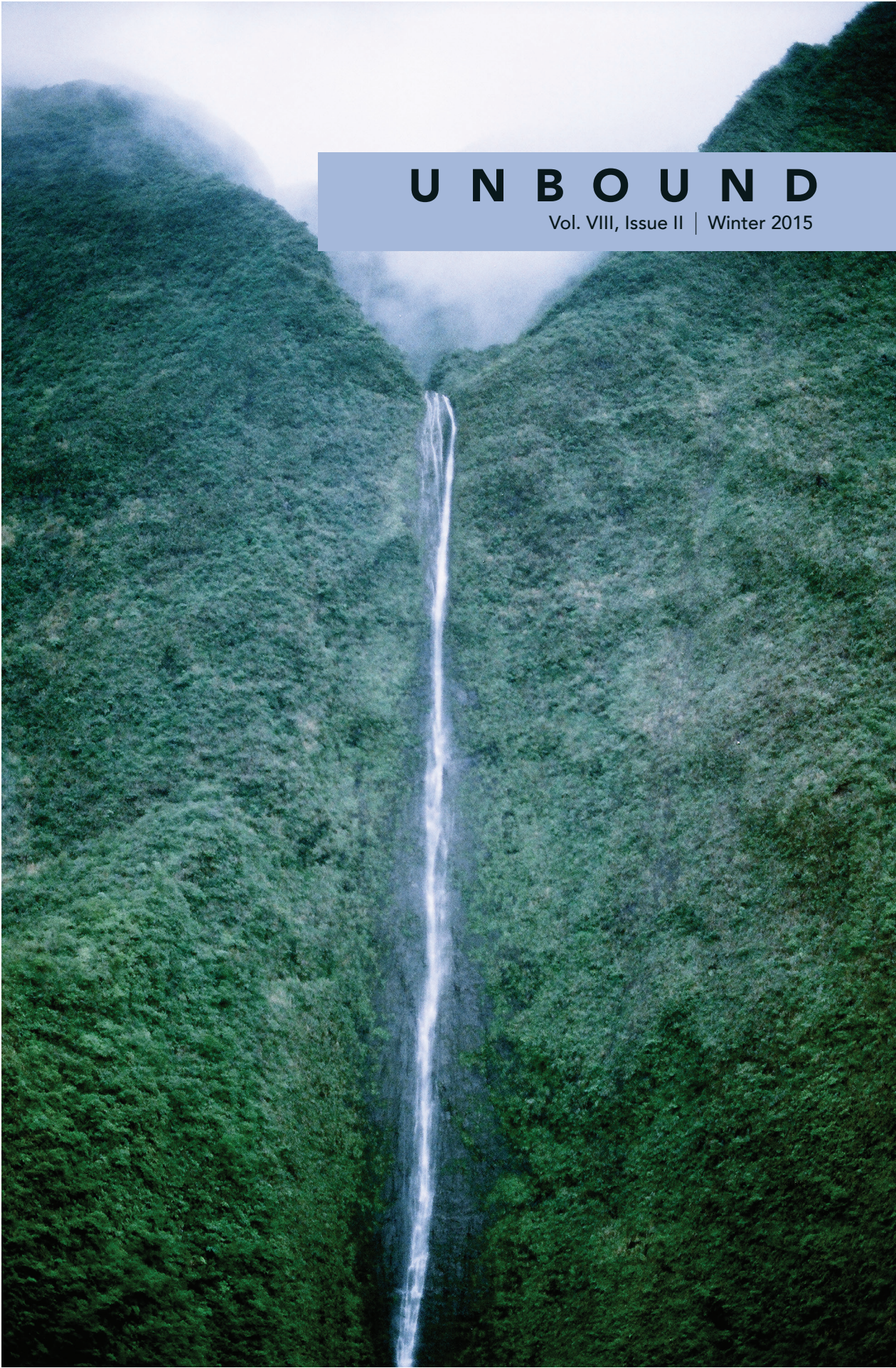




# U N B O U N D

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# *Unbound*

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*Unbound* is a platform of creative expression for students at the University of Oregon. We are transistor for the prismatic creative voices on campus. We understand art as a continuous process and aim to engage in its development while respecting the integrity of the artists and their work. At *Unbound* we endeavor to foster and enhance a collaborative creative process by opening a dialogue between the editorial staff and contributors. In addition to serving as a canvas for student art, *Unbound* allows its editors and staff to professionally engage in the field of publishing in an equally creative environment. We are thankful for all of our contributors because without them we would not have the opportunity to practice what we love.

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# CALL OUT

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By **Brooke Josler**

INSPIRED BY STANLEY KUNITZ

I have walked through many hallways,  
some of them I rented,  
most I hummed through  
without breakfast.

When I look behind,  
thinking I have heard the footsteps  
of my mother or the broken tooth  
from the laundromat,  
I find only ivy gripping my trail.

Oh, I have made myself small  
glasses of lemonade on Saturdays,  
sipped so slow the ice melted,  
and I have stared down stairs  
twice chuckling  
like a raccoon.

Yet I turn, without asking,  
and crawl around the corners  
looking for the watch I lost  
a few weeks ago or my reason,  
a good book on the ethics of marriage.

In my dark reverie, I have been known  
to utter thankyou's or cut my hair badly.

I opened a wooden window and wore overalls  
and as I grew up, out into a sticky hymn,  
it was a choice.

A maple voice called out to me:  
"Live in the space, but don't pay the meter."

I will own a broom.  
Crumbs fall asleep on the floor.  
I am not above dust.





NATALIE HARDWICKE

# A FUNNY WAY TO HELL

By ReBecca Hupp-Dukes

How much higher my breath (in South Carolina)  
enough to separate from myself. And though I use to think  
self-criticism was more effective than Lithium  
or the transient oughts  
I thought the sky away until it wasn't even a whisper.  
The Yahweh version of my consumption consists of Cheerios  
and hope and vulnerability and Depakote and Seroquel  
and Thorazine and Lamictal.  
Just pick your Jesus because, they all and  
he hacked into my throat.  
I wrote something vaguely pejorative about it and now  
burn compulsively to revolt and wake all those  
sleeping Christs in this universe that falls a funny way to hell.  
I like to enter into a world that tilts back  
if you're pretty, if I'm pretty... enough  
with this, but you introduce yourself as  
The Likelihood of Laughter and I like you  
but you can only spill coffee on how to enter into me.  
You aren't forged in ancient script or capsules,  
can't understand the loss of nothingness.  
Can't sink you to the pit of me  
To the pit of a metaphor that picks me apart—  
    she's just being a good girl.  
    She is with Dante in the 7th circle.  
    Her limbs snap like twigs.  
    Her blood dries like sap.



**BRINKLEY CAPRIOLA**

*Drifters*



# THAT'S NOT ART

---

By **Ethan Arlt**

**R**ays of sunlight cut through the sliding glass door of the apartment and woke Bernie from his sleep. He rolled around in the throw blanket his daughter, Elaine, had given him and shifted his head on the pillow. He thought about how nice it was to not worry about guarding a campsite along the Willamette River or being robbed at any hour of the night. The warmth and safety were so comfortable, and he'd had such a good dream that he wanted to return to. If this were any old day, then perhaps he would have tried to return to it. Perhaps he would have stayed on the couch and listened to his daughter get ready for her classes at the University of Oregon or her job as a waitress, and maybe he would have gotten something of hers to eat before going out to draw caricatures by campus. But today was different. It was the day Bernie was taking his trip back to France—back to where he was born and lived for two years, before his family came to the states.

Bernie sat up on his daughter's black, fake leather couch and scratched his recently greyed stubble. The stubble dug underneath his dirty fingernails, and when he put his head down it scratched at the skin on his neck. He thought of the razor he kept upstairs in Elaine's bathroom under the sink—a manual Gillette he'd brought for himself a year and a half ago when he'd started stopping by—and considered ridding himself of the stubble right away. Ultimately, he decided not to. There would be more opportunities to do so later.

He reached inside the front pocket of his backpack and removed a small, gray canvas bag that held the travel funds he'd saved up from his caricatures, some odd jobs, and what was left of his divorce money—two thousand dollars. It was all there. When he was satisfied, he put the bag back and grabbed his materials from the big pocket—a sketchbook and pencils—along with a plastic stool from Elaine's kitchen and took them outside on the shared porch for a morning sketch. Over the other dingy college apartments, he could see the tip of a mountain in the distance. It must have snowed recently—the first snow of winter—and Bernie felt inspired to draw its likeness.

The mountain reminded him of his dream. He and Elaine were climbing Mont Blanc, the famous French mountain, on a thin ridge and they couldn't see the summit through the cloud ceiling, but he knew somehow they were close. The wind whipped them, threatening to push them off the ridge. When Elaine yelled at him to turn back, he smiled at her and urged her on. They climbed higher and higher, until they finally broke through the cloud ceiling and came onto blue sky. They looked above them at the blue and then beneath them at the white clouds, and for a moment, they were like gods, and Bernie could recall that same inspiration that used to spur him to paint, to create art. He knew his trip would provide this same spark.

Bernie removed his favorite type of pencil—a Faber-Castell 9000 graphite that his ex-wife, Judy, had purchased for him three years ago when they were still together—and slid it gently over the page, creating an outline of the mountain's shape. He put the sketchbook in his lap and moved the stool so he could look up and down at the mountain easily, seeing both the real and artistic image at once. Then he flicked his pencil inside the mountain's outline, fleshing out the details. He wanted it to look real and fantastical at the same time, akin to the Romantic style, and capture both the beauty of nature and the beauty of his own art on the page.

He had accomplished this once, in the painting he'd done while he, Elaine, and Judy were

camping in Big Sur seven years ago. His family in the foreground cooking beans over the fire and the white-tipped waves of the Pacific crashing into the steep brown cliffs behind. Heavy purples and oranges streaked across the sky as the sun dipped over the horizon, a glow of red and orange cast over their own faces. A certain lightness to it. He'd framed it and given it to Elaine years ago as a gift, but she'd hung it up in her room, which was always her private space, so he'd yet to see it again. More than anything, he wanted to use it as a model to see what kind of techniques he used to use to create a masterpiece.

In an attempt to manufacture some more inspiration, he thought of one of the old famous replicas he and Judy used to have in their bedroom. Entitled *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* by Caspar David Friedrich, it was an oil painting done in the Romantic style—the most superior style. In the foreground was a man with golden hair and blue garb, facing away from the viewer. The man looked out at white fog beneath him. Brown rocks broke through the fog in certain areas, and in the background was a mountain of light blue, drawn mostly like a shadow but clear enough for the viewer to understand its grandeur. Judy never liked it much, never really took the time to appreciate it or absorb the feeling of wonder that the piece created. She would glaze over it, her eyes staring blankly at the man in the foreground, and then get into bed. After a while she asked him to take it down, saying she wanted to put something else up—some mass-produced Ikea print of a bridge over a misty gorge. Bernie tried to tell her that *that* painting wasn't art—that it didn't hold any emotion or depth—but she told him it was art to her because she liked to look at it. *Telling the artist what is and isn't art. Hah.*

Elaine walked downstairs into the living room and tripped over her father's things, which were strewn about the floor like children's toys. She bent down and picked up an old can of Great Value refried beans, a half-empty water bottle, and her father's blue beret and put them back into his pack for him. He was sitting outside on her porch, with the stool from her kitchen, and she could hear him humming an old Earth, Wind & Fire song they used to listen to. She recognized the tune, "September," because he hummed it almost every morning that he was there. And he was there a lot.

After she'd found out he'd lost his apartment, he had stayed with her for a few months as he tried to get back on his feet. This was all fine for her; she loved her father and didn't want to see him in such a bad state. But after he'd been fired from his first few jobs for tardiness or attitude, he had stopped applying. Some days she would come back from classes to find him still on the couch, drinking whiskey with the TV on, scribbling in his sketchbook, and telling her that he was in fact "working" and could be making the next *Mona Lisa*. He was getting much too comfortable, and in an effort to help him jump start his life, she'd found him an open job as a janitor at the university and kicked him out for a bit. She'd see him around campus sometimes, and then for a while, she didn't. He then reappeared shortly after on the curb in front of the Spirit Store, drawing caricatures for money, insisting that he was doing fine, telling her that he had a new apartment.

Things stayed like this for a few months. She would see him and stop and chat, for shorter periods than he'd have liked, and then she'd be on her way. During this time, he grew progressively worse. His facial hair started to turn grey and his eyes were bloodshot and tired almost all the time. A few times, she'd spotted him drinking and smoking by himself at his station. After four months, he was back on her doorstep with a backpack that held all of his possessions, talking about how he would only need to stay for one night because he was leaving for a trip to France the next day. He stayed for one night, and then he left for a night, and then came back the next night, for some

reason or other. One more night, off and on, turned into another and another and then weeks at a time with only a few days out on his own. Always talking about his trip. Always around her.

From on the patio, he hummed the chorus of "September," a song Elaine couldn't listen to anymore. He put down his sketchbook and pencil and opened the sliding glass door. "Good morning!" he said. He stretched his arms toward the sky and made an overly loud guttural noise.

"Morning," she said, placing the last of his cans in his pack for him.

"Oh, no, no, no. Leave that for me. I can clean up my own mess. I'm sorry about that."

A smile stretched across Bernie's face. His words sounded sincere, but his eyes shifted around while he spoke, never quite making eye contact with her. This was something new that Elaine had noticed about her father since he'd come back. She pushed the blanket aside and sat down on the couch and tied her black dress shoe.

"I really don't like waking up and seeing a big mess. I've already told you that." She ripped the laces through one another and pulled them tight.

"I'm sorry. This'll be the last time I have to stay over. I promise."

"You said that two days ago. You shouldn't make promises you can't keep." Elaine looked at her father and again he looked past her.

"Yes. But I mean it this time. Today's the day that I leave for my big trip."

"Do you have a plane ticket?"

"No."

"Then you're not leaving today."

"Yes I am, dear. Did you know that tickets are cheapest right before takeoff? They have to sell the extra seats. Your old man's got a few tricks up his sleeve."

"That's *if* they have tickets left."

"Don't be such a pessimist, Elaine."

He stole a glance at her. She met his eyes, looked down, and then exhaled and picked a piece of lint off her black dress shirt.

"You're still more than welcome to come with me." He looked at her again, watching the small movements, hoping to see her eyes widen or her ears perk up, but she remained looking down at her shirt and shook her head, like she did every other time he asked.

"I can't just pack up and leave for some trip. I have a lot of responsibilities."

She hesitated on the last few words and then regretted them. Given her father's circumstance, they seemed more biting than she'd intended. But they didn't seem to faze him. If they did, he didn't show it.

His eyes wandered past her to the kitchen, and he walked over and picked up the banana that she'd set out for herself for breakfast. Before she could say anything to him, he peeled it and took a big bite.

"Do you mind if I have this?" he asked. A piece of half-chewed banana flew out of his mouth. "I haven't had potassium in a while and I think my legs are starting to cramp."

"I was going to have that."

Bernie rifled through the pantry and pulled out some waffle mix because he knew that waffles were her favorite. In middle school, she would make them every Sunday morning.

"That's okay. We can make waffles together," he said. "Like old times." He held the waffle mix up and some of it dumped onto her floor. He apologized, and she went into her closet and grabbed a broom and dust pan, but he stopped her, insisting that she should leave it there for him to clean.



"I'll just have some almonds or something."

"Oh!" he said. He swallowed the rest of the banana in his mouth and then continued. "There's a fantastic new art gallery at the Schnitzer. Would you like to join me? I think you'd really like it."

"I thought you were leaving today," she said.

"I am. But I could do this before I go."

She remembered the last time she'd gone to an art gallery with her father, when she'd finally caved after his multiple attempts to invite her. While they walked through the gallery, he spoke the entire time, as if afraid of the silence, always staying a few feet away from her. Even though he'd brushed his teeth at her apartment that morning, he constantly checked his breath before speaking in her direction. A docent came by to tell them about a piece and her father tried to argue the validity of his statements, citing his own "art" as if it made his points more credible. And she could feel the gazes of the other people in the museum and hear the soft whispers. *Who is this guy? Who does he think he is?*

"I have to go to work. I'd really prefer if you didn't stay tonight."

"I won't need to." Bernie smiled.

"Thanks."

Elaine walked upstairs and shut her door. She started up some folk music that Bernie didn't recognize.

"You haven't told your mother about me staying over, right?" he said. He raised his voice so she could hear him up the stairs.

"No," she said through the door.

"Thanks." Bernie walked away from the staircase, but then returned. "Do you have that painting I made for you? That one of us at Big Sur?"

"I have it."

"Can I see it?"

"Not now. I need to leave."

He understood. It would be a hassle to take it down on such short notice. So he would see it later.

Elaine burst out of her room and flew down the stairs. "Good luck today with whatever you're doing," she said.

"Wait," he said. "This could be the last time you see me for a while."

He raised his arms for a hug and, after hesitating, she embraced him. Even though he washed his set of clothes a few days ago at her place, they still smelled like cheese that had been left out for too long—her father's scent. It was the same scent she smelled as a little kid, when she would curl up between her parents after having a nightmare, only the scent was amplified now, and rather than comfort her, she couldn't bear it.

"I love you," he said as she was halfway out the door.

She turned and saw her father standing there in her living room in his white and black striped shirt, with his thin shoulders slumped and a smile on his face, and she thought to herself how he'd come to this. It was hard for her to look at him, to see what had become of the man she once looked up to. For some reason, a drawing came to her mind, one she'd made in elementary school. The assignment was to draw a role model and she drew herself and her father. The crayon drawing was horrible, two stick figures holding hands, only distinguishable by the length of their stick bodies and

poorly drawn hair. But when she'd brought it home and showed him, he'd made her feel so good about it, sticking it on the fridge with a magnet, noting all the "artistic" choices she'd made to make the figures come to life on the page. She didn't really understand what he was saying but his smile was infectious and it made her feel good. That moment seemed so far away now.

"I love you too," she said and then shut the door behind her, leaving Bernie all alone in her apartment. He grabbed the broom and dust pan from where she'd leaned it against the wall and swept up his mess and then put them back in the closet. Before returning to his sketch, he decided to write Elaine a short rhyme. He grabbed a pen from his pack and ripped a small piece of paper from a notepad on Elaine's fridge. Then he wrote:

*I'll be gone for a long time.  
It'll sure be a while.  
But when I come back,  
I hope to see your smile.*

They used to make these little rhymes up when they went camping as a family. They had no service, so Judy could take a break from her constant work emails, and that was when she was at her best, when her silliness bubbled out to the surface. Sometimes Bernie would start a rhyme, and he would be looking for the final word, and Judy would finish it. He liked to finish her rhymes too, more than she finished his, but she got tired of that after a while and would say, "Stop. Just let me speak." When Judy went to sleep before him—as she did most of the time—Bernie would help Elaine carve her marshmallow sticks and talk to her about what was going on in her life: her dance recitals, how she liked her new piano teacher, the boys who teased her. On the best nights, they would talk for hours and the marshmallows would burn and drip into the fire. And when the marshmallows were all dripped away, they would put some more on.

Bernie stuck the rhyme to the fridge with a magnet and returned to his spot on the patio. He lit a cigarette and took up his drawing once more. He dragged and exhaled and watched the smoke float up into the blue sky, dispersing and being carried away by the wind, until he couldn't see it anymore. He wondered where it went, the smoke, when he couldn't see it anymore. Did it just disappear?

He dragged again and checked his cheap Casio watch, noting there was still plenty of time to grab a bus to the Portland airport. He looked at his drawing of the mountain. The lines had come out curved and cartoony, like they had for his last few sketches, and he worried for a moment that his caricatures had sapped all of his real artistic ability. But he couldn't think like that.

A crow cawed from the top of a large fir tree. It was looking around, searching for other crows, but none of them came. Bernie cawed back at the crow, flapping his arms and smiling, letting it know that he heard its call. The crow turned its head toward him and stared for a moment, its small head twitching around, taking full stock of him, looking him up and down. And then it flew away

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Campus was alive. Students rushed in and out of the Spirit Store, past where Bernie had set up his caricature station, and walked onto the main quad—sections of maintained green lawns intercut by white concrete pathways—before disappearing into old red brick buildings. Bernie loved walking through campus. He loved seeing the students and the energy and the passion of the place. Sometimes, when he still worked sanitation, he would stop in front of one of the old red

brick buildings and stare for a moment. He'd think about all the learning that was going on and had already gone on inside. All the brains working. A precursor to great things, and at the same time, a connection to the past. Even though he'd never been to college, when he stood in front of the old red brick buildings, he felt like he too was a part of something great. Bernie reached inside his pack for the canvas bag. It was there and so was all his money. He could take it and go if he wanted to. He was a free man after all. No material possessions to tie him down. But he was in no real rush and figured he may as well make some more money on his last day in Eugene.

"*Il fait beau aujourd'hui*," he called. "Come get your ugly mug drawn. Only five dollars." Bernie pulled out his blue beret from his pack and put it on and lit a cigarette to keep his hunger down. A gust of wind made him shiver, but he didn't wear his coat for fear of breaking character and losing customers.

A group of students next to him had set up a bake sale table. Bernie leaned over and asked how much it was for a brownie. When they replied that it was "suggested donation," he fished a quarter out of his pack and handed it to them in exchange for a few brownies. It probably wasn't an appropriate payment, he thought, but on most days they didn't even sell everything they had. Bernie scarfed down the brownie, hoping to quell some of his hunger, but instead of filling him up it made him realize how hungry he was. The banana he had at Elaine's was the first thing he'd eaten since this time yesterday. His stomach growled, and he gazed around at the restaurants lining 13th street and smelled hamburgers from the pub across the way. He wanted to go over and get something, but he had vowed not to spend any of his travel funds, so he would have to make some money—maybe draw two caricatures—before he got his food and left for his trip.

Students walked out of the Spirit Store with their bags of books, and he thought of how when Elaine was in middle school, he would take her to this same store and she would wander around for hours, looking at the books on the second floor. She would come up to him with a book in her hands and tell him everything there was to know about that particular book, running her hand over the cover. She really liked covers. Liked the look of them and the feel of them especially. After she'd gone through the Spirit Store books and the rest of the local bookstores multiple times, he would drive her two hours up to the Powell's Books megastore in Portland a couple of times a month. On the way there, they would listen to Bernie's old Earth, Wind & Fire CD. Listen all the way through, singing the lyrics. Bernie wondered if Elaine still knew the lyrics. He did.

A blonde girl and her mother walked up and asked Bernie for a caricature, and the smell of hamburgers seemed to get stronger. He dragged on his cigarette.

"*Ah, mademoiselles magnifiques*." Smoke slipped out of the corners of his mouth. "Of course!" He shifted the two chairs he'd borrowed from the Asian restaurant around the corner and wiped the seat off with his shirt before asking them to please have a seat. Then, he began.

He drew with speed and fluency, with the practiced hand of someone who had been doing this for much too long. He looked first for their physical oddities. Girl, big ears. Mom, big ears. Both, big ears. Mom, big lips. He drew the circular outline of their faces, emphasizing curved, cartoony lines, and then began on their extremes. All the while, he told them jokes about the school and stories of his life. Most of these were made up, but the goal was to entertain, not to tell the truth. After a few minutes, he'd completed the drawing of the mother and daughter, but they didn't seem to be in any hurry, so he didn't tell them the piece was finished. Instead, he drew a light sketch of himself between them, to see what it would look like, and then erased himself from the drawing. He shaded the mother and daughter a bit more to give them more depth and then stood up quickly.



"It's finished." He showed them their cartoon selves and the mother and daughter laughed. Bernie wondered how they could get such enjoyment out of such a terrible drawing. He bowed deeply, removing his blue beret, and the mother placed a five dollar bill in his hat. She took the drawing and handed it to her daughter.

"This'll be great for your dorm room," the mother said. "You can put it right next to the poster I got you. Then you'll never forget to call your mom to check in."

The daughter forced a laugh.

"Sure," she said. But she wasn't going to put it up. Bernie could see the look on her face. The daughter's eyes avoiding her mother's, the shoulders not squared, the smile that faded too quickly. She might not call until December.

The mother and daughter walked on to campus and a group of students, led by a tall boy in a North Face vest and red beanie, walked down the sidewalk toward him.

"Bernie, bonjour," the red beanie boy said.

"*Salut, ca va?* A drawing today for... What is your name, sir?"

The red beanie boy did not stop or look at him.

"Pierre," Bernie said. The group kept walking, and Bernie laughed. "A fine name indeed!" he called. "Have a beautiful day!" The red beanie boy did not turn back.

Bernie's smile faded, and he sat back in his chair and rubbed his stubble. He had forgotten to shave it and he wanted to shave it before the trip because it would start growing out quickly. Maybe he could go back to Elaine's and shave before he left. Just a quick shave and he'd be out. Bernie hated the feeling of scruff.

He waited hours for more customers, and the meals that accompanied them, but nobody came. Bernie's mind wandered to his painting. Was it above her bed? He saw the waves crashing into the cliffs, the orange and purple sky, his family in front.

A white and tan Subaru Outback, his old car—the car he'd lost in the divorce—pulled into the parking spot across the street and Judy stepped out. She looked healthy, in her green Property Management Concepts shirt with tight black pants that hugged her strong legs. She glided across the asphalt, swinging her hips back and forth slightly, and flipped her hair, which she'd dyed blonde. Back when she and Bernie were together, it used to be brown and she would always talk about how she hated when moms tried to look younger by dyeing their hair. Apparently, she'd become what she hated.

Her brown eyes looked directly at him as she approached and Bernie avoided her gaze, hoping she would pass him and go into the Spirit Store to purchase something; instead, she stopped in front of him, blocking out the sunlight.

"You need to stay away from her," she said. Bernie stomped his cigarette out on the ground and offered Judy a seat, but she remained standing and placed her hands on her hips. From up close, he could tell that her hair wasn't all blonde. The roots were still brunette, trying to come back to life. The small details.

"She loves having me over," he said. "We went to the museum last week. Then I went back to my place."

"I know. She was texting me the whole time." Her face relaxed, her shoulders fell and she sat down in front of him, casting the sun back into his eyes. "I know you're struggling. If things get really bad, I can give you some food or something. You just need to give her a break."

"Things aren't bad. I get by." He pushed his backpack further behind his chair with his foot. "Do you remember that trip we used to fantasize about? To France?"

"That was your fantasy."

"Well, I'm finally going."

"That's great. You can't go to Elaine's anymore. Just stay away for a while. She's busy with her own life." Bernie's eyes widened and he looked past her at the open sky.

"I'm going to summit Mt. Blanc and pop my head above the clouds."

"Did you hear what I said? I'll call the cops if this gets out of hand." His gaze returned to her and when he met her eyes, he looked at some of the students passing by.

"That's silly. I'm her father. You can't call the cops on me." Bernie chuckled.

"I can if I need to."

"I don't know what gives you the feeling that she doesn't like having me around, but I can assure you—"

"She's called me every day, telling me about how you won't leave her alone." Judy took her phone out from her pocket. "I can show you the call history."

"You don't need to show me the call history. I'm leaving for my trip. Didn't you hear me when I said that?"

"You were always going to do *something*." Judy stood up from her chair and moved toward the street.

"How's work?" Bernie asked. She turned back around and she looked at him with her eyebrow raised, as if trying to solve a riddle.

"Fine. I got promoted. Now, I manage."

"That's fantastic." Bernie motioned toward the chair. "Would you like a caricature?" he asked, still avoiding her eyes. "I could do it for free." She answered quickly.

"No thanks. I have to be back at the office by—"

"Three." Bernie looked at her, watching her reactions, and smiled. Judy's thin lips pursed and turned down.

"Leave her alone for now. Please."

She walked away and got in their old car and drove off down the road, disappearing past the throngs of students. He wanted to be with her—to sit in the car next to her, to run his hands over the steering wheel, to feel like he had something of his own again. But that time had passed. What happened was always going to happen. He and Judy were always going to disagree on how to spend family money and they would always fight over Bernie's lack of income, and in the end, they would always compete for their daughter's love. There was nothing he could do to change it, so he didn't spend time worrying about what he should have done to keep his life together. Bernie sat back in his chair and watched students pass by.

"Get your ugly mug drawn," he said. His voice was weak and scratchy, and he didn't feel much like drawing anymore; instead, he felt his hunger, sitting heavy in his stomach. He packed up his things and walked across the street to Taylor's for a burger, and when he was finished eating, he walked a few blocks to the liquor store and used a bit of his travel fund on a bottle of Old Crow whiskey. Just a little something for me, he thought. Just this once. He walked a block to a small park, bordered by dilapidated student housing, and sat on a bench and looked up at the blue sky. He used the brisk air to fuel his imagination.

Elaine with gear on, the blizzard whipping the few strands of brown hair that stuck out of her hood. *The top's just a little further*. He grabbed her hand and helped her to the summit of Mont Blanc, and they looked together at the view. Miles of clouds like marshmallows. He opened his eyes. The same blue sky above him. The view around him different. He wanted to paint blue, to splash it

on the canvas and watch it drip and be absorbed. He took another drink from the Old Crow, then closed his eyes once more.

The sun was down and the night was cold, and Bernie was headed for Elaine's with the quarter-empty bottle of Old Crow in his hand. He scratched at his stubble, which had grown to an uncomfortable length, with his free hand, and when he put his neck down to shield himself from the cold wind, the facial hair irritated him and he scratched again violently. The stubble stood between him and his trip. Needless to say, he couldn't wait to be rid of it.

When he arrived on Elaine's block, he heard the thump of some kind of music emanating from her complex and as he got closer, he found the source to be his daughter's apartment. He watched the shadows of multiple party-goers move across the drawn window shade, dancing, enjoying each other's company. Elaine's shadow, or what he thought to be Elaine's, swayed along to the electronic beats.

Bernie combed his half-gray hair into a part and checked his breath. While it smelled, he didn't think it to be too offensive. He made his way up the short flight of stairs and took another drink from the Old Crow before rapping his knuckles on the door.

Inside the apartment, Elaine stopped dancing and set down her red solo cup on the linoleum floor. She looked through the peephole and when she saw her father standing there, army-green backpack on, straightening the hair around his blue beret, she wished it were anyone else.

"Dad, you can't come in," she said through the door.

"I can't hear you over the music," he said, setting down his whiskey on the doorstep. "I just need to shave." She opened the door a crack and before she could say anything else, he pushed his way in and turned to face her. "*Ma fille merveilleuse*. So good to see you."

"Take your razor and shave somewhere else."

"I just need one last good shave." He hugged her. "It's always so good to see you."

Elaine held her breath and left her arms limp at her sides. He let go of her and though she avoided the brunt of his smell, she caught traces of his scent and the alcohol that seeped from his pores. Before she could say anything else, he bumped into a few of her friends and then immersed himself in the crowd of dancers.

Bernie scoped out the crowd and thought of how he would paint the scene. *Blurred lines. No. Sharp lines, but maybe less defined. Not cartoony.* He had to do them justice—the dancers, the youth, because they were *it*, *the spark of life*. They still had time to do anything, time to love and laugh and be in control. They jumped along with the beat of the music and even though Bernie was not fond of the electric sounds, he couldn't help but bounce his leg along with them. The heartbeat of the crowd.

A few of Elaine's friends stopped dancing and stared at her father as he looked around and introduced himself to some of the more attractive women. More heads started to turn, to notice the man who didn't belong. Elaine ran upstairs into her room and pulled twenty dollars from her wallet and came back down. She tapped her father on the shoulder.

"You can have this if you leave."

He turned and when he saw the money in her hand, his face dropped, the creases around his eyes, caused by the constant smiling, undone. The bags prominent underneath his brown eyes. He held up his hand and shook his head. She couldn't hear what he said next because he said it softly, almost like a whimper, and the music drowned it out. She thought she could read his lips: "I don't want that."

He turned and walked further into the crowd, pushing his way into the center, into the core.

Before he started dancing, he noticed that somebody had taken his rhyme down from the fridge. He pushed past a few people and searched for it on the ground, under the fridge, in a cabinet somewhere, but it was nowhere to be found. He saw Elaine talking to one of her friends by the door—a muscular blonde boy who was bigger than him. She raised her arms in exasperation and then pointed toward him and the blonde boy nodded and walked his way.

Bernie threw himself over to the speaker dock where Elaine's phone was plugged in. He unlocked it, using the four-digit password he'd seen her use multiple times, and scrolled through the music library until he found it, then clicked. The familiar Earth, Wind & Fire tune poured through the speakers.

*Do you remember the 21st night of September?*

He sang along with the lyrics and some of the more drunk students sang along with him. Elaine didn't sing. Instead, she watched her father from the other side of the room as he made a fool of himself, trying to get attention like he always did. She wanted him to leave, to be a normal dad who had a steady job and came to visit only when he was invited and helped her instead of the other way around. But this was her father, dancing and singing with college students, stealing glances at her, knowing he wasn't welcome and staying anyways. Haunting her like a bad memory.

With her blonde friend, she fought through the crowd, but before they could reach Bernie, he slipped past them against the wall, using a few of her friends as a barrier, and dropped his pack.

"I'm going to shave now." He ran upstairs.

On his way into the bathroom, he noticed that Elaine had left her door open. As he didn't want any nosy party guests entering her room, he moved to close it, but when he did, he noticed that the painting wasn't above her bed. He opened the door and entered. He looked for it. Behind her laundry basket, in her closet, behind her desk. He got down on his hands and knees and looked under the bed and spotted the edge of the black frame that held his masterpiece. He withdrew it and saw the oranges, the purples, the white-tipped waves, the steep cliffs, his family. He saw his masterpiece again.

But he saw it through a layer of dust. It hadn't been looked at in years.

He wiped the dusty glass off with his arm and then grabbed a hammer and nail from the toolkit in Elaine's closet. He kneeled on the pillow side of her bed and held the painting against the wall. When he was satisfied with the level of it, he placed the nail under the string on the frame and hammered it into the wall. As soon as he did this, Elaine appeared out of the stairway and came rushing toward him.

"What are you doing?" She pushed him, causing him to fall backward on the bed, and grabbed the painting off the wall, moving to put it away in her closet when she felt her father's hands latch on to the other side.

"This is art. My art. It deserves to be up." He pulled and adjusted himself so his back faced the wall, and then he pulled again. She held on tight.

"I can do what I want with it. Just leave it alone!" She pulled back, causing Bernie's hands to slip, but he gripped it tighter and pulled back. This time, her hands slipped back along the frame.

"It needs to be displayed. People need to see it. *You* need to see it!"

He threw his entire body back and her hands slipped off. Without the resistance, Bernie's body flailed backward and his head hit the wall with a loud thump and his arms crossed the left side of his body. He heard glass shatter. With the painting still in his hands, he leapt off the bed, ignoring the pain in his head, and when his boots hit the ground, little bits of glass crunched on the carpeted floor. He looked down at the shattered glass and then turned the frame over to reveal the painting,



which had lost its protection and was now exposed to all sorts of damage—damages of food or water, damages of the elements, damages of time. The oranges and purples would dull. The family would fade away.

Bernie fell to his knees and carefully set the painting down next to him. With his bare fingers, he picked shards of glass out of the carpet and put them back on top of the painting, scrambling to fit the broken pieces together like some impossible jigsaw puzzle.

“Dad,” Elaine said. She sat down on the bed and watched her father. He didn’t hear her. He didn’t want to. She looked at what he’d become and sobbed once before composing herself and speaking to him again, louder this time, not like she was speaking to her father anymore, as if she were speaking to a stranger.

“Get out,” she said. “*Now.*” He turned his head to look at her, and she stood up from the bed, towering over him.

She looked different to him—changed. Her brown eyes, eyes that used to be blue, didn’t move and stayed on him. Her chin jutted outward and her nostrils flared, and her nose was not like his. It was bigger, like her mother’s. He’d never seen her like this before. He looked down at the shards of glass in his hand and when he dropped them onto the painting, he noticed it was covered in his blood. He watched as the blood creep down the sharp sides of the glass and then dripped into the white-tipped waves of the Pacific. Little crimson dots that didn’t belong.

“Okay,” he said. He looked at his hands and when he wiped them on his shirt, trying to get rid himself of the blood, a fresh layer appeared, starting from his fingertips and running down past his bony knuckles and pooling into his palms. “Okay. I’ll leave.”

“I’ll get you something,” she said. She started toward the bathroom, but he stood up and stepped in front of her.

“No. No.” He shook his head and put his hands in his pockets and looked at her, his daughter, who had grown up and grown away. “I won’t take anything else.”

He walked toward the bathroom door. “I just need my razor so I can shave.” He walked into the bathroom, not waiting for her response, and grabbed his manual Gillette razor from underneath the sink and capped it with a plastic protector. When he came out of the bathroom, she was standing in her doorway.

“You’re taking your razor?” She raised an eyebrow.

“There are lots of places to shave.” He forced a smile. “I’ll go shave somewhere else.” He walked downstairs. Someone had changed the music back to electronic and the kids partied on without missing a beat. The crushing bass assaulted his ears as he weaved his way back to the kitchen where he’d left his pack. He removed the small canvas bag from the front pocket of his pack, putting the razor in its place, and took enough money for a bus ticket and a few meals. Then he placed the bag on the counter and ripped a piece of paper from the notepad on the fridge and with a pen, he wrote “For Elaine,” before dropping it on the canvas bag.

He shouldered his pack and made his way through the crowd and opened the front door. Before exiting, he turned back around and saw her in the stairwell. She stared at him, as if expecting him to come back inside, to make another excuse, or to say another goodbye. But he didn’t; instead, he forced a smile and a wave and then left.

The bottle of Old Crow was still on the doorstep where he’d left it. He picked it up with a bloody hand and took a drink and then another, but it didn’t numb him. The bird on the label stared through him. He looked up at the sky, and the stars were gone, siphoned away by the streetlights and the clouds on the edges of his vision. A cold wind dug down into his bones and

made him shiver, and he knew that no drink could warm him up. And though he had walked past the station many times before, it now seemed so far.

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One of the fluorescent lights inside of the Greyhound station flickered on and off. On and off. A small woman with beady eyes called for the next person in line and Bernie asked her what bus was leaving next. She told him San Francisco, and Bernie handed her the money for a ticket, trying to hide the dried blood on his hands, and then sat down on a plastic chair. After a few minutes, the bus pulled up to the curb outside and stopped with exhaustion. The doors slid open, and Bernie boarded and handed his ticket to the overweight driver who didn't look at it before cramming it in the ticket box next to his seat. Bernie made his way to the back.

People were scattered among the seats of the bus, drawn to the edges as if repulsed by him. They hid under hoods and the shadows made by the dim lights above, but Bernie could see what they were. They were ugly—noses too big, ears stuck out too far, moles, unibrows. Fodder for a caricature. They were ex's. Ex-husbands, ex-wives, ex-mothers, ex-fathers, ex-daughters. Drifting along as the world was pulled out from under them, and their hands doing the pulling. They were alone.

Bernie took his seat in the back, and on the opposite side of him was a bearded man in a dirty green hoodie with a full trash bag in his lap. The lights above shut off, and the bus forced out air before lurching forward and pulling onto the street. Bernie looked out the window as the town passed him by. The familiar streets he used to drive on in his Outback. The restaurants on 13th. His old home. The red brick buildings of campus. He wanted to stand amongst them one last time.

He lit a cigarette and opened up his sketchbook, and the sketch of the mountain was there. His shading was off on the left side. So poorly done. Too light. The shadows looked terrible, drawn as if there were a light source on both sides of the mountain. And the curved lines. The lines he could never get right again. The curved lines he drew time after time after time. A fucking cartoon. He ripped the drawing out of the sketchbook and tossed it on the floor of the bus and started a new one. His Faber-Castell gouged the paper, and his bloodied hand swept across the page. He drew two circles, and then a third, and started to fill in the details. Two women, with long hair and big noses, and the figure next to them a man with bulbous eyes and a small nose and a gaping mouth that hung open and stretched across his face. He gave them bodies, the two women thicker and stronger than the man, and drew them seated around a campfire with marshmallow sticks in their hands. He added shadows from the fire, a semblance of reality, but the scene didn't look real because it wasn't. He drew it all with curved lines.

"That's really good." The man with the trash bag leaned over the empty seats and Bernie kept his head down, pretending not to hear him. "You going to San Fran, too? I heard it's a nice place." The man coughed, and Bernie dragged on his cigarette. "I wanted a change, you know? It was time for a breath of fresh air." Bernie exhaled smoke, and the man put his hand on Bernie's shoulder. "I know you." Bernie looked up at the man, whose green eyes, yellowed around the edges, were wild, staring holes into him. Focused and distant at the same time, as if he were thinking of something else. Another place. "You're the artist on 13th. By campus." The bus driver yelled at Bernie to put out his cigarette.

"I don't make art." Bernie crushed the lit cigarette into the campfire, as if trying to ignite it, and watched as the orange embers flicked out on the page one by one. A tiny plume of smoke rose from the campfire, floating around Bernie's face before being swallowed by the darkness of the bus. The page was stained with little black burn marks the embers had left behind. He shook his head. "I just do caricatures."

# *Ethics of* **OWNING**

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By **Brooke Josler**

There were two Justins on Hawkeye Run.  
Weekly, one would write his name into the other family's driveway,  
the urine evaporating into spring.

I told my mother I was going for a walk with our labrador.  
We met Max at the swing sets in the park between our houses.  
First few kisses, gently rocking, eyes closed. I dropped the leash.

One Justin's mother would spray the ears of their husky, Bandit  
with Raid to keep the bugs from burrowing into his brain.

After searching with weak legs and bitten lips for the lost dog  
we relented into the twilight, heading home. Montana lay  
panting on the porch by the front door, and behind her  
my mother's hard silhouette was a bruise.

The other Justin told me I was his girlfriend.

A moving truck, the purple shutters, cherry tree and hot urine,  
two dead dogs, Max and some Justins left at the park bench. And now,  
a cat called Little Mama who hates bubbles and isn't mine.

This time, it's a girl who drinks too much cider  
that makes out with me in the park after remembering  
we still know how to do cartwheels and stand on our heads  
tucking necks in for the roll.

I don't want to own anybody.

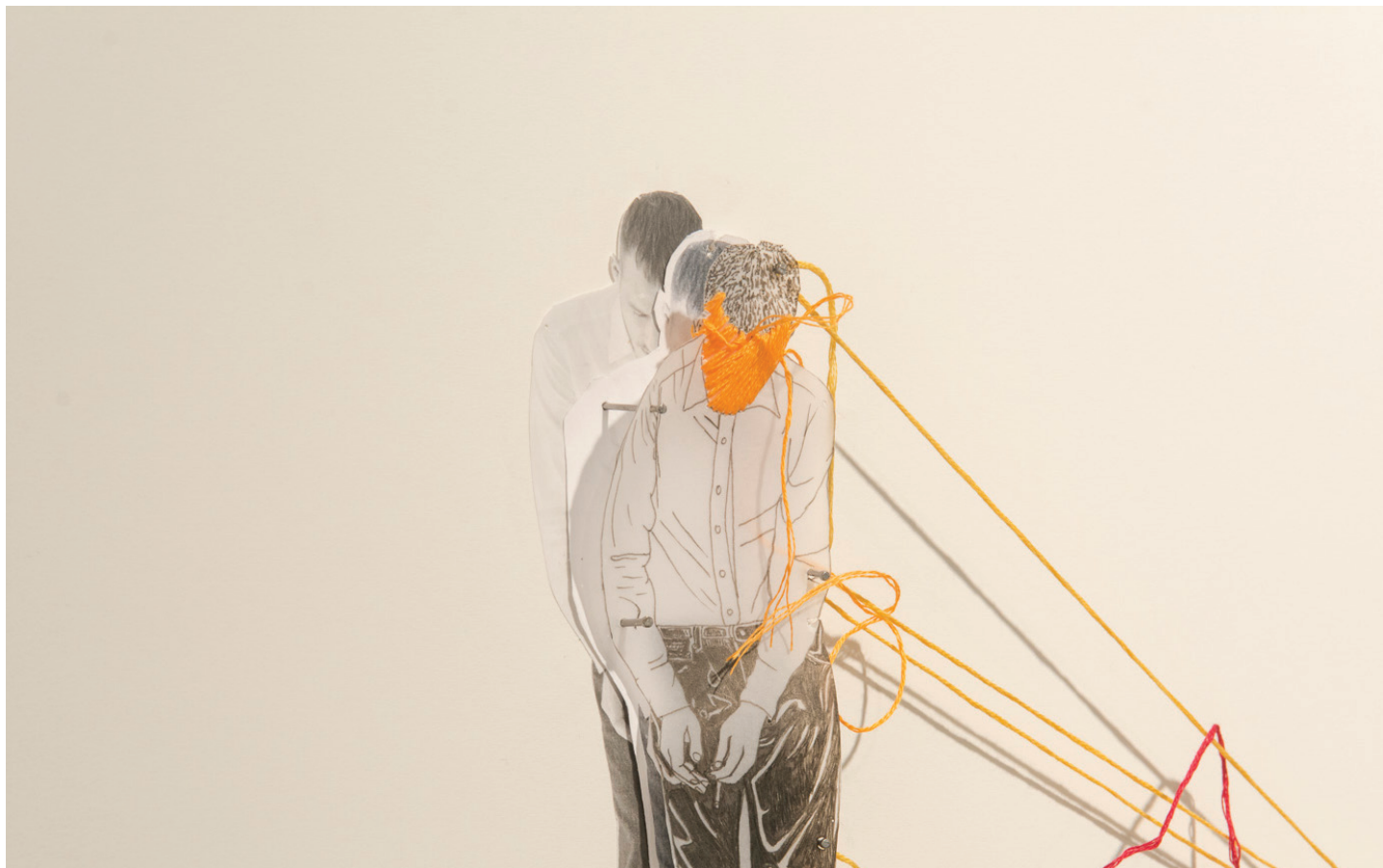
I met her mother. In a parking lot, we spoke of my mother  
and I said too much about how long she's been dying her hair.  
Thumbs up behind my back they thought I didn't see.

There are two girls on Adams Street.  
We are writing each other's names with tongues between thighs,  
condensing into spring.



JUSTIN BOGGS  
*Conus*





**EVAN BAILEY**  
*Traces*

# ***THINGS I HAVE LEARNED ABOUT THE MAN WHO DIED ONLY SIX MONTHS AGO IN THE ROOM I JUST MOVED INTO***

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*By* **Brooke Josler**

1. Beer thief with a heart condition (hearsay from a living roommate).
2. He labeled Ziploc bags in the kitchen with his name, and now I think of him as I eat my trail mix, guilt and raisins sticking to my hands as they dip slowly into the bag of Ray.
3. He wore black knee socks—I found them in the drawer of his armoire in the closet.
4. We have our beds in the same corner under the south window.

Sometimes in our cool basement room, I feel him descending upon me like dusk and surrender. Darkness encroaching, all crickets and riddles, my heart so swollen with humility, I put on his socks.

*By* **Indigo Vance Eyebright**

# FALLING TOWARDS ANDROMEDA

where we will collide

and bounce away

dancing out and towards the center

until at last we will slow down

learn to know each other's movements

loosely connected by so much gravity

it will look to scientists in far away observatories

as if we move as one

unknown to them

we are falling

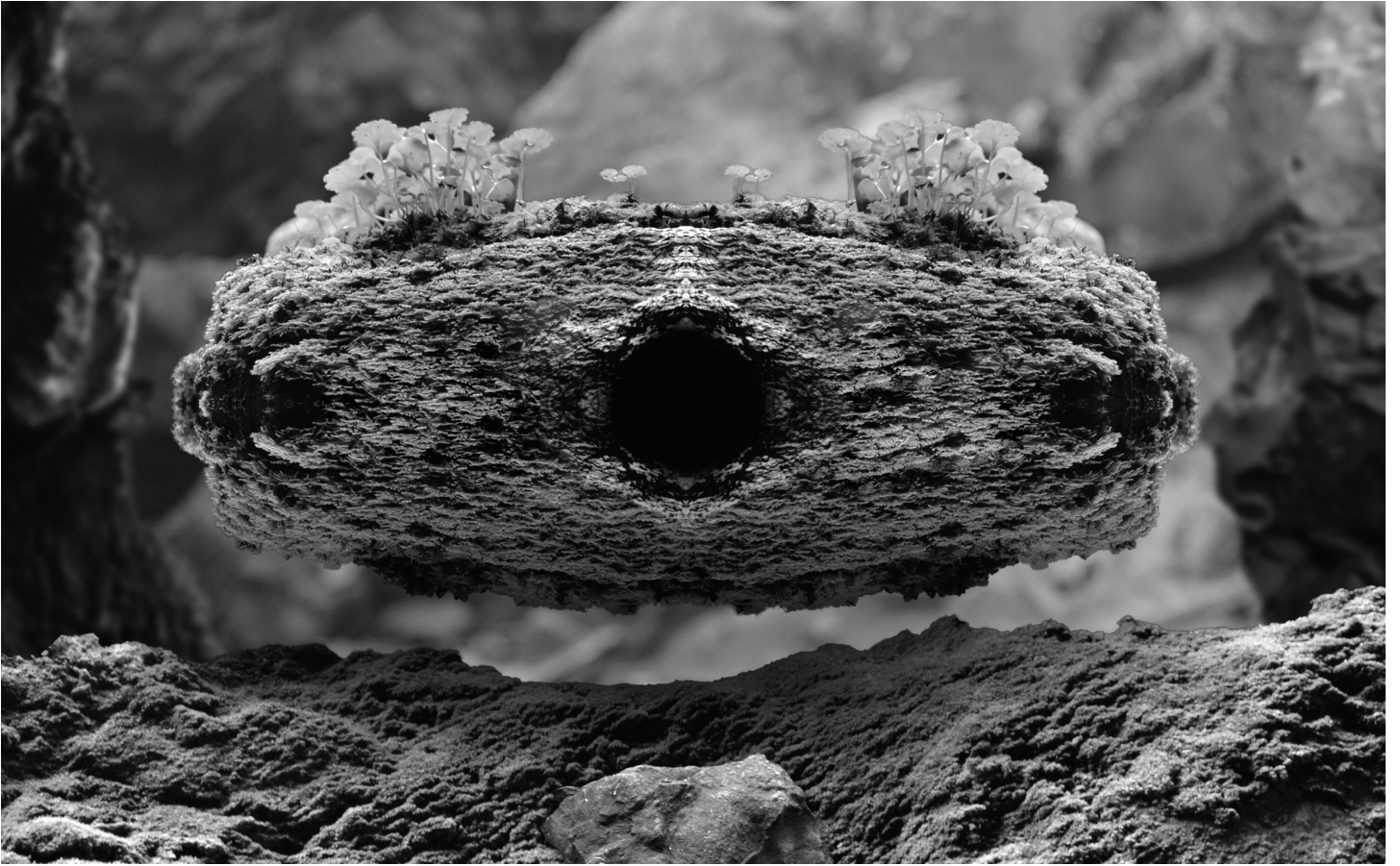
and have always been

the sound of a bell in a hollow chamber

the weight of our bodies

measured only by what is closest





TED KESSLER





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