

The
Daphne
Review

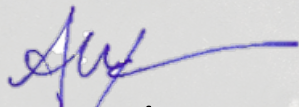
Fall 2017

Editor's Note

Dear Readers –

It is hard to believe the time for our next issue has arrived once again, but it is undoubtedly one of our most delightful installments yet. Selected from one of largest and most geographically diverse pools of contributors, this new edition of *The Daphne Review* truly showcases the amazing array of young talent around the globe.

We are excited to bring these young talents to you in this issue, but we applaud all of our contributors and encourage everyone to continue to follow their artistic and literary dreams. For those whose works we've selected, we hope this is just the beginning of an illustrious career in the arts.



Alexis Culotta
Editor-in-Chief
The Daphne Review

Cover Art: *Peaceful Mission* by Lexi Despaux. More on this artist and her work begins on Page 27.

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hot tar

i drift away in a boat made of palm fronds and hot tar.
my hands collapse against the water,
begging the tide to bring me home to you,
the only place where i truly belong.

i'm shivering,
your warmth no longer rests upon my flesh.
my skin begs for a companion of lavender and salt.

all i wanted was you
for your face that lit up most nights.

i don't want to disappear into the horizon.

~~~~

it's been 2 months now.

i was told it would get better.  
i was told i'd recover.

there's a feeling i have everyday now,  
the feeling of my heart being clenched  
waiting for someone to come.

it often feels like no one will,  
it feels as if i stand alone in a sea of strangers,  
built with strong arms but weak hearts,  
and superficial lives.



Sung Joo Jang

*Pond*



## *Aches*

A cloud stares at me from the corner  
of her eye,  
I have been staring back from my  
bedroom window.

"Give in."  
"You first!"

I pledged to get out of bed today, I  
shouldn't let her win.

She says she feels nothing when she  
cracks,  
when the rain ruptures through like  
early labor.

I know it's heavy,  
I let her mock me.

As strong as a cloud may be,  
she's just collecting dust until she  
breaks.

She is like that friend you pour all  
your worries into  
because her glass is bigger, and you  
watch your gunk turn grey  
in their chest, as it seeps from yours.

Maybe that's the price the sky is  
hiding,  
the exploitation of some must exist  
everywhere.

I don't ask her those questions.

It is an honorable job I must admit,  
giving up one's whole being for a  
cause,  
letting it weigh on you to death.

Does she come back as herself,  
or are there bits of her scarred from  
what she's been through  
in different seas?

Does that make some rain drops purer  
than others?

I can hear the wind picking up  
strength,  
her next form will do away with good  
old me,  
it will do her anger justice.



Yoonseo Lee

*A Narrow Passage*



# Jenny Boyd

## *Rich Kids*

It's 2:00 on a Tuesday morning in Monaco and you're frolicking  
with the bartender and falling into his sugary arms because

everyday is your holiday and we never have to leave. our  
friends, the ones with callow eyes, gleeful like wayward

cinnamon queens drunk in candy floss lust, stampeding  
to the psychedelic soap bubble beat of a club remix,

foreheads with a filmy luster & limber tendrils cascading.  
spidery Dior eyelashes fluttering at pasty cuffs, waiting like

arachnids to trap honeycomb in a web of strawberry  
floss and jukebox laughter. a metropolis of blurry

chandeliers rendered in hungry stares, oh so percussive.  
electric scorpions lure with beguiling smiles and gumdrop

violet eyes. stingers pierce skin tinted sepia by Monte Carlo's  
mandarin sun. French venom courses through dark-bloomed ruby and

sapphire veins. you feel a lithe sense of euphoria. is this how it feels  
to fly? waltzing down the boardwalk in blanched camera flash,

*follow the arrow.* white limousines and foreign tongues barking  
at us and antique Chevrolets, hair curled like Shirley Temple's.

dollar bills on the fifth of August taste crisp like coconut wafers  
and soften thin as a milky broth. tears on ashen pyramids hidden

masterly by taupe nails. a veiled woman with motorcade  
lips like elegant hounds walks in front of traffic, smiling knowingly.



## *A Sinking Feeling*

Our attic was a coffin. I don't climb into coffins, especially when they're occupied. For years I, Markus Hood, avoided the attic. Since I'm a fourteen-year-old, you would think I'd love to explore it because of its fascinating past remembrances and hidden treasures, maybe even some forgotten baseball cards. However, since infancy, I sensed an ominous aura of death about the attic and the creaky wooden steps that beckoned me up to its dark foreboding door. I avoided the room and its contents.

That changed today. My parents and I are moving from Miami to Maine. The movers were here and had stripped the house nearly naked of its furniture. The attic belongings were the last to be moved to the truck. I watched from the next room as two movers, in torn jeans, sweaty see-through tee-shirts, and dirty fingers carried down from the attic a parade of dusty cartons, musty old clothes, trunks, magazines, and pictures.

I froze when they brought down a wood-framed cobweb-covered twenty by thirty inch Victorian portrait of a bearded man in a gray-buttoned uniform. He looked severe and sinister. His threatening eyes appeared to follow me as the movers carried him toward the front door. While the portrait showed no hands, I had the feeling that if I approached, hands would suddenly reach out to grab me. What was most shocking, though, was the three-inch scar on the left side of his head in the form of a seven. It looked exactly like the scar on my own head, the one that I had as long as I could remember and made me self-conscious and withdrawn, with no desire to seek out friends.

I never really knew the origin of my scar. When I was seven, my uncle drove me to a barbershop. He didn't know better, so he asked the barber to trim my hair to the length of a fingernail.

When the barber finished, I stepped out of the chair and examined the left side of my head in the mirror. Leaning in close, I noticed for the first time that my temple displayed an ugly scar that looked like a sewn-up peach. It bled a little from the barber's scissors.

"It's just a birthmark," my uncle said, stuffing his hands into his pockets, the only place he could find to hide his embarrassment. My stomach felt as if it wanted to eviscerate itself. My brain contracted, squeezing blood back into my body until I felt faint. I ran my fingers over the side of my head.

"A birthmark?" I shrieked. "It doesn't look like one at all!"

## Akiva Splaver

The barber dropped his broom. Staring, he said, "Is there a problem I should fix?" The store froze, everyone staring now. People put down magazines, barbers stopped trimming, and even I could not stop looking at that wound in the mirror.

"We're fine, we should leave now," my uncle said as he put his hat on my head and tugged me out of the shop. My questions about the scar's true origin remained.

Today, after the movers left the house, I confronted my father. "Dad, who is that guy in the painting!? He looks positively evil! And how did he get that scar on his head!? It looks exactly like mine! How come no one ever showed me that picture? I'm not going to Maine with you and Mom until you tell me what's up with this scar!"

Mom emerged from the kitchen. "For heaven's sake, Markus, we told you the truth many times. It's a birthmark."

Dad dropped the suitcase he was carrying and, with a confirming nod from Mom, swallowed deliberately in anticipation of what he was going to reveal. "Promise not to tell Grandma about this. She told us not to tell you about one of our relatives from the 1800's, Admiral James Hood. He was a Confederate officer in the Civil War who commanded a ship. He was wounded, which resulted in a scar on his left temple. Some people felt that the scar went deeper, affecting his brain, because his personality changed for the worse. He was accused but never convicted of setting fire to his own ship. A number of sailors died in the incident, and he was dishonorably discharged. He gradually became insane and committed suicide. Grandma wanted to suppress his memory."

"Wait a minute. How do you know all this?" I insisted, with arms crossed in confrontation.

Dad said, "Grandma showed me an excerpt from the family album, with newspaper clippings. It's all recorded. Your having a birthmark scar that looks like his is only coincidental. Scars are not hereditary, although a physician from India once told me that in the Indian culture, they believe that a scar from an injury can turn up in a future descendant. We don't believe that in Western civilization, but Grandma still wanted to hide the picture from you, to avoid unnecessary concern."

"Crap!" I said silently, but thought loudly. I retreated into my bedroom for the last time.



## Akiva Splaver

What was left of my room was a nightmare, with no bed to cry on, just depressing pale hues of light trickling through the blinds and bathing the bare wood floor. Dark square shadows, the last proof that I inhabited the bedroom, stained the walls where my beloved pictures of ships once hung. I always liked ships. I don't know why.

I stepped back through the door, closing out that part of my life. In a few days, somebody else, maybe a child, would sleep in my bedroom and use my bathroom. I was now trespassing. A new life in Maine, my parents told me, would be more splendid than the one here. And I would have more pictures of ships than I could ever imagine in my new bedroom.

The back of the movers' truck was open, laying bare all our belongings for the neighbors to rubberneck. Across the street, an old woman stared up from her knitting, a man walked his dogs while looking sideways, and another man drove down the street with his face out the window like a hound sniffing the air. Nobody said goodbye to us or offered any help. I guess we never knew our neighbors that well. Maybe my reclusive nature repulsed them. I was perfectly happy avoiding people where I lived and was anxious and unhappy about meeting new ones.

So, we were moving to Maine along with the painting from hell, my scar, its attendant self-consciousness, and my prune-faced angry demeanor. I didn't like the movers either, who were displacing us. "The Nazis are here," I convinced myself.

"Come on, let's go," Dad said, motioning with his head toward the front door.

One last box lay on the ground by the truck, the one that read "Pictures." "Look, Markus, we're taking your pictures," Mom said, forcing a smile. "You'll be able to continue your ship-studying hobby in our new home."

"To hell with those ships! I'm no longer interested in anything! I wish I was dead."

This comment made my mother suspect that I was not happy about something.

Just then, the box on the ground exploded in flames. The fire department arrived quickly, but the box and its contents were already destroyed. By the side of the truck lay four gasoline cans. The movers had run out of gas and were filling the truck. The firemen were perplexed as to the cause of the

## Akiva Splaver

explosion. "It could have been the gas cans. There's broken glass around, too, which may have focused the sun's rays, causing the fire," one fireman said.

We took a cab to the airport, where I covered my scar with a baseball cap, still distraught. A breeze blew as I walked across the jet bridge, and I zipped my sweater, feeling the coldness seep into my scar. I pushed my way through the plane, knocking into people.

"Watch it," a man growled, but I didn't apologize. I didn't owe the world anything.

At my window seat, I noticed that the plane reeked of canned tomato sauce sprinkled with meatballs. Across the aisle, my parents sat with overfilled carry-on bags at their feet. The pilot shut off the lights in the plane, which bumped along the runway and lifted into the air. I sensed that the plump male passenger next to me, with his seatbelt digging into his stomach, was contemplating the scar on the side of my head, confusing it with the odorous tomato sauce and meatballs. All the faces on the aircraft either seemed to stare or look away because of my ugliness.

The plane leveled off and continued its flight. I raised the window shade. Down below was a ship, glued to the water like a dark bug to a painting. I pressed my face to the window. While I was contemplating the ship, its lights started flickering on and off. I was overcome by the thought that the ship was in distress.

Then came the real horror, an adrenaline moment. Admiral James Hood's face suddenly appeared in the window, glowering at me as he did in the picture, except that his eyes were wide and bulgy. His hands pressed against the window glass, trying to get in. Then, the face melted away into the stars.

To put it relatively calmly, I freaked out. I unbuckled my seat belt and yelled to my parents, "The boat below is gonna sink. It's gonna explode! And our plane is gonna crash!"

A stewardess quickly moved toward me. "Please buckle up. What's wrong?"

"A ship is flashing its lights! It's gonna explode!" I yelled, gesturing to the window. And the plane is in danger, too!" The stewardess said, "Look, there's nothing to be worried about. Lots of ships have blinking lights. Planes have flashing lights, too. But you don't see us in distress, do you? Why would you think we're in any danger? Try to enjoy the flight now." She moved to the back of the cabin. My heart quickened. My meatball-sniffing neighbor winced and



## Akiva Splaver

grumbled as I climbed over him and ran toward the stewardess.

"Wait, listen to me!" I said, disturbing the now murmuring and fidgeting passengers along the way.

The stewardess said, "Hey, come on, you have to sit down. Now, have you got a parent on this plane?" Her breath hit me like a frozen steak covered in garlic.

"I know about boats, and that one is gonna explode and sink. So is our plane," I said.

"Right. Please come on back to your seat."

Mom's worried, crinkled forehead addressed the stewardess. "He's been very nervous lately, you must understand, Miss."

"We may have to use restraints if his behavior isn't controlled," the stewardess said.

I stood at the entrance to my row. The man in the aisle seat said, "What's wrong with you?"

I grabbed his shoulder, looking directly into his pale, gray eyes. "This may sound strange, but the ship below us is about to explode and sink. And our plane is going to crash. I know it!"

He unbuckled his seat belt, and said to the stewardess, "Miss, I refuse to sit next to this boy. He's insane." He stretched a leg against the seat in front of him, blocking the row.

The stewardess said, "I understand. We'll try to find another seat when the seat belt lights are off." She hurried to the back of the plane and phoned the pilot. In the meantime, muttering spread through the plane. One man fastened his seat belt, while checking for the closest exit. A woman began reading the printed emergency escape brochure. A middle-aged man put back the plane's shopping catalog, which no one ever buys from, in exchange for a barf bag. Cell phones were out.

The flight captain emerged from the cockpit and approached me. "Now tell me, what's going on?"

"The boat is giving off a distress signal, and it's going to explode and sink. Also this plane is in danger," I said.

"How do you know that?" the captain said, placing a hand on my shoulder.

"I've studied ships and their interiors for a long time. This one has a corroded gas-fueled boiler that is about to rupture!"

"How do you know?" the captain said.

"Admiral Hood told me. He's outside the plane trying to get in. You just can't see him now!"

## Akiva Splaver

The captain patronizingly said to me, "Okay, I'll look into this and keep you informed about the situation. But we can't have you running up and down the aisle yelling and disturbing everyone."

Dad interceded, holding a plastic bag. "Markus, please take one of these pills. It will relax you like they have in the past."

I took the pill but had worked up too much of a frenzy to be quieted quickly. With a signal from the captain, two flight attendants grabbed my arms. I tried to wiggle free as they dragged me to the rear of the aircraft. One male passenger in his twenties cheered. The other passengers remained passive with pale, worried faces. I was forcefully seated, with flexcuffs applied, and remained under surveillance by the two attendants. Perhaps my maniacal look had something to do with it. I now added this airplane to my list of dislikes.

A short time later, the captain emerged from the cabin, and engaged the stewardess. From his worried look, I knew that he had confirmed the boat's sinking. He was now concerned about the plane. He approached me.

"Tell me again, Markus. What makes you think the plane is in danger?" he said.

"I know a lot about boats – and airplanes, too," I said with a wry smile.

You know how a person, alone in an unfamiliar dark alley, reacts to the barest whisper behind him of "Psst." He panics despite the low decibels of the intruder's voice. It doesn't take much. Well, it was similar on the plane when it entered a zone of the barest turbulence. Quicker than it takes a New York cab driver to blow his horn when the light turns green, the passengers erupted into full-blown pandemonium.

Miles away, George and Martha Silverstein sat on the balcony of their Bermuda condo, facing the ocean. "George," Martha said, "did you just hear a second explosion?"

"So what else is new, Martha? It's the Bermuda Triangle, you know."

Now, although various news reports claim that my fellow passengers and I died that day, I am still here but now reside in the seventh circle of Hell with my new psychiatrist, in a rather hot padded room.

With his back turned away from me I asked him, "Was it my fault?"

My psychiatrist, dressed in a black coat and bearing a pulsating purple scar on his left temple, turned his chair, facing me with a playfully malicious smile. "Yes," Admiral James Hood said. "It was."



Stephanie Koo

*Untitled*



## *Care to Share*

I was on my way to my next patient, each needy in their own way. But this one sounded particularly urgent, as if death was imminent. Life as a visiting doctor is just awful. I've met all sorts of customers, but I say the cut-off is at 300 pounds. They each have their own psychological reason justifying their obesity. In fact, I'd say that's my field of expertise. The excuses. The maze of excuses. It is, as it sounds, a very rare but necessary job, especially these days, as well indicated by the increasing obesity rate.

The client lived on the 35th floor of the tallest and most expensive apartment in town. A wealthy guy. I notified my arrival by giving him a call before I took the elevator. Though an expensive apartment, the elevator was old, old enough to take millions of seconds for the doors to open and close. It had a small square window on the door providing a view into the lives of those who can't afford to live in towers of marble and glass. As the door opened, a short fat man in glasses greeted me. He seemed calm and gentle; a little *too* calm and gentle. I almost apologized for visiting the wrong house.

"Welcome, doctor. I'm Bernely Votig. Glad you're here."

Funny name. I shook hands with him; warm and soft, moist and chubby. A million drops of sweat fell from his round and wide forehead to the frame of his glasses. To the frame, then to his three-layered cheek, eventually reaching his undistinguishable jaw. His eyes labored under the unbearable burden of his enormous eyelids, which blocked the view of his eyes. He had a full tuft of wavy blonde hair, neatly combed back. His nose was little more than two huge holes which seemed to expand more and more at each breath he took. He pulled out a dainty looking handkerchief and dabbed the sweat on his brow. As he smiled, his whole face struggled to lift upward. His rich belly moved slowly but surely, dragging with it flabby friends on each side. His legs seemed as stiff as wood after several decades of epic heavy lifting. They maintained a precarious balance, just like his breath.

"Sorry, I'm late. Carol Johnson. Let's get started, shall we?"

As I took my jacket off, I noticed a red flower planted in a dotted flower pot inside the glass exhibit. A nametag "Ellie" was embedded in the dirt. The flower's name, I suspected. I looked closer to smell it. It smelled fishy, unlike its appearance.

## Ye Eun Cho

"What's the story behind Ellie?"

"My mom bought it for me years ago. Isn't she just beautiful?"

"Yes, she certainly is. I love flowers too, you know."

I had to get friendly with my patient first. I tried to think of another topic for conversation, but my eyes wouldn't leave the flower. I then saw five little caterpillars inside the pot. Pale, almost white. I searched for Mr. Votig, but he looked busy getting me something to drink.

"Mr. Votig, your Ellie seems to have unwanted visitors inside the pot. Perhaps caterpillars?"

"Oh, not to worry. They're just a prank. My nephew keeps putting them there. I tell him not to but boys these days..."

"They certainly won't help Ellie grow. I'd say your nephew definitely lacks green fingers."

"Ha. You have an unusual sense of humor, doctor."

Okay, enough small talk. My next job was to carefully examine the house, searching for anything that can be a clue. From textile to furniture, anything can be worked into the patient profile. His entire abode glowed with a light, pale pink. The space was as empty as his face, every surface had a rich gleam, like a layer of fat waiting to be seasoned in oil. Mr. Votig sat down next to me with tea and a plate of cookies. He seemed like a nice man. A well sustained man. I wondered why he called me so urgently.

"So, Mr. Votig, I'm pretty sure there's a reason why you called and said it was urgent. Can you tell me what's wrong? You can tell me anything. I'm here to help."

"Well, Dr. Johnson, this might disappoint you, but my ailment has little to do with my obesity. It's about my...bulimia. I'm not even sure I should call it bulimia. I just don't feel normal. Not because I'm overweight, but really, as a person. I just... I needed help. I, I..."

His face turned pale and he started breathing hard. The whole chunk of his being began trembling. As he tried to reach his face with his two chubby hands, he realized his efforts were in vain. He couldn't bend his arms far enough. He seemed frustrated at this limitation. Even his fingers refused to help. He seemed to struggle to make a fist. His eyes darted about in full rage. I could have sworn he stole a glimpse at Ellie. The panic was intense.

"It's okay, Mr. Votig, it's okay. No need to panic, I'm here to listen. Why don't we try to get as comfortable as possible? Pretend I'm not here and you



are talking to yourself. That's right, deep breaths."

After the time it took for him to relax, he confessed.

"I can't bear other people eating. I just can't. I get angry when there's food that's not mine. Just the thought! How they chew! How they gulp! How it all disappears into their mouths! I'm afraid. I'm afraid, doctor! I could hurt people, you know. I could really hurt them. Crush their skulls! Snap their fingers off! I'm so scared, doctor, so scared..."

Curious. He reminded me of something I heard on the radio. A 12-year-old boy had been found with his fingers severed. The fingers were nowhere to be found. But his remaining stumps were strewn with the Skittles he was last seen eating. Some saw an opportunity to raise public awareness on children's sugar intake. Others felt it was time to arm children with guns. And here was this man whose sole source of misery was his inability to share food.

Just as I leaned forward to give him a pat, this man, well above 300 pounds, started crying. Like a baby. Yet the rest of his body told a different story. There was something cruel about his body. Its bulk was imposing and indulgent. It spoke of strength and brutality. This was not a body in shame. This was a decadent body sniffing out sustenance wherever it could. I wanted to help him, but I knew I was way over my head. Embarrassing, but that was the truth. This was not exactly my field.

I didn't respond immediately, and he seemed to disintegrate. As he continued to sob, I thought of Ellie. An object of familiarity could calm him down. I walked across the hall where every bit of furniture seemed to belie a quiet extravagance. Holding Ellie seemed to soothe him, though the five pale caterpillars brought a peculiar smile to his face.

"Mr. Votig I'm really so sorry but I should tell you the truth. There's nothing I want more than to help you, but if obesity isn't an issue, I'm afraid you'll be better cared for by a different professional. I'm so sorry. I really should leave now."

"No, no. I'm a mess. You know, I should thank you for seeing me. And thank you for bringing Ellie this way. She reminds me of everything that's great, you know? And thanks for coming all this way."

Mr. Votig followed me out to the elevator like a sullen dog. Once his pink face disappeared behind the elevator's sliding doors, I let out a sigh and heard a grumbling in my stomach. All that emotional outpour got me through my empty stomach. I rummaged through my bag and took out a cereal bar. I

## Ye Eun Cho

took a bite as the door slowly closed, and all of a sudden my eyes met with those of Mr. Votig's, his cruel body approaching me in a slow but steady pace. His face had changed. His eyes crumpled up as he bumped into the door as the elevator started going down. He then disappeared from my sight.

Criminally insane. I never thought I'd actually use that term. Interesting though. I could introduce him to a colleague. He could make a fascinating study. I took another bite of the cereal bar as the elevator stopped at the 20th floor. The door opened just as slowly as it shut, and Mr. Votig was smiling, breathing hard.

"Care to share?"

## *My Flowers*

A slumber-filled night  
An awe-filled morning  
Hundreds of dandelions had grown  
in our backyard as I slept  
and bloomed at dawn,  
just as I had.

The sun had risen from the soil  
and each flower was at high noon.  
Yellow waves crashed against the patio  
and I had never seen the ocean  
But looking out on that honey sea  
I understood its vastness.

And I knew the best was yet to come,  
because when evening came,  
and the sun went to rest,  
it left a thousands moons;  
a thousand wishes in its place.

I dove into the medallion lake and  
swam with the tides of the blonde-kissed flowers.  
That's what they were to me; flowers.



## Madison Bissonette

Not to my father.  
When I saw him my heart swan-dived to the pools of my stomach.  
I knew my oasis was not long for this world.  
The dragon to my castle had come roaring,  
my dad behind the wheel

I begged him to leave my flowers alone;  
He had work to do  
I told him I loved them;  
They were weeds

I planted my roots in the soil among them.  
If he was going to put out the sun,  
he'd have to extinguish my fire, too.

He did.  
I didn't move a muscle.  
I watched him smother every ray of light in the yard that day

When all that was left of the dandelions  
was the patch I'd protected with my own roots,  
He told me the neighbors would be upset  
if the seeds drifted to their yard

I didn't understand how anyone could be upset  
with the sun on a stem,  
but nevertheless

I nodded  
And let him cut my flowers down

Linh Nguyen

*Dance II*



## *Her Hair*

Her mother looks down with loving eyes,  
and runs her hands through her hair.  
So soft, so thin, that the curls  
swirl and slip  
right through her fingers.  
So light and carefree  
that the weight of life cannot yet pull them down,  
as they seem to *float* above her head like tufts of cotton candy.

The first day of kindergarten.

### **She's finally a big kid!**

Hair thickened like her vocabulary,  
swept back and up into two uneven pigtails,  
a mismatched purple and pink barrette on either side of her scalp.  
Her curls swing when she walks, springing when she runs,  
inviting themselves to every "snack time" meal.  
But that's ok.  
The chocolate pudding is just the right shade of brown to camouflage.

Today her friend,  
a friend who is a boy, **not** her boyfriend, that's just silly...  
Anyway, he pulled her hair.  
Mom says it must mean that he likes her.  
She doesn't understand how he could like her **so much**,  
as to want a strand of DNA.

She runs her hands through her hair  
fighting a losing battle with humidity,  
even with John Frieda as her General.  
The girls at school call her frizzy.  
She doesn't mind.  
She knows her hair can fill a room as can her voice.  
Dad says to keep her head on her shoulders,



## Katie Butler

and her hair got the memo too.  
Sure it stretches outward instead of down.  
It can twist,  
and twirl,  
and *defy gravity*.  
The girls at school don't know what it feels like  
to be limitless.

He who pulls on piggy tails  
is taller than her now.  
Hair gelled and spiked so precisely,  
she thinks it points towards her.  
Her stomach is as tangled as the mop atop her head.

He runs his hands through her hair, it refuses to let go...  
She straightens **away** the curls,  
so she won't be forced to hold on to anyone  
*ever*  
again.  
She dyes it platinum blonde,  
so she can convince herself that the hair on *his* sheets,  
is not her own.  
And soon,  
it is not.

No one tells her the *pain* that comes with bleaching,  
that it is almost impossible to get your true colour back.  
She tries to give her hair away thinking,  
**someone,**  
must need it.  
She is told it is too damaged  
for anyone to want.

But with time,  
she finds her roots.

## Katie Butler

At first, they feel out of place.  
It is hard to look at the contrast between the  
*rich* dark chocolate  
you were and the  
**cacophonous chemicals**  
you have **become**.  
She was fooled into thinking  
that fake was more tasteful...  
And yet, she outgrows her past,  
embraces the space  
her hair has *longed* for.  
She turns her **volume up!**  
And lets out *all* she has been holding back,  
for what seems like a century.

Unprofessional.  
That was her boss' weapon of choice.  
The one word to  
**cut** her off,  
straighten her out,  
**clip** her self confidence,  
like dead ends you discard.

She runs her hands through her hair,  
can't quite describe the texture,  
guess that makes it unqualified.  
She quit that day,  
remembering what her mother would say.  
"That man is a...!"  
Well it doesn't really matter.  
He was about as effective as the third broken hairbrush,  
*that month*,  
at taming her curls.

She grew strong,  
**Unbreakable**.

## Katie Butler

Splitting the ends of each path into  
new beginnings.

Years later,  
she runs her hands through the chestnut brown hair,  
less of a curl and more of a wave.  
Like an equation where certain factors canceled out,  
this was the father's doing.  
Looking down at *their* daughter's hair,  
he misses the curls he fell in love with.  
While *she* sees an easier life.

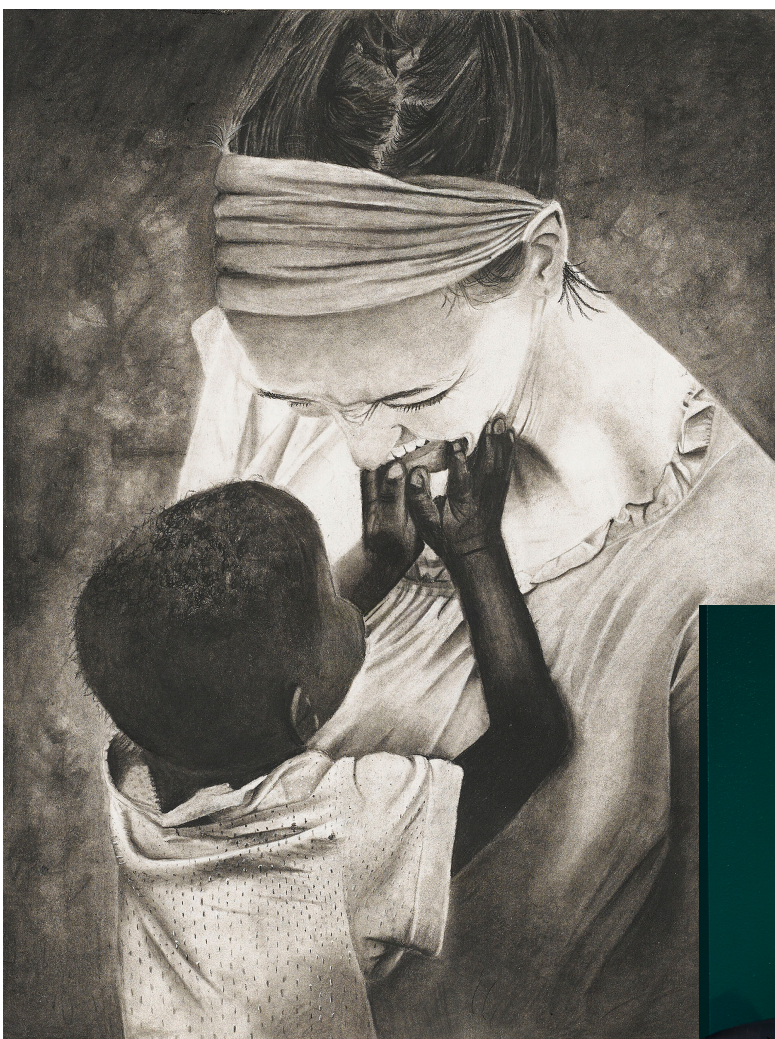
Because limitless is merely a feeling.  
One that maybe her daughter will find in,  
**H**istory  
**A**rt  
**I**ntellect  
**R**omance,  
but not in hair.  
Hair cannot compare,  
to her *heart*,  
or her *mind*.  
Hair is not even alive,  
and the only time it should hold her back,  
is when she is swimming.  
Rest assured,  
the sensation of water **rushing** through each strand  
will be well worth it.

Her daughter runs her hands through silver curls once more.  
as they laugh about the volume once taken for granted  
when now it hurts just to speak.  
Her hair has thinned out,  
along with her memories.  
Now the strands seem to *float* above her head,  
like the rain clouds that follow people around in cartoons,  
but *happy*.  
So soft, so delicate, so,  
**Light.**



# Lexi Despaux

## *Peaceful Mission*



Lexi Despaux's moving work, *Peaceful Mission*, was the recipient of the First Place Award from the Rau for Art Foundation, a New Orleans-based non-profit whose aim is to encourage promising high school artists and their schools.

The foundation's annual scholarship competition, now in its sixth year, challenged students to "Dare to Dream." Out of the 140 students that applied, Lexi won a \$7,500 college scholarship along with \$500 in funding for her high school.



For more on Lexi and the foundation, including its potential prizes, eligibility, and how to apply, visit: [rauforart.com](http://rauforart.com)



## Madison Bissonette

Madison is a senior at Owatonna Senior High in Owatonna, Minnesota. After high school she plans on attending the University of Iowa for their writing program. She is an aspiring writer and is published here for the first time.

## Jenny Boyd

Jenny is a sixteen year old high school junior at Notre Dame Academy in Hingham, Massachusetts. Her poetry and essays have appeared in several publications, including *Poetry Pacific*, *Alexandria Quarterly*, *Tower Journal*, and *The Critical Pass Review*. Her work has also been recognized by Smith College, Hollins University, Princeton University, and the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. She is also the founder and editor-in-chief of *The Onism Journal*.

## Katie Butler

Katie is a grade twelve student attending St. Anne's High School in Windsor, Ontario. She lives with my parents and four siblings. Her hobbies include visual arts, music and sailing. She wrote this piece last year as she experimented with creative writing.

## Ye Eun Cho

Ye Eun Cho is a high school senior at Global Vision Christian School in Guri, South Korea. Her passion for writing started in middle school after discovering her love for reading. When she is not writing her interests lie in listening to music and walking her fluffy white French poodle. She has enjoyed recent publications in *Claremont Review*, *The Daphne Review*, and *Teen Ink*. She also received an Honorable Mention from the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards.

# Lexi Despaux

Lexi is a senior at Fisher High School in Lafitte, Louisiana. She's an active member of the school's dance team, where she served as captain, and a teacher graduate of her senior performing arts class at her dancing school. She showed elevated art skills at a young age and tested into the talented visual arts program in third grade. In addition to all of her artistic studies, she is an honor student and an active member of National Honor Society & Student Council at school and her church youth group. She has been inspired and shaped by the influences & experiences of her family.

# Sung Joo Jang

Sung Joo is a high school student who loves art as much as she is interested in computer science and math. Her main inspiration comes from her surroundings, whether it is from friends or from books and movies. Even though she may not have the most experience in art or the best skills, Sung Joo believes that what matters most is the message the artwork portrays and delivers. Her favorite medium to work with is charcoal, since it can be used to create both crude and delicate textures. She hopes that she would continue to improve and use art to encompass other subjects related to her interests towards math and computers.

# Stephanie Koo

Stephanie Koo is a sixteen year old junior in high school currently attending Seoul International School and hailing from New York City. She has previously been recognized by the Scholastic Arts and Writing competition and hopes to pursue fine arts and creative writing in college.

# Yoonseo Lee

Yoonseo Lee is a rising senior currently attending a private high school in Pennsylvania. She grew up in Seoul, South Korea. Besides making frequent trips back home to visit family and friends, she loves making things with her hands, game design and getting ready for her college days that are fast approaching.

# Linh Nguyen

Linh has always been fascinated by reincarnation. From the fact that every single cell in a human body will be replaced after five years, to the belief that reincarnation exists, it is our essence, memories, and "soul" that persist on. With this in mind, she wanted to create an image that evokes an ethereal experience in a common setting

# Annasofia Padua

Annasofia Padua is a multi-genre writer who has been published in several literary magazines, including *Hypernova Lit*, *Creative Communication*, *The Voices Project*, *Amazing Kids Magazine* and, most recently, the *Silver Birch Press*. She received Honorable Mentions from the Scholastic Writing Awards as well as from Hollins' Nancy Thorp Contest. She is a finalist in the "It's All Write" short story writing competition. Annasofia will be attending Florida State University this coming fall, she hopes to become a screen writer in the future because she finds that the people she encounters inspire her the most.

# Akiva Splaver

Akiva Splaver is a sixteen year old who is passionate about writing fiction. He has written a few short stories, including a short screenplay, which have never been published before. His interests are in stories that resonate on a deeper level with readers, instead of just producing pieces for mere entertainment. Although Akiva considers himself an independent adult, he is a junior at the Katz Yeshiva High School in Florida.

# Zach Zebrowitz

Zach Zebrowitz is a sophomore at Episcopal Academy outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He writes poetry and fiction. He also has a strong interest in biology. This summer, Zach will be attending the *Kenyon Review* young writers workshop and Stanford's pre-collegiate creative writing program where he hopes to further his talents and collaborate with other young writers.



# The Daphne Review



Founded in 2015, *The Daphne Review* is an arts and literature magazine that features exceptional work by today's high school-aged artists. We accept original written submissions of any format (essay, interview, poem, short plays) and artistic submissions in any media on a rolling basis throughout the year. Share with us what you can create, and we may share it with the world.

For more information about *The Daphne Review*, including the submission guidelines and process, please visit:

[www.thedaphnereview.org](http://www.thedaphnereview.org)