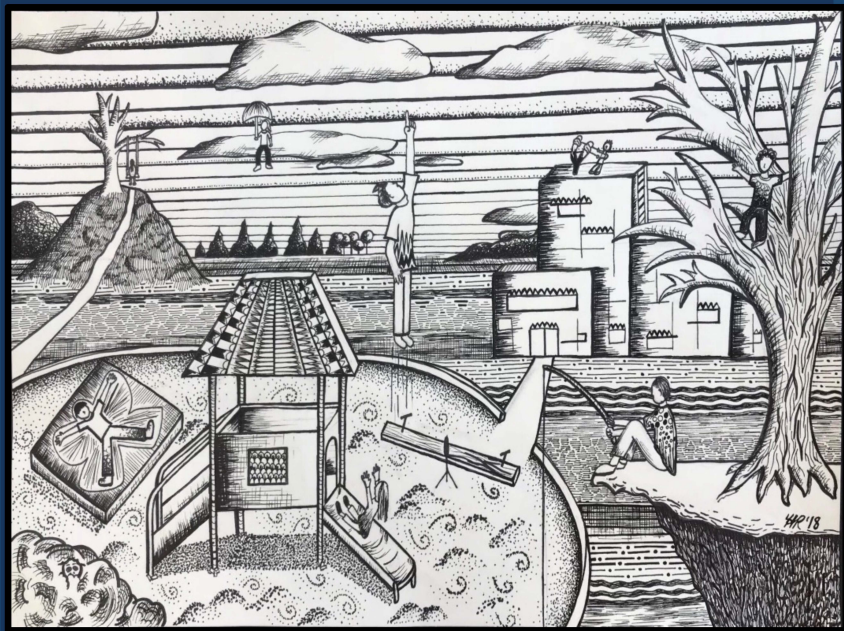


The Nighthawk
Review
2018



The Nighthawk Review

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Creative Arts Club and its publication, the Nighthawk Review, is to provide Thomas University students, faculty, staff, alumnus, and friends with a creative outlet. In doing so, we endeavor to engage in constructive criticism, peer-review, and helpful discourse that both enriches and documents the creativity of the Thomas University community. It is our purpose to encourage creativity without restraint, and to facilitate the presentation of meritorious creative works in publication.

The Creative Writing Club accepts submissions year round. Please email submissions to: thenighthawkreview@gmail.com. Be sure to include the author/artist's name, title of work, and email address of the author/artist. Submissions of poetry, fiction, plays, screenplays, photographs, and artwork will be considered for inclusion in future editions of *The Nighthawk Review*.

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“JIM: A HISTORY” – MADELYN ZORN

Summer in Mississippi, where the dull gray weeds
Long for death as much as God does.
I was born out there, and set down quick to get warm mud
On my toes. Because momma didn't want to spend the drinking
 money
To cover feet that could not even walk yet.
Only stumble some.

I had to grow up in a fire, in the backroom of the grocer's,
In an emptied bottle, left by the door for me to clean up.
I didn't know why daddy bought two chocolate bars
And then fed them both to our dogs. I only knew
The moonshine-bright smell of him as he came swaying home,
The smell of his greatest creation, his favorite child
Cradled safe in a still in the forest behind our house.
Son, it ain't gonna raise itself.

And I knew of course the tilt of his black hat,
That he cocked like a gun, creating a shadow to cover
The swollen eyes of the night before, the demon still dancing
In his vision, clacking red heels over the speakeasy floor.
I knew this and what's more, I knew my mother's silence,
Her coffee cup sweating rings onto the table, and smoke
Curling around her head like snakes
In the backyard grass.

But soon I knew other things, too. I knew
I was taller than dad now, and that drinking
Anger like water had made me lean.
I knew that only my brother Tommy would survive this,
Because he took the bed, and from the floor,
I heard him still able to dream.

I also knew that he had to eat. To take the offering
I laid, the leftover from an alleyway
That he could never see me picking around in. He could never see
Dad's swinging gate and terrible laugh, dad's blind hands
And what they felt they had to leave.
But I now knew the sweet
Split knuckle of my own hand,
The way the man sitting up there at the county school's
Proud clean face had buckled beneath it.

I knew I wouldn't be let to come back up there
On Monday, wouldn't be allowed in.
That man had called me *just more white trash* and
I had finally stepped up
And proven it.

But I learned quick and I knew. Knew that the wind
Whispered at night, always about me. So concerned
With me, this world of unpainted houses, sagging roofs.
It told me that soon we'd have to abandon Mississippi, would have
to stop
Making unsure her illusion of sobriety. I knew that the judge,
When he told dad as much, told him to *git out of Miss'ssippi*,
That he was cutting his eyes,
Was really looking at me.

And so momma's in the hospital now, a pin stuck clean,
Right through the softness of her brain.
Dad said *its helping her*. I don't know.
But twelve men had to pull him out of a gutter
One other night, all twelve and he had them all beat.
That bravado that is stupor and clove and deterrent -
I wonder vaguely whether that's something I'll inherit.
All this *fine* heredity.
This high tolerance to life
As well as to drink. Either way
It was finally 1960, so I knew it was time for me to leave.

And so the world opened up
Like the torn seam on my only good shirt.
I wore that shirt, wore it when I met her father the first time.
Her father was my commanding officer, with a chest
Of medals for liberating the death camps of Germany. He looked
me over
Once and I knew he had seen. But no.
I was just some kid, a bad accent, sure,
But anonymous, skinny. Standing in his pink
Living room and waiting
For his little Suzie, just like the other boy from the
Friday dance last week. And the week
Before that.

But later, sitting in his car with her, I felt like I was dead
And watching a stranger from sleep. The roundness
Of her face was in fact turned on me. And her innocence

Was the innocence of my imagined God,
Who had long been a substitute for sleep,
Who was somehow somewhere already inside of me.
I tasted it when I kissed her, curled thin hands around
The fullness of a living blonde body and upset the scarf
On her head, just knocked it a bit out of place. Like flesh skinned
And wrought for the empty stomach, I did not feel a rebirth.
Just a salvaging.

So even though she was only sixteen, I married her,
And suddenly I was moving back South,
A preacher with a child packed and folded
Safe in a belly, that small, soft-headed seed
The fear of my line's self-fulfilling prophesy.
The giving of my history.
All this in just a few weeks.

With the coming of my Michelle, dad stopped drinking
And I started to age immediately. Time became a blood-letting.
My face grew lines around my mouth and eyes
As dad laughed on a macramé couch, bouncing my baby
On his chest, a cigarette hanging from his open mouth.
Is this the end every road promises?
Salvation of a creek, water in my eyes,
And insects buzzing strong and lost in the throes of
Hope. After all, the milk is set out and waiting at home,
with cake, strawberries, cream, set on a sideboard,
Made by a girl who always makes sure me and my child
Have enough to eat.

She makes me want to believe, though my mother
Still sits quiet in the corner. She has never stopped
Being silent. Black eyes of the crow at the window,
Waiting for whatever gore would wash up
On the side of the road
Wine sweet.
As steady in the face of reform
As they had been in taking in my beatings.
This lets me know that the past is still burning
Through me like disease. And that judgement
Will always be forthcoming.

But Shelley,
She grows like I never could quite do.
Smiles cut knowingly towards the photographer

In her school pictures, and ready for dances,
Hair high on the lawn, dressed all in blue.
Her and her mother
Made my praying to what I would never see
Seem less like sorrow.
So I stand at a pulpit each week
And say things I really do mean

Even if I do not understand them just yet.
I grow old this way. I suppose I am old now,
Am a man who, buttoning cufflinks on Sunday morning,
Cannot help but think about this thing I've chosen to believe -
The horror of His forgiveness. Of his absence.
I knew then I would always be a lack, a lack
That cleaved like that -
Receding back to the bottles littering the hot Delta shore
And the cemetery I had to cut through as a child
To get back to town from my tilted house -
Back to civilization, to the worn blandness
Of the soul. Of a Greenwood street.

So, of course, it is old Mississippi who I take as a lover.
She is not a state, she is a stranger.
She is my past, a summer I have not lived in forty or fifty years
At least. I drank her down in one swallow, and was
Drunk. I suppose the weight of being God
Must eventually tear at the meat.
So I took to the lowness of my beloved humanity.
I kissed hands that held no ring.
My brushfires, burning,
Providing awful light,
Kicked up inside of me, like an animal.
Like the big black dogs that sat on the rotten floorboards
Of my childhood porch,
Eyes narrowed to slits and dark rippling coats
Reminding you of their
White teeth.

I still love you, you know? I hated myself
Even as I said it, said it to my Suzie Q.
I felt like it was both the least
And most myself I had ever been.
And I felt like all I knew was leaving.
Eviction, the only tenement of my life.
So of course it was dad I saw

In the mirror the morning after the
Dining room confession. Yes, I saw
Christmas, and futures melted into birthday cakes, and a divorce
Not just from a wife, but from a reality.
I saw myself losing the girl
Who pulled me from the rotten earth,
Who had tried to make me holy.
But I have always fallen back upon momma's mind,
Her all-knowing wrist, aged now,
Shaking the tabletop with ash that falls like memory.

So, you can see, how, almost sixty,
Armed with the sought sentience of the gun,
Cold in the hand and the mouth,
It was the first coolness I'd felt all July.
First coolness of my entire life.
I felt momma and dad and Tommy
And especially, those who would come long after me.
Felt lovers who were not family.
And felt a buttercream girl of seventy
Who sits still in the window of me
Folded hands the only martyrs
Still longing to be blackened
By the match I had struck
And dropped.

Mostly, though, I felt just this punctured
Orange-crate body that would swell
In the oppression of the summer and the tinned failure
Of A/C. I felt like God, finally.
I felt Him like He was peeking around the staircase
As though He lurked and bent curiously
In the pull of the trigger
Waiting to wipe blood from my eyes
Hand on my back, helping me up,
To let me become the ghost in the eaves
My brain a nailed palm, a love given through.
Burning, there is a revealed need
For a new coat of paint on the wall.
Yes. I kneel to give my blood and body
Because I could always comfort myself with knowing
That it is always summer in Mississippi.

“SOMEONE’S MISSING” – MADELYN ZORN

Girls were disappearing
Because it was summertime, because
It kept raining, because everyone was watching
Out of their peripheral. Because our pulses
Spent the sun-fire days trying to beat
Back the vacant past, trying to beat the blood alive enough
To hold off death just one more day.

Four hot years with no seasons, tripping into five.
Like living on Neptune - can you imagine
Being caught inside the same weather your whole life?
And what those divine ideas of acyclicity could do to one’s
development?
The price for worshipping rotten symmetry?
See all the tadpoles with too many legs, moths who never
Learned to love the light, and water, gray
And boiling with longing for the fresh decay
Of some delicate flesh.

This fever-world is heavy with heat like a house
Built with no windows. It is good only to grow grief.
The clicking of the shoes behind you on the rain-dark pavement.
The wine you gave me nothing but a stain on my lips
The next morning. Nothing anyone would believe.
And the red sun glowering like the red
Inside the thin opening of my body, the spreading stain of my life,
Of the staged crime scene, making me new,
Making me into a scarlet Proserpina, a bloody Persephone,
Sore like anguish, the sluice of the berry and the scream.
What do you expect of a world where we all must live on just six
Pomegranate seeds?

You may whisper how I was the beauty death
Loved like a blade. How this welling of the atmosphere was
Warmth and not pressure.
But it was not I who made Sappho’s island curl up and weep.
And now our fruit, allotted slowly, blooms
Only in spite. It sheds, it sweats. It fails to resist
Rotting. It is something I learn to eat.
And yet I am supposed to be a symbol of life.

These swelling feet, marked skin torn by dog teeth,
This guillotine, this sweat
Dripping into my eyes is nothing beautiful,
Just violence. Heat.
And I hate to have to hold still,
Feel you place a crown on my head, expecting me to call you
King.

But I can live on air and seeds.
I can float back up from the bottom of people's closets,
Dried swimming pools, suitcases half packed. In fact,
The crawlspaces of collapsed houses have been churning out
A new set of my skin each week.
Heads cracked like melons, standing on the earthquake
Of shaking thighs. And the anonymous face,
That you broke into multiples.
We buried rise, accordion out like paper dolls,
Hot and hateful in this bleeding summer-spring.
I hold my sheared sapling tree,
And we sing.

“IMPERMANENCE” – ANDILE SITHOLE

To what gain is my martyrdom?
How immaterial effect proves,
How ephemeral – one’s influence,
Therein, lies the truth that all is futile
All purpose, ideals, morals – senseless,
A dog chasing its tail,
A sailor searching for the horizon’s end,
The durability of change only equates
To the next revolution
Which may come at any moment, post –
Unannounced, unconcerned, unabashed.
We strive for greatness to leave a legacy that won’t last.
We compete for glory that becomes useless but for fond memory
Which too may fade in old age and become null in death.
These temporal things we tinker with
Yet treasure as if timeless
But the ticking of time is the only sound of existence –
Not the wind or sea or birds in trees or victory screams – they’re
irrelevant.
And in the end the only immortal, eternal, everlasting thing
Is impermanence itself.
For all things die, all fade, all wither away
And that the only fact of life that remains –
Unchanging, unchangeable, unchanged.

PAINTING BY: ANNA MARIE AUGINS



Psychedelic Moon

“THE SOUL OF SOMEONE WHO ONCE DREAMED” – ANDILE SITHOLE

I used to dream

I used to have a passion

I used to believe

Key words: "used to"

Not anymore

I guess I'm not all I thought I was

I guess I'm going to die wasted potential

I guess apathy is my fate

I guess self-pity is made for me

I guess my bed is the only place I belong

I guess tears are my best friend

I guess giving up was always on the cards

I guess I'm useless

I guess I'm just the same as you all

you mediocre scum

us mediocre scum

I have become just like you

You people who work for no reason

Rather, no purpose than filling your middle class belly with cheap, middle class, just-barely-getting-by food, with thousands of calories and heart attack giving saturated fatty foods

And drive your scratched, stained, faulty, secondhand car you bought from that shady dealer you'd be ashamed to mention

And marry a somewhat tolerable human being to bicker and battle for power with till death do you part, or divorce, of course, which is likely since you know nothing of love

And manage to have just about enough left in the bank to sustain an excruciatingly mediocre lifestyle once the bills have been paid and the taxes done

And never know what it's like to travel to another country, but sure, go on some wild road trips that your shitty little unappreciative kids whine about and "hate you" for

And struggle to provide for those same shitty kids who don't understand just how much you sacrifice for them

And consider quitting your horribly soul-destroying job but stop these thoughts because you can never leave the half-comfort of a place that lets you just about live another day

And cry when bad things happen because it gives you an opportunity to cry about everything else in your pitiable predicament of a life

And laugh when bad things happen to other people behind their backs because for a change the joke is not on you

And maybe, if you're lucky, actually get a promotion or two which allows you to buy presents for your kids that they'll enjoy for three weeks then break or disband, or complain about for not being the "right one," but hey, it's the thought that counts, right

And maybe, you'll actually raise them to be cultured and respectful so they'll internalize their disappointment and feign excitement for your sake, instead of whining

And maybe they'll silently pity you, their parents, possibly even feel guilty, so they'll never ask for much, and when they do and you say you can't afford it, they'll say "it's okay"

And maybe these sort of kids will feel in themselves an overwhelming desire to work to achieve what you never could

And they'll aim to provide for their kids in a way that you failed to, which will make you happy, but only remind you of your failings and inadequacies

And hopefully, one day, if your children feel bad enough for you, they'll support you in your old age, giving you about ten good years of life

And hopefully in these years you won't be bed-ridden, frail, and quietly detested by your grandkids who think you smell, but you probably will

And hopefully you'll get to do things you always wanted to when you were young, but these activities are for young people you old piece of shit so the option is no longer available

And then you'll resign to the available joys of old age like peeping at the young nurse's arse as she walks away from giving you medicine, giving you the closest thing to an erection you've had in years

And that young stud will flirt with you for the sake of charming an old decrepit hag for banter, but you'll feel a tingle in your saggy breasts and a thump in your barely beating heart nonetheless

And you'll think the most profound thoughts which you neglected to delve into in youth, but your hands will be too shaky and weak to write them out

And you'll feel an overwhelming sense of pride and accomplishment if you can rise from your rocker, unassisted, or take a shit without a caretaker aiding you

And then, your children will visit you every now and then out of obligation, in debt to you for those first eighteen years when you taught them the art of getting by and achieving nothing –

And then, one day, you'll die. The world won't know. You might become a statistic and that'll be your greatest legacy, your footprint on this world

And you'll have lived a safe, sheltered life without a day of true zest because you settled for something less than that which fills you with joy

And just as you're about to drift off into the eternal slumber, all this will flash before your eyes and as you take your final labored breath, you'll wonder "what was the point?"

"What was my purpose?"

I guess I'm just the same as you all

you mediocre scum

us mediocre scum.

I have become just like you

and this fate awaits me too.

PHOTO BY: JON MILLER



Curtis Shed

“DARK WATERS” – ANGIE GUTIERREZ

all i can see is nothing, no light, no way out
just you and me and me alone
no matter where i go, you'll always find me,
 there is nowhere to run
scared, that's how you made me feel inside, how easy it is for you
 to come back
i want to drink until I until feel nothing, mind and body numb
light it up, watch it consume me like you once did
i'll be its prisoner for now, always crawling back to the arms of the
 devil's son.
 don't scream anymore, let me in, so let's get this over
the more i fled, the more i bled, alone tormented daily by you
 i watched you wash the blood of your hands
 but you could never wash it off
 come to bed, don't make me sleep alone
i surrender once again, all i see is nothing, no light, no way out

“LOST PARADISE” – ANGIE GUTIERREZ

Naive,
oh boy, was I innocent
Maybe even stupid, but I still don't know.
You made me red, more like hot all the time.
I didn't even think twice about it.
Your light loving affection suddenly became rough
You came told me things that I wasn't ready for.
And I said *fuck it*.
You liked me and I liked you,

You were like a tick, latching on to me
Draining me, from everything
I thought once was pure.

You continued to lie and deceive me, and I was still so trusting.
I said *no* and you didn't listen.
You taught me how to love
And if I didn't do the things you wanted me to do,
I was afraid.
I was terrified that you would do something
And I was right. You did do something.
Room 101 will forever haunt me.
Naïve, maybe,
I was just innocent.

You left,
You coward,
Blaming it on a mental illness you've been battling.
But why lie?
I knew what you were,
a leech, slowly sucking everything good that I had.
I could watch you drown in your own misery,
I wouldn't save you.
Drowning is quick and silent just like my time with you.
Watching you fight for your last breath

Your lungs filling in with water, your eyes bulging.

I didn't think much of it when you came and saw me.

You eyed me like I was some sort of prize

Your possession.

I kept telling you I wasn't yours that I wasn't going to have sex
with you

But you did something that haunts me to this day.

You assaulted me,

Grabbed me by my ass in the middle of broad daylight, like I was
your property

I was petrified I couldn't do anything, I was afraid you had a
loaded gun

And you would pull the trigger if I did something that would upset
you.

So now I finally can tell you to go to hell.

Touch me again and I swear to you

The last face you see will be your own reflection.

Just like Aly, Gabby, Uma Thurman and the many other women,

We will stand united and strong to keep

Fighting to stand tall.

We will not remain silent, your time is done.

Tick tock tick tock

We will stand together, united and strong.

I hope and pray that our faces remain etched in your mind forever.

That those steel bars and the grey walls are the things keeping us
away from you.

WATERCOLOR BY: JENNY SWEARINGEN



Three Beauties

“FIRE BONES” – LESLIE AKRIDGE

There's a fire in these bones, way deep down

One minute it burns and tortures and the next it gives me strength
I inherited this heat, my Daddy made sure of that

Is it bad luck or resilience; well that depends on who you ask
This fire in my pit, be black, red, or blue, is always hot
Passion, defeat, rising, repeat, over and over again, I fan the flames

I can dig my toes into the swamp of this hell

Claw my way up past the sycamores to the top of the sticky pines
There I can be lit aflame by the sun and

Unleash my wings that spit sparks and whisper ancient threats
“You're gonna fall, little girl,” I hear the taunting
Daddy always said hellfire is always there trying to drag me down

This blaze is a part of me, it can be wielded

My burn scars run deep and long, like the old river, etched into me
I've tried to snuff the inferno with the cold black water

But I'm learnin' to feed the coals and embrace this burning light
You were right Daddy, there's something pulling at me
The fires have changed me; like a tattered phoenix, I feel the
renewing heat

The hot licking hands pick me up so high

Over old muddy ground of my childhood, making me a beacon
Let me show you how I use the heat of the flames to fly

I'm glowing, burning brighter, let me blind you with my light
It's never too late Daddy, that South winds change
I can be the firebird that guides the way to redemption, follow me

“LONG HAUL” – LESLIE AKRIDGE

I hate you today; I am bitter and mad
My scars are deep, and the knife is lodged
Vows long gone, broken across the floor
I feel scattered, you broke my heart, you fool

Your addiction unwinding of the knot we tied
The thought of repair seems like too much
That day, I wanted you out and I wanted to be free
But what about for better or worse?

We never read the fine print on the dotted line
I knew the road to forever was going to be hard
I see you working, changing, to keep me
Forgive my hate and I'll forgive your stupidity
Together we'll find our footing among the glass
And we'll show them all how to make this last.

PHOTO BY: CARTER VANN



Monkey with Baby

“VOICES FROM THE WELL HOUSE” – RICHARD CURTIS

For Helen Keller and Mike Kelley

As the legend goes
When Helen Keller was nine-years old
She and her teacher - Anne Sullivan -
Were outside at the well house

Helen loved to feel the water on her skin

It was at the pump where Anne
Held one of Helen's hands under the rush of cool drink
And signed the letters W-A-T-E-R
In the palm of the other hand

In that moment
Helen realized how she could communicate
Later writing in her autobiography
“I left the well house eager to learn...”

This afternoon I traveled to Ivy Green and
I placed a tape recorder inside a shoebox
And I placed the shoebox in the well house
And I recorded silence in the place where
Helen learned to speak

And when I returned home
I listened back to what had been recorded
And to my surprise
I could hear a faint voice crying:

To live a life in silence and darkness
To be intimate with solitary thoughts
To know uncommon loneliness
To learn by touch and smell
To find a language with fingertips
To caress and be caressed by the world
To navigate the change
To live and keep on living
To lock my bones away forever
To... to... to...

“THE NATURE OF GLASS” – RICHARD CURTIS

In the late 1700's, German physician and astrologist, Dr. Franz Mesmer issued his theory of *Animal Magnetism*. Mesmer claimed that living things had a vital magnetic fluid that animated them. He also maintained that illness was caused by blockages in the flow of energies through the body. As part of his therapies, Mesmer often used old kitchen magnets, laying on of hands and strange music to stimulate his patient. One of his favorite instruments to use was a Glass Armonica.

The Armonica was a kind of organ invented by Benjamin Franklin in 1761, made with an arrangement of glass bowls. A musician would play the instrument by wetting his fingers and placing them on the rims of the bowls.

Mesmer's objective was to send his patient's body into a kind of "crisis" whereby any obstructions to their animal magnetism would be released. This was often a gruesome spectacle of convulsions and vomiting. Mesmer claimed that in this state his patients reported unobstructed vision, able to see through bodies and objects.

For many years, Mesmer was the toast of Europe. His clients were many of the aristocracy from Vienna to Paris. Getting mesmerized was all the rage! That is, until 1784 when Louis XVI appointed a Board of Inquiry to investigate Mesmer's claims. Among the members of this committee was none other than the American Ambassador, Benjamin Franklin.

After a rigorous investigation, the committee found no evidence of a magnetic fluid in the human body, or any positive results from Mesmer's therapies. As a result, Mesmer was forced to completely abandon his practice, and he was branded a fraud. Shortly after, his wife passed away due to illness. Alone and destitute, Mesmer spent the last years of his life in exile. Coincidentally, by the 19th Century, the Glass Armonica also fell out of favor after people began complaining that prolonged exposure to its high pitched sounds caused fits of madness.

There are some that claim glass is a liquid. Perhaps it is.
Perhaps it is also imbued with a vital magnetic energy.
Perhaps in its crystalline form it allows for unobstructed vision.
Perhaps it holds the clarity of emptiness.
Perhaps that is why when you touch glass with a wet finger it begins to sing.

“SRI GANESHA RAKSHAMAM” – CARTER VANN

Parvati ordered Ganesha not to allow anyone to enter the house. After a while, Shiva came home. Even after telling him that he is the husband of Parvati, Ganesha didn't allow him to enter inside. Shiva got angry and cut off the head of Ganesha and threw it away using his trident.

Darkness falls with my head
I cry out, in vain
voice – voiceless
lungs – breathless
body – headless
She doesn't hear my cry.
(she isn't there anyways)
Love to fury, existence on edge
Teetering
And then, with his grace,
light springs from the dark
These eyes
This snake-like nose
And then, he breathes
his sweet, blessed breath into my lungs
And Ganesh, I become

“CAGE IN THE DARK” – CARTER VANN

There is a bird in a small, dark cage
His feathers slowly dropping
His song not quite as happy—
Nor as loud.
His cage locked for a while now
No, he hasn't flown free.
The little one found him silent
And swiftly opens the door.
Curiously he slowly perks up
Closing his eyes
And gently hops from his small cage.
Almost too afraid to fly.
Wings beating frantically
As he begins to fall
“Fly” the little one calls
As he falls to the floor
—“You have wings”—
The bird slowly begins to rise
And another feather drops.

“SISTER” – SAMUEL POULK

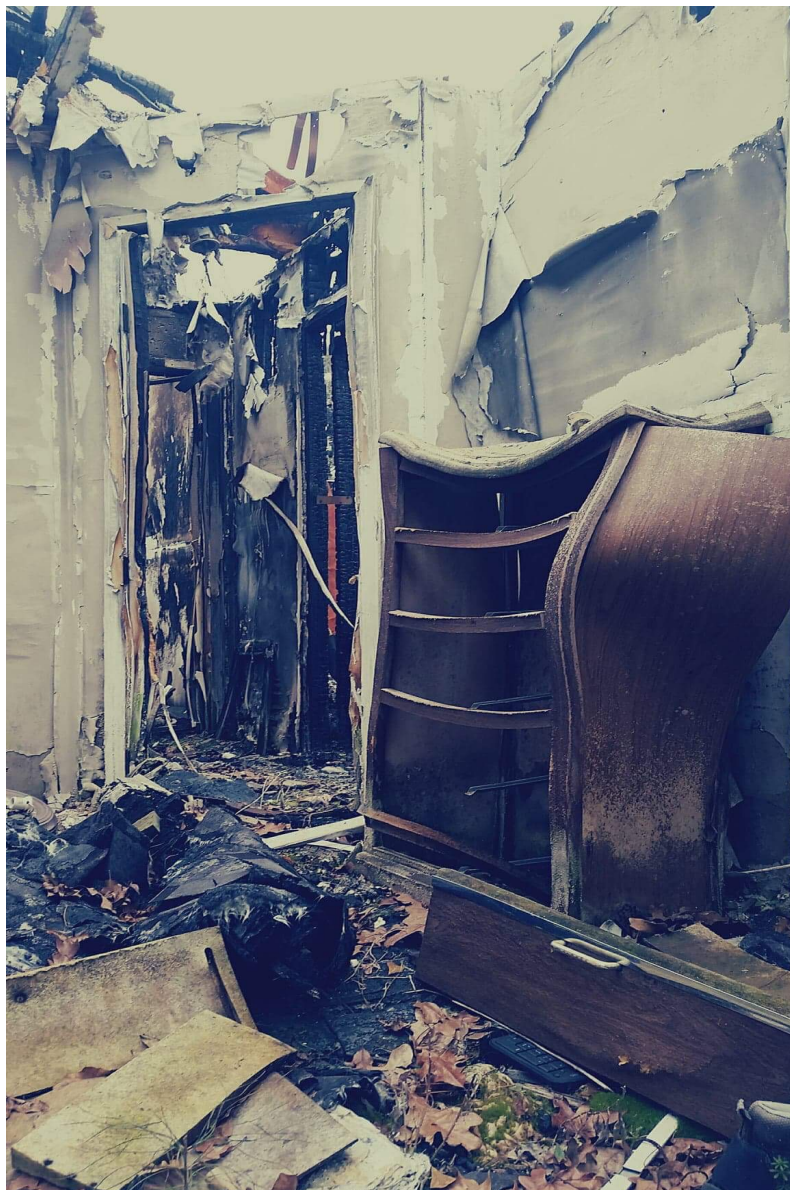
You want to know my sister
She is a lovely girl
She loves our birds
Father’s birds
She loves giving to her friends
She would teach them during Sunday school
She loves many things

Everybody likes Lizzie
She has a radiant glow
And is so favorable
She always knows
Knows how to humor you

Especially Father, she always humors Father
Until he took her birds
Then we saw Lizzie
My darling Lizzie
Axe in hand
Scarlet droplets running across her hands, dripping
I saw her for the first time

It made sense now
Why she was so – perfect
She, unrestricted
She could do no wrong
After all, she felt no wrong

PHOTO BY: JON MILLER



Melting Dresser

“LOOKING THROUGH A TEMPERED VIEW” – SAMUEL POULK

Looking through a child's toy
To see a tempered view, of the eternal world in a tube
The blue is peppered over a crimson ground
Like salted snow – it melts away
There are fewer now, but more will spawn
Social spores begin shifting around
A royal shade will bleed for control
But its color becomes contorted then mangled again

They are mad – stuck inside
And begging for a shape or pattern
But only lie together, just a broken jigsaw puzzle
Sometimes, it looks like an uncanny valley
That cures the broken shapes and colors
It mirrors its way through the bog and marsh
And past the windows through the cones
To find a home on the empty prairie
Where all the others melt away

“ANALYSIS” – HOLLY GUTHRIE

Taking baby steps toward destruction. Tearing it down. There is no paradise to find. I am programmed to seek it in vain. It's a state of mind. Not being. Following words set down by scholars. Maps to righteousness. Roads to riches. Bridges to the other side of nowhere.

There is no reason?

It's some huge cosmic joke. An experiment. Ants in an ant farm. Place your bets on which one will escape. Build the fastest. Work the hardest. Die last. Losing days and weeks and months and, oh, God, not years. To uncertainty. Indecision. Pondering. Imagining the answer. Can't remember the question.

Why not just be?

And love. Hold onto something that feels real. Because in the end there is only feeling. And love. And you. And me. And in the end that's enough. *Isn't it?* I could spend my eternity. Never seeing what's right in front of me. Think I'll just stop here. And have a look around. Right on this spot. Not forward. Not backward. Just right here. Right now.

There it is.

DRAWING BY: RICHARD CURTIS



Venus of Walmart

“EXPEDITION” – HOLLY GUTHRIE

40 years gone
must've walked 10,000 miles
treads are worn smooth as stones
the only tangible thing to show
for half a lifetime of fervent contemplation
perhaps another 40 years
and a new pair of sneakers
to retrace my steps
at a slower pace
with less determination to reach the end of the race
that shouldn't be a race at all
but only a stroll through a garden of thought
that changes with the seasons
like the conclusions I came to in the first 40 years

“ROUTINE STOP” – SHAQUILLE HOLLEY

What seems to be the problem officer? (Damn what did you do?)
all of my lights work and this here is my car.
I'm not who you're looking for
I don't even fit the description I mean –
yes I'm black but I swear it wasn't me
Mr. Officer I'm looking for my license and registration but your
light of interrogation is burning through my lenses
you act like you know I did it (where's my damn papers?)
Your voice is like an earthquake on my island trembling my body
I'm trying to comply but I heard the story of Mike Brown
Sandra Bland Jerame Reid Tamir Rice
and me dying has crossed my mind a thousand times
I don't wanna be a hastage on twitter a picture on a shirt in some
fucking clouds. (please don't shoot)
Officer there's nothing in here I'm not trying to be difficult
but I have rights and I said you can't look in my car sir.
You tell me to get out the vehicle your commands paralyze
my body but my mind races (please don't shoot)
Officer I said I don't have a weapon you pat me down
anyways removing my shoes and socks
all this for a failure to signal? one wrong move
turns me into a statistic another nigger off yours roads
your quota met for the month.

DRAWINGS BY: RICHARD CURTIS



Four Noble Truths of South Georgia

“VOICES OF CONFUSION” – DAVID SLAUGHTER

Two voices,
In darkness collide
Like crashing waves.
The thoughts
with ebb and flow
 continue on
 for days.

They never sleep;
they never rest;
never will one win.
This ever constant argument,
that stays,
resides,
within.

“STRINGS” – AUSTIN ROBERTS

I speak softly to ease your suffering,
But your viper tongue slashes and tears at my soul
Many have left you long ago

“THE BEAST OF WILD AND DEEP” – JILL GUTHRIE

The forest, dark and deep, and lovely.
And the mist that falls softly against your skin
and shivers up my spine.
Like I'm not alone.
Like someone is watching me.
The monsters of the wood –
I've yet to know if they're friends or evil.
Calling from the distance –
closer, farther.
Reaching into the dark, covered
solace of my chest and releasing
the wild being that resides there.
Free.
The cover of the trees tells me I'm home,
and the whispers of quiet welcome me.
I shall council with the beasts
and determine their loyalty.
But first I must sit and draw in the breath of the place.
Waiting, watching. Coming closer –
closer to what?
The crow's hollow cry solidifies my being,
and I am one with the pulse of the green around me;
the bark that pulls off in my hand,
the babbling stream buried behind the tree line.
The wild calls are arresting.
Startling, comforting.
If I cannot claim the place, the place has claimed me.
I belong to the forest,
All it shadows and all it lights.

“MEDUSA” – LAURA ALEXANDER

She is beautiful and kind,
Her silky white skin glowing,
Golden hair so long and flowing

But an evil spell from Athena
Places an everlasting spell
If you speak to Medusa you will know so well.

She is now evil and scary
Her skin so green everyone looks away,
For her hair hissing snakes come out to play.

Her powers are nonexistent,
Athena has them all,
For Medusa knew, loving the wrong man, she would fall.

Medusa is ugly for eternal life,
Everyone stares in horror and disgust,
For Medusa begs Athena to undo the spell it's a must.

From having everything in the world,
A princess by name,
The Greek queen is now shamed.

“A SUMMER LOVE” – KATY HANSCOMB

Have you ever thought about it like this?
That as the days drag on longer
And the waves say goodbye to the moon
That the only thing missing is a sweet kiss.

Who knows where this wild ride may take us
Where the butterflies are in peak
And the red robins sit patiently
Waiting on the wires of the last school bus.

The rich greens of the breathless trees
Dried out from the wake of the sun
A pile of books for a planned read
Hiding away from the winds slight breeze.

The longing for the summer heat
Quickly replaced by the love for another.

PHOTO BY: DAVID ALLIO



Copepod 19

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“WALTER” – SPENCER DEPOALA

Adventurous, stubborn, relentless, distracted
Lena Younger (mama), Travis Younger (son)
Ruth Younger (wife), new ideas, Travis Younger
Sad, stressed, hopeful
Money, new friends, bigger house
Rejection, failure, mama
Hope and dreams equals stress
His self will be successful, a bigger house, new job
Lives in New York with hope
Younger

“HAIKU” – SPENCER DEPOALA

Soldiers die
Children cry
Peace is fragile
Silent cries for freedom follow

“EOS” – RHETTA WEEKS

Eos, Greek goddess of Dawn, awakes one morning to find a handsome prince. She wishes to marry him, and asks Zeus for the gift of eternal life so that they might be together. Unfortunately, she does not ask for the gift of eternal youth. The prince lives forever, but shrinks and becomes a cricket. Eos places him in a basket in a corner of her palace, where he remains forever. She continues to wake the world each morning with her touch.

Nature awoke only by her touch,
Tinted by the subtle cerulean of dawn,
Soft pinks and dew-sprinkled trees.
One morning, a prince appears,
Handsome and devastatingly mortal.
The dawn begs the sky for eternal life,
So that the prince might share every dawn with her.
Years came and went in the blink of an eye,
Delightful, but without youth.
The prince, shrunken and shriveled before her eyes,
As his youth slipped away, he became a cricket.
Her rosy fingers placed him in a basket,
Which he had shrunk small enough to fit,
In a dark corner of her palace,
Until he began to chirp for eternity.
Her features still glow, rosy and bright,
To awake the sleeping world.

“BLACK SWAN” – RHETTA WEEKS

Blisters and broken toenails,
Taping and tapering, but none of it hides the ugliness.
When the illusion of beauty is gone along with the satin shoes,
I am all that is left.
If beauty is in the eye of the beholder, my beholder yells “5, 6, 7,
8!”

My arms replaced by wings,
Wings that pull me down until I am buried deep enough so that I
cannot be found.
My heart races at the speed of which I must complete 32 fouettés,
The pressure builds and stifles my once elongated movements,
Causing my beholder to yell and pull at my mangled limbs.

The dirt and mass which once surrounded me has given way,
Crumbling as I crawl to the surface,
And I crawl until the tension in my neck and the twist in my ankles
fade,
And I have ascended.
I fly high now, flanked by creatures of feather and white

I enter from the middle wing, the corps singing a chorus of
“Merde!”
I shock even devilish Siegfried, as if he truly cannot believe the
sight of the girl before him
I receive the most generous of applause and accolades for my
portrayal,
Even though the audience does not know it is neither a
performance nor a guise,
But what beautiful Odette has finally become.

“TELL YOUR STORY” – DAVID KIRBY

As you walk by the river with your friend and tell stories,
at some point you say, “I told that one before, didn’t I?”
and your friend says, “You did, but I like that story,
and besides, you never tell it the same way twice.”
So tell your story. Sonny Rollins had an apartment
on Grand Street near the river but was reluctant
to play his saxophone there because he didn’t want
to bother his neighbors, so he started practicing
on the Williamsburg Bridge, where he could play
as loud as he wanted, 15 and 16 hours a day,
all year round. He was joined sometimes by other
saxophonists, by Steve Lacy and Jackie McLean,
and they’d imitate what they heard and try
to play it back louder. Lacy recalls, “On the bridge
there was this din, a really high level of sound
from boats and cars and subways and helicopters
and airplanes. Sonny played into it. I couldn’t
hear myself but I could hear Sonny.” Zola said
if you ask me what I came into this life to do,
I will tell you: I came to live out loud.
So tell your story. Tell it on this steel-blue day,
send it out on the glad air that floats over
the murderous masculine sea. Tell it well,
and this winsome sky will stroke and caress you,
this stepmother world throw affectionate arms
around your neck, as if over one she can yet
save and bless. Jackie McLean says,
“I’ve seen Sonny blow some of those tugboat flats
and sharps and have the tugboat answer him.”
Tell your story, then, and await the world’s reply.