

# Trestle | CREEK | Review

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# CONTENTS

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## Fiction

<i>Daniel Lee Troxell</i>	Black Coffee . . . . .	7
<i>Liz Patterson</i>	The Violinist . . . . .	20
<i>Jennifer Stevenson</i>	Coffee Mug . . . . .	31
<i>Jack Ortiz</i>	Mica . . . . .	52

## Nonfiction

<i>Janice Bronson</i>	Tracking . . . . .	12
<i>David Reece</i>	Shoes . . . . .	23
<i>Kacie Kennedy</i>	City under One Roof . . . . .	47

## Poetry

<i>Lucas Brown</i>	Sibling Rivalry . . . . .	5
	Gulf of Mexico . . . . .	6
<i>May Jordan</i>	Pepsi Mouse . . . . .	9
<i>David Reece</i>	In That Ditch . . . . .	11
<i>Stephen Sapp</i>	Earwax . . . . .	17
	Journey . . . . .	18
	Gun in His Pocket . . . . .	19
<i>Karl Fletcher</i>	Fat Man Fire . . . . .	21
<i>David McKerracher</i>	(Nostalgia has no antonym) . . . . .	22
<i>Timothy Pilgrim</i>	Martha's Café . . . . .	28
	Gerunds running down my leg . . . . .	30
<i>Jeffrey Gerhardstein</i>	Hitler Greets at Wal-Mart . . . . .	33
	Rumor of Flesh . . . . .	34
<i>Naomie Barnes</i>	The Fall . . . . .	37
<i>Jack Ortiz</i>	Bundle . . . . .	39
<i>Sandra Rasor</i>	Outsider . . . . .	45
	The Judge Wore Pink . . . . .	46
<i>Aubrey Stribling</i>	In Your Sickroom . . . . .	49
	[I sit at my desk] . . . . .	51

## Other Prose

<i>Broderick Pellow</i>	The Apple or the Orange . . . . .	36
<i>Renée E. D'Aoust</i>	You Move Closer. You Move Away . . . . .	41

## Visual Art

<i>Madison Hawk</i>	. . . . .	8
	. . . . .	48
<i>Gabrielle Roglin</i>	Contradiction . . . . .	16
	Continuity . . . . .	44
<i>Joal Chiu</i>	Solitude . . . . .	27
<i>Jill Stevenson</i>	Biding My Time . . . . .	35

## Contributors

. . . . .	57
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## Sibling Rivalry

My angry blow to the wall.  
It yields, surprisingly weak,  
to the part of the hand I hurt.

If the wall were my brother, he would fall  
with a broken nose and become meek.  
He's older, so I wait for my growth spurt

and can't turn this into a brawl.  
A good Christian turns the other cheek  
to the fist that ruined, with blood, my favorite shirt.



To the fist that ruined with blood my favorite shirt,  
a good Christian turns the other cheek,  
and can't turn this into a brawl.

He's older, so I wait for my growth spurt  
with a broken nose and become meek.  
If the wall were my brother, he would fall

to the part of the hand I hurt.  
It yields, surprisingly weak,  
my angry blow to the wall.

## **The Gulf of Mexico**

Someday, when I take you to the Gulf  
of Mexico, you won't have to take me  
at my word when I tell you of the new car  
metallic blue water so warm you can stay  
in it all day and come out looking  
like some sort of dark warrior, tan  
and fit and of course a little drunk.

As we go about our tasks, picking  
up sticks and twine and bits of shiny  
ribbon, the small one makes your belly swell  
like you are about  
to burst. The other day, I was in the room,  
but you were alone. You sat on the floor  
and smiled as the cat ran circles, trying  
to catch her string. In a less than a month,  
when I hold in my arms that little passion  
that became a person, I hope to catch  
you looking at him with those ocean  
eyes, so that I can dive in  
and come out dripping, refreshed,  
salty, warm.

## **Black Coffee**

**A**t the small city café, the photographer continued drinking his coffee. No cream, no sugar, thank you. He stared at an underdeveloped black-and-white photograph, one of his own. The boy spotted him several yards away and seated himself without an invitation.

“I see you,” said the boy. “I see you a lot.” The photographer resumed drinking his coffee. “I like trains,” the boy smiled. “Have you ever been on a train?” The photographer refused to answer. The boy continued chatting about trains. “Trains—love ’em. Ask me about any kind of train.” The photographer did not; instead, he drank more of his coffee.

“My dada—”

The waiter refilled the man’s cup. He saw the photographer’s Polaroid, looked in his empty pot, limped off, and didn’t return.

The boy scratched his head and wiped his nose. “I haven’t been on a train in some time. I was on one last week.” He sniffed. Then he picked up a linen napkin and blew his nose. The photographer glared at him.

The train boy continued speaking about long and short train adventures, but then he changed topics altogether. “I want to go to a foreign country,” he said suddenly. He sniffed. The photographer took a longer glance at the boy, into his eyes, and drank more and more coffee, until his mouth blistered.

He looked at the photograph.

“We could go on a train,” said the boy.

“No,” said the photographer. He tightened his grip on the photograph.





## Pepsi Mouse

We're creating a dog kennel  
for our border collies  
out of an old horse stall.  
My husband loads hundred-pound sacks  
of rice hulls stored here.  
Mother sweeps up the leftovers  
while I brush down thick spider webs  
from the corners of the walls,  
and to a boarded-up, once window.  
An old vintage Pepsi bottle  
sits on the sill, clogged with dirt.  
Mother collects these whatnots,  
so I hand it to her. She picks up  
a broken piece of fishing rod  
and starts to poke inside the bottle  
with no success. I tell her to wait  
until we can wash it out  
at the water pump outside.  
After cleaning the stall,  
mother and I stand by the red pump.  
The water runs in and out,  
and it becomes clear  
there is something other than dirt  
inside the old bottle.  
And to our surprise,  
it is a skeleton of a mouse,  
with its tiny snout, silk whiskers  
and long tail still intact.  
I think . . . it must have been years,  
this mouse was trapped  
inside this glass tomb  
where no one noticed him,  
except for a spider on the wall  
or maybe a barn cat.  
How repeatedly, with or without hope,  
he must have tried to jump,  
nose up that bottle  
just to slide back down again.

→

I pull him out with a paper towel,  
and drop him into the garbage can.  
Mother stares at me.  
She likes to read the obituaries  
in the newspaper.  
Well, maybe to her, it doesn't seem fitting,  
since he probably struggled  
for that wee sip of Pepsi  
that brought about his fate.

## In That Ditch,

the dry, sun-scorched one built of fertile earth in that barren dirt lot tucked between Albertson's and the vacant office buildings on the corner of Bullard and Fig Garden Loop. The one filled with tires, glass, and syringes, its walls decaying, neglected, and forgotten. Its concrete pipes cracked and crumbling. Its iron valves rusted shut. The one that serves as a makeshift depot for hobos and transients jumping trains running the adjacent tracks. The one purged by arson every couple years.

That's where I stalked my prey.

Hunched over shin-deep in cool, crystal-clear, swift, flowing water. Shaded from the valley's relentless, torturing heat by ancient, gnarled fig trees full of tender, ripe fruit. Muddy, frayed Levi's rolled to my knees. Bare feet caress—fully embracing and stroking—every algae-covered pebble, stick, and stone. Slimy, soiled hands snatching up frogs, tadpoles, minnows, and crawdads. Filling an old paint bucket before walking home barefoot through the old orchard to greet my mother and hose off in the yard for supper.

## Tracking

**W**hen you got sick we discovered:  
How long a man will refuse to see a doctor.  
How long it takes one's mind to accept how serious this is.  
How hard my stomach knots to hear it spelled out.

*tracking:*

8 trips before doctors will say "cancer."  
6 trips to the cancer center "getting ready" for radiation.  
Waiting room filled with headscarves and smiles.  
30 days of radiation treatment.  
30 times the doctor says "quit now."  
Statistics the doctor quotes, longevity in numbers:  
70% cure rate if you quit now,  
5 years survival rate if you quit now.  
95% chance of it returning if you don't.  
How your heart eases just a little when the doctor says,  
"OK, for now—just quit!"

*tracking:*

How many weeks until your sore throat is back?  
How long can you go without eating?  
How gray can your skin turn?  
How much weight can you lose and still live?  
How many trips back to "check up?"  
How many times our held breaths catch,  
resume: still no sign that the cancer is back.  
But you're still losing weight?  
60 trips to the shop on the John Deere—not strong enough to walk.  
6 hours a day sitting by the warm shop stove—smoking,  
or rolling smokes for friends.  
1,000,000 excuses for still smoking.  
How hard our hearts drop: it's back.

*tracking:*

“Okay, I quit!”

1 bottle of pills to help you quit—they make you sick.

4 boxes of patches to help you quit.

Finally, not smoking.

How many pounds must you weigh to have chemo as a treatment option?

They won't say, but it's not enough.

2 extra bottles of Ensure every day trying to gain weight, trying to get strong.

How many radiation treatments can the body take on a second round?

They won't say, but you are weak.

2 surgeries to survive until radiation can begin.

323 miles to drive to Seattle together.

5 hours to drive back home alone.

4 boxes of medical supplies and equipment ride with me.

4 weeks of radiation have drained us both.

*tracking:*

11 people are in the yard to meet you when you come home.

No ambulances available at Spokane Airport,

so you arrive in a long, black limousine.

2 large nurses flanking your thin frame, you, tucked into a small, black wheelchair.

Still joking, you ask, “How do you like my ride?”

How good you look, smiling, joking.

How tired you look, sitting in your wheel chair.

4 hours to set up the sick room.

How long for belief to sink in: hospice is required.

*tracking:*

Details make life now:

7 bottles of Ensure a day to maintain weight.

2 feet of tubing makes an NPG tube.

2450 calories make a body gain weight.

24 white cotton clothes to catch drips from the feeding tube.

How many times your tube feeding was postponed because company was there.

Untold miles driven around the yard on the John Deere,

mowing grass that didn't need it.

18 gallons of gas used in Deere.

8 trips to pharmacy for emergency drug changes.

6 trips to the VA before they say there's no point in coming back.

## *Tracking*

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### *tracking:*

Smoking again.

It's too late anyway, we know the ending.

It's all that keeps you getting up, to roll a cigarette you can't inhale.

8 weeks till you can't leave the house unassisted.

8 weeks with 20 hours bed rest a day.

6 cigarettes a day rolled at the counter eventhough you can no longer inhale.

3 times we must move to remain in the sunshine on a fall afternoon.

Uncountable times I have to leave to cry where I can't be seen.

84 assisted trips from bed to bathroom when walking is unsteady.

21 times you dress just for the nurse's visit.

122 dinners I eat alone, in secret because you can no longer eat.

1 cup of coffee, nuked over and over because cold coffee is gross even when you can't swallow it.

98 cups of coffee sipped and spit into a cup.

98 times the ash tray is washed and replaced for cigarettes not inhaled, just burned.

3 little bells to call me with.

90 nights spent listening for the bells.

### *tracking:*

5 words in your last note, asking to die when there is no voice left.

3 days, the nurses say. Their expectations for your release.

7 days your body could actually live with no food or water.

Hundreds of words spoken softly, to let you know I'm here, hoping to connect with your subconscious.

126 hours sitting by your bedside, listening to each breath.

78 seconds between breaths—

110 at the very end.

3 times nurses ask for extensions, because your body is so strong it won't go.

4 root beer floats shared with nurses, whispering, waiting outside the door.

6 people you felt it important to say goodbye to.

3 nurses required for around-the-clock nursing.

12 times the dog has to be gated to keep him from biting the nurse.

### *tracking:*

3 calls to help the funeral parlor drivers find our house.

3 root beer floats while we wait for them, 45 minutes.

8 inches of water the drivers must wade through to get the body out and into the hearse.

2 dogs, sitting on kitchen chairs, watching you leave on a gurney.

5 midnight calls to let friends and family know it's over.

*tracking:*

3 days to take down the sick room down.  
121 days from leaving Seattle to leaving home in a hearse.  
Uncountable people at your memorial, remembering.  
53 sympathy cards received.

*tracking:*

5972 days from beginning of marriage to end at death.  
190 days the dogs sit at the window, waiting,  
watching for your return through that same door.  
50 times the dogs run to the door when the tractor starts in spring.  
1 John Deere sitting in the shed.  
10 gallons of gas left beside it.  
Hundreds of things I can't do alone.  
How many times do I have to go into the shop before I can actually work?  
8 stashes of tobacco I found later: Top tobacco in the freezer,  
rolled cigs in the carry can.  
27 lighters bought, and kept for later use.  
17 dead lighters saved for their flints.  
3 months to find someone who wants extra Ensure.  
Number of questions I didn't ask, things I don't know and now can't ask.  
2 years and counting to dispose of your stuff.

**Contradiction**





## **Ear Wax**

There's something about ear wax.  
Just sitting there, not bothering me,  
Does it grow? Ooze, secreting out of nothing?  
The tingling sensation it left on my  
Tongue when I was a kid. Weird.  
Finger in my ear when  
I should have used a Q-tip.  
The primal feeling of rooting  
In my body. Searching for that oily  
Substance to feel accomplished.  
I examine my finger like  
I've found a lucky clover.

## **Journey**

I start for home thinking  
Of moments as tires churn pavement  
Into past. Warm encounters,  
Growing desire, lying awake  
At night discussing our plans.  
Nine years of my life—the illusion of feelings—  
Dissolved in our battles.  
She now needs her freedom. I tell myself I want  
To search for something too.  
This love was like the realization a mountaineer finds  
Once he reaches the summit.  
All he's left with is exhaustion. Tired from  
Fighting the wind, and snow, and dark, and ever-biting  
Cold. Was it worth all the work, as he fumbles  
Back down. He knows it will never be the image  
He held in his mind, some grand idea  
You have to constantly press life into.  
Should it take this much effort?  
Is this what we both so desired?  
Street lights now flash, flicker, ignite.  
I walk to the door and know I'm not home.

## **Gun in His Pocket**

One day he came to school with a gun in his pocket. His intentions were simple. He didn't want fame in some perverted way, not looking for revenge or even to be remembered. He just liked the coolness of metal on his thigh. The barrel against his leg, he could almost feel it breathing, reminding him of its presence. This wasn't a toy, or some silly game he was trying to play. He liked the power it gave him at lunch. His walk was now different, he moved through the line and didn't stop once. The contents of his pocket now shaped his demeanor. He almost talked to girls, instead of shutting by. He even made a joke in math class about girls and irrational numbers. Some kids have good parents, and others have friends to make them feel more alive. He had a pistol in his pocket. He showed it to no one, and still sat alone, now staring at the window instead of the wall.

## The Violinist

**T**rails of light spread through the crowded streets. You can follow them past intersections and skyscrapers and streetlights. And if you do, you will end up at a corner several blocks from the heart of the city.

You won't hear the music until you are quite close; the traffic does its best to drown it out. But when you come to the corner, you'll see the violinist. For a minute she'll hold your attention—her slender figure bundled up in a black wool coat, the dark red hair spilling over her shoulders, and the way she's swaying slightly back and forth as she draws the music from her violin. Her eyes are closed, and you realize that she is playing for herself, not for you.

But as you stop and listen, as everyone stops and listens, you will begin to notice the face of each person standing at the street corner. It takes a moment for you to name the emotion in their expressions because it is so rare you have hardly seen it before. You search for a word.

It's the same light that led you to the place. The same light that comes from the violinist and the music.

Somehow the idea makes you uncomfortable. You lean against the edge of the bus stop and check your cell phone. When you catch yourself staring at the screen with no idea what you were checking it for, you slip it back into your pocket.

The music crescendos. It's so beautiful it hurts.

Again the uncomfortable feeling. You try to make sense of it and realize that the music is too beautiful to be here along with the car exhaust and dirty, tramped up snow on the pavement. You are embarrassed.

Maybe this is why the violinist closes her eyes.

With a grind of brakes and a hiss of smoke, the bus pulls up the stop. Footsteps slap the sidewalk. People get off. People get on. You wait for as long as you can, then you step away from the street corner and climb onto the bus. Through the window, you watch the violinist fade from sight. The music is long gone.

Glancing up, you recognize some of the other passengers as your fellow listeners. You notice one staring after the violinist. That look is still on each of their faces. You feel it on yours as well.

Later, you will consider telling someone. But by then it will seem too insignificant. It won't be until you are walking home through the dead winter night that the feeling the encounter gave you becomes a thought and that thought takes on words.

## **Fat Man Fire**

I feed the Fat Man  
and watch as he licks the plate clean.  
More! he demands  
and his smoky breath burns my eyes.  
The wind changes  
and the Fat Man wants more food.  
I fill his plate again  
and watch as he turns his food to white powder.  
For a moment he fades,  
and I am sure he has eaten his fill,  
but he shrugs off his meal,  
and with a loud pop he is ready for more.  
He protects me, the Fat Man,  
from the those things without that would do me harm.  
So I feed the Fat Man,  
and I am fascinated as I watch him eat.  
Each morsel is devoured  
slowly, he consumes all that is set before him.  
Relentlessly, hungrily,  
Fat Man and his unquenchable appetite flow on.  
In the darkness,  
I sit alone beside him and listen to him eat.  
A long drawn out hiss  
comes from somewhere deep inside.  
For a moment he is done,  
but the moment doesn't last, and I am feeding him again.  
The stars light the sky,  
but the mountains that surround us are black and cold.  
Fat Man is not cold.  
Fat Man licks the chilly night air indifferently  
and demands more food.  
Fat Man eats.  
I sit and watch him burn away his food  
and my memories of the world.

**(Nostalgia has no antonym)**

Vague memories  
that feel more like childhood nightmares:  
haunting, almost tangible,  
lurking just outside my peripherals.

## Shoes

I got my first nice pair of shoes in high school. Osiris brand skate shoes. I worked hard for those shoes, working several jobs off the books for the neighbors who owned a carpet-laying business. Pulling decades-old carpet from grungy office buildings was demanding and disgusting work, but paid well. I bought the shoes for the stash pocket in the tongue. I needed to hide a little sack of cannabis, and a little glass pipe, also paid for working odd jobs, plus five dollars weekly allowance and saving lunch money. My friends called them moon boots. Bulky, white, with silver reflective bands on them. They certainly had their own gravitational mass. My feet drug behind me everywhere I went.

I grew up in Fresno, California. After my parents' divorce, my mother moved me and my brother to a rental house in a small neighborhood on the northwest end of the city. The neighborhood was a stark contrast to the rest of the city that grew and surrounded it. At that time, it was a small group of about twenty to thirty houses on two individual streets. The streets were surrounded by hundreds of acres of neglected fig orchards, and surrounding the orchards was the city. One street had houses on both sides of the road, and the other street had only one row of houses facing the fig orchards. Our house was on Cecelia Street, and it faced the orchards. We raised ourselves in those orchards while mom worked to support us. We ruined countless pairs of shoes in the dust and mud. My mom couldn't afford to buy us nice shoes; she wouldn't have even if she could.

Freshman year of high school, my friend Jerrett's shoes got stolen from his locker during football practice. They were K-Swiss: the most expensive pair, and all the rage. They were brand new, and Jerrett was pretty upset about it. It had taken him a long time to convince his parents to buy them for him. The next day Jerrett came to the chill spot at school and said he knew who stole his shoes. I don't know the kid's name, but after smoking a couple of bowls on the handball court, me, Jerrett, and four or five other teammates surrounded the kid and forced him to take off his shoes and return them to Jerrett. He claimed they weren't Jerrett's, but Jerrett was convinced they were. There was a scuff that matched the scuff Jerrett put on them the first day he got them, and that was that. Jerrett got his shoes back, and the other kid rode the bus home in socks.

Another time, we had just finished getting high in the orchard and were headed off for a bite to eat at McDonald's before heading to a house party for the rest of the night. We turned out of the orchard, which had not yet been plowed that year and to my recollection was never plowed again, and headed down the paved road towards McDonald's. As we approached the stop light at Bullard and Fig Garden Loop, I noticed from the backseat of Kevin's 1980-something, faded blue, two-door Blazer, a single shoe fly into the air and strike the side of Kevin's car with a loud thud.

“What the fuck was that?” Kevin yelled from the driver’s seat.

“I think someone threw a shoe at us,” I said.

“Fucker,” Kevin screamed as he slammed on the brakes and pulled over partway onto the edge of the orchard.

He got out to assess the damage, and I scanned for the person who threw the shoe at us. I didn’t see anyone. I began to think my eyes tricked me and maybe it was a stupid bird. Some stupid bird that lost its direction, or balance, and struck the side of the car, probably ending its life. I continued to scan for something or someone who could have hit the car. Kevin was out looking for dings and dents, and the rest of us just sat in the car dazed, confused, hungry, and looking for a reason to be pissed off.

After what seemed like a good while, I noticed a white car, maybe a Camry, stopped in the opposite lane of traffic, twenty feet or so from where we stopped. I thought it was a bit odd both of us would stop on the side of the road at the same time, and I began to wonder if someone had thrown something at their car as well. Again looking around for someone to castrate for tossing a shoe at us, I saw a torso sit up on the road behind the car. I hadn’t seen him lying behind the median, and when he sat up it still didn’t compute. Then he fell back limp onto the asphalt and began to convulse. His head was in a bad way, and there was a good amount of blood, but the thing that stuck out the most was his right, shoeless, foot. The left shoe was there but the right shoe was the one flung at Kevin’s car. As I noticed, we all noticed.

Several other cars began to stop and approach the boy or young man to offer aid. Several people were on cell phones calling for help. Kevin got back in the car and the question was asked if we should get out and help. We thought we should, but the consensus was that there were already plenty of people, we could do nothing, and we didn’t want to be around police, reeking of pot. So we drove off for McDonald’s before heading to the house party. I looked back to see if the guy would sit up again. He didn’t, but I did spot his missing shoe on the side of the road.

When I played Pop Warner Football, I always had cheap cleats. My mom couldn’t afford expensive cleats. My dad could, but he never bought me any. The cleats I got were generally the cheapest soccer cleats my mom could find. They worked, but every day I came home from practice with sore feet. By the end of the season, they were so sore that it took the entire off-season for them to heal to the point where they didn’t hurt to walk on bare.

When I started freshman football at Bullard High School, we were all required to wear the same brand and color of cleats. They had to be Reebok and match the school colors. There were three different styles to choose from. Mom and Dad had several arguments about the cleats. When Dad ultimately refused to purchase them, Mom bit the bullet and bought me the cheaper of the three options. She commented countless times throughout the season that she should take Dad back to court for the child support and alimony he owed, but she never did. The cleats were amazing. The most expensive cleats I ever had, and it felt great to finally have a pair of cleats



that matched the rest of my teammates, but every day I came home from practice with sore feet. By the end of the season they were still so sore that it took the entire off-season for them to heal. They weren't any better than the cheap soccer cleats, but I still have them packed in a box somewhere.

In middle school, me and some classmates stayed after school most days to play pickup sports. The bus from Bullard High School had a drop off at our middle school, Toby Lawless, and we generally had to pause our game while the couple dozen high school kids crossed the campus and through our game. Occasionally we lost whatever ball we were using to one of them.

During one of these pickup game pauses, two black girls from Bullard got into a fight on the blacktop. The couple dozen students that got off the Bullard bus surrounded the fight like a mob while we middle schoolers stood there and watched. We couldn't see much after the mob formed, but we did notice one girl's hair, a ponytail worth of braids, fly up into the air and out of the crowd, and we could all see that one girl was beating the other with a shoe. Finally one of the boys pulled the clear winner, the girl with the shoe, off of the other girl. In one final attack the victor threw the shoe at the loser, striking her in the chest.

As the mob dispersed, the girl who had lost walked off alone towards the bleachers. A boy picked up her hair, and her shoe, and yelled towards her.

"Hey girl! You forgot your weave."

She turned to face him, screaming profanities, and walked towards him to collect her property.

"And your shoe," he continued.

Once she retrieved them and shared more profanities with the high school students that remained, she walked back to the bleachers and sat by herself. After every student from Bullard High had left our campus, she began to weep uncontrollably. We returned to the pickup game and never noticed her leave.

Towards the end of my junior year in high school, me and some friends went to a house party a fellow classmate had. After the beer was gone, and we ultimately decided not to flip the Geo Metro parked on the side of the road, we headed off for a place to hang out, smoke some weed, and kill the rest of the night.

We decided the new construction in the housing development down the street from my house would be perfect. The orchards that once surrounded my neighborhood had slowly decayed and were now being swallowed whole by the encroaching city. What was once thousands of acres of orchards was now empty strip malls and office buildings mixed with housing developments that all looked alike. We still often treated the developments as if they were the orchards, and our mischief shifted from the dust and mud of the orchards to the asphalt and concrete of the city. Once we were at the construction site, and the cars were parked in a discreet location, we darted across an empty lot and towards one of the unfinished

houses. I was in the lead, running as fast as I could, and Jerrett was right behind me followed by Kevin, Greg, Phil, and three girls whose names I can't remember. Once in the middle of the bare lot, I began to slip on what felt like mud. Triumphantly I slid to a stop, proud of myself for keeping my balance. Next came Jerrett sliding past me, balancing himself by pushing down on my shoulders and knocking me, ass first, into the mud. The rest of the group noticed and stopped before stepping into the mud.

I was covered from head to toe. My Osiris shoes had come off and were buried deep and I couldn't seem to retrieve them, so I walked through the mud in my socks, which were soon sucked off as well. Once on solid ground I looked over the mud hole I had just slid into. It wasn't mud, but a concrete house foundation that hadn't set yet. I never did get back my Osiris shoes with the stash pocket.

**Solitude**



## **Martha's Café**

Weeds stretch high in the parking lot,  
windows are boarded, doors, sealed tight,

peeled strips of white paint flutter  
like flags of failure in the wind.

This is George, Washington,  
halfway between Montana and the Pacific.

Truckers don't venture off the freeway anymore,  
intent on the cherry pie their wives deny them

in Glendive, Missoula, Butte. Farmers don't leave  
combines running outside, sit, bellies on counter,

sip coffee, fib about being rich and single  
to the slim waitress, who calls them Hon.

Yes, Martha's gone now, trading George  
and miles of empty sky and promises,

bed behind the diner, for Mount Vernon  
and a new lover called Lucky, local cop in control

of chance, hope arriving with each red light.  
Truth is, I'm driven to stop here ten times a year,

pull off I-90 at midnight, take the pot-holed road  
to café remains, let my rig idle outside,

feel decay whip mistakes into bad memories,  
see dust devils circle nothing in moonlight.

Kenworth pointed west, I wish the past back,  
dream of forgiveness, perform my ritual:

write poems by dome light on napkins  
for Martha and her pie. I vow to myself,

some trip soon I won't stop, just roll by,  
phone for help, or at least reach out, send

a firm warning, one about obsession:  
If you leave by three for Mount Vernon,

drive like hell, you still cannot deliver  
a truckload of sonnets by dawn.

## Gerunds running down my leg

First, verbs began to collide,  
in novels, no less. It was clear  
the English Department running

the universe should assert itself.  
Hope for writing no longer lay  
in prepositions, slender adjectives,

and strappingly comely adverbs  
marching like linguists  
toward a rigid master language—

erect, proud, but accidentally,  
on occasion, flaccid, surely predicting  
very many adverbs more. Then,

participles, multiplying like termites,  
eating life out of whole sentences,  
lolling about with infinitives—

themselves claiming to be verbs,  
weasels trying to reject all nounhood—  
brought total impotence to sonnets,

villanelles, even three-act plays.  
Swaying over the blank hole of verse,  
I felt gerunds running down my leg.

## Coffee Mug

She switched the lights on as she entered the building and made her way to the staff kitchen. The black coffee pot waited quietly. She set her things aside and made the coffee before resuming her early morning activities.

The coffee finished just as she finished her duties. A huge cup of coffee in her hands, she found a spot to sit and wait. The aroma filled her senses and the liquid warmed her.

She didn't have to wait long. His huge form came wading through the door. He was in his early fifties, but she swore he only seemed seventeen thanks to his sense of humor. She held up one finger, then two. Then three, as he turned to face her with a cup in his hands. He held up two. She knew to wait. Without his three cups, he was a grumpy old bear with a thorn in his paw.

"How's it going, Harlee?" he mumbled over his mug, taking a seat across from her.

She glanced up and shrugged her shoulders. "Same old, same old."

He nodded. She knew he understood. That was the great thing about him. He always understood. It was always like this. The coffee sat between their fingers as they sat staring into space. The only two bodies in the place.

She rubbed her forehead. "I can't wait for Friday," she grumbled.

"It's only Tuesday," he pointed out.

"Fred, you suck." He didn't comment but a half smile managed to peak through.

"Aren't you supposed to have the day off?" she wondered as she took a sip of the hot liquid.

"I left a few jobs undone."

She smiled behind her coffee mug. He always left a few jobs undone when he had a day off. He couldn't leave her to handle the coffee by herself.

"How was your date last night?"

She raised an eyebrow at him with a frown. He didn't need to ask. He knew how it went because it always went the same way. No matter what she did. No matter how different they seemed.

"If you weren't so temperamental you wouldn't have this problem," he said. Smirking behind his coffee mug, he couldn't help himself.

She huffed. "They just need to man up."

Fred chuckled as he stood up. "I highly doubt they'll ever do that. We're pansy asses." He walked out of the room and went on to his duties.

The same routine followed two days later, but this time, Harlee was late. By the time she made it to work, she felt her ire rise. She stomped the snow off her boots before stepping into the warm building. The coffee was already made. Two mugs sat on the

counter with the warm liquid steaming into the air. Grabbing two sugar packets, she tromped her way to her desk and curled up into her chair with the coffee mug in her hands. The ceramic mug created warmth that she was lacking. Fred always seemed to know what she needed.

He came walking in after a few minutes and took a seat at her desk. They didn't say anything to one another as they sipped at their coffee. Harlee tried to absorb the heat before it disappeared while Fred seemed content to drink the black liquid leisurely.

"You should quit smoking," she commented through the silence as she caught a whiff of the toxic smell.

"I know." She smiled behind her mug. "Thanks for the coffee."

He grumbled back a response before heading back out to finish his duties. She watched him as he left.



## **Hitler Greets at Wal-Mart**

He looks pale  
in his red vest and party sash,  
tar black hair  
disheveled,  
arm outstretched,  
polished shoes glinting  
bullets of sunshine.

## **Rumor of Flesh**

In the currents of rivers,  
flickering gold reflections gush over stones.

What is it the waters want to say  
about this life, defined by the undersides of boats,

muffled bobbing,  
bent sunrays in cool, clear streams?

Some days, like today, to skim the surface  
is to be a rumor of flesh,

illuminations of cobwebs and moths and leaves.

**Biding My Time**



## The Apple or the Orange

In these uncertain times we all must have something to count on, something that can be held onto no matter the national climate or unstable economy. Fresh fruit is and always has been a haven to which all Americans can retreat when times are hard. Yet, how can it remain a safe harbor for all freedom-loving people if there is a battle raging between two superpowers of fresh fruit? The fact is that no real conflict exists because the Apple, so unique to America, so assorted in colors is far superior to the Orange in the ways of edibility. There are skeptics, namely those in the Orange-growing states, who would contend against the Apple, but they have no stance strong enough to oppose it in open argument. Let them stand against the Apple: this, the most colorful and patriotic of fruits.

The Apple is the keenest of fruits when considered on the grounds of coloration and variances thereof. All one need do to understand this fact is drift through their local supermarket or fruit stand where they will absorb the cascade of breath-taking colors bestowed on mankind by the humble Apple. As all *homo sapiens* understand from birth, color is one of the basic attractants given by Mother Nature. It can warn us of danger or signal affection, confirm shame or capture imagination. It has an endless assortment of mixtures and tones to capture the eye and ensnare the brain with its complexity. Nowhere in the fruit kingdom is this ability more aptly appropriated than in the lands of the Apple and all its shades. The Apple uses color to the maximum, mixing reds, yellows, and greens to its own ends. From tiger-striped to spotted, swirled and patchwork, all colors and patterns are used to entangle the human into a springtime Apple frenzy. Now consider the Orange; yes, it utilizes the catchy color of its own name, but it has little or no variation from it. Beyond color, the juice of the Apple is the nectar of the gods, and the pies made from its flesh their dessert. The only improvement to Lady Liberty, the contemporary form of Libertas, Roman goddess of freedom, would be the addition of her holding the deific Apple.

The most noble and national of all fruits is by far the Apple. It is the hallmark of American cuisine; nothing is more American than its pie. We have nicknamed one of our greatest cities “The Big Apple.” Even our greatest electronics firm is named after this most American of fruits. The Apple was the catalyst of the first attack on American Colonists, the Boston Massacre, where the British officer claimed his men had been assaulted with what else but an Apple? The Orange has laid no such illustrious claim on the history or culture of America. For shame, Orange, oh meekest of all fruit, have you failed to leave equal impression on our society. Look to the Apple, for it is so truly red, white, and blue that if you cut it in two, all it shows is a five-pointed star.

But there is rumbling from the back. Statements such as: “How about the Orange?” “It is essential in the State of Florida as well as California” and “It is highest in concentration of vitamin C.” And, “Oh how it helped us win the Second World War being concentrated and sent to the front!” These are all true statements, and they serve to its honor. But the Orange is still just for squeezing, a game the Apple plays equally well.

## The Fall

Like fledglings from the nest, too young we fall.  
Tumbling together in reckless descent,  
wind presses against our skin—ecstasy of flight—  
blind to the ground rushing to collide into our bodies.  
Crashing against jagged rocks,  
bent and broken, we rend apart.

I rip myself from your outstretched arms;  
the ragged edge too raw to mend.  
Bruised and weak, I stagger into the disquiet world.

Across the roughened ground I fight to soar alone  
as briars shoot up to grasp my wings  
and jerk me back to the stony waste.  
I slam into the earth.

Again.

Again.

Violent thorns pierce my breast  
as scarlet plumes settle to the frigid ground.

There he finds me:  
flightless in a twisted cage.  
His gentle hands bind my wings;  
softly pulling the barbs away.  
He strokes my face  
and silently wraps his tether around me.  
Wings mended, I thirst for the rapture of our primal flight.  
Rushing to the naked sky I race to break free!  
The falconer calls my name—  
Hesitation halts and holds me aloft.  
I hear his call again.  
Drawn back to his expectant arm

→

I tug against the unyielding leash.  
Whispered words of devotion  
meant to soothe my anguish  
echo through this empty shroud.

His breath upon my cheek—  
Your name upon my lips.

## Bundle

Hearing from you  
after so long  
and now seeing you,  
seeing your apartment—  
a home for your newborn son,  
littered with papers, socks,  
the smell of diapers, coffee grounds,  
the squish of your baby's gums,  
and the stale wind outside  
that rattles your screen door  
like a ragged poncho tied to the hip of  
the loneliest person you'd hate to see,  
an unknown

straggler, years drunk, a man  
who could be your father  
or his—almost makes me cry  
tears of happiness it isn't me.  
I can look into his eyes,  
hold him tight like my own.  
Here's your little man,  
tumbling in his infant sleep,  
dreaming of human motions,  
smirks on his face; he flirts with warmth.

Yet, behind the salient  
bags beneath your eyes,  
your tired, contented smile,  
and those stiff, stern lips,  
is a sincerity I loathe.  
If only you would ask me  
to fuck you,  
coax me from my head,  
and my eyes from the neglected  
grass outside  
the way you used to,

I'd have you back,  
my bundle of sin,  
constricting me  
between the sheets.  
But how you've grown beyond  
the play we used to share:  
here's your little man.  
And before I leave,  
a kiss for him.



## You Move Closer. You Move Away.

*I see the way you move closer. I see the way you move away.*

Did you mean it when you said: “But, Renée; there’s no separation between life and death. You know that.”

Did you mean it when you said: “You’ll have a much closer relationship with your brother now. I’ve seen it happen again and again.”

*I see the way you move away. I see the way you move closer.*

Did you mean it when you said: “You have to reciprocate, Renée. You don’t phone me; I don’t phone you.”

Did you mean it when you said: “We lost him, too.”

*I see the way you move closer. I see the way you move away.*

Did you mean it when you said: “It was accepted medical practice, Renée.”

Did you mean it when you said: “Psychotic. He must have been psychotic. Very strange.”

*I see the way you move away. I see the way you move closer.*

Did you mean it when you said: “What will you do with his things? I can take his things, Renée.”

Did you mean it when you said: “I would have shown up at his doorstep. That’s the kind of mother I am.”

*I see the way you move closer. I see the way you move away.*

Did you mean it when you said: “Renée, he couldn’t live in this world.”

Did you mean it when you said: “You’re just like your mother.”

*I see the way you move away. I see the way you move closer.*

Did you mean it when you said: “She said you hate her, Renée. She said you are very mean to her. She said your mom intimidates her. You shouldn’t be mean to her. She runs five miles a day! You should tell your mom not to touch her laundry.”

Did you mean it when you said: “You’re weird. And all my friends agree.”

*I see the way you move closer. I see the way you move away.*

Did you mean it when you said: “It’s so sad that he was never a teacher, Renée.”

Did you mean it when you said: “MS? I thought he killed himself.”

*I see the way you move away. I see the way you move closer.*

Did you mean it when you said: “I’m a very peaceful person. You’re too angry, Renée. I can’t be with such an angry person.”

Did you mean it when you said: “Children? No? Thank God. Thank God he didn’t have children.”

*I see the way you move closer. I see the way you move away.*

Did you mean it when you said: “Well, thank God you didn’t have children, Renée. You could have ended up divorced with children.”

Did you mean it when you said: “Renée, most normal people would answer my question. And normal people would be proud of me for asking it.”

*I see the way you move away. I see the way you move closer.*

Did you mean it when you said: “I may have hit you. But, Renée, you emotionally abused me.”

Did you mean it when you said: “I have so many books and I’m overwhelmed by my books and I’ve moved to a very small studio, so I won’t be buying your book. I know you understand completely where I’m coming from.”

*I see the way you move closer. I see the way you move away.*

Did you mean it when you said: “Kaczynski. Didn’t he live out where you live, too, Renée?”

Did you mean it when you said: “They all love me. Everyone knows that. I should have won. Not her. Did you see all the comma splices?”

*I see the way you move away. I see the way you move closer.*

Did you mean it when you said: “No. I cannot be your therapist. I won’t. I won’t. I don’t know any other therapist who would treat you, Renée. Please leave my office now.”

Did you mean it when you said: “You can’t write this. No one will read this. No one reads epics anymore.”

*I see the way you move closer. I see the way you move away.*

Did you mean it when you said: “We know all about that, Renée. We read it in the paper.”

Did you mean it when you said: “I can hear the birds again. I can hear them sing.”

*I see the way. I see the way.*

## **Continuity**



## **Outsider**

I need to love myself, the love myself meditation does nothing for me. The others have a lot to say. “That was the best ever.” “I felt warmth, like I was in a cocoon.” I keep quiet and look at the floor so as not to catch anyone’s eye. I want this class to work, I want to say those things about an aura and a peacefulness, I want to sit perfectly still without so much as wiggling my toes (and the minute she says “don’t even wiggle your toes” I immediately want nothing more than to wiggle my toes), but I fidget and try to adjust my bra by twisting my ribcage just right. A myriad of itches invades my determination like an infestation of bedbugs, first my nose, then my ankle bone, then the left side of my forehead just at the hairline. The teacher says “just notice the itch and then bring your attention back to your breathing, it will go away.” I do what she says (how could I not notice the itch) but it doesn’t work, I keep on itching but not scratching, she might scold the entire group if I scratch but I’ll know it’s me she is talking to. Everyone else seems to be able to sit like statues and keep their eyes closed. I have to open my eyes once in a while, I wear contacts, they dry out and then even my eyes will get itchy. I peek out and no one else is looking, damn. I am the only disobedient meditator.

## **The Judge Wore Pink**

I question your sagacity;  
cerise is not the color of judgment,  
but of fresh passion.  
Like new love that lasts  
for years.  
A legend of sorts.  
The final resting place  
of hummingbirds.  
Throat of the flower,  
fleshy and unprotected,  
waiting to be plundered.  
Choose another.

## City under One Roof

The dark tunnel ends in a flash of light, and we emerge amid pouring rain and fog that clings stubbornly to the looming mountains. The sky overhead is a solid gray, reflected like a mirror in the ocean, though blurred by the rain's steady fall.

Through wiper blades, we glimpse the miserable grotto of Whittier, Alaska, as it slides out from behind the mountains. There! Looming at the back of the former military base town lies its birth. The Buckner Building, abandoned and condemned. The city under one roof.

We approach this strange, lonely giant as explorers who have discovered a forgotten cavern. The North's silence echoes around it, disturbed by the symphony of rainwater that drifts through the air. Drip. Drip. Drip. As we entered through the overgrown doorway, its chorus fills the space around us, resonating off of the dull concrete walls. The stairways have become waterfalls, flooding the ground floor.

We venture up the stairs, aim our flashlights cautiously ahead. There are rumors of bears roaming these halls. Drip. Drip. Drip. The steady flow of water continues as we explore. The structure has been stripped of anything of value, leaving a husk, a skeleton. No evidence remains of the town that once lived within these walls. Every pane of glass has been shattered, letting in the cruel chill of winter wind.

On these higher floors, outside light wanders in. Grass and moss grow on forgotten floors as nature slowly reclaims the enormous structure. On the fifth floor, a scraggly pine leans in the corner of a room.

We reach the roof after the sixth floor. It is a lake, sending ripples in every direction as the rain pours into it. Rusted and eroded material lies scattered across it: remains of chimneys and vents and various metals stretching up like skeletal hands.

The Buckner Building gazes down at the town that has left it behind, that now regards it as useless or an eyesore. But still it stands, holding against the tests of time. Calcium stalactites hang from ceilings and walls. The stuffy presence of asbestos clings to the air. And the constant rhythm of water carries on.





## **In your sickroom**

I am not the only one who visits.  
Though today,  
swirled into your room,  
    blown in by clatter  
    and the braying, honking streets,  
I shut the door, alone,  
relieved.

You have discovered something here.

Remember when it was hard to speak,  
    hard to breathe?  
We kept ourselves so rigidly.  
Words dented the floor at our feet,  
a cement block, or a large, black safe  
    with a combination key, or lock  
that we had misplaced.

But here,  
Here you have discovered space—  
    and your place in it.  
Space to think, space to be.  
    As diminished and as important  
as the furthest star;  
You have forced yourself  
    to face yourself.  
You have snatched the truth  
    from inside yourself  
and shaped it in your hands  
till it became the glowing ball  
that fills this room.

But it fills your valleys, too,  
where your life beats through  
the lines and traces  
the mountains in monitored  
    Bleep,  
        Bleep,  
            Bleeps.

You and I,  
in this room  
    if we laugh or cry—  
    it feels like truth.

In this room, we speak of things.  
And words leave our mouths  
with equal pressure outside and in,  
an equilibrium  
that hangs between us like a bright balloon.

**[I sit at my desk]**

I sit at my desk,  
I scan taxes,  
I soothe mad clients,  
I add.

Her voice, through the radio,  
reflects that she is almost  
sad, still,  
and, also, the fondness she feels,  
and, also, peace.

She speaks of him; I think of you—  
that when you fall into your grave,  
life will waste.  
I will grasp  
for you as you  
flicker out  
and fade.  
She has learned what to do  
with what remains.

At my desk,  
I know the sun shines  
because the light slips  
through the window shades  
throwing shadows and lines  
that illuminate my computer screen.  
Where the sun hits,  
it bounces back to my face,  
and there, I'm blind.

My brain computes a thousand things:  
data, formats, tax plans,  
the phone rings—  
an anxious client, I think.

I grab the phone,  
I clear my throat,  
I speak.

## Mica

She sat in the corner of Seven Sisters Coffee and Brewery. She flipped through the coffeehouse's art book, clicking the home button on her Facebook every few moments to refresh the newsfeed. A little kid had gone in and scribbled over some of the entries in the art book, covering entire pages of art and anonymous letters with jagged crayon loops. There was a local abstract expressionist that displayed art in the Seven Sisters. His signature was BABs, so a couple of the baristas had gone through the art book and initialed BABs on all the kid's scribbles.

"Hmph."

She bought the coffee so she wouldn't be loitering, but she couldn't stomach it. She couldn't stomach the thought of last night, either.

People-watching was more inspiring than TV, so she came to coffee shops.

A little girl in the corner was playing with pieces of a napkin. Her mother was on the phone. Everyone was so active, even the hipsters there for the same reason as she. They were active in their presence. Mica could barely muster the drive to even talk to herself in her head.

Nothing here had meaning for her. There was the coffeehouse. The implied character of the place, with its opposing brick and cement walls as if consisting of different rooms inhabited by people from different worlds.

There were the baristas. And shouldn't the male servers be called baristos? There were the plates and mugs and crumbs from previous customers. There was the white noise of conversation and music, without which she might die. There were laptops, Facebook, cell phones. There were dates. There were people rushing somewhere, and there were people with nowhere to go but still rushing.

There was the thought of Alex and the thought of Kyle.

Alex, the man with the connections. Kyle.

On Facebook, Mica found a picture on Kyle's profile of him at a little pajama drug party. She had almost gone to this party, and if she remembered correctly, they were candy-flipping. Candy-flipping is when you do ecstasy and LSD at the same time. Four mattresses were laid together with blankets and sleeping bags. Kyle was in the picture. He was in the foreground, off of the mattresses, sitting with his fingers laced, arms tucked hard against his torso. He was studying something to the left, out of the frame, or perhaps out of everyone else's reality. Three other people were sitting cross-legged, with high posture, staring straight toward the camera at nothing. They were wearing masks of various animals. Some of the animals were smiling and some were faceless.

Mica despised Alex for giving in to her. She despised him for being less affected by it than her. She felt like some high little girl he had permitted to pleasure him.

She clicked Home.

She clicked Home and every time the door opened, people looked. They hid their glances. They checked their phones. They rushed through looking for people so they

could wait and start again. Mica dreaded Alex texting her and she dreaded him not texting her. She dreaded Facebook, and she dreaded her cell phone, and she dreaded the door swinging open.

The door chimed and Mica's aunt Amy entered the coffee shop. Any moment she would see Mica and tell her she looked like shit. Mica forced a smile at her aunt, who was thirty-three and loved to smile. She waited through the line, ordered her beverage, and approached Mica with a hug.

"How's it goin' girl?" Amy asked.

"Good."

"You party too hard last night?"

Mica smiled genuinely. "You know me."

"Tell me about it."

"I'm not going to tell you about it," Mica said.

"You'll have to slow down one of these days."

"I can't. My career depends on it," Mica said.

"Your career depends on it! You can throw parties and take pictures of them, but you don't have to get crazy with everyone else, Sweetie."

"Amy, I think you're forgetting all the times I've seen you get shit-faced. Remember Easter? The night of *Easter Sunday*?"

She laughed, "Not too much. You know I'm just givin' you shit."

"How's Rachele? Has she picked out a name for her baby?"

"She's naming her Sophie."

"Sophie? Okay, I seriously know at least ten future babies named Sophie."

"Yeah? It's a good name. They're going to do great."

"They're going to do a lot better than most of my pregnant friends, that's for sure."

Amy laughed, "'Tis the season."

"Pregnant season?"

"Mmhmm," Amy laughed again.

One of the Baristas called for a "mocha soy-latte whipped" and she got up to claim it. Mica hoped it was to go. Amy brought her drink to the table. Mica was looking at her laptop, but she seemed to be staring past it at nothing. She had forgotten to reanimate when Amy sat back down.

"I saw you last night," Amy said.

"No."

"You were getting out of a car downtown. You were with some guy."

"Oh, that was Kyle."

"You guys were holding hands."

"Oh, yeah?"

"Uh. Yeah?"

"He's my friend."

"Does this mean you're over Alex?"

Mica perked up and, for a second, thought she could cry. She mentally pursued the tears out of habit, but they did not come.

“I’m just asking, hun.”

“I’m over Alex either way.”

“I’m just glad if you’re handling the break up okay.”

“I don’t know if I am handling it okay. Right now I’m just trying to surround myself with friends.”

“That’s the best thing you can do. Did you guys have a lot of the same friends?”

“We do now,” Mica said. “I had way more friends than him before he met me. Now, half of my friends hang out with him more than me.”

“Ouch.”

“And it’s really hard to not talk to him.”

“If he hurt you, he isn’t worth a second of your time.”

“That’s how I need to think.”

“Is everything else going okay? How are all your online projects doing?”

“Okay, I guess.” Amy didn’t really know about the website. She thought Mica earned her money from promoting events and shows online. Mica owned a site where people could post pictures of girls getting dirty at EDM shows. She never took pictures or tagged people; she only created the website. Earlier that week Mica had received a text from an unknown number, saying “Take down your website or fucking die you cunt.” But it was too lucrative to take down.

There was a silence. Neither of them knew where to go with the conversation from here. Mica was still clicking Home, out of nervousness now.

“Well, I need to get going. You know you can call me anytime.”

“Thanks.”

They hugged and Amy walked out slowly, savoring something or questioning something or perhaps just trying not to look like she was escaping something. She knew Mica was having some kind of crash from hard drugs. Mica knew she knew. Mica cared that she knew.

Mica found the picture of Kyle at the candy flipping party again. She wanted to be with those people. She wondered why Kyle was not on a mattress. She thought she might text him tonight. He might be pissed at her for not hooking up with him, but she did get him very high for free. Mica thought, also, that she might cry tonight. Maybe she would go to a party and cry in someone’s bathroom. Everything—her career, her friends, her ex, the people who threatened her life—it was all too much at once.

The door chimed. Mica was spacing out again. Every noise was delayed as if the only occurrences were the ones she remembered to acknowledge. She shut her laptop and left.



## Contributors

**Naomie Barnes** is a native desert rat who migrated to North Idaho after graduating from Arizona State University. Though having lived in the area for three years, she still enjoys experiencing the wonders of the Pacific Northwest, such as: spring, fall, winter, temperatures that dip below sixty degrees, and riverbeds that actually hold water.

**Ernest Bauer** is an Idaho native (Priest River) who is finishing his final semester as a full-time student for the second time at North Idaho College. After twenty five years he returned to the Graphic Design program in 2011 to update his skills and finish the degree he started in 1986. He has been diligent in completing this task and recently recieved a gold and a silver ADDY from the American Advertising Federation for his design work. His goals are to finally finish his degree, and to go back to work in the design field.

**Janice Bronson** is a student at NIC. She has resided in Idaho for the last twenty-five years and considers herself a perennial student. She is currently exploring the possibilities of a writing career, as she has entered retirement and now has time for this activity.

**Lucas Brown** is an instructor of English at North Idaho College. He received his MA in English from the University of Idaho in 2008.

**Joal Chiu** was born in the Philippines and moved to California at the age of five. He spent fifteen years in the city of Los Angeles along with his brother and sister. He has a passion for cars, respects and loves anything art and creative. After graduating from high school, he moved to Idaho to get away from city distractions and focus more on his career goals. He attended North Idaho College and graduated from the automotive program, but wasn't quite sure of the career he had chosen. After he graduated, he went back to school and enrolled in the graphic design program. From this day forward, he is hopeful that one day he will become a great all-around graphic designer, one who will make heads turn and hopefully make his parents proud.

**René E. D'Aoust's** first book *Body of a Dancer* (Etruscan Press) was a Finalist for Foreword Reviews "Book of the Year." Recent anthology publications include a prose poem in *Animal Companions*, *Animal Doctors*, *Animal People*, which is used as a text at Ontario Veterinary College, and a critical dance essay in *On Stage Alone* (University Press Florida). She teaches online at North Idaho College and Casper College, lives in Idaho and Switzerland, and helps her dachshund Tootsie write a blog (bicontinental-dachshund.blogspot.com). For more information, please visit [www.reneedaoust.com](http://www.reneedaoust.com).

**Karl Fletcher** is a life-long resident of Idaho, leaving only long enough to experience the world through the eyes of a soldier before returning home to the Pacific Northwest. He lives in Post Falls with his wife and four sons.



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**Jeffrey Gerhardstein** teaches English composition at NIC and is the author of a chapbook, *Make Plans for Darkness*. His poems have appeared in *StringTown*, *Elysian Fields Quarterly Review*, and other independent journals.

**Madison Hawk** is an amateur photographer. She grew up in Spirit Lake and is currently still living there while attending NIC. This is her first year at NIC, and she plans on getting her business associate's and then moving on to a university somewhere.

In 1969, **May Jordan** served in the Marine Corps during the Vietnam War. She has a bachelor's degree in English from Fresno State University. She published her first poetry book, *Dreaming of Horses*, in 2006. It is about her and her brother's horrific experience of being abducted in the summer of '64. Her poetry book is available in a few independent bookstores, Hasting's in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, and Auntie's in Spokane, Washington. Recently, her poems have appeared in *Clarkstreet Review*, *Plato's Tavern*, and the *Penwood Review*.

**Liz Patterson** is a communications major at NIC with a passion for public speaking, psychology, and storytelling. She has been avidly involved in writing since childhood, and when she is not studying for classes, she is most likely working on a novel. Apart from writing, she enjoys music, travel, philosophy, and looking for adventures.

**Timothy Pilgrim**, a journalism professor at Western Washington University in Bellingham and former instructor at North Idaho College, is a Pacific Northwest poet who has published over one hundred sixty poems, mostly in literary journals and anthologies of poetry, such as *Idaho's Poets: A Centennial Anthology* (University of Idaho Press) and *Weathered Pages: The Poetry Pole* (Blue Begonia Press).

**Sandra Rasor** has lived in North Idaho for most of her life with a couple short forays out and about. Those forays occurred when living in paradise, but also in poverty, was not acceptable. She is a long time member of the Monday Writers Group, founders of Five Minutes of Fame in Sandpoint. She lives in the country with her husband and pets. Her children and grandchildren all live nearby and provide her with lots of subject matter.

**David Reece** was born in Fresno, California, in 1983. He spent the first twenty-three years of his life in the San Joaquin Valley of California. He currently lives in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, where he is studying for a degree in English. He would like to thank his wife and three daughters for their patience, understanding, and love.

**Gabrielle Roglin** is a full-time college student at NIC, and she has lived in Idaho for over eight years. Her major is English, and she'll be graduating from NIC in the spring of 2013 with her AA. She enjoys writing and also enjoys photography.

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**Stephen Sapp** is getting a start on his education degree at NIC. He works on Lake Coeur d'Alene, and lives for summer, spending time with his wife, and walks with their dog, Tucker. He has always enjoyed writing and sees it as one of the purest ways to express yourself.

**Jennifer Stevenson** is a full-time student, part-time writer, and twenty one years of age. She spends her time thinking and writing, writing and thinking while working with kids younger than five. Her inner child gets to come out and play at these times. She hopes to double major in English and secondary education, which later may lead to a master's. Her dream is to one day become a writer.

**Jill Stevenson** works at an elementary school in Post Falls and enjoys outdoor activities like camping, hiking, snowshoeing and taking pictures of scenery and people. She has four children, four cats, and four dogs.

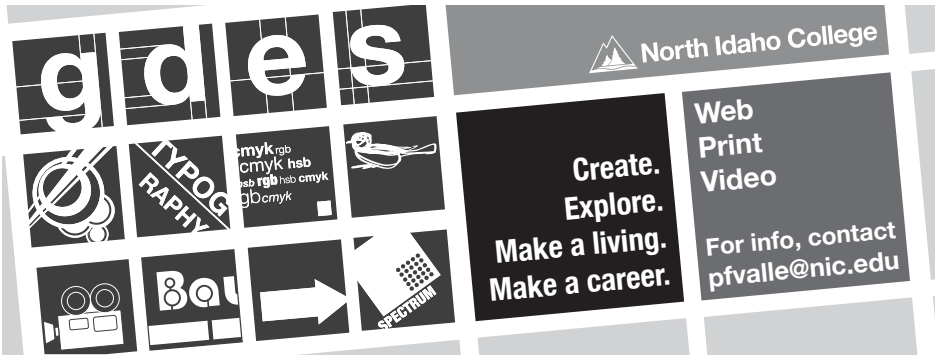
**Aubrey Stribling** makes money by counting money. She is highly suspicious of advertising, and likes movies. She also used to live as described by the old folk tune "This Land is Your Land," except the part about the Redwood forests, and the island in New York. *Habla español.*

**Daniel Lee Troxell** is a storyteller. Born in Krasnodar, Russia, he was adopted at age two and was brought to Idaho in 1995. Daniel enjoys telling stories through the mediums of prose literary fiction and filmmaking. He is a general studies student at North Idaho College, and he will be returning to Biola University to receive his bachelor's degree in film production.

The following contributors declined to provide a biographical statement: **Kacie Kennedy**, **David McKerracher**, **Jack Ortiz**, and **Broderick Pellow**.

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**welcomes submissions of any genre of literary or creative work** for its 2014 issue. Submissions of poetry (3-5 poems per submission), prose (5,000 words maximum) or black-and-white artwork (any style or medium) may be sent via email. We consider work by any member of the North Idaho College community—including students, faculty, staff, and alumni—and by residents of Idaho's northern five counties.

No previously published work can be considered, but simultaneous submissions are welcome. Please include a brief bio with your submission. More information and complete submission guidelines are available at our website, [www.nic.edu/tcr](http://www.nic.edu/tcr). Submission deadline is **January 31, 2014**, for May publication.



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