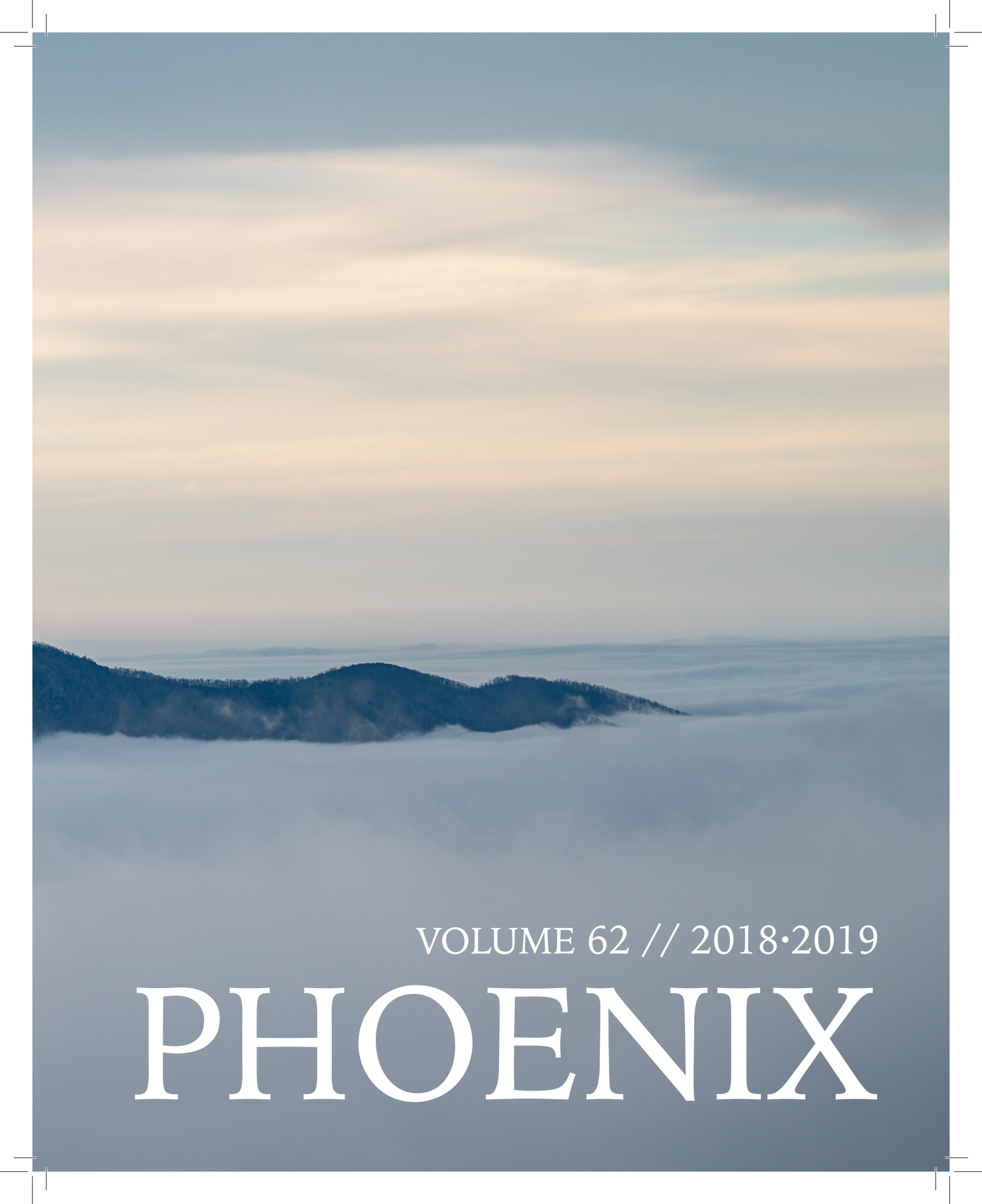




VOLUME 62 // 2018•2019

PHOENIX

Go into the arts. I'm not kidding. The arts are not a way to make a living. They are a very human way of making life more bearable. Practicing an art, no matter how well or badly, is a way to make your soul grow, for heaven's sake. Sing in the shower. Dance to the radio. Tell stories. Write a poem to a friend, even a lousy poem. Do it as well as you possibly can. You will get an enormous reward.

You will have created something.

- Kurt Vonnegut

Thank Goodness for these Wonderful Folks:

Kirsten Beachy, staff advisor and encourager

Kate Szambecki in training our helpless selves on InDesign

All those brave enough to submit work

The EMU Print Shop

Student Government Association

Phoenix

// Literary and Visual Arts Journal

Eastern Mennonite University

2018•2019

Index

- Cover **Skyline** // Missy Muterspaugh
- Index **Rajasthani Camel** // Nicole Litwiller
- 4 **Peyto Lake, Alberta** // Kieran O’Leary
- 5 **Wayfinding** // Luke Mullet
- 6 **Beauty in the Chaos** // Leah Wenger
- 7 **Held** // Abigail Shelly
- 8 **Kolkata Flower Market** // Joseph Harder
- 9 **Right Now** // Anna Cahill
Smoke Break // Nicole Litwiller
- 10 **Cascade Snowfall** // Joseph Harder
- 12 **On Working with Children** // Kate Szambecki
- 13 **Celebrating Tradition** // Carissa Luginbill
- 14 **2 AM** // Missy Muterspaugh
Loneliness of an Immortal // Paul Kayembe
- 15 **Incarceration or Incineration** // Avery Trihn
- 16 **Red Fireflies** // Asha Beck
Please // Anali North Martin
- 17 **Blackberry Girl** // Megan Good
Untitled // Christy Kauffman
- 18 **Abstract Cityscape with Primaries** // Kari King
P.S. I am your brain // Liz Marin
- 19 **Favorite Friend** // Anna Cahill
- 20 **Untitled** // Christy Kauffman
- 22 **Prayer Flags** // Nicole Litwiller
- 23 **Gaṅgā** // Leah Wenger
- 24 **¿Qué es la poesía?** // Jonathan Nielsen
- 26 **Great Blue Heron** // Missy Muterspaugh
- 27 **mother earth** // Elizabeth Nisly
- 28 **The Trees and I** // Megan Good
- 29 **Frolicking in the Redwoods** // Joseph Harder
- 30 **Untitled** // Christy Kauffman
Curiosity // Carissa Luginbill
- 31 **A Boy Named Mamo** // Dr. Tom Syre
- 32 **Lime, Mandarin, Pineapple, Strawberry** // Missy Muterspaugh

- 33 **The Fortune Cookie Crumbles** // Avery Trihn
34 **Man's Best Friend** // Abigail Shelly
 drinking black coffee // Elizabeth Nisly
35 **Taj at Sunrise** // Abigail Shelly
36 **Allegheny Mountains** // Missy Muterspaugh
 Love Me // Anna Cahill
37 **whole** // Luke Mullet
38 **A Life of Its Own** // Hilary Moore
39 **The Human Handprint** // Adam Moyer
40 **Toward Burg Eltz** // Trina Nussbaum
41 **Peppermint** // Liliana Holcombe
 All the World // Trina Nussbaum
42 **Ponderings** // Sara Beth Ranck
43 **Meditate in Color** // Nicole Litwiller
44 **Continuations**
45 **Editor's Page**
46 **Biographies**
48 **Disparities of Time** // Emma Hoover





Peyto Lake, Alberta // *Kieran O'Leary*



Wayfinding

Luke Mullet

I was on the precipice
On the fringe
Of a historical theme
Hearing eerie things
And dreaming of solace
Along this rocky seam

And yet, in a world of two
In a hinge
Between the forgotten green
And meaning unseen
You'll find me wayfinding
A new song—that might be

And so, I reason in this
Wild high place
Where fiery sands etch me
And wisdom--she sings
And certainty--displaced
New unknown--light uncased

I am
A human touching the hue
Of this space
Roaming amidst what does seem
Hearing eerie things--
And dreaming of solace
That no sealed reason brings

Beauty in the Chaos

Leah Wenger

Beauty within the chaos
Hundreds of people
Thousands of colors
One body
The eyes see

Spices and flowers
Exhaust fumes and stale urine
The nose smells

Beads, bags, boxes
The outstretched and grabbing hand
Begging for something
Anything
The fingertips touch

A honking sea of yellow and green
Of two wheels, of three wheels, of four wheels
Of none
The dogs, the birds, the curly horned cow
The boys playing cricket in the street
A prayer floating in the wind
The lungs breathe

Bells, horns, and the rhythmic voices
That seep through the temple walls
Early in the morning
The shouts and the laughter
Oh the laughter!
Which rises through the air like music!
Like music!
Music
The ears listen

Hindi, Urdu, Malayalam, Punjabi,
Rajasthani, Tibetan, Ledaki...
English?
The tongue speaks

One body, yes, one body!
A woman squats on her mat on the street
As two men argue over the price
That is already too little
A family takes a moment as they pass the
town temple to bow their heads in prayer
The drums from last night's festival
Still hang in the air

Now look, the women sit down to share tea
“Don't forget to feed the ants!”
The heart beats

Beauty
Beauty in the chaos

Held // *Abigail Shelly*



Kolkata Flower Market // *Joseph Harder*



Right Now

Anna Cahill

At this moment,
I can see sounds and
Taste colors.

In this instant,
I can breathe words and
Feel patterns.

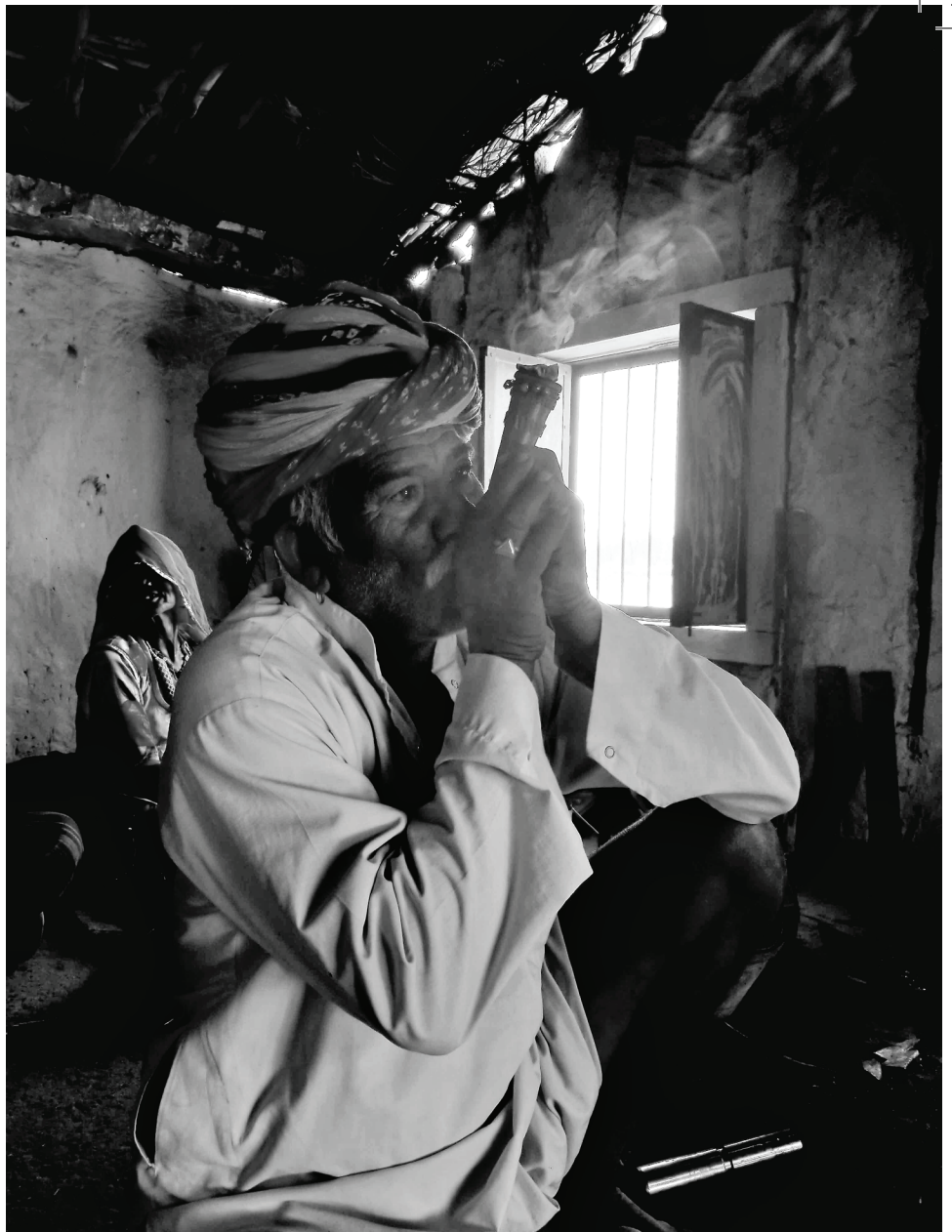
Before you blink,
I can smell emotions
And sense breaths.

I feel everything.

My focus is on nothing,
Yet I am paying
Attention to everything.

The colors are all
Much brighter.
Each heartbeat is
much slower.

Right now,
I'm trying to
Stop thinking...



Smoke Break // *Nicole Litwiller*



Cascade Snowfall // *Joseph Harder*



On Working with Children

Kate Szambecki

I sat against the gym's cool cement walls, watching the kids run aimlessly around the gym. I'd never get tired of this job—getting paid to watch children have fun. There were a couple games of tag, and a few kids huddled over one who had brought a video game—a celebrity. I noticed something off in my peripherals. Jace had broken off from his group of kindergarteners and first-graders, and was walking towards the wall, wiping tears from his eyes. I could see his tiny body shaking.

I jogged over to him and squatted against the bricks.

“What’s wrong?”

Silence.

“Hey. You don’t have to tell me, if you just want to cry that’s okay.”

He looked up at me.

“No, I can’t,” he mumbled. I looked at him questioningly. “It’s dumb, I shouldn’t be crying.”
Something inside me broke, just a little.

“Jace. You know it’s okay to cry, right?”

“No, no it’s not,” he shook his head. Why did he think this?

“It is. You are allowed to cry. You are always allowed to cry.” I remembered something my coworker had said to me, when I told him I’d heard from our boss that Jace and another boy, Henry, had been holding hands and kissing. He had shaken his head and said, “That is too damn funny, man.” Then added, quieter, “His dad would kill him.”

I wanted to hug Jace, tell him that his father would not always be right, that he could still be a man even if he held hands with other men, that no matter what his father said, his worth was not defined by dry eyes. I asked him one more time what had happened.

He paused.

“Henry slapped me on the bus.”

Oh. “Why did he do that?” I asked, “Was it on purpose?”

Jace nodded sincerely.

“Okay. I’m going to go talk to Henry.”

I found Henry in the game room, and when he saw me, I knew by the look in his eyes. It only took me asking once to confirm. I lead him to Jace.

“Henry, Jace says you slapped him. I think you should probably apologize.” Henry’s brow furrowed.

“Well he tried to kiss me.” *Oh.*

I didn’t know what had changed, but I could only imagine the worst. Why Henry no longer wanted to kiss Jace. It could just be that he stopped wanting to. But I had a feeling it was more likely someone who told him he shouldn’t. And Jace didn’t realize that some people looked down upon boys who wanted to kiss other boys. That one of those people was his father.

I wanted to tell him: When your father has yelled at you to wear looser pants or take off that damn eyeliner, you will question your worth. You may think the person you are is not enough. You will be wrong.

How do you tell a six-year-old that who he loves is not okay to some?

I told Jace that he needed permission to kiss people, and he said he was sorry. I told Henry that he should use his words, not his hands, and he apologized, but Jace didn't think it was good enough. I told Jace that I would talk to Henry again, then asked,

"What is your favorite game of all time?"

For the first time, there was a break in the stream of tears. He paused. "Crab dance."

I had no idea what, in God's name, he was talking about. "That sounds ridiculous. What is that?" I asked him, feigning indignance. I saw what I thought was the start of a smile.

"It's a game... you make your hands go like this." He pinched his fingers together. "The best one wins," he said.

"Are you the best?" I asked, smirking. He giggled.

"Yes."

"I will not believe it until I see it."

He giggled again, and the tears were gone, for now. There would be more, later. But for a moment I could make him forget.





2 AM // Missy Muterspaugh

Loneliness of an Immortal

Paul Kayembe

In the depth of their souls I reside;
My presence is necessary to create a balance
between their most existing moments and bitter tears;

I bring kings and kingdoms down in my dark hole;
Throughout time I have been studied, but never understood to those human's flesh;
How can they if they can't comprehend their own existence;

In the soul of newly born, resides the secret to my extermination;
Their being is a threat to my existence; I can't be destroyed;
In the center of the earth lives my most powerful weapon: circle of life.



Incarceration or Incineration

Avery Trihn

People sizzle and implode under the force of enslavement

Incinerate even
Slavery long gone? Wrong!
Slavery Longing For Eternity

No cotton picking, just exclusion, just the hands up

Just the constant vicious visceral enclosure and exposure of the human body

Just the intrinsic injustice by the system...
What system? What system? No system...
Just Incarceration Incineration
And Cynicism leading to Recidivism
Inciting World Division



Red Fireflies // *Asha Beck*

Please

Anali North Martin

You are what happens when someone
so soft
and so deserving of love
gets hurt
and fights back
with fists and feet
until you are fighting
yourself

I see your bruises
sweetness now tastes black and blue
a heady tang
tough to swallow but
deep and
stirring
and that sweetness remains
Nonetheless

Blackberry Girl

Megan Good

She has blackberry fingers
plump and ripe like a child's
And dark from shoving fistfuls of juice
into her small mouth.
This is the true black gold, she thinks,
warm summer bliss mined from the fern-footed forest,
sugar made magically out of thin air and light and water.
Kiss her and she will taste like blackberries.
Cut her and her blood will run black syrup.
Love her, and she will bring you blackberries every June.

Untitled // *Christy Kauffman*





Abstract Cityscape in Primaries // *Kari King*

P.S. I am your brain

Liz Marin

Dear human,

Psst!
Journal some more.
Your brain misses
The dance of a whirlwind
On a page.

Let me swirl
Let me go
Let me rap
Let me flow

Let me be
Who I am

P.S. I am your brain

Favorite Friend

Anna Cahill

My absolute favorite friend of all time is my fluffy Teddy. Teddy has been right by my side for years and years and years. He follows me to the park. He follows me to school. He follows me everywhere. He is my very best friend in the entire world, and I love him lots. Teddy will always be my best friend because of his warm snuggles and soft, fuzzy texture. My favorite thing in the entire world is when I got to sleep with my Teddy. I lay my cheek down on his tummy, and I am greeted with a soft hug. Teddy tells me to embrace who I am, and that makes me feel nice inside. Teddy always makes me feel nice inside. He cares more than anyone else. He's my favorite.

I love going to the park with my Teddy because he loves meeting new people. Strangers make me nervous, but Teddy tells me not to be afraid. He always gives me the greatest advice. Mommy tells me that it's weird for me to talk to Teddy in public, but wherever I go, Teddy is always there for me. Teddy gives the best hugs, and he always helps me feel better. Teddy is a great helper around our house. Whenever mommy has to go to work, Teddy takes care of our babysitter and me. During this time, I get to play more freely with Teddy because mommy isn't around to tell me I shouldn't.

Mommy doesn't like Teddy. She tells me I'm too old to be hanging out with him in public. Mommy tells me I shouldn't because Teddy is dangerous, but he's my favorite, and he tells me not to be afraid, so I'm not. Why should I be afraid if he is my very best friend? All he ever does is make me feel good inside, so why should I be afraid?

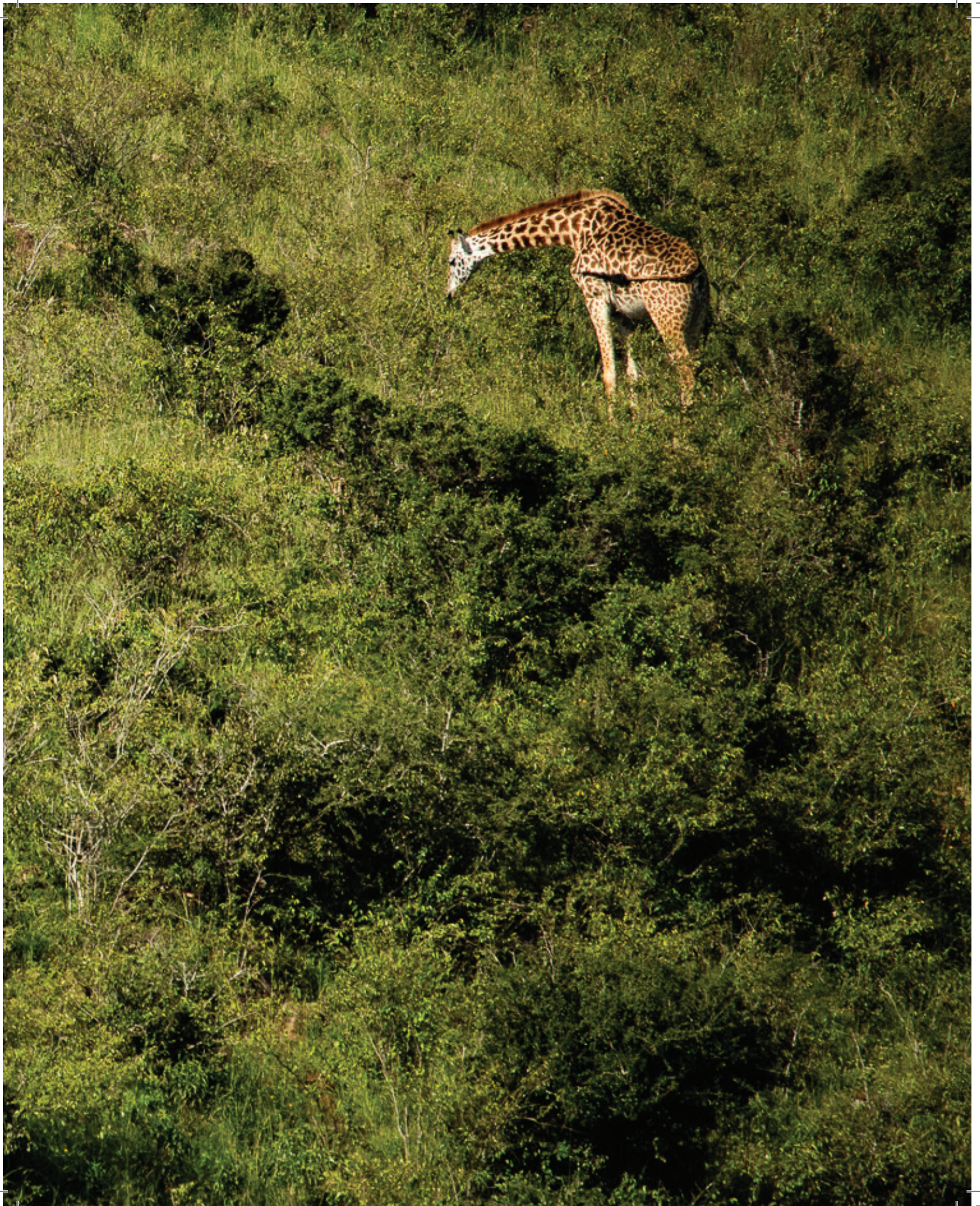
Mommy always likes things to go her way. She's too uptight about shit that don't concern her. That's what Teddy always says. Mommy just wishes she could go back to when she had Teddy, but Teddy's all mine now. Mommy thinks I only get to see Teddy every once in a while, but he is always by my side. Mommy can't know that, though. Teddy tells me that his visits are our little secret.

Teddy used to tell me stories before I went to sleep. He would creep into my bedroom window right after mommy would click the door closed. There was always a little girl, just like me. She always got to have her Teddy, and the mommy in the story had no idea. They went on adventures together after bedtime. The stories always made me really happy. The stories would be so exciting, and he would tell them while I laid on his fuzzy tummy. Those were my favorite. I always kept the window unlocked for him, but mommy soon found out and took Teddy back to court.

Mommy used to call my best friend Teddy or Theodore, but I mostly just call him daddy.



Untitled // *Christy Kauffman*





Prayer Flags // Nicole Litwiller



Gaṅgā

Leah Wenger

How ancient the wind and the water
And ancient the people who call her home

In the early morning
A man
From his hands
A stream
Yes, a blessing
A prayer
To Her

Oh, but devoted one
Open your eyes!
Now She, to whom you pray
She chokes

Look here!
No longer wind But smoke
No longer water But ash

¿Qué es la poesía?

Jonathan Nielsen

Emociones, acciones, ensueños: todas son parte de la poesía.

Un mundo en que expresamos o no expresamos cómo sentía.

El dolor, el color, las frases románticas,

Todos son encontrados a través de las atlánticas.

Espero que todos experimenten que es un poema,

Cómo les fuerza pensar, cómo les dirige evaluar un problema.

Aún los poetas son artistas, humanas, mujeres,

No hay límites, no hay prohibición, limpias, pero no destruyes.

Si se quiere saber sobre vida y no se rechaza realidades ni fantasías,

Aquí se descubre que las palabras pueden ser las tuyas y las mías.

Aplica a toda la gente, se debe interpretar,

Desde un largo tiempo, se debe leer, se debe comer, se debe descansar.

Hasta al fin de la vida la significación se cambia,

Autores no definen, ni obligan la armonía.

Si un poema se anuda, bien, fantástico.

Este desafío se mejorará como la eliminación de plástico.

Si un poema no se influye, pregunta el escritor,

“¿Cómo es un poeta, si no siento la alteración?”

Y cuando contesta este autor,

“Si me pregunta, esta es mi verificación.”

La poesía es una foto, se captura:

Qué cree la poeta, qué siente la poeta,

Cómo vive, cómo sigue, cómo ve su pintura.

La agonía de existencia es un viaje por muleta.

(Y este hemos visto en Vallejo, por cierto)

Este es el valor, porque se aprecia.

El poder de ser ambiguo y dudoso.

Puede traer alegría o se agravia,

Es real, es ilógico, es cómico y gracioso.

No tiene que entender, no tiene que gustar,

Porque la poesía sea que sea.

No tiene que comprender, no tiene que encantar,

Porque la poesía sea que sea.

Un vehículo para experimentar,

Un movimiento en contra de la prosa,

Un hogar donde queremos inculcar

Ideas y deseos que no son aceptadas por la sociedad.

Escribiendo un poema sencillo beneficia a la gente,

Como las palabras de Gabriela Mistral: un pan es un pan.

“Mitad quemado, mitad blanco”; un pan no es un pan: pero es

Algo feo clamado por la belleza, que nos recuerda de

Las bendiciones, que expone nuestras desgracias de nuestras

Experiencias en grandeza.

Pan: un portal de la memoria.

La poesía es sobre cualquier tema en cualquier lugar,

Es un sentido universal que traslada una persona a nuevo hogar.

Un hogar de la mente, de perspectiva diferente,

Que nos cultiva y nos cosecha cuando olemos triunfante.

What is poetry?

Emotions, actions, dreams: all are part of poetry.
A world in which we express or don't express how we feel.
The pain, the color, the romanticism.
All are found throughout the Atlantics.
I hope that all experience a poem,
How it forces you to think, how it makes you solve a problem.
Still poets are artists, humans, women,
Limitless, unprohibited, you purify, but do not erase.
If you want to know life without rejection of fantasy and reality,
Here you will find that words can be yours and mine.
This applies to all people, you must interpret,
For a long time, you must read, you must eat, you must rest.
Until the end the significance changes,
Authors don't define or oblige harmony.
If a poem binds you, good, fantastic.
This challenge will better you like a world without plastic.

If a poem doesn't have influence over you, ask the writer,
"How are you a poet if I am unaffected?"
And when this writer answers,
"If you ask me, you prove me."

Poetry is a portrait, it captures you:
What the poet believes, what they feel,
How they live, how they follow, how they see themselves.
The agony of existence is a journey on crutches.
(and this we have seen of Vallejo, of course)

This is value, because they appreciate themselves.
The power of ambiguity and doubt.
It brings joy and envy.
It is real, illogical, comical and foolish.

You don't have to understand, nor like,
Because poetry is what it is.
You don't have to comprehend, nor enjoy,
Because poetry is what it is.
A vehicle to experiment,
A movement against prose,
A home where we want to teach
Ideas and desires that are unacceptable in society.

Writing a simple poem benefits all people,
In the words of Gabriela Mistral: un pan es un pan.
"Mitad quemado, mitad blanco"; bread is not bread: but is
something ugly crying out for beauty, that reminds us of
the blessings, that exhibit the tragedy of our experiences of grandeur.
Bread: a gate to memory.

Poetry is about whatever thing in whatever place,
It is a universal feeling that translates from a person to
A new home.
A home of the mind, from different perspective,
That cultivates us and harvests us when we smell
Triumphant.



Great Blue Heron // *Missy Muterspaugh*



mother earth

Elizabeth Nisly

no wonder we call earth
mother
she birthed us from dust
and mountains
soft loamy soil cupped in her hands became
the shape of us
she plucked us from the thousands
of grains of sand
that tumble and twist in the oceans

tendrils of ivy clung
to the salt on her face
when she breathed life into our lips
and pronounced us good

god is all around us

she is the forest
we are the trees
she is our heart
we are her fingers and toes
the best way to share her vast
love that cascades through the rivers
and pulses with each beat
of the hummingbird's wings

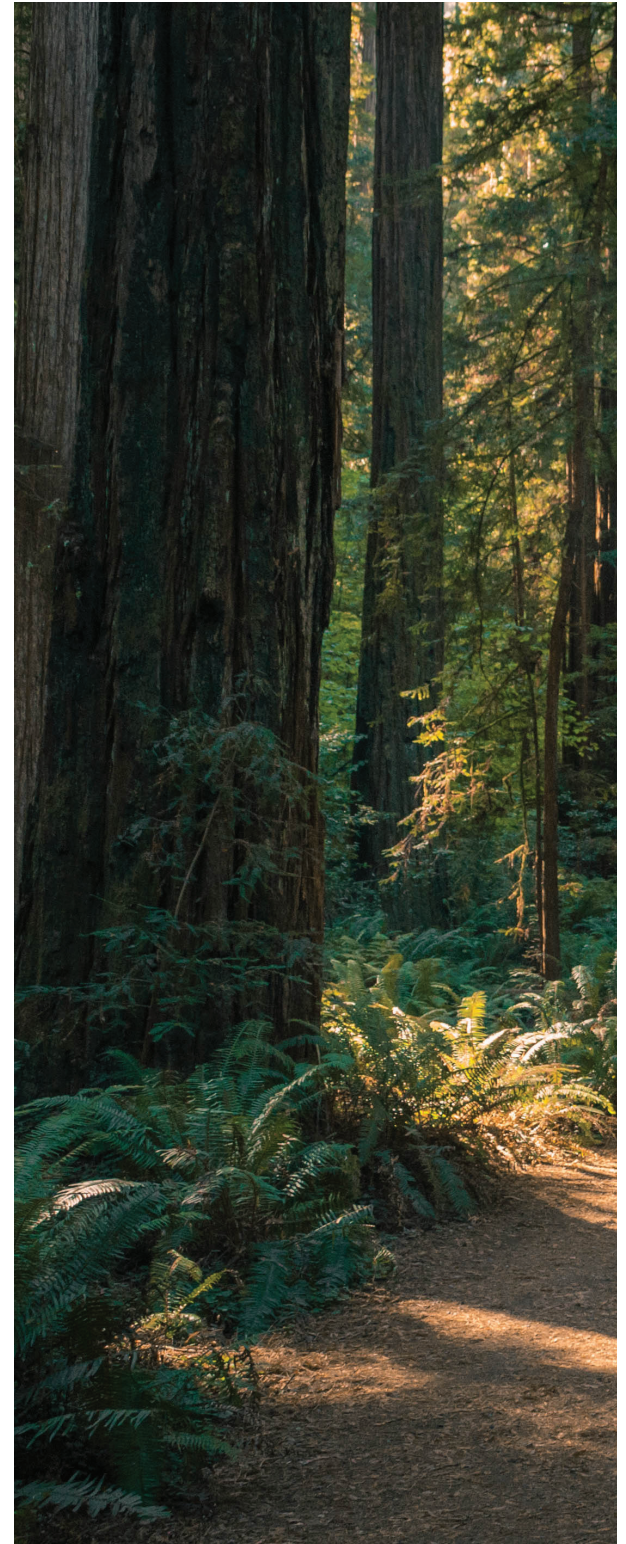
each small flower that unfurls
its petals towards the sky
is a love letter from god
I love you enough
to flood this field
with sunshine
she says, this flower
is a ray of light you can hold in your palm
just like I hold you

The Trees and I

Megan Good

The trees and I dream alike;
our thoughts come slow and wise with time,
and we build our inner cathedrals
in the waking and the sleeping of the seasons.
Our roots go deep — they're strung together
in thousands of thin filaments, inconsequential threads
running through our heartwood, humming with the quick of life,
spun webs to hold us all. Each root tip
seeks out the meanings of soil, of home, of relationship.

The trees and I breathe alike;
our spirits diffuse with each giving out,
and enter the other undistinguished,
one song rung in our hidden selves.
We know the uncelebrated joys of leaf mold
and light moving secretly through shadow.
Our sorrows are shared, and many —
for the sure forgetting of clean air and voiceless things,
for the hurry that conceals vital truths,
for the noise that dulls and blinds our empathy.
We dream of a quieter world,
a more looking world, where small ferns speak, and we hear,
of the abundant life found
where we did not think to look before.



Frolicking in the Redwoods // *Joseph Harder*



Untitled // Christy Kauffman



Curiosity // Carissa Luginbill

A Boy Named Mamo

Dr. Tom Syre

I feel good. Another beautiful morning. It's 75 degrees and sunny in eastern Ethiopia in the rural Muslim desert town of Harar. The morning prayers blaring from the ninety mosque towers have finally subsided. The goats are herded by a bare-foot boy down the main street in front of the run-down hotel once popular during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie. Brilliant yellow and purple flowers blossom in the untended garden nearby. Colorful birds flutter about among the low hanging branches of the acacia trees. This could be a scene from a travel book.

I order my usual rich dark coffee and a cheese omelet with toast and jam. A delicious breakfast on a perfect morning. I know that I am where I should be as I sit on the front patio of the Ras Hotel I have come to cherish. In past years, my daughter and son have sat and dined with me at this same table.

I am a regular customer and receive excellent table service because I tip generously and they know me by name. I am not a tourist held in contempt for their noise, self-importance, and lousy tips. I live nearby in the apartment building with aging and retired professors from the States, India, and the Philippines who teach with me at the local national university. We are in Ethiopia for different reasons ranging from adventure to home-country joblessness. We are all excited by adventure and a different way of life.

A child of about four walks up to me. His face is thin and dirty with dried sweat. His nose runs snot down his face. He is dressed in a filthy tattered once-white rag that barely covers his bottom. Bare-foot. "Dahboe, isty." Bread, please. I look into his sad brown eyes and wonder about him. I quietly ask, "Inati et abate yeti alu?" Where is your mother? Your father? "Yellaynim. Edesi teswaldi ahnd amet bifeet." I do not have. They died from AIDS last year. The boy's name is Mamo, a name given in this region to unwanted boys by disinterested parents who cannot provide. It means "nobody."

A few minutes pass and Ato Habtamu, the gray-haired waiter dressed in a starched white jacket, worn black trousers, and blue plastic shoes approaches the table intent to chase the child away. It annoys him that I have the boy sitting next to me as I share my toast and omelet with him. Habtamu asks me, "Eekertah, mindonoh, urso?" Excuse me. What are you doing (respectfully)? I respond quietly, "Issueh yinay sew leech." This is my son. He hesitates. Without expression, he steps back and leaves us.

We finish eating, and I take Mamo hand-in-hand to the nearby street vendors who line the streets. The teenage women, with their young children, sit all day in the street gutters selling sticks of gum, single cigarettes, and other wares. They also beg; some are prostitutes at night. I spot a young woman with a newborn at her breast, and I buy the boy a pair of red flip-flops and a used but clean small bluish tee shirt to cover his bottom. I spend the equivalent of two U.S. dollars. It's money well spent.

We walk in silence to the nearby town orphanage, and I speak with the unsmiling director without front teeth and ask her to take in this homeless child. I pay what is her month's wage as a gift and she agrees. Money talks, especially in the developing world. As I leave, I advise her in Amharic that I am a local and I do not want to see this boy begging on the streets again. She squints her dark eyes and slowly nods. She understands and agrees. "Ishee" is her response. I will visit soon to see the boy.

What will happen to this child? If he is fortunate, he will share a bed for sleep and two meals a day. Bread and a vegetable stew. He will remain stunted in growth for want of food. Medical care will be provided by a kind volunteer nurse only when he is sick. Perhaps some schooling, but probably not. It saddens me to think he may eventually become an illiterate laborer or a thief.

continued on page 42



Mandarin, Pineapple, Lime, and Strawberry // Missy Muterspaugh

The Fortune Cookie Crumbles

Avery Trinh

The prophecy dilutes, the time machine malfunctions, and the fortune cookie crumbles
All we see in front of our altered sights are faint and fading chalk marks
The ponderous visionary unfolds his climatic product, with no outcome

The unknowable is unwanted
Yet the unknowable is the only state we know

So, peer ahead

And expect and embrace scorching lava, trip wires, and days of utter perplexity

The rhythm is rapidly altering
Ride the roller drastic tempo coaster

Breathe

And if you begin panting, just know the speed you exert will only further distance you

from your perceived outcome, so

Breathe

And welcome each fragile fractional moment of the journey.



Man's Best Friend // *Abigail Shelly*

drinking black coffee

Elizabeth Nisly

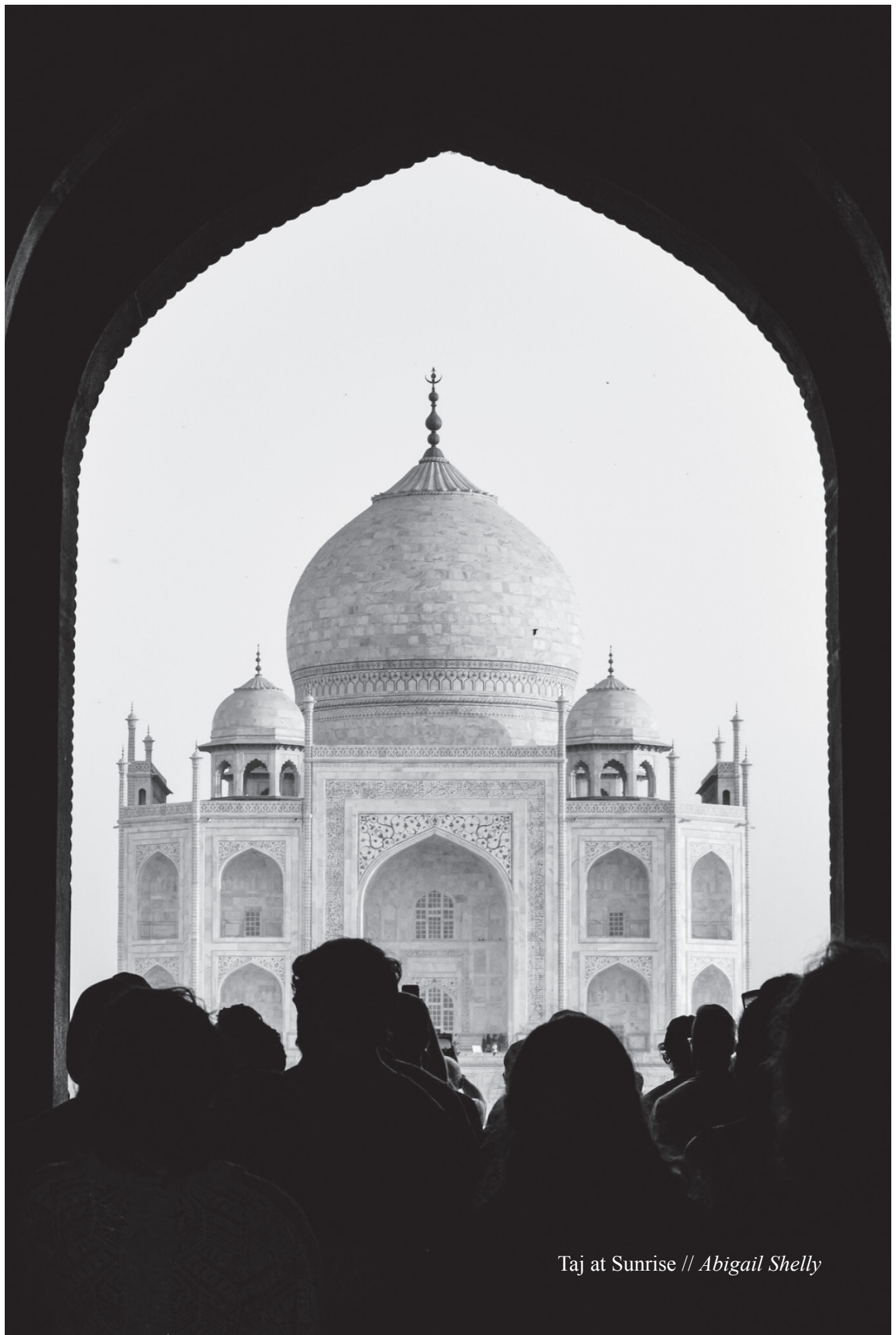
don't hide your bitterness
not from me
i am here to taste your
sharp edges
let your acid singe all
the way down my throat
roil in my stomach

don't temper your rage
with cream and sugar
they render you
voiceless
if they soften your
fury, mollify
your ever-churning
resentment

burn, boil, bubble over
blister the tongues of all
who would have you
Silenced

seethe
mix your acrid
grounds
with mine

i am done sleeping



Taj at Sunrise // *Abigail Shelly*



Love **Me**
Anna Cahill

When you begin to fall in love,
There's always this moment
everything makes sense,
But then, it doesn't.

The tide pulls you,
Such a lovely invitation,
disappears.



whole
Luke Mullet

whole in water
bound

mustering centuries
Of body and sound

I am with this
I am with
I am
the spirit
the ground

A Life of Its Own

Hilary Moore

He woke with a start, his eyes wide. What was that? He listened, motionless, as the wind whipped around the outside corner of the house, like God's lips blowing air across the mouth of an empty glass bottle. It howled.

Mom said she liked the wind. It reminded her that she was safe and warm inside. He thought it just stole his shouts when he called to her from the back yard. Her back already turned, she'd keep walking, forcing him to chase her fitfully, struggling to catch up.

Darkness filled his room, interrupted only by the dim light from a sconce in the hallway that spilled across the floor, its pitiful bulb impersonating a lone flame. His eyes strained to see the foot of his bed, his dresser, and the front side of his bedroom door, angled open, allowing as much light to seep in his bedroom as possible. He liked the other doors shut - the one to the bathroom directly behind his head, and the one to the closet on the opposite side of the room, just beyond his left shoulder. It felt safer that way, to have them conceal whatever lurked beyond. It was easier to pretend there was nothing there - out of sight, out of mind. He'd be able to hear them if they creaked open - proof that there had been movement. It wasn't his "mind playing tricks on him" or his "imagination running wild" as his parents claimed. He'd have warning, though what he'd do with a warning was uncertain. The main door to his room at least provided an escape hatch and the one source of light, other than the stars and moonlight that stole in through the window on a clear night. The door to the hall remained open.

The house exhaled, settling in at its corners. "It's just resting." Mom would explain, rolling her eyes, brushing off his concerns. As if it were a grandfather perching his elbows on the arm rests of an easy chair and lowering himself in with a creak. "Old houses do that."

The house did indeed seem like a person at times, with the exhale of warm or cool air from the vent in the corner of the ceiling of his room, the rush of water through pipes within the walls like blood through its veins. In fact, when Mom and Dad had to give a kitchen drawer an extra wiggle to open it, or had to turn off an electrical device that "someone apparently left on," they'd comment how the place had "a mind of its own," but it had "good bones." Did it?

Sometimes it spoke to him, he'd swear it. Usually when he was alone in the playroom, or like this, awake in the night. A groan or a whisper, with words just inaudible, that left him straining, leaning in their direction to hear. Was it his name? Was it a warning? It was like a dying breath - the last clue to a mystery too important to go unsolved. Other times it was more of a hiss, like the steam from a teakettle just before it turns to a whistle. It happened with enough certainty to make him believe, but with enough anonymity to allow others to doubt, shaking their heads or giving a quick snort, just short of a laugh. "Kids."

continued on page 42



The Human Handprint // *Adam Moyer*



Toward Burg Eltz // *Trina Nussbaum*

Peppermint

Lilliana Holcombe

You say
Delilah, why don't you go out
to get drinks and dance with the guys? All you need to do is
smell the air. The peppermint factory is pouring
today. It poured that day too.

Look at my coat. The threads are coming out
and the fabric is running thin.
And in my pocket, there sits one last
peppermint.

Remember that day. The docks
were lively. I went to the celebration
with him. A brief farewell.
We would trounce the bad guys,
come home to victory
and peppermints.

They threw them out by the bucket.
Peppermints
raining down on us
like a rainstorm in May.

So I can't go out again
yet. The smell still lingers in the
air. I can't go out again.
Not until the last
peppermint
is gone from my pocket.
Like the bullets
on him.

Before the rain he
danced with me and
held me tight and
put his hands in my
pockets and
kissed me deep. And
in his breath was the taste of sweet
peppermint.

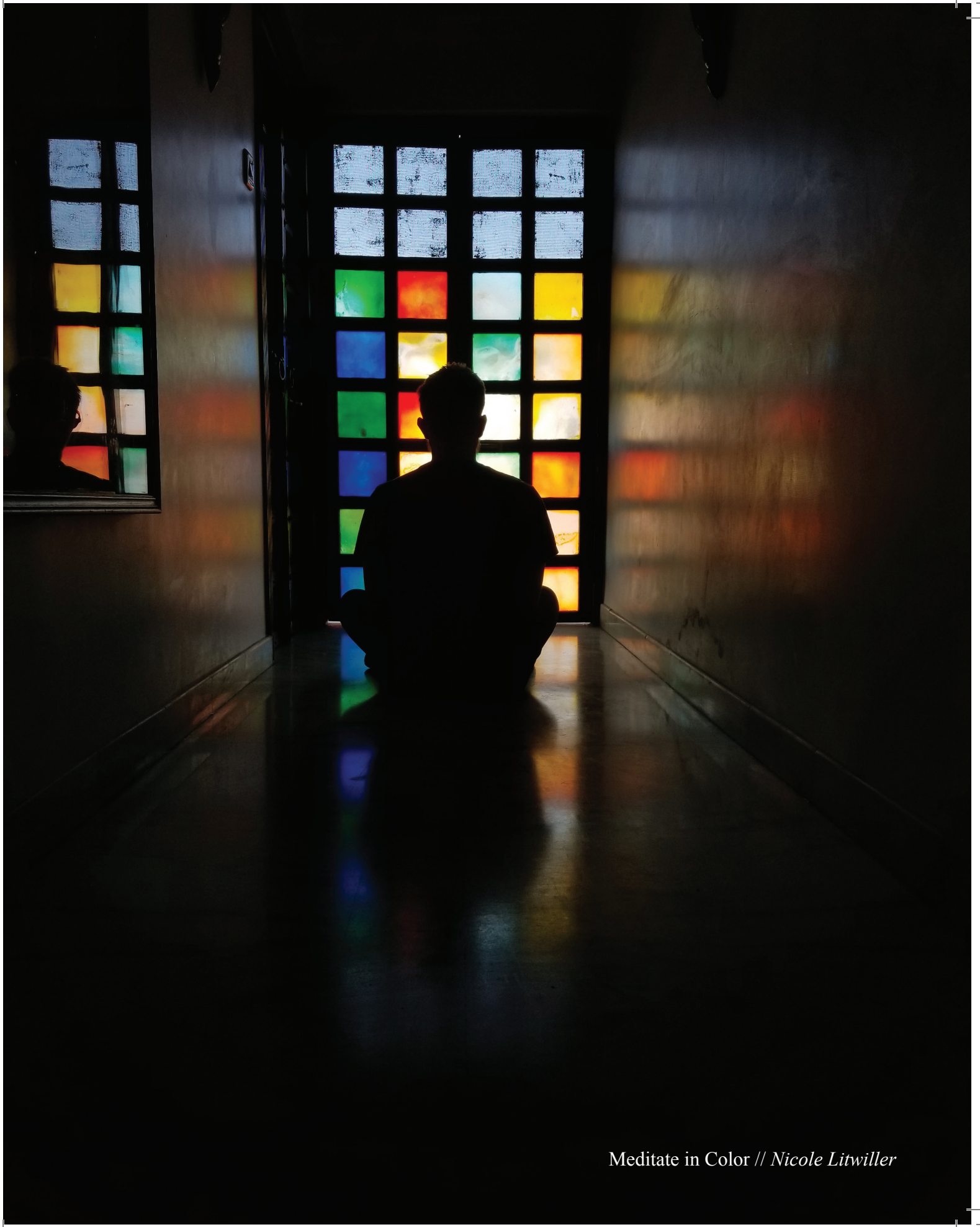
All the World // Trina Nussbaum



Ponderings

Sarah Beth Ranck

I am beginning to understand
how little I know
how powerful thoughts are
how breakable life is
I am beginning to notice
the image of God in others
and myself
I smell the lilacs
Life brings joy
Life hurts
Most of it I don't think I will understand
I am weak
I can be selfish
and wound others
But Oh to know the maker of the breeze



Meditate in Color // *Nicole Litwiller*

A Boy Named Mamo // *continued from page 29*

Days differ. But, in the quiet moments like today, I know I am touching the face of God. As I walk the rocky unpaved road to the university gate, I feel His warmth. He understands Mamo's pain. He brings joy to those who have almost nothing. It reminds me that things are unimportant when compared to love, faith, family, and community. It's odd that life in this world can bring me so much joy and meaning. As I feel the sun on my face and see the beauty around me, I know.

I am where I should be.

A Life of Its Own // *continued from page 36*

It was the black corner behind his open bedroom door that caused the most distress however, at least at night. He was tucked under the fleece blanket, his heart pounding, his pupils dilated, waiting, watching, his body tense, gripping the edge of his blanket beneath his chin. Was something watching and waiting from behind the door, blanketed in the protection of darkness? Peering anxiously through the crack between the door and its frame? Was that a rustle? A shift of weight on the carpet?

Mom said no interrupting her sleep unless it is an emergency, and if he miscalculated, and she determined that his concern was in fact not an emergency, misery was inflicted via lost TV time or extra chores. Was this an emergency? He wasn't sure.

His mind flooded with thoughts as he balanced the danger posed by the darkness behind the door with the risk of running past the door and down the hall to Mom's room. Could he make it? Would the door block the creature, buying him enough time to rush past? What if Mom's door was shut? His pulse raced as his mind calculated. Then with a shift in the air, he heard the bathroom door behind him pull shut with a gentle click.

Staff

Co-Editor // Anali North Martin

Co-Editor // Yordanos Tesfa

Co-Editor // Megan Good

Advisor // Kirsten Beachy

From the Editors

The Phoenix has been around for a while. (Since 1958. 61 years. Longer than any of us editors have been alive. A little bit younger than our three ages combined. Dang.)

We have loved continuing the tradition of showcasing EMU's finest writers, photographers, and artists. The submissions this year were fantastic, and we thank everyone who bravely entrusted us with the offspring of their creative genius.

As three writing studies majors, we could say a lot about the power of art to reveal truths and change hearts, but we won't say much because you already know that. As a wise poet once said, "Beauty is truth, truth beauty, —that is all / Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know" (Ode on a Grecian Urn // *John Keats*).

We hope you enjoy reading the sixty-second edition of The Phoenix,

Anali North Martin, Megan Good, and Yordanos Tesfa

Want Your Work in the Next Phoenix?

Please send all submissions to phoenix@emu.edu. Include your name and titles for all of your works. Although we accept untitled submissions, we strongly suggest titling your work for clarity. We are looking for submissions of original creative works of fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, photography, and art. If you are interested in becoming a staff member, please contact EMU's Language and Literature department or email us for more information.

Biographies

Abigail Shelly has lived with Anali North Martin for five semesters; she is a resilient woman and a great listener. Abigail runs track/cross country, recently joined the new triathlon team, and she's a junior TESOL Education major. Her photo submissions were taken while on cross cultural in India.

Adam Moyer is a Spanish Language and Hispanic Studies major with minors in Political Science and Journalism. He is the founder and current president of EMU's Young Democrats club.

Anali North Martin is detail-oriented and driven, if any future employers ask. In reality, she is pernickety and high-strung. Anali has two talents: burping loudly and crying very easily. She is a bitter old hag at the age of 21.

Anna Cahill has more to say than she ever lets on.

Asha Beck is a first-year (not freshman, thank you) studying Digital Media and Communications. Her favorite way to eat sandwiches is in two, diagonally-cut halves and her favorite karate sound is the silent but deadly "pusheeeuuu". On another more important note, she is continually trying to grow her faith and relationship with God.

Avery Trihn is a first-year Psychology major with a huge passion for greek yogurt and the darkest of chocolate. In his spare time, this spry young gentleman plays a mean sax, watches way too much soccer (such a beautiful game), and enjoys setting foot on the stage. Some of his favorite literary works come from the illustrious Ray Bradbury, and boy, does he simply adore the sounds and vibrations that Stevie Wonder makes. Most of all, Avery loves to create :)

Carissa Luginbill is an EMU alum and is Northlawn's Residence Director. Two of her loves are collecting house plants and eating ice cream.

Christy Kauffman is always looking for opportunities for adventure. She has found a passion in listening to people's stories and helping them tell their stories through visuals.

Elizabeth Nisly is a beautiful majestic unicorn and lover of foods, according to her roommate, Emma Kay Hoover. The athletic trainers can tell she likes to go barefoot just by looking at her toes, and this semester she took napping to the next level.

Emma Hoover, according to her roommate Elizabeth Nisly, has a knack for ruining favorable opinions about historical figures and says the most quotable out-of-context statements. Emma has found an artistic voice she never thought she had through photographing her way through the Batlics and careful self-reflection that keeps on revealing more and more everyday.

Hilary Moore is a lawyer, turned stay-at-home mom, turned lawyer, turned professor, turned writer, turned beekeeper, turned..... Well, she's a work in progress... She likes to write creepy little tid-bits that are inspired by her children or legal cases that she has worked on.

Jonathan Nielsen tries to enjoy every moment of the day, especially Mondays. He loves Jesus and would be honored to tell you all about Him, just ask!

Joseph Harder is a mischievous lad and is utterly smitten with bicycles and boogie-woogie piano. In his free time, Joseph gets excited about old, broken things.

Kari King is the Academic Success Center Assistant at EMU. Her only requirements for her paintings are that they include color and movement, allowing her to freely create without restrictions of size, theme, medium, or subject.

Kate Szambecki is a first-year writing studies and digital media and communications double major. She works in childcare and is probably getting tackled by a child at this very minute. If you see her, don't touch her. She is covered in sticky kid germs.

Kieran O'Leary basically lives in the VACA lab. On rare occasions you may spot him scavenging for food at the den late at night.

Leah Wenger (is a third-year music performance and psychology double major who is best known for being the former roommate of Megan Good and current roommate of Anali North Martin. She does everything on campus, so you've probably seen her around. Leah's poems "Ganga" and "Beauty in the Chaos" were written during her cross cultural to India.)

Liliana Holcombe has all the potential to take over the world as a Mathematics major with a devilish creative streak. With her crochet hook in her left hand and a calculator in her right, there is no challenge she can't tackle. Well, if she ever leaves her room, that is.

Liz Marin is a Theater Education major. She is also known as Lizwordz, the spoken word/rap artist. She is the founder of the Integration Nation drama group and hopes to develop the program into a theater company some day. Lizwordz believes that children are professional actors because they are professionals at make believe.

Luke Mullet - When you don't find senior math major Luke Mullet in serene meditation, you might find him frolicking along or roaring with friends. With his creative energy pouring into music and poetry, Luke seeks to bring awareness, empathy, and warmth to people and the land.

Megan Good is a third year writing studies major. She is happiest when she has dirt under her fingernails. Her writing is inspired by her affinity for green and growing things.

Missy Muterspaugh Need design? Contact Missy Muterspaugh via gregorian chant.

Nicole Litwiller is a senior with majors in Liberal Arts and Global Development. Her artwork is often inspired by her colorful surroundings. In addition to paintings and other artsy things, Nicole also enjoys creating yummy food. She happens to have the best chocolate chip cookie recipe in existence, just ask Jonah Short-Miller.

Paul Kayembe - From the Democratic Republic of Congo; Paul first attended Intensive English Program (IEP) before he enrolled in Peacebuilding and Development (PXD) in Fall of 2016. Paul has served on the Student Government Association first as Senator, then as Vice President, respectively, from 2017-2018, and 2018-19. He also served as Chairperson for the International Student Organization(ISO) from 2017 to 2018. Poetry is the very few things that he enjoys doing in his spare time, what little he has of it.

Sarah Beth Ranck is a Mathematics, Secondary Education major with a minor in Spanish from Lancaster, PA. She writes poetry every once and a while when she is inspired. She wrote “Ponderings” on a summer day, sitting on a rock next to a lilac bush when she was dog sitting.

Dr. Tom Syre is a part-time graduate writing tutor at the Graduate and Professional Writing Center on EMU campus. He retired from teaching at James Madison University to teach overseas. As a volunteer, he then taught public health education for several years in the national MPH and MD programs. His daughter, Elizabeth, is a graduate of EMU and his son, Tom Jr, a graduate of JMU. He enjoys writing fiction and non-fiction.

Trina Trotter Nussbaum is the Associate Director of the Center for Interfaith Engagement at EMU. Not only did Trina graduate from EMU undergrad in 2000, but she also graduated from the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at EMU in 2018, and has worked at EMU since 2013. She met her husband Brian here at EMU and they have two lively boys, ages 10 and 7. She is an actor and a soprano, and dabbles in photography and other art forms.

Disparities of Time // *Emma Hoover*



