

The Palette

Issue 21 ♦

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The Palette 2021-22

Faculty Advisors:

Mr. Scotty Peek

Ms. Emily Masters

Mr. James Hane

Editor-in-Chief:

Liam Quan

Palette Staff:

Anna Cooper

Annie Benoit

Julia Claire Cooke

Sally Carey

Tess Overstreet

Pete Peterson

Abby Suber

Cover Art:

Cherry Zhang

sunset

by Grayson Elliott

gone. forgotten.

it was so different than the way it had been.

the sunset still washed the streets with fire and gold, but it was quieter than it should have been. it all seemed wrong.

what was he doing here?

chasing ghosts, maybe.

the alleyways that should have been littered with crumpled neon flyers and empty beer cans were instead bland and empty.

the old sign for the rainbow bar & grill seemed like a beacon of faded glory, shining dully next to the flickering “R” of the roxy theater, and the sight almost brought him to his knees.

his head spun, and he suddenly felt disconnected from the ground in his ratty cowboy boots. the warm pacific breeze ruffled bleached out waves and slid under his torn tank-top.

tears pricked at his eyes.

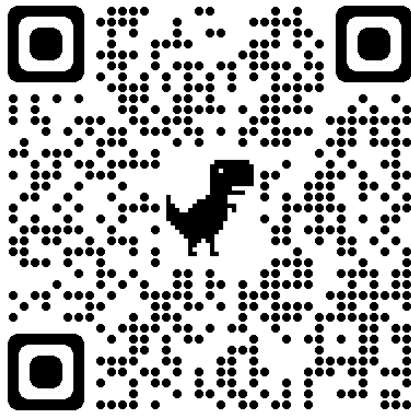
he was just another suicide, on a crash diet of rock n’ roll. what did it matter if one more visionary burned on the streets of hollywood, choking on his own dreams?



Ukrainian Flag
by Lauren Free



Emotional Support
by Elizabeth Burns



(To access this QR code, scan with your phone camera.)

Wayfaring Stranger
by Webb Hodges



Tree
by Cherry Zhang

Puke and Vomit

by Liam Quan

The odyssey of the bee is an epic no one tells you;
From pollen to flower, dewdrop to dew,
Why the bee flies, I have no clue.

Why the bee stings, well, I know that better.
The bee stings when its vision gets redder and redder,
As its eyes and cheeks get wetter and wetter
When the sky turns sharp, to weather the weather
The scared bee attacks, whether or whether
It knows it will meet its end or not.
To protect its queen: that's the quest it got
At birth—to live one single purpose!
To sting what stings back and never lose focus.

Ironically,
The best remedy for a bee sting of the throat is
Honey: the food they cannot stomach.
That when vocal cords run away in fear,
Or when a tongue is swollen from being bitten all day,
Honey helps.

Honey helpers have to hate our homeopathic poultice.
I would hate to have my haven's heirloom heaved and hauled away
If I were a honey helper;
I would hate to spill out my guts then see it licked off another's
Lips.
Thankfully, I do not partake in the bizarre business.
I am not a bee nor a honey helper;
No, no, I am just a hive.

Yet Another Soup Poem

by CeCe Fern

Oh joy
Liquid joy
Carrots and Celery
Aromas deploy

Fill up my senses
With your scent
Oh joy
Boiling on the stove

Anything can be added
Anything can contribute
To that special joy
Oh joy

Kale & White Beans
Or Broccoli & Cheddar
Oh this joy seems
Like it could never get better

Vegetable, Bean,
Beef or Clam Chowder
Oh joy I exclaim
Oh joy I say louder



Untitled
by Priya McLaughlin



Yin and Yang
by Gia Pravato-Hutcheson

36 Month Harvard Experiment

by Pete Peterson

Sweat: that's all I could smell, taste, and feel as it ran down my face. I quivered on the stage at the musty local New Brookland Tavern in front of three hundred people densely packed into the small, dark room. Do they know I'm nervous? Do they notice I'm soaked? I fumbled with the microphone as if I'd never held one before while I told a story about the time my friend pierced my ear with a needle he found under his bed. Why aren't they laughing? My friend's name was Carlisle, and I was standing on that creaking stage in honor of his life and project, 36 Month Harvard Experiment. I was terrified, but I knew I had to be there. It was the only way to fulfill a promise I'd made to Carlisle, one I'd failed to keep while he was alive. While I couldn't change the past, I knew I wouldn't break any promise I made to anyone I loved again.

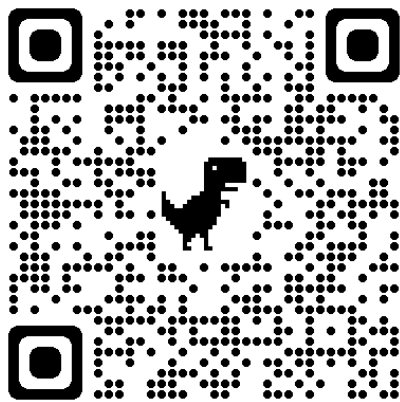
Before he was snatched from his mother, his friends, and his community on that gloomy May 27, guitarist Carlisle Kelly had written the music for our band's songs, performed under the rotting ceiling of Jimmy Ruskell's laundry-infested room. Carlisle always asked me to learn how to play guitar to help him write songs. I never did. I thought of the band simply as the place I could unleash my own internal struggles in song lyrics every weekend. Whether moaning "she never calls me at all/she pushed me off the cliff to see how I'd fall" while wallowing in self-pity after a breakup, or murmuring "the thumping bass and thrashing guitar solo of Will Toledo's 'Cute Thing' in a bustling Chick-fil-A drive-through" to illustrate my experience meandering through rural Camden, South Carolina, I was content singing all of my lyrics about my own self-centered personal narrative. This contentment was destroyed when my friend, without warning, was senselessly murdered in his car.

Slumped in my room at 2:00 AM, I searched for any remnant of my lost friend. I came across a Google Drive folder that Carlisle had shared with me years before. I'd never even opened it. The folder was filled with dozens of guitar melodies he'd recorded. I realized I owed it to Carlisle to make sure his band was finally going to play in front of an audience, so I began to

learn to play Carlisle's guitar and to craft an album using the melodies I'd found in the folder. In ballads like "for me?????", I sing about how the album will hopefully have Carlisle "look down from the heavens and say 'he did this for me?'"

After finally honoring my late friend's long-standing request—later than I should have—I realized I was too often unaware of the hopes and dreams of those I care about. I'd been too self-centered, and too often only thought about my own goals.

Watching the line of teenagers snake around the block the day of the concert, all there to support our lost friend, I knew it was time to fully pay attention to the people I love. I decided from that moment that I would fulfill my promises, both explicit and implicit: I refused to let anyone else down. In being more aware of my loved ones' dreams, I know I am going to seek to help people achieve them in the ways that I'm able. And while I started my journey to fulfill promises, it was only fitting I began with Carlisle's 36 Month Harvard Experiment. As we kicked off our thirty-minute set with a song about making amends with a ghost living in my room, the audience roared with cheers. Although it was not in the same manner that we dreamed of when we were freshmen, the 36 Month Harvard Experiment was making a lost friend proud. ♦



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Chopin's Nocturne
by Alex Myrick



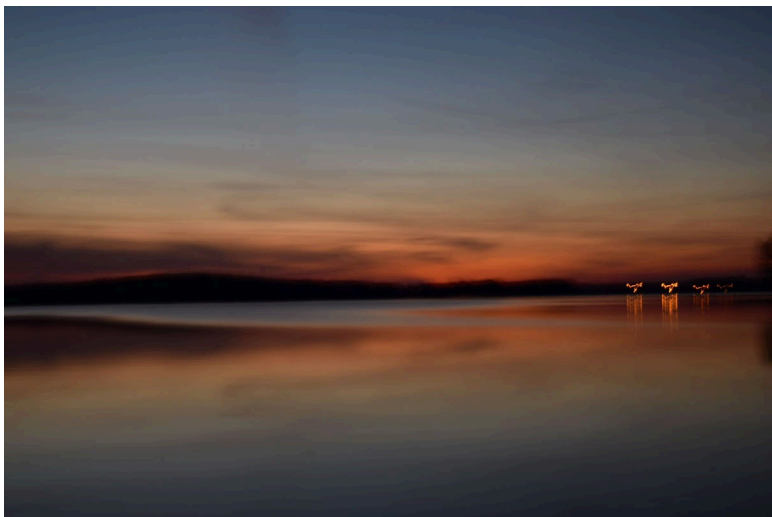
Album Covers
by Abby Suber



On Leash
by Liam Quan



Untitled
by Cherry Zhang



Untitled
by Max Hagood

An Ode to Chipotle

by Mary Frances Ruskell

Oh Chipotle,
 Roman forum of the college age.
 I sit at your high metal tables,
 Watching bright, twinkly lives
 Flow in and out of
 Your bounds.
 They stand before your uniformed lieutenants,
 Supplicating for your lifeblood.

I eat a forkful of guac and beans.

Oh Chipotle,
 Proving grounds of the college age.
 Where one can meet an old friend
 Or a bitter adversary,
 Waiting for ambrosia.
 Yawps of sorrow and surprise,
 The echoing New Jerseyan call of
 “Goodbye, my b*****s!”
 United for one cause, the glory of Tex-Mex.

I take a sip of Tractor Organic Lemonade ®.

Dear Rabbit, From the Fox

by Priya McLaughlin

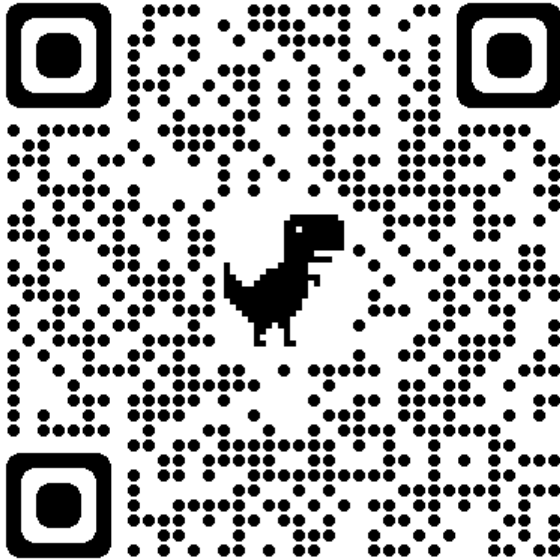
Dear Rabbit,
My legs are growing tired, chasing you.
This forest wouldn't seem so big if you only knew,
That once you stop running, it would seem so small,
Just like you.
And I snapped at you once, with my sharp-toothed jaws,
And I swiped at you with my thorn-like claws.
But you kept running, into the undergrowth,
And we grew tired, us both.

Now Rabbit,
I know that history has divided us for a while,
But why not choose our own fate,
Instead of living this life filled with bitter bile.
Perhaps we could be friends, and live together,
And maybe break that dark, bloody habit.
Let's meet in the field, and head towards the great oak tree,
And sit there for a while, feeling ever so free.

So Rabbit,
It has been a while since you stopped by the farm,
And I am still thinking of the shriek I heard, ever so crude.
I watched the farmer walk out this morning, with some new fur
gloves,
And they looked silky like you, like a small winged dove.
I am still here, beneath the oak tree,
Awaiting your return, so we can leave the farm be and head onto
our dreams.
I was sitting, staring out into the sky,
When everything went black, as a sound like thunder blasted into
the sky.

And Rabbit,
I opened my eyes, to see you sitting there,
Your nose twitching, along with those little hairs.
You looked as bright as a star, with your fur glossy and clean,

And I did too, so it seemed.
As we stood and began to run among the clouds, staying afloat,
I looked down to see the farmer with a new, red, fur coat.
And we ran to the stars as the sun began to set,
Leaving that life full of rules behind, along with every fret. ♦



(To access this QR code, scan with your phone camera.)

BL1ND B4B3
by Derek Lewis



Pottery
by Mia Singerling

An Unnatural History

by Ryan Shelley

Ah the duality of flamingo...
Once worshiped and exalted,
Seen next to godly.
In all your frank boldness,
You represented all that we wished
To see in ourselves.
But America in her irony,
Grew jealous of your fire,
And sought its warmth.
They hunted you to extinction,
And displayed their mockery
Of your purity,
In their ironic effigies
Planted in their yards
And buildings erected in your shape.
Imagine, then, in a thousand years,
That humans might build a hotel
In the shape of the cross upon which
Our Savior was crucified
And say "look how bold."
I hope that one day
We might know
To live as brightly
As your feathers show.

Along the Whale Road

by Liam Quan

To see, to hear, to know; they need to feel
A sound, from you, they make, to read your soul:
The beasts who wonder if you are a meal—
Your body trembles under their control.
The will of whales is overwhelming. Thus,
You must abide the siren-call within
And fall into the ocean trusting trust.
Against the waters pulling you, give in.
The sea expands beyond the line between
The sun, the prairies, mountains, clouds and stars.
You float, surrounded by the middle scene,
Your heart in place but mind ensconced afar.
A noise, a shout, a call to wake they make;
With open eyes and freedom found, you break.

I Am From

by Kiana Lee

I am from a box,
From cardboard and scotch tape.
I am from the dog hair
that lies on the living room floor.
(Black, glistening, the things that fall beneath your shoe.)
I am from tulips,
whose petals only bloom once a year.
I am from laughter
and eyeglasses.
From Kioya and Michelle Lee.
I am from the know-it-alls
and competitive spirits.
From “she needs to participate more in class”
and “closed mouths never get fed.”
I am from the Easter mornings
with colorful little easter eggs scattered across the yard,
and the vibrant poofy pastel dress for church.
I am from Manning, South Carolina, and the Lees.
From peanut butter blossom, and chocolate chip cookies
and spaghetti with ranch.
I am from the metal rod in my father’s leg,
when his friend fell asleep at the wheel.
From the scar on my grandfather’s chest
he received by a bullet in the Vietnam War.
I am from a bookshelf in my mom’s office,
that carries the photo albums and baby books.
I am from these moments.
I am from these pages.
I am from the spines of those books
that hold me together,
until my memory fails me.

Long Way from Dover

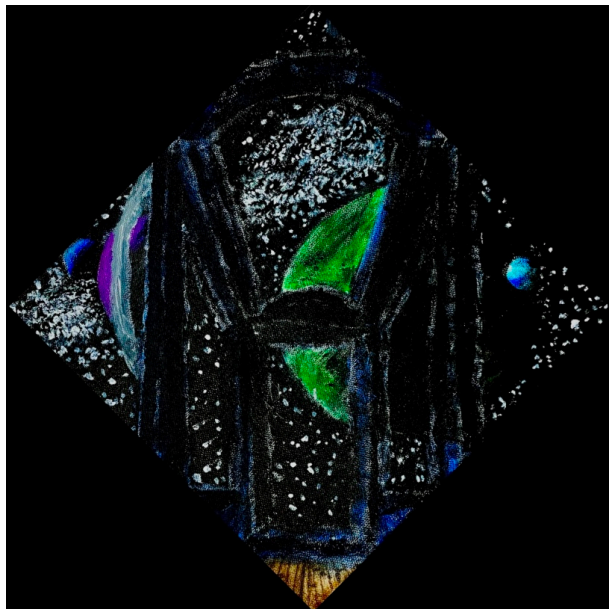
by Owen Hart

The farm, the field, I feel the wind
Around my friends, they are my kin
We eat the crops, taking the wheat
A rest we need, get off our feet

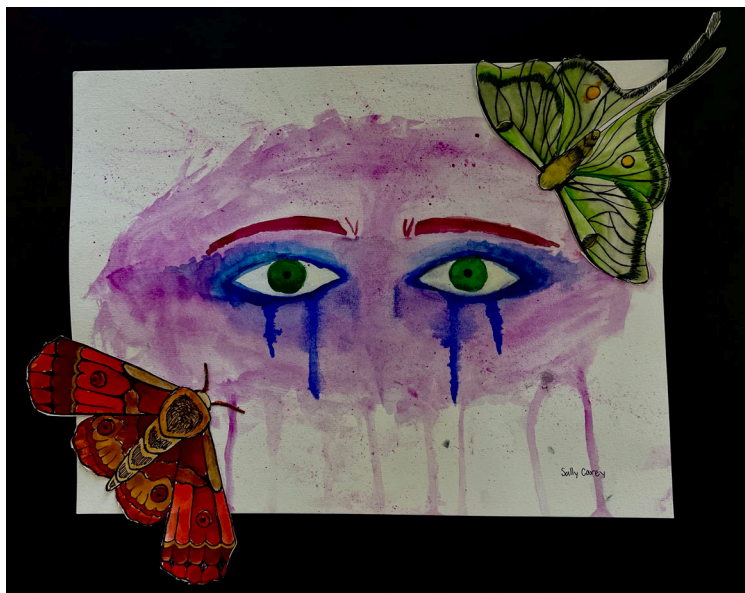
The farm is warm, a place to rest
We sit on hay, birds in a nest
The sky is bright, though it is night
The door is open with quite a sight

Vast orange clouds, our break is over
It feels like home, across in Dover
I stand in line, helmet in hand
The barn on fire, the bomb hath land

The fields are red, bloody and damp
My mind turned off, just like a lamp
So far away, to go back home
So far away, can't get back home



Dream World
by Conor Greer



Butterflies
by Sally Carey

Emily as an Individual, Not a Symbol

by Mary Frances Ruskell

Literary criticism of the short story “A Rose for Emily” by William Faulkner often disregards the tragic story of Emily as an individual woman in favor of proclaiming that the story is a message about the decline of 19th century Southern traditions. In his introduction to the short story, Joseph Kelly writes, “Nearly all critics think Emily symbolizes the decay of the old order, the dissolution of the Southern aristocracy.” However, “Faulkner himself disowned symbolic readings” and claimed the story was simply about “a young girl that just wanted to be loved and to love and to have a husband and a family” but was unable to because she was “kept down by her father, a selfish man, who didn’t want her to leave home because he wanted a housekeeper.”¹ Emily, the main character, was denied her individualism and power over her own life by her father, and critics continue to deny her individuality by using her as only a symbol for their own interpretations of a dying social order. To them, she is an idea, and not a woman with her own interior life and struggles. “A Rose for Emily” is the tragedy of a woman that was never allowed to develop a sane autonomy and the long-reaching psychological effects of that denial. Symbolic readings of the story risk repeating that tragedy by reducing her to a collective symbol.

Emily’s father is portrayed as an intimidating and controlling figure. He isolates Emily by keeping her in their home and denying all of her suitors, because they were not “quite good enough” for the Grierson name. The narrators describe the Griersons as “a tableau, Miss Emily a slender figure in white in the background, her father a spraddled silhouette in the foreground, his back to her and clutching a horsewhip, the two of them framed by the back-flung front door.” Emily is shown as innocent and powerless in white, set farther back and separated from the viewers by her father. He is a barricade positioned before her, literally cutting her off from her possible future as a married woman. Her

¹ Joseph Kelly, “William Faulkner,” *The Seagull Book of Stories*, fourth edition (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2018), 154.

father cuts a domineering figure, preventing her from leaving, keeping her behind him and keeping her under the control of the horse whip he wields. He has denied her autonomy and when he passes away Emily denies his death. Her father's hand on her shoulder had always been heavy, and the missing tether unmoors her. She cannot fathom being left alone.

The death of Emily's father destabilizes her, and the sudden, crushing loneliness left behind by his absence engulfs her and causes her to fall ill. The severity of her illness causes her to stay inside for weeks. When she resurfaces, she is described as having a "vague resemblance to those angels in colored church windows--sort of tragic and serene." The narrators pity her, but they consider her as something other, separate--frozen in glass. Then, her loneliness seems to be assuaged by a man named Homer Barron. He and Emily spend time together in town, and the townspeople begin to speculate on whether they will marry. However, it is implied that Homer is gay and he himself said that he "was not a marrying man." Despite this, the people come to the conclusion that they will marry because Emily had ordered a man's silver toilet set with the letters H.B. on each piece and a set of men's clothing. Homer leaves town, and when he returns he is seen entering Emily's house. He is never seen alive again. During the time period that "A Rose for Emily" was set, it was expected of a woman to marry. Howbeit, Emily remained unwed and the townspeople pitied her, causing them to view her as a "tradition, a duty, and a care; a sort of hereditary obligation upon the town" because she had no one to care for her. She is repeatedly referred to as "Poor Emily" behind her back by them. Hence they didn't pry into the disappearance of Homer, whom they had viewed as Emily's last chance. It would have been improper and rude to ask the poor, lonely woman in her falling-down house about the lover that had left and embarrassed her. The townspeople hold a slanted perspective on Emily and consider her as a sort of symbol, referring to her as a "carven idol in a niche," a "hereditary obligation upon the town," and having a "vague resemblance to those angels in colored church windows - sort of tragic and serene." This subtle implication of inanimation may influence the reader to see Emily as an effigy, a figure that can only be thought of as representing something. But, it must be remembered that Emily's individual experiences and decisions drive "A Rose for Emily," and her complexity cannot and should not be brushed aside in favor of an exclusively symbolic interpretation.

Years after Homer has disappeared, Emily has grown old and died, allowing the townspeople to gather and scrutinize her house. Everything inside is coated in dust, and when they go into an upstairs bedroom they discover a terrible secret. A desiccated body is sunken into a bed in a room furnished for marriage, “lain in the attitude of an embrace.” Upon closer inspection of the body and bed, it is discovered that the pillow next to the corpse holds the indentation of a head and a strand of long, iron-gray hair on it. The body is Homer Barron’s, who was poisoned by Emily. This is evidenced by her actions earlier in the story when she went to the druggist and bought arsenic, refusing to explain why.

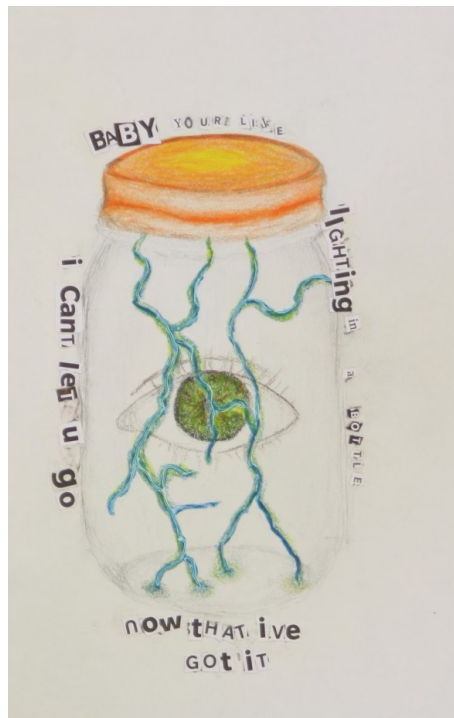
One has to wonder if Emily had been sleeping alongside his corpse for decades in a tragic perversion of marriage. Killing a man and sleeping next to his corpse is not a sane reaction to his threatening to leave. Emily clung desperately to the past and the people she loved. Because Emily was not allowed to “be loved and to love” while her father was alive, she saw Homer as her only chance. So, when Homer was going to leave her, she killed him and kept his corpse hidden in her house. When her father died, she refused to relinquish his body for days or admit that he was dead. Emily was so desperate to keep the people she loved with her that she stopped seeing death as an end to a person. She killed Homer and kept his body because in her mind he had not left if his corpse, a part of him, was with her. After her father’s death, Emily held onto the traditions he instilled in her, such as her *noblesse oblige*. She held onto this obligation by carrying “her head high enough—even when we believed that she was fallen. It was as if she demanded more than ever the recognition of her dignity as the last Grierson.” She feared that if she stopped obeying the phantom hand on her shoulder, she would lose her father forever: “with nothing left, she would have to cling to that which had robbed her, as people will.”

Emily was a bastion of old southern culture due to her father’s influence, but it is important to not view her as merely a vessel for symbolism. The abuse of her early life shaped her. Since she never was allowed to develop emotionally, she held onto the few people she had relationships with and what life was like when they were with her.

Emily’s refusal to let go causes death, deterioration, and decay in her life. This ternion of rot is a prevalent motif in the story. As Emily ages she is increasingly described as pale, corpse-like, with eyes that are sinking into her face. Emily’s house

deteriorates, described as having “once been white” but now “lifting its stubborn and coquettish decay,” with a smell of “dust and disuse.” Her house withers around her but she neglects to fix or change it, because she cannot break the illusion of an unobtainable reality where no one she loves has left her. She remains shut in the house as she remains in a delusion of the past and what could’ve been. She dies in a “house filled with dust and shadow,” with her head lying on a pillow “yellow and moldy with age and lack of sunlight.” Emily’s psyche never developed in a healthy way, and the damage that deficiency caused can be seen through the decay of her body and her house. The popular analysis of this story is that the motif of decay symbolizes the “dissolution of the Southern aristocracy,” and while Emily certainly is an old southern aristocrat, her interior life should not be ignored in favor of a broader interpretation. One might think that Faulkner himself, in choosing to not make Emily ever speak directly to the reader as one of the narrators of her own story, is denying her individuality and power as well. But upon closer examination of the text, the reader becomes keenly aware of Emily’s interior life and the fact that she is not merely a powerless symbol. For example, when she reappears after falling ill due to her father’s death, her “hair was cut short.” While the details of her period of sickness are never described to us, we infer that she felt intensely enough to have to cut her hair. Possibly she cut it because she was so ill she could not take care of it, or she might have cut it in an impulsive decision fueled by grief. We do not and can not know, but her actions plant impressions of her interior life into our minds.

The long-reaching effects on Emily from her father’s mental abuse are the basis for the events of the story. If this is ignored in favor of a symbolic interpretation that could be applied to many stories, is Emily not denied her individuality? Emily must be allowed to be a person, a tragic person, yes, a disturbed person, indeed, but a person, an individual. She is a woman who was never allowed to become an individual apart from her father, a woman who fears being alone even as the mental abuse of her father ensured she will end up alone. Insisting that we see her as a symbol of the South takes away her individuality once again.



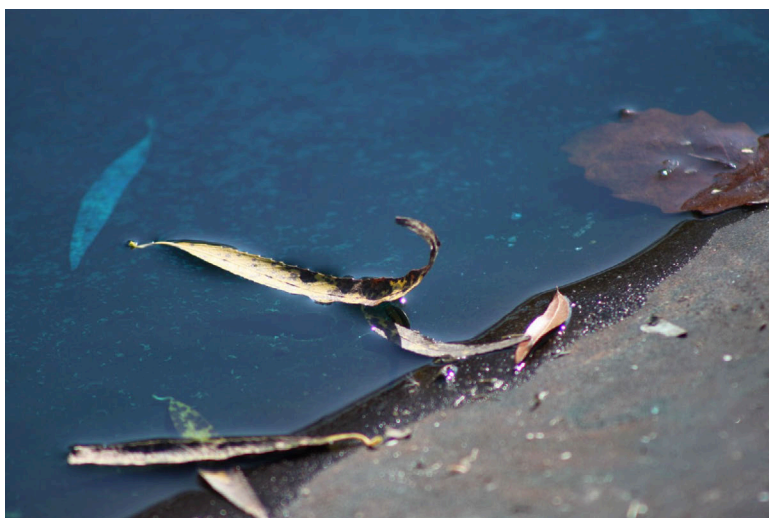
Lightning in a Bottle
by Sally Carey



Untitled
by Tess Overstreet



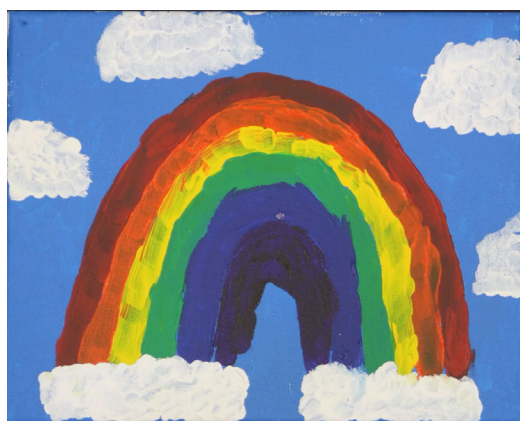
Apple
by Webb Hodges



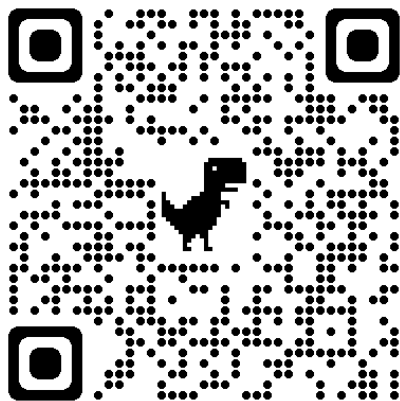
Untitled
by Priya McLaughlin



Flowers
by Cherry Zhang



Rainbow
by Annie Benoit



(To access this QR code, scan with your phone camera.)

blah blah something about gravity

by Derek Lewis



Nightmare

by Penelope McDougall

The Warm Sun and the Cold Moon

by Justin Ansley

Warm like the Sun
Cold like the Moon

Warm like ire
Cold like isolation

Warm like the embrace of a mother
Cold like the heart of a human

Warm like a searing fury
Cold like a chilling sorrow

Warm like blood in the heart
Like a beat that never ends
It grows Warm
And blooms Cold

gold

by Grayson Elliott

maybe,
a cut leaves
a scar.
or,
a punch leaves
a bruise.

but what—
what of words?
vicious,
ugly,
words?

like hot knives
to a golden heart,
they burn,
they cut;

but in the end,
their only office
is to make you shine
brighter.

the ones who wield
the fire
do not know this,
but gold—
the hotter gold burns
the more glamor it gains.

Escape From Familiar Days

by Owen Hart

The days drag on without a single break.
Alone all-day inside a weary home,
No matter what I do I cannot fake
My interest in class or in this pome.

At home at school without a chance to move,
Sitting all day alone, it did not suit;
We could not find ourselves inside a groove
On a laptop always forgetting we're mute,

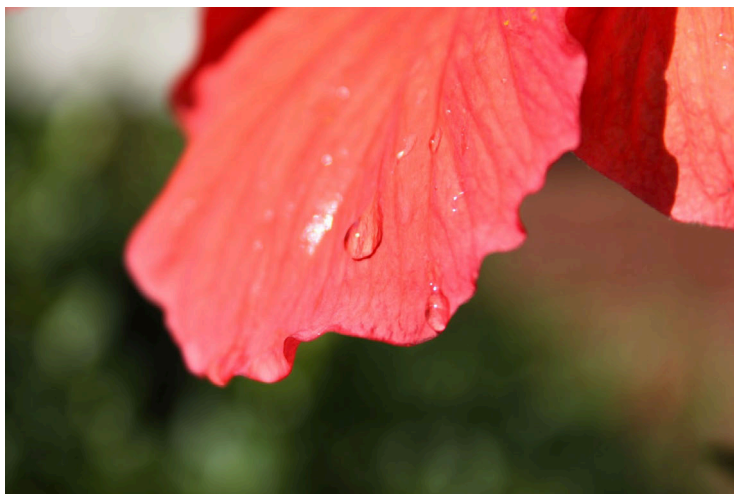
Wanting a change in pace and place with grace,
A journey to explore, gone from a screen,
Alas, a life on wheels with thrill and race,
Trees flying past my face, no more routine.

Then an order was made, but plans would fade
Eight months at first, a year, no bike, still paid.²

² Originally scheduled to arrive Oct. 2020, Owen's bicycle is still unaccounted for.



Koi Fish
by Sally Carey



Untitled
by Priya McLaughlin

Think of the Shoebox

by Liam Quan

My grandfather has golden shoes.

When he was a child, barely walking, his mother got him a pair
Of shoes; each one could fit in the palm of my hand.
He would don this pair of path-keepers and
Set out on the streets of the city.
Soles young and laces crisp and tongues firm,
He grew to run in these sneakers like the pavement was a raceway
And the streetlamps an endless canopy of greenlights.
But he also grew. And that was the problem.
For when the soles were worn and laces languid and tongues tired,
He kept wearing them beyond their use.
His mother saw his blistered feet and worried like all mothers do,
Yet my grandfather walked until his bare feet
Hit the bare pavement. He walked until

A stop-sign stunned him and ended the road.
My grandfather loved those street-stompers, but out of necessity
He was forced to move on.
That night, he placed the old pair on a wooden plaque
Beside his bed.
While my grandfather slept, his mother plucked the flightless fae
As if they were teeth under a pillow
And she dipped them in gold—the enduring metal.
When bronze dawn had broken through his bedroom curtains
And gilded the ceiling and walls,
My grandfather woke up and found his footwear
Eternalized.

The golden shoes on the lacquered plaque still lie by his feet;
Memory lane a shoebox, its cover never
Closed

Friend,

by Pete Peterson

how have you been
i haven't seen you in quite some time
i miss you.
i hate to
be brash
but 17
is a pain in the ass
how's 19
i hope it's better
that's why
i write to you
in this letter
and although
oftentimes
it slips my mind
i would die
so i could say
"i love you"
one more time

An Excuse (a Parody of “This is Just to Say” by William Carlos Williams)

by Max Hagood

I'm writing this to say
I drank the Krystal
That was located
In the alcohol rack

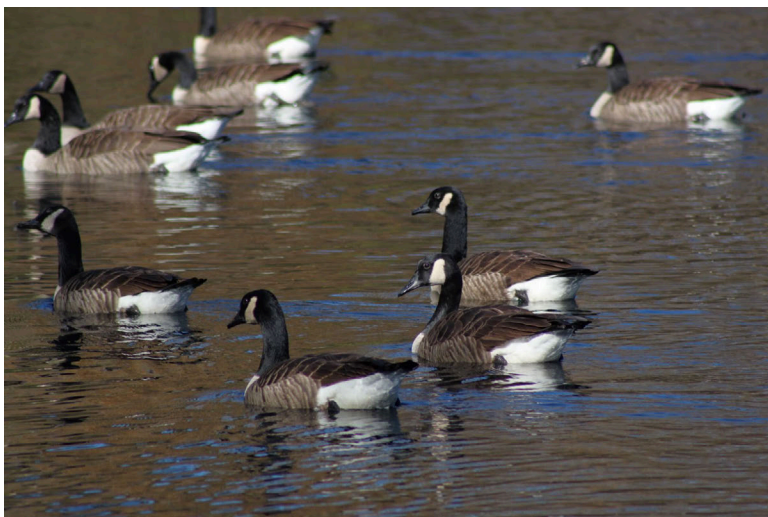
I know this was
Probably saved for holidays
In which the consumption
Of alcohol is intense

Please pardon my actions
For this particular Krystal
Made me feel really good
And tingly

Flowers for Algernon

by Pete Peterson

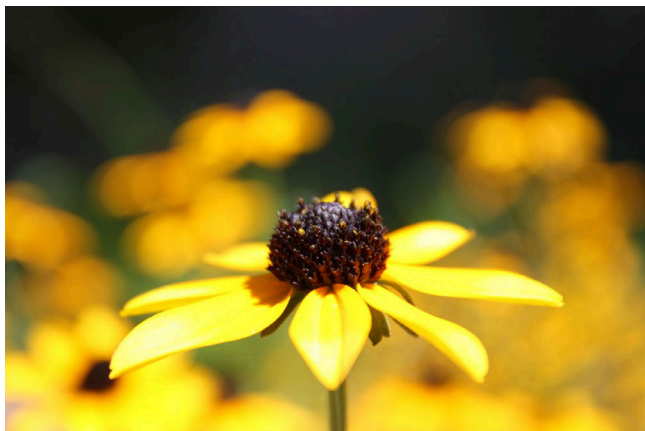
ashamed of what i've become
haunted by what i've left undone
trying hard to be someone i'm not
empathetic to only a fictional character in a book
to be more human
that's what Charlie sought



Untitled
by Priya McLaughlin



Untitled
by Max Hagood



Flower
by Priya McLaughlin



“Recreation of ‘St. Emilion Dans La Matinee’ by Pat Katz”
by Julia Claire Cooke



Boats
by Julia Claire Cooke



The Lonely Suitcase
by Eliza Kitchens