

Each year, The Nyack College English Department sponsors an awards contest to encourage and recognize talented creative writers and artists who are students at Nyack. In the past, some of our award winners have gone on to publish their work in prestigious journals and art venues. The English faculty is thankful for the opportunity to work with such a diverse and gifted pursue excellence in embodying the profound intersections among thought, feeling, belief, and form. We delight in seeing God's image in each artist presented in this book, and here we recognize the outstanding contributions.

Art and Photography



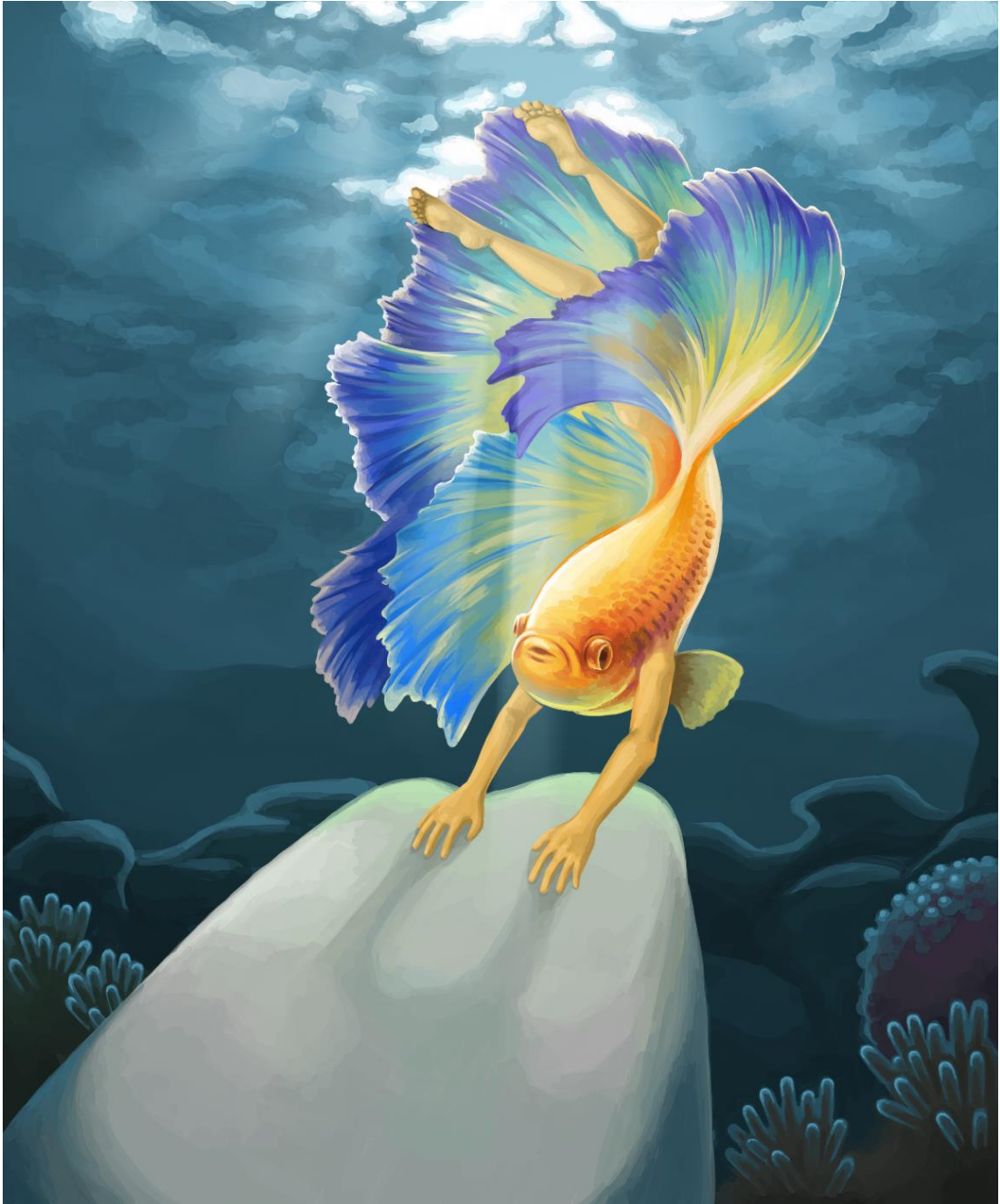
ART: *Luminescence* by Rebecca Przywara



ART: *Hook Sunrises* by Joseph Girard



ART: *Gloom* by Kaelah Byrom



ART: *Swimmer* by Hanna Lee



ART: *A Stormy Mind* by Kaelah Byrom



ART: *Windblown* by Rebecca Przywara

Poetry

Interstate

Written in the style of Allen Ginsberg

I-94 I'm sorry we never saw eye to eye
all I remember when I think of you not at eye level but at sea level
is seeing the crosses up and down your sides, tributaries to all your victims and all the
lives you took and all the lives you saw taken and all the lives you couldn't save
They're all part of you now, trapped under those crosses one with the interstate
Their bones pile up under the wooden Xs and line the road until they become one and
you're a highway to hell paved with good intentions and the memories of car-crash
victims.

The interstate spectres are haunting me again
I'm sorry I couldn't save you and I'm sorry nobody could save you and I'm sorry you
couldn't save yourselves
and I'm sorry for the metal twisted around trees and I'm sorry for the guardrail that
wasn't strong enough to keep you above the cliff and I'm sorry that I still drive too fast
and occasionally drunk down the road that's your grave
and I'm sorry for all the construction cones and the asphalt smell and the big fat stinking
crawling machinery that shits pavement over your potholes and your gravel of your bones
and I'm sorry for the businessmen who drive over you everyday talking on their
cellphones staring with their empty eyes oblivious and indifferent to your existence and
I'm sorry for your impromptu lobotomies by metal and glass and force and your heads
through windshields over seatbelts into trees into guardrails over cliffs into the river and
watch helplessly as they drown themselves in blood or water
I'm sorry I couldn't be there for you, I-94, through all those casualties and murders and
suicide pacts fulfilled.

--Rachel Buratovich

Moon Madness

in the dark, uncertain wasteland of deepest night
we watch our fates unfurl like ocean's tides

we so cruelly governed by the measure of the moon,
though we know our futile dreams are bitter madness,

hope still to calm our restless, heaving hearts
that ache against all reason to reach the stars.

but we are like the feral waves of the sea
moved by more than mere logic can compel;

indeed our hearts are ruled by more Delphic commands
than those that order lives of common men.

bound to quest unreleased from dark insanity,
like wretched Sisyphus we climb on eternally

helpless to do ought but endlessly beat
the aged rhythms graven for our souls to seek.

--Rebecca Przywara

Wise Man's Song

Herod chased the prophecy he had never bothered to learn
when the term "born King" caused him grave concern.
See, it meant the Messiah came here with an authority that no man had to give Him;
He'd been anointed from before the womb, so the Roman client king felt it imposition.
He could not place the place or time the time everlasting made its mark
nor see the sight that lit the wise men's sky, for him it didn't even spark.
No herald angels to hark. Instead, he asked a misled skylark to stay crazy as a loon,
Sad as a gypsy serenading the moon....

He knew as much that threatened was the throne that he'd set up
Cause the enemies of heaven always know that there's a limit to their stunts.
Commanded priests to tell him what Micah and the universe will forever declare:
He whom draws wise man to worship draws His enemies to despair.
What made them astute was not what they already knew
But the deep desire to learn within the pursuit
of the rising star that gave the east their back en route
to the mountain on the mountain, the rock that's higher than but lives in me and you--
the one Herod's hands could not cut out, nor his scribes construe.
As they unpacked earthly gifts of myrrh and gold
The incense this swaddled King of origins old took hold of was their ode--
The same one that unties the single parent's overload
That out-sings cancers swollen lymph node
Can release any pastor from any depressive episode
The same one that echoed in the belly of ships and on the underground railroad
Directs the exiled from the crossroad
In petrified and gentrified zip codes
Takes you from having service to living in church mode
Burst the fire in your bones to explode
beyond capitol hill and elite caged bird tweets...
like Saul's bleating sheep, from a deaf Balaam who sits a no-mercy seat
and beats backs in globals warning heat.
But like threshing wheat for Gideon's bread consumed, or the other team at Canaan's
track meet
Will be blown out by a song sweetly sung
among the old men, dreamers, and the prophesy of the young-
Reminding us that despite the long road, our seeking's rewarded...
In lonely times of calling out, our weeping is more than recorded...
In disgraceful mistakes that birth morbid on top of distorted
what's aborted is your past and the lie that the ransom was defrauded!
Present yourself and sing like wise men in Herod's dismay and in awe of what the Lord
did!
Like Hosea's wife, the only response to His courtship is to cast off our crowns

HERE WE ARE TO WORSHIP, HERE WE ARE TO BOW DOWN

Dance like David wearing the ephod

HERE WE ARE TO SAY THAT YOU'RE OUR GOD

Rejoice and leap like confirming Elizabeth's discovery

YOU'RE ALTOGETHER LOVELY

Pray like Stephen to his standing Attorney

YOU ARE ALTOGETHER WORTHY

Singing Mary's melody, cementing your identity, like

when she beheld heaven's royal true love's legacy

YOU ARE ALTOGETHER WONDERFUL TO ME.

--Ana Luisa Nunez-Robertson

Finding Humanity

The air smelled of mildew and curry,
taxi's horns blared, and a bicycle darted,
splashing sewage-reeking rain.
I changed before heading to a party
where I expected new faces, and yet
everyone had been introduced
as who slept with whom.
I needed a holiday away,
perhaps what I needed most was time alone.
I left the party and looked across a Pier,
a green space along the waterfront,
Red Hook section Brooklyn.
A man gasped and grazed his forehead,
eyebrows furrowed upon receiving news.
A man drove a truck through a crowd, Lower Manhattan.
Helicopters hovered in the distance, and
a police boat raced across the river.
In an instant, the world shuddered,
every noise was deafening,
yet the park was peaceful,
separated from the distant chaos —
in solitude, I found humanity.

--Sarah Dunlap

Portrait

Heavy eyes, swollen heart
She looks in the mirror, doesn't she see?
She's a work of art.

The stroke of a brush, she thinks, would just do the trick
What did I do? To deserve to look like this?
Golden eyes, sunken from dark clouds
Swirling over the portrait.
The artist hoping the lighting doesn't change too much
Then again, he thinks, we can always adjust.

A stroke of the brush, he thinks would just do the trick
Lighten the eyes, a curve of the lips
Deepen the lines, soften the brows
A story in his mind, her beauty in his eyes

--Cece Humphrey

Short Story

Head High

Susannah Devenney

“Let’s go, Susannah!”, my dance teacher banged on the door.

“One minute, please! I’ll be out in one minute!” I look at myself in the mirror, frowning. My skin is as pale as my costume, but with less shine. Is this what it feels like to be an angel? The several layers of itchy tulle have gotten rumpled in the stress of the moment, and I carefully straighten them out, fluffing as I go along. The first two layers have silver sparkles dotted all over, and it comes off on my hands. I turn on the sink and wash my hands again, letting the glitter fall into the glassy white bowl, splashed with mysterious shades of foundation by the rushed older dancers.

I’ve never worn makeup before, so I’m not sure if it is any good. But someone’s mom had done it an hour ago, and she seemed confident. We had all sat in a circle a month ago, going through Miss Elisa’s caboodle and talking about each layer of makeup which we would have to wear to be angels.

It seems as though each of the shades had a funny name, either half-french or a teasing pun.

“Firetruck red”, Miss Elisa had said, “Everyone’s lips have to be firetruck red.”

My lips were not firetruck red. They were a bit too dark to be a firetruck, except maybe one that had a bit of smoke stains. I had found my lipstick in the box of Mary Kay samples we had in our bathroom at home, from when my oldest sister’s friend was a Mary Kay representative. There was only one in this shade, so I took a lighter red sample as well and tried to mix them together to make it brighter. Instead, they look patchy and I look ill.

“Susannah, if you don’t feel well, it’s okay. We can have Julia do your part. You just need to come out of the bathroom now,” Miss Elisa said softly, from the other side.

I sighed deeply. I didn’t feel well. I had already thrown up twice. There were dark circles under my eyes, where the thick layer of too-dark foundation was coming loose. It wasn’t nerves. It couldn’t be nerves. I don’t get nervous! But this was a lot of pressure, I suppose. I was going to be the only person on stage, and lead the rest of my class when the music shifted. And, dear God, why was I so tall?

I don’t look like an angel, I look like a sore thumb. I look down at my shoes, made of the darkest leather I’ve ever seen. The elastic my mom had sewn on is too bright of a pink, too thick to be discreet. Miss Elisa had made me paint them tan with foundation, but that didn’t do the full trick. There are dark scuffs along the inside of the shoes, from my Tuesday night classes all semester long, when I would push so hard into the ground so my feet would look even more beautiful.

These shoes are too tight, but I think I can get another year out of them. I would have to. Mom bought the leather ones so they would last longer, not those beautiful canvas ones that the older girls wore. Those would get the most marvelous holes, fraying

away as they danced beautifully across the stage. Their spins caused the shoes to split, evidence of a job well done.

Why are there no windows in this bathroom? The air is getting too thick now. The thin straps of my white leotard are just a few inches off from the faint remnants of August's tan lines, even though it is mid-December. My crown! It sits on the counter, tacky and large and marvelously shiny.

I pick it up for a moment, cheaply encrusted with sequins and attached to a thick plastic headband. It was no larger or smaller than any of the other girls'. All twelve of us had the same outfit and crown, there was uniformity and beauty in all of the planning.

But could I really be replaced just like that? Could Julia really do the same steps, in the same way I would? Would she give the same dazzling smile? Would she give the right signal when the music changed? Would the thirteen family members in the audience, here to see myself and my cousin dance, see her and think she was me? Would they feel like they had wasted their time?

I pick up the crown and fit it on my head, a little too snug. My bright blonde bun is too tight, and a few hairs come loose when I adjust the crown to the center. There is a bobby pin on the floor, and I pick it up and tuck the strays back in.

I breathe in, closing my heavily made-up eyes. When I open them again, I let the air go and give myself one last look. I do not look perfect, I do not look like an angel. But I will be one tonight.