



A L I T E R A R Y M A G A Z I N E



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THE SEATTLE SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of The Seattle School of Theology & Psychology is to train people to be competent in the study of text, soul, and culture in order to serve God and neighbor through transforming relationships.

COVER ART

Untitled | Ellie Bosworth

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A moment of clarity can emerge
through these hazy wisps of
mind-numbing clouds

Tenderness with painful patriarchy
A man's soul seems to require more
weight than feminine grace

Kind glory with oily death
Miniature gods pretend that
soil needs be washed away
and stripped of its bare beauty

Dark-skinned honor with a
Legislative disgrace for diversity

Frail humanity with ignorant awaeness
Families kept close so quickly
separated for the sake of law

Sublimity with sour, wholeness with hurt
The contradictions that dwell with and around us

THE CORPSE

MARJORIE LONG

Flowering yet still a bud
Frozen like pursed lips
Beauty desires a way out
Beams of light shine in
She longs to scream loud
Space awaits her lonely pistil
The earth is dry yet rain drops down
Not wet enough for her to break through
Yearning to unfold, it beats fast and hard
It looks for the future where living is alive
Trying to find her mind down there in the dark dry earth
It's home and no longer home
The bud takes 40 years to bloom
The corpse awakens
She finds just 3 days of life,
Go back, start over and over and over
This is where you find you.

How do you want to move?

Slowly.

Then stop. Don't move. Breathe. And when you feel like rising do it. And when you feel like sitting do it. And when you feel like draping yourself facedown on the earth do it. Do it now.

How do you want to eat?

Lavishly.

Then stop. Gently slide your lips around the fleshy curves of this pink fat fig. Puncture its ripeness with your teeth, a slow hunger barely restrained. And notice as your jaws flex, your tongue lolls within this sweet body. Stop everything else. Do it now.

How do you want to listen?

Like the angel of God is speaking.

Then stop. Alert yourself to the evensong of birch leaves and crow feathers, a faucet flowing and a child's socked feet scampering up stairs. Sigh to the ocean sound of the freeway just north, and let your ears ascend to these high crystal notes: jet engine and the woman next door. Stop hearing noise with your every listening. Do it now.

How do you want to rest?

Deeper than the Milky Way.

Then stop. Breathe your bones wider and your belly softer and your urgency less so. Receive yourself into your mother's mossy breast and let yourself be swaddled in kelp and currents. Do this right now, before something ticks or beeps or rings. Do it now.

How do you want to love?

Recklessly, like the world was on fire.

Oh beloved one, it is. It is on fire—for want of your reckless love and because of it. So stop. Stop peeking around corners with your pocket mirror. The beloved is before you and behind you and peeking back at you in the glass. Place your hands over your heart and rub vigorously, like flint stones sparking—then fling your phoenix wings wide. Welcome in, the indiscriminate blaze, all that your feather-flames touch. Do it now, before you lose your courage or your madness.

Do it.

Do it now.

Do it now.

REACTIVATE

AMY LATHROP

re-integration cues
aged & forsaken detritus to rise
breaking benthonic from roily depths,
like slowly ascending air bubbles,
slipping past & around obstacles both
blanket-like and insular.
strictures {carefully coded & well placed}
upend with every surfacing blup,
blup,
blup.
heart | body | mind
skilled competitors,
mucking about in discordant rhythm, yet
synching in ever-weighted vigilance.

The day after she said she longed to die
I drove away from Church of the Holy Trinity.
I had been sifting Father Ben's homily
For some thick root of grace to put between my teeth,
Like bracing for sharp pain without anesthesia.
I'd knelt and stood and knelt, my mind two feet above my body
Seeking comfort in the piety I could not feel
But soaked through witness from the second pew to last.
I saw old Thom.
Thom, with his staff in hand, tall as his head,
and thick around. He needs it to move,
To stand, to bend, to kneel, on knees torn up by shrapnel.
Vietnam, his wife said. I used to fire pottery in her garage.
Before cancer. Before her seven cats were spread
Among the parish for safekeeping.
Thom would be sitting by the door, smoking a cigarette.
His hand would tremor when he took it from his lips.
Sometimes he'd stare, sometimes he'd see me to my soul
And pull me to his whiskered face, eyes like black holes.
That Sunday, when I came to church
Long-stretched and worn, I fell into a pew
Loosing tears that seeped endless
Into my cardigan. I watched Thom up front.
I saw his old head bowed. I heard him shuffle
Slow and painful steps to read the Psalter in a voice that didn't shake.
Not like his hands, which trembled as he raised them
When we stood to sing the closing mercy.
He did that every week, both arms outstretched
To the wooden cross at front of the chapel,
Hands quaking visibly above his gray and balding head.
Sometimes he'd fling them wide
Through the cloud of incense and my breath would catch,
Thinking of the nightmares in his eyes sometimes.

*O Lord God,
Lamb of God,
Son of the Father
Who takest away the sins of the world
Have mercy upon us.
Receive our prayer.*

He'd seen me in the back afterward and came close
To clasp my hand in his two trembling ones.
I hadn't been there in a year. He knew me though.
How are you Thom I'd said.
Better now he'd said.

I set the vision of his raised arms between my teeth
Now when I wake, miles from the cross.

You were my home, but I didn't live there,
From a childhood marred by miseducation, you were my apple tree,
You were my permission to try, but I hid.

From myself, from the strangers that could've been friends,
& under the weight of waiting, I lapsed into darkness,
You mapped a road, and I hid.

Inside crumbling apartments, folding t-shirts,
Reading Proust, in the cork-lined chamber of my mind
& with a cat on my lap, I hid.

With every no, I watched everyone else doing something,
To frustrate the deadline of my becoming, I waited
For le mot juste, and I hid.

From the God that didn't want me, from the family that didn't know me,
With downcast eyes, I amputated my will,
Expiring on the shelf, so I hid.

You wanted to love me, but became the father that sold me,
While I traced the constellation of my feelings, you covered me like a blanket,
Making me dinner, and I hid.

In bathroom mirrors, imprisoned by the body that betrayed me,
From the wounds of my misspent youth, I tried to complete
The mystery of my flesh, and I hid.

You tried to save me, but I couldn't pick a paint color,
We wanted things to stay the same, but you drowned in my apathy,
Carrion to an absent prey, and I hid.

Hibernating in your good will, I became a siren of righteous indignation,
Under the avalanche of apologies, we exhausted each other for years,
Two fugitives too dull to flee, and I hid.

Then the fracture broke, and you said, "I can't do this anymore,"
Catatonic with shock, we collapsed our lives
And I mourned my life support, but I knew I couldn't hide.

When my feet touched the bottom, I shook my armor to swim,
I woke up.
Reluctant, angry, but wanting to live.

In rooms of strangers, confessing their sins,
I watched the burden of my existentialism grow weary, transfigure, disappear.
Then I dug a grave for my sadness and resurrected my will.

I did the next right thing, and forgave myself.
For the unfinished still life drawing of the child within, because
He was still here.

Where did you come from?
Flung out of space?
Divinely intended.

A coffee date I couldn't walk away from,
A chance encounter to pantomime
The love I held on reserve.

You've given me the language to a foreign tongue,
A triangulation of unity,
With God.

You are the mirror of possibilities,
The becoming that's become.
I'm nervous, too, but I love you.

So, I'll pack up my things,
Trade my zip code for yours,
And leave the streets of my youth.

To try and fulfill the promise of great love I deserve.
Because I'm worthy.
And I'm not hiding.

ERIKA DAVIS

There's three things on your lap competing for your attention: a clunky silver iPod from 2009, a copy of Pablo Neruda's *Love Poems*, and your journal, open to an empty middle page, bouncing along as it waits patiently for you to choose a song. That empty page is not going anywhere, even though you sometimes wish it would. There are thousands of songs on that iPod, and you are thousands of miles away from home. There is time.

You're on a long bus ride, trying to distract yourself, and you choose that song. You're in Bolivia, sitting in the front seat on the second level, kicking your legs up and watching the miles crawl by. You think, *how are these tickets always available?* They cost the same, but they allow you a view like you're the pilot in an airplane without any of that cockpit stuff they need to make the plane fly. It's like nobody is driving this bus. It's just you and the world.

And right now the world is dark and full of stars. When it was light out, you noticed the whole world was flat and the only signs of life were the occasional villages with bathroom stops and food stands on the side of the road. You keep trying to figure out where these people are coming from. Now and then, the driver stops at what appears to be the middle of nowhere and picks up a local person selling snacks out of a wicker basket so big their arms wouldn't be able to touch if they hugged it in front of them. Once they've walked up and down the aisle to sell all they can, they walk back up to the front of the bus and the driver lets them off wherever they happen to be.

And you've been here long enough that this scene, so different from home, starts to become normal. You wonder what would happen to you if the driver decided to let you off here. If you didn't have your bags, you might be able to get someone to show you the way into the next town, then maybe get a phone and call home? Then what? You start to realize how far away from home you are and how, in your longing to feel free, you've come as far away as you could without any real purpose. And now you feel alone and vulnerable. You never really thought about what freedom would *feel* like when you found it, and now you wonder what is going to come next. That's why you chose this song. It is your escape.

That song comes on and suddenly, you're not thinking about Bolivia or the stars or where the people with half-empty snack baskets have been dropped off. You're thinking about how when you were 18 you used to listen to this song while driving in your first car with your high school best friends. You're thinking about how you used to skip school and drive forty miles from your small town to Seattle. In the city, there were desirable things—vegetarian Thai food, trendy thrift stores, and other gay people. You didn't feel so trapped there, and it gave you hope that one day you might find some place where you felt you belonged.

You're thinking about how you always used to play this song when you drove across the Ship Canal Bridge, but you didn't call it that then. You called it "The Seattle Bridge" because it was the only bridge you drove on in Seattle and the only one you could name and locate on a map. As soon as you passed the 65th Street exit heading south, you and your three best friends would put on this song, turn it up all the way, and roll down all four windows of your 1988 Toyota station wagon. You'd feel the air on your face, see the Seattle skyline, and feel full of possibility.

After that bus ride in Bolivia, you play this song for the next five years at times when you want to escape into the matrix of compounding memories. You play it on more bus rides, flights, boat and train rides in over a dozen countries. You play it while living in rural villages. You play it in the middle of cities of over 20 million. You play it every time you visit home as your plane is landing at SeaTac.

Eight years after that bus ride in Bolivia, you realize you've been living in Seattle for two years and haven't thought about freedom for a while.

It's summer and I'm driving home across the Ship Canal Bridge, towards my house in North Seattle, and this song comes on. I turn it up and crack my window and my girlfriend, who I've only been dating a few weeks, held my hand on her lap unknowingly as my mind drifted. I think about high school—about how much I wanted to escape into this city—and the ten years after—how I tried so hard to stay away—and I realize I haven't thought about freedom in a while.

It seems absurd to think about those times fondly. I only feel shame for the recklessness of my teenage years and the way I was unaware of how fortunate I was back then to have so much freedom. What was I trying to escape? I wonder how I'm still alive after years of being willing to do almost anything to avoid being trapped. I feel annoyed with my past self that I didn't appreciate being able to skip school with little consequence or take a whole year to ride busses around South America. I wait for myself to wish I was back there, but the waves of envy don't come.

Instead, I feel the warmth of my girlfriend's hand interlaced with mine, bouncing along on her lap as I take my exit home. I begin to feel compassion for my younger self. Freedom used to mean *getting out of here!* And, at the time it felt exciting and like the right thing to do, but now it feels sad. I wish I knew to appreciate feeling lost and directionless because now, with my life so full and rich, I am grateful for the time I spent exploring. It got me here. But, it was also painful. There is only so much we can know at any point in our lives, and although it may be painful to look back and wish we'd been wiser, it isn't helpful. For the first time I can remember, I don't wish anything were different, including the present moment. *Is this what freedom is? To want nothing other than to be here, now?*

Now, the world was dark and full of stars, but when it was light out, I noticed I didn't recognize much of the city. The city that had cradled me when I'd been longing to escape into it now pressures me to move faster, and as a form of resistance, I don't. To me now, freedom is freezing time. It's not worrying so much about the future that I forget to love the people in my life, or be grateful for my health, or give what I can to my community.

Freedom is not wishing the past were different so that my present would hold less tension, but understanding how tension builds our gifts. Now, freedom means having my past, present, and future alive inside of me in this one divine moment of which I am in awe. I remember that bus ride in Bolivia, when I tried to distract myself with words, songs, and memories. Now there is nothing to write down, nothing to figure out, nowhere to go. There is only time.

Late for work and school
The bustle of many arms reaching, hurrying
Lunches to be put in Tupperware
And tea water scalding flasks and skin
causing his barely contained frustration
to boil over

Comforting familiarity is shattered
An uneasy silence replaces the racket
as his rage pours out onto the floor
along with the water overflowing from his jug.
We step back warily so as not to get
the wet shame of his wrath all over us

Cursing and slamming, and kicking cats,
and cursing and slamming some more
becoming so ridiculous we have to stifle our snickering,
while staying out of reach and sight
letting the cat bear the brunt,
its screeches a comfort, because they aren't ours

We quietly slip out the door relieved
to be leaving and longing
for the disengaged peace of evening
with its sedating sour smells of backyard-grown
and attic-dried remedy rolled into thin white papers
A peace that brings its own pain

IN WHICH I PROVIDE TEA TO A GRIEVING DINOSAUR

GENEVRA LEVINSON

He sat as one does after swallowing a sack of concrete. It was difficult for him to want to move, even at the suggestion of a succulent parade of pre-roasted chickens, or an exceptionally sulfuric natural hot spring. When I asked what he needed, he couldn't so much as growl. His scaly encasement was a broken topography of cracks, red and dry.

I rummaged through the back of the cupboard to find it, a crusty old bag of Lapsang Souchong, and popped a mug of water in the microwave. The smoked leaves made it palatable; the steam loosed the saltworks in his face. I proffered a towel, and mopped up the pools before they warped the wood floors (not that the landlord cared anyways, the panels were already quite pocked and scarred from decades of former tenants' dragged claws and carcasses). He thanked me. We parted
—his face an array of rinks and loranges, all shades of bioluminescent radiance, hatchling-fresh, tender, and hungry.

TIME'S ARROW IN FIVE SCENES

B. MASON JUDY

I am twenty-nine. The select board meeting plays loudly on public access television in my grandmother's new room at Stoughton House. The board members discuss paving a series of dirt roads. She whispers over a tracking shot, "This is how they'll get us. This is how it ends." I am here to draw the shades at 4 p.m., at her request, for her safety. Today she doesn't confuse me for my father.

I am twenty-two, crossing Fraser and Kingsway, head down and pedaling toward Main Street. Then the car, the somersault over my handlebars, the nurse asking who to call, the ambulance, and two hours in the ER strapped to a stretcher, head cinched tight, wondering if my back is broken.

I am fourteen, sitting shotgun in a 1992 black Chevy C/K going seventy toward the Brandon Hills, skittering limestone and kicking up dust. My arm's out the window streamlining in dry air with the promise of a prairie summer. The truck bed is too light, begins to fishtail as the slough on my right blurs and the cab rolls over through a barbed wire fence.

I am three, waiting for my mother in the car. I push in the cigarette lighter. It pops out red. Entranced, I press the coil onto my palm. I wait two seconds before screaming.

I am my grandfather, watching the Green Mountains recede beneath the plane's wing, clutching the one-way ticket back to San-Francisco left so carefully in the boughs of the Christmas tree. The shortest divorce letter and her most expensive present sealed in an envelope that reads: "To Jim and the memory of a future already forgotten."

THE CROWS

KYLE PETRICEK

They show up in my writing
They flutter over my shoulder
They call out into the world
What are you doing here?

They followed me across the country.
There was no escaping them
Their laughter woke me up
What are you doing here?

I can't get away from them.
I can't unsee them.
I can't unhear them
What are you doing here?

Beauty seems to unfold in its own time
Its not to be forced or coerced
It wont be opened a moment sooner
It will not be missed

Perhaps they were telling me to stop
To see
To hear
What I cannot

the wildness
I feel her howling inside of me
stretching as she awakes
after years of my silencing her

I am frightened of her energy
the goodness
of her untamed strength
she could take me anywhere

but oh how I love adventure
and even if I tremble
I'm headed into the wild
to find who I have always been

A WOMAN'S LAMENT IN THE CHURCH

HANNAH MARTIN

i
wonder
when
i'll
stop
going & also
sitting
in
the back
and
crying

i'll

never

find

an

efficient

grief

Devote yourself to the hard
work of listening—
to the mournful memory of fallen
leaves who know their brothers
will rise again;
to the audacity of hellebore
who stand and bloom
in the snow;
to houses full of windows,
some dark, some lit; and doors
that draw you in or plainly say,
“keep out”—
even those are a tell
of treasure and what was once
living; even in winter
life is still
speaking.

AFTERSHOCK

ELLEN CLINE

Feel your hands shake, brother.
Rise up in the morning before it is light.
Take a glass to drink water, and watch
The way your fingers tremble as you turn the tap.
It is cool. It is dawn.
Press your palm to your chest.
Inside, somewhere deep, the rumble of your heart is pulsing.

As you set your face to the sun, feel tremors from deep places:
Earthquakes inside as the land begins to shift.

They tell us: a quake occurs as the sudden release of energy in the world's lithosphere
Creates the shakes. Seismic waves.

Consider geophysics:
Refractions of these seismic waves are used to research the structure of the earth.
Tremors tutor us in the scaffolding of the world.

Feel your hands shake, brother.
Feel the earth shift.
See the spaces cracking deep and wide.

Then, stop and sweat outside someday. Plant your hands for chaturanga.
Watch your palm press down against the earth, and see your own solidity.
Your wrists won't crack under your weight.

Ekam, inhale.
Dve, exhale.
Feel your hands shake, brother.
Trini, inhale.
Catvari, exhale.
Feel your heartbreak, brother.
Panca
Inhale
Look up

BIOGRAPHIES

ALEJANDRA CLENDINENG is a 4th year MACP student. She loves a good book, conversations over coffee, and sunshine. Slow, sad songs make her happy.

ELLEN CLINE First year MACP student Ellen Cline has the periorbital dark circles of a third year, the preoccupation of a koala, and the stubbornness of a small ox. You will find her where the rice is. If she's not there, she's dancing.

KATE FONTANTA is curious about many things, like kitchen fermentation, time-travel in a fractal universe, archeology of the body, and the precise ratios of absurdity and surprise that will make her nieces laugh. Her theology has been shaped by the mystics, the Bhagavad Gita, the Goddess, Battlestar Galactica, and an unexpected friendship with Jesus. As a second year M.Div, she does her best to live by the principles of moving-slowly and good-enough. She enjoys fashion modeling her girlfriend's thrifting treasures, moon-bathing, sourcing local ingredients for potions and teas, and staying home.

MICHAEL FORRESTER is a first-year graduate student in the MACP program at The Seattle School. His poem "I hid" is about the loneliness of growing up queer in Alabama, the heartbreak of divorce, and finding God at rock bottom. The original ending was about falling in love with someone else, but was revised when he learned it was about him.

TARA HUBBARD is a first year MTC student, wife and mother of four, in reverse order. She is an artist and writer trying to capture the real or the felt in her expression. She loves to share with others the deep inner processes of thoughts, feelings and experiences so don't hesitate to chat about what comes up for you

B. MASON JUDY is a third year student in the counseling psychology program at the Seattle School. This is his second year as co-editor of *Lit*.

CHRISTIE KUSHMERICK is a second year MATC student at the Seattle School and is a member of Sacred Space on Student Leadership.

AMY LATHROP is a follower of Jesus, a mom of two, and a friend to many. She is the managing director of a local nonprofit and a first year student at The Seattle School.

GENEVRA LEVINSON is part dragon, part archaeologist of the human soul. She currently resides in Seattle, WA, where she is pursuing a graduate degree in Counseling Psychology and exploring the intersections of art and traumatology. Her work traverses the deep crevasses of post-traumatic grief and beauty, identity formation, and the nature of humans as time-traveling mystical beasts.

MARGE LONG is passionate about living authentically while embracing the journey of becoming. After years of creative expression being stifled, she has taken the first steps on her artistic pilgrimage. This is her first piece.

RACHEL LUKE is a 1st-year MACP student. She can most often be found exploring Seattle's various rocky beaches along the sound at low tide.

HANNAH MARTIN likes skateboarding, nacho cheese, and making waves. Oh and she's a co-editor of *Lit*.

LUCAS PEISER is a first-year MACP student and a new father of an eight-month-old. He is an avid runner, lover of local food, and is always attempting to improve his sourdough bread recipe. Lucas recently spent several months in New Zealand working on vineyards and farms.

KYLE PETRICEK is another one of those walking paradoxes, a human. He gets lost in violence, suffering and some how beauty on a daily basis. Kyle is currently working on breathing in light of all aforementioned states

JOHN VERNON is a second year theology and culture student focusing on religious abuse and the recovery of identity. Personal experience, discovery, and the exploration of what it means to be human in relation to one another, God, and the earth inspires John's writing. John has previous publications in LIT issue 7, The America Library Of Poetry, and Wilderness House Literary Review (9.2), (10.3).

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