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CADET
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OF
THE
ARTS

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Chia-Hsiang Shen, "Ah! Morning, Again." Canon 70D, EF-S 18-55mm, Adobe Lightroom CC

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Anna Kemper, "A Glimpse"
digital photograph

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

We have all weathered a tough storm in the past year and a half. Covid-19 and isolation from our friends and family made it hard to accomplish the simplest of tasks, and yet we somehow endured. One respite for many people during these difficult times was the arts; theatre troupes performed over Zoom; some people wrote short stories; others painted murals on their bedroom walls; some people even made outfits for their dogs! We know that the last year and a half has been tough, but it was also a time for reflection and for trying new things. For this reason, we as a staff decided to extend our invitation for submissions not only to cadets, but to USAFA faculty and staff as well. We wanted to display the amazing talents of our USAFA community and—as you will see—they did not disappoint.

Our USAFA community contains a plethora of talented individuals who are humble about their skills. If you have a knack for drawing, writing, photography, or any other art form, we encourage you to submit in the future. We also encourage you to spread the word about *Icarus*, as appreciation for the arts is part of what makes us human. *Icarus* is currently a small organization, and we hope to extend our reach as we grow.

On a separate note, this year was also notable for political and societal reasons. With the nationwide protests and countless instances of police violence and racial injustice, we were inspired to include a new

section in our publication: *Amplify*. This section primarily contains artwork and short writing pieces from African American cadets and cadets of color, often describing their experiences as they relate to their identity. The purpose of *Amplify* is to create a platform for cadets to speak to their unique perspectives without fear of judgment or retaliation. We intend to create a space for members of marginalized groups to share their stories, and we hope to continue including similar initiatives in our publication in the future.

We cannot thank you enough for reading this publication and for supporting the arts at USAFA. Our small organization was hit hard by Covid-19 limitations, but we continue to do what we can to bring joy to the Cadet Wing through our work.

We are proud to present the Spring 2021 edition of *Icarus: Cadet Journal of the Arts*.

Jordan Brown '21
Amy Padilla '22
Managing Editors

ICARUS *staff*

Where we're from and what we're looking forward to as COVID-19 takes its exit:

Jordan Brown

*Managing Editor,
editorial, layout*

CS-25
Chicago, IL

Screaming my lungs dry in a tiny concert venue with a bunch of strangers.

Grace Hess

editorial

CS-40
Abingdon, VA

Visiting my godmother and going to concerts again.

Dr. Richard Johnston

Faculty Advisor, faculty & staff submissions, editorial

DFENG
Spartanburg, SC

Salt water.

Dr. Sarah Nance

Faculty Advisor, student submissions, editorial, layout

DFENG
Green Bay, WI

Coffee *inside* a coffee shop.

Amy Padilla

*Managing Editor,
editorial, layout*

CS-23
Woodland Park, CO

One day finally visiting an Arabic-speaking country (since CSLIP was cancelled...twice) and getting to use my language skills.

Rachel Price

editorial, layout

CS-23
Birmingham, AL

Wearing glasses again without them fogging :)

Grace Protzman

editorial

CS-18
Norfolk, NE

A big family reunion and seeing all my cousins, aunts, & grandparents.

Sophie Serage

editorial

CS-25
Tulsa, OK

Walking to the bathroom without a mask.

Rachel Werner

editorial

CS-03
Warsaw, NY

Movies and plays returning to theaters in full force.

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THE LIVING MONUMENT OF LANGUAGE

Professor Donald Anderson

*Writer in Residence & Professor of English
Department of English & Fine Arts*

If it is true that we are what we've read and where we've been, then it must also be true that, for writers, we are what we've read, what we've written, and where we have been. If we don't read and write, we are stuck with only the experience of our own little lives. Reading, enlarged by writing, grants us passage to a larger world. Who doesn't want that?

Perhaps you'll agree with Ted Hughes who wrote:

"Our best imaginative literature can well be called the sacred book of the tribe. It holds what we, as a tribe, have inwardly . . . lived through. . . . This living monument of our language is the closest thing we have to a mythology: it is sacred because it enshrines our deepest knowledge of ourselves as a people, the language-circuits of

our thought and feeling. It holds the D.N.A. of our consciousness as a spiritual unity. The literature and the language are one . . . it is the national soul we carry. . . . And if this is not important, I do not know what is."

John Updike wisely points out that "[c]reativity is merely a plus name for regular activity. Any activity becomes creative when the doer cares about doing it right, or better."

Groucho Marx, another wise man, opined, "Outside of a dog, a book is a man's best friend. Inside of a dog, it's too dark to read"—all to say: Find a well-lighted place to enjoy the well-crafted writing that follows.

*Remember: Friends don't let friends
read junk . . .*

Seclusion, Wandering

Alexander William Cooper

If I can't leave than I'm stuck, fuck
Trying to conceive: Hey, what's up?

Are you just joking with me,
Or is it that plain that I can't see?

Like the cold sunlight,
A shadow waves at my height.

Quite a fright.

There sit the prisoners, all calm and collected,
So far-fetched from this World and it's connected,
We'd be all fools to pretend,
That we didn't see it coming from the first onset.

My family's sat at home, listening to the drone,
Of the radio that lies next to the Faberge phone.
And on the phone they chit and chat,
Like that whilst staring at the crazed and confused
cat.

And there's the dad who acts all calm and alarmed,
There's the look on his face, he just flails his arms.

And the mum's in the kitchen humming a
translucent song,

I guess we should all just see to it that we agree not
to leave.

Fifteen days and it's not gone away,
The pandemonium continues to sway.
I can't believe it's happening this way,
Gone is my expected seasonal pay.

Stocks are in ruin and I'm all in rags,
Bereaved by some losses as I smoke a packet
Of cheap Camel blues.

God forbid I sit and wait alone in these days,
Practicing an art which'll never see but one hooray.

But that's just it; all in all as well,
From the gates of heaven to the depths of hell.
We'll get what we're given for playing with fire.

We plea for sympathy,
But we gave into our desire.



Andrew Lemke, "Thorned Fragility"
digital photograph

The Rose Bush

David Ott

I stood in the storm's trail
Whose devastation did not fail
For with a terrible scorn
These homes had been torn
Many left on the ground with nothing,
But soon I found my eyes fixed to something...

A rose bush tightly a wall clutching.

Tall as the door
That it once stood before,
It was supporting the last remaining wall
Of the first floor.
It stood battered and scarred,
Crushed by brick and wood,
And yet it stood.

Its flowers and leaves were scarce to be found
Scattered by the wind
Or laying crushed on the ground
The petals bleeding rosy sweet lines
Of cherry wine
Beneath what had been a STOP sign
Where they would lay 'til the end of time.

In my eye, a red glimmer burned
And my gaze upward turned
And how my joy did abound
In a bloom I had found!
For one rose did yet evade
The fate the others made
Hiding behind the braid
Of vines and thorns in spades
(Presumably the careless hand to dissuade);
But even its attempts behind thorns to confide
Could not hide
With what pride it shined
Of a crimson most fine,

This delicate red heart divine.

It was then I saw its victory absolute
Among the bush's far-reaching roots,
For there clung its fruits:

A bed of lilies, iris and lilac
Though thrashed, survived the attack
Of the storm's ire black,
And if given time might grow back.

I stared with awe at this thing before me.
Scarred and marred and slightly charred,
As a hen to her chicks
Or Christ to the sinner,
This proud bush of pricks
Held those precious lives together
Against wind and sticks
Among its roots and broken flowers
With a beauty to some worth nix,
But to me it was a beauty pure in form
In a being strung up on her own crucifix
To protect those she loved from the storm.

A rose bush on crumbling bricks
I had almost passed by as I trod.
I stopped and gave thanks to God
That I did not fall for such tricks.

IN THE EYES OF THE WINGS

Eliana Catalano

The Sun, glorious as the mirror's image
His son saw himself without fault
My body, sweet wax, turned to liquid
His ambition too heavy to exalt

I'm crafted of feathers, a tool of freedom
Bonded with the strength of wax
Able to hold the weight of His body
Wings strung without syntax

No one could curb His mighty enthusiasm
Flying was my job, my tasking
He did not want to stop, would not, could not
What was it that He was masking?

Icarus' father, his creator, his ruiner
No one would predict his FFAALL
Too close to the Sun, he flew without heed
Courage regressed into gall



An Nguyen, "Eagle's Island"
digital photograph



Taylor Metzger, "A Challenger Enters"
Nikon D3400, 85 mm lens

I WISH I KNEW WHAT YOU WANTED

Daniel T. Garza

I cannot read the thoughts in your mind,
Without your words, I am blind.
And I do not know what to think,
I'm left vulnerable upon the brink.

Please, oh please, just use your voice.
Is your silence all by choice?
Lately you've been distant as a ghost,
And it's your words that I miss most.

When I am with you, I get a sense of doubt
Can you not just say what you feel all-out?
Am I just missing the signs?
Must I read in between the lines?

So often, you stand there muted,
Interpretations of your actions disputed.
I think I'm afraid of the answer,
This overthinking poisons me like a cancer.

Please just tell me what's on your mind,
Tell it to me straight and unrefined.
For I cannot infer, I must be shown,
It's the only way to make your feelings known.

BE HUMAN

Meredith Hickman

I often wonder how I would dance
If no one had ever shown me
How one dances.

I sometime ponder how I would love
If nothing had ever told me
What love was.

I stand here asking myself how I would feel
If no one had ever shown me
How one feels.

I stand among scaffolding
in a constant, tape-rolling picture.
A poor player that struts and frets
Yet here I am
Wishing I could know how to truly
Be human.



Taylor Metzger, "Silhouette Carved by God"
Nikon D3400, 18-55 mm lens

Miles de Millas

Aidan Boyle

Un rastro; una calle; un campo de hierba; una playa;
Miles de millas, sin un final a la vista.
Despierta, come, trabaja la mente, trabaja el cuerpo, duerme;
No es de extrañar que la gente siempre pregunte:
¿Cuál es el propósito, qué se disfruta?
¿Estás adolorido? ¿Tu mente está sana?

Correr es verter el alma en algo;
no solo un deporte, no solo un pasatiempo.
El corredor casual cree que sabe la verdad,
pero uno no comprende los límites de su mente,
hasta que ensucias la suela de tus zapatos y pierdes el ambiente.
Cuando corres tanto tiempo, olvidas a dónde perteneces;
ese es el estado de paz supremo – al que alcanzas pocas veces.

Un arte que todos pueden hacer, pero pocos dominarán.
Una droga que es tan dolorosa que pocos la tomarán.
Entonces, ¿por qué unos pocos lo hacen de buena gana?
¿Para qué? ¿Números en un reloj? y perder la cordura?
Precisamente. Porque mientras vivimos en esta tierra, nuestro reloj no se detiene.
El corredor, vive cada segundo como si fuera el último que sostiene.

Con cada milla, las piernas más doloridas, los pulmones más pesados
Sin embargo, los pensamientos del corredor solo se vuelven más agraciados.
Sueños de podios olímpicos y récords rompidos
Alimenta la mente después de que el cuerpo se ha ido
El corredor no tiene un día “fácil”, ningún “día libre”,
El corredor no tiene tiempo para celebrar hitos o victorias.
El corredor teme que un día sus piernas no se muevan más, que terminan quebrado,
Entonces corre cada momento con la esperanza de que sus huellas puedan dejar un legado.

la sabiduría de mil hombres,
el hambre de mil leones
el poder de mil pistones,
puedes creer que es la fuerza de sus pulmones
Pero es la voluntad invencible de las negrillas
que conquista los miles de millas.

How Many More?

Jocelynn Cooper

How many more dirty needles have to be exchanged for clean ones?
How many more doses of Narcan have to be given?
How many more DOAs have to be noted in charts?
How many more people have to become nothing but a statistic to the public?
How many more books have to be written?
How many more obituaries for 20 year olds have to be read by 70 year olds?
How many more grieving mothers will be interviewed on TV only to be forgotten
about the next day?
How many more rehabs have to be built?
How many more “bad batches” have to cause the overdoses of 28 people in four
hours, in one
town?
How many more parents have to bury their children?
How many more children have to come home from school to find their parents dead?
How many more “what ifs” have to be asked?
How many more people have to be missing from a 5-year class reunion?
How many more settlements have to be reached with pharmaceutical companies?
How many more GoFundMes have to be made for funeral expenses?
How many more people have to wish for just one more phone call to a friend who
isn't there?
How many more calls have to be made to family members?
How many more people have to overdose?

The answer is one.
Only one more person has to suffer the same fate as hundreds of thousands of
Appalachians.
But it can't be just anyone.
It can't just be another expendable Appalachian.
Hundreds of thousands of those didn't matter.
It has to be the son of a senator or the daughter of a billionaire.
All it would take is one person who is attached to power and wealth.
Then change would happen.
Reform would come.
Bills would be signed.
Cases would be judged fairly.

Until that day comes, Appalachians will continue to mourn those gone way too soon.
Those who fought their demons as hard as they could, but still lost the battle.
Those who were doing so well in their recovery.
Those who were setting sobriety goals and reaching them.

Those who didn't know their resistance to drugs had decreased since getting clean and snorted
the same amount they did months ago.

Those at the top of the prayer list in church for months, only to be replaced by names of their
family members during their time of grief.

Those who others see and say "it's a shame".

Those who never stood a chance because of who they are, where they're from, and how they
were raised.

Those who were seen as nothing but expendable.

Those who became a statistic to the public.

Those who left their families asking "What did I do wrong?" when there was nothing more that
could have been done.

So I ask again
How many more?

*In memory of Trenton (TJ) Platt and dedicated to Jim and Wyvonda Henderson, and every other
southern West Virginian personally affected by drug abuse in one way or another.*



Jordan Melendez, "The Land of Bethel"
digital photograph

BORED

Jeremy Pinon

“Bored in the house and I’m in the house bored...”
Except I’m not home,
I am on my 4th bout with Q&I,
And my sink threw up.

Classes all day, monotonous pacing.
Push-ups offer hope,
My escape is Mark Z’s shallow e-world,
And my sink threw up.

My nostrils get harassed every M-Day.
I cannot complain,
Others have it leaps and bounds worse than I
And my sink threw up.



Taylor Metzger, "Ghost in the Fog"
digital photograph



Anton J.J. Dahm, "New Dawn"
digital photograph

Saint Adrian

Tristan Barton

I wish you were still next to me.

Sometimes, it feels like you're a part of everything I do;

Others, it feels like you couldn't be farther away.

Lately, things have been easy but I know harder times are to come.

Always, I carry your strength on my chest and your memory on my side.

Those gems of your personality have become apart of mine and yet

I wish people didn't hold me to your memory.

Once everything is said and done, I know

I will become a man you'd be proud to call brother.



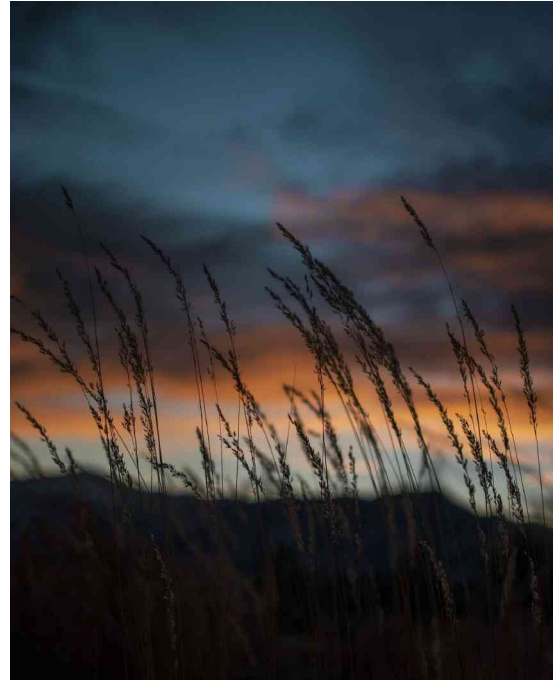
Chia-Hsiang Shen, "As an Air Force Pilot... We Do Cool Things"
digital photograph

SHAKEN

Michael Ernst

REALITY

Clouds of sleep so luscious and sweet
Yearning for them forevermore,
Some live their dreams those lucky few
While others wake shaken to their core,
To walk the thin line of paradise and hell
Where morals twist and values degrade,
Whichever one to slip and fall
Please, don't let these feelings fade.



Nicholas Waters, "Saturnine"
digital photograph



Anna Kemper, "Turmoil of Color"
digital photograph

Masterpiece

Anna Little

When you think about the classic works of art
The physical ones
Paintings, murals, statues
Billions have heard of them
Millions have seen them
But probably very few have gotten so close as to trace the brushstrokes
To see every paint chip without a glass barrier in front
The pauses and breaths of the painter displayed on stretched canvas
Every single freckle put in its place
And every soft strand where it fits best

If my presence in front of that masterpiece causes it to change
My words landing on the pigment cause it to fade
Then everyone from then on will look at the piece and see history
Or they will see the mistake made by a naive observer

I know nothing about art
My untrained eye cannot discriminate perfect from imperfect
But to a person who has never critiqued a painting so closely
You might be as beautiful as it gets



Meredith Hickman, "Brotherly Love: Frodo and Sam"
colored pencil on paper

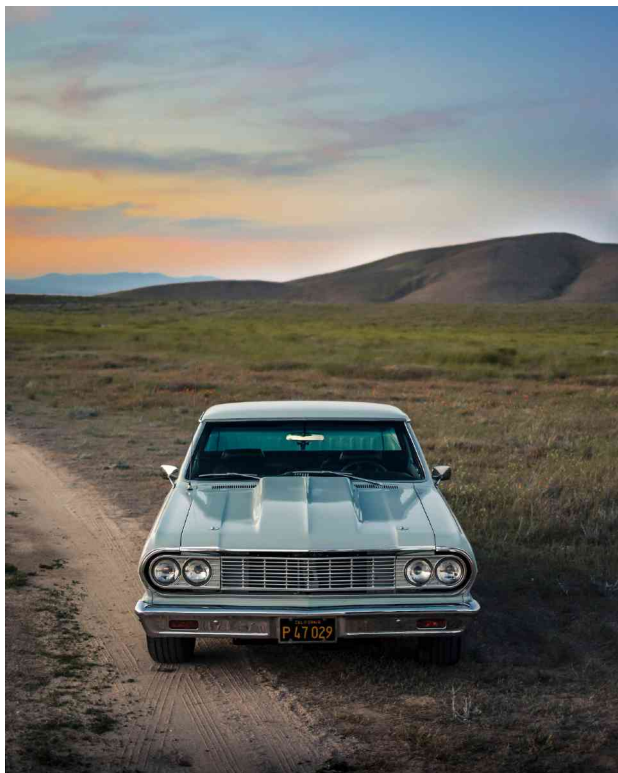


Harry Andriantavy, "Full Moon"
edited digital photograph

Headspace

Anna Little

Those words I hold inside my head and heart
Those actions on replay behind my lids
As orchestras of neurons nightly start
And stories wanting stages place their bids
If I were in the proper headspace now
The fault in my plans I'd promptly accept
I'd freeze my thumbs and lips, furrow my brow
And calmly as I can my plans reject
But thoughts don't flow as easily in stress
As they do when my head is down to earth.
While everything's presenting as a mess
I've realized what time is truly worth.
Now that I've found a clear and kinder place
It's certain you don't deserve my headspace.



Nicholas Waters, "Father-Son El Camino,"
digital photograph

LAVENDER AND BUTTERFLY BUSH

Helen Agee

You're seventeen and drunk and you can do anything
Anytime, anywhere, for any reason whatsoever.
No police sirens wail into the shrill night air,
But you drive like a fleet of red and blue follows your trail,
Adding dents to the fiberglass-steel bumper,
Amputating your freshly-grown freedom.

Traffic lights glitter twofold in double-vision,
And whether a moon of green or a star of red
You skid past empty intersections of slick asphalt,
Motor humming under heavy rain and reckless driving,
The sound nearly loud enough to forget,
To skim out the thick oil of past actions from clear water.

poetry

A jigsaw puzzle upended on shaggy carpet is your memory,
Only bits and pieces of a whole tapestry remain.
But the memories that stick circulate throughout your body
And the moment you left pumps beside your heart.
Her face opened like a fissure in the earth
To reveal the human in hiding.
And the wallpaper of lavender and butterfly bush
Stained red

You killed the woman who declined to be your mother,
Who let you rot in a last-chance home,
The woman who never gave you a chance.

You pocketed her wallet, the empty pill bottles,
Her keys, her powder-brown wig and cheap perfume,
And you left the house in her clothes,
So much smoother and slimmer than your own.

You took the car
For a late-night drive,
Leaving destruction in your wake
Facing freedom in your future



Andrew Lemke, "Rural Anachronism,"
Fujifilm xt-2, 30mm

Ambiguity

Anna Kemper

Two friends, a Camry, and some tea.
No particular destination. Only the present,
Characterized by the amicable undertones of ambiguity.
The quiet strum of the car harmoniously
Melts into the shy rhythm of the music.
The loud static of the week fades,
Succumbing to quiet smiles.
The stars meet us amidst the silence,
Peeling back the bold beauty of the night.

You come to a stop,
Cresting the familiar hill –
Increasing our acquaintance with the angels.

There we sit.
Beneath the expanding stars
And above the brilliant city lights.
We are captured in between,
Suspended by the warm embrace of friendship.



Harry Andriantavy, "Passion"
digital photograph



Harry Andriantavy, "Fairy Lights"
Sony a6000, Adobe Lightroom

ODE TO SUN

Anna Kemper

Oh Sun

The grand orator to our mundane reality.
Your clever illusion – rising, going, gone.

Composing our days by the rays of streaming light in octaves,

Marking time.

Oh how cunning thou art!
To the boisterous fool – rising, going, gone.
To the keen scholar – rising, going, gone.
Life, yearning for thy warmth, for thy courage.

But you, oh glorious Sun,
Thy master of light and dark,

Are instead, an ever-present song radiating, persisting.
It is not you that succumbs to the dark,
But us – rising, going, gone.
And so, us, left to only to the fleeting crumbs

Of your shifting rays,
Are subject to patience,

Entrapped by the rests within the measures of the night,

Dreaming of your return.

I thought I had finally found you;
Someone to look at and plan,
But my hands and my heart are both shaking

Not knowing this new bond's true span.
I wanted to tell you "I love you,"
Hear your gentle voice mention it back,
But instead of that song I so longed for,

You joked, and I failed to laugh.
My mind raced as I stuttered in silence,
Urged my brain to bridle my face,
But to my so deep disappointment,

A loose tear had abandoned its place.
I froze: still, in hopeful deception...
That deception I hoped for was false.
Your hand soon reached out to touch me.



Rachel Price, "Daily Water"
raised acrylic & linoleum print

ON LOVING SOMEONE FOR THE FIRST TIME:

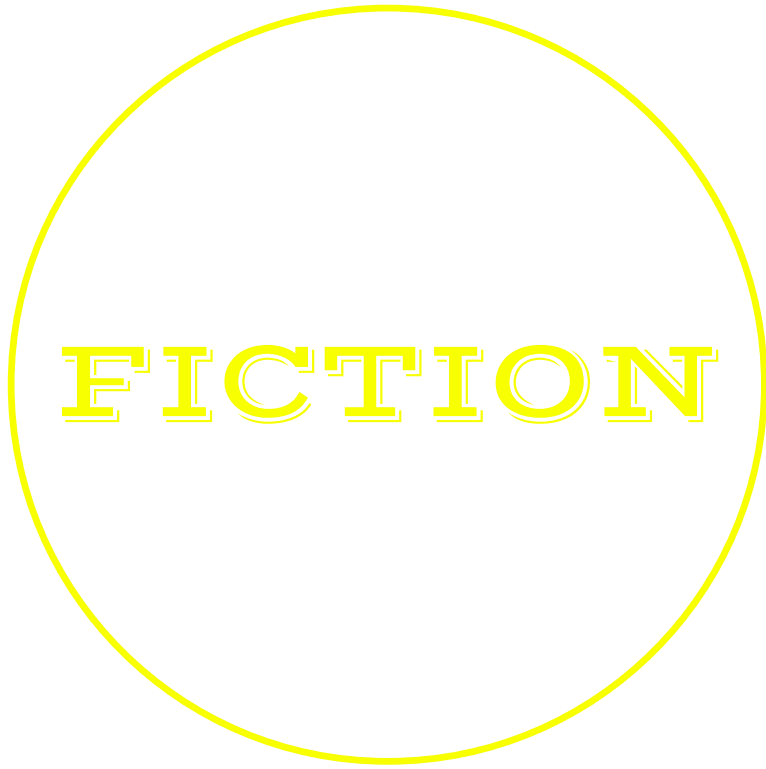
Bella Ilchenko

'Cross my cheek your kind fingers waltzed.
Determined, I stared straight forward
Unwilling to give up my ruse.
What a shame you decided to stroke me,

Removing my power to choose
If I should, or rather not mention
The way that you make my heart reel.
I longed to just suffer in silence

Than tell you how I truly feel.
Am I moving too fast? I wonder
But who's to determine what's right?
For every new love is distinctive,

And each love comes bearing new plight.
Stop comparing this one to others.
Stop doubting. Emotion's not wrong.
Whatever should happen will happen,
And perhaps he will sing you his song.





Alena Wroe, "Flight of Nature I"
digital photograph

These Things I Knew

Julia Marie Rosenfeld

Daddy talks to my brothers and me about Heaven a lot. He is happy when he talks about it, so I know Heaven is a good place. I look up into the sky all of the time searching for it, but I can't see it. Daddy says I won't be able to see it until I die. We all die, but Daddy tells me to not be scared of dying, so I am not. Daddy says Heaven is beautiful. Jesus is there...there are angels dancing and singing... Grandpa and Grandma are there, too. There will be no more pain or suffering in Heaven. That is what Daddy says at least. There is only peace and love - more peace and love than I could ever imagine. He always brings up Heaven when Steven feels really sick. Steven is our best friend, and he lives right next door to us. Steven has leukemia. Momma says it's a type of cancer, but I don't really know what cancer is. I just know cancer is sickness - and I

know Steven has always been sick. It is just another thing about him just like how he has brown hair, is five years old, and loves airplanes.

I sometimes forget Steven has leukemia because he still plays with us the same. He comes over every morning to wake us up, and then our day consists of us running back and forth from both of our houses, coming up with different games to play. My brother Daniel and Steven are very close. Sometimes when they are playing by themselves, I help Momma with Steven's medicine. She crushes up his pills, and I help her scoop it into Steven's yogurt. I like helping Momma take care of Steven. It sometimes feels like Steven is another older brother of mine. His sickness doesn't bother me

at all, because I have known it my entire life. Being a friend of Steven has made me comfortable with all things related to sickness. I am not afraid of Steven's shots. I am not afraid of the throwing up. I am not afraid of dying. I tell myself these things to remind myself sometimes. I know I shouldn't feel scared, but sometimes I do. But that is why I always remind myself that I am not afraid...it makes me feel better. My brothers are strong for Steven, so I must be strong too.

•

I know Steven has been sicker lately. He is bald now, but I don't mind it. Sometimes he can't play with us, but I know it is just because his leukemia makes him tired. I know he wants to play. Momma says we are going to the hospital today. I don't know why Steven has to be in the hospital, but Momma says hospitals heal people. Maybe the hospital will heal Steven. I hope it does. Steven never talks about what it feels like to be sick with cancer, but I know it has to feel worse than a cold.

There will be no more pain or suffering in Heaven. That is what Daddy says at least. There is only peace and love.

Before we are allowed in his room, the ladies in the pajamas make us wash our hands. They say it keeps Steven safe. Steven smiles big when he sees my brothers and me. I haven't seen him in a few days because he has been here at the hospital. He has seen Momma, though. Momma goes to the hospital to stay with him every night. Momma is in the hallway now talking with Steven's parents. I just listen. Steven apparently now has a type of leukemia called Philadelphia Chromosomal Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia. That is too long for me to understand. They say only 5% of all leukemia patients get it. I guess

Steven is special. I don't know whether or not that is a good thing. Steven's parents seem really tired. Their eyes have a shadow underneath them like I have never seen before. Maybe they haven't been sleeping well lately. I guess Steven hasn't either. His eyes have black underneath them too.

I have been listening to Momma talking lately. The leukemia is taking over Steven's body. I don't know exactly what that means, but I know leukemia has caused Steven to stop playing with us. I hate leukemia. Momma says I should never hate anything or anyone, but I really do hate leukemia. Why is it hurting my friend? We still see Steven though. Although his sickness is worse, we pretend like it isn't - we pretend for Steven's sake... or maybe we pretend for ours. Daniel goes over to sit with Steven and watch TV, and I sometimes go over, too. Steven doesn't really talk much anymore. I know it is because he is really sick. He is also very white now, and his eyes are very swollen - they are nearly swollen shut. I know that is also because he is sick. I really do hate leukemia. Daddy has mentioned Heaven a lot more recently. He says Steven is going to Heaven soon. I may be only four and a half, but I know what that means. I know Steven is dying, and it scares me. But I still tell myself that I am not afraid. My brothers tell me that Steven will be with Jesus, and so we shouldn't be sad. I listen to them, but I don't say anything. I stay silent so I don't cry. I must be strong for Steven.

•

I climb onto the step in front of the casket and look at his body. He looks as if he is sleeping, but I know he isn't. His skin is so pale, almost see-through, and I can see his veins. He looks both the same and different all at once. With my small little arm shaking, I place in the casket his favorite ICEE slushie cup. Daniel, standing next to me, sets at Steven's side his favorite airplane. I kiss my hand, and then touch Steven's forehead with it. I don't know what

this sadness is. I have never felt anything like it, but it hurts.

•

Today is Steven's funeral. As I put on the dress Momma laid out for me, I can hear my parents talking in the bedroom. I don't know what about, but they sound very worried. Maybe it is just because Momma is nervous to say Steven's eulogy. I don't know what eulogy is, but Momma told me she gets to speak about Steven's beautiful life. At the funeral, I stand in the back next to some stranger's grave, and I listen. I drown out all of the words of everyone speaking, including my Momma's, and I am mesmerized by the bouquet of red roses sitting on top of Steven's casket. I have never seen more beautiful flowers in my life. As Steven's casket gets lowered slowly into the ground, I cry. In the car, I just sit in silence and think about my friend. Daddy tells us Steven is with Jesus in Heaven now. I can't stop my tears from falling, and I look out of the window, up at the sky, and look for Steven's face.

•

"Momma is sick." It has only been three weeks since Steven died, and I am now sitting in the living room of my house, next to my brothers, with Momma and Daddy telling me this. "I have cancer," Momma tells us. I look at my brothers and they look scared. That makes me scared. I know cancer. Cancer is leukemia. Steven had leukemia. I look up and stare at the ceiling. Steven is in Heaven now. Daddy tells us it is not the same cancer that Steven had, and I don't know if that should make me feel better. He says it in a way as if it should. All I know is that Momma has the sickness that took Steven away from me, and I cannot lose Momma too. They tell us Momma felt the tumor under her right arm the morning of Steven's funeral. They say it took the doctors three weeks to figure out what type of cancer it was. They say Momma has breast cancer, and they say that is good. That is a funny

thing to say. How can cancer be good?

I sometimes forget Momma has cancer because she still acts the same. She still does my hair every morning, she still goes to work, and she still plays with me when I get home from school. Momma says she doesn't feel sick, so I should stop worrying. She lied to me though. She looks sick today. I stand in the doorway of Momma's bedroom, and I watch as she lays in bed with piles of blankets on top of her. I count five blankets. I am now five years old. She has so many blankets and yet I can still hear and see her shivering.

**Although his sickness is worse,
we pretend like it isn't - we
pretend for Steven's sake ... or
maybe we pretend for ours.**

My brother David is standing behind me and stares at her too. We just watch her in silence, and then David takes my hand, pulls me away, and closes the door. He tells me Momma is tired from the chemotherapy. Chemotherapy. I don't know what that is but I keep hearing Daddy and Momma talk about it. They say it is medicine that kills Momma's cancer cells. I ask why Momma feels so bad if the chemo is supposed to kill the bad cancer inside of her. Daddy calls the medicine indiscriminate. The doctors call it "The Red Devil." It doesn't care what cells it kills. It kills her bad cancer cells, but it kills her good cells too.

Steven's momma comes over and drops off meals every night for us. Daddy says Momma doesn't want to see anyone while she is sick, so our friends and people from Church drop off the meals next door first. I think that is so kind. Every night I go and watch Momma in bed. I don't say anything, but I think Momma knows I

fiction

am there. Daddy says she is not herself now. The chemo makes her brain foggy, and she is in a lot of pain. After a few days, Momma goes back to work. After a few days more, she is back home in bed with the blankets on top of her. Momma is still shivering even though I count seven blankets this time. Momma says she gets really cold when she gets her chemotherapy at the doctor's office. She says the doctors give her frozen gloves and socks to wear on her hands and feet. Daddy says they stop the chemo from reaching other parts of her body. No wonder Momma is still shivering. Maybe she still feels frozen. I just sit in her doorway and watch her. My brothers join me sometimes too. Momma leans over the side of the bed and throws up. She is crying. I hate it when she cries. I know Momma tells me not to hate anything or anyone, but I really do hate it when she cries. I tell myself that I am not afraid. I tell myself this so I don't cry too.

•

I'm crying. I know I shouldn't be. I know I should be strong for Momma, but I am so scared. Why is she bald? This morning she had hair, and now it's gone. Where are her eyebrows? Why does she no longer have eyelashes? Momma screams

at me to get out of her room. Why is she screaming at me?

•

I am now used to Momma's cycle of chemotherapy. She is in bed for the first few days after the medicine is in her, and then she is back to work and I forget she is sick. Today I went with Momma to the wig store to help pick out her new hair. I thought that was fun. When she doesn't wear a wig, she wears a bandana. I can tell Momma hates that, but I don't mind the bandana at all. Sometimes I wear one too so I can be just like her. Daddy has gotten really good at doing my hair when Momma doesn't feel well. Daddy has also gotten really good at washing our clothes. Every day, when we get home from school, Daddy makes us wash our hands and change so he can wash our clothes from the day. I asked my brother why he does laundry so often, and Daniel tells me it is to keep Momma safe.

Daddy was arguing with Momma today. It was about starting her next round of chemotherapy. Momma said she needed to finish first. I wonder what she was talking about. Afterwards, I helped Momma finish putting up all of the



Alena Wroe, "Flight of Nature II"
digital photograph

Christmas decorations outside. Momma said she was ready to do her chemotherapy now.

•

It is Christmas today! I love Christmas. I play outside with Daddy and my brothers. Momma sits by the fireplace bundled up in blankets. Daddy says she doesn't feel well this morning. I wish Santa made Momma better for Christmas.

I'm crying. I know I shouldn't be.

It is New Year's Eve, and Momma and Daddy are gone at the hospital. Momma apparently has pneumonia. I don't know what pneumonia is. I thought Momma had cancer.

•

Momma is doing radiation now instead of chemotherapy. My brothers and I go with her after school and sit in the waiting room with the nice lady at the desk. She gives us lollipops. Momma's radiation doesn't take too long, but I still get scared sometimes. I am with my brothers though, and they tell me Momma will be okay. Momma walks out as if nothing happened, and we drive back home.

Momma has been doing a lot better recently. That is what everyone tells me, but I can see it for myself too. Her hair is finally growing back now, and she no longer lays in bed all of the time. I haven't seen her cry in a while, or throw up. She looks a lot happier ... she looks herself. It is St. Patrick's Day today, and Momma and Daddy seem excited. Daddy tells us Momma finished her last radiation treatment today. I look at my brothers, and they are smiling. That makes me smile, too. Momma says she is hopeful the medicine is working. Momma says the cancer shouldn't scare us anymore. I tell myself that I

am not afraid of cancer. This time, I really mean it.

•

I am not afraid of medicine. I am not afraid of shots. I am not afraid of throwing up. I am not afraid of cancer. I am not afraid of dying. I tell myself these things to remind myself sometimes. Sometimes the fear still gets to me. I hate that it does. My mom tells me that I shouldn't hate anything or anyone, but I really do hate that the fear gets to me. Sickness has a way of lingering with you despite it being gone, and despite it not having ever been inside of you. I know this, because I know cancer. Cancer is leukemia. Steven had leukemia. He succumbed to it and died. But cancer is a shapeshifter, and it takes on different forms. Cancer is also breast cancer. My mom had breast cancer. My mom overcame it and survived. Sickness consumed my childhood, and perhaps you can say sickness helped raise me. Being only around five years old, many people didn't think I understood what was happening around me. But I knew. I knew cancer was an entity I could not control, and it sought destruction. I knew the magnitude of exhaustion and the burden of fear. I knew the grief of death. I knew the tragedy of parents losing a child. I knew the heartbreak of losing a friend. I knew the deception of illness, and the magic of treatment. I knew treatment sought destruction too. I knew the glory of faith, and the gift of friendship. I knew gratitude, and I knew the celebration of life. I hold on to these things I knew. I hold on to them to remind me that I need not be afraid. I hold on to them to remember Steven. I hold on to them to remember the strength of my mom. I hold on to them to remember the strength of myself.

•

I spoke on the phone with my mom today. As I listened to her, I stared up into the sky, searching for Heaven, and looked for Steven's face.



Finn Westenfelder, "Castle in the Clouds"
digital photograph

A Cold Quiet Morning

Daniel K. Huntsman

Cold

The mist curled through the vale as darkness burned before a predawn light. Cold's crystals glistened on the sweet grass gently shaking in the twilight. Disturbed by a passing shadow, they leapt and danced from their precarious perch, sparkling as they fell to the earth.

Shadow

The scattering of crystals the only herald of his passing, Shadow swept across the hollow. Bursting with fury and fear, he found a heart and mind devoid of light. Black flames of desire birthed specters of thought he held then discarded along his path. Watching from his Stygian claw, Steel regarded all it saw.

Steel

Deep within his clutches, the blued steel weighed on Shadow. Cursed with a voice only others could use, it silently pondered its companion. It knew he carried them towards an end, for history had taught it so. When men walk with steel in hand and iron at heel, fire and fury follow.

Smoke

Hovering above its bed of embers, it gazed on the monsters below. This child of greed and hunger, it recognized the former in these creatures. For men driven by greed cease to be anything but a vessel for desire. The Smoke swirled at the arrival of Shadow as Flame sprung from cold Steel's maw.

Flame

It leapt without warning at Steel's shout. Flashing with displeasure, it spun through the smoke. Six times Steel called, and six flames it put out. Angrily it snatched the sparks the monsters had tainted. With Flame's deadly work done, it returned to its slumber as Day continued to rise.

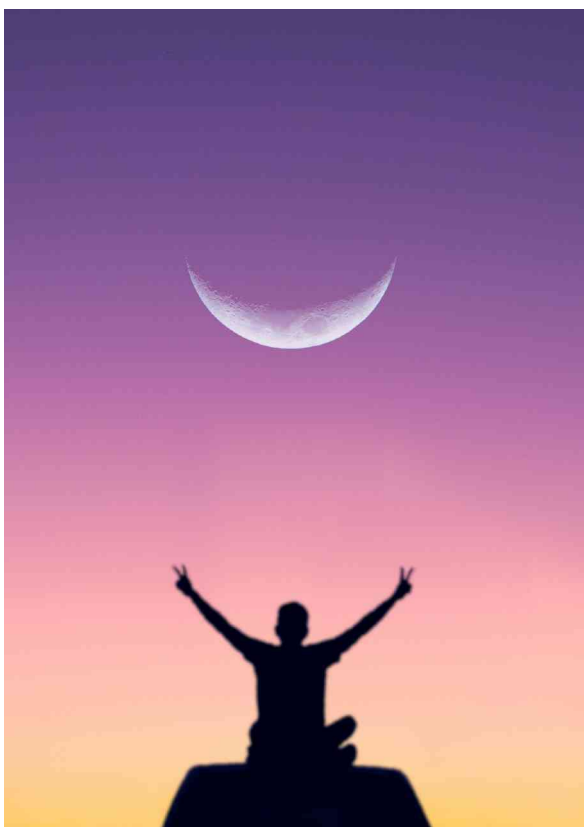
Day

Breaking the deadlock of twilight, Day gazed

on the scene. Flame slept in silent Steel's jaw as cold shadow hid from the light. Searching through the smoke, it found only sorrow: For Death had come to this quiet hollow.

Death

Vengeance had been sought, and in Death vengeance had been found. He had come in the form of a boy and the Steel dropped to the ground. Yet Death saw he was a boy no more, no matter how small. When War is born, it makes monsters of all.



Harry Andriantavy, "Summer Sunset," Sony a6000, Adobe Photoshop (left)
"Neowise Comet," Sony a6000, Adobe Photoshop (right)



Duke Bengé, "Leaf"
digital photograph

Memories of a Distant Past

Cassidy Bassett

I am standing outside the window of a house that is familiar. Familiar front yard, with huge, overarching trees in the middle of the lawn that drop flowers in the spring and spiky seed balls in the fall. Familiar bushes beside the windows that house birds and bees from their predators. Familiar cars in the driveway that take their occupants to school, activities, and to and from their lives.

The window is familiar. It is dirty, obviously not cleaned in a long time. There is a piece of purple duct tape on it that looks to be covering a crack quite well. The curtains are pulled together, light green but see-through. The blinds are open to let in the glow from the streetlights outside. Maybe whoever is inside is scared of the dark and wishes to let in the light.

The room is familiar. The light purple walls create a sense of safety in the room. Paper decorated with unicorns and fairies covers the white furniture. The white rug is fluffy and covered in black hair that seems to belong to some animal. The colorful paintings on the walls echo a past that is so familiar yet so foreign.

The room is empty.

There is a noisy creak from the hinges of the door. It swings open to reveal a young girl. Fun pajamas covered in cupcakes, pigtails down to her waist, a smile that lights the room as soon as she enters. Her deep brown eyes gleam with excitement. She bounds to her bed and effortlessly slides under the covers as if they were air. She is far too excited for sleep.

She waits impatiently.

A woman follows her in shortly. A hoodie and sweats, short dirty blond hair, a similar smile that lights the room even more than the streetlights outside. She walks across the fluffy white rug to the girl and sits on her bed. They begin conversing.

I can't hear what they are saying.

The woman is speaking. She seems to be telling a story. Her hands draw a picture of kings and queens and princes and princesses in a faraway land. Her words paint the picture with exuberant colors. Her smile brings the story to life.

I want to hear the story.

The girl has the covers to her chin. Her teddy bear is tucked in beside her, enraptured by the story. Her pigtails disappear under the covers. Eyes wide with excitement, then shock, then laughter, then shock, then content.

I remember that story.

The woman finishes the story with a dance around the room and applause from the girl. A yawn breaks her jaw. The woman sees her tiredness and walks back over quietly. They whisper. She rubs the pigtailed head, pulls the covers up, and tiptoes out. The door slowly closes behind her.

Wait, come back.

The room is dark with the exception of the streetlight. The room is quiet with the exception of breaths. The room is still with the exception of the girl's stomach rising and falling in tune with her heartbeat.

I miss you.

There is movement from the bed. The small breaths turn to a shift of the body as the girl

throws back the covers, climbs out of bed, and races to the window.

I meet her eyes.

She pulls back the curtains and wrestles with the window lock. It is not yielding.

She puts her face to the glass.

"Hi!"

Her voice, so young and full of life, sounds clear through the glass as if there was no barrier. So familiar. A memory from a distant past that I could never be certain was real.

**The room is dark with the
exception of the streetlight.
The room is quiet with the
exception of breaths.**

"I can't get the window open."

Her eyes, so big and innocent, are bursting with apologies as she again wrestles with the lock.

"It's okay though. We can still talk through the glass, right?"

I nod, choking back tears.

"Okay. How are you?"

I can't respond. My mouth is as dry as the sand of a desert. Words form in my brain and are lost as they pass from nerve to nerve to vocal chords. I can do nothing but stare.

"Hm. I can sense you're not really feeling that good right now."

fiction

Not good is an understatement. Everything is wrong. I long for the simple days. The days of young, when I wore cupcake pajamas and had pigtails down to my waist. The days of my mom, telling stories by streetlight. The days of innocent eyes and smiles that could light up rooms. But I cannot tell her. Only stare.

My eyes grow wet.

“No, no, no, please don’t cry,” she says, putting her hand to the glass as if she could reach through and wipe away my tears. “I promise, everything will get better soon. You just have to believe it.”

I’ve tried so hard. I’ve tried to believe. I wake up every day asking why. Why do I continue this struggle that we call life when there seems to be no enjoyment? Why wasn’t it different? Why did I lose sight of you?

“It can be hard, I know. But you have to have hope.”

Did I ever have hope?

“You have to remember.”

Remember what? The pain of losing you?

“You have to believe.”

Believe in what? The fact that these days will never come back, no matter how much I plead?

“Believe in me. Believe in us.”

I want to.

“I’m always with you, you know? Even though you’re all grown up and stuff. You may be a hundred or even a million million miles away from this old house, but I’m gonna be with you wherever you go.”

I...I miss you.

“I miss you, too. But you have to accept it.”

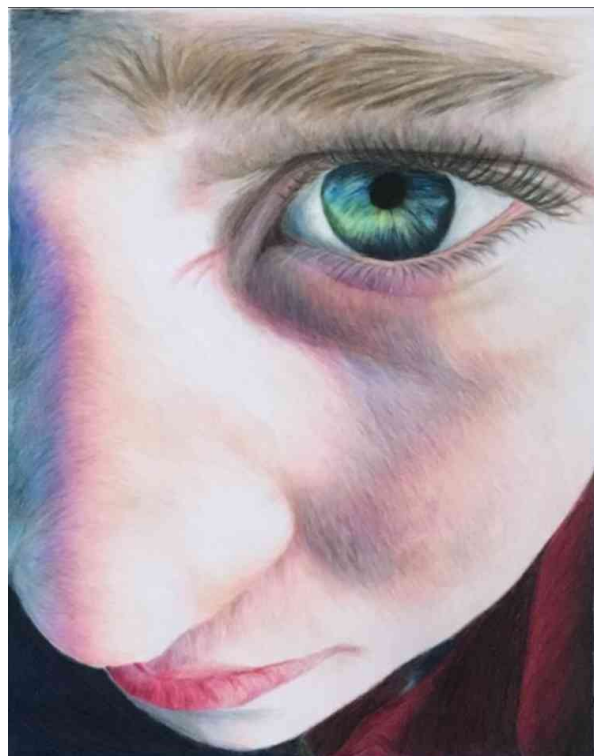
I know.

“I’ll never really be gone. As long as you remember, I’ll be here.”

Remember.

“I’ll be with you.”

My tears make for a cloudy visage of her through the glass. Her brown eyes, my brown eyes, a reflection of streetlight that disrupts the darkness.



Anna Kemper, "Angled Vision"
colored pencil on paper



Hanna A. Miller, "indiana sunset"
digital photograph

My Mother's Statues

Mack Lucas

"Hey Will?" she asked, sitting comfortably in the same bed they had shared together for five years, in the same room, in the same house.

"Yeah, Rea?"

"I think we should have a kid. We should have a kid now. I wanted to wait until we needed to, and I know now is a perfect time." The painted and etched facial features of the tiny ballerinas and marble statuettes stationed around the room shifted ever so slightly from blank boredom to scared intrigue.

"Are you sure, Rea?"

"Yes, Will, I am. I have never been more sure of anything in my life. We need something new

now, a new challenge. I know kids are tough, but we've handled tougher. We need something else we can be proud of."

"Alright, it's settled then. We're gonna have a kid."

•

I woke up for breakfast at the same time I do everyday for school, 7:00 am, and looked for Mama. She was normally at the stove making pancakes or eggs or something else, but lately she'd been making breakfast really fast and going to work early, or eating in her room. I went to her room first to see if she was there, and she was. Whenever she's in her room the door is always locked and I hear subtle

murmuring coming from behind the door. This morning I heard the murmuring again. She was talking to her statues. When she first started talking to her statues, I tried to decipher what they were talking about, but I don't think they speak our language. Now I've stopped trying to listen to the words.

I knocked on her door and she came out, her eyes droopy and tired, but a nice clown-like smile on her face. When she opened the door, I peered inside to wave to her friends on the shelves and noticed all her ballerinas looked like they'd been crying a little, their heads hung a bit lower and their posture a bit imperfect. The marble statuettes had their faces turned away from the velvet purple chair Mama sits in. That chair always looked funny to me, like it didn't necessarily belong in Mama's room full of different things.

The painted and etched facial features of the tiny ballerinas and marble statuettes stationed around the room shifted ever so slightly.

I brought Mama to the kitchen so we could all eat breakfast together like normal. Dad was reading something on his phone. He can't really see as well as he used to so now he has to hold his phone up really close to his face or really far, his arm outstretched. Most days Mama thinks it's funny, cute even, but some days — like today — she didn't. I knew she wouldn't. It's never good when the ballerinas cry.

"Okay, Peanut," Mama said loudly, exhaling. "What's on the agenda today? Anything fun in school?"

"I think we are gonna learn more about planets today, Mama. Dad, you like those things right?"

"Very much so, A!"

Dad liked to call me "A," short for Aspen, my name. Sometimes he called me "peanut" or "honey" too, but Mama always called me "Peanut" or "Nut". I liked "A" better because I learned the other day that technically peanuts are related to lentils, and I don't think I am much like a lentil. I don't know about Peanut, though. I think it has to do with Snoopy, my favorite dog. I don't mind being compared to Snoopy.

"Is that all, Nut? You're gonna have to tell me all about it tonight. I hate to run, but I will be late for work. Have fun at dance today — Dad will take you and I will pick you up."

"Okay, bye Mama — have fun at work!"

"See you tonight, Rea."

Mama walked over to kiss my head, then leaned over to kiss Dad's cheek quickly. Then she grabbed her bag and keys and coat and walked out the door without waving goodbye. She shouted "Love you, Peanut!" as the door closed.

I know Mama was bored a lot and I think that's why she talked to her figurines all the time. Dad always told me Mama is the strongest person he's ever known, but just like him and me and everyone else, she's not strong about everything. Mama had been spending a lot more time lately with her ballerinas and marble statuettes because I know she loves them a lot. Mama used to be a ballerina when she was my age, but had to stop when she went to college because she couldn't do everything anymore. I knew she used to be really good though, so it makes sense why she has a lot of ballerinas. But I don't think she used to be a sculptor or be a statue so all the marble statuettes don't really make sense. Mama still loves them, though.

Dad took me to school, and he told me about some of his favorite planets and stars and

galaxies. He took me to dance right after school, and I told him about my favorite ones. Mama took me home from dance and we talked about dogs and how if I was really good we could get a puppy soon as long as we train him and he belongs to both of us, not just one. Not just Dad, either. I said, "Okay!"

•

Leap Day! Leap Day is so exciting, it's the rarest day! Rarer than Christmas so it should be celebrated more than Christmas or Halloween. I asked Mama if we could have a Leap Day Celebration. She said, "Of course, Nut, ask your dad, though. I will be out of town."

That morning at breakfast, after I asked Mama about the Leap Day Celebration, she went back to her room with her figurines so Dad and I planned the whole thing. We were going to bake a giant cake, at least five layers, and write on it with edible markers and colorful fondant. We were going to play football outside which I loved because I beat him a lot — only because he let me though — but then he'd get mad and beat me and I would just laugh, and then we'd laugh together until we couldn't run anymore. Then we'd watch Star Trek and eat our cake for dinner.

Later that night, after Mama still hadn't come back from work, I went to her room to give her a hug and ask for a bedtime story like always but then I remembered she wasn't there. Instead, I just said goodnight to the ballerinas like always, and they waved ever so slightly back. They looked kind of scared of me today though, which wasn't normal. The statuettes, too, didn't have their usual smug, know-it-all faces, but a different kind of smirk, like they knew something they weren't supposed to know. I didn't really like it.

I left and sat in the living room with Dad until I fell asleep watching the Astros beat the Blue Jays. Occasionally I'd wake up when he clapped

his hands together really quickly when the Astros did something good, but then he'd gasp and sit back down on the couch super quietly. I don't think he knew I saw him. He kind of seemed my age for a bit.

•

Dad made french toast and bacon, extra crispy, for Leap Day Breakfast. Mama never ate bacon, so I didn't eat it that often. I couldn't tell if I liked it or not, but Dad made it, and he liked it, so I ate it.

Dad was reading his phone again, telling me about the latest Democratic debate. Suddenly, the door opened, and Mama walked in.

Mama had been spending a lot more time lately with her ballerinas and marble statuettes because I know she loves them a lot.

"Mama!" I exclaimed, dropping the piece of bacon I was eating mid-bite. "You're back! Why?"

"Hello, my family. I am back early! I'm just stopping by quickly today, though, have some things to take care of, then I'm off again." She walked straight back to her room without even taking off her coat, shut the door, and started talking with her figurines.

"Hey Dad?" I asked. "How come Mama always talks with her ballerinas and statuettes?"

"I don't know, A, it's just something she likes to do."

"Oh, okay. What do you think they talk about?"

fiction

“Not sure, peanut. I don’t really ask much about them. I don’t think they like me very much.”

“How come?”

“Well, whenever I walk in, their eyes dart around a lot and they shake a bit, or they stare right at me the whole time. When people get nervous, their bodies jitter, and when they are angry, their eyes grow very focused, their brows pinch, and their gaze doesn't falter.”

“So is that why that’s Mama’s room now and you live upstairs?”

“Yes, honey, that’s why. They’re your mom’s friends, not mine.”

After Dad and I talked some more about what he was reading, Mama walked out of her room, a big smile on her face. She looked really pretty. Her eyes weren't as tiresome and her smile wasn't clown-like, but instead kind of like those happy albino alligators we saw last year. They were so cool.

She said, “Will, I have the papers. Everything has been worked out, please sign these so I can return them later today.”

He said, “Sure thing, Rea. Will do,” with a smile, except his smile wasn't like hers, but kind of like the ballerina’s when I walked into my mom’s room without her last night.

• 12 Years Later •

Leap Day. I remember how much I used to love Leap Day, how I thought it was the absolute most unique day in the history of days. Dad and I normally spent Leap Day together, but this is the first time since my mom left that we haven't celebrated and mourned with each other. Instead, today my boyfriend suggested we go to a local museum we haven't yet been to in our

term abroad in Greece. I, of course, said yes, as to me each museum I've stepped foot into felt a bit like a second home.

The good news is that the anniversary of my mom’s disappearance comes once every four years, so this is only the third anniversary Dad and I have had to deal with. It only hits me on these days that my mom is, in fact, completely and utterly gone. The past two Leap Day Eves, I would fall asleep to tiny, tiny bits of hope that maybe Mama would walk right back through the door the next morning, like she never left. But that never happened. This Leap Day Eve was the first night I fell asleep without that tiny, explosive hope.

Artie and I took the bus to the edge of the old town to the modest museum he had been reading about. We spent a few hours exploring its interior, immersing ourselves in the cultures of times and places that were not ours. It was quite fun. On our way out, we stopped in the souvenir shop, as it had now become my custom to get a small souvenir – typically some humorous figurine or tacky postcard or keychain – before we officially departed. As I stepped inside the little shop, I heard a faint murmuring surrounding Artie and me.

I never really paid too much attention to the murmurs of gift shop inhabitants, as I had grown up surrounded by murmurs, and was used to it at this point. Each time I bought a new souvenir, its sounds never bothered me. Artie and I spent a few minutes slowly schlepping around the shop, neither of us nearly as comfortable around cheesy replicas of real things as we were in the tomblike halls that housed decades of real work. I eventually found myself looking at a glass bookshelf about twice my size packed full of miniature replicas of famous Greek statues, each with their own unique twist. There was an old, male Aphrodite, an ageless and genderless Venus, a child Discobolus, and even a female Atlas. Each replica was glued to their own plastic platform

that seemed to be painted to resemble the waves of marble, but upon further examination, I realized each brushstroke intended to create a new face to look up at the figure, in admiration. Each statuette was surrounded by a hundred faces.

I decided to get the Atlas statuette, as it seemed like it would fit nicely with my collection. The moment I picked it up, the murmuring I didn't know that I noticed ceased. The man at the checkout wrapped it ever so carefully and perfectly and placed it in a small gift bag. Still no murmuring.

Artie and I walked back to the bus stop, unable to stop ourselves from talking about the work we saw. After what must've been 45 minutes of bliss, Artie decided he needed a bit of food, after having just walked by an open door of a cafe from which wafted an absolutely heavenly smell.

I would fall asleep to tiny, tiny bits of hope that maybe Mama would walk right back through the door the next morning, like she never left.

"I am starving, should we stop and grab something to eat?" he asked.

"Sure, sounds good to me. Let me just call Sam and let him know that we'll be back a bit later than expected — that line looks to be moving back in time."

"Ok, I'll head in and hold our spot."

I never ended up calling Sam. The moment Artie walked away, I noticed the piercing ringing, screeching even, that reverberated throughout my head. At some point in our walk the

murmuring must've started again, but I could not pinpoint when, precisely, it did. All I knew at that moment was that the murmuring had to stop, as I had reached a new sensation where I felt my ears bleeding from outside in, my head and my chest from inside out.

"A, you coming?"

"Give me a sec, Artie, I need to sit down for a sec, then I'll be right in."

I sat on the bench near the entrance of the cafe, gripping my skull in my trembling hands, squeezing my eyes shut, begging for the sound to cease. I dug around my bag, searching for some Advil, but instead came upon the tiny gift bag I had placed in there not even an hour earlier. Once I touched it, the tone of the screeching seemed to soften. I ripped the thing out of its careful wrapping and stared at it, practically begging it to end all the screeching I felt.

I stared and stared at the statuette, the piercing sound neglecting to soften. Slowly, I began to hear the chaos in its tone, almost as if the frequency and intensity of the piercing was a desperate method just to be heard. I kept staring, and right as the sound began to swell to a volume I was sure could kill me, I saw a tear roll down Atlas's face. The sounds stopped. All I could hear were the happy sounds of families and couples walking down the streets of Greece on a perfect day. I kept staring at the tear, and traced another one down to the faces below the statuette. They didn't seem too pleased to be cried on. I felt a similar tear roll right down my face, and as it fell on the statuette's pedestal, a subtle buzzing started up again.

This time, no murmuring followed the buzzing. This time, I heard something real.

"Hey, Peanut. I'm really sorry. I miss you."

The faces below soon drowned in our tears.

RAISE THIS WOUNDED WORLD

Col Kathleen Harrington

*Permanent Professor & Dept Head
Department of English & Fine Arts*

We hear you, Amanda.

On a bright and sunny day, we witnessed a new President of these United States of America be ushered in with the words of Amanda Gorman's poem, "The Hill We Climb." With a message for perseverance and hope, a call to our history and our future, and an embracing of grief and reconciliation, Amanda Gorman spoke with bold eloquence and passion.

We hear you, Amanda.

How fortunate for our profession, literary studies, that Amanda Gorman found us. How loudly she calls out to a nation to be undeterred in its bravery. From Martin Luther King and Ralph Ellison to Toni Morrison and Eula Biss, creative voices keep us moving forward. The creative pieces from our cadet contributors amplify this legacy and

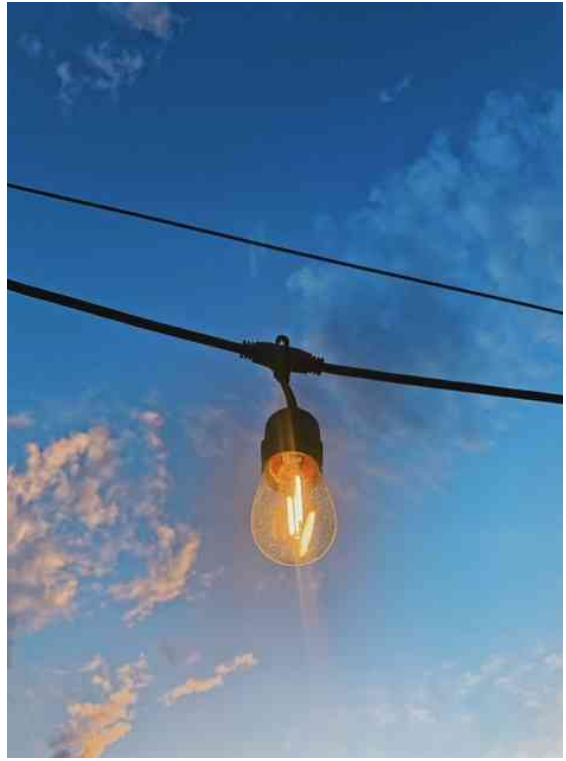
form a chorus singing loudly for racial equality and justice.

We hear you, Amanda.

Hear, then, from these amazing contributors the urgent need for change, the desire for acceptance, the pain and heartache of justice unfulfilled. Hear their humanness, raw and exposed. Hear how their words move within and beyond anger and disappointment to question standards of beauty, to question what it means to belong and/or to be free. Hear the reverberation of these prose pieces, stare spellbound at the art—but most importantly, be brave enough to find your voice.

We hear you, Amanda.

The cadets in this section, "Amplify," have contributed their voices to do just what Amanda Gorman called us to do, to "raise this wounded world into a wondrous one."



Aliyah Brown, "Perception.noitpecreP" I, II, III, and IV
digital photographs

Escape [A Found Poem]

Daniil Tourashev

I cry at nothing, and cry most of the time
I lie here on this great immovable bed—it is nailed down
[With] a paralyzed inability to accept its significance

The windows are barred

There are hedges and walls and gates that lock
There [is] something coming

I have locked the door and thrown the key down into the front path
I am getting angry enough to do something desperate

[She] has hastened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message

The delicious breath of rain was in the air
There was a dull stare in her eyes

Not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought

Veiled hints that revealed in half concealing
She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment

Physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul

“I’ve got out at last,”
“You can’t put me back”
“Free! Body and soul free!”
She was drinking in a very elixir of life
Countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves
She opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome
[and] said it over and over under her breath: “free, free, free!”

Quotes were taken from Kate Chopin’s “The Story of an Hour” and Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s “The Yellow Wallpaper”



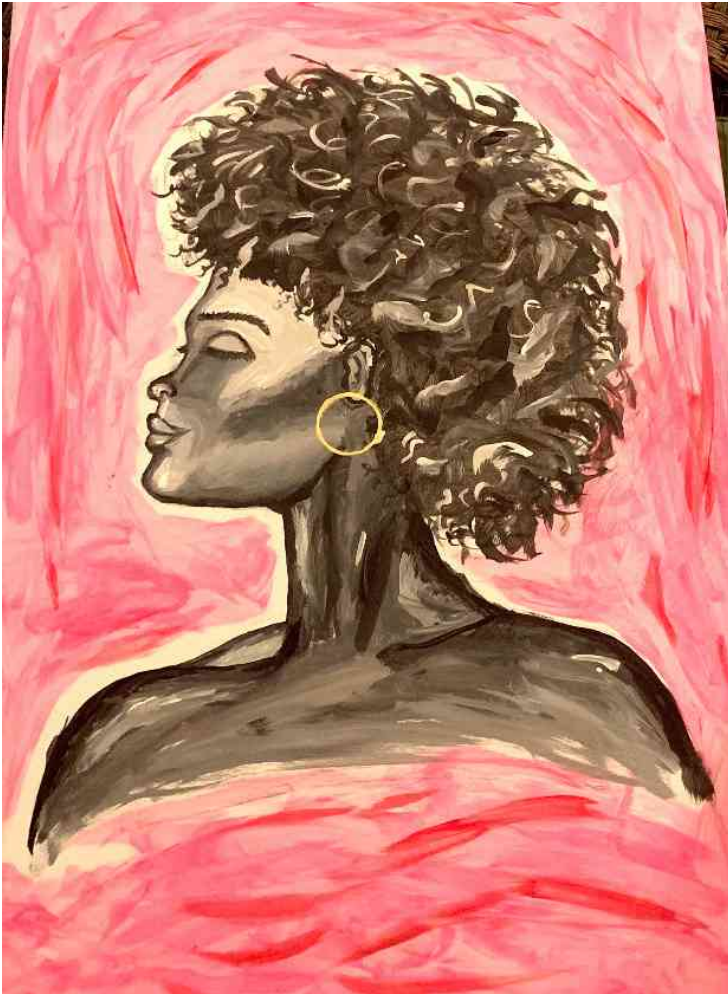
Rachel Price, "disordered"
digital



Rage

Eliana Cantano & Crystal Levy

They call us *rioters*
But all we want is peace
We fight without violence
But they put us on our knees
We want to show our struggle
But the white man—hard to please
They run the government
Enter the Capitol with ease
Posed with sanctity and silence
They kill us in our dreams
“Hands up!” “Get on the ground!”
“I can’t breathe” won’t work—it seems
The media casts a shadow
Exposing us piece by piece
Being black is the worst crime
The Gestapo dressed as police
Some say “Land of the Free!”
Protect and serve? Ha, please



Harmoni Blackstock, "natural beauty"
acrylic

free

Madeline McFadden

consumed by the sea
without a trace
finally, i was free

from my father's snare
a disappointed face
a failing son can't bear

melted from every feather
with unexpected grace
falling through the ether

the songs of Calliope
fill my headspace
and finally, i am free

The Essence of Beauty

Harmoni Blackstock

Hair; we are taught every day to value its beauty.
We are applauded for its length, volume, and shine; it's supposedly

a girl's primary duty.

Every day society praises girls for their straight and long luxurious hair,
But what about the girls whose hair does not meet these rigorous & ideal standards?

What about the girls who don't compare?

What about the girls with natural hair?

What about the girls whose hair is deemed unusual?

What about the girls whose hair is not viewed as beautiful?

These are the girls who are told to tame their curly or nappy hair.
These are the girls who would give anything for products that portray false hope,
products that strip their tight curls for long hair they wish to stroke.

These are the girls who are ridiculed for using extensions to try and become the absurd image
they

were always taught was the standard of beauty.

These are the girls who put destructive, deadly chemicals in their hair to alter their texture,
they were told lank hair was always better, even though that is mere conjecture

Why does society try and change something that these girls were born with that makes them
unique?

Why can't their luxurious locks be viewed as chic?
Their hair is not tangled, kinky, nappy, nor frizzy,

But gravity-defying.
Their hair is exceptional.

Their love for their curls should be irrepressible.

These girls are beautiful and extraordinary.
Their hair is legendary.

Why fix something that is irrefutable?
Their hair is natural and it is truly beautiful.

amplify



Justice

Aliyah Brown

I crave you
Like negative craves positive
& the ocean craves the moon
Like a sea of prisoners longing for their lover's cocoon

I crave your presence
Your essence
Your power over ignorance
Your ability to silence the majority
And give victims back their innocence

Even those who live blind
Know deep in their mind
That this country lacks integrity
Its morals and downfalls are intertwined without clarity
Feeding on polarity
Burning all similarities
In a fire without sincerity
Where. Are. You?

When I turn on the news you disappear before arriving
Obama's election had us calling this the "post-racial" era
As if we are thriving
In reality

We are dying
Blood on the streets erased so quickly you'd think it was invisible ink

In reality
We are diving
Into burning shelters
for free merchandise
We'd rather die than pay the price

Economic disparities have us welcoming barbarity
Into communities that were never really ours.

They were loaned to us
Just until they could find space
To put us behind bars

I crave you
Like Martin craved his dream
Like Emmett Till craved a chance to make the baseball team
Like Breonna Taylor craved a good night's rest
Like George Floyd and Eric Garner craved one more breath
Like Ahmaud Arbery craved a long run to clear his mind
Instead they stole his mind and left his body behind
No justice
No peace

Justice, we are waiting for your resurrection
Because you must be deceased
For there to be this much pain
This much hatred from the police
We need your return
The rewritten Easter of the west
These injustices must soon be addressed
Murderers put to the test
Divest of all power
Bring us to the promised hour

We pray you put our aching hearts
to rest.



THE TIME IS NOW: WHAT DR. KING TAUGHT THE WORLD

Katrina Benson

Perhaps one of history's most renowned and revolutionary figures is Martin Luther King Jr., whose stance on social reform challenged the deeply embedded historical nature of victory through violence, and instead proposed passive resistance as a more effective and successful alternative. One of King's most profound essays that documents this approach is a letter he wrote while imprisoned in Birmingham Jail in 1963; to eight Alabama clergymen, King expounds on the rationale of

nonviolent protest in response to their concerns with and criticisms of his public demonstrations: "Why direct action? Why sit-ins, marches, etc.? Isn't negotiation a better path?" (King 734). Certainly so, but when laws are unjust and its enforcers are corrupt, there is no room for negotiation, forcing the suffering community to "dramatize the issue" so that "it will inevitably open the door to negotiation" (734). It is this will to fight without taking up so-called "arms" that King passionately advocates for as the

start of establishing a more civil future, allowing the silenced to be heard and to remain heard.

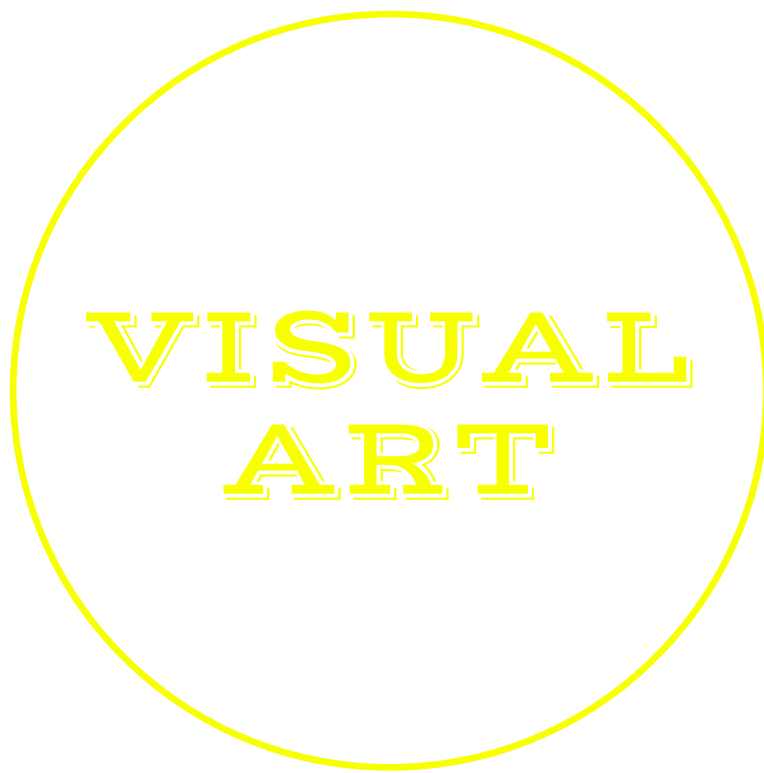
Upon examining King's main points, it is evident that the notion of time plays a powerful role in his argument for pursuing demonstrations and forwarding the civil rights movement. Knowing that the clergymen and the majority of white authorities do not support his protests, King takes this opportunity to put them in the shoes of an African American, and enlightens them on why time is of the essence. He stresses that the illusion of time has stunted the growth and progress of the civil rights movements when he calls attention to the term "eventually" in the claim, "All Christians know that the colored people will receive equal rights eventually, but is it possible that you are in too great of a religious hurry?" (739)

After reading this in a letter addressed to him from a white man, King includes it in his own letter to

signify the gross misuse of the word "eventually" and expound on why the minority has been driven to the "hurrying" point. Some African Americans believed they were dependent upon white people to enact change—for they held all authoritative positions in society—until King realized that "the people of ill will have used time much more effectively than the people of good will" (739). It is this manipulation and misinterpretation of time that the white majority uses to keep the oppressed bound, to the point that, no matter how long they wait, African Americans will never be granted their right to freedom and equality. This very fact is what ignited King's push for civil rights and drove him to protest, to show the white majority that "time is always ripe to do right" (739). With that, King urges the silenced to stand up and be heard, but to do so without violence. His demonstrations testify to the practicality of passive resistance while simultaneously announcing to society that change should not rest on a white man's interpretation of its necessity.

Work Cited

King, Martin Luther, Jr. "Letter from Birmingham Jail." *The Writer's Presence*, edited by Donald McQuade and Robert Atwan, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009, pp. 729-746.



ART ABIDES

Professor Pam Aloisa

*Professor of Art History & Art
Department of English & Fine Arts*

Creative art at USAFA can involve far more cadets than the art courses offered here. The *Icarus* publication shares cadets' creative work with a much broader audience. This is extremely important for the arts to grow and prosper in an institution that focuses primarily on STEM. *Icarus* adds "art" as a term and promotes STEAM!

A very common purpose of the visual arts today is just craft and techniques, many times pushing art projects as therapy sessions for individuals to solve personal depression, stress, and anxiety. But a more scholarly use of the arts is what universities and colleges have promoted over centuries; successful work in art requires critical thinking and narratives that push far beyond just a decorative piece of craft. *Icarus* is showing a variety of artworks fulfilling many purposes that art brings to our culture.

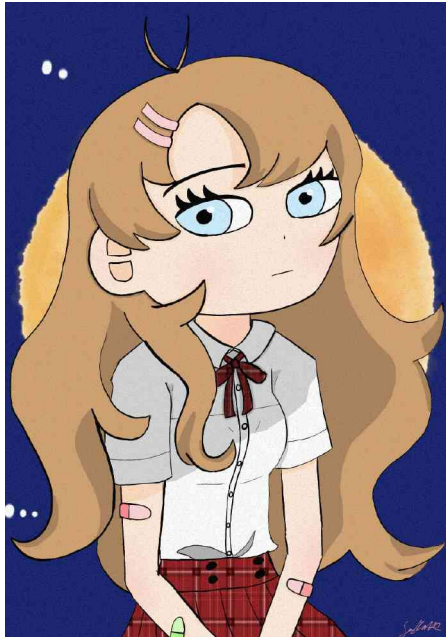
The cadets at USAFA, attempting to get finished art published, have access to *Icarus* to let viewers be inspired by their creativity. Sharing

art and making it available to others takes their art forward, past the purpose of just pleasing individual artists. The art goes out into a wider public that actually gives more meaningful and critical responses to the art. Every artist who has experienced sharing their works publicly realizes right away that their art is not just decorative expression but includes deeper meanings, symbols, and stories; when viewers observe, they also add their own educational, cultural, and personal experiences to what they are seeing in the cadets' images.

What we see in *Icarus* is a wide variety of subjects, styles, and narratives in the paintings, drawings, and photographs. The publication totally fulfills the purpose to promote creativity, push STEAM into the broader USAFA arena, and to appreciate true art! ART ABIDES! Share it!

**“Art is not what you see,
but what you make
others see.”**

Edgar Degas



Saffron Hewitt-Qualls, "Samishii"
digital drawing



Saffron Hewitt-Qualls, "Isogashii"
digital drawing



Felix Zheng, "Ascent to Timpanogos"
digital photograph



Emilio Quiroz
"Shredding Lines," Sharpie pen on surfboard (top left);
"Wave," spray paint on surfboard (top center);
"Waves and Sun," Posca paint pen on skimboard (top right);
"Straws are for Suckers," Posca paint pen on surfboard (bottom)



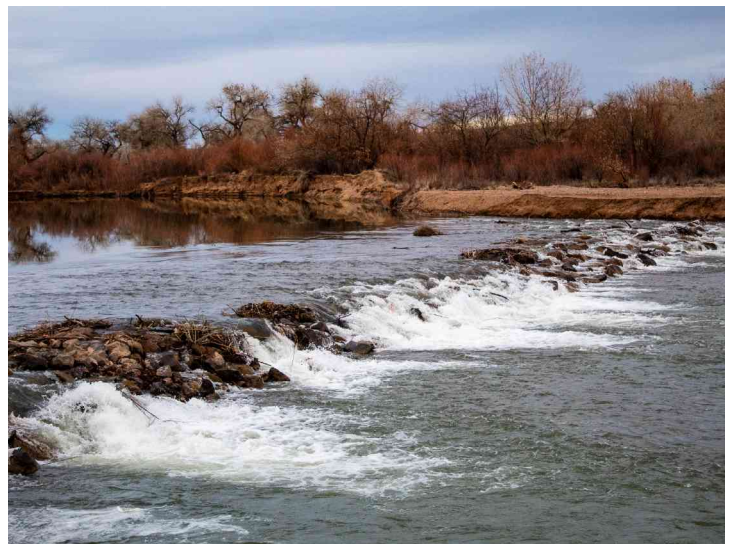
Josiah J. Hughes, "The Wild Blue Yonder"
acrylic paint on stretched titanium canvas



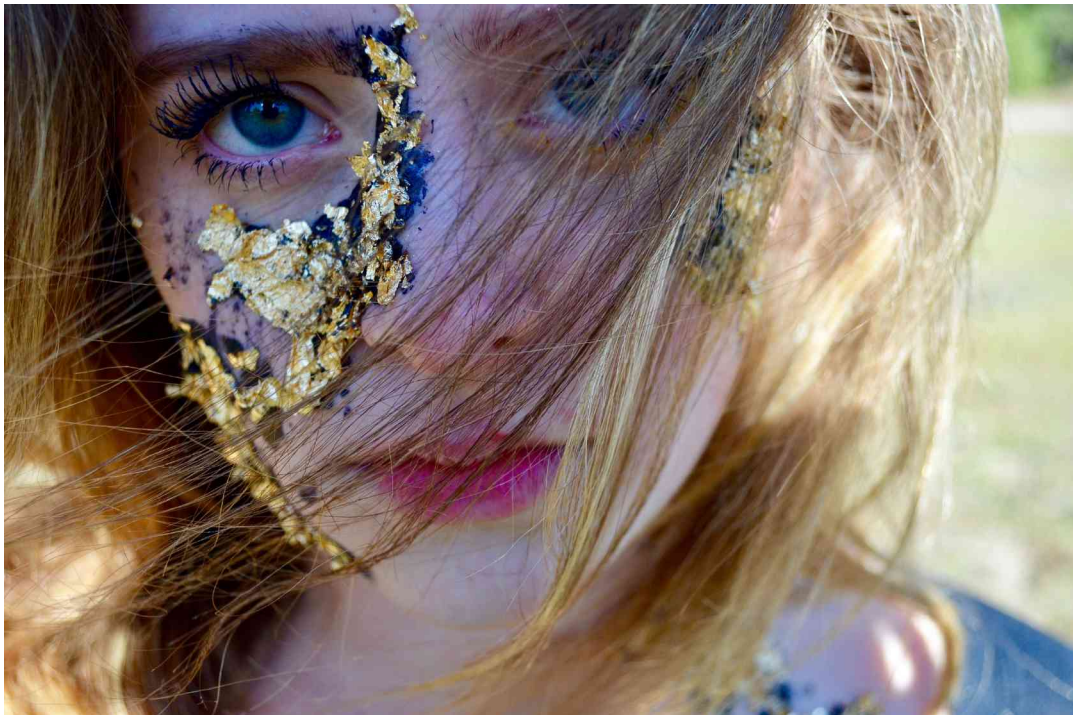
Taylor Metzger, "Journey Between Lands of Snow and Sand"
Nikon D3400, 18-55mm lens



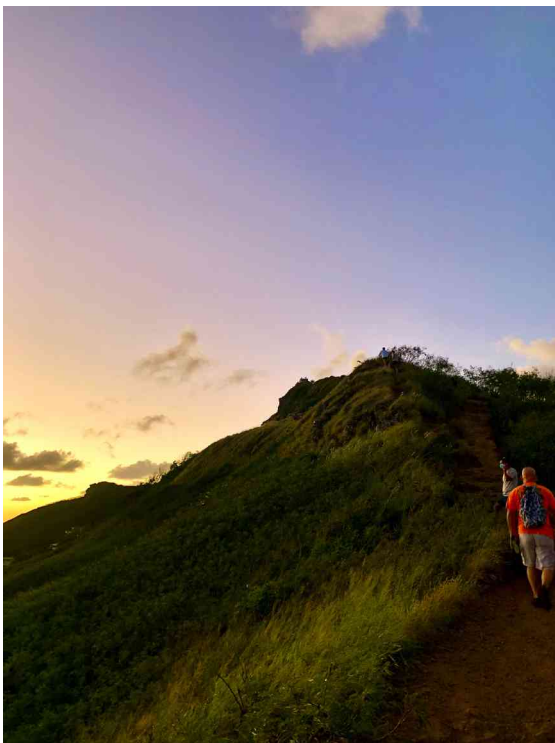
Andrew Lemke, "Hope was Here"
Fujifilm xt-2, 18mm, f4, iso: 200, 1/250s



Jordan Melendez, "The Flow of Penuel"
digital photograph



Anna Kemper, "I See"
digital photograph



Anna Kemper, "First Light"
digital photograph



Anna Kemper, "First Light, Part II"
digital photograph



Rachel Price, "Those Valleys"
acrylic and ink



Rachel Price, "Shifting Paradigms"
acrylic



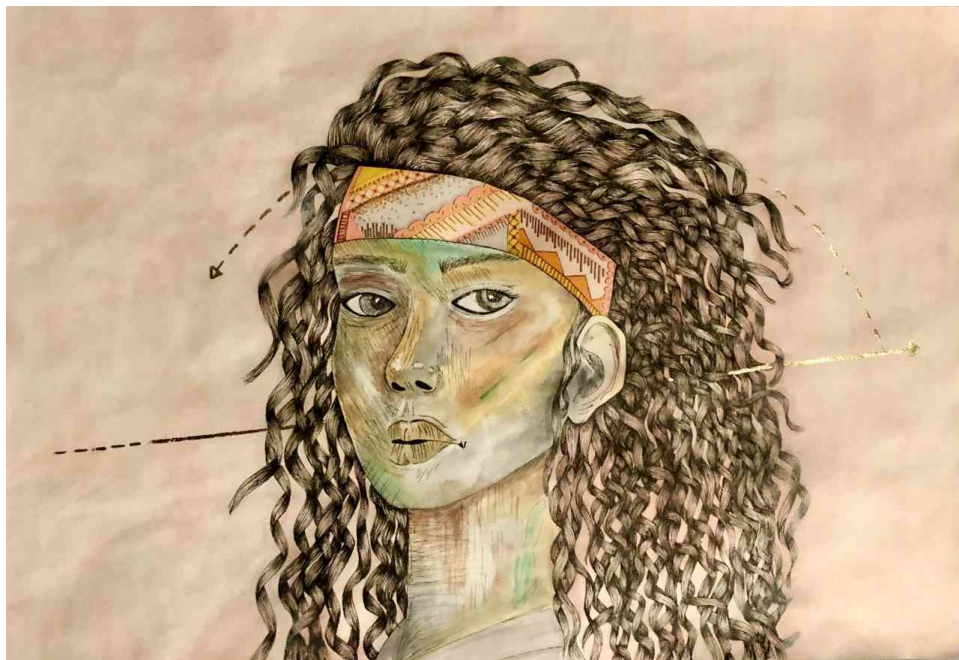
Andrew Lemke, "Lonely Summit"
Fujifilm xt-2, 18mm f8, iso: 200, 1/1500s



Meredith Hickman, "A Loss of Innocence: Dances With Wolves"
colored pencil on paper



Sonja Nelson, "Lost at Sea"
(inspired by Sumit Datta)
acrylic on wood



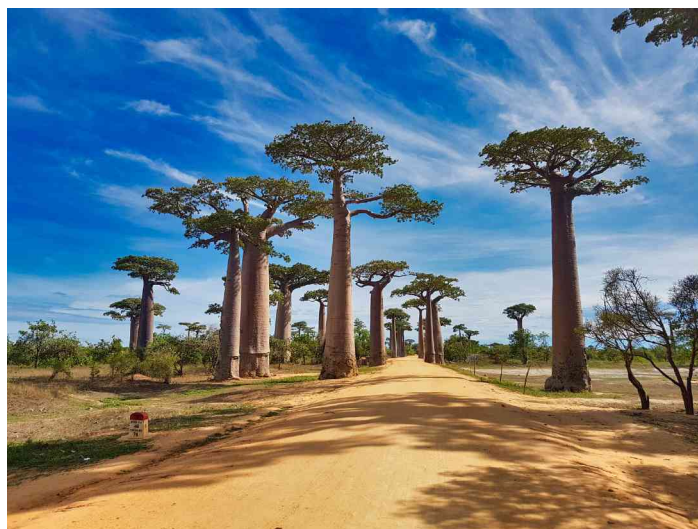
Rachel Price, "Waxing Strong"
watercolor, ink, and gold leaf



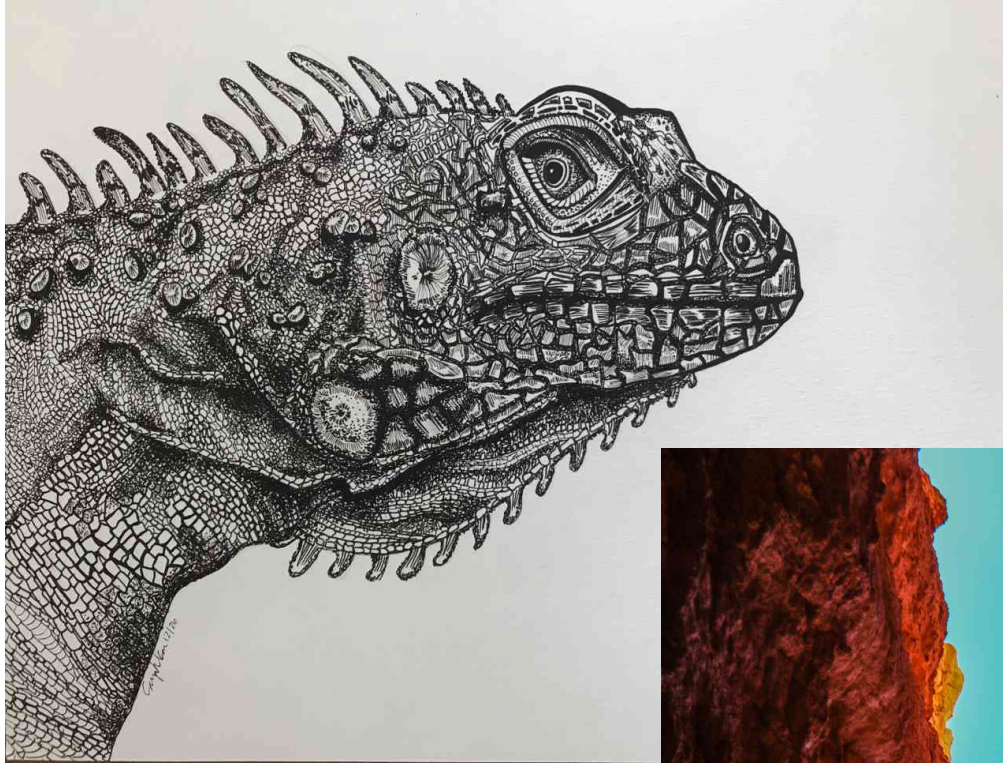
Felix Zheng, "Moon Lake"
digital photograph



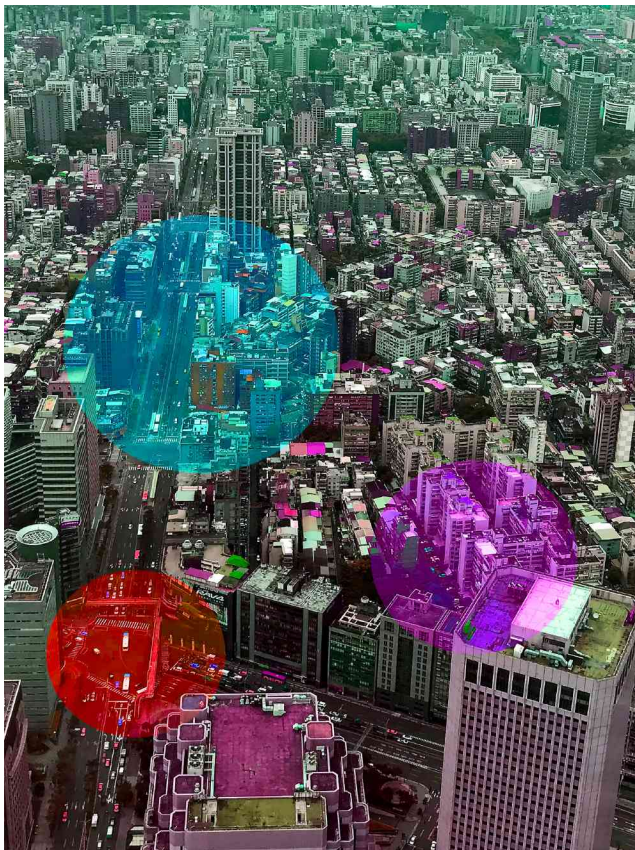
Felix Zheng, "Mesonet"
digital photograph



Felix Zheng, "Allée des Baobabs"
digital photograph



Sonja Nelson, "Steve"
(inspired by Anoop Kumar)
black ink on paper



Brayden Whatcott, "Orbits of Influence"
digital photograph and Photoshop



Brayden Whatcott, "Towering Heights"
digital photograph and Photoshop



Taylor Metzger, "Glory to the Victor"
Nikon D3400, 18-55mm lens



Duke Bengel, "Plane"
digital photograph

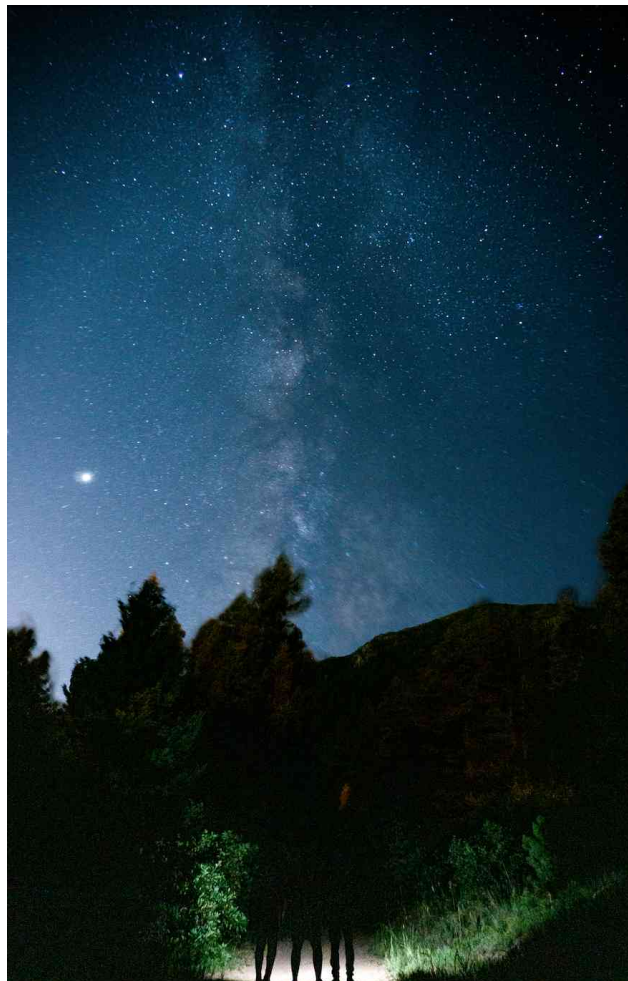


Chia-Hsiang Shen, "KaBoom—It Was a Nuke"
Canon 70D, EF-S 18-55mm

visual art



Felix Zheng, "Bryce Canyon"
digital photograph



Harry Andriantavy, "Three Friends"
Sony a6000, Adobe Lightroom



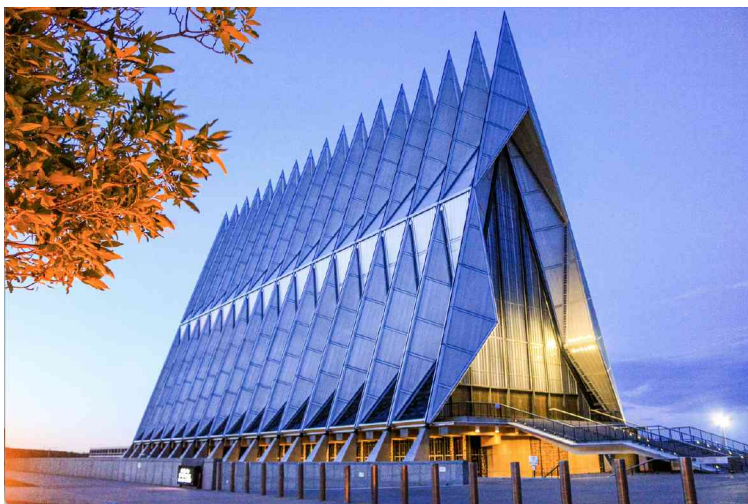
Rachel Werner, "Dogs of War"
acrylic on Academy walls



Chia-Hsiang Shen, "Feel the Thunder"
Canon 70D, Sigma 150-600mm C, Adobe Lightroom CC



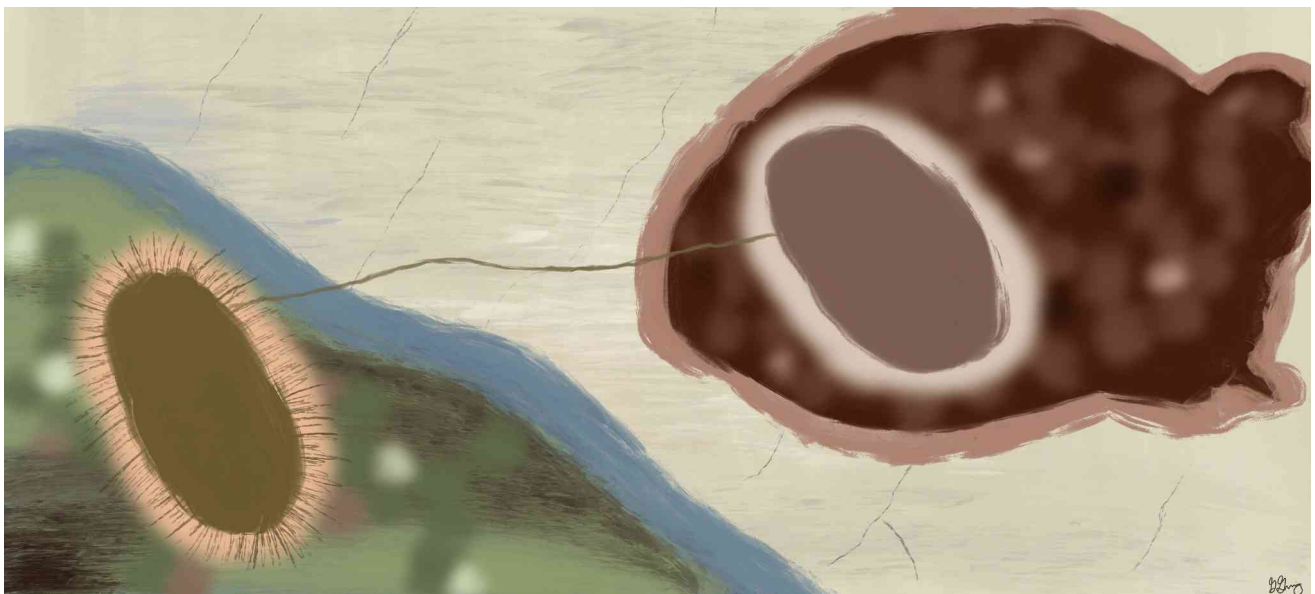
Tiffany Turinsky, "P-51 Drawing"
alcohol ink marker, ink pen, and and colored pencil



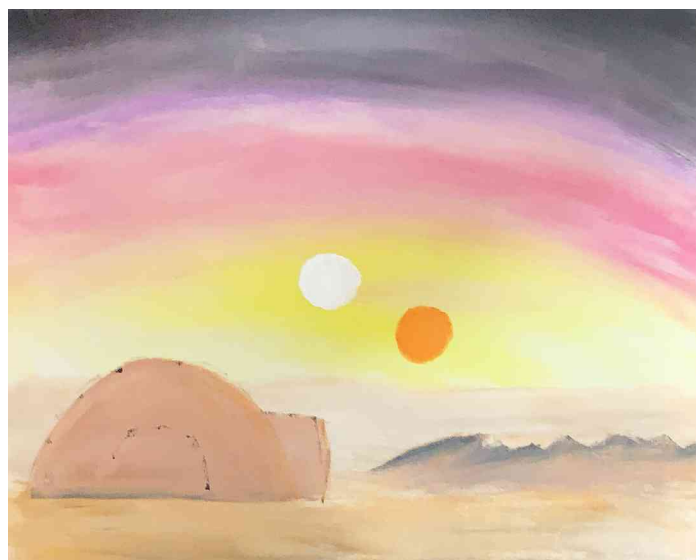
Chia-Hsiang Shen, "Autumn Chapel"
Canon 70D, EF-S 18-55mm, Adobe Lightroom CC



Jasmine Roberge
"Navaggio Beach from Home"
oil and acrylic on canvas



Gabriella Gerving
"The Conjugation of Bacteria"
digital drawing



Josiah J. Hughes
"Happy Little Sunsets"
acrylic paint on stretched
titanium canvas



Harry Andriantavy, "Impatience"
Sony a6000, Adobe Lightroom



Duke Bengé, "Head"
digital photograph



Duke Bengé, "Locked Out"
digital photograph



Harry Andriantavy, "Night Drive"
Sony a6000, Adobe Lightroom



Harry Andriantavy, "Gate"
Blender



A TALK WITH AIDAN AUCI

C4C Aidan Auci has been making music since he was young, and now has a wide range of songs and an EP to his name. Icarus reporter Rachel Price sat down with the Orange County native recently to discuss his entry into songwriting, his inspiration for music, and his changing understanding of what it means to be a creative in the world. You can find Aidan's music on Spotify, Soundcloud, Apple Music, and Youtube.

•

Rachel Price: Tell me about your musical journey. You write your own music and you produce it—how did that happen?

Aidan Auci: I think it started when I was really young. I was always singing along to TV shows and theme songs. My parents have videos of me singing when I was little. It was always just something I was really interested in. But I was really shy, especially as a guy, trying to sing; because I felt like you mostly see girls singing – especially at church and stuff like that – so originally I was really shy to branch out.

Auci (cont'd): But in sixth grade I had a music teacher make everyone in the class – whether they were choir or not – sing *do re me fa so la te do...* So everybody had to do it and I sang and the class was surprised... the teacher was surprised. So she recommended that I do choir. And I tried it out and it worked out pretty well and that's when I found out that I just love music and singing. So when I got to high school, I put it on the back burner because I wanted to be a tough guy – I didn't want to be known as the guy who sings. So I played football and ran track my first two years, but after my sophomore year I wasn't really enjoying those as much. So I quit those things and I started focusing on writing. It seemed even when I would try and walk away from it, I would always come back to the guitar and the piano. I would always come back to singing because no matter how much I tried to put it on the back burner, it just kept creeping up in my mind. So I stopped suppressing it after a while and decided: let's just see where this goes.

I grew up in Orange County, pretty close to LA, so I have a couple of friends in my high school who had connections in the industry. I had one friend who is a producer and so they were able to set me up with studio time, but I eventually built my own studio in my house. We had a spare guest room in my house... and my parents weren't really on board... but I just did it anyways. So I had a whole set up and eventually my junior and senior year of high school that was all I would come home and do. I would start with the basic song writing process – building the chords and then a melody would come to my head and I would collaborate with some of my other friends who were involved – I tried my best to be a sponge and absorb as much information as I could from my friends; because it was something that I was really really serious about doing at the time. And now that I'm here, I had to put it on the back burner again. If you you want to be successful at this place you have to put

your academics and other priorities in the forefront of your mind. And now I am back to the point where I am waiting until I have more time. I try and get involved in other ways – I'm a singer for the band Vandy Slingers and we play at Haps, I'm in In the Stairwell. Eventually I hope to bring some recording equipment out.

Price: So what made you want to come here when you were so passionate about singing?

Auci: Well, the entertainment industry is very competitive. Only the top one percent ever actually end up making it with a career that could actually support their family. So that risk factor, for me, wasn't worth taking. And my parents definitely pushed me to not go that route. So I wanted to do something that would be beneficial for my career and something that would be stable.

Actually, toward the beginning of COVID last year in mid-March, I was at home with a lot of time on my hands and that's when I really started to pick it up. I thought, "This is it. I want to do music and this is the way I want to go." At that point I dropped a lot of songs, including my EP. I was really trying to get creative with my sound and doing everything I could to get noticed. I was really intent on making it before I got to college but I realize now that at the time I was doing it for the wrong reasons. By the time my senior year came to a close, I wasn't doing it because I loved it any more. It was for attention and other things.

Now that I've taken a step back for almost a year, I haven't released anything since June 2020, and now by taking an entire year to focus on growing as a person instead of doing things for the wrong reasons... now I'm able to look at it from a different perspective. I'm really grateful for this past year, because it's taught me a lot about myself and a lot of lessons like how to be motivated and have a good work ethic.

Price: Where do you see music fitting into your life moving forward? Where do you hope to see it?

Auci: I would say moving forward... I want to focus more on performing live. I'd love to put out a couple projects in the future. I think taking this break has really allowed me to grow and see things from a different perspective, and performing with the Vandy Slingers has been such a joy and so fun... so I think in the future, doing those things like performing live and writing with other people instead of just doing things individually is where I would like to go moving forward.

Price: You have a very distinct sound. Apple music seems to label it pop, but I'm curious how you would describe it? And what do you hope to communicate through your music?

Auci: I would say my sound is very R&B, but with a pop twist. I don't want to put my music in a box because I like to experiment with it so much. That is what makes it so much fun for me because it's like a creative process. Like when you're painting – no two paintings are the same. I think it's important to have a distinct voice, but I'm not really doing it anymore for my own gain, I'm just doing because I want people to enjoy it and be touched by it. Like I said before, I used to do it for the attention and now I feel like I'm really just trying to make someone else's day better and I think that's the biggest lesson that I've learned in the past year is that I want to be able to use the gifts I have to better someone else's life instead of my own.

Price: Let's talk about your song "Blind." It's different from your other music, much more acoustic. Tell me about where that song came from and what inspired it.

Auci: My friend actually came up with the guitar part for that song about a year before I actually wrote the song. He played it for me

and I instantly fell in love... I thought it was so cool. So we went to my studio and recorded the guitar part first and I just kind of sat on it for like a year. Then when COVID came around I started coming with the lyrics and melody for it. The meaning of the song is like with all of the things in this world trying to compete for our attention, I want to be focusing on what's going to help other people instead of getting distract[ed] by all of these things. It's so easy to lose our way and lose our faith or our focus with all of these things competing for our attention. That's where the title comes from, as today's culture has so many things that can make you blind to what's important. With everyone trying to compare to one another on social media, that really makes you blind to true validation and happiness.

Music is something that always comes back to me no matter how hard I try to escape it. It always comes back to me. I don't really know how that's going to look going forward but it's just something that is an escape for me. I've been writing a lot of stuff, so even though I don't have my recording equipment right now, I have been able to record demos and voice memos on my phone, so if I decide to use those ideas in the future... they're always going to be there. So music isn't really something that I stress over. It's just a way to have fun. And I think that's the difference between my mindset now and my mindset a year ago. I'm just doing it to have fun.



FACULTY & STAFF

A few weeks after COVID-19 struck us in March 2020, cabin fever settled in, and I began looking for projects to occupy my time in between the lesson plans, the remote classes, the remote meetings, and the endless grading. I remember looking in our guest room closet for an old box of watercolors. I remember sitting outside with brushes and some jars of water and trying to paint an oyster shell. I also remember recalling why my lowest grade in school was in a watercolor course. Watercolor is a hard, hard medium—but that is another story.

I was looking for something different to do. It needed to be creative. It also needed to be finished. Very little I do—in my teaching, in my service, in my research, in my various relationships, or in my life—is ever really finished. And this, in particularly uncertain times, felt jarring to me. And so my work needed to be more than finished. It needed to be public—it needed to be something I could share with others and offer a connection to at a time when human connections suddenly felt so vulnerable and so fragile.

And so, one day, I bought a box of sidewalk chalk and drew a scale model of the Solar System in my neighborhood in Old Colorado City. This may seem strange, coming from an English professor and writer, but you need to know that, when I matriculated at college, I planned on majoring in Physics. I would have, too—if I'd had the math in my bones.

The first time making my model, I made an error in my calculations, and I had to walk about a mile—practically to an I-25 exit ramp—before chalking out Pluto. And then, of course, it rained, erasing all my handiwork. The second time, I got my calculations right. Even so, Pluto was on the sidewalk next to a neighbor's house, and if I had wanted to chalk out Proxima Centauri, I would have had to drive to Casper, Wyoming.

And then it rained again.

A year later, I have planets hanging from shepherd's hooks alongside the west side of my house. Beneath them are small paving stones with their names. (There is a special one for the Perseverance Rover that touched down on Mars in February.) Alongside the east side of my house is a geological timeline stretching back to the end of the pre-Cambrian. The timeline identifies the periods and eras of the Earth's history, and glued to more paving stones with barge cement are plastic specimens of invertebrates, fish, amphibians, reptiles, flowering plants, and mammals, primates, and birds—which, as I learned in the course of my remote study, are actually dinosaurs.

We are awfully lucky to be alive on this planet, which falls through a narrow belt of space-time around our Sun called the Goldilocks Zone. Our species has evolved—and fundamentally changed the Earth—in the blink of an eye. We will not be here forever.

Is this one of the reasons we create art? To assert that we were here—that I was here, with you? In "Anecdote of the Jar," Wallace Stevens imagines placing a jar in Tennessee. Just an ordinary jar—but a human artifact that galvanizes the wilderness and turns it into a human landscape:

I placed a jar in Tennessee,
And round it was, upon a hill.
It made the slovenly wilderness
Surround that hill.

The wilderness rose up to it,
And sprawled around, no longer wild.
The jar was round upon the ground
And tall and of a port in air.

It took dominion everywhere.
The jar was gray and bare.

It did not give of bird or bush,
Like nothing else in Tennessee.

When I joined the editorial team of *Icarus* this spring, I asked whether it published work by faculty and staff. *Icarus* showcases the creative talents of our cadets, but I felt there had to be faculty and staff who, like me, had spent time the previous year practicing or rediscovering art. A little research revealed that the magazine had, in fact, published work by faculty and staff in the past. We didn't know when this tradition ended or why, but we agreed that there was no better time to play with reviving it. And so we designed a special flier and, with the help of Lt Col Sarah Isbell in the Dean's office, distributed it as widely as we could.

Some of the responses to that call appear in the pages that follow. Col Tasha Pravecek (DFC) had spent time weaving retired rodeo rope into elegant baskets. Prof. Pete Swanson (DFF) had been carving decoy drakes from cork and brasswood and painting them in acrylic. Tom Ulmer (DFOU) had been taking stunning photographs. Lt Col David J. Ratliff (DFEG) and Crystal Eve Kelley (DFSS) had been writing poems and taking photographs to capture those words in images. Finally, Lt Col Tim Tryon (DFP) had

been making whimsically delightful fan art using watercolor, pen and ink, and chalk.

I am particularly intrigued by Col Tasha Pravecek's baskets. I like it when artists find or repurpose an object into art—like the "found poem" published elsewhere in this issue. I especially like it when the repurposed art object echoes the original purpose of the material. Here, stiff rope designed to lasso a powerful animal has, after power washing and machine washing, been woven to perform a different, gentler kind of containing and giving.

I suspect there are many more artists in Fairchild and its annexes. I suspect there are artists in CW. I know there are artists in AD. Just the other day, while showing him my Solar System, I learned that Daniel Oosterhaus, the coach for Men's Tennis, does a little astrophotography on the side.

Hopefully this section on art by "Faculty and Staff" is just a preview of things to come—of more art that reminds us that we are all here, together, in this place, and at this time.

—Richard Johnston, Associate Professor
Department of English & Fine Arts



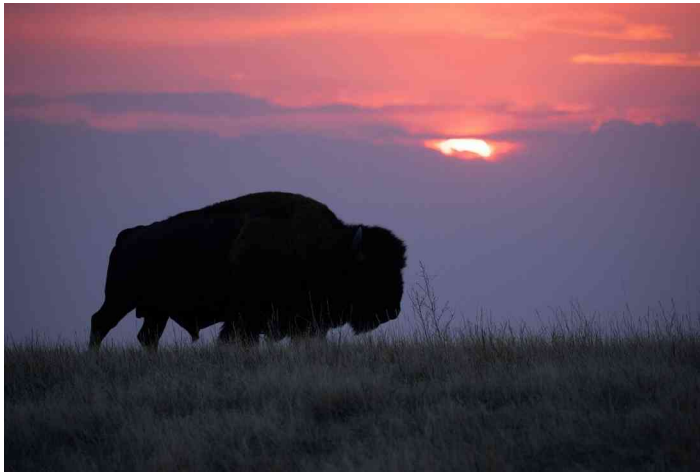
Constance Besaw, "Untitled"
mixed media



Constance Besaw, "Birch Forest"
mixed media on canvas



Tom Ulmer, "Black Canyon of the Gunnison Juniper"
digital photograph



Tom Ulmer, "Badland's Bison Sunset"
digital photograph



Tom Ulmer, "Lake Clark Shoreline Bear"
digital photograph



Tom Ulmer, "Stellar Sea Lion Haulout"
digital photograph

I'm Still a Mother

Crystal Eve Kelley

My sweet, precious child, you're no longer here.
I miss you so dearly, I need you near.
Even though you are gone & now I'm alone,
I'm still a mother, even if it's not known.

My sweet, precious child, your absence is war.
Time is a battlefield, each second hurts more.
My heart beats no longer, just trembles in the night,
but I'm still a mother, who just can't kiss you goodnight.

My sweet, precious child, you made me complete
Memories we had were so timeless & sweet.
Since you left this world we can't laugh and play,
but I'm still a mother, no matter what they say.

My sweet, precious child, I want you to know
I still have the clothes you will never outgrow.
My arms are empty, there's no toys on the floor—
but I'm still a mother, even when they ignore.

My sweet, precious child that I was unable to save:
your life still has meaning, not defined by a grave.
Although life is lonely without you by my side,
I'm still a mother, filled with so much pride.

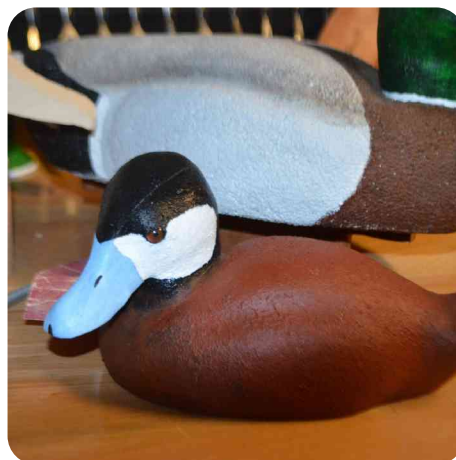
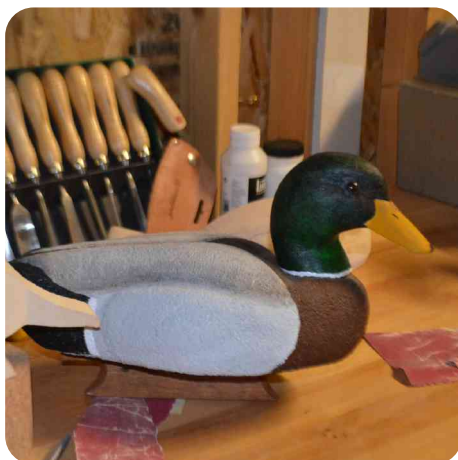
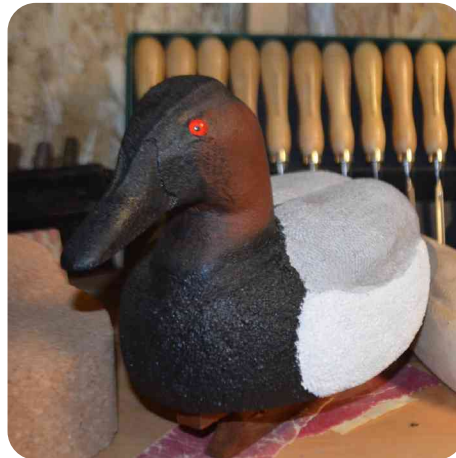
My sweet, precious child with those darling blue eyes:
I'm so sorry I survived and you tragically died.
I know that I never got to tell you goodbye
but I'm still a mother, missing the sound of your cry.

My sweet, precious child, now a star in the sky:
Your light beams upon me when I break down and cry.
Mother's Day is torture & bring you back just can't be,
but I'm still a mother even when they don't agree.

Oh sweet, precious child, I wish you could see
how good of a mommy that I would be.
But sweet, precious child, even though we're apart,
I'm still your mother and love you with all my heart.



Col Tasha Pravecek, rope baskets
USAFA Cadet Rodeo Team decommissioned roping ropes



Pete Swanson, Canvasback Drake Duck, acrylic on cork with basswood head (top row); Drake Mallard Duck, acrylic on cork with basswood head (bottom left); Ruddy Duck Drake, basswood with acrylic (bottom right)

By a Beach

Lt Col David J. Ratliff

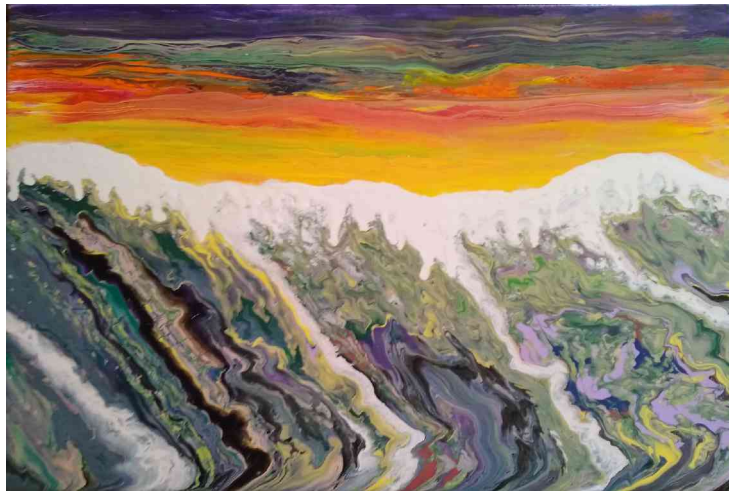
Waves caress the sand where foaming water meets the land,
Little shiny creatures from the tide pools in our hand.
Islands in the distance beckon us to come away,
To paddle out and wander on their sloping peaks all day.

Walls of water pound the land where black sands form the shore.
Nature combats nature in this tumultuous uproar.
Perpetual percussion creates a thunderous booming roll,
But nature's strife creates a calm that infiltrates the soul.

Liquid fingers quickly reach then make a leisurely retreat,
The ocean laughing gently at the children's fleeing feet.
Regardless of the temperature the waves will always win;
It doesn't matter where kids start, they always end up in.

On calm days lapping ripples scarce disturb a sea of glass.
Warped reflections smile back at visitors that pass.
Shadows cast by floating clouds dim the mirror of the skies,
And ghosts below meet shapes above as the expanse fills our eyes.

A windy day, a stormy day, a sunny day, a funny day,
A day with rain, a day with pain - It may be blue. It may be gray.
Whatever kind of day you've had, a bad egg or a peach,
I know you will agree when I say: Life is better by a beach.



Constance Besaw, "Mountain Stories"
mixed media on canvas



Lt Col Tim "Beetle" Tryon, untitled fan art I, II, and III
watercolor, pen & ink, and chalk



ESSAY

Someday

Duke Benge

Why do we fight? they ask.

We fight because the moment we don't will be our last that we control. The moment we lay down our arms and submit is the same moment that we lose the spark of hope that reverberated against the thin walls of the Pennsylvania State House not so long ago. That dead hope would be the death of not just a country, but the death of an entire way of thinking. An entire society, that despite its flaws and imperfections, is willing to listen to its people to allow for a system that allows for change, not one that is static against the tide of free will.

We fight because we do not know of a world in which fighting is absent. We grew up watching cartoons that bred hatred towards bullies and playgrounds that reiterated that same sentiment when we decided to stand for those that couldn't—and although being castigated in our principal's office was an unjust punishment, we knew in our hearts that what we were doing was right. Fighting has been something that has been in our blood since the first time we clenched our fist after birth.

Fighting is wrong and it is better to simply turn the other cheek, they say. But what do they say when I stand by and see peers of color rejected simply because of their skin or peers that wear their hair in a bun passed over because they are simply "not vocal enough to lead"? What do they say when subjectivity determines careers and yet the ones behind the mind of subjectivity are biased against those that are not vocal in this world we

stand in, because they are too busy fighting the demons that haunt their minds? The demons of depression and anxiety may cast doubt upon those they inhabit, but when, as a society, did we allow for those demons to be fueled by ourselves? How can we give those demons a voice and still dream a dream when night comes? How can we sit by and not fight when these injustices that have plagued us for this long, will simply continue? When did we become the ones that pulled the trigger that killed the Mockingbird?...

And again they ask: why we do fight?

We fight because if we unfurl our fingers now, we will be admitting that we were wrong. We will be accepting the lies that they tell and the illusions that they create. We will be allowing for someone else, something else, to grip the clutch and shift the speed of our progression back into neutral. We will accept the passive present and trust that it will be a problem fixed "someday," this same "someday" that our ancestors sang about and that same "someday" that will come just as soon as we live a day in the land of tomorrow. For with every sunrise that we refuse to fight, and every sundown that we accept the marginal progress of today, we will never inch a step closer to this "someday."

We fight because if we don't ... who will? If we don't take a stand today, to fight for the moral beliefs that we hold as self-evident truths, then we cannot expect those that will live tomorrow to ever be born into a world that knows of our perfect "someday" that we are not sure if we are running closer to or further away from. We fight for those that can't and those that wish they could. We fight for a cause that is greater than any single individual or any family. We fought yesterday, we fight today, so one day, maybe even someday, they won't have to.

Twenty-One

Julia Marie Rosenfeld

Seventeen. I was seventeen, bold in ambition, small in perspective, and mesmerized by my brother saluting the flag. All cadets pivot toward this fabric of freedom, swallowed by the magnitude of the mountains, stilled by their love of country, or perhaps, as I now know, by their dull habituation. However, for me, all I saw was beauty – a beauty matched by a greatness I sought and felt within the boundaries of the Terrazzo. Yet I was seventeen, and I fell for anything.

Nineteen. I was nineteen, bleeding brokenness, bold in my fear, and trapped within the boundaries of the Terrazzo which I once found captivating. Now, they were exquisitely suffocating. Though I dreamed my place within this world would be greater, at nineteen, I merely belonged to a box of space – this space, bounded by boxes of buildings. Clean lines, sharp corners, and zero unpredictability consumed my landscape. The box of the Terrazzo in which I lived mirrored the box of a personality this school desired to conform me to. Clean appearance, sharp mind, and zero unpredictability consumed my essence. I was nineteen, beaten to nothing, yet expected of everything. Already on the ground, I could no longer fall for anything. However, I could also no longer stand.

Twenty. I was twenty, plagued by pride, addicted to approval, and for the first time, stepping foot outside the skeleton of a person I was stripped down to be. I came to this school for myself...because I believed that I deserved the greatness this school promised. Yet, at twenty, I realized I had no “self” left to believe in. In the midst of seeking approval and fearing the pitfalls of disappointment, I lost myself to the system of competition this place breathes. I looked around me and saw a cage, strips to follow, turns to take, and no individual course worthy of pursuit. I looked around and saw arrogant majors, shallow leadership positions, and zero creativity and voice. I was sleepwalking, and if I continued to turn right following my box of a life, I’d survive. Then one day I woke up. Finally awake, I stood mesmerized by the beauty of the mountains shooting high past me, past this place, past empty ambitions, and reaching high for Heaven. I knew then, that my life was not meant to stay in this box of mundanity and repetition. Rather, I knew my life could rise like those mountains. I was twenty, and like the mountains, I was reaching for Heaven too.

Twenty-one. I am now twenty-one, humbled by experience, confident in my voice, and dedicated to pursuing joy in the journey of the chaos and conflict that is this school. This place transformed from being my dream to my destruction, and yet still I stand. I stand, because while I was beaten to the ground, I have realized that I cannot know Heaven until I have tasted earth. To know earth, I must accept my own mortality, which is to accept my weaknesses and acknowledge my brokenness. I cannot know sacrifice until I have sacrificed my pride. I cannot know greatness until I grasp humility. I am twenty-one, and though I am a cadet at the United States Air Force Academy, my identity soars above that. My life is more than following straight lines and sharp corners. While this place is structured to embody uniformity and organization, if you really look, it teaches one how to find beauty in chaos. This place is brilliantly deceptive. It seems impossible to become lost in a place with merely straight lines and sharp corners, and yet I lost myself to mindless habituation. It seems impossible to encounter complexity in a place so simply designed, and yet my life is anything but simple. I walk on marble, a stone resistant to heat, but I still find myself engulfed in fire, struggling to put out the flames. But like I said, I am twenty-one and awake. I am no longer constrained by fear, but am content in chaos. My goals are no longer solely oriented toward the future. I have found that it is when your eyes are locked on only what's ahead that you find yourself easily trapped inside a box. When you only look ahead, you fail to see the people to the right and left of you helping you to extinguish your fires. When you only look ahead, you fail to look down and humble yourself. When you only look ahead, you fail to see Heaven.

You can only turn so many corners until you realize the only way out is up. You can only sleepwalk for so long until you run into a wall. I have hit that wall. I have turned those corners. Now, I rise, just as the mountains remind me to. I am a cadet, but I am also a mountain. I am twenty-one and, walking on the Terrazzo, I no longer feel confined. I have learned that you can reach for Heaven from here, too.

Something I Learned In School

Nya Oster

Every summer, my grandparents have countless friends over who my brother and I get the pleasure of meeting. Though I have never really taken an interest in any of them, my brother and I love the invitation to come over for dinner and a swim in my grandparents' pool.

My grandparents would always address Nick, my brother, as a grandson particularly good at math and tennis. I, on the other hand, am a great baker and babysit every weekend. I never thought much of it. For one, I was good at baking and for two, my brother has a knack for tennis.

One particular summer, I was reading a book where the role of women, both black and white, was to stay at home and cook, clean, and care for children. These stereotypes were not new to me, but I thought that in the 21st century they wouldn't travel with me through my life.

As my grandparents introduced us to yet another friend, I realized that the talents they picked, though true, did not really represent who we are. I am in the same level of math as my older brother and love to play a mean game of field hockey. My brother has a sense of fashion and knowledge of sewing I have grown jealous of. Yet to my grandparents, I will never be the granddaughter of sports or him the grandson of sewing.

These stereotypes are not limited to my grandparents but apply to a lot of people. I will never fail to get a surprised look from people when I tell them I want to join the military. Every time I chew gum I think of the phrase "polite women never chew gum," which I was told growing up. So maybe I should work harder or chew louder. Maybe Nick should sew more. Or maybe society should realize our genders don't make us who we are.

Helen Agee, '24. A Dallas native, I a member of the USAFA climbing team. I love swimming, drawing silly cartoons, and repeating the same jokes over and over again. My ultimate goal as a writer is to imbue readers with a sense of dread and morbid fascination through the written word.

Prof Pam Aloisa: Pam joined the faculty at the Air Force Academy in 1991, where she works as an art professor and Director/Curator of the art gallery. She teaches drawing, painting, photography, and seminar courses in art history. She has curated/hosted over 150 exhibits for the gallery.

Prof Donald Anderson: Donald Anderson has taught literature and creative writing at USAFA for more than thirty years. His fiction and essays have been widely published. His most recent book is *Fragments of a Mortal Mind: a nonfiction novel*.

Harry Andriantavy, '21: I am an international cadet from Madagascar. I enjoy traveling and discovering new places, meeting new people, and experiencing new things (culture, food, situations). My goal through my photography work is to deliver a feeling using my camera, and bring my viewers with me for an emotional trip using my images.

Aidan Auci, '24: Aidan Auci hails from Orange County, California and is a member of Squadron 28. A Political Science major, Auci enjoys travel and has a unique passion for creativity. He has performed the National Anthem at Los Angeles Clippers games and Carnegie Hall in New York and recorded at Elvis Presley's RCA Studio B in Nashville. At the Academy, Auci is the lead vocalist for The Vandy Slingers and a member of In the Stairwell. A published musician on Apple Music and Spotify, Auci has amassed over 25,000 streams across all streaming platforms. Search 'Aidan Auci' wherever you listen to music.

Tristan Barton, '23: I'm from Charleston, SC. The poem is about my brother.

Cassidy Bassett, '23: My name is Cassidy Bassett. I'm a 3-degree in CS-31 "Grim Reapers" and in the Class of 2023. I am from Hurlburt Field, FL. I am majoring in Meteorology and minoring in Spanish. In my free time, I love to draw, sing, and play Dungeons and Dragons with my friends.

Katrina Benson, '24: Katrina "Katy" Benson is a member of CS-22 from Michigan. She is a FAS major, a triple minor in Chinese, French, and Space Warfighting, and hopes to commission into the Space Force as an Intelligence Officer. Katy absolutely LOVES the great sport of baseball (St. Louis Cardinals all the way!), reading, playing the piano, and movies. She has always had a knack for writing and took a leap of faith when she submitted her essays to *Icarus*. Katy hopes to write more in the coming journals!

Duke Benge, '23: Born and raised in Lakeville, Minnesota. Pitcher on the Air Force Academy Baseball team. Double majoring in Philosophy and English with a minor in Religion Studies. Passionate about flying, reading, and photography and is always looking for an adventure.

Ms. Constance Besaw, Divisional Program Coordinator for Humanities and Social Sciences: I can't draw a straight line but found other adventures in different art mediums to satisfy my creative outlets. One of my most favorite mediums is scrapbook paper. I've never made a scrapbook page, but love the paper for making almost everything else. My recent 'paint pours' have been vastly satisfying yet frustrating as once the paint leaves the container you have very little to zero control. The end result is always full of happy surprises and joyful endings.

Harmoni Blackstock, '23: Harmoni is a 19 year old from Chesapeake, Virginia. She is a self-taught artist and enjoys reading, writing, and painting. She was inspired to write this piece by her personal hair journey and wanted to spread the importance of self-love to those around her.

contributors

Aidan Boyle, '23: Aidan Boyle is from San Francisco, California and is a member of the cross country and track teams at USAFA. He grew up learning Spanish since kindergarten, and used his passion for running in conjunction with his dual-immersion experiences to produce his Spanish poem, "Miles de Millas."

Aliyah Brown, '22: I'm Aliyah, a 2 degree in CS-33 with a Behavioral Science major and a Portuguese minor. I'm on the Wings of Blue, Way of Life, and Steel Script Poetry Club. I'm into anything creative including painting, guitar, writing, photography, etc. I'm a rookie in all of them but they bring me joy nonetheless. Hopefully my work can inspire some of you to find your own passions!

Eliana Catalano, '22: Eliana Catalano is a 21-year-old in the class of 2022 at the United States Air Force Academy. Originally from Austin, TX, she is currently an English major with an intense passion for the fine arts. Eliana's hobbies include dancing, painting, and musical theatre. She thoroughly enjoys expressing her emotions through the form of dance, however in recent years has taken up creative writing and poetry as well.

Alexander William Cooper, '22: Alexander William Cooper is a Firstie at the United States Air Force Academy, majoring in English and minoring in German. Written on a warm spring afternoon in March 2020 on the Academy grounds, his work "Seclusions, Wandering" is inspired by the early stages of what would come to be known as 'Coronacation,' and the difficulties therein.

Jocelynn Cooper, '22: C2C Jocelynn Cooper is a member of CS-27 and is from Whitesville, West Virginia. She is a Behavioral Science major with a sociocultural focus and a German minor. She is passionate about improving her area of West Virginia, archery, and reading. She wrote "How Many More?" the night she found out one of her friends from home died of a drug overdose.

Anton J.J. Dahm, '24: Dahm is corn fed and Iowa bred. He is in CS -17 and an operator in CSOPS. Dahm studies MSS and Space Warfighting. He enjoys history and traveling, but his love for the outdoors inspired "New Dawn". This piece shows no two sunrises are identical, which leads us to live each day differently and better than the last.

Michael Ernst, '24: I hail from Glendale, AZ. I am planning a double major of modern/nuclear physics and applied mathematics because math and science are the subjects that just click. While I am hardwired for STEM, there is too much beauty in the world not to take it in and try to share what I have experienced.

Daniel T. Garza, '24: Daniel is a freshman from cadet squadron Rebeleven. Daniel has always had a love for poetry and for the past two years, he has been writing his own work. In his free time, he also enjoys drawing and painting. Daniel hopes to continue creating art in his free time for the remainder of his tenure at USAFA.

Gabriella Gerving, '22: Gabriella Gerving is a 2 degree in CS-08 from West Point, NY. She is currently a Biology major, and enjoys spending her time painting, acting, and learning about biology and space. She hopes you enjoy her piece and it inspires you to learn more about biology.

Col Kathleen Harrington, DFENG: Col Kathleen Harrington has served as Permanent Professor & Department Head for English & Fine Arts since 2004. Her academic interests include 19th c. American literature, Renaissance drama, and most recently, Jewish Literature & Holocaust Studies.

Saffron Hewitt-Qualls, '24: I am a member of CS-04 from Virginia Beach, VA who has always had a passion for drawing. I am heavily inspired by Japanese culture and art and want to travel to Japan in the near future. I am majoring in Aeronautical Engineering with a minor in Japanese and hope to continue drawing during my time at the Academy.

Meredith Hickman, '23: Meredith Hickman is a 23er from squadrons 18 and 37. At USAFA, Meredith is a member of Navigators, a member of the Chapel Praise Team, and a passionate distance runner. As a lover of a variety of art forms, many of her recent drawings have been based on powerful scenes from her favorite films.

Josiah J. Hughes, '24: I am a 4-dig of CS-17, "No Escape," and a member of the Precision Flying Team. If you were trying to compare me to someone, it would be somewhere between Tom Cruise in Top Gun and Carl Wheezer. My paintings are inspired by the legend, Bob Ross, and I hope I can inspire you, too. God bless and happy painting!

Daniel K. Huntsman, '22: Daniel Huntsman is a military brat from Northwest Arkansas who has dreamed of becoming a pilot since he was a little boy. Daniel developed a passion for writing in high school and was featured in last year's edition of Icarus. When he is not writing or working on school, Daniel spends his time at midfield flying gliders, singing with In the Stairwell, reading in his hammock, or wandering the foothills of the Front Range. He is honored to be featured in Icarus again and hopes you enjoy his work.

Bella Ilchenko, '23: Bella Ilchenko is a 23er from squadron 29. She grew up in the United States, speaking only Russian until age five and learning English and French later. She enjoys writing and translating poetry, and likes to focus on utilizing aspects more commonly found in Russian poetry while writing poems in English.

Ms. Crystal Eve Kelley, Dean of Faculty Commander's Support Staff: I'm Crystal Eve Kelley – from the great state of Texas, Air Force veteran and passionate about all forms of art. Music, art & literature have restored my heart & soul in times of hardship for as long as I can remember. Creative expression isn't only magical in the sense of healing but the freedom to create with your own set of rules, inspired by experience and raw emotion is so liberating. After losing my

son Jaxon, I wrote this poem and hope it inspires those going through a traumatic event to know they're not alone and using your suffering to help others is a timeless deed.

Anna Kemper, '23: Anna is from Monument, CO and is a member of the USAFA Diving team. She is majoring in English with a French minor and hopes to be a Pilot or Intelligence Office. Long-term she aspires to be a Foreign Area Officer. Outside of academics and sports, she enjoys literature, art, poetry, and photography.

Andrew Lemke, '21: Initially drawn to the technical intricacies of photography, I now enjoy the expressive side more, using photography to not capture the world as it appears, but as I see it.

Crystal Levy, '23, and **Eliana Catalano, '22:** Crystal Levy and Eliana Catalano are currently roommates at the United States Air Force Academy. Eliana is an English major and Crystal is a double-major in both English and Behavioral Science. After seeing the events that took place at the U.S. capital on Jan. 6th, they decided to give their take on the entire situation. They hope that through this poem, they can reach others who feel similarly about this controversial topic and incite feelings towards change not only within USAFA bounds, but the U.S. as a whole.

Anna Little, '23: Hi! I'm a computer science major who happens to write more than just code. You can usually find me singing with Cadet Chorale or practicing piano in Fairchild. In fact, the piano room is my favorite place for writing poetry. Huge shoutout to CS-04's Dead Poets Society for inspiring deep thought and effecting a creative space on the hill.

Mack Lucas, '23: Mack is from Upton, Massachusetts, and graduated from Philips Academy Andover. She is a Behavioral Science and English double-major. She played soccer up until coming to the Academy, and now really enjoys boxing. In her free time, she loves to paint and sing, and one day hopes to screenwrite.

contributors

Madeline McFadden, '23: Maddy McFadden is a sophomore from Akron, OH. She is an English major but has little experience with creative writing; she was inspired by her poetry class project to create a poem about the story of Daedalus and Icarus. She is very excited for the opportunity to be a part of Icarus!

Jordan Melendez, '22: Jordan Melendez was born and raised in New Mexico, the Land of Enchantment. He has always enjoyed the beauty of the world and how it makes him reflect on the important aspects of life. His interest in photography started a year ago and has continuously educated himself to improve his skills and to share creation's beauty with others.

Taylor Metzger, '23: Taylor is from Colorado Springs, CO and now resides in CS-25. He is studying Computer and Cyber Science and uses his hobby of photography to get away from the stresses of the Academy and spend even more time in nature. He specializes in portrait and landscape photography and is thrilled to share his love for people and nature by publishing his photos in Icarus.

Hanna A. Miller, '24: My name is Hanna Miller (CS-40) and I am from Lawrenceburg, Indiana. I am a Legal Studies major in the Class of 2024 and hope to attend law school after graduation and become a JAG. I enjoy reading, playing soccer, finding hole-in-the-wall coffee shops and trying new things. Nothing beats an Indiana sunset.

Sonja Nelson, '24: Sonja Nelson is a member of CS-26 from Edina, Minnesota. Her favorite art memory is going to parks and painting with her grandma and great-grandma when she was little.

An Nguyen, '24: I am an international cadet from Vietnam in CS-30. About the photo, standing in the middle of the sea of clouds makes me feel like Eagle's Peak is just a small island. I sent the photo unedited since I want to appreciate the true beauty of it. Photos like this make it worth waking up at three in the morning.

Nya Oster, '24: Nya Oster is a fourth class cadet from Lancaster, PA. She is in CS28 and a Physics major. In her free time, she loves to run and be outside.

David Ott, '21: Born and raised in St. George, Utah, mountains, red rocks, and open space have always been important to me. I was originally a freshman with the USAFA class of 2019, but took a break afterwards to serve a two year religious service mission to Germany. After graduation, I will enter UPT to become a pilot in the USAF.

Jeremy Pinon, '24: Jeremy Pinon hails from the sands of Roswell, New Mexico, and is a member of CS-18. Jeremy came to plane school to fly planes, is a History major, a member of the fencing team, HHC Officer, and enjoys writing with poetry as his favorite medium. Jeremy wrote "Bored" based on his bouts with Q&I and hopes you enjoy Icarus!

Col Tasha Pravecek, DFC: OIC Cadet Rodeo. Permanent Professor and Head, Department of Chemistry. She has worked as a research toxicologist, chemistry instructor, bioenvironmental engineer, health risk assessment consultant, weapons of mass destruction analyst, Air Force Research Laboratory staff officer, Senior Service School Fellow at Argonne National Laboratory, AFMC Command Bioenvironmental Engineer, Squadron and Group Commander, and staff positions at the Defense Health Agency.

Rachel Price, '23: Rachel Price is a sophomore at USAFA and an English major. She was born and raised in Birmingham, AL. Her upbringing fostered a great deal of creativity and she accredits her mother for sparking her love of art. She is a strong believer in art as a form of rhetoric and strives to make communicative artwork.

Emilio Quiroz, '24: Member of CS-38, currently a refugee in CS-32. From Merritt Island, FL. Majoring in Military and Strategic Studies. Member of Cadet First Responder Team, Spikeball Team, and Catholic Choir. Hobbies

include surfing, skiing, and working out. Inspiration for artwork comes from growing up surfing and past employment as an ocean rescue lifeguard. No formal art training, just do whatever comes to mind.

Lt Col David J. Ratliff, DFEG: Lt Col Ratliff is currently the Director of Economics in the Department of Economics and Geosciences. As a Financial Management officer, he earned his PhD in Economics from George Mason University, taught at the Defense Financial Management and Comptroller School at Maxwell AFB, and commanded the 436 Comptroller Squadron at Dover AFB. He looks forward to walking on many beaches in New Zealand with his wife upon retirement from the military.

Jasmaine Roberge, '22: From Gulf Breeze, FL. As a Civil Engineering major, I'm passionate about concrete and dirt. Member of CS-35. Avid lover of the beach; I painted "Navaggio Beach from Home" during my ROM period when everyone was brought back to USAFA fall semester. I enjoy painting, cooking, and my friends, and can't wait to see more beaches in my lifetime to paint.

Julia Marie Rosenfeld, '22: I'm just a Jesus loving, Texas gal with big dreams. My writing is a looking glass into my heart, so thank you for reading it.

Chia-Hsiang Shen, '23: I take pictures, especially flyovers. Fun fact about me: I don't like two kinds of people: 1) People who are bad at counting.

Dr. Pete Swanson, DFF: As an avid outdoorsman, I have enjoyed photographing, painting, and hunting waterfowl since I was a kid. The Canvasback and Mallard decoys are pieces that are part of a larger collection of decoys that I began carving as a hobby to see if I could create decoys that would attract ducks and geese. The Ruddy Duck is a part of a series of decoys I have carved for decoration in the house and cabin.

Daniil Tourashev, '23: C3C Daniil Tourashev is a member of CS-03. He is majoring in MSS and FAS

with a Russian minor and wants to serve in Intelligence after graduation. He was inspired to write "Escape" after reading "The Story of an Hour" by Kate Chopin and "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman.

Lt Col Tim "Beetle" Tryon, DFP: B-52 Electronic Warfare Officer with nuclear engineering background. Currently teaching physics.

Tiffany Turinsky, '24: This work was done after we were sent home from the USAFA Prep School. I had a lot of time on my hands back home, so I decided I'd have fun drawing planes, as I usually do, and decided to draw the P-51 because it is a highly respected plane. It took me a few weeks to do, but I had finally done it! The main focus on this was to work on reflections.

Mr. Tom Ulmer, DFQU: Tom Ulmer is a 1995 USAFA Grad. He served in the Air Force for 22 years before retiring in 2017. He now teaches MSS 201 as a contract instructor and is also a First Officer for United Airlines. His photography has been internationally awarded and published & can be viewed at www.rock36photography.com.

Nicholas Waters, '24: I'm currently a doolie at USAFA and come from a small town: Littlerock, California. For the past 6 years, I've had a passion for photography and have self-taught myself to use a camera and editing software. Throughout my life, I've had a huge love for cars. My father and I currently share a 1964 Chevrolet El Camino (pictured), and it's a father-son car that will forever be in the family. I quickly found myself combining my passion of photography and love for cars into one. Even though I love taking nature photos, my favorite photography subject is cars.

Rachel Werner, '23: Hi, I'm a fuzzy major, focused on politics and Arabic. I love learning languages and history, and I spend most of my free time writing, reading, or drawing. When I graduate, I want to be a fighter pilot, ambassador, and author —I want to share my stories with the world, and make a better world to share those stories in.

contributors

Finn Westenfelder, '23: I'm from Montana and like to ski.

Brayden Whatcott, '24: Brayden Whatcott is a Fourth-Class Cadet in Cadet Squadron 29. Growing up in the mountains of Utah has influenced an appreciation for the beauty of outdoor landscapes and a desire to capture them through photography. His photography combined with a use of Photoshop seeks to provoke a more thoughtful interpretation than stand-alone landscapes.

Alena Wroe, '22: Alena is a Biology major from Colorado Springs, Colorado. She is a member of the class of 2022. Alena is passionate about being outdoors and advocating for the environment. She enjoys using photography to capture the most interesting parts of nature.

Felix Zheng, '22: Felix Zheng is majoring in Computer Science and Electrical & Computer Engineering, and minoring in Chinese and Portuguese. He is also working on his instrument rating and volunteers in various capacities for the Civil Air Patrol. In his limited free time, he enjoys hiking, cooking, learning languages, and photography, among other hobbies.

A Look Back Thirty Years: *Icarus* 1991

Thanks to the efforts of DFENG's "Preserving *Icarus*" project, we have access to digitized versions of *Icarus*'s print history, dating back to 1965! Below you'll see '92 grad Elizabeth Williams's award-winning poem, "OY 463, F-4." See more past issues at afadigitalhumanities.com.

*The Brigadier General Paul T. Cullen Award
for the Outstanding Cadet Creative Writing*

OY 463, F-4

Greetings, old lady.
The grass beneath you has dried and faded,
Withered in winter's ivory touch,
Very different from the foliage that,
In another time and place
Also died below your wings.
The leaves were a brighter and more varied green,
And you a living warrior,
Without time for the regard of non-essentials.
Now, in this place of learning, of beginnings,
You can do little else.
Perhaps you sleep here,
Chained and bolted to this high ground,
Beneath a sky not unlike the one you once rode.
Perhaps you do, and dream intermittently,
In the silences between the young voices.
The voices are not those that spoke within you,
As you streaked high above that canopy;
These are higher, lighter,
And for all their learning, do not remember you.
Nor the war you fought outside their past.

They do not, can not, share your dreams,
That reach back into orange and scarlet death,
Into terrible slow falls that last forever,
Into the dying screams of fighters.
Rest well, old lady.
Sleep lightly.

ELIZABETH WILLIAMS '92

Editor's note: "OY 463" is the tail number of the F-4 which has been displayed on the cadet area terrazzo for several years.



Duke Bengé, "Where to Go"
digital photograph

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