



# *Staff*

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## *Dear reader,*

Thank you for picking up a copy of the *Creative Review*!

We are grateful to the Student Body, the Student Activities Office, and the English department for funding the publication in its fifteenth year.

Thank you to the Review Board for the hours you spent with this content, to my fellow editors, without whom there would not be a *Review* to speak of. And thank you to everyone who submitted this year, and trusted us to read and view your work.

Please, enjoy!

With love,  
Isabel





# *Table of Contents*

## *Artwork & Images*

Dream	8
Molly Linden	
Feedlot	9
Jonathan Zisk	
shard and stone.	10
Monique Queen	
Taking up Space	11
Elaina Wittmer	
Untitled Works	12
Matthias Ruffins	
Mud Monster	14
Oliver Hillenkamp	
Divine Network	15
Saxton Fisher	
Life Under the Stars	16
Jessie Willson	
Me on T's old Calligraphy	18
Cecilia Bahls	
(don't) look @ me	19
Nick Marsico	





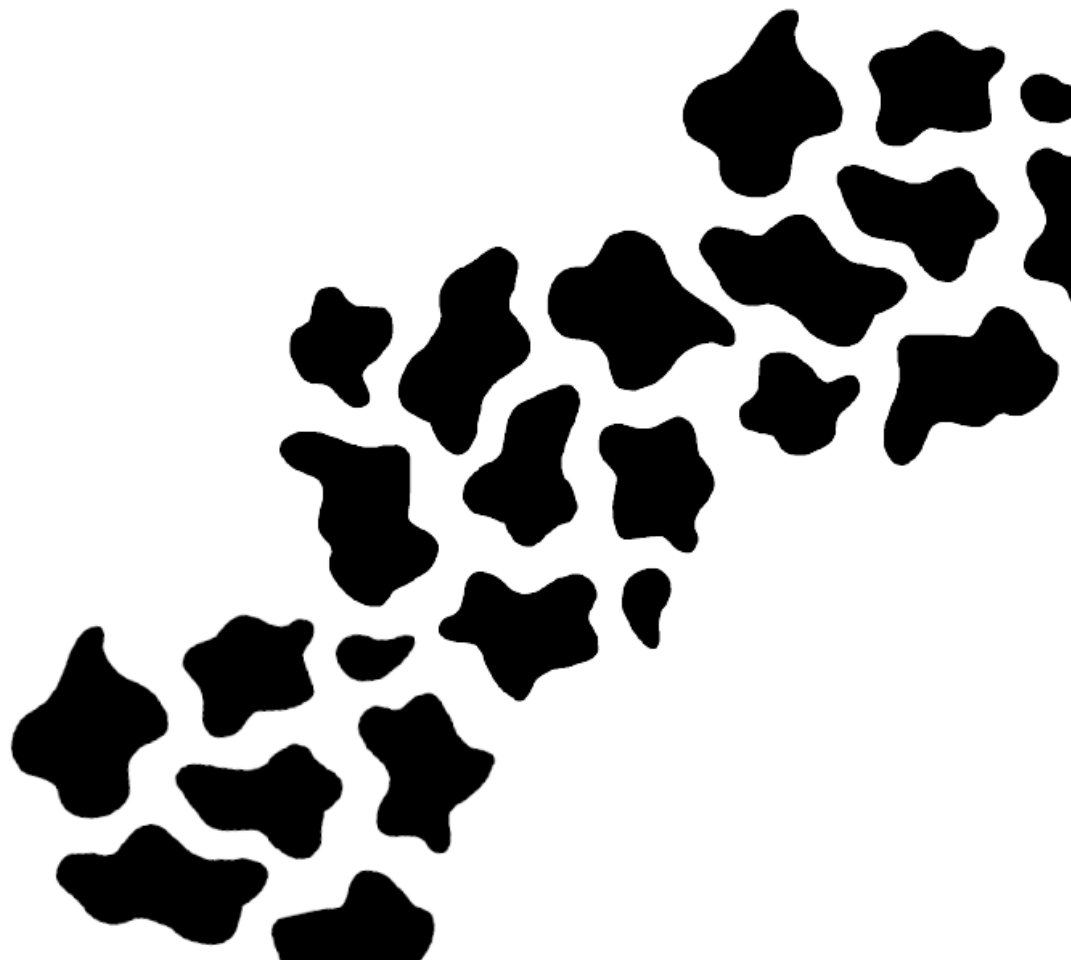
## Prose

Questionnaire	22
lou ellingson	
Will the Rains Come Down to Destroy Our Temples?	23
Natalya Lawren Hill	
God Lives in a Hole on the Beach	24
Rishi Krishnamurthy	
Michael Again	26
Natalya Lawren Hill	
Actually, it's Pronounced "Kuh-Donald"	29
Freddy smith	
Short + Long	30
lou ellingson	
Disposable Razor	32
Rishi Krishnamurthy	

## Poetry

Daily Practice	36	growing lover	44
Emma McNeel		Samantha Hordyk	
Overlook Park, December	37	Tangerine	46
Emma McNeel		Miranda McGough	
Tie My Scarf	38	"big ups"	47
Ethan Brisley		Poppy Freat	
Emotional Donut	38	a devotional	48
Max Nobel		Emma Adest	
Blue love	39	XVI	49
Matthias Ruffins		lillie c.	
Verbless	40	Ghosts.	50
Ari Libove-Goldfarb		Jacey de la Torre	
Seasisters	41	Before the world was big	52
Molly Linden		Emma Adest	
I Like My Body When It Is Not My Body--A Tribute	42		
Elaina Wittmer			
for The Upstanding Citizens of Petrolia, CA	43		
Jonathan Zisk			









8

*Dream | Molly Linden*







*Feedlot | Jonathan Zisk*



9 | RCCR





*shard and stone. | Monique Queen*







*Taking Up Space | Elaina Wittmer*





*Untitled | Matthias Ruffins*





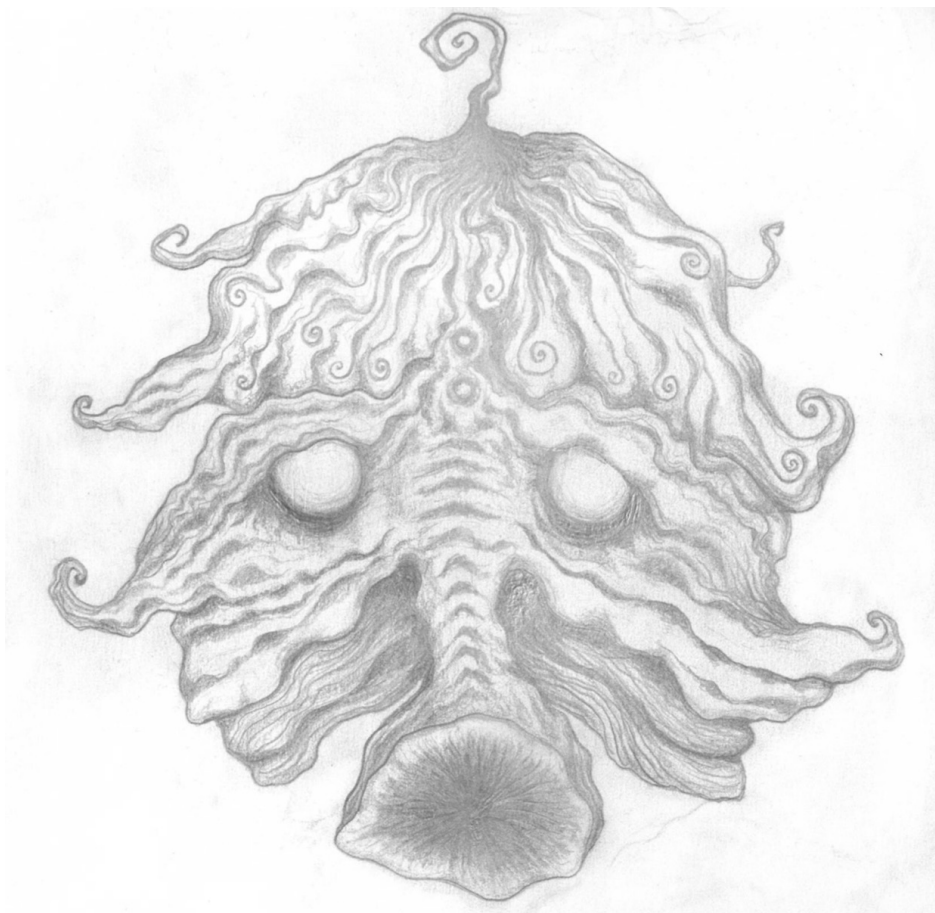


*Untitled (left and right) | Matthias Ruffins*



13 | RCCR





*Mud Monster | Oliver Hillenkamp*



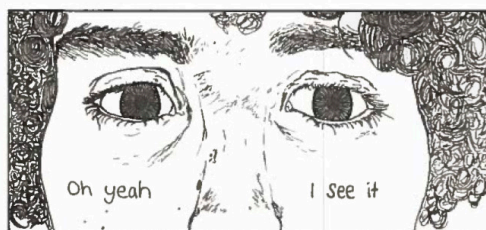
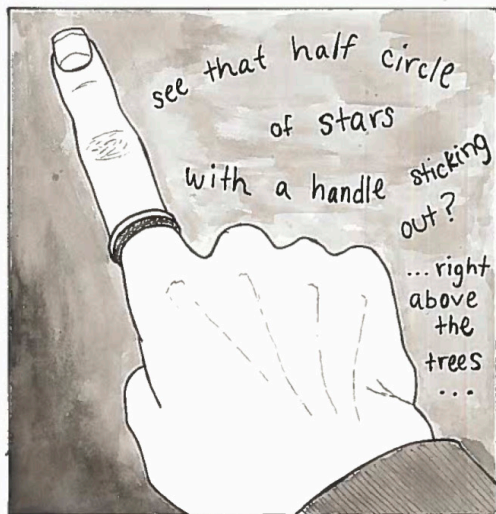


*Divine Network | Saxton Fisher*

15 | RCCR









*Life Under the Stars | Jessie Willson*







dica me aqu  
a turmdican  
dicenda hoc  
tempore arbi  
tror. exponam  
vobis brevit  
er consilium et  
reversionis me  
ae. ego cum spe  
cecilia is my  
favor te evre  
icecilia is mi  
mujer bonita!





*(don't) look @ me | Nick Marsico*

19 | RCCR











# Questionnaire

*lou ellingson*

Do your dreams at night appear three sizes too big? Do you feel like you do what you want to do when it is in your capacity to do it? Do you know what prevents you from doing it? Do you know where your mother is right now? Do you know the way to her? Do you know your deductible and if it has been met? Do you need approval from your primary care physician? Do you worry about the fact that it is harder to learn languages at an older age?

How are you? How do you stay warm in the mornings? How does grief taste to you? How did your vomit look the last time you saw it? How do you know when other people in a social setting have implicitly agreed, through eye contact or otherwise, that you should stop talking? How much will your next paycheck be? How many tabs do you currently have open on your computer?

Have you eaten in the last 4 hours? Have you been arrested? Have you broken another person's bones? Have you broken another person's heart? Have you broken your own? Have you ever been shattered by a moment of disorientation? Have you

felt seized by a moment in which your body floods, leaks, floats, seeps out of your body?

When you look at your hands do they appear ten miles away? When was the last time you backed up your data? When do you know you're in love? When are your powers at peak potential? When will you find the time to complete your to-do list? When does having a to-do list stop being useful to you? When are you hurt by ordered time?

Would you like to turn on notifications? Would you know the shape of forgiveness if you saw it? Would you prefer to take the bus or walk? Would the table look better against the window or the wall?

Are familiar faces a source of comfort or chaos to you? Are you concerned with the percentage of cotton in your underwear? Are you looking in the right places?

What are you to me? What do you think I look like naked? What would you say if I told you I am a constant, a well-trodden path, an always-already present? What have you done to make space for me? What have I done to help you find the answers? ♡





# *Will the Rains Come Down To Destroy Our Temples?*

*Natalya Lawren Hill*

My father tells me that he is not allowed to have dreams. But I see him here, Taos. A house on a hill where we can see the bosque, and at night the stars stretch on, endless sky above endless land, and we can hear the coyotes. When the sun rises, I go outside and see it all. I hold my mother's hand and the sun over the sandias stretches our shadows long and melded into one another. On our best days,

we are hiking in the dirt along the frontage road when the sky is still dark. We are surrounded by hot air balloons, and as they rise you can look in any direction and always see a hot air balloon. It makes me terribly sad to think that there is not enough time for moments like these. My father explains to me how adobe homes are made. That enough rain will turn brick back into mud. ♡





# God Lives in a Hole on the Beach

Rishi Krishnamurthy

God lives in a hole on the beach. He moved there after curing my mother's cancer, and now He wakes up with the crabs and the worms to crawl across the sand and into the water. They go as far as they can without being pulled in by the current, but He makes a point of touching the bottom of the ocean every morning before He does anything else. It gives Him structure. He hadn't intended to come down from heaven for so long, but He was tired. From on high He watched her do three months of chemotherapy and started every week waiting for Sunday to come so He didn't have to see me or Dad taking her on her daily pilgrimage from one end of the hallway to the other. He wouldn't admit it but He was uncomfortable with the way her hair had started to fall out.

It wasn't bad enough that she wanted to shave it—she had been left with long, wispy curls of baby hair that made us wonder if she was being born all over

again. It frightened Him, even now, that He hadn't thought as far ahead as cancer. He'd rested after making the Earth and the skies and the creatures man would watch over, and closed his eyes. Closed them just for a moment, and woken up to a sickness that did not seem to understand how death was supposed to work. *There was no judgement*, He complained to Himself, *no due process, just the slow, incurable sin of cells who did not know any better*. And what the hell had happened with remission? Why would anyone be allowed to see themselves fall away in front of death, actually be rushed over the edge before His hand was obligated to reach down and set them right back where they were before? He'd come to the beach to take some time off from these questions, stop thinking so hard. After He felt better, He'd crawl out of his hole and up to heaven. He hadn't set a date, but soon. Definitely soon.

Until then He tried to relax, make it easier on the





kids. For a while He had kept them involved as the cancer dried up, but they learned about remission and tumor cells hung over them like a hairy full moon and He turned them away from it. Instead He conscripted His angels, said, *this is the most important work you will ever do*, and spread them with divine hands over the Earth to repress the summers we spent watching our parents reduced to saline and ice chips. They still cried, still feared death, but they no longer thought about shaving their heads or paying for the bed that let Mom sit up without the strength to do it herself. *Remission*, He said, *would come*. It had been a long time since He tested His people the way He used to, but He tested them. He made them watch life flicker without dying away, made them see people for their resilience and then for how soon they seemed to disappear: there were no lessons to be learned from losing them. He tested them so they would turn to Him, and He could close

their eyes for a few months.

The first time I prayed was in sixth grade. It was the last day of school and I was on the bus home and the doctor was going to call to tell my parents the results of my mom's test. I had never believed in God, but from the moment I walked in to her last day of chemotherapy, I remember absolutely nothing. I cannot remember one full conversation or meal, and I am grateful, because I remember all the time we've had together since. And since every child of God knows about remission, I know too. One day it may come back. It may stay, it may stay longer and hurt her worse. It may kill Her, and I won't remember that either. ♦





# Michael Again

Natalya Lawren Hill

“There’s a car crash a few blocks away.”

She came in late.

“Bad?”

“Oh yeah.”

She set the materials out like placemats. It was one a.m. and quiet enough to hear the sirens. Everything else was indecipherable.

“This is a mess,” she said and stacked, restacked papers.

“It’s alright,” he tapped his pen against the table, “it’s not as if we’re waiting on you.”

The other members stirred in their uncomfortable metal folding chairs.

“I feel like I’m suffering a psychotic break,” one of them muttered, rubbing their eyes.

A few of them picked up their packets, leafing through the drafts and fragments.

\*

*They marched across the plains, a song raised and subsequently lost to the howl of the wind. The shatter came on that plateau, among that long haul of souls.*

*Hands rose to cover her ears, she dropped her gun, she turned quick away red splash of violent in their ears the spatter-crackle. Something had fallen. When she turned back around someone was prodding its remains with the barrel of their rifle. The wind died down and nothing stirred.*

\*

The first written record called it a felled archangel. The second called it human. The last called it bird. Her editors knew what words she’d surely meant to say all along. In all those meetings she had missed, they had supposedly talked about what would make the most appropriate corpse.

\*

The only words on the first page were:

*Even Jesus had a betrayer.*

“Are you calling yourself a messiah?” a nameless voice called out. There was a wave of unsure laughter. She refused to make eye contact but instead flipped to the next page. She’d be early next time. She would





take away all of their chairs.

\*

It was almost one a.m. and they were on an excursion, a research trip. She had been there when they'd arrived.

They walked single file along the dark narrow city streets. The destination: an alleyway next to a skyscraper. They were instructed to line up along the wall, with their toes in the fold connecting behemoth to earth.

"Look up."

Some of them were excited for the first time in a while because this felt like the beginning of a miracle. Others were bored, skeptic. A few were scared, reached for their nonexistent guns.

\*

One draft didn't suggest angel or bird, but liar. Liar also became a stand-in for song and violent and fallen and around and remains and nothing. *Reword*, a comment scrawled in the margins mocked. She took careful note of the handwriting and syntax and cross-referenced it to every draft with names attached. Nothing matched. She wasn't perturbed. She'd find something.

\*

*There was a betrayer in the flock, a false member of the troop. His name was Michael James and he was the kindest of the group. He tried too hard to be liked, always went out of his way. But he drew the enemy to the group. He'd forget to cover their tracks. He'd always carry his gun, even when he was sleeping. She wasn't stupid. She saw right through it, and was the first to guess. She told everyone else, one by one, everyone knew. She told them, each of them, that they shouldn't do anything, that they'd dismiss Michael James when they made it to where they were going and not out in the middle of nowhere. But nobody was happy. Michael James disappeared and she never saw him again. Part of her was glad.*

\*

"I won't revise a single word," she said without turning around. He closed the door behind him and crossed the room to join her at the whiteboard she'd been scrutinizing.

"It's blank," he said.

"I know."

There was a moment of silence.

"Okay, so what do you want to keep?"

"Everything. As it is."

She picked up the rubber stress ball he'd given her





for her birthday and bounced it against the board a few times, each time landing with a satisfying shudder and rattle of the board against the wall, and the thwack of it returning to her hand. Thud, thud, thud.

“Be reasonable. At least let us change the name so we don’t get sued.”

“So you think it’s real? What I’m writing about?”

“It damn better be. This book is being sold as pure truth, testimony. What are you calling It?”

She didn’t answer his question.

\*

In the early days, when they’d meet in the afternoons and everyone wanted to be there and there were more comfortable chairs, they started by brainstorming titles.

“Forty years,” someone suggested.

“Too biblical,” another dismissed. “What about Oasis?”

“What do you want it to be called?” someone asked her.

They all waited with quiet anticipation of a new gospel. They’d come because they believed. They used words like visionary, words like epiphany and there she was, out in the plains again—a new set of disciples, a new set of words.

\*

The meeting had stretched on—it was nearly two a.m. They had all become jaded and deluded by apathy. A siren could be heard in the distance.

She turned around and all was still. Something red, something fallen. It was like reliving the truth. ♡







# *Actually, it's pronounced "Kuh-Donald"*

*Freddy smith*

It was two a.m. yesterday when Johnny "Big Hammer" CDonald was out for some nightly exercise and suddenly, as he puts it, attacked by the heavens. This, at least, is how he explains the five-foot decrease in size of his six-foot hammer. To anyone who had never seen this "big hammer" of his before, it would just seem as if Johnny was actually a rather ordinary man, with a most certainly ordinary hammer. Had you been from the city Johnny has just travelled from, Johnny insists, where everybody is very well aware of Johnny and his famously large hammer, you would

instantly know this not to be the case and, in fact, would be rather alarmed. "It is rather unfortunate, you know," Johnny loves to sulk, "to go by the nickname 'Big Hammer,' when your hammer is so tragically small". The townspeople (of Pelham) find this a little misleading as really, it is a very normal sized hammer, and would only be considered small if it were being compared to an abnormally large hammer. Anyway, nobody really much likes Johnny, mostly because he always spits at stray dogs. ♡





# Short + Long

*lou ellingson*

I stopped short. Short of my path. Upended by the door, my daughter's, usually fastened so tight, which stood ajar. No doubt she was in a hurry—these days she's always late for school. But as I passed the column of space opening onto piles of clothes and sheets of wide ruled binder paper, I glimpsed a mound of something soft at the base of her full-length mirror. An animal? Injured? While she may be a seventh grader, cruel in other, often mysterious ways, she had never been the type to giggle at peals of pain, especially from small creatures. I laid a hand on the door even as I heard her puberty-riddled voice shouting at me from inside my own head. She would be furious. Not an animal, but still fur. Brown fur. No, hair—her hair.

\*

“Meadowbrook Middle School, front desk speaking.”

“Hi, uh, hello? This is Ms. Reiland calling. Um, is she there—I mean, my daughter—at school?”

“Excuse me? Didn't you drop her off this morning?”

“Well, no—I mean, I just got this second job and we live so close...”

“I see. One moment please.”

\*

I stopped short. Short of breath. Not that I've ever felt camaraderie with other moms who lend leisurely hours to PTSA. No camaraderie, for sure, with the yawning secretaries eager to share the latest discoveries of toxins in the Tupperware I buy from Safeway, or to donate pearls of parenting advice when they themselves remain childless. I still had to call the school, though—for confirmation, I suppose. Confirmation that she, my daughter, newly missing eight inches of locks that I





made, still existed. Why this drama? Why the kitchen scissors? Confounded, I forgot all about the phone I was holding, on hold. No matter. The secretary never returned, neither with news of my daughter nor news stories of thirteen-year-olds being violently murdered on their morning walks to school. Thirty minutes until work and, as I told her, we live so close.

\*

“Do you have any styles in mind, any reference pictures?”

“No, just cropped short—about eight inches.”

“Um, I don’t think you have eight inches to spare.”

“Well, whatever. Just make it short. Straight and short, ok?”

“Alright then.”

\*

I stopped short. Stopped the short. Couldn’t go through with it. I had walked to the middle school, just in time for lunch. My daughter, she was furious. I watched her face slide from confounded to furious as her binocular squint brought my approaching body from blurry to focused. Shorter than her friends, I saw her hair, now short, and stopped. I walked back towards our house—we live so close—and alighted upon the new hair salon the middle school secretary had once gushed about, it having won some all-star organic award, all vegan, earth-friendly, no animal cruelty. No kitchen scissors in there. No sulfates like in my daughter’s shampoos. No toxins like in the Tupperware I give her to eat out of. Not even a release, I realized, as I sat atop swiveling leather. Eight inches wouldn’t bring me closer to her, the distance being longer than that. ♦





# Disposable Razor

*Rishi Krishnamurthy*

When I was younger I watched a Discovery Channel special about a woman who had almost been killed by the worms moving around in her brain. After the doctors pulled them out, she kept a few of them on the nightstand by her bed. While she was talking she made a little pile of them in the palm of her hand. The interview ran on and she picked them up, turned them in over in her fingers. Then she started to cry. They were flat, dried out: they looked like beans and she was holding them and crying. She kept them on her nightstand to remind herself of everything she'd been through. What was it like? Waking up, rubbing your eyes, glancing at the night stand and wondering how much of your brain those little worms had chewed through?

Did she dwell on it before getting up to make coffee? Did every headache make her picture the worms on her nightstand, not twisted and dehydrated but chewing delicately on the soft tissue behind her eyes?

Something does the same to the woman inside of me, the milky white cloud settling in hair and teeth before falling back into confusion. I have seen this feeling, breathed deeply and pushed it past my lips, where she calls it Wretched and I am inclined to agree: camera flash turns her eyes from brown to blue, and I set my disposable razor down on the counter. Here it feels like there's no one like us and I am everyone's son, and I no longer know if I want it like I once did, soft and smooth and streaked with makeup that rubbed off in the rain, where she danced in front of the library, burned her papers, kissed a stranger. I spent that whole night without a body. Just sitting, listening to music, feeling myself spiral away from people, away from loneliness, begging myself to sleep, where soft sounds and medicine would transition me in my bed. I curl into the fetal position and fall, through womanhood, landing soft and silent in the folds of Something Else, without water bottles or burdens or tissue to chew through, where all of us





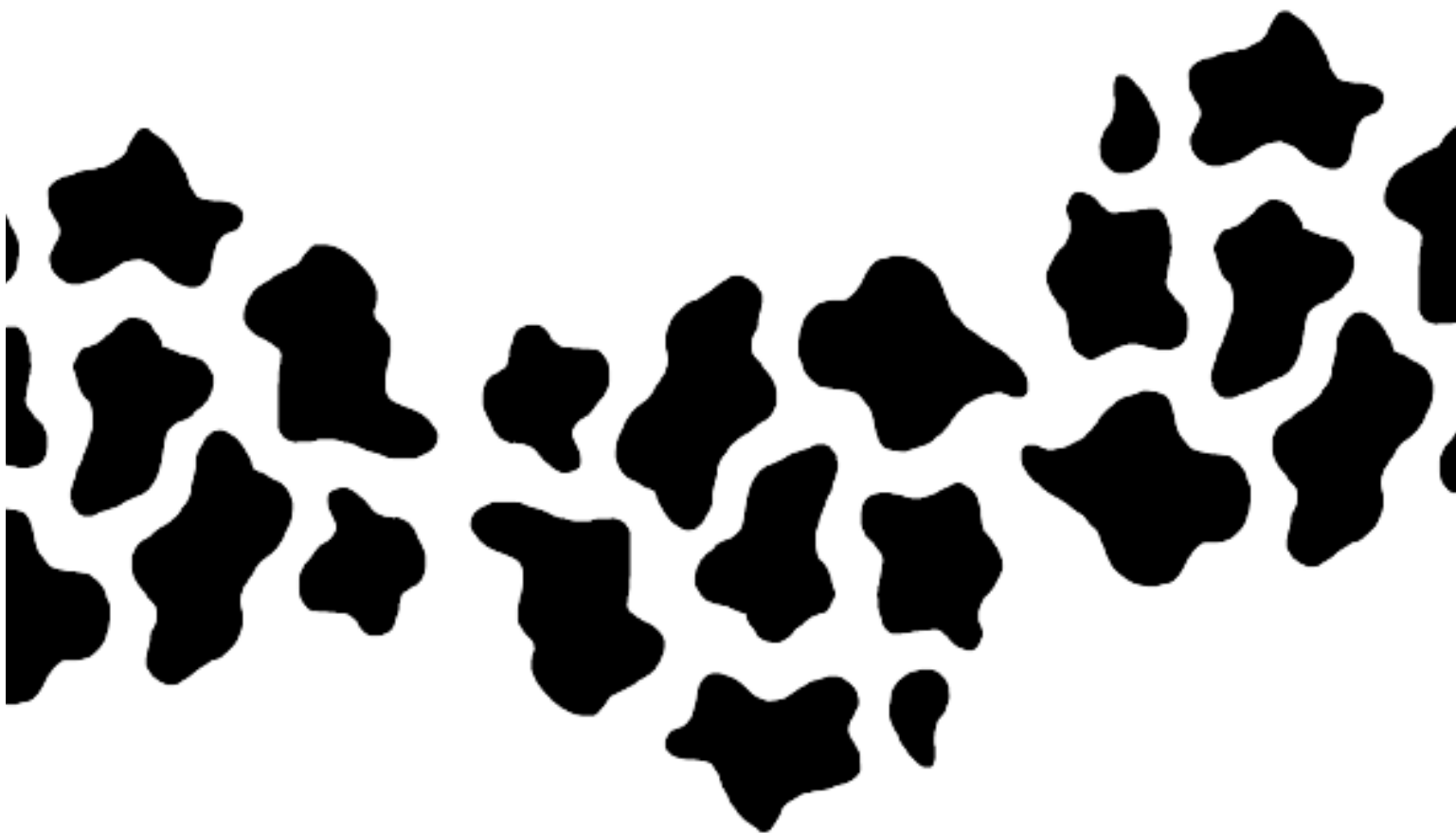
float dreaming down rivers of blue ether.

The song I played then follows me, her voice follows me, *'round midnight, memories always start 'round midnight*, as if the quarrel Ella Fitzgerald is trying to mend was always and will always be between my body and the woman inside. That woman who circulates in blood vessels, who finds herself delusional with worry over disposable razors and the hair they can't cut fast enough. She works in fascination over a body that sees her as its parasite. It resents the way her razor chews through dense black hair. It resents the makeup, borrowed, for someone lighter and less concerned with people humoring her name and face. But most fully it resents the mind that lies beyond conscious knowledge, tethered to some childhood understanding of a different person traveling unseen in its world.

One day it will grow too tired to hate, and I wonder then what she will hold up in her interview, what she will keep on her bedside table to bring his body back.

I hope dysphoria fits in the palm of her hand, that she can file it away and make her coffee without being spit back out of the folds of Something Else. I hope it is flat, dehydrated, unmoving, that there is nothing left for it to twist around. I hope she doesn't have to cry, thinking about how much it hurt to let someone else live inside her mind uninvited. And I hope a little girl like her watches the interview. I hope she finds out like I did, and that she doesn't have to start from worms. ♦









# Daily Practice

Emma McNeel

To write grief.

In ancient Greek, an untranslatable *sk* sound in the middle of verbs denotes a past action repeated. See Hom., *Il.* *Wasted his heart out over and over and over.* Guest speaker in an armchair wrote himself into a poem every morning til his partner noticed he'd been counting syllables asleep. Second time on the wagon, sobered as untethered. Achilles was in rage, waiting. Over and over. Speaker taps middle finger to thumb to show us what he means, ten beats per line. On the phone, R says he finds his belief in unraveling the Bible. Under the paint, in the bones of the thing. Intention. I love God's earlier stuff, whole world on the brink and everyone just trying to save everyone. Again and again. *Daily practices*, speaker

says, *I always wanted to write daily.* All summer, after Mom told us, I'd sit on a sports field and cross out every line as they appeared. Took the New Testament home to stare at it on the shelf. Over and over. Diagnosis is Greek, too, *to know thoroughly.* Guest speaker forgot the essay form when his mother died, learned poetry and the art of angry prayer. R at the table, *How's your mom doing?* How are you doing, Mom? In this rhythm, all over and over. Iterative. My heart lies somewhere beneath everything and I am trying to dig it back out.





# Overlook Park, December

*Emma McNeel*

Dog bounds from wild grain to shore.  
This place, the slow hill rolling down  
into reservoir, his brown curled coat,  
long grass gone dead and gold.

Two years ago, the city covered the lakeside  
with scrap rock to keep erosion at bay.  
Dog moves so cautiously  
over them, aware of stumbles and slips,  
and I feel like a mother to child.

With every tossed twig, dog carries  
his dripping body and these sticks.  
He's so proud, dropping them at my feet again  
and again, until he leaves the water  
and then just runs, coursing  
through the golden field like his heart might burst.

I follow him back up the hill, past picnickers  
under pine trees, past the pine trees,  
past the hill. Two vultures wait,  
and they don't look at us. I open the car doors,  
and dog lays down in the back seat.

Tonight, he sleeps, his head  
on Mom's lap, the two breathing together  
slowly, like water and wind.





# *Tie My Scarf*

*Ethan Brisley*

Those California  
Nights  
Never taught me  
How  
To tie a scarf.

The neck gets so cold at  
Night.  
Please will you tie this  
Scarf  
Around my naked neck.  
Like  
My mother never did.  
Kiss  
It upon my  
Neck.

# *Emotional Donut*

*Max Nobel*

Oil holding teeth as  
They sink through. Each new tear near  
Enough to wholeness





# *Blue love*

*Matthias Ruffins*

I walk, waltz all through your face.

Snap your fingers while I do it, you know it's catchy.

Shimmy my way, take a glimpse of my charcoal face and tell me you love it.

Well I love the night, and lullabies that turn that love into lust.

Has it been this long? since we started sinking into the sand.

Sift with me, uh huh, and let your body be suffocated. Learn how to forget the dark and the cold.

Let me and the sea topple you over. Forget the pressure.

My reverberations keeping the puke afloat.

I can't see your face. I'm not frantic.

Let me love you. Lust for you.

I don't ever wanna leave this night.





quilt backed cozy couch  
    green pleather pouf leaking pale pellets  
shag carpet in a shade fashionable  
    only in 1973  
the same books  
    faded covers facing out  
    betty crocker with her  
        enticing candle salad  
        —but mostly cake  
knees high on the stepstool  
    table-level now  
glass ornaments and elephants  
that pot from guatemala  
and a still lively  
    gift wrapped  
        violet  
cactuses and marbles  
grandaddy's cat  
a warm wooden frame  
chocolate and candles  
    still covered in mylar  
limp marionette  
and birthday cards  
cross stitch overhead  
and fred's still running late

## *Verbless*

*Ari Libove-Goldfarb*





# Seasisters

*Molly Linden*

My car was the first place either of us chose to be home  
Hotboxed it to break it in, to fill it with our scent  
No boy could ever be this, fit us like this, we said  
The seats rolled all the way back, fingers traced eyes on the steamed up windows

Our purpled nightbodies streamed in and out of white fog as god lapped at our feet  
We danced to the music of being naked in front of someone for the first time  
We were swimming in god  
And I told you I loved you but pretended I was telling god  
And I laid down and floated so my ears would be underwater





# *I Like My Body When It Is Not My Body—A Tribute*

*Elaina Wittmer*

*A tribute to e. e. cummings' poem*

*"I like my body when it is with your"*

I like my body when it is not my  
Body. I like to dwell inside its dreams.  
Touch sparks and stiff shots.  
I like my not-body. I like how it moves.  
I like its wants. I like its leaving reason  
And thought. Can I dive further, meet you  
Not as I am, as I could be, like I'm not?  
Glimpse you, real/fake and take  
A chance on sharp cheekbones & fingers  
tap dancing with spiders. I like my not-  
body, the way you see it sees you. side-  
step reality together in three/four, all the  
what-might-bes and soft eyes blink ginger-  
ly more., blink, & we wake separately.

I like what we are, what we come visualize

when it's not inside us who's living inside.





# *for The Upstanding Citizens of Petrolia, CA*

*Jonathan Zisk*

The *ReddyIce* box sits  
outside the general store,  
with the knowledge of the forest –

of ancient lichens,  
and untrammelled logging roads,  
and brazen tarpaulin roofs

– inside, the shopkeeper's  
steady green eyes never  
ask of my intentions, my zip code.

Does she perceive my  
uneasiness? hear when  
my Honda's tires click in the cattle guard?  
know that I might write about her?

Has the laconic icebox  
not lead her to understand? would now  
be too late to learn?  
that she and I, an improbable affair,  
are aliens in this land;  
the cantankerous mites of the West.

And that before I leave tomorrow  
I will, with tightened form, copy  
onto my notebook's cover

*The universe has one true lover  
and it is not the poet,  
but the farmer.*

though I know the next time I return,  
if I ever do, she will still be immobile,  
checking IDs behind the counter.





# *growing lover*

*Samantha Hordyk*

I'm not sure I want you to see me.  
I'm still spreading thick oil paints  
across my cheekbones  
clay around my ribs,  
letting them crack and dry as I breathe deeply.  
I am growing, slowly upwards  
towards my sunlight.  
My dance with gravity as the light rises and falls  
to the beat of my breath.

Gravity is a distant thing,  
A steady pulse from echoing stars  
gently pushing you onto a softer path,  
a kinder path.  
As you pull on its cord,  
as you collide and embrace,  
chaos erupts and foams.  
Nothing is as it should be.







Maybe we should wait.  
(The gentle curves of gravity's grasp turns vicious without space between us,  
without time between us)  
Maybe we were meant to be apart  
until this writhing foam calms  
into pale statues.  
Until this terrifying reliance turns  
from gravity to  
an electric magnetism between us,  
entangled in an equal dance  
we tread softly on contentment,

And I—  
I am content.





# *Tangerine*

*Miranda McGough*

My eyes roll over faces  
Flatten them in two dimensions  
A fading film strip enters through a slot  
Above my right ear  
Runs across my mind and  
Exits over the left.  
I look down at the red fingernails and  
Reach them into my eyeballs,  
Through that deceptive jelly and into my skull,  
Vast and barren, an empty easter egg  
Missing its old, familiar weight.  
The red fingernails curl and scrape,  
Seeking an elusive creature that  
Despises desperation, a smug and  
Slippery little thing that appears  
Only on its own time.  
What am I reaching for?  
The smell of a pierced orange peel  
Sticky hands wordlessly passing  
Segments to me, fleshy and alive  
Like tiny caterpillars.

Look up, I want to say.  
I need to see your eyes.  
The veins of the orange slice  
Stand out against the flesh,  
Like a glowing dragonfly wing.  
Say something, please  
Look at me.  
I don't remember your voice  
I don't remember your eyes.  
The juice bursts between my teeth.





# *“big ups”*

*Poppy Frean*

I was ill in bed  
revising for January exams  
the week after I met you.  
you wished me “good luck” and “big ups”  
and all I could think of as I ran into my exam  
late cos I hadn’t bothered to look up where it actually was  
and my mouth stinging like a little bitch  
cos actually I had trench mouth  
was getting  
the fuck out  
of there, jumping on the train and racing  
the fuck  
home  
so I could go on that date with you.  
your smile, those eyes and two words  
which at first made me laugh  
cringe and despair  
of that tongue in your mouth.  
but now I can see it for what it actually was  
affection, no flaw or crutch  
and all I find myself wanting  
is someone to tell me  
“big ups.”





# *a devotional*

*Emma Adest*

deviant, forbidden to inhale  
communion of earth and water  
Consecrated by the sweat from a  
wrinkled palm and thick roots and  
winter freeze

something like twenty-five cents  
each, but I would give a fingernail  
an earlobe, any number of  
eyelashes

These are valencias  
bursting trills of  
Ambrosia (onto my blankets)  
—my half-wish of remembrance  
of the taste of a woman's lips  
like orange like mangoes like dark  
Lemonade  
Aching but so pure like rosewater  
flawless sweetness lacing my  
gaping mouth and embittering my  
eyes

48

sticking my throat and fingers with  
dust and animal hair, disintegrating  
tacky residue gathering into me  
their leavings touch these useless things  
Bleak and stripped like  
bony twisted root  
while the poppies struggle through  
rocky soil  
anxious for a filling meal  
I'll anoint myself with colors  
Artificial substances  
perseverance and stubborn correction  
not long to put deeds off and then;

Breathe the sun into my hair again

spirits, and juice, uninhibited across my body

again, the lazy refrain of mossy hillsides

and honeycombed holes in  
woodland's dusty ground





# XVI

*lillie c.*

No, my darling heart, I do not like to speak my barren rhyme.  
It puts an old, rigid cage on me that I do not feel  
can keep me satisfied for any period of time.  
But still—it is to you (and you) I pray, to you I kneel  
in the dark of the day and in the light of the night,  
as the world fades and burns and starts to crumble,  
for you (and you) alone I will fight.  
You alone I shall worship. And as we tumble  
through the inevitability of it all,  
you must know that without fail, I will run  
to your beautiful arms, if only they may catch me as I fall.  
You must know that you are my moon and sun.  
You must know that you (and you) took from me  
that which you could never give back, even if you wanted  
to. You took my soul, despite my plea  
to cease, and of you (and you) I shall forever be haunted.





# Ghosts.

*Jacey de la Torre*

Maybe because my grandfather liked to take pictures  
He continues to exist in the ones that hang  
Around the house, on the walls, lazily.  
In the same way that my mother's sister and my father's brother  
Both make DVDs with photo montages on them,  
Labels sharpied hurriedly, lovingly on their homemadeness, denoting  
Birthdays, barbecues, cross country races.  
In the same way that my grandmother owns a slide projector,  
And two Christmases played images past on the wall  
Aunts and uncles, dogs and houses,  
Now untouchable, now unreachable,  
But rendered meatier, larger-than-life, suddenly alive again, existing  
Though caught under the beige grainy film of the image in its staticity and frozenness.  
Maybe because my mother looks the same in pictures from the 1980s as I do now,  
Our dirty glasses and grinded teeth and tangled hair  
And all our other innate messinesses  
Exist on a continuum, holding hands with one another  
Across time and the stuckness of pictures, flatness  
Moving, fluid, dancing, rejoicing  
Filthily, lovingly, humanly.





Maybe because I harbor a picture of my grandparents in my wallet,  
“Merry Christmas from Duncan and Gail, 1962.”  
I also cling wishfully to the promises offered by photos  
And grow sick thinking about the day  
When callused hands and scratchy cat-hairy sweaters and finger snaps and head-rolled-back laughs and silent  
angry looks and woolly whispers and drives to Walgreens and church mornings and Pixar nights  
Are gone  
And all I have left of them  
Will be these handheld things,  
Glossy and cold in my hand, with a wink of life embedded  
In them.





# *Before the world was big*

*Emma Adest*

## *Before*

Community chlorine  
and Fridays with diving, bags of chalky candy  
accomplished with the strokes underwater, I would

Swim. Like through a tunnel, pressing the airy realm  
out and above me, like a reef shark self-propelled.  
Maybe I could sprout gills, if I just didn't surface

I would race them faster, those with floaties on arms,  
the instructor showing the same techniques  
so I could bob and dive like a confused bird, until fished out.

Mother, the backstroke swimmer, always a few laps  
other backyards' pools, scratchy diving board,  
teaching the both of us to run the gamut

Of back-aching bends or speedier strokes,  
me in a little racier suit, for her not allowed  
didn't matter, dive, flip the top up, laugh.







*After*

Palms seared on porous concrete  
with tiny orange mites jawing my flesh  
guiltily stealing the sunshine on my own towel.

Or the sloping concrete scraping against my body,  
ventured deeper each time, racing, to fetch  
weighted squishy diving sticks, my contest.

Or in the river, sifting the silky river moss  
diving, nibbled by hungry bluegill  
Shaking off girlhood with the sandy droplets.





# Contributors

*Ari Libove-Goldfarb* is a huge nerd and occasional poet. They can be seen at all times with either a pencil or crochet hook in hand.

*Cecilia Bahls*' least favorite question is "what are you thinking?" As for likes, there is coffee, and her dad's advice, and fixating on Dounia.

*Elaina Wittmer* is, by definition, a person.

*Emma Adest* is a strange creature who misses working with her hands, with dirt under her fingernails, who wants to be planted like a seed.

*Emma McNeel* got her life saved once, or twice, or countless times. Now she just translates ancient Greek all the time and dreams of Mississippi.

*Ethan Brisley* is from California. He enjoys reading, writing, and sometimes reciting poetry.

*Freddy smith* is the 2nd coolest smith child, 3rd most attractive, 1st smelliest. He thinks he's the sanest person he's met, so far.

*Jacey de la Torre* is a junior English major from the East Bay and passes as vegan but isn't.

*Jessie Willson* is a graduating senior, wants to change the world, is sometimes terrified of being alone, and has very vivid dreams that feel like memories sourced from an alternate universe.

*Jonathan Zisk* is really sorry.

*lillie c.* is trying to make friends with the campus geese, but it is a task that is proving to be rather difficult. In her spare time, she stares at her pet mouse, Frankenstein.





*lou ellingson* wishes you good luck.

*Matthias Ruffins* likes to move. I mean, really move. Groove. Funky stuff. Rocky legs but with that velvet touch. Watch your toes!

*Max Nobel* is a writer and probable Econ major from Chapel Hill, North Carolina who watches movies in his spare time and might be addicted to decaf.

*Miranda McGough* is fruit's biggest fan and an avid believer in the powers of touching dirt.

*Molly Linden* loves her dog.

*Natalya Lawren Hill* is a writer and student who spends her free time recording random quotes from obscure literature and stays up too late playing videogames.

*Nick Marsico* is an avid skincare enthusiast, overtly pretentious French-wannabe, and avocado-toast-loving bitch from the Valley who loves to question the distinction between human, alien, and robot in his art.

*Oliver Hillenkamp* puts the "aw!" In Gawking Seaweed Spawn.

*Poppy Frean* is an exchange student from South East London (a.k.a paradise) who writes poetry and stitches it into coat linings, and misses the pub.

*Rishi Krishnamurthy* peaked writing Pokemon fanfiction in 6th grade and lives their life chasing that sense of true artistry.

*Samantha Hordyk* is a freshman physics major who writes music and poetry when not thinking about outer space.

*Saxton Fisher* is a Texas kid who loves thunderstorms and dreaming about mods for their PT Cruiser.





# Colophon

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