



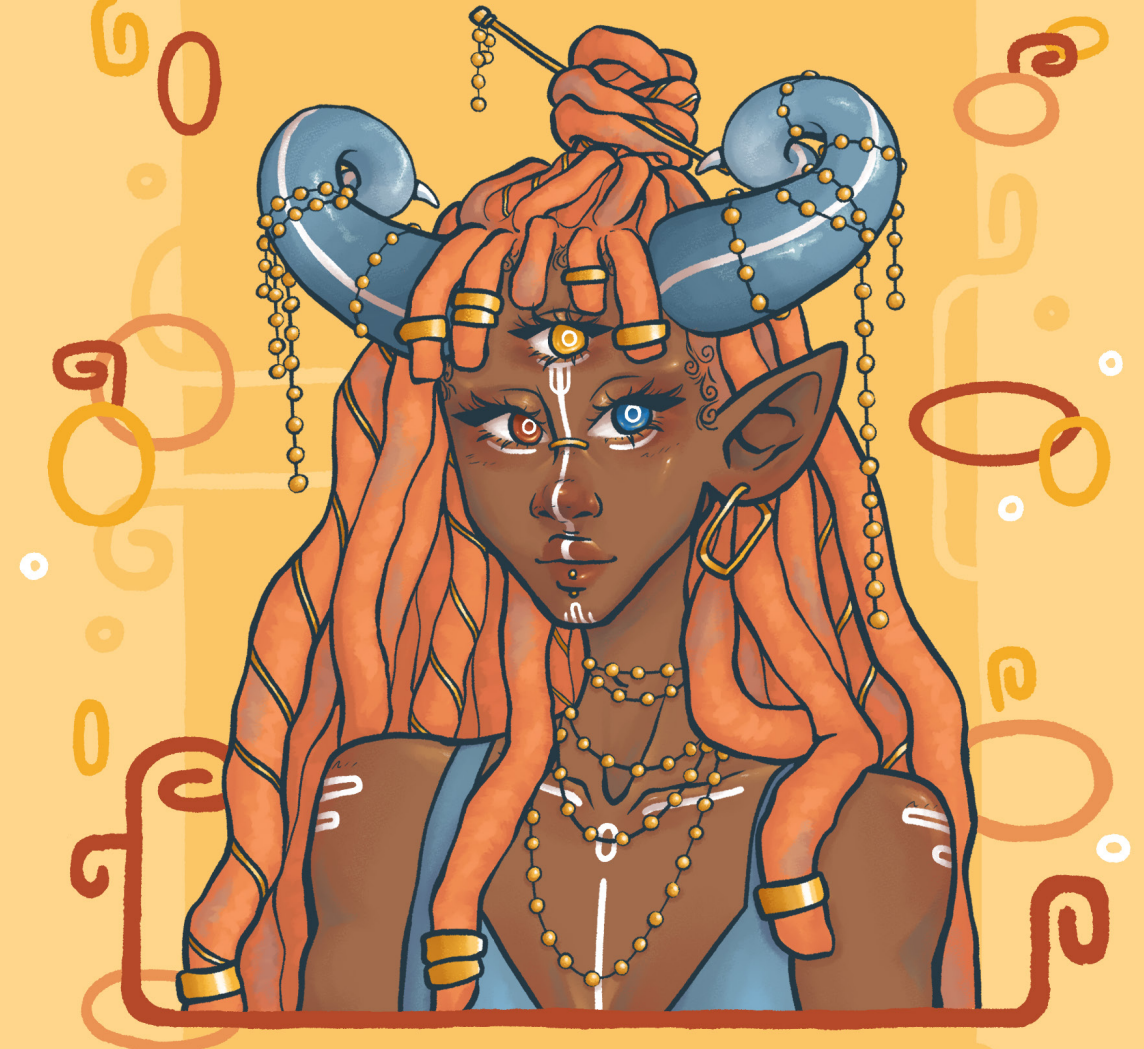
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THE CORADDI 124.2

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To My Little Brother

Alexis King

I look into the eyes
that parents say contribute to our
“likeness,” those wild irises
now empty and spacious;
void of once candid innocence
that frolicked in legos
and playsets.
Before you tried to look tough
with soft light skin
that skipped me
to spoil your
menacing
symphony of silence.

That twinkled
before your words
were afraid to be
saturated, before you drowned
them in meat and sugar
to hide from the world’s beratement.
Before the air about you
was insecure because
it wasn’t sure
whether to fear for its life
or yours.

Before judgment
coiled its arms around
your sweatshirt-swaddled shoulders
and promised to be
the legacy your name carried.
Bursting from teeth
like the swell of
explosive laughter,
Grandparents swear

that “if you wear that thing again,
in the heat of summer
when it makes no sense
and go down the street
at over six feet
the world won’t care that you’re
only fifteen!”

I wonder if he’s still in there
that boy who cried and begged for his
sister before the tension grew
thick as the peanut butter
we tried together.
When Spiderman shirts swaddled
your shoulders and
soaked your smile,
of course, before he transformed into Odd Future
and spoon-fed pop culture.

To My Little Brother

Before your spirit was distant
as it drifted
along to music
whose rhythm matched
the beat of those shifty eyes
promising mischief.

Before you swallowed your fate
and your boyish smirk
was displaced from your face.

Before the air about you
sang of being all too
terrified of reality; and danced
along the lines of stereotype
and conformity.

As we age,
and you boast about
being taller than me,
I can only wonder
as I look up into you, who the
ghost in
those eyes will be.

Waiting for Nothing

JD Terhune

The world wants me to get up
I don't dare look at the clock

The dark void of my closed eyes
The plaster expanse of my ceiling

Alarms screeching at me
Yet I am unphased

Notifications screaming my name
All left unread

The sun peering through the blinds
Blinding light judging my inaction

The sweet song of birds
Sounds akin to mocking laughter

My bed is no longer comfortable
But I can't bring myself to leave

I cannot sleep
I cannot wake up

The day goes on without me
But I cannot go on without it

Elton John's Dressing Room

Abigail Domorod

“Elton, you’re on in five.”

Only a simple nod in return was given to him, not meant to be shown as apathetic, *no, no*, but to be shown as a gesture of familiarity. He had been told that so many times by now it was almost incomparable to anything else. Like a music box kept in a fancy house for years to be played over and over again in the same way, day by day. In fact, that’s exactly what it was like. He felt like one of those little ballerinas in getups that swirl around to the sound of an open box, a tiny dancer.

Four.

Looking forward at himself in the mirror, its golden glow melting away any imperfections on his face seen by others who thought he had any at all. He took a cheap plastic comb and ran it through the sides of his hair.

“I should dye it again. Maybe a bit of blue this time, that would be exciting! I’ve got to remember to grab some.” As the words mumbled out his cracked lips meant for his reflection and not a soul else, he gave himself a soft, toothy grinned laugh. This was his intimate time, and he wouldn’t want to spend it with anyone else.

Three.

“Which pair today? The pink ones will become a bore if you wear them too often, now won’t they? What about a bit of yellow? Proper fitting for the song.” Once more the Brit made conversation with his mirror friend, reaching over the jewel-encrusted vanity not fit for his simple makeup and powders. No, that wasn’t him. Though he adored Marilyn, he couldn’t think of just wearing a simple chic look with full red lips and a powdered nose.

He grabbed the wooden box of great size, something that took up nearly half of his personal space, and opened it to reveal a dozen types of glasses. Some large and square, others small and round. For a moment, he just looked at them in complete awe, as if a new child was laid out in front of him to adore. It was equal to him of that. “Perfect.” He chose the yellow pair of glasses with large lenses and placed them on, feeling more himself than he ever had. The bridge hugged the short curve of his nose, rhinestones sparkling where his eyebrows would normally be visible.

Two.

“Elton, you’re on in two. Are you ready?”

Once more, he heard the voice behind the thick dressing room walls that hugged the sounds of the people and their music. The studio walls squeezed and comforted anyone in need of it, as if transporting them to a different planet once within the confines of them. One filled with groovy tunes and alien creatures who wore diamond platform shoes and itchy sequined coats, which began to feel soft after a while.

Standing up from the worn leather stool, he examined himself from nearly every angle, way, and direction, smoothing out any form of crinkle, almost obsessively, in the silk of his blue clothes. *Smooth as a baby’s bum, but just as striking as a grown man’s.* He let out another toothy laugh to himself at his private thought. “Let’s do it.”

One.

He closed the door of the dressing room and began to work his way through the corridors and tunnels to get into his wing. The clunking of his thick, sweaty high-heeled shoes echoed throughout his surroundings, telling others to move aside. He’d never do it, so the textiles spoke for him. The man speaking to him before gave him a soft smile as he planted himself beside him, the clipboard in his hand practically sewn to it. He never saw him without one. “You’re a star, Elton John. Go give them a show.”

Elton nodded at him, patting his arm gently, “You haven’t got to remind me twice. If I go off my rocker, never pull the plug, I think it’s worth the risk.” Pushing him aside, the curtains shedded the protective layer between him and his people. He felt cosmic, groovy. Cheering, clapping, and everything else filled his ears making his glasses rumble. *This was it.*

Dorothy, it’s time to go home darling, beyond that Yellow Brick Road.

Crumbling

Dana Broadus

The scratches on the wall don't bother me anymore. They're small; nearly unnoticeable among the other things that fill this room. Old clocks, dolls, dishes, maps, lamps, globes, a telescope, cameras, painted glass, pictures, dust, countless mirrors that reflect every sparkle of light that comes in through the thick browning purple drapes, rugs, desks, signs, radios, games, pottery, woodwork, chairs, books, three cats, and the scratches on the wall. I have no doubt that the last two are related.

Though it should, the scratches on the wall do not offend me. They bring solace. It's as if there is something beyond the scratches that beckons me to something more. They call me to investigate, to feel, to allow my fingertips to caress their ridges which juxtapose the smooth surface of the wall, to see if I can only feel the texture of freedom.

The bell from the entrance interrupts my trance and I tear my eyes to the customer walking in. I don't pay much attention to the way the man looks but I welcome him to my antique shop. He does not stop to acknowledge me but instead continues walking to browse the endless items. I am glad because now I can gaze across the room to the markings on the wall.

I was dusting and taking inventory when I first noticed them. They caught and surprised my eye. Although there are no more than five and they are all smaller than the length of my index finger, I watch them as they watch me. In a box where even I have become a slowly aging item, these marks are untouched by time itself.

There is a shuffling sound and the man from earlier walks out without buying anything. The bell rings on his way out. I turn my attention back to the symbols on the wall. They have only been there for a week. They mock me gently. Asking me why I cannot join them in their immortal crusade. Why do I let myself slowly perish in a sea of material things? If I cannot join the clouds, the forests, the waterfalls, the rocks, the trees, the rivers, the lakes, the oceans, the volcanoes, the mud, the ash, the magma, the leaves, the statues, the sky, the sun, the night, the day, the moon, the lights, the pyramids, the sand, the faults, the mountains, the valleys, the grass, the waves, the wind, then isn't it better to join the symbols on the wall?

The glyphs do not get to continue their sweet nothings as the third cat

jumps on the desk in front of me and hits a key on my cash register. The nearly empty money pocket pokes me as I glare at the sassy fur ball before me. The thing hisses as though it catches my dark intent and stalks away to lay in the sun on the other side of my desk. Cats are evil.

But could it have made them? The glyphs that indicate a new world, a place to be a person and not a thing? A thing that is barely looked at and interacted with like the rest of the store?

The glyphs promise me more. They tease me as they chip at the wall slowly, opening my confinement to new horizons and possibilities.

The meow comes slightly before the sound of the bell. I fully plan to throw both offenders out of my shop. I wait for someone to enter but it's just the wind that has picked up enough power to briefly open the door.

I glance back to the runes on the wall, I have to be sure they did not escape. Alas, they are still there. I must make my move now before they realize that my mundane-ness is unlike them and they reject me. They stagnantly swirl with my eyes as they seduce my mind with wonders and imaginings of this new world, a place where only I am smart enough to go. How brave am I to decipher the runes, to understand their clear intent. Their will for me to forever leave this place, their will for me to be special.

Past the runes, I see the wall in front of me crumbling at the cracks, the seams holding the wall together. There is just enough space for me to view the lush green of the beyond and to hear the waterfalls, birds, and animals, calling me to embrace them forever. On the other side is a globe full of new adventures and things to do, if I will only obey and submit to the runes.

The blasted bell rings once more and only the deepest discipline in me allows me to stop myself from throwing the cash register in front of me at the offender. They have the audacity to disturb me during this time? They think they can take the runes away from me? They think that they can take it for themselves? I will kill them before I allow them to take what is rightfully mine. What I worked so hard to achieve. What I was blessed with.

The sudden flash of bright pink interrupts my mental rant. *They make balloons square now?* The bright pink monstrosity is covered in sparkles, has a horn on the top, and reads 'Happy 8th Birthday!' in huge black block letters. I am unprepared for the screeches that follow.

"See? I told you I saw a babydoll." Comes the voice of the owner of the

balloon. A small girl with a dark green tutu, red tennis shoes, new and poorly dyed purple hair, and an orange shirt. She has pigtails on each side of her head but they are uneven and one is poorly tied and coming loose. She has the widest smile on her face and she points a chubby finger at one of the antique dolls on my shelves.

I want to throw the stupid thing at her and demand she leave my shop but behind her is a giant of a man that is blocking the doorway.

“Now Sarah, are you sure you don’t want any other doll?” The man says, his voice rustic, grutal, and uncharacteristically shaky, as if he had just run a mile. He looks at the doll with confusion and fear on his face. “Are you sure you want that thing to be in our house? I know there’s a toy store down the street and we only get one new toy on our special day, remember?”

The little girl, Sarah, barely considered his request. “I’m going to go look for more.” She says as she looks around my store in awe and, before the man can register what she has declared, she is off to a running start through my shop.

Stupid creature. I need to stop her before she has a chance to damage anything. *What if she damages the runes?* Fear has never been more present in my body. *I need to grab her and this man and get them out of my shop now.*

“Excuse me, how much for the doll?”

They need to leave now, if they don’t they might change something that cannot be fixed. They could harm my escape. And then I will be stuck here for the rest of my life.

“Excuse me?”

A thing, forever tarnishing slowly and to make matters worse, I am below the objects in this store. They have lived for hundreds of years and they can exist for several more. But I- I am nothing but flesh and bone, doomed to forever. I turn my head to glance at the runes once more and another wave of fear strikes me hard and heavy. The runes are gone.

Everything is gone. There is nothing but brown in front of me.

“Is everything alright?”

I bring my head up to meet the voice. The man that walked in with the little girl is standing in front of me. His brown shirt is the one that’s blocking my line of view to the runes on the wall. It takes me a moment to realize what

he said and I feel my eyebrows crinkle in confusion.

He’s looking at me? I look around but there is nobody as usual. The little girl has not come back from exploring and he and I are the only ones that can speak.

“Yes?” I hesitantly respond.

“Oh, I was asking if you’re alright? I’ve been trying to talk to you for a while but you’ve been staring into space.” The man says with a little confusion.

He wants to know how I am? No, that’s a common greeting. “I’m well, how are you?” I respond as politely as I can muster. My palms are already beginning to itch from being apart from the runes. *I need to see them now, to make sure they are all okay.*

“I’m holding on, thanks for asking.” The man chuckles a little as if he knows a small joke that I don’t. *Annoying*

I don’t respond, hoping he will tell me what the hell he wants and move out of the way. I stare at the shirt in front of me. It shifts for a second and my hopes go flying, but not before I realize that he is not attempting to move out of the way, he is only shifting out of awkwardness.

“Do you need anything?” I prompt him.

“Oh yes.” He says as if he forgot what he approached me for.

I wait patiently for him to tell me what he wants but he appears to be thinking too slow for my pleasure.

“And what is it that you would like?” I ask him with urgency. *This conversation is moving too slow.* Keeping my eyes on the brown shirt, I pray to the runes that he is able to articulate a single sentence and move out of my way.

The gruff voice thankfully doesn’t take long to respond. “How much is it for the doll over there?” I don’t have to lift my head to know that he’s pointing to the same one that the little girl wanted so I am quick to respond.

“\$35” I hesitate. “But because I think there is someone with a birthday in the building, I will take 50% off.”

“Really?” The man says in appreciation. “That would mean a lot. Thank you so much.”

“It’s no problem.” I manage to grind through my teeth.

“So, how long have you been here?” The man asks me.

Oh, to be in the runes right now, away from this conversation. “I’ve owned the antique shop for 15 years.”

The man looks genuinely shocked. “Oh really? It’s amazing that I haven’t been here before.” He briefly scans the room. “I grew up in this town. You?”

I’m a bit taken aback by his question. “Why?”

Two hands are pointed up in the universal symbol of surrender. “I just wanted to start a conversation.”

This is something that I could never understand about humans and why the runes and I have so much in common. Only the runes see me as more than an object. But, if that were true, why would the man be asking me where I’m from.

“Why would you care where I’m from?” I ask him again, politer.

The man shrugs. “Because everyone’s from somewhere, that’s where we get our stories.”

“Ah, that makes sense,” I say outloud to myself. Like the objects on my shelf, they all have a starting place that makes a story that makes people want to buy them. Humans are just like them.

“Why do you say it like that?” The man asks curiously.

“Well, humans are just like objects in this store,” I’m quick to respond to this obvious, trivial question.

“How so?” He inquires.

I am aggravated that I have to explain this much to him. “We are meaningless. We are just things that may have a creator and origin story, but, we are gilded because we are nothing. And one day we will fade into nothingness. We are all touched by time and we are all destined to die in the end. There is nothing that we can do except wait to die. How can you be happy when you know that nothing you do will ever make a difference to the inevitable?”

I’ve had this talk multiple times. With family. With friends. With strangers.

With doctors. With psychiatrists. With myself. With the antique objects. With the runes on the wall.

But the man doesn’t laugh. He simply shrugs his shoulders, “Just because our time on earth is short doesn’t make it meaningless.” he mutters and glances around awkwardly for the little girl.

When it’s evident that she’s not returning, he looks back at me and we stare at each other in silence.

Eventually, I decide to ask him about his day.

A brief flicker of shock crosses his face and he begins to talk about how his day is going and what he plans on doing for the rest of the day.

I ask him a courteous follow-up question and he hands me a flier from his back pocket.

The little girl comes back as he is finishing his explanation. She lets him finish and then politely asks for the doll on the shelf. I go and get it for her, making sure that it is clear of dust, and then I tell the man that they can have the doll for free. He declines and I tell him that I insist. He thanks me and he and his daughter leave my shop.

I watch them from the window and smile as the man hands the girl the doll. They walk across the street where I know they will continue for three blocks, turn left and walk two more blocks. That’s where the homeless shelter is and where he will spend the rest of the day volunteering with his daughter; a community tradition according to the flier.

It’s not meaningless? My life.

I can do something.

But no. The glyphs will handle my life for me.

I look over at my antiques. Each telling the story of a different time in which they were loved and cherished by someone.

But then they were thrown away. Their masters tossed them out and abandoned them until I found them.

But does that mean their time being loved meant nothing.

This is all too much.

I look back over to the markings on the wall and I realize they look so small, so trivial.

If I, a walking breathing thing cannot change my fate, then how will they.

How can five little scratches change anything?

I am doomed to be nothing. To live as nothing, to only sit here and watch as I am consumed by nothing.

But I am not meaningless.

I pick up the phone carefully. Going to pet the third cat that lays on my desk at the same time. The paint company picks up on the third ring. They agree to come tomorrow morning.

The White-Walled Room

Hannah Ward

Everyday was the same. Lyvinya woke up at precisely 0700 hours, according to her alarm. Lyvinya brushed her hair, put on her dress and shoes, and waited at the metal door. At exactly 0800 hours, Lyvinya knew Carl would open the door. Carl always opened the door.

Carl would give Lyvinya a blue tray of biscuits and a greenish soup. Carl would remind Lyvinya to eat everything on the tray, and Lyvinya would do so. Then Carl would take the tray.

“Lyvinya, ready to go?” Carl asked.

“Yes,” Lyvinya answered.

Every day was the same.

Carl would take Lyvinya to the white-walled room. Lyvinya didn’t know why the Matron couldn’t see her in Lyvinya’s room. It was just as clean and smelled much better. But it just wasn’t how things were done. Lyvinya once asked the Matron why Lyvinya had to leave her room to see. However, The Matron did not like her question, it was disrespectful to question things she’d say, and so Lyvinya never asked again.

The white-walled room was Lyvinya’s least favorite part of the day. The Matron wanted Lyvinya to talk to the people there. They never talked back of course, not in the way normal people did. They were dead. But the Matron wanted Lyvinya to talk to them and so she did.

Sometimes Lyvinya sang to them. “Sing,” the Matron would command Lyvinya. “Yes Matron,” Lyvinnya would reply. The bodies listened to Lyvinya, often dancing to the music she produced, if that’s what the Matron wanted. They were simple songs, the ones that the Matron had taught her to sing. Whether Lyvinya sang or spoke, the bodies still responded.

Sometimes Lyvinya would command them to walk in circles. Other times they would pick up things. Once, the Matron even let Lyvinya dance with one of them. That time was difficult for Lyvinya, She had to focus on the body’s steps while also making sure she did the correct ones herself. As usual, Lyvinya managed to keep her focus. The Matron valued focus; Lyvinya knew what would happen if the Matron’s wishes were not obeyed.

At 1300 hours, Lyvinya would be allowed to leave the white-walled room, and she would be allowed to sleep then. Her room contained a small cot and a steel sink bolted to the smooth, metallic wall. There wasn't much else in the room, and so nothing for Lyvinya to do except sleep. If she wasn't able to do so, Carl would offer her one of the Matron's purple candies. She would sleep soundly then.

At 1800 hours, Lyvinya would be dressed and waiting at the door for Carl. She knew that she would again be provided with the blue tray and then taken to the white-walled room to see the Matron, who would instruct Lyvinya with more songs and chants. This had been Lyvinya's routine for twenty years. Every day was the same. Only today, it wasn't. When Carl took the blue tray from Lyvinya, he didn't lead her down the hall to the white-walled room. Instead, Carl brought her to another unmarked door that she had never seen before.

"Carl," Lyvinya started, "I think we've gone the wrong way."

"Nope." He responded. Not looking at Lyvinya, Carl continued. "Matron wants you here."

"Where is this? What's in there?" Lyvinya asked. Her curiosity was rarely satiated but it never stopped her from asking.

Carl was silent.

"Carl?" Lyvinya asked, stepping away from the door. Before she could get far, Carl, still silent, gripped her arm and held her in place. Carl used his fist to lightly tap on the door in front of them. Lyvinya was frightened. Carl had never done that before.

"Come in," the Matron called. Carl, aware of Lyvinya's growing fear, practically dragged her through the door. Lyvinya was stiff and still, like the bodies always were before she moved them. The room Lyvinya walked in was different from those she had seen before as well. It's walls were not white or a metallic gray, but a color she didn't know how to describe. The walls were light, almost like the color of Lyvinya's hair, but brighter somehow. Lyvinya stared so long at the walls, trying to decipher the color, that she didn't notice the woman, gagged and weeping, in the corner of the room.

"Come here Lyvinya," The Matron ordered. "We are going to try something new today."

The woman, who Lyvinya now noticed was crouched in front of the Matron, continued weeping, her hands bound as if in prayer. She seemed young, although still a bit older than Lyvinya herself. The woman had long, dark hair that curled in little rings. The woman's skin was a beautiful shade, only a smidge lighter than her hair. Carl stood defensively in front of the door. Lyvinya wondered if the Matron believed the woman would run, although Lyvinya couldn't understand why.

"Who's this?" Lyvinya asked.

"Come here" The Matron repeated.

"Why?"

"Lyvinya," Carl admonished.

Lyvinya obeyed.

"Sing," The Matron commanded. "Dancing for now."

Lyvinya looked around, but she could see no bodies with which to sing to. The only ones in the room were Carl, the Matron, herself, and the strange woman who was still crying on the tiled floors. Lyvinya looked toward the Matron, knowing better than to speak this time, and waited. The Matron sighed, seemingly disappointed with Lyvinya's confusion. She usually was disappointed, often calling Lyvinya a "dim child," which Lyvinya knew was not a good thing to the Matron. The Matron didn't value 'dimness.'

"Sing to her," the Matron clarified, pointing to the weeping woman. The woman, seeing the gesture, began scooting herself further against the wall, eyes wide with an emotion that reminded Lyvinya of the feeling she got when the Matron ordered Carl to correct Lyvinya for disobedience. Lyvinya wanted to make the woman feel better, but she wasn't a body. She had blinking eyes and everything. Lyvinya decided she would sing a different song than the Matron commanded. One Lyvinya often sang to herself when she was afraid. With it, she put in her intentions, as the Matron taught her with the bodies. But instead of movement, Lyvinya instilled a feeling: peace.

"Stop." The Matron commanded, shortly after Lyvinya had sung the first verse. Carl came closer behind Lyvinya.. "Sing it correctly." The Matron growled, slightly irritated.

The woman had stopped crying and was looking at Lyvinya with, not fear, but a strange expression.

“But Matron,” Lyvinya started, but was immediately silenced by the weight of Carl’s hand on her shoulder. Lyvinya swallowed and continued quietly. “I just didn’t want her to be scared of me.” Lyvinya looked at the floor, knowing better than to meet the Matron’s eyes.

The Matron looked at Lyvinya and her voice softened. She walked past the woman who was still bowing silently on the floor and came to Lyvinya, bending down so that she was eye level with her. “Lyvinya, don’t be afraid. I understand you only wanted to make it easier on the woman, but she doesn’t deserve your help. She,” the Matron shot a disgusted look in the woman’s direction, “Is not here to be pitied. She is here for you to learn.”

The Matron straightened, and her voice returned to the cold, commanding tone that Lyvinya recognized. “Let’s get straight to the point, shall we?” The Matron guided Lyvinya firmly to the center of the room. She nodded to Carl, who dragged the woman in front of Lyvinya. Whatever Lyvinya had sung to the woman early had worn off, and she was now actively fighting Carl, but not well. Soon, she was pinned in the center of the room, her head held so that she was looking up at Lyvinya.

“Lyvinya,” the Matron began, taking a long silver object out of her dress pocket. It looked like a spoon, although it had a wooden handle and a sharp point. The woman writhed at the sight of the object, and Lyvinya wondered how it could cause so much fear. It was just a piece of shiny metal.

“This time, when you sing, I want you to have this woman take this object from me and shove it into her stomach. Can you do that?” The Matron asked. She never asked for things before. Lyvinya nodded, eager to please.

She sang.

The woman was unlike the bodies. She fought Lyvinya’s music, making her movements jerky and awkward, not like the beautiful movements she usually had the bodies do. But Lyvinya was well trained. She did not sing louder, only more intensely, carefully weaving in and out of the notes as she willed the woman to obey. Her concentration was not broken, and yet she briefly wondered if the woman would stay. Maybe the Matron would allow them to take classes together. Lyvinya silently hoped she wouldn’t be alone anymore.

Lyvinya continued singing. The woman, with the object now in hand, slowly guided it to her own stomach. Lyvinya wondered what would happen when the object bounced off the woman’s skin. Would the Matron have them do something else?

The woman was fighting her. *Just obey*, Lyvinya wanted to say. *Then we can have our trays and start classes together.* Lyvinya decided to help the woman along. She sang louder, until the object went through the woman. At first, Lyvinya thought she had failed, but then a dark fluid started dripping from the woman. She slumped over her hands, and the woman was silent. “Well done, Lyvinya,” the Matron said. “You can go.”

“What’s wrong with her?” Lyvinya asked.

The Matron stepped over the woman, ignoring Lyvinya’s question.

“Lyvinya, ready to go?” Carl asked.

“Yes,” Lyvinya answered, looking back at the woman as Lyvinya walked away.

Lyvinya woke up at precisely 0700 hours, according to her alarm. Lyvinya brushed her hair, put on her dress and shoes, and waited at the metal door. At exactly 0800 hours, Lyvinya knew Carl would open the door. Carl always opened the door.

Carl took Lyvinya to the white-walled room.

There the Matron was waiting in her usual place beside the tables of bodies. Lyvinya walked up to join the Matron at the table. As the Matron lifted the sheet that covered the body, Lyvinya saw a face that made her gasp. It was the woman.

“No!” Lyvinya shrieked, throwing herself towards the body, tears already springing to her eyes. Lyvinya finally understood what the Matron had forced her to do. Before Lyvinya could reach the body, Carl’s massive arms wrapped around her waist, pinning Lyvinya in place. “Why?” Lyvinya asked, struggling against Carl’s iron grip.

“Sing,” the Matron commanded, looking at the body and ignoring

Lyvinya's distress entirely.

"I won't!" Lyvinya screamed, still fighting to break loose. Only this time, Lyvinya's anger was directed at the Matron. She couldn't understand how the Matron could expect her to keep going now that Lyvinya understood she had killed the woman. Lyvinya had hoped for a friend, but created a corpse.

"Sing," the Matron said more forcefully, and Carl tightened his grip on Lyvinya in warning. Lyvinya knew she had no choice but to obey.

Still, her mind wandered across possibilities. She couldn't keep blindly following orders, not when it was clear the Matron would never allow her the company of anyone but the dead. She would have to obey. She would have to sing. Lyvinya forced her body to relax and Carl, though not letting go entirely, seemed to sense Lyvinya was giving up and loosened his grip. Lyvinya drew in a deep breath and began to sing.

This time, however, it wasn't the body of the woman that Lyvinya sang to, but the Matron herself. In this song, Lyvinya forced all of her anger, all of her fear. She used the full force of her emotions, more than she ever thought possible, and commanded the Matron to do the same thing the woman had done. She commanded her to die. However, Lyvinya didn't command the Matron to be calm or compliant. She wanted the Matron to fight, to see what she was truly capable of. Lyvinya forced the Matron to pick up the shiny tool lying on the metal table next to the woman's body and bring it to her chest. Lyvinya felt fear like she never had before. She had never done anything like this and she wasn't sure of the consequences. Regardless, she promised herself she would never obey the Matron again, not of her own free will.

Lyvinya was so focused on singing that she didn't notice Carl come up behind her. The full force of Carl's fist exploded against Lyvinya's head. She crashed to the floor, vision blurring.

Before Lyvinya slipped into the darkness, she could just make out the Matron and Carl standing above her.

"Well that was a waste," said the Matron with disgust. "Take her away and restart. We will continue fresh with the experiments tomorrow."

"Would you like me to do anything before restarting her?" Carl asked.

"No, it isn't worth it. She won't remember this anyway."

Lyvinya wondered what the Matron's last words meant before she succumbed to the darkness.

Everyday was the same. Lyvinya woke up at precisely 0700 hours, according to her alarm, although her head felt a little fuzzy as if she hadn't slept well. Lyvinya brushed her hair, put on her dress and shoes, and waited at the metal door. At exactly 0800 hours, Lyvinya knew Carl would open the door. Carl always opened the door. She knew they would go down the hall to the white-walled room and the Matron would ask Lyvinya to sing to the bodies there. Lyvinya always obeyed.

Today, there was the body of a young woman in the white-walled room. The body had long, dark hair that curled in rings, and Lyvinya was instantly jealous. Her own hair was a much lighter color, and she briefly wondered if she would have been prettier with hair like the young woman.

"Sing," the Matron commanded. Lyvinya obeyed.

Every day was the same.

Anniversary

Brian Hutchins

FADE IN:

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - DAY

A kitchen sits disheveled. **TOM** (30s, widowed, depressed) walks towards his refrigerator. **SARAH** (30s, deceased, apparition) watches from the distance as Tom pulls a beer from the fridge. He creeps towards his chair. He sits down and grabs the TV remote. He turns the tv on, news of a terrible car accident BLARES through the speakers. He hangs his head.

FLASHBACK

EXT. STREET CROSSING - NIGHT

Tom raises his head, staring in disbelief. A siren BLARES out in the distance.

END FLASHBACK

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - DAY

A phone RINGS as Tom continues staring at the TV. He grabs the phone, the contact screen reads **ROBERT**. He declines the call, revealing the wallpaper, a picture of Tom and Sarah in a park.

BRIEF FLASHES OF

--a park

--a bench

--a fountain

--laughter

END BRIEF FLASHES

The phone RINGS again. Tom snaps out of his trance. He answers the call. Sarah quietly stands behind him.

TOM
(shrugs)
Hey.

ROBERT
How are you, man? I know how today must be for-

TOM
You have no idea.

ROBERT
She was my sister.

A moment.

ROBERT
I'm-- we're so worried about you, Tom. No one should be alone, especially-

TOM
(angrily)
I am alone, unlike you. You weren't even around here when I needed you most. Just-

ROBERT
About that.

The doorbell CHIMES. Tom jumps up to answer the door. Robert stands in the threshold and smiles.

ROBERT
Surprise.

Tom looks at Robert with disgust. Robert walks past Tom into the apartment, looking around.

ROBERT
This is worse than I thought.

TOM
I'm not in the mood for this shit-

Robert picks up Tom's beer and takes a sip.

ROBERT
Of course you're not. When are you? When are you going to be ready to take-

The sound of Robert's voice fades as Tom looks around.

FLASHBACK

Sarah's voice fades in. She and Tom argue.

SARAH
When are you going to be ready to take responsibility for your actions, for this home? You can't just keep checking out. I can't do it alone.

Tom, several drinks past mental clarity, struggles to stand.

TOM
I-- I. Uh-

He blinks several times. Sarah shakes her head.

SARAH
I can't help you, not tonight at least. *She furiously walks towards the threshold.*

TOM
(stuttering)
Where are you going?

SARAH
The hell away from you- *She leaves. Tom turns away.*

END FLASHBACK

Robert's voice fades in.

ROBERT
The hell out of here?

Tom looks, confused.

ROBERT
I said, do you wanna get the hell out of here?

TOM
No, I just need-

ROBERT
Time?

TOM
Yeah.

Tom tries to snatch the bottle back from Robert, who refuses to relinquish his grip. Tom turns from him.

ROBERT
Don't worry, I won't take up all your time today. I just want us to go for a walk.

TOM
Why, so I can see the sun?

ROBERT
You've obviously not seen it in a while.

Tom opens the fridge, attempting to reach for another beer.

TOM
I appreciate the gesture, but I don't need you to save me

ROBERT
I agree.

Robert grabs Tom's arm.

ROBERT
But you do need a friend. Go get dressed, I'll wait.

Tom moves back from the fridge.

TOM
(sighs)
You're over stepping.

A moment.

ROBERT
Tom.

TOM
I know.

He walks away towards his quarters. Robert begins to clean the dishes and the kitchen.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY
Tom stares at himself in the mirror. Sarah is in the reflection of the bedroom that is behind him.

FLASHBACK

INT. BEDROOM - DAY
Tom lays out in bed as Sarah gets ready behind him. She's brushing her hair.

SARAH
You gonna to get up, sleepyhead?

TOM
What's the point?

SARAH
To say goodbye? We're gonna be fine, babe. I picked up some extra shifts and I can see if they'll let me work overtime for a couple weeks. We're still on our feet.

She leans over to him.

SARAH
I love you.

She kisses his cheek. He flips to face her.

TOM
Love you.

SARAH
I'm heading out, call if you need anything.

TOM
K.

Sarah leaves the room. Tom flips back over.

END FLASHBACK

INT. BATHROOM - DAY
Tom finishes brushing his teeth. Sarah is gone.

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - DAY
Tom returns, Robert sits with his feet propped up on the counter, watching TV.

ROBERT
You ready to go?

TOM
No.

ROBERT
Great.

They leave the apartment.

INT. ROBERT'S CAR - DAY
Robert and Tom drive down the road. Tom stares out his window.

ROBERT
Isn't this nice?

TOM
Just as nice as I would have expected.

ROBERT
Not the walk, the day.

He motions at the sky around them.

TOM
It's a nice day, sure.

A moment.

ROBERT
You catch any of the game last night?

TOM
I don't watch sports.

ROBERT
Oh, well, Charlotte won.

TOM
(sarcastic)
Great.

Awkward lull.

ROBERT
How about the economy?

TOM
What about it?

ROBERT
How's it doing? I thought you were into that stuff?

TOM
No idea, I don't really care. Not my field anymore.

ROBERT
I'm just trying to talk-

TOM
How about we don't.

Robert looks over his shoulder.

ROBERT
Why don't we get a coffee?

He points at the coffee shop out the window.

TOM
Not here.

ROBERT
Why not?
Tom shrugs.

TOM
What the hell!
They pull into the parking lot.

INT. COFFEE SHOP
Tom and Robert walk to the counter. Sarah sits in the corner of the shop watching.

ROBERT
You okay?

TOM
Yeah.

ROBERT
What do you want?
Robert's voice fades out.

FLASHBACK
Sarah's voice fades in. She stands behind the counter, Tom approaches. His eyes seem distant from the moment he inhabits.

SARAH
What's wrong?

TOM
We need to talk.
They now sit at a table, Tom is sobbing.

SARAH
Did they give you a reason?

TOM
No.

SARAH
And they can fire you just like that?
Tom nods.

TOM
I can't believe this is happening to me.
He turns from her.

SARAH
It's ok. We'll make it through this.
She hugs Tom.

END FLASHBACK
Robert hands a cup to Tom.

ROBERT
Here ya go.

TOM
Thanks.
They exit the coffee shop.

EXT. PARK - DAY
Robert and Tom walk around a fountain for a moment.

TOM
Is Linda going to meet us here?

ROBERT
Nah, and I'm getting ready to head out myself.

TOM
Why? You just dragged me all the way down here?

ROBERT
You know why. There's something you need to do, man. I know it hurts, but you've put it off for too long.

TOM
A year doesn't seem long enough, Rob.

ROBERT
No amount of time can heal a wound like yours. You have to learn to live again, but with the pain.
(beat)

I knew Sarah her whole life. She loved you more than anything, Tom. When she called and told me about you for the first time, I knew that she'd found her someone.

TOM
I'm not that Tom anymore.

ROBERT
And you won't ever be again.
Tom looks away.

ROBERT
But you have to at least attempt to live again. If not for you, for her.
Tom nods.

ROBERT
I love you.
He hugs Tom.

ROBERT
I'll call you tomorrow, ok?

TOM
Ok.
Robert leaves. Tom continues walking around until he comes to a bench. He stares at it.

FLASHBACK
Tom and Sarah walk around the fountain.

TOM
And that's how a 401k works!

SARAH
Nerd.
She pushes Tom's arm, he laughs.

TOM
You asked!

SARAH
I asked what you were doing last night.

TOM
Planning for our future.

SARAH
You could have just said that.
A moment.

SARAH
Our future?
Tom smiles.

TOM
Yeah.
He gets down on one knee.

TOM
I was going to ask after dinner, but, why wait?
Sarah smiles wide.

TOM
Will you marry me?

SARAH
Yes!
They embrace.

END FLASHBACK
Tom sits alone on the bench.

TOM

It's been a while.

He sips his coffee and looks to the sky.

TOM

There's so much I want to say right now, but I don't even know where to start.

I could have-- should have been there for you.

He takes another sip of coffee.

TOM

I've never let you go. It's like you're always there. I keep holding on to our good moments because I think they negate all the bad. But I can't bring myself to face what happened.

He wipes his tears away.

TOM

I wasn't perfect, but you loved me anyways and then you died-- you died-- because of me. I'm so-- sorry.

Tom breaks down weeping. Sarah sits beside him on the bench, she reaches her hand to his shoulder.

FADE OUT

Mary

Bronwen Bradshaw

Red Hair, a slow burn

A calming crackle

Compared to the raging fire

A light in a dark room

Brings a warmth in which,

People huddle closer to feel

Her presence

Freckles, like splattered paint

On a canvas

Dark,

Like the makeup on the hood

Of her eye

She is the forest

Adventurous, growing

All shades of green,

A color that suits her well

A wise woman, yet innocent

In her years

She is a lifelong friend,

The lingering smell of the fire

Which she let herself burn

In order to keep us living

Woman

Kayla Currie

Wherein lies the hope of passions waiting for conception
In the womb of grandeur far more open-minded
Than traditional meritocracy
Wherein a gentle spirit can equally coexist
With the piercing cry for autonomy and pride
Not necessarily hidden in folded hands
But acted upon in script and rhythm and strength
When before we have been trusted solely to sustain the lifeline
Of our other
May we be granted now—through civility or otherwise—the ability
To right our bow in whichever direction
We choose

The Weeping Willow

Briyana Storm Baker

In memory of my grandmother, Nancy Lassiter

Precious elongated branches
Draped over the ground
To shield the innocent
From evil's ominous gaze.

Strong, sturdy bark
Become the laughing child's brace.
Build joyful, happy memories
With your steady presence.

Gentle leaves caress
Tired bodies seeking shelter.
Manifest your compassion,
And sooth the wounds of time.

And infinite roots
Firmly hold all in place,
Embracing, uniting, a
Foundation for us all.

I shall mourn your death
With eternity by my side
As you return to dust, leaving
Only grains of memories past.

I came back today

Alexander Meeks

and everything feels like a reflection of when it was “better.”
The sky seemed to be trying so hard to remind me of you
with the shade of Carolina blue it produced.

The parking spot right off Franklin Street,
the same street I cried on when you left me waiting.
The coffeeshop, where you complained that I tipped them too much,
but I was too busy with saying goodbye to you for the summer to care.

The corner we sat on by Venabal Hall, where we decided to try again.
My fingers running through your bleached hair as you laid on my lap
and said, “*I’m sorry*”
and I forgave you.

I thought about stopping at the other places
that reminded me of you,
the day is still young so I just might.

The yellow house on Lloyd where you couldn’t talk above
a whisper or else the paper-thin walls would reveal your
words to the rest of its inhabitants.

The small vintage store beside the butcher shop on W. Main Street,
I went there during the summer when I missed you.
I sat on the floor flipping through old postcards,
reading their messages and memories almost lost in time
but rediscovered by the boredom and lonesomeness
that I was consumed with that summer.
No matter what path I took I still looked for you.
I study the faces that covered the grassy spaces
in between the intersecting paths hoping to spot you,
but knowing I’d either freeze or turn the other way if I did.

Walking the same paths alone
brought back memories that were so potent,
like a strong perfume that is too overwhelming.

Your aquiline nose that I adored so much,
your hair that I still can feel on my fingers
with enough pinot grigio in my stomach,
and your slender frame which wrapped me up
under the full moon while kissing my neck.

A fucked-up game of Where’s Waldo:
whether if I win or lose the prize is still pain.

Twenty-One Years of Mirrors

Sarah Emanuels

As the sunlight gleamed through a mosaic of an old bathroom,
it fell on her hair, giving it a sheen. Reminding her of her mother,
of all things. How their faces are similar: her eyes, hair, lips, cheeks.
She, a collage of discarded parts mixed with the most cherished.

Jude examined her face very closely in the mirror. Paying attention
to these features; the way they were held together and lifted by her
bones. Observing each one as the light brought focus to them.
In many ways, she did resemble her mother. Though the heart, she
thought, the prize of it all, would be the one thing she'd call her own.

Seventeen

Emily Merchant

It is not summer, and I am not asleep. I don't want to sleep.
It will be summer when I wake up.
You are seventeen and you are young.
You are seventeen and you are not.
Hold on, they say, you will not always be seventeen. But you will be.
Hold on, you say. *Hold on*, you cry and beg and scream.
I was just seventeen. But it's winter now
and I'm not asleep and seventeen was five years ago.
I watch the seasons change outside my window.
Soon you'll be seventeen. I can see the sky again.
Hold on.
Soon all I will have are photographs of everyone I love.
Soon I will be trying so hard to remember peaches and trees
and music and dancing.
Shouting for your friends from the passenger seat of their car.
Go, you say. *Go*, we're going to be late. Where was I rushing off to?
I don't remember what it's like to not ache if there ever was a time.
The very nature of life is impermanence.
Why does it feel like this will all last forever?
Why does it feel like I just turned seventeen? How long has it been since
seventeen?
When will I be seventeen?
I can see the bones again. They scrape at my window. They keep me up.
They don't want me to sleep.
If I do, I will wake up and it will be summer, and they will be long gone.
I can see the sky again. What else can you depend on?

When Corrupted Hands Hold the Gavel

Briyana Storm Baker

Justice, how the people love thee
How thou art proudly standing over the world
Bearing thy righteous sword on one hand
And at the other, the balanced scale
Held high like the patriot's flag
And thine eyes, blindfolded
The symbol of what thou should always be.

But you are just a marble statue
Or stone, or gold, still you don't breathe
Not like the ones holding the gavel.
We judges of the world, of the people,
Determiners of good and evil,
With vile hands we rip the blindfold,
And seize the sword to conquer the other.

When corrupted hands hold the gavel
Justice, you become the line and hook
To bait the oppressed into false ideals.
We the representatives, with deluded minds,
We set the scales all in our favor,
And you become the fleeting illusion
Sought in vain by those who desire you so.

To the downtrodden, justice is but
A buzzword to calm their anger.
A farce, spouted by evil's pawns.
Like stars, far off and mysterious,
The unrealized desires and hopes
To keep us all dreaming, dreaming
If you will serve us instead of them.





Bed

Sophia Dominici

Bedframe, Steel rod, Fabric, Polyfil



el fin 222

Suan Murillo Lopez

Mixed Media Ink, Watercolor, Colored Pencil, Pen



Rewriting visibility
 Andrea Ellerby
 Photography



Unveiled
 Andrea Ellerby
 Photography



Rainbow Bonds
Marysa Huffman
Digital Art



Yōkai Series: Baku
Marysa Huffman
Pen and Permanent Marker



Cold Habit

Brad Lowery

Digital Media/Collage



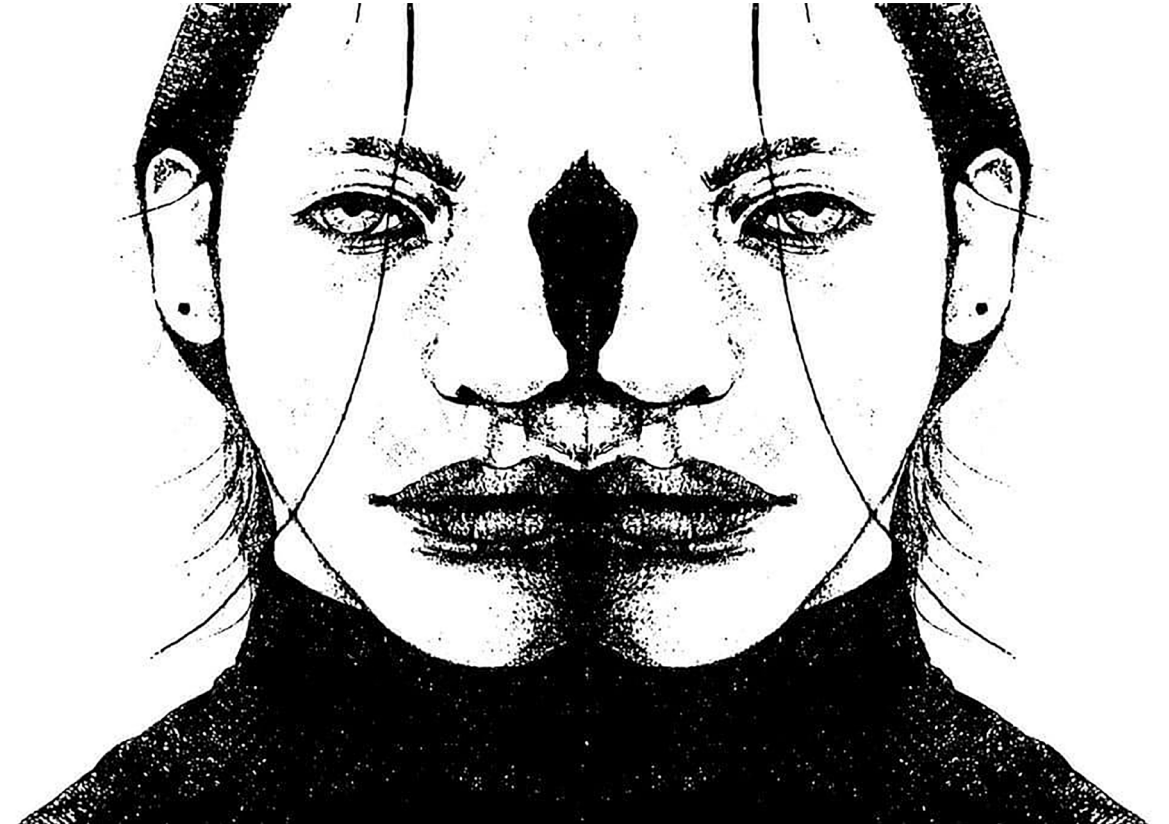
Emotionally Complex

Austin Sellars

Digital Illustration



Crying Wall
 Brian Hutchins
 Photography



Split Personality
 Amber Cranfill
 Digital Media (Adobe illustrator)



Al at the Junkyard

Hunter Pham

Photography (NikonD750 and 24-120mm lens)



Untitled No. 3

Christopher Fowler

Photography, Digital Editing



Desire and Desperation

Elizabeth Hernandez-Gomez
Magazine, Fabric and Acrylic Paint

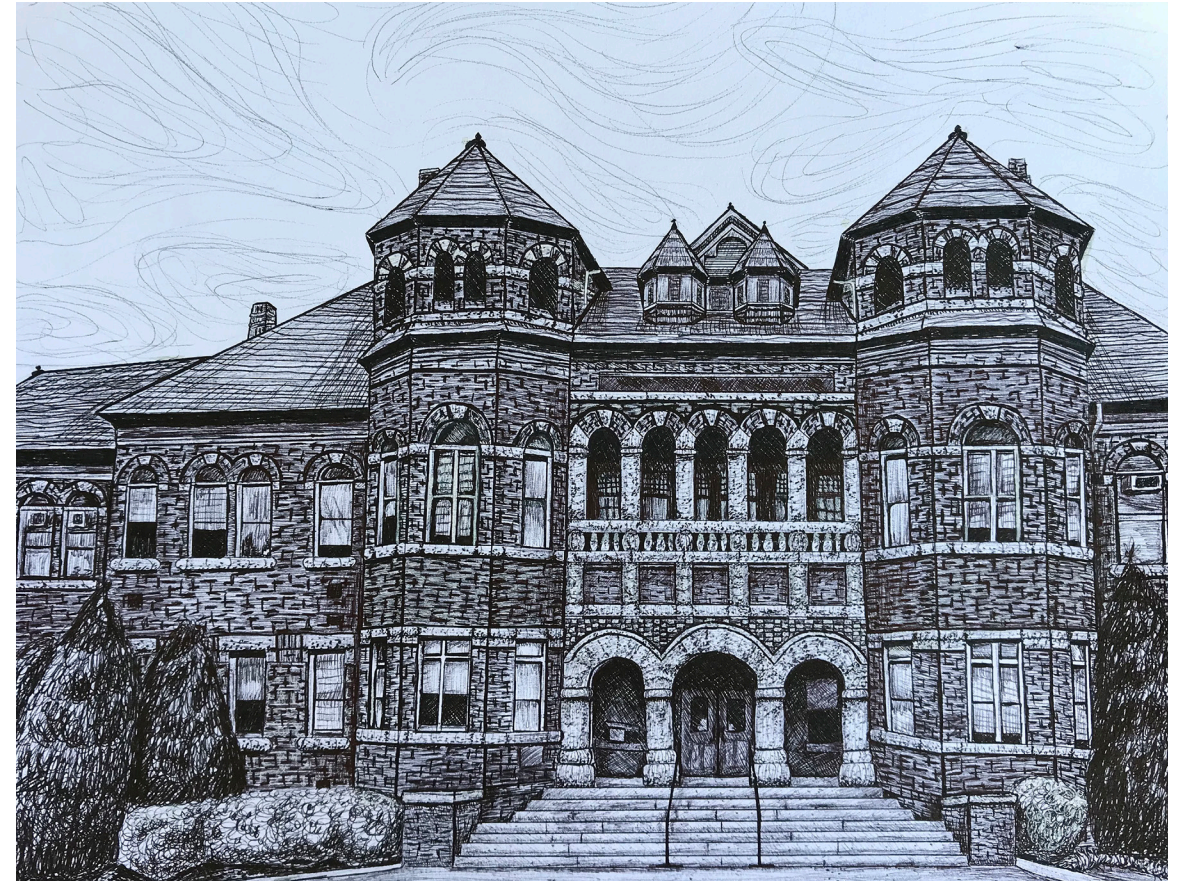


Forgive Me Father

Elizabeth Hernandez-Gomez
Pen and Acrylic Paint



Found Treasure
Annabelle Kizer
Ink



Foust Building
Lydia Selvek
Pen and Ink



Haunted Hut

Lydia Selvek

Markers, Pen and Ink



Forest Fire

SarahWen Williams

Digital Collage



When the Waves Break into my Life

Tala Zamamiri

Photography, Nikon D750



It's Easier to Love When It's Far Away

Tala Zamamiri

Photography, Nikon D750



Man with horns
Janice Walton
Digital Painting



Iris
Janice Walton
Digital Painting



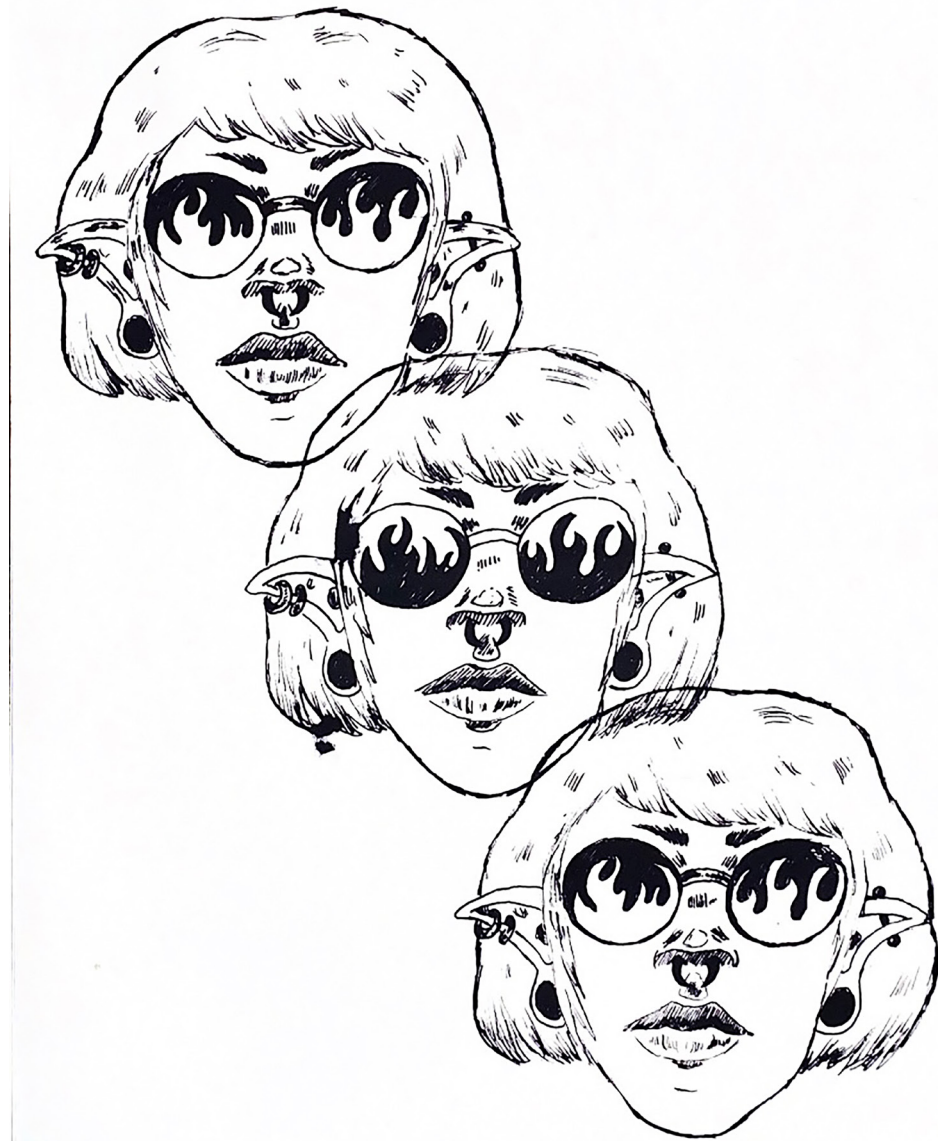
KILL OR BE KILLED

Jhordan Rose
Digital Media



CHAINSAW MAN

Jhordan Rose
Digital Media

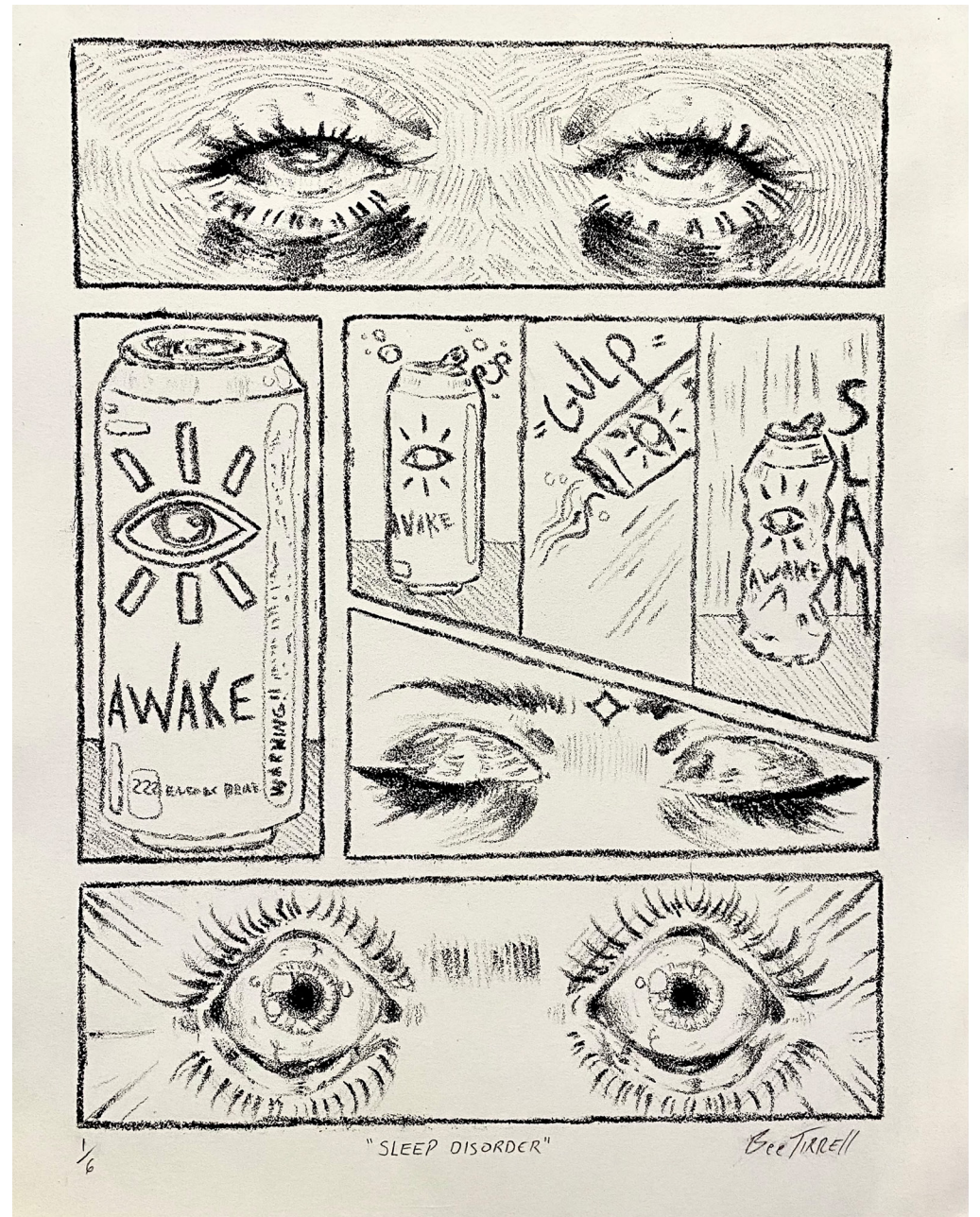


5/9

KOOL THING

Bee Tirrell

Kool Thing
Bee Tirrell
Screen Print



1/6

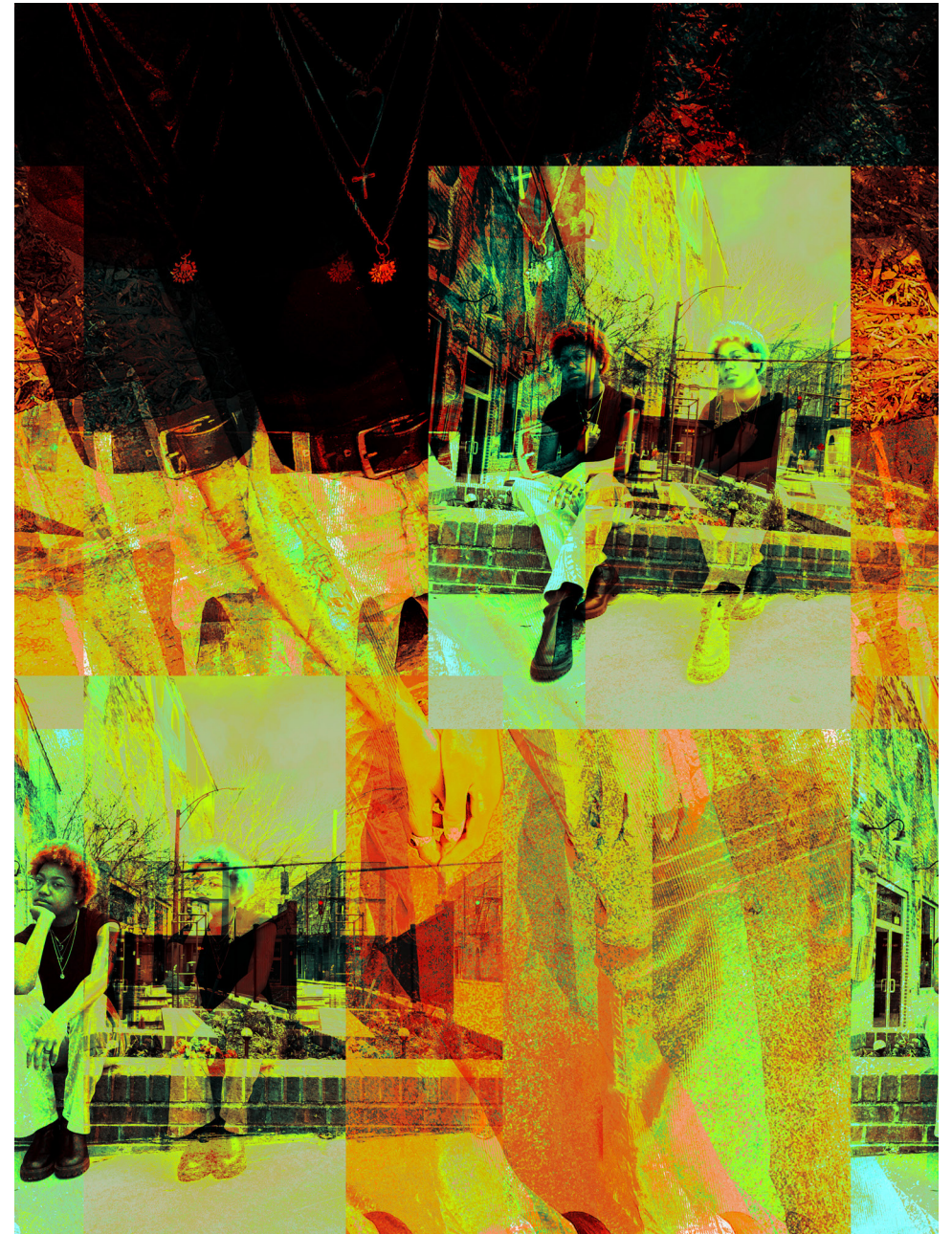
"SLEEP DISORDER"

Bee Tirrell

Sleep Disorder
Bee Tirrell
Lithograph Print



Colors
Megan Byrd
Digital Photography



Downtown
Megan Byrd
Digital Photography



Coche Rojo

Keyla Marquez Vergel

35mm Film



Catedral Primada De Toledo

Keyla Marquez Vergel

35mm Film



Moon Child

Yerin Choi

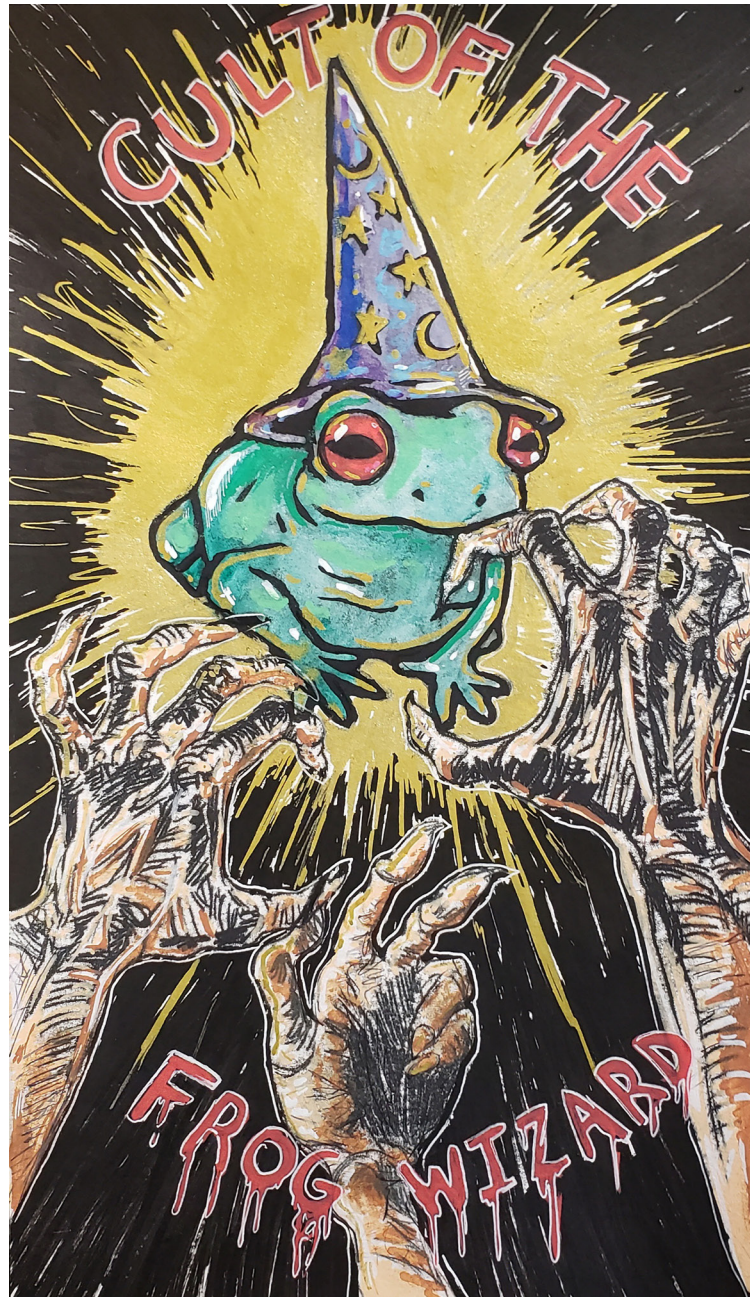
Procreate (Digital)



The Tears of Blood from the 14 Surviving Comfort Women

Yerin Choi

Procreate (Digital)



Cult of the Frog Wizard

Ioana Anghelescu

Mixed Media



Saint Guinefort

Ioana Anghelescu

Multilayer Screen Print



Queen's Portrait
Autumn Canady
Acrylic Paint on Canvas



Injustice
Brandon Hernandez
Digital Collage



The Shroom Trio: Boot

Mary Rezin

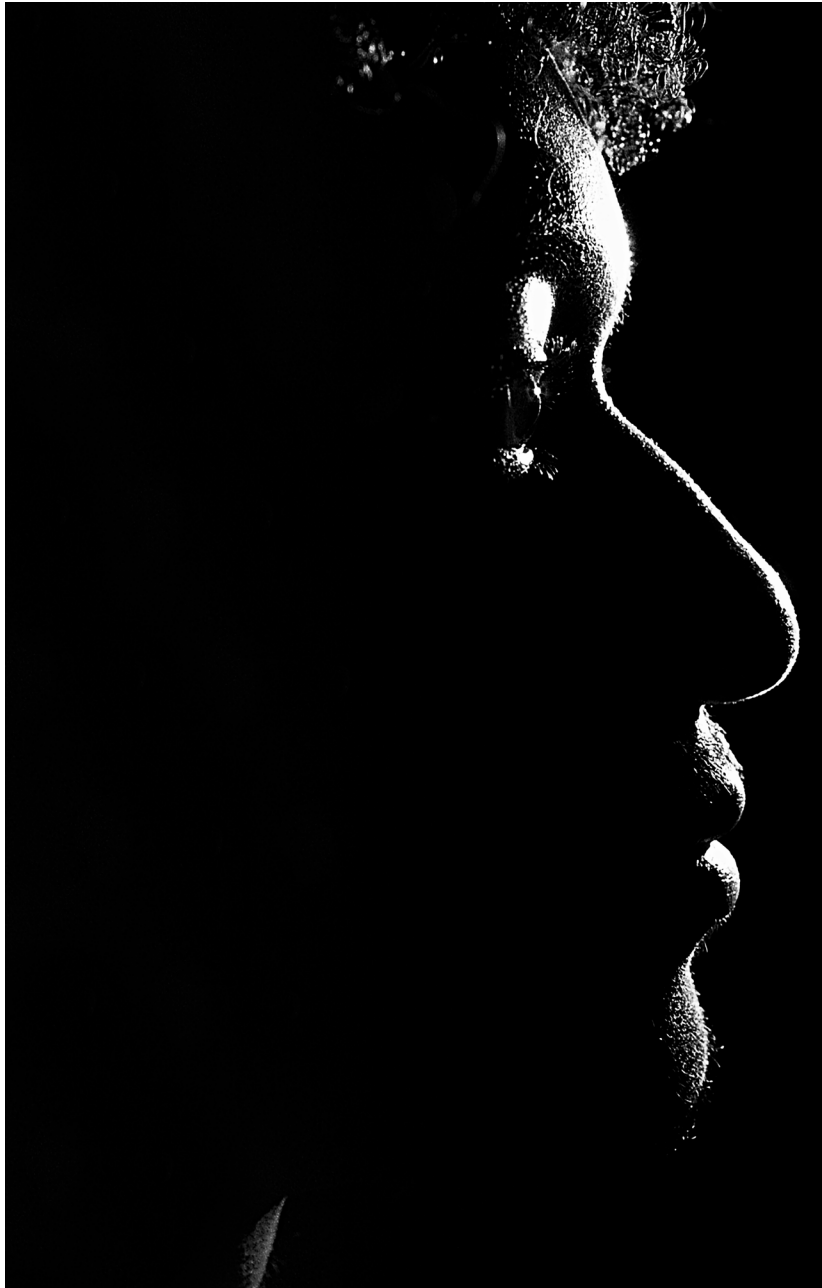
Cast Aluminum, Bronze, Iron



The Shroom Trio: Glove

Mary Rezin

Cast Aluminum, Bronze, Iron



Color Theory Archive: Self #12

Quan Apollo

Film Photography

Shimmer

Tyler Bailey

Mixed Media/Digital Drawing



Untitled (glitch bow)

Ash Strazzinski

Still from video



Subway Tension

Autumn Canady

Black Sharpie on Paper



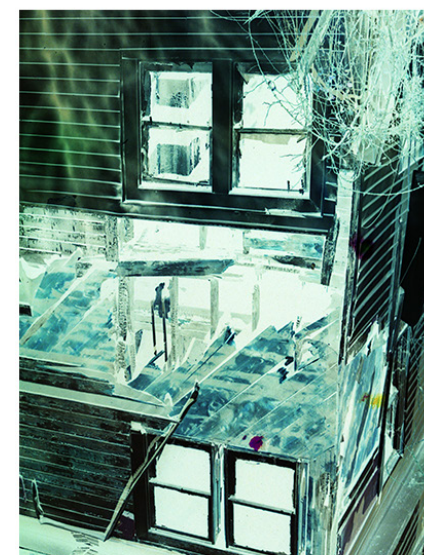
Stay Wild, Moon Child
Van Walker
Graphic Design



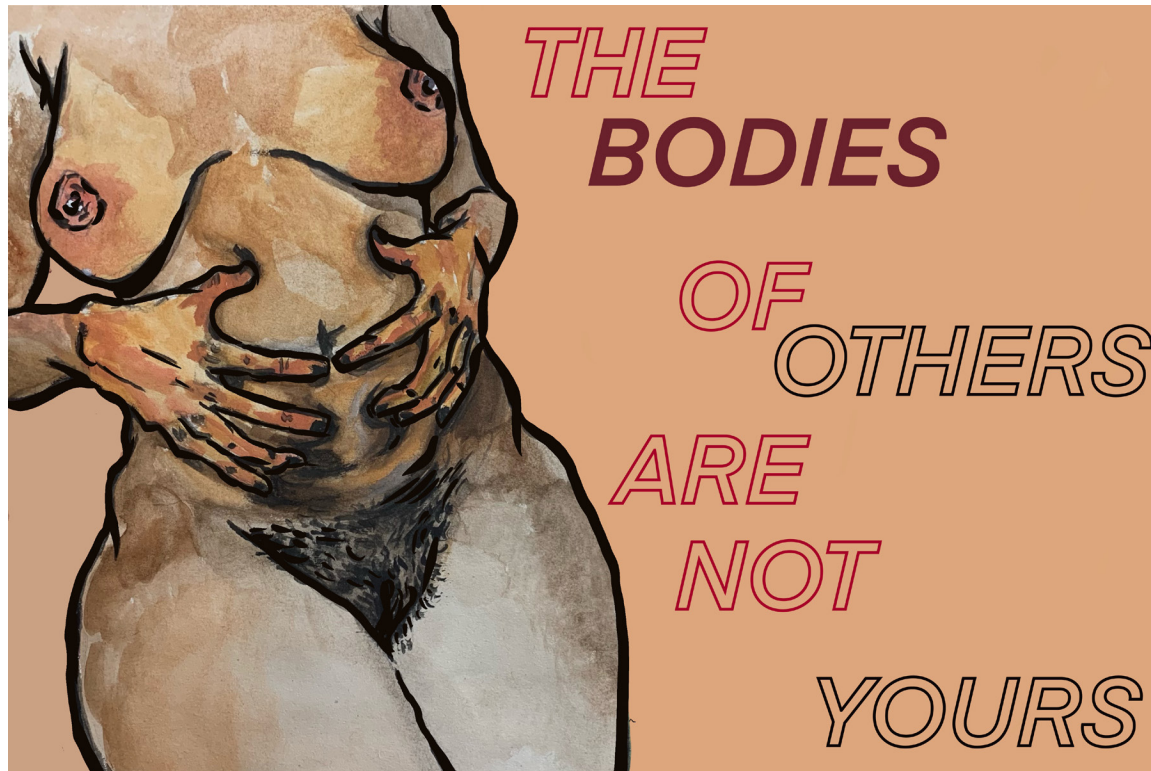
Wandering Eyes
Viktoria Banovic
Oil and Acrylic Paint on Wood Panel



Gemini
Olivia Overton
Collage



Positive/Negative Study
Jenna Futrell
35mm Film, Febreze, Adobe Photoshop



THE BODIES OF OTHERS ARE NOT YOURS

Alexis Pemberton
Digital painting



DON'T WE TOUCH EACH OTHER JUST TO PROVE THAT

WE'RE STILL HERE

Alexis Pemberton
Digital painting



Water Lilies

Shane Hart

Watercolor, Colored Pencil and Gel Pen



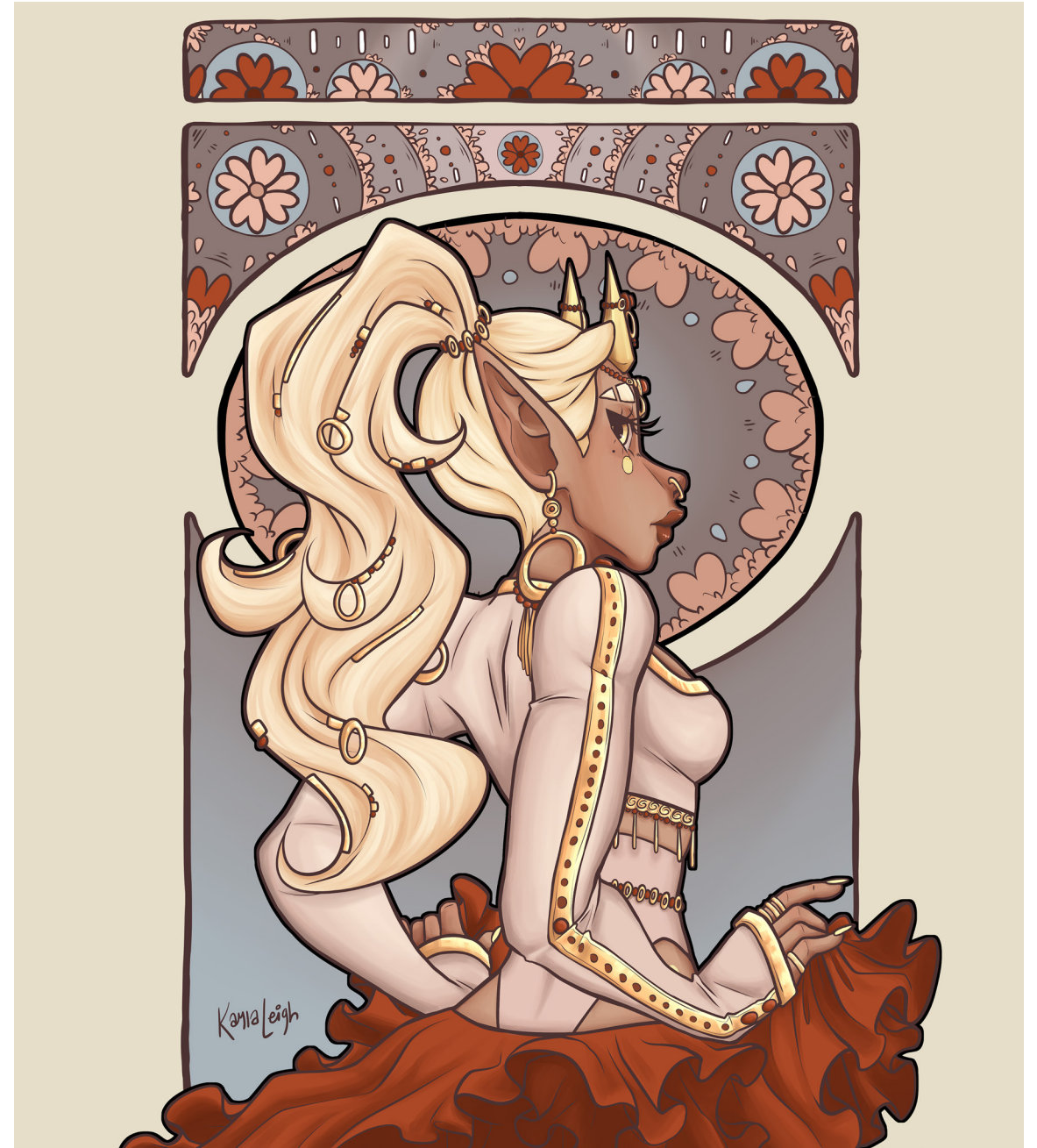
Childhood Bedroom

Shane Hart

Maya 3D Model



No one can worship you
 Jac McGinty
 Mixed Media Painting, Acrylic



The End of a Lineage
 Kayla Pemberton
 Digital Painting



The Lookaftering

Jac McGinty
Woodcut Ink



sexy mothman is going to kill me

Dorian Leto
Screen Print Collage



Treading the Winepress
Jonathan DeBord
Oil on Canvas



Self Portrait, Christmas, 1999
Evelyn "Suzanne" Bradshaw
Bristol Board, Yarn, Ink, Paper



There Is Nothing New

Alyssa Smith
Photography

There Is Nothing New

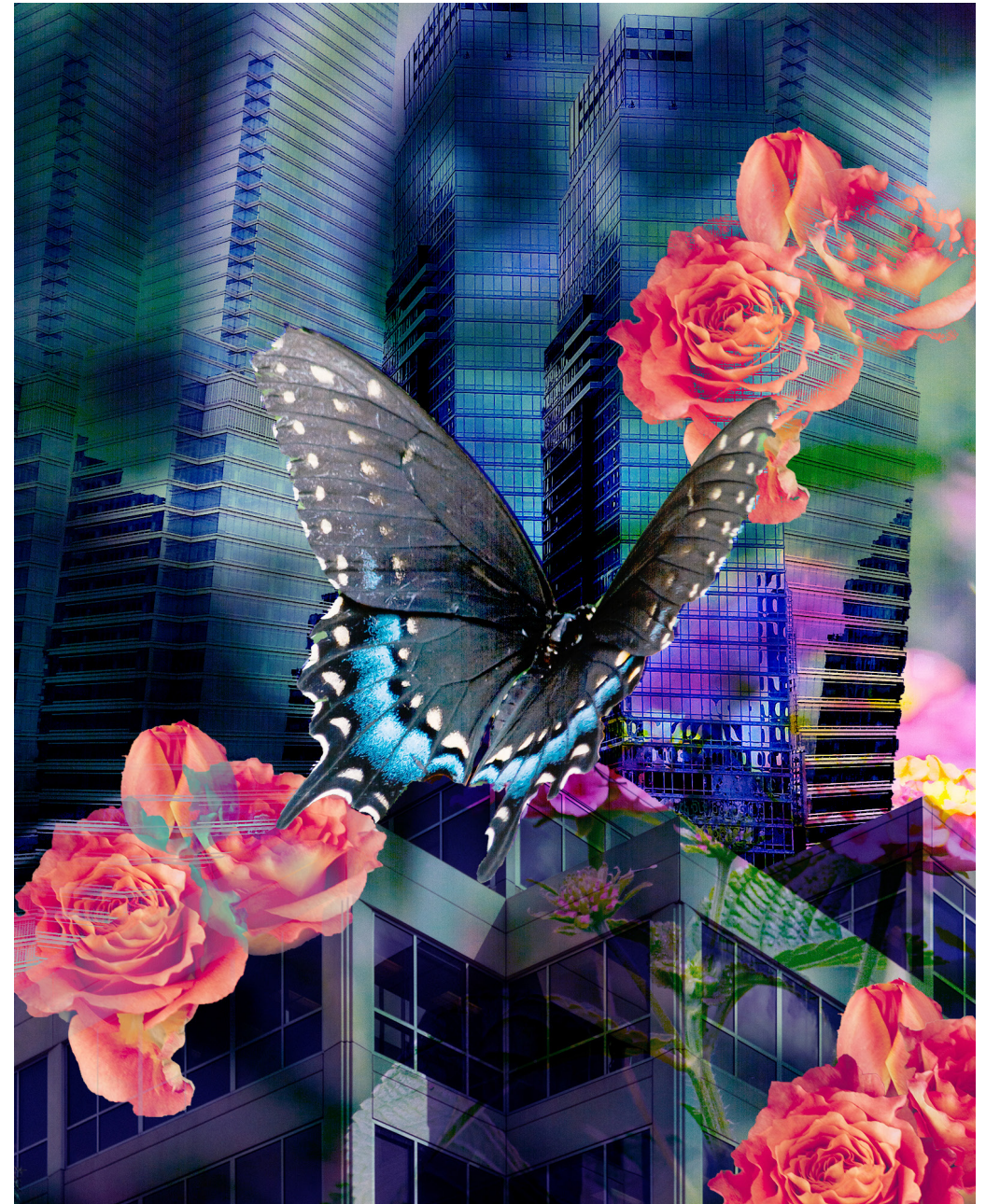
Alyssa Smith
Photography



Butterflies and Buildings Series

Morgan Gustafson

Digital Collage



Butterflies and Buildings Series

Morgan Gustafson

Digital Collage

CONTRIBUTORS

Sofia Aguilar is a sophomore majoring in the BFA program with the concentration in New Media and Design. She enjoys playing video games, watching animated films, hiking, and hanging out with friends! If you are interested in looking into her art, her instagram is @dvyfly.

Haley Dale is a junior majoring in the BFA program with a concentration in New Media and Design while minoring in Photography. Her hobbies include stippling art, working on her small business, video editing, and videogames. She hopes to expand her small business and work for a company known as Razer.

Sarah Emanuels is a junior studying English and creative writing. She enjoys reading and writing poetry.

Shane Hart is a senior majoring in the BFA program with a concentration in New Media and Design. Some of his hobbies include collecting vinyl records, listening to music, and creating designs and art in his free time.

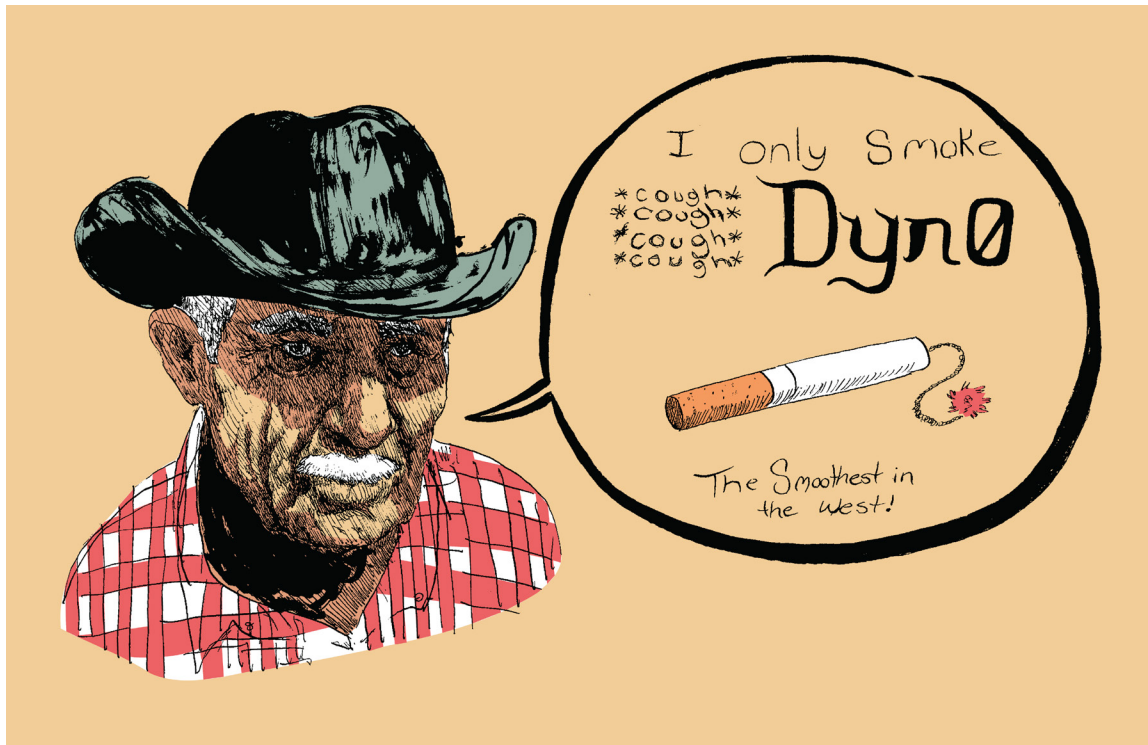
Brandon Hernandez is a senior majoring in the BFA program with a concentration in New Media and Design. His hobbies include drawing/painting, listening to music, playing video games, and going out with friends. He hopes to work in an industry firm as a Graphic Designer in the future.

Iyanu Olaseun is a junior pursuing a BFA degree in Studio Art with a concentration in New Media and Design. They enjoy watching animated films, digitally painting, traveling, and trying out new food spots.

Kayla Pemberton is a senior majoring in the BFA Studio Arts program with a concentration in New Media and Design. They enjoy creating original characters, webcomics, and animations. Find their art on Instagram @sprouttdraws!

Leyra Marquez Vergel is a senior pursuing a BFA in New Media and Design. She enjoys collecting things like CDS, Vinyl, and trinkets! Leyra also loves watching tv and movies!

SarahWen Williams is a senior majoring in New Media and Design with a minor in American Sign Language. She enjoys sleeping, hanging out with friends, and drawing. Find more of her art on Instagram @sarahwensart!



Smoke Dyno
Will Harvey

COLOPHON

The Coraddi is the University of North Carolina at Greensboro's magazine of arts and literature. Submissions are open to both students and alumni.

This semester's issue includes selections of art and literature from UNCG students submitted between March and April 2022.

The body text is Baskerville 11pt font. The titles are in Monserrat.

This magazine is distributed for FREE throughout the UNCG campus.

This year's cover was designed by Kayla Pemberton.

We would like to thank everyone who submitted to this semester's edition.

Contact

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