

THE LOOKOUT



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THE LOOKOUT

A Journal of Literature and the Arts

by the students of
Texas A&M University-Central Texas

Volume 5 | Spring 2018



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Contents

THE LOOKOUT

Volume 5 | Spring 2018

Poetry

HEATHER CHANDLER	Wisteria.....	9
JOY BEILER-REAVIS	While thinking of writing a love poem..	10
DOMINIQUE FRAZIER	Another's Dimensions.....	11
ANGELICA EDWARDS	The Flood.....	12
FELICIA JULIANO	Glass	13
ELIZABETH LEISURE	If I Told You.....	14
DOMINIQUE FRAZIER	Broadcasted	16
PAT SONTI	Notes from Kirkuk	18
HEATHER CHANDLER	Black Label	20
NICOLE METTS	Tree.....	21
PHYLLIS D. SMITH	The Scene.....	35
CYNTHIA SOLL	Penance.....	36
ANNIE MINGA	My Coworker is Death.....	37
PAT SONTI	Tunnel Vision.....	38
NATHAN SULLIVAN	The Anchor of My Time	41
JASON SMITH	The Meaning of Life	42
NICOLE METTS	Moon Follow Me Home.....	43

Fiction

FELICIA JULIANO	The Masterpiece.....	24
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Art & Photography

RICQUE SALGADO	The Abbey.....	15
DOMINIQUE FRAZIER	Give and Take.....	22
FELICIA JULIANO	Fade	34
FELICIA JULIANO	The Brink.....	39
ANNIE MINGA	Far East	40
RICQUE SALGADO	The River Nidd.....	Front Cover
RICQUE SALGADO	The Landing.....	Back Cover

Editor's Note.....	5
Contributors' Bios.....	45
Submission Guidelines.....	49

Editor's Note

With our newest issue, a milestone has been reached—five straight years of *The Lookout*, which has served as the vehicle for literary and artistic expression of the students and alumni of Texas A&M University-Central Texas throughout its rise and expansion as a university community.

The 123 poems, short stories, photographs, and art works contained within the past five volumes of *The Lookout* are a product of this progress and evidence to the boundless creativity of the many thousands of students who have attended and graduated from TAMUCT since its inception. *The Lookout* has been honored to provide these students a platform for artistic expression and especially proud to see several of our contributors go on to success in publishing in other journals after obtaining their first publications in these pages.

The works in this volume continue the tradition of originality and craft that has come to define this journal and the stunningly creative students who make up its contents. On behalf of the TAMUCT College of Arts and Sciences, thank you for reading—and get ready for more to come!

Ryan Bayless

Editor, *The Lookout: A Journal of Literature and the Arts*

Associate Professor of English and Fine Arts

Texas A&M University-Central Texas

THE LOOKOUT

Volume 5

HEATHER CHANDLER

Wisteria

I planted wisteria in the garden
to remind me of my roots.
Blooms briefly exhorting the profits
of staying put, providing comfort to those
just wanting to sit a spell, and conjuring fantasies
of iced teas, gentlemen callers, and cotillions.
I breathe in her intoxicating scent,
and carry about my day mimicking her grace and flair.

But the blooms are short lived.
Mostly it's just a tangled vine,
requiring constant care and direction.
She grows impatient, pushing beyond her cage.
And the petals fly off with the first
cool breeze promising something better.

I'm left looking at the carnage of twisted
sticks, wondering if there is any life left at all,
or if I should just harvest the remainder
for kindling something warm and inviting.
I can't remember what I saw in her in the first place.

But the seasons have taught me patience.
When everything else blooms around her
and I start thinking of tearing her down,
the small buds peek through.
Emerging from her deep introspection,
she once again blossoms.

JOY BEILER-REAVIS

While thinking of writing a love poem

laboring for words
to bring order
to the onslaught
of frantic thoughts
wrapped up in love and
mystery and meaning.
this love defies
the logic and loathing
of a feisty girl
paralyzed by fear and
shadow beliefs from
some other century.
the shadow life of
a perfect woman
judging the performance
of the Other.
i am a shadow.
i'm a contradiction.
i am sacrilege.
i'm a queen.
i am perfection.
i'm a celebrity
in a town of forgotten legends.
only he knows
my royal lineage,
with champagne souls
gilded in gold
and lights and
leaves of yellow
deeper and truer than oblivion.

DOMINIQUE FRAZIER

Another's Dimensions

Together they drift down a river of feathers.
Beneath the darkness and warmth
 their sighs can be heard.
The breath shared between them spins
 a rich, golden thread.
There, a new life blossoms,
 an eagerness to explore spills across the planes.
In this foreign land they discover new promises.

In the distance a waterfall rushes,
 the air carries chamomile and secrets,
 and trees share their shade with every soul that passes.
Here the weight of another is shared, embraced.
Lips no longer shy as eyes meet
 and minds open.
Now, in the stretch of dawn
 they awake next to one another,
where they glide together into a rhythm uniquely their own.

ANGELICA EDWARDS

The Flood

Words burst forth,
 met with silence.
Battling imageries,
 colliding stop.
Blood pulsating,
 sweating cold.
Deep breaths,
 stagnant air.
Looming presence,
 momentarily abated.
Thunder claps,
 rains unleashed.
Barely surfacing,
 now drowning.
Gradually sinking,
 peaceful agony.
No longer fighting,
 sweet release.

FELICIA JULIANO

Glass

I have a face of glass—cracked, fragmented, and glued back together.
I have eyes of china—painted in red, white, and blue—unable to see
my own soul.

I have a tongue of stained glass—bleeding—and teeth of sand—eroding
rivers of ink.
—but my mind is that of a poet.

My eyes—I can't see out of them—but others can see in—and the
colors collide violently.

My lungs expand—to take in sound from the Lion's mouth—and
collapse—to expel creation.

My hands reach—to grasp the handle between worlds—fingers stick
to the edge of the universe.
—but my mind is left trapped between the glass.

I exist—stuck at a dead end—staring into the infinity reflected in a
giant glass door—and yet—

I exist in silence. Nothing here but whispering—fragmented, broken
sound—music of the ages.

I exist in a world of mirrors—I did not know the dead could speak.
—Or see—out of two green eyes—burning in the middle—
freezing around the edges—

I can't tell—are they looking at me?

—Wait.

—*Or am I looking at them?*

ELIZABETH LEISURE

If I Told You

If I told you I was _____

Would you still say no?

Or would you be alright with the way I am?

Cause it hurt

When I asked before

And was plagued with insecurities

As I heard one say a lie

And the other say *no*



RICQUE SALGADO

The Abbey

DOMINIQUE FRAZIER

Broadcasted

A mother watched her baby boy through a series of channels.

Each detail faint, and further from the truth.

With each segment,

the story grew into a bad game of telephone.

The only thing her baby boy ever carried were his books to and from school.

He spoke in the softest of tones,

and he always wore the same red t-shirt to practice.

The news only showed the same mugshot over, and over again.

The news only discussed everything that he did wrong.

The news only played the same video of a young man getting shot by an equally frightened cop.

However,

the news never showed

how hard the black asphalt was against the soles of his feet.

How the numbers were stacked against him.

Or how every time the ball hit the backboard, the chains of the hoop echoed.

Now each time a mother closes her eyes,
she imagines the fear in her baby boy's eyes.
Every night as she lies awake in bed,
she wishes to hold him as close as she can.
And with each street she crosses,
she regrets not holding her baby boy's hand tighter.
What the news will never show,
is how a mother now holds the empty, callused
hands of a man she will never meet.

PAT SONTI

Notes from Kirkuk

I walk

in Kirkuk, an ancient city;

“it is more than four thousand years old,” spat a grizzled colonel.

I hold

my rifle tighter, weaving between a caravan of vehicles,

like ships at sea, eyes swivelling,

surveying for danger.

I look

to where the gunfire must surely come.

Minarets reach out to the heavens. Birds fly zig-zag

like mad arrows.

I hear

a call to prayer,

a sonorous cry of joy, complaint, or pain.

They stop, but we didn’t.

I ignore

all other ‘Stop’ signs, too;

horns honk, traffic weaves, the enemy stays put –

safety lies in distance.

I observe

black smoke on the horizon.

Distance is no obstacle to a precision artillery strike.

Maybe they don’t know that yet.

But they will. Give them time.

I sweat

under the same red sun from California that bakes my skin.

Brownish, dusty haze covers the tanned labyrinth of homes and shops.

I need
to remember. This war was just two days old for me.
“This is where Davey died,” points a sergeant from a vehicle.
I see
overlooked street-corners, garbage strewn,
children kicking a soccer ball;
they stop and wave.
I tap
my finger on my rifle as if to say, “I ain’t got the time,
kids, this isn’t the place.”
I refuse
eye-contact,
made easier by dark, ballistic lenses.
Body armour
is useful for many things.
I know
survival means just dodging bullets.
I sense
somehow that this war will kill us long after we are home.

HEATHER CHANDLER

Black Label

He drank enough black label to drown
the scars left from the explosion in Baquba,
looked at the number she had scribbled on his arm,
hoping it would sink in,
and got into his car.
He remembered the way she smiled
as she wrote,
the way her fingernails carved
into his hatred of the place
and its stale smoke, dirty glasses,
and watered down drinks.
As the engine warmed up,
he watched the tachometer rise,
red, angry, like a revolution of memories,
nightmares and regret, swelling against
the windshield, blurry.
He would find something worth leaving for—
the digits on his arm—
new coordinates.

She has no idea what she is in for.

NICOLE METTS

Tree

Fluttering feathers
shining like an oil spill
scavenging brilliantly
completely aware
of all of us
our intentions
disguised in
trees
one
eye
staring.





DOMINIQUE FRAZIER

Give and Take

FELICIA JULIANO

The Masterpiece

It wasn't even a real theater.

The room belonged to my cousin Tom, who leased it for almost nothing on account of it supposedly being “haunted.” It was part of a four joint strip mall located in the middle of an old rundown neighborhood where it had sat empty for decades, still as brand new as the day it was built, back when Tom's daddy was in grade school. The only blemish on the otherwise flawless exterior were the boarded up windows in Tom's movie theater. Apparently, Jenkins had been hiding out in that very room for weeks when the police found him sitting outside having a smoke. Jenkins was no idiot of course, and he barricaded himself inside Tom's theater with his ammunition and his booze ready to stay, he said, until the Good Lord himself should come back to earth and decide what to do with him. The cops weren't very religious folk and not inclined in the least to wait on The Lord to show up, so they shot out the windows and sent Jenkins to meet his maker a little bit ahead of schedule. Tom says that was mighty considerate of them.

Anyways, the whole place was darker than the palm of Satan's hand because no natural light came into the room, and the light fixture in the ceiling was useless since the building had no power. We all carried flashlights which we would turn on and stand in a row by the back wall to flood the place with enough light to see by, but not enough to expel the dark. Movie theaters had to be dark, or you couldn't see the film. The walls had been hastily covered with a bright red and white striped wallpaper, crooked in places, and filled with air-pockets so that it looked like there were things inside those bubbles that were pushing to

explode out of them at any second. The smell of stale, day old popcorn and sweating bodies settled in a fog over the tiny little room choking out any real air left. Tom said all theaters smelled like that. In order to play the films, Tom had set up a portable generator that he had hooked up to a projector and the thing made so much racket that it was nearly impossible to hear what was going on, so we almost always had to turn on the subtitles.

—This is where real cinema went down.

One night, we were showing one of those Monty Python films during “kids’ night” (entrance fee only 5 dollars) when the generator made a tremendous rattling sound, popped, and went out with a lingering hiss and a small explosion of light. As our eyes adjusted to the sudden blackness, some of the rather small children began to whimper and the older children immediately broke into frenzied whispers. The room suddenly felt like a funeral. The whispering melted into one continuous hiss, and in the dark beside me, the walls groaned with the voice of a murdered man. Tom’s voice cut through the dark as a bullet cuts through flesh, jerking me abruptly back to reality.

“Aw, shit. Shit shit shit.” He kicked the generator a few times, and unsurprisingly, this had no effect. I blinked a few times, re-orienting myself to the situation and found that the whispering had stopped. A voice spoke up directly behind me.

“That’s the second time this week that this has happened!”

Tom’s voice shot back, clearly annoyed, “I know, shut up. I’m tryna think.”

“I want my five dollars back,” one kid hollered.

“Yeah me too!” another kid chimed in, and soon all the kids were demanding their money back.

Tom released an exasperated sigh. “Y’all be quiet!” he commanded, and when the room was once more silent, he continued, “You ain’t getting your money back, because the show isn’t over.” He looked at me and then at the generator. “Hey Mal,

when exactly did the film cut out?”

I shrugged. “Uh, I don’t know the exact time but—”

“No, Mal, keep up here. I’m not asking for the time. I’m asking at what point in the film did the generator die? They were at the bridge right?”

“Oh—yeah, I think so. Lancelot had already gone across.”

“Excellent. Mal, you and I will act out the rest of the movie. That way everyone will still get what they paid for.”

I blinked, incredulous. “What, like a play?”

“Sure, exactly like a play. Come on, I’ll be Arthur and you can be Galahad. We’ll switch between other roles.”

I shook my head, “Tom, come on, just give them their money back. I—”

“No, this is a great idea!” One of the older kids was standing on his chair and looking around the room of dark faces excitedly. He turned to Tom. “It’s okay mister Tom, we don’t want our money back anymore. We’d rather put on a play!”

“Now wait a minute—”

This time Tom was interrupted by a tiny room full of cheering and hollering kids. He looked at me and I just shrugged my shoulders at him resignedly. The damage had already been done.

The kids made short work of divvying up the remaining roles in the scene and were moving around the room like ants, stacking chairs against the wall and moving boxes into a row at the front of the room to serve as the “bridge.” In the meager light provided by the flashlights, the kids popped in and out of the shadows like pantomime demons popping out of the darkness and melting back in again. It was highly mesmerizing to watch, and I was jolted out of a trance when one of the kids grabbed my hand and dragged me over to the front of the room.

“You’s Galahad,” he informed me. “That means you die.”

I had to appreciate the kid’s efficiency. When it came time for me to “die” I jumped over the “bridge” and flopped to the floor. I’m no actor but it felt awkward just to lay there, so I did the only thing that seemed appropriate for a dead man to do: I began to recite the Lord’s Prayer. I was interrupted by the kid playing Bedevere.

“Well hang on—he’s talkin’ or somethin’. Is he dead or ain’t he?”

“He is.” I answered.

“Then stop talking! Dead people don’t talk.”

“This one does.” This statement was met with instant protest.

“You can’t do that—that’s not how he did it in the movie!”

“He ain’t dead! He don’t look very dead to me!”

Over on the other side of the room, Tom stood with his hand on his chin looking at me thoughtfully. “The kid’s right, Mal, it ain’t real. It has to be real.”

He went out and came back about five minutes later with an open can of tomato sauce.

“Where did you get that?” I asked, immediately suspicious.

“Outside.”

“Where outside?”

“The dumpster. Don’t worry, it wasn’t open—it’s a pop tab—I opened it myself.”

My own protests were drowned out by the kid’s overwhelming approval.

“Now it’ll look like he’s really dead!”

“It can’t be real,” I pointed out, “we’re acting.”

“Of course it can,” said Tom as he poured tomato sauce over my face and clothes. “Now be still and stop talking.”

I guess there are worse things than being covered in tomato sauce.

—Like I said, we take stories seriously here.

After the tomato sauce incident, I firmly refused to be a part of any more “plays.” At least I didn’t have to worry about it for a few days anyways. Tom had to shut down the theater until he could fix the generator, and new parts for it wouldn’t arrive for several days. I was in the theater by myself the day after the incident cleaning up the left over tomato sauce stains off the floor, and it was not a task I did with relish. I had a single flashlight with me, and I propped the door open to let in a bit of natural light, but even then, I could not drive out the dark. In the semi-darkness, the sauce looked like blood and in the silence it was easy to recall the way the walls had groaned. Thinking about the air-pockets (and things being inside them) made me increasingly uneasy, and I tried not to look at them as I worked. I finished up as quickly as I could and gathered up my soiled cleaning rags for a trip to the dumpster (the same one where Tom had supposedly found the tomato sauce in the first place). I dumped my load and walked back to the theater relieved to be done, intending on retrieving my flashlight before heading home.

I was just getting ready to duck inside the door when I nearly collided with someone coming out. I yelped and jumped back, striking a defensive position and on the verge of a heart attack. The stranger stepped out of the dark doorway and into the bright sunlight. He was tall and lean, dressed in ragged, poorly patched clothes that looked like they belonged to someone two times smaller than he was. The cuffs of his pants and shirt stopped above his ankles and wrists, and his bare feet were covered in a layer of dirt and grime. His head was covered with

wiry grey hair but his face was clean-shaven. He smiled at me, and I noticed that most of his teeth were missing. He looked faintly surprised to see me standing just a few feet away from him.

“I’m mighty sorry ‘bout dat. I didn’t see you there.”

A long silence followed this statement. He seemed to be waiting for me to speak, but my heart was still going a mile a minute and my mouth had gone dry. The best I could do was lower my defensive stance. He looked at me with a peculiar expression on his face.

“Well I reckon you can speak can’t ya?”

I began to calm down. “Yes.” I licked my lips and swallowed. “You just startled me is all.”

“Well, again I’m mighty sorry ‘bout dat.”

I looked from the stranger to the open doorway. “What were you doing in there?”

“Oh me? I was just seeing who left this here flashlight in there all by itself.”

I didn’t notice until then that he was holding my flashlight. “That belongs to me,” I said.

“Okay. Well, I won’t keep it from you.” He held out the flashlight to me and I stepped forward to take it.

“Thanks.” I put the flashlight in my back pocket and shuffled my feet awkwardly not really knowing what else to say.

The stranger slipped both hands in his pockets. “What’s your name?”

“Mal,” I said.

“Mal? Well, what kind of name is that?”

I sighed. “It’s short for Mallory.”

The stranger gave a short laugh. “Isn’t Mallory a girl’s name?”

“My parents wanted a girl.”

He raised his eyebrows. “Oh—that’s a shame.”

“Not really.” I shrugged, and half turned away hoping he would take the hint.

“Okay.”

I looked back over my shoulder hoping to see Tom—or anybody—walking down the alley behind me. I looked again from the open door to the stranger. He was still standing between me and the door so that I couldn’t close and lock the building without stepping around him and putting my back towards him. I decided I’d have to draw him further out into the alley.

“Well, I’ve told you my name,” I said, “what’s yours?”

His demeanor seemed to change immediately and his toothless grin suddenly seemed to be bared in malice.

“Who me?” He tapped his chest with one finger.

I nodded.

“My name is Jenkins.”

He must have seen the blood freeze in my body because he started laughing, and the sound of it nearly dragged me so far into the dark that black spots danced in my peripheral vision. Still laughing, he stumbled a few steps forward wheezing for breath and leaned against the brick wall for support. He pointed one grimy finger at me. “You—you done look like you’ve seen a—a ghost!” His laughter subsided into chuckles and he wiped his eyes with the back of his hand.

I took a few deep breaths and the black spots vanished. I looked at the old man before me weak with laughter and I felt an overwhelming sense of irritation. My jaw clenched and I glared at the man in front of me.

The stranger noticed the change of expression on my face. He stopped laughing. “What’s the matter now? You mad?”

“Yeah I’m mad! You’re making a fool out of me!” I accused him.

He straightened up and adopted a very serious expression. “What? Me? Nah, you misunderstood is all. I was just having a bit of fun. Here. Let’s start over. My name is Leroy, but most folks call me Leo. How do you do Mr. Mallory?” He tipped his hat and dropped into an exaggerated bow.

“Mal,” I muttered.

“What?”

“Most people call me Mal. I hate Mallory.”

“Oh-ho-ho! So I’m “people” now? Why only five minutes ago I’s just an old hobo, but now—now I’s “people.” He grinned and I felt my insides twist.

“Okay, look,” I was running out of patience. “I just need to shut the door and lock the theater.” I stepped forward to shut the door, but the stranger moved fast for an old man and grabbed my arm standing in the doorway of the theater. I heard a small metallic click and felt the point of a gun press up against my chest.

“Now hang on, don’t be so hasty. We were having such a nice little conversation.”

I froze, thinking wildly through all my available options. The stranger pressed forward with the gun, so I backed up with my hands in the air. “What do you want? I don’t have any money.”

“Oh, I don’t want money. I’m just going to kill you.”

“Wait, what?” I was trying to make sense of this sudden turn of events. “Why?”

“Oh. No reason.” He grinned again and up close, the scent of rotting gums made me gag.

Well, shit. I wasn’t about to let some old hobo shoot me in an alley for no reason.

Still grinning, he stepped back and wrapped his finger around the trigger. I moved in that same instant. Without thinking, I attacked and overpowered the old man, disarmed

him, and sent three bullets through his chest. His body fell to the ground in slow motion and his face was frozen with a look of surprise. I stood for a moment staring at the body with the gun still pointed out in front of me. A growing sense of horror and panic rose inside me as I looked at the man I had just murdered. My hands began to shake, and I lowered the gun, taking quick short breaths. I looked behind me expecting to see cops materialize around the corner of the building, but my attention was immediately brought back to the scene in front of me. The body began convulsing and emitting a horrifying sound that sucked my soul right out of my lungs. And then suddenly it sat up, and I realized it was laughing.

I raised the gun again, confused beyond any capability of rational behavior. My hands were shaking so badly I couldn't hold the gun steady. "Stay back!" I shouted.

The laughter stopped and the old man clattered slowly to his feet. "Well, don't have a heart attack now. I ain't dead. You can't kill me with that gun anyways. It's filled with blanks." He dusted off his jacket and stood watching me with a hint of an amused smile on his face.

I just started at him, barely registering what he was saying. "Did you hear me? I ain't dead."

When I still didn't answer he stepped back and held up his hands in surrender. "Go ahead. Try again if you don't believe me."

I looked at the gun in my hands and the feeling of horror and disgust intensified when I realized what I very nearly had done. I turned and threw the weapon into the dense growth along the right side of the alley. "I didn't kill you," I said. And as I said it, a feeling of relief swept over me, and I felt my head clear. "I didn't kill you." I said again, louder and more confident.

"But you thought I was dead, didn't you? You shot me without a moment's hesitation when you thought your life was in danger."

“You were going to kill me! I had no choice.”

“I said I was, yes, but I’m an old man. You easily overpowered me, didn’t you? There was no need to shoot me. You want to know why you did?” He moved a few steps closer. “You’re a killer. A cold blooded killer.” He began laughing again at the horror stricken expression that crossed my face.

“I’m not a killer!” I shouted above the noise, panic beginning to set in again. “It wasn’t real anyways—I shot you with blanks.” My breathing became rapid and I was close to tears.

“Not real?” His tone became condescending. “What do you know? Nothing. You know nothing. You were saving your own skin. And that’s as real as real can get.” He stepped so close to me that he was only inches away, and the scent of rotting gums wafted into my face with every word. “That’s almost worse ain’t it?” He whispered. “The knowing? Knowing will haunt you forever.”

“Knowing what?” I whispered back.

The old man threw his head back and laughed.

There are no words to describe the profound horror that settled over my soul that moment—or after when the sound of the stranger’s laughter echoed down the alley as he melted into the lengthening shadows and was gone as suddenly as he had come.

Head reeling, I walked back into the theater. The dark was whispering to itself, and it settled into a fog over my body, choking the air out of my lungs. The room suddenly felt like a funeral. The whispering melted into one continuous hiss, and in the dark beside me, the walls groaned with the voice of a murdered man. In a trance I walked to the nearest wall and felt for the air-pockets. My fingers met shredded and ripped wall paper, and beyond that, exposed wall. The air-pockets had exploded, and inside them—

There was nothing.



FELICIA JULIANO

Fade

PHYLLIS D. SMITH

The Scene

Once inside the creaking door, she walked across a sinking floor

A cool and gentle northern breeze

Powered the rise and fall of tattered curtains with ease

Cobwebs attached to the back of a chair

Seemed to find comfort hanging there

And the five pictures in place on the wall

At any second, either or all could tumble and fall

Dried, wilted roses in a small antique vase sat on the mantel above
the fireplace

A bed of tumbled pillows and covers allowed for nothing to discover

There were no signs, notes, or letters left that yield to her curiosity

The place was cold and still life, and she longed to be someplace else

Cascading questions came to mind, as she wondered what things
happened this time?

Scattered items about the room

Were evident of situational doom

Another observation long and hard

Offered her strength to depart...

The scene

CYNTHIA SOLL

Penance

She killed herself.
Not all at once,
but slowly
and day by day.

She took the pain
they handed her,
carved it into
neat little bites,
and then
she swallowed it.

Later,
she turned
the dull blade
upon herself
and pruned her soul.

She carved out
pieces of herself
with a surgeon's
skill and patience
until nothing was left
of her Self.

And when
She was gone,
she left.

ANNIE MINGA

My Coworker is Death

She smells it and doesn't know what it is, just that it is uncomfortably familiar.

The stench isn't yet overwhelming, only a hint of what's to come.

No matter what the doctors prescribe, nothing changes.
The lingering sense of impending disaster is hard to explain.

The smell of death creeps slowly nearer.
I know the smell. I have known it for years.

The bright lights harshly illuminate the next scenes.
The machines silently mark the heart's last symphony.

Everything non-essential is removed. Kleenex boxes are everywhere.
Staff becomes scarce as the time draws near.

It is unwritten in my job description, but I am also the encouraging cheerleader,
the believer in miracles, the comforter.

Some rooms are full of silent sobs, screams of despair, words said in anger.

And some rooms contain no mourners at all.

Death and I work together. It is an unspoken agreement between us and the ones with nearing expiration dates.

My occupation begins at the end of life, a profession of expiry.
My coworker is Death. Together, we get it done.

PAT SONTI

Tunnel Vision

From inside a reticle

I channel a creation few know

farther than the destruction that follow.

Observe and capture – hardly ever whimsical.

In between the crosshairs

I taste the close pleasure

hear the song of the far-away treasure.

Shape and silhouette – hardly ever symmetrical.

From inside a reticle

I revel in the power

the reach from my tower.

Squeeze of trigger – hardly ever decimal.

With eyes wide open

I deliver sweet victory

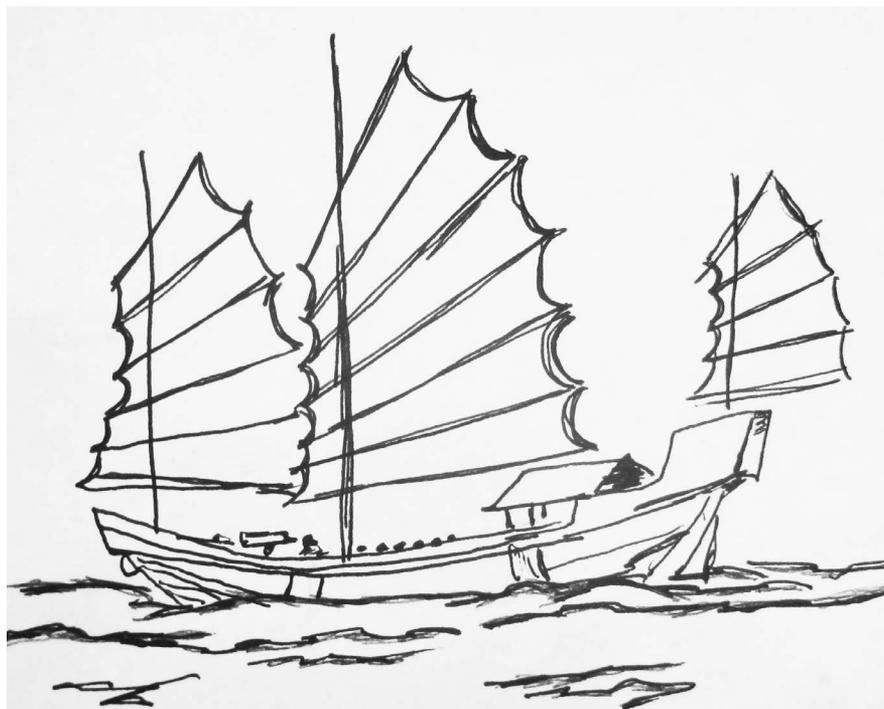
the relief from misery.

Pounds of pressure – hardly ever accidental.



FELICIA JULIANO

The Brink



ANNIE MINGA

Far East

NATHAN SULLIVAN

The Anchor of My Time

If you were to sail across my seven seas,
And venture to the first town in me,
It would be burning

With the emotions that I carry on my sleeve
Exposed for all the world to see.

And the current would pull you out to sea,
There is more to me than what you see.

Where the rhythms of life are sorted into fours
The signature of time I always try to beat,
But the metronome keeps me

In sync with my mind;
Leading you to the heaviest town.

What weighs this one down
Would surely cause you to frown,
So let's skip it for now.

If you were to sail across my seven seas
You would notice the dotted lines
Marking half of the world I want to give you.

JASON SMITH

The Meaning of Life

Wanna know a secret? I know the meaning of life.
Pretty bold claim, you say, but what if I'm right?
Like before the Big Bang that we never explained
There's a balance in the universe that needs to be maintained,
A key that unlocks the forbidden parts of the brain.
As you keep reading, you may get what I saying.
The level I'm on is the Atom I see. The Atom I see is the Atom I C,
Atomic level mind-frame, with the rule of three,
Having Faith in the Positive surrounded by Negativity.
Like the backside of a dollar bill, I Hold and Control which I see Below.
Yes, there's reasons for ancient seals, I just thought you should know.
But back we go to the meaning of life,
That balance that we need when there could be no wrong if there was
no right,
No up without down, no light without dark,
So the one belief in two, adds up to three in this part.
Now you see it's simple, not too complex.
Life is not a race, a game, or even a test.
Life, to me, is to survive and evolve,
Nothing more, nothing less, and that is all.
And that, my friends, is the secret to the meaning of life.
I could be wrong about it, but what if I'm right?

NICOLE METTS

Moon Follow Me Home

I know grass is not truly green,
nor is the sky blue.
A flower's sweetness is not to spark love
between me and you.
A shooting star does not exist,
and a kiss is just a kiss;
yet I long for beauty, not truth,
a ghostly silhouette of shadow, not bone.
Or how the moon must follow me home.
How the wind cradles and caresses me, alone.
Sparkles along my path are not common stones.
And mysterious people have beautiful souls.
The ocean shores mend broken spirits and make them whole.
Loved ones lost protect us, wherever we go.
Rain releases troubles if I stand in it, so
open your mind beyond what you are told
or a beautiful world you may never behold.

CONTRIBUTORS

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Submission Guidelines

The Lookout is published annually by the College of Arts and Sciences at Texas A&M University – Central Texas and features poetry, short fiction, creative non-fiction, photography, and visual art submitted by current students and recent alumni of TAMUCT. Any student currently enrolled in classes at TAMUCT (or recent graduates) may submit their previously unpublished creative writing, photography, and/or art work for possible publication in the spring.

To submit your work, save your complete and polished manuscripts in Microsoft Word and send as an attachment to Professor Ryan Bayless at ryanbayless@tamuct.edu.

Poetry: submit 1 to 3 poems

Prose: submit 1 short story or creative non-fiction essay

Photography and Art: submit 1 to 3 works

(Attach photos as high quality JPEG files; black-and-white images preferred, but color photography and art will be considered for the cover)

-Please use the body of your email as a cover letter that includes the titles of your submitted works, contact information (email, physical address, and phone number) as well as a brief bio that indicates your class (Junior, Senior, etc.), your major and minor (or degree), and a list of any previous publications in the arts.

-Also, please write “LOOKOUT SUBMISSION” in the subject line of the email.

Submissions accepted October 1st - March 1st each year



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