wooden teeth
The George Washington University's Student Art & Literary Magazine

special thanks
Jessica Serejo and the staff at SASS Communications, The Student Association, The Marvin Center, the English & Creative Writing Department, ALEXIS McCLELLAN, and THE G.W. Review.

Wooden Teeth is published twice each year and is open to all members of The George Washington University community. Undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, alumni, and staff are encouraged to submit their poetry, fiction, non-fiction, and art. For additional information, please refer questions to:
Wooden Teeth
The Marvin Center 431
800 21st Street NW
Washington, DC 20052
(202) 994-7779
wood.ind@gwu.edu or
jcwonderfully@yahoo.com

Submissions can be left at Marvin Center 431 or sent electronically. All submissions should be typed with name, phone number, and e-mail address. Limit of three submissions per person per semester. If you choose to submit via e-mail, please send a new e-mail for each submission. No literary work is returned, but art will be returned at the request of the artist. If art is not claimed after four semesters, it becomes the property of Wooden Teeth. For more information, including deadlines and selected pieces from this issue and others, please visit our website listed below.

http://studentorgs.gwu.edu/woodenteeth/

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON DC
# table of contents

## poetry
- mary ellen dingley 7  
  Cover Letter
- daria-ann martineau 8  
  Orchids
- kelly ann jacobson 10  
  Out with the Recycling
- mary ellen dingley 11  
  Fiend Hunter from Ninja Gaiden (Xbox)
- josie price 14  
  Sideline
- aaron friedman 16  
  426
- alesk marciniak 16  
  Commuters
- cody lee 18  
  Forever Spill
- joshua tallis 19  
  Love 2.0
- yahia lababidi 19  
  Untitled
- justin ritchie 21  
  How to Eat an Avocado
- anayza stewart 22  
  Sum Me as Mad
- steve isaac 25  
  Fender Bender
- steve isaac 25  
  I never
- joshua tallis 29  
  Confessional
- josie price 30  
  Black Pug
- yahia lababidi 31  
  Lessons in Bitterness
- steve isaac 39  
  Tabula
- liz ewing 39  
  Knot
- eve kenneally 40  
  Young Woman Picking Oranges  
  (Berthe Morisot, 1889)

## prose & short fiction
- matt berman 13  
  Love the Size of Longing
- michael mazzara 24  
  Marathon
- zachary boirenstein 27  
  That Would be a Thanksgiving
- marielle mondon 33  
  Cup Rings

## art
- paula mejia 9  
  Lumiere
- sara schlosser 12  
  Peace Offering
- c. jay 17  
  Wall
- c. jay 20  
  Morning in Salt Lake
- paula mejia 23  
  Drummer
- hyacinth mascarenhas 26  
  I and Love and You
- matt casale 32  
  der Habicht
- david feuling 38  
  Dead Waterway
- c. jay 41  
  Nantucket

## cover art: paula mejia Kyoto

## 42  Contributor Biographies
mary ellen dingley

Cover Letter

To Whom It May Concern At Human Resources:

I am interested in the position
of sitting in a chair with non-squeaky
wheels behind
a low wall, off-white, not quite gray

I have experience with walls such as these
and other wall types—great, wailing,
Berlin. My wall duties
have included, by turns, guarding, building,
climbing, and a short stint as
graffiti-in-residence

Hard-working, responsible, detail-oriented
describe me.
Let me sit in your chair and I promise
it will not budge,
however well-oiled the wheels

Wooden Teeth 1 7
daria-ann martineau *Orchids*

Needle to my ribcage,
the tattooist imprints the flowers.
My pores break open at the seal
where he places the tip,
unleashing pearls of blood
that blend into purple.

I have chosen this emblem
after seeing orchids in a wedding.
I fell in love:
with corollas meshed into bride’s veil
and centred in her bouquet.
The petals—
jewel hues against white dress—
protruding as defiant tongues,

The convolutions of their shape,
shades,
wine-coloured communion
spilling into concavity.
Undeniable as pure sin.

At home I disrobe,
view my beautifully crafted scar,
remember how orchids first pierced me,
a breathy *Oh* buds at my mouth.
kelly ann jacobson

Out with the Recycling

He kept piles of island magazines:
on coffee tables, on top of the toilet.

Beautiful women in gold bikinis
mocked me from the pages.

He used to say that one day,
I, a big shot lawyer,
would take him there.
Women would greet him,
sleek hands soaked in lotion and sweat.

When I flunked out, I asked him
to throw them away;
they pressed on me like walls or bars,

When I thought he wouldn't notice,
I took some out with the recycling.

But the next day there they were,
on my bed, and he was gone.

mary ellen dingley

Fiend Hunter

from Ninja Gaiden (Xbox)

I would prefer to fight in cotton—it breathes
and it would be nice not to worry
about shaving everything or having a boob pop out
when I've killed some fiend with my viper clutch

and it's still hard to get dates
most guys are too busy seeking life-giving orbs
to revive dead lovers
or caught up in the monotony of demon killing
some of them, you never see their face
behind their armor

my battle axe is taller than me
and incredibly hard to get storage for
and insurance? Insane.

but at least I'm not those other women
non-player characters
who live to be accosted and killed
at least my iron bikini stops bullets
matt berman

Love the Size of Longing

When they met he felt like he was shrinking. He had felt that way for some time—each day a bite-quaking awe at growing backwards, a head-throbbing awareness of the fade. In the mornings, he would wake screaming as his appendages curled in atrophy, his fingers every morning coming more and more to resemble dried fruit.

He was 34, getting smaller by the day, and he saw her in his bookstore, peeling apart a pale croissant with fingers like pipe cleaners, tips painted orange. She was ravishing, gigantic, a colossal to a millipede.

"May I help you?" he screamed, a mouse in the shadows of Melville.

"You may," she replied, as she took him into her leather-folded palm and splayed him out in her cushioned hand: a hot tub of undercooked chicken.

She raised him steadily, bringing him past rows of autobiographical fiction and nauseatingly colored cyberpunk realism. She lifted him across her breasts, the color and feel of gelatinous warm milk. She cradled him to her red wax-smudged lips and let him climb their lightly crumb-chapped crevasses.

He determinedly waltzed down her red carpet of tongue, fording through puddles of tuna-scented saliva, crouning over her taste-bumped lizard. Her hair, a sauna in triplicate.

The last thing he saw, his head shrink-wrapped around raisins: a throat beating in stutters, ready to take him into the infinite.
Josie Price

Sideline

When I would go with my father
to my brother's games, moving to the front row
after the old man sat in the second,
I'd watch Ben waiting to come into action again,
my eyes only ever on him, his on the ball, then
the basket, expression an itch
to return to that fury,
all those boys' limbs, faces
under shags of hair threshing sweat in the
rise and fall, rise and fall
of their steps, squalls from high-top soles
kicked against waxed floors
coming out and up to me, watching, and then
my Ben would be called like a son
by his coach to crouch outside the half-court side-
lines, Ben would take a knee
like a grown man proposing, anticipating that yes
or no, his huge hand a hard word yanking

the neck of white jersey, and then I could see
the blond thatch of hair
matching our father's on his harried chest,
this boy my brother, still 17 when I barely knew 18, his body
already six-three, one-ninety,
this brother whom I loved more than he loved me, more
than our baby brother, so much more
than the father I hated, this man,
my brother, I'd watch
from my collapsible bench of bleachers the perfect
athletic form of his winsome body and how,
depending on the call, he'd either
sit back hard on his haunches
like some great knowing animal or with the
slightest look or motion saying go or come he'd
leap into his other, purer world
as I stayed watching so far away on the
crowded seats,
I was this speck smaller than a fleck in his eye.
aaron friedman

sat here yesterday
writing about not writing

today is day two, it is
a day maybe like day one

he counts days-in-a-row
that he runs, today is
day 426, stupid saying
he made it to 426.

aleks marciniaC

Commuters

commuters sons pack lip, spit
city slang, hawk wet bird
brown into coffeeless cups, some
empty
mugs outside the packie
cody lee

*Forevers Spill*

forevers spill from gasping
mouths like moths.

they scatter on the kitchen floor
beneath upturned palms, searching
for a linoleum heart to lay eggs on,
only finding black semicolons.

above,
the single bulb suddenlybuffets
and the whole world balloons,
catatonia/ically tossing a sense of understanding
across the chair, the sink,
the open refrigerator.

knee caps and the maniacalcorners
of the table in the back left attempt to ground
this reeling reality with some sort of angular
certitude, but the ceiling fan still cackles and
god, god, shut that window the moths are getting
lost.

later,
it would seem a broom is needed
to tidy the severed wings
before the disposal starts shouting
periods again, who knows what happened
to the commas they’d loved.

a clock ticks the space that makes
thought possible in this place and yet
the microwave’s digital display
is setting its hands on fire so
who is going to direct it all
now?

ask the moths, maybe;
they seem to know what they’re doing.

joshua talli

*Love 2.0*

Wireless, infinite,
intimate endlessness.
Blue tooth, sweet tooth,
Industrial sugar rush.
An affair,
Seduced by numbers to cheat
On our own limitations.
Caressing wires,
Enthralled by light.
Making love to digital
Copies of ourselves.

yahia lababidi

*Untitled*

I have not found the key to myself
the one that will get the high gates
to swing wide open, and the lights
to come on, at once.

When not denied entrance entirely
I fumble in the dark and stumble
blindly, run into doors and walls
groping and hoping

I knock my head against false ceilings
and trip on traps I forgot to remember
then start at the sight of my reflection
bumping into myselfs.
with your hands of the dirty dish
shred the skin and core

First

Remove the skin from the avocado
Place the avocado inside your hand to remove

In the edge of the skin
C core the avocado-where shear

Remove the core of the fruit
score from the direction of the skin

Cut the fruit from the skin and inside the pit
Drop the skin and pit into the sink

Pitch the pit piece and

justin rice how to cut an avocado

After the pit is all removed
Hold the two halves together

Above the pit is the main remnant

Inside the meat
Go outside the skin of the fruit
Removing the dark seeds and keep

Continue to core around

as you cut into the flesh
and core downward
Place the avocado on the flat side of the knife
Cut a midway from avocado flesh

and show you to slice with precision
the natural indentations of the avocado
somewhat like a cake, carefully work around
a small pocket along

Find a sharp pointed knife
Sums Me as Mad

It isn't always easy to begin
again. I sense the constraints of the walls;
fight to let the sunlight in,
but this darkness is stifling, and I fall.

The boundaries of the room disable me.
I see the bond of my muscles to my body
and soul loosen, detach. All shreds of strength escape.
Falling, longing for the wholeness of life, but it's so thin.

My eyelid flickers, sensing the shadows that suffocate me.
Nose fills with their pungent scent, ears ring with the loudness
of their silence. Eyes peer through the black light of a joyless sun.
Whole body trembles as the goose bumps rise on my arm.

The air clashes with my lungs. I try my hardest to stand tall,
an internal crawl toward salvation. A light I remember.
I remain on the floor with the remnants of who I used to be.

Every vein, every pore bursting, as if flowing through fire.
I gasp, battle to claw away from the mistakes of the past.
No breath, lungs limp, paralysis takes hold. Suspended in dark.
Overcome by the weight of nothing, solely thoughts' ensemble.

The pressure breaks me, then suddenly
dissipates, all anguish postponed.
Tick-tick-tick.
I live in the seconds
of the in-between waiting to fall again.
marathon

This is how you carbo-load the night before a race, eat more pasta than you thought could fit in your body; this is how you go to bed at eight o’clock the night before the race; this is how you carry your shoes to the race so you don’t wear them out; this is how you stand on the starting line and wait for the race to start; this is how you run the first mile; this is how to not think about the second mile; this is how to run the second mile; this is how to not think about the third mile; this is how to take water from the volunteers on the fourth mile; this is how to ignore the arch pain you’ve been experiencing for the past week; this is how to run mile six; this is how to not think about mile seven; this is how to run mile seven; this is how to pretend you are an Olympic runner and that this marathon doesn’t exist; this is how to realize that on mile eight that fantasy is wrong; this is how to run mile ten; this is how to realize you’re not even halfway there; this is how you hate running; this is how to vow to never run a marathon again; this is how you hope the banquet at the end has chocolate pudding; this is how you get a little nauseous thinking about chocolate pudding; this is how to hold back your vomit; this is how you run at a slower pace than you wanted to; this is how you feel like your shoes are filled with magma; this is how you think about how hot magma really is; this is how you eat the orange slices they are handing out; this is how you worry the Vitamin C in the orange slices will dehydrate you; this is how you forget which mile you are on; this is how you realize you are on mile seventeen; this is how you attempt to hold back tears because you thought you were on mile twenty; this is how you resolve to keep your mind occupied so that you focus less on the running; this is how you realize how much your legs hurt; this is how you force yourself to think about unicorns and who was the uncreative person who just decided to put a horn on a horse; this is how you wonder what a narwhale is; this is how you realize it’s mile twenty; this is how you try to possibly fathom how far the rest of the course is; this is how you think you can see the end; this is how you realize you can’t see the end; this is how you run mile twenty-two; this is how you think you can taste the food in your mouth already; this is how your arches continue to hurt; this is how you can’t believe you made it this far; this is how you try not to lose control of your bowels like that woman in that story did one time; this is how you realize you can’t pick your legs up any more; this is how you realize muscle memory means a lot when your legs are numb; this is how you think you’re dying; this is how you know you’re dying; this is how you think you should just walk the rest of it; this is how you think you’ll never get anywhere walking places; this is how you realize that previous thought was false; this is how you think you know it’s a mile left; this is how you take one last cup of water from the volunteer and you realize there actually is only one mile left; this is how you try not to throw up before the finish line; this is how you almost cross the finish line; this is how you cross the finish line; this is how you collapse.

Fender Bender

On every street on every day are thousands. And all sputter and stop, and grumble and GO: all different in color and shape and size but all the same.

They pass ignoring, dumb and not acknowledging unstrung threads between brother universes inches to their lefts, alone together. But when two collide?

Beauty and carnage.

Beauty in carnage.

Beauty incarnate.

I never

I never smelled the sea on the air never bathed in it never drank it in never. I never felt her heart beat never saw myself in her eyes never “we are one”’d never. I never seen red never seethed never lost control never. I never turned a cheek never ignored for ignorin’s sake Never showed my back and walked when I didn’t need to never. I never drank to get through never thought on the how’n’why never wallowed in it never. I always hoped always locked it up and took it Always tried another band-a-id always. Always failed, always. Never failed.
zachary borenstein That Would be a Thanksgiving

The turkey was getting to the point where just a little of it would be black so that the skin would taste like crunchy barbecue sauce. It bathed in the four hundred and twenty-five degree heat of the oven beneath the stove, on the right of which the cranberry sauce, not the extra sweet jello stuff, but the real live cranberries lathered in goo, settled. There was a pot of cheese-less macaroni on the left burner and the yams, pumpkin orange and sprinkled with shelled walnuts, cooled down on the grey, faux marble countertop. The microwave still ran down from three minutes and eighteen seconds to moisten the stuffing. A pile of seasonal napkins, embroidered with red and yellow leaves, covered the dining room table along with the china plates and actual silverware that had been in a cupboard more years than times they had been used. The table centered on an auburn, scented candle, all atop a white tablecloth with a crossing pattern on the fringe; a remembered coffee stain raged beneath an empty ash-wood bowl. Alice rotated the chocolate turkey on the platter, and sang along to her song on the radio, "You can get anything you want at...my...restaurant."

"What are you using that same joke again for?" Rip looked up from his black leather reclining chair in the living room and the newspaper he had been holding up to the lamp. He looked at Alice through the empty space where the wall used to separate the living room and dining room. "I should go away for twenty years and tell people I was drunk like Rip van Winkle. How would you like that?"

"That would be a Thanksgiving," Alice turned off the radio and sat down on a brown, box-shaped sofa and set to work on a crossword puzzle. Three minutes later the microwave dinged, and a minute after Rip put down his paper again. "Are you going to go get that?"

"It's a microwave, not an oven."

"You can't leave things in a microwave after they're done. The radiation will get in the food. You want me to get cancer?"

Alice tried to stop her teeth from bursting out of her mouth. "That would be a Thanksgiving."

Rip threw the newspaper on an ottoman and said, "Always those jokes of yours," and then he pushed up on the armrests of his chair and walked through the dining room, paused for a second, went into the kitchen to take out the stuffing, stopped for a second and said, "Alice! How hot is this microwave anyway?" picked up a dish towel, set the stuffing on the counter, then came back out to the dining room and stood by the table, glaring at Alice. He picked up the wood bowl and said, "There's not going to be any guacamole. That's not a Thanksgiving food anyway."

(continued on 28)
Alice penciled in another clue in her crossword. "There's not just some rule for what a Thanksgiving food is. Rip," Alice's forehead wrinkled at the paper and she said, "Besides, it comes from the family."

"First of all, that's not true. Thanksgiving has its traditions and there sure wasn't any guacamole back when the Pilgrims sat down for the first one." Rip looked at Alice, who looked at her crossword. "And secondly, guacamole sure isn't our family's tradition, especially after that stain right there."

Alice kept her head towards the crossword but lifted her eyes. "You wouldn't have seen that stain if you'd left the bowl there. So just put it back." Rip looked at Alice for a moment, then walked in to the kitchen, left the bowl there, came out, and started taking everything off the table. "What are you doing now?"

"Maybe yeah, maybe not. But I saw the stain, so now I can't just let it come back now, can I? Maybe it's going to be there forever, but if that's the case, then I might as well hide it in a closet and try to forget about it." Rip rapidly moved everything to the kitchen, to the point of being short of breath. "We'll use a different tablecloth."

Alice's fingers trembled, and she set the unsolved crossword puzzle down next to her. She put the bottom of the pen up to her lips, and pushed it back against her quivering face. After a deep breath, she said, "You know, the only thing he said was that you didn't go to law school. And that's true."

Rip stopped his shuffle run to and from the kitchen, and he bent down, using the edge of the tablecloth to wipe his brow. "What, do you want me to just sit down for dinner and pretend like a stain isn't there?"

Alice laced her fingers and propped up her head with the pads of her thumbs. "That would be a Thanksgiving."

Rip had removed all the accoutrements from the table, and now ruffled the cloth so as to grasp it with his fist, and looking down at his feet, he tore the tablecloth from where it lay like the severed of a wishbone. "Well you'd think if he was able to go to law school and I wasn't, that held at least know to put down a coaster."

After listening to this last remark, Alice stood up straight so that bow on her scarlet blouse, just below the bosom, faced the same point straight ahead of her to where her gaze was directed, and keeping the posture, she marched over to the stairs, and clenching the railing, she climbed up to her bedroom. Rip watched her until she reached the top, and then went over to a closet, fetched an olive-green tablecloth, and with a sudden snap of the wrists, sailed the cloth over the table and let it drift and settle over the corners. Then he placed all the plates and utensils and the hollow chocolate turkey back on the table, as best as he could remember them being there, without the bowl, and without the stain, and when he finished, he walked back over to his chair, sat back, and finished reading the newspaper.

---

joshua tallis 
Confessional

Psalm 23.5

He was my shepherd,
and I'd never wanted.

He lay me down to sleep,
And to him I gave my soul to keep
That should I live another day,
He would be there to guide my way.

Well he's gone and left without me,
And I'm here with broken body,

Now I walk in the Valley
of the Shadow of Death and disease
and I do fear,
because he is not with me.

Tranquil waters nightly soak my pillows
as I long for a scent of those lush meadows.

Now here I sit where things are said to re-begin,
Forgive me mother for father has sinned.
When I was just a baby, legend is, it was my father who told my mother that we needed to get a pool in our backyard for parties and his business folk. Every summer I had forgotten how to swim, shoving the inflatable rafts up my chubby arms, the plastic sticking to my skin in sloppy drops of heat. I blew them up and then my mother filled them with more air and I floated like that in the shallow end. The summer would get deeper and I knew how to swim again, to stay under water for a long, long time, and I swam like that for hours and hours until my lips turned purple and my hands pruned and I started to shiver. It was 8 p.m. and still light out and the day wasn’t enough.

Though, I never swam in the pool with my father. He was gone by then. Thank God, my mother would say, ring out like a bird’s song. And I had agreed, never envying the girls in my grade school with fathers who took their daughters to the family dances. Who took pictures with them before a formal, posing like their dates. Never stopping to think how, when he was gone, the house and the pool eventually followed. Thank God, thank God, thank God.

Ask my brothers about our father and they can’t tell you because they haven’t thought. But I have, lots, for the both of them. For my eldest brother who had it the worst because he looks just like him, when he’d yell at my mother in the kitchen with the yellow tiles and the sharp black stove that once hurt my elbow. When he took the juice box and squeezed it and threw it on the floor so the red punch splattered out like paint or virgin blood. It had been the worst thing in the world. I had stood up on the dark brown kitchen bench, bare feet, saying, Hey guys, just stop, everyone needs to stop! But I was young with bangs in my eyes and my voice was small, smaller than even now, and to them I just mewed like a cute pet, like the only girl, like my mama’s pretty baby girl.

My brother, that brother, he would run away in his baggy jeans and blue bandanas and always come back with a new girlfriend, with Lisa (he was fifteen and she was fourteen, pregnant by another boy by the age of sixteen). Lisa’s hair was blond and soft like Rosemary’s golden retriever. No one in my family has hair like that, Aryan hair. They had sat kissing in his room and I would pretend to pass by plainly, but really I wanted to be her friend. Always wanted an older sister who could show me how to put on powder and help me talk to boys when I got older and started to need bras. Someone to teach me how to deal with them, how to feel when men passing on the street would cry things out from their big white trucks, saying, You’re so sweet, the sweetest thing I’ve seen all day. How to stay on the sidewalk and not say anything. Every house we lived in, it was the same, and I spied on my brother and Lisa, then Gwen, then Adeline, and now his wife, Brigit.

Sometimes I worry marriage will be his only success. I worry that it’s not success enough for him.

(continued on 34)
No one believes me when I say I just want him to be happy. No one understands how much it aches to know how much he aches, because he looks the most like him of the three of us. Short and squat and dark and trying. He makes jokes because he works at a library now, was named best librarian in the county. He makes jokes because he hated school and reading and now he's surrounded by books.

My mother blames my father for my other brother being gay, which is another way to say she blames herself. Which is another way to say it's something that someone needs to be blamed for. As for me, I know my brother. He lives a simple life, with big, scholarly dreams sometimes but simple things, and if he tells me he is the way he is, I'm going to believe him.

For my mother it's another way to say she couldn't do anything for us to live in a lot of places, in a lot of ways. I have kept my passport from when I was two years old, my empty passport, printed after the divorce when she was going to carry us back to her country. Me around her hips and my brothers trailing behind.

When he came out, he did it in reverse. He showed us a picture on the computer and said, 'This is a picture of a boy who is your brother's boyfriend. I.e.: I am gay. I cried when he told me because I was fifteen and didn't know him.'

Easter Sunday I come home from college and my mother argues with my brother when we're eating. He says to her, So if I found someone I loved, and I married them you would not condone it? And she says no—she says, I'd be happy for you to feel that way, to feel as if you were in love. But it is not a marriage. I didn't know she felt that way, he says, turning to me. I didn't know she felt that way, and I find it very unfortunate.

She doesn't worry as much about me, or my eldest brother, because I like boys and he likes girls. I haven't told her about the way I spend nights with men, and how no one wants me for more than a night or sometimes two. Three with Rico. I don't know what my eldest brother doesn't say, but she doesn't blame my father (and thus herself) for our secrets.

The church where they pay me to sing talks about real subjects the congregation can reach out and touch, like this country's health care, and human rights violations. At home, the priest is elevated behind the marble and knocking off a bulletin list of the gospel in a coarse football voice with the game tied at nothing.

I worry for my gay brother differently than the way I worry for my eldest brother; it seems each has had success where the other has failed. He told us he is gay, but he doesn't explain what he is doing during those late hours of the night, when the house is small and I can hear every movement, and he's sitting in front of the computer, typing to anonymous people and looking for more photographs. Talking on the phone saying, I've had enough of this, I'm done trying, good-bye, or being upset in the way that only a man can make you upset, can make the entire world feel gray and empty like the ring left over after you've lifted your glass of ice water from the table. And you think, if only I could have just a little more water, if only I could taste what's left over from the ring of my cup, just a few more drops, that's all I need. But then you will lose your breath trying to get it. You will look like a fool.

I've never been in love, but I came close to feeling it, I think, the time I fainted in the shower with Rico. It had been after I knew him two days. I started calling him Rico because his name is Richard, but Richard was the first boy to break me, so I couldn't call him that. I started calling him Rico because he doesn't look like a Richard, and in the least, he could look like a Rico. I met him at Joshua's party, the night Joshua had been accepted to law school and wanted us to celebrate. I had painted my face with the coloring of a prostitute, although Leah said I looked the same, and we went so I could kiss Joshua and have a new stamp on my lips to fade out the smudge left from Clark, who had been there to mark out Aiden, who had erased Richard, the boy who had came first and lasted, at that time, the longest.

Joshua is far away when I arrive. He is standing on the black kitchen chair and his friends are cheering. Speech, speech. My eyes had been set on Joshua but they fell asleep to Rico, woke up to Rico. I still fall asleep to Rico, but now he's not there, he's not cupping my body, and some nights I start to shake a little. Some nights, I fear that I will die this way.

Rico is standing near the drinks. He wears a flannel shirt and his hair is light brown, spreading out in curls that reach his chin. My friends and I, we joke about him, say he looks like he's not even in school. Looks like he has an illegal business on the side. Looks like he's older and crashing the party. I call him Rico and he is none of these things, I call him Rico and I am wrong in every way. I call him Rico but I'm the only one. I invite him back after the party, after making him follow me around, after saying, I don't like to kiss in front of people. Just like that my friends are starting to leave and instead of going to the next party, we are gone, the two of us, and I yell at him in the street like an actress. I say, What do you want. What is it you think you want. He is quiet and drunk and kisses me on the street and, to passing cars in the night, we look like a fighting couple making up.

In my apartment we sit on my white sofa and I put my head in his lap and almost cry. I tighten my eyes but can't make out any pictures. I wait to feel the wetness on my skin. He asks me, Are you okay? And I say (drunk, believe me, I'm so drunk), I say, I'm in love with someone else. Though I was thinking of Clark, which is stupid, because I don't love Clark. I don't love anyone, especially not Clark, especially not now.

Rico says he likes the turquoise lace and kisses me through it at first. Whenever he tried to make me come he would open his eyes and look right into mine, and they were shining like that, even in the darkness of my apartment. Shining the way the sea does when it's nighttime on the beach. The only light that came was from the windows. I sleep with the blinds open when my roommate is away, and I look out at my city and fall in love over and over. I think it scared me to have someone look at me like that, to make eye contact while burying himself away, so I would just throw my head back and shut my eyes and begin to moan like they do in movies.
I'd reach down and take my fingers through his hair until it was tight and straight against his scalp, and hold my hand there for a little while until I let go and it was finished, until it was flooding.

Sunday evening he came back. I was so sober I was holding on to the railing of the apartment lobby, holding to stay upright, and he waved at me from outside.

I was so tired in the morning but I promised him we'd take a shower together because I never had before, I mean, never with another person, so I said, Okay and as soon as I closed the door to the bathroom, I was just as naked as he was, because he loved being naked, because his body is perfect and mine is soft and spreads in and out like drops of water, like cartoon tears. The sound of the water running and the sound of Rico's voice then grew muted in the small heated space, and I looked at him and said, I feel sick. I feel sick I feel like I'm going to faint. Then I fell, I guess, and Rico caught me and took me out of the shower and turned off the water, and he looked so afraid and I was so afraid and so he hugged me close, just held me, all wet and naked and scared and shaking and deprived of sleep. He said, You're not going to class today.

The blue in his eyes was so light right then; it was barely blue. Like the color of the shower's water if we imagine it behind our eyelids. I thought, Thank God, thank God, thank God Rico is here, because if he hadn't been, I could have hit my head, or drowned a little, or simply died.

I think if I keep going under and under, one day I'll be able to breathe, even if I'm sinking down, down, down, into the sea. I used to think that all these people, that they were lifting me closer to the surface, closer to air, but now I think I'm sinking. I'm sinking most of the time, and I can't tell the surface from the depths of the ocean, where, I once heard, when you are deep enough, the water is so intense and sharp, it will cut you up like silver blade to paper. It feels silly to keep my arms and legs moving in place just so I can stay afloat. Moving so I stay paralyze.

Once at a party my friend asked me, Do you need help getting home? Are you going to be okay? I said, I've been taking care of myself since the beginning, don't you know that?

Still, I can't quite breathe under water yet.

Rico had left his boxes and, on accident, his necklace. He said it was important to him. Please take care of it. I would then walk past Clark on campus and see Rico holding me after I fainted, how warm he had been, and how Clark was really just a hairy bastard with a chunky girlfriend who held no mystery or story, just blonde hair. Just blonde and blonde and blue eyes, like Clark's own. But Clark, his hair is dark and rough and comes in curls that he trims short, but reveal themselves as they stretch down the front of his body in one big tuft. You look like a 70s porn star, I had once told him, his facial hair thick and spreading, his body poised like a pin-up (left leg bent upright, right leg lying flat on the bed, propping his head up behind his right hand).

Do you like me, I had asked him, and he had said, Would I be here if I didn't? And I had thought, Of course you would, You live here.

I could have said that to Rico as I sat up on his flat body, looking at him in the dark, saying, You have a very nice smile. He poked at my teeth and we laughed; he said, I like your lips.

Then I started to see myself from far away. I could see myself and start to think, Hey, I look pretty good. I could see myself from far away like how he would see me, like how he does see me, when he looks at me like I'm beautiful and he's in pain. I started to see myself when I come, loud and full, and then shrink back into silence. I started to see myself when I whisper, I like you. I started to see myself when he says, I like you too, I started to see him looking at me like I'm the most sincere girl in the world.

When he ends it he is sure in his words but tries to feed me strawberries from across the table. His eyes are darting around the restaurant, at everywhere but me, and he says about the girl at home, the break that's coming to an end soon. I look down when he talks, I let out a small laugh. I say my lips are chapped, so I take out my lip balm and start dotting it on with my finger and my thick bottom lip squishes in and out, and he finally just stares and stares and I reach out my lip balm to his face. I say, Want to try.

He feeds me strawberries and when we walk out he grabs me under his shoulder and kisses my forehead. He says, I feel so bad, I really like you. I really like you. When we walk for coffee though, he doesn't hold my hand.

In tenth grade before my first kiss Robert went away to college, at his graduation party, we were sitting next to each other and I let my hand dangle there on the old chair's oak armrest, hoping he would notice, take it, hold it. Hold it in front of the people around. He just saw the birthmark on my left pinkie instead. Touched it for an instant to make fun of it and then let it go away. Kissed me goodbye on the cheek and when I saw him in November he was chubbier and uglier and I looked quite lovely, actually. I thought, thank God, thank God, thank God.

That at Starbucks Rico says my chipped pink nail polish matches my lip balm and he holds my hands there for a few seconds. He tells me this is hard because I'm cute. He tells me he wants to take me out again, he wants me to at least let him do that. He kisses me long on the lips, outside the Starbucks after a homeless man asks for change (or a check, a money order...Anything, child). He says, I want us to still be friends. I'll see you soon.

Then I made a picture of him where he is under cool white sheets and a faceless woman lies with him. They are in a bed high off the floor, above the earth and its oceans. They lift up the sheet over their heads and look at each other, beneath the tent they made, and I'm outside the sheet, far away, letting the tears drop out of my big pretty eyes and down my rosy red cheeks to the corners of my lips, and I'm stretching my toes into the water, but it's too cold. It's freezing.
steve isaac *Tabula*

Etches scatting like
a jazz hound on
leaf over leaf of yearning
potential. She jumps in,
gliding,
leaving perfect lines
of graphite snowflakes weaving
patterns round and out and
back. She is a god.
A slate of ice in hand,
she skates on fingertips.

liz ewing *Knot*

You wound
string around
my neck
loosened & tied
a knot
so your ring
would hit
my sternum
when I ran
yes, i will do my work for you,
standing on a ladder two breaths away from
collapse
and picking oranges from the trees you have grown
and nurtured. i turn, knowing you will always watch me,
making sure i don't disrupt the delicate balance of tangled
branches and interwoven fruits so easily bruised.
some things are sacred.

but you do not trust.
so you peel your oranges for me,
splitting skin with decisive thumbs and,
knowing no juice will seep into any
paper cuts or blisters,
your skin being unblemished and whole,

i watch you arrange cold segments
on colder plates,
leaving me to sit and stare
at the aggressive patterns on your china.

you left a mess,
the cutting board smeared with pulp
and littered with peel,
rifrons curled like fists.

Young Woman Picking Oranges
(Berthe Morisot, 1889)
biographies

matt berman is a senior majoring in Political Science. Next year he plans to become an astronaut.

gadamy borombein is a monkey bar enthusiast, English and Math major. He has a penchant for frivolous hats
and splits his time between being and doing. He credits all his inspiration to the massive intake of high fructose
corn syrup, and would like to thank the Egyptian goddess of cats, Bastet.

matt casale is a former member of Wooden Teeth. He now lives in New York City.

mary ann cygler is a junior majoring in Anthropology and minoring in Creative Writing. Her mom used
to make her memorize poems about sentimental holidays and patriotic events, and from this she somehow
decided to write her own. For the record, she is very sentimental and patriotic. She credits Professor Pollack
for pushing her to think deliberately in her writing.

lisa owen is a sophomore majoring in English. She plans on attending law school after graduation. She thanks
her grandmothers and her mother.

zack friedman is a senior studying Criminal Justice. He wants to thank everyone who helped make this
semester’s magazine so great!

david feung would like to dedicate his photography to the great many people to whom he owes a great deal.

steve isaac is a senior majoring in International Affairs and trying to get a minor in Theater. He hopes to
somehow turn acting and writing poetry into food, so that he won’t starve post-graduation. He wants to give
a special thanks to his parents, who always bought him books.

lilly ann jacobson is a senior majoring in Women’s Studies with minors in English and Creative Writing. She
is a novelist who recently discovered poetry, and would like to thank Professor Pollack for convincing her to
give it a try.

c. joy likes the fireplace in winter, the fire pit in summer, and knows that a camera is a poor substitute for living
in the moment.

evonneיר is a sophomore majoring in English and minoring in Creative Writing. She greatly looks for-
ward to the day when she manages to find some way to make a living. Her current interests include Mumford
& Sons, tea, owning too many scarves, all things British, incessantly quoting Mean Girls, Mom/Dad/Long-
Legged Jo (thank you!) and 705.

yahia lababidi’s latest book is the well-received collection of essays, ”Trial by Ink: From Nietzsche to Belly
Dancing.” His first book, ”Signposts to Elsewhere” (June Street Press) was selected for ’Books of the Year’ in
the US and UK. Otherwise, Lababidi’s work has appeared in journals such as Agni, Cimarron Review, World
Literature Today, and been translated into several languages.

cody lee is a sophomore double majoring in Psychology and (hopefully) Creative Writing, minoring in
Economics; apparently he’s obsessed with four-year plans and taking as many classes as humanly possible, as
effectively as possible. He’s inspired by e.e. cummings, lips, hips, shadows and all the decadence in between,
while—of course—always seeking sans serif.

alexı marshak appreciates her classmates for never skipping over the white space.

daria ann martínez is a senior majoring in Speech and Hearing Science with a minor in Creative Writing.
She wishes to thank her intermediate poetry classmates, Allison Schwartz, Naima Thompson, Supriya Gos-
rami, Michelle Braffman, Geoffrey Carter, Ed Skoog and Gregory Pardlo for nurturing her love of poetry and
creative art. Daria was born and raised in Trinidad and Tobago.

hyacinth mascarques is an international student from India majoring in Journalism and minoring in
Fine Arts. When she’s not cooking up a storm for her floor-mates, you usually find her painting her next ’quota-
ble quote’, singing along with the radio, or watching a Steelers game. She insists that her obsessions with
chocolate, caffeine and the Irish are controllable, and in no apparent order. She would like to thank God, her
family and friends for their constant support, immense love, and tolerance for her constant hypn
ness.

michael mazzari wishes it were still socially acceptable to urinate sitting down. He sometimes writes for fun,
other times for pleasure, and one time in exchange for laundry services. He enjoys dogs in people clothing,
running in place and acting appropriately in inappropriate settings. Some day he wishes to wed a Norwegian
heiress and have very muscular forearms. He also thinks grapefruit juice is underrated and metaphors are not
cool. This is an extended metaphor.
maya engla is a sophomore with an intended major in English & Creative Writing. Her interests include hosting a music show on GW radio, going to far too many concerts for both her wallet and well-being, scribbling down lingering thoughts and passing conversations with strangers to later fabricate into writing, and snapping photographs of beauty found in the most unlikely places.

sara schlosser is a senior English & Creative Writing major and Journalism minor. The fake name she gives to creepers is Penelope. She likes to jog up Wisconsin Ave., over and around the exorcist steps, then back down through M St.—especially when it’s crowded.

jeffrey price is proud to be a fifth-year senior majoring in English & Creative Writing. She would like to thank her “artist” boys Lars and BN for their support through humor, and a thousand thanks to David, Jane, & Greg for absolutely everything.

george radea is a GW sophomore, an avid gardener, and as of late an award-winning squash player in the Philippines, but when he is not meddling in the affairs of horticulture and underground Filipino racket-ball arenas, you can usually find him cooped up on his bed desperately trying to paint his world with paper and pen.

sara schlosser is a sophomore with messy hair, coffee in her veins, and an overpriced digital camera.

kristen stewart is a sophomore from Brooklyn. She really enjoys brunch, hearing odd comments, talking about how cool DC sky looks, and long walks to Adams Morgan.

jacob toole is a sophomore majoring in Middle Eastern Studies, obviously making him an ideal candidate for closet poet! His intention is not to save the world because then he would be out of a job; his dream is to earn a Ph.D. because he does not value free time. He would like to thank everyone who read his poems and supported him!