‘Teller of Tales’—The rough English translation of the Samoan word “Tusitala” perfectly encapsulates the heart and meaning of the publication. Tusitala is the premier literary magazine at Lake Forest College. Since 1935, the publication has brought student literature and art to life in its pages. Featuring sketches, paintings, digital art, prose, non-fiction, poetry, and more. Tusitala’s pages serve as a diverse platform for students of all academic disciplines to express themselves.
Every submission that we have received never fails to bring out the uniqueness and creativity of the student body! *Tusitala* gives thanks to everyone that has submitted to this semester’s issue. We would also like to thank everyone who had submitted their piece in previous years. Your commitment and dedication to the publication is not taken for granted. Without the contributions from the student body, *Tusitala* would cease to exist.

Thank you
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lowering</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily Murman’19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call Me Maybe</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Kelly’17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another Day in Brazil</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtney Gora’16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeding</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily Murman’19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irascible</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Jones ’17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfidy of Catharsis</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick Nusbaumer’17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:27 PM</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily Murman’19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Face, White Space</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn Jennings’16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenshi</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miwa Lee ‘18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tabacalera 2</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrea Castillanos ‘15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect Storm</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley Ackerman ’16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Golden Line</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley Ackerman ‘16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cracked Flame</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivia Zyszczyński ‘17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lowering

The whole idea of it makes me feel as if the entire room is shifting, endless rows of upholstered chairs encroaching, leaving their once-calm places. A handshake and solemn smiles, a mask of makeup, an envelope stuffed with questions. I can’t make sense of why I’m looking back when I’m one of the youngest here but when my eye shifts through shadowy figures and lands upon the spray of velvet roses placed upon the casket, the haze is cleared. I see her there, knees bent, hands folded, diamonds sliding down her cheek. I want to run up to her and crush her in my arms, but I’m a statue - later on I will fulfill my duty. Feeling her sobs against my contoured chest, the tops of her braids frizzy, bottoms bound by purple hair ties, knowing that ten years isn’t long enough to learn of loss. I will have to stay calm in the afternoon sun even as the repeating note of the crane rings in my mind and my high heels sink past parched grass into the tousled dirt.

Emily Murman’19
Call Me Maybe

The flicker of the first sight
My heart rate raises
The heat rushes my body
Randomly walking forward
Each step feels like crushing coal
Red ambers tickle my toes
Mind runs blank
Reminisce renders my soul completely
The burning stare of the on looking peers
The soul awaken by the touch of her flame
My steps draw me closer to her
Heat radiating
The smoke from her presence strangles me
Retreating is what my mind screams
The tingle of heat scratches at my skin
I surely should run, the burn awaits
Shall I reevaluate my struggle
The purpose of my plan is naturally for fulfillment
The fire of my heart cannot be smothered out
By my contradictory logic, it sears away my soul
Fine I am a hypocrite
Burn me at the stake
For I am a witch

Michael Kelly’17
He heard the blankets rustle beside him, but he didn’t dare open his eyes. Sunlight was beginning to pour over his face and he knew in any minute Margo would wrap her slender arms around his neck and begin to coax him out of his slumber, but he wouldn’t let her win. He squeezed his eyes shut and inhaled deeply as he tried to prolong dreams of his life without Margo—a bachelor life he could never return to, all because he said “I do.” He almost succeeded in fully returning to his dreamland, but he was forced back into reality by his wife’s cool breath and how he shivered when her air danced upon his bare shoulder.

“Casey,” Margo murmured softly as she threw her arms around her husband’s neck. She embraced him from behind and pressed her face against his shoulder, but Casey pretended she wasn’t there and let drool spill from the edge of his mouth and onto one of the hotel pillows. Margo noticed Casey’s pillow was marked firm and she scowled at how intent he seemed on sleeping. While she couldn’t tell if he was feigning sleep or not, she knew her husband well enough to know that he was most likely awake and the thought that he wanted to sleep his life away irritated her.

“Casey,” Margo began again, but his time acidity leaked through her voice. “Casey—it’s eight o’clock.” She stared at her husband’s greying brown hair—the hair he claimed he would never dye because it made him “look like a silver fox, like George Clooney”—and grew frustrated as he continued to ignore her. That’s it, she thought. She began to pound her fists against her husband’s back and noticed how, whenever her fists crashed against him, his skin would pour over itself in waves. Seeing Casey’s skin flop like this made Margo even more irritated with her husband because at fifty-two, Casey was no longer watching what he was eating and it was taking a toll on his body—and their sex life. Casey claimed that, after fifty-two years of experience, he knew how to eat and Margo knew that this statement wasn’t exactly wrong. He did know how to eat—he proved that every time they went out to a buffet—but Casey was too stubborn to understand that he was growing older and could no longer eat like the athletic soccer player he had once been. Casey
was an old man how whose metabolism was shot, but his mind was still young and when he looked in the mirror, Margo knew that Casey saw himself as the handsome, charismatic man she fell in love with years ago.

Casey’s entire body shook from his wife’s incessant pounding and he knew that he’d have to open his eyes—he’d have to let her win—because his back began to sting and he knew it wouldn’t be long before his wife would start biting him. He turned his body to face her so she’d stop abusing him and extended both of his arms over the red silk that poured over his body.

“Mmm…I’m always big spoon,” Casey grumbled as he blindly grabbed at the ends of the silk sheets so he could throw them over his wife’s head. He planted his hands along the edges of the sheets so Margo couldn’t escape from underneath, and she squealed with mock anguish before all too quickly giggling in delight. Although he couldn’t see her, Casey couldn’t help but smile at his wife’s naiveté. She must have thought he was being funny, showing his affection for her by pulling the covers over her head to mess up her already tangled bedhead, but really Casey was thinking about suffocating her. He loved Margo—after being married to her for thirty years it was apparent that he did—but he didn’t love her now. Not when she was waking him up to spend another day in Brazil.

“I can’t believe you’re making me wear a fanny pack,” Casey muttered as he sucked in his bulging stomach to secure the fanny pack’s clasp. Rolls of excess “love” (as Margo called it) spilled out from over the sides of the strange little purse and Casey felt his lungs strain against his ribcage with every breath. He and Margo were standing outside of the hotel and all around them were tanned bodies in bikinis. Compared to everyone else, they looked like polar bears in a forest of black bears; they were obvious tourists. One woman with thick, black hair passed by—her lime green, sequined bikini sparkled in the sun—and pointed at Casey while uttering something to the dark man beside her. They spoke in foreign tongues—Casey thought perhaps they were speaking Portuguese—and he assumed that they were commenting on how out of place he and his wife must have looked with their pasty skin and now with the belly-fat squeezer he sported. Casey looked down at his fanny pack, frowning.

“Don’t these just shout, ‘Hey everyone: I don’t belong
“Oh, don’t be ridiculous,” Margo said, smacking his shoulder. She looked down to adjust her own fanny pack and Casey couldn’t help but laugh at how ridiculous she looked when the fanny pack sat atop her deep blue, designer dress.

“What?” Margo asked upon hearing her husband’s deep baritone laughter. She looked up in confusion, her electric-blue eyes growing wider than usual. Her husband looked back at her, smiling slyly.

“You know that belly purse sure makes the dress I bought you look real good. Really brings out your eyes.”

“Oh, shut up,” Margo grumbled, sensing her husband’s sarcasm. “Besides, it’s not a belly purse, or a fanny pack or any of that crap. It’s a belted satchel.”

“Well,” Casey said, unclasping his fanny pack, “I’m not Indiana Jones. I’m not wearing any kind of satchel—”

“But they’re convenient,” Margo persisted as she shuffled through her own fanny pack and removed a bag of trail mix. She ripped open the bag and roasted honey filled the air as she took a handful of the mix and stuffed it into her mouth.

“See?” she said as she chewed. Remnants of peanuts escaped from her lips. “Convenient,” she repeated, nodding to herself.

“I’m not wearing it,” Casey said and slapped the fanny pack to his wife’s chest with finality. He realized he’d given it back to Margo harder than he intended, and touched his lips gently to her forehead. Margo understood that this was Casey’s way of silently apologizing, and she pressed her lips to his cheek as a sign of forgiveness, although deep down she wished he would utter he was sorry for once.

“Well,” Casey said as he started to walk ahead his wife, “I’m going to see Giant Jesus. I didn’t come to Brazil just to get food poisoning and look like a tourist.” Without turning back, he asked if Margo was coming.

“Yes,” Margo said as her heels clicked furiously along the pavement. Casey towered a good foot over her, so she had to pump her arms and her legs had to work overtime to catch up with him.

“Good,” Casey said, continuing to stare straight ahead. “And after we visit Jesus, I’m picking the restaurant.”
“But Casey, I already made a reservat—”
“I’m not getting sick again. I pick where we eat for the rest of the trip.”

“Okay,” Margo sighed and looked at the ground, defeated.

Although Cristo Redentor was one of the main reasons why Margo wanted to travel to Brazil, now that she was actually here—here, in the shadow of Giant Jesus—her heart stirred with nothing but discontent. At first she couldn’t figure out what it was about the statue that bothered her—she thought perhaps it was Jesus’ eighty-foot robes that failed to inspire her, or perhaps it was his arms: concrete arms that failed to welcome her despite how they extended across the sky—but as her eyes continued to make their way up towards Jesus’ face, she knew instantly that it was his eyes. While Jesus’ gaze was directed down towards his sea of admirers, Margo realized that Jesus ultimately ignored them—he disregarded the hundreds of camera flashes, he was deaf to peoples’ shouts of praise, and he stared vacantly into space as three small children fell to his feet and cried, “Resgata-me, oh poderoso criador!”—because his eyes were nothing but stone.

He doesn’t see me.

Margo squeezed her eyes shut, feeling her cheek muscles strain and tighten as she attempted to make her eyes as tiny as possible. She thought that if she’d closed her eyes long enough then perhaps Jesus would grow eyes that actually saw, but when her eyes flashed open again, she was met with his same stony stare, and the coldness of his face made her shiver.

“He doesn’t see me,” said Margo, barely moving her lips.

“What?” said a deep, muffled voice next to her, and Margo jumped. She turned, startled by the sudden voice, and realized that it was just Casey, munching on a churro.

“Oh, uh forget it,” she stammered quickly before turning back to the statue.

Casey laughed, finding it amusing how his wife had forgotten about him even though he had stood next to her all this time, but secretly he was glad that she forgot because that meant they both had dreams of returning to a time when they weren’t together. He smiled at this realization and offered Margo a bite of his churro, but she shook her head and continued to stare at the statue. Casey frowned at his wife, unaccustomed to rejection because Margo never denied him when he offered her food. He
knew she understood that sharing meals was how he showed his gratitude towards her, and he was about to call her out on rejecting his thanksgiving when he heard her sniffle, and noticed tears welling up in her eyes.

Goddammit, Casey thought as he threw an arm across his wife’s shoulders. Margo willingly surrendered to his added weight and began choking out small sobs, and Casey sighed, relieved that he seemed to be comforting her. Margo’s shoulders shook violently and he looked down at her, noticing that almost all of the color had been drained from her face, with the only hint of color coming from the mascara-stricken tears that continued to stream down his wife’s delicate cheeks.

“Oh Marg,” Casey sighed, and in an attempt to further comfort her, he smoothed his thumb under her eyes to collect her hot tears.

Here they were, in Brazil, at the statue Margo had been talking about nonstop since they had first arrived four days ago, but now that she was actually here—now that they were actually here—she was rubbing her eyes and ruining her makeup over the thing. Casey’s brow furrowed. He tried to convince himself that he understood his wife’s changing feelings towards the statue, but honestly he had no idea why she’d find the statue upsetting, especially because he actually kind of liked it. So far, he despised everything about Brazil—he hated how the sun felt too warm on his back and made his skin feel sticky, he hated the air for always smelling of stale booze and coconut oil, he hated spending half an hour in the bathroom due to food poisoning, and he hated the people that spoke to him in foreign tongues with their cheap merchandise waggling in the air, trying to get him to buy something—but he actually liked Giant Jesus. Jesus was...well...giant, and Casey liked the idea that humans were capable of constructing something so colossal using only brute force and sheer will. Truthfully, he thought the statue was amazing, and while he wouldn’t ever admit this to Margo—he didn’t want her to think he enjoyed traveling, because he didn’t—he couldn’t possibly believe that her feelings contrasted ever so strongly from his.

Casey thought back to Margo’s face when she had told him to “forget it.” He thought she looked as if she was in a daze, recalling how her endlessly excited blue eyes seemed oddly cloudy and lifeless, and he figured that if he were to wave a hand in front of her face at that exact moment, she would have been so involved in her own thoughts that she wouldn’t have blinked.
Quite possibly, Margo wouldn’t have noticed that for one, small fraction of her life, a waving hand had briefly interrupted her line of vision.

Casey gently pulled Margo’s cold shoulders towards him, and wrapped around her in a sweaty embrace.

“Margo,” Casey crooned, as he pulled his face down towards to his wife’s ear. “What did you say, earlier?”

He wanted to make sure his wife heard him, so he enunciated every word with deliberate slowness. He felt as if he was talking to a small child, but he thought that this was probably a good thing because if he had talked to her as he would with an adult, he would have told her to shape up and quit whining, and that would not have been very comforting. Still, despite how he tried his best to hear her out and console her, Margo wriggled out of his arms and turned on him.

“It doesn’t matter!” she screamed, turning sharply away from him. She rubbed at her arms—Casey thought Margo was probably ridding herself of his sweat—and tears began to flow more rapidly from her eyes as her gaze fell to the pavement. Suddenly, though, Casey noticed his wife’s eyes light up as she spotted an abandoned soda can within perfect kicking range. Even though Margo adored the lavish dresses he bought her and had relatively expensive taste, Casey knew that there was a small, soft spot in his wife’s heart reserved specifically for “Kick the Can.” Margo wound up her leg to kick—

But her tears blurred her vision and her aim suffered. She froze, and though Casey couldn’t see exactly what Margo had kicked, from the way Margo’s eyes appeared to be bulging out of her head he knew she definitely had not kicked the can. Whatever Margo kicked was much too hard and not nearly as crunchy as the can should have been, and after blinking back her tears Margo was able to discover what it was that she had actually kicked.

Margo let out a gasp and Casey followed the direction of his wife’s gaze to find that Margo, his petite, little wife, gave some burly black man a broken ankle.

The man stared at Margo in disbelief and Casey flew over towards Margo as the man crumbled to the ground, cradling his ankle.

“I, uh-uh, I-I’m sorry,” Margo stammered at the man and in response, he screamed. He continued to scream and began to utter sounds in a tongue neither she nor Casey could under-
stand, but both knew instantly that whatever it was he was saying meant pain. Margo began to open her mouth, but before she could say anything else, Casey scooped her up in his arms and led her away.

“We’re done at Giant Jesus,” he said, and Margo nodded against his shoulder.

“Tell me whatever’s going on in your head at dinner? Everything that happened back there?” Casey asked, but from his authoritative tone, Margo knew that she had no say in the matter. She was to tell Casey about the statue, even though she knew that he wouldn’t understand.

But Margo, she could imagine him saying, it’s just a statue.

I know, she would reply, but statues are created to be the likeness of something, and what if all this time I’ve been dedicating my life to a man who can’t even see me—a man who doesn’t even know I’m here?

And then Casey would laugh and waves of fat would make wrinkles in his t-shirt.

And then he’d call her crazy.

And then she’d nod her head slowly, and she’d keep nodding her head until she actually believed him.

She didn’t think she would need to nod long.
Feeding

I will spend hours pushing poetry into my hot mouth with rough fingers.
I will feed myself seedy dirt and let flowers grow between my teeth so whoever may kiss me will have lips and tongue coated with dusty pollen.

Emily Murman’19
Irascible

She crotches down,  
Vigorously rubs her palms against one another  
And places them against the solemn flame  
As if to calm it,  
But you can’t calm fire,  
You can only lift it  
Or smother it,  
“Cold out there, eh?”  
“Yeah,” she chuckles  
And drags her eyes across the mantel,  
“You have a really nice place here, warm--cozy” she glances at him but they don’t meet eyes,  
He clears his throat, “I actually made that, little fireplace,”  
He hands her a cup of hot chocolate  
And joins her upon the lukewarm floor,  

After a couple sips, she breaks the still silence, “how long did it take you to make it?”  
He looks up at the wooden mantel hoping it would jog his memory,  

“Well I, first off, I took uh, tree down yonder and cut ‘er down, now it—”  
“Wait, you cut a tree down to make a fireplace,” she said matter-of-factly  
As she stared right into the flames,  
See, you can’t calm fire,  
You can only lift it  
Or smother it,  

“Well,” he combs through his beard with his fingers, “Yeah, I used it to make somethin’—”  

“But-why-did-you-have-to-use-a-tree,” she adds and her voice breaks slightly,  

Their eyes meet  

Silence fills the room and the nervous flames flicker,  
He places his hot chocolate down and places his hands in his lap,
“It’s just wood, ya know?”
“No,” she shakes her head,

“Okay, I, I didn’t mean it like that, it just umm, doesn’t have feel-
ings, it can’t feel,”
“It’s alive no less than you, how could you think that?”
He opened his mouth to respond but his words disappeared,

Yeah, you can’t calm fire,
You can only lift it
Or smother it,

She turns her face against the dimmed flame, away from him,
“‘The fire,'” he says calmly and she looks at him dubiously,

He gets up and goes into a closet and brings out two wooden logs,

“I had to use wood to make it, to keep you warm,” he sets them with-
in the flame and moves them around until the flame regains its light,

“But you shouldn’t have to sacrifice a tree to keep me warm,” she says as if to
convince herself,

Honoring her modesty, he lets out a low facetious chuckle and says,
“Then go stand outside then,”

Instantaneously—
She locks eyes with him,
Sets her hot chocolate down adjacent to his,
Gets up and flails the door open,

The cold breeze causes the timid flame to flicker in the opposing
direction,
Almost as if the flame was about to be smothered,
Mhm, you can’t calm fire,
You can only lift it
Or smother it,

Whips of cold air alarm the man,
He stares into the flame,
He thinks: This simple flame is created every day during the winter,
It dies and it’s brought back to life
Just to warm us
And the fuel of the flame has become the cynosure of the evening,
He watches the wood slowly dissipate,
Turning into ash
And then into nothingness,
He gets up and goes to the door,
His footsteps, heavy, like they were sending a message of defeat

Or a truce
“I, we, can find other ways of heat,” he says as he puts his hand along the door handle,
She doesn’t move but her eyes flutter
The “v” planted above her eyebrows lowers its wings as she walks back inside,
Verily, you can calm fire,
You can also lift it
Or smother it,
He throws a thick blanket over the flame, smothering it,
The entire room becomes obscure
But after a few seconds,
Their silhouettes start to become visible,
Silence fills the room once again,
She gets up feels along the walls like blind mimes

And goes into a closet, fumbles around and brings out two wooden logs,
He looks at her dubiously and she responds:
“I don’t agree with it, but I—I’ve just been writing this paper, and—”
She plops on the floor like a puppet with cut strings
And pushes a strand of hair away from her face,
The noble flames flicker and their faces glow,
“You know,” he lifts his cup and examines it, “I made this, too,”
She rolls her eyes dramatically and he returns with a low laugh,
She laughs,
And the fire laughs, too.

Charles Jones ’17
Perfidy of Catharsis

“Decided to die on this day
Attended a gun tasting exposition.
Put on my Sunday bests and
Opened the take-home-sack:

Black steel;
My favorite flavor.

Packed a couple of napkins from
The cafe, wouldn’t want to
Stain my fancy clothes...

Hmm...
Bury me in my fancy clothes.

Can hear mom screeching.
Dad disappointed;
Catalysts for my acquired taste.

Knees rosy from the stained wood floor.
Cool, drab wood.
Do not have time to pad knees;
must make quick work.
Fingers entwine handle.
Heavier than expected; need both hands.
‘Click.’

Fuck. Forgot to buy a magazine.
Find one under dad’s sink.

See him in the hallway,
“How’s it going son?”
“Good!”
Dad has nice magazines,
The ones you have to show ID for.
Grab one, only need one.
Taste the Black Steel once more,
Still alive for

a moment.

Never tried this before,
I crave the anxiety.
Never cried before a meal.
Never weeped into a cold steel dish.
A meal of catharsis.
Please, grant me catharsis.

Okay,
Catharsis...
Anytime...

now.

Found me on the floor, couldn’t
Wash the stains off the floor,
Could not discern body from floor.
Don’t think that was the first concern.
Food poisoning at its finest;

Black steel stale.
Mind stale.
Life so stale.

Need more napkins,
For tears,
For blood,
For stains,
For, what words will
resurrect my being?

Perhaps none.
Dad seeks black steel now,
Prepares his meal just as I.
Misses asking his son how it’s going.
Cannot endure
Unlike his son,  
Dad never forgets his magazines,  

Joins his son in post-meal stupor,  
catharsis...  

Leaves mom to clean up our messes  
With a mop and some towels.  

Gets off slick leather couch,  
Was watching ‘Pangako Sayo,’  
Misses Amor vowing:  
“Matitikman niyo ang batas ng alipin!”  
“You will taste the law of slaves,” he said.  

You will taste the law of slaves.  

Mom burns the magazines,  
Destroys the food,  
Recreates Hell, well,  
Not enough fire.  
It’ll do.  

House gutted,  
Our memories scorch.  
House collapses.  

Our final meal.  
Simply occupying the table,  
Longing...  
Pensile...  

Embers dwindle;  
We are satiated by the  
perfidy of life’s  
shortcomings.”  

Nick Nusbaumer'17
Late December.

Dull hums of boredom fill our warm car, but my dad notices the lights sprinkled along River Road. “For us living this close to a shrine, we’ve never been here. Let’s check it out.” Red winter blood rushes to my lips and christens their soft bow. Now I’m thinking about the way John Lennon’s husky voice sings about Mother Mary. My penny loafers click on the cobbled path, my sweater slips off my shoulder, winter wind brushes past the jeans clinging to my thighs. It knots my hair, and I think of how a smiling aunt once compared it to Jim Morrison’s. The click on the cobblestone stops. There lay thousands of roses piled on a hill, cascading down, painting a mural.
under the bruised winter sky. They’re like an opiate, heavy in the back of my throat. I can’t help but laugh at the picturesque spontaneity, how this random fling, this left turn on River Road, became so beautiful. My laughs are clear and sharp, piercing the night, because when I press my face into the flowers, their velvet petals meet my lips, like some spontaneous kiss. The night is my cathedral. I tug the sweater back onto my shoulder, give the roses a goodbye, and walk back to the car.

Emily Murman’19
The Black Lives Matter movement began after George Zimmerman was acquitted for the murder of Trayvon Martin. It began as a hashtag on Twitter in an effort to bring awareness to the injustice that had occurred in this particular case, and the many unfortunate cases similar to it: Black people being killed by white vigilantes and police officers with no justice for the victims.

For most, college is a time to explore your identity and find your passions in life. For me, college has been exactly that. My experience at Lake Forest College has really helped me to delve into the question of who the heck am I? And it hasn’t been just “oh I’m a young lady who likes to write and really wants to be a teacher.” My self-exploration has led me to come to the realization that I am a BLACK WOMAN. And in the bubble of the college, and most of the world, actually, I don’t mean shit.

Before coming to college I’d already had experiences with racism, but there’s something about being a Black face in a white place that really puts things into perspective. The first outward “you don’t belong here” message came in the form of beady blue eyes boring a hole into me whenever I went to my 9:30 Tuesday/Thursday morning Medieval Literature class. I tried to make excuses for why this tiny blond girl would stare so intently at me for an hour and twenty minutes. Perhaps where I sat is where her eyes naturally fell when she zoned out in class? I tried sitting a seat at a ninety degree angle from my original seat. Her eyes still bored into me, stealing tiny pieces of my soul. I asked the only other two students of color, a Latino boy and a Black girl, if she ever stared at them, and they responded with an empathetic YES!

*Names have been changed to protect the identity of the subject

The same thing happened whenever I would attend her precious SWAN meetings in which she was the secretary or vice president, I forget which one. But I would go with a white girl that I met during First Connection. There were few women of color at the meetings. As the semester wore
on, I saw less and less of them, and I myself eventually stopped going, to escape her beady blue eyes.

... Black people as a whole are considered “inferior” to whites, but this phenomenon is taken to a whole new level when it comes to Black women. The unique condition of the intersectionality of Black women is rarely acknowledged, but when it is, it is in the form of angry Black woman, ghetto-ness, welfare queens and big booties. In short, we are undesirable as life partners, but everybody wants a chance to tap our fat asses. As one clever Twitter user notes “Black girls better watch out. White girls getting thick now,” which perpetuates the idea that the only thing we are good for is men’s sexual pleasure.

Wanting to do the college thing, I got drunk one night and went to a borderline party. I wasn’t white-girl-wasted, but I was pretty girl-tipsy. I was having fun for the most part, but the music in every room absolutely sucked. My friends were getting tired of going from room to room and nominated me to go check out the next one. I happened to walk in with a Black guy and one of his buddies saw him. I’m not sure if he saw me and just had a foot in mouth moment, or if he said this to remind me that my Black ass wasn’t shit, but at the top of his lungs, the white guy says to the Black guy “Jaquan* looooooovves white women!!!!!!!” The Black guy then turned around and grabbed me in a giant embrace, declaring his love for all women. Pause. I know Jaquan. I know his girlfriend. I know he don’t give a fuck about Black women and is one of the Negroes on this campus that would swap out his dark skin for a paler complexion if he could. I’m not sure who he was trying to fool, but I was drunk. Not dumb. I know his ass don’t fuck with us Black girls. He had already been claimed by the whites, and no self-loving sista would want his ass, so him making a public declaration for his “love of all women” was lost on me. I pushed him away from me and went further into the room to hear what music was playing in back. Country. What a wasted night.

I wish I could say Jaquan is the only instance of a Black man preferring white women over Black women, but that has been an occurrence throughout my college career. The excuses for this are endless, but the funniest I’ve heard is that they want cute babies with good hair. I hate science and even I know that just because you mix some genes you aren’t going to always end up with a child that has coveted light skin and type 3a hair. For
people who expect their child to look like this, I often wonder if they would love their child any less if it came out with skin as dark as the night and hair in tightly wound coils? Or would they pull a King Henry VIII and kill all their wives until they got the “perfect” mixed child? When people say mixed babies are cute, I really just want to barf because what does that say about all the dark skinned kids that are just as beautiful as mixed babies? Youtube personality Chescaleigh, a Black woman married to a white man, puts it best: “my babies are going to be cute because babies are cute, and I’m cute, and my husband is cute. Not because they’re going to be mixed.”

The attraction to white women is not something new, however. Malcolm X was initially attracted to white women because they were the white man’s forbidden treasure. Men in the 1990’s saw it as the ultimate achievement of status. One of my peers during our second year at Lake Forest looked at me and my two Black friends and broke it down to us like this: “Looking at y’all I can tell ain’t none of y’all going. But a white girl. Well...”

I’ve felt grubby hands all up in my hair. Hands that did not ask permission to touch me. Hands that seriously mess with my ‘do. For me, my natural hair is a religion. I respect it and show it love. It is a symbol of pride. A symbol that generations before me in the 1960’s were deemed rebellious for. Before this current natural hair movement, Black women did everything possible to get their hair European straight. We burned our scalps with the creamy crack, hot combs, and sometimes even irons. The hair that grows out of our heads is considered unprofessional, unruly, and unattractive. So why do people always want to touch it? And if I say no, they wonder what is wrong with me and I am deemed the angry Black woman. If I ask to touch your butt, and you, rightfully so, tell me no, I’m not going to ask why not. That’s yours. Not mine. My hair is mine. Not yours.

I decided to allow my hair the freedom to grow without manipulation my first year of college. It was more of a survival method than anything since I didn’t have a hot comb or stove to keep it straight, and my hair would only laugh at the joke of a flat iron. So I let it be, and it became a religion for me. Today me and my hair share a relationship that has been four years in the making and we know how to respect each other.
The natural state of my hair forces me to be careful with my choices when styling it to keep it healthy. Sometimes it is necessary to wear protective styles and my favorite is throwing on a scarf and letting it do what it do under there. Because I’m going to try to give these two boys the benefit of the doubt, I’m going to say that this next incident happened out of ignorance and genuine curiosity. Two non-Black boys of color were walking behind me and a friend as we made our way back to our dorm. One of them then asked me “Is that a weave scarf???” Me and my friend stopped in our tracks. A weave scarf? We looked at each other, the question on our faces. I don’t remember exactly what followed in the exchange, but I know for certain that I was thinking, and communicating to my friend through facial expressions that we’d learned to give each other, “What, pray please tell, is a weave scarf?” There’s no such thing. This was insulting because it assumed that all Black girls wore weave, and never in their life had these two boys ever seen me wear weave. There’s a dirty rumor going around that Black women are addicted to weave, but the truth of the matter is that white women wear just as much weave as Black women do. Besides, it’s a protective style that some natural women revert to to ensure their kinks and coils survive the harsh winter.

Calling a white person a racist is just as bad as calling a Black person a nigger. They literally cannot stand that shit. It is the worst thing to ever accuse them of. So of course, there is an arsenal of rebuttals, including but not limited to: “but I love Black culture,” “I have a Black friend,” “I can’t control what my ancestors did,” and my personal favorite, “You’re being reverse racist.” Reverse racism. Sorry to break it to you, but reverse racism is a unicorn. A mythical occurrence that was created to erase white guilt. Although the universal consensus amongst progressive Civil Rights activists is that it’s impossible for people of color to be racist, comedian Aamer Rahman makes a convincing argument for why reverse racism could actually exist. He details how people of color would be reverse racist if we got a time machine to go back before Europe colonized the world and do the exact same thing they did except in reverse. Then reverse racism would actually exist.

Although in our current situation, it is impossible for people of color to be racist. They can, however, be prejudiced and hold biased beliefs which are not grounded in reason or experience. Racism is prejudice plus
power or prejudice plus discrimination. Both definitions mean a bias combined with the ability to institutionally act on that prejudice is what creates racism. For people of color to be reverse racist, they would have to have the ability to impact the lives of white people and be disproportionately preferred for jobs and other life opportunities over white people. Although people of color can’t be reverse racist, we can be prejudiced, which is only one part of the formula for racism. I have to admit that I am prejudiced.

I wasn’t fully aware of my own prejudice until this summer when I befriended a white girl. The thing is, when interacting with an unfamiliar white person, my guard immediately goes up, and I approach with caution. This white girl started me thinking about why I do that. We had been in a car crash together and were in a different state far away from our families, which I think propelled the bond that we formed with each other. After knowing her for only two months, I consider her a good friend, but I would never use her as the excuse for why I’m not prejudiced, because I am. She unknowingly helped me realize this when one day she was talking to me about one of our students. She was having a hard time with him and didn’t know what to do. She told me she thought part of the reason was because she was a white lady, him a Hmong boy. I told her how I, as a twenty-two year old woman had a hard time trusting white people, and it was no doubt, the same for this ten year-old boy whose school experience most likely told him that, to white people, he wasn’t shit.

That night as I lay in my bed, I wondered why I have “Caution White People” sign in my head. I grew up around mostly Latinos, and if anything I should be prejudiced against Black people, since they were the source of much of my anxiety in middle school. But I’m not. I love Black people. When walking down the street, I don’t the typical reaction and get scared when I see a group of Black boys, but if I see a white guy I find myself praying that I survive the two-second passing. But why? I’m still trying to find the answer to this, but most of it may be the experience I’ve had in college when the color of my skin became the most salient part of my identity.

My friend told me a story about when she was an RA for a floor of freshmen at her school. She had one resident that she found out was depressed and went to her room to talk to her. Gradually the resident
opened up and told my friend that she had been being bullied by the other residents on the floor and many of them threw racial slurs at her in and outside of the classroom. Being in the hostile environment had made the student depressed and suicidal. My friend did everything in her power to help the girl, but the school and her fellow RAs didn’t seem to care much about the situation. One day, the girl couldn’t take it anymore, and she ran away. My friend still doesn’t know what happened to her but she thinks about it continuously. She wonders if the girl went home or if she finally broke under all the hate that she encountered, and ended her life. It’s situations like these that should alert colleges to put a bigger emphasis on social diversity and acceptance of people of all backgrounds.

I have never been to the point where I felt like I couldn’t hold my own against my ignorant classmates, but I shouldn’t have to hold my own all the time. At some point, the school should step in and say “we won’t tolerate racism as an institution of higher learning.” Situations like my friend and her resident should not occur, and yet it seems to be common in colleges and universities across this nation. Hearing her tell me this story reminded of what Malcolm X “the most disrespected person in America is the Black woman. The most unprotected person in America is the Black woman. The most neglected person in America is the Black woman.”

...With the spike in media coverage of police brutality, #BlackLivesMatter makes the desperate plea that America sees Black people as human beings who are worthy of living. It isn’t about hate. It’s simply about the humanity of Blacks that the world refuses to see. If we allow the oppressive treatment of Black and brown bodies to continue the way it is, we will eventually revert to the past of overt racism filled with Jim Crow laws, segregation, KKK night rides, and slavery.
Tabacalera 2
Perfect Storm

Ashley Ackerman ‘16
The Golden Line

Ashley Ackerman ‘16
Cracked Flame

Olivia Zyszczynski ‘17
Untitled

Leena Schwartz '19
Sunrise Over Cape Town

Matt Weidner ‘17
Untitled
Untitled

Heather Hanson ‘14
Tabacalera 3

Andrea Castillanos ‘15
Personal Exploration Map

Ashley Ackerman '16
The Streetlamp

Louisa Van Akkeren ‘18
Crackle

Louisa Van Akkeran ’18
Glow

Luisa Van Akkeren ‘18
Moon over Maine

Louisa Van Akkeren ’18
Every submission that we have received never fails to bring out the uniqueness and creativity of the student body! *Tusitala* gives thanks to everyone that has submitted to this semester’s issue. We would also like to thank everyone who had submitted their piece in previous years. Your commitment and dedication to the publication is not taken for granted. Without the contributions from the student body, *Tusitala* would cease to exist.

Thank you
‘Teller of Tales’—The rough English translation of the Samoan word “Tusitala” perfectly encapsulates the heart and meaning of the publication. Tusitala is the premier literary magazine at Lake Forest College. Since 1935, the publication has brought student literature and art to life in its pages. Featuring sketches, paintings, digital art, prose, non-fiction, poetry, and more. Tusitala’s pages serve as a diverse platform for students of all academic disciplines to express themselves.
Unti 1ed................................................................. 28
Leena Schwartz ’19

Dehydrated............................................................ 29
Nikoletta Raso ’17

The Traveler Story.................................................. 30
Ashley Ackerman ’16

Unti 1ed................................................................. 31
Leena Schwartz ’19

Secrets in the Tea Leaves......................................... 32
Samantha Van Kollenburg ’14

Unti 1ed................................................................. 33
Brandyn Ausich ’16

Mechanical Fishes..................................................... 34
Emily Murman ’19

Unti 1ed................................................................. 35
Heather Hanson ’14

Breaking Tension..................................................... 36
Louisa Van Akkeren ’18

Unti 1ed................................................................. 37
Abram Garcia ’15

Moon over Maine..................................................... 38
Louisa Van Akkeren ’18
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Just the Way I Like You</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediating Mario's Marriage</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frogs</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still Empires</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His Element</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chasing Ice</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wait for a Train</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Flood</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illusive Identity</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Wow!” I said, but in the back of my mind I was wondering what that would look like, too.

2.

What you don’t know and can’t see is that she is a Third Culture Kid (TCK)—a child who has moved in and out of foreign countries as her parents have transferred around the world. Born into one culture, raised among others, her identity is most closely aligned with others raised like her, moving internationally.

Bahrain was always boring, especially on the weekends, so me and Michaela would often find ourselves sitting outside on her balcony watching people and cars as we sucked on shaved ice. We’d replace the syrup with coconut rum. We always played this game where we tried to pour out some of the shaved ice onto the people walking below and then pull our feet away if we heard them shout at us in Hindi, Tagalog, or Arabic. Sometimes they’d scream and recited some scripture because they believed that it was actually a drunk pigeon that had peed on them and that it was all the devil’s work because their hair and clothes would end up smelling of alcohol. And while I would always laugh at everything, Michaela loved the insults that came in English the most, her laughs were so hard that I was scared that she’d end up with an ulcer.

“You OK?” I always asked.

“Yeah,” she’d always say wiping the last laugh off his lips.

“You?”

“Yeah,” I always said back before we continued to torture the tiny travelers trying to make it out there in the blazing heat.

3.

Expert Rebecca Grappo says there are three basic things all children need: belonging, recognition and connection. For TCKs, these basic needs are ripped away with each move. Powerless in the decision to relocate, their many losses are often not acknowledged even by their own parents, and the main problem is unspoken, unrecognized, shunted aside.

Before winter break, Michaela broke into my building be-
You may not notice her. At first glance, she may appear perfectly comfortable—these kids are chameleons, adept at taking on the colors of each new environment they are plunged into. She looks and sounds like the other kids in her class; she wears the same kind of clothes, has the same gadgetry, and carries the same backpack.

Michaela was caught making out with someone in the boy’s bathroom. It was on the second floor of our high school, which nobody ever used because it was always closed either for repairs or for some other unknown reason that most of us didn’t understand. But Michaela said that it was open when she and Naven, the new kid from South Africa, made their way in and where they were found nearly naked minutes later by Mr. Nielson who almost fainted.

“No way.”
“T’m so serious Randy, he was about to go down!”
“Yeah, but he’s mostly made out of jelly so he’d probably bounce back up.”
“You’re wrong,” she said.
We looked at each other for a moment.
“He wouldn’t have bounced back up because his ass would’ve brought down the entire school with him.”
We laughed so hard the secretary had to tell us to shush.
“So why are you here, I thought that you never got in trouble.”
I smiled at her idea of me.
“No, I’m not in trouble, I just had to drop off some papers.”
“You don’t say?” Michaela’s demeanor became determined and I felt her eyes trying to investigate mine as if to uncover some feeling that my face couldn’t forge.
“I’d like to see you get in trouble for once. I bet that it’d be interesting.”
wobbly but still warm, her right hand holding out a red cup.

“Hey you!”
“Hey.”
“Francesca’s fighting with her boyfriend again, we should just head back to my house.”
“But I just got here.”
“I know, but I got souvenirs though.”
She pulled out her purse and showed me the blunts at the bottom.
“I found these in Francesca’s room.”
“Wow.”
I only eye them for another minute before my mind makes sense of it.
“Wait, don’t tell me that that’s the reason they’re fighting?”
She only shrugged so I smile it away.
“But drink this down first. It’ll get you right.” She instructed as we exit out the house before Francesca finds us.
“But we should stop by McDonalds to get something to eat first,” I said before I sip. And as soon as I do, I’m surprised by it because I seem to taste only orange juice.

6.


Me and Michaela were dissecting fetal pigs. I was the TA for the class so I was moving around the other tables trying to help the other students identify the organs that were too cold and compressed for them to find. But Michaela was already a master at cutting things up and figuring things out because both her parents were surgeons, and she wanted to be one too. But when I got back to her, she was just staring at the scalpel as she slide it softly across the pig’s stomach.

“Hey, you need some help?” I asked her as I grabbed a new scalpel out of the sink.
“Yeah, but these pigs are too cold to cut.”
cause she was bored. I was studying for a Spanish test when she decided to count and compare the stamps on our passports.

“Wow, you been to Amsterdam already?”
“Yeah.”
“Was it fun?”
“Yeah.”
“Hey, maybe we should go sometime during Spring Break or something?”
“Yeah.”
“Hey, Randy we should go to Singapore for the summer?”
“Yeah.”
“Hey, are you listening to me?”
“Yeah.”

4.

It looks like depression, but it’s not. This is the face of TCK grief.

Out on the AstroTurf during lunch Michaela was trying to burn herself black.

“Hey Michaela…wake up. Let’s go get something to eat.”
“I’m too tired.”
“Come on, I’m really hungry.” I nudged her sleeping body with my shoe softly, careful not to kick.
“But I’m too tired.”
“Michaela, you’re already dark, you don’t need any more sun.”
“Yeah… I don’t know… but maybe I do.”

5.

And, according to Ruth Van Reken, unresolved grief is the most urgent mental health issue facing TCKs -- the children as well as the adults they will become.

After break, Francesca threw a party and invited everyone in our class. I arrived late because my parent took their time going to sleep. But once I got there, Michaela was already waiting, a little
“Yeah, guys, there shouldn’t be anything plugged in,” Oona says. She runs upstairs with Hannah to try to block the water from coming in from the outside of the house. It’s still raining and the water seeping in from the window is not slowing down. I roll my eyes and while I start picking up clothes the side of the room with the most water soaking the carpet.

Oona and I had a fight earlier that day, and before that hadn’t talked for three days, so I was surprised she even got me from the shower. We had a disagreement on a girl she didn’t like coming to the house and stopped talking to each other. I thought she was being immature and stubborn and she thought I was being insensitive to her emotions. We were friends for three years yet we were both being stubborn, neither of us seeing the other person’s point of view.

Her and Hannah couldn’t stop the water. They come back to the basement. Will and I are trying to scoop water from the floor and pour it into the sink using plastic storage bins. I’m struggling to pick up my bin, filled to the top with the murky liquid, when Oona grabs an end and helps me dump the water into the sink.

* * * * *

To say the house turned into a disaster was an understatement. We all had different schedules and were so busy with school. No one had time to clean their dishes or take out the trash, and no one was communicating with each other. As the house got dirtier and the bills started coming in the mail, all the roommates grew animosity towards each other. Someone would forget to turn off the air conditioner before they left or finish a roommate’s milk without asking and we all started regretting living in the house. None of us lived without our parents before, and whenever something broke in the dorms, Facilities Management was a call away. We didn’t know how to pay bills online or how to properly unclog the garbage disposal; hell, we didn’t even know when trash day was for the first three weeks.

* * * * *
The sizzling of a white straightener as the water hits it startles me. Angabin was getting ready and left the straightener on the floor before she went to the ATM to take out cash for the night. She was dressed in a black halter top with a matching pencil skirt and bold, jeweled necklace, ready to get out of the house and enjoy her weekend. When she came back she was doused in water from the storm with black streaks of makeup running down her face, high heels in her hand. She walked down the stairs to the basement; aware of the flood from the countless times we called her screaming to come home. She helps Hannah and Messina move the couch up to the first floor.

Eventually we are able to move everything valuable out and just looked in exhaustion at the two inches of water covering the carpet floor. Angabin and Oona start giggling and dancing in the mess, splashing the water on their already soaking clothes. Everyone starts laughing when Will mimics the way Messina first screamed to get everyone downstairs to help her. Even though it is still raining outside Angabin and Hannah drive to Jewel and bring back frozen pizza and Carlo Rossi sangria. Everyone gathers in the living room, we listen to music and laugh at what we just went through. Our laughter echoes through the house, our home for the rest of the semester.
“The basement is flooding, if you want to get your shit out I suggest you come now!”

“Shit,” I turn off the water, rip away the curtain and put on my pink polka dotted robe in a matter of seconds. I run down the first flight of stairs. Then the second, trailing soapy droplets on the floor. I realize I still have conditioner in my hair. When I get to the basement my side of the room looks completely dry, but I hear splashing. A pool of rainwater is coming from the laundry room on the north side of the house.

“It wont stop!”

“Pass me that bin!”

“We have to keep it from getting on the carpet,”

My roommates Hannah and Messina are trying to block the doorway of the laundry room by scrunching towels and blankets. Hannah’s boyfriend, Will, and my other roommate Oona are trying to throw clothes out of laundry bins to put under the window to catch the water that is gushing out. It looks like a light yellow waterfall, filling the laundry room with water up to their ankles.

* * * * *

Last year Angabin and I fantasized about living in a house togeth-
er near campus. We were done with the insect infested, cramped dorms and were ready for our own bathroom and kitchen. We got a broker last semester and found a house five minutes from campus, a duplex with three rooms, one and a half bathrooms, and a huge basement two could share. We brought in Oona and Hannah, our close friends from school and moved in the following June before our junior year.

Our landlady’s name is Holly, she’s blonde with an orange tan and thin, crinkled lips. She always wears blue aviators, hot pink lipstick, and Lulu Lemon leggings and comes to mow the lawn (wake us up) every Saturday morning. Her greatest fear was her property getting ruined by immature, promiscuous party girls; we even had to promise her we had no affiliation with the hockey team (notorious for their keggers across the street) before we could sign the lease. It took us a while to buy a couch, so we sat on pillows and ordered Domino’s until we could get pots and pans. For the first couple of days we didn’t have a trashcan and it took us a while to set up the Wi-Fi, but we were just happy we were sharing the experience of owning a house together.

* * * * *

Messina screams as she throws her clothes in a trash bag. She later said she was watching Friends in her bed when she heard a cracking sound and a huge wave of water splashed on her clothes in a hamper under the window, then started covering the laundry room floor. Will and Hannah were in her room on the second floor and Oona was in the living room listening to music when they all heard Messi-na’s scream echo from the basement. She’s the youngest roommate, turning eighteen in four days. All the roommates were going to dinner, then to the city with more friends to celebrate. An hour or so before the flood she was trying on tight, clubbing dresses in the mirror. I was in the shower getting ready. Now I’m in a soaked robe and greasy hair trying to move my shoe rack out of the basement.

When I come back downstairs I see the water is inching more and more into the room. I start unplugging all of the cables in the wall.
Chasing Ice

O thou masterpiece transfigured by time,
Your children float away without warning,
And the unfamiliar summer air
Causes you to crumble like flakes on a pastry,
O thou ancient relic incapable of retribution,
Your children are falling
Like sugar cubes into the abyss,
And unless captured by someone
It will cease to exist,
O thou sculpture that has remained untouched by other hands
And has naturally had its head cradled by nature,
Your children trip down a flight of stairs
In slow motion,
Causing our jaws to expand with questions of the “how”,
O thou human,
Look at your masterpiece.

Charles Jones ’17
Her legs cross and uncross
ticking off the seconds
rain batters the covered bench
cross and uncross

Her eyes flinch with every raindrop
fingers trace the splinters in the wood
the vein in her neck pulses blue
under pale skin

Lips part
she lets out a held breath
frozen wisps curl up
dissipates

Her legs are falling asleep next to her
eyes open wide
wipe drool from mouth corner
look around

Rain through cracks
this bed isn’t hers
waiting for a train on Sunday
at three.

Brandyn Ausich’16
Gift me your nurtured Neptune winds
to tame my Venus clouds,
to trap with forceful magnetism
my trophies, stains and sounds.

The casket built around my skin,
shell made of melted lead,
forgives your gentle hurricanes
and blames my storms instead.

I wondered if I ever could
withstand your thirteen moons
or would they quake my surface through
to leave my lands in ruins.

The thick and widowed rings of smoke
weave arcs around my waist.
The Venus looks with worried eyes,
the Neptune sets the pace.

Still Empires

Evgeniya Semenova’17
His Element

He’s like the puzzle people are afraid to solve
The knot too complicated to untangle
He’s fragile as a glass menagerie
As secret as his worn out diary
But he puts on a smile as warm as a neon light
Makes your mind take flight
He’s a piece of a whole
Too big to unfold
Too wide to take in
He’s someone I loved as a friend.
Someone who you can’t play pretend
He knows all about you from the tip to the end
He rises like a wave and scorns like a storm
His heart was once hers but now it’s torn
The man I speak of is no more
So she don’t know who she’s writing this for.

Bryanna Tartt ‘16
when he was still called Nick, not Davis. His family was
going to the fair, and the traffic on the highway was
backed up, and his sister was crying because she thought
they weren’t going to make it in time for the fireworks,
and his mom was yelling at her to quit her damn belly-
aching for once, which only made her wail louder, and Dad leaned
his elbow out the window and rubbed his temple, staring blankly at
the cars ahead of them. And Davis – Nick – looked out his window
as they drove slowly past the flashing blue and red lights of all of the
emergency vehicles. A big black screen blocked out the majority of
the scene, the four cars crushed like soda cans stomped flat on a hot
summer sidewalk, one car was even completely blackened from fire.
He watched as a black plastic bag was lifted off the ground. Of
course, he didn’t know what that was back then, but when his dad
said the phrase ‘body bag,’ he felt dread deep in his stomach that he
couldn’t yet explain. A few feet away from the cars, among all the
other debris, was a green can of Pringles, a perfect cylinder with a
few chips scattered next to it. He couldn’t explain why that image
stuck in his head so vividly, even years later.

Davis didn’t think of any of that stuff that Sunday night. He
was half-sitting on the railing, casually holding his arm over the
edge, and as he lifted his beer to his lips, a sudden draft of wind
went past him. Something feathery grazing his hand, and when he
looked down, the girl’s eyes locked on to his, just briefly, as the two
spots of white were quickly engulfed in the night. He remembered
the way the deer looked in the headlights. In his hand, a strand of
her dark hair clung desperately to him. He turned his head away,
looking at his friends, who didn’t see what had happened and were
carrying on, holding out the gin bottle to him. He pushed himself
away from the ledge, maybe a bit too hastily, and took the bottle on
his way back to his room. He raised it to his lips and tilted it back as
he stepped through the door, leaning against the wall and closing his
eyes, hoping the sound of the liquid filling his mouth would silence
any possible sound from below. He started to hum a little, not fol-
lowing any specific tune, just trying to fill up space.

He sat at the edge of his bed all night, the noise of a party next
door and his friends’ laughter leaking in through the windows and too-thin walls. He thought about humans and frogs, and decided he didn’t want to know anymore.
Like most Sunday nights during the school year, Davis, Matt, and Eli were sitting on the balcony of their little apartment on campus, drinking whatever booze they had lying around, a slightly-waterlogged case of Busch and the dregs of some gin. It was no different the night the girl jumped off the roof.

Davis came to Colorado from the small town of Embden, Maine, population of 993 and dwindling, the typical case of a kid desperate to get as far away from his shitty situation as he could. He liked to think there was something deeply poetic about the way he left; his parents heading for the town over two nights before to go to a friend’s wedding, his father firmly clapping his back before picking up his own suitcase and heading out the door, his mother’s ‘have a safe flight, honey’ thrown over her shoulder as she did the same. His older sister, still living at home, dropped him off at the airport in the morning, didn’t even walk him in, a one-armed hug sendoff across the center console. It was just him and his duffel as he boarded the plane, and he felt relief bubble in his chest, all of his material possessions on this great green earth more-or-less-so nicely folded in the bag next to him. The sun was rising as the plane took off and the little city below disappeared beneath the clouds.

It had crossed his mind before to kill himself. He wouldn’t jump, though. There’s no beauty in the mangled body you’d leave on the ground if you jumped from high enough. He imagined his body would look like that frog he squashed while running on a pale morning back in Embden, remembered that odd feeling of both squelching and crunching that moved from his heel to his arch to his toes as he rolled his foot over it. A few days later, when he ran past that spot again, the frog was still there, completely flattened, but now crisp like a potato chip and black as tar from being fried in the summer sun. He wondered briefly if, left out long enough on the street, people would crisp up like that. “Fuckin’ Christ, Davis,” Eli had said when he’d posed this question aloud in their circle one
night. His friend took a quick drag on their joint, smoke wisps trailing out of the corner of his mouth and nose as he continued, “why ya always gotta be so morbid, man? Fuckin’ weird.” Max switched the topic over to an upcoming party. Davis stayed quiet. He wouldn’t jump, he thought, not feeling satisfied until the conversation was finished in his head. He’d want to go out more glamorously than that- he had an image of himself blowing his brains out with a sleek, shiny handgun in a white room- white walls, white furniture, white rugs- his blood and brain matter acting as his medium, creating something new and spontaneous out of a planned end. Shit, yeah, that sounds good; something like that, something artistic. A statement.

Once, when the three of them were heading to the convenience store, Matt driving, Davis in the passenger seat, and Eli in the back, sticking his head into the space between them, a deer jumped out in front of the car. Up until then, Davis had always thought those signs were funny, those yellow ones that depicted the silhouette of a deer jumping, its front legs folded up, like it was trying to stand up like a person, or act like one of those ponies in the circuses trained to walk on their hind legs. “Have you ever seen a deer jump like that?” he’d asked before as they passed by one of the signs. “Seriously, I don’t think deer actually do that.” But that night the deer did jump just like that, its body so close to the car that, for a split second, Davis could see each and every white hair of its underbelly accentuated in the high beams. “Shit!” Matt had spit through gritted teeth, jerking the wheel hard left before slamming on the brakes. Eli lost his balance and was suddenly in the front of the cabin with them, his face slamming into the center console. Outside, the deer stood still in the middle of the road, a few feet from the car, staring at them with these wide. Davis started to laugh, something funny about the phrase ‘a deer in the headlights’ and actually knowing what it looked like. Eli held onto the bridge of his nose, letting out a stream of vulgarities under his breath. Bruises were already starting to form under his eyes and his nose was flowing thick dark blood onto his t-shirt, collecting wads of snotty strands.

He was eight years old when he first saw a car accident, back
How many,
How many times? Stomping’ on
Talking turtles, walking
mad mushroom faces
scurrying off to places
I have to avoid—
you!
Oh, you!—

I’ve traveled roads
(crossing castles cautiously)
and I came across Toads
telling me you’re somewhere else?

I don’t know…
I don’t know if I’ve had it or it’s
because I’ve fought a dragon—whose
sickly spiked shell kills me
the instant I touch it—

He hid drugs in built up blocks of brick
and my fist’s hit
unleashes them sending me
on a colorful flipped journey

You want Viagra?
I got wild mushrooms a plenty.

You want a life of luxury
living with Dragon King Koopa?
Or I could give it up
to my second banana brother
She has to be into the green,
I wouldn’t be surprised
with all the stuffing Mr. Dino-dick does
hiding drugs.

You smug girl,
ungrateful and grinning,
but for what? What do I get?

A simple cake?
Complementary kiss?
You have so much more!

I’m-a so poor!
Plumber butt and blue overalls.

You have treasures and pleasures I risk
my life
to rescue you.

I’ve died and cried
cried and died
tried, but died
but never dead
oh mama mia how I dread

I do more than I should
more than I ever could—for you?

All for you...
All for her pleasantry,
Princess Peach.
Poor Princess—

Peach...?
Let’s-a-go home.

Benjie Weiss’16
“No way,” I said, as I made an incision and it only took me only about an inch to see that the cut came off clean, a smooth slice right above the space where the lungs were located. I looked back up at Michaela.

“Huh…guess I was wrong,” she said as she took over, her scalpel completing the rest of the cut.

7.

These children are losing the worlds they love, over and over. They cycle through the stages of grief each time they move -- or they don’t, and push it down, submerge it, only to have it bubble up later in life, unexplained.

One morning there was a rumor running around school, and only when I was out of IB English Highers did it make its way to me. Apparently, Michaela was caught making out with Francesca’s boyfriend, Omar, at her party and Francesca was super pissed off because she thought she was pregnant that entire week. They also said that because she was Black, Filipino, and American that whoring around was what made her whole. But I knew that she wouldn’t have made out with Omar because he was ugly and had fucked up teeth.

Later after school I found her sitting out by the boy’s bathroom that was always locked and saw that she was looking out at the AstroTurf. We only smiled at each other as I sat down beside her. After that we just stared out onto the AstroTurf, out onto that synthetic green pretending to be real and in my mind I felt as if are stares were simply just settling on the sight because within the reality that had ruled our lives, real things were rare.

8.

Kathleen Gilbert has researched grief among TCKs, and writes, “Losses that are not successfully resolved in childhood are likely to reoccur again in adulthood... For TCKs, questions about who they are, what they are, where they are from, what and who they can trust are examples of existential losses with which they must cope. And the way in which they process these losses will change, or may even wait until long after their childhood.”
Just before my birthday, I decided to go to my uncle’s barber-shop to get a haircut. I was only one block away when I felt something strong bump into me.

“Hey, I’ve been calling you! Couldn’t you hear me?”
I pulled out my earphones and held them out.
“Oh!”
“Sorry.”
“No problem, but I really need to tell you something.” She had on a serious face.
“Really, and what’s that?”
“My mom got her orders and we’re heading back to the States.”
“That’s great.”
“Yeah, right, I can finally get out this place!”
“When are you leaving?”
“Tomorrow.”
“What?
“Yeah, so this probably going to be the last time I see you… for a while.”
And after she said that, I just let the silence around us speak for me.
But she sensed this and grabbed my shoulder so that we were standing side by side to take a picture.
“Happy Birthday!” she said as she sent the picture to me before taking off. She only made it a few feet before she turned back to me.
“You don’t need to get a haircut!
“What?”
“You don’t need to get a haircut! She yells it louder this time.
“Why?”
“Because you’re just the way I like you.”
Breaking Tension

Louisa Van Akkeren ‘18
Mechanical Fishes

Emily Murman ‘19
Untitled

Heather Hanson ‘14
Secrets in the Tea Leaves

Samantha Van Kollenburg ’14
Untitled

Brandyn Ausich ’16
Untitled

Leena Schwartz ‘19
Dehydrated

Nikoletta Raso ’17
Untitled

Brandyn Ausich ‘16
Illusive Identity

Ashley Ackerman ’16