

A L I T E R A T U R E & A R T S M A G A Z I N E

VOICES



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Voices is a literature and arts magazine that showcases the diverse voices of West Valley College. It is published once every fall and spring, and is produced by the members of the Voices staff and English 80 & 81. Current students, alumni, faculty, and staff of West Valley College are invited to submit their works of original fiction, creative non-fiction, poetry, and art for publication.

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For more information, visit us at:
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On the Cover: Squirrels!! by Vandana Pawar



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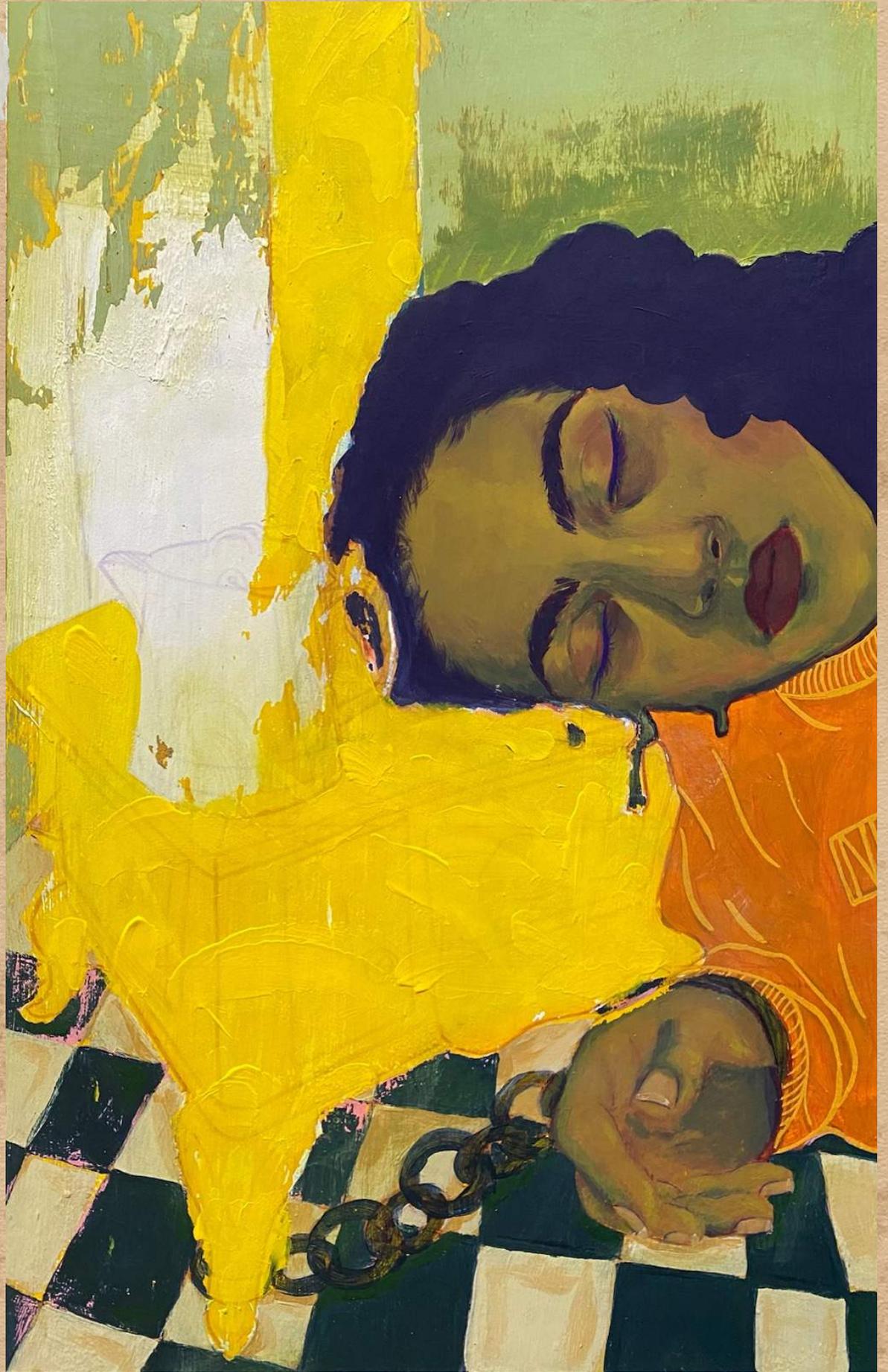


Black Woman
Brooklyn Munoz

I am the product of
racism, colorism, hatred and abuse.
Controlled by depression, anxiety,
and ruled by the fear
that sexism, harassment and assault will always be here.
I have seen my people beaten and killed,
hearts sorrow filled with minds frozen still
black and red stuck on our screens,
and it continues even with streets full of screams,
The people meant to protect us, continue to neglect us.
Yet it doesn't stop there, my life never feels fair.
As a woman I am constantly afraid.
All I see is young and old stalked and preyed
Beaten to a pulp and yet still to blame,
always hiding in a shadow of shame.
My glass is always empty and dull
while everyone else's seems to always be full.
The best of both worlds is what I was told,
A Woman and Black? Comparable to gold.
But societys sadly still old, and black women unfortunately don't
fit the mold.



Over-Easy
Amani Jordan



Ouroboros
Luke Cody





Falling Asleep
William Gauvin





The dawn-shimmered frost melted away as the pistons filled with billowing heat. Gears clinked and pulleys whirred from deep within the metal hull. With a puff of steam and a short whistle, the brass and scarlet doors parted. The mist, the breath of the veil-piercer, curled around a young woman as she stepped into the doorframe of the passenger car.

Her ashen face, framed by pale tresses of gold, was flushed with color as her skin met the bitter cold. Her layered dress of cream seamed all the more pastry among the white powder that dusted the rolling hills outside. Simply dressed, her only jewelry was a tarnished locket, a common marker of St. Greylin's lot. After a moment she stepped down and among the thrall of travelers and automata.

Coal and iron, the heart of the Oswalden engine roared once more to life, as its murky breath enveloped the aging station. Cassandra "Cas" Greylin shivered as the memory of the Mournland's frigid mists pricked against her skin and ached her arm. Her lambskin boots crunched against the frost-bitten floor, scuffed and flecked with the smoke and grime of Oswald. As she made her way through the dispersing crowd and along the russet-bricked wall of the platform, her long fingers traced the lines of weathered mortar. She slipped just beyond the arch of a side passage, rusted pipes sputtering steam and blistering droplets. Silently preening for the loose brick that would mark the spot, at least according to the Ministry stamped slip folded close to her chest.



Woe, the haunting cry of the train called out into the early morning, as it began its gallop towards the next settlement, the next lighthouse in the neverending sea of accursed mist. Cas turned her head to watch as it passed, her hair fluttering wildly as the clanging of iron against steel faded to a distant hum in her ears. Away it shrunk into the lowland fog as it took her chance to turn back with it, to run away... there was once more, only forward.

A loose brick pulled free with hardly a prod. Cas carefully reached into a space just beyond the wall, her left hand grasping around an envelope. Another day. Another job. Withdrawing the paper into a pocket beneath her dress, she quietly replaced the brick before continuing down the dim hallway. Her path was lit only by the flickering light embedded in her arm, as the chatter, whistles, and clings of the platforms faded behind her.

As snow sprinkled about like winter ash, Cas walked through the bustling streets and alleys of Gellymeade. She found the air thick with the meandering scents of cinnamon, fresh bread, and roasted apples. Half-lost outside the Capital, her pyrite eyes danced about the sod roofs and cozy shops; spotting a single clocktower's face peering over the cluttered city. Mistwork automata of all forms and functions advertised to passerbyes, transported goods and wares, and simply milled about. Laboring bronze oxen, sputtering red and blackened smoke, heaved their heavy carts. Chortling octopodal handymen on clattering rails moved among the grime spattered mill and factory workers. While well dressed mannequins soliloquized in



snippets of aging tapes to parents and their children. A chorus of machines and people, a symphony of clockwork and aether, all bundled in the greens and reds of Yuletide.

“Charlie,” Cas mused for a moment as her porcelain hand grasped the silver locket around her neck. “You would have loved it here.” After a moment more she hardened her heart, feeling the mist cooling in her chest, as she broke from the crowd. Past run down storefronts and a long abandoned St. Greylin’s, she crept into an alley marked only by a hanging ladder and scattering rats.

Like a moth shedding her constricting cocoon, Cas’s puff pastry dress unraveled from her body, revealing a more actively inclined fashion. A set of cargo pants and a sleeveless shirt, a relatively normal attire, disturbed only by the bronze and oak firearm slung over her back. Her left arm, porcelain and jointed, leaked a puff of yellowed steam as its pistons and motors filled with heat. As her mechanisms whirred to life, she pulled a butterscotch ribbon from her pocket, loosely tying up her pale hair in its fraying thread. Then with the yank of her hydraulic musculature, Cas pulled down the iron rungs of the rusted fire escape, and clambered up.

The gears of the clock clanked with a rhythm, like her own mistwork heart, steady as her aim. Perched below the numeral III, she scanned the courtyard. It was packed with a coat bundled crowd holding signs and shouting for what they were owed... yet what the merchants would never pay. In the center stood a small group speaking from a makeshift stage. At their head rose a curly haired



man in a leather jacket, not much older than Cas, as he urged them all to hold fast in their strike.

Cas pulled out the envelope from her pocket, parting its broken seal. Glancing over the document she checked the target once more. Only listed as Rebel - Q765, marked for termination by the Ministry. She looked back up glancing once to the second agent. Stationed opposite her atop the industrial compound, she motioned to Cas with a flick of her copper hand. It was then galvanized in blue static, as with a crackling pulse the courtyard's magnetic locks shut.

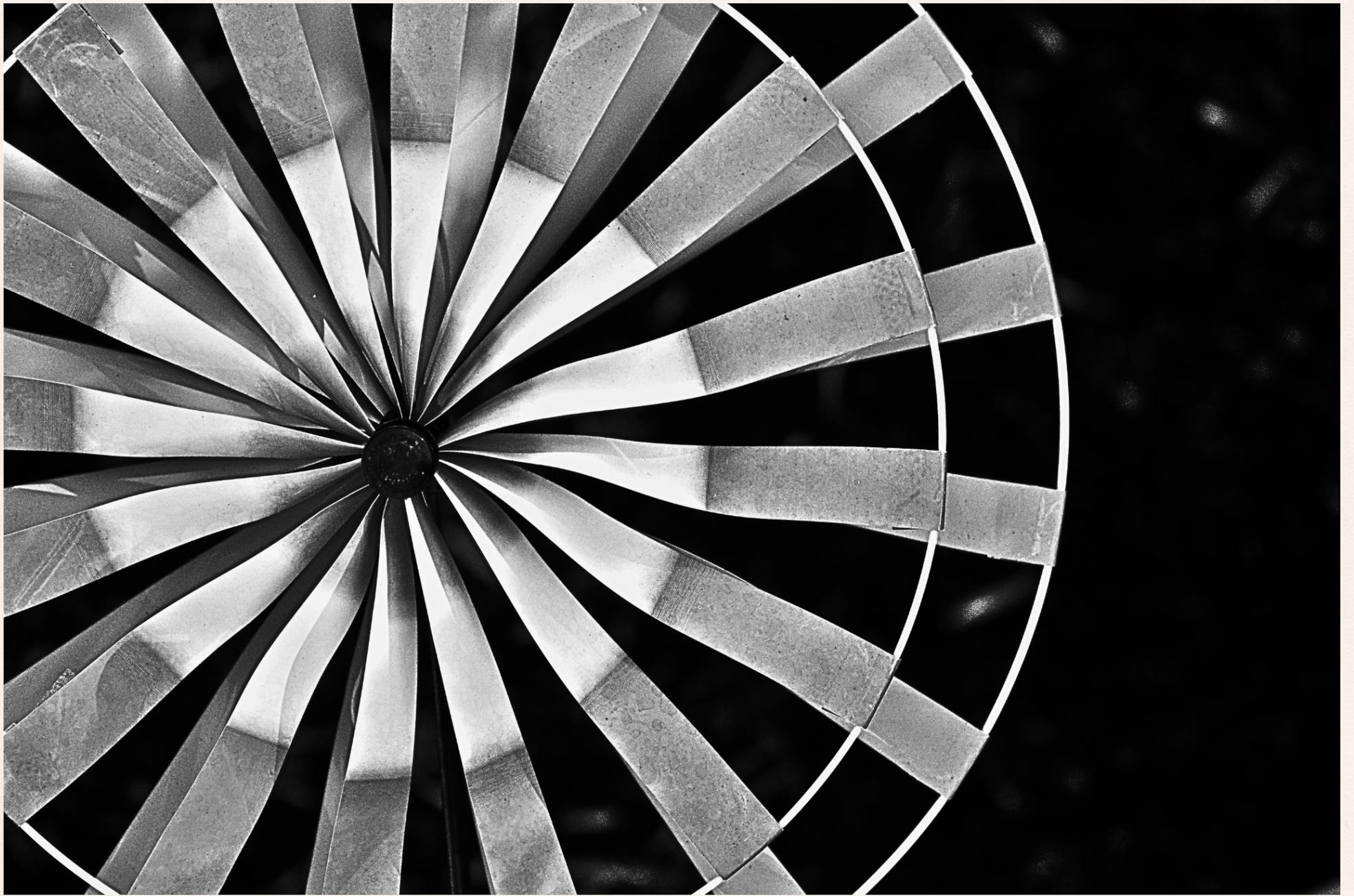
As Cas readied her rifle, raptorial eyes gleaming with a golden mist, she hesitated, as the speaker turned in gesture. She looked into his eyes. Mottled brown eyes. Like the ones she once had, filled with a passion, that too was hers, before they took her heart. Yet, the eerie mist that animated her clockwork ticker seemed to churn all the same.

"Charlie?" she whispered as she pivoted her rifle across the courtyard, to where the Ministry assassin stood. Before the agent could turn her head, Cas aimed her bronze barrel, "I guess it's time to switch careers." And with a breath of golden smoke parting her lips, she pulled the trigger.

Bang.

Shaking It Off
William Gauvin





Pinwheel
Harita Sunkara



Wanderlust
De Anna Mirzadegan



Las Flores
Amani Jordan

La Vide a Través
de Mis Ojos
Anonymous

Nunca pensé esperar que escuchando tus últimas palabras, me
hicieran llorar

Qué al contrario, sintiera nada

Recordándote todas las veces que me corraste de tu vida,

Recordando que todas las veces que me dijistes que no me
querías

Recordando todas las veces que dijistes que yo si era tu hija,

Pero las últimas horas me botaste al lado

Rompiste el cariño que yo te tenía

Que al contrario todas las cosas que has dicho, y has pensado

Nunca imaginé que escuchar tu voz, me hiciera sentir así



Tomáš Hertl
Kaya Juncker



22

Jason Challas

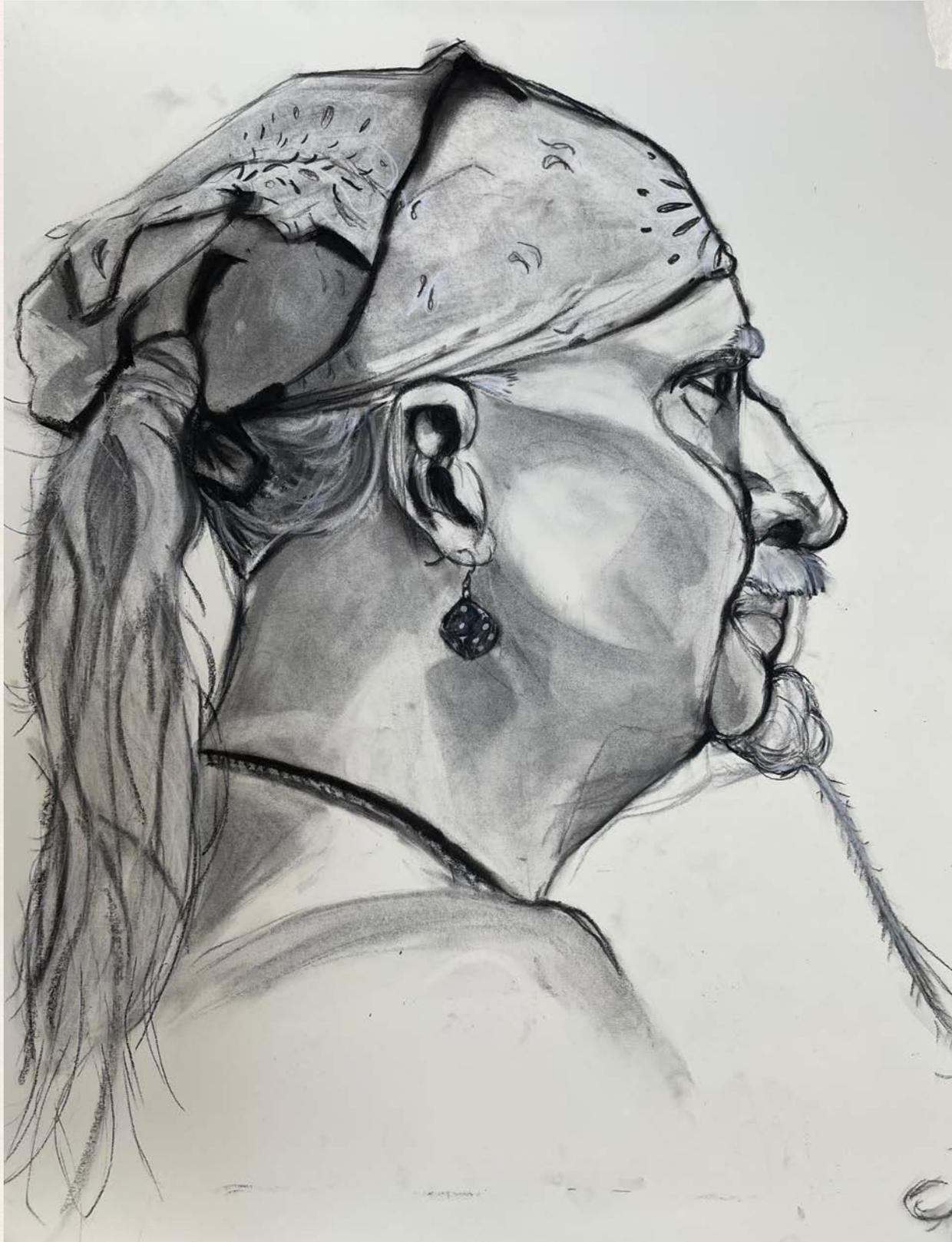


Butterflies
Christine Josey



Thin colorful creatures
Flying around many trees
And flowers than bees

Man with a Die
Earring
Evan Summers





Colored Bubble
Liya Wu





Rangeela
Vandana Pawar



Squirrels!!
Vandana Pawar





Coasting
Evan Summers

the holiest of books
somewhere out there in the midst
the one with the rules
of the universe and its kicks
written in it is said
one must let go
when confronted with death

I cannot say I disagree
but if that's the case
then I should revel, don't you think?
in love
in life

in passion with fire, ignite
I shall make the world mine until I have passed
until I have no more questions left
& have shattered the glass

if there is a book
there are pages
& one by one
I shall flip through
like the moon & its phases





Long-billed Curlew
Evan Summers



Evolving Boundaries
Vandana Pawar

The Death of Coreopsis
Emmett Abatecola



Gone with wind and gone with rain,
Always to return again.

A suffocating death of quiet heat.
Cooked, no, burned on the baking sheet.

Body drained, withered like hay
With cracked lips our dead forms sway.

Vampiric spirits of the hellion blaze
Chase innocent souls to their parched graves.

They mock as they gorge in grotesque delight
On the bodies of those too weak to fight.

And so derelict my husk awaits in the field
To crumble to dust or by rain be healed.



Fractured
Pearl Soni

The Death and Unlife
of Beatrice Baker
Gwyndolyn Szoboszlay

I don't remember much about that day.... Not that I want to anyways.

My friends had decided to take me on a last minute trip. We drove out of Olmsted and up to Corbin's Hill, trying to keep my mind off the upcoming neurology appointment. Sat in shotgun, I flicked nervously between Wikipedia articles; Sleep paralysis, Hallucination, Maladaptive daydreaming, and Oneirism. Before the page could load I was left to groan and toss my phone to the side when reception cut. I began anxiously fiddling with the crescent charm around my neck as my mind drifted about the news reports of sleepwalkers and psychosis. Only Maggie, pink streaks and headphones, seemed similarly bothered in the back; pleading with her console like our pre-calc teacher. Clint on the other hand, dressed in an orange varsity jacket and ripped jeans, was tapping along to some pop song as he drove. While Harriet and Beck, blue cardigan and green beanie, bantered as ever in the middle row.

Their quips were cut short as Clint forcefully jerked the steering wheel to the left, inertia slamming my forehead into the window with a dull thud. Maggie yelped, Harriet shook my shoulder, Beck's "pen" flew out the window, and Clint exclaimed something about horses. Between the pain and strands of fawny hair, I saw a hunched shape standing at the road's edge. Two colorless pinpricks following me from the deepening woods. Everything after that is hazy, like ashen smoke, slipping between my fingertips.

It started once the sun set over the campsite.



Clint found Beck's glasses. I think Harriet found him... or what was left. I just remember water, and a lot of red.

We tried to leave, but my Subaru was gutted like a haruspex's offering. Carved with three letters, on the right side door.

White eyes... heavy footsteps.

Gods save us.

A blurry shape swung from the rafters of the ranger station, the air smelled of iron. Or is that blood? Clint grabbed a metal cylinder and Harriet pocketed an orange canister. A loud knocking shook the barricaded door.

Open window.

Maggie held my arm as we crept along the dirt road. Alone. Hazard lights blinking in the distance as my head throbbed, crimson scabbing over barley. She stopped.

White eyes. Running.

Maggie ran faster. A blur of pink, in the dark.

It grabbed a fistfull of my hair.

"Maggie!" I screeched as I was thrown to the ground. Pinned underneath.

"One lies on a rocky bed," It rasped in a half familiar voice as it gripped my right arm, "Another, by a friend, is blasted and bled." With a single wrench I felt my skin tear, the joint pop, and the limb came free.

I screamed.



A shrill call of fear, of pain, of abandonment. All I could do was scream and fruitlessly thrash as one by one I was dismembered with a wrench, a pop, and a tear. Splattering my blood and skin about in the flickering glow.

“Third shall sleep ever more.” Its voice grew clearer as it raised itself, “Four scapes through a woodsman’s door”

“Please...” I choked, dazed, bleeding, and freezing in shock. “Maggie... Harriet... Anyone.” To my friends, gods, demons; I screamed for someone, anyone, to save me.

None came.

“Five lies broken, at road’s end,” It snarled as with a cracking rend my head rolled across the dirt road, “Another dreamer, for the far land.” Voiceless I stared into two lifeless points. Human eyes? Wreathed in flickering mire, as the light left my eyes.

“Mr. Baker...” The doctor asked as he cleared his throat. Facing his patient blankly, an eighteen year old girl with dirty blonde hair and gray eyes.

“Beatrice,” She smiled, her teeth grinding, “Please.”

“Beatrice,” He spoke plainly, “Are you claiming you are dead?”

“No... but I did die.”

“...”

“...”



“Have you been visiting Ms. Reed again?” He sighed as his fingers nervously tapped his clipboard. “She is kept alone for her own good.”

“Ani’s a good friend,” Her fingers tracing the thin scars encircling her wrists and neck, “It’s not her fault she sees things.”

“Perhaps not,” He mused, “But your own condition is made no better by her delusions.”

“Maybe she’s not crazy.” Beatrice muttered.

“Or maybe you both are.” He half-shouted before getting up and growling, “She was scheduled for the procedure earlier than this morning anyways.”

Silence.

Alone once more, Beatrice stared at the featureless ceiling above her bed. Seconds bleeding to minutes bleeding to hours. Andromeda was gone. Like her friends. Everyone. Gone.

“It’s time to go,” A sing-songy voice called from her side, as she felt a hand interlace with her own. Turning she saw a doll-like face with lilac eyes and pointed ears, alien but familiar, as she was pulled to her feet. Andromeda

“Where to?”

“Elsewhere.” She replied, as everything fell to terptine flux and technicolor hues.



Collin, Cubed
Dylan Dann



The Growth of a Red
Nocturnal Rose
Liya Wu



My Eyelids are Heavy
Nineteenth



The world is draining with its ever consuming daily cycle
Exhausting me in ways I never believed possible before Dealing
with the all of it saps strength
Fighting back is getting harder and harder
Falling asleep would be so easy
Dealing with none of it
Diving into comfortable unconsciousness
Closing my eyes
So easy
But
I can't
Not yet anyways
Goals must be met
Promises to friends and family
Sunsets to see, children to raise
A future to fully experience and explore
There will be times when I want sleep
But I won't give in, it's not worth it
I keep moving simply because my future depends on it



Combat Boots
Liya Wu



Growing Pains
Laurelle Kelly



I am constantly growing, changing, evolving,
Shattered like glass,
Held together by duct tape and hope;
For a life that's better,
To get to the person I want to be
Before the end of me.

I am tired of going until I break-
Break down
And pulling myself back together,
Will these growing pains last forever?

If I am shattered down to dust
Let me be glitter and shine.
Forever radiant
Don't get it twisted,
My defiance is divine.

Defiance is essential to growth,
If you don't defy fear you'll never defy odds.
Defiance is my heritage
Defiance is my inheritance



In a society that wants me to hate myself
Self-love is a radical act
And I love myself,
Or at least I'm trying to.

And I'll get there,
For all of those who came before me
And those that come after;
For all the dreams deferred,
Every song sung of joy and pain.

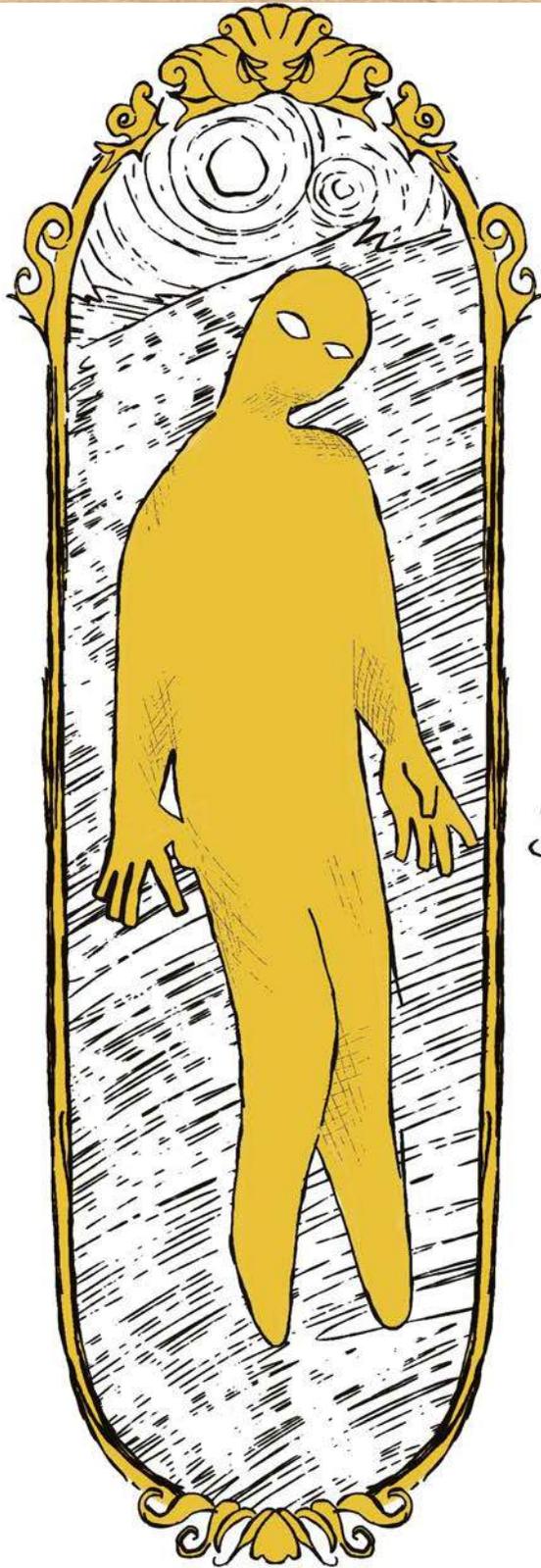
I know to grow is to hurt and fall,
But also to rise and stand tall.

Hand
Hanl Schumaker Jo



I am something.

I have
been



Some-
thing





Book
Hani Schumaker Jo



Eyes
Hanl Schumaker Jo



Lycanthropy
Gwyndolyn Szoboszlay



“Beast, lupine, wolf”—
they shouted at her sight.
For like wolves she bore claws and fangs,
and not faerish wings of flight.

So they called her and so she came,
for she knew better not.
She draped and bore an ashen pelt—
and as he was, they wrought.

Fur bristled across her skin—
as bone shuddered and ached.
Crimson boiled his acrid blood,
o’ the wretched form she takes.

She grasped upon her croaking throat—
as a howl bellowed deep.
His voice, not her own,
said she would ever sleep.

For she was he, yet he not her—
a queer state, I must admit.
But one he didn’t fully ken—
before she, he did forget.



Many years he ran and roamed,
a beast said and thus he was.
A false wolf, a hollow hide,
that for himself, bore no love.

Yet gone she wasn't as he thought,
merely stirring deep inside.
Until the day she clawed and tore,
as in fear he clutched his side.

Claws, not his, her own—
pried his swelling gut.
Her fingers grasped for open air,
as rattling sank the mutt.

As opal skin met mourning dew,
golden ichor filled her eyes.
A name she knew, not his, her own—
as he is dead, and
I'm alive.

Self Insert Fairy
Luca McPeak



Autumn Leaves
Shannon Tai

Tis' the year to harness
Beliefs in each other
Tis the time to embrace
The change in weather
To notice the vibrant spectacles
That drift across the wind
Paper-thin cutouts coloring the sky
That come in every color
Every shape
& every gender

“for a mosaic of leaves symbolize how beautiful we become
when we embrace our differences, uniting together”





Crimson
Harita Sunkara



Interconnection
William Gauvin

Autumn on East Street
Amber Holloway

We track our days through
Sun rises and sun sets
Through paths never followed
And those we haven't yet met

Tracking light as it moves
Through the windows
Across the walls
And out towards the street

The cool evening breeze
Whispering past the hairs
On your neck

As we venture onto the
The road ahead
Your scarf wrapped tight
Around my neck





Souvenir 4
Sarah Snitzer





trying to give myself over
give up the memories
wondering what hasn't been glossed over
a burn so slow growth tipped to rot

genus name, species epithet
blooms in april and may,
fruits in mid to late july; poisonous
drought-deciduous:
leaves wither and fall in august
dies in late october
lifespan: six months

compartmentalize:
1. before: [the first cut; deepest]
hidden glances, sly touches,
shoulder to shoulder, hip to hip.
germination triggered by
increase in temperature and
sunlight after last frost



1.

between:

rapid growth, gentle smiles,
fingers tangled.

thrives at high elevations [embrace]
though falls prey to cyclical thoughts
(raven or hawk; divinity or damnation?)

2.

after:

separate subjects as soon as possible.

roots tangle, fight for nutrients,

blood runs green on iron rails.

check leaf and bud scars

for vascular tissue from abscission

apoptosis: programmed cell death...

fate?

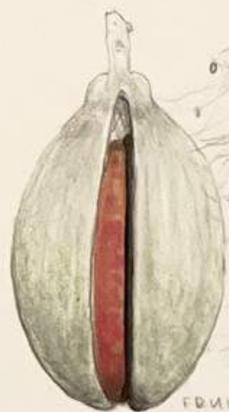
Aesculus-Californica
Star Taylor



Aesculus CALIFORNICA

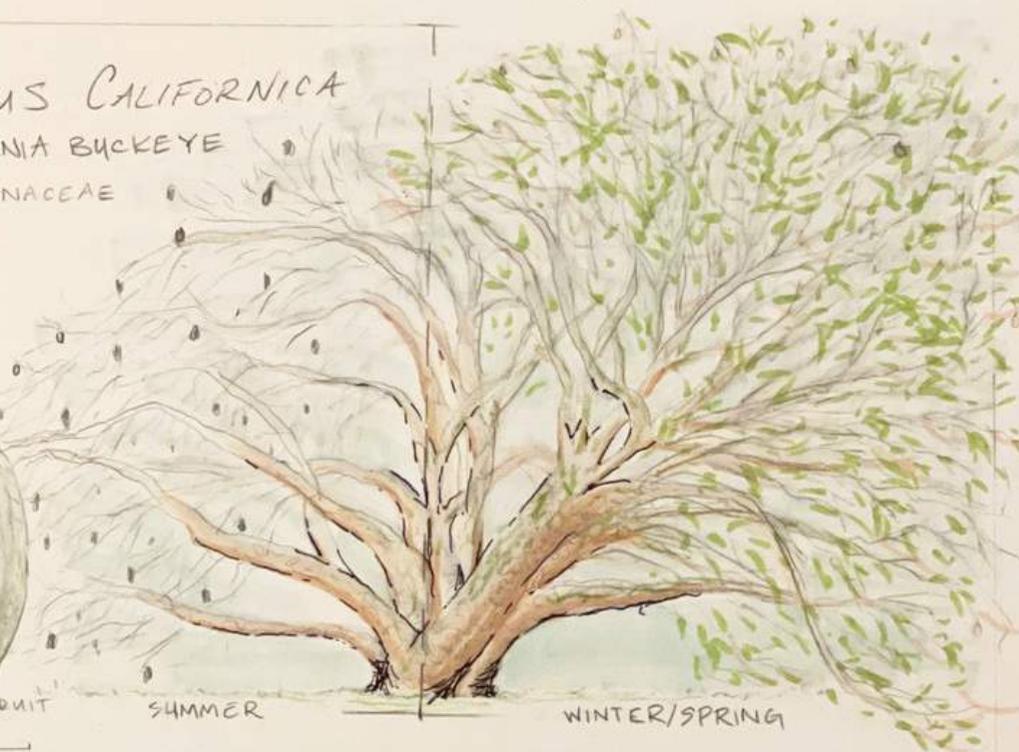
CALIFORNIA BUCKEYE

SAPINACEAE



FRUIT

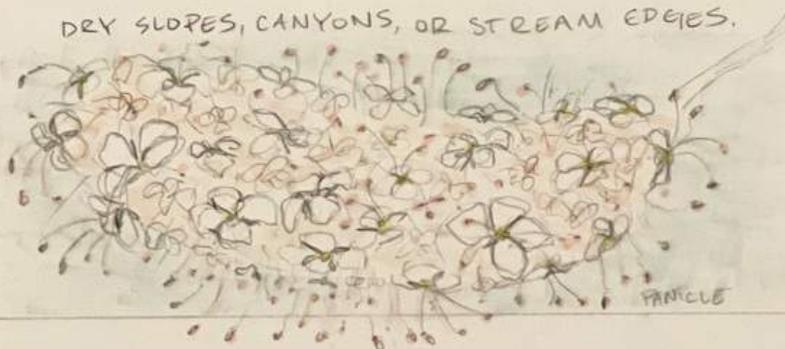
1.0" = 2.0"



SUMMER

WINTER/SPRING

NATIVE TO THE FOOTHILLS & VALLEYS OF THE WESTERN COASTAL RANGES, THIS DECIDUOUS TREE HAS A ROUNDED FORM & FLOWERS DURING THE SPRING. ITS GREY BARK, DARK GLOSSY PALMATE LEAVES & WHITEISH-PINK FLOWERS EACH CONTRIBUTE TO THIS SPECIMENS ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST YEAR ROUND. THEY REQUIRE VERY LOW WATER REQUIREMENTS & ARE A HOST TO BUTTERFLIES. THEY ARE COMMONLY ALONG DRY SLOPES, CANYONS, OR STREAM EDGES.



PANICLE



1.0" = 2.0"

LEAF

STAR TAYLOR

It's easy to get lost in the forest. Here, where the birds fly in between the boughs of the ancient trees. It's those very trees that shatter the sunlight into beams that pierce the veil of the many leaves and spotlight the occasional rabbit or lizard sunning on a rock. It's in this forest that I can escape the world into a land of emerald greens so full of life that taking a breath in I can feel my life lengthen. This is where I go to see life in all its messy glory. Here where I can see the flower bud, bloom, and wilt away. Here where I first saw a doe give birth from up in the limbs of an accommodating oak. Here where I saw a rotting corpse of a boar killed but another in what I assumed to be a fight for territory. But as I wander these hallowed halls made by branches interwoven over the ages I know a fact. Nowhere else can I feel the soft grasses and mosses between my toes. Where the rough bark bites into my palms and fingertips as I clamber up another of the ancients just to see how far up I can get. Cushioned by new growth clover I can feel the heartbeat of the world as I nap. The sounds of every living thing in this forest creates a beautiful symphony of sound that few other places can replicate. The swaying of the branches leading to leaves making the soft rustling, accented with bird calls all with different messages behind every chirp if you care to learn them, the eventual call of a deer that breaks up the monotony, the crashing of a boar through the underbrush as it forages, then when everything goes still and you know a predator is close by, and then it all starts again but at a different beat from before. The forest lets you hear



sounds I never would have noticed were it not for the deafening silence that can be found in a few of the glades. There was where I first heard my own beating heart with its steady rhythm telling me I was alive. It's not just sounds that the forest can gift to you but also smells you won't find anywhere else. Here with flowers that can bring you back to the days of your youth and of simpler times. Smells that can bring a panicking mind to ease after a few breaths. Odors that tell you a story of a recent past that involved fear and death. This is a forest where time passes at speeds both slower than the growth of mountains and far faster than the wind on an open field. I know I have spent many a day watching the sun's rays run across the ground chasing the shadows. I've pondered all my life and all I could ever think of and still have time left in the day for misadventures amongst the treetops. This is a forest that can show you wonders you can't imagine in a reflection off a pond. And now that we are well in the embrace of this magical gathering of life.

I ask you, traveler, two questions,
Do you know the way out of this forest?
Would you even want to leave?



Terra Incognita
Cody Luke





Souvenir 8
Sarah Snitzer





Emmett Abatecola
Anonymous
Jason Challas
Dylan Dann
William Gauvin
Amber Holloway
Amani Jordan
Christine Josey
Kaya Juncker
Laurelle Kelly
Cody Luke
Luca McPeak
De Anna Mirzadegan
Brooklyn Munoz
Nineteenth
Vandana Pawar
Hanl Schumaker Jo
Sarah Snitzer
Pearl Soni
Evan Summers
Harita Sunkara
Gwyndolyn Szoboszlay
Shannon Tai
Star Taylor
Liya Wu

