Dear Readers,

There is something deeply unsettling about turning around and realizing that you've matured or that the people around you have. Sometimes, it seems like the change happens all at once; you don't notice that one person that has stopped getting their tongue stuck to flagpoles until they have a solid job, a varied social life, and you haven't seen their tongue in years. You never notice the process, the evolution, just the beginning and the end.

Well dear friends, here I am pointing out the process. Over the last few years, Gardy Loo has been growing. We have more submissions and more readers. There are at least 20 more people on campus that can tell me that they've at least heard the name “Gardy Loo” (whether they know the meaning or not).

We are also maturing. We have found a solid look for the design of the magazine. We have a cleaner, classier appearance that really shows off the pieces located within, rather than taking the attention away. We are being more selective with our submission choices, keeping to the best work and ideas, rather than the flashiest or coolest.

Almost every day, I am astounded by the growth I have seen in this magazine, not just in the staff, but also the authors and artists, even the JMU community. I hope readers, that you will see the same things in this beautiful edition (especially now that I have pointed it out).

Keep reading.
Keep enjoying.
Keep growing.

Jaimie Swann
Editor-In-Chief
Dearest reader,

While most JMU students are young adults, Gardy Loo is proof that we have had diverse and powerful experiences in our few short years. We are living and we are learning, building and being built. This magazine is a testament to all we experience and all we perceive.

Take this time to broaden your insights, to be entertained, charmed, perhaps even enlightened by your peers. Ponder, interpret, reflect, and feel free to find your own meanings.

When you pick up Gardy Loo, your time becomes your own. Whether you’re in a crowded library, riding the bus, or curled up in your living room with a cup of tea, this is your moment to experience. This is all for you. Let the artwork move you, the photographs transport you, and the written word show you something new. With every turn of the page, assess, critique, and enjoy. Open your mind to fear, hurt, and hope, and if you feel the urge to laugh aloud, then go ahead. We won’t judge you.

With love,

Erica Dodson
Managing Editor
to The End

Sarah Meirose

Lie down with me.

Curl your fingers into my hair and tell me your story.

Tell me the darkened hearts of your antagonists:

Take me through every turn and twist of your plot.

I want to know how your syllables fall on each page.

And if it is fair to judge you solely off of your covers.

And if the reviews you carry on your back are scathing or supportive.

Tell me what your critics think of you, so that

Every time I begin a new chapter.

I can come closer to proving them all wrong.

Tell me all that I have missed:

I know I’ve a lot to learn, but I will hear you. cover-to-cover.

Even if it gets to be so late that the last few words

Are barely a sigh into your pillow.
Lust, Love, and Lovers

Faith Pomeroy

I.
I laid on my back watching the popcorn ceiling move in and out of focus wondering if the awkward elbows and uncertain knees made God hate me.

II.
Much softer, gentler fingertips brushed lightly over eyelids trailing down a crooked spine. Dishonesty leaked between stuttered breaths.

III.
Rapid heartbeats and uneven conversation made enough space to fill your parents couch. You kissed at frozen skin belonging to someone else.

IV.
Too naïve and a little more reckless we fogged wintry car windows. Caught between broken lights on a black sea pavement you left me a victim at the crime scene.

V.
Distrust fell from your lips and bitter cold winters were salvaged in the spaces between bones no one ever warned me wasn’t called “Home”.

VI.
Giant hands pulled me in to mismatched bed sheets. I never knew that love smelt like body wash and vulnerability. You held me in your arms drunk, seeing stars.
Cowardly Lion
Rachel Denison
Even alive, his face had appeared to be decomposing. He had lived so long that I half convinced myself he was immortal, like a wood elf. But at 4 p.m. he had died, just like everyone and everything. Staring at his placid expression, I relaxed my face and closed my eyes, imagining what it would be like to be soulless. To be a body without movement, a mind without thoughts, and heart without feeling. Void of life. Swaying slightly in the breeze, I roamed in a tranquil sea, neither sinking or floating.

"Peter." My mind swung back to reality like a stone pendulum. "Do you want to look at great-granddaddy's face one more time before they close the coffin?" I kept my face forward but moved by eyes slightly. He had always done that when I had called for him. Faced one direction but watched from the corners of his eyes. Never turning his head. But that had been his stance through life, never facing a situation head-on, never taking action. Like when I fell off my bike last year and broke my wrist. He had scurried outside, glanced terrified at my writhing body, and called for grandma. The more I stared at his gray, his very dead face, the more he resembled the cowardly lion from *The Wizard of Oz.*

And my great-granddaddy had sought courage also. Although my memories of him were fragmented and surreal, like a faded dream. I vividly recalled him tramping in his woody backyard grasping an axe and chanting, "Kill dem snakes, kill em," in an overly-confident voice. "Snake-hunting" was his religion, his dose of medicine. However, his medicine proved ineffective as day after day, he arrived home with a clean axe. Ducking under a refreshment table, I squatted and pulled the tablecloth to hide my body. Propping my chin on my knees. I poked four holes in the moist soil then rested my hand on the ground. Nine ants hurried across my open palm; I killed four of them. Delicately, I dropped the ants into the four holes and pushed dirt over top of them. Four graves, four bodies, four empty faces. four people I would never have back. Underneath the disturbed earth. I wrote, "Uncle Rob, Penny, Daddy, and Great-Granddaddy." Uncle Rob had died four years ago from a cardiac arrest. My sister, Penny, passed away at age four from pneumonia. Daddy had been killed in a car accident involving four other cars.

Four was a curse to me, I refused to speak or write it, and I failed math problems with that problematic number. The tablecloth rippled in the evening breeze and I leaned closer to let it flutter against my cheek. From across the field, I could hear my relatives singing, probably as they lowered great-granddaddy into a hole. The melody was "Amazing Grace," but the words said, "If I were the king of the forest..."
Color-Coded Crack

Zachary Schneller

He's the man with the white-gloved hand
Service with a Colgate smile
And he's here to do the best he can
Put him on speed dial
He knows you
He needs you
He's not slinging rocks
He's not waiting in a dark alley
He's in a brightly lit aisle
With an arm held aloft
Rattling pills like cocktail shakers
For medication cocktails
Open wide and down the hatch

Swelled shelves full of bottles
Colors like candy
Your lips will kiss them
They are our friends
We fellate them
And drink their bitter discharge
To your expectant birdlike claws
And open birdlike mouths
Just one and it's never done
Forever and ever is all it ever is
Unless you're rendered comatose
From a fatal overdose

Medical junkies don't gather on street corners
They're in bed riding their latest benzo waves
Or riding the Adderall Express to work
Unmarked arms
Dead starfish palms
Remarkable paleness
Hair plastered to sweaty brows

You ask: how much does it take?
Call the doctor
One
Still wide-awake
That's it! No more!
Two
Feel a pressure on my temples
Look at you! Getting down with two.
Now I really think you're addicted
Three
Eyes are pulling deadweights and losing.
Don't make it worse, take this instead
To shake that embarrassing side effect
But my pee is red
Better than not getting an erection, no?
Four
Fuck the doctor. He doesn't need to know
Guilt can't permeate the haze of drugs
But what he doesn't know will still hurt me
Hey, doc. Looking at you for more? It hurts.
Tell me something I don't know. Move it along.
Next.
Someday, I will have my mother’s hands. Nicotine fingernails brittle and bitten. Cracked skin, smelling of scalding bleach-water. Soft as when she first held mine. Balled tight like flower buds.

Someday, I will have my grandmother’s hands. Carved deep by river beds. Wrapped loosely in tissue paper skin. Soft as when I last held hers. Balled tight like flower buds.

**Flower Buds**
Sarah Morris
There is a moment when the body becomes recognizable but then disappears into an ambiguous, amorphous form. It is a space of solitude and escape, a utopian environment of sorts, yet the tension of another body brings back reality. Looking to ritual, costuming, and drag, while still using traditional craft processes, my practice reflects imagery from my own narrative with inspiration from history and counterculture movements. I have been exploring themes of identity, gender, and growth, through movement, form, shape, space, structure, and performance. Color has recently become an important formal aspect of my work. Moving away from a neutral palette has allowed for exploration and freedom within my making. With this came the possibility for experimentation and collaboration. There is a connection to multiples, in thinking about forms, bodies, and shapes, that is consistent throughout my work.

I am interested in connecting bodies, or integrating people into a group temporarily, through a relational garment that becomes both a performance and a sculpture. I have also been thinking about extensions of or modifications to the body so that the body is obscured and the form that results references the body. The image of connecting bodies in nature then taking over the landscape is a challenge I am experimenting with. Metaphors of skin such as where we touch the world around us and where the world touches us relates to these garments. The extension of the body's skin shifts the relationship to things around us. There is a proposition of movement and shared experience when participating in the relational garment. Where does the space of the viewer and that of the participant start and stop? What is felt or embodied and what is seen? Who participates? What is the relationship between the body and space? These are some of the questions that drive my making.

*Stitched Drawing* came out of the series of wearables and began as a sketch for a sculpture. I used the drawing as a way to explore the ideas of multiples through layering and repetition of form. Color and texture became important in this piece, as well as the beginning of material experimentation that continues to inform my making. With this came *Untitled*, the same design rendered digitally. Translating the color and texture of the materials into a new medium allowed for further exploration of the form and shape. Both *Stitched Drawing* and *Untitled* reference abstracted images of the body extended, a consistent theme within my work.
I held you, once.
You were gone, but they said let her,
just for a minute. So I did.
I held out my arms
and they placed you there, gently
as if you might wake.
Your eyes were shut tight, but there was no fire
peeking out from behind the lids.

You were heavier than I’d imagined
Or maybe it wasn’t you, but the air around us,
the thickness smothering the hospital room

My mother’s tears slowly
wove a blanket of darkness.
She’d escape to that grief, later
but for now
she just cried.

Someone took you, and placed you back
in her shaking arms
Let’s leave her be now
America
Aaron Lovejoy

America, I had fallen in love with you.
I grew to love your classic cars and movie screens
and I always secretly wished I looked like Elvis.
But I've done some thinking
and I've tried to mend the broken feelings
and now, I'm not sure that we can work things out.

I climbed a mountain
to look from the top for your amber fields of grain
but all that stood before those purple mountains
were fields of cattle, penned in like prisoners,
wading to their knees in shit.

I walked downtown.
past the cars and the bars and the shops
and when I got to Liberty Street,
all I found was a prison,
filled with lonely people who you once loved too.
Lonely people who will only return again
because sleeping in your prison cells
is warmer than sleeping on the street.

No, America, I'm not sure that you and I will pull though.
On our drives you played Motown soul
and I wore faded Springsteen blue jeans,
but you lied to me
when I asked if they had been made
by Chinese girls kept in factories like slaves
at the age of only thirteen.

I'm sorry, America,
but if we keep this up, there's going to be trouble.
You hate my red books and my black books
and the red faces and the black faces
(yet you only look at me with swastikas in your eyes).
You destroyed Route 66 because it wasn't worth the trouble
and built concrete arteries to carry dark blood to your dark heart.
Well, I won't travel it anymore.
I love you, America, and who you might have been,
but you and I, we're through.
Men.

Emily Hagy

Men in my family are rough.
Gritty, apathetic, unmoving.
Detachment means strength.

My father stands at the kitchen
counter to eat dinner.
My father’s father left him
with a string of bastard brothers
and absence only to model
himself after.

My brother doesn’t really
live anywhere in the world.
he just lends himself to places
and I think maybe someone
broke his heart, and it made
him just as still as he is
constantly moving towards nowhere.

My pop-pop was silent.
I can’t place a memory where
he ever spoke to me.
Subtly seeing through me in his corner recliner.

My uncle is tall with a gently gnarled nose,
he kills for sport and hates talking politics.
When I was little I found a photo
of him holding a turkey carcass.
He always scared me after that.

My cousin has a tattoo over his muscled heart
of a crooked batman symbol.
done by his drunken friend Taco.
and I hate that most of the lines
don’t meet. One sip of sticky booze and he’s shouting.

Sometimes I’ve caught myself
in the presence of some man, kissed by some man
close and rolling my fingers
over his bare, tough and smooth skin
and I feel in our senseless distance
I will never truly know a man,
because I never really have.
Artist Statement

Isabel Yun

Times of rapid change produce a lack of sensitivity. This inherent human lifestyle of the modern era often overlooks the mundane and subtle moments of the everyday life; beauty is omnipresent. Through my work, I capture fragments of life that have a peculiar or an unexpected quality. It is the juxtaposition of the shapes, tones, and textures or the way the light strikes the surface, triggering the shadows to shift or a fleeting moment that captivates my eye and dances with my imagination.

Through the dialogue between these fragmented, transmuted moments in time, I recreate the experience by my emotions and perceptions to allow a once transient and ephemeral phenomenon within our rapid lifestyle to endure long beyond that fleeting moment. While Ephemeral depicts a subject of the fragmented, transmuted moment in time, I choose oil as the medium for this painting because of the longevity and flexibility of the paint to echo the notion of extending an ephemeral moment. The flowing nature of the brush strokes, the movement, the tonal range, and the subtle blends equally trace the decisions and gestures made in real time. I hope that through this expression, the once forgotten morsels can be rediscovered.
Feet

Faith Pomeroy

Your feet hang over the bed
and I wonder if it means as much to you
as it does to me.

I saw the way you looked at me
when I pressed my hand to yours
in that tiny restaurant with the yellow walls.
Spanish fell from your lips like machine gun shells.
You might have killed me then.

You say that there is beauty in my stubbornness.
You say there is strength in my privacy.
I say I'll try not to steal the covers this time.

Maybe this is something you are looking for.
You are 43% wrong.
I am only calcium and protein.

We dissolve.
familiar.
Wild Fire

Ruth Shuford

The sky crackles and rumbles,
and a white electric flash
births fire upon a dead tree.
Like an animal, it crackles and hisses,
licks the earth with little tongues,
eats, climbs, smoulders,
spreads its limbs
across dry brambles.
Flames sink teeth into
undergrowth,
move and grow
with feverish passion.

At third grade,
one teacher announced:
“You read like wildfire,”
as though I read with
speed and spark.

But now I know,
to be made of fire
is to consume without creating.
Even my own attempts
to reproduce firewood,
my black type
and flickering cursor,
are a smokestack

bellowing up
from a mountain
of burning books.
Whetstone
Samantha Noble

Kkchink, Thump. Kkchink, Thump. Kkchink!

Crescent moon flakes of wood fly up into the air, landing softly onto the table and sticking to my sweater as I work.


The sound of my knife on the whetstone isn't all that different from sticking your head out of a window in a tunnel -- or what I imagine it'd be like. The air seems to curl around the metal itself, my striking and sharpening forming a rhythmic beat.

Besides that, the room is silent. I don't play music or the TV, and there is no chatting with a friend while I work. Definitely no friends -- the stillness would make anybody else uncomfortable. Good thing then that it's just me, the knife, a few chosen chisels, and a block of wood that I already see as a bird.

The whetstone I have was my father's, given to him by his father, who was given it by his father. When I use it, I caress the wooden case gingerly, as if the stone hadn't already outlived me by a hundred years. Still, of the thousand possessions that clutter my college apartment, this, by far, is my most precious. The stone itself is the blackish-gray of a chalkboard, the surface smoothed by time and hundreds of blade strikes. It bears its cracks and imperfections as scars and sometimes I almost can hear it saying, "Look what I've helped make."
There is no need to grunt when you’re alone, but I do so anyway when my chisel strikes a knot on the length of the wood— the part that I know will be the bird’s tail. I switch chisels to a sharper, angled blade, and grind into the spot. My payoff will happen an hour later, when I’ve succeed in removing a single square inch, creating a roughly hewn triangle. I don’t use a pattern, so anybody looking might think I’m just messing around— but I can see the delicate feathers starting to form under the flick of my fingers. It just takes time.

Woodcarving is always like that— having a secret. It’s an act of creation where there is no easy prediction of what it will be, whether it will work, or how long it will take. But now, when anything can be made in a matter of minutes, the goal of woodcarving remains not in the product, but in the process. That’s another thing others don’t seem to understand. They want their oak-hewn spoons smooth and flawless. But when I look at my grandfather’s delicate skiing figurine in his cozy post on my bookshelf, I don’t seem to see him, the stubby fingers crudely painted, the square face two-dimensional. Instead, I see him— my grandfather, sitting in his garage, his own stubby thumb firmly planted on his knife, carefully releasing curl after curl of wood. His thick white eyebrows are furrowed intently as he shifts the piece under his hands in the never-ending quest for a better angle. When he figures out he could use popsicle sticks as skis and toothpicks as poles, I see the delight shimmering in his blue eyes as sunlight off a lake’s surface. And even before him, I see another him, my great-grandfather. His face is roughly hewn as if carved in wood itself: my impressions from the two photos still in the family. But still he sits, at another table and in another time, the faithful whetstone keeping him company as the kkchink of the knife cuts the silence.

12:35 AM. It’s time to stop. In packing up my toolbox, I brace myself for the next morning’s onslaught of classes, work, and lunch with friends who laugh when my response to their question was that I spent the night carving a chunk of wood. Some want to see a picture and only can say “huh” when the photo I produce shows a triangle of wood. We change topics, and the lunch continues. But I can see a bird.
Down the Shower Drain

It's happened again.
Of course.
But I want it to happen again and again.
Is my mind so fearful of society that I will avoid life's pleasures at all costs?

Being scared of others doesn't seem very practical.

My body has become worn, shifting through the days.
Never settling.
Never resting.
Never returning to a clean slate.

My body is corrupted, used and touched by so many.
In the shower the water runs over me.
Slick and repellent it glides off my skin and down the drain, carrying my dirt.
Washing it away.

But I like it. I like being used. Or as we call it, "being loved."

This feeling is seeping into my mind, and lapping at the edges of my soul.
Tasting, eating, sucking so deeply.
It's... nice.
And I feel so dirty for it.

The joint is passed, the shots are gone, and my mind fades into oblivion.

The smoke burns my lungs with the fiery passion of being filled so completely.
Why do the wrong things in life feel so right?

I want. I crave. I need. But I can't always have and that is difficult, too.
It is hard to sit and wait, patiently, pretending to be another and never allowing myself to glare through.

I am okay keeping to myself and letting the dirt grind its way through my body.
how to hide your shame in public

Amanda Anzalone

alcohol. realize you've had too many.
  have one more.
  forget.
  wake up. be unsure
  of where you are, unable
  to recognize the smell
  of the sheets you're wrapped in.
quickly leave without asking his name.
  open your door and pull
your face muscles into what you hope
  resembles a smile at your roommates.
repeat nothing happened one too many times.
  shower a little too long
  with water a little too hot.
tell yourself nothing happened.
get dressed fast enough so you can't
  see your own body.
  grab the scarf, the one
  with the delicate flower design
that reminds you of the wallpaper
  you picked out
  with your mother when life
wasn't so terrifying, the one
  your mother sent you
because she said it made her think of you,
  the one with the smell that calms your racing
  mind.
  use the scarf to cover the foreign
  marks on your body.
  be unsure you said yes.
  but nothing happened...
so skip lunch to mimic control. cling
to the scarf until your hand
stings and swear to God.
  Repeat.
25th Wedding Anniversary
Celebrated in the Corner of My Kitchen

Megan Makarowski

I broke that glass bottle, smashed it on his head.

Blood mixed with merlot, red ran into red.

Glass fragments tinkled on to the tile floor.

It dripped down his nose to his parted lips.

Taking rapid breaths in his unconscious state drowning. I hoped, in the misery he caused.

I had kept that bottle for a worthy occasion.

Looking at the mess, all I could think was:

What a waste of wine.
Andromeda

Ruth Shuford

Even autumn is a time of metamorphosis.
The hum of cicadas through hot summer air
replaced with a hollow wind.
Soon, every branch will erupt
with the false fire of scarlet foliage
and the blood-blue sky
reaches down its corners
to the clear horizon
of undulating orange mountains.

Like the trees, you wish to
set your limbs aflame with color,
crumble your bones like aging monuments,
rip up your arteries like roots of weeds,
fill your lungs with soil and scream sunflowers.

But remember
that every tree is a multitude,
of leaves, of little capillaries and chloroplasts.
And you are also a collection of small universes,
interlocked, underneath your skin and sinew,
full of turning galaxies and glimmering constellations;
like Krishna, who parted his lips
to reveal the swirling shapes of every universe,
filled with stars and October sunlight.
When morning—after the night's haze is mourning after the night's haze:
Jane Doe, in a Culture of Drought
she is cracked open like
an excavation on dry earth
and I hear the tears as this dead child
looks to the stars to find
Reason in her Rape
but finds no Watcher-Over
for Jane Doe was born as the wrong flesh—
too drunk, too ripe, too provocative, too woman

Jane Doe, in a Culture of Civic Dispersion
she became a vacant space to store
men’s unfettered zeal, packaged and sent
from apartment to apartment
and captured by camera then
stored in the memory of the Eagle's eye & the spider's Web—
and the next morning, Jane Doe reconfigures her spent night via bites and bits

Jane Doe, in a Culture of BoysWillBeBoys
she liked a boy who cracked her opened
like a volcano ripping through the ocean floor
and bringing America's putrid water to the surface

Jane Doe, a Steubenville man said "America loves its football players more than it loves its daughters" but "Jane Doe"s already know

•Artist Statement•
Brianna Eagle

Growing up, I was a crafty child. I could make awesome popsicle stick picture frames and glue together pom-pom balls to resemble some kind of animal, but that was all the extent of my artistic ability. Years later, I found that I was capable of basic origami figures as well as some basic doodles that made others smile. Building on this very small skillset, I decided to venture into the world of graphic design through an intro course where no previous art experience (or class) was required. It was through many ups and downs with Photoshop that I realized I could create things more interesting and visually appealing than something doodled down or glued together.

Just Dandy is the end result of me wondering what seemingly simple "dandelions" would look like if they were to be literal "dandy lions". In general, I wanted my lions to be reminiscent of 19th century gentlemen due to their decorum and stateliness - their overall dandy appearance. The lion heads, oddly enough, worked well with the bodies because they too were stately and proud looking, but also, brought in that tongue-in-cheek quality I find both interesting and amusing. Through texturing, I wanted to add a bit of the vintage Victorian context, but also give my piece a more modern and eye catching appearance through the different coloring of each body part that ultimately culminate in the multi-colored heads.

Just Dandy is a prime example of what I like to do with my art. I like to experiment with color and texture and seeing what can happen when you put things together that you normally wouldn't. I like the humor that comes out combinations such as Just Dandy and I like the thought of all the outcomes that could happen when you take a chance and just create.
In the ashes of the 1980's, little Richie lived with his father in their one bedroom apartment in the south Bronx. Four blocks away from where he attended school, grade five. He left for school at 7:00AM. He counted nineteen pairs of shoes slung over cable lines on his way there, and rebounded six racial slurs. How long would it take for him to believe that brown skin was not a disease? On his way back, two rounds of gunfire pierced his eardrums in the distance, plus the three sirens that eventually followed. One man died for selling on another dealer's turf. Wandering the streets with his friends when the sky flashed to indigo, he passed three junkies sharing two heroin needles in the shadows of addiction, plus two drunks passed out on a stairway Minus the one that was on half dead on the curb. Surrounded by four walls of graffiti on the 6 train, How much pressure did little Richie feel when his friends got jumped into a gang and expected him to follow? Richie, had told his father "You're my hero", nearly every day since he'd learned what the word meant. It had been one of his 20 vocabulary words. Minus the days he forgot Minus the nights his father didn't come home until after he was asleep. In need of two extra blankets in one freezing bedroom, stretched as far as the hope he held that his father would make good on his word to leave this place behind someday. He had had four potential stepmothers in a two year radius. He'd gotten five warm smiles from the handful of women working the corner. Three of them were mothers. One of them had been sexually assaulted twice last month. Her vocal chords had shattered from the screams. Both times, no one cared. Because, "how the hell do you rape a hooker?" It will take someone three seconds to look down on them after processing their fishnets and cleavage. It will take you less than six seconds to judge them after you hear them labeled prostitutes. It will take another three seconds for you to deem them less than human. On the twelfth day of the month, he walked to school smiling. But how many tears would two doe eyes cry? When he came home to three bullets lodged into the heart of his father. How many times would little Richie scream "Daddy!" while kneeling in 0.5 liters of his blood? Minus ten thousand dollars of angel dusted blood money they'd wedged from his hands, still warm with the promises he'd served his son on a bronze platter. How much pain would little Richie feel? When the police officer looked him over, his eyes pale blue with venom and said "Boy, heroes die. Heroes sin. Heroes don't always win." Ten-year-old hands dug one hole in cold soil, two feet deep to bury the plastic superheroes he'd accumulated over five years of motherless Christmases. He kept the villains. That day, he was strangled by the hands of child welfare. At night, going to sleep in a foreign place, his heart plummeted seven inches into his stomach when he realized he was alone in a cruel world with zero people left to fight for him. It will take approximately five seconds for you to process your pity on Richie. 2.5 hours for you to go home to your warm bed, your electronics, and your loving family and forget that people like this even exist. Now. Add it up.
The Suicide Pact and the Mounted Head

Jake R. Toth

Antlers, arthritic hands grasping towards the ceiling.

In glass eyes, the reflection of two defeated boys set on ending their hunt for a better life.

Wiry golden hairs shift slightly with the breeze of cabinet doors swinging wide.

Perked up ears deaf to the single blast, a double barrel.

One blast less than promised.

Black and brittle nostrils can’t smell the blood of one brother lying dead and regretful tears of another.
Blood seeped up around the splinter
That had cuddled deep into the pad of my thumb.
I released the ivy that had woven itself up and
Around and through the lattice-work that boxed in
Our porch and hid our windows from the street.
I stepped into the heat of the kitchen and
Pulled a frozen cube from the ice box.
The cold of it made my skin pull back.
Away from the tiny wooden dagger.
I put my teeth down on the piece of the porch
That had set up shop in my thumb. and pulled.
I spat it down into the sink. Gone.
Wrapping a ratty dishtowel around my hand
To try to quell the bleeding, I sat down in a chair
And crossed my legs. My shin scraped the
Underside of the table. Another splinter.
A sigh bounced off the linoleum in resignation
Before catching hold of a warm breeze and
Being dragged out through the open window.
Cars wooshed by the far end of our front yard—
Empty noises in my ears that make it easier
To focus on the magazine my mother left behind.

It was hard to decipher the text through the thick
Screen of flour and baking powder that still clung
To the glossy pages since this morning.
But bare eyes managed to get the gist of it.
Another older white man had been sitting in a
Desk chair, basking in the framed shadow of his
Scientific doctorate, when he told the interviewer
That over the course of every seven or so years
All of the cells in our body will have died and
Rebirthed themselves one by one.
Until everything is new again.
My thumb stopped its purge then.
I stood and moved myself back to the porch.
Shaking sunlight from my eyes and
Breathing it all in. I relaxed my weight onto the ivy rails
That had struck me not ten minutes ago.
And I decided to forgive them.
If my whole being can end up forgiving every
Injustice from this second until seven years from now.
Then I can just as easily start the healing now and
Forgive what I am sure was a loving attempt at a kiss
Before I am unrecognizable to this home.
Sixteen
Rebecca Benedetto

Rain taps at the window sill
only the moon trickling through the blinds
I feel his fingers tightly around my wrists.

I flinch, the wood stings the skin on my back
as he tears my clothes from me.
I look away,
he whispers harsh words into my ear,
his voice smooth and slick like oil,
oozing from the car.
I feel his breath on my shoulder
with each heave, his body pushes down on mine.
I wiggle, trying to loosen his grip,
break free.

I want it to be over,
I want him to leave.

A crash of thunder beats down,
his sweat droplets drip onto my face.
Tears roll from my eyes leaving a trail—burning cheeks.
The rhythm in his movement quickens pace,
I hear his heart pounding, or is that mine?
The grunts grow louder in my ear, then
Silence.

A heavy sigh.
He releases me.
leaves me in the moon light
the door slams.
Pantoum for the Things You Don’t Write About
Dominique Marmolejo

I hate Veteran’s Day.

Everybody wraps themselves in flag-faced robes
parading patriotic poise and empty thanks
and I stand naked with my hand over my heart.

While everyone is wrapped in their flag-faced robes
I brace myself to walk outside with my guard up,
standing naked with my hand over my heart
as strangers belt the National Anthem on my television.

I brace myself and walk outside with my guard up,
ducking around the pointed elbows of pixelated salutes
as strangers belt the National Anthem on my television,
crying frozen freshwater tears.

I duck around the pointed elbows of pixelated salutes
edited for definition to stand up beside the neighbors’
crying frozen freshwater tears
and railing against the white picket finger-lace like Red Rover.

Edits for definition that stand up beside the neighbors’
but is it still “keeping up with the Joneses” if Mr. Jones isn’t coming home?
Do they rail against the white picket finger-lace like Red Rover
until the empty gloves break apart and appropriate their hands?

Are we all “keeping up with the Joneses” when Mr. Jones doesn’t come home?
Do we all stash our memories in black leather creases
until the empty gloves break apart and appropriate hands
so real you could reach through time and feel their warmth?

I’ve stashed my memories in the black leather creases,
folding phantom knuckles away into my glove box.
It’s so real that I can’t reach through time and feel their warmth.
They don’t make Band-Aids for that.

Unfolding my knuckles from fists set to box
to lay flowers at my feet
- They don’t make Band-Aids for that. -
I pray the Pledge of Allegiance with my hand over my naked heart.

Laying flowers that somehow got lost
in the parade of patriotic poise and empty thanks,
and praying the Pledge of Allegiance with my hand over my naked heart –
I hate Veteran’s Day.
Pantoum for the Things You Don’t Write About
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Laying flowers that somehow got lost
in the parade of patriotic poise and empty thanks,
and praying the Pledge of Allegiance with my hand over my naked heart –
I hate Veteran’s Day.
The wind breezes through my hair.
The sunlight looks pink.
Camouflaged by my eyelids.
I can turn my face fully to the light.

I think of you here.
Clouds move across the sky.
The long grass sways around me,
and I think of you here.

The sound of your voice
weaves between the blades of grass,
and throughout the pink spots of light
seeping through my eyelids.

The smell of mud and soil
tickle my nose.
And for that one moment,
I'm not concerned over anything.

Not the small bug exploring my skin,
not the grass stuck in my hair,
not the dirt in my nails,
not the fact you’re not here.

All I’m concerned with is:
my body laying on the soil beneath me,
slowly adhering to my body,
and keeping my shape.

Helping me make a temporary fossil,
on the otherwise impeccable setting.

Idyllic
Marissa McCormick
Losing

Ruth Shuford

The thing is, I lose everything. I’ve misplaced all the things I own at least twice. No thing is safe from disappearing. It all slips between the threads rough stitched fabric of my universe.

A few weeks ago, a pair of rose colored rabbit-shaped earrings went missing. They must have scampered away from my bedside table as I slept.

and yesterday too my class ring, with dragon insignia carved into its metal side, lost so many times I’ve just stopped looking. It always turns up again like a hungry cat.

Long ago I bid farewell to a book of poetry by Billy Collins, each page dressed in a suit of marginalia, kissed my favorite teacup goodbye, the pond-green one, topography of cracks down the side, and one sock from almost every pair has fluttered free like a pet parakeet through the open window.

So I hope you understand, love, why I hold you so close, afraid that if I set you down and turn around for even an instant you will disappear, gone the way of so many photographs, rusted door keys, and two driver’s permits.

Now you know why in my dreams I forever find myself searching for you, hands outstretched, in the dark.
I was born into the arms of rejection.
Rocking my infant body above light blue linoleum
just as spring broke in May,
smiling down at me as if I were cheap gold.
I was a daffodil seedling planted by God beneath
your aorta,
trying to struggle up out of the cracks.
But you ripped me up by the roots
like some vexatious weed
Budding where I didn’t belong.

You dropped me into the mouth of the lioness we’re
forced to survive in,
and she swallowed me whole because my heart
was just as
raw as the baby gazelle in her belly.
Just as innocent, too.
You shattered it and then punctured my back
as deep as the spine with the shards of it.
Why didn’t you teach me how to guard it?
How to dig a moat around vital organs
to drown the jackals that came in packs at night,
groping my body with their eyes,
sizing me up like prime rib.
Why didn’t you paint maps of mistakes on the backs
of my hands?
So that I would know how to avoid yours.
To have a chance to learn from my own.

I used to mold your promises with wax so when the
faith in six year old eyes ignited them, and they melted into
lies.
I could blame it on the flames.
So I could ignore the screen door click at midnight
when I’d be left alone, twirling a little hourglass in the dark.
Because I didn’t need to see the black sand dripping
through the neck
to know that even time couldn’t heal the doses of pain
you’d shot up my veins like crystal methamphetamine.

You taught your son to be a man through black eyes.
So he’d cry liquid silver to make a medal,
and somehow win at the game of life.
You expected your daughter
to turn a blind eye to your sins.
and go out in the backyard to jump rope
with the same noose you hung her self esteem with.
She was born headstrong and steadfast,
ever interested in conforming to her peers.
She only crumbled because the pressure to look like the
models came from you.

We’d die for the ones we love, but I have no doubt
that if it came down to you or I in this arena, you’d crown
yourself with life.
The same way you did when you built a throne
with everything you took from me.

We cannot help the hell we are born into.
Some of us waste our lives trying to mold it into a heaven.
Someday we must let the relationships of
those we cannot save, go up in smoke.
And swallow the match.

Ode to the Abusive Mother

Brittany Fisher
Parkinson’s
Rebecca Benedetto

Hands, wrinkled and aged, shake violently in mine,
little glittering flakes
of sun dance
about the walls, reflecting off the charm bracelet
so loose on her slender wrist.

Glossy eyes wander back to mine,
clear and calm
like blue water after storm—
Waves of fear pound on my chest
crushing me with their weight.

Lips twitch, attempt to form words,
only air whistling past
white teeth and pink gums.
Sweat swirls with tears, sliding down my cheeks
in trails of pearl.

Glancing away from her frail body wrapped
in the frayed
crochet blanket,
the flowers on the bedside table drop
browned petals and leaves.

I kiss her forehead, white feathery hairs tickle my nose.
Placing a hand lightly
on her shoulder
I feel her bones rattling beneath the fragile weight
of my fingertips.
The Leaky Faucet

Kevan Hulligan

the smoke hung in the air like beehives made of tar.
the clanking of glasses were the drums of life’s ensemble band.
the door creaks every time it opens welcoming new residents to this house of liquor and broken dreams.
regular blue collar shmucks ending a long day of emasculating work by gulping down glasses of relaxation hoping for a little release from their strain both foreign and domestic.
the wall street big shots who decided to “slum it” tonight so they can mock the peasants and bathe in their own self-satisfaction.
cokewhores making the rounds licking the openings of their reptilian word-holes singing their twisted siren song to any man looking for a good time just as long as they had a few bucks to spare.
the bartender has seen too many harsh winters looking as grizzled and hard as the taste of the vodka he hands out on a regular basis cleaning the glasses as if trying to clean his soul.
wiseguys whispering in darkened corners wearing fancy track suits and business attire smoking cigars the size of .45s discussing new additions to their gravestone collections as their chains rattled around like church bells on Sunday.
junkies frantically twitching in their booths trying to see the rainbow through the dank marsh of their drug-addled minds.
old men sitting at the bar reflecting on their long, uneventful lives through whiskey glass binoculars.
yes. The Leaky Sink was a meeting place for sad fools and bad intentions. A chapel dedicated to the worship of decadence where the parishioners praise Jack, Jim, and Johnnie on ash-covered altars praying the night away.
Claire Haskins

Lepidoptera

Were she a butterfly, I think she would not move; her splendor would be spread wide upon the velvet, but pinned with a slender needle through her neck.
To stay, pushed amongst those not of her choosing and wings forever stifled between cold metal and poisoningly soft cloth, must be hell as she dreams of flowers and a breezy heaven.
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Business Manager: Lucas Falzetti
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Hannah Burgess

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JMU College of Arts and Letters
JMU Media Board
Mary Murphy and McClung Companies
Rose Gray & Susan Facknitz
Judging and Designing Process

To ensure fairness, staff and general submissions were judged separately. Staff submissions were accepted until midnight on February 10th with a limit of five entries per member. The writing entries were compiled on a GoogleDoc, while the art submissions were compiled in a Flickr gallery. In both cases, the works were compiled without bylines by the Editor-in-Chief and Managing Editor. Submissions were judged anonymously at 8pm on February 13th in the Annex. Of 26 writing and art submissions, six were tentatively chosen. This list was finalized after general submissions were judged.

General submissions were accepted until midnight on February 17th at the limit of five entries per student. As with staff submissions, the Editor-in-Chief and the Managing Editor compiled the submissions on a GoogleDoc and a Flickr gallery omitting bylines. The Art Committee, led by the Art Committee Head, met at 7:30pm on February 25th in the Annex and chose 28 of the 116 art submissions. The Writing Committee, led by the Writing Committee Head, met at 8:30pm the Annex on February 27th. 27 writing submissions were chosen out of a total of 131 entries. Judging was completed through voting with the Editor-in-Chief and Managing Editor excluded from all selection processes.

Design began the week of March 2nd and continued through the week of March 23rd. During these weeks, the magazine was planned, designed, and edited. Book layout was orchestrated by the Editor-in-Chief and Chief Designer. Artist Statements were requested by the Editor-In-Chief and Chief Designer based on popularity and space allowances.

For the sake of artistic integrity, all submissions were published as closely to original condition as possible. Prose was edited for grammar, while poetry was left largely unedited. Stylistic attributes, such as spacing and alignments, were determined by the magazine style guide unless otherwise expressed by the writer. Art was subject to cropping if necessary.

The staff appreciates your submissions and hopes all work was presented in a clear and pleasing way.

Production Details

The cover was printed on Cougar Super Smooth Paper and the content was printed using Flo Dull Text paper All content was printed using CMYK color and were designed using Adobe InDesign CS6 and Adobe Photoshop CS6 on Mac Desktop Computers in the Hillside and Moody Hall computer labs at James Madison University. All Images were submitted as JPEGs or TIFF's in various resolutions. McClung Companies in Waynesboro, VA printed 1,200 all-color copies, which the staff distributed to the JMU community free of charge in April 2014.

The style guide includes the following fonts: Caviar Dreams, regular and bold, in sizes 45pt -- gopt was used for titles; Raleway, extra light, regular, and bold were used for body copy and bylines in sizes 9pt -- 14pt. The style guide utilized ‘dots’ as accents in various places, such as artist bylines and page numbers, in order to echo the round features in the Gardy Loo logo. The introduction and conclusion pages were created with photoshop, using various water color brushes to exemplify the color features of the cover. The cover work is The Scientist by Orphia Zot. The image was slightly enlarged with photoshop to ensure the piece would fit the cover properly and a portion of the piece was copied for the back cover. Otherwise, The Scientist as shown is in original form.

Want your work published?

Please send all submissions to jmugardyloo@gmail.com or through our website www.jmugardyloo.org. Include your preferred print name and attach all works with respective clearly specified titles. Although we accept untitled submissions, we strongly suggest titling your work for clarity. Submissions are limited to five per person and may consist of writing and art. If you are interested in becoming a staff member, simply attend a meeting or e-mail us for more information.
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