3Elements Review

Issue No. 10

Spring 2016
Welcome to issue no. 10!

Thank you for taking the time to read our 10th issue! We sincerely believe that you are going to find some great material in this issue. This issue is packed with various writers, artists whose work we truly enjoyed!

The next issue’s elements are: Labyrinth, Trace, Reflex.

Follow us on Twitter and Facebook for all of the latest updates!

Sincerely,
Mikaela Shea
Preparing to be Profiled

Justin Rogers

1.
I measure the distance between home & work, or school, or anywhere that murder defines itself as a mistake.
I create a map noting every State Trooper Station—I learn the route they travel between district courts, memorize their roadside hideouts, add a gas station locator to my GPS so I can always locate a camera. At night, I can tell by headlight shape what kind of car is a mile behind me & some restroom breaks are because I saw a Crown Vic or an Impala or a Charger or a Suburban or the reflective silver of a “discrete” cruiser’s trim or a red flash or blue paint but most of the time I am just seeing a routine traffic stop that became a YouTube clip that became evidence that became a hashtag

2.
My privilege glances behind its back every 10 to 15 steps. It doesn’t trust its habitat; my privilege’s habitat kills black boys no matter how mixed they look. My privilege cleaves a clean cut between urban & suburban. My privilege keeps the blade as a souvenir; says the blood, the sliver of brain roting on the asphalt, & the secret autopsy is not my own but swings from trigger fingers close enough to my throat to taste its steel. My privilege sounds like gunmetal kick back. My privilege looks like decades of war machines but is threatened by the skin it was built on.
At Gate C-43
Johnson Cheu

At the passenger’s question, her lips cleave into a smile that doesn’t reach her eyes; they betray her — bored, listless, like kids stuck inside on a rainy day. Did her Chinese grandfather teach her Majong when the rain delayed playing Double-Dutch?

Did they bond over Bruce Lee movies, see The Good Earth, Grandfather assuring her she looked nothing like Yellowface, slanty-eyed, demure Luise Rainer?

Growing up, did her face obscure or reveal? Did kids tease, call her slanty-eyes, sliver-face? Was she bullied for not being Black enough? You want to tell her she is beautiful, now, standing behind the counter deftly handling the passenger who asks about her Chinese last name, if she’s adopted, a blood measure of her name’s veracity. She’s pragmatic, answers. My grandfather was Chinese. Yet, the man insists, No, lemme see your eyes.

Salmagundi Club
Van Hong

This piece was painted from life over two days at New York’s Salmagundi Club, a historic establishment in the fine arts, in oil on canvas board.

The game of billiards is a practice in mastering precision, often requiring years training to find Slivers in space, Measurement of paths, and honing smooth, delicate execution to Cleave space with both the cue and the ball.
Thirty-four human souls
Cleaved into little bubbles
Scantron creatures

You wouldn’t know anybody
Is here but for the sticky clicks
Of hand-me-down calculators

Or the jerky whisper of pages
Turning over—but if you could hear
Eyes roll or spirits break

It’d be a rock concert in here
Like at the usual lunching hour
When you measure the time

By how much of each little pizza
Square is left, three bites to go
Until we walk in circles outside

But not now, though still you
Stalk between the tables as usual
Human dignity slivering away as usual
"Songs from Sheffield, No. 3" comes from a series celebrating the survival of the handmade scissors craft in Sheffield, once a thriving center of manufacturing in England. The series is an exploration through the passage from drafted design through final, realized construction. Each illustration is a mixed media piece, created with graphite and digital coloring, and stands on its own.

Like many metal-based handcraft techniques, constructing scissors involves painstaking Measure, honing in exacting Slivers, but also forceful movements to Cleave the material into a balanced, delicate design.

Some work takes careful measure—surgery, for instance, or baking, or compounding cures from elemental slivers of leaf and root, composing what might heal or kill depending on proportion.

Music comes in measures and the steps of dance, ordered and accounted for in the mathematics of creation and desire—
where numbers catch and hold
the secret heart of things
in a silver net, shining
in the spin of galaxies,
in the web of nerves
threading thought to flesh,
in ordinary miracles basic
as the electric life of cells,
that though they cleave and cleave again,
do not diminish, but increase
with each division,
achieving in their multitudes
astounding new conclusions.

I don’t know how often the train comes—every hour, maybe less. When it comes, the bed shakes. He calls it our old motel bed. One night, he rolled over and affixed the curve of his body to mine and said, “All happy couples start off in terrible apartments.” And I listened to the faint tinkering of the glasses we shelved too closely together and the low whir of the old air conditioning unit, keeping his palm pressed into mine until we fell asleep.

I’m late, but I told him I wasn’t. Acted like I didn’t keep track. Last week, my friend had a miscarriage—she’s the third one this year. It’s always the same vague explanation: She lost the baby. How insensitive to say it that way, lost the baby, as if it were a set of keys or a card game, like it was somehow her fault for being careless. When I was in my twenties, my friends had abortions; in my thirties, they have miscarriages. After that, I bought a test and shoved it under the sink in the bathroom when he wasn’t looking, but I still haven’t used it. I told myself it would come—trying to forget about the last time it didn’t.
It was easy to give it up back then. “You’re young...there’ll be time for that later,” they say. Then one day, without notice, a cavernous desire unbuckles inside you, begging to be filled—a sliver of sadness cleaved in an empty womb. Yesterday, I watched a man walk down the street, gripping the ankles of his tow-headed daughter who was hoisted up on his shoulders. She was eating an ice cream cone that was quickly melting, dripping onto her legs. When the milky trail finally made its way to her frilly white socks, he wiped it off and licked his fingers clean. I wondered how old her mother was, or if she’d been old enough to know that later comes sooner than you think.

I wake up to the tremors of the six-thirty train, before the sun burns the sky into daylight. I watch him sleep in the dull glow of early morning, measuring the minutes left before the alarm goes off. It reminds me of how a child sleeps; his left leg bent at the knee and raised to his chest, his large hand reduced to a balled up fist next to his slightly parted mouth. It’s better not to worry him, so I stay in bed, listening to the long sigh of each passing boxcar, wondering what’s inside.

Measured by the Opening of a Door
Ronald Dzerigian

I stand at the door when it rains;
the mug’s hot face slivers into the first
blanket of finger skin. Ricochet of rain
cleaves and carries dirt, scatters it over
my bare feet. The sky lights up; I cannot predict
each new strike. In stillness, I search.

Our home still dark—my wife walks to me. Walks
to the door so she can see
what I am seeing. Each morning, with coffee,
we—in turn—trade eyes.
as the questions dribbled to a stop.
I had since learned about your skittish truths,
how they pranced to the beat of leaping brows and slack jaws.

To this day,
I don’t know the how of the cut,
have no idea what you felt,
ring finger a ghost, first marriage a hoax.
When the cat died, you lied and squirmed as I spit my surprise.
You even neglected to say you had lived through the beast of cancer, every Sunday when we talked on the phone six thousand miles apart.

Mary McGovern

You said you lost it in the army slicing bread, but your mother swore a sliver flew off stopping a knife in a bar fight.

Every time you shook a hand, it couldn’t. Every time you spread your fingers, it wouldn’t. Even your pinkie curled up in solidarity—devoted ally in sorrow. Later, measured tales of gangrene and surgery trickled in, then silence.
I wish I had been there
to hold your hand—
ring finger a stub,
pinkie gently hooking
mine

when your heart
gave out
and you were all
alone

when your ribs cracked
as they tried
to revive you,
my chest forever
crisscrossed,
cleaved and stumped
as I go
through this world

missing.

You rarely speak of your mother,
a cleaved mass of caution and dread
whose rapid mutterings
translate into a form of sainthood,
bathing all in her smothered sacrifice.

Your father lapses into his own
brand of blessings—
one of uncapped beer bottles
and cigarettes long in the ash—
often issuing his first commandment:
the deliverance of an angry hand.

In clouds of stoned glory,
your sister walks the streets,
her disobedience at home
a flood of cursed defiance,
braving black eyes
and swollen cheeks never turned.
Following the way of the father,
reeling a river of drink and flesh,
your brother disappears in the night
before he is cast out,
confessing his weaknesses
long distance on the phone,
then the ultimate amen
of wrists and razors.

You live in the measure
of quiet moments,
prey library shelves
and old books for revelation,
ponder the softness of words
like peacemaker and forgiveness,
and wonder if that sliver alone
might be your only savior.

Plutarch said, "The measure of a man is way he bears up under misfortune." Sir Walter Besant said, "The measure of a man's success must be according to his ability."
Fifty years later: Mother still tries. She scoops the strained peas, clings to the dead bird before our childless eyes. Hacks with knob-fingered vigor to maim the already hobbled beast. Half-blind, she still vies for control of every sliver—of each mashed notion of the perfect adults she somehow gathers we have become. ...

Our parents were not perfect but they qualified: they knew how to make babies. For the rest, Mother relied on *The Joy of Cooking*, on Gerber and Dr. Spock. Carefully-ironed rituals. Clean, efficient rules. Yellow Jell-O was our standard supper treat. Annual portions of Betty Crocker meted from the birthday hopes we neatly poured in a pan.

A misery pretty generic. Safe and bland. I see that now. Funny, then, that I once cleaved to the fantasy of our own personal brand of family feast. I ate it up: the dried centerpiece of each spick-and-span celebration. (Weren’t they healthful, those long-stewed grudges? Weren’t they normal, our grated prayers and overly-peppered fears?)
In my paintings I ask myself “Is this the way the world is?” I reshape and retool my painting experience to answer that question. But while the question begins with the world, it ends with the work itself: “Is this the way the world is in this work?”

The search is for the world in painting and painting in the world (painting worlds/paintings world). Am I in the world or is the world in me? I allude to my life, to writers works, to imagery and it is my hope that this record of allusion conjures and creates the same. I am referring to text, theory, idea but I am also finding myself already there, looking out to see in.

Her hairdresser lifts her tresses, glides them through his fingers, smoothes them flat, focuses on the task of shaping & defining. All the while tangles of thickening plaque beneath her scalp are redefining who she is, shaping who she’ll be.

I watch her facing the mirror. She’s not looking or looking away. Brushing away tiny slivers of gray from her face, I wonder what she sees, feels.

My thoughts stray to her beauty-parlor days of old:

Once back home, she’d head straight to her bedroom, root herself at her vanity & measure & pull her overly cleaved locks, frantic to stretch them.
back to a length she could live with.

II.

Silver snippets fall to the floor of the shower stall in Mother’s nursing-home bathroom, as I stand behind her — she, statue still on a plastic stool.

What to do with the comb when I have to wield scissors with one hand and, measure for measure, clasp her locks with the other — Mother’s tangled brain not letting her grasp she could ease my task, could turn her head when I ask, hold the comb and look in the mirror, see what a fine job I’m doing?

Every month for seven years, I’ve stood at the sink in Mother’s bathroom, trying to rinse all traces of her out of my mouth before they could cleave my heart more than I can stand.
SHE collected sparkling flotsam.

Shiny coins, lockless keys, jagged blue and green glass bits she found gleaming by the dusty road. A rhinestone button that popped off her mother’s robe. Mother searched, flapping her thin white sheets, but Crow stayed quiet and folded the gem in her palm. Her teacher gave her a gold star for spelling; Crow kept it affixed to its paper backing instead of wasted on the class’s chart.

She hoarded her glimmer in first a tissue box, then old jam jars. First two, then a whole row.

Her mother began calling her “Crow” and the name stuck. Crow liked it so much better than Mona Lisa, which everyone else called her, because she was so quiet and because she thought herself an artist.

She painted and drew and got bits of modeling clay wedged beneath her fingernails. She sketched stick-thin women in billowing evening gowns. She’d flick gray colored pencil across the page and see the Eiffel Tower. She’d smudge green and blue and see the ocean.

Aqua and burnt umber and magenta stained her fingertips, and gray smeared a mustache beneath her nose, and Crow would glimpse herself in the rust-specked medicine cabinet mirror and think she looked like a tribal princess. A conquering warrior. Crow brought her pictures to her mother’s bedside.

“You see that?” Mother would guess. She’d wince, cough into a tissue. “The yard out back?”

She was wrong more than right, but Crow would nod anyway.

Father lined up all six kids on the lawn. Crow, the youngest, stood on the end. They faced Father and the church. Father was so tall he blotted out the sun. The church’s spires spiked behind his head. The building was painted plain white, but Crow knew there were blue and green stained glass windows inside.

“You see that?” He pointed to the church. The Martins had attended services before, but Father had decided the parishioners were up on their high horses and didn’t know anything about God.

“The Reformed Church,” Crow said, proud to be right. The church where the rest of the white families went. She wished Mother could hear her answer correctly, but she was in bed again.

Father turned to her. The sun’s glare darkened his face. “You can always see it, can’t you, in the yard? That means God is always watching you. And I am, too.”

At night the devil came, and she stayed quiet then too, like the Mona Lisa. She knew it was the devil because of his flaming breath and the heat of his body covering hers. When he slipped into her bedroom, she imagined sometimes that she wasn’t in her bed, but
Helen’s shoulders when coughs doubled her over. They urged Helen out of her room, to this society and that movie and this reading. National Union of South African Students meetings, which they claimed were filled with passionate, eligible young men.

Crow woke early, so she could wash alone before the bathroom’s steam and perfume and chatter choked her. She retreated to her room early, before the breathless recounting of dates and dances made her head throb.

She strung colored paper clips along the single window’s ledge and slept with the lights on.

Soon the other girls stopped talking when she came into the hall.

When her father called, Crow flew at once, in the night, packing easily. Most of her clothing, her books, her paints and pastels had never left her bags.

Her mother in bed was a sight Crow was accustomed to, but her father looked shrunken under the scratchy white blankets, his bald head propped up on one flat pillow.

She’d cook eggs, make tea, fill a plate with rolls and cheese. He’d push it away. He’d curse Crow, her stupidity, her slowness. She’d bring more tea.

Her mother would allow Crow to gently wipe her pale skin with a sponge, with warm water and soaps scented with jasmine and lavender. A few days after Crow’s return, she passed away as she’d lived: quietly, without fuss, without complaint. Her brothers and sisters did not return for the burial; only Crow and a few neighbors stood before the grave, marked with a simple in the sky, made of stars, twinkling and shining. And she didn’t tell anyone, because God must have seen her and sent the devil to punish her; otherwise, why would he come?

Later, when Crow was no longer a little girl despite still feeling like one, when her ill parents had called for her, she’d hang the mirrors so that light would wrestle the dark from every corner.

Father had some of her modeling clay. She stared as he plastered it over the glass pane in the front door, flattening it with his fist, folding it over the edges.

“What’re you looking at?” he asked without pausing in his work. His hands were huge and red-knuckled. “Gotta keep the bugs out.” He waved his free hand at her. “Vertrek!”

Crow hadn’t seen any bugs, but she drew some in her sketchbook, with hard bodies and dark wings. She tried to mold them out of clay, but the bodies were too heavy, the wings too brittle, and she flattened each one.

At school, Crow didn’t have anyone to sit with, so she drew instead.

By the time she left for university in Cape Town, she’d collected an entire jar of widowed single earrings.

At first she was a pet among the university’s other girls. She’d told them her given name, Helen, and they indulgently scolded Helen’s scuffed boots, her worn stockings, her single frayed hair ribbon. They offered city shopping trips and salon sessions. They tried to teach Helen to smoke their long cigarettes, and rubbed
gray marker. Crow wished she could carve that unforgiving stone herself, etching it with maps to places they had never been and notes to songs they’d never sing.

    Her father would not wash, would not accept Crow’s help, and would not allow the windows to be opened, so the house, inhabited by two living people, already stank of stale death.

    One morning he knocked the saucer from the tray. The cup broke into four sharp-edged pieces. Crow tried to glue them together, but amber liquid still seeped through the cracks.

    When she returned with a new cup, the steam rising and dampening her face, Father’s breathing had stopped, his mouth and eyes open until Crow closed them.

    This time, she alone buried her dead.

    A moat of wide flower beds surrounded the house. The day after her father died, Crow drove his rickety truck into town and returned with royal purple pincushion flowers, tiny pink skullcap buds, pansies in blue and yellow, with their blooms turned up like faces toward the sun. She planted until dirt blackened her nails and soil darkened the whirls of her fingerprints. Her cheeks were stained bright pink from the sun, and sweat beaded her brow.

    Within a week the flowers were all dead.

    She pulled wilted, browning heads off the limp stems and gazed at the church. Its spire pierced the sun. Petals turned to dust between her fingers.

    She put a hand across her eyes and strained to see the stained-glass windows.

    She owned the house now, outright. She would replace its windows.

    Colored glass would shield her, distort the view of anyone trying to look in. And, inside, bathe her in light, in red and green and blue.

    She inquired in town. The panes would be shipped quickly, the shop-owner promised her.

    Crow measured her windows and then used her inheritance, her father’s money, to order every color.

    She hired three men to install the glass, which was so heavy she couldn’t unload the sheets from her father’s truck. Two white men and one black heaved the panes and snapped them into place. Sweat dampened their work shirts when they finished.

    “To your liking, ma’am?” Only the black man spoke to her. He had an angular jaw and deep brown eyes. Clay-smooth skin. He might have only been a few years older than her.

    Crow nodded and thanked him.

    Installing the new panes took days; she tried not to bother the men, and busied herself hauling her parents’ things to the dump. She left the old windowpanes stacked like firewood beside her house. When the work was complete, she stood before the blue window. The glass rendered the sky and Reformed Church nearly the same shade.

    If she was going to stay there, she needed to do more. Crow paced around the house, tinkering here, fiddling there. She always felt warm, even feverish, walking out into the yard in just her bare feet. She was on the porch, scrubbing the men’s fingerprints from her new windows when three boys on bicycles rode by, reflectors shining. Their baskets were filled with dust-dulled green glass
Crow called to them. “I’ll pay you two rand each for those bottles. Three if you scrub them first.”

And they did, and they brought more each day, holding out their grubby hands for the money, until the afternoon they approached with their mother.

She was red-faced, thick-armed in a cream house dress. “I don’t want my boys over here. You understand?”

“They were helping me with some work,” Crow explained. “For a few rand.”

Her eyes narrowed. “I know what kind of people you have over here working for you, and I don’t want my boys over here.” “I don’t know what you’re talking about! I live here alone!”

Crow stomped off the porch and slammed the door behind her. Glass rattled in her wake.

She pried the house’s only mirror from the medicine cabinet, pulling until her nails were broken and bleeding, and finally bending the hinges with a pair of pliers. Crow stretched to hang it, sweat running down her back from hoisting the glass.

There. The window panes’ light rebounded off the mirror and filled the front room with more transparent color.

When Crow passed by, she could only glimpse the wisps of hair at the crown of her head.

She woke with a start to the crash of breaking glass.

The woman had been right. She shouldn’t have let him in her home. She’d heard, of course, about bullets fired through the windows of those who dared to speak, like Helen Roberts, imprisoned in her own home for leading the women’s protest in Pretoria.

Not that Crow would ever be so bold.

Her mirror, not her window, had broken into heavy shards on the floor.

In the sun’s first rays, Crow glued the jagged pieces back onto the wall. The cracks webbed her face, carved her reflected cheeks. And somehow, she liked it better that way.

She hung every slice of the broken mirror on her wall, and then she went to a dusty antique shop and bought more framed ovals. All day she would work, breaking the bottles and the mirrors, cleaving the shards to the walls with thick, noxious glue.

She broke some of the glass with her father’s hammer, some with an old rolling pin. Some she smashed against the floorboards.

Every morning she would find that the glass had fallen, splashed across her floor like shining puddles. She’d replace the mirrored specks until phantom snow danced before her prickly eyes. Cuts patch-worked her palms.

She arranged the broken glass into shapes. A diamond, a star, a heart.

She decided to paint, too, and brighten the rooms further. A grassy green in the bedroom, strawberry red in the halls.

Crow called the shop and asked them to deliver a ladder, so that she might paint the ceiling. The black man was back at her door. This time he was wearing overalls, and she recognized the chalky stains on the denim. Clay.

He set the ladder up where she pointed, then asked, “That all today, miss?”

Crow hesitated. “What’s your name?”
“Koos, miss.” He looked back to where his work truck hulked. “Is there a problem with the ladder?” “Do you sculpt?” “I do,” he answered. He looked at the green walls, the bird’s nest of glass wedges near her feet, anywhere but her face. “What do you make?” “Animals. Things for my daughters.” Her clumsy fingers would never be able to perform such magic, to mold the cool clay into animals, or birds, or figures. She slipped her nicked hands into her housedress pockets and asked instead, “Do you know how I might get glass to stick to these walls? Permanently?” Koos pressed a tentative finger to the wall. “Is the paint still wet?” She nodded. She heard pride in her answer. “Just added a third coat this morning.” Koos twirled a sliver carefully between two fingers, and held it to the wall. “The paint should hold it, before it dries. When it’s tacky.” The glass he’d touched winked, affixed like a gold star on a spelling chart, and did not fall.

She waited until the truck’s rattle faded. Then Crow hurled a fistful of glass at the wall where the red paint shone wetly. Some flurried to the floor, but Koos was right. Most stuck, shimmering on the paint. Pinpricks of blood dotted her palms, speckled her fingertips. She didn’t notice until she wiped the sweat from her brow and streaked her forehead red.

When all her walls glimmered with glass, Crow ordered clay. She tried not to be disappointed when one of the white men delivered it.

She sat in the red room, the windows tinting the clay scarlet as it oozed between her fingers. She tried to shape it into an owl, a woman, a horse, a church. A simple sun. The lumps remained formless. She missed the points, the satisfying breaks.

Crow splashed more glass across her walls, this time embellishing the brick outside, which she’d coated with paint. Natural shades, like pine and umber and muted gray, so that the house would resemble a shimmering mirage. She rained stones down upon bottle fragments. A snow bank of glass dust piled next to her porch and still she brought her father’s hammer down again and again, believing she could smash the splinters until they disappeared like ash in the wind. She’d rub her inflamed eyes and wonder how the specks still shone back at her, regardless of her abuse.

One morning, Crow placed a shard on her tongue, rolled it between her teeth like a piece of hay, careful of its icicle point. She was overcome with the strangest, strongest urge to chew it, break it with her teeth, feel its gritty crunch.

She spit the glass out. It shone wetly against the porch’s dull concrete. She squinted to see it. Of course that was crazy. One swallow could kill her.

Crow went to the shop herself, with a drawing in her hands. A simple flower. She could create that much. She found Koos outside, hauling wheelbarrows of bricks. Maroon dust rose and
settled around him. Crow rubbed her eyes, always itchy like she’d developed an allergy. To what? Herself?
She showed him her drawing. “Could you make this? I would pay you.”
Koos studied the paper and nodded.
“Could I watch you? How you do it?”
Koos nodded again.
The shop owner glared at them. Crow stared back until he looked away.

What Koos did was even better. He sculpted her a bouquet.

He made her owls, camels, mermaids, pyramids, peacocks. She made coffee, and they drank while she sketched and he sculpted, outside. The owls each had two heads, enormous round eyes and mouths, just like in Crow’s drawing. She had them flank the gate like palace guards. Koos coaxed a lion as big as a man out of one mound of clay. Crow made trips to the scrap yard, filling an old milk crate with cracked mirrors and busted bottles. There she scavenged the broken automobile headlights that became the lion’s gleaming eyes.
They barely spoke. Crow wore the silence like a warm shawl.

One day she came into the yard to find that Koos had made a woman.
The knife-sharp pleats of her skirt. The wisps of hair curling around her forehead.
The clay woman’s legs were bent under her, her face blooming toward the sun. Her eyes were wide and her body embraced by colored glass ribs: red, blue, green. So much more precise and clean than the dusty specks she’d crushed herself.
Helen tucked her skirt beneath her and sat down beside the sculpted woman, as though they were about to share coffee themselves.
Suddenly she realized it was her. She recognized her own face, clearer than it had been in all the mirrors and glass. Whole. Koos had sculpted her. Made her beautiful.

Crow looked away, toward the church, ever-present, watchful over them and all they’d created. She kept her eyes open despite the sun. Colors refracted and split. Thin tears squeezed between her lower lashes.

She was still sitting there when he arrived, sketchbook and mug in hand. She could hardly see his face through the mid-day glare.
“You have to go,” she said. And he did.

The next morning, a velvet curtain of blackness hung over her vision. Disoriented, Crow was unsure if she had even opened her eyes. She blinked, painfully, as though through handfuls of tossed sand.

The darkness remained. The paint, the mirrors, the sculptures, the glass, all she’d done to bring in light, now hulked in thick, melting shadows.
She held her hand to her face. She could just discern its lines through the shadowy film. She flexed her fingers, and they also ached, like skinny shards had wrestled under her skin.
Crow fumbled to the closest mirror, the one she’d ripped from the medicine cabinet, and searched for her reflection.
She was a shimmering blizzard of pin pricks. She was a shattered church window. She was glass.
How much a sleeve, before it is a sleeve, resembles a plot line. Arm measured, cloth cut, exposition begins at the wrist. A French fold, added ruffle, or lace tells us this is the story of a girl, and her mother pinning fabric. One sliver at a time pulled from her mouth, the action rises until the elbow presents a conflict, an itch, a need to move. Hold still, almost done. With the shoulder, keep it square, put it to the wheel, offer it, and it will all come together with a little shimmy.

Slide off. Careful now. The garment falls into denouement... The seamstress, alone at the kitchen table, navigates a tissue paper map of arrows, triangles, numbers, and words like *simplicity*. However, from the girl’s point of view, it is anything but simple. This is a story of scissors cleaving perfect lines through warp and filling, a satisfied, crunching sound, and a request to stand on a chair like a statue as her mother sculpts her into someone new.
Snow clings
to the fake fur of my coat
like frozen moths
as I step into the
simulated life
of the nursing home

Chords of “Somewhere
Over the Rainbow” reach me
through the damp chatter
and wallpapered flowers
and I smile at the silver-haired head
of the lady at the piano bench

I am back now to a child
listening to my father
practice Mozart’s Sonata’s
scales and arpeggios—
magical incantations
that keep night monsters at bay
Nesting my head
under the cocoon
of a cotton sheet’s
pink and yellow daisies,
I let my eyelids close
and drift easily
to a safe sleep, resting
my young body
for tomorrow’s play

Today, the piano player
once again regurgitates
an old handful
of lesson-book measures,
her fingers stuck
on about 45 seconds
of her younger life, maybe

around the time that Europe burned
and she, a sliver of a girl,
freckled and fragile,
turned her head away
from the radio news and burned
into the crevices of her brain
these notes

that now break
the room like a saw,
splitting it into those
who will walk back into the snow
and those whose bodies
will cleave to the cold

McCleave
Tim Skeen

I caught this image of Ronald McDonalds after the clown was fired as the corporate spokesclown. Their hands are tied as if for a trip to the gulag. Set them free!
And I add you to this list: you, shining like silver in a riverbed, your defenses down, a smile playing on your lips and me, here, lucky enough to see it.

There is simple beauty in this, although you would deny it: you, stretching like a cat in a sliver of winter sunshine.

You are often untamed, afraid of what is to come, but today you are calm, and I will crouch, frozen, my hand outstretched for hours, if necessary.

As I grow older, there are moments you cannot measure. I find: small ones that creep, that cleave

The boy I lost at 18 holding his cousin, my nephew’s hand sneaking into mine unbidden, a frog leaping in tall grass and laughter melting into tears.
The Measure of a Woman III
C.B. Auder

More than a century after these photos were taken, a woman’s worth to society—her measure of success—is still troublingly dependent upon reactions to her physical appearance. I wanted to express the ways in which a person’s identity becomes fractured and altered due to external pressures and expectations. I also wanted to show the many beautiful moods and facets that make up any one personality. I was pleasantly surprised to notice the white area in the center is the letter “I”; that was a happy accident.

Watching Casablanca at Oma and Opa’s House
Melissa Fite Johnson

At 5:00 p.m., my grandfather wanted dinner, my grandmother a swim. He said, My stomach! She said, Old man, and stomped into the bedroom.

They switched over to Dutch when fighting, then back to English, conversations like a radio station flickering out of my service area.

Oma returned in a blue bathing suit and cap. Opa sputtered as she slid through a sliver in the deck’s door, raised her arms, glorious as a peacock stretching its feathers, cleaved the water. Opa, frantic to prove he hadn’t lost, barked at me: Have you ever seen Casablanca?
I shook my head. He said,
*I thought we’d watch it before dinner.*
And we did, volume measuredly
turned up to drown out Oma’s splashes.

View of Prague Old Town from Prague Gallery of Art
Karen George

I’m interested in taking photographs that play with how we see through various frames—in this case the frame of the window within the frame of the camera—how it limits my view and yet enhances it, creating a layered effect. This photograph represents the element of “sliver,” as in the sliver of Prague’s Old Towne Square viewed through the frame of the window on the second floor of the Alfons Mucha exhibit in Prague’s Gallery of Art.
My father hasn’t worn his wedding band in thirty years. He was there the day his brother’s hand went into the machine — blood came out instead of chaff.

Two ploughmen pulling like mules is enough to cleave a finger at the second knuckle. In those days, my father had some measure of restraint, and didn’t run straight for The Four Seasons to get piss-drunk before driving home. Instead, he brought the machine back into the yard, hosed it off, and climbed inside to untwist the familial slivers of meat from the flywheel.

---

**Michael** was surprised his mother had exhausted her most potent weapon so early in her visit. “Well, then, I guess I’ll just go back to Florida,” Ilaria said. He could see from the look on her face that she, too, realized she had deployed her “change my ticket” option too soon. Michael raised an eyebrow and took a sip of his coffee, which was cold. He reminded himself to buy an insulated mug so that this wouldn’t happen again. If he opened up the desk drawer, pulled out a post-it note, and wrote, “buy insulated mug,” while muttering the words aloud, his mother would either fly into a rage and rip the paper apart, sob harder and retreat back to the guestroom, or stand in the doorway and say something like, “It’s gonna be like that?” At nearly thirty, he knew all his mother’s moves, but he couldn’t predict which one she would make.

In the past, she hadn’t demanded a ticket change until she had been at his house for at least three days. Ilaria had only arrived the night before, but a dispute with his wife Megan over some wadded-up paper towels in the sink had already prompted a
minor explosion. “You’ll have to go online and change my ticket for me,” she said. She wasn’t going to back down. Michael ran through his options. He chose to call her bluff, but would give her an out.

“Okay,” Michael said. “You know they’re going to charge you a fee.” He was trying to keep his eyes focused on his computer screen and not give her the satisfaction of showing his irritation. Ilaria took a moment to respond. “That’s fine,” she said. “I can pay it.” She paused, seeming to consider whether a follow-up was worth it. “I’ll use the money I planned to spend on your son’s Christmas presents.”

Even for Ilaria, that was low. He had hoped she would take the out. His mother had worked as the manager of a law office for twenty-five years and had enough money to both change the ticket and buy her only grandchild a Christmas present. “It’s your money, Mom,” Michael said. “Bring me your ticket and I’ll get it changed.”

Ilaria began to sob. “My own son,” she said. “My own son.” She rushed out, and within thirty seconds, Mike heard the guestroom door slam. Slamming a door in this house wasn’t dramatic since the doors were hollow and everything was carpeted; all you got was a whoosh like air being sucked into a vacuum nozzle.

This was one of the nicer parsonages that Michael and Megan had lived in; it had a guestroom and a second bathroom, but when his mother came to visit, he wished it didn’t have room to for a home office. Michael stood and shut the French doors, but Ilaria had already reopened the door to the guestroom so he could hear her weeping. Michael was fairly sure that she was standing just to the side of the doorframe for better effect.

Megan had gone out to drop their son Clifford at preschool, and Michael doubted she would be back soon. When Ilaria was in town, Megan found ways to stay out of the house. She invented errands, offering to take furniture and broken appliances to the dump for parishioners and trying to start a parish group to hold baby showers for single moms. Michael had asked her to stop. “You don’t want me to help people in need?” Megan had asked.

Michael had hated her then for having plausible deniability on her side. That was the sort of thing his mother would say. “You think my mom doesn’t notice that you are off doing everything you can to avoid her?” he had asked. He had brought up the example of Saint Therese intentionally spending her time with a nun who she couldn’t stand. Surely, Megan would appreciate the way he was holding her to a high standard.

“We’re Lutheran,” Megan had said. “And I’m not a nun; I’m your wife.”

Michael tried a different route. “She just needs patience and compassion,” he said. “You’re a patient and compassionate person.”

“I have limits, Mike.”

In seminary, Mike had been adamant about not using his sermons to push agendas, but lately he couldn’t help himself. Last Sunday, he had preached about setting forth a table in the presence of one’s enemies even though that Psalm hadn’t been part of the lectionary. He had tied it to another reading, but he had felt, standing behind the pulpit, that it wasn’t a strong sermon. This Sunday’s Old Testament passage came from the second chapter of Genesis: the one about how a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife. The New Revised
Standard Version used the word “cling” and not “cleave,” but he enjoyed preaching with the antiquated “cleave” in all its unwavering loyalty. He had written a few paragraphs about how the passage didn’t mean abandoning your parents; he tried to say something about not treating difficult people as disposable. Already, he could tell this was a forced sermon filled with his own troubles rather than the Holy Spirit.

This was not who he wanted to be as a pastor, but Megan had started taking these courses with the ecumenical pastors’ wives group, and all of a sudden she was trying to be assertive and set boundaries, which didn’t sound generous. He had picked up one of her worksheets from the counter last month and tried to make a joke. “Who is leading this? The Unitarians?” Megan had not laughed. Later that week, she had said no to organizing the craft bazaar and now she was telling his mother not to leave messes in the kitchen.

“Can you just put up with it while she’s here?” Michael had asked that morning after Ilaria came into the dining room in tears. “Just don’t give her reasons to be upset.”

Megan had stared at him. He had said this to her before. Michael was certain a more generous attitude on Megan’s part would solve the problem. “So, she gets to do whatever she wants, and I am supposed to ignore it?”

“Just turn the other cheek,” Mike said.

Megan had mumbled something about turning her cheeks until her head spun.

Michael selected all the text from his document and hit delete. He could hear Ilaria wailing, wanting him to get up from his computer and acknowledge how wronged she was. Michael took off his glasses and rubbed his eyes. He shut his computer and tossed it into his backpack with his annotated Bible.

“I’m going to go to the church, Mom,” he called. He stood at the end of the hall, not wanting to come nearer. He heard Ilaria snort back some snort.

She came out into the hall and said, “If you had even a sliver of love for me, you would make her apologize.” She sniffled between words, but her voice rose into a yell by end of the sentence.

“We’ll talk about this later, Mom,” he said. He hoped he would come home and discover she had decided to be over it.

*

Ilaria went back to the guestroom and slammed the door, though it just made a whoosh and a click, like someone was trying to mute her rage. Through the blinds, she watched Michael walking up the street. He walked like his father had: too casually, letting his hips swing. His father had been the Lutheran; she had just gone along with it. When Michael came back from college and told her he was switching his major to theology, she had tried to talk him out of it. She’d had high hopes for him. She had never hoped for this: borrowed houses with forty-year-old appliances, the baby he had too young, and the wife he had married too soon. The wife. If he were anything other than a minister, he could divorce her. There was a window when he could have, while he was still in seminary. Her son liked to rescue people, and most of his girlfriends had been the equivalent of shelter cats—the kind with mange and half a tail.

Megan had grown up poor and probably thought that Michael was a way out. The baby was cute; still, Megan had gone ahead and let herself get pregnant just six months into marriage. Poor
Some mornings, lingering over her tea, Ilaria daydreamed about her own funeral, and Michael and Megan at the podium talking about how they wished they had been kinder before her death. When she heard the backdoor open, she mumbled under her breath. She wanted to get out unseen. Maybe Michael had come back to apologize. She heard the fridge opening and closing, then the sound of the radio, and Megan singing along. Megan didn’t have a pretty singing voice; she had a fragile voice that hit a few notes, but she seemed to like the sound of it. Michael’s father had the same annoying trait; he used to sing to himself when he thought no one was around, but he did a lot of things thinking no one was around.

Ilaria remade the guestroom bed. Megan had made it sloppily, as she did everything, but Ilaria tucked the sheet and blanket under the mattress up to the pillows so her effort would not be lost on Megan when she came to get the sheets. That morning, the girl had yelled at her over some paper towels in the sink, which was absolute nonsense, since she was just trying to clean girls did that sometimes, trapped good men with babies.

For a week or so after Ilaria found out about the pregnancy, she had hoped they would lose it. She felt bad about that, but she could hardly be happy about the prospect of a grandchild under those circumstances. “You’re twenty-five years old and you could still do something with your life,” Ilaria had told Michael.

“I’m already doing enough with my life, Mom,” Michael had said.

After lots of thought, Ilaria decided she needed to be more generous than she imagined she could be. Standing in her kitchen, looking out at the palm trees in the courtyard, she had called when she knew Michael wouldn’t be at home. “You don’t have be burdened with this child,” Ilaria had said. “Let me take it, and I’ll raise it. I’ll pay for everything.”

Instead of being grateful, the girl had overreacted, as she often did. “Oh, stop crying,” Ilaria had said. “You can have more children later on.” Ilaria thought of her tidy condo overrun with children’s toys and wondered how the girl hadn’t seen what she would be sacrificing for her. Ilaria had since read several articles about cultures where it was normal for a daughter-in-law to give up her children to their grandmother. If her own mother-in-law had made her that offer when she was younger, she would have taken it.

For now, Ilaria was down to two choices: she could go cook something fancy to surprise everyone, and pretend nothing had happened, or she could be gone when her son came back. She wouldn’t take long to repack. The suitcase was new, the color of orange saltwater taffy. She had bought it especially for this trip.

She had brought some clothes for Clifford and a pair of coral earrings for Megan. The earrings had been a buy-one-get-one-free deal, and these were the free pair, which made Ilaria smile.

Leaving them on the kitchen counter with a bow would be the best move, she decided. She had brought curling ribbon with her, since she doubted Megan thought to keep such things around. On the plane, she would sit and imagine Megan finding them and feeling overcome with regret that she could have been so cruel to someone who would bring her such a gift.

She determined to pack everything up and take a cab to the airport. The airline would probably change the ticket, and if not, she could get a hotel room (unlike Megan, Ilaria had earned her own money). She liked the idea of Michael rushing to the airport and begging her to stay. That would be even better than the, “Please, Mom, we want you to stay,” that she had heard before.

When she heard the backdoor open, she mumbled under her breath. She wanted to get out unseen. Maybe Michael had come back to apologize. She heard the fridge opening and closing, then the sound of the radio, and Megan singing along. Megan didn’t have a pretty singing voice; she had a fragile voice that hit a few notes, but she seemed to like the sound of it. Michael’s father had the same annoying trait; he used to sing to himself when he thought no one was around, but he did a lot of things thinking no one was around.

Ilaria remade the guestroom bed. Megan had made it sloppily, as she did everything, but Ilaria tucked the sheet and blanket under the mattress up to the pillows so her effort would not be lost on Megan when she came to get the sheets. That morning, the girl had yelled at her over some paper towels in the sink, which was absolute nonsense, since she was just trying to clean
Ilaria zipped her suitcase shut and listened to the satisfactory snap of the lock.

* 

Megan had gone to the grocery store to pick up things to make a chicken potpie, a dish she reliably could make well. That morning, after dropping off Clifford, she had driven around and ended up by the river. She parked in view of a pair of mergansers on the shoreline, folded her hands on the steering wheel, and tried to pray.

She prayed to be more generous with Ilaria, but she knew in her heart that she didn’t actually want that; God knew that, so she unclasped her hands and watched the ducks groom themselves while a Jack-in-the-Box cup bobbed in the reeds.

The worst part about that morning was that she hadn’t been surprised Mike had wanted her to apologize to Ilaria. Sometimes, driving around and churning Mike’s words around in her head, she despised him. Everyone had those thoughts occasionally, but sometimes the feeling seemed so strong, she wondered if they were a message from God. She had read once that the strongest desires of your heart were what God wanted from you, and she hated herself when her strongest desire seemed to be yelling at her to run.

Years ago, when Ilaria called and offered to take their child, Mike had not believed Megan. “You must have misunderstood,” Mike had said. At Megan’s behest, he had called up Ilaria and asked if she had really said that. “She said she would take him for weekends so we could have breaks,” he had told her. “You are determined to see the worst in her.” From then on, Megan had known that her husband would always believe his mother over her.

Megan found the outdated parsonage kitchen comforting; she even liked cooking in it. Growing up, she had lived in apartments with white cabinets and white linoleum, anonymous places for anonymous people to pass through. This kitchen, with wood-veneered cabinets and old gold linoleum seemed like the kitchens people were supposed to have.

Ilaria was home, she knew, but she doubted she would emerge after this morning’s explosion. Megan preferred her confined to the guestroom.

That morning, Megan, in the midst of making Clifford’s oatmeal, had asked Ilaria to not put trash in the sink. Megan had pointed to some wadded-up paper towels Ilaria had dropped on top of the dishes. She had done this at their previous house as well, and Megan had dutifully picked cold wads of paper towels out of the sink each time, hoping Ilaria would get the hint.

“I wipe your counters down because I like a clean kitchen,” Ilaria had said.

The next thing Megan knew, Ilaria was in the dining room where Mike was trying to have coffee. Megan had stayed in the kitchen, but she could hear her mother-in-law telling Mike that he needed to make her apologize. Mike had come into the kitchen, collar on, and asked Megan to say she was sorry.

“What for, Mike? Was I rude?” Megan asked, pouring milk and sprinkling cinnamon on Clifford’s oatmeal.

Mike had sighed and said he needed to work on his sermon. Megan had said she needed to get Clifford ready.

As she cooked, Megan could hear Ilaria fumbling around down
the hall in the guestroom. She cut a stick of butter into cubes and readied some water in a cup.

Over the past five years, Megan had tried to figure out Ilaria. She had tried focusing on Ilaria in prayer, imagining her loneliness and insecurity, but she hadn’t had success. She meditated on how hard it must have been for Ilaria after her husband walked out on her, and how it must have felt when she found out he had died, but the thought crept in that maybe he just wanted to get away from her.

Whenever Megan had a problem with Ilaria, though, Mike—who became Michael around Ilaria—stopped being her husband and turned into her pastor, urging her to be the better person. Megan had tried different theories: Ilaria was sent to test the limits of her charity, her patience, her ability to forgive. Usually, though, Megan just thought Ilaria was a bitch.

When Mike and Megan went to Ilaria’s condo in Florida to announce their engagement, Ilaria had looked at Mike, refusing to make eye contact with Megan, and said, “Are you sure you want this?” In their wedding photos, Ilaria stood to the side, chin-up, stern as a Confederate Soldier posing for a daguerreotype.

Whenever Ilaria’s name came up, Megan was reminded that she herself was neither generous nor good; she was someone who, handed Ilaria’s slights big and small, wadded them together into a bigger and bigger grudge that had displaced all her goodness. She tried to sing along to the radio so she wouldn’t hear her own thoughts, but they kept marching in their ugly processional.

“You don’t measure?” Ilaria said. Megan jumped, nearly sending the bowl onto the floor. Ilaria stood in the kitchen door in her Madras capris, her taffy-colored suitcase sitting behind her legs.

Megan reached her fingers into the bowl of cold butter and smashed it together with the flour. “I’ve made this so many times,” she said. Megan wanted to say something else, but held her tongue.

“You’re never going to be a good cook if you don’t measure,” Ilaria said.

Megan turned around and continued to press the flour into the butter.

“I’m leaving soon,” Ilaria said. Megan stayed quiet. Ilaria had said this on her last visit. The catalyst that time had been that Clifford wasn’t wearing an outfit she had given him. “I’m all packed. I just need to call a taxi to the airport.” This time, Ilaria seemed to be taking her own threat seriously.

Megan poured the water onto the butter and flour and mixed it until it formed a stiff dough. “Just let me just finish up and I can drive you,” Megan said.

Ilaria stared at her with eyes that looked like pools of egg custard with raisins floating in the center. “I wouldn’t want to put you out,” she said.

Megan pressed the dough into a neat ball and wrapped it in wax paper. “It’s okay,” she said. She knew she shouldn’t feel gleeful about this turn of events, but her heart raced. She scrubbed the buttery film from her hands and went down the steps to put on her shoes. Mike wouldn’t like this, but she would be able to deny having done anything wrong. “Your mother said she needed a ride, so I helped her out,” she would say.

If Ilaria was going to leave, Megan was determined that she could end things on a friendly note. She would apologize in the car and maybe say she had been too blunt. Maybe if she explained
about assertiveness, and how she was new to it and didn’t quite know how to use it yet, Ilaria would understand. When she came back into the kitchen, Ilaria was standing in the middle of the room, arms at her sides.

Megan squeezed past her. “I’ll just clean up quickly,” she said. She got a rag from the drawer and went to wet it, but saw a wad of paper towels floating in the mixing bowl she had used just used to make dough. Megan watched it, still in motion from being tossed into the water, the edges swirling like fish fins as it sank.

“How much would it cost for you to leave my son?” Ilaria said.

Megan continued to stare into the sink.

“I have ten thousand dollars I can give you now, and fifteen thousand more in a retirement account you can have once the divorce goes through,” Ilaria said.

Megan reached her thumb and forefinger into the bowl and pulled out the wad of paper towels. She held it up so the cold water dripped on the old-gold linoleum.

“With twenty-five thousand dollars, you could make a fresh start.”

Megan dropped the wad of paper towels back into the sink. She craned her neck to look out the window. She wanted Mike to burst in right then, to come bounding up the stairs, and tell Ilaria he had heard every word she had said and that he was shocked. Megan knew, of course, that when she told Mike this news, he would find a way around it; Ilaria would say that she had only offered them some money as a gift, or, more likely, she would deny ever having said it, and Mike would believe her. She imagined Mike coming into their bedroom and telling her that she had just misunderstood, again. He would wonder aloud, as he had in the past, how someone could teach Sunday school classes about forgiveness and still have no room in her heart to be kind to a lonely old woman. Megan pushed past Ilaria to get out of the kitchen.

“Wait, wait,” Ilaria said. “Look what I got for you!”

Ilaria laid the taffy-colored suitcase on the kitchen floor and unzipped it. She held out the white cardboard earring box tied up with curling ribbon. “You wouldn’t be so cruel as to make me leave. Please, please, don’t make me change my ticket. You wouldn’t be so heartless.” She flapped the white box at Megan, making it rattle as she pushed it towards her. Megan wondered if Ilaria believed that whatever was in the box would make her forget what she had just asked her to do.

“I’ll drive you to the airport now,” Megan said. Ilaria still held out the box like she was trying to coax a cat down from a tree with treats. Megan headed down the steps to the back door, keys jangling in her fist, and let the aluminum screen door slam shut behind her as she walked out to the car.
Shatter
Caitlin Crowley

‘Shatter’ captures a winter tree captured in the panes of a church window. The tree is distorted and broken by the many windows, the branches appearing cleaved by glass panes on slightly different angles. The window takes on a stained glass appearance.

This image was shot on silver emulsion medium format (6x4.5cm) film.

SiJo: Silver of Light
JBMulligan

A sliver of light can cleave the darkest room. The door holds a blade. A clerk at his desk watches the minute hand execute each hour. We measure out our lives with a leaky cup. We walk in puddles.
Some theater student waited to speak last. I hardly knew Laura, his soliloquy began. She was David’s mother, nothing more.

He dabbed at his eyes with a sliver of something white. After hearing your stories, I’d give anything for one of my own.

He’d measured each word to cleave tears from this audience—a symphony of blowing noses. Grandstander.

If Laura and I had seen him together at someone else’s funeral, she would’ve sworn by his sincerity, jabbed me with her elbow for being cynical.

“Songs from Sheffield, No. 1” comes from a series celebrating the survival of the handmade scissors craft in Sheffield, once a thriving center of manufacturing in England. The series is an exploration through the passage from drafted design through final, realized construction. Each illustration is a mixed media piece, created with graphite and digital coloring, and stands on its own.

Like many metal-based handcraft techniques, constructing scissors involves painstaking Measure, honing in exacting Slivers, but also forceful movements to Cleave the material into a balanced, delicate design.
before it shrinks to a sliver of itself, an ungrown twin, thin enough to quake, to quiver. I cleave to this image of self, a not self, but a maquette all dressed up to deliver.

If I were to measure myself eye to eye, I would find myself asymmetrical. Even now I mold my own casket, or rather map the back of my head. A casket is a hexagon but not in the same way that tiles of honeycomb, or human torsos with hands teapotted out from hip to shoulder, are hexagons. Caskets are different. They measure the body only as a courtesy.
ON Rosh Hashanah we Jews perform Tashlich. We carry our sins to the water, to be rid of them, to begin the new year fresh. We take bread and throw it into flowing water, preferably with fish, because fish have no eyelids and are thus immune to the evil eye as they sliver through the waters. Many people shake out their pockets, to be quit of any lingering linty sins hiding near our hips.

I am Jewish and also a daughter of the Orisha Yemaya, the Great Mother, Our Lady of the Seas, and so I take myself to the ocean for my Tashlich. I am a writer and recycler so I write my sins onto used scraps of paper and toss toward the waves, hoping the tide will carry them out. Often the tides bring them back and there I am, on a beach littered with my sins for anyone to read. I decide to write on the sand what I want Yemaya to take from me. I wait by the waters until they are removed, made into nutrients for any water creature, lidded or not.

And then I wait until the waves recede, wade into the water, then up a bit onto the beach, lean down to the ground, Yemaya at my back, and write on sand what I want her to bring me in the coming year. Peace. Creativity. Self-love. As Yemaya tickles my ankles, pulls at my knees, reminding me of her force, I feel the endless measure of in and out, back and forth, call and response. I cleave to the land as Yemaya reminds me from whence we all come, just as she did the year we went to Point Reyes National Seashore for Tashlich.

There on the beach, waiting for the tides to take them away, were written the words: War. Racism. Injustice. Rape. Who had written it? No one was near; people playing far away had no interest in us or the words on sand. I so wanted to find others of my tribe, who Tashlich in this way. Yemaya whispered into my seashell ears: We are everywhere.
Onsen
Libby Maxey

What have we done? We came away to be together in a winter mountain’s mouth by night, to talk with all the urgency of people cooking in the same small pot. The slippery stone, the clouded liquor bronzed with slivers of the roiling underground, my silver ring—I didn’t think, I saw too late—so quickly tarnished sulfur brown. What is the measure of this water, sold to soothe and heal and bond by naked shock? Our cleaving is the island’s balance; old and trembling on its bed of molten rock, it sighs its someday shifts through steaming veins. We dry each other, rub away the stains.
Contributors

C. B. Auder is the Associate Editor at freezeframefiction.com and has had work published in Jersey Devil Press and A cappella Zoo.

Cimarron Burt is a poet/educator pursuing her M.F.A. in southern Minnesota. Her poetry has appeared in the Corvus Review, A Quiet Courage, and The Upper Mississippi Harvest. She self-publishes regularly on Tumblr and Wordpress as “Literary Accidents.”

Peter Burzynski is a third-year PhD student in and Graduate Assistant Coordinator of Creative Writing-Poetry at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He holds a B.A. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, a M.F.A. in Poetry from The New School University, and a M.A. in Polish Literature from Columbia University. In between his studies, he has worked as a chef in New York City and Milwaukee. In addition, he works as a Teaching Assistant and an Assistant Editor for the cream city review. My poetry has appeared or is forthcoming from The Best American Poetry Blog, Thin Air, Prick of the Spindle, Working Stiff, Thrush Poetry Review, Your Impossible Voice, RHINO, and Forklift Ohio, amongst others.

Adina Cassal has resided in the Washington, DC area all her adult life. Before that, she lived in six countries and acquired a love of languages, music and cats. She works providing human services to people she deeply respects. She has been published in The Commonline Journal and Alimentum.
**Nico Cassanetti** graduated from The New School with a degree in creative writing, and is currently pursuing an MFA at Florida Atlantic University in the same. She has written for *The A3 Review, Proximity Magazine, Abramsbooks.com, TheFasterTimes.com,* and reviewed great literary works on index cards for her staff picks at an independent bookstore in Brooklyn. She lives and works in South Florida, but please don’t hold that against her.

**Johnson Cheu** has poetry and essays which have appeared widely, in *North American Review, Red River Review,* and *Screaming Monkeys: Critiques of Asian American Images*. He is the editor of the scholarly collection Diversity in Disney Films and teaches at Michigan State University.

**Caitlin Crowley** is a film and darkroom photographer based out of Fort Wayne, Indiana. Caitlin graduated from the University of Saint Francis with a degree in Studio Art. Caitlin exhibits artwork in Indiana and Wisconsin, and online. In addition to photography, Caitlin enjoys painting, running, roller derby, and cooking new foods.

**Benjamin Duke** received his MFA at the Maryland Institute College of Art, Hoffberger School of Painting in 2006. He has been teaching painting and drawing at Michigan State University since 2006 and has had numerous Solo, and Group shows at the national and international level including the Delaware Center for Contemporary Art, “Weak Painting Group,” exhibitions at The Kuandu Museum of Fine Art in Taipei and Da Xiang Art Space in Taichung City, Taiwan, and Several Solo exhibitions at Ann Nathan Gallery in Chicago. Duke has also been awarded international residencies at Bamboo Curtain Studios, The Kuandu Museum of Fine Art at Taipei National University of the Arts, and the Vermont Studio Center.

**Amy Durant** lives in upstate New York and works as the Digital Editor for an award-winning daily newspaper. She has a Bachelor’s Degree in Creative Writing from Binghamton University and has been previously published in places such as *Rose Red Review, 200 Proof Magazine, Ascent Aspirations* and *jmww magazine*. Her book “Out of True” was published in 2012 and she recently won first place for her poem “Sagamore” in the 2015 North Country Writers Contest.

**Ronald Lawrence Dzerigian** resides in small farming community just outside Fresno, California, with his wife and two daughters. He received the C.G. Hanzlceck Fellowship while working on his MFA at California State University Fresno and has been a two-time recipient of the Academy of American Poets’ Ernesto Trejo Memorial Prize in 2014/15.

**Jennifer Fenn** has fiction that’s been published in *Drunk Monkeys, THEMA, The Writing Disorder* and *Fiddleblack*. Her essays have appeared in *Bitch, Education Week* and *Teacher*. She is a graduate of Rosemont College’s MFA program and lives with her husband and daughter. She is also an avid reader and runner.

**Melissa Fite Johnson** is the author of *While the Kettle’s On* (Little Balkans Press, 2015), which won the Nelson Poetry Book Award. She was the featured poet in the Fall 2015 issue of *The KLC Journal*. Individual poems have appeared or are forthcoming in such publications as *I-70 Review, Rust + Moth, Broadside Press, Inscape Magazine, The Invisible Bear, Bear Review, Red Paint Hill Journal, The New Verse News,* and *velvet-tail*. Melissa and her husband, Marc, live in Kansas, where she teaches English. For more, visit melissafitejohnson.com.
Karen George is the author of Into the Heartland (Finishing Line Press, 2011), Inner Passage (Red Bird Chapbooks, 2014), Swim Your Way Back (Dos Madres Press, 2014), The Seed of Me (Finishing Line Press, 2015), and The Fire Circle (Blue Lyra Press, 2016), has work published in Naugatuck River Review, Adirondack Review, Louisville Review, Memoir, and Still. She’s received grants from Kentucky Foundation for Women and Kentucky Arts Council, reviews poetry at Poetry Matters, and is fiction editor of the journal Waypoints.

Van Hong is an illustrator and printmaker based in New York. Her work focuses on storytelling and finding narrative drama in moments of stillness, at times resulting in images that coexist as sequential art. She currently creates soccer illustrations in conjunction with Wundergol Art, an artist collective and exhibition for which she also curates.

Libby Maxey has a master’s degree in Medieval Studies and works as a freelance editor. She is part of the staff at the online journal Literary Mama, which has also published her poetry. Other work has appeared in The Mom Egg Review, Brain of Forgetting, Off the Coast and Tule Review.

Mary McCarthy has always been a writer but spent most of her working life as a Registered Nurse, far from the academic and literary communities. She has had publications in many literary print and online journals, and greatly enjoys the online communities of poets she has only recently discovered.

Mary McGovern has enjoyed writing for years. She teaches yoga and English, has a B.A. in Psychology and English from the University of Massachusetts, is 49 years old, and recently moved to the Austrian Alps from Paris, France. This is Mary’s first publication.

JBMulligan has had poems and stories in several hundred magazines over the past 40 years, has had two chapbooks published: The Stations of the Cross and THIS WAY TO THE EGRESS, and two e-books, The City Of Now And Then, and A Book of Psalms. He has appeared in several anthologies, among them, Inside/Out: A Gathering Of Poets; The Irreal Reader (Cafe Irreal); and multiple volumes of Reflections on a Blue Planet.

Joshua Roark grew up all over as a military brat, and is now a teacher and writer living in Los Angeles with his wife Jo. He is currently enrolled in the MFA program at Antioch University.

Chris Roberts is Dead Clown Art. He is a full-time freelance artist, using mixed media and found objects to create his visual nonsense. Chris has made art for Another Sky Press, Orange Alert Press, Dog Horn Publishing, Black Coffee Press, Kelp Queen Press, PS Publishing and ChiZine Publications; for authors Will Elliott, Andy Duncan, Tobias Seamon, Shimon Adaf, Seb Doubinsky, Ray Bradbury, Kaaron Warren and Helen Marshall. He was nominated for a 2013 World Fantasy Award in the Artist category.
Justin Rogers is a poet, educator, coach and venue owner from the city of Detroit, Michigan. Rogers is an advocate for literacy among inner-city youth, and the amplification of Black voices. Rogers has poems published or forthcoming in First Literary Review, undr_scrawling, and Eunoia Review to name a few. He continues to tour across country, mentor up and coming writers, and teach youth poetry with InsideOut Literary Arts Project.

Barbara Ruth was a recipient of a California Arts Council Artist in Residence grant at the Jewish Community Center of San Diego, CA., where she taught creative writing to people aged six through 86. She also was a poet-teacher and San Diego Area Coordinator of California Poets In the Schools. She wrote and performed with Mothertongue Readers’ Theater in San Francisco and Wry Crips Disabled Women’s Theater in Alameda County, CA. She is resident poet of Fabled Asp, a disabled lesbians storytelling and arts project. Her photography, memoirs, fiction and essays have appeared extensively in literary, gay, feminist and disability anthologies and journals. In 2014 she was a featured writer-activist at the biannual national gathering of Old Lesbians Organizing for Change. She lives in San Jose, CA.

Ruth Sabath-Rosenthal is a New York poet, well published in literary journals and poetry anthologies throughout the U.S. and, also, internationally. In October 2006, her poem “on yet another birthday” was nominated for a Pushcart prize. Ruth has five books of poetry available for purchase on Amazon.com: “Facing Home” (a chapbook) -- “Facing Home and beyond” -- “little, but by no means small” -- “Food: Nature vs Nurture” and “Gone, but Not Easily Forgotten.”

Michelle Seaman is a writer living in Irvington, New York. In addition to composing poetry, she is working on her first novel, keeping a blog of her travels, and collaborating with musicians to combine poetry with music.

Tim Skeen is the author of two books of poetry, Kentucky Swami, and Risk. He is the Coordinator of the MFA in Creative Writing at Fresno State, and in the past has been published in 3Elements Review.

Allison Thorpe is a writer from Lexington, KY. A Pushcart nominee, she has appeared in such journals as Freshwater, Appalachian Heritage, The Citron Review, South85 Journal, Scapegoat Review, Gingerbread House, The Homestead Review, and Third Wednesday.

Sarah Wylder Deshpande lives in Oregon with her husband and son. She holds an MFA from the University of Maryland. Her fiction has appeared in Dunes Review and Tammy Journal and her poetry is forthcoming in Fire Tetrahedron. She is currently working on a novel.
Submission due dates are October 31, January 31, April 30, and July 31, for issues forthcoming January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1, respectively, unless otherwise noted on our website.

There is no minimum word count, but please keep your fiction and nonfiction submissions under 3,500 words. Poems must be under two typed pages.

It is equally important that all three elements given for the specific submission period be included within your story or poem. Artists and photographers are only required to represent one out of the three elements.

For multiple submissions, fiction is capped at no more than two stories per submission period. Poems are limited to five per submission period. In the event your material is accepted in another publication, we request that you withdraw your submission from 3Elements Review should you decide to publish your piece elsewhere.

Visit www.3ElementsReview.com for more info.

NEXT UP
Issue No. 11
Summer 2016

3Elements:
Labyrinth, Trace, Reflex

Due April 30, 2016

Staff - 3Elements Review

Mikaela Shea is in her thesis hours of her MFA at Columbia College Chicago and was recently a writer-in-residence at Ragdale Foundation. She has published stories in Midwestern Gothic, Copperfield Review, Waypoints Magazine, Foliate Oak, Hypertext Magazine, Paragraph Planet, Vagina: The Zine, Columbia College's annual Story Week Reader, as well as a children's book at the State Historical Society of Iowa. Mikaela is currently writing a novel and is Editor-in-Chief of 3Elements Review. @mikaelashea.

C.J. Matthews is a writing teacher from Des Moines, Iowa. She adores traveling, elegant food, bold red wine, and her two little dogs, Hercules and Hucklebee. Her recent work can be read in Spoilage Magazine, Cahoodaloodaling, and the Kind of a Hurricane Press anthology In Gilded Frame.

Parker Stockman is a writer, college writing instructor, and storyteller. He tells personal narratives with 2nd Story in Chicago, a monthly live literature event, and is featured on their website. Currently finishing his thesis for his MFA in Creative Writing—Fiction at Columbia College Chicago, he is at work on a novel. He writes a blog for his school's program and works as a writing tutor. Parker plays rugby with and is the Vice President of Recruiting for the Chicago Dragons Rugby Football Club. He is excited to be part of the 3Elements family and hopes you enjoy the journal as much as he enjoys working on it.
Marlon Fowler is a Des Moines–based designer and web developer for 3Elements Review. He received his bachelor’s degree in Journalism with a major in Advertising from Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. Marlon enjoys all things technology, making websites “do things,” running, reading nonfiction, sports, movies, video games, and Chicago food. He would really like to learn PHP and get back to Paris. You can check out Marlon’s portfolio at www.marlonfowler.com.

Kelly Roberts received a BA in English from the University of Iowa. After years of writing creative nonfiction, she decided to give fiction a go. Kelly lives in Iowa with her adoring husband, clever daughter and rescued wire fox terrier. By day she works in Human Resources, which provides her with more writing material than she could ever hope for. Cooking, reading and popping bubble wrap—one bubble, one row at a time—are her passions. Her work has appeared in Lunch Ticket.

Megan Collins received an MFA in Creative Writing from Boston University. She teaches creative writing at the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts, as well as literature at Central Connecticut State University. Her work has appeared in many literary journals, including Compose, Linebreak, Off the Coast, and Rattle. When not writing or teaching, Megan enjoys reading, watching The Ellen DeGeneres Show, collecting miniature items, eating cupcakes, going on Netflix binges, and spending time with her husband, Marc, and her golden retriever, Maisy. Check out Megan’s work on her website, megan-collins.com.

James A. H. White is an emerging writer completing his MFA in Poetry at Florida Atlantic University. He is a winner of the 2014 AWP Intro Journals Project award in Poetry and 2016 Pushcart Prize nominee. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in Colorado Review, Gertrude, Hermeneutic Chaos, Tahoma Literary Review, and DIAGRAM, among others. His chapbook hiku [pull] is forthcoming from Porkbelly Press.

Katherine Davis earned an MFA in fiction from the University of Maryland and a PhD from the University of Tennessee. Her most recent work appears in Gravel and in Broad River Review, and she won Gigantic Sequins’ 2014 Flash Fiction Contest. Currently, she is living in Wisconsin with a small flock of cockatiels and is completing her first novel.

Carol Roh Spaulding is co–author, with Kay Fenton Smith, of Zakery’s Bridge: Children’s Journeys From Around the World to Iowa (2011). A Professor of English at Drake University, Spaulding teaches courses in writing and American literature. She is the author of several award–winning short stories, including a Pushcart Prize, best story of the year in Ploughshares, the Glimmer Train Fiction Open, and the Katherine Anne Porter Prize for Fiction. Her new novel, Helen Button, tells the story of avant–garde writer Gertrude Stein and her life in Central France during World War II. Spaulding is also director of the newly–established Drake University Community Press. The Press produces attractive full–color, illustrated editions serving a community readership while providing students with practical knowledge of book editing and production using a cross–disciplinary and collaborative focus. She lives in Des Moines, IA with her husband, Tim, and son Jonah.
End