

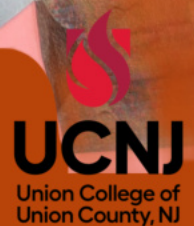
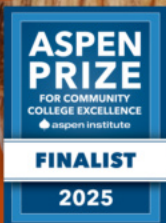
# THE SHEAF

Literary and Arts Magazine



## The 5 Senses

Summer 2023





# Contributors

## Editorial Board

### Co-Editors in Chief

Pamela Bazan & Izabella “Caelan” Kopacz

### Designers and Editors

Pamela Bazan, Lily Corso, Jay Durst, Izabella “Caelan” Kopacz, Rosebertine Michel, & Maya Simpson



## Acknowledgements

Kevan Pidgeon-Hammock

Student Services Specialist, Office of College Life

Ms. Saralia Bontempo

Associate Director of Branding and Design

Lidia Costa-Fernandez-Castillo

Graphic Arts Academic Specialist

Dr. Melissa Sande

Associate Vice President of AA & Dean of Humanities

## Disclaimer

UCNJ does not discriminate and prohibits discrimination, as required by state and/or federal law, in all programs and activities, including employment and access to its career and technical programs.



THE SHEAF EDITORS RESERVE  
THE RIGHT TO EDIT  
SUBMITTED MATERIAL TO THE  
NEEDS OF THE PUBLICATION.

For more information about The Sheaf, contact Dr. Sophia Mitra at [mitra@ucc.edu](mailto:mitra@ucc.edu)  
Office: W-113 Cranford campus.



# Table of Contents

Front Cover	-	Lily Corso/Pamela Bazan
Contributors	-	Rosebertine Michel
Is it Future of Is it Past?	3	Matthew Spohr
Untitled	4	Alyssa Bellante
Streetcar Named Desire	5	Brandon Glover
Sorry	6	Alizza A Mahmood
Evil Eagle	7	Maria Robles
artificial rain, dilapidated innocence	8	Caelan Kopacz
Untitled	9	Leslie Rodriguez
Black Boys in the Moonlight	10	Kalier Brown
Untitled	11	Leslie Ramirez
The Power of Esteem	12	Nyla Williams
Untitled	13	Leslie Ramirez
to be observed is to be loved	14	Pamela Bazan
self portraits	14	Juan Barreiros
Untitled	15	Leslie Ramirez
Lady Taurus	16	Camryn Elise
Untitled	17	Thomas Demkowicz
Pumpkin Patch	18	Sabrina Gallardo
Untitled	20	Leslie Ramirez
Untitled	21	Mayra Castro Carrera
Art in Human Form: Ecstatic Beauty	22	Rosebertine Michel

# Table of Contents

Cotton Candy Sunset	23	Annamaria Perez
Ignorance	24	Alizza A Mahmood
Untitled	26	Max Rodas
My Lover is Laughing	27	Rosebeiry Nunez
I Painted This For You	28	Mirdyne Eugene
Baba	29	Alizza A Mahmood
Fashion is a Political Statement	30	Pamela Bazan
Wish	31	Alizza A Mahmood
She Was the Sun	32	Rosebertine Michel
Backyard Summer	33	Maria Moura
Untitled	34	Roger Fortunato
We all Wear Cloaks	35	Jamie Stefanski
Stars	36	Rosebertine Michel
Platonic	36	Alizza A Mahmood
Is Home Safe Yet	37	Mirdyne Eugene
Untitled	38	Jules Schuttevaer
Collarbone	39	Caelan Kopacz
pthalo	39	Caelan Kopacz
Intertwined	40	Kinereth Fallas
I Do Not Need Books	41	Rosebertine Michel
Estrellita's Estampillas	41	Elizabeth Robles
Back Cover	-	Caelan Kopacz



# Is It Future or Is It Past?

---

Matthew Spohr



# Untitled

Alyssa Bellante

Surrounded by friends,  
dancing the night away.  
Drinks clink and food disappears,  
everyone laughs and sings.

It's creeping in.  
No, not now.

People conversing,  
clouds shading the mind.  
Fire blazing the cold,  
yet freezing in the dark.

I miss her.  
Don't let it show.

Hugs and kisses go 'round,  
but numbness lingers.  
All the warmth,  
yet all feeling is gone.

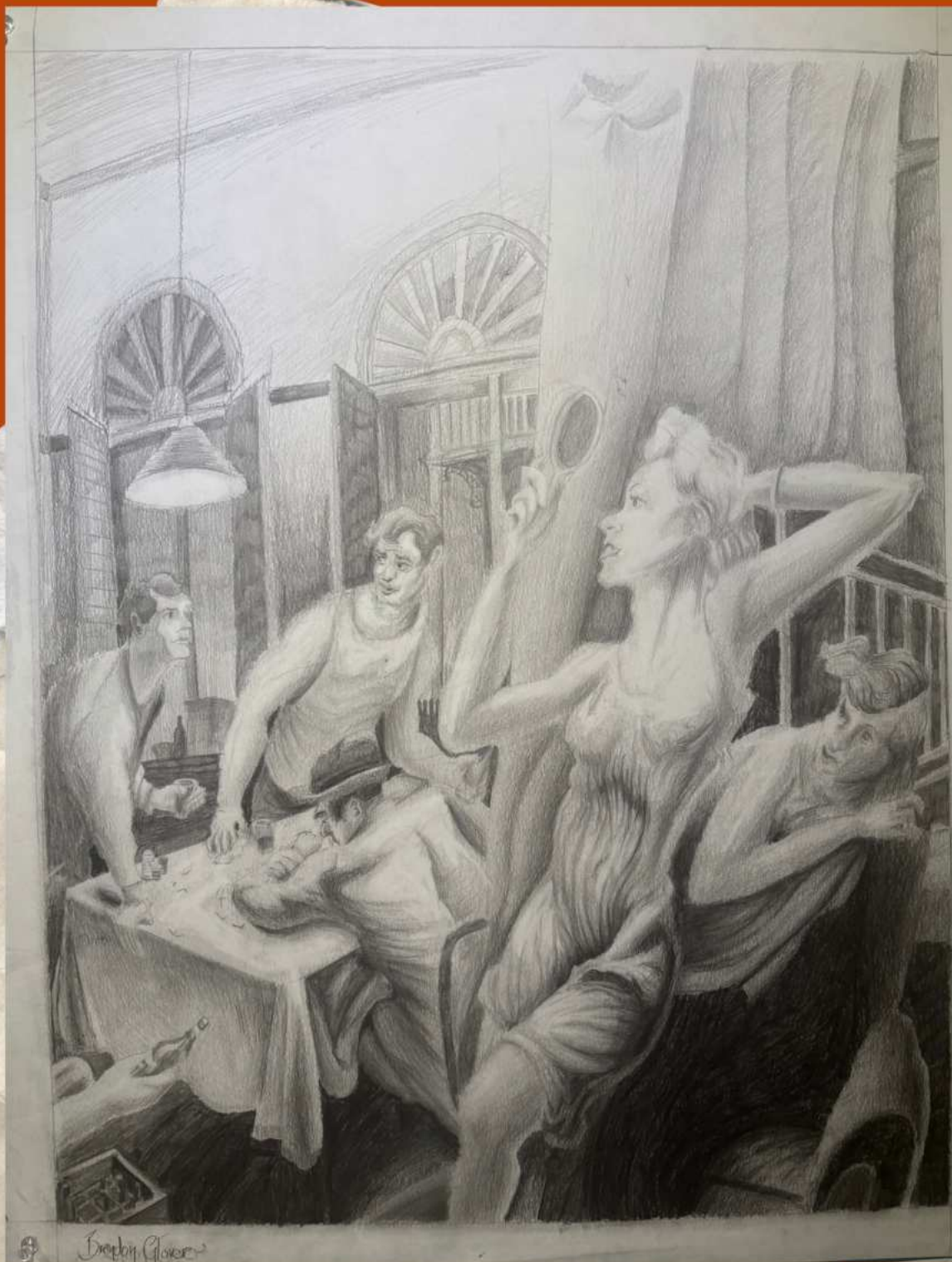
I wish she were here.  
No one knows.





# Streetcar Named Desire

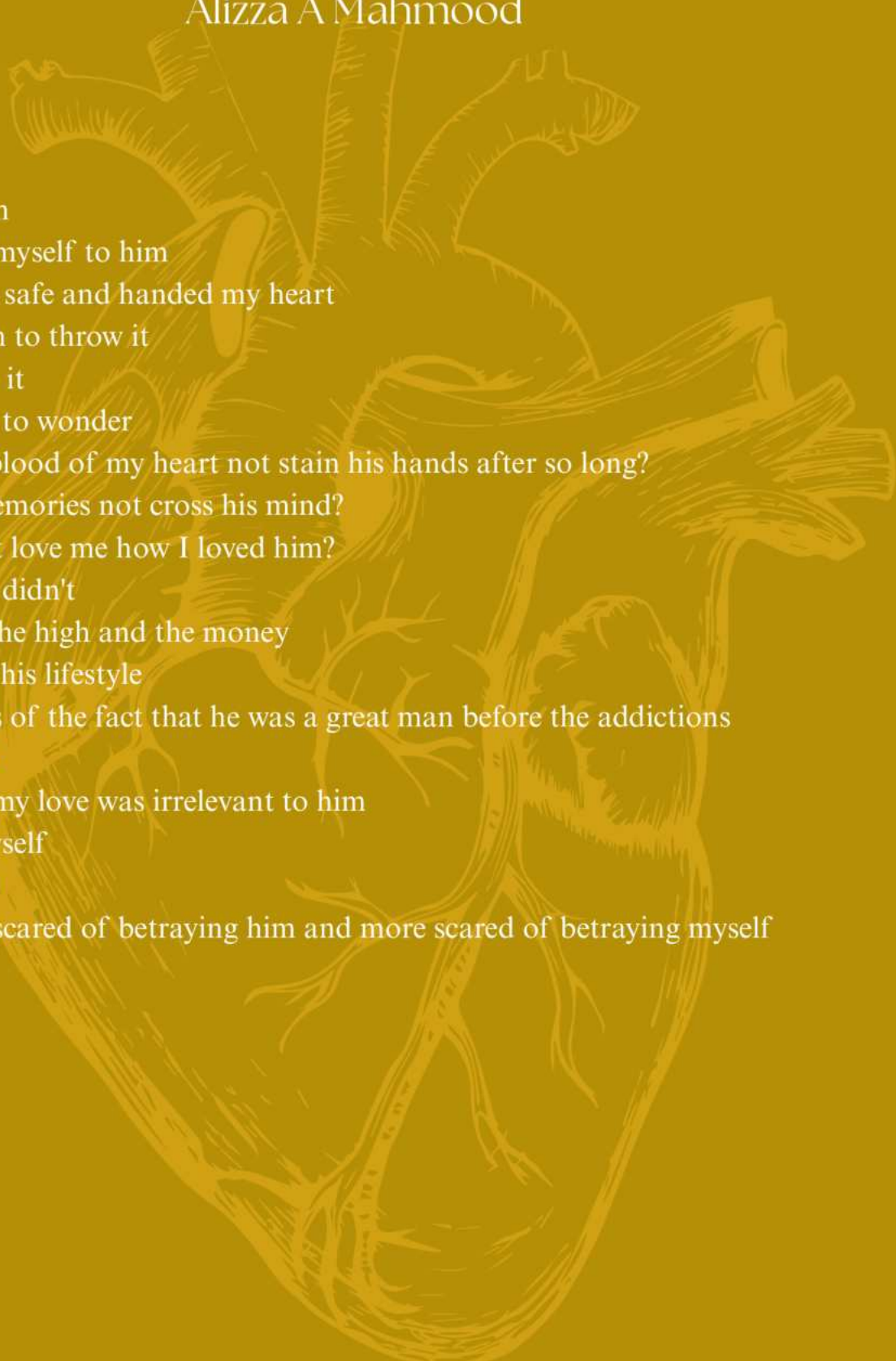
Brandon Glover



# Sorry

---

Alizza A Mahmood



I loved him  
I devoted myself to him  
I kept him safe and handed my heart  
All for him to throw it  
And crush it  
All for me to wonder  
Does the blood of my heart not stain his hands after so long?  
Do our memories not cross his mind?  
Did he not love me how I loved him?  
He simply didn't  
He loved the high and the money  
He craved his lifestyle  
Regardless of the fact that he was a great man before the addictions  
Reality hit  
Realizing my love was irrelevant to him  
I chose myself  
In the end  
I was less scared of betraying him and more scared of betraying myself



# Evil Eagle

Maria Robles





# artificial rain, dilapidated innocence

Caelan Kopacz

bare toes, spaced out on sodden asphalt  
pitter-patter of sweet kisses from the sky  
waterfalls from ridges between thumb  
and forefinger.  
gangly limbs finding purchase in  
new growth, sinew wrapped around marrow  
mousy rivulets pressed against pores  
the taste of home on a lonesome tongue.  
i lost the solace of my ignorance  
sweet child, i miss you,  
i've outgrown you,  
my soles hard on the pavement.  
the rain fills my belly,  
but not with wonder, not with hope,  
i let it swish, bile of plastic and regret.





# Untitled

Leslie Ramirez





# Black Boys in the Moonlight

Kalier Brown

Often criticized and dramatized  
for the way that we live.

People questioning other parents about how they raise their kids.

The sun is shining  
against our beautiful melanin skin—  
glistening and glowing,  
almost always  
way too bright.

I remember watching a movie  
about the Black boys in moonlight.  
A kiss on the beach,  
toes twirling in the sand.  
A dream many dream of  
without ever being given the chance.

Living through a film,  
where lust plays every part—  
lust disguised as love,  
because our homes were never intact.  
Beautiful, pure souls  
tainted by society's views,  
coasting by in life  
as if the car was set to cruise.

We don't get the soft-focus kind of love,  
no slow dances in the rain,  
no perfect scenes.  
But I imagine... it can be, eventually.

Just beautiful Black boys  
inside the moonlight.





# Untitled

Leslie Ramirez





# The Power of Esteem

Nyla Williams



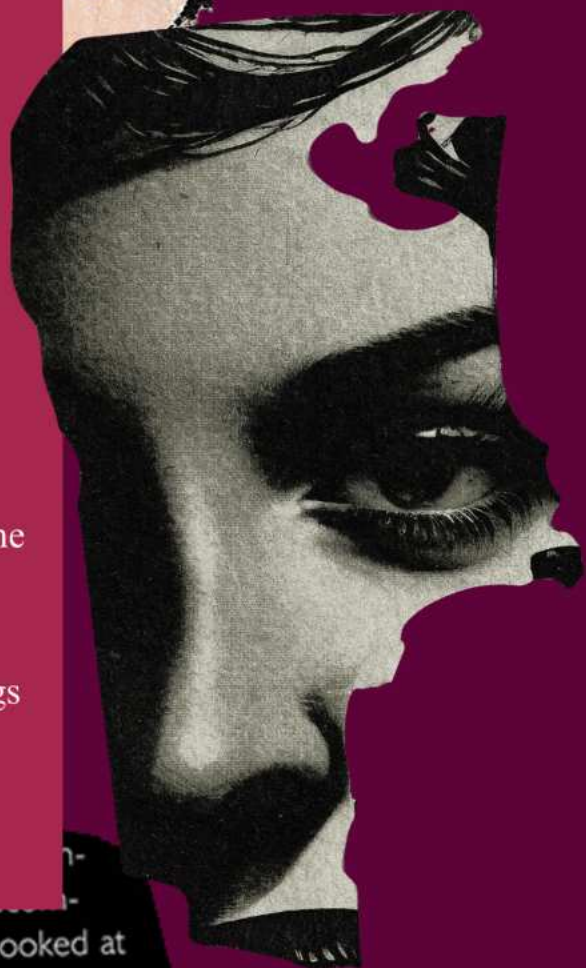
There she stands with an overwhelming heartache  
It's tormenting, it's ruthless, it's breaking

With no depth of confidence  
A costume is her only defense

Tense emotions are typical in hard times  
Challenges of self-esteem taunting her down the line

Proposals of changing just one little thing  
Negative pressure will influence a change that stings

Within herself she one day found peace  
That's when she finally prospered and felt free



...ensive and adventurous  
...ine with its seafood and  
...perhaps the  
...needed freshening. At the time  
...of friends, I had booked at  
...otel (\$\$149) in the trendy



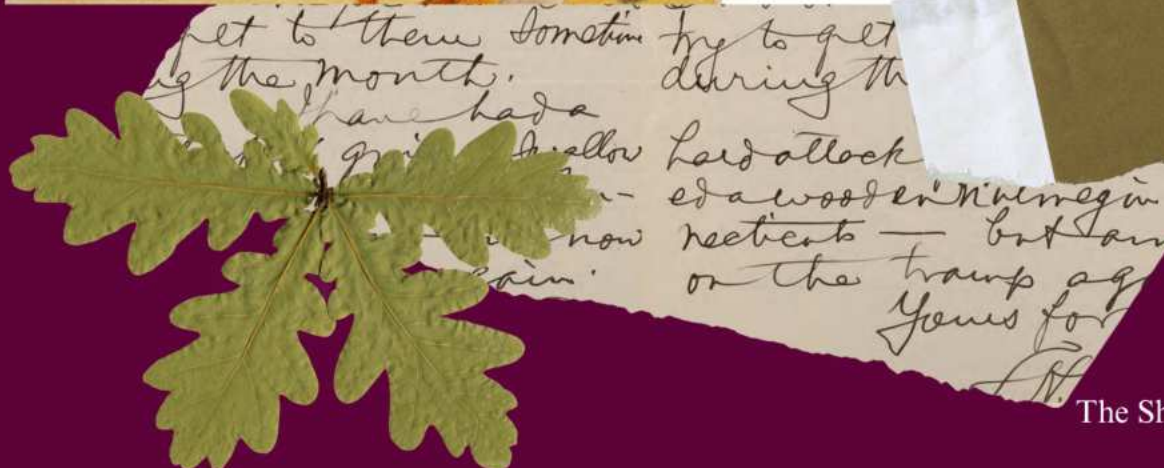


# Untitled

Leslie Ramirez



She would sometimes look at herself in the mirror and ask herself why she wasn't as beautiful as the other little girls. She wouldn't say what was on her mind because she was scared of what people would say to her, like saying that she was wrong or disagreeing with her.





# to be observed is to be loved

---

Pamela Bazan

my lover understands me from the tip of my tongue  
my lover understands me when i cant talk and i hum  
my lover understands me when i go mute  
when i am hungry my lover is astute  
my lover understands



## self portraits

---

Juan Barreiros





# Untitled

Leslie Ramirez





# Lady Taurus

Camryn Elise

Lady Taurus, how you move to your own chorus,  
A heart steady, yet craving more.  
Beneath the sun's golden glow,  
You rise like lilies from the earth below.

Her touch is warmth, her arms a home,  
Her voice makes the heart feel less alone.  
In love divine, she gives, she glows  
Her beauty soft, yet it's power that shows.

Her stubborn fires burn too bright,  
Unshaken, even in the fiercest fight.  
With her flowers, she continues to bloom,  
Even when some days are thick with gloom.

She stands her ground  
By love and earth she is sustained  
In every way, her soul declares:  
Lady Taurus you are truly rare.



## Thomas Demkowicz





# Pumpkin Patch

---

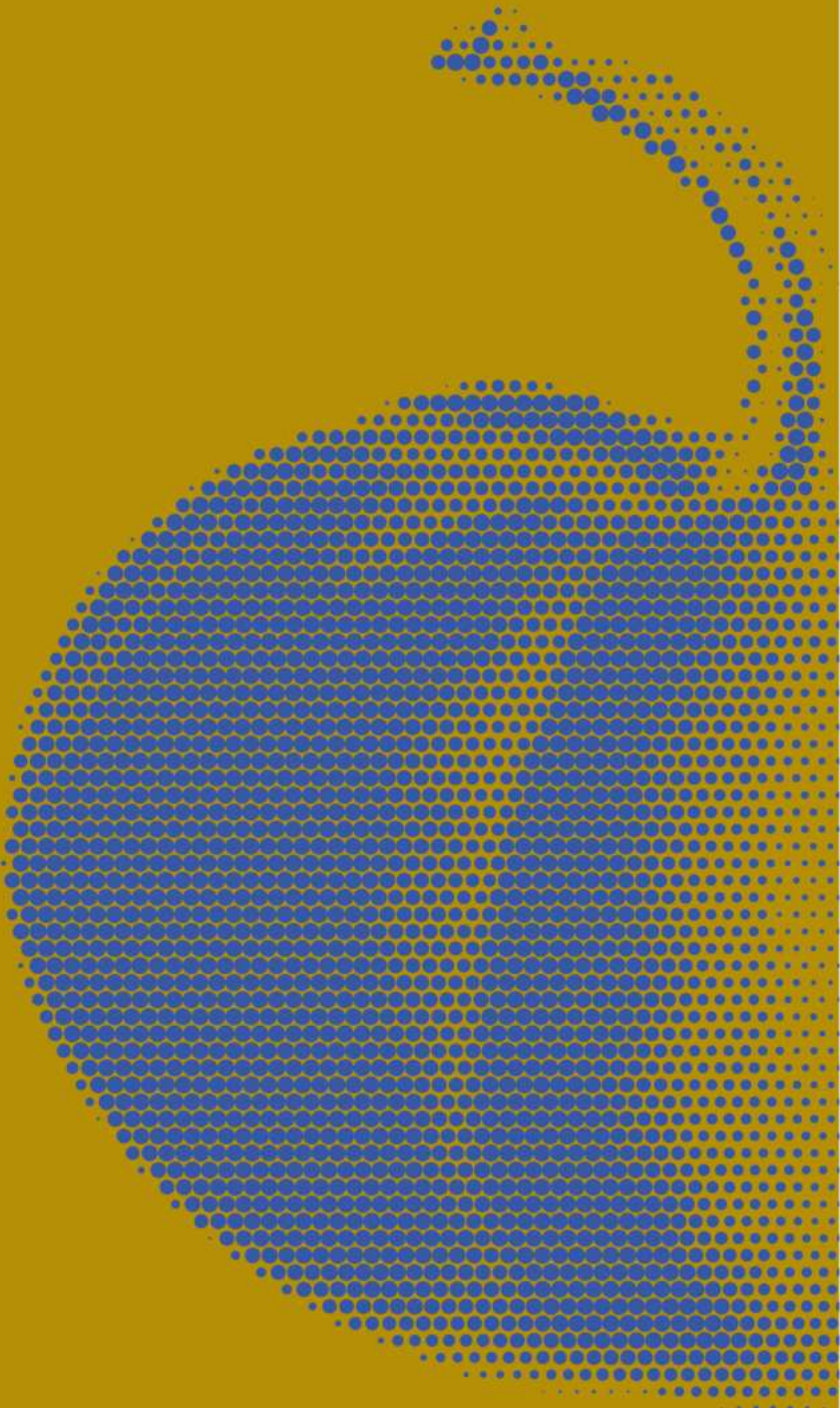
Sabrina Gallardo

In the picture,  
I am two, maybe three—  
Elbows scraped, curls wild,  
grasping the stem  
Of a pumpkin half my height.

The earth is red-clay broken,  
And the air, I remember,  
had the flavor of dust and hay  
and something warm  
Like cinnamon or sun.

I do not smile into the camera.  
My gaze is on the gourd,  
orange and spotless—  
A treasure I meant to grasp,  
Though I could scarce lift it.

Mom is just out of frame.  
I remember her voice,  
laughing softly,  
telling me to pick  
The one that "felt right."  
There were so many  
that year—  
pumpkins,  
And things I did not understand.  
Like why Dad worked late  
Or why grown-ups whispered  
Behind doors.





# Pumpkin Patch

Sabrina Gallardo

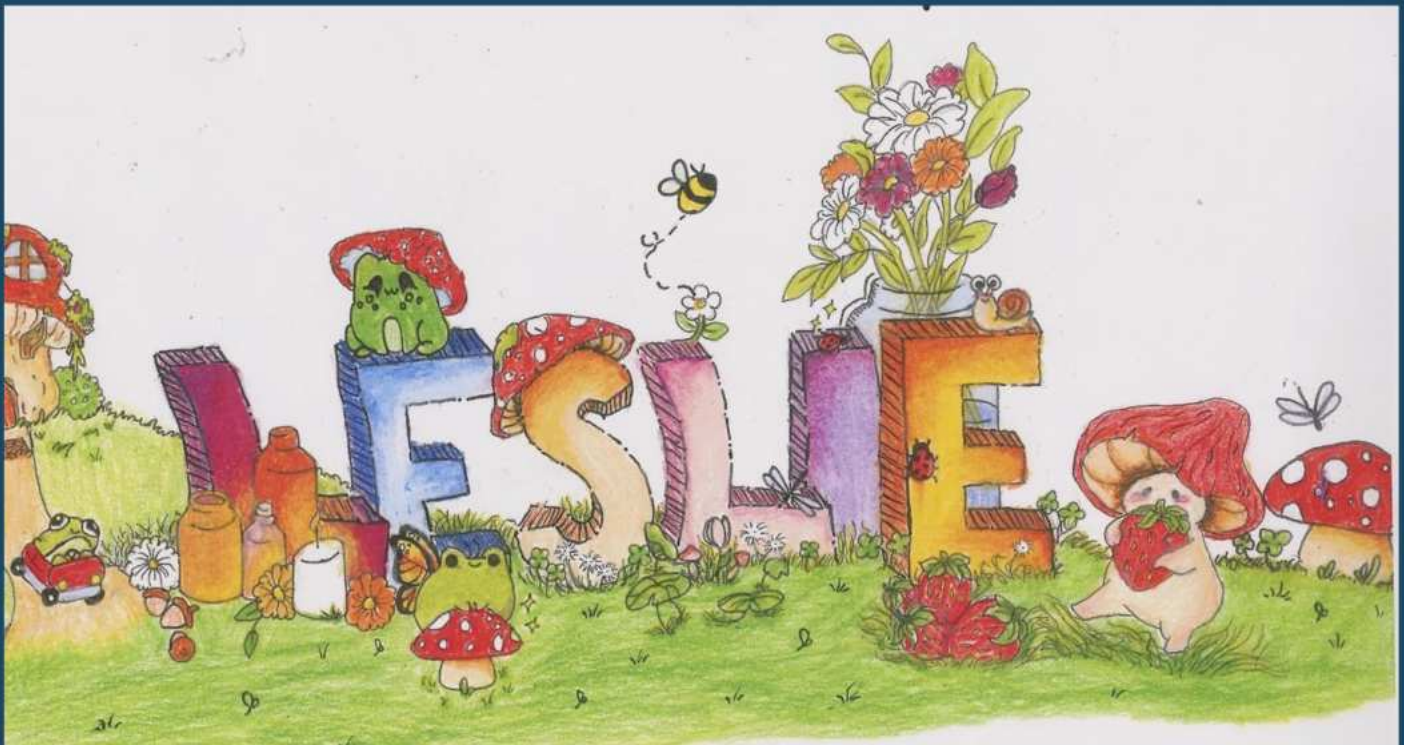
But in this patch,  
There was only sky and soil,  
The hush of October,  
and the weight  
of choosing something  
I'd call mine.





# Untitled

Leslie Ramirez





# Untitled

---

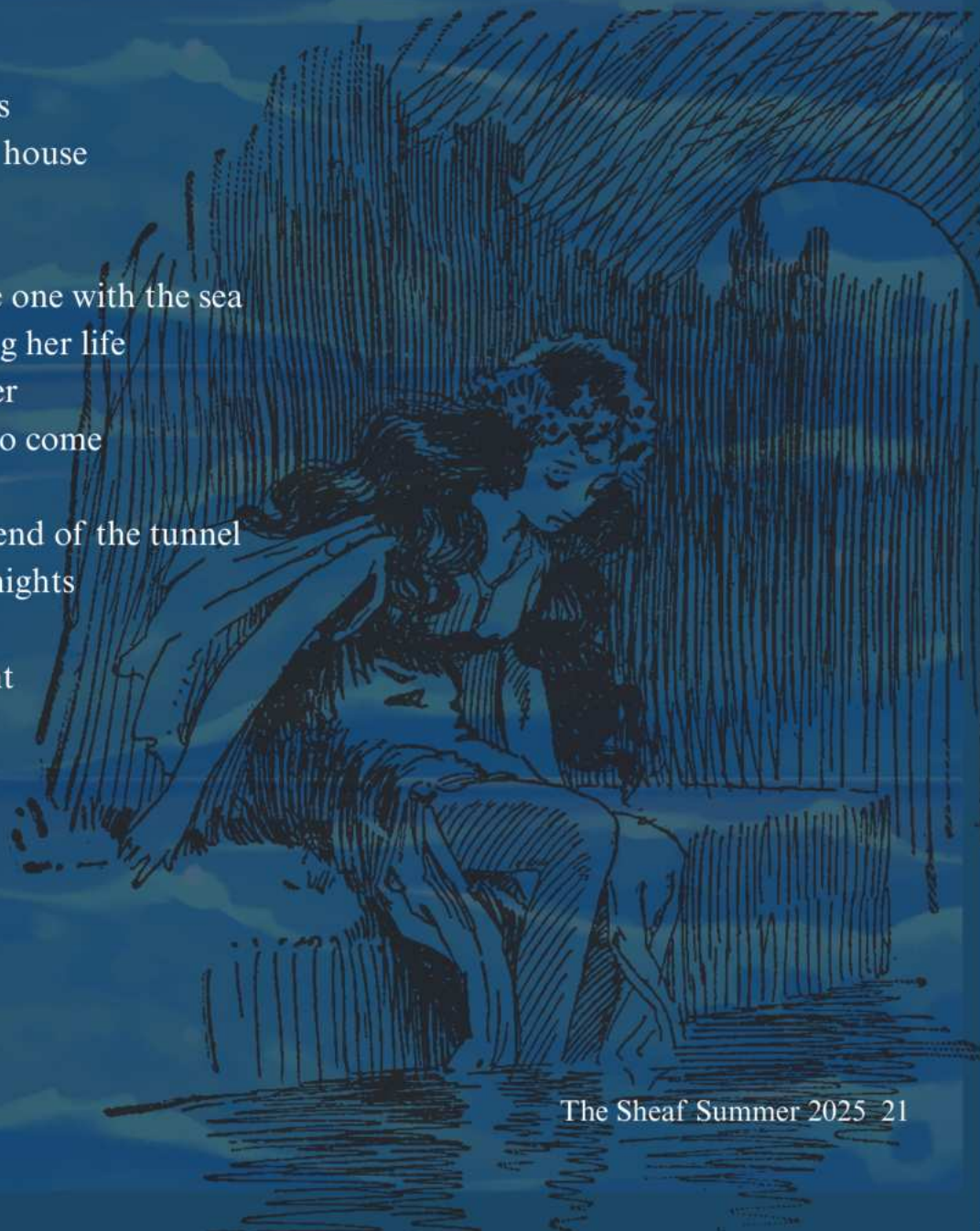
Mayra Castro Carerra

10 years old, wishing to be mermaids  
No worries, living carefree  
Dancing freely with her little sister  
Not knowing what is to come

Enjoying the lilac lights  
Paired with the loud nights  
Jumping like it's a bouncy house  
Living life in the moment

19 years old, wishing to be one with the sea  
Worrying that she's wasting her life  
Worrying about her mother  
Still not knowing what is to come

Looking for a light at the end of the tunnel  
Running away from loud nights  
Staying in bed, rethinking  
Never living in the moment





# Art in Human Form: Ecstatic Beauty

Rosebertine Michel

There are people, when I meet their eyes,  
I am immediately filled with the burning and almost insufferable desire  
To make art out of their existence.  
The way they move their body across rooms mimics the slow movies, filled with  
passion and dimmed light.  
Their lipstick stains every poem, every love letter, every journal entry  
When I see those people, I imagine myself holding their hands under the pouring  
rain  
The water falling on our bare bodies, cooling down the warmth of humanity  
burning in me.  
When I see their lips, I think of all the songs they could sing.  
Their face, a painting, traveling through the centuries, making every history book,  
filling every museum.  
You are that kind of person  
You are the most eloquent poem, mystical like Rumi's  
The softest painting  
The most exquisite wine

My mind is filled with your eyes,  
Which are one of my most beloved scenery.  
I sometimes imagine myself going through them  
Wondering and exploring your brilliant mind filled with gold and sunshine  
I wonder if I can also see a tortured heart?  
Because art, if not about beauty, is about the pain we so desperately need to  
excruciate.  
But with you, I don't hear pain screaming at my ears or beating my heart  
All I see is dazzling beauty  
Ecstatic, calling my name  
Begging me to write about you.



My fingers are overwhelmed and my mind hurts from all the poems and the collages and watercolor paintings I could create mirroring you. I wouldn't know how to describe to others the softness of beauty, yet how obvious it is. How do I begin to explain to them that the warmth of your soul constantly draws me to you? I find it irresistible to ignore the calls of your light. And I am blessed that you, as beautiful as you are, allow me to be the receptacle of your softness.

## Cotton Candy Sunset

---

Annamaria Perez





# Ignorance

---

Alizza A Mohmood

Ignorance is bliss  
We are only as blind as we want to be

The kids who will never understand  
The real circumstance of the truth  
But desire it and are told lies  
I'm not sure how Angelou comprehended ignorance  
But I know ignorance can be bliss  
I know there was a time we all wondered how does the sun come up  
Before science was taught to us  
Before religion was presented to us and we grew to believe

Ignorance is bliss  
For the innocent children who are happy everyday to wake up  
They are fine with the simplest of things  
Hate was never a concept for kids  
They loved all  
Divine love is what I aspire to accomplish but how can I  
When I have hate in my heart  
I have hate for those who treated me wrong  
I have hate for those who left me in moments I couldn't handle  
I hate that I do know the truth of my life  
I wouldn't know how my life would've been if I was ignorant

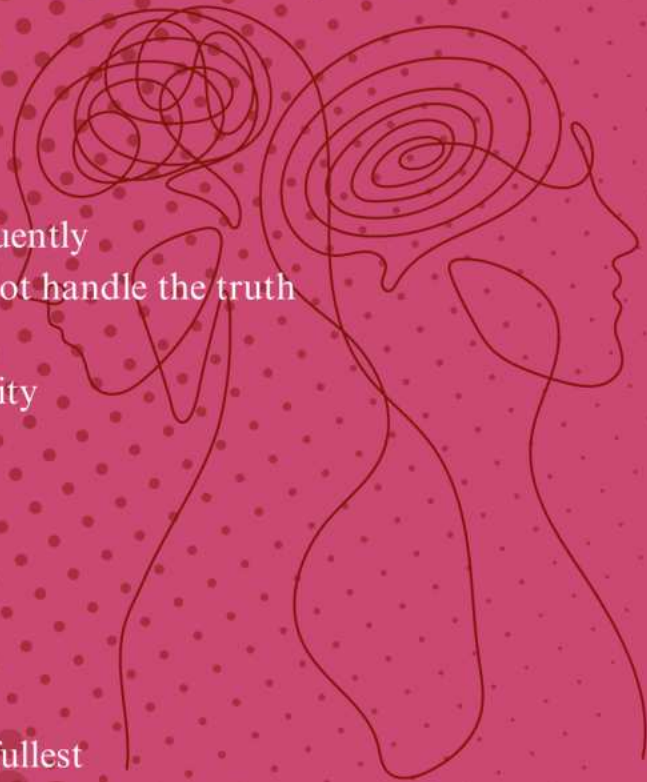
They say knowledge is power  
But they don't want to admit  
It's corrupt  
Don't sit on your high and mighty throne  
When it can be tipped  
By a feather it can





All with my words  
The words I was blessed to speak so eloquently  
But it may be shielded for the world cannot handle the truth  
Truly I don't think I can  
However, what are we without our curiosity  
Are we even human

Ignorance is bliss  
You don't have to worry  
Or stress  
Or have that curiosity  
The kids live on everyday, living to their fullest  
Wake up  
Eat  
Love  
Go to sleep  
Why I wish to be a kid again  
Is so I can forget my knowledge  
Before I knew of the state of my country  
And how my distant family lives  
Before I knew what a corpse looked like  
Before I knew why people are forced to leave the country  
Before the world was seen as dark and scary  
So I can see the world all beautiful again  
So I can be ignorant  
For ignorance is bliss  
But it can be disturbing





# Untitled

Max Rodas





# My Lover is Laughing

---

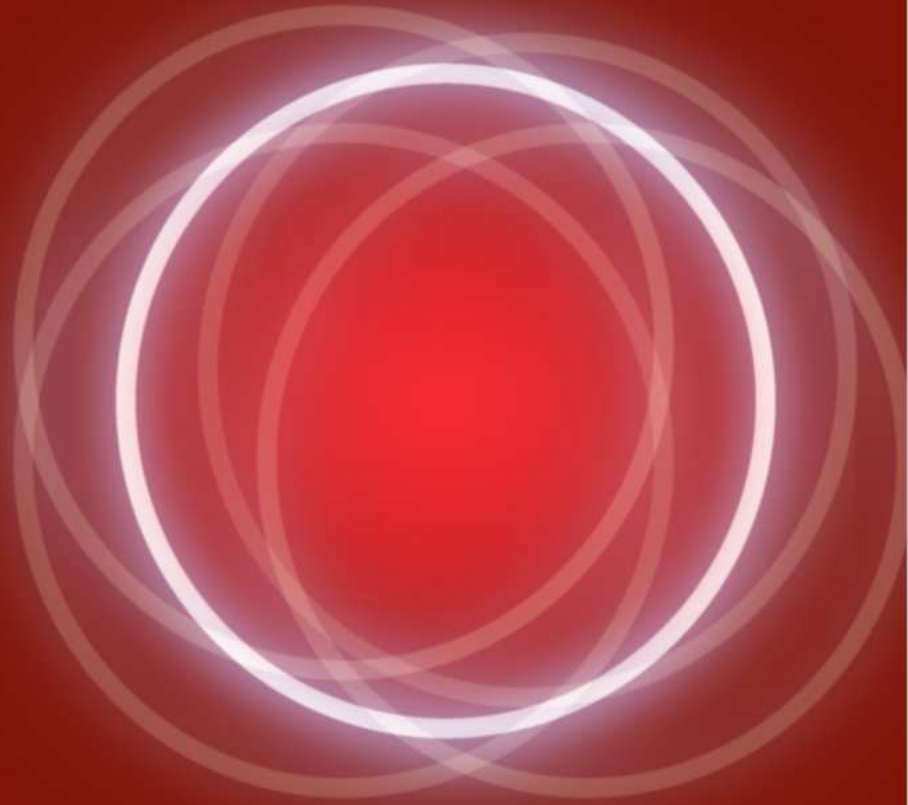
Rosebeiry Nunez

In this photograph,  
my lover is laughing —  
head tipped back, eyes closed like the sun itself  
is something only they can feel.

It was late —  
a cheap diner on the edge of nowhere,  
neon lights buzzing like tired bees,  
coffee cups gone cold between us,  
the kind of night that hums  
quiet and electric  
like every song on the jukebox  
was ours.

There's syrup on their sleeve,  
a curl of hair falling loose  
from the mess of their braid —  
and I swear I've never loved anyone  
so much as in that moment  
when they laughed without thinking,  
without holding it in,  
without saving any part of themselves  
for later.

I keep this photograph  
pressed flat in the back of a book  
I don't lend out —  
not because I'm selfish, but because some things  
aren't meant to be shared,  
only held  
close to the ribs,  
where memory turns soft,  
and safe,  
and glowing.

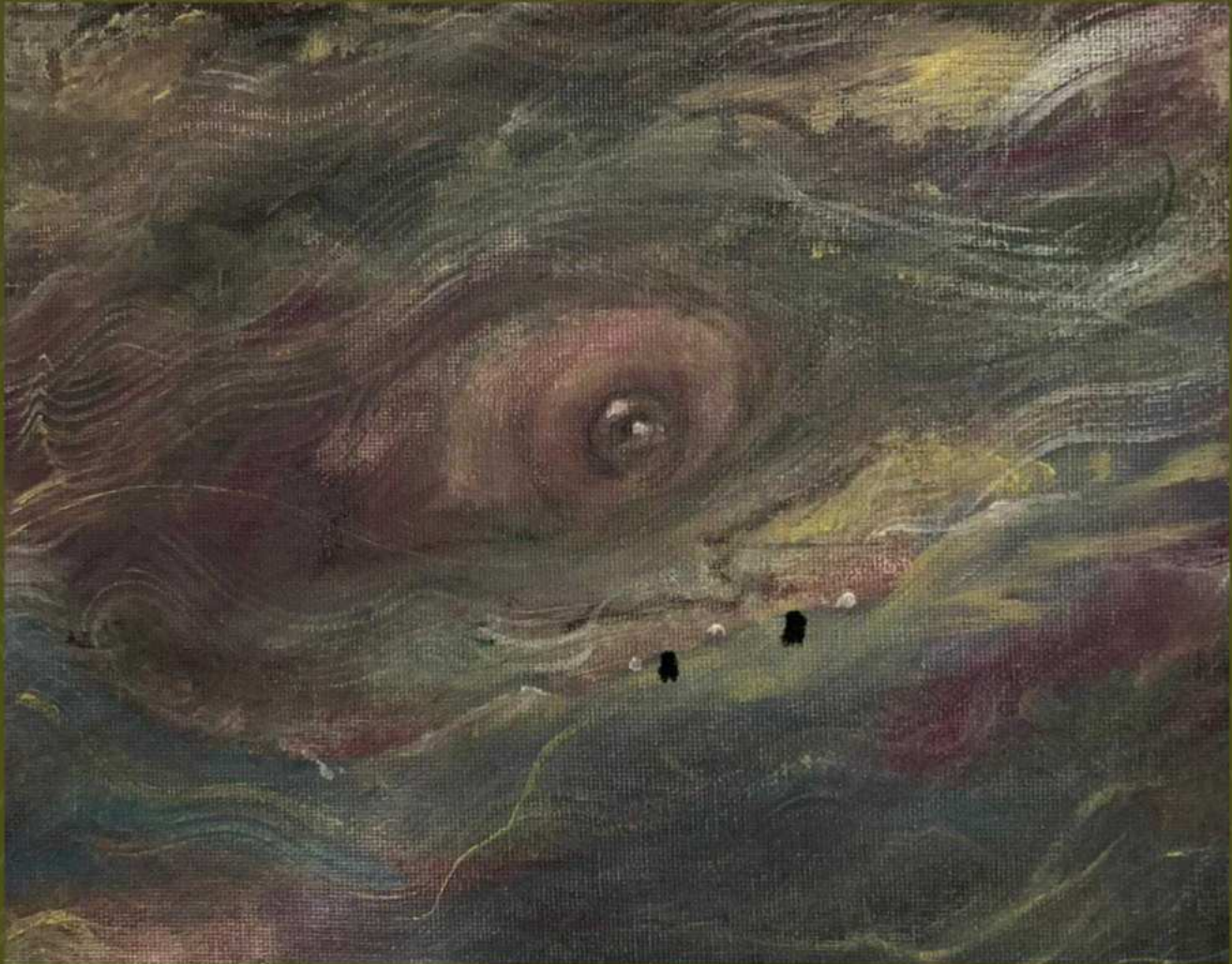




# I Painted This For You

---

Mirdyne Eugene





# Baba

Alizza A Mahmood

I never knew my father  
My mother said he was a good man  
But I never got to see him

He would call me when I was little  
And he would say I was his princess  
And will be forever

Until one day we stopped talking  
I was no longer a little girl and knew the truth  
I vowed to never be like him

Some nights I catch a glimpse in the mirror  
And my reflection is a reflection of his  
I'm my father's daughter

As he sits alone in his house  
And eats by himself  
I sit alone listening to the clock tick  
Eating by myself on the other side of the world

Our last meal together was when I was one  
My family remembers it vividly  
I can't help but wonder  
If God spared me the memories  
So I can deal with the fact I will never know him

My mother says I have his anger  
I have his stubbornness as well  
But I don't know for sure  
He is just a man to me now  
But I wish I could call him Baba again





# Fashion is a Political Statement

Pamela Bazan





# Wish

---

Alizza A Mahmood

I wish for many things in life  
I wish to be successful  
I wish for there to be world peace  
I wish for all my family and friends to prosper and be healthy


But there are also things I shouldn't wish for

I wish for complete silence  
I wish for death at times  
I wish for you  
I wish you were with me, and I forgot the pain  
I wish I could hold you tight  
I wish I hugged you tighter every time we embraced each other  
I wish I cooked for you more  
I wish I made you tea every single time you told me your head was hurting even though you didn't always drink it  
I wish I could sleep next to you one last time  
I wish I could wake up with you one last time  
I wish I could've married you  
I wish we went out to that rooftop dinner  
I wish for your smile to only be caused by me  
I wish for us  
I wish we were meant to be



# She Was the Sun

Rosebertine Michel



I once had a thousand  
desires, but in my one  
desire to know you,  
all else melted away.

~ Rumi

She was the sun





# Backyard Summer

---

Maria Moura

I'm eight in this photograph,  
sitting on the old tire swing  
in my grandmother's backyard.  
The sun is strong,  
making the grass look almost yellow.  
My hair is tied up in two small puffs,  
and I'm laughing at something  
my brother just said.

My sneakers are muddy from running,  
and there's a scratch on my knee  
from where I tripped chasing fireflies.  
Behind me, the fence is falling apart,  
but I didn't notice then.  
I only saw the ice cream truck  
turning the corner,  
the promise of something sweet.

My grandmother took the picture.  
She always said,  
"Hold still, you'll thank me later."  
Now I do.  
When I look at it,  
I hear her voice again,  
soft like the breeze  
that carried the smell of barbecue  
and summer rain.



# Untitled

---

Roger Fortunato





# We all Wear Cloaks

---

Jamie Stefanski

We all wear Cloaks  
Not that thin, shoddy material  
Shipped from overseas  
Tearable and cheap  
This is crafted from the Shadow  
Casted from our subconscious minds  
Then unwillingly draped over our bodies  
Thick, heavy, and fragile  
The material is  
Woven with shields, defenses, and weapons  
One must hope they never have to use

I yearn for a world  
In which the cloaks  
Can be shed  
Tears freely wept  
We don't need to hide  
What is truly  
Inside  
So that the wonders of the world may be unveiled  
Naked  
For unknowing, greedy eyes to see  
Really see  
Just once  
Before the Cloak is whisked back to the shadows  
From where it was born





# Stars

---

Rosebertine Michel

I saw the stars yesterday.  
I lifted my chin, and there they were  
Linear, messy, geometric, singing  
They shined  
And called my name.  
You are one of us, they said.  
Smile, smile until your cheeks burn, and your teeth whiten  
That is your light  
Keep it alive.

# Platonic

---

Alizza A Mahmood

Two leaves in the wind  
Flowing alongside each others  
Two birds sitting side by side  
To conquer the cold  
Two trees stretching upon one another  
While their roots stay intertwined  
Two jelly fish dancing  
Their tentacles colliding in harmony  
Two instruments  
Creating a melody for the heavens  
Two flowers blooming  
Providing beauty for the gaze  
Two snowflakes falling  
Melting into my palm  
Two women laughing  
Happy to have the other in such a world





# Is Home Safe Yet

---

Mirdyne Eugene





# Untitled

Jules Schuttevaer



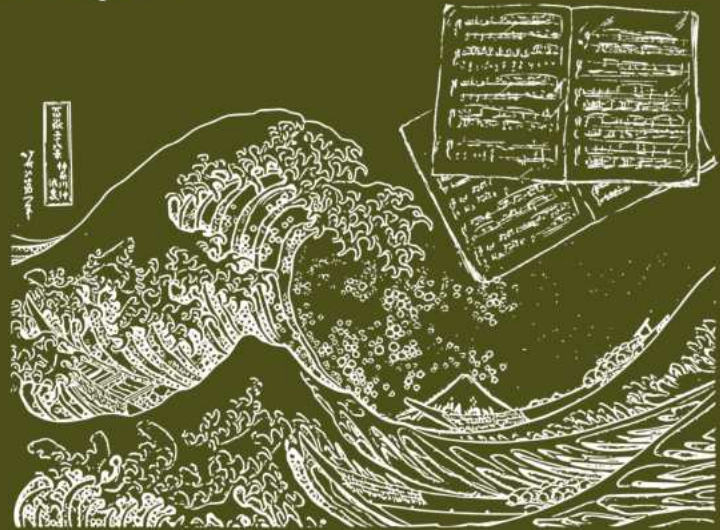


# Collarbone

---

Caelan Kopacz

strum and synth careen like the tide  
my body pulled to and fro  
my lack of fixture not a disturbance  
but a comfort, oceanic wanderlust  
the tendrils of kelp and seaweed  
dress my leg with newfound harmony  
mellifluous and welcome  
like the sand coating my hair  
the moonlight bleeds indigo and ivory  
in the waterspun cavity of my collarbone

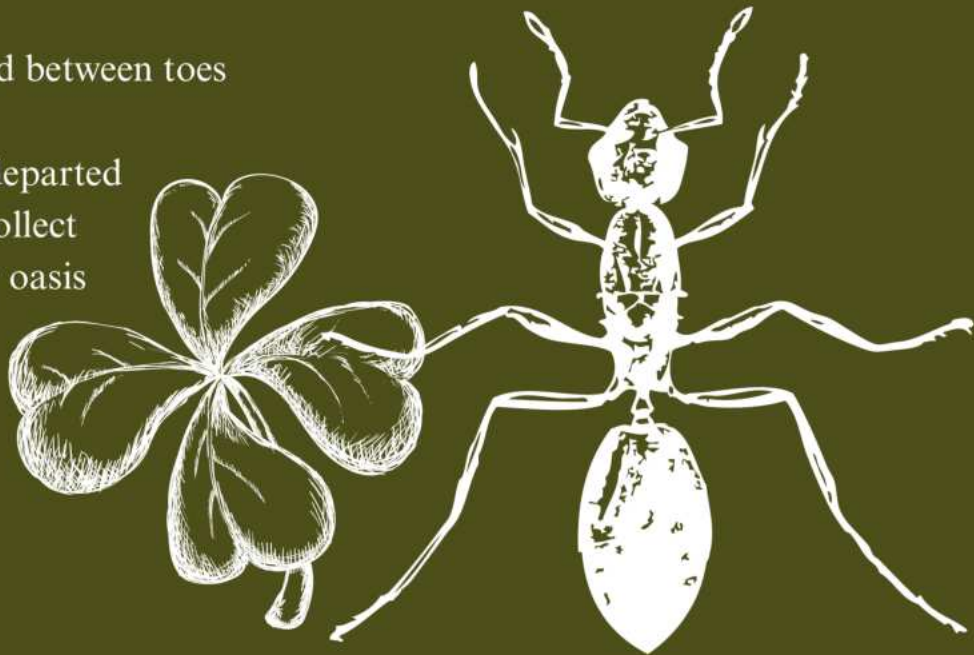


# pthalo

---

Caelan Kopacz

damp earth clustered between toes  
a habitat of pthalo  
a rustle of crowns, departed  
dribblets and pools collect  
at the ant's heavenly oasis  
a four-leaf clover  
lost in the deluge  
never to be found.





# Intertwined

---

Kinereth Fallas

Rainy days greet us as we meet again  
A full house once again  
Filled with your bright eyes  
As the sun starts to rise  
A new day ahead  
Day trips to get sweet treats  
In the new car  
Not ours forever, but ours for now  
Car rides filled with endless conversation  
Intertwined you and I  
Not just my sister but my better half  
I see you in me  
But I want you to go farther than I  
Our shooting star  
Landing beyond the moon





# I Do Not Need Books

---

Rosebertine Michel

I carry my library on my back and in my heart.  
I do not need tall furniture of a cold brown  
to hold and capture my books.  
When my mouth frees them from their immortal shell everyday.  
Do not pity me when I tell you I don't owe bookshelves  
Because I do not need books  
I need words  
Those words that blooms in the light of Spring  
And when Winter arrives survives and thrives.  
Words that travels  
Words that are free.



# Estrellita's Estampillas

---

Elizabeth Robles





Thank You For Reading

Thank You For Reading

