
mangrove

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mangrove

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Mangrove is the University of Miami's undergraduate literary journal, publishing quality fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and art from current undergraduate students from a variety of majors and universities. Mangrove is edited and designed by an undergraduate staff and is sponsored by the Department of English and advised and managed by its MFA students and faculty. For additional information, please visit mangrovejournal.com. printed in the United States. Cover art by Talytha Campos, Golden Waves.

COVER ART

FICTION

NONFICTION

POETRY

ART

A Note From the Editors

Dear readers,

We are Jackie Yang and Betty Chinea, the co-editors of the University of Miami's Mangrove Literary Journal, and we are excited for you to dive into the work submitted by our 22 talented contributors.

The pieces that were shared with us this year made us laugh, think, and raise our eyebrows.The works that made it into this book are the result of hours of reading, debating, swapping edits, and wholehearted gushing.

As a student journal, all of our fiction, poetry and prose comes from undergraduates scattered all around the country. Some have already shown their work to the world, while others are publishing for the first time.

Both veterans and newer faces drew us in with stories of family and culture, history and love. During a time when the value of art is being questioned, we are proud to continue reaffirming its importance and providing a platform for new voices.

We thank you for appreciating great writing and art, and hope you enjoy what we have prepared for you.

Sincerely,
Jackie Yang & Betty Chinea
March 2017

Artificial Fruit

Hanisha Harjani

In our town, John Travolta doesn't grease his hair back on Sundays. He lets it fall over his eyes, all stringy and grey. On Sunday, I see him in the laundromat washing his whites with his colors. He grabs fistfuls of dirty clothes and jams them into the mouth of the machine. Stubble seasons his cheeks. He smears the detergent that drips blue on the side of his hand all over the back of his sweatpants. His face is waxy in the way that makes me want to sink my teeth into his forehead to see if he's all flesh.

My wash isn't done drying. I take it out anyway. Mother would say I'm dressed for the landfill and she dislikes when I'm dressed for the landfill and she dislikes when I embarrass her So I won't embarrass her in front of John. A 45 blinks in blocky neon green on his machine; there is time. I sling the bag over

my shoulder and walk out, obscured by a line of faded yellow dryers down the center. I sneak a last look at him—over my shoulder, like you're supposed to. He picks at his teeth.

There is still time when I get home, so I put on Mother's tapes and the dress she bought me for my last birthday. It reaches my knees now; I feel tall. I pull out Mother's good makeup from the empty tissue box on the toilet. I start with my eyes. I know how it goes.

The laundry bag sits closed on the kitchen floor so the clothes won't smell up the house like wet dog food. When I'm ready, I sling it over my back again and walk the four blocks to the laundromat. The sun makes my upper lip sweat, and the gloss on my lips stick together, so I have to peel them apart slowly. I press them together harder, so they come apart even slower.

The laundromat is busy when I get back. I start to worry that John is gone or else swallowed up by the crowd, but he's there, sleeping with his head tipped back against the wall. His mouth is open. He sounds like the spin cycle.

I put my laundry back in one of the dryers. The clothes are dry now, but I don't mind paying another two

dollars for opportunity. In the reflection of the dryer window, my face is cupcake-swirled. I wipe the sweat off my chin.

I sit on the plastic chair next to John's. Sitting down, my dress bunches up at my thighs. His breath smells of menthols and the five-dollar special at Chicken and Co. I try sliding my arm down his on the armrest to wake him gently, but he stays slumped. So I kick his leg in an accident kind of way. And then, once more, when it doesn't wake him the first time.

He scrambles. Sleep crusts off his eyes. He blinks a few times.

"You're washing's done," I say. I peel my lips at him.

"What?"

"You're washing's done, Mister."

"I'm sorry, were you trying to put in a load?"

"No, I'm drying already. I just thought I should tell you on the account that you're probably a very busy man and all."

"Well, thanks."

He cracks his back, swaps machines, and sits back down next to me.

Our feet tap the blue tiled floor. I look at the big folds on his forehead. His ears have hair curling out of them.

"I know you're not John Travolta," I say. "My mother

wouldn't know but I do."

"Oh, well, I'm glad you know that."

"My mother is in the hospital. I help them change her IV sometimes. I know how it goes."

"Good for you." He nods, turns away his body a fraction.

"I'd like for you to come with me to see her tonight. She loves John Travolta. It's her birthday."

He is silent for a while but I don't mind silence so I keep looking at his forehead folds. I even brush my leg up his a little to get him started.

"Gee, I can't do that, kid," he says. "I got a family thing tonight. A dinner."

"It's her birthday, today," I say again. I peel my lips, make my eyes go watery.

"Do you want a picture? I can do a picture with you."

"She won't wake up for a picture."

I end my dryer cycle early and go to the grocery store down the road with my laundry bag over my back again. The fluorescence makes everything look necessary. I buy a cake—chocolate, my favorite. I tell them to frost *Happy Birthday*

Mother on the top in green.

After I pay, I sit on a bench opposite the laundromat and wait. I don't mind waiting. I enjoy the clouds and the way they move through each other. I want to move through something like that. I want to open up a hollow inside someone and slither through them.

When John leaves, I follow him from a distance. Patches of sweat bleed through his blue shirt. The back of him looks like he could look like anybody.

He walks into a rain-stained brownstone. I lay my laundry bag on the steps and sit next to it. I enjoy the clouds for a while. The laundry is warm on my side. The cake looks soft and wet.

I vibrate thinking of Mother's surprise. John will jump-start her. I remember how excited Mother would get when she watched Grease; I could hear her through the door, catching her breath during the quiet bits.

I run my thumb over a sprouting pimple on my knee. The head is milky, hurts when I touch it. I pop it, even though I know better. It moves through me.

When I'm ready to leave, I ring the doorbell. I scrape

my tongue against my teeth and gather up all the plaque. Swish it around and wash it down with spit.

John opens the door; his forehead folds crease deep.

"What are you doing? How did you get here?"

"We should go see Mother now. I have a cake, and it's getting late."

"I'm not going to see your mother."

I peel my lips a few times while he watches me. "I guess I could blow you if you want that."

He shuts the door. I try ringing up again, but it's like there isn't even anyone there.

"I have a cake," I yell. "I have a cake.".

The silence and the sunset settle over me. The cake feels rotten in my hands. It shakes where I hold it.

I open the top and smear it against John's door. The heavy brown frosting glosses over; globs form, like clouds suspended, extending out the front. The plastic base falls against the cement. Crumbs scatter on the doormat. I lick the door for a taste, because Mother says you should always get your money's worth.

I leave the laundry bag on the doorstep.

At the hospital, I stick a birthday candle in a cafeteria apple. It was the sweetest thing I could find there. I sing Mother happy birthday and blow out her candle and eat the apple for her. It's waxy; reminds me of the artificial fruit Mother would use to decorate the house.

Mother sleeps with her mouth closed and sounds like grass. I tell her: "Mother, I met John Travolta. Mother, he was going to come see you." My fingers get caught in the knots in her hair. She drools on her gown; her IV drips. I don't tell her about the cake and door. Mother dislikes when I embarrass her. I know how it goes.

Vivian Calderón Bogoslavsky, **"Alegría "**
12 x 12" acrylic on canvas. One of a series of 150 paintings.

The Bad Idea Catalog

Madison Cain

Waxing your eyebrows in the dark.
Watching porn with your parents.
Saying something racist at church.
Sitting next to the condiments and seasonings.
Not bringing cash.
Milk before a run.
Milk after a run.
Milk.
Thinking you can get there without GPS.
Ignoring the five-second rule.
Going to the gym while gassy.
Riding a roller coaster after ten beers.
Waiting 'til the morning to complete anything.
Wearing your skinny jeans after a fat day.
Sleeping with the bride.
Sleeping with the bride *and* groom.
Milk.

Michigan Hula

Ally Butler

Construction paper palm fronds cinched with yarn
around hapa hips. *'Alekoki* plays
to evergreen trees caked in slush. The child
in boots and mittens sways to Hawaiian
lore through her front yard, adjusting
the plastic coconut bra with each pose,
while neighbors watch through frosted glass.
There's a fear of the cold, but still, she grins, and shares
her mother's passed-down traditions
to warm the bones of drab, Midwestern March.

First-Gen ABC

Jim McKenna

Doi oom ji[1] //wo yue lai yue wang le shuo ha ka[2] // my roots
are withering. Easier for me, is it, to tend to this lotus
blossom—symmetrical, pointed, fragile house of cards,
but beneath its groomed surface lay waste to my foundation.
The base of it: starved grandparents, Gong Gong swam
and Pua Pua went by mountainside to Hong Kong, she
the orphan, sold to him as their field worker and at ten
years old the ox rushed her— a pronounced scar runs
down her face, today. Mine blushes, when everyone
at this USA party hits the ground when I speak because
that's what our soldiers did when the kamikazes attacked.
I visit and she holds my hand, holding stories she cannot speak
aloud and I wish I could squeeze them from her bones
when she sneezes.
Shang di bai yong ni // White God uses you? //
Shang di bao you ni[3], child.

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1 I'm sorry.
2 I've slowly forgotten how to speak Cantonese.
3 God bless you.

Perspective[1]

Ellen Rethwisch

I've always known I would end up here,
24,000 feet in the air, the cockpit of a Kingcobra.
I've known since I was six, when I'd climb
to the armrest of my mother's sofa, spread my arms
wide, full wingspan, jump. And that moment,
just a moment, I'd hover, wondering if this time
I'd beat gravity. And I remember the feeling
the disappointment that swelled in my gut as
my hands met carpet, hair resettled on my cheeks.

From the cockpit, I watch the ground move
slowly below as if being pulled by giant hands
from the east—perfect squares carved out by roads
and rivers like a roughly-pieced- together quilt.
If only my mother could see this. I recall Portland;
I stood in the kitchen for the first time in months
as she made spring rolls, sliced carrots and cabbage

into fine shreds. Her mouth was unsmiling, lips pressed
together, color replaced with stark white. She set
down the knife, wiped her hands with a towel, looked
at me for the first time since I told her about flying.
Come home, she said. *Those airplanes could kill you.*

The sun shines from the west, illuminating one side
of the hills and groves of trees, the other half dark,
shadows sending ripples through Earth's patchwork. If she
could see this, the world from where I sit between
two wings, she'd understand. And perhaps she'd
understand if she felt the descent of an aircraft, if she
felt her body leave her stomach behind for a moment,
if she could feel what it means to beat gravity.

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1 Hazel Ying Lee (1912 - 1944), the first Chinese-American woman to become a pilot for the United States military.

Jialu Shao, “そうだねそうしよう. Inspired by Stuart Davis.”
24” x 30” acrylic on canvas.
“そうだねそうしよう” is a Japanese phrase said when people became disappointed feeling. Exam marks, piano lesson, and tears.

Garrison Keillor

Edinson Shane Tolley

I would listen to *A Prairie Home Companion* with my parents
in our one house.
Education came for free,
and Garrison Keillor whistled when he spoke.

I listen to *A Prairie Home Companion* by myself.
My mother lives with a woman, my father lives alone.
I owe Sallie Mae thirty-thousand,
and Garrison Keillor whistles when he speaks.

One Last Thing About Sam

Michael Welch

Sam Cassidy killed a guy.

That's what Eddie said. It was a guy with a long beard, like the Amish. He told us Sam grabbed him by the beard and punched him in the throat so hard he died right away.

Not a last gasp of air or anything, just dead before he hit the ground.

"Why would he kill an Amish man?" Sarah asked.

"No, he wasn't Amish, he just had a long beard," Eddie said. "I heard the guy owed him money, so he punched him!"

We might have believed Eddie, if he hadn't added that Sam cut off the man's beard and glued it to his own face. He was a notorious bullshitter, whether he was telling us that Antonio's Deli was as a front for the Mob or that his neighbor let him borrow his switchblade when he took the Red Line.

On the weekends, Eddie worked down at his dad's department store where he sold perfume, and he'd give women quick spritzes and tell them they'd find their true love if they wore this. According to Eddie it worked more often than not, but whenever we came to visit he was usually alone at the perfume table, spraying wildly at passing flies.

"That's why he strokes his beard all the time," Eddie said. "He's trying to keep it from falling off."

Theories like this sprung up from time to time. It seemed like whenever Sam picked up Mickey from school or came to his football games, someone had a strange explanation for the man's quiet manner, dead eyes, and easily agitated attitude.

Eventually, it became a competition for everyone who knew the two brothers to share their thoughts on who Sam Cassidy was, and what he had done in his past to make him so scary. For a while, people thought he was an actual mute—he never talked to anyone. Someone else brought up the theory that the two weren't even related, and Sam had just found Mickey lying in an alley one day. But the most common rumor was that Sam was a murderer, the coldblooded psychopathic kind. I never did find out if any of those

theories were true. Sometimes I still wonder, too. Looking back on it, they were all outrageous, but then again anything could have been true to us.

To be fair, there was always something off about Sam Cassidy. Whenever we went over to Mickey's apartment, he would just sit there in the corner of the living room, right in that old yellow armchair that he brought in from god-knows-where. He never took notice we were there, never looked up from his old, acoustic guitar, chipped at its side and its mocha color worn down to splotches of light gray. He played those deep old folk songs, Bob Dylan and Johnny Cash tunes, and sometimes things that we thought were his own.

They were soft and beautiful, and when he sang it sounded as if he were caught between tears. It was like the music had a hold over us. We talked faster to fast-paced songs and our moods dropped to the ones about heartbreak. One time I even caught myself humming along to "Mammas, Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to be Cowboys" while I was going to the bathroom. Sometimes he'd stop playing and we'd think he fell asleep clutching his guitar. We'd keep quiet, afraid to be the first to speak and accidentally wake him. It was only safe to continue our conversation when he tilted his

head up and ran his fingers along the strings once again.

I never told my parents when I was going over to Mickey's apartment. One time, I mentioned it, and my father asked why I would ever want to go into the inner city. But it wasn't like Mickey lived on Garfield or Halsted & 77th; it was just a few stops down into the city. Plus, my parents had no real right to speak what was "too city" and what was appropriate. Our neighborhood was aggressively normal, nestled on the borderline of the suburbs and Chicago, with all the houses painted bright yellows and whites and the lawns cut regularly. People that didn't fit the mold were not welcome. But, I liked riding the buses and the L, walking down the main streets where the homeless men had signs and sometimes even skeleton-like dogs. My parents wanted nothing to do with it, but I wanted to walk the streets like Mickey did.

Mickey's apartment was something of a safe house for us. Sam and Mickey lived alone together, so we were free to drink beer and smoke our cigarettes with the windows closed. Sometimes, Eddie or I would stay over when we didn't feel like going home, and we'd spend the nights having spitting contests on the back porch. As long as we didn't get in Sam's

way, there were no rules in that apartment.

But Mickey never seemed to notice how uncomfortable Sam made us. He liked to invite us into the living room to watch the end of Wheel of Fortune before we went out. But I felt too aware of myself when sitting on that couch. I held my hands tight against my lap, my back stiff against the cushion, eyes straight ahead at Vanna White as she moved across the stage. Sam Cassidy strummed his guitar just inches from me, his slick shoulder-length hair merging with his beard, as he held his head close to his heart. Mickey continued to talk as if his brother wasn't there, incorrectly calling out the answers to puzzles and yelling obscenities when he got them wrong. But whenever he got too loud, a thick raspy "Fuck, Mick," escaped from that tangle of hair. It always sounded harsh against the song he was playing.

He had to be strung out, like, constantly.

Sarah and I argued about this all the time. She was convinced that Sam Cassidy had burnt his brain to nothing with his drug habit. I assumed she thought this way, because her own brother was continually in and out of rehab, followed by jail, followed by rehab again. He got into drugs early in his life, when he worked as a dockhand out at the lake.

Eventually, everything he earned went towards his drugs, which he took and sold to the kids down on 75 th street. Sarah would say he was long gone when he grew his hair out. That was her basis for her judgment on Sam; the hair was simply too long.

"Mickey says that he never knows where he goes at night," Sarah said. "A lot of times he doesn't come back until early the next morning for breakfast."

But Sam Cassidy never so much as drank in front of us. He kept a few in the fridge, but we always ended up drinking them on Friday nights. No, Sam seemed to avoid anything stronger than root beer.

"He quit drinking a while ago," Mickey told us once when we asked.

So if Sam was a junkie, he hid it well. No matter how unpleasant he seemed to us, he treated Mickey like he was his son. Even when we were around, he'd sometimes pull Mickey outside onto the porch for what felt like hours, and eventually, we'd just leave out the back as we caught bits of the conversation—a little philosophy, a little politics, and stories about their days. Sam worked as a plumber for the rich neighborhoods in the suburbs, and he'd wave his hands wildly

as he talked about the giant shit that clogged the entire plumbing system or the snobby customers he had. Then, he'd sit quietly to listen about Mickey's day, everything from school to football practice.

I remember getting angry a lot. I'd sit there in the kitchen for a while and listen, the only thing separating me from them was that screen door. When I was home, my conversations with my parents were about the weather, the newest murder down on the Southside, and stock market reports. My father liked to read the newspaper at the table, so he rarely looked up, unless he found a grammatical error he wanted to point out to us. So mostly it was just silence and the scraping of my fork against the dinner plate. But sitting there listening to Mickey and Sam, I almost felt like the third brother.

One Saturday night, we went down to Lake Michigan—out on the rock beach that overhung the water. We liked to watch the waves get larger as storms rolled in, and according to the news that night, there was a big one coming. We let our feet dangle over the edge and looked out into the blackness. Eddie took a drag, and I held onto Sarah's shoulder as she tried to dip her toes into the cold water.

"Hit?" Eddie asked.

"No thanks." I gave Sarah a quick pull on the arm, and she fell back.

"Odds you jump in the lake," I told Mickey.

We closed our eyes, and I held up three fingers.

"One…two…three."

I opened my eyes. Mickey held one finger. No match. No dip in the lake. Eddie coughed so hard he dropped his joint and grabbed at his sides. One time we convinced him to give Sarah a surprise kiss, even though we knew she actually liked me, and that we regularly fooled around in the back of the movie theater on Sunday afternoons. Eddie got a black eye that day. But when he told her why he did it, I got one too. I never told anyone, but that was the most satisfying reaction she could have given. Of course, I knew that she loved me—she told me so that night we took the Purple Line up to Evanston to see the mansions on the lakefront. But deep down, I just needed a reminder that I was here.

"So just out of curiosity, Mickey," he said. "How long did it take for your brother to grow that beard?"

I gave Eddie a quick punch in the side, forcing him to cough again. The joint rolled onto a lower rock closer to the

crashing waves.

"Jesus," she said, looking around with glassy eyes. "Those buildings are like celestial stairways…"

Mickey chuckled.

"Hey, Mickey, focus!" Eddie said, dropping down onto the lower rock. "Your brother, beard, how long?"

"He wants to know if your brother has ever killed anyone," I added.

Mickey frowned under his Cubs hat. Sarah continued to stare off and mumble to herself, but Eddie and I understood Mickey's quick temper well enough to recognize the twitching muscles in his cheek.

"Are you serious right now?" he stood up and swung a fist at the darkness. "Come on, screw you guys. Sam's my big brother, dad, and fucking mother. And all you want to know is if he killed someone?"

"Hey, hey, Mick," I said. "Odds we drop it?"

He gave a quick glance to each of us, first meeting my eyes, then Sarah who was running her fingers from her brown roots to the bright red ends, and then finally at Eddie who had picked up the joint and put it to his mouth. With a slight nod, he took one step forward and pushed him into the lake.

The splash was piercing in the silence, and within moments, the lights caught Eddie's bobbing head in the black water, and he was coughing even harder than before.

"We'll drop it."

"It's like the lights just keep getting brighter," Sarah said.

Sam had given up everything.

Mickey was clear on that. He admitted to me that his brother was a bit odd and even intimidating. But only someone with a good heart would take care of him when his dad drank himself into nightly comas, and his mother died probably because of her husband and definitely of an aneurysm.

And of course it wasn't fair to Sam, he would say. At that time, Sam was just out of high school and doing folk music down in Nashville. But he headed back north when their mom passed.

"You hear that finger pick?" Mickey asked me one late night.

He pointed to Sam's guitar as he played, head close to chest and face lost in hair. We sat in the dark that night,

passing between the three of us the last of my cigarillos. The smoke webbed its way through the room, running in between the rays of light from the elevated McDonald's sign across the street.

"Sam picked that up from Neil Young down in Nashville. He used to play with him."

"Just listen to the music, kid," Sam said.

For a few seconds, the rumbling of a passing train drowned all sound in the apartment. Its headlights pierced the room, until it curved on its way to the station at Western. Even though I spent a lot of time at Mickey's apartment, I never got used to the look of cold steel and yellow light working its way right towards me.

"Why did you leave?" I asked.

"They ran me out."

"The guys Sam played with said he was the best young musician they've seen,"Mickey said.

"People say a lot of shit." Sam looked up, shook his hair out of his face, and caught my eyes. "Why are you never home, kid? You should spend some damn time with your family."

"I'm sorry. I'll do that," I said.

I knew that I actually wouldn't. I had a feeling Sam knew that too. In the half glow of the room, I thought I almost saw him smile. Then he dropped his head low again.

"There's never any quiet in that whole city. Every building you pass there's some country kid thinking he'll get famous, so he just plays louder. You don't get no silence like here."

"Do you ever miss it?"

A second train broke the pause, but when it passed, the music had stopped. In that golden arches glow, Mickey was leaning in close. I could tell he wanted the answer even more than I did.

"The past," he said, "don't matter."

Mickey sighed. The music returned.

Sam was afraid.

That's what I decided. I didn't notice it until Mickey left, but Sam was living in a constant state of fear. Of course, he hid it well with that aura of intimidation he created. But even then, when he dipped his head to his chest and began to play, he was really just hiding.

Mickey left on a Saturday. I remember that because

we took the Blue Line home from the lake, and my eyes were itchy from smoke and the wind. Mickey and I hugged Sarah and Eddie on the platform. They were heading south for their houses and we were heading north to Mickey's apartment.

We jostled along to the clicking of the rail line, standing near the door because our exit was approaching.

"I'm leaving."

That's all he said. It was simple like that.

"Well, where are you going?" I asked.

"Anywhere. Where does this train let off?"

"What're you going to do for money?"

"I'll figure it all out."

"What about Sam?" I said.

"It's better for him like this. I don't need to be fathered, anyways."

What about me, I wanted to ask.

"That's bullshit, all of it," I told him.

Mickey shook his head.

"What's bullshit is that you're still afraid of him."

We began to slow down as we approached our stop.

"Odds you stay on with me?"

I laughed as the doors opened and stepped out onto

the platform. As the train began to rumble away, I could see him standing there with his eyes closed, four fingers raised, waiting for me.

I think he expected Sam to go back to Nashville once he realized he had left. For Sam to just pick up his guitar and start playing with Neil Young again or something. It never happened.

The theories stopped after Mickey left. Sam had no reason to come around anymore, and we had no reason to think of him. No one ever found the truth about him, so those stories were good enough for us. And eventually, we didn't even care for the stories. I figured that out of the four of us, my theory was right all along. But that was nothing to be proud of.

I saw Sam a few times walking down the street or picking something up at the McDonalds. A part of me wanted to talk to him, to see how he was doing. Maybe even talk a little philosophy, a little politics, ask him about his day. But I never did. I walked by the apartment a few more times, hoping to see Mickey back on the porch with him, or even that apartment emptied out. Every time I looked up though, the living room light was still on. Even as the years passed,

and I knew that it probably wasn't even Sam living there anymore, I found myself checking. The city eventually tore the apartment building down as the place began falling to pieces. Nowadays, it's just an empty lot, so that light has been turned off for good.

Nectar & Coffee

Micaela Gerhardt

As my father drives, my mother digs her thumbs
into the heart of an orange, citrus rind beneath
her fingernails. I watch from the backseat
as she peels the fruit, as the road unravels
as if from the palms of my father's hands.
Prairie flickers by—golden wheatgrass,
purple coneflowers, shelterbelts perpendicular
to prevailing winds. We drive further south,
toward the border between the Dakotas,
and my mother offers a slice of orange,
white veins exposed, to me and my brothers,
then bites into a slice of her own. When teeth
meet veiny skin, the scent of light and tang
melds with the scent of my father's black coffee.
And it lingers, this smell, as we enter
the Black Hills, South Dakota, where I feel
swallowed by the risen landscape, the narrow

road, evergreen trees, and I close my eyes,
imagine sky. It is this moment I will return to
after the divorce—this quiet, this comfort,
her citrus, his coffee steam—their marriage
so pungent I could smell it, its sweetness
and its bitterness, from the backseat even then.

Ana Gonzalez, **"I'm Still a Carnivore,"**
48" x 72" mixed media on paper. A reaction to veganism in a world that is primarily full of meat eaters.

Deb

Catherine Byles

The Debutante Club of
High Point, North Carolina
requests the honour of presenting
Miss Catherine Noelle Byles
at the Debutante Ball
Saturday, December 19 th , 2015
at eight o'clock
High Point Country Club

Please respond.

The invitation arrives in the mail. Your parents are surprised. They aren't from High Point. This isn't how either of them grew up. You don't understand it either. This isn't how either of them grew up. You don't understand it either. This isn't how finding a husband works today. Girls aren't shown off in front of polite society to find a suitable match. You hook up

with people, and then go on a few dates if you're lucky.

On the first cow here, who's got fifty-five? Fifty-five, will ya' give me sixty? Sixty dollar bid.

Miss Catherine Noelle Byles
accepts with pleasure
the kind invitation of
The Debutante Club of High Point
for Saturday, the nineteenth of December.

You accept, mostly out of guilt. Your best friend's mother nominated you for this. Your best friend has always been expected to do this, but told her mother she would only deb if her friends did. It would strain the relationship if you turned the invitation down.

So now you're in a bridal salon with your mother, shopping for a gown. The first dress you try is the one. Your mother, the one who was skeptical about the whole enterprise, is dabbing at the corner of her eye with a tissue when you step out of the dressing room in a white gown. And just like that, you have a wedding dress. You have a wedding dress, but no groom.

***Marshals*:**
Each Debutante may have three marshals: one Chief and two Assistants.
All Debutantes are asked to have at least two marshals: one Chief and one Assistant.
All must be at least twenty-one years of age and single gentlemen.

Now sixty-five, now sixty-five, will ya give me sixty-five? I hear sixty-five, anyone for seventy?

You have no groom but you will have at least two marshals. That's two single guys over the age of twenty-one who are willing to wear white tie, black tails and white gloves to escort you at your debutante ball. While this gives you power to choose your own match, being the one to make the first move is stressful.

For years, your mother and all of your friends' mothers have been telling you not to text the boy first, not to call the boy first, not to flirt with the boy first. You really shouldn't even look at the boy first. You have no idea how to engage with the opposite sex because you've spent your entire life waiting for them to come to you. And now that it is your

debutante season, your "prime season" to find a husband, you have to make the first move to find marshals. You don't have an extensive list of boys to choose from. The only boyfriend you've ever had was in tenth grade for two months. He only used you to get to your best friend.

Marshal Information
Full Name: _____
Preferred name:_____
Home address:_____
Email:_____
Date of Birth:_____

Last call for seventy…Sold to bidder eighteen for sixty-five. Now to the next cow, a strong one —

You find two marshals. One is a friend from grade school and the other is a friend's cousin. Finding three is not going to happen.

Let's start the bidding at seventy, who's got seventy? Seventy, will ya' give me seventy-five?

Debutante Attire:
Debutantes will wear floor-length, formal white dresses (no pant dresses) and long (twenty-one inch) white kid or doeskin gloves for the Presentation. Shoes should be white, closed-toe pumps with low to medium heels. No sandals please. Shoes shouldbe on at all times. Debutantes will be expected to remain dressed in formal attire untilthe end of the Ball.

You have a dress but it still needs to be fitted. You worked at overnight camp last summer, which means that your diet consisted of all things salted and deep-fried. You put on some weight. You put off your fitting to see if you could lose the weight before the dress is altered.

You couldn't. But you have to go for the fitting because time is running out.

Your mom can't make it to the fitting. Your grandmother is scheduled for a minor surgery. This is surprisingly upsetting.

What if you never get married because boys never take interest in you? What if you end up alone, and are forced into too much solitude, too much for even an introvert to handle? Then you'll never have kids. But that will be a waste —you're so good with kids.

Seventy-five dollar bid, now eighty, now eighty, will ya' give me eighty? I hear seventy-five —

In your mind, the debutante ball becomes your parents' only chance to see you in a white gown. But your mom is missing the fitting. You don't want a twenty-person entourage. You do want your mom there. But because you have already gone on and on about how ridiculous this whole event is, you tell your mother her absence is no big deal.

Your fitting is just you, the overly happy attendant and the woman working on the alterations. And as a twenty-two year old, non-bride having a wedding gown fitted, you get flustered without your mom. You're so flustered that the attendant talks you into buying a pair of shoes for the event. They're satin, sling-back kitten heels. "Buying the shoes now will just make life so much easier," she says. You buy them, and then cry about it on the way home. You hate kitten heels. You order a pair of '90s wedding shoes off Ebay to replace them.

So your mom goes back with you for a second fitting and to return the shoes, even thought it's against the store's policy. And you feel a bit of relief, knowing that even if you

never get married, your mother still experienced her daughter getting fitted for a wedding gown. It's also a relief that you don't have to wear sling-back kitten heels.

You've been so focused on your dress that you haven't really had a chance to look at the debutante binder. Yes, there is a binder about the debutante weekend and all the dos and don'ts of the strange social cult you are about to enter, like a full wedding weekend.

Anyone for eighty? Last call for eighty…Sold to bidder twenty four for seventy-five. Last cow —

Friday, December 18, 2015

10:30 a.m. ……..Debutantes arrive for group photo
11:15 a.m. . .....…….. Debutantes in receiving line
11:30 a.m. . ..……..President's Luncheon at HPCC
4:00 p.m. . ……..Rehearsal- Debutantes arrive at HPCC
5:00 p.m. . .....…….Rehearsal- Fathers (or Presenter), Chief Marshals and Assistant Marshals arrive at HPCC
7:30 p.m. . ……..Parent's Party

Saturday, December 19, 2015

11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. . .Informal Cook-out
2:00 – 5:00 p.m. . …...…Formal Photography at HPCC
6:00 p.m. . ……...Ball- HPCC- Debutantes arrive
6: 30 p.m. . ……..…Ball- Mothers, Fathers, Marshals, Guests and Debutante Club members arrive at HPCC
7:30 p.m. . ……...…..Presentation of 2015 Debutantes
9:00 p.m. . ……..Music and Dancing begins

The weekend arrives and you have sprouted a zit between your eyebrows. Between your olive skin and horribly-placed zit, your Indian background really shows through. But you are supposed to look very WASP-y this weekend, not Indian like you do at the end of the summer. So out of frustration you pick at the bump, but then it becomes a bloody mountain. And because this weekend has made you into a crazy person, you call the dermatologist and beg for a cortisone shot to get rid of the zit. They can't fit you in for an appointment**.**

For show, she's got a gimp leg, no problem milking though. We'll start at forty, who's got forty?

Months ago, you were scoffing at this whole idea, agreeing to it only because you thought it might turn into a hilarious chapter in your memoir. You try to remind yourself that if things go wrong, it will make for a better story.

It's the night of the ball. There is a speech and a champagne toast. But you are whisked away for the presentation before a sip of champagne is taken.

***Miss Catherine Noelle Byles* is presented by her father,**
Mr. Michael Noel Byles
She is escorted by her Chief Marshal,
Mr. John Dillard Spring
and by her Assistant Marshal,
Mr. Robert Harrison Reece

You curtsey as the spotlight hits you. You circle the ballroom on the arm of your chief marshal.

"You were shaking," he says after the presentation is over.

Dinner is served after the presentation. You're too busy with pictures and dancing to eat the lobster and filet mignon, so you drink instead. You really are like a bride at her wedding.

Forty, will ya give me forty-five? Forty-five dollar bid, now fifty, now fifty, will ya give me —

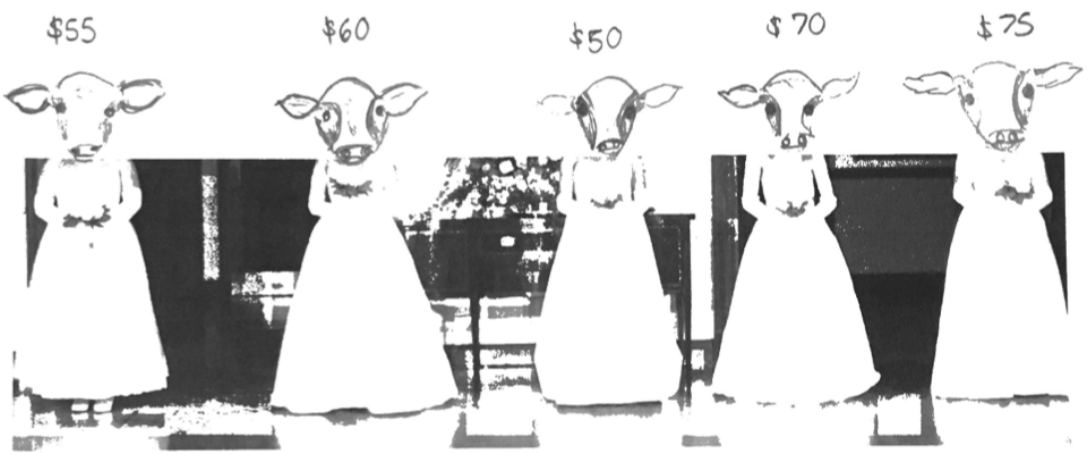
"It's tradition for the girls to leave the club in their dresses," says one of the moms. You leave in your dress and a fur, all while gulping down a beer on the way out.

"You girls are all ready to get married. You have the dress, the shoes, the etiquette," your friend's mother says a few days after the ball. This is the same mother who got you into the whole deb ordeal. Now she's trying to have you married off.

"You need to take your dress to be cleaned at Shores Cleaners," she says. "They'll even put it in a preservation box so that you can keep it for your wedding."

"Do you think you'll wear it for your wedding?" says my mom when I tell her about the preservation box. The dry cleaning service costs more than my white kid gloves did.

"I'd like to."



Fifty? I hear fifty, anyone for fifty-five? Last call for fifty-five…Sold to bidder three for fifty.

Matthew Watkins, **"Nice Hare!"**
Digital fingerpainting on iPad.

It Doesn't Happen to Me

Cody Oliver

I watched a colony of ants pick apart a dead bird
feather by feather,
and swooned at the thought
of maybe
being picked apart myself.

Palm Trees

Lucas Baker

Bearded men descend from the mountains
—peasants riding stolen trucks.
Red slogans. Green fatigues.
Rifles thrust into the air
like spears of sugarcane.
Dark throats coated in cigar smoke
chant the songs of struggle.

The streets smell of seasoned lechón
and open bottles of rum.
The Dictator's gone.
Now the people are free to play
bongos, maracas, and smiles,
caramel legs free to dance Island dances.
They've burned the old history books—
No more yanquís, no more Batista.

A man watches from a
penthouse suite in the Hilton.
The wave is coming his way.
He sweats through his white-collared shirt
and phones the concierge
looking for the next flight out.
And the phone keeps ringing
over the knocking at the door.

How to Make Pasteles

Kaitlinn Estevez

It was two weeks before Christmas, and the house morphed into machine. Not a properly oiled, high technology, smooth running machine. A loud, clanking, screeching, dancing, laughing machine. For the first time in my adult life, every member of the family (living in New York) attempted to compact themselves into this tiny home on the corner of Francis Lewis Boulevard and 56 th street. The kitchen, wearing the same chipped painting on its wooden cabinets since I was a child, struggled to contain the entire family as we replicated Abuela's pasteles recipe. The goal was to make 150, divide them evenly amongst my dad, and his sisters, and hope they last beyond New Year's Day.

The process to make pasteles is a tedious and long one. The recipe was passed down from generations of Puerto

Rican lineage, then from Abuela to her three daughters. The only grandchild to have the written recipe is my older sister Tiffany, which is now framed in a shadow box is the scribbled instructions on a tiny piece of paper showing evidence of multiple folds. When we gathered to make the bulk, we relied on my aunt's version and on memory. First, you must make the masa; a dough like ingredient made out of plantains. These plantains, however, cannot be ripe. We peeled, what felt like, hundreds of still green plantains discoloring our hands and bending back nails. My sister Tiffany screamed, Tía Lillie snapped back with "Oh, suck it up! I had to do this my whole life!" We laugh, and Tía Nancy yells from the kitchen "That's it! Time for mimosas!"

Nothing is whispered, let alone spoken at a conversational tone. We yelled to make sure our voices are heard over the bachata playing on the speakers, and it is rare that someone finished a thought without being interrupted. While peeling the plantains, I danced the way Abuela taught me when I was seven years old. In the same dining room, she played Anthony Santos and grabbed my hips with both her hands demanding "Like this!" forcing my stickly body to sway to the music. Fifteen years later, the movement comes

naturally to my hips, no longer stickly.

The peeled plantains go into a large pan of salt and water so that they do not brown as we continued to next steps. To make the masa, the plantains must be shredded in a blended and mixed with an array of spices. What is unsure, is if the onions go in before the plantains are shredded, or after. Tía Lillie ran upstairs, to where Abuela sits in her room.

Ten years ago, after a fall that resulted in hip surgery, Abuela gradually deteriorated in health. Unable to use stairs, we travel up to where she is for her to taste samples along the way. Only five years before this day, she was still able to guard the kitchen fiercely, deeming herself the only one with authority to utilize the 20-year- old oven and stove top. She would turn anyone away who tried entering her space, even on the premise of lending a helping hand. Now, the kitchen manages to be occupied by all four of my aunts, consisting of constant back-end bumping and elbowing. Reaching the top cabinet for a dust coated bowl, Tía Nancy exposes her armpit in Tía Maddy's face, to which Maddy yells "Jesus, take a bath!"

As Lillie ran up the stairs, I imagined her seven years old again scurrying to Mom to prove she was right. Found

watching tapes of the *Carol Burnett Show*, Abuela gave the verdict. Tía Lillie, defeated, runs back downstairs, "I could have sworn when we made them they go in after! Mom says it's before."

After the masa is made, my aunts begin working on the pork that goes inside. The day before, Lillie had purchased ten pounds of pork from her favorite butcher on Bell Boulevard. After the meat is grinded to a consistency that matches Tía Maddy's memory, an elaborate list of spices is mixed into the simmering stove top. A spoonful of the carne is brought upstairs in intervals, having Abuela taste the sample and tell us what is missing. Each fleet upstairs was preceded by a five to ten-minute battle between two of my aunts of what's needed. At this point, I am still on masa duty with both my sisters and our bellies became sore from laughter watching our aunts.

The afternoon approached, and with all the food filling the house, there was none that was yet edible. My cousin Emilio and I walk to the liquor store for reinforcements while 5 pizza pies are called in for delivery. The walk down Francis Lewis Boulevard consisted of me probing at Emilio, egging for details on his latest love interest. An unlit cigarette

dangling from his mouth, he admits only that it's too soon to say. I still beg him to spill before we return to the house, where the opportunity for conversation would be gone. Yet, I walk through the door with no more than "She's a writer too, you would like her."

After countless trips up and down from the kitchen to Abuela's room, where she sat overseeing, casting judgment and demanding more salt or less oils, an assembly line formed around the kitchen table. The aciete de achiote was spread on the paper, then a handful of masa was placed on the paper above the oil and flattened. After, a spoon is used to form a crater in the masa to place the carne inside, the paper was folded like origami, then the string was looped and tied to keep the pasteles properly secured.

My job was to fold the paper, then hand off to Tía Nancy who was tying the strings on. My first batch needed to be done over, on Tía Lillie's request due to being too long, not flat enough. I felt like intricate origami at first, so particular and exact. By the last ten, the movement came more naturally, leaving very few folded to the likes of my aunts. The pasteles piled on the table into a giant heap, making less room for the work to be done. Across the room, my cousin Matthew and

his wife, Beatrice, poured the last round of drinks for everyone as the masa disappeared in the pot.

Each family received 20-25 pasteles. The second shelf in my freezer was stuffed with the Ziploc bags that held our share. For the next few months the supply rapidly dwindled down until the last one was cooked in April housed the rapidly dwindling supply until the last one was cooked 4 months later in April. A month later, on Mother's Day of that year, Abuela had a heart attack. All of us spent the next two weeks rotating shifts for hospital visits. I would come home from class, relieve Aunt Maddy, and read the Psalms in Abuela's Spanish Bible out loud until my dad came to the hospital from work. We found an odd rhythm in the tragedy, as though following this militant schedule would somehow heal arteries.

Hospice care began at home the following month. They managed to squeeze the hospital bed in that room. Melissa traveled from Chicago and Jonathan from Wisconsin, and the room upstairs was overflowing with human bodies every day. The summer heat left a layer of sweat on our skin, but Aunt Lillie refused to put an AC on.

"If she finds out it's in there," she said one afternoon

when the outside temperature reached 100 F, "she will come back to haunt me." As a Puerto Rican, any heat the New York summers brought were welcomed and embraced, even inside the house where heat rose and accumulated in her upper room.

Sentences turned to simple phrases, phrases turned to single-word responses, until eventually there were only few moments in the day when her eyes were open. Abula passed the first week of August. Cousin Jonathan had flown back to Wisconsin, only to immediately hairpin back to New York in a car with his wife Gina, their seven children, and their dog. Cousins flew in from Puerto Rico, the walls strained to fit us all inside. My cousin's children giggled and played with us as we mourned the only way we knew how--eating.

There's a formula for death. You wait a day, perhaps two, and depending on how many people you know, you schedule one or two days at the funeral home for viewings. The last evening wake will include a service. You purchase a casket, and a tombstone, and a tremendous amount of flowers. The flower arrangements will vary, but each category of relationship will have its own designated arrangement. A sash with the words "Beloved Grandmother" hung across a

mix of yellow and orange flowers in the shape of a heart. I thought it looked tacky, and I found no solace in the viewings, picture slideshow, the pastor's words, or the amount of times others apologized for my loss. I could not understand how the living or the dead could find any peace in this claustrophobic schedule.

After her death, the decision that was made between my dad and his sisters that the house should be sold. Fifty years of life now needed to be cleaned and put into boxes, or thrown out, or donated. The grandkids raced to call dibs on favorite knick-knacks and furniture. I was fast enough to claim the set of jars with hand-painted sunflowers from Puerto Rico, and a rosary from her jewelry box strung with pink pearls on a gold chain.

A few weeks into cleaning the house, I went with my father to help with packing. I sat in the dining room, for the first time, seeing bare walls. I never before noticed the yellow, a discolored shade like urine, and the paisley pattern throughout. After staring long enough, I noticed patches of, what must be, the original color; a soft dandelion in rectangles and squares throughout. Once covered by picture frames (me at four years old on the beach, Melissa's school

pictures, my father's wedding) protecting the wallpaper's original color.

The tablecloth at the table, I now notice as I trace my fingers over it, has a flower embroidery. Within that garden are stains of masa, wine being spilled; I think of how many hands have touched this fabric to be so worn and how many Christmases, Easters, Birthdays, and Sunday Afternoons are woven into the pattern. The wooden floor dressed in scratch marks, from the times we've extended the table, moved it to fit two tables in the room, and pushed everything back to its proper place afterwards.

This year, we gather again to make the bulk of pasteles for the family. Tía Lillie and Maddy do not run upstairs to seek approval, but there is still music playing loudly, there is still laughter that keeps us from breathing. My aunt Lillie decides her house will host the cooking next year, knowing we would have had the house sold at this time during the holidays. Tía Maddy argues, saying her house is bigger and would make more sense. They decide to wait, it's too soon to make those plans. But they have come to agree last year's pork was missing olives, but can't decide if Abuela used green or black.

Rio de Janeiro

Charley Cote

There is a halo on the horizon
and I am wondering what Nina
Simone means when she says
the word freedom. Perhaps
I have never loved, or perhaps
I have loved the hardest. Nina says
it's a feeling. I say it's December.

My mother will be alone
on Christmas, and I ask
if it's possible to taste pain.
She says she does all the time—
It's a rich oak, an unsettling quiet.
I imagine my tongue is really bark.

I heard that Rio De Janeiro
has the world's bluest sky,

something that was determined with 72
days and a spectrometer.
I've never been religious, but it's hard
not to think of the 7 wonders,
of being 98 feet tall.

I wonder what the Brazilian birds
would say to me. Perhaps they would
ask how to tell time, or what it means
to love. It's either a feeling,
or it's December.

Alicia Ferrara,
"Witches"
11" x 14"
oil painting
on board.

Wearing the Mirror-Girl

Kristin Emanuel

The mirror-girl dealt with intimacy
Backwards—through de-materialization,
As if it were a daydream's dim imposition—
Taming her reflective tissues
Until even affection seemed surreal:
A fearless, flat-edged emotion.

Everywhere, billboards sold love's illusory lotion,
Claiming they could help her feel silken & happy-sheened,
Commercially perfect, cloaked in idolatry.
So she bought in.

After figure-skating across her silvery complexion,
A gentleman, allured by its lambency, courted the mirror girl
In hopes of attaining the same sleek, replicative properties.

Like some, he wanted his lover slim & curtained,
Drawn open to pearly windows on a whim,
So she drew for him: swindled his image
When he wasn't looking, borrowed his body
On summer evenings
Before giving him
Her own aqueous skin to slip out of.

(But never to get back in)

The Physics of Ex-Lovers

Shanley Smith

We found ourselves in a cottage kitchen touching fingertips,
hiding our hands under a table, out of each other's sight.
Behind a gaslit stove you whispered
that you wished a snowstorm would settle
in late October, forcing us to stay another day
under whiskey heating systems and shared blankets.

Though we'd heard stories of autumn and ice
from our grandparents, neither of us believed it possible
because we'd never seen snow with our October eyes.
And it seemed wrong to say *my grandfather told me...*
while I could feel your hand reaching for my left breast.

As we made our way into the bedroom, wrapping
our pinkies 'round each other's, I thought
about my future-boyfriend. His thin, pinched
mouth. I imagined him cross-armed in the hall,

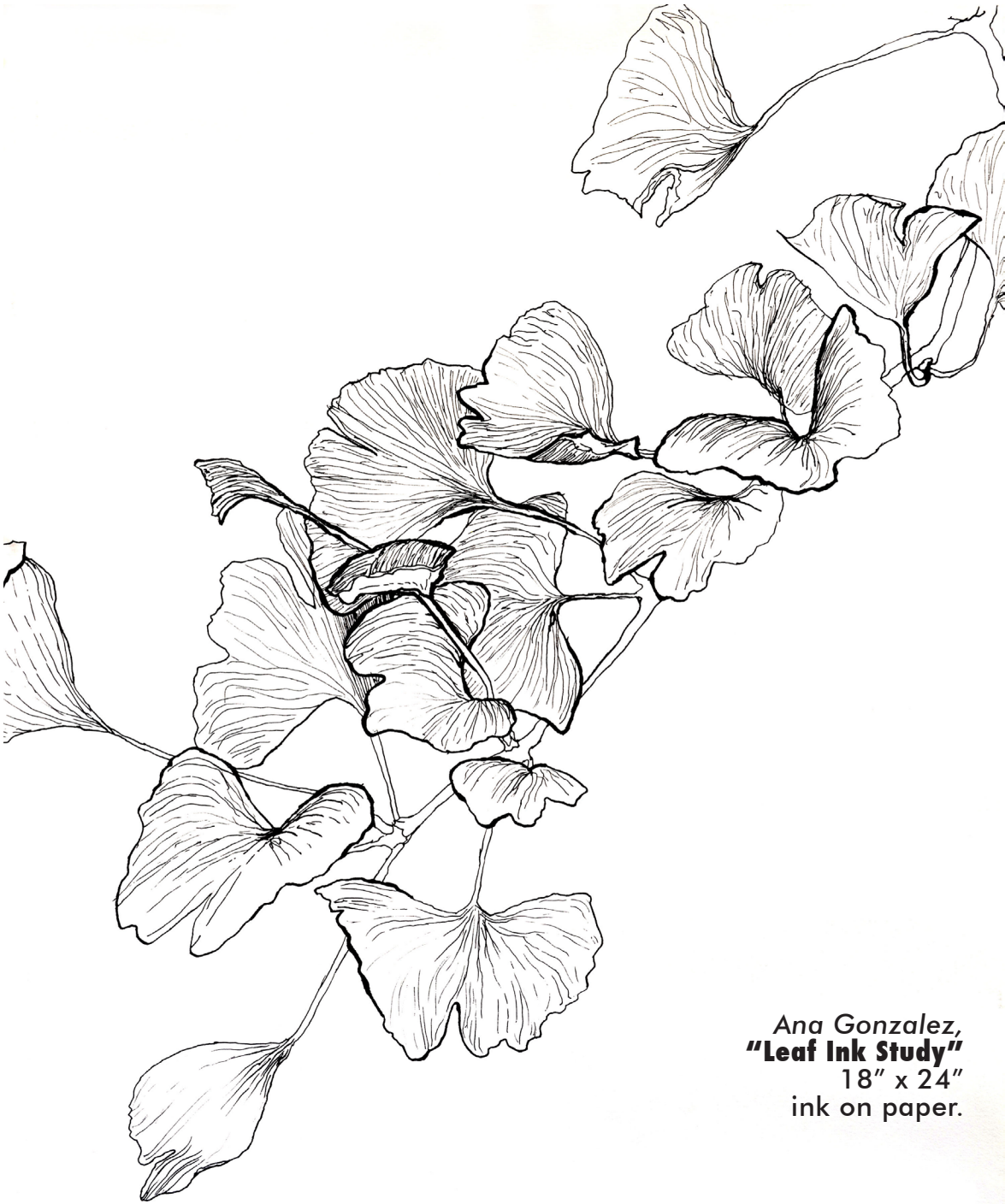
watching, eyes quivering as you pinned me against wall.

I wondered if he would have been able to smell
how sour you and I tasted to each other.
Like lemonade at an Independence Day parade,
but it was Halloween in that cedar cabin,
and as you teased that my costume
was corny, you took my jacket and kissed my neck
as I reached backwards, hunting for a doorknob,
discovering instead a splinter on the split frame
injecting itself into my third finger.

In the bedroom I watched our fingertips
forced apart by scientific laws with complex formulas,
like magnets from the same side of the polar field–
too similar for the earth to allow them to remain together.

Your sinuous spine pushed apart from mine,
as you attempted to ground your arms to my torso
and set your lips to my knuckle, to pull the sliver of oak
from my drying skin, until we were driven
from the knit quilt by strangers' hands. Forced

to rejoin the crowd in the underworld
of the cabin's basement, where amongst sticky
bodies, we'd drift to opposite sides of the room
orbiting around each other, pretending
we didn't know the taste of each other's lips.
And I'd pretend I wasn't craving lemonade
because it was October and out of season.



Ana Gonzalez,
"Leaf Ink Study"
18" x 24"
ink on paper.

Her

Jennifer Langan

Find. *Verb. 1*. To come upon by chance; meet with: I have this body that yearns to *find*. I have this body that speaks to wine glasses in hopes that inebriation might expel inspiration. I've desired the right to write revelations because of park benches I rest on and cafes I sit in. I *find* that human nature, the human body assures creation not for the weak at heart, rather a reason to try, what stillness moves for. 2. To Locate: To *find* turns into found for the luckiest of souls. To locate lost trinkets or lockets doesn't conspire like finding what description couldn't describe. Definitions skew words meant to simply exist. Chance plays a part in finding, and I found her. 3. To recover: A rehabilitation of the soul exerts a body that bends to recover a reason to love, reason to exist. This existence assures me that to *find* anything worth having

in this life is meaning to be found at that given moment. 4. To discover: I like the word, *find* and how present it makes me feel to discover the unexpected. Maybe it's how nervous I am, tipping the lemon into the vodka soda; sitting heavily on the mahogany bar table. I can't look up at the door. With a brave, quick lift of my head my eyes *find* her. Through the glass window I see long curls and a quick open of the door. Her eyes *find* mine. 5. To gain: the stars are sleeping brightly in the sky tonight. I gain life into my heart tonight. The air is cold but I don't feel a degree of it. I commit a hand to her waist and use the other to gently reach up toward her face. My body needs her, not for mere warmth but for the chance that being found means holding on, never to be lost again. My lips *find* hers and I can feel the stars wake and stare in accomplishment. I open my eyes to *find* my life in her eyes.

CONTRIBUTORS

Contributors

Lucas Baker writes novels and poetry. He's written crime stories and tried his hand at paranoid fiction. He's currently working on a new novel mixing fiction and memoir. Born in Miami, Lucas Baker studies Political Science and Creative Writing at the University of Miami He writes a daily lifestyle blog called writtenbylucas.com, focusing on writing advice and motivational pieces.

Vivian Calderón Bogoslavsky is a Colombian native. She has studied art for over 13 years in Argentina, Florence, Italy and the USA. She currently lives in Colombia. Vivian has shown her work in Colombia, the United States and Spain. She has been published in various books, magazines and webpages, and has received multiple awards. Her intention behind painting is to create magical worlds that move people, that make them look within and explore their feelings when confronted with her work.

Ally Butler is a junior at Bowling Green State University and fiction editor for *Prairie Margins* literary journal. She'd like to thank the editors of Mangrove for giving her poetry a home. She'd also like to thank her cat, Linus, for being adorable.

Catherine Byles, a student at the University of North Carolina at

Chapel Hill, has studied abroad twice and traveled to 16 countries. However, Catherine's most foreign experience was becoming a southern debutante. She found the practice of showing single girls to polite society to find a mate degrading.

Madison Cain is a senior at Florida Southern College in Lakeland Florida. She is pursuing a double BA degree in English and Theatre Arts. She is from Annapolis Maryland and plans to move to Chicago after she graduates in May to continue writing, acting, and performing improvisational comedy.

Talytha Campos is a junior Neuroscience major at the University of Miami. She is originally from São Paulo, Brazil, but has lived in Miami for most of her life. Her passions include helping to erase mental health stigmas, expressing herself through her artwork, and spending time with her dog, Lady.

Charley Cote is originally from Alton, New Hampshire and is currently a junior at the University of Vermont, where she studies Creative Writing and Art.

Kristin Emanuel grew up in the mountains of Colorado, but has also lived in Texas and Minnesota. She currently resides in Arkansas, where she is pursuing a degree in Creative Writing and minoring in French at the University of Arkansas. When she is not writing poetry, she is likely cloud-watching.

Kaitlinn Estevez is a senior at Adelphi University from Queens, NY where she frequently participates in poetry workshops and open mics throughout the New York City boroughs. In addition to her writing, Kaitlinn Estevez is passionate about local and global outreach. In March 2017, she will be speaking at a TEDx event on Long Island to speak about the integration of writing and creative outlets within the mental health care system.

Alicia Ferrara is currently a junior at the University of Delaware, where she is majoring in Art. She enjoys oil painting and marble clothing.

Micaela Gerhardt is a senior at Concordia College in Moorhead, MN

MN where she studies English writing and Spanish. She is the editor of Concordia's art and literary magazine, *AfterWork*, and a student ambassador for the international storytelling organization, Narrative 4. In the future, she plans to pursue an MFA in Creative Writing and to teach abroad.

Ana Marie Gonzalez was born and raised in Miami, FL. She started drawing at the age of seven and never stopped. She is currently attending the University of Miami and is receiving her BFA in Painting with a minor in Art History. Her website is anamgonzalezart.com

Hanisha Harjani is currently an undergraduate writing major at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. She is interested in storytelling across media and works heavily with films, puppets and performance art. More work is available on her website: hanishaharjani.com

Jennifer Langan is a United States Coast Guard veteran and recent graduate from the University of New Haven in Connecticut. At just twenty-six years of age she has accomplished a great deal of traveling while in the military and studying abroad in Europe. "Her" is Jennifer's first piece of published writing.

Jim McKenna is a student at Florida Southern College studying English with a concentration in writing from Cherry Hill, New Jersey.

Cody Oliver is a recent graduate from Kutztown University and is currently working as a copywriter at an advertising agency in Allentown, Pa. His first collection of poems, "No More Loveland," was self-released via Amazon in November 2016.

Ellen Rethwisch is a senior English writing major at Concordia College in Moorhead. She has had poems published in *Words Apart Magazine* as well as *Afterwork,* Concordia's literary journal, for which she is now an editor. She writes weekly articles for *The Odyssey* online and she has contributed opinion pieces for the school newspaper.

Shanley Smith lives in Holland, Michigan where she is currently

seeking her undergraduate degree in creative writing and classical studies as a sophomore at Hope College. She enjoys acting in various theatrical productions, drinking a good cup of coffee, and of course, writing. She plans to continue to do all of these things throughout the rest of her college career and into her post-grad life.

Karu (Jialu) Shao was born in 1997 in Shanghai and used to live in Japan and Switzerland. She now studies studio art at the University of Miami. She has worked with painting, ceramics, and silkscreen printing. She also studies theatre and design.

Edinson Shane Tolley is a recent graduate of Virginia Tech, where he majored in English and Creative Writing. His work is featured or forthcoming in *The Allegheny Review, The Sandy River Review, Linden Avenue Literary Journal,* and elsewhere. He lives in Northern Virginia.

Michael Welch is the winner of the National Federation of State Poetry Society's Florence Kahn Memorial Award and the author of the chapbook, "But Sometimes I Remember." His works have appeared in Black Heart Magazine's *DISARM* Anthology, *LITRO* magazine, *South 85 Journal*, *Welter,* and *Arlington Literary Journal.*

Matthew Watkins was born in Manchester, England, in 1962 and raised in Toronto, Canada, now living in Southern Italy. Matthew has exhibited in galleries and museums internationally, attracting the interest of such publications like the *Washington Post*, the *Daily Telegraph,* the *Daily Mail*, *Wired* and *GQ*. Matthew teaches art, design and technology at the university level. Silvana Editoriale published a catalogue of his works in 2013 under the title of "Matthew Watkins."

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Lucas Baker · Vivian Bogoslavsky · Ally Butler · Catherine Byles, Madison Cain · Talytha Campos · Charley Cote · Kristin Emanuel · Kaitlinn Estevez · Alicia Ferrara · Micaela Gerhardt · Ana Gonzalez · Hanisha Harjani · Jennifer Langan · Jim McKenna · Cody Oliver · Ellen Rethwisch · Shanley Smith · Jialu Shao, Edinson Tolley · Michael Welch · Matthew Watkins

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