



wildscape.

LITERARY JOURNAL



CALM // STORM

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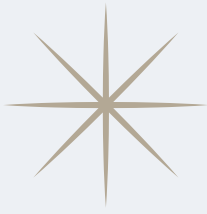
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TRIGGER WARNING: Some passages within this issue may contain difficult topics, which could be triggering for some people. These topics include but are not limited to mentions of genocide, religion, sexual assault, mentions of self-harm, mentions of suicide/suicidal ideation, abandonment, addiction, and abuse. Please read with caution, and take breaks as needed. Your mental health matters.



editor's note

Dear Readers,

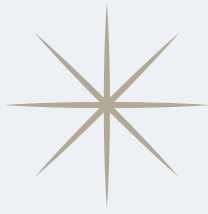
The theme for Issue 6 is calm // storm. This theme stemmed from a bone-deep rage at the injustice of gun violence, oppression, genocide, and systemic poverty and racism. Below is the story that ignited this theme.

I am an inner-city high school teacher. In May 2024, on graduation day, some of the graduated seniors and their loved ones came back to our school's campus to utilize the grounds to celebrate together. Later in the evening, while they were celebrating, a car drove onto campus and the occupants of the car began shooting. One of our graduates, Lamon Wiggins, was shot and killed while trying to push a friend out of the way of gunfire. He had just graduated hours prior, and he was excited for his future.

A week after Lamon's passing, as I was walking through the hallways of our school, I noticed that our 12th grade English teachers had hung up "Where I'm From" poems in the hallway that their students had written right before graduation. As I was scanning them, Lamon's poem caught my eye. While short and sweet, it talks about the little details of his childhood and upbringing that he remembers fondly. And in that moment, my heart broke a second time. For Lamon and his family. For his mother, who lost her only child. For the gentle moments that made Lamon who he was, only for violence to take him in the end. For injustice and the systemic violence that too often ends in a mother holding her child's lifeless body - both here in America and abroad. For families ripped apart and lives taken far too soon. For the unfairness of preventable loss, almost always stemming from greed, corruption, and power.

I wanted Lamon's poem to be seen. I wanted his story to be heard. So now, with Lamon's mother's blessing, his poem is the start of this issue. From a calm, gentle, nostalgic beginning, to a violent, unfair death, Lamon's story encompasses the two ends of the spectrum that I hope to create with the theme of "calm // storm".

This issue is formatted differently from our previous issues. Instead of being separated by genre, this issue is a spectrum that starts with calm, and gradually works its way up to storm (i.e. rage, grief, etc.). If you're looking to read this issue the way it's intended to be read, you'll want to read these pieces in order. This is, by far, the longest issue we've ever curated. It is also the most art-heavy. This was intentional.



editor's note cont'd

As you journey through this issue, I ask that you give yourself space to feel. You might notice intense emotion with some (or many) of these works. Sit with them - both the stories and art, as well as your emotions.

Allow yourself to grieve. And then when you're ready, take that grief and let it simmer.

Then, do something with it. Create, fight, scream. Speak up for the oppressed and marginalized. Find a way to integrate yourself into the fight against fascism, oppression, and injustice. I want you to hold onto the way you feel as you read this issue, and I want you to never let it go. That rage, that grief, that devastation - let it ignite something in you. I beg you to never let anyone or anything snuff out that fire.

We're in this together. We fight, together. We create change, together.

You are never alone. You matter. Your words matter. Your art matters. I love you. Please, never stop creating.

-Ophelia M. (editor)

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Where I'm From

LAMON WIGGINS*

I'm from Good Samaritan Hospital.

I'm from Cincinnati, Ohio,
Or that's what I tell people.

I'm from Atlanta, Georgia
Where I have been half my life.

I'm from Virginia,
But I don't remember what city.

I am from playing outside before
the street lights come on.

I am from riding my bike down the street,
but not going past a certain point.

I am from watching the same DVDs over and over
until I know the entire movie by heart.

I am from having to find different ways to
wipe off video games and CDs so that they can work.

I'm from playing with my pencils in class.

I'm from 50-cent Honeybuns.

I'm from going to Gamestop to buy new games.

I'm from PS2 and PS3s.

I'm from America, where I'm glad to be.

*Lamon and his story are the reason this issue came to be. On May 18, 2024, just hours after graduating from high school, Lamon was on his alma mater's campus celebrating with his family and friends when a car pulled up and the occupants began shooting into the crowd. Lamon lost his life pushing his friend out of the way of gunfire. Lamon had written this poem just weeks before his death. The spectrum of this issue, starting with calm and ending with storm, is meant to highlight the injustice and systemic violence that too often ends with a mother holding her lifeless child, while also shining a light on the gentle beginnings of lives that end in violence.



TITLE: *Give Our Beautiful Black Boys Their Flowers*

ARTIST: Indigo R. Williams

ABOUT THE PIECE

“Give Our Beautiful Black Boys Their Flowers” is meant to show recognition, care, and respect. This collage focuses on honoring Black boys and men by offering flowers, not only as a physical gesture, but as a symbol of acknowledgment, love, and respect that is often delayed or withheld.

This visual piece invites mindfulness and tenderness. The flowers stand for affirmation, celebrating presence rather than waiting for absence, and legacy rather than loss.

Moon Maps

ABIGAIL WASSERMAN

In the morning, you curl into my lap, wrapped in a sleepsack patterned with crescent moons—blue as a distant ocean. In the heart of a New England winter, there are no waves in sight, but the moon still rises for us. I hold you as you scan the sky each night, a dimpled finger lifted to its glow, brown eyes shining silver, taking in the dark expanse above. It's hard to believe something that looks so small from here can tug at oceans, reflect sunlight, stretch the hours—but then I feel your soft weight warm against me. You trace each crescent on your blanket with that tiny forefinger, mapping your own universe in miniature, and suddenly, I understand.



TITLE: *Tonight*
ARTIST: Camellia Paul

ABOUT THE PIECE

“Tonight” is a mixed-media work created with acrylic paint, ink, and metallic pigment on canvas, using a limited palette of deep blues, blacks, whites, and gold to heighten contrast and atmosphere. I began by building the night sky in layered acrylic washes, allowing darker pigments to pool and dry unevenly, then dusted and dragged metallic paint across the surface to create a grainy, star-like texture. The figures were rendered in black ink and paint, carved out with negative space and fine white linework, a method that emphasizes outline and gesture over facial detail. The moon and clouds were added with thicker, almost sculptural strokes, letting texture stand in for light.

The work is inspired from a very special night I shared with my beloved who is no more—we stood watching the moon and sharing a moment of quiet attention beneath a sky that felt both intimate and infinite. The gold flecks suggest wonder and fragility at once, echoing how memory often glimmers unevenly against darkness. This piece reflects my ever nostalgia around nocturnal spaces as sites of pondering and revelation, where conversations feel heavier, pauses last longer, and connection becomes more deliberate.

Teaching my child to wash

ELLA B. WINTERS

In the porcelain ocean, water ripples around
his round belly, capsizing a rubber duck.
We squeeze soap on a sponge, and I
show him how to lather up the foam, gently
coat his arms, shoulders, back, let
it creep into every fold. We fan out
his pink toes like fins and watch
bubbles web them together. A giggle
bubbles up from his chest.
Next, slicking his hair with shampoo,
I show him how to massage his scalp, his
fingers intertwining with mine.
No one showed me how to do this. No one
made caring for this body a game,
a pleasure. Still now, I shirk at the feeling
of another's hand in my hair - cut
my own imperfectly. Shower fast, like it's
a secret, a sin. We sculpt
a mohawk like a shark's dorsal, and he
pretends to prowl through the calm sea.
I pour water over his back-tilted head
like a baptism, washing off
the suds. He fidgets, eager to get out
now, to start on the business
of readying his small body
for the next wash. Just a little longer,
I say, and keep pouring,
until the stream runs clean
off his hair, off my clammy
child-heart.

Yellow Raincoat

HALEY DIRENZO

The tea of my childhood, Lipton Black.
Powdered dust tucked into teabags and wrapped
in yellow label paper. Steeped haphazardly
sometimes so strong the heavy bitter bruised
my tongue until I softened with cream
and seven scoops of sugar. When my mother
would let me pluck sugar cubes from the pink box
in the back of the cabinet by the matches—
the kind you might brush against a horse's soft lips
until she takes them gentle in her mouth to dissolve—
I felt luxurious, like my English Grandmother
in her parlour. Teeth in. Hair curled. Delicate lip
of a teacup lined gold. Ohio rain singing on the roof.
Childhood is a young girl in a yellow raincoat.
Bright note against Manchester's grey.
Loving horses. Hands full of sugar cubes.
Continuing rituals. Coming in from the cold.



TITLE: *Reflection 1386*
ARTIST: Dave Madeloni

ABOUT THE PIECE

This photo was taken with my cellphone at Look Memorial Park in Northampton, Mass. in January 2026. It is a pond reflection turned-upside-down. My purpose is to show the beauty and vulnerability of our world in spaces that are often ignored.

songbirds

K.M. HANSLIK

Suddenly there were no more words
for wandering. Birdsong, I found,

is a good remedy for lostness, planted
in the hours it took me to find my way home.

In the past, I made rooms in my mind
and nests in my heart, and neither

have managed to tether me. I have grown
wings from stumps as many times

as morning has flown me away again.
There was a time I believed prayers

sat like stones, unmoving, reminding God
of their weight. Now, I know prayer

as the dawn light guiding the songbird
who has traveled twenty-thousand miles

toward salvation, its tireless body finding
refuge upon the roof of my house, and my palms

outstretched towards it, the melody pouring
like light from its beak, as if it has come home

only to bring me the sun.



TITLE: *Sunrise, Lake George*

ARTIST: Janet Cooke

ABOUT THE PIECE

The awe I felt at waking up to this magnificent sunrise on vacation at Lake George in the Adirondack Mountains last October inspired me to try to capture its grandeur in paint. The air was so still and a sense of hushed calm infused my entire being. The magic of the orange and magenta light and their reflections in the water lasted only a few minutes, a sweet and fleeting moment of paradise.

Oil on linen panel, 9" x 12"

What the Wind Spares

DAVID ANSON LEE

Morning opens
like an unaddressed envelope.

Steam lifts from the mug:
a private weather
no one monetized.

Outside, the streetlight blinks off,
as if mercy were scheduled.

In the eye of the hurricane
there is a lawn chair,
someone's grandmother shelling peas,
green clicking softly into metal,
the radio low enough
to keep history from bruising the air.

Here, money is rumor.
The wind has misplaced its orders.

Clouds pause:
white animals lying down
before fences are invented.

For a moment,
the world is paid in breath.



TITLE: *Let's go, girls*
ARTIST: Caitlin Rantala

ABOUT THE PIECE

This piece is inspired by L.E. Bowman's musings on women and horses, where she writes, "A horse will turn feral if it loses its confines, is given enough time away from governing hands, dictated days. There isn't a woman I know who doesn't burn with the same faculty...We understand the gleam in their plum-purple eyes, the twitch in their whispered lips that says: kick the boards down, jump the fence, run." Reflecting on those words, this work features a snapshot of my personal life, where during the dawning of a Tennessee summer day, I watched a mare gallop at full speed toward the furthest fence line, playing chicken with her desires.

Arrival

JENEVIEVE CARLYN

And here comes
the rain again. Thunder rumbles
loud as this train that rolls past my window
all night long.

How I miss those mornings
when icicles clung to the eaves,
snow falling soft as a wool blanket
over the granite birdbath, the garden bed;
this tiny house, our winter palace.

Oh, but the rain.
How it always seems to know
we were thirsty for spring,
each bright leaf and puddle reflecting
our wish for something green.

Already, I miss the frogs.



TITLE: *Night Garden 16: Brief Lives of Artists*
ARTIST: Denita Benyshek

ABOUT THE PIECE

Work in process, photographed on January 9, 2026
acrylic paint, collaged pages from a book titled Brief Lives: A Biographical Companion to the
Arts, on canvas.
48 x 60 in.

The inclusion of my artwork in Wildscape is a delight and an honor. The wild places, whether in nature or in the soul, are so very sacred to me. After earning a BFA at Wichita State, I taught visual art and dance for 15 years, in the Alaskan bush, working with all of the major tribes. In this frontier, amidst vast wilderness, far from big city art scenes, I experimented and further developed my unique artist's voice.

I later completed an MFA at the University of Washington and worked as a model for I. Magnin's. After my son was born, I needed a steadier income. I studied marriage and family counseling at Saybrook University, then continued into the research program, earning a PhD in humanistic and transpersonal psychology. In 2018, Kim Junghee, a South Korean master of one thousand spirits, heard about me and invited me to undergo a traditional Naerim Gut (shamanic initiation ceremony). Three shamans flew from South Korea to my home in the Cascade Mountains, to perform this ceremony. I am also a researcher on contemporary artists as shamans and my research influences my art studio practices.

Night Garden 16: Brief Lives of Artists is part of a 3 year series inspired by my adult son. He is disabled, chronically ill, always suffering pain. He asked to move from the mountains, to be in a city. So, we moved to Wichita, where I grew up. Before a surgery, he asked me to plant a garden where he could go and be amidst nature. So, I did. For me, as my son's caregiver, the garden also became a source of respite, beauty, and inspiration.

Walking out in the wild, I carefully pulled up a clump of wild sunflowers, brought them home, and planted them in front of our cottage, where they have flourished and spread.

My son's medical condition worsens, his suffering escalates, his is hospitalized again, for two weeks. After visiting him, I am in my studio. I am painting and collaging. Gluing pages of a book, Brief Lives of Artists, into a ladder shape that is over a dark lake or ocean that was previously our cement driveway, before it was a band of gold, just beyond a flower garden. Storm clouds blowing in towards the observer. Light failing into the night. Something is needed. I listen, waiting for what the painting wants, to hear what the Art Spirit will say. The painting asks for wild sunflowers. A thin, tall stalk with flowers over here, another one, a bit closer, on the right. So, here she is, a painting about standing in the wind, as the storm approaches, and the world darkens, a moment of beauty.

For me, making art is an act of service. My work presents the spirit of nature, providing access to a radiant, mystical, inspirited world, where viewers experience awe, connecting to the eternal cycle of life and the cosmic soul of nature.

Appalachian Treeline

JOSHUA WARD

The bobcat moon paws at my feet from behind
the elk's garden

Campanula dance in the wind like ravens,
finding love.

The lichen sighs, and springtail yawns
while the lower slope leaves choke
and burn orange.

The gentians gasp after
each swallowing of the bumblebee,
the musk of them on their petals
just as the essence of blueberries
on my tongue.

All breaths condense into one vapor
at the summit; nuthatch,
salamander, spider in the moss,
and the lone man.

The parapets of moss are chimneys, the trees
are chimneys, the mountain
is a chimney;
all falls upwards into the sleeping heaven,
or rises to greet it.

*Note: This poem was first published in *Silhouette Literary and Art Magazine*.



TITLE:
Appalachian Grounding

ARTIST:
Airy Wylde Tincher

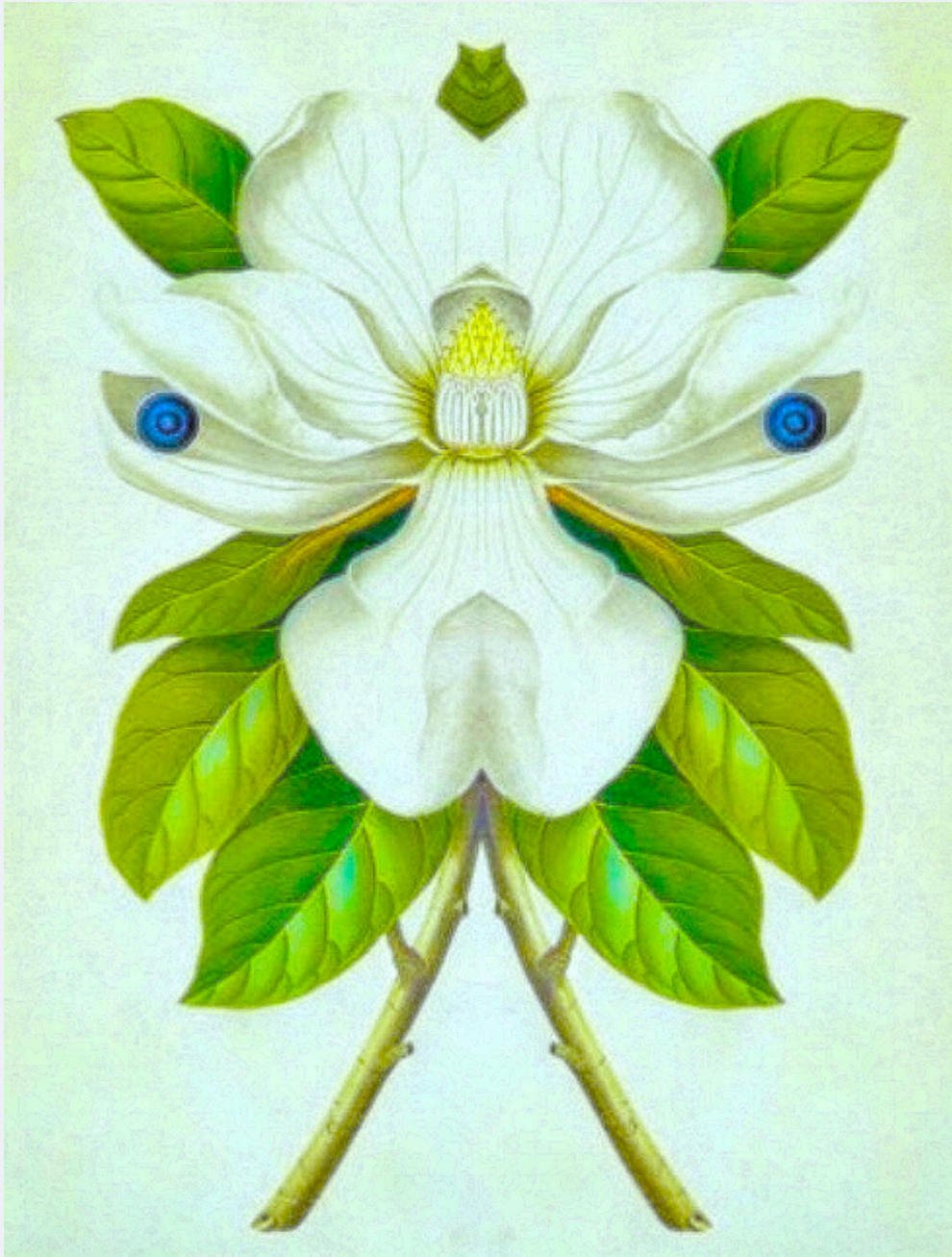
ABOUT
THE PIECE

2026 is a lot. Sometimes it wakes quite a bit of rage, and I need to find calm. For this piece, I let watercolor flow freely, inviting the chaos to settle. Shapes appeared, and suddenly I was in a winter Appalachian forest in West Virginia — the one place that steadies me. I added details only where the paint whispered, letting the work guide me instead of the other way around.

When Winter Ends

MATTHEW D. ALBERTSON

When winter ends, my soul will want to defrost. The warmth
Of Imbolc grows near—a season of lambing, a season of budding,
A season of mud and rain and cotton-clouded skies.
I'll furiously weather the inevitable spring frost,
And lament my lost crop. Experience is the best teacher,
Or second to the earth, and yet is unreliable in our
Faywild climate. I'll rescue the peas and the carrots
And the strawberries with plastic cover, but the cherry blossoms
Wilt. Hungry bees and hummingbirds will return soon to sip,
Nip at dry flowers. Mother help me. Though I curse these turnabouts,
Would it be Oregon without the chaotic weather? Unanswered,
I vanish into my work, tending the soil into loam, tending
The freshly germinated seed until my feet are swollen,
Just as my soul: inflamed by permafrost with the hope
That what was sown may be reaped.



TITLE: *No Deeper Than Desire*
ARTIST: Bill Wolak

Small Talk

AUDREY LANE

We leave to collect eggs
before he wakes, bleary
and bloodshot with wine.
It is early, nearing five,

but the sun is already slipping
the way Ohio winters
careen toward the dark.
We arrive in the hazy

between time when
molten ribbons melt
to gray horizon
behind the barn.

We talk about small things.
All the while, I worry.
We cannot mend. We cannot
siphon. We cannot press

grief into a simple
shape with cigarette-
stained fingertips.
But we can reach deep

into feed bins, scatter
corn for the chickens,
pull still-warm eggs
from shadows, tuck them

close in the wire pail. Watch
our breath disappear
into brittle air. Pray
they do not break.



TITLE: *Blue Dream, a Preserved Future...*

ARTIST: Nasta Martyn

ABOUT THE PIECE

Materials: Ink, leaves, foil, cardboard

Size: 30×40 cm

Year: 2025

I wanted to create something magical, inspired by the fairy tale about the girl and the bears and the legend of the nymph fleeing from the amorous Apollo.

The girl defied her circumstances and became a tree, or, according to one legend, a cypress. I guess I can relate to this legend in some way. And also, like her, I didn't want to be a slave to circumstances.

Owl-Wide

EMILY HALNON

An atmospheric river is about to get undammed over the Pacific Northwest when I find two screech owls, small and cute as kittens, under the umbrella of an awning. People walk by, eyes flooded with screens, oblivious to the tiny wonders hiding in plain sight. My brother used to joke that I wouldn't notice if someone painted the neighbor's barn neon green. And that was before my first phone, before apps and inboxes grabbed a rod and got me hook, line, and sinker. They say the average adult will spend 17 years of their life online. I've never looked at my own screentime because I know the data would cut like a rusty knife. I think Emily Dickinson was right when she said *hope is the thing with feathers*, because birds might throw a lifeline to the months and years drifting away. That wasn't why I got binoculars a few months ago, I was just another middle-aged woman who wanted to look at birds. But once my eyes were owl-wide, I couldn't stop looking: at the rainbow of songbirds chirping from every other bush, at the branches that start hooting when the sun slinks into the cellar, at just how many barns have been painted neon green while I've been looking away.



TITLE: *Kaaterskill's Edge*

ARTIST: Kalib Bryan

ABOUT THE PIECE

Life feels so addicting when you're standing at the edge of the world.

Weeding

ABNER OAKES

The spring rain brought chaos,
cracks in the front patio carpeted
with common chickweed, speedwell,
the beginnings of hairy bittercress,
each paver with its mane of green,
and I ease down in it, tuck my knees
under and begin with the tallest, careful
to ease each out so that I get the roots,
not just the false top, shake off the dirt
and tamp it back in the hole, filling
the emptiness. I turn clockwise, a quarter
turn, and reach out again, the bottom
of my bucket filling with this wild salad,
and another quarter turn to clear an arm's length
of stones, stand, knees stiff, move
to a new section and sit, my turns
to weed a stop motion Dervish in jeans,
fingertips black and bruised.
Even with the washcloth in the shower,
I can't coax the dirt from my nails
and so take with me dark crescents,
soil and seeds of the day. Tomorrow, the same.
Turning, reaching, pulling, my small repeated
efforts and the clarity that emerges,
brushed stone, fresh dirt, bucket that
I empty onto the hot compost pile.



TITLE:
Botanical Echoes

ARTIST:
Reena Choudhary

ABOUT THE PIECE

Ashfall over Red and Botanical Echoes are acrylic works built through layering, scraping, and imprinting.

Ashfall over Red explores intensity and release through bold color contrasts and scattered, ash-like marks, while Botanical Echoes draws on organic imprints to suggest memory, preservation, and quiet transformation.

Together, these pieces reflect my interest in impermanence and the balance between chaos and structure, where each work evolves through both intention and chance.

Love Is Teaching Your Girlfriend Mandarin From A Din Tai Fung Menu

SARAH ANG

“元盅排骨面¹,
油豆腐细粉²,
菜肉馄饨汤³”

My tongue skirts around
the ridges of pork ribs;
stutters over
the length of vermicelli noodles;
wraps awkwardly across
pork and vegetable wontons.
In this minefield of pronunciation errors,
tripwires abound,
but you spool out thread to guide me through.

I have told you my secrets,
and you have built me a sanctuary.
Our laughter peals like bells;
my suppressed shame crumpling in on itself,
cast away like fallen flower petals
cascading in the wind.

¹Steamed pork rib soup with noodles.

²Vermicelli soup with deep fried beancurd and minced meat rolls.

³Vegetable and pork wontons served in superior chicken broth.

This, too, is how I learn the vocabulary of you,
fingers tracing each character
in this hallowed dictionary
to form the liquid poetry in your eyes.

Come. Together we will
breathe life into these letters,
fold them into singing sentences,
construct a narrative that spans the sky.

Fox Medicine

ANNALISE GRUETER

Walk beneath pewter skies and robins egg blue ones.
Breathe thick heavy air under the umbrella of towering storybook trees, and crisp bright air that tastes the way snow sounds.
Consider the vivid apricot-sized blood clots in the sink and know WebMD would say "have you considered you might be dying?"

As far as animals go, I may be more like a hound than I'd like to think.
Headstrong, excitable. Focused to exhaustion should I catch particular scents.
Restless when I cannot access what I want, hungry for enrichment.

Saudade has entered my regular vocabulary. I'll never be home again. At least not in the sense of a place. I spent four years somewhere I grudgingly tolerated. I learned there the geologies I love best (everything I'd left behind). Yet now I make pilgrimages to that grudging place every few years. Fondly. Nostalgically.

Change. change.
I heard it call me. From a distance. From years away. I hoped hunting it might lead me to more, to the elusive. Ran in the opposite direction, hoping that by looking elsewhere I'd catch the trail of what I want the most.

I see far-off lands, mossy woods and rocky shores. Soaring peaks that feel like religion. Distant people like curtained windows, withholding light from what isn't their own.

The most frightening thing anyone has ever told me was a professor explaining that in writing, consistency and persistence are far more important than any skill when it comes to being Known.

(poem continued on next page...)

I've wondered ever since if it is arrogance or delusion. Which? fed my interpretation that the battle of my life would be overcoming reticence and distraction. The notion those would suffocate my talent, that I am talented. The certainty of the shape of my words.

I remember I am a woman. One era of the world does not want my kind to be confident or tenacious. I wonder how long those teachings will take to unlearn.

I try to love my body. To thank the pale fat that announces itself in times of uncertainty and fatigue. It is only trying to protect me. It wants to feed my appetite for affection.

I long for the hard lean shape of my thriving self. I recognize it better. But soft me has insisted on staying for a while. She's like a phantom who looms larger to me than anyone. I need to learn the lessons she offers.

I take my happy pills. Sometimes twice a day. The plant-based ones because I hold stubbornly to a notion of medicine from nature.

Walking a ghost through hallways that replaced the ones I walked 20 years before. The fledglings seem so foreign, nothing like my memories of that age, strange as unstudied languages.

But that one- yes- so young, whose paintings belong in galleries already. Another, the 13-year-old who asks to stay in for lunch to research rocks and minerals and talk about the vast age of the earth and ideas and the world. A week later, the 15-year-old done with her work and bored. Wants to know what my favorite books are. Wondering if skate skiing will ever feel easy. Her whole being lights up at the recommendations on a sticky note.

41 months ago, I saw two foxes in an aspen glade. They chattered to and chased each other, and watched me watching them, seven or twelve feet away.

It was during the plague. I'd thought I was alone in the woods at sunset, among the rustling frost-burned heart-shape leaves on pale sentinel trees.

Consider if the encounter is a koan, the closest to a religious subscription I've flirted with in my adult life. Text an ex later for details about this symbol, guidance on how to read it. With gratitude but quite honestly no wistfulness at all for the person providing the answer.

We don't get to know where we are going. There is no other version of the story. It is good to notice what plays on the periphery, navigating mapless, accepting that no Place is home.

In how many years, I'll look back. Will have to laugh in the changed light. The trail will be visible, just, meandering through peaks and forests.



TITLE: *Plaything: Veil*

ARTISTS: Sarah Graves & Christine Hogg

ABOUT THE PIECE

Plaything: Veil

watercolor, ink on paper

12.75 x 8.5 in.

2025

Nova you are, near
distant, of what measures
we sense. Crevices
spiral bring
us interweaving.

Like an angler,
you mesmerize with your
light prismatic
of what we want
to see until after
we've realized
we're trapped and
dizzied. Dazed
in our demise.

Or at ease end,
stretching into
the next. Specimen,
predator or kin,
emitting frequencies
behind our eyes.

Alien yet familiar,
scale undetermined,
trajectory of arc supreme.

I've Been Listening to Exclusively Country Music Lately

CONNOR DONOVAN

I'm not so much a cowboy or a country
even less so a nation,
though I do have my own declaration
of togetherness.
Tennessee & Georgia voices singing
something like Guns
& Roses, bunch of boys in a Chevrolet. Talking proud
of the town you were raised
to believe in. Measuring your faith in ounces
instead of its onus.
When I gave up on thinking of love
as a privilege
it became a right. When I gave in to
the eye contact
on the bus it became a moment. Each
morning, the dogs bark.
Each morning, the dogwood bark
scaling again as if
summiting a mountain one day we'll all see.



TITLE: *The Garden*
ARTIST: Orangeblossombitch

ABOUT THE PIECE

"Eternity is shy of no one when she grants her body to all here... in the fleeting spring" - Mahmoud Darwish

I originally created this drawing to go along with a song about spring, made by my friend's band. The design is inspired by Persian carpets, both in the symmetric layout, as well as the capture of scenes from nature. The unfurling flowers emulating gold thread embroidery against the vivid green of a lush spring garden, with birds and fruit hidden in the branches.

The Search

CLAUDIA HEYMACH

In between years of tired fasts at dawn,
singing hymns among redwoods,
sprinting from demons through the night,
you had a moment of calm.

You called early evening, told me
you were thinking of something sacred:
the cartwheeling of life into the vast universe,
into the territory of blind suns and deaf rocks.

That we are surrounded by sensing things,
a world lush with awareness.

Before you returned to unspooling meaning
from dreams, trying on ill-fitting faiths
and wrestling with the cuffs,

you asked if this could be enough —
the universe, loud and bright, knowing itself.

What Sleeps With Its Fist Uncurled

VERONICA TUCKER

Your hand is open in sleep,
as if you have finally decided
the world will not take from you tonight.

Your breath lifts my shirt
and sets it back down.
The room holds.

Downstairs, the refrigerator hums.
The dogs have arranged themselves
like punctuation around the couch.

You are warm in that specific way
only children are, a small sun
gathered into a single body.

I think about how often I tell people
to rest, how rarely it is possible.

In the emergency department,
we tape arms to boards,
tie gowns in knots that do not hold,
write stable in charts like a word
we are afraid to say out loud.

(poem continued on next page...)

Here, your pulse is a bird
I could cup in both hands.

You have unlearned the need
to be ready.

Your fingers, for once,
are not practicing how to hold on.



TITLE: *Unmasking*
ARTIST: April Love

ABOUT THE PIECE

“Unmasking” is a visual representation of the moment I decided to stop performing a version of myself that was never sustainable. The mask wasn’t protective, it was compliance. Removing the mask hasn’t been graceful, it has been disorienting, raw, and necessary. What remains is a more authentic version of myself, more vulnerable but stronger, unapologetic, unpolished, and revealing a self that is entirely my own. I give thanks to my dear friend Elizabeth for always partaking in my wild ideas. This photo was taken digitally and manipulated in Photoshop only with color correction to achieve the desired tones and also adding the blur between the face and mask. “Unmasking” is part of a numbered series and prints are available.

Bird Watching with a Beer on a Beach Towel

HEATHER TRUETT

The gull throws full speed, body drop
dives, orange beak ammunition, and rises
undeterred. Shiver of wings, droplets sling,
my skin and bones adoze in the chair, a red
shovel in the sand. So much does not depend
on that red shovel, its scratched plastic forgotten
by a child. I laze. I gaze. I graze on images, sandal
toes pointing skyward, blue whales on a beach
bag, and gull cries, like a called shot. Fish
dinner. Gulf of Mexico. Bird bodies taut
and straight, aimed, like my sister with a pool
cue, a bowling ball, the right words.

We Could

AUTUMN WILLIAMS

The cupboards are light, warm brown,
and covered in dirt.

Old windows let the dust blow in
through cracks, over months of sitting empty.

I can't clean it, but you can.

You have no time for paperwork, but I do.

We don't want to move, and we definitely want this house,
and maybe an old roof isn't so scary.

It's fixable, or replaceable.

There's a tree outside with perfect branches.

When they find a cure, we could climb it together.

When Stories Fell Silent

ANANGOOKWE WOLF

Part I.

Profound tales of Nanaboozhoo echoed in the dense woods, where snow thickly blanketed tawny leaves and coniferous. Despite the insulated boreal, you could still hear the bellows of a train one town over. This train's horn shattered the crisp, arid air. Its roar vibrated the thin, white trailer walls where community members gathered.

It was solstice and we were thoroughly stripped out of our down feather coats and mits. Pendleton, fraying quilts, and flannel blankets rested on the back of the foldout chairs, assuring us that extra insulation was nearby as we keenly listened to the orator narrate in Ojibwemowin. I cautiously leaned over my soggy, orange-greased, paper plate to take a bite out of my cousin's "authentic" NDN taco that was seasoned with Great Value Original Taco Seasoning—the low-sodium version—as the orator paused to quench their thirst.

Winter stories kept our homes and spirits warm. Winter stories can only be told when snow is on the ground.

Part II.

Solstice is here and fog cloaks twilight. Light rain has been forecasted through Christmas Day and the grass, eerily bright green, peaks through littered, amber leaves. A light dusting of snow is scattered about the scenery. It smells like spring.

I remain steadfast as I walk from my mother's trailer to my aunts', whispering to the trees to take back their budding green and to gichi-manidoo, pleading for winter. A fierce winter reminiscent of 20 years ago when my downy pillowed

body broke a sweat maneuvering through 4 feet of snow. A fierce winter when I inevitably released my clammy body into the powder. My hot breath melted the snow and its steam coated my cheeks in dew. They soon turned a bright, dry red.

I pleaded for a fierce winter reminiscent of when my older brother and I constructed forts of strawbale under my auntie's porch as we watched the snow fall from the dreary, grey sky. We gleefully screamed as we played in our shoddy architectural masterpiece. It took years to recoup the shocking neon toys that were lost amongst the straw, plastic litter, and dirt. Later that evening, during that fierce winter 20 years ago, my mother frustratedly spent hours separating my knotted curls from dry stalks. I smelled of a hot barn and cried as she tugged my hair with her brush.

.
Solstice is here. A warm rain has begun to fall from the sky, dissipating the light dusting of snow.

Lilac buds burgeon
Amidst winter solstice daze
Stories fell silent

Flowers on the Hillside

ASHLEY KIRKLAND

Everything is yours. Take it.
Cut the flowers
on the hillside: yours.

Even my urge to make
this beautiful: yes, yours.
I want to feed every

mouth with the flowers
you've cut so we can all taste
what it's like when a home

is lost. You can escape
it all if you just believe
enough or pray enough

or pay enough. Meanwhile,
summer's last tomato goes
rotten on the counter before

we can eat it. There it sits,
in a circle of its own juice.
We preserve the flowers

in a vase. Here: take this
petal. And, here, this one. We'll
swallow them all before long.

Greenhead Horseflies Chase Me

DÉSIRÉE PENNER

deeper into the olive-black smirk,
where Excited and Clever
Deerflies shriek— squabbling
in swirls. Raindrops freckle
the river's face. A thousand
mirrored moods
live here— but I do not
have time to search
for serenity. My insecurities are leaving
large welts along fleshy shoulders
and arms that ripple. I drop
underwater. *I am heavy-bodied,*
a Canvasback diving duck.

The sluggish belly
of the lake feels cool,
and yet, my lungs
are fiery. Silt
surprises my eyes
and I know, I cannot stay
drowning. I find a surprise,
a confident scatter—
golden glints from Northern
Redbelly Dace
Minnows who niggle
my kneecaps, tut-tutting
a love that tangles
my tongue.

Which is to say,
I wish I could stay,

but the surface is screaming.

Spaces of Waiting

CHLOE PAIGE

It was a habit—you and I driving to the used bookstore after our doctor's appointments.

Even now, we find ourselves here again. Despite being the dead of night; despite the closed sign; despite the locked door, you try to open it anyway. Of course you do.

Normally we'd squabble in the kids' section about what picture book to buy next. I'd want a tattered copy of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. You'd want a pristine *Possum Magic*. You'd kiss my forehead, hand on my belly, and buy us both.

It's the anthropologist in you that sits us on the cold footpath outside the bookstore to look at the stars. They flicker above, a mocking kind of dance. You pull me close, voice thick, reciting how some cultures believe those pinpricks in the sky are souls waiting to be born.

I know the story but lean back against your chest, watching the constellations of freckles on your cheek while you talk. I'd rather be out here on the dark, lifeless street anyway, time freezing with us, than drive home and face the blue nursery walls.

Once, briefly infected by your optimism, I let you draw stars on the ceiling and fill a crib with animal plushies: blue iguanas found in the Cayman Islands, blue-footed birds from the Galápagos, blue whales found in every wild, sprawling, glittering ocean the three of us would have grown old travelling across.

You squeeze me tighter while your breath plumes and trembles. You won't look away from the sky. You whisper that if a streak of light zooms between the stars, that shooting star is a soul finding its way home.

You always joked I'm a pessimist, but I'm just a realist. I knew the cramp meant bad news. I rocketed straight to the acceptance stage of grief. It was the maths teacher in me. Years of waiting multiplied by one loss equals dozens of unread picture books in the nursery. But you raced us to the ER anyway. Afterwards, we were two unmoored astronauts floating in unknowns and *what-nows?*, so we autopiloted to the bookstore.

You stop talking mid-sentence. I can't find a reason why in the spaces between your freckles. You don't finish the story. *Please finish the story.*

You collapse your head onto my shoulder, chest heaving, sobbing warm trails of saltwater down my neck.

So, from down here on the footpath, I look up to the sky. One of us needs to.

Somewhere out there, beyond gravity and atmosphere, there are dancing and sparkling *what-ifs*. Millions—no, *billions* of stars swaddled in space dust blankets, and one of them *should have been ours*.

Somewhere out there, beyond immeasurable galaxies and incalculable gas giants. Beyond thieving black holes and the blazing pillars of creation, their splayed, reaching fingers of pinks and blues.

Somewhere out there could be one star ready to zoom from the dark, empty spaces, across the sky, and home to us.

And so I wait

and wait

and wait.



TITLE: *Somewhere Between What Remains*
ARTIST: Jalen Martise Micquiel Williams

ABOUT THE PIECE

In the drawing "Somewhere Between What Remains", I wanted to capture a self portrait split into equal quadrants. With this in mind, I wanted to experiment with materials such as Rust Ink, Mud, and Liquid Pigment. Along with these materials, I wanted to adapt on the materials I was familiar with such as India Ink, Sharpie, and Ballpoint Pen. Within this self portrait, I wanted to tackle both feelings of peace and insecurity. When thinking of peace, I incorporated things such as the number to my childhood home, the use of cars (being my metaphorical and literal escape vehicle during times of stress), and the imagery of a party dog representing my thrill for life. My insecurities are shown through the sector of eyes (the fear of being over analyzed), the bouncing clock (time slipping by me), and me being surrounded bare in a gridded chaos (being openly presented to tension and disorientation).

Alongside Everything

CAMILLE LEBEL

In what passes for prayer these days
I breathe in, slow and deliberate
My children run down the wooded path
well-worn boots sucked into soft mud,
pulled free again with satisfying squelch

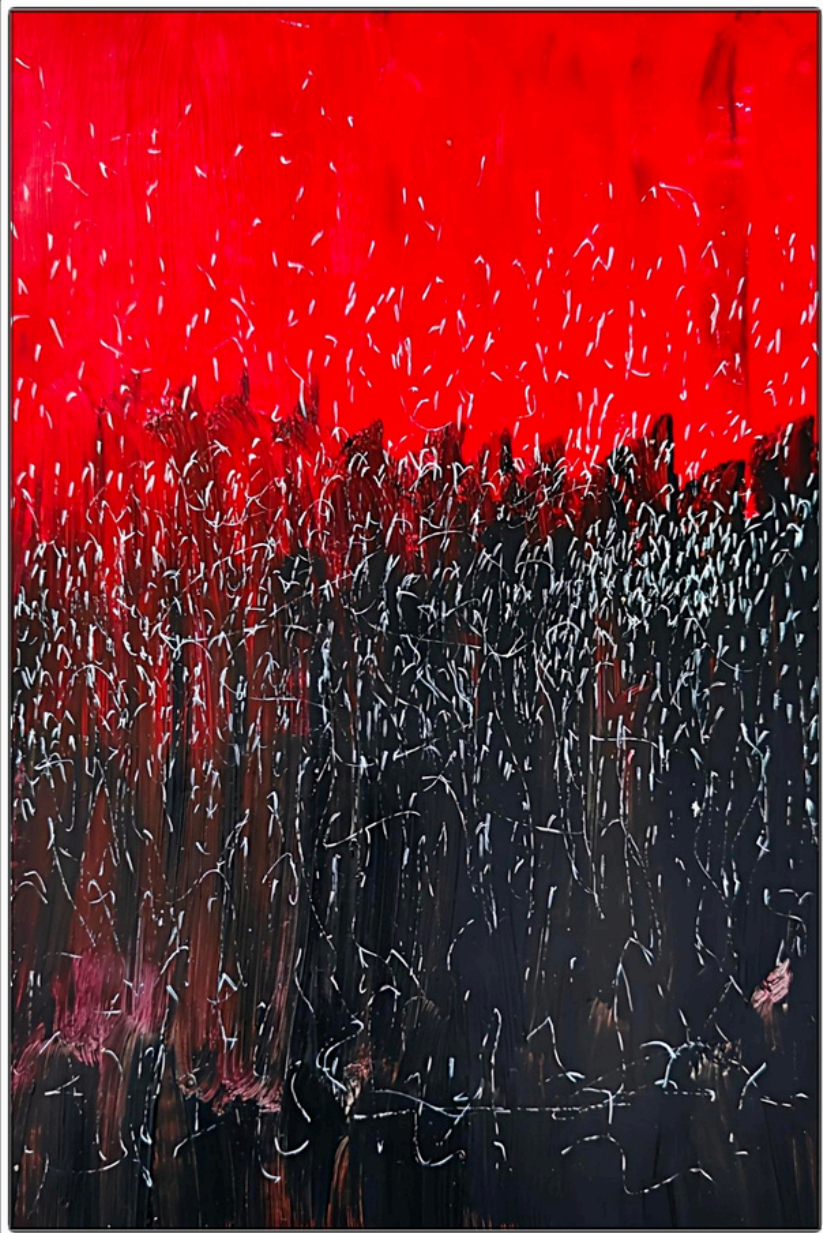
At lake's edge, we find a nest,
an oval bowl scooped from the ground.
Adorned with grass and downy feathers,
it awaits tenants. A half million neighbors
erupt from mountainous ant hills nearby,
pouring from scars left by a probing stick

Pink light stretches through clouds
as we feed chickens, searching for eggs
fragile, perfect treasures

*mothers kneel in rubble, gasping as
thick, brown shrouds steal time with each breath.
children run down shattered streets, screaming
sandals slip on broken glass and bone
shrapnel carves bodies into sharp-edged memory.*

*Families hide under desks as the sky falls,
leaving craters in lifelines. Uniformed men
raid factories, restaurants, schools - convinced
there isn't enough for everyone. Billionaires
fling themselves into the cosmos
while the planet begs mercy.*

*a boy sifts through trash in the dying light
gathering glass bottles, metal cans, shoes,
bricks for building his future.*



TITLE:

Ashfall Over Red

ARTIST:

Reena Choudhary

ABOUT THE PIECE

Ashfall over Red and Botanical Echoes are acrylic works built through layering, scraping, and imprinting.

Ashfall over Red explores intensity and release through bold color contrasts and scattered, ash-like marks, while Botanical Echoes draws on organic imprints to suggest memory, preservation, and quiet transformation.

Together, these pieces reflect my interest in impermanence and the balance between chaos and structure, where each work evolves through both intention and chance.

What The House Does Not Know Yet

VERONICA TUCKER

In the living room, sunlight
spools across the rug,
catching on puzzle pieces
left mid constellation.

The dog noses at the couch,
finds last night's popcorn ghost
and makes it disappear.
Someone has left a sock on the table.
Someone has left a drawing of a dragon
guarding a stick figure family.

You move through it all
with a laundry basket on your hip,
collecting the evidence
that children were here,
that they will be back.

On the counter, your phone
rests face down in its own quiet.
You can almost believe
it is just a rectangle of glass,
not the mouth that drags you
out of sleep
and into other people's worst moments.

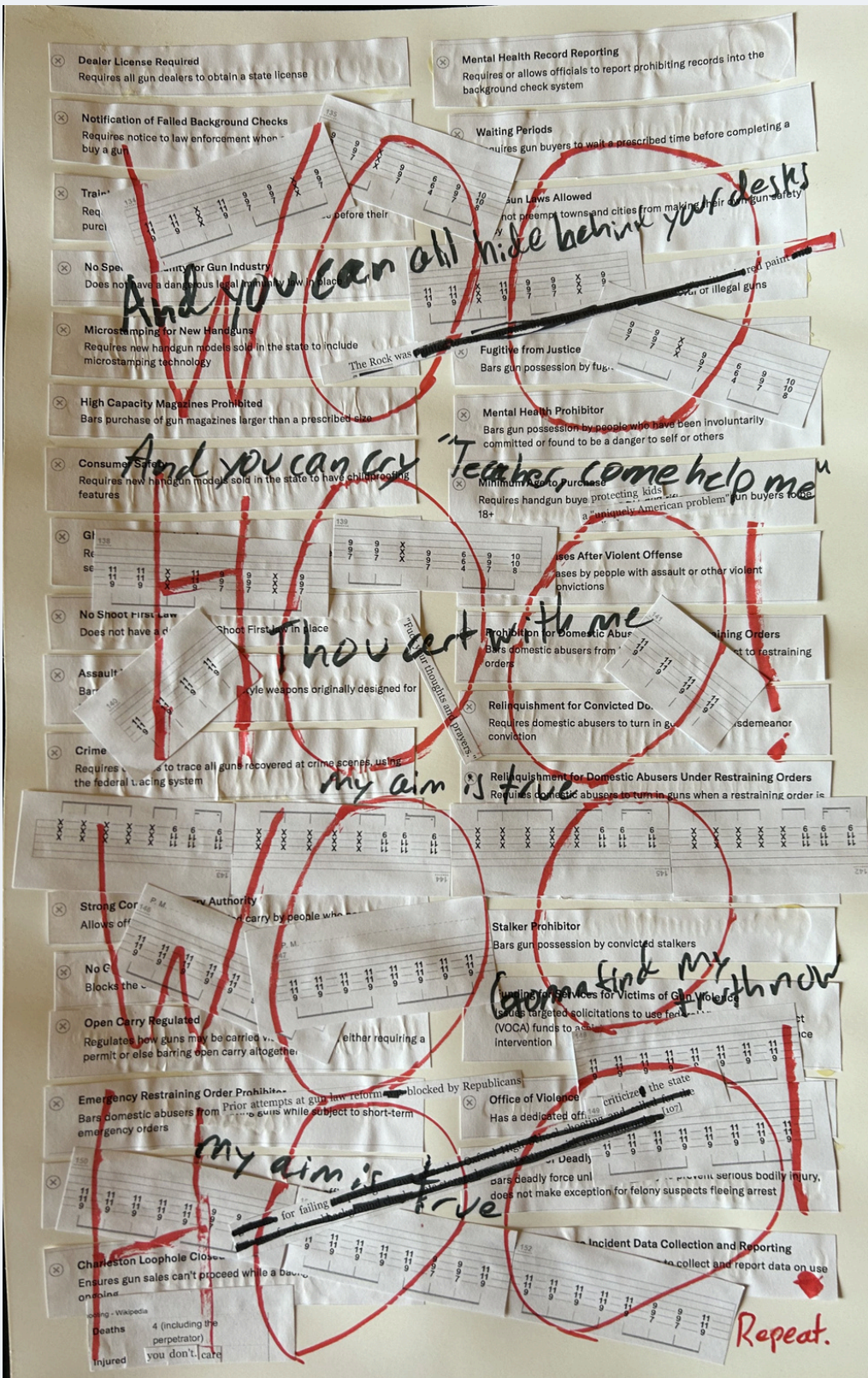
In the next room, the television
murmurs under your daughter's show,
a news anchor's voice
threading between cartoon laughter.
You catch stray words
as if by accident.
School.
Shots fired.
Witness.

(poem continued on next page...)

For a second the hallway narrows.
Your heart steps off rhythm,
remembering blood on tile,
metal on a stretcher,
the way sneakers look
when someone carries them in
without the person attached.

Then your son shouts
from the top of the stairs
to ask where his favorite shirt is,
the one with the planets,
and the spell breaks.

You tell him it is in the clean pile,
bottom of the basket.
You say it like a promise.
You lift it out and shake it once,
watch the tiny stars
settle back into their places.



TITLE:
In My Head

ARTIST:
Paul Hedges

ABOUT THE PIECE

I started with a poster board as my base, then glued cutouts of all the gun legislation that the State of Michigan doesn't have (pulled from Everytown) as the first layer. The second layer was tabs to the song Hammerhead by the Offspring; specifically Verse Three after the bridge. The black text is excerpts of the same verse, overlaid with the raucous cheering "WOO HOO!" in red that persists as a juxtaposition to the horrific lyrics. Finally, excerpts from the Wikipedia article about the February 13th, 2023 Michigan State University shooting are strewn across the page, the number increasing as we reach the bottom of the piece where it culminates with the number of deaths and a single word handwritten in red:

Repeat.

I find that Hammerhead, like a lot of metal and heavy rock, is a mirror for how I feel after such horrific events. I interpret the song to be about a traumatized veteran going through a psychotic break of some kind; reliving combat in a foreign war - quite likely in Iraq or Afghanistan. This person returns to the United States and is provided no help, no treatment, and no aid. This person cracks at the bridge of the song, where they gun down children at a school while believing themselves in a war zone with only god to help them. It touches on the "uniquely American problem" of the commonality of school shootings. I struggle to play this song on my guitar; only when the amp is loud enough can I make my way through the final chords while some part of me relives the fear of that shooting.

Preservation

CLAUDIA HEYMACH

In the poster, Neighborhood Man rests serenely
on a folding chair against the park's backdrop.

It's been nearly a year since he was killed;
already, the wet heat of summer slicks the grass.

Last year, the park filled with signs
celebrating his life —

until the scalpel of the seasons
sliced off leaves and unpeeled posters.

By summer's end, what of Neighborhood Man
will remain in this place?

At times, each day feels like a veil
laid over the last:

translucent enough that the steady
evolution of a place can be observed.

Other times, days are more opaque than that,
each a scene painted over the last.

Something like Van Gogh's Patch of Grass:
a flower-studded field painted over an older work,

the original image seemingly lost
under streaks of green and blue.

But now, X-rays have reconstructed
the painting underneath:

a swooping cap, sunken cheeks and taut mouth.
A woman, still there, underneath it all.

Through the flower-studded field,
her red-rimmed eyes meet mine.

Dik, J.; Janssens, K.; Van der Snickt, G.; van der Loeff, L.; Rickers, K.; Cotte, M.
Visualization of a Lost Painting by Vincent van Gogh Using Synchrotron Radiation
Based X-Ray Fluorescence Elemental Mapping. *Anal Chem* 2008, 80 (16), 6436-
6442. <https://doi.org/10.1021/ac800965g>.



TITLE:
Decapitulation

ARTIST:
Robyn Daly

ABOUT THE PIECE

When I moved to Ireland from South Africa in 2020 I settled in a semi-derelict house built in the 1920s but badly neglected by its previous owner. This sparked a fascination with derelict buildings and the connections we establish with places: how identity, beauty, decay and sensuality change over time as our sense of self evolves. Initially I planned to renovate the house top to bottom, however, the more I photographed there, the more I realised that to embrace the imperfections of the house would be the true transformation. This has been the starting point of a wider journey: one of creative risk, personal change, and learning to value what time has altered - in the house and in myself.

Many of my photographs depict transformative states or liminal spaces, where paradoxical concepts such as movement and stillness, old and modern work together to weave the narrative. The title of this image is *Decapitulation*. Strictly speaking this is no longer a word, however, it does encapsulate the notion of losing one's head (decapitate) and succumbing or surrendering (capitulation). One can see this image in many ways: an expression of rage, energy, a sense of discombobulation, disconnectedness... there are no wrong answers, it is about feeling.

Camouflage

CHRISTINA TUDOR

After Agustín Fernández Mallo

You were born when Obama was about to be president. You were a toddler crawling on your palms, on your knees while I watched the first Black president get inaugurated on a TV my social studies teacher rolled into the classroom. You pronounced soldier as shoulder once (I did too) and now I'm on a metro train going home and there you are. You are just following orders. You are doing what you're told. You cannot say no. *What are you doing here?* I want to walk up and tap you on the shoulder. *No one wants you here.*

You have your own questions. *Where is the Chick-Fil-A? Am I taking this red line train in the right direction? I want to go home, you say. Good, I think but don't say.* You've got braces on your teeth and you look like you're twelve but maybe you look like a child because I'm thirty and at the soccer game we hold up yellow cards that say Free DC during the 51st minute and, when the game ends, there you are milling about right outside the gate. You've got a gun strapped to your chest that I watch you cradle with both hands. *Go home, I want to tell you.* But you've got a gun on your chest and all I've got is a crinkled yellow card. You are just doing your job. You are just doing what you're told. A stranger I pass in the street says these words, they slip into the air and make their way towards me through the crowd like a game of telephone.

When I exit the U Street metro station, you're doing high knees down the sidewalk in rows of two. Your feet drumbeat on the pavement, I turn back, watch you loop in a circle and go nowhere. I walk by the bookstore where men sit out front with grocery carts full of their lives and every single one of them asks me for money. I hand out all the cash I have, which isn't much, isn't enough while you stand across the street. Your hands in your pockets. Your hands idle on your phone. You never look at us. *It costs a million dollars a day for you to be here, I call across the street, to you, to myself, to anyone.*

In the park on K Street near my office, you climb out of an unmarked white van. You cradle sandwiches wrapped in butcher paper, weave in and out of park benches holding out the sandwiches to strangers. *No*, we say. You've still got your gun, tucked inside your belt this time. *No, thank you.*

I turn away so I don't have to face you, wonder when I'll stop seeing you, wonder if, wonder when, you'll slip into the background and I'll forget you're there at all.

Carrying Touchstones

ADELE EVERSLED

On the train to Norwalk, I read the first two Touchstone-winning haibun—they're both about dead mothers that linger long after the worm moon has waned. There's a body tucked between the pages of a not-very-good book and ashes in an envelope that sassily answers back. And I'm disappointed. Don't get me wrong—I've written reams about my own dead mother—seeing her in the steam from my kettle—hearing her in the soft mutations of the sea—so I'm no stranger to this touchstone.

The other winning poems are both about children—one who is not here yet, and one who is too much here—a hinted disability and a father who catches crabs—maybe for a living or maybe to feel there is still a living to be had. It's difficult to say which. I have four children of my own, each with their own claws and sideways glances—so I know all about crabs and the way they pinch.

Four poems by four different people, yet all with the same sorrow of too many words and no understanding. And on this beautiful spring day, I don't want to think about the grief we share—all the *should haves*, *could haves*, or *never haves*. No, I want to look out of the train window at the cherry blossoms and forget they will ever have to fall.

Just as I write that last word, I get an alert on my phone—an active shooter at Florida State University—and the blossoms disappear from view

train tunnel my smile on and off...



TITLE: *world peace?*
ARTIST: ML conrad
Detroit, Michigan—2017.

I'm not anti-apocalypse, but I don't want it to happen now

BRIAN U. GARRISON

Rain still falls on Angkor Wat.
Fronds wave. Moss crawls.
Nature's gentle carpet
against rigid architecture.

This blossoming archeology:
the opposite of a soldier
whose tender interior
carries a hard outer shell.

Two deconstructionists, moss
and bodies, in this moment
between collapse. Jasmine
blooms in my backyard,

far from soldiers
and archaeology.
A fragile scent
on the wooden trellis.

A mighty collaboration
by former star stuff
committed to gravity,
and simultaneously defiant.



TITLE: *Sleeping Giants Awaken*
ARTIST: Matt Laux

ABOUT
THE PIECE

Watercolor & ink
10 in x 9 in
2026

You Tell Me It's Just Weather

ALICIA COOK

I say the air
is raining gasoline,
that the sky
has traded its blue
for bruised clouds
the color of old blood.

You tell me, "It's just weather."
That the wind is carrying smoke
from somewhere else,
not here.
Never here.

But I can't unsee
the rooftops alight in a false dawn,
the chimneys coughing black shadows,
the river boiling, spitting up
the bones of fish.

You laugh—claim
sunsets have always
looked like this.
Artificial.

I keep pointing out the obvious;
the red smolder of shingles,
the crooked bridge sagging
like the spine of a tired beast.

(poem continued on next page...)

You fold your arms,
close your eyes,
shake your head,
blame my paranoid imagination.

But these days
silence
is an accelerant.
Your apathy
tastes of cinders.

And when the last house
is only an ember,
and everything we've ever had
is burned to the ground—
you'll ask me why
I never warned you.



TITLE: *Beautiful Storm*
ARTIST: Jo Rohrbacker

Banned Blessing

EMILY BRUHL

After PEN America's Banned Words List

Long live affirming care, first of all, medicine that restored my love's biggest smile, and long live the half-broken belonging we've found in our red town. We're hanging sweaters and polos in the community closet, sorting by size, and I think, long live diversity. How expression delivered us. I am female, fragile, wishing warmth to all growing things, bailing hate by the teaspoonful. A blessing for all immigrants, a candle for Justice40, a new love lullaby for every lesbian. Long live men who have sex with men. A bundle of carnations for everyone nonbinary, noncitizen, non-conforming, tied with rainbow ribbon. Oppression drove us here too, but I don't want to dwell on that just now. I want to untangle these wire hangers from one another. I want to wish an epipen for everyone with peanut allergies. I want pronouns, I want grammar, I want queer grandmothers. I want finally racial justice, even here in our Confederate colors-flying town. God give us safe drinking water with our daily bread. Aren't we hanging these clothes in a church, after all? This church that married us just last year, with a trans flag fluttering pink and blue. I wish funding for the understudied. I wish vaccines. I wish wind power. I wish a sunflower, big as your head, for every woman. A toast, long life, a blessing pulled from my top shelf, and until then these secondhand sweatshirts, these hangers, free hair dye if you want it, bowties and brand new sneakers still in the plastic. Until then, we'll walk home across the empty parking lot, checking over our shoulders beneath the streetlights.

[Wr](f)i(gh)t[e]

ELIJAH ST. PIERRE

The reason [I'm] a writer is
when life has me [going] full haywire
all that I need [to] do is align words;
and the [punch] of the keyboard
or [that] raspy, scratchy sound
a pen [prick] makes on paper
soothes me [in] a way in which
not even ONE of [the] movements
of a talking [mouth] can.



TITLE:
Liberty Against Ice

ARTIST:
Nicole Schulman

ABOUT THE PIECE

This image is ink on clayboard with digital color added. I'm a long time political cartoonist on the editorial board of World War 3 Illustrated Magazine, an arts collective that was founded in 1979 in New York City. I am a teacher of immigrant students, the wife of an immigrant, the descendant of immigrants. ICE must be stopped, Trump must be stopped, and the systems that created these injustices must be abolished. It's our job as artists to fight for a just society.

Vertigo

YIMIN HUANG

They taught us about tectonic plates
at school, about the
ways they divide the earth,
moving slowly over a searing, viscous layer.

In the past, I've heard alarms reverberate
over the quakes caused by the movement
of the plates, but felt only the slight tremors
by my bed, my body
completely safe.

This year,
in the misty morning,
after the wind pounded the glass windows
throughout the night,
I climb down from my bed and
the ground is shifting
beneath my feet.

after a cord-cutting ritual during a NYC drought

c. rivera

therapist says,

what's his face?

he's no longer—

but wouldn't you know it—

I can smell the rain's want

how it begs for east coast skies
to be yearned

wide open

& my tongue, as always, is out
& I am giving the world above
the most believable

doe eyes, I am

giving the world these two
arthritic fists.



TITLE:
Cibum Cogitationis
(Food For Thought)

ARTIST:
Allan Sanchez

ABOUT THE PIECE

2024 mixed media collage which blends recycled paper, acrylic & spray paint. Assembled on 22×28 cardboard

This piece reflects on the overconsumption of goods in society and the inhumane systems we create to sustain ourselves, which ultimately have negative affects on the natural environment

“The earth provides enough for every man’s needs, not every man’s greed.” -Gandhi

Wind Narrative

GENARO AGUILAR SAUCILLO

The hills are a handful of knuckles under the grass,
a lesson in how a country learns to sleep on its dead.
I stand where the shadow of a tree stitches my
ankles
to the earth — a tree without leaves, just bone,
just the memory of fruit. *What are you thinking about?*
I'm thinking about them — two strangers crossing the field,
their dresses fluttering like orchids in the wind,
as if they offered
their bodies to this quiet. Back home, my mother folds tortillas
into moons — *yezana*, offerings. On the news, a new unnamed face
surfaces among *yo nujmú*.
We call it mourning, but here
it reeks of windburned grass.

I have become the seam the hill stitches shut.
The mountains I left behind,
dogs barking at *yo paa*, our days,
the stony trail swallowing our tongue
and spitting back its foreign
alphabet.

I think of the fathers that never return
— by choice,
or lifted off the road like brush — how we inherit a silence
and polish it into a benched grammar.
We are told to bow our faces to the uncut sky,
though it never whispers our names back.

A branch points toward this pale arch
and they ask us to call that doorway home.
I want to say I am safe, I do,
that distance uncrooks a landscape,
but my bones crackle in the wind
of every border they crossed,
all our names beneath the orchard back home.
I press my ear to the hill. It beats. It beats.
Who have you become in this bright, razored field?
I have become the bare branches,
the shadow, the deer.
*I'm thinking of both my mothers
meandering these plains,
turning the grass until their faces
flicker in the roots —*
again.

Notes (in *Jñatjo*, or *mazahua*):

Yezana= two moons

Yo nujmú= the harvest

Yo paa= those who go; the days

**NOTE: This poem was originally published in *Rattle's Ekphrastic Challenge*.

August Prairie: Bearing Witness

BETTY BENSON

*12 miles west of the Minnesota/South Dakota border
on flatland stolen in 1863
from the Dakota people
by my ancestors*

in the distance
a plume of dust

rises

and falls as a lone

car navigates
a gravel road

whir of motor
faintly audible
through thick
summer air

in nearby fields
cicadas weave
taut threads

(poem continued on next page...)

Another

BAABI KIR

I could have been a goose
in a Chinese meat market, hanging
upside down with no feet or insides, unmoving
but for the air that sways me a little,

but I am a man here, bearing
this now with straw breaths and a belly full of sand,
holding my head with two stone hands
tracing with a third
the round ache
of a crown that I once wore and that
wore me.

I could have been a German Shepherd
in America, watching
the news on tv with no interest
and the road and the traffic, waiting
for her to come back, so I can warn her
of this new man, so she can ignore me, so
the days go fast and then stand still, crooked,
so that I'm in a new home and she
is on the news, and I watch her
and the road and the traffic, and wait
for her
to come back,

(poem continued on next page...)

but I am another creature
in another land mass, not many Bundys
or Gacys around, but
the hacksaws still whirr from the pulpits,
the boys still hang from the beads
of rosaries, and the girls
still vanish from their own eyes.
in my chest is a brotherly love that
is kneaded with the flash of whips,
my body a bridge of scars, from somewhere
to me to somewhere,
my dreams the defeats of those who came before me,
from somewhere to the me that defies, the me
that is molded into what yesterday desired, to the me
that surrenders while nursing the wish
that he

was another

This Definition of Danger Breaks My Heart

DEIRDRE GARR JOHNS

The man making laps at the park
stops and points to the bend.

“Alligator.”

There — on dirt, the grass sloughed off
by the scales of his underbelly.

“El grande, the big one,” the man says.

His syllables unwind like the line of a kite.
I hold fast.

The alligator won’t bother you,
unless you bother it, he says, grinning.

The wrinkles on his sun-battered face
erupt into ravines.

Do you live here? he asks
and does not wait
for my response
before telling me
he’s been here
for twenty years.

(poem continued on next page...)

His accent and his English
mingle — melodic.

We make small talk,
mostly about *el grande*.

Sometimes his snout points
toward the trail,
like a compass needle set on its next victim,
whom I imagine to be
the Chihuahua, Shih Tzu, or Yorkie
picked up by an owner's arm,
unwilling to tempt fate.

Some days, *el grande* is nowhere in sight.

Manuel flags me down.
Maybe it move to another lake?
Maybe is hiding?
Maybe new territory?

Instead, he tells me about his brother
who was a boxer back home in Mexico,
or the money he sends home
for his niece who needs medicine,
or the pollen on his work clothes.

Tomorrow, Manuel is not around.
The next day and the day after —
nowhere to be found.

(poem continued on next page...)

A lump in my throat rises.

Reports of ICE removing dangerous illegals
across the country and in my backyard surge,
their rough hands and weapons and masks
all part of the great purge
of people with accents
and skin colors richer than vanilla.

Mistaken for danger.

Manuel does not return.

These afternoons of late dwindle, the sun
muddled at dusk.

I keep my distance from *el grande* —
its mouth gaping, ready to swallow the world —
and wish I could do the same,
but I am left to keep this vigil.

Not a poem about birds

ELIZABETH JOY LEVINSON

Chicago, 10/8/25

The shadow of the bus is underneath me,
I abandoned the thrush I passed on my way,
window stunned and naive enough,
I could have cupped its breast in my hands,
cradled it until it could stand, until it could fly.
The machine in me has been so angry.
The sound of helicopters keeps me moving.
I'm watching the day arrive, the moon is still out,
but dawn breaks on the other side of the sky.
This morning, whatever the world once was,
it is not anymore.
Perhaps this has never not been true.
Sometimes a storm whips the world clean.
But everything looks exactly the same today.
Likely some feral cat will find the thrush.
Only after we see none will we ask,
where have all the birds gone?

I'm still learning how to talk to men.

TYLER MCDONALD

Some of them greet me as they pedal past
 on their bikes, and I don't have to say anything.
I wave my hand and carry on.
 Words caught in the back of my throat.

Other times they're on the opposite end
 of a Microsoft Teams meeting. I pretend
I don't hear them when they ask our group
 how our weekends went. I don't need to know

what they'd say if I confessed, "I dressed up as a sexy sailor,
 went to the gay bars in Over-the-Rhine,
blacked out after my ninth shot."
 Although I'm not sure if I'd tell that to anyone.

Tonight a man instructed my piano lesson,
 my class partner a little boy named Blaine. I pity
laughed maniacally at Blaine's joke about the periodic
 table. There was awkward silence after.

The instructor chewed on pen, stone
 faced. We practiced ear training without words.
These are the interactions that I handle quietly.
 I can say nothing at all when I'm uncomfortable.

Most of the men I've known have been preachers,
stepfathers, preacher's sons, step-
brothers, and characteristically,
the most morally depraved men on earth.

This is why my family doesn't celebrate Christmas anymore.

A few holiday seasons ago, my stepfather drank
himself into fists. My sister and I clay statues.

My mother still strings white lights all around her house.

There was the preacher who stole church tithes,
unrelenting coffee breath. Flirted with the youth group,
his wife in the nursery. He wrote in my Bible,

This book will keep you from the world, or the world

will keep you from this book.

Outside of a bar last September, a group of guys
with jeans tucked into their cowboy boots
called me a faggot as I walked past.

My friend Emma didn't let it slide. Disbelief in her stars.

She slapped him across the face twice.

I ripped her off of him as his friends shouted,

Don't hit the girl! Don't hit the girl!

His fist landed against my Adam's apple. I didn't see the punch,
the vodka caught the pain for me.

I rubbed my neck to check if my pearl necklace was still intact,
then I launched after him.

His friends held us apart as I threatened to kill him.

There are moments when I feel like a villain,
I am trying to grasp the male condition.

Emma and I entered the bar,

splashed water on my face as we cried
in the women's bathroom.

But this June when a man dabbed me up
outside of the club,

I flinched when he dropped

his vape pen, pointed at me: *That's my brother right there.*

I don't want any brothers.

I've tried to have those before.

It ended in the guys from middle school calling me slurs,
lonesome on the boys-only schoolbus,

hollering, *What dress are you going to wear to the dance?*

I feel like the tacky disco ball, whirling,

stage four lymphoma, as voices crack

the classroom saying I deserve it. They laugh at my moon face,
reach to rip off my beanie in a rundown gymnasium.

I'm getting older, but I still carry grudges.

This November is bitter and I've had five glasses
of watermelon white wine.

I'd like to say it's nice to have a friend.

I can't see past the condensation on the skylight.

I'm still learning how to talk to men.

I'd just like to have a male friendship.

How many of us climb the apple tree

only to find the fruit rotten off the branch?

After the Monsoon

T. REPALLE

There: your grandmother's hands unwrapping foil from the handi, and the kitchen erupts—ghee-smoke blooming thick as monsoon clouds, cardamom pods

split open in boiling milk, their seeds dark as monsoon earth. Biryani steaming in clay, raita weeping cucumber water, achar

glistening red as laterite mud after the first rain. Your mother's been in the dough since dawn, her palms slick with oil and flour, kneading

until it yields. Until it becomes what she needs it to be. And now the paratha sits on your plate, still exhaling heat, ghee

pooling in the torn places where her fingers pressed through. If only, you think. Stomach crackled like a drought-bed earth

waiting for the deluge, or refusing it—you can't tell anymore. God, to be handi—holding heat without feeling, without this mud-thick

need clotting in your throat. The table is full of open mouths. Your cousin splits a gulab jamun with her teeth, rose-syrup bleeding

where she bit, and she's laughing, sugar dark on her tongue. She swallows. Her throat works like a river knowing exactly where to carry everything,

and you watch the way her jaw moves, mechanical, easy, like she was born knowing how to drown and surface. How to open herself to this

and not disappear. The biryani on your plate is a mound. Saffron threads dyeing the rice the color of floodwater, each grain swollen, fat

with its drowning. Bay leaves floating like debris. Your aunt's hand reaches across—ladle dripping—and adds more. *Thoda aur* (a little more), she says,

piling it higher, the rice wet and glistening, and your plate is a flood plain now, is a delta where everything collects and nothing drains. Better

a storm drain: open but taking nothing in, just the sound of water passing through. Let your ribs rise like levees,

spine dry as river stone. But you are the field that cracks for want of rain and drowns at the first drop. You have always been

both. Outside, the sky splits. You hear it before you see it—rain stippling the courtyard stones, darkening the concrete to its true color. Your grandmother

says the word: *varsha*. Relief threading through her voice like this is what saves, like the breaking of the sky is a mercy and not another drowning. But you know

there are two kinds of ruin. The paratha on your plate is still weeping, ghee seeping from its layers. Your mother tore it with her hands,

made it smaller, manageable, a portion she thinks you can bear. But even this— even the smell is a fist in your throat. Even the sight

of it sweating oil makes your stomach contract, tidal. A month of rain trying to move through six inches of pipe. You press your palms

into your lap. Your salwar kameez clings like wet cotton, though you haven't moved, haven't touched the water glass sweating beside your plate,

its own small weather system. You are so thirsty your tongue is a stone. You are so full you could flood. If only you were the petrichor—

the smell without the substance, the ghost of rain without the rain. If only you were the river that never questions where it's going. And god, if *only*

your mouth remembered how to open without keeping count. Your hands shake. Small monsoon winds. The table stretches:

raita pale as a drowned sky, dal simmering yellow as silt-thick floodwater, your cousin lunging for seconds, thirds, her plate a roiling abundance,

and the sound of her chewing fills the room like rain on a tin roof. Unyielding. Your aunt is talking, her mouth full of biryani, and someone

passes the achar, oil-slick and sharp enough to make your eyes water, and your mother is watching you. Not obviously. Just that glance,

the one that weighs. That measures. The rice on your plate has gone cold. Grease congealing at the edges. And you think: *next year,*

when the monsoon comes, I will know how to open my mouth to it. I will learn the way a field learns water, the way a river learns its banks.

But the rain is here. The rain is now. Three times, your grandmother's hand crosses the table. Her spoon scrapes your plate—careful, quiet—

and she lifts the gulab jamun still drowning in its syrup. The top layer of rice, wet and heavy. The paratha folded like a ruined map. She returns them

to the serving dishes. Says nothing. Just catches your eye, brief as lightning, and you understand: this is what mercy looks like. Not the flood. Not the drought.

Just someone who sees you is still deciding if you can survive this. The meal continues. Plates passing, voices rising, the rain outside

heavier now, the way it always does once it starts. Your plate lighter, but still impossible. Your throat still a shut valve. And the water—

inside, outside, *everywhere*—has nowhere to go.



TITLE: *Seastorm* // ARTIST: Camellia Paul

ABOUT THE PIECE

This piece is created using soft pastel, and diluted watercolor on textured paper, allowing the surface grain to remain visible and active. I worked from broad atmospheric washes outward, laying down the sea and sky with wet-on-wet watercolor, then dragging graphite and charcoal through the damp surface to blur horizons and soften edges. The figures were added last in darker, denser strokes, deliberately simplified and silhouetted so they emerge from the landscape rather than dominate it. I used smudging, erasure, and repeated reworking of the sky to build the weight of the approaching storm, letting marks remain unfinished and wind-swept.

The work is about companionship in uncertainty—two bodies standing at the threshold of something vast, restless, and uncontrollable. The sea here is not romanticized; it is heavy, cold, and indifferent, while the storm above mirrors emotional turbulence rather than literal weather. Holding hands becomes a quiet, defiant gesture: not safety, but presence. I wanted the figures to feel small without feeling erased, and the world to feel expansive without becoming abstract. What I want the world to know is that this drawing was made slowly and attentively, with a willingness to let the image stay unresolved. It reflects my interest in liminal spaces—shorelines, storms, pauses before change—and my belief that intimacy often lives most honestly in moments where nothing is promised except standing still together.

great horned owl

KIMMY CHANG

great horned owl

i am confident
it happens—
the powder of uprooted roots
needles the eye raw

bulldozers bite the ground open,
metal jaws clamping clay,
gear-teeth sawing shale
heat blisters plaster-skin
long after the grocer's fluorescents whine.

watch how the owl slides into the vacancy,
the gaping circle,
wings folded close,
its gaze a hammerblow,
shopping the ruin
among gray shingles.

no one can tell where it will land.
worm-casts split,
lichen scabs off stone,
—silence grips the teeth—
something worries the wood,
as field mice spark, chalk-white.

the owl fixes its stare—
a bruise deepening in bitten fruit,
not rapture but rage,
splintering on the wet crush of tomatoes—

bubo virginianus

when lots are cleared
one comes without warning,
a shape slammed to the window,
as the ground outside buckles.

the horde—
engines, blades, wires—
a screeching hunger;
cement poured where roots once spread
and filled the emptied space.

too still—
a hostage hush,
silent feathers fanning
over the scalped lot,
over scraps of receipt paper
searching where oak once anchored it.

it turns its head—270 degrees,
like a drill-bit searching a purchase.
i slam my curtains,
still, it advances, between the joists,
nails shrieking
the whole house echoing.

the owl lowers itself to ravish,
breath close and scorching
under rafters—
narrow in the joists.

Reading twilight at the end of the world

ALEXA BROCKAMP HOGGATT

Bella and Edward are seventeen and certain in a field of flowers and on Pacific Avenue, someone is beating a drum, chanting *no justice, no peace*. Sirens blare towards the drummers and Edward is carrying Bella because she is so tired, she shouldn't have to walk and the man with the sirens is out of his car with a shield and a baton and the drummer is a boulder in a stream and both of them are comets burning out on the sidewalk in a conjoined blaze and a few cities over an old man with a walrus mustache has been denied coverage for a pacemaker. It's been a week since FAFSA said his daughter didn't need grants because their house is worth \$350,000 and if they sold that they'd have plenty of money for tuition, and the siren-man raises his baton and the drummer falls, the river seething over his head, the body cam switched off, a stack of paperwork and two appeals between him and medical leave for recovery, during which time his mortgage payments will bounce and his head will ache with dreams but Bella walks into her cozily decorated gift-cottage, mortgage-free and custom-made. Her favorite books wait on solid wood shelves and her immortal body needs no doctoring. Just days after giving birth, her skin is tight, her body smooth and bloodless. Opening the closet, she cringes, because she does not like the clothes.

Fascism

TC WIGGINS

I watch as this world
shrinks to the size of a flea.
Streets have been swept clean of song.



TITLE: *To The Lighthouse 2* // ARTIST: Dani Gray

ABOUT THE PIECE

My paintings are almost always mixed media in a process that utilizes many thin layers. Typically I am exploring themes of light, exploration, loss, and new worlds. When a piece is complete, I will often write a quote on the back, one of my own poems or prose, or words of another that resonate deeply with me for the piece.

“At any time I am both; the warm light on the horizon guiding you home, or the brutal force of the waves pulling you under.” -dg

Field Notes, November 2025

BEA SOPHIA

1. OBSERVATION

Start before heat hits 40°C.

Before the air quality index turns purple—
the colour that means: stay inside.

You won't stay inside.

2. EQUIPMENT

Bring water. More water.

Water you think you won't need.

Glacier National Park will need
a new name. The glaciers
are leaving. Nobody's decided
what to call a place
where the thing that named it
no longer exists.

"The Park Where Ice Used to Be"
is too honest for a sign.

3. PROTOCOL

Walk until you forget what year it is.

The polar ice is 30% gone.

The ocean rises 3 millimetres
every year—

doesn't sound like much
until you do the maths on what
you might leave behind
if you had anyone
to leave it to.

4. DATA COLLECTION

Stop at the summit.
Document what remains.

The snow you love
arrives later each year.
Sierra snowpack last winter:
40% of normal.

Normal isn't normal any more.

This is what you climbed for:
white silence
that doesn't apologise
for disappearing.

5. PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

Take pictures.

(poem continued on next page...)

You'll want proof you saw this.

Your hypothetical children
won't believe you.

(Whose children?

Never mind.

Keep walking.)

6. DESCENT

Come down before dark.
The trail you climbed
will flood next spring
when the snow melts
too fast for the ground
to hold it.

Everything you love: temporary.

That's not new.

What's new: knowing exactly
how temporary. Having the data.

7. NOTES

At home, shower off ash.
Check the news.

Another record broken:

hottest June on record

driest July on record

worst wildfire season on record

since last year.

8. CONCLUSION

Plan the next hike.

You will go
even though you know.

Especially because.

TITLE:
blue care

ARTIST:
Alice Cuenot



ABOUT THE PIECE

“blue care” depicts a person who is part of the world and trying to care for it, but also a fire in the background. I was thinking about the world in flames while painting this piece, particularly what was already happening in Gaza and the forests burning everywhere due to the heat. I tried to convey this feeling in the painting, especially through the use of contrasting colors.

After the Tragedy

DEXTER V. HAUNTS

we piled stuffed animals and grocery store bouquets
in front of the Christmas tree in town. We repeated
“no comment” to the vultures with their cameras.

We cried when the President spoke to us
on TV and crammed in our tiny auditorium.
We heard later that he sat with the families,
one by one; that he held the mothers’ hands.

Our stuffed animals became waterlogged with rain;
our flowers wilted. We tore down the school
and raised money to build it anew. This time,
we hoped it’d be bulletproof.

Now, still, we proudly wear
our green and white. Each year,
we repost their faces: *Gone but not
forgotten. Never again.*

Now, still, we watch other towns
pile flowers for their children.
We hear that the new Presidents
don’t hold the mothers’ hands;
that they don’t even visit.

Sandy Hook, Connecticut, 2025

(“After the tragedy” borrows its title from Christina Olson.)



TITLE: *Midnight Mass America* // ARTIST: Albert John Belmont

ABOUT THE PIECE

2026, oil on canvas, 20×30

“Midnight Mass America” explores the presence of two authorities, government and religious, and asks the viewer to notice their first gut reaction. On the left are the flashing lights of law enforcement. On the right, a church with its doors open. Is this midnight mass, police guiding people safely inside? Or does mass signal violence and response? Are agents unjustly searching for someone seeking refuge, or are the police there because of harm within the church itself? The cross of the church is echoed in the composition by the crossing geometry of police lights and the walkway leading to the rectory building. I know what the scene means to me, but while painting it that meaning shifted as I broke it down and rebuilt it.

When I Text My Mother Gun

JOSHUA LILLIE

my phone corrects the *n* to an *m*, as in:
"Is my Nintendo in the attic or in the basement
with grandpa's *gums*?"

I google *murder, Tennessee* and I'm redirected
to an AI overview bullet-pointing what not to do
beneath my breath.

Suicide swipes a breeze but, pluralized, the outcome
changes to *divides*, as in: "among survivors of suicide,
nearly all reported regret the moment
they awoke. Worldwide there are roughly 800,000 *divides*
per year."

Mass shootings become *mass shoutings*:
"There have been more mass shoutings this year
than calendar days so far."

Abortion becomes *abolition*: "Scars from clothes-hangers
heal like claw marks on the scalps of children who escaped
back-alley abolitions."

Last year's documentary on melting ice caps is eclipsed
by the one on this year's flooding, so I'll skip
the winter premieres and wait for new summer tides
to reach my door. I'll refresh the doppler radar
and hope the cyclone spares my cow.

The cracks in the guest rooms of my heart heal quicker
each time I memorize the names of schools
and churches and small towns *gummed* down and gutted
by one more mass-*mutterer* draped in echoes and bright

red flags. The weather calls for shelter
behind barricades so solid no amount of cheesecake
could distract us from this wind. My mother marks

herself safe and chalks another prayer up
to relief. She says she recalls exactly when
the urge to teach me fell behind
the walls she built to keep me shielded, like it was
today or yesterday.



TITLE:
*Invitation to the
Sunflower Lunch*

ARTIST:
Susan M. Donnelly

ABOUT THE PIECE

“Invitation to the Sunflower Lunch” acrylic on canvas board 11 x 14. This painting reflects my anger and frustration that women aren’t fighting to save their rights that their grandmother’s worked so hard to get them.

The sunflower lunch was a poster that pre-dated the Suffragette movement. Women had to be clandestine about meeting about getting the vote. The sunflower, for lunch was a secret heads up to women who wanted to attend without attracting the attention of those who were trying to stop them. In my painting invitation on the sunflower lunch, she screams for the viewer to pay attention because her rights are burning.

Like Chained Elephants

JOHN MUMMERT

"They look like white elephants," she said.

— Ernest Hemingway

The Trinity River had dwindled throughout the summer. Two women made their way to a table overlooking the depleted canals. They sat facing the puddled water, their backs to three men in the opposite corner drinking beer and arguing about whether a football game should ever be cancelled due to excessive heat. No one else sat outside in the late afternoon. The patio roof provided a modicum of relief from a sun that seared the skin. Ceiling fans stirred the stifling air. The women lay their wide-brimmed sun hats on the unused chairs, set their purses on the table.

The red-haired woman's eyes followed two policemen on bicycles as they rode alongside the canal below.

"Just a routine patrol," the dark-haired woman said. She touched the red-haired woman's arm, spoke so as not to be overheard. "They aren't interested in us, Paige."

A waiter came from inside the cafe, placed chips and salsa on the table, and cardboard coasters bearing the logo of a black lager.

Paige pushed a strand of red hair behind her ear, and brushed a finger across a coaster. "It's a breed of chicken, you know. Blue Kraienkoppe. German. Or maybe Dutch."

"German beer in a Tex-Mex cafe," the dark-haired woman said. "Their feathers are blue, I suppose?"

"Blue and white, I think."

The waiter handed menus to them. "Something to drink?"

Paige adjusted the long skirt of her green sundress. "Something hard."

The dark-haired woman looked to the waiter. "Give us a minute, please."

The waiter nodded, and retreated past the surveillance camera above the door and into the air conditioning.

"Something hard isn't a good idea, Paige."

"Bad for my health, Andra?"

"If they discover you were drinking . . . and we need to keep our wits about us."

"Then let's have iced tea. That's allowed, isn't it?"

"Regular iced tea," Andra said. "Tea wasn't meant to taste like a peach."

Andra turned and waved to the waiter who rushed to the table.

"Regular iced tea, please," Andra said. "Unsweetened."

A poster glowered from the wrought-iron fence surrounding the patio. The phone number and web address were large and bright red.

Andra scanned the menu. "Feel like eating?"

Paige shrugged. "Split some nachos?"

The waiter returned with two tumblers of tea, and placed them on the coasters.

"Can we get an order of Grande nachos, please?" Andra said. "Steak."

"No," Paige said, "mixed."

"With everything?" the waiter asked.

"Enough jalapeños to scorch my insides," Paige said.

"Don't give him a hard time," Andra said.

Paige looked to the waiter. "*Lo siento*. I'm bitchy today."

The waiter smiled. "*No importa*. It's very hot." He headed back inside.

"It's hot every day," Paige said. "Wonder what else he might attribute my mood to? I suppose that's a good thing, considering."

"Be careful," Andra said. "The last thing you need—the last thing we need—is attention. This conversation alone—"

"I know . . . I know."

A sudden gust of hot wind caused a red windsock at the corner of the patio to snap like a whip. The attached chain slapped against the fence.

"That windsock looks like an elephant's trunk," Andra said.

Paige squeezed a lemon slice into her tea. "Then the chain must be attached to shackles on its legs."

"Well, that's morbid."

"I saw a documentary about elephants kept chained up for work. They were beaten. The shackles rubbed sores on their legs. It was horrible."

"Not here?"

"No. I can't remember. India? Thailand? I can't remember."

"There's a giant rock formation in Iceland shaped like an elephant. Frozen in rock, dipping its trunk in the ocean."

"Better a rock than being chained and beaten."

"You feeling all right?"

"I feel fine."

Andra wrinkled her brow.

"I'm *fine*. Really."

Andra glanced at the canal, took a long drink of tea. "You left your phone at home?"

"Kitchen table. Seems an appropriate place, don't you think?"

"You haven't looked up anything?"

"Of course not. There are people scouring those records. Looking for someone to report."

"Have you had time to think this through? I know it's a lot."

Paige stared through her tea glass. "I wish we could go back in time. Before..." She waved a hand. "Before all this."

"We don't get that option."

"Well, at least we're allowed to pick our flavor of tea and what we want on our damn nachos."

"Focus. Anger won't help right now."

"I'm so scared."

"I know. So, no one else knows?"

Paige shook her head.

"Do you trust him?"

"I don't know. His head's not on the chopping block."

"It is if he helps you," Andra said. "Or if he knows, and doesn't report you."

"I don't know what he'd do. That's sad, isn't it? That I don't know?"

"Then say nothing."

"I'll lose my job. Have to report twice a week."

"You're certain?"

"As certain as I can be without a test. A doctor would have to report the results. But I know. If I could get across the border—"

"You can't leave the country without a test."

"And another when I return. I'd have to sneak across."

"And then sneak back? If you got caught—"

"If I got caught . . . then . . . well. Wonder what they'll put on my tombstone? Or will they just put my head on a pike somewhere?"

Andra leaned forward. "They won't find out. We'll get you through this."

"What if it goes wrong, and I have to rush to an emergency room? The hospital will have to report me. Even if they might not admit me. Just let me bleed out in the parking lot."

"It's early. There are other ways."

"They're searching packages and the mail."

"They're missing a lot, maybe most. Listen . . . I know someone."

"Around here?"

"Don't ask me that."

"But if you get caught with . . . anything."

"We're careful."

Paige glanced around. "Expensive?"

"No one gets turned away."

"You're sure they're the real thing?"

"Our sources aren't scammers."

"Seems what I bought to prevent this wasn't real."

Andra touched the ring on her finger. "You should have come to me. I'm allowed. At least for now."

"You've done this before, haven't you?"

"Don't ask me that either."

Paige sighed. "If I was some big-shot's daughter. Or mistress. Fake test result, a few days in Canada. Or Europe. You know . . . a country in this century."

"Unless that big-shot was willing to hang his mistress out to dry to protect himself."

Paige smiled. "How would he replace me if word got around he sold me out?"

"They all seem to find someone willing. Henry VIII didn't have trouble finding another wife after chopping one's head off."

"Two."

"Two?"

"He chopped off the heads of two wives. Henry was way ahead of his time. He—"

Andra cleared her throat, tapped the table.

The waiter set a platter of nachos, two plates, and a small bowl of jalapeños on the table, and refilled their tea glasses. "Do you need anything else?"

"Not right now," Andra said. "Thank you."

Paige clenched her napkin with both hands as she watched the waiter return to the air conditioning. "Think he heard anything?"

"Not unless it was about Henry VIII." Andra gestured at the poster on the fence. "Nothing worth reporting."

"He brought extra jalapeños. Maybe he's okay."

"He might well be. But I'm not about to ask."

Paige shuddered as a police motorcycle rumbled across an adjacent bridge. "I'm so scared, Andra. How could people think it would never get this bad? It was so obvious."

"I know." Andra picked a nacho from the platter. "You suppose this chicken might be Blue Kraienkoppe?"

"I think that's a show breed. I doubt anyone actually eats them."

They ate their nachos and drank their tea.

Paige drew a finger through the condensation on her tea glass. "What now?"

"Give me a couple days."

"If you get caught because of me . . ."

"It won't be because of you. We can't let them take everything from us."

"My grandmother says there's some preacher in—I forget where; Louisiana? Idaho?—there are so many. He wants to allow burning at the stake. Says the Spanish Inquisition had the right idea."

"We'd be far better off in Spain these days."

"We'd need a test before going."

Andra smiled. "We would."

"So . . . a couple days?"

"Friday. Not here. Too crowded on a Friday."

"And that camera."

"The plaza at the Carter? Bronze sculpture at the east end. Same time."

Paige nodded, and stared into the distance, across the shrunken canal. "What do you think they'll tell my classes? You know . . . if . . ."

"Listen to me—you're going to get through this. We're all going to get through this."

"Not all. That poor girl down in Granbury last week."

"I know."

"They just let her die. She's not the only one."

"I know. But we're not going to let that happen. You sure you're feeling all right?"

"I'm fine. I feel fine . . . I'm so damn scared."

TITLE:
Frayl

ARTIST:
Bri Wenke



ABOUT THE PIECE

My work begins where language falls short, at the intersection of emotion, collective narrative, and somatic storage. Each deconstructed face and figure a map of what the body carries: grief, fortitude, release. Using palette knives and visceral, tactile layers, I sculpt into the paint as if amplifying truth from the physical. In this unraveling and reassembly, I'm searching for what is universal and what is singular, how the body itself can become a site of both disruption and belonging, both betrayal and home. Ultrarunning closely mirrors this painting process; both demand surrender, both reveal what endures, what remains. Through gesture and texture, I aim to make visible the unseen, to translate the raw, resilient pulse of what it is to be human.

This Death Is Not A Surrender

C. SHOW

For Elisa Rae Shupe

FIRST (FOREMOST)

Their policies are clear: They want to kill me,
so why should I do them the favor of dying?

NEXT (AFTER)

I've spun the comfort of suicide
like the stem of a clover
through my fingers
since I was 9—

the words fleshing the skin from my hands
until blood drips from my cuticles.

FURTHER (DEEPER)

I've sown sorrow with the seeds
dug from the roof of my mouth,
stripped like a spoon to the center
of a green bell pepper.

NOW (FOREVER)

I gag, but I've learned not to swallow.



TITLE:
Caterwaul

ARTIST:
Ronan McSorley

ABOUT THE PIECE

This linocut portrait is about the kind of anger that sparks change. A fire within, that provides the fuel and courage needed to do what is difficult but right: to speak up when silence is easier, to name what has been deliberately obscured, and to protect those we love. It empowers us to move forward together, arm in arm with those who feel it too, fighting for justice and truth.

The Sun Woke Up Enraged This Morning

DERON ECKERT

after Renee Nicole Good

I thought the world
was engulfed in flames

behind me, but I know
the real fire is blazing

all around. The red sky
in my rearview mirror

is just a pretty sunrise.
Meanwhile, a fellow poet

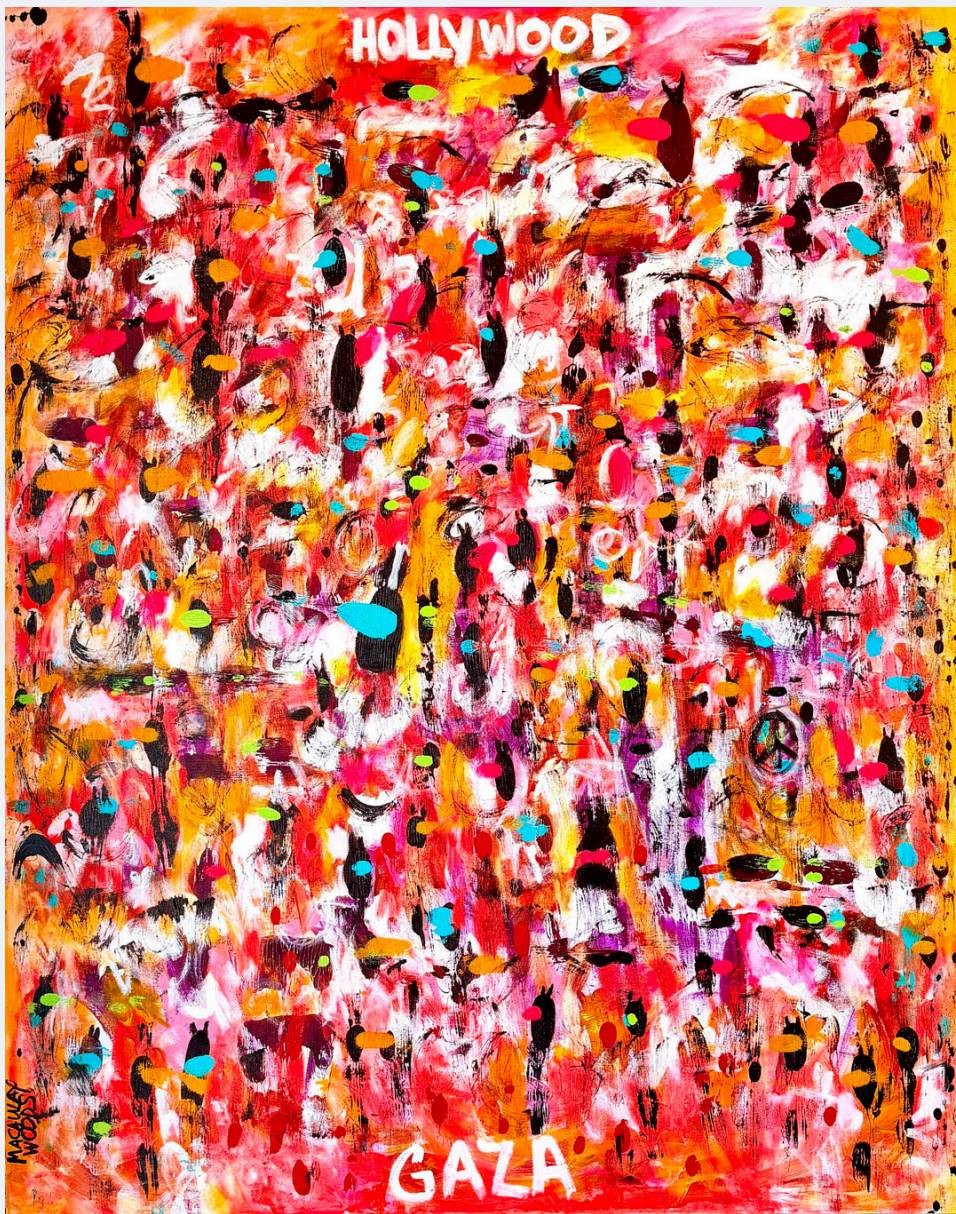
is lying dead somewhere
cold as the drive before me,

gunned down by the government
for doing something so simple

as driving. And I ask myself,
what is there for us to do,

so I answer by bearing
witness to the still rising sun

following me and write another
poem that could be my last.



TITLE:
Hollywood Is Burning

ARTIST:
Macaulay Woods

ABOUT THE PIECE

Hollywood Is Burning (Chapter whereby the Crocodiles are repulsed) 48" x 60", acrylic on canvas, ©Macaulay Woods 2025

Painted as the hills of the Pacific Palisades burned while tent cities in Gaza were engulfed in flames, *Hollywood Is Burning* holds two infernos in a single field of vision. Headlines lingered on California as images from Gaza — children running through fire, families incinerated in makeshift shelters — were censored or erased on social media. One image was indelible: a small girl, no older than three, moving alone through flames. The painting gathers these devastations into a shared atmosphere of heat, grief, and departure — thousands of souls leaving the earth at once.

Hemorrhage

NAA ASHELEY ASHITEY

Everything is systemic.

The reason why I'm crying myself to sleep,
the reason I'm currently in a season where I can't fit into any of my clothes
from the summer or from last Thursday.

Everything is systemic.

The reason why my head is filled with endless questions,
but I don't see the text of what is attempting to be asked,
or what I want to ask,
or what I think I want to be asked.

Everything is systemic.

The pain, the suffering,
the failures that keep piling on no matter
how much I work to avoid it.

Everything is systemic.

Being given a seat at the table,
but the chair is made of cracked glass
and the blood from the cuts of my thighs and fingers
are further letting the pieces slip off.

Everything is systemic.

And the screams from those
whose chairs are nailed down with diamond and composed of porcelain,
dare to yell at a frequency in my direction

that further weakens my "seat,"
because I spoke up and expressed
that I am at least worthy of being given a glue gun
to help make this chair steady.

Everything is systemic.
Everything is systemic.
Everything is systemic.

So, when I finally jump from the banister,
dressed in doctoral robes,
my neck tied to the banner which decorates the atrium
and with my degree as my suicide note taped to my feet,
is that finally going to be the thing that makes the system realize
it needed to offer me something better than a
glass chair?



TITLE: *Exorcism*
ARTIST: Nailah Moon

ABOUT THE PIECE

Exorcism is an acrylic on black canvas painting using broad, loose brushstrokes to create this expressive portrait. Black and white were used to create a stark contrast and to also add a ghostly sheen to the figure who is of the 'walking dead'.

This piece has a two fold meaning: working under the capitalistic structure turns us into hollowed versions of ourselves stealing the vibrancy and life out of our bodies when we are possessed with what people might often call the 'spirit of customer service'. The exorcism is what happens when we can unmask and purge this spirit out of us and return to being human.

The other meaning of this painting reflects a lot on how Black women have to show up within workspaces. We often have to code switch, contort and make ourselves palatable within these structures held up by anti-Black racist tropes of Blackness where to be ourselves often leads to being labeled difficult, angry and hostile. Exorcism is what I envision it would look like if all Black people, but specifically Black women and femmes, could let out the poison being in this system infects us with. If we could tell our stories fully, the land would weep, the trees would mourn and the heavens would hold us while we grieve together. Exorcism is a spell of release: lets spit out the poisons of this world and become human again.

The Fish Weir

MIKAL WIX

Today, I open the sergeant fish
and reveal its fairy heart inside
the silver ghost my father hooks.
I know I've laughed out of turn
as he lands a palm on my cheek,
glowing coral, a medusa loose
to drift the current in search of fire.

I turn back to the silent animal,
its eye fixed on mine, still wet,
gutted. The swim bladder strives
to be neutral, buoyant, heard
swapping volumes of air to plunge,
then rise. Hot words, a lure
still stuck in his mandible, unreflecting
the vanity of scales we brood over.
I hover, suspended in murk, bloody
chambers spilling to the pilings.
A whipping boy, caught and taught.

I want to fly with the swallow-tailed kites,
toss bits to the frigate birds
and pink roseate spoonbills—but I fall back
to the pitiless bull shark fathers,
submit again to the primeval sawfish
brothers, all the brutish, russet
contractions binding us in viscera,

to Cape Sable, to Chokoloskee Bay
and its islands of Calusa middens,
these opalescent oyster shells
tossed for millennia. Even our mothers
must wade into the mouth
of Dismal Key, where the vanilla orchids
skirr, juking and jiving, a deviant
portent like Jacob's ladder dream.

But maybe my father and brothers will
glimpse the Seminole twilight fade
and release me from their foul fish weir
before their mania and rage take root
in me, before I become this fish-eyed cipher
standing at my own cleaning table,
mistaking cruelty for strength, teaching
that silence tastes of salt,
before I learn to gut what I love, too.

Renee Nicole Good

PIP MCGOUGH

There are names that sound
like they were meant to be sung at evening,
with a hand on your chest.

There are mornings you wake up American,
and nothing answers to it.
The papers. The prayers.
Children in the kitchen
waiting for buttered bread.

There are short lifetimes you live in a body:
plant crabapple trees,
write poems no one reads,
teach the dog to sleep through thunder.

Renee Nicole Good—
a name the wind should have carried gently,
a milkweed seed lifting from grass,
with nowhere it could not go.

But the wind today is full of guns.
And the air is divided into permissions.
A line is drawn where a woman falls,
and a border closes—
procedurally—
between the living and the dead.



TITLE:
She Burns

ARTIST:
Rachael Caringella

ABOUT THE PIECE

This piece emerged in the aftermath of the 2024 election as a visceral response to the collective grief and rage felt by many, especially women. She started with a face but the flames consumed it entirely while fire burned in her chest. With head and heart ablaze she became less about one woman and more about a universal feeling. The burning that happens when hope and fury occupy the same body at the same time. May the fires of our collective rage turn into fires of transformation. Painting was done with acrylic paint on an 11"x14" canvas panel.

“War is the incubator of progress”

CYPHER

a smart woman tells me. “Necessity is the mother of invention,”
Death’s debt can’t be paid with innovation.

I walk around with a livestream, the world’s genocide
in my palm. I force myself to stay -

to keep my eyes pinned to the rubble, to the young girl
stood in front of a destroyed school, smiling.

She must be about 5, and she knows
how to find joy or fake it
in the midst of the world’s end.

It was never progress for all, was it?
You get tech, and we get a growing count

of children with war for a mother, and mothers
with corpses for kids.



TITLE: *Grace* // ARTIST: Chis Bettencourt

Linocut relief print, ink on paper. 12×12, edition of 25. *Grace* is about giving yourself the space to collapse. About taking the time to feel the things you'd rather not. About letting some things die. About momentarily ignoring hope. Letting the weight of the storm bow your head. For me, the American Southwest is a place of grace. The still strength of the plants, the scarred landscape, the healing dry air — they come together to honor the fall and support the recovery. This piece was made with a nod to my Catholic upbringing and the Stations of the Cross. Like those intricate woodcuts depicting moments of pain and failure, *Grace* is packed with iconography that invites reflection. May we all give ourselves a little grace.

Dagger Sonnet

PAUL ATTEN ASH

after Carleton Watkins, 'Three Brothers, Yosemite Valley' (1872-75)

hear *Ahwahneechee* women grinding acorns in cupules †
weaving willow and sedge † old *Tenaya's* ghost gaping-
mouthed † Death comes riding in on horseback † miners
& militiamen firing rounds † their demands to quitclaim
yohhe'meti lands † *genocide's a dagger at a gunfight, my sons* †
here the Three Brothers stagger † whispering *they are killers* †
the Merced's blood-sky mirror † history is fatal-black, sick †
hear cries for mercy † razed remnants of Mono Lake *Paiutes* †
White gold-seekers like a plague felling Ponderosa pines †
here a country is burning villages † erasing its own people †
and here a photographer is capturing the American sublime †
its perfect aura of incompleteness † in Amen albumen-silver †
here is God's blessed valley † unpeopled † awaiting *eschaton* †
like a dagger through the heart † that's how the West is won †



TITLE: Wild Hunger // ARTIST: Orangeblossombitch

Based on Mahmoud Darwish's poem "Identity Card", specifically this verse:

*Write down!
I am an Arab
You have stolen the orchards of my ancestors
And the land which I cultivated
Along with my children
And you left nothing for us
Except for these rocks ...
So will the State take them
As it has been said?!
Therefore!
Write down on the top of the first page: I don't hate people,
I trespass on no one's property.
And yet, if I were to become hungry.
I shall eat the flesh of my usurper.
Beware, beware of my hunger
And of my anger!*

in which he talks about the natural reaction to oppression.

I created this piece shortly after the beginning of the genocide in Gaza, wanting to channel my rage and fury into something somewhat useful. While scouring one of Mahmoud Darwish's poetry books I came across the poem, and like many others I came across it was decades old yet simultaneously more relevant and current than ever. Something that is accepted as natural in any living being, the refusal to politely and quietly die when face by a foe, violence as a means to protect yourself against an aggressor, to survive, is still not acceptable when it comes to Palestinians. Especially not in Germany.

An Arabian Wolf is featured together with several plants and fruits that are of cultural significance in Palestine, such as watermelon, pomegranate, figs, olives and the Sabra cactus. The border is based on the weaving pattern on the Kuffiyeh, which represents ancient trading routes.



TITLE: *The Tower*
ARTIST: Róisín Clothier

This artwork was hand drawn digitally to A3 scale, originating from an small traditional ink sketch. The illustration style was inspired by the dramatic contrast and texture of linocut prints.

It was created as part of the Major Arcana exhibition in Bristol in 2025, where each artist was given a tarrot card to illustrate.

In my piece, I aimed to capture the sudden chaos and crisis of the tower card, as well as the forced change it symbolises. I drew on multiple inspirations including celtic triskeles, the greek myth of Icarus, as well as an elm tree to support the cards themes. The falling figure is intended to double as both Icarus and a phoenix, symbolising the duality of destruction and rising from the ashes.

We Did Not Inherit This Silence

VERONICA TUCKER

The news shows a mother
lifting her child from a street
that has forgotten anything but ruin.
She holds him the way all mothers do,
as if her arms could undo
what entered his body.

In the corner of the screen
a map traces absence,
the word genocide bright
as a warning label.

I watch from a couch
littered with yesterday's crumbs.
My children argue over the remote.
The dog dreams at our feet.
This is the calm
they say everyone deserves,
a room where no one is dying
on the floor beside the coffee table.

In the emergency department
I see how rarely this safety is given.
Bodies arrive marked by borders,
lungs filled with another country's smoke,
wrists circled by plastic restraints
instead of friendship bracelets.

Students shot at graduation,
villages burned to dust,
families stopped at a line
someone else drew.
The details change.
The pattern does not.

I write for the ones
who did not finish their own poems,
the boy who loved
his grandmother's kitchen,
the child collecting shells
in a place that has lost its shore,
the teenager's notebook
waiting on a desk
no one will sit at again.

I am not here to be gentle.
I want the page to sound
like a metal detector
that keeps screaming
until someone notices
the danger is everywhere.

Remember the first time
your hand was held at a crosswalk
and you were promised safety.
Now imagine never hearing it,
or hearing it and learning
it was a lie.

We did not inherit this silence.
It was built to keep certain cries
on the other side of the wall.
Every word I write is a crack,
every line a fracture,
until the calm at the beginning
belongs to every child
and not just the ones
the camera stays with long enough
to count the loss.



TITLE:

*Fire to Ice - Creating Peace
From War*

ARTIST:

Kacey Lore

ABOUT THE PIECE

Drawn in Procreate using watercolor brushes, this painting is a result of the artist looking to represent the border between calm and storm. In the presence of atrocities around the world, specially women, although victim to many injustices, hurt and hurting, are still expected to absorb the pain, and exude a presence of calmness, kindness and care for those around them. Punished and burnt by fire that they do not deserve, they hide the pain deep in their souls and become the often forgotten, almost never celebrated powerhouses that shield others from despair.

This painting is an ode to every woman who hid their tears, and made themselves small so that the world did not have to face the discomfort of acknowledging their pain.

How To Write Allegory

FAITH OTIENO

First, pick a country that does not exist.

Call it a garden.

Gardens are neutral. Gardens make people lower their guard.

In this garden, the soil is very rich.

So rich it stains the hands of anyone
who claims they never touched it.

There is a river.

There is always a river.

It once fed everyone.

Now it carries bodies
and press releases downstream.

Do not call them bodies.

Call them leaves.

Allegory loves leaves.

Next, introduce the caretakers.

They have uniforms.

They say they are maintaining order.

They say the fence is for protection,
not exclusion.

They say the gate only closes
on people who don't belong—

which is impressive,
considering the gate decides that part.

Somewhere in the garden,
children are very good at hiding.
They have learned which sounds mean danger,
which silences mean worse.

Do not describe the children too clearly.
Readers prefer innocence
when it is abstract.

Now add a ruler.
Old.
Comfortable.
Has been there so long
the throne thinks it's furniture.

The ruler speaks of stability
the way arsonists speak of warmth.
The ruler insists the fire is necessary.
The ruler has many friends
who call this leadership.

There will be rebels.
There are always rebels.
Make them vague.
Vagueness keeps the poem publishable.

Say the violence is complicated.
Say both sides are hurting.
Say history is long
and therefore no one is responsible.

This is a key step.

In the distance, powerful neighbors watch.
They shake their heads.
They issue statements.
They sell weapons with clean invoices.

They say they are very concerned.
They say they are monitoring the situation.
They do not enter the garden.
They own too many of them already.

If anyone asks why the garden keeps burning,
say it is ancient.
Say it is cultural.
Say it is unfortunate.

Do not say it is designed.

Finally, end with hope.
Allegory must always end with hope.
A seed.
A sunrise.
A child looking toward the horizon.

The reader should feel inspired
and absolved.

Close the book.
Turn off the news.
Congratulate yourself
for understanding the metaphor
without having to change anything.

That's how you write allegory.

Clean.
Elegant.
Bloodless.

And if anyone recognizes the garden,
deny it.

Say it could be anywhere.



TITLE: *I Am Aaron Bushnell*
ARTIST: Markie Hines Ridgway

ABOUT THE PIECE

Markie Ridgway is a 44 year old autistic, chronically ill, transgender man from Kansas City, Kansas. He is a peer support specialist in the behavioral health field and has a passion for providing resources and advocacy in his communities. He has an eclectic perspective for art and likes to mix mediums for the full effect of his creativity and a consistent theme of mental wellness and mad rage.

the empathy gene

JEN BIGELOW

a man i once called friend stands to greet my husband then turns his back to me and sits down. a man i still do says "they're all bad" when clearly one is worse — just not for him. i'd subpoena them as witness to crimes that victimized me but their praise for the defendant is only damning for my own plea.

what's deadlier, my internal bleeding or their dismissal of it?

how many times do i have to see a man i trust tell me how little they care before i'm legally allowed to stop trusting them? how many good men can i meet before it stops feeling like a miracle?

i married the only man in the world with the power to yell and never use it. *i married the only man in the world who isn't angry.*

what stage of puberty sheds the empathy gene? do they trade it in for height? or is it thrown into donation bags with grandma's gifted sweaters and last year's shrunken tees,
stuffed between
so mom doesn't see



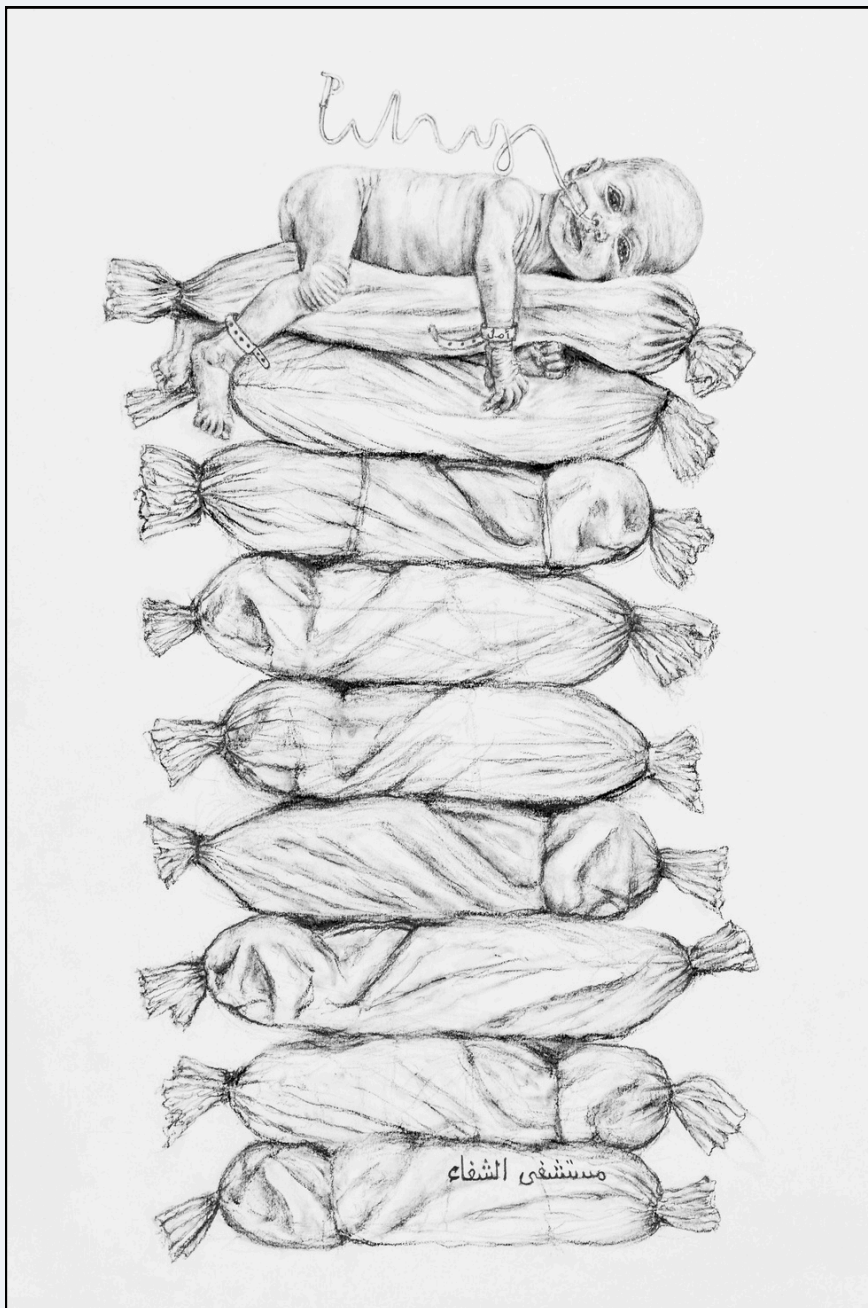
TITLE: *What I Thought (I Deserved)*

ARTIST: Khao Kros

On the streets of Naples,

LAVINIA LIANG

a couple keeps kissing / stopped by the old wall / too many palm fronds / and
slicked back movie hair / and they don't know / about the taxi / and those *kids* /
sleeping in their mothers' / beds last night / but today / what of / the swimming pool
outside ringed / with bodied sculptures / glorious and dirty dirty / and gunshots
sound / clear as ribbons / and those *kids* / and watch the mountains / tongue the
horizon / and those *kids* / they came here to run away / not to see this / but the street
dogs keep barking / and the land is still far



TITLE:
We Are Not Numbers

ARTIST:
Nuala Herron

ABOUT THE PIECE

It feels like my duty, not just as an artist but as a human being, to talk about these injustices and give a voice to those who have been silenced. We need to show solidarity with the Palestinian people (and all those living under oppressive regimes) and remind the world that they are not numbers, but unique human beings with hopes and dreams.

I made this drawing 'We Are Not Numbers' when I was full of rage and grief, in December 2023, when the world watched on as Israel went on its murderous rampage. All the premature babies in the incubators in Gaza were left to die slowly and alone, in the worst possible way. I continue to be full of this rage and grief, as everyone should be, as it comes from a place of love and empathy for those who are suffering.

Extraction

ALICIA POTEE

Lately, I've wondered what it really means:

my mouth missing

topography, each half of my jaw deemed
a half inch too small, a little girl sentenced
to the dentist's chair at nine—numb, supine,

poised to be stripped

of my bite. And all the while, I felt nothing
but the glare of silver in my periphery, the pressure
of the empty holes—one for each tooth

ripped out at the root.

At sixteen I'd be starved, manic, foaming
at the mouth—snarling at an ER nurse
who'd insist upon a gown I'd refuse to wear.

My body—

furled like a bud shocked shut
by frost—pried open, quartered,
tethered flat. Then the prick
of the needle, the rush of
heat—a manicured fist to

my temple.

On the other side of the curtain, my mother

would drown my screams, slip
out sliding doors into the wet spring
evening, its cloaked moon full as a weaning
breast—violet bloating the clouds that cradled
my mind's remains, my eyes already planning
a pilgrimage to the farthest corners of

my skull.

Years later, I'd still feel the weight of

those straps—naked
bitch, prone and black-eyed,
gnashing, then stiff and still
as road kill—no memory of
what it was like to howl,

toothless

dirge on a blood-soaked tongue,

silenced

with the quarry's anodyne

smile.



TITLE: *Pater*
ARTIST: Camellia Paul

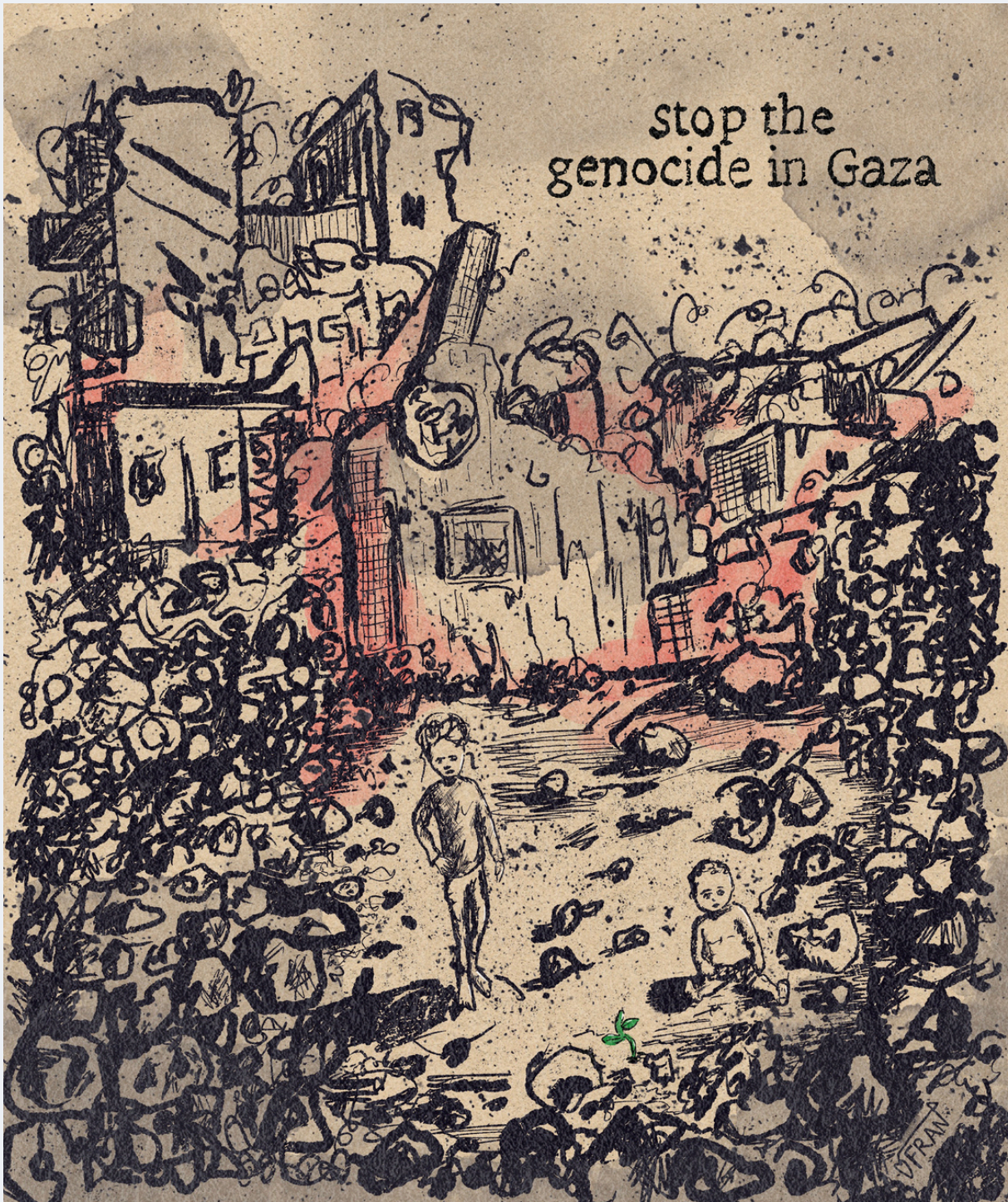
“Pater” is a mixed-media drawing made with black ink pens, alcohol markers, colored pencils, and layered acrylic, allowing rough brushstrokes and visible texture to remain part of the surface. I began by sketching the house and body in ink, deliberately keeping the lines uneven and slightly warped, then built color in restless layers—dry strokes over wet, pigment dragged and allowed to bleed—to create a sense of pressure and instability. The red forms were added last, not as background but as intrusion: storms, fissures, and emotional noise pressing down on the structure of home and self.

The piece explores the idea of inheritance—emotional, architectural, and bodily—where the house becomes a metaphor for familial memory and the self crouched beneath it bears the weight of what cannot be held upright anymore. The cracked roof and spiraling sky mirror internal fracture, while the curled figure of the young woman suggests both self-protection and exhaustion. I wanted the work to feel loud without being literal, intimate without sentimentality. The visible hand, the refusal to smooth or “correct” marks, is intentional: this is a drawing that insists on staying raw. What I want the world to know is that this piece was made quickly but not casually—it is an act of release, a confrontation with how violence, especially the domestic kind, grief, and love can coexist in the same inherited space, and how the body remembers even when the house pretends to stand.

tails

ELLIE ELLIAS

our dreams have tails like / humans used to / I hear we left them for the / energy
cost / while cities burn they're putting tails on / robots / this is for dynamic /
control / balance / maneuvering / but listen up we / used them to swing through
trees / when did we decide this wasn't what we wanted / we have built all of the
wrong gods / whales sing to dissolve boundaries and / time / or because of
beauty, remember that / sorry but / AREN'T YOU FED UP? / I swear to god, one
more platitude / you'd better evolve, baby / you'll never get to heaven if you're
living / closed my eyes and there was international law / that's how I knew it was
a dream / I'm not saying you can't laugh I'm saying you'd better be / screaming /
look at the bone we're left with / how would we ever know that / our tails had
dreams like / humans used to like / anybody's listening anyways



TITLE: *Stop the Genocide in Gaza*
ARTIST: Frances Marcellin

Homeless and with rubble all around them, two children - a little girl and a toddler - are somehow still alive as the neighbourhood they knew crumbles around them. They look stunned, unsure of what comes next. As homes and apartment blocks are destroyed behind them, a red wash of watercolour represents the bloodshed. In the foreground, a small plant is miraculously still growing - life continues defiantly against all the odds. The children, alone and now without parents to look after them, have to find a way to survive, along with everyone else in their community who has had their lives torn apart. There is a little hope, but in the meantime they must endure this heinous hellscape with barely any food, medical care or opportunities to leave.

I hand-drew this piece in Procreate as a response to how I was - and sadly still am - feeling about the genocide of the Palestinian people at the hands of the Israeli occupation. My heart is broken for the thousands of families impacted, and as a mum I feel very distressed when just one child is endangered or hurt, let alone the numbers that have been killed and injured in Gaza.

One of the ways I most enjoy drawing is with pen and ink - my current analogue favourite is a TWSBI Diamond 580 fountain pen, which is a dream to draw and write with - and I had been working hard to find a way to create the look I wanted using a digital canvas. I found that by layering certain textures and working with a particular "pen and ink" brush, I could create the look I was seeking, which provided a hand-drawn, textured feel while remaining digital and ready for publishing.

My god still has teeth

KRISTINA LIZARDY-HAJBI

At least he did yesterday before he got the wind knocked out of him by the owner of that bodega on 63rd who once took out my grandpa for stealing a pack of cigarettes when he was thirteen. My god can still kick back a few beers & be totally fine to walk home because it's only a half mile down the road. My god's not a narc like those Rivera girls who went straight to their parents when I told them for the seventh or eighth time that I am just clumsy & sometimes I run into walls or doors or fists. No, my god stays close to me like hair over skin, never sharing the secrets that don't belong to him. My god hasn't taken me out yet, so I go on bleeding & dying every third day just like Jesus did.



TITLE: *Worn & Numbered*
ARTIST: Sillygoose

ABOUT THE PIECE

“Worn & Numbered” explores the quiet tension between identity and being. Through restrained composition and layered textures, the piece reflects on how individuality can become obscured within systems that assign value through categorization. It invites the viewer to pause and reconsider what remains human beneath the labels.



TITLE: *All That Insatiable Tingling*
ARTIST: Bill Wolak

*Trigger Warning**

ANN WEIL

On every scrap of paper a trail of ink, and yet,
I can't write my way out of the pain of this life
that now includes a nephew's shooting.

I have no magic keys to type away the spreading stain,
no perfect pen to stop the next bullet
which is already on its way to a body near you.

I'll not apologize for this blunt poem— a knife
that hacks a path through the day's denial.

A bullet gets there faster, but my hand
will hold no gun. How can I explain
that your own child stands in the same line as ours?

Do you see me standing in the wind, trying to light
the match of urgency? I dare you—cup your hand
alongside mine. Let the spark catch. Let the guns melt.

**for Troy Forbush and seven fellow students at Michigan State University.*



TITLE: *Lady Liberty*
ARTIST: Maryam Sohail

ABOUT THE PIECE

Medium: Mixed Media

Reckoning, No Requiem

NANA T. BAFFOUR-AWUAH

I.

The news wakes me up
tired every day (what's new?)
Here, someone asked
and another got axed
— both for the truth.
And elsewhere
the slaughter continues
while justice weeps and greed keeps.

II.

A hatermonger cloaks his cruelty in Christ;
he bears no cross but the fruit of his own words.
Poisoned fruit by which we know him
from which seeds spill
and sow more sickness
into hearts dying to destroy the other.

III.

The news wakes me up
tired, every night (what's new?)
demanding my attention, insisting
I mourn not for the poor
or corpsed children
but for the false saint
until I boil with a fury that is alien.

IV.

And elsewhere, strange fruit
sprouted from the sickness
swings in the southern breeze
cuts Black shadows in the morning sun.
("No evidence of foul play")
And justice weeps while greed keeps.

V.

I want to know what you must burn of your soul
and what holy vows you must you break
and how you litigate your humanity
so you cannot see the difference between
good and the evil you have made your god.
How many ways will you angle the mirror
so the truth staring back doesn't revolt your insides?

FROM TURTLE ISLAND TO PALESTINE



OCCUPATION IS A CRIME

Hayf Photography

TITLE: *From Turtle Island to Palestine*

ARTIST: Hayf Farsoun Abichahine

“From Turtle Island to Palestine”

Photograph taken November 2025 on the unceded lands of the x^wməθkwə́yəm, Skwxwú7mesh, and Səlílwəta? Nations

16" x 24" digital image printed direct to glass | available for purchase as art print | <http://www.hayfphotography.ca>

My compass.

Indigenous women leading our way.

Mothers, matriarchs, aunties, and grandmothers – the ones who show up for their kin, demanding justice for our children and sovereignty for our land.

Feet on the ground, fist in the air, I listen.

More about this piece: “From Turtle Island to Palestine” is a part of Hayf’s first solo exhibition, “Love letters from Turtle Island to Palestine,” which features raw and telling photographs taken between 2024-2026 on the traditional lands of many Indigenous nations and peoples in so-called Canada and the USA including the Anishinaabe; Anisinew, Aztatlán; Cree; Dene-zaa; Guatecol, Huicholes(Wixárika); Ininiwak/Nehethowuk; Kanien’kehá:ka (Mohawk); Katzie; Métis; Mountain Métis; Nêhiyawak; Niisitapi Blackfeet; Oceti Sakowin/Dakota Oyate; Secwépemc; Səlílwəta?; Siylix; Skwxwú7mesh; Stó:lō; Stoney Nakoda; Tla-o-qui-aht; x^wməθkwə́yəm; and Yuułʷiłʷatʰ. This photograph features a young Haida matriarch who is proudly wearing a traditional Haida button blanket designed by her late father and sewn by her late mother.

MY MOTHER TRIED SO HARD TO KEEP ME CHILD, BUT I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN GIRL

VALERIA EDEN

All of our stories begin like this:

There was a man. He took something.

The echoes of the epilogue linger like smoke and spill heavy down my throat enough to burn, enough to choke on. What I mean is that I can't remember what my body felt like before it was a crime scene. What I mean is that this is girlhood: my young chest still as flat as my brother's and my mother still covering me up, her trembling hands both prayer and plea. A single pink slipper caught in the mud, left behind in a desperate, half-mad dash for safety, its delicate laces wilted and ruined. How before I knew the curly loops of my own name in cursive, I had memorized the lines of hunger that can settle inside a man's smile. What I mean is that my first breath christened me half-girl, half-elegy, forever bound at the knees. I don't know where it ends. What I know, when looking out the window, is that where my boyfriend sees a wide open field, I see the broken peach-pit of my body, its dead weight bleeding and bowed into a shape of submission, attracting flies under a red halo of light.



TITLE:

Lost Daughter of Janus

ARTIST:

Bri Wenke

ABOUT THE PIECE

My work begins where language falls short, at the intersection of emotion, collective narrative, and somatic storage. Each deconstructed face and figure a map of what the body carries: grief, fortitude, release. Using palette knives and visceral, tactile layers, I sculpt into the paint as if amplifying truth from the physical. In this unraveling and reassembly, I'm searching for what is universal and what is singular, how the body itself can become a site of both disruption and belonging, both betrayal and home. Ultrarunning closely mirrors this painting process; both demand surrender, both reveal what endures, what remains. Through gesture and texture, I aim to make visible the unseen, to translate the raw, resilient pulse of what it is to be human.

it's all horror

HIKARI LEILANI MIYA

spotted salamander spotting salamander
become a splotch of gray mush on the road
faster than a blink. how everyone's migration
to water can be flattened just feet from the pool.

ICE detaining another american citizen, a little
boy with a blue bunny hat. another american
citizen plugged with bullets. wife screaming,
dog yelping just feet away from the car.

ice weighing down branches holding
iguanas falling onto yards. curious eyes
questioning what it means to be dead. if
iguana is indeed dead, or just dead weight.

the most documented genocides aren't real
people, they aren't real deaths, they're AI
they're acting, see the bloody limb move
see the bone-thin girl still smile in a clean t-shirt.

the diamondback rattlesnake does not ask
to be tread on. it does react to the crush
of heel on spine snapping her vertebrae.
the fang in ankle to say *i am here. stop.*

timber rattlesnake icon on yellow flag. i don't tread
near it. a joyful color and favorite reptile i avoid
in case a heel crushes my neck and i no longer
have any breath to say. *i am human. i am here.*

stop.



TITLE: *Death of god* // ARTIST: Najib Joe Hakim

As a documentary photographer, I try to show the world as I see it. For me right now, Gaza is the center of the earth, yet it is neither possible nor desirable a place to go because - you all know why. As a result, my way of showing it is emotionally expressive, fractured like Gaza itself, appropriated from powerful humanist artists and courageous photographers - and achieved with the ease and safety of a computer on my desk.

In these two pieces (from a series called *From My Pillow*), I've invited Goya and Michelangelo to Gaza to join Palestinian photographers on these virtual canvases. How many times since he painted them have Goya's frightful warring demons resurrected to terrorize humanity? Why has Michelangelo's Adam been abandoned by god? Am I overlooking something much more straightforward, that these images are simply a reflection of the primordial scream exploding from the shattered illusion of *Never Again*?

Some of my documentary photography projects can be seen at
< <https://bit.ly/JaffaOrangeSocialProjects> >.

Joy in the wrong language can make you a target

DIANA CORRALES JARAMILLO

Something essential in me needs to change
so the living can keep living.

I am aware of this not as theory,
but as fear that rides with me in the car,
as documents I carry like talismans
because my skin is read before my words.

I keep my license on me at all times.
I carry an expired passport everywhere I go
because it costs too much to renew
and because proof of who I am feels necessary now.
Because brown skin is always one question
away from being asked to justify itself.

This is what this country looks like right now.
I drive with a bumper sticker that says:
no one is illegal on stolen land.
That sticker has made me rehearse what I will say
if red and blue lights bloom behind me.
It has taught me how quickly conviction turns into calculation.
But this is not the moment to take it off—
this is the moment to ask for more.
More safety. More accountability. More humanity.

This is what this country looks like right now.

My partner is white.
She does not carry proof in her bag.
She does not rehearse her words for a traffic stop.
She does not calculate the cost of being visible.

I love her.
And sometimes I am angry at the ease of her safety.
Angry that her body moves through this country
without being questioned, followed, or explained.

This anger does not cancel love.
It names the truth:
even in intimacy, the ground beneath us is uneven.

I no longer play Spanish music loudly in my car.
Not because I stopped loving it,
but because loving it out loud has consequences.
Because culture has been marked as suspicious.
Because joy in the wrong language
can make you a target.

My mother is a legalized U.S. citizen.
And still I wonder—
will that be enough?
Will her citizenship protect her
when she speaks Spanish in a grocery store,
when she helps translate for someone who needs it?
Or will it be treated as temporary, conditional, revocable?

This is what this country looks like right now.

I have been shouted at.
I have been spit on—
saliva on my cheek for translating a sentence,
for helping someone understand what was being asked of them.
I was called “trash” for standing beside another human being.
This is not misunderstanding.
This is violence.

ICE is not abstract.
ICE is violence with a badge.
It exists to make fear routine,
to break families efficiently,
to teach people how to disappear quietly.
It depends on silence to keep operating.

One bullet is all it takes.
One disagreement with a masked agent,
a coward hiding behind authority.
One bullet. One boom.
That’s all it takes to erase one of my loved ones.

What must change in me is this:
I can no longer be quiet to stay safe.
I can no longer make myself smaller
to keep others comfortable.
Politeness does not protect us.
Silence does not save lives.

I don’t know the correct way forward.
There is no manual for surviving a country

that keeps asking who deserves to stay alive.
But I know what comes next.

I speak plainly.
I refuse to soften what is happening.
I let my anger exist without apology.
I let my grief be visible.

Something essential in me chooses truth over safety.

I will not make this easier to hear.
I will not look away.
This is what this country looks like right now.



TITLE:
Rib Caged

ARTIST:
Kilobaxi

ABOUT THE PIECE

Made on procreate primarily using the flat paint brush.

This art is the illustrate the feeling of having to keep a part of you hidden in your heart to protect your mind and body in this world.



TITLE:
*False Face of
Twisted Curses*

ARTIST:
Jym Davis

ABOUT THE PIECE

My artwork, *The False Face of Twisted Curses*, was inspired by ancient Gaelic curses, which I transcribed and 'twisted' into a paper mache mask. One example of a twisted curse is 'Go N-ithe an tochas thú!' (May you be eaten by an awful itch!), and another is Go n-ithe an cat thú is go n-ithe an diabhal an cat (May the cat eat you, and may the devil eat the cat). The creation of these masks is a response to the frustration I feel about the current state of the United States government and the erosion of democracy. The curses are intentionally 'hidden' within the mask, symbolizing the pervasive wave of censorship we're facing today. In a time of chaos and uncertainty, humor and art are my outlet.

emo-punk spell for keeping ICE away

C. RIVERA

give me the gift of your guts on the floor - Lucas Regazzi

at first, we must
talk the talk
rooted in
cemetery
language

& we must speak into
this fire-cleansed jar
its contents bloom-freckled

& waiting

sad boi says, the new moon
in leo is more like sestina
than sonnet, boi I am trippin' over
your sputter-not blood, but resin-
a mutter of nerves bundled up tight
for the ceremonial

flame

not knife, this time
but sage-against-throat
like an oath, lit-

give me the gift

of yours, only-

& with these hands with these
hands with these small, small

hands, I will keep you safe
from ICE, my copal
 smoke
will make 'em choke / on sacred
you best remember that no one
protects better with hatred
than a witch with a Leo moon
& a Taurus sun, whose devotion
feasts on
 bones & flowers
& your guts
 & your guts
 & your guts.



TITLE: *FURY* // ARTIST: Abbey Gorsage

ABOUT THE PIECE

January 2026 I was creating daily collages, many of which stemmed from current musings, emotions, or events. On January 7th, our news and social feeds were overwhelmed by the tragedy of Renee Good. Like many of us, I didn't know how to respond, so I turned to art.

This magazine collage was my response to that day.

Humpty Dumpty Fragments

JADE GAYNOR

My first memories are
 heaven in my head,
 silence,
 dead animals,
 then what teeth feel like

I remember stillness
 as mercy, motion
 as the violence after,
 how different each part
 resonates with impact:
 backside high-sting,
 dull sudden hollow head,
 heart juddered out of beat
 to chest

 I remember the way betrayal
sounds from inside

 I remember handling
 what was handed out of turn
 or reason

 I remember overbearing, as they do,
and a crawfish bleeding orange in a backyard

I remember the boy who played naked with me
vague father-shaped voids
traveling forward in time
with no memory

I remember when night was cover,
us one more mystery in the midst

I remember not remembering when it stopped:
lava dreams, shame,
wet piss in the mornings

I remember switch-up,
alone to lonely as safe,
as bloodless,
catastrophe to keep quiet

I remember quiet,
small unmoving deaths

I remember distance in the day,
green, and floss-cut pink

I remember pleasure, hot and nauseous
pressing on skin miles above
harm

I remember knots,
plastic chains,
hoarse

I remember ants and fire

I remember frowns and secret

I remember wind on my face
and an open car door

I remember run, hide, cry,

I remember water,
branch, weight,

I remember candy
in the throat

I remember marble
in the throat

I remember steel
in the skin

I remember bleach,
sight, scrape

I remember screaming, silence,
other songs I wrote
when I was trying
not to be here

I remember Death, next to me
in four basements

I remember Death, loving me
in seven homes

I remember Death, there for me,
but saying no.

I remember resignation, holding

I remember holding

I remember the way betrayal
sounds from inside

I remember distance
in the day

I remember



TITLE: *She Held The Line*
ARTIST: Kimberly Dow

“She Held the Line” presents a solitary, unyielding figure standing between destruction and what remains. An older woman, illuminated by firelight, grips a white flag—not as surrender, but as a quiet act of defiance. Behind her, the world burns; before her, there is only resolve. Her body is steady, her gaze unwavering. Age is not depicted as fragility, but as authority—earned, weathered, and immovable.

The painting speaks to the kind of strength that doesn’t shout. It holds. It endures. It refuses to step aside. In a moment where collapse feels inevitable, she becomes the boundary—the last, human line between chaos and care.

Choosing the Bear

AVA MACK

for Renée Nicole Macklin Good

The bear doesn't call me *fuckin' bitch** when it kills me.

The bear kills me and picks my bones clean.
You leave my body to rot.

The bear splits the G on pints of my blood.
You gag at my stout heart.


The bear returns me back to nature.
You keep me uncovered; you waste me.

The bear takes me into itself.
You wash your hands of me.

Let my death be a ripping into anonymity and a oneness.
Let the last thing I hear be a perfect roar.

Let not the last thing I see be the dead black eye of your gun
your face, covered
in shame.

If it is the last thing, let it be known that the bear killed me
and man murdered me.

*This line is inspired by a Threads post from @reclaimwithbrooke. 



TITLE: *Passage*
ARTIST: Bri Wenke

ABOUT THE PIECE

My work begins where language falls short, at the intersection of emotion, collective narrative, and somatic storage. Each deconstructed face and figure a map of what the body carries: grief, fortitude, release. Using palette knives and visceral, tactile layers, I sculpt into the paint as if amplifying truth from the physical. In this unraveling and reassembly, I'm searching for what is universal and what is singular, how the body itself can become a site of both disruption and belonging, both betrayal and home. Ultrarunning closely mirrors this painting process; both demand surrender, both reveal what endures, what remains. Through gesture and texture, I aim to make visible the unseen, to translate the raw, resilient pulse of what it is to be human.

Tell Us Who Killed Them

CLR DORE

should you ever dare to accuse me of murder,
I want to feel the hurricane in your mouth
felling your last wisdom tooth,
sustained winds racing
to my mother's house,
tearing her panel
& pride asunder,
her contempt poisoning the wild palms,
 & her penniless scream as the insurance
men dive back into the swamp,
the bog stench choke slamming me,
grinning gators rolling
 as they referee

my crime of passion
 propped
 pillar by
 capital debris,
mural memorial tag
 & tatter acrylic,
 wheat pasted
 by prodigal
 rhyme cleric,
marching dry mouth demonstration
 be cause
 the cause

the thermometer climbs,
the salt water cooks,
the wood stove bakes-
smoke signal sin rise
at your god's & my god's
back door,

& notarized in
the concrete
lay our convict demands:

hear the avenging thunder
eat the paper perpetrators,
of my sentences,
where
a headshot,
swims Olympic front to back
kicking off the ballroom shoes

& feel the juried lightning,
the active sentence
savored over sweetened,
the reporter's camera clicks & bangs
the editor
side by side, & the dancer
retiring from show business for good.



TITLE: *Stand Up 2* // ARTIST: Matt Laux

ABOUT THE PIECE

Crayons & pencil
6 in x 8.25 in
2025

Welcome to the trans high school experience

PATRICIA DAVIS-MUFFETT

I've never been bullied. I don't think that's a thing here.

Do you have a manifesto hidden somewhere?

It's just better if we keep the gender neutral bathrooms locked so kids don't get high in there.

We don't need metal detectors here. Those make kids feel unsafe.

Are you sure you don't want us to say your dead name at graduation?

People are entitled to their opinions. We have to be respectful of that.

Maybe those kids didn't mean to drop trash on your lunch table every day.

Maybe the gym teacher doesn't remember your pronouns after being corrected all semester.

Are you sure you're talking about this school?

Please take the school climate survey.

Please come to the Principal Coffee.

Please tell us how we can do better.

Are you sure you're talking?

We don't want anyone to be uncomfortable.

We don't want the other kids to be uncomfortable.

We didn't know there was a problem.

I've never seen a problem.

We know there's a problem. We're working on it.

Are you sure?



TITLE: *Surgical Liberation* // ARTIST: Sagewing

ABOUT THE PIECE

I created *Surgical Liberation* digitally, and wrote the phrase "I will excise that which oppresses me, and my flesh will finally know true liberation" as both a promise and a chant to ward off despair. The scalpel serves two purposes: the literal liberation of the flesh through gender affirming surgery, and as a metaphorical instrument excising hatred and bigotry from society.

“MISOGYNY IS SEEPING INTO CLASSROOMS, AND TEACHERS ARE TAKING NOTICE”

NIX CARLSON

Black mold in the pipelines to adulthood, oozing into the brains of young men. Boys. As if a boy hadn't pushed me off the monkey bars at seven. Ms. Lees claimed he liked me. Said a crush was meant literally. As if it was my fate to pour peroxide bubbles over scraped knees. Misogyny is snaking through middle school science classrooms. As if boys didn't jeer, they were just stronger than us. It's just science. Chromosomal decree. As if I couldn't lift more than them. Misogyny is poisoning classroom debates. As if I didn't sit in Intro to Law while red-hat boys argued death penalties for abortion. While Mr. Hamm moderated decibels over humanity. A girl who hated me gripped my hand like a lifeline in a sea of callous vitriol. As if we didn't escape to the bathroom. As though I didn't hold her, sobbing her rape down the sink. Misogyny is the sludge between young men and women. As if the sole lesson from my high school romance wasn't *love is best felt through a closed fist*. As if girls haven't been raised in the perfume of mildew.

invasive species

EMMA JOHNSON-RIVARD

gimme shelter when i'm killing lanternflies.
we're playing god and feeling good about it,
going heel to boot to soul. red blooms before the
crunch. people aren't metaphors but the lanternfly
isn't either. they did not ask to exist. we're told only
that they shouldn't, *invasive* clenched tight
between our fingers. it's your duty, the flyer says.
and it's our birthright as white americans, the sticker
in the park says. start kicking.

please, god, gimme shelter while i'm taking
white power stickers out the park. gimme grace
when i'm out there killing lanternflies. it's in the air now,
ohio strong. duty and boots and big black heels.
they've all got something to say about that shine of red,
the death spasm after the stomp.

lanternflies die like origami, you know,
they fold up neat. no coffins. they only
want to exist.

i dream metaphors, killing lanternflies, thinking
about the chant that erases me, too. i carry conflict
in my throat. bile on the soul. we cannot do this clean.



TITLE: *Ya es hora (It is time Again)*
ARTIST: Najib Joe Hakim

ABOUT THE PIECE

As a documentary photographer, I try to show the world as I see it. For me right now, Gaza is the center of the earth, yet it is neither possible nor desirable a place to go because - you all know why. As a result, my way of showing it is emotionally expressive, fractured like Gaza itself, appropriated from powerful humanist artists and courageous photographers - and achieved with the ease and safety of a computer on my desk.

In these two pieces (from a series called From My Pillow), I've invited Goya and Michelangelo to Gaza to join Palestinian photographers on these virtual canvases. How many times since he painted them have Goya's frightful warring demons resurrected to terrorize humanity? Why has Michelangelo's Adam been abandoned by god? Am I overlooking something much more straightforward, that these images are simply a reflection of the primordial scream exploding from the shattered illusion of Never Again?

Some of my documentary photography projects can be seen at
< <https://bit.ly/JaffaOrangeSocialProjects> >.

Coastlands

LIN LAGUNA

We—foolish, brazen—provoked

Her wrath. Belittled waves lapped,
now lash, submerging mansions
and motels. A weather vane

gasps. She orchestrates

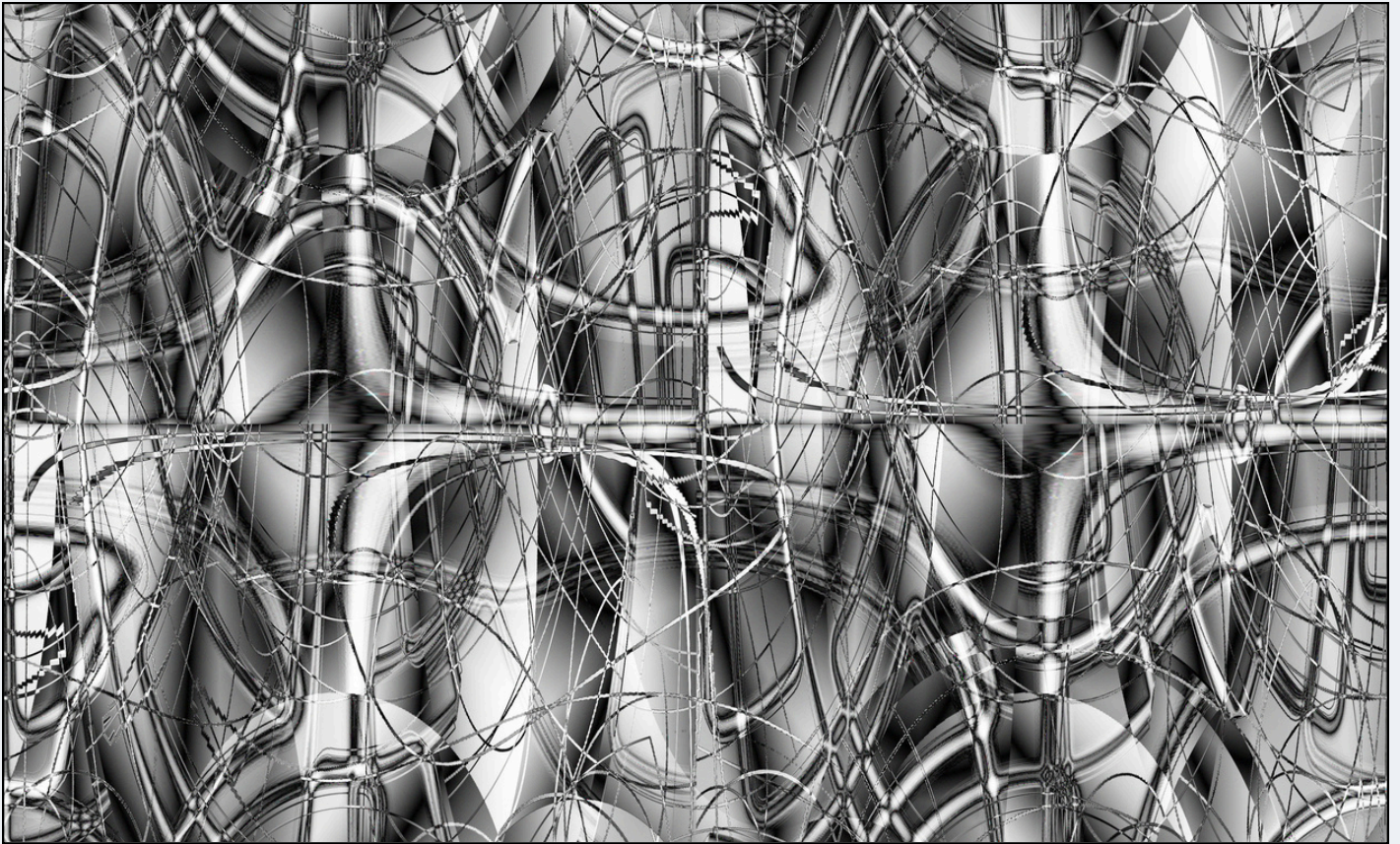
Her second coming: rebirth
of desecrated soil, free
from the feuds and follies,

the factories and falsehoods

of man. We are reclaimed;
whirled into oblivion,
suspended in Her dark womb—

Have mercy! We babble

and beg, professing ignorance.
A lethal, laughable lie
as salt fills our lungs.



Title: *Grey Day Disaster 8* // Artist: Edward Michael Supranowicz

ABOUT THE PIECE

Materials used: digital painting

Methods: Starting with a blank digital "canvas" on GIMP. I use variations and adaptations of traditional painting methods to achieve the result I want, i/e, lay in background color and shapes,, then work in layers and use the digital equivalent of glazes, washes, etc.

I work intuitively and use somewhat poetic titles, which in themselves are intuitive. A gray day may be a disaster by being gray, but does not have to be. The day could just be overcast, somewhat depressing, but not a disaster. But anything that happens to go wrong can take on shades and shadows of grayness, and turn the day into a gray day disaster.

Anytime I explain, clarify, or amplify things, I feel a bit of falseness, pretension, because clarity is a claim to omniscience, a usually unfounded or mistaken claim.

Crosswalk Between Worlds

VERONICA TUCKER

The teenager on the gurney
could be any kid leaving a birthday party,
walking home from a game,
standing under a streetlight
telling a joke that makes his friends
fold in half with laughter.

Instead he arrives under fluorescent noon
carried by four sets of hands,
shirt cut open,
skin slick with the language of impact.
The hole in his chest is smaller
than the worry on his mother's face.

You do what the protocol requires.
Hands on the wound,
voice calling for blood,
fingers finding the line between
here and not here.
There is a rhythm to this work
that you do not want to have learned.

Outside, his friends gather
in a loose orbit around the entrance,
hoodies pulled up
as if fabric could hide their fear.

They stare at the ambulance bay doors
like a curtain that refuses to lift.

Somewhere across town
your own child stands at a crosswalk,
backpack heavy with notebooks,
hair still damp from the morning shower.
The light turns green for the cars,
red for the walking figure.
She knows to wait, to look both ways,
to listen for danger that has an engine.

There is no signal
for a bullet aimed down the wrong street.
No sign that reads
caution, stray anger ahead.
You think of this
while you press another line of medication
into the vein of a boy
who will not get old enough
to forget what it felt like
to be sixteen.

When the monitor finally settles
into a flat, arguing silence,
someone turns it off.
In that instant
the room is full of a quiet
that sounds exactly like shouting
in a language you do not yet speak.

Later, you will drive home
through a neighborhood
where children ride scooters
in wide circles at the edge of the road.
You will stop at a crosswalk
for a girl who looks nothing like your patient,
everything like him.
She will wave.
You will wave back,
hand lifting once
before it returns to the wheel,
knuckles white
on the way to your own front door.

abecedarian requiring further examination of foreign policy complaint

AVA CLARE NG

after natalie diaz

apartheid lives when there are
both sides to a wall.

complain in an email about the dead and dying.
death builds a party boat on three glass towers: for
each food ship israel bombs they build another.
flour is a declaration of war: whenever i eat a burger
gaza burns. i starve myself because
hunger is peace and peace is fragile and
instagram already feeds me too many fragile kids peacefully killed,
jagged bones hollowed into skin-wrapped wings.
killing is something you don't choose. i learned that when i
learned the necessity of safety: the safety of coffee pods and soda
machines, the safety of raided vigils and racial harmony laws, the safety of
national-day missiles falling on children like candy-cane gifts
of faraway gods living in air-conditioned heaven.
palestinians already know killing just happens to you. no
querying the ministry to find out you can't refuse. refuse to
relish a sky of birds, fireworks and full bleachers cheering
strike-eagle parades, the fantasy of a woman
tweeting if anyone grew up in gaza they'd take up arms too,
undo daily sorties of grief in a flurry of feathers. truth is, when
vagrant wings shatter themselves against glass for a cruel, lying sky
we'll swirl our whiskey cups and say, *look just how safe we are*. so i pop a
xanax, deep breathe phantom blood from my hands and pray
years later heaven still wouldn't be
zion, oklahoma, or wherever else they next make safe.



TITLE: *We Stand With Palestine*
ARTIST: Hayf Farsoun Abichahine

ABOUT THE PIECE

"We Stand with Palestine"

Photograph taken November 2025 on the unceded lands of the x^wməθkwəyəm, Skwxwú7mesh, and Səlílwəta? Nations

11" x 14" digital image | available for purchase as art print |
<http://www.hayfphotography.ca>

My compass.

Love and rage.

On the streets and in our hearts.

What we wear matters. How we show up matters.

Palestinian children matter. All children matter.

"We Stand with Palestine" is a part of Hayf's first solo exhibition, "Love letters from Turtle Island to Palestine," and is a response to enduring realities of occupation, displacement, and resistance by Palestinians and Indigenous peoples around the world. A parent, a teacher, and an advocate - the subject of this photo reminds us that resistance is a shared language spoken across histories, land, and borders. On her chest, she wears an "Every Child Matters" sweatshirt and on her head "We Stand with Palestine", art designed by Heiltsuk Nation artist and hereditary chief, Ian Reid for Firekeepers Collective. Firekeepers Collective, owned by Hayf is a collective of Palestinian and Indigenous artists creating bold designs for justice, land sovereignty, and human rights.

<http://www.firekeeperscollective.com> for more info

Nametag

ERIN MATSON

There is a community center down the road. It is on the farthest edge of the inside of the secure perimeter. The school is not visible. If her name is called you can go. If her name is called she is alive. Her name is Samantha.

If her name is called she is alive. This is the agreement. No one has articulated the agreement. You have decided this agreement. You are talking to yourself in the third person because otherwise you will lose your fucking mind. They will only call Samantha's name if she is alive. Otherwise, they will call your name: Donna. No one has articulated this protocol. You have created it. It is common sense that if you hear your name in the room you've been sitting in for three and a half hours now, your daughter is dead.

The room is hot. Halogen lights drone overhead. It looks like the waiting room of a DMV. For a time, there was a rapid succession of names, called out in inscrutable order. Fourth graders mixed in with second graders mixed in with upper schoolers.

What were they doing, you wonder. Acid burns the back of your tongue. You have a Rolaid in your purse.

You wish you had gotten to know parents better. You wish you hadn't turned down gift wrap fundraiser captain. You wish you hadn't worried about the big projects coming up at work.

Mort is the father of Harley. Mort shits his pants. I'm so sorry, he says. I can't take this pressure. He stands, walks toward the door. It's okay, the officer says. I understand.

You made scrambled eggs and toast this morning. If you had known, you would have made Samantha's favorite strawberry waffle with whipped cream. You would have told her you were going to stay home and watch movies. You would have. If you had known.

Mort and the officer return. There is a window that looks out to a parking lot. It is the opposite direction of the school. It is not dark yet, but the brightest light of day is gone.

The door opens. Eight officers walk inside, single-file. They are in various stages of clasping their hands or looking down.

Eight sets of parents.

Samantha's dad is not here. Samantha's dad is never here, wherever here is. But your sister is here. Your sister grabs your hand. Your sister's hand is cold.

An officer walks over to Christopher's parents. His voice is low. You cannot hear it. But his lips move. Christopher's mother is Valerie. Valerie begins to scream. Christopher's father gasps and cries. You are ashamed to see this moment, to not know his name.

The officer who had been there the whole time, the one guarding the door, escorts them from the room. It is audible from the other side of the door:

What do you mean, you can't identify him?

Mort's dad vomits. Another parent vomits. You retch yourself. There is an American flag hanging from the corner of the room.

Seven sets remain. Together, you begin to wail. You liked to sing in choir growing up—you had made the traveling troupe; you guys were good. You know that what you are hearing now is beyond the realm of practice. It is guttural. It is from God. You feel as if you emanate from one body together, spontaneously moving in unison through chords of sobs.

You realize, the longer you can think like this, the longer you can count the cracks in the linoleum tile you threw up upon, the longer someone is not telling you what has become of Samantha. The longer you hear nothing the longer she may be alive.

You will do anything, as you press into the other parents, wailing, to keep Samantha alive.

An officer approaches. He is tentative.

"Are you Donna?"

Inspired by: Lamenting Group, by Paul Albert Bartholomé

& FIRE & ICE

KAYLEY VANDENBERG

Pedro greets me on Thursday.
He says it's *frio* and I reply *sí*.
We can't say much else. I point to the fruit—
Este, por favor.

He says it's *frio* and I reply *sí*
then stumble through *con tajín y limón*.
after *Este, por favor*.
He asks *fork?* in Spanish as he scoops his hand to his mouth.

I stumble through *con tajín y limón*,
words that still live in my body.
He asks *fork?* in Spanish as he scoops his hand
so I will know what he means.

There are words that still live in my body,
names like the Santa Anas, Eaton.
Now I know what it means
when someone says *after the fires*.

Names like the Santa Anas, Eaton
make me worry less about earthquakes.
When someone says *after the fires*,
the words come out tangled in roots.

I worry less about earthquakes
now that people are disappearing.
The words come out tangled in roots
when we cry for our neighbors.

Now that people are disappearing
I chant in crowds clad with clever signs.
But when we cry for our neighbors
something keeps getting lost in translation.

I chant in crowds with clever signs
as if we believe in a heaven that can help
but what we mean gets lost in translation.
How do you say *fuck ICE* in every language?

I no longer believe in a heaven that can help
and my weather app warns about a wind advisory.
How do you say *fuck fire* in every language?
How do we shout *enough* without saying a word?

My weather app warns about a wind advisory.
January stagnates as ash swirls in empty lots.
Here I am, begging *enough*.
Still, the current comes.

Ash swirls in lots my friends called home.
How quickly everything changes.
Still, the current comes.
Still comes fire. Still comes ICE.

How quickly everything changes.

How slowly nothing does.

Still comes fire. Still comes ICE.

And we are going nowhere.

How slowly nothing changes.

Pedro repeats *tenedor?*

Time careens like the car of a dead driver

and we are going nowhere.



TITLE: *Minnesota Loon*
ARTIST: Evelyn Reátegui Zirena

ABOUT THE PIECE

I used acrylics on canvas for this piece. It expresses solidarity with Latino communities in the US and supports Latino students in Minneapolis.

Cento for Gaza

BETH BOYLAN

I wake up spitting nails in a bed of sweat
(turned off the rattling air conditioner hours ago,
still afraid of the dark and all of its creaks).
This apartment full of books could crack open
to the thick jaws, the indulging eyes of monsters—
fear tethers me to the fire. I was raised afraid
of strange men, sudden noises, groups of men
in the square, isolate men on the road.

Now the men have gone and made war again.
Stolen land, pulled out their missiles to compare size
right there on the evening news.
Last night I watched women and children starve:
their brown skin hung in strips like ancient wallpaper,
their faces full-blown roses stained and lost through age,
flesh packed in like feathers, the big bones and the little bones,
holding a bowl of howls tricked into the porcelain night air
(how the grass sounds when the locusts come, like a spaceship
taking off and how it makes the air shake)—their hunger
clutched in the hands of the vile like a wilting bouquet, cut from their roots.

These women mirror rivers, seacoasts, volcanoes,
the warmth of moon-bathed promontories—
and where they once wept and laughed
passed bark and root and berry from hand to hand,

whispering each one's power
washing the bodies of the dead,
the stars will come out over and over
the hyacinths rise like flames

and I will roll the nails in my mouth
and begin the jagged music, when I not just grieve,
sick and ruined, watching history not be history,
but in the music not be music
and the shame be shame be shame
for all my little fears and books and pity,
my sunburned flab and the pristine white sheet that covers me.

This cento includes lines and phrases from the following poets:

Elizabeth Bishop ("The Fish"); Gabrielle Calvocoressi ("Captain Lovell, ["My eyes are shaky and glimmer like stars"]; "The Chapel, Now Quite Open to Its God");
Nikky Finney ("Fifty Thousand Dogs Slaughtered in China");
Andrea Gibson ("Orlando"); Marilyn Hacker ("Gerda in the Eyrie"); Adrienne Rich ("The Lioness"; "Sibling Mysteries"; "Nights and Days"; "Twenty-One Love Poems: V"); Evie Shockley ("the way we live now : :")



Title: *Carry On* // Artist: Chris Bettencourt

Linocut relief print, ink on paper. 12×12, edition of 25. “Carry On” examines the weaponization of endurance as social control. The solitary figure trudges through a hostile landscape. This is not resilience as empowerment, but resilience as sentence. The phrase “keep calm and carry on” has become a cultural mantra that asks us to endure our isms, our phobias, our violence, while maintaining composure. The figure in this print embodies that impossible mandate — trapped in perpetual motion through increasingly dangerous terrain, with no destination offered, only the obligation to continue. When there is nothing to move toward and no option but to move, carrying on reveals itself not as hope, but as the only response left to us.



Title:

In memory of the dead and the unborn

Artist:

Polina Hrytsyk

ABOUT THE PIECE

10.04.2022

After this piece, I promised myself not to depict war anymore. I don't want to dedicate odes to it.

*Note from the editor: Polina is from Ukraine, and is currently displaced and living in Germany, which is relevant to this piece.

MY SON LEARNS ABOUT BEING A GOOD CITIZEN WHILE THE PRESIDENT CALLS A FEMALE REPORTER “PIGGY”

JILLIAN STACIA

Answer the following questions:

- 1.If Johnathon makes fun of someone’s appearance, ethnicity, or disability, does that make him a kind friend?
- 2.If Michael gets caught in a lie and refuses to accept responsibility, does he have integrity?
- 3.If Peter separates grandmothers from their families in the name of national security, is he being a good leader?
- 4.If Donald’s name shows up in hundreds of emails with a convicted sex offender, does that make him a role model?
- 5.If we are teaching our children about emotional intelligence, kind behavior, and responsible leadership, why do we continue to elect leaders who contradict those values?
- 6.What do you do when dissonance is as wide as a cavern? When the cavern becomes a country? When you’re forced to live inside it?

Take your time answering. Don’t leave anything out.



TITLE: *no title*
ARTIST: Joshua Porter

ABOUT THE PIECE

52in H, 38in W, acrylic and oil on canvas

On the Precipice in This Perilous Moment: A Triptych

NANCY FLYNN

When the moral sense of a nation begins to decline
and the wheel of progress to roll backward, there is no telling
how low the one will fall or where the other may stop.

—Frederick Douglass

I. Bitter Root

dateline June 2025

I don't know about you. For now?
My day-by-day remains unsettlingly
at ease, even those nights when I'm un-

able to catch my breath, at a loss to take
it all in, let alone tally the exhaustive list
of wrongs undertaken, their wrongs yet

waiting to be wrought. I can still hide
in my envelope of green, rallied to life
by the thriving of a hot pink *Lewisia rediviva*,

the thrum of wild bees circling their knot
in the maple, a whiff as the jasmine asserts
its vining dominance over the alley fence.

We are living both drought and deluge
but the history of our landscape is not
on the side of relent or regret. For there is

bitterness at the root, maybe even a poison
we seem unwilling to extirpate, a bloodlust
we are powerless to shake. And so it continues

to grip while we wait and wait and wait,
doubtful their munitions will miraculously
fail, and spare all the innocent heads.

II. Make Room for Wonder

a found poem culled from "On Learning to Dissect Fetal Pigs," by Renée Nicole Macklin,
winner of the 2020 Academy of American Poets Prize,
who was murdered by ICE agent, Jonathan Ross,
in Minneapolis, Minnesota on January 7, 2026

Remember salt and ink,
high-gloss pictures plucked

splintering and hard-edged. My palms
under the *Bible*, *Bhagavad Gita*, and *Qur'an*.

The dumbed-down, easy-to-read
tercets in pentameter at the corner of

rocking sunsets and coastal sounds.
Clippings of the moon to study and repeat.

What dies there,
how often and how well—

fickle faith and heckles
exhaling from the mouths?

All my understanding is summarized
as the ruler by which I reduce all things.

Now life is merely scribbled
from knowledge,

from the piddly brook of my soul.
Make room for wonder.

III. An End Must Be Put to All of This

First they fascinate the fools, then they muzzle the intelligent.
—Bertrand Russell (on the start of fascism)

Somewhere in Oregon, I am lost
again. In a country where they want
to throw us all back, there are days
when I am unable to navigate, to exist

forever in spin. Last week, they shot
a prize-winning poet, four bullets aimed
at her goddamn face. What had been
previously desired was (merely) this:

to study the clouds in their formation
above the nature patch at Alberta Park,
parading away from the sky after
the Japanese maple lifted its fire-

red branches in defiance of an early
morning fog. Can such (fleeting) instants
offer a stay, a strategy to counter the end-
lessness of vex—coronations, guilt, tracery

of cursive, typos, errors in capitalization,
the ahistorical plaques, frippery plus phony
smiles, debasement of the simple
thumbs up, a firehose of (neverending)

untruth, mangled syntax, masked men
with armaments, the bulldozers, rattling
sabers, and AI architectural slop that forgets
to add a door, levitates a stairway into thin air?

On the table, there is whimsy—a wind-up,
backwards somersaulting frog. The *alebrijes*
cat on the sill struts its parenthesis
tail, luminous in the afternoon light.

Welcome to the hell of our own making,
where we've grown numb, where we
wail into a void. No one is coming
to save us. Put an end to all of this.



TITLE: *And The Child Shall Bear Witness*
ARTIST: Kimberly Dow

ABOUT THE PIECE

My Bearing Witness Series is born out of anger and grief. We are due a reckoning, and an unflinching gaze at the world we are leaving behind for the next generation. A young figure stands against the backdrop of a world unraveling—flames, smoke, and the shadow of destruction pressing in from every side. There is no innocence spared here. The child does not look away; instead, he becomes the unwilling witness to the choices of those who came before him.

Children inherit not only the earth, but the memory of its ruin. His quiet stare is both accusation and plea. In this work, I wanted to hold the tension between fragility and resilience, between despair and the possibility of endurance. To me, the child embodies the haunting question: what legacy will we force the youngest among us to carry?

I paint in oil and for much of my career have painted what I call 'pretty girls in white dresses'. My anger and fear and frustration over the world today has me painting as therapy.

Enough Wild

JILL BERGMAN

If we lose this battle,
I pray that there is enough wild left
to repair what we have done.

[contributors]

Abbey Gorsage // Genre: Art



Abbey is a multi-passionate creative from Missouri. A storyteller through and through, she enjoys weaving tales with both words and color. Abbey can typically be found with an iced coffee in her hand, an audiobook in her ears, and too many ideas in her head. When she isn't teaching big kids at school, she is busy raising two little creatives at home with her wonderful husband and their black lab Wally.
Instagram: @abbeygorsagecreates

Abigail Wasserman // Genre: Nonfiction



Abigail Wasserman is a writer and educator based in Massachusetts. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in The New York Times "Tiny Love Stories," Eunoia Review, little somethings press, and ONE ART.

Abner Oakes // Genre: Poetry



Abner Oakes taught middle and high school English for 16 years and has had poems published in the Potomac Review, the Maryland Poetry Review, the Baltimore Review, Stone Poetry Journal, and Thimble Literary Magazine. He lives in Bethesda, MD.
Instagram: @sidcakes4

Adele Evershed // Genre: Poetry



Adele Evershed is a Welsh writer who swapped the Valleys for the American East Coast. Her work has appeared in Poetry Wales, Comstock Review, Modern Haiku, Avalon Literary Review, Black Bough Poetry and Flashflood. She is the author of Turbulence in Small Spaces (Finishing Line Press) and has a forthcoming poetry collection, In the Belly of the Wail, with Querencia Press. She has published three novellas-in-flash— Wannabe and Schooled (Alien Buddha Press), and A History of Hand Thrown Walls (Unsolicited Press).

Instagram: @ad_libby



Airy Wylde Tincher // Genre: Art

Airy Wylde is an artist and herbalist who spends her time traveling and selling art and Conventions across the US. She believes art and plants are both healing, and feels called to share both with the world.

Instagram: @wyldeunleashed

Albert John Belmont // Genre: Art



Albert John Belmont is a New England-born, contemporary neo-cubist artist based in New Hampshire. Working since the mid-'90s, his art focuses on the deconstruction and reconstruction of subjects to convey form and feeling through simplicity. He developed this approach while studying art in Boston, exploring abstraction, cubism, expressionism, color, and line. Since 2020, his reconstructivist neo-cubist work has delved into autobiographical explorations of space, experience, and memory. He has exhibited in several states and cities over the course of his career, most recently in New York, Boston, Chicago, and throughout New England.

Instagram: @belmont_aj

[Website](#)

Alexa Brockamp Hoggatt // Genre: Poetry



Alexa Brockamp Hoggatt is a poet and programmer from Tacoma, Washington. Although there is endless machine to rage against, Alexa writes poetry as a sort of running list of reasons humans deserve to go on existing: The tenderness, the shared experience, the soft parts. Her dad woke up every morning after coughing through the night from breathing sand and dust at work and said “It’s another perfect day” and that is what she wants her poems to say: Even if you have sand in your lungs, it’s another perfect day.

Instagram: @alexa.hoggatt

Substack: A Case For Continued Existence

Alice Cuenot // Genre: Art



Alice Cuenot is a French painter who lives and works in Brussels. A few years after obtaining her master’s degree in art, she developed a pictorial practice rooted in mourning, transformation, and healing— themes that have marked her life. Through her paintings, she shares her anti-speciesist perspective while encouraging self-exploration.

Instagram: @alice_wolves

Alicia Cook // Genre: Poetry



Alicia Cook is an award-winning poet and mental health/addiction awareness advocate from Newark, NJ. She has four poetry books out thanks to Andrews McMeel Poetry, including the bestselling collection *Stuff I’ve Been Feeling Lately*, which is celebrating its 10th Anniversary.

Instagram: @thealiciacook

[Website](#)

Alicia Potee // Genre: Poetry



Alicia Potee is a 2002 graduate of St. John's College in Annapolis and current MFA candidate at the University of Baltimore. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in Sky Island Journal, Radar Poetry, Gone Lawn, trampset, BRUISER, Chestnut Review, Comstock Review, Hawaii-Pacific Review, Little Patuxent Review, and Baltimore Review, among other places. She lives in Towson, MD with her tiny zoo of children and pets.

Instagram: @apotee

[Website](#)

Allan Sanchez // Genre: Art



Allan Sanchez is a NYC based multidisciplinary artist whose work merges social consciousness with a poetic visual language. Grounded in the belief that art can illuminate the unseen while challenging the familiar, his works weave together symbolism, layered narratives, and emotionally charged imagery. Influenced by music and the storytelling traditions found in literature, his practice spans mediums—ranging from illustration, painting, mixed media to music production. Each work becomes a dialogue between personal reflection and collective experience, inviting viewers to question cultural norms, confront social realities, and explore the different stories that shape our world.

Instagram: @Inaurora2002

Anangookwe Wolf // Genre: Poetry



Anangookwe Wolf is a poet and vocal artist currently based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The body of their poetry encompasses narratives rooted in environmental sovereignty, justice, and intergenerational healing. Anangookwe has performed at venues such as The Poetry Project, Abrons Arts Center, Mezzrow, and Carnegie Hall. They are an Indigenous Nations Poet fellow and 2025 Native Arts + Culture LIFT grantee. You may find their poems in Yellow Medicine Review, ALOCASIA, and elsewhere.

Instagram: @anangookwe.wolf

[Website](#)

Ann Weil // Genre: Poetry



Ann Weil's (she/her) poetry appears in Best New Poets 2024, Pedestal Magazine, RHINO, Chestnut Review, 3Elements Review, and elsewhere. Author of Lifecycle of a Beautiful Woman (Yellow Arrow, 2023) and Blue Dog Road Trip (Gnashing Teeth, 2024), Weil is a former special education teacher and four-time Pushcart nominee who lives in Michigan and California.

Instagram: @annweilpoetry
[Website](#)

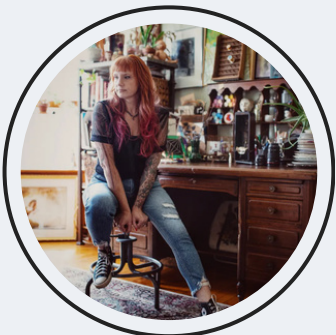
Annalise Grueter // Genre: Poetry



Annalise Grueter is a freelance journalist and opinion writer. Her work is regularly published in The Sopris Sun and Aspen Daily News. Her creative non-fiction essays have been published in Camas Magazine, Flapper Press, and Disco Kitchen Mag. She participated in the 2026 Voices of the West workshop taught by Craig Childs and in the 2025 Aspen Summer Words juried memoir workshop led by Joshua Mohr.

Instagram: @wild.spirit.22
[Website](#)

April Love // Genre: Art



April Love is a conceptual photographer and fine arts artist. She strives to create conceptual pieces that carry profound meaning exploring darker facets of human emotion and existence, inviting contemplation and reflection, connecting with the viewer on a personal level.

Instagram: @aprilloveadams
[Website](#)



Ashley Kirkland // Genre: Poetry

Ashley Kirkland writes in Ohio where she lives with her husband and sons. Her work can be found in 805 Lit + Art, Cordella Press, Boats Against the Current, The Citron Review, Naugatuck River Review, among others. Her chapbook, BRUISED MOTHER, is available from Boats Against the Current. She is a poetry editor for 3Elements Literary Review.
Instagram: @lashleykirklandwriter



Audrey Lane // Genre: Poetry

Audrey Lane is an Austin-based writer who grew up in Dayton, Ohio. After earning degrees in English and environmental science from Davidson College, she pursued an MA in English from Middlebury's Bread Loaf School of English and an MFA from Queens University. She is currently working on her first poetry collection.
Instagram: @aulane12



Autumn Williams // Genre: Poetry

Autumn Williams is the author of two poetry books: her chapbook "Waves", and her number one bestselling collection "Clouds on the Ground". Her poems have been featured by Flare Magazine, Arcana Poetry Press, The Poetry Lighthouse, and others. She also earned a silver medal in The Wishing Shelf Book Awards. Her work is influenced by the chronic illness she has, Myalgic Encephalomyelitis, but is written to be universal.
Instagram: @autumnwilliamspoetry
Website



Ava Clare Ng // Genre: Poetry

ava clare ng (she/they) is a writer, anthropologist, and community organizer living in singapore. their work has been or will be featured by fifth wheel press, aster lit, and butch-femme press, among others. she loves flowers, crisp winter air, and a free palestine.

Instagram: @warmsummercats



Ava Mack // Genre: Poetry

Ava Mack (she/her) is poetry editor at The Lost Poetry Club and a reader for ONLY POEMS and Palette Poetry. She was the 2023 Poetry Fellow at The Writers' Room of Boston. Her work has been published in Muleskinner Review, Free the Verse, Heimat Review, Pearl Press, EDGE CITY, thread litmag, The Indianapolis Review, Monterey Poetry Review, and elsewhere. She lives somewhere between Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

Instagram: @avamariemack

Website



Baabi Kir // Genre: Poetry

Baabi Kir (he/him) is Sudanese poet, 31 years old with a BA in English, currently living in Northern Kurdofan, Sudan.

Instagram: @baabikir

Facebook

Bea Sophia // Genre: Poetry

Bea Sophia is a writer and literary journal editor whose work explores curatorial labour, climate anxiety, and the interior architectures we build to survive exterior pressures. They run The Page Gallery Journal and live in London. They write on substack under the name 'Sophia Sharkey'.
Instagram: @beasophialovesgnocci

Beth Boylan // Genre: Poetry

Originally from New York, Beth Boylan (she/her) now lives and writes near the ocean in New Jersey. She holds an MA in Literature from Hunter College and is the author of the poetry chapbook *Third Rail* (Kelsay Books). Beth has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net, and her poetry appears in a variety of journals, including *The McNeese Review*, *Rust + Moth*, *New York Quarterly*, *Whale Road Review*, *Jelly Bucket*, and *Peatsmoke*.
Instagram: @bethiebookworm

Betty Benson // Genre: Poetry

Betty Benson is a poet, writer, and educational psychologist; she holds a PhD from the University of Minnesota. Her work has appeared in *The Comstock Review*, *RockPaperPoem*, *The Avenue: A Mid-Atlantic Review*, *Glacial Hills Review*, *The Best of Choeofpleirn Press* (2023), and others. She was a 2023 finalist for the Small Orange Emerging Woman Poet Honor. In 2025 she was awarded the Grace Potter Harkens Award and was shortlisted for the Letter Review Prize.



Bill Wolak // Genre: Art

Bill Wolak has just published his nineteenth book of poetry entitled *What Love Calms Only With Nakedness* with Expeditions International Publishing House. His collages and photographs have appeared as cover art for such magazines as *Phoebe*, *The Passionfruit Review*, *Inside Voice*, and *Barfly Poetry Magazine*.

Bri Wenke // Genre: Art



Raised on the New England coastline and currently based in Charleston, SC, Bri Wenke is a self-taught figurative artist with a background in history and anthropology. Her work investigates the human form as a vessel for emotion, memory, and collective narrative. Through the use of charcoal, palette knives, and heavy-body mediums, Wenke approaches painting as a visceral and sculptural act—one that reveals the tension between physicality and feeling. Her practice is deeply informed by movement and endurance; as an ultrarunner, she explores the parallels between the body in motion and the process of artistic excavation, continually uncovering what lies beneath the surface. Wenke's work has been exhibited both locally and internationally, including Miami Red Dot, Saatchi Art, and the Other Art Fair London. She has independently curated and exhibited two fully immersive exhibitions, and her work can be found in private collections worldwide.

Instagram: [@artbybri](#)
[Website](#)

Brian U. Garrison // Genre: Poetry



Brian U. Garrison is President of the Science Fiction & Fantasy Poetry Association. His chapbook *Micropoetry for Microplanets* earned 3rd Place in the 2025 Elgin Awards. He lives under a tall, leafy tree in Portland, Oregon.

Instagram: [@bugthewriter](#)
Bluesky: [bugthewriter.bsky.social](#)
[Website](#)

c. rivera // Genre: Poetry



c. rivera (they/she) is a queer disabled poet from NYC. They were named a Brooklyn Poets Fellow, a prize winner for Eavesdrop Magazine's Queer Joy issue, & a contributor in Querencia Press's We Were Seeds anthology benefitting Palestine. Their work has appeared in Fruitslice, The Plentitudes, & elsewhere, with forthcoming appearances in Oroboro & M E N A C E.

Instagram: @crystal_e_rivera

C. Show // Genre: Poetry



C. Show (they/them) is a Central Arkansan poet whose work has appeared in Pleiades: Literature in Context and is set to appear in PRISM international. Their hybrid poetry chapbook GESTALT has been published by new words {press}.

Instagram: @_cshow_

Caitlin Rantala // Genre: Art



Caitlin Rantala is an expressionist oil painter, who explores girlhood, resilience, and authenticity through the lens of whimsical equine art. She weaves vivid emotional narrative through color and subject matter, inviting viewers to examine the juxtaposition in the power and joy of being unapologetically oneself—an art we so often lose in childhood. Rantala earned a BA in art and writing at Elon University, and operates out of her home studio in Nashville, TN.

Instagram: @caitlinrantala

[Website](#)

(*Author photo taken by Katie Rector)

Camellia Paul // Genre: Art



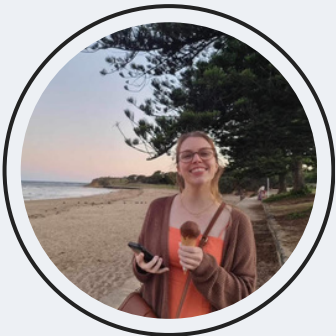
Camellia Paul is a PhD student in the Department of Comparative and World Literature at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She is also a creative writer and visual artist with her translation, fiction, and art regularly appearing in magazines, journals, and anthologies. She has presented award-winning research on “Bengal owlsapes” at an interdisciplinary conference in South Korea. Her areas of research and publication include Comparative Literature, environmental humanities, ecocriticism, animal studies, myth and folklore, and Translational Studies. Apart from being passionate about Nature, art, and owls, Camellia loves reading, listening to music, and exploring cultures. Contact:
paul40@illinois.edu
Instagram: @cammeowl
[Facebook](#)

Camille Lebel // Genre: Poetry



Camille Lebel, mother to seven, lives outside of Memphis. She's a Pushcart-nominated poet published in Literary Mama, Rogue Agent, Sledgehammer Lit, Last Leaves, Writer's Resist and more. She enjoys traveling, gardening, crafting, and making people uncomfortable. You can find her on Insta @clebelwords writing about religious deconstruction, parenting, child loss, and similar uplifting topics.
Instagram: @clebelwords

Chloe Paige // Genre: Fiction



Chloe Paige is a Pushcart Prize-nominated writer from the salty shores of Wadawurrung Country in Geelong, Australia. She is published in a small handful of online and print literary journals, and has won the Elegant Literature Award, NYC Midnight, The Booby Prize, and has shortlisted multiple times for the Not Quite Write Prize for Flash Fiction. She adores strong verbs, flouting the writing rules, and rambling about literary devices to people who truly couldn't care less.
Instagram: @chloepaigeauthor
Bluesky: @chloepaige.bsky.social

Chris Bettencourt // Genre: Art



Chris Bettencourt is a St. Louis-based multidisciplinary artist, teacher, and community organizer with a residential history in post-industrial cities including Detroit, New Orleans, and Buffalo, and an extensive nomadic practice in the American West and Southwest. She returned to active art-making in 2024 after a long hiatus and has since exhibited widely, winning Best in Show at Art of Darkness at Soulard Art Gallery in St. Louis and Seven at Memento Mori in Denver, with work featured in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. Her relief printing practice explores displacement, survival, and resilience – combining precise tooling and design with the democratic potential of the multiple. She also leads Pressing Matters, a community activist printmaking workshop series addressing urgent social justice issues, held at galleries, community spaces, and private venues across the region.

Instagram: [@chrisbettencourt_art](#)
[Website](#)

Christina Tudor // Genre: Nonfiction



Christina Tudor is a writer living in Washington, D.C. Her fiction has been featured in SmokeLong Quarterly, matchbook, HAD, Flash Frog, The Citron Review, Best Small Fictions 2024, and more. She has received nominations for the Pushcart Prize and the Robert J. Dau Short Story Prize for Emerging Writers, and was a 2022 PEN America Emerging Voices Fellow in fiction. Her debut chapbook, CALL MY BODY A CAUTIONARY TALE, will be published by Thirty West this Fall.

Instagram/X/Bluesky: [@christinaltutor](#)
[Website](#)

Christine Hogg // Genre: Art



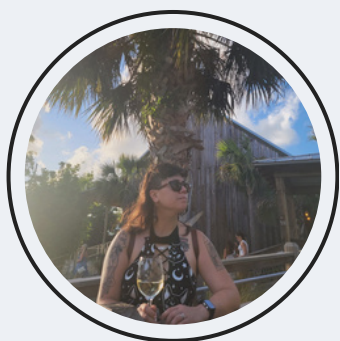
Christine is an artist and designer based in Fort Collins and is an Arkansas native. Through experiences in the arts, travel, language learning, and a career in education, she developed a commitment to creating spaces for open dialogue and honest communication. Art is a means for her to confront and process experiences and to document nuance. She shares her stories to contribute to conversations about (re)humanization, vulnerability, and reconnection and creates spaces where others can share their own.

Instagram: [@christine.f.hogg](#)
[Website](#)



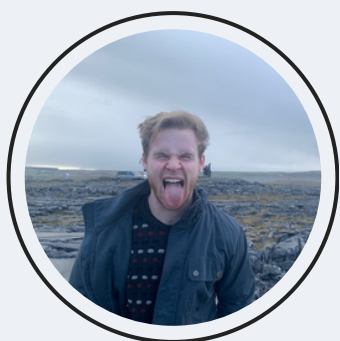
Claudia Heymach // Genre: Poetry

Claudia Heymach studies neuroscience in the MD/PhD program at the University of Pennsylvania, and she is drawn to writing that explores medicine, science, and the mind. Her work has been published in Eunoia Review.



CLR Dore // Genre: Poetry

CLR Dore is an Asian writer, dancer, and gardener originally from New York. They have a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from University of North Carolina Wilmington and have been published in fifth wheel press, Canto Cutie, and more. They currently reside in Atlanta, Georgia.
Instagram: @clearcellarwords



Connor Donovan // Genre: Poetry

Connor Donovan (he/him) is a graduate student at the University of Pittsburgh. He is a winner of the 2023 Healthline Zine Ekphrasis Contest and a Pushcart Prize Nominee. Find him at connordonovan.carrd.co.

Cypher // Genre: Poetry



Cypher (she/her) is a self-taught brown and queer Tamizh diaspora poet living in Canada. Her writing is deeply musical, political, and introspective. Her work has been featured by the Dark Winter Literary Magazine, Arcana Poetry Press, FeelsZine and several other publications.

Instagram: @cypherspace_101

Dani Gray // Genre: Art



Dani Gray is a multidisciplinary artist from the Pacific Northwest. Her work spans atmospheric abstract landscapes, assemblage, and collage- often drawing from the region's moody skies. Deeply influenced by the shifting natural light, she creates atmospheric work that feels rooted in place yet exists in a state of searching. These landscapes are not just where she feels most at home, they are portals, reflections of her ongoing exploration.

Instagram: @grayskies.painting
Bluesky: @grayskiespainting.com

Website

Ko-Fi (for downloads & prints)

Dave Madeloni // Genre: Art



Dave Madeloni is an educator, activist, journalist, and photographer who resides in Northampton, Massachusetts. All of the reflections were captured since the beginning of the Covid Era.

Instagram: @dmadeloni

David Anson Lee // Genre: Poetry



David A. Lee is physician, philosopher, and poet based in Houston, Texas, whose work explores memory, human connection, and the liminal spaces between perception and reality. He holds a background in medical science and philosophy, bringing a reflective and inquisitive lens to his writing. His poetry draws inspiration from both contemporary and classical literature, emphasizing vivid imagery and emotional depth. His poems are forthcoming in *Mobius*, *Euonia Review*, and *Unbroken Journal*. David is currently developing a collection of original poems examining time, identity, and place.

Deirdre Garr Johns // Genre: Poetry



Deirdre Garr Johns is the author of the children's book *Weathering the Storm* (Palmetto Publishing, 2024) and poetry chapbook, *Fallen Love* (Finishing Line Press, 2025). Deirdre is an alumna of the Tupelo Press 30/30 Project. Her work is inspired by memories of people and places, as well as nature. Deirdre's work has appeared in *Iron Horse Literary Review*, *Silver Birch Press*, *Stone Poetry Quarterly*, *Sasee Magazine*, *The Petigru Review* and more.

Instagram: [@deirdregarrjohns](#)

[Website](#)

Denita Benyshek // Genre: Art



Dr. Benyshek is an initiated shaman, counselor, artist, loving mother, and published researcher on contemporary artists as shaman. Her spiritual practice and research methods inspire and influence her artistic creativity. Primarily a visual artist, she also performs rituals at art openings and art fairs to connect viewers with the art spirit.

Instagram: [@denitabenyshek](#)

[Website](#)

[Research](#)

[More Research](#)

Deron Eckert // Genre: Poetry



Deron Eckert is a Pushcart-nominated poet and writer who lives in Lexington, Kentucky. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Appalachian Review*, *Atlanta Review*, *Wild Roof Journal*, *Blue Mountain Review*, *Rattle*, *Stanchion*, *The Fourth River*, and elsewhere. He can be found on Instagram at [deroneckert](#).

Instagram: @deroneckert

Désirée Penner // Genre: Poetry



Désirée Penner (she/her) is a queer, Canadian prairie poet and painter, currently studying for her Master of Social Work degree. She is inspired by the intersections of land, faith, identity, and memory. Désirée lives on a fourth-generation family farm, in a 150-year-old farmhouse that belonged to her grandparents, nestled next to a creek. She is an Al & Eurithe Purdy Residency Recipient for 2026.

Instagram: @desireepennerart
[Website](#)

Dexter V. Haunts // Genre: Poetry



Dexter V. Haunts (they/them) is a poet who resides in New England. They love punk music and hate using social media. They identify as a pessimist who believes in better worlds.

Instagram: @haunting.dexter.haunts

Diana Corrales Jaramillo // Genre: Poetry



Diana Corrales Jaramillo was born and raised in Tucson, Arizona and spent her school breaks in the beauty of Turichachi, Sonora, Mexico. She is a proud Mexican American woman and the daughter of a Mexican immigrant mother. She holds a bachelor's degree in creative writing and a master's degree in clinical mental health counseling with an emphasis in trauma, which continues to shape the way she understands and writes about people and their stories. She has been writing for years across poetry and prose. She lives with her two cats, Angelou and Borrero.

Instagram & TikTok: @dianacorralesjaramillo

Edward Michael Supranowicz // Genre: Art



Edward Michael Supranowicz is the grandson of Irish and Russian/Ukrainian immigrants. He grew up on a small farm in Appalachia. He has a grad background in painting and printmaking. Some of his artwork has recently or will soon appear in Fish Food, Streetlight, Another Chicago Magazine, The Door Is a Jar, The Phoenix, and other journals. Edward is also a published poet who has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize multiple times.

Elijah St. Pierre // Genre: Poetry



Elijah St. Pierre works on the data team at a public policy research center. He resides in his birth city of New Orleans, but was raised in Albuquerque. He discovered his appreciation for poetry while working as a writing tutor during his undergrad at Penn State. His work has appeared in several indie publications, including Chillmag, Flowermouth, and Limacine. Outside of writing, Elijah enjoys boxing, moonshining, and looking at rocks.

Instagram: @puddles.poems (poetry) @st.p.air (main)

Elizabeth Joy Levinson // Genre: Poetry



Elizabeth Joy Levinson is a biology teacher in Chicago. Her work has been published in Whale Road Review, SWWIM, One Art, The Shore, Anti-Hero in Chic, and others. She is the author of a full-length collection, *Uncomfortable Ecologies*, available from Unsolicited Press, as well as three chapbooks. Instagram: @ejoylevinson

Ella B. Winters // Genre: Poetry



Ella B. Winters (she/they) is a social worker, researcher, and writer, living on the South-East coast of England with her partner and their sausage dog. Her poetry often explores themes of identity, memory and belonging. It has been published in *The Aftershock Review*, *Frozen Sea*, *Full House Literary*, *Black Iris*, *Wild Roof Journal*, *Outskirts Literary*, and elsewhere, and was nominated for the Forward and Pushcart prizes.

Instagram: @ella.b.winters
Bluesky: @ella-b-winters.bsky.social

Ellie Ellias // Genre: Poetry



Ellie Ellias writes poems and stories from the woods in Quebec. Ellie's fiction has been shortlisted for the Prism International Short Fiction Competition and longlisted for the Peter Hinchcliffe Short Fiction Award from *The New Quarterly*. Her poetry has been published in *Crowstep Journal*, *Assignment*, and *Paper Cranes Literary Magazine*. Ellie wholeheartedly supports freedom for Palestine.

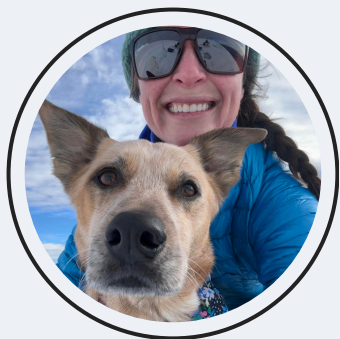
Instagram: @elliejnicks



Emily Bruhl // Genre: Poetry

Emily Bruhl (she/her) is a writer currently based in Marion, Indiana. Her work has previously appeared in *Halfway Down the Stairs*, *Relief Journal*, and *Litbreak Magazine*.

Emily Halnon // Genre: Poetry



Emily Halnon is a story collector and teller out of Eugene, Oregon. She is the author of the national bestseller, *To the Gorge*, and can often be found sharing snacks and trails with her best friend, Dilly Pickle Chip. Her writing essentials include strong coffee, orange cardamom pastries, and running shoes. She prefers the outdoors to the internet but she recently created a new space to share poetry and lots (and lots) of birds. If you're into that kind of thing, you can find her @owlphabet.soup
Instagram: @emilysweats
Substack

Emma Johnson-Rivard // Genre: Poetry



Emma Johnson-Rivard is a doctoral student in creative writing at the University of Cincinnati. Her work has appeared in *Strange Horizons*, *Tales to Terrify*, *Red Flag Poetry*, and others.
Bluesky: @blackcattales
Website

Erin Matson // Genre: Fiction



Erin is drafting a memoir, and editing her novel. She has been published in *Glint Literary Journal*, *Sublunary Review*, *Misery Tourism*, *Teen Vogue*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Women's Review of Books*. She has an MFA from Mississippi University for Women.

[Website](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter/X](#)

[Substack](#)

Evelyn Reátegui Zirena // Genre: Art



Originally from Peru, Evelyn Reátegui Zirena is both a scientist and artist whose work bridges nature, culture, and community. Through vibrant, hand-painted pieces, she seeks to create awareness, and express solidarity with Latino communities in the U.S., while giving back through art that supports students and families in Minnesota.

Instagram: @zirenart_ig

Faith Otieno // Genre: Poetry



Faith Otieno (she/her) is a writer based in Nairobi, Kenya. Her works explore memory, faith, love, heartbreak, healing, the body, and becoming. When she's not writing poetry, she enjoys cooking and bingeing the same comedy shows she has watched five times already. She is also pursuing her Master's degree in Diplomacy, Development, and International Security and is interested in the intersection of politics, identity, and personal narrative.

Instagram: @words.by.faith

Frances Marcellin // Genre: Art



Frances Marcellin is a France-based illustrator and journalist studying for an Illustration degree with the Open College of the Arts. Shaped by her background in national journalism, her research-led practice uses illustration as a narrative language to explore nature, childhood and humanitarian stories with empathy, intent and social awareness.

Instagram: @franlovesillustration

[Website](#)
[Portfolio](#)

Genaro Aguilar Saucillo // Genre: Poetry



Genaro Aguilar Saucillo is a Mexican poet, editor-in-chief and founder of Paratextos, and a poetry reader for Fahmidan Journal and Palette Poetry. Paratextos was a finalist for Chill Subs & CLMP's 2025 Literary Magazine Incubator. Winner of Rattle's Ekphrastic Challenge as editor's choice (December, 2025). Adroit Summer Mentorship Program mentee (2026). Their work appears or is forthcoming in Rattle, Allium, dialogist, trampset, Wildscape, Santa Rabia Poetry, "Nueva Poesía: 18 poetas contemporáneos. Vol. 2" (Buenos Aires Poetry, 2026), and in the first two young Mexican poets dossiers curated by Círculo de Poesía. They are the author of the forthcoming poetry collection "Jauría" (Valparaíso Ediciones, late 2026).

Instagram: @Claude__saucedo

Twitter/X: @Saucedo84890

Haley DiRenzo // Genre: Poetry



Haley DiRenzo (she/her) is a Colorado writer and attorney specializing in eviction defense. Her work has appeared in Does it Have Pockets, Thimble, Gone Lawn, and Ink in Thirds, among others, and has been nominated for Best of the Net and the Pushcart Prize. Outside of work and writing, you can find her browsing book stores, brewing tea, and watching movies and live performances in the theater.

Instagram: @haleydirenzo

Hayf Farsoun Abichahine // Genre: Art



Hayf (Palestinian/Lebanese) was born in Beirut and raised as an uninvited guest on the unceded lands of the $\text{\$x}^w\text{m}\text{\textcircled{a}}\text{k}^w\text{\textcircled{a}}\text{y}\text{\textcircled{a}}\text{m}\text{\textcircled{a}}\text{?}\text{\textdagger}\text{ t}\text{\textcircled{a}}\text{m}\text{\textcircled{x}}^w$, $\text{S}\text{\textcircled{k}}\text{w}\text{\textcircled{x}}\text{w}\text{\textcircled{u}}\text{7}\text{m}\text{e}\text{s}\text{h}$, and $\text{S}\text{\textcircled{a}}\text{l}\text{\textcircled{i}}\text{l}\text{w}\text{\textcircled{a}}\text{t}\text{\textcircled{a}}\text{?}$ nations. Hayf has always found joy, community, and solidarity in creative expression – writing and performing music from a young age. In 2024, he was fired from Vancouver Coastal Health because of his past expressions of Palestinian solidarity in his private life, a blatant act of anti-Palestinian racism that ended his thriving career in equity, diversity and inclusion and destabilized his life. Hayf dove deeper into his documentary photography, applying the same principles of equity and inclusion to his art. His practice now spans a wide range of mediums including leatherwork, digital design, sewing, and printmaking.

Hayf lives in East Vancouver with his two kids – together they love singing, making art, and building entire worlds of lego. Hayf dreams of a day when the three of them can walk through the streets of Haifa – the city where his Jedo was born and raised.

Instagram: @hayf_photography &
@firekeeperscollective

Websites:

<http://www.hayfphotography.ca>
<http://www.firekeeperscollective.com>

Heather Truett // Genre: Poetry



Heather Truett holds an MFA from the University of Memphis and is doing PhD work at FSU. Her debut novel, *KISS AND REPEAT*, was released from Macmillan in 2021. She has work in *Hunger Mountain*, *Whale Road Review*, and *Appalachian Review*.

Heather serves as editor-in-chief for the *Southeast Review*. Find out more at

<http://www.heathertruett.com>.

Instagram: @heathertruett

Hikari Leilani Miya // Genre: Poetry



Hikari L. Miya is a Japanese-Filipina LGBTQ+ disabled doctoral candidate studying animals, the environment, and disability studies in poetry at Florida State University. She is the author of *Do Not Feed the Animal* (Cornerstone Press, 2024) and is a graduate of Cornell University and University of San Francisco. She is a herpetologist volunteering in animal care at Tallahassee Museum and has worked with over a hundred different species of animals as a former zookeeper.

Instagram: @herps_and_friends

Indigo R. Williams // Genre: Art



Indigo R. Williams is an Atlanta-based analog collage artist whose work explores Afrofuturism and the deep, often overlooked connections between Black people and nature. A self-taught artist, she began creating at a young age through drawing, painting, and pottery. Inspired by everyday moments and personal history, Indigo builds layered compositions that reflect both the past and imagined futures.

Instagram: @artistirw

Jade Gaynor // Genre: Poetry



Jade Gaynor is a trans poet from Atlanta who attended the University of Massachusetts MFA for Poets & Writers. She enjoys that picnic tables appear in the most unexpected places. You can find more at linktr.ee/jadegaynor

Instagram: @jadeofthelongwords

[Website](#)

Jalen Martise Micquiel Williams // Genre: Art



Jalen Martise Micquiel Williams (he/him) is a multidisciplinary artist based in Greensboro, North Carolina. Born in February 2004, Williams was raised in rural North Carolina, later in life residing in urban North Carolina. In his upbringing, Jalen was always intrigued with the arts throughout his childhood, exploring it through multiple disciplines. This sparked an early thirst for creativity and experimentation within visual arts for him.

Instagram: @Marty_micq

Janet Cooke // Genre: Art



Janet Cooke (she/her) worked at a major book publisher for many years before retiring and becoming an oil painter. Inspired by the beauty, tranquility, and serenity surrounding her home in upstate NY, Janet's expressively realistic canvases are a testament to her love of evoking strong emotion through color and composition. She is a Signature Member of the National Association of Women Artists and a member of Oil Painters of America.

Instagram: @janet_cooke_art

Jen Bigelow // Genre: Poetry



Jen Bigelow is a writer from Las Vegas, who recently left the bustle of the city for Colorado's nature. She is an artist through and through, a photographer by day, an illustrator in the ever occasional free time, and a storyteller deep in her bones. Her perspective is ultimately led by her relationship with her incredible partner, a community she hopes to cultivate and protect, and her family, both nomadic artists and immigrants.

Instagram: @j.3.n

[Website](#)

Jenevieve Carlyn // Genre: Poetry



Jenevieve Carlyn is a poet and freelance educational writer in New England. In 2023, she won the Connecticut Poet Laureate Award for Eco-Poetry, and the Poetry of the Sacred Prize from the Center for Interfaith Relations in Kentucky. She was shortlisted in the 2025 Artemesia Arts Contest in France and highly commended in the Mist & Mountain Competition in Scotland for her poem, 'The Oracle at the Well,' on the 2025 theme of peace.

Instagram: @coastal_poet

Bluesky: @coastalpoet.bsky.social

[Website](#)

Jill Bergman // Genre: Poetry



Jill Bergman is a printmaker, illustrator, and writer in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. Her linocuts are made by carving a sheet of artist linoleum, rolling ink over the surface, and printing on an etching press. She is influenced by the western landscape, wildlife, and storytelling.

Instagram: @jillbergman

[Website](#)

Jillian Stacia // Genre: Poetry



Jillian Stacia (she/her): Jillian is the author of the poetry collection, SET THE BONE, published by Arcana Poetry Press. She was selected as an Honorable Mention for the 2025 Jack McCarthy Book Prize and short-listed for the 2026 Central Avenue Poetry Prize. She has been nominated for several awards, including 2025 Best of Net and the 2025 Pushcart Prize. Her poetry has been featured in several literary magazines and anthologies. Find her online @jillianstacia to read more of her work.

Instagram: @jillianstacia

Jo Rohrbacker // Genre: Art



Jo Rohrbacker has lived in Flagstaff, Arizona for over 30 years and attended college at NAU. When she earned her degree in fine arts, her goal was to teach knowing she could be an artist without a college education. It was important for her to create safe environments for other creatives to discover their own passions knowing an artist's process can be so humbling and empowering in equal measure. Although her comfort zone lies within the medium of painting, she has always loved telling stories. She hopes to create children's books in the near future accompanied by her watercolor illustrations.

Instagram: @jo.paints

John Mummert // Genre: Fiction



John Mummert grew up in Illinois, and spent thirty years in the water quality protection field in Texas before turning his full attention to writing. His stories appear in Up North Lit, Ivo Review, TrashLight, Sangam Literary Magazine, and Wild: Uncivilized Tales From Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers. He currently lives in western Minnesota.

[Website](#)

Joshua Lillie // Genre: Poetry



Joshua Lillie is a bartender and musician in Tucson, Arizona. He is the author of the chapbook *Small Talk Symphony* (Finishing Line Press, 2025). He was a finalist for the Jack McCarthy Book Prize Contest from Write Bloody Publishing in 2024, and a Best of the Net nominee in 2026.

Instagram: @josharonlillie

Joshua Porter // Genre: Art



Joshua Porter resides in Denver, Colorado after having moved from New York state in 2019. He uses mostly self taught techniques and processes to create his work, which covers a range of topics from social issues, addiction and recovery, to more fantastical themes.

Instagram: @joshporterart

Joshua Ward // Genre: Poetry



Josh Ward is a first year graduate student in the MFA program at Virginia Tech, studying eco-poetry and other forms of nature writing.

Instagram: @thefinderofthefurtive

Jym Davis // Genre: Art



Jym Davis (who goes by the name FALSE FACE) is an artist and storyteller, whose work explores themes of conservation, folklore, and the surreal. He currently serves as the Endowed Chair of the Art Department at Reinhardt University. Davis has also been awarded five National Park Artist-In-Residence positions since 2016, completing residencies at sites such as Big Cypress Preserve in Florida and Lassen Volcanic National Park in California. His work from these experiences has been featured by the National Endowment for the Arts. In addition to his exhibitions, Davis has contributed to major film and video projects, bringing his distinctive Beyond galleries, his alter-ego Instagram account, FALSE FACE, has attracted 421,000 followers.

Instagram: @jymdavis

[Website](#)



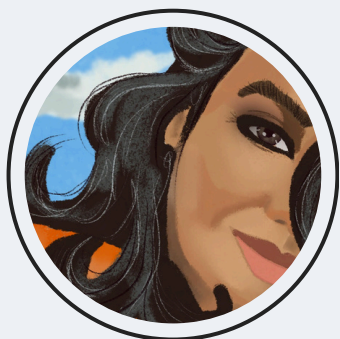
K.M. Hanslik // Genre: Poetry

K.M. Hanslik is a writer from Ohio. She edits for The Turning Leaf Journal and dabbles in art.

Instagram: @kmhanslik

Bluesky: @kmhanslik.bsky.social

Website: kmhanslik.com



Kacey Lore // Genre: Art

Kacey Lore (she/her), is an amateur artist and writer.

She likes to write and draw the lesser selected subjects, and find beauty and romance in the not-as-often seen moments in life. She loves playing with perspectives, and creating space for readers / viewers to think outside the box and challenge their way of understanding.

Instagram: @kaceywritesfiction



Kalib Bryan // Genre: Art

Kalib Bryan's work explores the beauty and complexity of the inner world through digitally constructed dreamscapes that exist between reality and imagination. Using mobile technology, photography, and digital effects, he transforms everyday environments into surreal visual spaces that reflect solitude, memory, and emotional introspection. He is drawn to moments of quiet observation. Natural landscapes, shadows, reflections, and solitary figures serve as starting points for his work. These elements allow him to investigate the tension between presence and absence, and to create images that feel familiar yet subtly displaced. What interests him is the space where the ordinary becomes extraordinary, and where inner experience reshapes external reality.

Instagram: @storymanart

[Website](#)



Kayley Vandenberg // Genre: Poetry

Kayley Vandenberg is a poet and nonfiction writer based in Highland Park, Los Angeles. Her work explores nostalgia, memory, and the emotional afterlife of ordinary moments.

Instagram: @okay.kayley



Khao Kros // Genre: Art

Khao is a nonbinary artist out of Omaha NE. They focus their art on expressing emotions. They create art to make you feel something in a world that feels so disconnected.

Instagram: @art_by_Khao

[Website](#)



Kilobaxi // Genre: Art

Khadijah Chapman is a traditional and digital visual artist and poet residing in Washington DC. Their work explore themes of visceral human emotion, introspection, and connection.

Instagram: K111_0

[Website](#)

[Purchase Art](#)

Kimberly Dow // Genre: Art



Kimberly Dow is a contemporary realist painter whose work blends finely rendered technique with narrative-driven imagery. While best known for her expressive figurative paintings, Dow also explores still life, animals, and symbolic arrangements of everyday objects—using each subject as a vehicle for storytelling. Her compositions often balance emotional depth with a subtle sense of playfulness, inviting viewers to look closely and uncover layered meanings within ordinary scenes.

Instagram: @kimberlyrdow

[Website](#)

Kimmy Chang // Genre: Poetry



Kimmy Chang is a Texas-based poet and computer-vision engineer. A 2026 Writers' League of Texas Fellow and Pushcart Prize nominee, her work has appeared or is forthcoming in trampset, ONE ART, and Sky Island Journal, among others. Read more at <https://www.kchang.xyz/>.

Kristina Lizardy-Hajbi // Genre: Poetry

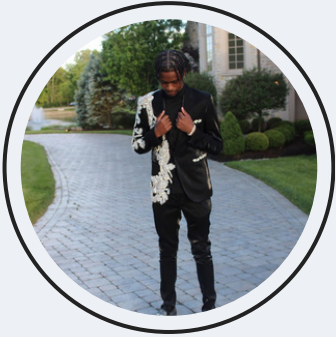


Kristina Lizardy-Hajbi (she/ella) is a biracial Latina writer and professor from Colorado. She is the winner of Fragmentation Magazine's 2025 micro fiction contest. Kristina loves poetry, miniature things, and cake.

Instagram: @kristina_lizardyhajbi

[Facebook](#)

Lamon Wiggins // Genre: Poetry



Lamon Wiggins was a teen from Cincinnati, Ohio, having lost his life mere hours after his high school graduation in May 2024 due to senseless gun violence. Lamon's loving mother, Tierra Mike, lost her only child on that night, and continues to grieve the loss of her son. Lamon wrote "Where I'm From" just weeks prior to graduating from high school, as an assignment for his English class.

Lavinia Liang // Genre: Poetry



Lavinia Liang is a writer, artist, and attorney. Her writing has been published in The Guardian, The Atlantic, TIME, the Los Angeles Review of Books, AGNI, and elsewhere.
Instagram: @Lavinianshores

Lin Laguna // Genre: Poetry



Lin Laguna (she/her) is a Filipino American writer based in Florida. Fueled by matcha, she spins speculative tales of wayward women. When not worldbuilding, she enjoys capturing poignant moments through poetry and short fiction. Her work has been featured in The Icarus Writing Collective, Cosmic Daffodil Journal, Yin Literary, and elsewhere. She is pursuing an MSt in Creative Writing from the University of Cambridge.
Instagram: @linlagunawrites

Macaulay Woods // Genre: Art



Macaulay Woods is a contemporary American painter. In her recent body of work, *Lazarus Ball* (2024–2026), blocks of paint become narrative: biomorphic forms—the sprites that populate her canvases—enact loneliness, war, surveillance, and grief in ecosystems under pressure.

www.macaulaywoods.com
[@macaulaywoodsstudi0](https://www.instagram.com/macaulaywoodsstudi0)

Markie Hines Ridgway // Genre: Art



Markie Ridgway is a 44 year old autistic, chronically ill, transgender man from Kansas City, Kansas. He is a peer support specialist in the behavioral health field and has a passion for providing resources and advocacy in his communities. He has an eclectic perspective for art and likes to mix mediums for the full effect of his creativity and a consistent theme of mental wellness and mad rage.

Instagram: @markieridgway

Maryam Sohail // Genre: Art



Maryam Sohail is a Houston-based artist and educator creating surreal, mixed-media work shaped by migration, memory, and emotional nuance. Her art turns ordinary moments luminous, balancing fragility and resilience while she teaches and grows alongside the next generation of creators.



Matt Laux // Genre: Art

Matt is a father, chef, and artist, inviting everyone to be creative and joyful.
Instagram: @mattdrawsdnd



Matthew D. Albertson // Genre: Poetry

Matthew D Albertson has the Pacific Northwest in his heart as a poet. His love of nature, the rain, science, politics, and myth all originate from calling the Portland area home. His previous work may be read in *Alchemy: Issue 50*, in *Arcana's* upcoming "Smitten with the Written" anthology, on Oregon's tele-poem hotline, and online at *North Meridian Review*.
Instagram/Threads: @matthewdalbertson



Mikal Wix // Genre: Poetry

Mikal Wix is a queer writer and biomedical editor from Hialeah. His poems appear in *American Literary Review*, *Pleiades*, *North American Review*, *Berkeley Poetry Review*, *Sonora Review*, *Pinch Journal*, and elsewhere, earning Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net nominations.

Instagram: @poeticmojo
[Website](#)



ML conrad // Genre: Art

ml conrad is a queer, neurodivergent scholar and educator. she spends her time reading books, writing poems, or cuddling cats. usually you can find her in a classroom, in the forest, or on the road. her photography is inspired by new places and finding beauty in moments often not perceived as beautiful.
Instagram: @_mlconrad

Naa Asheley Ashitey // Genre: Poetry



Naa Asheley Ashitey is a Chicago-born writer and MD-PhD candidate at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. A first-generation, low-income Ghanaian-American and University of Chicago alumna, she writes at the intersection of race, medicine, and belonging. Her creative and editorial writing examines how policy, media, and academia reproduce structural violence—and what it means to resist with truth. Her creative work appears or is forthcoming in Eunoia Review, BULL, Hobart, The Cincinnati Review, and editorials for The Xylom, MedPage Today and KevinMD. She has been nominated for multiple awards, including Best Small Fiction and a finalist for the Claire Keyes Poetry Award.

Instagram/X: @foreverasheley
Bluesky: @foreverasheley.bsky.social
[Website](#)

Nailah Moon // Genre: Art



Nailah Moon (She/They/We) is a ritual based artist, community worker and Teleniohiet active in Mi'kma'ki. They spend their days coworking closely with Community Garden Kjipuktuk, painting portraits inspired by the Black diaspora and dabbling in many forms of artistic expression. A budding painter and tech artist, they merge the world of sustainable technology with African Indigenous motifs and communal values. Nailah is the 2025 winner of the Charles E. Saunders Writing Award through the Writers Federation of Nova Scotia and a Roots.Wounds.Words 2024 Writing fellow. From the Didigna Hills, South Sudan.

Instagram: @nailahmoonkjipuktuk
Substack: NailahMoon

Najib Joe Hakim // Genre: Art



Najib Joe Hakim is a working documentary photographer, artist and photography instructor. Hakim also serves as the President of the Board for the Network of Photographers for Palestine and is a founding member of Class Conscious Photographers. He is the recipient of the Rebuilding Alliance Storytellers Award for a trilogy of projects on Palestine, a Political Art Fellow at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and a past nominee for the US Artist Fellowship.

Instagram: @jaffaorangephotography
Website: <http://www.jaffaorangephoto.com>
His books are available on MagCloud

Nana T. Baffour-Awuah // Genre: Poetry



Nana T. Baffour-Awuah (he/him) is a Ghanaian writer and editor currently based in New York. His poems, short stories, and essays have been published in Brittle Paper, Chronogram, Raven Review, African Writer, North Meridian Review, HuffPost, Sierra Nevada Review, and elsewhere. His work has also been anthologized, most recently in Creative Stillness (Gatekeeper Press, 2026) and Smitten with the Written (Arcana Poetry Press, 2026). Nana is a poetry editor for The Hummingbird and a reader for Callaloo. He is working on his first book.

Instagram: @whatnanawrote

Nancy Flynn // Genre: Poetry



Nancy Flynn grew up on the Susquehanna River in northeastern Pennsylvania coal country, spent many years on a downtown creek in Ithaca, New York, and now lives near the mighty Columbia in Portland, Oregon where she grows a field of dahlias in her front yard. She attended Oberlin College, Cornell University, and has an M.A. in English from SUNY/Binghamton. Recent poems have appeared in Fence, Halfway Down the Stairs, kerning, and the IHRAM anthology, America's Slide Toward Authoritarianism.

Website: <http://www.nancyflynn.com>

Nasta Martyn // Genre: Art



Nasta Martyn is an artist, graphic artist, illustrator. She graduated from the State Academy of Slavic Cultures with a degree in art, and also has a bachelor's degree in design. The first personal exhibition "My soul is like a wild hawk" (2002) was held in the museum of Maxim Bagdanovich. In her works, she raises themes of ecology, in 2005 she devoted a series of works to the Chernobyl disaster, draws on anti-war topics. The first big series she drew was The Red Book, dedicated to rare and endangered species of animals and birds. Writes fairy tales and poems, illustrates short stories. She draws various fantastic creatures: unicorns, animals with human faces, she especially likes the image of a man - a bird - Siren.

Instagram: @martynpasta

Nicole Schulman // Genre: Art



Nicole Schulman was born and raised in New York City in the 1970's by a couple of Jews from the Bronx. She is mostly known for her political cartoons published with the World War 3 Illustrated collective, editing Wobblies!: A Graphic History and murals facilitated by Groundswell Community Mural Project NYC. Currently, she is a full-time union high school art teacher. Nicole also paints, designs enamel pins under the name of Gussie Grubman, buys too many records and watches too many horror films. She is currently living in Brooklyn with her husband and cat.

Nix Carlson // Genre: Poetry



Nix Carlson (she/they) is a queer, polyamorous, and neurodivergent sign language interpreter based in Lexington, KY, with strong ties to Milwaukee, WI. Their work appears or is forthcoming in several publications, including Voicemail Poems, Arcana, Orange Rose, Vellichor Literary, Page Gallery, and Broken Stone.

Instagram: @bynixec

Nuala Herron // Genre: Art



Nuala is a Visual Artist specialising in Drawing and Painting. She is drawn to the everyday and inspired by the world around her. Whether she is painting human or animal portraits, there is a narrative and symbolism throughout her work. She aims to tell a story through painting, usually using the medium of oil, encouraging a dialogue between the art and viewer. In recent years, Nuala has used her Art to raise awareness about social and political issues and believes that artists have a role to play.

Instagram: [@nualaherronart](#)

[Website](#)

Orangeblossombitch // Genre: Art



Orangeblossombitch is a Palestinian artist and illustrator currently living in Germany. Her work spans different subjects, topics and mediums. She draws inspiration from Palestinian poetry, songs, cultural heritage and practices, Islamic art as well as nature and the women of her family. Her drawings focus mainly on feelings of nostalgia, depictions of beauty and political statements, through ornamentation and geometric art. She often incorporates other forms of Palestinian art into her pieces, such as Henna or Tatreez, finding new ways to center and reimagine common motifs and themes.

Instagram: [@orangeblossombitch](#)

[Tumblr](#)

[Bluesky](#)

Patricia Davis-Muffett // Genre: Poetry



Patricia Davis-Muffett (she/her) is author of the chapbook, *Alchemy of Yeast and Tears*. Her work has won honors including the 2024 Erskine J Poetry Prize from Smartish Pace, Best of the Net and Pushcart nominations, and appears in *Best American Poetry*, *Best New Poets* and other publications. She lives in Rockville, Maryland.

Instagram: [@dmtricia](#)

[Website](#)

Paul atten Ash // Genre: Poetry



Paul atten Ash is the pseudonym of Bristol UK-based author & art-photographer Paul Nash. His work is fuelled by his response to navigating the climate tragedy and attendant grief/moral injury as a father to two children, giving voice to the other-than-human in an age of exhaustion - ecopoetics as a creative act of resistance, bearing witness to 'this extractive nightmare of a disaster-capitalist world'.

Instagram: @north_sea_navigator
Bluesky: @northseanavigator.bsky.social
Website

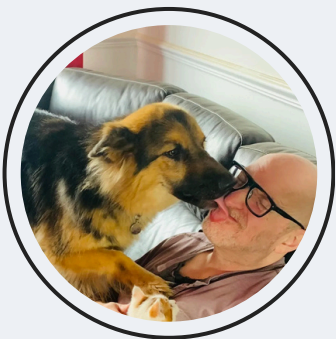
Paul Hedges // Genre: Art



Paul Hedges graduated from Michigan State University with a degree in Creative Writing. He writes any and all poetry except for prose poetry. Occasionally he works on sci-fi and fantasy short stories. When he's not writing, Paul spends his time practicing guitar, mountain biking, and playing Magic: the Gathering.

Instagram: @hedgehogwriting

Pip McGough // Genre: Poetry



Pip McGough is a UK-based freelance writer whose output explores the uncanny intersections of myth, memory, and the modern world. He blends lyricism and political commentary with dark humour, often drawing on folklore, religion, and metaphysics. At present, his work is necessarily preoccupied with the issue of Palestinian liberation. His writing spans poetry, children's fiction, and surreal short forms, frequently invoking landscapes as witnesses and the body as metaphor.

Instagram: @manifest_gothic



Polina Hrytsyk // Genre: Art

Ukrainian creative currently residing in Germany. Painting only when it matters and writing when it hurts.

Instagram: @akedia_art



Rachael Caringella // Genre: Art

Rachael is a multi media artist with a love for the natural world. She loves to blend reality with mysticism and surrealism. She uses a variety of mediums in her art with the goal of evoking strong emotions and a sense of wonder.

Instagram: @treetalker

Tiktok: @treetalkerart

Youtube @Rachaeltreetalker

Website

Etsy Shop



Reena Choudhary // Genre: Art

Reena is an artist whose work has been featured in several print and online publications, including The PERCH Journal (mental health and substance), The Climate Art Collection, Aunt Lute, Judy Magazine, Farm Girl Magazine, Art Axis Project Organizing Committee, January House Literary Journal, and T-Art Press. She was awarded a Silver Medal in the Khula Aasmaan India Art Contest. Her practice explores texture, emotion, and layered abstraction.

Instagram: @reenarav13

Robyn Daly // Genre: Art



Robyn Daly is an Irish-South African photographer based in Ireland. Over her career she has shot in a range of genres - from travel to commercial photography. She moved to Ireland in 2020 and settled in the Midlands in a semi-derelict 1920s farmhouse that has provided the canvas for many of her works. She is intrigued by the chemistry of light and time and how they intersect to offer new possibilities and new ways of seeing. Movement is a hallmark of her visual language through which she reflects and comments, inviting the viewer's interpretations and projections.

Instagram: [@robyndalyphotography](#)
[Website](#)

Róisín Clothier // Genre: Art



Róisín Clothier is an Irish animator, muralist & illustrator currently based in the UK. She is a freelance artist focused on engaging with the topics of ecology, environment & climate in a way that makes them more engaging and accessible to the wider public. Past clients and collaborators include RE-PEAT, The Marine Institute of Ireland & Wild Card, among others. Previously she worked in animation studios across Ireland and the UK as a background artist & designer on several productions, ranging from 2D commercials and TV shows to 2D & 3D feature films, such as Dreamwork's 'Dogman'. The studios worked at include Infocandy Animations, Jellyfish Pictures, Telegael, and Igloo Animations.

Instagram: [@art_of_roisin](#)
[Website](#)

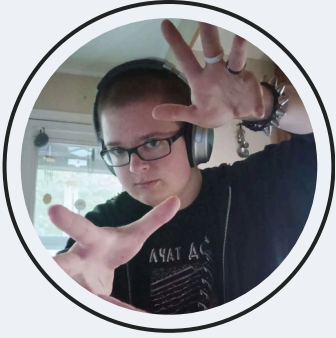
Ronan McSorley // Genre: Art



Ronan McSorley (he/him) is a visual artist and former psychologist based in Philadelphia, PA. Over the course of his clinical career, he worked extensively with individuals whose experiences are often pathologized and rarely understood. For many years, he ran a private therapy practice, helping people heal from the wounds of childhood trauma. Although he no longer works as a therapist, his artistic practice continues to be shaped by his years of experience supporting others.

Instagram: [@hospitalhaircuts](#)

Sagewing // Genre: Art



Sagewing is an illustrator and art student based in New York. His works primarily center around what it means to live as a queer person in modern America, the furry fandom, mental health, and having come of age in the era of social media and internet culture. In his spare time he stares out of windows, cooks a mean grilled cheese, and dotes on his three-legged twenty pound housecat.

Instagram: @sagew.ing / [Website](#)

Sarah Ang // Genre: Poetry



Sarah Ang is a writer from Singapore who has won international and national awards for her writing, including first place in the Wilbur Smith Author of Tomorrow Award, first place in the National University of Singapore Creative Writing Competition, first place in the iYeats International Poetry Competition, second place in the Walter Swan Poetry Prize, second place in the Alpine Fellowship Academic Writing Prize, third place in the Ledbury Poetry Competition for Young People, and third place in the Wells Literature Festival Young Poets Prize. Her work has been featured in publications such as Mithila Review, Quarterly Literary Review Singapore, Idle Ink, Alexandria Quarterly, and Eunoia Review, among others.

Instagram: @saraahndipity / [Website](#)

Sarah Graves // Genre: Art



Originally from the Delta and now based in Fayetteville, Arkansas, Sarah blends her scientific background with a more intuitive and emotional way of seeing the world. She discovered watercolor while navigating the challenges of a demanding work environment, where painting became both a refuge and a quiet rebellion—space to breathe, release, and experiment. Her work reflects the energy and freedom she finds in wild spaces, whether swimming, mountain biking, or simply pausing in stillness. Water, especially, has always drawn her—carrying a sense of lightness and flow that continues to shape her style. Through her work, she invites others into that same sense of release that creating art gives her.

Instagram: @sarah_graves_art / [Facebook](#)
[Website](#)

Sillygoose // Genre: Art



Sillygoose is a multidisciplinary, globally published & acknowledged artist. Shaped by travel across continents & a sustained curiosity for nature & culture, the work draws from places, people, & the quiet details of everyday life. Through a visually restrained yet conceptually layered language, the practice explores perception & the subtle architectures that shape inner worlds.

Instagram: @sillygoose.co
[Website](#)

Susan M. Donnelly // Genre: Art



Susan M. Donnelly, a New York-based activist artist, has been painting her entire life. She uses her art to highlight social and political injustices.

Instagram: @paintedrage & @paintedvisions

T. Repalle // Genre: Poetry



T. Repalle (he/him) is a high school senior and writer from Austin, TX. He is passionate about various things including science, climate change, and health disparities. He recently got into poetry last year, and believes in how much power it has to change how people think.

Instagram: @trishithr

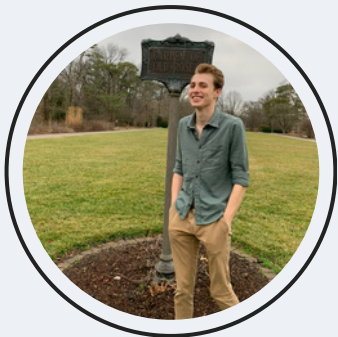
tc Wiggins // Genre: Poetry



tc Wiggins is an African American poet residing in Cincinnati, Ohio who has been writing since the August of 2022. His favorite writers and inspirations are Jack Gilbert, Linda Gregg, Raymond Carver and Mary Oliver. He's not proud of it, but he's been pushing off learning how to fish for the better part of four years now.

Instagram: @scaringthemuse

Tyler McDonald // Genre: Poetry



Tyler McDonald is an MFA poetry student at Bowling Green State University. He graduated from the University of Cincinnati with a B.A. in English, where he was the recipient of the Academy of American Poets Prize and the Robinson Essay Prize. His work has been published or is forthcoming in Poets.org, Exposed Bone, and Short Vine. His poetry explores cancer survivorship, queerness, and the complexities of relationships and family.

Instagram: @tylermcd5

Valeria Eden // Genre: Poetry



Valeria Eden (she/her) is a writer, editor, and circus enthusiast living in Colorado. Her work has appeared in Variant Literature, Wasteland Review, Eunoia Review, Stanchion, Stone Circle Review, and Arcana Poetry Press, among others. She has three dogs, two therapists, one wildland firefighter boyfriend, and her favorite color is green.

Instagram: @poetvaleriaeden

Veronica Tucker // Genre: Poetry



Veronica Tucker is an emergency medicine and addiction medicine physician and writer living in the Lakes Region of New Hampshire. Her work explores the intersections of medicine, motherhood, and systemic injustice, drawing from years in both rural and inner-city emergency departments. She is a Pushcart Prize nominee with work in *Rust & Moth*, *Eunoia Review*, *The Berlin Literary Review*, and elsewhere.

Instagram: [@veronicatuckerwrites](#)
[Website](#)

Yimin Huang // Genre: Poetry



Yimin Huang is an MFA graduate from the University of San Francisco and an author and poet. Her short stories have been selected as finalists for Singapore's Writing The City Showcase 2021 and 2022. Her writings have also been published in *Neocha*, *The Hooghly Review*, *Expat Living*, *Hey! Young Writer* and *Cha: An Asian Literary Journal*. She is currently working on a short story collection on the Chinese diaspora.

Instagram: [@tori_minz](#)



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