

Haute Dish is published two times a year, Spring and Fall semesters, and is dedicated to showcasing the literary and artistic talents of students, staff, faculty, and alumni of Metropolitan State University.

Categories include: Poetry, Fiction, Creative Nonfiction, Memoir/Personal Essay, Visual Art (Photography, Illustration, Focus on Metro), and Digital Storytelling.

Haute Dish is supported by funds from student activity fees, Metropolitan's School of Communication, Writing and the Arts, and Metropolitan administration.

DEADLINES:
FALL ISSUE- April 15
SPRING ISSUE- November 15

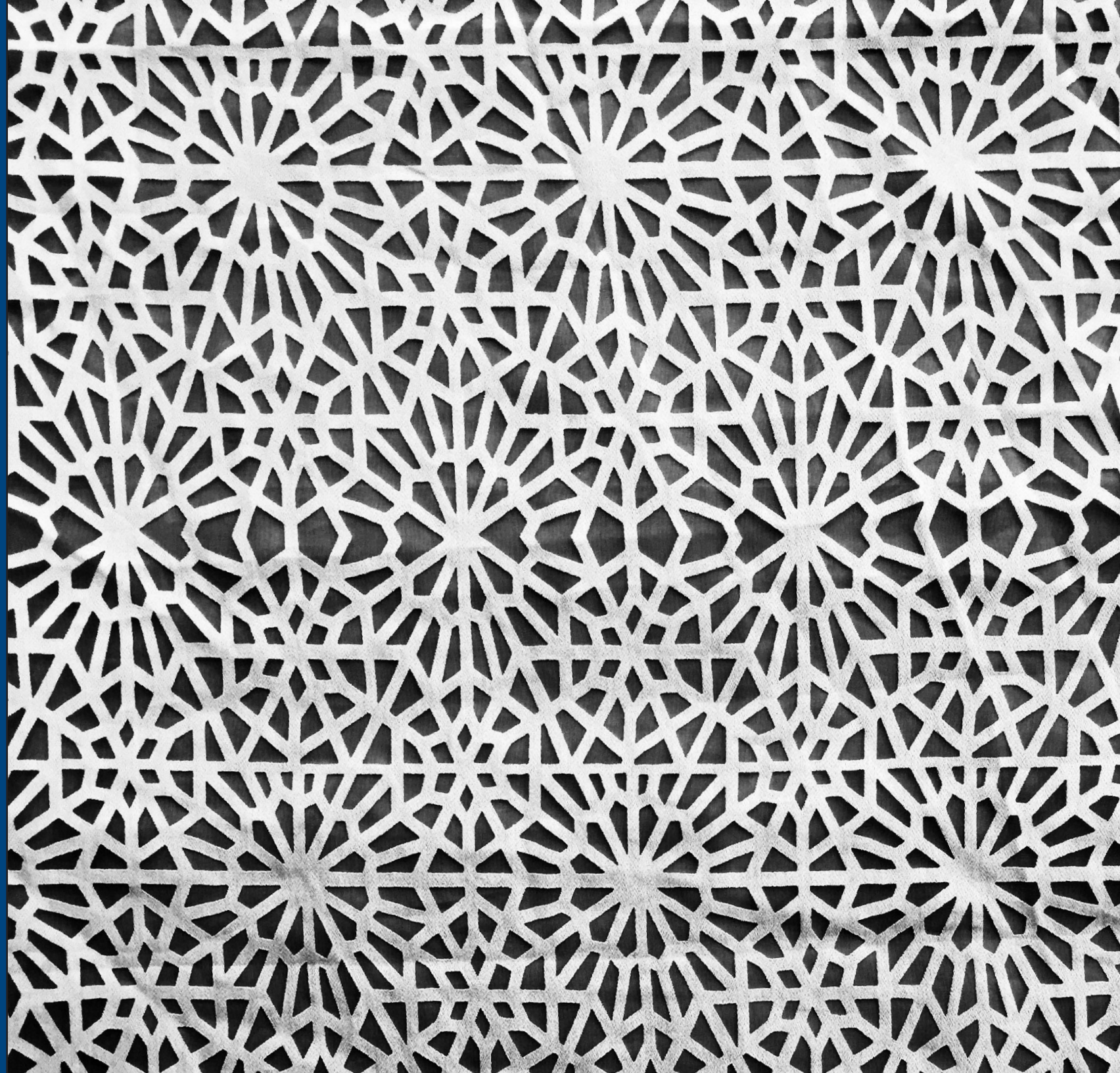
VISIT US!
hautedish.metrostate.edu

QUESTIONS?
Email us at:
hautedish@metrostate.edu

LIKE US!



facebook.com/HauteDishofMetroState/



The Arts & Literature Magazine of Metropolitan State University ---- Fall 2017 . Vol 14 . Issue 1

HAUTE DISH

EDITOR'S LETTER

Welcome to *Haute Dish* and thank you for engaging in one of the most treasured adventures of this campus; reading and viewing the work of a variety of Metro State artists. This year it is my pleasure to serve as managing editor. It takes many hands to assemble a literary magazine of this quality: assistant editors, a layout/design specialist, web editor, and proofreaders.

An artist's work is never finished, but at some point, it should be launched into the world and *Haute Dish* is the perfect place to do that. I encourage all artists whether writers, poets, painters/photographers or producers of digital storytelling to submit their work for possible publication in the next issue. The deadline is November 15, 2017, so don't wait until the last minute. Polish that poem, write that story of 3000 words or less (the one you've wanted to do for so long), dig out your best piece(s) of photography or maybe a painting, prepare your digital story for presentation and then send your work to *Haute Dish* via the website.

And, while you're at it, check us out on Facebook, and in the spring, come to The Open Book (home of the Loft Literary Center, Milkweed Editions and the Minnesota Center for Book Arts) to show off your work for family and friends. All who have been published in *Haute Dish* are welcome to participate.

So, for now, I leave you with these thoughts to ponder:

"You're a writer and that's something better than being a millionaire – because it is something holy."
-Harlan Ellison

"I was working on the proof of one of my poems all morning and I took out a comma. In the afternoon I put it back in again."
– Oscar Wilde

If you are a student, staff, faculty or alumni, we are anxious to see your personal art form (from one of the above categories) and offer the possibility of publication. For now, enjoy the magazine you hold in your hands.



Sarah Fjellanger - Managing Editor

HAUTE DISH STAFF

MANAGING EDITOR
Sarah Fjellanger

WEB EDITOR
Joseph Parsons

DESIGN/LAYOUT
Kaytie Clough

FACULTY ADVISOR
Mary Ringstad

EDITORIAL REVIEW BOARD
Jeanna Stumpf
Jonathan Hiatt
Oleksandra Ranchuk
Renaë Edwards
Sarah Fjellanger
Alex Kies
Adam Moyer
Kathryn Ganfield
Betsy Salvatore

Haute Dish is published two times a year, Spring and Fall semesters, and is dedicated to showcasing the literary and artistic talents of students, staff, faculty, and alumni of Metropolitan State University.

Haute Dish is a publication of Metropolitan State University, and is supported by funds from student activity fees, Metropolitan’s School of Communication, Writing and the Arts, and Metropolitan administration.

All copyrights are retained by individual artists and authors. Any unauthorized reprint or use of this material is strictly prohibited.

CATEGORIES
Poetry, Fiction, Creative Nonfiction, Memoir/Personal Essay, Visual Art (Photography, Illustration, Focus on Metro), and Digital Storytelling.

WHO MAY SUBMIT?
FALL ISSUE- current students, staff, faculty, and alumni
SPRING ISSUE- ONLY current students

DEADLINES
FALL ISSUE- April 15
SPRING ISSUE- November 15

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I WILL NOT MISS YOU	Taylor Bell	4
CONTRAST	Kevin O'Connor	5
GRAY BLUR	Kathryn Ganfield	6
THE BEAT COP	Tara Guy	8
PHILADELPHIA CITY HALL TOWER	Betsy Salvatore	9
TILL DEATH DO US PART	Christopher Corum	10
AUNTIE RHONA	Aaron Avis	14
PAINT BY COLORS	Kim DeBlieck	15
WATCHING THE VEIL DESCEND	Sarah Fjellanger	16
DISEASE	Jamie Haddox	20
SCULPTURE OF LINCOLN		
BY MT. RUSHMORE ARTIST		
GUTZON BORGLUM	Elizabeth Todd	21
I WATCHED	Renaë Cragg-Edwards	22
ON THE FRAGILITY OF LIFE	Christopher Corum	24
EQUANIMITY	Lacey Zawacki	25
CONTRIBUTORS		26
BAD FRIENDS, GOOD TIMES	Jamie Haddox	28
IT'S THE LEAVES THEY DON'T EAT	Kevin O'Connor	29
THE WEDDING PHOTO	Tara Guy	30
THINGS WE OWN	Jamie Haddox	36
FISH ON	Amber Bergslien	37
WHEN THE WORLD STOPS TO WATCH	Christopher Corum	38
PRE-DATE JITTERS	Liz Tetu	40
KEYSTONE TREES	Amber Bergslien	43
PURGED	Kim DeBlieck	44
MODERN LINES	Kaytie Clough	COVERS

I WILL NOT MISS YOU

Taylor Bell

I'll always miss the nights not spent
sitting out on your cold front porch
not smoking a cigarette with you
and not looking up at those stars
like frozen diamonds under an lowan sky

the way that sky would not scream dark blue
and you would not rest your head against my shoulder
carefully carrying a carriage of cold tears, not shed
the way my boots would not gently
brush against your sneakers

I would not run my fingers through your hair
and tell you it'll be okay
I would not look into your hazel eyes
and know there's some hope left
I would not feel sad when you would not make me cry
and I will not miss you, when I say goodbye



CONTRAST

Kevin O'Connor

GRAY BLUR

Outside my window, half of America rolled past: the tourist traps of Wisconsin, tollbooths of Indiana, mountains of Pennsylvania, the Tappan Zee Bridge just up river from New York City. Clicking past, like stereoscopic images on my Disney View-Master. But as I pressed my face to the tailgate window of Big Red, our diesel station wagon, these views were lost on me. Early on the first morning of our annual summer road trip to the East Coast, my brother and I tangled over the latest issue of Uncanny X-Men. I lost. My eyeglass frames bent and broke in the struggle. And I was blind without them.

Everything I counted on to make the miles pass more quickly was taken from me. I couldn't watch for all my favorite roadside attractions: the giant orange moose in Black River Falls; the castle-shaped restaurant in the outer ring of Chicago; the exit for Gary, Indiana which signaled everyone else in my family to burst into song. I couldn't read the books I had packed, or play the license plate game or fill in Mad Libs. Inside, the world was reduced to tan vinyl seats. Outside, the world was a gray blur.

Mom lent me her prescription sunglasses, though they were far too weak for my terrible nearsightedness and much too big for my face. I near-constantly pushed them back up my nose as they slid downward with every turn of my head. I was Elton John without the glamour.

My mood was even worse than my appearance. I seethed. Ticked at my brother, for his expert tackling. Frustrated with my Dad, for refusing to even pause the road trip to get my glasses fixed. And, most especially, I was furious with Bob. He was the reason my Dad was in such a hurry, pushing the accelerator harder than he ever had— which is to say, maybe 57 mph.

News of Bob came in a steady stream on NPR. Hurricane Bob, the category 2 storm set to make land-fall near my Nana's house in Connecticut within the next day. As we neared our destination, after 1,200 miles and nine states of blindness, the news came that most stores, malls and public buildings would be closing immediately. Which meant a trip to an optical shop and renewed eyesight were not hours away, but days. Like the darkening skies above the Atlantic Ocean, my outlook went from merely blurry to blackout.

But in the days that followed, as Bob's rain and wind battered the roof and windows of Nana's sturdy little saltbox house, I came to realize that maybe there wasn't any better time to be blind than during a natural disaster. The beaches were closed, stores shuttered, Baskin-Robbins cleared out of ice cream in case the storm knocked out power. We all had to stay home anyway.

I couldn't see the TV screen, but between my parents watching the Weather Channel and Nana demanding absolute silence during Jeopardy every night, there was no time for Nickelodeon. Blind or sighted, I was lousy at Jenga. And my lack of sight didn't impede my ability to make a dent in Nana's freezer-full of chocolate frozen yogurt.

When the storm was at its worst was when I finally shook the feeling I was missing out on everything. As a Midwestern kid, I thought a hurricane was something you could see bearing down on you. Like a tornado, a distinct dark form spinning on the horizon. As it ends up, a hurricane is sheeting rain, freight-train wind, piling ocean waves. In other words: a gray blur. Glasses or no glasses, I could see that.

Kathryn Ganfield

THE BEAT COP

Tara Guy

In my brother's cramped apartment
a dusty glass curio holds ghostly artifacts
of a life long gone, gleaming gold shield,
melancholy medal of merit for he who
once served the lesser, who
protected the weak, the weak in his street.

In the curio, tarnished gold braid on a blue peaked cap,
gilt-trimmed plaques, engraved commendations,
aging, faded citations for the once proud sergeant,
a lauded lifesaver—decorated, acclaimed, even famed. . .
then forgotten.

The curio's glass dimly reflects his now-life,
Worn and wounded wheelchair, with tattered
stained cushion, rent, then mended, with purple duct tape,
damp towels, mildewed laundry, reek of neglect—
who serves *this* weak and lesser one? Who protects?

In the curio, dusty glass preserves dead dreams
that gleam in the lamplight...
in the closet, abandoned crutches lean
against forgotten hope, both laid away
in the grey of this new day.

But once he was someone, he was *something!*
In his youth
with length of stride, and pride
in his service, his skill, his care for the weak,
the weak, in his street,
where now he rolls on, alone.

One of the weak, alone in his street.

PHILADELPHIA CITY HALL TOWER

Betsy Salvatore



TILL DEATH DO US PART

Standing in a dimly lit room, she gazed into the casket. Inside, was the man who had conquered her heart. She wished desperately that her husband would leap up out of the casket and comfort her. But instead, he rested peacefully in his new home, unaware of the havoc he was causing to his wife. As she tried frantically to hold back her tears and be strong, she felt the cold grip of grief close around her throat. Her sorrow was too much to bear, and like a crumbling dam, rivers of water came bursting out. Flooded with anguish, and sobbing to herself softly, she didn't hear the sound of footsteps behind her.

A voice whispered, "I am very sorry for your loss, Victoria."

Startled, Victoria turned around. Behind her stood a man wearing a suit, his hair neatly combed back. "Death waits for no man," he said, "For most, we have no way to stop him from taking the life of those we hold dearest." He ended with a sad smile curling on his lips.

In a broken and choked voice, Victoria said, "Thank you." She was numb to random condolences from funeral attendants this late in the day.

"Excuse me for not introducing myself. My name is Harold, and I believe that I may be of some assistance to you." He paused for a second, looking Victoria straight in the eyes, "I work at a company whose mission is to create life. We look at these awful funerals and feel aghast at all the pain that it causes. Life is too short, and because of this, we have created a formula that will allow our deceased to have a second birth." Harold gently took Victoria's hand and said, "What would you say if I told you that I could bring back the man you love?"

The question hung in the air for a couple of seconds. Victoria couldn't believe what she had just heard. Slowly, she asked, "How is this possible?"

"It's quite easy actually," Harold explained, "You see, our technology allows us to make insertions into the brain that permits the organ to be 'reawakened,' for lack of a better term. As long as the body is in decent condition," taking a momentary pause he glanced into the casket, "And your husband's body seems to be fine, then it is the simple act of science overcoming the influences of death." Noticing Victoria's doubtful look, he continued, "Your husband will be exactly the same as you remember him. His personality will remain the same, the way he talks, thinks, and loves. All these characteristics will be unaffected." Harold paused a moment to clear his throat, "We of course do charge a small fee for our services, but I know that you should have no problem overcoming the small financial burden." Smiling, he added almost as an afterthought, "Really Victoria, what is the value of money when it is spent on someone you love and hold dear to your heart?"

Victoria took a second to let the information distill into her. She glanced once more at the casket, remembering the joy she had with her husband. She could feel happiness enlighten her as she recalled his soft touch, his beautiful smile, his lovely voice.

"You are sure that he would remain the same?" Victoria asked suspiciously, "How many times has this operation been done?"

"As I have said before, he would be exactly the same as you remember him," Harold reassured her, "We have done this operation on household pets. Your husband will be the first human, but do not be concerned, the science is certain and you have nothing to be afraid of."

Victoria found herself wondering what her husband would've done if he had been given this choice. After a long pause, she looked at Harold and said, "You are right, death waits for no man." She took a deep breath and continued, "No, I am sorry, but I think my husband is fine just where he is."

Mildly surprised, Harold raised one of his eyebrows and asked, "Are you sure? Doesn't your love for your husband make you want him back? Once he is buried, we cannot resurrect him again."

Victoria replied, "Of course I love my husband and want him back, but not like this."

"Very well, Victoria," Harold said disappointedly, "It is your choice." And with that, Harold disappeared as quietly as he came.

A couple of minutes later, the pallbearers came into the room, closed the casket, and carried it into the hearse. As Victoria watched the casket sink into the ground, she felt a wave of relief wash over her, knowing her husband was safely tucked away beneath the earth.

A few weeks later, as she was reading the newspaper, she noticed a headline that read, "Frankenstein Experiment Gone Wrong." The article read: Billionaire Berny Wicket, who had just recently passed away because of a heart attack, was brought back to life Thursday, October 14. After Life, a scientific company located in Boston, claimed that they had "found the cure to death." By making insertions into the brain, After Life promised that they could resurrect the dead. Unfortunately, one week after Mr. Wicket was "reawakened," it was revealed that he had killed his wife, and later took his own life. Police are still investigating... Victoria laid the paper down on the coffee table sitting next to her. Looking out the window, she watched the sun rise in the distance, breaking up the morning darkness that had settled on the earth, and bringing light and life as a blessing. Love is an amazing thing, she thought to herself. Able to transcend races, cultures, borders, and time; the one thing love could not overcome was death.

AUNTIE RHONA

Aaron Avis

Her hair is Hannah Arendt,
White billows of smoke
Fleeing from her head,
Rising and bowing down,
An eclipse around her face
Like Mother Mary's halo,
With the frantic electricity
Of static energy and Camus.
Her eyes are Sartre,
Intense and restless.
They penetrate and calm
Like a self deprecating prayer.
They stir tornadoes
Of ideas and compassion,
Thought and humanity,
And they suck you in.
Her body is a silhouette
Of wool and cotton,
An outline of a young woman
Hunched over Kant
On her third cup of coffee.



PAINT BY COLORS

Kim DeBlieck

WATCHING THE VEIL DESCEND

She took time to study the white-haired old man sitting at a distant table, his blank expression focused on something far away. Long ago he'd been handsome, but now his mouth hung ajar as if a hinge had broken. His brow was tensed, and she imagined him trying to find the lost connection as people mingled and laughed in every corner of the festive hall. Some were holding drinks in their hands, and she wondered if he missed his Scotch-on-the-rocks.

Giggly girls passed by his table in their spangle-laden party dresses, and the band, positioned against the back wall of the dance floor, began the playlist just as a mirrored ball was lowered. She suspected that the light, bouncing from its surface, might introduce another distraction to his fragile mind.

When the bride and groom stepped onto the dance floor, the old man studied them, then glanced down at his own apparel, a seersucker suit of blue and white pin-stripes. It was old, not a Minnesota style, but a summer apparel nonetheless, and she was sure it came from the Philippines where he'd been a missionary for seventeen years. This quiet man with the searching eyes, was the oldest brother of her long dead husband, and her heart ached for him. His mind had been brilliant,

kind, and thoughtful. Now it ran like a river snaking its way between the fading banks of recognition.

Throughout his life, Jim had written poems, even had some published in the Reader's Digest, or so he often said. On one of the visits to his home, she'd learned that many years before, he'd started to write a book. He'd asked if she would be willing to type it for submission to a publisher. "Of course," she replied, but as he dug through the scrambled papers in the file folder, she realized he'd completed no more than twenty pages; the rest ran around in his mind and never made it to print. Procrastination, his biggest downfall, had buried the tome forever.

"Have you written any more chapters for your book?" she asked as she approached his table and moved to take the seat across from him.

Looking a bit puzzled, he asked, "What was the story about?"

"It was about the Dos Mundos, the stolen coin. Remember? You must keep at it. You are such a good writer."

His eyes brightened, and words, strange to her ears, spilled out. Filipino. She guessed that it was the dialect he'd learned in Cebu, and she watched him relax for a bit.

"But I gave it all to you, or someone, didn't I?" he said, his voice trailing off again as if the thought was too much to sort.

"No, just what you'd written so far. Maybe you could do another chapter before I come to visit again."

It was then that he felt a hand on his shoulder and turned to see the bride and groom who'd come to thank him for helping celebrate their wedding. He studied their faces and tried to reply, but no words escaped. When the couple left, the lady sitting beside him gently took his hand. His look of confusion prompted her to say, "I'm Peggy, your wife, do you remember?" He shook his head. "There are some others who want to say hello," she prompted, "so let's move over to that table."

Reluctantly, Jim allowed himself to be guided to another area where some people sat with their children. One of them hugged him and called him Uncle Jim, but he lost her name, and didn't try to find it; he did not remember that she was his God-child. He sat and listened, though it was obvious he couldn't follow the conversation; it was too late at night.

"Uncle Jim," a red-haired girl softly said as she stepped up to introduce her friend, "this is Albert and he's from the Philippines. He wants to say hello."

Always the gentleman, Jim rose to greet the younger man and shook his hand, while the long-ago language of the islands flowed from his lips. With the utmost respect for this elder, Albert explained that he spoke a different dialect, but nonetheless the two clumsily conversed; the old man's eyes wide and vibrant the entire time. This stranger before him had picked the lock to a hidden compartment, one that remembered all the details of a happier time, and it was beautiful to watch.

But, when Albert stood to say goodbye, it was as if the switch in Jim's brain had flipped to off. His jaw hung loose again, and she watched the emptiness return to his eyes. His shoulders sagged and the lady who'd said she was his wife, placed her hand on his forearm and said, "It's late, Jim. The children are here to take us home."

DISEASE

Jamie Haddox

There's nothing romantic about finding
your sliver has become part of your hand,
moved into your soul,
deep enough to be a blood relative,
but is only a shard
of someone you once knew.
A soul is only worth its displacement.

The absolute parts fell away,
drowned in the relative parts:
hands holding to fingers,
but not to hearts.
In the end how much water did you move?
You find you're about as deep as a bathtub,
spending too much time with reflections.
And you take too many baths
to still feel shallow while you read.
Fingers, wet and wrinkled,
tremble on page corners,
like fishnets on street corners...
one more chapter, though the water
has long gone cold.
Under the skin of your wet, plush palm,
black enough to find
through so many pink layers,
a relative stranger,
your own displaced matter,
a shard of kin has replaced
a sliver of you forever.

SCULPTURE

OF LINCOLN BY MT. RUSHMORE
ARTIST GUTZON BORGLUM

Elizabeth Todd



I WATCHED

I watched him pack up the boxes. I watched as he carried them up the stairs. "You don't have to go."

"Yes I do, Mom." he said as he juggled a box between one hand and his knee while struggling to open the door with the other.

I just watched.

Boots stomped up and down the stairs. Resigned, I went from box to box trying to add just one more thing to each. I threw a ripped pair of jeans aside. When Kyle walked past, I asked, "You don't want to keep these do you?"

Giving the ratty jeans a quick look, he said, "Nah, just toss them."

Long before I was ready, the totes, clothes and most important to Kyle, the computer, were loaded in the snow covered car. I shivered as I stared at the few things that made up my son's life. How could he survive out in the cold world with so little?

Turning away from staring out the window at the small blue car and its contents, I said, "I'll make you a coffee for the road while you make one more check of the house to make sure you haven't forgotten anything."

Kyle graced me with one of his heart-melting smiles. "Thanks."

I brewed up a double coffee. When Kyle returned from his final search, I handed him the cup. "I made sure to add extra love."

Kyle wrapped his arms around me. "Thanks, Mom."

He placed the extra house key on the microwave.

At the door, I kissed each of his cheeks and hugged him again. "Drive careful."

"I will. "

I locked the door behind my youngest son then went to the window and raised my hand to wave.

I watched as he walked to his car, stopping to close the gate on the way. I watched as he sat for a moment adjusting things just so. I watched as he backed out of the drive then drove away. I watched as he never looked back.

Renae Cragg-Edwards

ON THE FRAGILITY OF LIFE

Christopher Corum

The fragility of life is a strange thing.
Immortality; a phenomenon
beyond reason, for our being comes and
passes with the waves of the ocean tide.

Whether it be from the pull of a trigger
or the curse of growing old. Perhaps from
the word that offends, and from these events
our life halts to an abrupt and sudden end.

And with that, we are tucked under the earth,
remembered for a span of time, but soon
forgotten. Overlooked by the world,
resting in a tomb of dirt, so that life
is pointless, for time murders entirely.

But to rest, what a holy guarantee.
The turmoil that festers to be silenced.
A breath of life, to make the earth born. And
when the end comes, to crumble back to clay.



EQUANIMITY

Lacey Zawacki

Aaron Avis

is a second year Philosophy major at Metropolitan State University. He began writing poetry in the first grade and short fiction during his junior year of high school. His major writing influences include Albert Camus and Allen Ginsberg. Aaron currently lives in Crystal, Minnesota.

Taylor Bell

born and raised around Minneapolis, one foot in the suburbs, one in the cities. I spend a lot of time writing and reading, as well as going out and shooting photos. I try to diversify what I write about, because I'm still learning and I aim to be great one day.

Amber Bergslien

graduated in August of 2016 and holds a BS in Accounting. She has been looking forward to submitting as alumni since she graduated. In her spare time, she is an artist who is passionate for the outdoors, unplanned adventures, dark chocolate, and a good cup of coffee. When Amber isn't busy bean counting, you'll most likely find her exploring the north shore, hiking, fishing, camping, or snowboarding.

Kaytie Clough

is a senior at Metropolitan State University, graduating Summer 2017, with a B.A. in Technical Communications & Professional Writing, and a minor in Advertising.

Christopher Corum

(pen name: C.T. Corum Junior) C.T. Corum is a student at Metropolitan State University. He writes for the school newspaper and plans to graduate with a bachelor's degree in professional writing and technical communications by spring of 2018.

Renae Cragg-Edwards

is a senior at Metropolitan State University. She graduates this Spring with a BA in Creative Writing. Edwards started at Metro in 2013, seeking to major in Urban Education, but after just one writing class she knew that before she could focus on anything else, she had to pull together her writing abilities. Majoring in Creative Writing seemed the best way to accomplish her goal.

Kim DeBlieck

is currently pursuing a degree in Creative Writing. She prefers writing memoir and enjoys macro photography.

Sarah Fjellanger

is a senior at Metro State and will soon graduate with a degree in Creative Writing. She likes writing short pieces that remind her of real life events.

Kathryn Ganfield

is a Creative Writing major and Research & Information Studies minor. She focuses on memoir and nature writing. Her work has appeared in The Metropolitan. She lives in St. Paul with her husband and three young kids.

Tara Guy

is a senior in the Creative Writing program at Metro State, hoping to graduate next year, if she can pass a math course. She wrote this poem about her brother, a retired St. Paul Police Detective, who has had many health problems and fallen on hard times, after many years of protecting and serving others.

Jamie Haddox

I'm a Minnesota writer. I received my BA in Creative Writing from Metropolitan State University in 2014. I've been nominated and awarded in academia for my work. My works have appeared in Gyroscope and Drunk Monkeys.

Kevin O'Connor

is a Spring '17 graduate, majoring in Professional Communication on the Organizational Communications track.

Betsy Salvatore

is a May 2017 Technical Communication and Professional Writing graduate. She enjoys content development and design for print and digital media, as well as capturing images with her camera.

Liz Tetu

routinely writes about sex, gender identities, and Paganisms. His work appears in places like The Edge, Witches & Pagans, Eternal Haunted Summer, and the anthology Arcane Perfection. At Metro, he is working on an undergraduate degree in Creative Sexual Communication (with a minor in Violence Prevention and Intervention).

Elizabeth Todd

is a Graduate Student at Metropolitan State University, currently in the Psychology program. She has a BA in writing and a MA in Liberal Studies and currently works in the Information Technology (IT) division of Metropolitan State as a Content Producer and Editor for the university website. In her free time she enjoys reading classic literature, watching Netflix, scrapbooking, and playing video games. Her main career goal is to break free of freelance writing and be successful enough to write novels and research reports full time. She loves working as a tutor because even if she helps others pursue their academic goals, she gets to continually learn through her students and their exploration in education. Creating substantial relationships with those that want to learn, and helping them reach their goals, helps her, as a tutor, feel fulfilled in her educational goals.

Lacey Zawacki

is currently a Junior at Metropolitan State University, majoring in Social Work. Photography has always been an enormous passion for her. Lacey loves mixing her passions of photography along with social issues to create beautiful awareness. Her dream is to travel the world taking photos and advocating for those who need more voices.

BAD FRIENDS, GOOD TIMES

Jamie Haddox

You give and I take. Nobody
has to understand. I can take
you wherever I want. I caught
you dreaming about choking
on my kiss. You're screaming,
I'm touching and you're shivering.
You say you want it numb,

but I know you like the pain.
You always come back wanting
a forever just like this. I know
there's things about me that leave
scars on your brain. You'll feel
my fingernails on your back
even when we're apart. There's
nothing riding on your heels,
nothing driving you away. Maybe
I'm the voice inside your head,
the only one you really want.
When I do things to you, I'm
doing them for you, the better
to keep you. Our religion lies
between the sheets, and it's okay
if nobody understands. Keep
telling yourself it feels good,
and that there's nothing wrong
with losing. Maybe I'm insane,
but let me show you my teeth,
and you'll know how much
I love you.

IT'S THE LEAVES THEY DON'T EAT

Kevin O'Connor



THE WEDDING PHOTO

The old black and white photograph in the silver frame sits on my dressing table. I have been looking at it a lot in recent days. It is a picture of my mother and father on their wedding day some fifty years ago. The photo shows my parents in their white nuptial finery, seated in the backseat of an early model sedan, the kind with the high arched roof like the cars in old gangster movies. The photographer must have shot from the front door into the capacious back seat, perhaps perched on the running board as he captured them on film forever just prior to their departure from the church. I suppose that this angle must have been a stylistic affectation of the time, for I have several similar photos of aunts and uncles taken on their wedding day, and it seems to have been quite a popular shot in the 1940s. I have looked at this picture a lot the past two days, because I have just come to understand something terrible and profound. My father is dying.

My parents sit hand clasped in the photo, their entwined fingers almost hidden in the creamy folds of my mother's satin gown. Her hair is dark, worn long and wavy, not at all like the short, practical hairstyle she favored all the days of my life. There is a Juliet cap on the back of her head with a white tulle veil flowing out behind, and I imagine it will be wrinkled when she emerges at the hall for the dance. My father is in a white tuxedo with black tie and a red-rose boutonniere. His neatly barbered hair looks dark in the photo, although I know it to have been auburn, and his

nose looks amazingly Roman for a flat out Connemara mick such as he. They are young and they are beautiful to behold.

Kidney failure, we have been told. A hateful, sneaky disease that, in an old man, masquerades as the normal aches and pains of encroaching age and produces occasional flu like symptoms. Fatigue and a sensitivity to cold, the constant companions of the aged and infirm, are also present, and, as with my father, may pass relatively unremarked for a long time. It is this ubiquitous panoply of symptoms that permits the disease to wreak havoc on the kidneys and advance the renal failure before any real diagnosis is forthcoming. After that, the game is one of catch up, and attempting to slow down its progression for as long as one can, with the help of skilled nephrologists, which is the new and fancy name we have learned for kidney doctors. Organ failure is a long, slow descent into the final betrayal of self by the human body. One by one, those



reliably loyal organs begin to refuse to perform their lifelong functions. They... mutiny. I have watched my father wrestle with this astonishing notion. He is an old Navy man, and I know that he feels like a ship's captain watching his sailors become derelict in their duty, that he senses a distinct sloppiness below deck. It is incomprehensible to him that his loyal crew is laying down on the job after so many years of devoted service.

In the silver frame, my mother and father smile joyously at one another. With the hand not entwined in my father's, my mother clutches a bouquet of what appears to be orchids, although I can't imagine white orchids could have been readily obtainable in the farming town of Redwood Falls. My mother beams beatifically at my father, her smile wide and radiant. My father grins happily into her eyes; a groom's grin, I think. It is a little foolish, displaying desire, I imagine; appetite for his new bride, anticipation of the wedding night, and most of all, the happy lifetime beyond. Their faces shine with high hope, the joy of the day, and their happiness in each other. There is not the faintest foreshadowing of the distant day when the aged bride will, without warning, drop silently to the kitchen floor, ever gone from her groom. There is no harbinger, no portent, no hint that one day the handsome young groom will be a shrunken, bent old man who sets an alarm clock to remind him four times a day to take his next round of the dozens of medicines which keep him alive. . .for now.

My father and I have learned to speak a whole new language since his diagnosis. It is foreign and vaguely sinister, this new patois we have perforce become familiar with. Words like creatinine, toxemia, uremia, nephrology, hematocrit, and other, have crept into our vocabulary. We incorporate these words into our daily conversations now, like neophyte French students self consciously pronouncing "La plume de ma tante." We have learned that it is possible to become "in

toxicated" by your own body, when waste is not cleansed from the blood. My father jokes with Dr. Zarama, his kidney man, that for an Irishman the notion of being intoxicated is not necessarily a bad thing. The doctor chuckles, but reminds my father that the root word is "toxic," and even with liquor, and its happy, bubbly connotation, it means poison. Our laughter fades as my dad and I are, quite literally, sobered by that observation.

I look at the photograph of the lovely, happy couple, full of life and hope, and I feel a rush of tenderness for them. Almost protectiveness, as though I could reach back, cup them in my hands, and try to protect them from the sure and certain sadness of life; from the caprice of fate as it deals out the hands, such as the unexpected loss of my mother, when my father had painstakingly planned to go first... not right away of course, only after insuring his life to a fare thee well, to allow her to live well. He still can't believe that his well crafted plan went awry, and that here he remains, without his bride, as he called her during their whole married life.

Still I look at the photo. Their joy is almost palpable in the picture, with no sign of the loss of innocence to come. As I stare at their glowing faces I realize that I am much older than they are in the photo, and not without some sad knowledge of life myself. I fully understand that the moment we are born, we begin to die, that it is the only certainty in life. But there is something

so poignant in the photograph, in the contrast between the proud, handsome young groom, and the stooped old father I now ferry to and from the doctor, that I feel a fresh new sorrow in the ancient knowledge that we all have to die. I want to weep for our species.

I gently place the silver frame back on the dresser. I don't want my father to die, the hero of my youth. I would restore to him the beauty and youth I see in the old photo, protect him from the pain and difficult times ahead if only I could. Lost in a sort of reverie, I struggle to name my sorrow, to see its shadowy face. I recall that some sage once said, "Time is a river." Indeed. I feel a sense of incalculable loss; I can almost feel the swift flow of the current through my hands, as I try in vain to slow it down. The unstoppable movement...so like sand through the hour glass, where the sifting grains visibly mark the diminishing moments of a finite lifetime. I picture the history timelines we used to make in grade school; a long line, with haphazardly spaced markers, little colored circles signifying events in history. But these images are unsatisfying. None of these metaphors for the fleeting passage of time quite capture the flavor of my melancholy, my sorrow, as the daughter of this once-young man who is beginning to die. The river, the pouring sand, the timeline; somehow they are too. . .linear.

I go upstairs to help my father ready himself for our thrice-weekly visit to the dialysis center. He sits dozing in his favorite easy chair, waiting for me. As I kneel beside my dad to tie his shoe-laces for him, a glimmer of understanding pierces my fog of gentle sadness and bittersweet regret, and in a moment of clarity I realize that life isn't really linear at all. The sages had it wrong, I think. Life is a cycle; it circles back and around upon itself endlessly, and we are all part of the cycle.

Tying his laces, I have a sudden vivid memory of his big freckled hands teaching my own pudgy little ones to tie my own shoes. Unexpected tears mist my eyes, and a vast tenderness fills my heart; for him, for me, for all of us, and our finite circle of life. I gently wake him and help him up, buttoning his jacket against the winter chill outside. I take his hand to go, and feel the circle close gently around me.

THINGS WE OWN

Jamie Haddox

All the buttons still
waiting to be sewn
back on
Every scratched CD
that wasn't returned
to its case
Every dirty plate that
doesn't make it to the
kitchen sink

The sixty dollar pair of
shoes ruined by walking
on the heels
The car that could have
been repaired, but
was replaced
The bottle of cheap kosher
wine that was emptied
on a lonely day

The couch and coffee
table that went uncovered
when the ceiling was
sprayed
The permanent marker
accidentally used on the
dry erase calendar when
keeping score
All the water bottles
ruined by tobacco spit
The pilfered sewing table,
less one vintage sewing
machine that was traded
in for one that worked
The house we let go



FISH ON

Amber Bergslien

WHEN THE WORLD STOPS TO WATCH

The wind whipped against my face. It was the beginning of April, but winter had decided to make one last stand against the advances of spring. A small cluster of parents had decided to brave the Arctic winds in order to support their children. Shivering in my muscle shirt and shorts, I made my way towards the line, where fifteen athletes were packed next to each other and were stretched across the six lanes. I held my breath, waiting for that fatal moment when I would hear the gun shot. The man who was standing on the step looked more like an Eskimo, than he did a referee. Cupping his hands around his mouth, he shouted above the loud gusts of wind, "On your marks!" I arched my back and spread my feet apart, right foot in front of the left. The referee raised his gun to the air and fired; my body jerked into action.

Every motion was crucial. With elbows flying, the mob of athletes dashed for lane one. Sucking down gusts of cold air, I broke ahead of the pack, forging my way into third place, staying close to the leaders. With my track spikes on, it felt like I was running on clouds. Despite the frigid environment, sweat started to form on the runner's brow. The cold air was murdering my throat and forcing my lungs to spit out raspy coughs.

My arms began to ache. The buoyant feeling of clouds was replaced by running in quick sand. My legs were moving, but I wasn't going as fast as I needed to. The leaders were starting to pull ahead. Just like Atlas, the great titan of old, I could feel the weight of the world pressing down on me, slowly crush-

ing my feeble body. The story of the tortoise and the hare was a lie. The hare always won. Panting hard, I sounded like a thirsty dog on a hot summer day.

I needed to win this race. Too many hours had been spent training for this one moment, and I would not allow myself to take third place. I began to lift my legs a little higher, and leaned forward. I tore around the last bend, and saw the finish line ahead. It was light years away, but I didn't focus on that. I was thinking about how good it would feel to pass that line. A fire grew in my eyes, a lust in my heart. Greed is one of the great motivators. It is never satisfied and is always hungry for more, and my appetite had been whetted. The finish line was in my grasp. For years, I had worked and sweated for this one moment, this one second, this savor of salvation that I could taste to quench my thirst. This was my time and only mine.

My feet were making longer strides. My arms pumping hard. A calmness overtook my being, a militaristic regulation spontaneously governed my breathing. People were cheering, but their cries were muffled by the loud steady beat of my heart as I pushed forward.

I crossed the finish line, and that was when I realized I had taken first place. I watched quietly, as the other runners passed by, breathing as if they were old men who had just climbed a set of stairs. Destiny fulfilled, I exhaled slowly. My legs were on fire, and my soul wanted more. I had never felt like that before, nor have I felt anything like that since. My attitude had become the deciding factor in this race. My determination, my need, my ambition. My legs had brought me to the finish line, but my mind won the race. I was convinced at that moment, that the earth had stopped revolving. That the ocean had become still, and that the wind had quieted. I was certain that the whole world had stopped to watch me cross the finish line.

PRE-DATE JITTERS

No matter how many times she looked at it, only three adjectives came to her: "Lesbian," "leather," "wedgie-inducing."

Like something she would have worn for her ex.

Groaning, Megan gathered up the leather pants from her bed only to throw them back down for the fourth time. It was insufferable. Her coworker had asked her to come out to the Satanic bake sale with them. Her outfit, haphazardly strewn across her covers, just asked her to come out.

It wasn't like they didn't know, she soothed herself assuredly, unconvincingly, as she settled on top of a crumpled jean jacket. She smoothed what little of the scratchy fabric peeked out from underneath her. She gave off enough signs of her sexuality to all of her coworkers, so there was no question about who she could like; the question remained, though, if her coworker knew that they were the kind of person she could like, fall in love, and spend the rest of her life with. The thought made her double over with nervousness.

Megan stared at toes wriggling with frustration. They had so much in common. They worked together. They appreciated Satanists selling devil's food cake.

Maybe something a little more innocent was going on. Working as managers, Megan and her fellow creatures had to survive a high-stress environment, and maybe her coworker just wanted to savor the weekend. There were many things Megan wanted to savor.

Maybe she couldn't stop thinking about her ex.

As looking at her toes kept her anchored in muddy thoughts, she chose to lean back and stare at the dust universe that decorated the dilapidated ceiling of her apartment. She traced the equivalents of constellations Pisces and Andromeda with her inquisitive eyes. Her eyes darted to her phone held slackly in her left hand. Idly brushing her thumb across the smudged screen, she contemplated looking up article after article about genderqueer and POC politics again. She wished she had learned and kept up on these issues before this date.

The word "date," accidentally slipping into her thoughts nonchalantly, accompanied the lighting up of her phone and the magic text: "Be here soon! Ready to make my day?"

She leapt up and pulled on a pair of black denims recovered from the floor over qualms about waiting out the end of this enthusiastic eruption. Shimmying and struggling into her pants, she just managed to avoid crashing into her dresser.

As she stood, she tugged the collar of her black T-shirt up to her nose. The faint smell of an ambiguous buffet and an even more foreign odor inspired by hand

lotion wafted up to her nostrils. She found herself hoping no one would go sniffing around her neck, throwing on her jean jacket and flipping up the collar as a barrier.

Stuffing her phone and her wallet in her back pockets, she barely remembered to shove her keys into one of her remaining pockets when she eyed the statuette of the Goddess sandwiched between her new gaming console and a defunct ashtray full of pennies. She stumbled over to the deity depicted in some sort of white rock, shaking her head sheepishly. Rubbing her thumb over the detailed face in the stone, she murmured a little spell, pretty sure that her Goddess would forgive her for not breaking down into a whole ceremony. She was too distracted, anyway.

Her hands patted her pockets ritualistically. Keys, wallet, phone. Keys, wallet, phone. Wallet. "I'm leaving now," she called out to the empty apartment, a rueful grin spreading across her face.

She slammed her locked door closed and pitched herself down the stairs one step at a time until she found herself parking her butt on the curb, waiting for Skylar to show up in their conservative compact.

KEYSTONE TREES

Amber Bergslien



PURGED

Tears streamed down my face and deep sobs wracked my body. I sat at my laptop computer in the basement of our suburban home and cried. I typed as fast as I could as years of suppressed memories threatened to overwhelm me.

Many ugly incidents came through my mind; the details as fresh as the day the events happened. The emotional pressure from the flashbacks continued to build. My fingers pounded on the keyboard.

The dam of silence suddenly broke and stories flowed out of me. Tears dripped off my chin. Secrets I had quashed were unleashed and allowed to surface.

I typed the unpleasant memories as fast as I could to capture my feelings. I was being with the emotions in a way I hadn't allowed myself to feel for years. Just when I thought it all would be too much, the emotions receded and my sobs subsided. I had survived what I feared most.

The words on the screen eventually became hundreds of pages about the abuse of power called Plucking the Deadheads. Writing it was a cathartic process which became a turning point in my healing. I no longer experienced the flashbacks that haunted me, I had purged them. I could finally be with my memories and not be controlled by them; such is the power of writing.

Kim DeBlieck