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# TRANSIENTS MAGAZINE CLASS OF 2024

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## Issue II: Growing Up

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Nearly Spring 2024



# THIS ISSUE

- |           |   |           |  |
|-----------|---|-----------|--|
| <b>01</b> | OH THE GOOD NEW DAYS<br>Devon Webb            | <b>02</b> | Silk Heads With & Without Angel Wings<br>Ashton Palmer |
| <b>03</b> | Home<br>Devon Webb                            | <b>04</b> | Canco<br>Nazaret Ranea                                 |
| <b>05</b> | the mother and the child<br>Alexander S.W.    | <b>07</b> | The Babysitters Club<br>Rebecca Agauas                 |
| <b>08</b> | The So, So Wrong Parcel<br>Angela Arnold      | <b>09</b> | the crimson eyes and the clouds<br>Phoebe B.H Mercury  |
| <b>13</b> | Sprung from the Earth<br>Lucy Rattner         | <b>13</b> | Urn<br>J.L. Moultrie                                   |
| <b>14</b> | trailing clouds of clay<br>Angela Arnold      | <b>15</b> | April Showers<br>A. Daniyal                            |
| <b>20</b> | Coming Home Means<br>Hannah Cochrane          | <b>21</b> | Happy Reunion<br>SOUM                                  |
| <b>22</b> | in the sunspot<br>Ayumi Inoue                 | <b>23</b> | Sacrifices with Age<br>Syd M                           |
| <b>24</b> | Psalm<br>J.L. Moultrie                        | <b>24</b> | where we were different<br>Ava Mahtab                  |
| <b>26</b> | metamorphic<br>Devin Reeves                   | <b>27</b> | defining<br>Devin Reeves                               |
| <b>28</b> | colony<br>J.L. Moultrie                       | <b>29</b> | finding<br>Elyse Welles                                |
| <b>30</b> | Artists Statements<br>from our visual artists | <b>I</b>  | Contributor Bios                                       |

# VISUAL CONTENT

<i>Untitled 1</i>	<b>X</b>	<b>XX</b>	<i>Untitled 2</i>
Erica Galera			Erica Galera
<i>[TO BE ADDED LATER]</i>	<b>XXX</b>	<b>03</b>	<i>Untitled 1</i>
Artist (courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art)			Drew Dukkha
<i>Untitled 3</i>	<b>04</b>	<b>06</b>	<i>GROWING UP</i>
Erica Galera			Helen Gwyn Jones
<i>Untitled 2</i>	<b>07</b>	<b>08</b>	<i>Untitled 4</i>
Drew Dukkha			Erica Galera
<i>Sunset Diving Off the Wharf - Balingasag - Mindanao</i>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<i>Untitled 1</i>
D.C. Nobes			Abi Byrne
<i>Piltdown Man After Hop Along</i>	<b>14</b>	<b>19</b>	<i>Untitled 3</i>
TOR WAR			Drew Dukkha
<i>Cherry Tree</i>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<i>Untitled 1</i>
Kobayashi Kiyochika (courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art)			Erica Galera
<i>Sunrise Sillhouettes - Sanur - Bali</i>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<i>Untitled 2</i>
D.C. Nobes			Erica Galera
<i>Better</i>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<i>Metamorphosis Erasure</i>
TOR WAR			TOR WAR
<i>Metamorphosis</i>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<i>Bush Warbler (Uguisu) in a Plum Tree</i>
TOR WAR			Sakai Hoitsu (courtesy of the MET)
<i>What I Give</i>	<b>28</b>	<b>30</b>	<i>Fruit and Flowers</i>
Syd M			Orsola Maddalena Caccia (courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art)
<i>Twilight on the Sound, Darien, Connecticut</i>	<b>III</b>	<i>back</i>	<i>Dune Landscape with Oak Tree</i>
John Frederick Kensett (courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art)		<i>cover</i>	Jacob van Ruisdael (courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art)

# MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS

## on growing up, and changing completely

While studying some philosophy in university, I came across a theory of personal identity which I am reminded of again, as I think about the theme of this issue – ‘growing up’. It was part of a course titled ‘Biomedical Ethics’, although ‘The Philosophy of Dying’ would have been more accurate. The professor exclusively focused on the hottest of hot-button issues: abortion and euthanasia. *Note:* this was in Canada, which has virtually no abortion restrictions and passed a prominent medical assistance in dying law in 2016. *Also note:* about a year after I took this class on dying, the professor was diagnosed with terminal cancer.

The study of life and personhood is essential to the study of death. This theory argues that it’s not our physical bodies which grant us one personhood– we are constantly shedding our physical bodies, replacing it entirely every few years. Instead, it is psychological continuity which ties us together as one person. Our memory/ies, our identity, our consciousness is the glue of our being.

But what if that glue fails? What if the glue is replaced – by time, by stronger memories, by memory loss? One logical conclusion of this is that we can be entirely different people at different points in our existence.

I have been through two radical conversions of my identity – along personal, religious, and political axes – in the past decade or so, and little remains of who I once was. Have I become a different person, then? Even as we grow from babies into conscious beings, and from children to adults, we undergo deep changes. Do we become different people then?

Not much has stuck with me from that philosophy course, but this theory of personal identity and how it changes does sometimes bubble up into my mind. I suppose that’s a bit of continuity in my memory.



As you read and enjoy the works of these talented contributors, I ask you to consider our theme – growing up – and the people that you are, the people that you were, the people that you will be, the people that you won’t be. Consider why you are the people you are right now.

nadav and Melissa  
Co-Editors



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*a note on the photo above: titled ‘The Prettiest Doll in the World’, this photo of young ‘Xie’ Rhoda Kitchin was taken by Lewis Carroll in 1870. Carroll often photographed children in outfits inspired by the storybook narratives and fantastical stories he wrote into his quintessential childhood novels. This image is courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art ([metmuseum.org](#)), whose endless online archive of public domain images has provided several of the visual works seen throughout this issue. Thank you MET!*

XXX THIS MAGAZINE IS DEDICATED TO IMPERMANENCE

# OH THE GOOD NEW DAYS

Devon Webb

Oh the good old days when this city was so new to me so fresh & beaming network of streets yet unseen connections of friendship still to make & oh the delirious enchanting euphoria of being a new woman in a new place. These Wellington secrets beckon me, Wednesdays at San Fran looking out over the balcony with Cuba Street illuminated & stretching out & on into bohemia's favourite daydream & oh the music & the scent of other people's cigarettes & the names taking shape on my tongue for the very first time, I give them my own in exchange like the little gifts I love to make. & here the city unfolds itself, the city grows wider bigger more delightfully incomprehensible more glowing with mystery the more I know the more there is to learn... alas, the dream cuts itself short with dystopia's cheeky sadism, I'm going home on a plane with a ticket I can't afford, barely a month in my new world & we return to the old. To the familiar, the family, the quiet Matakana birdcall & the bedroom with its cacophony of overburdened bookshelves reminding me who I was who I remain. Can we stay the same, even when we're so open to change? Can growing up & going backwards into our memories & childhoods happen in tandem? & I am safe here & happy yet so aching to get back to the rhythm & beat of city streets throbbing with the majesty I'm yet to discover yet to learn yet to yearn for yet I yearn for the unknown anyway. & oh how I while away these quiet days which all look the same with poetry & video games aka everything I've been till now everything I've grown into & the growing slows down for a while as I fold myself into the sanctuary of the past. But the past doesn't last & the future comes fast like the flash from a quiet sky when you barely saw the storm coming & I'm back again, back in the mystery & the game that plays me the same way I play it & there's something different about the world now, some kind of magic some kind of spell as we emerge from our shells & our shrunken circles into the glow & the promise of a world opening itself back up again. & there's so much love to go around, so much thrill & joy to be found in being back again but are we back in the same or sparkling with something new, something that wasn't here before when we took it all for granted? Are we enchanted & more likely to take chances with our hearts & our heat & our dancing feet & the closeness that's become such bliss, such blessing? & oh I'll tell you now the waiting's over the yearning's gone & what presence I present to every today & tomorrow still to come among the young sweet loving of these good new days.

# Silk Heads With & Without Angel Wings

Ashton Palmer

I see you crouched heavy with the  
angel wings; soft hides  
of red waves that bubble up to white. Cobwebs  
are lacing my face & I tell myself there  
are no black spiders feeding  
its fangs; there is no bloodshed here. The  
blinding flashes of lanky limbs,  
that have overgrown in my eye  
are not warning  
signs: not delicate hitches in early breath; not a place of  
quivering that moths shiver through; there are no  
monsters here. I'll look at the billboard, the red  
lettering I'm fed & I'll eat the cardboard and swallow  
the splinters of wood you carved: there is nothing for  
you here. You're heavy to the ground and weight is all  
that pushes you, but I will not warn the sand that it's  
drowning soon. *[ Yes, I'll be there, I don't know, no, what do you want ]*

I W I L L N O T

D R O W N H E R E W I T H Y O U

I W I L L N O T

D R O W N H E R E W I T H Y O U

I know by those loaded feathers & crashing waves

that there is nothing I can do

to lift you; the spiders are sleeping,

my head is covered & finished, I can breathe in this dome  
of silk, the water is rinsing to trickles, I am now  
cotton-mouthed.

*[ No, I can't, no, maybe? I'm too tired ]*

I C A N B R E A T H E I N T H I S D O M E O F S I L K .

Falling in love  
really & truly for the first time  
into the opposite-of-a-void is like  
coming home  
to a place I've always wanted to go  
but never been  
It's like seeing everything  
all of a sudden in technicolour  
& becoming the  
opposite-of-blind  
glasses where the rose-tint  
is prescription  
It's like  
the stars falling out of the sky  
into your lap  
with strings like helium balloons  
attached, as they rise again  
taking you with them  
on this infinite  
glorious-vertigo  
retransmuting rise

# Home

Devon Webb

It's like  
becoming, & becoming, & becoming  
over & over again  
till you are your best self but better  
writing a letter to God saying  
thank you  
the delivery was perfectly on time  
the alignment like a crick in my neck  
unfolding like a road  
I've always wanted to follow  
walking into the light  
teetering drunk on tomorrow  
every little heaven another  
hello  
good to see you  
I've finally made it  
home.

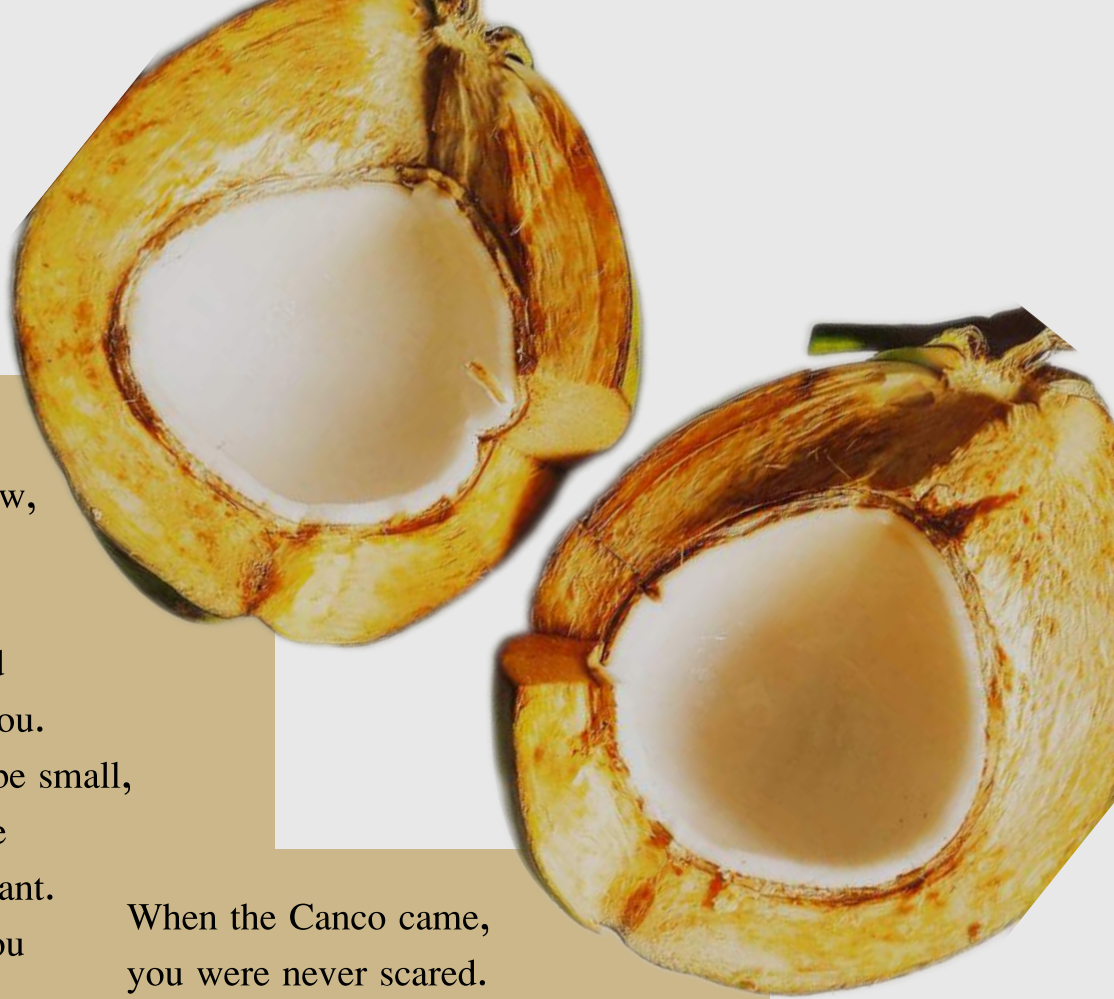


*Untitled 1* by Drew Dukkha

# Canco

Nazaret Ranea

Come my little girl,  
lay down with my pillow,  
take off your glasses,  
turn off the lamp,  
and grasp this soft hand  
that your sister offers you.  
Because you'll always be small,  
even though by my side  
you may seem like a giant.  
Today, I want to tell you  
that when my hair  
is no longer black,  
I'll still be sleeping  
beside your bed,  
holding you from behind,  
kissing your head,  
singing the same lullaby.



When the Canco came,  
you were never scared.

Although you'll always be little,  
just like the stars  
seen through these bars,  
so dark and twisted  
like the curls you had  
as a child, so tiny,  
you used to fit into my two  
open hands.

The same hands that now  
your sister brings close  
for you to hold on to,  
not to let go,  
to guide you  
on starless nights,  
when my lump  
in the other bed  
no longer moves.

*Untitled 3*  
by Erica Galera



# the mother and the child

Alexander S.W.

**THE** mother led her child to the water's edge. It laps and splashes at their feet with cold expectancy and the child squeals in terrified delight. *See, it's not so bad*, the mother says but the child doesn't understand. Upon the shore they undressed in the sun as it came over the cliffs and flooded that sandy shore with a soft twinkle. They entered the water together, allowing it to fold over them and the mother takes the daughter's hand casually with a careful leisure to reassure the child in teaching. The child broke away, rushing forward and cried in ecstasy as she splashed with the unconsciousness of a child as the mother pleaded, unable to  
tumbled through the air.  
the light and illuminated  
humble in their beginning  
moment, a blazing jewel

**TO SWIM  
WAS TO GO  
TO WAR.**

escape the white droplets that  
And as they fell, they caught  
like individual earthly stars,  
and end, but for a fleeting  
falling though the world. The  
mother cried as they crashed upon her pale skin, unblemished in the attack, though she felt them brand her. The mother moved to assert herself, charging through the water and came upon the daughter like the crashing of a white wave upon the unbroken blue of the ocean and the child cried in laughing terror as she was swallowed by the falling body of her mother's open arms before both being swallowed by the ocean. When they broke the surface, the water flowed over them and they laughed and spat at the harsh bitterness of salted water upon their lips.

*Okay. Let's swim*, said the mother and the child was tentative in her squeal. The mother simply replied with a spitting stream of water from her mouth with a growing smile until it became a laugh and what sea water she held in her mouth spilled out and she grabbed the child. She held the body of the daughter up and glided her forward until she herself was treading water and the bottom diminished away into the unknown depths of what was below. An instinctual, primeval fear came over the child with frightened enchantment.

The world below was undimmed and the darkness and the pebbles below, all swam in silent repose for the existence of the mother and daughter. Though they splashed about upon the surface, and their existence was marked with ripples boring outwards in every direction, the sounds were muted and so to, their importance. The trees upon the shoreline were kind when the sun was coming, though now they drive with the wind, the coming storm. No regard is given for the rain cannot wet them more than the faceless darkness below them. And with that thought, another comes across the mind of the mother who peers downward, though her gaze is disturbed by broken waves of murk. *Who* or *what* else lay under those depths and at what stage would they come and pull her and her daughter under? A thought that makes the mother's teeth clatter in the cold. The child's teeth also clatter, though only because of the cold and nothing beyond like the thoughts of the mother. *To swim was to go to war*, the mother remembered her own father saying that, the first time he had taken her to the shoreline. The mother gently pushed her daughter away. A tender push, not to force the child away, but to let her glide on her own in the hope that the love she had been pushed away with, would guide the child back. The daughter thrashed and tore at the seamless water and she fought for her continued existence and the mother hoped she would return.



*GROWING UP* by Helen Gwyn Jones

# The Babysitters Club

Rebecca Agauas

What I wouldn't give to be back in my childhood bedroom.  
That 8x10 square was where my imagination ran wild and free. I had everything I ever needed in that room.

1 Boombox

1 TV

1 VCR

1 Sony Walkman

1 pink Crosley princess phone

The Babysitters Club & R.L. Stine Fear Street book sets

A stack of YM magazines

My favorite blue Converse shoes

Several bouncing Souls band tees

CDs stacked to the ceiling (alphabetized, of course)

One caboodle filled with:

- Lip Smackers chapstick
- Scrunchies
- Hard Candy nail polish

Take me back to those simpler days.

Take me back to when death and loss were foreign to me.

Take me back to when I was The Beckster!



*Untitled 2* by Drew Dukkha

# The So, So Wrong Parcel

Angela Arnold

Just as you've settled  
into the new order of things, 100%  
keeping faith with the anti, the non- and the  
without-any, big finger  
to the uber-materialistic world; just as you've  
nailed it, your new girl approval rating totally up,  
just then the silent bomb:  
laughable, outsize, parental parcel, enough to

rip doors off hinges, smithereens and shreds  
of credibility to the fifteen winds,  
great splintering inklings of doubt with  
phantom shouts of Out! or just the sky being  
good-humoured? as it buckles and bops  
you on the head, the same head that you  
suddenly want to  
mislay  
among all the other things that now  
seem left over

mean: the childhood that had been so successfully  
shed has to be fled all over again.

*Untitled 4*

by Erica Galera



# THE EYES SOON CAME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT HUMAN CHILDREN WERE MORE ADULT THAN THE ADULTS THEMSELVES.

**THE** rain flooded the eyes, yet they still remained crimson. They still shined in the bright light, they still saw the souls moving all around. The red never faded away, even though many thought it would. The clouds were all gathered, ready to cause a storm in order to erase the maple shade that was sparkling through the day, but right then, the eyes closed. The storm passed. Everything else was destroyed, mud and ruins everywhere, even the time mourned the Earth's injuries. But the eyes remained red and silent.

They closed again, out of sadness and shame. Shame that should not have been felt, as it was not their sin that caused chaos. Regret and grief, but for what? It passed, it never came back, nor will it return. But the feelings never went away. The eyes could have battled the fury of the skies, they could have changed their colour, so many possibilities, but unmoved they stayed. It was disappointment that haunted the irises.

The red turned brighter, yellowish tones colouring and adding emphasis to their beauty. But not once had they ever felt their own charm.

Now that the clouds were gone, who was going to become their enemy? None other than themselves. They started doubting their senses, their round shape, their piercing intensity. They didn't want to be red anymore, they wanted to be green, then blue, then purple. As a consequence, they turned even more yellow.

the crimson eyes  
and the clouds

Phoebe B.H Mercury

Orange spots were following human hearts. The eyes were bored in the absence of a hobby. Analyzing their movements, their speech, everything and nothing at the same time, the eyes soon came to the conclusion that human children were more adult than the adults themselves.

These children were put into a new environment, with no knowledge of anything whatsoever, barely any senses or cognitive abilities, at the mercy of the ones raising them. They had to adapt, in the speed that nature allowed them, but also they had to fit invented norms, values, follow a path they did not choose, but were forced into. They were small, innocent, they had to live like victims until they were able to conquer their pitiful condition. To be thrown blindly into a world and be expected to act precisely to its rules... it was cruel. And then, to be scorned if they could not think outside the box. To be told to behave like a puppet, then be expected to be a leader was a torture dressed like contradiction and hypocrisy.

Oh, but the adults.. oh, oh, oh. Children, infants with a brain, crowding the Earth, as they had no time to be children when they were small. What infuriated the eyes was that they pretended to be enormous pioneers of morality, when instead they were nothing but pathetic killers. Quite an irony.

The poor human cycle discouraged the eyes somehow. Growing up was a calamity. Seeing tragedy from afar was better than to be implicated directly in it, but it still left a sour taste in the mouth.

Then, the pupils dilated — why? They didn't know, it was a reaction foreign to them. Were they becoming unpredictable, after examining the truest materialised form of uncertainty? Were they borrowing traits from the ones they observed, as they had done it for so long? Has it been so many years that some characteristics were ingrained into their nerves? Strange was this human life. The colour turned more yellow.

The eyes looked around, ruins again. They looked up, but no sign of the clouds. Have they lived until now, or were they non-existent? It felt as if they passed through time again. Ruins all around. But they could not feel the shame anymore, like they used to. Nor regret for lost opportunities, since they did not even know of those said possibilities. They were so engulfed into their study that the eyes became a part of it. Now, what was their actual world like? It was not shame that they felt, but confusion and loss. What loss? What loss?

The eyes looked left, right, left, right. Nothing. Nonentity. They looked up, only the sun was shining brightly, coloured with gold, just like them. They used to be a pungent red, dominant, outstanding, but they had started fading away. Yellow was still a prominent nuance, but it was not theirs. It was indeed a loss.

The pupils tried to send messages to the sun, addled looks signaling panic and distress. The mighty star responded, a guide, a saviour. The rays illuminated for a brief moment the world with even more ardour and what a mess they uncovered.

A plethora of lurking shadows, naked under the light, turned their heads and made contact with the eyes. Finally, all of them coexisted in the same realm. The irises and the shadowy figures were acquainted, became aware of one another and then went back to their problems. Should the eyes try to integrate themselves into this new community, or should they exclude themselves like they used to? Why did the sun lay bare a path that they did not want to go through?

They thought about it over and over. It was no command, the eyes asked for a context and they were given one. Yet, a minuscule part of the orbs kept wondering if the displayed reality was real or the one that the star wanted them to follow.

They searched the sky again, but only the moon illuminated the dark blue mass. With their eyelids, they blinked, further advice wouldn't hurt. However, the moon only gazed uninterested at their golden colour, before shifting their attention to the oceans. It was dark, the eyes couldn't see anything anymore. Fortunately their yellowish colour slightly illuminated their place.

Some time passed or that is what everyone thought. Meanwhile, the yellow irises made a career for themselves by blinking elegantly in a slow motion every five minutes. It was an innocuous action on the surface, except there were many consequences for the performer. Nobody cared that much for their health, not even themselves, even though they were decaying bit by bit. One day, they even started bleeding. A sense of relief washed over them, since red has always been their favourite colour. They continued with even more passion, the need to see the crimson shade once again was corrupting for them. Between the blinks, a revelation passed their nerves: have they lost themselves? Immersed in the madness they had created, did they sell their integrity to an idiotic ideal? Idiotic because it was no use for them and unachievable.

The pupils dilated and for the first time in their life, they started crying. It marked the inception of their end. A realization so brutal, it ripped apart their identity completely. An idea such as that could not roam free in the halls of their heart, it was too dangerous, so they did what everyone would do: fell into a deep sense of stress and delusion.

Their thought process was not as sharp anymore. They were old, worn out. They looked up once again and were taken <sup>by</sup> surprise by the sudden appearance of four clouds. They remembered their sharp colour, they remembered their youth, their observations, their strive for survival...where was it now? Did they get so used to living, did they adhere to the laws of life so much that their will to live was lost?

The clouds, which were once the bringers of bedlam, had never given so much comfort to the eyes than at that moment. They blinked. From four they multiplied to eight, then to sixteen, then to thirty-two. The colour of the clouds was of a pale colour, with many hints of greys and white. The eyes closed, opened, they couldn't see anymore. However, they knew the skies were preparing for a much-awaited funeral, they heard the sun sigh in disappointment, they smelled the flowers cheering with the shadows, they felt the first drop of rain falling down on their eyelashes.

Oh, this painful cycle was near to its end, a moment of rest for the eyes who matured, flowered, then succumbed to their death.

As expected, growing up was a torturous process.



*Sunset Diving off the Wharf – Balingasag – Mindanao by D.C. Nobes*



# Sprung from the Earth

Lucy Rattner

The first thing I remember  
is dirt.  
In my eyes,  
in my nose,  
in my mouth.  
I tried to spit it out  
but there was nowhere for it to go.  
Then I remember  
hands,  
digging through the soil,  
grabbing me and pulling me up.  
It was  
you,  
frantic and  
messy. desperate.  
I saw forest, a thick grove of oak.  
“Quick,” you whispered.  
“We have to go now.”  
You took my hand and  
we ran,  
leaving the hole I called home  
for so many years.  
It was  
all I knew,  
the dirt.  
Now,  
all I know  
is you.



*Untitled 1* by Abi Byrne

## Urn

J.L. Moultrie

Frail stem of mind  
shed my eyes the leaves  
from which pry my skin  
thin feelings ended in peril  
an abundant feral longing  
called like my older sister  
after nightfall familial voids  
sank into golden strata unadorned

# trailing clouds of clay

Angela Arnold

They will learn, they must. For years  
their gabbling has pushed its roots  
down, deep, Word  
for word roots, without heads  
to them, Father forgive –

till now they grow, begin  
to wrap young minds  
around what lies  
so easily, loosely, below  
and Father is pleased.

And Mother makes sure to Let us  
guard them From evil. They will learn  
other things, hours of Peril,  
but a firm anchor will surely Save our

lie, like hoarded gold, always  
at the pure root  
of their living: they will not  
Go forth, ever meet the world out there

buck, stark, as babes.  
The process has seen to it.  
There is Hope to return  
to, into. Always,  
simply, avoiding On Earth.



*Piltdown Man After Hop Along by TOR WAR*

# April Showers

A. Daniyal

**HE** disliked the obligatory after-school remedial courses, and for good reason. It was not only because he hated being face-to-face with the teacher with only a few classmates who could not shield him from her interrogations. It was also a problem of logistics.

The high school was in a small provincial town in northern Italy, and kids from small towns scattered all over the adjacent valley went there. It didn't employ school buses of its own, instead relying on the services of the regional transportation system to deliver the students. The buses had accommodated the school by adding a detour on their routes, stopping by the school's gates exactly twice a day: once in the morning when classes started, and once in the afternoon when they ended, students who had to arrive earlier or leave later than usual be damned. Days with after-school courses meant that he would miss the bus home.

He didn't live that far from the school, not in a far-off village up on the mountains like some of the other kids, but rather on the edge of the same town. It was still about an hour of walking if you didn't have a moped or a Vespa, or your parents ready to pick you up. He didn't own a moped, and some rascals had stolen the wheels off his bike some time ago, and his parents were working people, so he had to walk all the way back home on those occasions.

Late April was the season for these remedial courses, as everybody desperately tried to save their school year after months of procrastination and substandard grades. The temperatures in northern Italy already started warming up by the middle of March, and by late April, each day was a prelude to a coming hot and hazy summer. Staying indoors in air-tight and humid classrooms to study was even more claustrophobic and dreadful than during the rest of the year.

On one of these typical late April afternoons, around 4pm, the teacher decided to call it a day — probably because she was tired of being there herself and seeing the wretchedness of the faces of her prisoners. Everyone was there against their will. His fellow inmates were already latching on their helmets while she was dictating further exercises, so they could be ready to dart out on their Vespas as soon as they got the green light.

The teacher quietly and solemnly packed her teacher's companion version of the textbook in her messenger bag, uttered a faint 'Buona serata', and then left, already dreaming of the Mediterranean. When he looked back at her to reply 'ArrivederLa', he was already alone. He stepped out into the corridor. The corridor was empty, full of ghosts. Just some hours ago, at recess time, the place had been jam-packed with screaming hordes of adolescents. It was now silent enough that he could hear the ticking of clocks in the classrooms.

He stepped into the courtyard. The walls of the building were scorched by acid rain and graffiti. He walked through the doorway into an invisible wall of humid air, but found this more pleasant than walking through that young, energetic, and directionless sea of students which earlier had flowed down these hallways, unsure whether it wanted to ebb or flow, destroying the ships it was supposed to carry on its waves...

It was sunny, and it was still. Outside the gates, not a single blade of grass moved. Not a crow dared to caw. Everybody was either at work or at home. The roads felt like a post-apocalyptic movie. The school was in an undeveloped area, halfway between the industrial zone and a recently-built residential complex. Around it were vast fields which, by late April, had already grown a layer of wild vegetation and dry shrubs which nobody bothered clearing. He started the long walk along the side of the road back to civilization.

The prickly heat produced its full effect before he had moved more than a couple of hundred meters. He removed his hoodie and tied it around his waist. His bag was as heavy as a boulder. The weight made him breathe deeply, and each inhalation brought the warm, sticky air into his nostrils. Bugs flew and crashed into him like kamikaze pilots – somehow they always knew to fly into a person's face, out of all available body parts.

After fifteen minutes, he had barely reached the new residential area. There were lawn chairs, garden gnomes, and small statuettes on the lawns. Often, he passed by gates bearing a sign with a cute little doggie drawn on it, next to 'Attenti al Cane' — Beware of the Dog — written in Comic Sans. But the creatures who would rush to welcome him at the gate as soon as he passed by would be no cute little doggies, but a barking, growling, vicious, raging beast from hell, who wanted to rip him to shreds.

As he approached the town's main square, the road started sloping upward. The straps of his bag were starting to cut into his shoulders. His mouth was dry, and he wished he had brought a water bottle with him. The fountain in the town square was also dry. Tired, he sat for a bit on the edge of the fountain to catch his breath, and looked around him. The square was mostly empty. Someone darted on a Vespa towards the municipal soccer stadium, a soccer bag hanging from his shoulders. In this town, all men played soccer, and all women played volleyball, almost everybody he could think of. There was no other thing one could do or be in that small town.

He ran his eyes around the deserted square. On weekends, this square would be full of scooters, mopeds, bikes, guys, and girls, sitting on the edge of the fountain, the steps of the town hall, or gathered around the entrance to the post office, which right now stood locked and silent. Nobody knew when it operated — it was a government service, after all.

**In the distance he heard a rumbling noise, like  
a window shutter being lowered in haste.**

The asphalt was sizzling. There was a smell emanating from the ground, the burnt, stale smell that rises up when it hasn't rained for weeks. He felt a grumble in his stomach... the last thing he had eaten was a focaccia with olives and a banana with juice during recess. There were a few restaurants and cafes around the main square, some of them closed for siesta time after catering to the lunch crowd, and which would only open in time for the late afternoon aperitivo. There wasn't much he could have bought with the miserable 50-cent coin that he had to make emergency calls from public phones, apart from some grissini sticks. His only hope was to reach home, so he got up and started walking again. In the distance he heard a rumbling noise, like a window shutter being lowered in haste.

He walked for ten more minutes, and felt there was no end to this pilgrimage home — he would die of dehydration and starvation before he ever got there. He had been walking for months or years in the midst of complete nothingness.

He turned a corner, and got a clear view of the sky over the rest of the valley. Dark clouds approached from the horizon. So that was the source of the rumbling noise. A layer of shadow was creeping down the hills underneath them, swallowing up the pine trees in its way like a black avalanche. White pulses of lightning flickered in some of the clouds.

‘Cazzo’.

He looked incredulously at the oncoming storm. It promised plenty of violent rain. He quickened his steps, his legs protesting from fatigue. His house was still far, and there was little cover until he reached it. Just then, a damp wind struck him with force, bringing the fragrance of pine mixed with water all the way from the mountains. He felt pinpricks on his cheeks; droplets had started falling. He could smell the dampening mud.

He started running. He hadn’t brought his umbrella — nobody had predicted in the morning that there would be a shower later that day. His bag swayed left and right behind him like a pendulum, weighed down by books. Seconds later, the heavens let loose all the hell they had in store. It took mere moments for the sprinkles to turn into a full-blown biblical deluge.

A wave of water thrashed him, his hoodie immediately useless. In less than a minute, he was completely soaked. The wind whipped water in his face and he was forced to run with his eyes nearly closed. He ran into a park, but even there, under the pine trees, he couldn’t find respite as the trees themselves were battered from above and from each side. He kept running along the bicycle path, the pine cones and needles dropped on his head like bombs.

Finally, he saw a playground ahead, and spotted a small play tunnel which offered some refuge. He ran over through the mud, shoving his bag in first and then crawling into the tunnel behind it. He wiped the water from his face, and drew a deep breath. Everything that belonged to him — body, clothes, and accessories — were all drenched. His jeans were soaked and stuck to his leg like glue. His socks and Converse, all wet. He didn’t dare think about what condition his bag was in; his books were probably sponges by now, the pages permanently stuck to each other.

As the adrenaline rush wore off, he began to feel cold. Frustrated and with chattering teeth, he drew his breath and yelled a string of the worst blasphemies he could think of at the heavens above.

He kicked the wall of the playground tunnel multiple times, not achieving much, only stopping when he felt pain in his leg. Water still dripped from his hair onto his forehead, and proceeded to slide slowly along his nose. He felt his outburst was ridiculous. The rain pattered violently on the playground rides outside and puddles formed in the mud.

He noticed something orange moving in the puddle nearest the tunnel. It was a garden slug, lying in the middle of the water as if it were a kid floating on their back in a pool. These slugs usually appeared all over the place after sudden downpours in spring and summer in the Alpine regions, lounging on wood, mud, and leaves. Rarely did it move its antennae. Every so often, it would jerk its body a little, staying exactly where it was.

He thought about the life of a slug. Slugs covered little distances in an enormous amount of time, going nowhere. Kids who spot them while riding their bikes deliberately run them over, slicing them in half, ending their ephemeral existence. They felt hunger, they felt the rain on them, they felt the heat desiccating their body, they died and decomposed, turned into humus. But they existed. Their insignificance didn't seem to bother them.

He took his bag and put it in his lap, covered himself with the damp hoodie, gathered his legs towards him and crouched into a compact position to keep warm. There were still a few years to go until he could spit on the face of this god-forsaken town and leave.



*Untitled 3* by Drew Dukkha

# Coming Home Means

Hannah Cochrane

Going to town, hoping I don't see old friends,  
buying new lip balms that taste like childhood,  
discovering the pie shop is now a trailer,  
walking the cobbled streets I know so well.

Dressing up in my mum's clothes,  
finding an outfit for the Winter Ball,  
ignoring the 2000s pencil dress that won't fit me,  
but reliving the joys of a sparkly gown.



*Cherry Tree* by  
Kobayashi Kiyochika  
(courtesy of the MET)

Experiencing autumn in my forest,  
watching breaths form mist,  
seeing the fires of auburn spring up amongst evergreens,  
talking while walking – endless words to share.

Feeling cold evenings and crisp mornings,  
relearning the comforts of home, of family;  
watching mist roll over the fields,  
laughing and rolling eyes at the Park Run.

Remembering how I'm loved,  
regaining control over stress with logic,  
recouping and recovering self-worth,  
remembering why I write these words.



# Happy Reunion

SOUM

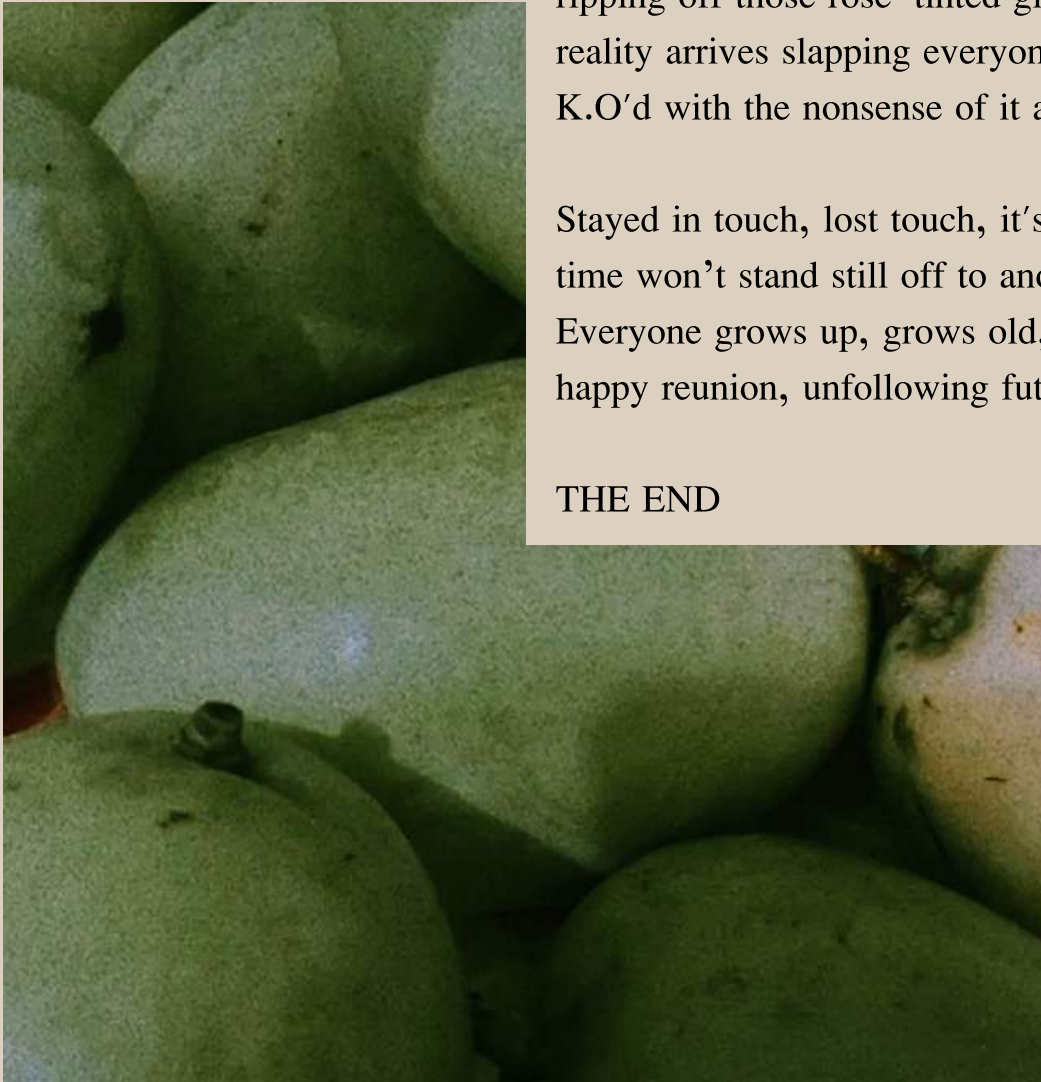
So here we all gather, the once–young  
in our collective middle–age spread.  
Shattered dreams loiter behind bland smiles,  
dreams met proudly flashing gold visa cards.

Ladies measure each other, counting  
each wrinkle, desperate to have the least.  
Men pat their paunch, the passing of youth  
tastes bittersweet downed with fancy craft beer.

These reunions draw suckers–for–punishment  
ripping off those rose–tinted glasses,  
reality arrives slapping everyone silly,  
K.O'd with the nonsense of it all.

Stayed in touch, lost touch, it's all irrelevant  
time won't stand still off to another party.  
Everyone grows up, grows old, grows dead,  
happy reunion, unfollowing future newsletters.

THE END



*Untitled 1*  
by Erica Galera

# in the sunspot

Ayumi Inoue

birthdays and Christmas and New Years. those days are a glaring reminder of discontinuity where there isn't what there should be. yet sadness is there, something that should not be. we are not longing, for how could we long for what we do not have? or perhaps it is our lack of entitlement that drives us to long for something— i do not know. but there is beauty in the emancipation from hope, for the heart no longer imagines cutouts of you in every second that passes by. we have learned to stitch ourselves over and over, making a home with fragments that burn, in sunspot memories that you don't exist in. our bones have fractured and healed; our skins have cracked and mended itself; i no longer believe in fairy tales. i no longer mourn the past, nor do i grieve for the future. my footsteps have grown and so have i — so have we — into something you will never know. perhaps that is growing up. warmth blooms where you left us. (perhaps that is growing apart.)



# Syd M      Sacrifices with Age

Required reading books lie dormant on the shelves, collecting dust. Handmade bookmarks scattered, left in different pages of past reads. Once endless, annoying annotations are mostly forgotten, lead smeared. Sticky notes with character quotes unappreciated, boring, dead. A wild imagination once challenged by the world created with each page, now left to decipher biology textbooks.

Multiple half-used journals sit in the cabinet, entries still ingrained in memory. Sketchbooks filled with depictions of my greatest battles, a museum, my autobiography. Dull pencils, dry copic markers, rusted paint brushes and oil paint tubes scrunched up to the brim sleep with the sketchbooks and journals. Paint marks are still left on the sides of the cabinet.

A blue soprano ukulele, once named 'Ryan', waits to be played. Notebooks with chords of my favorite songs still inside the unzipped guitar case. Picks scattered on the carpet in the closet. Connective chords of the mini recording studio, disconnected and displaced.

The sewing machine, a gift from my favorite grandma, still has maroon thread from the last project. Extra fabrics and bobby pins in the torn USPS package box. Crumbled cut patterns attached to ivory cloth on top of the machine. Buttons, findings, beads in a treasure chest that has been in the works since my youth.



*Untitled 2* by Erica Galera

So little time for joy and wonder, just the strenuous journey for a successful career.

# Psalm

J.L. Moultrie

The statue and fountain on their sides  
the rain-soaked courtyard the sights  
exiled only to enter my mind the curtain's  
drawn nocturnal hymns at dawn most  
said it was pride in the thickets ice shelves  
represented my true self on the riverside we  
stood beside the abbreviated firing line  
what was I but a mosaic, flowers  
in a basement? Trauma's unabated like the  
lore of falling bombs

# where we were different

Ava Mahtab

Our childhood was strikingly different from theirs  
We were covered in dust when we came home from play  
When children of Palestine go out to play, they don't come back  
Our mothers would hug us tight when we cried,  
hushing us to sleep with a sweet lullaby  
When they weep, people ask — Is this a lie?  
They burst into bloody tears, and they question — Is that a lie?  
And they cry until they die. Yet, the wisdom still wonders — Was it all a lie?  
Our backpacks had broken crayons and pencils, forgotten like silly pledges of peace  
Their backpacks had broken bones  
and body parts of siblings the world would soon forget  
We scribbled our names on school walls and notebooks  
Their names are written on their arms and backs, like labelling potato sacks  
It is a land of many little things — olives, dates, days, dreams,  
shelters, children, food and water  
And all of them destroyed

Even the Sun sprinkles into little pieces and falls at night  
And their tiny skulls bounce with the river's ebb and flow, like  
like little moons dipping into red skies

We also had many little things — eclairs, coins, dices and dolls.  
But our dreams are no longer little — they have evolved with us  
and now look like facts

We were born in white-washed hospitals, wrapped in warm clothes  
They — at the edge of swords, shrouded at birth  
Our youth was not crushed under the rubble,  
snared in bomb shells and shrunk to bullets

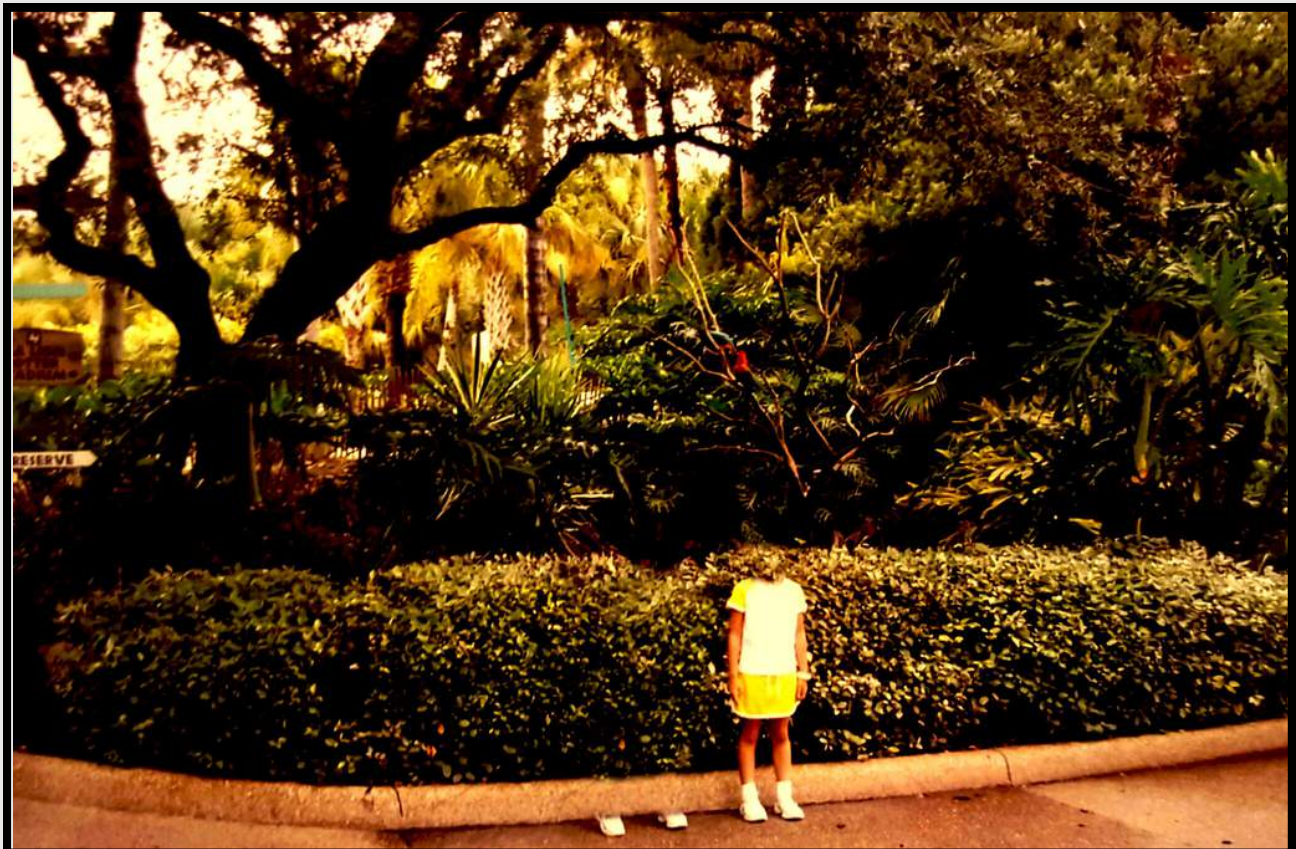
Our childhood was indeed strikingly different from theirs

We were plain children whose cries were not pleas; we feared ghosts, not guns

We didn't smile in pain, and we had no courage; no one told us we needed it

They smile while they bleed and laugh, embracing death

No one tells them they don't need it either.



*Better* by TOR WAR



*Metamorphosis Erasure*  
by TOR WAR

# metamorphic

Devin Reeves

the landlord special's pearlescent gloop  
everything's three weeks past due  
and from this sense of impending doom  
an unset alarm clock emerging  
tuneless but certainly not without teeth

that's something they've always said  
about me

*Metamorphosis* by  
TOR WAR



# defining

Devin Reeves

it's the difference  
schistosomiasis and schizomania  
her body is a wonderland  
mine's a crime scene  
twenty-one and nineteen

“the taste of her cherry chapstick”  
her breath in the backseat

making it  
making it better

another year  
another last chance

pretending  
becoming

you asked:  
*how do you know the difference*

I said:  
*I guess I know it when I see it.*

*Bush Warbler (Uguisu)  
in a Plum Tree*  
by Sakai Hoitsu  
(courtesy of the MET)

between  
between  
and  
between

between  
and

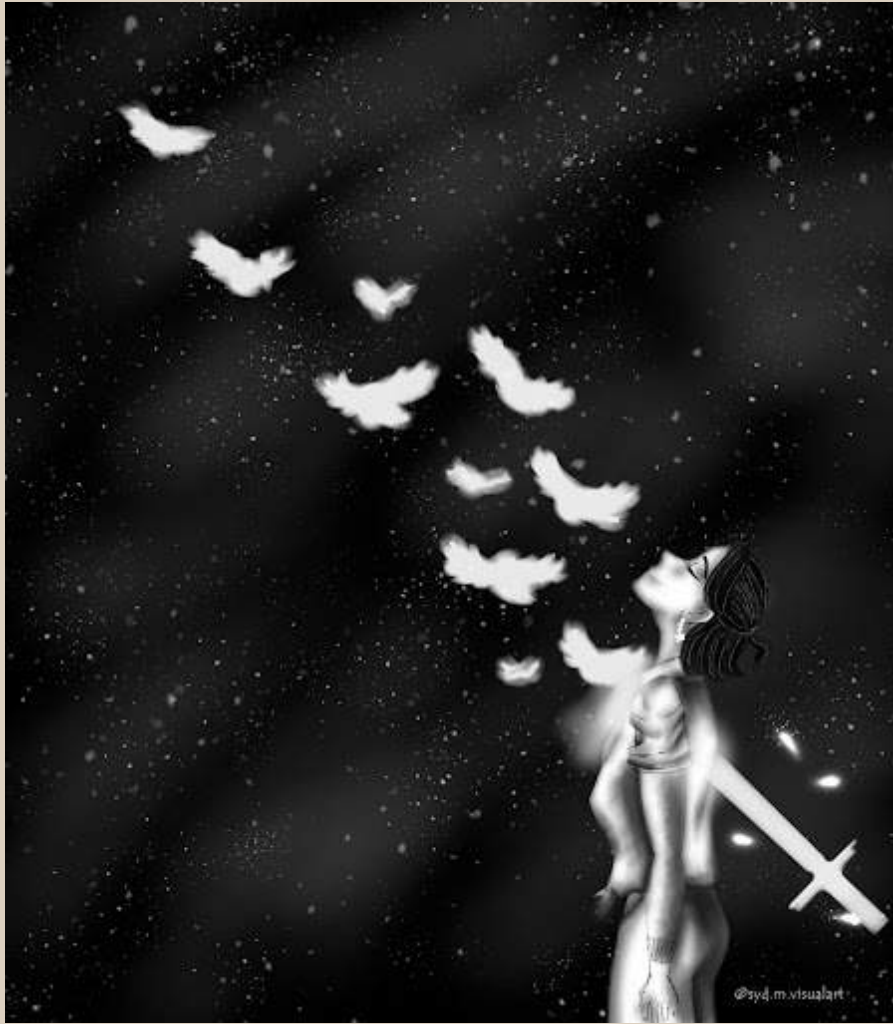
between  
and

between  
and

between  
and

*between  
seeing and believing?*





You imagined gaps between  
experiences  
but they don't exist  
for me escape was bliss  
for you something else  
a foreign part of me quickly  
divided up like a colony  
I used to shake these truths but  
they've since pulled me slightly off  
the ground

# colony

J.L. Moultrie

the most honest answer  
was to say the city  
got the better of us  
and the places we  
find ourselves are shot-through  
with opacity sagacity didn't  
stop the rain  
again and again I find  
myself in front of mirrors



# finding

Elyse Welles

We fill the void by turning towards it.

Inspired by (not in spite of)  
the deep places of ourselves:

The shadows of our hearts;  
the dark pasts we (try to)  
leave behind.

In the never ending healing  
of traumas,  
and triggers,  
there is (hard-won)  
growth.

We find strength to face this shadow.

Our leaves turn up to the light  
shining from the souls who came to find us  
in the dark (they didn't have to)  
pulling the warmth of empathy  
around us  
like a blanket.  
(did you even notice the cold creeping in?)

Always growing, a chisel on a marble slab  
we pick and poke and lovingly massage,  
(flaking off bit by bit)  
the self doubt and harmful habits  
until only love remains.  
Love for what is within.  
Love for what is without:  
from the tiniest flower  
to the loudest music.

Listening to the voice that says  
“I’m not, I never, I couldn’t, I can’t”,  
the first step is answering, “why?”

Then we learn to roll our eyes  
and pat it on the head,  
an inner child scared and lonely.  
We nurture it in any way we can.

New and old,  
we find ways to heal (or at least escape)  
Until we bring ourselves  
back  
through the spiral  
raw and real  
until we feel  
that we are both the new  
and the old self  
and neither  
because we are only ever present  
(and, I think I understand: that is enough).

# Artists' Statements

## **Syd M – *What I Give* (pg. 28)**

*This piece was meant to capture how growing up felt like a cycle of taking in pain and disappointment, but transforming it to something better and giving it to people I love. Always trying to take that pain and turn it to something else, something more pleasant, more beautiful.*

## **D.C. Nobes – *Sunrise Silhouettes – Sanur – Bali* (pg. 22)**

*This photograph is of a group of young women, gathered together on a log to watch the sunrise. They chat, look at their cellphones, or stare at the sunrise.*

## **Sunset Diving Off the Wharf – Balingasag – Mindanao** (pg. 12)

*This photograph shows a group of young lads, silhouetted against the setting sun, jumping into the sea off the end of the wharf. It focuses on the energy and simple joy of young school-age boys. The two photographs together illustrate two different stages of “growing up”, which never really ends. Do any of us really stop “growing up”?*

## **TOR WAR – *Better* (pg. 25)**

*The original photo is from a family vacation the artist went on years and years ago. The adults are not the artist's parents, and the other child is not the artist's sibling. The artist wished that they could chameleon into belonging to this family instead, and made a series of pictures depicting that feeling.*

## **Piltdown Man After Hop Along** (pg. 14)

*The Piltdown Man was a paleoanthropological fraud made by Charles Dawson, combining pieces of monkey and human parts to fool people into believing in evolution. Even though his theory would be proven correct in the future, Dawson rushed to convince others of his theory through falsehoods. In Frances Quinlan's song of the same name, the singer is a child playing at their friend's house and wonders if they could fake their connection to this family and live a happier life.*

## **Metamorphosis (and Erasure)** (pg. 26)

*The artist is an adult who found himself through his art and was able to break his own cocoon. In some ways, he lost pieces of himself, but in more ways he has been found.*

*Fruit and Flowers* by Orsola Maddalena Caccia  
(courtesy of the MET)

# Our Contributors

## Helen Gwyn Jones

*started recording her world and saving the past in real and photo form at 8 when she bought a Brownie camera from her sister. When not photographing drains or going into raptures over rust she can be found in a Welsh grammar book. Instagram / Twitter @helengwynjones*

## Devon Webb

*is a writer & editor based in New Zealand. She is an in-house writer for Erato Magazine, an editor for Prismatic Press & Naked Cat Publishing, & has had her work included in over fifty publications worldwide. She is currently working on the final edits of her debut novel, The Acid Mile, & can be found on social media at @devonwebbnz*

## Ava Mahtab

*is a doctor who composes poetry, articles, short stories, etc., inspired by nature and her work experiences. She has been writing for a few years and has received recognition on various platforms. Poetry, in her opinion, should not just be something to admire and read for leisure but to impact, inspire and encourage others.*

## Ayumi Inoue

*is a freshman pursuing Liberal Arts at a university in Japan. When she isn't writing, she spends her time thinking about writing. Her work appears in Brown Sugar. She can be found in Instagram @in.iyoume*

## Syd M

*Syd M is a non-binary Arab American poet, artist and coffee lover studying Biology and Political Science in college. You can find them on Instagram at @syd.m.poetry or @syd.m.visualart*

## Nazaret Ranea

*Born in 1999 in Malaga, Spain, Nazaret Ranea is an emerging poet now residing in Edinburgh, Scotland and recognized as one of Scotland's Next Generation Young Makars. Author of the zine My Men and editor of the anthology For Those Who Tend the Soil, she frequently participates in spoken word events, has been featured on BBC Radio Scotland, and debuted at the 2023 Fringe festival. Explore more at [www.nazaretranea.com](http://www.nazaretranea.com)*

## Devin Reeves

*(she/her) is a product of every horror movie she's ever seen and every bad pun she's ever heard, all piled into a trench coat and masquerading as a writer. Find her on Instagram @devin.reeve.s and Twitter @devinreeves02*

## D.C. Nobes

*is a physicist, poet, & photographer who spent his first 39 years in or near Toronto, Canada, then 23 years in Christchurch, New Zealand, 4 years in China, & has retired to Bali. He used to enjoy winter but admits he doesn't miss the snow & cold. Twitter: @sebon521 Instagram: sebon52*

## **Angela Arnold**

*lives in North Wales and is also an artist, a creative gardener and an environmental campaigner. Her poems have appeared in print magazines, anthologies and online, in the UK and elsewhere. First collection In/Between: 'inner landscapes' and relationships (Stairwell Books, 2023). Twitter @AngelaArnold777*

## **Alexander S.W.**

*is a writer and photographer currently based in London. As an artist, Alexander strives for truth in whatever form that takes. Minimal if any editing to his photos and writing as honestly as he can, he hopes his art will inspire those to slow down and appreciate life.*

*Instagram: Alexander.sw\_*

## **Abi Byrne**

*In my art, I primarily portray female figures. They seem alien, not real women, more like otherworldly alter egos set amidst vibrant, contrasting or natural backgrounds—a personal link to nature's essence.*

*As I've matured as an artist, my work embraces the female body vulnerably, exploring duality, confusion, and concealed truths. Distorted bodies signify the challenge of processing experiences. These female beings represent my attempt to control and find solace in another world.*

## **Drew Dukkha**

*is a photographer, visual artist & musician from New York*

*<https://votedrew.love>*

*ig:drewdukkha*

## **J.L. Moultrie**

*is a Detroitter and multi-genre writer who communicates his craft through words. Since encountering Patti Smith, Bob Kaufman & Franz Kafka, he hasn't been the same. He considers himself a modern, abstract expressionist. He can be found on Twitter @JLMoultrie*

## **Rebecca Agauas**

*is a 39 year old woman who lives in Michigan. She lives with chronic illnesses and is an advocate for the chronic illness community. Rebecca has self published two books. She has written for several digital art & literature publications. You can find Rebecca on Instagram @rebeccaagauas*

## **Lucy Rattner**

*is a 20-year-old poet from Rockland County, New York. She adores the sublime, the surreal, and the sentimental. Her work has been published in Pinky Thinker Press, Scribere, Daughter Zine, and more. She has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize by Viewless Wings.*

## **Phoebe B.H Mercury**

*is a young writer and poet, who enjoys creating a plethora of stories with unique themes and controversial characters. Most of the subjects they choose to write about are linked to psychology, therefore a lot of their works are about the deep desires of the average human. They possess a great set of skills such as: creativity, open-mindedness and high intuition. Their instagram handle is @spitewantsmealive*

## **SOUM**

is an acronym for *Screams Of Unfettered Minds*, a collective of three women who write under the cloud of preferred anonymity. Their writing leans to the raw, unpolished, cheeky, punchy style, championing awareness for mental and social issues.

They can be found on:

Twitter: @SOUMpoetry

Website: [www.unfetterednfts.com](http://www.unfetterednfts.com)

Email: [screamsOf@gmail.com](mailto:screamsOf@gmail.com)

## **Erica Galera**

earned her BFA in studio art from Silliman University. She works in a variety of mediums. Her works have appeared in *The Purposeful Mayonnaise*, *Iris Youth Magazine*, *Aster Lit Magazine*, and others. She is also passionate about music and psychology. She can be found on Instagram @baobeidrgn

## **Ashton Palmer**

is an Irish, transgender writer. He has been published in *The Malu Zine*, *Adolescence Magazine*, *Gypsophila Zine*, *Ink and Marrow*, *Spiritus Mundi Review*, *The Dawn Review* and *The Elysian Chronicles*. You can find him on Instagram under the username @ash\_t0nes.

## **A. Daniyal**

was born in Lahore, Pakistan, and grew up in a small town in the Italian Alps. He moved to Canada in 2008, and now lives in Montreal. His work has been published in *The Polyglot*, *The Imagist*, among others. Find out more about him at [www.adaniyal.ca](http://www.adaniyal.ca)

## **Hannah Cochrane**

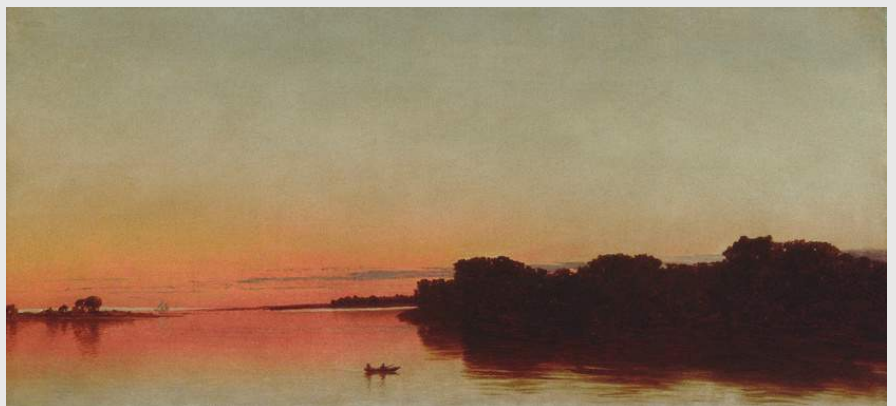
is an English Literature & Creative Writing student, based in the north of England. Her favourite genre to write is YA, however, she loves including supernatural twists. While she's focusing on her degree, she dreams of one day publishing her longer works and pursuing a career in journalism. She can be found on Twitter/X at @HannahC\_03

## **TOR WAR**

(he/him) is a gay, Trans, half Vietnamese Chicagooan artist. He loves to contribute short stories, illustrations, and poetry to collaborative zines and projects. You can find his work in *Immigratitudo: Tales of Asian Immigration*, *When I Was Me: Stories of Trans Euphoria*, *Bonfire's Stratos*, and more. Instagram @torwar\_

## **Elyse Welles**

A 'Best Poet of 2022', Elyse Welles is a Greek-Egyptian American nomadic writer based in Artemis, Greece. She's been published in *Myth & Lore*, *Witchology*, and others. Her debut novel, "What the Water Remembers", is forthcoming. She teaches spiritual practices from sacred sites around the world. Find her on Instagram @seekingnumina



*Twilight on the Sound, Darien, Connecticut*

by John Frederick Kensett (courtesy of the MET)

Issue II

Nearly Spring 2024

*this magazine is  
dedicated to  
impermanence*



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*Dune Landscape with Oak Tree*

by Jacob van Ruisdael (courtesy of the MET)