

SPARK

A REVIEW OF NSCC STUDENT LITERARY & ARTISTIC EXPRESSION



SPARK 2017 **volume 9**

sparked by inspiration

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

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www.northshore.edu/spark

on the cover:

Alleyway in Cambridge | *O'male Rodriguez*

Princess Perfect

By **Chloe Hannan**

Tote your glamour and flash your luxury
Blind with diamonds and hoard your gold
Parade your toys and dazzle the people
Get high on glory and feel it in your veins

Scream your grievances and huff at others
Sit atop your throne and wield your scepter
Lift a finger and weep from the pain
Wail, sweet damsel and Prince Charming swoops in.

Please wake up, Princess Perfect.

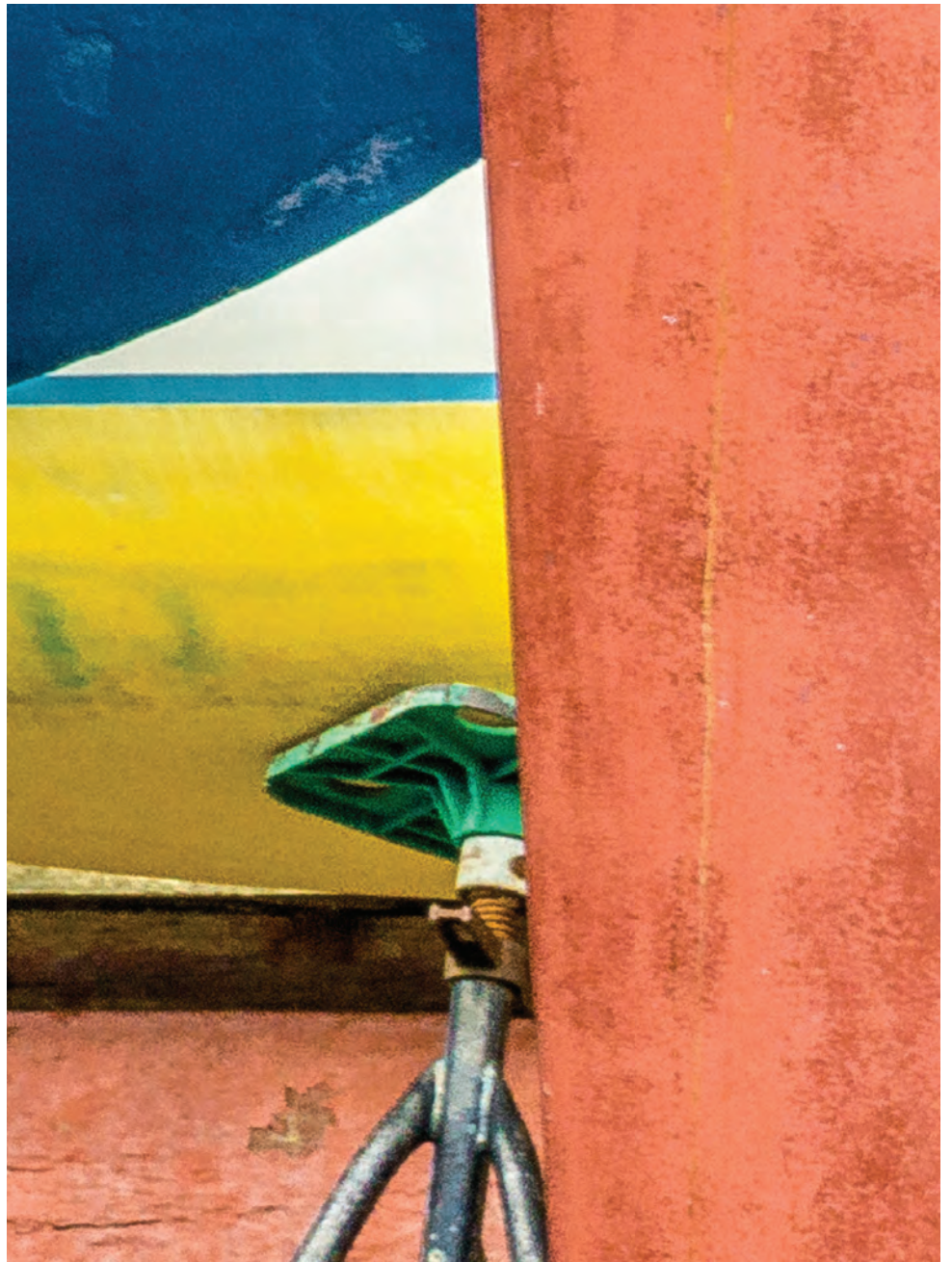
Canvas bag totes and overpriced trinkets
Blood stones and archaic beauty
Flaunt a boy and perturb the people
Skid marks from stale glory and craving more

Grievances lost in a sea of reality and defenses too
strong to fall
A throne of cracked wood and a plastic stick flung in a
tantrum
Yet you lift a finger and still cry from the pain
Wail like a toddler and a fed-up man will hear from
afar

True love's kiss only seals your lids. ■



Floral | *Jillian Stanton*



Ruddle and Hulls | *Scott Newell*



Koga's Tundra | *Fanny Cai*



A Puzzle

By Jason Grant

What is beyond the veil?

A complex tapestry in disarray

Each facet of her holds a secret lament

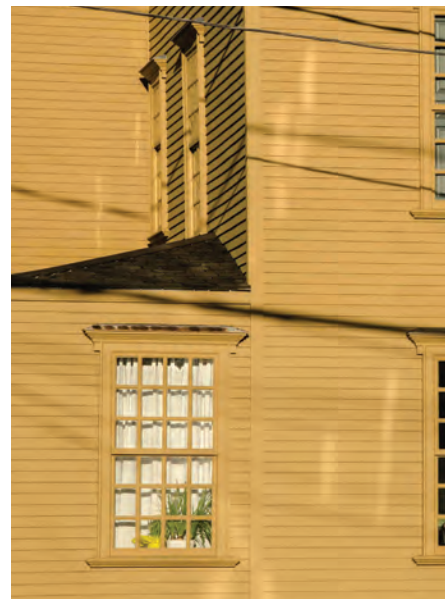
To unravel this quandry, be cognizant of her elements

Contrast her ambiance,

So an epiphany may illuminate

Can you personify what is illustrated?

It is an affliction of a heart broken ■

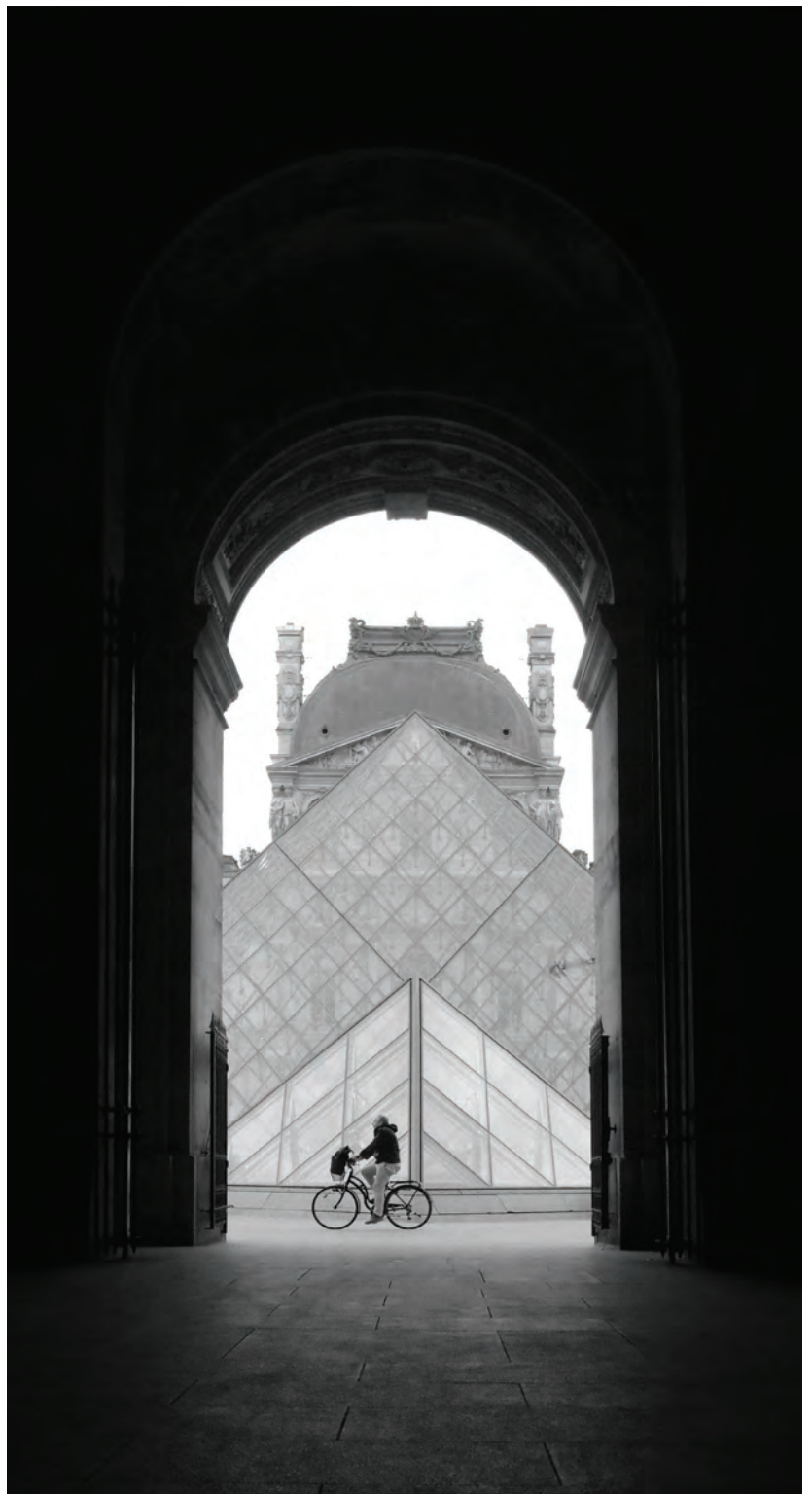




Ambition | *Christian Drennan*



House Stop Sign | *Michael Maginn*



Louvre | *Michael Konstansky*

THE MIRROR

By Katelyn Gilbert

I could see the majestic mountains of Pakistan looming off in the distance through the thick smoke coming from my stale cigarette. They were treacherous and beautiful. I could picture a small single lane road winding through the steep cliffs of the mountain range. I imagined malicious men smuggling weapons and bombs in old dusty trucks and hatchbacks. There were terrorists in those mountains and they would kill me if they got the chance. It was a shame that such beauty was giving shelter to such evil. Afghanistan was a mysterious land in which fragile beauty could be shattered and destroyed instantaneously.

As I finished my smoke, my fellow soldier yelled up to my friend and I that our ten minute break was over. It was time to return to the aid station, where I spent the majority of my time on my deployment to Afghanistan. My home base was located at an airfield in Jalalabad, which most people just referred to as JAF. JAF was a decent place to be stationed, compared to some of the other operating bases further out in the smaller villages. There were small cement buildings with paved paths in between, everywhere you looked. Port-a-potties were strategically placed near living quarters and other larger buildings, which you could always find due to the revolting aroma.

The dining facility was in a central location near the runway. This large runway, or flight line, took up the majority of room within the walls of the base. From the sky, JAF looked like a big rectangular runway with two small cities of cement and wood buildings to the left and right.

Immediately surrounding the thick heavily guarded outer walls were miles of ancient looking irrigated farms and fields. There were goats and birds and dusty children that danced through the green fields during the day. The local men tended to their crops of

towards my neck to tuck in my rosary beads that I frequently played with while I killed my lungs with nicotine. My twin sister had bought me the beads while she was on a trip to the Vatican. She told me they were blessed by the Pope and that they would keep me safe during dark times. They did not look like typical wooden or plastic rosary beads. The necklace was made from sparkling rose pink beads that glittered in the light. The crucifix was detailed and made of strong, heavy metal. I was not authorized to wear this gaudy necklace while I was in uniform, but exceptions

“At first, no one wanted to show the fear and panic that was creeping into everyone’s minds.”

wheat and sugarcane and glided through their lands dressed in their lightly colored pajama-like shirts. They looked like sailboats drifting in an endless green sea. The scene was calm, peaceful and mesmerizing to observe. It looked nothing like I pictured it would look. Beauty was abundant, but in my heart, I knew there was a powerful ugliness hiding and plotting evil in the midst of the paradise-like land.

As I entered the aid station from my smoke break, I reached up

were made in a combat zone.

After tucking my necklace into my shirt, I went back to my daily task of treating patients, cleaning equipment, and preparing for the next patients. I was a trained combat medic but I had never really had the opportunity to do my job. I chose to be a medic because I wanted to help people who were shot, as opposed to choosing a job in which you had to shoot people. But I was unaware of the fact that no matter what specific job you had in

the Army, everyone was trained to be a killing soldier first. We were trained to shoot the enemy before we could provide medical aid, but of course this concept was not always applicable in all circumstances, especially when working in the aid station. I worked with four to five other medics and two doctors per shift. The hours were long and the work was difficult but the motivation to make it home pulled me through each day. Working with injured and dying humans gave me an enormous appreciation for life and showed me how fragile the

human body really is, physically and emotionally.

The aid station was tucked away next to the helicopter landing zone and the outer wall of the base. Our field litter ambulances, FLAs, were parked in a line in front of the entrance. There were two old wooden shacks on the other side of the FLAs, which is where the civilian contractors, who fixed our medical computers, resided. The government loves its computers to be updated and running smoothly, especially in a combat zone. To the left of the

shacks was the guard tower built into the outer wall of the base. The tower was made of wood and was strengthened by hundreds of army green sandbags filled with wet sand and dirt. Having a shift on tower guard was not an enjoyable experience, considering the small, unprotected room reeked of moldy sand and chewing tobacco. And of course, the obvious reason that you were more likely to get taken out by a hidden sniper or a mortar explosion. But the guard tower was also the place that you could observe the beauty and normalcy



Big Dreams in the City of Lynn | *Manila Roem*

of the land.

On the other side of the aid station were the living quarters—the barracks. These were cement one-story buildings with plywood walls separating eight rooms per building. Each room was different because of all the modifications the previous occupants had made such as wooden shelves or lifting the bed off of the floor to create space for a desk or TV. My room, however, was just a plain wooden box with an old wooden bed in it. The best part of the room was a mirror that was left by the soldier before me. This was no ordinary mirror purchased at Target for a freshman dorm room. This mirror was a hand-woven, Indian-looking masterpiece from a local merchant from Afghanistan. There were tassels and strange yarn-work made from brightly colored yarn. I remember feeling spooked when I first laid eyes on it because of how strikingly unbecoming it was. But I loved it and immediately decided that I would take it home with me after my long nine months were over.

One evening, after dinner I was getting ready to walk out of the aid station to grab my bag of dirty laundry from my barracks for washing, when I heard and felt a louder than normal explosion. I felt the impact in my heart and eardrums. I quickly ran to my equipment and threw my body armor on and shoved on my helmet. At first, no one wanted

to show the fear and panic that was creeping into everyone's minds. But as we realized that a mortar had hit close to our location, people started yelling and taking roll call. A soldier came exploding through the entrance and collapsed in my arms. She had dust and shattered glass all over her but was not bleeding from any vital parts of her body. I carried her into an exam room and calmed her down by telling her to breathe and relax because she was safe. But I knew none of us were safe as long as we were in that country.

I searched for my closest friends and overheard someone saying that the barracks were on fire. I reached up to my neck and started twirling the sparkling pink beads in my fingertips. I was terrified. More people were rushing into the entrance and being placed on beds. Alarms were roaring and echoing throughout the base, warning the masses we were getting attacked. My training kicked in, and I went to work taking vital signs and assessing patients. I remember looking around the room and realizing that all of the patients in the beds were the medics from my barracks building. For some reason, the first thing I pictured was that yarn mirror shattered and burning on the floor in my room. I felt like someone deliberately blew up the one place in Afghanistan that I called home. I snapped back into work-mode and did my job.

At one point during the chaos of the night, all the occupants of my barracks were asked to go assess the damage and retrieve essential items only. I felt my hands quivering as I walked towards the danger zone. I could see the huge crater from the impact area, but I was surprised to see the building was still standing. . The mortar had hit less than a foot away from the building, and less than a foot away from landing directly into my little room at the end. The metal door was ripped apart from shrapnel exploding through it. There were hunks and chunks of twisted metal lodged in the thin wooden walls throughout the building. Part of the roof was collapsed. The windows were blown out and glass littered the hallway. The area smelled of smoke and burnt chemicals. I entered my room, expecting to find destruction, but instead I found my elaborate mirror still hanging on the wall as if nothing happened. I wondered if it was a lucky mirror or maybe it was blessed, like my beads around my neck; two items from very different worlds, both protecting me and allowing me to return safely home. ■



Boston Public Library | *O'male Rodriguez*

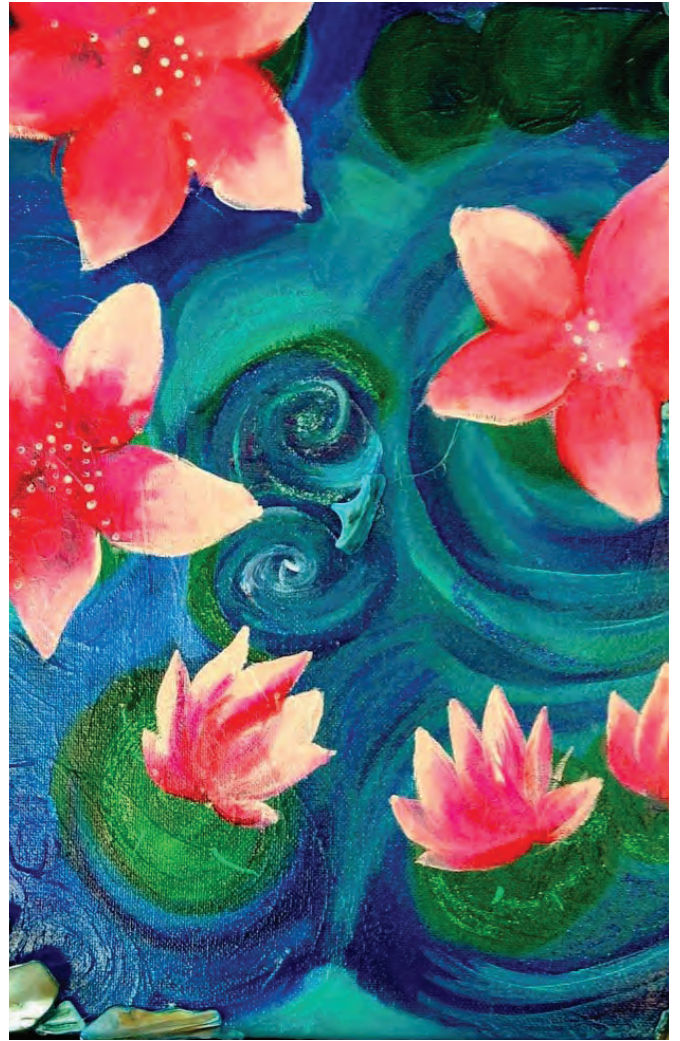


The Glorious Gull | Michael Konstansky

Anxiety

By Kelsie Verdini

I strut along this cobblestone path
In my head I try to do the math,
But I've never been any good at that.
The thoughts keep adding,
Peace of mind subtracting.
I wish, only If, next time, maybe so, but
should've, could've, would've,
Oh! Look at the storm I've cast;
On this noble, wise, cobblestone path of my past.
My heart beats fast,
My hands shake,
My God, the world quakes!
With fear, sadness and anger.
My Life has 82 years past,
Trying to do the math in my maddening wrath.
Of tomorrow, and the next day, next month, next year,
two years from now, six months of last.
My mind slips year back to the
wet cobblestone path of my past.
Worrying about the stepping stones
where I have not laid a foot,
Dwelling on footprints behind my back.
My God, what a fulfilling Life I lack.
Because I've been too busy,
Casting storms of wrath when
I should've just taken a look around,
So much joy I could have found.
I'd do anything to take it all back.
I'd appreciate the beautiful cobblestone
path God laid beneath my feet.
Because Life is a Gift; it is
A choice to live it faithfully.
I'm grateful at 22 years past, I realize this
Before tears of regret flooded upon my weathered cobblestone path,
Of the joys I never found. ■



Rising Out of the Mud | Kelsie Verdini

Still Silence

By Hillary Mercedes

brief biographical statement:

The seasons are passing by and silence is still.

Still Silence

The wind would scream
The trees would dance
The silence would roar

Autumn

The trees are coated with colorful leaves
And when they fall it gives the cement color
The cold air making me shiver
Making every hair on my arm stand up
Through my jacket
As the hot chocolate, warms up my hands
As I drink from my favorite mug
And the silence is still

Winter

Boots, scarves, hats, and gloves are needed
Because the season is almost over
The trees are beginning to be nothing but naked
The wind would sing carols
Near Christmas Eve, People are filled with joy
Families & friends are traveling
To unite with each others

Spring

The beauty of the flowers
Are ready to bloom
The wind blowing some umbrellas
On those rainy days
The trees losing some of its leaves
And falling into the wet pavement
And the silence is still

Summer

The beauty of the flowers were
Still Blooming
The days were longer
Hearing the tune of the ice cream truck
Going up and down the streets
The trees are aging as it dances
The wind will forever scream on its own
And the silence continues to be, still

Throughout the year

The **Silence roared** the loudest in Me
You wouldn't have known
If I didn't tell you

&&

Autumn is near once again
And Silence is still
As everyone sees it

But behind closed doors it's nothing

But a storm

And I start to lose myself

Little by little

Trying to hold myself together ■

The Cigarette Man

By Francisco Acosta

Early winter, on a brisk afternoon, I sat in the east lobby exit of North Shore Community College. I patiently waited on an icy metal chair, for my ride, in an over sized, navy grey, winter jacket. From where I sat, Near the exit, I felt the brisk wind whistle underneath the glass doors. Suddenly, with a squeak of metal hinges, an icy wind rushed in, relentlessly engulfing all it could. Demised, the rushing wind reeked, like burnt cigarettes, left in water overnight.

A man walked my direction, and asked, "Francisco?" "Yes," I muffled, covering my nose, "it's the ride." he said in a deep rasp. His breath belched cigarette smoke, and coffee stench, so I knew the source of the smell. We zipped our jackets over our noses, scurried out the exit, as each step formed mounds of snow. I carefully held on to his right arm, but not too tight, lest the foul stink contaminate my hands. We went up the empty bus steps, and he led me to my seat.

His large, round stature, pressed down on the driver's worn down, leather seat. The sound of rips in the leather, being stretched, grew louder as he got comfortable. He turned the ignition, cranked up the heat, and drove out the park-

ing lot. The crackle of ice, and gravel underneath the tires, could be heard over the overworked heater. "How long have you been smoking?" "A long time, since I was fifteen, so about thirty years." "So you believe in moderation?" "Yeah, absolutely." "Did you know a philosopher said there are three parts of the soul, Desire, spirit, and rational?" "Mmmhmm." "For the rational, expect knowledge, for spirit, expect honor, and for desire, expect moderation." Amidst the conversation, he laughed, "You sound just like my father, so rational."

"Oh really, why is that?" "Well, he always had a book in his hands, every day, a book was pressed on his face." "You know..." and before I finished, he mumbled, expecting a logical response. "My father's gone now... He's dead."

I broke the awkward silence that consumed the bus, "May I ask something?" "Sure." "Suppose a man told you, 'in my hands I have a new box of cigarettes, in the other hand, I have a book. The cigarettes is just a regular sealed box, but the book, well I found it in a dusty attic, inside a box. Inside the book, is a letter your father wrote, it begins, 'Dear Son'. Now the man gives you the choice to choose one. If you choose the cigarettes, you can smoke them, and upon finishing them, you'll just die. If you choose the book,

you can finish reading it, and the letter your dad wrote you, then you'll die, but you'll get to see your dad." I was paused by a regret that drowned us with silence.

His dark little eyes opened wide in the rear view mirror. "I'd choose the book my father left me."

"Exactly, that's why I stopped smoking, because although I didn't know anything about my biological father, including his name, I grew up thinking I didn't have a dad, but I was wrong, because my whole life, there was someone up there thinking of me, and every day he wrote to me. Daily I chose cigarettes, rejecting his letters, as I slowly faded away, but now, I've decided to pick up his letters, he put them all in a book, just for me. He is my father in heaven, my real father, he is God, and he loves me, he writes to me every day, he always has a different message for me, for all the situations of my life, and he never stopped writing. God is my father, and the book, is the Bible." I looked out the cold glass, at the clear blue sky, and smiled, "in fact you know, I think he has a message just for you too." For the remainder of the ride, we were not two, but three, for God's presence had accompanied us. ■



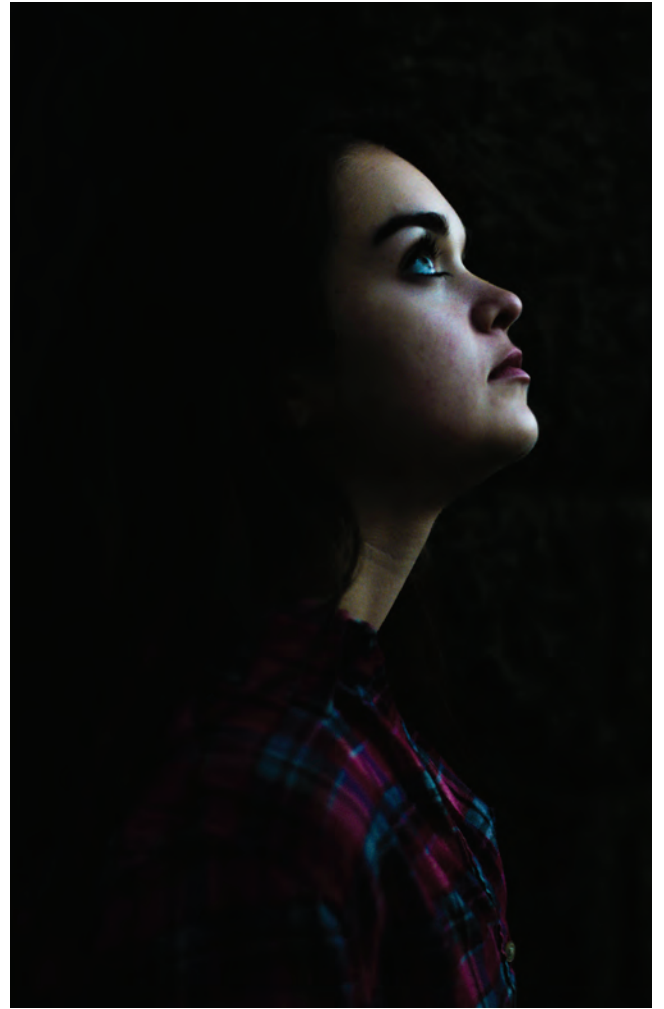
Friendly Squirrel | *Jillian Stanton*



Pi Squared | *Jonathan Hernandez*



The Skater Boy | *Deepak Bardhan*



When the Spirit Calls | *Deepak Bardhan*

(The Skater Boy)

by **Deepak Bardhan**

Life in the dark with his colors hidden,
Inside deep in the shadows, almost forbidden.
Vanished this street boy, for a soul unforgiving,
Interrogated throughout his teen hood, reliving.
Nothing did he do, yet linked to the crime,
Granted no law and was forced to do his time.

Mother murdered, in the corrupt town,
Young John brilliantly framed down.

One clue to prove his innocence,
Window wide open, but nothing there.
Neat kitchen except for the bloodstained skate.

Sin covered and the murderer free,
Tormented John to hang him by the tree.
One more year, for him to be outside prison gate.
Reliving to get justice for that bloody Sunday fate.
Yo Skater boy this cellmate called, Better get to work he
said, as his time went on. ■



Eagles in Alaska | *Donna Bambury*

Ginger

By Edwin Donovan

8:30 a.m. was nearing and soon it would be time to head to work. But the man still needed to walk the dog so she could complete her morning ritual. The morning weather was warm for March in New England and reports said this would be the warmest day of the week. As the rays from the sun shined down, he felt a sense of nostalgia. He thought about his father who had died two years prior and his two grandfathers both long deceased. He thought of his own childhood and a warm feeling began to fill his heart. He thought of Ginger. Beautiful Ginger, his passion project, the love of his life.

He first saw her in 2006 in North Carolina during his time at technical school just after enlisting in the Marine Corps. Her body glistened in the August sun and at first sight he knew he had to have her. Their connection was magical. She was a low maintenance beauty. Ginger had been loyal to him through his entire enlistment and during some of the most significant moments in his life. He had many memories with her. Three cross country road trips between east and west coast. He met his wife

while driving Ginger, got married in Ginger, and rushed his wife to the hospital when they had their first daughter together. Through every moment Ginger never let him down. Ginger was the man's 1985 Monte Carlo SS.

He had named her Ginger because she was a red head, a deep dark maroon. That same dark maroon like the Monte Carlo his Uncle had bought in 1987 when the man was just a six-year-old boy. He remembered the first time he rode in that car and his happiness as his Uncle spun the tires at a stop light. There was another time when they beat that Corvette in a drag race down on Main St. As he opened the garage door, Ginger gazed at him. Her four headlights and front fascia gave such an aggressive look that he could tell she wanted to run. As he sat in the bucket seat, the smell of the 80's GM upholstery tickled his nostrils, even though 31 years of UV rays had finally taken their toll on the faded maroon cloth. He turned the key to allow the starter to turn over the 383 cubic inch motor. Originally, Ginger had come with a 305 cubic inch motor but the gear-head in him yearned for more power and 180 horses from a stock motor would simply not cut it. VROOM!!! Ginger screamed as her engine finally caught power and her eight pistons fired in

perfect timing emitting a gurgling sound out of the dual exhaust tips. He loved that sound. He would argue with his brother about whose car had the better sound. He knew Ginger sounded far better than his brother's throaty Cobra engine.

Ginger had 77,000 miles on her when he bought her and now she was nearing 200,000 miles. After each deployment when he had some extra change, he modified her and she always responded. Her performance these days showed no signs of age but years had taken their toll and the man would always do his best to restore her. The suspension was the first to go after his second cross country tour and when he returned from his first combat deployment plans for the new motor and transmission went into effect. Soon after her body needed its attention. From there it was the little things such as an audio system, shifter, and gauges. The man would always ask himself "When will she be finished?"

His son was ready for school "Dada, are we riding in Ginger today," his son asked when he saw the garage open and the puffs of steam coming out of the exhaust. "Yup," he replied, "seems like a good day to let her run." "Yes," said his son with an exuberance only a child

could muster. He remembered that feeling too. As he buckled his son into the back seat he noticed a small tear in Ginger's vinyl. "My work is never done," he thought to himself. He'd been working on her for about 10 years now.

Ginger jerked as the man threw her into gear and he and his son were on their way. It wasn't a long ride to his son's school but both of them enjoyed it immensely. It was their time. As the man looked into the rear view mirror he saw his son looking out the window and making noises with his hot wheel's car as if he was the driver. Every now and then he would tease his son by giving Ginger just enough acceleration to throw him back into the seat or if they were making a 90 degree turn he would fish tail just a bit without losing control. His son loved that. "Do it again Dada," his son begged. "Bye buddy have a great day at school were the last words he said to his son before he exited the school. As he got on the main road traffic was minimal and the road presented a vanishing point. He couldn't help himself. He mashed the accelerator to the floor and as her tires found traction Ginger took off with such a force that he knew his son would hear him for at least a quarter mile. He eased off the gas as he didn't want to get pulled over or wreck

Ginger like he had wrecked Carla. He was a lot older now.

As he turned left onto Peabody street he drove past the tree where the millionaire had totaled his Ferrari. Peabody street was a long windy road with blind corners, dips, and rises perfect for a sports car to maneuver at high speed. He sensed Ginger wanted to play or maybe it was just him. Her suspension was modified to handle tight turns so the man figured why not. As he dialed her in and accelerated down the windy stretch Ginger handled the corners like a fighter jet might maneuver the skies. Her tires extremely sticky at this point the man was filled with elation. Her suspension stayed tight through the hairpin where her stock self would easily have lost control and plowed into the trees just before the Ipswich. These moments were what he had built her for. This was what the struggle had finally produced. These cars had been built to race the NASCAR circuit in the 80's and he felt he was one with the likes of Dale Earnhardt and Geoff Bodine. But this car was a reflection of his life. Nobody would truly understand it but him and maybe his son. The culmination of mistakes made and lessons learned. Figures who came and went. The story of a child to a man through one car. As he approached the intersection the

green light was an added bonus. "Today is going to be my day," he thought.

The kid was on his phone looking at directions to the event and texting his buddy. "Where is this place I can't be late this time." He was going excessively fast and did not see the red light at the intersection. The speed and the breaks were not enough to stop the heavy ram 3500 from plowing into the driver's side of the old car. The screeching tires and busting glass created such a force of impact that the young boy was knocked unconscious. When he awoke, the boy saw EMT's loading a covered gurney into the ambulance. The fire fighters had finally extinguished the inferno of the wreckage. Twisted heaps of charred metal and debris were scattered over the road. All he could make of the vehicle was the front end which looked like a crying face. When the medic asked him what happened, he replied. "I don't know he just pulled out in front of me. What the heck was he thinking?" ■



Butterfly | *John Kandres*



Through the Lens | *Colin Prentiss*

It's Not Healthy to Live Like This

By Andrew Lawson

There's just no accounting for nervousness.
The paranoia is overwhelming
whenever the thought of it crosses my
mind. I close my eyes and see you sitting
there all still and silent, as if waiting
for something but already having everything you
need. I see you looking at the window
pouring light into the otherwise dim
room. I see the darkness grow as the day
turns to night; the emptiness reclaiming
it's hold on life inside the hollow room.
Nothing is all I see, yet I know you're
there, no I hope you're there. I pray you're there.
I stare into the void, waiting for light's
return to free me from everlasting
worry. I look at the window. Black turns
to the barren white ceiling of my room
as I open my eyes. I'm scared to look
at my phone, knowing now could be the time
darkness sets my paranoia to rest. ■



Compound Curves | *Judith Schneider*





Untitled | *Manila Roelum*

Migration

by **Mbuaya Kalemba**

My only crime was to be born in a different country.

#XENOPHOBIA.South Africa
#DEPORTATION.United States of America
#EXECUTION.Asia
#WAR.Birthplace
#GENOCIDE.Neighboring Countries
#EXCLUSION.Europe

Why then was I born? Why is my entire life discriminated? Who then was I born to serve? My entire life has been drenched in tears and blood. Why, then do I strive so much to be a nurse, medical researcher or doctor? Is it my brother's killers' lives I strive so hard to save? Or is my life based for the Innocent? Who then is guilty or innocent? I committed a crime, I was born, my birth is the crime. I've been charged with infinite migration. ■

Not A Hero

By Jason Grant

He does not leap tall buildings in a single bound

But will be there for her when but a frown

Any time her peace is wrested

A precious one may find tranquility vested

No cape or blazing S is needed

While fleeting through the chaos, my damsel is heeded

She is the first one saved in no time

Now, Let us elevate to our Solitude of Sublime ■

clockwise (from left):

Memorial | *Scott Newell*

Dreams of Escaping Poverty | *Manila Roem*

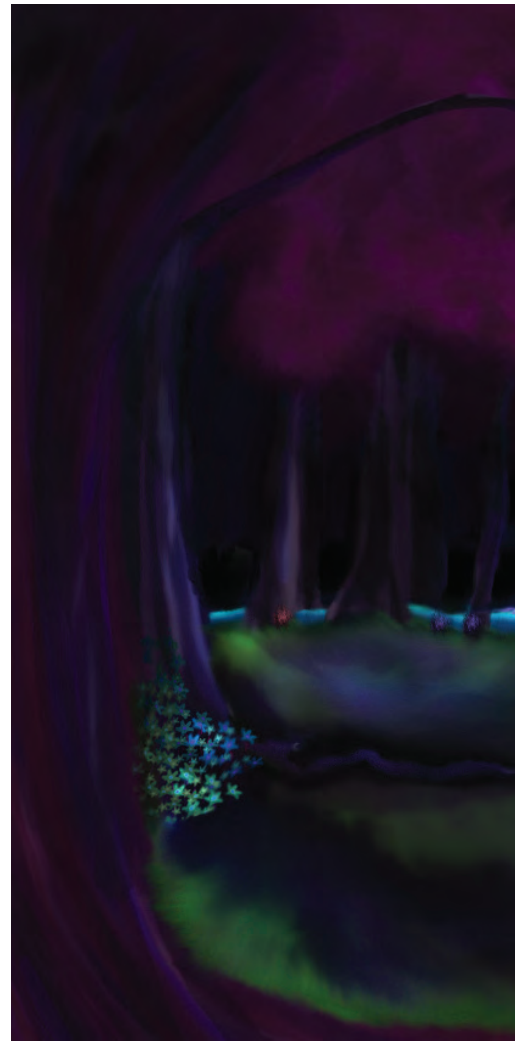
Musee d'Orsay Clock | *Michael Konstansky*

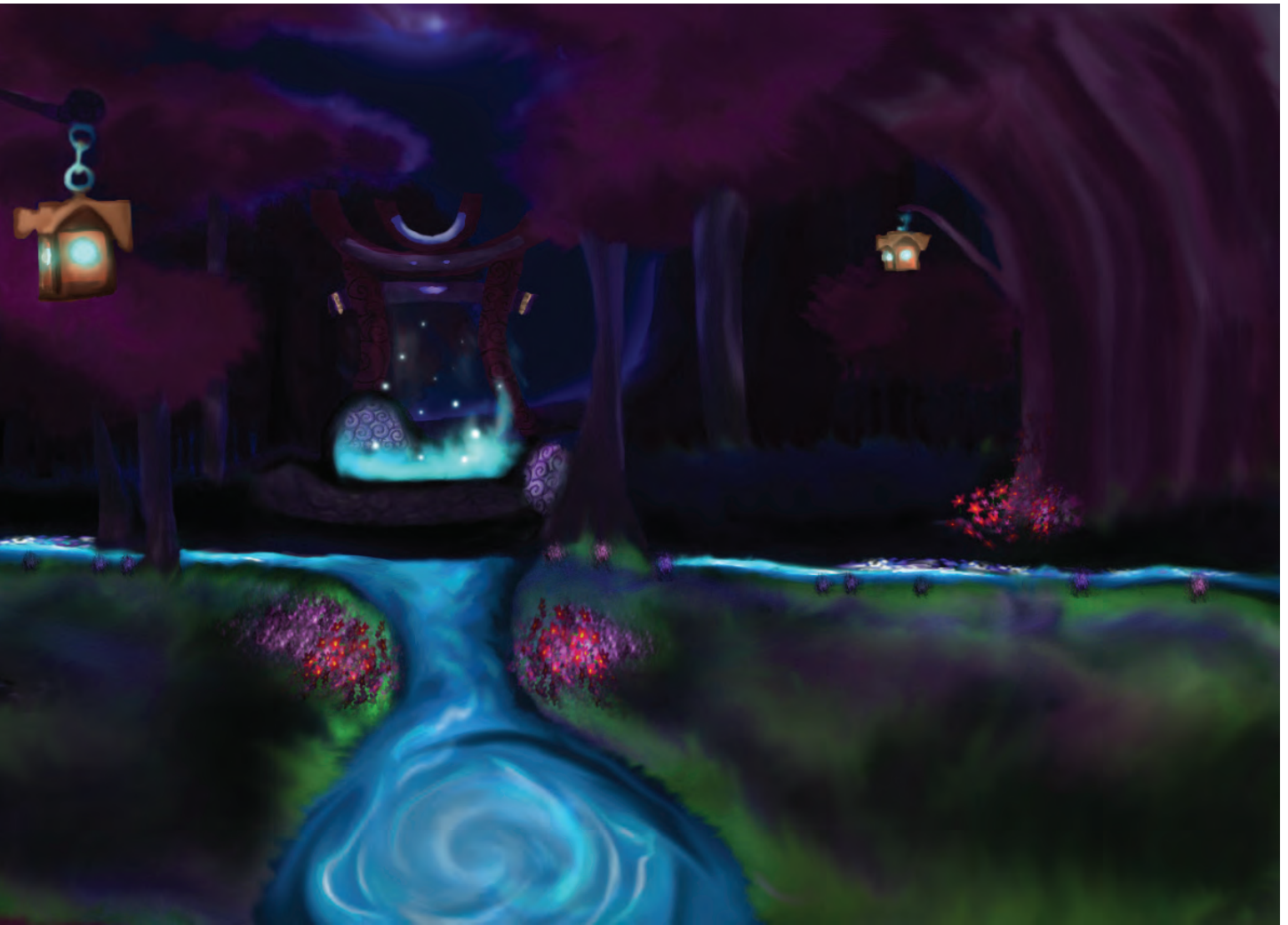






Inside Out, Sadness | *Ashley Darius*





Teldressil - World of Warcraft | *Tawney Dacko*

I Won't Wait Forever

By Madison Klug

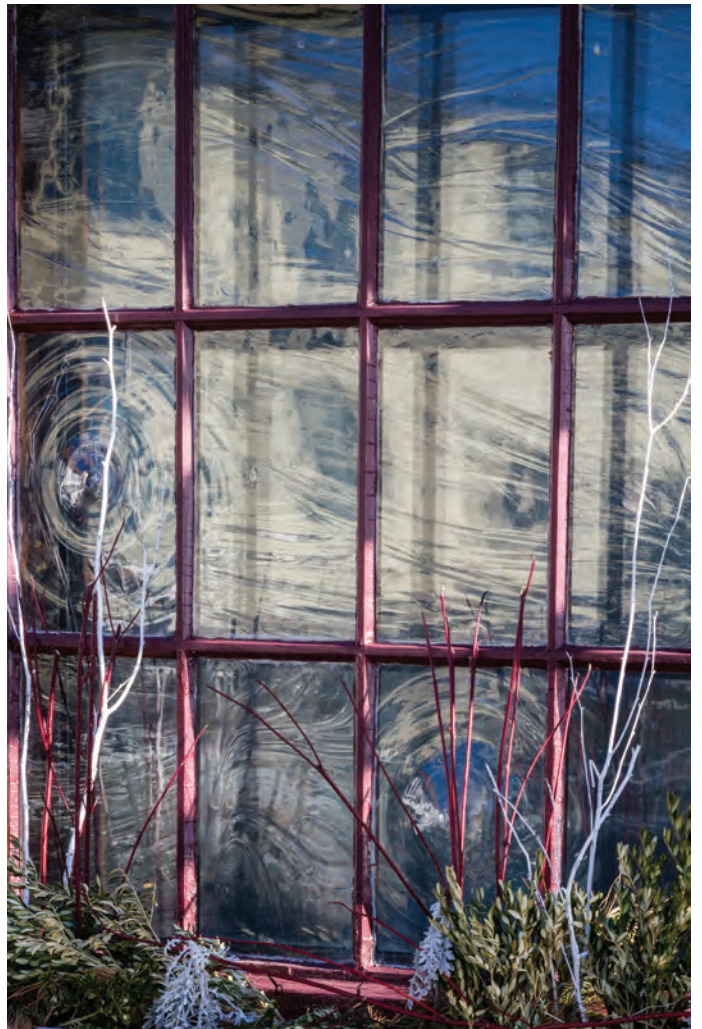
Together,
Derailing intimately.
Forever,
Exhaling into me.
I,
Am falling eternally.
You,
Are catching me instantly.
We,
Are breaking intentionally.
Why,
Can't we stay indefinitely?

This,
Will surely be the death of me.
Apart,
I want you to take my breath from
me.
At heart,
We still dream of rest in peace.
Together,
Let go of intimacy.
Never,
Hold onto eternity. ■

A Work of Art

By Jason Grant

Every stroke counts on her alluring visage,
Puckered lips, a passionate strawberry,
The flushed hue of her cheeks, dimpled with a smile,
Eyes with a lucent gaze to enthrall any man
With the guidance of my hand and some time
A true masterpiece is in the making... ■



Window Designs | *Judith Schneider*

Knothead | Donna Bambury



Pearls of Light | Scott Newell





Dream World | Ashley Darius



Window and Vine | Michael Maginn





Seaside Seating | *Judith Schneider*



Zakim Night Trails | *Deepak Bardhan*



The Bright Lights of Austin | *John Riley*

Missing Headlight

By Madison Klug

I keep looking behind me
To see if I were any different.
To see if we were any different.
But it is too dark to see back there.
It hurts to remember.
Remember me hurting.
I don't know if that
Makes me self centered.
Or
If it makes me weak.
I just know I get this, "Well, fuck," feeling
Whenever I think of my bathroom floor.
Remembering how
I would become one with it.
Remembering how
I flooded it whenever I wanted you.
Remembering how I said,
"You mean the world to me."
And still meaning it
Even though
You can't hear me screaming anymore.
I am just white noise to you.
I am just the sounds outside your window
You fall asleep so easily to.
While I am wide awake
Drenching myself in what I remember
And what I know you never seem to recall.
While I am wide awake
Remembering how
I mean nothing to your world.
While I am wide awake
Remembering every missing headlight
Every pothole in our pavement
And every star above my bed, I hope you're missing.
I hope you miss my ceiling
Because I can't help but miss you being under it ■

Ink Mess

By Hillary Mercedes

The pen would dance across the paper
It would dance to sad songs
And it bled out
Feelings ■

I Waited

by Mbuaya Kalemba

I waited

Making sure that I updated my weekly image

Wardrobe, fielded with twelve sizes

Fridge filled, yet there was nothing to eat

Threw tantrums at dawn

Mourned at noon

Prayed at sunset, that you may be different

I waited

to be satisfied

Daily, I lost shape

“Who Cares?”

Two heartbeats at one pace

Routinely, we breathe, through valves guarded
from misfortune

I cried no more, because for you I was Spartan

Like Mommy Elephant,

25 years was nothing without you.

I listened to the rhythm of your soul

You moved and danced bouncingly

My pain was your comfort

30 pound shotput sphere settled on pelvis

I waited

Yet I missed you in a split

One last flash & my Periodic Table of pictures
remains imperfect

An upheaval, a clout, a hemorrhage and I
fumbled

Dyad, I waited forbearingly

Couldn't you wait a while for Mommy? ■



The Sage | *Fanny Cai*

In Autumn

By Caitlyn Sawyer

Sunlight poured across the acres of trees
and sprawling farmland of the orchard.
Yellow, orange, pink peeked over the hills
and trees that bore glimmering red bulbs
of fruit. The apples were glossy and rich
with their own color that bounced rays of light
through the ivy green leaves like mirror balls
for the lucky harvester, an apple
during the peak of the season--deep red
with a crunch and swollen with sugar-filled juice.
Boots squishing through dirt and kicking away
the duds of the harvest, I found myself
with a full bag of freshly-picked treasures.
Satisfied with the plunder, I began
to leave the field. Suddenly, a glimmer
caught my eye and piqued my interest.
Dangling from a branch above me,
an enticing ruby beckoned my grasp.
Who decides when enough is enough? ■

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