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Art & Artists

Front Cover Art
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Simon Robbins

Letter from the Editor
Joel Eisenhower

Prometheus
Cory Mimms

XXX
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Einstein
Graham Stephens

To Be Someone
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Outside Scio
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Woman
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Back Cover Art
Untitled Portrait
Simon Robbins
People often ask what pathos means. It’s not a ridiculous question, but there’s no easy answer. The word is plural for patha, Greek for “experience,” or more specifically, “suffering.” Pathos then, is a way of describing the aspect of a work that evokes the senses, the emotions. Along with the terms logos and ethos, pathos presents us with a way to categorize certain modes of expression. The term “pathetic” now takes on connotations of helplessness, though it was originally used more simply—to describe a representation of experience that was deeply affective, if morbid in nature.

Like most things, though, it’s not quite that simple. Notwithstanding the obvious interrelatedness of pathos, ethos, and logos, scholars like Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell insist that mythos must also be taken into account, and might in fact be essential to understanding the rest. It is not the mythology of the far away past, of silly gods drawn in sidereal lines across the night sky. It is about each individual’s personal mythology. What hero do you become in your dreams? What fears haunt you just when your mind is most at ease?

Friedrich Schiller, a German poet, connected these ideas with the notion of sublime pathos, whereby suffering is overcome in a moment of triumph, a moment of true freedom. Pathos no longer refers to suffering, but to the moving beyond it, transcendence of the unforgiving human condition.

Perhaps as an idea, pathos is ambiguous at best. But we all know it instinctively. It is that aspect of art that wrings our emotions raw, and rouses the unruly creatures dormant in all of us. And that is what this magazine is for; let the reader decide. Let them consider another’s pathetic expression, and interpret it in their dreams.

J.E.
The cone fell to the ground. The soil accepted it gratefully. A tiny white sprout poked from the dirt. The sun flickered overhead. A cluster of needles opened to the sky. The joy of photosynthesis, the constant pit-ter-patter of ants, the giant dung beetle crawling by, the crunch of herbivores feeding in the distance, the rolling change of the seasons, heat and ice and new growth.

The sun was high and the young sapling sucked up the air and dug into the ground. The rumbling of bi-son hooves in the distance shook the soil; the rocks vibrated against each other and the sapling’s soft roots tingled. Men ran on padded feet through the tall grass in the field below, chasing after the giant beasts.

The sun was low and the ground was frozen. The winter felt longer than usual as deer nibbled at the bark of the tree and plucked needles from its branches.

In the summer, squirrels gathered fallen nuts. The young tree was bent over and tied with a rope. A squirrel investigated a pile of berries and then was hooked by the neck as the tree slung itself upright again. A man picked the squirrel from the noose and ate it over a fire started with leaves. The fire left soot near the base of the tree, but the snow came and washed it away.

Snow melted and the ground became soft again. The sun blinked on and off and the deer returned. The snow rose and fell and new needles burst from the branches and then slipped silently to the ground.

A river formed in the valley, crawled by like a snake, and then was gone.

The tree’s roots turned hard as they tunneled deeper into the ground, pushing past the rocks and worms. Little trees grew from fallen cones and marched into the distance. The older trees fell, crushed under the weight of their trunks.

The sun flipped on and off a thousand times, ten thousand times, a hundred thousand times.

Men came dressed in animal furs, collected the fallen trees, and built small boxes in the valley. They collected more trees, chopped them into manageable bits, and took them into the boxes. Smoke tinged the wind. The men moved on, toward the setting sun, and the boxes crumbled and fell apart.

Men came, with tall black hats and shaped beards, and took clipping from the trees, and drew pictures and named the trees: Pinus Longaeva, the Great Basin Bristlecone Pine.

More men came, laughing inside rumbling iron trucks, and cut down the trees and hauled them away.

A single young man came and wrote notes and marked the remaining trees. He bored into them, made more notes, and then left.

He returned with several other men, dressed similarly in brown jackets and matching pants.

The teeth of the saw scraped a line through the tree’s trunk. Suddenly, the soil was gone. A rush of wind blew needles from long branches and cold, not unlike the cold of the winter, overcome the tree.
Einstein, Graham Stephens
To Be Someone
Chris Maday

I was sitting on
the banks
of the
Mighty Columbia
when a UPS plane
flew overhead.
I wanted it
to crash
into the river
so I could
marry the pilot
and use
the packages
to build a life.

Outside Scio
After Foreclosure
William Holloway

Cattle low
in long grass.

Hills moulder
among rock
toward water.

Burnished arm.
Tendoned neck.

What’s left of
my father.
Eye of the Storm
Lena Baisden

I like to pretend that I am the Eye of a Storm as I walk through the streets on my way home from school. I pound down the sidewalks, weaving around people, keeping my eyes on their faces, capturing their last seconds. My eyes collect people at moments they wouldn’t want recorded: arms awkwardly posed mid swing; a tongue searching for a straw; fingers scratching at skin; a moment before a sneeze; indistinguishable syllables yapped into cell phones; eyes glazed over, lifeless; contorted features displaying the idle moments in between action and reaction. The rain pours down, and they march on, as I maneuver through the stream of them, stealing the last seconds of their lives. I blink hard after each kill to memorize the face and its last contorted moment on Earth, if my eye were the Eye of a Storm.

Sometimes I sit and watch them, if I can stomach it. I sit under Genghis, the twisted tree on Cherry Street. No one likes Genghis but me. It looks like he has an ugly old face and knobby thick limbs. But I like him. He doesn’t try to pretend to be anything he’s not.

There’s something about the positioning of the streets or buildings or something right there on Cherry and Ninth—the sound of the trains moving in and out of King Street seem to echo right there. It’s pretty faint, but if you listen for that kind of thing, it’s most clear when you’re at Genghis.

Humans are like every other species. It makes me sick. My last class of the day is biology and it puts me in a real foul mood before I go out on the sidewalks to play Eye of the Storm. We cut into a frog last month and it looked just like the insides of a person. I cut into an apple the other day and the veins looked just like the blue lines running through my body. People think they’re so important. But they’re not. They’re no better than a dead twitching frog or a rotting apple.

When I graduate next year, I’m gonna go live with my dad in Alaska. I’ve always wanted to but my mom wouldn’t let me. She’s said it’s too dangerous for a boy. But I’m not a boy anymore. I’m gonna learn how to work on the boats with him. I haven’t seen him in four years but when I do, he’s gonna see I’ve grown into a man. I can’t wait to get outta here. I wanna live in the middle of nowhere and I don’t wanna see another stranger as long as I live.

One biology class was particularly miserable. I couldn’t stand it. We were dissecting a grasshopper. We had to pull its body apart and identify the bits. We had a worksheet with a drawing on it that outlined the head and we had to label each part like the labrum and mandible. I couldn’t take pulling this thing apart, but I couldn’t walk out of class—you can’t be a pussy at my high school, not with Reggie and Jake sitting two rows behind you. I’m twice the size of either one of them, easily the biggest kid in my grade, but I can’t take two guys at once, and they always start shit together.

I took out a piece of paper and drew an outline of Mr. Ackley’s head and started labeling his teeth and skin and parts of his brain. I imagined pulling him apart with gigantic tweezers so big I had to be twenty feet tall to stand over him and work the metal to get his parts separated. I made a doodle of me dissecting him along the side of the paper. I don’t know how long I drew for but it felt like a while.

I do that sometimes. I think about something too much and it takes me away. A lot of time can pass and I don’t really notice it and I can’t remember what I’ve been doing during that time. It’s like a time machine. That’s how I’ve made it so far in high school.

Anyway, Mr. Ackley’s a dick. My other teachers think I’m sleeping in class and they let me. But Mr. Ackley has it out for me. He’s a snake in the grass. Everyone thinks he’s nice but I know better. His eyes
look like dead-fish eyes. They're all glassy and gooey. I can't look right at him.

I was time-travelling on the idea of pulling Mr. Ackley apart and he must have thought I was sleep-ing 'cause he took our big biology book and crept up to my desk and held it open in front of my face and slammed it together and yelled “WAKE UP.” The whole class was laughing. What a dick. I ran out of class when the bell rang and kept running home, my eyelids snapping shut hard, sweeping up one victim after another.

I ran down Cherry Street, the winds and rain of my storm preceding me, and took seven victims by the time I reached Genghis. I slowed to catch my breath and saw a little blonde girl sitting cross-legged under my tree. I couldn't see her face. She had her head bent down, over a book on her lap. I blinked hard. Again and again. I wanted to bash her head against Genghis or pick her up and throw her down the block. I wanted her little body to get caught up in my twister and snap her neck.

She looked up from her book. Her eyes made flickering contact with mine and then her gaze rested about a foot away from me. I heard the trains whis-
tling. She dug her elbow into her thigh and made a perch of her arm, resting her chin on her fist. Her brows knitted up and she chewed the thin red line of her lower lip.

“What’s habitus mean?” she asked like I was her brother and had just wandered into her room.

She had fine white-blonde hair that looked like strands of pale silk and I could see dried mud in it. Her tattered blue jeans were smeared with mud and dirt too. Her hands looked like she might have been buried alive, and had to claw her way out of the earth.

“My dictionary was stolen. What does habitus mean?” she asked again, still not looking at me.

“I don’t know. What are you doing at my tree?” I snapped, and stepped closer to Genghis.

Her eyes flashed to mine. She had dark circles under her blue eyes. Her jaw clenched. I think she was trying to read me. She looked a little banged up and that kinda made me less pissed at her for stealing my spot.

“What are you reading?” I tried to sound not so mean.

“Nothing,” she mumbled and returned her focus to her book.

I stepped closer. I saw her body stiffen but she didn’t look up.

“I wasn’t even gonna sit there today. So you can be there.”

She ignored me. I stepped closer and sat down near her. She kept reading. I pulled up some clumps of rain-soaked grass. I asked again what her book was. She looked up and said it wasn’t hers, but she didn’t look at me. She looked over my shoulder, behind me, in the distance. She shifted her weight, leaning forward to get a better view of something, and her book tumbled from her lap. The cover read C.G. Jung: Modern Man in Search of a Soul.

Then she muttered “uh oh,” and got up quick as lightning. A millisecond before she sprung down the sidewalk at a breakneck speed, she looked me dead in the eyes and said, “see you later.” I blinked hard, taking her picture.

I moved over to lean against Genghis. My head felt clearer. I stretched back, crossing my arms behind my head, ready to play Eye of the Storm again. A moment later, two little boys jogged quickly past me. I snapped my eyes closed, taking them down. I saw in my mind’s eye, after they had passed, that one of the boys clutched a mud-smeared dictionary.

I only played for a little while more and then went home for dinner. When I was younger, once they finally found Kendra’s body and dad left us, I would set fires. I still do sometimes but I have to be real careful. A while back, I got in a lot of trouble and had to spend a month in the Children’s Hospital over in Laurelhurst. I wasn’t a child. I was 12. I hated being in a place that called me a child and I hated everyone there. It was the worst month of my life.

Making fires is addicting, like huffing or cutting. When I was in the ChilHos, as we call it, there was another kid there named Rick who was a burner too. He taught me how to control them so they burn out quicker and don’t spread. I also learned that when I’m raging, I can draw and it’ll make my head quiet down enough so I can think again. It usually works but I don’t always remember to do that. Sometimes lighters are closer than my drawing charcoals. Charles, my stepdad, says if I ever set fires again, he’ll put me
in the ChilHos and I’ll never come out. (Whenever anything of his is missing, he could find it if he looked in the growing pile of black ash next to the burned up oversized Maxwell House can in the back alley behind our house.)

The next day on the walk home, I didn’t play Eye of the Storm. I was feeling good. I turned the corner on to Cherry Street slowly, enjoying the feeling of walking and the October sun. I felt better than I had in a long time, really. I could see as I got closer to Genghis that the reader was in my spot again. I felt myself smile. I didn’t say anything, I just sat down next to her and pulled out my sketch pad.

“It’s my dad’s book,” she said in a small voice after awhile, without looking up. “I’m trying to solve it.”

I started sketching things around me like birds and Genghis and leaves. Then I realized it was the first time I’d ever drawn anything other than Storm victims.

“Is it a murder mystery?”

“No. I think it has clues to why he went away. It’s the only thing he left behind.”

“Maybe he left it because it doesn’t mean anything to him.”

She let out a sound like air rushing out of a balloon. She turned toward me suddenly, with force. Her eyes were sharp. Angry.

“Why would you say that?” she demanded, loud, her voice trembling.

“I donno,” I stammered. “I just, it seemed like a reasonable thing to think, like maybe he didn’t care about that book, maybe –”

“SHUT UP!” she screamed. “YOU FUCKING ASSHOLE! You’re wrong! You don’t know.”

She grabbed her book, stood, and paused to glare at me. I’ve never been looked at that way before. I tried not to blink but I couldn’t help it. I captured it. Then she pivoted and marched away.

I couldn’t sleep that night. I tossed and turned. Her image burned into my eyelids. When I did sleep, it was some version or another of our exchange and her vile stare. I kept waking up from the dream but I wasn’t really awake—I was just in another layer of a dream. Over and over, I clawed my way through dream after dream but they were inside each other like Russian dolls. When I finally woke up in the morning and recalled the series of dreams, I wondered if that was what being in a coma was like. That idea gave me the shivers.

I couldn’t wait to get to school and get the day done so I could go meet her again. I had a pit in my stomach and I knew it would be there until I could see her. The day went by slower than any other day I can remember. When it was finally done I raced through the streets and rounded the corner on Cherry Street. I ran toward Genghis but she wasn’t there.

A stab of pain grew from my stomach and squeezed my throat. I didn’t know what I was feeling but I didn’t like it. I sat at Genghis for a while and then walked to the downtown library that looks like a weird diamond-spaceship and checked out the Jung book. I took it back to Genghis, feeling a little better, and got to the second page before I gave up. That incomprehensible psychobabble pissed me off to no end. I fingered the little blue lighter in my pocket and knew what would be going into the Maxwell can next.

Weeks passed in the same way. Each day, I would sit there waiting. And every day she wasn’t there, I’d be pissed all over again. Every time I squeezed my eyes shut to pull up her picture from the first time I met her, I heard her say, “see you later,” and I wanted to yell “YOU’RE A LIAR!”

In November, we had midterms and I had to stay after school with a tutor for one week to prepare for the tests. It was either that or repeat the eleventh grade, the tutor told me. So I stayed, but my mind was on Genghis. I’d fly out of class when the tutor would let me go, and would feel certain that the reader had just been there. I hated that tutor.

Friday was the last day of my afterschool punishment. I left the study hall so quick that I forgot my biology folder. I often leave things behind because I don’t have a real good memory for stuff like that, but my bio folder was a bad one to leave. It had the drawing of me dissecting Mr. Ackley in it. It wasn’t worth rushing out anyway, she wasn’t there.

So when Mr. Ackley told me to stay after class on Monday, I was expecting him to lay into me. I wasn’t expecting him to walk me down to Principal Slade’s
office, and find my mom and Slade talk-whispering. They shut right up when I walked in. I sat down and my mom asked me, all sweet-voiced and real touchy-feely, how I was doing. I said fine and crossed my arms tight across my chest. I didn't like her tone. It's snake in the grass talk—they aren't saying what they mean and they're circling you with a net. Adults always do that.

Principal Slade leaned across the desk and asked all nice if my classwork was getting to be too much for me. I said “no” with an edge. I acknowledged how rude I was—I know they all heard the fuck you in my voice—but they were making me so angry. Condescending and treating me like a baby. My mom asked if I thought it would be nice to take a little vacation. She meant ChilHos. I clenched my fists. I knew I wouldn't go back there. I'd burn down the school with everyone in it, myself included, before I went back.

They decided I'd take the rest of the week off and we'd all talk again after the break. Then mom drove us home in silence. I fell asleep on the couch when we got home and when I awoke, I was alone and could see through the beige blinds that the sun was beginning to set.

The air was cold when I stepped outside, and woke me up from my fog. Being asleep felt better. I was sick of my head, my skin. The long fucking days and nights of waiting to see her. I felt like cutting again, like breaking the lock on mom's liquor cabinet, like burning something, like burning myself. Anything to get some control. I walked slowly, depleted, toward Genghis. The streets were bare except for a parked car or two. I passed only a few people and didn't even look in their direction. I didn't want to remember their faces. I wanted to not exist without trying.

I focused on my black sneakers as I walked, counting steps to keep my mind busy. I looked up as I turned the corner like I had for the whole last month, and there she was, sitting with Genghis. Seeing her there felt better than staring into the orange flames of a fresh fire, or the feel of the edge of steel on my skin. It felt like memories of everything okay, like before, like when I was a little kid. It made me feel a way I didn't know I could remember feeling.

She didn't see me coming. I watched her from a distance as I approached. She sat bent over her book but she kept snapping her head up, glancing around, then returning to the book. I pretended that she was waiting for me and I slowed my pace to savor the idea. When I was about 10 feet away, I saw her face. She had a blackening eye. Her right hand was wrapped in a bandage. She looked up and her eyes found mine. She smiled, then winced.

“I got in a fight,” she announced.

I sat down next to her and reached for her book. She started to flinch, but then let me pick it out of her lap. The book was mostly destroyed: more pages than not were ripped out. Ragged portions of pages still clung to the spine but it was futile. It wasn't legible anymore. I turned the book over in my hand. The letters C-U-N-T were gouged deeply into the plastic-coated dark blue cover. I fingered the indentations of the letters.

“I'm going to find my father,” she said. She sounded serious like an adult. My flesh shuttered.

“Do you know where to look?” I asked while tracing the lower hook of the C on her book cover.

“He left two years ago. He started riding the trains at night and would come back every few days. Then he was just gone. He writes me postcards. The last one I got was four months ago. He was in Mississippi. That's where I'm going.”

A long silence passed. I studied the fallen leaves and blinked hard, slowly in all directions, to capture the night. Finally she turned her bruised face to mine. Her eyes glinted off the street light, and there were no traces of childhood in her.

“How are we going to get there?” I asked, handing her book back to her, and thinking of the cold air in Alaska.

“You'll see,” she answered, unflinching, and stood. She pulled me up to my feet with her good hand.

I followed her and she followed the whistle of the trains.
Woman, Megan Stumpfig
The apartment complex had a stretch of dirt wide as two children lying side by side, long as the parking lot, used mostly as place for dogs to shit.

A family in the building saw the space and imagined a field. They tilled the earth. The neighbor girl of ten, narrow and tall, unbothered by womanhood or a body's way of swelling, looked graceful as a cattail as she sowed seeds into puddles.

So pumpkin vines with their delicate curling fingers climbed the wire fence and between the wheels of trucks.

A few of us saw this Aad were inspired and also planted. The whole thing took off in a jungle of jade.

Neighbors far down the road in houses big as dreams came to see our worth, as if marveling at a prized pig.

In my assigned part of the garden I grew everything I had ever dreamed of: habaneros, those hot green triangles, tomatillos, eggplant on spindly stalks, cantaloupe, and pineapple sage, the sage with the scent of a tropical drink when rubbed between the fingers.

My mother said the plant would bring hummingbirds as it flourished and sprouted red plumage, a fountain of blossoms. I was amazed to find the flowers had no scent. The namesake was in the greenery.

So it was with our little garden. The neighbors departed, chuckling about the hobby we had made for ourselves.

We threw up our hands and grinned. We knew better. We learned of the earth and had planted for our future.

Our power was not flashy and outward like flowers but resilient and humble, regenerating leaves.
Jazmine Mira Rosier(?)

oh, how we were tea party friends. how we were frightful young hooligans. full blown roses. more subtle too, and truer. we were moonstruck and heartbroken and we rambled our way through dawn and dusk, love bruises on both knees from falling for curly-haired boys along the way. you and i, we were daughters of the moon, seashells, indian reeds. swinging along infinite and curious, we plucked cherries from our blushing cheeks and sipped lemonade from the last of a setting sun. and it was all so secret and sweet and soft, hushed only because we said it was so. we were a howling smoke but yours was the pinky i held onto, and our whispers were the honeycombs left in door latches. we were sleepwalkers through whirlwinds. secret spun stewards and foolishly honest magicians.

there is a horizon we remembered, on the very edge of everything. draped and dazzled in a smoke that must have blown over from the lips of cigarette sweethearts. a smoke! we were harnessed in a haze. a hazy drunk and we slipped our toes into the sea and waves carried our murmurs and coos onto other coasts, into the pull of tides much different than these ones.

winter mornings are here, wind’s bitter fingers are wrapped tight around the marrow of glass spines. here are the mornings of iron and stone, and the silver doves your feathered breath makes in the cold, fly close. let’s pretend our crystal cheeks aren’t yet broken and drink up ‘til lips tumble into apple smiles. let’s pretend, and let this swaying seashell of a moon carry us home.

my home has been living rooms and sidewalks. cafes and train stations. my home is a glass of sangria in a swanky spanish bar. berlin chai and graffiti is my home. parisian cobblestone. gaudi’s park is where we eat our breakfast of oranges and pears. we shower on porches overlooking lakes in finland. we brush our teeth in bushes and lay our heads to rest on sidewalks and black sea sands. dinner eaten in fields, parks, and hills. on church steps we drink wine, and in the middle of the vltava we drink tiny champagne.

i’m swaying back and forth and back and forth and back again. fingers reaching hopelessly through shadows, searching. could it be your sea glass eyes? in your hands you hold the ocean, giving me tides as our palms join to one. your little bones are constellations fastened delicately together, wrapped around me like twilight. i let them, i fall back in, i carry your exhale timidly in my inhale. nostalgic for reasons we’re not quite sure, i measure from eyes to lips to hair to here and i’m swinging. salt water beneath my feet.
Merry Go Round, Barrett Butterfield
We Will All Be Swallowed By the Sun
Cassia Gammill

One thing I remember is just the terrible stillness of an afternoon. I’m on the carpet, the sunlight comes in the window and something about the quality of the light—it’s much too yellow—makes me ache. I wonder what happens to the light within its journey of approximately eight minutes and nineteen seconds through the Milky Way to turn its photons sour. Maybe it doesn’t like to travel, just wants to stay close to home, afraid it’s going to miss something, resents being dispatched from the source, and for what? When it hits me I feel only a mixture of sensations without context, without connection, heat that doesn’t warm. Only vague discomfort and dread. It happens only rarely, but still today, when the light in a room is of a certain hue and hangs about in just such a way, I feel a similar mourning mixed with shaky hope, and a recognition that nothing will ever be the same. And it won’t. The sun itself has changed.

How did I make it from the pale stillness of that moment to the shadowy earthquake moment of my favorite memory? Here I am with the girl-child, she’s meconium-sticky, naked and angry, making her way toward my nipple as I lay in exhausted disbelief at this loud and soulful fleshy-form that felt so impossibly large on her way through me—and now I see she is hardly bigger than my two fists. And how perfectly she fits. Maybe I got here stumbling into some sort of comfort with the idea that life is a constant flux—and that I have about as much control over it as I do the ever-shining light of the sun. Still, we all have to come out of our caves sometime. Surely I have stumbled out here, whatever the impetus, whatever receives me.

The child multiplies in size, yet still her size remains ideal, perfect. I carve a space out of my body for her. Embrace. Her favorite thing to do is to put things in what she calls my “pouch,” which is really just my shirt. If my shirt is loose and stretchy enough, she’ll climb in herself and ask me in her halting, choppy language, “Mommy-hold-in-arms.” My shirt stretched around her like skin, I get a pang of concern: I don’t want this to end. This feeling of hers of belonging in my arms, and this feeling of mine that the world revolves around this right here (you are my sunshine, my only sunshine). I hate to admit that sometimes it alone hinges me here, in life—the physical reality of a soft gaze and being mesmerized by right-brain feedback loops, her neck getting sweaty in the bend of one of my arms, her legs hooked over the forearm on the other side, dangling. We both are.

In a white room, in the night, in my dream: she was a tiny sunset just in front of my spine like a jewel
by the cold, sure hands of a man in white. In the room were a dozen other women, laying stuck about the floor, arranged like a constellation, moaning space music with thin voices like streams dripping from quickly melting icicles. Silver-haired, the man approaches me and I rise. The women look toward me as he reaches in, in, in, and I feel white-hot as he plants the sun-seed. Next moment I fall, I'm limp, but I hit the ground so softly—a feather on the moon disturbing nothing but the finest dust. The egg has burrowed and settled like it does in educational films, and somehow this is the way my sleeping brain tells me. I sleep and wake up, knowing I slept with stars, while the silver moon and my remembered euphoria illuminate and soften the atmosphere, and then there's a whirl in my belly at his scent on the pillow, and he hasn't been here for days. I know and I am still.

The real life man with the real life smell. He has cold hands, too.

I bleed and stalk the pavement, restless. There's nothing to do but wait said the nurse on the telephone help-line. Oh please, oh please. I don't know if I'm asking one way or the other, I really don't. Still, my sleep-brain knows that this is the one and only sun, and if trophoblast and villi are lost through pulsating expulsion, the deterioration process is already well under way—I myself will slowly cool and fade. I enter a bathroom stall and lock it behind me. Standing, I rest my head on the cool metal door and cry. The light in here hums and shivers. The walls are slippery, there's nothing to grasp onto. My palms flatten against them, and their emptiness brings me little comfort as I hope for something to curve palms around.

The real life man with the real life smell. We walk at night. Weaving through the streets we argue, our words missing each other. In the letter he said later. In the letter he said not now. The letter urges me away from myself and away from the sun, the opposite of gravity. It asks, why should we observe the law when we have shown ourselves to be more powerful? But to me it's not about law or time. What does the sun know about that? The sun seeks to swallow, to grow, to change. It heats up. The real life man with the real life smell touches me with a cold hand and it reminds me of the emptiness. You don't understand, I say, our sun may stop shining some day but for now this must grow. And as my belly continued to swell he sighed and backed away, as if I could scorch him, and rounded his shoulders into the shadows away from me, like a desolate moon.
Dracula, Skyler Wells
Modern Love: A Triptych
Sarah Currin Moles

1.
The dentist furtively dials his cell phone, listening to it ring as he readies his equipment. The voicemail picks up. He slips the phone into his pocket and tries to smile reassuringly at his nervous patient.

"Will this hurt? I don’t think the Novocain’s kicked in yet…” The dentist checks his watch.

"Don’t worry; you shouldn’t feel a thing.” With his left hand, he grabs the weighty pliers. With his right, he dials again. Waiting breathlessly to hear the tongue and teeth of his lover, he posits the pincers. An automated voice answers instead. He grimaces and yanks.

II.

Two young women holding hands are walking through a reptile exhibit in a zoological garden. The one with the Mediterranean coloring and piercing eyes speaks excitedly, occasionally reaching up to adjust her head scarf. Her flaxen-haired companion looks around nervously. They come to a terrarium: Eunectes murinus. There is silence for a moment, and then a shrill scream as the fair girl faints dead away. Later that night, alone in front of her bathroom mirror, the darker girl picks up a pair of scissors and sorrowfully pulls the scarf from her head. Twenty exquisite snakes begin to writhe in fear.

III.

She steers her ship out to sea, the wind tangling her hair, the taste of salt on her lips. She travels until she can no longer see land. Days and nights pass, the sun and the moon chasing each other through the sky. After some time, she comes across a man floating naked in the ocean. His eyes are calm, and she can hear snatches of lullabies between the crashing of the waves.

“Aider!” she cries. “Je suis perdu en mer.”

He smiles as he uncoils a length of rope. He throws it high, and she grabs hold.
This is not a page, but some slack mouth
sipping spiked lemonade from a mason jar,
the teeth above a hot collar sweat-soaked
and hastily tugged by stumpy fingers banded by gold,
the story flushed out of the throat,
thick-tongued orator waving his arms
in wide arcs to accentuate deep vowels like inky lagoons
or tangles of thickets in brambles scrambling across the ground,
trough slop sloshing against wooden boards
and the starchy white floppy hat flapping over creased white knees, the groan
of the soul as he leans back or slaps skin
with the fat brass watch above the gallumping heart
and tiny shoes for thick hips
a procession of words smooth as syrup dripping from the spoon
a cocked eyebrow, voice whooping and hollern’
the deep gasps of breath, a “mercy!” squeezed somewhere
between the story spilt forth like a tipped jug of milk
and the Mississippi eagerly flooding its muddy banks
to some deep rumbling thundercloud of the past
and a sentence anxiously sizzling, roaring fast like fire.
Artist Biographies

Erika Levison is a Fine Arts student at Portland State University. She also studies comic-arts at the Independent Publishing Resource Center in Portland, OR. Her work consists primarily of drawing, painting and illustrations; however, she is also exploring practices in stop-motion photography, textiles and permaculture design.

Micah Dugan is a junior at PSU, a journalist, a poet, and pop culturist. Many of his works pay homage to his favorite poet Allen Ginsberg. Dugan also hopes to one day exist.

Samantha Gentz studies Anthropology at Portland State University, and ensures that she still has time for art. Her work is inspired by the light and culture of Alaska.

J. Moody is working toward a Bachelor’s degree in English and a Master’s degree in Education. She plans to radically change youths’ ways of thinking about the world through teaching – to be part of the revolution toward sustainability and equal rights.

Liz Yerby Dunn moved from Baton Rouge, LA to Portland, OR to study Russian and art at PSU. She spends most of her time making awkward artwork which she occasionally documents on www.lizyerby.com.

Chris Maday was born and raised in Colorado, at the convergence of the plains and the mountains. After clawing his way through the dust and the dirt, he found himself in the Pacific Northwest, where he has been writing, studying English, and dreaming of America ever since.

Dan Brownhill decided to move to Portland late one summer night in 2008, and seven days later he was behind the wheel of his Toyota Corolla leaving Rochester, New York for Oregon. Breaking free of the life he was expected to live, choosing his own meandering path of experience and writing has been a tremendously rewarding decision. He is currently working on his English BA with a minor in Writing.

Michael L. Hostetler is an Art Practices major. He was born and raised in Union Mills, IN and moved to Portland in 2009 after serving 6 years in the military. His work references themes dealing primarily with the figure. He believes that the human form evokes a personal narrative to the viewer. The viewer can make connections to their own physicality by analyzing the figure’s composition, grace, and demeanor.

Lucy Mihajlich is an English major at Portland State University who has been previously published in RAIN Magazine.

Erik White was born and raised in Salt Lake City. A move to Portland four years ago rekindled a passion for creating art, and he decided to follow his childhood dream. He works primarily with ink and paint but if there’s a block of clay, a sewing machine, or basically anything in the room, he’ll play with those too. If you’re interested in seeing more, check out his blog at prayfortherain.blogspot.com.

The Unnamed

Not all artists chose to submit biographical information. Pathos nonetheless thanks them for their artistic contribution, and salutes their preference for mystery, anonymity, and the great unknown.