



# SPARK

A REVIEW OF NSCC STUDENT LITERARY & ARTISTIC EXPRESSION



SPARK 2012 **volume 4**

## sparked by inspiration

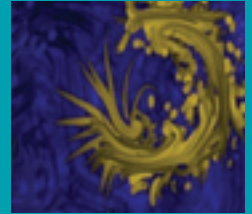
Through poetry and stories, photographs and drawings, Spark showcases the talent and spirit of students at North Shore Community College. This third issue of Spark is dedicated to the persistence of vision, forward movement, and the knowledge that creativity is its own reward. **Enjoy.**



**eclectic**



**colors**



**creative**



**impressive**



**energizes**



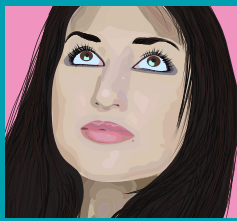
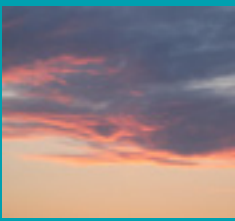
**fulfilling**



**talented**



**uplifting**



**bright**



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music video:

Klusive - "I'm on One" Remix | *Adamo Pulzone*

Type this URL into your web browser to watch video:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n9dvubulvcE>

Or click the link on our Spark page:  
[www.northshore.edu/spark](http://www.northshore.edu/spark)

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on the cover:

Topsy Turvy | *Jonathan Cwiok*

# Advice

by Wendy Walker-Casal

The devil is a Libra. It's his aim  
to bait you with the promise of a honeyed  
cottony quiet of peace,  
then mendaciously howl as he hands you  
the jangling mind of the micromanaging boss.

The devil is a Libra. He moves with stealth.  
No dark. No light. Just shades of opal.  
Frowning grizzled scholars attempt to study  
the epistemology of his dance,  
but it's all so simple, really. The snake  
was never evil; the mother goddess  
was never purely good. Don't rack your brain  
or jump to the safety of poles.

The devil is a Libra. Remember his trip:  
worry them with letters in the margins,  
powder streaks of color outside the lines,  
always leave the headlines behind the sports,  
one plus one could certainly add up to zero.

The devil is a Libra. Remember balance  
is not his forte. It's we who cannot bear  
the yawn of this reality's chasm.  
Suffer the end of simple logic.  
It's the peculiar service he renders  
before we surrender to sleep. ■

# Aluminum-bitten Roof

by Nicholas Lovasco

Twisted up a cocktail napkin,  
Turned it into a hopeful rose,  
White with a blue stencil letter,  
Words blooming out to her nose.

Soothing sounds of a Sunday belle,  
Like the notes ringing in a  
depression era tenor  
Hanging over from the night  
before, we awoke  
Desire for a bite, hungry together.

She spent a year in an attic,  
Withering away but retaining her  
shame.  
Three children had died following  
birth.  
Each one was given the same name

I was a wandering carpenter.  
From west to east, a bar -room  
gardener.  
Trying to speak easy to anyone who  
would listen.

She was empty except for a free  
glass of water.  
I came along and offered a flower  
for her stomach vase,  
but all I gave was paper and said,  
"Chew, 'cause everything beautiful  
is as bad as it tastes." ■

# A Song for the Sacco's Shivers

by **Nicholas Lovasco**

Cover up your breasts, they make me angry.  
Her flesh is only a missed opportunity.  
When we met we shook hands then took it upon  
ourselves  
To put logs on the fire while all the others retired  
to bed.  
A clash of wit mixing like dust with water,  
Sinking and sitting until stirred in the summer  
By kicking feet from kids like us.

We talked until it was time to take a walk  
Up to the porch where at the base of the steps  
She started writing in the earth with her  
fingernails,  
"I was raped years ago."

A hug felt cheap, but I was broke and the gesture  
would be kind.

Her mouth went to my neck, then mine to hers.  
But our restlessness began to shake like autumn  
morning pines.  
Eyes closed, lips wide, I knew in the morning she  
would forget  
What it had meant to me to feel trusted and  
loving.  
Walking back, the stomps erased her silent dirty  
words.  
And in the White Mountains, every morning still  
shivers,  
Like she did years ago. ■



Dragonfly at Rest  
*David Dougwillo*





*clockwise*

Elements Reflecting Rock Pool | *Kristy McGarr*

Carriages Boston | *Colleen Bertolino*

Bakasyon 09 | *Martin Sison*

# AND SO HE SAT IN THE COCKPIT OF HIS SINGLE-STORY SOUTHIE

by Jonathan Cwiok

It's not clear why Phil Tobin wanted  
to kill himself  
even when you consider the state of  
his wealth.

He was unemployed, but frankly  
that made him want to die a little  
less,  
and he was otherwise in no dire state  
of distress.

No repressed memories of Uncle  
Steve at the family pool party  
coming to light.

It wasn't even a particularly bad  
Simpson's episode that night.

In fact it had little to do with  
depression or misery.

Phil had merely been struck with a  
sense of apathy.

If every life story ends with a  
meeting with the lord,

why should he have to wait until he's  
old and bored?

Instead, he would take a shortcut at  
his own pace  
and beat everyone around him in the  
human race.

Of course a man in this position is  
much more concerned with the how  
than the why.

So Phil got out a list and wrote all  
the ways a man could die.

Shot to the head? Too much racket.  
Slit wrists? Not on this new carpet.

Hung with a noose? He could barely  
tie his shoes.

Going out in a blaze of glory isn't for  
me, he thought. I just want to sleep,  
no theatrics.

That's when he found the answer in  
his medicine cabinet.

And so he sat in the cockpit of his  
single-story Southie,  
ready for liftoff with pills in hand  
and a bottle of brandy,  
when Phil was treated to yet another  
sparkling revelation.

How much is my mom going to  
have to pay for this situation?

He needed to know the cost of a  
good funeral.

So he aborted the launch and  
consulted the almighty Google.

Phil sat there staring at the five-digit  
wrench thrown into his plans.

The casket alone could set him back  
three grand.

\$20,000 wasn't the kind of money he  
could make on the fly.

If it was, he'd probably be a lot less  
inclined to die.

He knew he would have to raise the  
money on his own.

Nobody in their right mind would  
give him a loan.

Then it hit him, the answer was right  
in front of his nose.

The internet! Where a jackass that  
nobody knows

can become the focus of an  
anonymous world's adoration.

All it needs is a little persuasion.

So he set up a blog to gather  
attention

where he declared proudly, his  
intention

## “Here's some money, now stop wasting my oxygen!”

to kill himself at the tender age of  
thirty  
unless the world showed him some  
monetary sympathy.  
He shared it on Facebook, Twitter,  
even eHarmony  
and signed off that night with a  
sense of victory.

By tomorrow he'd have thousands of  
good Samaritans  
weeping and begging for the life of  
Phil Tobin.

They would donate just to prove life  
gets better after this drought.  
Then he'd spend their charity on a  
nice funeral plot.

Phil went to bed that night like a kid  
before Christmas  
counting off the items on his morbid  
wish list.

He wondered if he could still get a  
free casket.

If he could hide in a store coffin and  
take some arsenic.

Then they'd have to let him stay.

I mean, they can't sell a used casket,  
can they?

First thing in the morning Phil  
booted up his Dell

to discover with great cheer how his  
PayPal account swelled.

Just for the hell of it, he'd give the  
blog a quick look

but what he saw made it feel like the  
earth shook.



No pleas for his life, no praising his potential.  
Instead people were telling him to go to hell  
for his benefactors saw right through his little scheme  
and made him into another internet meme.

“Do it, stupid! Take like fifty Ambien!”  
“Here’s some money, now stop wasting my oxygen!”  
“Hey you fat lard, go jump in front of a bus!”  
“If you do yourself in on cam, I’ll pay five hundred bucks!”  
They got worse and worse as they went along  
taunting poor Phil, seeing nothing wrong

with urging on a stranger with a foot in the grave.  
He had never heard anything so depraved!

Determination replaced depression.  
Anger replaced apathy.  
Phil slammed his computer shut.  
“They think they’re better than me?”  
And in all his thoughts of finding those punks and skinning their hides he completely forgot he was trying to commit suicide.  
Instead, his mind turned toward grander goals,  
ways to prove he could win over those worthless souls.  
He could use their money, go back to college, get a degree  
then he could die with some sense of dignity.

No, if they want me to die, then I’ll live!  
I’ll live and watch those punks beg me to forgive  
as I spend my life making mine matter  
while they fill the internet with their senseless banter!

And so Phil Tobin began the rest of his life  
as long and as proudly as anybody ever tried.  
And on the day he feels death knocking at his door.  
He’ll still try that thing with the casket store. ■





You know you saw them but no one ever listens

They'll be long gone by the time the sun has risen

You feel 'em lurking,  
breaking nat

hey  
ome co  
ight! The  
ome o  
ight!

ly  
right! They only  
y come out at  
right! They only  
ly come out at  
right! They only

hear 'em how in the shadows  
noc on your pe... world

Don't know what's at stake

I think they're right beside me

I gotta stay awake

them all from biting



## Brazilian Trickster

by Wendy Walker-Casal

Pomba-Gira's reproachful glance  
reminds you of her agency;  
she's built her altar out of keys,  
perfume bottles and black lace fans.

Sanctifier, vilifying  
all that is saintly, dead and white –  
her eyelid, heavy with midnight  
blesses dancers, bone-defying.

Would you change the world you have?  
Turn the ladders upside down.  
Sprinkle anisette on the ground  
for the Queen of crossroads, sea and grave.

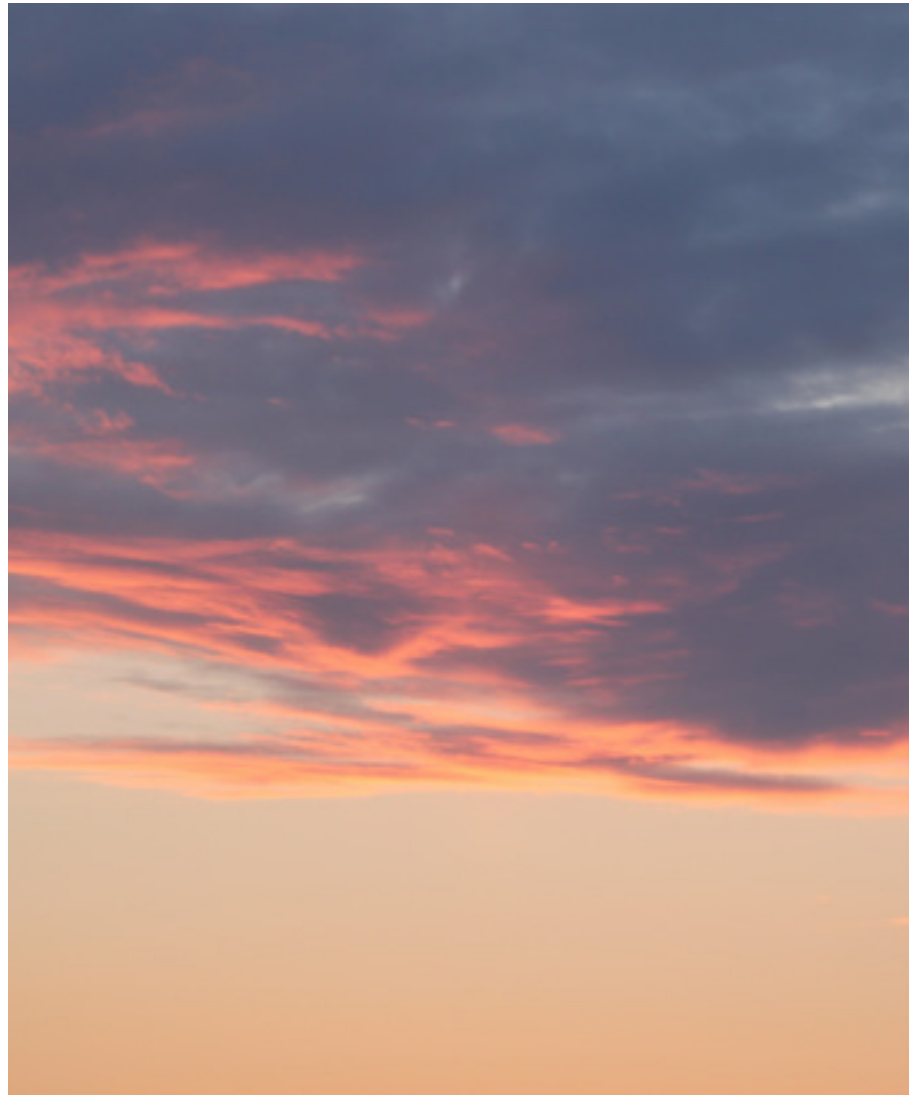
Her worshippers are well-acquainted  
with her trident, swathed in shells –  
Good and Bad and Something Else  
are cased in the tines, triple-pointed.

While theologians try to guess:  
Is God complicit in evil?  
Pomba-Gira's holy revel  
will answer no and sometimes yes. ■

## Cavalier

by Adam Arsenault

“Come along,” entreats thy Cavalier.  
I will take you far from here.  
“Dis-moi, m'aimez-vous?”  
Tell me just as I've told you.  
Still thy reply leaves only want,  
Ever so casual and nonchalant.  
With a nod thy Cavalier bows his head,  
Only to watch as his heart doth bled.  
Thy Cavalier whispers, “I understand,”  
As he grasps your solemn hand.  
Tipping his hat, thy Cavalier must depart  
To meet again, though only in heart. ■



# BULLDOG

by Mary Ann Honaker

On the cliff's edge between  
exhaustion and sleep,  
I found my wound mind  
insisting time  
is a bulldog.

Fine, then. Time is  
stout, tine-nailed,  
scratching over vinyl floor.  
Time huffs along  
measuredly, and if

she loves you she will  
heave a squashed nose  
under your bare arm  
hoping for a touch,  
besmirching you  
with unknown damp,  
mucus or drool.

If this happens you  
should stretch out your hand.  
Time is short. So lean

down, lean out of yourself,  
touch the stiff bristles  
of fur, breathe in  
the warm stinking musk  
of living beast.

Time may walk with you  
down the street. If so,  
do not hurry her;  
she likes to nose  
the earth and air  
for scent-secrets.

Let her stop and snuffle  
by the lamppost.

When you take time  
and let time this way,  
you have time  
to awaken your eyes

to this ant navigating  
the valleys and hills  
of tree bark, the separate  
digits of each maple leaf.

You will see squares of sun  
on your neighbor's stoop,  
sliced like bread  
and bread-pure, clean.

Then you will be thankful  
time is so squat and slow.  
Your heart and time's heart

will meet in sweet morning,  
leashed or unleashed, if  
you but let time stop. ■

Sunrise on Revere Beach | *Ilene Bloom*



# Every Morning I...

by Robin Myers

Every morning...

I get up,

And out of my comfy cozy bed.

I get myself ready

To seize the day!

...

Every morning...

I sniff the air

To see if my breakfast is ready.

...

Every morning...

I go to the bathroom.

I am not allowed to do this alone,

I have to wait for my mother

To watch me.

Sometimes,

A little pee squirts out

If she makes me wait too long.

...

Every morning...

After my pee time,

I get to eat my breakfast.

It is so yummy!

Sometimes it is crunchy,

Sometimes it is smooth and creamy.

Some mornings,

It is crunchy, smooth and creamy.

...

Every morning...

After breakfast,

I have my teeth brushed.

My mother opens my mouth and looks at my teeth.

I am not sure what she is looking for,

Or what she sees.

She has this special brush,

Like the one she uses.

She puts it in my mouth, and I get all foamy.

It is hard to keep my mouth open.

The foam makes me spit and sneeze

And my mother laughs

At the spittle all over her face.

Some times,

My tongue gets scrubbed too. Yuck!

...

Every morning...

I have my hair brushed.

My mother says,

If it is not brushed every morning,

My hair falls out

All over the couch, the car, my bed.

This clogs up the vacuum cleaner.

My mother growls

If the vacuum cleaner clogs.

So,

I sit quietly, so she can brush my hair.

Well, I do squirm a bit!

...

Now comes my favorite part of the morning!

...

Every morning...

We go for a walk.

My mother says

That exercise keeps us young and beautiful.

So we walk briskly,

And sometimes we trot.

I am much faster than my mother.

She really needs to keep up.

...

Every morning...

After I have taken my mother for a walk,

We head back home.

We are very slow.

Slowly, we climb the stairs,

Slowly, we open the front door.

We go into the house, slowly.

We look at each other

And yawn.

My mother yawns with her big mouth



Burning Summer | *David Dougwillo*

And then I yawn,  
With my little mouth.

...

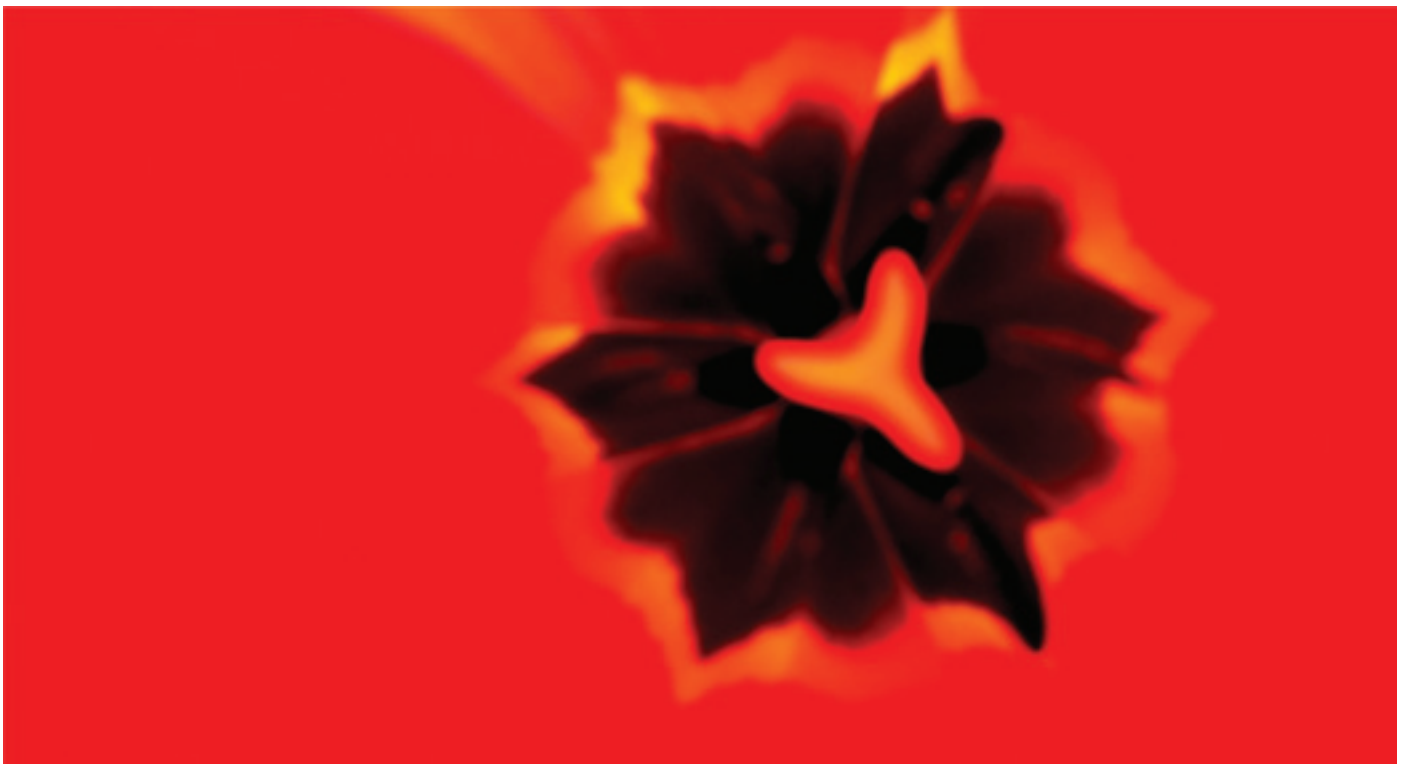
Every morning...  
After our walk,  
We take a little nap.  
She lies down on top of her bed  
And looks at me and says,  
“We will close our eyes for 7 minutes.”  
I agree with a WOOF!  
And with the thump of my tail.

I circle my comfy cozy bed  
On the floor  
Of my mother’s bedroom.  
I curl into a tight ball.  
We both close our eyes  
And float off into our  
‘7 minute nap.

...

Every morning...  
Is a brilliant morning  
To be a dog!

...



*clockwise: Sunburst | Johnathan Cwiok Orange Flower | Jillian Brice Stairway in Portugal | Shannon Horgan*





# Day Dreams

by Madeline Troncoso

Sometimes I want to kill you  
I dream of a life where you  
don't exist  
A parallel universe where I am  
free of your demons  
Where I can worry about me  
Where I come first

Sometimes I want to run from  
you  
From all your sorrow and pain  
It doesn't belong to me,  
And yet I hold on to you  
I keep you in my life

Sometimes I want to fix you  
I want to make it all go away  
I want to kill the man who  
hurt you  
Destroy his life  
Murder him in cold blood

Sometimes I want to kill you  
I dream of a life where you  
don't exist ■



Lexicon | *Kyle Johnston*

# GOSPEL OF JOHN, CHAPTER 1

by **Mary Ann Honaker**

My friend who was raped says  
the D.A. won't take the case.  
We're in church; the lights are dim;  
the men sit in a circle to discuss  
our world made by and through Him.

She is wearing a blue dress,  
light and watery, loose-laced,  
sitting under muted beige  
Celtic cross painted high  
on the wall, symbols from  
some other age: chalice,  
crown. I've nothing to say.  
I look at my sandaled feet  
and frown. Later when I wake

from numbness, after  
sudden summer storm, I walk  
by the sea. The tide is out;  
under bruised sky gulls stand  
in yellow-shimmered shallows.

I pray for justice for a few  
footsteps and my mind falters.  
Without Him nothing was made  
that was made. He's the crease where  
Love becomes path, rock, water, duck.

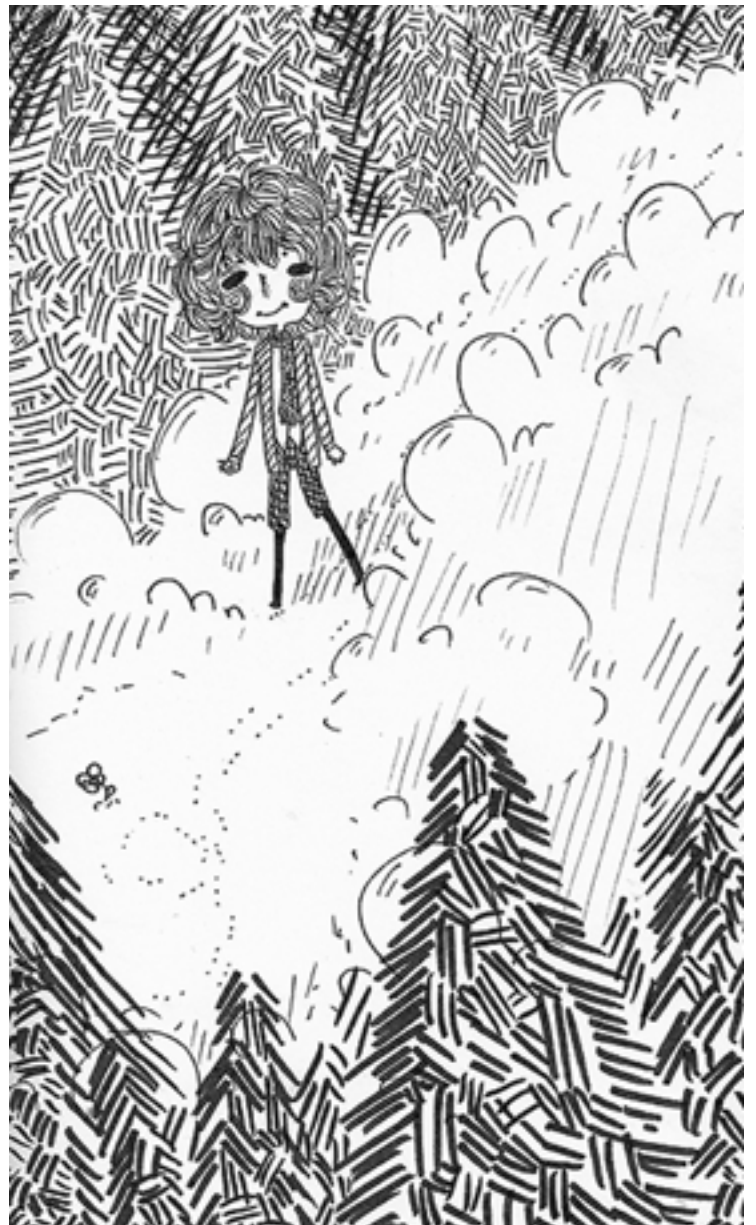
Unpainted shutters. As if to her  
he'd said, your body is a water jug.  
There's no worth to what's inside.

No, I won't cry. A terrier  
regards me mournfully, sulking  
on leash's end. When I reach the road

I find the thick screen of weeds  
mown clean. Crickets sing  
from beneath drying husks  
of their homes, wilted leaves,  
little yellow flowers  
curled in on their cores.

Further down a new house  
is finished, a realtor's sign  
shines. Only the climbing vine  
survives, with its red trumpets  
spilling over the fence like fleeing  
refugees, crying, death and fire. ■

Kolya Woods | *Kasha Kawczynski*



# Laura de la Torre Bueno, M.D.

by Wendy Walker-Casal

Blonde girls with perfect pigtail names  
like Joy Ash  
copied square manila oaktag;  
eternity finished before I crossed the T.  
My name stretched across my desk like a  
Montana sunset.

Blue-eyed girls named Jane Carr  
ran through Chinese jump rope;  
the teacher tripped through my endless syllables.  
Laura de la Torre Bueno  
spun down on Rapunzel's dark curls.

Taller than the tower of Santa Barbara  
in the kitchen I slouched  
wearing my cousin's too-short  
lavender prom dress – waiting.  
My mother prattled  
all evening – stories of Papa Luis  
fighting Trujillo, grandmother's hands  
shaping arepas and beans.  
Then she fed me milhojas at midnight,  
leaves for my thousand letters.

Once in Norfolk, Nebraska,  
I was exotic azucena perfume  
and wild. Big sky and highway kissed.  
Blond man on a Harley chanted  
Laura de la Torre Bueno:  
wave upon amber wave of grain  
matched our ecstatic rhythm.

Precise anatomy professors  
enunciated my vowels with care  
tenderly as scalpels and specula.  
My father cried at graduation.  
I fell in love with his tears, his rebel heroes,  
plantains, arepas and beans  
in an eastern ivory tower.

Now my stethoscope equals my name  
in length, at last. I examine  
aerobics instructors named Jan Jones  
dressed in impossible paper gowns,  
who nervously await – the length of my name. ■



The definition of life, while at first glance an easy proposition, proves to be incredibly difficult. Every proposed definition of life suffers from one of two problems: The definition is sufficiently broad that it allows things generally accepted as non-living to be defined as alive; or is so specific that should more exotic forms of life come to light, they might not fit the classic view.

- ◀ Life Definition | *Jose Gonzalez*
- ▶ Into the Night I Heard You Calling | *Kristy McGarr*



# J.W Fosdick and Emily Young

by **Nicholas Lovasco**

“I’d give you a rock, but flowers are much more pretty, even though they won’t last as long.”

“Rocks can wither as well,” Emily quickly replied, blushing like a peach.

Whipping water through desert canyons.  
Carved away at minerals and sediment.  
Balls will chip away at the insides of cannons.

“I suppose,” J.W Fosdick says.

“I’d give you a gift, but I have nothing to bare. An empty womb resides in the bottom of my body. I’m not sure it is something I could share.” ■

▼ Tranquility | *Geraldine Scola*





# Learning of Colours

by Wendy Walker-Casal

Red with orange clashes, so Mother said.  
Will red clash very much with yellow bruises?  
The softest mustard rings, concentric lichen,  
on a toddler's arms, pale thighs - more the shade  
and feel of clotted fabric, stitched and broken.  
The corner chair knows a family's hidden vices.

What best agrees with rising granite welts?  
Will this violet-speckled dress augment or cover  
the welts that mottle kindergarten flesh?  
Purple disaccords with cracked leather belts  
and walnut disagreement rankles Mother.  
There mustn't be disharmony in family ashes.

This daughter looks far better in a hops field,  
or torn in grassy mires in southern heathlands.  
Tormentil and heather match contusions.  
The bogs absorb unpleasant stripes and squeals.  
What tint best sweetens bloody lines of handprints?  
No unsightly discord in family fission.

Mother's handiwork is grim, completed.  
Two mysteries remain: What is the pigment  
of the blisters and the wheals on a darkened psyche?  
What do I choose to wear to celebrate  
the collapse of her infernal firmament,  
to harmonize - just so - with a family break? ■





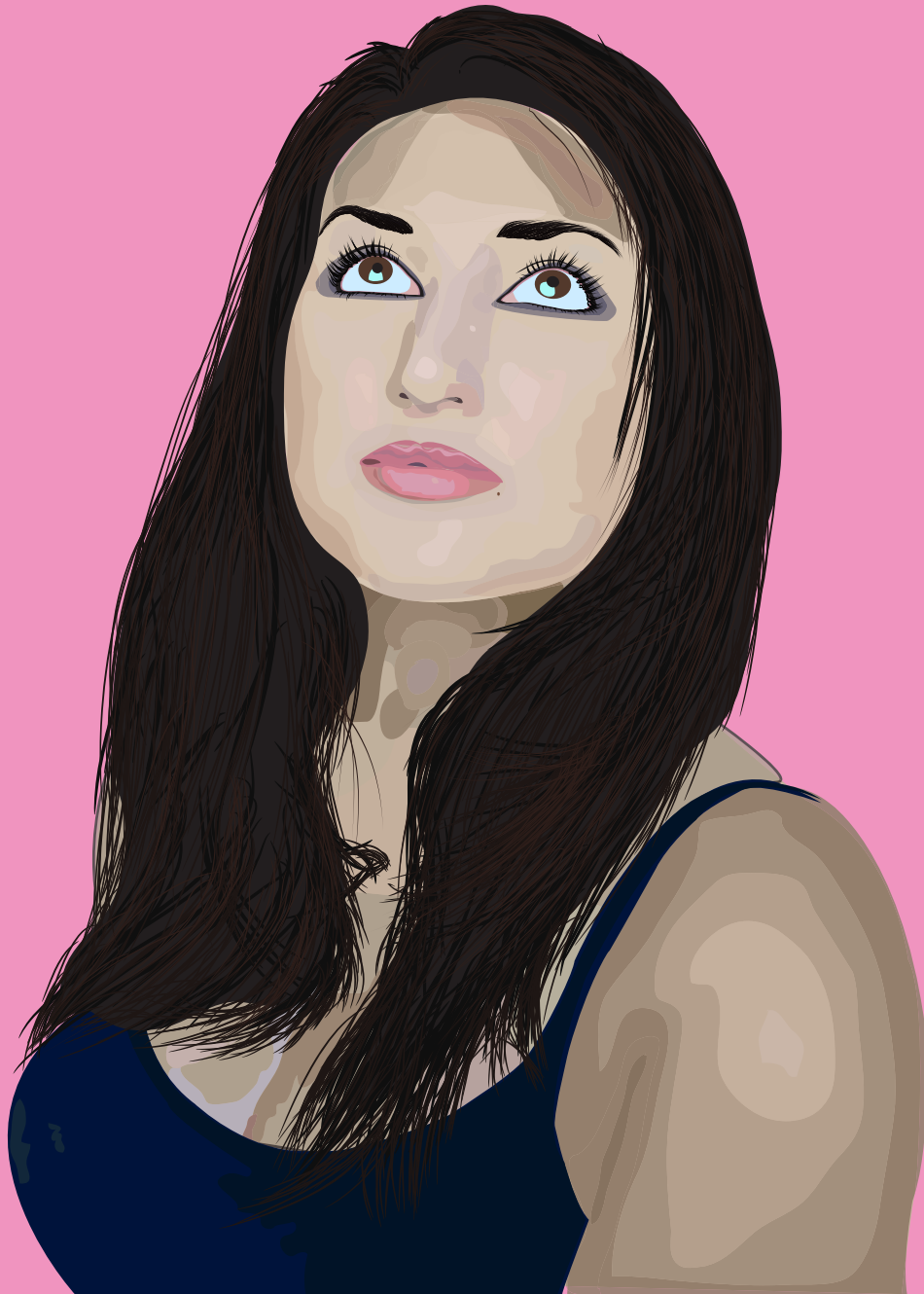


Tiger | *Kaitlyn MacDonald*

## Military Wife

by Catherine Alvord

The bed we bought together,  
I sleep in alone.  
The dog we adopted together,  
only sees my face.  
I miss the mornings when there  
are two coffee cups to wash.  
And I miss the dirty clothes you  
habitually leave on the floor.  
Our neighbors think you don't exist,  
and sometimes neither do I.  
It's sad that they know our dog  
better than they know you.  
But one day this will all be over.  
One day we will eat together every  
night.  
Until then I'm just a military wife. ■



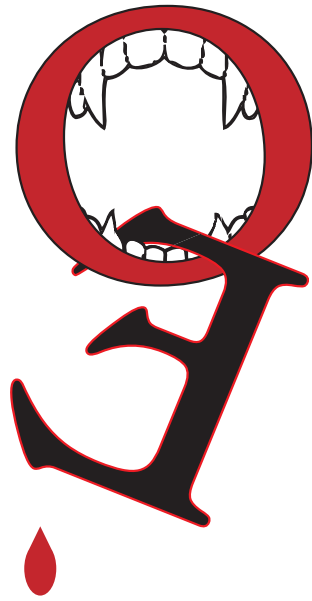
*clockwise*

Liza Self Portrait | *Yelizaveta Osipova*

Logo | *Yelizaveta Osipova*

Monogram Logo | *Kyle Johnston*

Self Portrait Illustrator | *Colleen Bertolino*



# NEVER FORGET TDOR

by Jessica Tower

This afternoon a man looks out past the church and remembers the day when a group of his people held candles burning bright like the sunlight giving life and hope to those surrounding him through the paradox of the readings of names of the dead. That day, the man was a woman. That day, the man had been afraid to tell people that he was not as he seemed. That night, when someone asked where he'd been, he said tee door. Not even emphasizing the individual letters. Not even explaining that the acronym meant everything to him. He spent the year building up his bravery, learning about his people. His tribe. The ones like him. And so today, one year later, the man was back in the church. When someone asked where he was going, he said TDOR. When someone asked what that meant, he said: the Transgender Day of Remembrance, a day for people with courage. ■

# Moon

by Christina Siebertz

He referenced the moon.  
How hazy it was tonight,  
Smothered by clouds.  
But somehow he still noticed  
Its light,  
Burning bright in the black sky.  
No stars.  
Only him.  
He referenced how only God  
Could create such a thing;  
A moon and all its brilliance,  
Still able to be seen  
Through the thicket.

I thought of his brilliance.  
Hazy; not so evident.  
But I noticed it anyway,  
Shining into me. ■

# As Nature's Few

by Nicholas Lovasco

just past the ferns and decaying branches,  
sat a clearing nestled by the water dancing.

and the path to the rustling ripples led  
like weariness does to a fresh made bed.

there i watched algae on rooted rocks grow,  
so simply and slow as a huntsman's bow.

i thought of reproducing microscopic pieces  
as the luckiest of all creation's many teases.

it happens without knowledge of any other;  
human begging to make an animal a mother. ■



Small Voice | *Karen Spear*

## Sundays With Elvis

by **Shannon Krisko**

It's Sunday and Marie is getting ready for her weekly date. The coffee is brewing and she looks anxiously at the clock. The time seems to pass at pack-a-day joggers pace. Her coffee steams her glasses as she fidgets on the couch. She tries to avoid the acidic odor seeping from the litter box that she needs to clean, but she has to wait for an old friend to show up. The clock on the cable box reads eight and she knows its time. He never knocks. It is strange but he only shows up when she turns the radio on. Marie's back aches as she reaches for the dial and finds the

familiar local Oldie's station. It's time and HE is here.

Elvis has entered the building. Like a school girl, Marie's face glows, her body lightens and her energy is renewed. He doesn't mind the mess because it is part of their agreement. She will bring him back to life for three hours every Sunday and he will hold the dust pan. Sometimes Elvis gets cross at Marie when the cat's fur invades his rhinestone jacket but the coffee and conversation is worth it. He sings to her as she dusts and she always has to remind him to quiet down

because her daughter is sleeping.

Occasionally their conversations turn dark as they share their struggles with self-loathing and addiction. Marie will often bring up the death of her mother and how hard 1977 was. Elvis hates when she brings up Lillian's death because it reminds him of his own mortality. But too soon, time's up, the house is clean and the little girl is awake. Good-bye Elvis. See you next Sunday. ■

# Parting Ways in Santa Rosa

by Wendy Walker-Casal

The rain sounds like a faucet this year.  
Do you remember when there were no  
sounds at all  
in the mornings at the table overshadowed  
by the mountains? Only wings  
of toucans and green  
parrots by the bay.

Love, honor and obey -  
We promised, at least, to love. How many  
years  
young were we? How quickly green  
tender emotions give way to all  
gray soaking pots, bills, soiled diapers,  
wings  
of transgressions crumpled in shadows.

I sometimes see your shadow  
while I'm crushing bay  
laurel leaves, like angel wings  
in dinner tomato sauce, and twelve years  
melt away like April snow, and all  
I feel are two eyes, willow green,

open, soft, forgiving. Shards of green  
anger flash now in the parlor shadows.  
Fierce spars and jabs are all  
we know to keep loneliness at bay,  
stave off silence for a year.  
Decisions perch on swings.

Do you remember the chuparosa wings?  
Humming vibrato, splash of tropical green  
against the hibiscus. Our first year  
was swathed in buttery shadows  
of tremulous forbidden embraces, obeying  
only the cry of Now! Always.



Meet You at the Top | Adam Arsenault

All  
that remains is the swing  
of melancholy. Marooned on the bay,  
we look back on the wild green  
passion and lament the shadows,  
daily dishes that mock twelve years.

Still you are all that is untamed, precious  
and green,  
a quilt of soothing shadow against the  
beating wings  
of humdrum days, a tourmaline bay that  
could last another year. ■

# The Witch

by Martha Perry

Sister Joan had been helping out at the halfway house for her lay sisters of the bottle for over a year now. There was much to be done every day including Monday, St. Joan's least favorite day, her day for yard work. St. Joan was sweating, but not from the work or the habit. It was the children again, the children who yelled "A witch, a witch, a witch," and then fled in a panic before a long distance witch slap aside their heads would foul them with a long streak of bad luck or suck the breath right out of them. Lord, she wished it was winter and not fall. In the winter she would be in a coat; she would be shoveling clean white snow

from the walkway with a shiny shovel, not sweeping dry leaves off of it with a tired broom. St. Joan hated brooms. Not-quite holy water dripped off the tip of her nose.

It was not the children's fault that they believed the fairy tales told to them by parents who had not converted, had not ensured their children's entrance into heaven via the Holy Father, the church. No, not the children's fault that they thought her a witch. And it was certainly not Sister Joan's fault that she was baked in black, head to toe, north to south, east to west. Jesus had called her to color the world with His love, her love. Black was

a color best suited for women who frequented cocktail parties, not servants of the Servant.

She looked at her heresy and started the Act again, imagining her Priest alone hearing her confession. For a while now, she had hoped her quiet eyes and gentle smile would dissuade the children from their taunts, but no child ever stayed long enough to look into her eyes or notice her smile. Curses. Sister Joan wanted color. Her avocation and color. And for the children to stop, and to visit with her.

It was Monday again and the same children ran by, yelling "A witch, a witch, a witch." St. Joan tucked her broom between her legs and laughed out loud, her eyes aglow. Putting aside her old habits, she ran about the yard chasing the wee black kitten. One child stopped to watch, confused, astonished, engaged. ■



MFoA Logo | Kyle Johnston



- ▲ Alone | *Martin Sison*
- ▶ Art | *Rachel Doe*

## SEA SONG

by **Mary Ann Honaker**

Sometimes sun shines upon  
the waves  
as soft as fingers over silk,  
softer still, as soft as shadows  
in silken folds.

When sea slips over shattered  
shells  
each as white as teeth  
or blue as noon sky,

it chimes, it tinkles  
like tiny bells.

A white boat sails  
close by and the sea swells,  
it lifts its glistening black  
back like a cat  
that yawns and turns  
its moon face away.

The moon is a secret pearl  
half hidden as if in sand,  
turned shyly aside  
from setting sun.

The sea is a sleeping beast.  
I lay beside her on the brittle  
dock  
of sun-bleached wood,  
sere from salt, where  
footsteps fall hollow;

I listen to her small white  
hands  
smooth the cut-stone pier,  
erasing years. Sleep,  
she says, this is all a dream. ■





# WORSHIP, WITH CHOCOLATES

by Mary Ann Honaker

I met a gay man at the gallery:  
a roundish man, stout, who wore  
his silken shirt half undone  
to show tight-sprung chest curls;

jolly as sunlight in the Commons  
brooding through the thick-  
trunked trees.

He sat knees-splayed  
hand on meaty thigh  
and entertained my friend and I  
for hours. He sang opera

and recited the poem he wrote  
for his love in the days  
when they first met, laughed  
ringingly and kissed my hand

when I recited the only thing  
I remembered of my own poor  
verse.

He recalled the Sistine Chapel,  
where left alone as a child  
he sang aloud for hours  
under the sacred dome,

told us he liked to buy  
a box of chocolates and stroll  
down the center of the street  
eating. Shameless.

He declared everything delicious

while I, close to tears, realized,  
for perhaps the first time,  
how bitter my life,  
what pain, what struggle.

Now the sun sets over the inlet  
in the green-bedecked summer.  
Dark blue clouds, satin soft  
and sapphire deep lay asleep

in a saffron blaze of sky,  
crowned now by lavender clouds  
and above them, the fresh  
deep well of night,  
draught of coming cool,

and, like chocolates eaten  
on the sidewalk outside the store,  
an extravagance more-

the whole palette in reverse below  
on the receding tide. God

did not make this for me  
to bow my head and return  
to sudsing the dishes;

what sense are the pink  
roses unfolding in creamy layers  
of subtlest shade, and their  
precious  
yet-to-open buds and the gifts

of their faces strewn over the mud

but to say this is not a grim  
test, pass or fail, sorrows  
only in this life, our dark vale,

so why do I expect it so? Why  
trudging, struggling, travail?

Love the one who brings the  
verses  
and the songs in painted vaults.  
Step close to the painting.  
Eat the chocolates  
while standing in the street,  
right out of the box!

Forget the funny way people  
look at you. Take him up  
and kiss him, the one you love-

there won't be another Sunday  
such as this one, and this  
is worship true. ■

# faculty, staff, student volunteers and student contributors

## **JAMES CHISHOLM**

Professor, NSCC Cultural Arts Department  
*Spark Art Committee & Judge*

## **ALYSE COMEAU**

*Presidential Scholar student,*  
*Spark Art Judge and volunteer*

## **CHRISTOPHER DUFORT**

Web and Portal Administrator,  
NSCC Information Systems Department  
*Spark Art Committee & Judge*

## **JESSICA GINGERICH**

*Presidential Scholar student,*  
*Spark Literary & Art Judge and volunteer*

## **ERIN FORD**

Graphic Designer,  
NSCC Marketing Department  
*Spark Art Judge, Spark layout & design*

## **SANDRA FUHS**

Program Coordinator,  
NSCC Digital Graphic Design Program  
*Spark Art Committee & Judge*

## **LLOYD HOLMES**

Dean of Students, NSCC Enrollment &  
Student Services Department  
*Student Life Spark Art Committee & Judge*

## **VICTORIA PASCIUTO-DOGRAMACIAN**

Assistant Director,  
NSCC Student Activities Services  
*Spark Coordinator*

## **LISA ALTOMARI**

Professor, NSCC English Department  
*Spark Literary Committee & Judge*

## **NICKI BUSCEMI**

Professor, NSCC English Department  
*Spark Literary Judge*

## **LAURIE CARLSON**

Professor, NSCC English Department  
*Spark Literary Judge*

## **LYNN CLARKSON**

Professor, NSCC English Department  
*Spark Literary Judge*

## **SEAN HANLON**

Professor, NSCC English Department  
*Spark Literary Judge*

## **CARL JEAN**

Professor, NSCC English Department  
*Spark Literary Judge*

## **CARI KEEBAUGH**

Professor, NSCC English Department  
*Spark Literary Judge*

## **TIFFANY MAGNOLIA**

Professor, NSCC English Department  
*Spark Literary Judge*

## **MARCEY MAROLD**

Professor, NSCC English Department  
*Spark Literary Judge*

## **JOE MODUGNO**

Professor, NSCC English Department  
*Spark Literary Judge*

## **MICHAEL NORWOOD**

*Presidential Scholar student,*  
*Spark Literary Judge and volunteer*

## **MARK SHERF**

Professor, NSCC English Department  
*Spark Literary Judge*

## **JANIS SOFERR**

Professor, NSCC English Department  
*Spark Literary Judge*

## **DONALD WILLIAMS**

Professor, NSCC English Department  
*Spark Literary Judge*

## **TERRI WHITNEY**

Professor, NSCC English Department  
*Spark Literary Judge*

## **JOHN ZAMPARELLI**

Professor, NSCC English Department  
*Spark Literary Judge*





## North Shore Community College

1 Ferncroft Road  
Danvers, MA 01923-0840

### Danvers Campus

978-762-4000

### Lynn Campus

781-593-6722

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