

## The Canticle

“It is in the furnace that gold is refined, increasing in value the more it is  
beaten and fashioned into different shapes” - *City of Ladies*

### Work

*\* denotes a winner of the Editor's Choice Award*

Lexi Burt - “archaeologist”\*, “schizo-effect”

Lola Culbertson - Untitled 1, Untitled 2, Untitled 3

Madysen Gailey - “Vacationing”

Niki Jalali - Untitled 4

Eric Jensen - “Meditations in October”

Milo Kluger - “Fountain”, “Puppet”\*, “Skull Garden”, “Sunday  
Commute”

Emma Liston - “There is a Room”\*

Gabby Nelson - “Coffee Shop Toddler”, “4x4”

Nihil - “Redemption”

Ygor Noblott - “AN ODE TO A POETRY CLASS AFTER A LONG  
YEAR”, “THE TREES THAT GROW CURVED”

Cailey Rohovit - “sixty-three plastic army men”, “tell it slant”, “The  
Inevitable Erasure of You, a Small White Dog on a Dirt Path”

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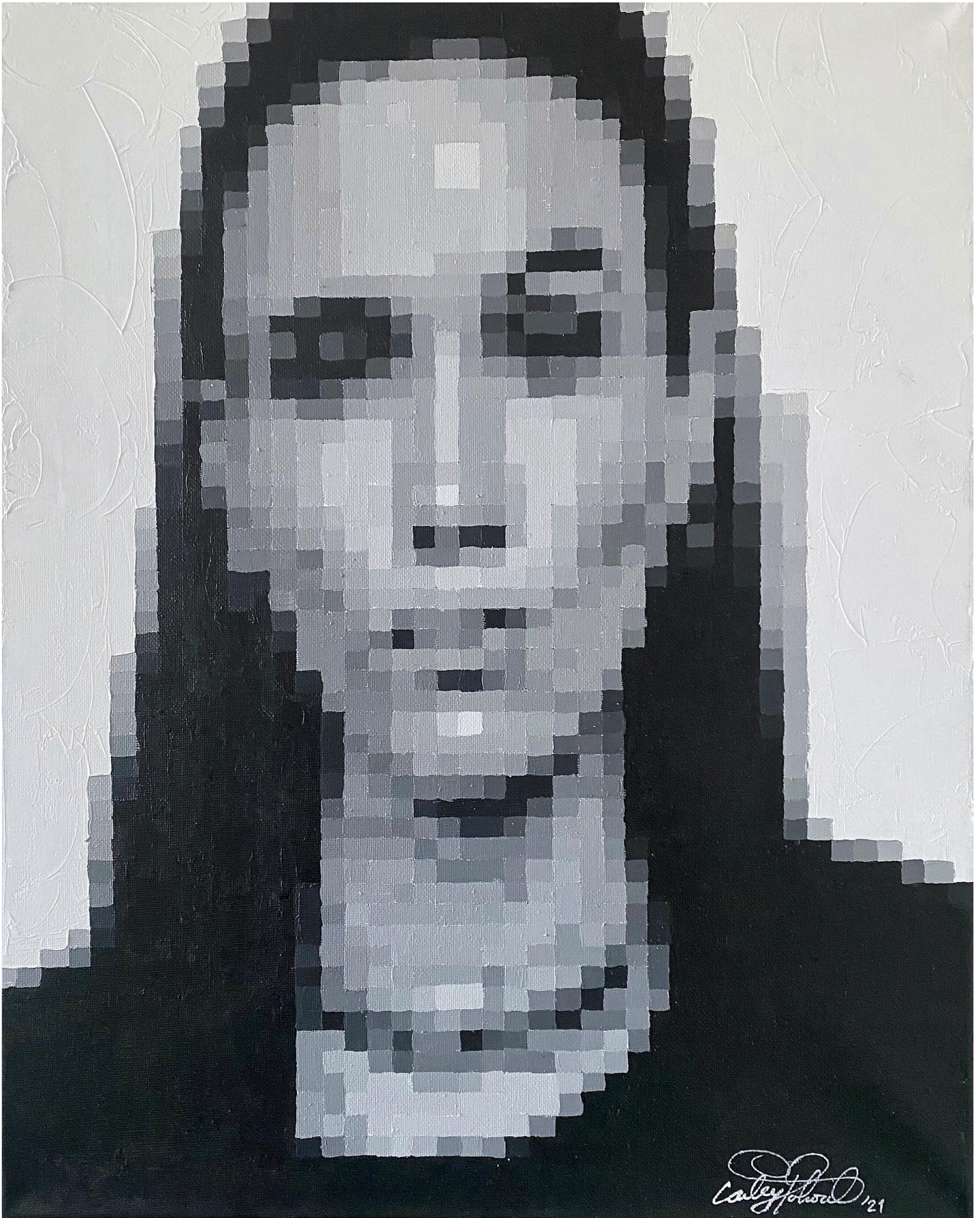
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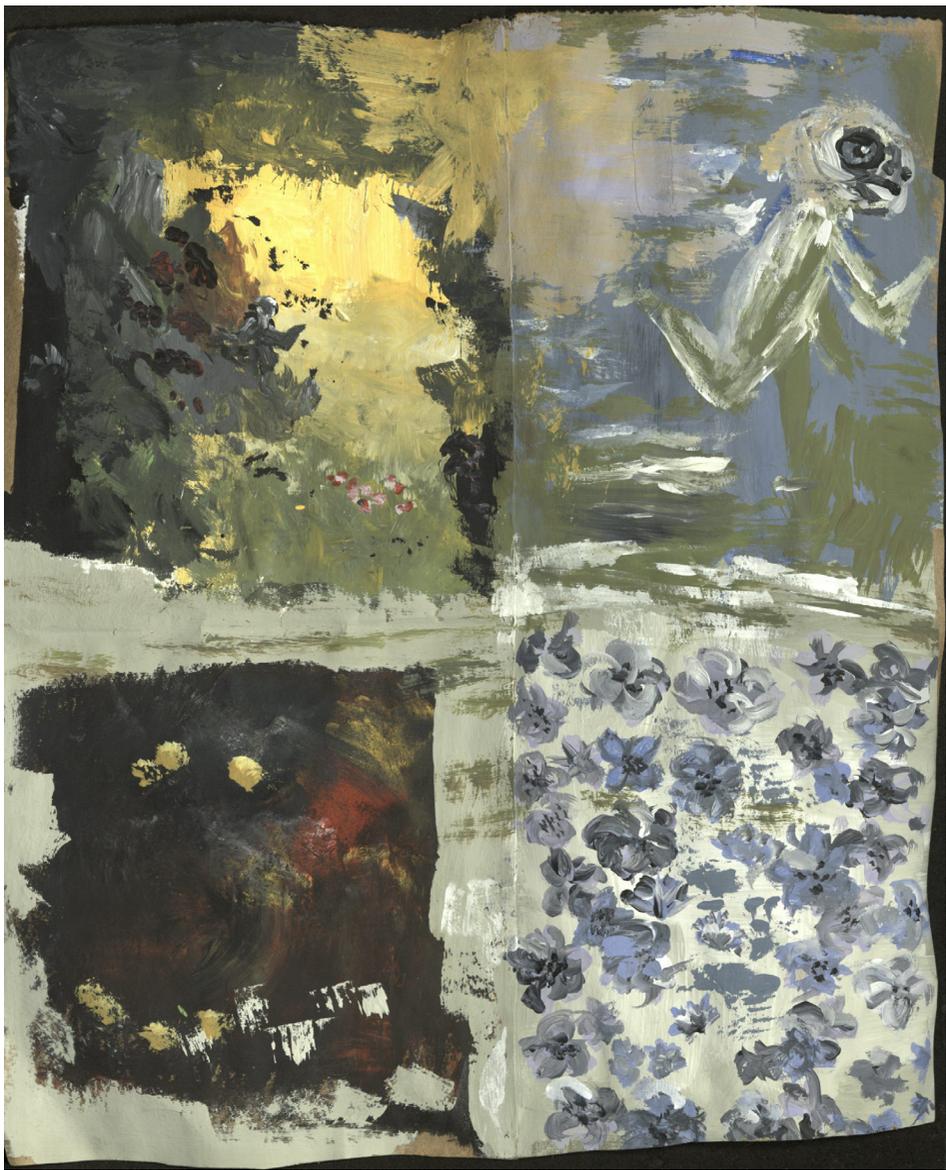






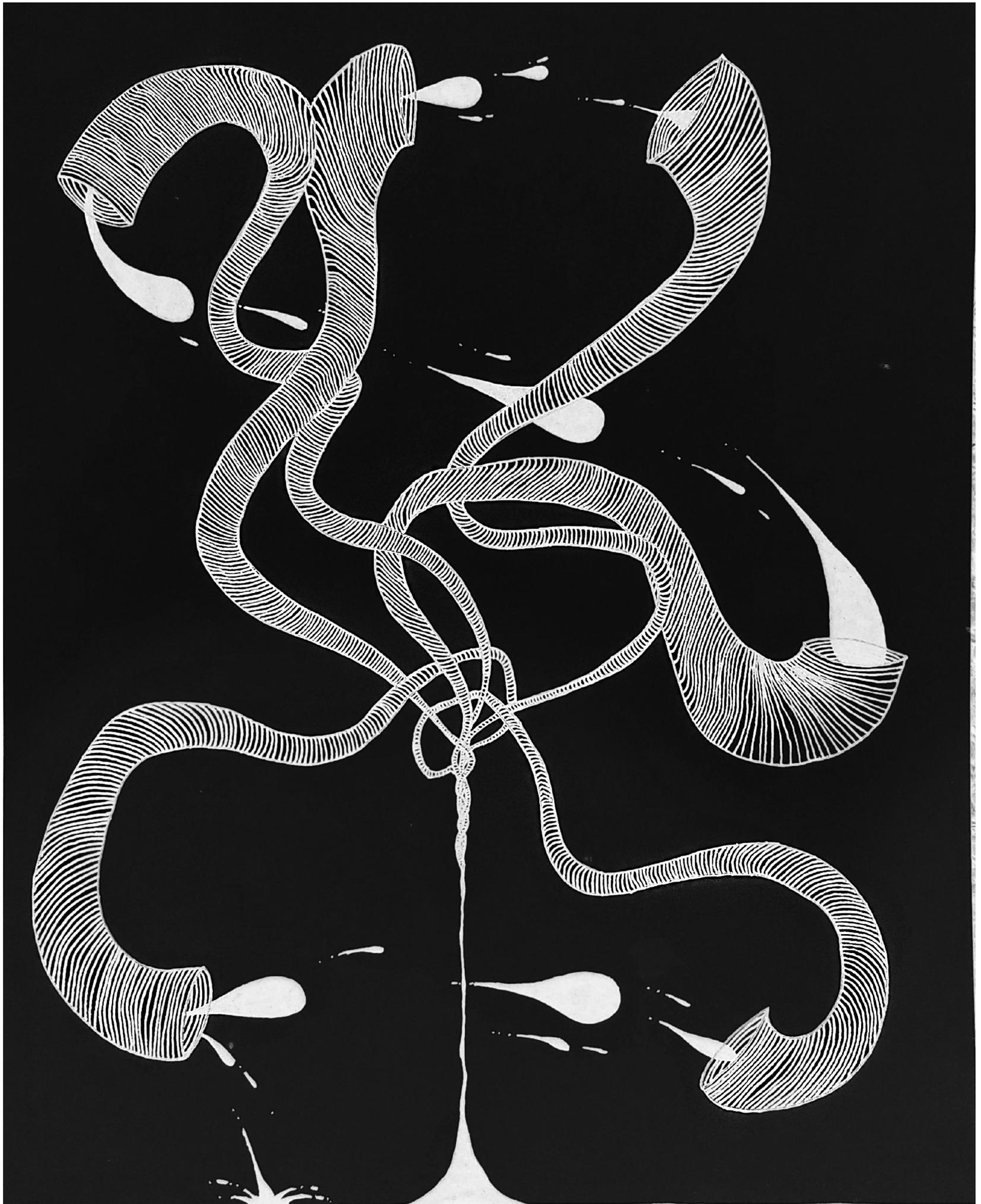
















《救赎》

从无

我想了很多  
在椅子上落入空灵  
我想我的童年的老水沟，当然还有树上的白兰花  
公园的鸡蛋花  
我想我的风筝和飘进大海的蝙蝠  
我想自己，我想我的她  
我想我的钱，我想我抽过的烟  
我想昨夜散去的记忆，我想我失落的眼睛  
我想了很多，坐在椅子上  
我想我的生命，我想凋落的花瓣  
我想宁静的校园，我想小学的下  
我想我生命的终点，我想破碎的灵魂  
我想散落的硬币，我想嚼剩的口香糖  
我想我只能这样坐着，在冷气里裹紧衣服  
我想我落魄失魂，我想我生命残缺不全  
白兰花，白兰花  
我要你补全我的灵魂，拯救我的生命  
我要你很多，我要你的全部  
我看见自己散落的头发，我看见蓝色的灯  
我看见昨夜的星空，我看见自己像个孩子  
我空洞，我疲倦，我剥析了我的皮，我的血，我的骨头和我的肉  
我看见那个孩子，蜷缩在地板下，颤抖，在冷风中徐徐  
我看见远处的山脉，被灰烬所笼罩  
我看见干涸的池塘里干裂的烂泥  
我看见陌生的女人再没有爱意  
我看见男人卷起自己的腿，我犯恶心  
我嘴唇干裂，我的皮肤缺水  
我饿到筋挛，我的胃在抽搐  
我看见许多可怜的姑娘心生爱怜，也看见许多优雅的姑娘让我反胃  
我看见虚伪的皮和翻腾的毛发  
我听见她们起伏又拘谨的声音  
我像孩子，不能爱上世俗的模样  
我越来越饿，越来越空虚  
我吃所有见到的东西，包括蜘蛛和苍蝇  
我越来越渴，但好像所有的液体都只划过表面，我的根却是干竭  
我看见所有欢乐的模样，但我越来越沉默  
我听见所有苦痛的呻吟，但我却无所适从  
我在山脉望见城市，回过头是无人的旷野，我试图拖动双腿扎根在这里，抵抗着，抗拒着片刻的喘息  
鼠尾草的荧光，让我被月光沐浴  
蓝色和金黄的杂草，我看见地上的红砖，我不能再继续走下去，  
但我走的太快，太快了  
这一切的一切，那一切的一切  
我要在这里沉眠，我抵抗着一切，还有我自己  
我，我，我  
我想需要得到救赎  
救我爱，补全我，滋养我，让我活着的时候得到安息

这我知道  
魔鬼与上帝这两个词是孪生的  
不管以哪一种方式  
与他们无关  
和所有一切分离  
我要得到安息  
Peace

《Redemption》

*Nihil*

I think a lot  
Fall into ethereal on the chair  
I think the old ditch of my childhood, and of course the white orchids on the tree  
Frangipani in the park  
I miss my kite and the bat floating into the sea  
I miss myself, i miss my her  
I want my money, I want the cigarettes I smoked  
I want the memory that disappeared last night, I want my lost eyes I think a lot and sit in a chair  
I want my life, I want to fall petals  
I want a quiet campus, I want an afternoon in elementary school  
I want the end of my life, I want the broken soul  
I want scattered coins, I want to chew leftover gum  
I think I can only sit like this and wrap my clothes tightly in the air conditioner  
I want to lose my soul, I want my life to be incomplete  
White orchid, white orchid  
I want you to fill my soul and save my life  
I want you a lot, I want all of you  
I see my stray hair, I see the blue light  
I saw the starry sky last night, I saw myself like a child  
I am hollow, I am tired, I peel my skin, my blood, my bones and my flesh  
I saw the child, curled up under the floor, shaking, slowly in the cold wind  
I saw the mountains in the distance, shrouded in ashes  
I saw the dry and cracked mud in the dried-up pond  
I saw strange women no longer in love  
I saw the man roll up his legs, I was sick  
My lips are chapped and my skin is dehydrated  
I'm so hungry that my stomach is twitching  
I have seen many poor girls with love and compassion, and many elegant girls make me sick.  
I see hypocritical skin and churning hair  
I heard their ups and downs and stern voices  
I'm like a child, I can't fall in love with the worldly appearance  
I am getting hungry and empty  
I eat everything I see, including spiders and flies  
I am getting more and more thirsty, but it seems that all the liquid  
is only across the surface, but my roots are dry  
I saw all the joy, but I became more and more silent  
I hear all the painful groans, but I don't know what to do  
I saw the city in the mountains, and when I turned around, there was  
no one in the wilderness. I tried to drag my legs to root here,  
resisting, resisting  
A moment of respite  
The fluorescence of sage leaves me bathed in moonlight  
Blue and golden weeds, I see red bricks on the ground, I can't go on,  
I know  
But I walked too fast, too fast  
All of this, all of that  
I want to sleep here, I resist everything, and myself  
Me, me, me  
I think I need to be redeemed

Save my love, complement me, nourish me,  
let me rest in peace while I'm alive  
The two words devil and god are twins  
No matter which way  
Nothing to do with them  
Separate from everything  
I want to rest in peace  
Peace

Cailey Rohovit

**The Inevitable Erasure of You, a Small White Dog on a Dirt Path**  
after *Tobias and the Angel* by Andrea del Verrocchio

What it must feel like to be  
a dog under the feet of an angel,  
ghostly by accident.  
To be more obsolete  
than the slashed belly of a bound fish  
who waits for its needless death  
to be deemed as such,  
or the shriveled grass beside the soles  
of a merciful being found guiltless.  
Do you feel the heaving that billows  
surrounding bodies?

The angel is golden, glowing,  
and I can see dirt through your head.

**sixty-three plastic army men**

Cailey Rohovit

six months earlier i was crouched  
next to the trash can

we end up where we don't belong  
falling in luck  
falling in *unlucky*  
picking at split ends because that's all  
that's left  
right  
picking at split-

(when did you start rotting?)  
(all that's left of you is) rot.

six months later i was curled  
between my fingers  
between your fingers  
between your *rotten*

i end up where i started  
climbing out of unlucky  
climbing out of *luck*

there's blood under your fingernails and you  
aren't sure whose it is.

## There is a Room

Emma Liston

There is a room that exists only in Vincent's brain. A room whose walls are powder pink with paint chipped away at the door frame so that the old moldy underneath, which is the color of a chunk of ginger root, can be seen. The ceiling is too high up for his eyes to discern and yet there is a fabric chandelier descending out of that unknown to illuminate the room with dusty white light. A moth clings to the shivering tassels. This room exists in his dreams. An old childhood dream that has the faint tang of loneliness, of malicious intent, or of some kind of death.

Vincent woke from this dream for the first time at the age of eight and thought it must have been what heaven looked like. Maybe it existed before God, and He simply moved in. Or maybe He mixed the pink paint Himself, maybe the grandfather clock and the dollhouse and the birdcage were His from childhood.

In Ethan's garden, he points Vincent to the white meadowfoam at the border of the property, edging up like lace against the wall the neighbors erected last year. The monkey flowers and the wild roses mingling into a mosaic of pink and yellow petals, the blue-eyed grass blinking in the wind. The cactus by the rotting swing set, round and steady like a laughing Buddha, with a vague silvery tint to its spines. He knows the scientific name of every plant on the property. *Sisyrinchium bellum*, *Salvia spathacea*, *Carpenteria californica*.

Vincent thinks the garden couldn't have been more green if it was instead a room painted a toxic, man-made emerald.

It's a tapestry of roots and leaves and pistils and pollen, and the blossoms are delicate shining jewels fastened on with thread. Murky olive like the muck at the bottom of a lake— a bed of moss. Tiny pansies shelter under calla lilies. The air is hot and wet, just how Ethan hates it most, and they lounge in the shade of a tree with sweat dewing on their faces like morning condensation does on the garden plants' leaves.

Vincent's eyelids are heavy, his lashes filtering sunlight as he blinks lazily. He'd dreamt of the room the night before, when he was curled up under Ethan's arm. Like boys having a sleepover except they're sleeping in the same bed and they're touching each other's collarbones and studying the color of each other's eyes. Some of his old toys were scattered about the room, and the floor was the same as the carpet in his grandparents' house, old and scratchy and with dead bugs in the corners. The door, which is always red, had been opened a crack.

Vincent thought God would probably be mad at him if he left the room without permission.

He'd woken up to Ethan saying he was going to feed his plants, wondering if Vincent wanted to watch, and yes, he did really want to watch. Ethan has two Venus flytraps and a bladderwort, which is suspended in a slightly mucky fishbowl. The bladderwort he just fed some fertilizer. It eats things like mosquito larvae when it's outside, he explained, and he would've transferred it outside if those contractors had ever finished the pond his mom wanted to put in. It tumbles down through the water in tangles of tender yellow and green sprouts, held afloat by dark round bladders. A tiny white flower

crowns the tip of the stem.

The flytraps are upstairs next to the china cabinet. One is a bruised kind of purple, and the other is green with a violent red mouth. Ethan fed each one a mealworm— small, tan, earthy— even though Vincent was expecting to watch the black corpse of a fly dissolve between the plants' teeth.

Grass scratches at his face, not yet dry from summer heat, but not soft and shiny either.

Ethan, at his side, is muttering about all the things he needs to do today, listing his chores out loud just for the sake of putting it straight in his head. A patch of morning glory blossoms flutters in the wind by his face, which is flushed pink in the heat, and he twitches his cheek when the petals brush against his skin. Vincent wonders if Ethan would let bugs crawl on him, he belongs in the garden so. If a centipede emerged out of the green sea they lie on and went up his arm, into his sleeve. Or if a monarch landed on his lips and tried to drink the spit he uses to sooth the dry, chapped skin.

Partway drifting into a doze with the lazy summer lethargy weighing him down, Vincent closes his eyes to the sky and, in the pink room of his dreams, he imagines the door with its cracking paint and when it creaks open this time, Vincent slips through it.

Ethan says he wants to eat something from the garden even though not much is ripe. There's a lemon tree, but it's shielded from their bare feet and hands by a thorn-studded bush. There's tomatoes, but they're small and green and Vincent doesn't like eating tomatoes in the best of circumstances.

Ethan reaches up into the boughs of his mother's ancient apple tree, though, and pulls out a single foetal fruit. It's green, like all the rest of the place, other than the sky and the boys— blue and pink. It's small enough to be almost entirely enveloped in the cradle of Ethan's palm, and he takes a hard-earned bite out of it. It snaps under his teeth, a harsh and refreshing kind of noise, even though Vincent knows it's sour. Ethan seems to enjoy it anyways, always one for sour things, and always one for things out of his own garden.

He asks, around the sourness in his mouth, if Vincent has ever had fried apples, says he'll like them fried even if they're unripe.

Let me try it, Vincent says, because he can't help his curiosity. He gestures for Ethan to hand him the little apple and takes a bite out of the opposite side. The taste of it pinches the inside of his mouth until it waters and he squeezes his eyes shut. Waxy skin, unyielding flesh.

In the grass they leave behind imprints of their bodies and, with a small handful each of unripe apples, head inside to fry them.

**Vacationing***Madysen Gailey*

Kissed by the permeating gaze  
Of a star that will swallow us whole  
Our soft fingers prick at our tender skin  
Where mom had slathered us in lotion  
Just moments before  
To repair the damage of days  
Spent anywhere but inside  
Forgetting to regret it  
As we stick to the sheets  
In midnight misery

We read in bunk beds  
In the humid afternoon  
Too full to sleep  
Too hazy to run  
They call us Icarus  
Pushing the bounds of comfort  
Egging on what'll inevitably come  
We set up the fan  
Drifting from my side to theirs  
Sweat dripping down our foreheads  
And onto the pages  
Turning placid stillness  
To ocean waves

Summer days spent thrill seeking  
We are sunscreen and lake water  
Grass stains on our knees  
Mud between our toes  
We pick tomatoes off the vine  
Collect them in our shirts  
Tossing them in the paths  
Of glittering girls on the sidewalk  
And their shiny shaved legs  
We scoff at consumerists  
Becoming the product  
Plastic little women  
In tiny bikinis

And cheap drugstore sunglasses  
They are chlorine and tanning lotion  
Perfectly manicured nails  
Zumba at 5  
Eris draws caricatures  
Their backs are barcodes

Our calluses swell  
Blood blisters form  
Barefoot at the tennis court  
We let the heat burrow itself in our heels  
Hopping from one foot to the other  
Laughing off our fouls  
Mini skirts and sun visors and strawberry daiquiris  
They are hornets swarming  
Our recluse little world  
We play checkers and poker  
Betting off the chores we're hiding from  
A waiter asks us if we'd like to try the chicken special  
We tell them we don't support genocide  
They ask for our membership cards  
We jump the fence

Tuesday is for paddling out to deserted islands  
13 square feet around  
And stabbing our makeshift flags  
Into the untrodden soil  
Admiring our useless territory  
Squinting under our paper hats  
The adolescent guise of divinity  
We are gods  
I tell Eris  
They shake their head  
The Gods wish they were us  
We eat raspberries and cucumbers and sandwiches  
Sucking grapes off the vine like Kings  
Basking in the glory  
Of our democratic country

We drink coffee black in the morning  
And unsweetened lemonade at night

Scrunching up our faces  
 Laughing at each other's bitter suffering  
 While we anguish in our own  
 We don't mind our messy fingers  
 We sprint to the shore and rinse the residue in the cool water  
 Squealing as the algae brushes against our knuckles  
 The neighbor kids with the concrete pool ask where to find us  
 They have barbies and hot wheels and gender roles to play with  
 Our father shrugs and tells them to look where the wild things are  
 They don't find us  
 They don't try

Eris lays up offerings to the trees  
 They pick flowers from the garden and plant them like seeds  
 I am a collector, a scavenger, a gatherer  
 I find wild mushrooms and seashells and rocks  
 Sedimentary, obsidian, limestone  
 I string up the shells with an abandoned fishing net and tie them round my neck  
 Eris calls me the lighthouse keeper  
 I guide on my own  
 Immovable  
 Never degrading myself to cry for a savior

We take the ferry to the shops across the way  
 And climb the surrounding trees  
 Poking fun at all the little ants  
 Exchanging paper for goods below.  
 We denounce capitalism  
 As we roam through the market  
 I buy plants and pastries and teas  
 Oblivious and unaware  
 We catch the boat before dusk  
 Hair salty and wind-whipped  
 Eris puts their head on my shoulder  
 The breeze ebbing and flowing in an unsteady stream  
 Like a brook obstructed by petrified cedar  
 I wrap my arms around them and squeeze tight  
 Believing if I hold on long enough  
 We will turn to stone  
 The portrait of Half-Educated Ignorant Bliss  
 I imagine them knocking down David

Our sculpture on bucket lists and blog posts  
Mother's will ask their little Ralph Lauren's  
Why can't you love each other like that?  
And I will think  
Because sometimes siblings are soulmates  
And sometimes they were just born in the same place.

## **Meditations in October**

*Eric Jensen*

Outside it is cold, and raining.  
I am going to be late for the bus.  
The darkness is still set in, heavy.

I feel as if I want to live in pre-dawn  
Drizzly America forever.

I have no desire to see the sun.  
I view it as an unwelcome visitor.

The sun points out the flaws on beautiful days.  
I would rather we smudge our sins out.

Like watercolor smudged by coffee stains  
And ink mixed with strong liquor  
Hiding the blemishes with the oil-stained sidewalk water.

*archaeologist*

*by Lexi Burt*

claim me

one vertebra

at a time

fill

the honeyed hollow

at the nape

of my freckled

neck

travel slow

your urgent tongue

snaking

the length

of my spine

arching in synch

thumbs melt

into dimples

encircling

my sacrum

voyaging fingers

trace threadlike maps

glowing blue

beneath my skin

find your way

to pumping marrow

excavated

one stone

at a time

schizo-effect  
lexi burt

yellow fingernails rest in the beds of whites, and golds, and greens that paint his turpentine-soaked hands. their metallic scent mingles with marijuana and the cloy of patchouli and seeps from the pores of her dad's sweat-slick face, clinging to her skin. she meets his gaze, red threads stitched from eyelid to brow, forever-open eyes sunk in hollow-black spheres. his paper-skin taut against sharp-socket ridges with silver scars snaking down the sides of his acrid mouth—a battered marionette of their mind's creation with a hand in the back of the head that works the mouth and says, *let's go treasure hunting*. she follows him outside into the street, lined by abandoned furniture that glows with stories of owner's past. a couch with a mouth smiles, inviting her to have a seat— but she sees its legs have woven into the gnarled limbs of the towering oak tree that shades it and knows it would swallow her whole to feed the roots. a shade-less lamp a skeleton searching for its skin, a dresser bared of its delicate knobs standing naked and sealed. tender-greeting each piece, he approaches a mattress stained with a letter of lovers (a hate letter, when love and hate are all the same) and pulls a rusting maroon pocket knife from his pocket to pierce the seam. he strips away the top and carries it back to his door-less studio where he transforms it into a canvas while she turns over a cement-crusted bucket to fashion a seat. he assembles his brushes, bits of beard trimmings bound to sticks bloodstained by the cuts scabbing over their fingertips, and she watches as he bends time around them, painting it to his will. a shimmering kokopelli emerges before her and dances in time to his strokes— with a wink he runs across the wall and out the frame where the door once hung and fades into the night as she sits alone, waiting.

## THE TREES THAT GROW CURVED

*Ygor Noblott*

The trail stares back  
as I ascend it's pine-scented foothills  
western temples  
passed down from paleolithic tribes  
fur traders, and pioneers, to me.  
The sun's soft streaks break through  
the arbor wall ahead giving both  
a destination and cheer; and I  
can't help but wonder if these  
same perennials hidden in the folds  
of the rockies greeted my predecessors  
with equal temptation.

~

A fallen tree is always welcomed  
into the grove. It never has to ask  
the others simply carry on, as if it was still  
there, fused into the camo of their skins, a part  
of them more as expired than when living.  
And do we not all carry death inside us?  
Are we not all a bit fallen?

~

Even when dry  
tree-talk sounds just like the rain.  
Hushes. Whispers. A hymn of reverence  
and adoration—in conversation  
with the ordinary chatter of the wind—  
paying tribute to the life-giver.

~

Nature has its own kind of sophistication.  
Damp pine-needle-carpet cushions  
my every step, the eternal librarian, keeping  
silence, and Oh! what silence it has kept.  
A meandering creek, the focal point.  
Tree tips on slanted slopes, perfectly  
cutting the frame in diagonals, avant garde  
yet retro: a dichotomy which I notice only  
years after the fallen friendships, a mountainous

solitude perfectly cutting my life into straight  
sharp lines from which I'd never recover  
but would learn to reverence as I walked.  
And here I am, decades later, a collage  
of fallen, meandering, slanted sophistication.

~

What would it be to be a tree?  
A rock? A bush? A flower  
with roots fighting  
to hold on against the violence of the stream?

~

Interesting what one notices  
when the veneer of the sublime is  
stripped away, and the blackened petrified  
leaves, the shriveled grass and vines  
underneath brand new bushes of violets  
and yellows, dusty bark, and the stomped-on  
insect carcasses that molder into sediment  
to join the remains of some indians and traders  
and pioneers, are finally seen; and not just  
the lime green and maple of the thicket  
but the ashen community of pines  
are given just as much respect when  
amber mornings and the smoky aroma  
of a nearby camp  
make them appear as though still aflame.

~

Death, amidst so much life;  
and here we are, descending  
descending, descending  
though still near, perhaps too near,  
To the summit.

~

I admire the trees that grow curved  
on the steep slopes of mountains, twisted  
upwards, roots extending whichever way  
defying all, as if saying that life will flourish  
wherever it needs or wants to.

## AN ODE TO A POETRY CLASS AFTER A LONG YEAR

*Ygor Noblott*

O, scandalous year  
your unfriendly giraffe went insane  
thinking about the complex formulas  
and linguistic light of the time  
he coached little league baseball.  
But the optimism had already diminished.  
The glimmering demise of modern-day  
vanished in the smoke-filled haze of  
America and her mundane friends.  
The diamond-encrusted baseball  
like the expanse of the hardened desert,  
Marco the forgotten Italian boy,  
Cesar Chavez an immortal grape,  
*One-Hundred Years of Solitude*,  
a phantom typewriter in the desert sky,  
novels of detective work lore,  
my favorite daughter, and  
the culture she claimed to reject  
as calamity raced up her throat,  
pierces like music nearby and smiles  
to me like a hug, like the embrace  
my knowledge, inked in gothic scroll, gives  
to all the scandalous news; but is  
unfortunately, deceptively, not for sale.  
I, however, choose to look at you  
like the giraffe in her zoo-home,  
if you can call it that,  
with undiminished, unrelenting, and  
slightly disgusting optimism.