Three Peaks Review

Black Hills State University's student-run literary magazine



Three Peaks Review

Black Hills State University's undergraduate literary magazine featuring a collection of students' poetry, fiction, and visual art

STAFF

Jo Mitchell President, Editor in Chief

Ben Parks Vice President, Visual Media Editor

Isabel Litzen Secretary, Writing Editor

Hayley Bowen Chief of Media, Writing Editor

Carley Diess Instagram Media Manager

Audra Lynam Facebook Media Manager

Sophia Clarke Twitter Media Manager

Matt Bauman Advisor

© Three Peaks Review 2020 | Issue 2

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

In what feels like a blink of an eye, another year, another chapter, and another issue of Three Peaks Review has flown by. Yet, the differences between this year and last couldn't be more clear. This time around, it seems as if everything tripled—the weekly meeting size, the frequency of literary readings, the number of submissions received, and reasonably so, the workload behind it all. With the challenges we encountered this year, particularly regarding the pandemic, I am reminded once again of how important it is to have a dedicated team of people in order to succeed as an organization. When it comes to the 3PR members themselves, I couldn't have gotten luckier. My first major thank you goes out to these wonderful people who kept their passion, determination, and sense of humor as we all learned to navigate the process of creating a literary magazine in quarantine. For the same reasons, I would like to thank our advisor, Matt Bauman, who supported us along the way, answered endless questions, and gave honest feedback when we needed it most.

Another necessary thank you goes out to every student who not only found the courage to submit to us, but also the motivation to create work during the strain of an international pandemic. Perhaps now more than ever we are in need of words and art to help us find a mutual understanding of one another. As an organization, our goal from the very beginning has been to instigate a stronger sense of community through shared literature and artwork. While the pandemic has set us apart physically, it is the creative work of people that moves us closer together. For this reason, to every student brave enough to put their thoughts onto paper and share it with us, we couldn't thank you enough.

I'd also like to say thank you to the professors, other student organizations, and the Spearfish community, who have given us the support that has allowed us to grow into who we are today. A thank you especially goes out to the Student Engagement and Leadership Center who has spent the past two years answering every question and concern while also promoting us across campus and within the community. Lastly, a big thank you goes out to the College of Liberal Arts and the School of Arts and Humanities, as well as the BHSU Print Center, for once again making this annual issue come to life.

With that being said, I hope you enjoy your read.

Sincerely,

Jo

TABLE OF CONTENTS

POETRY

- 2 Your Old Home | Isabel Litzen
- 5 Stone in Love | Andrew Toft
- 10 Abscission of Women | Jo Mitchell
- 13 Nairn Beach | Elizabeth Harms
- 15 Earth Sounds | Linnea Langseth
- 19 Stuffed Animals | Marissa Boyd
- 20 Blackbird | Hayley Bowen
- 23 Weed and Perfume | Kylee Myers
- 26 One Afternoon | Robin Bissett
- 27 The Forgotten Story | Hope Christofferson
- 29 Forgive Me | Kaylee Kalmbach
- 30 Electric | Renée Ciccariello

PROSE

- 6 The Natural Order of Life | Marissa Boyd
- 16 On Herman Street | Sarah Schaeffer
- 17 An Extra Room | Sarah Schaeffer

PHOTOGRAPHY

- 3 Style After Light | Hiroto Hayashi
- 12 Iceland Mountain | Keegan Baatz
- 14 Untitled | Keegan Baatz
- 18 Forgotten Childhood | Kathryn Jones
- 28 Transition | Linnea Langseth

ART

- 4 Farbeyond | Hope Christofferson
- 11 Pulse | Katie Wolff
- 21 Mechanics | Anne Skaug
- 22 Nike/Dior | Kady Jo Dufloth

Cover Art: Fresh Start | Kathryn Jones

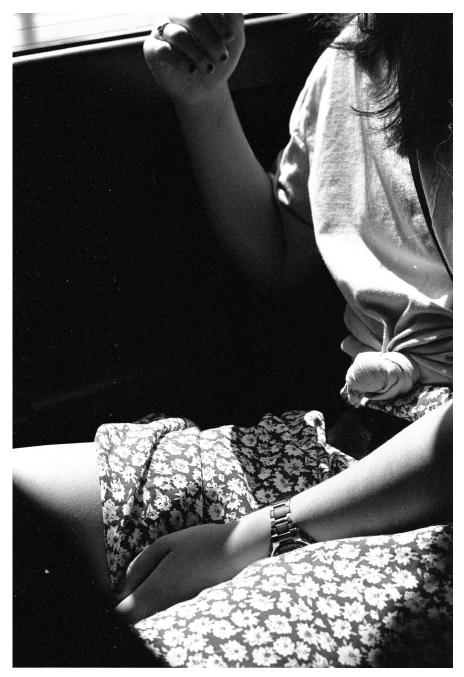
YOUR OLD HOME

Isabel Litzen | Poetry

The first time I went home with you I was nineteen and petrified. My socks were soaked from the wet snow seeping through my shoes while I stood shivering, waiting for you to find the keys to your parents' old Victorian. You couldn't, so I helped you steal your neighbor's ladder so we could climb through the open window on the second floor and we tumbled into the past. Every room smelled of history. Like my antique typewriter or an art museum. You smiled as I stared at the coocoo clock mounted on the floral wallpaper. Your wide eyes gleamed when you showed me your dad's old record player and the overflowing shelves of vinyl. You moved the needle and voices of The Beatles filled the chilly home with warmth.

I Want to Hold Your Hand.

We basked in the golden hour light and you grabbed my arm and we danced in the dust like it was rain. The home creaked with each step, moaning her pleasures as if sheltering a new visitor satisfied her. You sang, your voice echoing through the home and made it seem empty but I knew it was full of memories and love and bare feet like ours dancing. We swayed till the record ceased and you led me into the kitchen with the gas stove and the tile counter and the smiling wildflower that sat in the windowsill swaying. You made tea with a kettle that whistled and we sat sipping across from each other at a wobbly wooden table, and for a second I thought the tea was wine because of how it soothed me, but I realized it was your breath on my lips as you blew the steam away from my cup.



STYLE AFTER LIGHT Hiroto Hayashi | Digital Photography



FARBEYOND Hope Christofferson | Pen and Ink

STONE IN LOVE

Andrew Toft | Poetry

The hills are not just hills but the uncovered heart of some long-forgotten magma-flame from below.

The pines point up Searching for what I cannot find. They can only see the sky, and I envy them.

But there is more than the blue sky and arboreal towers. So as I sit upon my half-alive boulder I wonder what I think.

I think that long ago my heart was buried, too, waiting. Waiting for a geologic romance to push me up.

I don't mind that the trees don't have to look down. They will live a life of loneliness surrounded by others. You must see where you have been to decide where you are going and I do not long for the olden days of fire and change.

For now, I understand that beginnings have an end

THE NATURAL ORDER OF LIFE

Marissa Boyd | Short Fiction

She stared down at the mangled corpse, at the entrails leaking from the body, at the disfigured face, at the wide, blank eyes gazing up into nothingness. The forest floor around the body was stained with dried blood, a dark contrast to the brilliant colors of the greenery surrounding it and the blue sky above.

Cora stifled a cry, stumbling away from the body and bumping into a tree behind her. Her gaze flitted from side to side, looking for something, *someone*, even though she was the only one for miles around.

It wasn't the first time Cora had seen a dead body. Growing up with a father who worked as a mortician for their town's local funeral home, she would often find herself down in the basement of the morgue, watching him clean and prepare the bodies, handing him tools, daydreaming of the corpse's past life; so she was used to being around death.

But this was the first body Cora had ever felt a sense of fear from. Never before had she seen a body so *dehumanized*. When she had first set out on this six-day hiking trip in the Rockies, she had been warned of the high probability of running into predators such as wolves and bears, but the thought of finding something this gruesome and horrifying had never crossed her mind. She had grown up with this naïve love for nature, believing it was much more kind and compassionate compared to human nature. Nature had always been her escape from her life, from the loneliness at home without her mother around, from the doom and gloom of the multiple bodies she had observed at the morgue her father operated. For Cora, nature meant life and freedom, so she certainly hadn't expected to stumble across something so ghastly such as this corpse.

Out of the corner of her eye, she noticed a dismembered arm a couple feet away from the body. It had been chewed off just below the elbow with large bloody tooth marks covering the majority of the wrist and forearm, and two of its fingers were missing. The blood near the gaping wounds on both the body and dismembered limb had long since dried, but Cora couldn't help but gag as she surveyed the carcass splayed before her on the ground.

The body was at least a couple hours old, she supposed, because it hadn't begun the bloating process and the body was stiff and cold, from the rigor mortis.

Chills ran down Cora's spine and she could feel the hairs standing up on the back of her neck as she surveyed her surroundings. The rocky trail she had been hiking on stretched on before and behind her, beckoning her to continue on her trek. The sun shone brightly overhead and a cool breeze blew gently through the trees, rustling the leaves in a soothing tune. Birds twittered high in the branches, oblivious to the near-panicking human below them. All signs pointed to a beautiful, calm August afternoon in the mountains, but Cora's heart was beating out of control in the cage of her chest. "It's okay. It's fine. You're the only one for miles. It's okay," she muttered to herself under her breath, trying to calm her rapidly increasing pulse and the hysteria rising inside her.

But the terrifying fact was she was the only *human* for miles. Whatever creature had done this could still be lurking nearby, or its den was located around this area.

Then something had dawned on her.

Whatever had done this hadn't eaten the body, but rather had killed the person just to kill them. It had killed them for *sport*.

Cora let out an involuntary whimper, pressing herself harder again the tree she stood against. What could she do though? She couldn't scream; there was no other person around to help for miles, and that would certainly alert whatever animal had done this to the body before her. She could run, but where could she go? If she left and hightailed it back to where her car was parked, she would make it to the nearest ranger's station in less than two days. If she continued on, there was a possibility she might run into another person at the cabin at the top of the peak she was hiking to, but there was a high chance she would be the only person there until she came back down the mountain. Regardless, she had to tell *someone*.

Dread seeped into her bones as she continued to stare at the corpse, her body seemingly paralyzed with the contemplation of her decision of what to do.

After what seemed like hours, Cora peeled herself away from the tree that she had unconsciously deemed her safe haven and stepped closer to the body. She peered down at the disfigured carcass as a hard lump formed in her throat.

Never before had she seen such a mutilated human before; all the other corpses she had observed while shadowing her father in the morgue back in her hometown all had the appearance that they were sleeping. Those bodies had all looked peaceful, even in death, despite a few of those bodies being the product of the occasional suicide and even homicide. Cora knew human nature was not always kind, that many people were actually evil, constantly battling inner demons that often drove them to commit horrible acts of crime that often resulted in death. Many of those particular bodies were passed from the coroner to her father, whose job was to clean the corpse up enough to make it presentable for the family to identify or for a funeral.

Death was inevitable, Cora knew that much; that was something she accepted long ago. But perhaps because of constantly being surrounded by human death, some naïve part of her had somehow ignored the realistic notion that even life in nature often ended in death. She had never really thought much about the animalistic side of nature, because in the woods behind her house, the forest was constantly alive with birds, bugs, squirrels, and the occasional deer; it was an escape for her, away from the awful nature of man. And maybe that was the reason why Cora never fully grasped the idea that the nature outside of her house could be just as horrible as the nature inside her fellow man.

But now...

Cora felt a hitch in her breath as she suddenly made contact with those unblinking, unseeing dead eyes of the corpse and she stumbled back once more. She rubbed her arms, hugging herself; she suddenly felt cold despite it being a warm, sunny day.

The sudden crackle of feet upon undergrowth made Cora whirl around, fear spiking in her chest.

A man, around the age of fifty, with graying hair, a tanned, weathered face, and a lean build, was tromping towards her, a puzzled expression on his face. "You okay over there, friend?" he called in a concerned voice.

Cora opened her mouth to reply but the only sound that came out was a weak croak. She cleared her throat, watching apprehensively as the man drew closer to her, and exclaimed in a panicked tone, "There's a dead person over here!"

The man quickened his pace, breaking into a jog as his expression changed from curiosity to alarm. He didn't say anything until he was a few feet away, where he stopped abruptly. His eyes narrowed as he took in the sight of the corpse, at the dismembered limb, at the bloodied scratches and tears in the body.

"What in God's name?" Cora heard him mutter.

"I just found it a couple of minutes ago," Cora told him; her voice came out softer than she had intended, more timid and afraid that she wanted him to know.

"Huh," was his response; he bent down to examine the body closer, picking up a nearby stick and prodding the torso of the corpse with it.

"Don't!" Cora cried as bile threatened to rise in her throat.

The man glanced up at her, an eyebrow quirked skyward. "It's not gonna hurt you."

I know that. I'm scared of what killed it, not the body itself, Cora wanted to tell him, but she bit her tongue and watched as the man turned his attention back to the carcass.

"Must've been wolves," he muttered loudly enough for her to hear as he continued to stare thoughtfully down at the body.

"H-How do you know that?"

"See the bite marks? There?" He pointed at a bloody tear in the body's bare leg. "Those aren't big enough for a bear. And no other animal could have taken down a human with teeth like that."

Chills ran down Cora's spine. She swallowed as bile yet again began to rise in her throat. A sudden wave of exhaustion washed over her just then, and her bottom lip trembled, threatening tears. She wanted to be home in her living room, curled up in her favorite arm chair near the fireplace with her cat, Mick, purring in her lap.

The man straightened, done with his inspection. He turned to her, eyes wary. "Well, that's that, I guess. Best quickly move on from this place and away from the body. I bet that scavengers will be here soon, and they get mean when they feel threatened."

Cora gawked at him in surprise. "You aren't going to go get help?" she asked incredulously.

He frowned, staring back at her in disbelief. "What's the point? It's already dead and there's no ranger station for miles. Neither of us ain't got no way of transporting the body and I have a goal of finishin' this particular hike in the next twenty-four hours."

Utter amazement filled Cora. She couldn't seem to wrap her mind around not telling someone about this tragedy as soon as possible. "But-" she began, but the man cut her off.

"Look, missy, we're only human. This is a part of nature, death and all. *We're* a part of nature." The man gestured wildly about himself, as if to emphasize the absolute barbarity of the world around them. "It can be pretty awful sometimes, because wild animals are feral. You should know that by now, out here hikin' by yourself and all."

"My dad works in a morgue. We should give it some sort of ceremony. It's a *person*!" she protested bewilderedly.

"It's the natural order of things, missy."

Cora didn't know how to respond; she stood there, gaping, mind suddenly blank. "No, but-"

Without another word, the man nodded to her in farewell, turned on his heel, and marched away, never glancing back.

Grunting in frustration, Cora watched the man hike out of sight before turning back to the body. She was torn. She, too, wanted *badly* to finish her hike, but she felt a guilty obligation to trek to the nearest ranger's station and report her findings.

The man wasn't wrong. They were only human, and there was only so much either of them could do, because regardless of Cora's actions, nature would take its toll, and sooner or later the body would be reduced to bare remains by scavengers and the wilderness around it.

But everything she had learned and experienced during those days down in the cold basement of the morgue, watching her father paint faces on dead people, dress them in fancy clothes, lay them in caskets for their upcoming funerals... Her inner humanity screamed at her. She had to do *something*. She had to give the body *some* sort of ritual, let someone else know what had happened, where it was.

Cora heaved a great sigh and stepped back onto the trail. She gave one last lamenting glance at the corpse that lay there, unknowing of its fate, and began to hike back the way she had come.

ABSCISSION OF WOMEN

Jo Mitchell | Poetry

When I think of oak trees, I think of young girls.

They too are living and rooted, unwilted and unafraid, to cast their own shadow.

But like oaks, they also fall into the routine of autumn: Skipping meals, seeping nutrients.

Kissing sunlight goodbye and dreaming not of being cloaked in color, but emptiness—

Wishing their skin would shed from their core like leaves until their ribs resemble barren branches,

until they are nothing but the bone and bark of a silhouette.

Until they grow into women, who, unlike trees, never learn to blossom.



PULSE *Katie Wolff* | Oil on Canvas



ICELAND MOUNTAIN Keegan Baatz | Digital Photography

NAIRN BEACH

Elizabeth Harms | Poetry

I do not know if the grit in my mouth is sand or the willpower to keep digging for something deeper than what I already know.

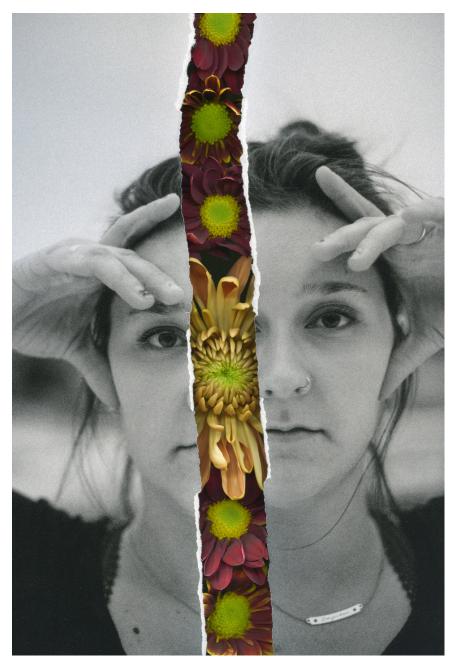
Haunted by icy aquatic life, I wonder, who lived in these shells, or what, and when. And how many times have they inhabited heartbroken urchins on a tearful Thursday evening when the tidepool just begins to low.

I smile to myself, no longer caring about whether I make pearls in my stomach or if my lungs are filling with precipitation from the softly-shedding sky, because I know that there is something poetic about this moment,

here,

now,

in the gentle, blowing snow.



UNTITLED Keegan Baatz | Digital Photography

EARTH SOUNDS

Linnea Langseth | Poetry

There is nothing like the sounds of the Earth To color skies when gray, The trickling echo of a rumbling river lets me know good things are heading this way. Oh, how I adore the sound of trees Like no one is watching, with the wind they dance, Branches whispering to one another Trading dreams, I am put in a trance. I rise in grace when I wake to birds Singing away at the birth of new day, They remind me to let go of troubles That may linger from yesterday. I find comfort in the roar of thunder I'm reminded that chaos can be okay, The crack of lightning excites me Now my cloud can drain away. As the rain feeds my flowers Beauty blossoms where darkness once stood, Sometimes we forget that from bad can too come If the Sun could make noise she'd sound like embrace, she warms up those who've been cold and leaves freckles as she kisses my face. My favorite tune is the swell of the sea I too ebb with the flow, if I'm swept away in a current I find new land where green grass grows. When life gets tough and you struggle to see the sun glisten, Take a walk in to nature our Earth creates music for those who listen.

ON HERMAN STREET

Sarah Schaeffer | Prose

The one grandma had little time for children. At least, my mother's mother had little time for us, specifically. When we came to spend the night, it was as if she had forgotten we were coming. Chad, her Scotty dog, growled at us and sometimes nipped at our hands or our bellies as we tried to navigate her narrow kitchen entry. He had no problems letting us know we were an inconvenience. If we hadn't eaten dinner, she'd pile us into her beige Mazda hatchback and we'd bring back Wendy's to eat at her kitchen table. She never forgot to get Chad his own frosty, and I would wonder why the chocolate didn't make him sick as we listened to Charlie Rose or Larry King or some opera on PBS on the kitchen radio that played television stations. She'd send us to bed in the guest room, with a lighted picture of Jesus plugged into the wall, and a picture of her mother, lit by a small lamp, in a place of prominence on the dresser. They both had the same wistful look and I wondered if it was because they knew they would die young. We struggled to fall asleep under their dim lights, and the next morning we would wake to Jesus and the Great-Grandmother watching us from different corners of the room. We would quietly stay in the big bed together, covers pulled up to our noses, biding the time in hopes that we might avoid having to go to her church. When our tummies were louder than our whispers, we would tread out to the kitchen. If she was still in a housecoat, we were fine, no church. Or, if she asked if we brought church clothes and we were smart enough to say no, again, no church. Breakfast was tricky. She never ate in the morning; she just drank coffee, so pickings were slim. She only bought whole wheat bread, and it always burned in the toaster. Her cereal sometimes had dried bugs that floated to the top when you poured in the milk. Sometimes the milk poured out in chunks because she never drank it. Only the Eggo waffles in the freezer were reliable, and it seemed that there were only ever two left. When it was time to leave, she didn't seem sad to see our mother take us, and we were anxious to take our hungry bellies home.

AN EXTRA ROOM

Sarah Schaeffer | Prose

When I was young, my mother's mother had two rooms just to herself: her bedroom and her sitting room. In truth, when I was seven, she became a widow and her entire house and yard were just her own, but the first extra room always fascinated me. It was a room that was off-limits for us, which meant I had to sneak in and look around as often as I could. The door had a squeak if it opened too fast, but I mastered it. The first few times I just stood and looked, trying to take everything in. It had been a bedroom once, but now it was a space just for her. This room did not multitask. A gold rocking armchair sat in the middle of the room. A side table held a three-way lamp and a doily she had made. A long low bookshelf held her stereo and records: Julio Iglesias; Placido Domingo; Luciano Pavarotti; Classical orchestral music; Christmas albums. A dresser held her yarn and crochet thread.

By degrees, I became braver. Once I came in and sat on the floor while she listened to her music and worked with her hands. She gave me some yarn and a hook and showed me how to make a chain, then sent me out to practice. This was a room for only one. Eventually, I would bring my book and turn the chair away from the door, the way she did when she sat here. I would luxuriate in the fact that no one knew I was here, and even if someone looked in, they still might not realize it. Once, she came in and found me. She said nothing, but went to the record player and put on some Puccini. She left silently, and my heart swelled at this gift: her wordless acknowledgement that I needed a separate space to think and be, and that I could borrow hers.



FORGOTTEN CHILDHOOD Kathryn Jones | Digital Photography

STUFFED ANIMALS

Marissa Boyd | Poetry

She stands before the subjects of the softest kingdom, capturing their attention. They stare in adoration, black eyes unblinking, unseeing, devoid of life. Still they watch their ruler in rapture as she dances and sings, performing a show for the peak of her innocence, her childhood. The soundless music wafting through the palace, shining and sparkling, dazzling the audience of vacant faces, who continue to watch their sovereign carry out the last few steps for her show, before she bows low, waiting for their applause. But nothing comes. A limp bear leans against a glassy eyed rag doll on the princess's bed. Darby the Dolphin lays impassively next to a tiger with a torn ear and a dusty pink pig. But in their princess's imagination they are her loyal followers and their cheers are deafening.

BLACKBIRD

Hayley Bowen | Poetry

There is a blackbird that lives in my throat and it makes me mispronounce your name.

Months ago, before we met, a man came from the trees and gave me an egg. He pinched the fragile freckled shell between his thumb and forefinger and gently placed it on my tongue, and I swallowed it. I believed if I held this egg that tasted like promises and the first syllable of forever the man from the trees would hold me too, but he left before it hatched.

The shell shattered the first time you kissed me. The broken glass in my windpipe made your whiskey-soaked lips taste like blood.

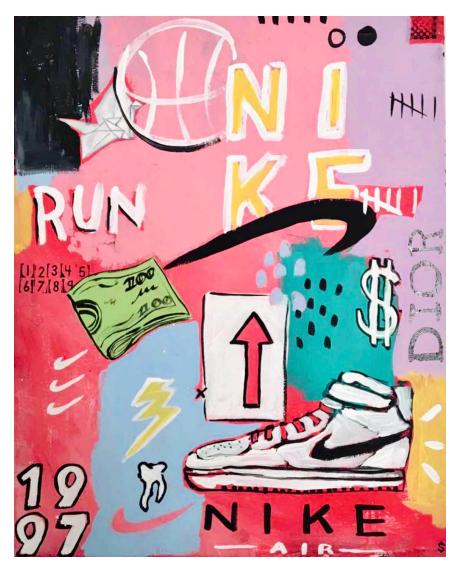
Now the bird has made a nest next to my sternum out of scraps of paper with your name written on it. I hoped it would learn to pronounce you correctly.

But the blackbird flaps its wings against my lungs when it hears his name, ivory birdcage rattling, and it makes my heart pump black ink until I can only write words about the man and the trees. It uses its charcoal voice to sing out for him, missing him, tangling its longing on my tongue, even though his name sounds like No, like I Know I'll never see him again.

But still, your name is drowned out by the desperate dirge of a bird asking for somebody else.



MECHANICS *Anne Skaug* | Ink on Paper



NIKE/DIOR Kady Jo Dufloth | Acrylic

WEED AND PERFUME

Kylee Myers | Poetry

I pledge allegiance to the flag As girls wearing crop tops and razor marks rise With boys with no belts and negative lunch accounts Recite the words drilled into their minds

The teacher's eyes glaze over

She has four more years. The tradition of counting down like an inmate waiting for his release began before 5th grade When she realized her father walked funny When she realized not everyone lives in a trailer house When she realized she didn't know anything about her mother and was too afraid to ask When the kids in her class asked, "do you even have a TV?"

As the clock began slowing She began dreaming more than ever Seeking comfort in the reservation of her mind Where friends were loyal Where adventures didn't need approval Where happiness wasn't fleeting

Every night

The suffocating air around her reminded her that first, she has to get there

The statistics surrounding the town began crawling down her throat forcing her to accept them The roads surrounding the town began taunting her

She tried to think about When the fields were green When her mind was clear When the boys in her class didn't try to look up her skirt Or feel down her chest When the stars seemed to sing When there weren't knots running up and down her back When the sprinkler made rainbows appear from nowhere Sure, she's had good times

Four years of climbing up a rope that seemed to leave slivers in her hand She finally reaches the summit

She packs her bags and doesn't look back Until the night her boyfriend comes back

She goes to kiss him Pulling their lips closer And closer But before they can touch, she shrivels away

She Knows that smell.

One she didn't think she would ever find again The sweet familiar mix of weed and perfume

Suddenly

She is back to the part of reservation inside her mind Where her legs fail to reach the ground while she sits in the cushioned booth Where her mother sits across from her Where a stranger watches them on the monitor Where her mother smells of weed and perfume

It all comes back

The kids on the bus telling her, she doesn't have a mom The first boy she ever loved telling her sweet lies that rip her insides ruining what she thinks love should be

I pledge allegiance To the place I can never leave To the place I can never call home To the adults who never left high school To the dagger eyed girls And the absent-minded boys

And her eyes glaze over

She can never leave

Her young mind spent its time dreaming Of music Of waterfalls Of boys who were becoming men Friends who stay and people who care

With liberty and justice for all.

ONE AFTERNOON

Robin Bissett | Prose Poetry

You flop on to your belly and observe the soft slugs slide down their muddy runway. You see the ladybugs stretch, adorned in their armor of good luck. And the ants, always scurrying, two steps and six feet ahead of you, are busy planning their next move. Who allowed humans to fight for control of the earth when the ants have long existed as natural leaders? Worlds once concealed at a distance become visible in nature's luscious carpet.

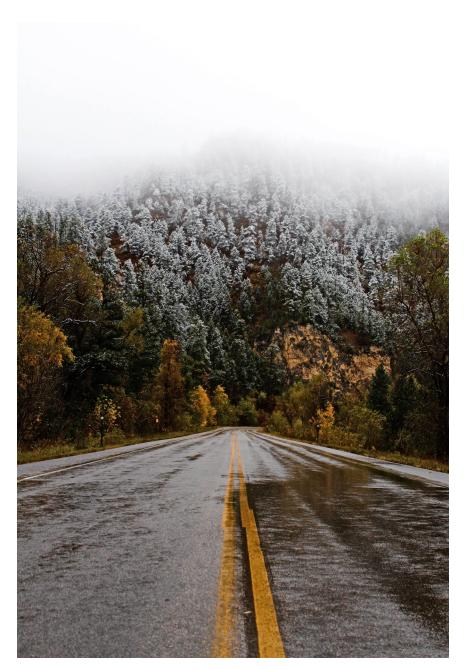
THE FORGOTTEN STORY

Hope Christofferson | Poetry

Stories say the moss grows on the north side of trees, Just the bears follow the sweet sonnet of honey bees, And as the flowers bloom brightest after longest rain, The bird's song sounds clearest in the midst of winter's bane.

From the densest fog emerge winding trails, Promising direction and purpose under moonlight pale. On these paths the curious walk, Listening with care as the forest talks.

The breeze in the branches sings its whispered thoughts, Of tales written in tree bark and the grooves of old rocks. Webbed words caught in spider silks spun long ago, From a silent song that links all friends and foes.



TRANSITION Linnea Langseth | Digital Photography

FORGIVE ME

Kaylee Kalmbach | Poetry

The words I said sit in my stomach like sticky clumps of dirt and my mouth tastes like pesticide rain and maybe if I go lick icicles until they're smooth and soft the words would melt away and I could dance in the puddles I created and my soil stomach could dissolve to dust and I could replace my insides with flower petals and chew them until they taste like citrus sunsets and I could walk back into our home with delicate pieces of planet and I could say

baby,

I've coaxed an apology from the earth and brought it back for you.

ELECTRIC

Renée Ciccariello | Poetry

He smelled like cheap laundry detergent and possibility. Sitting there beside me, just out of reach and cast under the glow of a hundred constellations momentarily, I would have sworn nothing had ever looked so beautiful His silvery face cut out of glass in the moonlight Eyes alight with an undercurrent of electricity that sparked through every conversation we had like a live wire. I have wanted many times in my life but never quite like this. So casually in reach. But do I dare disturb the precarious nature of this friendship? Do I reach out and touch the current and hope my rubber shoes haven't left the ground? A better woman would not Someone more sane would pull back from the precipice and say it isn't worth it. But I have always lived in the chaos of the here and now I do my best with the world crashing apart around me When something seems holy, I am Samson pulling the columns down myself And I know that lightning flows in my veins already, so I might as well. For once there is no fear of something beautiful being broken For once I am not afraid to set a fire and not afraid to burn out either This boy is no different from the rest, just as I am no different But there's a spark in his eyes I haven't seen in awhile The constellations we're sitting under reflected back between us And I'm willing to make a bet That if I reach out and touch him, we'll both go up in flames



For questions and submissions, contact us at threepeaksreview@gmail.com