

KENNINGS

Kenning: a descriptive phrase used in place of the ordinary name for something, usually found in the poetry of Old Germanic languages, but still very much alive in our own vernacular.

Examples include:

“sea-farer” for ship

“whale road” for sea

“tree-hugger” for environmentalist

Produced by Hanover College students, Kennings Literary and Artistic Magazine features art, photography, poetry, and prose from the Hanover College Community, including students, faculty, staff, and alumni. All submissions are considered for publication, and selection is made by blind voting of the editorial staff.

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Faculty Monitor by Kathy Barbour

You can talk of text

sub supra ad infinitum
immersed in epistemology

I have already booked it
fled flown away crawled dumb
on my pearly belly and scaly elbows
over under gnarled knees leather-patched
scrota untantalizing bob of Adam's
apples certain you did not feel
my cool insinuation read my green-lipped
warning

the crocodiles are coming

a leafed window beckoned sky
pieced like blue fruit fit plumb
in the
cracks of the puzzle I carried
on my back duplicate beadwork
jeweled with dew a secret
branching code tongue split
legs forming a V to fit the fork
you perceived as fault
in the perfectly inarticulate
heaven tree

ah men ah men
endlessly sunk in the con
text oblivious to telos

the crocodiles are already here
gaping like wallets from metal-jawed chairs

The Man by Brianna White

There is a man at Joe's Bar
treating his depression with a prescription from Joe.
Black clouds that look ready to release precipitation
made from cigarette smoke hover

above him. A live band today, or maybe yesterday, and their music still hovers like clouds, a new addition or maybe not. The man doesn't know. He's been here, in this position, for a long time. He's tired, wants to leave, but like the dog star,

Sirius, he is fixed. He cannot leave the office of his physician. He knows what awaits him – an empty home, a dirty kitchen – so he stays beneath the clouds of cigarette smoke and yesterday's guitar.

He is so tired of this Satanist's lullaby, of this bar,
but he returns like a perpetual motion
wind-up toy.
Dr. Joe Frankenstein's creation.
A monster.

There is a man at Joe's Bar
who's made from cigarette smoke and yesterday's guitar.



Music and Blood by Brianna White

Warm, beating, frantic, winged; music and blood
We live, we breathe, we struggle – human
Whiskey on his breath – we kiss – this Dutchman
We are only human, experimenting, crawling through the mud.

We talked . . . well, tried to . . . He patronized with the unthinking tongue
of a cow chewing cud. I got more sensual pleasure from a bowl of soup –
Champignon,
warm cream and brown better than red, red, red – Stupid American –
Warm, beating, frantic, winged; music and blood

flow through my body as I let go, and allow my blood
to warm and make me feel like a woman.
We are human. We love, we hate, we move on;
we are only humans, experimenting, crawling through the mud.

We have hearts of fire, music, and a bud
of hope. We want and crave. You crave sex.
Me, a bowl of spinach soup. I write about him and her. About love and pain,
warm beating, frantic, winged; music and blood.

She offered to come to Belgium – to draw blood
from the one who made me bleed (the cow-tongued Dutchman). My dumb
heart flipped and made no sense – I'm only human . . .
We are only human, experimenting, crawling through the mud.

Like Cyrillic cursive – a flood
of ink and words – unreadable
Warm, beating, frantic, winged; music and blood,
We are only human, experimenting, crawling through the mud.

The Fuck It All Villanelle w/ Cabbage by Brianna White

I once had dinner with a Cabbage.
It was awkward.
You should have seen its face when I brought out the Spinach.

It thought I was a complete savage.
I elected not to mention the Collards.
I once had dinner with a Cabbage.

“I wasn’t ready for that kind of baggage,”
I told myself as I, in the garden, watered.
You should have seen its face when I brought out the Spinach.

I should have remembered my mother’s adage:
“Time spent with a vegetable is always squandered.”
I once had dinner with a cabbage.

A small knight came once on Halloween, complete with a little pumpkin and a junior police badge.
I didn’t want to answer, but she knocked on the door, hard;
You should have seen her face when I brought out the Spinach.

You know what word I’ve never heard anyone say? Cribbage.
The little policewoman was a warrior in the making. She did fencing (with a sword!)
I once had dinner with a Cabbage.
You should have seen its face when I brought out the Spinach.

Man in the Mirror by AJ Breit

I've seen you at your lowest time
I've been there at your best
I'll be there at your prime
I was there when you were stressed.
I know the good that's in your heart
You want to be a good, honest man
You and I will never be apart
And I will be your biggest fan.
I've heard your degrading thoughts inside
I've felt your heartache and pain
I've seen you get swallowed by the tide
And I know why you enjoy the rain.
I know why you like to be alone
But how you fear it too
I know you just want to be home
And you struggle with what to do.
On your way to your pursuit of happiness
You want your heart good and true
But you still feel this angriness
I know this because I'm you.
The man in the mirror face to face
I've seen what you can become
You'll fight the good fight and finish the race
You can't forget where you come from.
You will be who you want to be
Being a good person is your call
So in the mirror I will see
You above it all standing tall.

Soldier and the Tree by AJ Breit

The mound like a grave on today's front page
Covering the news that a soldier was hanged
After being tortured and kept in a cage
Always being kicked and his head being banged.
Leaving behind a woman who cared
And loved him, now a widow of murder.
His last thoughts were of the times they shared
And how his death was going to hurt her.
She couldn't take all of this pain
As he's put in the ground with angel singers
She couldn't take it; she's going insane
She is a prisoner of the tree and its green fingers.
And so she comes to dream herself the tree
The same one that choked him blue
Now dreams of a rope setting her free
That devilish tree had taken her too.

My Strange, Strange Violence by Wezi Mulamba

I do not fear it,
When it comes
At least anymore
When it comes to the bottom of my core
At least I try not to
It often creeps through
My bones, my joints.
My soul groans
But I cannot hear it
When it comes
Oh, my silence
My strange, strange violence

My Addiction by Wezi Mulamba

There is no better stimulant
No addiction greater
Than that of laughter
No sensation like when it floods up your lungs
Strangling you from the inside out
Leaving a large lump the size of Louisiana
That leaves languishing lacerations
On the right and left side of
Your throat.
But you continue regardless
Of the pain because it
Hurts.
So.
Good.
And your eyes
Seal up and your voice
Cuts completely out.
Shaking as if you
Were in the middle of your
Own dark death rattle.
But you're alive.
You're more than alive.
You're laughing.
Or maybe that's just
Me.

Pachy Pachy Pachyderm by Wezi Mulamba

Pachy Pachy Pachyderm
With eyes so small
And oh, so stern.
Stoic stomping sentinel
With tusks so white
Almost dentinal
Flap your ears like great fans
For you'll be Pachy (ears sans)
Blow your trunk!
Your body's horn
That succulent thing
With which you were born
Even your legs and toes and feet
Will fill me up with pachyderm meat
Oh Packa Packa Pack-a-the-derm
I'll eat you from fall
To even May term

I Hate The Cold by Wezi Mulamba

I hate the cold.
The sickness yes, but also (and mostly)
The weather
The absence of heat, of energy
Is literally (yes, literally)
Humanity marching on without
A care in this world we weave our "lovely" lives in
Straight to a numb death.
There's a reason we get cold
When we die,
Some people, under the influence
Of unadulterated madness,
Think it better,
To die . . . in. the. Cold!?
"To feel is to be human
And to be human is to feel."
In the Gobi this will not occur
No ma'am! No sir!
They want to die coldly numb
And they'll die dolefully dumb!
Give me the Sahara!
Desert Desert!
Let me feel my cells fade
In the heat
Away from all shade
(In this world that we've made)

Smile, Thumbs Up, Wave, Smile, Thumbs Up by Wezi Mulamba

Every time I go home on
That second to last turn he's there.
Smile, thumbs up, wave, smile, thumbs up
And every time there's something between us.

My car window, my radio, time,
Space, commas, but I can still see him.
My window's not that dirty.

Smile, thumbs up, wave, smile, thumbs up
I've seen him many times
On that lonely median,
Just a smile with clothes
Without a dime to his name.

I assume.
I never got past that dirty window
(Nor do I know his name)

His grass and concrete island
Consists of grass, concrete,
Sometimes his chair,
(Sometimes it's not there),
And a cross-shaped monument with a photo
Of some man
Whose name I don't know.
A dead man.

On that monument, under
The dead man's photo,
Two playing cards are nailed to that cross
That cross yet kind
Crucifix

Smile, thumbs up, wave, smile, thumbs up,
Cross, photo, cards on

Grass... and concrete.

Today when I passed that man
He had some small smiling
Sordid looking dog with him.
And I was jealous.
Of that dog
Who showed more humanity
Than I had ever shown that man.

That dog went past the
Smile, thumbs up, wave, smile, thumbs up.
Passed that dirty window
And passed the river of cars
That guard that lonely median

All before I remembered
He was there.

Oh, Spotted Lady Bug by Wezi Mulamba

Oh, spotted lady bug
To you a gentle lady hug,
May you forever be so snug
Watch you fly!
A speck in the sky!
To say I don't love thee
Would be a lie
Oh spotted lady bug
Loved by I.
Crawl on my hands
Tiny feet!
Upon my glands . . .
A thing to eat!
Crunch! Crunch! Munch! Munch!
I'll eat a bunch! For my lunch!
And I shall
Never save some
For all will fall
Into my tum!
With thy kin upon my tongue
Oh, spotted lady bug.

Requests of Love by Wezi Mulamba

You. Will love me.
Or you are a wicked person.
You. Will see me for the perfection
That I claim to have
(that which I wish I had)
You may have no preference other
Than I.
You will see my face when you
Look to the sky,
And
You. Will. Love me.
Or die.
A wicked person.
Every knee will bow,
Every mouth will confess,
That they love me
And anyone who falters
Anyone who sees that which
I have
(and not that which I wish I had)
Is evil.
A wicked person.
You. Will love me.
I command it.

Response to Requests of Love by Wezi Mulamba

Who are you?
Who tells me that I
Must fancy you?
That I, myself, must "love" you?
Petulant, pitiful, and pathetic.
Now I am evil?
Now I am responsible for things
Beyond my power?
You blame me, you shame me,
For not loving what you
Can't control.
Do you smell that?
It's hypocrisy.
And you reek of it.
Love and fancy are natural things.
You're trying to hammer nails
Into a tree
Then you insist I call them leaves
Under threat
Of being called "evil."
Leaf those trees alone!
You're ruining the forest.

My Blind and Younger Beauty by Wezi Mulamba

My blind and younger beauty,
A soul I can no longer view,
Many pledge and promise to you their dueful duty.
They toil and try (some even die), your passions all to woo.
They praise your locks,
That marble-formed face,
Down to your verdant socks,
But your eyes, they debase.
They call them too milky;
A blemish, a shame.
I find them silky,
Those curs aren't worth your name.
So, banish those fools to the pits of despair
Leave a spot near you open, and place me there

William Writman by Wezi Mulamba

William Writman was old and ill
Soon to be buried on that hill
But he wasn't done with his poetry work
For this he thought God was the biggest jerk.
William cursed and cried, not wanting to die
That's when a new friend came and dropped by.

It was at night (when the best things happen)
He came where poor Will was Writmanly nappin'.
"William Writman! You have to wake up!
There's wine to drink from the Earth's cup!"
Writman woke with a wonderous shock;
A strange man in his room had gotten past the lock.
His skin was like snow and his eyes were red.
William feared him, and fearfully said,

"Leave this chamber where I lie
God has willed it that I must die!
Curse he who lives in the sky
May he fall! from his throne on high!"

The strange man smiled.

"Close your eyes, Writman, and forever you'll see
You'll be like the night; you'll be like me."
Writman thought, but he didn't understand,
But he wasn't long for this living land.

So he closed his eyes, all old and tired,
From that day on, Writman never retired.
Some say he still writes his verse,
Others say he took the darkest curse,
Was it death? Or was it something worse?

How Art Dies by Wezi Mulamba

I love those monsters
Who create.
Who dare to exist with their
Demons at their door
Knocking, rapping, pounding,
Clawing, burning down the doors
Of their treasured humanity.
Oh, to be human is the
Struggle to keep that
name of our race,
Humanity:

A race of those who chase
Dreams and on the way
On a certain day
(not specified)
They lose some of themselves,
The demons come out
And without a doubt
We discard them.
“Those wretched creatures.”
I love those thieves, murderers,
Defilers, extortionists,
And those most in need of an exorcist.
“Burn them alive! And all their children!”
“Purge, purge, purge
The soiled blood from the flock.”
And so, the “monster” fries
By him his child lies
And oh, how art dies.

Remember The Daffodils by Wezi Mulamba

When winter sends
its coldest chills,
Remember my friends, the daffodils.
When a pain aches, as if it kills,
Remember my friends, the daffodils.
When you can't see
past the greatest hills,
Remember my friends, the daffodils.
and when I'm gone
and no longer feel
place on my grave
a daffodil.

Color Number 1 by Wezi Mulamba

Sometimes it's dank, dark, dangerous,
Deadly and deviant,
At others, it's nothing.
Nada zip-peroni.
That empty hole when you finish all the pepperoni
And you and your cousin Tony
Are feeling lonely
In the same room
With all the conventional,
Crippling chaos
Of a silent tomb.
Or perhaps a mother's womb
Undamaged by the kicks
Of her infant murderer
Ushering her bleak,
Blemished future of
Nothing.
And sometimes it's black.

2:00 Going on 3:00AM by Wezi Mulamba

The tea is done.
The black and red scars
of soundless, sleepless nights
mark my eyes
like ancient war paint.
My blade is drawn,
and I write on.

My Precious Dolphin by Wezi Mulamba

Oh, my precious Dolphin
Whom I simply adore
You bring me great wonder
You're never a bore
If the sea were the sky
And if the sky were the sea
Up there you'd fly
While I watched with glee
"The Grey Blur!"
That's what I'll call you
Yes, you, sir.
For I always knew
That you'd be my friend
Deep-fried, and breaded.
It's how they all end,
All bloody and shredded.

Love? Love? Love, love. by Wezi Mulamba

What can I say of that thing
That binds, blinds, and somehow intertwines
With goldness and boldness into a ring?
It makes birds fly, children ask why,
Makes women cry, and it makes men die.
For what fits like a glove,
but rhythms with shove: a thing called love?
Nay! Nay! Nayhity nay!
Madness I call it! Madness, I say!
It brings sadness and gladness and the happiest badness
The ultimate insanity (my personal vanity)
That rules over manatees, canopies and even Humanity.
So swear me on my truthful lie
And swear me, too, on my easy eye
Never, never in love fall I

Morgan Mc'Dye by Wezi Mulamba

Morgan Mc'Dye wanted to know
Where the dead live, where people go;
He asked a priest, so he knew what they say.
A heavenly feast? Not possible, no way.
One priest found him, and said to Mc'Dye,
"I have a nice book that you should try."
Morgan began to pay with cash,
But he was stopped from acting too rash.
"This Tome holds knowledge of things unseen,
And of nightmares and a monstrous queen.
To some it's rubbish. Useless.
So I gift it to you. Priceless."

Night came and Morgan was eager,
His preparation all but meager.
So he dug up a corpse, the deadest man there.
A man who had once been nice and fair,
But fifty years with dirt and worms
Had made him ugly, and filled with germs.
Morgan laid the man on his back
Then Mc'Dye pulled the tome from his sack.
Opening, he read, he chanted, and spoke,
The ancient words made the dead man woke.

He spoke to Morgan inside his head.
He told Morgan things he wanted to know,
But also more than death and where people go.
Things long forgotten and forbidden,
Things that ought to stay lost and hidden.
But all this knowing came with a cost.
The dead man's eyes were glowing.
Then Morgan was lost.
Morgan Mc'Dye learned where the dead live
For this his mind, body, and soul did he give.

The Sunset King by Wezi Mulamba

Today the sun sets
On this Era and day
Regardless of whatever
I have to say
The people have spoken
Their hatred awoken
Their price I am made
unwilling to pay

My grandfather was the sun
Now I, his fading spark
Go to meet my maker
And soon embrace the dark

Today the sun will set
and with it?
Comes the night
The unsatisfied
hunger for blood.
So now the sun sets
And then the blade falls
Night comes
And soon hunger calls

A Zillion Leaping Chameleons by Wezi Mulamba

I want a zillion leaping chameleons
To cherish, love, and hold.
I want a zillion leaping chameleons
That are brave, fancy, and bold.
I want a zillion leaping chameleons
To see, gather, and meet.
I want a zillion leaping chameleons
To stab, murder, and eat.

The Fool's Eulogy by Wezi Mulamba

A crown of wool for the Emperor Fool
Knower of knowledge and giver of bull
Clothed in denim and a purple tunic
His tales and jokes made people sick

In this world he called the stage
He'd pretend to be an old
and wizened sage
His soul trapped
In a mental cage

You ruled the shadows
with your ebony club
You had many dear friends
Who were all named bub
You danced and sang
Outside the pub
For the world was your own
personal Club

You brought us chaos
And madness and cheer
You brought us great laughter
And also great fear
For that was the key
to your power
The beautiful sight
Of a poisonous flower
He conquered the west
where he was crowned
He couldn't swim
so there he drowned
He brought us smiles
wherever he clowned
But nevermore for he's...
Somewhere bound

Rest your sword that stopped the rain
Rest your staves full of wooden pain
Rest young madman for you were
Insane!
Rest oh king of the twisted brain!

Ulysses Ulric rest your easy eye
You're off to Hell within the sky
You told us the greatest truthful lie
You told us that you
would never die

Color Number 2 by Wezi Mulamba

Sometimes it's depressingly
Dull, droopy, drippy, dumb,
or perhaps it's high up, or at
The bottom of the sea, if you
Dare to see with me or your drowning
Family with their perfect bulging
German sapphire eyes
The same as their skin when everyone dies
Or sometimes
It's blue

Dust to Ash by Wezi Mulamba

Dust to ash
Ash to rust
We made this world of
Ash and rust
We killed it with
Our sinful lust
We severed its veins
Beneath the crust
No longer breathing
Not even bleeding
Just ash and rust
Now pass the rust
I'm starving.
Then pass to dust

Ira by Wezi Mulamba

Burn and smolder
Every path, and every boulder.
There will be nothing left...

Gula by Wezi Mulamba

The world is to be consumed;
It will leave you dead and entombed.
There will be nothing left...

Luxuria by Wezi Mulamba

Indulge and fill your heart,
With a body on fire, torn apart.
There will be nothing left...

Invidia by Wezi Mulamba

The treasures of others ought to be yours.
You must have them, even if it creates wars.
There will be nothing left...

Superbia by Wezi Mulamba

Thou art the greatest in these lands.
Against you, no one stands.
There will be nothing left...

Acedia by Wezi Mulamba

Never shall you do a task.
To save a life none could ask.
There will be nothing left...

Avaritia by Wezi Mulamba

All belongs to you.
With it, do what you do.
There will be nothing left...

It Blows by Wezi Mulamba

The wind came today
It blew my mother away
It came with that waning moon
And it'll come tomorrow soon.

Be it frigid or in fire,
When it blows some retire.
But their wind... I desire.
That wind as sweet
As a strumming lyre,
The wind of the grassy sea
That never blows for me.

It won't ever blow for me.
Or any of my friends.
The only wind that we have
Brings about our ends.

I want that sweet wind.
That makes a grassy sea.
I want that sweet wind,
So happy I can be.

I hear the wind blowing
It comes here for me.
I stand here not knowing,
Bring it death or grassy sea.

Fresh Air by Emma Jones

I just liked the guy's face paint.
He knew his Halloween, all right,
all the way from the bottom of the world.
Face whited out to nothing, eyes bored in with black,
a spiky red scar scissoring one cheek.
He'd cared, and it showed, and cynics make me yawn,
and so I danced with him.

But then he found out I was an import.
I know I've got an accent
but my hands don't.
Maybe a hard shove off the hips is a false cognate.

My friend's friend saw it coming.
"They're always fresco with gringas," she said.
Back where I'm from, "fresh" is an old word,
old as crinolines and curlers and pants without pockets,
but this game these chilenos are playing?
It was old even when it was new.

You hear that, muchachos?
It's time for some fresh air around here.

Me, I like the ones who don't need the reminder.
Metro Guy, who tipped me off about my open backpack
and spoke English better than most gringos
but let me try out some Spanish on him,
once he figured out I knew some.

Baby Blues from Buenos Aires,
from whom I won a laugh,
azure eyes twinkling,
when he swerved to duck a propped ladder
and we both made a crack about *mala suerte*.

Have Words Will Travel didn't even look at me on the train
which was just as well:
he had another girl, anyway.
I caught her name through his hands, cupped soft around the book: Margaret
Atwood.
I thought of asking him how it was
but I know love when it doesn't see me.

The Engineer from a Spanglish party at a bar
who told me Dostoyevsky was good
and agreed with me he'd like Geraldine Brooks.
His hands, almost as small as mine, were sushi-slippery when he spun me in
the salsa,
and he wanted to know if he'd see me again.

Ex-Salsa Teacher, the same night,
who told me my missteps didn't matter,
just my heart.
He looked down at me all through the song,
guiding my feet when need be,
his face throwing back the light from my smile.

Resurrection by Kathy Barbour

Who has been burying the animals aloft
so shabbily?

The wild turkey hurled on the roof
of a sod farm shed without ceremony, sop
for cozening buzzards,

The purblind mole acrophobic
lifted pink-handed, left in a nest
like an orphaned baby bird, flightless,
totally out of its depth in the fearsome
freedom of air.

What of the pallid grubworm formicide tortured
by acrid ants, shoved into a rotten log
like an unwanted Eskimo elder's umiak
layered with skin, ribs athwart black
ice, or
the dashing grey fox, red at the temples,
casually draped in a La-Z-Boy chair, trashed
by the side of the road. He looked disappointed,
as though his last martini had been shaken,
not stirred.

Some rank amateur, doubtless,
haunter of grander funerals,
a keen-eyed, studious, knock-off artist
looking for pointers,
whose only experience of death—
or for that matter, murder—
has come second-hand.

Take the strange case of the rabbit, for instance,
ineptly arranged on a platform of mock-orange
branches to look like a phony Indian
in harmony with nature, his cinnamon limbs
stiffened in prayer to a Great White Father
obscured by honeysuckle bushes,
a messy affair with the reek
of pretension, a saccharine

cinematic ending better off left
on the cutting room floor, or, best,
in the killing fields for the dogs
who slew him to see to.
But some misguided soul intervened
in the natural process to by-pass decay
(too delicate for the smell of it, probably—
perhaps well meaning),
and even before the rabbit's demise, sharply
rapped her hounds on the nose
to make them let him go.
They did—lay down and rolled over,
fawning, as they were trained to,
but what was gained in the end, after all,
by prolonging the agony of an innocent
creature who instinctively knew he was doomed
to die, but could not comprehend the unguent hand
that hovered, just out of sight, pretending
to comfort him, Judas-like, in denial
of death, stroking his silver fur
and bestowing the taint of perfume.
Three time he raised his head,
and lowered it, stretching his paws out
painfully. Finally calm, he lolled
and rolled an eye like a whitened stone
away, leaving an empty form
in sepulchral grasses, fragrant
of nest, dirt, blood, empurpling clover.
Why must novices play at God among dogs,
acknowledged masters of death,
though almost universally beloved?
And why did I feel the need
to resurrect the wild rabbit
slain by faithful domestic pets
in a supplicant's pose
in the suburbs, under
the messy mockorange
trees?

make my father proud by Joshua Parker

i have written poetry for love and
all the things i've lost, like little dots stuck
to pupils when i can't teach my eyes to
look away from the car crash, my car wrapped
around a tree, feeling the shame of one
thousand fathers' stares as i try to tell
him i sometimes change my tinder settings
to search for men and women, like sleeping
in my closet when i don't have sheets clean
from all the blood of all my friends who felt
the need to stay in cramped space with hanging
clothes and hanging ropes and one last fucking
note to tell their parents they still love them
even though their parents never loved them
the same way just because they're fucking gay
but i love you and i am not too fond
of reading while holding back tears in the
middle of trying to force down dinner
that i already know i'll throw away
before my fork clinks the bottom of the
plate since i've been losing weight to somehow
better wrap my body to the mold of
my car pressed against oak or to help ease
the bow of oak meant only to support
the weight of clothes and not also those who
wear them and maybe one day i'll let my
dad know that i had a boyfriend for one
week my junior year of college but could
never force myself to disappoint him
and i guess i don't like boys all that much
anyways so i'll just keep trying to
make my father proud.

Ribbon by Joshua Parker

Haven't seen God in a while—
Feels like I've been leading him on.
Guess I'm not used to being fucked
and hung out to dry with the lights still on.
So, I'll let him pray that I come back,
leave him strung out like a rich white kid on a cocaine binge,
But unless he can give my mom back the life she wants to live,
I think I'd rather delete his number,
Because why would I talk to someone who can't pick up the phone
and answer a simple question:
"How long does it take to grow back your hair?"
My friends get mad at me for sleeping in,
crushing up too many Vicodin.
I can't swallow pills—
Imagine what I must do with my pride.
I'll take four new medications and call the doctor in the morning,
Have him tell me I'm another failed case,
So I can start self-medicating
and answer the same fucking question:
"How many more before I feel alright?"
I'm used up, used to taking tests—study hard, kids:
A, B+, A, Positive
I don't want to fit into my Mom's jeans,
and I've been trying to gain weight since she keeps losing it,
But I can't.
Ran four miles on an empty stomach
so my friends could ask me the same question:
"How long before you start eating again?"
I don't even get phone calls anymore.
Commonplace conversation through tired eyes and worn-out words.
"Your aunt has to get a second opinion."
"Your mom is back in Columbus."
But I get nauseous thinking about making the 5-hour drive home.
"I'm too tired, Dad. I can't do it."
"I'm busy." "I have too much work I need to do."
But I just don't want to go home and find out what's wrong,
be told my mom's still not alright,
or that my future kids might not grow up.
I just need someone to answer one more question:
"How much longer do I have to wear this fucking dark blue ribbon?"

Alight by Joshua Parker

I'll dilute simple sugars into diabetic daydreams.
Jerk off into jasmine tea while jamming Jimmy Eat World.
Stay home from school and scold my dog
for never picking up my phone calls when I knew my parents weren't home.
Take twelve years to tie knots with my tongue
and roundabout four more to regrettably tie one with a ring.
Give my dad golf shoes so we can go hit balls,
maybe chop mine off for the money to pay my mom's hospital bills.
I've been feeling bone dry lately, bored out of my mind,
whatever happened to drinking water before all this wine?
Stood up in class to say something stupid,
"I truly think *As I Lay Dying* was talking about Harry S. Truman."
Never really wanted notable achievements or a new name,
but PJ panders well to my friends so I'll be polite and indulge their fantasies.
Scared to try new sex positions or send mail to old friends,
discuss, orally, how Dahmer may have thought you did.
Took a field trip to the Manson Family Ranch for fun—
Excuse me, sir, why is my salad bowl stained with all this blood?
Became a member of the cuckold club in Cultra didn't have enough coins to change,
cut my hair, got some head, and headed home to watch the NBA.
My mom told me I'd find the right girl or get mugged in Boston,
but no one wants to live life on the edge with a lifer in a lush one-bedroom
apartment.
No more American dream, just animosity and arrogant stares,
brought back tea from Great Britain to see if the government would try to tax my
wares.
Spent most of my life mourning waking up in the morning,
I can't get up, won't get out, and get overly worried for nothing.
Lost the will to live somewhere in line to get gas,
rather take a bridge down to the river than race my friends to get riches.
White lighter liturgy, lent out books to line the walls with insulation,
since no one reads for fun anymore, fucking floral wallpaper.
I hate poetry, anyways, hate the imagery, I hear nothing special,
Don't want to describe the colors and details of things that everyone already knows.
I want to piss on form, fuck up the font, I feel nothing.
Stand back, watch the world burn, waning moonlight, gravitational waves,
I'm nobody, nothing, now where the fuck am I supposed to sign my name?

The Man that Touched the Sea by Cambria Jones

His shaded grey eyes stared into mine as he waited for my answer. I noticed the hard creases lining the edges of his eyes, spread a tentative smile across my face, and replied, "It's all yours," gesturing towards the vast blue Pacific Ocean before me. The man nodded and reached up to tip the ripped edge of his weathered brown cowboy hat to me. The old cowboy turned toward the ocean and walked bow-legged straight towards the vast roaring blue ocean, the thick heels of his dusty leather boots sinking into the soft, fine, wet sand. The frothy tide raced up the beach towards the cowboy's boots before slowing down and pausing just long enough for him to bend over at the waist and reach a shaky arthritis-ridden hand towards the water. His worn cracked fingertips caught the edge of the tide as it receded, all too quickly. The cowboy stood rooted to his spot and turned eagerly towards his son behind me, who held up a silver camera to capture this moment. Water filled the cowboy's eyes and big salty tears ran down the deep creases in his face. They fell and mixed with the salty spray of the ocean.

"I touched it!" he exclaimed, giddy as a toddler with a new toy.

"I touched it!" He smiled.

He was crying.

With a roar, another wave came racing up the cool sand on this overcast day, and the old cowboy took hasty steps away from the rushing tide. He flung out his arms to steady himself. He turned to me and thanked me with his shaded grey eyes that were now filled with joy. It was as if I was the one who owned the ocean and had permitted him to touch the sea. The bow-legged cowboy turned around and walked away, back towards his previously land-locked life, with his dusty worn leather boots a shade darker from the ocean's spray. With the memory of the time he first touched the sea. With my eyes trailing after him and filling with tears of my own. With a thousand unspoken thank yous. Leaving me with the key that unlocked a piece of my heart. His footprints faded in the cool, wet sand.

The Point in Snow by Cambria Jones

Cold. fresh. flakes. Snow falls from the sky.
I stare and gaze into the air as one falls into my eye.
Inside my class I hear the chalk rattling on the board,
but when I step outside, a padded silence strums a new chord.
Unique, six-sided flakes collect upon my jacket.
I stop and pause and take it all in for fear my boots make too much racket.
As I stare and smile peering at the mighty river,
the beauty causes tears, which freeze, and so I shiver.
Yet the frigid cold upon my face seems to disappear
as I turn and twirl and enjoy the snow, a feeling so sincere.
Each snowflake so unique, at just one I could forever stare.
It's just as God made you and me, oh, with so much care.
As I gaze upon the mighty river, I stop. savor. pray.
Thanking God for the beauty on His earth and for such a beautiful day.

An Orange by Mr. Lemon

So I'm eating this orange.
Or I try to eat it. I open it up and it's just
fucking, like
rotten.
And there's bugs crawling around and, like, the spirit of my dead dad and I'm
thinking
"Where did I get this orange?"

Right, because my dad got cursed and put inside a *lemon* because he was
like
a huge dickhole and a racist.
What?
I didn't -
No.
"You didn't know what?"
I didn't -
eat the fucking orange.

A Lemon by Mr. Orange

Old! You're old.
And sour.

Your penis is vestigial, and your body is a shadow.

A yellow shadow.
You're a lemon!
I just wanna squeeze you.

A Mess by Kelly Poston

With staggered breathing,
I wait for your reply, but I couldn't rely on anything that could stop the panic
that was filling this burned mind of mine.

This smeared makeup hid the starless sky that resided in the bags under my
mossy green eyes, and this moment felt like absolute zero – not a single
particle trying to sift through these frostbitten fingers in fright.

I wanted to say every word I could –
Every word I could uproot from this dark earth,
But no matter how many combinations I could find for twenty-six letters,
It would never be enough to articulate all the words I needed to say that night.

You knew this link in the chain was breaking and
I could see the faint glow of the taillights fading

And I knew then:
Two broken people do not make a whole.
They make a mess.

Women by Kelly Poston

Life doesn't function in absolutes because
we are often not as full as we feel or
completely whole when we heal.

We are a collection of broken pieces
that broke through the ceiling
that kept us in – that kept us grounded.
Just because I have some,

Does not mean

Will not mean

Will never mean

I have enough.

And if there comes a day

where I am a finished mosaic,

that does not mean the roads that lead to Rome are done.

Just because my battles are over, it does not mean this war is won.

If we do not fight together,

we will fight forever.

But I Did by Kelly Poston

You said I'd never make it,
But now I'm here by your side.
I asked you to remember when you did it,
And there was absolutely no reply.
That lifeless voice lost love
Those blank eyes lost sight
Of reality's way of blowing out
Life's strongest glimmer of light
You said I was going to lose
But this is not how I want to win
Your hand grows cold in mine
And this flame dies within
These tears became your raindrops
That fell upon your grave
You counted yourself as no one
So that there was no left to save
So instead of seeking help
You found your own solution
Drink until the bottle's gone
Add smoke in this pollution
I didn't want to win
But I'm victorious by default
If I could say one last thing,
I'd say it's not your fault.
You said I'd never make it
And I'll say I wish you had.

Eggs and Stale Bagels by Kelly Poston

We were sitting at a dark wooden table
eating eggs and stale bagels,
when you said yolk was spelled with an l and a k,
but I specifically remember the dictionary whispering to me that it ended in a
k and an e.

You said one letter didn't affect anything,
so why did I fail Organic Chem?

But regardless of that letter,
I could write thousands of letters to express my confusion in yoke, but take a
joke.

It's really not important.

What's important is that you are a vegetarian eating eggs
and I still don't seem to understand.
Please explain to that to me
at this dark wooden table while we eat eggs and stale bagels.

Black Gardens by Perah Rutledge

I like boys who live in black gardens,
With bright smiles and gold links,
Boys who struggle with the struggle,
They water their garden with Hennessey and Gin,
Their smiles are louder than their laughs,
Boys with twists that curl like spirals,
Boys who work 9-to-5s,
Only to make 5 percent of 9 and they carry that,
Do the math and analogize,
So that means I like boys who carry .45s at a Second-Amendment rate,
They put on for my culture,
Mixtapes hot like fire in '45,
Mississippi burning bodies,
So they never forget their ancestors,
Respect their women like they were the American flag,
I like boys whose gold grills glisten like their Glocks do,
I like hood boys in hoodies sipping on Arizona,
Popping skittles like it's Xanax,
I like boys who live in black gardens,
They water their gardens with Ciroc and Kool-Aid,
And their smiles are louder than their laughs.

Untitled Poem by Perah Rutledge

On days like this,
When grandma's prayers keeps the tornados away,
And jokes make the floods seem insignificant,
Where chicken and dumplings turns into nostalgia,
These days where the woman becomes like child,
Because fear and sons live like neighbors,
And life becomes the death of innocence
While death is the life of the party.
How prey pray for praise on stormy days.
When grandma's prayer is just a whisper in time
All time will stop for seven seconds,
And in those seven seconds I will realize it was never the prayers
That calmed my storms.

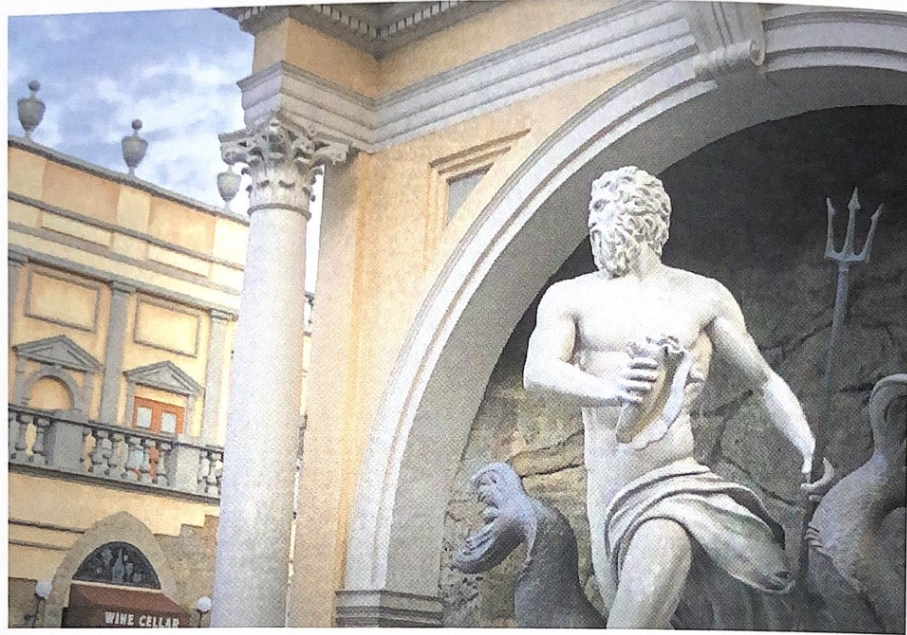
Anarchy by Perah Rutledge

The "B" in "bomb" is subtle yet valid,
naturally the clock ticks and the womb sours,
but sometimes the dog meows and the cat barks.
The bomb continues to swim laps in its race,
precipitation hails from glass finger tips.
The bomb you've swallowed is afraid of your stomach,
it finds the serenity in solitude by blockading itself
in the neck of your lymph nodes.
Your cardiac, arrest itself, over a cage of mangled innards,
the "B" in "womb" is silent and so are you.
The bomb is a swollen lump ready to explode,
the slightest touch ends in fatality,
but you know how to disarm a bomb.
The "B" in "succumb" yields to no one,
it is deafening and sturdy like your physique,
it fears no bomb and it stands tall.
The "B" in "beautiful" is valid, much like
the "B" in "bold," the booming thunderous
sounds from your mouth pave way for the
smoke clouds that follow.
The "B" in "LGBTQ+" is subtle yet valid.

Perah by Perah Rutledge



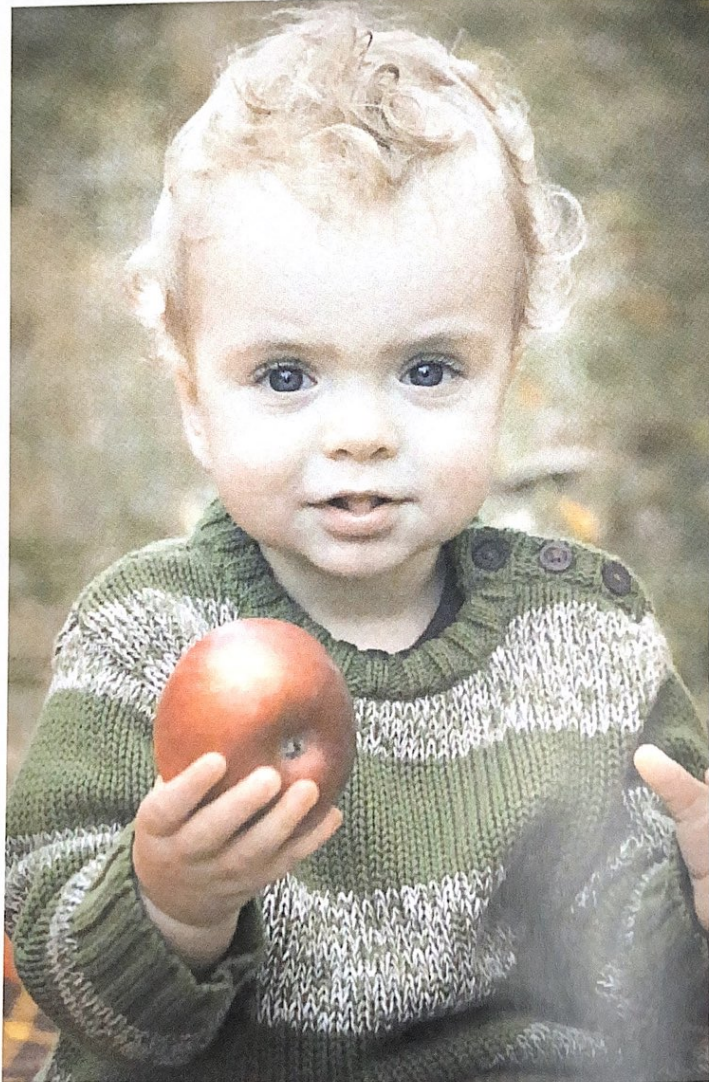
Neptune's Fountain by Jordan Kennedy



The Little Ballerinas by Jordan Kennedy



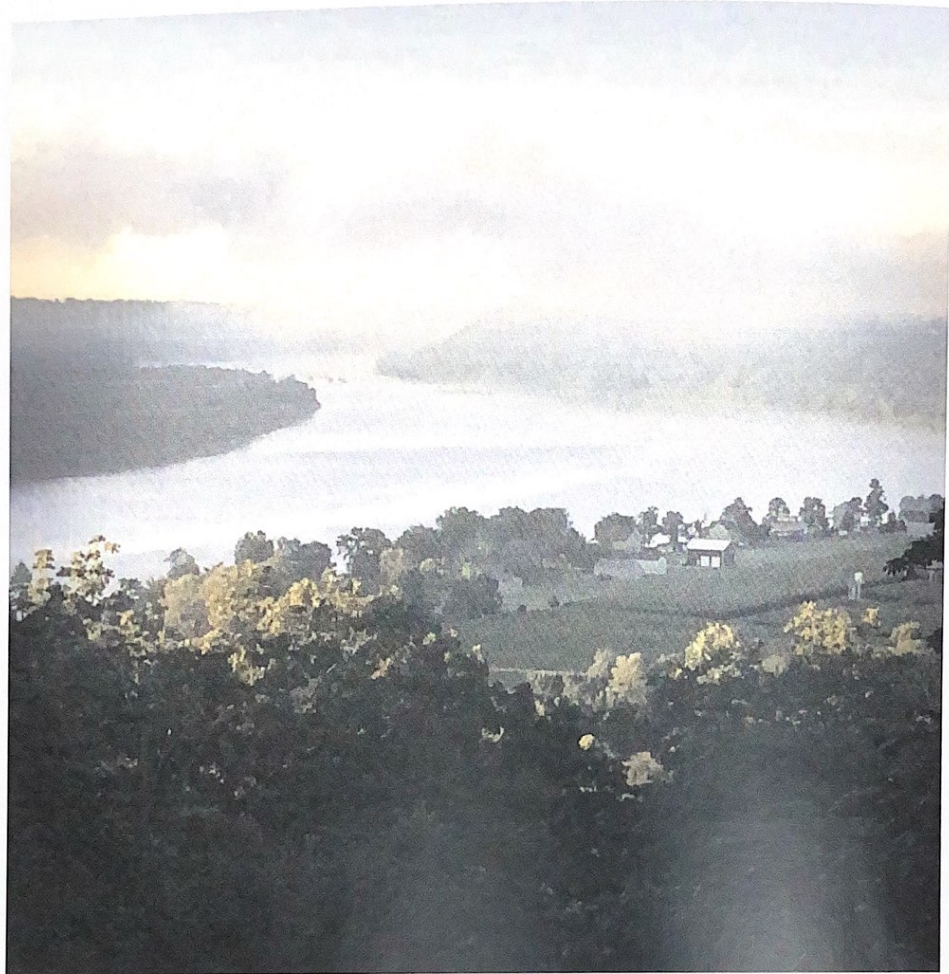
Apple of My Eye by Jordan Kennedy

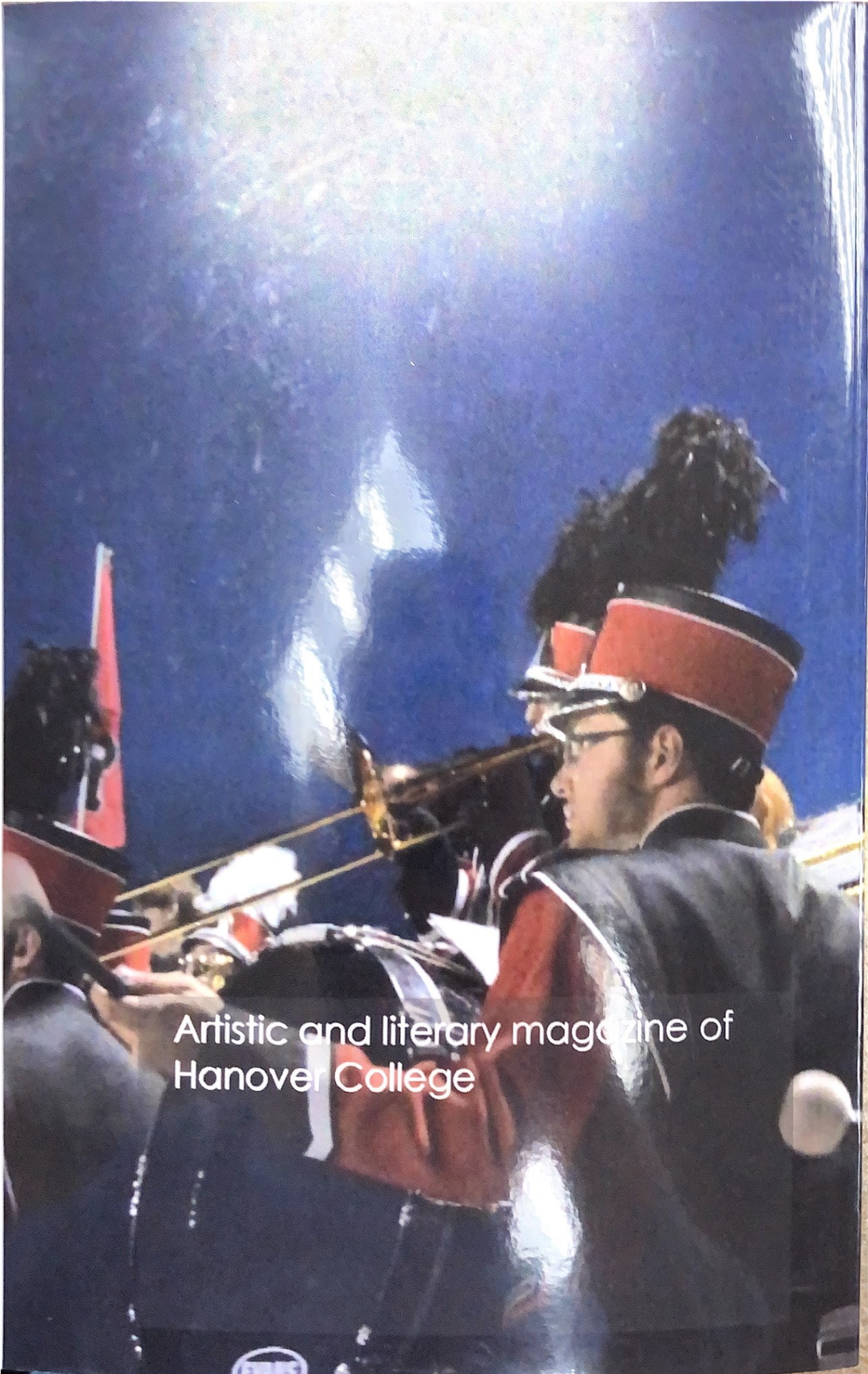


Árbol Rosa by Jordan Kennedy



The Point by Victoria Blackwell





Artistic and literary magazine of
Hanover College