

PERSPECTIVES



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A literary arts magazine composed of original pieces from
Suffolk County Community College's students, staff, and friends.

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A Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers, Contributors, and Friends,

As I write this letter, I know only that my laptop is dying, my office chair is very uncomfortable, and that this is the last issue of which I'll be Editor-in-Chief. There is no grand statement about what comes next—I'm transferring, but as of now, I'm not even sure where to.

I find myself both unworried and unhurried, however. This part of my life began with me physically walking through a random door while unsure of the outcome, and what comes next will surely be the same. Things are always in motion, things are always happening—even in moments of perceived stagnation.

I've found fulfillment in observing for the sake of seeing, in making something for no reason other than the act itself, in moving with no destination. As Editor-in-Chief, I hope this publication has represented meaning not dictated by utility, and demonstrated that things don't have to go anywhere in order to be something.

I want to say this: thank you. For creating, for consuming, for lingering in this space without needing it to mean more than it does. Thank you for allowing me this dance with sense and nonsense, and for the opportunity to unilaterally become acquainted with hundreds of my fellow students through their work. However fleeting this moment and others, I'm endlessly moved to have been a part of it.

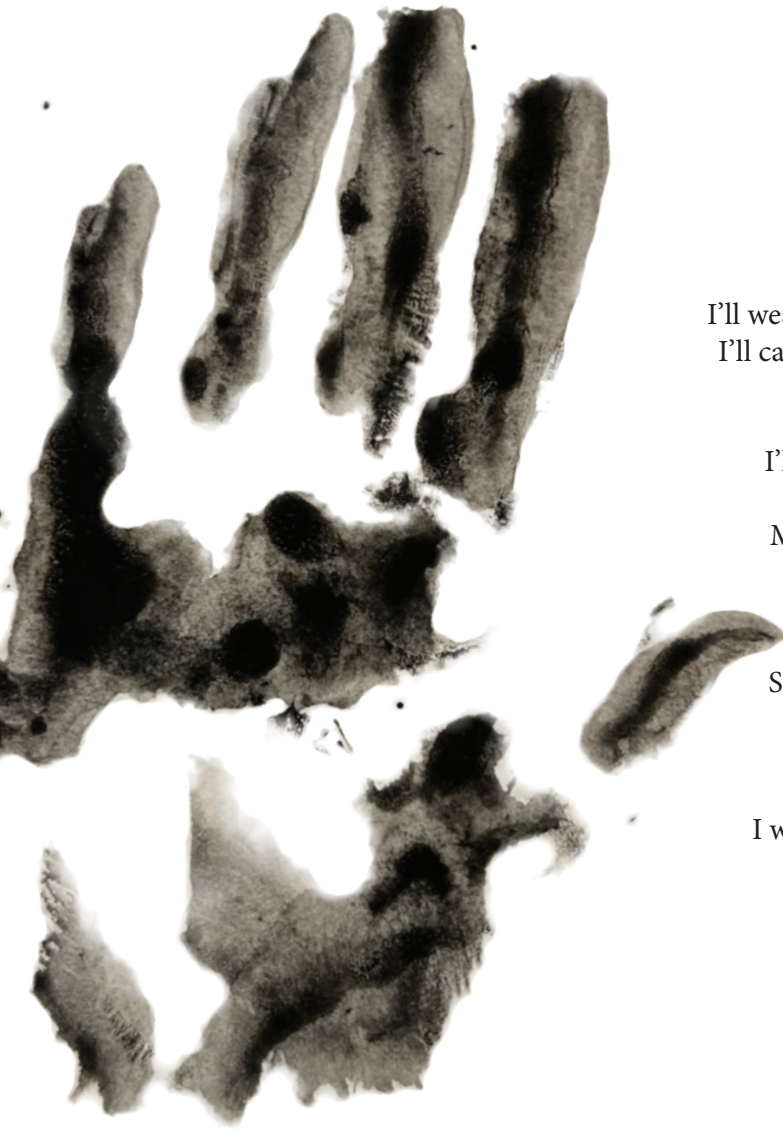
With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Evangeline" followed by a stylized monogram that appears to be "VZ".

Evangeline "Violet" Denis
Editor-in-Chief

I Am Not an Artist

— Ameerah Wilson



I'll weave tapestries that depict my sorrow,
I'll carve out stones to show you my truth
 You will look at it as if it's hollow,
 And decide it's not worth the ruth
I'll write stories about my encounters,
 Fill pages with my silence
My strings of memories will sounder,
 But these are acts of defiance
 I am not an artist,
 I never could be
So I'll keep my art where it is darkest,
 Keep it where no one can see
My "me" is not hidden for me only,
 It is not acceptable to you
I will always be this strange and lonely,
 Nothing I say will ever be true

Airhead

— Rain Rook

my head weighs three four two six
tons
pounds
ounces
milligrams
planck masses
then my head weighs nothing

my friend once wrote
in his poetry
may God bless him

“the sun is so yellow
but the grass is so green
the sky is so blue
but the flowers are so pink”

go outside
you should see them
do it for me okay

“nitrogen (N₂)
78.084
oxygen (O₂)
20.946
argon (Ar)
0.934
neon (Ne)
0.0018
helium (He)
0.000524”

i wish i could say more
 i cannot
 my prose is gone
 make what you will
 of my life

of my writing

of zero ten inbox

of the weight

of a human head

of the weight

of a helium balloon

just leave me alone

i know nothing

no

i wish i knew nothing

a woman who worked for
 a car insurance company
 was killed in a collision
 a few states away

dear reader,

it will rain tomorrow

did you know

it will rain tomorrow

White Lines

— Garrett Spaulding

I loathe the way
That my face melts
Whenever I hear your name
Like a candle in a cathedral,
Waiting for the Holy Ghost
To come and put me out of my
Misery
Leaving me
Swallowed up by this
Catholic guilt—

You overdosed on
The dead stars that
Hung above our lonely heads
Like paper moons.
Since then,
They've been burning out and
Leaving ulcers in their wake,
Ruining the last painting
I had of you.

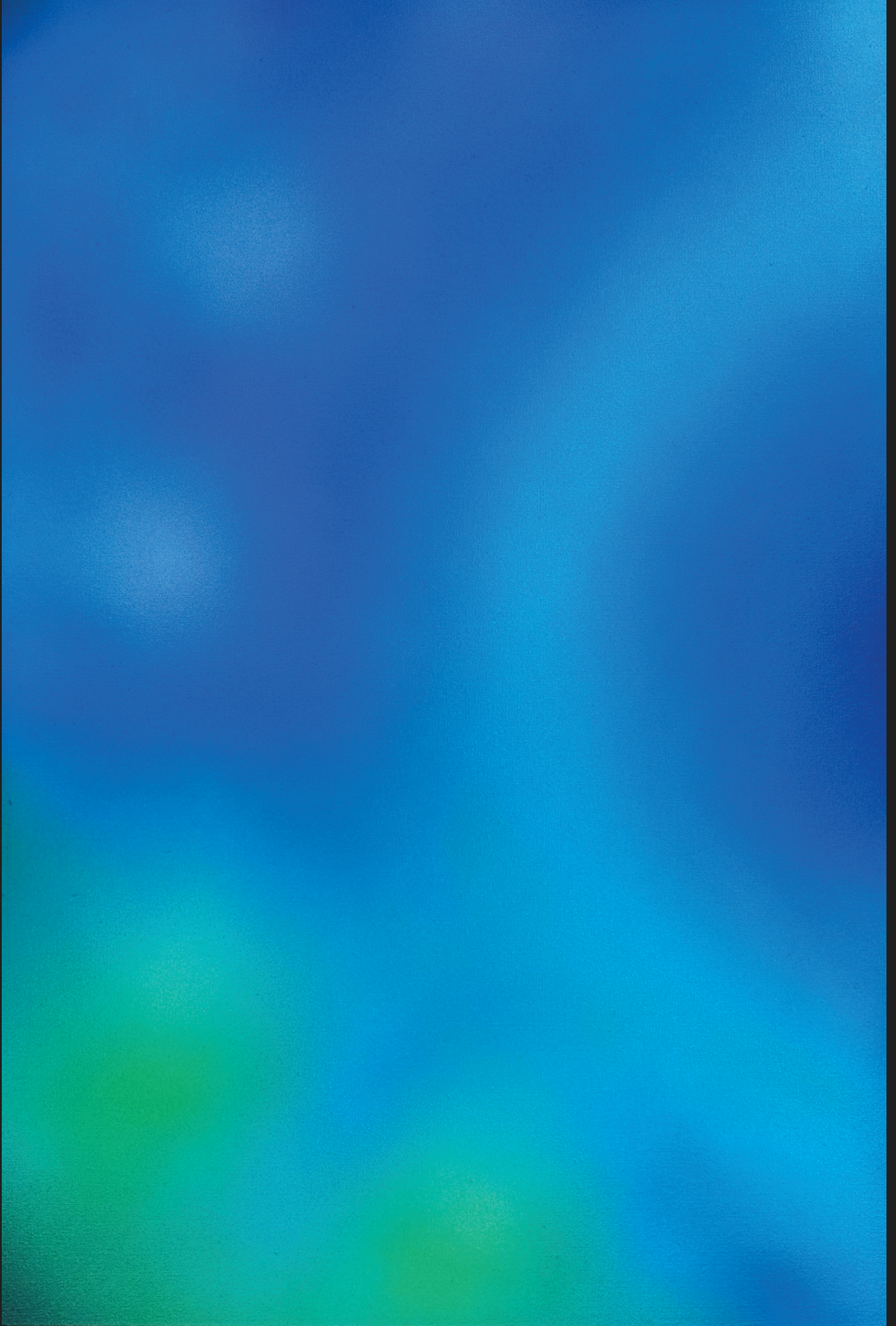
I wonder,
If God could see me now,
Would he still
Love me?

The Oracle

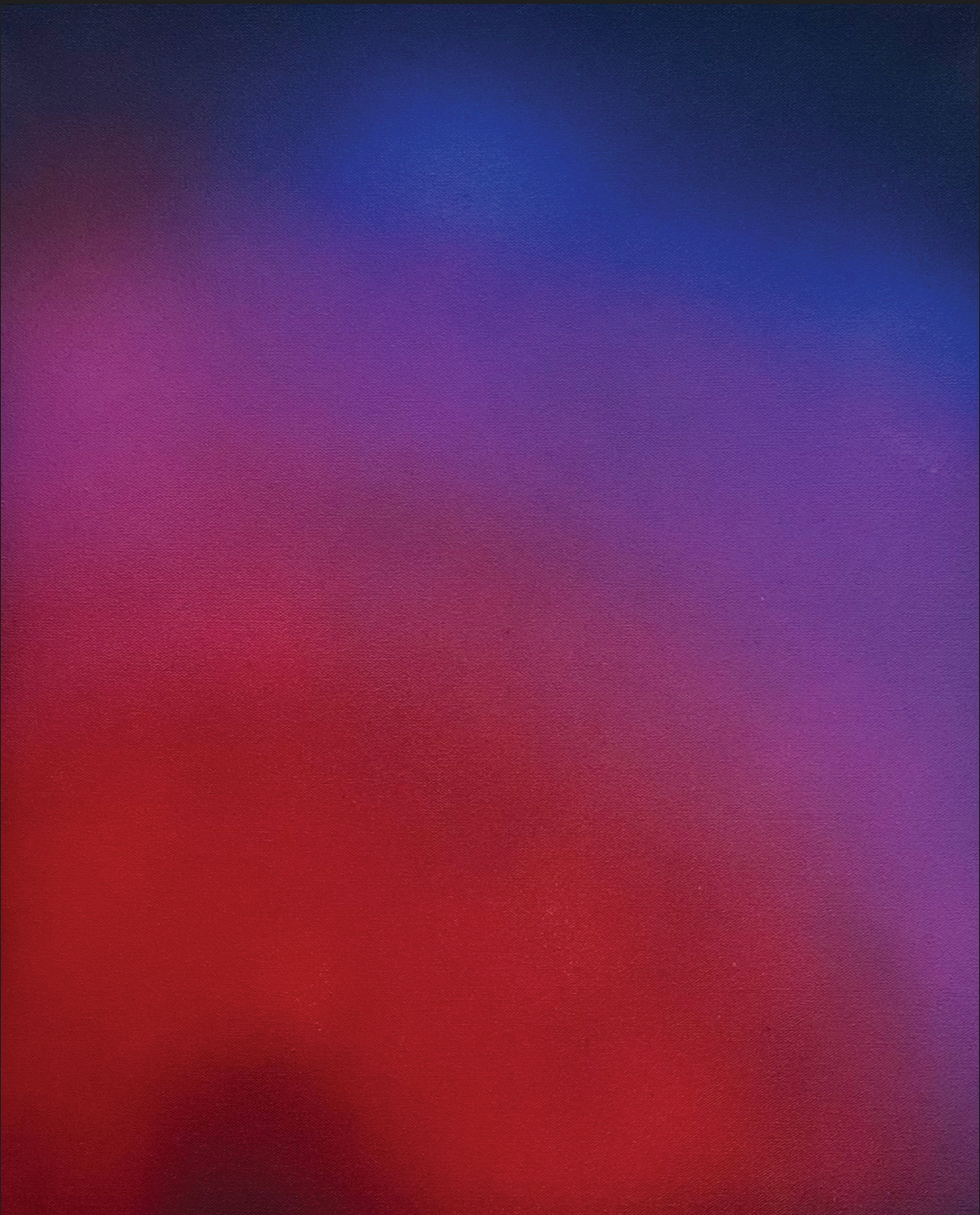
— Julianna Reiss

You are not the only one whose chest aches
 As if that chasm of inevitable glow could only ever belong to you.
 The home of the stars is not in your eyes or hers or mine,
 They are boundless bursts of light which fade and die
 And belong to no one at all.
 Your soul is not meant to be one of pride
 Or ownership or possession,
 And you are wrong to believe that
 You are the only child of warmth;
 To believe that rays of sunlight
 Only forgive your skin;
 To insist that you are so
 Much more complex than anything else.
 She who feeds us glimpses of
 The mortal star's shine
 Knows she is as mortal as you.

I See You — Alexis Murray



These Things I Hold Close — Alexis Murray



The Devil's Cocktail

— Shannon Martin

I.

It takes a developed mind
To upturn the jagged shards of growth
And understand the complexity
That seeps from the cracks in each stone.

Untrained eyes will blink
At the foreign feelings of fear and anger,
Seeing them as simply a symptom
Of growth—
A common problem.

But the day,
It rears its ugly head—
Teeth sharp, yet appearance unknown;
The thirst for emotions
Salivating from its scaled maw.
The tall shadows of authority
Furrow their brows before tucking
The creature under the rug,
The scared sapling trapped in
Its clawed grip.

II.

The house is tense with anticipation,
Waiting for the next explosion of voices
Wastefully wording their distaste
For the sunken eyes—
Looking, but never seeing.

The creature has grown
Its arms dragging
Behind its bulging form,
It stalks the child like a shadow—
Both the predator and the prey.
Its echoing sobs haunt her,
And the child feels its sorrow
Anchoring her bones to the ground
Beneath her feet.

Like a chain on the ankle
Scraping the cement,
As the child tries to bear the burden
That she never asked for.

It's the head of a mace—
Raking up the soft ground and tearing the turf,
Eyes peering at the child with
Her shoulders hunched, pupils imagined
But the reality of repressed fear,
Sadness without cause,
Dismissing the drama of death
Until it simmers into poison.

III.

Murmuring voices drift by,
 Words that mean nothing to them.
 The child comes into her own,
 Her posture straight, and her footsteps sure.

Things in the distance are clearer
 And her eyes shine brighter
 But the beast lurks around the corner—
 Gleaming eyes fixed on her,
 Waiting for a moment of weakness.

She's learned to live in the shadows;
 To find the outline of each issue
 That rolls up like a wave that laps
 At the shore of youth.

At this stage, perfection is the goal:
 Straight back, good proportions,
 Intelligence and beauty
 Makeup to highlight her naturally—
 But God forbid she wear too much
 Lest she wear her skin with pride
 Of the genuine sort.

The days flicker by like old film—
 Moments flashing before her eyes,
 Only to disappear.
 Opportunities missed, friends lost,
 She wants to look back; to see the innocence
 Of her early years
 But the beast has eaten every crumb
 She left behind.

Punish — Julianna Reiss



Perfectly Unrecognizable

— Sydney Dunn

Roseanne's waxen hands lie silent
 Still, intertwined.
 We cannot see her life
 No scars or creases,
 They don't reach out to me—
 Perfectly unrecognizable.

Her waxen hands
 Best recalled by
 Burns from the stove,
 Softly running through my hair,
 Callouses from creating music,
 And love coursing through them.

Now her wax hands are cold,
 No longer dancing with warmth.
 Whose hands are these?
 They are no longer the same—
 They are a stranger's hands
 Wearing a familiar ruby ring.

Blooming — Oliver Coca



The Wave That Carries You

— Garrett Spaulding

Are waves usually this quiet?
Or is it that I'm missing you?
Usually, it howls out my name
In a deep, labored shame,
And spits it out up north
Where your hazel hair sways, graceful,
And free.

I stood where we left you, in stony silence,
And I carefully amputated the thorns
From the cold spine of your favorite rose,
And placed them in my pocket.

I held the roses tightly,
And the memory of you
Jumping in the bush off Center Street
Blurred my vision the same way
Reality floods our youth
And for a moment,
A brief, unfair moment,
I saw your face again
It was war torn and splintered,
Like I was looking at you through a kaleidoscope,
Like a dream was playing on repeat
But the film was warped and tattered.

We ripped thorns out of your
Rose colored flesh,
And while the crimson tide ebbed
In between the celestial cotton,
We wiped away the blood that
Poured out like our laughter.
We felt infinite—

Like the future ahead of us was
An ever expanding event horizon and
At the center, was not a black hole, but
Another sun

A bliss that only the ignorant would understand—
And this laughter that we shared
Lasted until the silver sun
Washed away the heat,
And cascaded its silent waves unto your wounds.

But if I had known
That you would never
Laugh again,
I would have asked you
To stay.

And now,
Just to see your face,
I make peace with the past
By reaching out to the ghosts
That saunter endlessly in my pocket.

The Pirate

— Jose Mendez

How to forget the night I lost my coat—

walking aimlessly, like an injured pirate—

seeking a treasure more beautiful than gold.

Dead Man's Switch

— Rain Rook

“you should envy me for i am
 bound to a cage of silver by chains of diamonds
 i am happy this way
 a rotten heart adorned with gold,
 not made of gold, no, never sir
 for when the price of gold rises,
 i cannot risk a one-time transaction
 forfeiting future monetary gains,
 whenever that may occur
 it is much better this way,
 to live by a profit incentive!”

“i encase my organic heart in precious metals
 it makes the most sense to me
 for not one person could truly
 have a heart made of gold,
 or silver,
 or platinum,
 we are not robots, after all,
 and
 shouldn't our hearts
 weigh less than a feather,
 anyway?”

“i will tell you a secret;
 i fear the day when
 the bolts will rust and fall
 and flowers sprout
 from within the vulnerable decomposition
 i fear my humanity
 i fear the mortality of my cardiac muscles
 i do not want to accept the notion
 that someday i will be akin
 to the soil of the mountains
 i have climbed to achieve this glory,
 or should i say;
 bury me with my money!”

the businessmen laugh
 the birds bathe in puddles
 the lonely woman walks her lonely dog
 the bus stops to a halt for passengers
 and God listens on port 80

Jesus Was a Friend of Mine

— Garrett Spaulding

Jesus was a friend of mine
He rode the bus every morning and he
Leaned his head on the cold winter glass and
He watched the birds sing and laugh
About the days undoing and how they
Can escape the cold whenever they feel like it.

Jesus was a friend of mine
He walked to class every Monday morning at seven and he
Wore headphones to blot out the static
That was the constant noise of the hallways and
He listened to the silence while his fellow students
Laughed and cried about how their lives were a means to an end.

Jesus was a friend of mine
Until he graduated early and left town
For a place that no one knew how to pronounce and
No one knew they belonged and
I wish he'd stuck around
Because if he did,
He would've seen me grow into the man
That he always knew I'd be.

Love

— Jose Mendez

To learn how to love

Is to understand that love has no limits,

While fear does.

One Exit Upon Arrival

— Gabriella Piccione

My feet planted,
Steady but unsure
Contemplation on the horizon,
A decision awaits.

Teetering on the edge of this mountainous moment,
Ambition and immense fear
Surging through my veins
On a clock that ticks—
Unwavering, refusing to halt for anyone.

No backward glance,
No time to pause or ponder,
One foot steps into the uncharted distance,
I walk an unfamiliar trail.
The door creaks open,
Breaths are meek, but heard from within,
My chest tightens,
Heart palpitating
As the walls abruptly close in,
Pressing against hesitation.

“Hello...”

My voice crackles as the word leaves my tongue.
A light flashes—so quickly, even a camera could not capture it in time—
Beaming from within the crouching pathway.
A voice echoes from the dark, narrow scene,
“The only way is through.”

The curiosity floods my mind,
Waves of stories that never reached shore.
Will I be a story or a tale to teach?

Lingering footprints—
A moment in time
Left as the next wave approaches shore.

Intuition is what I gauge,
Reflecting on past stories of mine,
Unable to tell what chapter I am awaiting.

I stand, courage in sight,
The touch of my palms
A constant reminder of how I feel.

The door swiftly closes behind me,
Rending turning back
An impossibility.

I reach for the handle,
Yet it is too soon.
My character remains in development—
Chapters ahead pulse with suspense,
Eager to unfold.

Untitled

— Mia Mattera

The leaves fall softly, drifting low,
A chill winds through the trees below.
Once vibrant hues now fade to gray,
As sunlight slips from day to day.

The cold creeps in, a heavy sigh,
And shadows stretch beneath the sky.
In winter's grasp, the heart feels light,
Yet deep within, the world feels tight.

But know that change is always near,
For after frost, the blooms appear.
Through darker days, we find our way,
And hope returns with each new day.

Serenity's Embrace — Judy Lopez



Twilight Embrace

— Judy Lopez

In the hush of twilight, where colors collide,
A sun dips below, with the forest as its guide.
Golden rays stretch out, like fingers of light,
Embracing the trees, bidding day goodnight.

A towering sentinel, in green so deep,
Stands guard over secrets that nature keeps.
Behind it, the whispers of smaller trees sway,
As shadows dance softly, welcoming the gray.

The sky, a canvas, painted bold and bright,
With hues of pink and blue, a breathtaking sight.
Clouds drift like dreams, in a tranquil embrace,
Reflecting the magic of this serene space.

Colors blend onto the ground, a soft serenade,
Water-like reflections, where memories are laid.
In this moment of wonder, time seems to freeze,
As the world holds its breath, in the gentle breeze.



Twilight's Embrace — Judy Lopez

The Thief and the Sea

— Jose Mendez

Your captivating, coffee-colored eyes hold me at their mercy. I am locked in the prison of your lips, condemned to live with your absence for having stolen your heart. I sail through memories and dive into the waves of your body; carried and drifted by the tide to a distant place while the water caresses my skin.

What am I—a thief or a sailor? Or simply a lost lover?

El Ladrón y el Mar

— Jose Mendez

Tus cautivadores ojos color café me tienen a su merced. Estoy encerrado en la cárcel de tus labios, condenado a vivir con tu ausencia por haber robado tu corazón. Navego las memorias y me sumerjo en las olas de tu cuerpo. Tendido y llevado por la marea a un lugar lejano, mientras el agua acaricia mi piel.

¿Qué seré yo, un ladrón o un marinero? O simplemente un amante perdido.

Reflection

— Jacqueline Leal

I.

Once a couple headed towards success,
 Now complete strangers
 Our mornings were my favorite,
 An ice-cold Dr. Pepper, cigarettes, and a leftover joint
 I still remember the brand of cigarettes you smoke
 Parliament Lights
 Now we're just like the ashes of those cigarettes—
 Burned out, nothing left

II.

I now lay with another stranger
 Who only likes me because my beauty feeds his ego
 Not because I talk about the moon or the stars—
 Just another object
 Filling a void
 I spark a cigarette
 I already know where it's going
 I still stay

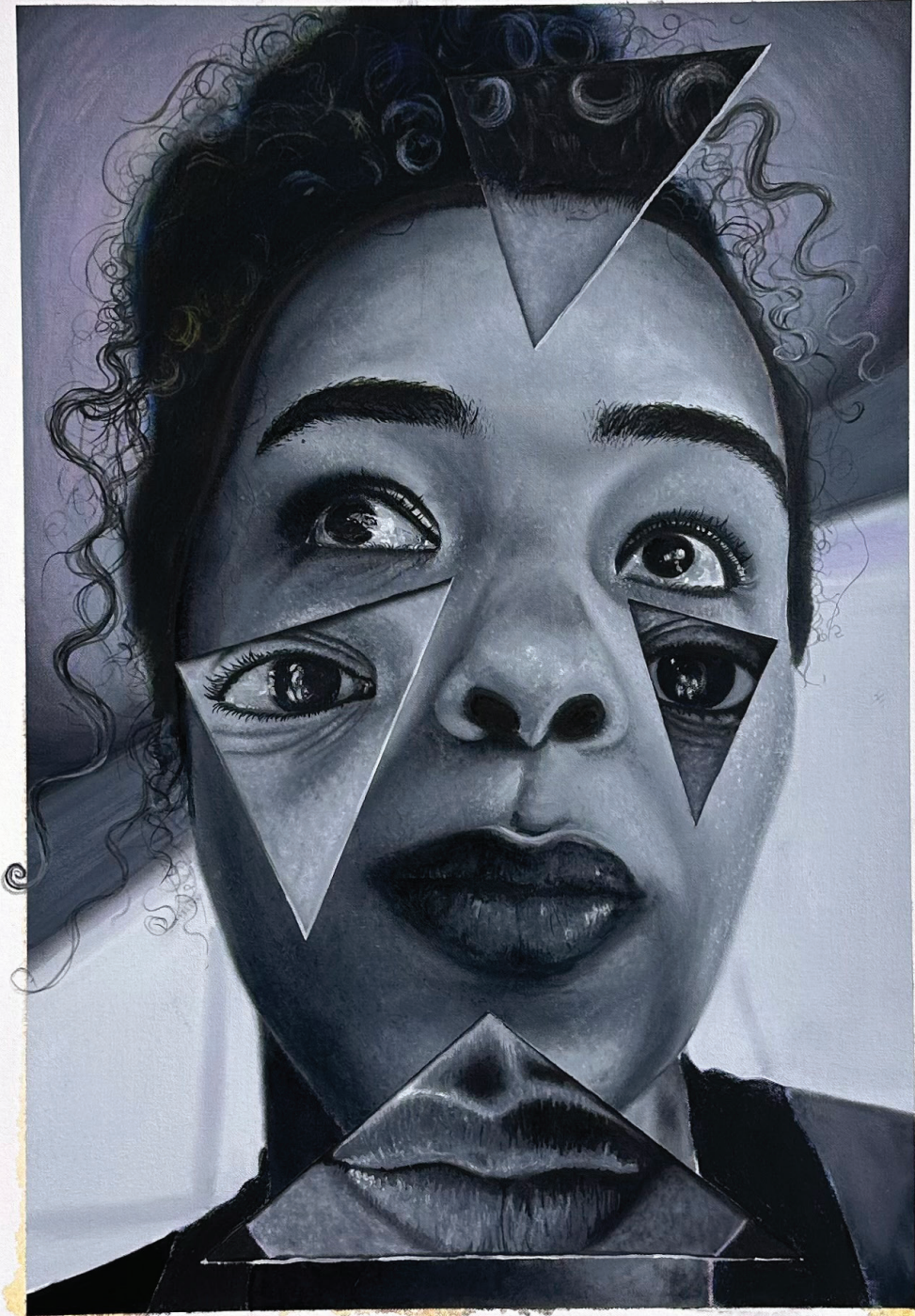
III.

A long look in the mirror—
 I see my childhood;
 I see every man that my mom has ever loved
 That didn't love her
 She says, "You don't want to be like me,
 No self-love, no self-worth,
 My daughter, don't do the same."
 I couldn't love myself or you in the right away
 Hand on mirror, I forgave her
 She was no longer the problem,
 I was

A Self Portrait — Alexis Murray



Selfie — Alexis Murray



Tea with the Banshee

— Ameerah Wilson

The house has since then rotted,
 Windows covered with exposed nails
 The grass is overgrown and wild,
 And from the door come screams and wails
 Not the most welcoming sound—
 But if you'll come in for tea,
 The banshee will set the table
 And your comfort will be her guarantee

Yes, the china is dusty and cracked
 And your seat is a tad uneven,
 But she is trying her best
 Not to anger the demon
 He roams the upstairs of the house
 Banging on different doors
 Be careful not to open any—
 Less for him to explore

So quietly sip your tea,
 And smile at her grotesque face
 Pretend you are enjoying yourself;
 You are familiar with this place
 When she leaves for a moment,
 Escape to the kitchen
 Search the cupboards,
 Look for the children

If you listen carefully,
 You can hear them crying
 It comes from cracks in the foundation,
 And the memory of dying

When you attempt to leave,
 You'll find the door has disappeared
 You cannot escape now—
 Face your fear

See the spiders up there?
 They are weaving your noose
 Flies swarm around your head—
 You are the product of abuse

So the banshee is still waiting,
 And the demon is still banging
 The ghosts are still crying,
 And you are just hanging

Trapped between whispers, lost in the past—
 A shadow in the house, meant never to last

A Canvas of Second Chances

— Kimberly Phillips

Until 53, my life was like a battleground. The wounds from my tumultuous marriage long outlasted any healing. Like scars, the exhaustion on my skin, the lines scribed on my face, and the suffocating heaviness upon my shoulders were visible proof of that. Yet deep beneath the seams of a mother's mask, who can neither pause nor take a break, some scars still remain hidden.

My kids—Dexter, Jasoni, and Ki'mya—were, undoubtedly, the force that was able to keep me grounded in times when everything felt out of control. My mornings were consumed by packing lunches, scraping burnt toast, and rushing to bundle all three kids into the car before heading to work. My evenings were no less chaotic: filled with homework, making dinner, then wrapping up the day with my favorite bedtime stories. Nonetheless, chaos had its golden threads: drowning in my own laughter from Jasoni's antics, Dexter's questions of endless depth, Ki'mya's soft, loving hands stroking mine, and her gentle whispers of "I love you, Mama." These threads made it possible for my heart to heal, piece by piece.

Then, I bumped into Phil.

We met during a community art class, which I almost chickened out of. At the last moment, I came up to the door—hand clutching my bag strap as I considered fleeing.

But then I noticed him—a man whose hands were stained with paint; a man who wore a smile like he had just come out from under a warm blanket, as if he had been basking in the glory of the sun after a tempest. When he met my eyes, it felt like looking through a window untouched by life.

"Are you a newbie?" he asked, wiping his hands on a towel.

I could only nod nervously in response.

"Don't worry," he said, laughing slightly, "You're not required to aim for perfection like an artist does. All you have to do is try and feel something."

His voice changed something within me that compelled me to stay.

Phil became more than merely a classmate to me over the few weeks. He morphed into a constant presence: patient, composed, and reliable. He never tried to save me—he simply appreciated the way I had woven my life back together, all the while deferring from the unsightly edges.

“You’re stronger than you think,” he told me one night. We were seated on a park bench, watching the sky above us turn into a vivid display of gold, red, and violet.

I wanted to believe him.

Then came the night he asked me to consider something unthinkable: moving away. A fresh start in a quiet town far from the noise of the city.

Doubt gnawed at me. Could I really uproot my children? Could I trust happiness enough to chase it?

I stood in the doorway of our apartment the night before the move, staring at the walls covered in crayon scribbles and memories. Doubt tightened around my ribs. Was I being selfish? Uprooting them for the sake of my own fragile hope?

Then I heard a giggle. Ki’mya sat cross-legged on the floor, drawing another picture. I crouched beside her.

“What’s this one?” I asked.

She held it up—a house, big and bright, with us standing outside.

“Our new home,” she said, beaming, “I think we are going to love it.”

And just like that, I exhaled.

Adapting was not easy at all. The new house took some getting used to—it did not have anything familiar, the silence during the night was very uncomfortable, and I had concerns about my children hating me for forcing them to move.

But then, something remarkable happened.

Jasoni made a friend. Dexter joined a soccer team. Ki'mya, my little dreamer, started slipping tiny hand-drawn notes under my coffee mug—each one a declaration of love for our new adventure.

And I started painting again.

Phil and I spent almost every evening sitting on our front porch. He would joke around, saying I worry too much about how every brush stroke would look—yet at the same time, he let me smear some paint onto his nose. The fresh air combined with the new paint made the evening views look even better.

And for the first time in years, I wasn't just surviving—I was *living*.

Life didn't become perfect—it never will. But I had learned something invaluable: joy isn't found in waiting for the storm to pass. It's found in learning to dance in the rain.

As I felt my paintbrush slide gently into a mix of vivid colors, the sound of laughter from the yard where my children were chasing after fireflies reached my ears. I paused for a moment to absorb everything.

My masterpiece wasn't just the painting before me. It was the life I had dared to rebuild—stroke by stroke, color by color, love by love.

Motherhood — Julianna Reiss



At the End of the World

— Ameerah Wilson

When a want becomes a need in desperate, dirty hands,
And the mind is cracked and half full of sand,
We'll crawl and drag ourselves to the center of the Earth,
And cling onto the core to become one with the dirt
Run back to our mother, her ocean is our womb
She'll cradle and carry us back to our tomb
And we'll fall asleep to the rhythm of her breath,
Peace at last, but only in rest
The wind will sing one final song.
And the hills and trees will dance along
When at the center lie the old men,
The sky will kiss the terrain again





Alexandrite — Kai Kubik

Want to Be Featured in Our Next Issue?

*Email poetry, short stories, artwork, and photography to
perspectiveslm@gmail.com to submit!*

Include the title of each submission and your full name.

Providing contact info is also preferred.

Additional Guidelines

*Written works: Each submission should be no longer than 4 pages.
After submitting, expect revision suggestions from our editors.*

*Visual works: When capturing and uploading an image of your submission,
ensure that the image is high quality with clear visibility.*

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