



MOSAIC

MAGAZINE

2021

Mosaic's editorial staff would like to thank the Department of English in the College of Arts and Sciences at The Ohio State University for its generous support of Mosaic and this publication. More information about the Department of English is available at english.osu.edu.

Dear Reader,

Thank you for supporting Mosaic Magazine in our 44th year. In this 2020-2021 volume, we are happy to represent a diverse and creative group of undergraduate authors and artists, and we are so excited to share their work with you! We would like to congratulate all of the students whose submissions have been accepted, and commend their hard work.

This year has been a strange one, and Mosaic has had to adjust alongside everything else. Traditionally, Mosaic has hosted events such as poetry readings and art workshops. Unable to see each other in person, however, we have reinvented the way we interact, holding virtual trivia nights, watching movies through the Netflix Party platform, and seeing each other's faces in small Zoom rectangles as often as possible. We have attempted to make our world feel brighter and more connected in this year of endless virtual meetings and time spent inside, and we hope that sentiment is reflected in this publication.

We would like to thank our editorial board, art staff, layout staff, and literature staff. Although this year has presented unique challenges, their enthusiasm, dedication, and creativity has made this publication a reality. We would also like to express our gratitude to the Department of English for the guidance that they provide. Without their support, this publication would not be possible.

Finally, we would like to thank you, our readers, authors, and artists. Mosaic's mission is to provide a platform for talented undergraduates to publish, share, and develop their work. Thank you for continuing to be creative, and for supporting your fellow artists in The Ohio State University's undergraduate community by reading Mosaic.

We hope that you enjoy this year's volume of Mosaic Magazine, and we encourage you to get involved next year by joining a staff, submitting your work, or attending our events!

For more information about our organization, please visit our website <http://org.osu.edu/mosaicmagazine/> or email us at mosaic.magazine.osu@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Mosaic Staff 2020-2021

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Distelepathy


The Lewis kid can't read minds. I saw him the other day trotting behind his mother at the grocery store, arms full of cereal boxes and brain full of nothing. He's a normal looking thing I suppose, spun sugar hair and heavy cheeks. You can't tell by looking at him.

It was a scandal when he was born. He popped from the womb howling like an animal, and no matter what the nurses thought, he wouldn't calm down. Kids like him happen sometimes, though not very often. The Doctor thought his condition might be temporary; he only thought it to be nice.

Mr. Lewis was furious. He blamed Mrs. Lewis for eating too much meat during the pregnancy (this was before a prestigious university released the study which found no correlation between meat consumption and distelepathy). I heard he stormed out of the delivery room with a scowl and a cigar refusing thoughts toward his son altogether.

The real shock was when Mrs. Lewis rejected euthanasia for the boy.. Upon hearing this, every woman in town thought she must be insane from grief. Yes, it was an unfortunate circumstance. They empathized. Not that they would understand, mind you. Their children were not empty-headed like that boy. Their children were all perfectly telepathic.

Mrs. Nelson and I had visited Mrs. Lewis shortly after the birth. As her oldest friends, we felt an obligation to convince Mrs. Lewis to mind her senses. It was a kinder fate to let him go. Imagine speaking, Mrs. Nelson shuddered. The primitivity of it all, I thought. A baby like him can't survive in this world. Mrs. Lewis thought we were meddling busybodies and kicked us out. I haven't



thought to her in the five years since, and I'm not alone. The community avoids her. Mr. Lewis begged her to give up the boy and come back to him, but she chose the boy over her own husband. He remarried a year ago, and his new wife is expecting a baby.

I see the boy from time-to-time. Once, jumping in a rain puddle at the park near my house. His little red raincoat zipped up to his chin. I've seen him a few times in their neighborhood, tugging on his mother's hand, spinning under her elbow and grabbing onto her hip. And once I saw the two of them in the cinema sharing a bucket of popcorn, each wearing a crocodile grin. The movie played silently while I stared at them unable to tear my eyes away. Something in his face rouses a memory. A baby. Blue eyes. A dimple pressed into the supple butter of its chin. It wails soft, wet sounds as its searching fingers curl and spread. The weight of its warm body is in my arms for a fleeting moment, then cold emptiness. I wonder if it would have changed me like the boy changed Mrs. Lewis.

The neighbors hear them playing in the backyard sometimes, and they've thought to me on several occasions how uncivilized it is. Mrs. Lewis speaks to her boy in hushed tones, wary of being overheard. Johnny, she calls him. They hear her laugh. It's the most unusual sound.

Aryn Pawlik

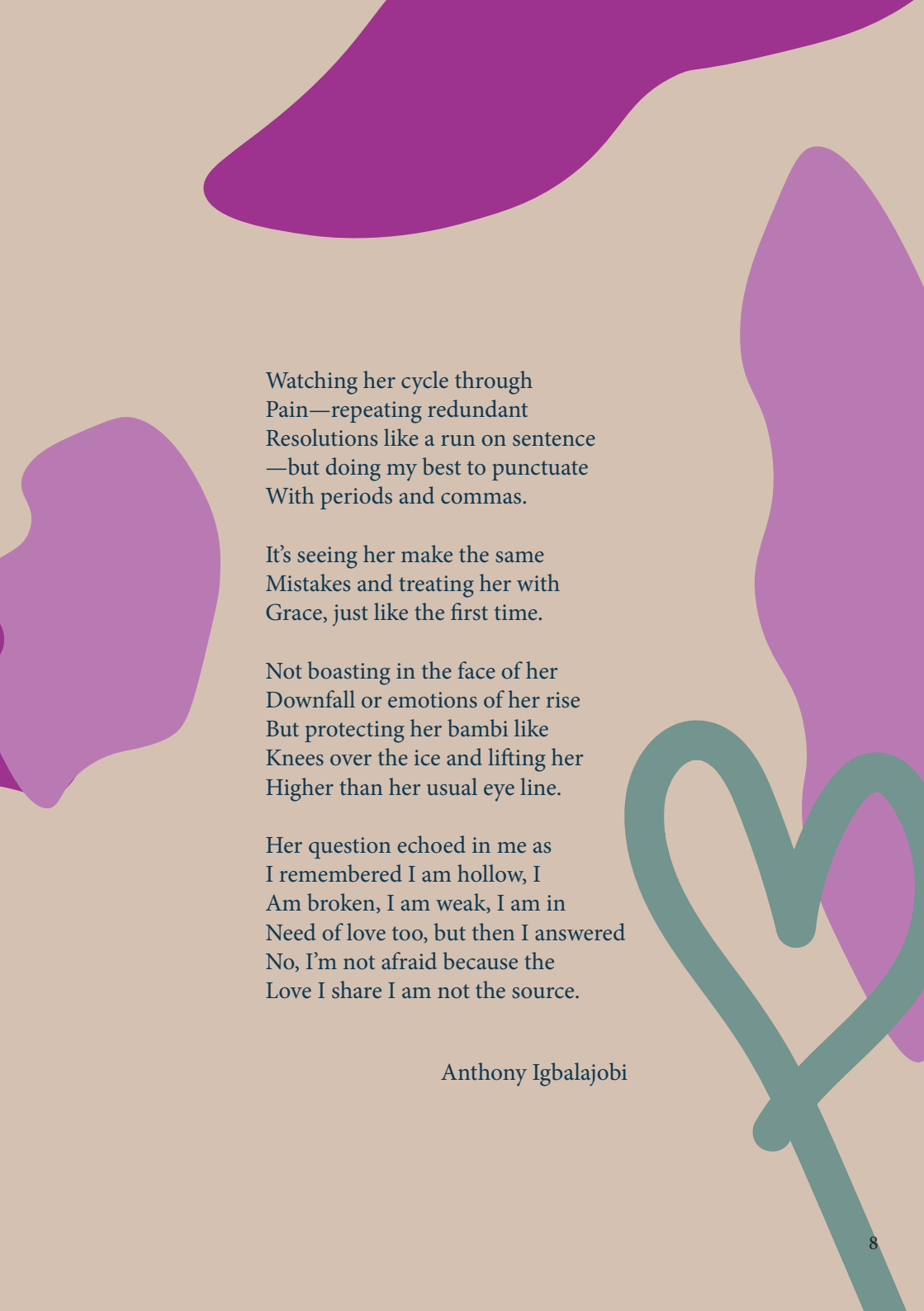
I am not the source

She asked if I was afraid to love.
If I am scared to willingly look her in
The eyes and say I Love You.

My mind screamed Yes. Love is
Not just double taps on glass
Screens. It's not just enjoying
Company in convenient moments.
Love is not cute-in-the-rain movie
Scenes or locking eyes after
Being seen.

It isn't feeling. Love is doing.

It's seeing her bare naked
Heart ripped to its core by
Passing comments and
Begging God to stitch it with
His needle and thread.

The background features several large, abstract, organic shapes in shades of purple and pink. A large, dark purple shape is at the top, a lighter purple shape is on the right, and a pinkish-purple shape is on the left. A teal-colored shape, resembling a stylized heart or a large letter 'M', is at the bottom right.

Watching her cycle through
Pain—repeating redundant
Resolutions like a run on sentence
—but doing my best to punctuate
With periods and commas.

It's seeing her make the same
Mistakes and treating her with
Grace, just like the first time.

Not boasting in the face of her
Downfall or emotions of her rise
But protecting her bambi like
Knees over the ice and lifting her
Higher than her usual eye line.

Her question echoed in me as
I remembered I am hollow, I
Am broken, I am weak, I am in
Need of love too, but then I answered
No, I'm not afraid because the
Love I share I am not the source.

Anthony Igbalajobi



Fade



Genevieve Wagner

flushed

What can I compare this snowfall to but the last?
I cannot give credit to that of a god's
lonely tears or angry tantrum.
But the collective performance of the sky and ground.
Each flake falls only to be swept up again,
a flurry,
the swaying pocket watch to my hypnosis.

Reverie.

The night gave birth to a hushed aching
soon buried under mounds of anticipation,
smothered by the sun,
But, left gleaming still in my marrow.

You sat next to me on the bus
and I kept closing my eyes to better remember,
When we arrived
the snow had started falling again,
the heavens and earth were toasting to you!
My chaperone!

We strapped those decaying rackets on our feet
to keep us afloat
and hiked to see the birds they said would grant us a wish.

I let my lips part slightly
and spoke your name,
but the ghost of it billowed past,
twirling up to embrace that singular cloud.

Crystals landed on my lashes,
knitting my eyes further shut with each blink.
I was so scared that I would lose sight of you
and the wind would erase your tracks
making it so that you were never really there.

Oh, Mom! Just look for my cheeks
turned rosy with fervor,
like the lights on a truck
rushing to a fire.
Hurry this way now,
it's me that is burning!
I'm rosy with fever,
a child so in need of their mother's palm,
that is also a thermometer
that is also a spoonful of motrin
followed by a spoonful of sugar.

Alyvia Moore

MAKE POETS DANGEROUS AGAIN

Make poets dangerous again


Let their lines be a test of
The Emergency Broadcast System
Let their metaphors wail every Midwest
Wednesday at noon

Let Lorca's ballads
Be pop songs
In the top ten with a bullet

Let Trudell give us a new anthem
To start the game between the
Kansas City Settlers and the
Washington Colonials
8 PM on the Sports Network

Let Neruda be a
Viral makeup tutorial

Let Lorde render dictators flaccid
And let them thrash in sleeplessness



Let the chapbooks burn in a pile
Exercising the violence contained within their pages
Let the fearful police batons
Wag over the flames

Let Limón cause a shudder
And let Da' cause a seizure

Make Jericho crumble at
Ginsberg's trumpets

Let the walls be pocked and bloodied

With

Your

Power

Ty Williams

Faux Flora



Rebecca Irmén

blood orange

I find myself again on a stretch of charcoal asphalt heading to the wrong destination, and the clouds above make the sky look like a picture book or a pop-up card. In two hours I'll be stranded in the dark. I'll pray for more time like throwing coins in a wishing well.

The scene stark against burning headlights, against the tangerine aflame on the horizon. In two hours I'll hold my patience as I lose it. But for now I drive under a tunnel, watch the sun set and then rise again.



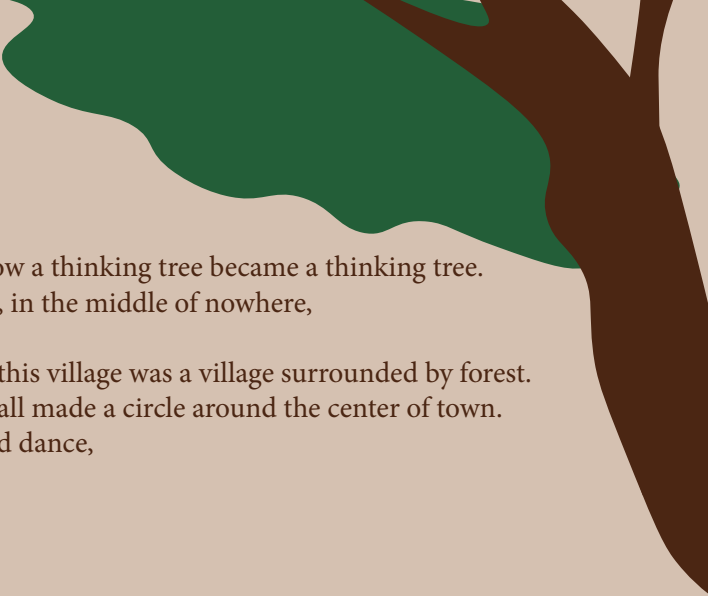
Anukriti Tayal

A Thinking Tree

Today is the day.
Out in the middle of nowhere, there is something
That has never been seen anywhere.
As they typically are,
Those things in the middle of nowhere.

In this nowhere, there is a tree.
A thinking tree.
It does not just think.
It sees. It hears. It smells. It touches. It tastes.
But it has no brain.
No eyes. No ears. No nose. No hands. No tongue.
People are frightened by a thinking tree, for it is unnatural.
And yet it is a tree, and therefore more natural than any of us.
I have studied the tree for some time, and I know all about it.
No one knows more than I do.
Today I will learn even more.

The tree does not let me near.
It fears me, and maybe it should.
I say that I do not want to hurt it, just to understand it.
I weave in false promises and lies.
Because I do want to hurt it, so I can understand it.
This is what makes a tree natural, and I unnatural.
A tree would not lie to me, nor to itself.
This is why the tree does not let me close.
There is trust in protecting someone from the sun with your leaves.
Trust in letting them lean against your trunk.
Trust in allowing them to sit in between your roots.



There is a story about how a thinking tree became a thinking tree.
Where a thinking tree is, in the middle of nowhere,
There was a small village.
Many years before now, this village was a village surrounded by forest.
There were houses that all made a circle around the center of town.
Here there was song and dance,
Mourning and prayer,
Food and drink.
it was a good village.

No one knows the villager's name anymore.
But he was the wisest man in the village.
So wise, in fact, that when he thought, he would grow wiser.
So he thought often.
But he had no place to think.
The best place to think is underneath a tree.
So the man left the village to find a tree in the forest.
He found a nearby dogwood tree and sat under it.
This tree was too convenient to find, thought the man.
He cannot think under a tree that just anyone can find.
And he wandered until he found a red pine tree.
This tree is too rare and far away from people, he thought.
How can I meet people when no one will pass me by?
And like this, the man went tree to tree,
Each time concluding that this was not a tree that he could think under.


Tree to tree,
Branch to branch,
Stump to stump.

The man walked until he had scoured the entire forest
And he still could not find a tree.
Exhausted, the man collapsed in the village center.
There he laid face up and saw nothing, for it was night.
He could not hear, for the village was asleep.
He could not smell, for no one was cooking.
He could not touch, for his arms were too tired.
He could not taste, for he had lost his appetite.

The next morning, the villagers left their houses.
Surrounding the center of the village, they saw something new.
Where open space had been, was a tree.
A tree they had never seen.
A tree that thought often of the village and thought it was good.
A tree that watched the village and thought they were making progress.
A tree that heard them laugh and thought they were happy.
A tree that smelled their meals and thought they ate well.
A tree that touched them with its branches and thought they were strong climbers.
A tree that tasted their soil and thought they built on good ground.

A tree that was right and also a tree that was wrong.
The village thrived until it did not.
And the tree remained when it was gone.
When the tree saw that other trees grew through the debris,
It wondered if any of the trees remembered.
Of course, they remembered.
A man forgets because he cannot remember.
A tree remembers because he cannot forget.
Many memories are stored in a tree.
Memories of many villages.
Of many disasters.
When I cut down the thinking tree, I was sad.
I learned a story about a tree.
But I had to create my own ending.

I did not like my own ending.



Why can a man fell a tree?
He cannot do so with his hands alone.
He had to sit under a tree for a long time to understand how to fell a tree.
And how a tree fell.
And how society fell.

How many thinking trees have been prevented from growing
Because women were kept in their village,
Children kept in school,
And men wasting their thoughts on power and manipulation?
How many budding seeds starved or trampled?

The forests are gone, and yet we move forward
To a future unknown.
Will we think enough to save ourselves
Before nature reminds us
Who is in charge?

Caleb Campbell

Untitled



Kat Arndt

afternoon nap

Your head crushes my chest
As I struggle to time my breaths
To the rise and fall of your breaths
Such a heavy
Burden that you've placed on me
Without asking

But I'd be the devil if I woke you

Instead of letting you slumber
And suffocate me
Your thick hair in my mouth as I spit it out
Only for you to shift and prick
My eyes instead

*A hush; your breaths gone silent
Or has mine?*

Your head nestles by my neck
And my breath slips
Into the rise and fall of yours

mourning routine

Two drops of castor oil

Plop

Plop

Scrub it in

But don't use your nails

instead, use the pads of your fingers and bury them in your scalp
till it's nice and red and raw

But don't use your nails

Smoothe

Brush

And part again

2 inches to the left

Or the right

It doesn't really matter

it's falling apart everywhere

Scrub it in

And ignore the ache in your chest

that it's not growing back

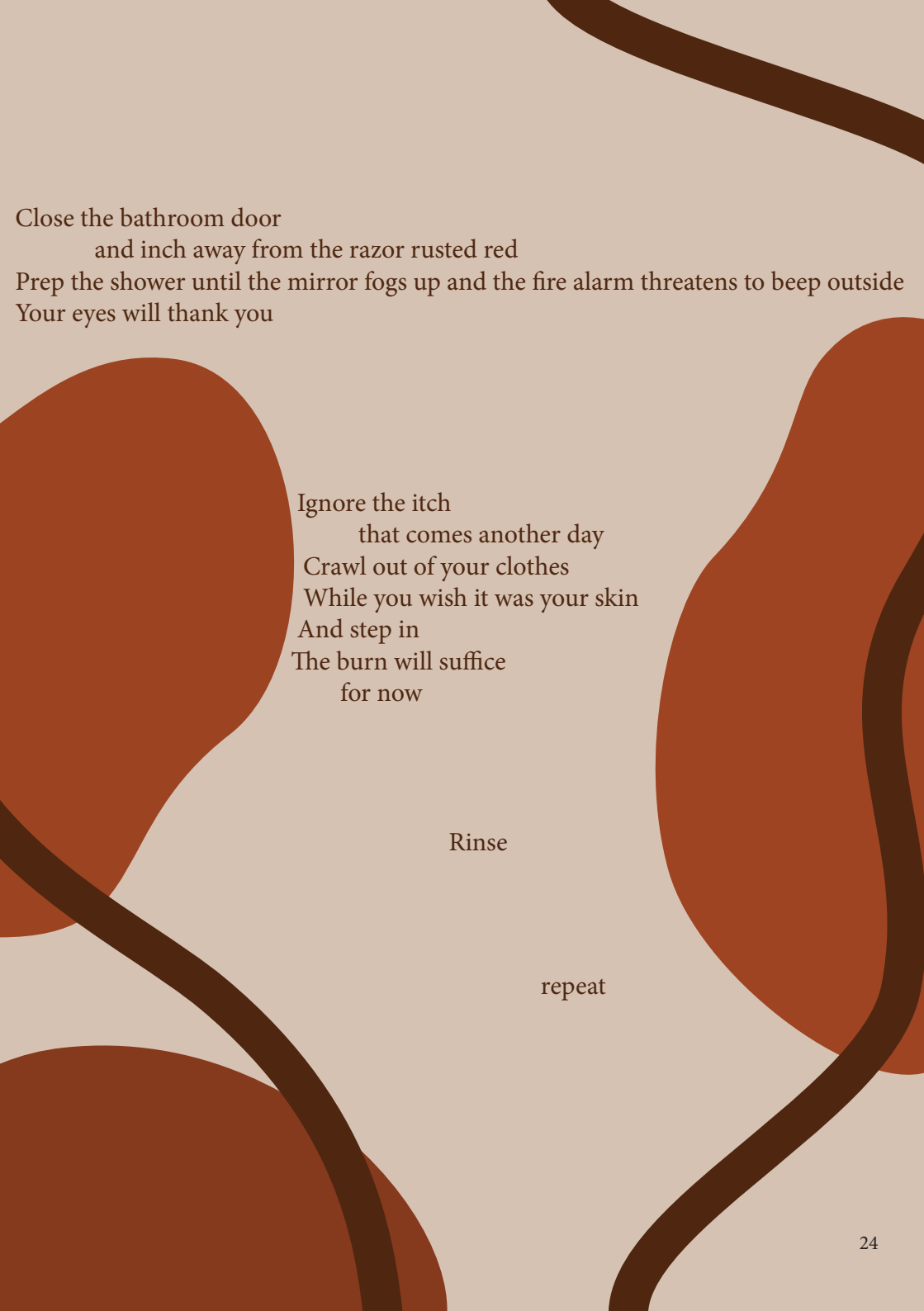
Continue this

Until your fingerprints have rubbed away

And your whole head is covered

with sickly film that barely holds it together

Translucent threads piled on with expectations beyond them



Close the bathroom door
and inch away from the razor rusted red
Prep the shower until the mirror fogs up and the fire alarm threatens to beep outside
Your eyes will thank you

Ignore the itch
that comes another day
Crawl out of your clothes
While you wish it was your skin
And step in
The burn will suffice
for now

Rinse

repeat

proprietary rights

I tried to catch a heron once.

Childish, unadulterated joy at the thought
of snatching something
that wasn't mine.

Of course I didn't get very far,
just enough to spook it
and send it off in flight.

Tell me, have you ever seen a bird fly?

Watched its breast bone beat
in time, its slender neck seeming to snap
from the weight
of holding its own head.

Tell me, have you ever watched
as the entire body gets pulled under?

Farah H.

Mirror, Mirror



Bayley Carter

for so long

When you are alone for so long,
you start to see the orange beaming through the blinds as
sad

and the crooked book on the edge of a
desk looks like it will
tumble into the ocean beneath it.

But you
are too stuck to move.

Stuck like a web your mind is on the
dust on the door knob—who knew? But you see
from this peculiar angle

that you don't think *anyone*
has *ever* viewed
anything from before.

Carry yourself to the kitchen,
the bedroom like

luggage. You never forget, but

when you feel that
itch of bubbles under your skin,
when you are alone for so long,
the floor is actually quite

you recall

walls holding up everything imaginable
and those screens illuminating the
holes in your face.

hollow. As too are those cracked

When you are alone for so long, you

start to confuse voices with

whirring tea kettles
and wind mingling with leaves with
a promise. And death with

the distant highway echo.

You start to hear rain's footsteps

as a prize.

Prime ambition: pierce the earth like

cold liquid needles.

Nothing has ever sounded so fantastic.

bluebirds fly away

there are some memories
I can't explain
it's like I left the teabag
in my cup a little too long
and what was sweet
has now become too bitter
for my liking
I look back to days of joy
driving the long open roads
with you

I feel that you wouldn't recognize me now
and I don't know if I would recognize you either
and that's okay
I'm learning to let go
and be grateful for what once was

we're just different now
I wonder if we would still have as much to say
to each other
as we did back then
drinking that coffee
and listening to that playlist

we've grown up a little
and we have our own lives
even if we only live a few minutes apart
you can't seem to respond to my messages

it just feels a little strange
listening to these songs
and not thinking of you
and not driving these backroads
with hair scarves and pink sunglasses
in your ruby jeep
in saying all this
I mean no harm
I hope you are doing well
I hope your peach ginger tea
is keeping your cup & your heart warm
that you continue to live as freely as you did then

you drift into my mind quite often
I wish these days of distance
could have treated us kinder
but maybe it is the way
it was supposed to be

my friend,
although we are apart
and I'm not sure what we have become
may the bluebirds
still sing to you
in your corduroy dreams

may you look at him
with your rose-colored sunglasses, you once wore
even if he
quite possibly
is the reason
we are apart

an ode to what once was
and what could be
I still love you, maggie leigh

Alyssa Sharp

Blue



Rachel Moseley

Authors and Artists

Authors

Caleb Campbell - A Thinking Tree

Farah H. - afternoon nap, mourning routine, proprietary rights

Rachel Harris - For So Long

Anthony Igbalajobi - I am not the source

Alyvia Moore - flushed

Aryn Pawlik - Disteopathy

Alyssa Sharp - bluebirds fly away

Anukriti Tayal - blood orange

Ty Williams - MAKE POETS DANGEROUS AGAIN

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Kat Arndt - Untitled

Bayley Carter - Mirror, Mirror

Rebecca Irmen - Faux Flora

Rachel Moseley - Blue

Genevieve Wagner - Fade

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