STAFF

Editor-in-Chief
Joe Cirino

Managing Editor
Katherine McInerney

Layout
Kamila Albert
Arielle Mejia-Garcia

Marketing Team
Alex Pop
Aadil Vora
Angelica Zadak

Editors
Tyler Conti
Joseph Fleming
Juan Miranda
Alison Parente
Sasha Strelitz
Mary Young

Cover Art by: Stephanie Johnston

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Suzanne Ferriss

With additional assistance from:
Dr. Kevin Dvorak
Dr. Megan Fitzgerald
Dr. Christine Jackson
Prof. Tennille Shuster
Dr. Kathleen Waites

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Nova Southeastern University
Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences
Division of Humanities
EDITOR’S NOTE

It seems each year brings with it new obstacles to overcome, this year being no different. The Digressions team, that mysterious force of editors, designers, and managers who make up the constructors of the magazine you hold in your hands are responsible for rising above and beyond almost all expectations.

In the three years that I have been a part of Digressions, I’ve seen great works brought into a published existence. Watching people rise above the faceless ranks of the populace into spaces reserved for those with some true talent in visual art and the written word is a wondrous experience, as you can see within the magazine you now hold.

First and foremost, I would like to thank all of the students who have submitted to the magazine. Without you various writers and artists, Digressions would not be.

Dr. Ferriss, my endless praise for everything you do in aid of the magazine would never be enough to fully describe the impact your help has had. While the students may be the blood of the magazine, you are most truly its beating heart.

Dr. Santos, Dr. Dvorak, Dr. Fitzgerald, and the rest of the faculty, my sincerest thanks go out to you all for your help and support. You all aid the magazine in a myriad of valuable ways, and I shudder to think of what state we would be in if it were not for your collective guidance.

Kathy, your help and excellent management of the team has been invaluable. The daunting tasks of the magazine may seem impossible to overcome, but with your aid overcome them we have.

Kamila and Arielle, you both have my greatest thanks for your stupendous work on the layout. You two have seen fit to transmute a confusing collection of words and images into a mighty work worthy of publication.

Alex, Aadil, and Angelica, you three helped tremendously to make this year one for the record books with regards to our marketing scheme. I thank you all for your dedication.

Editors, your eternal commitment and enthusiastic work move the gears of this magazine. Through both time and tribulation you have proven yourselves, and I thank you all for an enjoyable and productive year.

Joe and Sasha, I thank you two especially for your close friendship and advice on the various workings of the magazine.

In these pages lies a gallery of souls striving for immortality. By the proxy of our wits we create images and words that outlast all of us. Even after the students of today move on to become writers of tomorrow, their works and their legacies will remain inscribed in the minds of all—just as they are here.

Joe Cirino
Editor-in-Chief
CONTENTS

Movement Malischa Oge.................................................................4
Listen Malischa Oge.......................................................................4
Wake Up Malischa Oge.................................................................4
La Rue Paradis Juan Antonio Miranda.......................................5
Ryan Alison Parente......................................................................9
The 160 Characters Generation Arielle Mejia-Garcia..................10
Oz Alison Parente.........................................................................12
Barren Natalie Hernandez..........................................................13
Sister Morphine’s Requiem Sasha Strelitz..................................14
Girl with a Pearl Earring Duy Truong........................................16
Still Life Natalie Hernandez........................................................17
Cigarette Juan Antonio Miranda.................................................18
Untitled Alexandra Hernandez...................................................20
Untitled Lauren Frey...................................................................21
House of God Joseph Fleming......................................................22
A Poem on Nothing Joe Cirino....................................................23
The Awakening of Her Mind Sussy Lobo.....................................24
Gals and Dolls Sasha Strelitz........................................................25
Fall of Sonnets Joseph Fleming....................................................25
Mother Leela Mansukhani.............................................................31
Dreaming Sussy Lobo...................................................................33
Scene Out of the Life of an Introverted Book Geek Arielle Mejia-Garcia..........................................................34
The Arabian Woman-Ruler and Oracle Duy Truong..................36
Self-Portrait Roxana Lifshitz..........................................................37
President Deadly Ian Bates............................................................38
LayAway Alison Parente...............................................................40
Untitled Amanda Choi.................................................................41
Rationale Joseph Fleming.............................................................42
Dream for a Dream Leela Mansukhani.........................................43
Snow White’s Apple Duy Truong................................................44
Reflections Natalie Hernandez.....................................................45
The Faerie Gate Joe Cirino...........................................................46
Soaring Gas Prices Yavir Escovar................................................48
Contributors’ Notes....................................................................49
Celebrating Ten Years of Digressions.........................................52
Movement
MALISCHA OGE

Foundation.
Solid, smooth, cold, firm. Just right.
Leaps and slides glide. Appearing effortless, feels effortless.
Pain that it should inflict only a figment of the imagination
Unnatural but so natural. Breathing. In and out untaught but felt through every fiber
Smile, breathe,
Complete.

Listen
MALISCHA OGE

Even to the things not actually said
Eyes to see, ears to hear, brain to know
And a heart for that
Not a mindreader
But literate, considerate,
A mind reader.

Wake Up
MALISCHA OGE

Take a break from your thoughts
Breathe. Thoughts can strangle, coil, consume
Your positivity, optimism, smile.
Like a snake that never ends never ceases.
It’s good to be alone with thoughts.
It’s bad to stay alone with thoughts.
Like a weight that builds on your head, your chest, your shoulders.
Piled up.
No start. No end.
Sleep finally frees.
Sleep to wake up.
Stop thinking. Sleep. Then wake up.
Ivan stared blankly at the horizon, freckled with tall figures, where the sea interchangeably kisses the sky bonjour and bonsoir. He saw the caramel eyes of her cold face. “Where do we go from here?” With grim curiosity Ivan wondered what lay beyond the ledge under his feet.

Clouds amassed over the erect buildings eyeing him like indifferent jurors. The wind howled in protest and thoughts cluttered his head. Anxiety tailored him a suit of tension. “Here comes the migraine,” said Ivan, as he groped his face, wiping away beads of despair. He then combed his charcoal curls with his fingers. It was a habit he had first developed when the migraines commenced their blitzkrieg sometime in July.

The now quelled September breeze caressed him with a song fit for a siren’s voice, specifically targeting the heart’s ears. He shivered. His nervous hands ached for the reassurance of a cigarette between his fingers. His lips quivered for its noxious kiss. Reaching into his left jeans pocket, a pack met his hand and a stick was plucked. Mechanically, Ivan exhaled billows of woe towards the horizon.

He flicked the butt towards the street, the wind instructing it how to dance amidst its descent towards the sidewalk. A sudden burst of wind dispersed the hovering clouds in a surfeit of rage, as a lion does a flock of vultures scavenging a carcass.

“That should be me,” he thought, recalling that Saturday long since passed with Arianid.

The disconsolate waves greeted the shore as if the certainty of their first embrace was never retained. The sun, dressed in clouds, was half-mast. Ivan and Arianid lay, their bodies like entangled yarn, beneath a blue towel. Wrapped in tender affection, they were an island in a sea of sand.

Ivan pulled himself back to his ocean of solitude, his body numb and entwined within the ripples of his thoughts, hidden
from the moon’s reach and oblivious of the distant pockets of light speckled across the sky. The last words whispered in Ivan’s ears that flitted from Arianid’s thin, pink lips were like a butterfly’s search for the right flower. Motionless atop their island, Arianid – with eyes closed and chin pressed against Ivan’s left breast, the warmth of her breath stroking his neck – whispered: “Entre la luna y el mar te deseo confesar que el sinónimo de alegría sumamente la descubrí sólo en tu sonrisa.”

Ivan could no longer bear the apparition. His arms vainly flounced in attempt to dismiss the image. He opened his eyes and stared at the distant sidewalk.

That day remained a stain in Ivan’s memory, an ink blotch bleeding through a pad of paper. There is no way to quell the anarchy of the mind. Within the beauty of the mind lies the abstract notion of time, where past memories, current thoughts, and future aspirations comingle within an arbitrary framework, where one realizes, though may not always understand, the futility of control outside the realm of one’s own decisions and actions where one confronts the realization that in most – if not all – instances, why is an easy question to ask, but not necessarily one with a simple, adequate, and prompt response.

Ivan’s tic resurfaced with ignited fervor. His gnawing teeth resembled a symphony of rusted gears grinding in a mill.

The image refused to be dismissed. Arianid’s blood-curdling screams following the gunshot clawed Ivan’s mind like nails dragged across a wooden floor. The horrifying screenplay rolled the same reel over and over within the cinema of his mind. It always ended with that stunned and pleading look on her face before the body went limp.

He opened his eyes again. The wind ceased its shrieks and stroked Ivan’s bearded face. The sound of silence lulled his restless soul. From the twenty-third floor, Ivan studied the ants.

Perhaps, he thought, we are all ants, drones partaking in
this imposed and constructed reality, waking in search of attaining that repugnant dream dear to so many – perpetually in pursuit – hoping these material goods will satisfy our desiring hearts, will amend our open sores and thrust us into the arms of happiness on La Rue Paradis.

Inebriated by the nectar of pathos, Ivan yearned to self-impose his exile. Hope sprouts no fruit in this desert, gives life to no organism that dwells here. Despair asphyxiated him to the degree of dementia. He wanted to escape, even if it meant undressing the mind of its body or the body of its mind. Who truly knows the essentiality of our being and the meaning of our existence? Is there even a universal meaning? We are all diseased, of that much we can be certain, the contagion – life. A cure awaits – death. Some dress in scrubs and heal others, themselves too. Others endure the symptoms until they succumb. The rest submit themselves to false hopes devoid of any reason. Shrouded in ignorance, they frolic in the entrapments of their sightless faith.

Ivan considered the defeat he must accept should he leap. Is it right to put an end to this all? The end inevitably comes, eventually. No debt evades time, especially those owed to the cold scythe. But, he thought, isn’t all being relative to existence? That is, if I were to perpetually close my eyes, all Being, relative to me, would cease. Yet, pondered Ivan, I am not the sole person of Being. If death were to embrace my desire with its calm, would not others reminisce about me, though my existence, relative to me, is void? Am I too egocentric to believe that my death brings about the devastation of actuality? Isn’t the human being wholly, if not minutely, driven by ego? Certainly it is uncertain what constitutes the relationship between relativity and universality, but why let anxiety drape the indiscernible? Quietude arrives through suspension, never through hassle.

“Two roads diverged in the woods,” and from them, forking paths. But, which one will Ivan toddle upon? Must he step to the pavement below, or tread back to the door?
Silence sank its jagged claws into Ivan’s shoulder – the onyx cardigan cloaking his slender body proved too thin a coat of armor – as a gargoyle would perch itself atop a ledge. Captive for seconds – perhaps months, even decades – Ivan finally, or instantly, for Being is no juror of time, clenched his arms, avoiding his habitual tick.

Scarlet-stained eyes, pink-rimmed lids, mahogany colored pupils. A lone tear surveying the texture of his left cheek. Mucus protruding from the nostrils.

In Ivan’s mind looped Prufrock’s thought: “In a minute there is time for decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.” In his final embrace with despair, Ivan understood the severity of his condition. It was as if an unwanted burden had been cast upon him, he the mule to carry it, inhibiting his thoughts and acquainting him with his task. Who knew what would become of him? Perhaps, solely he. Though we live this life and feign to devise morality, we do not qualify as judges, merely as prosecutors, defendants, and witnesses.

Ivan whispered to the mute audience of space, buildings, and empty souls: “Let the breath of the wind enter my scarred lungs and dictate the actions of my stained hands. If I am to be exiled from life, let it be by my means, and let my actions, as well as my known thoughts, constitute my definition. My mind is set.” The wind sighed with relief as Ivan took a step...
Ryan
Photograph
ALISON PARENTE
The 160 Characters Generation  
ARIELLE MEJIA-GARCIA

_I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness_  
-Allen Ginsburg, “Howl”

A generation of antisocial social networking

The bright screens BURN their retinas to melt down their faces to drip on the textiles of isolation

As their ringing laughter fades into the keys and comes out the other end a silent, stoic, EMPTY, mean LOL

You have 892 friends out of whom you speak to five. And the other 887 you wouldn’t know from Adam if you passed em on the street. NOR THEY YOU.

A generation consumed by STATUS. And yet still poking and tagging as if stuck in the wet-diapered playground of KINDERGARTEN.

Connected by ties that are so flimsy as to be CUT with the single stroke of a key

A generation too cowardly to say how they feel out loud but feel BALLSY with the protection of PIXELS

All in a game of whose MOUSE is bigger

Who friend their enemies  
And tweet like maniacal birds possessed with SELF IMPORTANCE

TWEET (NOTICE ME)

TWEET TWEET (I’M IMPORTANT!)
Who need the validation of letting EVERYBODY know what they’re doing at every single SECOND of the day

And then take pictures of every MEANINGLESS event as if to prove they have a LIFE.

The CONCEIT

Look at me at this angle

look at me at this angle

look at me at this angle

LOOK AT ME!

emotions replaced by emoticons

friends with followers

SASHA STRELITZ!

I’LL REMEMBER YOU IN DESANTIS!

I’LL REMEMBER YOU in Parker 243

I’ll remember you

A GENERATION of youth connected to everyone.

And still alone.
Oz
Photograph
ALISON PARENTE
Sister Morphine’s Requiem
SASHA STRELI茨

she—little lass with her wide-eyed wit and naïveté a-glow,
she bent o’er one day, S-spine twist all before her menses

she was cut—porcelain skin, tissues, bones, nerves, sinews
she was cut—tranquil peace, dreams, laughs, calms – adieus

shooting spasms, pain in pangs, tender torment—torture,
“sister morphine, when you comin’ round again?”

drip, drip
dr
ro
p
li-quad pop-py flowers~~~

white pills, Percocet’s frills, God-knows-what fills!
Zofran for the quease, Valium to freeze

that Fent’nyl dermal gill—ripen for kill
like a zombie’s niece, who’s too close to the cease

morphine beans called Kadi’n, Lyrica designed by fiend,
poor teen’s worst dream, about the horror it is to wean
lil’ lady on the blues, not quite what it is to “use,”
mercy be the doctor’s muse, spine and metal all a-fused

GABA receives and gleans Topomax and Neurontin,
Trazodone o sleep machine, and Soma for the queen.

such a loss ‘tis to lose, this doll in pillhead’s noose—
revelations and rainbow hues; my bod, i say, “truce, truce!”

herbs’ pills, natural mills—out with your quills:
some Mary Jane-y peace, quite contrary please?

she—she is Teva’s robot, Eli Lilly’s frankenjew, Pfizer’s cyborg,
her belly fully equip with computadora morfina™
Girl with a Pearl Earring
Photograph
DUY TRUONG
Still Life
Oil Painting
NATALIE HERNANDEZ
Cigarette

A cigarette departs
her lips, a sigh whistles and
smoke coyly
curls into the
night’s embrace.

As her chapped,
wanting lips
engulf the
butt, desire and
temptation shed
identity, mutating into
tangled fibers
suturing her thoughts.

Transmittable like a
smile, every breath
is an interplay
between choice
and guarantee,
between air
and tar, between
death and death.

Slowly, it evolves
into a thick
veil encompassing
her flesh, her
silhouette mirroring
blackened lungs
betwixt her sheltered
cage.
Each sigh
dissipates anxiety,
each drag cries
mortality, each
exhale mourns
fertility.

A cigarette is
lit, to the
final ash,
if not from
the open sores
of a heart, streaming
through every capillary,
navigating into
every vein, until an
outlet is discerned.
Through the ducts
of every eye, the
canals of every
nostril, and the
parted lips of
a muted maw.
Untitled
Acrylic Painting
ALEXANDRA HERNANDEZ
Untitled
Charcoal
LAUREN FREY
Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?

–1 Corinthians 6:19

Long was the night the temple fell,
A hand stayed patient, hitherto
Could not have known, but should have thought!
One day too long a time to halt
Deliverance of godly vessels.

And long have been the nights henceforth,
Gone is the temple, left in shade,
Where prying eyes shall never see
Nor wish to catch a glimpse! The empty shell
Where life once promised to reside.

Long have I dreamed she still remained,
The house where proudly God took shelter,
And patient with a patient heart
Would not that staying hand rebuke
But smile as the temple raised.

Long then would only daytime be,
Each hour passing naught but hope.
For this I’d gladly breathe my last
And lose this temple as recompense
That she might see the light once more!

The temple named Elizabeth.

A House of God alive again.
To see a further shore,  
Chaffed not by grains of war.  
A land not swarming with the slop of the least,  
But blessed by the devas of the East.

That track is my path, for all days end,  
Rome ruined in the past, Byzantium not on the mend.  
Never more will man rise above the sands,  
Time and fate have seen to all the lands.

The desert calls to me,  
As one may call to a follower to see.  
A land lonely in emptiness,  
Swallowing and drinking in enviousness.

The sands devour all that walks upon their back,  
The spines of worms hardened against attack.  
Men of blue, red, and gold walk under the suns,  
They know not what is to come of their sons.

The desert is the end of us all,  
Just as it is the beginning of the call.  
To repeat the process has no merit,  
The desert is just a blind zealot.
The Awakening of Her Mind
Oil Painting
SUSSY LÓBO
A symbol is something used to represent something else. Sometimes symbols are tangible or physical, and sometimes they are words, phrases, or even images that have a meaning associated to them. Our names are symbols of our essences. Write 3-4 paragraphs about your name and how it represents who you are. (Remember the bold words for next Friday’s vocabulary quiz.)

I was named after Barbara Streisand because both my dads love her. They call me Barbie, but I actually think “Barbie” is childish. I’ve been trying to convince them to call me “Barb” but they insist on adding the “ie”. Barb sounds way more mature.

Also I don’t resemble the doll at all. I wish What do I say now? This assignment is harder than I thought – “Barbie” doesn’t symbolize me. I look around the classroom and my gaze lands on Dee Shapiro, who’d be more suited as a “Barbie,” since she looks exactly like Mattel’s doll.

After English is lunch, and I’m in a corner of the cafeteria reading Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, when I see a shadow eclipsing page 108. I look up and it’s Dee; the hideous plaid uniform jumper we have to wear on Fridays actually looks good on her. She sits next to me and nonchalantly informs me about our plans this weekend, as if we’re best friends.

“I’ve been putting notes that say, ‘Can I please sleep over Barbie Dershowitz’s?’ in my mom’s drawers like all week. And guess what? She finally said ‘yes!’” she gushes, as if she hadn’t terrorized me for five years. The latest was last month when she
ridiculed my very convincing witch costume at Cher’s Halloween party.
I’m totally shocked, so “cool” is my only response.

That night, after we bless the candles, wine, and bread, I blurt out, “I need to move into the blue room tonight.” Pure amusement on both my dads’ faces, so I explain further, “Dee Shapiro is sleeping over tomorrow, and my pink room is filled with dolls.”

Silence.

Daddy pours two glasses of Merlot and hands one to Dad, who absentmindedly swishes his glass around to let the wine “breathe.” (How does wine breathe?)

After what seems like a few minutes, Dad speaks: “A friend will like you for you, and not the room you sleep in. You happen to love your pink room, and if she’s your friend, she will too. Besides, there’s nothing to play with in the blue room—”

Daddy finishes his sentence, “Except for our masks, which—”

“I solemnly swear never to touch/play with/spill on any antiques, the Haynes furniture, or your masks. Amen,” I repeat like a mantra, with my right hand over my heart. But I see their faces, so, “I didn’t mean to sound so sassy, but you don’t understand. This is Dee Shapiro, and she CANNOT know that I play with dolls. She’ll tell everyone, and—”

“That’s ridiculous,” Dad says. Daddy puts his hand on my Dad’s shoulder and gently says, “I’ll help you move some things to make it look lived in after some de-ca-dent tiramisu.”

I wake up in the blue room (Daddy said it would have a more lived-in feel if I slept in here). My stuff is everywhere, so Dee has no reason to think this isn’t my room. I stare at the beautiful masks that decorate the four walls of my temporary-new
room. I can’t resist, so I take my favorites off the walls to play with (quietly and very gently, of course).

It’s almost sunset, and I’m stoked. Sunset means she’s almost here, which means hello malls on weekends with Dee, Cher, and the rest of the crowd. I’m wearing my best outfit: jeans and my favorite Indian tunic.

A red convertible zooms into our driveway, squeezing between both Priuses. As I open our door, all I notice are Mr. Shapiro’s tattoos and farmer’s tan. (I know what my dads are thinking: cancer, cancer, CANCER!) Polite “hellos” are exchanged, but the three men look at each other as if they were from different tribes.

Dee is wearing sweatpants (that I wish I had) – with a homemade, bedazzled “PINK” on the butt – and her nails are red like her dad’s convertible (“hooker nail polish red,” Daddy harps for weeks). Her carefully crafted messy blonde ponytail is perfect (my hair is messy too, but frizzy-messy, not cute-messy). I see a quick snarl on her face when she notices my outfit, but maybe it’s just my imagination.

I lead her past the closed door of my room, and into the blue room.

“What are those?”

I don’t have enough time to analyze her tone, so I reply truthfully: “They’re my dads’.” I point to each wall as I explain, “Those are Venetian, those are African tribal masks, those are ceremonial masks from Oceania, and these are burial masks from South and North America.”

On Sunday afternoon, Dee proposes another sleepover, so while noshing on some cinnamon schneckens and tea, I start the begging/convincing scheme: “We have tomorrow off because of teacher workday, remember?” but Daddy makes eyes at me. Even so, I continue to plead: “Please?”
“But Barbie, remember we’re supposed to go to Avi’s gallery opening tomorrow?” Daddy argues.
I keep on whining, while Dee repeats, “Pretty please?”
“Well, as long as long as they can fetch you—” Dad concedes for them both, and makes a “let it be” motion to Daddy.
“Of course!” Dee quickly replies, as she dials home.
“Thanks, dear. We’ll bring some whole wheat scones for your parents when we pick Barbie up tomorrow,” Dad says.
While Dee is on the phone, I mouth, “Barb not Barbie!”

Dee lets me sit up front, since it’s my first time in a convertible. I politely ask if we could turn the radio to 105.9. Mr. Shapiro blasts it.
As he turns it up, he remarks, “This was so trippy when it came out.” He taps his tatted arm along with Ringo, and only sings the “coocoo cachoo” parts.

The Shapiros don’t watch old Bette Davis movies with snacks made up of seasonal fruits; instead, they watch reality TV and eat delivery pizza. At 7 p.m, Dee’s mom comes home from work, and an hour later, her dad goes to a bar.
“They can’t afford a divorce,” Dee whispers to me.

Dee’s mom paints our nails, and while we let them dry, she does our hair. Eventually, she goes to her room, and Dee falls asleep on the couch; but I just lay there. I try so hard to meditate just like my dads taught me, but I keep thinking of all the Mountain Dew I drank. I tiptoe to the bathroom and look around: Pantene Pro-V, strands of fake, multi-colored hair, and Nair (she’s allowed to wax her hair?)
I squat and gaze at the wall in front of me as I relieve myself. Instead of patterned wallpaper, it’s filled with doodles, no doubt scribbled by all of Dee’s friends – so cool. My eyes follow
a sexy doodle of Edward Cullen all the way to the floor when I notice it: pinkish-red spots on my panties.

Panic.

I unroll the remaining toilet paper, wad it up, and tuck the cotton bulge safely between my legs. I replace the empty roll with a new one that I found under the sink, so no one notices. I scan the washroom to make sure that there is absolutely no evidence, and I tiptoe back toward the couches where Dee is.

I toss and turn, wondering when I’m going to start to turn into a “bitch on wheels,” Daddy’s worst nightmare.

I must have fallen asleep, because I wake up to some loud coocoo cachooing. I try to stay as frozen as possible, but I manage to half-open one eye. I see him stagger over to kiss Dee – he nearly trips as he approaches the couch. I smell something horribly acidic, which fades just as he wobbles away like a sick penguin. (For a while, some weird banging noises come from the master bedroom, then some shouting, a SLAM!, some noisy footsteps, and then SLAM! again.)

I wake up to Mrs. Shapiro’s face inches from mine, “Honey, you gotya pe-r-iod, and bled all ova the cowch,” she croaks in the same exact tone she had explained the intricate drama of the Real Housewives of New Jersey last night. Then, to my horror, Dee wakes up; she starts to chuckle uncontrollably as she takes in the scene. (The most embarrassing moment of my life, but instead of crying, I tell myself Barb doesn’t cry; only little Barbie would.)

“Dee, ya little reta’d, don’tchya laugh atya friend. Her bubbies will be big soon, and you’ll still be flat like my iyan.” That shuts Dee up.

We all walk into the kitchen to find an old My Size Barbie. “I’m gonna show Barbie howta wear a tampon, using Barbie as a mawdel” she giggles through her nose. As I learn about applica-
tors and strings, I’m no longer able to stomach the ketchup and eggs, so I push them around politely.

“Ya bleed so ya know ya not knawcked up.” Mrs. Shapiro pulls a bottle from her robe pocket, and pours an amber liquid into her coffee. (If I never hear the word “tampon” again, I’ll be happy.)

I look outside and see Dee’s dad on a hammock hiccupping in his sleep. As I turn my head back to the mortifying breakfast scenario, Dee is wearing a face I’ve never seen on her before—humiliation.

I’m silent all the way home. When we arrive, I run past the blue room with its masks, and into my room. I absentmindedly prepare some papier-mâché to make one of my dolls a costume. After what seems like both a minute and a year all at the same time, my dads come in and sandwich me. Daddy has a bag from Whole Foods in his hands, filled with pads and some rose oil extract, and Dad has a steaming mug of cinnamon tea.

They take turns hugging me, and Dad says, “Barbie, we don’t want you using tampons yet, because the research says you’re still too young.”

A wave of relief: I’m still a girl, still Barbie.

Tuesday morning is more regular than I thought it would be. As soon as I see her, I’m surprised that Dee seems embarrassed, but maybe that’s because I saw behind her mask. Even more surprisingly, she invites me to sit with her, Cher, and the others for lunch. We both smile and laugh, pretending: I’m pretending I’m not the first sixth grader with pads in her backpack, and Dee is pretending her family isn’t cracking at the seams.
A serpent wanting his own end
Am I the Fall of man’s reflection.
In Spring towards Summer did I wend
With Spring my Summer’s retrospection.
When plucked from April’s shallow grave
Forget-me-nots, my May obsession,
I gladly June through August gave
For Autumn foresaw no such passion.
And now as verdant veils doth Fall
Green am I still of greener saplings,
Yet Time has made me fool for all
Who mind full well their Autumn’s passing.
  It is but wit this wit defies:
  To mourn our Spring ere Winter’s rise.
Mother
LEELA MANSUKHANI

Words do not exist
To describe the comfort of your presence

No painted scene
Can outmatch your beauty

You create my endurance
Through your words

The love you place
In everything you make
Is priceless

The purity of your spirit
Is the heart of my soul

You are my mother

The life you have given me
I thank you for
Dreaming
Oil Painting
SUSSY LOBO
I hate the first day of school.

It’s not that I don’t like school, it’s just that every teacher makes you get up and introduce yourself in front of everybody on the first day. Like the rest of the class cares if I like to scrapbook – not that I do, I’m just saying. I thought that when I finally got to college it’d be different. That I’d be at last spared from the humiliation. That I could finally put those previous traumatic first-day-of-school experiences (that will not be mentioned) behind me. But no. I wonder what I did in a past life to deserve this punishment. Whatever I did, it must have been bad to doom me to this fate of never-ending mortification. My mother says I dramatize. I disagree.

So, there I am, sitting in Brit Lit class.

I like the professor. She’s like a chirpy gumdrop or something. And I’m excited about the material assigned. It’s totally what I’m into: Shakespeare – I love her!

And so I think to myself, Finally. The horror is over.

“All right everyone, why don’t we go around—”

Oh no.

“—and introduce ourselves.”

No no.

“Just get up and tell us your name and a hobby of yours.”

Noooooo!

“Tell us all a little about yourselves.”

…really? REALLY?! This isn’t supposed to happen. I’m in college now. I’ve paid my freaking dues, lady!

The rest of class seems slightly annoyed, but apparently I’m the only one dying inside. The first girl gets up. “Hey, my name’s Chelsea and my hobby is listening to music.”
Then some guy. “Hey, my name’s Juan and my hobby’s running.”

Okay. At least their hobbies aren’t that cool either.

“Hey, my name’s Alice, and my hobbies are base jumping, sky diving – any extreme sport really.”

…

What no shark wrestling?

“Oh, and I just got into swimming with sharks.”

…damn.

All right, I tell myself. Don’t panic.

“Hey, my name’s…”

Three more people.

Thump…Thump…Thump

Just keep it short and sweet. “Hi, my name’s Elle and my hobby is reading.”

“What’s up my name’s…”

Two more people.

Thump.Thump.Thump.

“Hi, my name’s Elle and my hobby is reading”

“I’m Anna…”

One more person.

ThumpThumpThump

“Hey, I’m…”

“Hi, my name’s Elle and my hobby is reading”

Finally, the Professor looks at me expectantly. “And you?”

“Hi, my name’s reading and my hobby is Elle!”

…

I must have killed someone in a past life.
The Arabian Woman—Ruler and Oracle
Photograph
DUY TRUONG
Self-Portrait
Digital Art
ROXANA LIFSHITZ
“I would like to thank you all, people of the United States of America, for electing me, Walter Saltonstall, your new president. Even those who did not vote for me, I thank you too, because that’s how democracy works. I would prefer if you had voted for me, and I wish I had a list of everyone in the country who voted against me. But I’m getting off topic.

“When you people elected me your new leader of this free world, you were aware from my multi-billion dollar ad campaign that some radical changes were going to be in store for our country. Changes that would make this land the great nation it deserves to be. Now, after much consideration and debate, I weeded out my weaker proposals and have chosen the first new law I shall enact as president of the United States. For far too long, one problem has riddled our glorious nation above all others, a problem that affects everyone: death! That’s right; I can see it in your faces. Everyone here has lost someone to a fatal case of death. Well, with the power you’ve vested in me, I say no more death! From now own, death is dead!

“I have asked you all if you wish for me to put an end to such travesties, and by voting for me you have answered with a resounding ‘YES’! From this moment forward, I hereby declare that death is illegal!”

The thousands gathered for Saltonstall’s inauguration erupted in a deafening cheer. Of course, the president had no authority to create a law without the approval of the rest of the government, and by doing so he’d probably broken at least several constitutional laws. But no one really cared in this case, as everyone hates dying. President Saltonstall blew kisses at the audience like the pope or some rock star and walked away from his podium, towards the White House.
Within hours of the president’s proclamation, the police force had officers dispatched to every cemetery in the country. Corpses were being exhumed and handcuffed, while bright yellow police tape was being wrapped around the fences and grave stones. At one such cemetery, Walter Saltonstall’s own mother was about to face this justice.

As the police hauled her coffin from the disturbed earth, Walter dabbed at his tearing eyes with a handkerchief embossed with the presidential seal. One of the officers brandished a crowbar and pried the coffin open. President Saltonstall watched impotently as handcuffs were slapped onto his mother’s bony wrists.

“I’m sorry, Mom, but justice makes exceptions for no one... Besides O.J. Simpson.”
LayAway
Photograph
ALISON PARENTE
Untitled
Charcoal and Graphite
AMANDA CHOI
Sir, mind thy tongue and mind withal—
Some Reason may fond Reason stall!
Right Invention\(^1\) is too dear to sit
By which little wits deem little fit.
Truly, man can know the night as day
And so offer Reasons why he may
As soothly call the day his night
With coffered Reasons why he might.\(^2\)
Though surely must in spades be spades,\(^3\)
For those simple Reasons were they made,
Save if spades known for other things,
Deny them that, when Reasons bring?
Lo Reasons bear the same rancor
Such palates hath to aired liquor,\(^4\)
Yet palates be of Basis taste,
To Basis true doth man make haste.\(^5\)
Curse wit, known by vagaries such!
But if it can be praised as much
That Reasons be what make man merry
Let Reasons be by bushels plenty.\(^6\)

\(^1\)i.e., that which is favored by Invention (Knowledge)
\(^2\)An allusion to the eighty-ninth sonnet of Sir Philip Sidney’s *Astrophil and Stella*
\(^3\)“I come from the country; I call a spade a spade” - Ancient Greek maxim
\(^4\)“Vinegar is the son of wine” - Jewish proverb
\(^5\)Lines 15-16 contain the same play on words; Line 13 contains another
\(^6\)“If Reasons were as plenty as Blackberries, I would give no man a Reason upon compulsion, I.” - *Henry IV*, Act II, Scene IV
A Dream for a Dream
LEELA MANSUKHANI

A race for patience
A man of harmony

A quest for love
A world of unity

An eye of wisdom
A prayer for prosperity

A child of innocence
A cry for humility

A wish for balance
A body of strength

A mother for sustenance
An Earth of protection

A soul of freedom
A promise for devotion

A dream for a dream
A journey for an uncharted fulfillment
Snow White’s Apple
Photograph
DUY TRUONG
Reflections
Photograph
NATALIE HERNANDEZ
The Faerie Gate

JOE CIRINO

Long have I wondered at this door,
Shorn of birch and yore.
Lore covers it in great swaths of gore,
Touched only by the green man’s store.

Great wall of mysterie,
Open to my pleasure and please.
But I know you never will,
For I am lost upon this hill.

Never before such a conundrum as this,
Bothers me as much as the bamboozlement of thine verdigris.
Yet such loathsome lexicon is too verbose,
For the primal pretty of your yoke.

Great, tall, proud,
Strong, yet, loud.
Lay bare to me thine secrets,
Though know you never will.

Thus I sit and wait for thee to open your stony hide,
To enter that noble garden on the other side.

Its existence is mine goal, you see,
As you are the creator of me.
Oh but if the stars should show such kindness to me,
That I would bless them in glee eternally.
Even if they be of seelie soul,
Or unseelie so.

Life is short.
Breath is dark.
Night draws on,
And with it my lark.

I come now,
To all barriers thrown low.
I come with the breeze,
For in the earth I shall not freeze.

Dreaming of glory, kneeling before you,
I have gained the wisdom to be mute.
O my Queene, to be with you,
Until the last full moon.
Soaring Gas Prices
Photograph
YAVIR ESCOVAR
Contributors’ Notes

**Amanda Choi**, sophomore, Graphic Design major.
A drawing is a message you tell other people. A design is a message other people give you to draw so everyone can understand the world better. My drawing reflects my struggle to design. It has no title because I can’t even think of one.

**Alexandra Hernandez**, junior, Theatre major.
Aspiring to become a makeup artist and director. Spends most of her free time in the theatre department. Also loves to go scuba diving, when the water’s not too cold.

**Alison Parente**, senior, English and Psychology Major, Gender Studies minor.

**Arielle Mejia-Garcia**, junior, English major.
I love to doodle and watch Korean soap operas. I hope to be a book critic someday. That’s my dream job. Another dream of mine is to be published. Dream fulfilled! Thanks, *Digressions*!

**Duy Truong**, sophomore, English Major.
I would love to be a new modern artist, like Editta Sherman. I like to be involved in photography, painting, music, fashion, theatre, writing, and so much more of what could be considered art.

**Ian Bates**, freshman, English major.
“President Deadly” started off as a joke, but I could not think of a way to incorporate it into an actual story. Upon learning about the submission opportunity, I thought maybe it alone could work for a short yet humorous decision -- kind of like a newspaper gag.

**Juan Antonio Miranda**, senior, English and Philosophy major.
If it were not for the prowess of fecundity and its indefatigable expression through the various mediums of the arts, décadence would be synonymous with reality...and this instills within me a duty to humanity – a duty to create.
Contributors’ Notes

Joe Cirino, senior, English Major, Folklore and Mythology Minor. I’m a devout scholar of H.P. Lovecraft and Lord Dunsany - the sort of poetical fiction and fancy that is long gone from books. Their worlds and their words have had the greatest of marks on my aspirations as both an aspiring poet and a novelist.

Joseph Fleming, junior, English and Philosophy major. I enjoy creating my own origami models, watching British comedy panel shows, and learning bizarre, random facts. I write the instant an idea comes to mind, often dropping whatever I was doing, and edit until I’m satisfied. (I edited this sentence four times!)

Lauren Frey, junior, Biology major, Chemistry and Humanities Minor. I aspire to one day work as a forensic pathologist. My piece was a Christmas gift for my mom of our dachshund, Nikki. Nikki is so squirmy, and it took over 20 minutes, 40 blurred pictures, and lots of treats to finally get one that was suitable.

Leela Mansukhani, freshman, Environmental Studies and Legal Studies major. I aspire to be an influential leader in the United States. I’m not sure how yet, but I would like to help environmental lawyers and environmentally threatening companies meet in the middle to find a way to satisfy both of their interests without destroying our planet.

Malischa Oge, Junior, Communications Major, Dance Minor. I want to be a great writer someday! Someone who people look to for inspiration, for laughter, for wisdom. That is what I aspire to. I love that feeling of being finished and feeling proud of what I’ve written.
**Natalie Hernandez**, senior, Studio Art major.
I always try to capture images that inspire emotion in the viewer without venturing outside of the boundaries of realism. The ability to fill a work with one’s personality and emotions is at the core of fine art, and is what I try to do with my work.

**Roxana Lifshitz**, senior, Graphic Design major, Marketing minor.
This self-portrait does not only represent my face, each line is composed with words and quotes that depict parts of my life and personality; my name, place and date of birth, where I live, and my favorite quote. I aspire to be successful in my professional career.

**Stephanie Johnston**, sophomore, Graphic Design major, Marketing minor.

**Sasha Strelitz**, senior, English major.
I am an avid reader and writer, and interested in pursuing academia and scholarship. A fusion of real-life experiences, my quirky imagination, and wicked wit, these pieces exude my essence.

**Sussy Lobo**, sophomore, Studio Art major.
I am a Fashion Designer. I am getting my Bachelor’s in Art. In my paintings, I always compare the nudity of a woman to a flower because flowers are not covered and women always cover themselves, hiding their beauty.
Celebrating Ten Years of *Digressions*

In 2003, Marlisa Santos, then Assistant Director of the Division of Humanities, envisioned creating a student literary magazine. She had heard that previously a poetry club had existed on campus. In 1992, it had published a slim volume called Calliope, but then student interest dropped off and the club dissolved. Dr. Santos thought that it was time to try again.

An enthusiastic group of students, led by D.J. King, organized and produced the inaugural issue of 19 poems and 4 drawings, publishing a simple paper-bound volume. They called the magazine *Digressions*, asking students, as D.J. wrote in her editor’s note, “to take a break of ‘Works Cited’ and turn inwardly to work sighted.” She asked, “Where do you digress? What are your thoughts apart from the academic focus of your life?”

Their initial volume reached an audience of creative writers and artists eager to continue the project—and to improve it. With Liz Harbaugh at the helm, the staff doubled in size and, with a modest budget, they published the second edition of the magazine professionally, in the form it takes to this day.

By the publication of the third volume, the staff was determined to establish a common look for the magazine. Omar Lopez designed a cover used for four years, appearing in different colors (2006-2009). By 2010, it was a time for a change. Tennille Shuster, the faculty chair of a new program in graphic design on campus, suggested a cover contest. Since then, students in graphic design compete each year for the honor of seeing their work on the cover.

While the cover may change, the dedication of the student staff is unwavering. Each year, they bring greater energy and creativity to their work. In its ten-year history, over 60 students have served on the staff—as editors, managers and designers. They encourage students to submit their short fiction, poetry and visual art. They work with faculty teaching creative writing—such as Chris Jackson and Kate Waites—to apply editorial criteria in evaluating written submissions. They select the best in each category, edit the final selections, choose the cover, lay out the magazine, and review the results before final publication. All contributors are invited to receive coaching from Dr. Megan Fitzgerald before presenting their work at the annual event celebrating the magazine’s publication, where students read their work, discuss their art and display their cover designs.

The student staff has benefitted from ongoing professional support from the Division of Humanities, the university’s Office of Publications, and Don Rosenblum, Dean of the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences.

With their support and the hard work of the magazine’s staff, over 130 students have had their creative talents recognized in *Digressions*. That’s an achievement worth celebrating!

Suzanne Ferriss
Faculty Advisor