

THE WHITE SQUIRREL



LITERARY & ARTS MAGAZINE

VOLUME XVII
SPRING 2020

**THE
WHITE
SQUIRREL**
Literary &
Art Magazine
University of Louisville

Volume XVII
Spring 2020

Copyright © 2020
All rights reserved.

Cover image: Evening, photographed by Aubrey Vittitow
Cover and magazine design: Erin Wedemeyer

The White Squirrel is the University of Louisville's Honors Program Literary and Arts Magazine. Submissions are free and open to the university's student body. During the submission period, send your work to uoflwhitesquirrel@gmail.com. To learn more, visit our website at louisville.edu/honors/student-organizations/TWS

University of Louisville
Louisville, KY

A Letter to Our Readers:

While we did not expect to be bringing our 2019-2020 edition of *The White Squirrel* to you from such a distance nor under the present circumstances, we still want to express our gratitude to everyone who made this year's magazine possible. None of what we accomplished here could be done without the truly incredible prose, poetry, and art that we've received from our contributors—thank you for sharing your work with us!

Thank you so much to our panel editors, Faith Fisher and Zoey Morris, and our graphic designer, Erin Wedemeyer, for your careful reviewing and construction of the magazine itself. Your commitment to this publication, your help with all of our open mics and events this year, and your own wonderful talents have been such a joy to have.

Thank you to our faculty advisor Luke Buckman and our mentor Em Nordling, for your support and guidance through another successful year of *TWS*. Also, thank you to Emma Radulski at the Honors Center for helping us transition to digital publication and finish out the year strong.

We'd like to express our gratitude as well to *Miracle Monocle*, the University Writing Center, and Honors Student Council for partnering with us and making many of our events and connections with the UofL community a reality.

Special thanks go to the Creative Writing Department for selecting our magazine in which to publish the winner of this year's student writing award; we're delighted to host even more great work and would love to continue doing so.

Finally, we'd like to thank all of our readers for the support and care you show for *TWS*. For your bravery and enthusiasm at our open mics, your encouragement at our events, and your commitment to sharing this magazine with so many people in your lives, we sincerely thank you. We are so proud to present to you this collaborative work, and we hope that it can bring you as much inspiration and heart as it has brought to your *TWS* staff.

Sincerely,
Jodi Hooper and Natalie Snyder
Editors in Chief

Table of Contents

Peaches

Poetry, Loren Moody 1

Rose's Kitchen

Poetry, Grace Ann Rogers 2

Innocence

Art, Natalie Shain 4

Out to See

Poetry, Lance Price 5

At Least we have the Lake

Poetry, Eli Hughes 6

should you cover a burn or let it breathe?

Poetry, Carrington Padgett 7

My Chest

Poetry, Eli Hughes 8

Mad Hatter

Art, Carol Watson 9

The Unlove Potion

Prose, Erin Wedemeyer 10

Sunset

Art, Aubrey Vittitow 11

Nine things to do while waiting for a text...

Poetry, Vanessa Fuller 12

Don't Tell Me to Turn Off the Sky

Poetry, Loren Moody 13

Lad

Art, Natalie Shain 14

Cetus

Poetry, Brady Alexander 15

Anxiety

Art, Carol Watson 19

Girls

Prose, Faith Fisher 20

A Prayer in Evergreen

Poetry, Vanessa Fuller 22

At Least the Octopus is Laughing

Art, Brady Alexander 23

Mere

Poetry, Grace Ann Rogers 24

Cow Skull

Art, Carol Watson 27

Ephemerality: wood frogs
Poetry, Carrington Padgett 28

Tobhta
Art, William Logan Muse. 29

Lack of Love
Poetry, Ariana Velasquez. 30

The Good Man
Poetry, Vanessa Fuller 31

Fragmented
Art, Natalie Shain. 32

Every Star is Rotting, Creative Writing Contest
 Winner
Prose, Brady Alexander 33

TWS Staff. 36

Peaches
 Loren Moody

Things I Like That Are Peach Flavored:

soda, tea
 cereal, muffins, pastries
 popsicles and snowcones
 and my chapstick
 and your lips

and probably the drink
 we get drunk on
 so we can pretend to be carefree
 despite how we tumble
 as wind over water
 through peach-perfume
 and wake up to peach-colored
 sunlight

Things I Don't Like That Are Peach Flavored:
 peaches

Rose's Kitchen

Grace Ann Rogers

When your mother was pregnant with you, the fetus' soul flew
right out and God swept you in
to save the day. You inhabited the empty fetus body readily
though you weren't meant to be

born for another six years. So, soul-wise you are actually only 44.
And you are not actually
Stacey, but Rose, Stacey's superhero replacement baby soul all
grown up: How your

California lilt and that glass of iced sauvignon blanc has me
citifying my 'I's and mystifying my belief system. Truth is, I
don't have a
belief system. I have many, and God sweeps them

in to save the day at His convenience. I believe whatever is
relevant. You right now
—you stare at me earnestly while a puppy licks your face and your
sixteen-year-old

son comes home from his job at the grocery store and laughs
about a meth-head who couldn't get
food at the Wendy's, couldn't drive, couldn't win for losing. He
leans his bike against the

perfect wall and it slides down to the floor mud and all. He goes to
his room, and you whisper
about the time you did meth in California, how different it is from
coke: more intense, lasts

longer, you don't have to keep bumping all night, but you do have
to smoke weed the next
morning—the come down, O the come down. I can't help but
think of all the kids I went

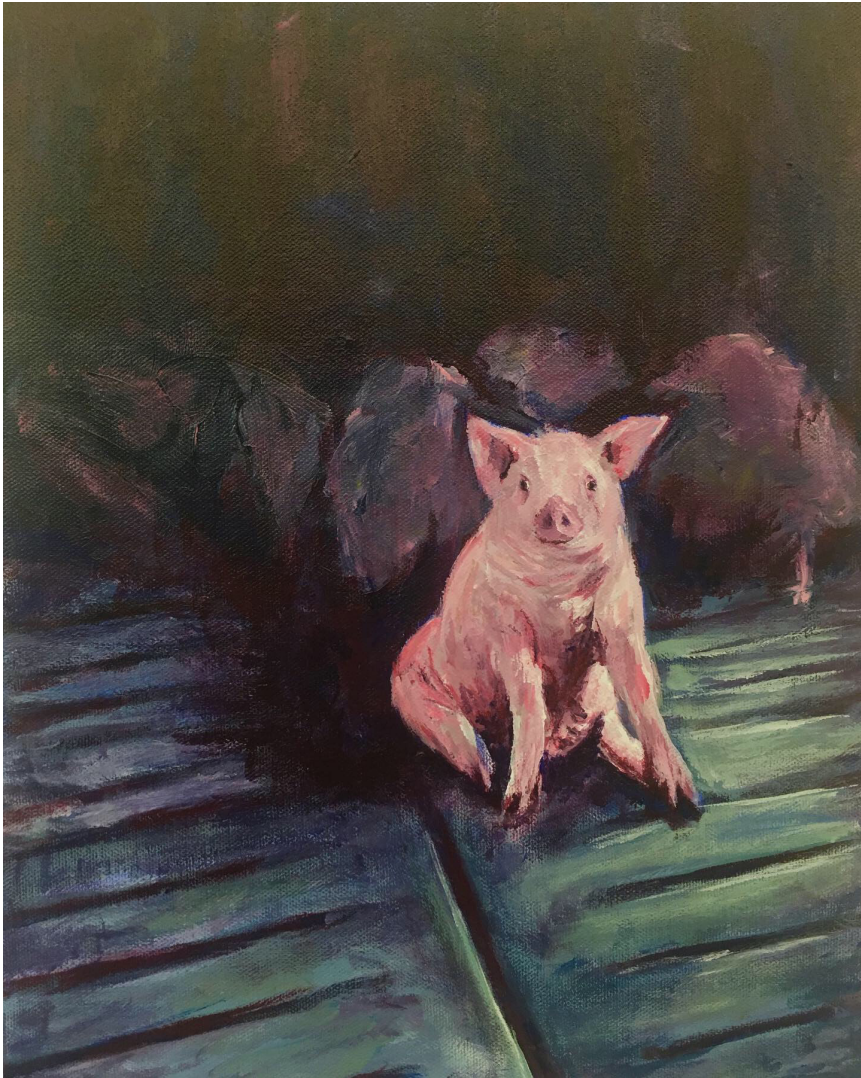
to high school with who are in the county jail for meth possession,
meth trafficking, meth
addiction. Country-ass-talking kids who had better ideas about
The Great Mother

Fucking Gatsby than I could ever think up, but they couldn't
manage to sit down
in class for more than ten minutes at a time. *Behavior Disorder*,
the psychologists

call it. I'm half sure they'd think you were speaking in tongues if
they heard you: Aye aye aye.
Aye try out one nasal vowel after another and cannot recognize
maye own voice. Do you

realayeze ayme feeking et? You simmer the curry, you pour the
bourbon, you start the
music, and you tell me how you remastered 'The Last
Waltz'—talked to Robbie Robertson

and he wasn't egotistical at all.



Innocence, acrylic painting 11” x 14”
Natalie Shain

Out to See Lance Price

Walking at the water’s edge
Foam fizzing at my feet
Standing in shifting sands
At a beach barren of certainty

Wishing of not washing
Into the great unknown
Gales guide me to see
A vast expanse beyond comprehension

Wading waist deep in the water’s waves
Finding my footing
Before swiftly being swept into the surf
Washing myself into the surge

Submerged. In a well of swells
Bereft of breath beneath the blue
In a cacophony of crashing crests
Bordered by boulders and rocky ridges

“It’s sink or swim” they always say
As they lazily sway on the surface
Riding on the tide with ease
As if dancing atop the sea

Swiping at the space before me
With speedy succession to
Break out from below the brine
And to finally reach the horizon line.

At Least we have the Lake

Eli Hughes

There's a small lake in Morehead, Kentucky.
And on the shore of this lake, tucked into the woods
Is a place where the tree branches meet to make a canopy.
The ground is soft here, bare feet can feel the moss
And the wet leaves that litter every inch of the forest floor, they
are tinged yellow bringing
The first thoughts of autumn to the mind.

There are two boys, born and raised in Morehead, Kentucky.
They sit on the damp ground and dangle their feet in the lake,
Not caring about the leaves sticking to the seats of their pants.

Nothing else can reach them way out here.
All they have is the woods, and the lake, and the leaves,
And each other. They have each other, and that's enough.
If you zoomed out, all you would see was a thick expanse of trees,
Only the birds perched above could see anything more, and why
would a bird care about
two boys kissing by the lake in Morehead, Kentucky.

should you cover a burn or let it breathe?

Carrington Padgett

Tuesdays don't bother me anymore. here's the thing: I
took your anger and swallowed it so I could breathe fire
instead of smoke. then, I burned everything I touched.
so I stopped. touching, that is. parts of me, underneath
all the charred, burnt black skin were still warm. I took
a calendar and kissed the third day of the week. I said
thank you. I said *I'm sorry*. I didn't mean it. hence,
lying. inside a pool of crystal-clear fear, body floating
on the surface until the water clouded to gray, because
the color of sadness was never blue. it's a mirror where
you face a can of gasoline and decide not to pick it up.
on Wednesday, I dreamt my teeth fell out. they didn't.
when I woke, I cried so long I grew a new layer of skin.
mostly scar tissue, and not the pretty kind. but there are
no thin white lines, there are no dark inked words of
loneliness, my hips are so bare I am afraid to press my
fingers into the dips. but because I pick at scabs and
press on bruises, I remembered your phone number. but
the year ends on you, so I checked into a burn clinic.
diagnosis: pyromaniac. treatment: move on. they asked
for an emergency contract—but every lighter I owned is
gone. I didn't rip my planner in half because I don't
have the glue to put it back together. I don't know if I'd
even want to. I mix my spit with ash and use it as a
makeshift bandage, marking the place where my
fingerprints should be, taking great care to remember
the days of the week, and the taste of the flame: the way
it fades and the orange of *that* afterglow.

My Chest

Eli Hughes

I have something I have to get off my chest.
I realize this as I lie in bed,
Clothed in sheets, watching the rise and fall
Of my body with every shaking breath.

When I was younger, my mother
Would place a stuffed animal on my chest
And I would watch it dip up and down
While she said, *this is how you know you are alive.*

But my breathing has become more labored
With this excruciating weight, passed down from mother
To unwilling, ungrateful child.
Who can't appreciate the rise and fall anymore.

The weight that was added to me in middle school
When I couldn't possibly layer enough shirts
To hide the body that cannot be a home for a boy like me.
I have something I have to slice off my chest.



Mad Hatter, ink 8" x 10"
Carol Watson

The Unlove Potion

Erin Wedemeyer

“There’s no need to be nervous,” said the neuro-chemist. The tag on his unwrinkled white coat read Dr. Grant Cupid.

“I’m not nervous,” she said. “It’s just... strange.” Jenna re-adjusted in the blue faux leather seat. Despite the shine of everything and the strong smell of disinfectant, the room felt unclean.

“You’re doing the right thing.” Dr. Cupid whirled around to the counter behind him. He opened a drawer and took out a clear flask. Purple liquid danced within. “It’s your best friend, right?” Jenna couldn’t look the doctor in the eyes. “Jack, yes. I just can’t be in love with him anymore; I don’t want it to ruin our friendship...”

“This will solve all your problems. One full dose and you’ll never lust for or love him again.” There was something impure about the doctor’s smile.

The air was thick. If she hadn’t paid in advance, Jenna might’ve walked out. But this was the right thing to do. Her crush on Jack ate away at her from the inside. A relationship would ruin the greatest friendship she’d ever had.

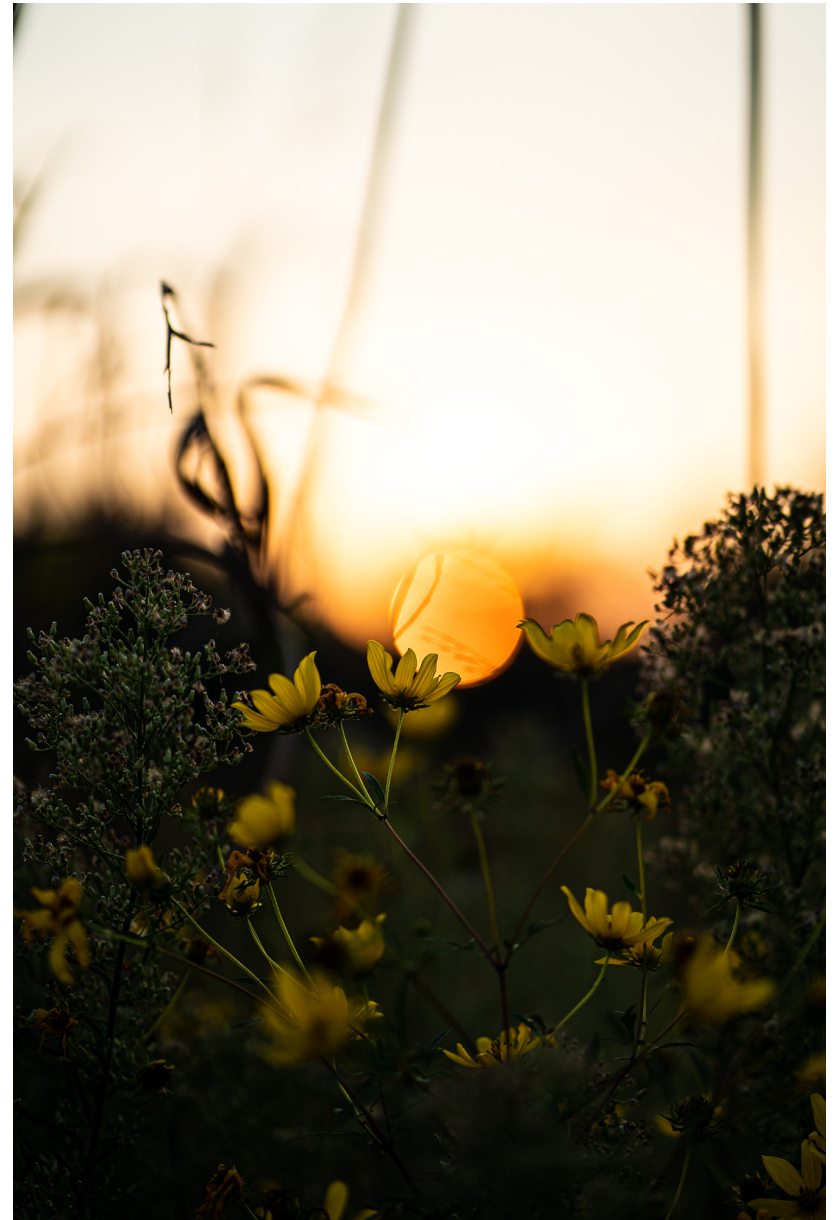
Dr. Cupid held out the flask to the girl. “Take your time. Just make sure you say his full name, loud and clear, before you drink it.”

Jenna snatched the potion. Bubbles erupted at the purple surface, upset from the sudden motion. “Jack Charles Montague.” She chugged it with her eyes closed. The faster she did this, the sooner it’d be over with. It didn’t taste good, but it didn’t really have a taste either.

Something within her changed. The difference wasn’t physical, more a mood, an emotion. Emptiness clouded her mind.

As she left the office, Jenna checked her phone for messages. *Jack: How did everything go?* The poor boy thought it was a gynecologist visit.

Jenna swiped the message away. Maybe she’d tell him about it later.



Sunset, photograph

Aubrey Vittitow

Nine things to do while waiting for a text that probably won't come but you keep your phone close by just in case

Vanessa Fuller

1. Set yourself on fire.
2. Flush your phone down the toilet
3. Update your phone plan
4. Set yourself on fire again, just to feel something.
5. Teach yourself to cum by doing origami, masturbate using only your pinky.
6. Drink champagne from an old chocolate milk container.
7. Dive, head first, into your loaded kitchen sink
8. Redo #5, but with twice as much apathy.
9. Bathe, fully clothed, in a tub full of your own discontent.
Wash. Rinse. Repeat

Don't Tell Me to Turn Off the Sky

Loren Moody

I sit beneath every cloud
and wish I wasn't dying of thirst
and you stroll along as if your tongue has never
been lighter
and you carry a canteen
and maybe it's full of pure moonlit water
or tap water that's been filtered through one of those fancy water
filtering pitchers
or maybe it was salty ocean water
but you met my eyes and
it turned into a sweet drink
like how a promise tastes the first time you bear one
and for my sake you sat beside me
under every cloud in the sky
and offer me all you have
like a sudden change of heart
and I pretend I can repay you as such
but the chasm between your heart and mine
is shaped like
an orange



Lad, ink 8" x 11"
Natalie Shain

Cetus Brady Alexander

She's slept for many years;
she rests beneath his feet.
Perseus has built a city on a spine
beside the sea.
He knows Leviathan lives underneath
his every little move.

She's pretty, though; her size supports
the palms and cyto-pools,
where rosy vines constrict
the wrists of women and of men,
guiding them into the grottoes of her jungle,
shaping every one into
desire.

Medusa was among them.
Her dreams: control, protection.
Snakes erupt to stagger foes full-stop.

And Scylla is among them.
Loving size, sensation, comfort,
and the hand of precious Glaucus.
Scylla now has tentacles, and
her own mass is dwarfed by no one
but Leviathan.
Little lover Glaucus rests within a suction cup,
his mysticism blooming and snared safe
by her great love;
his tail awash
with benthic scales,
his heart entangled in
her fishing net embrace.

Perseus has slayed Medusa, yet her blood
lives on
and on. Her children—women with nematocysts,
and men with gill-slit hearts—
float just offshore, drifting at the fins
of their Leviathan.
Perseus cannot slay Scylla, Glaucus, Typhon,
or the ferryman to Hades, for
this truly is their Isle of the Blessed—
and so he trades with other kingdoms,
hoarding weapons
to amass some sort of army.

Perseus slayed many women in his time,
and slayed their many lovers, but
his power ends where palms begin,
where hydras coil up to dryads;
this is where kind Charon
plays with Persephone's hair.

Perseus plans war.

Stranger beings are monsters—
not the people of his
town, but the extraordinary
gentlemen and ladies of
the jungle and the reef.

Perseus shall like to spear them
with his phalanx,
torch them with his mob
of calcified
fear-drinkers.
He shall like sling a hook
behind Leviathan's own gills
and bleed her out
and slay her body-paradise,

his own Greek fire trickling
down her blowhole.

But, she loves him,
knows his heart.

Leviathan is sleeping, but she knows
each beating heart. The people here are nothing
but her dream. So she announces, softly,
clearly,
that she will coat herself in resin
and then dive.

"I will be with Pisces and Aquarius,"
she bubbles, "down among the seagrass fields
where Capricorn and Hippocampus
graze. I'll provide a means to save your air:
So slather,
and be saved."

Many in her court breathe sea,
but she loves lungfish, too,
like Hydra, and Sybaris—
both her dragons—
and the Dryads,
and the boatman to the underworld,
and Perseus
and everyone within
his city-sphere.

Leviathan spouts resin from her pores,
and men and women,
dragons, trees,
and Charon
slicken with her sap,
since they so
choose

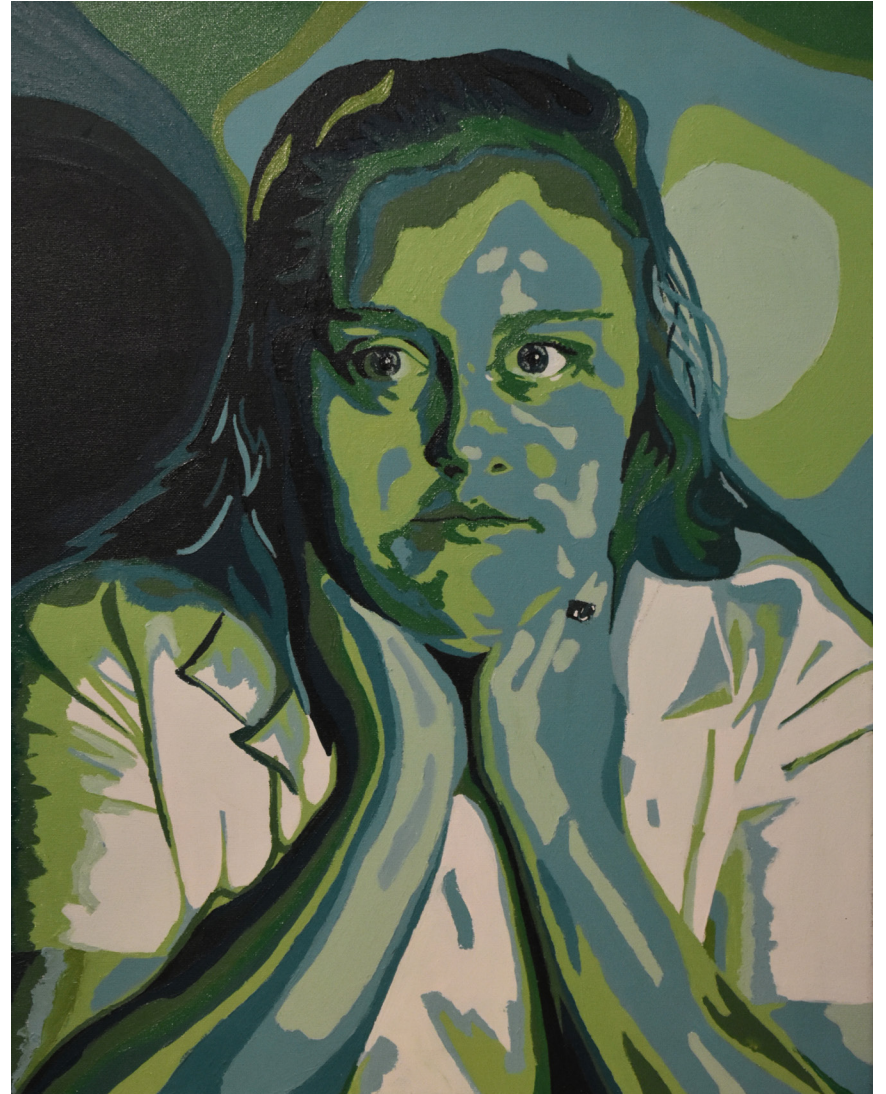
to love,
to live.

But what of Perseus?
He's holding out for now.
He refuses fatty, hand-out
Sap.

And finally, she rumbles.
For the first time in his life, he
feels her move.

She lowers towards the sea.

And what of Perseus?



Anxiety, acrylic painting 16" x 20"
Carol Watson

Girls, inspired by Jamaica Kincaid's *Girl* Faith Fisher

This is how to dance at a ballet recital, this is how to dance while listening to your favorite song in your bedroom, this is how to dance to your favorite song at the concert of your favorite band and you're still convinced you can date the lead singer, this is how to toss your hair while flirting with the cute lead singer, this is how to curl your hair, this is how to curl your lashes, this is how to avoid stabbing your eye out with eyeliner, this is how to walk in stilettos you could stab someone with, this is how to take your shoes off at the end of the night and still look put together, this is how to fall apart, this is how to piece yourself back together, this is how to piece together the perfect outfit, this is how to stay fit, this is how to get a thigh gap, this is how to be thick, *isn't that a contradiction*, this is how you evolve with beauty standards, this is how you evolve as a person, this is how to put on a pad, this is how to write on a notepad without getting ink all over your hand, this is how to get the best deal on an iPad, this is how to bring back shoulder pads even though we should have let that trend stay dead, this is how to write your name, this is how to write a thesis statement, this is how to write a love letter, this is how to bake cupcakes, this is how to frost cupcakes, this is how to escape the man that called you cupcake, this is how to report the man that called you cupcake, this is how to use pepper spray, this is how to use a pepper grinder, this is how to avoid catching feelings for the guy just because he has a dog on Tinder, this is how to be tender, this is how to become strong, this is how it's okay to not be strong, this is how to be wrong, this is how to right a wrong, this is how to treat your partner, this is how your partner should treat you, this is how to not have a baby, this is how to change a diaper, this is how childbirth really looks, this is how to numb pain, this is how to lose yourself in a book, this is how to balance a book on your head to improve your posture, this is how to read a book to become enlightened, this is how to pull off dark lipstick, this is how to pull yourself out of darkness, this is how bring light into

the world, this is how you smile to brighten a day, this is how you smile to flirt, this is how you smile when you disagree with someone's values, this is how to make people value you, this is how to know your worth, this is how to know your worth and add tax, this is how to do your taxes, this is how to apply for college, this is how to apply for a job, this is how to drive a car, this is how you drive someone crazy, this is how to tame your crazy hair, this is how to make the perfect messy bun, this is how to love your natural hair, this is how to shave your head, this is how to dye your hair at home, this is how to explain what happened to the hairdresser after you dye your hair at home, this is how to make a home, this is how to feel at home, this is how to feel at home in your own skin, this is how to find the best faux skin and faux fur, this is how to shave your legs, this is how to wax your legs, this is how to get laser hair removal, this is how to wear a blazer, this is how to dress business professional, this is how to dress casual, *but how do you dress business casual*, this is how to look up outfit ideas on Pinterest because no one knows what business casual means, this is how to make a vision board, this is how to make those visions come true, this is how to be your true self, this is how to make yourself look better on a resume, this is how to do your makeup to look better, this is how to do your makeup to feel confident, this is how to find the shade of red lipstick that looks best on you, this is how to wear that red lipstick and feel like a boss, this is how to walk a tightrope, this is how to do a rope braid, this is how to do a waterfall braid, this is how to keep your personal and professional lives from braiding themselves together even though you're drowning in work, this is how to maintain a work life balance, this is how to wreck your sleep schedule to do homework, this is how to participate in a class discussion even though you didn't do the homework, this is how to work hard, this is how to play hard, this is how to do self care, this is how to care for others, this is how not to care what others think of you, this is how to listen to what I say, this is how to ignore me and listen to yourself.

A Prayer in Evergreen

Vanessa Fuller

All at once I am bare and the air surrounding us has caramelized;
has gone a deep purple. I have never known god, but I will pluck
your ribs
out one by one if you let me. I can't wait to fuck
up your entire life.
I'm sorry I talk so stupid sometimes;
I've never felt more like a child.
I want to last. To keep all this from yellowing sour.
Come once more slowly, and I will wash your feet
with the tips of my braids.
Your prayer is an arched spine.
Amens in heavy gold.
Watch me worship every god I have found in you.
What could ever be more holy?



At Least the Octopus is Laughing,

photograph

Brady Alexander

Mere Grace Ann Rogers

I bobble the bobble head
 head
 at an antique store
 in Apalachicola.

There is something
 that I admire nonchalant in my own step
 in the rusted mirror.

I am left alone in this store
 by everyone that I know.

I apologize,
 curl into a fern-shoot: face to belly fat.
 To restate:

I stay in this store, and everyone that I know goes for oysters.

You will find no moderation at the beach,
 only the most of everything.

The most walking,
 sunshine,

rain, salt.

The most eating
 thing has consumed
 my winter face.

I observe the continuously changing landscape
 of my own human skin
 as blemishes appear and recede.

There is no moderation
 in natural disaster.
 The whole house gone,
 not just one quarter

the whole panhandle
 has been bent.

The whole slant
 field of trees.

If your house was not here where would you live?
 Would you evacuate,
 or would you remain
 with the water. Tell the truth.
 Would you excavate the trash
 and build anew?

We drive over COSWAY
 and another, flattened town and another. Wonder
 why they keep staying.
 And why it makes us want to join them
 in the eye of the storm.



Cow Skull, ink 8" x 10"
 Carol Watson

Ephemerality: wood frogs Carrington Padgett

pale yellow under belly resting on
the leaf litter, black-brown-brown-black,
the woods a color palette bleeding from
my skin. us frogs do not live in the bogs
and summer evenings forever. winter
forces the ravines to slow, so I move
upland. feet in the mud, my body creates
its own antifreeze. protective measures,

the snow was always bound to fall. the first
time December water touched the place I
jump from, I thought time decided to move
on without me. body cold-blooded,
unmoving. cells caving in on themselves:
amplexus. my eyes frozen wide open.
I cannot tell you if he was a wood
frog. I just know there was ice. I waited

for the sun to thaw it. the vernal pools
called. I rushed to the water, forgetting
all tadpoles lose their gills once they taste dirt.
so it does not matter if you long to
stay underneath the surface—memory
and biology make you breathe. absorb
dry air, the no-longer-November air,
gullet moving up-down-up-down-up. the
chirping at the sky now a desperate
croak, throat unable to stop vibrating.

to migrate when terrestrialism
seems like an outdated concept. I sit
on cool rocks, insects humming around me,
but I will not allow the escape of
my tongue. this jaw will not unhinge.



Tobhta, relief print 9.5" x 17"
William Logan Muse

Lack of Love,
from the collection Heartburned
Ariana Velasquez

Are my hips handles
For wanton hands?
Arms and legs
Ornamental?
Lips and cheeks
With days and weeks
Lose their flush
sentimental.
A simple beg
Filled with dread
Every time
Inconsequential.
God above,
This lack of love
A prayer for rain
Torrential.

The Good Man
Vanessa Fuller

I have watched my father rise from the grave
and seep into every man who has ever looked me in the eyes
and lied to me.
I am so lucky to have a good man.
He; next to god. Me, laid below his feet.
As it always should be.
He digs into his lower rib, hands me an upright bone.
And I choke, while he laughs. Like the women
who came before me, I know what my mouth was meant for.
Like the men before him, my father knows how to kill a woman.
These men love so, so well.



Fragmented, oil painting 12" x 14"
Natalie Shain

Every Star is Rotting, *Creative Writing Contest Winner* Brady Alexander

“‘Seek a fallen star,’ said the hermit, ‘and thou shalt only light on some foul jelly, which, in shooting through the horizon, has assumed for a moment an appearance of splendour.’”

— *The Talisman*, Sir Walter Scott

Mrs. Crouch lay in the grass, enormous splats of meat beside her. Had she been inside when it occurred, she wouldn’t have believed it: atop her stoop, she’d mooshed the lard and lye and water from the well to shape the soap—then the meat slopped down like slabs of rain.

The wooden town was squirming with the folks all round the area and way far out. The meat attracted flies as well as diners. “Looks like beef,” her husband said, but after tasting it remarked it must be venison. The scientist from Lexington attempted, “Well, it tastes of lamb.” Someone had a nostoc theory: algae in the ground invisible in dry spells suddenly all swelling up from rainfall. “Saw it fall,” Crouch had replied, “and I don’t think it’s algae.”

Someone figured out beneath a microscope that it was lungs that fell, and cartilage, and muscle. All the while, some big author theorized that planets break apart in space through impacts, and the meat the aliens have stockpiled go flying into orbit, resulting in great stellar belts of cosmic victuals. Someone else deduced that vultures can spit up when they get scared, and if they see another hurl, then out it comes—the acid and whatever lies inside.

The townspeople thanked God for grub, regardless of the distance. Imagining the whole blue sky encased inside, Mrs. Crouch felt every blood vessel irrevocably filled with air.



In 2012, a sea fell down in showers over Dorset.

The gardener cradled seven in his palm, struck puzzled. Turquoise spheres lay resting in the tulips and the daisies underneath a sal-low, bruised sky. The hail had stopped a bit ago and melted in the moss, but there the orbs of glassy slime remained. When the newscast and the

scientists rolled in, one made this small offering of explanation: “Birds carry marine eggs—well, those of invertebrates—among their toes for miles,” she had said. “It’s possible the hailstorm frightened them so much, they dropped their cache. We’ll take some to the lab for testing to be sure.”

After filming ceased, a correspondent took the gardener aside. “Between you and me,” she hushed, “I think it’s angel sweat.”

“It’s what?”

“You know, that astral jelly stuff,” she said. “Angels make secretions all the time: you’ve seen their hair, haven’t you?”

Imagining an angel like a mollusk in a coat of slime, or some kelp-wrapped crustacean waxed with resin, sun-white filaments, and other meek and mild drippings which all drift their way to Earth like deep sea snow, the gardener had smiled at the correspondent, shook her hand, and asked if she would like to tell him more about the world.



Moses stood within the desert valley, the oases of Elim a dozen suns behind. The Israelites’ dates and cakes they brought from Egypt had been eaten. The people begged Moses to fill them up.

Moses promised he would try.

Moses had forsaken laws of old and brought down law anew. Now, he tilted up his head to face the sky and begged for sustenance.

The next day, morning mists upwelled from somewhere far and all the land lay heavy with its drink. No one saw the sky release its snow, but as the water parted from the air, they saw the ground was smothered with a sugary expanse of flakes.

Contemporary ethnobotanists, biologists, and theologians have suggested that manna is a lichen that, like nostoc, can appear miraculously after contact with water. I suppose hydration’s certainly a miracle.

Moses ordered everyone to harvest. “Gather as much as you can! We have no idea just what tomorrow’s sky might bring!”



Sagan: *We are star stuff.*

Solomon: *We’re dirt; to dirt we will return.*

In Medieval and Modern Europe and the places which those people settled, it was common to believe that meteors were oftentimes

the source of astral jellies.

Like all the world and every world is filled with cosmic waste and made of cosmic waste and populous with organs and their slime.

Nostradamus translated these visions of the future and the past and present to his dead talking mate, George Berkeley.

Berkeley: *Are we all just cells within God’s squirming, slimy flesh?*

Vonnegut: *Well, even angels sweat and cry and bleed.*

Mrs. Crouch: *I think that skymeat gave my husband indigestion.*

Hildegard of Bingen: *Hush now, every thought. This is not a wasteful space if every living thing can still enjoy the aftermath of everdying spheres.*

Berkeley: *Well, I want to know, am I God’s dream or am I in The Body?*

The Correspondent: *Angels—tell me that they’re made of stuff like us.*

Moses: *When I say, “Behold,” and “I am about to rain bread from heaven for you,” can I be sure that I’m not skinning God alive?*

Hildegard: *Come inside for breakfast, everyone.*

Philosophers began to pour inside her house, a convent in the forest underneath a shell of autumn oaks.

The table spread was full with jams and jellies, amphibian eggs and those of all marine invertebrates, and meteors and birds, and angels’ hair and exoskeletons, and nostoc, sodium polyacrylate pustules, and all the multihued ideas swarmed round and round the table, spinning with a speed at which the people could not follow. Growing dizzy, many felt as though they would be sick as vultures.

But their nausea and anxiety soon melted into air.

Everything became awash with Hildegard’s viridity, and every person realized they, like fruit suspended in a gelatin, exist in worlds of being, not cutlets, and that jelly has no start, no end, no edge—it only lives, it ripples.

Butterknife and bread in hand, Hildegard could only smile, reach for something on the table, slap her toast with jam, and take a bite.



TWS Staff

Editors in Chief



Jodi Hooper
Natalie Snyder

Panel Editors



Faith Fisher
Zoey Morris

Graphic Designer



Erin Wedemeyer



UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE