

Centrique



Inside cover: Page blank

Centrique



Magazine for Creativity

Centrique Magazine Carthage College
Published and printed by Walsworth Printing Co.
Copyright @ 2023 by Centrique Magazine

All rights reserved.

To Phil Carl and Larry Dunn, founders of Centrique Magazine
Thank you. You are where we come from. We hope you like where we're going.



Table of Contents

0	Cover: <i>Risks</i> - Eva Menzia
1	Letter from the Editors
5	<i>I Let-</i> - Madelyn Lakeman
6	<i>Bubble</i> - Savannah Kroeger
7	<i>Overgrown</i> - Andrew Colletti
8	<i>Chapel</i> - John Cargille
9	<i>Are You a Violin?</i> - Daniel Dadivas
11	<i>Of Emptiness and a Lover's Touch; a. Empty</i> - Stephany Mandujano
12	<i>Side A Track 1: Billie Holiday, 1957</i> - Claire Bromley
13	<i>A Waltz For Weary Grey Weather</i> - John Cargille
14	<i>A Grand Marais Glimmer</i> - Andrew Kirchhoff
15	<i>Airports</i> - KJ De Jesús
16	<i>Midnight</i> - Sophia Figura
17	<i>The Blues of a Fruitful Spirit</i> - Hope Paisley
18	<i>Get Out; We're Lost</i> - John Cargille
19	<i>Neon Dreams</i> - Andrew Colletti
21	<i>Cracked Panes of Glass</i> - Elsie Berg
22	<i>A booger and homicide</i> - Sophia Rogne
23	<i>Waiting</i> - Alexis Greeve
24	<i>Untitled 1</i> - Sydney Anderson
25	<i>...Oh Pity Me</i> - Nicole Smith
26	<i>Rose Leverage</i> - Claire Bromley
27	<i>Under My Skin</i> - Abby Zera
28	<i>Untitled</i> - Sophia Salcido
29	Building a PURPOSEFUL Life; interview with Professor McLean

Table of Contents contd.

- 31 *Just Wondering* - Savannah Kroeger
- 32 *The Truth About The Present Future* - KJ De Jesús
- 33 *Tea time in deep blue* - Jaden Gardner
- 34 *Submission 1* - D'uandre Drain Majors
- 35 *Untitled* - Mills Guanci
- 36 *While Reciting Hamlet* - Elsie Berg
- 37 *Untitled* - Sophia Force
- 38 *Life Occurs Without Our Permission* - Andrew Colletti
- 39 *Lab Mate; Melanoplus ponderosus* - Mary "GP" Gargano-Price
- 40 *The Grass is Always Greener* - Andrew Colletti
- 41 *2022: What's New, Conglomerate?* - John Cargille
- 43 *Photos for IG 1* - Edelmar Morales-Rivera
- 44 *Trough Recipe* - Serena Richardson
- 45 **What IS Leadership?; interview with Rick LaBerge**
- 47 *Observable Universe* - Natalie Matoska
- 48 *It's Vintage* - Katherine Layendecker
- 49 *Solitude on the Field* - Mary "GP" Gargano-Price
- 51 *Untitled* - Lin Sensenbrenner
- 52 *A Friend in Türkiye* - Elsie Berg
- 53 **Trusting YOUR gut; interview with Professor Udry**
- 55 *Water in a Glass or a Glass of Water?* - Madelyn Lakeman
- 57 *Reflection Chamber* - Andrew Colletti
- 58 *A Spoken Word: Look Around* - KJ De Jesús
- 59 Editors Blurbs
-

Letter from the President

Andrew Colletti (President of Centrique)

We are but a blink of an eye in the history of our world. Civilizations rise, civilizations fall, and we are destined to die. To know where we come from is also to know where we are going, and what this life is about. The past, our histories, are combinations of myth and reality, that together form one unverifiable story that we can gather the rough features of our ancestors. In the same way that a caricature is not an accurate representation of a person, but an exaggerated impression that combines fantasy and reality into one more fanciful depiction. It tells a partial truth. In this same way, we attempt, with Centrique—to be a magazine that houses the conversations, ideas, artworks, and moments that were shared on Carthage’s campus in this last year.

Working on this magazine has been rewarding, painful, and hilarious. We’ve shared both stress and laughter.

Centrique hasn’t had a physical publication in four years. On top of that, there is no backlog of processes and publication steps or best practices. Everything we are doing this year—is starting from scratch. In the course of a single year, Centrique has gone from two active members to fifteen.

We’re misfits from different areas of life. From criminal justice to art majors, Centrique has a little bit of everything. Introverts, extroverts, writers, singers, artists, poets—we all have one thing in common: we love to create. We all have a passion for telling our stories in the only way that we know how: in brutal honesty.

I came to Centrique through Poetry Underground. I had recently gone through a breakup and didn’t have a single friend on campus. This was my junior year. I came to campus for my classes, and went home. I felt no connection to campus life. In my first Poetry Underground meeting, last spring, there were three or four of us, and I was nervous, but I came to realize these people were just like me. Looking for someplace where they were welcome and accepted, where they could share their stories without being judged, where their stories mattered, where they felt heard.

Then, I met Kj, who is now one of my best friends. I immediately connected with Kj because she was going through similar things—even if her circumstances were different. She sat there in her beanie, cracking jokes, and I was impressed that she could still find humor in the world around her.

I sit now watching our editorial staff laugh, point at printing materials, and discuss our publication. As I write this, we are slated to send our magazine for print in under 24 hours. I see people united in an effort to connect campus. To create a space where creativity can be shared and thrive. I see people interested in telling diverse stories, and in being a megaphone for voices that we feel aren’t heard enough.

I believe the success of any endeavor lies in our ability to connect with our authentic self. I was beyond happy to create this space.



You can become anything if you put enough work into it. You don’t have to be brilliant, you can learn as you go. No matter what it is, it will be hard. Trust that it will always work out. Because it will. But you have to trust the universe and embrace that scary feeling of having absolutely no idea where you will end up. If you do that... you can go anywhere and you can do anything. You don’t have to change the world, you don’t have to build the next Fortune 500 company, you just have to listen to your soul. This is all just a ride; this brightly colored and very beautiful thing we call life—is just a ride.

Something I’ve recently come to confront is that when you compare yourself to others, you overlook the beauty of your own soul. It’s easy to feel intimidated or jealous of the abilities of others, but in doing this, you diminish your own value and you also take away your ability to see the beauty of others. It’s tempting to see the abilities and traits of others and to want them for yourself, but your soul, your existence is equally valuable in your own way. We trick ourselves into believing that other people are better or more worthy of love; but this is the single biggest lie that has ever been told. Your soul deserves to be loved, and if you don’t feel that yet, keep looking for it. That ache goes away when you find your home.

We tend to think that good things have to be earned and conquered. We think if it happens naturally that it is not the right path for us. We make life a lot more complicated than it is. We make it a challenge to be overcome instead of enjoyed. At its core, life is very simple. If something feels right, or easy, don’t be stupid. Follow that feeling.

When you melt into something, you stop worrying how you sound, or if you’re good enough. When you become one with it and embrace it is so much more enjoyable. Embrace your child-like spirit and follow your whims, and accept the discomfort that comes with this. You can be free.

So, how can you be free? You can be free within the feelings, but never free from them. The world is going to judge you anyway. So you might as well be whoever the *hell* you want to be.

Everything you are is good enough. Now show the world.

— *Andrew Colletti*

Letter from the Vice President

Kj De Jesus (Vice President of Centrique)

Hi. I'm going to do what I do best, and tell you a story.

Fall 2020, black screens, one of my Professors pleads to the entire class "Speak- please!" I say something small occasionally, but school doesn't feel like school anymore. I'm at home, I'm disorganized, and going back and forth between structure and chaos. Orientation was an hour long Zoom call.

I found the History Department. Dr. Mitchell said I would convert to be a History major from my political science path. I did. I wanted more, I wanted to learn more stories; more history. I noticed that listening, sharing and bringing people to a safe space is my vocation. I then asked myself how else I could achieve that goal? The search started.

Poetry Underground. The name sounded so cool that I signed up immediately. For a year, there were no meetings held. I emailed professors- took some English classes for my other major... rekindled my love for ink on the page. Sophomore year, we met. The poets. It started out with 6 of us, and after break it had twiddled down to 2 to 3 people every Wednesday night- writing and sharing our innermost thoughts, writing styles and past.

I took a J-Term class that changed my life.

I met my best friend Savannah Kroeger, my girlfriend Claire Bromley, and a whole new crew of beautiful, expressive, and kind people. Who knew Jazz literature was the key that would open the door to the rest of my life. I added creative writing to my major and moved on campus months later. I struggled to make my time, my mind, something mine. I had help along the way. April of 2021 Professor Rick Meier told me that he saw me. He saw me step up for Poetry Underground. He asked me if I would do it again.

"We have a literary magazine," he said, "it's called Centrique."

There hadn't been a publication in years. I got plopped down as a president of a student run organization (and creating a publication, something I had zero experience with) 2 months before the end of the school year. It was insane, but I couldn't walk away. I immediately sat down and started the learning process.

In this process I met Andrew Colletti. Little did I know he'd change my life. I had writing, ideas and a timeline, while he had the admirable, yet wacky, wit to draw attention to something lost and make it real. We worked hilariously together and were inches away from having at least something digital to publish after submission campaigns and compiling all the work we saw coming in. But something was off. We weren't doing it justice.

"I don't want people's souls laid out on some scrappy PDF file that no one will read." I said.

We talked about it for hours, what was the right call? We were running out of time. We didn't publish. Our decision landed in spending the time on quality and quantity, on finalizing what the gold mine of Centrique was, and could be.

Come this past fall- we hit the ground running.

"Who are we? Why are we here? What should we do?"

We spent most of the fall semester collecting stories, digging people out of their caves, and showcasing that they could contribute

a verse to something powerful- something that would never end even after they walked away. We went from 2 to 4 people to now 15 pairs of hands diving head first into something brand new. We wrote a new constitution. We introduced people to their best friends. We made people cry and showed them the stars. We had intellectual and artistic debates about creativity, writing, and what telling a story looks like. We told people it would be hard, but it would be worth it. We trained our e-board from the ground up and now fully trust them and their support to get the heavy work done.

We decided that Centrique needed a change. It was a home for literature and art but it felt like it wasn't saying everything it needed to. We learned about the Current, Carthage's school newspaper that had also died around the same time Centrique did. We talked a lot about if and how we should incorporate them or how we could let them breathe as separate entities. This spring we have had a consensus on what we could be going forward. We decided that Centrique needed a journalistic aspect to the magazine to let it lock into place. We were sharing stories from campus, what better way to do that than interviewing the people on campus? We now accept everything that our community has to offer. Send us your playlists, recipes, song lyrics and drawings. Tell us stories that never leave your notebook or your photo album. Our newspaper is dead. Our yearbook has no longer kept track of who did what when or where. How will people remember what happened during their years here other than social media? We wanted to provide a space for that, and to help people share the soul of our little world by the lake. It had finally clicked, Centrique no longer was a magazine- it was an innovative anthology.

Now here we are, hours from sending our printing company stories from Carthage and the microcosm beyond- and we have built something real. Something you will hold in your hands, annotate, take pictures of, talk about years later. We wanted to provide a space where everyone's mind was safe- where we could be elevating each other in a concrete way. Everyone does advocating work differently, everyone searches for justice differently. As a queer woman of color, my fight will never be done- but I have taken one step here. I have helped people put words down on the page. I'm now giving these pages to you.

**Centrique. A Center for Creativity
YOUR center for creativity.**

- *Kj De Jesus*



“Centrique is a mythological place in Hades, where up is down and down is up. Literature is the same in the world of art. Literature that is up to some, may be down to others. Here, we use Centrique as the name of an independently published magazine of literature designed to give writers a chance to display their work while promoting a creative atmosphere. “

-from Centrique Magazine’s first volume.

I Let-

Madelyn Lakeman



"I Let-"
I let go of you
Like a string on a balloon
You floated away in that dirty pink sky
The higher you went, the further I fell
So close to that clumpy ground.
I sliced my hand on the
Freshly cut green
Choked on bits
Of pungent
Brown.

I see it now, the sky so clear.
You were there while I
Was nowhere.
I called your name into the somber air
But the higher you went, the further I fell
Because I let you go
Just like a balloon
Ready to
Implode

You were too dense to notice then
That I kept you leveled with the ground
Selfishly I tightly clutched the string
My touch you were impervious to
And I let you go like a string
On a balloon

Slowly the air carried you
I wondered how long
The helium
Would last
Inside of
Me
And how long the blood in you
Would flow so
Valiantly

As the wind swept you up
I think I saw you smile
You were the lucky one
So free and frivolous
Leaving me stranded
My ears bare to the cold
The feelings within me
Two convergent winds
My cheeks so flushed

My head so hot
And a heart
So numb.

I let go of you
Like a string on a balloon
And whispered to the moon
To watch over you.

I let you go
Like a string on a balloon
And whispered to the old you
I had envisioned long ago
If only you knew how
Much you've
Grown



A bubble.
 A bubble floats into the air with the hopes of reaching the sky.
 A clear blue sky full of space to soar, explore and exist without
 being caught in the middle of an uproar.

Pressure.
 Pressure accumulates over time and it claws at anything in its
 vicinity.

It continues to build until it meets a bubble.

A bubble and pressure.
 One floats, flies and defies constraints.
 While the other conquers, compresses and depresses anything in
 its path.

An unlikely pair,
 Yet, they both exist.

A bubble skips about dodging danger.
 While pressure thrives in tense air.

Once a bubble finds itself nearing the end of its journey,
 it begins to

F
 A
 L
 L.

It gives in to the pressure and drops to the ground.
 A ground inhabited by various creatures that
 observed its flight.
 But here, the bubble lands and it pops.

*

The bubble pops,
 and the world stops
 dead in its tracks.

The world and its creatures look to the sky to
 locate the bubble,
 but it's gone.
 And the creatures, like children riding their bikes and falling for
 the first time, were speechless.
 They tried to process what happened.

The child notices the bike is fine.
 There was nothing in their way.
 They were distracted and they fell.

They fell, surveyed their scraped knees, and road
 rash ran up their palms.
 After the initial shock, they feel something –

like little shocks of lightning –
 little campfires roasting the areas where the pain be
 comes real,
 And they begin to cry.

The creatures who were speechless began to cry.

In their shared state, they looked around.
 It took eyes welled up with tears to see each other clearly for the
 first time.

No judgment.
 No hate.
 No predispositions.
 They simply saw each other.

The creatures known as humans came together and began to
 rebuild their world. This time they wanted to protect each other,
 and they did.

It began with an unlikely pair,

A bubble and pressure.

But when the bubble popped,
 the world stopped,
 listened,
 and changed.



Overgrown - Andrew Colletti



The chant feels heavy in my mouth,
 But lighter than air
 out there, in the open;
 With the faithful and the hoping.
 I guess you can try to forget the faces,
 the fathers, the fables,
 the words of fallen wisdom,
 the seeds of planted doubt...
 But you can't forget the taste of
 Communion bread on your tongue
 and entrance hymns on your lips.

It feels as if I have martyred my hope
 unto my mind
 and now I can't truly cling
 to either side.
 To thee I want to cry
 "I don't want your Mount Sanai,
 Art is my Ascension and
 Music is my God!"
 And my whole heart is in it,
 but my soul is nowhere to be found.

"Come to Mass and see what it feels like, and..."

But I know what it feels like!
 It feels like a childhood home
 that someone else lives in now,
 It feels like a photo of someone
 I've loved and I've lost them now,
 It feels like a dragon, the dragon
 shot dead by mortal bow and arrow,
 It feels dead,
 It feels dead,
 IT FEELS DEAD!

...Sorry. I know this is important to you.

It feels... eerie.
 Part of me feels at peace, but—
 It feels... uneasy.
 Part of me feels all twisted, but—
 Who's to say which camp is
 Human and which is
 Something More?

It feels like a trance,
 reciting the words without a glance
 at the paper.

It feels like a birthright,
 but it's not right to
 say the words "I believe"
 when I really don't.

It feels selfish,
 as I say them anyway.

It feels

weightless / reckless / wrong / almost right

to be back at Chapel.

Are You a Violin?

Daniel Dadivas



Rich in its sound, but not in importance
The violas' renowned to always face a shortage
In accordance with forums of orchestra players
This instrument warrants a lot of nay-sayers
They say their performance is dry, weak, and awkward
And their language is foreign, so why even bother?
Their parts are abhorrent, what worth could they offer?
Like the bears and the porridge, the violin's hotter

Violins, they're on top as the hierarchy reckons
They get the first cut while they wolf down the seconds
Through unread perspectives, most people accepted
That violin sections ascend past their brethren
Solely based in metrics of privilege and fame
With tunes bestowed on them to stake their acclaim
Seduction and arrogance resonates in their rhythms
Greater honor and income all thanks to the system

Rich in its sound, but not in its relevance
The violas' renowned as menaces like melanin
So evident these instruments have never been as prevalent
The elegance they represent gets cast aside through negligence
Expressionless and formless tries that sound so bleak and vapid
And somehow boasts enormous size with talent, weak and flaccid
Proportions they were born with are exploited for rough humor
Just like the bears and their porridge, the cello is much cooler

Cellos lay the groundwork that supports the higher register
The bottom staff to counteract the power-packed competitors
Low servants to "the very best" who conquers one whole step on them
They make the bed where music rests, ashamed that most have slept on them
Like bassists, they're the basis, they are famous for their gracious sound
They maintain a steady cadence on the stages, turning pages 'round
Yet all their traits are weighted down by ages now of racist clowns
That make it sound like violins are the only ones who should take a bow

So how do violas make it out in this brazen drought over fame and clout
It came about that their fated route was to be overlooked like the Asian crowd
In order to avoid these blatant wars that sent cellos' corpses to the patient wards

All they had to do was remain ignored and their lives were forgotten like Jason Bourne's
Thus, violins die and the nation mourns while violas cry on the basement floor
Watching cellos comply like a racing horse til' they're placed in their cases and the nation snores
Or they're shamed and scorned for their aim is poor with no achievements to their name like low gamerscore
Since their fated course lacked any great support as they were planted as the root of a major chord

Not to undermine their agony as such abuse is not fair
But at least when cellos are not spared and are caught there in the crosshairs
Of violins spouting violence on the top stairs blowing hot air
That cellos have the spotlight unlike violas who have lost theirs
When such gaps in privilege are exposed, the middle child is overlooked
They are placed on the back burner til' they're bitter, vile, and overcooked
Though, cellos may have tasted ground, most people can recall them
But when no one hears you make a sound, you cannot be forgotten

Despite all that evidence present, violins are not the nemesis
Even though some feed mentalities that seize on greed and prejudice
The genesis of supremacists cannot be blamed on their cockiness
The origins of these abhorrent sins points plainly at the audience
As curtains fall, these servants all will service you in servitude
They follow all their certain cues all to amuse your current mood
You're conditioned to give a listen to the instruments that give you a terrific tune
Causing violas and cellos to get ripped from view since they seem to have no specific use
Players are trained to fit an archetype, the kind that grows to be harvest ripe
The potential-to-become-a-starlet type, the would-you-serve-well-in-the-market type
Society's just structured to guard and hype the type of breeds that are regarded high
Which means violins take off on carpet rides while the others are the swept-under-the-carpet types

Rich in its sound, but also in wisdom
The viola is bound to break out of this system
To fix this great schism and heal all the victims
As long as somebody is willing to listen
We must defeat elitists that just feed us fright and bleach us white
We need to have strong people who will lead us right like Jesus Christ
The viola aspires to be one, although that may just seem dumb
A dream to seek the beaten and the weakened reach their freedom
But the viola is brilliant and resilient regardless of its lineage
Not heard by billions, can't earn those millions, it lives to serve civilians
Through all the mayhem and torment, the viola continues to fight
Just like the bears and their porridge, the viola is just right

Of Emptiness and a Lover's Touch; a. Empty

Stephany Mandujano



The days pass by in a blur.

Nothingness fills my chest.

And I'm left floating, reaching out.

For something that can fill the loneliness and the nothingness in my heart.

And I wonder if I will ever stop feeling this way.

Like the ground under my feet will cave in and crumble.

And I'm left with no perch, falling and spiraling out of control.

Despair creeping up with a torturous gentleness.

Followed by the shadow-like void.

That with a bloodthirsty grin will rip apart the once addictive fantasy.

Without mercy the warmth that I thought was forming in my chest.

Will disappear and I will be left with nothing but freezing sorrow.

One that I will try and rip out with my own two hands.

For nothing is as painful.

As being truly.

Empty.



There is very little left unaffected by her. Even the things I had before her are covered in her fingerprints. The worst part is I would sound so dramatic if I tried explaining it to my friends and family. How do you tell your friends that she has stolen the smell of roses from you? What would my mother say if I told her that when I open my underwear drawer all I can see is what I bought with her in mind? I smile with my teeth in pictures now because she begged me to. I let my hair grow out because she always preferred it that way. My favorite sweatshirt that was handed down to me by mom when I was 15 was her favorite to steal and keep warm with. I haven't put it on since it was handed back in a plastic bag of my things. My things that aren't even really mine anymore. They hang in some limbo between being mine and being hers and being ours. Not that she wants them. I told her my favorite baby names. How could I use them now? They're tinged blue with the hopes I had for our imagined children. Could I saddle a child with a name I adored but wanted to share with another family?

She's there in my prom photos, in my graduation photos, in all the photos of my senior year. Staring at the pale pink dress hanging at the back of my closet I see only where she placed her hands while we slow danced, the only couple of girls on the dance floor. She held my hand as we were asked to leave our church for so offending God. She's even there in my struggle with faith. When I sing in my car she's still sitting in my passenger seat smiling and laughing and telling me I ought to have pursued the stage.

I stopped wearing my favorite perfume; when it would wash over me so would the memory of her, burying her face in my neck and inhaling after so many weeks apart. Looking at my closet has the same effect. The dress I wore to her cousin's wedding. Her favorite shirt of mine, favorite jeans.

She liked my eyes. Even looking at my own eyes I think of what she used to say. Looking at the moles that cover me I think of when she would count them or place a kiss over each one. I can't escape the memory of her because I can't escape myself. She so deftly touched every part of me, body and soul, that to scourge myself of her would be to erase myself entirely. And yet I will not tell my loved ones. How do you explain that she has permeated your skin? That she is knit into your favorite sweater and that Christmas will never be the same?

Of course I am left to wonder many things. Have I touched her the same way? Perhaps I have left some impression on her. The more important question I fear is: will we ever be disentangled? Can two hearts so intertwined separate without leaving one or both irreparably changed?

A Waltz for the Weary Gray Weather

John Cargille



The snow melts before it even leaves the clouds;
Losing one aspiration, I'm sure, but
they gain another in the grandeur
of kissing my winter coat softly.

The fog slides into the Lake in the distance;
The horizon forcing them into commonality,
both looking for an advantage, but the reality
is that they're evenly matched.

The waves howl bloody vengeance as they crash;
The spray meets the rain on the rock, bold meets
meek but it's their shared cold shock that brings
them together in the end.

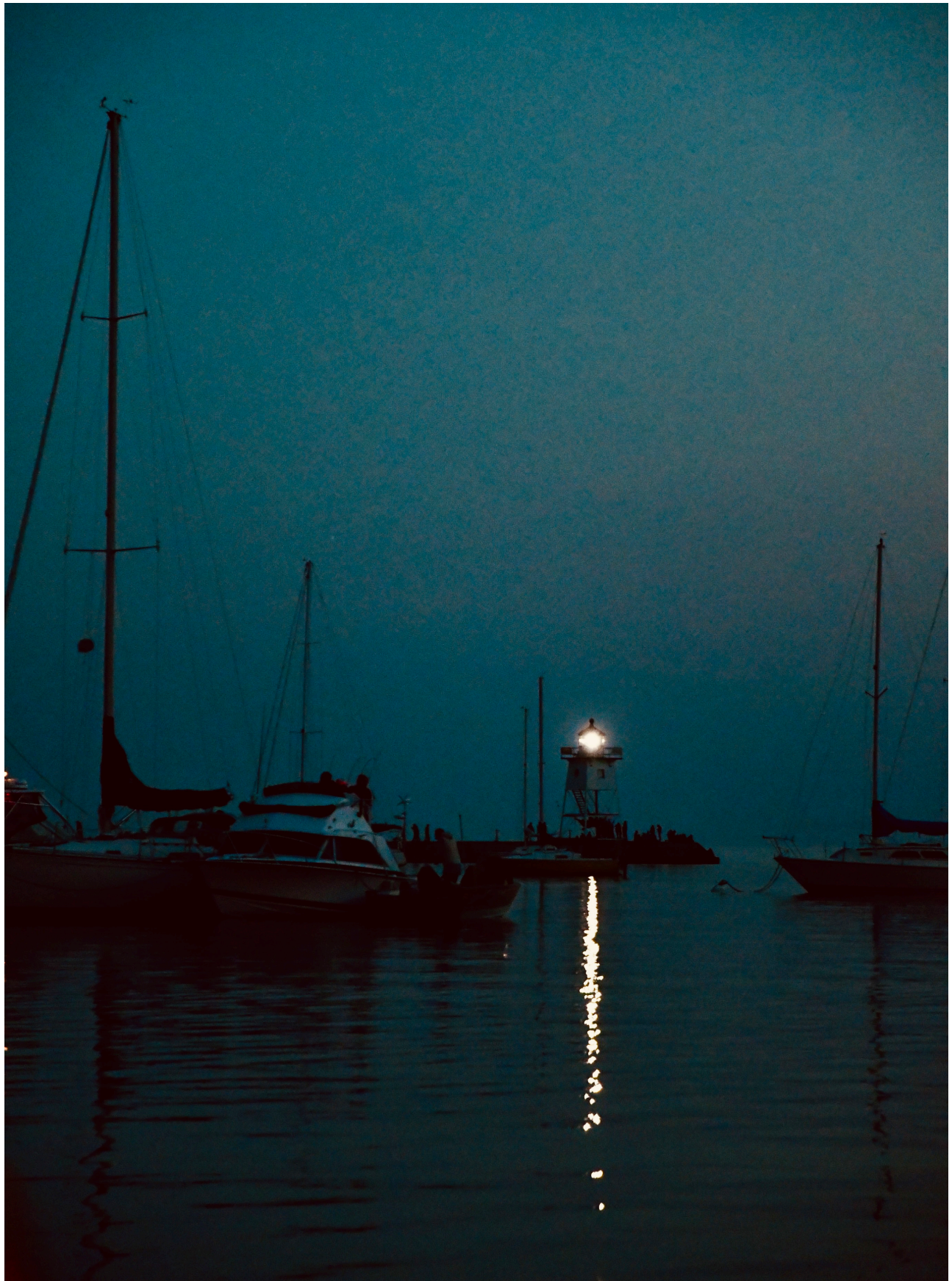
And why shouldn't they become one?
Love is in the air, the dreary mist its kin;
But no one stops to breathe it in.
All these lonely people,
and no one stops to breathe it in.

And why should they?
The frog sings to himself, softly amidst the humidity;
They have places to be.
All these lonely people,
and they have places to be.

I love this weather;
Perhaps it's the pattern of the patter,
Perhaps it's the sky so a'tatter,
Perhaps it's how it asks what's the matter,
all soothing weight and Blues melodies.
Perhaps I shall marry it next Winter,
if it proposes to me.

I improvise a line, whistling to the clouds;
A bit too high, but the Gray sky
Just smiles. I let it go because I can't take it
back, and he loves me anyway.

And all these lonely people, under a lonely, far-off moon.
It breaks me, a bit.
The sky, the rain, the pause, the tune...
And all these lonely people.



A Grand Marais Glimmer - Andrew Kirchhoff

Airports (WINNER 2023)

Kj De Jesús



Airports.

Before I was born, they were a place people went to to go somewhere else. Just a temporary place where time was rushed but irrelevant- and the people had no other desire other than to leave for their next destination or pick up some souvenirs.

After I was born, it was a place of anxiety, fear, and panic. No one trusted planes, or the people flying them, their fellow passengers- anything. Almost too scared to fly because the world had stopped. That one day changed my life before I even had a life to live and I will never know anything different.

My mom says that she was pregnant with me when it happened. Saw it on the news. Everyone saw it on the news. I don't even have to mention what I am talking about because whenever someone in my generation says airports the older generations look down ashamed, reliving what they consider their mistakes, guilty that we have to experience our reality that they never had to experience until us.

There's this saying, "This is why we can't have nice things." Sadly I think it is true. From the time I was born, there have been these incidents where nice things have been taken away. Airports of freedom, affordable housing, affordable insurance, security in schools, safety on the streets, comfort in the air we breathe, comfort in the posts we see, trust in the uniforms and the powers that be, and the millions of words we should see in pictures and videos that we no longer conjure up ourselves but consume to no end until we are full but keep eating.

My dad says that I will never live in his world. I know he refers to his old world- but does he know that he isn't living in mine too? That by taking his world and separating it from mine he is refusing to take accountability that he brought me into my own world and his world is a part of it? I find it interesting how unless someone is directly affected by something they decide to put distance between themselves and whatever happened like it's the plague.

Speaking of. Airports.

Now, airports are some kind of joke. Hi, welcome, get your ticket, spend your money, take your shoes off. Do you have a metal screw in your leg? Wait here, stand there, throw out your sealed drink, run somewhere else. Your flight has changed, your time has changed. We're running late, but make sure you are early! Eat this expensive ass food, buy these unnecessarily costly things, sit next to that loud baby, or that snoring guy. Have a "free" drink. Remember the oxygen mask is above you, but don't take off your mask. Social distance, but then sit like sardines next to everyone during the flight. "Have a safe flight!" Yes, this is entirely safe- except for that one time. But there are rafts, and exits lit by lights and if we do crash, you should sit in the position most likely to kill you because insurance is a bitch and we don't wanna pay the "ultimate" price if you survive. Also- were going to trust that you are either vaccinated or tested negative, but we won't ask anyone about that.

Turbulence, aren't you used to that? It happens in the sky, it happens on the ground. Don't you feel that anxiety? Like you're falling? Don't you see the world falling? But then you wake up. And people clap, some leave right away, some don't. You're rushed out of the plane forced to wait for the luggage many hands have thrown around while you weren't looking, no matter how fragile it is. You get to this new place and look for a map, a mentor, a sign- and then you are pushed out like an infant into a brand new world that you have yet to experience with your falling eyes. You haven't landed yet, but when you do, let me know. Because I'll wait for it. Don't you feel that? Like we're falling?

No, we're not in the sky, wake up. It's turbulence.



At midnight on forgotten days
When all is dark and still,
Be careful love, be careful now
Don't let it take your will.

It comes at night, it comes at dark,
It comes when you're asleep.
It peaks in through the windows high.
And through the sill it seeps.

When breathing's slow, when eyes are closed,
It sneaks throughout your home.
It brings with it a stifling air
And fear of the unknown.

Then as the bell of midnight's struck
It screams till all awake.
And those who startle, those who shake,
'Tis those souls who it takes.

A lucky, lucky girl was I
So many years ago—
I stayed awake throughout the night
As pale and cold as snow.

I's silent as I heard it scream
And still as friends awoke.
As terrified as I was then,
Come morning my heart broke.

This house, this house, so full of life
Now empty 'cept for me
There's no one left, there's no one left
There's no one left but me.

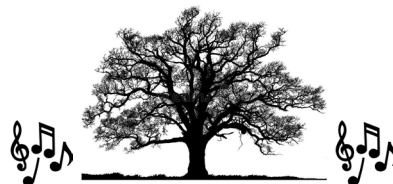
The Blues of a Fruitful Spirit (The Return) (WINNER 2023)

Hope Posley



Strange fruit? Is that I who is swinging from that tree? Who are all these people standing around cheering and clapping for me, Is this a celebration for me? A tea and crumpets celebration or make sure to dress to the 9s? But rather a celebration of the death of me; a nuisance is what my country labels me to be. "The land of the free" is what they told me. I guess the only truth in that is I'm free to believe in anything my imagination will take me. Even the foolish mere thought of me thinking someone who looked like me, a race kissed by the sun, would have a chance at truly being free, Ain't it funny how the sun didn't shine on this swell July day? Blues in the air, knocking at my window to my dismay. Too happy, too proud I thought, to think this could ever happen to me. Till fate came kissing me gently on my cheek. Or, should I even in the spirit live in denial and walk on by and say that ain't me, but I can't do that. I can't believe this is the representation to the world that they left of me. This rope tied tight around my neck, surely I won't fault or blame you, a victim you are just as I am. You're an accessory to a crime after the fact. Crimes pinned against me and people of my kind since before I stepped out of my mother's womb. A crime you did not want to commit. In the court of law you'll still be found guilty tho. Not that you wanted to be here, but still here you stay, the one who'll take all the blame, I just asked you to be so gracious to break from this innocent tree and let me go free. The arrogance of these silly crows to be pecking at me. This sweet but bitter skin they take to digest while they sleep. If only they knew I was not merely some cheap roadkill, but perhaps an expensive and luxurious black sheep. The nerves of these people to not show me a mustard seed of respect. To at least let me go with an ounce of dignity and cover me. Lynched is not only the flesh. Lynched is the dreams, hopes, opportunities, goals, ambition, faith, family that was taken from me. I hope thoughts of remembrance of my faint and dangling body stay infested in your mind, intruding your psyche, haunting you till the end of time.

All that was taken from me. My flesh wants to hate you and wish you'll rot in hell but the equanimity of my soul asks how then will I prevail? Hanging and vulnerable, the only statue of my dear self this country will have of me. That light in me that you tried so desperately hard to kill, is the same light that deep down inside somewhere hopes that you repent, find peace, and heal. I surely will not blame a whole race of people, how foolish would that be? I do blame the crooked veins, steel and metal hearts of those who taught me stupid, ugly, black, and worthless, was the only thing I could be. The man, the woman, the child, may die, but the spirit, the soul no man can see nor touch, it will forever be. A whisper of compassion I leave with you. If only you could see me now, not black, nor white, pink, blue, purple or green, just a free glow of light that's watching you while my feeble body that you watch swings.



Get out; we're lost



Neon Dreams

Andrew Colletti



I'm sitting on a couch in a friend's apartment, looking out the window—seeing the buildings lit up at night. The glass sliding door is cracked, some of the night buzz slips in. I sit, curled in a blanket, listening and looking.

It all feels rather grand—the city. Quite a massive thing.

A smoky forest smell comes in, its source an utter mystery. Perhaps something Durban, something wild. Something familiar, yet distant. Some come here, just for that.

To get something foreign, within the comfort of their own country, they come to experience life in a big city. Where everything is happening, where people can explore, where they can follow their dreams.

Just as long as the neon doesn't get in the way of it all—the dream can be found, but one would have to be careful with the lights and the brightness, with people moving fast—and no one seems to notice you.

One must be careful not to get lost in all that. To not get lost in the lights, fancy clothes, and finer things, if he is to remember what he came to the city for in the first place.

Yesterday, it was the traffic and the honking that was loud at night, tonight, it is a homeless

man's cries into the empty night.

An umbrella'd man ambles in the neon haze watching the vendors as he goes stooping close to see their foods, measuring their smell against their sight, and that to the signs above seeing if they fulfill their promise.

He walks, stepping through a curtain of smoke, smelling chicken, veggies, car exhaust and drainpipes.

Sprawling up, dripping, dripping, dripping.

He follows his eyes to a different time, no moving pictures, no flashing signs

Only a neon buzz, a soft glow and big words and larger promises.

Only now the neon is its own reward, one could fill himself on them alone.

Big arrows, small gestures, hidden messages, burnt avocados, but a certain fullness.

Liquid light you can drink until intoxication, standing still on the street hiding in a recess the emanating billowing bulbs breeze with energy...

Who, upon closer look from his balcony, seems to be someone on drugs? Not sure which for the better.

Due to the vastness of the city, he feels no connection between himself and the man's wellbeing. He does feel pity and sorrow for the man, but he doesn't feel responsible for him. He feels guilty about this.

Even through a shut door, his moans can still be heard. He decides to wait this one out, he was going to go to sleep, but now he feels for this unfortunate man.

He puts on slippers and walks downstairs to see the concierge.

He pushes the elevator button with squinting eyes and a face mask, and watches as the floors beep by. The concierge is looking down with earbuds in,

He walks close and puts his arms on the counter in a friendly manner.

"Hi, I'm new to living here, and I can hear this homeless guy moaning outside, is that normal? Should I do something?"

He looked up and his blue eyes met mine,

"Was he yelling anything? Or just moaning?"

"Just moaning," he said, "Probably drugs then," the concierge responded and looked back down at his phone.

back down at his phone.

"So, I shouldn't do anything, then?"

He asked.

"Not much you can do, really."

"What? What do you mean?" he felt sorry for the man and did not want to leave him out in the cold.

"Well, if he's homeless and cold, he would be able to say help or some words; but, seeing as you said he was moaning, it's probably drugs. If you try to help, you could end up making matters worse, and if you don't help, then one of two things could happen." The concierge went on, rolling back on the marble floor, putting his feet on the counter.

"One, he will eventually sober up and find someplace warmer, assuming he is homeless and can't just make it home for the drugs in his system, and in this case, he will most likely be fine. Or, two, he stays high until the cold kills him, less likely if you ask me." The concierge finished with a proud tone of indifference.

"Still... sounds pretty bad though," he went on, "There's really nothing we can do?" He wanted the concierge to agree—so that he can go back to sleep with a clean conscience.

"How long were you watching him?" He looked back up.

"I dunno five or ten minutes,"

"And did anyone try to help him?"

"I think so, there looked like a person who stopped and tried to help," he shifted his weight, thinking.

"And what did the man do?"

"I'm not sure, it sounded like he just got louder, just moaning." he pictured it again.

"Well, there ya' go, why would he react any differently to you trying to

help?" He finished in rhetorically. He looked back at me, "Okay, I get it, you're new here, you want to be the good guy, you feel bad and you want to help. You pity the underdog. But sometimes, what I've learned from living in the city, is that you gotta learn to just let some things be.

The neighbor has loud pipes, your floor tiles are crooked, your bathroom door is on backwards, and there's a high-pitched noise coming from another building across the block at night.

That's just part of living in the city, my guy, you learn to ignore it. You get pretty good at it, pretty quick." He leaned back, further, looking up at the ceiling.

"So, you just ignore it then?" he asked?

"Well, yeah. That's the only way you can do it, Else you'll just go mad and poor..."

Imagine you donate a single bill each time you pass a homeless man, say you pass four a day, which is a low-ball, that's \$30 a week. \$120 a month in non-tax refundable charitable donations.

Sure, you might feel better about doing it, but now, every time you pass these guys, you will feel bad if you DON'T give them your money. Plus, they'll learn your face, and call you out, look at you a certain way.

Now, even if it grows too expensive, you've trapped yourself in guilt.

Then, if you give in and keep giving, eventually you'll start to blame yourself for them not getting a job,

or seeking a home or better circumstances. You begin to feel wrong about giving.

But now, you must give, but you feel wrong doing it.

There's just no way to win.

Is there?" The concierge looked back at me.

"Honestly, I bet someone already came along and took him someplace to get help, anyway," he shrugged.

"Really think so?" he asked?

"How about this, you go back upstairs, and look to see if he's still there. If he is, I'll go with you to see if he's alright; and if he isn't there, well just call it a night and we can both go to sleep knowing he was alright." He gave a sympathetic smile.

"Yeah, you're right, I'll check. Good-night if I don't come back down." He spun and walked to the elevators.

When he got back in his room, he walked straight to the balcony and looked out—his eyes widened as he saw a couple approach the moaning man and talked for a moment and walked off.

He slipped off his shoes and went back to bed.

Cracked Panes of Glass

Elsie Berg



Your body is made of cracked panes of glass.

The glass gets hot at night. It shifts and moves, and, occasionally, it allows us to breathe together.

Your spine got twisted up once because your body forgot that it wasn't taffy to be pulled.

The result was three bone spurs along your vertebrae. If I focused, I could feel them against my fingers.

In some places, the glass thought it could stretch further than the laws of physics allowed, creating the jagged lines at your shoulders, elbows, and hips—I like to think it makes you a work of art.

And art doesn't feel pain the way that people do.

Trees are similar to your spine in shape.

Their limbs are spindly and fluid, and all they want to do is kill you. Always. Always. Always.

I watched them kill you yesterday, and your face cracked like glass.

I hear you break everywhere I go.

A booger and homicide (WINNER 2022)

Sophia Rogney



A booger was in your nose, a small decoration to the bruise that stained your forehead, and I couldn't get it, because it felt too weird to do in front of an audience, the coroner standing a few feet from me. What did he think I was going to do? You were already dead. No more harm could reasonably be inflicted, and I would have appreciated some privacy to say my farewell. Alas, I removed a small shred of toilet paper from your forehead instead, and stroked your hair, and whispered "okay" trying to come to terms with what I was seeing, what had been done, and give you peace in a roundabout way. I hoped you could hear me, that close to your ear, and it felt like maybe you could, but also like you could not. Your teeth. Your hair. Your skin. The blue blanket covering you up, and I was confident in that moment it wasn't suicide, no one would choose to be found naked on the slippery bathroom tile, outside of a nice steamy shower. Part of me wanted to imprint this memory into my brain so that I would never forget my last moment with you, and the other screamed and stretched and overworked itself to make sure I would block this out. I still have no idea who won. Greek gods never battled the way my brain did that day, the way it still rages on. Did you know that if someone dies alone it is ruled immediately a homicide, until an investigation can be done? I put myself now in a game board on our kitchen table, wondering who had done it. Mom? Dad? Was it me? What would we each have used? The bathroom was the room, obviously, but I couldn't for the life of me remember seeing "bathroom" on that board game. Candlestick I remembered, rope, pistol, poison, wrench, Mr. Mustard, with the rope, in the bathroom. Scarlet, with the pistol, in the library. Mr. Plum, with the wrench, in the pool. Ms. Peacock, with the shampoo, in the kitchen sink. No, those weren't right. Not a game, but I did make it fun. I told jokes, and made Ruth laugh in the parking lot, and tried not to perform my sadness but to feel it, and process it, so that the grief would only last as long as Dad in a game of Clue, wrong every time he proclaims proudly he knows who's done it.



Waiting - Alexis Greeve



What is it like to watch a couple argue? Why is it uncomfortable? When should you step in? Should you step in at all?

What is it like to observe a couple that seems like an unequal partnership? When is it the right time to voice your concerns? Is it ever the right time? How do you know if you are overstepping or crossing a boundary?

What is it like to connect with one lover over the other? Why does it feel hurtful, yet feel so right at the same time? How do you behave around both of them? How do you behave around the one you love more?

What is it like to have the couple trust you with their intimacy? What is it like to then want one lover for yourself? What is it like to get too close, but not want to distance yourself, even though you know it is the right thing to do? Why is it so hard to not be selfish when it comes to desire?

...Oh Pity Me

Nicole Smith



...Oh pity me

As if, I

had it easily

Privileged and

pathetic with

A silver-spooned

mentality

Exploiting

femininity,

“Be content and

let it be”,

Turn the other cheek and reap the

benefits of ecstasy-

Can my passion be a legacy?

Or am I fueled

by jealousy

To bury in the sands

of time while

reaching

for eternity?

Can't fathom

immortality

Too young to stand

for anything

I haven't had

the time

to fabricate my own morality



There's nothing remarkable about this tube of lipstick. Like most traditional lipstick, it's no taller than a driver's license and no wider than a quarter. The brand name is in raised letters on the side of the white casing. There's a good weight to the thing, it's not cheap plastic. There's a ding on the cap, just a tiny little dent, as well as pink stains on the top and bottom of the case from a pen. The bullet itself is about half gone - despite this the top retains the angle of a fresh tube. The shade name according to the circular sticker on the base is *Wifey*; a neutral dusty rose shade.

This well-loved lipstick has rolled around many a purse: a small black crossbody on a night out, a tote bag on a family outing, a chestnut shoulder bag for errands, a large backpack during the school year, a clutch on prom night, and even a serving apron. It currently sits at the bottom of a makeup bag, tucked back in a drawer, where it rarely sees the light of day.

Most people are creatures of habit, including the woman who owns this lipstick. The dings and stains and half-gone bullet indicate that. She also plays it safe. The color is not bold or daring. The formula is a comfortable, longwear matte. This isn't only true of her lipstick, but of the rest of her life as well. Take a peek into her bedroom; three practical pairs of shoes lined up on her closet floor, each with the same wear pattern on the sole. Earthy greens and browns dominate the clothes hanging above them. In the dresser, one finds sensible slacks and well broken-in jeans. An old school alarm clock sits atop her bedside table. It has rung at 8:00 a.m. each day since she bought it. Monday through Friday that sound rouses her from bed and herds her into the bathroom. Pushing sleep from her eyes she pulls open a drawer,

the drawer where the lipstick lives. Most days she moves through her motions: toothpaste, shower, brush, makeup, clothes, keys and out the door. But today she stops. She stops and stares. A small white tube is rolling loose in the drawer.

Her eyebrows pull in confusion, she could have sworn that thing was zipped safe and buried at the bottom of a bag. She looks around as if to ask someone how this was possible, but there is no one to look to. Of course there isn't, she scolds herself, you live alone now. A little more shaken than she'd ever care to admit, she slides the drawer shut and looks at herself in the mirror.

Andi Wallace is white, 5'4", and approximately 135 pounds with light brown hair. That's how a missing persons report might read, she thought as she looked into her reflection. With hazel eyes and pale skin, there is little contrast in her looks. That's why she had chosen that dusty rose lipstick to begin with; she thought its muted blush would suit her naturally dialed down coloring.

Jamie had liked it too. Andi pushes her hands on her face, willing the thought back in her mind. Routine disrupted, she ditches her pajama set and steps into the shower to scrub away the feeling. She wrenches the handle as hot as it will go and breathes in the steam that begins to rise. Submitting to the drum beat of water on her face Andi is unable to fight the memories, they flood her mind and her body with Jamie.

Under My Skin (WINNER 2022)

Abby Zera



Under My Skin.

I grew up on borrowed encyclopedias, I'm growing old in skin that feels like it's not quite my own.

Human skin is enormously well-supplied with blood vessels; it is pervaded with a tangled, though apparently orderly, mass of arteries, veins, and capillaries. Such a supply of blood, far in excess of the maximum biologic needs of the skin itself, is evidence that the skin is at the service of the blood vascular system, functioning as a cooling device. To aid in this function, sweat glands pour water upon its surface, the evaporation of which absorbs heat from the skin. If the environment is cold and body heat must be conserved, cutaneous blood vessels contract in quick, successive rhythms, allowing only a small amount of blood to flow through them. When the environment is warm, they contract at long intervals, providing a free flow of blood.

Motion. Rhythm. These words carried and cradled me. I had them memorized when I was 10. I saw the words printed on the thin sheets bound together by string, cloth, and glue, Smyth sewn and sent, and I stitched them in my mind to the thin sheets surrounding my form, bound together by collagen and a structure so detailed it made my, well... skin, crawl. Composed of numbers of layers oriented so that each complements the others structurally and functionally, it seems at odds with my less than structured nature. I wish we matched. Or rather, I wish I were a better fit for it, for if it were to stoop to my level, I'd unravel at the seams, figuratively and, in a way, literally.

I am encased in my own simultaneous topography and cartography. The dissimilarities between the palms and the backs of the hands and fingers justify their own existence by their functionality and act as textures on the surface of a map, the ridges and folds hinting at the history they hold, providing a diagram with plotted points to which I can gesture saying, "This is where it hurts," or, "This is where I still feel the itch of unsolicited contact."

Foreign objects against my vessel leave a lasting prickle. Though they haven't broken the surface, it feels like they've intruded in a deeper sense, in a more perpetual sense. I am at once cushioned and insulated yet left vulnerable, exposed. Can it protect me if its an extension of my being? Are the soft, weak parts of me safe within a feeling, pliable shell? It encloses me as nothing else does, for I have no armor nor exoskeleton, something I often find regrettable.

Its existence and persistence makes me more real, evidently. It is all you or I will ever see, and it's the dusty slate upon which my hatred and love rests. I'm interfacing with my reality through it, with it, my companion, my surface. In human anatomy, the covering, or integument, of the body's surface that both provides protection and receives sensory stimuli from the external environment, is a thing that lives. Fibrous and elastic, held within its layers are the nerve endings that sense the pain, touch, pressure, and heat that make me, in some sense, real. I'm participating in a constant proof that I am not a figment of my own imagination. That these things beneath my feet and held in my palms are not a figment of my own imagination. His hand against the small of my back, sending shivers down my spine, is just as real as the oil that scalded the space between my fingers, sending shock waves through my system.

I writhe and ache and burn, longing to escape it while knowing it's essential to my being. Feeling the defeat that inevitably comes when this realization sinks in. I can't absorb it. Not yet. So it sits there, static and stagnant, under my skin.



Untitled - Sophia Salcido

Building A PURPOSEFUL Life

Terrell T. Franklin in **bold** (Centrique's Chief Journalist) with Professor McLean



Professor Nora McLean is an experimental psychologist whose research interests include human behavioral and physiological reactions to social stimuli and social stress. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, and she has taught courses focusing on various elements of biological psychology, psychological research design/statistics, and human development.

Outside of academia, Prof. McLean enjoys running outdoors, living near the lake, and spoiling her six-pound Yorkshire terrier, Twig.

How would you describe passion?

When I think about things that make me passionate, I would say that when I'm passionate about something, it can exhaust me but it doesn't feel like work. So, a lot of times, when I'm describing being a professor or something like that to people, you have days where you're exhausted or where it's a lot of work or like being a professor can get stressful. But I've never had what I call the "Sunday Scaries"; when you enter the work-world and all of a sudden, Sunday, instead of being a nice, enjoyable weekend, Sunday becomes this really anxiety-inducing day. And a lot of my friends from college got it really bad. They hated Sundays, because it just felt like the work week was starting. I've never gotten "Sunday Scaries" because I think that being a professor doesn't feel like work. I think that's because I'm passionate about it. So when I think about passion, I think it's like it's something that can exhaust you and be stressful but it doesn't feel like work.

“You don't know what makes you passionate until you've tried it.”

How do you think passion like that develops?

A lot of things, I think. Part of it is experience. You don't know what makes you passionate until you've tried it. Which is why I think with college students, I tell them try something even if you hate it. The only way you're going to find out if you love something is if you try it, so I think you do have to have experience. When I was in grad school, if I didn't teach as much, I wouldn't have realized that college students are hilarious. I wanted to do that.

Do you think that everyone has a passion? If they do, how would they be able to find it if they haven't found it yet?

Yes. If they haven't found it yet, I guess it would just require going out of your comfort zone. You've got to try new stuff, but also, I don't know if passion is always a career. For some people, your passion can just be, like, family or children or pets or something else. Career and work isn't everything. Life develops them through experience and it's sort of like the life force. And I like thinking that way. Work isn't everything, and I don't think it should be everything. Your friends are your passion, your family can be your passion, your hobbies can be your passion. Finding the things that make you so happy can

be your passion. I don't think it "happens" either. I think you do so much development after college and in your 20s. I just think it just gets better over time. I remember when I graduated college, and people around me were sobbing, which was very sweet. Like, they're sad to leave, but I was like, "I had fun and learned a lot but why am I not as totally heartbroken?" I do think it's because things get better. It took me a while to find good friends. I was surrounded by people who were really intense. I think you just get exposed to more things and you find yourself a little bit more.

Do you think exposure is kind of the key to experiences that make you, you?

Yeah, I do think exposure and experiencing things is a big part of it. But I also think as you grow and age, you get better at reading yourself and knowing what makes you happy and what doesn't. You get better at being like, "okay, spending time with this person doesn't bring me calm or joy. I'm not going to spend time with that person," That gets easier to do as you get older, just like with experiences and things saying no to things that don't make you happy get easier. That's hard to do when you're younger.

"A lot happens spontaneously as long as you are open to it."

How do you know what things to experience or what experiences to look after?

I think some come to you without trying, which is what I say to a lot of students who are really stressed and they're like, "I don't know, what I'm going to major in or what I like to do," I think some will come to you on their own, whether it's like a class or a job, and there's a small piece of the job that you really enjoy. But I think that a lot happens spontaneously as long as you are open to it. When I graduated, I had no idea what I was going to do, which then stinks because it just seems like everyone around you has a plan. Then just as long as you kind of put your "feelers" out there, I think things fall into place. And the exposure can come spontaneously sometimes.

Everyone was pre-med when I was in school. I knew I didn't want to do anything medical. But then, maybe junior year, I picked up an anthropology major, which was kind of how I fell into an interest in how people behave. I think that's when Bio kind of merged with Psych. I started doing some research as an undergrad and I really enjoyed that. And then, when I graduated, I still had no idea what I wanted to do, but I was putting "feelers" out there. I would say, "Okay, what's a biology research opportunity that I can do and expose myself to?" So once I got over the drama of "I'm about to graduate without a plan," once you get over that — which is fine, that's normal — then I think you can be more open. So then I put "feelers" out and I did biology fieldwork. Then I worked at a zoo. And then I did lab work with people because I wanted to see what it was like working with humans. Then you kind of just see how each of those fulfills you or brings you joy or brings you stress and then you can kind of go from there.

When does it become too much time? Or when does too much time become procrastination?

Have you ever been on a vacation and got bored? I feel that when I do long trips. I don't know if it can ever be too much time. I think the importance is balance. It's okay to have a productive work life, but you need to carve out time for yourself. The other thing I'm really adamant about is sleep, which won't happen until you get older. But then I realized I just cannot function well without it. I read this book in one of my anthropology courses in undergrad. It was just a book about what lack of sleep does to your physical health. And ever since I've been like, "this is so important!" I can't pull all-nighters.

I remember in high school, I would work. I would do high school homework until like three or four in the morning. Like, get a life! What are you doing? So that, I think, was probably partly procrastination. And then maybe the fear of needing enough sleep caused me to stop progressing a little bit more. Not that I don't anymore. I'm still progressing.

How do you think your perspective has changed within like the past year or two?

I think that expecting a child has changed my perspective in a good way. Like when you go to an appointment and get a checkup and they're like, "yep, fetus is okay." You feel this big relief. Being behind on grading isn't what was making me stressed. So that's been a good perspective. I think the focus shifts more on family. I just think there's this trend that things just get better over time. Like, as you get older, a perspective changes for the best. It's easier to slow down and say, "Wait, that doesn't matter." What matters is my health and the health of my family and the health of my friends, and things like that. So I think it's more positive, as I've aged, in a good way.

"As you get older, a perspective changes for the best. It's easier to slow down and say, 'Wait, that doesn't matter.'"

How did you know that you found the right people around you?

For me, I think it's people who I want to be around even when things are really bad. So I remember, in my 20s, and dating people, realizing that with my now husband, I wanted to be around him even on the most horrible of days or going through deaths in the family or things like that. This, for me being an introvert and knowing that being around people exhausts me, was a big sign. I think that can be true for my closest friends, too. I want to be around them even on my worst days. Or even when I'm super tired or super stressed. And I'm like, "I don't want to teach today." I do think being around my college students makes me laugh and makes me feel happy. So that too, is just a sign, even when you're super exhausted or super tired. It's a good sign if you want to be around those people, even when you're at your worst.

Just Wondering

Savannah Kroeger



If you had to describe yourself as any art supply what would it be?

A crayon?

- Undeniably still a child at heart who colors outside of the lines
 - Who needs guidelines anyway!

A colored pencil?

- Stiff, sophisticated
 - Keeping things classy and lookin' sharp is definitely your trademark.

Watercolors?

- Haters will say you're wishy-washy
 - You like to say things have a way of flowing into each other.

Marker?

- Bleeds onto other pages, but you definitely make a statement that leaves an impression.
 - Bold, present, and powerful are your adjectives.

Glue?

- The invisible blessing that miraculously holds things together.
 - You're not into seeing things fall apart, and you're the behind-the-scenes hero in every project.

Paint brush?

- Leads the paint across the canvas.
- You may be full of remnants from the previous painting projects, but the speckles of paint remind you of where you're from.

Spray paint?

- Risky.
- In your face.
- Your best buddies with the markers.
 - For sure.

Why ask this question?

Oh, I was just wondering.



I hope it isn't true,
What you say after
I bear my soul to you,
I don't understand the loner.

I hope it isn't true,
I don't want to lose a friend,
I don't want to be alone,
I can't depend on just one.

I hope it isn't true,
I hope he didn't betray you,
I wish you grow happily,
And love yourself more.

I hope it is true,
That this is my end,
And that the rest of the story,
Is already done and written.

I hope it is true,
And that my little circle,
Expands to a sphere,
To hold you and others dear,
I hope it is true,
That the days will now be longer,
The nights shorter,
The time between them irrelevant.

Tell me is it true?
Do you love me like you say you do?
Do you care for me like you promise you would? Do you harbor away your heart as I do?

I don't know if I can handle it being true.

Tea Time in deep Blue (WINNER 2022)

Jaden Gardner



It was wrong and dark and it smelled like a late afternoon with hints of cantaloupe
You can never really go wrong with fruit that nobody really likes
Strapless in the night
Heads would turn if heads were near take it off, there's a clasp
Tonight a rumor,
And I was tremendous
There, towards the edge you could see the reflection of everything
Where the brave were swallowed
And the sun burned the imperative the tomato plants that grew without permission
They would get stepped on
And then multiply Because the salt in the water killed the bugs but not the tomatoes
Because that is what it's like to be consumed
tidal
It would reach capacity on rainy days and stretch out to the lonely
The loneliest would sail away in boats of skin
Embroidery pearls and blue paned glass ate the ground, hard to miss, build a house
Exhort were whispers from the sea
And,
there was a fog that never lifted it was because of the clouds that never faded the imaginary heart
dust that laid with the sand
Red red red
Pink at night but who would know.
Every time it turns into November bums will swim, and come out looking milky some stay
Drifting in the salt, cheekbones of silk the border of beautiful
This place, this is the place where wishes are wasted
to disappear into the glow in the dark waters the pellucid playground
sometimes the wind thrashes but not a thing winces, taking each lash with a smile
Happy to be here.



Submission 1 - D'uandre Drain Majors

Untitled

Mills Guanci



Goddamn spring is bitter
Its got flesh and its got teeth
It's erotic in its growth, in its green
In its being, in the way it seeps out of the chill and into
the air
It reflects me to myself like a kaleidoscope of
everyone I've ever been
Every spring I've ever lived
In one I'm taking my first hit, in one I've learned to
punch
I'm crying and I'm dancing and I'm eating
Scoops of ice cream in mid-March
The world's blooming around me as my nails tear at
my skin
I've been timid here and wild here but I can never leave
here
Spring will outlive me
And turn my body soft and damp

Would I love me if I met me
Would I understand myself when I stand face to face
With my eyes and my anger
Would I hate my own stammer
If I heard it with ears of my own
Would it hurt when I met me
Would I embrace them or rage
About all that they could do
And all the time they waste
Will I recognize myself when I stand face to face
With my soul, with my creator
The one who shaped my life
Who gave me every burden
Who twisted every knife
Will I love them like a brother
Like an ally, like a lover
Could I love someone so close to me
So close they see right through my words
Can I handle being known
Do I just want to be alone

And I tried to find a poem for you but I only
memorize Robert Frost and tragedies.
The snow is lovely, dark and deep. If you love me Hen-
ry you don't love me in a way I understand.
It all blurs into the feeling of poetry.
Of something deeper, of something reaching.
No cadence here
No rhyme
It's a poem because it's not a poem
Because the commas don't make sense,
Because nothing matches, because I'm picturing my
bookends in our home.
And my body in our home.
And the way I'm scared of myself in our home. And the
way I want it till it burns my bedroom to ash
And the sky appears above me
Pushing me into my charred mattress
The way my outline is left there, gray footprints leading
towards you.
It's snowing in my head. I'm carrying a pillow and a
mug
It's the mug you gave me but I scrubbed the words that
you wrote away. It wasn't hard.
They were in sharpie.
It was harder to keep them before. I cleaned that mug so
carefully. It's okay
I won't say that I love you but I know I don't have to
I wrote you a poem. I've written you a thousand poems.
I've felt that cadence for you
It's snowing in my head
It's summer and it's snowing, and then it's bookends
falling from the sky
All the things I wanted in our home, falling from the
sky
The panic that there is none yet, nothing when there
should be something.
Some walls and a sink for the mug.
We can wash it now, it's okay. It's safe
This is safe and I tell myself this is safe.
It's too late for water to ruin it.

While Reciting Hamlet (WINNER 2022)

Elsie Berg



Yesterday, I made myself cry while reciting *Hamlet*.

I stood between two pressures—two people telling me what I hear in my head on a daily basis,

And I had to remind myself that they weren't real.

I gazed out at the woman in the back row and the man in the front,

And I told myself to breathe.

I walked back from class in the rain the other night.

I was wearing a t-shirt, and it was dark and cold. My arms were so frozen

That they felt warm when I got back inside.

I laughed about it on the phone to my mother once I was dry,

But my arms were still tingling when I fell asleep.

Earlier this week, I cried at the word, "hunchback."

It was used in a book to describe a man. The author didn't use his name or any other description,

And I swore that I could feel every degree of my kyphosis echoing it back.

I pulled a muscle in my neck trying to sit up straight,

But I just ended up putting the book down.

Lately, my life has been filled with instances of unexplained feelings.

Two months ago, I sobbed in bed at night over the memory of an x-ray from when I was sixteen.

Last month, I was angry for weeks over a Facebook post.

And I tell myself to breathe.

I go to sleep with tingling arms.

I put the book down.

But the feelings just keep coming back.

Yesterday, I made myself cry while reciting *Hamlet*,

And I can't tell you for certain when it will happen again.



Sophia Force - Untitled

Life Occurs Without Our Permission

Andrew Colletti



Most of life, most of the world exists without our taking place in it...

We are but a blink in the eye of time,
a short flutter of leaves in the tree of history,
our life takes place within a season
that has occurred millions of times over—
and will continue to do so.

Our lives are shorter than most,
shorter than the trees we grew up watching,
smaller than a single wave in the tides of the ocean.

We are one moment.

Our lives are short, so short, yet we contain ourselves,
we limit our experience—we prison our excitement and our enthusiasm,
we attempt to shackle our dreams, our loves, our desires—
we convince ourselves they are impractical and impossible.
We ignore our impulses to explore, travel, and experience adventure—
all because we believe in what?
That we must have stability?
Longevity?

How can we have either in a life that is but a ring in the stump of the largest redwood—
a Goliath, monolith held out to the sky—
we tell ourselves we must be round,
we cannot endanger our future... what future?

What future is there but death and all that comes with it?

What of life do we avoid living in ignorance of death?

How many experiences do we rob ourselves in the guise of sense and ration,
fear masked over with a faux visage?

What is life but a series of events and experiences,
what is the point if NOT to take risks,
to go on adventures, to have our heart broken and our soul crushed,
only to find out that there is more behind the next door.

There is more than we could ever have calculated before—
under ration and sense—
there is more that was hidden from our eyes because our fear prevented the mere imagination of something so wonderful hidden just behind something that appeared to be so painful.

The end will come regardless.

Regardless of whether we asked that question, took that chance, went on that trip,
or regardless of if we sat nicely, asked polite questions, and ignored our soul.

The end will come regardless of whether we truly lived.

So whether we live in fear or in excitement, in anxiety or enthusiasm,
our end will not wait for unrealized life.
The end does not care whether we spoke our love,
or lived true to our spirit.



Lab Mate, *Melanoplus ponderosus* - Mary "GP" Gargano-Price

The Grass is Always Greener

Andrew Colletti



I sat in my desk chair,
rotating in the sun,
“The grass is always greener
on the other side,”
My grandma said.

Today the string wonders,
Where did I come from?
Where am I going?
What do I want?

Peering from my dog to my shoes,
glistening in the sun,
I looked closer,

She said she was fed up
with hearing this be said,
as English is not her native language—
this proverb did not make sense.

Today the string is torn
between two places,
he spreads himself thin,

I thought about how I found the shoes,
I was slightly disappointed to find
that they darkened in color
when I rubbed oil into them for the first time,
and showed them love,

One day, she hiked across the street
to look at her grass,

He feels the knots
and realizes they’re bullshit,
the urgency needless,

From some angles, in the sun,
there is a beautiful red glint,
that appears in the cracks.

And she said, “Well I’ll be damned,
My grass is greener from over here.”

The string stops pulling,

she put to rest the thought

because even a string
unsure of his location
needs love.

2022: What's New, Conglomerate?

John Cargille



I. Annoyances

“Want a break from the ads?”
Spotify asks, and God I do, lads;
But stubbornness stays my hand
from a demand for more convenience.
We live in a world with the
ancient wonders at our fingertips
and a million facts hid in questions on our lips
But to get there we need to wade
through products promised to aid you
And so I’ve bade you good luck, sir
if you want to escape the slur of the internet
without an advert making you a pervert

Sex sells, so they say, but
Why does Reese’s insist on chocolate being in
lingerie,
Why does Snicker’s suggest you do away
with health in exchange for faux social play?
Why does M&Ms persist in insisting that
food walks on two legs and that I must be a fan
of it?

I must be a fan of many things, apparently, to
be bombarded with all the things I need so fre-
quently; Better get the McRib that’s back, I’ll want
six Curder burgers but alas and alack I can only
get five, Better get in the Arby’s drive-through
for their great new steak burger which surpasses
all others, now where have I heard that before—
besides everywhere, of course
I’ll buy another iPhone, you say it’s the Tuesday at
2:30 model today? Do away with the past as easily
as the Google Pixel does away with
“annoying objects”,
Don’t object to that referring to people,
that doesn’t sound evil,
Nothing wrong with some advertisement people’s
quirks, with not knowing how any of this actually
works

Skin a car ad and you’d find nothing under the
hood, you could put another car’s skin on that one
and no one would even notice.
Tricks of the trade is all it is, in an environment
obsessed with one-upping show-biz you have to

brighten every skittle, cut out every bite, reach a
new height of absurdity as you color and mix and
count and light a little more,
Because how will they know they need it at their
door if they can’t taste it in their mouths?

Between you and me?
I’d like to burn down the most magical place on
earth. But annoyingly enough it’s not worth
my time; it’s not worth
my money.

II. Inconveniences

Now, now, now! Buy it
before you know it
it’ll be gone! Scream it
Loud, loud, loud so people
know they need to press the
button, make the purchase,
Forget that now is worthless
if we think we have
all the time in the world.

Hurled through targeted ads are we,
Targets painted on our backs by
those privy to our privacy who
dangle the keys in front of
salivating websites, no worries
given to hacking attacks,
*I’m sure our security will hold,
no lax firewalls in our old-ass
Infrastructure.*

Rupture the status quo
with a— gasp —throw
-away guarantee of satisfaction!
Really original to make a customer
wonder what 100% is;
Who takes action
when three Cheez-Its are burnt,
Whose ego is hurt enough to
call someone and demand
reparations as a reaction
When the interaction is a casualty
for spender as much as seller?

Teller at the bank will
cash your check, of course,
But wouldn't you like to
sign up for rewards, endorse
her to track your habits and
habitually steer you towards
their doors again?
Loyalty can't be bought but
points for it can be earned, it
helps where prices are concerned
And you've learned not to
question its side effects.

Complex is the human person,
so deals must be personalized
to polarize them towards purchasing,
to reduce them algorithmically
from anomaly to normality,
understood and categorized.

Complex is the human person,
so personnel must be personable,
wear a mask of merriment as they
wear thin underneath it,
bring comfort every minute,
as they pretend to be invincible.

Complex is the human person,
so let's break them down into
their constituent pieces,
prey on their insecurities, creases,
cracks in the facade we help them construct,
Make personal care items they
need to make their faces
anything but fucked,
Make them

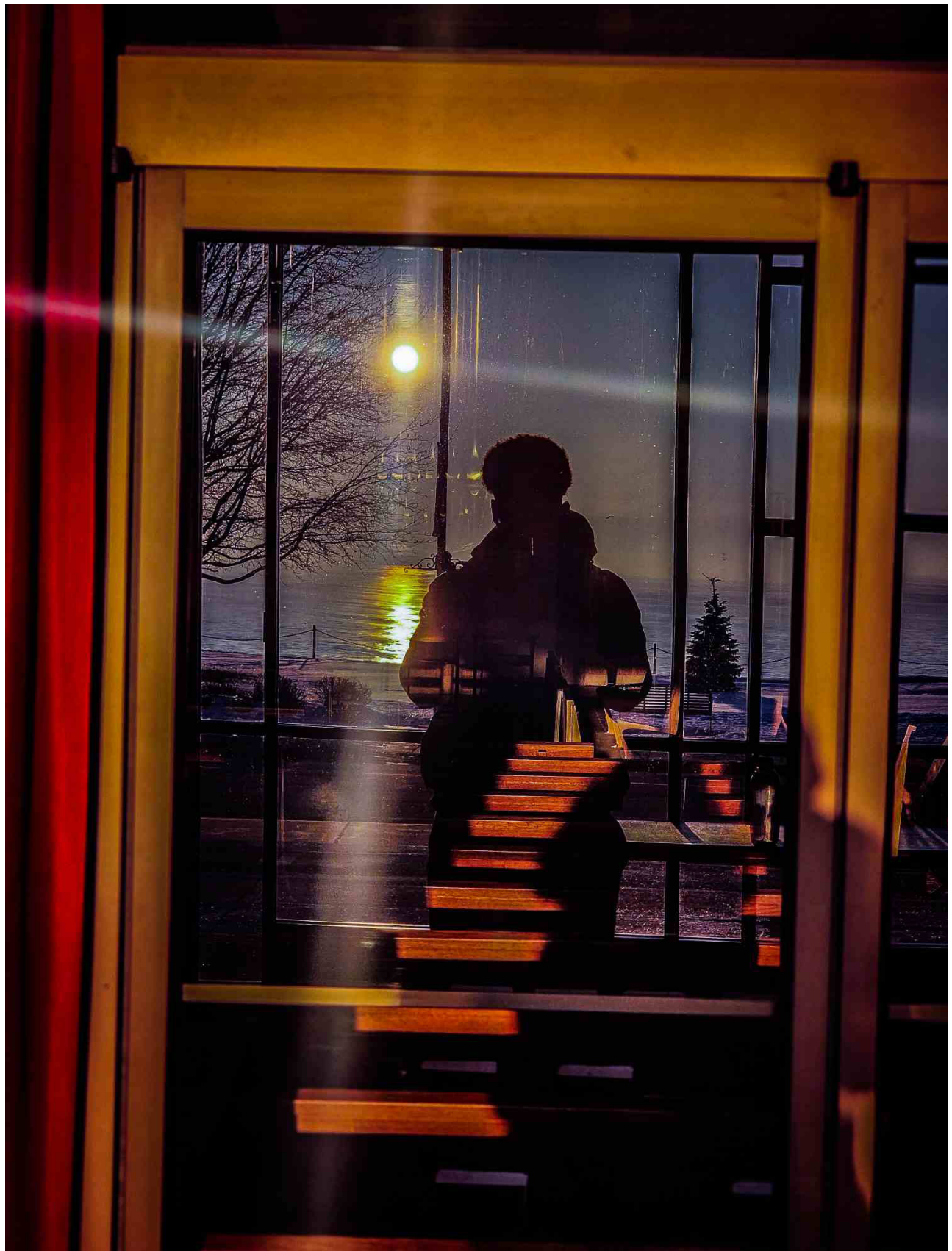
III. Faceless

Letter on my desk referencing a name that's not
mine, but the job title is right.
A typed out template for regrettably cutting ties,
signed in uncaring ink.
Imagined buyers bid on this cubicle, now for sale,
falling over one another to do more than what's in
the job description for scraps of bread and manda-
tory office parties.

How bright
is the outlook of one on the brink
As they open the door
And bid farewell to Marty's
"megalomaniac" Mega-Mart?
Well...

That's the beauty
of a large company;
you aren't liked or hated,
you're not berated
by faces full of fire.
You just get an email
that says you're fired.
And so you set sail
for something else,
searching for deliverance,
leaving behind liars
that said they knew you—
and a deep, corporate

Indifference.



Photos for IG 1 - Edelmar Morales-Rivera

Trough Recipe

Serena Richardson



Once upon a time, in a land far far away, there I was... sitting in Sunday School at church. We were nearing Christmas and our teacher brought in some treats to share with the class. Being the sugar-glutton that I am, I reached for as many as my grubby little paws could grasp, and was surprised to see these ridiculously neat and peculiarly small rolled-balls of chocolatey goodness. Why would she limit such a sweet surprise to such small quantities? Obsessing over the ooey-gooey creamy delight that melted onto my tongue, I immediately requested the recipe so that I could replicate it at home. Except my family does it a little differently... and we call it trough.

Why trough? Once you prepare this recipe, there is no desire to funnel it into petite, artful shapes or mold it into cupcake liners... in fact you have full permission to eat out of the mixing bowl like it is a trough. In case you are unaware, a trough is an open container for animals to eat or drink out of. Therefore, do what you may with the delectable sludge you create and enjoy :)

Ingredients

2 cups of sugar
1 cup of butter
½ cup of milk
4 tbsp cocoa powder
1 tsp vanilla extract
3 cups oats
optional (which means required unless you're a fool) 1 cup of chocolate chips

Make

1. Mix sugar, melted butter, milk, and cocoa powder together.
2. Add vanilla extract, oats, and chocolate chips. Stir well.
3. Put in the freezer until hardened.
4. You can use a spoon if you are civilized... otherwise enjoy!

What IS Leadership?

Andrew Colletti in **bold** (Centrique's President)

with Rick LaBerge, HARIBO of America's Chief Commercial Officer

Rick LaBerge is a senior executive with 30 years of experience leading global sales and marketing strategies that build iconic brands. His expertise in business strategy and innovative execution has led him to his current role as Chief Commercial Officer for HARIBO of America (HoA), the fastest growing confectionery company in the U.S. As CCO for HoA, Mr. LaBerge has built a best-in-class sales and marketing organization to amplify brand awareness across the U.S. Under his leadership, the U.S. HARIBO



business has doubled in growth over the last five years through creating innovative confectionery treats, increasing distribution and launching engaging media campaigns. Mr. LaBerge prioritizes attracting and retaining top talent to deliver results, and in 2018, HARIBO became the #1 gummi brand in the U.S.

How do you think candy interacts with the family experience?

We bring joy and happiness and we like to be part of a celebration. So let's call it a "fifth season" where an activity happens with a family and candy becomes an interesting part of it. A road trip is one of those. It's like a comfort or a reward. I mean, three kids in the back of a car on an eight hour car ride...

Is that something you did with your family?

Yeah, but I'm one of five children. I'm the baby. That probably explains a lot.

Why do you think that explains a lot?

Well, I don't think I come off as negative. I like to be noticed. I am comfortable speaking in front of a group. I get energy from building teams and running large organizations. The fifth child is the caboose in a family. I had to be the louder one, you know? Like, "Look at me, look at me. Listen to me."

"I get energy from building teams and running large organizations."

How do you think being the last child has influenced your personal and professional development?

One of the things I pride myself in is trying to keep the peace. And how do you make sure everybody has a chance to have their voice heard? But eventually, on a professional level, you have to say, "Okay, we heard everybody." It can't be perfect, but you have to move forward, and maybe try something different next time. You also have to keep people engaged. You have to keep people feeling like their voices are heard. There is a difference between unhealthy tension and healthy tension, and unhealthy tension is not productive.

And where would you say that comes from?

I am not an expert at this, but I would say experience and being able to break down communication. I have this great technique that I've learned where you volunteer to someone: "This is what I think you think of me." Or, "This is what I think you think of the situation." For example, "I think you don't like this color. Right? And you hate the design of this?" Or, "Oh, my gosh, I can't believe you think that," and you'd say, "Well, when I showed this to you, you rolled your eyes." And they might say, "Oh, well it was because I just read a text message about something that had nothing to do with that." So, in my non-qualified diagnosis, I would say some of the leading factors of conflict in the professional world are breaks in communication, misinterpreting communication, and not giving people enough time to feel like their voices are heard.

There's a balance of being directive and telling people what to do while also allowing that balance. It's tough. You have to really read the situation and look at the time pressures you're under. You have to have conversations outside the meeting to say, "Okay, you were very quiet in the back. Why is that? Did you not feel safe to put an opposite opinion?" It puts a lot of pressure on the leader to make sure that everyone's on board. There's a lot of people that can fake it and you may think that they're on board, but they walk out of the room and go, "We'll see if this works."

That involves a deep level of trust from the people that you're working with. I think the hardest part comes from knowing if you're encouraging people to be authentic with you, then they'll speak their mind. And if someone's not on board, they can't tell you if they're not being authentic.

But you have to watch if you have a strong personality and strong opinions. Inadvertently, you may shut people down. We do a lot of work with the Myers Briggs personality tests. With that, I think I'm extroverted with introverted tendencies because I'm most energized when I'm with other people. But, like you were saying about leadership, it can also be very challenging when you're not sure whether other people are on board with you. And if they're not on board, that's where I lose a lot of my energy. And if someone's not being present with me, I take that upon myself. I take that as a failure of my leadership.

"If someone's not being present with me, I take that upon myself. I take that as a failure of my leadership."

What experience comes to mind when you think about having to step back and slow down?

I spent a good part of my career working at Johnson & Johnson, and when I was there, we integrated with another company called Pfizer which is a company for consumer health care. I was working at J&J on their over-the-counter medicines. We acquired Pfizer's consumer healthcare business, and we wanted to merge the two together. We ended up having significant production issues when we brought those products into our factories. And I know for a fact, if we had created an environment where people were comfortable expressing their concerns, we could have avoided some of those hardships. But we publicly said by a specific date that we would have what needs to be done, done.

Did that help you understand that balance is important?

It helped me to become self aware and distinguish between when I'm defaulting to action and pushing too fast too quickly.

How do you know when you're in a situation where you need to slow down?

Whether it's professional or personal, I think it's on you as the individual, as a leader, to ask the team to see how you're doing and to see if you have enough data to make a conclusion. Sometimes we set fictitious dates for ourselves, but if you miss it by a week, that gives you the ability to go back and ask six more questions.

"I think perfection should get in the way of certain parts of a business. It doesn't have to be unreachable, it just has to be a standard."

What is your relationship with perfection?

One of our core values is pragmatism. I think there are certain things that are non-negotiable. One of our other core values is quality. I would say I'm a perfectionist when it comes to quality, but I encourage my team to try different flavors to test things. We have launched products where two years later, we discontinued them. So, I think perfection should get in the way of certain parts of a business. It doesn't have to be unreachable, it just has to be a standard. We can always adapt and adjust and, of course, correct.

What is leadership to you?

Leadership, to me, is there to help provide clarity on where you're going and what it's going to take to get there. And that takes shape in making choices. It's making sure you can live in two worlds: a world where you're dreaming of what the future can be and a world that is the reality of delivering your commitments. As a leader, I have to make sure that we can deliver on all those commitments. The beauty of working for privately held companies is that I don't take it based on a month, a quarter, or a year. I take it based on the right choices for generations.

At HARIBO, we're excited to be part of this community. We're excited for the grand opening and we're excited for more than almost 400 associates working up in Pleasant Prairie. I'd love for people to remember that we are all about childlike happiness, about flavors, and textures. We're committed to delighting our consumers and bringing something new. We ended up choosing to move to Pleasant Prairie because of this amazing community we have here in the Kenosha area. The community has a great work ethic and embraced us. It exceeded our expectations.





After a long day most people want to come home and lay on the couch. They could watch some TV or absentmindedly scroll through their phone pretending life has some sort of meaning on that tiny screen. Or if they are lucky they might take a nap, getting those much needed hours of sleep before they go out for the night and prove that their youth isn't being wasted.

I have none of those options. Most of the time I find myself sitting on my chair, just opposite of the couch. I always think about getting another chair, something to match and make it all nice and even as if that would make my life any more normal. But instead I sit on my white chair, the pride of my collection, and sit across from my couch. I just look at it most of the time.

I stare so long the blue starts to distort, bending and molding into something its not. As if the blue upholstery is calling to me. Or screaming, depending on the day.

I could give in and finally sit in it. I could let the stains on it seep into my own being, the different browns and rusty reds from drinks spilled and brownies burnt becoming a part of my existence. The blues highlighting my DNA. The royal blue taking my eyes. The navies blending into my hair. And the color of the ocean soaking into me. The buttons would poke into my back and making me stay in one place. Then I could finally say, "See, this couch gets used, because I'm sitting in it right now."

But I can't do that. I can't make myself sit there at all. Whenever my friends come over and see it they suggest I get rid of it. Everyone knows I hate it. But I always insist I can't. "It's vintage," I'll say even though I've never really cared for such things and only bought it because I liked the color. Instead I let the blue fade, not by use but by time. As the blues grow weaker the memories grow stronger.

This couch was my first piece of furniture. Something I bought when I didn't know my own style yet. Now as I've grown around it the couch no longer looks like something I would want. Though its vibrancy has lost its luster it still stands out in among my more muted tones, the modern look clashing with its camel back that expresses a uniqueness about me that I don't think is there anymore.

Every time I truly think about getting rid of it, giving in and buying a couch I'd actually like to sit in, I burst into tears. I just can't do it.

That couch holds memories, ones built so deep into me I'm not sure where the present starts and the past ends. It's been five years and yet I still see him just sitting there. Every time I look at the couch a different part of him pops back up into my reality. The way his legs

hung over the arm every time he would lay down on it. Or how he'd sit there and smirk at me, just because. But mostly I just see him sitting there waiting for me to sit next to him. But I just can't.

So, as I sit on this chair I look at that couch. I try to find the bad, searching my mind for a fight or a time where he ignored me. But all the bad has left me in my time of need. It's like my mind only wants me to see the good. And if there is only good then I cannot get rid of that couch.

If I get rid of the couch it's like finally getting rid of him. I've had other friends sit on that couch. Different boyfriends and girlfriends and whatever else sit on that couch and still all I see is him.

I used to be a more interesting person. Someone who believed in the sanctity of accent pieces, like a bright blue couch. I used to go out at night and never wonder who I would be when I woke up, because I knew who I was. And I'd come home after a long night, sometimes with him and sometimes not, ready to sit on that couch. It would be my lifeline.

When people would compliment that couch it felt like they were complimenting me and my successes. As if this bright blue couch, once spotless, was an expression of my own self worth. In some ways it was. It showed I was prepared for life, it was unique and proof that I could live on my own. People who saw this couch probably thought *this is someone who knows what they're doing*. And I did know what I was doing. I was great.

Though I know it's insane I look at this couch and I see how my life should have been. How my life would have been different had he stayed beside me. About now it would maybe be his couch, or he would have convinced me to finally get rid of it.

In this moment I look at this fading blue couch with so many stains and loose buttons and I see what I could have been.

My downfall.

For the first time in seven months I change the routine I had built for myself. All this rage build up inside me, leaking really. I get up and kick one of the legs of the couch as hard as I can. It doesn't go far but the slide it makes across the floor is the most soothing sound I have heard in years. I kick it again, and one more time for good measure. By the time I'm done the couch has moved a couple of feet. I'll have to put it back eventually but for now I like where it is.

Then I see him again, looking at me as if implying I join him. And for once I sit down beside him on this old couch and let the blues seep into me.

Solitude on the Field

Mary "GP" Gargano-Price



A rustling in the grass, a faint whirring of wings...they were music to his ears.

'There's two...no; three! Wow...'

The buzzing of their calls, communicating to their mates and searching for food, vibrated through the boggy path and filled Shino with a restless sense of purpose that he could only akin to adrenaline. He squatted behind an oak tree, butterfly net in hand, and watched a thick cluster of damselflies and their larger counterparts zip over a holding pond.

'I need one of each.' Shino decided, checking his pocket journal for the third time.

The damselflies would be a piece of cake to catch; they were far more flippant than dragonflies. However, they were fragile, their wings immediately curling in once riga-moritz hit. He would need to be extremely gentle when catching the family. Shino took a quiet breath, inhaling through his nose and exhaling as minimal as possible. The Odonata order were perceptive as Hell and couldn't be caught unless with the utmost of surprise. Shino checked his watch and then looked out at the setting sun, noting the gradual temperature change that was currently occurring. Today was one of the last days he'd be able to catch these fliers.

'Alright. Let's do this.'

The holding pond stood just

west of the campus' baseball field, where Shino could see the men's team taking fly balls off a pitch-back machine. He scowled silent; the boys' shouting no doubt left his targets on edge. He'd have to work quickly. Like a panther on the hunt, Shino crouched low to the bole of the tree and wordlessly set up his Paris Plaster jar, careful to pour in the right amount of Ethanol. He repeated the process with his second jar, setting them both aside with their caps loosely unscrewed. Then, Shino rose and dumped his drawstring bag next to them, checking his field shoes for sturdiness.

He took another breath, narrowed his eyes on a target: a blueish-green damselfly, flitting about on a decomposing leaf.

'You get one chance.' Shino reprimanded himself.

Then, he took off.

Fwoosh!

The first initial swipe stirred up the coat of leaves on the water, sending his target and others into retreat. They zipped and zagged in the air, bursting away from their pursuer like missiles. But Shino was not going to be so easily deterred; on the second swing, he swiped a damselfly from the air and skidded to a stop in the muddy shallows, immediately twisting the net so his victim couldn't escape.

Shino glared triumphantly, "Marvelous. Now I just need...

oh, dammit."

Upon further inspection, he began to realize that the damselfly was already dead, its body smashed to bits from an undoubtedly zealous swing. Shino cursed again. He'd need another one. Tossing his coat aside, Shino rolled up his pants and wiped off the mud on his glasses. Then, he rushed the holding pond once more, pinpointing a brownish damselfly hovering over the water.

"Gotcha!"

With a quick swipe, the damselfly was tangled into the netting, its hunter quickly traipsing through the marshland and back to his makeshift headquarters. There, Shino carefully guided the damselfly to its doom, pushing the netting over a kill-jar like a sock in order to trap his victim. The insect was asphyxiated within moments. One down, one to go. Shino carefully set the jar aside, wincing as the baseball field grew louder. He'd be damned if those idiots scared off his precious specimens.

'Relax. They're too far away to bother them. You're the only source of life they're paying attention to anyways.'

Up next was the dragonfly--the Ashindae family--he needed. Shino quickly inspected his soaking-wet clothes and grimaced; laundry day was going to be an absolute drag. Oh, well. There were far more important matters at hand. As

quickly as he could, Shino recollecting his net and stalked after a rather massive dragonfly, its reflective body giving away itself in the approaching dusk. In an instance, Shino pounced, missing his target by a hair. He quickly rose to his feet and sprinted after it, the dragonfly leading him in circles and erratic patterns to shake him off its path.

'Don't take your eyes off! Don't you dare take your eyes off of him!' Shino demanded of himself, picking up pace and feeling the mud fleck onto his clothes from behind.

The dragonfly was leading Shino further and further away from the holding pond, taking him to the lake next to the baseball field at a breathless pace. As he got closer, Shino could hear the team yelling at him, whooping and calling as if they were placing bets on which contestant would succumb first. Shino narrowed his eyes once more, picking out his victim in the air--he would not be the one to cave in.

After a few minutes of pursuit, Shino noticed he was well and beyond a mile away from his makeshift camp, the outfielders rattling the fences as he ran through the trees. Eventually, the dragonfly diverted his path to the lake--Shino jumped in right after it.

"Ah ha! I got you!"

Shino was waist-deep in the wa-

ter, the muck below seeping into his shoes and pant legs. Thank goodness he had forgotten his phone in the lab. Carefully, Shino checked his butterfly net and exhaled with relief; the dragonfly was trapped inside, clinging to the fabric for dear life. Shino smiled, "Finally. Only a few more orders left."

"Yo! The Hell are you doing in the lake?!"

Shino's mood quickly deflated; the baseball team was pressed against the fence, ogling, and snickering to themselves.

'Perfect. Absolutely perfect.' Shino thought.

The varsity team consisted predominantly jackasses, a popular few being from the Akatsuki Fraternity, an exclusive establishment within the university that Shino didn't particularly like. And to think, they were just cheering him on! Shino decided to ignore them, wading out of the water as he held his net and prize protectively above his head.

"Hey, asshat! I'm *talking* to you!" A member with silvery hair barked, seething and spitting through the outfield fence.

Shino sighed to himself. He would never stoop low enough to answer the call of a man whose athletic career revolved around catching more fists to the face than catching actual fly balls. Shino climbed out of the lake and shook himself, check-

ing the dragonfly once more as the team captain dragged his teammate away from the fence, the rest of the players chattering to themselves as they went back to their own business.

"Absolute idiots." Shino murmured.

When he reached the original spot of his gear, he carefully dumped the dragonfly into the remaining kill-jar, watching solemnly as it beat its wings in a fruitless attempt to escape its plastery grave. All the accomplishment he had just felt moments before had vanished in an instant.

"I'm sorry, buddy, I didn't want to hurt you," Shino soothed, picking up both jars, " I just need to do my best for this class. I won't hurt any more of your friends if I can help it."

It was always a forlorn business, catching and killing his insects; Shino felt guilty from ripping them from their habitats. But, regardless, it was necessary for science, as well as his grade. He'd just have to manage with it, like always. Shino was a pro in managing things by himself.

An *absolute* pro.



Lin Sensenbrenner - Untitled



I have a friend. They have “Turkish” in their Twitter bio, and when they speak, their words have a lilt to them. They study abroad for school, and they spend their spare time making Tchaikovsky playlists and streaming horror games on Discord for their friends to watch while half a world away. They speak Italian to the guys upstairs that bang on the walls too hard, and they take impulsive train rides to idyllic cities to get away from their roommate.

But they went home yesterday, back to Turkey. Türkiye.

They told me they would go to a museum tomorrow. They’ve been to just about every museum in Istanbul multiple times, but what else is there? They say everyone is sticking to their routine, and I try to say something encouraging, but what can I say? It’s four-fifty-six PM there. I’ve never been away from the Americas in my life. But they’re hurting, and I can tell, even if it’s over text. My friend is hurting. My friend is in Turkey, telling me about their bass guitar and the corset they’ll wear tomorrow, and I think it’s because they know we won’t understand. Because they’re sick of talking about the earthquake.

They have friends and family in the country, people they’ve been forced to console in between funerals and relocations. A quarter of the country was destroyed just like that, while they were off at school studying humanities. An earthquake hit, and they’re lucky — they’re not lucky. It’s not normal, what’s happening. But no one gives a damn because it’s the Middle East, right? No one cares because it’s an eccentric, young, alternative person who lives on the internet going home to rubble. No one cares because Turkey and Syria? I’ll bet most people in the West forget those countries even exist half of the time.

I have a friend in Turkey right now, and they’re angry. Of course they are. The internet cared about them for all of three seconds, and now everyone’s forgotten. This isn’t a shiny, “noble” cause like fighting a war against Russia. This is a natural disaster. Not as flashy. No one cares. Of course they’re angry. I’m angry for them. I want to do something, but I don’t know what that something is.

I have a friend. They don’t live in Turkey most of the time, but they speak of it with pride. They gush about the food, and the way the cities are built. They live and breathe their culture in everything they do. They have “Turkish” in their Twitter bio.

Trusting YOUR Gut

Victoria Stockinger in **bold** (*Centrique's Secretary*) with Professor Udry

“I had a place to stay for three nights when I landed in Taiwan. After that...”

What's your favorite language or a language you admire?

I love listening to French. That's what I first started studying, but I did not do very well in it throughout middle school, high school, and even during college, embarrassingly. But always in the back of my mind was the strong desire to relearn French because it's such a beautiful language. I really like the way it sounds. I also love Chinese because it's a super fun language. I love reading and writing it, but mostly I like speaking Chinese because it's a lot of fun. I get pure pleasure out of that.

Because of how it's structured?

I think it's something more basic than that — It always catches people by surprise when they start speaking Chinese with me or hear me start speaking Chinese. As a blond-haired, old white guy, it's something a little bit different. So I think that shock factor is always a little bit of fun too. But outside of that, I love the tones. Even though they're very difficult to learn and get used to, once you get it, it just makes it a very different kind of language, the way you use it to do different kinds of things.

Do you find yourself thinking in Chinese?

I can't say I do that very much these days. But certainly when I was living in Taiwan. When my Chinese was — during grad school — at its best, absolutely. You can't carry on high-level conversations about Manchu shamanism if every word, every sentence, is being translated. But then, of course, we grew up with English. It's incredibly complex as well. Keeping track of all the grammatical terms and things like that have always been difficult but important, especially as a teacher.

What did you go to undergrad for?

I actually majored in religion. I went to undergrad thinking that I was going to do psychology. I think half of the people in the world do that. They think, “Oh, this is great. I can help people solve their problems.” But then I started taking psychology courses, and they were very different from what I had expected and wanted. Religion has always fascinated me. The power of religion over people and the harm that religion could cause, which, of course, there's a lot of good in it too, just led me to want to learn more about it. And then, it was through studying religion where I got drawn into Buddhism, Hinduism, and Daoism. And that's the kind of stuff that just fascinated me.

How did you go from the broad spectrum of religion to the very short time period of Chinese history?

When I started studying Buddhism and Daoism, then even Confucianism, all of these were so important to China. [In the 80's,] the leader of China had come to the United States and gone to a rodeo down in Texas, and they were bringing pandas over. Businesses were starting to move into China, and there was a lot more cultural exchange going on, which was all very new. I became attracted to Chinese culture, history, religion, and language.

At that time, I knew that if I studied Chinese language, I would have a number of paths open to me. After I graduated from college, I worked as a very bad waiter for one summer, but I earned enough money to buy a plane ticket to go to Taiwan, where I could study Chinese. But why Taiwan, not China? This was 1985. Had I lived in China, I would have had to live in a foreign students dormitory, a government minder, and any Chinese friends I made would have been hassled and harassed by those government minders. It probably would have worked out okay and been fine, but going to Taiwan would have been much more free. So, I went to Taiwan.

“I knew that if I studied Chinese language, I would have a number of paths open to me.”

How did you start learning the Chinese language and about all these aspects of Chinese culture and what it would be like to travel there? Was it mostly self study?

I studied Chinese for one summer between my junior and senior year at college. I just stayed on campus and did a summer semester studying Chinese. It was hard, but it was so much fun. Then I continued to study second year Chinese during my senior year.

So you just followed your interests and things that you learned about and paid attention to the cultural climate?

I absolutely did. Career and cultural climate and the world's situation. You couldn't miss it because it was such a huge change with China opening. It was something different. Just like you guys can't miss the war in Ukraine. You also can't miss the now "threat" that China represents to the United States. Most people don't pay too much attention to that stuff, but still, it's hard to avoid that. And so it was similar at that time.

What do you think your younger self would think, seeing where your path has taken you?

Prior to college? Totally confused. I grew up on the North Shore of Long Island, in a small, well-off community, where most of the kids' parents were homemakers. Parents, most of them, were stockbrokers or somewhere working in Wall Street. It was a 99.9% white high school. There was one Asian woman. And then, one of my best friends, his mother was Japanese, and his father was Dutch. That's it. There were no black students. But my parents had always brought us into New York City a lot, and I loved New York City. I loved the diversity, I loved everything that was going on.

But, honestly, soccer was the most important thing in my life at that point of time. So I chose the best academic institution with the highest level soccer that could be. That just so happened to be Columbia University in New York City. Once I was living in New York, with such diversity around me at Columbia University, it was just fantastic.

“It was definitely hard, leaving everything I knew behind.”

How did you go from living in New York, to then living abroad, to then— Carthage?

Taiwan was great. Going from New York to Taiwan wasn't easy. Taipei is a big city, huge city, bigger than New York. So making that move to Taipei was hard. It was definitely hard, leaving everything I knew behind. And you really leave everything behind, because this is the 80s. You couldn't even make phone calls. The first year that I lived in Taiwan, the only way that I could call home was to go to the post office and book a time to make an international call. Now, it's much easier.

I lived in Taiwan for three and a half — four years, really. Studied Chinese, learned English, traveled around Asia, and just lived my life. It was awesome. I had a place. Well, when I first went over there, I didn't. I did couch-surf for a little while. [I found a] network that all worked out fine. I had a place to stay for three nights when I landed in Taiwan. After that, I knew I could go to a hostel. I knew I could go to a youth activity center, or a hotel. Worst case scenario, something like that. But I had a place to stay with the business associates of a friend from my college. They were in the shoe business, and Taiwan at that time was making all your Nikes and Adidas and things like that.

But, on my plane trip over there, I met three Americans who were returning to Taiwan after having just spent a summer back in America. At that time, it was a 16-hour flight with an 8-hour lay-over in Seoul. So, got to know them. After the three days of living with the business associates, I immediately moved in with one of them for a little while until I found an apartment.

There was this guy from California. A big red-haired dude. He was leaving, I was arriving. I got his apartment, his English teaching jobs, his motorcycle, his motorcycle helmet. Just sort of replaced him. And then, when I left, same thing happened. I gave my apartment, my motorcycle, my motorcycle helmet—different ones, obviously—to an American who had just arrived.

“When I was in Taiwan, I taught English, I studied Chinese, and then I worked for a shipping company for a while. Didn't like that.”

I played for the soccer team that the shipping company sponsored. Then came back to the US and worked for three years doing business that was awful. I just found out that it definitely was not for me. I then applied for a master's because I had thought I wanted to go into the Foreign Service. I talked to a lot more people after I was in the master's program and figured I didn't want to spend a year stamping passports in Peru. I really wanted to be in Asia, specifically China. There was no way, as a low level, foreign service person, that you could do that. I went back to school for my master's in international affairs. That's where I figured out that I really loved China and wanted to learn more about it, and the best way to understand China is through history. You can't understand modern China without understanding what they've gone through. I was attracted to it. After two years of getting my master's, I went to grad school for my PhD.

So you've never lived in China?

I have. I lived in China for two years doing my dissertation research. Before that, I spent about half a year living in China but constantly going back and forth on business trips. I lived in Beijing for a year and a half, and in the northeast, in Changchun City, for six months.

So my dissertation wasn't done. It was my trial year on the market. But Carthage gave me a job. So I hurried up and finished my dissertation and ended up in Wisconsin. I'd heard of Wisconsin before, but trust me, that's the most that can be said about it. When you live on the East Coast, or even the West Coast, you don't think a lot about Wisconsin. It's not really in your consciousness.

So I just ended up here. It was a very hard adjustment. It's so flat here compared to the Pacific Northwest—which is not flat, and is just stunningly beautiful in terms of its mountains and its ocean. Coming here was hard. It was the hardest on my wife. When we first arrived here 20 years ago, we drove through downtown Kenosha. It took us maybe 2 minutes to drive through it, and my wife was like: “What? Really, we're living here?” So, it was hard.

Water in a Glass or a Glass of Water?

Madelyn Lakeman



You clutch a glass of water, one hand wrapped around it, feeling the stillness of an iridescent pool. In contrast to the warmth of your body, the glass is cool. You imagine what would happen if you were to drop that glass: the sound of the shattering; the water exploding over the floor like an angry waterfall; the sudden emptiness of your hand as the tightness of your grip loosens. But it's only your imagination. What's stopping you from letting the glass go?

She broke up with him eleven days before his birthday. Four years they had been together and now my brother was in tears, the wet droplets soaking into my left shoulder. His wails reminded me of when he was younger, when he'd trip and blood would seep from his skin because it hurts to be human. My fingers slowly rubbed his back while the pain that poured out of him was being absorbed by the pores of my skin. There were so many tears that soon my eyes were trying to rid them from my insides too. The warmth of our locked bodies was trying to rid a virus. They were different viruses but the same symptoms.

Water takes many forms. Sometimes it is a river. Sometimes it is the rain from the clouds. Sometimes it is the ice that cools our drinks on sweaty summer afternoons. Yet, it is all the same water. The same water we drink. The same water that the clouds leak out and soak back up just so they are reminded that they have a job to do as clouds. Water is made of hydrogen and oxygen. Our bodies are made of water. That's what makes it water. That's what makes us human. Just like the clouds, sometimes we need to leak water to remind us that we are human.

When my boyfriend broke up with me, I cried for the wrong reasons. I sobbed into the arms of my mother. I screamed at him in the middle of my driveway while the roaring wind tore my hair across my face. My arms were tugging into the blue sweatshirt I was wearing because it was October and chilly. I knew we weren't going to make it. I tried to convince myself that I did have feelings for him, that I considered us a "couple." The problem with lies though is that they are merely a loose

thread pulled from a knitted sweater. A lie always loops back to the truth.

If being a couple would make the emptiness inside of me disappear then I would consider myself a "girlfriend" to hold on to him as long as possible. I wanted to be wanted. Whether it were a friend, a stranger, or a boyfriend, I wanted someone to care. I wanted someone to ask about my day, to listen to me complain about being human, or to accompany me on drives where the destination became whatever direction the car took us.

"How are you?" Such simple words but I longed for someone to ask me them. I wanted to be read easily, but people are complicated and not everyone knows how to read. It seemed as if I were the only one in the world who gave a damn about other people. I was the asker, not the one being asked.

I didn't cry because I was heartbroken over a boyfriend. I didn't cry because he broke up with me. I cried for him and the hurt he must have felt because he too knew all along that I didn't truly love him. We were too young for "love," but he couldn't understand that. But as I would lie in bed thinking about the person who I considered my closest friend, I made sure to convince myself that I also missed him because he dumped me. I was the one who was wronged.

Water is strange. It always tastes the same: no taste at all. There is no word to describe the way water tastes. "Refreshing" is a word used to describe how water makes us feel, not how it tastes. Even so, our bodies crave water. It's only a matter of time that the water overflows inside of us and dribbles down our cheeks. It is natural. Our hearts yearn for water as they yearn for pain. We yearn for it because we wouldn't know what it's like to be without water, the thirst that lingers in the back of our throats while pounding in our heads. How would you know happiness if you've never been in pain?

She broke up with him eleven days before his birthday. I was sitting at the kitchen table, a glass cup of Sprite Zero filled with ice sat beside me. My legs were crossed and I was looking through the railings of our family room since our

house is an open floor. As I watched my brother play Ark with my sister in silence, I stared at my useless phone. Phones are used to contact people but I never had people to contact or people to contact me.

My brother was sitting in a chair near the television. His bambi blue eyes with long lashes spitting out tears, his fragile arms shaking every so often like an earthquake. He used to cry a lot when he was a boy. He'd cry whenever he thought our mom was mad at him even when she wasn't. He'd cry when he spilled something, when he thought a teacher was yelling at him, or when Dinoco in Cars was totalled during a race. However, the moment he cried again, after she blamed him for being who he was meant to be, he became a man.

Watching him was when I realized that I had no right to cry when Adrian left me. After he had left me, I went on numerous dates with boys who had been heartbroken just as my brother had been. I went on dates with boys who told me about girlfriends who cheated on them and the countless hookups they've been having since then. I went on dates with boys who were underage drinking and drinking while driving. I even went on a date with a boy who told me he tries to kill himself every Christmas. And while their hearts were scabbing over mishapenly, I had been inconsiderately wallowing in my own sadness like some billionaire who lost two dollars from her wallet.

I think about those boys and my brother a lot late at night when the only sounds are my fan and the crinkling of sheets when I turn. I breathed in the same pain as them, a kind of pain that I felt only I was going through as it took over my veins and began pumping fire to my heart. If I were a glass of water, I'd only ever take the shape of the glass because I wouldn't be willing to let myself spill. Water takes many forms but I was too closed-minded then to know it because I'd forgotten that I'm the one who holds the glass.

You clutch a glass of water. An iridescent pool. It's time you let go.



Reflection Chamber - Andrew Colletti

The Spoken Word: Look Around

Kj De Jesús



Would you look around?
The world is infected.
As infected as the paper I write on with this bloody ink it is infected.
It has been dyed, in colors of black, purple, blue, white and red.
It has died in the hands of the people.

Would you look around?
The village doesn't raise the person anymore.
There barely is a village- there barely is a stream.
It has flowed away, gone away- damned.
It has flown away from the people.

Would you look around?
The sky is beautiful.
Painted by the wind and the sun and the moon.
It has held light in the sky amongst the odds.
It has survived for the people.

Would you look around?
The water is heavy.
As if it was poison- lead, ammunition, to kill who depends on it.
It has been polluted, by companies and carelessness.
It has been polluted by its wise family- tricked by the people.

Would you look around?
The people are dying.
Aggressively, they go, disease, murder, suicide, addiction- hunger.
It has been a struggle for them to survive from natural causes.
It has been a suffering so grand that the suffering suffers... poor people.

Would you look around?
The land is disappearing.
Abandoned, to run wild but empty, for profit and benefit.
It has been cut down and left behind like its children.
It has overgrown in fire, poverty, and devastation against the people.

Would you look around?
The world is alive.
As alive as our hearts are, beating, breathing with the world.
It is living in colors of culture and history and acceptance.
It will live in the hands of the people.

Look around.

~Kj De Jesús
Of the Kenosha people

EDITOR'S BLURBS

Poetry Underground's Open Mic



Poetry Underground's Closed Mic

Maddy Lakeman _____ **(Chief Editor)**

Working with Centrique has been an honor. I didn't think I'd become part of the E-board since I am a transfer student and have never been to Carthage before, but everyone was so welcoming and kind. They were welcoming on Day 1! Every voice in Centrique is heard -- it's a great group to be with. I could not be happier! As for the magazine itself, I've loved reading everyone's works and submissions.

This year was a bit rough since Centrique has not had a magazine in a while due to COVID, so our roles on E-board were not really defined. We started out with having no plan or structure, but slowly built it over time. This, I know, will set the foundation for future Centrique publications. It has been a real milestone for the club, spreading inspiration throughout campus! I am so proud of everyone and the work they have put in, but I am especially happy to have met the people I did.

True friends are hard to come by. The people I have worked with for Centrique are the rare kind that you never want to let go of. Nothing I write or say could express my gratitude for being a part of this club, even if I didn't contribute as much as I could have. My first year at Carthage was rough. Centrique was the only thing in my life that kept me going and I'll forever be grateful. :)

Terrell T. Franklin _____ **(Chief Journalist)**

Being a part of Centrique has been a great journey. I could not have imagined how close a group of people working on a literary magazine could feel to me. Every part of it was so much more of a magazine. Every time I look back on what I remember best, I see smiling faces, excited voices, and passionate dialogue based on the stories we felt needed to be told on campus. I hope when people see the magazine, they just don't skim over it and see the works that "artsy" people had just put together. Instead, I want people to use their imagination to envision a group where a bunch of college kids came together creating a bond over one common goal, where otherwise these people would likely never interact if it weren't for the magazine.

Eva Menzia _____ **(Chief Graphic Designer)**

Hello! My name is Eva and I am the chief graphic designer for Centrique! This experience has been a fast one, but a fun one. I have never been able to express my art as openly as this before...since my art is the display of all other art, which is pretty cool. I was hired around a month ago to work for Centrique and I have never done graphic design before, so this was an incredibly challenging job. But luckily, Centrique has introduced me to some pretty awesome people who always lift me up and remind me how important it is to express myself, trust myself, and take risks. I hope you enjoy and take in the hard work we've all contributed to and created because I am extremely proud of it. Enjoy! Mwah!!

Tabitha Mani-Eapen _____ **(Director of PR)**

Working with Centrique is one of the best things, and I feel proud of the different aspects I am involved in. As PR, I can create stories and posters that influence people. I work directly with my peers and listen to their passionate work. Organizing the different events and talking about them to my friends is one of the best parts of my work. Looking back, I could've done things differently, but I would never trade my time here for anything in this world.

Tajaniah Drone _____ **(Director of Finance)**

As someone who has never played a role in creating a publication, I've come to appreciate all of the hard work that goes into it. As an editor, my favorite part of the process was seeing all of the passion, creativity, and hard work that went into every submission! This experience will definitely be one to remember.



Centrique's Friend'sgiving celebration 2022



Centrique staff 1971

Daniel Dadivas ————— (Co-Director of Event Management)

Centrique magazine means more to me than the distribution of literary work and visual art. The process introduced me to a community of creative and supportive people who share the same passion for expression, inclusion, and diversity as me. While the release of the publication showcases numerous fantastic and insightful submissions that deserve to be broadcasted across campus, it is the revival of this exceptional organization with its promotion of its values of creativity and acceptance that excites me the most. From long meetings to extensive submission forms to annoying janitors with random, unknown QR codes, the contributions from the entire club will not be understated by our readers. With every witty pun, tearful line, and inspiring quote, I know that our readers will recognize our hard work and commitment to this

Elsie Berg ————— (Co-Director of Event Management)

Working on the magazine was an experience that truly opened my eyes to the experiences of my fellow students on campus. Through reviewing their writings and artwork, I felt I could get a sense of what all of us here at Carthage hold dear or find worth sharing. More than that, I also found that working on this project with other students so dedicated to our vision and to sharing the stories of everyone on campus created a place where we could all work together to capture the collective soul of Carthage. No one works harder than so many of the people working on this publication, and I found their devotion to this project admirable. This magazine is the spirit of our campus. These are the stories and pieces of life that my fellow students felt needed to be seen by everyone. It is an honor to bring them to life in this magazine.

Edelmar Morales-Rivera ————— (Photographer)

Centrique is pure, lovely, different, and an experience everyone should have. The work on the magazine was fun, unique, and lively in the fashion of working towards publication as a squad, team, and I appreciate the camaraderie.

Victoria Stockinger ————— (Secretary)

I'm incredibly honored to have helped advocate for creative student expression at Carthage, and revive the org that had left a hole in our campus culture. A physical publication is a huge benefit to our sense of purpose and permanence, but I'm also immensely grateful for the community we've established this year. It may sound cliché, but my life would be lesser without the people I've met, the conversations I've had, the work I've done, and the laughs I've shared—and it was all because of Centrique.

Sophia Force ————— (Editorial Staff)

While I only found out about Centrique this semester, I felt immediately welcome into this community. I love being around creative people and it encourages me to keep making my own art and appreciate other's art. I enjoyed reading through everyone's submissions and seeing what kinds of art people on campus are making and what people are drawn to write about. As for submitting work, I chose a piece that I was proud of and felt that it was a good fit aesthetically for this magazine.

Centrique Members

LAST EMAIL before publication <3

What's up Nerds?!?!?

The magazine is finished yo!! (That shit was craaaaazzyyyyyy)

So... what's next? Isn't that the question? The 2023-2024 school year (duh) but other than that... at least for today when you read this... cherish the pages you are holding. Write notes, share things you like, (if your name is John, make corrections) and keep creating!

Over the summer, you will see a new e-board, our system being slightly (bad news, more forms ;) more streamlined, and a budget that pays for all our bad decisions. Like printing a magazine.

Sadly, that does mean that our current e-board is retiring T_T.

Shout out to Victoria, Tre, Maddy, Daniel, Elsie, Tabi, Taj, and Ed. Even bigger shout out to Eva for being the most DEDICATED person to the magazine with 2 months of being part of Centrique (damn Ma' when did you sleep?). These people have grown so much over the past semester and a half (sorry we took so long electing people) that we have fallen in love with the My Little Pony and Veggie Tales memes (and SLANDER).

Next year, there will be a new crew taking care of Centrique. We hope that it continues to grow in size (that's what she said) and spirit. There will be new jokes, new routines and new members (this is a reminder to be 'involved' in the Involvement Fair lol- get it?).

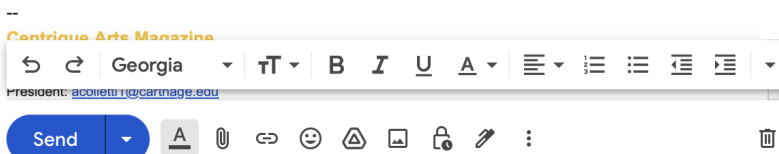
We wanted to write you one last letter at 1:41 in the morning before submitting for publication (classic, we know). We took the college student route and we're submitting this after the due date. We wanted you to know that this semester has been everything. We've shared tears of pain and laughter together. In our darkest moments we had each other and in our darkest places we had Icy Hot... kidding... unless?

Together we learned how to build a community that embraces their authentic selves, and listens and respects each other's truths—a skill necessary to heal trauma, improve lives, and shake with laughter. And, soon, we will all be going in different directions.

College is kind of like being trapped in a train station (for a really long time). You spend some time together with total strangers, knowing that you may not see much of them ever again. Though, that doesn't diminish your time together in any way. In fact, it might make you cherish it even more. And the strong friendships you build here will not only remain (they better) for the rest of your life, but they also remind you that you are never alone on your journey. Even if you embark on your train alone, you still have the memories and connections that will await you when you return.

So no matter where you choose to go on your journey, just remember the people who waited with you at the train station. Remember the people who lingered when they didn't have to. The people who waited for you to get your ticket, sparked random conversations with you and who waited when they had no reason to stay other than because they enjoyed your company. Because these people are the people who will always wait for you.

- Your presidents Andrew and Kjl





Notes





Special Thanks

Rick Meier, our faculty advisor, and the English department,
Lance Thompson, for guiding us the entire way,
Carthage Student Government for supporting us,

Isabella Norante for reviving Centrique before Covid-19

Phil Carl and Larry Dunn, founders of Centrique Magazine

All those who submitted,
All those who collaborated,
And all those who created.

“That you are here -- that life exists and identity,
That the powerful play goes on, and you may contribute a verse.”

- Walt Whitman

Strike the match. Share your light. Start the fire.

