Great art is an instant arrested in eternity.

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www.jmugardyloo.org & jmugardyloo@gmail.com
Dear Readers,

So, this will be my last letter since I am graduating (there is a lot of emotion behind that word, as some of you know and the rest of you will find out) this semester. I’ve done the emotional, the heart-felt, and the inspiring letters. Now, I’m going to do the realistic one.

Gardy Loo was a lot of hard work. It was hours upon hours spent in a computer lab. It was dealing with politics, budgets, and sometimes a general lack of enthusiasm. It was side-stepping homework, sleep, and almost losing my sanity to make sure this magazine looked beautiful and came out on time.

But it wasn’t all bad. There was laughter and silliness at our meetings. There was passion from both our staff and the wonderful artists who submitted to our magazine. I had a lot of help, some amazing staff members, beautiful co-editors, inside and out, and a magazine that came out at the end of the semester that I could be proud of; a magazine that we could be proud of. This is what its like to do something that you are passionate about.

The work is exhausting and exhilarating at the time. Every other moment you want to quit and yet for some reason you keep going. This is the kind of feeling that can’t be replaced, replicated, or faked. So embrace it.

Thank you to the staff that for some crazy reason, believed in me. Thank you to my co-editors, Erica and Taylor, for going on this journey with me and coming out on the other side as friends. Thank you to my friends and family for allowing me my breakdowns and then helping me keep going.

Thank you to you, the readers, who have given us feedback, both positive and negative, that has allowed us to grow. Thank you for picking up this magazine (and a bigger thank you if you don’t throw this away somewhere I can see it).

May Gardy Loo live on, happily ever after!

Jaimie Swann
Editor-In-Chief
June 14
When we left this morning I wasn’t fully awake and my
half open eyes stumbled down the stairs and into our now washed car.
You had the map set, and we were ready. Ready to drive for the next
hours or days or months. After all,
exploring is just carving out home wherever you go.

July 5
Bridges stitch together cracks in the land,
water imposing canyons in red dirt
as if to say, let me have a turn in making mountains.

August 19
We watched fireworks last night
the lights scarred our eyes - we kissed blind

September 23
Restless isn’t quite the word I’d use, that’s
what they don’t understand - those content with staying still,
forgetting we’re always turning, so we might as well keep moving

October 7
Truthfully, I never thought we’d still be going, but I guess
leaving nothing behind means everything is here.

Let’s keep leaving

Wanderers
Vaden Vosteen
The open sun, 
flares its fingers, 
grasping my skin. 
Stinging it red.

Dusted cowboy boots, 
kick up clouds; 
which settle, 
after I'm gone.

There is no end 
to this roam. 
I will always be 
dust but never 
settling after 
I'm gone.

Unsettling 
Dust

Robert Fadley
Peoples Climate March NYC 2014.
Protesting, chanting and holding
Our ideals high on poster board above our heads.
Walking endlessly on hard concrete.
Long day, tired body.

Starving, we scour the streets for pizza
On our way back to Penn Station.
In need of cheese melted on crisp bread
Greasy and warm, filling my mouth.
Salivation propels my aching limbs until we find god.

Two slices ordered,
Two bites before I paid a dime.
Four dollars poorer with rich taste buds
and a stomach on its way to fulfillment.
I tried to eat slow but couldn’t control
the hands and jaw that kept saying more.

Penn is in sight and we tread on.
One cherished slice left. We pass
a middle aged homeless woman
with a sign that reads, “HUNGRY FOR FOOD.”

She sat surrounded by a few belongings and sheets,
hair disheveled, dressed in ragged layers.
Looking tired, with a dull and detached expression.

She chose here because its prime tourist population.
Empty handed she sits in the wealthiest of cities,
among the wealthiest of people.
who pass with designer accessories and
high tech cell phones right in front of her face.
She can touch none of it.
And then I pass with my pizza.
My heart sinks and I wrestle with my own hunger,
greed and selfishness.
Shouldn’t my hunger have lent empathy to
what she feels all too often?

But that’s not how it works
upon getting too close, with the possibility of
implication and responsibility
we recoil, repulsed.
Not even my guilt could push me to action.
As I sat on the train to go home to
My clean and safe suburb,
(Eating my last slice)
I became all too aware of the different lives
we live.

I took with me a restless emptiness
for the plain sighted injustice of
suffering left alone.
And a resentment for my privilege and
selfishness in perpetuating it.

Katie Costanzo

An Apology
Intrusive Thoughts

She sits in chairs that are too comfortable,
uses tissues that are too soft,
has too much trouble distinguishing
which of the lives she inhabits is real.

She longs to stay in the lie she concocted
for her family only because they must not know
and it might be easier to pretend that it never happened.
Pretend that she never had beer bottle glass cutting her back.
that she never found out what her own blood tastes like,
that she never went up those stairs.
that she never even met him at all—
but she is thrown back into the truth
of having to figure out what muscles she should use
to put on a brave face when he approaches her
and thanks her for "what a great time
he had the night before."

She navigates the graveyard
that beats between her ribs,
on her way to bury this part of herself.
She digs her heel into the dirt and wonders
if the flowers in her hands are really there
or does she just believe they are because
the sticky juice of the stems
is all too familiar to her palms.
Blood-moon blooms
in summer's sky.

Copper powder
settles on my tongue.
Too thick
to speak.

You were broken bones
between my thighs
before you had breath.
Dr. Mary Beth Cross, PhD.
Clinical psychologist who always ended her interactions
With, "take good care," in a voice smooth as butter.
As if she could soothe my pain away; soft voice
Stare so intimidatingly intense, I could feel it penetrating
My soul, qualified to listen to despair. I articulated
To her with hesitation that inhibited comfort.
That I love a man who annoys me, but I don't expect
Him to change, and she responded by rolling her eyes.

I watched in horror as her eyes traveled to the tops of her
Eyelids, and quickly landed safely in the position in which
They began. Never leaving her notepad, she didn't allow her
Face to leave its position of facing downwards towards it
Writing down every piece of psychological pain that I
Described in detail, and saying everything else with the distance
Her eyes traveled while sending her pupils on an adventure
Throughout the opening of the slits of skin that hold her eyes.

She spoke so loudly with her body that I haven't been
Able to forget it since, because it's a polaroid picture stuck
On the horizon of my memories without any greasy fingerprints
To inhibit clarity. But I forgot to thank her. Gratitude is due.
I forgot to thank her for letting me know that each sleepless
Night that I spent clutched in the metal spiked arms of anxiety
Isn't worth talking about.
I forgot to thank her for implying to me that each time I am asked
To present for a class, I can feel bits of my stomach dying
Underneath the weight and the poison of my stomach acids,
Thrown into a tumult from stress
Isn't worth talking about.
My memories aren't worth talking about!
I'm not worth talking about!

I forgot to say thank you for compartmentalizing my character
Into neatly organized, incorrect assumptions, and expressing
Irritability when I refused to simplify my complexities
And inconsistencies, so that her job could be easier
Because now I realize I am just as insane as I worried, if not more.
My desperation eroded my common sense and, therefore, all
My pretenses of happiness and well being

Clouding my introspection so that I was naïve enough to believe
My consistently quick heartbeats were indicative of an
Annoying personality of a woman detached from reality and not
A woman suffering from slowly engulfing madness.
No, I am an annoying woman, yes, but now I know I’m also crazy.

The woman who treated me as a job and not a human being
Granted me clarity in her invalidation of my feelings.
I am a problem to be fixed and nothing more. Her reluctance
To acknowledge her own behavior when I inquired about it,
Normalized it, furthering the distance between me and her
Or anyone else as, "sick," and, "healthy."
I've wanted to be a therapist for three years
A dream concluded by a 60 minute intervention of a woman
Indifferent to my struggles who clarified that, above all else,
Therapy is a business, and people's trust is the currency.
Tartarus

Vaden Vosteen

My dreams of space were cut short by an
unfortunate encounter
with a black hole.

Caged in my ribs was a star.
Upon that first kiss,
it grew into a sun.
We marveled at the brightness.

You swore we were twin celestial beings,
encircling each other as if this had always been the plan,
thrown into orbit by Helios himself.

I never questioned it.

But we were destined to die.
Millennia not enough to protect us.
Your last words sparked me into supernova and I burned.

I burned until nothing was left and I let myself implode.
Now all I know is the nothing.
The pull into dark.
I thought we'd explore the heavens, now I'm caught
in always and never.
Linger
Vaden Vosteun

I stretch my neck back, reaching my head to my shoulder blades, straining to glimpse the flickers of fireflies in the dark trees above. Their black green against an inky black blue, with white out stars splattered across the page. You don't get this dark in the cities, where neon replaces star and airplanes, planets. Flash and speed instead of slow, sparkling shine. Do I live slower here? Are the minutes the same or are the hours, somehow, longer? Sixty seconds is a long time to count between lightening strikes and owl hoots. An hour is even longer when it's the last one before the sun slips behind the mountain and brings us into slow, dark, shadow. I wish, on my stars I wish I could always feel this peace.
The rhythmic clunking of the heavy wheels against the railroad drowned out all other sounds. Muffled by the roar of the engine, a voice crackled over the intercom echoing its message through the crowded space. "Next stop Boston Train Station, all passengers departing please proceed to the front of the train with your boarding pass"; not that anyone could clearly hear the disembodied voice. The train rocked, back and forth, back and forth. David Shale swayed in the worn blue-carpeted seat, his head lolled to one side and a small puddle of drool pooled on his wrinkled blue collar. He had not shaved in days and his eyes were bloodshot behind his lids. He grew used to his discontinued slumbers: a little here, a bit there.

Neglecting. That’s the word Amanda had used when she calmly sat at the small circular table at midnight, waiting for David to walk in the door from work. Tired and sore from craning his neck at briefs on the computer screen in his office, he would trudge in and find her. Sitting looking at him calmly and creating a tension only David could feel. In her hands she cradled a black heavy pottery mug. Her ring finger was slightly pulled away from the mug so her wedding band did not clink against the mug, while her pointer finger slowly tapped the side of the mug rhythmically. She never liked coffee, but she liked how it felt cupped in her hands: warm. She had said the coffee felt like a presence in the empty kitchen.

When they had first bought the home, Amanda had tried to tear off the fading floral wallpaper, but in the end she had left it. She claimed that it made her feel like Alice in Wonderland, because the flowers on the wallpaper had such long stems that they towered far above her head, stretching toward the ceiling. She felt buried under ground the size of an ant looking up at the flowers. Amanda had stopped waiting for David for dinner after he walked in the door late for the umpteenth time after they were first married long ago, and he had stopped expecting it soon after. Now, she just was an ant in the dirt.

The train rattled and David's briefcase slid further under the seat in front of him. He did not even notice. He continued to doze, vaguely aware that he should begin to move towards the front of the train. Boston was where his life was, where Amanda was.

They were supposed to be happy there. Just days after graduate school and with an offer from a friend's firm, David had signed a contract to be a lawyer for a firm practicing civil law. He never wanted to be a lawyer, but he was good at arguing. He could argue his way out of any situation and, conversely, argue his way into any situation. So when he finished his bachelor of arts in geology without a job offer, rather than returning home to his father's disappointed glances and his mother's timid footsteps, he took out a loan and enrolled in law school.

His passion was geology, however. David loved how the earth seemed to destroy and repair itself all at once. It built itself on itself. Minerals were just glorified dirt that someone saw the beauty in. When he was twelve he took the challenge of...
digging to China seriously. So seriously in fact, that he hit a water line. But before he flooded the street, he found something. He found a rock. When he broke it open, he found ribbons of teal with swirls of onyx inside. It was beautiful. It was different. To David, the earth only hid magic to people who did not want to understand.

He kept the rock on his dresser and decided his future should lay with the earth. The rock was shown to friends and colleges alike. but after he met Amanda he figured she should keep it. Amanda placed it on the kitchen table for them to see every day. His father never supported his desire to become a geologist. “What is so interesting about the damned ground? It’s over. It’s done with,” he ranted. His mother only supported him in the fake sort of way mothers do when they hope their child will outgrow something. Unlike his parents, Amanda would have rather David been a geologist. “Do what makes you happy,” she persisted each time. David’s brief case burst open with legal documents on the kitchen table covering the rock.

The train screeched to a stop. David’s eyes snapped open as tap pulled against the polyester seatbelt fitted snugly across his hips. “Folks there seems to be a train attempting to enter our track at the same location we are trying to exit. so we will be experiencing a short delay while we configure the movements between us.” David rubbed his eyes and turned his gaze to the window on his left. It was raining out and fog was clouding the fingerprinted window. It figures. He promised Amanda that he would be home before eight at night and now he knew he would not. He did not want to call and tell her the news. The disappointment and cutness in her voice was all too familiar to him and she knew how it made him feel. She did not stop though, because somewhere deep down, as far as China. David knew she kept hoping it would change.

She loved him. She told him. After graduate school, he was living in an apartment in Boston barely able to pay rent and student loans. He stumbled down his front stoop hurriedly one day and fell into Amanda. Literally. She caught him. Or that was the joke. Recently, he could never catch a break with her. She was beautiful. She sometimes wrinkled her nose when she looked at him; like she was fighting the urge to smile. She wore glasses that sometimes slipped down her ski sloped nose. David always thought women in glasses were too serious for their own good. until he met Amanda. She was quick, spontaneous, and worked as an art director for a museum downtown. She was on track to be everything David never was and she lived for herself! She knew who she was and she made him feel like he knew who he was.

There was a mirror in their front hall opposite the door. Once before he and Amanda left for a restaurant, David caught a glimpse of the two of them standing side by side in the mirror. As he helped her into her coat, he noticed. He noticed his wrinkled collar and crooked nose. That was when Amanda turned to the mirror to tie her scarf and noticed David. He felt himself grow warm, as he always did when she looked at him. She giggled and straightened his crooked glasses on his crooked nose, turned on her heel, grabbed his hand, and pulled him to the future.

Back then; he would take her to the Boston Park late at night. “That’s when all the rocks sparkle,” he had said. “Everything that’s covered in dirt reacts differently in the moonlight.” Sometimes at night in the parks with Amanda, he could forget that he was a lawyer. In the park, he was David: geologist extraordinare.

When he asked her to marry him, after two years together, she said yes. “But only if you don’t make me old and boring and unhappy,” she had said. “Never,” he answered. So that was it. Their life together would be games of never. She never wanted him to work so late. He never wanted to make her threaten to pack her bags every few weeks. She never wanted to marry someone working just for money and without a thirst for adventure. He never knew who he was without her. But their nevers grew into always and desires into doubts and soon, they were strangers who knew absolutely everything about each other.

The train continued to sit idly on the tracks. The world grew colder, darker. The train lights turning on in the pitch black jolted David awake. He had better call Amanda to let her know that he would be late. As if she would expect otherwise. With tired fingers, he dialed her number.

“Amanda,” she responded on the first ring.

He can almost see her like she used to be back then, before disappointment peered out at him from behind her thick-rimmed glasses.

“Amanda, the train’s delayed. I might be late.”

“Of course. See you later.”

“Amaza...I’m sorry.”

“I know.”

The receiver clicked and David looked at her name flash across the screen for an instant before disappearing.

Months into their relationship, Amanda told David that she never thought she could be with someone who worked hours and hours as a lawyer. “I
would be alone a lot," she said. David had assured her that would not happen. He made time to see her now, did he not? Besides, he was only working at the firm until a job at the geology department or museum opened. That had assured her fears for a while, but David grew tired of waiting and rejection after rejection and buried the letters of disappointment under case files to pay the bills.

He knew she was unhappy, but what could he do? She had always told him that he should become a geologist. "Why not?" she questioned. "Just walk around the museums and schools for a few days. Make a few connections. Take a personal day or two." He could never explain. He was the lawyer who could never explain his answers.

His phone buzzed and a number he did not know flashed across the screen. David stared at the phone a moment before deciding not to answer. Whatever it was could leave a message and he would handle whatever it was the next day. Picking up the phone and answering it might lead to work and Amanda would just sink further into unhappiness. First he was late and now he brought his work home with him. He wasn't happy. The train moved a bit. The voice echoed over the speaker again. "Thank you all so much for your patience, folks. We should be arriving in Boston shortly." David began to ready himself in his seat. He squirmed a bit and patted his hair down. He lifted his luggage from the shelf above his seat and set it in the aisle in beside him. The train lurched and stopped. David moved to the back of the line with a cup of coffee watching the fog waiting for David to be late. Later the driver of the red eighteen-wheeler will say that he should have had that extra cup of coffee. Later, Amanda will sit at the kitchen table and notice that there was a voicemail from the number. While he was looking at his phone, a taxi stopped, then the driver shook his head. "Gold's Jewelry: Gold Doesn't Sparkle When You First Find It" flashed in David's vision for an instant before a screech filled the foggy night. Seconds after the screech, a crunch dulled the high pitched song. What once was David lay twisted inside the metal frame of the cab. He joined the asphalt. In the silence, his phone buzzed with the missed call's message.

When the police officer arrived at the scene, he was excited. This was his first real job without a mentor. He closed off the area and pulled the contents out of David's pockets to figure out his identity. The officer noticed David's phone was buzzing with a voicemail. "Perfect," he thought. "Now we can reach this guy's friend and he can help us out."

The disembodied voice played, "Good evening. We have just finished reviewing your application and would be thrilled if you would fill the opening in the research sector of the Geology Department here at the Museum of Rocks and Minerals. Please give us a call back. Thank you so much." The police officer sighed. "Damn, this message tells us nothing about him." Handing David's possessions to the ambulance driver, the officer left the scene.

Later the driver of the red eighteen-wheeler will say that he should have had that extra cup of coffee. Later, Amanda will sit at the kitchen table with a cup of coffee watching the fog waiting for David to be late. Later she'll wonder why he couldn't just be late again. Later, when the doctor calls her she'll wonder if their marriage was always just a series of nevers. Like rocks that are never found. Then, later she'll remember sometimes rocks get lost in the earth. They just bury themselves deep down, lost forever, but nothing's really ever lost forever.
Clockwise from top: Ablution, Hemidemisemiquaver, Cacography, Indelible
Jeffrey Thelin
Artist Statement

I consider myself to be a "Mobile Artist," meaning I do all of my artwork on my iPhone. I always start with an image I have taken, using my iPhone. I then edit, transform, and add to the image until it reaches completion. The entire process is incredibly inspiring; what many people think is only possible on a computer, I can do with a device that fits in my pocket. I love the mobility because my art never has to stop. I don't have to wait to add this or that until I get home, I can work while I am waiting in line, or I'm on the bus: my art is always right on the edge of my fingertips. Creating art on a smartphone is certainly a limiting and sometimes frustrating experience, there are many hiccups and barriers, but I have found that these things in the end have only challenged me to be more creative and think in innovative ways to achieve my desired results.

I truly gather inspiration from all around me. Having my art studio and camera in my pocket has changed how I see the world - I'm always alert watching everything passing me and imagining designs over them. Specifically, though, I have a deep love for geometry, color, and simple line work. I find the lines of buildings, the vertical nature of trees meeting perpendicular to a horizontal landscape, and empty skyscapes interacting with the organic shapes of clouds to all be very inspiring things.

My intention with my art is to just provide people with a visual experience: everyone sees, interprets, and feels something different when they view it and that is what I love. I believe that if people tried to view art the way they hear music, they would have a more enjoyable experience. Most people don't ask what classical or instrumental music means after they hear it; they simply appreciate pieces of its structure, such as its melody, rhythm, and chords. Art is full of the same elements. I encourage you to view my pieces as a visual experience, and try to find elements of harmony, repetition, and balance.
Lowly whispers cut through the wind,
As he stands before the currents, peering over the rock.
Doesn't know where to go, but knows where he's been;
Like the end of the road, he feels his journey must stop.

A Coarse hand, rubs upon his cheeks like snow
While the wind pulls hair to nature's discretion.
A beating abandoned shell, left long ago,
No one's inside to make a decision.

Sights the curling foam created by water on rocks-
Looking miles down, he smiles;
Realizing the ocean never stops.

Maybe it was just the wind blowing in
Making a stinging ring inside his chest.
Then all was numb, just like he had been;
Knowing his heart felt the last of life's mess.

Somewhere inside his vacant shell
The last of something made up his mind.
As he plummeted down, ears ringing bells.
He was glad that she had declined.
American Girl
Charlene Wood

When my Korean mother bore me,
She always refused to teach me any Korean.
Fragmented English, bedtime stories in which
The wrong syllables were stressed, and a rice cooker that was
Perpetually steaming, all paint the canvas of my memories of my childhood.
Eventually, in fragmented English, but with a heart so sincere,
That I could see her protective, undying, motherly love
Slipping from her mouth, carried like blood in an artery, directly from her heart.
She explained that she didn’t teach me the language of
My ancestors and beloved mother, so that I wouldn’t suffer
As she did when confronted with the “American culture.”
She didn’t want me to speak Korean at home, only to be told
It was foreign, as soon as I left the safety of my mother’s arms; my home.
She wanted me to appear as, be as, American
As she and I could help. She didn’t want me to suffer by
Hearing children, lost in their own identities, calling me, “China Doll”
Or have a boy from school tell me, in sincere,
Eyebrow-furrowing, honesty, that, “My English has gotten better”
Or have a boy, with skin and eyes
Paler than mine will ever be, tell me that I am beautiful,
And tell me later that he only finds Asian women attractive.
Only recognizing the culture I inherited from my mother.
He refers to me exclusively as “Asian.”
As if my father isn’t a hazel-eyed, blonde, White male.

So that I would not grow up thinking my nickname is, “Ching-chong.”
Or that I was some exotic sexual treasure from the Orient
That would be submissive and just as exotic in appearance as in bed.
Boys who watch anime and read manga like a religious ritual.
And develop a taste for girls like me.
Girls with slanted eyes, high cheekbones, and
Face that will eternally resemble youth.
They see girls like me and fall in love.
They love me because I represent a character.
They love me because I represent an object.
From this, my mother did not want me to suffer.

Eyes that can't breach the surface of my eyes to reach my soul.
These boys tell me that I am the girl of their dreams.
I am the fulfillment of their English-dubbed, soft spoken dreams.

Upon hearing me speak,
I am asked about the origin of my accent.
Everyone is the bearer of bad news and tells me that I cannot pronounce my "r"s.
No doubt attributing my deficiency in English to my non-existent second language.

When I tell my mother now, that I am Asian,
She tells me that I am not, while biting into a leaf of cabbage.
In which she rolled rice, gochujang, and an assortment of naked peppers.
I tell her that I am, as if it is something that requires evidence,
As I eat kimchi, rice, and spaghetti.
I handle my chopsticks expertly.

When my mother gave life to me,
She refused to teach me any Korean and drafted an
Unspoken contract for me to sign to appear as, sound as, live as, be as,
American as possible.
Of which I unconsciously signed so that my mother, and I,
Her daughter whose face is more likely to conjure up "Ching-chong."
Than, "Charlene," in someone else's mind.
Would not need to suffer at the hands of "American culture."
Topaz Waves

Rebecca Blair

Twisting and turning –
the hair you wrap around your finger.
Each thread, golden-brown
tinted with streaks of topaz
from long hours spent
in the blinding summer sun.
Still, your skin is pale
glowing like sand in the moonlight.
Naked by the ocean,
you will the waves to take you.

Like the Ancient Mariner,
I could tell you a story of rime.
A companion to the song
you called out in the night.
The hushed th-thump of my melting heart
greeting the faint lyrics
flowing from your lips.
Such words that make these waves
 tumble to your feet
meeting sand with their knees.

Twisting and turning
like the world in which
everybody wants to fall in love.
Sans that paradox your wore –
now floating out to sea.
Much like the face
that launched a thousand ships
calling sailors and soldiers
to save the façade,
hypnotically rowing.

With every salty, rhythmic wave
you purify me.
Like the rocks on the shore
each one, slowly eroding.
I’ll remain until I’m left for nothing
but the bits you let fall
through slender white fingers,
sifting me until you find the wholest piece.
A shell or fragile stone to thread and wear
right above where your heart beats.

Twisting and turning,
like the boats out at sea.
Shipmen brave the storms and rain
to rummage for the jewel
you ripped from your chest
and tossed out to the hungry trenches.
“To stop the longing,” you said.
“To heal the greed.”
Sunken treasure
for whoever finds the sunken key.

Yet, am I the only one who sees
your eyes are glacier green.
Emeralds will never compare
to that never-melting ice
kissed by a thousand
sunrises and sunsets.
The windows of your soul glisten
with the surface of the sublime:
only questions and inquiries
for what lay beneath.

So I’ll sit by your side on this shore.
I’ll watch you watch the waves and boats
helplessly out at sea
wishing those topaz highlights
could be wrapped around my fingers
as delicate as the wind
that brushes them from your face.
Glistening in the moonlight, the ocean
it carries us away.
The ocean, it carries us away.
Avalon Farm 1
Sarah Golibart

mass burial of seed garlic
tear drop cloves white as kneecaps
buried two inches apart
in soil
& two inches deep.

like a genocide,
a stolen population swiftly planted
by careless hands of those born
to rip roots, withhold lifewater,
hate seeping like pesticide.

white bones dissolved &
absorbed & transformed.
we all pray for rebirth
into something more
than we were.

garlic will sprout
beneath a coverlet of earth,
like a hundred pungent stories,
shared at every meal
at every table.

we will all taste.
and all see."

"Psalm 34:8"
That Starless Night in January

A.J. Granger

Wrapped in the white threads of an old hammock on the front porch blue as painted water, my brown jacket parted open wide, like the Red Sea waiting for the trampling feet. My scarf untied like shoelaces in grade school, where love was holding hands and rosy cheeks, but—my hands exposed, harden under winter’s smothering grip; in denial that she—my red lips chap and seal clenched teeth as the thin vapors of my breath pour out hitting my face with the hit I long for; clouding my eyes, thin vapors, white vapors, pale, like my skin with every drop of red mercury, losing color under the black, star barren sky. My limbs—fallen ice—finally nothing—yet I’m still melting.

My mouth. laconic
I speak with soft hands and eyes
You hear without sound

Intimacy

Taylor Broughfman
Introverted Vodou

Robert Fadley

Stay secluded is always first. 
Become an eremite, 
a forgotten curse.

Let them wish they had never come, 
if you have visitors, 
tell them bring no one.

They cannot see the shrines you’ve hung 
for Loa, displaying Papa Legbas tongue, 
on walls of broken earthen vestigium.

Fire and stone, mix with water and air, 
inside the hounfour possessed. 
Kay myste burns the sacrificial hair

Imperfect, impetus, loneliness consumes, 
recites, détruit votre âme immortelle.

the wild becomes entangled in you
As soon as my body touched the floor, he curled up by my side, his small frame fitting perfectly in the curvature of my abdomen. It was a routine my skin grew to expect. To feel his soft fur on my leg, or his warm body next to mine, meant I was home. For others, it is their favorite home-cooked meal or the comfort of their childhood room. For me, home was my perfect floppy-eared dog.

When you talked to him, he hung on to your every word. He would look up at me with his dark brown eyes, expressing a look that made me think he understood what I was saying. He cocked his head at questions and wagged his tail with laughter. It always melted my heart.

I only had a few minutes before I had to walk out the door and head to school, but once again, my indecisiveness was getting the best of me. My hair was straightened, my makeup done, but the two shirts I had picked out laid on my bed, mocking me to choose one. I looked out the clock. Crap, I should have left 5 minutes ago.

He laid in the corner of my room, keeping me company as I got ready. He laid in the corner of my room, keeping me company as I got ready. I walked over to him and held out my palms.

“Coral or burgundy shirt? Right for coral, left for burgundy.”

He inspected both and finally, after a moment of deliberation, he shook my right hand with his paw. Coral shirt it is.

Looking through old family photos, I can find him in almost every one, right there in the middle of the action. In the pictures, he’s lounging around the fire with my little sister and me. He’s licking our faces to wake us up for the first day of school. He’s digging through his stocking with the rest of us on Christmas morning.
Not only is he in my childhood photos, but also my senior pictures. While most of my classmates chose to take their pictures in their team uniforms or in the back of lifted pick-up trucks, I smiled a big fat cheese with my Sheltie on the back of lifted pick-up trucks. I smiled, but also my senior pictures. While their pictures in their team uniforms or in most of my classmates chose to take to the beach, his freshly groomed coat gleamed in the setting sun, the orange and red sunset reflecting off his eyes.

We lay in the dunes, obeying the commands of the photographer. The teal and black ribbon tied around his neck billowed in the wind; he looked handsome in my school colors. As I was directed to the shoreline to shoot some solo photos, I left him lying in the dunes. He was unaccompanied and unleashed, but I wasn't worried. He was the kind of dog that you could trust not to run away. I remember looking back at him from the shoreline and thinking how blissful he looked. I had never seen a dog look so at peace before.

It was the perfect temperature for a longhaired dog like him. The air was warm, but the setting sun brought in a fierce breeze. It brought goose bumps to my arms but he seemed to appreciate it. He watched the people on the beach. The family packing up after a long day of boogie boarding and sandcastle building, the couple holding hands, making footprints in the wet sand. He watched me, sprawled out in the water, unsuccessfully attempting to take sexy pictures.

I stole one last glance at him before we wrapped up the photo shoot and headed home. A breeze came in and hit his fur just right, blowing it flat against his body; it was the type of breeze you can appreciate because it doesn't mess up your hair. He lifted his head and closed his eyes, enjoying the wind and the mosaic of smells it brought him, the stories it told his sensitive nose.

It could have just been the breeze pushing his skin back, but I swear that he was smiling.

He's in most of my childhood memories. I remember playing with him at my elementary school playground, and bringing him to show and tell. He's in the teenage years, when I moved to Virginia from Florida.

I barely remember a time before him. A time before my seventh birthday when my parents brought home a little puppy named Todd.

My mom braided my hair as I sat in front of her on my bedroom floor. My sister and I were already dressed in our bathing suits, ready for a day at a lake where I had never been before.

We rode in the car for an hour or so until we pulled up to a ranch. The sprawling landscape was beautiful, but there was no lake in sight. As my dad parked the car, I caught a glimpse of two massive white dogs. They ran immediately towards our car.

"Dogs!" I squealed, already forgetting about our plans for the lake. My mom and dad turned back and smiled at us in the back seat.

"We're getting a dog," my mom said eagerly.

We went inside to a barn that housed a multitude of Shelties in chain link kennels. The breeder led us to a pen filled with a tired mother and her excited puppies. As my family sat in the pen, we each picked out the puppy that we thought would be the perfect addition to our home. In the end though, it was my dad's chosen puppy that we brought home. My dad, a short man himself, picked the runt of the litter claiming that the runts were always the strongest.

When my parents brought him home, they knew we would all love him. I just don't think they knew quite how much. I don't think they expected him to infiltrate all of our hearts so deeply. Somewhere after we brought him home, we went from a family of four to a family of five. He became one of us. He was not our dog; he was our Todd.

We crowded around him as he laid on the pull down examination table. My mom and I stroked his back, running our fingers through his long sable fur for what I knew would be the last time. I whispered in his floppy ears, floppy ears that I loved to watch perk up in the morning when he heard the word hungry.

"I love you. Forever."

My dad stood in front of him, looking him straight on. He watched him as he took his last breaths, as he closed his eyes. The last thing Todd saw before he drifted off was my dad, the leader of our pack, letting him know it was okay to go. It was the first time I ever saw my dad's eyes rimmed with tears.

My sister stood off a little to the side, reaching out from afar to stroke him. They weren't as close as they used to be, my sister and Todd. Back when we were younger, we liked to pretend he was the little brother we never had. Sometimes when I got on her nerves, she would even tell me I was her least favorite sibling as she hugged his neck tightly. Now she always forgot to fill his bowl at dinnertime. When he whined, she sighed and walked away. "Annoying dog," she would say. But in that moment, he was not that annoying dog. He was a part of her family too. I realized then that there was still love there, even if I hadn't seen it before. It was there.

It came quickly, just like the vet promised.

"He's gone," she said, truly empathetic.

My mom yelped. My heart broke.
With loss comes change and we're now back to a family of four. There's no one to eat the cereal that I spill on the floor. There's no one to follow me from room to room, keeping me company when I'm home alone. There's no warm furry body to curl up on my feet when I sit on the couch, no nails clicking on the floor, no fur balls in the corner of the room, no wet nose or wagging tail to greet me when I come home at the end of the day.

Instead, when I walk through the house, my heart aches.

I read through the comments on the Facebook picture that I posted, a picture of Todd and me when we were both much younger. People had commented their "I'm sorrys" and "he was such a great dog."

"Oh, so sorry to see you've lost Todd. I know how much he meant to you. I'll never forget his one and only day as a service dog. Good memories!" It was a comment from Kendall's mom.

I read it over again in disbelief. How could I have forgotten such a memorable moment? Up until now my memories had been clouded. When I thought about him, all I could remember was the sickness, and sleepless nights, sedative eyes, and wobbly legs. I remembered the dog my mom cleaned up after when he lost control and slept on the couch with when he couldn't sleep. I wanted to remember the happy dog that sneezed when he got excited and barked to high heaven when he was hungry. But I couldn't. Until now. I smiled as I thought back to the memory that Kendall's mom had just reminded me of.

On our way home from the photo shoot, the urge to go to our favorite pizza place struck, as it usually does when we are at the beach. We eagerly decided to go only to realize we had a problem—Todd. It was summertime and we couldn't leave him in the car. We had two options: go home without indulging in our favorite pizza or take him in the restaurant with us.

"Let's pretend he's a service dog!" I proposed. Kendall and I laughed at the absurdity of the idea until her mom looked up at us in the rearview mirror, clearly considering it.

We started to brainstorm. I obviously had to have some type of disability that wasn't outwardly noticeable for it to be believable. I thought back to the epileptic service dogs I had seen on Animal Planet while back. And so our lie began.

Kendall's mom called the restaurant and explained how her niece, who I would be playing the part of that night, had a service dog for her epilepsy. But since we were just coming back from a long day at the beach, we had completely forgotten to bring the dog's service vest with us. Was there any way we could still come eat at the restaurant?

She grinned as she hung up the phone. "Okay, so we have to sit on the patio. But we're in."

Todd went along with our plan as long as I kept the pizza crusts coming. He laid on the ground next to my chair. "I'm sorrys" and "he was such a great dog." I took a bite of a pizza crust and offered it to him. He ate it and wagged his tail. His breath smelled horrible and I knew it because I swear he always smiled when we shied away. He always licked my feet when I took my shoes off and even though it was gross, I usually let him do it anyways. He liked Milkbones, but Greenies were his favorite.

I savored the moment. We chased each other in the backyard, crunching leaves underneath. It was fall—his favorite season. We played tag and fetch and tug of war. He didn't get tired like he used to. Afterwards, we collapsed on the deck together. He laid his head in my lap and I stroked his fur, massaging his ears the way I knew he liked.

It was only for a short time. But we were together again.

They say you never forget your first love, but I think what you really never forget is your first dog.
Phantom coughs and rhythmic beeps
tick the minutes by.
almost drowning out her voice because
the dying always whisper.
The dying always whisper because loudness
is for the scared.
Quiet is the brave.
Silent is the strong.
The dying always whisper secrets on that last, long, breath
Before Matanuska Rowen Perry
You are an itch beneath my skin, a burning from toes to scalp. When you creep into my chest, my heart booms against my ribs—a sledgehammer cuddled to a wall. I can’t get the smell of you out of my sheets and my clothes. You linger in my kitchen, in my garage, in every drawer of my desk at work. You split everyone away from me. No one to tell me I’m still human. No one to take my trembling hands when I bolt upright in bed, damp with my own sweat.
The angular white tents,
Mimicking the fluffy masses above,
Sit in their temporary village.

Summer sunlight casts deliciously
Deep blue shadows
Protecting the piles of bursting color:
An all-natural all-organic spectrum of light.

The olive loaf being lifted to the olive-skinned face
Of the elegant Italian women as she inhales deeply,
Her daughter’s chestnut curls bouncing,
Feet skipping across the furnished floor
Of a healthy green habitat

From which also came
The spruce stalks of asparagus,
The leafy bundles of kale,
And the dense heads of cabbage.

The Honey Man flashes me his glittering smile
As he hands over the golden bottle
Which I pass down to Vaishnavi.
Who is sinking her teeth into an orange,
It’s juice seeping into her identically colored shirt.

Khushi adjusts her rosebud pin
And sips her rose lemonade.
Leading us over to the pastry stand,
Following the cinnamon current of air.

“Are you their babysitter?”
Asks the woman sitting lazily behind the stand.
My cheeks turn the same red of her berry lips
As the words “Sisters,” “Adopted,” and “India”
Stumble and fall hurriedly out of my mouth.

I realize, as we walk away,
That I’ve laced my fingers through my sisters:
A spectacular pattern of brown and white
Radiating through the Farmers Market.

A Reflection
on Color

Lilly Constance
To my hair, swept up in bandana knot  
Many colored threads, thick as fishing line  
But soft as feather grass or needles pine  
My unwashed locks tied back with ribbon taut  

Strands flight the head like a Rorschach inkblot  
An earthy smell, like from the roots of trees  
Haloes my head, lifting with every breeze  
See my hair, an unraveled ball of twine  

My unwashed mane traces places I've been  
Artifacts collected: bay air, farm earth  
To sud away these relics, a sad sin  
Not in lye and lemon grass is my worth  

This bandana holds the flaxen harp strings  
My hair song, unwashed and unfettered, sings  

**To My Dirty Hair**  
Sarah Golibart
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Cover art by Jeffrey Thelin, entitled *Nidificate*
The phrase "gardy loo" was derived from the French saying "garde à eau," meaning "beware the water." Eighteenth century house maids would shout the words to warn passers-by before dumping chamber pots onto the streets. We're sure you're loving the imagery. Some might think this makes for a crude magazine title, but we see it as inspiration to always keep looking up.