

BATTLECRY

New College Review



2021



photo by Anna Grace Lalisan

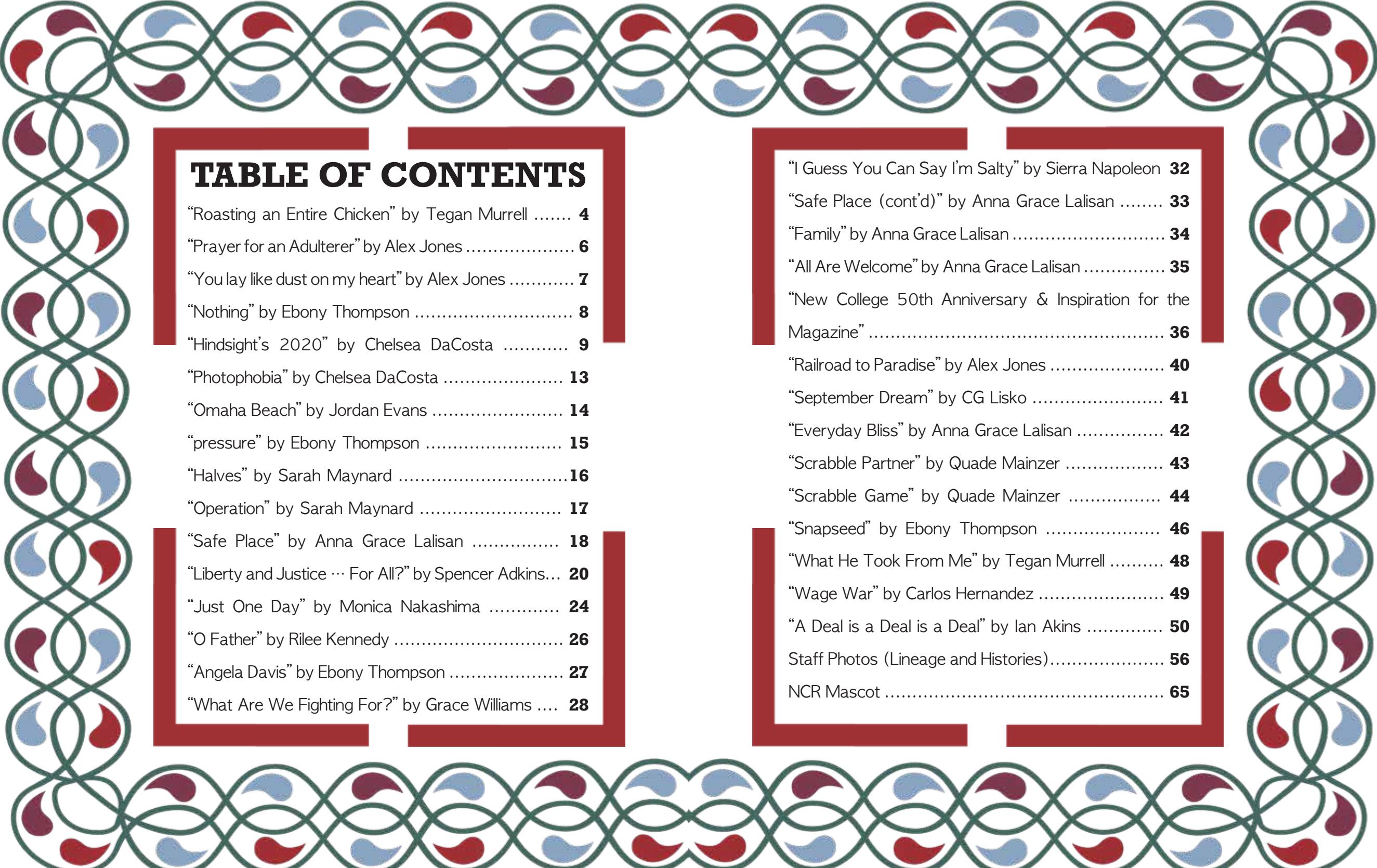


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Roasting an Entire Chicken

and only as my hands crawl beneath the skin
halfway up its back does it occur to me
to wonder who I am expecting for dinner,
to marvel that this is a meal for a family.
Maybe it is a stark act of independence
for a young woman to treat herself like a family,
but I am astounded by my own loneliness.
I do not want children, cannot imagine
which friends would sit around the table
if the table were real, not a desk
pushed up against a wall
if I hadn't once again driven myself
deep into the woods. (Even then, not you.)

I know how to cook to mark a place as mine
with the Norman Rockwell scent of roasted bird,
even if I'm the only one smelling
the herbed butter crisping the skin.

But standing here in this postage stamp kitchen,
I know I am expecting someone.

I took two trips to the store
ten miles down the road because Georgia
won't sell wine on Sundays. This morning,
I chose the red dress that flirts with the skin
above my knees because it is warm outside
and marveled at the desire to put on makeup
for the cashier. I itched to clean my studio
when I should want to write, longed
to put away my laundry before it dried.

Pulling the giblets from the cavity,
remembering the night Annika and I roasted
our first turkey, how we didn't know the giblets
should have been bagged, reaching down, gaging
at the soft, thawed guts in our bare hands.
We tried tongs, rubber gloves, it took forty-five minutes
to get them out, but finally, we made gravy
from homemade stock. How yellow
the kitchen was, how warm with her laughter.
Even the best Fleetwood Mac record
(Future Games, this is not up for discussion,
I've already let you have "Operator")
cannot out-sing
the absence of her laughter.
My eyes sting with the memory

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of the shallot I chopped hours ago.
They say blue eyes are more sensitive
to cutting onions. I always squeeze
mine shut, operating my knife blindly.

Now, wearing that red dress you think is sexy
under a white apron, remembering
when I stewed chickpeas in curry and coconut milk,
wearing that vintage china-blue dress with flowers
and the apron that matched the pattern exactly.
You were on your way, so I took a shower
with the front door ajar, hoping you'd come in,
sneak behind the shower curtain and whisper in my ear,
are you insane? so I could laugh and you'd understand
how unlikely anyone else is to come my way,
even in this awful town.

When someone you love dies, you learn
—if you hadn't already—how to hate
someone and miss them at the same time.
I don't hate her because she's dead
or because I wish I were dead
or anything soapy like that. I just hate her.
Ugly and simply. Don't look at me
with those fucking sad cow eyes.
I really do hate you, so there.

Last night, before I sat in bed, stomach pounding,
and listened to the rattling of my front door
as someone tried to get in, before I got up this morning
for trip number two to the grocery store,
the auburn hills pecking the sky on its blue lips,
and got in a car that smelled exactly like you,
I drove home from the store at 10 pm
which is dead time for this farming community.
No one on the highway as far as I could see,
just the midnight trees whispering
against the phosphorescent sky,
and that song you liked was bleeding, warm,
from the stereo. There was an urge
to turn off my headlights and melt
into the charred darkness of the hills.

-Tegan Murrell

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Prayer for an Adulterer

Father forgive him for his awful deed,
For he knows not the damage he has done,
But if You don't, my heart, for him, won't bleed.

For his satisfaction of selfish need
The needs of others he considered none.
Father forgive him for his awful deed.

To the lives of others, he paid no heed,
But for this do not him from heaven shun.
But if You do, my heart, for him, won't bleed.

Do not damn him, on his behalf I plead,
To You, who leave the ninety-nine for one.
Father forgive him for his awful deed.

Apply your grace, the message of your creed,
Extract him from the web of hate he's spun,
But if You don't, my heart, for him, won't bleed.

As it is my duty, I intercede.
He, same as me, is your prodigal son.
Father forgive us for our awful deeds,
But if You don't, my heart, for him, won't bleed.

-Alex Jones

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You lay like dust on my heart

Do you miss me when it rains, my love?
I long for you as the moon wanes, my love.

I lay in the dark, search for stars through plaster,
and know that waiting for you is as vain, my love.

Can you can hear the bleating in my chest,
the beating that is my heart's refrain, my love?

Each time we meet, I know it's written on my face.
I fear, yet I hope, you'll ascertain my love.

I wish to speak, but my tongue is leaden
with cowardice. I am silent; I abstain, my love.

I fear rejection, so I hide in glass houses,
knowing once I emerge, you'll disdain my love.

But to think about you is to walk on coals;
to stand still brings too much pain, my love.

To advance? Impossible. Retreat? Unbearable.
This life I cannot sustain, my love.

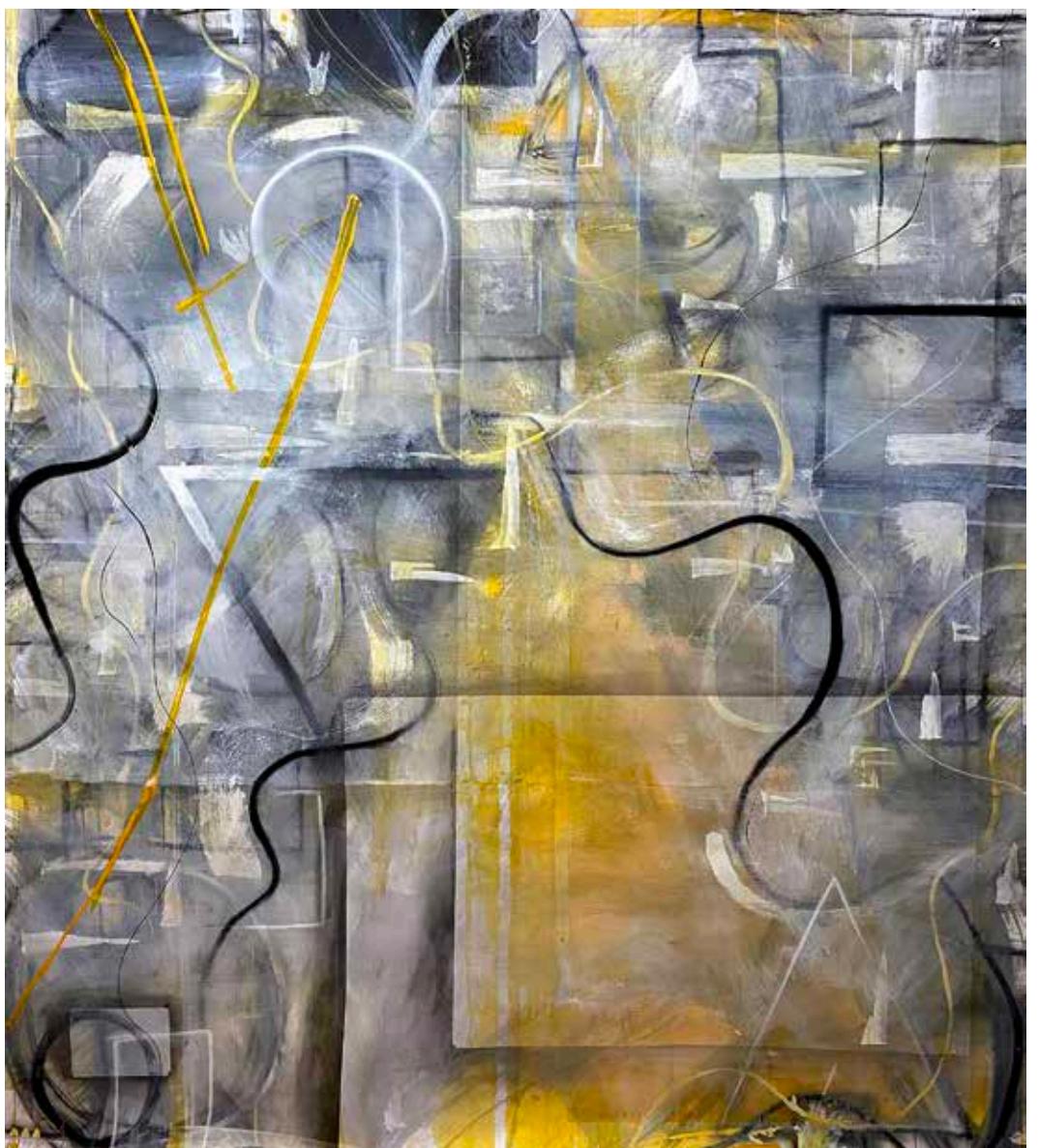
What do I do? Where do I go?
What is left for me once hope is slain, my love?

"For dust thou art, unto dust shalt thou return,"
is what the Lord hath proclaimed, my love.

Who would I, Anteros, be to stand against His Word?
The earth will your body regain, my love.

-Alex Jones

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Nothing
mixed media on canvas
Ebony Thompson

Hindsight's 2020

-Chelsea DaCosta

It is 2 AM again, 2020, a repetition of yet another night I am far too familiar with by now. The unwieldy palms whack lazily against my bedroom window, dancing among the billowy winds. The sky is pitch black, with not even the shining moon to keep me company tonight. I am in my family home in Florida, though I ought to be on the Tuscaloosa campus, stressing over term papers and watching football games with friends. The threat of COVID-19, a merciless thief in more ways than one, leaves me fearful to return. This is not a decision I necessarily regret, though I wholly resent that I even had to make it. Tonight, I am taking a break from the very real troubles of the world, and I instead find myself in a differently agonized obsession. The blue light from my computer stares back at me, the only light I've seen in days. I am disgruntled, trying for the umpteenth time to access my damn iCloud, even though I know I won't find what I'm looking for. I rub my temples. It is far too late, and I am far too emotionally exhausted for this, worn weary from this turbulent year.

Look, if I put things into perspective, I have no real problem. At least, not a legitimate one where my iCloud is concerned. This year has taken so much away from everybody, least

of all the opportunities, experiences, and connections we center our lives around. It has taken our patience, good faith, sanity, and peace of mind. For some, it has robbed the health and life of themselves and loved ones. And what's more – it has taken its sweet time, casually basking in the afterglow of a world quietly on fire.

So I realize as I say this, what with our dire reality unabashedly on display everywhere we look, how I might sound when I say that losing a few years' worth of iPhone photos feels an awful lot like salt in the wounds of a hot dumpster fire of a year. Through my obsession I can hear Kourtney's voice now – "Kim, there's people that are DYING." I'm fairly certain this comparison reflects poorly on me, but that is how it feels - like I'm crying over disgustingly expensive earrings while others are facing real tragedy.

My focus tonight is squarely on trying to retrieve two years of photos lost in my iPhone upgrade. If I haven't reiterated it enough, this problem is dumb, and yet... I am a sentimental person at heart, and I almost find this problem to be a personal, petty affront on behalf of 2020. This inane and incredibly frustrating "problem" I face pales in comparison to this, "unprecedented time," or whatever euphemism we use to encapsulate all of this. I know this. I realize that I enjoy an immense amount of luck and privilege in this situation. I enjoy the privilege that is being able to work and learn from the safety of my family home. I have the great privilege of falling asleep at night knowing that people in my small circle, those that I worry and care for, are safe and healthy. I know



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the strain and the anxiety I feel pales in comparison to those on the frontlines; those who are essential workers; those who have felt the fullest extent of tragedy during these times.

With this in mind, please make no mistake: I do not distract myself with this ultimately frivolous issue because I am unaware of the tragedy around us. On the contrary, I fear and loathe it. I have spent restless months sitting weary with the strain of the uncertain future sitting on my shoulders, as I am sure we all have. I worry for my parents, who for one reason or another, are classified as "high-risk." I've spent countless nights frantically studying reports and articles that I am wholly unqualified to understand, hoping that there is an answer for me somewhere, a beacon of light that points to an answer. The slightest modicum of comfort would be welcome. I have obligated myself to rules – the masks, the sanitizer, social distancing, all of it – out of consuming fear, and because those are actions that I can control. I have balked at the thread of human decency unraveling: "Well, we all have to die someday, I won't live my life in fear," (you know who you are). I have spent months swallowing my anger and frustration, twin demons that sit white-hot in the pit of my stomach. I think I am in good company when I say I'd rather not think about it.

So, I pack my anxieties and frustrations neatly in a box, tucked away in some dusty corner of my mind that has the energy to care anymore. I've tried to distract myself in other ways, but I find that alcohol just makes me even more sad than I already am, and videogames only

dig at the slim patience I cling to these days. Reading requires an attention span that no longer exists within me. I think of memories of decidedly better times- I think of the memories of the sweltering humidity of a Florida summer, one where I traipsed with my boyfriend through Animal Kingdom, the summer before it all hit the fan: Slick with sweat, thrust within the throngs of an overwhelming herd of parkgoers. With it being the last weekend of summer vacation in Florida, we were unsurprisingly unable to score any rides. So, we loitered around the animal habitats, scouring for the critters who would emerge to brave the baking heat and bustle of screaming kids and weary parents. I think of the pearl grey turtles (or maybe they were tortoises?) who were aggressively posturing to each other, squaring up for a brawl. We remained their sole and captive audience, watching as one slowly projected his threat to his counterpart. The opponent, undeterred, snapped back with the force of a geriatric man. This went on for some time, a most formidably boring, yet highly amusing, fight. The only fights we get now are of old people decking each other in Costco over toilet paper. Somehow, the turtles are less pathetic.

I had lots of silly memories buried in my phone like that - Countless stories and anecdotes, proudly displayed next to the milestones. One of my most prized memories is that of my 21st birthday, because of course it is. A quote from Panic! At the Disco comes to mind, "A moment you'll never remember, and a night you'll never forget." It's hard to forget the buzzy euphoria of a bubbly drink and good music. The details in my mind are clear as day:



Because it was my 21st birthday, my boyfriend had surprised me with tickets to see my favorite band in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The band in question is an amalgamation of pop and rock, 80's inspired synth, and iridescent glitter and vibrant colors. Their songs are the songs I listened to while preparing for nights out with friends, or dancing with reckless abandon throughout my apartment (alone, of course). I would leave their most sentimental songs for the early morning hours, when the creeping daylight would start to pour through the cracks in the windowsill, overtaking yet another sleepless night. These songs are the soundtrack to my life, underscoring decisions big and small, in happiness and in grief. They tell tales of heartbreak, yearning, desire and love. Some are just fun little party anthems, for the days you need an extra hit of serotonin - a hot commodity, as I'm sure we all know. Needless to say, I was incredibly excited. Clad in my signature denim jacket, scuffed high-top chucks, and a newly-minted license to drink, we set off on our four hour trip.

I affectionately refer to this birthday as the "one where the stars aligned." February 16th not only fell on a saturday; We later found out it was the singer's birthday too! A milestone birthday, on the perfect day of the week, shared in celebration of my favorite performer- a serendipitous occasion if I had ever seen one. We dropped what little bit of luggage we had brought with us back at the dilapidated hotel, a sad looking building composed of cracked walls and washed out blues - but it was in the heart of the city, and in walking distance of the venue, so it was

perfect nonetheless as far as I was concerned.

Walking towards the venue, my hand firmly grasped in my boyfriend's, I felt elated, as though I had ascended the personal hardships of the year previous only to meet with that exact moment at that exact time. It was as if the world had two hands planted firmly under my arms, hoisting me up to the shining night sky that we now stood under. Invigorated by the chilly winter air, I smiled with laughter punctuated by warm puffs of breath. After dinner, a selection of overly priced yet incredibly delicious food and drinks, we made our way to the show.

Here is where the memory is hazy. Whether it was a blur of emotion or the buzz of alcohol thrumming beneath my skin I really couldn't say (although realistically speaking - it was probably both). I remember the frenetic pulse of excitement that surged the crowd. I remember the smell of sweat hanging thick in the air. I remember the sight of fists thrust up, pulsing forward, camaraderie embodied as gentle buoys raging in verse. I remember the way we sang along as one voice, shoulder to shoulder, caked in sweat and unencumbered by the brisk chill night. This pulse, this heat, this passion- preserved within this moment.

I guess this obsession is just another distraction from our current reality. It is a way for me to continue to chase this feeling, an experience of being impassioned and overcome with emotions (positive ones, that is). I used to never understand why some people would cry during concerts, but I think I understand it a bit better.



If I listen to just the right song, in just the right (or wrong) mindset, I just might sob these days. These memories are not just remnants of time before, they remind me of what it feels to be human. They remind me that the scope of human emotions extends beyond anxiety, depression, loneliness, and anger. My focus on these representations of happier times are a wish for normalcy, and a testament to hope - abstract concepts that no longer feel guaranteed, if I am being honest. These images are hazy, twirling like a whisp of smoke from a burning cigarette wedged loosely between two fingers. With an absentminded flick and a toss to the ground, the flame is snuffed out, black ash scattered in the wind.

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I wonder if the absence of the photos unnerves me enough because it feels as though we will never return to "normal". I don't mean in the sense of COVID – at this time a vaccine has been developed, and there seems to be a light at the end of this tunnel (even if that tunnel is a few years long). I mean that the varied range of responses to pertinent issues on an individual and national level - ranging from apathy, denial, and ridicule, to genuine concern and activism - has exposed a fissure far too deep for whatever band-aid that the vaccine functions as, at this point.

I have no answer, no solution. Hell, now I don't even have the reminders of the good times to keep me going. But I do not forget those good times either, and maybe that is enough for now. Those experiences have been lived, and if I may pretend to be an optimistic person, no one and nothing can take that away from me. In that light, I will continue to



choose focusing on the creative ways people have taken to make and preserve connections and experiences. Concerts, weddings, and graduations are livestreamed now. Birthdays are held over Animal Crossing, and FaceTime and Zoom are prime for happy hours, group work-outs, and weekend get-togethers. We can be alone together, or whatever cheesy platitude we want to assign to our situation, and there's something poetic about that. Maybe one day I'll even look back at this time and see through the flurry of overwhelming headlines and months bereft of sanity and truly appreciate the realization that if I got through all that, then maybe I really can get through anything.

If that rosy thought doesn't cheer me up in the meantime? Well, shaking my fist in the air and cursing Apple is forever.

Photophobia

Daybreak
sheds light like tears
through a broken windowpane.
Fragments bounce off a mirror,
And dart through forgotten corners
Crystalline, white-hot around the edges
They jut like shards of glass, glinting menacingly
pulsing caution
the glower of a new day.

-Chelsea DaCosta

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Omaha Beach

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I always pictured a battlefield being noisy,
painfully so,
but the beaches of Normandy, France remained eerily silent
as the sun dipped below the white-capped waves.
I could feel the warm water brush against my ankles
as I waded in the shallow regions,
my toes curling against grains of sand
that had once been stained red with the blood of thousands of young men—
some German,
some French,
and some from the numerous towns and cities in America.
But my uncle—
he was different.
He didn't die here,
among his fellow soldiers.
His body didn't lie lifeless against the seashore for hours,
riddled with holes that oozed a steady stream of crimson.
No, we buried my uncle beneath the willow tree in our backyard.
I didn't know my uncle very well,
but the violence of the crashing waves confirmed my theory—
that even after the war ended,
even after the battle was over,
even after he'd returned home to his wife,
crying and trembling—
my uncle
never
truly
left
that
beach.

-Jordan Evans



pressure
mixed media on canvas
Ebony Thompson

Halves

My mother says not to worry,
I desperately listen to her tender mouth
knowing damn well
it will ease the doubt
for a split second.
Miles away isn't close enough.

But she also panics every christmas,
every thanksgiving,
every time she is known
for bringing the warmth
and decorating the home,
and setting the stage
for a wholesome family memory.
I tell her not to worry,
as she oversets the tables
and overprepares the feasts.
And we all eat and eat
And smile as she smiles.

I am a child,
as she stands in front of the mirror
almost every day,
teasing her hair,
complaining about crow's feet.
She stands in front of the mirror
saying "this is as good as it's gonna get"

Every day I look in the mirror,
and conceal my tired skin
and try to remind myself
that this isn't as good as it's gonna get.

I'll be like my mother some day
But different
But not
I will keep as much of her as possible,
even the insecurities
I will just tuck those further back until they melt

oh mother you are so beautifully naive
we are so beautifully naive.

-Sarah Maynard

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Operation

I am beautiful and ugly.
So I laid myself on a sterile table,
all of me,
even the stained
treasure map inside my head.
Even my unruly crooked spine
and my cracking knuckles.
A pearly skeleton,
under a faulty microscope.
It was beautiful and ugly.

I thumbed through my skull,
all of me,
arranged my brain, nice and neat
in a squeaky file cabinet.
What if I could crack my own chest
and pluck out all of the splinters?
Pack what's left with lavender grace.

Would it make me selfish to feel the right things
at the right time
for the right reasons?
(with a right person)
If I was right,
I'd probably be wrong.

Obnoxiously altogether,
Don't let them fool you.
They're all beautiful
and ugly,
like me.
And never forget, You.

-Sarah Maynard

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Safe Place: A Photography Essay

-Anna Grace Lalisan



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Liberty and Justice...For All?

-Spencer Adkins

The United States was founded upon the principle that “all men are created equal.” We grow up believing that our laws and systems reflect our principles of equality and justice. Unfortunately, this has never been the case. As a nation, we have failed to live up to the ideals that so many people associate with America. Racial inequality, disenfranchisement, and a lack of civil liberties for women and minorities has plagued the American legal system since its genesis. One of the greatest ongoing battles in our history is the continued battle for equality and justice in a system that has never truly embraced these concepts.

From the nation’s founding, the promise of equality has been false. The Constitution, our groundbreaking charter for a new form of government, had the issue of inequality embedded within it. This inequality is best illustrated by the infamous “three-fifths compromise” which stated that African Americans, who were slaves at the time, would only count as three-fifths of a person for all official government counting purposes such as the census. This blatant disregard for the value of African Americans’ lives would not be remedied until 1868 with the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment, almost 100 years later.

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Due to injustice and inequality being present in the United States from the beginning, the only way to remedy this is through changes in the laws and through challenges in the courts. Many issues go all the way to the Supreme Court, the highest court in the United States and the final word on the legality of federal and state laws. However, even this does not always guarantee that the principles of equality and justice will be upheld as the Supreme Court has a long and complicated history of not always defending these principles.

The Supreme Court’s complicated relationship with racial equality can be traced to before the Civil War. In *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1857) (1), the Supreme Court ruled that an African American cannot be a citizen if he or his ancestors had ever been slaves. This essentially meant that even if an African American resided in a free state, they could not be considered citizens. Another example of the Supreme Court failing to uphold the basic principles of equality can be seen in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) (2). In this case, the Supreme Court ruled that the concept of “separate but equal,” or segregation, did not violate the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution, even though the Amendment specifically provides for equal protection under the law for all U.S. citizens. This ruling illustrates how racial inequality did not simply end after the Civil War. Courts throughout the nation still treated African Americans as second-class citizens, especially in the South under Jim Crow laws.

Perhaps the most egregious example of the Supreme Court failing to protect individual liberty

came in the 1940s. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the United States government began placing Japanese Americans in “relocation” camps in the name of national security, however in reality these “relocation” camps were internment camps. In *Korematsu v. United States* (1944) (3), the Supreme Court reviewed the arrest of Fred Korematsu who had violated the executive order to relocate and deemed the placement of Japanese citizens in these internment camps to be legal. In *Korematsu*, a group of American citizens were plainly and unabashedly being deprived of their personal freedom. And yet the Supreme Court, the last bastion and final line of protection for equality and civil liberties, did nothing to prevent this explicit violation of individual rights.

The law is supposed to protect individual liberty and promote justice and equality. When it doesn’t there are processes in place to challenge unfair law. But when an unfair law is challenged and still upheld by the courts, it emphasizes the deficiencies that exist in the American legal system. All of these examples point to the fact that the American system has not prioritized “liberty and justice for all.” Liberty and justice have been preserved for one section of the population, white males, while minorities have been forced to fight for every right they have.

Other than the failure of the courts, another failure in the American legal system is the lack of representation that exists in both the legislative branch that creates the laws, and the judicial branch that interprets them. While white males have had a foothold in Congress since

the nation’s founding, African Americans did not start to have representation until Hiram Revels was elected to the Senate in 1870 (4). Likewise, women did not have representation in Congress until Jeannette Rankin served in the House of Representatives in 1917 (5). While progress has been made in this area (the 116th Congress is the most diverse since 1930), 8 out of 10 members of Congress are white and roughly 1 in 4 are women (6). In the judicial branch, African Americans were not represented on the Supreme Court until 1967 and the first woman was not sworn into the court until Sandra Day O’Connor in 1981.

In a bench composed of nine justices, there has only ever been one African American on the bench at one time, and only two total in the history of the Court with Thurgood Marshall and Clarence Thomas. When laws are being written that affect African Americans, women, and other minorities, but these groups of people are not involved with the creation of the laws, it is no surprise why the laws negatively impact these people. Likewise, when laws that negatively affect minorities are being reviewed by justices unaffected by the law, it is unsurprising that they often fail to recognize the issues with the law.

Despite America’s history of failures, progress has been made as individuals continue to fight and battle for equality and justice. The three-fifths compromise was invalidated by the Fourteenth Amendment. The *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision was overturned in 1955 by *Brown v. Board of Education*, which declared racial segregation illegal. The Supreme

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Court has since condemned its decision in Korematsu. No matter how many times the American legal system fails, it is vital that people continue to battle. Women continued to fight for their right to vote until it was finally granted in 1919. African Americans have fought extremely hard for the rights they now possess.

Many participated in physical battles during the Civil War to gain their freedom. Hundreds of thousands of African Americans fought against their disenfranchisement during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and won with the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. These successes show that fighting for equality and justice do prevail. Unfortunately, due to the nature of our system it may take years, even decades, but change can occur within the legal system. The key is persistence.

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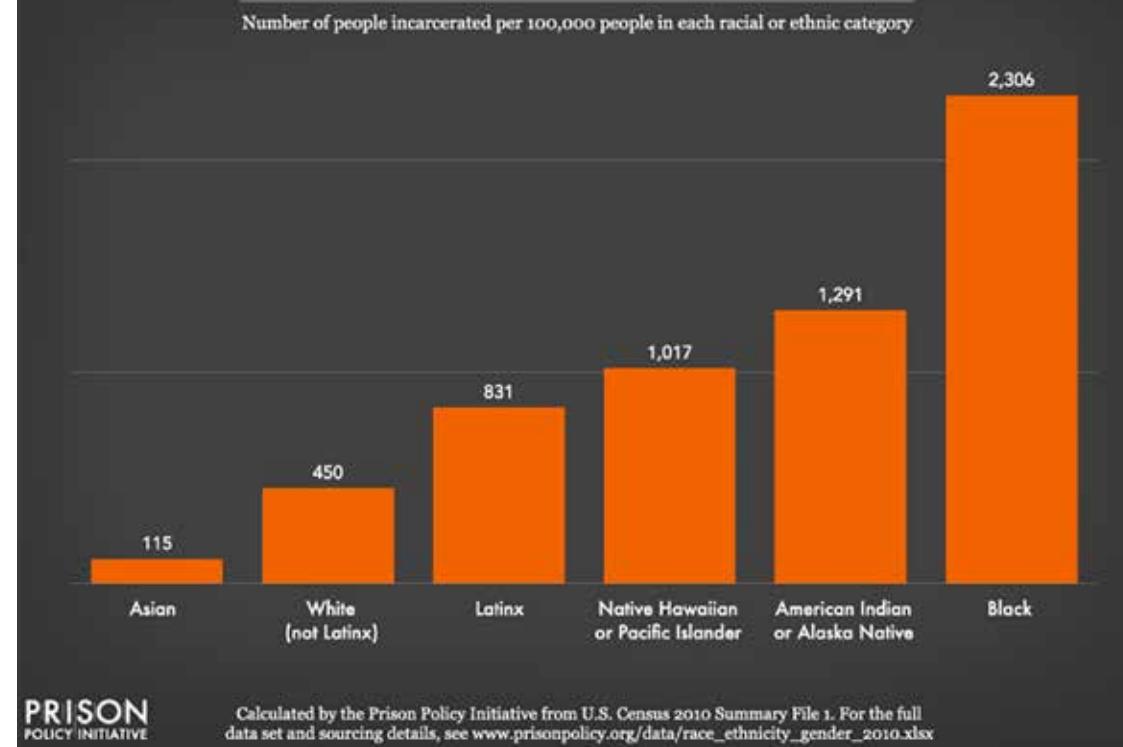
Even with the progress that has been made, there are still more battles to be fought within the legal system. The graph above shows the results of a study conducted by the Prison Policy Initiative based on data gathered by the 2020 Census. The results show that the criminal justice system is still in need of change. The discrepancy between the rate of African Americans incarcerated versus the rate of incarceration of white persons could be the result of a plethora of factors such as economic status, graduation rates, and access to legal counsel to name a few. However, one thing is certain: the criminal justice system has always been and remains to be an enemy to the African American community rather than an ally. Recently huge protests have erupted across the country calling for

criminal justice reform, and hopefully these protests will cause meaningful change to come to fruition. Even if these protests fail to accomplish their goals immediately, it is vital that people continue to fight. Our system of justice was not created with all people in mind and there will always be another battle to fight, another war to wage, and more change to hope for. It may take time, but a better future can be secured as long as there are people willing to fight for it.

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U.S. incarceration rates by race and ethnicity, 2010



Source: Prison Policy Initiative
<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/graphs/raceinc.html>

Maker of graph: Wendy Sawyer

Sawyer, Wendy. "U.S. Incarceration Rates by Race." U.S. Incarceration Rates by Race | Prison Policy Initiative, *Prison Policy Initiative*, www.prisonpolicy.org/graphs/raceinc.html.

Just One Day

-Monica Nakaima

As I walk through the cascade of trees lining the Quad walkways, they fail at making the suffocating Southern humidity more bearable. Despite their attempts at covering the sunbeams peeking out through their leaves, it almost feels like the air is sweating with me. As I go to sit on the steps of Denny Chimes, the sound of traffic on University Boulevard reminds me of rolling waves with the rush of lunch time traffic. I think back on the earlier coolness of the quiet morning, before the campus woke up and became as active as a mini city.

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I can't say every major to minor detail of university life was what I had expected. When I attended Capstone Communication Day, I was impressed by the quality of work showcased by students who lit up with pride about their accomplishments. Their experiences affirmed to me the College of C&IS is one of the corners of the Capstone Where Legends Are Made. Even stepping inside Reese Phifer Hall for the first time felt like returning home after a long trip.

I wish I could've remained consistently optimistic throughout my first semester. No one could have imagined how certain aspects of student life would have to be adjusted due to the pandemic.

I don't get to experience getting lost in Reese's maze-like hallway system, as Lloyd Hall houses my only in-person lecture once a week. The rest of my classes are completely online, either self-paced or taught through Zoom lectures. I adjust to digital teaching alongside the rest of my peers. Pre-pandemic, I could complain about the last exam to the classmate sitting in front of me before the professor entered the room. No face-to-face classes means a random someone in a fifty-person course creates a class group chat for everyone to discuss their frustrations and crack jokes.

Education-wise, I submit assignments less than ten minutes before the 11:59 deadline because I can't concentrate past the burning feeling in my screen fatigue eyes. I should be more interested in what I'm learning, but nothing seems to stick like before. By the time Blackboard emails me the 'your submission has been received!' message, I've already forgotten the basics of the assignment. I endure virtual deadlines and my failing mental health for the sake of leaping into my field of study.

The little peck-peck-peck sounds of rapid typing, chasing after the zaps of words. The confident feeling of knowing "Oh, this is something I really enjoy doing!" as a spark of an idea that turns into a wildfire of writing. Publishing articles, broadcasting radio work, and making so much career progress in just a matter of weeks pushes through the pure exhaustion I feel at the end of the day.

However, the rush quickly begins to feel like falling into a void.

It's the editing, the frustration, the evenings that drag on until the sun rises. The feeling of crashing and burning and reigniting all in one night. My back hurts and my eyes feel heavy like I didn't just sleep for over ten hours straight during a 'nap' mid-afternoon. The harshness of the creative burnout I experience after midterms and anxiety over the uncertainty of the world crawls into my brain and won't leave.

Will I be able to have a 'normal' Fall Semester next year? I should just drop out at this point. I'm just not good at writing. I don't wanna do this anymore.

After I finish my finals, I reflect on the semester with a clearer mind. The days of nose-swab testing, accomplishing half of my goals, feeling isolated. I linger over my class schedule for the upcoming Spring and wonder, should I even apply for another round of this? I manage to push away the thoughts of all the things that soured my Fall, and instead think of the moments that I enjoyed.

One-on-one Zooms with my favorite professor, appreciating times set aside for laughing and relating with someone who understands burnout and emails me advice articles. Conversations with my CW and APR colleagues that motivate me to continue my career path and also brighten my days. My online classes, as problematic as they may be, are based on getting my work done at my convenience. I still appreciate the instructor that included a ':)' at the end of a very polite email, because it was as human as online interaction gets.

I decide to commit to the classes I scheduled for the New Year.

I got this. I just have to take this one day at a time.

25

O Father

Fear -

It was the last thing leaving me,
while your leather fists were beating me.

Love -

It's the one thing expected from you,
but all I got was neglection from you.

Masks -

Like smiles stretched across your outward face.
Why did I have to share every line of your face?

Scars -

Streak your heart from wars in sands across the sea.
Oh, how my green eyes have leaked a salted sea.

Time -

Passes like a hazy fever, nearing a breaking point.
When I've seen the Devil, it's hard not to point.

Better -

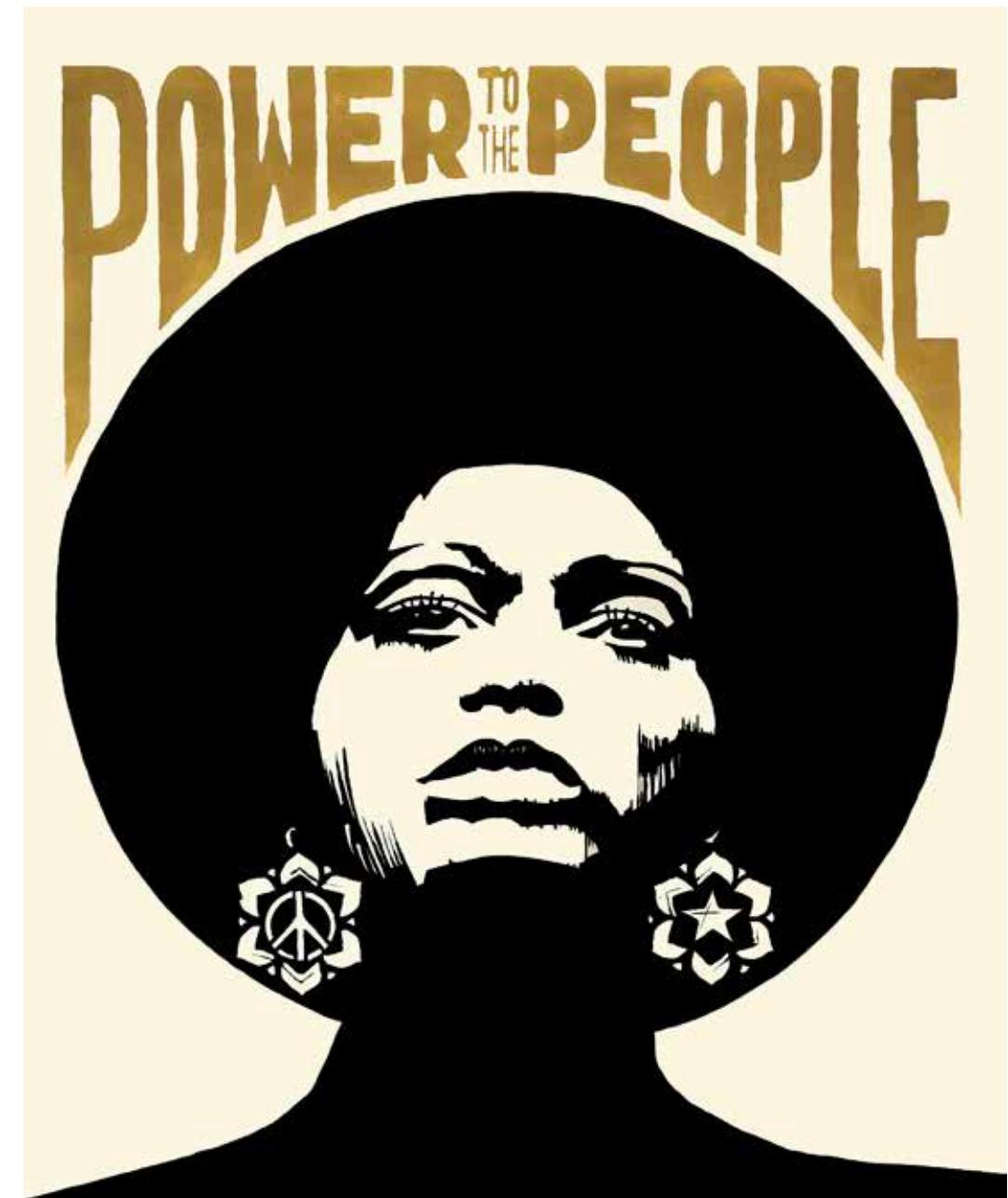
When tiny eyes look at me, that's all I'm wanting.
For my child's heart to never be left wanting.

Gone -

Gray and wrinkled, why stop now?
Just keep going, we'd all be better off now.

-Rilee Kennedy

26



Angela Davis
acrylic paint on paper
Ebony Thompson

What Are We Fighting For?

-Grace Williams

The clock reads 12:00 am on January 1st as it is officially a new year. Popping bottles of champagne as I toast to the new year surrounded by my closest family and friends. The ball is being dropped in NYC as my dogs are barking at the fireworks going off across the street. This is what my New Year's looked like. This state of normalcy was all about to change.

We all knew 2020 was going to be different than any other year, because this year was not just any other year, it was a new decade, as well as an election year. What we did not know was how crazy this year was going to be. We have been tested so much this year starting with a possible World War III, to Australia on fire, West Coast wildfires, COVID-19, the stock market crash, murder hornets to the Black Lives Matter protests. These are just some examples of the events we would go through in 2020. People are in a state of fight, a constant struggle and everyone's fight is different. People are fighting to make a living and support their families. Fighting off the virus and to survive this pandemic. Fighting the injustices of the world, to not be judged or killed because of the color of someone's skin.

In February, we learned the news of this new and unknown virus. I

do not think many of us thought about how serious this was going to be. I definitely did not think the coronavirus was going to lead to a worldwide pandemic. In fact, at the moment I was planning my spring break.

We were all wrong. This is a national emergency and has been unlike any other virus or pandemic we have dealt with in the past. As the cases continued to rise, spring breaks were extended or cancelled, University's and schools were closed, and all unessential businesses were put on hold. The only people who were allowed to go into work were those that were deemed essential. Some examples of essential workers were the front line workers such as, medical professionals, police, EMTs, and firefighters. Grocery stores and pharmacies were some of the only businesses open.

Everyone has a different fight. What I am fighting for is different than what my neighbors, children, nurses, doctors, businesses, and farmers are fighting for. Nurses and Doctors are fighting for their patients. Police, firefighters, and EMTs are fighting for the common people, to serve and protect. Businesses are fighting to keep their business open. Your average homeowner is fighting to keep their job. The fight to stay on top of bills, to keep the house they live in, to put food on the table, to take care of their children. These are all examples of what your average American is fighting for. We see this fight more now than ever as millions of Americans have been laid off due to the virus. These Americans are worried about where their next meal is going to come from and will they be able to pay the bills this month.

These are some the most troubling times that we have ever faced. People are isolated in their homes, as almost everything has turned virtual. We would begin to transition to the virtual world by doing all of our work at home and through Zoom calls. There would be days where I would not leave my house. We were told we should not go out if it was not necessary, the safest place for us was at home. This was a stressful time for many us, as being home comes with its own set of challenges. I was beginning to go stir-crazy and all the days were blending together. This was all about to change as something huge and disheartening happened and was going to wake this country up. As I tuned into the news every day to check up on the pandemic, what I saw on my screen on this day was different. I see a video of black man being killed by the police. Yet another innocent African American was killed by a dirty cop. It is horrifying and heartbreak. Here we are in a new year and a new decade and it still feels like it is 1960.

George Floyd wasn't the first African American killed by the police and wasn't the last this year. His death sparked a movement against police brutality. After his death the Black Lives Matter movement regained momentum and countless Black Lives Matter protests occurred throughout the country. The Black Lives Matter is an organization and movement to end police brutality and the killing of African Americans by the police. Millions of people were attending these protests all while the pandemic was occurring. People are angry and tired of this continuously happening. Peaceful and not so peaceful protests as well as looting began to occur.

As these events were occurring throughout the country, policymakers and Washington finally started to listen. They are starting to hear the outcry and the voices of African Americans and the people of this movement. African Americans should not have to be afraid of the police. African American parents should not have to talk to their children about what happens when police pull them over. They should not have to worry about whether or not they will be killed just because of what race they are. This is a real issue in the United states going back to the founding of the United States. Black Lives Matter is fighting to have Black Lives Matter. People who have a different skin color, their life should not matter less than someone who is white. Due to these protests and the continued fight for equality and this movement policymakers are finally starting to pay attention and listen.

I conducted interviews with students who are in college about how the BLM Movement and the Coronavirus has affected them. I interviewed people from Alabama to Virginia about how they feel about the current fight in our country. I am currently fighting not only to help others survive the pandemic but my biggest fight is standing up for inequality. I want to bring awareness to educate individuals as well as help be a part of the change that we so need in the country for People of Color individuals. I wanted to hear from students like me and what they are fighting for, what their perspective is on this. Here are some of the students feedback that I spoke with. The students that I interviewed with gave some incredible input.

Interviews:
What is your name?
Solomon Balaam-Reed
Justin McPherson

What pronouns do you use?
He/Him
He/Him

How did you feel when everything was shutting down?
Sad but it was the right thing to do to get the virus under control, even though we didn't do enough to get it under control.

It felt scary at first. It was easy to get caught up in the craziness that happened when people first heard about the shutdown. Quickly though, it became a fight up hill as it seemed that the people who wanted to lockdown were the working class people on the frontline and the people who were complaining and violating orders were people who were much better off. In theory many those people would've been more comfortable in lockdown than most.

Do you feel safe in terms of the coronavirus?
Not at all, the moment I feel a bit safe, I see the growing numbers on dead and how the cases have risen in the United States.

No. That's the short answer. No one seems to know how to handle the pandemic and there seems to be no resources available to those in need. If I get sick I'll lose everything trying to afford treatment.

Do you think your state is doing everything they need to do in terms of the coronavirus? Please explain and give an example how.
Shut everything down for a month besides very basic jobs (Grocery Stores/Power Plants). Pay all

families \$3,000 to stay home (can be adjusted based on your living situation). Allowed one hour of outside workout time, can only be in groups of 3 or less.

Absolutely not. The state of Alabama is suffering a lot. The numbers are scary and people are getting sick. The mask mandate is a little like putting a Band-Aid on a stab wound. It's nice in theory but we need real help. As long as sick people are going to be forced to work, like in Bessemer at the Amazon center, it seems like the spread is always going to continue. Plus how do you tell someone who has just worked a 40hr a week job that they don't like that COVID is to bad for them to go to a restaurant on Saturday? We need to take it seriously and that requires actually aid money and a freeze on mortgages and rent.

How does it make you feel when innocent African American men and women are killed across the country by the police?

Disheartening as an African American.

It makes me sick to my stomach. The system has failed and cannot be rescued. It is time to dismantle the systems that empower white supremacy in this country. That means seriously reducing the funding and the role of police.

How did you feel about the looting across the country?

Big stores I don't care as much, but looting mom and pop shops are counter-productive

I couldn't care less. Congress sold off stock before the collapse and no one bats an eye. Bezos has personally grew his wealth to ridiculous levels. Even in a pandemic no one accuses him of profiting off

others misfortune. Target does not service the communities it is in. It extracts wealth from them.

What are some challenges you faced this summer?
The KKK coming down and threatening us

In my personal life I have faced very little hardship. I have been incredibly lucky. I have however tried to provide aid to those that have and I can say without the shadow of a doubt that most people are not as lucky as me. There is real suffering out here.

How would you describe your fight?
What are you fighting for?
All of my black family that aren't able to protest.

The biggest fight right now is making sure as many people that can be safe are being safe. Working with groups like the Birmingham Free Store and other organizations that provide street level mutual aid. Homelessness is policy failure. Sick people not being able to get treated is a policy failure. The fight is building the network of mutual aid so that as communities we can serve each other.

How do you feel at the University of Alabama or any other university you attend? Do you feel safe and do you think your voice is heard?

I feel heard but not safe, there's a lot of surrounding cities with dangerous people.

Troy University has not proven to care about the student body. While COVID precautions are implemented the responsibility is placed largely on the student body. Raising the price of online classes is also a pretty big spit in the face. The community college I attended before coming to Troy utilized the care act money to

provide students with relief. All classes were moved online. Even refunds were discussed. Troy seems to be okay with limited COVID protocols and not giving aid money to students. As one student I know said they care about you until the checks clear.

Do you feel safe in this country?
Please explain why.
Not really, but I'm working to make it a better country for me and future generations.

This is a complicated issue because the answer as a whole is no but in an immediate sense the answer is yes. I don't have to worry about police violence for the most part and there is no risk of me being the victim of a hate crime. When I go to events that change as it becomes clear that people would target me for protesting. In the large scale I feel uncomfortable and unsafe in this country because this country cares nothing for its people. The US is three companies in a trench coat pretending to be a country. 8 million people slid underneath the poverty line over the last few months and no one in power is going to help. When COVID first hit one of the first things they did was a massive bailout of 2.2 trillion dollars. The money is there to fix the problems but the people in charge don't see our problems as their problems.

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I Guess You Could Say I'm Salty

In December, I spent four straight days listening to the gentle purr of the bottom of the ocean mix with the angry rumbling of a washer desperate to spew out its soapy innards. They were deep within my right ear, where no dainty fingers could turn the volume dial down, and I tried my best to bury the pot of boiling paranoia in the backyard of my mind.

In February, the distant engine roared up again for six days amid a seemingly endless period of breathlessness where I snuggled my numb face into my sleeve and felt my lungs squeeze out coughs until I couldn't tell people their words fell on deaf ears, and I couldn't even hear myself play my instrument, all in the name of something labeled an ear infection.

In April, the hum of the stuck bumblebee came back with a fuming fury as it burrowed into my forehead and screamed in frustration until my entire face flushed red, and my brain convinced itself my room was a tilt-a-whirl. Finally, the boiling pot erupted from the ground as the ENT told me through muffled mask she theorized it might be Meniere's disease.

In May, I slashed into my sodium consumption while my family feared one day her theory might be confirmed as my permanent reality. One week after the visit, the blustering blizzard returned, and I nibbled on the tiniest slices of a diuretic. Two days later at half past two A.M., with my head a raging wildfire, I searched for some light snack

in the kitchen, but I felt something drip down inside my body and pool in my feet. As I stumbled back to my room, the curtains shuttered closed, and I eventually awoke on the floor outside my room slathered in a cold sweat, my mom's voice distant, and my dad's hands warm, with my blood pressure desperately trying to crawl itself out from the smashed elevator in the basement.

In June and July, the buzz of the fly came back, and I had nothing to distract myself. I couldn't even crumple the blanket of anxiety down into a small paper ball because we were stuck at home, more than 1600 miles away from the brother I hadn't seen in two years, and that long, desired vacation is still farther away than a dull country mile.

In November, I'm still afraid of the diuretics. I'm still afraid of losing the hearing that I feel I need to function, to appreciate that hum of music and that gentle purr of the rain on the grass. I know my problem is just a small papercut on a body bruised purple with the fear of its death, its future, and its safety, but the cut is healing in this chronic fight.

-Sierra Napoleon

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Safe Place: A Photography Essay

-Anna Grace Lalisan



Safe Place: a place intended to be free of bias, conflict, criticism, or potentially threatening actions, ideas, or conversations. The harsh reality is a lot of these places intended to be safe are actually the opposite. Abusive households, broken systems, and narrow-minded views are just a few things that make these safe havens so dangerous. A safe place is something everyone deserves and should be all inclusive. This project was created to help shine light on some things that we don't often think about.

Disclaimer: these images are not reflective of any of the institutions or individuals pictured.

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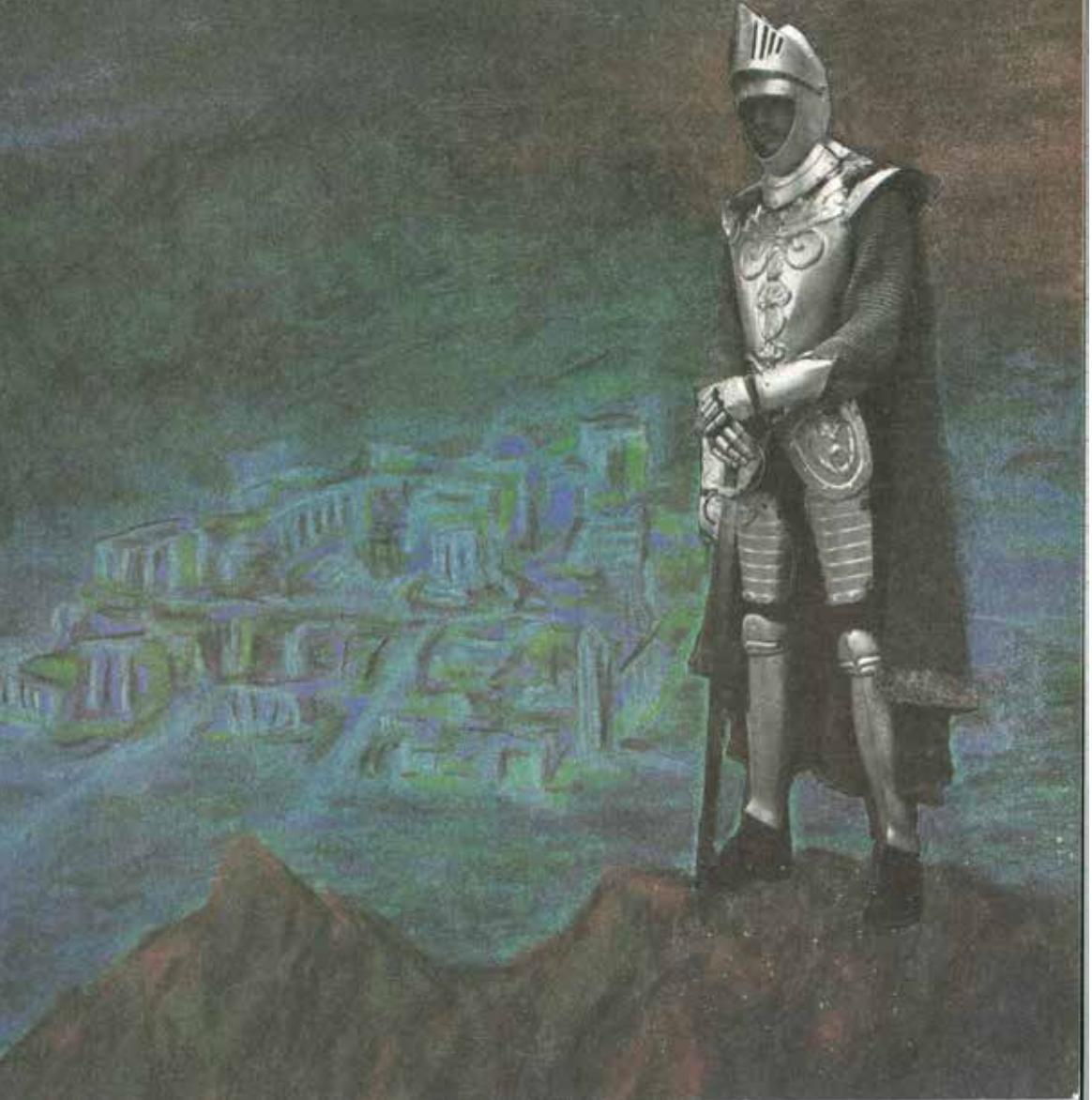


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NEW COLLEGE REVIEW

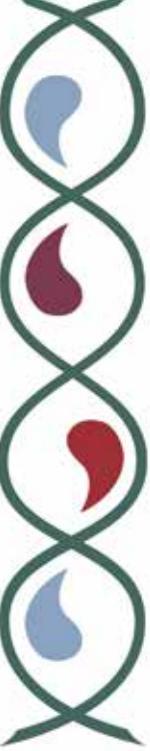


36

When the staff of the *New College Review* got together to begin working on the 2021 edition of the magazine, we wanted to look back at our past to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the New College, but to also help give us some inspiration for our current issue. The issue pictured to the right is the cover from the 1985 edition of *NCR*.

We looked at some medieval manuscripts to help give us an idea for what we wanted the inside of our magazine to look like. The staff took a lot of inspiration from the over-the-top floral and extravagant detailing in the margins of the manuscripts. Turn the page to get a look at what inspired the look and design of *BATTLECRY*.

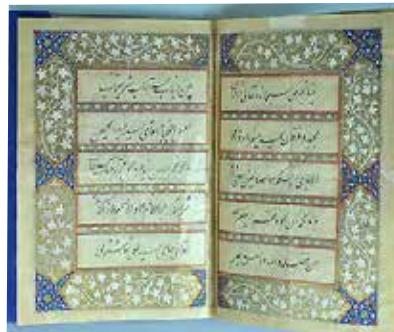
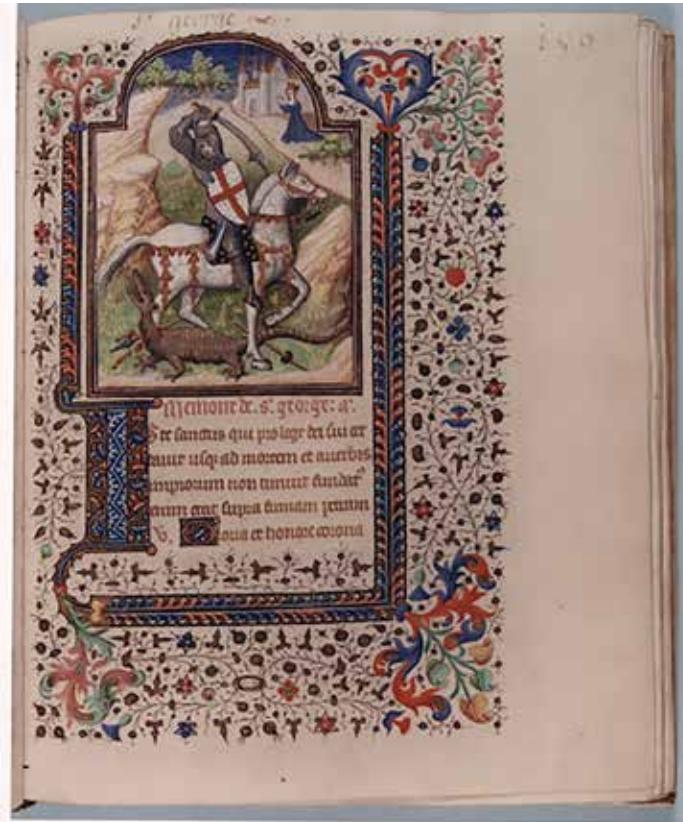
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38



We were inspired by the combination of elaborate floral designs with sharp rectangular boundaries to create our own twist on the style of these manuscripts.



Ornate cap letters from manuscripts like the one on the opposite page were another historical design element that interested our staff.



39



Railroad to Paradise

A white-haired man looks out the window of the train car. He has not gotten up in hours; his feet are sore. He listens as the rain lashes the roof. He removes a photo from his suit pocket. Every time he dreams, she leaves again, gone to the place where there are no more tears.

A fresh-faced woman watches as tears moisten his cheeks. She steps lightly across the car, the train of her dress rustling like fresh-fallen leaves. Her quick, slippers feet carry her to the small mirror in her suit case. She removes a piece of lint from her long lashes.

A bright-eyed man admires her long lashes. Catching himself staring, he tears his eyes away. His smooth cheeks flush. The pink patches suit him. He wonders if she saw him blush. The floor of the train rattles slightly under his leather-bound feet. He determines to say hello before she leaves.

A solemn boy sits on the floor amid scattered leaves of paper. He is afraid of the lashes his drawing master will give him and stares glumly at his feet. Looking at the paper in his hand, he tears up his fourth portrait of the bright-eyed man across the train. Wearied, the boy lays back, wrinkling his carefully pressed suit.

A stout lady looks with pity at the boy in the wrinkled suit, then goes back to studying her book, Whitman's Leaves of Grass. She tries to focus on meter, but loses her train of thought, captivated by the way Walt lashes out at aristocracy and mercilessly tears from convention. She refocuses. Her lecture is on poetic feet.

A strapping young man tries to judge how many feet lie from him to the stout lady. His depth perception isn't suitable to fly, the army doctor had said, but even through the tears he thinks he can judge the distance. He can see the leaves blowing alongside the tracks, each raindrop as it lashes the window, and every damn thing on the train.

A white-haired woman sees the shed tears, the kindled love, Whitman's feet. She sees the fallen tree on the tracks, the long lashes and the wrinkled suit. She sees as each spirit leaves, and she welcomes her husband off the train.

-Alex Jones

40

September Dream

In my other life I am born male. I fall in love at the age of 20, and society accepts this love; two people in love—what could be wrong with that? In love, yes, because they love me, as I love them. I know no 3am heartbreak in the passenger seat of a Subaru Crosstrek Never stumble out of the car with a cup of chai, leaving behind you and my dreams of our future That cup sat on my dresser for days before I remembered to throw it away Yet the memories of that night took far longer to cast away. In my other life my family never thinks twice about believing my struggles, and I never see the pale green walls of the psych ward in DCH Northport. No psychologist throws a piece of paper at me, a life sentence of bipolar II and generalized anxiety. In my other life I never attend a pride parade, because I have no reason to. I am a man and I love women, I am a man and I love women. I unwittingly ignore those in my current plight, deeming their problems something I cannot possibly comprehend. In my other life I am ignorant, blessed, and I am happy.

-CG Lisko

41

Everyday Bliss

I.
Echoes in my head
Cries of everyday evil
Sounds I tend to dread

II.
Her eyes used to shine
Her hand fumbled into mine
Her love only lied

III.
Darkness in our hearts
Clouds upon our wretched sky
No light in our minds

IV.
Fighting with our minds
Our thoughts tend to scream out loud
Tears start to rush down

-Anna Grace Lalisan

42

Scrabble Partner

My name is worth 15 points in Scrabble
Am I worth that much to you?

Innocent flirting made me gullible
Invitations to your room

Whisper my breathy, moaning syllable
Only when you're in the mood

Then it's back to being invisible
Clothes kept on but I feel nude

You boast me conquered on your trophy wall
But we both know that's not true

I know I'm so much more than fuckable
I'll never play Scrabble with you.

-Quade Mainzer

43

Scrabble Game

We sit cross-legged across from each other
Engaging in our single mutual commonality
Of tabletop games. You go first.

APT

Rack. A C E I N T V

The first thing you said to me was “nice shoes”
So you were looking down on me from the beginning.
NAIVE?

They were ripped and worn
Dangling straps tucked into the laces
I think you just pronounced Nike wrong.

VICE?

A common mistake
Like confusing attention for love.

Your turn.

Re-rack. D E L N O S W

You spent a lot of time in my mind
In my dreams.

OWNED?

I spent a lot of time in your car
In your arms
In your bed.

ENDOW?

We spent a lot of time
That I can't get back.

Your turn.

Re-rack. D E I O R R W

Every moment with you was a game
Hard to get was your favorite
And I thought I could win.

ERR?

I liked Guess Who?
I wanted to play The Game of Life
But I was never willing to learn Ticket to Ride or Reversi.
WEIRDO?

44

You liked Risk
You wanted to play Dominion
But you've never heard of Sorry! or The Resistance.
ORDER?

I didn't understand the rules you played by anymore
I don't think I ever will.

EW / NO / WORRIED

Your tu—

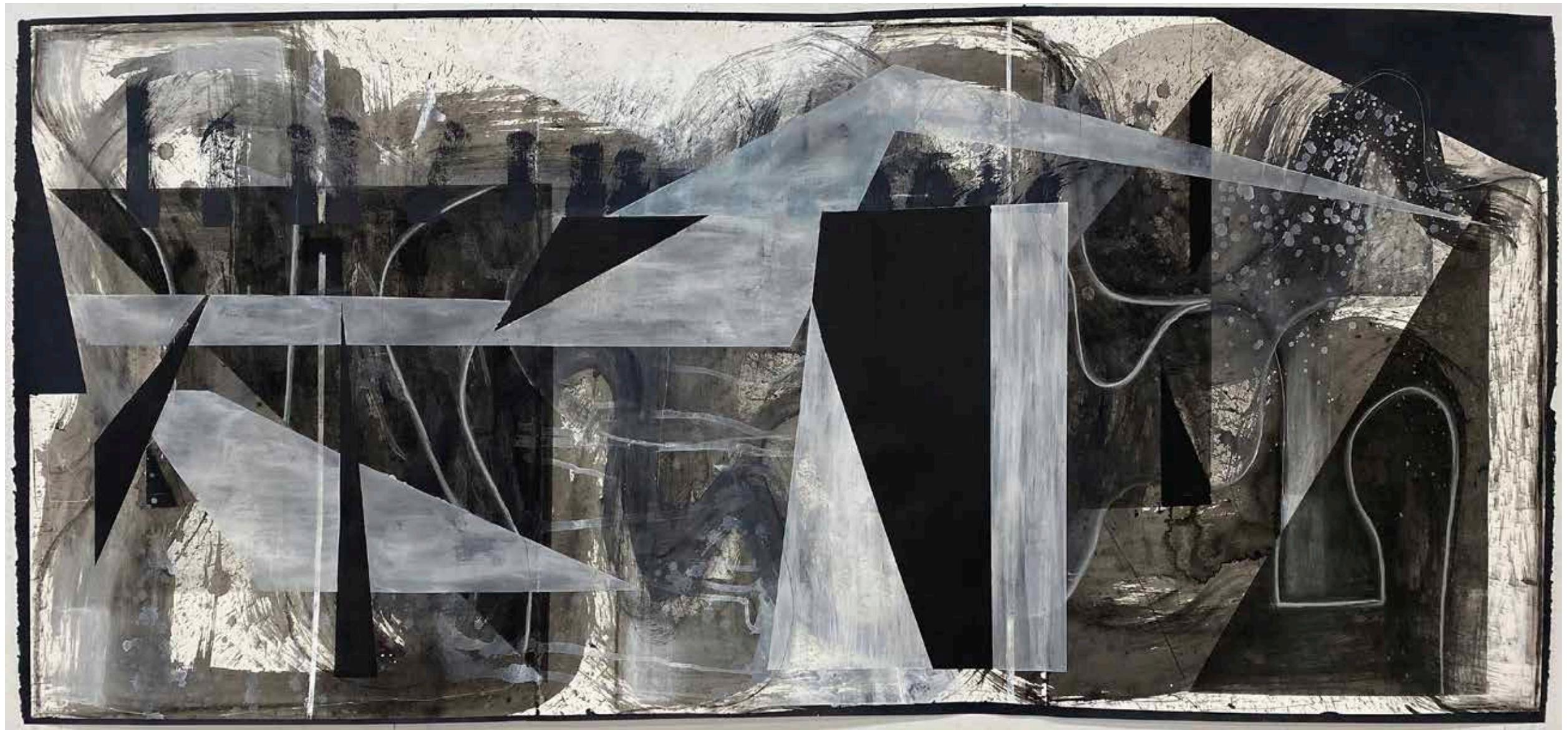
I don't think I ever want to
re-rack
No one wins when we play by different rules
So I quit.

C F K O U U Y

-Quade Mainzer

**B
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45



Snapseed
Mixed Media on Canvas
Ebony Thompson

What He Took From Me

Like the satin scars of her heart, I never forgot
how the coppery burning of her body impressed
even the cozy graveyard stench of rot.

He was there when her wounds sopped
her sheets after surgery, leaking from her chest,
from the satin scars of her heart. I never forgot

that when we gathered around the teapot
with our bears and dolls, all finely dressed,
the cozy graveyard stench of rot

was so sweetened by tea that he could not
bear to lurk and sat as honored guest.
Like the satin scars of her heart, I never forgot.

He was there, even when he hid, even now I can't blot
his oily stain from my page. I am obsessed
with the cozy graveyard stench of rot.

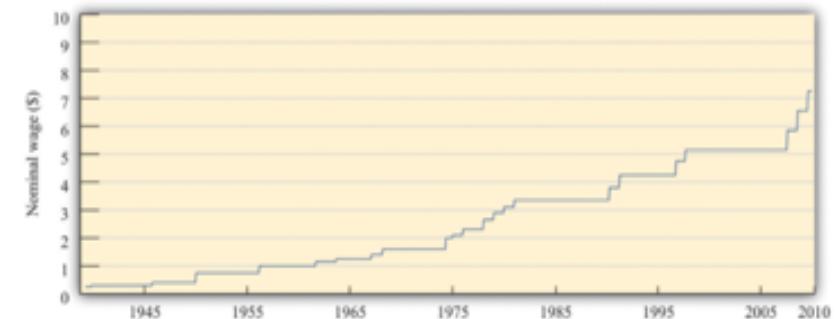
When the past returns in dreams, I want
to believe that I could again bet my hope against
the satin scars of her heart. But I never forgot
the cozy graveyard stench of rot.

- Tegan Murrell

48

Wage War

Nominal Federal Wage in the United States



The figure shows the federal minimum wage in the United States. When introduced in 1938 the minimum wage was set at \$0.25 per hour. The minimum wage, since 2009, is \$7.25 per hour.

Source: US Department of Labor.

“The battle surrounding the stagnating wages of American workers and the role of the federal government is continual and omnipresent: the proverbial *Wage War*.”

- Carlos Hernandez

49

A Deal is a Deal is a Deal

-Ian Akins

Daniel looked around him, his breath catching in his throat. He heard the crushing of the twigs and leaves on the forest floor. His heart was pounding from the anticipation. He didn't think anyone followed him into the woods. Who would? Maybe one of the other village boys looking to get in a fight.

"Who is following me?" He asked.

No reply came. The only sound in the forest was the birds singing in the trees a ways off.

Daniel turned his torso around and saw the shadow of the figure behind him. His eyes slowly began to climb up off the forest floor and onto the figure. Panic immediately took over Daniel and he saw the moss and bones hanging off the body. The legs were that of a goat with cloven hooves. The torso looked like human flesh, but it was contorted in ways that seemed unreal. There was blood smeared all along the body and in some places there were bones sticking out of the skin. The face is what scared Daniel the most. He was not able to process what it looked like exactly. Or maybe it was that Daniel had never seen anything like it before. There were no eyes. Just hollow sockets. The skin was rotting in many places on the face. There was a hole where the cheek should be and Daniel could see the

rotted gums inside the creature's mouth.

The panic within Daniel made him fall to the ground, making him come to his senses. He began to crawl backwards, trying to get as far away from the creature as possible. As he did this, he noticed the creature began moving closer, taking slow steps. Dread crawled up Daniel's spine and he let out a scream as tears fell down his cheeks. He picked himself up off the ground and began to run, not caring in which direction he was running. His main goal now was to escape from whatever this abomination was.

As he ran, he began to calm down and he soon realized he was nearing the village. He elected to run to Constella, the village healer and skeptic and tell her of this creature.

He was out of breath when he knocked on the door to her shack which was nearest to the woods. Daniel tried to catch his breath as he waited for an answer. After moments of silence, the door crept open and Constella was standing in the doorframe looking displeased.

"What is it?"

"I have seen a creature of some sort in the wood. It did not look of this world."

Constella looked around to see if anyone else was nearby before gesturing him inside and shutting the door.

"Describe what the creature looked like," she said in a whisper.

Daniel did just that, trying to remember every detail of the

creature. When he was done, he felt terror rise in him once again and he noticed as a worried look came across Constella's face.

"You can not tell anyone of this. Do you understand?"

Daniel nodded. "What is it that I saw?"

Constella looked hesitant to say before slowly shaking her head. "You have witnessed the Blight. It is a powerful spirit of these woods. It was here before any human and it is said to wreak havoc on any who come across it."

Daniel felt his heart stop beating for a moment. Constella must have noticed this because she put a hand on his shoulder.

"You cannot tell anyone, Daniel. Not even Jerula. She would have a fit and it would not be right. This is between both of us. There is a way to fix this."

"What do I need to do?"

"You will do nothing but stay out of trouble's way. Do you hear me? You will stay in this village and you will not go into the forest again."

Daniel nodded his head slowly. "Now you must leave before Jerula returns from her lessons at the schoolhouse."

Daniel got up to leave and headed for the door.

"One more thing, Daniel."

He turned to Constella.

"Do not trust anyone right now."

He nodded once more and walked out of the house, looking at the forest behind it. He thought he saw two eyes staring at him, but he quickly turned to the village before he could actually process it.

As Daniel walked through the village, he received the same stares that he got everyday. He knew the people here did not like him, some even hating him. He did not, however, understand why they did. He was an orphan and never met his parents. Constella and Jerula were the only people who showed him any decency. They let him to sleep in the back room most nights and he ate dinner with them. Constella once told him that his parents were hated in the village because they came from the kingdom of Canolin. Canolin and Fedrey have been at war with each other for many years. It was always being talked about among the men in the village. Daniel did not care where his family had come from. He didn't even truly miss them. Can you miss someone you never met?

Daniel decided to stop dwelling on the past and he continued to make his way through the village, trying to be as helpful as he can despite the hateful looks from everyone around him.

"Hey Daniel, when will you ever leave us and go back to your own kingdom? We don't want you here. No one does," Tanner, the son of the blacksmith, yelled across the street in the market. Daniel did not pay any mind to the comments and proceeded to keep walking.

He heard footsteps running towards him and then a slap on the back.

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"I am talking to you. Answer me."

Again, Daniel did not respond to Tanner. He noticed that Tanner did not have any of his father's tools today, but was reminded of a past incident involving a hammer to the eye that left Daniel with bruising for a long while.

"Are you fucking deaf? Answer the fucking question."

"I do not wish to speak with you, Tanner. Leave me alone."

"No," he replies, shoving Daniel as he does.

"Hey! Leave him alone." A voice from a ways off screams.

Both Daniel and Tanner turned to see Frederick running towards them. Frederick was Tanner's father.

"What are you doing, Tanner? How many times do I have to tell you to leave the inbred alone?"

Daniel felt a sting from the comment and looked to the ground. Tanner spit at Daniel's feet and walked back towards the market.

Frederick turned towards Daniel and looked down on him with disgust. "I think it's best you leave the village, boy. You know we do not welcome you."

Daniel did not reply and instead ran away, not realizing that he was heading back into the village.

He slowed down, registering his surroundings. He meant to just turn around, but he could already feel the eyes of some of the villagers on him. He continued walking and went

down the middle of the pathway.

He eventually found himself at Constella's house again. He stared at the door, contemplating whether or not to bother her again. He walked forward and knocked, his nerves taking over his body.

Jerula came to the door, a smile appearing with her. She went in for a hug with Daniel, but he stood frozen.

"Will you be coming in, Daniel?" Constella's voice rang out from behind Jerula.

Daniel stood in front of the door unable to answer. He opened his mouth but no sound came out. Jerula must have noticed the lack of a response because she made her way to the door and stared in horror at Daniel.

"Jerula get into the house. Now."

Jerula obeyed the command and ran inside, still taking looks at Daniel's frozen body.

"Daniel, can you move?"

He did not respond.

Constella put out a hand to try to comfort Daniel, but it felt as if there was a barrier around him.

"I wish there was something I could do for you. I am sorry. I hope to see you in the morning."

Daniel felt pain and worry fill his body as Constella went inside the house and closed the door. As soon as the door closed, Daniel could move once more, but it didn't matter. He walked away from the house and caught a

glimpse of the woods. He stared out at them for a long while, thinking of the wickedness that lived within.

"Come forth, Daniel." A voice called out from the woods.

"I will not. It is dangerous and I have already been cursed."

"It is required of you. I can break your curse and rid the Blight."

Daniel considered for a moment.
"What would you have me do?"

"Come find me and you will know."

Daniel began to step towards the woods. Curiosity was eating him alive. As soon as he took the first step into the woods, he felt more comfortable than he had in the village the entire day.

"I will guide you. You must follow my voice."

Daniel took one step further and felt like he was gliding across the forest floor. He watched as the trees flew past him. He spotted deer running by. The woods were filled with creatures he had never seen before like a bear-looking creature with bloody antlers.

Daniel came to a sudden stop in a clearing in the woods. He looked around him to see where the voice was coming from but did not see anyone.

"Where are you?" Daniel asked.

"I wanted a good look at you first. My apologies."

Fog fell across the ground as a hooded figure emerged from the

woods. The figure was abnormally tall. It came to the center of the clearing and turned towards Daniel.

"At last, we meet. I have been watching you for a long time, Daniel."

"Who are you?"

The figure removed the hood and an old face stared down at Daniel. It was not exactly human, but it was also not that far off. The face was both comforting and terrifying.

"I am Gonlin. I am an Old God from a world that existed before this one. I have been wandering these woods a long while. Waiting on someone to come in who has the potential to help me conquer the beast that is the Blight."

"Why me?"

"You walked into the woods and survived a meeting with the Blight. Not many people can say that." Daniel stared up at the Old God.

"I just want to be accepted in the village. I want to help them out, but none of them see me as a villager."

Gonlin looked out into the woods and sighed.

"I understand. These people have not treated you fairly. I believe that if you help with defeating the Blight, you will be accepted by them for ridding such an ancient foe."

"Do they even know that the creature is real?"

"Some are aware of its existence. Most live in ignorance."

53

"I will do it."

Gonlin smiled and vanished. Daniel looked around, confused.

"Where have you gone?"

Daniel heard a crashing sound come from a ways off. Screams followed shortly after. Daniel broke into a run, heading towards the village. He narrowly avoided tripping over the roots of the trees as he sprinted as fast as he could through the forest. He spotted many of the foreign creatures on his run, but did not have the chance to properly look.

When he got out of the woods, he saw his village being ravaged by the Blight. Three houses had already been destroyed and there were corpses littering the ground.

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Daniel had come out a little ways down from Constella's house, but he saw it did not have much damage.

After sighing with relief, Daniel immediately began to worry again for the rest of the village. It was being destroyed by this creature which looked like it had split itself off into multiple different creatures. They were all wreaking havoc on the villagers.

Daniel sprinted into the village to try and help. He ran by a building that had caught fire from the inside. The family that lived there seemed to all be there. They were huddled together a good distance away from the burning building.

There were dead villagers everywhere. Daniel could hardly stand the sight. He ran past them as fast as he could, trying to not look at them. He mistakenly did look at one at one point. It was Tanner. He

had been slain by the Blight. Daniel choked back tears. He was not too sure what emotions he was feeling, but they were cut short when he noticed one of the creatures was headed towards him.

Daniel panicked and began to freeze up but he could hear the Old God's voice almost like it was coming from a distance again.
"This is what you were meant for. To save this village."

Daniel got a burst of courage and stood his ground against the creature. He looked around him for a weapon of some sort and eyed an axe lying close to the mutilated body of Tanner. Daniel quickly grabbed the axe without looking at Tanner. He stood back in front of the Blight, ready to take it on.

The Blight swung a contorted arm at Daniel as he swung the axe at the same time. The axe did not easily cut into the rotted skin, but it did cut it off eventually. The creature let loose a scream that chilled Daniel to his bones.

Daniel shook it off and took another swing at the Blight, this time aiming for the chest. The axe settled itself in the torso of the creature, making it scream once more. The creature fell to its knees as Daniel got the axe free. The creature tried to take another hit, but it was not strong enough at this point. Daniel took the final swing and the creature perished.

Daniel was shaking from the feeling of killing something. He could not move, but he noticed the battle around him starting to calm down. The sky turned very dark suddenly and the Blight creatures let out the

same scream that the one Daniel killed did. He heard many thuds as their bodies collapsed to the ground. Gonlin emerged from the forest and made his way to Daniel.

"You did well, young one."

"It killed so many."

"Inconsequential. This creature has been around for as long as I have been. You helped weaken it. It is destroyed because of you."

"I do not feel much relief."

"You are a hero. Enjoy this. I must go now. You will need to help these people rebuild. They see you in a different way now that you helped save this village. Build a community with them."

"Thank you, Gonlin," Daniel looked up at the Old God and nodded in thanks.

Gonlin watched as Daniel made his way to Constella and Jerula, helping them bring out medical supplies for the injured.

Gonlin found his way back to the forest before he departed. He went to each animal and said a last goodbye. Before he disappeared to some other part of the world, he laid a thumb on the ground. A rot began to spread in the dirt where his thumb had been. Gonlin smirked at the spot and laughed to himself. He then vanished.

55



**“Listen to
many, speak
to few”**

56



Ian Akins

Editor-in-chief

Death is always a comfort to write about and comes naturally to **House MedievalDisco**. Teal and purple are some of the most royal looking colors in the color wheel while also keeping an air of mysteriousness to them. These colors are comforting to House MedievalDisco and act as a security blanket in a way. The house motto is one of great importance in the house, as it represents how going through life as a quieter person, one can listen well and observe many events. Talking only when necessary, but continuing to gather information and listening closely is very important. MedievalDisco represents a fun idea for a record store that could possibly open one day.



Celly Gullo

Graphic Designer

The name of **House Seagull** is derived from the first initial and last names of its members. It carries a connection to their chosen names, birth names and family names, and so symbolizes a sense of continuity in their lives between who they came from and who they are now. Members of House Seagull use the house's name for their online screen name, which often holds personal importance to them because of the friends they talk to and meet online. Members of House Seagull grew up near the coast, seeing many seabirds, and seagulls are a bird that can be graceful, but has a sillier, less serious reputation than many other birds, which suits the members of the house who don't take themselves too seriously. The motto of House Seagull is “help and be helped” because members love people and help others whenever they can, but also have learned that it's important to be vulnerable and allow themselves to rely on others when they need it. The sigil of House Seagull features teal and celadon, which evoke seabirds and includes a favorite color of many members, as well as a connection to members' names, as well as a scarf, which members of House Seagull often wear, and which symbolizes gender neutrality and warmth.



**“Help and be
helped”**

57





**“It looks
good in the
light of day”**

Chelsea DaCosta

Submissions Coordinator

What wards off the demons that skulk under the shadow of the night? What can pierce these angry apparitions, so lonely in their anger and fear? What looms just beneath the hazy fog and the muddied water? In **House Daybreak**, the fiery sun illuminates all that hides under the cloak of darkness. Tendrils of heat radiate throughout the early morning sky, a beacon of hope in a world seemingly bathed in bleakness. In House Daybreak, one looks towards the sky for strength. Rich purple contrasted with muted beige embodies the humility and grace that one must assume to take on the long and arduous days ahead. Anger, fear, and sadness are cowards that hide in misty shadows of the world's anxiety, but in the light of day they disperse like ashes in the wind.



Anna Grace Lalisan

Photographer / Image Design

The colors red and blue to represent the sort of sadness and anger that comes along with having to grow through adversity. The house name **Roots** comes from the feeling of finally being grounded in life now that there have been unforeseen changes to be faced. Strong roots are earned through trials and tribulations and most importantly through change. Roots grow the most in times of heavy rain and are put to the test during dry seasons. Life oftentimes has these similar seasons where one's roots are tested. In this current season of life, my roots are finally strong. My house motto has a lot of personal meaning to me because it is actually one of my tattoos on my wrist. I find myself always looking at these words reminding me that no matter what is changing in my life, I am always growing in some way from it. The symbol of a tree represents all the different ways in which roots can go.

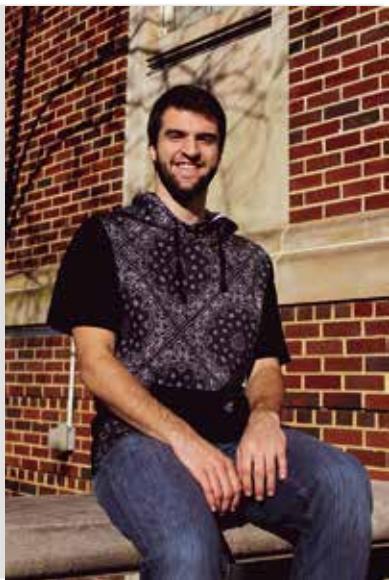


**“Always
changing,
forever
growing”**



“Play to win”

60



Quade Mainzer

Copy Editor / Social Media

Jokers easily identify each other by their collection of dice, dexterity in shuffling a deck of cards, and wild desire to turn any mundane activity into a game. From unloading groceries to waiting in lines, there is always a bet to be placed and a competition to be held. Jokers are fond of the color orange, underrepresented in common games as a player token option. Consequently, Jokers favor games of Catan and Trivial Pursuit, and hold grudges against Clue and Twister. Nevertheless, whatever the game, count Jokers as a willing and determined player every time. Jokers understand games as both a purely fun adventure that brings friends together as well as a perpetual intellectual pursuit. They seek the discovery of a superior strategy and a worthy opponent. Throughout childhood, Jokers' parents never let them win, which caused the high value placed on a hard-earned victory.

Jokers live to play, and play to win.



Spencer Adkins

Copy Editor

House Fundamental is a house of consistency, dependability, and diligence. The members of the House do not try to be something they are not. Those belonging to House Fundamental pride themselves on being the bedrock that holds things together. They seek no fame or glory for their efforts, they simply do what needs to be done. House Fundamental is easily overlooked, but others would take notice if the House ever disappeared. The motto of House Fundamental is “Hard Work Always Wins” which reminds members of the House that they will always find success at the end of a hard day’s work. The sigil for the House is an anchor, which symbolizes the ability of the House to stay constant and hold down difficult situations. The colors of the House are dark blue and grey, signifying calmness and dependability.



**“Hard work
always wins”**

61





**“Always on
the move”**

62



Grace Williams

Layout Manager

The colors chosen for the sigil are blue and purple. Purple can be very empowering as it is a royal color, while blue is very freeing. The symbol chosen is the world, a globe. This symbol very much represents life: always moving, always going somewhere different, and having a new adventure. Growing up in many different places such as Germany, Japan, and the United States have shaped who I am. “Always on the Move” is our house motto because always going to new places and different adventures is part of **House Graceland**’s life and story. House Graceland is a state of being, a different universe. Graceland is something that family members would use to describe my personality. A Graceland woman is extroverted, passionate, loving, funny, and unique. She walks to the beat of her own drum.



Carlos Hernandez

Web Master / Social Media

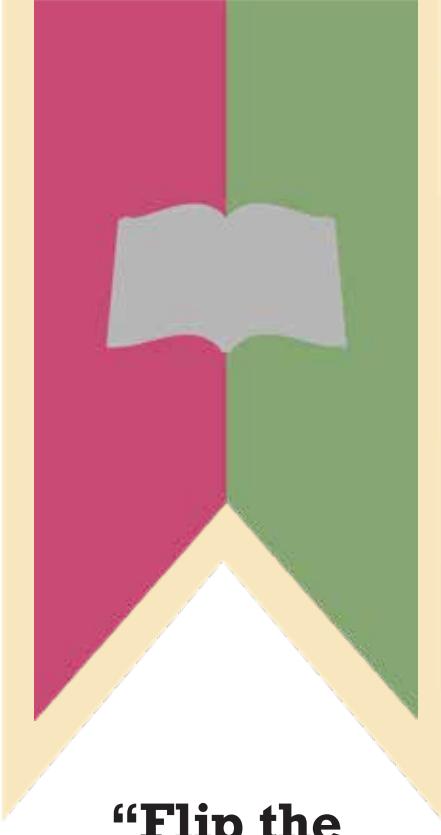
A **Greenthumb** man grows with time and learns from dead leaves. In the long, hot Summer of the Lonely he makes friends from cuttings and seeds, which feed on sunlight and savory waters. This green seedling is to me a symbol of hope, that in a time when life seems stagnant, you are still growing. “Greenthumb” acknowledges that to become a master at caring for your seedling, one must learn and develop from square one. Gold rays in the background shine onto the green, gelatinous concoction of our infancy, which give rise to growth and maturity. The light is the Food that we need for Growth; truth and time will at last make me whole.



**“Food for
growth”**

63





“Flip the script”



Amy Pirkle

Faculty Advisor

House Perkolator stems from the family name Pirkle; during their youth, many Pirkles receive the nickname “Perkolator” by their peers as a sign of friendship and respect. These peers and colleagues recognize that ideas are always percolating in the minds of young Pirkles. In the house sigil, pink represents femininity and love. Although a Perkolator is a feminist by nature and initially rejects pink from an early age, she learns to embrace the color and its meaning later in life. Green signifies growth; a Perkolator does not fall into a routine. Instead she continues to grow with new experiences. Members of House Perkolator choose to “Flip the script” whenever possible. When presented with a familiar situation or model, we subvert expectations. This house motto also gives a subtle nod to the flipbooks for which House Perkolator is so famous.

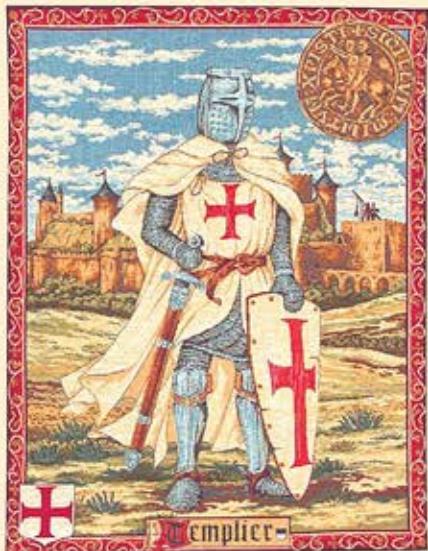


Enciere

NCR Mascot



photo by Anna Grace Lalisan



NCR 2021