

Volume 12, Issue 1

May 2022

Faculty Senate

Perennial



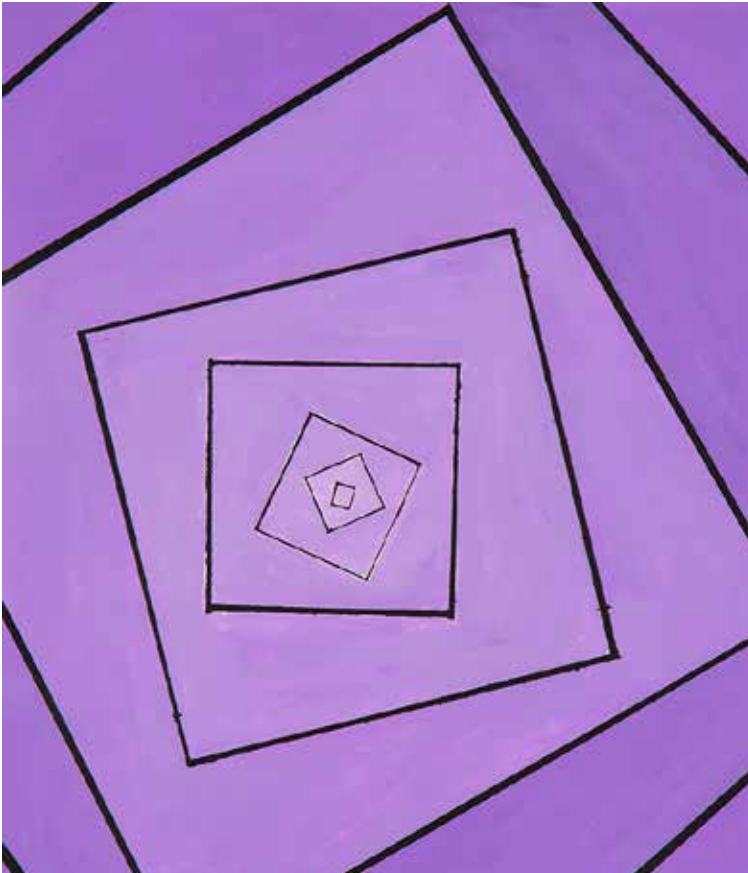
Hudson County Community College

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Zariah Alfaro, *Lost Compass*, 2022, Graphite and color pencil on paper

Daniel Estrada, *Op Art*, Acrylic paint on bristol paper

Wolf

By

Ryan Nowlin

If somehow the boy survived, what then? Wouldn't he stick out like a fallen angel, not majestic like Satan, but as some angry environmentalists know, the end justifies the means. No shit. The wolf was real, but nobody came to the boy's rescue because of his checkered past with a merciless hoosegow of villagers. Maybe it was an act of self-preservation. Couldn't he just cry out mulligan like they do in golf? To grip a golf club very loosely like holding wounded birds. Lately he goes by camel light or the grey old lady; herd immunity no closer than economic prosperity in the 1930s. Now nearly fifty, and he was no closer to being the boy he was than to the man he thought he'd be.



The River Otter after Thomas De Quincey

By

Ryan Nowlin

Three times in my life I've heard that rapid, tapping sound a river otter made as it snowshoed up a small stream. When coasting thus in stream-lined musical arrangements, as though a small piece for viola and piano were in progress, the otter nibbles at a treasured swirl of leaves. By what right do you drink from my flagon of life? I stood between a corpse and an open window--- a graph of a mind moving, with coordinates x and y resembling fly specks on old siding or an advancing storm cloud on a summer's day. Among my earliest trespasses a mysterious current of debt threatened to carry me away.

Brianna Cortes Rivera, *Beauty of the Night*, Acrylic on canvas

The Polar Bear

By

Ryan Nowlin

The endless figure-eight laps a polar bear made in his tiny, icy pool at the zoo seemed beneficial like the tick-tock of purgatory. The days beetled overhead glacier-like until a magpie brown carpet of leaves marked a passageway to a bygone era. Remember the eyelid of the gormless kid feeding bones to a dog or winter's trace dripping from the eaves of Paris? Henri Bergson's dreams of his teeth. The polar bear sweeps up after its prey. Affections of the polar bear poses certain problems like outposts floating on the fingernails of the Arctic peninsula jutting out into the cold sea.



Zariah Alfaro, *Gateway*, 2022, Graphite and charcoal on paper



Nickalus Seebraran, *Decaying Beauty*, 2022, Digital Illustration

Desert Bloom

By

Natalie Akel

I still get urges
To return to what was
Or almost was.

Moving backwards in time
I am left
Dizzy, disoriented, and
Squinting at faces
That are now no more than a memory
All involved know should be avoided.

So, I choose to grow.
Even in rocky, dry soil.
I choose to grow.

I wait for rain.
I befriend the drought.



2020

By
Natalie Akel

I needed to cry,
So I went to the water,
Leaned in,
And became a river.

Through streams, I fell.
Like a current,
I pulled what I needed towards my rough center.

The birds' song translates the wind

They are fluent.

They say:

If the leaves could sing,
They would still be crying.

If the flowers could speak,
They would laugh at you
For only just listening...

So yes, the river left me clean,
But I know
I will always be a part
Of the mud
Fossilized on
My own stony floor.



Daniel Calderon

When Tomorrow Became Today

By
Natalie Akel

I scroll the news and wonder when this fire began to flood.
Under the boots of war economy companies and their nuclear waste,
Every day, we seal our fate.
Folks in the south may tell you to pray.
In New York, we avoid your eyes,
Swear we are okay.
Perhaps we will live to see another day.

But what kind of day will it be if the air
Burns as it goes through your teeth?
If we cough and kill our neighbor.
If we greet each morning by drowning ourselves in the arctic glacier
Flooding at our feet,
Sweating into the streets.
What kind of day will that be?
And remember, your heart, habibi,
Could not take the night.



Isha Apalisok, *At Arm's Length*, Acrylic on canvas

Swan Song to the December Graduates

By
Chris Reber

*A*s though behind an Intensive Care curtain, the speaker anguished to purse dry lips and crevassed skin, spotted with wisdom of the years. Clinging to his student guide, he moved gingerly from backstage to the Commencement podium.

Like a bus complaining up a hill on a frigid December morning, he fought to elevate the whisper of each word with raspy

determination.

“You are the future, and you are my peace! Your gentle and stable hands must deliver spring’s birth with integrity and care. Then go forward to hasten and magnify the warm light of future’s summer!”

Soon after – calmed by the quiet sunset of his long journey – his feeble lips rested. He felt proud and relieved as he floated into the channel of black and silent brightness to celebrate the New Year, searing the cloud’s wisps – and igniting the graduates’ hopeful energy – with his honor.



Nickalus Seeban, *Springs Shimmer*, 2021, Digital Illustration

Generation to generation

By

Sarah Teichman

I have learned what it is to be old with age not my own, wise with words not my own, weary with weight not my own. These things are heavy. These things are

Nothing. These things are our

Heritage, hidden within us like a word in a poem or a pattern in a song, a spark fostered and nurtured until it can burst into dazzling, warming light that can never be, will never be

Extinguished, not by waves of rage or storms of hate or riptides of suspicion that promise falsely to wash us away. No squall or squalling has that power.

Remember, always, these words of mine. A fair and honest trade, for we can never forget the words of others.

I have learned in my years to celebrate burdens (for our many arms make them lighter) and embrace inconvenience (for we can make places in a world not shaped for us).

The line between how we bend and how we break is fine and thin but never still, a silent voice insistent that we hear It.

And we must hear it. Lift our luminous traditions as they lift us, connect to them as they connect us. Our rites, by birth or being, make constellations of us

Numerous stars. This is not a

Call to arms or trumpet blast. This is not an enjoiner or a threat. This is what is. We

Endure despite everything, to spite everything, for that is the legacy, dor l'dor.



Daniel Calderon

The Melancholy of Former Friends

By

Sarah Teichman

I remember my years with my friend
 Fondly until I think of the end
 Of our time together.
 No, she's not gone, just gone from me.
 We didn't end in clash or storm,
 No sharp words, no sharp edges.
 No clean break
 To heal fast and full like sprouting weeds
 To leave me whole and free again.
 We faded,
 Drawn apart by being apart.
 Her heart did not grow fonder in our absence
 From each other.
 My heart struggled with the silence.
 I didn't know, back then,
 Back when we were friends,
 That it was limited.
 Our bond, though formed fast,
 Was built to last,
 I thought. Or not.
 No voice is given
 To the melancholy of former friends.
 But there is love lost and partners parted,
 And the longing of the broken-hearted
 Does not distinguish between intimacies.
 I miss her.
 Even so, even knowing how we end,
 I don't regret our friendship
 Or the things we shared.
 Our bright laughter, our murmured hopes.
 Our every days and birthdays and "some days."
 Meals and books and blankets in the snowy dark.
 Time.
 Our time is passed, it seems,
 But if I remember the light of us
 The sadness softens to something
 I can hold onto,
 And she's not fully gone from me either.



Isha Apalisok, *Hey Moon (Please Forget To Fall Down)*, Pen and marker on paper

Dualism

By

Barry Tomkins

The human mind's a lie you know
 A reconstructed version of the truth
 A splendid fiction lovely in its artful lines
 There's history and future too
 The former edited in clever ways
 Some parts loom big and others shrink
 The forecast on the move always
 Bright or cloudy hot or cold
 Promotes a forward-looking bent
 I love the colors of perception most
 No nasty rays that burn or penetrate
 The flesh (I'll come to that)
 Rainbow hues on everything
 Bright to dull the range is there
 Lighting up the view like paint
 The sounds are great loud and soft
 Sometimes formed to interact
 In special complicated ways
 The lovely branching sprays of words
 Forking all about like living things
 They pile on thoughts as thick as trees
 A tribute to the power of mind
 To organize reality beyond the self
 And make it safe and fun to navigate

An artform in itself though rarely praised
 For sheer inventiveness and spunk
 When faced with chaos and the dark
 There's nothing in the galaxy quite like
 This bubbly froth of several billion minds
 A treasure trove we're glad we found
 These minds are great I'll save a few in globes
 So we can visit them from time to time
 But minds are not the best would you believe
 The bodies are the very prize
 Such gorgeous things we're envious
 So soft so tactile oddly separate
 From mind as if they'd had a scare
 In distant past and fell apart
 Now bodies have agendas of their own
 The nerves make feelings and so on
 And influence the fictive mental part
 But anyway that's not the point
 Embrace just one and all that interest fades away
 Its salty succulence is hard to beat
 And tartness too balanced with sweet
 The edge of bitterness in parts
 An all-round pleasure to the taste
 In sum a mind and body treat



Mourning

By

Daniel Campbell

I have felt the magic flow out
On a bright september's eve
In ethereal beatitude I have pulled it to me
Vain
Impossible
Like manna through a sieve
But that's not quite right
Because didn't I, no, didn't you
Once hold the magic to you
The sacred and terrestrial that
Once bound you to this rock like earth



Nickalus Seebaran, *Springs Silhouette*, 2022, Digital Illustration

Three Years Apart, Three Years Strong

By

Farhan R. Khan

It's been almost three years since that day.

I still remember the specific hour, minute, and second of it.

A Man I have admired all my life,

Spasming on the ground, gasping for air.

A scary night to witness.

What transpired next was anxiety and false hope,

Clinging to some miracle up above the cold grey clouds of the atmosphere.

Two weeks of praying to bring him back to me,

But in the end, what's done is done;

He has breathed his last.

Ever since then, it feels empty, hollow even.

Never would I have thought that a man of his caliber would fade away from life.

A Man that would always speak his mind, heart, and soul,

Not inhibited by the whispers of the black and white realisms

He is the beautiful grey matter of intellect

Not afraid to shout out his inner voice.

He is the voice inside your head, telling you what's right from wrong.

As days turn to weeks and as weeks turn to months,

I'm slowly getting used to his absence of presence,

At least that's what I believe it to be.

Distractions and focusing on life are good and all,

But time pauses for a moment,

Moment of solemn remembering.

Thinking of that Man

Who used to take me out for a chill cup of Dunkin'
Him sippin' on Dunkin while I munch on Donuts.
Too many memories I look back on my brain,
Too much pain of just remembering.
The brain becomes an emotional cancer,
All these what-ifs and what-woulds
God would I do anything to see him again.
To spend time with him more.
Every day, it feels like he's there but he's not there;
It doesn't get easy.
He may be gone but that doesn't mean I don't take what I've learned from him
All the adventures, his passions, his drives,
I will not let them go to waste.
Of course, no one can be like him,
It's humanly impossible to be like him.
He was a cut above the flock,
A lone wolf but not the savage kind rather a compassionate and loyal friend.
But, I and his close friends, family, students, and others
Can carry his burning fires.
Teach others to be upright rather than slouched
Guide young ones to be gentle and not pure but firm
Give them the freedom to speak their minds
Challenge them to find their personas.
I could go on for a few more lines
But you get what I mean
I hope so
This is just me, Farhan Khan, son of Javedd Khan



churches were left abandoned, towns were burnt to the ground

By

Eric Adamson

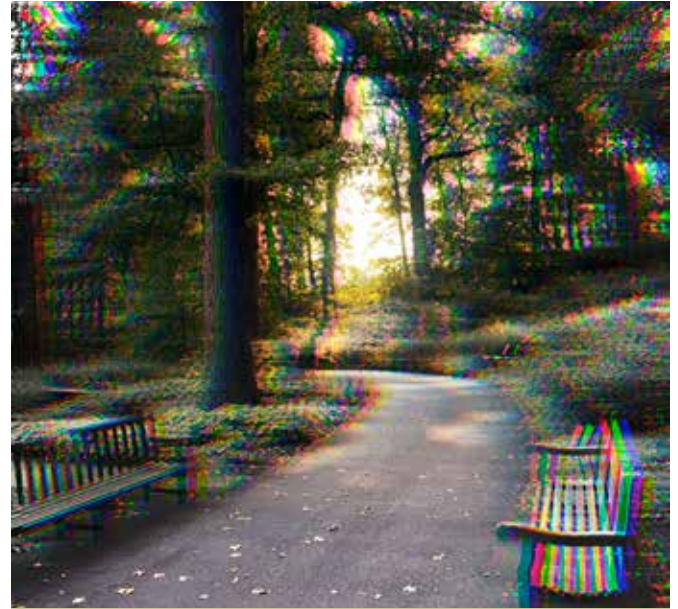
churches were left abandoned, towns were burnt to the ground

given the geography of most midwestern towns
it is not difficult to see in them an ancient civilization,
destroyed in the ravaged valleys of the arid plain.

sacked. and this is not the first that men have made
their appearance here - what I know about the autochthonous
people is so little that I might as well talk about the dust.

I'm just a disaster. the conjunction of all the fatal
inadequacies is an endless disappearing act I play. wandering
from the neighborhood or from the river or from a grave.

except it is really everything else that has most probably
disappeared. that's alright. I can dig a pretty good hole,
I can bury myself.



Nickalus Seebaran, *Static Forest*, 2022, Digital illustration

waking to what I already knew

By

Eric Adamson

waking to what I already knew

june brought no material change. to remain
a quiet mess is not the way I choose to appear.
it is, however, indisputable - the birds
return to my window every morning. isn't this
ridiculous I ask them but it's no use.

I suffer symptoms now and then of admiration
for a glimpse of meaning in an action - once
someone told me they liked to watch
my hands unravel wound up string, and so I thought
that every little finger motion was important.

some days it's the string unwinding and some days
it's me. is there meaning in the work unbinding struggles
at their seams? "the gleam in your eye is so

familiar a gleam" unless you end up with only thread
and learn the dream is just a dream. no, it cannot

be just an error of imagination, that what I think
and what can really count as substance are two
different things. have I really seen these morning birds
before, and if not, what is the thing that's like these birds
that I'm remembering?



Daniel Calderon

Toothache

By
Bianelly Tellez

(I get hung up on people)

I bite.

Chew chunks and let them rot,

Fester, wedged in the gaps of my jagged teeth

“Have you been flossing?”

My tongue runs across the crooked line of teeth

Feeling the voids where you make yourself comfortable

Red and raw, I pick at my gums

“Yes.”



Daniel Calderon



Brianna Cortes Rivera, *Journey to the Moon*, Acrylic paint on Bristol board

We Walk at Night

By
Bianelly Tellez

the subway carts surge forward,

for a brief second life halts

wine-drunk, I wrap my legs around you

under the warmth of plastic stars

there is something cathartic to derive pleasure from pain

the drag of smoke that ignites my throat

the stench that lingers, clinging to my fingertips

as I thread the needle through the coarse fiber

too fast and a bead of crimson blossoms

if I pressed against the fluorescent

pink lipstick stain at the edge of my mug

would it thaw to your tender lips

before I can think

the subway carts straighten out



self

By

Evan Kaw

Being Still is not comfortable,
 Countless hours trying to fill boredom with escape.
 The unbearable
 is to embrace the spaces and times,
 Thoughts and breaths.
 The occupied Mind walking, talking, fiddling.
 The surroundings observed.

Is Peace truly at all experienced?
 Still water
 creates waves and ripples,
 D i s t r a c t i n g .

Floating, my back on water,
 Water on my back,
 Removes the gravity that anchor.
 Eyes look at the sky,
 Ears underwater.
 Breath the only sound,
 Lung the only buoy,
 The gentle up and down.
 Inhale. Exhale.

When
 is
 that
 still?



Isha Apalisok, *(Un)made*, Acrylic on bristol

Dream

By
Angela Hebert

This time we're in a triple decker tenement
like the ones in my hometown.
The ocean is climbing up the hills,
defying gravity and making its way wave after wave.
As I gather our things, I look down
at the steep gully of a backyard.
One tall purple morning glory shows me her face,
and I think, maybe she won't drown.



Zariah Alfaro, *Submerged in blue*, 2022, Digital Illustration



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The Perennial

is an independent faculty publication of the Professional Association's Perennial Committee. It provides an open forum of debate and critical discussion of issues facing our college, students and faculty; an academic community dedicated to teaching, research and publication. The publication receives its funding from a portion of our faculty members' union dues. The Perennial editorial board remains independent from the union's executive committee. The May 2022 edition marks the Perennial's 35th publication.

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Zariah Alfaro, *Rain on me*, 2022, Digital Illustration



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