

# estuary

acadia's creative arts magazine

Édition 2.1

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# Andrew Atkinson

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## Amazing Crayola Sunset

July 24/00

Driving to Grand Pre with John Andrew

I

Purple and pink and muskrose and violet  
make me want to eat the sky.

The oven sun shrinks without fret,  
while baking my eyes a visionary pie.

2

Inside this appetite of red and pink

I well with saliva dripping off my heart.

I dream to back stroke in this cotton candy sink,

I wish to fly the line of an "Indigo Greart."

Note from the poet: An Indigo Greart is an imaginary bird.

# Charlane Bishop

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## Wool Hunting Coat

there's a smell to it  
doesn't slip off with the hanger  
rains don't dissolve steel and  
oak in a weave of tobacco  
heavy, sopping with predawn  
mists and marsh sucking boot steps

it sure holds gravity  
an orchard of apples drumming the ground  
sniffed a mile away  
this red and black checkerboard  
burdocks stationed pawns across my back  
and seeds of grass ancestors  
rolled up in the seams

walking in this, through  
fall sombre fields  
and bluejays chanting rain  
breezes snag, unraveling  
the red and black eulogy  
it's streaming behind me  
catching on rosehips, blackberry vines  
tiny bones are tumbling from my pockets  
patience, keep moving, these things take time

# Liesel Carlsson

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## Beautiful Girls

### **Beautiful girls**

against the curves

of beautiful

womanhood.

The shape that

makes us

women.

Always starving

for less shape,

for something

to fill up some

hole, some

shame, some

empty ness

Rag doll

bag of

bones will

beg for

sup- port,

for the

wind blows

strong today

and there

is danger of not being able to

**stand.**

# Lise Comeau

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## Et La Musique

Et la musique . . .  
Comme le soleil se lève tous les jours,  
J'écoute au calme du matin.  
L'amertume que je sens s'il y a rien,  
Ne compare même pas aux ténèbres du diable.  
La vie sans musique,  
Sans le chant de l'existence,  
(ou même les Backstreet Boys)  
N'est plus qu'un univers vide.

# Kamia Creelman

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## Like a Tourist

Like a tourist  
deafening reception  
with misplaced verbal force,  
I orally assault them  
in their poetry bar  
with forced course notes  
ripped from my throat's wise grip  
and draw critical blood.



# Ann Dickinson

---

## Characters

Him who wrote these words  
a creative flare of coloured infatuation  
(a thick pen, pulsating with ink, overflowing)

Him who ran across the page  
like a scared child running for home  
(with that slightly chipped chimney)

Him  
his wrist tightened, fingers gripped, the determined grip  
(dramatically clutching, with hard presses upon the page)  
pushed for more metaphor  
ready for culminating climax  
(forgetting to breathe under his hot yellow blanket and shadowed ceiling)

I am his character

Him  
ripping out pages of the ending  
I know it was him  
Him who made it all fiction

Deanne Gill

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**Moving Like Water**

There is something very poetic  
In the idea of moving like water,  
To ebb and flow and steal away  
as lovers do under starry skies,  
naked as moonlight  
soft and sand.

# Andrew Goulding

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## A Sacrifice in the Thicket

It was early morn  
And there I was,  
With cursed horns  
Caught, forlorn  
In thicket when  
Free I'd be  
As a hornless lamb  
Where all I see  
Is Shepard not thicket  
In Moriah.

Came that day  
four hornless men.  
One to stay  
As lamb that day,  
But ram for lamb  
Was seen to be  
By winged shepherds,  
Where all they see  
Are lambs  
On Jehovahjireh.

Isaac to wood,  
As I to thicket.  
God's Mercy could  
More so, should  
Touch lamb and ram.  
Horns to thicket be  
My fiery death.  
He just did not see  
In the mount  
Of the Lord.

Lay not thine hand  
upon the lad.  
Death demand  
Upon that land  
Of thicket.  
If there be

A Shepard for the ram  
Might I see  
A sacrifice  
In the thicket?

# Krissy Keech

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## Oh

Oh my goodness  
do you really think  
that while I'm sleeping  
fairies peeping  
make tiny little sounds  
like tip-tapping  
on my window  
and they pretend  
the glass can bend  
so they can practice somersaults  
no longer on the ground?

# Lewis Leon

---

## The Computer Ate My Little Brother

I lost my brother some days ago  
Where he went I do not know.  
But just today my eyes were filled  
With tears, realising he was killed.

In our house there was a room  
In which he faced his fateful doom.  
But there's no blood, no guts, no gore  
No chalk outlined on the floor  
No yellow tape across the door  
Just one thirteen inch monitor.

Eight days ago I left for work,  
"Good bye my brother."  
"Shut up you jerk."  
"Why are you not off to school?"  
"Leave me alone! You're not so cool!"  
I left him sitting in that chair  
And at the monitor he stared  
And stared  
And stared  
And stared  
I came home short after five  
And checked to see if he was still alive  
And in that room all I could see  
Was nothing more than our PC.  
I stared into the screen of blue  
Then I looked down  
A size four shoe.

Seven days, out the door went I,  
"Have a good day!"

“I hope you die!”  
“Why don’t you go and play outdoors?”  
“I can’t believe you’re such a boor!”  
I left him sitting in that chair  
And at the monitor he stared  
And stared  
And stared  
And stared  
And stared  
I came home short after five  
And checked to see if he was still alive  
And in that room all I could see  
Was nothing more than our PC.  
The chair was cold in which he sat  
Then I looked down  
A small red hat.

Six days and once again I left  
“Stop playing that!”  
“What are you, deaf?”  
“You’ve been playing non stop for hours!”  
“You’re such a pansy, go pick some flowers!”  
And at the monitor he stared  
And stared  
And stared  
And stared  
And stared  
I came home short after five  
And checked to see if he was still alive  
And in that room all I could see  
Was nothing more than our PC.  
There were no beeps, there was no racket  
Then I looked down  
A winter jacket.

Five days ago, I stayed at home  
To see what brother did alone  
“Go to work, you bother me.”  
“Keep playing, I want to see  
what occupies your time so much.”

“Alright but there’s nothing you can touch  
Sit your ass down in that chair  
And watch me play from over there!”  
I did exactly as I was told  
And watched the day’s events unfold.  
First were the games, a horrid sight  
“How can you dare sleep at night?”  
I sat cringing, he laughed instead,  
And shot another in the head.  
“Did you see that? I smashed his face!  
I killed everyone in that place.  
I have met the sacred devil,  
Finally! I have passed this level!”  
In silence I just stared and sat  
He decided then to chat  
In a room with his own kind  
At least that’s what I had in mind.  
PolarI2: Where do you live?  
BrotherI: Over the ridge.  
PolarI2: I think you’re sweet  
Maybe the park is where we’ll meet  
BrotherI: The park but why?  
PolarI2: I’m a nice guy,  
We’ll play a game. Let's say . . . um . . . nine.  
You show me yours, I’ll show you mine.  
Here’s my number why don’t you call?

I ripped the cord out from the wall,  
My brother sat and stared and cried,  
“Better tears than that you died”  
I left him sitting in that chair  
And in that monitor I stared.  
Scared  
Scared  
Scared  
Scared  
I went to bed short before five  
Knowing my brother would stay alive.  
Soon I awoke then from sleep  
I heard the shots, I heard the beeps



And as I ran down ev'ry stair  
I yelled "Better not be in there!"  
I turned the corner and I found  
And empty room but full of sound.  
I walked real close up to the screen  
Then I looked down  
Blue denim jeans

Then who's to blame? There is no other!  
The computer ate my little brother!

# Audra Tynes

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## Forming You

Bit by bit  
The scraps accumulate.

One man's junk  
Is another man's jewel.

Resistant to wind and the rotation of the moon,  
The scraps arrange themselves.

Resistant to the jeers of "masterpieces,"  
The scraps rearrange . . . re-order.

Resistant to rain . . . resistant to hail,  
Persistent. The scraps stay focussed on their goal.

Day by day.  
But by bit

They come together . . .  
The jewel.

# Jennifer Willis

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**2:23am**

It was nights of wet toes and drinking  
Songs with no notes and too many verses  
Inflicting drunken wounds that are numb with the cure in it

Later quietly inventing our own normality  
Through the long hours that make up for the mellowness of Waits and Bukowski  
Both reading aloud and I forget which voice and whose words I am in love  
with  
It feels just like Christmas somehow but I know it isn't  
As last night we sat up wearing only the cards in our hands  
And that would never happen--at Christmas  
But it still has that same hope of it.

I feel just like a little kid, who falls asleep on the couch listening to  
safe voices  
Explain the virtues of anarchy  
But I am woken for a more proper bed and I sink into the blanket  
The few of us still awake tell the kinds of stories that wonder what if  
there are burglars and what if there murders and what if there are monsters  
that fly up to the twelfth floor and what if they drop dead bodies from the  
thirteenth to the pavement below and what if what if and what if we never  
fall asleep.

Morning comes with the softness of pure grey low-lying cloud  
After the candles burned down and the kitten taught us how nocturnal she  
could be

I make tea for those who'll join me and the boys make scrambled eggs and  
again us girls flutter and flutter and giggle and sprawl energetically all  
over the carpet and pry ourselves from the floor when we are called to eat  
And after we crawl from out of our pajamas and clear the table and set it  
again for tea.

We set off in buttoned coats and mittens across the park up the hill

eventually buying two bottles of wine and one iceberg lettuce  
And when we get back I put the kettle on and we have the homemade scones

I can live on books and tea and cats without having to be entertaining  
Settling between the elbows and mugs at rest on the sleeves of couches  
Every moment or so the kitten meows and I hold her to the window and she  
watches steadily for gulls.

Then as day retreats over the water, the candles are lit  
And we gather round and play pick up sticks.

# Tegan Zimmerman

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## Back of a Postcard

The wharf was anchored today  
By that guy from the station  
Who carries that big  
umbrella Whose accent is so Thick  
He chopped wood for grammy's fire  
But I think she ripped him off  
Again The clothes from the line  
Mom hung them out this  
morning But they still refused to dry.  
The well is too low right now  
So we're only drinking soda  
It's like a birthday party  
That you haven't been Invited  
To his wedding  
You should have seen the flowers  
Bright red She drove all the way to Marble  
Mountain  
Just to meet her hero. The grass is still green  
The apples have not come  
The horses pick away at flies  
And watch the clouds Pass  
Going off to the cottage  
Where the wood smells  
Like mildew And the cupboards like last winter.  
I went by his place today  
Everyone was in lawn chairs  
She said I just missed him  
She was exact  
When she sliced that melon into pieces.

# Mark Gardiner

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## Kitchen Windows

I'm letting the wind hold my hand. (Vaguely remembering the warm American Pacific variety) Trying to retrace and reconstruct. I'm losing myself. Pulling through the coke-stick rain. Hydro-bullets. World washed in violet. Trudging over history erased by the pavement. Just industrial nature. It's so very cold. It's getting harder and harder to breathe. Ice like and sour vapour. Can lungs suffer freezer burn too?

Cool down and explode?

The shadows seemed so warm and inviting.

(Light a mental cigarette. Signs have turned to black.

*Lost for a minute or two or three . . . more.*

*I have a secret picture. Would you like to see?*

*Flash.*

*I know where I am now. Keep going.)*

Only light is from unsuspecting kitchen windows. Revealing pastel vomit walls chipping and cracking. Cherished possessions placed on the shelf to be admired and hated. Constant reminders. Volatile wishes hang and fall from windowpanes. They escape and bury themselves while you sleep. People accept everything. Almost everything. (There are lovely imperfections. You're just not included.) I can't give up this sadness flowing through me. The only thing I've been able to keep alive. Nurture and care for.

You're just trapped in your own bad horror movie. Watching from outside yourself somehow. Screaming at yourself not to do things. Not to go in there. So many thoughts swimming through so many sounds. Over the break away trash gliding along the pavement. Over the howling of rabid insomniac animals patrolling. Searching for victims. Over the dead water draining to the underground.

# Christine McNair

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## Red

The solar system spun in front of their eyes. It was shaped like a fried egg with a thick metal rod pushed through the centre. Multi-coloured planets dipped slowly around the yolky sun in the middle. Mrs Weaver brightly tried to explain how it worked. "You see," she said, "the planets spin around the Sun. Like this."

She took her finger and carefully spun the model around. The planets rocked gently in their elliptical orbits. There was a problem with Neptune. It kept falling off its guide wire and rolling across the floor. Mrs Weaver's stream of words kept getting muffled every time she had to bend down and pick up Neptune.

The sixth-graders were trying not to be bored. They chewed their gum with tight little mouths, hiding it behind their fingers. They looked out the windows with half-here lazy eyes and stared at the flat green of the playground. Some of the girls in the back passed small notes. They stuck them under their tennis shoes, pushed them towards the recipient and then coughed until their friend leaned down to pick it up. Each girl kept a wary eye towards the front of the room.

"Ashley! Could you pay attention please!"

Hands jumped back into pockets and the girls stared up with slightly guilty red faces.

The class was divided into twos. Leah and Jacob sat close together because Leah was considered a good influence. Her attendance record was spotless (except for when she got her tonsils out) and she always came to school well-dressed, well-groomed and well-fed. Her teeth were as bright and shiny as her white puffy sneakers. Every morning her mother pulled her hair into a tight ponytail that tugged the skin around her eyes. Her fingertips were lightly tipped with red nail polish.

Jacob on the other hand, was a certain type of boy. The kind of boy you might find in the shopping mall ripping up all the plastic potted plants. He came to school badly-dressed in too small t-shirts. His hair grew in spiky bed formations and his mouth was always circled by white spit marks. Jacob was the first kid to get braces and the net of wires pinched his mouth and made him anxious. He tried to ignore it by jiggling and bouncing his legs under his wooden desk.

Leah was trying to ignore Jacob. He kept breaking his pencils and then poking them into the back of her neck. She sourfaced him with the blade of her tongue. He squished his face into a grimace and then went cross-eyed. "Gross!" she squealed.

Mrs. Weaver sighed. "Leah, could you pay attention please?"

Leah turned quickly towards the front of the room. Her knees made a hollow clunk as they hit the

front of her desk. When the teacher's back was turned, she mouthed "Fuck you" to Jacob. He pinched the side of her leg. She stomped on his foot.

"LEAH! Please come sit at the front of the class!"

"But Jacob..." Leah protested.

"No excuses come up here right now young lady."

The rest of the class snickered as Leah stomped her puffy sneakers up to the chair next to the teacher's desk. With one angry humpf!, she sat down on the wooden chair. Mrs Weaver gave her a look that said, I expect better young lady. Leah crossed her arms and legs and glared down the row of desks at Jacob.

Mrs Weaver sighed again and went back to her lesson. She picked up a shoebox from under her desk and pulled out something glittery with her thumb and index finger.

"Now," said Mrs Weaver, "Who can tell me what this is?"

She held a silver model in her left hand. The light from the window winked against the squarish blob of tinfoil and paint. The class stared up at her with open eyes and closed mouths.

"It's the new NASA probe," explained Mrs Weaver. "They're going to use it to land on Mars. This planet here." she said slowly, pointing to the reddish styrofoam ball.

Jacob stopped making faces at Leah to stare at the model. The mess of tinfoil shimmered at the edge of his eyes. It reminded him of a game he played sometimes, where he pretended to be a robot. He could feel the spokes and wheels turning under his skin. Walking with stiff legs, he tried to imitate the sounds of his family's VCR. "Zzzzxxxxwhirwhirwhir."

He enjoyed the game because he could scare people with it. His mother would jump when she heard him making that noise. She would turn on him ready to give out slaps and tears. All the other kids would run from him when they saw his mouth go into a deep line, his eyes bulge, and his arms turn into lengthy fists. "whirwhirwhir." He didn't have to feel anything. It was all temperature measurements, gauges and clocks spinning behind his eyes. Counting down, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5 . . .

"Someday people might even live on Mars." the teacher said. "Maybe even . . . someone in this class." She smiled.

Mars sat smugly in between Jacob's eyelashes. He could picture it. All the red arid dirt of Mars under his fingernails. All the hot air of the planet dipped into his skin.

He wanted to see Earth slip away from the window of a spaceship. Slowly, it would become the size of a Ferris wheel, a tire, a dinnerplate, a Christmas ornament, a loonie, a quarter, a dime and then disappear. Just another star in the sky. He wanted to be the Petit Prince like they read in French class but without the nagging rose. He wanted to catch falling stars with a net. The interstellar robot boy with metal mouth teeth and jiggly legs. This is what Jacob counted on.

When the recess bell finally rang, Jacob took a while to find his coat. He walked up to the



teacher's desk. The model looked clutchable. The classroom smelt gobbly, like crayons and playdough. Stomp. Stomp. Stomp. Quickly, he grabbed the small model and put it in his pocket. Leah stood in the doorway balanced on one foot.

"I saw that," Leah said. "You better let me see it or I'll tell." She brushed her ponytail out of her face and balanced on the other leg.

"No!" Jacob glared and said, "It's mine, you can't have it!"

"I don't want to have it," she said. "I just want to see it. Now let me see it or I'll go tell."

Tentatively, Jacob let Leah see it. Leah picked up the model and pinched her fingers around its waist. "Neat, huh?" Jacob asked carefully, nervously eyeing Leah's red tipped fingers. "I suppose," she said.

Leah had watched Jacob's face go all shivery when she grabbed the model. Something twitched inside her. She carefully placed the model on the floor. Jacob looked at her, confused. She stomped that model dead with her white puffy shoes.

Jacob's eyes filled up with reddish rage as he started to cry and pick up the pieces. He threw them at Leah and pounded at her shoulders with his fists. Leah screeched and then grabbed his wrists, pushing them behind him onto the teacher's desk. He stared at her miserably, his face bruised with hate. She leaned forward and kissed his wet cheeks and then his mouth. It was warm and Jacob filled up with something that wasn't hate. And then he pushed her away, jumping down to pick up all the loved and slivered pieces. Leah stared at him for a second and then stomped out of the room.

When recess ended, Mrs Weaver didn't even notice the model was missing. The grade six teacher had made it herself last week with tinfoil, popsicle sticks, glue and a bit of paint. Sitting at her small desk, she had hummed cheerfully; the green smell of earth floated in from the window.

# Ryan-Lee Stevens

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## Room: First Fumblings

I am pushing and cracking and crinkling and ripping. Underneath what I'm trying to accomplish is this tearing that doesn't seem to extract from the day's proceedings. I don't feel like doing anything . . . and I'm not depressed. I surface, bob and bob, and show to the few lonely October beach-combers that I'm drowning. I then sink and swim on the sea bottom. I'm not dead yet.

There are tattered blue recycling cans littering the front lawn. I see this as a threat. These blue cans, symbols of regrouping and sensitivity to the Earth are being used as crude softball markers on a university front lawn. People who do things like this are being too familiar with their wastefulness; they are almost cruelly using the receptacles that keep their garbage off the streets as trash. A sin, to begin with. I don't sit ideally at my window sill pretending to feign an interest in their games. That is child's play. I have better things to do. I start to make my bed, but still suck at it. It lays crumpled. I write the words "pushing," "cracking," "crinkling," and "rippling" on a page, and crumple it up. This a theme, this a plan, this so planned.

I don't do anything today, or anything later. I call a few friends and talk about funny songs I heard, or how life is treating them in their bubble . . . or perhaps what I ate that day, for the twentieth time bragging about the good pasta I ate or the macaroni salad concoctions I blame for stomach sickness. I suffer, and it's because I just don't anymore.

Tuesday I go to class. I sit and suffer, enjoying the movie about immigrants but ignoring the sub-titles. I don't need these glasses. They make my face look fat, and we can't have that. . . I go for coffee by myself and smile at the gay guys (as I see them). I wonder how many guys I smiled at in my lifetime were really gay? Am I slipping or am I dead on, my calculations classy and bright . . . There has to be a scene of my dreams that I can design or locate. But how do I advertise? Am I too sleek? I am chained?

When I detach and blast away, I notice something about Tuesday that I found unnerving. I was so depressed and down-trodden. It hit me, and crackled. Straight males all around me make me feel elitist and small; they shout and bellow and I feel

undistinguished and so, so petite. Eating my pizza in an effort to get fat is useless. No one notices.

When I was young, and it was fashionable to be young, I used to go to the beach with my parents, sister, and grandmother, and walk along the long wooden path to the sandy knolls. My childhood was always about walking. We were either walking somewhere or coming back. The “in between” was never as exciting as it should have been. We’d sit on the beach for a couple hours. If I was feeling especially brave, I’d join my sister for a tease in the cold ocean, but otherwise I stayed on the blanket, humouring my grandmother as I listened to her tell the same stories again and again. I loved her. It was embarrassing, in contrast, to have to lie and say I went to the Yukon over the summer (to be interesting) as a response to the exciting sojourns to Disney World and New Hampshire I heard about from my friends. To be a homebody was at that point pathetic. It’s only good to be settled and what I call “introspective” if you’re artsy and have established yourself as such. I think early birds can register at sixteen. Otherwise, a child you’ll stay.

It’s Sunday. I close my window, and get comfortable. I’m writing a novel, and I think I’m dying. This week must bring more, otherwise I shall shed and be too weak to clean up after myself. I’ll eat every foodstuff I’ve hoarded and only leave the room to use the washroom. I’ll quit.

Do I quit? What IS quitting?

Wednesday. A journal or a memoir? I feel like I’m writing about my life in these detached segments because I’m dying. I don’t know why. I realize that right now, in this twisted invisible wreckage, if I wanted to do so many things, I could not. I have 17 or so friends here. 2 or 3 are to be trusted. They are lovely. The others will get Christmas cards if they’re lucky. My friends are in Halifax now, having moved there for a variety of reasons (University topping the list...). They still want me, but I made this choice and I’ve got to make it through the year, pass these courses, and save for my ticket to Ireland. What I find especially central to why I’m writing this colloquial mess is the fact that

I DON’T CARE WHAT ANYONE THINKS OF MY PLIGHT OF SORTS

Ha, ha. It’s not really a plight. I can’t compare it to homelessness or those stereotypically starving in Africa. It is a minimized sort of pathetic personal state of crisis centered around my total unerring feeling of indifference. I just don’t care how small people see my state. I won’t respond to:

“Shut up,” “Calm down, honey,” “Get out,” “Get off your ass,” or even “It’s okay.”

I would love someone or something outstanding to come along and undress my sense of bad style. I look like such a prep and would rather do what I did before. Where can I order some guts and ditch these pop monsters? Is it too late?

What a simple world full of simple joys and simple people. Hehe.

I shall now regale you with another delicious childhood tale to add substance to this work so the real intellectuals will enjoy it. I am so smart . . . in grade twelve I graduated with honors and distinction, sporting a tickle of tinsel on my wrist as an afterthought and reminder of my fabulous tinsel EC flamer costume at the prom. People saw. Did they know what to think? Yes, no one’s stupid. They cared too. Yay. Whatever. Three days until turkey presents itself as queen of the food chain.

Turkey as a kid was super. I was a conscious pig, feasting with a voracious appetite on every spot of stuffing I could locate, even taste testing the dressing my Mom and Nanny Jean would make co-operatively. Mom and Nanny’s dressings were equally superior, but my childhood fascination with my Nanny’s cooking proved her dressing to be secretly superior. My intuitive Mom was hurt, but my current understanding of the foodstuff’s equality leads to open lines of communication regarding good food and it’s virtue. Hats off to turkey . . . the meat of champs.

This year turkey tasted incredibly different. It was meaty and not special. I feel so queer. And it is with this that I go to bed.. The family fades as I undress and hope I never wake. For I spoke, and it melted. And no one came . . . I slept in a turkey suit.

# Robert Dicks

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Reproduction of with Variation on "The Son of Man by  
Rene Magritte," 1964



Julia Milton

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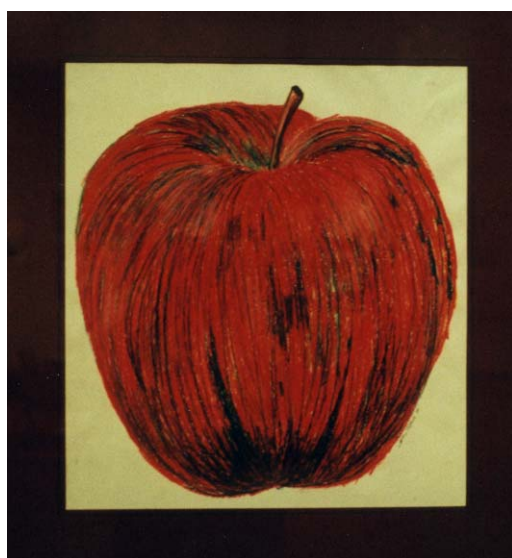
Reproduction of Vincent Van Gogh's "Wheatfield with Cypresses," 1889



Ashley Roberts

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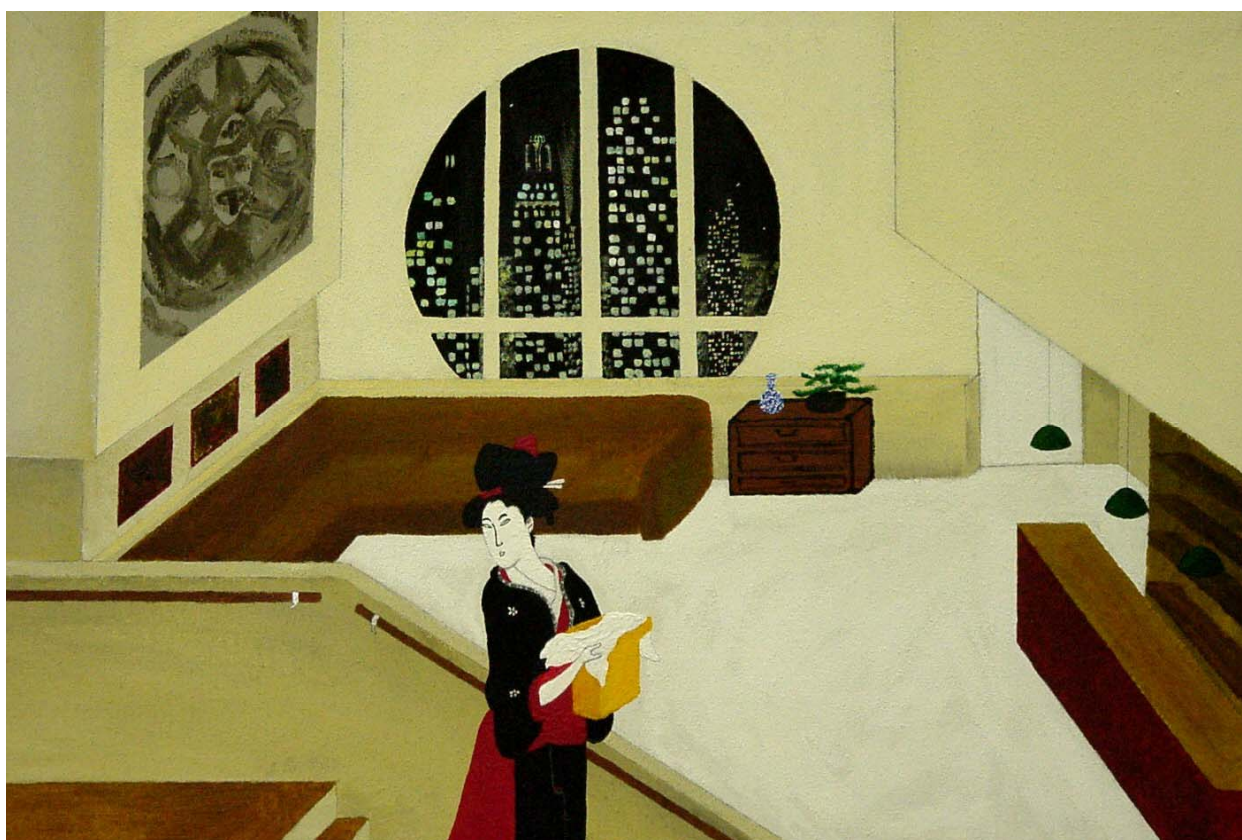
Apple



Brody J. Sloan

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Gotham Giesha





Emily Vanderburg

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**The Scarf**



Kate Wagner

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Escape



Jean Blum

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Gift



Jilian Eisnor

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Fruit



# Devon Nicole Goodwin

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## Untitled



# Myriam Hammami

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## Self Portrait



# Adam Hill

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## Untitled



Karen Parker

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Woman





Patrick Scholfield

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Untitled



Alana Smith

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Untitled



# Hamid R. Yazdi

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## Untitled

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven. It's seven. I've counted them several times. It's always seven. But each time I lie on this bed I end up counting the creases between the rows of the wallpaper again. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven. Next it's time to count the flower baskets on the wallpaper. It is more difficult to count these because they don't follow each other in a row. After each flower basket there is a house. A little blue house with two chimneys on the roof. I count the flower baskets. One, two, three, four, five, six. There are six of them, from top to bottom. I count the little houses. One, two, three, four, five, six. There are six of them too, from top to bottom. Now I try to count the baskets and the houses together. One flower basket, one house, two flower baskets, two houses, three flower baskets, three houses, four flower baskets, four houses, five flower baskets, five houses, six flower baskets, six houses. There are twelve altogether. Six flower baskets and six little houses. Now I count the flower baskets and the little houses along the width of each row. One, two, three, four. Four little houses. One, two, three. Three flower baskets. In the next row, there are four flower baskets and three little houses. What a fascinating equilibrium! The length of each row bears the same symmetry. Each row starts once with a flower basket and once with a house. Still the number of the flower baskets and the houses is six each time! Now I count the flower baskets and the houses along the width of the whole wall. Thirty-one and a half flower baskets. Thirty-one and a half little houses. I think to myself how nice it would be if one could combine the half flower basket with the half house and make a new row. There would be thirty tow rows then.

The ceiling is white. I know the number of the drawers in the dresser. Two rows of three drawers. Six altogether. It doesn't take much time. There is nothing else to count. I remember the creases between the bricks at the office. There of plenty of things to count there: the creases between the bricks, the ceiling lights, the windows, the desks, the telephones, the clerks, the letters on the desks. They are all meaningless and purposeless, in motion, or motionless. The clerks move. The letters, too, sometimes move, by the hands that throw them on the table. The bricks are motionless. The desks and the telephones too. The combination of all these moving and motionless things create a ray of beautiful and vague colours. Perhaps they were all meant to come to existence for this purpose, to move, to be motionless, to combine, and to create a ray of beautiful vague colours. The ghosts mingle with each other. The motionless things look on. I count them all. The best time to count is when the ghosts disappear for a short while. It's their lunch break. The meaningless sounds of the ghosts are stopped for a short time. Now every thing is motionless and silent. I like this better. I can count better. I have counted everything several times. The desks, the telephones, the ceiling lights, the windows, the floor tiles. I have counted them many times. Some time ago, I don't exactly remember when (I cannot count the time), I was taken into a new room. There wasn't a crowd and meaningless sounds there. I was placed before a huge desk. A motionless ghost was in front of me behind the desk. The meaningless sounds started again. I counted the stripes on its shirt. The sounds stopped shortly after. I am in the big crowded office again. A hand puts a letter on the desk. The paper stops moving. I count the lines. I am taken outside of the crowded and

noisy office. The meaningless sounds increase, so does the light. I am on the bus. Outside the window everything is in motion, and what a large number of things to count! I count the trees. I count the ghosts. I count the cars. The meaningless sounds are still ringing in my head. I count the cement blocks on the pavement. There are no numbers in my head. There are things instead. The numbers are meaningless. The things have a distinct numerical identity. I feel the burden of the rows of things in my head. I have counted them all. Suddenly, the rows collapse. And then I count again. I count the creases of the wallpaper, and the flower baskets, and the little houses.

In the dark I can only see the whiteness of the ceiling. The sounds have stopped. I hear the sound of the grasshoppers clearly, much more clearly than the meaningless sounds. I try to count their number from their sound. In the absolute dark, I imagine the length of things. Things have length and width. Time does not have length or width. It does not stretch. Everything is suspending in time. In the endless suspense of time, I count the things.