



estuary

ACADIA'S CREATIVE ARTS MAGAZINE 2023

*“There is no greater agony than bearing
an untold story inside you.”*

~ Maya Angelou, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

Cover Art: Hawaiian Pollinator // Hayley Newell

Faculty Advisor // Wanda Campbell

Contents

Hawaiian Pollinator // Hayley Newell	Cover
Editor's Note // Angel Percentie	6
Little Red Vest // Abby-Jean Gertridge	7
Hostel // Taryn Muldoon	8
On the Right Track // Jazmyn Yalowica	9
Think of the Wind // Makenzie Tavares	10
Water(color) // Nick Lundrigan	11
The Solarium // Sophie Ashton	12
Lavandula // Emma Hamill	14
London Fog // Mackenzie Boudreau	15
The Woman I love // Samantha Dempsey	17
Between the Seaweed // Makenzie Tavares	18
A Sunset a Day// Jazmyn Yalowica	19
From Battle Scars to Inner Scars // Matt Patterson	20
Father's Son // Zach Strong	21
Beside the Basin // Emma Hamill	22
How to be Happy // Julia Sylvester	23
Pomelo // Lily Street	24
Lilies in Autumn at the Garden // Ross MacLeod	26
Busted Jazz Shoes // Ariel Evans	27
Mangoes // Angel Percentie	28

Editor's Note // Angel Percentie

I would like to extend my gratitude to Dr. Wanda Campbell for her guidance and support throughout my editorial process. A special thanks also goes to the many contributors that made this edition possible.

In *estuary* the student body of Acadia University have an opportunity to share their art. The various submissions reflect unique perspectives. Each word, every photo, contemplates life—what it means to love, to hurt, to feel, and capture the stillness of a moment through the lens of a camera.



is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq nation

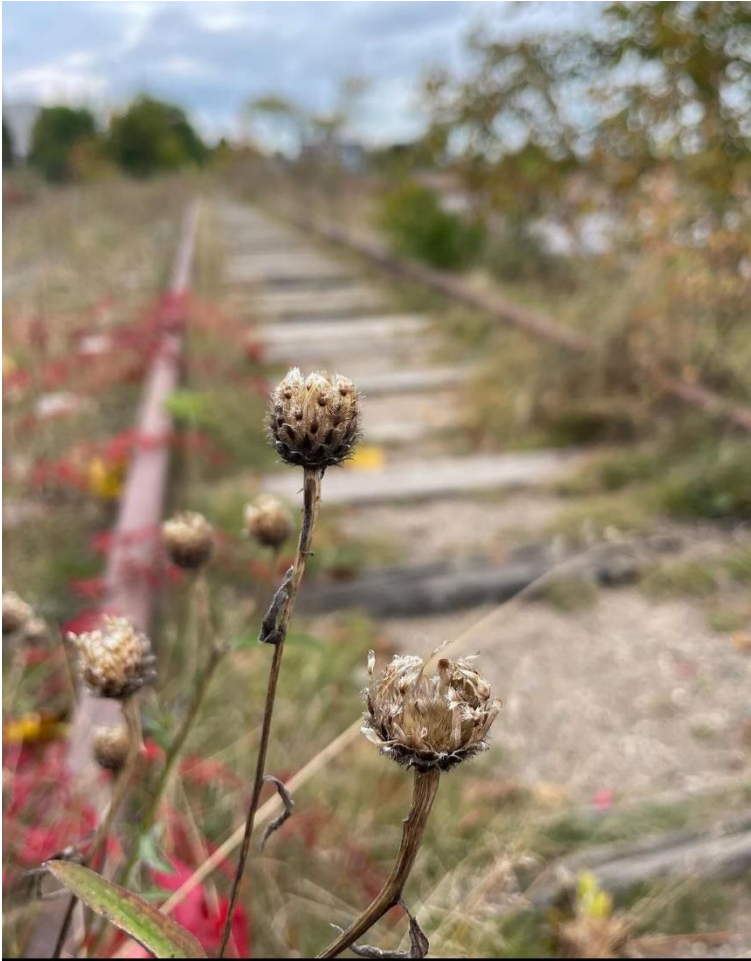
Little Red Vest // Abby-Jean Gertridge

When I have convinced myself I am incapable of love
I find a special comfort
In my childhood bear
Not for the nostalgia, nor a hope to revert to a simpler
time,
But as living evidence of my love
Worn directly through the fabric,
Into the matted fur,
And tangled in the remains
Of his little red vest

Hostel// Taryn Muldoon

At the hostel, Rick is trying to impress some girl he thinks he just met. His voice sloshes like his vodka cranberry, and she leans away from the haze in his eyes. I don't tell Rick that this girl spent last night in my bed, that we came kicking up the hill from the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall laughing so hard our dorm mates pushed in their earplugs before we made it through the door. Rick has not yet learned to see women as competitors, so he doesn't look at me. The girl does though, and I mime a palm strike, the heel of my hand punching up. *Break his nose.* Rick's face brightens at the smile in her eyes, and he puts his hand on her knee, offers to spring for a private room. I am laughing so hard I miss how she slips away, flashing us a smile, until I hear her voice at reception, requesting a single room.

I pour myself a shot of the vanilla vodka the English weekend girls brought. "Sex and regrets," they call it with their Manchester accents. Without looking, I pass Rick a glass.



On the Right Track // Jazmyn Yalowica



Think of the Wind // Makenzie Tavares

Water(colour) // Nick Lundrigan

Fine sable strands, all attached at the hip
Sip greedily from the cup, prolonging their small dip

Water coursing up the visible veins
Absorbing the goblet of captured rain

Precious droplets fall on the desk, between the cup and
palette
A price paid for the journey, the cost of incoming magic

Brush arrives at the target, cargo delivered safely
Crystallized colour softens under its touch, creating a
fluid surface of paisley

Water is key to this medium's activation
Carefully diluting the colour's concentration

Green water soon resembles leaves
Brushstrokes drip, I try to paint the trees

Muddy stalks blossom on my paper surface
The water comes full circle to its initial purpose

The Solarium // Sophie Ashton

They didn't know that I was right outside the solarium, very meticulously caring for the little bean sprout I had been growing. My mother would have had a fit if she had seen me covered in dirt, soil sinking into my nails as I patted it down into the pot. But in that moment, she was on the other side of the glass panels with my aunt Hattie, sitting in the crimson Muskoka chairs. I couldn't see their faces behind the greenery, but I could hear them chatting about all the things I always heard grown-ups talk about.

"I swear this summer is going to be the death of me," my mother's voice floated out as she adjusted her purple tank top.

"You're telling me," Hattie scoffed. "The humidity has made my hair blow up. You'd think we were back in the 80's!"

"I wish we were," my mother moaned, forlornly. "Imagine being young again and not having to use wrinkle cream."

I wiped my dirty hands through the tangles of hair that fell over my face and carefully lifted the watering can. At seven-years-old, I was doing my best to make my plants grow as fast as possible. I dumped the contents over into the plot, drenching the soil as the cold water overflowed onto my bare feet.

"When I was at the beach earlier, I saw a lady there who looked like a disaster, the poor thing." Hattie's voice travelled outward. "Her hairline was way back and you could tell she hadn't touched up her grays in weeks. It looked so dishevelled in the wind, too. I almost wanted to

offer her a comb, but she was busy chasing about four children.”

“Some people just don’t care about how they present themselves,” my mother sighed, reaching out to adjust a pot of tulips that were next to her. “God, I’m starting to sweat. Let’s go in and make one of those fat-burning smoothies I was telling you about. Besides, I’ll be needing to get the kids inside for dinner soon.”

I stepped back to admire my work. I was very proud and completely oblivious to the fact that the beans would never grow. Looking back into the solarium, I saw that they had gone inside. Instead, all I saw was my own reflection in the windows. Soil was sticking to my legs, arms, and even my face. It stained my clothes and was laced throughout my matted hair. I did look a bit messy. Really messy. Maybe I did need to brush my hair and put on some clean clothes. And also some shoes, perhaps. God, my nails were disgusting, and I definitely needed to wash myself if I was about to join everyone else for dinner. I had never paid any attention to stuff like this before, but now I couldn’t ignore it. I tried to recall how I had let myself get so dirty as I left my gardening behind, rushing inside to get cleaned up.



Lavandula // Emma Hamill

London Fog // Mackenzie Boudreau

“Here! I got you a cappuccino,” exclaimed James as I let the coffee shop door close behind me with a thud.

The strong smell of coffee brewing is almost overwhelming as I make my way towards the table he’s sitting at. The cappuccino's bitter. Really bitter. And the cup almost burns my hands as I hold it. Doesn’t he know I never order cappuccinos? I try not to let my disappointment show that he doesn’t even know my coffee order after eight months. Maybe he just forgot. He’s got a lot on his mind. He’s going to be a doctor after all, he probably doesn’t care about which fancy drink I want when he has to worry about all the veins and arteries in the human body.

Of course, I’m not in the least bit surprised that he has a London Fog half finished, sitting on the table. The milky beverage steams, the faint smell of Fruit Loops circling the table. At least, I always thought Earl Grey tea smelled like Fruit Loops. I remember when he spent forty minutes on our first date trying to convince me it was the best drink this speciality coffee shop offered. The coffee shop that featured fun themed drinks that changed every few weeks. I don’t think he’s ever tried anything but a London Fog.

We sit and study for about twenty minutes or so as I wonder what I’m doing with my life. Why am I sitting here with a guy who doesn’t even know my coffee order? I’m about to ask him about his organic chemistry test, even though I already know he got an A+, just so he can feel good about himself, when my phone lights up on the

table. The text from Michelle reads ‘Emmi and I are heading to the reservoir. Do you and James want to come?’

Suspecting I already know the answer, I pose the question to James.

“It’s just that I have this huge animal behavior test, and I didn’t do very well on the last one. I’m going to stay here and study,” he replies.

I know he wants me to stay, but for god sakes he didn’t even get me the right drink.

“I’m going to join the others. You’re free to come,” I tell him.

He nods, already putting his headphones on to block out the rest of the shop. I just hope he doesn’t see me buy an iced matcha latte on my way out the door.

The Woman I Love // Samantha Dempsey

How does one fill their cup of all
The waters of the world,
Bear every fever of womanhood,
Scale the mountain of paternal scrutiny,
Simply to ratify one's love?
Should that not be natural?
Are the ties between us
Simply transparent, unless history
Had paired us together ions ago?
For fiscal heartbeats must be
Stronger than ours, naturally.
How does one be known for
Warm passion before hot,
Dear before randy, lovers
Before experiments?



Between the Seaweed // Makenzie Tavares



A Sunset A Day // Jazmyn Yalowica

From Battle Scars to Inner Stars // Matt Patterson

In shadows deep, where memories reside,
A wounded soul with battles fought inside.
But fear not, friend, for healing is near,
A journey of strength, let it be clear.

Through smoke and gunfire, scars were made,
Yet, in each scar lies a warrior's serenade.
With every step, the path to peace unfolds,
As shattered pieces mend, and pain erodes.

In the quiet moments, a glimmer of hope,
A whisper of solace, a gentle scope.
The power of time, a balm for the heart,
Allowing wounds to heal, a fresh new start.

With patience as armour, and love as a guide,
Reclaim the self that was lost in the tide.
The battle may linger, its echoes remain,
But within resilience, the strength to sustain.

Seek solace in laughter, in music's embrace,
Embrace the beauty of life, its delicate grace.
In the tender bonds of friendship and love,
Restore the spirit, soar high above.

Reach out for support, for hands to hold,
Together we'll unravel the stories untold.
For healing is not a journey for one alone,
But a testament of courage, to be shown.

So let us rise, warriors united as one,
From the depths of darkness, let light be spun.
For in the wake of combat's fierce storm,
A phoenix emerges, brave and reborn.

Father's Son // Zach Strong

Inferno's son surrenders to the king,
preserving friends with shoulders made of ice.
The minion cries, for Hell he's sure to bring,
but Father grins, content to kill the mice.
A charcoal talon crawls inside his skull
and summons antlers through the bleeding skin.
Unto his back—His gracious claws do null—
a sinew-laden wing beside its twin.
The spawning screams for all of misery,
estranged from sense in haemoglobin grume.
Torrential torment bends eternity
so at its end the Father forms a plume.
Before Him leaks a ganglion of Hate,
but one that gnaws on what He shall create.



Beside the Basin // Emma Hamill

How to Be Happy // Julia Sylvester

Read books. Wear
fun hats and funky rings. Spend
time in the sunshine. Even if it's cold outside, bundle up.
Take
your antidepressants with a tasty tea. Pretend
not to see the knives in the kitchen. Paint,
even if you lack talent. Cook
elaborate meals that end with Oreos. Sit
in the shower and scrub your skin until it's raw. Wash
every part of you a man has touched. I promise,
it will help. Dance
every day and sing as much as you can. Drink
shitty wine. Have
lots of sleepovers and theme parties. Never
stop dressing up for Halloween.

Love
people more than you think you need to
and remember –
you are people too.

Pomelo // Lily Street

I found myself sitting on the floor of my apartment, battling evil thoughts inside my head. I felt so hungry but was unable to eat anything for supper. I picked up my phone and typed a message to the sweet boy who sat beside me in class. For months, he had listened to me rant about my issues, and after a while, gave me his number “In case I ever needed somebody”, and hell, did I ever need someone that night.

I was hesitant to press send. It’s so difficult for me to ask for help. I told him how alone and unsafe I felt. I told him I hadn’t eaten anything in days and really needed support. My phone quickly lit up with a reply, the sweet boy said that he would be right over and was bringing a pomelo. He arrived soon after, pomelo in hand. We sat side by side on my couch as I lowered my weapons and took off my armour. I allowed myself to cry to him as I told him stories of traumas that no ears have ever heard. As I choked on my words, he ripped open the pomelo with his bare hands. The pomelo was so soft, tender, delicate and sweet, and he tore it in two like he’d done this before. We sat down on the floor, I feel more comfortable on my rug. On his knees he held me as I cried.

Out of nowhere, he kissed me, unclipped my bra, put his hands around my neck and pinned me to the floor. Just like the pomelo, he ripped off my clothes. I was so shocked that I simply just froze. I couldn’t move, couldn’t blink, didn’t talk, couldn’t think. All I heard was the clink of his belt buckle. Time stood still as my body on that carpet. My mind rushed back into my body as I felt his tight grip let go of my neck. The first thing I saw was the

clock on the microwave, it read 2:33am. In that moment, I knew I needed him gone in more ways than one.

All I could say was, “It’s really late and I have an 8:30 class.” He stood up, and as he walked out the door, he said to me, “I hope you feel better.” Two hours later, I was still sitting awake at the edge of my bed, staring blankly into the mirror. Although he showed me how effortlessly he could tear a pomelo, I never could’ve imagined what he could do to a cherry.



Lilies in Autumn at the Garden // Ross MacLeod

Busted Dance Shoes // Ariel Evans

It started with a pair of busted jazz shoes
With bottle caps glued to the bottom,
And to the arrhythmic sounds a passion was born.
Even before then I loved the spotlight
And the spotlight loved me
See this little girl yearned for what she never received,
The applause, the encores, and the attention—
like a dopamine release
I mean it takes some level of narcissism to perform
Yet I did it for the self-expression
Inside of me was a soul bound in chains,
Begging to be set free
A firecracker lit beneath my feet
Limbs contorted, expressing,
And destressing my tired body.

I have this amazing gift to turn pain, joy, and sadness,
Into movements, into dance
The audience becomes my bewitched crowd,
And I the enchantress.
Their eyes reaching into my world, mirroring my upbeats
My bended hips and composed arms
We connect; they hear my cries, I hear theirs
The firecracker shoots off again,
Ancestors rousing into the distance
I feel their joy and suffering,
Don my busted jazz shoes
With bottle caps glued to the bottom,
And to the off-beat sounds of the shoes I become undone.

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Mangoes // Angel Percentie

“Well, what do we have here.” Nomi crouched to her knees until they were face to face. It was a difficult thing to do given the way he swung, head to the earth and feet to the sky. Still the boy thrummed against the tree’s grasp, his limbs tangling further into the branches.

Nomi stretched out her wrinkled hand and poked around his frame, dragging her cane through the leaves until she stopped at his perfectly rounded pockets. “You a thief boy?” the old woman asked.

“N-n-no Ma’am.” He looked above her to where the tree swelled with fruit. Mangoes hung like amber. Pulp, ripe, and yellow as the sun. The boy had thought so when he first passed. Temptation sat on his shoulder, the heat scratched at his throat and tickled his stomach. Before he could think he hurdled over the barbed fence.

Through the window blinds, Nomi spotted him. She watched and waited. The gall of the boy to mount her tree, in her yard. She’d fix him straight. The boy with no sense of the matter continued to take in the mangoes. He plucked them down by the cluster and when he drank, it was the nectar of the gods. The juice leaked from his lips and pooled at his chin. Quickly he climbed higher, sticky palms and greedy fingers pilfering Nomi’s tree. He took from it until his hands were full and the poor tree could only take from him.

Nomi’s hard cane circled his pockets once more. Mangoes ruptured as they fell from his pocket. The sweet things browned before his eyes, yellow flesh bursting from the skin. He felt each mango splash as they hit the ground. And when the bees swarmed, Nomi smiled.

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