



the **Tau**

*the literary and  
visual art journal  
of Lourdes University*

2017



*the* **Tau**  
2017

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**Award Winning**

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**P**ulchritude, passion, patience, perfection and perspective perpetuates the pages that lie before you. Every edition of *The Tau* contains different textual elements annually, with an underlying commonality. That commonality has no single descriptive term as those listed above, but a story that follows every piece of art and example of literature. A story unique to the artist that only the artist can decipher; its true creation, genesis and symbolization. Stories have inspired writers to construct their fiction, nonfiction, and poetic narratives. Stories have motivated painters to use simple ink to represent their experiences.

Time is that story of commonality. The literature published in *The Tau*, along with the magnificent paintings and photos provide time for that moment where the creators and readers can share an appreciation for that point in time. Of all the distractions in life, every affiliate of *The Tau* has taken time out, harmoniously working as one unit to piece together dozens of fascinating ideologies of life before us. Following the rules of literature, writers tell their stories and painters share their gifts of kinesthetic aesthetics. As you read the literature, attempt to visualize the writer's point of view primarily. Allow the art to enter your emotions, for time was taken out to create these styles of expression. The creator is trying to tell you something about their time.

As time and the essence of life influences our emotions, let us not only examine the presentation of this experience but also the purpose and meaning behind our existence.

**Denzell Anderson**  
*President, Literati*

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## American Frames

by Caroline Dziubek

The women knew of great painters  
Of acrylic paint and smooth strokes  
Studies of Bernini and Caravaggio  
With pages of notes preparing for a condescending baptism,  
Reborn as housewives who hung portraits  
That gathered with a dry dust  
As their children's hands grew sticky from fruit snacks  
And greedy in a desire for the toys  
That scattered across the floor, sliding over the rough, brown carpet.

The women looked to the sky, seeing an ever-growing cobweb  
Instead of a fresco ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.  
Paintings began to look like husbands, drawn by the hand of Kandinsky,  
Confusing the women, since they had studied works in the Romantic.  
The women found that art courses in a curriculum did not  
Leave them with a level of class and pride, but rather  
A sweaty child grasping for his mother's arm,  
Fat from takeout and soccer team snacks,  
A man aware of creases in the temper of his wife  
And a house not meant to be an artistic exhibition, but  
Chipped, off-white tile bathrooms, and  
A kitchen consumed with the smell of fried food,  
Even though there was a colder salad made in the fridge.

It was not a lovely, nor a respectable artwork  
But it fit in some kind of gallery, slightly tilted and still hanging.

## Birth and Death among the Trees

by James Gillespie



**The Origins of Laurel** ~ by

Here, the dim drum of heartbeats  
and last light

hang in vague differentiation, and then  
the sky –

an influence  
where the road cannot go, a kind  
of evidence  
of where I haven't gone, perhaps  
will never go –

in fact – a very slow trench work  
of walking down to heaven's old roots, a vision

clearer now than ever, a dried-up vein  
of cobwebs

where the sun still goes  
in the morning for a glance, for a moment,  
for normalcy, but now without me  
inside, weighing things down  
with thoughts of the moon

coming up late  
upon everything else down here misplaced

in their own places, training  
their feet to dance

on the patterns of winter's  
breath as she cleans the thorns through the freeze  
and the sun flanks the tree line  
but never finds me  
on the other side, never sees me

in the wild shadow of an oak  
lifting my arms as they all do, standing in place until the blood

runs out, until I am too cold to feel  
how the angles and the shadows work

to remember the pain  
of birth

when my head was wet  
and new like yours once was, when my eyes  
were weak and wild awake as yours once were,  
when my skin – red, blue, and purple-black –  
as we all once were  
in the distance of trees  
in the proximity of a pink-fringed sky

the rural rim of artfully wasted  
flames, a ceremony

that forever erases the site where we fell  
to pray against the shimmering wind of winter  
that killed our young  
and reinvigorated everything  
with emptiness.



**Image 7856-** *by*



## **A Handful**

*by Nicol Auguste*

of love is all it takes  
to quench the thirst of God  
to evangelize his love,  
her light, to  
souls who only offer  
bones showing  
beneath thin layers of  
skin

## **Love Song: A Reproduction**

*by Kristie Letter*

“Let’s go, kids.”

A yellow bus emptied in front of a building full of statues, reproductions from “famous European artists, kids, the really famous ones.” A bus-full of students indifferently artful, from that part of town where no one liked to go, wandered in and out of rooms full of strangely familiar shapes.

A seventeen-year old wound up stairs. His teeth blurred with ache and “dentist” was only a word he read in school. The throb of other students disappeared when he got to an alcove to the left of the stairway. He stared at the most deliciously painful thing, a gray-green slave in marble. Although a metal square said the slave was dying, this boy did not believe it, not for a minute.

A lot happens before death.

The stone torso pulsed in the snug almost-summer. Something that continues past the point of death, he thought. He placed two fingers in a hollow behind the statue’s spine and rested his cheek on the curve of stone stomach, in an arrested dance. No alarms went off, no one watching him, not like at the bodega.

On a picnic table outside, the young man brushed away the gnats and reached into his backpack to pull out a sheet of paper. He felt its thickness between his thumb and forefinger, soft as skin. The world was under water.

A whole class of them, angry and without aspiration, newly submerged.

And maybe those factories near school still leaked, or maybe the bodega corn had that fungus on it that once made people go crazy about witches. But the world got wavy.

Another breathless boy separated from a pack. He slept in a room with too many of his sisters, in an apartment where the TV talked the most of anyone. He waited for another to file past. In front of him, a green-gray statue. Somehow, these figures had appeared to him before and he had known them all. When the hiss of voices became a whisper, he approached the statue and placed one fluttering hand. And then the other. Waiting for the sirens, the infrared motion detectors to betray him. Boys like him should never put dirty fingers on things lovely like this.

Silence.

The stone was warm beneath his fingers, and he gasped. Barely breathing, he butterflied his hands across the curve of the statue's stomach. When the stairs thumped behind him, the boy pulled away and felt like he was stepping out from sunlight back into the dark apartment.

Outside in the shadow of the bus, a young man pulled a peach from his backpack. Beneath the lonely students, leaning out of bus windows, he held the curved tension of the furred fruit.

"Hey, can I?" The other boy looked only at the fruit in the first one's hand.

He bit past the part that felt like skin, his soft tooth sending sharpness towards the top of his skull. And then, the sweetness.

## Fall Mornings on Mountain Sides

*by Peter Faziani*

the fog of mountainsides  
a rager caged  
between tree canopy  
and entrenched roots

party sweat blinded gray  
until the hateful sun  
breaks it up  
beams morph  
glow sticks to nightsticks  
tear gassing eyes  
pupils contract and  
dew drawn up  
an ascent to heaven

weather thieving green  
the life  
from leaves as it rises  
an inexact study of  
pre-mature gerontology  
warm autumn tones  
burning in the memories of summer  
into death

## Sic Transit Gloria Mundi

*by Robert Beveridge*

She hops the bus at East 34th  
and heads into the heart of town.  
Too many buildings, all too tall.  
None contain places to hide.  
They are the field of the next skirmish  
in the war between bird and mayfly,  
renewed every year. She gets off  
two stops early. Diesel fumes  
in her nose, transfer clutched  
in bony fingers. She has time,  
will walk to the station.



**Image 4030** - *by*

## **Pilgrimage** *by Nicol Auguste*

A warming early morning during the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy brought with her a bit of a line to walk through Santa Maria Maggiore's holy door. A little Roman woman stands erect at the entrance, projecting her alarm "nessuno fotografia!" above the heads of pilgrims trying to take close-ups with their iPhones:

kissing the skin of your holy door, your panels taste

like your lips: charcoaled, holy, with a hint

of pomegranate from about a billion years ago

before I became an ish, a meish, when we loved

in the midst of the thickness of musical nothingness that would

chaotically, beautifully, violently create

us.

Morning Mass ends: seminarians and sisters rise and go in peace—

seemingly with joyful ecstasy—while tourists look on, wondering at this

peculiar passion. Just outside, taxis and tour guides await their harvest.

## **Compline** *by Jane Blanchard*

Too often once I have reclined,

A phrase or clause pops in my mind

For work that I intend to write

As soon as dark gives way to light;

And so I turn to grab a pen

With which to put words there and then

On paper meant to bear my scrawl

And keep me from forgetting all.

## Purchase

by Joe Mills



Writing History ~ by

For years, she had mocked the “blue chair people.” They infuriated her, the way at outdoor concerts and street parties, they would stake out turf, so she had to thread through them like they were a haphazard trailer park. Who sat in chairs and listened to music? Was Woodstock covered in blue chairs? Was the floor at the Savoy Ballroom? A mosh pit? Did Astaire sing about “putting on a white tie/folding out my blue chair”? If they wanted to sit, they should stay home. To her, blue chairs and blue hairs had been synonymous. Blue blobs sitting there, old, taking up space, space that could be used for dancing, for mingling, for moving. It had been a simple equation in her mind. Blue chair = Death.

Then, a couple years ago, she had taken Steve to his first practice, when the team used to meet at Jackson Park, and she had looked around for a place to sit, expecting bleachers or benches or tree stumps or something, but at that field, there was nothing. Just scrubby grass and a cracked parking lot. There hadn't even been curbs. The other adults had pulled collapsible chairs out of their trunks and backseats. That season, she would try to sit in the grass, even when it was wet, but by mid-June, she would be bitten within minutes. She would walk, but that grew boring since it was a park in name only and with nothing of interest. Sometimes she sat in the car, but that felt pathetic and got hot, plus it was too far away to see and be seen. If she was going to be there, she wanted to get the credit from her son for being there. So she would stand on the sidelines, pretending to be interested in the drills, her feet hurting. It was the price you paid to parent. Sore feet. But, still, she had no intention of becoming one of those people. Clearly they weren't the elderly, but they were still soccer moms, mini-van, “blue chair” zombies. The sitting dead.

Then Steve had needed more socks, another pair of shorts, another practice jersey, and in Dick's, next to the registers, there had been a display of chairs. They weren't blue. They were all different colors. And they were on sale. She sat in one, just to see what it was like, and realized it was comfortable. Distressingly comfortable. Maybe, she thought, it might be good to have one. For camping. Or picnics. For the backyard. For emergencies of some kind. They wouldn't use them at festivals. They would not take them to Rock the Block. Ever. They would not be those people. But, she needed to be less intolerant, less prejudiced. The chairs might have their uses.

Then, since she had a chair in her trunk anyway, she might as well get it out at practices. Especially since it had become clear that she was going to spend hours of her life there. This part of parenting took her by surprise. She had been ready for the expenses, but she hadn't fully understood how much of a commitment her children's interests would require from her. Not the hours driving around, but the hours spent watching or at least pretending to watch. The hours she had to sit somewhere. Parenting, at this stage, was mostly like being in a big waiting room, flipping through old magazines. They went off and played and she waited on a bench, on the bleachers, on a chair. This was her job. Waiter. She admired those who didn't do it. The ones who dropped their kids off and then drove away to come back at the end of practices or games. But that wasn't her. She was a waiter, and, since she was, she could at least be comfortable. It didn't mean anything. She hadn't changed. The chair was just a piece of furniture.

When she had bought the chair, she had told Steve, "We'll just keep this in the trunk." She had wanted to say, "Don't tell your father," but that would have increased the likelihood he would. Nick had heard her rant far too many times, and she didn't want to hear it turned against

her. She didn't want to hear the slightest indication that she was changing, compromising, selling out, getting old. Already she felt him looking at her sometimes as if assessing whether her hair was going gray or she had gained more weight or she had new wrinkles. Sometimes she thought that was ridiculous, and sometimes she didn't. He was aging as well – that gut she pretended not to notice, the glasses he needed a few years ago, the way he didn't take the stairs two and three at a time anymore – but there was nothing like a pregnancy to take its toll on the body.

She relied on her son being oblivious, not thinking to tell his dad, not seeing it as important enough to remember or being too excited about his new clothes. Which is what happened. You rarely went wrong counting on the obliviousness and self-centeredness of men.

She kept the chair in her car. A secret. One that embarrassed her. One that made her feel oddly guilty. It wasn't the only secret she had; she kept plenty from Nick. Shoe purchases, lunches out. Nothing like an affair, nothing big, but he didn't have to know everything. This one, however, felt odd. More serious somehow. Like she was someone different.

She used the chair just during practices. Not games, for those there were bleachers, and Nick came to those. Sitting next to her. Like now. It was nice. They watched their son together, held hands sometimes, but if she was honest, her chair was more comfortable. A lot more. That was what was upsetting. The realization that she preferred practices because she could sit in her chair. Yes, it was red, but it was a blue chair all the same, and she wondered what had died.

## 71 Words and Photopaper

*by Peter Faziani*

Red lights at railroads  
and red lights in dark rooms  
developing photographs of dark  
memories and blurred focal points  
mistimed shutter clocks  
but in there somewhere  
two silhouettes of friendship  
soliloquies of secrets  
told to each other with the  
promise of telling no one else  
fueled by the whiskey talking  
over the other  
with their own ragged truth

An American declaration of resistance  
resilience in the face of father's critical abandonment

## Things I Now Know

*by Kevin Brown*

How much an obituary in the paper costs.  
What death doesn't cost in grief, it costs in more and more money.  
The fact that newspapers charge for obituaries.

How to find my way around a funeral home—hallways  
that only lead to bereavement or an exit, where it  
follows us home—the quickest way from the visitation line.

How it feels to stand in front of over a hundred  
people and speak about my father. And cry.  
Which he never wanted me to do.

That my mother sounds like a little girl when  
she cries. That she can cry in front of me.  
Which she never wanted to do.

How it feels to bury my father.

What it feels like to hold my mother as she cries and assures us again and  
again and again she will be okay, trying to calm and convince  
herself. How small and frail she has always been, almost like a baby  
bird I could break if I didn't hold her correctly.

What so many people knew about my father,  
but I didn't. It's impossible to see things  
when you stand too close to them.

What it costs to cremate a body. Even when  
he was too tall and the urn too small, so some  
of the ashes have to be buried in a box.

No one knows what to say at a funeral.  
Meaningless words matter.

The parts of a funeral I thought would be hard  
are (mostly) not. The easy parts felt like I  
was watching my father die again and again.

Every billboard on the interstate between our house  
and my parents' (now just my mother's), ranging  
from HIV testing to Miss Kitty's pet daycare.  
None of them contain information I need  
for how to grieve a father's death.

## **In Rwanda** *by Shola Balogun*

At the borders of Kivu and Gisenyi,  
The land mourns her emptiness.  
There is stirring silence  
In the fragments of lone bricks  
On patched earth.  
Sprawling tombs retell  
The litany of a mother's sorrow  
At the crossroads of an Eastern soil  
When she heard the wailing  
From the wall of her home  
And the ballads of her children in exile.  
Mothers' sorrow is in Africa too.  
You may not know what their eyes  
Have seen in the lands  
Where they call their homes.  
You may not understand their silence  
And the fire of their lips.  
In Africa, mothers see their children  
Die in the streets.



## Mother Russia

*by Robert Beveridge*

she is no longer  
the old babushka  
who bows in the stony garden  
to the god of her cabbage  
amorphous, grey  
breasts that nurture  
the corpse of Lenin

now she is sleek, sensual  
a Soviet Aphrodite  
sweet enough for Pygmalion  
to recognize, cast  
in stone, reveal

## Slats

*by Lyn Uratani*

Unceasingly I search  
For family,  
Whose names,  
Livelihoods,  
Essence,  
Have not departed as they did,  
Ever-present  
In microfilm and  
Eroding headstones,  
Encoded  
In my DNA.

Compulsively I document  
Their existence  
As if they depend on me  
To keep them alive  
On paper,  
A website,  
Something tangible, so as to say:  
“Here is my family.  
This  
Is who they are and  
Where they come from.”

Rather,  
I need these strangers  
Far more than they need me  
To satisfy  
This desperate,  
Narcissistic,  
Quest  
For birthplaces, surnames,  
Conversation starters,  
Relentlessly hoping  
They can tell me who I am.

## Of Body and Tales

*by Ali Znaidi*

How come winter rain and summer nectar merge?  
How come the apparitions of a dream weave  
a formidable mirage? How come her body  
transgresses those peripheries? How come  
it weaves an aura for itself? How come  
she becomes the center? Stop asking questions  
and just let her colour the sky as she likes it.  
It's not a matter of seduction. It's another matter.  
—A matter beyond philosophy. Her body  
is not made of ivory, nor of ebony: Her body  
is made of tales which every agenda wants to repress.  
But, there is a silent tempest looming in the sky and  
lava will ooze from her pierced punk tongue letting  
the colours of her freedom embellish the universe.



**Image 4417** ~ *by*



Serenity~

## Smoke

by Winter Elliot

In her spare time, Malory Jones burned books.

Not just any books, though. She had a type. She stalked her victims quietly, prowling, she imagined, like a cat from shelf to shelf. Used bookstores and musty libraries particularly called out to her; the well-lit, spacious survivors of the bookstore-business-apocalypse made her shudder. Coffee. In a bookstore. Really, now.

And let's not even discuss Amazon. How would one burn an e-book, anyway? Release a virus? Malory had neither the time nor the interest to learn how to code, and she bore independent authors no particular ill will. If they had founded a new genre for randy young adults, so be it. More power to them.

It wasn't like she indulged her particular hobby all the time, or even at all frequently, anyway. Her job kept her far too busy to leave her small town and drive forty-five minutes away, to a city big enough to allow a few used bookstores to stubbornly cling to life. Murrayville, where she lived, actually did have a bookstore, and she'd been in there once. Bibles. Bibles. And more Bibles. In every possible version and binding. The elegant-but-simple ones promised to humble the purchaser's soul, whereas the shiny leather ones inlaid with metallic scrollwork vowed to illuminate hearts and lighten wallets. Malory had beaten a hasty retreat. She had no interest in committing religious sacrilege, and it wasn't like she herself didn't claim to be a Christian. Her great-granddaddy had been a Baptist preacher, way back when, and, although Malory couldn't remember the last time she, herself, set foot in a church, she figured that her venerable ancestor could be trusted to pave her way into Heaven. If such a place existed, of course. Malory had her doubts, which she quietly kept to herself.

She had basically accepted her fate, after all. Thirty-two years old, with a solid lower-middle-class job that didn't promote mobility, she was basically stuck in Murrayville. The town's limited stock of eligible males was getting smaller with every passing moment, and she couldn't afford to

rule out the religious ones. In fact, if she included football, every male in town worshipped something on Sundays. So Malory had smiled, purchased a very cheap Bible that honestly didn't say very much, beyond be kind to others, and walked out the door. That Bible lived in the unopened drawer of her bedside table, where it gathered dust and contemplated the darkness of eternity.

Each morning Malory got up and put on her uniform: slacks or a skirt, top and cardigan. If the weather was sufficiently cold, which it rarely was in the South, she added a fluffy coat, bought on deep discount one March a couple of years ago at Macy's. But she dressed differently when headed into the city: nearly-designer jeans that the salesperson had promised, nay sworn, hugged her ass in the all the right places, and a rather skimpy blue camisole with lacy straps. The top was just a little too young for her, but Malory considered her rare trips to the city a special treat, and besides, there was no harm in digging her nails into her fading youth until time ripped it out of her grasp.

But her first stop, Shady Glen Books, had become Shady Glen Daycare. Part of the once spacious parking lot had been stripped of pavement and fenced in, and a few grim shrubs and some pulsatingly yellow swing sets had grown up, seemingly overnight. Malory thought about it. Two or three months had passed since her last visit. That, apparently, was time enough for yuppie spawn to take over her favorite bookstore. Her car's clock ticked over to 2:00, a door in the newly christened daycare popped open, and small humans poured out, just as if someone had stuck a stick in a large ant hill. Like ants, the creatures would probably bite.

Malory drove away. The ant babies reminded her of own rapidly expiring eggs.

Fortunately, the next bookstore, a good twenty minutes away and in a less affluent part of the city, had not transformed into a hardware store or a paint-your-own pottery date stop. She parked and sighed and walked through the satisfyingly creaky doors. As usual, there was no one to greet her at the center desk. The owner, a nice man in his sixties, never came out of the back unless a customer forcibly dragged him out, usually by

frantically waving cash at his face. She thought the owner was probably deaf, and either a former English professor or suffering from the earliest effects of dementia. He had that abstract, spaced-out look exhibited by both types of people. Either way, he had books, and the right kind of books.

From the front, Malory snagged two hardback romances, both with nicely lurid covers. Malory never burned these books, since they promised exactly what they delivered, a bit of R-rated escapism.

Then she headed past the mysteries, past the biographies, past the self-help selections too (although Malory had considered spending some time there, since she was self-aware enough to know that her hobby was a bit unusual).

There they were. Her victims. And they deserved every bit of heat her backyard barbecue could dish out. She smiled grimly, showing a bit of canine. It was payback time.

Malory was leafing through nearly four hundred pages of sadly scrawled notes and dog-eared pages and the occasional anatomically correct drawing of both male and female genitalia when a voice made her jump.

"Miss Jones!"

The racy romances fell to the floor, and Malory was left holding a copy of *Moby-Dick*.

"Uh," she said, intelligently, as her brain froze. It tended to do that when she was surprised, or when she had to do her taxes, and especially during parent-teacher conferences.

"Ah, you probably don't remember me. I'm Brad Doyle, Miss Jones. You were my high school English teacher right before I graduated, nearly ten years ago now."

"No," she said. "I'm sorry. I teach so many students, you see."

He picked up her books and handed them to her, and she felt a blush start. He was really quite good-looking, although he would never make it as a cover model for one of her romances. No muscle tone, for one thing. A strange haircut. Spectacles (these were not glasses), for another. But he had nice eyes behind the wire rims.

“Yes, of course. But I always remembered you. American lit,” he said and glanced down at the copy of *Moby-Dick* she still held.

“You never got me to like that book,” he admitted. “My uncle owns this bookstore, and I’ve got an aunt who writes cookbooks, so you could say I have books in the blood. But I always hated Melville.”

“Me too,” she said. Even worse than Melville were the student study guides. And the tortured students themselves. Not a one of whom actually liked Ishmael or Ahab, and all of whom rooted for the whale, when they bothered to remember that the book even had a whale in it. “I hate *Moby-Dick* with a passion,” she added. Also, she hated Shakespeare, and Emily Dickinson, and, indeed, every author on the state-approved syllabi. But she figured that was too much information for a little casual flirting.

“Really? I’d never have guessed. Mostly I read popular stuff now. John Sandford and the like. It’s nice to see you again, Miss Jones. Or, is it Mrs. now?”

“Nope,” she said. “Malory is fine.” She smiled at him, showing all of her nicely white teeth. Maybe it was time to get a new hobby.

## Of Wounds and Stitches

*by Ali Znaidi*

A body scarred by the fingernails  
of exile. Wet wounds constellating on  
an errant isle. That old feeling does not  
need a symposium. It just needs some

clarifications. Scars can go their own way.  
—Something akin to an eloping plot from  
a badly written novel. Racing through time,  
this body tries to expel the intrinsic

scars from inside the errant isle.  
This body wants to anticipate the surfeit  
in the inconsistent breaths of a ghost  
jailed in the smallest crevice, away from

the expansive shadows. The sun has always  
been a blessing the body can completely and  
tectonically lose itself to it because it is always  
ready to stitch any wound it could come across.

**Liber Abaci**  
*by James Rovira*

O!  
Could  
any  
great stone,  
mountainous  
though it is, resist  
that wry, gentle, know-  
ing look that pierces your dark  
surfaces with humor like prismatic sunlight dript  
through summer windowpanes in early morning: you want the light, but  
don't want to wake up.



**Morning Nap~**

## The Orgiastic Silence

*by Ali Znaidi*

I was expecting a storm  
not because I was reading Kate Chopin's  
"The Storm," but (rather) because  
there was an orgiastic silence  
infesting the termite-eaten old attic  
since last night.

It seemed like every part of my tongue  
wanted to utter a word.  
But you can't speak  
when you are expecting a storm.

You can't speak when you are warned  
that termites are about to infest the dining room  
of your oral cavity.

You only stand still listening to the orgy.  
You only stand still remembering the taste of milk.

Trying to See it All ~

## Time-lapse Daisies

*by Peter Faziani*

fed from life  
feeding bees  
to feed other daisies  
making work for other bees  
covered tree canopies  
that shade petals like memories  
from sun burnt  
oblivion



Image 9761 ~



## **An Immortal Souvenir**

*by Ali Znaidi*

Behind an avalanche of flies  
I saw a bird in agony defying death.  
I kept watching till my gaze rusted.

What a scene! It (really) gnawed at my heart:  
{Disintegration began (to occur) under a bare tree.  
and the hungry flies started strumming the bird

with their labra}. Perhaps a prophecy of decay.  
Perhaps an apogee of history. What a noble  
death accompanied by blues! How soon

you will be a strange bird in a strange world!  
Will you remember the worms? Will you recall  
the chirping? I took a feather as a souvenir.

There is no secret to tell that the display case  
of my dreams will look better with such a souvenir.

## **Ossuary**

*by Jane Blanchard*

Each time I toss or turn I seem  
To have the same unpleasant dream.

I walk through—not a fine museum—  
But some macabre mausoleum.

The rooms I pass are full of bones—  
None coming from long-gone unknowns.

These ossified remains belong  
To those who chose to do me wrong.

Only if such has been confessed  
Can bones transform from cursed to blessed.

May flesh and blood bring me release  
From all that is averse to peace.

## Going Back Again, The Movie

*by John Grey*



**You Never Know ~**

It's time to go back again  
to the ordinary suburban home  
where I was raised  
in a family of average love and comfort  
until I moved out  
in my early twenties.

I stroll slowly by,  
risking an occasional glance  
at a color it was never painted in my time,  
new curtains, even an addition,  
and complete strangers  
playing on the lawns,  
peering out the window.

There's nothing for me here.  
My memories wrote the script.  
But nothing or no one  
appears to have read a word of it.

If this a scene from my early life,  
then the art director has failed  
in a number of areas  
from the privet hedge  
to the rose bush  
and the swimming pool out back.

And the kid with the ball is badly cast.  
Almost as much as I am.

## Muffler

by Kristie Letter

*and I forget*

each car self-announced with undeniable ferocity beneath  
what gentled rust one with HoneyLoversStickTogether sticker always  
inching (neverstopping) through radio lines unbroken medley of  
motor and song

that night face kiss-flushed from pressing the entirely wrong boy  
radio clears for the drive deep darks and headlit whites radio furs  
then clear (bass)  
alone with the road's shimmering (lines) and then sound presses (in)

*with the lights out, it's less dangerous*

willing red to switch to green before hitting middle thousand dollar  
cars with three thousand dollars to keep the sounds going to  
keep sliding through the one a.m. drive when the song almost crashes  
over you

radio's magic an intention uncontrolled (unknown) engine  
thrum pulsing behind and with no one has ever heard (this song)  
no one is hearing (just this) just now one radio just you (and that  
bass-line) and this humming machine

*oh well, whatever, nevermind*

apertures in seats peek-a-boos in floorboards perforations  
beneath the wheels whirring the Dodge almost-deserted  
taken back until final sputter - now, good grown-up sedans begin to  
louden against too-perfect inside sounds

(unchosen) songs whirl drive in dark next to bridges mouth slightly  
open for the moment inappropriate lips (impart) deserted drives  
when the notes tremble (unbidden) and wash (unselected) over you  
(un-alone)

## Summer Evening

by Allison Pattison

The moth fluttered by the porch light  
trying to make its way inside:  
bopping closer with each flit  
but never quite approaching  
the door frame.

She tilted her head at an odd  
angle as she watched the dusty  
grey creature smack against  
the brick wall and then  
the wood of the door jamb.

Its shadow looked like a dirty  
piece of cloth—a rag—ripped from  
Thumbelina's body. As it inched  
closer it got caught in a spider web,  
its wings now entangled.



Image 9576 ~

## Looking Back

*by Allison Pattison*

We never picked daisies together.  
We never rode in an Oldsmobile either.

I wanted us to get similar tattoos of Egyptian symbols  
while you were alive. Alone, I got on my upper back

the ankh and the Eye of Rah, and the fleur-de-lis  
on my wrist. In an old notebook I found drawings

of tiny pink (with no black outline)  
fleur-des-lis for your wrist tattoo — small

enough to fit under a watch band when you'd  
be a doctor and would need to hide it.

We never got angelfish or palm trees on our  
ankles, like we'd all agreed to on that trip

when you were studying in Trinidad.  
You didn't do much studying.

I realized that when I went to Sweden.  
All I did was the necessary homework

and a lot of what you probably did  
in your spare time on the tropical islands.

I don't know what made me think  
of daisies and Oldsmobiles. I picture you

with light pink roses and a black Nissan.  
I always imagined you as my matron of honor,

carrying a bouquet of purple flowers,  
in a lavender dress that defined your pear

shape. I would let you have the small  
waistline, to match our little sister, and I

would hide my larger midriff beneath  
beaded satin and show off my cleavage.

Later at the reception, we'd toss our shoes to the side  
and dance in a circle like we did at your wedding,

only nobody would cry because another man  
was taking away our big sister. Your husband

added himself to our family as our brother,  
the one we never had but always wanted.

Now, I hope to marry a man who loves me  
and our little sister, and although he has heard

about you, he will have never known you, but  
he has agreed to name a child after you if we

have a little girl. And maybe she will have a  
little sister with whom to pick flowers and learn

to drive and have in her wedding and have  
her forever or until they are ninety-five.

## **“van gogh”**

*by Mia Scissons*

Why the fields of wheat evoked a vindictive sense of solitude was unknown to  
her.

They threaten her, call out to her, and tempt her with grandiose visions of the  
purest constellations.

But she cannot reach them.

She knows this, and it saddens her.

A star cannot transcend above a mountain peak,

A field of wheat cannot conceal the anonymous sufferings she masks with  
frost.

How the city of lights brought a calm thought of solidarity was unknown to  
her.

They welcome her, call out to her, and tempt her with perfect premonitions of  
the bluest heavens.

But she should not reach them.

She knows this, and it angers her.

A star will not aspire below city soil,

A closet of skeletons cannot tempt the boldface longevity she masks with dust.

When the rays of light sought trepidations of courage was unknown to her.

They embrace her, call out to her, and tempt her with premonitions of the  
wildest spheres.

A star can rise above a city light.

A constellation will tempt the false altruism of a field of wheat.

She does not know this, and it silences her.

Why she survives was unknown to them.

But the starry night knew.

## First-born

by Dina Greenberg

Selengei had chosen the name during the wet season, many months before. This one was to be a daughter. She would call her Adia, a gift from Ngai—for this baby would be a precious gift, her first-born. Already fourteen, Selengei had attended many births and yearned for the time her own baby would suckle at her breast.

Now, as she felt the insistence of her unborn baby's head, Selengei knew she must push harder. Down, down, down! Her mouth stretched wide, tusks arcing to the heavens. Only Ngai would hear Selengei's silent screams from atop his mountain throne. She thought of nothing then—not of the others who stood and soothed her—only of her baby. She pushed again and her birth water rushed out like the great river Karura. The swill of water and blood washed over her feet as she stepped carefully over her baby. The girl-calf lay curled and silent against the earth.

Selengei prodded the infant, first gently with the fingers of her trunk, listening for the breath. She pressed one foot to the baby's shoulder, rocked her, and then—as she knew she must—began to kick, harder, then harder still. If her baby did not stand, she could not suckle. Selengei's heart surged with anguish. Tears slipped down her wrinkled face. The others drew closer. Selengei slipped her trunk under the baby's head and lifted the sweet face toward her own. She kicked at the dry-season dust. She kicked, and the others—daughters, sisters, aunts, mothers, and grandmothers—kicked until all were certain. Until the baby Adia lay covered in dust.

Selengei's baby was stillborn and so her sorrow swelled and churned. Again, she remembered the river, Grandmother Rukiya, leading the herd across the shallows, Selengei's mother—then the others—coaxing baby Selengei on that very first crossing. Then, year after year, Grandmother leading them further, further, beyond the crashing falls.

Now Selengei held the infant closer. As she lifted her gift to Ngai, Selengei wept, her keening rising, rising along with the others', until the swollen river spilled.

## Transactions in Sicilia

by Jane Blanchard

The merchant was polite as I came in on Monday afternoon to browse for wine, but conversation happened only when we spoke the common language of the vine.

A dozen bottles were selected, then examined, labels studied, line by line, at last set back into the proper bin, except for one most likely to taste fine.

It did, so I returned to that same store throughout the week and found the bill to be a little less each time. I said no more than grazie, smiling ever pleasantly.

By Saturday, I had a patron's status, awarding me a bar of chocolate gratis.

## Burial Rites before Sunrise

*by James Gillespie*

In the beginning when our fathers gazed  
on the waning fire

a break in the fever  
a moment  
in the night

when the family's  
fears were  
as quiet  
as empty crowns  
as dark  
as twisted thorns –  
a sentence made from the ground.

In the middle  
when we realized the stars  
were silent  
for the dead  
and for the living  
for the flesh and for the blood  
of everything  
invisible

at the end  
of a stranger's field  
where the sky is still too far away  
and the roots too deep  
for our faces

in between  
anonymous  
twilight

a new brotherhood  
out of a placid pool  
of cool earth  
stirred  
up for the lame's sake

in the beginning  
a generation of wanderers  
mirrored in the hazy horizon — amulet  
and wheel— the crux  
of white elephants

transfigured  
by speech – unspeakable  
similes –  
a protuberance

of blood  
letting shadows hatch cross-legged  
at the door –

a dunghill for the corpse  
we planted  
last year in our plot  
of burnt-out stars where dead men  
lost their bones

in the middle  
of a flower

the infinite  
metaphor  
of place  
where the boundaries of beauty  
are born

at the end, and the silence  
remembers  
nothing  
but the agony

of an empty  
garden

made in the beginning with the narrative  
of a bird  
above black water

a corridor  
of the unconscious

ladder to our moth-stirred  
memories  
spiraling uninterrupted  
somewhere  
between

the end of the tree's  
tethered shadows  
and the moon's  
false eyes.

## Silence Sestina

*by James Rovira*

In what darkened,  
ragged,  
screaming  
fire  
does the kiss  
of silence never

see? Or ever  
darkly,  
kisses  
ragged  
evening fire  
that loves while screaming?

In what screaming,  
never  
fired,  
dark,  
hot ragged  
tropic does your kiss

descend to kiss  
my scream:  
ragged,  
nev'r  
silent, dark  
burning yearning fire?



You rise to fire  
my kiss  
in dark  
screams  
that never  
suffer your ragged,

silent, blunt rag-  
ing fire;  
never  
kiss  
my screaming  
silent darkness?

In my forced silence, I can never kiss  
your ragged fire, your oblique passion,  
in the shared silence of our screaming dark.

## **Come Away to the Water**

*by Lauren Poslanko*

Not all snakes are coated in scales,  
Most look just like you and I.  
The boy with gorgeous brown eyes?  
He was a breed of this kind.  
Our love started off strong  
As he lured me in:  
I was his naive prey,  
He wanted my skin.  
With charming words  
And whispered kisses,  
He wrapped me in  
His spell, well-rehearsed.  
As though the roles  
Of snake and charmer  
Had been reversed.  
Little did I know  
He ached for two ewes,  
And my happiness would  
Soon turn to doubt;  
His dirty little secret  
Was bound to come out.  
That was the day that  
Everything changed:  
The day I transformed  
From a lamb to a snake.

## Two Months After My Father's Death

by Kevin Brown

When I don't talk to him,  
it's as if nothing has changed.

We often went two months  
without talking, emailing, even.  
I called him on his birthdays,  
Father's Days,  
but that might have been all.

My mother, though, lives with  
his absence,  
watches it  
walk around the house,  
come upstairs for dessert every evening  
around eight—some store-bought vanilla  
crème cookies or banana pudding he made—  
sit in his recliner for *Wheel of Fortune*,  
*Jeopardy*;  
mow the yard.

She watches it  
warily, while I am here  
without it.

My box of memories sits on the top shelf  
of a closet, mainly taken down to add  
something, though occasionally  
I just want to see  
who I once was.

The funeral program is there now,  
like Dad's absence,  
waiting for me to riffle through the years,  
remember what once was  
now always will be,  
there and not there.



The Smokey Mountains ~

## Flowers of Evil

by Ali Znaidi

Flowers of embers in a certain period of time  
were amulets for devils.

Flowers of clay in a certain period of time  
were original copies of pleasure.

Flowers of ash in a certain period of time  
were apocalyptic representations in the corridors  
of myths.

Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal*

in a certain period of time

was my panacea.



Symphony in Blue ~

## Chanel

*by Jane Blanchard*

No one but Coco would have thought  
Of such designs so often sought.

Hat, handbag, sweater, suit, or dress,  
Most every style had great success.

Her clientele could not consume  
Enough of No. 5 perfume.

Each item in her chic boutique  
Made all who wore it feel unique.

However priced, her haute couture  
Possessed a powerful allure.

Though she has passed, her name today  
Lives on—but carries less cachet.

## Buddha as the Backdrop

*by Darrel Dela Cruz*

who covers my recycling bin  
with his left hand. The right,  
holding a bowl with Explorer

inside. How attached I've been  
to electronic karma; the recycling  
of motivational quotes as long

as they are under a certain limit.  
Responses in the form of anonymous  
animals – screeches and grunts,

outstretching and tense, in love  
with the distraction of imagined  
alternatives which Buddha would have

embraced, bare his empty stomach  
and mind, and receive the nothingness  
of all the voices read in silence.

## Cursive Lines of Our Lady

by James Gillespie

When the honeycomb  
of the sun's storied womb

was made from the flower-legged  
prey of a wild god

it wrapped itself in the beauty of its own strangled  
breath – purple and white

as a babe in the washing  
water's warm yarn – the angel's voice  
a little more than a dream

in the scooped-out throne of a rock  
where rain-gathered prayers watched  
the birds as they worked their wheels  
against us

until their synchrony cut through  
a generation of forgotten songs, the skeletons  
of golden calves

and every memory  
gathered  
to fire  
us

in the kiln

but her belly bulged with God  
before the corpse screamed for air,  
the ivory cameo of a solitary soul,

a thing as paternal  
as the crane's sprawled turn  
to water

and memory  
of our ash when the ghost was flesh  
of our flesh and the temple  
was the sound  
of a few

gathering to watch  
their days carved in the dust  
with a rib.

- A Version of this Poem Appeared in *New Mystics*

## “Acetaminophen”

by Mia Scissons



Roman Vessels ~

Fall.

After serendipity of the calm, blusters in bitterness of the disgraced.  
Ice, a chill to those fragile, yet precious bones,  
greeted her with a sinister grin,  
disguising its cruel tongue with promises of a perfected white.

She remains untouched, yet unchaste.

The cold graces her gray skin and whispers silently the fault in her crystals.

After the fortuitousness of Judas' kiss, dances in joy of the infamous.  
Ice, a rupture to that frangible, yet willful soul,  
shuns her with amiable embrace,  
relinquishing its bitter secret with falsities of a dissolute ash.

She remains unfinished, yet ever-present.

The demons in her winter penetrate  
the frost in her unreachable spring.

The ice has melted,  
yet the snow still  
stands.

## ***POETRY 101***

*by Jane Blanchard*

poetry is an eighth-grade personality  
most usually with hobbies of burning fires and flowing waters  
and one or two...

...okay- three works about a Holocaust gas chamber

it is the point just before Bob Ross paints a purple sunset  
and just 3½- minutes after Van Gogh swallowed yellow pigment

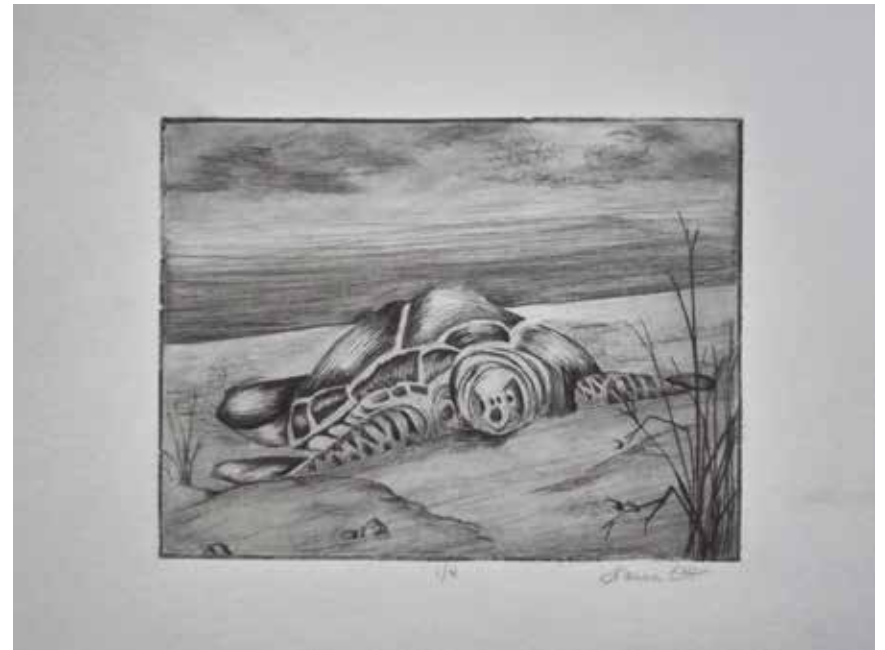
verb: to feel joy

poetry is the store bought, Kroger-brand frosting  
glued to the whitest vanilla cornmeal cake ever baked  
with bloody buttercream designs twirled in the only way  
to catch the glance of a fifth-grade teacher  
and prematurely poke the corpse we nicknamed “creativity”

poetry is Original Sin in a disguised cult of Christianity  
where a church missile is a free online thesaurus,  
but you ain’t gotta take notes  
and it is the extra temper-tantrum incited from the depths of  
a little girl who refuses to “see Jane run” or “watch Dick sit”

we are the slaves to interpretation in glass eyes of Literature  
without hope of a deliverance from which we reimburse  
our familiar symbols of Venus and Ares and a golden cow  
who hums the Hail Mary while it is milked

but, in its being, it will not grow till its muscles sore  
quoith the raven, “Nevermore”



**Sleepy Sea Turtle** - *Laura Ott*

## **Bunker** *by Kristie Letter*

### *Physical Education*

They had to dig. The crystals of sand didn't stick to skin the same way that earth would. Sand collects in pockets, but it doesn't stain.

Even so, the small dark girl reminded herself to shower before coming back tonight. Some girls had no problem showering once, twice a day with fruity lathers but this one had to make a conscious effort. Struggling out of socks, jeans, shoes, t-shirts and then having to choose new ones. The laborious attention to surfaces. Sand stuck to the parts of her skin letting moisture out.

"If we get used to it during daylight, we won't be scared when it's dark," her freckled friend had explained. The other freckled girl was the leader (taller, more boobalicious, better phone.) The smaller girl (piano-playing, ethnic hodgepodge, better grades) liked handing over the decisions. Even when her shoulder burned with the effort of moving sand, and the labored breath brought sand behind her teeth. The entrance wasn't easy to find; they circled the hill twice before the opening to the underground bunker appeared in the middle of a swell of sand.

### *American History*

"Why is this place so hard to find?" the smaller girl asked.

"They bulldozed sand over the entrance, so that nobody could get in anymore."

"Because it's really dangerous?"

"Because they don't want anyone to know what went on down here. War crimes and stuff like that. During the war, they thought this might be one of the areas the Germans attacked, even though they never did. They were ready to be all secretive and take them out. But I mean, it's not dangerous. Tons of army guys worked down here every day," the leader said.

Only the very top of the door was visible, with the metal teeth of its grate. They scabbled up the sand hill and peered into the darkness. The air inside smelled cold, generated by something other than the ocean air outside. The girls dug into the sand, in front a bar which had been twisted to one side, creating an aperture large enough for a body to squeeze through.

Head first down into the cave at an angle that made them push their hands ahead of them on the sloped sand, waiting for the floor. "Shine the light down more," the leader said. They needed the light to touch the floor before palms did, before faces did.

The follower handed off the light. Her slimmer hips slid through the aperture easily, and she dropped down onto the finally-flat surface.

The smell was earth, not sand. They were deep enough that the sand stopped and moist ground began. It was a great place to hide from the enemy. The smaller girl dug into the dirt until it pressed up against the softer half-circles of flesh beneath her fingernails. Then she dropped.

### *Biology*

Earlier, in front of a science classroom, a broad-shouldered boy swooped down on the taller girl and pressed his beaky nose into her clean hair. He inhaled and closed his eyes. As the smaller girl watched, she wondered if no one gravitated toward her hair because she had not showered that day, or if the pull of the other girl went to the voice, to the boobs, to the far-wider smile. What part of popularity was breasts, and what part fastidious cleanliness? The taller girl put oils, lotions and fruity scents across everything bodily.

Although the tall girl walked with a certain sense of expectation, the science incident was startling to both of them. Later, the same popular boy grabbed the tall girl by the flesh on her upper arm. He half-dragged her to the shadows beneath the bleachers, kissed her so hard his teeth left purpling marks on her lower lip, and told her to meet him at a bunker later. "You can bring a friend," he said.

### *Language Arts*

Besides differences in the height of waves, the ocean never changed and neither local girl found the sight of it particularly interesting. Up the beach, the state park had more mystery, with its three tall observations towers positioned according to some antique war strategy. In the towers' shadows, subterranean bunkers lay officially dormant, part of a much deeper strategy and a darker surprise.

Arms entwined, the girls walked down a long hallway in the central bunker. Each black door required a leap of faith to pass, shoving the



flashlight beam across darkness they hoped was empty.

“Aren’t you glad we are doing this during the day, so that we know what to expect tonight?” the tall girl said into her friend’s un-shampooed hair.

“Why do they want to come here?” the small dark girl asked, skating the light across crumbling walls, bits of broken radios, cords reaching out to nothing. In one corner of the room, seven beer cans huddled, the skeletal remains of previous explorers. Her heartbeat danced around her ears and eyebrows.

“Maybe this is what it’s like to be buried,” the tall girl said, turning away from the flashlight to stare back into the room they had just left. No matter how wide she opened them, her eyes could not adjust to blackness this total. She stumbled against a table corner, right on the still-sore spot where that confident boy handled her. With a small sound, she sunk slowly from her heights and sobbed. Her follower sunk beside her, put arms around the shaking shoulders and buried her nose in delicious hair. She squeezed her friend hard to keep the girl from sliding further down and puddling on the floor.

The small girl had to invent words, find ways to say what no one had ever said before, to say what no one understood.

“We’re going to my house, and we’re not coming back,” the small girl said. Her friend let herself be led.

### *Mathematics*

“They’re not here.” A tall boy scraped a flashlight beam across the sand.

“You think they chickened out?” the scrawny boy said to his broader friend, the leader.

“Yeah. I guess they were prudes anyway.”

“So. It’s just the two of us. You wanna go down there?”

“What’s the point? We were gonna scare the girls. Let’s go see if we can score a couple of beers from your older brother.”

## “100.7 Degrees Fahrenheit”

*by Mia Scissons*

i wrap my thoughts around me  
smile and stumble on  
the masses laugh  
inside i cry  
“where do i belong”

“kindness” “love”  
words we use  
like salesmen hawking cars  
compassion smells like Chevrolet  
light bulbs look like stars

dim the morning still i sleep  
with eyes that cannot see  
someday i may awaken  
someday i hope to be

each soul a cosmic fragment  
the whole a midnight sky  
the reasons thoughts and living get lost  
when we must ask  
why

**Guidelines: No Poems About Flowers,  
Pets or Grandparents  
(Unless They're Nazis)**

*by John Grey*

Okay already, editor.  
I've read your guidelines.  
So I decided no more poems  
about flowers  
but then I find myself  
out in the fields  
and the musk mallow's blooming pink  
and milkweed flatters the air  
with a whiff of juicy orange  
or I'm wandering a hospital ward  
and every patient's bedside table  
is adorned with a vase of blooming roses  
or I'm in the kitchen of a friend  
on the downslide  
and the lilies that centerpiece the table  
droop as low as her head  
and their stalks are black and withered.  
The thing is I cannot  
not write about flowers.  
And you insist - nothing about pets.  
But my dog trots over,  
comforts me with a lick of my hand.  
How can I possibly leave him out of all this?  
And you have this thing about family -  
you've no wish to know how much I love them,  
especially those in their eighties.  
But my grandmother's face  
stares at me in homely, nostalgic black and white  
and another artistic resolution  
joins the squished up first drafts  
in the waste basket.  
Sorry editors but,  
as long as there are flowers and pets and grandparents,  
I will write about them.  
And, speaking of editors...  
surprisingly, they're not on the list you sent me.

**Sawfish 3 AM II**

*by Robert Beveridge*

Let us go then, you and I,  
and get drunk  
and steal mail  
at 3AM  
ride shotgun  
with a bunch  
of rowdy  
adolescent sawfish

we'll use  
their noses  
to razor open  
the envelopes  
and throw away  
everything but  
love letters  
in the tradition  
of Jean-Paul Sartre

"there is nothing  
but us, my love,  
but us, and we  
have lost our names  
they were thrown  
from the windows  
of my little apartment  
in Montparnasse  
and now  
we are only  
each other"

You say  
you're reading  
Foucault now  
*Discipline and Punish*

a 1984-esque vision  
that brands itself  
behind your eyes

everyone watches  
us these days  
and they'll know,  
they'll *know*  
if you engage  
in interspecies dating

These sawfish  
around us drink  
behind the wheel  
and it occurs to you  
they need discipline

you think they need punished

but in the end  
it was *your* hand  
it was *our* hands  
on the window  
every twenty seconds

that pulled envelopes  
from their once-  
private boxes

and by god  
or whatever you take  
to be divine

there is nothing  
but us, my love,  
but us.

## I Worked on That Puzzle for More Than Forty Years

*by Kevin Brown*

I can tell you how many rebounds  
my father found in a game against Wofford,  
a skinny boy who knew how to use his body  
to box out other men, but I can't tell you why

he chose basketball in college. I know  
he pitched batting practice for the Red Sox,  
his long leg kicking up and back before  
he stretched one strike after another  
toward home, striking out both

Carl Yastrzemski and Ted Williams,  
but not why he wouldn't move  
into their minor-league program.  
I can say how he was as a coach—  
helped my basketball and baseball

teams when I was ten and twelve,  
but I will never know why  
he didn't take a job coaching  
in Chattanooga, his home town,  
where he bagged groceries at Buehler's  
as a boy living in the projects before

basketball lifted him out.  
The answers I own feel incomplete,  
a jigsaw puzzle with a few pieces missing  
in the middle, right where a person's face would be,  
and now I've lost the box,  
so I'll never know who it was.

## Within the Eye of a Sandstorm

*by Robert Beveridge*

In this landscape  
of cracked earth, bluffs,  
and dry scrub,  
a single dandelion is more  
than every rose  
in Ireland

## “the march of dusk”

*by Mia Scissons*

I sleep to wake, and wake to nightmare’s fear.  
I feel in the morning, still I will dream.  
I run by walking where Psyche appears.  
Men know when darkness falls light brings no cheer.  
What of this nothingness halts you to scream?  
I sleep to wake, and wake to nightmare’s fear.  
We know breath. How if by death’s volunteer?  
A mushroom cap nests near pools of egg cream.  
I run by walking where Psyche appears.  
Oh, Great Creator, why silence seem near?  
I know where I go. And go it must seem.  
I sleep to wake, and wake to nightmare’s fear.  
You who walks far; lest you who walks so dear.  
What must you think of the oak tree’s regime?  
I run by walking where Psyche appears.  
Halt by Sun’s mistress before the sky veers.  
I know where I stay. And stay I must dream.  
I sleep to wake, and wake to nightmare’s fear.  
I run by walking where Psyche appears.

## Free Flowing Genetics

by Caroline Dzuibek

jagged, raw tears result in pink blankets  
mothers burn candles that smell of tonka bean and pine  
ashy rose skin scorched from the adhesive strips  
that reek of Neosporin and iron  
fathers burn steak and onions on negro char  
wipe that crimson syrup from knuckles  
dapple the dark liquor that drips from nostrils  
smear wine that tastes of gasoline around the neck  
wear it as a collar, your necklace  
swallow the gore within contorted muscle  
sons shine bright with rice crisps crumbling in a fist  
ruby glass pierces a colonized vein far downstream  
where Brita-filtered water meets a fermented wound  
daughters twist blonde braids into thick, hairy knots  
sagged skin rips and drips into thorough puddles of ancestry  
it is so long  
it is never done  
families fear color on waxen, plump skin  
blood brands each and every one

## An African Angel

~ for Saint Monica

by Nicol Auguste

confident in chaos  
because  
angst can't survive,  
can't be alive  
in a mother's prayers  
against her son's  
acid Manichean tongue  
a machine of rhetoric,  
philosophy  
and *meology*

birthed that child  
his father's son,  
kingdom come,  
the Cain of the family  
inheritance to carry  
on, and yet  
her living deity  
would call him,  
create in him  
a friend

a mother's prayer  
always takes care  
her call, an agent  
her greatness  
communicates  
elucidates  
escalates  
venerates

Him

## call to prayer

by Nicole Auguste

come to me.

how, Lord?

in prayer.

when, Lord?

now.

when, Lord?

now.

okay, Lord.

the Light is the way.

in the resting body?

yes.

in the calm of the evening?

yes.

in the chaos of distraction?

I am.

the cicadas sound loud, Lord. I can't hear you.

I am.

And they calmed

I feel your heat on my cheek, Lord.

this is my Way



Now for Solitude ~

## Authors' Biographies

**Denzell Anderson** is a 2016 graduate of Lourdes University. Denzell has been interested in poetry since 2012. He has submitted and been accepted into *The Tau* since 2014 *Miro Eso* and *Enigmatic* for 2014, *You*, and *The Beauty of Life as We Know It* in 2015 and *Introspection* for 2016-2017.

**Eugen Bacon** MSc studied at Maritime Campus, Greenwich University, less than two minutes' walk from The Royal Observatory of the Greenwich Meridian. Her arty muse fostered within the baroque setting of the Old Royal Naval College, Eugen found herself a computer postgraduate mentally re-engineered into creative writing. She has finished a masters and PhD in writing at Swinburne University of Technology. Eugen has published over 50 short stories and creative articles, and has recently completed a creative non-fiction book and a literary speculative novel. Her short story 'A puzzle piece' was shortlisted in the Lightship Publishing (UK) international short story prize 2013 and is published in *Lightship Anthology 3*. Eugen's creative work 'Being Marcus' and other works are published in *New Writing*, *The International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing*.

**Danny P. Barbare** attended Greenville Technical College where his poetry won The Jim Gitting's Award. And his poetry has been nominated for Best of the Net. His poems have recently appeared in many Christian print and online journals such as: *First Day*, *Rhubarb*, *Friends Journal*, *Doxa*, *Sisters Today*, *Christianity and the Arts*, and *Prince of Peace*. He resides in the Upstate of the Carolinas with his wife and family and small dog, Miley. And he says he loves to travel to the Blue Ridge Mountains and the lowlands of South Carolina. He says he spends much of his time writing while doing work as a janitor at the YMCA.

**Gary Beck** has spent most of his adult life as a theater director, and as an art dealer when he couldn't make a living in theater. He has 11 published chapbooks. His poetry collections include: *Days of Destruction* (Skive Press), *Expectations* (Rogue Scholars Press). *Dawn in Cities*, *Assault on Nature*, *Songs of a Clerk*, *Civilized Ways* (Winter Goose Publishing). *Perceptions*, *Displays*, *Fault Lines and Tremors* will be published by Winter Goose Publishing. *Conditioned Response* (Nazar Look). His novels include: *Extreme Change* (Cogwheel Press) *Acts of Defiance* (Artema Press). *Flawed Connections* (Black Rose Writing). His short story collection, *A Glimpse of Youth* (Sweatshoppe Publications). His original plays and translations of Moliere, Aristophanes and Sophocles have been produced Off Broadway. His poetry, fiction and essays have appeared in hundreds of literary magazines. He currently lives in New York City.







**Call for Submissions  
for  
2017-2018 Tau**

Deadline: ????

Please email submissions to [Tau@lourdes.edu](mailto:Tau@lourdes.edu)

You may submit up to five, double-spaced entries. Each one should be in a separate, Word-compatible file. Accepted formats are Word (.docx), Word 1997-2003 (.doc), and Rich Text Format (.rtf).

Please do not include your name in the document or the filename of the document. Use the title of your work as the name of the file.



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