

Winter 2020

Pathos, Winter 2020

Portland State University. Student Publications Board

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pathos



LITERARY MAGAZINE
WINTER · 2020

WINTER TERM
2019 - 2020

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Hello reader,

This issue of Pathos Literary Magazine promises to take you on a journey you won't forget. Please come along with us as we travel through the desert, admiring the cliffs that loom along the highways and the memories that linger in the clouds. We will ride bikes to the beach and pick apples from the orchards before making our way to the east, where The Bad Things await in Colorado. We will knock on the door of your (possibly) haunted house, but we won't be afraid. When we return home, with a glass of whiskey in hand, we will read about the tragedy at the New Heaven Yacht Club, and we will laugh because we did it together.

Pathos is endlessly grateful to the authors and artists who have allowed us to travel these works. We are thankful to you, reader, for adventuring with us. If you would like to join in on more of our escapades at Pathos Literary Magazine, follow us @pathoslitmag.

I hope you enjoy. See you next time.

Yours sincerely,



Sadie Jordan
Editor-in-chief

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FRONT COVER:

AS ABOVE

ROXY TAHMASEB

BACK COVER:

MOUNTAIN

ANNALIESE SMITH



Fig. 1

Figure One

Mia Dorsey
Screenprint

A TRAGIC FIRE AT THE NEW HEAVEN YACHT CLUB

Walker Faison

Dearest Mariners,

It is with humility, regret, and deep sorrow that I write to inform you of the tragic events that took place at the New Heaven Yacht Club last night.

As many of you have doubtless already heard, we suffered a fire at the docks. We are still assessing both the damage and possible cause but first; the list of those confirmed lost:

The Lucky Lucy
Who Dat? Who Dat?
Fermat's Whale
Grillin' and Chillin'
Tina's Toy
Black Tie-Fighter
The Fibonacci
Not My Ex-Wife's
The Razorback
Mark's Home Office
The Jade Dragon
401-K.O.
Reel Estate
The Rootin' Tootin' Rudy
Yacht To Trot

Significantly damaged but with hope of recovery:

The Sloop John Beaver
Lord of July
Yacht Cross Fun
The Penelope Cruise
Sweet S. Caroline
Anchor Baby
The Windwhipper

Bigger Than Jordan's

The Escape Room

And the mild to moderately damaged:

The Grand Trianon

'Dee's Nuts

The Visigoth

The Sail On Porpoise

Despite this catastrophe we will be hosting our annual New Heaven Regatta next month with the aid of our friends down the coast at The Grand Old Troy Yacht Club. We believe it is important to continue on in the face of hardship and to remain the inspiration to the less fortunate in our extended community that we have always strived to be. Moreover, all the proceeds of the Regatta will be donated directly to the raising of our fallen vessels from their moorings and their restoration to seaworthiness.

Now we come to the cause of this terrible conflagration. We recently changed the brand of boat wax we employ, both to save money and improve the shine on the hulls of our vessels. However, this brand, Saint-Just Marine Ultra Performance Paste Wax, has proven to be highly flammable and, unbeknownst to us before this morning, has recently been recalled due to its propensity for spontaneous combustion. So, last night the unthinkable happened. A drifting cinder from the Aficionado Lounge nearby made contact with the

freshly waxed body of the Sloop John Beaver which was quickly engulfed in deck jumping flames that lead to the loss of much of our fleet.

Additionally, local handyman, Arthur Gutierrez, suffered burns to both hands when the wax went up and may lose as many as four fingers. Please keep him in your thoughts and prayers.

At the end of the day, someone must be held accountable and that someone is me. I will be resigning my post, effective immediately. Growing up across the bay I used to look at the golden lights on the dock and imagine a world of warmth and gentility. That world was real and as an adult it has welcomed me with open arms, asking nothing but a docking fee and a platinum card for incidentals. It has been the honor of my life to serve as the New Heaven Yacht Club manager. This has been a terrible day for sport, family, and for the yachting community writ large, but like the phoenix, we shall rise new made, singing songs of remembrance.

Yours,
Maxwell Broste
Fmr. manager New Heaven
Yacht Club

SUMMERS' MADNESS

Matther Wanner

That horizon,
That damned horizon,
Always there,
Just out of reach,

Always out of reach,

The pedal is on the floor,
Gas pedals,
Where else do they go?

The sun, the bastard,
Motherfucker,
Always so fast,
To be
Behind
That damned horizon,

Then the dusk comes,
With cool air and heartless stars,
Night breeds night,

And the engine roars,
Not to chase a horizon,
But to find peace among the stars,
And wicked pines.

The dark is deep,
And as the engine cools,
A comfort.

I FORGAVE MYSELF FOR THIS

Madi King

how much whiskey must I pour into your glass
until you claim it's finally full?

you would laugh at me.
 I'm drunk

like liquor slipping through my sticky fingers,
you never let me

 hold you.

 It didn't matter

my glass was empty while
yours was spilling onto the rug we
bought together.

 to you,

 your whiskey tasted like smoke

 and mine like melting snow

I don't know if that's true.

I never drink whiskey anymore.

THE VERMILLION CLIFFS*Trevor Yarnell*

Only once have I ever heard the desert speak.
I was driving my grandmother's old, black
Civic on I-15 when an unforeseen and antique
lag-bolt stood up to my tires—the bolt struck
through the dark armor of rubber and cracked
thunder under my feet. The steering wheel shook
free of me and my blind foot stomped around
for the stopping thing—the oldest cliffs surrounding
me looked down at my small sounds then returned
to their condescending conversation—I broke.
When it all skid to a stop, and the echo stopped,
I heard a voice traveling away, "You still owe me."

FATE'S BULLETS

Ian Sutherland

You have to believe me:
Roy Matthis did not kill her.

Fate killed her.

Roy Matthis was the gun and
Fate pulled the trigger.

The trigger was actually the
gun held by Roy Matthis.

It's all very confusing.

But you have to believe me:
He did not kill her.

Fate did.

Roy Matthis was the gun,
and Fate fired the bullets.

Fate's bullets were the angry
words that Eva Brisco flung at Roy at 767 mph.

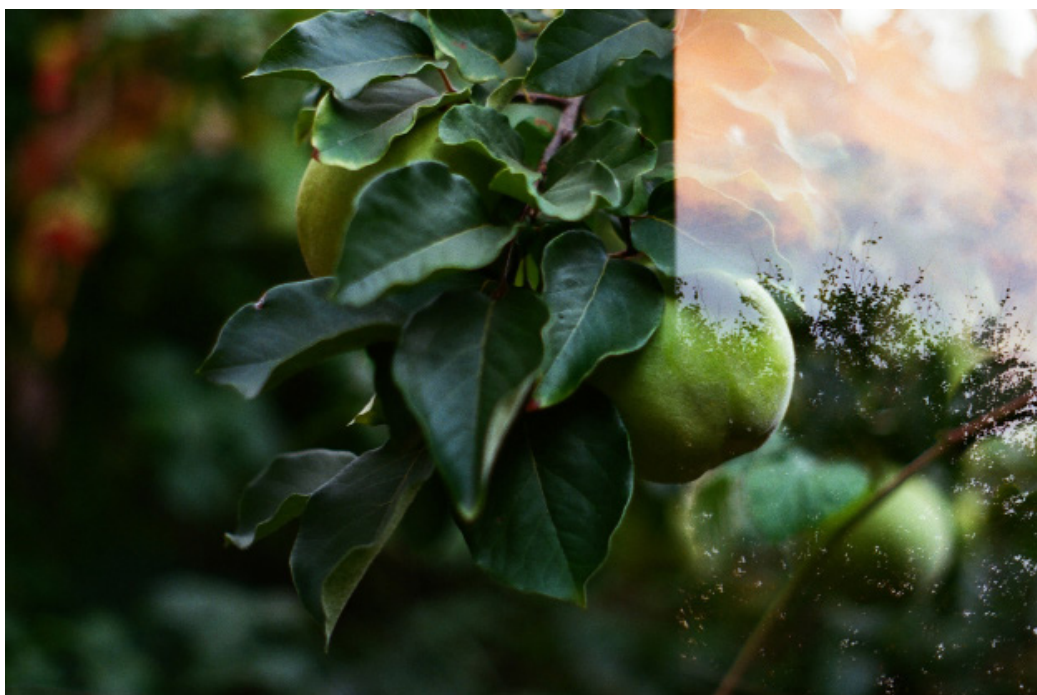
Roy's bullets were
the bullets he flung at Eva at 1159 mph.

(Using nothing but Fate's trigger)

That being said,
Roy Matthis did not kill her.

The culprit is clear.

But believe you me:
It's all very confusing.



Summer Sweater & Dizzy

Ruby Mullen
Photography



The Feeling of Bliss

Greta Deboer
Photography

DO YOU THINK THAT OLD PEOPLE FEEL LUCKY*Ian Sutherland*

do you think that old people feel lucky

that their bodies still work

or that they look better in hats than I do
(they really do, every last one of them, men and women)

that they have a husband or a wife that has known them for longer than I have been alive
for longer than so many have been alive
known them before they lost their friends and their parents

do they have the same relationship to coffee that they did, back then

do they relish it? are they tired of it?
do they feel lucky to drink it?

do they see the sky in the same way

is it now more of a friend?
more of an enemy?
doesn't it all feel more intimate?

are they lucky?

are they lucky?

I would hate to hurt and be old
to still hurt like I do now
but older
rotten tunnels of hurt in my carapace

this isn't about me
but I can imagine that it will be
in forty years
in fifty years

and some young person will look at me and wonder if I feel lucky
or if it still really hurts like it hurts them
and they might think that maybe it's both

THE CONSEQUENCES OF SILENCE:

An indirect response to the question “What are the consequences of silence?” from Bhanu Kapil’s book, The Vertical Interrogation of Strangers (2001) Kelsey St. Press.

Elle Klock

On the bus ride home, I see his face in the next seat over. I wipe my eyes and look again. Sickly panic drips like syrup down my back, my hands shake. I reason with myself that he doesn’t live in this state, that’s why Oregon was so appealing, it was as far west as I could get from The Bad Things. I count my breaths in and out, feel for the seat underneath me, a signal that I’m awake.

This is real.

The next morning, I wake up in a cold sweat, my heart a sparrow trapped in my chest, frantically searching for an exit sign.

In class we talked about how memory is a fallible thing. How we remember things the way we want to remember them, or the way our bodies allow us to. If memory is fallible then how do we trust a writer to tell us what is true? I take this home with me and consider it; could it be possible that The Bad Things happened the way I say they did, or even at all? Remember when you said “rape” they said “too drunk” and the District Attorney told you (after the rape kit and cold examination, photos, interviews) that these cases are often difficult to prove so try to think clearly, did it really happen the way you say it did? A boy’s life is at stake. So maybe my memory isn’t worth as much as my body was. I think about the tar Viramontes writes about, how bodies decomposing become a resource to start wars over, “Once,

when I picked peaches, I heard screams. It reminded me of the animals stuck in the tar pits.” Could my body ever be valuable enough to start a war? Where would it drift to when it’s finally used up?

If you were to map out my story, the silent violences would create a web across Northern Colorado, no clear timeline, but memorials and landmarks to commemorate The Bad Things that happened there.

A HOUSE OFF STUART STREET:

I went to a house party with some boys from my after school job, newly independent and eager to try on my ‘college’ personality. I met Ty there, a guy who had a girlfriend that danced for the NBA. It didn’t occur to me that it was odd he determined his success by what his girlfriend did. I watched him raise his arms above his head while talking in the kitchen. There was a line of hair that ran from his stomach to below his belt. I couldn’t understand the confused attraction I felt or what body hair equated to in terms of masculinity, but I knew I felt something swollen, wet, and impulsive. He’d recently gotten a DUI and was about to go to jail for a month so he knew about consequences. I found his authority impressive. Jail seemed dangerous and bad. A boy my parents would absolutely disapprove of which made the attraction more intense and irrational.

THE APARTMENT:

I went home with him two weeks later. I felt inside me a reckless drive to do anything other people were telling me not to. I was poised to prove to the world that I could make my own mistakes, tired of being a good high school girl. College was approaching and I felt I had to grow up and gain experience soon. It thrilled me to be taken home by a man who had his own apartment. When I got into his room there were posters and calendars of his girlfriend and her NBA team all over the walls. He took a call from her while I sat on the floor, played with my shoelaces, and tried to decide if it was too late to leave. When he got off the phone, after telling her “I love you,” he told me I could stay the night. Confused but hungry, I stayed. We slept together and it was silent and disappointing. I made eye contact with the girl in the posters and wondered if I was ever going to be “professionally pretty.” He didn’t say a word to me the rest of the night. This is what grown ups must do, I thought. As I gathered my things in the morning he said he’d text me later and this made me feel special:

“Excitement is inadvisable. Check yourself. Hope is the thing that comes before the very fucking scary thing.”

—Elissa Washuta

I spent that spring in his apartment believing when he said he was going to break up with his girlfriend. I cried the

night before he went to jail and he held me in his big, tattooed arms. I couldn’t stand the idea that he was going to miss my 18th birthday or that he couldn’t take me to my senior prom because he’d be on house arrest for three months after. He made fun of me for crying and for caring about my prom. It didn’t concern me that he also called his girlfriend the morning I drove him to the jail, or that he took his phone apart afterwards and hid the battery.

LARIMER COUNTY DETENTION CENTER:

I visited him in jail on my 18th birthday, the legal age to visit an inmate without a parent escort.

THE SILENT SPACES:

When he got out a month later, fitted with a fresh ankle monitor that would serve a double purpose of keeping him inside for the whole summer and also check his sweat for alcohol consumption, he immediately called his girlfriend while I sat next to him smoking. He hung up and cried. I felt a lot of confusion about how he talked about his girlfriend versus how he spoke to her. I didn’t know how to address these jealousies without feeling like a kid so I stayed silent. My silence became an expected part of our interactions. If I became too loud, too inquisitive about the things he looked at on his computer or who he talked to on the phone -- he reminded me how young I was. I went to

the store to pick him up cigarettes and brought pizza back from my work for him. I went to my senior prom with a girlfriend and went to his apartment after, still in my short, baby blue dress. He made fun of it and told me I looked stupid. As I undressed, he said I should try anal with him. It didn't feel like how prom night was supposed to go, but I hoped that my willingness would mean he would break up with his girlfriend soon. I thought about texting a friend to come get me after this, but the light from my phone would wake him up, so I laid there in the dark, waiting for morning.

He didn't hit me until a week before I moved to college. I came home with sunglasses on. My parents had seen the signs before I had. I didn't need to take off my sunglasses for them to understand what was happening. I found notes from my mom on my car asking me to consider not driving to his house. My dad cried openly in the kitchen as I tried to explain that I had just fallen and knocked my head. In my photo ID for school, I smiled brightly past my purple shiner. At least I looked pretty, I thought.

He broke up with me a few days before his house arrest ended. I cried as I packed some of my things into plastic bags while he assured me that we could remain friends. He was going to make things work with his girlfriend.

15TH AND CHAMPA:

I moved away for school, excited about the possibilities of college. After the first few weeks, I started seeing a boy I had met in the dorms. He was blonde, shy, his smile slurred across his face. He was a musician who liked to hold my hand and walk me to class. He had a terrible case of whiskey dick, but I didn't mind because I felt safe and comfortable in his room. I got lots of texts and angry voicemails from Ty when I didn't pick up my phone and tell him what I was up to. I felt like I had to be secretive about who Ty was with my new friends. I didn't quite understand the silence that gripped me, but I was certain that if I spoke about him, it wouldn't be "cool" or "normal" and I desperately wanted to be these things.

I hadn't considered that the new city I was in wasn't out of reach for Ty. On a Friday after class, he texted me that he was in town and headed to see me. He teased that he "just wanted to get his dick wet" but I didn't understand the saying. I let him in the secured doors of my building and past the security desk where guards sat on the weekends. He made fun of my dorm room and was rude to my roommates. I noticed that he had been drinking, but was afraid to say anything that would upset him. He wanted to have sex and I felt like I had no option. He covered my mouth. I looked at the wall, the window,

the headboard, counted my breaths.

Afterwards, my phone rang and Ty saw that it was a boy. He yelled something about me being a slut who couldn't keep her legs shut. The room closed around me in an urgent, pulsing buzz. I shook my head in quiet refusal. I knew better than to say "no" with my voice. My roommates heard him slurring at me and tried to knock. He threw my head into the door. I didn't care that my head was bleeding or that he was still coming at me like an enraged bear. I cried and asked him to be quiet, please. My roommates could hear us. I was horrified that this was the impression I was leaving on them. Their shouts from the hallway interrupted his rampage. He barreled out of the room, an angry wasp ready to attack.

Fog settles in on this particular moment and the ones that immediately follow it, blankets the violence that erupted, cushions the sirens and the rumors that came after Ty was handcuffed on the curb that night. My roommate flipped him off while he sat there. She was blazon and righteous, even after he spit on the ground at her. I envied her boldness and worried what he would do to her if the cops took the handcuffs off. I don't remember much except the officers asking me,

"Did he hurt you?" "Where did you get the alcohol from?" "Do you want to press charges?" I didn't know. My neck

was swollen and bruised, cotton filled my lungs, throat, mouth. I looked at Ty and knew if I spoke the consequences would be more brutal than what was happening in front of my dorm. I stayed silent.

My memory of this moment is something my therapist will ask me to repeat back to her over and over again while we record each session on my phone. She asks me to listen to myself tell this story through headphones during the week. I did it once and vowed never to do it again. It felt like taunting a lion from behind a weak fence, nothing good could come of baiting these ghosts.

Remember the price you pay for being a woman, the commodification of your body is inescapable; from billboards that advertise another juice cleanse to slim down your undesirable stomach to the stranger who grazes your tit on the bus without remorse, with a grin. Remember

your great-grandmother married a different man to cover up her secret, a lifetime of silence to erase a past she couldn't bear to speak of. There are things we mustn't speak of or if we do, we risk all: integrity, credibility, dignity. To speak we risk our lives.

* * *

EPISODIC AND OUT OF CONTEXT

Justin Grinnell

While under the cover of
 A deep down blanket,
My sister kicked me with
 A steel-tipped cowboy boot.
The boot was blue and paisley
 Like the welt on my right cheek.
It split, the welt that is,
 Oozing red jam.

Where would I have been
If I hadn't stepped out of your car
Saying nothing?
With you in my arms?
A bad break up?
I would have liked that,
 A bad break up.

No worries I have 15 min?
Oh shit, sorry! My phone didn't ring.
The reception is horrible in the
 Sub-basement.
Either way buddy. Up to you.
I work tonight.

It's been a long December...
Friend: 'It smells like crows outside'
Me: 'What do crows smell like?'
Friend: 'Savory wet newspaper.'
It's an olfactory catastrophe.

I moved back to the city
 And worked for a paper.
Headline:
 'Woefully underfunded'
Yeah, that's about right.
Story of my life.
I did some reporting on
 Narcissism.
Here's the kicker:
It all ends with me.



Early Hours

Noah Chavkin
Acrylic

STRING OF PEARLS

Mira Collins

i wrap wednesday around your wrist, tie it to the doorknob
spread the day like silk, ribbon-thin
and you watch me limbo

we pick raspberries at the edge of the
earth, stained fingertips
slack-jaw, i pull splinters from your teeth
as you reach your free hand towards tomorrow
and rubber-band back to the door frame
arched, like my back beneath this fine line

caught beneath the day and you, red-handed
if i stand, i'll break the week in half

ADINA LYSANDER, BY NIGHTMARES LOVED*Kelly Zaitlin*

Loose threads you're pulling tighter
to commit to apoplectic fits
resulting from your body made only for death

Does it make you sad?
Have you cried at all about it
knowing that you can't have
what everybody else has

Sometimes you're all sharp teeth and flowers
offerings for animals for whom no one could grieve
But sometimes you're a little less orchestrated
a little more broken down into dirt and dust

Have you been bent back too far?
You sparked and flickered
cinders falling out of reach
unprotected and exposed
wholly undefended

You can't help but shake and shiver
body haunted by bed-dwelling shadows
Nowhere safe to cling in the seizure of silhouettes
passing through unexpectedly leaving no trace

Are you lonely?
That the cacophony of whispers
will taper off as you waken
returning you to yourself
and only you in the morning

THE GATEKEEPER II

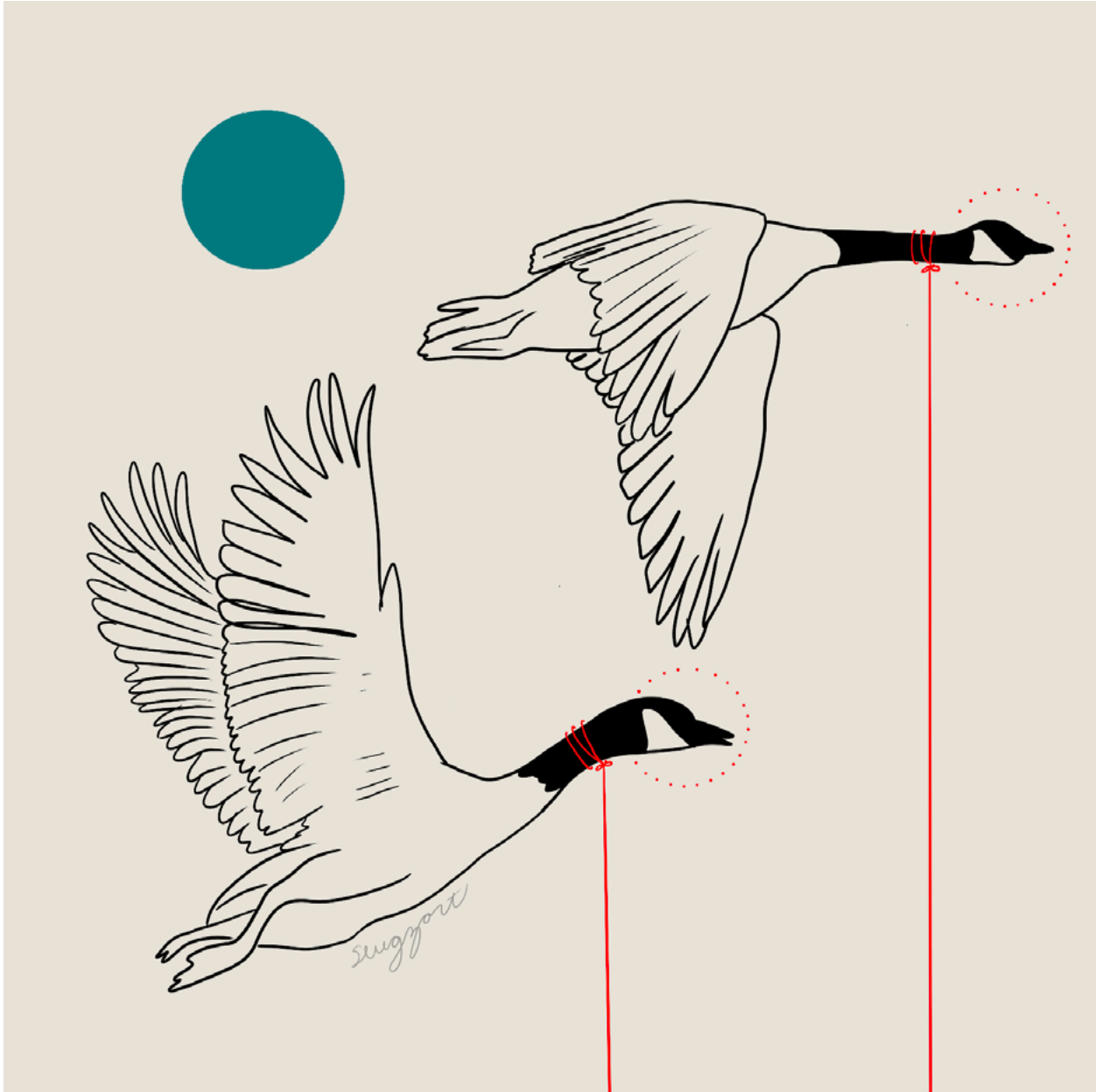
Ian Sutherland

cut off my feet
and I'll make an excellent Christmas present

to a dignitary
or a lover
or a trusted counselor
a vizier
a grand vizier, perhaps
or a friend who's tired of dogs
better yet if I have a collar
with a thick rope
Gordian-knotted
(I'd still suggest taking my feet)
leashed to my station

could I ask for more?
than this tan soup you put in my bowl?

what a great gift
what lasting applications
as long as i never learn to run again
as long as you have a thick-enough rope



Harsh and Exciting

Madi King
Digital



ATTENTION PORTLAND STATE
WRITERS, ARTISTS AND THINKERS!

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