


Spring 2023

## Pathos, Spring 2023

Portland State University. Student Publications Board

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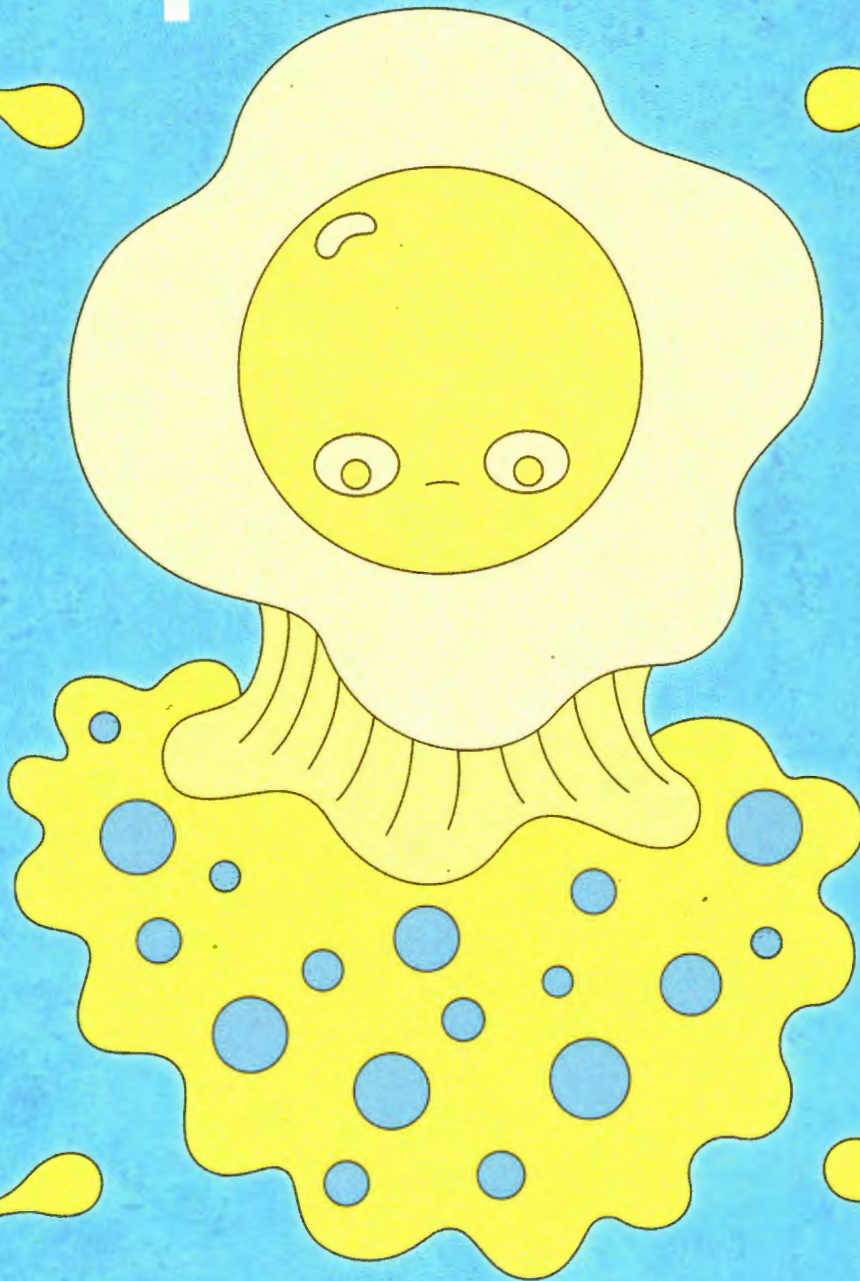
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# pathos



LITERARY MAGAZINE  
SPRING · 2023

DEAR READER,

I'M THRILLED TO BE writing my first letter as the new Chief Editor of Pathos Literary Magazine. In its many forms, art allows me to understand and relate to people and ideas as close as my neighbors and as far away as the stars. Ever since I was a kid, I've depended on art to show me the unshowable, speak the unspoken. The poems taped on my walls and the stories scribbled in my notebooks were a time-machine I used to understand the past while simultaneously reaching out to the future. It's my hope that in picking up this copy of Pathos, you're also interested in art as an escape as well as a tether to present realities.

Welcome to the Spring Issue! I associate spring with warmer weather and fresh starts. I love watching the park on campus turn green and fill up with students lounging on the grass in the sunshine. The burst of inspiration that comes with spring is unmatched as a harbinger of hope, which we all so desperately need after the past few years. We were thrilled to receive

an abundance of fantastic submissions this term, some of which you'll find in the pages to follow.

This season also means new beginnings for several of our Pathos team members. We're sending beaucoup congratulations to our Creative Director, Kelsey Zuberbuehler and our Social Media Whiz, Camden Benesh on their recent graduation. They've both left indelible marks on our organization. That also means we're starting with a fresh, new staff in the fall. Be sure to check our social media pages for updates and upcoming introductions.

Until next time, keep writing and making!

Best,



Stephanie M. Gresham  
Chief Editor

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EDITORIAL TEAM

**STEPHANIE GRESHAM**  
*Editor-in-Chief*

**KELSEY ZUBERBUEHLER**  
*Creative Director*

**CLOVER GULLANS**  
*Copy Editor*

**CAMDEN BENESH**  
*Social Media Manager*

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FRONT COVER:

*Jellyfish & Breakfast*

CASEY LITCHFIELD

Digital Illustration.

BACK COVER:

*Ambiguous Resolution*

DANIEL ZYSK

B&W Film Photograph.

## **SPRINGTIME**

*Cameron T.*

My thoughts catch in new sunlight like smoke  
Still they wisp and whirl around  
Their directionless outward expansion ever-changing  
Though tangible this time  
I can almost touch what thoroughly escapes me

As the rays of their illumination stick around  
My skin will no longer detect the pressure of the embrace  
And the smoke will disappear as though it never  
Touched the light

But for now I relish in the clarity as it lasts  
The rust in the cogs of the biological machine  
Stopping its growth to squint at the sun  
The blue tint of smoke giving way to rose filter

**XVII***Dan Chilton*

In a dream that  
I can't remember  
you are God, even though  
I don't believe in God  
and I've told you this all before  
but in the dream, you  
are looking down at the Earth—  
your Earth—  
and loving it so sweetly  
a gentle flow of water from  
an endless type of love and  
I am there, on the outside, but  
you've let me in and  
the stars are jealous and  
I can feel their lust but  
you smile at me and tell me that  
it's better to be awake.

**ROOM 67**

*Kamerin Villagomez*

it all feels so foreign.  
I sometimes wonder if  
blood and identity  
are even remotely adjacent?

a cut off generation  
(all I know is nothing),  
stories that will be taken  
to the grave.  
grandma-  
one day,  
will you tell me about Korea?

I suppose it doesn't matter,  
because I am here now.  
I speak English,  
and I visited your old home  
(as a tourist)  
perhaps this is your American Dream  
(but mine is different)  
sometimes, I wish this room  
didn't feel so foreign

but I'm longing for an idea,  
a version of my identity,  
a version of belonging  
that simply does not belong

(I am who I am now  
because room 67  
feels so foreign.)



*A Lovely Day*

NAFISA HUTCHINS  
Digital Illustration.



**PLATONIC LOVE IS SO PRECIOUS. OR: I THINK THE LOVE I FELT  
FOR HER WAS LIKE THE LOVE I WANT TO FEEL WITH ANOTHER  
WOMAN.**

*Andy Teel*

Do you remember feeling  
crumbly crispy and tired  
the leaves of my favorite fern  
laboriously methodically became  
without no reason I do  
think the lack of natural  
light in our apartment was  
not a friend to them  
I remember it  
as a washed-up sansevieria  
sundried in childhood sidewalk  
cement scabbled indented  
textures feel harder and firmer  
the further and farther  
the muscle between my thumb  
and my pointer finger burns  
aches as I reach – I need you  
to massage the pain out  
the way you used to at what point  
is a certain sure unmistakable thing  
unrecognizable unsalvageable?  
Do you remember  
downing cheap  
wine and lighting  
up cigarettes outside do you  
remember when I threw  
up in our bathtub too  
drunk and too high and you  
gently but still made  
me get up and go to bed do you  
remember your piece of shit  
boyfriend  
emotionally manipulative  
do you remember you  
made me go to bed

because he was coming over do you  
remember all the hungry  
neighborhood cats  
roaming right past  
me as they sauntered on  
over to you – you  
and your addictive  
attention enough  
to sustain a starving  
man for days  
Do you remember cooking  
for each other inside comfortable  
kitchen air, shitty ceiling fan  
moving steam around  
half-basement apartment full  
of second hand and free  
city sidewalk furnishings  
Do you remember comparing  
armpit leg hair lengths  
in the dining room  
mirror in the middle  
of summer playfulness  
openness in trashing  
burning burying  
normativity's no longer  
prized or precious  
Remember when you moved  
out dark mass of mold  
we found behind my bed  
how much we laughed  
and scrubbed  
and laughed at it  
I remember  
not knowing what else to do



*Future Fossils 2*

JAMIE PHILLIPS  
Ceramic, 2022, 9" x 6" x 6".

**CLAMSHELL***Jacob Thomas Clary*

Separated by the chain -  
We placed it into a bucket.  
A wish-Me well -  
That we once gathered -  
We both climbed, but it was -  
the boy's second steps -  
We knew the rules -  
That a house like this -  
Is bound to cave in -  
We followed the tracks -  
that lay in front of us -  
We searched the barren bones -  
Of the sunken basement -  
Saw the neatness that was -  
left to the ghosts.  
The only thing  
rotten was the food.  
We climbed into the attic -  
Saw the boxes brought -  
down by generations-  
photos - blankets - mugs  
and tea boxes.  
Still... very - warm.

## COUNTING TO 10 THREE TIMES

*Kaitlyne Bozzone*

I.

I am wearing a mask. Here,  
where people are talking to me. Here,  
where no one is talking to me.  
I try to pull it off, unmask the monster  
underneath. Some inverted cartoon villain.  
All I can manage is  
clawing at my flesh. I watch  
the blood drip on the concrete. It is all so much worse.  
Behind my closed door it sloughs off. I am left alone  
with my twisted reflection.

II.

I cannot stop reading about Laika.  
Patron saint of the stars. Patron saint  
of forced sacrifice. Patron saint of  
one-way trips.  
Heart rate triple, quadruple. Docile  
with a bark heard across her nation. I want her  
to have seen the universe. I want to see the universe.  
I cannot be sorry enough.  
Nothing is worth this.

III.

In ceremony—  
a horror film on screen. There is only this:  
the killer, the girl, her dead friends. The girl is dying, too.  
I can rewind and she won't be. I can pause and  
she never pulls back the curtain.  
I have the power.  
Does that make me the killer? I let it play. The dying girl  
picks up the bat or the crowbar  
or the gun. The dying girl refuses to die,  
so she fights back.

Diabla



Tierna

*Diabla Tierna*

ISABELLA MEDINA COREY  
Illustrated Screenprint.



*Winter Delight*

CASEY LITCHFIELD  
Digital Illustration.

**ALL HOUSES ARE HAUNTED***Kaitlyne Bozzone*

Sometimes the house is haunted  
because you feel the memory of the people  
who occupied your room and sometimes the house is haunted  
because desperation and wrath go together so well and  
sometimes the house is haunted because your reality did not meet your  
expectations and sometimes the house is haunted because when you moved in  
you painted over wallpaper that history loved and  
sometimes it is not haunted at all but  
the furniture moves and the moon rests on  
your shoulders and the ceiling cries for you  
(which you believe is pity because you live in a haunted house  
that is not haunted)  
and sometimes you realize the house is haunted only when your foot meets rot  
and you fall through your floorboards, down and down into some  
dark womb of not life but eternity and  
sometimes the house is haunted in a loop you sit to watch over and over again as  
visitors and specters cross paths in palatial shades of moss and  
forest as if entertainment, as if this manifestation  
were your favorite film, these phantoms the fleshy actors playing your life  
and sometimes  
the house is haunted because you have crawled out of the hole they put you in  
which is not your grave but feels like home and  
sometimes the house is haunted because you live in it.



## UNDERTOW

*H Mars*

1.

The bartender pours my last drink.  
I swallowed a pit,  
a stone,  
a piece of you  
it lodged, lounged,  
longed to be found  
the grace, the grind,  
I am ground down.  
I carry you,  
hold you,  
cradle you  
a blessing,  
a splinter,  
a curse.

2.

let's talk  
about the curl of cream  
into cold coffee  
the sound of ice against glass  
wet with condensation  
my loathing of helvetica  
the beauty of a serif  
your body nesting  
against mine as we sleep  
how words on the page  
touch my spine  
with the sound of your voice  
how hands are meant for holding  
fingers are designed for touch  
lips are meant for so many things.

3.

varied like the tide  
fickle like the current  
contrary as the sand  
grit grating against your gears  
were you expecting  
a postcard tranquility  
the docility of a daydream  
we wear upon the other  
teeth interlocking  
entwined then parting  
in opposing paths

4.

perhaps  
you should meet me  
where i am  
here and today  
unconstrained by expectation  
the sea does not conform  
it erodes and redefines  
then rebuilds  
that is the wild ride  
where the beauty resides.



*Rose Hips*

ROSE ALLISON  
Ink & Charcoal.

## JUST THIS

*L. B. Barger*

EK! THE GRIND of brakes reverberates in my eardrums. I scurry out into the sunlight that floods the intersection of W. Burnside & NW 23rd, racing against the blinking red caution light—I don't even slow my pace to hold up the sterile, silent Tesla impatiently creeping forward as the blinking hand stops blinking. The path up the hill is steeper than I remember, a mountain really, but I know this landscape well. I can spot the signs of disturbance; alders bend their knees in fealty, cracks give away the locations of buried streams, the cathedral walls slouch. The sun peers back at me through the curtains of foliage and their vintage, ruffled lace. I search for the bandits on the ridge—like I had since I was kid, even now my imagination is in overdrive—despite all previous data that confirms this land is one-hundred percent bandit-free. As if to spite me, personally. Breathless, I continue upwards. Late

enough to catch only the happiest people on their late morning jaunt. I say jaunt because anyone who has time to be walking for pleasure at 11:42 AM on a Saturday must be happy. I am just grateful to not be sweating in front of a flat top. (Oh, what a lovely way to suffer.) Here, now, the air is neither too warm, nor too cool, moist with the pleasant odor of turned earth. A groundskeeper, planting saplings in an emerald work uniform—one piece. Why I yearn to help him—be him—I'll never know. What I did know is that I wanted to put my hands in that dirt. A bee crawls out of a light red flower covered in gold dust. Bee pollen? Or rather flower pollen on a bee? No difference, not really. Jumpsuit, human, bee, pollen, flower, breeze, surplus canteen, sunlight, bandits...weather, serene. Why do I rush? There is nothing more than this. I slow my pace to stop, to sit, and to ponder—just this.



*This is the Man Who Tried to Find the Island*

DANIEL ZYSK  
Multi-Media Acrylic on Paper.



*Eyes on Red*

NONI TCHINTCHARAULI  
Punch Needle.

**BEING THIRTEEN***Eva Sheehan*

I saw the other day  
My cousin made a post  
That they had been suicide free  
For two months, nineteen days,  
Twenty-two hours, twenty minutes,  
And thirty-one seconds.  
The word suicide had been crossed out in red,  
But I knew what they meant.  
As I was unaware of the day before day one.  
As I was thirteen and unknowingly unaware  
Of the world around me  
And my brother crying in 5th grade because he couldn't sit still.  
And my mom painfully alone in cities her husband  
dragged her to.  
There are days I'm still thirteen  
And maybe the world is still thirteen  
Overlooking little kids crying for help  
Until it's marked in red.

# PREMATURE EULOGY

*Samantha Hope Boulgarides*

I.

Brother, oh brother, my brother - I nicknamed you "bubby" even though you are my older brother. Even though you are my older brother, you will always be younger than me. I measure this in life lived not years gone by and when I say "live" and speak of "life lived" I mean life blooming from a living body, not life festering from the wounds of a your stillwarm corpse and not life dripping down the back of your throat before leaking out of your tri-chambered nose - I know you are older but I also know you have not lived every secondminuteandday your feet have drifted here but I know you believe you have - just as much as I would like to believe someone other than *you* can make *you* live again. So until then, push another plate across the counter, *I know how much you like leftovers* and I'll count the-ribs-of-a-lifeless-body. Brother, oh brother, my brother.

II.

The first son  
Illuminates a new branch  
Crafted to the family tree  
A weight bearing branch  
Of sorts to carry what the  
Smaller sapling should not see  
Tired from convincing the  
Bark not to scream and  
The trunk not to lean  
A weight bearing branch  
On a poisoned family tree

## III.

Try to avoid the waterworks. The drugs stole his empathy.  
 I know you are so sad and you can't help but cry - but try not to.  
 Try to avoid your sadness turning into anger. You know he will always win that game. I  
 know you can still hear the glass shatter.

Try to remember it didn't start with him. There's no telling who tied off their arm first.  
 Addiction mainlined into the veins of our family tree.  
 All you can do is try not to count his ribs when he hugs you.

Don't check his glove box when you pick his car up from impound, Don't mind the sour  
 stench of black ice masking the vodka,  
 Don't count the cigarette butts and burns and  
 Try to smile at the new friend he made when he asks you to pick him up from jail,  
 Again.

Try to remember how 23 isn't really that old. He just looks tired.  
 Don't say outloud how you never knew a brown boy could become so translucent.  
 Distract yourself by counting the craters in his face. Don't ask him if he's hungry. He  
 hasn't finished a meal since middle school.

Try to forget how cruel he was when you were younger,  
 Try to remember he is your brother,  
 Try to remember

Forget  
     The DUI  
         The felony  
     The DUI  
 Forget

That he might not get better.  
 That he can't live like this forever.  
 Try, please try, to find the light when you look at him. Just don't flinch when the watch  
 falls off his skeletal wrist.

Just try to remember your brother is sick, not dead. Remember your brother might not  
 be here forever - But you know this. You know this too well.  
 So when I say remember, I mean -

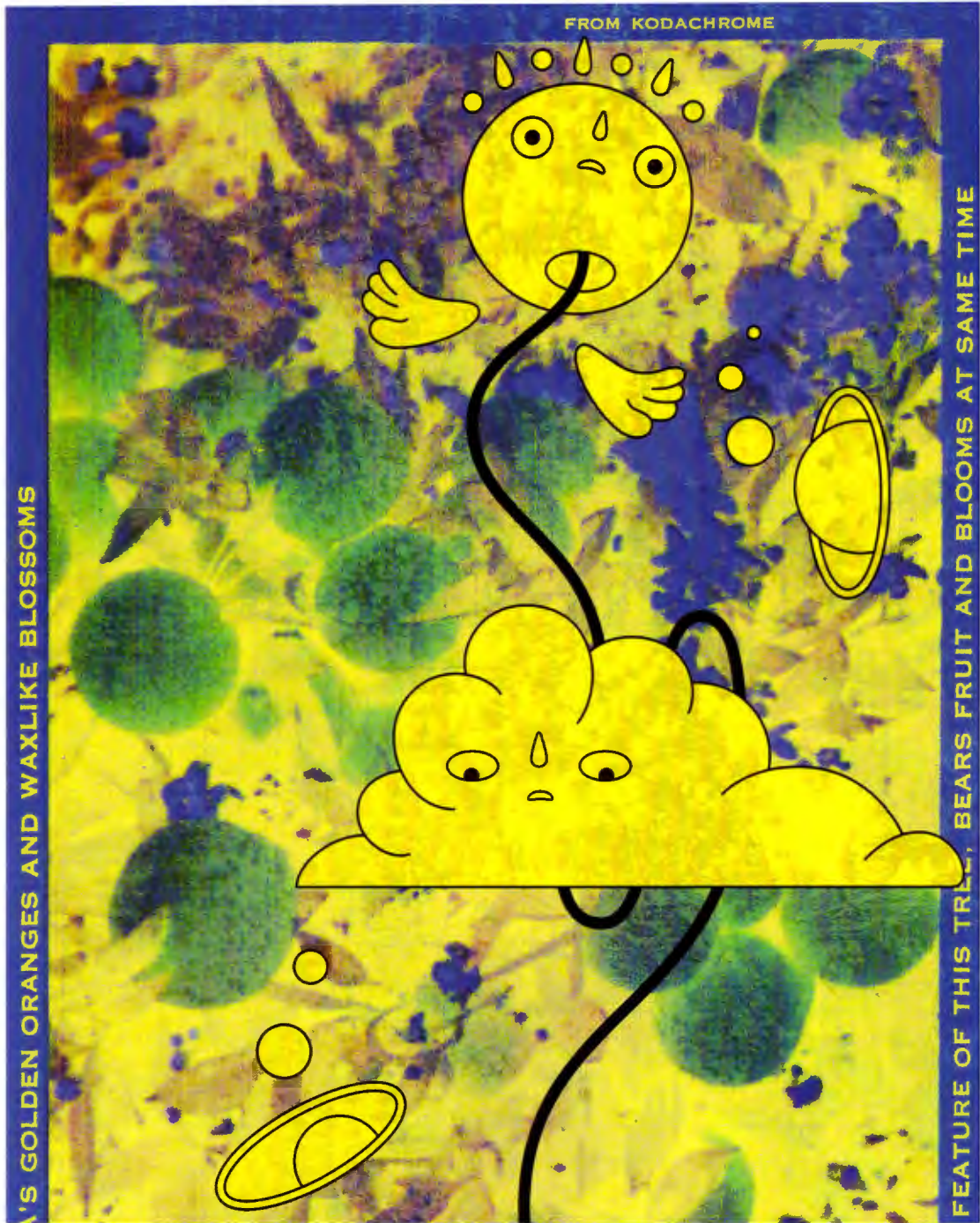
Try to forget your brother is dying.



## IV.

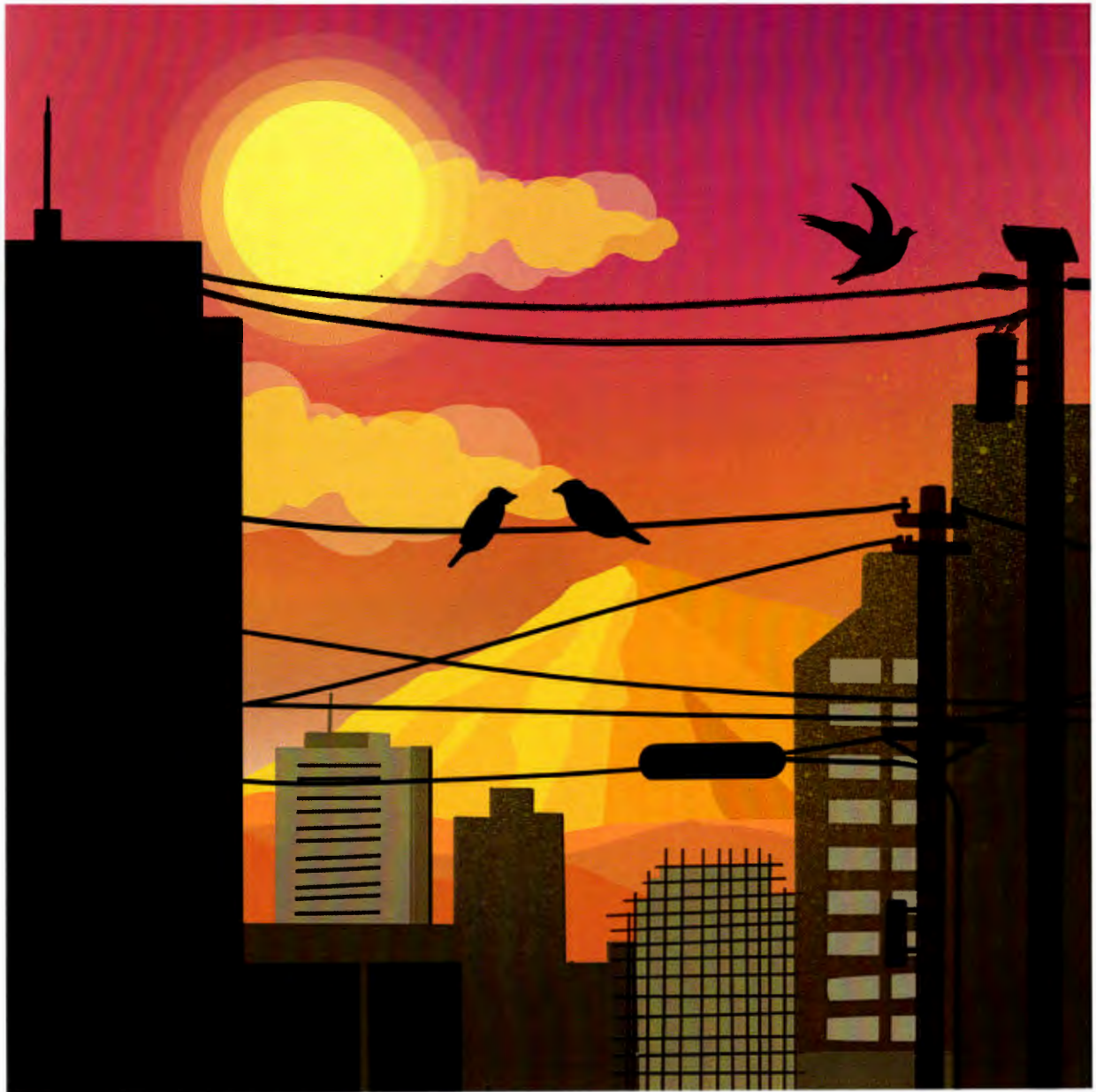
This will never be my story to tell  
 But time clipped wings  
 With rusted scissors and  
 Hushed them with  
 Shallow amends, a  
 Father says "Boys will be  
 Boys" but fails to see  
 How he molded a  
 Man in his image, and  
 I know some have  
 None but maybe nothing  
 Is better than a genie in  
 A whiskey bottle - so  
 Bothered we swallow our  
 Pride, gulp it down with  
 Another glass of  
 Wine—which who knew—  
 Is thicker than blood so  
 We run and hope for another  
 Day and pray statistics aren't  
 Leaning on the scale and pray,  
 And we pray, and we pray,  
 But we know.  
 If there was a god  
 He could never do this -

Bless a mother with a perfect  
 son  
 then let the world  
 kill it.



*Summer Bloom*

CASEY LITCHFIELD  
Digital Illustration.



*Sunsets*

NAFISA HUTCHINS  
Digital Illustration.

**BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE***Maxwell Kline*

following the sound with his finger  
lifted up  
I align my eyes with his drawn out hand  
at first I cannot see  
and then it becomes so readily apparent  
I am struck by the slight size and seeming weightlessness  
a singular drop of floating sound in an immense swirl  
of dark green and brown mass  
I feel the slim weight of his arm  
it falls light around my lower back  
I know we are both smiling  
looking up

## **FOLDING THE BREEZE**

*Corry Hinkley*

When I rest my face between your shoulder blades  
And pull shards of time from your spine with my teeth,  
I feel your breaths rolling into my dream.  
The years fold back onto themselves.

I open the nape of your neck, the altar  
Manchado con veinte años de sueños,  
littered with prayers de suplicación,  
Ashes of precious esfuerzos.

An open-eyed kiss, lips pressed to your skin,  
I inhale el olor de haber regresado.  
Slowly, por tres whispered in- and ex- hales  
Cenizas return a la flama.

I offer the peace of right now al pasado,  
Sananado momentos q ya se pasaron.  
A poultice of prayers, whispers, verdades  
Pressed into the scars on our hearts.

*“The breeze of love blows for an hour and makes amends for the  
ill winds of a lifetime.” Naguib Mahfouz*

**MANIPULATING***Poch Saldana*

of the husk  
coconut cud

spat on  
a dugout

in little rock  
wherever

the clamp  
guides back

to his  
squealing

hard-hearts  
leading the

heavy palms  
drupes lifted

sown shut  
where tides

turn wind  
waves and

boats whip  
feed on rank

pulp  
strained skin

till more fall  
next month



*Fortune*

ROSE ALLISON  
Acrylic, Enamel & Gold Leaf on Canvas.

**SWEET WORDS***Eva Sheehan*

Sweet words like to play for me like a melody  
Getting lost in the rhythm—  
I don't even know what they mean.

Sweet words, hum for me.  
Let you syncopate inside me.  
Like woodpecker beaks  
Beat inside a tree.

Sweet words,  
Taste good for me.  
Melt on my tongue  
Like cotton candy

Because maybe if these words  
are consumed in full petal bloom,  
Seeped into me, entirely,  
They'll mean something to me.



## HOW TO GET BETTER (AT SEWING)

*Julia Trujillo*

i shred every pair of tights i borrow  
and stain all my white shirts,

littering the washing machine  
with lighters, lipstick, and one time, a bottle of bones

how fast the fabric frays  
when it's sewn with dental floss

people have begun to notice  
the way i safetypin my pants at the waist

and i find myself mending the same holes  
again and again

collapsed on the floor as often as a  
a lover's tossed shirt misses the hamper

seams ripping on this raw-hem life,  
i am thread tangled, i am stitch skipped

worn down.  
ripped up.  
ragged.

but i recently realized  
getting better  
does not just happen to people

you have to be patient  
when your hands shake at the eye of the needle

you might need to follow a pattern  
the first few attempts

and even still,  
you may end up with something scrappy,  
or even misshapen

pin-pricked,  
bobbin-jammed—  
it is earnest and occasionally it is boring

the hardest part is deciding  
you are not the unteachable creature you were convinced of—

you don't need to wear such ill-fitting things  
that hang off your frame  
like an attic armchair draped in bedsheets

## PROGNOSIS

*H Mars*

I am miles away

I am on the median  
dividing the current of cars  
feeling the opposing forces at play

I am walking on firm sand  
the pelt of grains in the rain  
grating against my face

I am leaning body pressed  
against a sequoia fingers wedged  
into the ravines of the bark  
looking up into the canopy

I am pulling leeches  
from my goosebumped leg  
the stick of pond bottom  
upon my soles

I am craving the weight  
of sensation  
and  
I want for more

but the voice pulls me back  
to the sterility the brutality  
of biopsy and oncology  
the barrenness of here.





**ATTENTION PORTLAND STATE  
WRITERS, ARTISTS AND THINKERS!**

.....  
Don't forget to follow us on Instagram.  
We'll be posting work from the most recent  
submission period, interesting literary  
events around Portland, and updates on  
what Pathos is up to.

To submit to our upcoming issues, please  
visit us at [pathoslitmag.com](http://pathoslitmag.com) for submission  
dates and details.

**pathos**

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