



# estuary

ACADIA'S CREATIVE ARTS MAGAZINE

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*I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life.*

~ **Henry David Thoreau, *Walden***

*So, we beat on, boats against the current,  
borne back ceaselessly into the past.*

~ **F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby***

Cover Art: Midnight Pearl // Angel Percentie

Faculty Advisor // Wanda Campbell



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## Editor's Note // Angel Percentie

A special thanks goes out to Dr. Wanda Campbell for her assistance in bringing this edition of the *estuary* to life. Acadia students from various faculties have sent forth their creative works, and when added all together we were able to create something truly beautiful.

Many pieces in this edition begin a discourse that explores the relationships people form with themselves, places, individuals, and objects. It's interesting that life evolves differently for everyone but there are universal themes that tie us all together. Utilizing this lens, I was able to observe how these works complimented and at times challenged the ideas others proposed. Thank you to everyone that submitted.



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

## **Life Is... // Madilyn McClellan**

Life is my bound contentment  
Free as the bird on the apple tree  
It is what I make of my present  
Dancing around the leaves in glee

Life is my sweetest sorrow  
Bitter in its happy disarray  
Yearning for each and every morrow  
But hating each and every day

Life is my purpose and my gratitude  
It's my jovial and my fortune  
I'll always meet it with a positive attitude  
And never face an image of distortion

Life is my sickness and it is my curse  
Each pain in my chest and each cough  
Reminds me not to act in perverse  
For my actions will always pay off

Life is my faith and it is my hope  
I look forward to each and every triumph  
I'm proud of how I've succeeded this slope  
Let tomorrow face me and my righteous



## **Morning Java // Summer VanBuskirk**

Stained inside, chipped and dented,  
yet drinks are still warm until the very last drop.  
Coffee clings to the mouthpiece  
like glue.  
Worn and battered,  
lost then found,  
it always returns home, ready for the next brew.  
Every morning it sits  
ready and waiting  
for the good morning! push to get through the day.  
The first sip  
eliciting a grin or a lighthearted laugh.  
No matter the time or place, the cup can be filled with  
motivation to forge ahead through the day.  
Everyday without fail, the cup perches beneath the Keurig  
spreading warmth and happiness  
before starting a new day.

## **What's Going On // Victoria Smyth**

I tuck into the bin,  
Mattress topper draped over me like a shroud,  
Sinking into the shadows of the basement,  
I transform into clutter in the dimly lit storage room.  
Small voices hover,  
Little feet patter in and out,  
Searching, but never quite finding.  
I stay still, silent,  
For hours,  
So they must seek me,  
So they can escape what's happening above.  
What's going on upstairs?  
I only know fragments,  
Only what I'm told,  
Only what I'm allowed to believe.  
They move up there, speaking in strange tongues.  
Down here, I play the part of ignorance,  
So those small feet can feel it for real,  
An innocence I can only pretend to know

## **Tidal Run // Abigail Dancey**



## **Missing in Action // Caraline Tompkins**

Only He watched the sorrowful scene from above. The young family gathered around the grave, the untouched soil mocking them. A maple leaf and delicate cross chiseled into the stone, the flowers on the grave, a dull white, petals as listless and somber as those around. The moist air, smooth as silk, kissed the cold, rouged cheeks of the grief-stricken family, but the smell of incoming rain was sharp as a German bayonet. Sniffs, tears, and sobs punctuated the weighted silence, his loved ones mourning that he had been taken from them unjustly, lamenting that they would never see him again.

If only those damned Nazis would just surrender, the woman thought bitterly, then he would've been home already. She had no more tears to cry, her eyes dry and stinging. Grief bowed her shoulders and throbbed in her chest where her infant child was cradled. She felt hollow, incomplete with only whispers of him to comfort her. She still saw her beloved husband in the cerulean hue of their daughter's eyes, heard her best friend in the sound of their sons' laughter, felt her soulmate's love in the warmth of the little life nestled in her rounded belly. There were no words to express her heartache, her anguish, her pain. She grieved her companion, but she grieved that she would never feel his touch brush her cheek, his embrace envelops her body, his kiss caresses her lips more.

The woman mourned her lost love, but she mourned that she never got to say goodbye more. There was no wake, no funeral because there was no body, these were war times after all. She had only the word of a stranger in uniform and an official letter saying that her husband had been reported missing in action a month ago and was assumed dead. She pictured his lifeless corpse, colder than ice, grey as ash, laying forgotten in the dirt of some battlefield across the world. She was right that he

lay in the dirt on a battlefield in German-occupied France, cut and bruised, a bullet embedded in his ribs. Though, she was unaware that the trembling hand wearing the scratched gold wedding band she'd given him clutched a black and white photograph, yellowing and wrinkled, of him kissing his wife's cheek and her smiling brighter than the sun into the camera. She didn't know how the soldier's teeth clenched as he grimaced from the pain radiating from the wound as he shifted away from shards of shrapnel digging into his back, blood soaking through the thick, dark fabric of his uniform. She would've wanted to know that as his lungs heaved for breath, his bloodshot eyes stung from the smoke of gunpowder, he silently promised he would see her again.

### **Friend // Zach Strong**

You cannot see him. This is fine,  
since Cairo here is only mine.  
For seasons dry of any love,  
I slip to heaven like a glove.  
He speaks to me from everywhere,  
in tongues that soothe and always care.  
The clothesline reeks of silken fur,  
the source of which I can't be sure.  
Beneath the blankets he is warm,  
despite not having any form.  
From corners peek his jackal eyes.  
I blink, and then the vision dies.  
The teacher lies.  
His wolverine cries,  
they knot my ties,  
resist your tries...

You cannot see him. This is true.  
He won't be found in any zoo.  
His paws are felt upon the night;  
his words are sharp enough to bite.  
To write him off would be to say  
that moonlight constitutes a day.  
The wind cannot be captured bare,  
and yet you don't deny it's there.  
A luscious pelt of blue is seen  
in places where the grass is green.  
It seems to me that all you need  
is someone who can take the lead  
and plant the seed  
and find a steed  
without the greed  
on which They feed...

You cannot see him. What a shame.  
There's no one but yourself to blame.  
Though Cairo here is mine alone,  
perhaps one's left to throw a bone.

## **The Sun in My Arms // Aspen Webster**

“Stay away,” I saw him flying, moving closer to my light. The scorching and withering light that ravaged and killed mercilessly. It sparked fires and ruined crops and fried the ground around it. My light brought only death. The wind cackled viciously, whispering of its intentions to ruin all I held dear.

“Turn around, please,” I begged him, his manner only encouraged by the wicked wind behind him. His feathers rippled, then recoiled ever so slightly as they found my heat.

“I’m going to hurt you,” I reached out my arms, their rays not embracing, but repelling. I used my harshness and burning light, to push away his eager self. It did not work. I watch, dread filling my mind as he grows closer and closer, pushed ahead, motivated by the swirling wind, twisting my words, my meanings into those of longing, of love.

I did love him, but I did so from afar, I made his days bright, burning the clouds to help his way, to aid his escape. I urged him to keep his distance, to take the advice of his clever uncle. I wanted him to escape, to survive so I could shower him with my blessings from afar.

“Please not again,” I cried silently as the winged man drew closer, the breeze shaking the sagging feathers with the same twisted tempo of my pleading head. The winds had taken so much from me, I begged them to leave me this one love.

All at once he was in my arms. I looked at him closely, savouring what I knew would soon be just out of my reach again. His sharp jaw and tussled dark locks, his soot smudged nose and pock-marked olive skin. He was

beautiful, and yet would soon be little more than a memory.

He fell. From my embrace to the cold, dark ocean below was more time than even the divine could count, and yet it was mere seconds. I felt cold. His embrace had stolen the life from my light, and I would never have it back.

He smiled. To a life as short as his, holding the sun for just a moment must have felt an eternity. I smiled back. I knew I had given him more than most mortals ever dare to dream of. I had to be okay with that, if not for me, for him.





## Wind Watching // Aine O'Morchoe

“Twin gazes pass over my shoulders,  
Alert and watchful;  
Two sets of ears stand at attention,  
Listening with intent.  
Muscles are tensed, poised and ready,  
To take off at the first sign of movement.

Wind brushes past my head,  
And I feel a tug on my hand, beckoning me  
To look out at the vast field that has appeared  
For rabbits rustling in the waving grass.

The dogs have passed me already,  
Taking flight into the distance.  
Dirt flies behind them,  
And the rabbits run far and fast.

When I turn back  
They stand still,  
Smooth and bronze,  
A celebration of centuries of love and dedication.”

*~Inspired by the sculpture  
Wind Watching II by Fan Yu*

# The Four Seasons// Avery McWilliam

*Spring:*

### *It's a Big World Out There, The Valley Comes Alive*

A moist soil from a thawing chill  
 Bless passage of earthworms to awaken  
 Our love; love of the blossoms that bud in hopes  
 To bloom, planting seeds of formidable wishes  
 Dreams of a garden I wish to grow: Monstera,  
 Schefflera, Hibiscus. Stems that span distance  
 As vast as my visions.

*Summer:*

*Nature's Crescendo, The Sun can Bend an Orange Sky*

An unruly tangent, an enthralling serendipity, flourishing with  
 Flushes of flowers, the flow of the glittering stream from  
 Crepuscular rays; through the shower of sparrows that sing of  
 Alluring love that lives on forever, a love that sears of  
 yearning, but will  
 Never be seen again. Nostalgic, the timorous and agonizing  
 kind.

*Fall:*

### *The Smell of Mushroom, Raven's Descent*

Shifting, and evolving, yet all still the very same.  
The skeletons of the sedums, the rubies of my trees,  
Embracing the adaptation they must endure,  
Reminiscing on fleeting memories; when they used to  
Fly, not fall. Bitter chill and little light becomes brumal night,  
Lurking in its looming shadow.

*Nocturne of Ice, The Wind Can be Still*

abhorrent,  
Harrowing, flagrant. The wind of winter takes the vitality of  
My verdure; the virtue of my sins, leaving all I don't want and

What I wish I had: a garden to sustain, the willingness to Sustain it. Until spring, I abide my domain in the ever-expanding Maelstrom of the mind, where its essence grows, eternally.

## Ain't Briland Sweet // Angel Percentie



## **Hurricane Season // Mae Graham**

holy body  
adorned with faults  
when will you take responsibility  
for the anguish you have caused to others

burned their fields  
with your fire  
perceived as revenge  
but how could that be  
when the embers of your soul  
could not have been lit  
if not for their sparks

do we blame the flame  
or the one who brought it back from the grave  
nonetheless,  
the careless toss of a cigarette  
cannot turn my mansion to ash

they play with matches  
and cast sparks unknowingly  
blinded by their own light  
but blame my nightly prayers  
for what my mother deems righteous anger  
to know when wrong was done  
and to be set aflame by it

do you think I don't as well  
curse my naïve prayers  
made at the age of 8 and a half  
and even more  
curse the God who answered them

now it's as if I spent my childhood  
growing hollow bones  
and filling them with a rage  
great enough to weigh me down

without the rage  
and its turmoil within my bones  
coming only second to the blood  
that run through my veins  
my steps would be much softer,  
much lighter, I would hope

so light in fact  
would I fear an ocean breeze?  
the Halifax wind might blow me away  
and I'd spend the rest of my life cold,  
floating over the ocean  
like a balloon  
full of helium  
and wasted potential

so do I thank the rage?  
and its density  
that keep my feet heavy,  
my back sore,  
my life rooted,  
and my circle small

I dream of being lighter  
on my feet,  
with my words,  
what if my voice was airy?  
full of remarks that meant very little

*they would call me useless  
in hurricane season*

maybe people would like her more  
if she was this  
and maybe she would like people more  
if she was that

but God placed it there  
an ancient rage  
that smells of brimstone  
and the scent permeates  
in her bones and through her blood  
to her brain and in her heart

yet there are some  
who love her more for it  
so what of the rage  
and the bridges it burnt  
and the pain it exposes

it's a gift from her father  
and it's praised by her mother  
loved by her partner

rage in hollow bones  
a curse and blessing  
bestowed on little girls  
who pray for peace

## **Puzzle and Demons? // Sam Sweet**

I lower my eyes,  
Knowing, seeing  
Things too easily missed  
I am no longer here  
But a silent observer

I feel the freedom, the loss  
Both comforting and distant  
The way we merge and part  
The closeness, a gentle touch  
I am happy, but  
Frozen by fear  
For the eyes are the window to the soul

Can they see?  
Will they know?

We would be free  
But the fear keeps us inside  
Locked away  
If we got too close  
They'd see  
For eyes are the window to the soul

I imagine  
The shock  
The loss  
The fear  
While wishing to  
Be free  
Be honest  
Be Us

We approach the window  
See the light  
Touch the pane

I fade  
Falling into the quietness  
We open our eyes

Maybe they can see it  
Maybe they won't know  
Maybe all they'll see is the light in our eyes  
The joy of freedom  
For the eyes are the window to the souls

I feel the freedom and loss

The way we merge and part

Like rhythms of the ocean

Ebbing in and out

Like rhythms of the heart

We exist in unison

Full, complete

Us



## **Invisible // Quinton Gagnon**

“You’re not disabled,” you say.  
Yet the binder you were given after my surgery says  
otherwise,  
The doctors who order for yearly visits say otherwise,  
The pill dosette that lies—  
not lonely, mind you—  
on my nightstand shows otherwise.  
Even my aching heart,  
whose rhythm has never ba-bumped quite right,  
goes out of its way to pump oxygen  
into my wheezing lungs  
and through tunnels of veins, with walls  
equally familiar with the taste of flowing iron  
and straight, stainless steel  
to make me able to pick up a pen  
and tell you otherwise.

So, who are you to say otherwise?

## **The Walk // Damon Plume**

I'm hurrying home after work, it took forever to finish cleaning and now I can't even see well because the streetlights are broken, I feel the cold breeze, and my skin stands up with goosebumps. I see a figure at the other end of the sidewalk approaching. It's tall, and I clench my phone in my pocket. The figure appears to be approaching faster, I can't see the face, but I can tell he's a grown man wearing all black with his hood up. I hold my keys in my hand, if he even looks at me funny, I am running and screaming after putting them in his leg. He's getting closer and closer. I think about crossing the street and walking on the wet grass, but what if a car is driving too fast and doesn't see me? It's a dark rainy night, it'd be hard for a car to notice me. He is close enough I can see the outline of his face; he keeps looking around. There is nobody else here, it's just him. What if he tries to rob me, nobody else is here to witness it. Adrenaline pumps through me faster and faster. He looks up as we pass and he smiles, while continuing to walk. I check behind me and he is walking further away. I loudly start breathing slowly, and my body begins to calm down. I am almost home now.

## Mary Magdalene in the Cave // Mariah Blanchard

Mary, did you know?  
Did you know what you would witness?  
When he healed you,  
Cast aside the demons that plagued  
Every step you took—  
When you followed through burning sands,  
Did you know the sacrifice that would happen?

Mary, did you know?  
Did you know that your faith would see such things?  
You hold the cross as though it will save you—  
As if the cross had saved him.  
As if you never saw him die.  
As if he isn't wrapped in fabric behind the boulder,  
Lifeless, a saviour made extinct.

You pull your hands from your cross  
And expect them to come up sticky, red.  
A red the same shade of rusty hardware,  
Nails piercing tender flesh,  
The same red that dripped from the feet  
you once poured flowery perfume upon.  
The tears from your eyes,  
An unspoken testament to your saviour—  
The same eyes that would not leave him  
Until the linen covered his face.

Mary, did you know?  
That when you entered this pit as three,  
That you would leave as four?  
Did you think it was your faith that saved him?  
Do you know what purpose you serve in the story?

The blood on your hands will not memorialize you,  
Nor will the wooden cross that you clutch.

Mary, did you know?  
Did you know you are just a vessel for his story?  
Did you know that you are nothing more?

**Untitled // Bethany Estabrooks**



## **Flim Flam // Katherine Stanislaw**

He used to lean over store counters and flirt with young cashiers working their first minimum wage jobs. “They didn’t make ‘em like you when I was young!” he’d say, his thick white eyebrows raising high. “Now can’t you offer an old man a little discount?” I would blush furiously and mumble protests opposing his inappropriate behaviour. He’d brush me off jovially. He used to barter with the vendors at flea markets. “Too expensive!” he’d cry, his coin purse jangling in his pocket, his eyes wandering, momentarily focusing on a woman walking by. He would strike gold every now and again—an extra dollar from the recycle depot lying about the amount of beer cans in the blue bag, haggling the price down from an item listed in the yellow pages, or sweet talking an extra Timbit out of a cashier. He’d smile knowingly, squeeze my shoulder and lecture, “Sometimes you just need a little flim flam.”

Today, he slumps to one side in his high-back wheelchair. It isn’t a good day for him, and he feels frustrated that he can’t find his words, dementia clouding his memory. We ask him a few crossword puzzle clues. “Singer in *The Way We Were*?” Mum questions. “Streisand” he stutters. We encourage him and help him take a few sips of his coffee, a two-cream dark roast from Tim Hortons. The sweet, young nurse comes in and gives him his pills with a spoonful of apple sauce. “How’re ya doing today, Frank?” she asks enthusiastically. “Frankie’s not great today,” he manages. She leans over the back of his chair and wraps her arms around him, her ponytail bobbing with the motion. “Aw,” she sympathizes and plants a kiss on his cheek. His blue eyes glance over at me under those wiry brows, a sly smile flickering on his lips.

## **Guitar // Sara Farguson**

Numberless hours day and night  
Were sunk into your core  
With fingers shaping triangles  
To form new harmonies  
He grabs the smooth wood-bodied neck  
Because there is no strap  
And drags his fingers softly down  
The metal strings of brass  
A gentle chord is struck at first  
To try and get a gauge  
Of what he is itching to play  
Into the quiet space  
A draw of breath soon indicates  
A fast incoming song  
Chords weaving down your wooden spine  
As he follows along  
The notes of classic Beatles tunes  
That I remember from  
Saturday pancake breakfasts with  
Him (Dad), me, and Mom

## **Do You Know What It Means? // Caitlyn Cross**

Do you know what it means  
to miss that house in the trees,  
that blow in the wind  
which tickles the water's skin?  
Do you know what it means  
to miss the laughter,  
the sound of the tv,  
and the coffee maker  
brewing in the morning?  
Do you know what it means  
To miss the warm hugs  
The caring hands  
That reach out when you are lost  
Or need a hand?  
Do you know what it means  
to miss the warm bed,  
with a little body  
breathing against your leg?  
Do you know what it means  
to miss your home,  
the place you have always been safe  
but now no longer belong?

## **The Pianist // Megan Bautista**

*Manilla, 1941 - Sunday*

The Golden Arch had towering ceilings, decorated in swirly gold decals. The restaurant had a black grand piano and a glass chandelier that hung above. The crystals shined down like snowflakes, creating a glimmering reflection when the light hit them. Carlo always enjoyed the piano as his lola had made him play since he was young. As soon as each member of his family could walk – they could play piano.

His family owned a piano, almost identical to the one in the restaurant, but the “learning piano” remained in lola’s house. It was as if the expensive ones weren’t worthy of unskilled fingertips gracing their keys. It was brown and wooden and hadn’t been tuned in decades. But, something about its yellowy stained keys and chipped frame made it sound better than a brand-new one.

A pair of feet in black ballet flats hung down from the bench, reaching desperately for the pedals below. Her playing was unlike anything Carlo had ever heard. He was entranced by her melody as it spun, twirled and echoed throughout his now-empty head.

Carlo decided he had to at least give her a tip and express his enjoyment of her playing. As he approached the pianist, he noticed that her raven-black hair was pulled into a messy bun with two strands curling in front of her face. Her eyes were so dark he couldn’t even tell where her iris’ ended and pupils began. He nervously thumbed around for the pesos he’d set aside on the walk there and dropped them into the emptiness that waited eagerly below.

She flashed him a smile that made the blood escape his heart and fill his cheeks with a hot flush in wait for the next beat to bring it back where it belonged.



He opened his mouth to say something – say anything,  
but couldn't get his paralyzed vocal cords to budge.

*Monday*

Carlo returned to the Golden Arch the very next day, clutching the roses he'd stopped for on the way there. Her melody had stayed at the forefront of his mind since the last time he heard her.

His lungs refused to let in any more air until he was sure she was there. His ears began to burn, engulfed in a flame of uncertainty. Where once was the absence of sound was a deafening ring. It got louder, and louder until Carlo realized the ringing was not coming from inside his head.

A wailing alarm cried ominously throughout the night sky. The ground shook with terror as the sirens grew louder. The gold embellishments began to fleck off into crumbles. The chandelier detached from the swirly gold ceiling.

Down.

Down.

Down.

Until it demolished the everlasting home of The Pianist.

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On Monday, December 8th, 1941, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour. Hours later, air strike attacks from the Japanese military bombed many areas of the Philippines. An estimated 527,000 Filipinos died in the horrors of World War II.

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