

literary and arts magazine

equinox
issue 10 | 2022

Campus Honors
Program University of
Illinois at
Urbana-Champaign

Equinox is the literary and arts
magazine exclusive to the Campus Honors
Program of the University of Illinois at Urbana
Champaign. It was created, organized, and
published by
Chancellor's Scholars.

The mission of *Equinox* is to share the artistic
and creative talents of CHP members. Its name,
borrowed from astronomy, reflects this mission:
the vernal and autumnal equinoxes are days of
the year when day and night are seen equally.
The duality of day and night reflects the balance
between academic and artistic achievement
among Chancellor's Scholars.

Before we begin, many thanks are in order to so many people for helping us create our own little magazine.

Anne and Elizabeth and Laurie— thank you for your support and encouragement during this difficult cycle. You made our job much easier and more rewarding.

Abby and Kelly — thank you for all your work behind the scenes to produce this magazine

To the HSC — thank you for providing a space for creatives in this program

To everyone who submitted — thank you for letting us share your art and bringing this magazine to life.

And to readers like you — thanks.
Staff

Co-Editor-in-chief — Gail
Schneiderman Co-Editor-in-chief —
Briana Sobecks

Committee Members:
Margot Pierce
Brenna Freeman
Michael Jacobson

letter from the editors

Hello lovely readers,

When the two of us met as little freshmen during CHP orientation, neither of us could predict what the future held. Four years later, we are writing to you as co-editors, roommates, birthday buddies, and most importantly, great friends. We are excited to bring you the 10th issue of Equinox (only a few months late, but that's still better than some of our previous years). Both of us have been on staff for the magazine since we were freshmen, and are thrilled to be in charge of this extraordinary issue.

The theme of this issue is Exploring New Horizons. The editors and committee members for this issue were seniors, freshmen, and one honorary freshman (aka a sophomore whose freshman year was affected by Covid). All of us are starting a new phase in our lives - whether that be college, grad school, or the workplace - and all of us are learning how to navigate these changes and create our own spaces in the world. Even those not entering a "defined" new phase are learning new things, both with our changing world after Covid and about their own lives. The pieces included in this issue show our constant growth.

Over the past four years, we helped the magazine grow. We changed the layout by dispersing art and written works together instead of in separate sections and introduced the aesthetic lowercase. But it is not our changes alone that made the magazine what it is today. It's the contributions of our fellow CHP-mates' poetry, prose, paintings, drawings, and photography that only improve year after year. We are constantly impressed by the creativity of our peers. Many of those that submit to Equinox are not literary or art majors, but they still have a passion for what they do. All CHP students, regardless of their major, are doing incredible things, and we are more than honored to be able to share it with all of you.

But us editors and contributors couldn't have done any of this alone. We are so grateful to be supported by the incredible staff. Laurie, Elizabeth, Anne, Abby, and Kelly - CHP would not be the fantastic program that it is without you. You make the Honors House a home and we love coming by to hang out, study, grab some coffee, tea, or snacks, and of course, say hi to all of you. A big thanks to each and every one of you.

Thank you for reading Equinox. We hope you enjoy

it! -Gail Schneiderman & Briana Sobecks

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snowfall
margot pierce

She's standing in the snow. There's a lot of it, up past her ankles and the matted fur of her snow boots. The snow is still swirling down quickly from the sky in a quiet, lazy way. It catches in the girl's hair as it falls. She has snow in her hair and some in her left boot. She doesn't fully understand why they call it a blanket of snow; blankets are warm, and the snow is cold, very cold. That's what her wet left sock tells her.

The girl feels frozen, standing there in the snow, watching the fat white flakes pile up on the already coated, carless street. She doesn't mind the feeling. Everything else stops for the snow. The cars, the airplanes, the schools. She too, then, can stop, if only for a moment, for the snow.

The house behind her, yards away, blazes with light. She doesn't turn back to look at it. She won't break the spell, even though she is ever aware of its presence. The snow, with its quiet, lazy flakes, beckons. Forget about that, it seems to say. The snow has

no expectations or conditions for its beauty; like it or not, it continues to fall.

Standing there in the snow, she lets the quiet overtake her. She lets the snow gather on her shoulders and on the pom-pom of her winter hat. Lets it take gentle hold of her thoughts, the thoughts that swirl through her mind like the snow that whispers through the frigid air. Thoughts of the house behind her and its people, thoughts of what lies beyond the edge of her view of the snow-covered street. Her thoughts aren't always quiet and lazy like the snow, though. Usually, they call her with more urgency, demand her attention all at the same moment. The snow has the same effect on her thoughts as it does on her; it entralls them, beckons them, gives them a simple and singular focus.

The snow is falling slower now, tumbling ever lazier to the ground and onto the girl. She wishes to hold onto this moment, place its stillness somewhere safe she can run to when things are too loud, or too warm, or too fast. Already, she can feel the moment slipping away, falling apart as she watches one last snowflake fall, ready to become indistinguishable from the others.

"Wow," you say. "What a lovely little snow globe."



tranquil waters
madison wray



little ways of friendship
gail schneiderman

"Allie never told me anything," I swore. It wasn't exactly true – I knew a million little details, but she hadn't confided this harebrained scheme to me.

"We're hardly worried, Sue," her parents chuckled. "She'll be back to school on Monday." I left feeling slightly ill. She wasn't back Monday.

The rumors at school said she was a classic case of an overachiever who cracked. They said it was a long time coming – this disappearing act Allie pulled off. I wasn't sure. She'd been my best friend since kindergarten. We met on the school bus, she informed me we'd be friends, and that was that. We made it through middle school, when friends broke up and mercilessly slandered each other, in one piece. I'm not sure what happened. All I know is we went for a drive out to the cliff after the dance. She pulled us out into the rain in our party dresses and led me to the edge. Waves crashed violently below us, and the sky thundered above. Before we got back in the truck she'd borrowed from her brother, she twirled me and kissed my forehead as she'd done when we were kids and she was taller. She traced the rings we'd gotten at the mall freshman year as we sat in silence. She dropped me off at home, honked the horn pulling out of the gravel driveway, and took the road going north. I waved until I couldn't see her anymore through the rain.

Allie was a planner. She started planning her classes for all four years of high school in eighth grade. She wrote out her social calendar months in advance. We didn't do anything last-minute. She planned what she'd wear and eat for the week every Sunday. I had a gut feeling that this departure was spur of the moment.

She regularly promised she'd do something amazing, wild, and unexpected. She listened to that song about using a quarter to pick which direction to go obsessively over the summers – the only time she allowed herself to daydream. She always said, "we." I couldn't imagine she'd leave without me.

I wrapped myself in the thin, worn blankets in our treehouse behind my house and waited for her to show up. Hours passed, and I hadn't heard from her. I shouldn't have expected to, honestly. At some point, I drifted on waiting for her.

She woke me up, still in the same dress as I'd last seen her in and a brilliant smile on her lips. Her hair was tied back in a sloppy bun, the perfect curls I'd crafted four days ago nowhere to be found. She laughed as I opened my eyes and flopped onto the wooden floor beside me. "Oh my god, Suze, have I got a story for you."

chasing you
grace smith

I like the way you smile when I
Gaze into your mysterious eyes
And see something new.
I get to know you.

You walk around with those headphones on
Tuning the world out with your favorite
song. I know that you do.
I want to know you.

Dreams don't leave me alone
Like you do.
They tell me things will be fine,
But not you.

Why do you live in the world of
solitude When you could live with me
instead? If only you'd let me in
And not approach me with dread.

18

Person 2:
A rain of tears with no umbrella
But I am too ashamed to tell ya
That being alone is better than
Hurting with you.

The fire burns us up alive.
How are we supposed to survive
In each other's company
When it's not meant to be?

Person 1:
A wall of ice sits between us.
I've got the portable heaters

And you've brought more ice.
Will that suffice?

Such distance shouldn't mean much
When all we need to do is touch
And you'll see.
Maybe we are meant to be.

19

perhaps I'm not meant to have a life outside of
education
grace smith

I spend uncounted hours writing songs, books, poems,
Having nobody on this infinitesimal sphere to reveal them to.

I stray through the halls of Grainger
Humming my songs
That nobody will ever listen to
Or theorize who they are about.

My writings will never cross anyone's lips
Or change someone's point of view.
Or give life to an otherwise dreary one.
Nobody will ask me about my motive for creating.

Instead the only words they read are from lab reports.
The only songs they hear are murmurs narrowly escaping my
headphones. The only voices they remember are someone else's.
And the poems are entombed within a maze of digital folders.

Maybe I could show you?
An anonymous reader.

Who will never know me, see me, hear me
Except through these words.

20

fake

connie chen

I watch you
carefully
manipulate
emotions
to maintain
innocence,
forcing
together plastic
pieces until
they
fall

ap

a

r

t

a runner's low
grace smith

Shallow breaths escape my mouth, as I pause to recover.

People are shouting at me from every direction.

What just happened?

My vision blurs and my legs turn to jelly.

I collapse to the ground, catching a glimpse of the colorful pennants that marked the race's finish line.

"So close kid, you tried your best."



22

the dark she knows well

grace smith

I know that things might feel scary now.
Go flicker all the lights on that they'll allow.
A deep breath never hurt anyone.
So close those eyes until the storm is done.

Please believe
She never heard a thing.
You don't know
What the dark may bring.

sunrise
sophie luijten

23

faith
sophie luijten

You can't fail at faith
It is simply a matter of trust
Trust in a bigger purpose
A belief in something greater than us

Is there a point to all this
To all this endless strife?
I often question and I doubt
The miracle that is life

What sin have I committed
To land here in this Hell?
So often I trusted and took a
leap So often I just fell

Is there a God
And is religion truth?
Maybe it doesn't matter
For faith needs no proof

24



bittersweet
summer connie chen

It's a Thursday,
in August,
when I hear
that music from outside my window.

I pull apart the curtains
before they can
billow in with the wind
but really, because
the wind carries much more than dust in.

Even though
the patterns of notes are faint,
they echo in my head;
nostalgia hits for a minute
and then it's gone,
like it never existed.

But it remains there all the same.

My twenty-first birthday,
an outburst of emotions
a badly-ended phone call,
all lead me to Paris,
nothing planned
and nothing in hand.

Stepping off the train
at the station of Saint-Lazare,
there's crowds of people
rushing to their destinations,

but I catch your eye
and you catch mine
before you look down
at the standard piano,

standing between
escalators to this floor and the next.

You're the only one
with no place to be,
so maybe this is more than
a liminal space for you.
It makes me wonder
and wander over to you.

Whatever emotion flickers,
undefined,
gives you a pause
and so I get closer.

When I stand right at the
piano, there's an eerie silence.
Your hands are hovering.

And then it begins:
Notes and chords dance
together, the sounds are
feather-light,
but the pressure in the air slowly
grows, only you know where this music
goes, and I could be here forever,
and even when its ending,
I think, unblinking,
I'd still be here forever.

Your hands lift
and are brought together
and your head lifts up
I can see your eyes
as they meet mine,
your pupils blown wide.

I fumble with my words,
 hastily link them together from
 two semesters of college
 french, I need to say that
 I want to stay here
 forever and ever and ever.

You wince and smile and breathe
 out your first words in a whisper
 "C'est un morceau d'Amélie,"
 twisting your hands a little bit more.

It's a piece,
 music, without words,
 also one of a puzzle
 of a thousand pieces
 for my worn-out, torn-apart heart. It's
 the first time I think of the phone call
 since I've arrived.

You raise your hands from the
 piano, drag me to the hand-carved
 bench, just wide enough
 for the two of us.

After a quiet moment,
 both of us frozen,
 I press down on the keys,
 a jumble of intersecting
 notes. We're laughing;
 I've never played piano in my
 life. You drag my hands
 up and down octaves
 and I can hear
 beginnings of what you'd played

and trains crawling down the railway.

There's so much for me to say: I

want to tell you that back home
no one in their right mind
would've called me musically
inclined and that was perfectly fine.

But when your fingers release
mine, your hands flutter over the
keys like you've played piano all
your life, and you start again.

I hum along the first few measures
and after that, I can't remember.
And we settle into quiet ease;
everything broken can be
forgotten.

But my phone rings,
and your hands freeze,
and they drop to your lap.

So things like these
are just temporary,
and I can feel it in
that rush of wind,
an audience listening in,
the sound of travelers
walking and running,
and time starting again.

You lean over,
kiss me on the cheek
so soft, so quick,
it was butterfly light,

before you
snatch your bag,
take my hand and
stand and you whisper
again.
I don't know what you
ask but I want to say yes.

I almost accept;

those words are still unspoken.

But I think of the phone
call, and even though
maybe I could've had it all
there's a fine print
to our emotions,
delicate, like butterfly
wings endless, like the
ocean.

I am content
witnessing this fleeting
moment
We both own it
for the rest of our lives
and a few tears escape
me as we say goodbye.

It's in the afternoon
when, a gust of wind
sweeps in all my old
emotions,
the music, that
moment, of another
summer.

I used to be bitter
that such a time slipped me
by, but now it's just
bittersweet.

30

fall
flowers
sophie luijten

empty mind

31

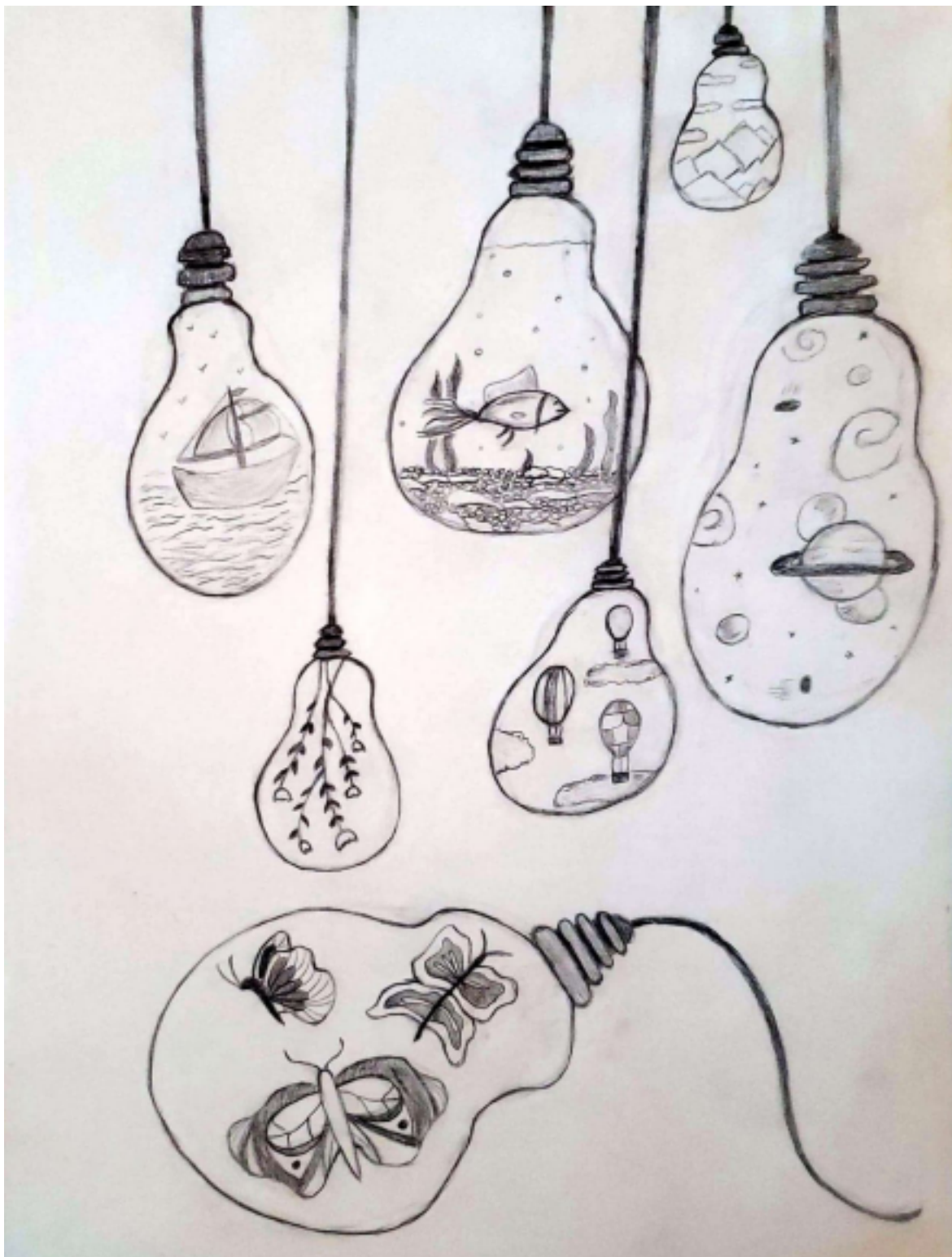
grace smith

All I've ever known was lost to me.

Every

Memory

Impression Conviction eradicated. I was alone with my thoughts and an empty mind. A rather dangerous combination.



lighting up the mind
gail schneiderman

life
sophie luijten

My spirit has been broken
My body obtained
I have no more purpose or hope left in me
My mental state is drained

I do not live but rather exist
Death is my destiny
I've made the ultimate sacrifice
My life is but a memory

Time is ticking and I stare at the
ceiling Wondering if things will ever
change Will I ever get my life back
again Or will I wither in this cage?

34

death
sophie luijten

The light is flickering out
The ending is almost here
My passage to the grave
Has never felt so near

When my body does give out
Will it be heaven or hell?
I suppose we shall see;
Only time will tell

The only natural partner of birth
Has to be decease
Sometimes we yearn for the finish
To finally be at peace



mr legs
henry feldhaus

A lonely night by the fireplace
I stared outside, the icy glaze
The glass did blur, yet through my gaze
I saw bright feathers of red.

A greeting, he made, my window guest
His plumage ruffling against his chest
A taunt it was, the feathery pest
To make me feel repentant.

Yet sitting in my wooden tomb
I remained, then through growing brume
The bird faded, and with his plume I
found peace again in my sleep.

sarah's summer wasteland

daniel cudzich

She sat on the cliside as you stood behind her, looking out west to the setting yellow sun. The sky was pristine, and so was the landscape, with soft rolling hills that faded gently into the mist settling on the horizon.

You could smell the dewy mist being wafted over by the gentle breeze, ever so slightly touching her hair as she gazed out onto the elds below. As the wind softly played with her hair, you took a deep breath, and exhaling, you marveled at how you found her.

You were not supposed to travel here.

You caught the glinting surfaces of still lakes within the valleys, motionless and dotting the landscape with reected sunset rays. No signs of settlement tainted these lakes; there were no boats, no intrusive docks, no roads connecting between the rocky hills. Loneliness did not permeate here though, for the natural scenery was more than enough to bring peace. In the serene stillness of this view, the breeze whispered, and she too sat still.

Her shoulders were tensed.

Grass was interspersed among the rocks and boulders that made the hills, welcoming vegetation that was neither sparse nor suocatingly crowded. The rocks were not destitute here, for their overall greys were deeply tinged with the soft yellow sunset, with ecks of green lichen and underlying crimson ores dotting the speckled granite. The rocks scattered across the landscape were neither haphazard nor intentional; here on the edge of the cli you stood near, they were balanced, just as she was sitting on the ledge looking out into that dimming sun.

You could not help but feel torn

38

Softly, violin strings and woodwinds played somewhere close, indistinct but calming, accompanied by a deep cello that brought your heart up to your throat with its sonorous thrum. Distant soaring voices singing crystalline high notes brought tears to your eyes, and as you gazed out west, peering over the hilltops that hid other hills behind, you brought your hands to your face. You knew what you brought here. A few wispy clouds hung in the sky above, and the rest was pure color, yellow melting into softer scarlets at the horizon and dimming into muted azures above you. The brighter stars of the night sky had begun to twinkle behind you as you continued to look west, and the fading sunlight ltered through the mist, setting the rocks with warm tones.

How selsh of you.

She made the slightest movement before you, a minute lowering of her shoulder, and you were moved. Brievely, you noticed how the light danced through her translucent auburn hair that the wind toyed with, the gentle utter of her plain dress

as her legs dangled over the rocky edge, and the terrific rigidity with which she sat.

You brought the end.

Slowly, she began to turn towards you, but you did not notice her eyes first. In that moment, you diverted your gaze to the evening sun, and you witnessed the great horizon. Imperceptibly at first, then with silent clarity, you saw the dissolution of the mist, and the landscape, and then the horizon itself.

Tears were in her eyes, too.

39

The cello began to weep, the violins beginning to rise in urgency while the far hidden hills silently, instantly evaporated. The wave marched resolutely as the sun too began to dissipate, the rest of the valley remaining untouched as it approached. Everything else was still. You took your hands from your face now, and you stepped forward, but as you tried to speak, to say something to her, words failed to come.

You found her, but it means nothing now.

As the instruments swelled, as the air rushed, as your heart leapt to your throat and you wanted to cry in that instant, shout that you were sorry to ever tread here and that you only bid goodwill, that you had some ill-conceived salvation that would have prevented this despite your arrival, she looked at you with pleading desperation. Her hazel eyes continued to stream with sorrow, her expression contorted with painful understanding. She need not look towards the horizon now, for she knew what was there, and what was to come in the impending seconds.

Gentle piano keys only punctuated the violins that now screeched so resonantly, so heart-wrenchingly gloriously that you felt that you had left the ground. The gentle harmonies had now heightened into cacophony as the landscape remained still, as the sun broke, as the wave approached with divine speed and assuredness.

Crying with the face of an angel, she bore the expression of someone who

knew precisely what lay underneath that beauty.

You quieted, and you both silently acknowledged that this paradise cost dearly.
This only begged the question of why such a paradise existed.

The wave met you two, and in a rush of air, you were snued like butteries in a wildre.

40

sunset
sophie luijten

41

playing sharp jigsaw
kayla vittore

We sit across from each other.
On cheap couches in my apartment.
Or metal tables at the pizza place.
How many times have I sat near you?
Negotiating peace treaties
Between the warring states of you
And your younger sister.
Or you between you
And your own raging mind.

I wasn't always successful.
But you don't really remember,
Do you?
After all, we were just kids.

The conversations start with school,
Your classes,
Your tests.
Maybe you tell me about your friends,
And I know you embellish your feats.
Are you trying to impress me?
The chance to impress is long passed
-- We've seen each other at our worsts.
Though it's hard for me to remember
Which specific worsts you've seen.

Eventually, inevitably, you turn us toward the
topic. The cosmology of us.
Is it on your mind that much,
Or is this just the thing we have in
common? Mitochondrial DNA links us

42

Like arm chains of the Red Rover Game --
As strong as we wish it to be.

You want to piece together the stories,
The shadowy memories and fractured
bonds, Following the spiderweb cracks to...
what? Some single impact that explains it all

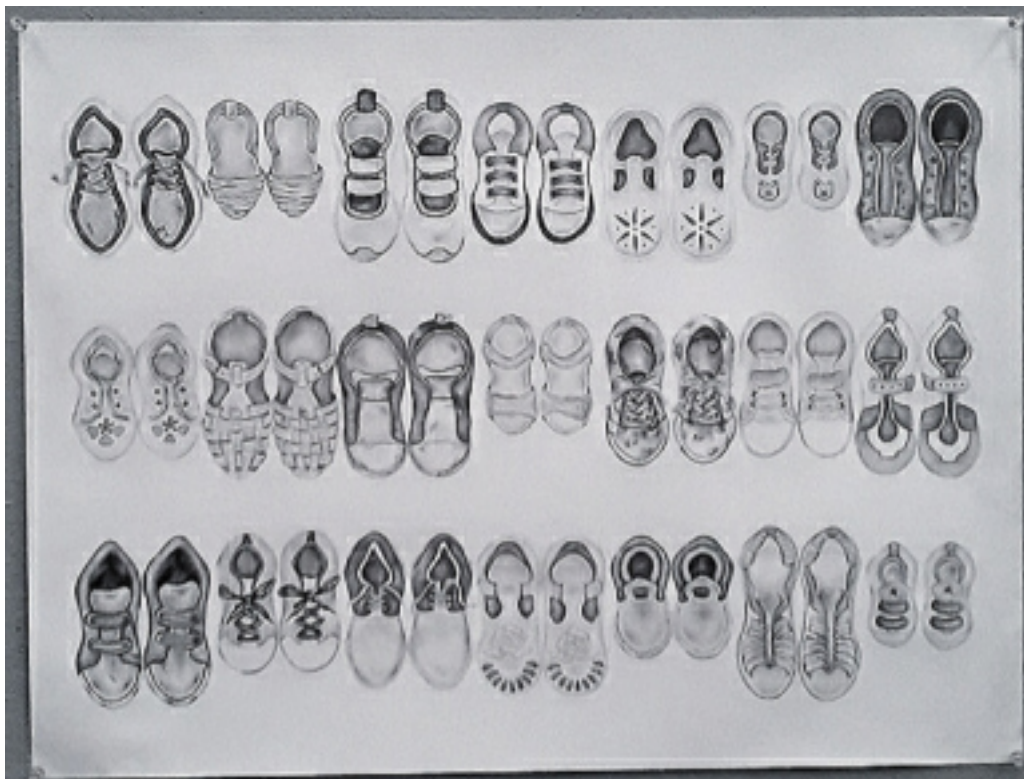
--
Explains us all --
The distances that stretched between
Five key characters
Each with arc and development
Completed before our inceptions,
But echoing throughout childhood perceptions.

A theory here. An unshared story there.
Laughter or heartache for children long grown. We
learn about them through the implied and indirect --
Like the sun, it cannot be seen directly without pain.

I have details you can't be privy to, not

yet. And some realities you can't face, not
ever. Watching you work a jigsaw puzzle
I hide pieces under the table
Clenched in sweaty fists
Hoping I'm correct
That you don't need a full picture.

I try not to count them
I fear we are just enough alike
That you are hiding pieces, too.
Maybe we don't want a full picture.



collect



detain

44



separate

freedom and justice for all

rosie martinez

45

the postcard adventure

elizabeth scherschel

She used to sign off her letters with “I hope you challenge the gods to stop you today.” I’d sign mine off with “have a good day.” I thought she was a tad nuts – no, actually, she was definitely nuts. She told me she’d go on an adventure someday; that she’d leave the little town she’d lived in her whole life. I had no plans to do any such thing. It was the summer of my sophomore year of college I got a postcard from her. Two years of radio silence, and I got a flimsy postcard with one corner bent. “Nebraska. Honestly, It’s Not For Everyone” and corn. She’d signed it in the same loopy handwriting I remembered from when we first started writing. No note – just the postcard and her name.

It was stupid. It was rash. I packed a bag, hopped in my dad’s old sedan, and started driving west. Maybe I’d find her – the girl whose letters had been my constant companion for seven years. In the end, I didn’t find her there, but I went to a college football game – my first – and screamed myself hoarse.

My dad sent me a photo of another postcard: a metal animal zoo in Fort Collins, Colorado. I made a face, but found myself on my way at sunrise. I couldn’t tell you why, to be honest. Perhaps it was the recklessness of youth. Perhaps it was the boredom. Perhaps it was the excitement of chasing a pipe dream.

I left the sculpture park with a dog. He’d looked so sad, sitting at the shelter’s little tent outside. I couldn’t leave him. Seamus, the sensible lad that he is, had no objections to the roadtrip, so long as we stretched our legs every so often.

Following Lily’s odd trail of postcards, we hiked in Wyoming, we swam in a stream in Montana, we got rained on in the Grand Canyon, and we posed at the four

corners.

46

The last postcard led me to a food truck in Reno, Nevada. I walked up, Seamus by my side. The gal behind the counter, about my age, maybe a few years younger, tied her hair back with a pen as she took my order.

"Can I get a name for that?"

"Carter," I told her. She fumbled with the pen, but recovered smoothly. "Do I know you?"

"No, I don't think we've met." She smiled and tucked her notebook in her apron. "I'll have that right out for you."

By the time summer ended, I'd explored the western half of the US. I was sunburned, unprepared for the academic year, and more relaxed than I'd been in years. Seamus and I got back to campus the day of orientation.

The next summer, I interned at a firm in downtown Chicago. The following summer, I secured employment there. I married an accountant and coached youth sports. No more adventures.

I never met Lily in person. I'm not sure I needed to. Maybe it was better if she remained just someone on the other end of the USPS. Years later, my sister sent me a photo of an obit: "Ms. Lillian D.W. Arthur, middle school librarian, cook, and adventurer." Various students added how much they loved her. She left behind two cats, three dogs, and hundreds of beloved students. It ended, "the gods needed her back home."

nature

sophie luijten

'Tis a force to be reckoned with
Wreaking havoc, violence, and chaos
Yet nature also induces all beauty and calm
Without any payoff

We humans torture the environment
Trashing our only home
Our weather reacts accordingly
While other planets we roam

Tides rise and storms surge
Mother nature mother nature awakened in a frenzy
passion The seed's been planted against our most basic
instincts It is time for collective action



birds of color
madison wray

call me out!
kayla vittore

Call me out call me out call me
out call

me

OUT!

I bumble like the bee
Clumsily through anthers
Guzzling nectar
Convinced this is labor

As the alcohol at the bottom of
cans rots sweetly in the bin
Like the leftovers I didn't get to
In favor of pizza and burritos
"Deserved" study breaks,
parties

Call me out!

From the fainting couch
For those with enough motor
control To faint delicately and
prettily Onto the designated
furniture

Where I bemoan and decry
The horrors of society
The injustice of reality
The world's impiety!
Having seen nearly 10%

Call me out!

As I bustle over the snow
Unseeing, unaware,
Blindly charting my way
Convinced of reaching some point

I do not know beneath the
snow Solid ground and thinnest

ice Lie entangled like lovers
Just a few misguided words
And I am plunged into

regret Call me out now --

Call me out tomorrow --

Call me out again and again --

Don't you recognize me?
I am The Fool on the tarot
card The lamb away from its
flock
I do not see, I do not know

You may choose how to wake me
Gentle nudging, kind redirection, Or a
sharp jab with finely honed words,
(Though you realize, I may retaliate,
out of instinctive defense)

The problem is this:
I know I'm a fool,
but not necessarily when
or how to stop once I start

I'm relying on you
to call me out, to make me
pause, to consider if my way
ahead
is the sturdy path I intended -- or
cliff's edge, tumbling into the sea

And in return, I will
call you out
when I see you stray toward
swampland Ideas and words that
cannot hold you

For I know I am a fool,
But I know you are too,
Did you know? Do you hate
it? Do you hide your hat of
bells?

Its ringing drowns out those
Trying to call you back
The more you hide the
costume The brighter its colors
burn



bright and free
gail schneiderman

freedom
sophie luijten

I'm sick and tired
Of my rights being taken away Noble
claims of protection of my safety Have
really just made me a slave

This is nothing more than a trap
Designed to suck the life out of me

The oppression has broken my spirit
And robbed me of opportunity

It would take a genie
To rid me of these chains
To reinstate my freedom
And absolve me of my pain

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pain

sophie luijten

I only ever suffer
Relentless torment
When will the sorrow and torture
Ever truly end?

This wound is gaping
open The gash runs deep
A void I can never fix nor soothe
All I can do is weep

This grief will last forever
Healing never seems to come
The ache and hurt is too much
I just want to run



loving life
gail schneiderman

Home is where the heart is
That is what they say
For that is where your roots reside
From there is where you came

My father played us music
My mother tucked us in
Children running around the house
Adults coming together again

Sturdy as a tree
Yet fickle as a flame
My connection to my ancestors
My ties to my family name

The clan is somewhat
broken The tribe fallen apart
But my family remains my
family And has all of my heart

the star that fell from the sky

madison rosenberger

The stars, as always, shone bright against the deep velvet of the moonless sky. Tonight was the one night of the year the dark would settle on the land as it has, the Virina and Jotin moons dipped below the horizon in synchronized harmony.

And on her favorite hill sat Taria. The layers of her court wear spread across the shadowed grass, her ballooned trousers hiked above her calf muscle so that she could feel the breeze as it brushed past.

Much of the city reveled in the night, the Night of No-Moon bringing about the

longest night and the most glorious of star-lined artwork, the lights decorating the sky in multi-colored swatches highlighting the images of the legends immortalized among the stars.

Taria leaned her head back, her hands digging into the soft, moist dirt. Strands of the yellow grasses tickled the inside of her elbow, just enough to send bumps shooting up her arm every so often.

The stars glinted in her eyes, their jewel-like shine sparkling against the clear of the night. For once, in many years since she remembered her first Night of No-Moon, Lorin Luck had sided with the people, giving them a cloudless sky to revel in the glories of the night.

As it always began, purples and greens began to appear, filling in the space between the stars with their glow. Soon enough, the sky was more color than space, a rainbow of iridescence scattered above her. The plains below became illuminated in this wonderful spectrum.

Taria drank in the colors, absorbing them into her memory to daydream about during the long court sessions. If only she had been born outside the castle she might have lived a more free life, dancing and running along the grasses as she pleased.

At least, that's what she was doing now. She would steal these moments with pleasure, remorse as distant as the morning sun.

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Soon the colors faded from the sky, and Taria's favorite part of the night began. A single silver streak pierced the sky, led by a fading star falling to land. If Luck lived until morning, perhaps she could find the fallen stars, make a wish and send them back to the heavens.

Smaller lines began to appear across the dome of night, swords gliding through darkened waters, siblings destined for light.

Taria counted each one, determined to remember the number. The storymakers of the city always told of how the number of stars could predict the coming year. Even, and Luck may be with them. Odd, and they may have to toil more for their trouble. Different numbers always had their meanings, and Taria was determined to predict this year.

On her fortieth, however, an abnormality appeared. A star, falling brighter and faster

than any of its counterparts, tore away from its determined path. It wove left and right, diving faster and faster towards the southern hills.

Taria stood, the star and its light so fully entrancing she forgot to brush off the feathered stalks that ordinarily were a bother.

The oddly-shaped light fell to the land until it was hidden behind the crowns of the hills. It was larger than a star, unnaturally asymmetrical, and seemed to cave as it picked up speed.

Without a second thought, Taria began to run, her bare feet covering ground as if the gazelle-beasts that roamed the plains had possessed her spirit. She dashed over rocks, a leap over a small creek as simple as if the air carried her. She sent a silent thanks to the spirits of the plains that aided her.

A slight tremor ran through the ground as whatever had fallen finally contacted the earth. Her feet momentarily slid out from beneath her, but Taria was on her feet and running in an instant.

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The hills glowed orange, the light of the fallen star turning the hills into mounds of fire whose surfaces swayed with the wind.

After what felt like an eternity, Taria reached the foot of the hills that hid the star. Scrambling through the grass, latching onto the stalks as if it were a ladder, Taria made her way towards the top of the hill. She fought against the night-damp dirt, claiming traction when there was none to be found, until the ground sloped towards evenness. Slowing to her hands and knees, Taria crept over the edge of her barrier. Never had a star so bright fallen from the sky, especially on the Night of No-Moon.

She peered through the waving grass. In the valley of two surrounding hills was a glowing so bright it seemed a sun had collapsed onto the earth. She quickly raised a hand, shielding her eyes from its seering glow.

In time it began to fade, and the center of the star would finally be visible. As it dimmed, Taria lowered her hand, braving the light. Still there was too much light to discern anything, but it seemed safe enough to approach.

With a quick prayer to spirits for safety and Lorin for luck, Taria pushed to her feet and crested the hill. With cautious steps she wove her way towards the valley, distinctly aware of the potential danger this posed to the crown heir.

Taria grew close to the light, and without warning it seared bright, momentarily blinding her. She cried out as she fell backwards, the soft grassy side of her barriers catching her. When her sight returned, she gasped at what lay before her. Or rather, who.

A boy, hair as silver as the light that once surrounded him, lay curled in the center of a darkened ring of burnt grass. He wore a simple dress-like garment, draped around him as if it were a blanket swaddling a baby.

Taria approached warily. Each step was as quiet as she could make it. Her instructor Mirinn would be proud of the control she exercised, despite the unknown situation she had found herself in.

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As she drew close she noticed tiny, metallic lines crossing his exposed skin. They swirled and squared, some ending in natural branches and outlines while others connected traceable shapes. They had no pattern, but they pulsed with a light not unlike those of the nightlights that dotted the plains in the winter.

She knelt down behind him, her knees mere inches from his back. Now that she was near him, she watched, looking for signs of life. Almost imperceptibly, his side rose and fell with a natural, if very, very shallow, rhythm.

Her hand reached out, but she hesitated, her palms hovering over his shoulder. Should she contact him? She had no idea where he came from, if he even was safe to touch. The boy shuddered, the sudden movement making Taria jump. He curled in on himself further, somehow pulling his arms and legs even farther in.

He's injured, she realized. And without a moment's hesitation, just as her mothers had taught her, she picked him up. If someone needed aid, and she could provide, no hesitation was needed. The decision was already made; she would help them.

After climbing out of the valley, Taria took off back towards the castle, following the very route she had taken to escape the busy festivities. Her mothers knew where she went and, despite their expected presence at certain activities, did not pressure her to come with them, allowing her one freedom in their world of countless rules.

The spirits guided her once more, helping her cross the plains as if they understood the severity of the situation. As she held him in her arm, Taria realized how frail he

was, how injured. She could not delay.

The white walls of the castle finally loomed before her, and with a quick step Taria made for the hidden ground entrance to her family's rooms. The heavy wooden door swung open with a well-aimed kick for the handle, and she raced up the stairs to the shared room.

With the star-show finished, her parents should be home by now, and just as she expected, a quiet blue light shone underneath the door to her mothers' room.

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Taria crossed the entrance hall in a matter of steps, coming to stand in front of the door. Pressing her forehead to its smooth panels, as her hands were a bit full, the door glowed and disappeared, allowing her entrance.

Jeq'ia, her birth mother, sat in a large canopied bed, the source of blue light her reading lamp. Her golden eyes flicked up as Taria entered the room, widening as she realized why.

"He's injured, Jama," Taria said in a rush of breath.

Without hesitation, Jeq'ia set her book aside and rushed to Taria's side, leading her to a small room adjoining the bedroom. There a table sat cleared, ready to be set for their morning meal.

Taria laid the boy on it, his face grimacing as his body uncurled. Jeq'ia quickly set to moving his clothes so that she could better focus on his injuries, although from a glance there seemed to be nothing wrong.

Taria stepped back towards the edge of the room, remaining silent as she watched her mother work. The table was equipped with the same technology as the door, instantly recognizing touch, responding to commands with a myriad of hidden tools. Now Jeq'ia called forth her medical supplies she had long ago programmed in herself, for moments exactly like this.

"What's all the commotion?" Another woman stepped into the room, a towel being rubbed over her head and obscuring her view. When she flipped it back, her eyes immediately shone with understanding, Pomot's gaze flicking between Taria and her wife. She fell silent as she joined Taria against the far wall.

While Taria mainly focused on her Jama's work, she could not help but notice as Pomot's eyebrows furrowed, as they did when she was puzzling out a problem in the city. She had obviously noticed something Taria did not, but her curiosity would have to wait until Jaq'ia was done healing.

Taria's heartbeats filled her mind, pulling her into their hypnotic rhythm as she waited. It could have been minutes or hours, but Jaq'ia finally stepped back, wiping a bead of sweat from her temple.

62

Her feet silent against the stone floors, Taria approached the table. The boy breathed much deeper now, his face even in sleep. Even despite his relaxed position, the pale color of his skin worried Taria.

"He'll be fine for now," Jaq'ia said, her warm honey voice calming the tautness of Taria's nerves. "Where did you find him?" She directed her eyes towards her daughter, their sun-like color something she wished she had passed on to Taria.

Taria knew her mother, and she was not mad, simply curious. It was simply for security and comfort's sake if they knew of the background of their patients.

But for some reason she hesitated to answer. People do not fall out of the sky. Pomot would have things to say about her and her habit of listening to the storymakers' tales.

"What's wrong, love?" Pomot said. She rested a calloused hand on Taria's shoulder. Taria leaned into her touch, its warmth as cozy as a winter fire.

Taria looked to the floor, avoiding her mothers' gazes. "I'm afraid that his origin may sound a bit...absurd...but," she took a deep breath, "He fell with the stars and landed in the plains."

Her mothers looked at her in silence for a few moments. They caught each other's eye, one likely conversing with the other in their secret method Taria had yet to discover.

Jaq'ia pulled her gaze back to her daughter first. She reached out, pulling Taria and Pomot into an embrace. "It may sound unlikely, but stranger things have happened in our lands."

To Taria's surprise, Pomot neither scoffed nor disagreed.

"Truly?" Taria asked.

"It's how I found your mother," Pomot replied, her voice thick with nostalgia and love long forged.

Taria pulled out of her mothers' arms, her eyes wide. Her green eyes, so uncommon amongst their people, searched her parents' for affirmation, finding it.

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A gasp echoed from behind them, and the three women spun around simultaneously to look at the boy.

He sat up on the table, his garments clutched to his chest. His face was one of plain fear. It was a look Taria had seen before, when one woke up in an unfamiliar room, all traces of pain from which they came seemingly vanished without explanation. It was a surreal experience, one Taria had even had the unpleasant fortune of understanding on a first-hand basis.

His lips moved, as if trying to form words, but no sound accompanied them. Without much warning, he clamped one of his hands to the table, his eyes squeezed shut as he began to inhale and exhale rapidly.

Jaq'ia approached the table smoothly, her calm masking her pace. She went to reach for his back, but the boy jerked away from her hand as if it were made of hot metal. She pulled her hand back, simply standing by the table with her hands clasped.

He looked frantically around the room until his gaze locked on Taria's, his eyes filled with intense need, for comfort, for knowing, for familiarity.

An understanding flashed through Taria as she met his eyes. Taria glanced between Pomot's and Jaq'ia's, each one nodding as she went. Then Taria crossed the room to the table herself, coming to stand eye-to-eye with the boy.

She held out a hand, maintaining a careful distance from his skin. Those silver marks had brightened, their shine intensified in his panic. His eyes darted between her hand and her eyes, as if looking for reassurance that it was not a trap.

Taria kept her eyes soft, conveying with all of her heart that she was saying "Yes, I am here for you".

He tentatively reachout a patterned hand, his fingernails torn and covered in the same silver. His thin fingers wrapped around Taria's palm, their touch shaky and afraid.

Taria remained still until he gripped her hand, his focus so intent that he began to calm. Inhaling deeply, Taria prepared her voice, soothing with a darker tone, the comfort of the night.

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"Who are you?" The first question they asked everyone.

He slowly raised his head, the silver strands of his hair parting to reveal obsidian eyes, glowing with the energy of the Night of No-Moon.

He parted his lips, trying to speak and once again failing.

"It's alright," Taria said, trying to comfort him. "Take your time."

Pomot appeared at Jeq'ia's side, holding a small glass of water. She passed it to Taria, who took a sip before holding it out to the boy. "This should help."

With the same tentative hands, he grasped the cup and lifted it to his mouth. He tilted it and began to drink as if he had never had enough. Once the cup was empty, he dropped his hands, letting them fall to his lap.

He opened his mouth, and this time a weak voice emerged. It was hoarse, but Taria could tell it had once been a beautiful tenor. The words that came out, however, were not ones that Taria could understand, instead a mixing of smooth syllables and long vowels with no meaning.

Jeq'ia sighed, drawing Taria's attention. She looked at the boy as if he were a child, innocent and in need of love.

"His name is Lisvide," she said.

Taria turned towards the boy, looking at the space-black depths of them. They met hers with equal tenacity, each searching for the same. There was something there, a string attached by Fate that was guided and laid amongst the stars.

"Lisvide," Taria tried, testing the syllables on her tongue. They tangled and rolled like soft taffy from the traveling market.

"Lisvide," she repeated, "I'm Taria."

future

sophie luijten

My future looks bleak
I have no hope left
My imagination has been crushed
Of possibility bereft

I fear I don't have much promise
So many questions and uncertainty
My prediction of the future: I'll
leave no legacy



cry your heart out, paint yourself all the
colors william hohe



tinfoil girl in a polyester world - denim
never goes out of style
william hohe

grace smith

The ceiling went on for miles.
I was trapped, unaware of my current location.
Was I underground? On a different planet?
How did I even get here?
All I remember is a voice,
(More like a whisper)
It called my name as everything went black...
CLUNK
It's coming from under the floor, or...
Platform?
With that, the ground shook
And I began to notice the serrated steel wires that surrounded me.
Where am I?
Another clunk and the tremor caught me off guard
I stumbled backward, accidentally pulling the nearest
lever When I hit the ground, I was stuck looking up,
Paralyzed, cemented in wonder.
I was trapped
I *am* trapped
The tall ceiling is getting closer.

someday, you will need a
poem kayla vittore

Someday, you will need a poem.

So you should save them up in bank accounts

-- Retirement poems,
Emergency poems,
Kids' Future College poems --
A logical and frugal investment.

But poems would suffocate in vaults.
Unread, a poem withers.
No, that is not the way.

Someday, you will need a poem.

So you should dream and search for it
-- Go out to meet nice poems,
Ones that make you laugh,
Ones that treat you well,
Find the one that makes you joyous,
To be with you every day,
That one perfect poem for you and only you
-- Ah, true love for eternity

Eternity? Maybe not. What resonates this
day, May ring flat and dull on another.
No, that is not the way.

Someday, you will need a poem.

So you should have them at the ready
-- In a medical kit on the wall
In the trunk of your car
Behind bold red words:
BREAK GLASS IN CASE OF
EXISTENTIAL CRISIS --
There for use in emergency

70

In an emergency, not a second sooner.
But so few of us recognize our own dire state.
No, that is not the way.

We are blessed with many poets.
The aggressive, angst-ridden student.
The empathetic, tempered retiree.
The skilled, inspired artist.

The hesitant, earnest hobbyist.

Poetry is growing on trees,
To print leaflets, books, volumes,
Collections of the best,
The famous,
The celebrated,
Whatever you may need,
And much you never will.

You can't know when you will need a poem.
And you can't know which one you'll need.
But someday, you will need a poem.
As desperate as the desert wanderer needs water,
And the drowning man needs land.
As deeply as a child needs love,
And the mourner longs for that hand.

How near they all are!
Our glowing screens are everywhere!
Take some time to read a poem
Explore the realm of rhythm and sense
Someday you will need a poem:
And when you need, the right one will be there.

***Dedicated to Prof Janice Harrington, inspired by her speech at the
Kelroy Convocation in February 2022



sleep tight
gail schneiderman

72

dreams
sophie luijten

My nights are filled with terror
Flashes of threats and screams
This horror of a hellhouse

Marked by inhumanity

They reveal all of my deepest fears
And greatest anxieties
What a terrible place to be in
My lack of agency

The nightmares come and go
But are sometimes replaced by a dream
A dream that I am finally home
The greatest victory

But when I wake my hopes are
shattered And home's a distant memory
A goal deep in the shadows
Is this my reality?



standing the sun
gail schneiderman



blowing in the breeze
gail schneiderman

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