

RUCKUS

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RUCKUS *Winter 2023*

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PRODUCTION GROUP

Abegail Pierson
Gracie Piotrowski
Maddy Moro
Regine Henry
Stelios Bakopoulos
Kabu Vaughn
Kal Whitaker
Myah Planten
Katie Fretz

ECHOES GROUP

David Fadem
Annalena Wagner
Rei Marrese
Rylee Ahart
Ollie Kubisek
Connor Martinez
Alek Lopez Almestica
Achilles Bezenyan

OUTREACH GROUP

A Sanders
Kizu Falconer
Addy Csordas
Ruth Hamilton
Liam McDonald
Sam Veluz

ADVISORS

Scott Beatty
Heath Mensher

Email **RUCKUS:** chartsmag@student.charterarts.org

An Unsaddled Creature

By Lila Dobrowolski

When I was six years old, I was an individualist.

I was a learner and a lover.

But I was always burdened by
the words of those who conformed.

Those who mistook my empathy for immaturity
could not wrap their heads around my mind, heart, and soul.

At eight years old, I became a queen.

I felt that being worshiped by natural outcasts
was more important than being liked by those
who were already so afraid of the world.

I was rewarded with friends, but still,
something was always hanging above, waiting to fall and
crush me.

When I was ten years old, I simply was not real.

The making of my humanity was still in the works.

I was euphoric and unknowing.

I had turned myself into mine and everyone else's toy.

I believed someone had incinerated my shackles.

I thought I was a phoenix, invincible.

I didn't stay careless for long.

The eleventh year of my life was the year I became a warrior.

My mind began to consume my heart.

The weight of what I knew became too heavy to hold.
My obsessions became too hard to maintain,
and the vessel that held my soul became shaky.
I discovered that I was still shackled within the chains my
aunts and grandmothers left me.

By thirteen, I was not my heart at all.
My mind had officially conquered me, crushed me into a
pulp.
Those twisted chains I was shackled in ran through my
brain,
kept it flowing with poisonous obsessions and compulsions.
My innocence had already been stolen, I could handle that.
But my childhood coping mechanisms disappeared during
the thirteenth year of my life.

God and grandpa and *when I am older*, they all fell through.
They were flowers, carefully picked and set aside for my
enjoyment,
that had hit the ground when their vase abruptly shattered.
Each piece of hope had come to an end after the thirteenth
year.

At fifteen, I have now completely finished cleaning the glass
and flower petals
of my thirteenth year and the years before it.
I am a true animal, knowing instinctively of my place
within the cycle of this world.

I have lost my dependence and planted new flowers on my
own,
which will stay outside, within their element.
I am not a lover or a warrior. Not a toy or a pulp.
I am an unsaddled creature.

Recalling Upon Your Lost Retina

By Alyse Gammons

The contents of your mind is what I truly find alluring.

If I cupped your cheeks in my hands and ripped off the surrounding flesh,

as long as you could speak
you'd still be beautiful.

But if you are not tangible, what am I running towards?

A crash course of self correction;

like a comet I fall aimlessly until I crash and
inevitably simmer out.

Your ideas in the palm of my hand as I slowly ball my fists,
squeezing what once was yours until it becomes my own.

In your eyes shines that charisma,
a glow so dawning—
a \\nebula\\ that I envy.

Dissecting your socket
like I'm in high school,
my botched job,
a single number in the grade book.

Ripping you apart and displaying your insides as a proud
trophy;
A reminder that
I knew you once.

If all I need continues to corrode: *"What am I to you?"*

A fallen cherub that never made it past the safety of your
wings...

Watching you from above as I saunter downward—
and even without flesh,
as you stand against me,
the stars no longer aligned
in my favor;

Your mind is beautiful.

plastic love

By Maddie Hess

I felt hungry for something out to get me. Something unappetizing – something that was almost feral, no scent and no name. It flattened itself like a treasure map covered in lipstick stains and old coffee. When light struck it, it glowed in an iridescent way – not too much unlike an elderly nymph or a freshly grown lily sprouting out of old soil. Yet amid all this beauty, it still slithered. It wanted to swallow me whole and end my pain.

Similar to a piece of food that only has taste when doused in salt, I frequently found pleasure in the chase. Sometimes when I stared outside my window at the river, I could see its form in the reflecting sunlight, dripping towards me like a sunset covered in melted stars. Formations of it clung like a tattoo onto the rough edges of my skin, the parts of my hands that became weathered from years of grasping pencils and charcoal in the hot sun. No matter how hard I tried, when I closed my eyes I would always see the stains of red swimming underneath. It was around that time when I realized that red does not not always symbolize love's beauty, but also its demonic hold upon you.

I used parts of my tears to water the plants continuing to grow throughout my lungs, my body, my journals, my home, watching them make a land beneath the surface of the river and an everlasting moss-stained imprint in my mind. Each stretch mark or roll of skin was

instantaneously claimed by some sort of overgrowth, inhabiting places that I felt were no longer my own. Another thing I realized was that no matter how carefully and softly I tended to my gardens, there would always be at least one plant coming back to choke me.

The world around me felt like some gooey formation and the steps to all of the places I traveled felt as if they were made of broken glass. I could feel my hopes getting choked to death as if I was the one with the hands around my neck, when really, it was a part of me that was completely invisible. I walked alongside cold, covered bridges adorned with smog and ivy – I traipsed through blankets stained with sleep to find the only one that would comfort me when I laid my head down on my pillow. Yet when I slept, the dreams were fragile, breakable, and loosely interpreted as bad omens when I woke. It was a constant cycle from nightmare to nightmare as I tried to find something – tried to grasp something – a million different hands slicing through my chest and reaching for something just a foot too far away – and that thing seemed to be sanity, normalcy, a sliver of what I used to be. Someone or something to call home and reach towards instead of heavy air. Someone to soak up my words rather than the washcloths in my bathroom being soaked with sweat after yet another terrifying sleep. I hadn't fully adapted to such a yearning feeling, and it sent me plummeting into an ink-like sea where the glow of home was ten thousand miles away, and all you could do was sit and wait to drown.

Unfortunately, I still yearn to find the wings of what I was searching for, no matter how invisible those wings may be – those secrets, the things hidden away that I can't bear to pass by like I did with everything else. I can still vividly picture the beings inside of my body telling me to forget the contents of my desperately constructed wishes and unwelcome hopes. When I do, I dream of bludgeoning those beings with a cherry blossom stained weapon, letting the flames and blood grow bubblegum pink. There are things, intangible things, somber things, calling to me in ways I can try to ignore but will always fail in. They fill my half-empty, weathered sketchbooks with images of eyes and carefully inked spines. I stumble around my loss of inspiration like a tired racehorse. I collect daffodils and remnants of past joys – loneliness still manages to lay in the petals. These things season my food. They adapt to me like a wild animal I will never catch. It is possibly time to accept that catching them is nothing more than a dream, for they are a whole ecosystem above me, seeping infectious disease.

Morning Ritual

By Achilles Bezenyan

Colt is woken up once more by the family of mice living in his walls. They're the ones that set up his alarm, since he always forgets. He didn't want to wake up yet, because he only has the closing shift at the bar today. If he slept in, he'd be able to miss the scolding sun.

“Oh, look who finally decided to show himself. Look at that sloppy outfit. At least you're actually dressed,” the sun scolds.

Colt didn't like the scolding sun.

Calmly, Colt smashed the blaring alarm clock against the wall and the thousands of little clock pieces flew everywhere. Absolutely obliterated that alarm clock. In a mannerly fashion, of course. He should really get to purchasing the latest release of alarm clocks. This one was a hassle to clean up. He fumbled out of bed and ignored the scolding sun's usual quips about his unbrushed hair and poor choice of clothes as he poured himself a cup of orange juice. He wanted coffee, but it was Thursday. There is no coffee on Thursdays. No one should drink coffee on Thursdays. Do not drink coffee on Thursdays. Don't. So he settled for orange juice. He doesn't like orange juice, though, so he filled the cup to the brim and then left it on the table to start on breakfast.

Scrambled eggs and toast for himself, and then scrambled half egg and quarter toast for the family of mice living in his walls. Colt can't afford rent, so he just feeds them. It is a comfortable and agreeable arrangement.

“Well,” Colt stretched his tired limbs, “I’m off to do my daily bike run.”

The mice bid him farewell. Colt wasn't a fan of bike runs. Screaming and running from metal contraptions weren't usually his favorite pastime. On the contrary, screaming and running from plastic contraptions were. But, who is he to complain about that? He is no one. He is no one. He is no one. At least that's what his reflection tells him. He doesn't like his reflection. His reflection is worse than the scolding sun.

Ah, what a beautiful start to another morning.

As A Viperfish

By Azrael El Shami

A chair made of gold, a dress that's renowned
With blues, with silvers, lights shining throughout
And atop said throne, the one wearing said gown
Sits little old me, topped off with a crown
My people, listen once, for I will not repeat
I feel for your troubles, I see what you see
Do note that we are strong, and with that, I decree
We'll all brave this storm, with my light shining

Though, lighting the way is the hardest of tasks
You've only one chance, there's no time to rehash
No retakes, no retries, no time to recast
For I am but an actor, unfit for this ask
My crown is much heavier than a handful of jewels
This weight on my shoulders is unbearably cruel
My subjects look to me, as it's my job to rule
But I also look to them, confused on what to do

But I can't be afraid, lest this play be tragedy
I'll fight for my people and all of their safety
Through it all, I'll spar the ones baring their teeth
With but my own tooth and nail, it'll end in victory
Wait—! I'm blinded by a light, I can't make out any shapes
And when my vision returns, I'm afraid it's too late
The very same teeth that I'd once sworn I'd make ache

Shoot straight towards myself, sealing my very fate

And as a viperfish, those teeth clamped to my eyes
And as they pierce through, I see I've lost sight
As sharp as the pain, the bones tear through my flesh
And as my new stream of light, it guides all my steps
But the light forever stays just in front of my head
Dangling before me, eternally seeming right ahead
And as the light flickers, it fills me with dread
Since I'm nothing more than prey that never could have fled

"*Et tu?*" I say to the one with the teeth
As I feel for their gums, all I felt was me.

Snowglobe of Pink

By Sam Griffith

i live in a clear globe littered with pink zinnias

it smells of pollen and bees at work,
the buzz of their busy pollinates my thoughts
and with every new idea,

i hear a spring of growth in my home
every sound, spoken or muttered,
heard or ignored
echoes around me

bounces off the eyes of the walls,
the fluttering of wings,
the livelihood of flowers,
and finally to me.

my affection argues in the air
soundless, but it feels so,

so,

heavy

a potent atmosphere smells the sky
like pink honey and sweet hugs,
yet no scent emits from the flowers.

but now my globe has become overgrown
my walls, once clear of thought,
poises of opaque pink prosperity

now unable to see the other side.

now

unable to see me.
the once busy buzz
became an overworked groan.
my steady stomach sounds up and i puke,
pink pearls and destined hearts emerge
as a deep vine twirls up my leg.
proud of its dance, it sings.
and all i can think of
is its melody.

my pale knees are dusted with a pink blush,
and my nimble fingers are the same.
my cheeks are a deep red of flush,
saturated from the crowd of my head.
and the heat of too much

yet my feet are purple

the tightness in my chest contracts and i begin to cough
violent spurs of muted red and dull pink exits my lungs
and onto the bed of flowers i lay
amidst the familiarity, i spot a violet

it's color is the bed i lay on, yet it sits small in my hand
it spoke of calmness,
and my mind went limp.

somewhere in my globe, a sweet voice sang.
the echo was different than usual,

a fight through scraggly pink thorns tired,
but it didn't quit.
eventually it reached my numb head,
it was then i saw something appear in my mind
a small pop sang,
and then another.
another

and before i knew it,
the dominance of pink retracted,
a small buzz echoed in my head,
healthy thoughts rolled off my tongue
and in front of me i saw a petite violet,
shy yet proud
and behind me,

i saw *you*.

July

By David Fadem

Imitation blue
projection in the
Black Lodge night,
supposed to feel like sky.

Coats the walls
 of the animal shelters,
 chips away–
howls through the cloud,
through the online noise.

I send them a heart,
(if it could beat–
 fill those tired, vacant veins)

Then it's a paper plane, gliding
towards the wall–
bounces back and smells like fur
with a crumpled nose.
Someone kinder, someone bigger,
could bring them home, then my eyes drift to the edges
 of my phone.

We're wrapped
 in a cruel blue night.
The love is stuck and circles

at our side.

There's a buck and a doe
in a verdant scene—
their eyes are Monet soft.

The grass sways key lime green,
a distant breeze, the sound of horns
refracted and got lost.

Their eyes find the treeline,
birch lets sunbeams through—
the gentle tidepool light
finds their eyes and pours in.

The absence, the halls, the darkened wastes—
meadow pockets glow,
guide us through.

Fallen Petals

By Adelaide Gustavson

Soft, soft

a breath of sweetgrass
threads through the stalks
crisp, brown, dry

It circles beneath the
fallen petals, their faces
pale and waxen, crumpled
as they fell

Rise, rise

the starling shrieks as she
cascades smoothly from the bruised
melted sky, spilled gold
shimmering in violet wrinkles
as a scattering of faded stars
pierce the old light

Quiet, quiet

the petals lie with velvet
coolness upon the starched earth
broken and hard

Sing, sing

the keening chords from the starling's breast
wander with their touch of moondust, brushing all
the silken
feathered
petals

fallen on the ground
a battlefield of nature's grim defeat
as beating sun and pounding rain
crushed, keening
the fragile heads
while last the solitary bird
flew off and left the
sweetgrass sighing through
the fallen stars

In Her Garden

By Rayna LeBlanc

As soon as the gates opened, she sensed something shift. The air was different. There was a goddess in her garden. She draped herself over the edge of her fountain, her skin and hair glowing and rippling in the dimming sunlight. The goddess would find her way just fine. She needed no guidance.

Sure enough, a few moments later, Stella, sister of the god Mika, stood before her. She dressed in traditional *Solis* fashion, her feathery garbs wrapped around her body, her jewels glinting in the light. Stella stopped before the fountain and bowed, her eyes tilted towards the ground, avoiding the nearly naked body before her.

“Madre de la Muerte,” she said, nodding her head, “I am sorry to disturb you on short notice.”

“It’s nothing to worry about, goddess. I only wonder why someone like you would be sent here. Surely, they have someone in a lower position to do business with me. You are in charge of the night sky, the constellations, am I correct?” Stella nodded again and put her hands behind her back. There was a short silence.

“Well, yes, I am that. The thing is, they didn’t send me. I’ve come here on my own. If I may, and if it is of no trouble to you, could I tell you why I am here?” The Mother of Death smiled at her, her rounded lips parting warmly. Usually, at this point, trespassers would be crying, praying on their

knees in her presence. She admired Stella's strength and polite manners.

“ There has been a sacrifice. Of a demigod. My brother's son, actually. It's caused him a lot of pain, I'm afraid. But it's not just him now. See, Miguel *took* his son. His soul is stuck with him because he spoke badly about our lands, our people. Everyone up there is now becoming ill because of the backup. I suppose that's what you'd call it. Anyways, I came here secretly without Miguel's permission, to tell you to retrieve the demigod's soul. Miguel can say no to his withering subjects all he likes, but he cannot turn down Death.” The goddess's voice became stronger, more harsh with those last few words. Stella wasn't the same as the rest of her kind, that was more than clear. There was a certain groundedness about her, something almost human. It was enough to persuade The Mother of Death. Sitting up straight, her hair swirled around every crevice of her body. The tendrils of lilac seemed to move on their own, charmed snakes curious to meet their charmer.

“ I shall come at once, goddess. Wait a few moments and I will escort you back myself.” Stella gave her a quick smile, clearly gulping down her disbelief and excitement. The Mother of Death pulled her black satin robes over her shoulders, the material's first touch cold as frost. She was always in the mood for a good chat with Miguel. He needed to be put in his place every once in a while, and she was the only one capable of doing that.

“ Ready?” She asked. Stella nodded. The Mountain of the Gods was too far away, so she pulled out her very own staircase instead. Taking Stella’s hand, she said, “ Special treatment. It’s a once-in-a-lifetime thing, dear.” Stella’s cheeks deepened in color. The two walked up the stairs hand in hand.

The Marshland Chorus

By Eclipse McKissick

Chorus of melancholy melody erupts from
Stray beads and small charms
You can't see them,
But they can see you.
They've been consumed

The little solid ground is old flesh from old souls
Thin chains of peat are too heavy for the dying after all
Roots strangle the bones of armies
in their stead

*I am the bog
I devour*

Unphased sludge of the mire swallows
that which falls in
The marsh breathes, yet not the bog
Fog suffocates the sun

Yet the bog knows no satiation
Nor does it feel

That's what it wants us to think, at least.

Sedate green and worn brown color the past and the future

The dead don't digest
The dead don't breathe
The dead live in the bog

The bog is animate
The bog is vampyric
The bog is everlasting

Sea Smashers

By Katie Fretz

Test the waves
and we shall see
if your troubles
drown in my shallow.
Estuaries entangle
when our severed blood
spoils. But if my
gills and fins offend you now,
why did you dive in
without hesitation?
You twist
your toes
til gripping seaweed
releases my tail—
 midnight lagoon fanatic;
throw your nets
and harpoons

through the depths of hadal's zone:

salted sensations.

Tragedies can be

beautiful

if the narrator

sings fondly,

but the tears I've shed

on these sand dunes

dried;

I'm over it.

But I promise to

elaborate

in the coral

true desires:

so walk over my

waves

and hear my

tidal lament,

disassociate between

hiccups,
and dread returning
to the shore.

Give me your
sorrows
and I will
bejewel
them
to the root,
only for these
promises
to break
against the
shorelines rocks...
alongside your
shallow soul.

Grimm Waters

By Sylvia Pauselius

The pale, weeping hands reached out of the murk -
there was no sunlight in their twilight realm.
These childlike creatures, they liked to lurk
near the crest of the hill, old Seaman's Helm.
But down under the land in the band of pitch black
they did humanlike things, so eerily familiar
yet so twisted, that
in the light of day,
I came to forget the dreams of those in the glorious rays.

In the glare of the sun the fire spirits danced.
They told songs and sang stories carefree
while their unwitting captives in agony pranced,
giving way to hypnotic melee.
At the point of noon they were quite invigorated -
in their controversial ways so exhilarated,
they soon forgot the way of the moon, who followed not
long after.
Grimm and silent and still and souled, it halted their
paralysing laughter.

On a sliver of moon, the fisherboy fished, reining in stars
with his rod
as he murmured softly of the soothing waters below.
The astral unicorns, hooves silvery and shod,

were calmed by the wind and the manner mellow.

And while they tiptoed carefully 'round
they dipped their heads and displayed their crowns, pearly
white with ease
and that is how,
in the light of the moon,
I awoke to the sound of the spectral seas.

The sea was a dance. And a song! Of something not quite
named.

It swirled and it swished, luring me to the edge of the walls.
A bit of my heart was left at the dock, while the rest of me
was changed.

The stormy air stifled the screams, of those, my dying
thralls.

And now the seas are calm once more, my offering not
forgotten,

while I dwell in the dark and the putrid stench of the
decaying and the rotten.

So, while you dance in the fiery sun, or play in the beams of
the moon,
remember me, now a child of murk! The sea shall learn your
name soon.

Maybe

By Hannah Kraybill-Greggo

Maybe the ghosts stand behind me,
Making me feel fits of disaster
Every time they get bored.
Watching my sorrow,
Must bring joy,
If you're eternally stuck to observe.

There is one ghost
Who I talk to
When the weather
Turns bleak.

She tells me her regrets,
Words, that would spill
Out as tears
If she had the capacity to cry.

I companion her,
I ponder what she tells me.

She's asks about my day,
And I whisper the
Fragments of beliefs
I have never voiced before.

She follows me down the stairs in the morning,
And watches pressed against the door.
My thoughts follow me,
When she can not.

Maybe if I was a companion
To the living,
Each movement I make
Would feel more fluid.
I wouldn't be walking
Through walls,
And the snug little corner,
Of the place I call my home,
Wouldn't be the only place I fit.

Maybe if I started listening more,
Instead of thinking,
I wouldn't be so lost.

Maybe if I started drinking tea,
Or if I learned to balance
The weight of existence on my shoulder
It wouldn't feel so heavy.

Maybe when the leaves start to change color
They will finally erase the words I use over and over,
And I can see the importance

In what I have to say.

Or, maybe, the guard that
I demand I maintain
Will be broken
With the first fall of snow.

I am from Weekends

By Lorelei Rehill-Baker

I am from my dad's blue broken down minivan on Friday evenings. It chugs along with nothing but a busted radio and of course, a dream. I am from "meeting in the middle", and "staying for the kids," and "compromise." Compromise that will never be a substitute for the puzzle piece you're missing. Even if you dare refuse to admit it. You will still have to start all over and try to make the pieces fit right this time. Maybe they never will.

I am from neighborhood bonfires, from sculpted fire pits with household names on them. Twisted ankles from flips on trampolines. I could never stick my landing. I am from homely suburbs with nothing special except an unbreakable bond. Next door neighbors become your family. I am from sisters who aren't really sisters, but they should be by now.

I am from grown-up parties on Saturday nights. Sip of beer, spit it out. Back to Root Beer it is for me. I am from movie nights, and dairy-free birthdays, from nerf-gun hide-and-seek, and from little kids I'll watch grow up and grow past me, they grow past all of us... I am from older brothers who actually are my brothers who watched me commit the same crimes as they once did. Same mistakes, same headaches, same choices, same fate.

I get scared of that. I'm from being afraid. That's how I am though, the way I was made.

I watched the others. I saw, I observed. They pulled out their baby teeth, but I never could. I'd scream when I saw one, covered in blood. I could be braver, maybe I should. I am from "working on it." I am from "trying my best." Maybe I should.

Still, I am from a house where the dining room is really just a "jam sesh room." I am from drum kits I smash and from guitars I can never put my fingers on. From singing along to an old song but not knowing the words. I am from doing anything to make them proud, just one more moment, just one more.

I am from Sunday afternoons when I dread school and dread the switch from house-to-house. I am from one last song and one last trip to the coffee shop down the street. I am from watching the stars from my dad's house windows turn to smoke clouds in my mother's. I am from both small towns and big cities. I am from losing my family and gaining a new one every few days.

I am from weekends. I'm just from weekends.

My reflection written in subjunctive

By Ollie Kubisek

Could I have been a woman? Could I have kept my long hair? Could I have dressed perfectly? Could I have cried myself to sleep every night? Could I know I would have done either way? Could I have looked my grandmother in the eyes and said I'm happy- I'm happy as a woman? Could I have been happy as a woman? Could I have been anything as a woman? Could I die beautifully as a woman? Could I be fridged as a woman? Could I have realized what spoke to me- what spoke to me beneath my flesh? Could I have given life to my vocal cords and spoke of my agony? Could I stand being told what I was not? Could I stand as a man? Could I stand as a man who wasn't a man? Could I live as a man? Could I die as a man? Could I be buried as a man?

Could I be a man?

Dying Stars

By Connor Martinez

“Hey...”

“Hey...”

“This is scary. Do you...know what it is?”

“A star. I think. It’s exploding.”

“A supernova, you mean?”

“Yeah.”

“I expected it to be quicker than this.”

“Me too... It’s cold.”

“We’ll die, won’t we? We’re just stalling for time.”

“Yeah...I wish this didn’t happen.”

“Don’t we all?”

“We’re the only ones left, aren’t we?”

“ ... I hope it doesn't hurt. I hope I can see you at school tomorrow like nothing happened.”



“I almost thought you weren't gonna show up.”

“Yeah, sorry...My mom woke me up late for school.”

jazz & the rain

By Liam McDonald

'i thought about you'
played as i sat alone --
 tan leather seats,
air conditioned breeze, soaking in
 the summer heat.
gray and white clouds laced together,
 a quiet storm loomed
in the rear view,
rain was sure to come,
 but for now i sit
alone,
waiting for the scene
of drops falling
on the windshield --
 a rhythm of rain,
 a drum of thunder,
the hidden sun is
waiting with me;

patience beyond
the clouds.

amber neptune

By Madeline Moro

in or out, she's the skittish and shy deer,
much too demure for her own sake and so
very anxious, worried about nothing
and everything at the same exact time.

kicking at any perceived threat, merely
blind with her force, yet still too scared to fight,
clashing with opponents in her mind,
but outside showing them kindness and love
like they won't pounce the very next second.

bruised, broken ribs match her swelling purple heart,
body too worn to give any more care,
yet trying to persist on; even so,
she'd be selfish to not tend to those who
would just leave her by the nearby freeway.

infection festers in her open wounds
where she promised she'd been far long healed from.
she won't cry, nor complain, or even wince—
compliant in her pain, she ponders more
on why it always must be her own fault.

the deer won't acknowledge the marks they caused,
their teeth once sunken into her frail body.

she will stand still, let them gnaw at her skin
until there's no more of her to devour.

I'm just a little bit sensitive

By Abby Ulsh

Lots of things make me sad.

I never knew why I got so down over the silliest things.

Maybe it's the fact that snakes can't hug me back.

Perhaps it's the roadkill we drive by.

It could be the whales washed up on the sand,

Or David Bowie being in the ground.

The ending of Rocky Horror makes me cry.

I would think more people would be upset

Considering the world's quite literally on fire.

But then I find myself to be the only one so down

About things I thought everyone was worried about.

Sometimes it makes me wish I could go to my own space
oddy.

My own little universe where my sensitivity isn't oh so
sensitive,

Where the things I get upset about wouldn't be all that
weird,

A planet where snakes can hug me back just as tightly.

Or instead of roadkill on the road it's daffodils,

The whales smiling as they're swimming in the waves.

Ziggy Stardust is still jamming out on Mars.

And Frank-N-Furter still giving himself over to absolute pleasure.

All these things wouldn't get me so down

If I was surrounded by people who are just as sensitive as me.

Dead sun flowers

By Myah Planten

Their desolate petals curl inwards—
Silked over stringy crepid innards
wrapping depollinated strands in a
browned embrace.

Left

Alone

In desolation;
The remnants of death's curious hand

Avoid
their vivid color. It is an ill born gift of

Recognition;

A filth-made conscience of a decades long guilt

To hold a piece of yourself

Unable to be lost

Yet,

Unable to face upwards

And Worship a sun

you were born to seek.

To them, the

clouds are cruel

Gray or white
As their breath; flitted along an infinite shore,
Is no longer a reprieve.

Pitiless, Fate inscribed—

But;

In beings accustomed to warmth strength beauty

They are nothing

From dust dirt glory.

Before first frost;

Cold silent unseeable

Mother Nature, gowned upon their hearth,

refuses to lift their chins toward

The Sky.

I am not a doll

By Annalena Wagner

Raindrops trace the cracks on my porcelain hips,
As my ball joint knees begin to rot.
You said you no longer wanted to play with my mind,
And force me into positions I couldn't hold any longer.
Bending backwards and splitting my hairs thin
Because of the mold growing within my damped body.

You know the roses I hold for you are wilting
And you avoid looking into my glossy eyes.
You are embarrassed of me
And not afraid to say it to my flushed out face;
No longer blushing in your presence.

The glasses you wear for me are broken,
So you only see me through a fractured lens.
I'm bruised and broken through your vision.

Tell me please what I can do,
For you to see me as I was before
Or else my soul will return to flesh and bone,
Before the last petal falls
And thorns begin to bloom
From my festering wounds.

THE
LEHIGH VALLEY
CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL
FOR THE **ARTS**

THE MISSION

The Lehigh Valley Charter High School for the Arts provides a unique environment that fosters a creative academic approach to learning and a development of talent in the arts. Built upon passion, discipline and a commitment to excellence, this integrative educational experience inspires all students to believe in themselves and what they can accomplish.