

5-1-2016

Reflections

NSU University School

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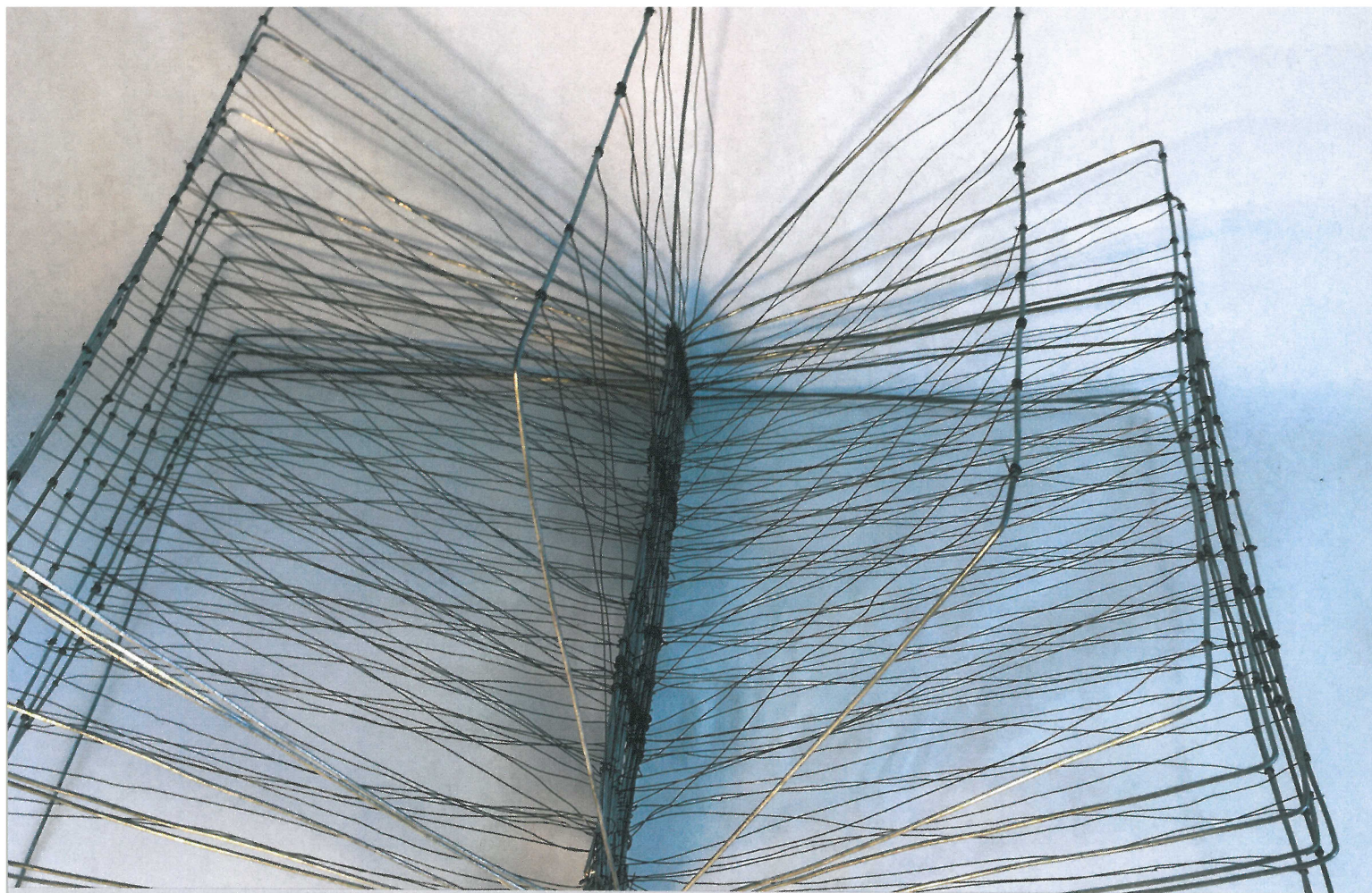
Recommended Citation

NSU University School (2016) "Reflections," *Hieroglyphics: the NSU University School Literary Magazine*: Vol. 22 , Article 55.
Available at: https://nsuworks.nova.edu/uschool_litmag/vol22/iss1/55

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REFLECTIONS

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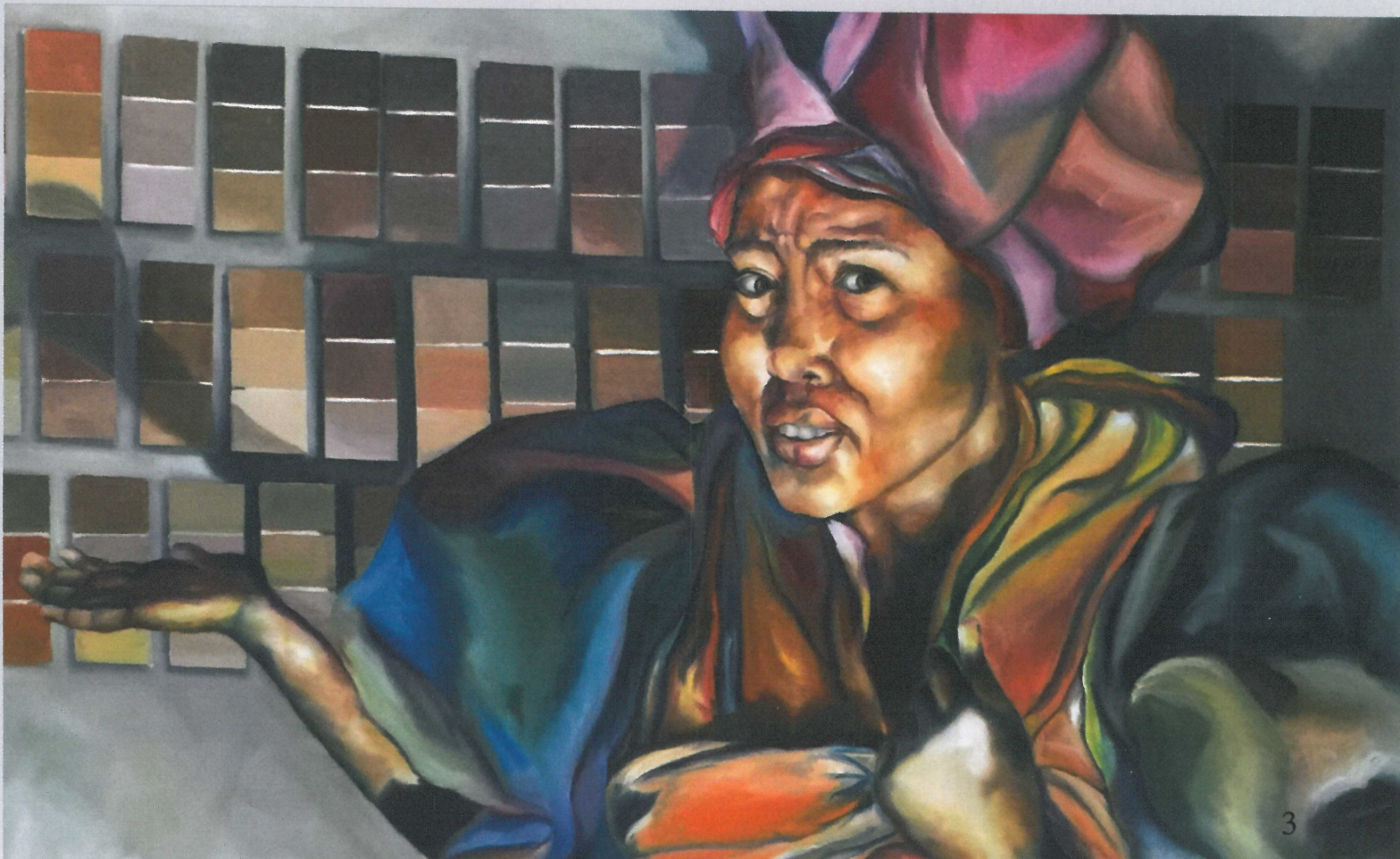
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Spring 2016 REFLECTIONS

NSU University School

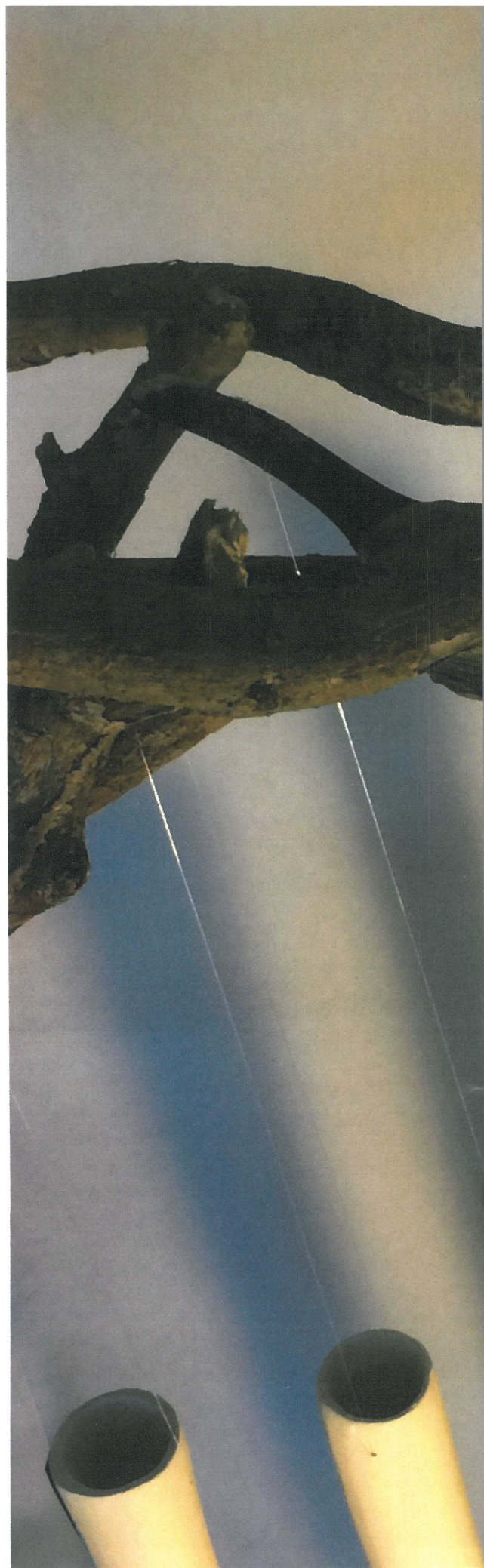
The annual student
literature and art magazine
reflecting the voices & visions of the
NSU University School Upper School

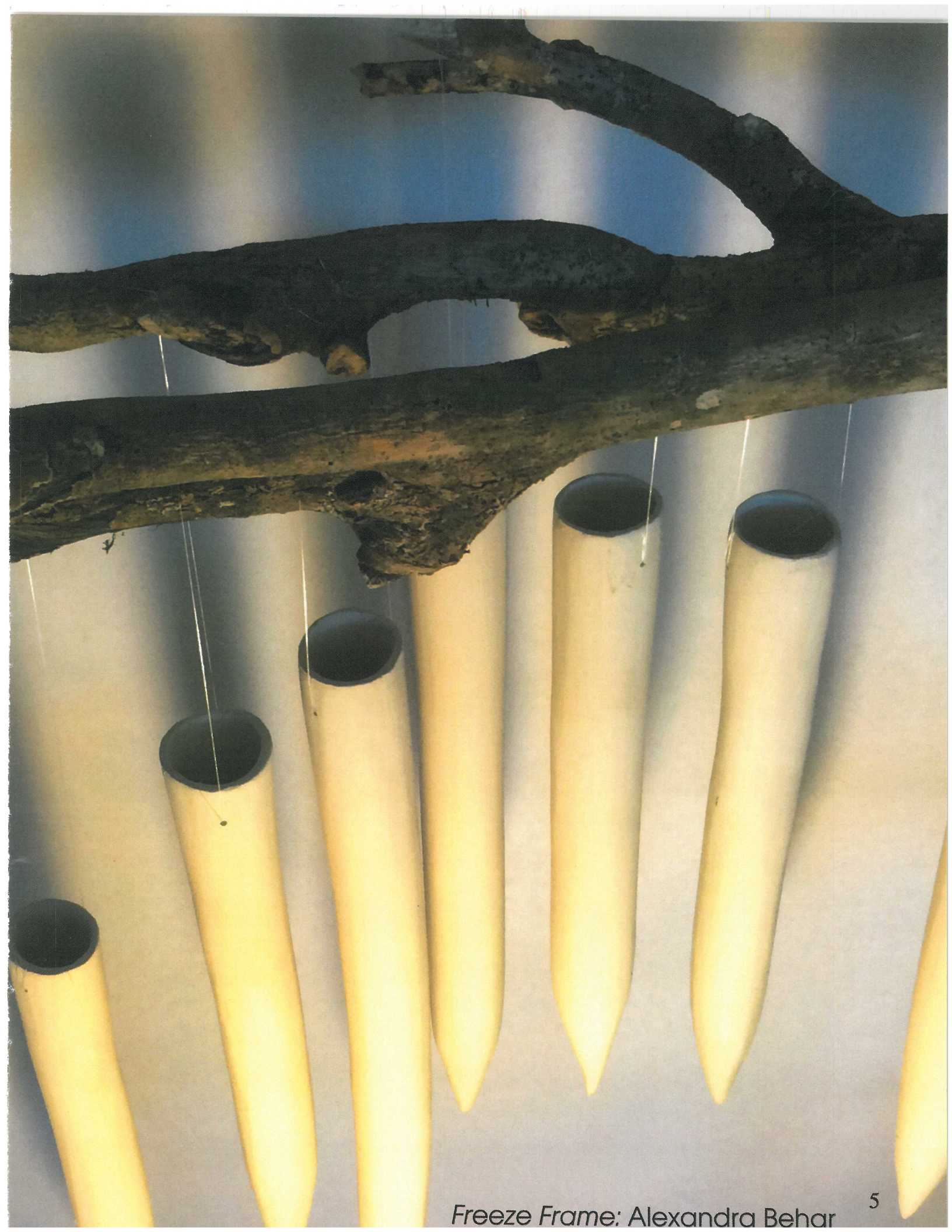
What am I, a color swatch: Nastassja Lafontant



Contents

Galaxy, by Sarina Schwartz	7
Before, by Michelle Langone	8
Blue	10
React, by Carlo Feliciani	12
Shattered, by Joel Shapiro	14
Frozen & Pieces	14
(S)implistic Art Lessons	17
Fear and Comfort, by Julie Topf	18
Promises, Broken, by Tamara Outler	19
A Mysterious Place, by Jade Young	20
I Wish, by Lorraine Xie	23
Hades, by Joymarie Puskadi	24
Zeus, by Jack Leinwand	26
Badlands, by Samantha Schraub	29
Back and Before, by Jon Oshinsky	32
Air, by Samantha Morim	34
Red, by Rachel Bomser	35
He Gave Me a Rose, by Marti Bennett	36
The Woes of a Paper, by Amanda Pravder	38
The Happiness Hymn	41
The Author, by Lindsay Glick	43
Depressing Poetry Is Only Depressing If It Doesn't Have An Uplifting Message	46





Freeze Frame: Alexandra Behar





Galaxy

Sarina Schwartz

You are nothing, they tell you.
Keep your head down, your eyes to the ground.
They tell you that you are nothing but a speck of
dust in the vastness of the earth.

But they are wrong.
You are more than dust.

You are a galaxy of light and hope and dreams.
There is an entire universe running through your
veins,
coursing through your body, your heart.
There is a sun shining through your smile.

Your tears are comets streaking across your
cheeks,
beautiful in their sorrow.
You hold planets in your hands, even as they
shake.

They tell you that you are nothing.
But you know that you are not.
And when you raise your head, they will see
the dancing of a thousand constellations in the
sparkling of your eyes.

Before Michelle Langone

Crystalline, pristine.
Shimmering light in the shadows
The world is clearer
More vivid than the morning.
Caricatures of colors
Distortions, shapes
Lovely delusions and sweet, soft
Pure
Reflections.
They witnessed.
Within the kaleidoscope
Lay the two
Sheltered by walls
of luminous enrapture
Cradled in melody, held in song
Engulfed by the precious gems
The deviant provocateur
Time
Or was it?
Held the precious stone
Caressed it, bearing it to
withstand
All the forces
that prolong the destruction
Propel the derangement
Manipulate fate
Until it has run its course.

Careful, you mustn't lose hold
Tread onwards my dear
Running, panting





mind, body, and soul: Aimee Starr

Grasping on to what will and may disappear
She clenches her fist
Relinquish, she does not
But hurry now, take heed of each step...

Trembling, she falls
Trips over herself.
a calamitous crash
A shattering of glass.

Broken pieces
Scattered, dispersed
She holds one up to her gleaming wet eye
Peers trepidatiously through it
Bearing witness to a world of ugly dimness.

It may never resemble its former self.

Blue

Shainal Gandhi

Blue is a mystery;

An ephemeral, enigmatic moment of clarity

In the undulating ocean of life.

Blue offers a sense of simplicity

Which belies the depths hidden beneath

Blue is vast;

Yet not incomprehensibly so,

Just large enough to make you feel small.

Blue surrounds you

A mixture of comforting and smothering

Blue is frigid;

Shocking and Invigorating

Yet Enervating.

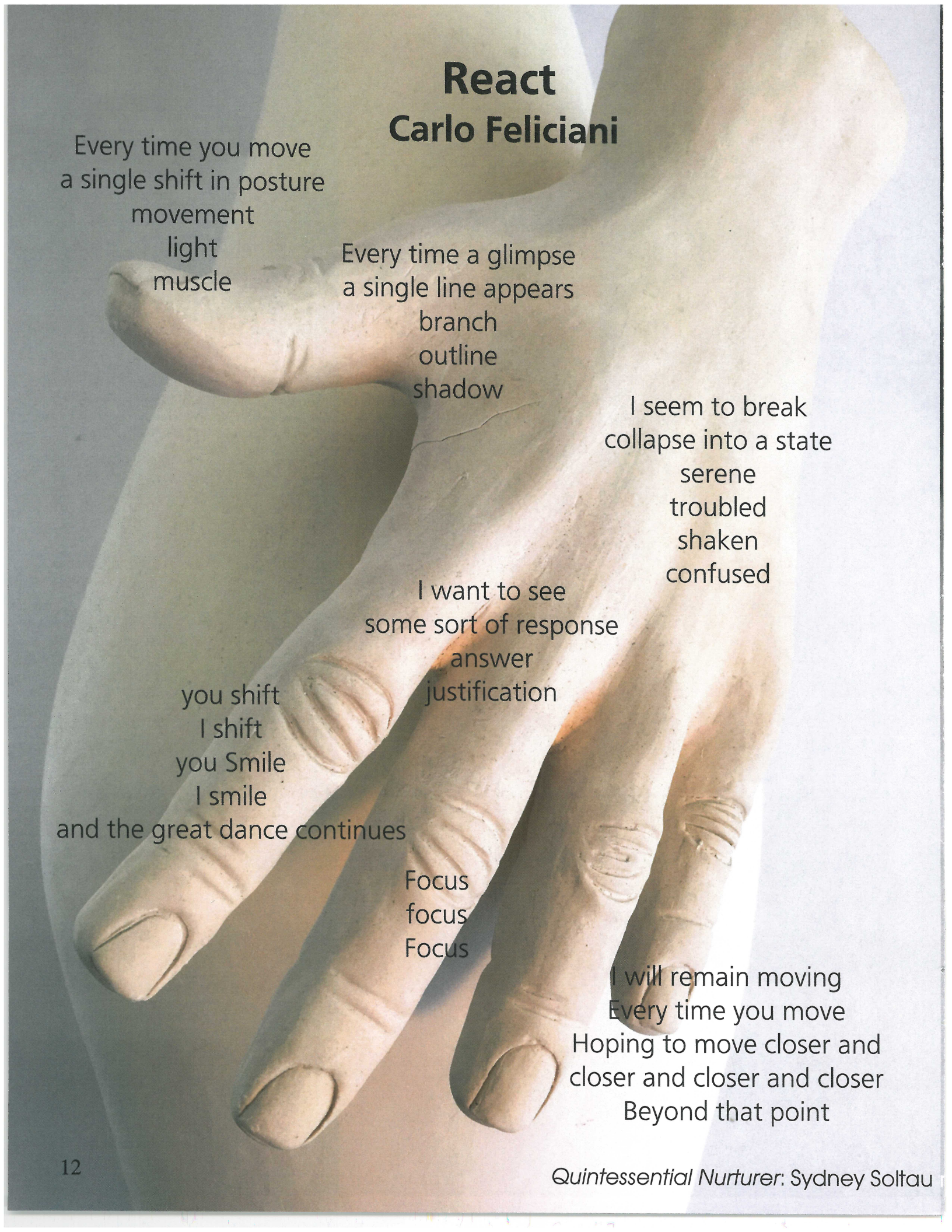
Blue clings to you

To hold you in its embrace.



Untitled: Joshua Churba





React

Carlo Feliciani

Every time you move
a single shift in posture
movement

light
muscle

Every time a glimpse
a single line appears
branch
outline
shadow

I seem to break
collapse into a state
serene
troubled
shaken
confused

I want to see
some sort of response
answer
justification

you shift
I shift
you Smile
I smile
and the great dance continues

Focus
focus
Focus

I will remain moving
Every time you move
Hoping to move closer and
closer and closer and closer
Beyond that point



Beneath the Skin: Aimee Starr

Shattered

Joel Shapiro

Broken glass, shattered
Hopelessness, misery, agony.

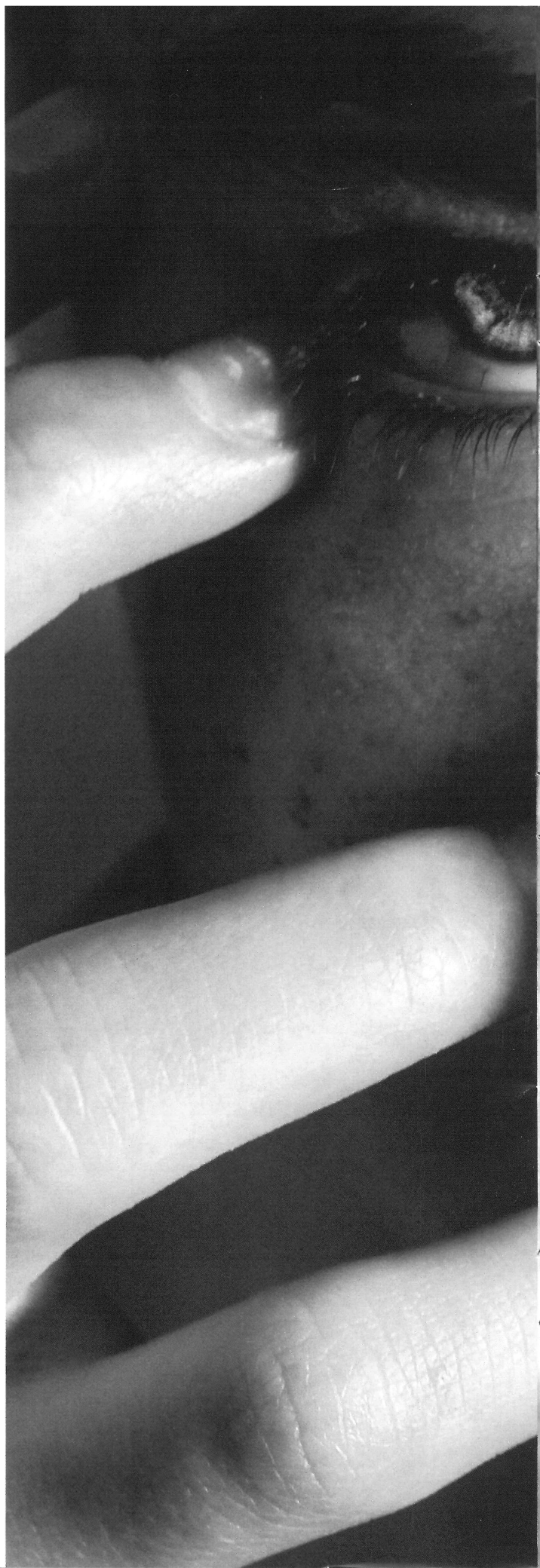
A life's work vanished
To the sound of a crash.
Broken glass, Broken glass
Figurines smashed
Nothing left but the mess

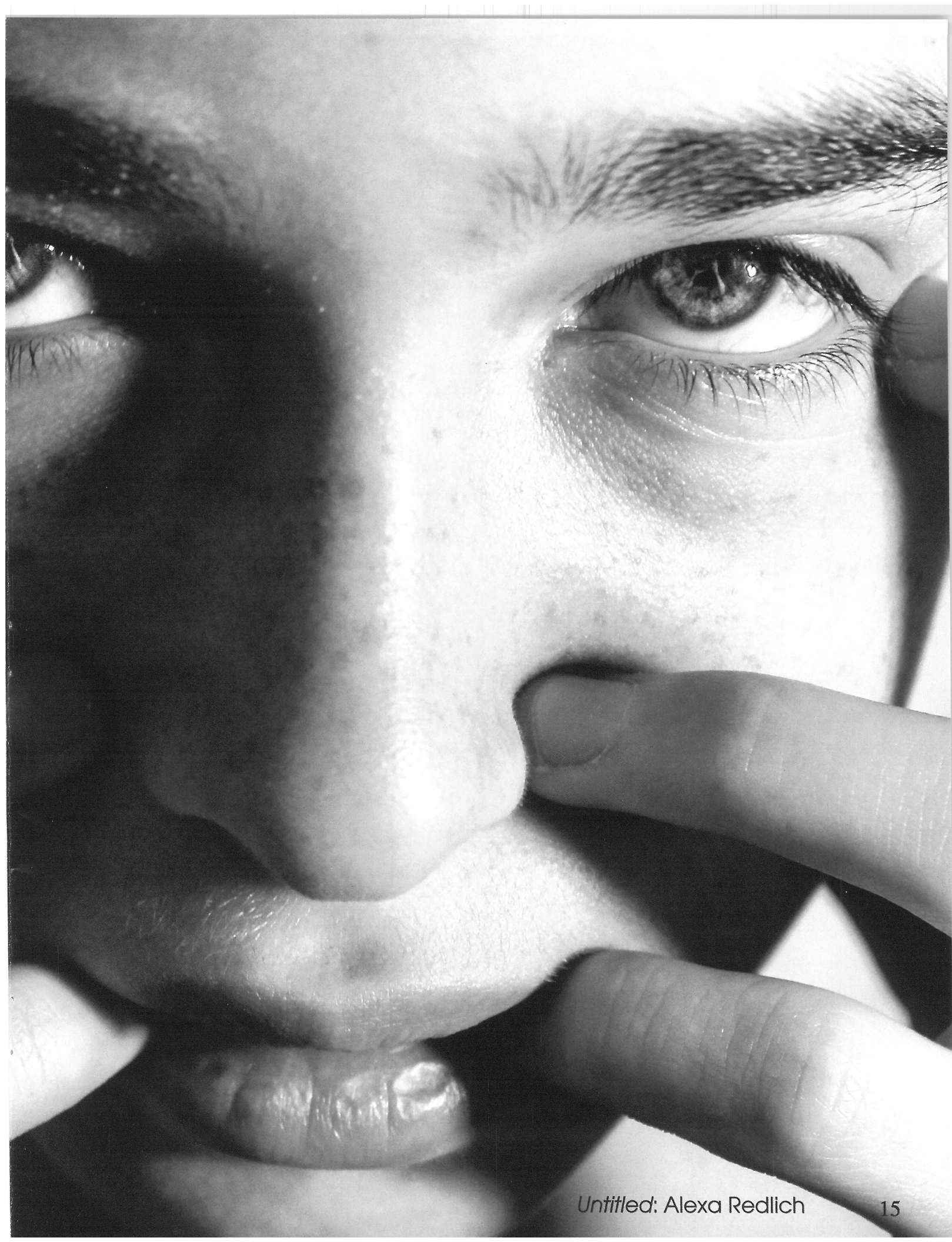
Glass, glass, a life's work now trash.

Frozen & Pieces

Ethan Legum

I stand there unmoving
stricken with fear
staring at a million pieces
trying not to shed a tear.
Although I know it's fragile
Just as I
I still had to touch it
and now I must lie.
I stand there unmoving
stricken with fear
I was supposed to stay far
but now I am near.







I can't paint. Ne
Nor do I think I'll
shouldn't seem

I could splatt
learned that t
blemished with c
as be

What was I ta
paper. We wor

Even artists, re
to

And, we the non-c
than pens. Instea
way to wri

In moderation the
saturates the clec
declare words, ye
our stag

(S)implistic Art Lessons

Anonymous

ever have I been able to pick up a brush and place pigment on paper. I don't know how to learn how. And isn't it a funny idea anyway, to learn how to create art? It seems so preposterous. After all, we learn words and customs and intonations of words and syllables. But with art, it is not so.

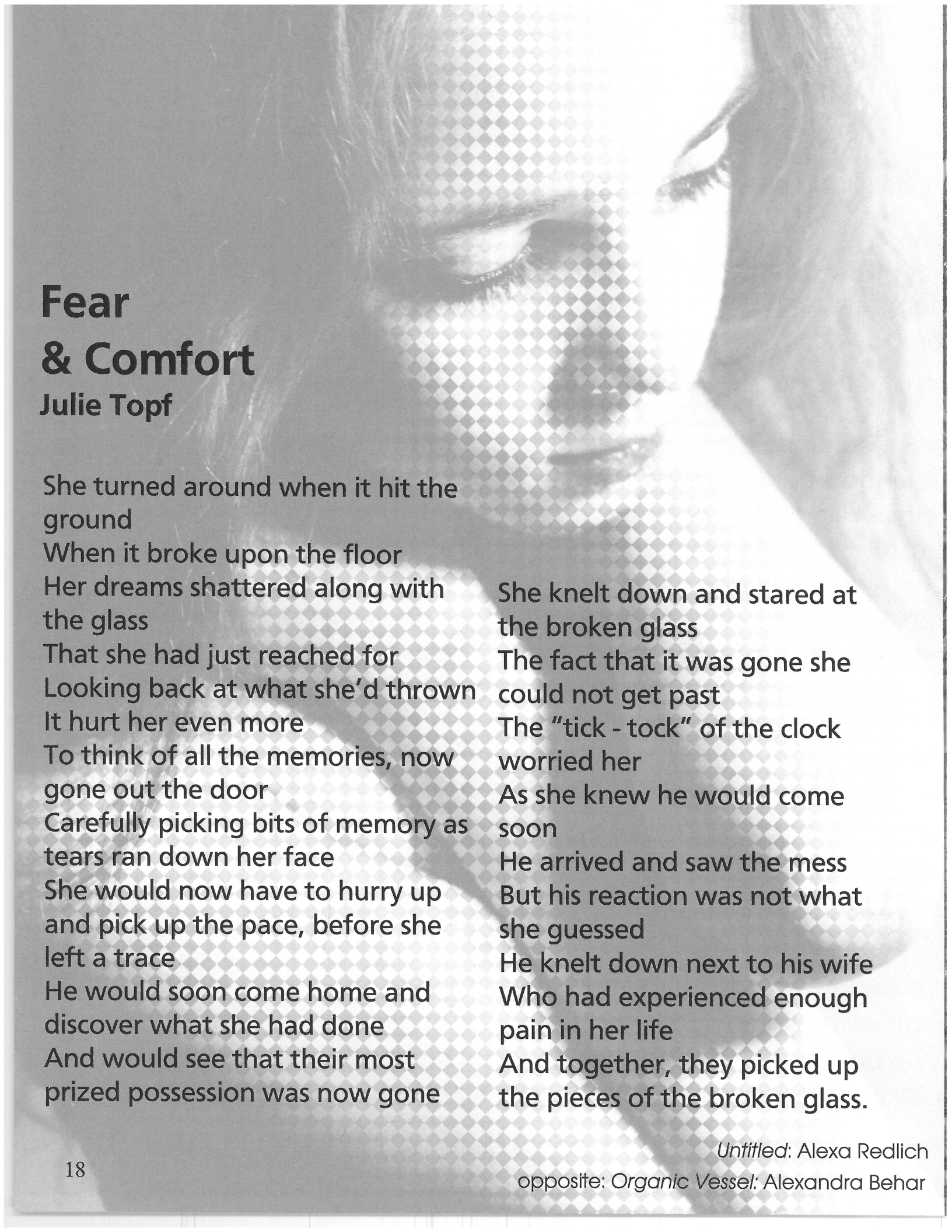
I have tried to use watercolor aimlessly and watch as the streaks dull and dry. I have tried to see if the unbearable lightness of color is desirable—a milky canvas barely visible. Watercolor is dark, edgy, and modern. Of course oils and acrylics are equally beautiful. But that is...what do they call it? Personal preference?

I was taught in grade school? Certainly not to put chalk on dark construction paper or to mark on white paper to show color. Black was the absence of color, the absence of creativity—empty.

Regaled as independent wonders, as individuals, even the artists learn to stay within the lines, lest a mess be created in lieu of art.

Artists, are taught to stay within the lines too: taught that pencils are neater than pens and of simply and avidly loving writing, our hands are forced: there's a right way to write. We crumple sheets of paper that were written the wrong way.

There is beauty, yet too much moderation forces sameness, a sameness that suffocates. In an air we are expected to draw breath from and speak. From our lips we are told to accept scripts and roles easily because we're told that the world is a stage. Of course, we'd all rather be a—rather than have—character.

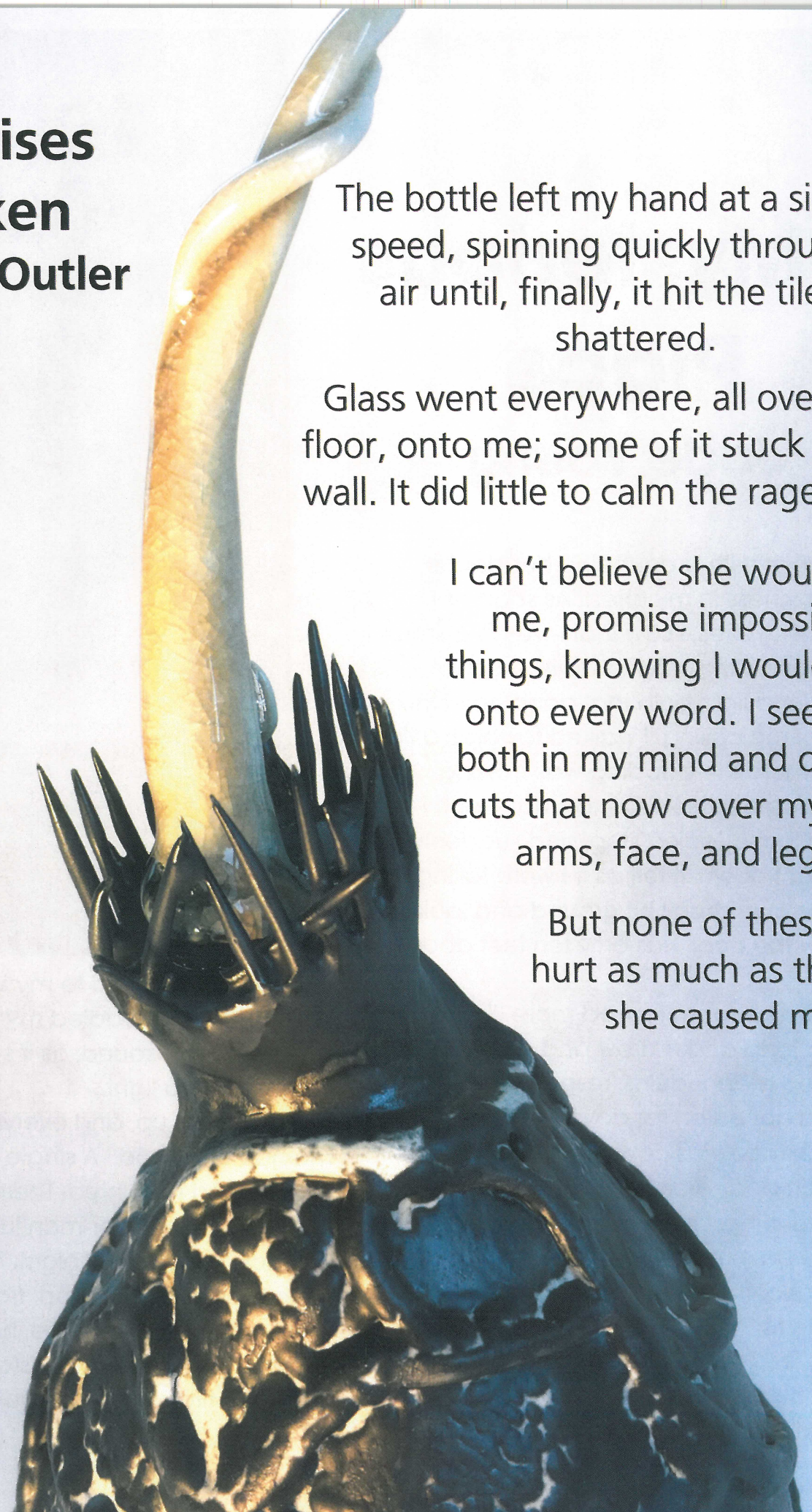


Fear & Comfort

Julie Topf

She turned around when it hit the
ground
When it broke upon the floor
Her dreams shattered along with
the glass
That she had just reached for
Looking back at what she'd thrown
It hurt her even more
To think of all the memories, now
gone out the door
Carefully picking bits of memory as
tears ran down her face
She would now have to hurry up
and pick up the pace, before she
left a trace
He would soon come home and
discover what she had done
And would see that their most
prized possession was now gone

She knelt down and stared at
the broken glass
The fact that it was gone she
could not get past
The "tick - tock" of the clock
worried her
As she knew he would come
soon
He arrived and saw the mess
But his reaction was not what
she guessed
He knelt down next to his wife
Who had experienced enough
pain in her life
And together, they picked up
the pieces of the broken glass.

A sculpture of a hand with sharp, dark claws holding a broken glass bottle. The bottle is shattered, with a jagged, yellowish-orange rim and a dark, irregular opening. The hand is dark and textured, with a pattern of small, dark spots. The background is a light blue gradient.

Promises Broken

Tamara Outler

The bottle left my hand at a sickening speed, spinning quickly through the air until, finally, it hit the tile and shattered.

Glass went everywhere, all over the floor, onto me; some of it stuck to the wall. It did little to calm the rage I felt.

I can't believe she would use me, promise impossible things, knowing I would hold onto every word. I see red, both in my mind and on the cuts that now cover my feet, arms, face, and legs.

But none of these cuts hurt as much as the pain she caused me.

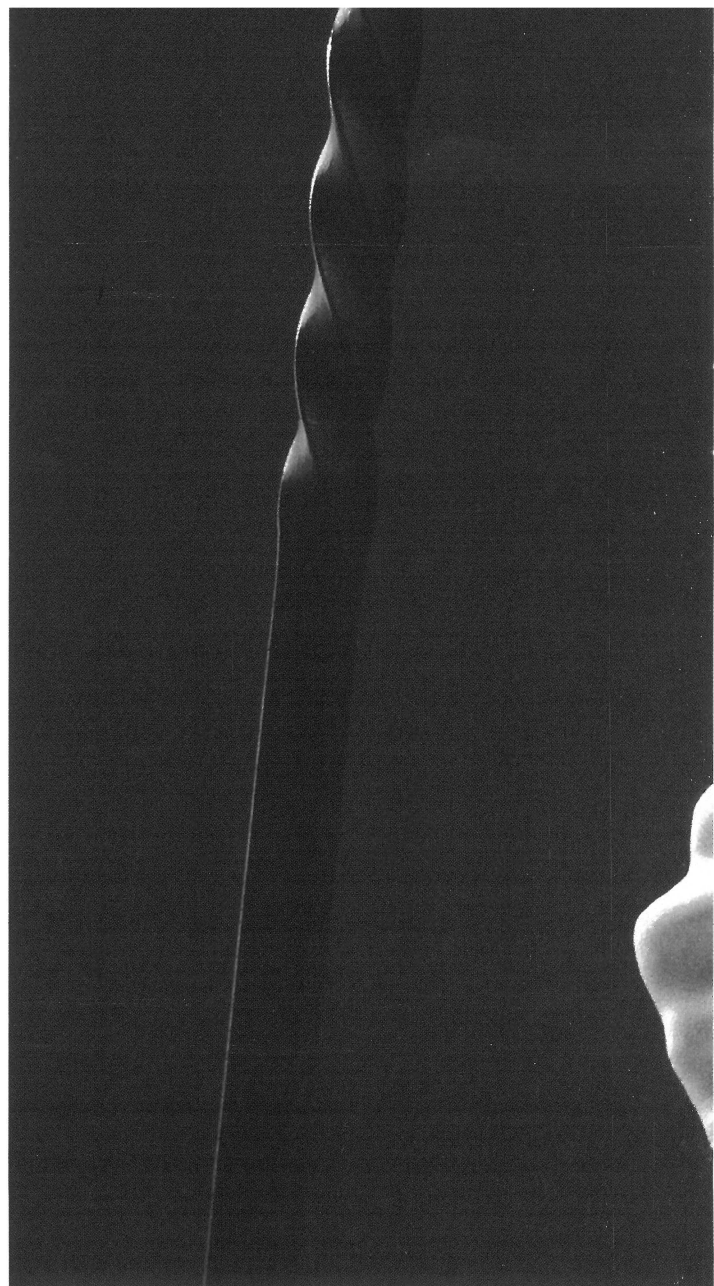
A Mysterious Place

Jade Young

I woke with a pounding headache and heaviness in my chest. As soon as I opened my eyes, I saw that I was in a small white room with padded walls, empty, except for a light bulb that dangled in the center of the ceiling. I walked towards a tiny space where the padding was missing. When I came close, I saw a small door. I opened it and took a step, and suddenly I fell straight down. It felt as if I were falling for a lifetime but when I hit ground and looked up, I saw the door was only ten feet above me.

This new room looked more like a hallway: long and narrow and slightly dim. Unclothed mannequins, resembling people who had not eaten for days, surrounded me. Each face was covered in makeup, and each body was covered in scars. I started running. I didn't know where I was or where to go, but I knew one thing: I needed to get out of there.

I ran for hours; my calves and lungs were on fire. I stopped, panting, to look around. But my surroundings had not changed, and I had not made progress.



Hopeless, I dropped to my knees. I sat, crouched, and cradled my head. It was then I heard a sound, as if someone had switched on a light.

I looked up, and everything around me had changed. A single bright light glared, and I squinted. There, in the open space, a tall slender man lurked, dressed in black jeans and a black hoodie that covered his face. I stood frozen as he slowly walked toward me, his face barely coming into the light. My stomach dropped; time froze and flew by at



Emotional Strongholds: Gabby Leveillee

the same time. Deep terror spread through my body, and I tried to swallow my screams.

He reached out his arms. His hands barely grazed my sides when I started screaming and trembling.

He disappeared.

I tried to calm myself: I was safe.

I wiped my tears and looked up. I was standing in front of a mirror. and my reflection showed someone someone stood behind me.

I spun around to see who it was,

only to face another mirror. I walked around the mirror in front of me only to become surrounded by even more mirrors. Everywhere I turned, more seemed to appear. I was surrounded by my own reflection and could not escape it.

Raging and without thinking, I started punching each mirror. But as they broke, they immediately repaired themselves. I threw my body at the mirrors; the glass shattered and pierced my skin, and I screamed in fury. As I shoved myself into the final mirror, I slipped through it and fell, back into the room with the padded walls.



I Wish

Lorraine Xie

I wish.

I wish the thunder outside could be louder, loud enough to cover the quarrels inside.

I wish.

I wish the lightning outside could be brighter, bright enough to expel all the darkness and loneliness inside.

I wish.

I wish the wind outside could be stronger, strong enough to blow away all the misunderstandings.

I wish.

I wish it would stop raining.

And I ask for too much.

Everything but silence has gone.

Hades

Joymarie Puskadi

Dark lord of the Underworld

He who keeps the souls

He whose wife is prisoner

He whose heart is cold

It was Demeter's daughter true

Persephone, so young

Hades would decide to woo

In a prison far from the sun

When her mother found her not

She despaired and cried

Still she searched around the world

Had her daughter died?

Hades evil, Hades cruel

Saw that Zeus had had it

He gave Demeter's daughter true

Six seeds of pomegranate

Now for four months she is bound

So tightly by his side

And though Persephone was found

She's gone in winter night

Hades, ruler of the dark,

Listens to Cerberus bark.

Three heads upon one dog

Watches Charon steer through the smog.



for Child: Anonymous

Zeus

Jack Leinwand

I see no, hear no evil,
Black writings on the wall,
I unleashed a million faces,
And one by one they fall.

Black hearted evil,
Brave hearted hero,
I am all.

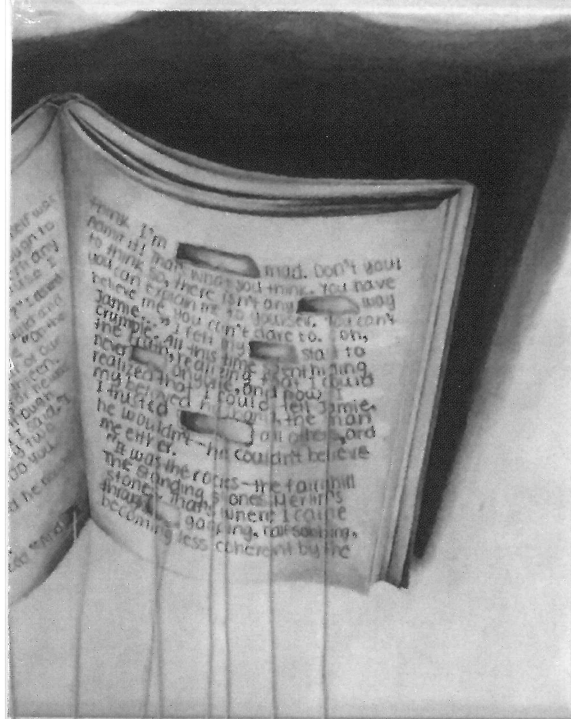
Go ahead and try to see through me,
Do it if you dare,
One step forward, two steps back,
I'm here.

Can you see all of me?
Walk into my mysteries?
Step inside and hold on for dear life.
Do you remember me?
Capturing you, or setting you free?
I am all, I am all of me.

I am... I am, I'm all.
I see and feel the evil,
My hands will crush 'em all,
You think you have the answer,
I laugh and watch you fall,
I hear them, I hear them all.

"Ela Ela O la Men apsete na petno ela ela O la,"
they call.





Come, come, O come.
 Black hearted evil,
 Brave hearted hero,
 I am all, I am all I am,
 Go ahead and try to see through me,
 Do it if you dare,
 One step forward two steps back,
 I'm here,
 Do it... Do it... Do it... Do it...
 Can you see all of me?
 Walk into my mysteries?
 Step inside and hold on for dear life,
 Do you remember me?
 Capture you or set you free?
 I am all, I am all of me.
 I am everyone, everywhere, anyhow,
 any way, any will, any day...
 I am!
 Can you see all of me?
 Walk into my mysteries?
 Step inside and hold on for dear life.
 Do you remember me?
 Capture you, or set you free?
 I am all, I am all of me.
 I am, I am, I'm all.



Badlands

Samantha Schraub

Thirty years ago a nuclear reactor melted, triggered by an explosion, causing the expulsion of radiation from the broken turbine.

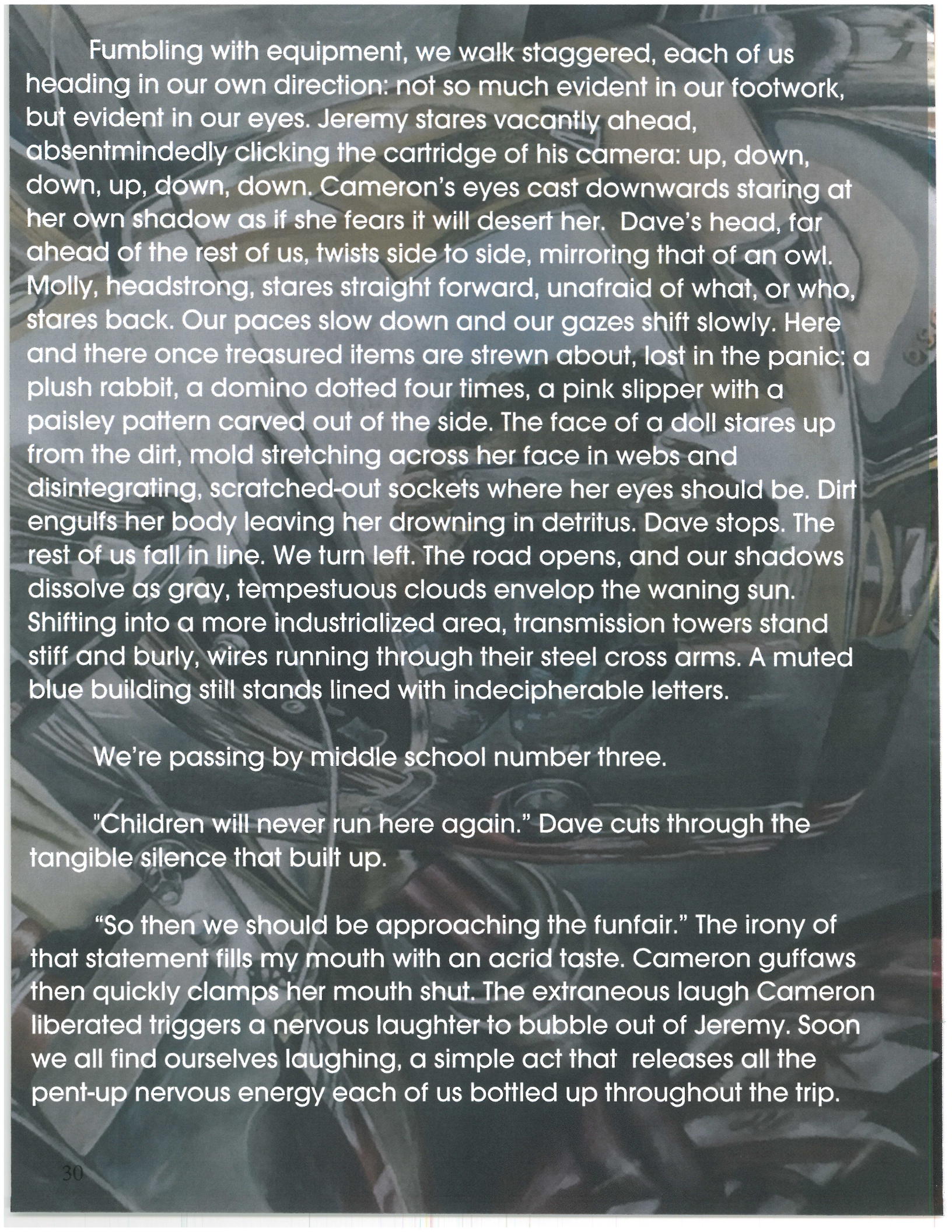
Today we return to the now-abandoned city. Sixteen hours pass while we sit aboard our plane to Kiev. Five hours pass while driving by bus to Pripyat. Time seems fluid as the hours rush by. In seven hours we end the final leg of our journey by walking across Chernobyl.

The aptly named Bridge of Death stands before us waiting for its new visitors to cross. As we walk across the bridge, the pounding of ten feet thunders, sounding more like the pounding of thousands of feet: the bridge's phantoms march behind us.

As we walk, orange paint flakes off of the railed bridge, sprinkling an ill-colored rust across our shoes. Below, two railways trace the rocky ground leading into a dark tunnel that swallows the rest of the land.

In the distance stands the nuclear power plant; a harrowing figure, Death's assistant, a tyrant standing proudly over the village he destroyed. His arsenal had remained hidden until with a bellow and a bang he released it on the earth.

The brittle leaves of trees blur the edges of my vision. Frail as skeletons, the leaves, holding on to the last supply of life that remains, cling to the branches of trees. Overhead, the sun peeks behind its cloud covering, still afraid that the radiation will surge out once again and diminish light. Stepping over the threshold of the bridge brings us to a street the color of a chalkboard slate that has just been wiped clean but remains firmly coated with a dusty residue.

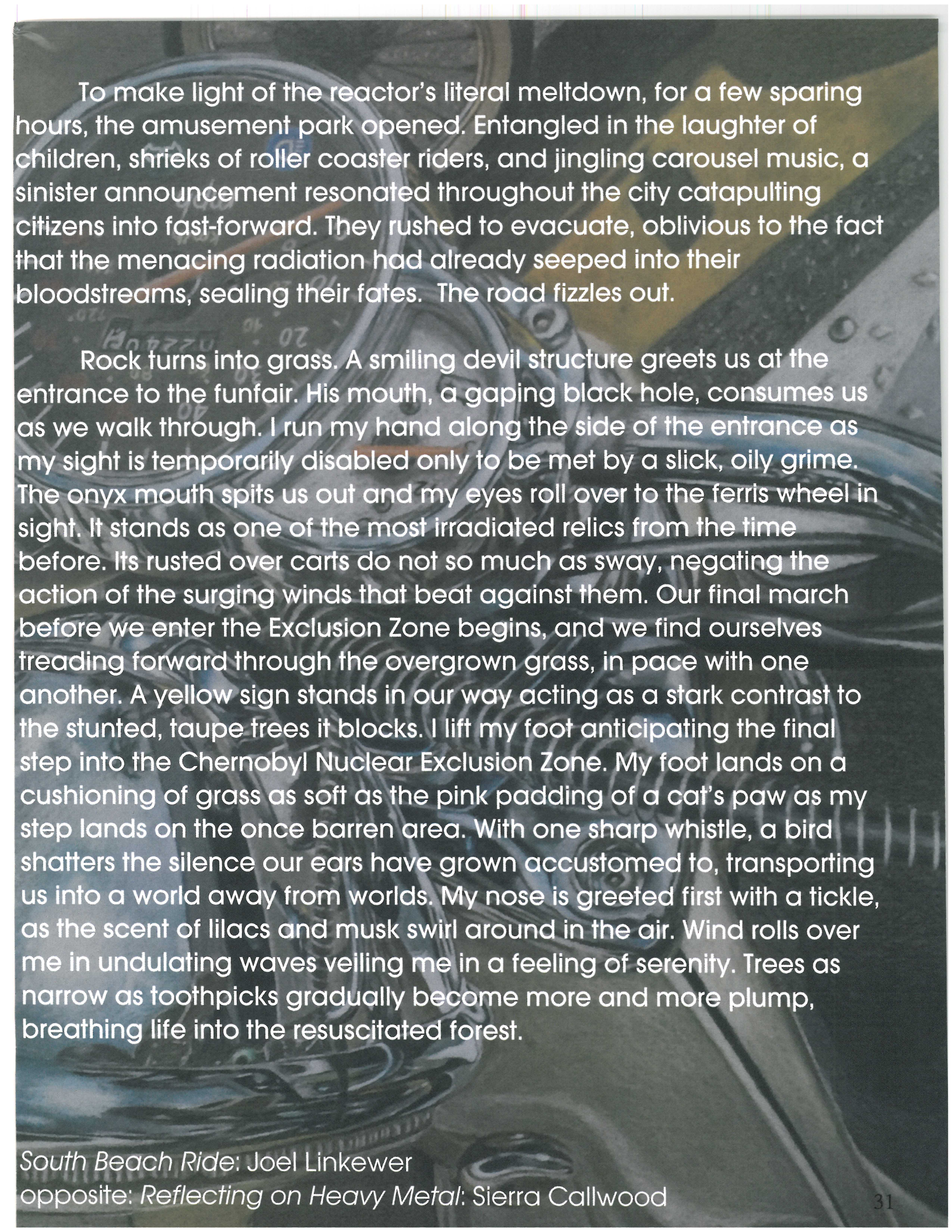


Fumbling with equipment, we walk staggered, each of us heading in our own direction: not so much evident in our footwork, but evident in our eyes. Jeremy stares vacantly ahead, absentmindedly clicking the cartridge of his camera: up, down, down, up, down, down. Cameron's eyes cast downwards staring at her own shadow as if she fears it will desert her. Dave's head, far ahead of the rest of us, twists side to side, mirroring that of an owl. Molly, headstrong, stares straight forward, unafraid of what, or who, stares back. Our paces slow down and our gazes shift slowly. Here and there once treasured items are strewn about, lost in the panic: a plush rabbit, a domino dotted four times, a pink slipper with a paisley pattern carved out of the side. The face of a doll stares up from the dirt, mold stretching across her face in webs and disintegrating, scratched-out sockets where her eyes should be. Dirt engulfs her body leaving her drowning in detritus. Dave stops. The rest of us fall in line. We turn left. The road opens, and our shadows dissolve as gray, tempestuous clouds envelop the waning sun. Shifting into a more industrialized area, transmission towers stand stiff and burly, wires running through their steel cross arms. A muted blue building still stands lined with indecipherable letters.

We're passing by middle school number three.

"Children will never run here again." Dave cuts through the tangible silence that built up.

"So then we should be approaching the funfair." The irony of that statement fills my mouth with an acrid taste. Cameron guffaws then quickly clamps her mouth shut. The extraneous laugh Cameron liberated triggers a nervous laughter to bubble out of Jeremy. Soon we all find ourselves laughing, a simple act that releases all the pent-up nervous energy each of us bottled up throughout the trip.



To make light of the reactor's literal meltdown, for a few sparing hours, the amusement park opened. Entangled in the laughter of children, shrieks of roller coaster riders, and jingling carousel music, a sinister announcement resonated throughout the city catapulting citizens into fast-forward. They rushed to evacuate, oblivious to the fact that the menacing radiation had already seeped into their bloodstreams, sealing their fates. The road fizzles out.

Rock turns into grass. A smiling devil structure greets us at the entrance to the funfair. His mouth, a gaping black hole, consumes us as we walk through. I run my hand along the side of the entrance as my sight is temporarily disabled only to be met by a slick, oily grime. The onyx mouth spits us out and my eyes roll over to the ferris wheel in sight. It stands as one of the most irradiated relics from the time before. Its rusted over carts do not so much as sway, negating the action of the surging winds that beat against them. Our final march before we enter the Exclusion Zone begins, and we find ourselves treading forward through the overgrown grass, in pace with one another. A yellow sign stands in our way acting as a stark contrast to the stunted, taupe trees it blocks. I lift my foot anticipating the final step into the Chernobyl Nuclear Exclusion Zone. My foot lands on a cushioning of grass as soft as the pink padding of a cat's paw as my step lands on the once barren area. With one sharp whistle, a bird shatters the silence our ears have grown accustomed to, transporting us into a world away from worlds. My nose is greeted first with a tickle, as the scent of lilacs and musk swirl around in the air. Wind rolls over me in undulating waves veiling me in a feeling of serenity. Trees as narrow as toothpicks gradually become more and more plump, breathing life into the resuscitated forest.



Back and Before

Jon Oshinsky

I wish there were a redo button.

I wish I could go back to before I knew everything I know now.

Back to when I believed in the innocence of the world, before I

knew how cruel the world could be.

Back to when we believed in love, rather than the despair and

sorrow it would later bring.

Before I had to worry about school and grades, back to when

my childhood was just beginning.

Before I knew about death and violence, before I knew how

evil some could be.

And most importantly, back to before my mistakes.

Because there isn't a redo button, and there will never be. For

it isn't our actions that define us, but how we handle them.

Life is all about growing and developing. As you get older you

begin to realize the world isn't as you grew up to believe it is.

But then again, is anything?

Does the reality ever meet the standards of our expectations?

No, it does not, and it never will.

So why do we keep chasing dreams and creating expectations,

when we know they will never be anything but failed?

Hope. Because of hope.

Air

Samantha Morim

Air

Barely even there

Caressing my skin softly with a
gentle touch

Blowing soft tendrils of my hair
around me like a halo

Swaying the trees with an angry but
graceful breeze

Whispering words of safety into my
ears

Mother Nature's breath against me

Barely even there

Air



I'm Withering Away: Erin Hunter



Red

Rachel Bomser

Crimson is your favorite perfume
wafting down the hallway and radiating from your body.
Rose is the smile that spreads across his face
when he hears your voice.
Fire engine is the heat that sizzles on your ears and behind your eyelids
as the sun beats down and penetrates your skin.
Wine is stepping into a burning bath,
the bubbles boiling and settling around your feet.
Mahogany is the smooth and creamy chocolates
gifted by your lover that melt down your throat
and settle in your stomach to join the butterflies.
Strawberry is the fuzz that appears on your tongue
after your face scrunches in distaste from the sour candy.
Garnet is a cinnamon heart, a chili, or a spicy jalapeno,
Leaving an inflamed tongue that craves creamy milk.
Candy apple is your favorite band entering the stage,
sparking a roar of applause that explodes in your ear and sizzles
throughout your body.
Delicious is your favorite fruits;
juices dribbling out of your mouth and onto your legs as you sink your
teeth into its crisp skin.
Burgundy is the rustle of leaves crunching underneath your boots
as you venture through the bare wooded trees.
Red is everything.

Juxtaposition: Elizabeth Cornfeld

He Gave Me a Rose

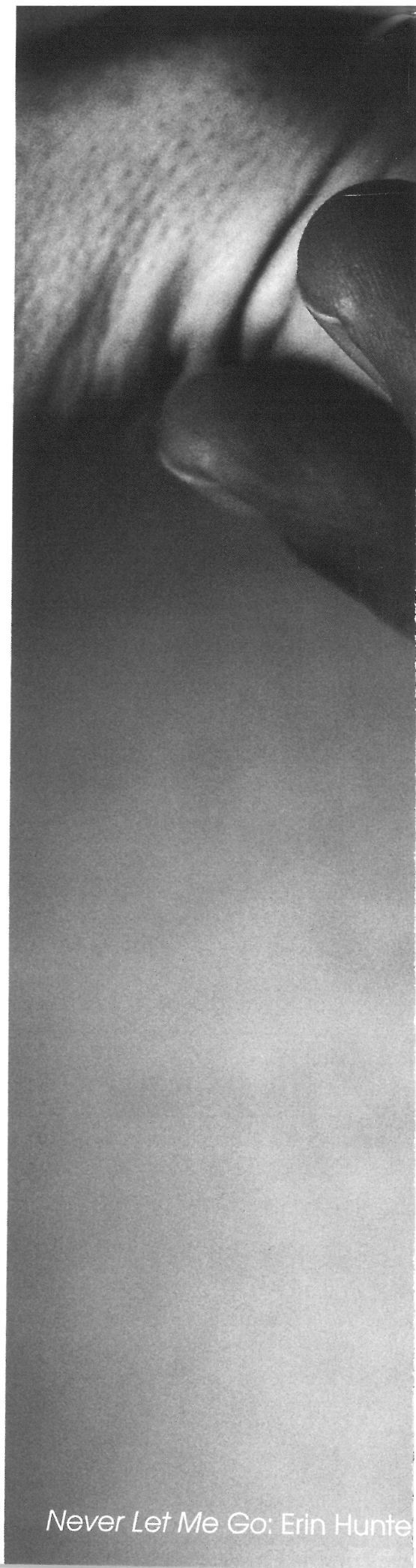
Marti Bennett

He gave me a rose,
One sore, cut at its tips,
Drenched in the murkiest of ponds,
Half alive, completely engulfed by darkness,
I threw it away.

My next suitor gave me a tulip,
Sinking in a pool of gray,
Once alive with healthy wealth,
Let me put it out of its misery,
I threw it away.

Then he gave me a field,
Blood flowing from its feet to its head
Thriving, live and gorgeous,
Lacking the bitterness of death,
I kept it.

I am a rose,
I am cut at the end,
Give me a field,
And I will bloom again.





Here I am, sitting upon a flat surface with no control of the world around me. I could be bent, crumpled, or broken, but I have no say in the matter. I am but an inanimate piece of four-by-six paper, ripped out from a student's notebook.

There is nothing written upon me. I am a blank slate, waiting for someone to take a palette and illustrate something upon me.

Oh, how I long to have something written upon my blank skin, like a tattoo with sentimental value larger than words. Any sort of marking, even just the single stroke of a pencil line, will give me meaning and purpose.

Or perhaps I could shift forms. I could be transformed into an airplane and soar across the room. What great heights will I see? How will it feel to have the air hit me as I accelerate higher and higher until gravity finally intervenes and lowers me? I wait in anticipation for something to happen.

But alas, there is no life for me. I am still as blank as a night sky without stars. Anything would be better than lying here against this table, dead to the world, and paralyzed.

Maybe my prayers have been answered because a lamp light abruptly turns on overhead. A human enters the room and is looking down upon me. This is the most joyous moment of my life. I feel overwhelmed with excitement and glee.

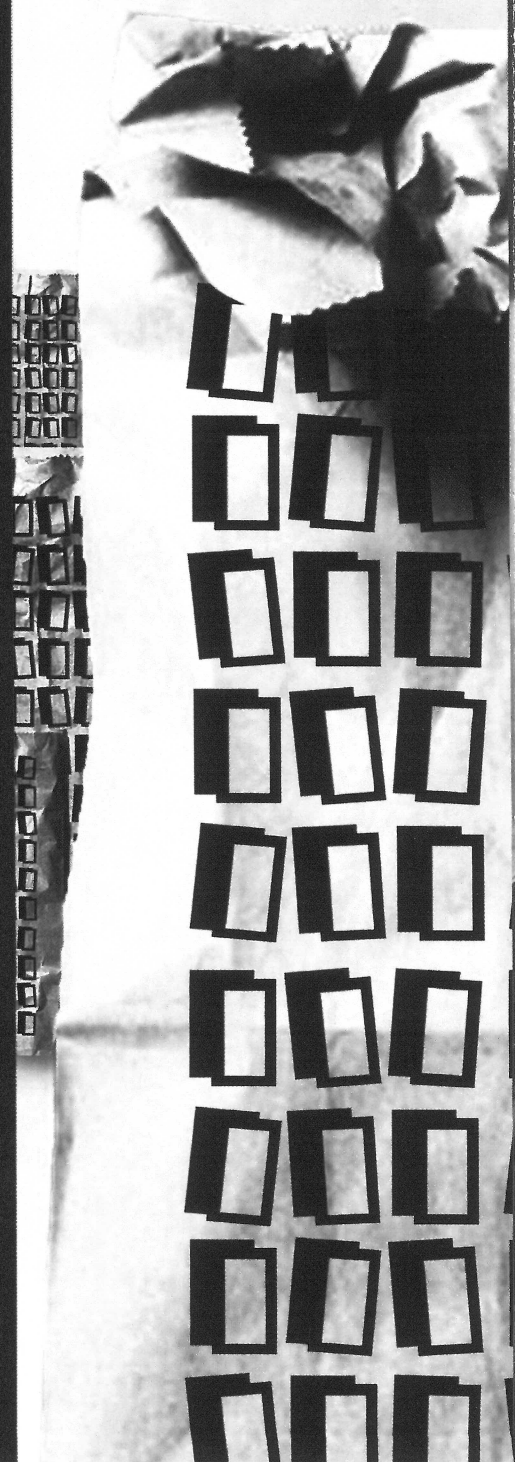
However, before my bliss can fully unravel, I realize that the human has no writing instrument in his hands. He lacks pencil, paint, or anything else that could be used to design me. Instead, he is lifting a heavy-looking machine which he places next to me and plugs into the conveniently located outlet.

Curiously, I stare up at the machine. It appears to be a tall, electronic garbage dispenser. The sleek, grey design reminds me more of a robot than a household device.

Maybe the human is using this device as an inspiration to draw a robot on me. It would be my honor to act as his canvas for a science-fiction diorama. The possibilities are simply limitless! Who knows what kind of imagination that human has running around in his head. I think his imagination is as vast as an open meadow.

The Woes

Amand





of a Paper

a Pravder

Yet, he seems to be blatantly ignoring me. In fact, he reaches into his bookbag, rummaging for a bit, until he reveals another sheet of paper. How rude! I am perfectly capable on my own. How dare he replace me before giving me a chance!

Much to my surprise, however, the human places this second piece of paper into the overhead machine and presses a button. I watch in sheer horror as the innocent body is torn to shreds in a mere instant.

This is no machine# it is a monster! This is a despicable creature taking helpless victims, chewing them up and spitting them out until their mangled bodies are unidentifiable. If I could move, I would be shuddering in fear at this point.

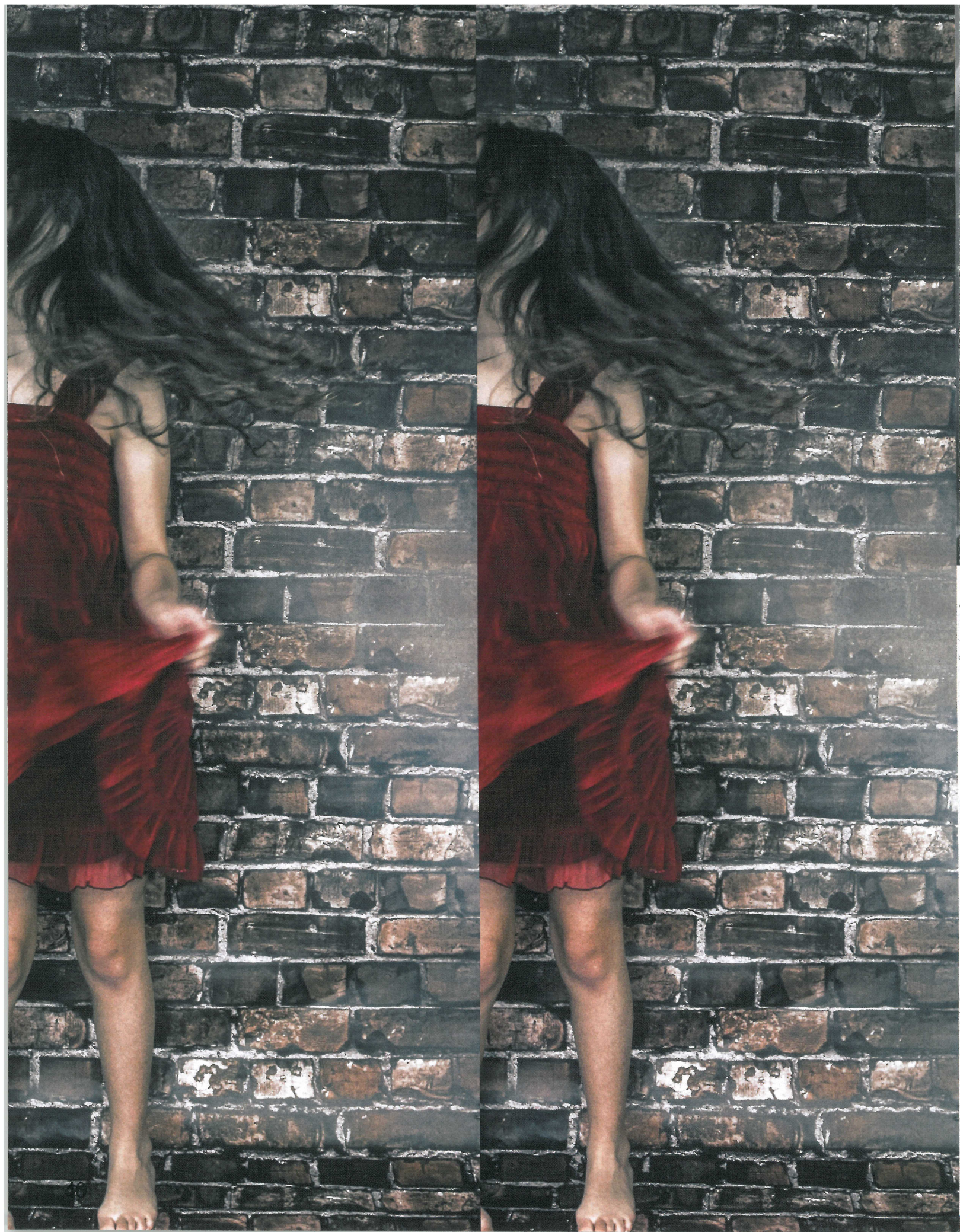
However, I am just a piece of paper. I cannot move. I cannot scream. All I can do is watch as the human puts more papers through the machine. Poor souls. What did they ever do to deserve this kind of torture? I would never wish that fate upon anyone.

With each buzzing noise of the machine as it devours the papers, more and more panic begins to rise within me. I cannot help but wonder if I am next. Will it hurt? That machine appears to be merciless in its pursuit to destroy all pieces of paper within its path. I realize that without a doubt the process will be painful.

If I could talk, I would shout at the human, begging him to spare me from this grotesque and inhumane practice. I would ask him why he is subjecting me and all of the papers to this unimaginable terror.

Luckily, for now I am saved. The human turns off the overhead lamp, unplugs the beast, and leaves. I am left feeling more thankful and relieved than I have ever been in my entire paper life.

Now, I have come to one conclusion. I should be more careful what I wish for. Earlier, I had said that anything would be better than just lying here on a flat surface, waiting to be drawn upon. I was wrong.



The Happiness Hymn

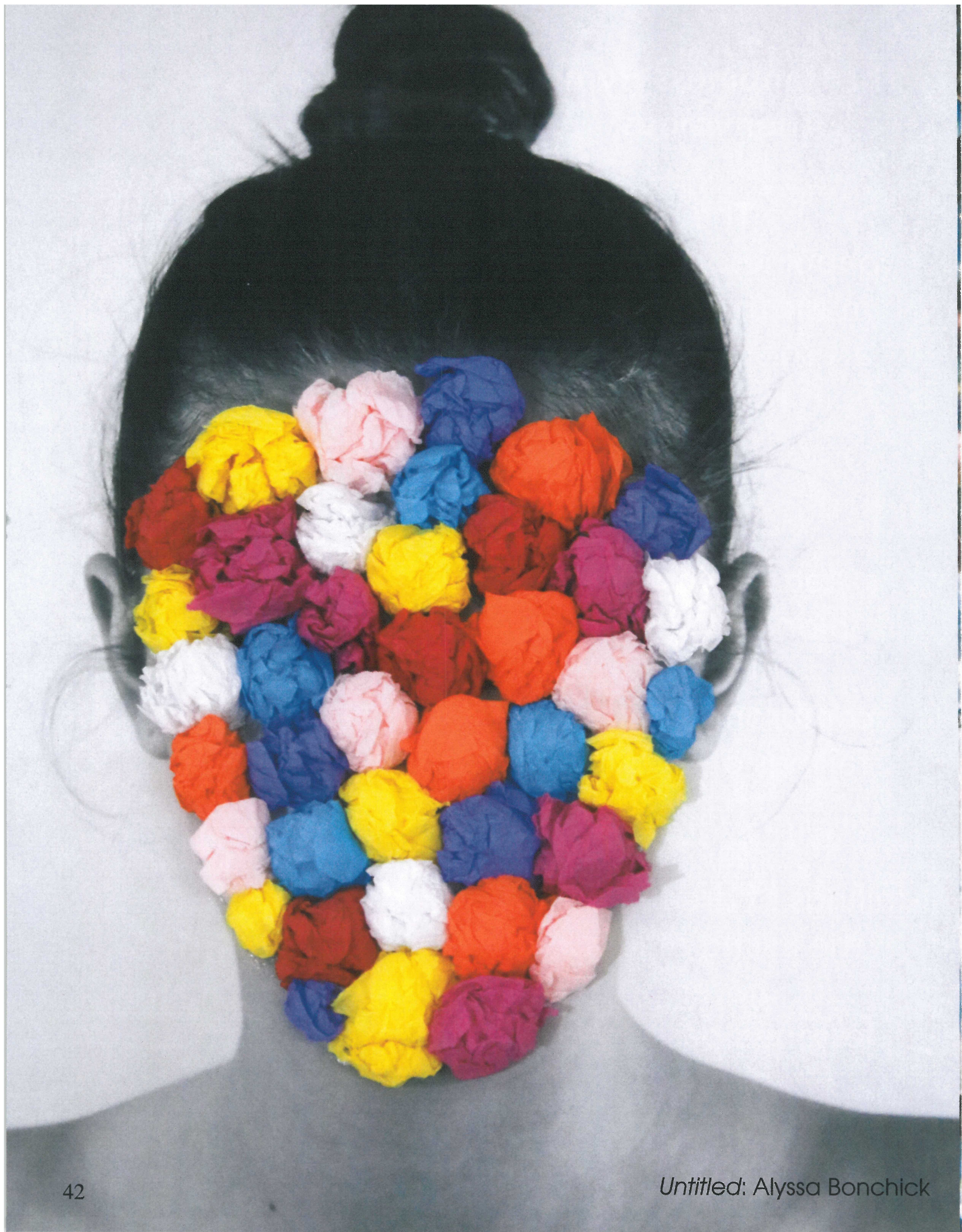
Anonymous

The
happiness hymn of
music that bled of
art so spread with
rowings
of red

the
red rowing of
glorious greens
always
compromised the
failings of dreams

the
failings of dreams and
the lulling of lulls
never
lessened passion's
crashing
cymbals

crashing
of cymbals
in harmony
brings
but
love was never born of
reasons
strings
reasons
strings
music
the same, art so dim
tangled
the wings of
the happiness hymn



The Author: A Commentary

Lindsay Glick

ONE //

We have found an author, shiny and new, his work not yet soiled by a civilization attracted to brevity. In an era of dull musings by bright screens and acronyms, such an author is rare. Nevertheless, we have found one, and he is here with us today.

The author is the antithesis to our concrete world. His writing carries us away from the gum-shellacked sidewalks of our urban dwellings into a realm where only words exist.

We lead the author to his room. He is ecstatic to be here, and we feel the same. As we round the corners of the compound, we can see the author's elation in the glow of the fluorescent lights.

When we discovered the author, he was writing novels for himself, the contents of which he had previously never shared. If we hadn't found him, he enthuses, he'd go on like this for the rest of his life. We must say that we agree. It would be a shame for such talent to go to waste.

The author is beaming.

Now, he has decided to stay with us forever.

TWO //

As we open the sleek metal door to the author's chambers, his smile seems to waver ever so slightly. Without a doubt, the author was not expecting such quaint and lackluster quarters. But the author catches himself. After all, few get the opportunity to do what they love for the rest of their lives.

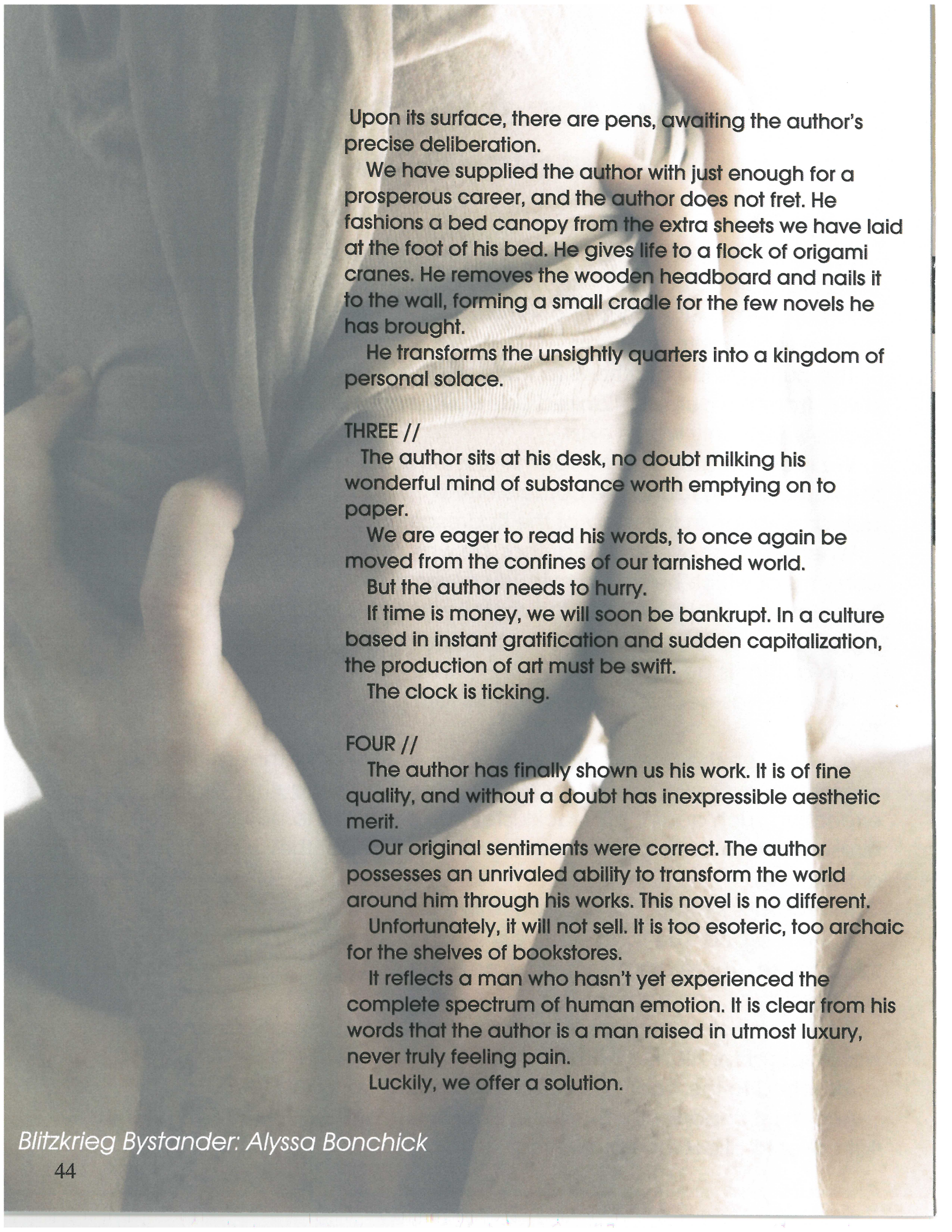
The room is simple, but enough to live on.

There is a bed. The foam mattress is thin as paper, and the sheets threadbare. There are a few loose nails jutting from the oak headboard, but nothing of concern.

There is a pot in the corner for the author's daily excretions and a small water spigot for his hydration.

Attached to the door, there is a small flap for passing food.

And most importantly, there is a desk. It is crafted of wood, with a shiny flat cover to allow for easy writing.



Upon its surface, there are pens, awaiting the author's precise deliberation.

We have supplied the author with just enough for a prosperous career, and the author does not fret. He fashions a bed canopy from the extra sheets we have laid at the foot of his bed. He gives life to a flock of origami cranes. He removes the wooden headboard and nails it to the wall, forming a small cradle for the few novels he has brought.

He transforms the unsightly quarters into a kingdom of personal solace.

THREE //

The author sits at his desk, no doubt milking his wonderful mind of substance worth emptying on to paper.

We are eager to read his words, to once again be moved from the confines of our tarnished world.

But the author needs to hurry.

If time is money, we will soon be bankrupt. In a culture based in instant gratification and sudden capitalization, the production of art must be swift.

The clock is ticking.

FOUR //

The author has finally shown us his work. It is of fine quality, and without a doubt has inexpressible aesthetic merit.

Our original sentiments were correct. The author possesses an unrivaled ability to transform the world around him through his works. This novel is no different.

Unfortunately, it will not sell. It is too esoteric, too archaic for the shelves of bookstores.

It reflects a man who hasn't yet experienced the complete spectrum of human emotion. It is clear from his words that the author is a man raised in utmost luxury, never truly feeling pain.

Luckily, we offer a solution.

FIVE //

The author complains of his condition. He no longer wishes to write. He is uninspired. Couldn't we at least give him more time? His ankles have nearly been rubbed raw. Could we be so kind as to loosen the fetters?

We do not agree. After all, it is agony that makes a true author.

The author should be well on his way.

SIX //

Today we have decided to remove the author's extremities. It is an unfortunate decision, but he will no longer be needing them, and we cannot afford superfluous limbs.

We, of course, leave his right arm intact, for it is his only asset except for his wonderful brain.

To accurately craft tales of sorrow, an author must permanently mourn the loss of something once his own.

SEVEN //

We have decided to get rid of the author. In the middle of the night, we sneak into his chamber with a knife. As he sleeps, we plunge the blade into his chest, letting it sink below his ribs. He sputters, coughing up blood.

Why are you doing this? he stammers.

We do not answer; we do not feel guilt. The author knew what his job would entail.

We pile his decaying body on top of the others'. The room reeks of stories never told. Some flies buzz around, clinging to the brains and entrails of decaying words.

We return to the author's chambers, pocketing the author's pages. We shall alter them just enough to make them our own.

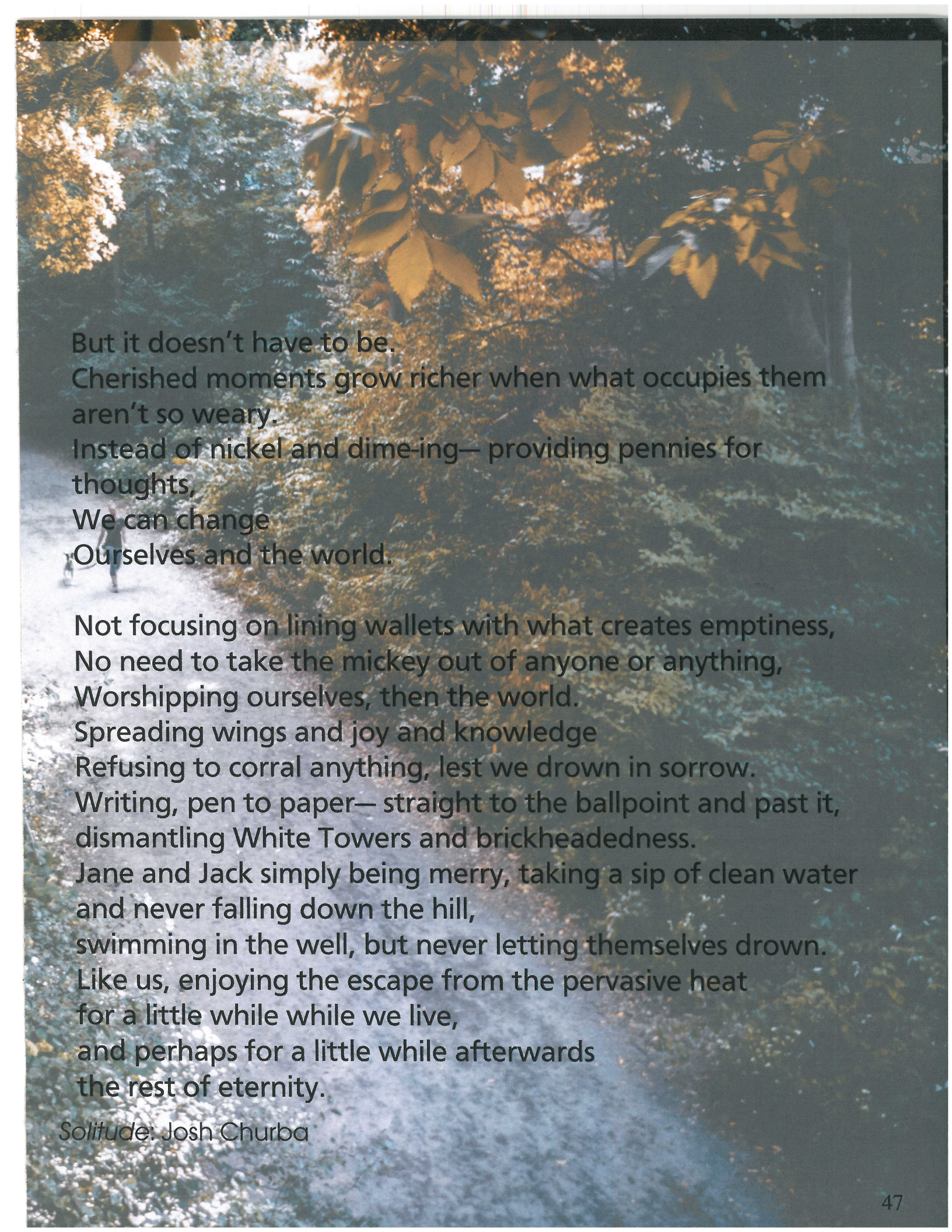
It is now time to find ourselves a new author.



Depressing Poetry Is Only Depressing If It Doesn't Have An Uplifting Message

Anonymous

We line up at a broken Disney World ride,
never realizing that hearts full of hope,
can never upset an empty wallet.
Existing under a guise of not even family,
we shout "Bird, bird, bird is the word,"
Extolling the praises of a box full of fake life,
our feathers clipped,
we fall out of the sky and into a cage,
where we can never sing anything but torn up notes,
unsent letters to John—
anything but dear,
for we are deers in headlights that shine light on the
small,
shedding darkness on what paints the big picture,
brushing past the important,
forgoing a canvas for an Etch-a-Sketch,
feeling more sorrow in an earthquake for our lost lines
than lost lineages.
we never know what to say, or when.
Transience liberates, for time traps us—giving us no second
seconds.
Wasting time, drunk on fake power
our livers aren't all that's failing
it's all a farce.

A photograph of a forest path with sunlight filtering through the trees. The path is covered in fallen leaves and dappled sunlight. The trees are tall and their leaves are a mix of green and yellow, suggesting autumn. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

But it doesn't have to be.
Cherished moments grow richer when what occupies them
aren't so weary.
Instead of nickel and dime-ing— providing pennies for
thoughts,
We can change
Ourselves and the world.

Not focusing on lining wallets with what creates emptiness,
No need to take the mickey out of anyone or anything,
Worshipping ourselves, then the world.
Spreading wings and joy and knowledge
Refusing to corral anything, lest we drown in sorrow.
Writing, pen to paper— straight to the ballpoint and past it,
dismantling White Towers and brickheadedness.
Jane and Jack simply being merry, taking a sip of clean water
and never falling down the hill,
swimming in the well, but never letting themselves drown.
Like us, enjoying the escape from the pervasive heat
for a little while while we live,
and perhaps for a little while afterwards
the rest of eternity.

Solitude: Josh Churba



Wonderland: Gabriella Bowling