



WESTWIND

2021

COLLECTION OF
HORROR

Westwind Journal of the Arts Presents

The Westwind Horror Collection 2021

A frightening zine with flash fiction and poetry by independent authors,
edited and prepared by our student staff.

Beware, what follows is not for the faint of heart.

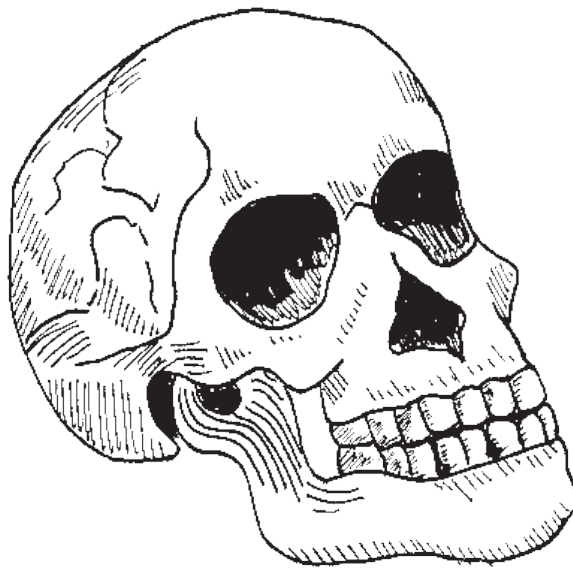


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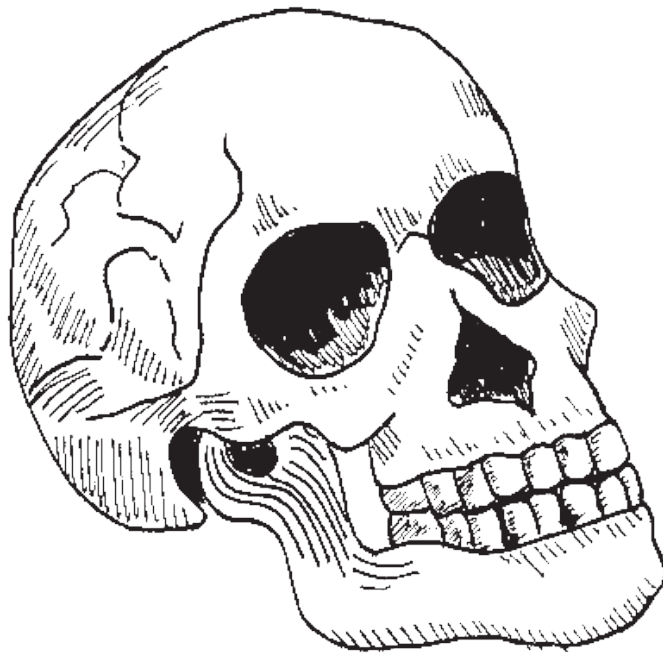
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Poetry



The Minivan

Firyal Bawab

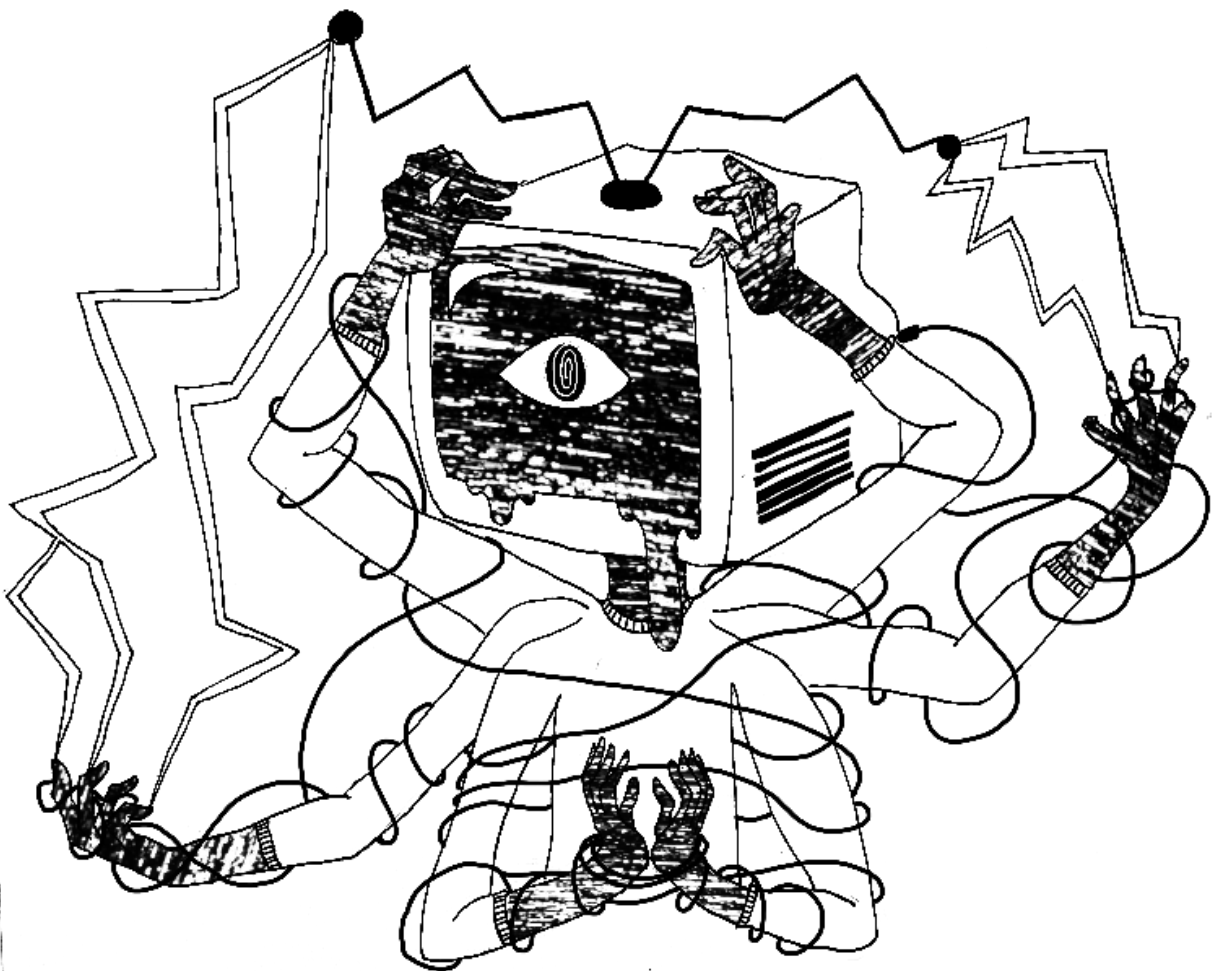
Few things are as small as the minivan
that seats me in the rear—
not meant for driving,
not meant for steering by the wheel;
but parking one lot from a dozen
lining an unmarked site— and one pharmacy.
Electric blue light fluid through the door
splays the van's hoodless front
a neon canopy.

Shell soaked spinach, windows dark—
the light in here glows green
whether from paint seeping in or
the taped up screens.
Computers, cameras, cable TVs,
frame the walls of the car's hollow
—an intestine
wreathed in copper cords;
umbilical wires
roping together digital paintings.
I was born here, in this coop,
Frozen as fetal, sponging the world—
and endless hours streaming the universe
dissolved brown irises into milk pearl.

I, the observer, slurping noodles imported,
microwave-heated worms sliding down throat,
until nausea nestled in my middle.

Small is a feeling I did not mind.
I peered from my cave onto beaches on screen;
I watched from behind.
Yet the van's backdoor would not stop rattling,
and the locks could not stop prattling,
as hands on the outside continued pounding
upon my minivan's doors, metal clacking.

I turned to see fingers squirmed through the tailgate's slit,
closed doors trembling to wrists thrusting up, pulling back,
and then their voices, lilting whispers and hiss,
oozing into the space: "Man, you have to try this."



body in the bathtub

Alexandra Geurts

bloated birch tree face,
skin peeling off like fish scales
and broken teeth tumbling out
of the gaping, bloody maw—
this is what i find in your bathtub,
obscured behind a dainty yellow curtain
with a cheery pattern of daisies
now smudged with ruddy handprints.

there is a corpse in this bathroom.
it is white and bloodless,
cheeks swollen and full of amber scratches,
savagely overlapping one another,
that came from clawing fingernails.
cold, coppery water submerges its limbs from view,
but an ashen arm hangs over invitingly—
the fingers are sliced off, exposing sanguine bone.
gasoline's nauseating fetor lethally circulates.
how long have you been hiding this from me?

you weren't supposed to see that.

i do not turn around at your voice.
it is so terrifyingly calm,
as if the sink faucet had merely jammed,
or the toilet had simply clogged,
rather the presence of a corpse
decomposing in your tub.
i cannot scream.
it is as if you had cupped my face
with your hands, soft as velvet,
and stitched my lips shut
with yellow thread, your favorite color,
matching the shower curtain
that was currently the boundary between
death and life,
absurdity and ordinary,
something unimaginably real and—

*I told you to not use this bathroom.
Why did you betray me?*

i am frozen solid,
my gaze fixed on the body in the bathtub—
your fingers trace my shoulder blades.
i wish wings would burst violently out of them
so i could smash through the tiny glass window
like an oversized, terrified sparrow
and fly out of this horrific reality
that has fallen, grisly and bent, at my feet.

your fingers reach the back of my neck
and then wrap themselves deliberately
around my throat—
you probably felt me swallow,
saliva nothingness sinking down my esophagus.
my eyes find the bathroom mirror,
sparkling sickly under the fluorescent lights.
now i notice spots of scarlet
on the bottom right corner
that should not be there.

i see myself,
my motionless shape
with wild scared eyes like a rabid animal,
and still wearing your college hoodie
that you kindly lent me last night.

i see you,
your long red hair obscuring your pretty face,
your chipped, black acrylics
digging into the skin around my throat,
and your floral nightgown
that transforms you into a ghost.

I'm sorry but I have to do this.

if you weren't strangling me to death,
we'd look like
two girls
waking up after a sleepover
at your street corner apartment,
on our way to wash up for breakfast—
we always prepared it together,

fresh triple berry waffles
and coffee with sweetened almond milk.

now you are using the same pretty hands
that you would

stir the batter with,
that you would

hold your mug in,
that i would

intertwine with mine

to stifle my b

reath

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me.

Death truly is a fickle, arbitrary thing, isn't it?

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The Scream

Firyal Bawab

The sky is an oily orange canvas when
a man with beady eyes and hollowed cheeks
walks ahead of his friends,
gripping his face— and screams.

The evening is thick with warm hues,
and our gaunt gent poses on grimy boardwalk
afroth whirling olive and azure.
The world is bended, swirling into strokes
of mind demented;
a man that in the moment,
feels choked and claustrophobic.
So whether flecks of boats rode into the distance
of what was either a river or a sea,
the man in dark garments couldn't tell,
and continued to scream.

Family Dinner

Charlie Stetson

you carried the soul of me inside your womb so both me and God couldn't have abandoned you
if we tried and

your daughter knows fear like the front porch knows welcome - it's always coming home yet

this house is a resurrection and a haunting and a labyrinth and a funeral and every room is a
mouth so

we are all infested with desire for consumption and the walls itch with pride and bone or

maybe you are just hungry and awake and still biting the hand that starved you but

that's ridiculous. Mothers don't eat daughters.



The Frog Prince

Zoie Burt

eat well,
sleep well

stop trying to tell
me what to do.

I'll do what I want
if I want
when I want

so leave me be
or else

I'll drop you in
the outside well

leave you there
to try and
creep & kick

your way
back out.

for once,
feel what I feel
you slimy green fuck.

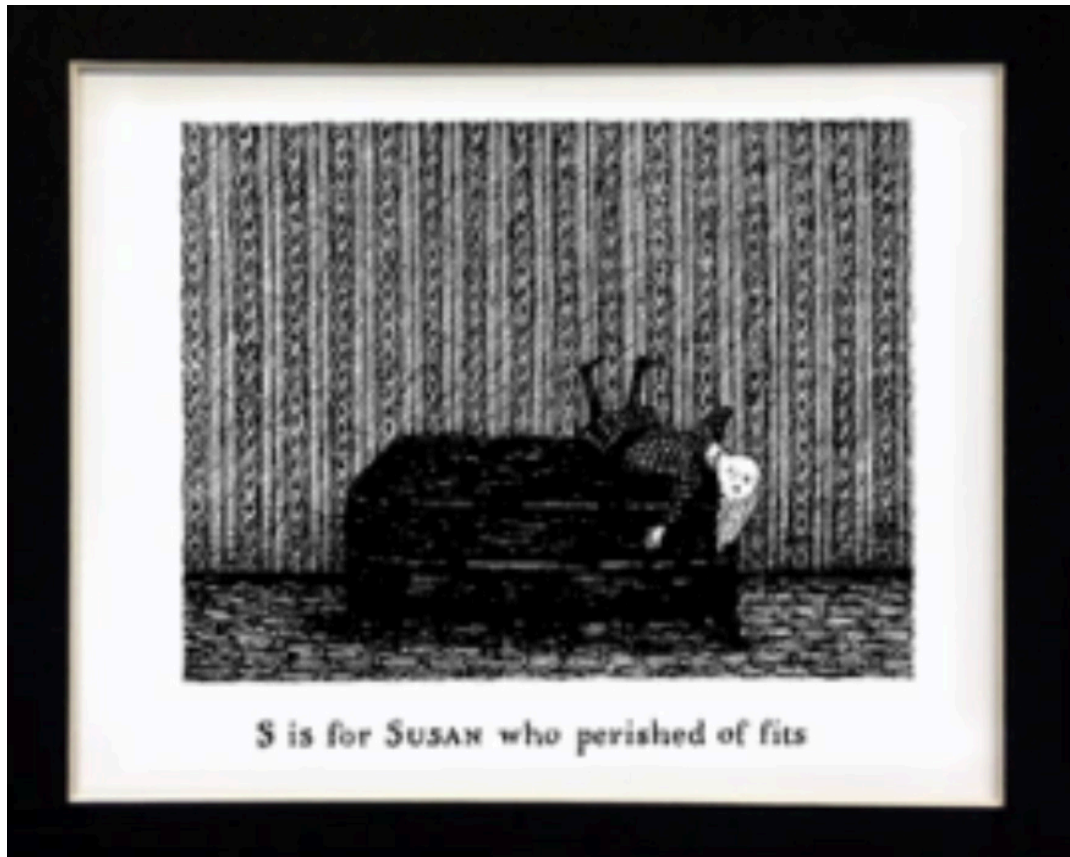
What Could Have Been?

Olivia Hill

These memories of mine
Memorialized in the tombs of time
Under the church is my cemetery
Lovers and friends sweet like strawberry;
Yet I am screaming for a hail Mary
Like a caged yellow canary
These memories have me married.
Til' death do we part;
In my heart, you are carried
In this time we take apart.
Asking what could have been?
After stolen glances and late night rambles,
History begot a lost love, where your memories
Captured and held hostage my heart.
For sweet like grapes,
Savory as wine,
Poisonous as spirits,
Your memories are a sweet haunting;
I wish you adieu no matter my wanting.

Most Infamous Dead Girl Around

Alexis Sanchez



S is for Susan who perished of fits
She shouted so loud that they tore her to bits
Told her she was too much and needed to change
Her only two emotions were jealousy and rage

She had a little brother who was 32 weeks
Wrapped her hands around his neck until she saw purple cheeks
A loud screech roared from her mother's mouth
Looked into her daughter's eyes and didn't see any remorse nor doubt

So she was sent away to an all-girl academy
It did not stop the fits but Susan did learn how to count to three
For her age, that was nothing impressive
And one day she finally did get arrested
One day she stood in front of the class, and did not count to three
Told everyone that she had a bad knee

The teacher told her "Sit down young lady!"
Susan said, "Wait, I still have something to say, I'm not
crazy"

She opened her mouth wide as can be
The entire class gasped as they saw two tiny cockroach babies
Emerge from her mouth as Susan cried
She said that on that fateful day something had died

The teacher yelled and continued to scold her
And that's when Susan broke and finally told her
To, "Fuck off Mrs. Price!"
"I'm not a girl nor am I very nice."

A yellow liquid emerged from her skirt
Her classmate yelled, "HOLD ON SHE'S GONNA SQUIRT!"

And then it came
And nothing after that moment ever remained the same

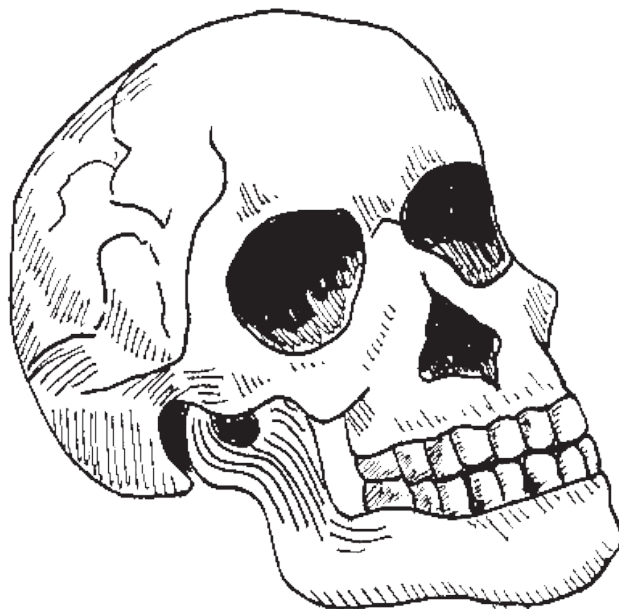
Susan yanked her classmate's hair until she saw red
And her classmate bled and bled until she fell dead

They said it was nothing like they had ever seen
The truth is that Susan is only comfortable being tired or mean

Her reputation ruined by maladaptive temper
No one in her immediate family knew how to help her
So she was left in a cell on top of the castle
With no one to share it with and it was a great a hassle
Not the security guards, nor police, nor authorities
Wanted anything to do with the girl who was essentially a beast
So she yelled and yelled until her throat became scratchy
And she pounded and pounded her feet until her bones broke and her skin became patchy

She had only two emotions: mean and pulverized
She had done this to herself; she had won the prize
Of the scariest girl in town
Of the most popular and infamous dead girl around

Fiction



When Feelings Become Untrue

Zoie Burt

The frigid air of mid-winter Amsterdam frosted her exposed face and fingers, seeping through her jacket to jab at her bones and scrape its nails against her skin. She had only stepped outside the airport for a few seconds, but the weather had already marked her as an easy target.

He walked up to her with a bouquet of red roses. The flowers were the only remotely brightly-colored thing she could see from around them, but even then the petals were a deep burgundy, almost brown, and they were all slightly wilted at the tips. She repressed a shudder as he embraced her. His body was damp from the perpetual mist of outside.

“You’re going to feel right at home here,” he murmured. It was a bold claim, a prediction of her future that really had no basis in her current reality. She thought about the car she sold, the friends and family she left behind, the Ph.D. program at UCLA she put on hold. When he pulled back, the mist curled around her neck and tightened into a slight chokehold, but it was nothing harmful or serious. It was just teasing her.

You willingly moved to a country where you know nothing about the culture, where you have no job, where you don’t even speak the language, for him?

The mist sounded maliciously gleeful. Anger rose in the pit of her stomach, exacerbated by the burgeoning insecurity she already felt about every life decision she had made in the past four months.

“I love him,” she hissed. The mist cackled and pirouetted back into the night.

“Hm?” he said. She turned her attention back to him.

“I love you,” she said. Her tongue felt thick in her mouth; the sides of her cheeks tasted like copper. He smiled and she repeated those three words, louder this time so that the mist could hear, but all she could see were little raindrops morphing into a million miniature daggers, all slicing her skin open as they sputtered down along with the blood streaming out of her body.

He wasn’t next to her anymore. He had dropped the bouquet of roses next to her writhing limbs and backed away into oblivion. The cold sliced its teeth into her heels, gnawed at the flesh on her thigh. Everything was so icy that she couldn’t feel anything anymore, physical or emotional. As she lay on the ground, the bitter winds and glacial rains of Amsterdam devouring her inch by inch, she heard their voices stroke her ear.

You’ve dug your own demise, they tee-heed. Her vision blackened, and she gave up resisting.

She had always believed that feelings would guide her on the right and truest path, one that would inevitably lead her to a happy ending—but no.

All she had learned was that she was stupid enough to destroy her own life in the name of what she thought was true love.



The Beast Beneath

Caroline Ives

Three teenagers are exploring an old mansion.

They'd been in the area, and one of them, a paranormal enthusiast, suggested they take a trip to the place. They hired a van driver to take them, but he'd parked a few minutes away from the entrance, saying it was "as far as he could take them". So they walked the rest of the way.

Now, the enthusiast starts to tell "The Story":

"Long ago, this abandoned mansion was inhabited by a rich family and their many servants. Then, one day, they tried to build a basement. There was a monster hiding under the foundation, and the moment the floorboards were removed it woke up." He paused for effect. "It massacred the entire household in minutes."

One of the teens inhales sharply. There is a quiet thud somewhere in the house.

"Their spirits are trapped here," The enthusiast continues. "You can't see them, but if you pay attention, you'll hear the sound of footsteps or see the eyes of a portrait follow you." The enthusiast gestures to a painting of a man with cobwebs draped around each corner. One of the other teens shivers, then pretends it was because of the cold. "They are cursed to follow the patterns of the day they died, only deviating from the path when the monster wants to use them... as *bait*." The enthusiast stops suddenly. "Did you guys hear that?"

"Ha, ha."

"No seriously. Come on." He takes off, and the others reluctantly follow him. The enthusiast stops at an open door and shines a flashlight inside. The room is dark, mostly empty, and has more cobwebs than the other rooms combined. He looks back at the other two and starts to go inside...

He screams, the other two scream, and then he bursts out laughing.

"That's not funny!" One of the others cries.

"Yes, it was, come on. Let's go before our parents get mad."

.....

I lean back in my chair. I scoff at that story every time I hear it; it's funny how things get twisted by word of mouth and bad imaginations. For one thing, any so-called-beast that killed so inconspicuously would be the subject of more talk. For another, the mansion isn't even abandoned, I live here, and I'm not a spirit.

I get up, closing my "portrait peepholes", and make a quick call. Then, I pick up the tea kettle I dropped earlier. There's a spider underneath it, and I crush it under my foot, scooping it up with useless data papers. It's damn hard to get an exterminator up here.

Finally, I move over to the window, looking through my telescope.

I watch as the van crawls down the mountain, taking a new path along the very edge of the cliffside. A mile below, waves crash against jagged rock. Beyond that, the wide expanse of blue. The sea dwarfs everyone. The van, the mansion, even the mountain itself.

What kind of beast could fit underneath a house anyway?

Nuclear Family

Jordan Medina

“Take care of your brother. Don’t consider sneaking out again.”

This task would prove too difficult for the young Annabelle, whose unsteady hands hovered above her brother’s abdomen, condemned by varying degrees of blisters, splintering across his stomach in jagged patterns. Inflamed cysts that bubbled and popped were scattered across his body, some smaller ones climbing up his neck.

As if someone sensed her worthlessness, the metallic crash from above signified Father and Mother were descending from the hatch. Perhaps they could help.

“Go, run your bath. Wash yourself until you’re spotless.”

Father pointed away, and Mother, covered in something thick and black, raced off to the bathroom, leaving behind powdery black footprints. It was clear that Mother had gotten caught up in one of the ‘virulent clouds’ Father warned the kids about.

“Why are you standing there? Clean up after your mother.”

I’ll take care of your brother.”

A rag was thrown in Annabelle’s direction, onto her face, as Father unlocked a first aid kit and removed a shear-like tool.

“Go.”

His tone had always been void of warmth.

And so Annabelle was on the floor, trying her best to wipe up these footprints without inhaling the mysterious substance. A gurgled shriek caused Annabelle to look up from her soot colored rag at a door left ajar. She was sure that Father instructed Mother to close the door.

Annabelle decided that she should check on her. She saw a pair of legs that didn’t make it into the tub. Mother’s torso seized from beneath the surface of the murky liquid as if someone was drowning her.

Annabelle thought for a second that it looked like a cauldron, the way the tub sizzled and popped. She could have sworn one of the bubbles burst and hissed at her.

A wet, crimson hand pulled the door shut before Annabelle could fully comprehend her Mother’s demise. Father dragged Annabelle down the hall. She tripped and heard her wrist crack, yet Father continued to pull her away.

She re-entered the room where her brother was splayed out, his stomach looking

like a flower blooming, with layers of skin pulled back like petals. A yellow mass laid in the middle, thumping like a heart. His eyes were a similar yellow greenish color, with liquid oozing out like honey from every hole in his face.

Father produced an old duffel in which he put Annabelle's brother, first cradling him in his arm before letting him slip off. He zipped it up and held out the bag.

"Do me a favor, Annabelle.

Bring your brother outside."

Father had given her a look before exiting the children's room for the last time. When Father's eyes got cold like that, she knew there was no room to question him. Annabelle knew what happened to the last daughter.

As Annabelle ascended the ladder with her brother slung over her shoulder, she wondered what could possibly happen to her in the wasteland.

She prayed for her death to be quick.



The Office

Amy Daisy Van Duzer

A soft-eyed Ella opened the door for her four-year-old daughter Rose. The smell of lavender and the expansive view of central park instantly calmed Ella's nerves. She sat her child down in the chair and Doctor Prager sat opposite, taking a discerning look at the girl. The shy Rose gazed at the floor and back up at her mother, confused. Doctor Prager held out his finger, bringing her attention back to him. Beside him, a thick file sat with the tab "M" for their surname: McCarthy. Ella cleared her throat.

"I have a nail appointment at 2:15, be back at quarter till," she said curtly, and with that turned to leave. The child gazed after her, a small puppy left alone in a kennel. Doctor Prager examined the file slowly, occasionally gazing at the child. He again held up a finger whenever her attention began to linger. Her eyes fixated on a small Ferris wheel outside in the park. She smiled, recognizing it from the tv programs she watched with her nanny. Rose was only allowed to watch programs when her mother was away, usually out with her father at galas or luncheons. The thought comforted her, and she began to daydream of the pizza and cookies she would enjoy with her nanny. The doctor's finger entered back into her sight, snapping the child back to reality. She winced a bit, yearning for her nanny. Doctor Prager's stare became fixated, his dark blue eyes narrowing at the crown of her head.

"I need to do a phrenological exam," he said. She winced again. "Can you be still, Dear Rose, it won't hurt. I will just need to examine your head a moment. I promise." He sculpted his large hands around her small head and squeezed a bit.

"No, no, that can't be." Her eyes looked up at him in questioning. "Now dear Rose," he patted her on the knee as he continued "I believe you've been born with an overdeveloped amygdala. Now don't fret, it runs in the women in your family, so we know what we're dealing with. You'll need to give yourself over to me for treatments until we can, let's say, fix this part of your brain." There was a knock on the door as her mother entered with a blank check.

"Doctor? What do you think?" She asked, hardly feigning concern as she admired her new manicure.

"The gene's run deep I'm afraid, Dear Ella," he smiled.

"Oh my, thought so. Better begin treatments as soon as possible. Wouldn't want my *perfect* daughter poisoning the family well." She looked down at Rose in a pout. "Now dear, don't fret, I'll be back with your father to see how you are after your initial treatment. You'll be just fine." And with that, Ella left, slamming the door behind her. Rose peered up at the doctor who was now opening the door to the other part of his office, the operatory and experimentation wing.

Library of Philistine

Hayden Wideman

You feel the heat leave your face and diffuse into the cool glass of the window. Your eyes open and stare out into the inky black of night. You pull your face from the window and wipe the drool from both it and yourself. Checking to see no one witnessed your faux pas, you look out at the forest of book stacks surrounding you. “Oh yeah,” you mutter to yourself. You go to pick up your shit only to realize someone must have swiped it. Fuck this place.

You look for an exit. As your shoes clatter across the linoleum, you notice not all the lights are on. The fluorescent tubes flicker in a circle centered around you. The limited lighting lends the library a limitless look.

Fahrenheit 451 catches your eye, you pick it up. You had always hated it and books like it that conflate the importance of books themselves. You weren’t a facist or nothing, but you felt the premium they placed on the actual pulp of fiction was self-serving. Suffice it to say, you found reading a book about the importance of books to be like holding your own handjob.

As your misanthropy piques, you begin to hear footsteps behind you. You drop the book and turn heel. They are heading away from you. “HELLO!” They stop. “Which way’s out?” you cry.

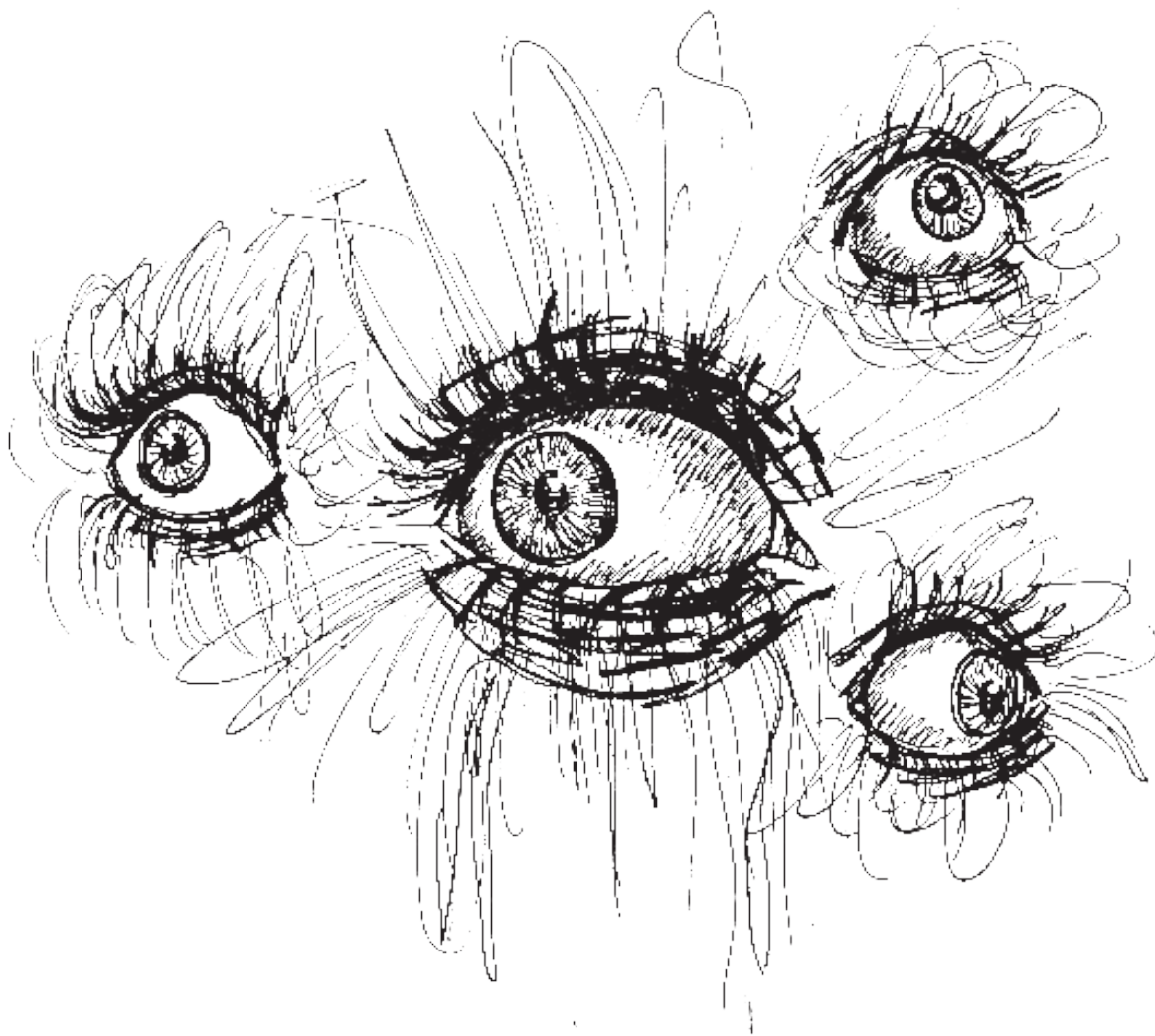
“I’m under the smoke kid,” a hoarse voice calls back. You clear enough space for your foot on the shelf beside you and clamber up enough to look over the stacks. You see another circle of lights on the ceiling about a hundred feet away, smoke dances in it. “I’ll wait here for you, I’m on my way out as well.”

With hesitance, you wind your way through the stacks towards your would-be guide. A small man hunched over a library cart stands with his back to you. Not deigning to turn around, he plods forward as you reach his row. Smoke curls from his unseen face and the stench of tobacco follows him as keenly as you do.

Finally you reach the end of the stacks. The Smoking Man and his cart are the only things that stand between you and freedom from this mausoleum of manuscripts. You can see two staircases. Without turning he asks, “Up or Down?”

“Well obviously I’m going down.”

He winds his face towards you. Fire burns in his eyes as smoke pours out of his mouth, his papery skin crackles and sings as his face stretches into a deranged smile. He sprints with his cart towards the staircase headed downward. As he crosses its threshold he jumps onto his tinderbox like a child onto a shopping cart. They both explode into a ball of fire as he sails into the darkness below, laughing all the way. You look down the staircase to behold a sea of roiling flame. You look behind you to see the only staircase left. You have nowhere to go but up.



The Watcher

Jacob Matlof

My vision began to return a fortnight ago. Picture my surprise when after a period of four and a half decades, my broken eyes began to see! At first, it came with lurid intensity, a corona of blinding lights in the pupils of my shrapnel-scarred eyes. The colors in my vision dimmed to a bleak and inky gloom. At first, a joy unlike that I've ever experienced filled my mind. Yet, as my eyes healed, a malaise of the most chilling kind began to settle in my weary bones.

A week ago, I was paid a visit. In the twilight hours of dawn, I was woken by the creaking of my archaic floorboards. I peered into the darkness, but my eyes filled with their hellish murk could discern little from the light of the low-burning candle at my bedside. I sat up, listening. What was it in the darkness? A scrambling, lumbering, noise came next, as if something heavy shambled across the floor. I was silent, sitting frozen upright in terror, an almost painful fear settling into my body. I heard more shuffling the wrenching shift of old wood, and nothing more. I must have sat unmoving for an hour before I broke free of my paralysis and fell asleep.

The next day, I scrutinized the kitchen and living room of my apartment. I searched for any clue of forced entry but discerned nothing out of the ordinary. That night I forced myself not to drift into sleep, tired as I was. The murky clouds in my vision had begun to lift and I intended to spot my intruder if he returned in the crepuscular hours of the night. A candle near my face, I waited in horror and anticipation.

The first noise was the wrenching sound I'd heard the previous night as it had left. Then, an undulating growl. I inhaled, clutching the candle close, peering into the darkness. I heard it shambling closer and struggled to make out the shape of the creature as it stood in the doorway to the room in which I slept. I could barely make it out, slender limbs ending in sharp protrusions of bone and an ashen grey face. I must have let out a whimper, for the thing lumbered towards me, halting inches from my face. It let out its sour breath, and I would have choked on the sickly odor had I not been terrified. This shambling creature was devoid of eyes, its pale skin stretched taut across its face. And yet it stared at me. It growled once more, taunting me. Then it turned, shambling away.

It's come every night since, never moving closer. I haven't slept. I can't risk that shambling monster catching me off guard. We sit in my dim candlelight watching each other. I can't bear it taunting me any longer. It will return tonight, but I won't watch it anymore. I've lived most of my life blind, perhaps it is better this way.

Party Girl

Jade Lacy

They let anyone into the frat parties here. At least anyone who looks like they have boobs and an intact student ID card. The line that snaked down the sidewalk was full of girls who were clearly taking their first venture in the world of going out clothes. I was wearing a crop top and shorts, plus respectably winged eyeliner. I thought I matched the mark pretty well.

I was wrong. Inside the humid, dark house it was a whole different ballgame. I saw midriffs and blonde hair and juicy you-know-what's everywhere I looked. In the pulsing lights I caught still-lives of girls rubbing themselves over boys and smashing their faces against their unskilled lips. There was a blankness in their eyes. A shot too many had rendered them all thoughtless and hungry. Each one was just a body within the gyrating machine.

I felt sick.

My stomach turned, and I realized that my righteous disgust might actually be my pregame shots coming back up to party. I clutched my mouth and glanced around for the bathroom. On command, a hand clapped on my shoulder. A boy, on the short side, probably a pledge, was smiling at me. I tried to smile back.

"Bathroom?!" he shouted. I nodded.

The guy took me by the wrist and navigated me through the party. He parted the sea of scantily clad girls, lower back by lower back.

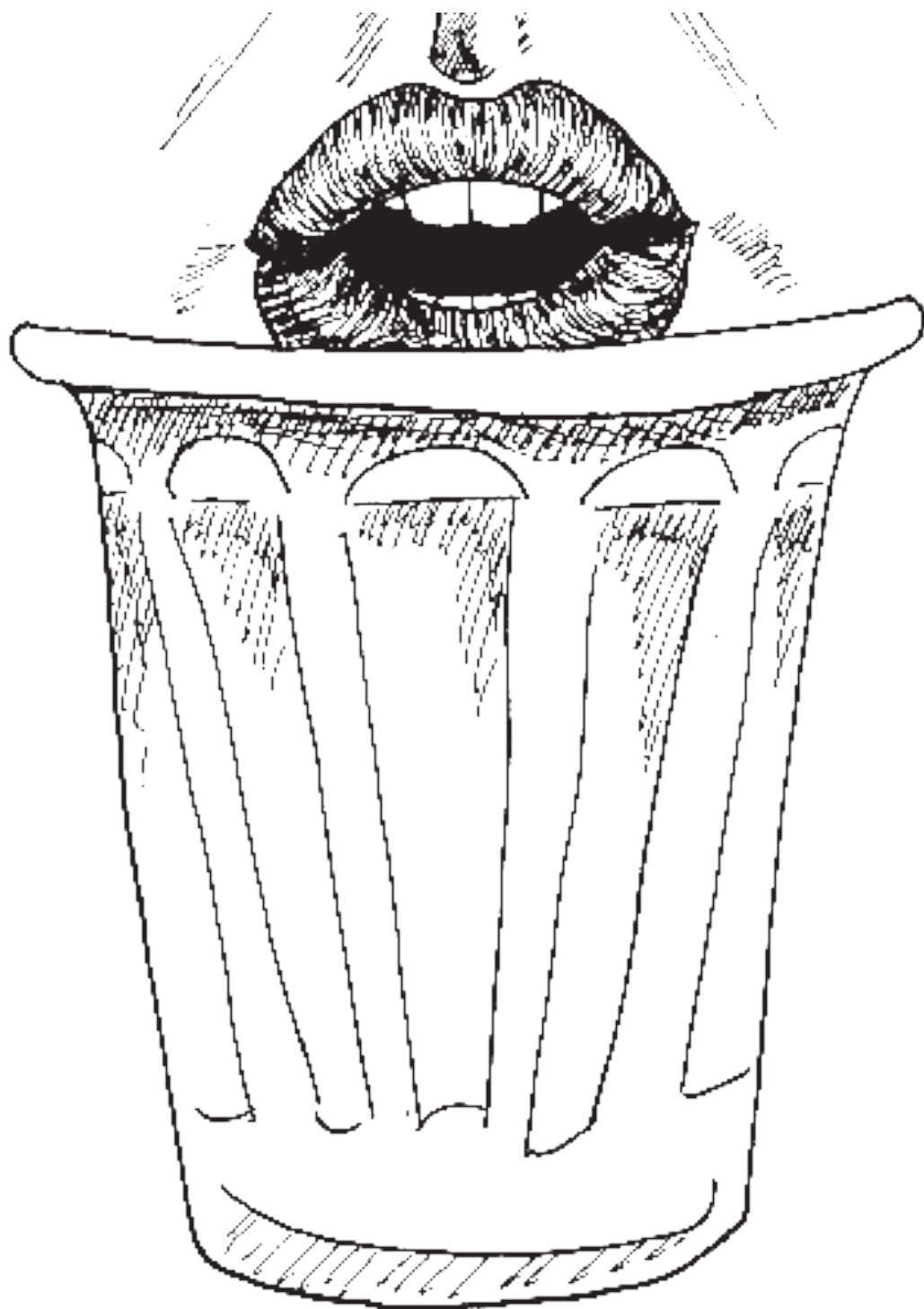
The bathroom was lined with wobbly, plain-looking girls and their hero men. My escort made an announcement that I was ready to go right now and suddenly I was struggling to open the stall door. He guided me in.

It was a strange bathroom. Stark white and large. It resembled an operating room more than a shithole. And there was no toilet. Before I could think about that, my attendant grabbed me by the waist and presented a red solo cup to me.

"Drink this," he commanded. A pink, glittery liquid swirled inside. I shook my head. The churning in my stomach was rising now.

"You'll feel better," he insisted. I opened my mouth to say no, and a fountain of vomit erupted onto the floor. He narrowly stepped to the side, as if he knew it was coming, and then, in a second, he was on me with a handkerchief. He shushed me and wiped off my mouth as I tried to babble an apology. Then, with the gentle hand of a father, he held the cup to my lips and, without even realizing it, I felt the pink liquid slide down my throat.

The guy was cute, I noticed. Something about his firm grip and kind eyes made me want to show him a good time. My stomach felt much better, and given that it was a party I thought I'd better get into the thick of things. I giggled and took him by the hand, ready to join the mindlessly writhing mass on the dance floor.



Hanging Bridge

Jaime Esaú Estrada

The planks unfolded forward as if someone behind him had ordered the proper clearance of the fog and made way for the bridge. He arranged to cross it, but stopped before he set a single foot. He committed to it and started walking, carefully as if he was asking for permission. Around there was only mist, below you could hear the commotion of birds and the constant and eternal whining of insects. But he would not look down, for the mist, though as a mantle, was incapable of stopping any convulsion or ambush. He kept walking, and when he thought he was in the middle, he turned to see his surroundings; only nothingness inhabited, and he was like a star extinguishing between a great cloud that encloses itself in many others, for blades, like the one wielded by a warrior, would be needed to cut through the layers and unravel what he came for. There in the middle now, too, no animals could be heard, despite being in the bowels of the jungle. He kept walking forward, or what he believed to be forward.

Until he finally arrived. The end of the bridge was less stable than the beginning, or had that been the other way around? He did not stop once the soles of his feet touched the damp and thirsty earth that welcomed him. Even if he tried to study the place, it was impossible, because nothing could be seen. But as if he knew where he was going, perhaps by means of an internal compass or the direction of a faint anxiety, he managed to reach the grave. Despite the haze, it was visible. A slight aura was defrosting it, and the coldness of the firm tombstone governed and communicated something unintelligible. With his heart in a fist he offered his offering; then, he sat down and started to talk while he lit the incense that he kept in his pocket. The smoke mixed into the environment, mitigating the fog slightly, giving a different smell to the place, as if he knew it, as if it was familiar.

He conversed for a while. A while is a fraction of time that is frozen by the anticipation of an expectation; that's how he stayed there talking for a while, nothing more.

"You should go now, it's late and I know you don't like seeing them. Better go. They can't hurt me anymore."

That's what was told to him when he began to listen for the first time, breaking the silence around him, just as skin breaks with a touch or time does with a cry, the unmistakable noises of those down there. Loud, vigorous roars came closer, expanding the tambourine of his chest. He rose and said goodbye. He would have to hurry and run back across the bridge, as was his habit, but his heart was no longer amplified but steady instead. After wiping a cold, large tear, he prepared to go down himself.

Whale Food

Alexis Sanchez

Eyes open up wide to see a vast ocean. So vast it makes your stomach sick. Large trees in the distance sway aggressively in the wind. Even the strongest structures can break. The clouds are gray, and so is the air, almost as if a thin gray film fills the entire landscape. The type of gray that colors everything and makes your skin sore when you're sad. Puffs of fog dance above the ocean and kiss your flesh manipulating you to believe that perhaps there is something magical about this place. You're not sure whether this is a nightmare but now your throat is scratchy, and your eyes well up the way they did when you were a kid. Like when a big adult looked down at you and made you feel small and soft. A gigantic whale slowly emerges from the sea. At first, you are not sure what you're looking at. You think, "Is this a giant fish? What is this?" It has scales on its side. It's emerald green. You can hear the water cascade from its belly and drip back into the ocean as it rises out of the sea. It's a creature you have never seen before, but once you see its belly, you have an intuitive understanding that it is, in fact, of the whale species. The type of understanding you have when you're in a dream and something weird happens, but you kind of just roll with it except; this is not a dream. It's something much scarier because real things are always scarier; that's why you doze off when you drive. The whale stands 170 feet in the sky, the height of your favorite roller coaster. Its belly makes your belly feel warm. It's a mother but not the scary kind. It's the one you always dreamed of. You are drawn to its pink mouth, and it eats you. You slide down into the pink until all you see is black. You are warm. You are safe. You don't need to do anything anymore. No breathing. No cover letters. No second-guessing. For the first time, you just are; cozy. No one can touch you. You are enveloped in darkness and not afraid anymore. Darkness is actually warm and wet and safe. You hear the sound of a horn and feel a vibrating sensation under your feet. It's time for you to be digested. You slide down with all the other algae. You might as well become algae. It's pretty much your life purpose now. This is what it was all about. That's why gum lost its taste and walking became hard, and breathing became a chore because you were meant to be algae, stupid. Algae don't need experience, they just need to be whale food.

Altar Call

Kristin Haegelin

Two figures stumble from behind the organ, half-dressed and reeking of dried sweat. The first is a girl. Eighteen-something, her hair coming out of a high ponytail as she walks alongside the pulpit. Then, he follows. Even in the darkness, the man is larger, calmer. Quieter. His white shoes shine from above, never squeaking along the marble. As he moves quickly and silently, he walks up to the girl and catches her arm. Then he smiles. Whispering sweet nothings to her, he stops his murmuring to push a strand of glimmering blond back behind her ear.

I can't make out much. They're too close together, a pair of shadowy figures in the darkness. As he turns to look behind him and what lays beyond the pews, a stray stream of silver moonlight flashes across his eyes. Seemingly satisfied, he speaks more confidently.

"Let's do something bad tonight."

Without much delay, he pulls his polo shirt over his head and drops it beside him, next to old cans of beer, broken bottles, and a small toppled cross upon which a miniature Jesus is crucified. It is an intimate space, but not a place where one should kneel anymore. Perhaps the girl realizes this, as her hand moves up to her neck and begins to rub anxiously.

At first, I think she is merely propping up her head, lifting it from its daze of drink. Then, I see a glint off of her neck and see her fingers playing with a dainty rosary. She turns to look at where they just came from. The backdoor is only a few steps away. Maybe it has locked behind them.

Now, the party goes on outside regardless of their absence. Muffled song lyrics beat through the windows while echoes of bass drum in the ground. The girl crouches down to feel the vibrations thrum against her fingertips. They travel up her arm through her body, and suddenly she's got goosebumps standing out from her skin. The air is somehow much cooler inside here than out.

Her eyes open now and she's pulling away, taking fast steps towards the door. Yet, he knows this scene. Despite her protests, he unzips her dress and carries her up the steps to the altar. She's standing on top of it, wavering bare like a leaf blowing in the wind, when he climbs up too. Then, without warning, she falls.

Her body slips backward slowly, as if gravity is impartial at this hour, tumbling down the stairs to crack at the base of the pews. A pool of red forms behind her, coloring her hair

shadow. The boy runs out the door quickly, silently.

I watch this from all four sides, the quietest of all.

I am not a vessel for God, for holy water, for spirituality to collect inside. I am merely four walls. Nothing less, nothing more.

There is little for a church on Frat Row to do.





Dreams from Ashberry Road

Claire Sammis

Mathew Morrison, only child, did not dream. He awoke in terror at 3am but made no noise, unwilling to wake his parents. He lay still and faced the wall closest to his bed, utterly sure that if he didn't he wouldn't make it to sunrise. He listened to the silence of his room and reassured himself that nothing was wrong and he could go back to sleep safely. After two hours, his exhaustion conquered his fear.

Johnathan Bellwood, oldest Bellwood still on Ashberry Road, slept alone in a king sized bed in the master bedroom of his estate. From his window he could see the rest of Ashberry Road if he wanted to, but he kept the curtains drawn and the windows shut, unwilling to face the melancholy that beckoned him. He dreamed, every night, of the day his ex-wife tumbled off the balcony after a fight between them got out of hand. Some nights, he could still hear the thump she made when she hit the ground. In the morning, he would go see his therapist and, with their help, he'd slowly work to overcome the lasting trauma.

Vivian Cox, Jonathan's live-in cook, slept in a guest bedroom one floor below the master bedroom. Though Jon had made it clear that he did not expect them to like him, he paid well, respected their identity, and treated them like a professional. Vivian respected the old man for this. They lay in bed listening to a horror podcast and slipped in and out of consciousness. They tried to hold onto the sound of their podcast, not wanting to re-listen the next day, but it was futile. They saw themselves open their eyes several times, trying to stay awake, but only found themselves waking into increasing unreality.

Karolin Raptor, newcomer to Ashberry road, avoided sleeping for as long as possible. Every night since she arrived, she had the same dream of a beast lurking outside her bedroom door. She could still hear it panting and pacing as the night went on. Though she had never seen the shape of her monster, she knew it would tear her to ribbons if she dared face it head on. With another cup of espresso down, her body began to shake. Sooner or later she'd need to sleep and, when she did, the beast would come.

Ashberry Road, old and lonely, tried to remember the last time it had residents. It filled its abandoned houses with the few people it could recall and let them wander their old halls. It hoped the company would ease the pain, but it was just as lonely before its ghosts manifested as it was afterwards. Unable to sleep and deeply melancholy, it tried to guess at its dreamers' dreams. By sunrise the dreams will fade, and Ashberry Road will die.

Fifth Grade Storytime <3

Zoie Burt

“Ara wished she had never noticed her, because this girl’s existence was destroying her own.

“When she first went to college, Ara had an unwavering sense of purpose: soaring grades to obtain, an LSAT to study for, a law school to get into. Any person that came remotely close to putting these things in jeopardy, Ara cut them cleanly from her life. Her favorite tool was a freshly sharpened Japanese chef’s knife. It did the job of permanent severance perfectly.

“Then there was an elevator. When the doors opened, she was the first person Ara saw. Lights glinted off the pearl necklace strewn over the high collar of her sweater. Ara stared at the back of her head as they dropped down thirteen floors.

“Take out your knife,” her mind whispered.

“But instead of pulling out that piece of metal, Ara’s fingers plucked against her heart strings. The music pulled her internal world into an unfamiliar and alien season, where veins braided themselves into new roots for new forests and capillaries burst like fireworks during the New Year. This girl had put Ara under a spell by simply existing.

“From then on, every morning, Ara woke up with a phantom kiss laid on the corner of her lips. The memory of this girl was permanently snagged against the splintered edges of her mind. She started skipping her classes; she got warnings from her counselors about possible expulsion. But what did her future matter compared to the high she got thinking about this girl and all the possibilities that could arise from her? Her days were now filled with an abundance of abstract pleasure; nothing mattered compared to the thought of her, the wanting, the desiring, everything and anything her mind could come up with that made life feel so breathlessly beautiful and vivid.

“Within three months, Ara was forcibly expelled from her university. Friendless, jobless, and moneyless, her obsession as derived from one encounter with this girl had completely ruined her life. She took her perfectly sharpened knife out and carved out her heart, sacrificing her ability to imagine and desire in order to live life like a normal human being again.

“So yeah,” Thelma said. “That’s my modern fairy tale retelling of the Evil Queen from Snow White.”

The rest of her fifth-grade class looked back at her, their eyes wide. In the back of the room, Mrs. O’Connell’s mouth hung speechlessly open. The silence and lack of understanding was deafening in this little corner of Utah.

Thelma sighed. She couldn’t wait until she graduated from elementary school. Because life gets less lonely when people get older...

Right?

Collection of Horror

Fall 2021



Contributors

Poetry

The Minivan

Author: Firyal Bawab

Editor: Kendall Moore

Firyal Bawab is a third-generation Palestinian migrant from Jordan. She is a third year undergrad majoring in International Development Studies. In her free time she likes watching horror movies and sketching.

body in the bathtub

Author: Alexandra Geurts

Editor: Austin Nguyen

Alexandra Geurts is an English student in her final year, and (hopefully!) is going to be able to snag a Creative Writing Concentration in Poetry by graduation. Her aspirations are to someday publish and share all kinds of creative projects she has. The only problem is that she wants to write too many things at the same time, so it is a miracle that anything ends up getting finished.

The Scream

Author: Firyal Bawab

Editor: Kendall Moore

Family Dinner

Author: Charlie Stetson

Editor: Jade Lacy

Skyler, Charlie, Stetson is a poet and author from Oakland, California and is currently pursuing a degree in English and Gender Studies at UCLA with a concentration in film. She has been publishing poetry since high school and is passionate about writing poetry through the lens of her life experience as a woman and a butch lesbian.

The Frog Prince

Author: Zoie Burt

Editor: Katherine King

Zoie Burt is a sophomore at UCLA studying English, Chinese, and Creative Writing. She is from the San Francisco Bay Area and can't wait to see where else words whisk her away to.

What Could Have Been?

Author: Olivia Hill

Editor: Austin Nguyen

My name is Olivia, and I'm an UCLA undergrad and senior.

Most Infamous Dead Girl Around

Author: Alexis Sanchez

Editor: Austin Nguyen

Alexis Sanchez is a UCLA alum; she has been published in both *The University of Chicago* and other publications.

Fiction

When Feelings Come True

Author: Zoie Burt

Editor: Garrett Ewald

The Beast Beneath

Author: Caroline Ives

Editor: Katherine King

Caroline Ives is an applied math major and a freshman student at UCLA. She is an editor for the Westwind fiction team, and writing is one of her favourite hobbies. As a lover of riddles, Caroline particularly likes stories that have little easter eggs one can look for on a second read, or even the first if you're clever enough.

Nuclear Family

Author: Jordan Medina

Editor: Garrett Ewald

My name is Jordan Medina. I am a first year transfer and a Sociology at UCLA. I am 19 years old and I am expected to graduate in 2023. I have always been interested in storytelling in any medium, but I have not produced very much completed work. "Nuclear Family" will be my first written submission for anything ever and I hope my work has a place in Westwind.

The Office

Author: Amy Daisy Van Duzer

Editor: Jade Lacy

Amy Van Duzer is a lifelong writer and MFA student at Mt. Saint Mary's College in Los Angeles. She is most inspired by her travels as well as other poets and lyricists. She has published pieces in magazines such as "Flora Fiction" and "Flare Journal."

Library of Phillistine

Author: Hayden Wideman

Editor: Kendall Moore

Hayden Wideman is like his car: big, white, and recently broken down. He spends his days writing stand-up and disrespecting the English language. If you happen to run into him on the street please feel free to put some change in his cup. You may reach him at this email address if you wish to harass or generally annoy him.

The Watcher

Author: Jacob Matlof

Editor: Garrett Ewald

Jacob Matlof is a 10th grader at Geffen Academy. He enjoys tennis, reading, and writing.

Party Girl

Author: Jade Lacy

Editor: Katherine King

Jade Lacy is a third-year English major and Asian American studies minor at UCLA. Her interests include writing, publishing, comedy, and looking cool to others. Her poetry and short fiction has been featured in Westwind Journal of the Arts and Mandarin Magazine.

Hanging Bridge

Author: Jaime Estrada

Editor: Katherine King

My name is Jaime Estrada, I am 21 years old, and I was born and raised in Tijuana, México. I'm currently studying Spanish as a transfer student. I enjoy writing poetry and short stories in my foretime, and I've been experimenting and been attracted into the gothic and terror genre in literature. I also truly enjoy music and a cloudy day.

Whale Food

Author: Alexis Sanchez

Editor: Austin Nguyen

Altar Call

Author: Kristin Haeglin

Editor: Kendall Moore

Kristin Haeglin is a first year student at UCLA. An English Major with a special interest in screenwriting and playwriting, she enjoys exploring book genres, as well as watching a variety of movies! She is especially enthralled with noir films, gothic literature, Letterboxd, and making everyday life as cinematic as possible.

Dreams from Ashberry Road

Author: Claire Sammis

Editor: Jade Lacy

I'm Claire, 2nd year English major. I like unsettling horror more than gory horror, so I wrote a few stories about people not having the best sleep, all of whom lived on the same road. I hope it's a good read.

Fifth Grade Storytime <3

Author: Zoie Burt

Editor: Garrett Ewald

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