

Juste Milieu



LITERATURE + ART
OF THE WORLD

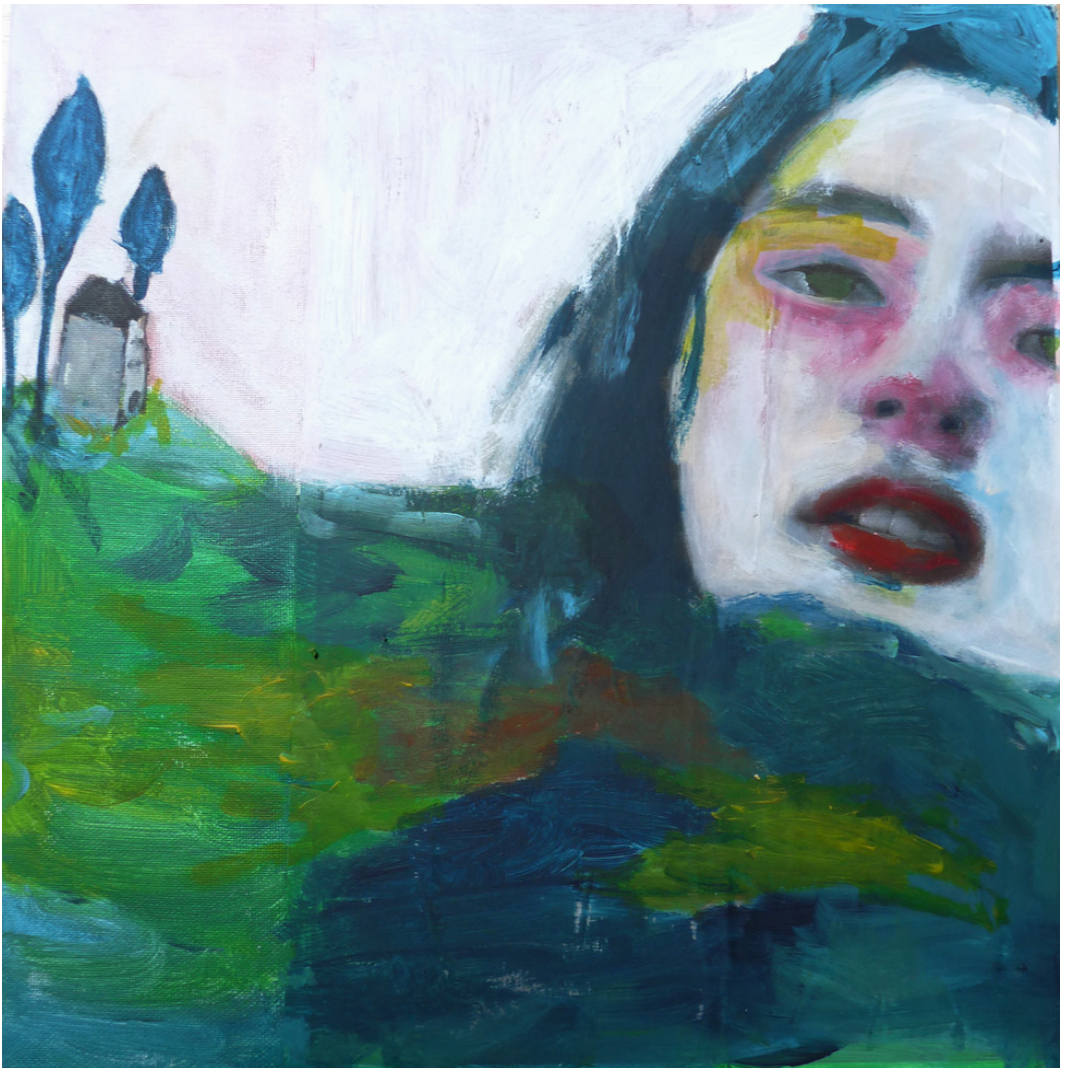
NO. 6
THE DREAMY ISSUE

Dreamland

Dark ,
Alone with my fleeting thoughts
Withholding the sob that's about to come
And out comes a whimper
Can't help but laugh at it all
The intensity ,
It's like I got lost in this maze trying to search for myself
And this time I found me
An older version though,happy carefree ,in love held in that trance, the beautiful cycle.
All I can do now is stare and wish I could stay in this world where all my dreams come true...
Where am no longer numb to my pain
And I do a happy dance once in a while when the world is reeling
out of control
and I can't care less cause it's all I can do
But that's just it ,out my dream world am still the control freak that hides the anxiety ,
A scared little girl afraid to call for help.

Sharon

Nairobi, Kenya





you're uglier than the sound
my teeth make when they grind together.
you are a hypocrite,
demanding me to love myself
when you can't even kiss the scrapes on your own knees.

Ramona Corlette
Portland, OR

"Obsidian"

JD Oquendo, Philippines

All around me are voices bombarding me with frustration, blame, anger, and disappointment. They are slowly creeping their way up from across the room to my feet to my shoulders and then to my head. They move excruciatingly slow enough for me to feel each voice stab me deep in my very being. All around me are voices.

I can feel my heart beat faster. My head is throbbing so visibly now. My hands are trembling. My mind is slowly deteriorating to complete shutdown. I close my eyes to dispel the voices in my head but it only makes it sound louder. As if the trigger of a gun is pulled upon my ears, these voices crush my eardrums to a deafening monotone. Soon, I am unable to open my eyes. I see nothing. I hear only a single note more sinister than the voices surrounding me before.

I call desperately to anyone for help. My mouth is wide open and my vocal cords are strung to a thin strip of muscle. But I hear no sound other than that sinister monotone. I struggle to get up from my seat and make my way out the door. There is no door knob.

I kick the door with all the strength I have left. But every time I do, I feel it bounce back stronger pushing me deeper to where I started. I do not back down and continue to kick the door but to no avail. I am not thinking. I am only doing. I desire nothing more than to get out. Out of the nothingness. Out of that monotone.

Now the walls seem to be shrinking and I feel it closer to my body than before. The door seems to be thickening as if turning into concrete such that kicking it brings no effect whatsoever. At that moment, I sit down and bring my head to my hands. This might be my end. This might be my last page. I still see nothing. And the monotone seems much darker than before. I soon hear my voice but only realize that the monotone I am hearing is coming from my own mouth. And the darkness that veils my sight from everything are my hands covering my eyes tight as if I am in wanting of plucking out my eyeballs.

This is all my doing. The voices all around me. The darkness. The monotone. It is all my doing. And therefore, only one thing must be done. I undid. I bid the nightmare goodbye as I wake up to a new day.



Back in the Day

there is no charm
to a skipping record,
but there was charm
disentangling from you
to nudge the needle
back into the groove
and turn back
to a soft shrug
a warm smile
and dancing eyes
a little skip
of imperfection
to warm, welcoming arms.

music streams
don't skip.

*words and art by
denis bernicky
Canada*

Tough Guy

i've wasted so much time
pretending to be tough
that i can't break the habit
even now that i know better.
as bones brittle so
the heart softens so
thoughts gentle so
forgiveness blossoms so
and so and so.
i've become a movie cliché
the gruff ol' softie.
i don't regret
what i've become,
only how i became.

Mirrors of the soul

i paint windows like Hopper
right angled holes in the walls
revealing all without
and all within
even if it's only window dressing
that or,
dark voids,
as if unfathomable blackness
was contained within,
the same way he paints eyes.

PAPER HEARTS.

I'm travelling
Through the spaces in your teeth
But you barely smile these days
I've tried to relieve
Those moments
When being happy wasn't such a hard task
For the both of us
But egos strike after midnight
When the alcohol settles 'neath our skin
And pain falls through like an avalanche
And holding you feels like home
Because its been days on end
Since last we even held hands
You say I'm a broken porcelain held up on the glass shelf
And I swear you are a fallen word wringing out the warmth of the past
But what do we know, what do we need to keep whole
On these days that heaven feels like a man-made illusion
And drowning becomes our salvation,
Our moment of grace, and poise
Our moment of shine, and sparkle
Because you only notice me
When my eyes are burning red, swollen
And I seem to want you only when your silent, broken
Because your pain is ever so calm
But here we are afraid of the scars
We collect and hoard like memories,
While our souls fade into silhouettes
Of little dreamers caught in the wake of a life
That mirrored nothing but wild storms
But we'd rather sit still, tapered mouths
Because you scare me most when you smile.

Letvneic . S. Change
Kenya





graphy by Kelsey Arrington
Washington, DC

My plastocene paradise has abandoned sleep
Rolling from slumbers keep by way of mischief
Im greeted by her palms in open armed procession
The mere suggestion of form is a forlorn thought here

We defeat bordered dialogue as we turn our tongues to speak
I weep in incantations when she confirms that we can meet
I streak her words on thunder clouds as I load the potters wheel
Thumbing ecstasy into the extracts of Eden her soul reveals

She is my dream spell sprouted on the back of broken silence
My unspoken alliance with the other side of reason
My violence against the tombstone text we connect with rule
My true breathe of belief when we are barricaded as fools

I detest the scrutiny provided by the watcher
The onlookers who loosen their lips to cast shame
Blame riddled theatrics that have never tasted the earth
Too bellow proud to allow themselves a moment against the dirt

Too sterile in tongue to stomach my lovers tonic
Chronic pains deform their gait and reject their bruised phonics
They waste away there steps forging haste against the dreamers
Little do they know they are the only ones still sleeping

The Blissful Nomad
United Kingdom

"MOVE THE WORLD"

SHINY PEOPLE
AND
SHINY DISTRACTIONS
THE POETS AND ARTISTS
MOVING THE WORLD,
SHIFTING SOCIETIES
AND REFLECTING HISTORICAL HUMAN
CONSCIOUSNESS

SSEAGRAVES
BACKATTHEHOUSEART
Athens, GA





at by Craig Blackmoore
Detroit

UNFORGIVING YOUTH

I open each day like a door,
dreading what's on the other side,
my greatest fear is that it's a mirror
and I'd have to stare down the face
I've tried to leave behind in that ocean tide, gust of wind, work day,
forgotten in the clumsy hands of boys on long car rides,
In every swallowed pill,
puddle spill and rolling California hill,
through all the broken glass cracks,
witness that I am unchanging

Brooklyn Small
Pittsburg, CA

Cleanse

Soak my body in
The lavender water
Clean my pores dry
Leave my skin on the rocks
To warm in the sun
I don't wanna be bothered
Drench my hair in your sweet sweat
So I can linger in your love
For
Another
Moment.

words and art by
Jennifer Lynn Belair
Ann Arbor, MI



Three stars/moles

I see differently today
My breath was
Telling me secrets
As I listened to your voice
Calming fingers
Trace shapes over the moles and bumps
And blemishes
Of my body.
“Orion’s belt, there on your arm”
A pause and
The wind whispers
Secrets into my
Hair as I see
your chest rise
And fall
Rise and fall



Words Evade me

Words evade me.
Creative words,
Used to run through my my veins
To my tongue, I'd speak.
Speak about things I see,
Things I saw I'd speak,
In creative orderliness as it should be.

Creative words,
Used to run through my my veins
To the tip of my fingers, I'd write.
Write of things yet to be seen,
Things I often dreamed of I'd write,
Laid out like scriptures
As I had seen it the night before.

I see and have seen,
Dreams never stopped revealing.
But yet,
Words evade me.
Creative words.

Erinayomi
Nigeria

Clouds are tinted pink,
The sky is streaked with orange ink
While the leaves
Rest in peace.
The temperature drops
As the sun's breathing stops
For tonight
To let the moonshine.
As she's rising,
Darker skies are arriving.
She comes up from her temporary death
To take her first breath,
A gust of cool air
That brushes my hair.
Stars twinkle and shine
Among the dark sky of night
I marvel at the sight.
Soon enough, light spills across the sky
And once more, the moon dies
For him, the sun, the love of her life.

Crimson Tide
Los Angeles, CA

Love experiments in a vacuum.
lots of reckless action
absolved in equal buoyancy;
no nozzle left behind
in this vagrant love quest
in punctuation's play.
Any who have half a soul
worship their lover's stroll
in these games of push & pull.
a set state
indented
upon an entangled consciousness.
a scripted porno
of 2 stereotyped roles
of leading prose in randy action.

Daisy Jo' Cranehill
Detroit, MI



Sophie Anne

What do they say about books and covers and judgement?

The cab driver tonight
was a scholar,
and a doctor,
who drives
14 hour shifts

And the haiku prophecies,
written on the side of my building,
were graffitied by a homeless teenager
Who chews opium,
and recites Othello
in his sleep

And the naked mother,
breastfeeding her child
in the park,
used to be
a nun
before
she
became
a
prostitute

Sean S. Attariani
United Kingdom

...Finally, profits are up by a little more than a third this quarter. And i want to thank each and every one of you for your effort in making that possible. Especially our new director of community outreach. You've been with us for what, four months now?

The new director wove her hands together, thumbed her fore and middle finger. Little filth under the nails. And they'd grown too long.

Sanders, I don't know that you've had the pleasure of meeting our director, the Executive said. She gestured toward her director, whose head remained bowed at the table.

Came from the West coast, isn't that right?

She'd been biting them too much. Look at the cuticles, all cracked up. This damned job. Had her up all hours of the night contacting clients, making sure the corporation's literature had reached the outer boroughs, what circulation was. Whether recruitment was rising. Been hell at home lately. Hardly had time for her partner anymore. Yesterday she'd promised they'd go on vacation. Somewhere nice. Somewhere warm-

The Executive's hand cracked and coarse as well closing on her neck, the young director's head flung forward onto the table. It met the wood on the cheekbone, a wrap hushing breath among the other associates. Wincing hurt her face, she relaxed. Hand remained vicelike.

Has it been four months?

F-five now.

Mm. Scalpel.

In her hand from an associate the ivory handled steel. Easy out the pocket. The glint gave the blade away, so thin almost translucent. The Executive brought her thumb to the broad side of the blade. She turned the young director's head like an apple. Surveyed. Tears welled and rolled wetting table and cheeks. An associate held the eyelid up. Slowly the Executive pressed the flat edge of the blade to her eye, a noise like white boiling from her, she'd writhe but they'd grabbed her arms. Her eye at first took the pressure then curled as a boil.

Her partner had tuna for lunch that day. The canned kind they'd decided last week to buy, not the kind from the pouch they never ended up eating. It felt so unnatural. Pulling from the silver pouch like an astronaut, a can felt much better. You remember? That and some carrots. So i'm famished. Ugh, do wanna try that Italian place tonight? Kelly said it was great. And you promised we would go on a date this week. Since you been workin so much.

He took her fist in his hand and kissed it and shook it smiling. Eyebrows upturned. He wanted this. He felt he deserved it.

And freelancing isn't that bad. The first few weeks are kinda brutal, getting used to working by yourself, no coworkers, no distractions? Well, some distractions. I cannot tell you how many times i looked at Facebook today. Y'know like thirteen people from my high school already have kids? Like one of my best friends from like tenth grade, Jake Tabert, we had third period P.E. together, he has like two kids. Can you believe that shit? He looks miserable. Looks like shit. Lost like all his hair, y'know?

Her partner rubs the top of his head then stuff more greens in his cheeks, already swollen with chicken. Chews and spits.

I'm so glad it's just us. Again he takes her hand. Again arching his eyebrows.

I love you.

Like always they brush their teeth.

Is that baby shower next week? We gotta remember to get a card and gift this time, okay?

Netflix until he falls asleep and she leaves the television on soft blue light bathing her cheeks warming her, drying them. The blood from her eye sticking there. Afraid of staining the pillow covers she lays on her back.

She wakes, her partner still sleeping peacefully. She goes to the mirror. Looks at her eye. Touches her cheek, tender. She begins to dress for work.

monuments of change;

scabs that've remained more than a heavenly generation
(as to remind)

despite destruction wrought forth from those who live mortal lives
that we who die we will be survived

by the one true god
some choose to call life

flying over the rockies

clouds scraped across the sky
like some great butter knife
had smoothed right through it

blue behind white
whipped flippant, yet
most delicate

72° sunset
portland
sewallcrest park
looking over the school

on a bench with ramona

James Albert
NYC

untitled

if we knew
the differences,
if we listened
to the subtleties
in the sunsets, the
morning would be
still and the glow
would magnetize you

a power i have
there are some women
who would tear
me to pieces

if they knew that
their men
would go to war
for me

with
a single word
a shallow hint
from my listless lips

and they would be
alone
and i'd be stringing
a new pattern

(zuri)
Detroit

I feel surreal in existence. My heart swells with nostalgia for this life, its ride and relations. The Deep South is within me. My perspective of self has evolved from the beauty of my mom's unwavering heart. I take chances beyond most capabilities; like I have nothing to lose, except everything.

Clouds float by like thoughts. White and fluffy fears. How do we begin to deal with the years? Collecting like cotton candy to clog the flow of dreams. Covering densely—a disconnection from star to sea.

I look into the horizon. Layers of colors; soft peaches, pale pinks, baby blues flowing into grays. I feel sick to my stomach, as I think of the ways greed has stolen from the children. I look in the mirror, but feel beneath what I see. How can I become a bridge? What is the truth of what we all need?

My heart tremors with angels. I have no proof—just a glimmer, a feel. "No one knows what they are doing. You just have to trust yourself." I ponder the quest for self-worth. What do you seek? The sun collects in warmth. My heart feels softer as I float west.

I chase the sunset, crossing over Kansas. I am happy to travel home. I long for the cool eucalyptus air. The hot honey suckle mug refreshed my roots, and reminded me of how I arrived. But transformation is as ever constant as our solar system's rotations. I border Colorado, looking down upon farms.

Following the flow of rivers. I am grateful for kindness that's been extended to me over a lifetime. I grow hungry, dedicated to return selfless giving to the earth. A hand offering love, refuge, acceptance and help; like that which has guided me over the mountains, and out into space.

I look at boundaries and I burn them to ash, I look at misconceptions and drag them to the light. I am a goddess of power and might. Coasting over the continental divide, with wings spread wide.

You'll find me in guitar riffs, a tiny little wavelength drifting through the sky. Awakened the backs of hearts. Shivering them open like a prayer. Above the clouds and floating towards radiance. I am not only a human being.

The mountains stack like dinosaur backs. Cresting and climbing towards higher climax. The drifting sun casts shadows across the landscape. I watch the clouds layering in Cornwall, pink, and dark blue; clearing and bunching, billowing and cascading across the world.

The sun creeps from the past and shines on tomorrow. Drawing rebirth around again. My love is potent. My dreams are pure. Do you feel like it's rare to be alive? Magnificent and obscure, stretching into new perspectives. Growing golden and blinding, as everything enhances before becoming invisible in the night.

Greens grow mossy and forest, reds rust, and yellows sand. Simplicity captures my attention. Here I see beauty. My jaw feels tight, but when I rest my gaze on the deep neon orange beneath the surface it becomes easier to relax.

Reaching California the sky is blood red, rising through the spectrum of blues from aqua to navy. Lights twinkle along the landscape. Stars dot the sky. I make a wish for peace. May it ground and release us. Entering a future of sweetness. Majesty abounds. I dip out of the sky to touch down.

My head spins. Clouds fill space, as trees once tiny grow taller; until the bay, dark and deepening, fills my vision and the light covered hills roll on either side of the invisible.

I think about the stories behind each light, all unique and varying in degree—offering individual perspective of a multi-verse of experience. Each a producer of dreams. Each holding some interpretation of prayer ritual. Each holding devotion and seeking love.

I imagine love pouring in and quenching our roots. Drenching the scorched earth, where pains rip us to shreds, and peace is stolen—from sane to deranged. Where concrete walls build around traumas and innocence become a twisted pawn. Where psychological warfare is a means to control and suppress.

Charred and molten, bubbling with unrest. The earth shakes for her children—it cracks and erupts. Lava spews across definitions of order. Let's reprogram the non from sense.

Demons call for exorcism. Draw them from their holds, and lay them to rest. Imagine the peace we all desire—the acceptance, the love, the release from endurance and effort. Like seeds planting into the lights, across the mountains.

Art is dedicated to the children, now and forever within. May you always be held when you are in fear. May every tear be kissed from your sweet cheeks. May every dream be honored in action. May the anger and greed be cleansed from your delicate soul. You are always at home when you take a breath upon this planet. A dream of the stars a product of mysterious cosmic birth. A series of anomalies at your core.

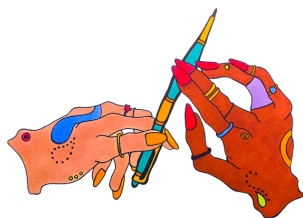
The unknown is our definition. It fills our blood, bone, cells and DNA. The one sure abstracted truth. We have no clue how we got here. We're just arriving in this construction. Guided by ancestors, tugged by the stars. We create for the future, in hopes that beings will love deeper and treasure every sacred breath. But let's embody this now.

My hips ache with the weight, the gravity of it all. I put down the curation. Each dot of light comes together to form the Milky Way. We are individual, but also a whole. Our stories separate, and yet coming together—to define this time. A blue print of guidance. Holding the secret key to life.

The heart cracks, like the earth. Fissures expand and spread. A sparkling nectar rises to the surface. What seems broken, is open. Inviting the change we need. Love is the power of choice. In unity, we illuminate serenity.

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"The Dreamy Issue"



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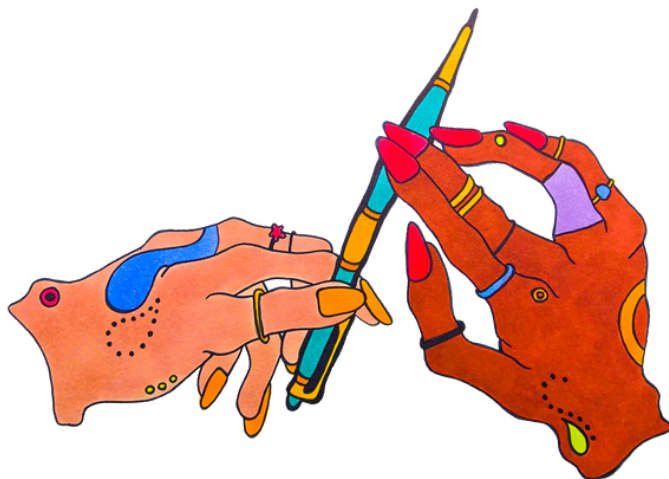
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"The juste milieu,
the happy medium
between reality and art"



This issue features writers and artists from:

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Los Angeles
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Nigeria
Detroit
Canada
United Kingdom
Portland
Santa Cruz
France
Washington DC