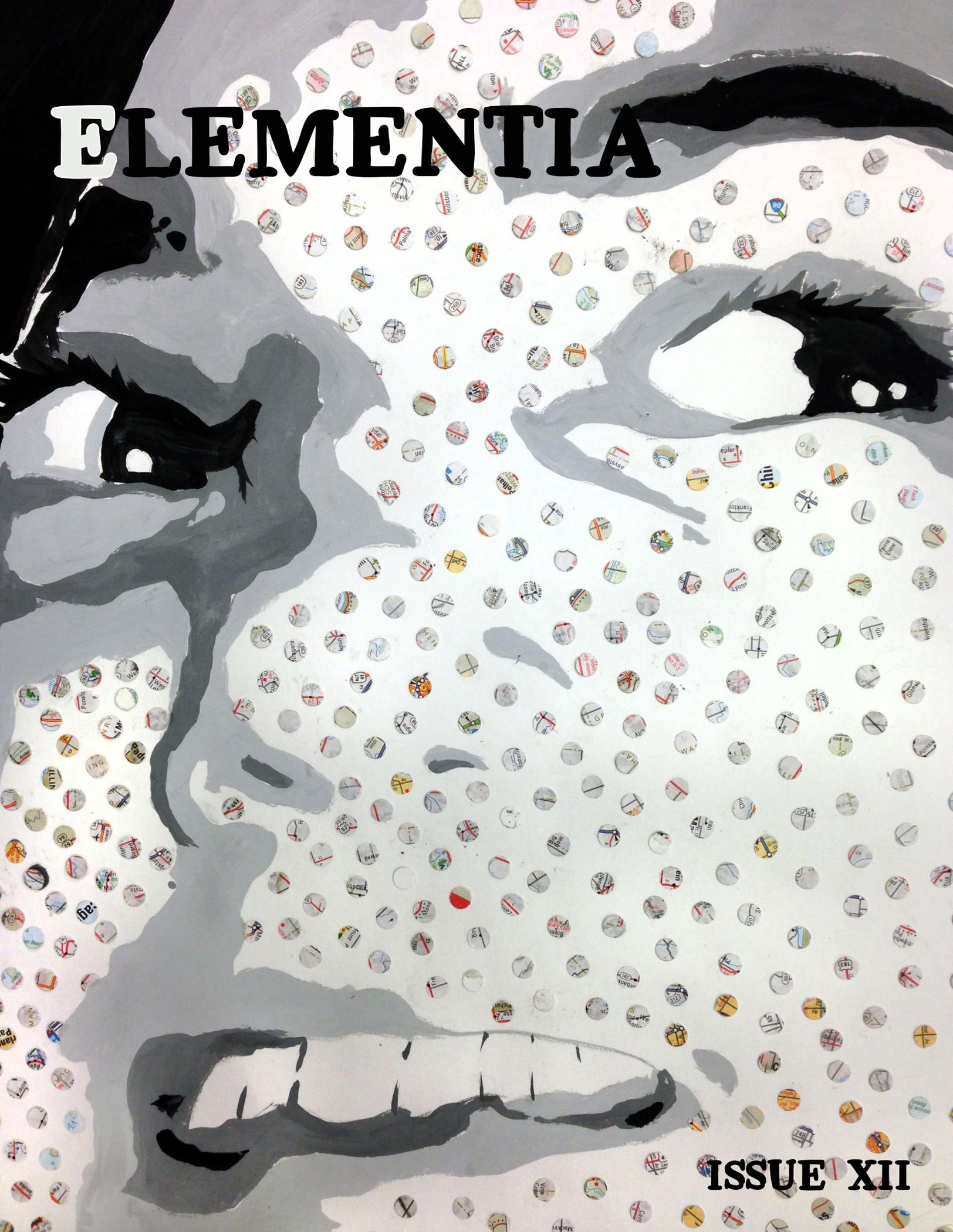


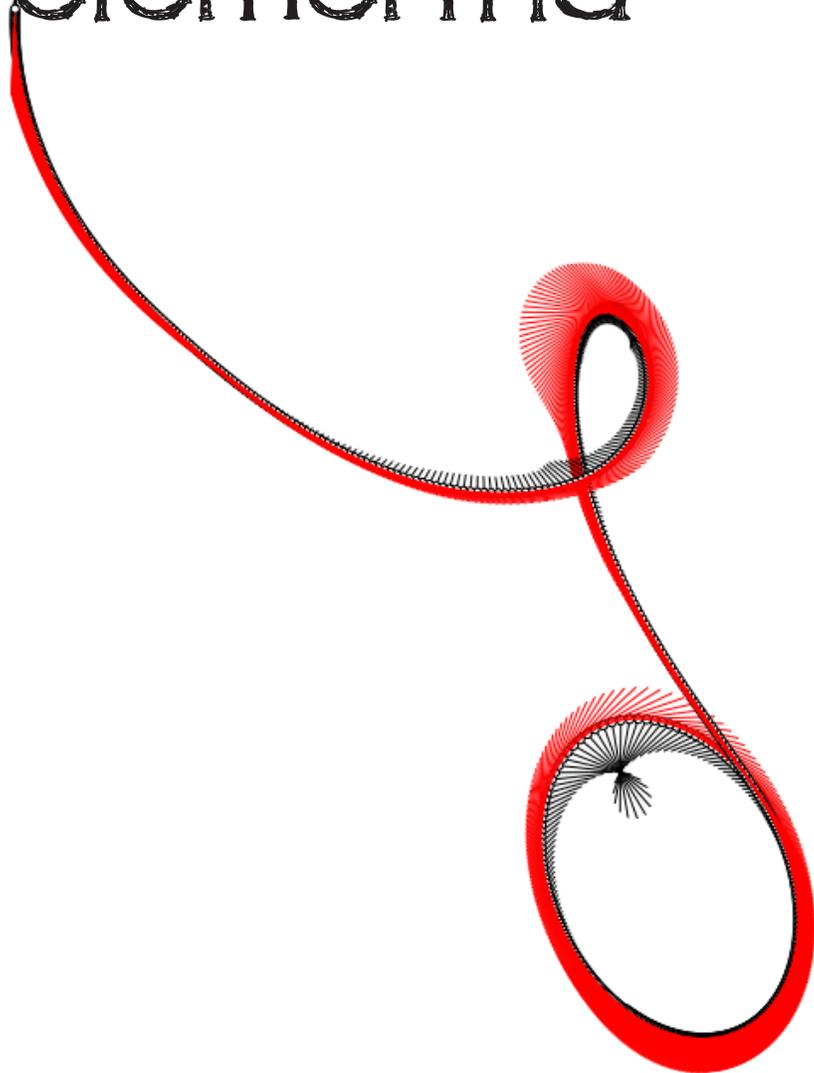
ELEMENTIA



ISSUE XII

Cover art by *Julia Huff*

elementia



Naomi Shihab Nye

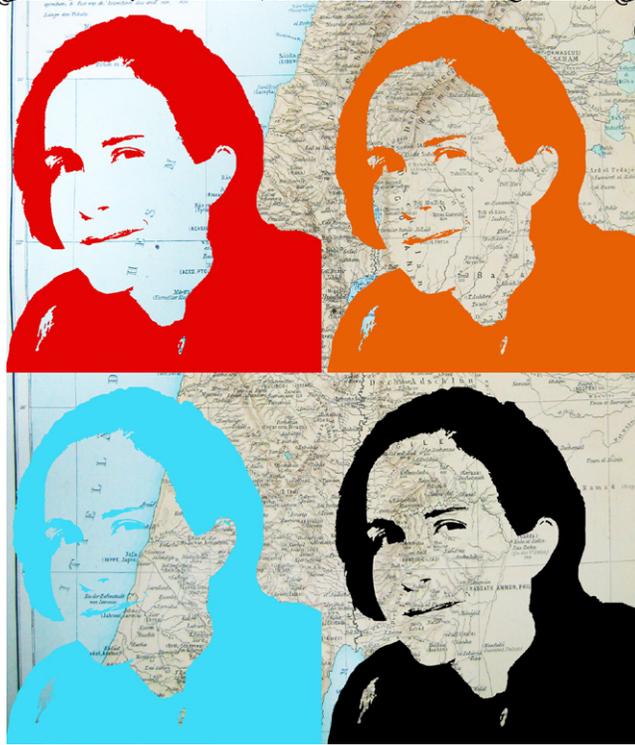


Photo Credit Chehalis Hegner

Johnson County Library is honored to dedicate the 12th issue of *elementia* to poet and novelist Naomi Shihab Nye.

Ms. Nye writes with unflinching compassion, taking careful note of what could be overlooked and alerting us that we are surrounded by significance in our daily lives.

Her straightforward voice and sense of appreciative curiosity inspire readers new to poetry and seasoned readers alike. In particular, her work addressing questions of place, ancestry, legacy, and heritage have inspired *elementia*'s writers and editors.

A selection of books and poems that sparked student work follows: *Habibi*, *Turtle of Oman*, *There Is No Long Distance Now*, *Burning the Old Year*, *Famous*, *Two Countries*, *Making a Fist*, *Daily*, *The Rider*, *Negotiations with a Volcano*, and *San Antonio*.

We thank you and we honor you, Ms. Nye. Your mentor William Stafford says it best: *"Reading [your] work enhances life."*

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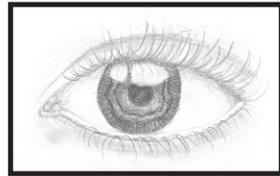


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The Spacewalk

Cole Wilson

Hadfield gazed out the small glass window,
a portal to home.

Through the opening, an inspiring sight,
the bright sunlight shone.

Swirling colors, pushing to the horizon,
a palette of aquamarine,

And through the dappled cover of clouds,
a deep forest green.

The distant surface hurtled past his feet,
long miles away,

And while his hand clung to its tether,
his body did sway.

Hadfield, in awe of his interstellar roam—
cried a single glistening tear, Alone.



heaven in the southern hemisphere

Carli Pymale

i could break beneath the weight of
atmosphere.
these stars, balanced atop my head
are heavier than the sun,
lending their light
across a universe, a lifetime
to shatter my insides in their silence.

the ground has already crumbled,
soft and cold between my toes
stilled and pliant
under the sky's watchful hands.
they ache, cold and raw
here where the world turns in reverse



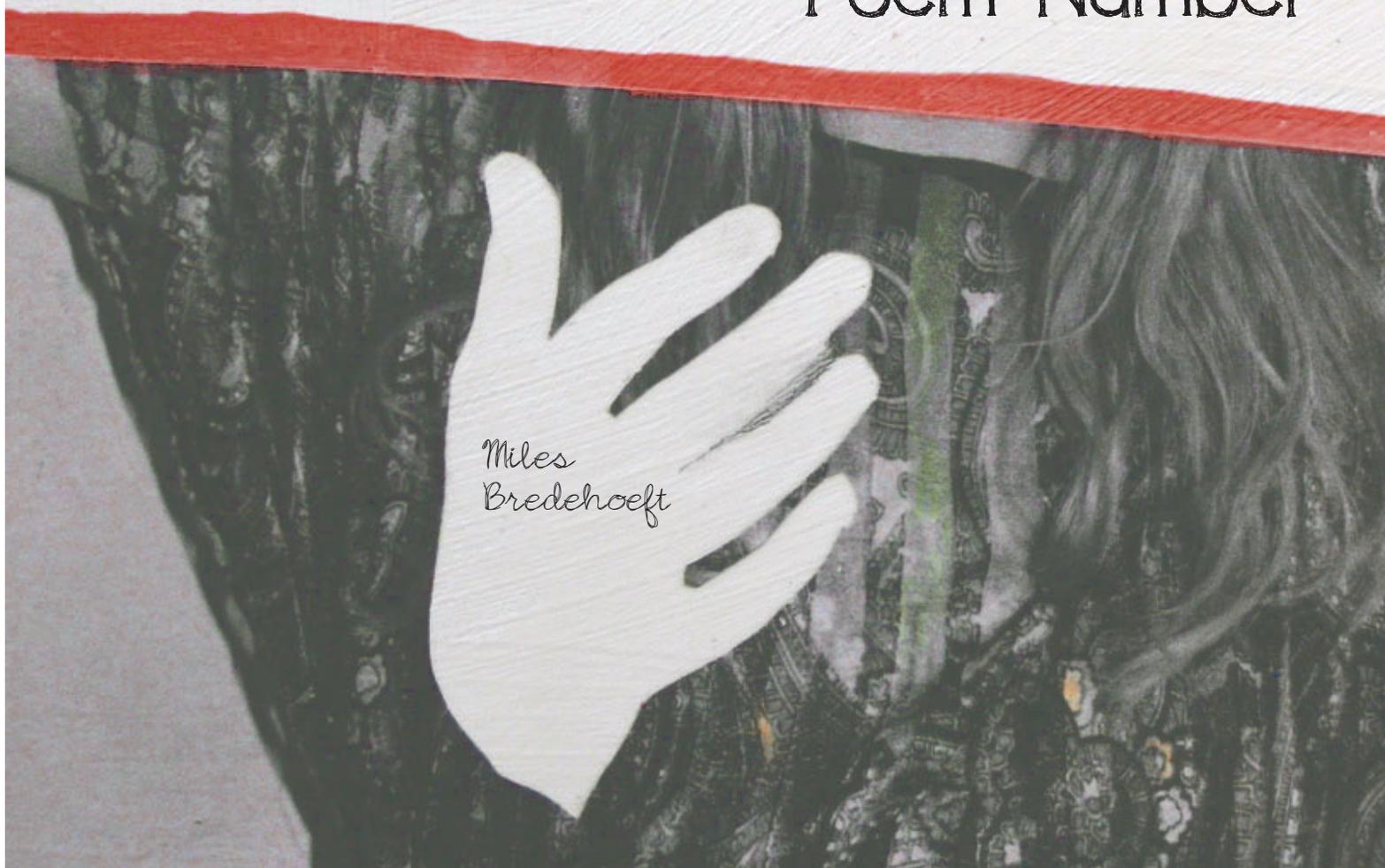
here, where long lost stories
pierce through darkness
as if they'd just been born—
here, where only dull beams of firelight
can illuminate july's winter—
here, where my heart beats
to watch the sky expand—

i have never felt so small.

distantly, laughter quakes
with a presence i cannot meet;
my fingers tremble
silent in their recognition
of why
humanity, in all its innovation
once thought this sky
the home of gods.



Poem Number



Miles
Bredehoeft



It's been five days,
But more than five days have been accomplished
It doesn't feel like years have past,
Only that the beginning seems like years ago
It's time to leave, to another world
But the world we leave will never leave us

People are made for people
To conjugate
To assemble
To be near
To grow alongside,
Providing steps where there are none
But it is deeper than that
There is a connection
Like a river trickles and flows past rocks,
Others trickle and flow past you,
Leaving you different than you were before
Now you are wet,
Now the hidden is made known
Now part of you is gone,
Now you are more focused
And as the river of humanity flows,
Its features become more and more defined
They're sharper, the current is swifter
For everyone involved

There is a danger
To be swept away by the wild center current
But meaning is found on the outside
Beyond the mass flow,
To the edge where you are sharpened, formed, defined
and perfected
Without the friction, dull would stay dull
Without the friction, broad and unspecific would stay
broad and unspecific
After the river erodes the old,
The new is left, primed to live full

The worlds, the rivers of people are to be taken with love
Letting them affect you, the way you cannot affect
yourself
Be mindful of passiveness, be easy to refinement
That is when time begins to drift away,
You consumed in your new end,
Happy as a fish being propelled to the ocean
Swimming with confidence and joy in the moment
Knowing what is behind, thankful for what is ahead
Swimming with the river to new worlds

川明かり

Catherine Strayhall

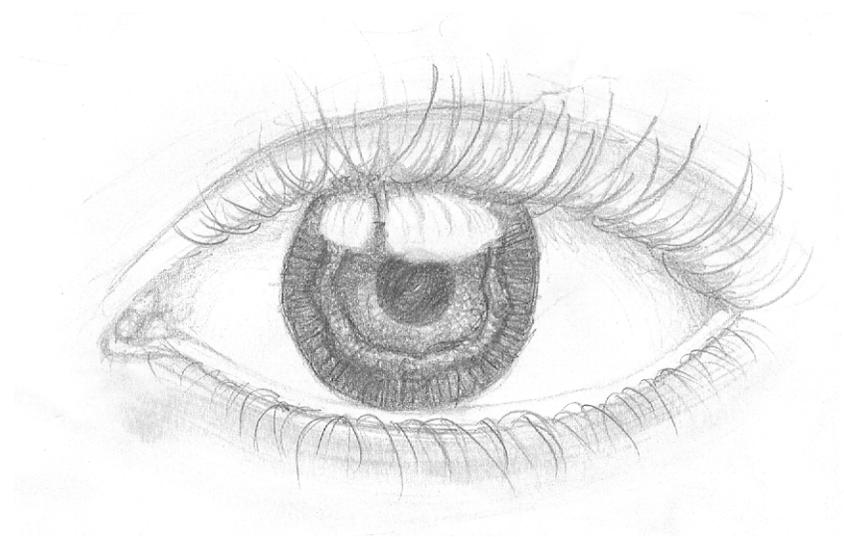
there was a river/in the black hills/that my favorite trail followed/with pine trees lining
its banks/of hard ground and towering rocks//i would beg my father/to walk that trail/
as far as it went/as many days as i could//and as we walked he would/recite poems from
memory/without ever missing a word//frost, cummings, whitman/he filled the air/and my
ears/with their words/and i soaked up/nature, rhythm, life//as the sun set/it would send
sparks of water up from the river/while my dad's voice/deep and quiet/led us home in the
darkness//i'd like to get away from earth awhile/and then come back to it and begin over

A photograph of a misty forest path. The path is covered in fallen leaves and is partially obscured by a stream of water that flows through the center. The trees are tall and dark, and the overall atmosphere is mysterious and magical. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

Place of Lore

Isabel Nee

Down the winding path I stroll, through woods dark
And deep, where mystery and magic roam.
A swift stream runs here; high above, a lark
Sings sweet and clear, in a voice that calls "home."
Onwards, a low growl comes from some deep cave
Hemmed in by rocks, shrouded in mist and steam.
I pass on my way; others think me brave
To pass by as dragons stare with eyes keen.
But this place here is no danger to me:
Though many legends run, fly, swim, walk here
In forests that echo with neighs and shrees
From unicorn and griffin, both so dear
To me I long to stay yet awhile more,
But others call me from my book of lore.



Glasses

Ashley Decker

I couldn't see the ocean, I couldn't see the waves.
I didn't even know there were waves.
Just a blue blur, like paint splattered on a blank canvas
Tripping over nothing,
Catching something that wasn't there
A trick of the mind it was.
But now, it is clear.
The water moves,
The clouds have shape,
And the grass blows with the wind.
Placing vision on my head,
Gaining clarity with the magic of an object placed on my face.
My eyes were given to me.

randomly again
pattern in certain

Unbounded

Jack

This place, that place, there are so many in which I can be,
But I choose that one, the one where I can be free.
It can be a place where the sun shines at the crack of dawn,
A place that is so dreamy it can make me yawn.

This place is there for me night and day,
This place is where I can hide away.

This place comes with a morning breeze,
It comes with the buzzing of bees.
And then...
The pages unfold,
A story never told.
And the magical moment...
When everything fades away...
I no longer see what was once there before,
For I am not here, nor there,
I'm in an undiscovered place,
At the edge of the world,
Where only imagination can reach.

And the events...
They are found between the leaves.

This world is everywhere I can possibly go,
I can be on a secret mission, or on a pretty meadow.
This place is of my choice,
The possibilities are endless,
There are no limits, restraints, or any restrictions,
This place is where my mind explores,
The treasures of dreams that flood through the scores of sheets.

This place comes with something magical and special.
It comes with something many will not view,
For it is something that has to come within.
And the magical moment...
When everything fades away...
I no longer see what was once there before.



Where You've Been

Anonymous

What do you do when the place you call home
Is one that you no longer recognize; when you
Forget that place is no mere function of space,
But also a function of time; and the
Crystalline memories you can still see,
With every step forward, move farther from reach?
Looks can deceive; where you are is not where you've been.
So you run 'round in circles, searching for home—
For safety, for comfort, familiarity, love—
'Til the ground your toes cling to crumbles beneath you
While your castle in the clouds floats off in the breeze
And you realize that once again, looks have deceived you—
Where you are is not where you've been.
Turn your feet toward home, but how can you know
Where the heart lies, or if it's still whole, or if
It's been splintered, jagged pieces torn off for each person you've loved—
In which case, that place may still be one of no return?
So many pieces gone and lessons unlearned, and yet we still
Yearn for the time when we were blind to our own ignorance,
And that's not a place either, and that's okay.
Looks will deceive, but the heart finds itself again.
It knows where you are is not where you've been.



Empty Suitcase

Rylee Wilson



Some of us haven't quite found a place
We wander with suitcases full of self-doubt and worry
We flit from person to person seeking acceptance

We run from place to place
searching for a passion where we can direct the never ending flow of time
so we can waste it in a straight line instead of in a zigzag

We search to find the point of our travels in the big things –
the lies we tell our teachers when we say we want to find a noble profession
that will give us a high income but
will not bring us happiness and won't give us a place.

We seek our place in our friends
but they are a little different than us
How can they understand us
if we can't understand ourselves?

It is like living in a home where
the roof is a mirage
and the walls are very real.

All we can do is wander in limbo
and hope the ideas of big dreams, place and happiness
were not a lie we were told
so the adults can feel better about themselves.



Mixed media by *Michelle Chan*

Untitled

Tajzhere
Dillard

Warm evenings -
a slight breeze with the scent of smoked ham
and cornbread for dinner.
BROWN BODIES come out when the streetlights do
FOR FEAR OF BEING SEEN,
dancing and singing to Motown.
Turning bodies into wine
too sweet to taste.
Hearing John Coltrane and his saxophone
telling stories of BLUES on SUNDAYS
with a bass line as steady as our heartbeats.
We gather here,
in this moment,
in this place.
A place not welcomed to us by outsiders,
but a place our tears have made a home out of.
Bodies laced in slick sweat, and HIP-HOP, and POETRY.
Bodies golden in sunlight and bursts of mahogany under dimly lit moons.
We've made our HOMES here.
Here, in TRAGEDY, SOLEMN and SORROW,
we pack up into HYMNS to sing like lullabies.
HERE we do not forget to be strong,
to go unbroken like our mothers did after crossing oceans
and bending their backs to save us.
WE DO NOT FORGET
to make peace,
not unlike the raging water we come from.
Somewhere along the way
we traded knapsacks for semi-automatics
and a dream for cheap liquor at the corner store.
A number of us have been forgotten here,
but we don't think about that.
Not today and maybe not ever.
This is just another story to US.
Another melody, another cautionary tale
to make a song out of.
This is how we survive.
How we make light out of darkness.
Our place.

Home.

Where I Belong

Available Space

Place: noun, defined as a portion of space available or designated for or being used by someone; i.e. one's spot at the table, or if you think like me, one's place in this world. It's funny how much time I spend wondering about my place and contemplating my distant future when in reality, I've already found my place without even realizing it and this moment. Before I know it, I'll be twenty-five and exploring my career somewhere, and then I'll be in my thirties doing God only knows what, and my place will have changed. As stationary as time, my place will grow, swelling like an infinitely rising chest; gentle, but full and hearty. Enjoy the moment, but prepare and hope for the future. There is no limit on what tomorrow holds, and time—past, present and future—is what you make of it. People spend their entire lives looking for where they fit in, when in actuality they've never been out of place because how can you not belong in your own life? Place: noun, defined as a portion of space available or designated for or being used by someone. Place: noun, right here.

Faith Freeman

I was once told that we must take adventures to know where we truly belong, meaning that we have to search to find the perfect place for ourselves. I do not necessarily agree or disagree with this statement. You see, I would like to believe that I have many adventures of my own, and that I have taken many adventures of my own, and that the way I look at the world has grown and changed because of them. That these adventures have taught me a lot about myself and how I feel I fit in this world. This being said, through all of my adventures and journeys I have never felt a strong connection to a place. I have never found that exact city state or town in which I feel I truly belong. But being 17 and still learning who I am, I'm going to assume this is relatively normal. Yet these experiences have made me find where I belong at this point in my life. It's just that my place isn't a place. Let me explain. My place is the journey: it is exploration discovery and freedom. I find my place in the fantastic tales of a pair of old timers, in the unbelievable organization of an eccentric shop keeper, in the subtle notes of a sleepy coffee shop's home brew. I begin to find my place little by little each time our tire blows out, each time I strike up an awkward conversation with a stranger, each time I stare down the road and wonder where I will end up next. Because every day I end up somewhere new experience something new or learn something new. Because sometimes a place doesn't have to be a place. Because no matter how cheesy it sounds the journey is more valuable than the destination, And in my opinion sometimes that destination gets in the way of the adventure anyways.

Lauren Keller

Change

I have not changed at all.
It is not true that
I have changed for the better from experience.
It is genuine when I say that
I have not tried to apologize for my past wrongdoings.
I am false when I claim that
I learned from myself and others.
But, it is sincere that I believe I have
Kept making the same mistakes all this time.
I am somewhat correct in thinking I have
Hurt family and friends for the fun of it.
I am ashamed that in the past I have
Tried not to blame others for my inadequacies.
I am proud to say that I have
Not Grown Up.
Giving up on myself is easy, but it is wrong that I have
Hope to become a better person.
Everyone has it, except for those who do not try.
A chance to change.

(Now read in reverse)

Justine Greig



Three Choices

Molly Kavanaugh

The ties to your ancestry
Binding a great family tree,
With this can you be truly free?
Now you have these choices three:

Embrace your blood,
An old-new bud.
Refuse the bonds
For fields beyond.
Keep roots down there,
And to be fair,
Leave your crown
In the care
Of clouds' prayer
And wind's heir.

The ties to your ancestry
Binding a great family tree,
With this can you be truly free?
Depends on who you want to be.

Home

Marilyn Stickler

A little spot in the heartland,
A little spot in your heart.
Where families are created,
And legacies carry on.
Where meals are around a table,
And the front of a fridge is your trophy case.
Where names are recycled,
And recipes stay secret.
Where talking over one another is normal,
And arguing a second language.
But things get messy,
We all grow up.
Never worrying what the future may bring,
Always having home as a crutch.



Grandpa

Kate Clore

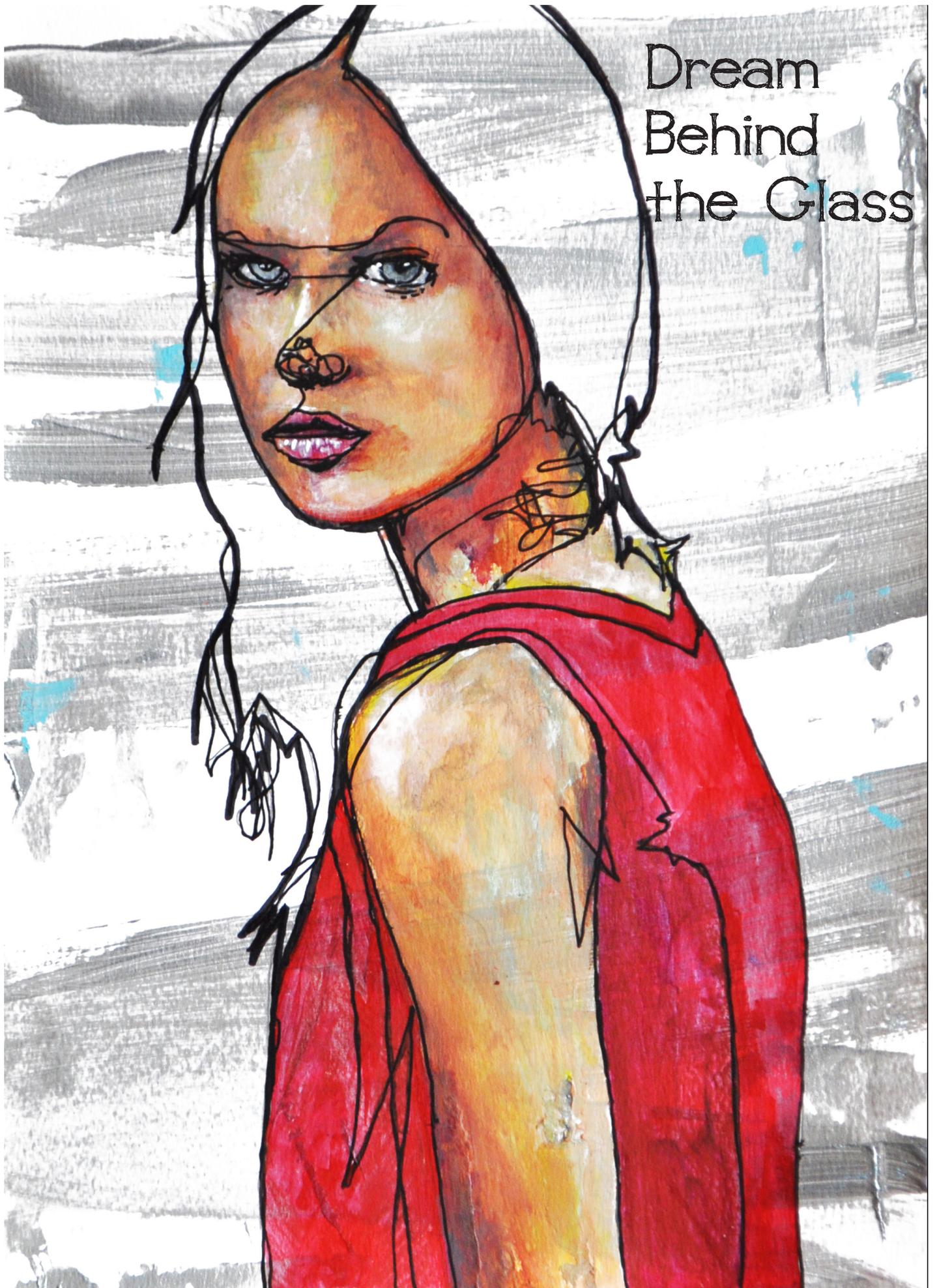
Sitting on my grandpa Larry's lap,
laughing and smiling.
Going everywhere on the cart smiling.
Smiling the way he laughs.
Going to the hospital trying to smile,
but I can't.
Rushing to his room I run.
He is still there I smile.
He doesn't have much longer,
so I must keep a smile on my face.
One last time,
I hold his hand and I smile one last time.
He is gone.

Christmas Axiom

Emma Muscari

The fire hisses, flickering,
as it lay encaged by a thick black sheath of iron.
Cloth stockings droop down- bare and bereaved.
Pure, white snow is drifting
down from the blank upper atmosphere.
The gray and white dog routinely scampers
around searching for scraps of food.
Family converses and unnecessary
gifts are exchanged.
And there I sit alone.
Under the absurdity
of the green leaves of the mistletoe.
Waiting.

Dream
Behind
the Glass



There's a girl that I see sometimes.
She pops up from time to time.
Day to day.

She's a lot of things.
God, she's beautiful.
And, isn't she just so funny?

When she fixes her eyes on you.
They sparkle, don't they?
Vibrant, bright, lovely.
So big. Full of life, yeah?

And when she laughs,
You could fall in love with that sound.
She laughs more than I do.
And they're all real, too.

If I look away for a moment,
Sometimes I see her.
Little glimpses here and there.

She's got it all figured out.
Knows where she's going.
Knows what to say.
Knows her place.
Knows where she belongs.
And that's everywhere.

Sometimes I hate her.

Because I don't know where she goes.

And I wish I was there.

These little glimpses, I get
Sometimes I see her looking back at me
As I fix my hair
Or brush my teeth

But most of the time,
She's absent.
And I miss her.

I imagine where she is.
Sometimes she wears a silly crown
of wildflowers.
She lies in a meadow and laughs.

Sometimes she's got a gun.
She wears black.
She's confident.
She's sexy.

Sometimes she wears a dress I've got
Somewhere in my closet.
She lives my life.
But she lives it better.

She's happy.
She's sad.
She's angry.
But, damn, she looks good.

I don't know where she goes.
But I wish I was with her more often.
In that ever changing world of hers.
Oceans and skies
Oh, the things she sees.

Anika Rasheed

Home

Saadia Siddiqua

home can be anywhere with a song
a constant melody
an extravagant sound

warmth without sun
cold without ice
feel anyway you'd like

the song's beat
replaces heartbeats,
gives you strength
stability, courage
lifts your heart up
pushes you out of your boundaries
helps you escape

music is a soul
taking you out of reality

music takes you to
the comfort of home

Patchwork of Places

Catherine Strayhall

The losses we experience
The victories we achieve...
They become intertwined
With the places we inhabit
As we go about our lives.
Meaning and memory tie us to these places
So that even when we leave somewhere,
Or the buildings disappear
Or the land changes,
We're a part of those places,
And those places are a part of us.



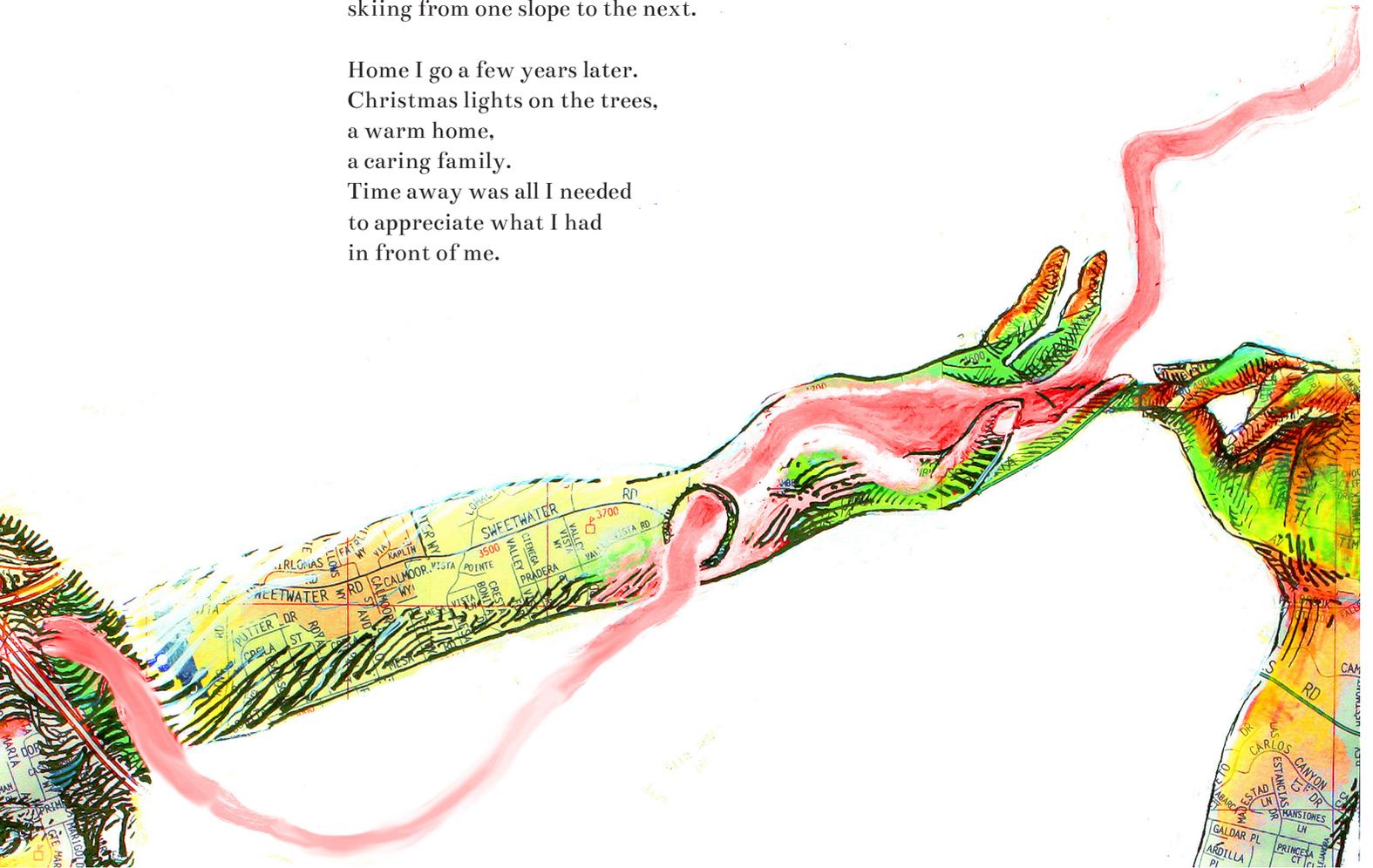
Growing Old

Anne Goebel

Born into the place I despise.
Growing in the green,
not seeing what could be.
Suffocating siblings,
pets galore,
always wanting more.

Colorado was my safe place,
one mountain to the next.
Creaky ski lifts,
glistening snow,
hot chocolate burning my tongue.
My problems disappeared,
skiing from one slope to the next.

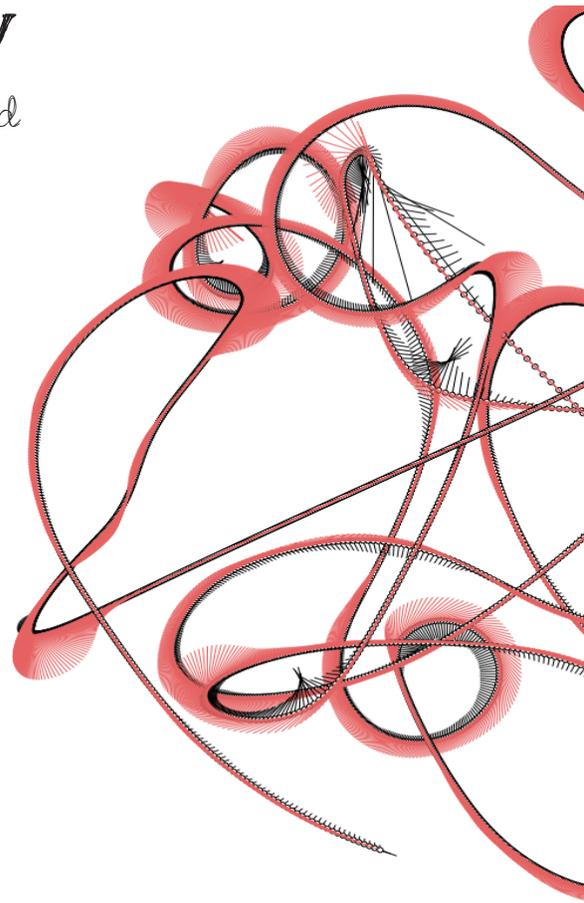
Home I go a few years later.
Christmas lights on the trees,
a warm home,
a caring family.
Time away was all I needed
to appreciate what I had
in front of me.



Kansas City

Tajzhere Dillard

This here is real.
There are no stories
about happy homes and whole hearts
where we come from.
No fancy cars.
We got no big houses but big dreams.
This is crack fiends at midnight,
babies crying, sleeping on wooden floors.
This is the corner of Troost.
On a pitch black Friday night
a queen sells her crown for
20 dollars and some rocks.
Young men selling souls for dime bags.
We don't know peace here,
but we got bullets to leave your world in pieces,
got backpacks but can't afford school supplies.
Everybody's watching,
but we're wasting time.
The blind leading the blind.
They gave us back our 40 acres,
but we can't keep hope alive.
It's time for change.
Time to save lives.



Pieces of My Heart

Anonymous

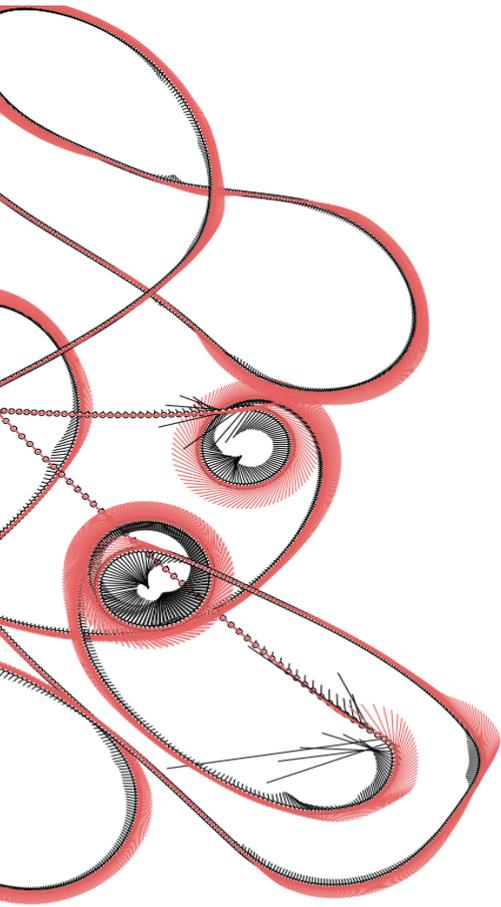
Since the first breath of life,
one adventure to the next,
I can only reflect back in fondness
to the scattered pieces of my heart.

Tall buildings and skyscrapers
lies, amidst, piece one.
Twin Cities separated by the
shinning, shimmering Mississippi River.
Memories of kayaks and bicycle rides
through the evergreen, forever green
trees.

Trees climb back into my mind
as piece two hides peacefully inside
Rocky Mountain terrain.
Cool nights of pine and sleeping bags,
millions upon millions of stars,
Heavens dancing to our acoustic
sounds.

Sounds begin the third piece,
the buzz of the Kansas City skyline,
whispers of the Great Plains.
Dancing through life, discovering our own style,
our own music, our own
lives.

As I look to the future,
these pieces left behind, these lessons learned,
I only hope, one day,
there will be a thousand pieces scattered
throughout the world
and the world within me.





Print by Hailey Byrne

Where the Heart Beats

Betsy Cha

Perhaps the first
Was the open sky
Infecting above the carpeted ground.
Books astray in an old wicker basket,
Just enough room for a girl to climb in.
Crayons drawing, thoughts wild; just
imagine at your fingertips-
The World.

Quicken the taunt
That was the painful play.
He'd pluck at ponytails,
Harp on flaws,
But idols crafted in gold
Grow larger after each disappointment.
Deserted to keep pleasing, always inspiring,
To be justly, simply, exactly-
Like him.

Relish the time,
Where the universe hums
In perfect tranquility:
Before the turbulence,
When words are silent, but not unheard.
When will we be judged as equals?
When eating lunch together, playing soccer
together,
Laughing 'til our cheeks and stomachs hurt,
You cared.
Why did you call for its banishment?

Straighten up now,
Only perfection is tolerated.
Park those tires straight,
That's an order.
Be organized. Remember.

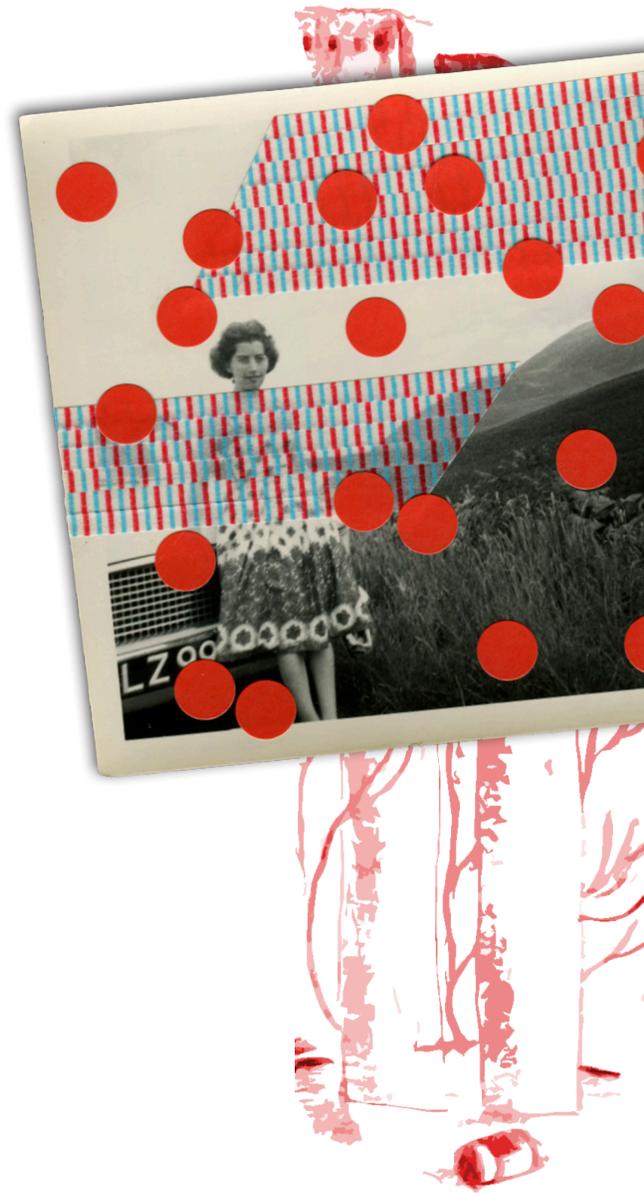
Stop fidgeting. Think.
Listen to the words sputtering from my
lips.
Let me scream to calm these waters,
Let me hurt you to regain my own breath.
Lying scattered among the discarded, the
used, and the fallen.
Don't worry
Because families always love,
That's the bloody obligation-
Our snare.

Turn the cheek,
Another year passes.
A home now vacant discards the fear.
Filling its bosom with music that could
make
You deaf at first inhale.
When I sing, there is a hollowed echo,
A dance with solely shadows,
But the air is finally clean.
But perhaps what they say is true,
Home is where the heart is.
But you have to survive every beat, stroke,
and tremor
To truly appreciate
What was.

Scrapyard Jungle

Alexandra Miller

The twisted metal trees
Rise up from the heap
Magpies hop about
The glittering savannah
And crows harass the mice
Nesting in the chewed
Leather seat
Of a Volkswagen
A scruffy dog
Stalks the crows
His paws padding softly across
A refrigerator door
Cockroaches scurry about,
Any mildew in their path
Is Vanished.
They are the army ants
That march across the forest floor.
The crows are the howler monkeys,
Squawking loudly.
The flies are mosquitoes,
Buzzing about, annoying.
And magpies are vultures,
Looking for anything.
Landlines dangle from a crane
Like bananas from a tree
A bus rusts away,
Yellow to red
The motorcycle gleams,
A new addition
And scavengers walk about
Looking for anything of value,
They will leave defeated,
This jungle is dead.



Where Am I?

Elijah Hernandez

I hear walkie talkies – kusssshhhhh.
People talking, “Blah, blah, blah, bleep.”
I hear toilets flush.
Basketballs bounce and swoosh.
This place is full of it: empty.



Everyone Thinks I'm Super Happy

Ali Robinson

Everyone thinks I am super happy
But I'm not...
Everyone thinks I just don't have any problems
But I do...
Everyone thinks I am just happy with myself
But I'm not...
Everyone thinks that I can just make everything in my life okay
But I really just can't...
Everyone thinks I don't care
But I really do...

You see
My place is not seen by most
It's where everyone thinks I'm always happy
It's so much easier to always put myself there
And try to make myself believe that I really don't care
Instead of facing the truth

It's where I live
And probably where I always will
Just hiding...
Between the lines



Print by *Lily Reininga*



Trip

Hannah Warren

constantly muttering to yourself
a constant hum in the back of your head.
carrying conversations with the walls around you
this is normal mom,
leave me alone mom,
I want to eat in my room tonight mom,
I can't talk right now mom.
buzz-buzz, buzz-buzz
your phone vibrates, mimicking a heartbeat
his heartbeat

the heartbeat you felt in your throat when he kissed you on the forehead
the heartbeat that synchronized itself with yours
thump-thump, thump-thump
your eyes shine and the medicine kicks in
your pupils stretch
your head fills with nonsensical words you don't know how to say
or spell

everything is fine
your hands stop sweating
you can't remember if you are breathing
you can't see
everything is fine
the walls are dripping you can feel them
hot on your face
drip, drip, drip,
no light in your room, but everything is white and gold
shimmering
you wish
coming down
slowly and then you fall
you feel it pulling behind your belly button
no that's something else, wasted food
swish, gurgle, pop, growl
you barely make it to the bathroom
swish, swirl, swish, swirl
wiping stomach acid off your face, you can't wait,
wait to do this again tomorrow.
everything is fine.

Showers

Sarah Hirsch

showers are often taken for granted
a comfort for the morning, afternoon, late night, whenever
consistently enveloping you in that same warm blanket
always at that perfect angle
so you never have to put in unnecessary effort

but showers can vary
nearly every time i visited my mother
new place new companion new shower
always one underlying feature
unfamiliarity

icy cold quick bursts piercing
scalding hot steady stream suffocating
lackadaisical drizzle uneven on one side confusing
all completely different
one without a spigot, essentially a hose

each with a different set up, a new set of instructions
which way is hot which way is cold how do i turn it off
i haven't showered in the same house as my mother in five years
i no longer have to rely on a haphazard note or uneven heating
my shower's foundation is strong i am strong i can turn things on

Her Sinning Soul

Aurora Westphal

We caught her,
Slowly dying,
Submerged in water,
Alone and crying,
Slowly dying,
As she falls,
Alone and crying.
The sinner crawls.
As she falls,
I heard the voice,
The sinner crawls,
Listen to the noise,
I heard the voice,
From the hurting soul,
Listen to the noise,
From the dirt and coal,
From the hurting soul,
We caught her,
From the dirt and coal,
Submerged in water

Escaping This Place

Michelle Lascon

This is not my place.
The smile I wear is fake.
Constantly fighting to escape your embrace,
The proof of my struggles remains on my face.
Through tears in the dark I turn over to see-
A stranger, a monster, lying next to me
I lay awake planning again and again
The fastest way out inside of my head
It's time. This time-
All of my bruises will heal
But forever will you live with all the guilt that you feel-
Or do you feel?
Or did whatever conscience that you had drown in my tears?
Do you have any remorse ...

Even if the school desks
Are perfectly aligned
And the chairs evenly spaced
And the walls precisely decorated
And the white boards
Sparkling white,

Even if there are regulations
For the houses in the suburbs
And the grass is evenly cut
And every last leaf is picked up
And the shrubs and trees
Are evenly groomed

Even if the tombstones
Form straight rows
And they are the same size and shape
And they are spaced exactly the same
And the graveyard is flawless

When we close our eyes
And imagine the earth,
We know it's not perfect.

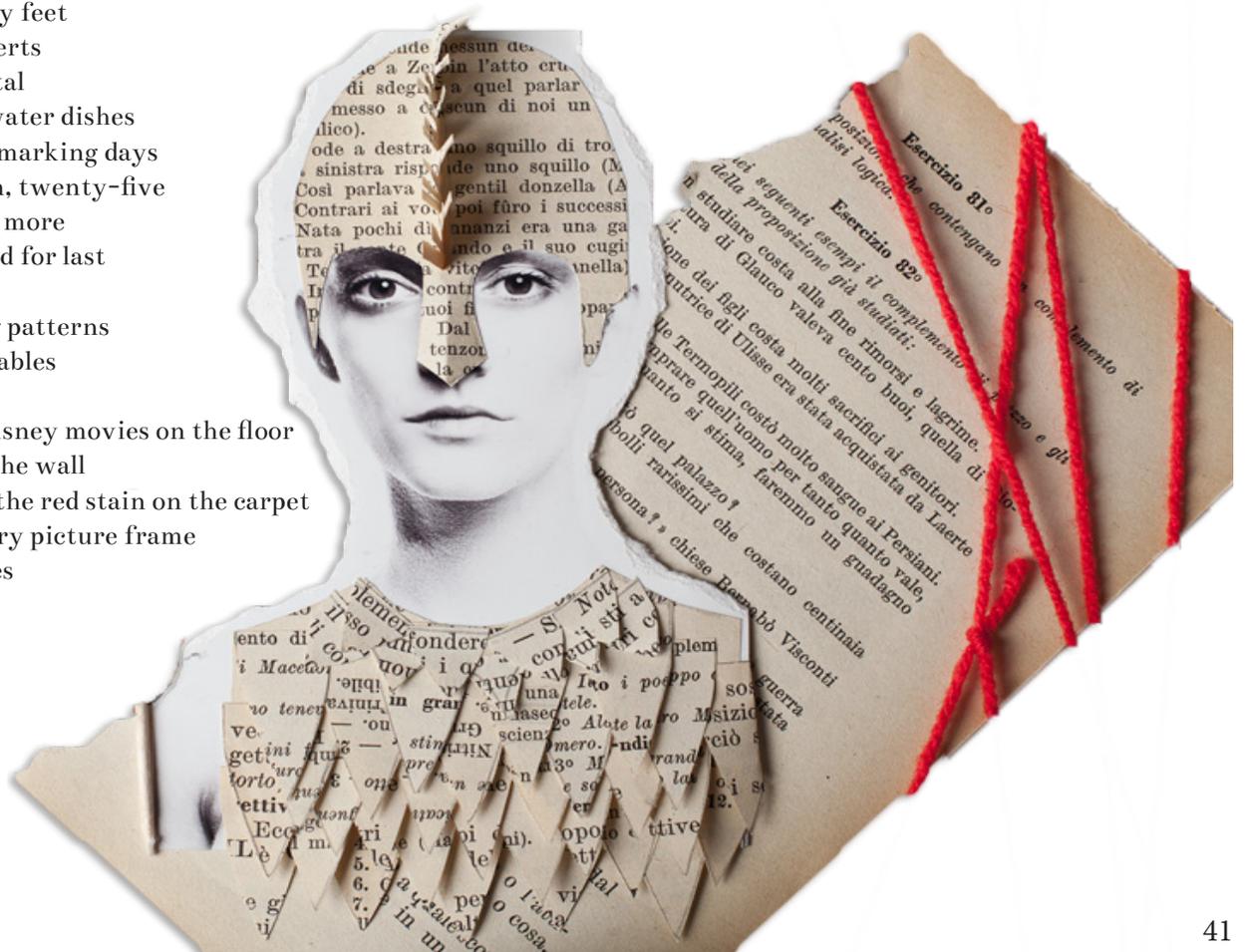
Uniform Place

Priya Jain

Pictures

Carly Hassenstab

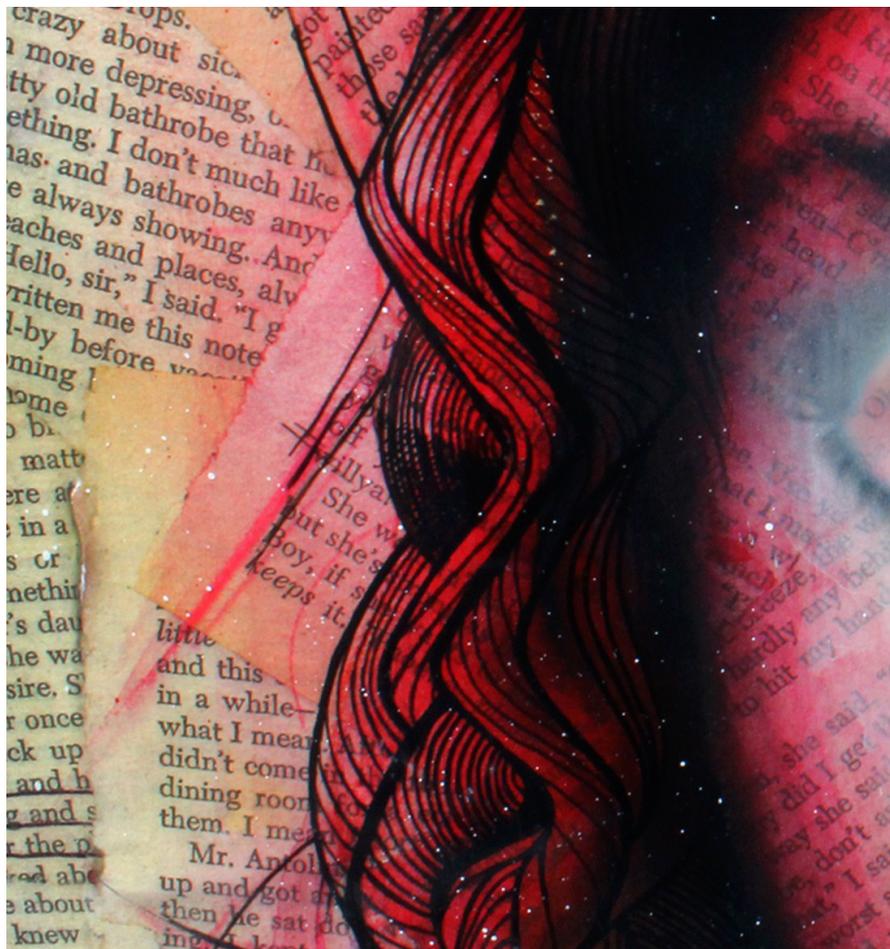
Police tape lines the yard
I walk past
Baby blue house in cookie-cutter neighborhood
I look down and it says welcome
I quickly step in and close the door
so the camera flashes don't glimpse inside
A table set for seven with pink orchids in the middle
Hand-colored drawings with markers on the fridge
Alphabet letters spelling words that don't exist
A X Z F C
I walk down wooded stairs
A big screen with Wii and PlayStation
Cords amongst cords and controllers
Board games and Twister on the shelves amongst
teen novels, adult fiction, and picture books
Door in corner eyes me expectantly
The lock was broken by fellow officers
I walk in
A storage shed with boxes
Christmas lights hang down
One more door hides in the shadow
I once more walk in
Concrete greets my feet
Cells with key inserts
Chains, heavy metal
Food bowls with water dishes
White chalk lines marking days
One, two, thirteen, twenty-five
I am upstairs once more
Intentionally saved for last
The family room
Couches matching patterns
Lamps on corner tables
A warm fireplace
Television with Disney movies on the floor
Pieces of glass by the wall
I gently step over the red stain on the carpet
Bullet holes in every picture frame
I study the pictures
They are smiling
They are lies



Beyond the Final Umbra

zac stower

A thousand stark crosses
Plotted on a green hill
Once moving a thousand miles an hour
Now stand still.
At life's bloody terminus
We are told they are the purest of all of us
The rolling front blending together
Forming a sea of forever
A canvas ravaged with uniform dials
For uniform men
Filling uniform files
Drifting together
In their uniform sin.
Now the timeless
Keep time.
Their shadows cast long
In the late setting sun.
Only able to regret
Neglecting the future in the past
Fathoming now in past's future.
The lucky few are rare to see
Peering through the darkness
To their future only they can see
Who make it to self-actuating immortality
Cast a unique umbra
Wasting no light on any but they
For all of eternity.



she walks
head bent against the cold
and the weight of grief
shoving her down

her black hair blows
in the wind around her head
i call out and she turns
her green eyes searching
for the dead that she can't see

i remember my hair flowing
across the thin pillow
machine's endless beeping
obliterating all other sound
the endless pain
crashes over in waves

she stands over me
says i'll be alright
but i know i
won't

the darkness descends
two voices
beaten and
silenced to
one

I end here

I turn my head
And look at the
Neat orderly
Rows
The grey and red showing even through the
mist

The ground looks clod and hard and
Dead

The trees bend over
The weight of grief pushing them down
I remember her
Hair flowing
Green eyes laughing
On top of the world until she
Wasn't
The endless falling
And lies
Her black hair flowing over the pillow
I push it back and tell her she'll be alright
But I know she won't
Machine's endless beeping silenced
Two voices
Beaten and
Silenced to
One
But I must continue

The Graveyard

Jessa Boutte

Home

overland park
kansas
usa
earth
milky way

am i supposed to call this
home?
i live here
but it isn't home.

my home is delved deep within
the pages of my books
my home is made in the beats
of my favorite songs
my home is captured pictures
at a time, then run together to
make magical movies.

my home is with my heroes,
on an adventure to save the
world. (again.)
Hogwarts is my home, its
stone walls built from magic
and wonder,
the corridors whispering

comforts when "home" is a
place of hatred and loathing.
The Hufflepuff dormitory, its
warm four poster beds, giving
me a place to stay
when "home" isn't an option.
5 Seconds of Summer is my
home, a blanket of sound to
comfort me when

"home" says i'm not good
enough. Luke, Calum, and
Michael's voices, lulling
me into believing I'm
beautiful. the drums of their
songs put a confidence into
my step, when the sounds of
"home" droop my shoulders.

The Doctor is my home; the
sound of the TARDIS lifting
my spirits into the clouds,
nearly defying gravity.
Hearing "Run!" for the fourth
time that day, as we weave
our way

through the streets of an alien
planet, avoiding one of the
many enemies The Doctor
has. no matter where i am
with him, it does not compare
to the feelings of inferiority i
have at "home".

Middle Earth is my home;
A little round door, half my
height, opening to reveal a
comfier
place than my own skin. An
elf, 14 dwarves, 4 hobbits, a
wizard, and two men provide
better companionship and
loyalty than i find at "home"
and in my family.

My home is not here, but
there.

My home is
made in the
comforts of my
imagination.

Tori Gardner

Warm Enclosures

I hastily picked my feet up out of the snow to uncover a pair of warm brown boots that had been hidden under layers of white fluff just moments ago. The cold wind pierces my bare cheeks as I charge forward, breathing heavily to reveal a cloud of warm carbon dioxide. Snowy, frozen trees frame the path ahead of me as the doorway looms closer and closer. The world around me

stays silent and solemn with not even the familiar roar of car engines to keep me company. Tightly bundled in my parka, I shimmy my key out of my pocket and fit it into the frozen lock and hear the comforting click as I open the door. The feeling of warm air rushes into my face as I creep through the doorway. The pleasant aroma of burning wood captivates my senses as I shed my extra

layers. I let my surroundings pull me in as I forget about the cold that haunts the world outside these doors. Behind these doors beholds a world that is my own and will remain there to comfort me at the end of the day. Behind these doors I forget all my worries and only feel safety. This, right here, is my place.

This is my home.

Ashley McLaughlin



The curtain rises,
anxiety and nervousness,
but the nerves vanish.
The lights hit me,
a warm and incomparable sensation.
Lines once memorized,
forgotten.
Few moments of panic are gone,
it's just me and the music.

Me
& the
Music

Ella Graham

Unsocial Media

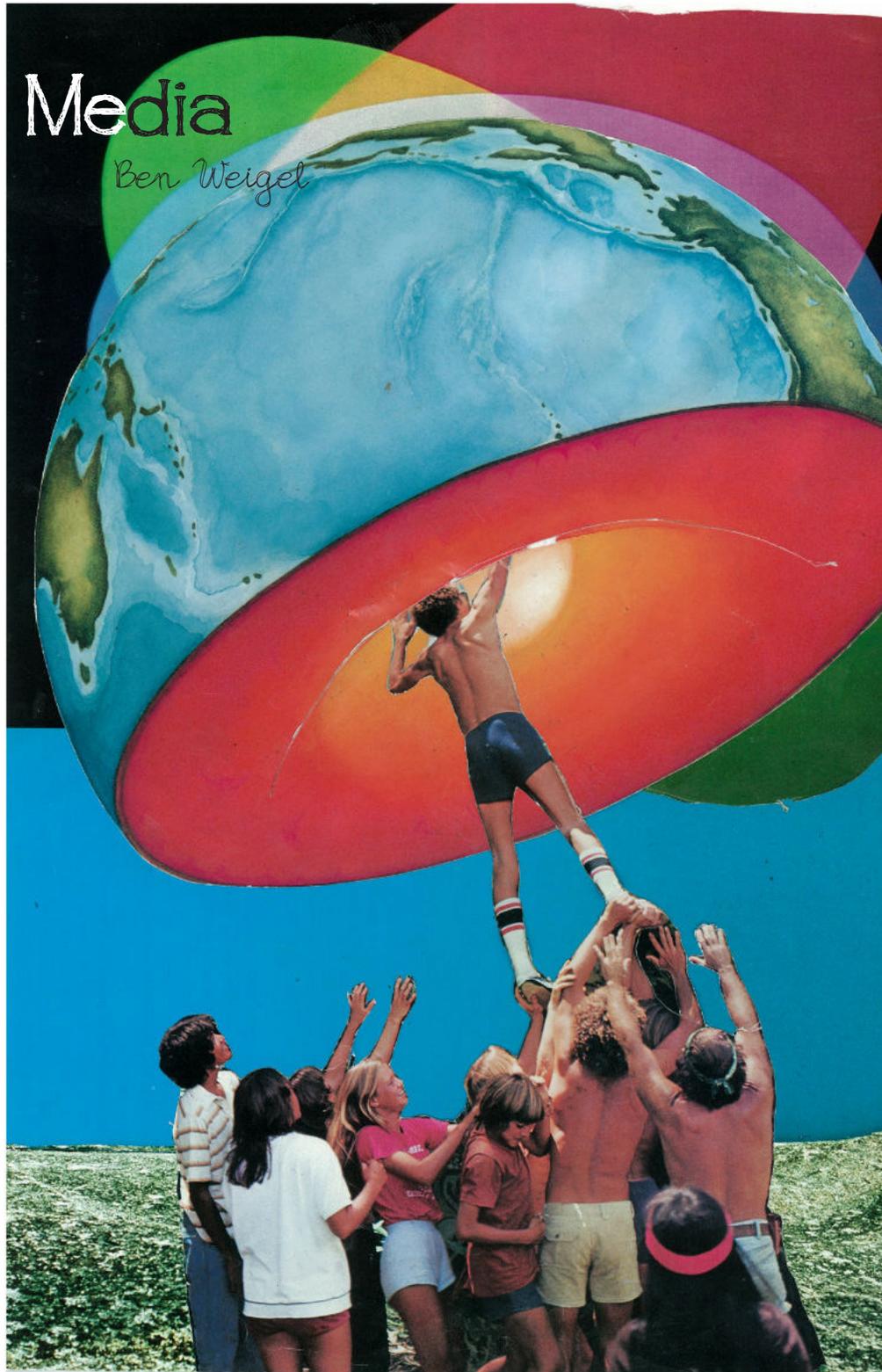
Ben Weigel

Headphones cradling my ears
I enter a world
Where electronic pictures and sounds
Are ever present

I take a seat
At the Twitter home page
Where people project themselves to me
Competing for my attention

I don't want to be left out
So I'll type my 140 characters or less

Copying, the time I have on this earth
Pasting it to a virtual wall
Dragging what I have left
Dropping it in the trash



Collage by *Bryan Voell*

The Workstation

Steven McPherson

Mental Silence

Physical Noise

“Click Clack Cliekity Clackity Click Click Clack”

The Blue Switch Thermaltake Poseidon Z Mechanical Keyboard speaks a special language to me

A language that is only understood by a certain herd of people

We call ourselves The Glorious PC Gaming Master Race (Satirically of Course)

Others call us “PC Profligates”

The Logitech mouse makes a soft reticent sound as it rubs across the mouse pad with a memory foam pad to protect the wrists

The mouse clicks and clicks and clicks as executables and links are opened and ad pop ups are closed

“I don’t care if there are “Hot Asian Mothers” in my area”

The 120mm fan cooling the source of the rig is spinning at 2,000 RPM keeps the components cool

The fans of the 750 Graphics Card spins as well for the same purpose

Anything over 50 degrees Celsius causes concern

Every fan rotation, keystroke, and mouse click can be heard through the entire room

That is all that can be heard

As the proud PC owner downloads torrents on thepiratebay or demonoid

Or when he edits a YouTube video for his channel

When he creates a locket.bat file to lock the folder on his desktop labeled “NSFW”

All creates a harmonic sound to the ears of those who appreciate the beautiful power and functionality of a good PC

Intel Core i5 4590k

NVidia GeForce GTX 750

8GB of DDR3 RAM

2TB Hard Drive

All connected by an ASUS B85M-E/CSM Motherboard

Powered by a 500 Watt PSU

And protected by a simple black case

Are working together in a symphony of peaceful harmony

In the space of the Glorious PC Gamer

My ma says
She pushed my stroller
around the bumpy streets of
Queens, Jamaica, Long Island,
even Manhattan,
Through rain and snow, all
alone.

Finding no help from the
passengers, all ignoring her
silent plea
She struggled to lift me,
And my clunky stroller onto
the bus,
As the doors began to close on
her, ready to shut her out.
Pushing past the passersby, a
destination in mind
In cold New York, I was a
weak replacement,
For a home lost to her past.

She listened to my babbles,
my nonsense, my gurgles and
My dreaded screeches in the
dead of the night.
She pleaded with me, saying,
“When will you respond to
my words?”
I responded.
But with a baby’s ignorance,
Simply staring with my
ignorant eyes.
Motherhood in New York,
For her, was lonelier than
expected.

Daddy Ji walks into our home,
cold and tired.
He walks into the basement,
rented from a Yugoslav.
A home under another home,
Two different tracks of life,
running parallel.
He’s seen a mirthless 11 years
of New York life,
11 years of American life
before that fateful year of ’97.
The year I came.
I reminded him what a home
was.

A life alone at 19, spent

walking the streets of New
York with no guide And a
dialogue of radio-English.
He was a cup already full of
tea.

Rockland College to NYIT, his
tuition he paid,
Every lonely penny.

The Stock Market surge of the
‘90s knocks on our door.
A penny becomes pennies.
Rich man Raheel, hustling
big numbers, with new doors
opening.
A life where every thread is
stretched taut with worries,
Has begun to loosen.

“Life is on its upswing.”
Daddy says to me, while I
roost in his lap,
“Ever since you came along.”
Yet the striking reality of
leaving a life behind, 12 hours
into the future,
Still strikes cold and hard at
every idle passing.

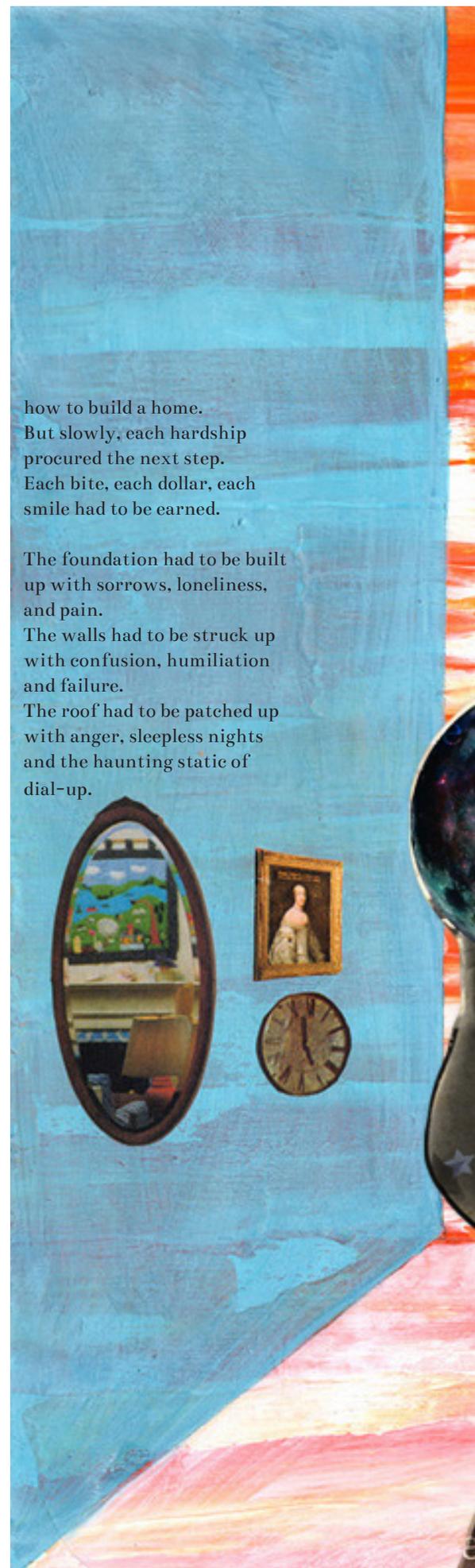
My mother is hunched over
the phone wire in our new
apartment,
Shouting at the phone,
through the phone,
to her mother, lamenting and
rejoicing.
Trying to share her new
family, her new home,
Through a piece of plastic and
cold science.
It gets lost somewhere in the
fray.

Lonesome and homeless,
They lived in a home they
could not call their own.
They drank their woe with
sugar,
And swallowed their pride
with old toast.
That’s all they could afford.

They were given no
guidebook, no explanation on

how to build a home.
But slowly, each hardship
procured the next step.
Each bite, each dollar, each
smile had to be earned.

The foundation had to be built
up with sorrows, loneliness,
and pain.
The walls had to be struck up
with confusion, humiliation
and failure.
The roof had to be patched up
with anger, sleepless nights
and the haunting static of
dial-up.



the comic
world.

To Build a Home

Amani
Raheel

er, miss my dog and
dom and the freed





Woman.

Sarah Woods

Woman.
Care-taker, life-giver,
nurturer, chef, doormat.
Woman.
Raised to believe my gender put
me on the bottom.
I am to please, not to be pleased.
I am the inferior, the weak, the
soft, the submissive.

Already born with joy, told to
mask the pain.
Hand swatted with scorn when
a fingertip probed the fire.
But boys will be boys.
And jump from rooftops and
run around and hurt each other.
Be a young lady.
Cover the sultry flesh, only to

be seen by one man.
Legs crossed, knee-length skirt,
chest covered, hushed voice.
Misbehave, spirited one.
Don't give in to them, they base
your character on what sexual
organs you have.
Walk topless, be on top.
Throw your fists, show your



The Plight of The G2

Arroog Khalig

[g2 (n): second generation; confusing to everybody but gregor mendel]

sing in me, O Muse, the plight of the second generation american;
 she is a girl with brown eyes and skin and hair,
 with \$300 Beats that match her silk headscarf affair.
 she brings “exotic” food to school,
 and cringes when lentils get on her skirt of tulle.

sing in me, O Muse, her struggle to fit in;
 her bad urdu accent makes her relatives distressed,
 and the bright blue scarf on her head marks her as “oppressed.”
 but really, she’s only a girl in need of more steampunk novellas,
 and a few friends who are passionate about ke\$ha a cappellas.

sing in me, O Muse, of what this conflict has done:
 all these opinions have made the poor girl downright prickly,
 and anyone who crosses her will regret it quickly.
 but through all the posturing, lying craze
 the young girl has, amazingly, found her place

sing in me, O Muse, of how happy she is now:
 the girl now writes feminist poetry and imitates bollywood dancers,
 and has learned that all those pedantic prancers
 who claimed that one side bested the other, were in fact
 all the same in one thing—they were cracked!

lividness.
 Have a loud mouth,
 blurt out the answers.
 Spirited one.
 Demand to be pleased
 Give to whoever you
 want, whatever you
 want.
 Feel passionately,

express.
 Live to please yourself.
 Human.
 Be an equal, stand
 unaltered.
 Pour tears from the
 cracks in your skin,
 scream.
 Sweat, wear your hair

down, be sultry.
 Speak, don’t go unspoken.
 You have a voice, use it.
 Make your presence
 known.
Be human.

A Different Room

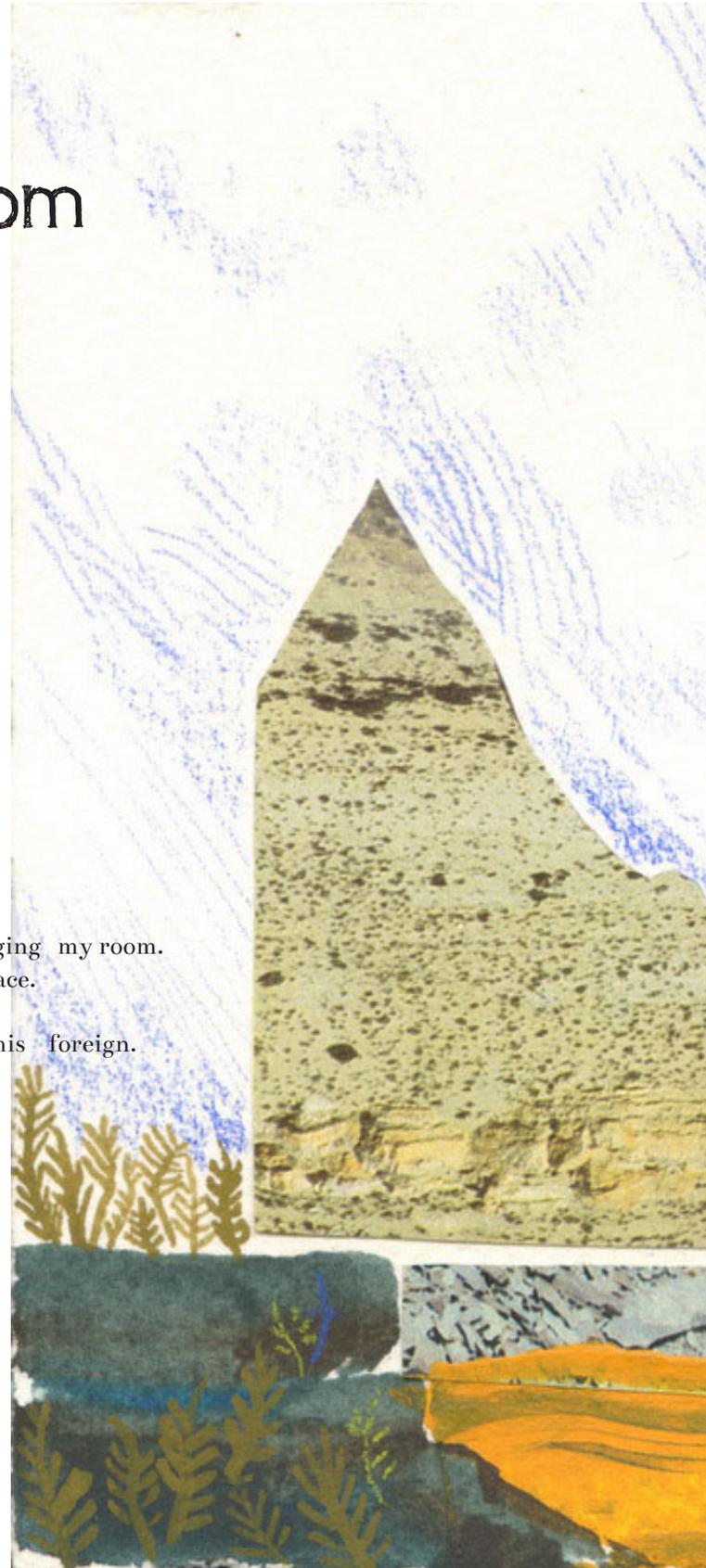
Arron Weber

Moving boxes carefully across the street,
Looking both ways
before pushing a small cart of toys across the street.
Today we were moving,
But it was not a long drive to our new house,
It was a simple walk across the street.

All day we had been ferrying things across the street,
Teams of people moving furniture and TVs
carefully across the street and into our new house.
I tried my best to stay out of the way,
But I usually failed because I kept trying to help.

Walking into our new house
I was confused at everything's placement.
Was this the way our new house would be set up?
It's so different and I do not think I like it.

Tired by the end of the day I spend the last hour arranging my room.
Setting all of my possessions neatly throughout my space.
Finally finished I lie down,
And wonder if every night in my new home will feel this foreign.



Just a Driveway

Jillian Dunlay

Laughter chirps through my ears
A forever perfect
Harmony
In this imperfect world

Sunshine frames the chalk lines
Every colorful streak
A reflection of my friends
A reflection of myself

Thriving in our child-like ways
Our imaginations soar
We gaze up above the trees
And make pictures in the sky

To the average passer-by
It's just a driveway
Another puzzle-piece
In this mediocre neighborhood

But to me, it's a place
where friendships were weaved
Tears were shed
Smiles were shared
And secrets confessed

It's not
Just a driveway
It's so much
More

Never Been

Raneem Issawi

Although I have never been,
I can smell the condensed aroma
of fresh bread in the bakery,
occupying its place in the noses of bypassers.

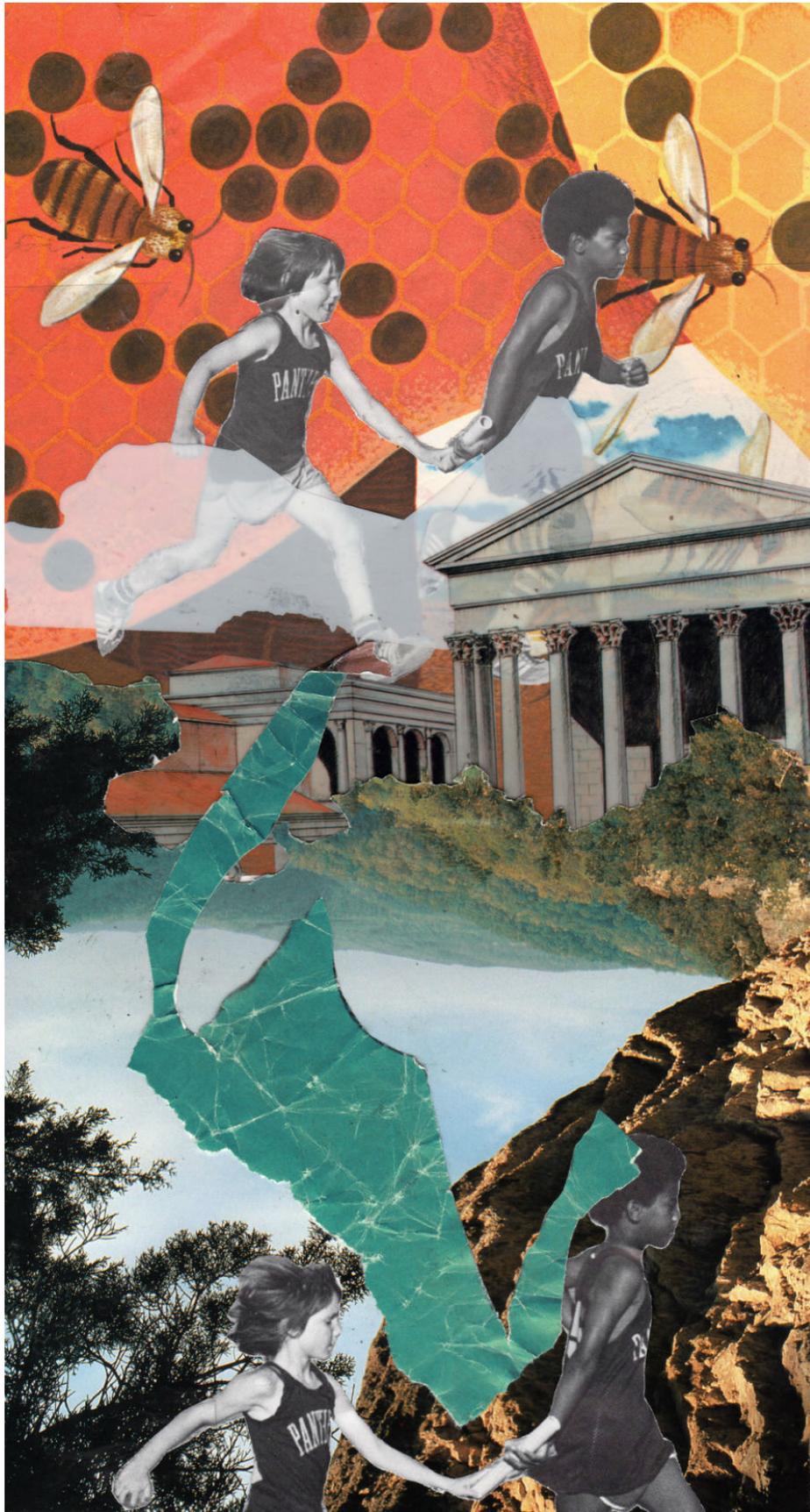
Although I have never been,
I can distinguish between the flavor
of black and green olives,
picked by gentle hands off of the giving trees.

Although I have never been,
I can gather the melodic harmonies
of the obedient robins,
chirping to the tone of a working man's whistle.

Although I have never been,
I can envision the elegant evanescence
of the secretive sun,
kissing its beloved Mountain goodbye till morn'.

Although I have never been,
I can embrace the warm compassion
of the indigenous souls,
breathing in crime and yet, still exhaling righteousness.

Because even though I have never been,
I know Palestine will always be.



Collage by *Bryan Voell*



Photo by *Maxx Lamb*

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs *Eunice Lee*

i am your (empty
dead-eyed cashier, mechanically
ringing up your nachos and popcorn;
have a great day!

weekend plans and giggling friends,
i am Maslow's slave
face blur past, i ring up your purchase
come back soon!

but i'll be here right, i am
your bus driver,
your garbage man,
your waiter, i am all the invisible
countless.
and i'll be right here,
this is my) future

Gymnastics vs School

Audrey Manivong

I'm from chalky hair,
Here, pretty hair and curls,
I'm from leotards and spandex,
Here, pretty tops and jean shorts,
Where I'm from, new skills
Here, 9 x 24
I'm from, rug burns and big bruises,
Here, paper cuts
Where I'm from falling on faces,
Here, falling on knees at recess.
I am from the gym

Homeless

Emily Steinmetz

Walking step by step to a place unknown,
people look past me like I'm a monster,
part of the disowned.
My heart is lost and I'm brought to a shadow of blue,
cheeks stained with tears,
a feeling that is far from new.
By the time the night is over,
it is just another day,
another heart that suffers,
my hands and body shaking in every single way.
Where is my home?
Who is there for me?
Is there a place beyond the darkness?
Or is it just another heartless broken disease?
There is light at the end of the tunnel but it is just followed
by the never ending black,
this is my painful home,
and I'm never going back.
The light is only vacant for the moments of disguise,
but it slowly disappears when the night has come to rise.
Feeling the empty pit of where my home once was,
I come to a realization of what it never truly was.
I am a homeless vendor seeking for some love to be at ease,
but now I have found my place of happiness,
in the heart of myself and not of anyone else, to please.

Civil Rights

Connor Phillips

I am a minor
I have the same rights of
A Black man 200 years ago
A Woman 100 years ago

They say we are not smart enough
They say we are not good enough
They say we are not old enough
I say I am

When will I have rights?
When I have grown old?
When I have lost my spirit?
When I have lost my perspective?

They keep us silent
Because they haven't yet told us how to think
But I think we should speak
And remind the world of what they were

It might sound silly now
But it was silly 200 years ago
And it was silly 100 years ago
Is it so silly now?

Glass Half Full

Helen Peng

The appeal of the beach is different
For everyone who visits.
Some venture deep into the water,
Their heads bobbing above and below the surface
Of the bittersweet saltwater.
Perhaps they crave adventure,
Letting the waves envelope their bodies,
Seeking a refuge from the prickly heat.
Perhaps they fear the danger
Of sickly rays of sun
On their children's delicate,
Porcelain skin,
Pulling them deeper into the water
By the strings of their life jackets.

Some remain at the shore,
Looking off into the horizon
But not yearning for it.
Perhaps they are holding the little
Sweaty hands
Of children who squeal

Whenever a wave rushes over their feet.
Perhaps they are women
Cringing as waves splash onto their legs,
Jumping up in alarm,
Avoiding the saltwater
For fear that it will fade their
Designer swimwear,
Purchased just for this trip.

Man is said to be able to be divided
Into two distinct groups:
Glass half empty
And glass half full.
But when you're the one standing
Inside the glass,
Filled to the halfway mark with saltwater,
And to the top with the warmth of the sun,
How can anyone tell you
You're an optimist if you prefer the water,
Or you're a pessimist if you prefer the sun?

The Neverending Adventure

At the sparkling lake,
from the early morning sunrise.
With boats at high speed,
with skiers behind them.
From the bright early mornings,

to the beautiful horizon of the evening.
The lake is an emotion
that sparks smiles all around.
Because the lake is always an adventure
that I wish would never end.

Tyler Joseph

Serenity

Lily Bykora

I sit there, in my own little world.
The fountain flows like a babbling brook as I inhale deeply.
I'm alone with my thoughts, and nothing else.
Just me, I sit on a smooth rock in the middle of the lake.

The soft murmur of kids
playing on the swings doesn't bother me.
Neither does the sound of their mothers
socializing by the picnic table ten yards away.
I dip my toes in the chilly water and squish around.
The tadpoles swarm away from my feet.

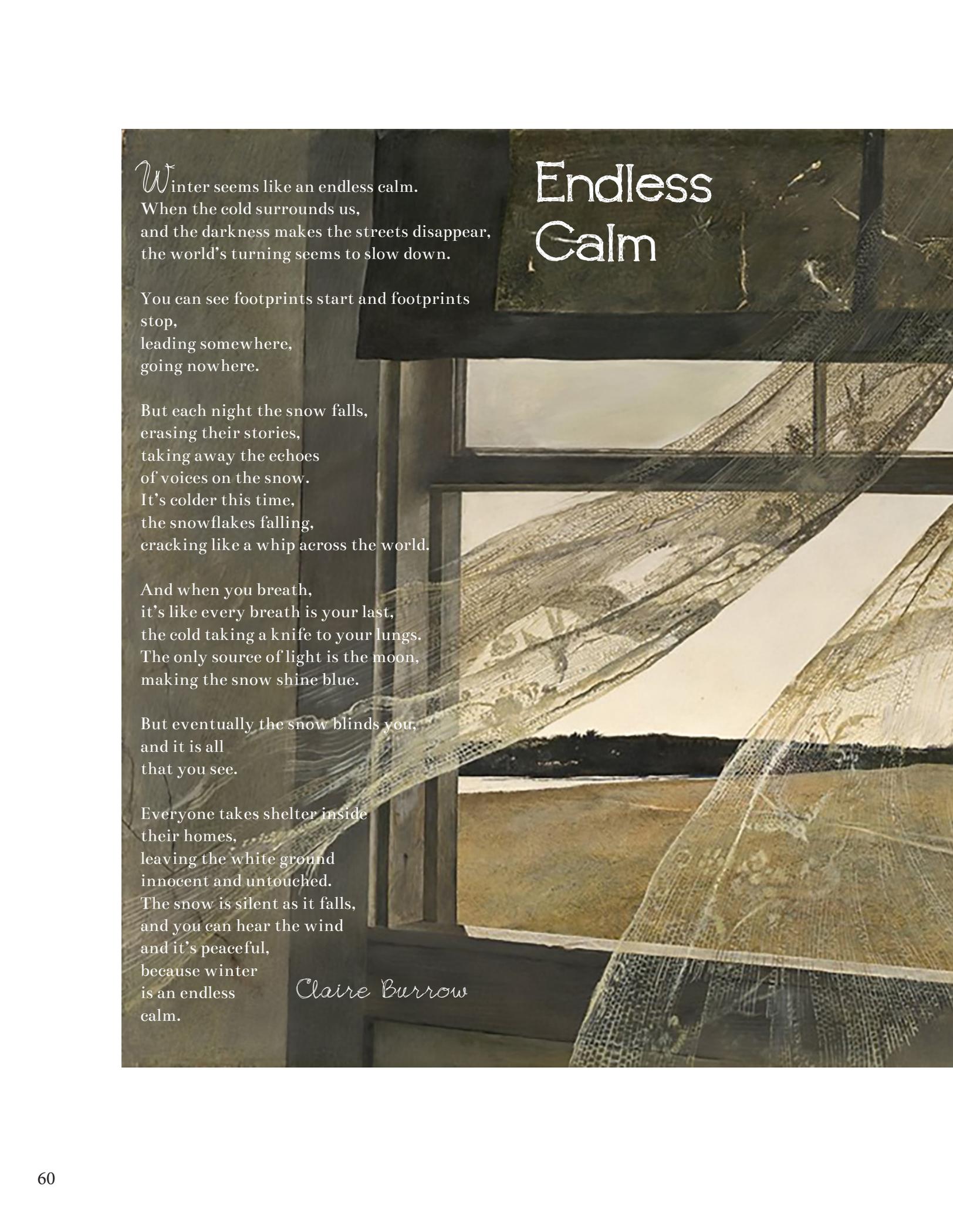
Inhale, exhale, inhale, exhale
I breathe deeply
as I pull my feet out of the water
Eyes closed, mouth shut, ears detached
I stand up, with my eyes closed, and walk across the pond
I stop, not ready to leave this heavenly place

I begin wandering down the stream
My feet squish on top of the soft algae
Eyes still closed, mouth still shut, ears still detached
All I see, all I say, all I hear are the thoughts
deeply embedded in my mind.

The loose ends of my pants freely
hover on top of the water behind me
All feeling escapes my body until I feel nothing
I don't feel the algae underneath me,
I don't feel my hands brush along my legs, I don't feel anything.

I continue on the path of nothingness,
on the path of dreams and thoughts and nothing else
I walk until my eyes open, my lips unlatch,
and my ears hear everything from the soft cicadas
buzzing to the birds chirping in the trees
And come back to reality

Photo by *Maxx Lamb*

A painting of a window with lace curtains looking out onto a winter landscape. The window frame is dark wood, and the lace curtains are light-colored with intricate patterns. Outside the window, a snowy landscape is visible under a pale sky. The overall mood is quiet and contemplative.

Winter seems like an endless calm.
When the cold surrounds us,
and the darkness makes the streets disappear,
the world's turning seems to slow down.

Endless Calm

You can see footprints start and footprints
stop,
leading somewhere,
going nowhere.

But each night the snow falls,
erasing their stories,
taking away the echoes
of voices on the snow.
It's colder this time,
the snowflakes falling,
cracking like a whip across the world.

And when you breath,
it's like every breath is your last,
the cold taking a knife to your lungs.
The only source of light is the moon,
making the snow shine blue.

But eventually the snow blinds you,
and it is all
that you see.

Everyone takes shelter inside
their homes,
leaving the white ground
innocent and untouched.
The snow is silent as it falls,
and you can hear the wind
and it's peaceful,
because winter
is an endless
calm.

Claire Burrow



Reborn

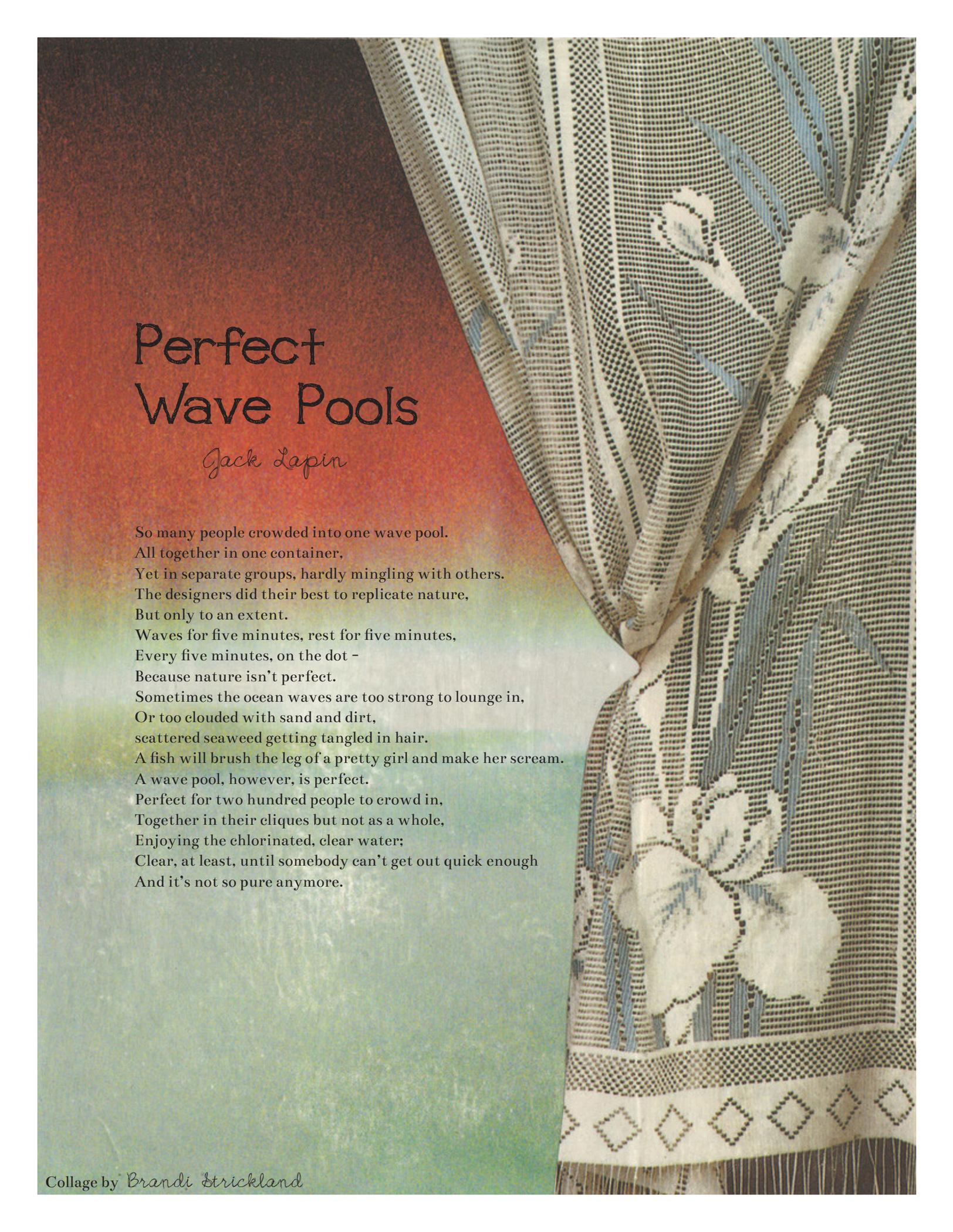
Laurel Foderberg

For months, I've been waiting for this day. Not only is it the first day of summer, but it's also the day I will get to see some of my favorite bands. I imagined May thirty-first a million different ways, and hoped most for a nice, sunny day where I could start my summer tan. As we drive downtown, I hang my hand out the open window. The sky is freckled with a couple clouds, but nothing threatening. Mostly, it's sunny. Songs we'll see live in a couple hours pour through the speakers in my car, and as a car full of men drive by, they cheer. The same kind of music is playing in their car. We're all going to the same place: Rockfest.

As we walk in, we get a few odd looks. I'll admit: our trio is a little out of the ordinary. Most of the people holding tickets are middle aged men, and are either bikers, white trash, or happy they got the day off their desk job. There are few high schoolers, and very few sixteen-year-old girls. We awe at the expanse of Liberty Memorial: the grounds that are trashed by fifty-thousand rockers each year. We find the main stage and maneuver our way into the thick of the crowd. The stage hands are setting up for the next band: Pop Evil. We have time to acclimate to the chaos before they start playing. After a couple songs, it starts to drizzle. Then, it rains. And finally, it pours. The grass transforms into mud that my feet sink in all the way to my ankles, and my friends complain that they can't see in the rain. This is one of the few times I'm glad I brought my hat to a concert. Marie thinks I'm crazy because I love the thing and hats are easy to lose at a festival. The climax of the rain comes during my favorite Pop Evil song: Trenches. My clothes are sticking to me like glue and I'm glad I brought a Ziplock to put our phones in. "Wanna go up?" Marie asks us and I nod nervously. I've never crowd surfed before.

She asks the burly guy next to her to give us a lift and he scoops her up princess style without hesitation. I watch her float towards the stage. The guy lifts me up and I grip my hat tightly to my chest. I realize how much support I have and relax a little. I even let out a little whoop! and sing along to the song. Suddenly, I go over a hole in the crowd and I drop seven feet to the ground. A few men quickly reach down to help me up. "You okay, sweetie?" One says in a fatherly way.

Before I can even reply, he lifts me up and throws me back on top of the crowd. Two seconds later, I'm in the mud again. I'm barely upright before I'm back up in the air. When I get to the barrier, a strong security guy wraps one arm around me and swings me like a rag to the ground. More security guys yell for me to keep moving. I run around the barriers to rejoin the crowd and my friends are waiting for me there. We're all covered in mud, and my blonde hair isn't so blonde for a minute before the rain christens us with its fury. Before the end of their set, the sun comes back out. I feel reborn into the arms of music, mud, and summer.



Perfect Wave Pools

Jack Lapin

So many people crowded into one wave pool.
All together in one container,
Yet in separate groups, hardly mingling with others.
The designers did their best to replicate nature,
But only to an extent.
Waves for five minutes, rest for five minutes,
Every five minutes, on the dot -
Because nature isn't perfect.
Sometimes the ocean waves are too strong to lounge in,
Or too clouded with sand and dirt,
scattered seaweed getting tangled in hair.
A fish will brush the leg of a pretty girl and make her scream.
A wave pool, however, is perfect.
Perfect for two hundred people to crowd in,
Together in their cliques but not as a whole,
Enjoying the chlorinated, clear water;
Clear, at least, until somebody can't get out quick enough
And it's not so pure anymore.

The Ponderosa Pines hunched ponderously,
Their convoluted gestures frozen
With dry, rasping limbs in stages of vexation
And narrow forearms lifted high
In savored moments of exalted epiphany.

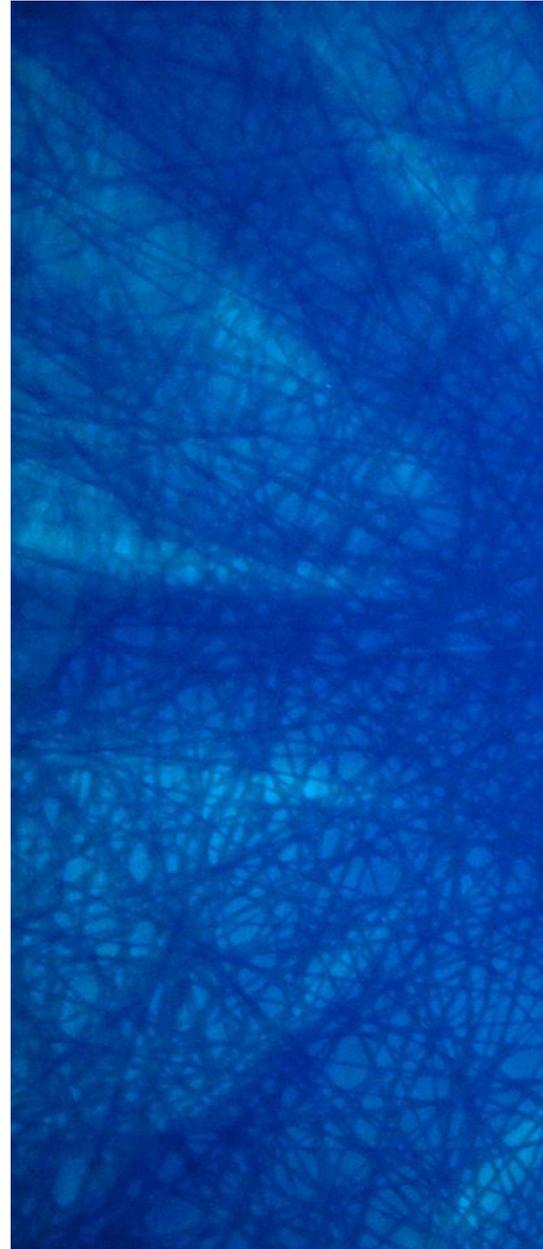
My brother and I climbed the questions
They grew,
Our legs crouching and stretching
Over the contours of perplexity,
Kindling a childhood
On the green-laced vertebrae
Of New Mexico's greatest fire hazard.

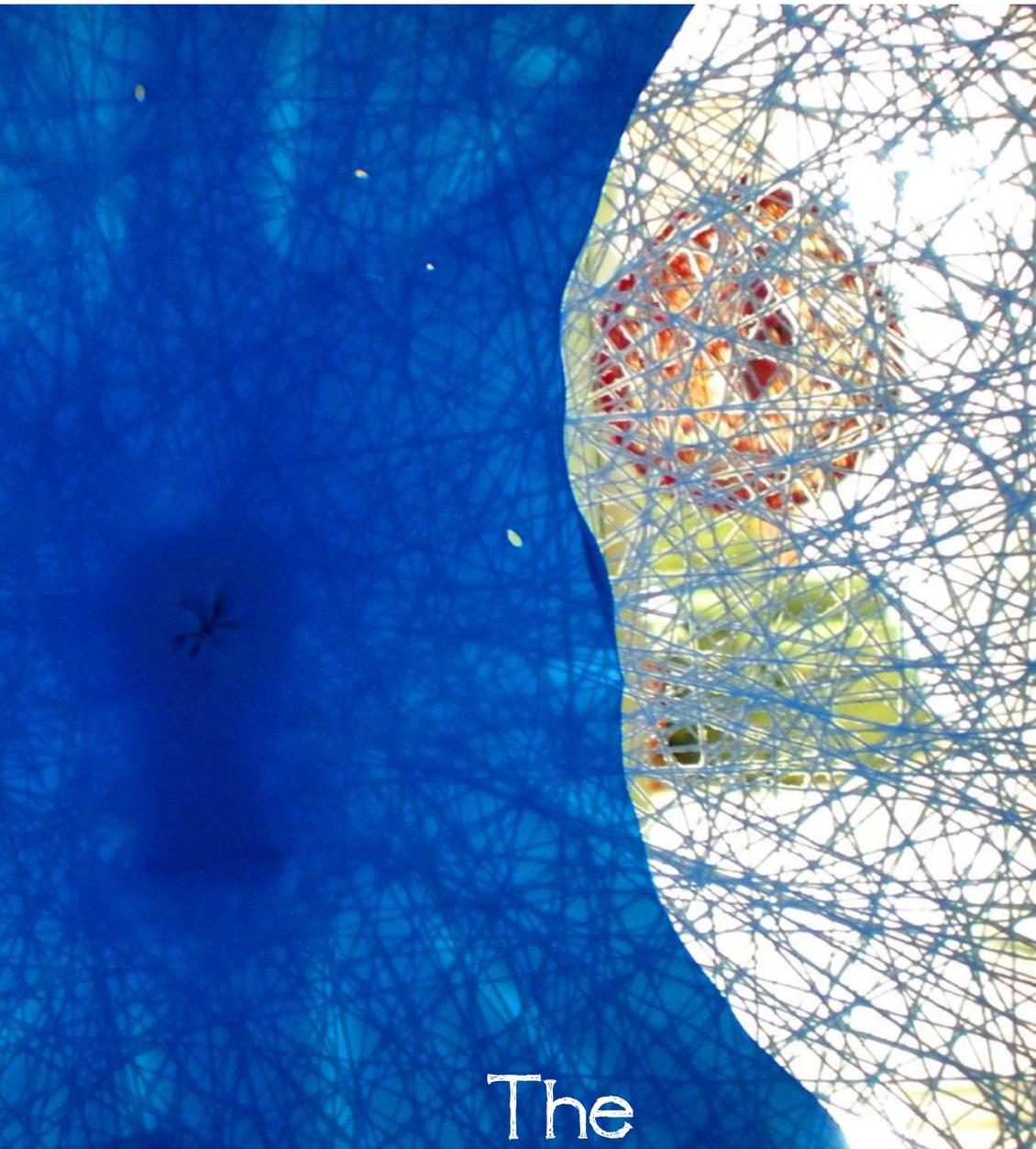
Our favored climbing tree
Was too close to civilization's adobe friction
For the firemen to let Him stay.
Perhaps He was too curious, too willing to lend His
Far-sighted perch
To inquisitive children—
Those that smashed rocks in search
Of pieces of the moon.

His lowest plateau,
A place of triumph, regardless,
Bled orange one day,
And the pigment brushed my flushed cheeks with discord.

This orange rot was a sickness spread from mankind,
A mark
For the brow of the doomed.
So we set upon fate with man's finest scalpel,
Our father's ax,
And it was fearful doctors that then sculpted their patient,
Heavy-handed in their love
And heady with the role of a savior.

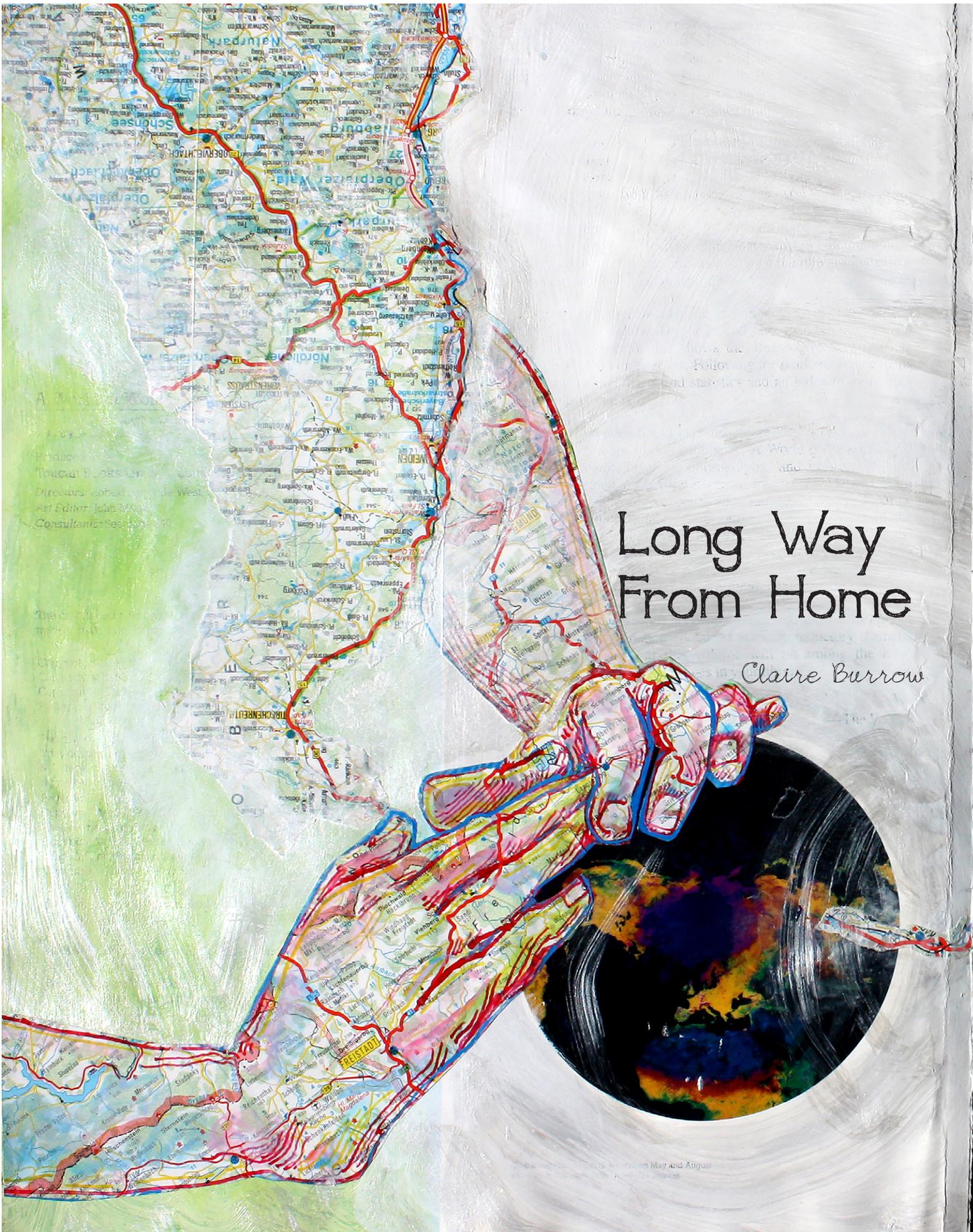
Sepia bark gleamed metallically with sap
Where the incisions lay,
Fly eyes made of a hacked and honeycombed trunk,
That saw nothing.
And the men finished off this crippled love
With blunter and bigger saws,
And all that remained of a once beautiful
Climbing tree
Was a bit of orange spray-paint—
A tombstone scrawled hastily
Over the true victim of fire.





The Climbing Tree

Ann E. McLean



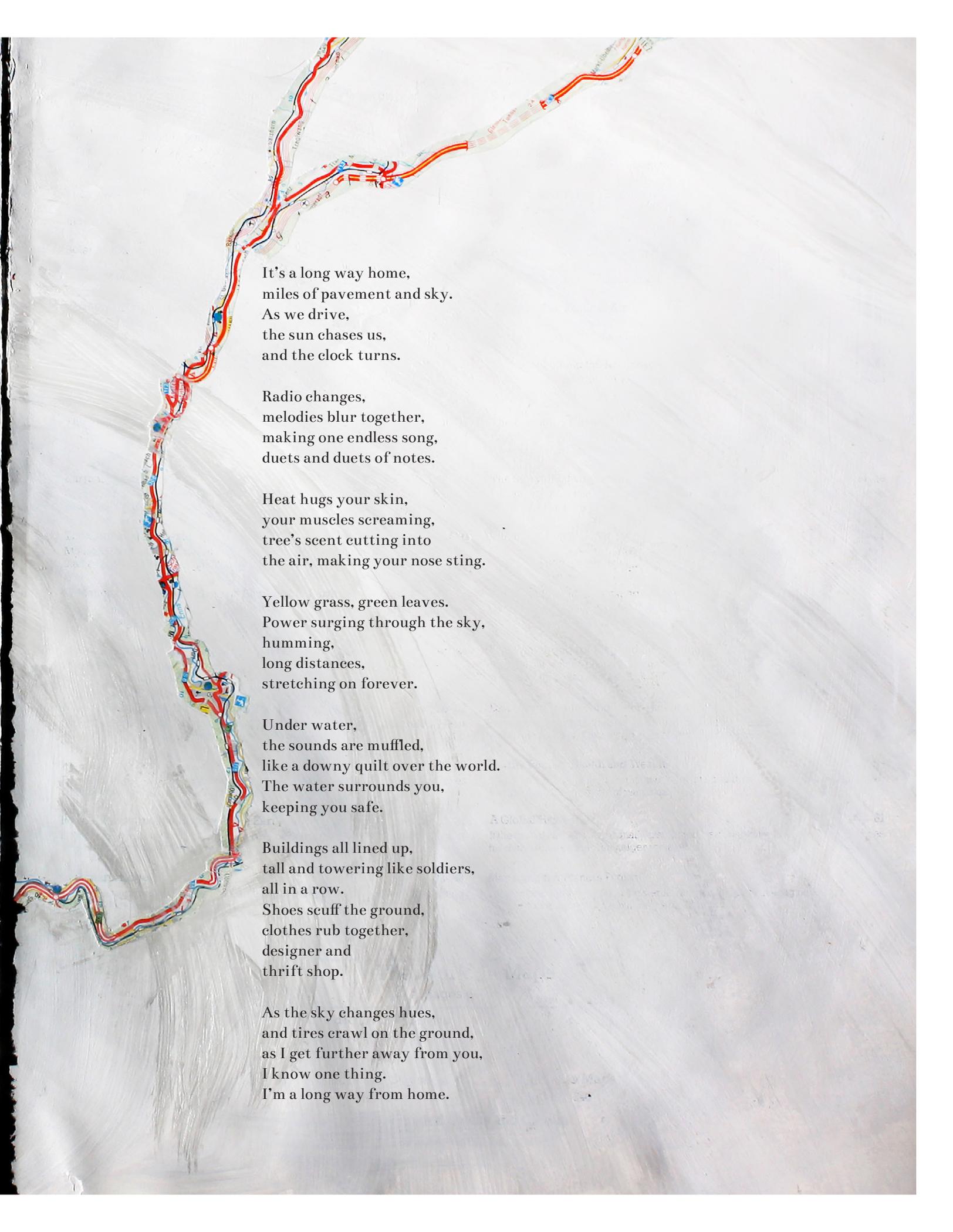
Long Way From Home

Claire Burrow

Editors: John West
Directors: Robert West
Art Editor: John West
Consultants: Robert West

The
map

May and August



It's a long way home,
miles of pavement and sky.
As we drive,
the sun chases us,
and the clock turns.

Radio changes,
melodies blur together,
making one endless song,
duets and duets of notes.

Heat hugs your skin,
your muscles screaming,
tree's scent cutting into
the air, making your nose sting.

Yellow grass, green leaves.
Power surging through the sky,
humming,
long distances,
stretching on forever.

Under water,
the sounds are muffled,
like a downy quilt over the world.
The water surrounds you,
keeping you safe.

Buildings all lined up,
tall and towering like soldiers,
all in a row.
Shoes scuff the ground,
clothes rub together,
designer and
thrift shop.

As the sky changes hues,
and tires crawl on the ground,
as I get further away from you,
I know one thing.
I'm a long way from home.

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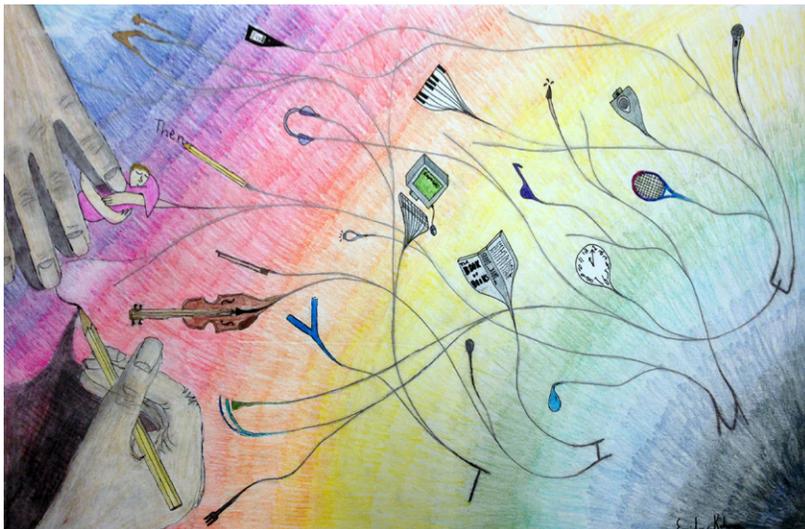
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"Poems have that subtlety of ending in air, hinting, suggesting, but now you take it and you go with it."

NAOMI SHIHAB NYE

Drawing by Emily Kohnen

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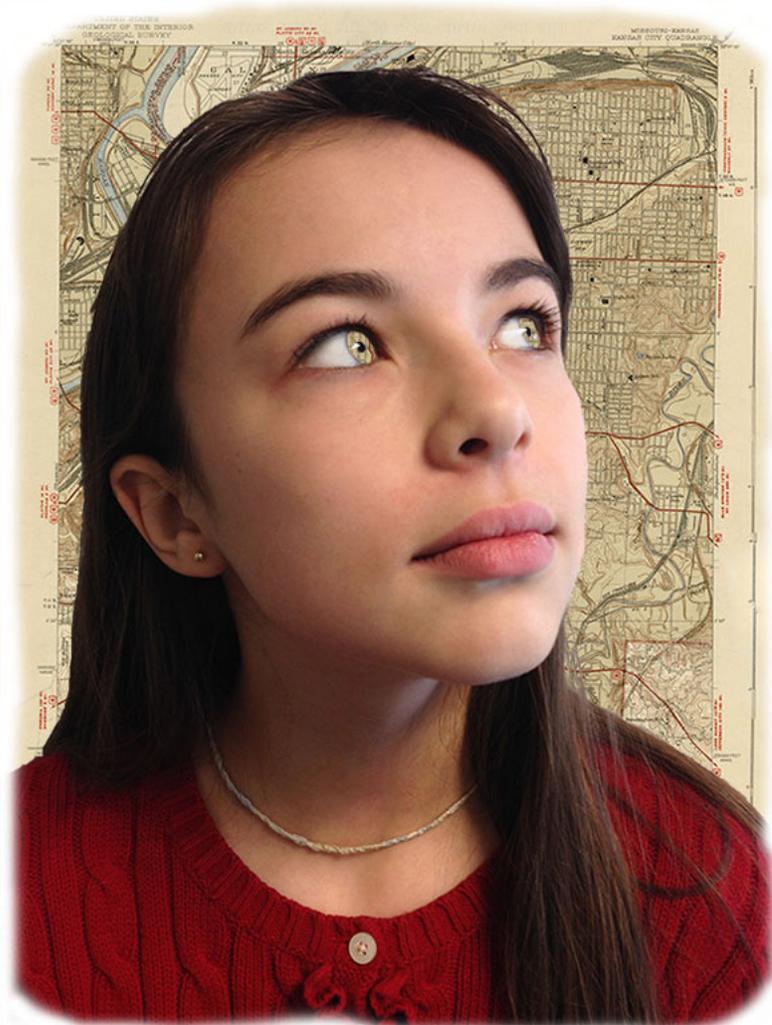
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Digital collage by *Gabrielle Kill*

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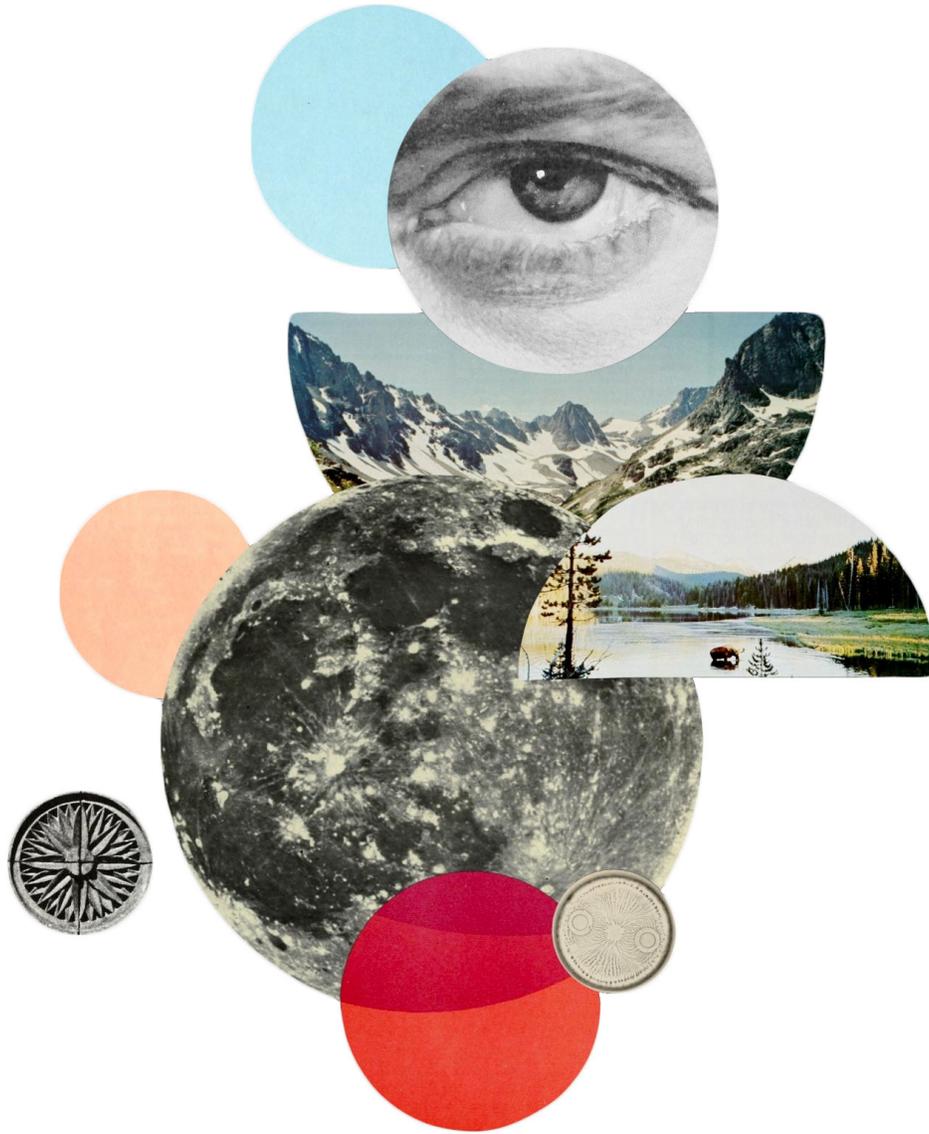
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