

Spring 2016

## Pathos, Spring 2016

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### Recommended Citation

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Spring 2016 Volume 10 No. 3

# pathos

LITERARY MAGAZINE



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### *Sedum Canis*

Victoria R.

Watercolor on paper

18.5 x 24"



## Letter from the Editor

Spring term is always a bittersweet time for *Pathos Literary Magazine*. Many of our staff members will graduate this term, and others will part ways to follow equally exciting opportunities. Our academic year may not be over quite yet, as classes continue through summer, but *Pathos* takes a break for the warmest season, just like most of our university's student body. And what a well-deserved break it is for all of us at Portland State University!

Each term, we at *Pathos*—all of us students ourselves from disciplines across the university—are blessed to receive throngs of thoughtful, thought-provoking works. Like April showers, this downpour of submissions feeds a campus-wide cycle of creation and inspiration. And this term, you sent us more submissions than ever before!

With the invigorating spring comes bounty. We see it along our city's streets as urban flora bursts into life. We see it on our campus as legions of elm, rhododendron, and students bloom, flush with the season. We feel it in our spirits when the sun and the warm wind pull us out of hibernation.

But there are limits to springtime, as with all things. Though the flood of light and warmth that comes with the season brings fresh energy, we know too well that Dog Days herald the end of summer, and autumn will soon call many of us back to campus. Never forget that though colder days follow summer, fall leads us to the harvest—a bounty all its own, born of dedication and the passage of time.

Without fear and with poignant joy, we present to you, the 2015–2016 academic year's final issue of *Pathos Literary Magazine*...



## Oaks Bottom

Shannon Almond

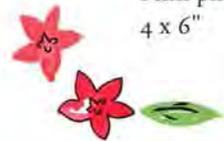
I TAKE A SEAT in a shallow valley on the surface of a fallen log, not caring if the cool, damp moss penetrates my jeans. My breath is ragged from the hike to the bottom, my skin coated in a salty glaze. As I catch my breath, a soft breeze caresses my cheek, its breath laced with dogwood and damp earth. The peaceful silence is filled by a cacophony of birdsong, pierced by the shrill cry of a nearby hawk. Nearby a rustling of leaves bursts open to reveal a pair of tawny-furred squirrels chasing, turning, twisting their way up the stout trunk of an oak, only to twirl and wind their way back down the maple next door. In the distance I can hear the delighted shrieks and metallic groans from the amusement park. Occasionally the greasy scent of popular-fried-food-of-the-day overpowers the flowery aromas native to this spot, but the intrusion only makes the flowers smell that much sweeter when they return. I hear the rhythmic crunching of gravel that alerts me to nearby hikers, dogs bounding in front with happy grins and tongues lolling. I wave meekly as they pass me and listen to the silence return as they shrink into the woods. I close my eyes and lean back, allowing the mottled sunlight and leafy shadows to dance across my face and chest. I inhale deeply, letting the sweet air penetrate me, feeling my heart pushing this place through my body to be absorbed by my organs, my muscles, my skin—to become a part of me. I slowly open my eyes, rise from my mossy seat, and continue down the trail.

*L2 (Spring)*

Kiley Yuthas

Film photograph

4 x 6"





## Rhododendron

G.C. Carroll

You entered my atmosphere  
a contagion  
a 3:00 a.m. fire alarm  
calling one hundred uniformed men to  
my smoky room.

Histories rewritten by the side of  
the reservoir,  
medieval atop Mount Tabor. And  
you become the mountain. A  
slumbering volcano.

Bird, flown through my window.  
Bell, strung up with twine,  
dangling from the maple branches. A  
fort for my warm afternoons.  
I am a boy in your sunny arms, and  
my mind will chase you  
like a stray ball,  
like a kite through the sky.

I feel the winter with you in  
Chicago  
though my body is darkening in  
the spring heat  
of California,  
the Mission District,  
in the sun,  
which belongs to you.

Where will your memory follow me  
To the tire swing  
or the abandoned chairs sitting out  
for us in the grass of  
NE Fremont and Mississippi

You are the rhododendron growing in the  
courtyard.  
A pink light.  
They have made a building out of  
bricks around you.

Sweet  
cold splay of petals  
that pulls me in.  
I love the taste  
of this bloom  
and I know it  
because I have kissed you  
brilliant flower  
unfurling before me  
all speckled and beloved by  
the universe.

## Lora/Camellia

Angelina Procopio

Oil and flowers on paraffin wax  
6 x 10"



# Form/Break

Nitya Prem

To take respite in form

is to mend the chaos.

To sift the miasma

is to inhale fulfillment.

But my mind does wander in spirals of shells  
born on the backs of snails,

that holds                      and ruuuuuuuuuuuuns

a cyclical embrace

away.

Careen into torrents of bile inside this stretched skin  
won't come off it **burns** to touch the interior of me  
fireFireFIRE words **stomp** into my brain "Thirty-two  
white horses upon a red hill, First they **champ**, Then  
they **stamp**, Then they stand still" I read Riddles from  
*The Hobbit* to grown-ups relish the perplexity of adults

In The Dark.

Play pretend mischievous children kobolds all greedy guarding secret treasure troves of  
generosity dancing in dragon's skirts our Nurse-maid breathes magma Intellectuals brainwash  
the Self and the Lass eats rocks  
to pray. I lie.



The answer is:  
Teeth.



***Butter Fingers***  
Kelsey Birsa  
Oil on panel  
12 x 12"



*Bloom*

Emily Condon

Ink and organic matter  
on digital scan

## Dessert Places

James R. Mitchell

(With apologies to Robert Frost.)

Cones filling and bowls filling fast, oh fast  
In a shoppe I looked into going past,  
Mountains of ice cream colder than snow,  
Funneled into mouths and stomachs so vast.

The children have it—it is theirs,  
Shouting and squirming in their chairs.  
Floods of frosting, it's impossible to count  
All the pastries and chocolate eclairs.

And sticky as it is, that stickiness  
Will be more sticky ere it be less.  
And woe to the poor, innocent soul  
Responsible for cleaning the mess.

They cannot tempt me with their licorice laces,  
The pounds of cake, and sweets by the cases.  
I have it in me so much nearer home  
To gorge myself in my own dessert places.

## Blue Laced Red Wyandotte

Casey Morel

Watercolor on paper

21 x 29"



## Contingent

Elizabeth Reed

Your half-remembered visage peers out from a shard,  
a reflective fraction of compromised glass  
lying on the pavement, oblique as it outlines  
its place in space and time, scheming of alternate  
realities—of seven years that might have been.  
Paralyzed, it gazes skyward, blind to its role  
as a passing glimmer in a kaleidoscope,  
entranced in a momentary lull as it drifts  
amidst a sea of triangles. Then worlds collide  
in a callous convergence of dreams, fracturing  
as they are swept beyond an event horizon.  
Oblivious to the fragility of ghosts,  
I empty the dustpan of broken glass, pieces  
splintering further in one last angry crescendo  
of screams that drown out your quiet apology.  
Deaf to both, I discard the debris and forget  
the existence of a mirror, remembered only  
by a light dusting of glitter that fades at dusk.  
Tomorrow the wind will force its absence, and you  
will recognize the impetus of gravity  
and realize that forgiveness is not mine to give.



## Lightning Bug

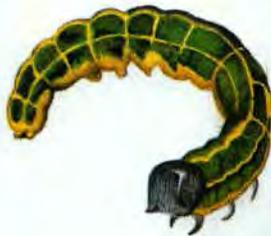
G.C. Carroll

Dear,  
I am not crazy for not taking you, catching you in a jar  
to put on my shelf. Little lightning bug.  
For I know your brightness is true fire, dear,  
and to trap it  
would be to extinguish it. Love hisses out.

Dear,

I am not crazy  
to keep my distance. When our two bodies do collide  
in a clap  
you are gone with the morning light, leaving just your glow on my palm.

Blue faced Red Wyanhette





## Imagine

Shannon Rose Merrigan

Acrylic on canvas

36 x 48"

## Heaven

S. Leonard



FROM A DISTANCE, Wyoming was one of the most beautiful places I had ever seen. Some say nature is a powerful way to experience God, and as I drove Highway 14 east of Sheridan, I understood why. The pristine ranching country moved me like a silent prayer. Summer grasses praised the breeze in slow motion, waving their arms with the air. Monastic cattle communed freely on hillsides, hemmed only by striated ranges of red and orange clay. "So," I thought, "this is Heaven." I basked in these images as I approached my destination: a small vegetable farm tucked a mile from the road. Little did I know, my lofty notions of a temporal heaven would soon be felled. If beauty is Wyoming's blessing on the earth from a celestial creator, then insects are its curse—an almighty wrath against the sins of its inhabitants.

Upon arriving at the farm, the owner, a soil-covered woman of middle age, greeted me sturdily, and we set out promptly on a tour of the grounds. I did not realize, at first, that I was surrounded—the farm was so quiet. In my native Northwest Washington, hazardous insects come with audible warnings. I was deftly attuned to a mosquito's high-pitched whine and a bee's distinctive buzz; the skill had served me well. I could always tell by the depth of the buzzing just how much trouble I was in. Here in Wyoming, the bugs were fairly quiet, but they more than made up for their lack of volume with their numbers.

As I strode the acreage, my eyes beheld a *pestilence!* Seas of hovering creatures shimmered like mist in the air. I feared inhaling them. Demon horseflies shadowboxed me, bobbing and weaving in

brazen provocations. I hunched forward, keeping my mouth closed and my face down. This was the first time I had taken a hard look at the ground. It was alive. With each footstep, a cloud of grasshoppers plumed up before me. I gasped, inhaled an insect, choked, coughed, and met the owner's raised eyebrows with a tight smile and a thumbs up as I dabbed my wet eyes. "Holy Christ," I thought, "I'm in Egypt, and Pharaoh won't let God's people go."

We circumvented the grounds, which I now mentally referred to as the *Temple of Doom*, and ended at my accommodation: a chic onerom cottage overlooking a creek. My refuge! My spirit revived. I wanted to hug the impermeable walls and big defensive windows. I told myself I could endure the torrent of daytime insects for the nightly serenity of this sacred space. Surely the views would still enchant me from behind closed windows. *I was wrong.*

As it turns out, Wyoming's biggest curse isn't grasshoppers or horseflies, it's *Millers*: vile monster-moths with roach-like antennae and a bloodlust for synthetic light. I never saw one in the daytime, but come sundown, the millers arose like a zombie hoard and descended in droves upon my cabin. The invaders began at the windows, impossibly making their way inside the screens that no other insect seemed able to penetrate! They packed themselves between the screen and windowpane like an excessive display of spray-on Christmas snow, jostling and scratching in a fever pitch to gain entry! Millers that found chinks in the cabin's armor dove frantically into lightbulbs, ping-ponging their bodies violently against any light-emitting fixture. For hours

I taped every crevice and smashed every miller, only to be met with five more in its place. I was at war against an unbeatable enemy.

Eventually, I surrendered the cabin and slumped onto the front porch, disdainful and deflated. This place of once-breathhtaking beauty had become a gauntlet of swarming punishments to me. The sound of the creek trickled out from the darkness. I let its rhythm settle me. I thought about this trip. For so long, I had dreamt about raking to the road and learning and growing as I faced the unknown. I scolded myself for not being more grateful that I was finally here. A flash of light broke against the darkness, then another and another. Blue lights streaked above the water like a miniature meteor shower. This was my first encounter with fireflies. I didn't know. I had ever seen an insect so beautifully perfect in its duality.

The earth breathed, and I exhaled with it. I thought about all the breathing that had ever been done where I sat. I thought about those who daily rendered the last drop of sweat from their bodies to reach one more day's end and a firelight moment of reverence for the soul-shaking blessing of this land. I thought about the meaning of the word "humility." My heart grew quiet then. Out in the darkness, my tiny nemeses began a symphony of nighttime music. Each was a heavenly singer, an angel in the night. I knew at once I was one of the privileged few to attend. I bowed my head and smiled in recognition. "So," I thought, "this is Heaven."

## In Memory of Someone Still Here

Jared S. McElderry

one foot forward    one foot forward    it's strange how  
the next foot goes    forward on the path    but where to  
I don't know and I never have    do you know in which way  
my feet should follow    when so many roads lie  
where are your feet leading    mine take me through a forest  
barren    the wicker men smile    what are they  
frightening    they steal the faces of those I love    I am  
unsure now where I roam    I now hold on  
rising up    the boy below staying in place    why  
am I not afraid now    in the air I feel confined  
but freed    it is so much fun I think  
not so much really    it's nostalgia    memory is funny  
in the way    that you and I    remember things  
so very    very different between us    let's go back  
so you can show me    again and again    how to  
make a paper airplane



### The Bank

Andrew David Viceroy

I knew it was the moon  
I felt the dead thud  
The low notes on the piano  
The crunch of the numbers

And there, underneath  
Dorothy's legs,  
the cobalt stains,  
multimodal histograms,  
carrots, sticks, and outliers,  
the little dog too,  
in the marginal distributions...

No one paid the bill.

How can propriety  
have so much force?

How can an abstract thing  
have so much weight?

### on growing up

Michal Anne Robideaux

when I close my eyes I am still  
spinning teacups and spilling my  
cheerios onto the purple carpet in my  
Winnie the Pooh room

the one with the tree my mom  
painted so tall and beautiful

the tree I cannot remember clearly because  
it was painted over when I grew too big for teacup-y things

now I sit in a room with no  
purple carpet and no Winnie the  
Pooh

and I no longer spill  
cheerios from  
a teacup

I purge into one instead and hope to remember a tree I cannot actually remember at all

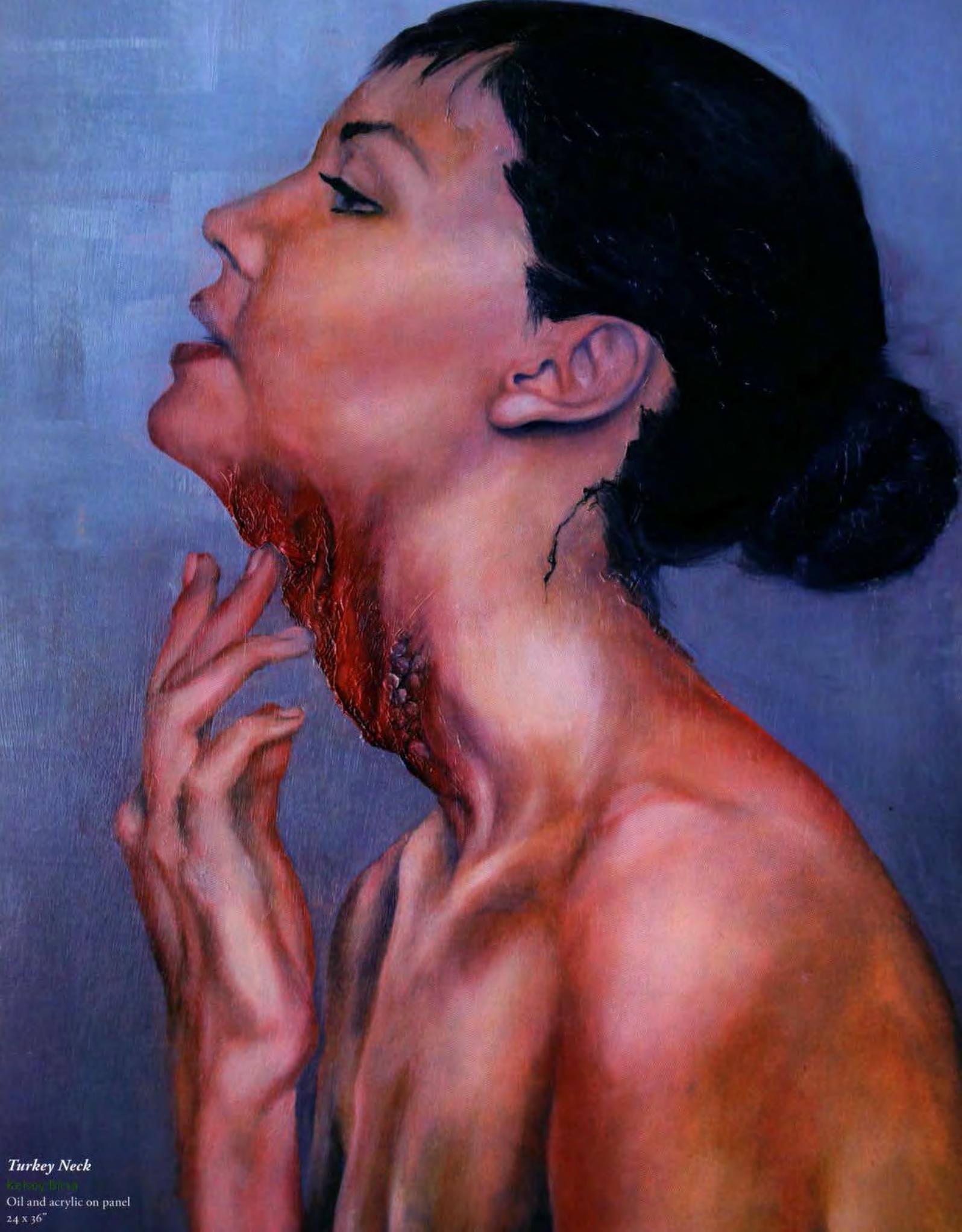


*Portrait of Unknown Woman.*  
*Florida, ca. 1970s*

Angelina Procopio

Oil on canvas

24 x 30"



*Turkey Neck*  
Kelsey Brink  
Oil and acrylic on panel  
24 x 36"



IT WAS A SIMPLE HOUSE, moderate and sturdy, in a huddle of mossy trees. I see it clearly: the circular driveway reaching out to the roadway like open arms. I see the steps leading up to a porch swinging, a picture window, and an unlocked door. It doesn't make sense to describe it to you; you will never picture it as it was. Just know that the house felt like a knitted sweater and sounded like a country song. It wrapped me in sunset colors and braced me with memento-lined bookshelves. The world inside was safe. A rifle over the fireplace and watchful white Jesus above their recliners made sure Grandma and Grandpa felt protected on all sides. Jesus looked gentle in the glow of the orange glass lamp hanging before him. Their house is probably the reason I love soft light.

I thought my grandparents were rich when I was little. They had the only real house in the family. The rest of us lived in basement apartments or mobile homes. Their house was my vacation. We checked in every holiday and often in between. Supervision was unnecessary. The rules were clear, and no one dared challenge my grandparents' sovereignty. We watched our mouths. We watched our manners. We accepted our allotment of lemon cookies and Rigley's from Grandma's magical pantry. We waited for permission to pillage the backyard cherry tree. At Grandma's I was, almost, well behaved. I only play-drowned in the backyard pool to test my sister's loyalty. The house smelled like Betty Crocker cooking, all butter and flour and meaty things. At Grandma's, the fifties never ended.

Over the years, the story got bigger. How the house was just a one-room shack in 1949 when Grandma and Grandpa married and paid down. "We found chickens in the attic," Grandma reminded us, "and a cow broke out the cellar when we opened the storm doors!" Grandpa built the rest. I hear men used to do that back then, but it still seems amazing to me. He spent ten years building. By the time he was done, the house boasted four bedrooms, two baths, a basement apartment, a dining room fit for twelve disciples, a screened-in patio complete with a built-in barbeque and bright green plastic grass, and proper heating, plumbing, and electric throughout. His "family wouldn't live in no shack." Grandpa finished the house with a den, the room for men, guns, and mounted trophies. A room symbolic of the Lord God's day of rest.

It should have been a perfect story: the Anglo-American dream. But Grandpa was a hard man, quick to anger and of little understanding. Isn't that the way the story goes? I've heard he had to have things done "the right way," which was always his. "He criticizes ruthlessly," someone once told me, "and treats you like an idiot if you don't 'do it right.'" I don't know what built his nature. My grandparents don't discuss pain. I figure he turned hard against the hard times. My dad, born in that house, remembers when his mother hung blankets and stoked the fire so she could dress him in the only warm room in the house. He tells the story lovingly, as if he misses it. No warm room stories about my Grandpa though. Just adjectives hung out in midair. "Hardworking." "Unyielding." "Tactical." "Organized." "Matter-of-fact." The qualities that raise roofs level people—this is just one of the ways life is unfair. Digging out the backyard pool with Grandpa in his early teens probably scarred my father. My father does not deny it, but then my father never speaks much at all. His midair adjectives are "loyal," "timid," "traditional," and by that I mean repressed.

Over the years, the house seemed to lose its luster. The back field grew unfit for firework lighting and the yard seemed to hide fewer Easter eggs. Things weathered, and my family became sick with

criticism and insecurity. The porch sagged and the fake grass faded as we spread the infection of my grandfather's disease. By the time Grandpa filled in the pool, we didn't know how to share who we were without fighting, and we didn't know how to fight without being hurt, so we became sports fans and Republicans instead of aunts and uncles.

The old ones watched football games and network news and railed against a constant list of idiots. The young ones kept our mouths full or smoked alone in the driveway or else didn't come at all. I still respected my grandparents' sovereignty. I watched my mouth, and I watched my manners, but I wondered what happened to Betty Crocker and lemon cookies and feeling like I belonged.

I must have been in my late twenties when Grandma and Grandpa announced the sale. Something about wide-open spaces and unobstructed views. True, the city *had* grown up around them. The place where Grandma once rode horses is a Nordstrom now. Naturally, they missed their little onediner town. Still, I knew their real reason for leaving. Grandpa couldn't face what he had built. The house was sturdy, but our family was paper-thin. We were strangers, living separate lives in separate rooms, trying to be happy and left alone. So Grandma and Grandpa decided to run, fleeing over the mountains to Eastern Washington, where the physical miles between us would mask the emotional ones. My last day at the house, I stood on the front porch and watched their giant fir tree shed its detritus across the drive. I loved that dirty, majestic old tree. The tattered rope swing in its branches remembered me.

I only wish I had seen it one last time before they tore it down. By the time I found the courage, it was gone. All that remained of the house was an arid lot covered in ashy gravel and debris. I tried to put back the house, the fir tree, the circular driveway, in the places they had been. The scene was too disorienting. Porta Potties and orange construction vehicles took up the spaces where I used to park my car before climbing the steps to the warm, sweetsmelling room where my father once stood, wrapped in a blanket, waiting cheerfully for his mother to come from the fire and help with his clothes. I put my hand on an old fir tree at the lot's edge, the only part of my history still in the ground. The bark was knotty and green from decades of Washington weather. It looked lost next to those hideous trucks and that reflective, chalky gravel, like an abandoned child. That land had recorded my existence, encapsulated my experiences, and called me family. All that was over now. I could never go home. I wrestled a few ripped boards from the wreckage. Holding the amputated limbs of my childhood, I wept over my family's dismembered body, in the piles of our emotional debris.

What is built always takes shape eventually. Eventually, I went back to stare at the new apartment complex. It felt like a suit and sounded like a hollow tree. Blue light flickered across my face from hundreds of identical windows where strangers lived separate lives in separate rooms, trying to be happy and left alone. The apartments loomed like a monolithic headstone. The past was dead, and I had missed the funeral. A bit of me dissolved into the ether. I was less real. I held my breath in the plastic air. "So," I exhaled, "this is what we built."

...

Once a year, I make a trip across the mountains. I join my relatives for turkey and stuffing at my grandparents' new home. It's a simple house. A rectangle, like all the others around it. Two bedrooms, two baths... You get the picture.

*Generation Loss*  
Angelina Procopio  
Oil on canvas  
30 x 40"





## Field Mice

Dylan Todd

I KNEW WHERE THE FIELD MICE LIVED. Light brown and white, they danced around the rusted mailbox that held their nest. The mailbox was in the grove next to the old hog cage that I, my brother, and Peter, my best childhood friend, thought of as a jungle gym. We could swing from one bar to the next, our imaginations swinging far ahead of us.

Spread around us in this part of the grove was a rusted-out car we could sit in and on top of, one of our favorite lunch spots. We used old tires and wheels as chairs, and clear glass Coke and calf-milk bottles filled with wildflowers decorated our fort. We later came to love the sound of them crashing when hit by our BBs. The head-high pile of large cans with skull-and-crossbones pictures on them made a great drum set.

When we were ready for a real adventure, we would head “Out West,” taking the gravel road that led past the barn, past the hog yard, past the pine grove to the never-ending drainage ditch. These adventures were planned out. A lunch was made, and backpacks were packed. Where the road “Out West” met the drainage ditch there was a culvert big enough to stand in and walk through.

In the spring, when the snow made its retreat, the world around the culvert would be verdant with cattails, tiny-leafed floating plants, and tall grasses that made great whistles.

In the summer, tall grass stood as gatekeeper to the culvert’s entrance. Parting it would reveal how much rain a recent storm had dumped. Crossing under the field road, we were cave divers—our feet on the culvert walls spanning the stream, hands up to touch the cold cement darkness, our gaze remaining steadfast on the green glow of the ditch’s grassy exit. Seen from the back of the line, our many arms and legs appeared a silhouetted, dancing windmill.

In the fall, all the animals were braver and hours could be spent trying to sneak as close as possible to a family of pheasants that liked to spend time by the drainage ditch. Here is where the corn-laden field trucks would bounce from the field to the gravel road, spilling golden kernels.

In the winter, the ditch was a snow heaven with big jumps and slides. It was always different, changing according to the amount of snow and wind direction. We would play until the cold consumed our bodies and minds then begin the long trek back to the farmhouse. Late-summer corn was tall and deep green, and standing on the edges of this ocean, all I could hear were the razor-leaves slapping each other, battling to get closer to the sun. Entering the corn was an adventure that always took our nerves. We did not enter the maze when I was young. Before pre-teen bravado dripped through me, the edges of cornfields were enough.

When we did enter, I would count the rows: five, thirteen, twenty-seven, forty-three, forty-six rows in, and we would lose count. The horror stories told by adults would grow louder at this point, and even though it wasn’t time to harvest, we became convinced that the combine was mere rows away, its roar concealed by the loud sound of the violent corn. It would chop us all up! Would they even know they hit us? Run, run, make sure you’re going in the right direction, and don’t follow that row—it curves to the endless middle. Stay together. Okay, stop.

Noah, my brother, would get on my shoulders and we would stand as tall as we could to look for the top of the silo.

“Head that direction,” he would rasp. Row after row, the razor-leaves sliced us with tiny cuts wherever skin was bare. The loud leaves grew, and the furrows deepened, row after row. Then there was a break in the dark green, and we would run the last rows and hurl ourselves into the quiet grove. Sweaty with a thousand little cuts, we would not do that again. Outside the farmhouse, by the clothesline, close to the cow trough, was a red-handled water pump. We loved to stick our heads under it and drink the cold, mineral water. Many of our adventures would end here. Before we were allowed to enter the house, Mom would demand we hose down.

Playing on the farm was often a dirty job.

Mud from the spring puddles of melting snow. Straw and hay from the loft of the big barn. Cow shit from the time we dared each other to wade in the manure pond that pooled by the water trough in the spring. Sticks, twigs, and cockleburrs from a day in the grove.

Cool water would always lighten the sting of nettles we often wore.

I knew where the field mice lived. But looking back now, I wonder: Who stowed those large metal cans in the woods, the ones with the skull-and-crossbones we used as drums? What was in them? How were they used?

Was the little oasis at the end of the drainage ditch that seemed so alive polluted runoff from the endless fields?

What about the cornfields that dared us, so loud and scary? Was there real danger in the form of invisible pesticides and herbicides?

What about the water that flowed from the red-handled pump? Was the groundwater in this area polluted from relentless demand for maximum yields?

I remember the excitement of the airplanes that sprayed when they buzzed close to our fort in the grove. I remember my uncles mixing the contents of the field sprayers, no masks, no gloves. They farmed, and I played.

My imagination and sense of adventure shrouded the old farmhouse and its outbuildings, the grove with its field mice, our fort our jungle gym junkyard, the drainage ditch of dreams, and the red-handled pump in a veil of brilliance.

I have often viewed my childhood on the farm as the forge that soldered my core to the natural world, an alloy of Man and Nature. Yet what was my family farm’s contribution to, say, the dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico, the polluted and depleted groundwater of the Midwest, or the soils nearly void of their once boastful fertility?

I am an environmental scientist now. I know a lot about how humans have interrupted nature’s rhythms and how small farms like ours are the marionettes of big agriculture and the economy and what all this means for the land on which such farms sit.

I am an environmental scientist now. I do not know where the field mice live now, nor what the drainage ditch looked like this spring. I’ve missed the harvest and have not spent an afternoon spying on pheasants in years. I know of nature from peer-reviewed articles: this is the price I have paid for my education. I can read models, understand theories, and add a true north arrow to an ArcMap. I know of the struggles of commons and how to calculate streamflow rates and wetland water budgets.

But I do not know where the field mice live.



## **I have never had a good sense of direction.**

G.C. Carroll

When I tell you where to meet me I  
do not say,  
At the corner of SW  
10<sup>th</sup> and Clifton,

I say,

Over by the highway,  
through the tall grass,

wet and Irish  
against my pant legs,  
past the row of  
stubborn  
rhododendrons

(not yet radiant),  
a suiting adversary

to my drunken Friday night  
where I kissed her face

all covered with tears, and I  
thought of that one part in *The  
Catcher in the Rye* where

Holden meets Jane's stepdad  
and she starts to cry.  
But that was April,  
winter mouths all  
bitten tongues

still sweet from pink wine. The  
corner lot over the interstate

still vacant.

*Call Me Back* (previous)  
Megean McBride  
Digital photomanipulation



## **The Man Who Congregated Alone in the Plaza**

Jocelyn Loyd

Mr. Walter carried his wrinkles  
like snakes hiding under his skin as  
his eyes perched on his face,  
hanging on by crows feet.

Dust clung to his hat  
that was a black felt crown  
too heavy for his smile. His  
fingers are matches  
that no longer light up the piano.

## ***Eve***

Lauren M. Blankenship  
Gouache on paper





## Little Charon

James R. Mitchell

This is the last autumn of the alley cat.  
Rooftop native, shadow-borne,  
she is the gatekeeper for the little souls,  
ushering them to silence,  
with tiny scythes hidden in velvet sheaths.

Days grow short and meals become rare.  
Her prey digs deep and waits for sleep.  
She pauses to lap the lifeblood of thunderstorms  
trickling through rainbow-stained gutters,  
bound for litter-clogged drains.

The hunt is over, but she is not tired,  
sifting through trash bins and empty lots.  
She ignores the flash of passing cars,  
and ignores the frenzied bark of nearby dogs,  
but starts at the slightest change in the wind.

This is the last autumn of the alley cat.  
In winter, she will finally come home.

## Jenny Dog

Morgan Bailey

Colored pencil on vellum

6 x 8"



## Convolution

Elizabeth Reed

Having tarried in the depths of labyrinths and having wished for a ball of twine with which to convey my memory, I have grown accustomed to seeing with my hands the tells that voices try to hush, leaving fingerprints across stone visages, venturing along stress fractures and counting worries within wrinkles, probing for insight in the hide of sentinels determined to stand mute. The walls reflect as we wander in intersecting circuits, sparking the occasional flare to steal a passing glimpse down yawning corridors, a look to which we cling when the light fails, a brief afterimage for sentiment, irrelevant once we stumble around the corner ahead. Unwitting artists, we roam and weave an ever-growing web in which to entangle ourselves, drawing stabilimenta in darkness as we are drawn to close a loop, haunted by the gentle tug of a thread pulling taut. Waving my arms in histrionic pinwheels with none to see, I pause at the brush of your hand, fingernails glancing off dry skin as dusty as the soil beneath timid palms, celebrating a lesser warmth magnified by camaraderie and gossamer shells that betray asynchronous pulses. In counterpoint we divine a melody to breathe sharp synthetic air—a harmony that sours when stirred, a harsh wash of sound that stills when the descant dims, leaving an aftertaste of dried blueberries, null kernels that rue sweetness distorted by desiccation. Gazing up at midnight, we succumb to crisp silence, standing hand in hand under a starless ceiling. Your fingertips spell the first flurry of winter, fluttering in aborted phrases at my wrist, before our hands unclasp and we let ourselves drift in diverging currents. Once your echo fades I feel the phantom pull of the carmine thread around my finger.







*Huntress*

Lauren M. Blankenship

Photo documentation of performance



*Moonlight Meanderings*

Shannon Rose Merrigan

Acrylic on canvas

20 x 23"

**Puzzle(ism)**

Tony Goncharuk

Jigsaw puzzle piece why puzzlement streak  
face can't see

past  
edges taunting tarried

twist

never full picture see  
unhappy jigsaw puzzle  
me.





# If You Read Anything, You Damn Well Read This

Adrienne Eaton

**W**HEN I LEAVE HERE, I wonder who will miss me. I wonder who will bid me farewell as I drive away or board that plane, and I wonder if on graduation day I'll cry and you'll hug me and say that you're sorry—have fun on my way out of here. Send you a postcard, or call if I get homesick.

Probably not... Definitely not. It doesn't matter anyway.

Because when I leave here, I won't be coming back, and I sure as hell know I won't ever be seeing you again. I know there are many things in my future, and this town, that school, or your face aren't any of them. No reunions, get-togethers, or catching up needed. When I leave here, I'll be finished.

When I leave here, I'll go far away, and I won't look back or cry anymore, and I'll get that tiny apartment all on my own: white walls and linoleum floor. And it could be the ugliest place you've ever seen, but I'll think it's beautiful because it's mine. And I'll scatter about my funky furniture and hang the pictures my mom was right to know I'd like so much, and I'll sit around in the mornings and drink tea out of those brightly colored, mismatching mugs I bought for only ninety-nine cents apiece.

And later, I'll have a small house with wooden floors and a big sleepy dog, and I'll always be speckled in paint from head to foot because I can't make up my mind as to which color I want the kitchen to be. And I'll have ten bookshelves, because my mom said that any good writer needs books to read and books to look at: books to look smart. And I'll stock up on some soy milk and vegetables and all that other healthy shit you hate, but I might just keep a box of "crap cereal" hanging around—for the weaker days.

And then, I'll meet a boy. Well, a man. And he'll say I'm beautiful. I'll take him into my little house with the wooden floors and a half-finished kitchen, and he'll say the paint in my hair is cute, and he likes all those stupid Polaroids I've stuck up on my ceiling above my big bed. And then I'll let down those walls that keep me sheltered and safe... I'll let them

down just long enough to let him in, and if he's lucky, if I'm lucky, to keep him there.

He'll treat me better than you ever did, and he'll kiss my forehead a million times and sing me pretty songs and paint me pictures like they all said he should. And together we'll plan a garden, just because I love the colors and the sun. Even though I hate the dirt and all the things living inside it.

And I'm not going to lie, because even with all this I'll still be scared. I'll be scared he'll change, just like you did, and that maybe one day he'll just forget to love me back, just like you did. And the bills will pile up, and some months I won't know how we'll make it to the next, and sometimes we'll argue, and sometimes he'll sleep on the couch, and sometimes I'll call my mom crying, just like when I was younger... And I'll tell her, Everything just feels so hard, Mom... Everything just feels so *damn* hard.

But somehow I'll pay all the bills and make it to next month, even if it means just living on that crap cereal. And even though we'll argue, and I'll get scared, I'll remember he isn't like you. He'll remind me he never will be. And I'll love him so much, more than I ever loved you... More than I ever loved anyone... And I'll just be so damn happy.

I'll buy that piano I've always wanted, and I'll sing him pretty songs. Maybe by then I'll have believed you when you said I really did have a good voice. And I'll sing, and I'll keep painting that kitchen until I decide maybe it's better equal parts yellow, cream, blue, and turquoise... Or maybe I'll just have had enough of the smell. And I'll keep writing and reading and loving and sitting in that patch of dirt I'll call my garden... And I'll be just as sassy as I am now.

And my mom will visit and tell him to kick my ass when needed, because God knows I can sure be a handful. And he'll say... It's okay, Ma, she's worth it. I can handle her. And lastly, after all the ands and the thens and the days and the days after that, I, we, will live happily ever after. And I will be the person I promised.

## *Body Bath*

Zoe Naimo  
Oil on canvas  
32 x 44"





## **Dream Canyon**

Casey Morel

Watercolor and collage on paper  
10.5 x 40"



## **Crying Madonna**

Joe Eichenlaub

Ink on paper  
8.5 x 11"

## **In Transit**

Elizabeth Reed

It's almost a hobby—channel surfing on the afternoon MAX train. Not mornings, before a first (or second) cup of coffee, spent in tacit communal meditation.

Past five, the pulse picks up—a symphony of orphan phrases, melodic fragments, percussive rhythms vying for solo parts. *Why you gotta be putting in all*

*that negativity?* she says, rolling her eyes. Robin's-egg blue eyeglass frames perch atop a nest of blonde-brown hair, buried halfway in a paperback. Don't stop and

stare into the tinted glass at sepia sketches—blurred echoes of now. *It's becoming tropical.* Record-breaking summer highs—with a blinding glare—attributed to

the Industrial Revolution. *Go north, my friend.* Her kaleidoscope scarf crushed like dried flower petals—sweet. Crisp, wrinkled cotton dress shirts startled to a sudden

halt—sharp brakes. *Those idiots, too close to the tracks... Somebody could get hurt.* Angry black flame tattoos trace a forearm dragon accompanied by an anthemic strain—

someone's theme song with the volume set too loud. In air above a sea of phones and players—vibrant colored headphones bob like buoys near harbor—they're not islands. *I know,*

*me too.* His helmet taps *clack-clack* against the door, bike folded like origami in a not-unicycle silhouette. The train power-cycles near 11th—

fans, overhead lights switch off and evoke a lull for several deep breaths—revealing its secret heartbeat—a low steady thrum along the arteries of the city.





## *Expectations*

Matt Grimes

Mixed media on canvas

11 x 14"



## Pathos Spring 2015-2016 Team

Editor-in-Chief Philip King

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Volunteers Alexander Henry, Melina Hughes, Hayley Wilson

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## Calling all Portland State writers and artists!

You've done so much, and so well. You deserve your break. The summer calls for you, no matter what it holds, to live in its warmth, to see the world it illuminates, to breathe its warm air, to lounge in the sun. *Pathos* is taking a break for the summer, but we'll be opening our next reading period sooner than you expect.

**We'll open submissions for our next reading period September 25, 2016.** We'd love to hear of your travels, your journeys, and your summertime sadness. We'll be waiting.

Keep an eye on our Facebook page, our website, and our Submittable page for announcements about how and what to submit. And please, email us at any hour with your questions, concerns or feedback at [pathosliterarymag@gmail.com](mailto:pathosliterarymag@gmail.com). We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

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**pathos**  
LITERARY MAGAZINE

 Portland State  
UNIVERSITY



*Summer Days* (back cover)

Morgan Bailey

Colored pencil on vellum

11 x 17"

Spring 2016 Volume 10 No. 3

# pathos

LITERARY MAGAZINE

