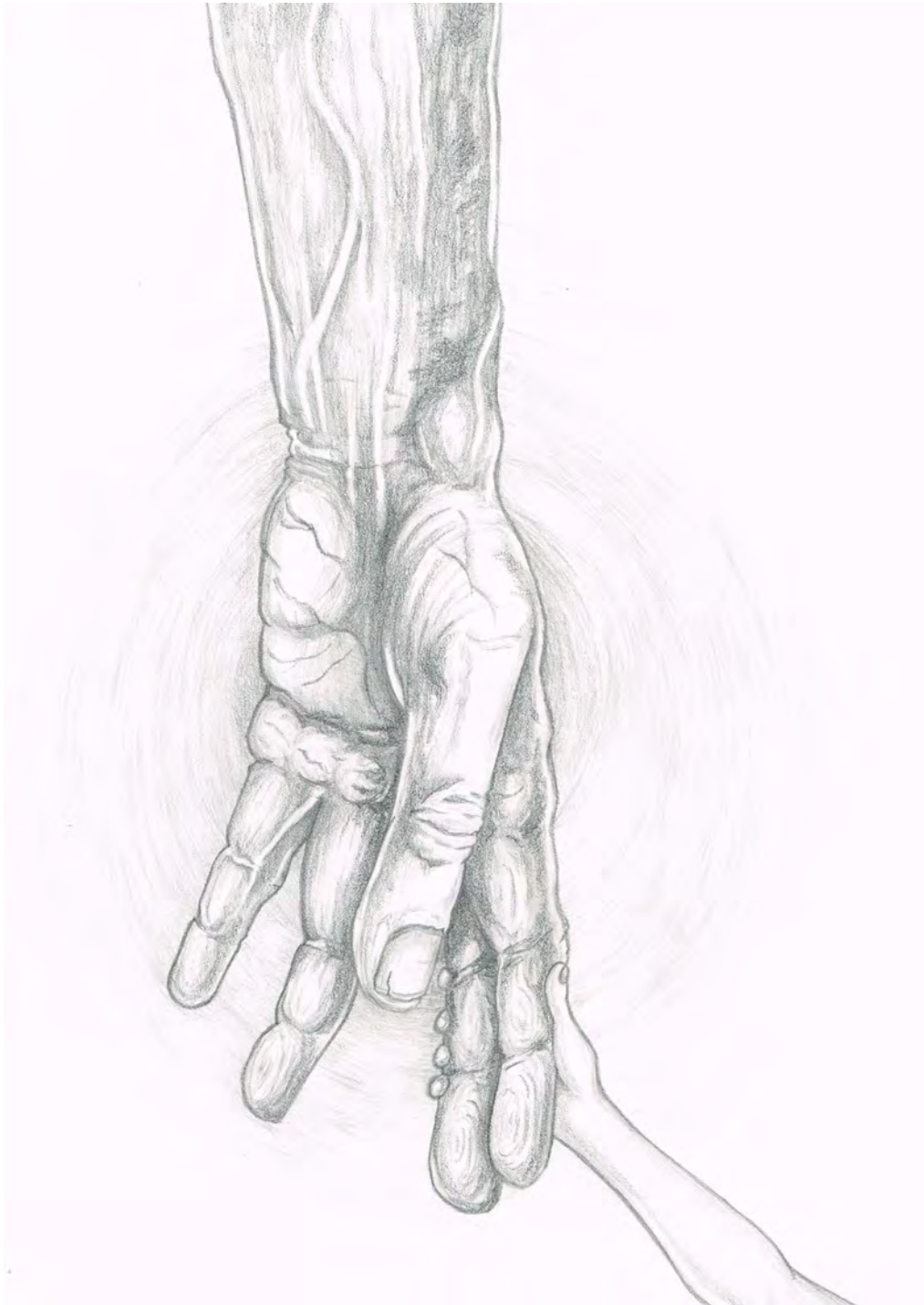


# Sakatah



**Spring 2017**  
**South Central College**



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Ideas and opinions presented in Sakatah are not necessarily those of the journal's staff or of the students and staff of South Central College.

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# Michael Greer

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## Thief

When I was eight, I stole an electric train from my cousin, and, in doing so, discovered a wonderful secret: toys are always more fun when they're somebody else's. There is, however, an unfortunate corollary to this rule: once you've taken something, it is no longer somebody else's, and so it is no longer fun.

After this, things began to disappear, at first only little things that wouldn't likely be missed—a silver watch or a neighbor's bicycle—but as time went on, and I grew weary of pilfering mere baubles and trinkets, more expensive items disappeared as well. Treasures from across the world found themselves resting briefly in my hands until I, because I had no need of the things I stole, and because I had nowhere to store them, and because I certainly wasn't going to give them back, tossed them into the ocean. And so the world got very poor, and the fish got very rich, and I got very happy. But then a problem arose; because all the world's valuables—all its guitars and televisions, all its doorknobs and bookshelves, all its motorcycles and thumbtacks—were settled comfortably on the ocean floor, there wasn't anything left to steal, except a breeze sighing quietly in millions of empty houses.

# Cole McAdam

---

## Ice Fishing

Grab your lucky pole and head out  
to the ice castle on the lake.

Pack your cooler with food, water and beer.

Meet your four friends  
on access of Cedar.

Put your depth finder down the hole  
and figure out where the fish are at.

You can jig the pole multiple times  
to attract them to the bait.

Turn the radio on  
to your favorite country song.

Patiently wait  
while you keep an eye on the bobber  
to make sure it's above water.

Flip a bucket over to start a game of Euchre.

Reel your line up to check and see if the minnow is still hooked.

Eat a few snacks  
and crack open a beer.

Step outside to get a breath of fresh air  
while you write your name in the snow.

Melissa Schulz

---

**Grandpa's Pond**



# Kaelen Kurtzweil

---

## **A Day of Hunting**

In my castle of wood and iron,

I see the prince walk gracefully across the meadow.

I raise my rifle and line my scope up with his heart.

A crown of twelve points sits upon his head.

I picture the feasts that I would host,

the mouthwatering meat.

My finger brushes the trigger, and steadily I wait.

Overhead a pair of bluebirds soar and sing.

Below, the prince lowers his head to the ground.

Then suddenly as if sensing me the prince stops and lifts his head.

I pull the trigger.

My bullet flies past the prince and impales the base of an old oak.

When I look up the prince is already on the move,

Disappearing into the underbrush.

Sighing I climb down from my castle and pack up my gear.

Walking home I gaze as the sun slowly falls,

showering the trees in orange fire.

# Kaelen Kurtzweil

---

A rabbit hops across my path knowing I'm not a threat anymore.

Reaching the hairline of the forest I stop by the sight  
of the prince in front of me, the sun at his back.

The rays bounce off his crown.

And then he is gone as if never there.

I stand for a second.

An hour.

A day.

A year.

Above me the blue birds still sing,  
full on wonder.

# Stephanie Teletor

---

## High Flight

I catch myself talking to the stranger sitting next to me.  
Making small talk at first,  
Yet trying to make the hours go by quicker  
She tells me about her fears and I tell her mine.  
Flying so close to the clouds makes our stomachs turn  
And the fear of never returning home makes us restless.  
We frantically come up with a new topic  
Maybe it was graceful birds or eagles  
How calm they soar  
Roaming around and never leaving the sky.  
Before we know it  
We are on the ground  
We are finally home.

# Frankie Johnson

---

## Gone

She sits on the oak tree  
The same place her brother broke her arm  
at the age of three

An eagle flew by  
It whispered so long

In a flash she was in the woods  
Her favorite spot  
The barn still tall and high  
but there were no more cows

The old man that owned the barn  
was nowhere around  
Like the rest  
He left

The rumor was he went up  
a willow but never came down

# Tracy Chrapliwy

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## Mockingbird

Through the trees, a familiar voice sounds.

Watching from the clearing she sees me.

She hops ever so cautiously towards the wood pile,

always keeping me in her sights

not even deterred by the chipmunk fleeing its winter home.

I whistle a happy tune,

she sings the same words.

I work to clean up after the summer storm.

Fallen tree limbs,

lawn furniture in the oddest places

and the burn pile prepared to accept another meal.

I take a break.

My friend

the mockingbird waits for our daily conversation and lunch

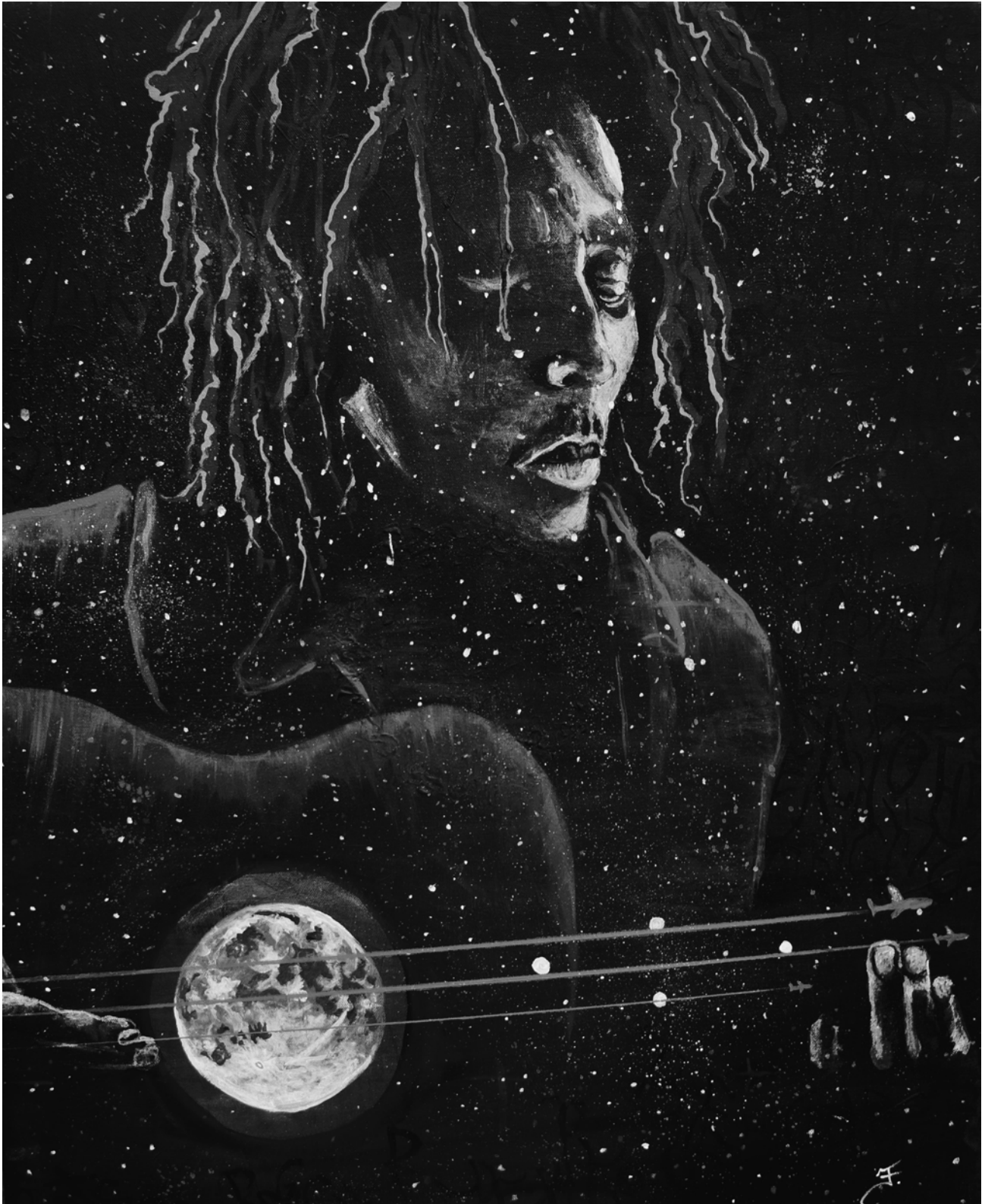
which lasts through the afternoon.

We share a lunch of peanuts and stale bread.

Jason Felten

---

**Get Up, Stand Up**



# Emily Whillock

---

## How We Used to Live

The rivers intertwined in our backyard,  
    dams and bridges crossing young waters.  
Sheepshead and bass splashed below our dangling feet.  
I wonder if they knew.

Fireflies lit up the night  
    and the fields surrounding our home.  
Lawn mowers roared to life every morning  
    with the sun, as it would rise higher in the sky.

Colby was my best friend.  
Videogames, basketball and boxing  
    filled our long summer days.  
We prayed to never grow up.

# Emily Whillock

---

A few years later, he moved out  
and got married.

I started high school  
and learned to drive.

The dams and bridges still stand  
while sheepshead and bass play under new friends.

The sun rises in the morning  
then sets in the evening,  
leaving the fireflies to light the town.

# Melissa Schulz

---

## Wagon Wheels

As I hid among the leaves of the rotting red maple, just as I had done countless times in decades prior, I found myself wondering, How could something, once viewed like a treasure hunt, suddenly leave you feeling more like the victim of a tomb raid? I watched the thieves arrive one vehicle at a time. At that moment I longed to be a child again, so I could scream and yell, leap down from my tree and tell them all to get lost. But I was no longer a child—and this was my grandparents' farm, not mine.

From my perch on that unbreakable branch, there wasn't a single direction I could look without being assaulted by memories.

To the right, in the distance, was the man-made pond that Grandpa had put in and stocked himself. In that moment I could see a seven year old tomboy with a broken arm, struggling to reel in her first bass. Her grandfather quickly secured the rod so she could use all of her might to bring in supper.

Straight ahead was the grassy field he had taught her how to run his riding lawnmower on. Once the yardwork was done, all the siblings and cousins would play baseball with Grandma (who would always be the pitcher, in an effort to prevent any arguments among us kids). Meanwhile, Grandpa headed back to the house to take a well-deserved nap in his overstuffed recliner.

# Melissa Schulz

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The barn was slightly to the left, where hours were spent playing hide-and-seek in the musty hay mound, or collecting peacock feathers for Grandma, who would reward us ten cents for each one gathered.

To the far left was the garage that we would sit in front of, in the white plastic lawn chairs, while Grandpa taught us the fundamentals of firearm safety. It is also where I earned the nickname “Dead-eye.”

Behind me was the deep red, two-story farmhouse where I had spent countless family holidays, and where my father lived for over half of his childhood. Placed like centerpieces on either side of the front door were big white wagon wheels that had been purchased on a previous treasure hunt. While admiring them, I was taken back to a time of standing on my tippy-toes and stretching my fingertips to their absolute limits in an effort to grip the top of one of the enormous wheels.

For a minute I smiled at the image, but was quickly jolted back to reality as the bidding began. I didn't have much spending money, which normally wouldn't bother me; but never in my life had I wished to be rich, more than in that moment. Hours passed as my tears continued falling freely to that sacred ground around me. I watched helplessly as more and more nameless faces left with pieces of my childhood.

Somehow, on that day, time managed to speed up and stand still all at once. Never have I felt so young, yet so old, at the same time. Life's greatest treasures come with the steepest prices.

# Melissa Schulz

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Today if you travel eight miles west on Hwy 60, you will come upon the tiny city of Morristown. On the main drag you will find a pale blue house. In my front yard, there is a flagpole rising from a little rock pond. To either side of the front door, placed like center pieces, you will see the most beautiful wagon wheels ever made. I would like to say that you can't miss it. But that would be a lie.

Melissa Schulz

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**Through Puzzled Eyes**



# Reyna Duwenhoegger

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## Mi Abuela

There she sat on the sofa, holding her rosary and watching her daily telenovelas (TV dramas). She decided to wear her floral shirt and khaki-colored shorts today, and I noticed that her hair was duller than usual. Maybe she had forgotten to dye it or just didn't feel like it. Deciding that now was as good a time as any other, I walked into the living room with notebook and pen in hand and sat down next to her.

"Wella," I said. "Can I bother you for a moment?" When I was little, I couldn't pronounce the word *abuela*, which means *grandmother*, properly so I made up my own shortened version.

"Yes, of course. What do you need?" she responded. The whole conversation was in Spanish so the formal speech might throw you off but that is the way we talk to our elders.

"I have an assignment for class to write a nonfiction story. The first thing I thought was to write about you. Can you help me?"

"Certainly, I have some time before I start prayer." She put her rosary down and turned away from the TV but didn't turn it off. That's how it was—no matter what was going on, save prayer, the telenovelas would continue to blast their Spanish chaos throughout the house.

I promised that it wouldn't take long but when you ask old people about their past, you can safely bet against that promise.

You may be wondering who I'm talking to. She is the rock of my family, my second mother, and my grandmother. Her name is Teresa.

Teresa was born in Mexico and spent most of her young adult life there. She eventually migrated to the U.S. with her husband, Ricardo, around the mid to late 1970's. They, along with their four children, settled into a small apartment in Texas. That compact, two-bedroom apartment was the start of a better life.

"All you knew was Spanish, right? No English?" I asked.

"Yes, we did not know anything other than a few words like 'yes, no, how are you, I'm doing very good,'" she explained.

## Reyna Duwenhoegger

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“Well then, how did you manage to get a job? How did other people understand you?”

“It was hard. But we also needed to eat, pay rent, and buy clothes for the children. We did not want to go back to Mexico; it was much harder to work there and you got paid less. They knew we were hardworking people. They just made sure we were not illegals, were clean, and would work for little money.”

She was excited to be in America as she had exclaimed in Spanish, “¡Yo tuve ganas de trabajar!” which translates to “I had the desire to work!”

About two weeks into their American lives, they both landed minimum-wage jobs. At that time it was only about \$1.45 to \$2.90 but sufficient enough to be able to send some money back to their parents in Mexico. Their children started attending public school and received a, more-or-less, adequate education. Life was great, or at least as great as it could have been for a family of six recently-emigrated Mexicans.

The happy beginnings of Teresa’s American journey did not last long. Ricardo grew severely ill. He began to have trouble walking because he didn’t have any strength in his legs.

“I remember the doctor saying that something was wrong with his lower back. I didn’t speak English and he didn’t speak Spanish, so I didn’t understand everything except that it was going to be expensive.”

Because of the language barrier, Teresa still does know exactly what her husband was diagnosed with.

After the diagnosis, Ricardo quit his job because he was too sick to continue. This drastically changed their lives. Teresa did not only become the sole breadwinner but she had to find another job and work every day from sunup to sundown. Eventually, she found work as a sorter at a vegetable packing factory.

“I was very tired at the end of the day. We had to stay awake and move our arms a lot because the machines were going so fast that we had to be careful not to cut off a finger or hand.”

## Reyna Duwenhoegger

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She worked like this for a year to pay the rent, bills, and her husband's treatments. Not only was she working and taking care of her ailing husband but she had to watch four children, one of whom was only five at the time. Alongside her factory job, she got a second job as a waitress at a place called "Las Tortugas" (translates to "The Turtles").

"I liked that job. The people were nice, the music was Mexicano, and we got an extra 10 or 25 cents here and there."

However, the waitress job at "Las Tortugas" didn't pan out, and Teresa was again forced to find another way of making money. For this, she turned to cleaning people's houses for a measly five to eight dollars a day. Since this amount wasn't nearly enough to pay the bills, Teresa's oldest daughter of seventeen joined her at the vegetable factory.

Now that Teresa's daughter was helping out, the family had become more secure. This is when Teresa decided to rent a small house. She described the new neighborhood as poor, sketchy, and dangerous. People broke into rundown houses and stole cars, drug dealers displayed their merchandise in alleyways, gun shots sounded in the distance, graffiti decorated the walls of buildings, and gang violence littered the community.

"Why did you move to such a horrible place?"

"I did not want to live there but we couldn't afford anything else. The apartment was too small for my four children," she replied.

Much to Teresa's dismay, her husband's condition had taken a turn for the worse. The doctor's had informed her that Ricardo wasn't responding to the treatments and that he would, ultimately, die. Her husband's ailment had racked up many hospital bills, but they did not have the money to pay them because they had been living from paycheck to paycheck.

She had said, "Todo lo que ganaba se gastó" which means, "Everything that was earned was spent."

After sending the children off to school, she would head out to work at the vegetable factory by bus or by simply walking.

## Reyna Duwenhoegger

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Besides having to sell their only car, Teresa had to get creative. She decided to cook tamales and sell them from door to door. Previously, her husband had made sugar cookies which she sold before he was too sick to bake. She also went to flea markets and bought what she could. She would then buy a license for a flea market stand of her own and sold the items or clothing she had just bought at a slightly higher price. With this, Teresa got into a more normal, albeit difficult, routine.

“I would wake up as early as three or four in the morning so that I would have enough time to cook breakfast and make lunch for the children.”

“Almost every morning, I would wait outside a whole hour for the bus to arrive.”

Following the factory, her kind boss would allow her to leave early to go visit her husband at the hospital. Being worried about his condition, she tried to visit him as often as she could. When visiting hours ended, she would leave to her second job of housekeeping. And during her spare time, she would have to go sell tamales or sell at the flea markets.

With tears in her eyes, she said, “Trabajé como un burro” which means, “I worked like a donkey.”

There wasn't ever any time for anything else. She would miss out on theaters, dances, parties, and all other kinds of gatherings. Yet, she would never skip church.

Teresa is of Catholic faith and even with her busy schedule, she still found time to attend Sunday mass. The church members knew about her situation. Whenever they held gatherings, they would hold them over at Teresa's house. Because of this, her family would receive food to eat. Their usual meals consisted of tortillas, eggs, and beans; so she enjoyed the gatherings very much as they presented a different variety of foods. She preferred being offered food by her friends rather than having to take food stamps, which she reluctantly had to accept a couple of times.

“But food stamps would have helped you and you wouldn't have had to work so hard. Why did you refuse them?” I wondered.

“It made me feel ashamed. I didn't like using them at the stores because I didn't want other people to see me as poor.”

## Reyna Duwenhoegger

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“Each bag of medicine costed thirty dollars.”

Back then that was a lot of money, so she was forced to cut back on her own expenses to be able to pay for her mother's cancer medication.

My grandmother suffered like this for seven long years. It was the lone act of a father of the Catholic Church in which my grandmother regained herself. After praying the rosary over his bedside and scattering holy water to bless him, the priest healed my grandfather.

“He saved my husband when no doctor could. I will never forget Padre Patricio.”

Her faith, other than her family, was the sole reason that kept her going. This forever changed the way she now views the world, the way she now views the simple things in life.

My grandfather now has to take medication for the rest of his life, but he is alive today because of my grandmother's endurance. Without the sacrifices that they made, the cycle of poverty would have continued into further generations and her grandchildren would have most likely been stuck in the same situation. Their sufferings made it possible for me to be here—studying in college today. She is what has made it possible for her grandchildren to now succeed. I am proud to be able to call her mi abuela.

“Thank you for helping me with my project, grandmother.”

“You're welcome, granddaughter.”

She then returned to her telenovelas with rosary in hand.

# Emily Bernau

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## Another Paper

Settle down in your favorite green chair next to the window.

Dig out your notebook and pencil.

Read the requirements for your paper about .... what was it, quantum mechanics?

Scribble your name and the date on top, not knowing what else to do.

Break your lead just in time for the first word.

Brace yourself for your next battle with the sharpener as it threatens to chew your pencil to

shreds with its razor-sharp teeth.

After finally defeating the enemy, reluctantly return to your seat and pull out your planner.

Count how many days you have left before you can get this thing off your hands.

Stare at your paper.

Jot a few things down.

Rip it out and toss it in the garbage.

Miss and hike to the garbage can across the treacherous landscape filled with all sorts of shoes

and books to trip over.

Approach the can and catch a few whiffs of popcorn—so buttery and salty.

Dash to the kitchen and plead with your sister to share.

Return with a heaping bowl of popcorn and continue to stare at your paper.

Accidentally brush your greasy hand across the paper and leave a nice splotch behind.

Decide you need a drink of ice cold water to rescue your mouth from all that salt.

Trudge back to your room and plop down in your chair.

Reread the paper's requirements for about the tenth time and discover that you are only 1,199

words short.

# Desirae Brooks

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## **When waves break into white caps**

Where tea isn't tea  
It's just lukewarm honey water with Bags  
And Strings  
and tags  
that's where I met you—

I met you where the Sun wasn't shining  
Where Bells rang loud—  
Louder than we could talk  
And your face was lit by candle light—  
my candle light

I put your Mug on a heating plate  
And caught you taking a nap  
And covered you in Blankets  
Coated in dog fur  
until you were gone—

And I didn't know  
You were never mine.

# Elisa Perez-Garcia

---

## The Unread Chapter

My notebooks are the only ones that have allowed me to pour out all of my thoughts on the table. I usually don't open to just anybody about an issue that hits close to home for me. Let me just, first of all, start off by telling you a little about myself. I was born and raised in a small town of a population around two thousand people. I was raised by my number one supporters, my parents. Personally, I don't know where I would be without them. Everything I had achieved was for them, and I wanted them to know that everything that they have done was worth it. Growing up there wasn't that many Hispanic families in my community in the late 1990's. In many classes, there were five kids that were Hispanic. At a young age I noticed that there were people who did not like us, and sometimes they would give us a nasty look. Maybe because they stereotyped us all as being "bad people," but we all weren't. Yes, some Hispanic kids might not have made the best choices, but I hated when people would judge me before getting to know me. I just wanted people to see that I was different!

Our government saw it the same way as they did. Did you know that our education system works the same way? If you grew up in a household where English wasn't the primary language you automatically get placed in ELL (English Language Learners). I was only six; I didn't pick up on this until I was in fourth grade. All I knew was that whenever my class had English, I had to go to ELL room for my class. But one day I noticed that I wasn't getting taught the same things as other kids in my class were. Not only were their spelling words more challenging, but overall they read at a higher level than what we were doing in ELL. Whatever I asked my ELL teacher why we weren't getting taught the same things, she told me I was and pulled out her book. At that point, I decided that I was going to work my hardest to prove to them that I could get taught the same things as other kids my age. By the time I was in sixth grade I was the only one in my class that was receiving straight A's and tried my hardest to prove them I was ready. The transition for me was hard, I'm not going to lie. Now more than ever I spent countless hours studying to catch up on the years that I missed.

## Elisa Perez-Garcia

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Not to mention at this age I would try to fit in with the popular kids. In reality, those kids were the ones that would hurt me the most. They would make fun of Hispanics, crack jokes of how they crossed the border and other horrible comments. I was blind; all I ever wanted was to fit in. It wasn't until eighth grade where I noticed that because I got good grades, the cool kids began to notice me. If there was homework, some classmates didn't understand. I would help them with it during lunch. Having such an open heart and always willing to help others, sometimes I would get taken advantage of just so that I could have those five minutes of attention, and I hoped that I would get invited to hang out with them outside of school.

However, when I entered high school my eyes were set on my dream to go to college, and I was going to work my hardest. At this time high school was going as planned; I got inducted into National Honor Society, and I ran for student council winning for three years in a row. I was constantly reminded of one thing. People weren't always going to have an open mind. When our school became more diverse with different cultures, classmates of mine would still crack jokes and make some mean comments about them. Little did they know that I was part of that group too; my parents were immigrants. That motivated me to prove to all of these people that I was capable of greater things. I graduated high school and all of my hard work paid off. In the end, I was going on to college to continue my education.

My class grew up anticipating 2016 to come. That meant that we finally were done with high school. For me 2016 had some highs and lows, as I'm sure for many other people too. However, there is one thing I can't believe that happened: half of the nation shared the same views as this man. Some of those people were my classmates, members of my community, or someone I saw on a regular basis. I didn't expect this from our country, and watching the results to come in was scary, and hear that he had won. That crushed my heart there was a chance my families could be torn apart, to see LGBT community get offended, or to see a wall get built. I felt as if we were going back in history; as a nation we saw milestones being created this past couple of years.

## Elisa Perez-Garcia

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We witnessed our first African-American President, the first Hispanic woman on the Supreme Court, and LGBT community receiving the rights fought for. Everyone is entitled to their opinion, but all I wish for people to keep an open mind of other people's situations.

My parents aren't criminals; for me, they are the ones that will always have my back no matter what happens. When I have a bad day and feel like I need to cry they will be there to make me feel better. Or when I receive an award they are the ones in the audience who clap the loudest when I'm up on stage. I don't think anyone understands exactly what many families like mine are going through at this time with the fear that one day they could be torn apart. I'm only eighteen, and I have a brother—we still need our parents here. Although I might be an adult, I don't think I can grow up fast enough to take care of my younger brother, work, and go to school on top of that. I want my parents to be here and see all the milestones we reach in our lives and tell us how proud they are of us by giving us a big hug. People don't understand our perspective. All they see is that we are immigrant and assume that we are bad people. Let me tell you something next time you want to judge someone; all I ask is that you keep an open mind, and listen to their story before that assumption.

# Emmanuel Granados

---

## **Aware**

Our sight is muddled by the pits below

Blinded by the stars' above

You are ignorant of the twilight you walk.

# Wyatt Erickson

---

## **Noun Poem**

From Saint Paul

To the brick wall.

Typewriter, dresser, ceiling.

Eyes all over.

Longing for the forest,

Tiger lilies, towering trees, strawberries.

The sun reveals a silhouette of a hawk.

However I am stuck sadly.

Plowing my blue Toyota Camry

through the snow

into the tsunami of bullshit.

## **November, Dawn**

The lingering smoke of last evening's bonfires and wafts of dryer emissions unsettle my dog. He walks in zig-zags, tracing the patterns of constellations above. Lavender picks at darkness in the east, slowly eating away the stars. Soon the mornings will arrive before I do; the night will be swallowed whole. But today a bank of clouds shields the creeping rays of sunlight from view, masking the dawn as if to stop it from coming. I exhale into the chill, willing my breath to the cause.

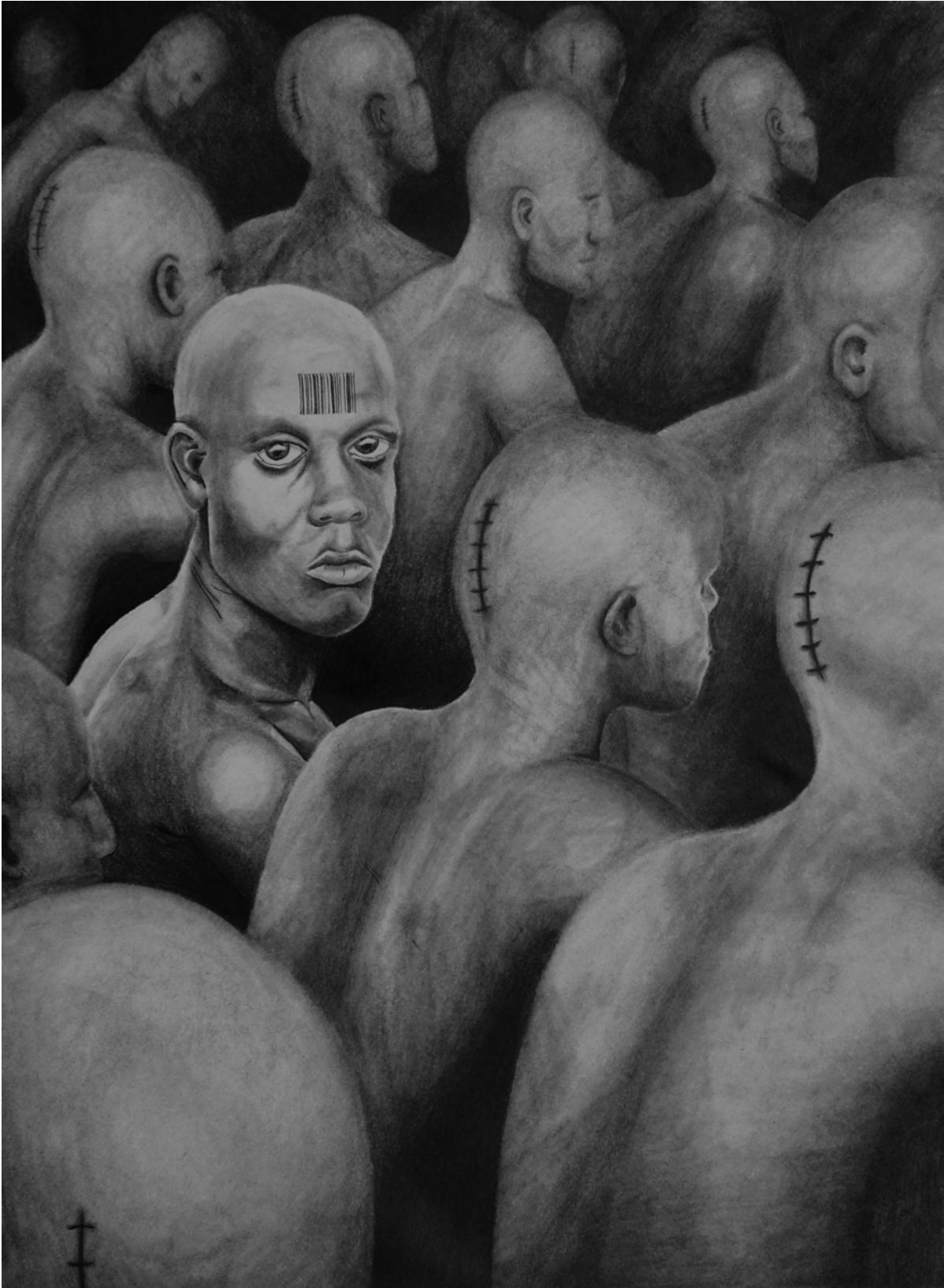
## January Looks

Reaching to  
blot the blood  
from your chapped  
lips, you spot  
ruddy knuckles  
and smoky semi-circles  
sinking under windblown  
eyes, like  
August wildflowers under  
dunes of snow.

# Jason Felten

---

122682



# Hannah Stoeckel

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## Remover

The pink text says it is oil free. Yet when I run the  
moistened Q-tip under my eye, thin skin becomes oily.

Don't trust pink text.

I look to the green rubber froggy, he is blurry.

My eyes are oily as well.

I think as I glance

to my hands. I discover they resemble pale, bloody  
mud cracks under a burning sun. Heat waves disturb my  
perspective, so I hide them from myself.

My back was warm like sandstone.

Skin, red as the old leather bound atlas sitting on my  
desk.

Untouched.

Do I feel like cracking, painted leather?

My hair was stringy. I forgot to take a shower, again.  
Never have I had louse and I wonder if it is because of  
this grease. Grease that sticks to frying pans, just as the  
pink text sticks to my eyes, just as the oils cling to my  
skin, just as my walls crumble like Jericho.  
Just as the deep chasm in my chest is filled.

# Desirae Brooks

---

## **Filling my Keurig with Ice cubes**

And I know I never said This  
But I hate you

Not for the way you held the steering wheel  
At 6 O'clock  
And not for the way you rolled  
Your eyes every time  
I'd reach to fix your necklace

Not for the way you rarely brushed your hair  
Or the way you often forgot to do the same  
To your teeth  
And not for the way you laughed  
Too loud during movies

I never hated you for the way  
You rubbed circles with your thumb  
On my hand  
When our fingers were intertwined  
—sometimes figure eights

## Desirae Brooks

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I hated you for the way you put ice  
In your hot coffee  
Then commenced to spit it out  
And complain  
About its heat

Why then  
Am I still spilling lukewarm coffee  
On my hands

And pretending  
It was you.

# Madie Cloutier

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## Perhaps I Have Insomnia

My ceiling does not speak to me  
At night as I lie in bed.  
We do not exchange stories of how our days went,  
Though, no doubt, it had one that was more interesting than mine.  
There is never any discussion on current politics—  
Not that either of us enjoys the topic anyways.  
We do not regale each other with tales of heroes and ancestors,  
Though I would love to hear about its family tree.  
We never question the other's schedule.  
I trust it doesn't plan on falling someday while I'm in the room.  
We never converse about our problems—  
Neither of us fancies the idea of getting caught up in the other's drama.  
Similarly, we avoid sharing our successes  
As we prefer not to gloat.  
We never ask questions about the other's past.  
Who knows what mysteries and scandals they hold.  
No arguments are uttered or screamed.  
Not even a friendly greeting is exchanged.  
Instead, we prefer competition,  
Things like the quiet game or a staring contest.  
However, I must admit I am rarely able to defeat that indifferent white  
plaster  
And wake up in the morning not knowing when I fell asleep.

# Jasper Beloy

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## Okay

I was lying in bed, I had been for hours. I had been watching a video, over and over on repeat. What it was I don't know, and I couldn't have told you even in the middle of watching it. There was a sound like mud oozing onto a wood floor, a wet slap. And I had turned around to find a sculpture of a person. He had looked pixelated and sad. But his eyes were human; they were sharp and I could see myself reflected inside. I watched myself reach up. I pulled out my teeth like a string of pearls. But there was no blood, just like always.

# Samuel Greer

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## The Harvest

Joe, a child of nine years, reaches, with one hand, for the Q-tip he had moistened with rubbing alcohol. With the other hand, he grabs a Lego mini figure. "Daddy is going to be so proud of me when I show him what I've caught." As Joe scrubs the little face with the Q-tip, smudging the paint, he knows, this time, it's going to work. With the face completely gone, Joe reaches for the red permanent marker and puts a little eye in the center of the yellow void. His daddy had always told him, "The eyes are the gateway to the soul," and Joe knows this to be true. That's why he is sitting out in the garage with his daddy's tools at hand. Joe reaches over and grabs the drill, lines it up with the makeshift eye, and bores a small hole into its head. At first nothing happens and Joe is disappointed, but as he turns away, a piercing shriek emanates from the toy and little blue smoke starts seeping out of the hole. Joe quickly snatches a jar and holds it over the opening.

## Samuel Greer

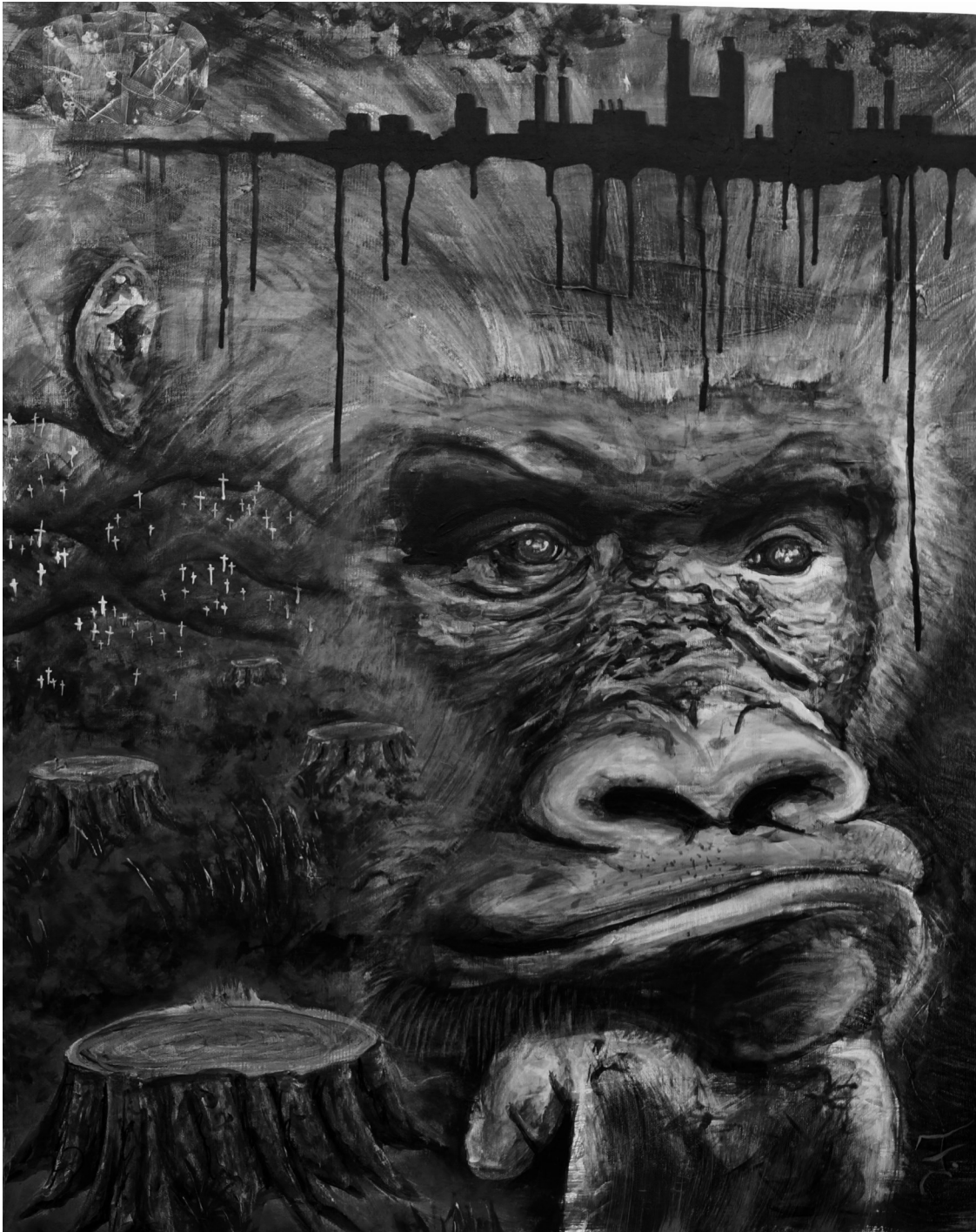
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When the smoke has finished coming out of the hole, he closes the jar, flips it upright, and squints at the contents. “Crap, not enough.” Joe tosses the jar into a pile of similar jars, each housing different amounts of blue smoke, and reaches for the next terrified mini figure.

# Jason Felten

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## Home



# Madie Cloutier

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## A Concert in the Woods

There is a band that practices in the entrance of a graffiti-laced tunnel to Hell.

They play loud as their cigarette smoke curls away into Tartarus. We follow  
To find animals gathered from miles around  
To cheer on Lucifer's band.

The deer watch from far off, still as statues.

The birds join in for a verse or two.

The river hums.

At the top of the hill, inmates sing along

From the other side of their barbed-wire fence.

They clank their chains and stomp their feet in ensemble.

On the other side of the tracks, mothers and children weep

As the music reaches their ears

Six feet under.

They died young

And crazy

Or so the people had said.

The band plays Johnny Cash as a train begins to rattle the tracks

Where our copper Abe Lincolns sit with blank stares.

But all this becomes background noise as I climb the old willow and

When I reach the top, I feel as though I can

Relate to the electric guitar below, playing the blues.

As the train blows its whistle I look at the horizon and think

That I don't know much except that from the top of this tree

You can see a real killer

Of a sunset.

Katelyn Graham

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**Old Bottles**

