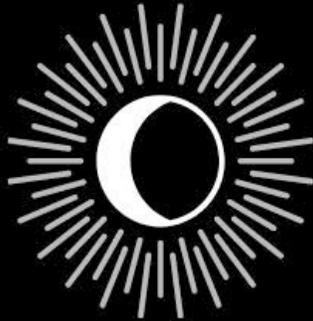


Chiaroscuro

Brevard College
2023





CHIAROSCURO
BREVARD COLLEGE

Chiaroscuro
Brevard College
Literary and Arts Journal
Spring 2023

Chiaroscuro

(ki-ar'-e-skyoor'-o)

n. [pl. -ROS], [<It. <L. clarus, clear + obscurus, dark]

The treatment of light and shade in art to produce the illusion of depth.

Chiaroscuro is published annually by students enrolled in COM 107: Literary Journal Staff and COM 307: Literary Journal Production at Brevard College. We accept submissions of poetry, fiction, nonfiction, theatre, photography, and art from Brevard College students, faculty, staff, and alumni during the fall semester.

For more information, visit our website:

<https://my.brevard.edu/ICS/publications/Chiaroscuro/>

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Editor's Note

I'm signing in for my final year at Brevard College and as this year's Editor-in-Chief of *Chiaroscuro*.

2022- 2023 has been quite the year, of COVID, climate change, and mental health issues. The Brevard College Literary Journal, has worked hard to bring together all of the people in the Brevard College community. The contributors differ in terms of background, nationality, field of study, and perspectives, making this journal a true mixing pot.

The works this year bring together themes related to LGBTQ, mental illness, darkness, and many more. Everyone who submitted this year brought a different perspective and added to an overarching theme. The students and professors who have submitted come in with different interests, different places, extroverts, ambiverts, introverts. Everyone is different.

Brevard College is an experiential college and encourages students to collaborate, and *Chiaroscuro* brings together students from different majors across the college. *Cognosce Ut Prosis*, learn in order that you might serve. In the world we need doctors, writers, laws, and scientist and the *Chiaroscuro* brings these people together to learn about other views so they might serve their community together.

I have been the Editor-in-Chief of *Chiaroscuro* for a year and a half now. It's been an honor to serve on the staff. I have enjoyed so much seeing four journals go to print. But if you had asked me in elementary school about being part of a literary journal, I would have screamed "I hate reading" in your face and ran off. I struggle a lot with reading and writing even now. But I have fallen in love with literary journals, and the best part is the community.

While I leave *Chiaroscuro* this semester, I hope that every now and then I can look back on the literary journal and see how the next generation will improve upon past ideas. I know it can be hard to submit work to be published, but I hope that *Chiaroscuro* can continue to bring the community together and see all the different backgrounds.

This has been Caroline Hoy signing out for the last time with *Chiaroscuro* as Editor-in-Chief. Good luck to all future staff members and contributors. I wish y'all the best of luck!

-Caroline Marie Hoy, Brevard College, Class of 2023

Masthead

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Alyse Bensel

Thank you to Rebekah Alviani for her additional support

Cover Artist Salena Malmin

"Brain Soup" 48in W 36in tall oil on canvas abstract



About the Cover Artist

Salena Malmin graduated from Brevard College in 2022 with a bachelor's in Art, and her concentration was in Drawing and Painting. Salena loves to portray the natural woman in a modernist style and isn't afraid to experiment with color and mark-making. She also enjoys abstraction as well as exploring other styles of painting.

Salena primarily works in oils, but occasionally you will see foil mixed in for a little bit of sparkle. Salena hopes that by the end of 2022 she will be working in an art gallery and on her way to her dream of owning her own gallery.

About the Cover Piece

"Camouflage" was my figurehead piece for my Senior Exhibition that ran in April of 2022. I designed a camo design out of women's silhouettes. Through the use of LED lights, I realized that I could get certain figures to appear and disappear depending on the color of light being used. This is to emphasize the kaleidoscope of beauty that is disguised as the average woman."

Table of Contents

Poetry

- 13 **Gwyn Jennings**, "Photos of Snow White"
15 **Jem**, "APPLY MY STRUGGLE"
16 **The Rev. Dr. Judith A. Davis**, "Great Chieftain among
the Woodpecker Tribes"
46 **Gwyn Jennings**, "Ode to Floor Time"
48 **Jem**, "SHE"
57 **Caroline Hoy**, "Big Words Sound Better"
59 **Sarah Hajkowski**, "Since I quit you, your faults are on my
mind"
69 **Christian Humphries**, "The Old Mills Along the
Roadside"
86 **The Rev. Dr. Judith A. Davis**, "Kanasgowa
[KAH-na-SKOE-wa]:Heron"
88 **Quintin Overocker**, "You're braiding fluttershy's hair
wrong"
95 **Sarah Hajkowski**, "Manifesto"
98 **Quintin Overocker**, "The Idea of Order in Streator,
Illinois"
101 **Sarah Hajkowski**, "On Reciprocity"
103 **Gabriel Bernhard**, "Mokita"
109 **Vance Reese**, "The Right Verse"

Artwork

- 14 **Gwyn Jennings**, "Self Portrait as The Broken Column"
17 **The Rev. Dr. Judith A. Davis**, "Icon of Audubons
Chieftain"
19 **Jem**, "Masked Distaste"
20 **Sarah Hajkowski**, "Binocular Behavior"
31 **Sydney Raber**, "Symbiolsos"

- 32 **Alison Holland**, "Timothy"
33 **Alison Holland**, "Tomothy"
34 **Gabrielle Lynch**, "Witches Passage"
40 **Jem**, "Woah You're Alive"
43 **Alison Holland**, "Three Clowns"
44 **Reagan Lane**, "Summit"
45 **Caroline Hoy**, "Powerlines"
47 **Jem**, "june 1, 2022 (12:33 a.m.)"
56 **Jules Lusk**, "Miss America & Country Madonna"
60 **Gabrielle Lynch**, "Low Water"
61 **Casey Jones**, "Of All the Moons in All the World"
63 **Jem**, "january 3, 2022"
70 **Tori Brayman**, "Aruba #22"
71 **Oreo Ellis**, "Take in the View"
82 **Jackson Inglis**, "Red Gotham"
83 **Gwyn Jennings**, "Oh My"
84 **Jem**, "Mushroom You Can Stand Under"
85 **Reagan Lane**, "Growth"
87 **The Rev. Dr. Judith A. Davis**, "Kanasgowa"
90 **Jem**, "Death by Companion"
91 **Nicole Bradbury**, "Still Life"
93 **Ji**, "Suspicious Minds"
94 **Jules Lusk**, "Wasn't the door Locked"
96 **Casey Jones**, "A Little Less Picture Taking, A Little More
Flower Viewing"
97 **Caroline Hoy**, "Sunshine"
99 **Jem**, "december 30, 2021"
100 **The Rev. Dr. Judith A. Davis**, "Snowy Owl"
102 **Ben Wilhelm**, "Lightning Glass"
104 **Ji**, "El Micha"
107 **Jules Lusk**, "Home Away From Home"
108 **Brian Seon**, "Railway"

Fiction

- 18 **Casey Jones**, "The Observer"
- 55 **Sara Laboe**, "Extraction"
- 62 **Gabriel Bernhard**, "The Great Storm"
- 64 **Evey Perrey**, "The Weaver"

Theater

- 21 **Casey Jones**, "Godsend Failure"
- 72 **Gabriel Bernhard**, "Limited Spaces"

Hybrid

- 35 **Anna Ervin**, "Chasing Warmth"
- 92 **Gwyn Jennings**, "Specimen: The Process of Diagnosing Chronic Illness"
- 105 **Caroline Hoy**, "Bouncey Pouncey"

Nonfiction

- 37 **Isabell Musser**, "Racism in Western North Carolina"
- 41 **Jackson Inglis**, "Coraline: 20 Years Later"
- 49 **Gabriel Bernhard**, "LGBTQ+ Representation in Popular Media, Particularly in the Case of Western Animation"

Poetry

PHOTOS OF SNOW WHITE

Gwyn Jennings



I see her in photographs
The first day of kindergarten in a circle on the rug
She was there next to me
I saw her, snow white and ebony in a rose red dress
And needed to be near her

I see her in a dusty frame on my bookshelf
Arms around each other on my backyard swing
A heart shaped bell from Valentine's Day around my neck
The back of my hand faces the camera
Hiding a secret in my palm only she can see
The two of us in a golden hour of spring
Frozen in 2007

I haven't seen her in ten years

I found an old blue notebook in the bottom of my desk drawer
My name scrawled on the yellowed front page
Two carefully scribbled stick figures who look like us
An attempt to mimic the hand I could not hold
A rough red heart behind them
A shape she taught me to draw
And written below with colored pencil in little hands
I love you

Artwork

SELF PORTRAIT AS THE BROKEN COLUMN
Gwyn Jennings



Digital Media

Poetry

APPLY MY STRUGGLE

Jem



waging meaningless wars in my head,
wishing for the fruition of a love never to come.
a mother's touch on the mind from the tongue,
so fickle and erratic in nature.
will i receive an apathetic accidental attack
or a confusing comforting compliment.
which hurts worse, the one you tell yourself every day,
or the one that pulls at your ducts in foreign desire.
it drops into my stomach, it aches in my heart,
closes my throat, and blurs my eyes.
perfection slips through the cracks of a pegged
slot board, falling into a singularity,
my worth contained and tied forever to a
capricious start. my character falters in her

mind, and my identity is abhorrent.
falling to my knees, i weep at her feet for
a do-over. if i could just be more perfect and
if she could just be a little more understanding.
in the back of my mind, a small part of it yells that
i'm always at this end. but i ignore it. that can't be
right.



Poetry

GREAT CHIEFTAIN AMONG THE WOODPECKER TRIBES

The Rev. Dr. Judith A. Davis

Audubon named you Chieftain among the Woodpeckers in the deep South where you
loved temperate, coniferous trees with luscious bark and Jewel Beetles.

In the early twentieth century, birders still sighted you flying through
swampy forests and landing on your precious trees in the swamps of Louisiana.

Loggers gradually destroyed your habitats of Cypress swamps and pines, while birders
mourned your demise.

At the Roger Tory Peterson Institute, I saw paintings of you by John James Audubon and
Roger Tory Peterson; I loved you, beautiful and majestic Ivory-billed bird.

I never saw you flying in the bayous, but I saw a preserved skin at the Yale Peabody
Museum of Natural History and I wondered what you were like as a living bird.

I longed to see you, hear your loud and plaintive cry, and be astounded by your size.

What a regal and grand bird you were with your gorgeous red crest accompanied by your
subdued mate with her black crest and smaller size.

You beauty of black, white, and red, I wish I could have watched you land in the Cypress
Trees and forage for beetles in those Southern bayous.

Sadly, now U.S. Fish and Wildlife has declared your species and ten others, extinct,
but not all of us believe you have vanished.

Birders hope a remnant of your species remains in Louisiana, and we will keep hope,
which Emily Dickinson said is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul.

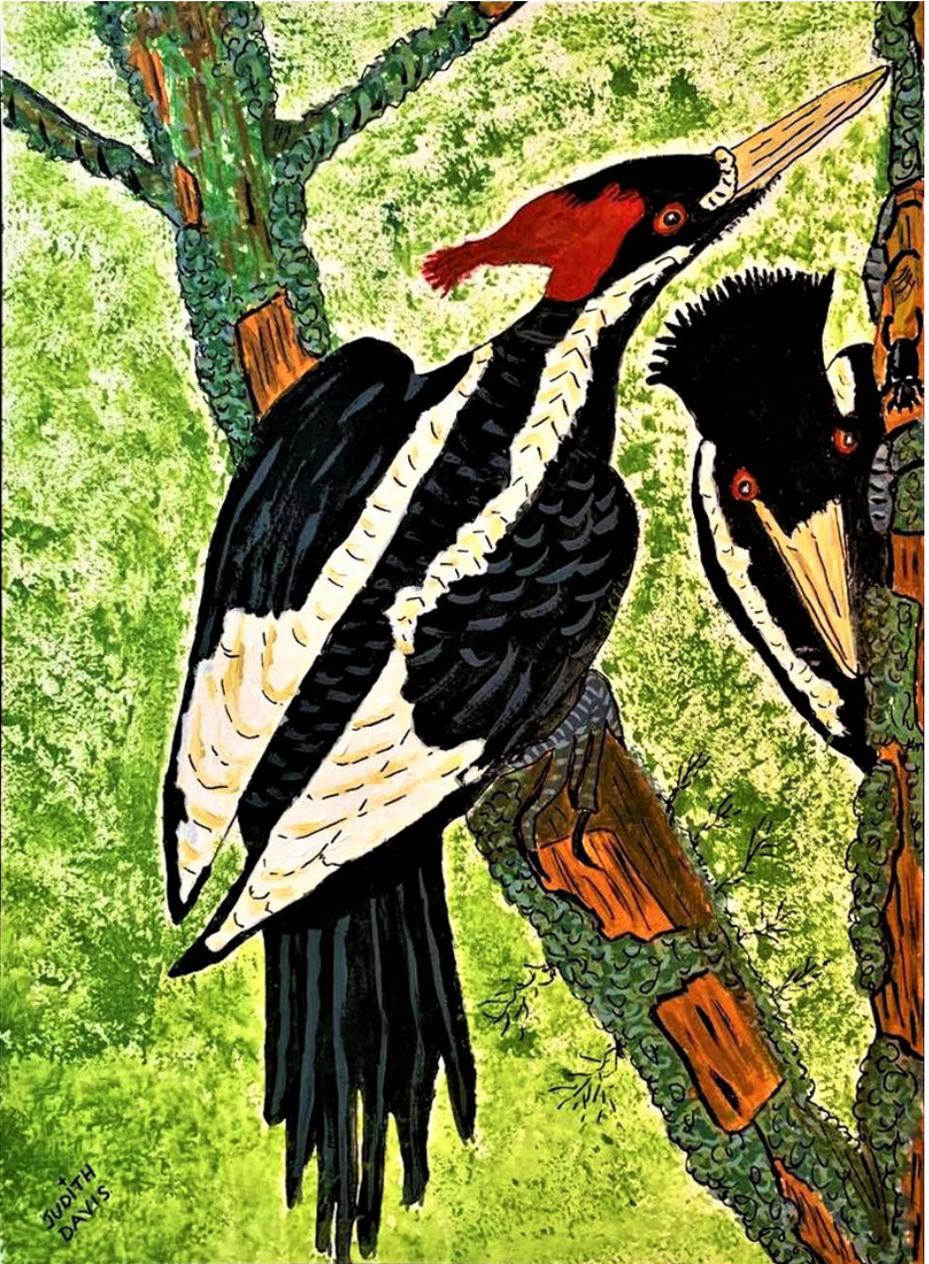
Our consolation for you wonderful Ivory-billed Woodpecker seems only in art and poetry.

I painted an icon of you, martyred to logging's so-called progress:
that image consoles me as you remain if only on my canvas and in my heart.

Artwork

ICON OF AUDUBONS CHIEFTAIN

The Rev. Dr. Judith A. Davis



Matte Acrylic on Arches Cold Pressed Watercolor Paper



Fiction

THE OBSERVED

Casey Jones

A blink. It must've been. What else could it be? The cold January air melted away into the warmth and humidity of June. The alleyway melted away, and for a second everything was black. There was no scenery, no sound or smells. The man was standing on something, but there was nothing there. And then, everything flowed into view. A sprawling, grassy landscape lightly dotted with rock faces, trees and groves, interspersed with creeks and a large river cutting the landscape in half. The river ran north, through a large fortified city, emptying into the ocean just beside the fortifications. The sun was preparing to dip behind the mountains to the west, casting long shadows on the orange tinted landscape.

Soon, the man touched the ground. His hand touched the trunk of a tall tree, where he was once touching the button on the wall. He pulled his hand back glancing around himself hastily. He was standing outside of a small shack that was leaning to one side. The door had been torn off its hinges and tossed aside. The window shutters had been pulled together, but neither of the front facing windows were completely closed.

“Hello? Is anyone there?”

There was no reply. The man walked towards the door frame, watching his steps in this unfamiliar territory. Maybe the other one was here. His overcoat shifted in the wind as he walked. The doorframe was a head shorter than the man, so he ducked when he looked in. The shack was in disarray. Personal effects had been flung across the floor and all the furniture had been tipped on its side. As he stepped through the door, he froze. He couldn't take another step forward, but he couldn't back out either. He could move his eyes, but he stopped breathing.

An even taller man stepped into the shack from a room in the back. He wore simple tan robes and had a walking stick as tall as himself. He walked towards him, saying nothing. As he got face to face with the man, the robed figure simply walked through him. He didn't even stop to acknowledge the man. And then he was able to move again.

His breathing began again and his heart began pumping once more. He felt his limbs move him forward, though he had no intention of doing so himself. The shack was slowly beginning to reassemble itself. Books slowly joined back to their shelves and pots began to float back up to their racks. Tables reoriented themselves and a shattered pot slowly began to reassemble, shard by shard.

As the Observer neared the room, he heard a loud noise from behind the door. When he opened the door, he saw the streets he had once walked, crowded and bustling. And then he saw himself standing in a secluded but accessible alleyway, hand hovering over a small ridge in a wall. The Observer screamed at himself, hoping the sound might reach him and serve as some warning.

But he couldn't even hear his own voice.

Artwork

MASKED DISTASTE

Jem

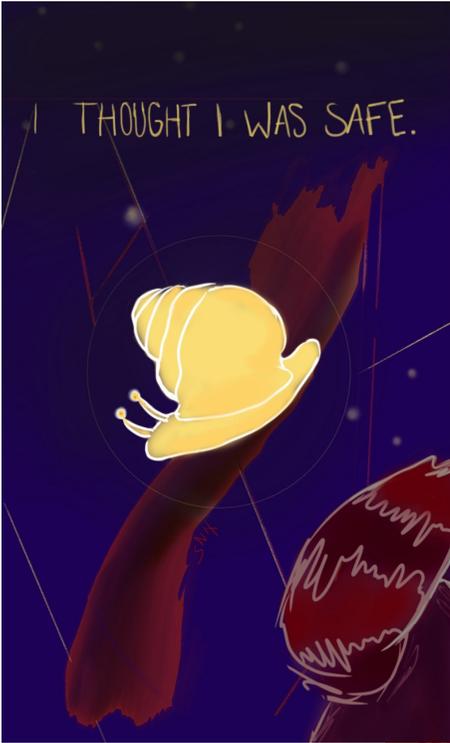


Digital Media

Artwork

BINOCULAR BEHAVIOR

Sarah Hajkowski



*Halloween Contest
Third Place*

Digital Media



Theater

GODSEND FAILURE
Casey Jones



Scene 1: An Incident, or, The Second Minor Bus Tragedy of Mather Point

Morgan

Man, just look at this.

Morgan strides to the edge of the railing, overlooking the canyon

Jackson

Yeah, I've been meaning to bring you and Sylvia here for years. (*shrugs*) I just haven't found the time yet.

Jackson walks behind him

Morgan

It's a shame she couldn't be here today. Mom is too difficult on her.

Jackson

Far too difficult. Margot needs success from her, and she's not getting it.

Morgan

True. Mom only sees in shades of success.

Jackson walks next to Morgan, leaning on the rail next to him

Jackson

Have you ever considered leaving? You know, me, your mother and Sylvia?

Morgan turns to Jackson

Morgan

Why would I consider that? Everyone I care about is at home, so why should I leave?

Jackson

Ha! I can understand that. Once upon a time I held that thought as well. (*brief pause*) Have I ever told you about my home life, Morgan?

Morgan leans on the rail again, turning to face Jackson

Morgan

No, I don't think you have.

Jackson sits on a bench facing the trail

Jackson



I'll start early then. My father worked in the silicon mines just north of what is now Silicon Valley. My mother worked for the California Cloth Foundry, a bastardization of steel milling and textiles.

Morgan

Very, uh, eccentric.

Jackson

Very eccentric. They'd come home from work and, while they loved each other very much, they would argue for hours on end, in front of their 13 children.

Morgan

Wait, you had 12 siblings? How have I never met any of them?

Jackson

They all went their separate ways when they came of age. Some left for different countries, others just left for other states. The constant bickering between my parents drove them away.

Morgan

Huh. What made you not bring it up?

Jackson

It just never came up, I guess

Morgan

What did they argue about? Your parents that is.

Jackson

They were terribly bitter.

Morgan

Why were th-

Jackson

They were bitter because they worked in competing industries, and wanted the other to conform to their views. It was a miracle they were able to separate their beliefs from their love for each other. I know I struggled with that myself.

Morgan

Is that why I'm perfect? I'm a fusion of both Cloth and Silicone? Is that why everyone always expects everything from me?



Jackson

... What?

Morgan

Is that why everyone has such astronomical expectations?

Jackson

Wait, have you still not caught on? That it's Margot making you perfect?

Morgan

No? Is that even possible?

Jackson

Yes, it is. I saw behind the scenes before she cut me out.

Morgan

How does she... DAD LOOK OUT THERE'S A BUS COMING TOWARDS YOU!

Jackson

Don't be silly, son, buses aren't allowed here. Not since the Minor Bus Tragedy of Mather Point.

Jackson runs off stage to imply being hit by a very large bus

It is at this moment that Morgan sees a bus containing all of Jackson's siblings and parents hit him and they both fall into the canyon. Morgan doesn't know how he can tell who is on the bus. There is a large fireball. This event will come to be known as the Second Minor Bus Tragedy of Mather Point. What Morgan is unaware of at this moment is that Jackson merely had a heart attack, and Morgan fainted.

Scene 2: A Confrontation, or, The Severance of Bonds

Very extravagant office on the top floor of a skyscraper or somesuch

Sylvia

Oh my god! Is he okay? That sounds really bad.

Staring at Margot

Margot

(nonchalantly) Oh he'll be fine. Fainting never hurt anyone.

Turns from Sylvia

Sylvia



But he hit his head on the railing! And he had just witnessed dad have a heart attack! That can't be good!

Trying to face Margot, though she keeps turning to not face Sylvia

Margot

Don't be obtuse, girl. (*under breath*) I know that's hard for you. (*normal*) He's perfect. He'll be fine.

Sylvia

Would someone who's perfect go into shock upon seeing their father die?

Manages to face Margot

Margot

Don't back talk me girl. He'll-

Sylvia

No. They wouldn't. Someone who's perfect wouldn't have gone into shock, and they definitely wouldn't have hit their head on the railing.

Margot

Morgan has never failed at anything in life. I made sure of that. He is perfect, by design.

He will be fine.

Margot strides behind her desk, sitting down

Sylvia

What?

Sylvia walks in front of the desk, leaning against it

Margot

(*Under breath*) Shit. (*Normal*) Yes, I suppose my greatest secret is out. I engineered Morgan to be perfect. The scientists and doctors told me the technology didn't exist, so I paid people to invent it. He is the greatest human being to exist.

Sylvia

So he was made in a lab? How could you even engineer perfection?

Margot

Oh it wasn't easy. Though he is still my and Jackson's son. We, although mostly me, were involved in every step of the process. My egg, his sperm. Then, we genetically modified him to be ideal. Perfect. No flaws. And yet, he is a failure. He couldn't succeed by himself. I learned early that perfection is



not something to be engineered. I had to invest everything in Morgan so that I didn't lose money. That's why you're not perfect, or even really average. I couldn't afford to make you more than yourself.

Sylvia

No, I don't believe that. That just... can't be.

Sylvia throws her hands up in disbelief

Margot

Well, you'd better start believing. (sigh) I need you to leave the premises. You and Morgan are no longer supported by Cataliya Enterprises.

Margot turns her chair to face out the window behind the desk

Sylvia

Really? Just like that? Your son is critically injured, your husband just died, and then you cut off your children?

Margot

Yes. I don't like the decision anymore than you, but the board decided it.

Sylvia

But you never listen to the board. You told me yourself it was just a figurehead.

Margot

Do not question me girl. Leave.

Sylvia

Fine. I just wanted you to know that I loved you. Even if you struggled to acknowledge me.

Sylvia leaves

Scene 3: A Dream, or, The Simple Mountaintop Conversation

Morgan and Sylvia enter and sit on the precipice of a mountain, on a bench.

Morgan

I feel like I'm drowning.

Sylvia

How could you be drowning, we're on top of a mountain, specifically Pilot Mountain?

Morgan

Well more in a figurative

sense. I think. Also why did you say that? I know we're on top of Pilot Mountain, north-



west of Winston Salem.

Sylvia

Just trying to establish the setting, you're helping too! But, if you end up drowning let me know, it'd be kind of hard to get you down.

Morgan

I'd assume so. But like, I feel so overwhelmed.

Sylvia

How are you feeling overwhelmed? You're literally perfect, in every way.

Morgan

But that's the thing! I'm not. I'm flawed and I make mistakes; you just don't see them.

Sylvia

Trust me, if I haven't seen them, they were nothing of consequence.

Morgan

Oh come on. You don't know anything about making mistakes then.

Sylvia

But, and this is important, I know everything.

Morgan

And how is that, pray tell?

God (Sylvia)

Well, because I'm god.

Morgan

Ah. Now you're just lying. God is supposed to be tall, and fit. You're just... you.

God

Aw come on now! That's rude. It's written right here in my script!

Morgan

Wait, they changed the script? Why didn't they update me? You're my sister. She's just a human, and that's the farthest thing from God I could imagine.

God

But you forget that if I'm God, which I am, I can become whatever I want.

Morgan

That doesn't change the fact that you at least look like my sister.

God



But I'm not your sister, I'm God. Again, the script says so.

Morgan

Why did you choose Sylvia? I love her, don't get me wrong, but she doesn't seem very... godly.

God

An interesting question, considering you chose for me to look like this in your dreamscape.

Morgan

Wait, is this a dream?

God

Of sorts. A mix of a concussion, excessive head trauma, grief and medication.

Morgan

Can you prove that you're God?

God

No.

Morgan

Then why should I believe you?

God

I'm not going to defend my godhood to you.

Morgan

Then I have no reason to believe.

God

But you can do anything, perfectly. Why can't you find a reason to believe?

Morgan

Why did you make me perfect, come to think of it?

God

Oh I had nothing to do with that.

Morgan

Don't you control everything? I thought that was your whole deal.

God

Something told me not to interfere with Margot. Plus, I'm merely an overseer now; I don't directly influence anything.

Morgan



So you're saying that Mom made me perfect?

God

Yes. Or at least, she paid for people to make you perfect.

Morgan

I'm... not inherently perfect, then?

God

Not exactly. Your body is almost flawless. Your actions, however, have been followed up on by a team to ensure it goes smoothly.

Morgan

That... kind of makes sense.

God

I'm sorry you had to find out this way. If anything, you already came to that conclusion yourself. You just weren't ready to accept it. That's why you learned it here. In the dream.

Morgan

Why did you kill my dad?

God

Again, just an overseer here. Although, it wouldn't be too far from the truth to just say it was for character development. Anyway, nice to finally meet you!

Morgan

Yeah, I suppose that's fair.

Scene 4: A Beginning, or, The Ties that Bind

Morgan

Oh it's not that bad. It's only 53 stitches.

Motions to the side of his head, showing off the stitches

Sylvia

53????? That seems... excessive. Was the fall even that bad?

Sitting next to the hospital bed

Morgan

Eh, I certainly could've done worse.

Sylvia



Well yes, you could have but I'm glad you didn't. You shouldn't really say things like that.

Morgan

I get that, don't worry. Just... trying to make light of a bad situation.

Sylvia

Yeah. I understand. How are you feeling by the way? About the whole dad situation.

Morgan

Well, I'm very depressed. And I'm in the hospital for brain injuries. And apparently they're also monitoring me for weird brain activity while I sleep? So, I'm doing pretty well given the circumstances.

Sylvia

I'm sorry. I wish this weren't happening. I feel like... well I know there's nothing I could have done but I wish I had somehow seen it coming. If I only could have been there.

Morgan

HEY! Stop that. There was nothing you could do. If anything I should've done something. I just... I don't know what happened. I froze.

Sylvia

I know. But you don't need to worry about that anymore. You just need to focus on getting better so you can make me coffee again. I need your caffeine to get me through my day, you know.

Morgan

Well once they let me go I'll be sure to get right on that.

A beat passes

Morgan

Is mom coming?

Sylvia

(Somberly shakes head) No. And she likely won't contact us again, either.

Morgan

(Shakes head slowly) I see. Well... just one less person I need to let know I'm okay. I'll ask for details later, I think that's a bit more than I can handle right now.

Sylvia



Hey guess what? You're a failure! Without Mom there to ensure your success, you failed.

Morgan

(Sits and ponders for a moment, looking around) I... suppose... that's not wrong...

Sylvia

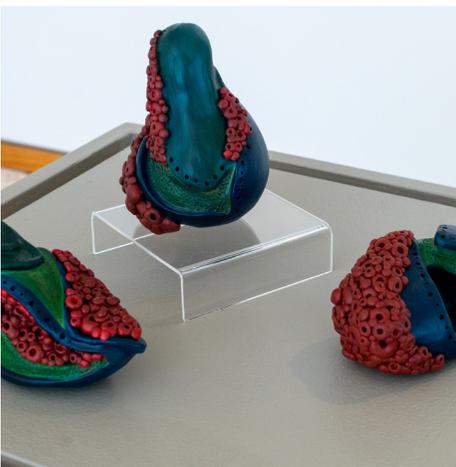
In your fumbling inability to save our father, or even make an attempt, you managed to fail!

Morgan

You're right! I did fail! Haha. How incredibly bittersweet. Almost like a symphony. A bittersweet symphony, this life.

Artwork

SYMBIOSIS
Sydney Raber



*Chiaroscuro Juried Art Show
Best of Show*

Ceramic

Artwork

TIMOTHY
Alison Holland



Oil Paint on Canvas Paper

Artwork

TOMOTHY
Alison Holland



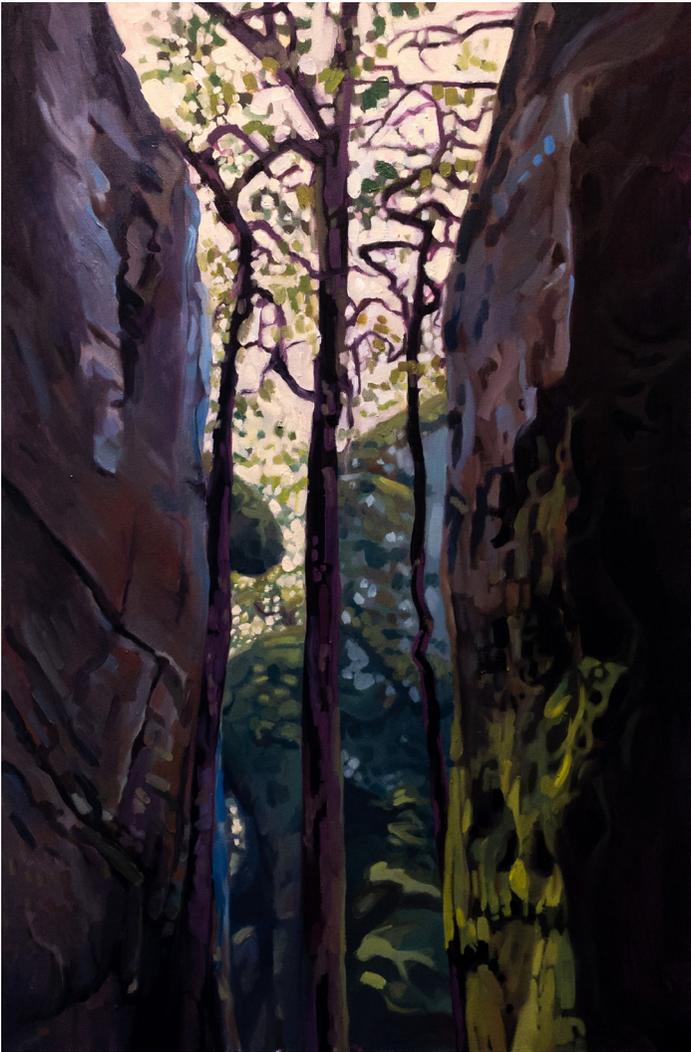
*Chiaroscuro Juried Art Show
Honorable Mention*

Oil Paint on Canvas Paper

Artwork

WITCHES PASSAGE

Gabrielle Lynch



*Chiaroscuro Juried Art Show
Brevard College Alumni Association Award*

Oil Paint

Hybrid
CHASING WARMTH
Anna Ervin



“When the Gods wish to punish us, they answer our prayers.” — Oscar Wilde

I want to go back to a time when things were simple and I remember what it is like to feel warm.

Once upon a time, there was a young girl who lived in the sun. The young girl loved to chase things, even the things not meant for her.

“Great things are done by a series of small things brought together.” — Vincent Van Gogh

Small things seem big and big things seem small. I confuse and intertwine them. They are a melting pot of inescapable things that surround me.

One day, the girl was told of something new. This something gripped her soul like no other. At first, it was curiosity. Then it was anxiousness. And finally, this new idea consumed her completely. She decided the only way to truly find what she was chasing was to step alone in the dark.

“To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow.” — Audrey Hepburn

A speck of growth is growth. And maybe that small growth is actually a big growth in my intertwined thinking. And it could be that a growth of any kind is a forward movement. Or maybe the growth is backward. It all becomes one again.

She ran after it. She did everything in her power to keep chasing. She ran until she was pale, she ran until her hair was gone, and she ran until she toppled over. When she toppled, all that was left was for her to feel the frosty earth beneath her back and the spotted sky above her head.

“Life is more beautiful when you meet the right hairdresser.” — Peter Coppola

No hairdresser can undull my hair. There are steps before the steps before the steps. The small growths I mentioned. It all comes back eventually. And yet, the cold remains.

The young girl was lost, with no will to move forward or back. And somehow, somewhere in this dark, she was found. She floated and fluttered back into the warmth, but she no longer remembered how to feel it. She couldn't absorb it the way she once had.

For a brief moment, all was lost.



"A mole, tired from tunneling along, discovered the mitten and burrowed inside. It was cozy and warm and just the right size, so he decided to stay." — Jan Brett, *The Mitten*

What brought her back into the warmth held her hand. She glimpsed what she knew. As much as she wanted to chase again, she knew she couldn't. It was not meant for her, or anyone else to be quite frank. But now, she had something even newer and better. And though she couldn't chase anymore, she learned how to walk. And her hair grew back, and she was no longer pale, and she could move. The cold came back for her, but in this moment she knew how to resist.

There are too many stories to be told for me forget how to walk.

RACISM IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

Isabell Musser



On October 9, 2020, at exactly 7:33 a.m., I was reminded of just how scary it can be to be black and for every choice I made to be life or death. It was a Friday and every Friday I had 6 a.m. practice at the track. Usually, I would finish around 6:30 or 6:45 and then head back to my dorm room until I left for weights at 7:25. Instead of following my usual routine on this particular day, I decided to stay at the track and wait there until my weight session. The other early morning practice group got there as I finished practice, and I walked laps on the track and listened to music to clear my mind. I even took a picture of the beautiful sunrise and saved it in my Snapchat memories, not knowing that the events later that day would leave their own permanent memory in my brain.

Once the group came back from doing sprints on the hill I sat on the hard concrete bleachers to get out of their way. Sometime after that, they took a break from triple jumping. One of the sprinters had seen an email on his phone and told everyone about it. The email alert was vague and said “Due to a threat to the UNC Asheville community there will be no in-person classes, practices, or activities on campus today.” I then looked at my phone to see what he was talking about. We were all confused so we asked our coaches what that meant, and they said to finish up practice and that going to weights would still be fine. Since the alert gave no detail, all we could think of was that maybe there was a huge breakout on campus and we were all quarantined. Just minutes later we got a follow-up email alert saying “All residential students should shelter in place, and all non-essential personnel should return home. We will provide updates as they become available.”

That was when the seriousness of this situation set in for me and we were trying to make our head coach understand something was really wrong. I started freaking out because I had been out there since 5:30 a.m., and had already heard two pop sounds throughout that time. I didn’t want to jump to conclusions but since we didn’t know all the details I was treating everything like life or death. As I was walking back to my room with the group of sprinters, my phone started blowing up since the rest of the team, including my roommates, were starting to wake up and had just seen the emails. On the way back to my room as I texted everyone back, I heard another pop and that was when my fast pace walk turned into a full-blown sprint. After we all got back into our rooms the whole situation exploded into a massive dumpster fire. There were so many rumors going around, everyone was worried about food, what was happening with classes, and overall what was happening from this moment forward, but it was a different kind of panic for me.

I was panicked because this was happening right as everything in the area was finally starting to calm down after the events that occurred a few months prior. In the summer of 2020 things really got out of hand, especially in Asheville. They had to move the firefighters out of their building for months because it was below the police department and the protesters were blocking their trucks from getting out of the garage. Things got so bad that police started using riot control gear including rubber bullets- also called pepper balls- and tear gas on protesters (Donnelly-DeRoven). One night



that summer, Facebook was going crazy saying that 3 Young buses, with Georgia plates, parked in a Harris Teeter parking lot, with tons of people dressed suspiciously were here to protest. The busloads of people did turn out to be more of a rumor than fact and were believed to be part of Asheville's solution to their public transport problems due to covid, but it was believed that there were people from out of town at these protests (Boyle).

That night was the first night that things got out of hand in Asheville during the summer. Those very same people believed to be from out of town were seen setting off fireworks aimed at the police and when one of them was arrested it was discovered that he was from Georgia. Asheville was so out of hand that a curfew was put in place like they were in the bigger cities across the country. Along with that they also called in the National Guard to enforce the curfew and help keep the peace. Asheville became the center of attention nationally and somewhat globally as videos circulated and went viral on Twitter. One video was of a woman yelling vulgar and highly inappropriate things at a young black girl and then the same woman assaulting another girl in a hijab. Not too long after that video went viral the same woman was hit by a firetruck when she stepped out into the road (NC Woman Dies). These and all of the other events from over the summer were going through my head at the time and even my own room started to not feel safe.

While we waited on an update I told everyone in the dorm to turn the lights off, close the blinds, and be as quiet as possible in case the threat was actively on campus. It wasn't till after 8:30 am that we got an email confirming the rumors that the target of the threat was in fact the black lives matter mural, and that everything was going to be canceled both virtual and in-person for at least 24 hours. I had been on the phone with my mom the whole hour in between emails and once she found out we were allowed to leave campus but only from 9-10:30 am, we immediately sprang into action. I packed a bag for a couple of days since we didn't know how long this would last and I made sure I brought my taser. My mom then hung up and called my aunt to see if she could come and get me.

My mom called me back and told me that my aunt had parked at the bank on the other side of the street across from campus. The mural that was the sole focus of this attack was right outside my bedroom window and we were on the very first floor right by the entrance, down the hallway, to the left, and ours was the 3rd room on the left side. We were a room of black girls and therefore the perfect victims. Once we left the building I was trying to talk to my mom to find my aunt's exact location as quietly as possible. Once we got out of the more dense part of campus and out of the woods we went onto the running/bike trail and then we just had to cross the highway. Just when I thought things were going to be smooth sailing, we were stopped by two men in regular clothing by a barricade. They asked us questions about where we were going and my mom wanted me to be rude and just walk right past them. Even though I was not a fan of it she had a fair point. Why would they be asking 3 black girls where we were going while there is an active threat on campus, and on our lives specifically, when we had a short window to get off-campus?

As soon as we got off the trail and turned to the highway, I saw my aunt's car drive past us. She saw us and turned around, but since we were on the side of the road there was no longer a sidewalk. In order to stay out of the busy street, I had to walk along the grassy curb and through the bushes. I got poked with so many different little needle-like parts on the bushes that my whole right side was covered from head to toe in scratches. I was wearing a hoodie and leggings but they still pierced my skin. My aunt



then finally picked us up and we drove to my house. As things on campus were still unfolding, I was keeping up with it all as best I could but they honestly never told us much.

This experience will definitely stick with me forever even as it turned out way better than it could have. One thing I can never forget is that I felt like Harriet Tubman leading the underground railroad as I tried to get my roommates and I to safety. This is just a minor example of history repeating itself and it goes to show that the struggle people of color go through only evolves. Every day I am reminded that even though I identify as mixed the world will only see me as black. Every day I am scared to go into a store wearing baggy clothes or have something in my pocket because someone could assume I stole something just because I'm "black". Black people are two to four times more likely to have heart problems by the age of 50 in the US due to stress caused by racism. It is known as John Henryism (Roisin). Every time I step outside everyone decides who I am for me without even knowing me. What people need to understand is that BLM isn't a threat to them in any way, it is only a call for justice asking for people to respect our basic rights and to treat us like we do, in fact, matter. It is so important to learn how to be an ally, especially for the people in your community.

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Artwork

WOAH YOU'RE ALIVE

Jem



Digital Media

Nonfiction

CORALINE: 20 YEARS LATER

Jackson Inglis



It's insane to think that Neil Gaiman wrote *Coraline* over 20 years ago now. It was published through Bloomsbury Publishing in the UK and Harper Collins in the US. It also inspired a film adaptation by Laika and Focus Pictures in 2009. The novel is 20 years old in 2022, and the movie is just barely old enough to be considered retro as well. This review will focus slightly more on the book however. It will also be relatively spoiler-free. The question remains: how well does it hold up?

Coraline hit bookstores on July 2, 2002. The raw story was very eerie and edgy for the time, and the illustrations provided by Dave McKean reinforced it. It tells the story of a young girl named Coraline Jones who moves into a flat just before the school year starts. Her parents are workaholics who never make time to bond with her. This, mixed with the gloomy weather and grayscale nature of her new home, makes Coraline bored and miserable all day. However, she soon discovers that a trap door in the flat leads to an alternate dimension where everything is perfect, and her parents are great caretakers. There's one problem. Everyone in this seemingly perfect world has black buttons where their eyes should be, and her "other mother" wants to turn her into a button-eyed creature and devour her soul; everything else is just an elaborate trap.

One thing *Coraline* does surprisingly well is create an atmosphere of both complete horror and innocent childhood curiosity. While the book was written in the third person by an adult man, descriptions of certain images, scenes, and feelings read like they're actually coming from the conscious and point of view of the young protagonist. That being said, a lot of the imagery and plot lines are incredibly distressing to read. Many characters and story elements feel like they were inspired by Stephen King's *It* or classic urban legends. Despite being marketed as a children's novel, *Coraline* might leave a few adults sleeping with the lights on.

The horror aspect is brought to the forefront by Dave McKean's brilliant illustrations. Every ten pages or so, an illustration is provided to show a certain scene or character, usually at the beginning of the chapter. The depictions include but are not limited to: a scrawny, button-eyed woman with a beetle hanging from her tongue, a creepy old man sitting in a dark corner, a rat casting a monstrous shadow over our protagonist, and ghosts of dead children. Their child-like textures and unorthodox shapes reinforce the idea that the world of Coraline is quite twisted. They can be inviting or repulsing depending on your mood.

The film adaptation was released in theaters only seven years later. *Coraline* the movie was animated entirely in a stop-motion style called "claymation," where all the characters are made of a malleable substance. It was directed by Henry Selick who had previously worked on *The Nightmare Before Christmas*. The film brought Dave McKean's illustrations to life in a terrifying yet whimsical narrative with elegant camera shots and character designs. After receiving widespread critical acclaim, making



far more than its budget back in box office returns, and winning multiple accolades, it helped to expose Neil Gaiman's original story to a wider audience.

Coraline certainly stands the test of time as a novel and movie that can leave an impact on anyone regardless of target audience. For children, this could be one of their first exposures to the horror genre. It's also brilliantly written and deep enough to be enjoyed by adults as well. If you've never read it, go read it. If you've never seen it, go watch it. You won't regret it.

Artwork

THREE CLOWNS

Alison Holland



*Chiaroscuro Juried Art Show
The Fine Arts Division Chair Award*

Oil Paint on Canvas

Artwork
SUMMIT
Reagan Lane



Digital Media

Artwork

POWERLINES

Caroline Hoy



Digital Media



Poetry

ODE TO FLOOR TIME

Gwyn Jennings

And though this was not
In our plans
For tonight
After eating
Far too much pizza
When games
And good company
Blinds us
To our needs
It is, in fact
A great source of comfort
To sit here
With her
On her friend's kitchen floor
Cold tiles to ease
The tension
In her skull
Two cups of mint tea
In front of us
Courtesy of her friend
For our nausea
And though the floor
Is cold
Beneath me
And the air conditioner cycles
Chill the air
I sit with her
Warmed by
Her flannel shirt
And my hand
On her shoulder
And her hand
In mine

Poetry

JUNE 1, 2022 (12:33AM)

Jem



with night the moon pulls a blanket
over my static brain causing it to
writhe with accusations of inadequacies.
burdens of current, faults of past, and
hauntings of future. i twist myself into
a truer image of a being less than human,
a vault of lies and failures and letdowns.
someone who can't bear to face the next
suns awakening or the cyclical bore of
every day to repeat. i can't bear to cumber
another person with the sight of this same-face,
the drone of my mouth or the letdown of
another day with nothing done. a bright future
where i could finally be free means nothing to
me at night.



Poetry

SHE

Jem

a word said so carelessly.
our eyes meet and my face flushes warm.
do i not exist as me to others.
am i just a joke.
am i not old enough to know myself.
but their seconds of knowing
my very existence warrants a makeover.
trying so hard to cover up the wrong face.
i have to explain that i am real.
i have to push through those
who refuse to see me.
they memorize a replacement.
and i want to give up, i'm tired.

Nonfiction
LGBTQ+ REPRESENTATION IN POPULAR MEDIA,
PARTICULARLY IN THE CASE OF WESTERN ANIMATION FROM 2014-2022
Gabriel Bernhard



As society progresses, so too must our media. The LGBT movement has become a powerful force for change in society. People are more educated and accepting than ever, they're learning about so many new ideas, and they are accepting themselves for who they are. With the issue of LGBT representation in media remaining a hot topic after controversial decisions in popular media like *Supernatural* and the *Fantastic Beasts* film series, it feels important to address the growth we've seen in recent years on this front. The focus here will be on Western Animation, specifically the journey from *The Legend of Korra* to *The Owl House*, and the progression of representation in children's media. The journey begins with *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, a show aired on Nickelodeon from 2005-2007. The show took heavy inspiration from anime, and was groundbreaking in so many ways. It pushed the boundaries of what kids shows could do, and ushered in a new era of action and story focused television, all attempting to recapture the magic that made *Avatar* so powerful. In this vacuum emerged *The Legend of Korra*.

The Legend of Korra is an official sequel series to *Avatar*, set 70 years in the future, with a dramatically changed setting, and a new storytelling format. The show ran for four seasons, from 2012 to 2014, and received generally positive reviews. The first two seasons were marred by a convoluted and overwrought love triangle that was dropped entirely for seasons 3 and 4. The finale is where Korra earns its place in the history of LGBT representation. Here, Korra and her friend Asami officially get together. The moment is somewhat subtle. Rather than a dramatic declaration of love, the two simply agree to take a vacation together, and walk off hand in hand, gazing lovingly into each other's eyes. Vague enough to slip under the radar of censors and conservative executives, but confirmed to be the beginning of a relationship immediately after the episode aired by the creators. It was a landmark moment in children's television. The main character ending the show in a lesbian relationship? Unheard of. In fact, in 2014, it was extremely difficult to pull off. The show runners were constricted in what they could show, leading the relationship to feel somewhat rushed and overly subtle at a first glance. The follow up comic, *Turf Wars*, went much more in-depth in its exploration of the relationship, and featured very overt discussions of the struggles faced by LGBT people, but that didn't fix the problems with the show's ending.

Watching the show a second time changes one's perception of both characters. Instead of a messy love triangle followed by an absence of romance and an eventual last minute pair-up, it instead becomes the story of two women growing and maturing, becoming closer to each other and silently coming to terms with their mutual affection and attraction. The love triangle serves in retrospect to establish both characters as being bisexual. This sort of concrete setting of the character's sexuality is very important, and goes a long way to preventing it from simply being labeled as "gay" or "lesbian", which is a harmful thing that can lead to LGBT representation being hamstrung through bisexual erasure.

The relationship at the end was very difficult for the showrunners to include. The subtlety was a result of Nickelodeon being extremely hesitant about it. Show runner Brian Konietzko stated, "We approached the network, and while they were supportive,



there was a limit to how far we could go with it” (Doug M). Nickelodeon, like many studios, was afraid of LGBT representation not being marketable enough. However, Eve Ng, a professor of media arts and studies at Ohio University, notes that putting such representation in mainstream shows is important for normalizing it. “If enough shows do it and nothing terrible

happens, there’s a precedent. It makes it easier.” (Doug M). Essentially, the shows have to take the plunge and include the representation in order to make it marketable.

Despite the understatedness of the show’s ending, *The Legend of Korra* opened the doors for others to follow. Featuring the two female leads ending up together was incredibly important to bring about future change. “We wouldn’t have a lot of shows if not for Korra,” said Steven Underwood, an essayist who has written extensively about media representation and sexuality. “That one implied kiss changed the very landscape of what we can see in cartoons today.” (Doug M). In the wake of Korra, other children’s shows have been able to go farther, featuring multiple same sex relationships in much more overt ways, from sustained relationships to love confessions and weddings. In comparison to the other shows we’re going to talk about, Korra seems fairly understated, but its place in the timeline makes it possibly the single most important one. Overall, *The Legend of Korra* can be seen as a bittersweet victory. It was a landmark moment that showed how far queer representation had come, but it also shows how far it has yet to go.

The next important show is *Steven Universe*. I have not seen this show, but it is far too important to the subject to leave out. *Steven Universe* ran for five seasons, from 2013-2019, and had a 2019 movie and a 2019-2020 sequel series, *Steven Universe Future*. The show broke many boundaries in its portrayal of sexuality and gender. The primary example is the character of Garnet. For context: the world of *Steven Universe* focuses on the “Gems”, characters who are connected to certain gemstones. Gems are capable of fusing with each other into more powerful forms that are treated as semi-distinct characters that are a fusion of the two component characters. Late in season one, it’s revealed that one of the main characters, an ally of Steven’s named Garnet, is actually a Gem fusion between two other characters, Ruby and Sapphire. It is explicitly shown, rather than simply implied, that these two characters are in a relationship. They kiss and openly state and show affection for each other, and other characters discuss their relationship. This openness and frankness about the relationship is incredibly important, and formed another huge stepping stone for queer representation in children’s media. But it’s only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to representation in *Steven Universe*. The show is important for its very realistic portrayal of these relationships. Instead of idealizing and protecting the characters, they go through realistic struggles. Ruby and Sapphire have a healthy relationship, but they also fight and make up just like any couple. There’s also Pearl, another of the main characters who was in a relationship that didn’t end well, with her partner winding up with someone else. This heartbreak forms a major arc for her. Then there’s the relationship between secondary characters Jasper and Lapis. Jasper forces a fusion onto Lapis, and the relationship between them is treated as sour and abusive. This relationship is just as important as Ruby and Sapphire. Lapis ultimately escaping the abusive relationship helps to show that LGBT people don’t have to stay in an abusive relationship just because they think they couldn’t find anyone else. In general, the show is incredibly good at making sure its LGBT characters are people first and foremost. Well, rock people, but still. It shows that they are completely normal, with flaws and faults and difficulties with relationships, completely averting the troublesome



implications of “perfect” fictional LGBT relationships. Queer people can be happy, like Ruby and Sapphire, but they can also go through heartbreak, like Pearl. They can also be abusive, like Jasper. Queer people are people, and *Steven Universe* does a very good job at understanding and portraying that.

There is also the show’s depiction of gender. The main character, Steven, eschews traditional ideas of masculinity. He wears his heart on his sleeve and does not hesitate to show his emotions, and these traits don’t go away as the show goes on and he matures. He’s not afraid to wear “women’s” clothing in front of an audience. This goes even further with Steven’s eventual fusion with his best friend Connie. The two form Stevonnie, a character who uses gender neutral pronouns. A main character being genderqueer is a huge step forward in representation for the gender side of the LGBT movement.

Onto the next show, *She Ra and the Princesses of Power*. Running for 5 seasons from 2018-2020, the show is a reboot/reimagining of the classic 80’s show *She Ra: Princess of Power*. The new show, helmed by ND Stevenson, takes the classic toy inspired characters and creates an entirely new universe with them. The show ultimately centers around the complicated relationship between best friends-turned-worst enemies Adora and Catra. Adora and Catra were raised in the setting’s evil empire, The Horde, by the incredibly abusive Shadow Weaver. The two were the only people they had, and were inseparable. When the events of the show’s opening episodes result in Adora leaving The Horde and turning good, Catra is hurt, and spends the rest of the show as the main villain and bitter rival to Adora. But even with this, it is clear that both characters still love each other, and are desperate for the other to join their side. However, Catra’s descent further and further into evil eventually results in Adora officially washing her hands of their former friendship, and the pair only interacts once in Season 4. Then comes Season 5. With a new villain in control, and things looking worse than ever, Catra officially pulls a Heel-Face turn, taking a genuinely heroic action to save one of Adora’s friends, Glimmer. Adora then saves Catra from the clutches of Horde Prime, in an incredibly emotionally charged fight that results in Catra’s near demise, and Adora unlocking her true power to save Catra. The remainder of the season delves into Adora and Catra reknitting their friendship, and slowly realizing that they see each other as so much more than friends. In the end, showrunner ND Stevenson stated that Catra’s big heroic moment is just her ability to finally ask Adora to stay with her, and the two have a heart wrenching confession of love in the finale that ultimately saves the day. That’s right. *She Ra* is a show where the power of gay saves the universe.

But while the incredibly complex and well developed relationship between the two leads may be the backbone of the show, and its main claim to fame on queer representation (see how far we’ve come from Korra? In 2014, the relationship had to be toned down and barely visible. In 2018-2020, it’s extremely blatant and forms the main plot of the show). *She Ra* also has plenty of other representation. Side characters Netossa and Spinnerella are in a married interracial lesbian relationship that is shown to be perfectly healthy, but also has its share of drama. In Season 5, Spinnerella gets mind controlled by the villain, and Netossa’s attempts to get her back serve as the main focus of several episodes, even though the pair had been mostly regulated to the background in previous seasons. There’s also main character Bow, whose parents are revealed to be two very much in love gay men, who are distinct, likable characters, who are also shown to have their flaws, but ultimately are incredibly good parents. The show also ends with



a teased relationship between princesses Perfuma and Scorpia, and main characters Bow and Glimmer show attraction to both genders throughout the show, and have been confirmed to both be bisexual.

On the gender side of the spectrum, several characters were designed to be trans-coded, although that is far from official material. In Season Five, we meet the Star Siblings, who are important because in the 80's show/toy line, they were the *Star Sisters*. In the new show, one of the siblings is a trans man, voiced by a trans man. It's very subtle and not remarked on at all, to the point that most people wouldn't even notice on their first watch. Then there's the crown jewel of them all: Double Trouble. Double Trouble is a non binary character, eschewing standard gender roles entirely, with a totally androgynous appearance and attitude. They are referred to entirely with gender neutral "they/them" pronouns. Why do they go so much farther than the likes of Stevonnie? Because they are so important. They run the entirety of Season 4, being easily the single most important character for the majority of the season's plot, and thanks to Jacob Tobia's incredibly memorable performance, they do all of it while also being deviously likable.

Like with *Korra*, showrunner ND Stevenson faced pushback from the higher ups. At first, his pitch for Catra and Adora ending up together was denied outright, more out of caution than outright malice. Then came "Princess Prom", an episode where the homoerotic tension between the two was too high to measure, and the fans went berserk. Once the studio saw that the pairing would bring in viewers rather than scare them off, they were nothing but supportive going forward.

She Ra is important to the LGBT movement because the plot and setting of the show are intrinsically linked to that struggle. The show itself is largely a metaphor for the struggles of this minority. Showrunner ND Stevenson said, "It always comes back to this — when you realize that there's a great evil or a great darkness that won't just go away from one fight. It boils up, and it can be pushed back down, but it's something that we'll probably have to be fighting for the rest of our lives. That's really hard to do, and it makes you really tired sometimes, and it can be really scary. But when you are surrounded by the people that you love, and when you have that love for the people around you, then that strength is possible." (J Scherer). That refers to both the recurring evil of The Horde in the context of the show, but also the eternal struggle against oppression and prejudice. As important as the journey of She Ra the show is, the journey of its creator is just as important. The showrunner, ND Stevenson, is trans and goes by he/him pronouns and the name Nate (he goes by ND professionally). When the show was created, Nate went by a different name and pronouns (which I will not disclose here out of respect), but his journey of self-discovery and acceptance after the show's ending has been a major uniting factor and rallying point for the show's fandom.

Finally, the newest show on our list: *The Owl House*. Only in its first season, *The Owl House* aired on Disney Channel in 2020. It had a modest popularity from those who were intrigued by its premise, and those who were drawn in by the shared talent from cult classic *Gravity Falls*, which *The Owl House* seems to be something of a Spiritual Successor to. But the show's popularity blew up about halfway through the first season. Amity Blight, introduced as a bully and antagonist, started going through some impressive character development, and began showing increasingly clear signs of a developing crush on the main protagonist, Luz Noceda. The ease and normalcy with which the show treated this crush was lauded, and the fact that it came from such a complex and well developed character didn't hurt either. But the real star of the show



is Luz herself. From the beginning she shows signs of attraction towards both guys and girls, and she was ultimately confirmed by showrunner Dana Terrace to be bisexual. This was a landmark, being the first openly LGBTQ protagonist in Disney history. The studio has had a historically rocky relationship with the movement, relegating any representation to side characters, and generally keeping it very subtle. Recall the controversy surrounding the so-called

“gay moment” in 2017’s *Beauty and the Beast*. And according to Terrace, they weren’t thrilled about this representation to begin with either. “In [development] I was very open about my intention to put queer kids in the main cast... When we were greenlit I was told by certain Disney leadership that I could NOT represent any form of bi or gay relationship on the Channel... I’m bi! I want to write a bi character, dammit! Luckily my stubbornness paid off and now I am VERY supported by current Disney leadership.” Terrace tweeted.

Unfortunately, this victory did not quite last. During the hiatus between seasons 1 and 2, it was announced that Disney was cutting the show short. Instead of the planned four full 19-21 episode seasons, the show would only get two full seasons plus a third “season” consisting of a trio of 44 minute specials. Dana Terrace was not even allowed to present a case to defend her shows, with the decision instead being made entirely by Disney executives. “They just wanted to be done with TOH and this was the perfect chance to do that. Even getting the consolation s3 episodes was difficult, apparently. Hard to say, I wasn’t allowed to be a part of any conversations until I was just... Told.” – Dana Terrace, via Reddit (Llewelyn, Tom). Terrace stated that she did not believe the decision was made based on the show’s LGBT content, but rather simply because it didn’t quite fit the perfect Disney mold due to its serialized story and higher aged viewership.

With the story condensed, however, the representation within the show skyrocketed. Amity’s crush on Luz was quickly reciprocated, culminating in the two officially becoming girlfriends in the first half of season 2 and sharing many mundane, but tenderly sweet moments throughout the remainder of the season. In the penultimate episode of Season 2, they even shared a proper kiss, with the animation being noticeably improved for the scene in the same way the show treats its fight scenes. Two girls kissed, and the show made sure it stood out.

In the season 3 premiere, “Thanks to Them,” it only got more explicit, with Luz and Amity’s relationship at the forefront being joined by a lot more real-world representation. Luz makes a video presentation to come out as bisexual to her mother Camila, with the words, “Hi, I’m Bi” and the Bi flag featuring prominently. This is notable, as very few shows with LGBT representation actually use real-world terminology to define the characters. Camila immediately and joyously accepts her daughter, and is later found with parenting books bearing titles like “Life Ain’t Binary” and wearing a pride pin on her shirt. Later, there is a minor character from previous episodes working at a museum whose nails are painted in the colors of the non-binary pride flag and whose nameplate displays they/them pronouns. The use of explicit real-world terminology and pride colors makes these inclusions even more resonant than in shows like *She Ra*, where such terminology doesn’t exist due to the open and inclusive nature of the world.

While the show was cut tragically short, and the condensing of the story does show in many places, it does seem like the support for LGBT representation is still there.



If Disney executives did not want such content, then such content would not have been able to reach the screen. So *The Owl House* is something of a bittersweet victory. While the show was cut short, the strides it made and the victories it had are still undeniable triumphs, especially coming from Disney. The same company that, 6 years earlier, had flatly refused to allow

Alex Hirsh to include any queer representation in *Gravity Falls*. *The Owl House* had a much steeper uphill battle compared to *Steven Universe* and *She Ra*, which aired on Cartoon Network and Netflix, respectively, both of which are much more inclined to push the envelope than the Mouse House. The show's tragic cancellation notwithstanding, it is already going down in history as one of the great victories in the ongoing battle to gain mainstream acceptance for the LGBT movement.

LGBTQ+ representation has come a long way in the past few years, and it has a long way to go. With times and views changing, it's a difficult fight to get the media to change with it. But the realm of children's entertainment is the perfect vanguard. It's the minds of children that need to be swayed. The normalization of queerness in the eyes of the youth is so incredibly important. Without *She Ra*, many people may go their whole lives without being conscious that nonbinary people exist. Without *Steven Universe*, people may put queer people on a pedestal so high that it creates its own set of problems. The story from *The Legend of Korra* to *The Owl House* shows just how far representation in mainstream media has come, but it also shows that there is still a long way left to go. Representation in media is so incredibly important, and people who fight against it are on the wrong side of history.

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EXTRACTION

Sara Laboe



The first jolt of consciousness went something like this: awareness of body, rebirth of mind. Not the shape or the feel of flesh, of life; never that— rather the reluctant dawning of unfortunate necessary tangibility. Buoyant balloon kept captive by way of its very own renegade string to a rusting and wretched anchor of iron. Cursed cadaver!

Eyes open and widen. Pupils restrict and retreat from the whites. ‘Round the room is draped an aggressive whiteness that refuses to tolerate the threat of a shadow, composing instead the bizarre unreality of sameness from ceiling to walls to floor. Vision blurs with the shock of the glow after so long in the black. Eardrums tremor and withdraw from the clink and scrape of metal on metal and sight shifts and reluctantly focuses, drawn to the motion of a pair of hands clothed only in white latex as brilliant as the walls. The hands reveal nothing by way of intent, as they have no body but for an essence of sterile indifference.

“Lie still,” they advise in a casual tone. The grimly determined entity fusses over the repair of a pesky ill-fated machine.

Facts and images groggy with sleep drag themselves to and fro, this way and that, until some kind of sense can be made of this. The coup, the other hostages, the instantaneous realization and acceptance that a body is better off a corpse if it means shielding that most precious: The Fetal Stellemerson. Still safely unconscious in viscous seclusion, the gas as prized as his keeper.

Sensations of tearing skin sharpen the moment at hand. Take note of the present, as it’s become. Here are the hands pausing now and again to select a more suitable tool; a tool to pry the bullets out from the skin over the front portion of the body. Here is the ripping and tearing of delicate nerves and capillaries as the tips of the tweezers dig and seek bullets and bullets and bullets. Here is the bowl containing the recovered “bullets”, each resembling a small, almond-shaped peach pit.

A moment exists to wonder why one might be kept fully alert to bear this agony, but on second thought it hardly seems to matter one way or the other. The procedure goes on.

The surgeon grows weary and requests a lullaby. Despite my alarmed remarks that the job isn’t yet done, he rests his head on my chest and begins to snore. “If I could just have some water, I should be well again,” I think. And thus, begin to push and pull the now lifeless body from atop my own lest it steal what remains of my breath. At long last, the skull cracks on the tiled floor, releasing what appears to be the insides of the egg of a shriek.

I hear my shock and disgust cried aloud, my voice choked with despair as I gingerly step over the muck and the splatter. The tiles cold as ice on my bare soles, I make my way to the door and am quite relieved to find it unlocked. In fact, the doorknob (dripping with some sort of sap) seems purely decorative as it need not be turned or even bothered with to relieve myself of its obstacle. A gentle push on the door’s white-painted exterior will do just fine.

Artwork

MISS AMERICA & COUNTRY MADONNA

Jules Lusk



Ink on Paper

BIG WORDS SOUND BETTER
Caroline Hoy



I have dirty napkins around me.
But they aren't covered in words.
They are covered in food stains.
I thought writers were supposed
to have dirty napkins covered in their words.
Yet all I have are food stains

Once upon a time
I went to a reading
and I listened to poetry.
She was really good.
Her words sounded like song birds.
She probably has words on
her dirty napkins.

I think how that could never be me
Not in a million years.
I'll never write a poem
that sounds like a song bird.

I scribed words all over the page
thinking
"I am a writer"
If I say with it with confidence
then maybe it will come true.
I will be the best writer.

But is it confidence or fear of judgment?
Judgment is when I'm too scared
to walk up for seconds in the cafeteria.
Judgment is when I cover my words in sarcasm
And pretend that it's for a different reason.
Judgment is when I try to change something to be more not me.

Maybe I change this word to a big word
that I don't understand and can't read.
Maybe if I read it again
Maybe if I read it again
Maybe if I read it again.
I will understand the words.
Maybe I use the word commonsensical.



Will I sound better?
Will I be better if I don't be me?

But then whenever I think these thoughts
something in back of my head flashes
Like a big red SELF DESTRUCTIVE BUTTON

So for now I'll just be defishant...

SINCE I QUIT YOU, YOUR FAULTS ARE ON MY MIND

Sarah Hajkowski

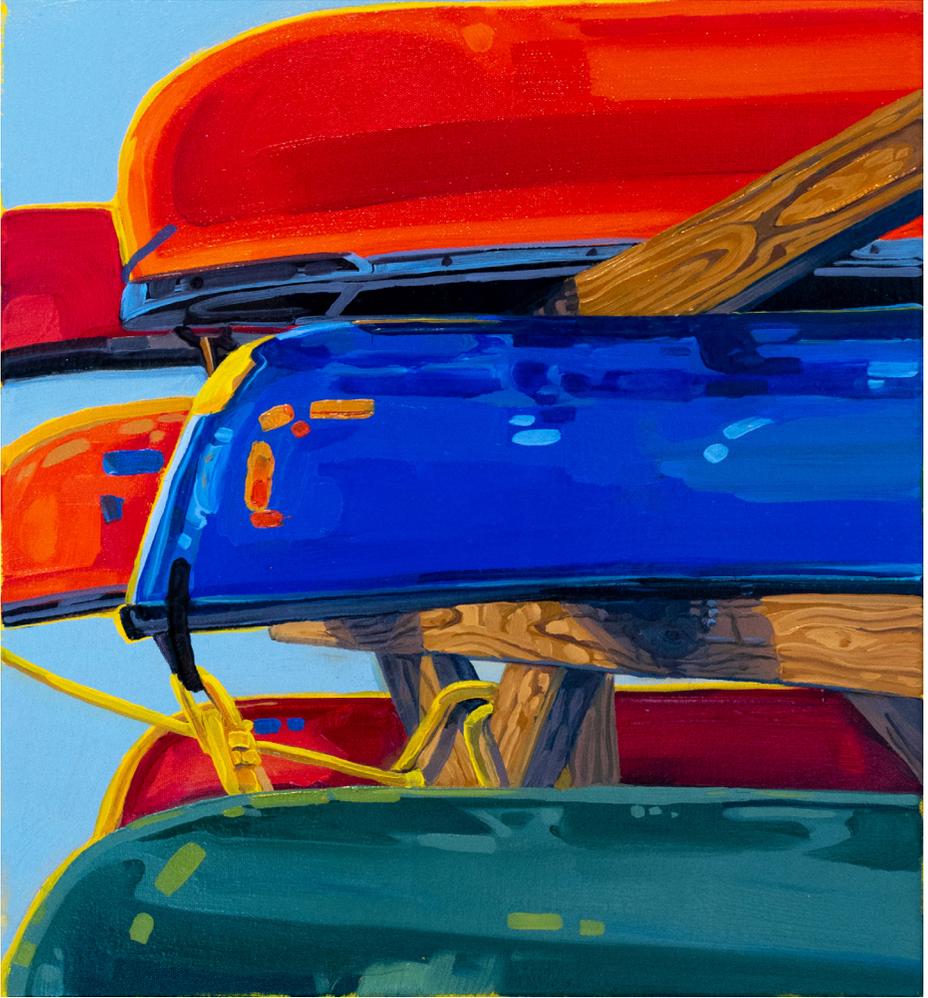


Since I quit you, your faults are on my mind,
and as I go through my weekly routine
I snicker at the pains I've left behind,
ones that while with you I'd forget I'd seen;
I work and earn and learn to self-improve
and all the while reflect on how you slack
how kingdoms could fall, and you would never move
how any ambition to you is an attack;

Your garbage piles that made my stomach churn,
the emptiness in every vow of feeling,
between the heartbreak and chronic heartburn
laughing at my loss just sends me reeling.
To free some truth I hid beneath the sweet:
What are you, left with only you to mistreat?

Artwork

LOW WATER
Gabrielle Lynch



Oil Paint

Artwork

OF ALL THE MOONS IN ALL THE WORLD

Casey Jones



Digital Media



Fiction

THE GREAT STORM

Gabriel Bernhard

Halloween Contest

Second Place

When the Storm hit the small old New England town of Devonshire, the citizens shuttered themselves up inside. They barred the doors against intruders and sat in their attics, waiting for the floods. Many held guns in shaking hands. Many sat around flickering lanterns and spoke soothing words to their frightened children. Many tried to quiet their anxious hearts with tobacco and absinthe.

I simply sat in my armchair, quietly penning my autobiography. It had been a terribly long time since last I updated it, and I only had so long to finish it. Sadly, I had not yet penned the final paragraph when a strange scent hit my nose. It was a smell like embalming fluid mixed with sea water, and it was a herald of utmost woe.

I said, "I pray you, give me a moment to finish writing."

It said, "All stories are left unfinished."

Two great, wet, clawed hands were laid on the back of my high armchair. My nose twitched, knowing that those stains would never leave the fine velvet. I did not stop writing. The scratching of my quill growing erratic, the ink slowly drying out. I dared not dip again though, for a red mist was beginning to seep out of my inkpot.

I said, "You don't understand, I'm so very close," as the last embers of the fire were snuffed.

It said, "All lives end before they are completed."

I admit my mind was racing. I had not expected it to speak when it finally arrived, nor did I expect it to take so long. On the wall above me, the painted visages of my dearly departed mother and father began to weep black blood and vomit blue fire. My quill was almost entirely out of ink; the marks on the pages were just faint impressions of letters rather than true calligraphy.

I said, "I beg of you, just one more sentence! That's all I need!"

Artwork
JANUARY 3, 2022
Jem



Digital Media



Fiction

WEAVER

Evey Perrey

Halloween Contest

First Place

“Please tell me what you saw.”

In the therapist’s office was a young woman with pale skin and mid-length, messy black hair of around twenty-two. She was wearing a purple hoodie, thick trousers, and a pair of boots fit for hiking. Her hoodie had a few blood stains. She nervously held her hands together, her eyes blinking violently, while trying to be comfortable sitting on the wooden chair.

“You don’t need to go into too many details, Iriisa. All I need from you is some information about what you witnessed and I can prescribe you your treatment.” Iriisa closed her eyes, and spoke.

My story began in Esther City, previously named Estuary city since it was right where the Indigo River met the seashore. I can never call it the nicest place; apparently it was developed to be a strategic location in the past. But it was more of a military base if anything since it was lined up with barracks and hospitals, built with the most dull-colored building material one could muster to manufacture, making the place very undesirable to even exist in. A smack in the face to the city’s warm beaches and endless supply of fresh fish. Still, the location had quite a lot of appeal for tourists. And although I lament my hometown now, I can’t deny how much fun I’d have riding on the boats with my father carrying a sketchbook, attempting to capture pictures of the waves and seagulls and the sunset in pencil drawings. Days like those were rare for me, however. Too rare.

The thing that I longed to observe, however, was a faraway mountain perfectly placed in the middle of the nation, so that on a clear day, you could see its snow-covered, cone-like summit. This mountain was part of a much larger mountain range, yet it always seemed isolated due to its sheer height. The mountain’s name was Pullenna, and it was the tallest mountain in the Carracada mountain range, a range that extended from the center of the nation to the northeast. And at the mountain’s base was the grandiose city of Pullen; a city whose skyscrapers at certain viewing angles almost seemed as tall as the monolithic mass of stone that preceded their history. The towering glass structures of several shapes and sizes, with many different logos of large companies and eye-catching nighttime dazzle wouldn’t be nearly as picturesque as it is without Pullenna mountain. That’s without mentioning the many high-priced residential buildings at the mountain’s base, the river isolating the mountain from the heart of the city, and the suspension bridge that connected the city’s railroads and freeways from one side of the river to the next. Even those who preferred the countryside couldn’t deny Pullen’s glamor and mystique.

But the mountain holding Pullen together was what intrigued me. I had left Esther after the place was attacked by a massive reptilian creature that was ever present in the Carracada Mountain range, simply known as the Skalark: a draconian creature, but without wings or tail, with red sharp scales and massive legs the size of a mid rise apartment that allowed the creature to bound across horizons at incredible speeds. According to those before me, the monster was supposed to be intelligent; intelligent enough that it never desired conflict with humanity, especially since our nation’s history



is built on bloodshed and terror. The last thing the Skalarks would ever want is to interfere with our society. The strange thing, however, was that every now and again, reports would pop up worldwide from various cities of Skalarks attacking households and stealing a resident from which, usually a young woman or even a child! Then the Skalark would disappear with the victim in its mouth, and bound across the horizons. It's speculated that the victim has always been taken to Mount Pullenna.

Now I had made my way to Pullen City after leaving Esther as a high school graduate, having applied for enrollment in the University of Maroon, a prestigious, yet affordable academic institution in the town of which it shared names with, just northeast of Pullen, between the bases of Mount Pullenna, and another mountain in the range to the east, Mount Immertia. Even though I had the desire to live in a nicer place than Esther, I wasn't sure where to take my life going forward. The only interest I had was to draw the landscapes of Pullen and the surrounding area, and maybe hike further up the Carracada towards the northeastern city of Kaen. But apparently the mystery regarding the Skalarks and its occasional attacks had caught the winds of several concerned people, and during my stay in Maroon, I had become more and more interested in figuring that mystery out. Why would such an intelligent species, renowned for its ability to negotiate, very occasionally lead attacks on individuals with no clear pattern?

On the weekend during my studies, I made plans to hike each of the mountains and make sketches of the views from which, so as to show them to my art classes. I couldn't go up Pullenna without proper preparation, so I started with its neighbor on the other side of Maroon, Mount Immertia. But the pathway up Mount Immertia was blocked by... armed guards... At first I assumed there was a crime scene, but apparently authorities say that anyone going up Immertia and affecting its current state in any way can cause chaos worldwide! How superstitious! My other alternative was to go by train to the other mountains northeast, such as April Mountain and Ella's Mountain, both of which had very good views of their nearby towns; as well as Pullenna's western neighbor, Mount Allison. I would make my way up the mountain range, and if I saw Skalarks, I would settle myself down with food at my side and analyze the Skalarks from a good distance. They would often acknowledge my presence, and, judging by the look of their golden eyes, take me as a non-threat.

I had visited every mountain by this point, even going as far as Kaen during the midterm break in my first semester. However, I was none the closer to uncovering the mystery behind why they'd go after regular people. So far, they had no interest in me as prey, and they only went after animals. Given that they probably feared Mount Immertia as much as morons do, I figured that the answer to the mystery lay at the top of Mount Pullenna.

I knew hiking up the mountain would take *days* in itself. As such, I waited for my college term to end in order to begin my endeavor. Sleeping bags and plenty of food were necessary, let alone how its snowy caps never melted no matter what season. The mountain was also so high that one would need oxygen tanks to even make it that far, due to the density of breathable air decreasing as the climb's difficulty worsened. Fortunately, although the mountaintop itself was cold, the summer would melt some of the snow and make the atmosphere somewhat warmer.

After preparation, I approached the trailhead. A ranger had alerted me that I was woefully unprepared, however. He even deemed me physically unfit for such a task!



But then he told me of something that did make me think twice. On the darkest of nights with a clear sky, even through the glare of light pollution from the city below, a glowing red light could be seen at the very peak of the mountain, flickering like a lantern. And that lantern would eventually seemingly move across the peak of the mountain before disappearing into the darkness. Many reports of seeing the glowing red light exist, with some claiming to have filmed it. But no one knows its cause or its purpose.

But I was not daunted by the man's warning. I had made this far in my preparation and analysis. This puzzling behavior in the Skalarks was one I needed to solve. Why would such an intelligent being known for its negotiation lead several attacks and cases on unsuspecting individuals? Furthermore, if I made my way up Pullenna, I would then have access to one of the most beautiful cityscapes in the nation. After a bit of convincing, he told me, "suit yourself!" and let me continue.

After two days, I made it very far up the mountain; right near the peak, but my entire body was aching all over, even though I was resting. I settled down for the second night and set up camp. The air was frigid, even for summer, and the buildup of clouds was so dense that I could just about see the bright Pullen Skyline. Honestly, you should've seen it as the skyscrapers once mountainous in themselves now looked like nothing more than multi-colored stars distant in the nighttime fog.

But what caught my eye next made me freeze, as if cold hands grabbed my shoulders and forced me to stop what I was doing and stare at what I beheld now: another person, or at least the figure of another person. It looked like a young woman, with short hair and a short dress. She was standing beside a wooden shack covered in snow, and hanging outside the door of the shack was a lantern with a red light. I didn't dare to cry out to the woman. She seemingly ignored my presence. I watched as she walked towards the lantern, and retrieved it, and as the light of the lantern lit up the shack and the area surrounding her, my horror intensified when I could still see the shack and the lit up snow through her. A huge gust of wind had reached the mountain as I quickly turned away from her to check if I was hallucinating. But only to see that the lights of the city behind me had gone dark with no trace of a city skyline even being there! The spectral woman walked with her lantern towards an opening in the rocks. A massive opening. With no light whatsoever. The woman then climbed down into the opening, and disappeared from sight. As she went, the gust of wind died down, and judging by the reflection of lights on the snowcaps again, I made a guess that the lights of the city had been relit.

I couldn't care about Skalarks now. I wanted to go home. I quickly turned my direction to escape Pullenna. But as I made my way down, loud footsteps followed me from the mountain, before something landed in front me. It was, of all things, a Skalark. It wasn't looking in any direction, however. In fact, it seemed very tense, with long fibrous tendrils protruding from its scaly body, and its eyes were completely black! I cannot remember what happened to me next; I can only assume that I tried to make a break for it.

I know not what was within my sight for the longest time. If not for a brief moment when my sense of self was restored, I wouldn't be able to recall this tale. By the time I began perceiving my thoughts, visions, and feelings again, I gathered that, wherever I was, I had been there for a while, with my dry, unconscious eyes wide open, failing to observe my surroundings.

The light of the sky brought about by the city below allowed me to at least get



a bare minimum of my bearings. I also felt a nervous tickling in my legs, as if several things had stabbed them and had made contact with my nervous system, giving me a tingling sensation, and my head felt heavy, now with a headache and a swollen face. I was hanging upside down within some cave; possibly the hole that I saw the strange woman enter earlier. In my sight, I could see the Skalark that had captured me, now limping in circles in a corner of the cave. Another Skalark lied right beside, and the fibrous tendrils from the latter had extended to the ceiling! But, how can I describe what startled me now... Following the strings of fibers revealed an upside down humanoid creature... covered in this... fungus... with warts and stems protruding from it all around, along with various skinny arms extending every angle from the being, motioning as if weaving a delicate structure with the fibers. Connected with its body through a tight, stringy neck, I then saw its head, or what seemed like a head, with more stems hanging downwards. But in the center of its head were darker, seemingly finer and skinnier fibers held together in the center which consisted of... human eyes!!

There's another person inside this thing.

Given the clues around me: the dead Skalark, the other one now limping, the fungus that infected them both, and that further developments of said fungus now enveloped the apparent person hanging beside me, I resisted the urge to scream out loud, thinking that if the thing could hear me, the monster would make haste upon turning me into one of their own! And already it had gotten far in its process. Seemingly binding my legs to the ceiling was the stringy organic substance that was delicately interlaced between through my skin, careful enough not to damage a blood vessel. Some of its wiring was even hanging from my cheeks! Perhaps that was what made me comatose and enabled this creature to take over.

I no longer wanted to be up this mountain, or in this cave, or wherever. The stakes were now set, and I started to gently move my body. My legs stung as I moved them a bit, as if they were prohibited from moving by command of my brain. I brought my hands to my face to remove the bindings from my cheeks. Nothing could've prepared me for the agony that caused. I felt as if multiple hornets living in my skull had stung me from inside out. But I refused to let the pain stop me. I yanked those strings out as hard as I could. The stinging continued to get worse the harder I pulled, but eventually they separated. My face felt like it was burning for a split second until the pain ceased. I then stretched my arms to reach my legs. And of course the searing pain that I had felt in my face was now centered in my legs and ankles as I tested the strength of the fibers that held them. They bound me like ropes in a tree snare.

As I was making my escape, the fungal creature next to me began reaching its arms towards me again. Clearly it saw me escaping, and by the time I had disconnected my consciousness from it, it was attempting to force me back. While reaching up to my legs to grab the binds that held me, the creature's farm made me jump as it caressed my chest and forced me to swing my upper body downwards again. After attempting to keep the creature's arm off my face for quite some time, the only thing I could think of doing was to yank at the creature's arm with my full strength. Surprisingly, after a few times, I managed to tear most of the arm off. The creature writhed around, flailing its other arms and making a strange whisper that echoed throughout the cave, while I continued to break my legs free. After several painstaking attempts, I managed to sever the fibers and set one leg free. But now my body was entirely held by one leg, and the creature was extending



another arm to me. Furthermore, hanging upside down for quite a while was making my vision blurrier. I tried pulling the thing's arm off again, but this arm was more firmly attached than before, and my entire bodily strength was being compromised by which way my body was swaying spontaneously by the ankle. My only option at this point was to use the thing's arm for leverage and then lay myself upon its upper body to get ahold of my leg. While grasping onto the fungal monster's abdomen, I could practically feel its hollowness, and the implicit human form inside. I resisted the urge to think of further details. While resting on the thing's body, I had now placed myself out of its arm's reach, and my only obstacle was reaching my leg and pulling the interlaced fibers out from my skin. Again, it stung my entire lower leg, but I didn't care about it anymore. I had enough of the situation I was in.

My entire body fell onto the rocky floor. I quickly collected myself and realized the floor was rather warm for a mountain cave. But I didn't stop to think. Because I had violently set myself free from the fungal creature's entanglements, my leg was now bleeding. As I limped out of the cave, the monster's whispers echoed even louder through the cave. The Skalark that had caught me didn't chase me this time. Instead it lied in the corner, twitching.

I escorted myself out of the cave, and saw that there were no lights from the city below. I could barely walk, and I collapsed onto the ground. Looking up, I got a glimpse of the transparent woman I saw earlier. This time, her eyes stared right back at me, with a bright red gleam from the lantern which she held. Another cold gust of wind came through, and I passed out.

Waking up to the sterile environment of the hospital, I could feel stitches on my legs and face. I had been rescued; most likely the park ranger got concerned about me, or maybe some of my peers from Maroon University. My parents had come to visit me. They hugged me and kissed me, telling me that they were worried when they got the news. Tears streamed down my scar-stricken face as soon as I saw them.

"And now we're here," the doctor said, interrupting Iriisa's story. "Now, what I recommend for this is—" but before he could finish, Iriisa took out a notebook. She sketched a strange, humanoid creature that seemed to be hanging upside down with spindly arms and no legs. The eyes were completely black with exception to the center, which she left as white as the paper. The monster was seemingly leading pieces of thread from its body with its arms. She then drew a lantern right next to a silhouette of a young woman.

"There," she said, once she had finished. "If only she could've told us sooner... Now we know about the weaver."

Poetry

THE OLD MILLS ALONG THE ROADSIDE
Christian Humphries



The old worn-down courthouse closes its doors,
As deer foals lie down on the cold forest floors.
And young farmers finish their late evening chores,
As streetlamps alight the barren closed stores.

Little old county, you're still mine.
Barreling down a rural decline.
A hundred others, no different at all-
But my soul only you can recall.

O'er the countless mill ruins, fresh kudzu has grown.
And the beautiful fields frame old wooden homes.
But I see ever more forests cut bare to the bone.
And so many lost souls, left poor and alone.

Little old county, you're still mine.
Barreling down a rural decline.
Despite all your flaws, you're still home to me.
My home's what you'll always be.

Artwork

ARUBA #22

Tori Brayman



*Chiaroscuro Juried Art Show
Second Place*

Digital Media

Artwork

TAKE IN THE VIEW

Oreo Ellis



*Chiaroscuro Juried Art Show
President's Choice*

Digital Media



Theater

LIMITED SPACES

Gabriel Bernhard

Synopsis: A recently deceased carpenter wakes up in a strange room with an unknown figure, who informs them that this is Purgatory, the waiting room of the afterlife. The carpenter quickly decides that they don't want to be dead anymore, and engage the figure in philosophical debate to try to talk their way out.

Characters:

J - Protagonist. A 33 year old carpenter living in New York City. A social activist and generally good person. Sardonic, inquisitive, and confident in himself. Dresses in very simple, breathable clothing with few adornments.

C - Antagonist? A manifestation of a God of Death, specifically lording over the passage from life to afterlife. They are otherworldly, but do derive some enjoyment from acting like a person and engaging in conversation with the recently deceased. Their personality is partially influenced by J, so they have a similar bearing. Dresses like a badass punk rocker.

Setting: J is from modern day New York City, but aside from providing character context, the time and place settings are unimportant, and can be changed if necessary.

START OF PLAY

Int. A bizarrely appointed room. A single table with two chairs sits in the middle of the room. A refrigerator stands SL, and an entertainment station with a 40-inch flatscreen TV stands SR. On the wall behind the table is a nearly life-sized crucifix. Flanking the crucifix are a window (SL) and a door (SR). Fire can be seen through the window. A line of spikes stands at the edge of the room facing out towards the audience. J is currently lying down beneath the table, while C is sitting in one of the chairs, drinking a Coke Zero.

J

jolts awake and hits their head on the bottom of the table.



J

Ow, Fuck!

C

(Idly) Be careful.

J

Yeah, no shit.

(J crawls out from under the table, takes a look around, and realizes where they are and how weird it is)

J

Uhhhh... where am I? This place is weird.

C

You're in... let's see, what would you refer to it as...? *(They open a file on the table in front of them)* Ah, there it is. You're in Purgatory.

J

Beg pardon?

C

Purgatory. The waiting room of the afterlife.

J

The afterlif- wait, I'm dead??

C

Afraid so. *(J is too stunned to speak for a moment, but they don't argue or try to bargain, as some people might. Instead, they accept C's words as the truth, and sit down in the other chair.)*

J

Fuck.

C

Indeed.

J

I don't... remember dying.

C

Most don't. Just like most people don't remember the majority of things that happen to



them. A lack of memory of the event indicates that their death was sudden, so at least you didn't suffer. Probably.

J

Oh. That's nice.

C

We do have your final moments on record, if you'd like to watch them. *(They gesture towards the TV)*

J

You know what? I'll pass.

C

Fair enough.

J

Okay, so... Purgatory. Why does it look like this?

C

I made it this way, based on what I observed of your tastes in life. There's a generically branded video game console plugged into the tv with some games you think are good, but not great. There's whatever beverage or meal you desire in the fridge, so long as it costs less than \$8, and an ice cream maker on the counter beside it.

J

Wow, that's all pretty nice, actually. Where's the bed?

(C raises an eyebrow)

J

Right. Purgatory. Not too nice, in case I need to go to hell.

C

Indeed.

J

And... who exactly are you?

C

I am what is called a psychopomp. My domain is the space between death and the after-life. Purgatory, the River Styx, the Embalming Room, et cetera. I am the judge of souls.



J

Big job.

C

Larger than you can comprehend.

J

Why are you here with me then?

C

Technically I'm not. This is a tiny fragment of my actual being, crafted based on your subconscious expectations of what would await you in the afterlife.

J

Oh. That's... neat?

C

I currently exist in the exact same manner in the dead minds of millions of other recently deceased people.

J

Wow. That's a lot of people.

C

Indeed. Running the afterlife is no small task, and even I am only one part of that celestial bureaucracy. The scale of this operation-

J

(deadpan) -is larger than I can comprehend?

C

Precisely.

J

Okay... so the afterlife is a big place... and I'm in its waiting room.

(C nods and takes a sip from their Coke Zero)

J

So... how do I get out?

(Beat)

C



pardon?

J

I want to leave. Been dead for about a minute and I already don't like it. So, how do I leave?

C

You don't. That's not how death works.

J

What about defibrillators? Modern medicine is wild, people can be legally dead for, like, minutes and then they get a ziggity zap and they're good to go.

C

If that were the case for you, you wouldn't be here. The journey to the afterlife is not an instantaneous one. Like all things, it takes time.

J

But you said I died instantly.

C

Indeed, and whatever the circumstances of that death were, they were such that revivification was not a possibility.

J

Some people get up on their own.

C

Do you honestly believe that you are one of those miracle people? To look death in the face, embrace it, and then walk away?

J

What about the door? If I can't leave, why is there a door? *(Before C can answer, J walks over and opens the door. Outside of the door is just fire. J closes the door and turns back to the table, rattled.)*

J

I... I guess not then.

C

No indeed. *(J sits down in the chair opposite C)*



J

Has it ever been done though? Has anyone ever just walked out? I know I can't be the first person who's ever wanted to be not dead, so there has to be a precedent

C

Some. Some have come and gone, others have tricked or bargained their way out. Some have been the subject of miracles or modern medicine that have let them defy their fates. But most of those happened in ages long past. Times when the barriers between worlds were blurred and the people were more willing to believe that they could do extraordinary things.

J

What, like- like myths?

C

Yes, myths. The tales of Orpheus, Odysseus, Heracles in the Greek mythology or the story of Lazarus and Jesus in the Christian Mythology.

J

Are you saying those stories are true?

C

Maybe. Do you believe they are true?

J

Well it's different to believe something than to know it as fact.

C

Belief, knowledge, in the end they mean the same thing. They are what the mind accepts to be true.

J

If that's how you define them, but there is such a thing as objective fact, and some people don't believe in those facts. Defining belief and knowledge as the same thing just devalues both of them as concepts.

C

Why should concepts hold any intrinsic value to begin with?

J



know, they just... should. Why wouldn't they?

C

Against the power of time and entropy, what comfort could such things bring? There is no purpose to any one individual's life, and if one is to take the mathematician's perspective, there is an infinitesimally small chance that any individual person would lead a life worthy of remembrance. Perhaps the tales of Orpheus and Lazarus are true, but what comfort is that to you? They were heroes. People of true valor with grand designs and purposes in their lives. That is why they were able to overcome death.

J

So their lives held more value than a "normal" person's life?

C

Empirically, yes.

J

Bullshit.

C

Oh.

J

I call bullshit on all of that bullshit you just bullshitted.

C

Well-

J

Every person's life is exactly as meaningful as everyone else's. Whether they're remembered by history isn't a matter of their personal valor or any of that. It's a matter of random fucking chance.

C

Do you think you will be remembered by history? A 33 year old carpenter with few close friends, a mediocre apartment, and a desperate love for a woman who left you (*C checks the folder again*) six years ago. What have you done that is worthy of remembrance? What life do you have that is so wonderful that you want to return to it?



J

I like what I did for a living. I volunteered at a soup kitchen. I- I protested and was an active voice for positive change in my community. I have plenty of that valor you hold in such high esteem.

C

And yet... (*They check the file*), you were not happy.

J

I... maybe not. But I was content.

C

Is contentment enough for you? If you have such valor, if you are such a good person then Heaven awaits you. Eternity in paradise. Would you truly give that up?

J

What if I'm going to Hell?

C

That's what this room is for. This is where you can grapple with that possibility. While playing pretty good games on a generically branded video game console and eating homemade vanilla ice cream.

J

The ice cream machine only makes vanilla?

C

Yes. (*Beat*)

J

So how did Jesus get out?

C

Jesus was chosen by a higher power to have that fate.

J

What if I am?

C

Do you think you are?

J



Well you'd know better than me. What if I'm Jesus?

C

(incredulous) What if you're Jesus?

J

Yeah. Jesus is supposed to come back, what if he did and it was me? What if I'm Jesus? Would you even know? Would you even tell me— would you even be allowed to tell me if you knew?

C

This is... quite a logical leap you've made here.

J

You're not saying no...

C

I'm a psychopomp. I monitor the transition from life to afterlife. I am not God. I was not consulted on whether or not or how or into whom Jesus would be reborn.

J

I mean, now that I'm thinking about it, the details are very similar.

C

Well-

J

(Holding up fingers) I died at the age of 33. I'm a carpenter. I'm a social activist. I'm spiritual, but don't conform to a specific religion. Thinking of it, I've only really got 12 or 13 close friends, and I've always gotten a shifty vibe from Isaiah, so I bet he's my Judas. Yeah...yeah! This makes sense!

C

It does??

J

Obviously I'll have to wait a few days but then my resurrection should be a given.

C

This is a truly wild turn of events.

J

It's not a turn of events, it's a realization of the truth. It's—it's a belief. Ha! A belief!



What's the difference between belief and truth? According to you, there isn't one! *(J walks to the door)*

C

If you're wrong, you'll be destroyed. *(J opens the door)*

J

In that case, I won't have to worry about it anymore.

C

Are you sure about this? *(J hesitates in the door)*

C

Are you willing to gamble your very existence on the possibility that you are the reincarnation of Jesus Christ, the messianic figure of a religion you are not a part of anymore? *(J wavers somewhat. C is right. This is insane. They'd be risking losing an eternity in heaven. J was a good person in life, and they do believe they've done enough good to outweigh them not following every rule in some book. And yet...)*

J

Good point, but won't it be cool if I'm right? *(J steps through the door, into the fire. The door closes. C sits at the table, looking at the door for a long while. Then, they take a sip from their Coke Zero and close the folder on the table. They stand up and look at the door, then at the audience)*

C

I wonder... *(Blackout)*

END OF PLAY

Artwork
RED GOTHAM
Jackson Inglis



Digital Media

Artwork
OH MY
Gwyn Jennings



Oil on Canvas

Artwork

MUSHROOM YOU CAN STAND UNDER

Jem



Cardboard



Artwork

GROWTH
Reagan Lane



Digital Media



Poetry

KANASGOWA [KAH-NA-SKOE-WA]: HERON

The Rev. Dr. Judith Davis

My herons on Cape Cod, I will miss you as I move to the Cherokee country of Western North Carolina. The Cherokee named you Kanasgowa, the Heron. We loved a house on Kanasgowa Lane: I would have loved to live on “your” street.

One autumn, almost a decade ago, we migrated north to Cape Cod, and now we will migrate south—you to the shores and salt marshes, and I, to the mountain lakes.

I will look for you on the lakes as I long to see you again: You, my favorite, majestic one, the Great Blue Heron—You, the diminutive Little Blue Heron—And you, visiting Tri-colored Heron that made me smile as I added you to my “life list”

You, elusive one, Green Heron with several colors in the spring, yellow near your eyes, green and maroon on your wings—And you herons of dusk I watch flying to your roosting trees—Black-crowned and Yellow-crowned Night Herons.

We enjoyed the quiet of the salt marsh—you, fishing for supper, and I, chilling out. You, flying to your roost at dusk, I, counting you for my “year list.” I will miss our peaceful, quiet times in the evening by the beaches and marshes of Cape Cod, and I wish us blessings as we migrate to our new homes.

You will migrate back to Cape Cod next spring, and I will wait patiently for your return to our mountain lakes, for you, Kanasgowa, will always be in my heart.

Artwork

KANASGOWA
The Rev. Dr. Judith Davis



Watercolor, Gouache, and Japanese Sumi-e Ink on Arches Cold Pressed Watercolor Paper



Poetry

YOU'RE BRAIDING FLUTTERSHY'S HAIR WRONG

Quintin Overocker

Where once on a Sunday morning you would
have been hiking or writing or quietly reading,
you're now sitting on a footstool next to the bathtub
in fleece pajama pants and a stained sweatshirt,
a child's snotty tissues tucked in your pocket
your feet wet from splashed water
and you're asked to braid a pony figurine's
multicolored mane.

Before starting, you'll need to do a couple things:

Get rid of the non-philosophical, selfish solipsism
you sink into every weekend morning around nine a.m.
This child in the bathtub doesn't, and shouldn't,
care about your love/hate relationship with the idea
of yourself as the center of the universe.

And forget about the shattered mirrors of lives
you haven't lived. Fluttershy's rainbow hair
isn't going to straighten itself on the jagged edges
of time not spent on the coast, or in Iowa City,
or as a lumberjack in the northwoods.

Ostensibly or not, you made the choice
to understand the origins of Equestria's inhabitants
and to engage in their pageantry,
so stop boasting that you've never braided hair
and you had to look it up on YouTube.
That doesn't excuse poor craftsmanship.

And when you braid it wrong the first time
and you act her age when she tells you so,
her saying she's sorry is the strongest indictment
yet of your faults, more powerful than twenty years
of dancing around the edges of self-analysis where you
achieved levels of self-loathing just strong enough
to give you a ridiculous sense of romance
about your struggle, but not enough
to make you change.

So just group the six colors into three,
leave out the decorative ruffled strands,

and forget about yourself for the first
time in your life. The braids will be fine,
and your daughter will smile.

And that is enough, and everything.



Artwork

DEATH OF COMPANION

Jem



*Found and Foraged Objects
Air-Dry Clay*



Artwork

STILL LIFE
Nicole Bradbury



*Chiaroscuro Juried Art Show
Third Place*

Oil



SPECIMEN: THE PROCESS OF DIAGNOSING CHRONIC ILLNESS

Gwyn Jennings

- 1. Panic.** You're studying in a cafe during your first year of college. Customers going in and out of the door let in a sharp sting of autumn wind. You never could handle cold weather and wear fingerless gloves. Despite this protection, the pain in your hands spikes. You try to massage your tendons before they freeze, but it's too late. Stiff fingers frantically text your mom, "my hands are hurting a lot, something is wrong."
- 2. Hypothesis.** Your mom says it's probably tendinitis. She gives you ibuprofen, exercises to do, and tells you to keep your hands warm. The pain makes it hard to sleep so you text your friend about what's going on. "It sounds like fibromyalgia," she replies. You see a chiropractor who makes you half an inch taller and tells you it might be Lyme disease. A physical therapist says it might be ehler-danlos syndrome. Your doctor sends you to a lab an hour away where they take two vials of your blood. Now your doctor is saying it's parvovirus or a thyroid condition instead of Lyme and your treatment changes yet again.
- 3. Degradation.** There are oil paint stains on your wrist brace. It doesn't do much to help, but you don't have anything better. Your fingers lock while doing your exercises. Slowly, you massage them back into motion while deep breathing down from panic. Vicodin for your wisdom teeth gives you a taste of a body without pain. Empty spaces in your gums show you how ibuprofen is supposed to work. You see your doctors more than your friends. After one appointment, you break down crying in front of your acupuncturist. "I don't feel any better, I don't know how to."
- 4. Rage.** Why aren't you getting better? Why don't you have answers? Why can't anyone see that you need help? It's been three years and your doctor still doesn't know what's wrong with you. You drive forty minutes for your rheumatologist to tell you that your blood is normal and you don't have an autoimmune disorder. You want to cry and your mom wants to break things. In desperation you slam your arms against the wall. Riding the high of pain you can control.
- 5. Hope.** You lay glassy-eyed on the table week after week. Nothing more than a body to be worked on. This maintenance isn't making you feel better, but it prevents you from feeling worse. The rheumatologist examines you. Your mind splits from your body as you allow him to arrange your limbs and give automated answers to his questions. He tells you something that brings your mind back into your body. You have fibromyalgia and hypermobility, your friend was right. He refers you to aquatic physical therapy where the water takes the weight off your bones. Your doctor prescribes you cymbalta, a pill that surprises you with how it immediately lessens your pain. Your new physical therapist later confirms that you have ehler-danlos syndrome and gives you rings that prevent your fingers from locking. Your mom researches foods that won't cause inflammation. There is no cure, but you accept that you're going to be ok.

Artwork

SUSPICIOUS MINDS

Ji



*Chiaroscuro Juried Art Show
First place*

Ink and Tempera

Artwork

WASN'T THE DOOR LOCKED
Jules Lusk



*Chiaroscuro Juried Art Show
Students' Choice Award*

Oil on Canvas

Poetry

MANIFESTO
Sarah Hajkowski



I expected when I got here I would know
some direction where my life was set to go
some rough idea of making pieces fit
the whole "experience fosters wisdom" bit.
And certainly, I have changed in these four years
I've gained some fortitude and faced some fears.
Still in recovery from hiding how I love
I reflect most people are nothing to be scared of.
And going forward, what's it all to mean?
Will I never write for stage or screen?
Will I never rise to what's predicted?
But drift from place to place, ever conflicted?

I expected when I got here I would know
and prove them wrong, but as I go on and grow
I find there's neither call to prove nor weight
I continue to connect, craft, and create.
I might end in some charming house somewhere
or some apartment covered in cat hair
teaching teens or serving customers,
might earn my MFA, or even worse,
just learn to be okay with breathing through,
and looking to myself for what to do.

Artwork
**A LITTLE LESS PICTURE TAKING,
A LITTLE MORE FLOWER VIEWING**
Casey Jones



Digital Media

Artwork

SUNSHINE
Caroline Hoy



Digital Media



Poetry

THE IDEA OF ORDER IN STREATOR, ILLINOIS
Quintin Overocker

For Ron Schneider

My uncle spent more than thirty years sweating under
a welding mask, staring at a darkened pinpoint of light,
fusing metal, listening to bosses half his age
shout orders over the drone of the factory.

In the summer he keeps an immaculate garden,
rows of plants neatly staked and labeled, tomatoes
that define the color red. The smallest weed
holds no quarter.

“Thing about it is,” he says, “it’s gardening or murder.”

Artwork

DECEMBER 30, 2021

Jem



Digital Media

Artwork

SNOWY OWL
The Rev. Dr. Judith Davis



*Digital Photograph with Canon Rebel Ti 5 Camera and 200mm Lens
(Unretouched Photograph)*

Poetry

ON RECIPROCITY

Sarah Hajkowski



I begin with painting a passenger pigeon.
Small enough to fit in a Wonder Bread sandwich container
and take with one to sit alone at the low, green tables.
Picture like a magnet from the old fridge
flat-back, photographic,
matte-shiny with the colors of the passenger pigeon.
People forget a rainbow in a spectacular hurry,
in 1915 they were already talking about the snowbird and the chickadee
and here you were, forgetting me while we spoke.
No sooner the roosting site,
our song by the Neon Trees, arroz con pollo,
midnight wailing like the Greeks used to do,
no sooner safety than extinction.
How did the birds die off? They were killed and eaten and forced out.
How is it different, what you did to me?
I didn't damage you first.

Artwork

LIGHTNING GLASS

Benjamin Wilhelm



Poetry
MOKITA
Gabriel Bernhard



We've discussed it before
Of course we have
It's been the subject of jokes
We cheapen it
Dull the knife
So it won't cut as deep
We say it, because we have to
But never in a real way

We've never sat down and opened up
Never let down our walls
We've come close
 In the night
 In the dark
 When it feels easy
 When it feels safe
But to truly TALK?
We haven't. We don't. We can't.

It's a kindly silence
Born out of love, not apathy
A dull blade does not slice
But it can tickle
It's best to laugh
When tears well up

We always know
And we're always here for you.

How are you FEELING?
Don't want to talk about it?

Good.

Artwork
EL MICHA
Ji



Gouache and Colored Pencil

Hybrid

BOUNCY POUNCEY

Caroline Hoy



During my childhood, my sister and I loved Winnie the Pooh so much and we have found many ways to incorporate the book into our lives. A.A Milne’s Winnie the Pooh takes place deep in the hundred acres of woods...

“Deep in the Hundred Acre Wood where Christopher Robin would play you’ll find the enchanted neighborhood of Christopher’s childhood days.”

Once in the Hundred Acres Woods my sister and I played. We went bouncy pouncey with Tigger. My ADHD helped with those bouncey pouncey fun fun fun fun fun fun times.

“The most wonderful thing about Tiggers is, I’m the only one.” — Tigger

After that we met Pooh. He needed help, so together we all thought about where he put his honey. It was always with the bees! But Pooh was happy once he had a spot of honey.

“My favorite thing is me coming to visit you, and then you ask, ‘How about a small smackerel of honey?’” — Pooh

Once we found the sweet honey it was time for gray storm clouds and a house made of twigs. Eeyore always seems to lose his tail. So my sister and I helped him find it. The tail's favorite spot to hide was on Eeyore behind.

“It’s not much of a tail, but I’m sort of attached to it.” — Eeyore

Next we ran over to Rabbit’s house. It was always hard to not to trample his garden. But Roo and Tigger come in bouncing and that makes it hard. My sister and I would ask Owl for help. He was a very wise owl so he could help. But the carrots could not be fixed.

“Hello, Rabbit,” he said, “Is that you?”

“Let’s pretend it isn’t,” said Rabbit, “And see what happens.” — Pooh and Rabbit

When the day was almost over, sometimes the elephants would come after us. But our friends would help us find our way to the hill with the fence. There we could talk about never growing up.

“So, they went off together. But wherever they go, and whatever happens to them on the way, in that enchanted place on the top of the Forest, a little boy and his Bear will always be playing.” — A.A. Milne

But we did grow up. We stepped into the world. I can’t go running after red balloons anyway. Now I sit at a computer and write about Climate Change. My days of pink pigs



named Piglet and kangaroos named Kanga are numbered.

“The things that make me different are the things that make me, me.” — Piglet

I want time to stop so I can go back. I want to hug my stuffed animals and imagine that they are real. I want to go ‘oh bother’ to my issues and ignore them. But I can’t. As my sister and I grow apart I look at our times at the Hundred Acre Woods and smile.

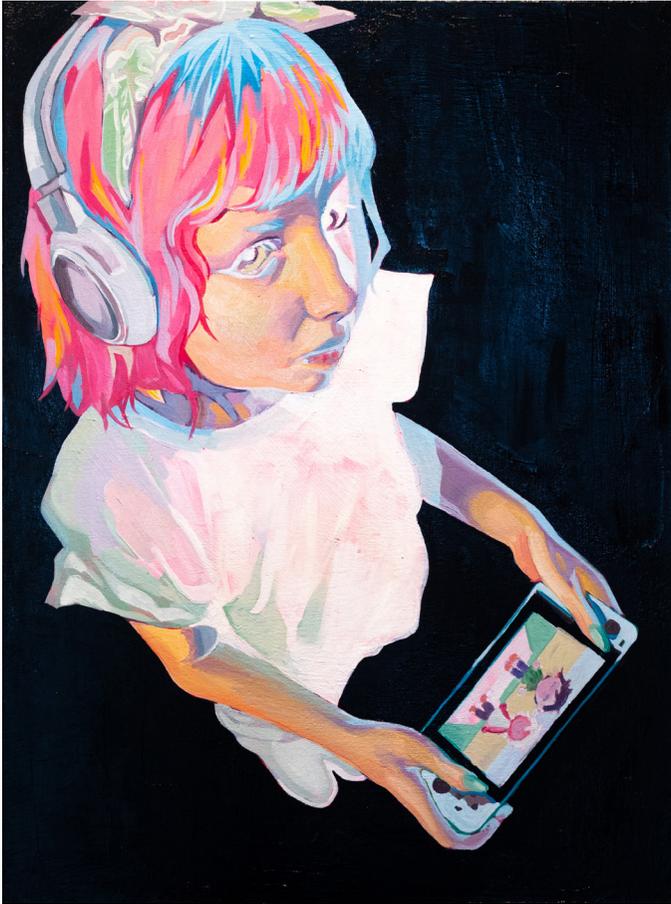
*“You’re braver than you believe, stronger than you seem and smarter than you think.”
— Christopher Robin*

Goodbye childhood, hello adulthood

Artwork

HOME AWAY FROM HOME

Jules Lusk



Oil Paint on Canvas

Artwork
RAILWAY
Brian Seon



Photography

Poetry
THE RIGHT VERSE

Vance Reese



Disruption of speech is my theme, and that's why
I am writing of people that might
Start a sentence with "So...", then with uptick of tone
End their phrase with the check-in word — "Right?"

It used to be like, I mean, not used as much,
But it comes as a thief in the night,
As with uptalk and "listing" and bad vocal fry,
So allow me to set things aright:

This talk, y'know bruh, can infect the whole crew,
And there's no vaccine for it in sight.
If we had one - well, awesome! I'd use it, because,
Uh, 100 percent it's my right!

I totally, literally, try to erase
These defective speech patterns in flight,
But, yeh. No. I can't win. It's, like, found everywhere
In our discourse from leftwards to right.

OMG! IDK, but in my POV
This habit's becoming a blight.
And what's worse, I've been humbled by gremlins in language
I use when my head's not on right.

But maybe we sort of and kind of might could
Like, um, put up a bit of a fight?
What if we started to say, "Yes you are!"
To those ending a sentence with "Right?"

So, I know what you're thinking, right? "Not gonna work!
You're trippin'. Don't be so bereft!
Why struggle and moan, right?" My careful response is:
What kind of speech will we have left?

Waylon Bigsby

Chiaroscuro Juried Art Show

First, thanks go to Brevard College and this amazing group of artists for having me serve as juror today. It has been an honor and privilege to view this work and select for you. I've been immersed in your world for this short time and have thoroughly enjoyed the chance to see what you've been up to. When I find myself in either a curatorial or juror position, I also find myself looking for common threads within the body of submissions. These threads tend to be based on my personal aesthetic preferences, but also on the elements and principles of design that I teach my students to wield. As I start to recognize those trends, pieces begin to commune with me and I them.

The exhibit includes a variety of subject matter and style—but I find a few threads that stand out to me personally. I have a deep affinity for works that explore geometric and “mathy” subject matter, and there are many 2D and 3D pieces that speak to me my native artistic tongue—from the welded sculptural work to the symmetries and pattern found in many of the paintings and photographs. I am also drawn to the bold use of color and contrast, and within these works many dare take the risks that capture a viewers' attention from across the room. Lastly, I favor work that piques my sense of wonder—be that work that possesses a mystique that holds me captive or work that appeals to my own constant longing for adventure.

I have selected four winners and two honorable mentions based on these few threads that have actualized during my time spent with this work, and I feel that these selected pieces are truly fresh and give us a fine sampling of all the great work that comes out of your department. Congratulations to all the winners AND show participants for an excellent show. I will know no end to the regret of not being here to meet with you this evening!

Thank you, Waylon Bigsby

President's Choice

Oreo Ellis, "Take in the View"

Division Chair's Choice

Alison Holland, "Three Clowns"

Alumni Association's Choice

Gabrielle Lynch, "Witches Passage"

Student's Choice

Jules Lusk, "Wasn't the Door Locked"

Honorable Mention

Alison Holland, "Timothy"

Honorable Mentions

Jodi Wyse, "House of Dreams"

Third

Nicole Bradbury, "Still Life"

Second

Tori Brayman, "Aruba #22"

First

Ji, "Suspicious Minds"

Best in Show

Accounts

Gwyn Jennings, "Photos of Snow White" My favorite poem by Eric Tran is "Portrait as Orpheus, Ten Years Old." There's an experience in the lives of most queer people where they remember a childhood friend who was different. Someone they were in love with before they knew what it was to be in love or that it was even possible or allowed for them to be in love with someone of the same sex. Heterosexuality is pushed on children since birth practically. It's all so tiring and it put the expectation on me from a young age that I would like boys. I had a friend in kindergarten who was a boy who I called my boyfriend because boys and girls can't possibly be friends. There was another friend though, the first classmate I met in kindergarten and instantly became my best friend. I sat next to her at the beginning of my first day because that was the only free space on the rug. I wanted to be friends with her because I thought she was pretty. Specifically because she looked like Snow White, who was my favorite Disney princess at the time. Looking back on our relationship and old photos of us, it was clear that I was in love with her. Sometimes you get possessed by the spirit of Sappho and have to be a dramatic lesbian yearning over a childhood friend.

Casey Jones, "The Observer" "The Observed" is about as close as you can get to a direct sequel of my past piece "The Observer". The events of "The Observed" start literally right after "The Observer" ends. "The Observed" starts as soon as the button is pressed, which is right where "The Observer" ends.

Sarah Hajkowski, "Binocular Behavior" Sarah is frightfully new to digital art, but she has found popular graphics software Autodesk Sketchbook user-friendly to create pieces like "Binocular Behavior." This piece in two parts centers a predator-prey relationship in nature, that of the raccoon and the land snail. The viewer is primarily "in" the land snail's perspective, the pieces' tone and text strive to convey shock and betrayal in being preyed upon.

Sarah Hajkowski, "Since I quit you, your faults are on my mind" "Since I quit you, your faults are on my mind" is a verse poem modeled after Shakespeare's Sonnet 113: "Since I Left You, Mine Eye Is In My Mind." Sarah's poem, mostly conformed to iambic pentameter, parodies the originally romantic sentiment of Shakespeare's "Fair Youth" sequence by having the speaker reflect on a subject who has treated them badly, and the silver lining of freedom from this person.

Evey Perrey, "Weaver" Evey's "Weaver" is part of a larger writing project that has been in the works since her interest in writing began in 2014. Although her short story was written in 2022 and inspired by the Gothic Literature she was writing at the time, the creatures in "Weaver" were created as far back as 2017, but never had a lot of focus or development.

Contributors

GABRIEL BERNHARD is a senior at Brevard College with a major in Theatre and a minor in Creative Writing. He is a writer, actor, and storyteller. Gabriel's passions include Dungeons and Dragons, film and television, video games, and fantasy writing. He loves being able to tell stories in any form he can, from theater to nonfiction to playwriting. He hopes you gain some measure of enjoyment or education from the effort he's put into his works.

NICOLE BRADBURY is a 19 year old artist and cyclist from Ontario, Canada. She enjoys painting in and outside of school, specializing in portraits and painting cycling shoes. Outside of school Nicole races cross country mountain bikes internationally on the World Cup Circuit.

VICTORIA "TORI" BRAYMAN is originally from Dearborn Height, Michigan, just outside of Detroit. She is a senior Art major with a concentration in Photography with a minor in Business. She took a trip over the summer on a cruise to Aruba to get this image.

THE REV. DR. JUDITH DAVIS retired to Brevard in 2018 following a career as a college professor and Episcopal priest. She is an artist, birder, mom of a BC sophomore, photographer, poet, priest, and former scientist. In retirement she takes courses in poetry in the Great Smokies Writing Program of UNC-A and publishes poetry and artwork. She is an adjunct priest at St. Philip's Episcopal Church and President of the Transylvania Choral Society. She is an adjunct professor in Religion at Brevard College. She and her family and three cats live near Cedar Mountain.

OREO ELLIS was born in Brooklyn, New York but he was raised in Bluffton, South Carolina. He started drawing at age six with just crayons and colored pencils. As soon as he could read, Oreo picked up manga and fell in love with the Japanese art style. As Oreo grew up he was very limited on things to see and places to go. He started using his mind as an escape from trouble. Everything Oreo thought, he put on a piece of paper. He started drawing comics with his friend, having been denied taking art classes from all his schools. Oreo stayed with his original comic paper even now that he is a college student with access to digital software. All his broken cookies are put into his artwork to make an Oreo.

ANNA ERVIN is a junior at Brevard College majoring in Theater Performance and minoring in English. She loves all of her cats, especially Professor Frizzle, and trips to Taco Bell. She has been an Editor in Chief of *The Clarion* for about two years, and this is her second time submitting to *Chiaroscuro*.

SARAH HAJKOWSKI is a senior studying English and Theatre at Brevard College, graduating Spring 2023. Her poems have been published in *Sonoma State University's Zaum Magazine* and the *Petite Pomme Journal*, as well as Brevard's own *Chiaroscuro*. Current writing projects include a 20-poem collection about loss entitled *Brain to Pick: Hostility and Healing*. Sarah is still new to traditional and digital art, which she finds helpful for self-expression as well. Sarah believes passionately in the power of the written word to change the world.

ALISON HOLLAND is a junior Art major with a concentration in Painting. They love all things creepy and want to show the cute side of those things with fun colors.

CAROLINE HOY is a senior Environmental Studies major with a focus on sustainability. Caroline has been on *Chiaroscuro* staff for four years now, eight semesters. Caroline is graduating Brevard College and is signing off from her time with *Chiaroscuro* finishing with Editor-in-Chief of both *The Clarion* and *Chiaroscuro*. She took control of the English department as a science student.

CHRISTIAN HUMPHRIES is a Senior at Brevard College who is majoring in Biology with a minor in Health Sciences. He is currently nineteen years old and is planning to pursue physician assistant studies after graduating. Aside from science, his interests also include playing the piano, reading, and studying other cultures.

JACKSON INGLIS is currently a junior at Brevard college and plans on graduating as an Art major. He typically enjoys drawing and writing, whether it be fiction or nonfiction. He also served in the "Art & Design" department for the 2023 *Chiaroscuro* issue. Jackson has been creating art and entertainment for as long as he can remember. From filming videos and home movies going back as early as middle school to writing professionally for *The Clarion*, he's got plenty of experience.

GWYN JENNINGS is a senior BA candidate at Brevard College, graduating this year in 2022 with a dual concentration in Painting and Time Based Media. Gwyn moved to North Carolina from California in 2014 and has loved creating art from a very young age. Independently, she works in digital and traditional media to create art in the realm of fantasy and science fiction. At Brevard College, she has pursued oil painting on canvas, creative writing, and producing experimental non-narrative films.

CASEY JONES is a senior art major (digital media) at Brevard College where they're also studying creative writing. They are a previous Art and Design editor and Genre Editor for *Chiaroscuro*.

SARA LABOE is an English major from New England in her junior year at Brevard College. She most enjoys spending time in little-known places in the mountains with her dog, Tennyson.

REAGAN LANE is a senior History major with a minor in Experiential Education. Her passion for the outdoors has translated into a love for landscape and nature photography. Lane wishes to share the beauty of the outdoors with everyone through images of her travels and hopes to implement photography into her future career in the National Park Service as an interpretive Park Ranger.

JULES LUSK is a junior Art major with a concentration in Painting. She takes inspiration from digital technology such as games and phones, as well as comics and manga.

GABRIELLE LYNCH is a senior at Brevard College. She is a Wilderness Leadership and Experiential Education major with a minor in Art and Environmental Studies. Within her work and daily life, she entwines her artistic expression with her experience in the natural world. She hopes to inspire a sense of wonder and exploration and to guide people to test their limits and seek growth.

ISABELL MUSSER wrote this personal narrative paper for English 112 in the fall of 2021. It is about her traumatic experience at UNC Asheville last year when there was a threat on campus and how it connects to the overall issue of racism in western NC. Isabell Musser was born and raised in Pisgah Forest, NC, is 20 years old, and is a Caucasian and African American biracial female. Isabell Musser was at UNCA for 2 semesters during the 2020-2021 academic year and then she transferred here to Brevard college and started here in the fall of 2021. She is currently a biology major and she doesn't really do a lot of writing in her free time, but Isabell Musser has entered the Grove Park Inns National Gingerbread Competition 5 times in the past.

MELANIE OLIVERA- DEGREE (Ji) is a Afro-Cuban artist with aspirations of working in the field of fine arts and graphic design with the goal of gaining representation as a first generation college student in her family as well as an Afro-Cuban woman. Her work reflects metaphorical symbolism of most and any topic, as well as the normal ordinary day to day.

QUINTIN OVEROCKER earned his Master of Science in Geology at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. Before he began his career in higher education, he worked as a grade control geologist at an underground platinum and palladium mine in Montana. Prior to becoming Registrar at Brevard College, he served as an Admissions Counselor, Academic Advisor, Associate Registrar, and Director of Admissions and Records at various colleges and universities. Quintin enjoys hiking, mountain biking, canoeing, and exploring creeks and rivers (and cleaning up trash along the way) with his wife, daughter, and their dog, Hobbes.

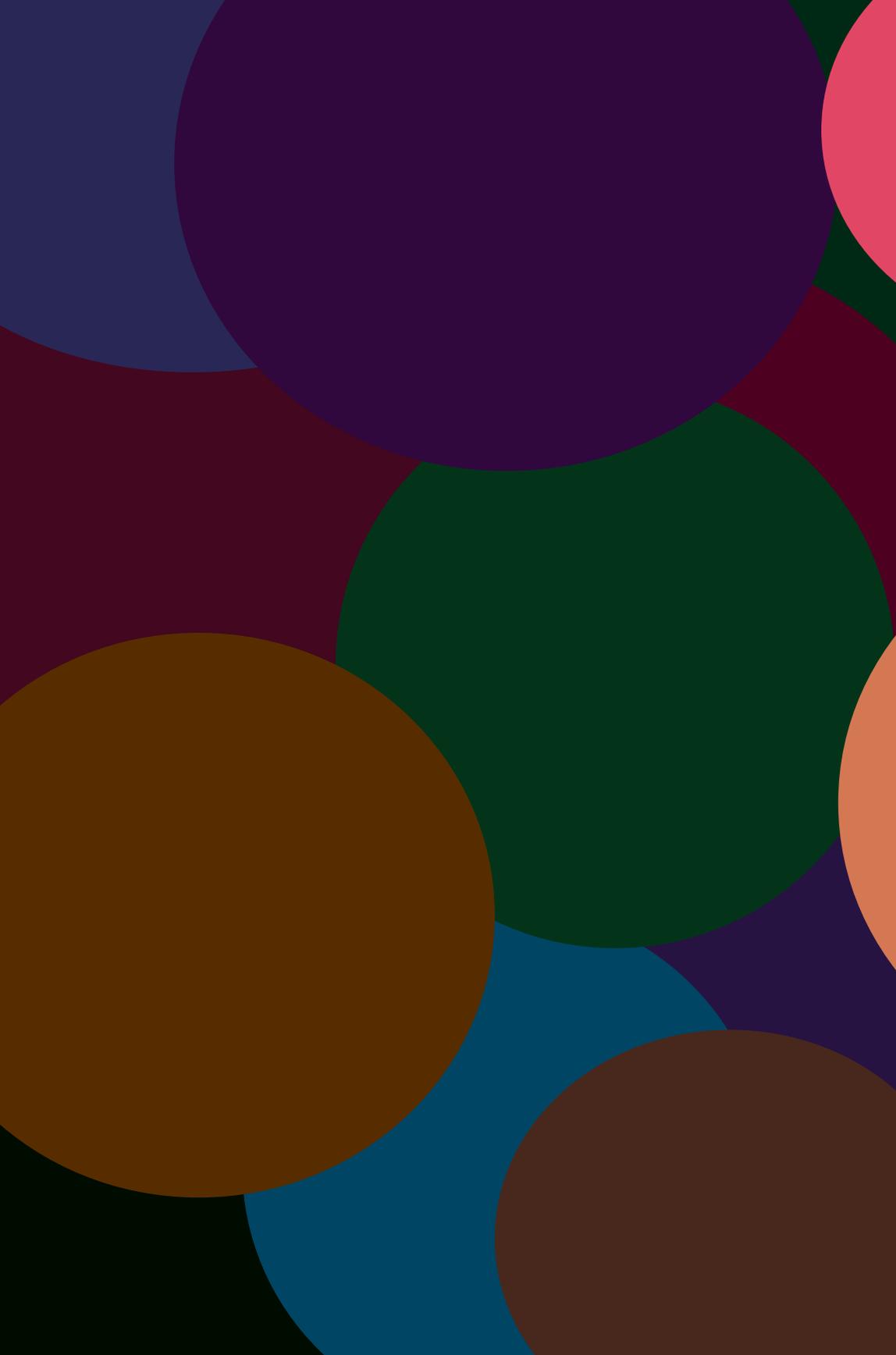
EVEY PERREY is a student at Brevard College who used to live in Durham, North Carolina. She is an English major in Creative Writing who has a passion for immersive storytelling. Evey's "Weaver" is part of a larger writing project that has been in the works since her interest in writing began in 2014. Although her short story was written in 2022 and inspired by the Gothic Literature she was writing at the time, the creatures in "Weaver" were created as far back as 2017, but never had a lot of focus or development.

SYDNEY RABER is a junior Art major at Brevard College with a concentration in Sculpture and an interest in Art History. Working in a variety of mediums, she enjoys collage, ceramics, wood construction, and steel fabrication, as well as sketching as a form of self-expression and stress relief. Aside from the arts, Sydney is pursuing a minor in History and enjoys hobbies such as creative writing and reading, as well as vintage fashion and aesthetics, which influence her artistic pursuits.

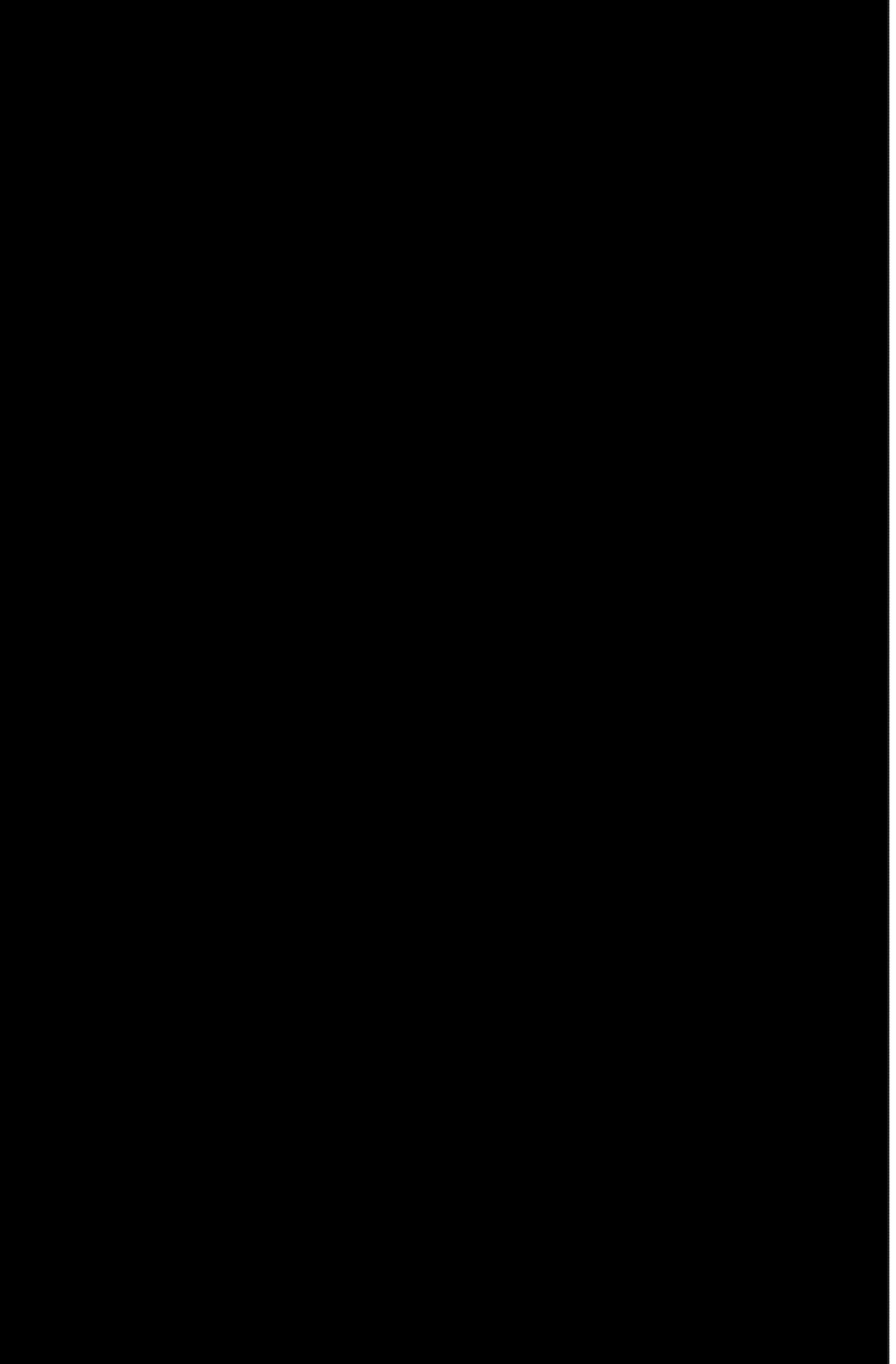
VANCE REESE is an underground light verse writer, which is not to say that he writes underground using a light. He is a professor of music, and he also plays the organ on campus where he can safely hide during silent movies, certain concerts, and convocations.

KENZ SCHINSKY (JEM) is a credit senior who has been at Brevard studying Art for two years now. While they have a digital media concentration, they also enjoy working in tangible mediums, such as sculpture. Themes they include in their works encapsulate death, decay, and distaste while featuring some occasional pops of color.

BRIAN SEON is a sophomore at Brevard College as an Art major with a concentration in Photography from Brooklyn, NY.







Gabriel Bernhard
Nicole Bradbury
Tori Brayman
The Rev. Dr. Judith Davis
Oreo Ellis
Anna Ervin
Sarah Hajkowski
Alison Holland
Caroline Hoy
Christian Humphries
Jackson Inglis
Gwyn Jennings
Casey Jones
Sara Laboe
Reagan Lane
Jules Lusk

Gabrielle Lynch
Isabell Musser
Melanie Olivera-Degree
Quintin Overocker
Evey Perrey
Sydney Raber
Vance Reese
Kenz Schinsky
Brian Seon
Ben Wilhelm

