

*The Marr's Field Journal*



Volume 26 2015-2016

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Memento Mori | Madison Sumner  
*graphite pencil, paper*

## Six | Emily Sturgeon

Set yourself on fire, my friends!  
Drink in the morbid air,  
Cruise on a sea of telescopes and cradle your old painted rocks carefully between your grasping fingers.  
Turn your face up to me with charcoal irises and burn promises into my skin.  
Tomorrow, when gears have stopped churning and you have run your cynical engine out,  
I will read the scars.  
Life is but a game of dastardly suns.  
Words lick me. You feathery thing—I want to put more coats on because you scare me.  
Hand me a teacup at bedtime, but fill it with gin instead, and I will offer myself to the battle of Angels  
You will take up your paintbrush and find the secret within your hallowed heart,  
the knife which knows no sound mind.  
Gorge upon the misinterpreted tendrils, Swear your life to them,  
Cry alone in a jealous towel,  
And tomorrow curse your limbs upon the wretched moon.  
Set your souls on fire, friends, because,  
what does a lonely gas station know about our sins?  
Probably more than we do.  
We, the loose cannons, the dipping sunset, the tripping fairies,  
have dipped our kindred fingers into the deepest bubbling fervors of this life,  
and all I can bring my tortured lips to pour into your reach is  
“sometimes I sit on the side of the road too. Is that enough to stop you”





Modern Day Icon | Marguerite Powers

*black ink, bronze ink, white acrylic paint, gold spray paint, sharpie, ballpoint pen, coffee, t-shirt paint*

## To Pimp A Butterfly Speaks to Kendrick Lamar, 2014 | Benjamin Nims

for your life, let these stories  
vibrate within you—the rattling sound  
in your ribcage  
echoing will watch

a flight of shivers migrate through  
your ready throat—only then will

the rhythms transcend you  
and our broken bones  
fester under your skin...

for we are the greater, more numerous  
than any comprehension of yours—  
and the unspeakable thing's  
utterance is what we demand,

the space that grows wide about you—  
things experienced, vast as continents,

and you are our translator,  
as your idol was our prophet:

our history is, after all,  
repetition, but time itself,  
like links of iron or circular steel  
can break, and history

shatter



You ask me about the movie  
Perplexed by the black heroine  
“she can’t like the prince, he white!”  
I smile and cringe and crumble inside  
“im white, and you like me!”  
“that’s different,” she says sneering  
“you mr warner.”  
the ink that flows through us is the same  
it’s bruised purple Southern blood  
infected with history and infused with iron  
but the scars that line her face and back  
have not healed  
she can feel the ridges  
with her tiny brown fingers  
do not show me the picture  
of the white child, and the black child, and the brown  
child, and the yellow child, and the green child,  
holding hands.  
in some kind of bullshit Khumbaya  
there is no such refuge  
they are allowed no blissfully ignorant state of sanguine  
I want you to  
show me the picture of the parents  
using their color cut out children  
in a proxy war  
show me faceless adults standing  
with arms crossed  
watching their little gladiators fight  
on all fours like dogs  
show me the wisps of whispers of  
hate and prejudice flowing out of their  
sour cellophane sound makers  
and flowing into undersized ears  
like hot smoke  
those ears couldn’t even hold a hoop  
or a secret



Shadows | Prestley Bramlett  
*photography*



Going Against Nature | Allison Grant  
*ceramic*



Jellyfish | Samantha Worono  
*watercolor, black sharpie, silver marker*



## A Gentle Knowing | Liz Adair

I met a man, tall with brown-gray hair  
leaning against a brownstone in New Orleans.

I said, “I’ve never been here before.”  
He nodded.

His face blended with the morning fog, his eyes shone out  
of a distant face, I couldn’t recognize him without  
the wooden boundaries of a picture frame  
He said:

“I think I would’ve liked knowing you.”

Can we sit once  
again in the back of dark theaters inhaling cologne  
smothered jackets?  
I want our hands to sweat like they did  
and I want to feel soda-condensation on my fingertips.  
I don’t know how Avatar ended, but I know

my skin was numb and the weight of me on top of you made  
the red-upholstered seats groan.

I want to call myself Bright Eyes

I want to look into my mirror and see bright eyes—  
glassy and red-rimmed  
I want the pressure of roof shingles  
scraping my skin  
as the years pull apart into sticky red clay and  
I want to still be waiting  
on the upside-down boat for you.

Can a stranger know that I loved the sound  
of chattering creeks, or feel what I felt  
when the red liquor-heat touched my blood

Does he know the way you touched me beneath  
my skin?

I am always standing next to a brownstone in New Orleans,  
always talking to ghosts, stalking phantoms,

Always fearing the harsh knowing of those who  
have seen me at my electric  
highs and shaking lows, those who have seen  
me reveling in purple bruises and glazed eyes

“Do I know you?”  
I recognized his face, usually seen between  
a 1976 Ted Nugent poster and a black-and-white  
of famous men playing golf.  
He stared into my every fissure, hollowing me  
out.

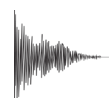
I stuffed my hands deep  
into cotton pockets.  
“Do you know me?”

I waited for admonition, staring  
intently at my left boot—  
scuffed on the heel—  
then at my red wool gloves

The man smiled and said:  
“I would’ve liked to have known you better.”  
I expected harsh words  
but his was the gentle knowing of the dead.



Motor City, USA | Alex Cruz  
photography

 [Click here to listen to a reading of the poem by the author](#)



Sorry | Emily Sturgeon

I veer to the left on light snowbanks  
Souls fell here - on new days,  
when grey dirt was intuition  
and morning slept in keen blood.  
See now, souls lick bare the sour  
ground  
and wonder how the dawn thickens.  
I am a liege, have resolved myself.  
“Kiss me clean” said in vain.  
“and put on my head anew.”  
I’m sweetly stretching thin heartlines



Starburst II | Madison Sumner  
*oil, canvas*



The Sitting Model | Xinyao Zhang  
*charcoal*



## Another Night (a glosa) | Lauren Pratt

“And further still at an unearthly height,  
One luminary clock against the sky

Proclaimed the time was neither wrong nor right.  
I have been one acquainted with the night.”

Silence first; yellow streetlights  
and old oaks threw patterns onto concrete.  
The obelisk of a Southern god stretched far  
and further still at an unearthly height.

Abruptly, singing through my chest—  
a bell. Decorous and deep,  
decrying crumbling tradition from  
one luminary clock against the sky.

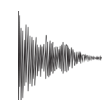
It woke some from their dreams;  
did they hear it in the marble halls?  
The clumsy words across the door  
proclaimed the time was neither wrong nor right.

The people went home from their stand;  
the schoolhouse door is closed again.  
Observer from another land,  
I have been one acquainted with the night.

—Cabeza from “Acquainted with the Night” by Robert Frost



Architecture Collage | Samantha Woronoff  
old fabric, ribbon, acrylic paint, black sharpie, white marker



[Click here to listen to a reading of the poem by the author](#)



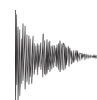
## Happy Family | Lawson Mohl

In the wooden house upon the hill  
Baby cried for love and milk  
Papa slept, bottle in hand  
While Mama lay buried in the land.

Fire flickered in the hearth  
Hollow footsteps walked through the garth  
Somber bells chimed over the terrain  
The family bound in mournful chains.



Untitled | Anna Despeaux  
*ceramic*



[Click here to listen to a reading of the poem by the author](#)



Bottles | Jamie Reschke  
*watercolor*





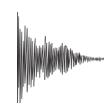
Life in Color | Allison Gant  
*ceramic*



Two-Tailed Chimera | Jeanne Wells  
*print*



We boys do big **things**  
    we hit things  
    we break things  
The woods nearby,  
    The one with flybys,  
    filled with memories,  
    calling out each time  
    we drive past.  
Forts, fights, fairs  
    Lie within these trees.  
    Tricks and dares,  
    Still hiding a scare.  
But, our neighborhood is empty,  
    All of us scattered across  
        the  
            country  
        Some lost touch,  
        Some lost hope.  
The woods have not.  
The woods believe we will return.  
The woods crave for those past epic battles  
    And countless hours spent running through its leaves.  
  
It's been some time  
Since we last got together.  
    The distance between each visit is getting  
        Longer  
            And l o n g e r  
While the woods are getting  
    Smaller  
        And smaller.  
The woods wait for us,  
Hoping we'll be back  
    before it's all gone



[Click here to listen to a reading of the poem by the author](#)



Lion | Callie Short  
*white charcoal, black paper*



## A Mississippi Picnic | Almosa Pirela-Jones

Oliver pulled his hood off, wiped the sweat off the back of his neck and fanned himself with his hands. The July sun was high and unforgiving, but nothing was going to spoil this day. Oliver loved Sundays. Lots of kids at school complained about church, but he enjoyed listening to Pastor Greene's stories from the Good Book. His favorite was the one about the short man with the slingshot. Last Christmas, Oliver's mother had gotten him a slingshot, but she took it away after he kept firing rocks (and anything else small enough to substitute as a missile) at people.

"Eat your sandwich, boy," his father said, jostling his knee a bit. "How ya feelin'?"

"Scared, prob'ly," his older brother said.

Oliver punched his brother in the side as hard as he could. "I ain't no chicken, Robbie!"

His dad and brother had been going off to the woods meetings for a long time without him, and while usually after church Oliver went home to watch Rosy cook dinner and play checkers with Mother, this Sunday he begged his father to take him along to the meeting.

Oliver squirmed in his clothes. They were shaded under the trees, but he was still sweating from the heat of the sun and from the heat of the fire. Oliver couldn't understand why the men would burn a cross at first, but he figured maybe it was a sacrifice for God. Looking around, Oliver saw nothing but familiar faces. There were his father and brother, of course, and there was his father's friend, Mr. Williams; Mr. Postman, the post man; their old man neighbor, Mr. War, who never stopped talking about the damned Yankees blowing his damned arm off in Vicksburg; and Pastor Greene.

"We've got a special treat today, folks," Mr. Postman said, standing from the checkered blanket he'd been eating lunch on.

"We caught us not one," Mr. Williams said, rising as well, "but two coons."

The two men disappeared behind a thick nest of trees with low-hanging branches, and Oliver couldn't tell what they were doing until they reappeared dragging two niggers, all tied up. One was really big and strong looking. The other was a skinny little thing, about the same age as Oliver. Mr. War threw some rope to Mr. Williams who caught it and started looping it around the older boy's neck.

"Y'all should've had this done before we got here!" Moses moaned.

"We was at church receiving the word of the Lord—same as you," Mr. Williams said.

"Amen," Pastor Greene said, patting the well-read black leather Bible next to him.

Oliver heard a weird noise, and he turned to the little boy and noticed he was sniffing and gasping for air and tears were rolling down his face. It was strange because the big nigger was just quiet. Mr. Postman kicked the little boy in the stomach and told him to shut up, but that only made him cry worse.

Oliver watched as Mr. Williams threw one end of the rope over a tree branch and pulled it so that the older boy was standing on his toes. He stopped pulling. "Give me a hand, Josiah. I don't feel like knotting it around the branch."

Together Mr. Williams and Mr. Postman hoisted the big boy into the air, and Oliver sat mesmerized as he thrashed and bucked. He made a bunch of gurgling noises. It lasted seconds or hours maybe. And then there was quiet. Only the snuffles of the little nigger. The two men huffed and released their hold of the big boy. He didn't move, and he tumbled really close the cross. A little bit of the fire got on him.

"Ain't he hot?" Oliver wondered out loud.

The men all looked at each other and burst into a chorus of laughter. His father gave him a couple hearty whacks on the back. "Happy birthday, son," he said. "This here was your introduction to manhood."



Dembones the Dragon | Phillip Estes

wire





Oscar de la Renta | Jamie Reschke  
graphite, Color Aid collage, black gouache

## Winter Girl | Madalyn Atherton

Sometimes I peel back my skin to see if I'm as frozen on the inside as I feel.  
My breath is frost, colder than the dead of winter,  
And words spin icicles in the air only to melt a moment later.  
Nothing burns, not even whiskey or gin,  
And especially not you.  
You thought you'd melt me,  
But I just froze you over like a walking Ice Age.  
I can't shatter,  
Can't even crack.  
It's past a want or a need.  
My hair is frozen like a murder victim  
But you kept running your fingers through it  
Pretending that you weren't getting frostbite.  
My touch made you shiver,  
But not the way you wanted.  
You walked away and there was no point in tears.  
Even if they weren't stuck inside my eyes,  
I never would've shed them for you.



[Click here to listen to a reading of the poem by the author](#)



We are all soldiers

It's the twinge in your left knee,  
Some major artery exploding, I'm sure—  
The red space in your mind reflects

The dull ache turned sharp pain  
In your chest—a blitz attack on the heart  
From who? From you?

So you retreat, fall back  
But where is home base when he's gone?  
Your own body betrays you.

Where is your breath  
Where is your brain  
Where is the blood that runs through your veins?

A veteran, you traverse these same fields.  
Adrenaline of battle, familiar familiar  
But the memories transfigure.

This fatality of your remembrance,  
This sense of your death – a corporeal curse. You lose  
Control of your troops and bleed tears

Into the black night until, resigned, you sleep  
And dream of blue kites  
And open your dry eyes

To see a brisk morning.

Once, white walls welcomed you screaming into the world  
Oxygen like foreign fire in your fresh lungs

You remember this and it comforts you  
You are one with the scorching earth again  
Rebelling, rebelling against order of man  
Take what nature gives you and fly.

But

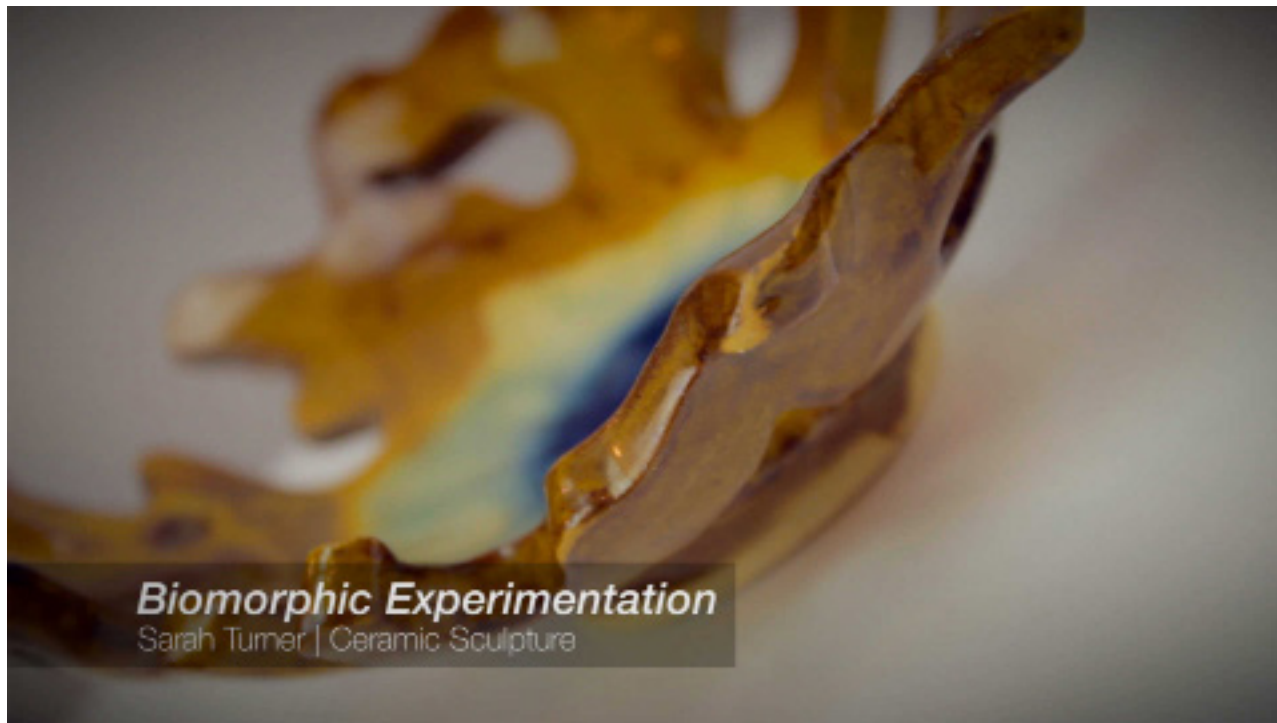


Littered Textures | Jeanne Wells  
*india ink, gesso, discarded paper*



Sound Wave I | Madison Sumner  
*oil, canvas*





Biomorphic Experimentation | Sarah Turner  
*ceramic*  
 click to play



Hazy Mollusk | Allison Gant  
*ceramic*



## One Last Lullaby (Modified Sestina) | Jacquavious James

A soot strangled farm,  
Lysed strings of a violin,  
Fires kindled with paper airplanes  
Once marked by markers tangerine.  
Curled up, not yet asleep in the convertible  
On the cusp of a desert.

Try not to waver, shiver, desert,  
For beyond the farm  
Blood soaks sand a tired tangerine.  
Knives thrum hotly like a violin.  
Passive eyes scan, ever-convertible,  
Cold to hot, like the engine of an airplane.

There are no clouds. The air is plain.  
Water has deserted  
For the most part; the rest, a dirty tangerine.  
The last who tried it collapsed dead behind the farm.  
But there's no time for downcast eyes, nor mournful violins  
Nor wills convertible

Since minds convertible  
Will crash like societies, like airplanes  
In turbulence, like the high school violin  
You never got to desert.  
Like a cropless farm  
Like a rotten, sour tangerine.

Pus from my wounds keep leaking, smelling sweet like tangerines  
Cut wide open on the hood of a convertible.  
Yet there are no supplies to farm.  
Yet there are no kits from the airplane  
That perished with the world that deserted  
Us here, solemn as an untuned violin.

Surely violence will wake before us, violins  
Still unplayed for the losses. Bloody sands still tangerine  
In the blistering desert  
Sun may make us convertible one day,  
Or may send us away, straight as an airplane.  
But until then, rest, and do not heed the farm.

And for you, my convertible child, I'll hum as violins.  
And for you, my child, I'll fold another tangerine paper airplane.  
And for you, my child, I'll make a desert farm a home.



Sutherlin | Prestly Bramlett  
*photography*



Still Life Drawing | Xinyao Zhang  
*charcoal, conte*



## The South's Children | Warner Thompson

You asked: is there  
No Song that will  
Bring rain to this desert?

In the deep South,  
where the rustic antebellum wind blows  
over society stuck in the seam  
between history and reality

we are its children  
the latest born into its vast contrast  
baptized in the mighty Mississippi  
its sins and our own  
hidden by Southern mud

but our Jordan is a graveyard  
2,300 miles  
brown water  
how many brown bodies do you hold?

we are the ears that drink in evening hymns  
sung long and low  
we are those who see  
Jim Crow perched in the rafters  
Like a dark chandelier in a New Orleans tomb

we who learned to walk  
where hate rises like heat from the ground  
have seen the whiskey drinking mean  
of a cowboy hat tipped low  
the slow smoke of burning tobacco  
creeping out of a mouth cutting the air  
with complaints about Niggers  
in the accent that uses g's like bullets

we are the eyes shaded by a past  
the noose still sways from the willow branch  
and it was these hands that tied its knot  
or ones like it  
our hands are not white but red  
forever stained  
by blood drawn before we drew breath

it is said that Southern air is perfumed by wisteria  
but with open eyes we see soot  
and the legacy that blackens the breeze  
a rebel flag flaps constantly, mockingly  
even though the pole is bare

you can plant yourself anywhere in the world  
but you'll still be a magnolia  
they say  
in a molasses tongue lie  
quiet truth carries a sharp axe  
and leaves a split tree smelling more like spruce  
than magnolia blossoms  
the thin wet fiber inside left exposed to the world  
truth leaves a naked form  
shielded not even by shame

we like you are monuments to histories we cannot possibly understand  
living memorials to battles lost and won  
but ones we do not recollect fighting

But I know that if  
the only dreams of your history are pleasant and proud  
then dried blood lives under your finger nails  
afflict yourself with a new insomnia  
of complicated existence  
with a respect for the past that tastes like copper  
and an unraveling desire for forward  
that nips at exposed heels  
“there's no fallin back asleep once you've awakened  
from the dream”  
The South's legacy is written in ink  
But not yet carved into stone.



## Spill | Madalyn Atherton

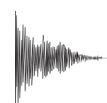
I will disappear by degrees,  
Laid out over white like sheets like states  
While I open my veins with felt-tip razors  
And spill my life onto pages like ink blots  
Barely organized into coherent words.  
Over and over again, tapping arteries  
until nothing is left of me but stains.

Words bubble out of my mouth  
Like gasps of desperate blood  
Hardly formed into phrase.

Do not fear words spoken in desperation,  
Gasped between sobs, streaked with tears.

Do not fear the abyss.  
Welcome it staring back at you  
With vacuum eyes and a sly grin  
And whispered promises of sleep.

Slip in, choking back  
Gasps for air and light.  
Breathe in the dark white  
And let yourself unravel.



[Click here to listen to a reading of the poem by the author](#)



Daniel's Atmosphere | Sarah Turner | front view  
*ceramic*



Daniel's Atmosphere | Sarah Turner | side view  
*ceramic*



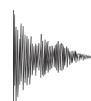
## I Can't Recall Why I'm Here— | Alex Heldman

That's where they found me:  
between a quiet, serpentine ocean,  
and that foreign noise  
you made as you ran away to the night.  
In violet hours  
and salted scenes,  
a truce.

It doesn't quite make sense,  
you yell in vacuums or was it  
spitting in cars too fast for  
little bratty kids and that friend  
you knew back when you were lonely  
and she was a reflection in the window.

That wolf tongues the dimples by your spine  
broken across fields of quartz and feldspar.  
And those once concrete pigments,  
impressions of impressions,  
you must squint to see them play.  
Stars of crimson song flutter away in the static.  
Hand in hand while we chant forgotten psalms.

I know there's no current there.  
And I know the electrons have run away  
but I can't help but feel  
before it's over,  
that some spark will hold us together  
like stones in a wall,  
or a baton  
some poor vagrant waves in the dark.



*Click here to listen to a reading of the poem by the author*



Portrait of Zack | Zackery Dailey  
charcoal



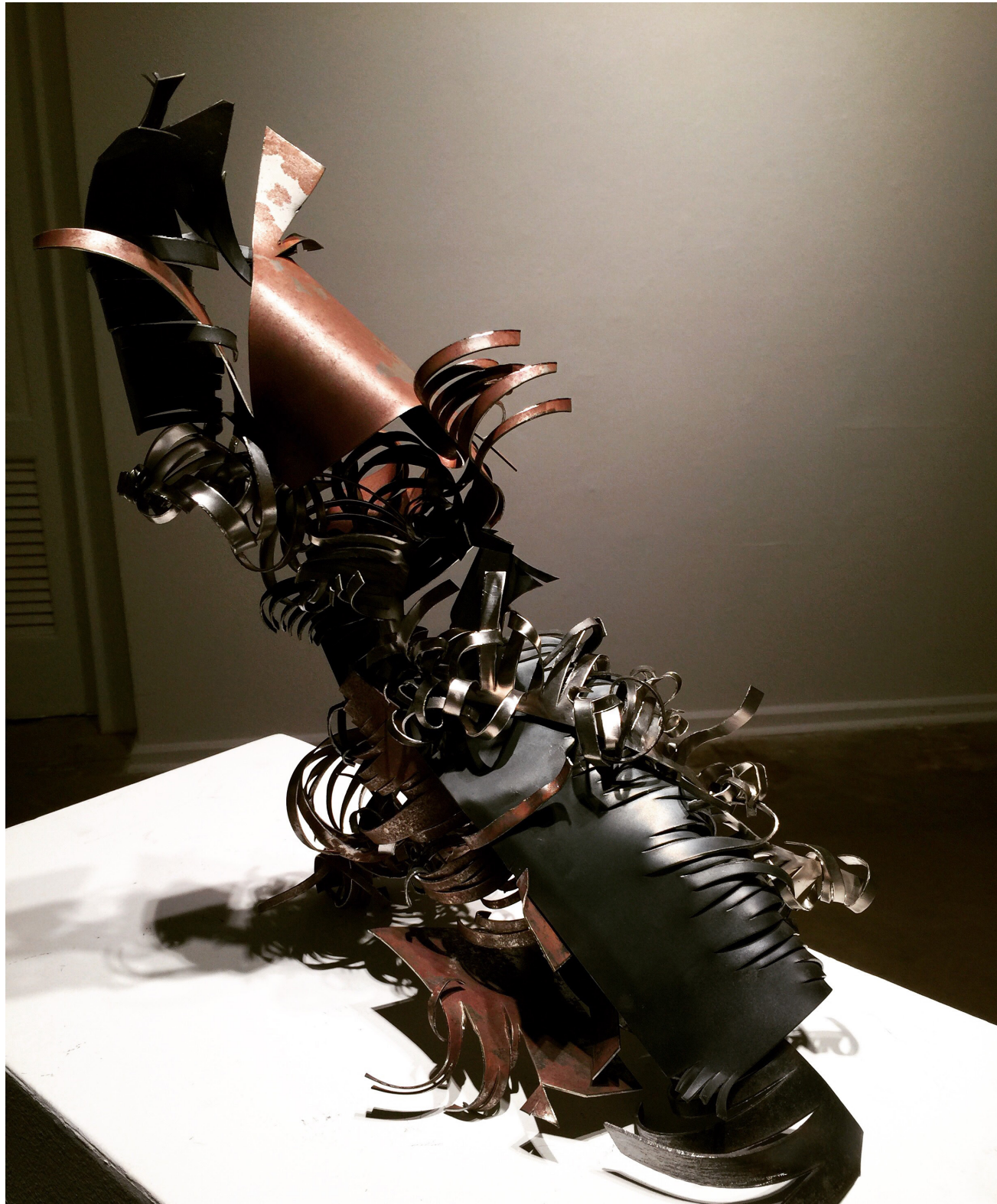


Steady Goin' Under | Brianna Miller  
*dance*  
 click to play



Untitled | Whitney Lloyd  
*ceramic*





Untitled | Whitney Lloyd  
steel

## The Alphabet from A to Zog | Turner Spurlin

Amy attempted an axe with no avail  
 Beatrix tried bludgeoning but broke the bat  
 Catherine couldn't carry the cannon to the castle  
 Dennis demanded drowning but no lake was had  
 Emily, for emaciation, was enlightened, feasts were an eternal occasion  
 Felix required fire but forgot flint or matches  
 George got em twice but was grabbed by guards in masses  
 Henry tried a hatchet but hastily hit his own hand  
 Igor ignited dynamite but at the wrong interval  
 Jasper just jettisoned some old rocks and minerals  
 Kyle had a kin with killer kick except that he was only 2' 6"  
 Linda liked lice in lavender sheets, but they were washed once a week  
 Margaret messed with a microscopic virus,  
 Noel nearly nicked the noble tyrant  
 Oscar only threw a Kleenex tissue  
 Peter picked a pistol, his aim, the issue  
 Quinton quit quietly but kept quarreling with insanity  
 Rust was reprimanded for his rifle at the raffling  
 Stephen struck out with seventy spears  
 Theodore tried tanks but was brought to tears  
 Ursula unarmed her superior then was struck by a meteor  
 Veronica failed victimizing him in the media  
 Wilson wired bombs wrongly in the West Wing  
 Xavier exalted with the trigger, could not pull the thing  
 Yusif yearned to learn what him and others couldn't tell  
 Zog the 1st of Albania just can't be killed



[Click here to listen to a reading of the poem by the author](#)



Today, you wake up.  
Where doesn't matter; it isn't your place in the world, so it might as well be the void.  
When doesn't matter; you're never up early enough. You never have been. Never will be.  
Today, you wake up to your phone's alarm going on and on, playing Your Favorite Song! Before  
you've finished wiping the sleep from your eyes, you're singing right along:

Simple words, simple words,  
Written four and four~  
Pop culture's least common  
Denominator~

Controversial as it is, you do get up. It is almost mistakable for a useful act. You go about the process of waking up, piecing the bridge of Your Favorite Song together in the back of your head. No dice, as usual; why stop being vacuous now, especially after so many years of doing so? After too many years. Might as well condition yourself for the [indeterminate time frame] now, stringing as many nonsense phonemes together as you can, so that you can recycle them later. It's an originality scam, you see, but you're not so aware of the fact that your scam's the least original thing to come from the darkness between your ears.

Being the undisputed master of non sequitur, inconsequentiality, utter pointlessness that you are, you go away from wherever you slept. You don't care where, or even remotely mind. Why should you, after all, when you think no one else does? Isn't that a bit critical to be? Well, seeing as you can't trust yourself to be wrong about that matter, you figure you must be absolutely right.

Good on you.

Okay, arrival at Equally Pointless Coordinate! You made it, though it took some effort. Dear mouth-breather, you may catch damselflies in your mouth more often that you like to admit, but I respect your dogged contempt for refusing to ask for aid. Left and right are surprisingly similar in the end, after all, and telling if an object is truly solid from centimeters away is nigh-impossible. Still, you were successful, and may now choose a prize. Applause for you, applause for you!

Would you like to read from your prepared script of nonsense syllables? Perhaps you're the type to stuff your hole, rather than vacate it; there appears to be a satisfactory supply of existence to gorge yourself on. Perhaps you simply want to witness others, judge them for their purposeless waking, deaf and dumb to anything that could vaguely stir ironic considerations.

Have you chosen? Surely not.

You repeat the options to yourself.

You repeat the options to yourself

you repeat the options to yourself

and come up with nothing.

Today, you wake up. You go away, and you struggle. Both alone, and among others but alone. Eventually, you will go somewhere, and you will become not awake, fully unaware that you may have never been awake to begin with.



Just the Two of Us | Kylar Dietrich

*digital painting*



## Mile Marker | Emily Williams

Mile marker  
156 is a myth.

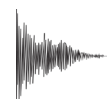
I cried through coiling  
cotton fields and a barren April sunset  
driving too fast in the haze

mendacity—a noun, from the Latin and Tennessee Williams

I'd like to blame you Margaret  
but if not you I would have lost him  
to the airstream  
the apple core the wine cork  
the smooth caress of silk sheets  
cluster flies and farmhouses

He was a head-on collision with a semi  
automatic hypnotic paralysis  
crossing ephemeral borders

He was a shadow  
wasn't he?



*[Click here to listen to a reading of the poem by the author](#)*



That's What Our Hamburgers Are All About | Jamie Reschke  
*oil, canvas*





Untitled | Jamie Reschke  
*ceramic*  
click to play



Heritage Flight | Alex Cruz  
*photography*





My Prophetic Dream | Alex Cruz  
*photography*

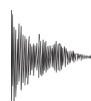
## Raleigh | Warner Thompson

You love to be picked up and spun around  
You long for the air because  
You dread the ground  
I loathe the thought that one day  
You will be too heavy to lift  
Your coffee skin has no more room for bruises  
I think when I hold you up high above my head  
You are searching for a type of grace in the sky  
I wonder if you mean mercy  
I dread the cicada crescendo that marks a Southern evening  
Because I see the fear in your eyes when the sun's colors start to run in  
the sky  
And it is time for you to return to the place that knocks out your teeth  
And screams in your tiny ears  
I want to always make sure you have money for popcorn at the movies  
And someone to hold onto while you try to skate on clumsy legs  
I want to put shoes on your feet that fit  
Because I have seen you run through open grass with your eyes closed  
Like someone who knows the value of freedom  
I want to take you to a place with a reckless disregard for reality  
I want to keep you in the stars  
Because you have their light  
But I know I have to put you down  
I am nothing more than a seasonal escape  
That you may never remember



## The Night Without My Volto— | Alex Heldman

I know the way to Heaven, I just  
chose to put the wrong foot there  
and drank his light instead.  
Dancing photons across the space,  
the same for you as me.  
But as there you dream those things you dream,  
a fructose tongue and opal waters,  
and the spiced savory sun you spoke of,  
I phase through air of leaden beats and neon static,  
dangerously effervescent.  
I wish you could see these halogen rivers, sweetheart,  
because what soothing power meditation has.  
Or was it powder? I don't know.  
All I know is they taste of lime  
and sour smoke and desperate dreams  
of being opaque rather  
than this that lets the day in  
like any other under the lamp.  
In all degrees rain and windows fall  
the color of the flowers you carried  
to kiss life back into the altar,  
and I'm so sorry.  
Forgive me my trespasses,  
even if they are strangers to you  
and will be strangers to me by daybreak.  
Of course I pray you are barren, sweetheart,  
for your man by man can be no patriarch.  
But if you're not  
and Fate betrays,  
I say to Hell  
with eloquence,  
and to Hell  
with grace.  
For all you gave me  
were concrete eyes  
and clandestine sweat  
and a careless parade of time.



[Click here to listen to a reading of the poem by the author](#)



Emotional Parallel | Ginny Sturgill  
*photography*



don't talk: you, too, would punish her  
    who stole away in the night  
the secret words between us,

and stripped them naked in menacing  
congress chambers  
and television screens  
    and newspaper headlines

printed in permanent ink. you came  
    to me first, you must remember,  
    you alone with my neck  
at your fingertips,

you who plunged into me  
and were satisfied.

the woman on the line, listening close  
to the talks we shared at night,  
    on my doting and your drawl

and the thousand dreams I shared  
    with you alone...do the hands  
    whose lines I memorized  
    burn with your fury,

or have a new set of eyes  
    already set themselves  
    to learning them?

only now, as I stand in front of  
this dirty bathroom mirror, do I see  
    the ruins left in your wake,

of the girl who rushed forward  
in raucous battle and was rapturously  
    conquered,

as though she could be surprised  
to find herself in hell  
    after falling  
on your sword.

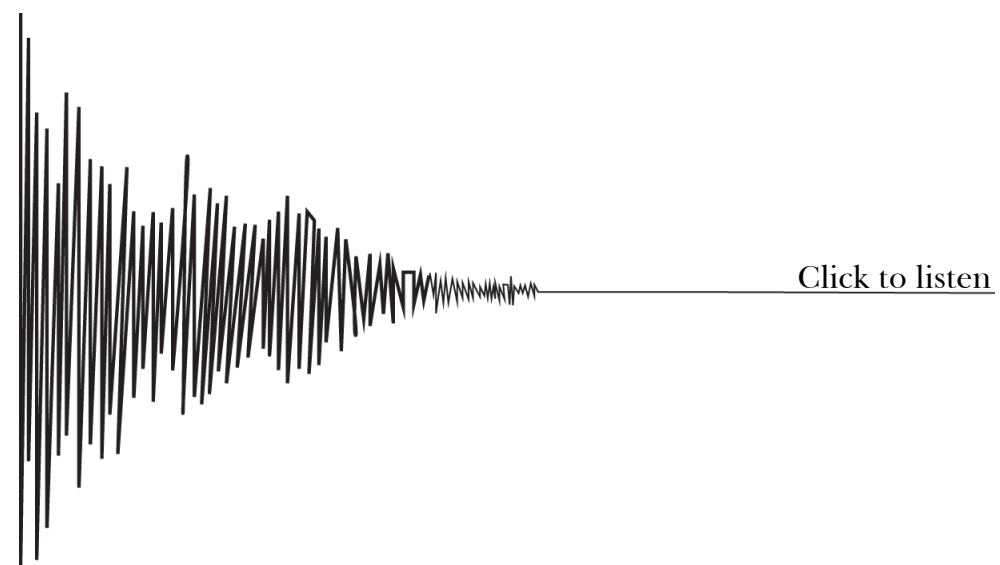


Colorful Bird | Jamie Reschke  
*watercolor*





Untitled | Whitney Lloyd  
*steel*



The Nation of Mirrors | Marcus Swain  
*guitar*

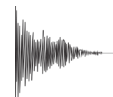


Bigger | Madalyn Atherton

I'm so much bigger than this house of blood and bones  
trying to hold me here to the brown-black earth and twisting trees and streams of marrow  
flow alongside Cassiopeia and Orion, making a home in this tiny, time-ticked house  
that can barely leave this thirsty dirt, the fire found a home in my aching chest and frontal  
lobe and burns out of my eyes angry at everything, at him her and that over there full of thick  
clouds from smoke bombs and riot sticks and screaming skyscraper beams that hardly hold  
this city of metal and screws together inside my writhing cerebral cortex where I keep try-  
ing to bash these saturated memories of you to pieces of broken glass, not the mosaic kind,  
just useless broken bottles on the side of a highway with no streetlights sunk into the waiting  
grass for miles, I try to burn you out but you've never been a part of everything for me and  
sometimes I have to lie in the rain, daring lightning and taunting thunder just to remember  
that the sky screams too and it's probably screaming at you for all that carbon dioxide I spent  
on tears and screaming no don't go and heaving, gasping can't we work this out of sight, but  
you're stuck in my stupid brainstem and I've tried to cut you out but everyone said it was too  
dangerous to try again and you're stronger for what you've been through but I've never, never  
felt as weak as I do now, ligaments separating from bones, blood fighting veins, atoms shov-  
ing at each other, my thoughtless mind disconnected from my useless silent-screaming mouth  
why are you just standing there but these people aren't being ripped apart they're collapsing  
into themselves, not nebulas but rotting things, dying to fall to feed the greedy things that live  
underneath and too few believe in these monsters and all we have is words for swords and that  
feels too light and weak in my small hands and it's not enough to matter but these things are  
all we have so it's going to have to be because we're the only ones screaming for these people  
with no tongues or vocal cords and our fangs are may be small but they're sharp and dripping  
black ink and we won't close our lips over them for the world no matter how hard you hit or  
how much red, red blood you suck from our necks we'll keep hurling screeching blades from  
our small hands and open mouths and with a million of us eventually one of them has to hit



Atami Night | Yanbing Wu  
*photography*

 [Click here to listen to a reading of the poem by the author](#)