



SPARK

A REVIEW OF NSCC STUDENT LITERARY & ARTISTIC EXPRESSION



SPARK 2021 **volume 13**

sparked by inspiration

Through poetry and stories, photographs and drawings, Spark showcases the talent and spirit of students at North Shore Community College.

This thirteenth 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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on the cover:

Moving in the waves | *ALICIA JAYNES*

Winter is upon us

By Jasmine Erazo

I am trudging through fresh frozen powder towards the town square. The gusts are merciless against my skin, my cheeks a bright amber. Pushing against the creaky hardened wood, I embrace the low murmurs and fire crackling atmosphere. The tavern is always reliable, filled with characters voluptuous with vigor and vehemence. Stationed at a mahogany table I lower my parcel wrapped in canvas. The barkeep twirls and floats around the visitors, a bit of dew to be seen falling from her brow. I flip through my leather-bound book affront me, my quill resumes a portrait capturing the effortless barkeep in real-time. I ponder the idea of indecency regarding my artwork of the barkeep. Before the sand reaches the bottom of the glass, a roar vibrates throughout the tavern. A burly figure emerges from the shadow of the pearly outdoors and swiftly began to sing aloud, voicing the complexities of living in ignorance. The tall taper candles once scorching and prideful now, intimidated and dull. Stomping and swaying, he leans over a group of ladies conversing. A fair slender arm reveals a handkerchief to motion towards the mystery man. With a swipe, the steam is gone from upon the man's head. The barkeep now hovering over the man, becoming his shadow. It had been made evidently clear the man had made a nuisance of himself as the message was displayed on the kind keeper's face. The ale desired was presented to the stranger and once more faded into the shimmer of the night. Observing the golden clock hanging

above I realized the night had expired and I must recede to my chambers. My imagination craving the variety of scenarios involving a fate with the barkeep had been silenced once more as I descend onto the cobblestone beneath me. As the clouds survey my movement I lament the imprisoned words that sit within my chest. One day I hope they escape.

■

Winter Dream | *BRIANNA FINNIGAN*





My Michael | ALEXIA PARKER

Conversations with Duncan | LOREN NEEL



Spring Winter

by Gabriela Garcia

In a dream of a spring winter, I live.
Sometimes I wonder if my memories, our memories were real.
Everything happened so fast and the last thing I wanted was to wake up from those eternal
nights in Vienna
Is it wrong that I want you this way?
If it was all a dream, why?
Why when I wake up I still hear the melodies of that palace in Russia?
Memories invade me; I fight them but it's in vain.
This is a war I lost the moment our eyes met.
Nobody wakes me up again;
I'm sad because I woke up.
I want someone to tell me how to sleep forever.
I know I can't live forever sleeping.
But I can live forever seeing you in my dreams.
Although this dream does not seem to be real, I want to see you again
In my dream, I just want to give you hundreds of Do Not Forget Me flowers so that you know
that even in this distance I still love you.
Spring dreams, Summer regrets, Autumn loneliness, and a Winter to Forget.
Nothing works, in my dreams I look for you, but...you are gone.
I wish to find you at least one more time.
If this dream is impossible, why do you ask me to find you at midnight?
I'm looking for a dream that I don't know if it still exists,
A memory forgotten in time that I hope is real.
Sometimes I feel like my dreams are a nightmare,
But when you hold my hand nothing else exists for me.
Take me by the hand in this dark night and lead me to the door that leads us to Vienna once more.
Although I deny that I love you and the world thinks I am over you, you are my greatest love
when at night I go to sleep.
My wish before sleeping is that all of this was different.
I wish you had met me in that dream where I invited you to dance.
I offer you my greatest possession, a blue rose.
Unfortunately, no matter how hard I tried, your heart did not look at me
and for you, I was just an apparition
Many times I blame myself for stargaze with your memory.
But no matter how much I conjure the moon to force me to forget you, nothing works for me
Why did you look at me when I was wearing a mask in a Vienna waltz instead of looking at me
when I could give you a hug?
My love, my regret, I really try to forget you but nothing works for me
I stopped trying to forget you when I realized my love for you was greater than the fear I have of
facing my nightmares.

How I miss hearing your voice when you speak, your sweet laugh, and seeing your skin like
snow in the middle of winter.

In another life maybe you loved me first, in this life, I am the one who struggles to get out of this trance.

Maybe you'll never come back, maybe you're just a product of my imagination
I just hope that when our destinies come together once more in a Vienna dance this story ends.

You are still my winter-spring dream, my spring winter.

But I must understand that you are afraid to dance with someone who you met wearing a mask
in a masquerade.

I may never know the truth, but I know I love you.

Find me where we once danced without looking at what happened, or what would happen.

Return to this dream when you hear our melody back in Paris.

Goodbye my love, Goodbye my only one

I'm going to sleep, maybe now I will dream about you and see each other for one last time.

Until then remember I still love you



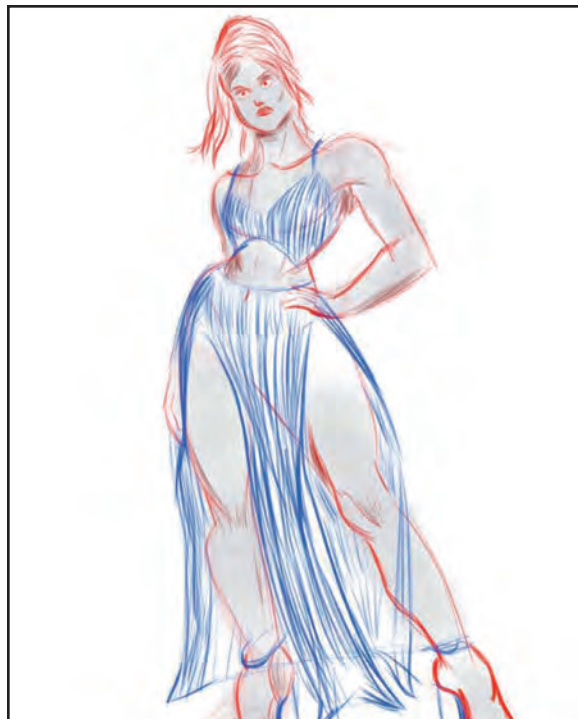
A Moment of Clarity | ANNIE MCMENAMIN



top to bottom:

Model | *RYAN KERIVAN*

Fall and Rainbow | *GABRIELA GARCIA*



The Hill We Climb

By Amanda Gorman

When day comes we ask ourselves,
where can we find light in this never-ending shade?
The loss we carry,
a sea we must wade
We've braved the belly of the beast
We've learned that quiet isn't always peace
And the norms and notions
of what just is
Isn't always just—ice
And yet the dawn is ours
before we knew it
Somehow we do it
Somehow we've weathered and witnessed
a nation that isn't broken
but simply unfinished
We the successors of a country and a time
Where a skinny Black girl
descended from slaves and raised by a single mother
can dream of becoming president
only to find herself reciting for one
And yes we are far from polished
far from pristine
but that doesn't mean we are
striving to form a union that is perfect
We are striving to forge a union with purpose
To compose a country committed to all cultures, colors, characters and
conditions of man
And so we lift our gazes not to what stands between us
but what stands before us
We close the divide because we know, to put our future first,
we must first put our differences aside
We lay down our arms
so we can reach out our arms
to one another
We seek harm to none and harmony for all
Let the globe, if nothing else, say this is true:

That ever
That ev
That ev
That we
Not beca
but beca
Scriptur
that eve
And
If
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T
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ra
W
A
B
it
In
in t
For w
history
This is th
We feared
We did not fee
of such a terrify
but within it we fo
to author a new chap
To offer hope and laughter to ourse
So while once we asked,



illustrated by Alexia Parker

Hope | ALEXIA PARKER



Art work and Design by Maria Sherer

snail swirl | MARIA SHERER

Snap Shot | ALICIA JAYNES



Dream Waters, Dream Memories

by **Gabriela Garcia**

The whitest ocean is full of waters.
Waters so deep like all the oceans
Waters so deep like these memories

But be careful
You can be enchanted with just a sight.
Water ocean, Enchanted lakes
Remember this enchanting song.
Come back to my waters and never leave them.
And a final kiss you will have

Swim in my memories, Dive everywhere you want
Just come back to me as I always come back to you

Dream waters, Dream memories
Please bring him back to me.
Please let me tell him once more.
How much I do love him

No matter how hard is the pain
I will dive deep,
just to bring you once more with me

The whitest winter has your face,
As pale as the winter sky
So sweet and silent as you are.

My little angel
I gave you so many names in the past.
No matter which ones
You always understand and keep the secrets.
The winter has many secrets and
My whitest secret It's you
Sleep, my sweet guardian

I just hope you come back.
I don't trust others but I trust my two winter boys.

Dream waters, Dream memories.
Please bring him back to me.
Please let me tell him once more,
How much I do love him

No matter how hard is the pain
I will dive deep,
just to bring you once with me

I will wait for your return.
This pain is so cold and pale as the last winter,
They took you from me in a storm.
But I'll still love you and I'll wait for your return.

■

Comic Kicks | ISABELLE SMITH

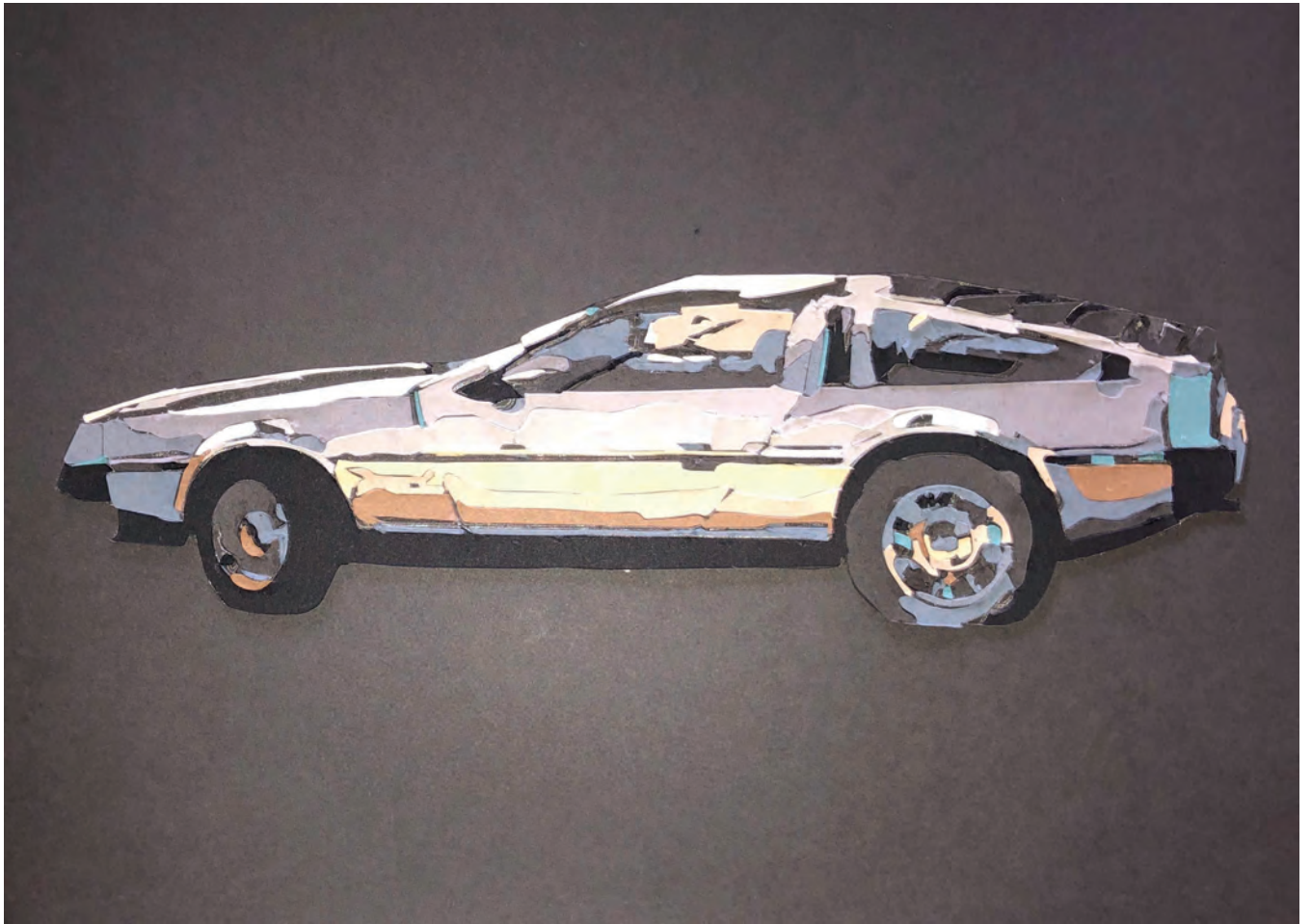




BEAT DOWN: Comic Book Cover | RYAN KERIVAN

The last Memory | GABRIELA GARCIA





Adam's Baby | *ALEXIA PARKER*

MOOSHU | *MARIA SHERER*



On Roads Less Travelled

by Grace Ksander

When I was a young child in school, there was a librarian who was particularly kind to me. She told me to read a book of Robert Frost poems, because he was a great writer of Massachusetts origin, and she thought that I would be too. In this book was the famous poem “The Road Not Taken”, which I was immediately drawn to like so many other people. The poem discusses the proverbial ‘lesser taken’ paths in life, and how they are ultimately rewarding. What the poem doesn’t discuss, and what I certainly did not pick up at such an innocent age, is how uncomfortable those lesser taken paths are. The alternate route is often full of silent failure and hardship. The harsh environment that growth and progress comes from is usually left as a footnote in the beloved story of the underdog, mostly because we write about success after we have accomplished it. As a newly successful person, I would like to dedicate some time to appreciate the value of failure and its role in progress.

Ever since I was a child I had an aptitude for the humanities as recognized by school librarians and my mother. Despite that, I managed to have an unusually tough time all throughout school. It often felt like somehow everyone else had gotten the memo on how to do everything, and I hadn’t. I had natural ability, but I couldn’t make it work for me. A feeling of isolation set in around me because I could not relate to many other people, until I met my best friend Alli in high school.

High school is a time filled with many opportunities to establish oneself as a young person becoming an adult. At the time it seemed like everybody else was getting the opportunity to grow up in a normal and linear path, but I was instead faced with an alternate path. Alli was diagnosed with cancer, which became terminal. She lived far away from me, so I watched from a distance as she struggled with the illness and I struggled with doing the bare minimum of being a young student. Then, my difficulties solidified into a barrier between me and achieving any academic success when Alli and my grandmother both died

within six months of each other, during midterms week and finals week, respectively. This was in my junior year of high school, the one that ‘the colleges would look at’. Instead of learning how to make myself stand out to a prospective college, my educational experience was being shaped by personal tragedy and learning methods of simply trying to keep it together. Alli’s obituary read like a yearbook entry, because dying young prevents one from experiencing all of the conventions of life normally awarded to a person. It profoundly struck me that I was allowed all of the opportunities she could’ve had, but I couldn’t make myself enjoy them. I was alone on an arduous, less taken path.

I kept myself together enough to finish high school, but remained entirely unsure of where I would go or if I could ever do anything. When graduation came I had no cords to wear for any honor societies, or even a college to say I was going to. Unfortunately, they do not make any distinctions for people who kept it together when life made it nearly impossible to. As I sat there in the commencement tradition, surrounded by people who had it together in the past four years and had a plan for the next four years, I became filled with a new determination to never let this happen again. I would never let an opportunity pass me by, because I was now more acutely aware of how meaningful they are when not everybody is awarded them. Instead of survivor’s guilt, I began to make a conscious choice to feel gratitude for what I was given, and make the most of it.

The next fall, I did attend college. I signed up for three classes at North Shore Community College. I was so gripped by a fear of failure that I almost didn’t go through with it. The seeds of my self doubt grew in a fertile soil of all of the impolite comments people made to me about my choice to attend community college, unaware of how hard I worked to get to community college. Every day of that first fall semester was difficult, but not nearly as difficult as making it through the path that led me there. The weeks went by, and I attended every class and handed in every assignment in a way that felt like a foreign body had taken over the underachiever I used to be. I suddenly started making exemplary grades. This

first taste of success didn't feel real. I felt like I was masquerading as a good student, that somehow at any moment my professors would find out that I was a fraud.

That first semester was over a year ago, and I am now in my last semester at North Shore. I was given an opportunity by this college, and I seized it with a promise to myself that I would take control over where I was headed rather than leave myself to the mercy of hardship. It took much determination and discipline, but the environment of North Shore allowed me to put into action my lessons from the burdensome path that led me here. I recently recalled a verse in the Bible which stated "for when I am weak, then I am strong." This idea that through suffering we breed strength or wisdom transcends religion, because it is a universal human truth. Community colleges are a deeply important part of our society, they take people as they are and foster them to grow in an academic environment. I look forward to graduating from North Shore and will proudly say for the rest of my life that my first successes were at a community college.

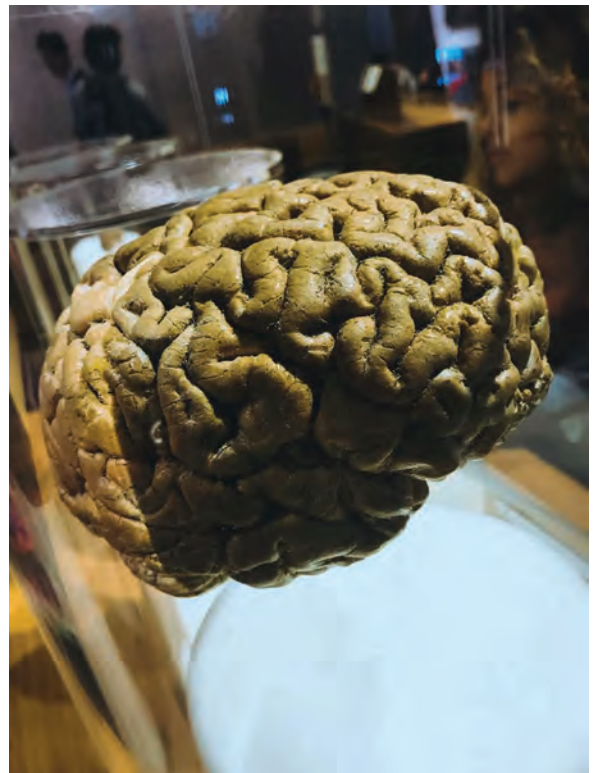
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Akiko vs Beatrice: Victory | RYAN KERIVAN





top to bottom:
Capri Italy 2014 | *ISABELLE SMITH*
Cranium | *JASMINE ERAZO*



top to bottom:

Crystal Tiger | SAM GORDON

The Mikey Zone Mode | MIKEY LUGO JR.



First Night

by Alysia Adam

How can someone fall asleep with all this light? Yes, the room light is off, but the hall light is on, and I can still see the leaves on the trees. It is at best, the evening. I am too old to be told when to go to bed and I am too old to be staring at my ceiling for hours in order to fall asleep. Too old to sleep with my door open. I am too young to have to be in a place this far away from my family. Too young to be surrounded by all of this craziness. I hate this hellhole.

The second, large, wooden chair lands a few feet from my head. Impressive. There is not much left in the room for her to throw. She has to be done. *scream*. Now she is after the desks, she is pulling one away from the wall. She probably wants to throw that too. But the woman with the high heels walks in, grips her arm like a suitcase, and leads her into the hall. They seriously think taking her away from things she can throw will deescalate the situation. I don't see how; you would think she had the chair banging against the floor instead of her fists. High heels tells her that "7 is too old to be acting like this." No, that baby is overwhelmed. I hate this hellhole.

My eyes are projecting the truth at the ceiling. No one wants to be forced to go to a strange place where they relinquish their freedom. No one wants to give up their shoes, pens, markers, spiral notebooks, friendship bracelets, or even certain clothes as soon as you arrive. Being forced to strip to your underwear is humiliating and traumatic at 11, 7, or 17. I hate this hellhole.

Yes! The heavy metal door is being closed. Now I can finally sle-*jingle jangle click*. Welcome to your first night.

■



left to right:

Sun and Trees | ALICIA JAYNES

Outgrowing My Old Self | ANNIE MCMENAMIN



Free

by Alysia Adam

You run away from me
You make me hide
You always manifest
a new way I can die.

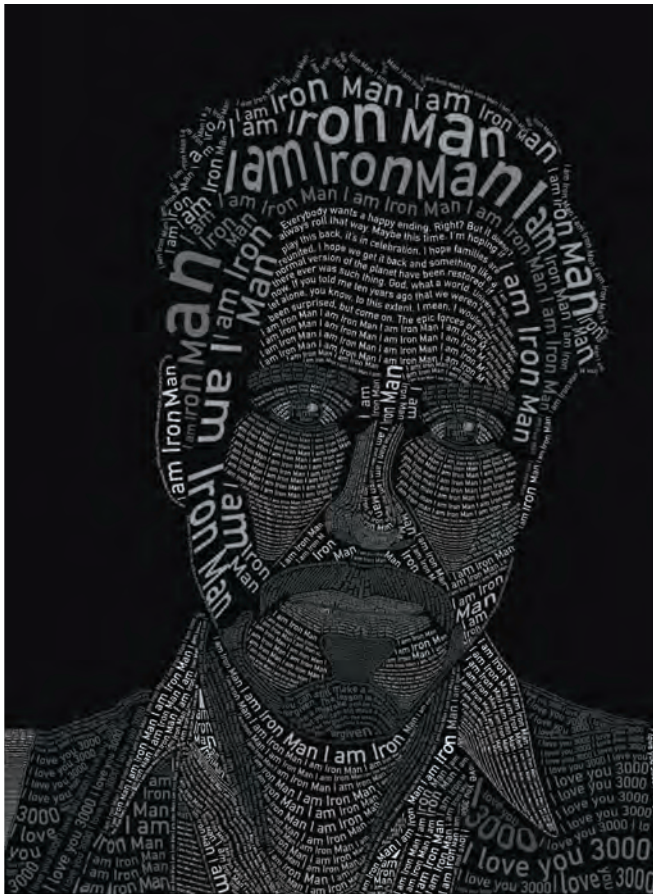
I hate the new endings
I hate the way I cry
I hate hating my life
living here full time

I needed happiness
I needed to be free
I made my new family
better than TV

You're creating stronger lives
You're creating better stories
You no longer need a hero
No longer give me that glory

I fear I can't find happiness
I fear I've stayed too long
I fear both worlds colliding
but I have already gone.

■



top to bottom:

Robert Downey Jr. Typographic Portrait | STACEY CLAVIJO
Self Portrait | SABRINE CAMBUI

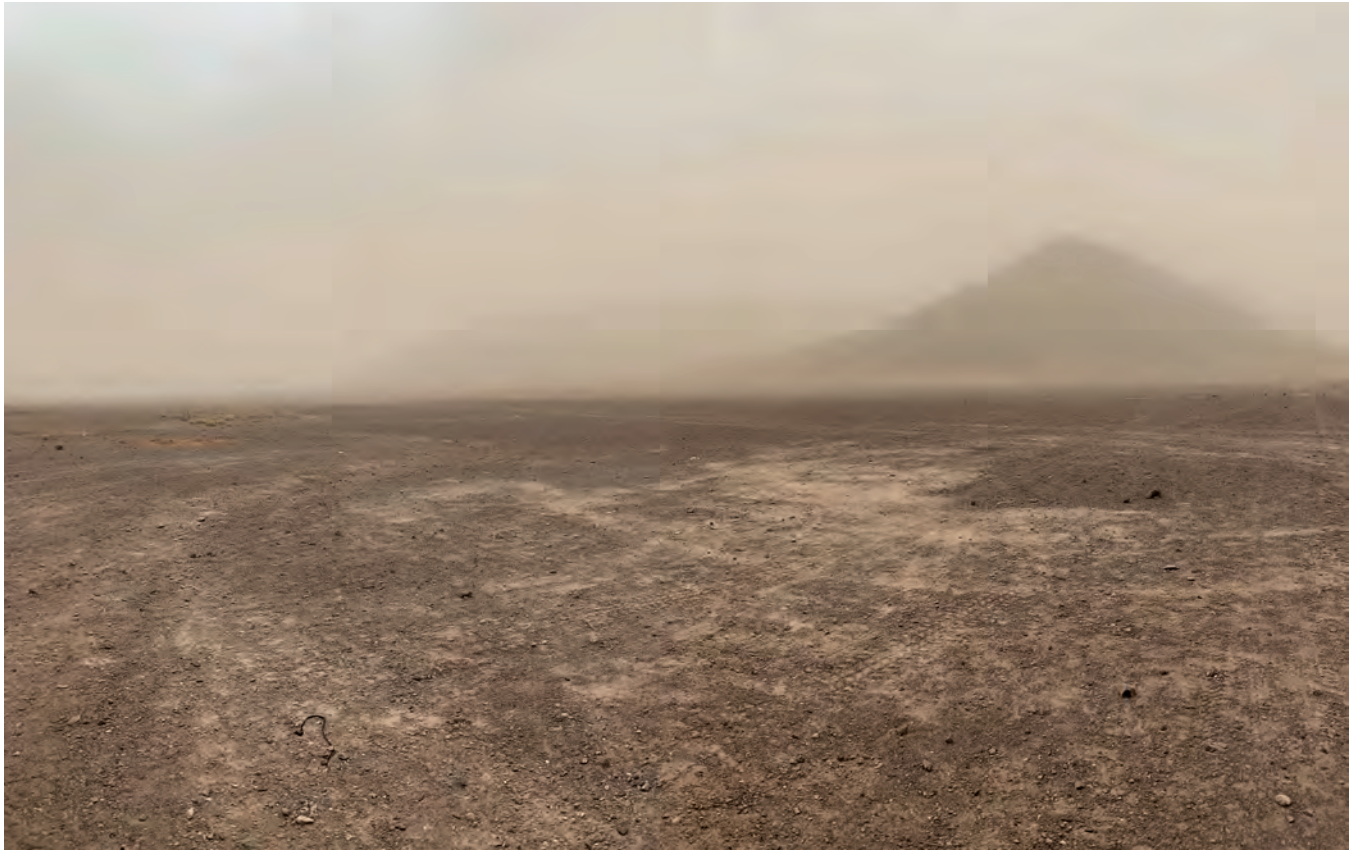


top to bottom:
Trenton | *PATRICIA GEISINGER*
The Benighted World | *JOE GIUNTA*





jey | JESSY MENJIVAR



top to bottom:
The Benighted World | JOE GIUNTA
MY YOUTH | CAROLINE JAIMES
Scenic view | PATRICIA GEISINGER



Eyes

by **Alysia Adam**

Did you hurt,
feel yourself die
Did you pause,
stop, wonder why?

Your child whines
hiding her pain
we sisters try
not to complain

Brother cries
will he survive?
Parents died
look in their eyes

Eyes show lies
we need to hide
Eyes disguise
we won't survive.

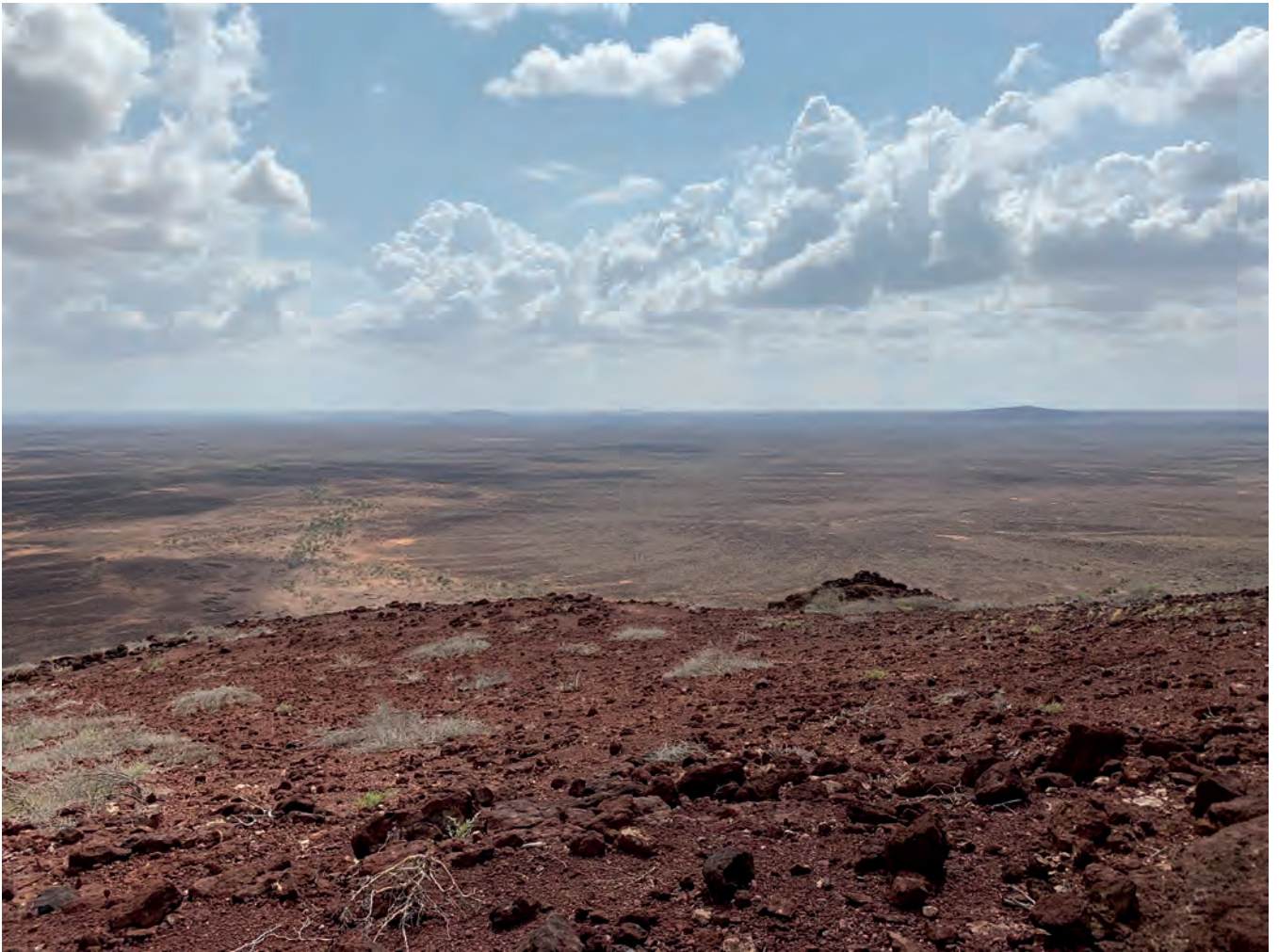
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Lost | *CAROLINE JAIMES*

Architectural Painting | *NANCY MCINTYRE*





The Benighted World | *JOE GIUNTA*



Two is Better Than One | *BRIANNA FINNIGAN*



The Benighted World | *JOE GIUNTA*

je | *JESSY MENJIVAR*

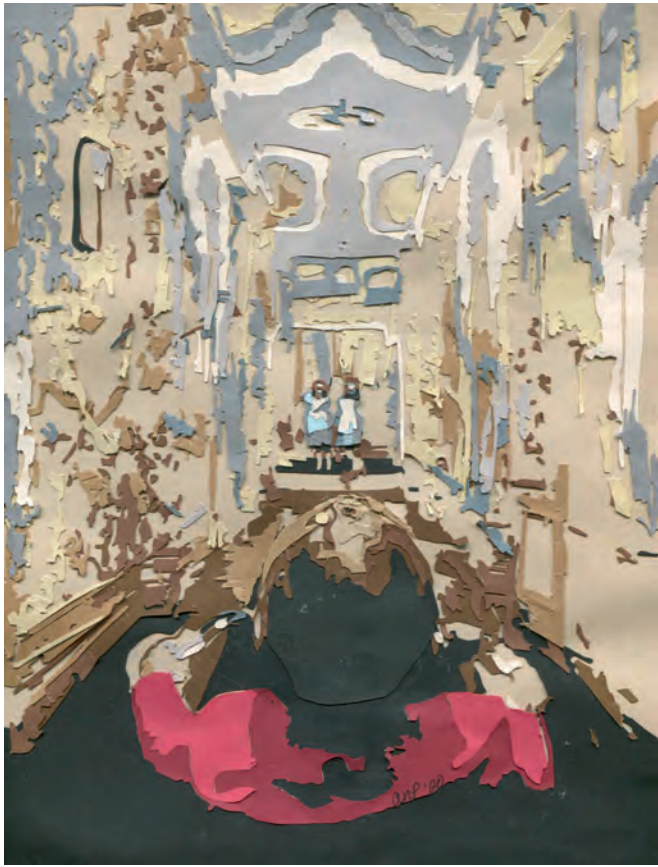




In the Moment Bliss | *ALICIA JAYNES*

Where she found her heart | *ROXANN MCFARLANE*





Danny | ALEXIA PARKER

Theater by the water

by Alex Bornholdt

The sun shines
The ground is warm
The air is filled
Comfort is the volume
Beauty is the area

The wind plays
Hair dances
The joy is upstairs
When the resort is within
Warmth is in the mind

The sea a film
Our sun a protagonist
The wind without the brass
A show in front of my eyes
The tune is pleasant and relaxing

■

The Benighted World | JOE GIUNTA





Longing By The Sea | RYAN KERIVAN

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and make **SPARK Magazine** possible!



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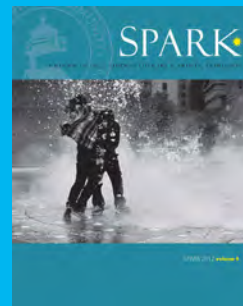
spark 2010



spark 2011



spark 2012



spark 2013



spark 2014



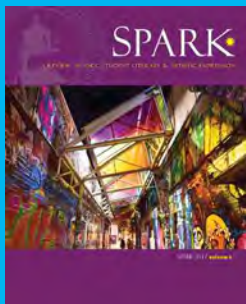
spark 2015



spark 2016



spark 2017



spark 2018



spark 2019



spark 2020



see them all: www.northshore.edu/spark