

# P'AN KU

Literary & Arts Magazine  
Volume XLIX

P'an Ku, volume forty-nine, issue one, was designed, produced, and edited solely by students at Broward College. All contributions in this issue are by students at BC. This magazine is funded by Student Activities fees. The opinions expressed are those of our contributors and do not necessarily represent those of the editors, faculty, staff, administrators, or trustees of the college. Copyright 2012 by Broward College, 225 East Las Olas Blvd., Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33301. Contributions with a submission form which includes the name, address, student number, and telephone number of the contributor are welcome from all students attending BC. All communications with the editors and all inquiries concerning this publication should be addressed to: Editor of P'an Ku, BC South Campus, 7200 Pines Blvd., Pembroke Pines, FL 33024. Telephone: 954-201-8044. All copyrights revert back to the original artists and authors after publication. [www.broward.edu/panku](http://www.broward.edu/panku)



## EDITOR'S NOTE

Much like the way in which the Sun rises from the horizon and into the heavens, I feel this publication has helped me be reborn. From the shadow and winter of my youth, I've risen into a Spring where I've been able to grow out of my shell and into my own person. As the stars cross the heavens, with a lyrical song from ages past, they've lent me their strength and allowed me to find my own voice.

During my time as Editor-in-Chief, I've learned how to deal with a lot of different personalities and how to help people work together. Learning how to run a publication has been one of the most rewarding learning experiences so far. I enjoy the fact we've incorporated dance into our magazine this issue, extending our reach into different art forms. One thing I really enjoyed as well has been bringing back hand-made art as opposed to relying extensively on digital media.

Working with such an eclectic group this semester has been inspiring. We are able to pull our resources and originality together to create something amazing. With so many points of view and talented individuals, it has been a bit difficult at times, but only because we've had to narrow down what we want from so many great ideas. In essence, distilling our creativity into this magazine.

So, thank you P'an Ku staff, for making this an amazing semester. Without you, none of this would be possible.

Melissa F.

## THANK YOU

We would like to thank Dr. Ellingham, who has given us the opportunity to express our creativity. Without him, we would all stray in different directions; he is what holds us together.

We would also like to thank Dance Instructor, Danielle Wancier, and her students for sharing their artform with us.

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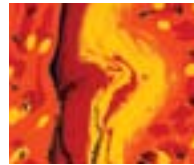
## ASTROLOGY

Western Astrology is based on the movements of the sun, planets, and constellations as they relate to a person's date of birth. Stars have taken root in humanity's social and mythological subconscious throughout millenia and continue to do so today.

Originally stumbled upon while finding a way to predict the coming of winter and spring it is no coincidence we have 12 zodiac signs and 12 months in a year. Zodiac is the Greek word for "circle of animals," and although not all of the zodiac signs are that of animals it is relative enough to the lives of early humans and the projections of their daily experience into the heavens.

Of course all of this should be taken with a grain of salt, keeping in mind that it's of your own free will whether you choose to believe it or not. In other words, don't let a horoscope dictate every facet of your life.

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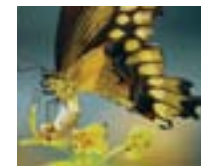


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# ABSENT

Jimmy Cash

You call yourself a man  
But when I was born you ran  
I'll never relate to having a dad  
Because it's something I never had

I didn't see you till I was 8  
But by that time it was too late  
The damage was already done  
As for respect from me, you have none

Although I was a child I seen straight through you  
You are the master of lies, because I caught you in a few  
Mom did a great job raising me, better than you ever could  
I wish you'd own your mistakes although I know you never would

We never had that real father/son moment  
No amount of money can replace your atonement  
You were absent for every single game  
Yet you expect me to keep your last name

When I won my gold medal, you were absent in the crowd  
Instead when I looked up mom was there to cheer me loud  
When I separated my shoulder you weren't there  
It was mom who had to rush me to urgent care

Together her and grandma raised me to pick up your slack  
When I got into a fight not you, but my brother had my back  
He is the one who sat me down and gave me "the talk"  
You were nowhere to be found when I first started to walk

Even though our relationship is torn apart  
I lack hate for you in my heart  
You set a good example for me  
On what kind of father not to be



**FERTILE**  
*Acrylic Painting*  
Kaylin Silva

# POSITIVE

Faye



**DARK SKIES**  
*Photography*  
Cindy Sterling

I am absolute  
I am absolutely positive  
There's no running from this!  
I should have been more careful  
Taking pill after pill for the rest of my life  
Trying to survive  
What about my children?  
Will I ever see them grow older?  
Hoping and praying I still keep faith.  
But the day will come that I will not awake  
Because I am absolute  
Absolutely positive  
With HIV/AIDS.



# ALEXA PONCE

Featured Artist



**METAMORPHOSIS**  
*Photography*



**PRYING EYE OF THE VULTURE**  
*Photography*

# ORANGES: BETTER THAN APPLES!

Michael Clark

I don't understand why I can't be compared to an apple; we're actually not all that different. In fact, off the top of my peel, I can list the similarities: We're both fruit, we're both sweet, and we both grow on trees.

Now don't get me wrong, we don't get along just because we're similar. I haven't even talked to Apple in quite a while. We've found ourselves deep in conflict about which of us is the most favored. Now among the juices, I admit, we're pretty much tied, but Apple thinks she's so high and mighty because of pie and sauce. Please, we all know that is just mush, and mush wrapped in a crust. I at least have the international flair going on with marmalade (pronounced "mar-ma-laud").

And if I have to hear, "An apple a day keeps the doctor away," one more time... well, I don't know what I'll do. Who does everyone turn to when Apple fails, and they're hacking up part of a lung? Orange, that's right.

I know, I know. This is the same story it has always been, so why haven't we been talking lately? I've had to deal with the brand name "Apple." She will not shut up about how popular all that technology has become because of the apple name. I don't know about you, but to me there is nothing that says popular, not to mention fashionable, more than having your own custom color. I'm like the original "Kelly" bag, without the wait list.

I will admit, I have become lonely since our little spat. After all, I am the only one; nothing rhymes with orange.

All I can say about our issues, is at least we have our act together more than Tomato, so confused, the poor dear. Can't make a simple decision on anything, "Are we Ketchup or Catsup?" Tomato is trans-getable; thinks he's a fruit, but legally he's a vegetable. Sigh, I can't even get started on that mess.



**MAIDEN**

*Photography*  
Ivan Benavides

# CHASING EARTH

Stephanie Leslie

I am a hot ball of energy  
Some days I just never want to come out  
Others I shine bright  
I stand alone  
No one or thing can visit me  
The closest thing to a friend I have is Mr. Moon  
He gets visitors  
He's not hot and unfriendly like me  
We both have a crush on Earth  
She is beautiful with water all around her  
She is one of a kind  
humans get to live on her  
Human abuse and misuse her  
I try to burn them away but it's just not working  
One day I will save Earth from those humans  
Then she will pick me over Mr. Moon  
Then we can have our happily ever after



**LIGHT PAINTING**  
*Photography*  
Teo Genao



# THE PICTURES LIE

Danielle A. Hossain

I really wish we were as happy we look in them but

*The Pictures Lie.*

I wish we were as happy as we once were.

These memories are torture.

They mock me in the face,  
reminding me daily of what we once had  
that no longer has its place.

*Happiness is dead*

and I will probably never have it again.

He was my only *Love*

but he still broke my heart in the end.  
He tainted our love and threw it all away.

*Loneliness* and *Pain* have taken into play.

*Trust*, he destroyed

through his *Lies* and his *Deceit*.

*Agony* consumes me

and within sight, there's no *reprieve*.  
*Honesty* is something he is ever incapable of  
nor is being *faithful*.

He knows not the true meaning of love.

His *morals* are low.

(He thinks cheating is alright.)

*Affection* is something he only shows  
when he wants sex in the middle of the night.  
All of my *Hopes* and *Dreams* were shattered  
by his foul deed.

I ask God why I still love him  
when he doesn't give me what I want or *need*.

With tears pouring, I look into his eyes  
where there's no *compassion* to be found.

There's a hole inside of me where he  
*tore my heart out*

and *slammed it on the ground*.

He could give me what my *wounded* heart needs  
but instead, he'd rather just watch me *bleed*.

*Cutting* me with his *infidelity* and *lies*,  
laughing with an *evil* smile  
he slowly *kills* me inside.

If one *only* looks at the pictures  
they'd *never* know how much I *cry*.

I really *wish* we were *happy together* but

**THE PICTURES LIE.**



## SUSPENDED

Photography  
Allison Nading



**WORRISOME**  
*Photography*  
Kareen Robinson

## HUE OF YOU

Lora Teagre

Black is the color of my skin

It is the fabric that I was born in

When mum told me to both love and never deny

The rich heritage that shines in my eye

Black is the color of my skin

Jamaican to the bone, down deep within

The food, the music, the sea the sand

All are mine I hold in the palm of my hand

I'm mocha, coco, caramel, and beige

I'm transparent and naked I put all on this page.

Strip me of my essence, rinse out my desire

To be, just to be a Black Woman I aspire



# A RISING PINNACLE

Ezana

I am on the rise  
Through the smoke and the lies  
Never have I rested my eyes  
Off the road that lies  
Ahead of me  
In the midst of my pleas  
I look up to see  
The path leading to victory  
Fighting against what is torn  
In the heart of the storm  
I have reached my reform  
No longer living in remorse  
Through the clouds, I see light  
Through the grief, I see might  
With success in near sight  
Now is the time to strike  
On the verge of becoming great  
With the power to create  
This life of mine; my fate  
There is no more to await

No longer a life of conforming to typical  
As I pave the way as A Rising Pinnacle



**BRIANNA ROSE**  
*Mixed Media*  
Melissa Frascati

# RIDING ON LOVE

Ezana

She'd rather watch the world from the clouds above  
Away from the rest, together with my love

Her eyes light the sky with a glowing delight  
And her smile draws me up with a loving invite

We leave all our cares behind, soaring through the air  
Because there's no place for worry when we're together up there

In complete bliss we spend all of our time  
I am all yours and you are all mine

How wonderful it is riding on love  
You by my side is more than enough

And whenever I find myself looking down towards the ground  
You always know how to bring me around  
Back to the place where our happiness abounds

And I remember all the promises we've made  
As we pass through a rainbow that never fades

I hope you know I'll always be here  
And I know you will always be near

Together forever without any fears  
Together riding on love is what I hold dear

And when the sun sets to kiss us goodnight  
And the stars begin to shine their luminous lights

I'll be by your side to hold you through the night  
And give you my love always, with all of my might

As we ride into eternity, together on love...



**ACRYLIC STUDY**

*Acrylic Painting*

Cynthia Bebak Inklebarger



# FLOWERS IN A VASE

Michael Clark

Passing into the waking world becomes such an ordeal. She looks down at her toes, her fingertips. How foreign they seem. From under the sheets of the bed, they stick out like little pink aliens, invading these snowy plains.

The morning light creeps in from every available crevice, even more intrusive than the little pink aliens. As her vision focuses, she lets herself become aware of the morning sounds, and most of all, to the sound of the ticking clock beside her.

Stretching as she removes the covers, she climbs out of bed on tip-toes. Her feet step from one crumpled pile of clothing to another, as if using stepping stones to cross a stream. Mossy patches of pinks and reds and blacks, soft and silky between her toes.

She reaches the dresser and picks up her day book, turning the pages until they reach Thursday. She slowly runs her rosy pink fingernail down the appointments until it rests on 1 pm. She hates early appointments.

She hurries to the bathroom, just steps from the dresser, immediately running the shower as hot as possible. The fog quickly envelops the entire room, leaving a thick layer of condensation over the large mirror. She scrubs her lily-white skin with the remainder of her shower gel and a loofah until it glows.

She wipes the mirror with her hand, so that her face will be visible. She blow-dries her hair with whatever products she has on hand, and curls her hair Marilyn Monroe-esque.

“Who shall I be today?” She asks herself as she applies the deep shade of pink to her heart-shaped lips. Is it who or whom? She wonders.

She studies her appearance, pulling back at her forehead and eyes. When do creases and lines begin? When will my ivory

face begin to become as crumpled as my bedding in the morning? When is it too early for Botox, and will I even be able to afford it? All the thoughts that concern her this morning, as well as every other morning, circled around her head and only managed to fade once her presence left the mirror. Out of sight, out of mind as the saying goes.

It’s ironic that she never wanted to think of herself, but always had to think of her body. She is able to dissociate from her body, her mind and spirit are separate. The same way that a vase and flower are separate, yet the flower will not survive without the vase. She could never think that the body being touched was actually her, just an extension of her.

It is good to dress the part throughout the entire day. It reminds her of whom it is she is supposed to be. She slides a nude lace bra and a pair of panties on with a little pink bow in the middle. The pink bow is entirely her; it reminds her to maintain a sense of self. The underwear seems ironic to her. At what point are you wearing so little that you actually are nude?

Her heels are reminiscent of the underwear she wears. The nude color is for chameleon-like purposes. It makes her seem leggy. She wears a soft pink dress and a chocolate jacket; black would just fade her out too much. She would be a corpse, and no one wants to fuck a corpse. She plans every detail, and yet she seems effortless. She is supposed to. She has to sell herself. Or rather, not herself, but her body and whatever personality is called for that day.

She enters the man’s apartment, smiling confidently. She can never appear quite as vulnerable as she truly is. He is somewhat

grandfatherly, but none of these men’s appearances surprise her anymore; there has become no “typical” in this business, and she has grown very used to that.

The usual pleasantries are exchanged. His answers, as well as his questions, he keeps short. She takes his cue and does the same, keeping careful not to languish on anything that he doesn’t ask of her. He is only being polite, and she as well.

He does not appear awkward, so she can assume that she is obviously not the first. She also takes into the account that she was given the address of an actual apartment instead of just the name of where to go. He also introduced himself as Doctor, no first name given. This is a sign of formalities; she knows she is not an invited guest. She is, better words escaping her, an employee. Without the health benefits a smile crossed her face.

He sat on a large couch and he motions for her to take the seat next to him. She eyes the large bookcase, which is entirely filled, and she can make out a few diplomas displayed on the wall, although the room is not bright enough for her to see what they are actually in or where they came from.

She assumes he is a PhD and not an MD, and by the looks of things, he may very well be a professor. Educated men frighten her. A doctor she understood, had to let off steam, and powerful men are on a type of ego trip. Or some need to be dominated at home, to be put in their place.

The educated men study her; some want to save her in that moment. They only want to understand her, but she can not understand them. She at once despised them, because they were men that she could not assume things from, and envied them, because she

longed to be as intelligent as they are.

He hands her a stack of papers, they have a binding along the side to keep them together. She quickly flips through; there are flashes of yellow and white as the pages fall against themselves.

This is not altogether entirely unfamiliar. Some men are so rigid, so unable to relax and let go, that they have to write the situation out for themselves. The only way for them to let go of control, is for them to be entirely in control of the outcome. He is no longer Gary, the church-loving family man, Richard, the frustrated city council member, or Steven, the local neighborhood business man, and I am not the whore. I am instead his savior, or perhaps he is mine. We are transformed into hero and heroine.

What is unfamiliar is the length; the sheer volume of it all. The language, as well, is far too developed for a night of tawdry fun. This is an absolute effort.

As if by reading her mind, he smiles at her and begins to explain, “I didn’t ask you here to have sex today, at least if it does come to that, not exclusively.”

She smiles hesitantly, but still doesn’t entirely understand.

“It’s a kind of escape, but unlike sex, it’s not just for the body, it’s for the mind as well. Haven’t you ever just wanted to escape?”

Most earnestly she responds, “Yes, funny enough, I have.”

“Good, you begin. You’ll read for Emma.”

Huh... that’s actually my real name. She smiled at him as she let herself sink into the pages as she read the fictional woman’s words aloud.



**CHRONICLES OF "FA"**  
*Acrylic Painting*  
Kaylin Silva



**GUNNY**  
*Photography*  
Antonio Ugalde





**LAKE MARY ISLAND**  
*Photography*  
Ivar Fandel



**ANA**  
*Photography*  
Cecilia M. Angeles



# VANESSA WOOD

Featured Artist



I SEE YOU  
*Printmaking*



NATURAL BEAUTY  
*Printmaking*



# CHILDREN OF SALOME

Photographed by: Julius Robledo



CANCER



LIBRA



SCORPIO



GEMINI



VIRGO



SAGITTARIUS



AQUARIUS



CAPRICORN



ARIES



TAURUS



LEO



PISCES

*Wendy Bellorini  
Alexis Ortiz  
Cecilia Garcia  
Esrom Williams  
Nichole Preziosi  
Samantha Selvin  
Camille Rebang  
Brittney Massey  
Ja'vael Cody  
Amanda Nicholas  
Danielle Bishop  
Jose Morales  
Heather Franzen*

**DANCERS:** *Heather Franzen*

# OUT OF THE FLOORBOARDS

Brittany Hayward

The lock clicks and thuds over the wood above me. The floorboard creaks as Ryan walks away to the kitchen to answer the phone. Somebody always needed something fixed.

“You will obey”, he always yells before he shuts the floorboards down. He says I’m too headstrong, that I can’t come out until I obey him. So I lay curled up on my pallet in the darkness until he comes back. This is how I survive: I do everything right and he rewards me with a bath or some new clothes he wants me to wear. I don’t get to watch TV unless he says so. The things he watches don’t seem very interesting though. I just sit through it to please him. I sit there and blink. But sometimes my mind takes me back to that day.

I’ll never forget my last day of school. My last thought after saying ‘bye’ to my friends and turning on my street was ‘Seventh grade was going to be so awesome’. I had just got a pink hyper color bike- early birthday present from my new step-dad. My friends, Ashley, Tara, and Draya were going to convince their parents they should have one too so we could all ride to school together. They were also glad to go to seventh grade because that was the year every girl sprouted boobs. I had already joined that club. Even though I’m comfortable wearing sports bras, Mom thinks a sports bra just won’t do, that I should wear my padded B cup bras with pride.

I couldn’t stand the restriction so I came up with a plan. I would wear the confining things in the mornings when Mom did her inspection of what I wear- usually an oversized t-shirt, jean knickerbockers, with sneakers. When I got to school, I went back into my comfort zone and donned my sports bra. When I came home from school, Mom said it was fine to wear them in the house so everything

worked out.

Besides, sports bras came in handy when you needed to run. Like that day. I was really glad to not have the thing confining me when I pumped the pedals to get away from Ryan. I put up the best fight a soon to be twelve-year old kid could to escape him. But now I’m older and I know the next time I try to get away from him, things won’t end the way that they ended up that day....

*Ryan crept up in his van. I didn’t even hear it cruising next to me. I kept pedaling down my street. I was expecting him to turn into someone’s driveway soon. He was the guy that fixed things in the neighborhood and you never really knew his real name. Somebody called him ‘Ryan’, so we all did. He fixed the dishwasher for cheap when we moved into our house last summer.*

*“You need a ride, Kid?” he smiled, sweat beaded down his temple.*

*Couldn’t he fix his own AC in his car? Instantly annoyed, I gave him a fake smile.*

*“I’m riding. My bike.”*

*“I was just kidding, Kid. Where are your parents?” he asked innocently.*

*That question weirded me out. I pushed hard on the pedals. He hit the gas a little.*

*Leaning out the window, “I bet they’re not home who’s gonna watch over you?”*

*I pedaled even harder. Why is the street so empty? This was supposed to be summer.*

*Getting closer to my house, I see my mom’s car parked in the driveway. And then it hit me. Mom caught a flat tire this morning. Miss Julia, our neighbor, took her to work. I didn’t see Miss Julia’s white car parked in her driveway. Speeding past her house I swerved around my mom’s blue car and hit the brakes to stop in front of the gate entrance. Ryan’s puke green van had halted. I open the gate, riding through it, not*



**TRANSITION**  
Photography  
Ivan Benavides



bothering to close it. There was no time to lock it back. Ryan was coming up the driveway.

Normally I'd hide in the shed, but I thought better of it. It was too obvious. I laid the bike down in front of the shed and crept behind the door and around to the side. It's door was open just a slit so that should make him think I'm in there hiding. Maybe I could make a run for it.

He jumped inside the shed, screaming, "Ar-ghh!". I didn't flinch because he scared me. I was more afraid that he would get his hands on me. Right like I'm scared of a yell. I was more afraid of him getting to me. I got my foot into place at the base of the tree behind the shed, got a good grip and started climbing.

"You can come out now. Your Mom says that I get to keep you when you get out of school."

He laughs louder, "She trusts me! Said she's working late. And your step-dad went on another hunting trip. You don't gotta worry bout anything, Kid. Just come out from hiding." He walked out of the shed.

I perched on the branch to see the whole street and leaned against the tree trunk. No one was home. Everyone on this street had jobs. All the empty driveways, save ours, let me know that no one would be home till after six. I looked at the watch my dad brought me before he died. It was three o'clock. I could have stayed up here for three hours and I blended in with the tree thanks to Dad's old camouflage shirt which I was wearing.

"Come on, Kid", Ryan coaxed.

I gripped the branch tighter than ever and leaned over to see that I was directly above him. He looked 'round the yard and over the white fence into Miss Julia's yard. I looked down the road, wishing someone turned on my street but no one was coming, I then glanced back down at Ryan who was headed out of the gate.

I didn't hear the van crank up but it started coasting slowly down the road. When it reached the stop sign, that was my cue to get down from the tree. I climbed far enough no to break my legs and jumped in the grass. I didn't care if Ryan was supposed to babysit

me, I was getting in the house and locking Ryan out. He was too creepy for my liking. This little chase just put the cherry on top. I never liked Ryan. I was just polite to him in front of my mother. The one thing my step-dad and I agree on is that something just wasn't right about him.

I ran for the backdoor, digging for my key at the same time. Hands shaking, I tried to fit the key in the lock. On the third try, the lock turned. My sigh of relief was for nothing because Ryan wrapped his hands around me before I could twist the knob. I kicked him. Hard. He fell and broke a tooth on the steps of the porch. Surprisingly there was no bleeding, not waiting for his reaction, I made it inside and locked the door.

I whirled through the kitchen and to the living room to search for the phone. It wasn't on the hook-stupid wireless phones! Mashing the pager button, I charged down the hall to the den, no sound. I focused through my heartbeat drumming in my ears. Beep! Beep! Moving back down the hall, the beeps got louder. I was warm. Back in the kitchen, it got a little louder. I passed the table and heard it near the dryer. I was red hot. But seeing Ryan's face turned my blood cold. I stopped dead in my tracks, frozen in fear. Ryan had the phone in one hand and my keys in the other.

"Looking for this?" He raised the phone and threw the keys on the table.

I turned to run. Didn't get far though. Ryan hit me like a Mack truck. Then put a cloth over my mouth and the world began to fade away. When he tossed me in the back of his puke green van, I fell into the darkness...

I don't know where I am, what city I'm in or how I got here. Ever since Ryan forgot I was in the room and I saw that girl on the news who got kidnapped get returned to her family, It's like I've woken up. As if my brain started up again like an old car. When Ryan is here, I act like a robot. I need to eat so I can have strength to get out of here. He keeps saying that I'm getting old and he needs someone younger.

I was twelve when he started raping me. He throws back the floorboards, drags me by my hair and violates my body on the pallet in the corner I sleep on. I don't fight him anymore or even cry. I know that this will irritate him and make him leave me alone. I need to be alone so I think like myself. Like Maya Goodridge. I've been thinking of ways to break away from Ryan ever since I felt the kicking in my belly. I know that I have to find a way out of here before Ryan kills me- and the baby.

Four hours later, Ryan was back in the house, pacing over the floorboards the way he did when his mother died sometime back. She was a very sick lady. The same night she died, Ryan force fed me her pain medication and depression pills so he could take my virginity. I shift in the corner under the stairway, wishing he would throw a rug over the floorboard to keep the cold out. The tattered blanket, the only one I own, is covered in the breakfast that I vomited after being manhandled by Ryan.

Around nine o'clock, Ryan lets me out of the floorboards. I stared at the floor as he trained me to, then waited. He closed the wooden opening and tread down the hall to the adjoining bathroom in his room. I fell in behind him. He gave orders and I followed. He wanted his bath made, hair combed and teeth brushed. When I finished, I stared back down at the blue tiles on the bathroom floor. He order me to bathe and wash my hair.

"Yes, Ryan," I obeyed, moving quickly in case he change his mind.

"Leave the bathroom door open."

"Yes, Ryan," I said trying to sound scared.

He feels in control if he thinks I'm scared—and I am. Usually he leaves me in the floorboards for five days if do something wrong. When he orders me to bathe, I get chained to the toilet with enough slack to get in the bed.

Tonight he just closed the door and locked me in his room.

I didn't try the window. Ryan had put up hurricane shutters because I tried to jump out the window with the chains still on my ankles and wrapped around me. That's why the toilet wiggles when you sit on it. I check the cabinet for something I could use as a weapon. I found his mother's pills, poured them in my hand and laid them on the counter. Then bathed until the water was cold. Drying with the same towel Ryan used, I lay on the bed. Waiting took a toll on me so I dozed off to sleep.

"Get up. I got us a surprise. Get up!"

He snatched away the warm covers. I straightened to sit up and rearranged the towel so he could not see my belly pudge out from my skinny frame. He held a white box with a pink Christmas bow on top.

"Here. I brought you a gift. Merry Christmas, Kid." He smiled, showing that decayed tooth he broke on the porch. The box landed on my thigh.

"Thank you, Ryan." I put my head down.

"Tonight's the night. By morning, I will have a new girl in my life."

I jerked my head up and looked him in the eye. His overbearing six foot figure didn't scare me anymore. Determined not to let him see me squirm, I opened the gift box and revealed the gift. It was a strapless orange dress with sparkles covering the top and flared out like a Cinderella dress at the bottom. Ryan ordered me to put on the dress and some makeup. I obeyed. My hair was to be braided into a single plait down my back. After applying make up to the bags under my eyes and over old bruises from being slapped, I sneered at myself. I looked like a dead pageant girl.

Ryan made his way down the hall to the kitchen. After stuffing a few pills in my breast area, I was close behind, almost chasing the sent off Chinese takeout. I sat at the table waiting for Ryan's orders. He grabbed a beer from the fridge, popped the top, then slid the smallest box over to me. White rice. Eyeing me while drinking his beer, I felt under scrutiny. Something inside the walls groaned and sputtered, then stopped. Ryan stopped drinking and concentrated on the silence. Then the night's air surrounded us, making the kitchen feel like Alaska.

"That damn heater!" He took another swig of beer and was down the hall in seconds.

I leaned to the left to make sure I could not be seen. Ryan was in the utility closet messing around with the heater. I snatched up a sterling silver spoon and began pulling and groping at my dress, putting one pill at a time on the table. I crushed six pills then scooped the remnants off the table and into Ryan's beer, swirling after each one.

The heater still wasn't working so Ryan came back to the table. I shivered uncontrollably and pushed the rice around on my plate, only eating a bite when my baby moved around. Adrenaline rushed through me for the moment that Ryan would try to kill me. All the while we sat in silence, as Ryan wolfed down the majority of the takeout and three beers after his first. When we were finished, he ordered me to get into his truck.

He placed a frayed sack over my head, which provided no warmth from the weather, then drove a long distance. When we came to a stop, I could hear crickets chirping and water moving with the night's freezing mist. We sat in silence for a while. Breathing slowly, I braced myself for the worst. I had watched Ryan swal-

low the concoction at the table and it didn't work. I was going to die.

Ryan snatched away the sack.

"Tonight's the night, Kid", he slurred. His chin dropped to his chest, then he fell over on my lap.

I slid from under him, almost standing, and pulled on the latch to open the door—it didn't budge. Fear roared in my stomach but forced my courage to turn the key. I put the windows down accidentally then hit the right button for the doors to unlock. The door opened and I felt like I should run. I walked a few feet away from the truck where Ryan lay, possibly dead. Then turned around.

I got back in the truck without closing the door, put my foot on the brakes, and put the truck in drive the way Dad taught me a long time ago. Ryan still lay there not moving. When the truck began to roll forward, I jumped out, and walked out of the moonlight into what looked like a cave opening. Sitting with my knees to my chest, I rocked a little to stave off the cold. Once the truck submerged in the lake, I thought the night would be silent save the crickets chirp-chirping away, but it wasn't. Someone was screaming inside the cave.

The moon glinted on something inside the hollow entrance. I followed the thin bit of light that went inside the cave and saw Ryan's puke green van. Another scream for help made me rush to open the back of the van. It was locked. I ran around to the driver's door and swung it open, the keys were on the seat. I unlocked the door and found a young girl who looked like me eight years ago. We climbed in the front seat of the van and left. Things did not end up like that day.



## MASS

*Printmaking*  
Jeremy Wallace



## FALLING

*Printmaking*  
Jeremy Wallace





**UP**  
*Marker & Ink Drawing*  
Alexis Azabache

## DREAMING

Gregory Mannix

As I rest on the grass and take in the night sky,  
I plan on how to reach my dreams before the day I die.

You need to chase your dreams so you can explore,  
A life with ambition is a life to adore.

To not live this way is to not live at all,  
There's always time to rise even after you fall.

The meaning of life is the meaning you give it,  
Each moment is precious so live each to the limit.

Experiencing life's endeavors will show you the meaning,  
Of all the ideas your mind has been dreaming.

# MORNING GLORY “THE THING OF BEAUTY”

Danielle A. Hossain

I look from my bed at the dew on my window;  
outside, the fog rising from the ground.  
Alone in my thoughts, this *peacefulness*...  
*Stillness whence there is no sound.*

It is in these moments of *quietness*  
while the world is still asleep,  
that I find such *blissfulness*  
in these memories that I keep.

Wandering my mind in this stillness of time  
is such a thing that I have found,  
when I experience such *completeness*  
in all this *emptiness* around.

Walking in this *solitude*,  
feeling the morning cool as it *envelops* me,  
I breathe the fresh air in and smile,  
*for within this moment, I am free!*

Walking hand in hand, side by side,  
by myself, within my mind:  
The world is *perfect*, my conscience is clear—  
*Purity* within is what I find.

A *soft breeze*, leaves drift to the ground.  
A signal to begin:  
A *white dove* flies over me,  
its *beauty* awing me within.

I wash my hands, my face, head and feet  
With clear water; cool, crystal clean.

Before the sun is arisen from the horizon in the  
distance,  
I face the *Ka'aba*,  
*Kneel to my Lord*,  
and make my *Fajr* prayer.

{I stand *Strong*:  
My *Faith* shall withstand the test of time.  
All *compliments* to **Allah**,  
For without Him, I could not inspire this  
rhyme.

I thank **Allah** for all He has given me:  
My Son, Husband, Family, Friends.  
And, for all my sins, I ask of Him:  
how I may make amends. }



HER BAPTISM  
*Conte Drawing*  
Nadine Yanes





**CHINA**  
*Photography*  
Cecilia M. Angeles



**JASMINE**  
*Charcoal Drawing*  
Heather Tomlinson



**CHATTER JAW**  
*Printmaking*  
Jesse Julian Cohen

## AVENUE OF AMBIVALENCE

Ezana

These are the thoughts in their subtle prevalence  
That lead me down the avenue of ambivalence

“There’s time to plan for the future” are the words often mentioned  
Yet the thought of it passing is the cause why the present is tensioned

Joyful dreams of possibilities fuel inward aspirations  
In an optimistic future filled with a loving adoration

But doubtful scenes of reality shape an outward realization  
Of a despairing past planning on a continuous replication

Through mournful words, grieving pleas  
I spend nights wandering through thoughts silently

As days are passed in a mindless daze  
Occupied within a society’s maze

Contemplating the mysteries of a life I don’t own  
While awaiting for a direction, an opportunity to be shown

The silence of ambiguity is always most deafening  
And the blindness of obscurity is always most deadening

The future is never as far away as it appears  
Yet the shadow of the past always trails very near

Are dreams visions of ambition or weights of despair  
Are they significant to envision or burdens to impair

These are the thoughts in their subtle prevalence  
That lead me down the avenue of ambivalence



# HAPPY GREEN HILLS

Julius Robledo

Getting ready for our date tonight and just about to light my last cigarette I realize that I've lost my lighter. Searching my bedroom for any sort of flame, I happen upon the ticket to the concert we first went to together, on the day we met. There we danced to a cover of The Door's "Light My Fire." This ticket is now torn up, the words have faded, and it's falling to pieces.

Getting out of my shower I realize I should have washed my dreds, but it's okay. Emma is a hippie as well and chances are she probably hasn't showered in three or four days. I can't go more than two, but my dreds are a different story as they can be washed every week and a half or so. Still, I enjoy Emma's scent, the way her skin stinks and crawls into my head, the soft texture of her blond hair. When we sleep together at night and I hold her close, it's not the smell of perfume or some scented shampoo that turns me on, it's the smell of her. This is what I've always loved, the fact that she's real.

As I dress myself after washing my teeth I text her: "Are you ready?"

"Sure, come by."

Once in my car I plug in the mp3 player, it's already on random. Red Hot Chili Peppers plays "Under the Bridge." I drive the five minutes it takes to get to her house listening to this song. Just as I pull up the song "Fake Plastic Trees" by Radiohead comes on. She must have been waiting for me, for it takes her literally seconds to get out of the house and into my car.

"Let's go." She says. Her outfit reminds me of the nineties. Straight leg jeans, black shoes, flower pattern button up shirt, with a cute blue sweater on top. Her hair is flowing lightly about the cabin of the car. I lean over to

kiss her but she turns away.

"What's wrong?" I ask her as we pull out of the driveway.

"Nothing..."

"Well, it doesn't seem like nothing to me."

"It's nothing."

"Are you sure?"

"Why do you ask so many questions?"

"I like to know things. I would like to know why you seem kind of... I dunno."

"What? I seem kind of what?" She crosses her arms.

"... distant."

"Huh... well, maybe there's a reason for that." Staring out of the window her right hand runs through her hair, she sighs heavily.

"What is it?" I can't really take my eyes off the road, but I want to look at her.

"I've just been thinking."

"So what's wrong?"

"Us." She lays her hands on her lap.

"Heart Shaped Box" by Nirvana starts to play.

"What do you mean? I don't understand what you're getting at, as far I know everything is okay."

"I mean that maybe we aren't going anywhere, you know? Like, you are clearly not even ready for marriage." She shakes her head a bit, then puts two of her fingers over her lips, biting just the tips.

"What the... are you serious? I didn't even think that was something we were considering."

She stares at me in silence – she looks upset. I just want to pull the car over and kiss her, for some reason I know it won't do any good.

"Okay, well how am I not ready?"

"To begin with you don't really have a job or any money in the bank. You keep going around traveling and writing for all these people who don't pay you a dime."

"Yeah... but it's my dream, it's what I want to do, I have to start somewhere."

"There is nothing wrong with that, it was actually what attracted me to you initially, and even to this day what keeps me coming back; but you can't keep doing this... besides, we can't move on if you just stick to that."

"Okay... So what am I supposed to do?"

"Why don't you get a real job?"

"You think someone is going to hire me with hair like this? Tattoos up and down my arms?"

"Maybe you should cut your hair, shave your beard. You know what though, this isn't even an issue anymore, and I've made up my mind."

"Made up your mind?"

Meanwhile as Nirvana ends, White Stripes' "Fell in Love with a Girl" comes on.

"Eric, he wants to get serious with me..."

"Wait, you mean that guy who bruised up your inner thighs?" She glares at me; her face reads contempt all over. Lip curled, furrowed brow, and the darkness in her eyes is one I'd never seen before.

"Yeah, so fucking what?"

"So fucking what? You think he's going to marry you? After what he knows you do and are?" She looks at me wide eyed and confused.

Now the Violent Femmes song "Kiss Off" starts playing through the speakers.

"What the fuck are you talking about?" She seems flustered.

"Do you really think you are ready to get married?" My question leaves her a little

perplexed; she takes a few seconds to answer.

"Yeah, I am. I have savings, a degree, and a career."

"Which you are blowing on drugs, alcohol, partying instead of finding a decent job little miss unemployed. So you tell me, do you really think someone would want to marry you? An addict? Someone who gets tore up every night they go out, can't control themselves when they do so, and sleeps around with random strangers just because they treat you nicely?"

"Hold on a damn second..."

"What? Isn't that how you met Eric?"

'Oh we met at this party all fucked up on coke and we just had so much in common, I couldn't help but get fucked and bruised by him.' Do you think that he's forgotten that? That you cheated on me just to fuck him on a whim? I took you back. Not to mention that all you have in common with him is a coke habit and the tendency to bruise others!" She stared ahead, not saying a word.

"The Gulag Orkestar" by Beirut starts to play, its slow introduction of trumpets and accordion accentuate the stillness in the vehicle; we both stare ahead as headlights dance in the distance. We breathe in the same air and in essence we become one, this is the last time.

Just as the piano begins to play she starts to roll a cigarette, I've always enjoyed the way she does it. Her long slender fingers grab the paper and fold it just as if it was a boat, a couple of pinches of tobacco, not too much, followed by a filter. She then rolls it, licks the adhesive, and sticks the filter end between her lips. Pulling out a cigarette lighter from her purse, I manage to catch out of the corner of my eye her shimmering kit. She hasn't used it around me in a while. It's a silver box that opens up to

expose a tourniquet, a few baggies with pinkish powder, maybe a couple of blue pills, needle, and a silver and glass shaft with a plunger. She always said it reminded her of the one Sherlock Holmes had. I thought she'd stopped using.

"Do you really want to do this?" I ask just as the song ends.

"Just Friends" by Amy Winehouse starts to play, the burning tobacco inundates the car as it seeps towards my watering eyes.

"I thought I'd already made it pretty damn clear, now can we just go to the bar? I need a drink."

In the bar it is smokey, dark, and someone has played "Say It Ain't So" by Weezer on the jukebox. We sit together, even though it feels like we could be across the bar from one another. She hunches over her drink, long sleeves hide the track marks of her favorite drug. Meanwhile I stare at mine. She's five nine, thin, blue eyes, blond hair. Her smile is a little crooked, but I love it just the same. She has freckles everywhere, each and every one them get me so fucking high every time I touch them, kiss them, lick them. They are my opium; they are my sublime admittance into godliness. Her beautiful and fair hands are always so careful when handling things, like her beer, cigarette, my dreds, I guess even her needle. I could never understand the reasons why. All I have known from her is beauty, the way she thinks about the world, the deeds she's done for others, her everything.

I lean on my arm and stare at her one last time, I know this is it. Nothing will ever come of us any further; she's made up her mind. I will miss our laughter, tripping on acid while we walk around the museum of art,

pointing out the moving colors and giggling as security passes by, walking on the beach after a long night of drinking not knowing if we are still drunk or it's just us slipping over the sand. Her weight on me as her tongue penetrates my lips and we taste one another. The way we left the sheets, stained and stinking of our love-making. Most of all, I will miss the way we talked into the early mornings about futures that now will never be.

So I say to the bartender, "Another beer, please." As he serves me another round Weezer's song "Undone" comes on. I look over at Emma, and she's rolling another cigarette. Her face is without emotion, three beers in and it doesn't even faze her. Her sweater is now on the back of her chair, and as she shifts looking for her lighter it falls off. I get up and hand the soft blue sweater to her, it smells of her skin, like her hair; we make eye contact for the first time since we came in.

"Would you like a smoke?" She asks me with that tender voice I've grown to love so much.

"Sure, I'll take one." Her soft hands roll another cigarette.

"Do you have fire?" With her smoke puckered between her lips, blue eyes staring into mine, I search inside my sweater pocket, and find my lost lighter. Glow from the flame lights up her face, her freckles. This is it, this is the last time. Finishing my beer, I drop a twenty on the counter and pick up my torn sweater.

"Where are you going?" she asks, scrambling to get her stuff together.

"Anywhere you're not."



## TRIBULATION

Marker & Ink Drawing  
Alexis Azabache



# BRITTANY CAPPETTA

Featured Artist



**ALIEN GIRL**  
*Mixed Media*



**ABANDONMENT**  
*Acrylic Painting*

# STRANGER

Jimmy Cash

It was turning past midnight  
And still I drove with no end in sight  
As I rode along I saw a man  
Who stood holding out his hand  
With his thumb pointed up he wanted a ride  
So off the road I pulled to the side  
To ponder whether I should pick up this guy  
After rationalizing I figured I'd give it a try.  
So I let him in and he seemed no harm  
He simply stated "I'm headed north to the dairy farm."  
His face was scarred as if he'd been in a war  
He reeked of alcohol with tattered clothes as the poor  
His pupils were dilated and set deeply in the back of his head  
All of which displayed inside his skin of cherry red  
This stranger looked as if he'd just gotten out of bed  
I asked his name to which he answered "Fred"  
For miles we drove and I wondered if there really was a farm ahead  
This is when I started to wonder if I'd wind up dead  
At this point some doubt started to creep in my mind,  
But I kept telling myself he's very kind  
In my rearview I caught him reaching in his pocket  
So I immediately sped up like a rocket  
Only to slam hard on the brakes  
Out of his hand fell a knife and I knew it wasn't fake,  
I lunged towards him, and we both grabbed for the knife  
I should have known this guy would try to take away my life  
For this weapon, we were at a race  
I thrust the knife like a sword and blood spattered on my face  
I looked down and noticed I stabbed him in his chest  
As he bled my car turned into a bloody mess  
Somehow he managed to open the door and get out the car  
I mashed the gas to get away very far  
To this day I don't know if the guy is dead or alive  
I'm just thankful to have survived



**RONDELL**  
*Graphite Pencil*  
Leah Seamonson



# THE JOURNEY OF LIFE

Celine Chan

Who am I...?

A question as intriguing to me as it is to you...

Am I to figure this out,

solve it on my own?—

Or is there an answer, just hidden, unknown?

But life as we know it is not always that easy;

free samples of answers are pretty unlikely.

I guess I'll find out sooner or later,

Right now I'll just focus on being a learner.

A learner of life

What will be next, what to expect—

Pop quizzes thrown at me,

Trying to block my way

to that nice sounding, perfect "A"...

but what is perfect to me may not be the same to you;

should I just meet the standards?—I haven't a clue...

oh no, but wait! I do have a guideline, all set in my mind,

to always do my very best,

and never settle for less!

So I guess in my world, perfection is spelled with an "A"

but sometimes I wonder, what does that stand for, in life, anyway?

Focus.

Don't lose sight of those hopes and dreams—

They may not be as far as they seem...

Being a novice in life, not knowing what's right,

May lead to some failures, oh how I wish I'd been warned earlier.

So many lessons taught, the do's and do not's

Invaluable, priceless, these life lessons cannot just be simply be bought.

With different perceptions

Of the morals in every lesson,

I learn and keep learning,

As persistent as the Earth with its turning

Tasks both difficult and simple

Still yet to complete,

Questions that need answers

keep me on the toes of my feet.

You may ask if the learning will ever stop...

Well let me just tell you,

We'll see at the top...

We'll climb the tall mountains

We'll drink from the Youth Fountain

to keep us young and healthy

would you like to come with me?

Become a discoverer of life, in life,

Exploring the heights,

As high as I please, enjoying the breeze.

Take a few slips, trip into a fall,

because life isn't just a nice dance you'd dance at a ball.

And never will I forget to pack up those life lessons,

Taking them with me to wherever life may lead,

Cause you just never know when they may be of need...



**SUPERIOR COFFEE BREAK**  
*Ceramic*  
Elisa Cresse



**BUCK BOOT**  
*Ceramic*  
Patricia Kobelin



# REALLY CATCHY TITLE

Ken Wallace

Readers acknowledge first lines as vital

Nothing grabs attention like a snappy title

People dislike poems that do not rhyme

Criticizing writers for committing a “crime”

How I hate being hated for being me

Now I see, for I, is Kenneth to be

If I choose to inscribe in a passive voice

Then do I will, for it’s my choice

If I want to use a vulgar expression

I’d choose ass, to keep writing a profession

I may write in lines that are far stretched across the page, and stick out like a sore thumb

I shall proofread if a feel and submit without

Errorz apparent, I’d never doubt

I’ll end abruptly if that’s what I like

And you my friend can take a hike



**Starfish Tea**  
*Ceramic*  
Elisa Cresse

# THE INEVITABLE

Bridgette R. Hawkins

I open my eyes, and I'm standing there in a room where my life seemed to stop instantly; I don't know what to do. This man that I knew to be a scurrilous and disparaging human being is now in a state of convalescence. His eyes have remained open in a gazing emptiness that expresses no life or existence. My emotions are flowing instantaneously, as I stare at him knowing that his life's journey is ending hastily.

I look around, I'm surrounded by my siblings and uncle who seem to have no apparent emotions. This man we are staring at, was once a very perplexing man who brought such despair and drudgery to his family. We feared him at times with indescribable trepidation and dread.

When I was a child I remember lying in my bed at night praying to whoever would listen, that my father's presence would dissipate far away into the unknown, so that we could finally taste that morsel of happiness that most children came to know. Now, many years later, I found myself standing above his hospital bed coming to terms with my past request.

Now that I was an adult, with children of my own, my dad tried to redeem himself as a father and grandfather. Though my personal destruction that he caused will never be dismissed, he apologized and made amends for his transgressions. He began to live his life as a man to be respected and adored. When he came to visit my family, I'd sit and watch him with my children and experience a side of him that I had once only dreamt about. How could this perfidious man be so adored by these innocent little beings? Those horrific days and nights that I only hoped were figments of my imagination, seemed to dissipate in my mind—I see this individual transform into what I

thought was an impossible feat.

When it was time for him to return to his home he would put his arm around my shoulder and kiss me on my forehead. The immense feelings of security and love I felt at that moment were inconceivable. I had spent so many years growing up trying to please him and make him proud of me, and so many times I disappointed him. Within that moment and of that kiss, I finally felt a sense of approval from him that I so longed for.

As time starts to slip by us, the doctors express to us that it is time to unplug the machine which is keeping him in this world with us. My uncle, dressed in his native Indian attire, places a small button into my father's hand. This button was once kept by my grandmother, a woman whom all of her children adored. As I later came to know, she once tried to protect her children from the monster that tormented them long ago. Though I do not accept this as a justification of his actions, but understand how his torture came about and was handed down from his father.

My uncle prayed out loud as he held his brother's hand for the last time. There were eleven brothers and sisters, and their Indian heritage seemed to keep them connected in a very spiritual way, though separated by life and distance. He stepped back as to let his children come closer to say their farewells.

There was a long silence. My brother and sister did not make a move toward his deteriorating—almost lifeless body. My brother expressed the most hatred towards him, as he felt he suffered the brunt of his rampage and destruction. He seemed so emotionless, as though our father's last breath could not come soon enough. Years earlier my sister survived terminal cancer, and it left irreparable damage.

Her emotions are almost childlike and vacant. This room was filled with damage to all that could not be changed or restored.

I slowly walk up to him and pick up his hand. My eyes swell with unstoppable tears, and my fingers lose feeling as I hold his hand tighter and tighter. The sounds of the ventilator are fading slowly and the beeps are drawing farther apart. I can't stop crying! I look at him with such a confusing visage, his own slipping away so quickly. This man, only the young age of fifty-seven, is drifting away from me and there is nothing that can be done to cause this irreversible damage to his heart. Whom am I going to try to please now? Who is going to kiss me on the forehead and tell me, "Love you"? Who is going to put his arm around me and squeeze me tight? I do not know what to do! Those hands that I used to look at as hard and unbearable are starting to get cold. My heart is racing so rapidly; I feel as if my chest is going to explode. This uncontrollable situation is getting away from me, and I feel like a part of me is dying with him. I don't want him to go! He has become my stronghold these last three years. I haven't had enough time with this transformed man, whom I had been waiting so long to meet.

More firmly I hold his hand, and his breaths are slower and more dense than the others. I pray for a miracle; I pray for a mended heart; I pray for me to take his place; I pray for anything!

The pain in my chest is taking over my body; this helpless and hopeless feeling is unstoppable. The sounds of the machine are slowing dying, just as he is. Tears are drowning my face! His eyes are wide open, but see nothing; this is the last time those large, brown doe eyes will see this world. His warm smile

and transposed heart will now become my memories and no longer my existence.

I look around the room looking for help or just something from the others who are standing there. Why are they not doing anything? They are emotionless! Do they not have a forgiving heart? Do they not remember the warmth of this man? Or do they not have a soul themselves?

My loneliness is taking me to this dark unconceivable place. I just want to lie in his bed and go with him to this unknown beautiful eternity.

The inevitable is here! With his last breath, my father is gone. Though I find myself still holding his hand, this shell of a body no longer belongs to him. His memories are mine. This pain that swallows me will not let me go. The emotions I feel are destined to engrave themselves into my soul. On days that are sunny and warm I see him in the garden on his knees tending to his flowers, looking up at me, smiling as if he is sending his approval and letting me know that he is there.



# STAFF



MELISSA



TONY



IVAN



KAYLIN



CINDY



JULIUS



ALLISON