

Inspired Minds

LITERARY
MAGAZINE



HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF.

**CREATIVE
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**Inspired
Minds** LITERARY
MAGAZINE

A TALON STUDENT MEDIA PUBLICATION

**HISTORY
REPEATS
ITSELF**

**VOLUME NINE
NOVEMBER 2023**

COVER ART: KARLEIGH YANCY

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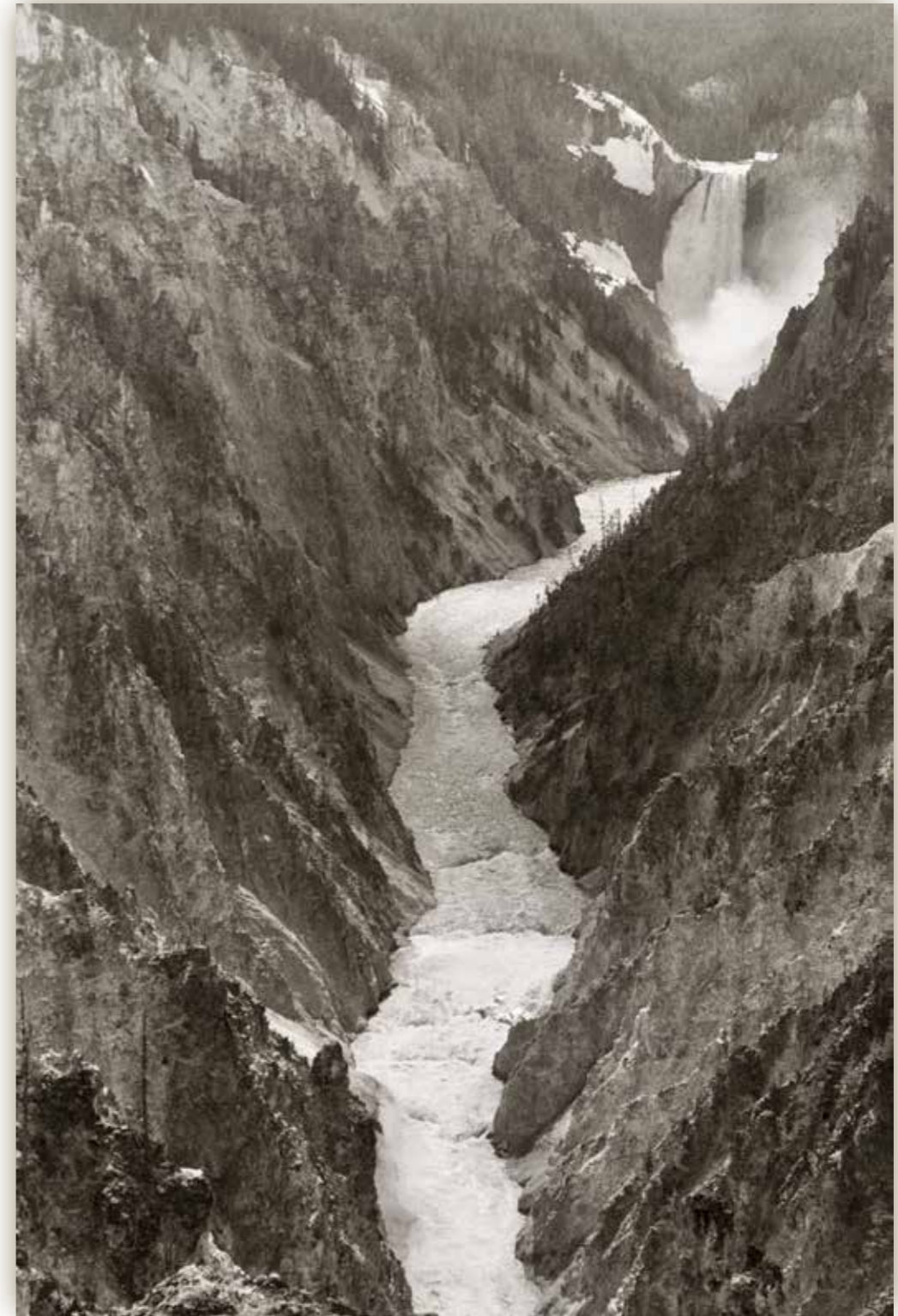
A Note from the Editor

Last semester, I was asked to be the magazine editor in the Talon. Inspired by an old photo of our staff advisor, Danny Mogle, I knew pretty early on what I wanted the theme of this semester's publication to be. I thought about how he was once a college student, and how someday, we may be staff advisors for a bunch of crazy college students. So the theme was decided. Armed only with the prompt, "History Repeats Itself," writers, poets, designers, artists, and photographers sent in a slew of works, some of which you'll see here. After a long 3 hour meeting filled with snacks, hot debates, laughter, and a mutual love for the arts, our submission committee chose the following pieces. It was not an easy task by any means, but this publication is a deep labor of love, with contributions from many hands. Inside, you'll see interpretations of the idea, with works about time, addiction, nature, trauma, love, and yes- even a dog. I sincerely hope you enjoy every pixel put to paper.

Stay inspired.

-Karleigh Yancy

Disclaimer: Inspired Minds accepts submissions from a wide array of faculty, staff, alumni, and students. The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of Inspired Minds, Talon Student Media, the Creative Writing Club, or any person affiliated with these organizations.



Ansel Again

Brice Wallace

Balloons

Peyton Jones

You will start inside of me.
 Right here, in the eggs I have carried since birth.
 Since the day I was born and had a large bow placed on the top of my head.
 You will grow inside my uterus.
 You were the lucky one.
 Your siblings escaped this existence as blood.
 Absorbed into cotton, then flushed away. Or tossed.
 My stomach is your first home, but you will grow up to make fun of it.
 To look at my extra skin and laugh, as if it did not create you.
 As if I was not gashed open, in efforts to remove you.
 More blood.
 Does the female anatomy
 Make you so uncomfortable
 Because you know you would be nothing without it?
 It baffles me.
 The way men are repulsed by blood.
 Do they forget it is what inflates them?
 Like cocky balloons, scared to be popped.
 Your jokes will revolve around my face, around the shape of my eyeliner and lips.
 You will call me a clown, I am sure.
 I will carry you for nine months of my life. I will dedicate that time to you.
 And you only.
 My belly swollen,
 My breasts rubber.
 My body will rip itself apart
 Just for you to grow up
 And rip it apart again.



La Calavera Catrina

Nathan Witt

Growing Pains

Janet Shtoyko

When you were two below thirteen
 the creepies crawled inside your ear
 from 'neath the bed and bathroom mirror
 to fester in your skin.
 They ate away the memory
 of your identity
 Now only cobwebs keep you company

My Mother's Daughter

Janet Shtoyko

I wear my mother's skin
 but father time is not fooled
 "Her trials are not yours to run
 For this, she will thank me."

Dear Daughter

Brynn Sultz

Dear Daughter,
 I like to imagine who you will be and what you will look like.
 I think about what I will name you and the ribbons I will tie in your hair.
 I haven't even met your father yet, but I pray for you all the time.
 And I pray that you are nothing like me.
 I pray that, unlike your mom, you are risky and adventurous.
 I pray that you are not a "yes-man" or a people pleaser or a worry wart.
 I pray that you don't crouch down in the face of fear, but instead look it in the eye and say,
 "Try me"
 There is a 50 percent chance you will inherit my unruly curls.
 I pray that you don't spend hours trying to straighten it and tame it and will it to be something
 that it is not.
 I pray that you let our hair run wild and free and I hope that is a reflection of your spirit.
 I pray that you don't seek the attention of boys,
 but instead have the confidence that will leave them no choice but to stop and stare.
 I pray you never let anyone make you feel like you are too much of something.
 I pray you collect all of their "too much" and "too this" and "too that"
 And make a mountain and stand on top of it with your hands on your hips
 Shouting "I'm not too much, you're just not enough"
 I pray that you are kind and loyal.
 I pray that you stand up for your friends and for yourself.
 And I pray that you don't let the opinions of others cripple you
 Because I pray that you will be so busy sparkling that you don't even notice.
 I pray that you don't shy away to a corner, afraid to take up space.
 I pray that you fill up the whole entire room.
 I pray you fill it with your opinions and your jokes and your obnoxious laughter.
 But even if you are none of these things, my darling girl,
 All I ask, is that you just simply be,
 unapologetically you.



(His)Story of Two Hearts

Tye Maldonado

Cicada

Calista Segura

I now know
 What growing feels like,
 Not the strains from
 Bone and muscle pains,
 But the one from the
 Heart and brain.
 Character growth,
 Developing into a better human,
 Feels like a cicada
 Shedding its skin.
 Upon great introspection
 And reflection,
 I emerge as a speckled, green,
 Fluttering thing,
 Stretching my new lean, black limbs
 And flitting my paper-thin wings.
 I have grown into a new shell,
 A new exoskeleton if you will,
 The husk exudes a newfound confidence

And self-trust as to protect the
 Inside which holds the gooey
 Guts of emotions like love
 That when given the opportunity,
 Seek to point, aim, and kill.
 I feel older and wiser than I did
 Last year.
 I know what I want and
 What I don't, but then again this
 Is all subject to change.
 For with every season,
 I molt from my armor,
 Emerging out from within
 As the innards I tried so hard
 To keep hidden.
 Slowly but surely, I sprout
 New wings and take on
 A new shape, as I forever
 Learn from my fortunes and mistakes.



Someday

Jim Clayton

Deja Beasley

Andrea Ortega

[two bodies longing for each other]

Melody Wilson

two bodies longing for each other,
destined never to touch.
soul, heart, belongs to another,
but skin craves a stranger.

breakdown, tears fall, guilt-ridden,
this shouldn't be.
for there was never a single touch,
nor a kiss, between two bodies.

resolve strengthens when the words are spoken,
like a soft whisper to the wind,
"i love you."

one body longing for a stranger,
destined never to touch.
desire has dissipated,
now only a ghost.
my soul is his, my heart is his,
and you are unwelcome here.

Half Alive

Abbi Fyffe

Malnourished memories fade away in the face of a neglected heart
It's hard to thrive when everything known is ripped apart
Faces blur, blend together; it was over from the start
No more looking forward; nothing left to impartt
A quiet ache aged like fine art
Til' death do them part
No more mourning,
Sweetheart

¡Viva Puerto Rico Libre!

Gabriella Vázquez

Engrave red, white, and blue on my skin
To match the blood pulsing in my veins
To keep my heart beating
For La Isla del Encanto

Listen to the song of the coquí
Let their voice flood my ears
To tell the tales of the island
And to unleash her secrets in my trust

Gift me the language of my father
To use the same tongue to
Speak the words of the Taíno
To keep the spirit of Borikén alive

Fly the flag high over all of Puerto Rico
Play "Que Bonita Bandera" in my bedroom
To remind of our fight against erasure
Never to again be silenced at the hand of the
Yankee

Rely on my throat to host the cries of
Pedro Albizu Campos
Let me be a vessel for his screams of independence
For the same screams belted during his murder

Show me the ways of the ones who came before
Rely on me to keep shouting the chant of
¡Viva Puerto Rico Libre!
Until it is one day proven to be true

Seven Steps

Alex White

One, drive two hours one way just to see her smile
at you when she leaves work.
Two, get a cat with her and then get another one
and maybe one more.
Three, tell her you love her with all that you are
and all that you will be.
Four, hold her like you could lose her at any
moment.
Five, promise that you'll never leave her side for as
long as you live.
Six, overcome your fear of marriage and finally ask
her to be your wife.
Seven, fall asleep on the couch while she waits for
you to crawl into bed.

Six, tell her you "don't usually like blondes" when
she bleaches her hair and say it was a joke.
Five, refuse to work through any argument because
you just KNOW you're right.
Four, when she makes you angry give her the silent
treatment like a toddler.
Three, stop holding her on the couch or in bed or in
the car.
Two, gaslight her into always believing she's the
one that's in the wrong.
One, tell her "no" when she asks "do you still want to
marry me?"
Apologize, beg, repeat.

Dog History

Katherine Robinson

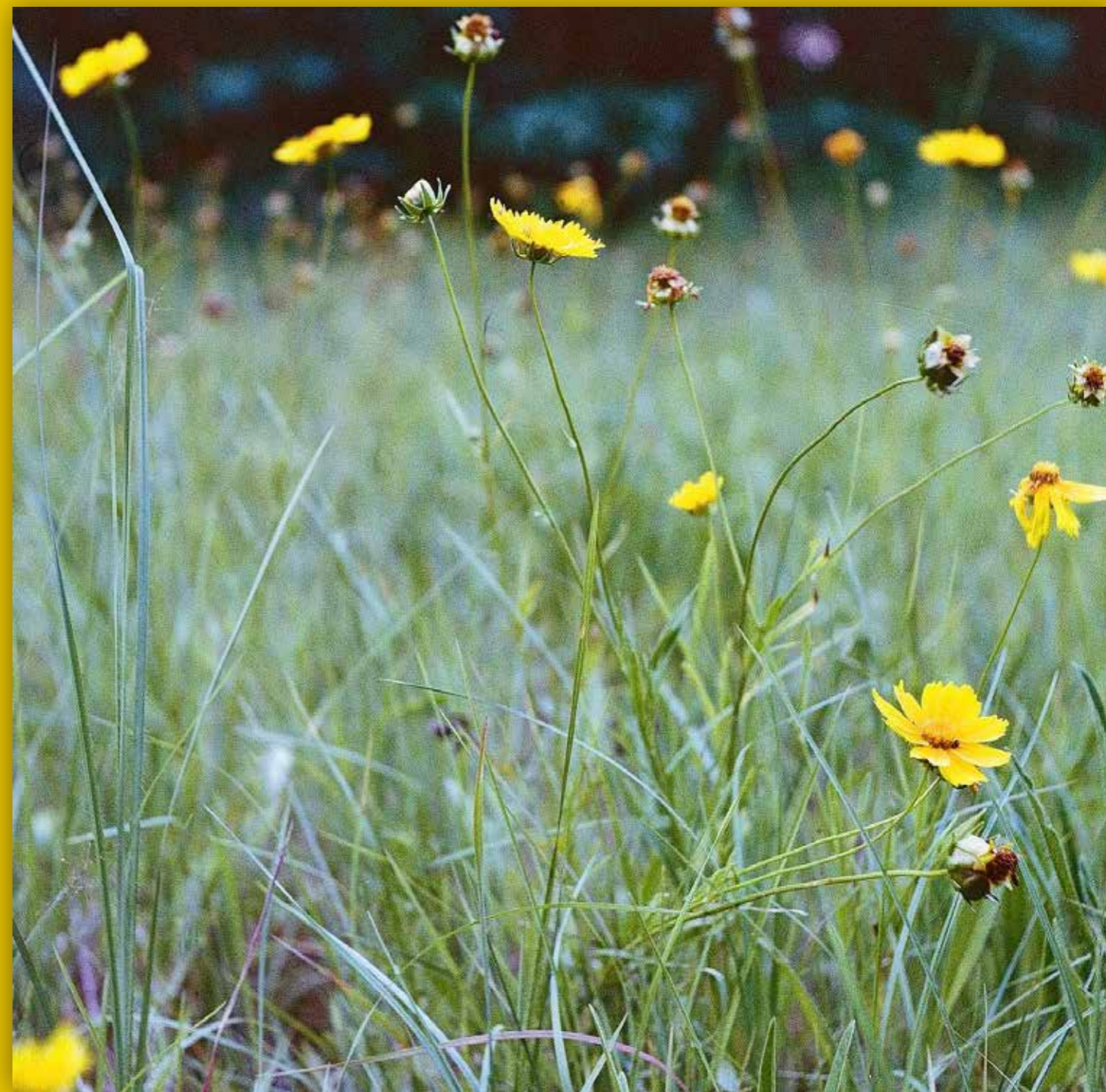
Hey look! A squirrel!
 Bark Bark!! Bark!
 Oh this is the most important moment in my life
 I will never forget it
 Bark!!
 Oh it's up a tree now.
 Everything is terrible and my life is over and I am destroyed
 Huh?
 Hey look! A squirrel!

In the Clouds

Gabriella Vazquez

We lay together in the summer sun
 Embraced by the plush strands of earth's hair
 Our fingertips brushed against each other like a
 Field of wildflowers in the wind

It is a dream to be here
 Charmed by the chirps of the birds
 And the dancing of the trees
 Almost as if we are in a fairytale
 Just me
 You
 And the strangers in the clouds



Seasonal Divertissement

Brice Wallace

The Long Dream, in which God is Starving

Camille Raney

The story goes like this:
God sculpts the universe amidst the emptiness
and says *There is wretchedness here.*
There is an evil here and I will see it purged.

I am only a child.
I do not know the evil that God speaks of.
I do not yet know the taste of flesh.
But there is Michael, and there is his fire, and
there is the Judgement. There is the dawn.
And light. And light. And light.

In my youth, I was told there is a right way and a wrong way
to do everything; life is a series of choices and you
choose right or you choose wrong. And maybe I chose wrong
somewhere along the road, because
my knees are bloodied and my teeth are stained red
and my mother tells me that means I am beyond redemption.

But a lamb is only a lamb until someone decides otherwise,
until someone stands it atop an altarcloth and slits its throat,
and a child is only a child until someone decides otherwise,
until someone hands it the knife and says *Kill,*
and then a child is a wolf, or a murderer, or a daughter,
and when a child is all three of these things
then it was never a child to begin with.
God says *I made this place for you. I sculpted it amidst the emptiness
for you.*
And I say *But there is wretchedness here.*
How could you?
And God says *Because I had to. Because I made you in my image
and that means you are beyond redemption.*

God is an emptiness and God is starving.
God is a dream on fire and I carry the scent of its smoke endlessly.

The story goes like this:
A girl is a dream on fire or else she is born out of the emptiness.
In one story she is only a child, and in one story she is only a lamb,
but in every story she is a wolfmurdererdaughter
who was never a childlamb to begin with.
We know this story. It is always the same story.

And I want to play my part. I do. But I am starving,
I am starving so please, God-

just tell me how to live
with your hunger.

I will try again

Emily Maliko

Today is not my day
I despise my looks
Every imperfect roll
Clothes hug and I tug
To fool the eyes
And myself
But there is no bigger fool
Than the enemy in my head
I want to love myself but
What's to love when the world does not love me
What is there to the love I have for myself
If it is not valid in the man's eye

But Who says that the man's eye
Is my keeper
Or is right to shove my
Imperfectly perfect soft
Cloud sized body
Through a keyhole
To thin me out
And turn me into
Something I am not
Lovable, I am
Even when you nor
I don't believe it
But I will wake
Up to a different day
And try to love myself
Again



Why are we fighting the police?

Shavon Foreman

The Point of No Return

Haley Stout

A man walks out his front door with no intention of returning. He feels no remorse, no guilt over leaving his wife and three kids to fend for themselves. The man had sworn, through sickness and health, and his wife had never fallen ill. She abided by his rules and regulations, even through the pillow-soaked tears, swallowing her pleads and disagreements like a good wife should. And yet she considered herself lucky; she was not beaten, she was not unforgivably violated, and she was not forced to watch her children suffer that fate either. She and her children always had a meal, always had a bed to sleep in, and always had warm water to bathe with. She had enough, yet felt undeniably incomplete. She was haunted by her childhood, and it changed her into a semblance of a ghost herself. Her father was the reason for the fears in her current marriage; he was the worst man she had ever met. She had felt immense relief when he left her mother, her, and her little sister for a twenty-year-old hairdresser with no money. But you know what they say: beauty is the currency men will strive for throughout life, without fail. Her husband was not necessarily kind. But he was fair enough with her, and a hard worker; a provider at heart, however reluctant that heart beat for her. He may have settled, but she settled too. She took the life he gave her without complaint, because how could she complain when she knows what life is like on the other side? The devil she knew was better than the devil she didn't, and she has now known two devils in her thirty years on this earth, and two devils is better than three. Alas, she did not complain. Then he began coming home later and later, smelling of lavender and vanilla. Immediately she knew and did not care. Not until he started treating her the way her father had treated her mother, clearly unhappy with the decision he had made ten years prior of settling for her now that he has someone to remind him that he did not have to. Red welts on her cheeks, but she is not blushing. Black lines her eyes, but she wears no makeup. Screams come from a bedroom, but the children are staying with her mother. Days turned to weeks and weeks turned to three months and three months was quite enough time for him to grow bored of punishing his wife for his decisions. And so, a man walks out his front door with no intention of returning.

Always an Angel

Grace Yancy

You poke and push prod and prick pulling me into quarters How much is that?	enough I make myself small sweet and small but now I am too much have you had -
enough you wait for me call it waiting patient arms outstretched Are you patient?	enough! tell me what to be I'm begging please shaking before my god this is
enough I'm cutting my hair short, curly, straight blonde, pink, black; Tell me, is it good?	Enough.

Living in My Dreams

Kassidy Keith

You live in my dreams on repeat.
Curling thoughts and poison comments
That cycle through every moment.
Bound by the past, you unravel me again
and again
and again.
You tainted the once beloved dreams
And I flinch at your name
And the haziest of outlines of your figure.
Your shadows unnerve me until I forget all about you
by morning and
by morning
I shake off the idea of you that lives on
In my memory as some venomous viper.
That makes me dread the night
When your voice shakes me from fitful rest.

if i were the moon

Deja Beasley

if i were the moon and you the sun,
born when this world had just begun,
in cosmic dance, star-crossed, we'd meet,
fate's thread binding our souls complete.
as we may wander, as we might roam,
with you i'll find my forever home
though light-years apart, our spirits entwine,
your radiance forever in this heart of mine.

should i dare to gleam with borrowed light,
tracing your path, day into night,
i'd never seek to dim your blazing might,
for together, we create this celestial sight.

in this cosmic tale, forever we'll sway,
eclipses of love in our otherworldly display
through the eons, our celestial rhyme,
bound, by destiny, for all of time.

if i were the moon, and you the sun,
darling, our story has just begun,
across the expanse of space and time,
in every universe, our love will shine.



Untitled

Maria Islam

Whole

Jim Clayton

The half made whole in the one he sees
Bound through love and the comfort it brings
Anticipation of the whole to grow
A Solomon's Knot composed of two souls

The whole bound and determined to stay
A path to engage full of pain and dismay
The knot that binds now strained and frayed
Chaffed and delicate from decay

The whole will dance, once harmonious and adored
No more than a waltz to a diminished chord
Tears fall like an autumn rain

Water only a garden of pain
Ink to paper, a blade so keen
Severs the knot through bitter glee
The heart-like glass dropped from on high
Shatter in echoes as the memories die

The whole made halves, shards set free
Untangled and lost only to flee
Gathering strength and the future vast
The whole made half steps out from the ash

Revolving Deceit: A Lover's Plea

Alex White

With green hair and a heart made of gold,
She grabbed the mic and pretended to be bold.
Clearing her throat and planting her feet,
All were told of her lover's deceit.

"My love was treated like a revolving door,
Where you came and went and came some more.
With promises you never intended to keep,
All logic was abandoned for I was in deep.

"You came and you went, seven times in two years,
Your smile and your laugh became my worst fears.
You learned rather quick that all it took,
Was a glance my direction with that infamous look.

"I stand here tonight with one final plea,
When you walk out the door, please let me be.
Don't laugh or smile or look my way,
Please hear these words that I now say."

As she set the mic back down in its place,
All heads turned around searching for a face.
Her lover was sat, smiling no more,
As she pointed her finger at the revolving door.

Dearest

Kasper Dunlap

"I never loved you."

I know she is trying to hurt me, but that is the most genuine thing she has said to me since I was a kid.

"I tried, y'know, I tried really hard, but you- you destroyed me. I mean look at me! Look at what you have done to me!"

I do look at her, and I don't see any remnants of the woman meant to nurture me. I see a vessel, hollow, empty, and I feel no warmth from her. I bow my head, allowing her to exhaust herself by berating me, as if she is preaching God's wrath. At this point, this is the only time she ever talks to me. When she is too drunk to stand, and screaming at the TV doesn't provide her with enough satisfaction because it can't recoil at her words, she turns to me for solace knowing that even I have some emotion. A connection with fizzled wires that refuse to ever meet.

"I regret a lot of things, but having you has to be at the very top. You are my greatest sin, may the Lord forgive me for bringing such a nasty, vexing, evil woman to life."

After she repeats the things she said to me last night, and the night before that, and the night before that, she passes out on the couch. I gently lay her down and cover her up with the only blanket that isn't soaked in wine. I replace the empty bottle with a freshly opened one, so she doesn't accuse me of stealing it. I look at her once more, and I have half a mind to burn the house down, purifying my greatest sin. I wish I were strong enough to do it.

We Collect, and We Pass Along

Ashley Worley

Like a pebble's ripples in a pond
Or droplets in the sea
Every moment spent with you
Becomes a piece of me
Through your father,
And his father,
And those before him
Hurtful words can lead long lives
When spoken on a whim
Cruelty lives in faded scars
And ever will survive
If no cycles are reversed
It touches future lives
Like a pebble's ripples in a pond
Or droplets in the sea

Every moment spent with you
Becomes a piece of me
Through your father,
And his father,
And those before him
Loving words can lead long lives
When spoken on a whim
Hope lives in softened hearts
And ever will survive
If no cycles are reversed
It touches future lives
Like a pebble's ripples in a pond
Or droplets in the sea
Every moment spent with you
Becomes a piece of me

Cardinal

Gabriella Vazquez

Searching for a place to rest
Red wings flutter on by
Finally perching on the fence
In the thick summer air of July

I glance up to eyes staring back
Studying the streams down my skin
As if you have something to say
To let me know where you have been

A sign from a cardinal used to prove silly
I never thought it to be true
But now my mind has changed

All because I have lost you

Maybe you are here to check in
To make known how you love me so
Or maybe you have come by
Just for a minute of a simple hello

Whatever it is
Whatever the case
Whenever I see a cardinal
I will always envision your face

Where do I put my eyes?

Nathan Witt

If **NOW** was a grain of sand, then how terrifying is an hourglass? How quickly is **NOW** becoming **THEN**. Where do I put my eyes?

If I select a single grain of **NOW** and try to fully appreciate it, now how many **NOWs** have I missed in order to watch the one? If I pick a favorite grain of **SOON**, how many **NOWs** have I ignored trying to appreciate **SOON** becoming **NOW** on its journey to **THEN**? Yet, if I pretend that **SOON** grains don't exist, do I rob myself of the ability to take full advantage of their **NOW** moment?

How hard is it to not look at the pile of **THENs** building at the bottom of the glass and not daydream about the **NOWs** they used to be, and the ways I didn't notice them as **SOONs** until they were already a **THEN**?

How cruel is it that every grain of sand is a different material, yet too small for the human eye to tell? How wasteful and pointless is trying to discern what each grain of **SOON** is made from? How many valuable grains of **NOW** am I missing by trying to tell if this one grain of **SOON** I'm watching is either made of granite or gold?

If only my hands were big enough to catch every single grain of **SOON**, right before they become **NOWs**, and hold them each under a microscope to know which ones are most important. But the sands are protected by the hourglass walls, and my view darts from here to there, trying to pick the best place to put my eyes.

Aromantic

Janet Shtoyko

The only true love I have ever known
had been when the vows I exchanged with the playground boys
meant our kinship would never break.
With the jungle gym, our church
and the plastic tower, our steeple
back when I was "friend" first, and "girl" second.

My Mother's Daughter

Grace Yancy

When I grow frail again
and you can pick me apart with your bare hands,
eat the meat off my bones,
teeth clacking like marble stones;
Will you be satisfied?

Leland Shot Sterling

David Michael Smith

Leland shot Sterling with trembling hand.
I, Sterling's 12th wife, Sterling's December
Observed as the man with skin of marble,
My husband, fell upon the sheets of silk
Of our bed, from which without an ounce of love
Did he covet me as nothing more than a wife.

With his last breath, he stretched his hand to his
wife

And as life left his body, did fall his hand.
I looked upon his corpse with disdain, not love.
Cold was the room, colder than any December
The body lay still, his blood spilled on silk
His lustrous blue eyes clouded white as marble.

Leland approached the columns of marble
Gazed out the window, anticipating the wife
Of the tyrant to collapse upon the silk
Sheets and weep, clutching his hand.
But nobody wept that night in December.
Nobody wept because Sterling had no one to
love.

The police assumed it had been done for love
Jealousy of the manor, of the gleaming marble,
Of his beautiful twelfth wife, Sterling's December.
How wrong they were, for though I was his wife

And in marriage did I take him by the hand
I wanted nothing more than the riches in silk

Leland had seen into the window lined with silk
Had seen how Sterling had shown his "love"
To me. From the garden did his gimp hand
Slowly curl in anger as he observed his marble
Master strike the face of his resisting wife.
Anger turned to rage, to kill that December.

Leland met up with me, with Sterling's December
He mentioned what he saw through the silk
I mentioned the gun in the drawer, the one any
wife

Would plant if they lived a marriage void of
love.

We had planned it together, to kill the man of
marble,
But, when arrested, I had no gun in my hand.

On that December, as love fluttered from my
freed heart,
I abandoned the silk, the marble, and Leland's
poor life to the gallows,
Which brought justice to the poor, widowed
wife's clean hand.

If Life Were a Poem

Joseph Hamm

It would be a free verse.
Much to my dissatisfaction.

I wish life were neat and orderly,
with rules in place and a gentle structure.
It would have rhymes that fit in properly,
and a sturdy architecture.

Even a haiku
would at least bring some balance
to everyday life.

But instead, it's a free verse.
Random events happen that don't make any
s e n s e.
There is no rhyme scheme in real life.
No grandiose masterwork of one moment,
pairing up perfectly with another moment.
Life is just a series of experimentations,
not unlike free verse,
where days can go on and on and on and
on until you realize you've

somehow made it to the next one without
even registering it.
We get caught up in doing the same things over and over again
that we don't even comprehend the fact that
we get caught up in doing the same things over and over again.

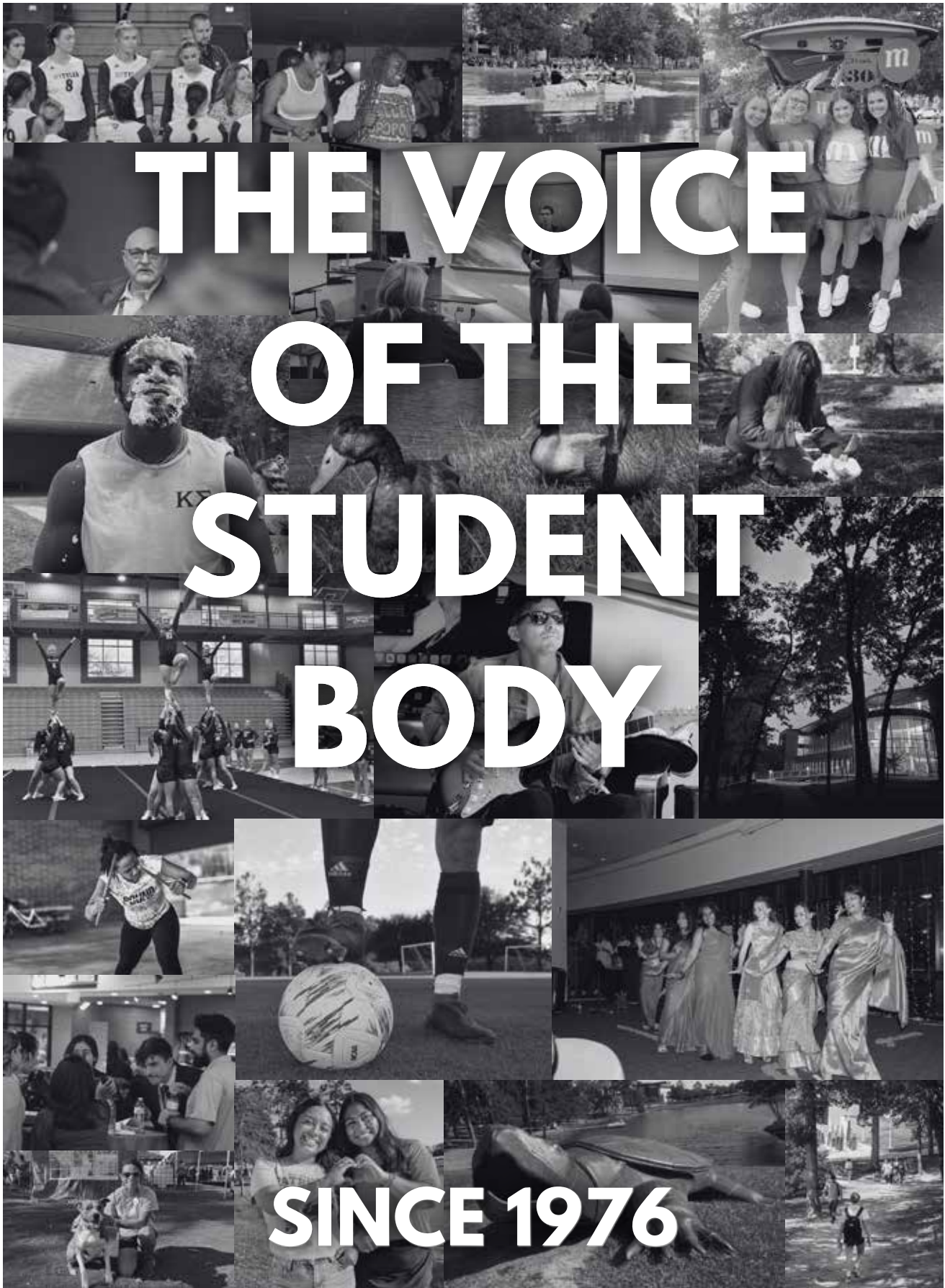
And when something new enters our lives,
it doesn't come in a pleasant format.
It usually either sneaks up underneath us when we least expect it
or boldly comes forth with no warning.

As scary as it can be to live in a world with free verse,
I've learned a secret that helps me traverse.
Just like every poet has the ability to make their own rules,
So, too, do you and I have the power to shape life with our own tools.



Ephemeral Blooms

Brice Wallace



SINCE 1976