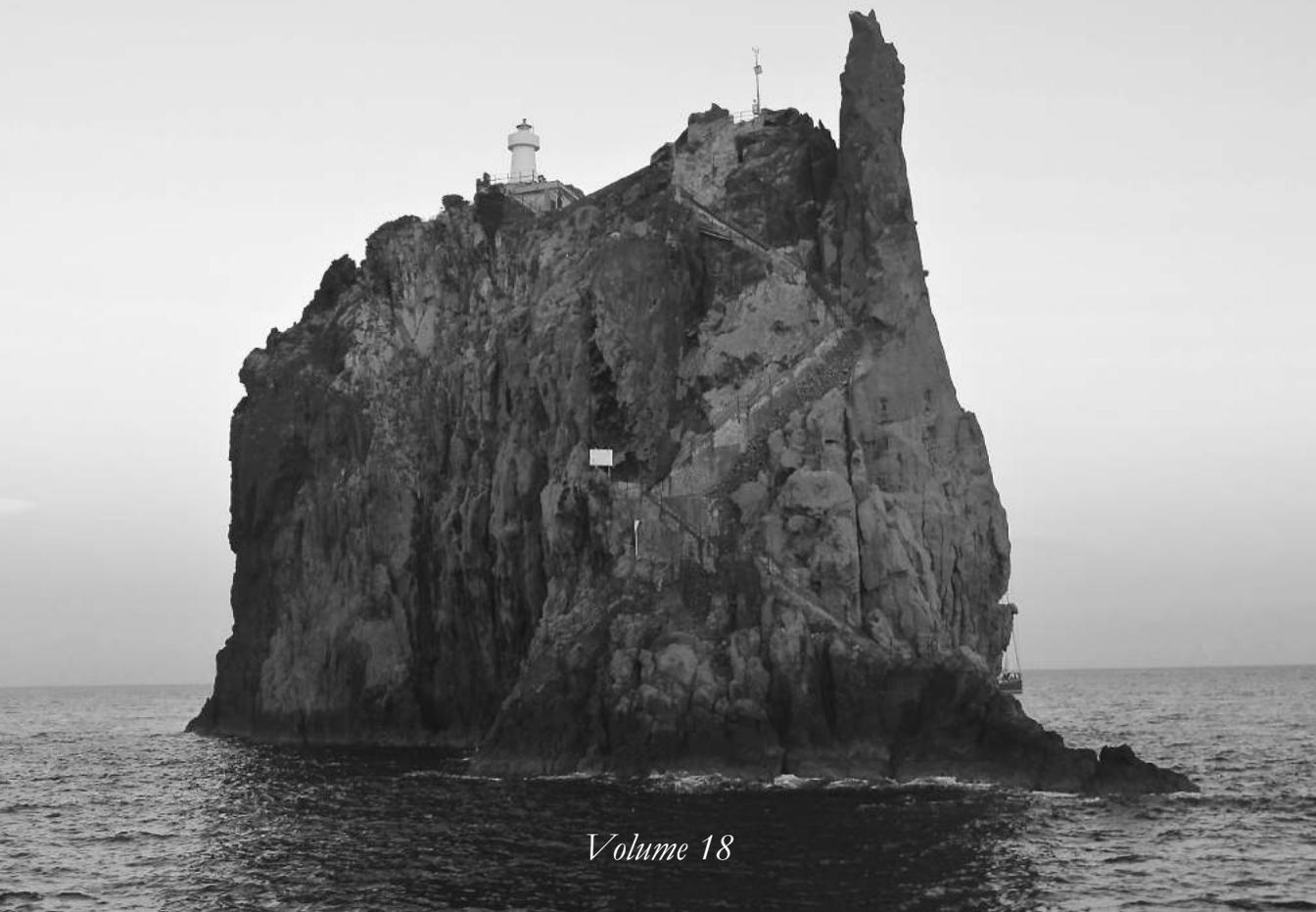




volition

George Mason's Literary and Arts Journal



Volume 18

CONTENTS

POETRY

C. Michael Mincks	<i>Adage of Adagio</i> 4
	<i>Before You Moved to Georgia</i> 16
Mohammad Abou Ghazala	<i>Streetlight Proposal</i> 5
	<i>Sestinyria</i> 10
Meaghan E. Rachal	<i>5:15</i> 8
	<i>Infinitesimal</i> 12
Nameer Rizvi	<i>Bona fide</i> 15
Cynthia Jessup	<i>Raking Leaves</i> 23
Keaton Maddox	<i>The Idea of You is Not Love</i> 24
Amanda Bender	<i>My Friend the Artist</i> 29
Ethar Hamid	<i>Almost</i> 30
Alex Horn	<i>Specter</i> 32

FALL 2014

PHOTOGRAPHY

Rachel Torres	<i>Desolate</i> <i>Cover</i>
	<i>Luster</i> 13
Lauren Soriente	<i>Persephone the Wanderer</i> 6
Songjun Deng	<i>Paper Cut</i> 18
Leere	<i>Purgatorium</i> 22
Maggie Shaw	<i>Interpretation</i> 28
Adam Breakiron	<i>Ol' Timer</i> 34

ART

Caitlin Samara Gonsalves	<i>Gardening</i> 14
Riley Keesling	<i>s. Gab</i> 17
Michael Collins	<i>Apprehension</i> 20
	<i>Like, Totally</i> 26
Brandon Gonzales	<i>Consume</i> 21
Mark Bravante	<i>Picky Eater</i> 27
Hoonyong Seo	<i>Smoke</i> 31

MISSION STATEMENT

Volition serves to elevate the creative capacity of the Mason community by fostering freedom of expression across diverse mediums.

FALL 2014

Adage of Adagio

"By the time you are 12 you've experienced all the emotions you need to write." -Aphorism

Except, perhaps, patience.

If twelve years drop like flies (the way they do),
then where was the lesson in sitting
and waiting
like a good girl
for each emotion to come along like a
new gadget added to Bond's arsenal,
Or, since 007 is the Simile of the Day,
a new number added to his black book?

And mother taught me only to think
the purest of thoughts, of tangerine
lollipops and heartfelt hellos,
So my encounters with distraction,
greed, jealousy, and want came much later
than my pre-and-pubescent stages.

Dreams flew to me every night,
performed by Mechanicals,
reenacting dramas yet to happen,
But these illusions were dressed
in jesters' clothes, as if
to mock my inability to recount them come morning.

How I wished to beat those dreams bloody
and transpose them with experience!

| *C. Michael Mincks*

Streetlight Proposal

If I was a bit more strong willed
I would've knocked on her door
up the hill
just past midnight a candle in a hand
and a promise in the other
we would've wandered down her street
to feel what it's like to meet each
savory star between our eyes
Her mouth would've spelt out the answer
mute she would say nothing
but I would've heard every word
between her breaths and mine
if only i was a bit stronger
I would've dared to wander
with her until the street ended
where the lamp post
flickered
then died out
I would've wrote my Will
right then
blinded
she would've written hers
before burning it
and leaving to sleep.

| *Mohammad Abou Ghazala*



Persephone the Wanderer | Lauren Soriente | gelatin silver print

5:15

It's five fifteen in the morning, two days after Christmas.
I am far away from you, in a sleep little town outside the city.
Grandmother's house
My third favorite place to be, next to your arms and my bed
In that order

Outside, a nor'easter is blowing glitter around the night as if we are all trapped in
our own personal snow globe
You are snoring, loudly
Due to what I believe is a sinus infection.

You whisper my name
Softly, sweetly, hoarsely
I wonder if you have developed laryngitis.

"Come back to bed"

You gesture towards the ancient goose-down filled pillow behind me
And promptly return to snoring.

In my head are lines of poetry about love and lust and war and peace
About soaring up so high, all we can do now is fall.
In love
Again.
And again...

Your beautiful blue eyes open as mine fill with tears at thinking how lucky I must
have been to have met you, to have loved you and been loved by you.

"Darling, why aren't you sleeping?"

You query me, concern tingeing your voice as you notice the shimmer at the corners of my eyes.

Beside me, my dog snores, almost as loud as you do.
He is on his back, belly up, legs spread, paws bent, head cocked to one side as if
Any minute now
I just might
Rub his belly.

Outside, it is dark and cold as ice.
And the river is off in the distance,
Shining like a great silver snake
As it twists and turns its way to the city
The wind is moaning like every spirit in the world is crying out

I look back at your expectant face
Almost angelic in the half-light, shake my head, and smile.

"I love you."

The words don't sound so much as a confession of some strange emotion as they
are a plea that I should sleep soundly tonight as they crack on your voice and you
roll away, fall back to sleep.

It's five thirty-six in the morning, two days after Christmas.
Outside, the nor'easter has turned to slush.
Your snoring fills my ears.
And I am the happiest I have ever been.

| *Meaghan E. Rachal*

Sestinyria

no one heard us crying lying under the rubble of our home
no one minded seeing bleeding trails of the desert's orphan
no one took my hand to help me stand over the makeshift grave of my mother
no one cared or dared share videos of her funeral because we have a scary accent
no one followed our footsteps through red rivers through the chest of a rebel
everyone shielded their ears till we wielded guns drenched in fear;
#HandsOffSyria?

I wish they knew the difference between cereal and Siberia and Syria
I wish it mattered when shattered shrapnel scattered through my mother
they wish we would stop dying eyeing their betrayal tying them to the orphan
I wish they listened to the twisted glare and glisten betwixt a heroine and her rebel
they wish to keep asleep and count sheep in the mirror because it isn't their home
I wish I knew how to spoon feed 'em and remind 'em the moon has no accent

1,000 2,000 120,000 dead instead of refugee tents with the wrong accent
I went to my neighbor who didn't answer at least he alone passed in his home
the era of Tete's smiling ended with the piling of bones and bullets when it was
Syria
the empty cradle and the soup-less ladle did well to make the rebel
scrutinized and crucified and wide-eyed I drank until I saw my mother
but it's a waste of time as missiles chime the birth of a new orphan

hey it's great to see them wake up and pick up and write up articles with a photo of an orphan
but they put their heads back to their beds while I rummage through rubble for the
smile of my mother
why lose sleep if they join sheep watch crocodiles weep and drop
hell on our home
are they afraid of what we say if they pay attention to the way a butcher in a suit
speaks the same accent?
why are they afraid at all? caught between missed calls and vacant government halls
buying pieces of Syria
I am a product of their hatred while I waited for their help while sin begot me and
created a rebel

I am what they made me when they made me swim in a sealed well so I
rebelled made myself a rebel
I need bricks I need cement I need to burn this refugee tent its not my
home
thunder doesn't scare me like it used to it used to until thunder became routine
stopdropandroll goodbye Syria
rain doesn't cleanse like it used to it used to but rain cries because it's useless to
wash the blood from these eyes hollowed orphan
there is no moon there is no more sky when I die soon my tomb will tell
where I went to give it dissent and accent
when I die soon -I hope I die soon I'm not sad or depressed I'm stressed from
military boots pressed to my chest- I'll die like her I'll see mother

I remember when I sang lullabies while I tied a noose on my neck by my hands but
I couldn't yet I remember when Sarin smothered mother
lullabies and beautiful red lines un resolutions condemnations hallucinations fly by
then hide the un tried and stepped aside and said "too many died to count in Syria"
pin the tail on the benevolent president watch him hail from the pleasantest views
real estate bonus: no neighborhood orphan
its new years party time new year new me new Gabriels and Lucifers
but the same old goddamn holes in my head holes in my home
fireworks fire off up through our sky its not 4th of July we don't fly yet
sky lights up anyway these northern lights the birthday of this rebel
these northern lights tantalize fantasies vandalize the scandalized agonies
borne of raped soil and ghosts alone with no accent

alas they die at last so do i to hell with the orphan to hell with his mother
tell them I don't want a home or family tell them dandy jasmines are dead
to hell with their accent to hell with Syria tell them this rebel Kurt Cobain'd

all I want is for Damascus jasmines to suffocate me I never want to live so long as I
haven't died

| *Mohammad Abou Ghazala*

Infinitesimal

Suddenly I feel very small again
As all my big dreams shrink down to
Hopes and fears as we wind our way
In the great metallic snake
That is the stream of cars backed up in traffic on I-95
All of us urging our monstrous vehicles
Coughing out exhaust like chimney chain-smokers
Upwards and onwards towards our various destinations.

Long Island beckons like a giant watery finger
Jutting out into the ocean
Drawing us to its end
Southampton, the wind whispers
Blowing back my hair as the window is rolled down
To let out the heat building as the tension rises between
My brother and I, trapped in a cramped car
The dog whimpers incessantly
Wishing and waiting to get out

| *Meaghan E. Rachal*



Luster | Rachel Torres | *digital photograph*



Gardening | Caitlin Samara Gonsalves | *graphic design*

Bona fide

The aftertaste of it is of dark mahogany leather, large square pieces of it tightly stitched together to hold inside it the maximum amount of comfort - cushion. We call it, or like to think of it, as luxury. Of course, like most things - if not everything - it is relative to the individual.

But this, the aftertaste, is definitive - absolute. It is something, which is the same for every man. The perception of it, yes, differs, but the taste (the aftertaste) is undoubtedly the same taste felt by all men: it is pure and unchanged no matter the throat it is felt in. If anything, the difference of perception is a test: a test to see if one is worth the imagined luxury formulated by the combined sense of taste and smell when felt with the liquid.

If one can't handle it, rebelling against it like virgin blood against disease, it means one's not biologically tuned for luxury; it should not be wasted on one. Give a man not tuned for luxury a drink of such a liquid, and he'll portray dissatisfaction. (pretended satisfaction is nothing but a mask)

It began with him in his first social party, as a tourist in a foreign country. He came to the basement bar of the host, not because he wished to, but because he had nothing else to do and needed something to do. He was after all, the youngest one at the party; invited solely because of his contribution of humor and friendliness. When this humble one, Jarm Himmin, tasted the whiskey in his throat the first time - and loved it! - it was the beginning of the most notable stage of his life: that of his ambitious acquiring of maximum luxury.

| *Nameer Rizvi*

Before You Moved to Georgia

Reclining on a gutted-out seat
from a 14-passenger white van,
we watched nameless men
in gray-stained work singlets
grind down the stump of
the blue spruce I used to want to climb.

I turned to you and said
“Shame, really,
I used to play chess with myself
on that stump.”
And you said “Let’s lean
back until this
seat tips over and falls.”

As we toppled over,
a cement column tried to catch me
by the shoulder, but instead it cut
me. You reached for a blade of aloe
and, tearing it asunder, you rolled it
like a tube of toothpaste
until a thin film of ooze dripped on
my injured arm.

Placebo: I thought it worked,
so we dashed through thorns
and placed ourselves in the routes
of newspaper boys to get
tackled by their bikes, then we
applied our miracle cure
until infection set in.

You never seem to go to school
when you’re ten; developmental memories are
replaced by scooters on the border between
drainage ditch and junior dance academy,
except for the moment in Gym—
when the rainbow parachute swallowed us,
and in the collapse you kissed me
for getting a 100 on my spelling test—
when I knew what love was.

| *C. Michael Mincks*



s. Gab (graphite drawing) | Riley Keesling | graphite drawing





Apprehension | Michael Collins | *oil on canvas*



Consume | Brandon Gonzales | *copic markers, acrylic paint on bristol boards*



Purgatorium | Leere | *digital photograph*

Raking Leaves

Leaves dancing in the air
 A small maiden, yet so fair
 'Twas a sight for all to stare
 Hands waiving in the air

A smile dawned upon her face
 Which made my heart race
 A sight so bright
 No evil could blight

Taking her in my arms with care

Beware those who care
 Her knight is there
 To protect her from the bare
 Any evil who would snare

Despite the dirt upon my shirt
 It did not hurt

A skirt of leaves
 A sight to please

The light of her heart
 Held me from the start

A child so bold
 Yet rarely does what she is told
 Though I did not have the heart to scold

Picking up leaves
 While there's a breeze
 May sometimes cause one to sneeze
 I did not want her to freeze

Yet the sun so bright
 The leaves are quite sight

So I wrapped her in a new warm coat
 And she jumped into the leaves
 As if it were a boat
 A parent can't help but gloat

| *Cynthia Jessup*

The Idea of You is Not Love

Bad skin and high cheeks
do not equate you
being a ghost
though you are
full of the same energy
as was ours.

a lot
can happen in two years.

Even still, I want to tuck
your concept
into the sleeve of my wallet
to keep safe the idea
in impenetrable leather
pressing it to be birthed as
infantilized love. Don't
you worry reality
doesn't stand a chance
piercing hide.

You would not tell me your life
story upon introduction

I assume

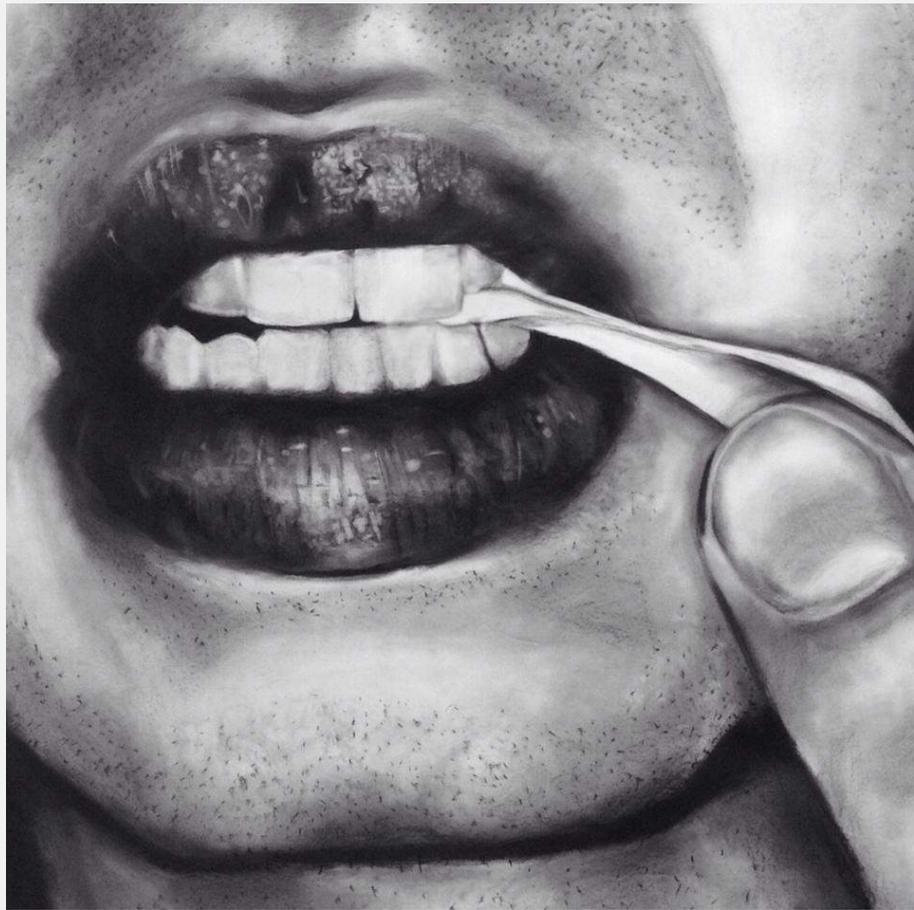
“you must be at least this interesting to ride this ride.”

We've let the rush come. We played
the requiem in a carnival last year and no body came
because every singularity had already grieved.

You were the only one who couldn't learn how it worked.
(I mean we) (I mean I)

She pretended to reincarnate as a tree,
as an intensity, a craving to build blanket forests
in my bed. And your cheeks are not her.
But in reality did not stand a chance breaking in.

| *Keaton Maddox*



Like, Totally | Michael Collins | charcoal



Picky Eater | Mark Bravante | charcoal, pastel, gesso, yellow pages collage



Interpretation | Maggie Shaw | digital photograph

My Friend the Artist

Through witty jives and love
of knives and brushes and chisels
she whittles, strokes, and sculpts
away on blank, boring beginnings,
fashioning them into abstract
yet so clear - cut - images; things
that speak louder than any
tale I could spin,
within my scribbles.

I envision her as:
The almighty,
The elegant, The graceful Swan Queen
who bursts with swirling, savory
feathers of vibrant hues - who
possesses the power
to bend reality at her
imaginative will.

She is a careful creator,
breathing life into wondrous scenes,
submerging us,
into her world for but a moment
- One Beautifully Glorious Moment -
leaving us to stare at
her artistic hints,
encouraging us to form
our own
stories.

| *Amanda Bender*

Almost

I will go down to the lake
And dip my toes in the blue-green water,
Tadpoles tickling my feet.
It would be a cliché scene,
If it weren't for my bottle of morning Prozac
Sitting beside me,
On the grass.
It will be a good morning,
The sun rising above me
Like a citrus fruit that smolders a rusty scarlet.
I will lie down on my back
And let a ladybug crawl over my chest.
No one will stare at me
Until maybe I start muttering
To the voices talking to me
To leave me alone.
I will not look different—
I will not be different
Unless I lie there, frozen,
Too weighed down
To even shoo away the birds
That gather
On my head.

| *Ethar Hamid*



Smoke | Hoonyong Seo | *charcoal pencil*

Specter

The words all seem to struggle,
some string straining to pace
with an arbitrary tune.
My screams sound in the din of rattled cook-
ware,
the scratch of the branch
at an icy pane.
I moan in your dreaming ears
with the creaking floorboards,
pleading with your
vacant faces.

Still, still!
I cling to the rafters!
I crash the chandelier
into a beautiful death
of cut crystal and
fragmented perfection.
All of the edges go wrong and I am
once more

so very alive in the chaos.
But I am
the ethereal sheen
of dew rising into steaming mist.
You do not see me
straddling the scene of the crime.
My magnum opus is
so heinously
accredited to wet plaster,
a thunderstorm wriggling
fat in what should be my
glory.

I claw at your spines around the dinner table
with tingling fingers.
I see the way you all shift in your
chairs and blush,
some sigh,
some tremble.
Yet you stab with your steel and try to
stomach the draft in the air,
that chill at your hearts.

Listed as twisted, gifted
fistfuls of salt over shoulders,
soldiered through sordid hymns
told on the whims
of the good godful folk
with which I often spoke...
at,
for all the good that did me.
Spit in my face all you like!
A red-cheeked fool,
fingering me as the Devil.

I've weathered worse.
What makes you think
you can shout me into oblivion?
I am here,
quieted into eternity, perhaps,
but I am here.

| *Alex Horn*



Op' Timer | Adam Breakiron | *digital photograph*

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