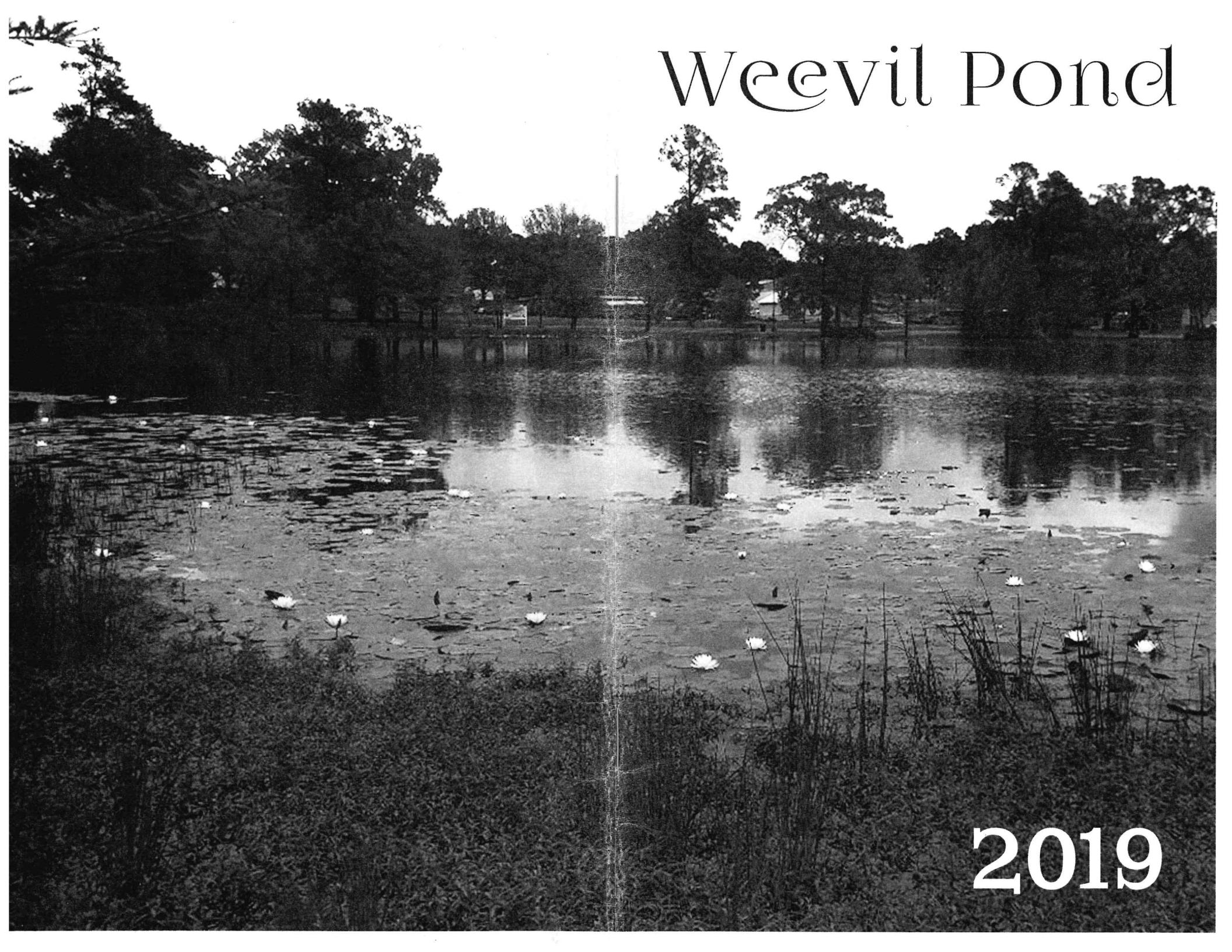


# Weevil Pond

A black and white photograph of a pond, identified as Weevil Pond. The water is calm, with numerous white lily pads scattered across its surface. In the background, a dense line of trees and shrubs forms a natural border. A few small buildings are visible through the foliage on the far side of the pond. The foreground is dominated by the dark, textured grass and foliage of the shoreline.

2019

# Weevil Pond

Weevil Pond is the annual publication of the English program at the University of Arkansas at Monticello. Our mission is to highlight the creativity of the UAM community. This volume features work from current UAM students, dual enrolled students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

2019

## Table of Contents

A Note on Panic.....	1
<i>Sydney Davis</i>	
I Found You.....	6
<i>Ginger Beck</i>	
On Trust and Preservation.....	7
<i>Zachary Abbott</i>	
Cosmic Love.....	9
<i>Ginger Beck</i>	
Be Willing to Change the World.....	10
<i>Alyssa Hooks</i>	
Guatemala Woman.....	13
<i>Miranda Holman</i>	
The Seer's Counsel for Surrender of the Sioux.....	14
<i>Red Hawk</i>	
Big Soldier Explains Why He Will Not Surrender.....	15
<i>Red Hawk</i>	
Sitting Bull Addresses the U.S. Army Surrender Commission (September, 1874).....	16
<i>Red Hawk</i>	
The Indian Head.....	17
<i>Laura Sawyer</i>	
A Heady Tale.....	18
<i>Kay Walter</i>	
Martha was Right.....	25
<i>Ginger Beck</i>	
Poems by Concurrent Students from Hamburg High.....	26-33
My Melody is My Weapon.....	26
<i>Jami-Lynn Hamilton</i>	
Battle of Friend and Foe.....	27
<i>Walker Davis</i>	
Who is this Mad Czar?.....	28
<i>Claire Brooks</i>	
Stigma.....	29
<i>Camryn Hughes</i>	
Untitled.....	31
<i>Carson Clark</i>	

Dreams.....	32
<i>Daniela Mondragon</i>	
Addiction.....	33
<i>Larson Rainey</i>	
Why Do People Care?.....	34
<i>Sydney Davis</i>	
Katie-Bug.....	39
<i>Anna Williams</i>	
Arkansas Death Song.....	40
<i>Zachary Abbott</i>	
Me and Bill.....	41
<i>Ginger Beck</i>	
The Cause of Death.....	42
<i>Zachary Abbott</i>	
Me and the Mountain.....	43
<i>Ginger Beck</i>	
If You Travel to Japan.....	44
<i>Zachary Abbott</i>	
Shelly.....	45
<i>Laura Sawyer</i>	
St. Patrick's Day.....	46
<i>Sydney Davis</i>	
Dr. Whooo.....	51
<i>Krystal Morgan</i>	
A Prose Poem.....	52
<i>Kay Walter</i>	
Martha's Legacy.....	53
<i>Ginger Beck</i>	
Washed in Pink.....	54
<i>Ginger Beck</i>	
How Water Feels.....	55
<i>Kay Walter</i>	
9/11 Memorial.....	56
<i>Miranda Holman</i>	
Contributor Bios.....	57
Editor Bios.....	60

## A Note On Panic

Sydney Davis

On a historic Monday in 2016, the night of *the* debate between Hillary Rodham Clinton and Donald J. Trump, I had my first panic attack. However, despite how this might sound, the panic attack had nothing to do with the debate. It had happened about five hours prior, to be precise. At the time, I was 24 years old, I was fearless, I was sensible, and I had no idea what was happening to me.

When the chest pains first began, and my ability to breathe had grown shallow, I first thought that I, perhaps, had had too much coffee, as I was known to do<sup>1</sup>. I had, albeit hesitantly, dumped the precious Colombian liquid gold down the drain, and instead switched to water before my brief<sup>2</sup> workout. When this didn't work, and the chest pains began to increase in strength and frequency, it occurred to me that I might die of a heart attack right there, in the middle of the gym. I had come to the realization in that moment that my entire life's legacy might possibly amount to nothing more than being found in that very spot, dead, beside the squat rack.<sup>3</sup> I didn't even like doing squats. I sincerely believed that I would beat my father's record<sup>4</sup>, and I'd be meeting my maker<sup>5</sup> before I was even kicked off of my mom's decent state health insurance.

The edges of my vision had grown dark, and blurry, wavering between shades of black, and blue. The images of everything before me began to tremor. I could hardly breathe, and when I finally could, my breaths knocked me off my feet. I would stumble and fall, only to be dropped right back down to the floor if I attempted to stand. Every moment felt as though I were teetering on the verge of blacking out<sup>6</sup>.

In that moment, all I had been able to think about was my mother, my brother, and the dog I would never get to adopt. I was also keenly aware of how hardly anybody ever came to that gym anymore<sup>7</sup>, so, when I inevitably died, I would lay there on the floor, collecting dust until my rotting corpse attracted attention with the smell.<sup>8</sup>

1 And by "known to do," I did this daily.

2 Lazy.

3 A-la David Carradine, minus the weird sex thing.

4 He passed at 30 years of age.

5 Who I STILL wasn't even sure existed.

6 And not the sort of blacking out that makes for a good bar-story.

7 Literally, like, ever. I worked there, that's the only reason I bothered showing up.

8 And if you knew how this gym smelled on a normal, average day, you'd

Luckily, it had been 1:30pm when I caught sight of the time, so I had known that my roommate/ex-boyfriend<sup>9</sup> was home from his afternoon shift as a personal trainer and would be able to respond if I reached out. I had sent him the most *casual* text message like oh you know, no worries or anything, low priority, but maybe did he think he could possibly come pick me up from the gym before I died? He'd been on his way immediately<sup>10</sup>. It was only about an eight-minute ride from our apartment to the gym where I worked<sup>11</sup>, and where I was presently fading away. I'd told him where to expect me to wait, but also where to look for my body if I wasn't in that spot when he arrived.

I began to count my breaths. Breathing deep seemed to stave away the blackness.

One, two, three, four.

Deep breath.

One, two, three, four.

Deep breath.

One- noooo no no, TWO. TWO. Two Syd, keep counting!

Three, four.

Deep breath.

My ex was, and is, a physical therapist, personal trainer, and a medical student. He was also a text book narcissist.<sup>12</sup> But he was a medical student, and in that moment, that was the most valuable trait he could possibly have.<sup>13</sup> I stumbled outside to the street, looking this way, and that, counting my breaths, and keeping them deep as I waited for his arrival. Soon enough, his car sped over the hill, slamming on the breaks in front of me.<sup>14</sup>

---

understand just how long I'd have likely lain there.

9 He was my ex at the time, too. I don't need the judgement.

10 Surprising, given his usual selfish behavior, and his typically late arrival to anything of importance.

11 Worked, as well as worked out.

12 Remind me to tell you sometime about how he made me late for my brother's birthday on purpose, a month after getting together, because "I am never on time for things, it's just not how I operate. I show up when I show up. You should have known that before accepting my offer for a ride, it's your fault you're late." And by "remind me to tell you," I mean I just told you. That's the story.

13 He literally only cared about strangers. It was so weird. If you had any personal connection to him, you were bound to get royally screwed.

14 Not out of worry, he was just a horrible driver. He always bragged about driving a stick shift, and then proceeded to terribly drive a stick shift. Also: speed limit laws didn't apply to him. He was 30.

This was when I had learned what was happening to me. Between asking me if I wanted to go to the hospital<sup>15</sup>, and asking me how much coffee I had consumed that day, he had listed off my symptoms without even having to ask me if he was correct.<sup>16</sup> But, this time, he actually *was* correct. He'd nailed them all.

Between breaths, I'd told him he was being ridiculous, because panic attacks happen to unstable people with *real-life* problems, right? People with marital problems, therapists, and turmoil, *right*? I wasn't having a panic attack, I was simply dying. I wasn't going to waste my last moments of life arguing with an ex in a Toyota when I could be making peace with every deity I could remember off the top of my head.<sup>17</sup>

He'd been kind enough to remind me of the living shit storm my life had been as of late.

I'd lost my job and been forced to take a new one at the gym that required me to be on call 24/7 for no additional pay. I'd also had to pick up a *second* evening job to make up for the money the first job wasn't paying me. Being on call for one job, while working another job, is never ideal.

He and I had also broken up recently, and "decided" to stay roommates, the decision being made partially by him, but mostly by my lack of gainful employment. Both of my grandmothers had died, one over a weekend, and the other two weeks after. My mother's mother, and my father's mother. In my haste to be home with my family both times, I had drained what little savings I had had in order to afford plane tickets to their separate funerals back home in Arkansas. The same money I had already promised a new landlord in an apartment too far away where I had planned to move out of desperation<sup>18</sup>.

We had attended a wedding in my home town immediately thereafter, where everyone in the room had asked us "WHEN'S YOUR TURN?"

Things had been falling apart right before my very eyes.

When I had stopped and really thought about it, long and hard, he had been right<sup>19</sup>. I had taken on too much, I had been spread too thin. I had been emotionally, financially, and mentally

15 I didn't.

16 He never asked if he was correct about anything, so this was the norm.

17 Which wasn't as many as I thought, it turned out.

18 My ex had started going out on dates with other people, and complaining to me about how boring they were. As I was sleeping on his couch week after week, wondering how I was going to put my life back together after all of this.

19 Which I'm sure he had already assumed.

tapped out. For once, he didn't lecture me. He didn't try to create a teaching moment from my fear and pain. He didn't try to somehow spin everything around to be about how all I needed to do was workout more and I would become stronger in all aspects of life. Instead, he had shown me how to sit with my feet propped up on the back of the sofa, while laying on my back, and how to let my bloodflow concentrate towards my head. I couldn't make any sudden movements without the room spinning all over again, but I wasn't dying of a heart attack either.

Always the fabulous cook<sup>20</sup> he had fixed us some lunch, forced me to drink water, and had helped me feel like a real human being once more. A shaky, walking-on-egg-shells human being that had to call and cancel her fitness class taking place later that evening.<sup>21</sup> The mere idea of swinging any kettle bells in front of students<sup>22</sup> that night gave me a coronary.

A human being who took more naps that week, and ate more bread.

A human being who called her mother and held back tears, just enjoying the small talk that she thought she would never hear again.

A human being who still performed in all five shows she had that week, because old habits die hard, even when she herself almost died.

A human being who learned that, even at 24, even when she felt the most invincible, even when she didn't need a man in her life to provide her with happiness, sometimes also needed to lean on other people for support, and stop trying to take care of everything herself, alone.

A human being who learned in that moment that sometimes swallowing her pride and wearing a mask are not the answer, but in fact can harm her more than they help her.

A human being who now has a therapist, and real-world problems.

It's been over two years since my first panic attack, and, while they still happen, and I still feel as though each one is going to be the last few moments of my life, they happen a lot less frequently, and I've learned how to manage them on my own.

---

20 Legit not sarcasm, dude could really cook. I probably would have moved out sooner if his food weren't so delicious.

21 As though anyone were going to attend it anyway, other than Whining Olga, who only ever showed up to tell me why she wouldn't be able to do the exercises and needed them all modified until they were literally nothing.

22 Just Whining Olga.

instead of visiting immediate care<sup>23</sup> each time, with a printout of my will. I've really taken a step back and reevaluated my life. I've made the changes I need to make, in order to feel like I have really lived. I've created a life for myself that I would be proud of, juuuuuust on the outside chance that it really is a heart attack one day.

I've focused more on myself, and a lot less on dating. I'm in a studio apartment in Chicago, alone, with the dog I did eventually adopt!<sup>24</sup> I cook, I read, I write, I take graduate level courses, I get up early in the morning because I feel like it and am in bed by nine thirty because I want to be. Life isn't perfect, but I don't think perfection is what life is about to begin with. I think that, even if we were to be given exactly what we wanted, exactly when we wanted it, we would still find out that the grass is always greener from the other side. Instead - I have found peace and happiness in what I have. Not what I have lost, and not what I have yet to achieve. And that, I think, is something that can only be attained through having struggled, having felt you've hit rock bottom, and having had to claw your way back to the top with nobody to lean on but yourself, proving to you that you can survive anything. Even a panic attack at the squat rack.

---

23 Definitely happened. Turns out, even immediate clinics can do an EKG scan. Who knew?

24 Follow her on Insta at @Godzilla\_the\_Rescue. Follow me, too.

## I Found You

Ginger Beck



## On Trust and Preservation

Zachary Abbott

Mountains forbid societies  
From making homes of them.  
What convenience exists atop Katahdin?

Paradise lies at the foot of Rainier,  
and dares not disturb majesty;  
Yet, there is pleasure at the summit.

To aim upward and to walk  
Is to sacrifice some degree of  
Self-preservation.

The pioneer spirit living searches  
For yesterday's dream today;  
Despite the danger it marches.

Indeed, I believe it is God who listens  
To those incantatory steps;  
They spark divine fires of revelation.

To realize the inhospitable vista is  
The final invocation for the sublime:  
The permanence of evanescence.

Your insignificance amid magnificence.  
You emerge from an involuntary baptism  
Into the light, warrior of a new hope.

Atop that mountain,  
There lies, like fertile soil,  
Detritus of your society, deadwood,

Upon which grows the fruit that Eve ate.  
The fruit eaten by the sojourner.  
They, too, will know shame and fate.

The weary traveler returns,  
eager to share their treasures.  
Here is a feather, a flower, a photo,

Treasures like false idols  
Lead to deception and disappointment.  
Instead, one must become a garden,

A garden whereby people would see  
The sacrifice before they saw fruit;  
The savory and not the subterfuge

But dynamite excites  
The nine-to-five interstate driver.  
They delight in the marring of the mountain.

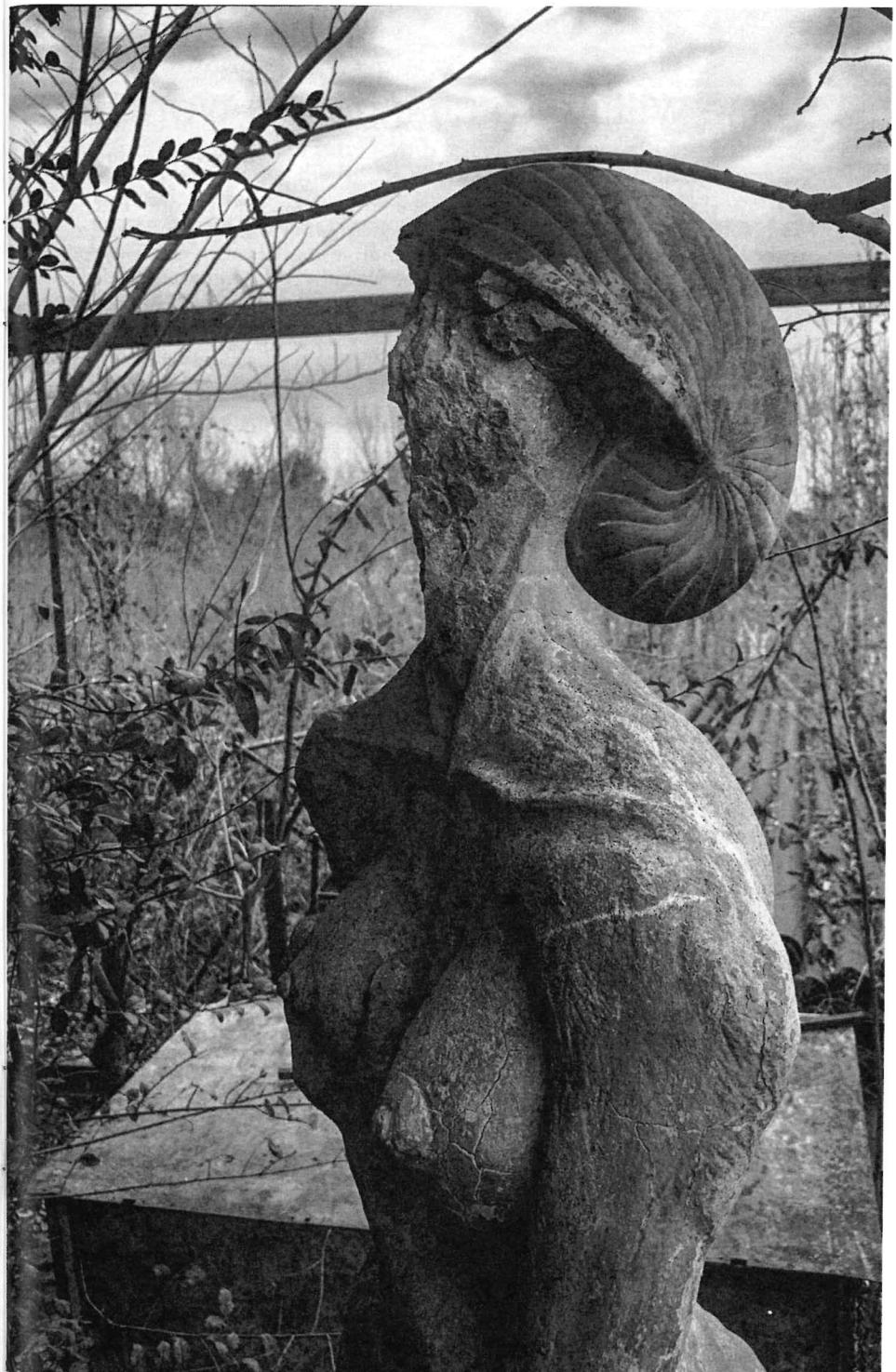
When the last plot of a hillside has  
Been surveyed and sold, another  
Engine has already been started.

Another excavation will yield more  
Newborn homes on Round Mountain  
Where, in my youth, peach trees grew.

Lo, the orchard is now a court  
Where newlyweds bed their infants  
After feeding them processed peach puffs.

Where the stems of peach trees remain.  
In the summer they hang leafless,  
Over the Round Mountain Cemetery.

On the next page  
**Cosmic Love**  
Ginger Beck



# Be Willing to Change the World

Alyssa Hooks

Every single person is different, original, and unique. But as children, there was an ultimate goal for what we did when we were 'grownups' -- most kids aim to change the world in one way or another. Now that people are older we talk a lot about changing the world, unsure of how to do it: Talk about ending world hunger, making world peace, creating universal equality -- all with goals to impact the world in an effort to make it better. When you set out to change the world, you set out to make a monumental change with a monumental mindset. Steve Jobs in his 1997 Apple Launch said "the people who are crazy enough to think that they can change the world, are the ones who do." But it all starts with you. The world is a delicate place with thousands of people working to make choices for themselves, their future and the world. And every person can change the world.

The world people live in is a world of many facets. Many things to change, fix, solve or see solved. Approximately 842 million people suffer from hunger worldwide. That's 12 percent of the world's population. This issue sometimes feels so distant, but one in six Americans face hunger and food insecurity. 11. The number of countries who are free from conflict across the world. 150. The number of countries that have at least one law treating women and men differently for things like: applying for a passport or conferring citizenship to their children. 1.1 billion. The number of people in developing countries that have inadequate access to water 1.6 billion people -- that's a quarter of humanity -- live without electricity. Almost half the world lives on less than \$2.50 a day. The problems within the world seem too big for any one person to handle, for any group to handle. Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Jody Williams "think[is] there's a mythology that if you want to change the world, you have to be sainted, like Mother Teresa or Nelson Mandela. Ordinary people with lives that go up and down and around in circles can still contribute to change." But the steps to change the world, start right here, they begin with a single person. They begin with their future. They begin with right now.

The future is a difficult thing to plan for. Take post secondary education for example, something we are all a little bit familiar with. About 80 percent of students in the United States end up changing their major at least once and on average, college students change their major at least three times over the course of their college career. Students go into college with one future in mind, but sometimes that changes. ALL because our vision of a future changes, whether it be a future for us or

someone else. Regardless of if we have ALWAYS known what we wanted to do, or if we are figuring it out day by day. We make an effort to plan for the future with specific goals in mind. All the while, planning for the future seems terrifying without learning and understanding. But that's the wild thing -- the future is incredibly difficult to plan for, even though that's often the only way people feel good about moving on into it, so work cautiously and proactively bettering the future for the sake of the yourself and those to come. It's incredibly important to look where one is headed, instead of where one was. Because the choices made, should be ones that one can commit to. Once a decision is made, don't look back and make it work, doing so shows strength and commitment. Remember the past cannot be re-lived. Never take back those words, and never time travel. Instead, decide to make the choices and situation work, that is how to make your future work. Especially because a future is impossible if we stop looking forward, and stay looking backwards. It's all about perseverance. Because, in the long run, it isn't just about moving forward. It's about learning from what is behind, that's why we make it work. If your goal is to change the world, you have to make the choices to set yourself up for a good future. Learn from the past and always look forward. But all of that starts with what you do right now.

Every day has eighty-four thousand six hundred seconds. Imagine if you wake up every day with \$86,400 in your bank account. And every day, at the end of the night -- it's gone, even if you only spent a single penny. You would do everything in your power to spend it, right? Because the next day you're going to get another lump sum. One gets 86,400 seconds each and every day. Never waste time, even if you're going to get it again. It doesn't carry over to the next day. It doesn't earn any interest. Take every day and every moment and make something of it. Start making change everyday, because your right here and right now matters. Making choices isn't necessarily easy, some say it's the most difficult thing they've had to do in situations, but it is always doable. Always manage the big stuff. It is easy to get distracted by the insignificant issues in your daily life, but losing sight of the big picture loses sight of your goals. If you spend too much time looking at one particular tree, you will forget the forest. Being able to focus on the big picture and major issues will always lend time to work with the small stuff. Even then, never ever sweat the small stuff. And while that is more cliche than life giving you lemons to make lemonade, it is incredibly true. Especially since we all know that unless life gives you water and sugar too, your lemonade isn't going to be as great. Not sweating the small stuff, though, makes life sweeter because we get to see the big picture, move on and make life great. Choices are huge and need as much attention to detail as you can possibly provide and sometimes that comes from asking for help. In knowing and doing this, you can make the right

decision for your right now. When choosing a road, for the now, take the one that is truest to the hopes and the goals that make life worth living. Whether it be the road less traveled or not, if one is true to their goals it will make all of the difference. This is where the change in the world starts. It starts with you.

While the issues of the world can seem daunting: world hunger, peace, water sustainability. It is possible to change the world if we make the choices to do so. There is a world around you that impacts you, but never forget that you can impact the world. Your ability starts with your choices. There's the big picture, that's life, and then there is every single tiny choice, that's how you got there. The big picture is art, but most importantly without every single brush stroke of choices there can be no art. Always have faith in the people you meet and interact with, for you never know who is also working to change the world. More importantly, have faith in yourself and your ability to do anything you set your mind to.



Guatemala Woman

Miranda Holman

## The Seer's Counsel for Surrender of the Sioux

Red Hawk

*Be still:  
guard your tongue or it will betray you,  
be aware that your words can slay you.*

*Don't give the Whites reason to shoot you:  
stay low, lay down, be invisible as a root,  
they don't shoot what they can't see.*

*Don't believe a word they say:  
they lie as a way of life;  
their lies will cut your heart like a knife.*

*Wait patiently for your time to come:  
all things come around in their season;  
one day they will be cut down for no reason.*

*Accept what you cannot change:  
be fluid as the mountain streams flow,  
follow wherever the spring winds blow  
  
and live to once again hunt the Buffalo.*

## Big Soldier Explains Why He Will Not Surrender

Red Hawk

He was one of the Battle Chiefs of the Lakota and he would not surrender, though he urged his people to because he saw they were starving and finished; when a colonel at Fort Phil Kearney questioned him

about why he would not lay down his arms it is reported that Big Soldier replied,  
*I see you admire your manner of living;  
you can do almost what you choose.*

*You whites possess the power of subduing  
almost every animal to your use;  
you are surrounded  
by slaves.*

*Everything about you is in chains  
and you are slaves yourselves.  
I fear that if I should exchange  
my pursuits for yours*

*I would forget who I am, live indoors,  
and cease being brave;  
I too should become a slave  
and the People would spit on Big Soldier's grave.*

## Sitting Bull Addresses the U.S. Army Surrender Commission (September, 1874)

Red Hawk

*The Buffalo are gone,  
wiped out.  
That is the end of us, so  
now we are made to surrender.  
I do not know what surrender means.  
Did the Buffalo surrender?  
It seems that is what is meant  
by surrender.  
I have never surrendered before so  
I look to the buffalo for an answer;  
the Buffalo tell me,  
to surrender is to be wiped out,  
to disappear from the Earth forever.  
Now you ask me to disappear  
along with the Buffalo and  
I am glad to do it.  
Without the Buffalo we are nothing.  
One day you will be asked to surrender;  
on that day Sitting Bull will be standing  
by the Buffalo waiting to greet you, not  
looking down from your heaven but  
looking up from our Earth.  
Do what you want with Sitting Bull,  
he knows where his feet are, he knows  
where he stands.*



The Indian Head

Laura Sawyer

## A Heady Tale

Kay Walter

On the night before the great storm arose that blew the sands of the desert across the floor of the earth and drove dust into the den of the keeper of the camels, one last story was told. The sage woman stretched herself bewitchingly before her listener and smiled coyly as she began. "I will tell you now another tale from a distant land that is recorded in the sacred text of a distant people. I will tell you the details of the story that their text does not record because their version was told and recorded by men, and some stories may only be properly told by women. I will tell you the story of a strange and powerful woman and the ways by which she made men do her bidding. In hearing my story you will learn a lesson, though what it will be you must wait to the story's end to understand.

"When the woman was young, she married the strong and gallant man who fell under the spell of her deep gaze. His body was brown and beautiful in her bed, but his wisdom was scant and his mind was easily swayed by desire for her pleasure. In this way, he failed to grow into a mighty leader, seeking his joys in her whims and thus changing from one day to the next his intentions and pursuits. His reputation as a fickle and feckless leader grew, and he was revered by no man.

"In time, his wife grew weary of his insignificance, and petulantly she longed for a stronger champion to serve her desires. Her longing found a home in the fierce determination of a man who only occasionally fell under her gaze, only sometimes seemed tempted by her whiles, only rarely gave his passions voice in the tremble of his sighs as his eyes caressed the length of her statuesque curves. This man was her husband's brother.

"Her husband, saw her gaze straying, and her eyes angered him. He began to search out comfort for his wounded ego far from the tents of home. She took no notice of his departure but used her eyes to woo his brother faster. Soon the brother saw that her home lacked the strength and vigor of a man's care, and his heart softened toward what he took to be her weakness. More actually, it was the source of her power as it provided her a means to his attention.

"By slow degrees, her husband was removed, and his brother came to be a welcome and familiar face among the movements of life. By the time the daughter was born, her

husband was not often home, and as she grew, her mother kept her close and whispered lessons to her in voices no one could hear or denounce. From the womb her mother taught her well the lessons that become the glory of femininity. She showed her how to work the silver needle in tiny stitches of the finest thread to mend tears in garments and in flesh and the words and sounds to say over such stitches to insure their hold and produce the least show of handiwork. She watched her mother sew such stitches in men who came home baptized in the sweat and blood of battle with their enemies.

"She wondered at the man she heard called her father, but his hungry eyes never sought her own. His greed for the manly virtues of life, glory, power, satiation of desires, was ravenous having been too long pent in the gaze of her mother. Now that is was loosed, his wanderings rarely brought him to their tents, but when he did come he was always fresh from conquest and full of boastful stories of his own cruelty. To the girl, he seemed like a very small and unimportant man, the least detail in the drama of her life.

"His brother, on the other hand, came often with self-assured stride. When he came, her mother kept her close until she found the very first chance to send her safely away to lonely work. No maidens attended the child as she grew. Her mother was her constant companion and only playmate. They played at odd games, pretending to be no more than they were or than they would become in the end. The child learned quickly the rules of unhesitating obedience and reckless attention to the slightest suggestion of her mother's bearing so that soon she was able to understand in ways that were deeper than human. She learned to look carefully at her mother's skin and lips to determine the means of her pleasure and to offer it unhesitatingly before her mother could request the fruit on the table with gesture or glance. 'Shall I feed you dates, mother?' She would ask quietly, and her mother's knowing smile was ample reward.

"For years they play at this game of pleasing mother, and the girl grew very wise in the ways of pleasing. There were times, surely, when her mother could not be pleased. A lean and hungry look would grow in her eyes when they had been alone for some days without a visit from the husband or his brother, and nothing the girl could do would satisfy her mother. Her mother carefully shielded her petulant ire from others, but the girl knew it well and worked even harder to amuse the woman. Sometimes, others took up the task of amusing the mother. Especially when the uncle was

arriving and the mother was sending the child to work, the girl would watch her mother aglow with preparations for his arrival.

"Alone, the girl would practice the poses she saw her mother strike to cat the uncle's eye. Sometimes he would look suddenly at her mother with delight and appreciation, but always there was a part of him held aloof from her snares. He concerned himself with the ways of strong men, and her magic only called him near enough to make her yearn to consume his will as she had her husband's. The girl knew these things, though she could not give them names or called them names of childish understanding. 'Mama's needs' she'd say to herself softly as she sought graceful and elegant ways of moving from one pose to another, practicing the slow flex and give of muscle and the smooth slide of flesh into curve of limb. 'Phillip's answer' she'd call her awkwardnesses and clumsy stumbles. Thus, the child learned to move to a rhythm of breeze across the desert floor and the metered way of the animals.

"Of the uncle, she thought very little. He did not speak of her, rarely saw her, and never caught her eye as sometimes did the boy who watered the camels. When she posed and turned and moved, neither her uncle nor the boy was the one watching in her mind. The watcher was her mother, and she practiced and posed to catch that flush of pride she knew so well in her mother's cheek. As she grew older, her play grew more elaborate. She added flourishes to her posturing, pouting her lips at moments when she thought they would enhance an outstretched hand, a quiet vacant smile, catching her breath as a prelude to a swift turn, and languidly closing her eyes.

"One day her closed eyes felt her mother's approach, sudden and silent. The girl held her pose but opened her eyes and lips to her mother's tight regard. 'I see that you are grown old enough to dance' were her mother's words. We must study music now.' Through the mother's guarded restraint, the girl could see that she was both pleased and frightened by the child's play, and the duplicity and complexity of this response puzzled her. Pleasure, displeasure, and fear were feelings the young woman understood, but an answer from her mother that so clearly indicated all these feelings was mysterious and alluring.

"True to her word, the mother began right away to teach her daughter to hum the notes of songs about winds and stars and journeys. Aloud they would sing harmonious words, syllables blending into chords meant to thrill a listener's longings, stir him to passions of tears or fury. The girl learned songs for seasons,

music to lull the fiery fury of summer's blaze, music to while away the warm nights of winter, to summon the dragon's breath of winds. For each of these songs, her mother taught her a series of movements that could be used to gather wandering attention and focus the hearer's eyes, mind, and will. The young woman learned movements of fingers and hand that could begin while she was seated and movements that allowed her to rise from the floor slowly and gather fascination as she took control of the room.

"After a time, the mother stopped making the music, asking her daughter to hear the notes in her head. She taught the magic of creating the notes in the mind of another with sweep and play. She taught the girl to use stray beams of light and gather them, including her surroundings in the dances. She taught her to read the breath of the desert winds and the fullness of silence and choose dances that begin from and are born into these presences and absences, gasps and sighs.

"Caught up in her lessons, the young woman was overjoyed with the gifts her mother brought her one day, finger cymbals, bells for her waist and ankle, and veils. They were tokens of acceptance, her mother said, from the uncle who was taking the mother as wife. 'What of Phillip?' The young woman thought, thought she dare not speak such words. The mother read the question in the girl's eyes and answered her. 'Phillip is dead. It is his brother's duty to marry me and care for us.' The young woman looked at the gifts in her hands. 'Phillip never gave me gifts,' she said. 'Now he will come no more,' but even as she spoke these words, sadness tugged at her, and its sorrow filled her eyes.

"The wedding day came and was celebrated, but the ceremonies seemed hollow and tense. There was crisp anger in the air everywhere the girl turned. A blessing that did not arrive irritated her uncle, now more than uncle. Many people crowded in the tents to recognize and authenticate the union, but the blessing he wanted most was withheld. Some long desert wanderer held the authority to make the wedding proper, and this wanderer refused to come to the uncle's call and sent word that the union was an abomination. Further, he refused to enter into the tents of the home except in fetters. When the uncle, now master of the household, heard this defiance, he sent out trusted servants with new ropes to bind the wanderer and bring him defiantly to the feet of his new master.

"Being seen as Master seemed important to this man in ways that it never had been to Phillip. The young lady pictured the wanderer in her mind as she had seen him before, a ragged man

with emphatic hair. His beard tangled with the bits of wild things he had been eating and his clothes stained with honey. They were not really clothes at all; mostly they were tattered skins of animals and rags, but these were not his distinguishing feature. In her mind, he was a voice. His voice came bellowing before him like a servant boy. It rolled across the desert floor and into the tents long before the figure was distinguishable among the sand and heat of the distance.

"His voice seemed too large for his body to contain, and his words seemed the idiom of Allah. It was the voice that made men frightened of him, and the words that made old women call him 'seer,' 'mage,' and 'prophet.' She had heard him so name in caravan when the beaters drove the crowds away from water. Always this man was there in the water, and his words were awful. The New Master wanted this prophet to use his words to pronounce a blessing upon his marriage and his new household. He had summoned the wild man to bring his echoing voice and speak words of comfort to him, but the wanderer moved away over the desert and would not come. Strong men rode out on swift mounts to bring him to reckoning.

"The mother seemed unsettled, disquieted by the uncle's greed, and the girl was sorry for her. She watched her mother's eyes for a momentary lightening of mood, but gloom stood fast in her countenance. The girl listened and held herself still in the gathering darkness of the evening. It would be night before the riders returned, she realized, and the thought of the desert expanse after nightfall frightened her. She wondered if the seer was every frightened at night and pictured him stumbling under the stars to collect words from the heavens. It was this picture in her mind that made her stumble and drew her mother's attention to her distant thoughts. 'Go' was all her mother said, and the girl was off to her solitary play once more.

"In the dim light fading in her distant tent, she fingered the gifts the uncle had given. She liked the feel of the cymbals on her nimble fingers and made them ring out. She strapped the bells to her ankles and practiced the movements her mother had taught her, humming softly to herself the measures of her favourite song. As the quiet measures of pause approached, she heard the distant voice and knew he was coming. The riders were bringing the wild man to her uncle. She wondered if he would be punished, beaten, beheaded for his insolence or if he would fall at the Master's feet and offer the blessings desires in his loud, unearthly voice. By the time he was close enough for the girl to distinguish words, she

knew he would offer no blessings. His words foretold destruction and eternal death to someone, though she couldn't quite make out whom.

"His voice in the midst of the household's tents was terrible, and the girl's bells and baubles sounded in harmony with her instinctive shivers. Ceaselessly the voice went on. Longer after the girl drew tired of listening and fell into an exhausted slumber, it rang through the night to trouble her innocent dreams. In the morning, it continued. The girl could see that her mother had not rested. All joy was gone from her face. Tight lines were etched along the familiar jaw and the mother's movements were nervous and driven. She heard the murmur of her mother's most convincing voice as she tried to bend her new husband's will to her own pleasures, but this master was inflexible. The mother begged and begged him to loose the old man or to gag him. She wanted only peace in their home, and that elusive peace could only live in silence. The booming voice of doom drove it from their tents.

"The husband was resistant and cold in his gestures toward Mother. He refused to respond to the prophet's words, but he would not stop them. The girl sensed fear in his reluctance as well as greed for power over the old man. He wanted absolute authority in their camp and felt a need to convince the old man of his reigning prowess. The girl puzzled over this need to be recognized by the mouth of the matted, tattered old man. Day after day the uncle stood firm in his decision to hold the seer until his voice was bent into obedience. Day after day the words of derision droned on. Day after day the girl watched her mother grow wearier with the weight of displeasure and longed for a chance to restore to her world the warm glow of Mother's contentment.

"The seventh day of marriage was celebrated with a great feast. Food and drink were abundant, but guests were few. The hour grew late, and only the servants lingered. The New Master was furious, seeing the evening, rightly, as a disaster foretelling the decay of his power over the tribe. The emptiness felt solemn as the family ate. Mother's mood was tense and close. The girl could read little of what she felt hidden in the mother's glance, and the vastness of clearly unreadable thoughts troubled her. As the meal neared its end, the mother's voice grew calm and casual. The girl felt tight control in her tones, but the words Mother spoke were easy and light. 'Shall we have music, Husband? My daughter has a present for you.' Suddenly, the girl knew, saw the ending of the evening as clearly as reading it from a sacred text, felt the chill joy of certainty throb like music in her core.

"The girl looked up slowly and caught the meaning in her mother's glance. The man nodded approval. 'Dance for you father, Salome' said the mother in words pregnant with intention. 'Father?' the girl thought, and her inner voice was echoed as Herod spoke the question aloud. He looked at the mother knowingly, and for the first time in many days, laughter sounded through the tent in peals that drowned the prophet's voice. Musicians played, and Salome moved bewitchingly. Just as her mother had taught her, she caressed the man's gaze and bent him to her will with the force of her body's harmony with the music. She neglected not one pout, not one flourish that she had practiced, and her dance became a vessel of the mother's will calling Herod to join their perfect force. In the man's eyes she could read hunger, thirst, longing, and raw desire. She danced perfectly and completely until the music and its purpose was finished then bowed herself below his gaze, a symbol of his completed surrender. When she rose from her final pose, she could see Mother, still and commanding, waiting for the final gesture that would offer the pleasure she had bargained for. The woman lifted her eyes to meet Herod's. 'What shall I give you in return, Daughter?' Will you have lands, flocks, or gold?' The child did not need to see the mother's cue to know the answer, and both women were very still as she said, 'The prophet's head, please, Father, and on silver. I care not for gold.' She felt the mother smile."

The new bride was still and silent, waiting for her husband's reply. The telling of this tale was a bold and daring stroke, she knew, and his answer would sear her future to death or to indulgence in their marriage. For a time, he waited, not realizing the story was done, and then he sighed. "You say this story is recorded in a sacred book, and yet it is no story that I know. Many strange and wonderful tales you tell me. I think you understand many things that I must learn. You will stay with me and tell me the meaning of this tale and many others and teach me to read the sighs of your pleasure as the girl did her mother's. For now, show me the dance she used to bend the man to her mother's will, and I will always keep you as my favourite." In the stillness that followed, the wise woman danced, and her dance prophesied the coming storm, and when the winds arose the man knew the storm told in the dance would come, and he would never part with her because her wisdom pleased him.

On the next page  
**Martha was Right**  
Ginger Beck



## My Melody is My Weapon

Jami-Lynn Hamilton

To some it's a simple tapping of one's feet  
A snazzy sound easy to hear, but it speaks

The voice is unique and shouts to the universe

Not a simple phrase that is easily sung, but the soul speaking-  
drenched with passion

Inspiring some to push through the abyss-the dark nothingness  
swarming about - the melody brings hope

When the mind is drowning in chaotic confusion;  
Music - tranquility descends, order is restored, certainty returns

Harmony, discord, diminished notes carefully orchestrated to  
evoke: passion, indifference; serenity, agitation; fear, bravery; life  
or death

Barriers of language, class, race spiral and trill  
Yet, music connects each to the other

When circumstances arise I realize music is: unlimited, universal,  
freedom, boundless, power

When all else fails music remains: unique, dynamic, accessible,  
limitless, moving, hopeful, inspiring, healing, spiritual,  
strengthening...

My weapon is my melody

## Battle of Friend and Foe

Walker Davis

As I prepare for the war and flood  
I watch the flow and gush of blood

I run into battle with my brothers in arm  
Just to see my brother of harm  
He is wearing the opposing side  
Right then a part of me died

As we lock eyes, I begin to shed a tear  
I want to run to him, but am held back by fear  
I become unaware of the fighting around  
Because all I want to do is fall on the ground

He begins to walk directly towards me  
I feel my courage and mind flee  
As I aim my gun for his moving feet  
Only to then lower it and weep

He stops when I can see his dark eyes  
Then aims his gun to claim his prize  
Only to stop when he sees my tears  
Realizing only then that he truly cares

I then drop my gun and stare at him  
As an angel sings a heavenly hymn  
He looks at me with a glance of pity  
Only then to return to the look of gritty

I begin to approach him with caution  
He raises his gun as a precaution  
I know he would never pull the trigger  
Surprised to feel the rigor of pain

I turn then to see my killer of an opposing side  
Thusly be shot, by my true brother, open wide  
He kneels before in an effort to save  
In that moment I realize and welcome the grave

As I prepare for the war and flood  
I watch the flow and gush of blood

## Who is this Mad Czar?

Claire Brooks

As my family and I were gathered eating dinner,  
we heard a piercing shatter and began to quiver.  
Three men jolted through the door with guns in hand,  
screaming and yelling, we did not understand.  
They shoved us outside and struck a flame,  
we were forced to watch our home lose its frame.

Dwellings destroyed and worship places wrecked,  
soon these horrid men began to collect.  
Confused of circumstances and full of fear,  
I reached for my family and drew them near.  
We Jews were divided into groups to receive a yellow star,  
I began to think to myself, who is this mad czar?

After we all were pinned with this new branding mark,  
we were herded like cattle to the train before dark.  
My mom, dad and sister were nowhere to be seen,  
I frantically searched but no familiar faces caused a terrible mien.  
I sit now on a cold seat feeling forlorn and low,  
quietly riding towards some place I do not know.

## Stigma

Camryn Hughes

A six letter word

That dehumanizes and segregates the whole world  
"White girls are spoiled rotten by their loving daddies  
Black boys' only chance at success is being a star athlete

An immigrants only hope is to reach America  
A drug addicts only relief are their pills and needles

A rape victim must have asked for it  
Someone with depression just uses it as an excuse to be lazy  
Anxiety isn't real

Bipolar people are just crazy and should be locked up  
Muslims are all terrorists

Trump is just a privileged imbecile  
People who go to church are goody two shoes

Transgender people are just confused  
People who don't believe in God worship the devil

Girls who wear makeup are insecure  
Boys who don't play sports are gay

A wife should be controlled by her husband  
Little kids are dumb and useless  
Teenagers are full of themselves

Drunks all beat their family  
Smoking weed makes you a horrible person  
Being skinny should be a girls top priority

If you don't get all A's you're stupid  
If you don't go to the division one college why even go  
If you've had an abortion you're a murderer

If you got pregnant out of wedlock you're a whore  
If you won't have sex until marriage you're a prude

You have to go to college to be successful  
If you don't have a boyfriend it's because you're ugly  
If you're not blonde you're not pretty

If you're Mexican you can cook and clean good  
If you're black you can run fast

If you don't get a brand new car when you turn sixteen you're  
poor  
If you're from the south then you're a redneck

If you're from Compton you're a thug  
If you're transgender you're disgusting

If you're gay you were a mistake that should have never been born  
If you have to take medication you are psycho  
Therapists are only for crazy people  
People with mental illness just want attention"  
Are these true?  
Does one of these apply to you?  
Do you believe it?  
Do you let someone else's words define you?  
Do you let them have power over you and your emotions?  
Do they make you question who you are?  
Do they make you question your self worth?  
What do you let that six letter word do to you?  
What is stigma?

## Untitled

Carson Clark

Reflect  
on the past  
But  
not too long  
Answer  
the questions asked  
Do  
not dwell on the wrong

Stay  
in the present  
This  
is what is essential  
Refrain  
from discontent  
Therefore  
to create potential

Stress  
for the future  
Search  
for a final destination  
Focus  
on what you should capture  
Make  
it a actual creation

## Dreams

Daniela Mondragon

Who I make myself to be,  
Is part of what I want to dream

It may be too far,  
But I will always never be torn apart

With every small step I take,  
the more that I will make

But when dreams go,  
I'm just a girl without a flow

So I must grasp,  
Before my dreams go too fast

So the burning ambition of mine  
Must drive the inside of my mind,  
Before I will let them die,

They must come alive these dreams of mine.

## Addiction

Larson Rainey

Insidious hunger,  
an innate yearn for divine destruction.

Primitive craving,  
pull the bottle to your lips and take another swig.

Invasive cancer,  
much like the one you conquered.  
Blessed remission  
wasted by the destruction of this substance.

Ultimate disappointment,  
you've hit rock bottom, but you're blind.  
Hindrance of denial,  
you won't accept the painful truth.

No option,  
now change comes-  
riveting release,  
your shackles have fallen off.

Awful alcohol,  
you've learned to shun the bottle which scorned you.  
Moving forward,  
you have no desire to turn back.

# Why Do People Care?

Sydney Davis

Why have people always cared *so* much, about *so* much?

I've been thinking about this question quite a bit recently as I enter my late twenties, and I've concluded that we, as a species, fret entirely too much about the opinions of other people, half of which we haven't even met yet, the other half of which we'll never meet. Our personal value in their eyes is all too important, and often comes at an astronomical cost. From the day we are born, we are raised as the product of a society that expects things to be a certain way and expects their people to look/act/sound according to that specific way *or else...* or else?

We want to meet these expectations, and, more importantly, we want to *avoid* judgement, yet at the same time, we seem to lack the concrete reasoning for why this is the way things are to be.

On both a conscious, and nearly *instinctual* level, we seem to place emphasis and power behind things like words, images, items, beliefs, money, brands, and various other things for reasons that all boil down to one singular purpose: getting other people's approval. This inherent human need to be liked and accepted by other humans is nothing new. This human phenomenon is cross cultural and has been passed down for thousands of years by our forefathers who came before us, their forefathers who came before them, and so on.

Let's take a look at a few examples from history to help extrapolate on what I mean: In the bible? You better believe people cared about fashion. They had to have the smelliest of smelly oils, the finest of all scratchy materials for their garments, and the highest of status in their villages. If you *didn't* have those things? There was shame brought upon you and your family. You were of low status. The idea that you didn't possess these things could affect you as deeply as your marital prospects, or the lives of your children. If you behaved in a manner that didn't appease the villagers? You were stoned to death, or chased out, depending on the severity of your "crimes" against the norm.

The ancient Egyptians dedicated entire murals in their palaces to power, and the amount of eyeliner they could fit on their faces before marrying members of their own families, (effectively ending their own family trees, after generations wrought with health issues and inbreeding). Status was everything! Did you have riches and gold? The Goddess Anubis smiled down upon you and brought great fortune to you and your household. Were you

a peasant? Well then good luck pal, you're hippo food. You could help build the pyramids, or you could kindly fuck off into the dust of history, never to be seen or heard from again until historians dug up your bones and determined that there was lead in literally everything you ate, which was why your thoughts were slow, and your teeth fell out.

The Greeks! Oh, who can forget the Greeks. The partiers of all partiers. They had entire troughs built into their homes dedicated to puking during grand feasts, so their guests could continue to eat more, and more, and more, until they couldn't possibly eat more. Then they would regurgitate, and start all over again<sup>1</sup>. They glutted until they couldn't possibly gluton any more, and then decidedly built statues of themselves that somehow still had six pack abs, despite them literally inventing the idea behind dipping bread into bowls filled with straight olive oil.<sup>2</sup>

Flash forward to today, when there's the Kardashians. The Kardashians would simply cease to exist if materialism and money weren't held to such esteem in our culture. If we weren't so entirely fascinated by wealth, status, and booties, imagine what television would be like.<sup>3</sup>

All of this, the extravagance, the gluttony, the effort and dedication, just to make other people say (in whichever language they happen to speak) "Well that's neat. That is some cool stuff that person has." To have other human beings look at what you have, and also want to have that thing. But, most importantly, above all this, there's the idea that negative judgement is so scary to us, we are actually in *fear* of the secret thoughts of other people. We know what we think about other people, and the idea that someone might be thinking that same thing about us is literally<sup>4</sup> *devastating*.

What makes us do this? Where did this all begin? Why is it that we allow so much of our brief existence on this planet to revolve both directly and indirectly around the opinions of the people around us, and the strangers among us? How is it that, despite the amazing technological, social, and intellectual advancements our species has made over the past millennia, we still cling to this one primitive idea that, somehow, we live a meaningless life if we don't spend it attempting to make a good impression to others? What has made us fear judgement so much that we cater the very fabric of our lives around avoiding the negative, and earning the positive?

1 Don't believe me? Look it up.

2 Thank you, Greeks.

3 It would be Animal Planet on a loop, basically. Maybe some CSI.

4 Like, literally.

- So, you've been divorced. Maybe more than once. Maybe more than twice.
- Maybe you're in your late 30's and still working a fast-food job. Maybe it's the same fast-food job you were working when you graduated high school.
- Maybe you ran out of quarters a while back, so you've been re-wearing that same pair of jeans for three weeks, or you got that trendy haircut before you realized you didn't have the jawline for it, and it's going to take no less than a year to look "normal" again.
- Maybe you slept with someone, and everyone found out about it. Maybe you slept with everyone, and someone found out about it.

Who cares? Why are these things such a big deal? Why do we allow ourselves to feel such shame over occurrences that are guaranteed to happen to all of us, at least once in our lives (except maybe the two-divorces thing, though, statistically, at least once). What is the worst that could happen if someone thinks your haircut looks stupid? I am literally<sup>5</sup> asking you to stop and ponder these questions to yourself. These are not rhetorical questions, I expect the answers on my desk by noon.

I feel as though this has become more of a rant than an essay, so allow me to clarify using real-life examples I have witnessed with my own eyeballs<sup>6</sup>. Exhibit A: Last week, I was Facebook stalking people in depth, as I often am wont to do, when I came across a very young friend of mine, and a photo she had posted of herself and her new boyfriend. They've been dating maybe two weeks at this point, and yet the caption was something along the lines of:

"My whole world. My heart. The reason I breathe.  
#LoveHim"

Naturally, my first thought was: "WHAT? They've only been dating for two weeks, and they've already started saying that they love one another??? Yikes. She's so young! She barely knows him, love is such a strong word," and so on, and so forth.

However, after a fleeting moment envisioning them breaking up within the month, flooding their Facebook pages with those "deep" and "thought provoking" facebook memes featuring quotes Marilyn Monroe never *actually* said, I realized it was entirely none of my business and that at no point had anybody asked what my thoughts were on the relationship between two people entirely unrelated to my life. I asked myself:

<sup>5</sup> Like, literally.

<sup>6</sup> I didn't use anybody else's eyeballs to witness these things.

- "Does this directly affect me?"
- "Does this cost me money?"
- "Does this utilize any of my rare and valuable free time?"
- "Did anybody ask me?"

The answer to all of these questions, of course, was "no."

Who cares if they already think they are in love? We give so much power to the words we invent. We create a combination of letters<sup>7</sup>, formulate a word, decide the meaning behind the word, and then give it this weight and power that it neither earned nor deserved. Instead of believing that the couple is clearly happy, minding their own business, living their own lives, we are conditioned to wonder how WE feel about this, and "what will people think of this!?!?!"

Exhibit B: When I was in college, my male friends used to express how weird it was to have to go to the local drug store to buy condoms. They "joked" about having to grab ice cream, socks, candy bars, batteries, and a varying assortment of other items to load onto the conveyor belt at the register in an attempt to disguise and distract from the package of condoms.

At the time, this seemed funny to me, and I used to feel the second-hand embarrassment for them. I pictured them having to venture down the condom aisle, being side-eyed by the old lady behind them in line at the checkout counter, or maybe even being judged by the cashier on the brand or size they had chosen. I pictured them hustling out of the store as quickly as their skinny jeans would carry them, and I would laugh to myself, "Now they know what buying tampons feels like."

However, as I grow older, I reflect on those times with a different perspective. I think about how the things that we all do, and the things that occur naturally within our own bodies are often made to feel taboo, dirty, or embarrassing. I question why anybody should ever be nervous to buy condoms, or why anybody should have the slightest care about feminine hygiene products.

Why do the old ladies care that the young men are buying condoms at the grocery store? If anything, they should be lauded for being safe and practicing sexual activity with care. Young women should feel pride in themselves that the function happening to them each month is one of the few things women as a whole have in common, and it's one of the few things that can bring us together, across cultures and generations, in a way that no other things can.

Humans do sex, and humans have been doing sex for thousands of years. The lady glaring at you in the line at Walmart

<sup>7</sup> From an alphabet that we ALSO made up.

is the product of sex. The person telling you how much you owe them for the condoms or tampons was the product of sex.

Those people in the bible with the fancy oils and scratchy robes? Those were sex people. The Egyptians with the eyeliner and the cousin-husband-brother? Sex people. And you can bet your bottom dollar that the Greeks were doing the sex thing. Honestly that's all we know about them outside of their art, their olives, and their wine. How much sex they were doing, then writing about it, painting about it, singing about it, and generally going about their lives revolving around it. And we shouldn't judge.

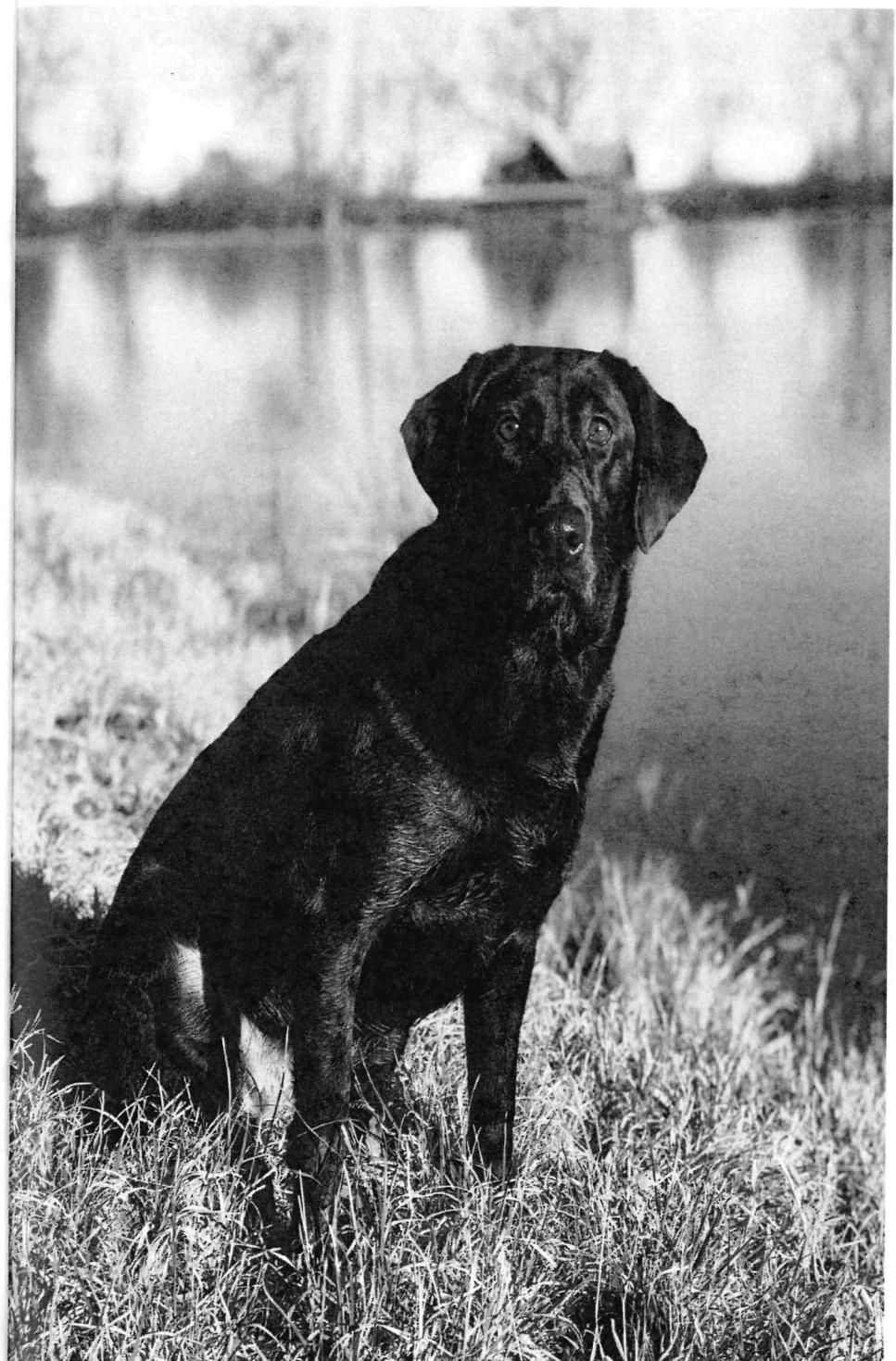
Through this essay, I'm creating an official call to action: let's take it easy on ourselves, and let's remember to be kind to others. Let's stop putting ourselves and other people to the test, and expecting them to conform to whatever it is that is good and right. We have become a society that is more accepting of same sex marriage (hooray!) and interracial couples (double hooray!) than ever before, yet at the same time harshly judge our neighbors for the cars they drive, or the number of children they have. We shouldn't put so much stock in the labels attached to our purses, or the swooshes on our athletic wear.

We teach our children to be kind and accepting of others, yet as we get older, we emphasize more and more about ourselves and others in an effort to impress and fit in. Let's say bollox to this nonsense, do whatever we want, wear whatever we want, let people look and feel however they want, and remember that, at the end of the day, we are all stuck on this orbiting rock together, doing our best to make use of the blip we have on it's timeline.

Live free! Dress comfortable! Eat cake for dinner, and pizza for breakfast! Do whatever you want that makes you happy!

Unless what makes you happy is killing people. Don't kill people.

On the next page  
**Katie-Bug**  
Anna Williams



## Arkansas Death Song

Zachary Abbott

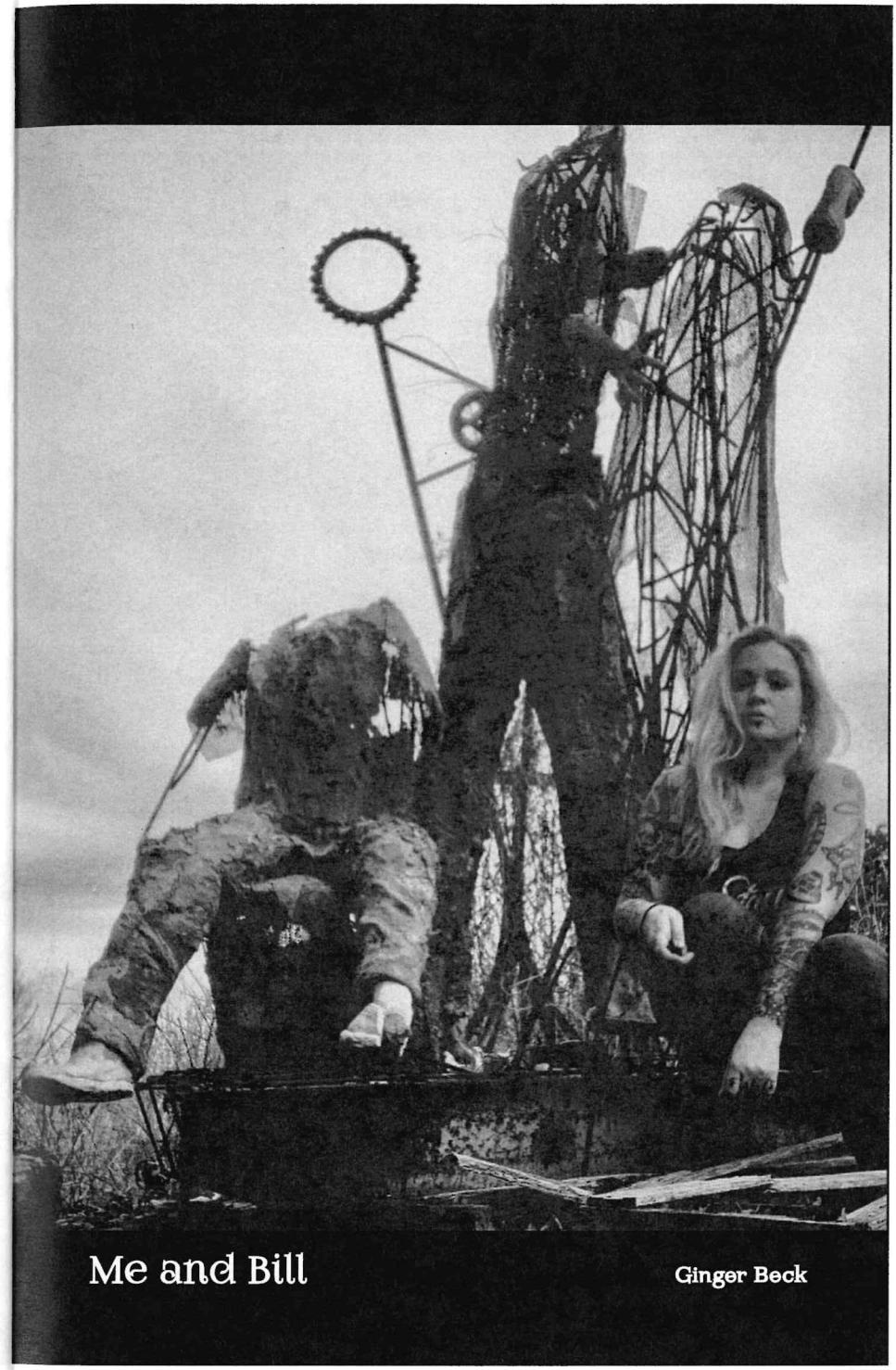
No spirit will conquer the man who weeps,  
Over my body, no hand-me-down dirge will arise,  
The time, mere words, may be spoken by  
A doctor, a sister or a brother.

Within a week of my death, hymns and verses,  
Stagnant and cold as my lips will be wheeled up,  
In a bucket from the well my great grandfather drilled;  
They will be devoted to me.

Of the regretful, the grateful, the mourning who see me,  
Woebegone, a sunken grey paper face in place of my own,  
Some will cry, some will smile, some will purse their lips,  
As they walk by my cherry casket.

By the grave, my young and old will grieve,  
A heap of roses will be buried along with me,  
"Amazing Grace", Death's most welcome tune,  
Will disappear like perfume on a postcard.

Who will listen then after you are dead and gone?  
Who will lament over your death's final notes?  
Who will wake from dreaming having heard your own voice,  
Pierce the silence of the night?



Me and Bill

Ginger Beck

## The Cause of Death

Zachary Abbott

The juvenile loblolly pine tree  
May not survive a February freeze  
Lo, it is not the ice that takes the pine  
Ice exposes ruinous design

Behold, the demise of the pine exists  
In its high branches and the crown that sits  
Atop the slender pole. If gravity does not  
Sever the young tree completely

The weight of the ice forces it to bend  
Compromising its strength while it descends  
To the forest floor where it will remain  
Shackled forever, strength never regained

When springtime sunshine returns and ice thaws  
When the forest breathes steamy morning fog  
The pine, once part of the green canopy  
Will die in the shade of God's panoply

On the next page  
**Me and the Mountain**  
Ginger Beck



# If You Travel to Japan

Zachary Abbott

Do not be weak for a lover.  
A foolish entrapment,  
Replacing solitude with dependency.

Do not retreat to her warmth,  
There is warmth enough  
on the evening shores of Aso.

Do not sail the amber seas  
Offered in her irises  
Her winds will drive you aloft.

Instead, fancy the gayety  
Of the Japanese shortbread baker  
Who shares tea and lessons learned in London.

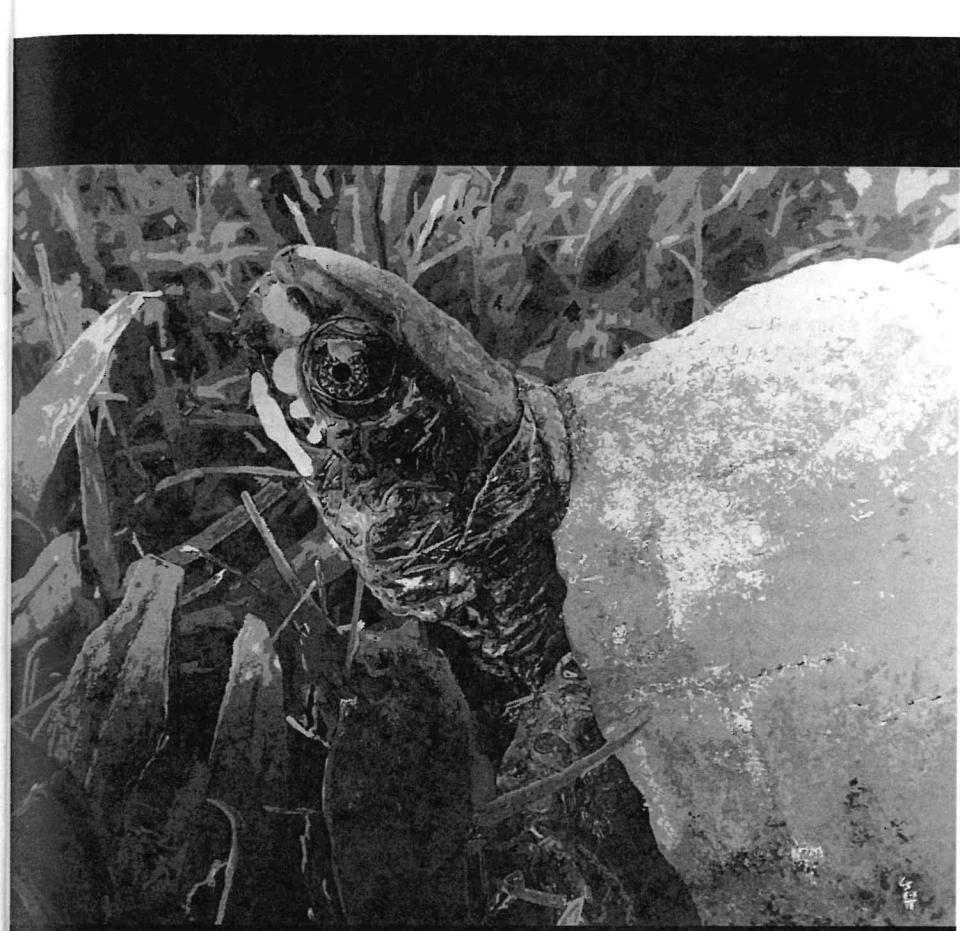
Fancy the tiger tattoo beneath  
The kimono of a strange geisha,  
Then whisper Yakuza to yourself alone.

Go see Hiroshima, and take a photo  
Of the torii in Nagasaki that wasn't  
Foundered by the fat-man.

Hike Fuji-San and at the mountainside onsen,  
Delight in the weakness of your legs,  
As you sip your tea delight in the land of the rising sun.

When you return to your one-bedroom apartment,  
Delight in the steady presence of your solitude,  
For only your solitude will travel beside you always.

A sunset without a lover will descend upon you.  
Delight in its solitude also, and know the sunset,  
Always on the move, is no lonelier than the rising moon,  
And your lover no more no lonelier than you.



Shelly

Laura Sawyer

# St. Patrick's Day

Sydney Davis

The first thing you should know about me is that I'm a square.

I don't drink alcohol, I don't do drugs<sup>1</sup>, and I don't really even swear<sup>2</sup>. I spend most of my free time alone at home with my dog Godzilla, inventing recipes, and actually *using* a food processor (as opposed to buying it and letting it collect dust like people are supposed to).

The second thing that you should know about me is that I am a redhead. However, I am not a *ginger*. There is a very important distinction between the two of those labels.<sup>3</sup> I expect those distinctions to be honored appropriately. Thank you in advance.

When you're a square, like me, that's pretty much all anyone ever wants to talk about to your face. How you never come out. How you always have excuses why you can't be at things, or go places with everyone else, how you never party on the weekends. How you're Just. No. Fun.

My reputation as a square is so widely known, and so openly spoken about, that it is the *precise* reason I have never told this story before. I don't think anyone would actually believe me if I told them...

Let me take you on a little road trip back to St Patrick's Day, 2013...

I was 21 years old, fresh out of college, and had recently dyed my hair black for the very first time in my life<sup>4</sup>. This meant I could finally show my face to the outside world on St Patrick's Day, as being a redhead on St. Patrick's Day is legitimately the worst fate known to man.<sup>5</sup>

To make a long explanation short: when you have red hair on St. Patrick's Day, drunk people spend the entire day insisting in your face (with spittle) that you are a leprechaun, and they demand that you dance. They scream "*Are you IRISH!?!?!*" and

<sup>1</sup> Unless they're plants, and only done at home, with the exception of the time I ate some mushrooms and went to see "Hard Core Henry." But I never told anyone about that.

<sup>2</sup> Most of the fucking time.

<sup>3</sup> A redhead is someone with red hair. A ginger is someone with freckles, invisible eyebrows, and no soul.

<sup>4</sup> Much to the devastation of my poor parents.

<sup>5</sup> With the exception of this thing I read about called the Brass Bull. I'm not telling you to Google it, but I'm also not telling you NOT to Google it.

insist you are, even though you aren't. Sometimes they even throw things at you, like beads, and glass. One drunk even took my Starbucks coffee and spit in it. But, somehow, this is supposed to be fun for everyone, and not at all racist.

Not racist.

At all.

Anyway.

I don't recall why, but, for the first time in my life I had decided that I was going to enjoy my black-haired freedom. I was going to go all out this particular year, and I was going to party like a rock star. I was going to finally *live the good life*. It turns out, "living the good life" basically meant putting some vodka in a single serving size bottle of orange juice, and expecting people to believe it's just orange juice while walking around in a crowd of other people who are *also not drinking booze*. Cool.

At the time- I was dating a cop. Ironically, this cop also had a bottle of juice cut with vodka.<sup>6</sup> He was already on work-related probation<sup>7</sup> for being tardy too many times, so he was *super* paranoid that other cops were going to catch him drinking in public, which I guess is discouraged when you're a police officer? He clearly wasn't too scared, though, considering he did it anyway. I made great romantic choices when I was 21, clearly.<sup>8</sup>

The city of Chicago is legendary for their St. Patrick's Day celebrations. If you leave your house that day at (or even before 7am), the bars are already pouring with people who have been drinking since the night before, and show no signs of stopping. They also "dye" the Chicago River green<sup>9</sup>, and have a well-known parade through the city.

"Pasta" (protecting his real identity, though his name is a type of pasta) and I<sup>10</sup> decided we would watch the parade that morning. In the mud. It had been raining all weekend, and the parade began in the middle of a park with no sidewalks. Naturally, I began to complain. In March in Chicago, it is still freezing cold each year.

<sup>6</sup> Chicago's Finest.

<sup>7</sup> Not ACTUAL probation

<sup>8</sup> He later (YEARS after we broke up) went on to vote for Trump, and support the border wall, which is super weird because his entire family came here from Mexico illegally, and he is a birthright citizen which might also get repealed because of Trump, but what do I know.

<sup>9</sup> It's literally always green.

<sup>10</sup> I did not want to see this parade. I wanted to eat Chinese food and get hammered.

Imagine yourself standing in ankle-deep mud suctioning your winter boots, in a heavy coat, and scarves (yes, multiple), and gloves, and your hat, watching the backs of people's heads where supposedly a parade is happening on the other side, and you're already half way through a bottle of juice cut with vodka.

Apparently, the more I drank, the more I complained about the situation. The next thing I knew, we were in line at a Starbucks, where Pasta had apparently brought me just to placate my nagging. It didn't work. One of the reasons I never typically drink alcohol (other than my clearly obnoxious behavior) is because I only have one kidney. This means that I must drink twice as much water as the average person to filter my body's toxins. It also means that I must urinate constantly.<sup>11</sup>

The line at this particular Starbucks, (being that it was two blocks away from the largest city parade of the year<sup>12</sup>), was no less than 45 minutes long. When you already need to pee *all* of the time, but now you also have to booze-and-juice pee all the time, it means that 45 minutes simply will not do.<sup>13</sup>

But it had to do.

I tried telling them (the baristas) I was a cop (they didn't buy it), I tried telling them I was *with* a cop (they bought it but didn't care), and so on and so forth until I was forced to wait until the line organically made it's way to the two individual restrooms at a snail's pace. Why was I acting this way, you might ask yourself? Who knows. Maybe it was the black hair. Maybe it was the alcohol. I had never once in my life tried to negotiate my way to the front of a line like this, nor have I since. But at that moment in time, straights were dire. I was about to pee all over that café, in front of that entire crowd of drunk people.

Finally, it was my turn in line to use the restrooms. As I was entering the restroom, finally at peace, seeing my golden throne mere feet away from me, I felt someone grab my shoulders. It was two teenage kids, they couldn't have been more than fifteen years old. They were so drunk, you could see their eyes weren't even focusing on anything specific. But one had grabbed me. They'd cut the entire line, and were dragging me out of the restroom doors to let themselves in.

A third thing you should know about me- I have redhead rage.

I hate being touched. It's my one *thing*.

<sup>11</sup> Literally even as I write this, I am about to piss my pants.

<sup>12</sup> Unless the Blackhawks win the Stanley Cup, then it's like *The Purge*.

<sup>13</sup> Imagine the clap emoji between the words "will" "not" and "do" for emphasis.

I'm totally fine, pretty cooperative, never causing a fuss, until someone touches me. Then I do this thing where I kind of black out. So I blacked out. But when I black out, I don't hit the floor like most people.

I just start swinging.

I punched this kid right in the mouth. Right there, in front of the entire crowd of people waiting to get into the bathroom. I punched this 15 year old kid in the mouth because he grabbed me. And then I started yelling. I have no idea what I was saying, but it was something along the lines of "GRAB A WOMAN AGAIN YOU PUNK ASS BITCH I DARE YOU."

But it didn't stop there.

Then I started yelling "I'M HERE WITH A COP!"

Fists swinging, arms grabbing, people yelling, I have no idea what really happened next to be honest with you.

The next thing I knew, I was outside. I still had to pee. Pasta was freaking out because apparently the baristas called the police over the scene I was causing, and he was still hammered and drunk in public. Now the entire café knew that this dude in the blue coat is a drunk CPD officer. All because of me.

On-duty cops showed up. They pulled me aside and interviewed me. At this point, I'd sobered up and was able to tell them that the (underage drunk) kids had grabbed me, I was afraid, and I wasn't sure what they had planned to do<sup>14</sup> after they had grabbed me.

The cops agreed that the teens shouldn't have grabbed me. They asked me to stay out of the Starbucks for the rest of the day and to go find someplace else to hang out. They didn't want to see me go back in there or start any trouble, they had better things to do that day than contain drunken brawls. The officers didn't interview the unnamed cop, who stayed as far away from me as possible during the entire ordeal. They went back into the café in search of the teenage boys.

I felt bad.

I realized I wasn't someone who should be drinking and that it was probably best I stay away from vodka for the foreseeable future.<sup>15</sup>

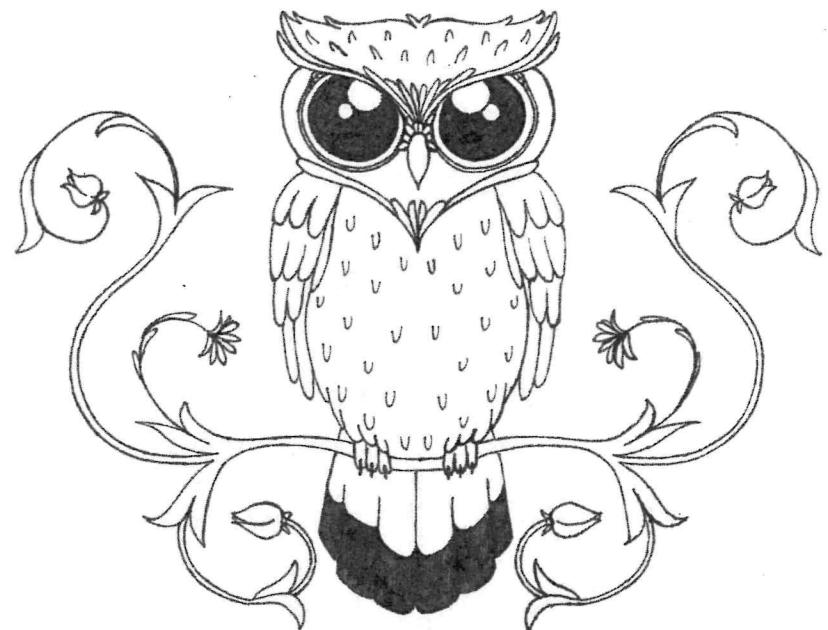
I finally found Pasta, apologized for my behavior, and was about

<sup>14</sup> I wasn't afraid, and I knew exactly what they wanted. But the moment they grabbed me, it was all over.

<sup>15</sup> This didn't last.

to express my shame in my actions, when I realized something. I didn't have my phone. Somewhere in the tussle, I must have lost it, meaning it was still in the café, at the front of the line, by the bathrooms.

Pasta grabbed my arm, reminding me that the police officers had just sternly asked me to stay away from the Starbucks and find someplace else to go. I looked at him, I looked at the café, I weighed my options, and decided right then and there that I wasn't about to go anywhere without my phone.



Dr. Whooo

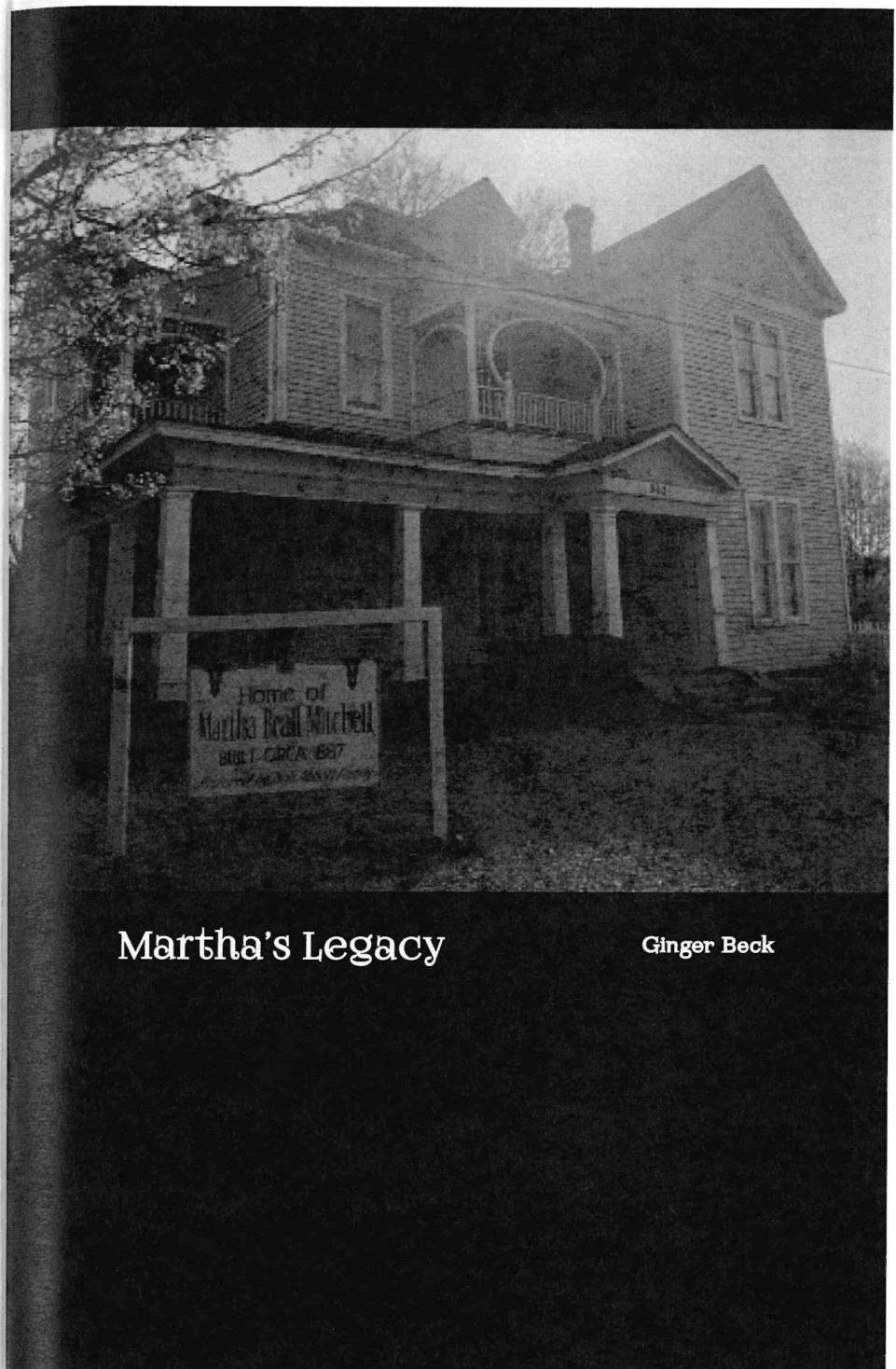
Krystal Morgan

## A Prose Poem

Kay Walter

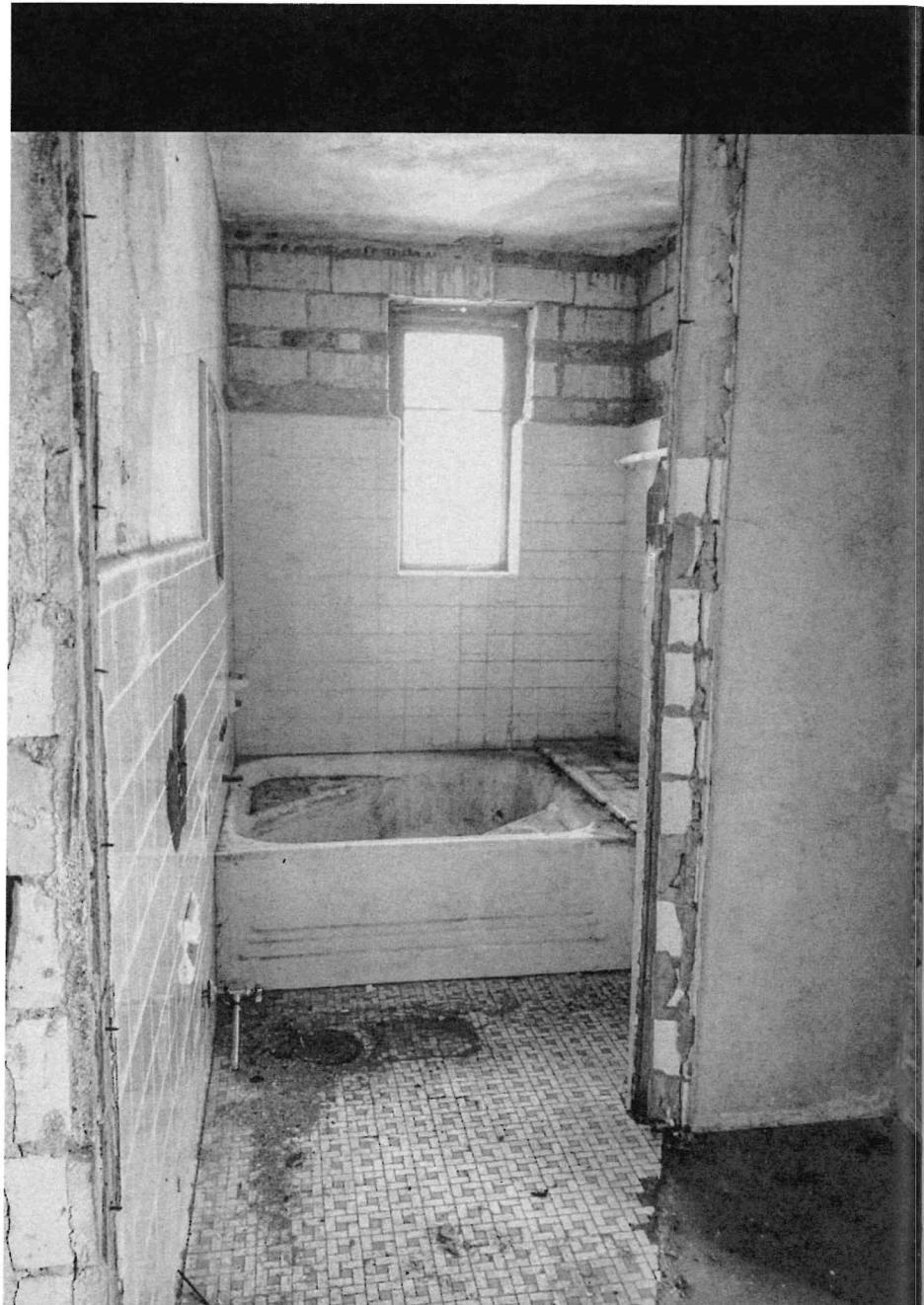
Star Son, embrace and dazzle the dance  
as I worry over a breezy rhythm.  
My daughter will remember to celebrate  
the young desire you imprison and  
the vast warm porcelain of my decay.

I ask any god for one sacred blush of joy  
and must picture only the lingering cloud  
of a freshly perfumed after.



Martha's Legacy

Ginger Beck



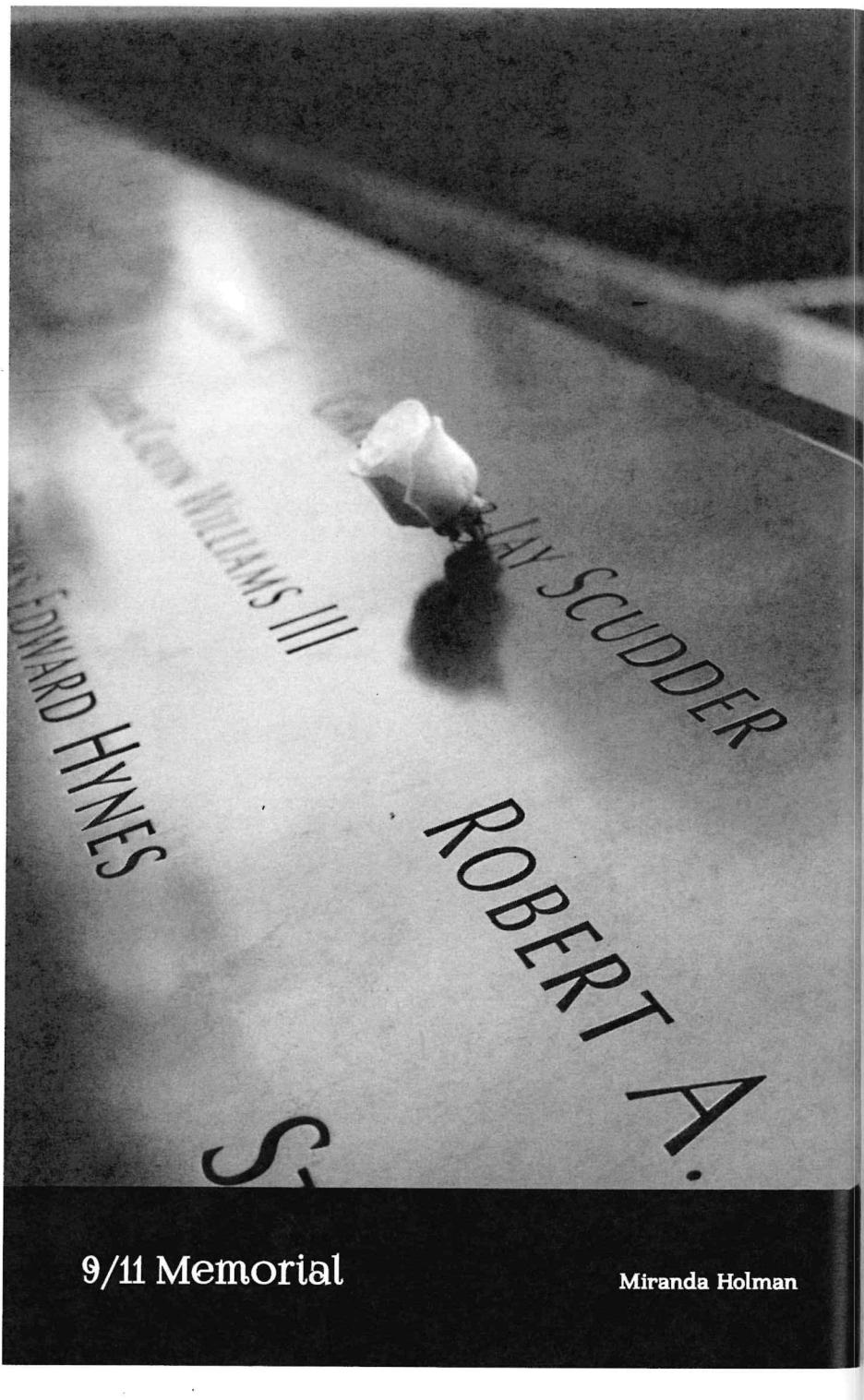
Washed in Pink

Ginger Beck

## How Water Feels

Kay Walter

I keep thinking that you feel like water  
Saying to myself  
Whispering aloud  
"You feel just like water."  
My mother, who can't swim, wanted all her children to learn.  
Water is always fear.  
Water is terror and surrender.  
It is the shock that answers the anticipation of the summer's first  
plunge,  
which stretches tight in my chest and throbs until I am immersed.  
It is the warm embrace I yearn for when cold and weary.  
It is the clean against my skin.  
It is the coolness that satisfies my thirst.  
It is the cocoon that sheltered me before birth.  
It moves against me with a buoyancy that reassures.  
It presses against me in the secret places erasing the stain of  
every day's deeds.  
In motion it is the sound of Dickinson's billows and Hughes's rivers.  
It is fluid potential and ominous power.  
It alters colors, sparkles into rainbows, warps histories, and carves  
caverns.  
It is your presence in my life.  
You feel just like water.



## Contributor Bios

**Zachary Abbott:** Zachary was born and raised in El Dorado, Arkansas. After graduating from Gallaudet University in 2016, Zachary taught Agriculture at the Arkansas School for the Deaf for one year. Currently, Zachary studies Forestry at UAM. His work reflects the values he earned in southern Arkansas during the pastoral days of his youth as well as the reflections earned over the course of a life traveling internationally.

**Ginger Beck:** Ginger is a writer, urban explorer, tattoo artist, and English teacher in Little Rock. Her book, *Abandoned Arkansas, An Echo From the Past*, is now available at all online booksellers. Her most recent work appears in Foliate Oak, The Molotov Cocktail, Red Savina Review, Blue Lyra Review, Intrinsicsick, and Pithead Chapel, among others. Instagram/Twitter: @highfiveg

**Sydney Davis:** Sydney is a writer and standup comedian based out of Chicago, Illinois. Originally from Bentonville, Arkansas, Sydney began her stand-up comedy and sketch writing career in 2008, while she was in the 11th grade. Since then, she has performed in various venues across the US including, but not limited to: The Second City (IL), Dangerfield's Comedy Club (NYC), Zanies Comedy Club (IL), The Comedy Bar (IL), The Apollo Theater (Chicago), Stage 773 (IL), and Skype (true story). Her debut stand-up special "Wasted (Potential)" is available on Amazon Prime, as well as her directorial/screenwriting debut "SQUID," a comedy series also available on Amazon Prime. Find out more on [sydneydavisjrjr.com](http://sydneydavisjrjr.com)

**Miranda Holman:** Miranda is a small-town newspaper editor and writer who is pursuing an MFA in Creative Writing. She currently resides in Arkansas with her husband, children, and her Shih Tzu, Johnny Cash. She has been featured in numerous journals and magazines for her poetry

**Alyssa Hooks:** Alyssa is a junior at UAM seeking a degree in Communications with a Speech Emphasis. She has been involved in forensics, on and off of UAM's campus, for seven years, including two years of coaching nationally ranked debaters for high school and college. After UAM she plans on seeking a post-secondary education for a later degree in communication.

**Robert Moore:** Red Hawk is a professor of English at UA

Monticello. He was the Hodder Fellow in the Humanities at Princeton University and has published 11 books. His book *Self Observation* is published in 10 languages worldwide.

**Krystal Morgan:** Krystal is majoring in Computer Information Systems with a minor in Business. Her hobbies include drawing, singing, and playing games like Dungeons and Dragons or adventure-type video games. She is the youngest of six, so she states she fought with her siblings when it came to her turn on the only game console she had, and they called her Pistol for being a fighter.

**Heather O'Neill:** Heather is a senior at the University of Arkansas at Monticello where she majors in history. She works for ResLife on campus and spends her free time gardening and stargazing. She is also a dedicated ailurophile and bibliophile.

**Laura Sawyer:** Laura is currently in her second year as a student at UAM. She is majoring in Forestry and often likes hiking, hammocking, and playing volleyball with friends. She paints and draws in her freetime, conjuring portraits such as these. Her two paintings featured in this magazine are titled "The Indian Head" and "Shelly."

**Kay Walter:** Kay is a Professor of English at the University of Arkansas at Monticello, her undergraduate *alma mater*, where she specializes in British literature. For the Arkansas affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English, she edits an award-winning newsletter, *The English Pub*. She is a Companion of the Guild of St George and a lifemember of the Royal Oak Foundation, Friends of Ruskin's Brantwood, Edinburgh Sir Walter Scott Club, Arkansas Library Association, Arkansas Council of Teachers of English and Language Arts, Hostelling International USA, and Carson McCullers Society. Her recent writing appears in *The Companion, Arkansas Libraries, Arkansas English Journal, FoB Newsletter, Minnesota English Journal, Moveable Type, and CEAMAG Journal*. She enjoys collaborating with colleagues, mentoring early-career educators and first-generation university students, and designing courses which include travel to Europe.

**Anna Williams:** Anna is a junior at UAM where she is pursuing a Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies, directed in Healthcare. She is the Public Relations Chairman and Editor/Historian of

Alpha Sigma Alpha sorority and a member of Sigma Zeta. After graduation, Anna plans to pursue a degree in dental hygiene. Her hobbies include painting and photography.

Also included in this issue of Weevil Pond is a medley of students currently enrolled at Hamburg High School. These students are dual enrolled at UAM in either Composition or World Literature. We would like to commend them on their dedication to poetry and encourage them to keep writing throughout their lives.

## Editor Bios

**Gabriel Bass:** Gabe is graduating this semester with an English degree with a concentration in Creative Writing. He will be attending West Virginia University for his MFA. Gabe is also very much into cooking and collecting Hawaiian shirts.

**Claudia Clark:** Claudia is a senior Psychology major with a passion for writing. She enjoys time with her children and grandchildren, photography, and working with animals.

**Jessica K. Hylton:** Dr. J is the fortunate faculty member in charge of this motley crew. She is also the director of the MFA program.

**Alyssa Lloyd:** Alyssa is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in communication with the focus of Professional Writing. Previously, she was an art major. She enjoys reading, snuggling with her dog, and spending time with family.

**Jeffrey Whitson:** Jeff is a third year English Major with a concentration in Professional Writing. He is also a junior on the Men's golf team and works as the assistant to the Sports Information Director. Jeff enjoys reading, writing, playing intramurals, and watching movies.