

AD LIBITUM

ART & LITERARY
MAGAZINE

VOL. — 10
SPRING 2012

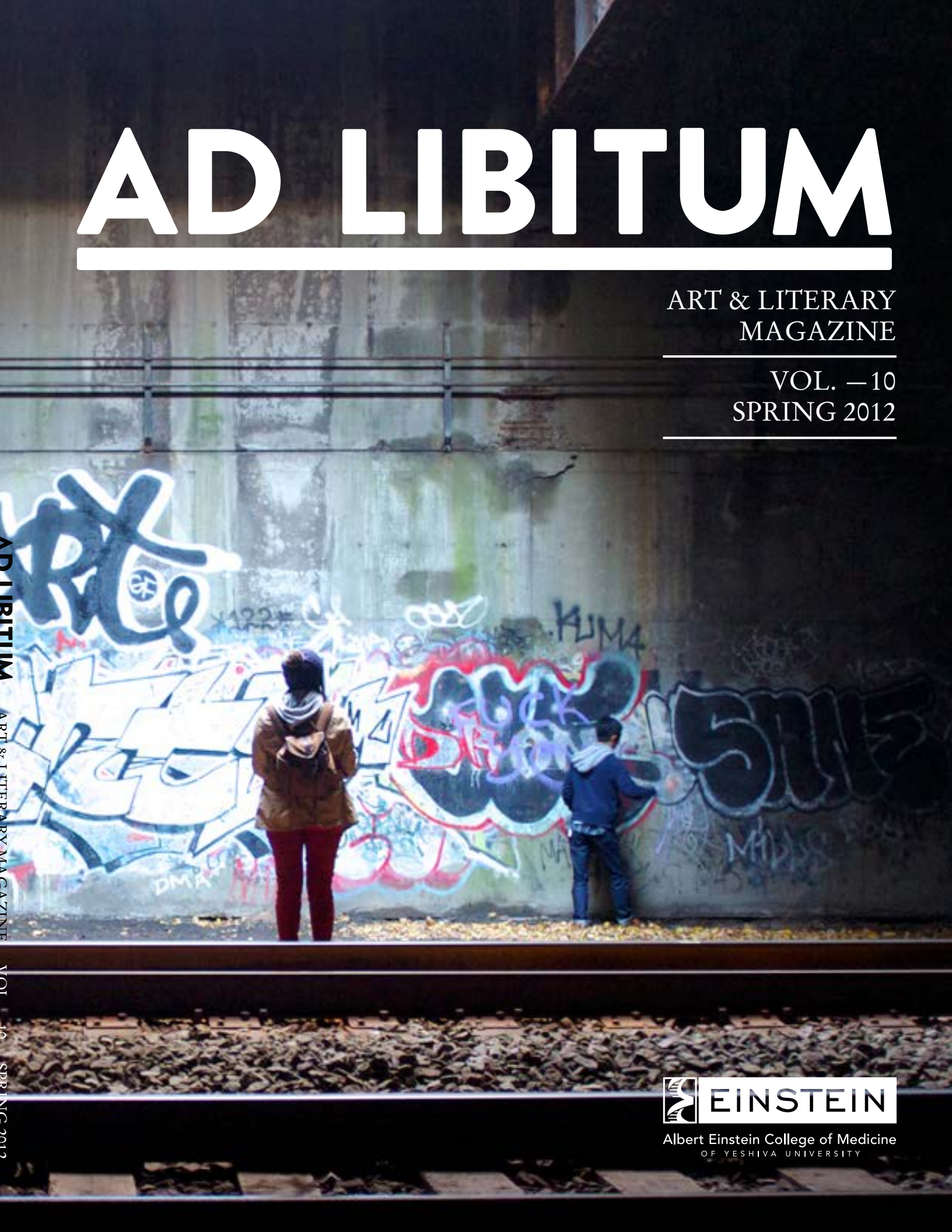
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ART & LITERARY MAGAZINE

VOL

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SPRING 2012



Albert Einstein College of Medicine
OF YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

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Letter from the Editors

Chelsea Higgins & Brett Wolfson-Stofko
Editors-in-Chief

We are pleased and proud to present the 10th edition of *Ad Libitum*, Einstein's own art and literary magazine. Once again, the creative individuals within the Einstein community including students, faculty, staff, and supporters have impressed us with an abundance of inspired works. We hope you enjoy these selected pieces representing some of the remarkable art of our peers as much as we do.

Ad Libitum is a unique creative outlet at the center of a focused academic environment. We feel very fortunate to have the continued support of an administration that encourages our artistic undertakings in addition to our scientific and medical endeavors. We would like to specifically thank Deans Grayson, Kuperman, Spiegel, Burns, Katz, Baum and Freedman, along with Martin Penn and the Office of Education Affairs, Lorene Tapellini, Peter Dama and the Graphic Arts Center, Karen Gardner and the Department of Communications and Public Affairs, the Graduate Office, and the Student Council. Lastly, to the contributing artists of the Einstein community, thank you for sharing your talent with all of us.

Letter from the Dean

Martha S. Grayson, M.D.
Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education

It is truly an honor to write a forward for this year's edition of *Ad Libitum*, which started 10 years ago under the guidance of my predecessor, Dr. Al Kuperman. This magnificent magazine has allowed a diverse group of members from our Einstein community to showcase their exceptional literary and artistic talents. The outstanding artwork, poetry, photography and articles explore a wide range of social, ethical, medical and personal issues. Readers have the great privilege of viewing these issues from a new perspective, as well as enjoying breathtaking visual images.

I want to thank all of the talented members of our Einstein community who contributed to this truly inspiring magazine and express gratitude to the dedicated editors and staff for putting together an especially masterful magazine.

Cover Image
escape from nyc in nyc
Samuel Ahn
Photograph



on a volcano
Mark Mikhly
Photograph

The Vending Machine and Life by Connieann DeVecchio

Today I was at the vending machine buying a soda to have with my lunch. I was putting my money in the slot when I noticed a woman buying a snack from the adjacent vending machine.

As I stared at the woman and the two vending machines lost in random thought, I happened to observe that the soda bottles were being picked up on sort of a mini elevator. The “elevator car” slid gently across the row of assorted soft drinks and stopped in front of the drink I chose; the drink was lightly tipped into the “elevator car” and whisked smoothly away to be ever so softly dropped into the next little compartment where I could pick my happy little drink up and take it to lunch.

Then I looked over at the candy machine. The candies, chips and cookies were carelessly stuffed on to a metal coil; with each dollar that was paid into the machine the snack of choice was hurled down to the tray landing on its head for some hungry individual to eagerly push open and flap crush the already jostled packaging, almost never ruined, and often holding broken bits of whatever snack is inside.

As a matter of fact, I noticed that if you look real close at the bags of chips, candies and snacks they seem to be cringing: you could almost hear a chorus of little voices pleading “Don’t pick me, don’t pick me.” I swear I heard a bag of chips screaming “They changed the slogan to all that and a bag of M&M’s They changed the slogan, they changed the slogan, aaaah-hhh! Where’s the elevatooooorrrrrr!”THUD

While I witnessed the two vending machines in action I thought how much those two machines resembled life:

Some individuals get a smooth ride from beginning to end, getting gently tousled about once in a while with minimal damage. Then there are those individuals who live uncomfortable lives, routinely getting tossed around on this mortal coil; landing on their heads; receiving no physical damage to their “packaging” but leaving their insides full of little broken bits of themselves. Just as I could swear I heard the pleading snack bag; I could swear that if I look closely at the faces of certain people I would see a look that said “Stop this ride I want to get off”THUD

Just a thought I had when I was buying a soda to have with my lunch.

Girl and Shadow
Leonid Tarassishin
Photograph



Snows of Kilimanjaro
Namita
Roy-Chowdhury
Photograph

Family Dinner

by Linnie Bendor-Grynbaum

He lay to the right of her in the bed, eyes glued to the gleaming red of the numbers onto her other side.

6:32 PM.

She traced her fingers along the angle of his elbow and his forearm, and every time the dots between the hour and the minutes blinked away another second, he grew more and more eager to leave.

6:33 PM.

He shifted his body and turned his head away, so that he was looking out into the hallway through the crack in the door. She moved her hand to his chin and pulled on it gently, turning his face back to hers.

He focused on the clock, avoiding her eyes. He had told himself to wait until a quarter to seven to leave the house, but it was 6:35 when he coughed and cleared his throat before mumbling "Okay, it's getting late. I should go."

"Kevin, you've got a while 'til you have to meet your kids," she replied, but he was expecting this and so before she could wrap her arm around him, he sat up and gathered his clothes from the foot of the bed.

He looked at her for only a second before turning away and muttering "I'll see you." Sticking his feet through the legs of his khakis and pulling on his T-shirt, he stumbled quickly to the door and out into the hall. With his flannel jacket tucked under his arm, he made his way down the front steps toward the driveway.

It was late February already, but the steps were still covered in ice and he could see

that the yard in front was still packed with snow. He had to jiggle the keys a bit in the frozen lock of the car door before it would open. Sliding into the driver's seat, he started the ignition before even shutting the door completely. He backed the car into the street and turned sharply to speed to the stop sign at the corner. By the time he had made it to Ashmont Street, about five blocks from her house, he slowed to the 25 miles per hour speed limit, finally convinced that he was far enough away now and she would not come running after him.

Most of Dorchester was dark already; only a few corner bodegas and Korean groceries were still open, but the windows were too dusty and crowded for the light inside to reach the dimming sidewalks. Kevin knew these streets well though, and when he turned right onto Washington Street and approached Neponset Ave., he found his neck craning to the left and before he could stop himself he was staring at the orange and green numbers above the door. Through the window he could make out a blonde girl chewing gum and picking at her fingernails behind the cash register, waiting for the next customer. Just before he tore himself away to look back to the ice covered road, his eyes found the slurpee machines propped on a counter in the corner of the store.

It was the hottest day of the summer and Kevin had just dropped the kids off at his sister's so they could go with their cousins out to Long Beach for the day. He pulled the red pickup into the parking lot of the 7-11 and jumped out of the car as soon as he pulled into a spot. He looked up at the front window and saw that his wife was already there. Her left leg

was bent back at the knee, the sole of her loafers resting against the window of the store she was leaning on. Her arms were closed tight against her chest and her face was pinker than usual, her forehead and nose shiny with sweat. As he got closer to her, his lips stretched into a smile and he focused on her narrowed eyes and pursed lips, unchanging as he approached.

He kissed her cheek quickly and put his arm around her shoulders to pull her from the window.

"You're late," she said quietly as she walked with him into the store, looking away at the cashier instead of up at his face.

"Sorry, Laurel," he replied. "It's only by ten minutes, though," he added, smiling, as if to convince her that it really was not a big deal. "It took the kids a while to get settled at Joanie's." "Yeah, well ten minutes is enough time to see another patient. It's enough time to do a lot of the things I had to do today."

The smile faded from his face. "You said we could spend a few hours together today. Does it bother you that much that you had to leave work an hour early to come meet your husband?"

They had come to the counter in the corner of the store where the slurpee machines stood and he took two cups out of the rack, handing one to her.

She made a noise that was a cross between a snicker and a cough and rolled her eyes at him before holding her cup under the machine and pressing the button that read BLUE RASPBERRY. "It bothers me that you're this obsessed with tradition."

"This is where we came every year in high school," Kevin muttered as he held down the GREEN APPLE lever above his cup.

"That doesn't mean we have to come back here every year now. We can be normal adults and go to a restaurant. Have a real meal."

Kevin said nothing in response. They found a bench at the side of the parking lot and sat, slowly sucking the frozen drinks through

straws. Kevin focused on the beads of sweat forming at the tip of his nose and above his mouth and tried to focus on his limbs burning in the sun, instead of the sound of his wife drinking her slurpee.

Kevin parallel parked his car on the street in front of Giovanni's Family Diner and walked to the front door, looking down at his wrist and realizing he was twenty-five minutes early. Thinking he would grab a booth, he walked in. The floors were a shiny green linoleum, two of the walls were covered with little framed photographs of little fishing villages and on the far wall a huge map of the Mediterranean was painted in blue and green and red.

The hostess sat him at a table in the back and he pulled out the scrap of *The Globe* that he had stuck into his back pocket earlier in the week, so that he could pick at the half-filled-in crossword.

It wasn't until the following fall that Kevin came home early from visiting his father upstate to find a brown leather jacket hanging on the doorknob of his bedroom. It was a man's jacket and Kevin didn't walk any further. He divorced Laurel two weeks later, about a year after the nightly arguments turned into days without talking. Kevin only realized after he had moved out that the leather jacket belonged to Richard, a man who had lived across the street for the past fifteen years. He had moved onto their block a year before the kids were born and Kevin sat with him regularly on his steps arguing about politics and drinking cans of Budweiser or in the yard of Kevin's house watching the kids throw a Frisbee.

They lived in Newton then, but after the divorce, Kevin moved back to Dorchester where he grew up. It was also where Laurel had grown up and where they went to high school together and where they got married. Kevin considered moving north of Boston, but everywhere he looked was too expensive, so he moved into a house in Dorchester. He began sleeping with the woman he met

at the garage that fixed his brakes, a few months after his move. When he first saw her she was leaning against the inside wall of the garage office, balancing in red stilettos. Her blonde hair was gathered behind her neck and fell over her left shoulder and smoke wisped out the end of the cigarette dangling from the corner of her mouth. He was disgusted by the smoke and the grease in her hair, but she drove him home when he had to leave his car at the garage and after visiting her house five or six times he found her no more appealing.

Sam and Lina walked into Giovanni's Family Diner, their nanny's hand on Sam's shoulder, twenty minutes after their father.

Sam peered toward his favorite booths at the back of the restaurant and ran toward his father as soon as he saw the arm of a flannel jacket hanging onto the floor. Lina was fourteen and rolled her eyes at her little brother when he jumped to high-five his dad with both hands. She muttered "Hey dad," and smiled quickly at the floor before sliding in across from him.

"So, how's it going, guys?" Kevin asked after they sat down and the nanny left. "How was your week?"

"It was okay," Sam replied quickly. "I had three soccer matches and we won two of them but then I had band practice today after school and that was pretty bad 'cause I was put in the back for the parade next week." "Oh, well that's great about the soccer games, Sam," Kevin replied. "Lina, how's that history class of yours going? Still having a little trouble?" "Whatever," the girl said. "It's fine."

Sam cut in before Kevin could respond. "She's just bummed about the news," he said, as if trying to explain something to his dad. "We all are, but she's taking it pretty bad." "What news?" Kevin asked. "Nothing!" Lina said, immediately glaring at her brother. "Oh yeah, I forgot. Not supposed to tell. Sorry, dad," Sam said.

"No, you can tell," Kevin pressed. "What's going on, guys?"

"Well, Lina, I think dad should know. It's not fair for him not to," Sam tried to whisper to his sister, but it came out loudly enough for Kevin to hear clearly. "Okay," Sam began again, "I'm gonna tell you this, 'cause I think you should know, but don't get sad, okay?"

"Alright..." Kevin muttered, frowning his brow with worry by this point. "Dad," Sam said again, and suddenly, Kevin wished that he could stop his son. He wished that he hadn't asked Sam anything, that he had never left Dorchester earlier, that he hadn't come to Giovanni's Family Diner. "Richard proposed to Mom Wednesday night. They're gonna get married next month."

Kevin barely took note of the pimply teenager that came to drop off a basket of bread. He didn't hear much of Sam talking about the parade next week. When the food came, he took a bite of his ravioli and let Lina finish the rest. By the time the waiter brought the check, the nanny was waving to them through the front window of the diner.

Sam hugged his father goodbye outside and Lina gave his arm a quick pat before the nanny put her arm around the kids and escorted them down the street to her car.

Kevin stood for a moment outside the restaurant, watching the white of his breath blend into the dark air around him. Glancing up at the awning reading Giovanni's Family Diner, he pulled his cell phone out of his pocket, pressed the "recent calls" button, and, without thinking, pressed send.

10:47 PM.

He lay to her right, eyes glued to the gleaming red of the numbers to her other side. As the dots between the hour and the minutes blinked away the seconds, her hand traced the angle of his shoulder. She moved her fingers up to his neck and he focused on the clock until the light hurt his eyes. Then he slowly shifted his body to face the door and stared out into the hall.



Ellen's 10th Birthday!
Alena Janda
Photograph

A Blessing;
Kibogora, Rwanda
 Melissa Peskin-Stolze
Photograph



Last Touch
 Aryeh Rosenbaum

Such a caring, gentle man
 On his patients, placed his hands.
 Dentistry was not enough,
 Saba also practiced Touch.

Reaching more than meets the eyes
 His healing Touch would "Powerize."
 With eyes shut, his soft hands asked
 'Till sacral rhythms they unmasked.

Though results were hit-or-miss,
 I was always sure of this:
 If I said I still had pain,
 He'd close his eyes and try again.

On visiting his hospice room,
 Filled with agony and gloom,
 I felt, not heard, the calm command,
 "Come, please come and hold
 my hand."

I quickly took the holding spot,
 His sickly hand so thin and hot.
 I focused then and shut my eyes,
 Thinking I could Powerize.

I sensed no "rhythm," just a pulse,
 And suddenly, I was engulfed.
 The chair, the room, began to spin.
 His spirit surged from deep within.

His body failing, breathing hard,
 By cancer irreparably marred,
 A final Touch he gave to show,
 Yes, one could make energy flow.

All skepticism thus dismissed,
 I said goodbye and gave a kiss.
 I finally grasped his healing art,
 To Touch, you first must use your heart.



Blue
 Linnie
 Bendor-Grynbaum
Photograph



PREVIOUS PAGE
Bluest Light
 Kevin Lau
Photograph



RIGHT
It's a beautiful life
 Minh Nguyen
Video
youtu.be/Y2xzNmd9xu8

untitled
 by Mariya Masyukova

we touch like lightning rods,
 and look down at the very last
 crumbs in the broken chimney.
 light them up like memories dropped
 window trackmarks, fume-stained,
 still distilled fantasies
 with umbrella scars.
 and the satellite eye hangs sideways, away
 from the silverlined tickertape forecast:
 we all know that the rain will come
 we all know that the rain will come.

坐 行
 看 至
 雲 水
 起 窮
 時 處

Chinese Calligraphy
 Yaw Shin Ooi
Calligraphy



**Who's Bridge?
Our Bridge!**
Brett Wolfson-Stofko
Photograph

This photograph was taken on October 1, 2011 during the Occupy Wall Street protests. A half-hour after this photograph was taken, 744 peaceful protesters were kettled and arrested on the roadway of the Brooklyn Bridge. Everyone to the right of the fence in the middle of the photograph spent the evening in jail and was issued a summons for disorderly conduct and disrupting vehicular traffic.



Rocks
Jasmeen Dara
Photograph



**Niagra Falls,
Top view**
Neena Jain
Photograph

**An Excerpt from the novel *Alumni Notes*
by Andrew Levitas, M.D.**

April 7, 1973: 8:00AM—10:00 AM

Swimming slowly into the light. The woman of my dreams was beside me...But it was only the alarm clock. She wasn't there. No one was. No one had been. There was never enough sleep, so never enough time to dream.

Shit, shave, shampoo. The same ragged-haired, bearded scarecrow in the mirror. *Chase me ladies, I'm in the cavalry.* Dress. Eat. Drive.

The way it was then, a resident-intern team was a first year resident and two interns or an intern and two sub-interns, a sub-intern being a fourth year student (one on weekends), and a third year student who followed around whatever was most likely to be educational. It was a Saturday, early April, what would be a beautiful time even in the mostly treeless canyons of the upper Grand Concourse, if I ever got to be out in it...Through a gap between apartment buildings I could see the lighted tops of the skyline I loved, poking above the ruins. And I thought about death. Here is how I think about death. First, that all this would wink out, vanish, be gone, lost. Second, that I would be gone, the thing I call "I" will no longer exist. Like before you're born. Extinction. Not that I would miss life, that there would be no "me" to miss anything. That far from winking out, all this would go on, and the part of it that was me would be a tiny hole, and it would heal over, and leave at most a tiny scar. Both these feelings simultaneously. Marcus Aurelius had covered this territory pretty well. *I did not know death had undone so many.* A sickness. Manageable perhaps. Not curable.

Marvin banged on the hood. "Wakey wakey. Fire up the V and the W". "Ah, the late Dr. Kornbluth." As I merged from the Concourse service road into the main road Marvin gave me the bad news: "We have a new sub-intern and a new clerk," and I groaned at the extra work. "No, no," he said, "This is big news, big; we have two women, and not just any two women...you take the Fourth Year and I get the Third Year *this was unusual* and wait till you see—it's the legendary un-touchable Lish the Dish. Aren't you glad you team with me?" "Lish the Dish." "Hair like brown silk, legs up to her neck, tits on the small side but fill in name of fresh-fruit-of-choice here. Movie-star gorgeous." "Very nice, but you make the assignments in the team, so why do I get this paragon?" "The Third Year is a redhead, and cute as a bug, and The Dish is way too tall for me—all yours, Tall Paul." *Look at this schmuck; it's green, for Christ's sake. 77WABC news at the top of the hour Kissinger says bombing will resume if Hanoi violates the agreement* "I shouldn't be telling you this, and definitely not them. They called in all the rezzies except Franny, maybe September last year and asked who had any reservations about working with female med studs. No shit—can you believe this?" "I'm past not believing anything, bro." "Only Bodacious Bob expressed doubt, and he's a complete dick. I, on the other hand expressed eagerness. Yes, my motives were mixed. We are a well matched pair of cynics, Dr. Seitz." "Reminds me—you going to be Chief next year?"

"Dunno. The Bodacious One is said to have a lock. Anyway, you get Lois Lane and I get Lana Lang." "Are you ever going to grow up, Marvin?" "When I have to. In 5—4—3—2..."

We pulled in the gate, past the ancient gate operator. I parked next to an old green MG with a dented rear quarter panel and rubbed sleep around my eyes. I didn't think about the possibility at that point. Not until we were in the elevator. The elevator operator was older than the gate operator. *MG with...* That was when I woke up. "Does Lish the Dish have a last name, or is it just Thedish?" The elevator stopped just above the 8th Floor; The Ancient backed it down, up, down again, opened the gate.

"Archer? Archibald? Acheson? Maybe that's the redhead." "Acheson. Alicia Acheson." *BEEEEEEP.* "Maybe, yeah..." He checked his beeper, pushed open the ICU door. "Hello, Bodacious Bob—couldn't wait for us?" 77 WABC playing all the hits. Here's "Dr. Kornbluth, Dr. Seitz, so good of you to join us. *Killing me softly with his song, killing me softly.* These are Drs. McCulloch and Acheson..." his lips kept moving. The hair was pulled back for work, pinned into a French twist. The gamine face; she had pierced her ears, graced now with gold hoops. *Slender. No, slim. That was the word. Slim Like a rapier.* There was a blue Oxford shirt and whites, a white Department of Health lab jacket a half size too big, one pocket filled with the Washington Manual bedside encyclopedia, stethoscope around her neck in the approved manner (like a scarf) and the Clark's Wallabies we all wore that year (surgeons wore Adidas). *Strumming my face with his fingers.* On a lapel, an Equal Rights Amendment button. She was beautiful, beautiful; the heartbreakingly beautiful girl had become a heartbreakingly beautiful woman. Bob was still talking, talking, the speech I'd heard him give for two straight years, the speech he'd given when I was standing where she was.

"Will you please turn down that radio? Just for a minute? *They never do, Bob.* Thanks. This is a crumbling old municipal hospital, it opened in 1929, everything is broken or about to be. The thing is—and this is key—this is our place. The attendings run the Mother House, and they run us. But they just round here. We run this place. We can practice medicine the way we want. It's ours."

"And a few administrators'." "Yes, Marvin, except on weekends when even they aren't here." He turned slightly to deliver this to the students head on. "Meaning we, the House Staff, are. Doctors, I'll leave you to it." And he handed Marvin the pile of sign-out cards and swept out the double doors, opening both, leaving a lengthening silence. *Killing me softly.* "Well," said Marvin, "And that was Chief-Resident-Elect Bodacious Bob, and—this is key—I am Marvelous Marvin Kornbluth, and this is Tall Paul Seitz, and we have been left to it."

They laughed. Her laugh had not changed. *Like music.* "Katie McCulloch" "Alicia Acheson. Ali. Dr. Seitz and I know each other. Or did." "Then that makes it easy—you work with him and Katie works with me. Let's divvy up the cards and start the bloodletting." "I'm sorry," she said, "Do we not just call the phlebotomy team?"

"At the Mother House we do; welcome to Morrisania," I said. She had a length-of-rubber-tubing tourniquet pushed through a jacket buttonhole in the approved way, but no pocketful of test tubes, and I needed a fresh supply myself, which worked out perfectly, so before Marv could say anything I said, "So our first stop is the roof." "The roof?" "Lab is on the roof." She stopped at the elevators. "Stairs," I said. "Elevators only go to 8. The ICU is on 8 so we can run up the stairs to the lab with STAT bloods. We'd

do it anyway; patients could die waiting for us to catch an elevator. This place is a step back in time.” I stopped on the stairs, turned to face her. “Which brings us to the question—is this awkward for you?” “Me?... No. Can you handle it? Is it a big deal?”

I hesitated. *If she can stand it. I can. Or maybe for her it is no big deal. I know how deeply I must have hurt her. I don't deserve it. But here she is.* I gave the best smile I could manage.

She smiled too.

And then we were on the roof, through the door just like the roof access to any tenement in the city, onto the duckboards.

“How is Morrisania?”
Life in the Valley of the Shadow. “I put one foot in front of the other. Hope it will all turn out well in the end, be worth it. Save some lives along the way.”

“Very dramatic.”

I shrugged “It’s been a long year.” *A lot of long years. So much to ask.* “Kenny, can a brother get some test tubes?”

“A brother can. You, I’m not so sure. She can. Any time.”

“Fill your pockets with an assortment of tubes and off we go. Bring some for Katie.” There were plenty of tubes in the ICU; I had just needed the minutes with her on the stairs to see how this might work. *Did she know this.*

“Bye Kenny; nice almost meeting you.”

Your scarf it was apricot. She had the quickness still; why shouldn’t she? I went through the sign-out cards, looking for the best mix of easy draws and challenges, and oh shit, there was Veinless Vinnie. *You’re so vain, you probly think this song is about you, you’re so vaaaain.* But the Unit first. We moved from bed to bed, reading the necessary morning labs off the charts, not much bedside chit chat since most of the patients were unconscious or close to it. 77 WABC. A diabetic recovering from an

episode of KA; two rule out MIs whose MIs had been ruled out and could go to the Floor, an OD waiting to sign out AMA so as not to miss his next fix.

We clumped down the stairs, pushing a generation’s dust and crumbled plaster around. Four West was a big open space with frosted glass dividers separating beds, lit by huge bay windows built when sunlight was the best disinfectant. Layers of dirt over the glass smeared the wan light. It was a warm spring; there were many empty beds. For now. We grabbed charts.

“Morning Mamie,” I said to the elderly woman with edematous ankles the size of a Clydesdale’s hoof, “Time to check the oil.” “Oh, Dr Seitz, you won’t leave me any blood, not a drop, and not a drop of water either.” The catheter bag was in fact full; I called over a nurse to change it. “This is Dr. Acheson” I said to Mamie, and added, for her, “The angel in white is Miss Springer.” They shook hands. Callie said, “It’s Callie. My wings are back at the desk.” *Everybody here is a comedian. Everybody here has recently seen MASH.*

She went to draw bloods on Mr. Gordon. Five patients later she hadn’t missed a vein, a good thing in a med stud. Mr. Gordon could be a challenge. “Very nice looking young doctor,” Mamie said. She had terrible veins, what with all the diuretics; I was concentrating on finding the second best one, leaving the best for an IV when the current one failed. “Mmm” I said. “We know each other from before,” and moved on. Mrs. Feingold, Mrs. Trent, Mr. Jackson...all old, all poor, all sweet and unknown to me except as patients, whatever they had been in life or would be. I liked them, I wanted to heal them; it was a losing battle against time and poverty and my own fatigue. *You’re young you wake up on a gorgeous spring day, and know you have to spend it with the ill and the dying in a place that people walked by every day trying not to notice until they had to. You still haven’t heard about your Public Health Service*

application or for sure about the rumored end of the Doctor Draft Residency loomed as more of the same but with the hope of more sleep. Life is a giant round of repetitive work and the only things that help make it bearable are passing on skills to students gallows humor and numbness. I tied off another arm, sank a needle into another vein.

“Quien es la castana?”
“Ella es una medica. Doctor Acheson”
“Es verdad? Ella es muy buena.”
“Si. Muy buena.”

Of all the hospitals in all the cities in all the world, she walks into mine.



Untitled Portrait
Adina Haramati
Drawing

Winter's Warming
Regina Janicki
Photograph



Kenya Wildlife
Jayanta Roy-
Chowdhury
Photograph





Pink Jumpers
by Batya Herzberg

All she could picture in her mind were those two pink jumpers, flowers embroidered on the pockets and lace peeking out from the hemlines. Those two perfect pink jumpers, now soaked in blood. Matching blood splattered across the windshield created a Rorschach Test, one that made her think of tea-parties and cupcakes and rainbows and death and screams and “MOMMY!” The pink jumpers are indelibly there, even after eighteen years. Eighteen years of poverty, of depression and bipolar diagnoses, and of a husband who left and came back and then left again. Eighteen years of not being pregnant; that hurt most of all. She longed for the kicks inside her belly telling her, “Hi, I’m here.” She longed for the glow she would feel as her body swelled with health and life. She longed for the morning sickness that would keep her vomiting in bed until noon. But none of that happened. She tried all the home remedies, she exercised and ate right, she monitored her ovulation with religious zeal. She prayed and begged and made deals. All for nothing.

Her chief complaint in the ER was dysuria, but that was far from the worst pain. Pain so deep and so sharp that she sometimes had to remember to breathe or it would suffocate her. Pain that made her plaintively ask the doctor to please figure out why she couldn’t get pregnant, believing, or maybe just hoping, that after all she tried, he would have the key. As the minutes ticked by, she knew. She knew that no one had the key. That her dream was as lost as her two little girls in the pink jumpers.

OPPOSITE
Music by Design
Raphael Hulkower
Photograph

BELOW
Palmera
Adriana Nieto
Photograph



Passport

by Geoffrey Kabat

From the highest shelf in my father's closet,
shortly after his death, I take down papers untouched
since he stowed them there in middle age
and pore over those from a lonely battle he waged
against the McCarthy-inspired loyalty boards
in government-sponsored research.

He kept everything:
lengthy correspondence with the State Department
about his passport, revoked on the grounds that
in the thirties he was a communist sympathizer,
items from his FBI file (obtained through the F.O.I.A.),
carbon copies, return receipts, transcripts of hearings,
letters from colleagues, and newspaper clippings.

Buried in a thick sheath are two small, faded envelopes
each with fuzzy type declaring their contents:
"ORIENTAL BILLS" and "SOUTH AMERICAN BILLS."
Inside the first is a worn, creased, and blackened note
for "Cinq francs, NOUMEA, Banque de l'Indochine."
The "NOUMEA" puzzles me, seeming a few thousand
miles out of place.

The second envelope contains five crisp mint bills
for one, two, five, ten, and twenty Brazilian cruzeiros,
displaying national figures—bearded, mustachioed,
and clean-shaven.
I have the impulse to save these, since they have
been preserved for so long already—exactly forty-five years.

But who are we saving these mementos, these talismans, for?

They seem like a pure message, timeless, an arrow headed
unimpeded into the future—
but what is the target?

These tokens remind me of statues and
artifacts arrayed around the pharaoh in his tomb
and meant to accompany him into the afterlife.

Or perhaps they are merely payment for the boatman who
ferries us to the land of the dead.



Monoceros
Michael Shamoon
Photograph



The History of My Fucking Avocado Seed

Inspired by the Charles Bukowski Poem "The History of One Tough Motherfucker"
By Hadas Reich

PREVIOUS PAGE
My Window Tree
Uwe Werling
Photograph

A few months ago, after eating an avocado, I decided to try to grow the seed, like I did when I was young. You stick a few toothpicks in the seed, a bulb, really, and allow the bottom half to remain suspended in a cup of water. That's all there is to it.

I waited and waited for my avocado seed to sprout. It felt like nothing was happening, and I grew impatient. After all, having an unsprouted avocado pit sitting on your window sill is not very attractive. After a few weeks, a crack appeared in the seed. I wasn't sure if that was a good sign or a bad sign, so I decided to leave it and wait a little longer. A few weeks after the crack appeared, a tiny root began to grow. "Finally!" I thought, and excitedly checked on my root's progress each day. It was slow going - painfully slow. It had been months since I'd embarked on this project, and all I had to show for it was a crack in a seed, a tiny root, and a glass that desperately needed to be washed. But finally, one day, a sprout! A teeny, tiny, bright green leaf. "At last!" I thought. "This journey has all been worth it! I will soon be the proud owner of an avocado tree." My sprout continued its slow ascent, and another tiny leaf joined the first.

Then one morning I opened my curtains, and they brushed up against the toothpicks, which were sticking out too far beyond the rim of the glass. My seed got knocked out of its home and tumbled to the floor. Its small sprout, which had taken so long to finally grow, broke at its base. It was like a dramatic movie scene where things happen in slow motion. I wanted to shout out in pain and frustration. But I wasn't ready to mourn the loss of my sprout just yet. I placed it back

in its glass, refilled the water, and figured, "well, I might as well let it try again."

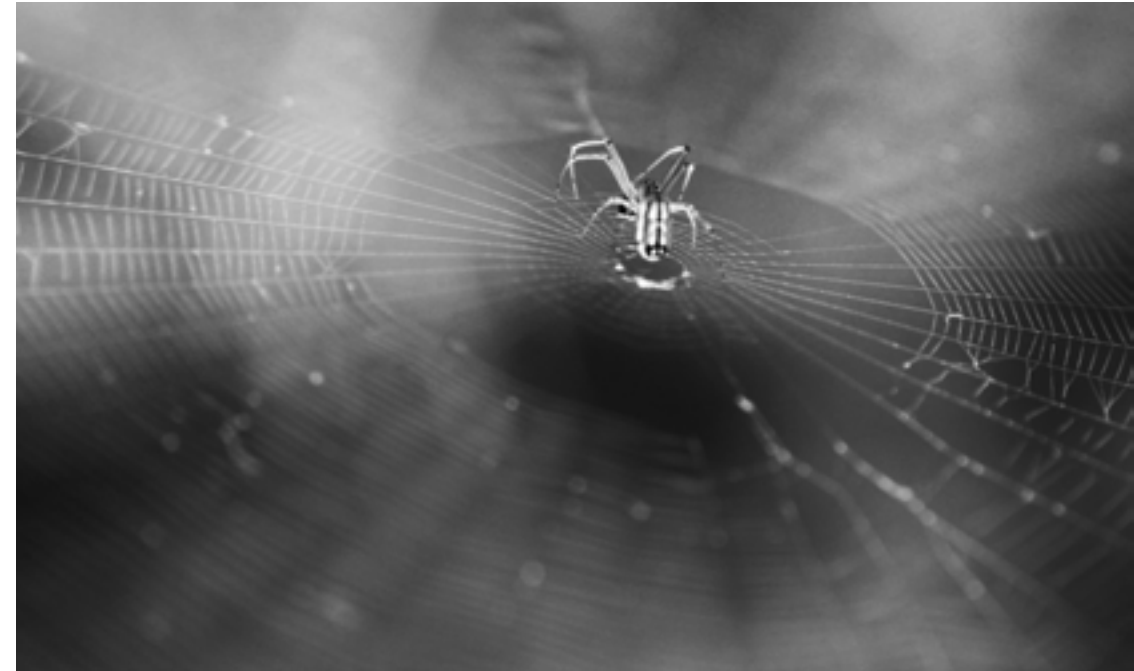
I continued to faithfully care for my seed. But this time, the little seed had a newly found sense of determination. Its roots grew more rapidly, and it only took a few weeks, rather than months, for a new sprout to appear. And once it finally did appear, I breathed a sigh of relief.

And now, at last, I have this little sprout. Its roots are substantial now - three large roots that reach the bottom of the glass and wrap around its circumference once or twice. It has 5 leaves, which aren't even that small anymore. The rate of growth is noticeable, so much so that every couple of days I can text a picture to my mom, who made fun of me for keeping it for so long in its sproutless state. There is a small scar at the base where it originally broke, but the seed doesn't seem to mind, and neither do I.

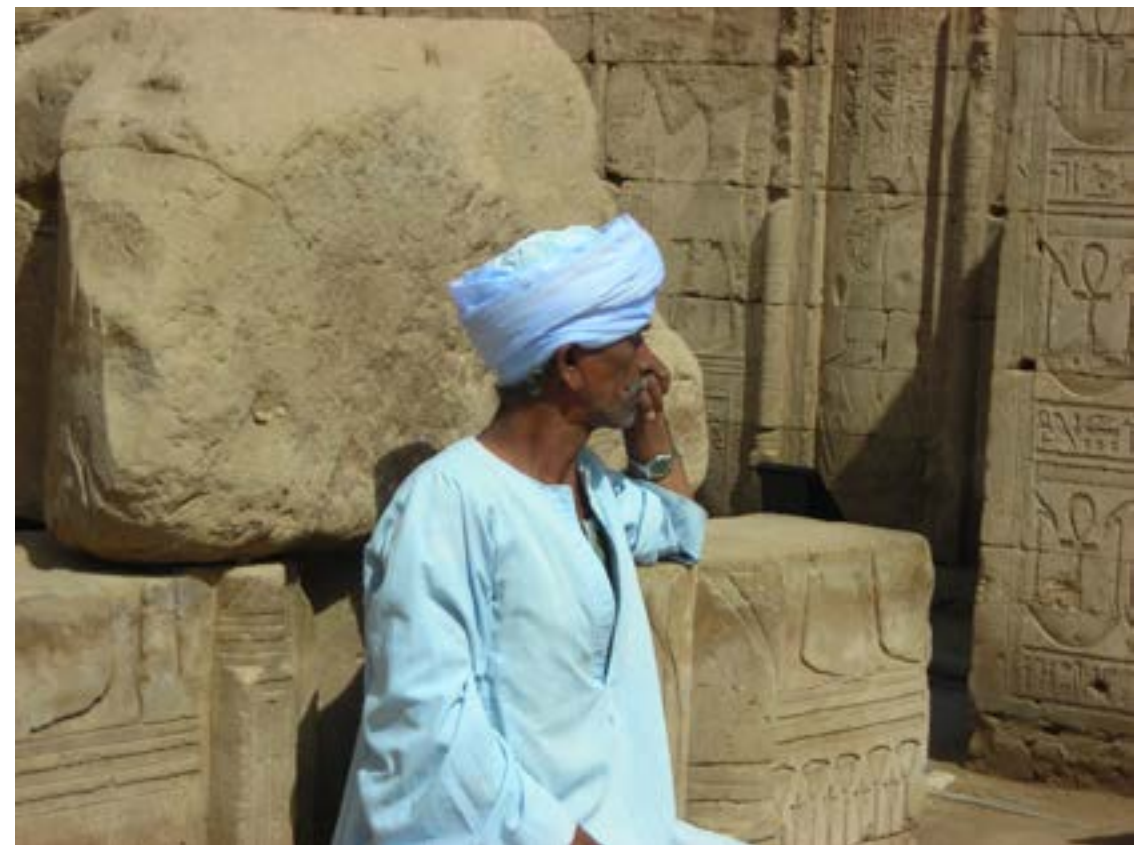
When that new sprout finally did appear, I thought "there is a poem in here - a grand metaphor." It might take a while, but you'll achieve your dreams! There may be setbacks, but you'll get through them! Very after school special.

Of course, I don't anticipate this sprout ever giving me an avocado, and I know too, that it can't be taken for too grand of a metaphor, because how many seeds are there that don't end up sprouting, or that break and can't recover? So yeah, I guess Bukowski was right when he said that it's all bullshit.

But somehow, it helps.



Home Improvement
Aryeh Rosenbaum
Photograph



Egypt-2010
Josephine Costa
Photograph



Un nuevo sol for
a photo
Brad Peterson
Photograph

Hot Toddy for a Brooklyn Thaw (An Ode to an Idler)
Maxwell Weidmann

With an exhale of fermented fumes he seeps in
To the aroma of spiced water, a helter-skelter melody
Trickles from strung out guitar strings, whispering
A message as worn as the rope that rings his neck.
Floating around the café, he begs to exist with eyes
Mirroring the aimless excess, but empty with want.
Lungs cough out a tune, bitterly brawling with radio gaga.

“I’ve never seen a warmer winter,”
Drops the domesticated dullard of our day,
Uneasy under the Aqualung’s obtrusive ogle,
Kafka’s cockroach creeping o’er the room,
Scampering up my spine with tendrils
Tempting my attention, jarred with reluctant inertia
From fantasies hoarded behind a backlit screen,
Forcing me to confront realities
Silently screaming their reproach
From the frigid depths of our Grand Illusion.



Coney Island
Hannah Rosenblum
Photograph

When I was thirteen
by Susan Alongi

Warm sea air swirled around my head. Bright sunlight kissed my cheeks as my father insisted on holding my hand. We walked down long, narrow streets as boats bobbed up and down in the water. The Long Island Sound flapped against the sand, and still, my father encircled my hand with his. It was embarrassing.

My mother and father had been divorced since I was seven, and my father came to visit me every other Saturday. On this particular Saturday he decided to take me to City Island at the end of the Bronx where the Long Island Sound brushed against the Island's sandy edges.

I loved seeing my father when I was younger and, though I loved my father, I felt I was growing out of his visits. At thirteen, I felt I was too grown up and, more importantly, I was too cool to be seen with my parent. The fact that my father insisted on holding my hand in public made it worse.

A few feet in front of me I saw a bright, pink house. It looked like it was placed there by mistake. The Island was antiquated with its tall, Victorian houses and rustic restaurants. The pink house with its obnoxious blinking colored lights that read "Ice Cream", was painfully out of place. The smell of churned cream and sugar filled my nostrils when we walked through the open door and my father smiled at me. I wedged my hand from his and walked up to the counter. I didn't want to hurt his feelings when I wrenched my hand away so I made pretend I was reading the big, bold selection poster on the wall. I couldn't believe he took me to a pink ice cream shop.

It was obvious my father thought I was still a child. When he asked me what kind of ice cream I wanted, I mumbled something as I watched him order two giant sugar cones.

We left the pink house and walked back to the car, which seemed to be parked miles away. The sun that had kissed my cheeks now scorched my head, and the Long Island Sound smelled of high tide. I couldn't pass the lazy boats bobbing up and down in the water fast enough. With ice cream sopping through the napkins bunched around the cone and dripping down my arm I hastened my pace. I swore people were staring at me and laughing as they passed.

I don't remember what time it was when we first arrived at the Island, or what time it was when we walked into the pink ice cream house. I don't remember what kind of ice cream I ordered. I do remember how I felt. I was angry with my father for bringing me to the Island, but how I wish I could go back to that day.

Now I wish I was walking down the narrow streets of City Island with my father.

Now I wish I could hold his hand and watch the boats lay idle in the water.

Now I wish I had more time to spend with my father.



LEFT
a day in the life
Robert Karr
Photograph

BELOW
Shimen Dam
Yi-An Ko
Photograph



Day Poem

by Stephen Lowery

A silver substance was spreading in the sky –
 The frankness of the word, his word,
 Uttered before the storm. Those squalls go unremarked
 Along its surface, cracked in profound ravines –

We hike into that forested darkness, vapor garlands,
 Wreathed in misgivings, the shiny liquid afternoon
 Congealed in a starry dream of night –
 Stray jottings instructing them –

Dissecting the mollusk, the games played in circles on wet grass.
 The note you left by the bowl of oranges
 Explained how each day may be lived precisely
 In this new life emerging from its topographic rigging.

It was the twanging fiber of each paragraph that mattered,
 The fever of colors, spreading through society,
 Blistering the mores they mapped back
 To the stream of laughter along the trail on a summer night.

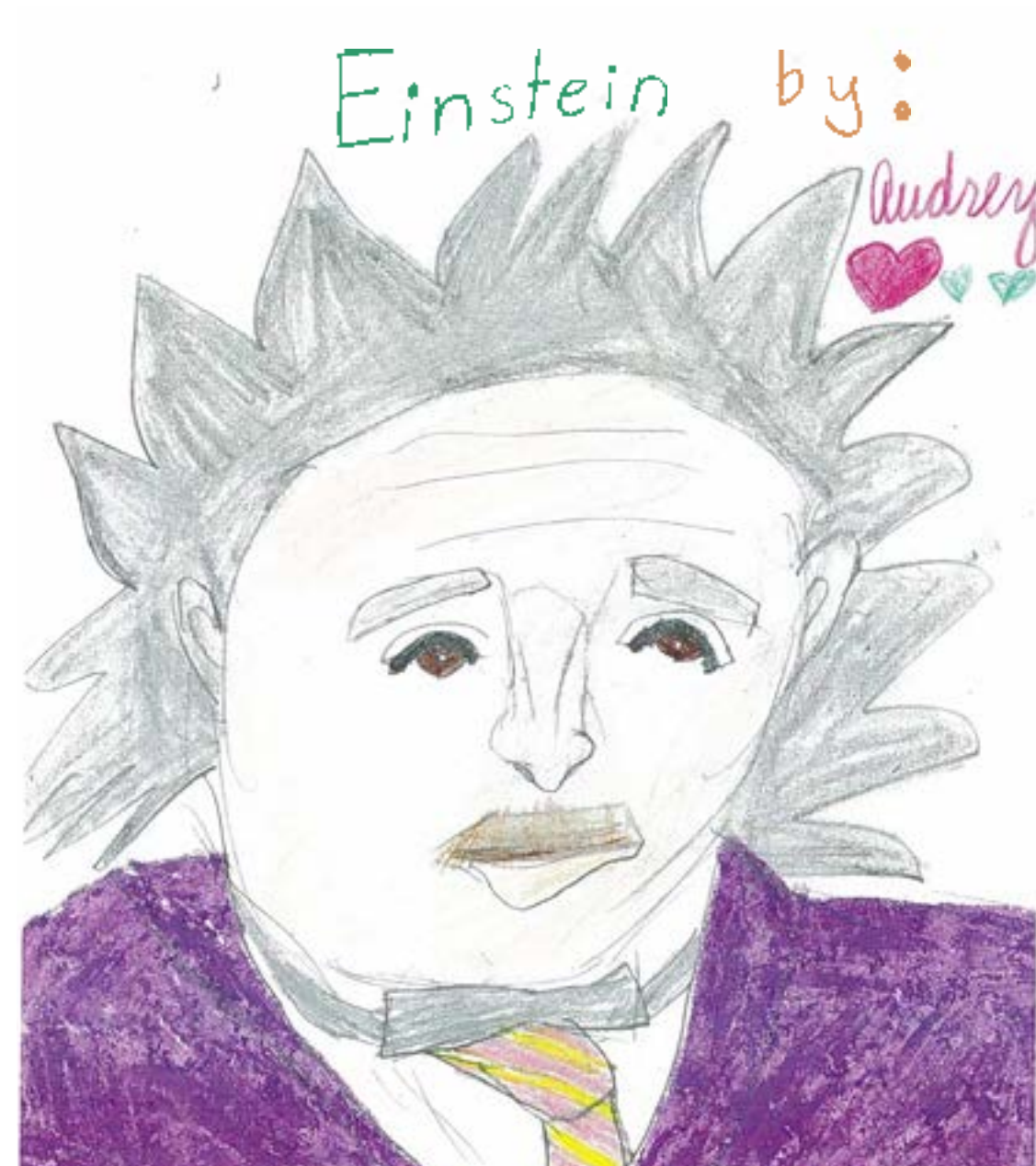
Maine MushroomsMichael Szmyga
Photograph**Strange Fruit Trees**Damien Jackson
Photograph**Leaf**Artemio Gonzalez Jr.
Photograph



Untitled
Tristan Feierabend
Photograph

Five Years Without You
by Vivian Gradus

Five years without you
Five years without your beautiful face
Five years without looking into those blue eyes and seeing your love for me there
Five years without that love in my life
Five years as an outsider in my own world
Five years without you



Einstein
Audrey Miller
Drawing



A Little Green
Loyda Cruz
Photograph

boat trip
Catherine Vilcheze
Photograph



Largesse
by Charlie Hathaway

If you ask a poor man to pay
What the market will bear
Then you may bestow
Some of your handsome profit
Upon those less fortunate



Protester
Nick Fernandez
Photograph



Queen's Giant:
tallest, oldest thing
in NYC
Ari Greenbaum
Photograph

Alex's Wife (a tribute to Alex Blake)
by Karen Gardner

When Alex plays the bass,
it is the instrument of his affection.
The bass is a woman.
His woman.

He strums and plucks her strings,
thumps her broad, smooth contours,
and guides his bow with a reverence
that is unadulterated adoration.

He serenades her –
“Doo dah doop doop, bum ditty bip bop” –
singing her praises in a language all their own.

Yet the translation can be divined:
“Thou art are my one and only,” he says.
“Let me worship thee,
thy beauty,
thy fineness.
Thou instillest me with faith and hope
in all that is rhythmic,
all that is loving,
all that is goodness.”

And she responds beneath his fingers
and the strokes from his bow,
making music
pure and soulful.
Alex and the bass are one.
She gives his music, his life, all meaning.
She is his wife.

Hold
Julie B. Zhao
Photograph





Tea Time Meditation
Tiffany Yeh
Photograph



9/11 Memorial: View
from the NW Corner
of the N Tower
Edward Nejat
Photograph



NY Comic Con #2
Nathaniel Swinburne
Photograph

Quests...and hindsight by Lenny Naymagon

I had taken several classes with Professor F and managed to impress him. Professor F is a good guy to impress; he's pretty important in the Biology Department here and an internet search of his name will quickly reveal that he's pretty important in a number of other settings as well. Professor F happens to be a world renowned herpetologist. Herpetology, contrary to what you may be thinking, is the branch of zoology concerned with reptiles and amphibians. I, unlike Professor F, am not overly fond of reptiles and amphibians, though I pretended to be, because again, Professor F is a pretty important person.

Eventually my pretending paid off. One day Professor F summoned me to his office, home to dozens of reptiles and amphibians, some pickled and some quite alive, and invited me on one of his expeditions. Now you must know that Professor F's expeditions are almost as big a deal as he is. Professor F regards himself as a scientist-adventurer, sort of the Indiana Jones of lizards. He's been known to disappear into uncharted jungles and emerge months later with specimens of a dozen or more newly discovered frog species in his backpack and a dozen or more well-known intestinal parasites in his colon.

Professor F's most renowned expedition, the one which earned him a number of interviews on morning and late night talk-shows, took him deep into the jungles of central Africa. One morning, somewhere along the border between Cameroon and Gabon, he was bitten by what he, and everyone else in his party, assumed was a lethally venomous snake. Deep in the rain

forest with no means of communication, Professor F seemed doomed. He sat down in the shade of a gnarled tropical tree and waited to die. He thought of his wife and children back home whom he might never see again; he thought of his parents whom he might see again very soon; he got hungry and had a quick lunch; he contemplated his life and all he had accomplished; he reminisced about his friends and lovers and the lizards back in his lab; he took a bathroom break behind his tree; he searched his mind for his earliest memory; he considered what might await him in eternity; he took a nap; he woke up and thought some more about his wife, and his children, and his friends, and his frogs; he got bored and asked one of his field assistants to turn on the stereo; he tried to recall the exact layout of his childhood home; he remembered that one night as an undergraduate when he took this girl home and...; he played a game of cards with one of his interpreters; he finally began to feel death gripping him tightly by the abdomen but it turned out to be a bad case of indigestion. He took another bathroom break. After a while it became clear that he was not going to die. He was strangely disappointed. So was everyone else in his party (especially Professor G, his longtime rival at the American Herpetological Society). Professor F, as it turns out, had stumbled upon a yet undiscovered mimic of the lethal species which everyone thought had done him in (though Professor G still maintains that he should be given credit for the discovery since it was he who pried the snake off Professor F's shin). Professor F wrote a book about the experience. He entitled it *The Serpent's Bluff: From Awaiting Death to Renew-*

ing Life. It was part adventure novel, part self-help book, with a slight touch of Herpetology here and there as space allotted. Surprisingly, despite its notable lack of ecological models and cladistic analyses, it became an international best seller as well as required reading in all his classes. He left out the parts about the nap, the lunch, the indigestion, and the bathroom breaks. But bathroom breaks or no bathroom breaks I was pretty excited to go with him. We were headed to a remote corner of tropical Asia where Professor F intended to compile a survey of endemic reptile species. The trip was to last two months. I felt like a real adventurer; like either Lewis or Clark (not sure which one I'd prefer) or Candido Rondon, or, to satisfy the adolescent side of my imagination, Jonny Quest. Unfortunately however, my experience did not quite measure up to young Mr. Quest's lofty standards.

We set off at the end of monsoon season, trudging for endless miles on inundated muddy roads, stopping only to remove the leeches from our calves and ankles. Professor F, I soon realized, had recruited me for a death march. My feet blistered in my boots, my neck played wet-nurse to legions of flies, my body moved sluggishly through the stale murky air like a spoon through a bowl of thick pea soup. Every once in a while someone would trap a sorry snake or lizard in a burlap sack and bring it to Professor F for inspection. The wriggling mass of scales would be noted in a log, photographed, sampled for DNA, and released. There were no ancient ruins, no spear wielding tribesmen, no spectacular cascades; just morose expanses of soggy jungle.

Quests, adventures, journeys, the epic stretches of our lives, exist only in recollection. In the present moment, the tremendous gravity of the journey is obscured by the slogging pace of its progress. Magellan's sailors, as they circumnavigated the globe, were too concerned with the scurvy afflicting their skin and gums, the vermin in the holds of their ships, and the madden-

ing infinity of the sea, to reflect upon the implications of their voyage. Alexander's soldiers, as they marched across deserts and over mountains, could not possibly see the glory they were winning through the sweat and blood and weariness which clouded their eyes. Even Jason's Argonauts, on their way to Colchis, must have at times lost themselves in their trials long enough to forget the Golden Fleece. The grand adventure is the product of hindsight. It is lost behind the weeds and brambles of its mindless increments until the very moment of its conclusion when it emerges perfect and whole, eclipsing the drudgery of its buildup as completely as that drudgery had previously eclipsed it. The epic journey is too fine for the minutiae of reality like a Victorian lady is too fine to do her own housework. Those adventurous stretches of our lives exist as definite entities, with volume and shape and weight, only in our memories, where the repetitive toil that went into them can be conveniently condensed, like gas under high pressure wisped together to form a solid.

Unfortunately, our herpetological expedition was never quite established itself as an "epic journey" in my mind. It was cut short before it could progress through its full course. About two weeks in, on a characteristically oppressive day, I found myself clambering along the increasingly rocky jungle path at the rear of our party which, due to the humble breadth of the trail, proceeded single file through the forest, laden with packs like some sort of guerrilla platoon. Professor F, as always, was leading the group, hacking away at the underbrush with his machete and humming some folksong he'd picked up in a local village a few nights before. Now and again the rest of our detachment would disappear behind a bend in the path and I'd have to hustle to get them back into my field of vision. Around noon, as the unforgiving sun was reaching its zenith, I was hustling as best I could when I glimpsed a flash of scales at the base of a nearby tree. I approached cautiously, just as professor F had

instructed, and at the last possible moment enclosed that scaly flash in one of my burlap sample bags. After a few seconds of vain twisting and wriggling the contents of the bag settled down and I was able to peer in and have a look. I had caught a beady-eyed little snake, black with whitish bands, the first of its sort on the expedition. Infused with the vigor of discovery I ran up the trail until I'd rejoined our party and then made my way past the procession of scientists and field assistants to reach Professor F at the head of the column.

I held the bag out to him. "It's a Dinodon" I declared. "Found it about a hundred yards back".

"Dinodon, eh?" replied Professor F, accepting the bag and sticking his hand in to remove the captive inside.

"Ouch! Little guy bit me!" he exclaimed in an amused half laugh as his hand emerged from the burlap folds, a scrawny little snake entwined in his fingers. "Right on the thumb didn't you?" he asked the snake as if he were playfully scolding a child.

He rotated his hand slowly in front of his eyes, contemplating the specimen from all angles. His eyes widened and a smile broke across his face, just the way it always happens when a grizzled prospector strikes gold in an old Spaghetti Western. But as he twisted his wrist left and right the enthusiasm slowly faded from his countenance. His eyes jumped from the snake in his hands and met my gaze. With his stare directed squarely at my face, he let the snake fall to the ground and drew the machete which was hanging at his waist. He approached me with blade drawn, pushed me aside, and sat down on a boulder which I had been standing in front of. He placed his right hand, palm facing down, on the rock at his side. He splayed out his fingers as wide as he could until the tendons became visible beneath the skin of his knuckles. He raised the machete above his head, and brought it down

upon his thumb with all the force he could muster. The severed digit proceeded to slide down the face of the rock leaving behind a narrow trail of blood as it went, like a snail depositing slime.

As he slathered his bleeding thumb-stump in antiseptic ooze he met my gaze again. "That was a Krait, not a Dinodon" he said, his voice firm and unwavering. "I'd think you'd know the difference". He'd lopped off his thumb to prevent the venom from reaching the rest of his body.

Professor F didn't say a word to me for the remainder of our trip. A few days later I was back home while he was being treated for an infection at some dingy hospital in Yangoon. I still see the professor now and again on campus or around town. He usually glares at me just as he did that day in the jungle. And every time he glares I think of how our journey together ended; by that boulder glistening bright with its fresh coat of blood. And I think of how Magellan's journey ended; his body torn to shreds by Philippine tribesmen. And I think of how Alexander's journey ended; with a furious fever in the halls of Babylon. And I think of how Jason's journey ended; crushed in his sleep by the stern of the rotting Argo. And I think that all great journeys are best punctuated by tragedy; great deeds put into perspective by the sudden actualization of mortality. And at the very least, I think that Professor F can squeeze another book from the experience. And after all, a thumb is a small price to pay for a good story.

Bronx, November Sky
Thomas J. Quinn
Photograph



Arthur's Bread
Michael Prystowsky
Painting



Morris Park
David Poulsen
Photograph



A Letter to Idealism

by Frances-Camille Solomon Padlan

Dear Idealism,

With ageless skill, your graceful hand
held on to your number two pencil,
drawing my life out so perfectly—
sketching each annoying detail.
There were never any mistakes
when you drew the bold lines of my face
or the chronic loneliness swelling the spheres of my eyes.
I am just another doodle
pleading for your approval,
seeking out too much, when all I really want
is to know
my Name.

You penciled in perfection and crowned my
face with some other name, but
pretty faces can only tell you even prettier lies.
You began to sketch other perfect figures
in your flat, white plane of two-dimensional space.
But this caricature seeks freedom
in sloppy eraser rubbings.
So if you take a look at me now,
you'll probably be so disappointed to see
how much of me
I have erased.

With warm regards,
Me

OPPOSITE
Jerusalem Old City
Carl Schildkraut
Photograph

One Year Ago...
Chris Iannantuoni

Last house on the left overlooks like a lion
Unknowingly creating your very own zion

Last supper today and maybe for life
As darkness encroaches, a hint of the light

The seeds of decay beginning to sprout
While experts leave questions and serious doubt

Cells disperse like soldiers on a mission
Fooling you into thinking remission

Stricken with fear too early to face
Can't find the words, don't know your own place

Your silence spoke volumes but wasn't by choice
The rest of your life without your own voice

Belief in white coats and scrubs all alike
Conforming to something that seems so unlike

Ensure you it's well and try as they might
The only one listening wakes up in the night

Pray to your God or look for an Angel
Maybe she's here, so tiny and fragile

One life for a new one second to hold
Won't know my name until you are old

The reaper's creeping transparently clear
Your future self's calling short timing is near

Isolation is cruel what more can I do
Friends all around try pulling you through
But day after day you struggle to fight
Will you survive for just one more night

The beat of the clock leaves you gasping for air
Although he's a friend there's still a blank stare
But in the short distance ablaze with a glare

Realization sets in you're finally there

Encased in your tomb but barely alive
And all the while that look in your eyes
Reaching and begging, not just a plea
A sobering calm has set over me

Through hazy dark clouds it's difficult to see
The mom from before this divisive disease

Do we regress or do we conspire
When seeking comfort in mother and father

12 years ago you looked in a mirror
Examined yourself it all became clearer

With a stroke of her key your moment
was sealed
Like the plot of a book too early revealed

Away in his life with his books and his
numbers
Seeming to care about all the others

He cared for not one but two of the same
A wife and a daughter oh what a shame

Frustrating right now how could it have come
Has all of the love submerged and gone
But give him some time and he'll come around
Knowledge is sparse and is seldom found

The remnants linger like a melody unchained
While the images and thoughts of you
still remain

Please take care of yourself and always hold true
One day down the road I'll meet up with you

Acceptance of death comes over me
Like a full moon wave of certainty

Do you know me? Can you see?
Do you hear me? Already free?

On your last night you weren't aware
Wheels set in motion for futures despair

Few words could be spoken no tears could
I hide
All I could say...it's okay to die

You tried your hardest, the prognosis a crime
All that's benign corrupts over time

When judgment day came we stood all around
Most of us shocked and made not a sound

No more should you worry your struggle
was clear
Short life on this planet so riddled with fear
But now once and for all your peaceful
night's here

News of your passing spread like wild fire
But no one believed that I was a liar

The friends you had met both old and new
Come celebrate life and future renewed

Mourn me in death miss me you'll see
One day we'll meet in eternity

Some secrets shared and some you did keep
Don't be ashamed or hide with the sheep
I can not judge I don't feel pity
You did what was right, damn the holy city

Look to the stars what future's beyond
Somewhere out there a cure to be found
So that one day progeny will be safe
And know that ancestors spit in the face

Rethink and re-question what was it for
Could it have changed could I have done more

The mind can't conceive to watch day
after day
With no hope to slow down the stages
of decay

Perhaps no one knows but what about mine

Now how should I act? What should I do?
Take what you taught me to always be true
Be a good man, husband and father
Try not to let all those little things bother

You couldn't have asked for a better daughter
Fulfilled all the dreams a mother could ask for

No longer in life my body may be
Always know what you meant to me

A name so unlike yet familiar to me
Waves of emotion won't set me free
Recalling the times and moments I see
I can't get those back it's not up to me

Endearingly clear the memory of you
Lifts like a veil to reveal something new

Never forgotten not whispers in time
Alive in our hearts awake in our minds

Could fate have been sealed at a moment
in time

Muizenberg
Sonia Schaezlein
Photograph



state fair
Hillary Guzik
Photograph





Wonderment
David Shechter
Photograph

we are
by Anna Pace

we are providers -
of medical care,
of guidance,
of reassurance,
of comfort.

we are teachers -
of medicine,
of integrity,
of patience.

we are learners -
of new cultures
of new practices
of ourselves.

we are listeners -
of problems,
of concerns,
of happy endings.

we are role models -
examples
of behavior,
of determination,
of compassion.

we are physicians.



Wheels of Revolution
Nicole Ruske
Photograph

Teton
Charles Kim
Photograph



Until the Sun makes its visit
by Afoma Okoye

I tend to the fields from dark,
Until the sun makes its visit
My hands grow red
And my mind goes weary,
But I work until the sun makes its visit.
I look at the fields
Men and women covered in earth,
Work until the Sun makes its visit.
A young girl falls,
Her mother she cries.
A moment of silence
And we work until the sun makes its visit.
My arms grow weak.
I look for someone to help but
They work until the sun makes its visit.
I scream out for help,
No words are heard.
I fall to the floor.
Unable to move,
I look to the heavens
And wait until the sun makes its visit.
A moment of silence
And they work until the sun makes its visit.

Alive
Mary Gomez
Photograph





First Day...
by Raquel Peralta

Anxiety kept me up last night
 I couldn't stop thinking about what was coming
 I hope someone calls to say I don't have to go in
 All I want is to stay in bed and cuddle with my son
 The past two years I've been anticipating this day
 Now it's here and I want it to go away.
 Finally I drag myself out of bed
 Now it's time to play dress up
 White coat one size too big
 Pockets full of books
 Stethoscope dangling from my neck
 (Do I even know how to use it properly?)
 I feel like a 5 year old on her first day of school
 Scared shitless, not knowing what to expect.
 Only now I'm 30 with a child of my own.
 Raquel! Get it together!
 As I walk into the room to meet my team, all I hear is
 He's decompensating, call pulmonary, call ID
 Everyone looks at me, says hello and quickly gets back to attending to
 The greater issue at hand: stabilizing Mr. Burgos...

OPPOSITE
Cliffs of Mohr
 Utibe Essien
Photograph

BELOW
Untitled
 Kamala Spencer
Drawing



Dream Loop
by John Phair

Death.

Young Avery Jones, 14 years old, lay on her bed staring intently at the ceiling. Her gaze stared deeply into the corners that defined her room, as if she could see cracks, leading to another world. She had always felt tethered to something other than this world. There was a subtle connection that made her question what was real. This odd link had always made her slightly out of touch..

She was told when she was younger that she had autism. As she grew, she was continually reminded by her teachers, counselors, and parents. It never occurred to them that she was simply born out of place and that there was something else out there for her, she thought.

The last thing she said to her mother before she went to her bed was, “Goodnight, if I don’t wake tomorrow, don’t worry. I’ll find my way back somehow.” Her mother, preoccupied and not quite mentally there, responded gently, “Okay, sweetie, goodnight.”

A thought began to occur to her as she slid into bed, like a green sapling uncovered creeping out beneath rubble. “Death must be the sister of dream,” she seemed to know. This revelation spawned several logical series of steps; thoughts that seemed only fundamental and true. “Everyone dies once and only once.” This thought, pushed into her mind, seemed so profound that she opened her mouth to repeat it. Over and over, she mumbled the first two truths that she had uncovered, “Death is

the sister of dream... everyone dies once and only... once... death... dream... die... once... dream.” She listened inside of herself for more while whispering each truth aloud to herself. Her eyes closed, her dark lashes intertwining, and her breathing slowed to a gentle rhythm. Her arms crossed as her chest respectively rose and fell slightly as she breathed. Her rhythmic chanting ceased. She had fallen asleep. She had not heard the rest of the truths.

Seemingly a few seconds later, she awoke, surrounded by dark and wet coldness. The ground around her was muddy. She tried to move. However, her body was locked, frozen with “crossed-arms”.

“Where am I? I must have fallen out of my dream... but where have I landed...? and why can’t I move?” she thought to herself.

“Wake... this is not what I wanted... what was all that stuff I was saying before I went to sleep... why can’t I remember?” she panicked. Her body was paralyzed but her mind lay frenzied within it. Around her, she felt the muddy water sliding itself around her body. The rain, big sopping drops of rain, pounded against her body. Slowly, mud began to fill her nose and drop back into her mouth. She felt it creep inside of her, reaching her lungs. “This is just a dream” she screamed in her head, “wake up!” Her throat itched from the mud drying as it slid down her esophagus. She desperately wanted to cough and breathe. And although unable to move, her eyes quickly gave way to warm tears, which were quickly splashed away by the thick cold rain.

As her eyes began to become covered with mud, she tried one last time to will her body to move. She shouted, “GET up!” and pushed forth with her mind. Her body however, unresponsive, refused to move. The mud, which had filled her body, now covered her eyes, and for a second time, she had gone to sleep.

Avery opened her eyes and emerged from sleep. She lay in her bed, arms crossed around her chest. She took a deep breathe in and looked around. Everything was the same as when she had fallen asleep. It had started to rain outside, and the drops hit hard against her window. She sighed; it had just been a nightmare, she uncrossed her arms and pulled her body out of the bed. Her arms were covered in dried mud and her pajamas were damp with water. “Mommy!” She cried out.

Avery’s mother ran into her room. “Honey, what’s wrong!” Her mom was tired, with bags under her eyes. Perhaps she used to be pretty, but the years and stress had not been kind. She looked down at her daughter, and her worried look turned into a stern expression.

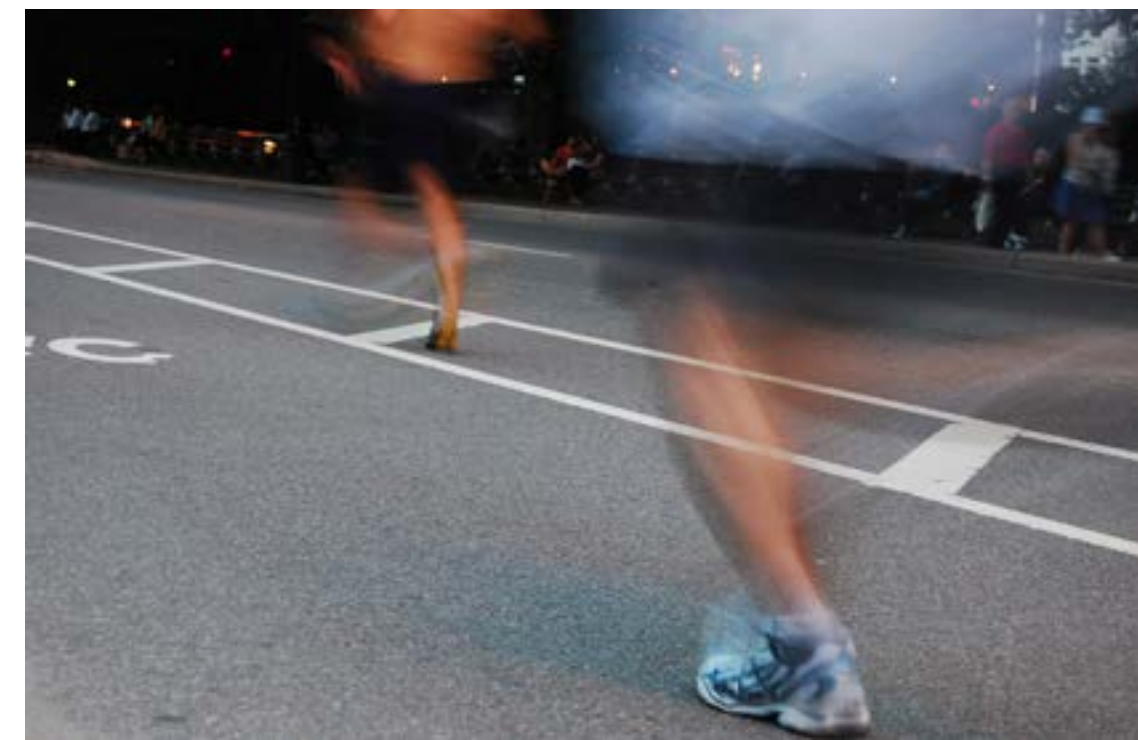
“For Christ’s sake, Avery, why are you so dirty!”
“Mommy, I was buried... I almost died.”

Avery’s mother’s looked at her daughter and then to her bed. The damp sheets and blanket were plainly obvious.

“Damn it, Avery, I have work in the morning. You can’t be doing this every night.”

“No, but mommy, you don’t understand, I... I...” Words escaped her. Avery realized that her mother would never believe her. She knew that she was different and that no one would understand. She was lost. Her mom picked up her soiled beddings and walked out of her room, mumbling to herself, “What am I going to do with her? Why is she so difficult?”

Avery’s eye filled her tears, as she watched her mom walk out of her room. She curled up into a ball on her floor, crossing her arms around her knees and closed her eyes and whispered to herself, “Death is the sister of dream... everyone dies once and only...” She fell asleep yet again.



Swoosh
Katherine Staats
Photograph

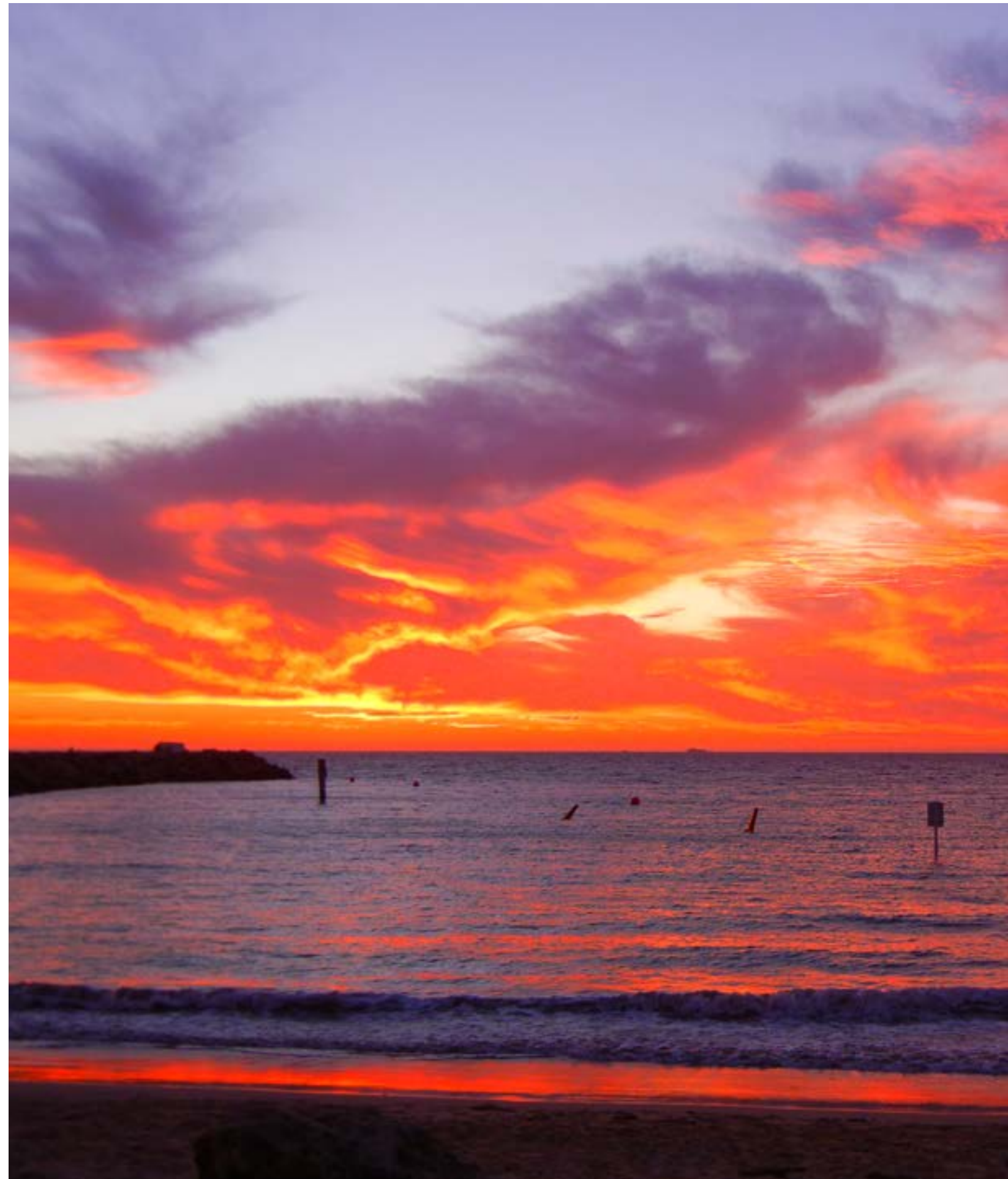
Bee-lieve in your work: Honey will come forth
Dovid Moradi
Photograph



RIGHT Mine!
Ariella Rosenbaum
Photograph



OPPOSITE Antipodean Sunset
Pamela Stanley
Photograph



The Red Coat by Walter Ronaghan

It was autumn, and the fourth grade boy was at home watching cowboy movies in black and white on the family twelve inch television. Afternoons after school were his favorite time of day. No nuns standing over you ready to strike or preaching about sin; just his oldest sister who always stayed in her room playing records or went to a girlfriends'; or maybe his bigger brother who at twelve years old had three part time jobs already and was rarely home until dinner. Mom was still out with his little sister. Dad didn't get home until at least six. It was his favorite time of day.

At five he heard the door open and his mom and little sister came in. Walking up the three flights of stairs was hard on mom but she never complained. She was carrying a bag of groceries and a shopping bag which had the name of Bloomingdales printed in bold letters. He had never heard of it.

His mom asked him if he wanted hot chocolate and he said yes. She put away some groceries and put a pot of milk on the range to heat. She came into the small living room carrying the shopping bag. "Danny, I bought you a new coat this afternoon." From the fancy bag she drew a coat, a red coat. "It's getting colder out now and you need something warm. Here, try it on."

Danny looked at the coat. It wasn't like other new stuff that came from a store, with labels and price tags. This was not a new coat.

"Thanks mom, I'll try it on later."
"Roy Rogers can wait. Try it on now. Besides, you probably saw that show five times already."

Danny stood up and took the coat from her. It was not only red, it was bright red. He turned away from his mother as he tried on the coat. He didn't want her to see his face.

"I knew you would like it. Look, it has a hood. Let's put that up. You won't need to wear a hat when you have this coat." Danny put his hands in the coat pockets. From the lint in each one he knew this had been a well-used garment.

"Mom, it feels a little long. Look at the sleeves. It looks like it would fit Jerry much better."
"They look perfect to me. Jerry already has a coat. And besides, you'll grow into it. Button the buttons." His sister Nancy, two years younger, stood at the open doorway between the kitchen and living room, viewing all silently.

Danny cringed as he put his fingers to the lowest button. It looked like a Tootsie Roll. Same brown color. It fit into a loop on the other side of the coat, drawing the two sides together in an overlapping fashion. To make it worse, two of the tootsie roll buttons were on either sleeve at the wrist, as some sort of decoration.

"There you go. Looks great. You'll be as snug as a bug in a rug."
"Yeah mom." He took the coat off, she put it in the closet and went back out to the kitchen to stir the cocoa powder into the warm milk.

The Roy Rogers show was now over. He sat thinking about the coat. He averaged about three fights a week in school, and he wasn't a bully, he was a target. He knew that wearing this coat was going to be a painful experience, in more ways than one. Even his brother Jerry was going to make fun of him whenever he wore the coat. What would Roy Rogers do?

He tried doing some homework in the little bedroom he shared with his brother. He was in the middle of doing his arithmetic

problems when an idea floated into his brain that was so overwhelming he immediately went into a state of panic. It was the same panic he felt when the nuns caught him doing something wrong. The tingling feeling of blood rushing to his face and the certain knowledge that bad things are about to start happening. His mother had bought the coat at a rummage sale. That was bad enough. But the more he thought about it the more he was convinced that the rummage sale was held at the parish, and that most of the items contributed were from parents of children in the school. Therefore, he was now the owner of a coat that had previously been worn by someone probably one or two classes ahead of him. This was now well beyond fighting. This was humiliation and a life of embarrassment. Yet he knew he would have to endure. He could never hurt his mother's feelings.

He could not share his dilemma with anyone, and as the days got colder and colder he continued to dress for school with the required brown pants, white shirt, maroon tie and maroon corduroy blazer. But in late November as he was running out the door in the morning his mother stopped him. She was holding the red coat.

"Wear your coat or you'll catch pneumonia."
"It's not that bad out, ma."
"It's 35 degrees out. Wear your coat."

Danny put on the coat and left the apartment. In the small lobby on the first floor he took the coat off and held it in his arm with the black lining outward. If he was careful no one would see the red color. He half walked and half ran to the school and in the school yard, waiting for the Principal to ring the bell which would signal an orderly progression into school, he tried to stay in an area with the least wind. A few people looked at him strangely without an overcoat but said nothing. A nun looked at him strangely when he entered the building but a classmate laughing drew her raptor like attention away.

The next day he planned more carefully. Once again his mother insisted on the coat. This time he diverted from going right to

school to the local paper store. He stood in the store, holding the coat inside out, reading the newspaper headlines, looking at the candy selection, all the time watching the clock, and spent three cents on penny candies. He took off for school, arriving just as the Principal rang the bell for silence in the school yard. He didn't know if he could keep this up until spring. He prayed for a solution that wouldn't involve telling his mother he hated the coat. He schemed of having it stolen or leaving it somewhere but he knew he couldn't lie to his mother. And he knew even more certainly that if his dad found out the result would be worse than anything the nuns would do to him. All he could do was wait and pray.

For three weeks Danny refused to give in and wear the red coat. He prayed for snow, the kind that would stick to his coat as it came down. He planned to walk carefully so as to not displace the snow off his coat. He had already thought of throwing the coat in a mud puddle and getting it so dirty no one could see it was red. The thought of the Red Riding Hood and Santa Claus jokes he would have to endure drove him to hold out day after day.

In the second week of December his dad and brother Jerry came home with a shopping bag. With the earnings of his part time jobs and a few dollars from dad he had bought a new winter coat at Alexander's department store. He took it out of the bag and began stripping the tags off. It was a lovely dark blue. His old coat was dark brown.

"Can I have your old coat?"
"Sure Danny. But you have a coat."
"I know, but I like this one better. Besides, Nancy really likes the red coat." Danny knew it was ok to lie to your brother. Jerry had taught him that.

The next morning the temperature was 32 degrees. Jerry wore his new coat, Danny wore Jerry's old coat, and as they were standing at the door ready to leave the apartment Nancy was wearing the red coat, a huge smile on her face. It was a little too big but her mother didn't want to make her unhappy, so she let her wear it.



PREVIOUS PAGE
untitled
Mariya Masyukova
Photograph

RIGHT
Untitled
Sahar Sherf
Ink & Pencil



BELOW
Alien Landscape
Stephanie Buss
Photograph



Window Shopping
by Stephen Marsh

He wakes for school
Not with eagerness
But with indifference.
“What will today bring?”
He wonders aloud
Hoping and dreaming
Of a better tomorrow.

He sits in class
Doodling away
Answering absently
Out of obligation
Awaiting the bell
And the promise
Of something new.

He sees her
Across the room
She waves at him
He waves back
Not out of obligation
But out of interest
In something wonderful

He wakes for school
With new vigor
He can't wait to see her
She makes his day
And he makes hers
Best friends
They finish sentences together
And everything is new.

He wants to take the leap
She's amazing
But there are others
Too many options to count
He can't decide
Who is right for him?
And who holds the promise
Of something romantic

Indecision plagues him
Lists of pros and cons abound
But nothing helps
He cannot sleep
Finally he nods off
And begins to dream
Of something more

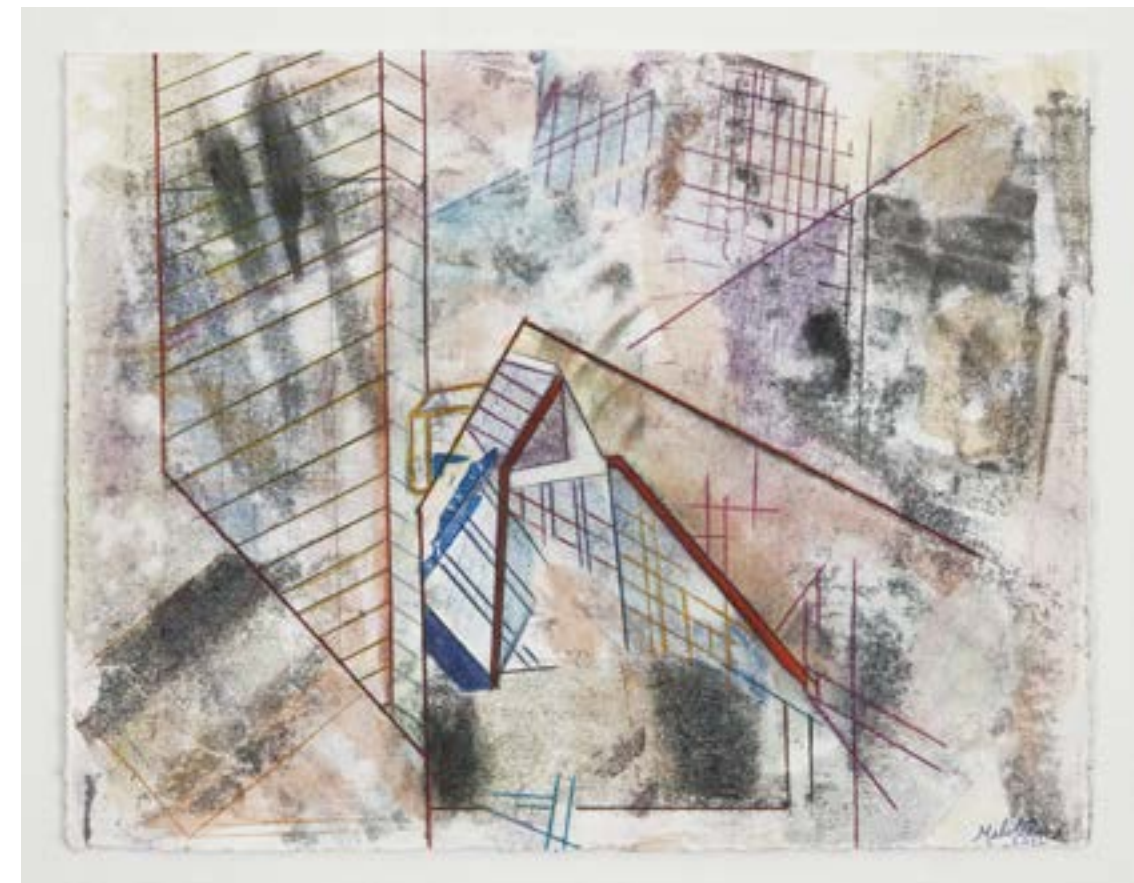
He encounters the store
“Pawn Shop of Love”
He laughs at the name
But walks in, intrigued
Inside are the women
His options all laid out
He peruses the items
Always window shopping
Never buying, never certain
Of what he should do

He keeps passing by her
As he window shops
In a sea of indecision
She's an island of resolve
He can't leave her side
And then it hits him
He's finally ready to buy;
To make something real

He wakes for school
His eagerness overflowing
Ready to be decisive.
He gets dressed
Not with indifference
But with confidence
That today is the day
For someone true

He sees her in the hall
He's ready to act
But something's wrong
Today she's not alone.
She's with another guy
Holding hands and smiling
He greets them
But all he sees
Is a “Sold Out” sign
Where hope used to be

He had it all planned out
Where did it all go wrong?
He thought she liked him
He was ready to buy.
And then he realizes
He shouldn't have waited
She was there all along
But instead he window-shopped
And lost something wonderful.



**Recent Works
on Paper**
Janie Milstein
Painting



Sewage Tiyul
Yardanna Platt Koppel
Photograph

Artist Index

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**Einstein's Fifth Annual
Ad Libitum Literary & Art Night**
by Brett Wolfson-Stofko

On December 7, 2011 students, faculty, staff, and their families convened for the 5th Annual *Art and Literary Night* in the Lubin Dining Hall. Despite the pounding rain, nearly three hundred art enthusiasts strolled through the exhibits, to the rhythms of the Albert Einstein Jazz Band. Later in the evening, the audience was calmed and seated for the poetry and prose readings.

This year, *Ad Libitum* held an art auction to raise funds for the *Bronx River Art Center (BRAC)*. The fundraiser benefit not only *BRAC*, but art aficionados as well who were given the opportunity to take home their favorite pieces. We raised \$568 to support *BRAC*'s wide array of art programs ranging from after-school cartoon drawing and ceramics classes for children, to advanced digital photography classes for adults.

This year was one of our most successful events to date. The *Ad Libitum* team would like to begin by thanking all of the artists, writers, and poets who submitted their work—since without you, none of this would be possible. We would also like to thank Dr. Kuperman for his support as well as Dr. Martha Grayson, Martin Penn, Karen Gardner, the Graduate Office, Peter Dama, Donna Bruno and the Graphic Arts Department, Jim Cohen from Lubin Dining Hall, the Student Council, the Engineering Department, Rebecca Potts and Gail Nathan from *BRAC*.

Thank you all for keeping this Einstein tradition alive! We look forward to seeing everyone again this coming winter.



Opposite
Susa
Kari Plewniak
Photograph



