Cover Art
3 Collision Staff
4 From The Editors
6 Acknowledgments

POETRY AND PROSE
8 Gift for a Fifth Child  Lawrence Lenhart
17 Of Course You
     Begin With Your Name  Nina Sabak
23 Umenifunulía Mbingu
     (open the heavens)  Natalie Somerville
25 Letter to my jaundiced baby brother  Caroline Kessler
27 Cornbread Knuckles/
     Sheen Spray and Coconut Oil  Savonna Johnson
30 irrational fears  Kelly Dougher
33 Remembering What The Body Is  Madeleine Barnes
34 Sorry, J.D. Salinger  Michael Kamison
36 Horror  Sara Keats
37 unfounded structural concerns (tsr)  Connor Pickett
41 The Overturned Automobile  Paul Cunningham
42 into collapse of known lovely  Evan Chen
48 Detritus  Jessica Poli
49 A Deconstruction of Towers  Julian Day Cooney
# Table of Contents (Continued)

## Visual Arts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Artist/Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Photo</td>
<td>Amy Hayes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Photo</td>
<td>Abigail Moore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Photo</td>
<td>Anna Rasshivskina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Photo</td>
<td>Quinn Keaney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Photo</td>
<td>Kelsie Hartpence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Photo</td>
<td>Kelsie Hartpence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Drawing</td>
<td>Melissa Dias-Mandoly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Photo</td>
<td>Abigail Moore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Comic</td>
<td>Andy Scott</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Staff Pieces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>Gestalt</td>
<td>Michael Simon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Untitled (Tanka Eleven)</td>
<td>Alicia Salvadeo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Triptych</td>
<td>Peter Webb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editors-in-Chief</td>
<td>Sarah Reagle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alicia Salvadeo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry Editor</td>
<td>Ryan McGinnis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prose Editor</td>
<td>Amy Hayes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design &amp; Layout Editors</td>
<td>Sarah Ivins</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Megan Roth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Music Editor</td>
<td>Michael Simon</td>
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<td>Copy Editors</td>
<td>Michael Good</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Megan Roth</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorial Staff</td>
<td>KC Euler</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liz Gildea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dan Malinowski</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kristin Patterson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sam Uthgenannt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peter Webb</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear Readers,

Collision’s tenth year of publication brought a number of changes to the magazine. The first was last semester’s decision to publish annually, rather than biannually. As a result, we were able to organize more events than usual, including a successful Tenth Anniversary Reading this past March that celebrated the work of past and present contributors. We also launched a new website with the goal of increasing readership and the amount of submissions—a goal well met.

As we give away the few remaining copies of the Spring 2010 issue, we can proudly note a record number of over two hundred submitting authors. It is important to recognize that the number of works that impressed us this year exceeded what we’ve published in this issue. We were thrilled to witness the diverse talents of Pittsburgh’s undergraduate writing community, and were also very pleased to read a staggering amount of submissions from universities all over the country and abroad. The selection process was long and especially challenging, but we are happy to present such a strong issue and very much look forward to next year.

We would like to thank our devoted staff members, whose time and insight was invaluable throughout this year, and whose input facilitated the success of these changes. We particularly want to acknowledge Ryan and Amy, who have done a wonderful job providing constructive criticism to those of our contributors who request it, and also Mike,
for collaborating with local bands to produce this year’s music compilation. We thank Sarah and Megan for another excellent layout and book design and for maintaining continual contact with our new publisher.

We believe that nothing can speak better for this issue than the following poems and prose pieces; so with no further introduction, we hope you find it as inspiring as we have.

All best,
Sarah Reagle and Alicia Salvadeo
Editors-in-Chief
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

_Collision Literary Magazine owes many thanks to:_

The University of Pittsburgh Honors College, for their continued support and the means to produce this publication.

Karen Billingsley, for her collaboration, assistance and understanding.

Jennifer Lee, for her insight, dedication and sponsorship.

Rick Baker and the staff of Print Tech, for their continued reliability and professionalism in creating a top shelf product.

This issue is dedicated to Dr. Alec Stewart, who passed away on April 7, 2010. His enduring enthusiasm has meant much to the University’s undergraduate literary community, and we could not begin to articulate how grateful we have been for his ongoing encouragement as Collision Literary Magazine celebrates its tenth year of publication.
POETRY AND PROSE
FIRST PLACE

Gift for a Fifth Child
Lawrence Lenhart,
University of Pittsburgh
When the last Bunion died, I pinkie-picked my Muldoon itch. Their house on Victor, 118 concrete steps above the valley. The last stretch of which—to their aid—the banister creeps to the front porch.

“Paint it green.”

“What sort of green?”

“An Irish green.”

As if a grip of Ireland would help them to lug sacks of flour, sugar, potatoes.

The cripple-clutching upward to the house where their unstirred ghosts gather in cool puddles or cob like porous webs. My reverent entering, toeing aside the rug-bunch that absorbs the draft.

The inside is arctic and bare, stripped as bones that waggle by the pot that boils the adipose flesh.

Inside, the meat hook hinges on the plaster ceiling where the pig, now and again, swayed without so much as a haunting squeal.

Its echo belongs to the yard.

The kitchen company carouseled around the hook, careening the kinked pink-pale tail while the guts unglued along the stomach wall—all-Spring supper, slow-draining.

The sisters buttered their toast with the backside of a spoon and when the other wasn’t looking, took another scoop for good measure, slapping the soft yellow wedge onto the tongue.
Gift for a Fifth Child

The warmth of the mouth melted it to a juice that filled the sag of their cheek pouches and the taste, again and again, was the moment of disinheritance.

From their growling hunger in the Depression, it was stifled as they melted too.

It was something rich.

And John carved his can of peaches with a serrate knife because “that other contraption” was too much clamping and cranking—and too, because however clever, it could never remind him of how his mother opened.

The century-old patter of his working heart and how his sclera dims just now, late in life.

The white, the all-else surrounding the pupil; even after 92 years, it remains true that you will always have seen less than what remains to be seen.

Do not look into that corner where Nonni folded, her heart attacking in the midst of her exasperation at a greedy contestant on Wheel of Fortune.

Do not misgaze down into the barrel from which the ladle lifted gulps of their father’s home brew.

Do not enter that crawl space in the attic where John and Bill stayed for too long without heating or cooling or a chance in hell.

That suffocation chamber with two hay-strung mattresses and a coal-black crucifix nailed to the chimney that poked
through the shingles.
Do not notice—in the box, in the corner—the letter E John earned for baseball, the one that Patricia thought ought be resurrected to remind him that his younger days were not wholly forgotten.
Or think of how he sat his last years out, in a wheeled chair like being condemned to the bench.
Avert from their wad of $2 bills and 50¢ pieces, in billfold and china.
When I visited the three unmarried siblings half my life ago, they dispensed to me $5 (Nonni), $2 (Bridgie), and 50¢ (John).
And as they left—one by the one—I became poorer.
Their absence is my poverty of pocket—no, spirit.
Like when their father, drunk in Listowel, one night found the courage or slurred his cowardice, and asked his sister: “Hanoria,” (my great-grandmother), “give me something else.” “Something else from what, Jim?” “From this,” and he stomped the dry Irish earth and rucked River Feale, and she smirked, knowing.
With savings-up, they both bought America, a County Kerry boat tacking and gybing Tralee Bay to somewhere near Wilmerding, Pa.
John’s gifts— the fifty-cent silvers—were last.
On it, Kennedy, the great-grandson of Irish Catholic immigrants.
Gift for a Fifth Child

Much myself.
Bridgie, Nonni, John lived for so long because they never married. (Their favorite joke)
I used to think that the sisters were in pontifical love the way that they framed John Paul II, kept him dusted and adorned with annual palm fronds, glanced at him when conversations lulled.
And Baby John, who blushed and loved only his mother.
There was Bill, though—the one among them who did find love—who hid his girl from his family and died at 56.
This is the only place to hear of it still.
Do not peek into the garage where Bill kept his Buick or hear John’s jealousy when he called him a “big shot.”
Me, just tapping on my brows; I could never know much else beyond the story-answers given me.
One more place not to look: the cushion to the right, where Bill sat on the towel in which his father’s canary was drying after a bath.
A shriek-beaked bird muffled by the haunches of a man with the heaviest kind of secret: untold love.
Upstairs, spiraling gold-green carpet like mowed grass trampled upward to their mother’s room.
The spinning wheel in its ancient revolutions, yarn-whorl from tight-wound bobbin.
I sit and stomp, the wheel still spins, but a cross-stitched
sweater made of dust and air wears too thin, me: the shiver-cold fifth child that enters this house.
The traveler’s chest—of wood or flesh—that held in one place their pieces of Ireland.
When the road did not rise, when the wind stood them up, when the rain would not fall, they crawled into God’s palm and wailed.
St. Aloysius Church never knew a better alms collector than John, who felt rich for the first of his life every time he brought the offertory basket forth.
Their own baskets, woven by their father, from sapling switches and willow wattle, flexed feebly but held strong, stuffed with pears or apples from the nighttime pluck-march through the near orchard.
An orchard, maybe, in the vicinity of Ice Plant Hill where there was once farmland, where the baby Hartnett walked ahead of his father, and they looked for piquant cow chips, somehow enthralled to find manure from which to grow vegetables for eight feed-me mouths.
“Papa, here: caca!”
“It was dumb that I never spent my money,” John told my dad.
The usual expenses never arrived.
Family—he was alone.
House—he stayed at Victor.
Car—everyplace was separated by a walk.
He was a man much without.
My dad helped him to buy the most coveted recliner in the nursing home.
The young girls who worked there tugged on his big ears, and he blushed like an ember glowed the inside of his cheek.
In his last year, John made us promise (mirroring my grandmother’s adamancy on the subject): “I’ll go in through the front door.”
An Irish tradition.
In January, the hearse parked at the side of the church.
Ignoring the undertaker’s white-glove gesture, our six kindred hands gripped and dragged his body forth, pall-bearing the box up the steep steps, and in through the front.
I thought I heard his casket sigh.
Their house now as empty as when Westinghouse first declared Saturday a holiday.
A month before he died, he reneged a promise to Father O’Mally (one of his favorites).
“Father, that hat I promised you—”
The priest, shrugging.
“The walking hat in my closet at home—”
“Yes. Yes, I know it.”
“I’m going to have to take it back.”
“You haven’t even given it to me yet, John.”
“The promise—I take the promise back.”
Instead, promised to me.
A week after the funeral, my father gives me the keys, not ready to enter the house himself. (John, great-cousin, nearly father.) Steady entering, tip-toeing through the old stubborn house, trying carefully not to look in the wrong directions so as to avoid stirring one of their old memories, to keep it from saddling me and riding me to my own grave.
A century since their boat had brought them, everything waits on me, just before I take the box from the shelf and pull the walking hat over my head.
The hat, pressing around my scalp like a new and heavy atmosphere.
A wool pressure.
Descending 118 times, these steps split the dizzy-weave of the “Old Lane,” a bumping pass hugging 421 Walsh and the renamed church.
These are monumental first steps, like Gabby’s whose might have been on a beach in Ireland, clover-toed in the undertow or Catherine’s first through convent door.
Before I duck into my car, I lift the hat away to set it in the backseat, and I shed the pressure of their relentless memory.
A hard brake-stamp on the accelerated accumulation of their history like when Bing Crosby’s “McNamara’s Band” ends, but Patsy and Norene would rather it continue ad nauseum because they are “a credit to old Ireland,” champions of
family tradition.
Now, for the first, the air that I give, no Bunion can take;
they are excused from
the organic cycle and given unto a larger cycle of spirits and
solemnity, prone to nonsuch homage that I need pay.
Never again to breathe in the rising air of the valley, the
aromatic stench of what was

preordained by life’s unflinching covenant.

And I breathe my own.
SECOND PLACE

Of Course You Begin With Your Name
A week of Russian in the style of Frank O’Hara

Nina Sabak,
University of Pittsburgh
Of Course You Begin With Your Name

To dance

it grew cold while I slept and my walk is interrupted by leaves skidding across the pavement like snakeskins. today we are learning complex sentences: you do not know where Anya was, I know where Misha lives. Yuliya paces the room waiting and Anya and Misha are waiting too but I have forgotten how to conjugate to dance or rather I am dancing with you which strikes me as the first thing you should know, except maybe the alphabet and slava isusu christu.

it is monday in pittsburgh and no one feels like feeling except maybe the evangelists on the corner with their dog-eared brochures: heaven awaits the willing. please form an orderly line for the apocalypse. come on and shake your blues out there’s nothing like a little damnation to spice up this weather but we’ve gotten off-topic, Yuliya sighs and begins to tell a different story, something we can understand, the edges smoothed to our few words to hell with infinitives sometimes it is better not to know how to say what you are doing

To walk

Now when I walk past the union I see the men in their rough brown pants pulling up red geraniums fistful over fistful like scalps from a forgotten war the petals have fallen off for the most part shriveled and
burgundy like
the wine that my mother forbids me to drink except at new year’s

I walk through the slanting drizzle toward the
cathedral where you can buy hot tazo tea in a paper cup, taste
the way your mouth moves: *hibiscus lemongrass rosehips tarragon*
if I grow up I’ll name teas after places I haven’t been
yet. in room 218 I wait for something to begin the rest filing in
all those boys named after revolutionaries – marat nikita
iosif who slouch
american-style
    eyes half-shut
and yuliya comes in and says that we should really be
able to remember the prepositional case now as in what
we talk *about* when we talk *about* love
a woman outside asks if I voted for Sestak yet and I
have to say that I’m still not from here

for lunch I have waffles and chocolate syrup because I once
    wanted
to have them for every meal and I’m living the dream now
I still feel like apologizing or
eating some broccoli or
something. on bigelow someone’s listening to la roux with
    the bass
turned up I like la roux when I can hear right I decide, I don’t like
guessing at words I like pre-post-avant-pop not so much
suffixes we like
those short-haired girls
    I just want to be famous enough
for someone to cut my hair every week so I can walk around with
the wind on the back of my neck I wonder if one person out of 311,000 is thinking about the back of my neck as I pass the ex-geraniums in silence and walk through the dirt possibly so

To breathe

It is 11:50 in Pittsburgh a Wednesday the first day I can see my breath, yes it is 2010 and I am wearing my wool coat for the first time since march because Rachael told me to and at the light at 11:56 I find grocery receipts in my right pocket and I don’t know how to keep walking

I walk up Bigelow and turn past the crowds of girls in their winter tights the boys smoking cigarettes behind their cupped hands and no one is talking about the election I pick up a copy of the newspaper where they have printed three articles about it and a crossword I cannot solve

I go to class and Svetlana (real name Allie) asks who else plans to keep studying this bizarre language and I raise my hand because I like bizarre languages and the way they feel on my tongue I’ve picked up enough french to curse out a policeman enough russian to run a circus or maybe just the elephants and in Fairmont I picked up enough english to know that I needed to pretend to be from somewhere else you know it’s all in how your vowels bend but mine don’t I do a convincing impression of not being myself most days
which is to say that I have no opinion of what Joe Manchin does back home or God forbid his use of hair gel and when we start my heart is still pounding loud enough to hear in Rostov or outer space which is what happens when you’re just a little too suggestible bring on the newspapers

Pittsburgh you can’t surprise me

**To survive**

unit four: disbelief. “tell me something fantastic” yuliya says “I will show you how to react.” we are learning how to lie with words we still don’t understand, everyone poised to say something un-believable. I will be different every time. marat is an astronaut irina a lawyer kolya turned green overnight. *vot etta da, a ty oksana?* me, I’m a ballerina today a very good ballerina I’ve danced at the bolshoi on that raked stage and the ballets russes adored me we went everywhere together in our fast cars and shawls like isadora duncan a close friend of mine

so sad about that long white scarf

this I could believe, yuliya says, *pravda*, and I square my shoulders to hips like anna pavlova about to take off into the cosmos soundless and sweet where it is still raining
To disappear

it is 12:27 pm on friday and no one is speaking possibly because we have run out of questions to ask in either language beyond will we pass in my backpack I have three books adrienne rich frank o’hara and marguerite duras all names I wish I had but here even my name is not my name after my rechristening in august as oksana which means hosanna my mother says like I am perpetually giving thanks for something slightly out of view, my constant prayers to our lady of perpetual astonishment yuliya says voprosy which means questions but knows that the answer is nyet nyet questionsky and she raises her eyes to God or alexander pushkin and says go on fsyso that’s it out the door no looking back
THIRD PLACE

Umenifunulia Mbingu
(open the heavens)

Natalie Somerville,
University of Pittsburgh
**Umenifunulia Mbingu (open the heavens)**

I speak of the sea that is one foot deep from Madagascar to Mozambique, so we can walk when you’re ready, for a cup of coca cola.

And my right eye is sealed so I can carefully select the mountain to pinch. Smaller than an inch, much smaller than an inch. Pinch the mountain.

I bring the Jebel Musa (مبل جبل) to you after dusk and we make war-paint from the clay of the stream.

And the sunflower drops dust when you shake it over top of the platter of Vermont’s finest crunchy leaves.

and the vibrations of midnight produce picture post-cards of skeletons on boxcars who smoke the finest cigarettes.

We storm through the sand dunes for one more day.

just one more day
HONORABLE MENTION

Letter to my jaundiced baby brother

Caroline Kessler,
Carnegie Mellon University
Letter to my jaundiced baby brother

You only know things close to the body: your skin chafing against the tree’s gray bark, your mouth stretched wide in infant-song, wordless. The mourning dove wanders in: a comma perched atop your tongue.

Glance down, a moth has joined the dove. They’re singing myths so loudly, you’re not sure which is your voice and which is theirs. You feel their whisker-wings in your mouth.

You try to lift your tiny finger to touch them, to feel their pulse on your yellowed hand. They quiver not out of fear, but amazement of you. Already, your skin is turning, becoming like the pink of the dogwood blossoms. The color deepens as the tree ages.

Let the sturdy dogwood keep you company while the sun glances over your eyelashes, your lips, your belly: the day passing its warmth through you.
“When she writes she roars, and when she sleeps other creatures walk gingerly.”
- Maya Angelou

**Cornbread Knuckles**

Roll yellow balls. Rub between greasy cracks.
My skin, this time of year, is made from ash,

except when I’m in the kitchen, mixin the oils. This is my place of moisture. You expect me to find pleasure in feedin all my dark children.

Southern food, bone marrow, the break, splinterin, and then the suck of marrow. Yellow-orange ooze.

Batter for the birds. Fry ‘em up, fry ‘em, fry them birds and set that table.
Not a slave in the fields.  
Now, in the kitchen.

**Sheen Spray and Coconut Oil**

pink aerosol can  
dollar general  
aisle wit the  
cheap lookin bottles  
aisle wit fine Black  
men on doo-rag packages  
aisle wit horse hair  
real hair weave latch  
hooks that pull at  
my scalp the reasons why  
my hair’s so short  
styless keep breakin my  
ends and why shdn’t  
I wear my afro? why  
can’t I let it free and  
healthy? no more flat irons  
burnin smells of grease  
forehead scars no more  
relaxers or drippin product curls  
every shampoo bottle flicks  
open wit a coconut  
bubble risin from its tip

—

I have the loud voice;  
attitude wit brown skin.
If you looked, 
you cd see me 
showin my teeth, 
in darkness.

“then i began an awakening a flowering outside/ the living dead became a wanderer of air/ barking at the stars became a bride/ bridegroom of change timeless black with hair/ moist with kinks and morning dare...”

- Sonia Sanchez
so I ask him,
What should my biggest fear be?

his reply:
Sharks
swimming up through the toilet.

(he has a good one there.)

Could that happen?
I inquire big-eyed, thrilled
to play along.
In some countries?

400 people die every year,
he says,
all matter-of-fact.

But what a way to go,
I reflect.
and then I have to admit,
Dying on a toilet, sharks or not, would have to be one of my
greater fears.
Like Elvis.
Too undignified,
sprawled out naked and...
I trail off with that image in my mind.

Yeah, but the shark thing doesn’t happen,
    he adds, as if it’s necessary.
Not possible.

It might be,
    I argue;
In some countries.

    but,
No.
    shakes his head
    regrettably
    at me.

    I insist:
With big toilets that connect to the ocean.

    but him:
Those don’t exist.

They should
    I mutter into his chest.

Nope.

    silence
    for a bit.
then I ask him,
What’s your biggest fear?

and he replies,
The shark thing.

But,
I protest,
you just said
it doesn’t happen!

and then he tells me,
Some fears
are irrational.
Remembering What The Body Is
Madeleine Barnes, Carnegie Mellon University

You are is speaking with your fingertips into an aperture, lean arms burnt, ventricles wired to flowering strings of shaved-down air and flattening sparks, perfectly displaced, your body remembering what the body is: a torn-up experiment, anatomical fragments. The bed at eight a.m., nine a.m., vomit afterwards, because the mouth must open darkly, and with the hospital curtain drawn, I record your intake, it must be a pill, a precisely yellow pill, a ghost-swallowed pill, a pill of acid rain to crush and drink before bed, a fluorescent pill, five hundred pills suspended in the esophagus, iron and ink, crushed along the jaw becoming wax, a terrain, a tundra, an artful and elegant pill, a chord of pills in a tiny cup, your brain smothered in antiseptic pills, take five, five hundred, take without food, without help, without burnt white tea vitamin water, without checking your weight, the pill wrapped neatly in butcher paper, a very unfeeling and blood-stained pill a pill the weight of sulfur, weight of a living thing, misshapen, unraveling, forced into dust, lungs and phlegm. You’re safer and closer, you’re safe, there’s nothing but corridors of pills and gowns sewed up with pills and water and waiting for a cloud to assemble, a pill that blooms and embalms, floods the tongue with its weight.
Sorry, J.D. Salinger
Michael Kamison, University of Pittsburgh

Sorry, J.D. Salinger for taking your picture
I saw you at the supermarket
Searching for your shadow somewhere in the bread aisle.
And Franny (and Zooey) held the flash bulb,
Letting it burst, spewing shards into the dairy
I think you stepped on a piece and carried it
In your boot. You cut up the Earth and left
This here
And that there.
Let’s get out of this supermarket
(Ginsberg was such a queer, he loved having his picture
    taken, especially in the nude).

Your grave is going to give it all away.
The secret locked
Somewhere in a face we’ll never see
    (But you know and now its buried somewhere).
Told on a telephone -- the most phony way.
Was he a dirty blonde or a light brown?
Where’s my mansion with a lock on the inside?
Why nine? Why New England?

Boys are really interesting, I get it.
They never grow old.
They cast off into forever and
Catch, maybe receive.
Sorry, J.D. Salinger

But fuck.
Please erase what I said.
You aren’t your peers; you don’t look at
Those boys wondering where they go
In the winter. They can’t freeze in place
On a pond, keep their hair, their skin.
How well could you picture his hand holding hers?
Had it hardened? Glazed over
And romping about New York City
With a glass spirit and a baseball mitt.
Yesterday,
She first saw
The Rocky Horror Picture Show
And God!
She thought it was strange
The film was funnier than she’d imagined
and He
Seemed nice, but
was shorter than she’d thought He’d be.

She had never met surprise with such indifference
and hopes she never will again.

“I don’t feel particularly sexually repressed,”
She explained,
“If I’d had toast, I would have eaten it,”

God’s office was at the end of a hallway.
“I’ll be honest, I was nervous”
But He mostly wanted to talk about Television,
British Soccer, Brands of Detergent,

Healthy Dinner Options for a God on the Go.
Here, in the hour of straight-backed liars,
in the time of flat-footed serpents,

there is no space for me to walk
but cower:
Eventual sky-scraping sons,
    with a mighty, thunderous awakening,
    tore for themselves a space in the heavens.

Here, between them,
    the territorial
    trade glanced accusations
    with the nomads:

    “Ours.”

    “No
        man’s.”

Walk the bridge,
don’t cower;
Despondent glamor::
glamorous Despondency.

Over incidental waters,
under confidential doorways,

these figures’ cigarettes
glowed like the faraway downtown lights

ember and amber,
adorning a thousand sulking grins

“Do some normal things,” you said

Marginal and unimpressed;
it was a party for one

on a coincidental backdrop.

In a moment of passing
from reality to dream,

gleam, become
perfect, pristine and
we are more beautiful than is

‘fair’

Drink the red-cup dream,
leave reality for the burning ones?
but liquid reality is itself combustible
I would know

[iv]

“\(e^{\pi i} = -1\)
because if you take the time,
with careful deliberation even utter balderdash can become quite reasonable

but it’s easier, and more feasible,
\(\sqrt{-1}\),

to make put the non on sense than to remove it from nonsense,”
explained Icarus aflame to Peter Rabbit.
they stood on my bridge, donning scuba apparatus

[v]

Icarus gave me no warning
so I’m through walking on bridges, even in my hour
I,
the straight-backed liar

the shape inside my brain collapsed like a soap-bubble
the emptiness therein has pulled me in
UNFOUNDED STRUCTURAL CONCERNS (TSR)

in a place too easy to enter and not possible to escape
how do you know when to give up when you have no
indication of your own lack of
progress

Eyes remain sealed. Eyelids remain wetting / open. Heights of head tissue leave you self-same, but aching from the finer cuts. The weight of bodies. Inside.

Bone resembles cotton and everything resembles bone.
Romanticism is then when everything being alike everything is naturally simply different, and romanticism.
- Gertrude Stein, “Composition as Explanation”

Scene One

then, while we in bed, “Nightswimming.”
hearing only the crackle in Michael’s voice
the piano pounds and plods too
beautified for its subject ahead
of the lost memory as
Q.E.D.

when we return from the first retreat
the glass that sits in metal, black-tinged has been duct-taped over, shattered
by too-excited a new alumni
or Pens fan celebrating the Game 5 win

through this glass at the stop where those
who live on the Hill wait for the 10A to snatch them
a ticker trails infrared for
approaching buses, usually off by a few minutes, out of time
with time
it has been reset for Summer. only the date

remains so the expected loop of 10A UPPER CAMPUS
3:40 PM 3:50 PM 4:00 PM instead reads only
TODAY IS SUNDAY MAY 09, 2010 and tomorrow will
read TODAY IS SUNDAY MAY 09

on Thursday, July 08, as I read this aloud to the fellows, it reads
TODAY IS SUNDAY MAY

three days in I forget
whose thumb sits on top when hands held
**Into Collapse of Known Lovely**

**Melanctha**

Alice, baby, tonight from across the
Atlantic I hear rumor of brick houses
cast staunchly down hills and my voice cast
by these folds is between caulked

the bricks, Alice B. and
I lifted that from *Three Lives*. this poem
was written by a boy on the cusp
of unemployment, insensitive to gender
sixty-eight years after you

pulling onto the highway off Braddock
brick cast away for trees, those I cannot
name. only re-
place
The Life of Juan Gris

or trying to write you during Nick’s neuroscience presentation
normalize that Erin. voiced fusion from synapse, facilitation
you can see this was meant to appear as prose
or I’m at Bekah’s these long projections Nick in his
beautiful poetry. the Cornell professor saying, “my brother
killed by alcoholism.” Imagine everyone (they were)
naked, and dancing, I drunk clothed looking for bag with
cigarettes, something green and dancing Erin, who online
appears silver princess at ballet, some storybook
where I two weeks in succumb to the comforts of my room
Nick speaking on the helix
Virgil Thomson

I am I—h he writes
“I—h” he writes clever to ink
Write something else. the deaf
custodian at St. Paul Cathedral
tried to find me a brochure. singles nights

for young Catholics. not single, am young
not Catholic but wait
“Lived Experience” too boring, and to be honest
spent last two weeks mopping floor with hair,
balancing pen between nose and lip

staring at her book, only its Stein cover its epic
font, she looking above red and white toward whitewash
wall. get out of Apartment 109, try harder
the project due
no time now to create that experience
1907-1914

at this rate the whole first book
will be about how I could not write that first
book, the first of which to write, to be written, hollow participle
I feel crazed. another page among the seventeen that’ve

produced Alice I love, Alice written toward the project
for the up-up who defined, again the participle
can you write? can you now a week past?
and how now to read, possess at the podium
so unsettled. never settle Alice. never settle for this
i.
I threw away cranberries – trash can full of eggshells and coffee, now I’m smearing it red.
And over it all, I threw salt.
Pulled myself under sheets and left the mess for Monday.

ii.
When I left, wet snow was muffling the sound of cranes tearing down the hospital.
I heard it muting down Atwood Street.
A block and then twelve and the sound died but the ground still shook.

iii.
“I don’t know if I can love like that again.”
She said it and threw salt in her mouth.

iv.
Mess still heavy when I came back; cranberries rotted.
It would all turn into great hills - crows hanging above it from strings,
dipping toward the garbage heap.
Everyone would come to see.
“The bells, I say, the bells break down their tower.”
- Hart Crane

“Come, let us build us a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, that we may make us a name, lest we be scattered over the face of all the Earth.”
- The Sons of Noah, Genesis 11:4

Misconstructed the beams were out of sunshine’s inability to be misconstrued on both sides of the world at once

Once the words began disconnecting foreign from familial; flotsam and jetsam

Fortune/Misfortune began building a new great wall, pole-to-pole East/West
Callused construction of
the Us
—the Them
sprouting out
of the former
as a farmer
cannot control
the weeds in his
fresh field of
cash crops.

Bowing to Mecca
five times a
day, they (as in
Them) bowed
to the Towers
the rest

The infinitely old
bearded man
unclogged the drain,
cursing the hair
for being separate
from His head

The pieces of the one
tower falling
into misuse—builders’
hands devoted to
their own
towers

Too busy
babbling
to watch it fall,
being the strongest muscle, did the tongue take both down resonating?

The clay for bricks splayed over the face of the Earth, but building too high is hubris—Lament the paradox:

Both are Them. Both are Us.

The Lord and His plan.

The two are now none.
VISUAL ARTS
CHRIST!! THIS GUY IS SOOOO GOOD! I’LL NEVER BE ABLE TO WRITE AND DRAW SOMETHING EVEN REMOTELY COMPARABLE. I DON’T EVEN KNOW WHY I TRY TO MAKE COMICS. I’M NO GOOD AT ‘EM. EVERYTHING I DRAW LOOKS RUSHED AND IMPERFECT. I CAN NEVER COMPLETE AN ENTIRE NARRATIVE, WITHOUT THE INEVITABLE GRIPE SESSION AND RABBIT-TRAITS TO NOWHERE. I KNOW THAT ALL I HAVE TO DO IS PRACTICE AND BELIEVE THAT MINISCULE VOICE THAT SHOUTS, “YOU’RE CAPABLE!” THERE’S ALWAYS STILL TIME, RIGHT? DO I HAVE ANY SMOKES LEFT?

I GUESS I’M JUST A SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY OR SOMETHING.

THE OL’ COLLEGE TRY

AXA. GIVE UP BEFORE YOU TRY.
STAFF SUBMISSIONS
Gestalt
Michael Simon

I. I’m not listening.
The Nazis come up in class again -
This is German history & all the
people talking have soothing voices -
I don’t need to listen to enjoy
their talking - Chan Marshall, shoegaze
timbre - makes the Holocaust
sound like a spring wind.

II. Enjoy their talk - all burned out -
whitefaced like Mephisto -
I’ve been to Dachau - I know everything.
I’d rather admire my own
handwriting & eat
pumpkin chicken curry.

III. Shoegaze timbre, a silk tongue
in my ear. Lovely voices, but
they can’t say the umlauts.
I can’t believe them, they’re
too confident in their enunciations.

IV. I know everything & you do too.
In Hamburg, a green cupric
St. Michael vanquished Satan
in the rain. We stood above
catacombs & listened to the organs
sing - birdlike - through their hollow bones.
GESTALT

V. To the organs, with Wagner in tow -
   A fatal ode!
   ‘34 – Der Führer’s plane
descending from cumulus
to Nürnberg, loomed
a shadow cross
upon us all.

VI. The Holocaust
   sounds like a spring wind.
   My grandfather almost
died in Dachau - in 2005.
   An evil heat brought him
to his knees, panting like a dog.
   We didn’t get to visit the incinerator.
there are bears, and then
there are those that chance to look
like bears: these vicious
roaming lightspecks roar through whole
black meadows, unsuspecting.
1.
to nothing

in both cases there are people,
masses or just several,
proceeding,
marching,
in the same direction,
in line or correlation,
to the sky or just across.
but the problem, in either case,
is there is no goal or ending.
John White Alexander died before he finished painting.
Jonathan Borofsky’s pipe stops.
There’s just them
and then there’s nothing.

2.
the black square

For contrast, restorers leave one part of the murals blackened, as Pittsburgh’s former pollution made it. This is a small square, about a foot wide; it covers the face of a girl, one of a crowd of women marching.
3. victors.

angels:

  crown
  andrew carnegie in black knight’s armor
  he is armed with a sword
  he is looking at me
  he is wreathed in fire and smoke

  shun
  andrew mellon with stocks and dinner
  cigarillo held between thumb and forefinger
  top hat reflected thrice in shadow
  he considers chicken, flan, and a bowl of fruit

either is served.
either is a victor.

Referenced Artworks:


2. *Walking Into the Sky*. Sculpture by Jonathon Borofsky. The replica I refer to is located at Carnegie Mellon University Main Campus.

## Collision: Mixtape 2011

*Featuring bands local to Pittsburgh*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Newest New Deal</td>
<td>TY-Bo &amp; B-Mac</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Good Morning, Mr. Evans</td>
<td>The Chesterfield Project</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>An American Mountain</td>
<td>Michael Benjamin Simon</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>You Make Me Nervous</td>
<td>The Sleepy Trees</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>“Grant Park: August 28th, 1968”</td>
<td>Obscured By Clouds</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Mjöllnir</td>
<td>Mike Solo</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>Old Accusers</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Spare Me Your False Comforts, Spare Me Another Sunrise</td>
<td>Means To An End</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Snow (Instrumental)</td>
<td>DataGrams</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Ghost Ship</td>
<td>Coal Miner</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Bad Children (Live)</td>
<td>Capax Infiniti</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Untitled One</td>
<td>Means To An End</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Leave My Pretty Face Alone</td>
<td>Costello &amp; The Cool Minors</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Kathryn</td>
<td>The Sleepy Trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Lightning, Lightning</td>
<td>Moth &amp; The Goat</td>
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</tbody>
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THANKS FOR READING!