

Spring 2015



Inkslinger

Spring 2015

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Editor's Note

Thank you for reading Inkslinger, Biola's literary arts journal

Working with *Inkslinger* for the last four semesters has been an honor and a blessing. Encountering the masterful storytelling of so many talented writers and artists has inspired me time and again. I truly believe that Biola is full of creative genius, and *Inkslinger* has always desired to share and showcase that creativity. As this is my final semester at Biola, I say a fond farewell to *Inkslinger*. Although I am leaving, my love and support for this journal will only continue with each new edition.

Reflecting on this particular edition of *Inkslinger*, a few common themes stand out to me. Many of the pieces featured here illustrate how our imperfections, eccentricities, and prejudices complicate our lives and relationships. Besides the issues that we ourselves bring to the table, we must also face the inevitability of death and loss. This is a world where things fall apart—where we die, where people are lonely and misunderstood, and where things that were once healthy deteriorate.

However, in the midst of these dire images, this collection also presents us with a real and vital hope. This hope is Christ. Love, joy, salvation—the things we so desperately need—are all found in Him. Christ brings reconciliation and gives us the gift of joy in the midst of a broken world. I see this story woven throughout, giving us glimpses of both the pain we endure and the small, daily blessings we enjoy. My hope is that you, too, will be moved by the art and story of the Spring 2015 edition of *Inkslinger*.

—Abby Hodgins, *Editor in Chief*

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A Dream

Spencer Camp

The Moon shone through
a tiny chink*,
In Love's forbearing Wall.

And motioned to
a Shepherd boy*,
To come and peer thru all.

So look within
the tiny Space,
His eyes beheld a Light.

It was the Moon's full
brimming gleam,
Of Truth and Mercy's rite.

A kiss he felt,
Divine and true,
Of Incarnation's face.

As sleep betook
his drooping lids,
He fell from Adam's race.

And to a depth
he Humbly went,
A Seed into the earth.

To close his lids,
and wake to sleep
At-oned in a Rebirth.

And sleep did he,
beneath Love's wall,
Dreaming away night's jest.

a *true* dream
this time,
of saints and kings,
and of his final

Lasting. Rest.

**"Thou Wall, O Wall, O sweet and lovely Wall,
Show me thy chink to blink through with mine eyne!"
-A Midsummer Night's Dream*

*inspired by sarcophagus panel with the myth of
Endymion and Selene

Brighton, Michigan 48116

Parker Munson

There is a basement buried in the Midwest
where I wasted time I had to waste,
spent the days and nights—which yet I've saved.
It's been trashed and rehashed and all night-bashed,
and at long last it's gone up in smoke like cigarettes.
It goes and goes sometimes like the bridge,
other times the verse, and nothing is worse
than having to remember it now as
it never was.

My headstock imprint eternal
in the ceiling, even in the dust.
I can still, ten years after,
hear the brain-bleeding whirr
of a microphonic endoscopy
Rattling the snare in the absence of artistry.
That basement is dopamine, epinephrine, tryptophan,
Schizoid sonic dreamscape,
Chaise lounge of my youth.
My shoes are there, on the first step, on the last.

Ghosts

Marisa Lainson

I am four and filthy,
my knees both scabbed and red,
with chlorine in my green-blonde hair and dragons in my head.
I dig a grave with child's hands
and plant dead butterflies in the soil
under the old rope swing. They don't grow,
but I do.

I am ten and a scarecrow:
my arms too long, too thin,
with summer dreams inside my eyes and sunburn on my skin.
We grow radishes in science class,
with turnips and carrots and small tomatoes.
Mine come out too small. I sprout up
like a weed.

I am thirteen and a scholar,
my braces turquoise green,
with Poe and Dante on my shelf, Sylvia Plath between.
In geometry, we make kites
and try to fly them on the soccer field.
Most of them collapse—mine, too. I'm tallest
in my class.

I am twenty and in love,
my toenails painted red,
with daisies in my blue-dyed hair and dragons in my head.
I try to stay my shaking hands
and sleep more than four hours a night:
side-effects of medication. I'm anxious,
but alright.

The Last Medici Princess

a response to Joseph Cornell's "Medici Princess"

Marisa Lainson

There are ghosts in the kitchen drawer next to the sink,
mixed with the whisks and the spoons, asleep.

They're hidden under the silverware tray. Above,
slippery waves of moonlight spill through the window
and kiss the countertop blue. A bird sits on the sill and
sings,

"How do you do, How do you do."

The clock chimes two.

I roll marbles in the grout lines of the tile
floor. They scatter and the cat chases after,
following lines that look like telephone wires, a
crucifix covered in shoe prints. I hear our mother
sob and roll three marbles all at once.

They clash and clatter, globs of matter
in motion.

The cat doesn't know where to run.

It'll be three hours yet before the sun comes
up. Voices swim in the rafters like whales
in the ocean, they echo and they spar.

The bird extends her wings and says,
"Goodnight, whoever you are." Our parents
are still fighting, but the dawn is marching
towards our door.

Katie fell from the second floor.
She doesn't play marbles with me anymore.

She lives in the kitchen drawer next to the sink,
sleeping in pearls and a dress. Sisters I never knew
keep her company, likewise clothed in their best-
pendants and curls, their wide eyes unblinking
and blue. They whisper in silence,
“We're waiting for you.”

We were the last two.



Up to the Edge

Katherine Hofer



Along the Tiber Part 2

Alyssa Mori

Losing It

Paige Dinneney

I could feel him watch me from across the booth. We never sat on the same side, because I'd told him I hated couples like that. I studied my straw.

"Claire?" He tilted his head and tried to meet my eyes. "Could we maybe have this conversation?"

"How clean do you think our waitress is?" I continued to stare at the straw. "Like, if she touched your straw, would you still use it?"

"Is this a real conversation?"

"No." I looked up and met his eyes. "Its hypothetical, but I'd still like your answer."

"Yes." He stretched the one syllable word for a second too long. "You can still use the straw."

I picked the straw out of my drink and set it to the side. "I don't really like straws."

He rested his head on the table. I held back my thoughts on the cleanliness of restaurants, specifically the counters and tables. He knew them at this point.

"Claire." He was speaking to his shoes. "Can we please have a conversation?"

"Okay," I said. I tapped the top of his hand with my pinky finger, not wanting to dirty the others. "What are we talking about?"

I knew this would upset him, but I was upset about the conversation. If I'd known this conversation would come from a comment at a kid's first birthday party, I wouldn't have said it. I hated "conversations," and he knew that. He lifted his head. I noticed the crease across his forehead.

"You know what we're talking about," he said.

He grabbed my hand, and I pulled it back.

"Now I have to wash it in a public restroom," I said.

“Holy shit,” he said. “I’m losing it.”

“I think I have the bigger claim on crazy.” I decided to grab his hand. Mine was already dirty. “You’re too sane to ‘lose it’.”

“I hate when you do that,” he said.

“Do what?” I asked.

“Act like you’re the only crazy person in the world.”

I pulled my hand back. “So you agree? You think I’m crazy?”

“Oh my gosh, Claire. It’s been two years. I’ve seen you throw away unexpired eggs and wash your hands until they bleed. I’ve seen you sanitize your hands after holding mine. I really don’t know if I’ve ever seen you touch a doorknob.” His hands gestured dramatically, but he kept his voice low. He hated a scene as much as I did. “Do I think you’re crazy? Yes.”

“So you want to have children with a crazy person?” I asked.

This was the conversation he’d been trying to have for the past three days.

“I’m saying all sorts of people are ‘crazy’ but it doesn’t mean they don’t have kids.”

I stared at the straw on the table.

“And just because you can doesn’t mean you should,” I said.

The waitress who touched my straw came to take our order.

“I’ll have the ‘Giant Cookie Ice Cream Sandwich,’” I said.

“Seriously?” He looked over.

I smiled.

“I’ll have the ‘New York Steak and Jumbo Prawns,’” he said.

He ordered a big meal to piss me off.

“Thank goodness you pay the tab,” I said.

He smiled. “Let’s get back to the conversation.”

“Please,” I started. I went to slam my hand on the table but stopped an inch before. My hand hovered, and he laughed. I laughed too. “Stop saying ‘conversation.’ I hate it.”

“Okay, I can be casual.” He leaned back against the felt upholstery. The Elephant Bar had been open for six years, and I doubted they had remodeled—ever. Thousands of heads leaned against that same upholstery. “Let’s say this is a first-date situation.”

I interrupted. “First date, really?”

“Okay.” He paused. “Third date?”

I shrugged.

“I’ll just casually say, like I should have on our real first date—what do you think about kids?”

“What’s your name again?” I asked.

“Stop trying to be cute and answer the question. What do you think about kids?”

“I don’t,” I said. “Is that when you would’ve walked out? A missed checkmark on your list of necessary wife qualities?”

“I just think it’s something I have to consider.” He pushed his hair off his forehead. “Unlike you, I want to bring life into this world.”

“Wow.” I rolled my eyes. “Seriously? ‘Life into this world?’ You want to be normal. You want to have kids. I’ve accepted that I’m not normal and accepting that means not having kids. Could you honestly see me as a mom?”

“Yes!”

It was too much of a yell and I glared at him as a warning.

He lowered his voice. “I mean, yes. You’d make a great mom.”

“See? That’s bullshit. Every anxiety I feel about my own health and cleanliness would be transferred onto them. I’d die of a heart attack. Preschools, playgrounds,

toys—I don't even put myself in those environments. Why would I put my kid there? And then what? I end up with Bubble Boy? Or the kid who has no kid friends? I'd be a shit mom and you know it."

The waitress showed up for my final sentence with plates in hands. She silently placed them in front of us and set my spoon on the napkinless table. I could see him cringe in my peripheral. She walked away.

"Did you pack a spoon?" he asked.

I grabbed the Ziploc bag of silverware from my purse and smiled. "Do you need anything?"

"No, thanks." He grabbed his fork from the table. "I'll survive."

His plate was huge, and I thought of how long it would take him to eat. This conversation was already too long. I took a bite of my ice-cream cookie sandwich and prayed he'd drop the subject.

"Dessert? Seriously?"

"I had to make this bearable somehow," I said with a full mouth. "See? Dessert for dinner? I'm already failing as an adult."

He shook his head. "Can you answer me honestly?"

I nodded.

"Is this conversation pointless?"

I nodded.

"Okay." He offered me a half smile. "Do you want a prawn?"

I pretended to gag, and he laughed.

"You have some chocolate on your face." He reached across to wipe my mouth. I leaned back.

"Your hands aren't clean," I said.

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It was a different restaurant but the same conversation. To his credit, he had given me a whole two weeks to change my mind.



“The problem is I want to marry you,” he said.

“Wow.” I waved a spoonful of brownie ala mode.

“This is a dream proposal.”

“It’s not a proposal,” he said. “It’s a discussion.”

“‘Discussion’ is just as annoying as ‘conversation,’”

I said.

“Okay, well, it’s a thing. A thing I’d like to talk about.”

“I’m willing to talk, but this ‘thing’ doesn’t have much of a compromise.”

He offered me a bite of his shrimp scampi pasta. I shook my head. His silence told me I should continue.

“Compromise would be me having a kid, which I won’t. Or compromise is you marrying me knowing I won’t have a kid, but you’d still have hope. I know you think I’ll change my mind. And then we’re in our late thirties, you see my eggs drying up, and you panic. Or worse, I hide my birth control and convince you I’m barren. You find my birth control in the cookie jar. Then we get divorced and feel worse than we would today.”

“I feel like this escalated.” He put his fork down.

“It hasn’t yet.” I pushed my full plate to the edge of the table. “But I feel like it could.”

“So, now what?” he asked.

I shrugged. “I feel the same I did three weeks ago, so I can’t answer that.”

“And how did you feel three weeks ago?”

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I called my mom the night of our first “conversation.” She loved Justin. She cried when I told her about the “bump in the road.” Her words, not mine.

“I know this is the last thing you want to hear,” she started.

I cut her off. “Then don’t say it.”

“Claire.” Her sigh was too audible to be natural. “I think therapy is an option.”

“Mom.” I sighed in response. “I will not be going to therapy. Drop it.”

I could imagine her on the other end, rolling her eyes and looking at my father. He was sitting on the couch. She was sitting in her recliner. Dirty T.V. trays held their microwave dinners. She’d probably told him to mute the T.V. She’d talk his ear off about the details after.

“Don’t you love him?” she asked.

“Love doesn’t change people,” I said.

“Well, honey,” she said. “That’s where you and I think differently.”

I could hear her rise from her recliner. She was probably walking to get her book.

“I just think,” she continued. “If you love him and he loves you—you’ll get past this.”

That’s the hope I’d clung to for the last two weeks.

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I wasn’t into mush, but he was. He wanted me to tell him how I felt, and I wanted him, so I gave in.

“Okay fisher, I’ll bite,” I said.

His smile grew.

“Three weeks ago I felt like I wanted to see you everyday,” I started. “And I still do. And I feel like I want to marry you. And I feel like we can have a full life without kids. But I love you enough to want you to get what you want. And if that’s kids, I can’t marry you.”

He pushed his half-full plate to the side. I waited for him to respond. He loved me when my hands were dry and cracked, and when I explained to him my distaste for movie theaters. He didn’t scare easy.

My stomach churned in the passing minute of silence. “So?” I asked.

He wasn’t smiling anymore.

“I really want kids,” he said.



# El Arco

Micah Malinics



# El Cráneo

Micah Malinics

# Hygiene

Jessamy Delling

Our auntie sipped on a foul  
Turn of phrase, and wiped her mouth.  
Supper table manners  
Are dyed deep down in the South.  
*Some things one just don't allow.*

She serves up dessert—*just don't see how*  
*That girl don't go sallow,*  
*Conscience-stricken at Sunday sermon.*  
*Mixed marriages even God won't hallow.*  
Mama bites her lips. —*Now, now...*

Bib in her fingertips,  
Reciting her favorite—Thou  
shalt, Auntie dabs off our dirty looks,  
—*just don't see how...just don't allow—*  
And consecrates her lips.

# Loma Linda Behavioral Health Center

Katherine Hofer

Breakfast here is always my least favorite:  
egg taco—imitation egg cooked flat,  
injected with cheese and folded over.  
Craft time. Make a sun-catcher or  
a bracelet. I dig my hand into the beads,  
green blue magenta yellow orange  
glinting in the fluorescent light from overhead.  
She plays Queen's Jazz: "Fat Bottomed Girls."  
There is plenty of time to tear out pages  
from these old magazines shoved  
carelessly under the bookless shelves.  
Here's a tiger, and a girl at a record store,  
and a recipe for blueberry waffles, but they  
never read their own material. Looking up,  
I watch the new arrivals in their loose gowns.  
Back in my room, it's sunset, I gaze  
at the palm tree on the grass hill.  
I cannot sit under it. I will never touch it.

# Gratitude

Ian Koh

Across the table from you, I sat there counting  
the peas – vibrant and healthy greens.  
The words you said bubbled like a spring;  
you described your day in care by rainbow colored  
patches. Although the frame is vast, I'll  
see details in the distance. I'll walk miles till  
I arrive up close, breathless. Still,  
I'll try my best to apprehend the wonder  
in one short instance.

Although peas taste of dirt, these ones  
had a fragrant flavor.  
Somehow, I knew my simple time  
was an act of God's favor.  
The taste of finery  
and beauty is  
given by the giver  
of life.

# Long Drive

Ian Koh

Raindrops splatter  
on my windshield, as the flashing wipers  
cycle through the tiny containers  
each with a reflection of my world.  
They leave momentarily and then come back.

My GPS guides.  
Unwillingly, I glance at the empty seat beside.  
My sight is a blur.  
I search for lighted windows - festive decorations for  
my peripheral –  
little distractions while the dark clouds cast over me.  
For now, I wish to leave the car and have the droplets  
cling to my skin.  
I have an appointment at 7pm, and my suit is in the  
back.



# Bench Boy

Ilima Kung

I can see him now, sitting on the bench there on the other side of the schoolyard, the chain link fence before him jutting into the soft white sky. What he was looking for, I didn't know. I—and all the others—thived in the chaotic land of tetherball tournaments, of screams and shouts, and of grains of sand wedged under our fingernails as we built and vehemently defended our castles. Bench Boy quietly dwelled among the outskirts, where the grass frayed and yellowed, and where our yells were drowned out by the sweeping sound of passing cars.

Other kids would ask me in hushed tones what was wrong with him, and I would relay my well-rehearsed answer:

*Autism. He just has different chemicals in his brain than everyone else does.* (A reply that I myself didn't understand.)

To which they replied: *I'm sorry.* (A reply that confused me even more.)

I figured they apologized to me because they didn't know that Bench Boy had superpowers. How could they know unless they lived with him? He could name the model of an airplane by just closing his eyes and listening to its sound. He could pick up bees without getting stung. He could make up songs with haphazard tunes and nonsensical lyrics that would remain in his little sister's mind from kindergarten to college.

My favorite superpower was when he would stand on top of the slide in the backyard. In its later years, it became a horrid spider-infested plastic thing, the roof cracked and soggy from weight and rainfall. But in its prime, it was a mountain. This was the one thing I could never muster enough courage to do. He would stand up there, high above our neighborhood, a motionless watchtower scanning the sky for hours on end. As I watched his triumphant pose in awe, I realized that he was the mountaineer and this was his Everest. And when dinnertime came, he didn't just descend—he jumped.

I can see him now with the grey sheet tied around his shoulders billowing behind him in slow motion as he landed lightly on the grass, miraculously unscathed.

One day I sat beside him and watched the cars rush by. Something about the sound was soothing, and I now realize it was in its beautiful constancy, like the sound of rushing waves. We didn't talk in that moment, but it was then that I resolved to never accept another apology about my brother.

He taught me wordlessly that *alone* doesn't always mean *lonely*. I imagine Superman high above our atmosphere, floating in the quietness of outer space, watching the clouds swirling below. He closes his eyes and listens to the low hum of the earth, breathing in the sun.



# Isla Del Sol, Self Portrait, 2014

Micah Malinics



# Lift Up Your Hearts

Hannah Schaller

# Nocturne

Kelsey May

Dusk drapes the woods  
in shadow. Snowflakes glint  
silver, in place of shrouded stars,  
all kindled by the shivering  
beam of my flashlight.

I am driven  
by the fading light  
until I am lured  
by a sound. Somewhere,  
at the top of the hill, Chopin,  
has set errant snow stars  
to dance.

At the crest of the hill I pause  
beside the open porch door, to scatter stardust  
from my boots with a kick.  
As the flashlight hustles into the house  
shadows pool outside, unmoved by Chopin's music.

I announce to the piano: "We'll find  
the sled tomorrow, alright?"  
Little Sister Chopin does not answer,  
she is playing Nocturnes for the night.

# Molalla, 1999

Kelsey May

The hayloft is filled with charcoal sketches  
from Georgia Medical college,  
rusting buckets, plastic bins,  
boxes of last year's jams.  
In the corner is a flat basketball  
on grandmother's hand-me-down chair.  
Folders stuffed with receipts  
gather dust beneath photo albums plundered  
three years ago for the wedding slideshow.  
The red pruning shears are on the windowsill  
above the splintered wood bench.

Mother always said there were bats in the hayloft.

The view from the window  
is the orchard and the ribbon  
of Toliver road.  
Father is a silhouette  
a charcoal sketch  
standing past the edge of the farm.

# MacBook Air and Angels

Hannah Schaller

Seriphed letters float and flicker  
In empyrean blinding white,  
Ministers of electric flame  
In Word suspended, light from Light;

Sprung from the digital abyss  
Of pixels atomic and void,  
Filled with the ethereal glow  
Of Him who is to be enjoyed,

The Archetype, the Word of words,  
Who life commands and lives doth save,  
More radiant than the angels dread  
Who scattered brightness in His grave.

Hark, how their silent appellation  
Would return us to their source:  
The point on whom the macrocosm  
Rests in its italic course.

# In the Garden

Aliza Schloesser

He will not stop biting his nails.  
It's his hardwiring, he claims  
it runs in his blood  
And my mother laughed at me for getting the same  
manicure  
that her mother would have  
in the sixties

and I wonder if we're all doomed to move like this, in  
circles

like a garden  
I hope to die and be born, die and be born  
but my mother was never a very consistent gardener.  
although unafraid to live with dirt under her fingernails.

Now  
since I enjoy a glass  
it is vital I remember my mother's mother  
's mother, whose husband would beat them after one too  
many.  
And so when Grandma swears that Jesus would have never  
drunk wine,  
and I am secretly annoyed  
I must remember  
that what she's saying is Christ would never hurt her  
like her father did  
And she does not mean to be hurtful.