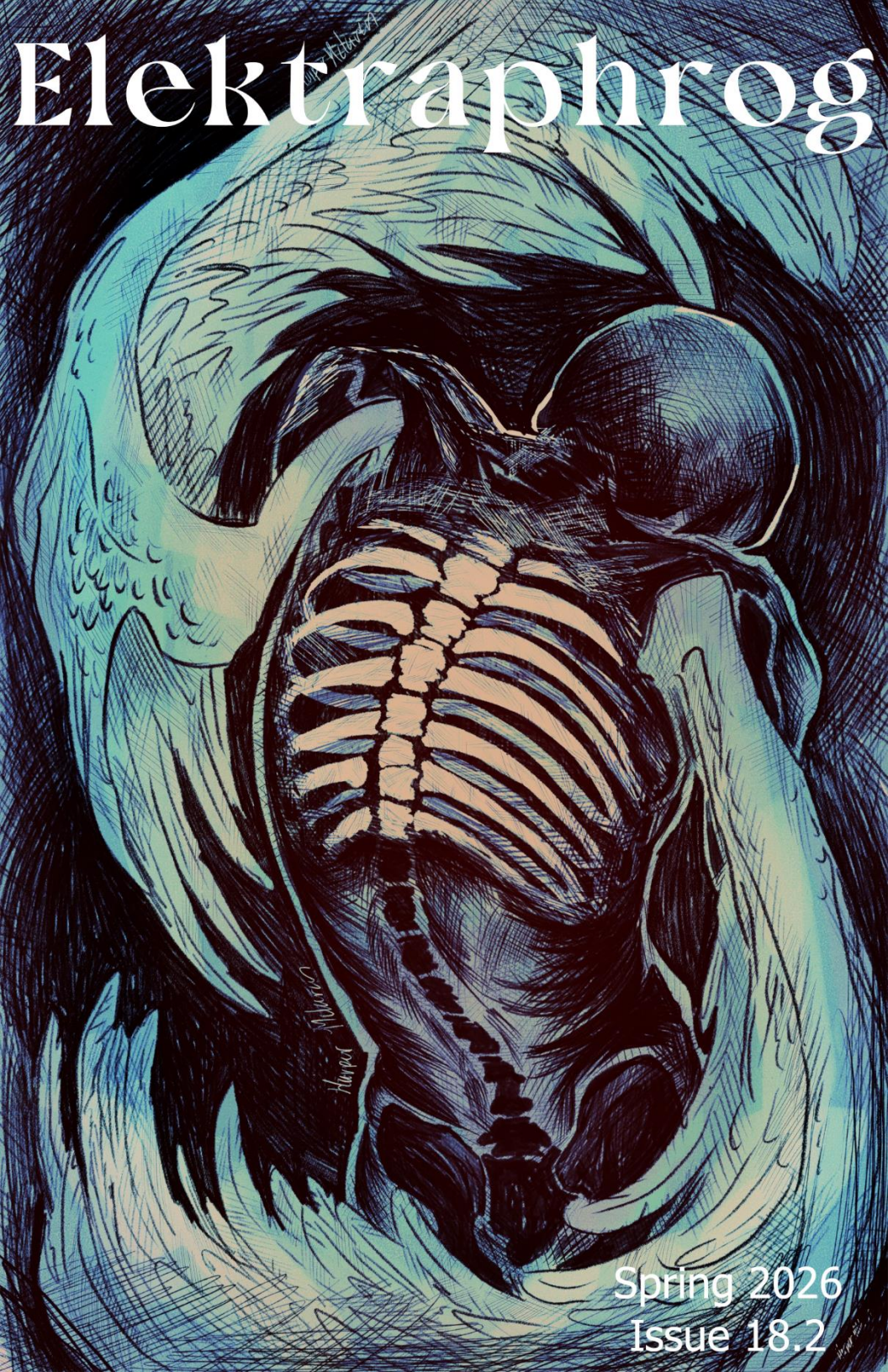


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Cover Image:
Detail from “Chronic Pain” by Harper McLaren

Back Cover Image:
Detail from “Glow with the Flow” by Jessica Godfrey

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To Be Alive

By Ackerly Justice

Ticket in hand, Mr. Aisling tried containing his excitement in the bland, office-like waiting room. Over the loud hum of the fluorescent lights, a voice asked, "Do you prefer mornings or evenings?" He glanced up to find the clerk creepily studying him.

She had the kind of face that never had enough energy to even be surprised by anything. A slightly yellowed, laminated badge on her jacket read CLERK. She held her pen above the chart the way a doctor holds a scalpel but didn't seem that threatening.

Mr. Aisling looked around before responding. The waiting room had no other occupants, in fact, he realized that it was just him, a desk, and some strange lady. Then he glanced up, above the desk it read 43. His ticket said 43. No one had even called his name.

"Mornings," he reluctantly said.

The clerk wrote it down without showing an ounce of expression. "Question two," she said. "Do you read the terms and conditions before agreeing?"

Mr. Aisling straightened his tie. "Always," he said, with the sternness of a college professor.

"Question three." She didn't look up. "Have you ever waved back at someone who wasn't waving at you?"

He opened his mouth, then closed it. "Well, there was this one..." He stopped himself.

The clerk wrote this down at the same speed as she wrote everything else, but with more strength, which frightened Mr. Aisling.

Then she instinctually set her pen flat against the chart. This was new. He noticed it almost instantly.

"Final question." She looked at him directly for the first time, "Do you feel that you deserve the opportunity to have been alive?"

The room then flooded with the annoying, bland, fluorescent light humming. Mr. Aisling sat with the question the

way you sit on an uncomfortable chair. He thought about his childhood, all the good he had done... what would that be?

"Yes," he said. "I think I do."

The clerk held her gaze for a moment longer than necessary. Then, suddenly she reached beneath the desk and slid forward a single piece of paper. It was the color of old cream and disgustingly warm to the touch. At the top in small, almost illiterate letters it read:

CERTIFICATE OF DEATH Issued to; Mr. Aisling Status: Approved Remarks: Deserved.

He read it twice. Then folded it carefully along an already made crease, then placed it in his breast pocket, and closed his eyes.

It was, he thought, the best thing he had ever been gifted.

The fluorescent lights hummed on, not noticing Mr. Aisling's long-awaited vacancy.

Ticket in hand, Mrs. Anila tried containing her excitement, though the hands holding the ticket didn't quite feel like hers, in the bland, office-like waiting room. Over the loud hum of the fluorescent lights, a voice asked, "Do you prefer mornings or evenings?"

She looked up to find the clerk already watching her.

The clerk had the kind of face that had never once been surprised by anything. A slightly yellowed laminated badge on her lapel read CLERK. She held her pen above the chart the way a doctor holds a scalpel.

Mrs. Anila noticed, distantly, that she had been here before. Not in the way you recognize a place, but in the way you recognize a feeling you were hoping you wouldn't come back.

The quiz was the same. The questions were the same. Even the pause before the final question was the same, the moment where it seemed like the only thing in the room were those damn lights!

"Do you feel that you deserve the opportunity to have been alive?"

Mrs. Anila opened her mouth. Before answering again, she thought of her childhood, all the good she had done.

“No,” she stated. “I don’t think I do.”

The clerk held her gaze, just like last time, then stood... slowly. Mrs. Anila glanced back at the clerk, or what was the clerk. On the desk, sat a single badge, face down.

She flipped over the badge to the sight of her name.

Instinctually, Anila sat behind the desk. The pen was already in her hand, though she did not remember picking it up. Above the desk, the number board clicked forward, then the door opened, emitting an ominous squeak from those rusted hinges she had grown to dread.

A man walked in, ticket in hand, trying to contain his excitement.

Echoes of the Wind

By Tyler Tuong

Is it worth coming back after all this time?

Hearing the voices to come back.

But those words were meaningless to me.

The scars of the past linger as each tells a story

A story that tells of strength, sorrow, and pain

The clouds above the ravine are inviting, yet alluring.

Like paradise waiting for me with open arms.

My adrenaline rises like rising tides of the ocean.

One jump it's all it takes to be free.

Free from the worries of the world.

All good things must to an end, but the end is never
enough

What I leave behind is not the end.

It's the beginning of something new

Chronic Pain
By Harper McLaren



Two Men, One Heart

By Elijah Brownman

In the city of Willowbrook money meant nothing. People could throw diamonds in the street, give piles of gold to the homeless, and lay down every bit of cash they have in the street, and people would walk all over it. The only thing that anyone wanted in this town was a human heart. A real human heart. Without it you couldn't buy anything that mattered. Especially some of that nose candy.

After the economies unique change, not many people bought drugs anymore. Everyone was too scared to be around that type of stuff out of fear of getting murdered and their heart taken. But the addicts still do whatever they can to get their hands on it. They thought that all they needed was one inhale and the world was a different place. All the noise in their head would quiet, their would pain soften, and for a few minutes everything would feel alright. But the dealers didn't take cash. Only hearts.

Caleb and Chris had been best friends for as long as they both can remember. Long before they got hooked on drugs and long before their city had changed. They used to be good people who had jobs and looked forward to the future. Now they spend most nights sitting in their crumbling apartment building and watching the city lights outside the window.

"You want to go to bed?" Chris said.

"Nah, it's not like I'll actually sleep anyway" Caleb said.

Chris nodded, understanding. Neither of them had been able to sleep much recently. "You ever think about it?" He asked trying to spark up a conversation.

"Not really," Caleb said.

"That's a lie," Chris said as he continued to stare out the window. "Everyone thinks about it."

In the distance the sounds of sirens were heard somewhere below. A few years ago, the city was horrified by the new economy. People protested, speeches were made, petitions were sent to the government. The government promised they would fix things, but they never did.

Now people have just become numb to it. Like it's something "normal" that they must live with.

Chris started rubbing his hands together nervously. "You know, people do it to strangers all the time now. Someone you don't know. Maybe someone who doesn't have family and won't be missed. All we need is one heart for a good load." He said.

Caleb didn't answer. They both know that strangers are getting harder to find now a days. The city was so much quieter than it was a couple years ago. So many empty houses. So many posters of missing faces.

A week later and the withdrawals really started to hit Caleb and Chris hard. They barely even talked to each other anymore. They would sit together trembling and mumbling to themselves. "You got anything?" Chris asked one night.

"Nothing," Caleb said.

"Yeah, same." Chris said as they continued to sit in silence. After what was either an hour or a couple minutes, because they couldn't tell the difference anymore, Chris spoke again. "Remember when we used to ditch school to go throw rocks at the pigeons?" He said. "Man, those were fun times."

For the first time in a while Caleb actually smiled. He smiled because he did remember. He remembered when life was so much simpler.

Later that night they were walking the streets together, trying to take their minds off of things. They walked past so many empty houses and closed shops. Chris kept on talking about childhood stories. Laughing, smiling, and trying to remember the good times. Chris stopped in an alley and leaned against a wall to catch his breath. "I don't know what I would do without you man," he said as he shook his head.

Caleb looked down at his hands. For a long moment he didn't say or do anything. Then he stepped closer. By the time Chris saw the knife it was way too late. He barely even

had time to be confused, and just like that the alley went silent.

Even that later that night Caleb stood alone in front of a dealer. His hands were shaking. Caleb passed over a box, and the dealer opened it, checked the heart inside, and nodded. The dealer handed over a bag to Caleb. Caleb grabbed it and quickly started walking away, already opening the bag to take some in his blood stained clothes.

Glow With The Flow

By Jessica Godfrey



The Darling Rose

By Jordyn Locklar

She danced under rosy lights that brought out her complexion,

A tender glow painting her in warmth's reflection.

Her laughter, soft as a breeze through spring's bloom,

Chased away shadows, lifted all gloom.

He watched, as though the world had gone still,

Every beat of his heart bending to her will.

Her smile, a lantern to guide him through the night,

Her presence alone turned wrong into right.

She reached with a hand, gentle yet sure,

And in his own palm, he felt something pure.

No words could capture the silence they shared,

For love often speaks without being declared.

He knew in that moment, and she felt it too,

That two broken halves had found something new.

Through laughter, through sorrow, through stars up above,

They stitched their tomorrows with quiet, steadfast love.

She was the Rose (his rose), the Lady of Grace,

With thorns to protect and petals to embrace.

Her spirit was velvet, her courage was flame,

Yet fragile in ways one would never name.

He saw his Rose, not just for her bloom,
But the strength that endured through shadow and gloom.
The way she could rise, though the world may be cruel,
A blossom of wisdom, a heart as her jewel.

She leaned toward him, the Rose to her Sun,
Her battles were many, yet never undone.
He cherished the Rose, both tender and wild,
A woman, a warrior, a heart undefiled.
And in her, he found the home he had sought,
A Rose everlasting, with love finely wrought.

The Defiance to Dream

By Zachary Prieto

"There's nothing we can do. I'm sorry."

She wept.

Hearing this, I looked blankly at the camera feed. The Suppression Team was in the hallway with all our main rooms. Their black uniform was even darker than the walls around them.

"No!" the speakers rang.

Even in their final moments, they held on to their dreams. They had faith in everything we built.

"It's not over yet," I told Carmen. "They need us. They won't give up. Open up my arsenal. I'm going to fight with them. Lamenting isn't going to fix anything."

She looked at me with tears in her eyes and nodded.

"Okay..."

"Okay, Yan. You're right. It's not over yet."

Carmen walked briskly.

I looked at the camera feed again.

Philip charged with all his might into one of the arbiters, but instantly vaporized. Faith beyond question. I loved Philip. I wept.

Not long after, I followed Carmen. In the name of the dream and the dreamers, I will fight.

Suppressors died left and right, but so did my allies. The weapons I provided them gave them enough strength to be able to realize their dreams. In this moment, everything was worth it. Everyone had something they fought for in this forsaken world. We were rebuilding humanity, even if it might have been our last moments.

Benjamin's screams were fierce.

Kali shouted "That's why we fight!"

Bari's bow was loud and clear from behind me. I heard her telling her allies not to give up, and commanding Elijah to protect Cassetti.

Most importantly, I felt Carmen. Her red eyes glowed with anger, and this was the first time she ditched her regular uniform. She was fully fighting. She believed in me. She won against herself.

Everyone was fighting for my dream. Everyone believed that in a world without meaning, we could make it for ourselves. Bringing faith and religion back, being kind to those who can't give return much to us, wanting things other than what we were told we should want, and everything else we all stood for. Humanity. My dream had become their own.

Were we the last dreamers?

I hope we're not. And if we are, I hope we don't get wiped out.

We kept fighting.

An arbiter entered the hall. I saw Carmen's fear.

I shot, but it didn't work. My strongest attack was easily deflected.

Instantly, Kali came in, and we all charged at the arbiter together. Two of our Friends were knocked into the wall and fell unconscious. But the sheer amount of us was enough to disarm the arbiter and pierce her heart.

"Why is it that the most violent are the strongest?" Kali asked.

"It's the way this world is. It's why we're doing this. Because we dream higher than that." Bari responded. She walked over to us.

"The swarm is getting lighter. We're doing great," she said.

I smiled.

"You were right," Carmen smiled back.

Everything was blurry and disfigured. I could barely read the labels next to the doors in the hall, words I was so used to.

I twisted the knife in her neck over and over again until the bleeding and writing stopped.

"For Bari."

I couldn't stop myself from charging into the horde of Arbiters. The Light was at the end, and if I could get the leader, I'd finally win this.

Bari...

I couldn't stop crying.

But I had to use that to make it worth it.

I charged harder.

Daniel's dying body lent me his weapons.

"For Daniel!"

I instantly knocked out the first arbiter and pinned her to the metal wall with my knife.

I kicked another one, but her ally deflected and pushed me away. I got up, and shouted with all my might.

"FOR KALI!"

I used Kali's signature kick and knocked one away and shot her four times.

"Get him," the Light ordered. "You girls are better than this."

I saw him grab a body from the side.

It was...

Carmen.

The first dreamer.

I raged. I ran and grabbed Kali's sword. I didn't care about the risk. I needed to get to Carmen.

"FOR!"

I gritted my teeth and charged as fast as I could with Kali's sword pointed straight ahead.

"CARMEN!"

Nothing could compare to how much I loved Carmen. She was there at the beginning, spreading our Home, bringing people in, helping everyone out. No amount of Arbiters could diminish my love for her. I pierced and sliced through what seemed like infinite arbiters until I reached the Light.

I reached out for Carmen and charged at the Light, but he easily swept me away. I was bound. I could do nothing. I tried so hard to reach for her, but I couldn't move. I was drowning in tears. I eventually gave up.

"Dreaming, huh?" The Light asked.

I saw the Arbiters trying to kill my Friends. Bari's body impaled by her bow, Kali's body sprawled on the ground, and Carmen's body in the Light's hands.

"Look where that got you."

He scoffed at me.

I couldn't stop crying.

"I wasn't asked to kill you, but to destroy everything. So I'm not going to kill you. You're going to watch everything fall."

I could only look at Carmen.

He grabbed me and a new wave of Arbiters came in. I couldn't move. I was so close to Carmen, and so far away from my dream.

"I'm sorry," I whispered to her.

In front of my eyes, everything fell.

The will to stand up straight.

The rationality to maintain discretion.

The hope to be a better person.

The fearlessness to keep on living.

The expectation for the meaning of existence.

The courage to protect.

Those who are faithful and trustworthy.

The eye to face the fear and break the cycle.

The eye to embrace the past and build the future.

The dream.

Ending.

Just like that, the Suppressors left.

It was only me and the corpses.

All were dead.

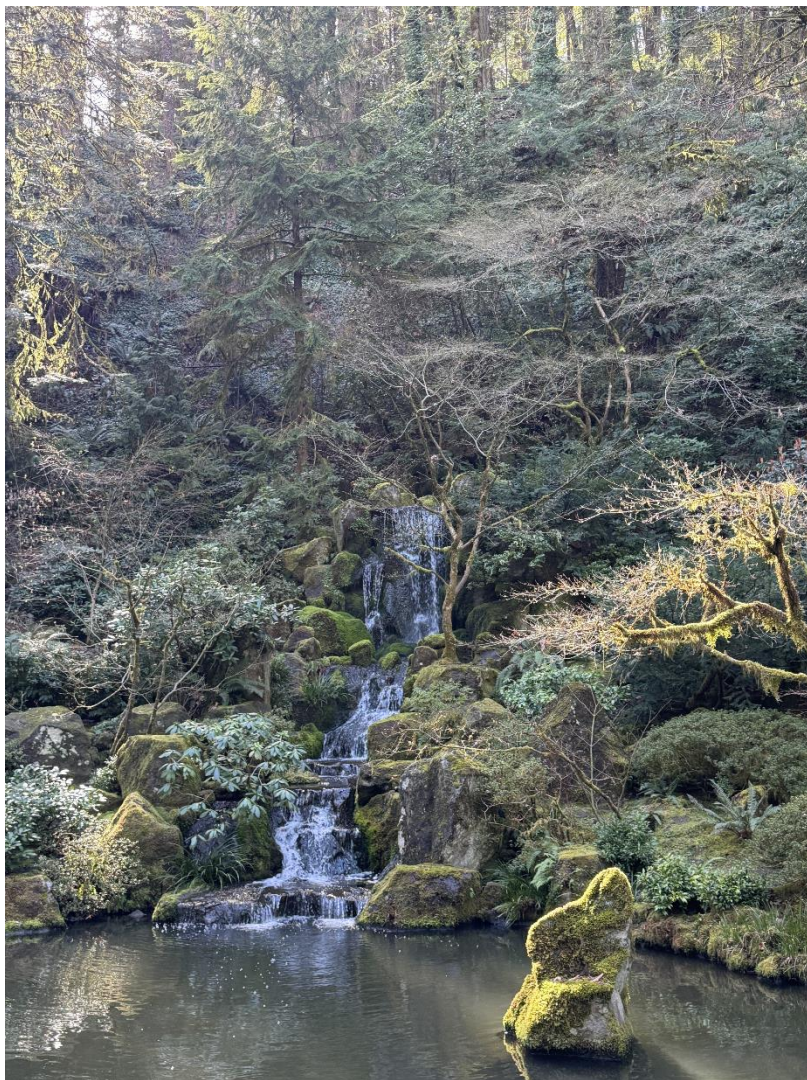
I couldn't do anything.

It was then I brought upon my own death, staining the bathtub with my blood.

We were the ones who dared to dream.

Serenity Falls

By Tyler Truong



California

By Sidney Nosek

The bitter frost of dawn
slapped my cheeks apple-red
on my zippy scooter.

Nearly leaving home,
I took each day like a greedy toddler
feigning for dessert
and freedom.

The sun rose to her feet,
opening the sky like a curtain
and kissed me Good Morning.
Pink mountains
and bouncing hills offered me
one last dance
(and two extra tumbles)
along cobblestone path.

The foxtail tickled my ankles
and their cicadas confessed
their secrets.

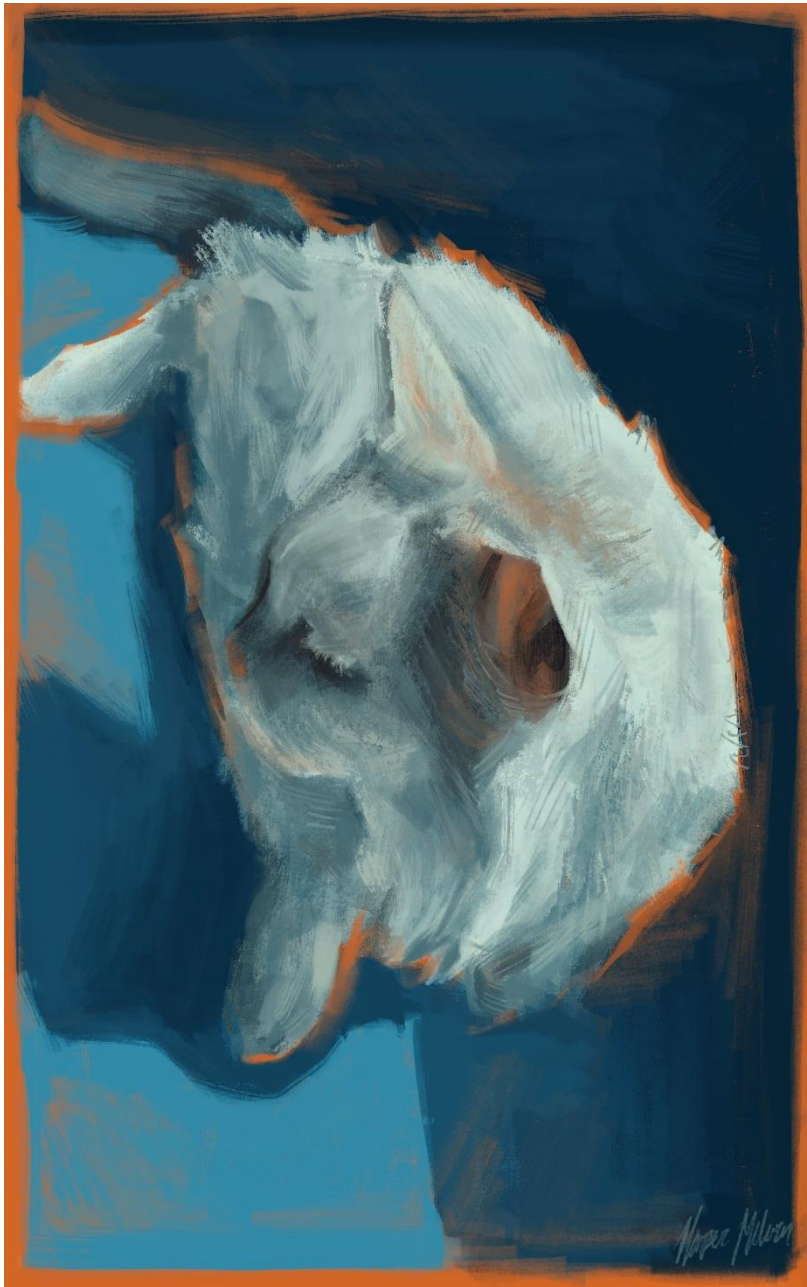
The wind bathed me in her
eternal fragrance
as the songs of sparrows

lulled my fears to sleep
in a bed of golden
wildflower.

Perhaps this was home.

Painting of a Cat Named Bubbles

By Harper McLaren



Eldtrich

By Grace Clough



Here, There, After

By Vincet Hernandez

It was a bright sunny day, and a car passed by. In the car is Owen, a young boy in his teens, who is driving the car. He is a decisive kid, but does not always think well of the decisions he is making. Owen grips the steering wheel tighter, jaw clenched, eyes flicking between the road and the glowing screen in his hand. “I’m done listening to you,” he snaps. “You don’t get to—” A horn blares. Too close. Too late. The world lurches sideways. Metal screams. Then nothing.

He soon wakes up in a dark abyss. He is disoriented, confused, and has no idea what happened. He wakes to silence.

Not quiet, but silence. The kind that presses in on him, thick and endless. Owen staggers to his feet. There’s no ground, no sky, no horizon. It’s just darkness stretching in every direction. “Woah... is this place?” He tries to listen around, but it is so silent that even the silence feels like an echo. He feels tethered, as though connected to something else. Owen hears hospital noises that come and go. The rhythmic pulses make him jump every time they beep. He walks around, though he feels a presence behind him. Owen turns around, only to be greeted by a dark, ominous figure. “Hello Owen” said the entity. “Who the hell are you?”. “You’re between places Owen. Between life and death” said the Entity.

A figure stands there—tall, impossibly still. Its shape is human, but only barely. The edges blur into the darkness, as if it isn’t fully there. A hat sits atop its head, its face swallowed in shadow. “Who the hell are you?” The figure tilts its head. “You can call me the Angler.” Answers the creature. “Yeah? What the hell is that supposed to be?” asks Owen. “A god and a creator”. Owen lets out a short, humorless laugh. “Right.” As he is about to ask a question, the Angler answers them, as though it already knows what it is thinking. But that doesn’t make sense. If he’s dead, why does he still hear

hospital sounds? Why does he feel tethered, like a thread still pulling him backward? “You’re wondering why you can still hear the machines. Why you feel... pulled.” Owen freezes. “I didn’t—” “You didn’t say it,” Angler finishes. “But you thought it.” The beeping cuts through the silence again. Louder this time. *beep... beep...* Owen’s chest tightens. “So I’m not dead.” “You are between places Owen”.

The angler offers Owen a choice. “I offer you an existence of unbroken happiness. A world of certainty, where nothing surprises you, and nothing is lost” says the Angler, as though offering a prisoner his freedom. “What’s the catch? Do you go around offering everybody happiness? You must be fun at parties”. “You will never attend another” responds the Angler. Owen is left shocked. The joke dies in Owen’s throat.

He promises him Eternal Happiness. A world of happiness, free of pain and uncertainty. He tells Owen that there is no going back to what things were before. He is dead. He is merely giving him a choice on how to spend the rest of his eternity.

“This doesn’t make sense,” he says. “If you’re a god or whatever, why ask me? Why not just decide?” Angler watches him. “Because it must be chosen.” “Why?” The Angler stays silent. He asks what happens if he declines. The Angler tells him he won’t answer. The unknown begins to weigh on Owen more heavily than the void itself. What if he is lost in this void forever if he doesn’t accept it? But this entity is more mysterious than godlike. What if it is all a figment of his injured brain? Or a supernatural being feeding on a dying mind. Why does he need consent if he is a god? He asks for proof, something real, something certain that he can stand by to give him acceptance. The Angler tells Owen it is a matter of faith.

“Is this any different from a coin flip? You trusted randomness before. Why not trust belief?” asks the Angler. “I didn’t-“ “You call it chance so you don’t have to call it surrender. But you did just that. You surrendered your will to

metal and gravity. Now you hesitate to surrender it to belief”.

He walks around, panting and hyperventilating. After a second, Owen calls for the Angler and tells him he has made a decision. “Okay, I decided that I will-“ As he starts talking, blackness ensues. The hospital’s beeping ends in a flatline. What decision did he choose? If he did die, what decision led to his death?

The Ideal

By Zachary Prieto

I plead.

Find my wings and fly me North.

Open the birdcage and send it forth...

Find me bloom in a spicebush forest.

Fly, my wings.

Open my ears and tell me more.

Open my eyes and expand my horizon.

Strip all my layers and bring my compass forward.

I'll use you all I can to let my light in.

Fly, my wings.

Fly, elusive wings.

I see you in the reflection of me.

Which of us can fly, though, I'm uncertain.

Fly, forever wings.

I know you're always in me.

Thank them for the nudge that got me started.

My hands never cease

To chase what I've always had in reach.

Pictures of the past

Only show they didn't last.

Fly, broken wings.

Fly, perfect wings.

In the mirror, you're all I see.

The embodiment of the ideal me.

So all I want to do is fly

To somewhere we can be free.

So, fly my wings.

For the one last time, if you will.

That's all.

I Got an “A” in Art

By Jessica Godfrey



Toddlers and Torches

By Kaylee Wymer

Please remind me to never, ever leave a lighter out in the open again.

You always hear people say that parenting is going to be an adventure, but they really should word it better. When my son, Tommy, turned five, I was expecting silly pranks. I expected him to jump out from behind the couch, acting like a scary monster. I certainly was not expecting him to turn my quiet, two-story home into a walking boobytrap straight out of the movie *Home Alone*!

It all started last Spring Break. Tommy was out of school and enjoying a lazy afternoon. He was in the living room watching loud, colorful cartoons on the TV with his two-year-old cousin, Lorey. I was in the kitchen talking with my sister-in-law, Lilly. We were chopping up vegetables and making turkey sandwiches for everyone since our husbands were out fishing for the day. The house felt peaceful.

Suddenly, over the sound of the TV, I smelt something awful. It smelled like a campfire mixed with melting plastic. Then, my son started laughing.

As a mother, you know that when you hear your kid laugh a certain way, that usually means they did something they weren't supposed to do. Lilly and I dropped our kitchen knives and rushed into the living room.

We walked into a nightmare. My son and Lorey had somehow gotten their little hands on a lighter. They had taken a plastic Barbie doll, wrapped her head completely in white tissue paper, and set the whole thing on fire! Lorey was running all over the living room, her bare feet slapping against my clean beige carpet, waving the flaming Barbie doll around like a maniac.

My son was lying on the floor, holding his stomach. He was turning blue from laughing so hard and not being able to breathe. I have never been that scared in my life, and neither had Lilly. We both bolted for Lorey. She saw us through

the corner of her eye and sprinted away like it was a fun game of tag.

This made my son laugh even harder as I yelled at Tommy to get off the floor and help us. But no, Tommy just sat on the floor laughing and pointing. He was cheering Lorey on with her melting Barbie torch as her mother and I chased her in pure terror.

Honestly, I have no idea how Lorey didn't set the couch cushions or the window curtains on fire the whole time she was running around.

You would think the story de-escalated by now, but it gets worse. While Lilly and I were chasing Lorey, James and my husband, Cody, finally came home. They opened the front door and saw the chaotic scene.

Our husbands had the nerve to pause, look at everything, and then close the front door. I could even hear Cody hit the front porch and laugh before the door shut again.

After chasing Lorey for so long that the flames melted half of Barbie's plastic body, Lilly ran outside, grabbed the garden hose, and brought it inside. She sprayed Lorey with cold water, finally putting out the fire.

Afterward, Lilly handed me the hose. I sprayed my son, then stormed to the front door and sprayed both men until they were begging me to stop.

Looking at the dripping wet men, the soaked children, and the ruined Barbie on my soggy carpet, a realization hit me. I finally understood why parents warn kids about playing with matches. I have just learned exactly how terrifying a child's free will is.

Dusted and a Far

By Jenny Lopatin-Austin

I look out from my lofty pedestal, surrounded but ever longing. I watch passersby from my station, ever hoping to be chosen by one. To see the outer world, to be wanted in this futile existence. I wonder if my comrades up here share in my wanderlust, the desire that lies deep in the core of my being. It is a wicked envy that engulfs me as I watch my neighbors be chosen. Gathered together. Sent on to see sights only the maker may know. Jealousy torments me as I wonder what they have that I lack. Is it their sheen that appeals to the wanders I watch? What is the something within them that differs them from I? I am small, not just in mind and shape, but in my bitterness. I know. I see those, those who are large and curvaceous plucked in the morning. Prime of their existence! Yet I wallow with the dregs of my society. Do they also feel this cacophony: envy, longing, sorrow, and somehow emptiness? I swear I am alone in the way I approach my sphere of existence. It probably makes me a wretch while my siblings are enjoying the bounties of euphoria. What makes it worse is that I often witness their selection over me. But why? We all look identical mostly, though I have noticed some of my relatives are more tarnished or lacking than myself. Some of them are even spilling over with what make us all prized. It is a disgrace! Have they no shame? But I reflect. I pray to be redeemed of my misgivings and cruel judgements. I know I am made perfect whilst entrenched with those with flaws. Our creator may have even hand crafted me. Oh, that fills me with joy during these long bleak hours. All I have to go by on this life are hopes and rumors. One dark rumor shakes the very fibers of my being. That being the tale that those not chosen before the dying of the light are sent to a pitch-dark hell from which none can escape. The only light at the end of that tunnel is the possibilities of beasts. The beasts pierce the veil. Their great maws filled with fangs reach in and grab you and devour

you whole. It is never the way any of us wish to go. Death is imminent, but the heaven we long to manifest is to see beyond our cradle, our high-rise existence. The dust on my shell shakes with delight at such a promised land.

Hark!

The image of salvation arises! I see my kin to the west be grasped and placed down upon by the great one, the ship to salvation. Their dust, cinnamon and pale cream, spray in Jacob's latter that peers into our realm. The claw that transports them finishes it's harvest before hovering over myself and my doppelgängers.

It lingers that. Oh, heavens above and hells below, how it places a torment in my aching crust. I yearn so deeply. The five digits above, great and powerful, are tantalizing inches from me. Then, like lightning from the blue, it pulls away, leaving me and my collection.

Why?

Why?!

Are we not made in the most refined image? Are we not crafted as they sought to make us? Not in their most ethereal vestige, a nay impossible sight for my collective, let alone impossible transformation. Why are we? What are we? If not for them then who? I refuse to believe I am of no service but to rot! Please creators be merciful!

But maybe alas I lie in a sea of denial, with only my ego keeping me aloft.

It is the fate of all things to break down into the ether of great nothingness, but how I prayed to be of the service of a higher being before I returned to the bosom of where all eventually take rest. But I am not weary, only dismayed. I cannot sleep. I can only remain a forever watchman to those who surround me.

One day we shall be consumed.

.

Constellations

By Harper McLaren



I Called You Father

By Jordyn Locklar

I called you father before I knew what safe could mean,
before I understood how cruel love could be.

I thought your arms were meant to catch my fall-

I never knew you'd be the one to drop me.

You were supposed to be the answer,
the steady voice that calmed my cries,

but every time I reached toward you

I only touched the back of lies.

You gave me away without a glance,
like I was weight you couldn't bear.

Said it was my fault

Though you never gave the chance,

Then vanished like I wasn't there.

Do you know?

Do you know how loud a silence can grow-
when love is what it should replace?

How empty rooms can bruise a soul
when no one fills a Father's space.

I learned to fold my grief in half,
to tuck it neatly out of sight.

A child, pretending not to shiver-
in the cold of endless, darkened night.

You were the door that never opened,
the porch light- burned... but never stayed.

I knocked until my knuckles bled,
until my fragile hope decayed.
You said the world was dark, and cruel, and heavy-
TOO much for shoulders built like mine.
But YOU were the storm I could not outrun,
the thunder cracking down my spine.
I begged for a father's comfort, much like prayer,
like deserts begging clouds for rain.
You turned your back before the storm-
That you had made-
And left me drowning in the pain.
You gave me away without a tremble,
No hesitation. No goodbye.
As if the daughter who had called you Father
was simply just a burden, passing by.
And STILL you blamed my broken hands-
for never learning "how to reach"
said I was hard, said I was distant,
But love was something you'd never teach.
I carried shame that wasn't mine,
wore Guilt like skin I couldn't shed.
Every cruel word you ever uttered-
Built a home inside my head.
Tell me.
How a child forgives...
The One who taught them how to Break?
How do you trust the ground beneath you

When it was love that learned to quake.
You should have been the voice that said
“I’m here, you’re safe, you’re not alone,”
Instead, you built a life without me
And called THAT distance, home.
I searched for you in other faces,
in borrowed warmth, in strangers’ graces.
But every hug just felt like proof-
I’d never fill your empty place.
You gave me away without a glance,
Said, wordlessly, I was too much to defend.
Said it was my fault when you never gave the chance,
Then called the Silence closure in the end.
I learned to stand without Your shadow,
To breathe without your “borrowed” air.
But healing doesn't mean forgetting,
It just means “learning not to care”
Because somewhere deep inside my chest-
A child STILL calls your name in vain.
..Still wonders why love felt like exile,
Why comfort always tasted of pain.
I called you Father like a promise.
Something sacred, something strong,
Something true.
But promises don't shatter children-
Ones that make them, do.
And now the word tastes sharp.

Tastes bitter.

A broken echo, worn and raw.

I called you Father all my life-

But you were never there.

..Not really.

Not at all.

When Mana Calls Out, You Listen

By Kaylee Wymer

Welcome to Avious, a planet filled with Mana and magic. Elves, demons, dwarves... even dragons roam freely, making dragon spotting common, and any kingdom is lucky if a dragon only attacks their borders once a year.

To protect themselves, everyone in each kingdom has a specific class to help them endure and navigate the threats posed by these perilous creatures and entities: classes like Knight, Mage, Priest, or Blacksmith, each shaped by the Mana an individual possesses.

My name is Blanch Cloverson, the eldest son of a noble family in the Withergates Empire. My father, Earl James Cloverson, serves as one of the empire's most respected generals. My uncle, Marquess Edward Cloverson, holds a higher rank—but not greater merit. That difference has always bothered him like a splinter my uncle could never remove from under his skin.

When I was born and later showed signs of being a magic prodigy, my uncle made sure everyone knew I carried his bloodline, too. That one decision dragged me into the mess I now call my job as Head Chief of the Mages Association of the Withergates Empire.

Why? Because my class is a Sage.

A subclass that is so rare that most people think it's a myth. Sages can cast any spell they imagine. No chants. No limits. No measurable Mana cap.

Which sounds amazing, until you realize it lands you in an office, buried under paperwork for the rest of your life.

And that's exactly what I was supposed to be doing back in my office right now. Still, I'm usually slacking off in the Central Garden up in a tree snoozing to hide from the Headmaster, Nolan Ivory, who I was currently watching storm all over the Mages Association, trying to find me and drag me back to my office.

He was a well-mannered older man in his eighties who was always polite, calm, and collected, but he tended to have a short fuse with me.

"BLANCH CLOVERSON!" Headmaster Nolan's voice roared over the entire Mages Association, echoing through every hallway, rattling the stained-glass windows, and sending birds scattering into the sky. "WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU, YOU BRAT?!"

I watched Nolan from the top of a tree in the Central Garden, barely holding back a grin as he kept looking for me.

"You know you're going to give Headmaster Nolan a heart attack one day, right?" a voice called from below.

I glanced down and saw Colton looking up at me with a tired, unamused look. He was a sunny blonde-haired Guard trainee who was always too honest for his own good.

"Eh," I shrugged, dropping from the branch. A flick of magic wind slowed my fall before I landed smoothly on the grass. "He'll survive. He's too stubborn to die."

Colton frowned. "That's not-"

A loud *poof* cut him off as purple smoke burst from a nearby staircase window, followed by the sound of thousands of frogs and Nolan screaming in irritation.

Colton covered his mouth, trying not to laugh. "You didn't."

I smirked. "Maybe, anyway, what did you need?"

"Oh! Right." Colton straightened. "Remember our bet? About someone finding your letter?"

I sighed. "Unfortunately."

He stepped aside, revealing two girls behind him.

"One's Lilly. She's shy." He gestured to the other. "And this is Maria."

Maria didn't look shy; instead, she looked annoyed. But what caught my attention about her was her Mana.

As a sage, I don't just *see* things, but can see everything, including mana particles as they cling to the world like invisible layers of dust to the naked eye. Some people have high mana levels, like I could tell Lily possessed; however,

Maria's was much thicker and completely in tune with how my own mana levels look when I look in the mirror.

The realization that Maria was like me, a Sage, made me feel awake, eager, and impatient for the first time in years. I knew at once that I wanted to mentor these three.

"I'm guessing you want to enter a dungeon?" I asked as I stretched and tried to hide the smirk forming on my face.

Maria crossed her arms. "We *would*, but are you really the Head Chief? You look like a lazy freeloader."

Lilly flinched. "M-Maria..."

I shrugged as I didn't let Maria's suspicion bother me. "If you don't want to come, don't." I turned and started walking. "I'm going either way."

Colton followed immediately as the girls hesitated, then hurried after us.

Moments later, we stood on the teleportation circle.

Blue light swirled. Runes formed. Mana hummed through the air. Then, a bright light flashed as the dungeon swallowed us whole.

"Alright," I said, loosening my shoulders. "Show me what you've got. I'm not helping unless I have to because you kids are struggling too much."

Maria scoffed, gripping her staff tightly as she stormed down the dungeon hall. "Like we need you!"

I chuckled as Colton and Lily quickly followed their feisty teammate, letting them go ahead as I spread my Mana out around me and through the tunnels around us, mapping the layout and tracking my new pupils' movements and watching for enemy signatures.

An hour later... it had gotten painful to watch.

I sat on a boulder, chin resting on my hand, watching them struggle against an Earth Newt, a large lizard monster related to Earth dragons and Lizardmen. Colton could barely hold the line as Lily froze up in fear half of the time, and Maria was rushing and overshooting most of any attack she cast at the Earth Newt.

"Can you three hurry up?" I called.

Maria dodged a tail strike and gave me a look. "Then get up and come help us!"

"Yeah!" Colton yelled, "You lost the bet!"

I sighed and stood up as I held up three fingers.

"I'm only giving you kids three points for this fight," I said as I shook my head and cast a shield spell to protect Lily from an incoming rubble attack from the creature.

"Lesson one," I continue ducking calmly under Earth Newt's tail as I walk closer to the fight. "Earth Newts have poor eyesight."

Maria rolled her eyes at the obvious knowledge. "Obviously! Why do you think they tunnel underground?!"

I place my hands in my coat pocket calmly and shrug, looking at her with an obvious expression, the kind of look a teacher gives a student when they answer their own question. "Then blind it."

The three students freeze in silence before Maria looks over at Lily. "Lily! Use your Holy Light spell!"

Lily nodded and quickly chanted the incantation as Colton protected her so she wouldn't lose concentration, then shot her spell up towards the ceiling, bathing the chamber in a bright white light that made the Earth Newt shriek and burrow underground again.

I walked over to one of the large holes the Earth Newt had made and smirked as I looked down into the black abyss. "Lesson two, they can't breathe down there forever."

The ground rumbles as the Earth Newt starts tunneling back up to the surface, making my smirk grow.

"Which leads to lesson three..." I said as I pointed a finger gun down at the hole. "Earth Mana is weak to Fire Mana."

Colton's eyes widened as he yelled, "HIT THE DECK!" before the three of them crouched to the ground away from any of the holes and covered their ears.

Crimson mana sigils formed in waves around my figure as my mana turned equally crimson, making it look like flames themselves were flickering off my shoulders. As I formed the spell I wanted to cast in my mind, a red magic

circle formed at the tip of my finger before I chanted, "Erupt."

Within three seconds, scarlet flames of a hellish blaze erupted from every tunnel's hole in front of me, along with every other hole the Earth Newt had been burrowing in and out of. Below us, the Earth Newt let out a shrill cry of agony, causing the whole tunnel to shake violently before emerging from a hole to escape the flames, only to turn to ash.

As the overgrown lizard vanished, its massive green Mana Core slammed into the dirt. The Core's green sheen glowed softly with magical energy, lighting the air near Colton as the three students looked at me in terrifying awe.

Seeing my pupils' faces, I let out a laugh and pick up the Mana Core as I glance back at them from over my shoulder. "Yeah... we have a lot of work to do when it comes to training you, kids."

After I store the massive core in a dimensional space, I place my hands in my pockets and head for the exit, yawning slightly. "Let's head back, I've got a nap calling my name I'd like to get to before Old Man Nelson finds me."

The three students quickly follow me as Colot starts rambling about how cool that was, Maria tries to lecture me to hide her obvious excitement, and even shy Lily speaks up about mana control and my quick thinking. All three of them were more excited and eager to head back down here at the next opportunity they could.

I smirked as I listened to them, thinking to myself, *This isn't half bad, or boring, think I'll have them stick around.*

When we reached the Teleportation Circle, Maria was still huffing and annoyed, but something in her eyes flickered, hope.

"So why did you take us down here so fast?" Colton asked in a whispered voice as he noticed I was looking over at Maria with a calculated gaze. "I was expecting you to make us wait until the end of the week or something."

I smirked and shrugged. "I can sense her self-doubts and the limits others put on her. I want her to live properly and ensure that she does not face such limits."

Colton frowned as he looked up at me, confused, but realizing the hidden words I was saying. "Limits? Wait, do you mean-Ow!" Colton yelped as he rubbed his forehead when I flicked it. "What was that for, jerk?!"

I grin as I start the Teleportation Circle. "Because I felt like it."

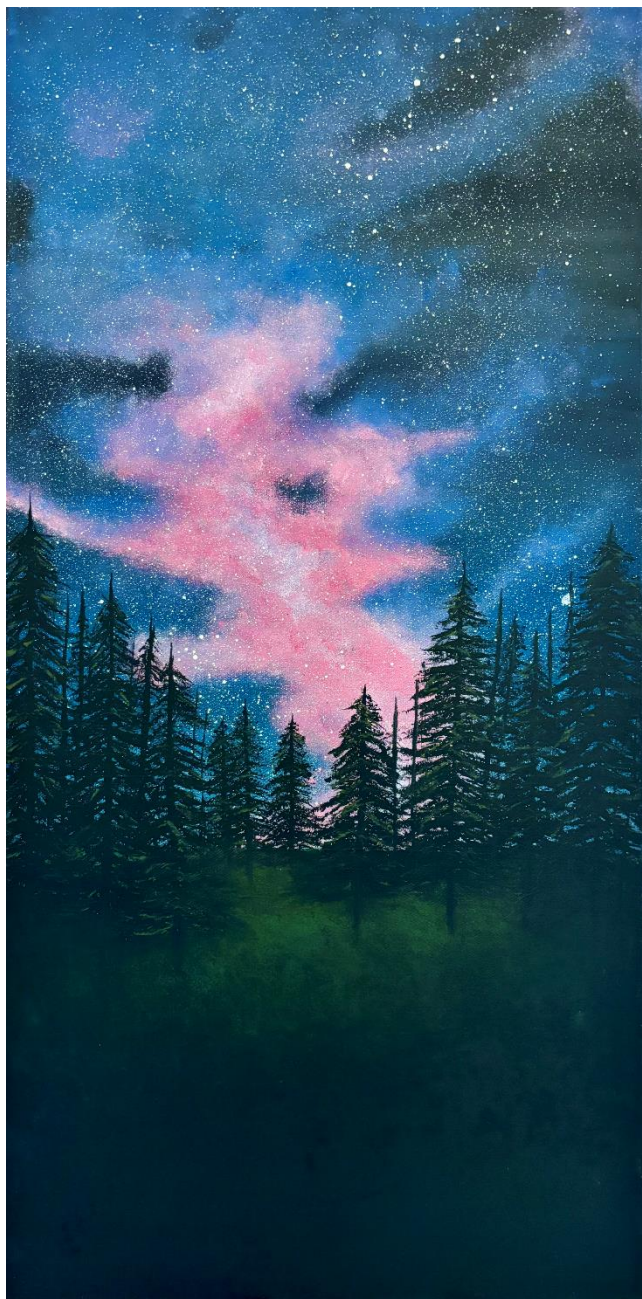
I glance over at Maria and Lily from the corner of my eye as my grin grows slightly.

But yes, Colton. I said to myself in my head. *I want Maria to stop guarding herself and feel free with her magic.*

I closed my eyes as we warped back to the Mage's Association, thinking this job wouldn't be so bad anymore.

Star-Struck

By Jessica Godfrey



The In-Between

By Emily McDowell

You are standing firm in the in-between,
not exactly where you started. Yet not
quite where you are going, but you
know that you are moving.

You carry pages of questions, filled
with “what's next?” Or “am I
ready?” Yet you keep striving
forward, writing a story that is just
beginning.

There is an undiscussed courage in that,
one you know you hold.
That carries a pressure in your chest,
that whisper yet to be disclosed.

Tracing your steps with fear, you
continue to stand in the unknown.
Brave enough to not get lost, when the
dark days aren't always clear.

You are facing it all.
Finding a balance in the in-between,
every time you choose not to fall. One

day you will see, just how much you
have changed. How the weight you
carried, became the strength of your
name. How the unknown you feared, lit
the path that you chose to claim.

Perched
By Grace Clough



When the Lights Went Out

By Elle Bodie

“Stay with me!” Lane urges as she continues chest compressions. The room smells of antiseptic and blood. Doctors and nurses surround her as she tries to perform a miracle on her patient. The storm outside is rattling the windows and shaking the building. The wind whistles against the windows as it comes closer and closer, gaining strength with each mile.

“One more round,” the attending says. “Keep it up.”

Lane nods. Technically, she is only a third-year medical student, but she got shoved into action when the resident burst through the doors with the gurney. It happened too quick for anyone to argue about rules or legality – this man needed treatment now or else he would die. This is what she has been studying and practicing for. This is her time to prove her legitimacy to her superiors. After this, maybe she would receive special privileges or at the very least, gain more trust from her superiors. She began chest compressions as ordered. Her hands moved with precision and Lane began counting as she worked – one, two, three, four, five, one, two, three, four, five.

The thunder shook the room as it crept closer. The lightning cracked and lit up the room.

She thinks back to the first time she held a scalpel. The cadaver was cold and grey, unnamed, and anonymous. She thought she would feel scared or nauseous, but instead she felt ready. Lane knew she had made the right decision at that moment. The thought of saving lives brought immense joy to her.

“Defibrillator!” A doctor yells. Lane jumps off the gurney. “Clear!” He says.

The shock slightly jolts the man’s shoulder from the bed. Her heart is about to jump from her chest as she takes a step back. She looks to the heart monitor for a beat. The line trembles then slips flat.

“No,” she says.

Lane jumps on the bed and begins another round of compressions. Her white coat flapping as she counts. Her name, L. Little, is stitched on the upper left side. She always hated how small her name made her feel. After all the nicknames and bullying in school, Lane was determined to show the world how big she really was.

"Lane," the resident urges, "Switch out."

She didn't hear them. She is counting. The patient's ribs bending which each pounce. She begins to wonder what happened to this man, who is he, and if he had anyone waiting for him in the waiting room.

The storm rages on. With each snap of lightening and growl of thunder, the power flickers. Lane steps off the bed again for another round of shocking.

"Clear!" The doctor yells.

As he pressed the paddles to the man's chest, the room and all the monitors go black. The power went out. The room became tense, nurses and residents shuffled quickly about, desperately trying to find a solution. The doctor began compressions as the room waited for the backup generator to kick on. Thirty seconds goes by. A minute. No sign of the power coming back on.

"There's nothing we can do now," the doctor said. He calls time of death and the rest of the room slowly shuffles out. But not Lane. She can't walk – can't think. The storm marches on. In the bathroom, Lane grips the sink. She wants to rewind ten minutes, she wants to do something different, to save his life. How could she let this happen?

The attending is cleaning the blood from the man's face, gentle and calm. As if he can still feel it.

"You did great," she tells Lane. "There was nothing any of us could have done."

Lane nods but does not answer. Not great enough. Great means that she did something - that she saved his life. But she didn't.

As she leaves the trauma bay, she feels like she is drowning. Her first death and she wasn't even a resident yet. Had anyone else failed this early in their studies? She steps into

the dark stairwell and sits on the cold cement steps. Her fingers trace her neck and she finds her heartbeat. Lane had memorized the heart chambers and the way the blood circulates through the body. She memorized protocols, drug dosages, all the muscles in the body.

But nothing could prepare her for what do to with the aching afterwards.

The storm eases by and the rain lightens. Lane thinks about tomorrow. The same thing could happen. There's no break, no waking up – this was her life now. Patients and protocols and the real possibility of death. All she could do was wake up and try her best. The lights flick back on as Lane gets up to return to work.

#

The next day, Lane returns to the hospital with newfound resilience. She has experienced her first patient loss; something that will make or break a new doctor. The death of a patient is the turning point in a doctor's career and Lane is determined to come back even more prepared, both in protocol and in emotional recovery.

The day was is and draining. Thoughts of her patient's death loomed over her head like a dark cloud, ready to burst into rain. Her resident from the day before is understanding of Lane's emotional state and gives her many statements of encouragement, which drastically improve her mood and self-confidence.

Lane thinks that, at least the man had the most prepared medical student on the clock that day. If it had been anyone else, he would not have stood even a small chance. She is confident in her skills after many kind remarks from other residents and head doctors. They have all suffered the same experience, been in her shoes, and felt the way she did. It makes sense that they are sensitive to her today; they needed words of encouragement when they were interns. One day, Lane will be in their position, and she will think back to the day someone died in her care.

Yesterday Lane was naïve, today she is prepared.

The Space Between Leaving and Becoming

By Andrea Guzman

There's a part of leaving that no one really explains. It's not the goodbye, and it's not the moment you get somewhere new. It's everything in between.

Moving changed everything—my family, my routine, and my sense of normal. I left behind my mom, my friends, and a version of my life that I thought would always stay the same.

At first, nothing felt real. I was in a new place, but it didn't feel like mine. I was around new people, but I didn't feel connected yet. It felt like I was there physically, but still somewhere else mentally.

I had to learn independence in a way I never expected. Not because I wanted to, but because I had to. I had to rebuild, adjust, and figure things out on my own.

Over time, things slowly started to change. The unfamiliar became normal. I found new people, new routines, and a new version of stability.

I didn't lose myself. I just grew into someone different. I didn't just leave one life behind—I built a new one.

Roll It On Home

By Lorenzo Ferraro

Sitting there across from me
you've got a monopoly
on where my weary eyes
come to rest

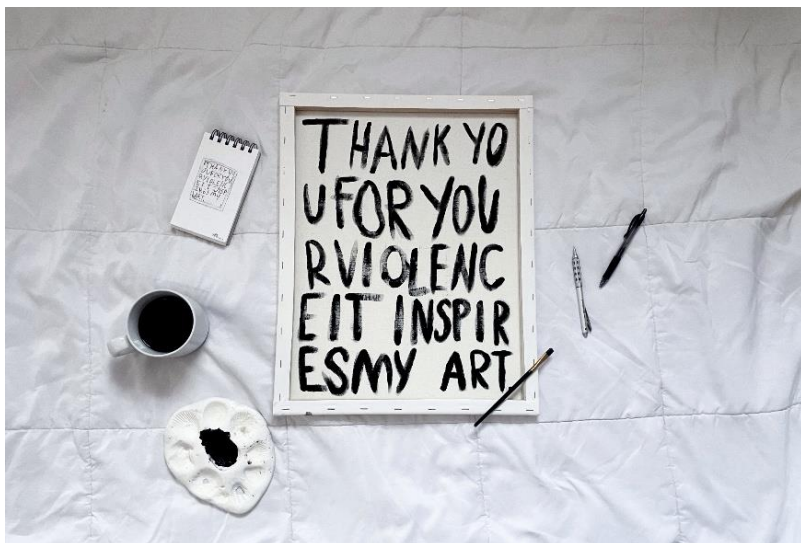
Do you have a heart of cold?
The windows to your holy soul
keep me wondering if
I've been blessed

Forgiveness, can you imagine?
The both of us were laughing
and I had thought we were
worlds apart

I wonder what onlookers see
watching us walk down the street
and hold on to each other
in the dark

To My Muse

By Alexandra Vangor



The Summer that Ended My Name

By Mikaela Masselli

Summer break, a time where you can be yourself, or anyone you want to be. A time where you can go anywhere you want. Responsibilities left behind. You're on a tropical island sipping on a cold drink; the sun is warm against your skin, giving your body the perfect glow. You look out to the ocean and it's endless, the different shades of blue you didn't even know existed. The light breeze that carries a faint sound of music that's in the distant. Later that afternoon, the sky is starting to paint pink and orange and then there he is. Sharing a smile, a joke over a spilled drink but somehow it turns into more. You start seeing him everywhere.... Or maybe you are looking for him. Soon, you never leave each other's side. You're dancing underneath the string lights, sharing drinks, telling each other stories like you have known that person forever. You're both trying foods that have never touched your palate before. As days go by you never miss a sunset together. The summer feels endless. Thinking and hoping it will never end.... Then.... "Mikaela?" Your eyes open startled and confused. The beach is gone, the ocean disappeared, and the warmth vanishes. Back in your seat in the classroom, silence all around you. Everyone is staring at you to respond. The professor says, "Whenever you are ready." You take a couple more moments to yourself reflecting of what you were just dreaming about, get up from your seat, notes in your hand and start your lecture.

Contributor Bios

Elle Bodie is a second-year student at SCF. She is majoring in Elementary Education and plans to become a lower-elementary teacher. Elle enjoys reading, painting, drawing, spending time with her family and friends, and thrifting and antiquing in her free time.

Elijha Brownman is a junior in high-school and is dual enrolling through SCF. He hopes to graduate with his A.A. Degree. Once he graduates, he is thinking about moving on to a trade school to learn something like being an electrician or plumber. He also loves playing basketball and hopes that he can incorporate that in his life as he grows up and moves on.

Grace Clough has been drawing for most of her life, and dragons are her favorite thing to draw.

Lorenzo Ferraro is a dual-enrolled student at the State College of Florida Collegiate School Venice in his senior year of high school. He currently serves as the President of the Student Leadership Team and a Senior Editor of the Yearbook Club. He plans on going to USF in the Fall 2026 semester and joining the Air Force ROTC program to study Aerospace Engineering. In the future, he hopes to be an astronaut.

Jessica Godfrey's "Got an 'A' in Art Appreciation!" is a visual representation of submitting her last assignment and officially retiring from having opinions on art history. "Glow with the Flow" is a throwback painting back to when she could just float through life aimlessly without a mortgage or a toddler. "Star-Struck" is a trial run at painting stars. A splatter experiment she liked enough to keep, though apparently not enough to sign.

Andrea Guzman is a student at the State College of Florida. Her writing focuses on personal experiences, change, and identity, often exploring themes of growth, independence, and adapting to new environments. She draws inspiration from her own life, especially her experience moving to the United States and adjusting to a new chapter while staying connected to her past. Through her work, she aims to express honest emotions in a way that others can relate to, particularly students going through similar transitions.

Ackerly Justice is a first-year dual enrollment student who can't make up his mind on what he wants to major in. When it comes to it, he enjoys anything absurdist fiction. When he isn't at work or busy studying, he can be found reading, listening to music, or thinking about things that probably don't have answers. "To Be Alive" is his first published work.

Mollie Kamp's "Mountain Sunrise" was drawn with only crayons. She tried to bring in some vibrant colors using the bright orange and yellow but also incorporating cool tone colors with the green and purple.

Jenny Lopatin-Austin exists somewhere in Venice if you haven't found her yet then you probably aren't looking hard enough. She enjoys cooking, watching films, and spending time with what is either a void with eyes or a black cat. For her day job she works at the SCF Venice library as an assistant, not a librarian, a very important distinction.

Mikaela Masselli is an Instructor in the U.S. Army with eight years of service under her belt. With the support of her husband and family, she has returned to school to pursue a degree in engineering, working toward her goal of building a successful future beyond the military. While writing is not her strongest skill, Mikaela enjoys it when exploring topics she is passionate about or creating ideas from her own imagination.

Emily McDowell is a dedicated student who is passionate about personal growth, leadership, and her own creative expression. She is actively involved in academic and extracurricular communities, where she demonstrates both commitment and initiative. Alongside her academics, Emily uses writing as an escape to explore themes of resilience and transformation. This has helped her reflect on her strength while showing the struggles of moving forward. With clear education and career goals, Emily is focused on building a future that holds a purpose of creativity and meaningful impact with her work.

Sidney Nosek's "California" explores Nosek's struggle with nostalgia after moving away from California, her childhood home. This poem speaks of the struggle in remembering those special moments that were taken for granted in retrospect.

Zachary Prieto is a senior at the State College of Florida Collegiate School. He loves poetry, has a passion for God and the Bible, and loves philosophy as well. In his free time, he enjoys writing poems, enjoying nature at the SCF campus, and hanging out with friends doing random fun activities. He loves helping out at the collegiate school and his church, he is the senior advisor of the Yearbook Club and truly enjoys doing his job there, as well as helping out very much within the Student Leadership Team.

Tyler Truong is an aspiring author who wants to find what he wants to write for the future. Tyler is a senior at SCF Bradenton and is pursuing an Associates in Arts and hopefully working towards an English degree. Tyler loves to find creative outlets in any way he can, but also loves to hangout with friends, sleep, and talk a lot.

Alexandra Vangor is a 17-year-old sophomore at the State College of Florida and an aspiring English major. As a dedicated artist, athlete, and writer, she finds inspiration in the intersection of classic horror and weird fiction. Whether an-

alyzing the macabre or drafting her own narratives, Alexandra's work explores the raw friction between personal experience and violent expression.

Kaylee Wymer is a student at State College of Florida Manatee - Sarasota and is currently finishing her AA Degree before she plans to pursue Medical Billing and Coding at Florida Gulf Coast University. Kaylee has had a rough three years dealing with the loss of her younger brother in 2024 and an injury from work that has left her out of work since May 2023 and immobilized, developing bipolar depression from the overwhelming isolation and death of her sibling. During this time of pain, Kaylee got into the habit of writing stories about how she felt, and she slowly healed as she found her smile again. In Kaylee's work, she uses empathy and emotions to connect with her readers by either letting her depression form relatable connections with characters in her stories or by bringing humorous tales that make readers, and herself, laugh.

Elektraphrog Staff



Mia Benarrivato is a student at the State College of Florida Collegiate School, Venice campus. There, she is the president of National Honor Society, and Community Outreach Club. She is graduating this spring with an Associate of Arts degree, and is excited to transfer to the University of Central Florida in the summer. She is planning on majoring in health sciences with the goal of becoming a healthcare professional in pediatrics. Aside from school, she works as a coach for children and she loves cooking, coloring, and volunteering.



Claire Christoforo is a full time student at the State College of Florida, currently working toward her bachelor's degree. She is passionate about helping others and creating safe, supportive spaces for children, and hopes to one day work alongside children and families through play therapy. When she's not studying, Claire can usually be found crafting something new, planning her next trip, or perfecting her latest coffee creation.



Angelie Green is a full time student at the State College of Florida hoping to transfer to the University of South Florida. With a soft spot for animals, she is an aspiring Veterinarian hoping to help as many four-legged friends as possible. In her free time, you can usually find her with headphones in and spending time with her loved ones, especially her own two dogs.



Daeria Harden is an award winning student writer based in Florida. She is second-year student at State College of Florida and is best known for her emotionally honest storytelling, including her award winning short story “Daddy Issues”, which earned second place in the Fuquay North Carolina’s Women’s Writing Contest. She enjoys exploring themes of love, identity, and personal growth, and most recently has been developing her own podcast focused on romance, life, and real experiences. She believes every story deserves to be told- especially the messy ones.



Emily McDowell is a dedicated second-year student at the State College of Florida who is graduating this May from the Bradenton Campus. Here she is apart of the Sigma Kappa Delta English Honor Society as well as Phi Theta Kappa and the President of the Italian Club. After graduation Emily plans to transfer to the University of Central Florida where she plans to major in English with a focus on creative writing. When Emily is not studying she enjoys reading for fun and her favorite genres are fantasy or romance.



Megan Storer is a student at the State College of Florida Collegiate School on the Venice Campus, where she serves as treasurer for the Student Leadership Team. She is graduating in May with her Associate of Arts degree, and is transferring to the University of North Florida in the fall. She plans on majoring in biomedical sciences with the goal of eventually attending veterinary school and becoming a veterinarian. She loves writing, and when she is not working on any creative projects, she can be found caring for animals, reading, listening to music, or spending time with friends.



Katalina Torres is a student in the Digital Publishing program at the State College of Florida. She balances her creative work with her roles as a Montessori educator and a yoga instructor. Building on her journalism background from the University of Central Florida, she plans to transition to the University of Florida to major in Advertising with a concentration in Persuasive Messaging. When she isn't creating or teaching, she can be found navigating Florida's serene waterways on a paddleboard or exploring hiking trails. After completing her degree, Katalina aims to travel the world to sharpen her storytelling perspective.



Tyler Truong is a very hard-working senior at the State College of Florida at the Bradenton campus who is graduation this spring with his associate's degree in arts. In SCF he is a part of the Bradenton Symphony Orchestra and the Symphonic Band in which he plays cello and clarinet for the respective groups. After graduation he hopes to transfer to the University of South Florida to pursue an English degree in the focus of creative writing where he hopes in the future, he is able to share his art with the world. During his free time Tyler likes to hang out with friends, play video games, and create stories that hopes one day they'll be published.

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Program Goal

The purpose of this program is to prepare students (yes! Even you!) with hands-on training in new media and digital publications. This program focuses on the skills necessary to work on print and digital publications, work in social media and digital marketing, or work in layout, design, and editing fields. The skills in this program are transferable to both local and national level publications. This program includes editing, programming, and graphic design courses.

Core Requirements:

- CGS 2820C: Web Page Development (3 Credits)
- CRW 2001: Creative Writing I (3 Credits)
- GRA 1100C: Introduction to Computer Graphics (3 Credits)
- JOU 1440L: College Magazine Production I (3 Credits)

Choice of two courses (6 credits total) from

- GRA 1206C: Typography (3 Credits)
- GRA 2121C: Communication Design (3 Credits)
- GRA 2150C: Photoshop (3 Credits)
- ENC 2210: Technical Communication (3 Credits)
- JOU 1441: College Magazine Production II
- MMC 2949: Internship in Mass Communications (3 Credits)
- PGY1800C: Digital Imaging I (3 Credits)

Contact Professor Masucci at masuccm@scf.edu
for more information.



**Are You Interested in
Writing and Publishing?**

Join Elektraphrog!

JOU 1440L (3 Credits)

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