The Deaf Poets Society, Issue 2: October 2016

POETRY SECTION

Editors' Note

by Ava C. Cipri, Cyrée Jarelle Johnson, and Sarah Katz

When asked to describe the body of poetry in Issue 2 of The Deaf Poets Society, the first word that comes to mind is visceral. These poems concern and complicate the disabled body by viewing the physicality of disability from another angle. It is a risk to write the disabled body into the white space of the page, and it's necessarily different work than writing about disabled experiences. This work is far more sensual; as you read, you will be confronted with internal workings of inflammation, allergies, and medication. You will be asked where love emerges, both for and from the disabled body.

Our favorite part of the issue is that it deals with the issue of pain. Lynx Sainte-Marie reminds us of the need for "Softsealedsmiles coz sometimes/ it hurts too much/ for teeth" in "Love Movement." To read that poem is to recode fragility as lovable, and to rewrite the body in pain as inherently worthwhile, as inherently worthy of loving. In the terminal stanza of "Bananas," Carrie Addington muses on "chronic inflammation, muscle contraction," and "the inconvenience of swelling," thus successfully illuminating what it feels like to recover.

Bravery is a word rarely associated with disabled people by abled folks, and yet some of us are incredibly daring. Not only in the "inspiration porn" crafted to embarrass able-bodied folks to play sports and get dates, but brave enough to look at the parts of our bodies that make us feel ambivalent, or even ashamed. In Junior Dare's "CONSCIOUSNESS IS HARNESSED TO FLESH IS HARNESSED TO COMFORTABLE PAJAMA BOTTOMS," we find the speaker gazing in the mirror, to find a "sweaty nightmare ass having done its best// to create conditions that are rapidly proceeding to clammy/ after the hospital i can see both hip bones, iliac crests caught// in a tight hammock of circus skin/ clowning me as is tradition." But the speaker still looks, and survives that moment, wrestling with the disappointment as they go.

These poems are subtly political in the way that the body cannot help but to be politicized. It is radical to turn towards disabled bodies; and political not to look away. We dare you to experience the joy, the terror, the overwhelm, the disappointment of disabled embodiment, and sensuality. We challenge you to emerge unchanged.

Ava C. Cipri teaches writing at Duquesne University. She holds an MFA from Syracuse University, where she edited Salt Hill. Ava's poetry and nonfiction appears or is forthcoming in 2River View, Cimarron Review, decomP, Drunken Boat, Rust + Moth, WHR, Whiskey Island Review, and PROSODY: NPR-affliate WESA's weekly show featuring the work of national writers. Her award-winning tanka sequence "From the Barre" is featured in AHA Books' Twenty Years, Tanka Splendor. She is anthologized in Red Moon Press' Contemporary Haibun Anthology and SUNY's Unruly Catholic Women Writers II. Next reincarnation she wants to be drawn with wings. Ava resides at www.avaccipri.com.

Cyrée Jarelle Johnson is a black non-binary essayist and poet living and working in Philadelphia, PA. Cyree's work explores femininity as resistance and rebellion, emerging femme thought, and community as a site of trauma. Their writing has appeared in digital and print outlets in the United States, Canada, and Europe including Feministing, Black Girl Dangerous, and most recently in the Spring 2016 issue of Bedfellows. Get in touch on their website cyreejarellejohnson.com.

Sarah Katz writes poetry, essays, and book reviews. Her work appears in Deaf Lit Extravaganza, MiPOesias, RHINO Poetry, and The Rumpus. She earned an M.F.A. in poetry from American University, where she received the Myra Sklarew Award for her thesis. She has also been awarded the 2015 District Lit Prize and a residency at Vermont Studio Center. Her poetry manuscript, Country of Glass, was named a finalist by Robert Pinsky for Tupelo Press's 2016 Dorset Prize. Sarah lives with her husband, Jonathan, in Fairfax, Virginia, where she works as the Publications Assistant at the Association of Writers & Writing Programs.

Bananas

by Carrie Addington

I perched on the staircase, peeking through splintered
banisters, listening to the pastor lead my mother
in prayer, dreading the consumption of all those
bananas.

All I remember of sickness is
bananas. Their supple elasticity, rubbery
outsides, the gradients of yellow: cornsilk,

papaya, goldenrod, bisque. Thick-skinned, ripened
little moons, pressed against cellophane, tied tight
with bows, pinned in baskets, bowls, platters

sent from everyone on the block.
The starchy-sweet peels shift from yellow
to mottled brown to shriveled black.

Some of them must already be decaying
from the inside. The Doctors said bananas
were good for recovery: potassium, eight amino acids,

their effect on lymph nodes. Repeating words like:

chronic inflammation, muscle contraction,
something about
the inconvenience of swelling.

Lammastide

by Jay Besemer

i’m not sure what i’m looking at.

i like the way things happen in the spaces.

& sometimes, that same rain comes a little bit
willingly.

when there are onions a man can stand in the rows &
look at his knees behind the points.

sloppy wax emerald arm, yellow fingers with brown
nails.

it’s easy to forget this, the howl of the sun on the
back & the earth.

make it count.

someone is a speaking tube or a wheel.

someone lights lamps.

what i’m looking at expands into a warm circle.

in the courtyard a warrior tries to sit astride a horse made of dough. spectators move about to get a better view.

i can love that warrior. i too am silent & dreadful.

a plane passes overhead, but i ignore it.

the warrior & i are never anywhere but in the corn rigs, or bundled in the wicker belly.

waiting for the first wisp to take us, oh, it feels like a great palm stroking the long muscles of the back.

everything now is so dirty it’s clean.

we cycle back around to the beginning because we have to, because that’s the way we do it.

there are days when i’d rather be burned than keep doing that, keep doing.

at first harvest, everything mighty & good is put in places, areas & locations. some of it is washed.

a lot of the harvest burns.

look at how grass is the same as knife, the philosophy of dryness as direction for travel.

this is the only time you can get bread baked into the shape of a man.

except he has ghost-eyes. don’t eat that part.

some of it comes back to me. the things we used to
say. merry meet.

merry part, & merry meet again.

how i buried my cords in the red dirt where the scrub
pines cried under the sun's claw.

how i walked away.

but i never walked away. blood of mine under the red
dirt, in it, become ants around the fire circle, become
feathers in a hawk's tail, become a dog's red coat.
there is no walking away. the earth

                is a sphere.

how we get from here to there is still a mystery. you
think there is only choice. choice depends upon
exposure.

i kept the knife my father & i made but i can't feel its
story. it is not what it was, no more than i am.

(my blood itself is not what it was.)

what sowing of blood did i do? what did i do? what harvest now emerges beneath the scorch of intention?

(my skin is new skin.)

what did i sacrifice to burning, just another type of radical transformation, both process & result?

(my sex a new sex.)

goodbye cakes.

goodbye wine.

How to feel beautiful

by Marlena Chertock

when you’re a 25-year-old
with 80-year-old bones.
Wear dresses everyday
because they’re easier to slip on.

Put on your darkest shade of lipstick
to match what feels like blood
seeping out of you.

Cut your hair short so it styles itself,
less work in the morning
when you wake up with an orchestra
of drumstick knuckle cracks.

Tell yourself you’re beautiful
so you start feeling it.
Ignore the coupling up all around you —
be strong on your own.

You’ll never have the bodies

you see in magazines, never walk
without a limp at the end of the day.

So tell yourself your size and shape
is all you have — your blood is still
made up of iron from ancient stars.

CONSCIOUSNESS IS HARNESSED TO FLESH IS HARNESSED TO COMFORTABLE PAJAMA BOTTOMS

by Junior Dare

"life is a naked battle between fear and desire,
fear is kept in abeyance only through the recurrent
surge of desire
desire is whetted only if it is reinforced by the
capacity to experience oneself
the capacity to experience oneself is everything"
-*Vivian Gornick, who feels empowered by having been*
a total virgin for most of college

over weak black tea i wearily pronounce
and what exactly i enunciated is emphatically
unimportant
lets focus on the comprehensive wound
this mange of torpor, the boring iterative
terror of waking up

i like that Snoop Dogg bragged about wearing his own

clothes
to a certified 2 million people

i drop my boxers in front of a full length mirror
like its cold, my sweaty nightmare ass having done its best
to create conditions that are rapidly proceeding to clammy
after the hospital i can see both hip bones, iliac crests caught
in a tight hammock of circus skin
clowning me as is tradition.

i chimp a shirt up with my left foot and verso birth
my head through the headhole's lack,
                                        cock
down my right ear towards my molehill humorous
acne shoulder globe, wonder
does this garment demand substantial love
does it help me fulfill the acme preconditions
to cease waiting for someone else to save me
so someone else can actually save me

i fink the strike against nudity and wiggle my dingus
against
every unchosen solitude
severe, arrhythmic glances at the dasypygal dale
nestled between my unimpressive pitcher's mound
a steepness has always been lacking
leading

to a lifetime of collecting instead of experiencing
language
like dasypygal

Joyelle says *each pun is a revolutionary syllable* -- oh
boy / mmm gurl
toot
the militant sibilance of shower thoughts

dreams that amount to little
more than being the kinda dasypyguy who looks upon
his disintegration
&& depersonalizes to kidding

i find my morning pill in the back pocket of skinny
jeans
and pop it with the blinds drawn. I pop a zit on my
ballsack with my eyes closed
          against the unusual pain
but it looked like herpes; i'm clean
 i can't allow that sort of confusion
           i'm too plagued already

i was once a child of oranges
now a singular fruit barreling

towards the sexy jaundice suggested by
amphetamine capitalism and direct deposit
alienation. Pharmaceuticals and pornography
and the witchcraft of liking yr socks too
much --
cast a new day towards broken promising
or the potential for a little fishing for
laughter or danger vocabs
respiting brief manumission

do i look cute in freedoms

free as in lunch,
free as in balls, free as in
healthcare, free as in
formation, free as in Chelsea
                    and Marie
                       and Leonard
               and Tupac's Dad
       and all political prisoners I mean it

crack my fingers, extend the reflexive, assent
to the cardigan of total submission
dry | desperate | self-aware | frugal

for the
nourishment of the certain

presentation and reply

DARN THE FLOW OF SYMPATHY TO HECK TELL
MY PEOPLE IT AND I AM OKAY
SOMEWHERE BETWEEN YOUNG AND OLD
ALREADY USED ALL MY CHANCES
THE WELL WISHES DIRECTED AT MY THIRST
WERE KIND OF YOU THOUGH
NO NO JUST GIVE ME A LITTLE SPACE FOR MY
LABORS SNAP A FEW
PITY NUDES MAYBE INVITE ME OUT TO
DINNER W/ THE EXPLICIT
OFFER TO PICK UP THE CHECK, STILL GOOD
@ CONVERSATION
AFTER ALL; WE’LL PRETEND I DID IT FOR THE
STORIES
LAUGH INSTEAD OF GRIMACE, SECONDS ON
THE
COMPLIMENTARY BREADBASKET.

AT NIGHT, PLEASE KNOW I TRIED

by Junior Dare

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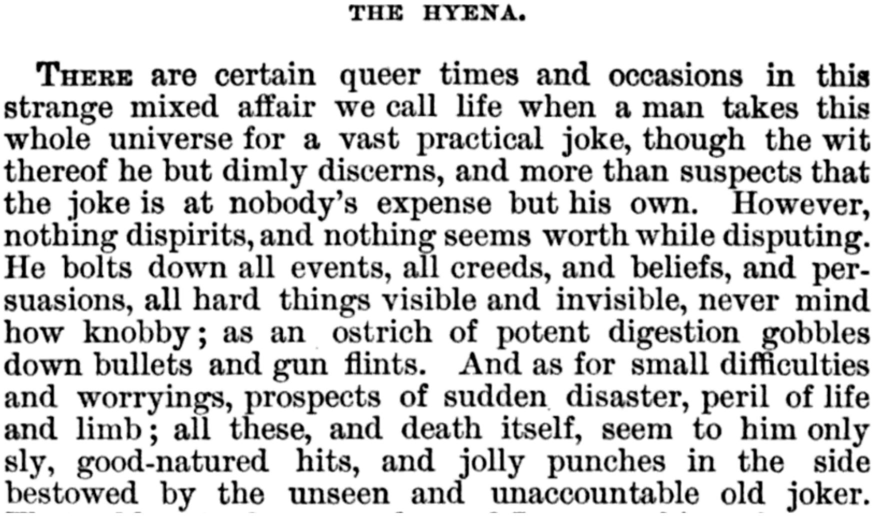

THE HYENA.

THERE are certain queer times and occasions in this strange mixed affair we call life when a man takes this whole universe for a vast practical joke, though the wit thereof he but dimly discerns, and more than suspects that the joke is at nobody's expense but his own. However, nothing dispirits, and nothing seems worth while disputing. He bolts down all events, all creeds, and beliefs, and persuasions, all hard things visible and invisible, never mind how knobby; as an ostrich of potent digestion gobbles down bullets and gun flints. And as for small difficulties and worryings, prospects of sudden disaster, peril of life and limb; all these, and death itself, seem to him only sly, good-natured hits, and jolly punches in the side bestowed by the unseen and unaccountable old joker.

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[Image Description: Screenshot reads, in black and white text,

"THE HYENA

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prospects of small disaster, peril of life and limb; all
these and death itself, seem to him only sly, good-
natured hits, and jolly punches in the side bestowed
by the unseen and unaccountable old joker."]

its hard to continue to exist
w/ a bang

the sun goes down on the solar city, an élan dusk
my syllabary still electric, charged by a thrill chase
sighed away from

sybaritic afternoons snapped at the joint,
passed well but
ash it to ashes, as they say

i considered loving you an infinite monostich
so this but is a handful:
you’ve recently cleaved yr youthful curls, presented
me the weak compassion of phase dismissal

bilious dark humor caught in my throat; this again?
& without the curse or closure of a good crisp fuck

its little comfort but familiar all the same: i am at
home in my disrespectful giggle
remembering your threats, voluminous and clear,

escaping the cultural dab, drying
on the corners of your mouth
a little in your hair

the greatest terror is the easy friendship
of the arbitrary and the constant

i make my best jokes when i’m feeling real shy
choking on the ease of narrative and cowardice

FACETIME ME CRICKET SOUNDS, ST. ELIZABETH CENSORS YOUTUBE
LET YR FRIENDS SLEEP, LET YR LOVERS SLEEP
W/OUT WORRY AS LONG AS POSSIBLE

by Junior Dare

"It's Mr. Pistol Popper screaming, "Fuck a copper"
All this talk of Illuminati ain't got a clue about me
Bitch I'm Trillmaluminati and got my crew behind me"
-*Rakim Mayers, fluent in Classic New York formalism but worried it's a dying language*

I.

Long-Term Evolution data communications are standard
so i circumvent authority sleep w/ earbuds
and mixtape lullabies

in early morning, an elderly man collapses
through the curtains his blood

is on me. i’m trying to be a good host
        shh it’s ok it’s ok

my neighbor pisses and the air
becomes thick with it. i am reminded
of Cape Cod in the summer, scared
of every sunset

        I get an X
        -ray daily
        for a week

shit myself doing my taxes today
the bathroom was occupied and my
body w/ organs went full insurrection
i cannot tell my story w/out making a state
-ment, thanks Obamacare. there is

another elderly man across the hallway
he is confused he is crying out
my chair my chair is broken
but there is no chair
he is in a bed he begins to weep
        why are you ignoring me

why did you break my chair
won't somebody help me
can you hear me can you hear me
please anyone please say something

the nurses apologize to me
its just a little confusion
there is nothing to be done
do you still have music
when the nice round woman w/ barely any hair
left to be grey makes port in our hospital room
the elderly man is only bruised, no longer
bleeding. she is drinking sweet tea he is
beaming w/ pride.
i used to say she was my better half
his bed alarm triggers he shouts fierce against the
wailing
I AM A LIAR
his whole body is shaking w/ love and Parkinson's
I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A
SMALLER FRACTION

he has nightmares when she leaves // asks if i am her
// pisses again

everyone here
likes that i
am young

no one likes to ask why // i haven't left yet

II.

the doctors have stopped seeing me they fax
in their orders which i inevitably swallow
for the promise of more yellow Jell-O

the doctors pull the curtains to meet
w/ the man who pisses and bleeds
ask him questions as if i cannot hear

what is wrong why do you keep falling
they venom to his clucking laughter
i'm finding that i'm not as good as i used to be
at walking a straight line

when weak i am enamored of understatement // the
curtain is drawn back // i smell him

begin to shit // while he smiles

i finally leave, promise a follow-up
sign papers that urge a lifetime of tests

III.

after i vomit a lecture on the virgule i trim
for the new doctor he says we both
have nice beards and touches me

the gruffer the voice the rougher the hands
is folk wisdom i jot down for the future

i want grandeverythings to think of me sagely

there is a brief, fraught silence
in the doctor's office punctuated
by a secretary laughing + turning up
the volume on "Paparazzi" by Lady Gaga
loving you is cherry pie

doctor says i should reintroduce solids // ahead of schedule

also says
    do you take selfies
also says
    take a picture of yr bowel movement
also says
    good joke about yr beach bod
    but please actually get exercise

        blueteeth by the erie
        in the smokey nymph glens
        woodbathe so fresh so
        peripatetic so clean
        get real fly in case
        its my final springtime

the ekg finding is benign this month
the nurses are kind and hand me my headphones
walk me out the backdoor

Fuinjutsu

by Travis Lau

Pronation; or,
the manner of his hand –
a delicacy to match
the whisper of a message
he conveys to paper mulberry
in stroking black.
The energies, quick to
disperse, flee to the corners
until the wood of his
spirit rattles no longer.
Ma at last, the guerdon for
a ritual in four seals:
apotropaic.

Imago

by Travis Lau

Oh, what says
the soul
with its soft
edges that cut
the sharp
of the body?
Rosaries of
bone sunder
into clattering:
punctuations to
prayers lost on
a maker who
can turn his back
with ease.

In this imago,
he was formed,
so he laminates
will to limit,
for that is what

his body deigns
to do.

Arisen

by Travis Lau

A bluff unsilts itself,
a rough removal from
the muddy nakedness
of the fifth circle –
this as a needle of
scarlet picks the lock
of dawn: a soft
violation welcomed.
Such is the flab
of waking: forgeries
loosens under
scrutiny so
enlightened.

Passage of Time in Hospitals

by Noemi Martinez

This black grackle sings
to me through torn window
screens while dew
from the morning
still waits on grass.
It pecks at worms and ants
nodding as it eyes
me. Were your cousins
able to see me
through screens, too
the times I
peered out at night,
searched for signs?
I would scan and analyze
trees and wet leaves,
how they move and sway-
unbroken.
In Houston hospital rooms
the grillos sang at odd
hours on some winter

nights. Scientists
tell us they
don't sing during winter
storms, rainy seasons, but
this rebel serenades me
as proof that men in white coats
are often wrong.

Love Movement

by Lynx Sainte-Marie

Can I move you without moving
shoulders, knuckled and crunched up
bruised from their hospital hands and stares
my lips send you soothing
sacred lovejones without speaking

Softsealedsmiles coz sometimes
it hurts too much
for teeth

Can I hold you without ever lifting my arms
sosore from the weight of the day, my
closed lids greet you with deep creases
side-eye and concern

my *kissteet*ing and *cluck*ing
at those
careless enough to mess with
your sweet heartstrings

forward leans and nodding means

I am present for those words

Can I witness while the sickness keeps me close
nuzzles&breathes me   feeds me
smoke and toosweet scented incense
as they pavepoundpast my door
on concrete

I often do this work alone

crumpled between abstracts and bedsheets

my fingers torn from the typingtextingtapping
too broke for walking, too
spent for all this social and
emotional talking
pockets full of disappointed feelings
from my own

Can I love us with this body

I mean they've always told me that love
was something to be tended to like gardens
backache working and shift hip sticking

taking turns to turn the soil, toiling hours
before twilight   before dawn   before dusk
but the grounddusting makes me sneeze and swell
these grinding knees cant
bend to worship
for so long

But I can really care for you   and you me
with such real real intentionality
And I imagine that the magically fantastical
possibilities of these ways of growing and loving know
all of our capacities
There should be room for all of us

no matter how many cancelled dates and Late last
minute messages
and days with heavywaves and remnants of trauma
we faced in the
spaces of those who never really wanted us to
Survive in the first place

Can I love you, they ask bravely

and I say yes.

PROSE SECTION

Editor's Note

by T.K. Dalton

Perhaps my favorite part of editing this magazine is coming across a piece I never thought I'd read. While reading submissions for this upcoming issue, I had the pleasure of that experience happening twice. The first piece to come over the transom landed in my inbox soon after selections had finished for our first issue. It was long, on its own nearly equal in length to the five prose pieces in our first issue put together, and it began this way: "There are a couple of jokes I tell about Irritable Bowel Syndrome."

The narrator of Whittier Strong's "Alphabet Soup"--casually confessional, equal parts self-assured and self-conscious--ricochets through the essay, dropping the reader at the end in that place that any essay worth the attempting to write or read should: in an emotional space that wasn't quite in the world in that way until the essay appeared. An essay that does that is life giving. At one point, a character in “Alphabet Soup” tells the frenzied, traumatized narrator, “But you survived.” This reader, at least, was right there with him, nodding along, saying, Yes, yes I did.

The other piece I never thought I’d read, the other piece I am so pleased to introduce to our readers in this issue, is Maia Dolphin-Krute’s “Science Journalism.” The piece begins describing the narrator’s nonfiction project, focused on the opiate epidemic, written from the position of a middle-aged science journalist. “This I describe as a series of events, a set of statistics, and a set of attitudes about drug addiction and pain currently being perpetuated in mainstream media. The thing,” she writes, “is that I’m not a middle aged science journalist.”

The fission of these narrators fuels the piece, as it dips and weaves between hard science and meta(non)fiction, policy critique and existential reflection. “As a middle aged science journalist, I read The New York Times. As a sick 23-year-old woman who writes critical theory, I read the comments on The New York Times articles about the opiate epidemic.” In this piece, mesolimbic dopamine circuitry is cutting biology lab and sneaking out to bum a smoke from the punk kids in the parking lot; emotion sits expressionless as it’s examined with a clinician’s chill. Dolphin-Krute writes: “This anger is a problem for a middle aged science journalist because of how anger makes explanations, like of science, seem shaky and unreliable, how by ‘middle aged’ I mean calm and experienced. Because there is no place for anger in medicine or in journalism…”

In each of these pieces, bold with form and brave in content, there is a place for anger, for sadness, for despair. To borrow the phrase from “Science Journalism”, that’s the something heavy lying over these pieces. But the other half of the phrase captures perfectly what first drew me to these pieces: amidst the playfulness of form and the acuity of language, there is resilience and self-knowledge--that’s the something weightless beneath the heaviness. What’s weightless is what fuels the reinvention at the heart of these pieces, what guides each fearless voice onward.

T. K. Dalton's essays have been nominated for a

Pushcart Prize and inclusion in *Best of the Net*. His fiction and nonfiction are forthcoming in *The Common, Duende,* and *Front Porch Journal*, and appear in *The Millions, Tahoma Literary Review, Radical Teacher, Deaf Lit Extravaganza, Disability Studies Quarterly,* and elsewhere. With poet John Maney, Jr., he edited *What if Writing is Dreaming Together?* He earned an M.F.A. from the University of Oregon and is currently writing a memoir. Tim lives with his family in New York City, where he works as an ASL- English interpreter.

Alphabet Soup

by Whittier Strong

IBS

There are a couple of jokes I tell about Irritable Bowel Syndrome:

"Solid, liquid, or gas?" is both a third-grade science lesson and IBS.

IBS is like a box of chocolates; you never know what you're going to get.

I joke, but it's serious.

I'm not really sure when my illness first developed. Maybe I've had it my whole life; if so, it's got worse as I've got older. In my twenties, I blamed it on the medications I'd just begun, known side effects and all that. This one time, I'd gone straight from the shower to my off-white sofa for a nap, sans everything. Just as I was about to nod off, the rumble below that hadn't been there a minute before decided just then to explode, with no time to run to the bathroom, and no realization I needed to run since I thought it was just gas. Quick as anything, I was on the phone with my mom, panicked and embarrassed, asking how I'd get a, um, certain kind of stain out of my upholstery.

My prescription regimen has changed several times since the incontinent incident on the couch, and the medication most suspect at the time has long since fallen out of my repertoire. But my bowels still rage against me, more and more every year. Resounding gurgles and grumbles in the quiet of a library or as I'm teaching class. Passed gas pretty much anywhere and everywhere with no way to control it. I plan my walking routes so that I have easy access to public restrooms, facilities which grow scarcer every year as architects and city planners, business owners and cops conspire to screw homeless folks out of fulfilling their biological necessities. When my condition is at its worst, I'm stuck at home for the day, running to the bathroom every ten, twenty minutes—no good if you have a half-hour walk to work and there are almost no businesses in between, which is the case at present. I'm just glad I don't have to mortify myself further by explaining to the boss exactly which kind of sick I am.

Earlier this year, my doctor asked me to eat Greek yogurt every day to get more probiotics into my gut—one of my favorite foods, so no complaints here. Many days the yogurt cultures successfully regulate my digestive system, but sometimes my condition is so bad that the only thing I can do is ensure I have ready access to a toilet.

I know I could have it so much worse. I know folks with colostomies, folks with more food allergies than fingers. For me, IBS is most often a mere inconvenience, an embarrassment. Rarely does it incapacitate me. And if it were my only issue, I could totally live with it.

TMJ

My doctor felt my jaw as she said, "Open… close… open… close."

"Well?"

"It looks like you have TMJ."

"C'mon, you don't have to use baby-talk and buzzwords with me. What's it called really?"

"Um, TMJ."

"You mean there's a medical condition called Tight Muscled Jaw?"

"That's… not what it stands for. Temporomandibular joint. Really, it should be TMJ disorder, but it gets shortened."

"Wow, never knew. Thanks for correcting me."

Like my IBS, it's usually not an interference with day-to-day functioning. And also like my IBS, the TMJ issues didn't crop up until my twenties. At first, I assumed my tetanus shot of years before had somehow failed me. Nope, just stress, complicated by a slight misalignment on the right side that produces a noticeable click when I open up.

My TMJ doesn’t flare up as often as it used to, but when it’s at its worst, I get some inkling of life with lockjaw. I talk through clenched teeth, sip broth because I can’t chew, sometimes try to slip in an aspirin to bring down the swelling. I know of no other treatment, but also, I haven’t been sufficiently incapacitated to look one up.

RSAD

I spent the summer of 2015 in Fairbanks, Alaska. I spent the summer of 2015 in bed. For me, those two statements are inextricably one and the same.

The fatigue first hit right at the end of April, just as I was wrapping up my fourth semester of graduate school, and just as I needed to look for summer employment. I was going to bed earlier, waking up later, and guzzling coffee to get through the day. Nothing going wrong there, I thought; finishing my term papers and tying up the loose ends of the course I was teaching were bound to wear me out, and coffee is considered statewide as the single most essential survival tool for Alaska’s extremes of daylight. For the record, Fairbanks gets nearly four months of daylight in the summer, but not four months of darkness in winter. In fact, we get nearly five hours of daylight on the shortest day of the year. Hard to explain how this works, but this isn’t an astronomy textbook so I’m not going to bother here.

Anyway, I thought nothing of my feeling out of sorts. At first. May went by, with days when I didn’t bother to leave my bed, tapping away at my laptop as I continued strategizing my summer. By mid-June, my strategy was in as much disarray as my apartment, my energy sapped from me so that I could make progress in neither income nor household. We now had daylight all day and all night. Every time I looked out the window, the light remained unchanged. Monotonous. Depressing. There was nothing I hated more than the sun, its utter sameness, washing out the surrounding forest like an old, sad, overexposed photograph. By mid-July, my meager savings had run out, and I was stuck begging money from friends and running to the food bank for canned soup.

Finally, in August, I roused myself from a full week in bed—no shave, no shower, no underwear once I ran out clean briefs—and made a long-overdue appointment with my therapist. I practically rolled myself down the hill from graduate housing to the student clinic, but once there, it took only ten minutes of conversation for my therapist to deduce the issue at hand.

By now, you probably know about SAD—the aptly acronymed Seasonal Affective Disorder. Basically, the brains of people who have SAD react adversely to the cold and minimal daylight of winter, leading to fatigue, malaise, and depression. Meet SAD's backwards cousin, RSAD, or Reverse Seasonal Affective Disorder. It's one-tenth as common, so it's less likely you've heard of it. For some sufferers, RSAD symptoms resemble those of mania; for me, it looks just like SAD except in summer instead of winter, heat and light my dreaded enemies.

The diagnosis made perfect sense. Ever since I was a kid, I hated pretty much everything from April to October. Halloween is like my Christmas because finally things start feeling right. Last year, when I was diagnosed, there wasn't much for me to do, as, soon enough, short, cool days would return and my body and brain would return to normal.

This year is different. I'm cognizant, not only that my mood and energy will change, but that I must compensate for my symptoms by setting a strict schedule, ensuring I enjoy adequate social time (unmediated by my laptop), and honoring my body when my energy is too low.

Oh, and I got the hell out of Fairbanks for the summer.

DSPS

I opened my eyes to a clinician staring down at me. "You need to get up now, Mr. Strong," she said.

"I just need to go back to sleep a little longer," I mumbled.

"You've been awake at least fifteen minutes, and we’re required to end the study now.”

“What? I’ve only been awake maybe five minutes.”

“You’ve been awake twenty, actually.”

“Wait, what time is it?”

“Eight-thirty.”

“Damn, I swore it was, like, seven.”

“You were asleep for almost ten hours.”

“Whoa. Is that bad?”

“It’s the high side of normal, but it is normal.”

A couple of weeks later, the sleep-study results showed no problems, despite the sleep journal I was required to submit beforehand that documented clearly erratic patterns. The study was a bust, and it was back to the drawing board. Or, more precisely, the internet.

All my life I had issues with sleep, tossing and turning for two or three hours each night, waking only to find myself so exhausted I was lucky to get out of bed at all. Oversleeping was the norm; one time, I woke up at 3:00 p.m. when I had to be at work at 8:00 a.m. Yeah, I didn’t get to keep that job for long. For years I found myself yelling and screaming at doctors (not literally, but it felt like it), me insisting that there had to be something deeply wrong with my sleep and them insisting that I simply needed to eliminate caffeine (done, until I got to Alaska) or to maintain a more regular bedtime (which did no good.)

Despite the inconclusive sleep study, I knew something wasn’t right and that there had to be a solution. So I started googling my symptoms. They tell you not to do that, but what else can you do when medical science has failed you? I came up with a short list of possible suspects. Then I had a long talk with my psychiatrist, who by complete coincidence was one of the world’s leading experts on sleep disorders. And together we zeroed in on the answer: Delayed Sleep

Phase Disorder, or DSPS.

This disorder wouldn't have shown up in the feedback from all the wires hooked up to my cranium because I don't actually have a sleep disorder. Except for my frequent nightmares, I sleep normally. Rather, I have a circadian-rhythm disorder. DSPS means my brain wants to run a twenty-five hour day, rather than twenty-four. So, with no constraints on my life, my instinct is to wake one hour later and go to sleep one hour later every day, changing me from day-person to night-person back to day-person over a period of three to four weeks. But, of course, I have constraints on my life—work, school, socializing—and maintaining my natural cycle is incompatible with 21st-century living. The same with getting six to seven hours of sleep a night, per the usual recommendation, since I'm left with woefully insufficient sleep, leading to excessive caffeine consumption, oversleeping, and fatigue.

The bad news about DSPS is that it's notoriously difficult to diagnose since it's so rare. For a long time, doctors attributed my wonky sleep patterns to bipolar disorder (a diagnosis abandoned several years ago.) The good news is that it’s relatively simple to treat: a consistent bedtime, a nightly dose of melatonin (an over-the-counter supplement), and a half-hour of light therapy each morning. I actually gave up the light box after a loose wire converted it into a strobe light, and besides, my RSAD actually helps my DSPS anyway since I’m better adapted to winter light anyway.

It sucks that I don’t get to socialize as much because I must do whatever I can to be in bed by 10:00 p.m., about an hour before my grad-school colleagues begin their hanging-out time. It sucks that I start winding down around 7:00 p.m., meaning I wouldn’t have much energy to hang out with my friends even if they got together earlier. It sucks that it’s not uncommon for me to doze off in my evening classes as my medications kick in. And even though ten hours of sleep a night isn’t considered a part of the disorder, it sucks that I get fewer hours in the day than other folks I know to get things done.

It sucks in a lot of ways. But I make do the best I can. I have no choice.

GAD

There's this Olan Mills Studios photo of my siblings and me when I was four. In front of the woodsy backdrop we sit in a row, none of us wanting to be there. My sister, posture sunken in, looks as if she might vanish behind her impish smile. One brother glares sullenly at the photographer, and my other brother is crying for posterity. Me, I'm a spring about to leap off the grey velveteen mat, hunched over, fists balled up, ready to explode. The physical signs of Generalized Anxiety Disorder are right there on film, even when I was just a preschooler.

Flash forward eighteen years to 1997. I'm sitting in the ER of the psychiatric hospital in St. Louis, stuck in this mental loop, prattling on about Rosa Parks and stringing together some explanation as to how she related to my aborted attempt at leaping from the Washington/Elizabeth overpass. I rock back and forth in my chair, eyes darting about, fearful that anything I say or do might somehow incriminate me. After five minutes of observation, and a brief discussion of my erratic sleep patterns intertwined with Rosa Parks, I'm diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

I began a medicinal regimen that piled on the pounds and flat-lined my mood. This is okay, I told myself, because I have to follow doctor's orders, and as long as I'm not too happy or excitable, and thus in the throes of the mania that led me to try to kill myself, then all is well. A deadened soul was preferable to a dead body.

For a full fifteen years I labored under the bipolar diagnosis, until finally I began seeing a psychologist who concluded that I wasn't bipolar. He saw zero evidence of mania and couldn't understand how the ER so long drew such a diagnosis off one brief observation; what they had witnessed, my doctor told me, was not mania but anxiety. My depression could mostly be written off as situational; it was just that I found myself in an endless string of calamitous situations about which I could do little and which would have triggered depression in just about anyone. He passed on the message to my psychiatrist—"This man does not have bipolar disorder, but Generalized Anxiety Disorder"—and my medications were changed.

With a new frame of self-understanding, I paid closer attention to what triggered these attacks that continue to leave me nauseous and vertiginous, or fatigued and bedbound, or stammering and stuttering—whatever way the disease wishes to manifest itself that particular day. And, in truth, I'm triggered by just about everything.

PTSD

Jeff, the caseworker from my clinic, looked over the annual-review paperwork and said, "Looks like things are good. You're managing your symptoms well."

"I'm not sure that I am, though," I replied. "I mean, is it normal to have the same three dreams over and over? I haven't really talked about it with anyone, but I've been wondering."

"What are the dreams like?"

"In one, I'm stuck at my old job—the one I got laid off from—and I'm just volunteering there, but everything's going wrong and I can't do anything about it because I'm not an employee anymore. There's the dream where I'm back in Bible college in St. Louis, and they're making some weird arrangements to allow me to remain at school even though I'm openly gay, like, I can't date till I graduate, or something like that. I was buried deep in the closet there, of course, and the pressure led me to try to commit suicide. Not sure that's in my records. Anyway, then there's the one where my father comes back to life and apologizes to my family for everything he did."

"Hm," said Jeff. "A layoff that screwed you over financially, homophobia that drove you suicidal, and an abusive father trying to make amends. Sounds like textbook traumatic situations. I'm going to set you up with an appointment with my friend Sally, she's out in Golden Valley, same network my clinic is in."

"What can she do?"

"Could be a case of PTSD. Sally's an expert; I'll defer to her opinion."

Three weeks later, I met with Sally, and she agreed with Jeff that I most definitely suffered from PTSD. The week after that, we began weekly EMDR therapy.

EMDR stands for Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, and as it was originally conceived, it involved visual stimuli that triggered the brain hemispheres separately. But this was not the method Sally used with me. Instead, I held these two devices in my hand—I must admit, I held back a twelve-year-old's guffaw because they reminded me of large testicles—and as Sally talked me through a simple calming meditation, the devices vibrated alternately and rapidly, left right left right left, about a half-second each.

After attuning my brain to the EMDR device, Sally and I met once a week for treatment. At each appointment, we addressed one of the three most traumatic events in my life that I related to her when first we met.

I held the electrical testicles as I talked through the time in seventh-grade gym class when three boys ambushed me, stripped me of my towel, and held me down naked as they mocked my modest manhood. Gym class was hell that whole year. I was surrounded by boys more mature and better-looking than me, and the greatest horror I could imagine was getting an erection in the locker room and thus revealing my deepest secret of all, a secret that I kept all through high school, that I kept as best I could through Bible college until the pressures of keeping myself closeted so I wouldn’t be kicked out of school drove me to the breaking point and I dropped out, struggled to find a job as my sanity deteriorated, found myself at a payphone shortly before reaching the Washington/Elizabeth overpass, babbled on and on in an ER about Rosa Parks because in my addled state, she was the only symbol of persecution I could muster, my substitute for the sin I dared not tell the doctors—I was a homosexual.

As the balls buzzed in my hands, Sally crafted a new narrative that wedged deep in my brain—yes, those boys assaulted me, but I was making something of myself, even planning to go back to school to finish my Bachelor's degree, whereas my brain couldn't even dignify the teenage trio by remembering their names. And I was indeed a man. I'd grown; I'd matured both physically and mentally; I was no longer the little boy trapped on the locker-room bench.

When next we met, Sally led me through another childhood scenario. I'm seven, and my father is walking with us four kids out of the Baskin-Robbins and towards the car on the other side of the parking lot. And my father is chugging along, won't slow down, my three more athletic siblings racing to keep up, and I'm trailing behind, and a car is coming my way, and I'm frozen in the middle of the drive, screaming for my father, the car honking its horn, me screaming, my father finally, halfway across the lot, turning back towards me, the car's screeching brakes, my father berating the driver, my siblings cowered at my father's knee.

"Yes," Sally intones in the midst of my worried reverie, "your father was wrong. He should have kept your pace. And to be abandoned in the road was frightening. But your father wasn't your only parent. You had your mother. And you've said she looked out for you, and loved you, and cared for you very much. And if she had been with you at the Baskin-Robbins, she would never have left you in the road. And she didn't leave you. She raised you and cared for and loves you still. You are very lucky to have her in your life. Her love triumphed over your father's abandonment."

Third session. My story: Age seven, coloring at the dining room table, Mom washing dishes always washing dishes next to the broken dishwasher my father won't repair so that my mother will always always be washing dishes so she will no time with her four children (my sister withdrawn my brother angry my other brother terrified me tense) the separation my father's way of finding yet another way to hurt Mom he at the head of the table mute the silent treatment NO the silent treatment because you don't know when he'll blow up and then he POUNDS the table shakes my drawing of a red cat Mom turns my father stares at her his finger to his throat draws it across I KNOW what that means points to Mom points to himself my GOD he's going to kill Mom and himself I'm going to be an orphan no one's going to take care of me my life is over my life is over I run out the kitchen door onto the patio and SCREAM

"But you survived," Sally says. "You and your mom and your brothers and sister went to the shelter that very night. You escaped. And once the divorce was final, you didn't live with your father anymore, and he faded away, and then he died, and he can't terrorize you anymore. And you are not him. Look what a good and kind and caring man you are. You are as far from him as you can get. And he can't hurt you anymore."

I wish I could say that EMDR cured my PTSD. It helped; the trauma-induced nightmares are far less frequent. But I will always carry the trauma in my body: the PTSD keeping me awake when the meds won't work, thus feeding into my DSPS; the helplessness of DSPS, the shame of not being able to control something so simple as sleep; the hypervigilance of PTSD, me always looking out for what terror might strike next, exhausting my brain, fatiguing my body further than DSPS and RSAD and GAD already do; too tired to cook, I stock up on alphabet soup, easy to microwave, easy to eat, the diet contributing to IBS; the inability to eat right leading to guilt that feeds the GAD, always fearful I can’t do anything right; the tension of guilt activating TMJ; the ache in my jaw from TMJ or the mortifying stutter of GAD silencing me; IBS TMJ RSAD DSPS GAD PTSD always conspiring to silence me.

And so I write.

Science Journalism (this essay is part of an ongoing project, working title Opioids: Addiction, Narrative, Freedom)

by Maia Dolphin-Krute

Recently, I have been writing a book about the opioid epidemic. It is nonfiction, it is and is not a memoir, and I try to write as if a middle aged science journalist. In this book, I trace opioids, as a substance, internally and externally through bodies and networks of governmental, medical and industrial power. I outline the history of opioids, their role in colonization, the development of capitalism and the pharmaceutical industry, and the current opioid epidemic. This I describe as a series of events, a set of statistics, and a set of attitudes about drug addiction and pain currently being perpetuated in mainstream media. The thing, though, is that I'm not a middle aged science journalist. The position has its benefits, to be sure, mostly because I like the kind of writing that is an explanation and also that is not about me. But there are a few other things I would have and could have said if I wasn't attempting a middle aged science journalist position.

Let's say I'm sick. Let's say I'm a 23-year-old woman who writes about being sick, in a way that is about biology but is not science journalism. Let's say, given the kind of pain I have in being sick, the medications I've been given for it, and how much I know I could like these medications, that I can see my entire potential addiction memoir spelled out ahead of me like a prognosis, one that seems actually more plausible, definite and easily imagined than the one I currently have, which seems built mostly on a foundation of how ill-equipped medicine is to understand and care for outliers.

Let's say I'm angry, and that this anger does and does not have to do with either being sick or the opioid epidemic. It comes and goes, or I wish it would. I try to let go. And about the opioid epidemic, my anger is mostly fear, sometimes disbelief, or how I wish some things actually were unbelievable. Fear because I do not want medicines taken away from me. Fear because the current situation exemplifies how little is understood about pain, especially chronic pain, and how to treat it and how will I live with this for the rest of my life? This is also what the disbelief is about.

There are a lot of questions here. This is something of a conflict for a middle aged science journalist, because although it's because I'm trying to explain something in as many ways as possible, I feel like my job is actually to be answering questions. The difficulty, for me, lies in the fact that many of the things I could say as answers are their own explanations; tautologies that do and do not require a background in science journalism to expand on. See: whose pain matters? People with money to contribute to the $9 billion Americans are spending on opioid prescriptions every year so that Janssen Pharmaceuticals, and others, can put at least some of that money into "neuroscience" and developing new drugs that can then be called "neuroscience" that can then help to sell the drugs to the people with money and the right kind of pain, the pain that matters[1]. The pain that matters is the kind that is not a moral failure, a choice, a set of behaviors, a mental illness, a criminal activity, or a psychological or emotional state. Addiction is not the right kind of pain. The most correct kind of pain to have during the opioid epidemic is a (possibly unidentified) low back pain, arthritis or possibly fibromyalgia. The first two, and assorted injuries related therein, are the only kinds of pain mentioned in articles about the opioid epidemic and also frequently in the comments on the articles. Only once, on the page for the WBUR program "Here & Now" did I see a comment from a woman who had pancreatitis, a comment I could have made. A low-back injury is the best kind of pain to have right now because it is the most substantial: it seems like a thing, a real thing. It is not a part of a rare, unidentifiable, inadequately treated or otherwise messy illness. It's not a disease at all, actually: it's a healthy person's pain, which is mostly what makes it perfect. It is substantial because it deals with bone, muscle, or posture, all of which are things visually identifiable even to a non-medical professional: this makes it seem real, and therefore manageable, not sick, still healthy. From a policy standpoint, having something like a low-back injury will be great in the coming years as opioid use is seriously restricted and the need for different forms of pain relief are recognized. Except that all that will be recognized, or at least what will be recognized first, is that which treats what seems substantial and is the right kind of pain. The pain relief that will become available will be physical therapy and related practices. This will be great for injuries and less great for disease in which 'physical therapy' unfortunately does not reach organs or nerves. But it was never meant to. Because people with diseases that cause pain are not pain patients. They are other kinds of patients. Who gets to be a pain patient? The people who are being treated only for pain because they have no other diseases, because actually pain patients are healthy people experiencing pain. Because they are healthy, they can and should expect their pain to be treated and end. Sick people should not expect this.

Which is not to say that an injury of this nature is not painful. But this is undeniably part of an answer to the question of whose pain matters: people whose pain is identifiable, whose pain will be profitable, whose pain fits well within the structure of Western scientific understandings of pain, whose pain makes sense to insurance companies and pharmaceutical companies.

I do work, all of the time, at imagining, and I do work to imagine myself less angry, but it is not the easiest work to do. Not when I, consistently, in almost everything I see about the opioid epidemic, hear only about pain patients whose pain fits into these narrowly defined, financially structured, concepts of the pain that matters. This is not my pain. It will not be my physical therapy.

Nor will it be for drug addicts. Because this is where the other half of the question comes into it, of how it's not just what is and is not being called pain but also what is and is not being called desire. Wanting, in addiction, is not desire: it's craving. Wanting, for a pain patient, *even when the object of desire is identical*, is not only desire but constituted as such because it is the right kind of wanting to begin with. It is wanting that moves towards the two best objects of desire: profit and "health."

Do I get to be healthy on the days I'm pain-free? But notice even just the phrase itself: pain-free, implicitly always maintaining a relationship between pain and value. Valuable pain makes money and also knowledge and cultural products (as in medical care practices and heroic survivor narratives). Pain is also valuable when it is gone, by making more labor possible. Addicts, on the other hand, represent not only a kind of pain that has no value, but worse: a pain that actively devalues the systems it makes itself felt within. Addiction represents pain in the form of an inability to conceive of and actualize "enough:" it is endless, and the endlessness of it is its pain. But it stands in contrast to the endlessness of capitalism by producing nothing except for more of its own endlessness. Addiction is a spiral, not a true cycle. Addiction is constant negative production, in which anything accumulated is disconnected from anything that could be accumulated. Nothing is enough, because nothing lasts; nothing adds up. High is a kind of time. Because of this, because of being a presentation of not (being able to) value the values of capitalism and American culture generally (also inasmuch as it represents a failure of, among other prominent values, picking oneself up by the bootstraps) it is treated as a moral and emotional failure but not a disease. This is changing, as medical treatments for addiction become somewhat more available, but very, very, slowly. It will not happen fast enough for the 78 people who die of an opioid overdose today.

Many people choose not to live with pain. As a middle aged science journalist, I read *The New York Times*. As a sick 23-year-old woman who writes critical theory, I read the comments on *The New York Times* articles about the opioid epidemic. The number of people who comment, as pain patients, about their own fears is staggering; the number of pain patients who write comments about how they considered or would still kill themselves without effective pain relief is unbelievable. I don't count these comments; I cannot give statistics. But they are everywhere.

And these people with pain who would rather kill themselves than live with it put the number of people who are dying of opioid overdoses into a slightly different perspective. Or not the number, exactly, but the accidental nature of an overdose death. All of these notions, of 'accident,' 'overdose,' 'death,' and 'pain' are deeply destabilized when they're distributed around the substance of opioids, becoming, on the one hand, a more or less conscious choice, of death over pain, and, on the other, of death over pain; who, exactly, is distinguishing between the two? Whose death is an accident and whose a suicide? Of course both are equally painful for those around the deceased, but there is an admission, like an admission of guilt, in the latter and not the former.

And how do you navigate these destabilized notions while simultaneously trying to navigate more personal, biologically-inscribed, versions of them? I read the comments because potential addiction memoir or not, I want to know what it is like.

Or what it feels like. As a middle aged science journalist, I can only give you statistics. But as a sick 23-year-old woman, I can tell what statistics feel like; what the scale is. How small or large I feel or the size of my life, or my pain. The funny thing is, I would not have responded positively to a recent STAT-Harvard survey about knowing anyone involved in the opioid epidemic.[2] I don't think I know anyone. I have a friend of a friend who recently died of a heroin overdose. I have an acquaintance who is a heroin addict of some level of recovery. I have a friend who I suspect abuses the the medications she is prescribed but I don't know this for sure and would not ask. I don't really know anyone who is addicted to prescription medications although statistically speaking, I probably do. But I don't know anyone who is a junkie. I don't really know anyone who is a pain patient, either. Mostly I know people who have pain.

I don't know any pain patients because what does that even mean? I wonder frequently whether it is doctors who say things or science journalists who say that doctors said things, and then repeat these things. Because the thing about pain and chronic pain in particular is that it is most often one of several aspects of an experience of chronic illness. I am not a pain patient; I am a patient treated for chronic pancreatitis. The friend who may or may not be abusing her medications is not a pain patient; she is treated for rheumatoid arthritis. You wouldn't say that I'm a nutrition patient or a digestion patient, even though my medical needs include attention to issues therein. What is so different about pain?

I do work, all of the time, at imagining, and I do work to imagine myself less angry, but it is not the easiest work to do and what is so different about anger? This anger is a problem for a middle aged science journalist because of how anger makes explanations, like of science, seem shaky and unreliable, how by 'middle aged' I mean calm and experienced. Because there is no place for anger in medicine or in journalism, an exclusion maintained by the very existence of the scientific method and journalistic ethics. I have a conflict of interest, beyond paying $6.33 to Janssen Pharmaceuticals for pain medications. I'm interested in the opioid epidemic, and in addiction and neuroscience. I could have written a book entirely and only about that, which would have been fine except that I also couldn't write that book because I'm self-interested. I cannot read about the opioid epidemic impersonally, as if it is only reporting. I cannot read science impersonally. And so I cannot talk about what is and is not being called pain and what is and is not being called desire without saying also: what is and is not being called (the right kind of) anger and whose anger matters and how addiction is another term for desperation, which is another term for pain, desire, and anger, how they create each other. How I'm angry because I want things, many of which I want because I'm in pain, how wanting only a few things makes me want more, like how working more makes me want more things which I have to work more to get, like a recovering addict in a recent Frontline documentary who equates living dime bag to dime bag with living paycheck to paycheck. Which is also a way of saying that it's one thing to talk about economic disparity, globalization or the loss of manufacturing jobs when talking about the rising rates of drug abuse and death rates (for white people) generally, and another thing to talk explicitly about the anger, desire, pain and desperation of having no money, having no job, having access only to something literally called a painkiller. Whose accident, exactly, is an overdose?

If I were more of a scientist and less of a journalist, I could have more deeply detailed a neuroscientific understanding of addiction. Specifically because the science, the biochemistry, involved, is so interesting and what a different kind of description it can be to say "dopamine" instead of "systemic oppression."

When opioids enter a body, they find themselves becoming attached to *mu*-opioid receptors, one of three kinds of opioid receptors in the body; morphine and its derivatives attach to *mu*-receptors (with different receptors producing a different set of effects, thereby creating the analgesic and euphoric properties of morphine as opposed to the analgesic but non-euphoric properties of methadone). It is as this connection, and the euphoria it produces, is made repeatedly and as it involves additional brain circuitry, that addiction can begin to form. The mesolimbic dopamine circuitry triggers drug seeking or "wanting," while a separate system involving endorphins produces feelings of "liking." As "wanting" and "liking" occur repeatedly, a second set of processes is triggered and becomes continually reinforced: as informed by the work of neuroscientist George Koob, these effects can be considered as a-processes and b-processes. A-processes are faster, act directly on dopamine receptors, and produce feelings of pleasure and reward. B-processes are slower, continue after a-processes have ended, and represent an attempt at bringing the body back to a homeostatic baseline. However, because a return to homeostasis always involves something of an overshoot, b-processes are actually a return to below baseline levels; this is the anxiety and depression seen after a high or in withdrawal. B-processes intensify the urge to initiate a-processes, yet because they are triggered by a-processes, this only ever intensifies the effects of b-processes. This is a way of describing the "spiraling distress" of addiction. This is a neuroscientific description of addiction's unique endlessness: it's endless because it becomes inscribed, via an augmentation of brain chemistry and circuitry, in the body and then, structured so deeply by homeostasis, the body continues. Habits are a function of a physical form, which is obvious outside of addiction as well. Because why do you eat at the times of day that you do? Why do you sleep an average amount every night? Why can you even say that you do anything an average amount? Because the body, in order to maintain homeostasis, has needs: needs that can be broken down by time and quantity. Food in the morning, water all day, sleep at night. And, of course, inasmuch as homeostasis applies to a huge range of biological activities, the materials and quantities needed and what they influence also include everything from temperature, light and hormones to blood sugar, blood pressure and weight. Every body has needs and many of these needs are chemical. Some of these are the right kinds of chemicals to need, and some of them are not. Some of these people who need some kinds of chemicals become the right kinds of people and some do not. But, ultimately, are you even aware of exactly all of the materials you need, everyday, and the way they are or are not supporting the homeostatic functions of your body? Do you know what you are dependent on? Which is not even to begin to include the substances a body doesn't need but does absorb and which do or do not support homeostatic functioning. As a science journalist, I would return to that issue and also more specifically detail a relationship between homeostasis, time and materials. For now, I'll say: "It is a biological error to confuse what a person puts in their mouth with what it becomes after it is swallowed."[3] I'll also say: how many choices do you actually think you make in a day? Every body has material needs and every body is dependent. But some bodies make more choices available than others.

And, as a sick 23-year-old woman who writes critical theory, I would be aware of the way that the body I’m describing and the way I’m describing it indicate serious biological determinism. To which I would say: look at the way that the mesolimbic dopamine circuitry, neuroscientist George Koob and a-processes and b-processes of neuro-chemical homeostasis say, essentially, that addiction entails spiraling desperation. Biology is another way to describe.

Furthermore, saying that some bodies make more choices available than others is also a way of saying that pain, desire and anger constitute each other and some bodies have more of one than the others.

Which is also all mostly to say, that outside of statistics-as-numbers, these statistics, the “opioid epidemic,” feels like a story, a story about facts, and because it’s facts it feels like it must be true. But because it’s a story, being told about people I may or may not know, and including myself because I became a statistic the minute my doctor signed my prescription, it feels inaccurate. It feels like something heavy lying over something weightless; something that takes a different kind of sense to feel. But some something which is exactly that, a thing: because that's the thing, the disbelief, in that I do just have this thing, in my body, and the thing is pain. And pain is a substance like any other and I cannot, quite, believe otherwise.

Notes

1. For statistics on American spending on prescription drugs see: Alcabes, P. "Medication Nation." *The American Scholar* 7 December 2015, Web. The reference made to Janssen Pharmaceuticals concerns their classification of Tramadol, a painkiller, within their class of products referred to as "neuroscience."
2. Scott, D. "1 in 3 Americans blame doctors for the opioid epidemic, STAT-Harvard poll finds." *STAT*, 17 March 2016, Web.
3. Leslie, I. "The sugar conspiracy." *The Guardian*, 7 April 2016, Web.

The Deaf Poets Society, Issue 2: October 2016

ART SECTION

Editors’ Note

by MANDEM and Janet

[Image Description: "Hypermobility: Self Portrait." A mixed media / oil painting. A person of indeterminate gender stares with great intensity from the dark canvas. They are resting their chin on their hands and under this pressure the wrists bend with extreme hypermobility (indicative of a connective tissue disorder) until their crooked fingers press against their inner arm. The portrait is cropped right above the ears and shortly above the elbows, and though the figure is clearly unclothed, their chest is lost in shadows. The image has intense chiaroscuro, with a bright warm light coming from the upper left and a softer blue-green light coming from the lower right, creating a cinematic and somewhat unsettling mood. In places the painting has classical elements, but around the eyes it appears photorealistic.]

We are MANDEM, the newest addition to the *Deaf Poets Society* editorial team. We will be writing about the wonderful artists featured in this issue, but first we would like to introduce ourselves. We self-identify as a conglomerate of non-binary gender, whose members are neurodiverse/disabled artists. Our self-portrait is above, demonstrating something about our own visual aesthetics and the way in which disability informs our work.

We are honored to be joining Janet as art editors. Our visual work is slightly less conceptual than hers, in part because our interest in the politics of representation has been translated into the faithful, sometimes hyper-real portrayal of the visceral body divergent. Yet behind our (somewhat retrospective) interest in figurative work is an entirely post-post-modern (metamodernist) conceptual drive. As Hollywood might spin it: *In a world where the crippled and mad and queer are hidden away from view, in a world of closets and asylums and hospitals, in a world where one must climb stairs to see a gallery full of white able-bodied male artists, in a world where we were invisible—representation matters.*

Even more importantly, self-representation matters. We believe that our bodies deserve a place in the theater of thought and that our voices (whether verbal or nonverbal) must be present in the dialogue of the art world. It’s time to queer the hegemonic narratives and likewise time to "disable" the contemporary art scene. We are passionate about being part of this journal because there is something inherently #cripplepunk (or #cpunk) about a journal made by and for people who self-identify as Deaf/disabled/chronically-ill/neurodiverse. Who better than artists and writers to give "an uncensored, unapologetic look into the lives of disabled people who are tired of being your pity porn"? (http://www.brokenpencil.com/features/up-the-disabled-punx)

We haven't and won't publish inspiration porn. We're publishing work that's actually inspired.

Most of the artists this month are representative of this "behaving badly" spirit of #cpunk. (https://mssinenomineblog.wordpress.com/2016/10/02/good-cripbad-crip) Take Karrie Higgins, who uses shocking self-portraiture and word art as if simultaneously channeling Cindy Sherman, Virginia Wolf, and Barbara Kreuger in order to challenge the medical abuse she has suffered at the hands of an ableist medical system. Taking a media form—the meme—so often used for inspiration porn, Higgins reclaims it as a protest and a howl.

Peter James also approaches a traditional form and repurposes it to express a neurodivergent experience. His series on face blindness takes notes from figure painting 101′s insistence on the “correct” proportions of the face, and uses that to try to reconstruct an anatomy blurred by propagnosia. The grids that cover his subjects' mouths reflect the grids he imposes also on his landscape painting, as if to show the way that the human face is a landscape to be mapped, as if to say that any other reading is only pathetic fallacy.

These works spoke to us on an extremely personal level—face blindness, and the compulsive need to learn portraiture as a coping technique, drove much of our early experimentation with the human figure. But where we (and other face blind portraitists such as Chuck Close) have let progagnosia lead us into the realm of hyperrealism (overcompensate much?), Peter James embraces the irregularity, letting it speak through his art.

We had the great honor of knowing artist Amanda French during her MFA residency at Florida State, where she was a cohort (co-conspirator) with us. This piece was created in a time of frustration and rage as Amanda fought to balance health irregularities, impending surgery, and the critical demands of an MFA faculty whose ideas on art diverged radically from her own. It represented a tremendous change (breakthrough?) in her approach to art, one that at the time I doubt she knew whether to name in its execution an Icarian fall or a Daedalian flight. MANDEM first queried this piece to show at our curation of an art show "Rape Culture," which looked at it in the context of bodily autonomy and trauma. Amanda later used this as one of the seeds for her thesis project, *Merry Christmas Frank*, which examined the story of her grandfather’s exposure to atomic bomb testing that led to his early demise and may have contributed to her own illness. Now known as "Page 11," the piece remains essentially nameless. The strength of its vision lies in no small part in its mutability—the rage, the sense of reaction and response, the struggle, the grasping of hands against flesh against color—the sense of being trapped within the body of space—these are emotions that function equally well to embrace the horror of one's own body failing, of doubt and frustration in a system that was not made for you, of the loss of bodily autonomy during assault, and of the generational violence and illness that persists. I hope that all those seeing it will find in it their own rage against the boundaries.

Barbara Ruth describes herself as a physically disabled neurodivergent artist who is "drawn to the edges, the in-between." Her photography rebels against traditional ideas of intention as she allows accidents and experimentation to create images that are not quite abstraction, not quite realism—and these jagged high-contrast images refuse to situate themselves either as photography or digital manipulation.

Only our student artist this month might be said to be well behaved. Nimue's paintings are filled with radiant light and joyful use of color and movement. She describes them as a way to relax and feel hopeful and connected to nature and the cycle of life. Her vibrant birds and swirling suns seem to pulse with the possibility of renewal and escape. One isn’t surprised to hear her speak of finding inspiration and hope for the future in her work. We're not ashamed to admit that we're glad this seven-year-old, despite her chronic pain condition, is not yet as furious with the world as many of her elders. Part of us says "give her time," but perhaps it is also true that for all of us there is a sense of hope and renewal within even our most angry or disillusioned work. What is protest, after all, but a deep rooted admission that we know things could be better? We demand change because change is possible, and we demand to be seen and understood because we find ourselves worth seeing and worth understanding. There is a certain naivete in Nimue's blue birds and flowers, but also a deep truth of our interconnectedness to nature and to one another.

MANDEM is a media-fluid artist conglomerate that identifies as nonbinary, neurodiverse, and disabled. Their work on disability poetics, the visceral body, gender, and childhood is in critical dialogue with art history, religious iconography/mythology, and various -punk aesthetics. They can claim an MFA (studio art) and MA (interdisciplinary humanities) from Florida State University, where they were the recipient of the Florence Teaching Award Fellowship. They recently received an Ohio Arts Council (OAC) Individual Artist Grant for their work on the **Hypermobility series**. In addition to showing in many museum and gallery shows, MANDEM's art has appeared in numerous journals, including *Rogue Agent, Menacing Hedge*, and *Cahoodaloodaling*. MANDEM lives in a centenarian house in urban Cleveland, surrounded by the empty lots where Little Hungary used to be. They are currently artists-in-residence at Negative Space Gallery.

Janet Morrow is a conceptual artist and teacher. Much of her work examines themes of deafness, disability and otherness. She holds an MFA in Intermedia Studio Art from The University of Texas at

Arlington. Her work has been exhibited at Surface Gallery in Nottingham, England, Access Gallery in Austin, The Smithsonian International Gallery in Washington, D.C., and many other venues. She has taught art and Disability Studies at The University of Texas at Arlington and Tarrant County College Northeast and currently teaches art for the MHMR Pine Street Recovery Center. Janet lives in the Dallas/Fort Worth area with her husband Jerry. She has two grown children and is a very proud new Grandma.

“Page 11” by Amanda French

[Image Description: This chaotic, emotional abstract painting is one page out of an artist book. On the bottom layer, bright orange and blue paints are scribbled violently across a white surface, with drips splattered across the end of the strokes. Over this, a layer of black and red paint is stroked on with equal violence, and then a layer of light cool colors (whites, yellows, and greens) are selectively smeared over it as if by hand. A splattering of blue sand and flue streaks across the center from the lower left-hand side to the upper right. In the center, Amanda has gone back with a sharp tool and scratched marks down through the lighter colors, leaving jagged black and red lines that one may imagine to resemble hands waving back and forth over a distressed figure.]

Artist Statement

My work is an invitation to look at confusing and traumatic events documented through painting with myself as an example. It’s about surviving some difficult events, dealing with the aftermath and trying not to give up. Resulting in a presentation of evidence that something exciting and beautiful can come out of a tumultuous history.

Untitled Series by Karrie Higgins

[Image Description: Karrie wears a long red wig, a green mini top, and a skirt printed with her brother's booking photo. She has electrodes stuck to her face, stomach, and chest, and she is holding a black landline phone. She is sitting on a blue couch, looking up, with her hand on her head as if hearing dramatic news. The image is overlaid with white text that reads: #Hysterical]

[Image Description: Karrie wears a long, brown wig and sits in a white tile shower wearing only a straight jacket and a long brown wig. In the corner sits a pink suitcase with a baby blue blanket spilling out of it. On the soap shelf: a Taurus PT-22 pistol with pink pearl grips. Karrie has bruises on her legs and feet, and she is shoving a model Pontiach GTO in her mouth, much as epileptics get things crammed in their mouths. Beside her lies an empty prescription bottle. Her blue feet are reflected in the glass sliding shower doors. Overlaid is the text #RestCure in reference to the Rest Cure that was used on Virginia Woolf.]

[Image Description: Karrie lies at the bottom of steep, concrete stairs as though she has fallen backward. Her feet are partially on the stairs, and her body is twisted. In her right hand, she grips a NASCAR checkered racing flag (signaling both the start of a race and the winner crossing the finish line); in her left hand, an empty prescription bottle. Her red walking cane appears to be falling down the stairs after her. Red in NASCAR signifies the race must be stopped immediately, usually due to danger on the track. Karrie is wearing a skirt printed with her brother's police booking photograph. The photo is overlaid with white text that reads: #NotDeadYet]

[Image Description: Karrie wears a long, crimped red wig and lies naked in a white, tiled, walk-in shower as though she has fallen. Her legs are bruised. Razors are scattered around her, and in the corner, a pink suitcase stands upright. White all caps text over the photo reads: #NotDeadYet]

[Image Description: Karrie wearing a long red wig, a black suit jacket, and giant white hoop skirt. She sits with her legs spread wide and hands between her knees holding an archery bow. Text overlaying the image in white and red reads: Healthcare in America: May the odds be ever in your favor.]

Artist Statement

These images grew out of another series called "Parallel Stress," inspired by Dennis Oppenheim's 1970 performance of the same title. Oppenheim stretched his body in plank position across two concrete brick walls, straining his spine to the point of greatest stress, illuminating the relationship of the body to the built environment. I wanted to explore points of stress for *disabled* bodies, usually gaps in accessibility.

In-progress on this project, I lost access to my epilepsy medication, a situation that places me in constant "parallel stress." Bruised and battered by seizures, I spontaneously added text to my photos, choosing Avenir Next Heavy Italic for a Barbara Kruger-esque vibe. *Avenir* means "future," and the font's graphic designer, Adrian Frutiger, drew inspiration from Futura Bold—Kruger's favorite.

Whereas Kruger appropriated pre-existing images, I create my own, in part as a statement about the lack of available Dis imagery and in part because I see much of feminist art as ignoring disability. I am forcing my body into the conversation.

It surprised me how my intended medium of social media drove these images into a theatrical mode. When I started doing the self-portraits/selfies

(#Hysterical; May the Odds be Ever in Your Favor), I started thinking of them as Dis Memes and the whole way I used my body changed. It’s sort of a fusion of Oppenheim’s performative situation and Kruger’s anti-ads. Ads for Disabled World!

I often collaborate with my husband, Alan Murdock, who is also my caretaker. In a world where caretakers are given credibility and presumed competence, I am asking him to deliver forensic documentation of my Dis/stress. It’s intentionally problematic.

“Anna” by Peter James

[Image Description: Portrait of a young girl with her face purposefully distorted. There is a white circle of glare in the lower foreground which is a deliberate part of the painting. The girl has long brown hair and is wearing a purple and gray striped shirt. The background behind her is green and reminiscent of clumps of trees. The surface of the work shows faint horizontal and vertical scratch-like markings over the areas of the eyes and mouth.]

Portrait of a young girl with her face purposefully distorted. There is a white circle of glare in the lower foreground which is a deliberate part of the painting. The girl has long brown hair and is wearing a purple and gray striped shirt. The background behind her is green and reminiscent of clumps of trees. The surface of the work shows faint horizontal and vertical scratch-like markings over the areas of the eyes and mouth.

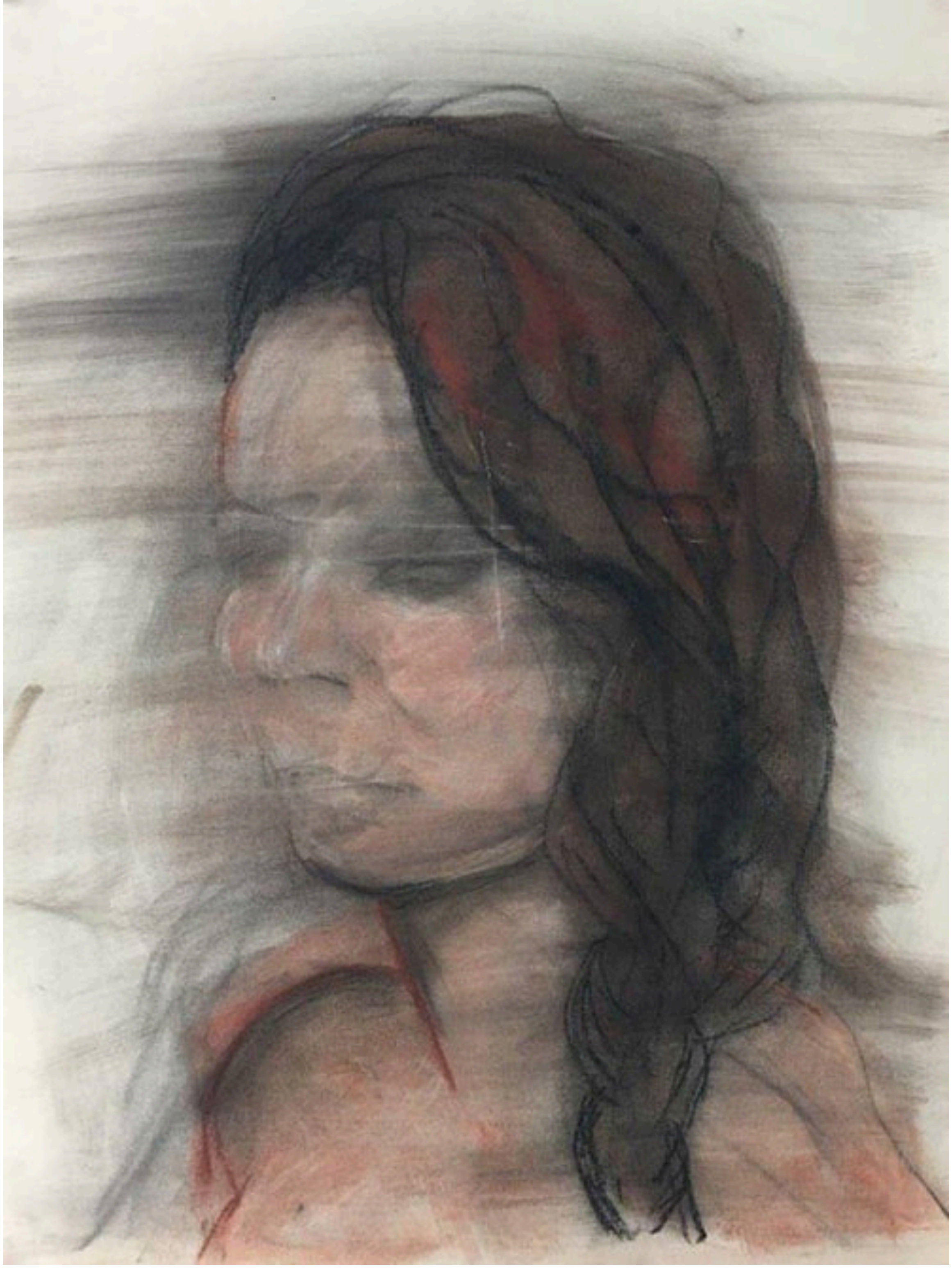
"Self Portrait" by Peter James

[Image Description: Self portrait of the artist, a young man with short brown hair, with distorted face. The beige background is smudged and there are some dark lines, somewhat random in appearance, emanating from the figure. A faint grid pattern is visible over the mouth area.]

"Untitled" by Peter James

[Image Description: Landscape overlaid with a grid pattern. The landscape is a barren, mountainous scene with a sky that fades from yellow on the left to turbulent greens and blues on the right. If you look closely at the grid lines, they depict the same scene in the light of mid-day.]

"DoRis" by Peter James

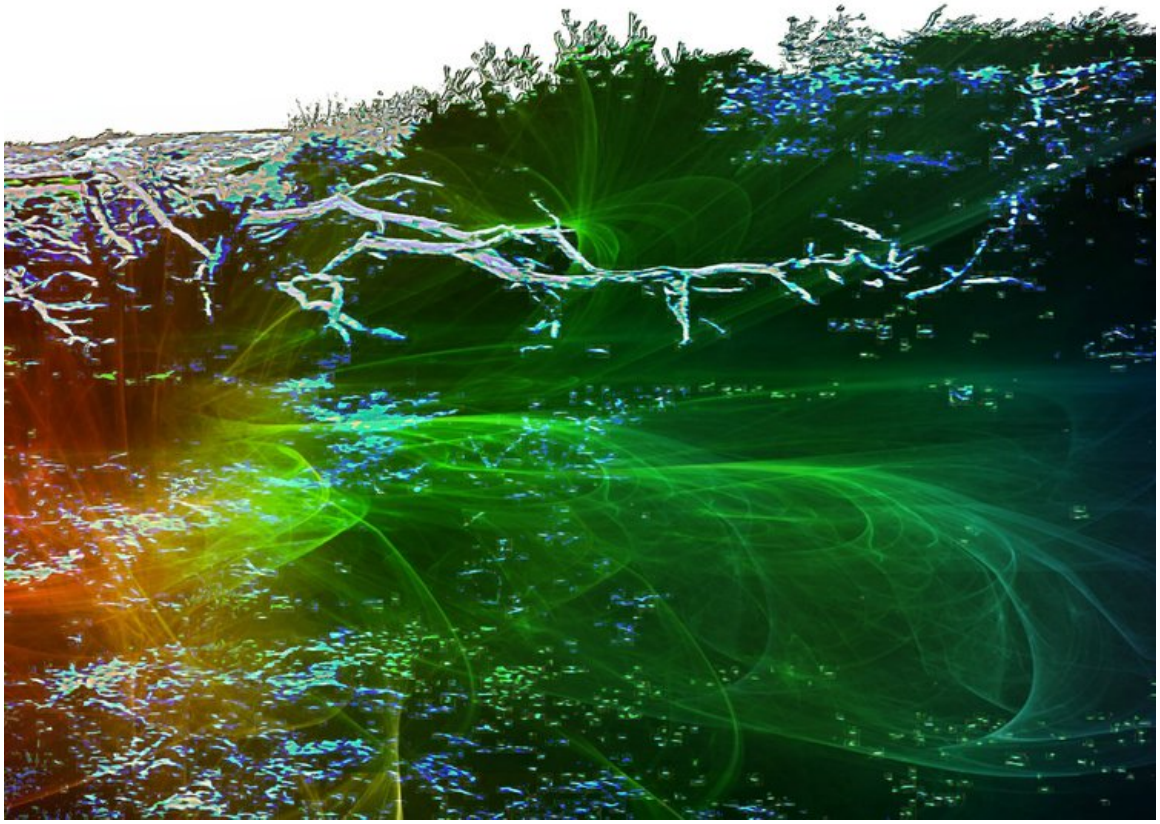


[Image Description: Portrait of a woman with her face intentionally distorted. The woman has brunette hair with red highlights. Her face is slightly turned away from us and we see a bit of the curve of her right shoulder. Some faint gridmarks are visible in the area of her left temple. The beige background is smudged as if the work has been wiped with the hand horizontally.]

Artist Statement

My art, to me at least, is a direct extension of how I experience life as an autistic adult and how I try to understand it. I tend to use certain motifs in my work that express how I view my life. Grid patterns and intentional smudging of surfaces are representative to how I cope with my surroundings, suggesting a certain kind of malaise of perception and awareness. At times there are emotions billowing out from within the image I create, whether intentional or not. Recently I started a series of works called "Face Blind" which examines the perspective of the inability of some people like me to read into other people's faces.

“Drifting Light” by Barbara Ruth



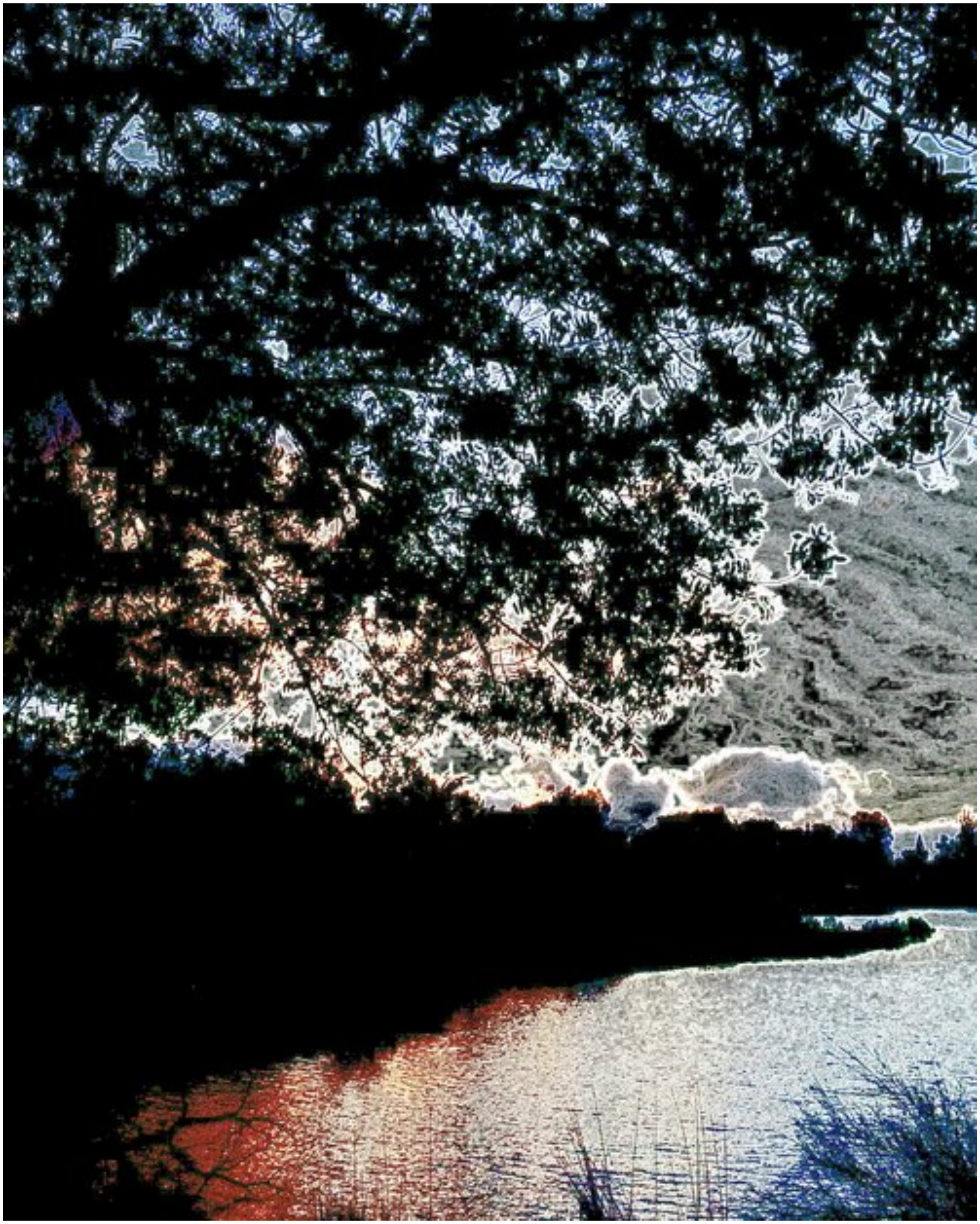
[Image Description: (Manipulated photo, landscape orientation, with many filters superimposed.) This is a beach scene, with ice plants and other vegetation and driftwood on sand. The tops of many of the plants and pieces of wood are electric cobalt and azure, this color is echoed in sparkles on the sand. Atop all this are swirling light trails, (predominantly in fern, shamrock, pear shades of green) which appear to emerge from the sand and make ovals over and with the wood and plants.]

“Sacrificial Altar” by Barbara Ruth

[Image Description: (Manipulated photo, landscape orientation.) This began as a picture of a tree. I used a mirror filter, so the entire picture is symmetrical.

The picture as a whole has an oval shape created by blacking out all the edges. At the top center of the picture, the background/sky ranges through bands of yellow: lemon, banana, corn. At the center is a large black figure with antennae on top, a large body with wings, and two yellow eyes low in the face/body. Below the face, the ground is crimson with white streaks. Below the figure is a smaller figure, upside down, with arms stretched and elbows bent. Black branches are on all sides.]

“Sun through the trees and water” by Barbara Ruth



[Image Description: (Manipulated photo, portrait orientation.) Lake, trees, sky. From the left, a large oak branches over a lake, stretching across the top of the page. Through and past, we see the cloudy sky, textured in shades of bone, graphite, flint. Silver and bone clouds hover above the darkened treeline on the far side of the lake. To the left, sunset colors of blush and lavender appear faintly in the branches. Their reflection is much brighter in the sparkling water, amidst cerulean and arctic blues. Nearest the viewer, sparse grasses on the edge of the lake peer up, in shades of navy blue and black.]

"Tree Sign Language" by Barbara Ruth

[Image Description: (Manipulated photo, portrait orientation.) Fully leafed trees, completely green, pine colored. Four branches of the largest tree rise into the sky and point to the left, the top two slightly turned up, with a wide space between them, the bottom two turned down, with a smaller space between them.]

Artist Statement

Three of these photographs (Tree Sign Language, Drifting Light, and Sacrificial Altar) are from a series called "Hallucinated Landscapes." There was an eerie mood about some of the locales which prompted me to photograph them for this series. In other cases, a discovery after I took a picture brought it to this series. Sometimes it was an experiment or a mistake in using a filter which made it a Hallucinated Landscape.

"Tree Sign Language" was a concept before it was a reality: I was looking for brachiation and leaf shapes which would resemble the handshapes of ASL.

"Sacrificial Altar"—Would I have had the same creepy feeling if I'd come across this tree and the grassland before it somewhere other than on the borders of rich folks' homes in Saratoga, CA. hearing aggressive rock music blasting through the forest? I'll never know.

"Drifting Light" was originally called "Darkly Driftwood."That version was so dark the art editor at The Deaf Poets Society couldn't actually see it. I tried to change the exposure but lost the effect I wanted so I brought up the exposure then superimposed light trails. I like this even better than my original concept, because it suggests the lights beneath the ground and in the air which are not actually visible but are buzzing around, full of life, nonetheless. Thanks, Janet!

"Sun through the trees and in the water" is from a series called "Found Altars." It was taken at Lake Almaden in San Jose and attests to what we fight for, in the Dakotas, in Flint, Mich., everywhere: "Water is life."

“Bolivian Houses” by Student Artist: Nimue Fong Yee

[Image Description: An acrylic painting. This painting shows four identical boxy white houses, each on its own hill. Their doors and windows are arranged so as to resemble little faces looking out in surprise. Squarish blue and gold splotches on the hills reference farmland, and the sky is a subtle blend of golden tones, with broad horizontal strokes resembling layers of cloud. The painting seems at once primitive and well crafted, with simplified shapes and masterful color and brush handling.]

"Happy Meadow" by Student Artist: Nimue Fong Yee

[Image Description: An acrylic painting. This small painting shows a field in shades of blue and green, with stylized gold and white flowers sprouting across its expanse. The bright blue birds peck at the ground. In the sky above a a flock of gestural birds flies across an expressionistic yellow sun, while waves of blue, pink, and white blend together in the clouds. The painting seems at once primitive and well crafted, with simplified shapes and masterful color and brush handling.]

"Sunny Morning" by Student Artist: Nimue Fong Yee

[Image Description: An acrylic painting. The abstract background fades from blue-green at the bottom to bright gold in the middle and on to a subtle mixture of blues and pale yellows along the top. In the top left, expressive circular strokes in white, gold, and red define a sun that seems to spin in the sky. Along the bottom, simple white flowers sprout on dark stalks, defining the ground with their presence. The painting seems at once primitive and well crafted, with simplified shapes and masterful color and brush handling.]

Artist Statement

I paint these paintings for our syndrome. So we can have better things for our future. And my future. If more people know about our syndrome it would be better for us in life.

I painted "Sunny Morning" because I loved Van Gogh's "Starry Night". This painting expresses how I feel about Van Gogh's "Starry Night."

I painted the "Bolivian Houses" because my grandma is from Bolivia. My grandma paints too, so she inspires me!

The birds in "Happy Meadow" express nature to me. I love the feeling of nature--the sights, the colors, and the sounds. We are apart of nature. Nature made us. We ARE nature. The sky was an accident but I loved how it turned out!

IDEAS SECTION

Editor's Note

This issue's Ideas pieces continue where our first issue left off: thoughtful criticism in the form of two reviews of new books by disabled writers of poetry and prose. One review comes from an established critic whose work in YA disability literature is pacesetting; the other piece, we are proud to say, is the writer's first publication credit.

Kayla Whaley, reviews Susannah Nevison's debut collection, Teratology. In her review, Whaley writes:

The wild is not some stain that can or should be bleached from Nevison's body; it, and all its attendant complexity, is an integral part of her whole. Sometimes, her animality is explicitly claimed ("by turns brute and bird"). Other times, it's an association, a shared kinship, as with the stillborn foal that appears in several poems. Often, her animalistic traits were assigned to her by others—born "tied like a calf / legs knotted for stumble" and with "daughter fins, fish for a flower, cold reptilian / blue"—but she embraces them, even when it's painful, maybe especially then. And while she never shies from the harsher realities of her body, she is just as forthright about the beauty and power she houses, too. In fact, both are often true at once ("…It's possible to love / what lays me to waste")

Emily Schwartz, the first-time critic who has logged many hours as a reporter and editor at student newspapers connected to her school for the Deaf, puts this community knowledge to work in her review Deafness Gain. The memoir by Michael Uniacke follows up where Deafness Down left off: with an Australian Deaf man looking to find his place between Deaf and hearing worlds. In her review Schwartz describes a scene in which young Michael, who has grown up with minimal exposure to signing, attends a Christmas party attended mostly by signers:

Despite not knowing sign language beyond a basic grasp with the alphabet, it began to lose its strangeness at the Christmas party. And so there is a shift of normalcy throughout Deafness Gain, from seeing sign language as a “waving flapping incomprehensible thing” made by people in the lower rungs of society, to feeling more at home in “this rich and exotic land of deafness."

The nuance these two writers bring to their reviews stems partly from their lived experiences. Reviews by critics with disabilities written about titles of new poetry and prose that aspire to include our portrayals are the lifeblood of this section. Several books under review for future issues came to us from readers, so please: if you are a writer with a disability or you know of a writer with a disability who has poetry, prose, artwork, theater, or anything in between coming out soon, please send us an email or a message on Facebook or Twitter.

Of course, what keeps us from calling Ideas the more humble Reviews is work of the “anything in between” variety, like Janet Morrow’s fashion review/photo essay/art history primer/travelogue, “Elevate: A DisArt Fashion Show.“ That she managed to produce this while editing, along with MANDEM, our extensive art section is all the more impressive. Here, she describes the accessibility set-up awaiting her: "We saw the formidable ramps right away. They rose, they swooped, they soared – as tall as 25 feet in some places. At the same time, there was a weighty feeling of sturdy permanence to them. The buildings they connected were old, decayed, seemingly ready to fall down in a strong wind, but the ramps threaded through them like a strong spine supporting the whole." Remember, though; a picture says a thousand words. Don't miss this piece.

Ideas wouldn’t be anything, though, without people to spark them and stoke them. In this issue in particular, I have felt personally very lucky to be surrounded by such generous, resourceful, and reliable people. I feel especially fortunate to announce that Travis Chi Wing Lau, a poet whose work appears in this issue, and who is also a doctoral candidate in English at the University of Pennsylvania, will be joining our editorial team to work on the Ideas section. We’re thrilled to be working with him starting with Issue 3.

No magazine dedicated to expressing the social aspects of disability as an identity can do that work without a social network--not a social network in that empty way that it can sometimes be deployed, but in the manner recently seen in, of all places, a New York Times essay series on disability, which included some of the most accomplished disabled writers and poets alive.

This issue and every issue, Ideas aims to work in that tradition, in whatever small way we can, to be a node in a matrix of actual people on one side of one feed or another. It’s our hope that these words move our readers through whatever form necessary: the pixels glowing against an actual face; hands touching oversize keys; an attentive ear reaching for screenreader; a mind stretching, however it best does, for a new tool, a next way, a thing that can be made to work better for us.

T. K. Dalton's essays have been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and inclusion in *Best of the Net*. His fiction and nonfiction are forthcoming in *The Common, Duende,* and *Front Porch Journal*, and appear in *The Millions, Tahoma Literary Review, Radical Teacher, Deaf Lit Extravaganza, Disability Studies Quarterly,* and elsewhere. With poet John Maney, Jr., he edited *What if Writing is Dreaming Together?* He earned an M.F.A. from the University of

Oregon and is currently writing a memoir. Tim lives with his family in New York City, where he works as an ASL- English interpreter.

ELEVATE: A DISART FASHION SHOW

by Janet Morrow

Photo Courtesy of Eric Bouwens.

Description: A line of models parade down a ramp/catwalk towards the viewer. The first two are men using wheelchairs. Most are wearing dark colored clothing, but the red of one man's jacket and the bright pink of a woman's hair ornament stand out. Dramatic stage lighting makes a grid pattern of shadows on the floor.

A few months ago, I heard about an intriguing art event, *ELEVATE: A DisArt Fashion Show,* which took place this year on September 24 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The show is produced by DisArt, an organization that strives to connect people through art and celebrate and honor disability as a natural human experience, in collaboration with SITE:LAB, which is known for completing award-winning, site-specific art projects.

In goals listed for the show, I learned that it sought to change:

- Perceptions about what the human body looks like and how it behaves;

- The role of clothing in enslaving or liberating both the bodies and ideas of the body;
- The challenge of the disabled body to ideas of wholeness, well-being, and beauty.

I decided to go and experience the fashion show for myself--and to bring this to a personal level, I am an artist with bilateral cochlear implants and have also survived double mastectomies for breast cancer with tram flap reconstruction. My body is a rocky landscape of scars, machine parts, and not necessarily human-looking contours. I also teach a Disability Studies course on Prosthetics and Cyborgism--whisper to me of post-humanism and alternative embodiments, and I am yours.

But, add to all this excitement the fact that Grand Rapids is home to Alexander Calder's *La Grande Vitesse*, a work I have yearned to see for years. It will be staged on *HYBRID STRUCTURES*, an architectural intervention by Alois Kronschlager in collaboration with Paul Amenta and Ted Lott, which, among other things, includes about 300 linear feet of ramps connecting several buildings. THREE HUNDRED LINEAR FEET OF RAMPS, PEOPLE!

La Grande Vitesse, Alexander Calder, painted steel, 1969. Photographed during *ArtPrize* 2016.

Description: A monumental steel sculpture consisting of enormous flat shapes in biomorphic shapes welded together and painted red-orange. There are tall buildings and trees in the background, with blue tents and *ArtPrize* workers wearing green t-shirts in the foreground.

I rounded up a traveling companion, my artsy niece Megan Greene, cashed in a bunch of AAdvantage miles, and the game was afoot.

DFW Airport – Megan and I hit the road.

> Description: A middle-aged white woman with red hair and glasses and a young blonde white woman wearing a black top sit smiling expectantly in an airport departure lounge.

The fashion show was part of *ArtPrize*, a ginormous international art competition that has taken over the downtown area of Grand Rapids for a period of time every fall since 2009. According to show literature, *ArtPrize* has had the highest attendance of any public art event on the planet for the last two years!

The excitement was indeed, palpable; from the time we landed at the Gerald R. Ford Airport in Grand Rapids, *ArtPrize* was literally everywhere. There were banners, flyers, posters, hand-written signs. Everyone we encountered, from taxi drivers to hotel clerks to friendly people on the street, asked us if we were there for *ArtPrize.* Everyone also had a particular venue or piece of work they insisted we must see. But while their enthusiasm was contagious, Megan and I soon realized that we wouldn't make much of a dent in the behemoth that is *ArtPrize* in our quick weekend trip. But we could try!

On Saturday morning, we grabbed a quick breakfast and headed out. The first stop was *La Grand Vitesse* herself in the plaza in front of City Hall, a very satisfying end to my years-long quest. We also realized that the *ArtPrize* logo is actually *La Grand Vitesse* turned on its side!

This photo is of me, fulfilling a dream – standing in front of La Grande Vitesse.

Description: A white woman with red hair wearing beige and brown clothing and glasses stands in front of a large red-orange non-objective sculpture.

Another lovely surprise was DeWitt Godfrey's gorgeous steel sculpture, *Louis*, on display in the same plaza. It's an imposing structure, but I found it most beautiful from the inside, looking out. It probably was not overtly intended to be about disability or embodiment, but to me it evokes thoughts of being "in my skin," of attempting to see things from another's perspective.

Louis, DeWitt Godfrey, weathering steel and bolts, 2016. Description: View of the sky and top of a

> building, looking out through weathered steel cylinders.

The downtown area was literally one big art gallery. Every open patch of pavement or grass served as a pedestal. The shops, restaurants, and businesses were filled with art. It was incredibly energizing to be surrounded by people of all ages, alight with excitement about art! There were far too many excellent pieces to share even a fraction of them here, but a couple of notables we passed on the street were *Ella's Wings* by Marie Greve and *Flush IBD -- Let's Find a Cure for Crohn's & Colitis* by Rebecca Takacs-Britz.

We wanted to check out the venue for *ELEVATE* in daylight, so we started making our way to 333 Rumsey Street SW. SITE:LAB’s Rumsey Street Property, on loan from Habitat for Humanity until 2017, consists of a number of unoccupied buildings, including a former Catholic church and rectory, a body shop, and several old homes. Some of the buildings still looked relatively intact, while many have been partially deconstructed or transformed into works of art.

We saw the formidable ramps right away. They rose, they swooped, they soared – as tall as 25 feet in some places. At the same time, there was a weighty feeling of sturdy permanence to them. The buildings they connected were old, decayed, seemingly ready to fall down in a strong wind, but the ramps threaded through them like a strong spine supporting the whole.

View of the ramps of *HYBRID STRUCTURES* during rehearsal of *ELEVATE*.

> Description: We see a complicated arrangement of sturdy wood and metal ramps connecting two or more buildings. The front part of the structure is very high – 25 feet in the air. This photo was taken during rehearsal and there are a number of workers in the picture, setting things up and taking part in the rehearsal.

Megan and I investigated the buildings and found that many showcase other works of art. One of our favorites was *Token Totems*, by Dan Woerner and Kate Barnet. It consists of four huge plastic inflated sculptures of North American animal busts, emerging from one of the unoccupied houses in the Rumsey Street Property. In their statement, Woerner and Barnet write, "The sculptures are part trophy, part Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade float, part compass rose and part oracle who stand as suggestions of something long gone and silent witnesses to current transformation, decimation and inevitable rebirth."

Zimoun's installation piece, *250 prepared ac-motors, 325 kg roof laths, 1.0 km rope*, consisted of hundreds of wooden roof laths suspended from a wooden structure mounted to the ceiling. There were motors that caused the laths to lift a few inches, then pound repeatedly against the floor, resulting in a constant clattering noise. The sound reminded me of hundreds of canes tapping. The room was awash in the vibrations created by the physical striking of the laths, as well as the resulting sound. I went back three times to experience it again. This was one time that I think my weird, hybrid/electronic perception of sound was richer than the perception of plain, vanilla humans!

250 prepared ac-motors, 325kg roof laths, 1.0km rope, Zimoun, 2015.

Description: Hundreds of wooden roof laths are suspended from a wooden structure mounted to the ceiling.

Redux: Stripes for St. Joseph (2016), Nick Kline and Amy Goldrich, parts of old pews, lights, wall drawings and portraits of local "leaders without titles," 2016.

Description: We see the interior of an old white frame building. Pieces of disassembled church pews are mounted on the far wall. Six large

> illuminated church light fixtures sit on the floor. There are some framed drawings and portraits hanging on the walls.

Redux: Stripes for St. Joseph (2016) is one part of a two-piece installation created by Nick Kline and Amy Goldrich. The work uses recovered materials from the former St. Joseph the Worker Catholic Church. It reflects the community's uncertainty about changes coming as the result of impending development. Although the artists' intent was to comment upon a specific situation in their community and not necessarily related to disability, I have chosen to include the work here because I find that the church represents a place of uncertainty for many people with disabilities. Rather than being a place of comfort and acceptance, it often merely highlights our difference -- whether due to lingering traditional beliefs that disability is punishment for sin or simple inaccessibility, resulting in isolation from the community of believers.

So, after a day rich in art and reflection, 8:00 p.m. had arrived and it was time for *ELEVATE*. Wanting to know more about the show beforehand, I had emailed

Christopher Smit, Executive Director of DisArt a few weeks prior. The organization had already conducted a DisArt Festival in April of this year, which included a wildly successful fashion show that inspired them to go even bigger and better with *ELEVATE* for *ArtPrize 2016*. I asked Christopher about the intent of the fashion in this show and his reply was:

> We have a big handful of designs and clothing… Some of them are specifically designed for PWD (wheelchair users, amputees, etc.), some are fantastic designs being adapted to disabled bodies for the show. All of them are aesthetically pleasing, most of them show functionality, but some are just there to look fabulous!

Under the direction of DisArt Fashion Lead, Robert Andy Coombs, who is producer for the fashion shows, the event took place at the front porch of one of the houses united by *HYBRID STRUCTURES.* The porch acted as a stage for the emcees of the show, Rachael Ruiz, host and reporter on eightWest, and Kevin Matthews, radio personality and writer--who were accompanied by ASL Interpreter, Misti Ryefield, and Spanish Interpreter, Leandro Robles. Colorful animated projections painted the facades of the houses, multiple monitors showed projections of the action on stage, along with real-time captions, and lively background music signaled it was time to party!

Stage area of *ELEVATE.*

Description: We see the front of a two-story frame house. Four people are seated on the front porch (with two more standing in the open doorway behind them), although we can't make out much detail at this distance. It is twilight and a projected complex purple design covers the front of the house. A crowd of people are sitting and standing in the foreground, preparing to watch the fashion show.

First model out, Holly, wearing an outfit from Rebirth Garments.

Description: A figure with blue hair poses on an elevated ramp wearing brightly colored form-fitting garments.

After some introductory remarks, the emcees introduced the first model, Holly, and we were off! We quickly found that, despite the undeniable coolness quotient of the elevated ramps, the distance and the angle of view made it difficult to see much detail of the models and their clothing. Fortunately, close-up views were projected on several large monitors and on the front of the building, where the emcees were seated.

> Here’s a projected view of model, Allie, wearing clothing from the Rock, Paper, Scissors Boutique of Grand Rapids.
>
> Description: An image is projected on the front of a house of a female model wearing dark pants and a dark top patterned with gold on the front. The model is wearing a puffy pink and purple ornament in her hair.

The show featured 18 models, all people with disabilities. I had asked Christopher how the models felt about foregrounding their own disabilities in this way, inviting the stare a la Rosemarie Garland-Thomson (*Staring: How We Look*, Oxford University Press, 2009). Christopher told me that the models would meet at least a couple of times before the show to talk about "this idea of being looked at as a moment of spectacle violation (i.e., making the choice to be a spectacle in the name of pride) rather than gawking.”

It seemed to me that the audience was enthusiastic to the point of being collaborators in the spectacle. In fact, this felt less like spectacle and more like family.

There were many people with visible disabilities in the crowd, and I have to assume that there were even more with invisible disabilities. Even the able-bodied people at this event seemed “involved” – friends, family, caregivers, supporters.

The fashions came from a number of different sources. Some of the ones I found most interesting were:

- Rebirth Garments -- They produce gender non-conforming wearables and accessories for people on the full spectrum of gender, size, and ability.
- Open Style Lab -- Uses a 10-week research program to team designers, engineers, and occupational therapists to create functional yet stylish wearable solutions with and for people with disabilities.
- Custom designs by Liz Hilton, a local Grand Rapids designer, and Knitit, a 3D knitting studio -- These garments are among the most elegant and big favorites with the crowd, featuring simple lines and a sophisticated black-and-white color palette.
- Designer Guadalupe Quero, a Mexico City based designer -- Her evening wear was stunning. In her mission statement, she writes: “I design each

garment to reflect the tenacity and strength and beauty of the model it is designed for, while at the same time preserving an authentic connection to their roots."

But although the clothing was inventive and exciting, the models were the centerpiece of the event. They were beautiful, hot, funny, endearing, confident. Gorgeously clothed and coiffed, they strutted, spun, slinked, rattled, and rolled their way up and down the elaborate ramp system. They donned wheelchairs and accessibility devices as accessories--and the technology was as fascinating as the designs. I was struck for the first time by the unique and distinctive beauty of non-normative gaits. (DisArt has posted profiles online about each of the models: http://disartfestival.org/elevate-profiles.)

The last models of the show were Bob and Magdalene. Bob was using a motorized wheelchair and Magdalene was riding in his lap. She was wearing a design by New York-based designer, Amanda Phelan, featuring a geometric printed knit white top, reminiscent of a Mondrian, with a pop of yellow color, black pants, tall blue suede boots, and a particulate mask printed in a pattern that complemented her outfit. They looked sexy and carefree as heck.

Photo Courtesy of Eric Bouwens. Last models of the show, Magdalene and Bob.

Description: A woman wearing a white knit top with a pop of yellow color, black slacks and blue boots sits in the lap of a man wearing a cobalt blue suit over a black shirt who is using a wheelchair. The woman has red and green ribbons in her upswept hair and is wearing a particulate mask that compliments her outfit.

The show ends with a projected image of Magdalene and Bob.

Description: View of models Magdalene and Bob as it is projected next to the Emcees' area. A blue and green pattern of light covers the front of the house.

The emcees closed out the show and invited everyone to stay for a street party. Megan and I had a morning flight, so we reluctantly left the festivities behind to make our way back to the hotel. As we left the Rumsey Street property, we turned to take one last look back and saw the view pictured below, the whole place glowing like a big gem… a perfect end to a perfect night!

Last look back at the street party in full swing.

Description: It is night and we look past an old building with light spilling out through gaps between the boards and holes in the walls. In the background are bright pink, purple and white lights from a street party.

On the subject of accessibility, I don’t think I have ever seen a more concerted effort to try and make every aspect of an event as accessible as possible for everyone. There were a few little bobbles; the ASL interpreter needed a small spotlight, the captioning on the monitors was yellow and sometimes blended into the background, signage for the induction loop area would have been helpful--but these are quibbles. Clearly, the organizers are a smart, kind, and infinitely resourceful group of people; they are learning as they go, making each event better and more accessible than the last. I'm so excited to see what they will do next.

Review: *Deafness Gain,* a memoir by Michael Uniacke

by Emily Schwartz

Deafness is seen as a wall of stigma that surrounds many, but there are these who, on the inside of the walls, peer outside into the hearing world. In *Deafness Gain*, a memoir by Australian writer Michael Uniacke, a life living within these walls is the story of a life where he is seen as an inconvenient burden by the general population who would rather give up and find someone else instead. Yet, within the walls alternate paths are carved. As a Deaf person I found myself relating with his story on a personal level and it led me through laughter and tears as I read of his journey from being a deaf person never fitting in to a Deaf person as a source of pride. Uniacke writes of attempting to fit in because it is what is taught by his family, to be normal and not to receive special treatment. It is better to fail at a normal school than succeed at a deaf school where everything is made easier, as his father staunchly believes for him and his other deaf siblings. In this family sign language does not exist and it is one of the most common experiences for deaf people; to be among these who do not understand the deaf, nor attempt to.

The memoir begins with him starting a new life out of school. Eager to wipe clean the slate that was tainted by deafness, he visits his school one last time and looks to a new beginning that comes with work at a tax office. Despite wanting to write, his father instead directs him into the field of accounting and business. Uniacke, growing up technically hard of hearing, finds he can understand some people better than others due to multiple factors (the accent, facial hair, etc.) and the reactions of others vary from understanding to impatience. Still, the stigma of deafness catches up to him at the tax office. He is told that he cannot do the job; this he ignores and completes the task at hand, in an alternate way he has figured out from experience. Uniacke sees that the hearing does not understand that about his alternate experience being deaf. He shares the incidents from work with other deaf people like him, people he can hear and understand well, because they understand, without sign language. Instead of being the sole deaf person among hearing people, he finds himself among others that understand him.

In the beginning Uniacke saw sign language as an “incomprehensible language of signs” used by real deaf people and wonders about his parents’ idea of what is normal. With this it is seen that while holding on to the standards of his family, he does not see himself as a real deaf person. Just being deaf already challenges the ideas of normalcy and brings up questions of conformity, as he wonders if there is anything wrong with preferring to spend time with deaf people instead, and belonging in a hearing world. Within this group of nonsigning deaf friends, a normalcy different from the hearing perspective on what is normal after meeting more different types of deaf people is found. Discussions are had without missing out on words or having to ask to repeat, and social outgoings which bring a different light in his life. There is talk of whether they should pretend they are not deaf, or declare it. Some say it is just a game of pretend, to play along with it but despite the varied responses with them, Uniacke can see hearing people as the “other people” rather than the people he is surrounded by.

Eventually he attends a Christmas party in Jolimont, where sign language is everywhere on the contrary. Despite not knowing sign language beyond a basic grasp with the alphabet, it began to lose its strangeness at the Christmas party. And so there is a shift of normalcy throughout Deafness Gain, from seeing sign language as a "waving flapping incomprehensible thing" made by people in the lower rungs of society, to feeling more at home in "this rich and exotic land of deafness". At church with a hearing mass, he would have rushed home at the end but with a deaf mass, he stayed to socialize afterwards with them. There he is discovered by a well known man in the Deaf community and is asked to show his writing. Leaving the hearing standards of normalcy, he finds a new beginning he couldn't have before with sign language.

With a changing shift, there is tension to be seen within his family, who do not understand his interest in deafness as it threatens their normalcy. From the socialization with other deaf people, Uniacke comes to learn that he not only just has to bear with hearing people, but he could also teach them about different ways of communication. With the group of deaf friends he begins to see what other opportunities deafness could lead him to, instead of as a barrier while among hearing people. There is talk of taking trips together, planning things for the future. With them anything becomes more possible. His memoir takes us into a world of a deaf person, and his journey towards what normalcy means for him as he finds more deaf people and a Deaf pride emerges. We, as readers, witness the shift from being the sole deaf person to knowing different kinds of deaf people and having all sorts of discussions about deafness. In a way this opens Uniacke's world to opportunities never before considered. Deafness is not just a can't, it's an opportunity to forge a path for a new beginning as evident in starting to associate with more deaf people, and a new deaf social club. This is an experience shared by people that have no choice regarding not fitting in with the most of the world, and a gift to read. With this story we are reminded of what it really means to attempt to be "normal" within the mainstream standards of normalcy, and to stand outside that standard as many do.

Review: *Teratology,* poems by Susannah Nevison

By Kayla Whaley

It's tempting to say *Teratology* defies or rejects simplicity, but that itself would be too simplistic an assessment. It's also tempting to merely list the collection's many themes as if they were discrete components of a whole, but doing so would necessarily strip this astonishing book of its power, precision, and purpose. Susannah Nevison's debut operates in a world where simplicity itself does not and cannot exist, which is to say, our world. It deserves—and demands—the full consideration and care of its readers, and offers in return the dense, challenging, and passionate complexity at its (and humanity's) core.

In the opening poem, "My Father Dreams of Horses (I)," which acts as a thematic cipher of sorts, Nevison writes:

> If your daughter is born
> and her legs aren't made
> for standing——if her feet

are painted hooves, if her legs
aren’t made——…

…if you must make
her limbs——if you carry her
to the river but the river
is made of horses——…
if your daughter is made

like you, is built to burn——…

The absence of clear demarcations introduced here—between dream and reality, lore and history, monstrosity and humanity—underpins the entire collection. Take Nevison’s birth, an event she approaches from a variety of angles, circling back to it again and again and complicating our view each time. Often, the description of her birth is violent, an expulsion more than a creation, as in “Lore” where she wonders, “…isn’t this the way // I was born, the wide dark trembling, a swell / of blood pounding across distance, / forcing inlets between bone?” But there is tenderness, too. Her father is a constant in the tellings, “trembling” and “steadying his hands——the first star rising / where he cut the cord.” He’s a constant even when she isn’t born at all, as in “My Father Dreams of Horses (II)”: “In another life, you carried me / to the river; I was undone, a smear / of blood inking eddies in the water.”

Of course, there’s more to birth than that first emergence. “Maker, don’t / hesitate, just set that saw / to singing,” she says to the doctor who who will “cut / [her] legs free from the linden / block, and stain them, too.” She is made and remade and remade again. Her body is forever in flux, its state changed by myriad outside forces: from her father “who held her legs / tighter, to still the kick” to the anesthesia that “pumped you full of forgetting” to the “the surgeon / a godhead who culls / one weakness, yields another” to

> …the fault line
> in your blood before you, the infinite
> wreck of bone, a tremor
> of history coursing through
> with a pounding like so many hooves.

Nevison’s greatest achievement, though, is the embrace and exploration of monstrosity. Disabled bodies have long been deemed monstrous in the Western world. Consider the traveling freak shows, popular during the 19th century, that employed and exploited disabled folks to shock and thrill audiences. These "deformed" bodies titillated precisely because they were viewed as not-quite-human. In Nevison's hands, though, the monstrous and the animalistic humanize.

In "Premortem," "half-masked faces… / prepare to scrub the wild out" only to inadvertently do the opposite:

> …they don't know
>
> they've roused the hounds in your blood,
> set the hounds running to open your throat
> with their sleek, muscled heads, to snap
>
> at the air, sound their note in your voice…

The wild is not some stain that can or should be bleached from Nevison's body; it, and all its attendant complexity, is an integral part of her whole. Sometimes, her animality is explicitly claimed ("by turns brute and bird”). Other times, it’s an association, a shared kinship, as with the stillborn foal that appears in several poems. Often, her animalistic traits were assigned to her by others—born “tied like a calf / legs knotted for stumble” and with “daughter fins, fish for a flower, cold reptilian / blue”—but she embraces them, even when it’s painful, maybe especially then. And while she never shies from the harsher realities of her body, she is just as forthright about the beauty and power she houses, too. In fact, both are often true at once (“…It’s possible to love / what lays me to waste”). That duality is particularly well-drawn in “Portrait as a Stand of Willows,” where she is:

> …the daughter of one struck branch,
> dumb beneath the earth, still trading
> in my body for root and bloom.
>
> I need to believe I’ve interred the lightning
> in my chest, that I am split with burning,
> that I am brave as a river trading in
>
> what separates water from cutbank.

Nevison's invocation of the monstrous doesn't end with nature, though. She is also partly man-made, after all, as we've seen via her births at the hands of surgeons. After one such surgery involving a leg fixator, what she believes to be the result of the wild ("I'm afraid the birds will nest in me") is revealed to be something else entirely:

…you weren't filled with birds, but with
machinery.
You were fascinated by your sudden
complexity.

You were a radiant marionette.

In taking control of the assumptions placed upon her disabled body by defining them for herself, Nevison also takes control of her own narrative, which is particularly interesting when considering how often she chooses to write in second- or third-person. She is simultaneously subject and object, narrator and narrative, actor and acted-upon. Again: a lack of clear demarcations, not a blurring of them.

It would be impossible to convey in one review how masterfully intricate, nuanced, and resonant this collection is. Nevison's verse is full of echoes and refrains and the subtle differences between them, and she writes with a vulnerability that doesn't belie so much as enhance her authority. There are entire poems I haven't quoted or discussed—"Marshland," "What the Body Wants," "Notes to the Body," and more—because they each could support an entire essay of their own, and to apportion any less space to their analysis would feel like a betrayal—of them and, in a strange way, of myself.

So I'll leave you with the final stanzas of Teratology's final poem, "If You Come to the Sea and You Must Cross":

> …You build
>
> with rotted wood, or limb,
> or bone: you turn
> into vessel, into hollow,
>
> so that you might enter the sea
> wanting, your cheek lined

with salt. Water opens its skin

to accept what you will give.
When the good work is done
            you begin.

AUTHOR AND ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Carrie Addington

[Image Description: A close up of a smiling white woman with red hair and blue-gray eyes. She's wearing a white shirt and appears to be standing outside, in front of a building.]

Carrie Addington's poems have appeared in *Poet Lore, The Collagist, American Literary Review, Waxwing, Tinderbox*, and elsewhere. She is the recipient of the Virginia Downs Poetry Award, the American Literary Review Poetry Award, and a Pushcart nomination. She received her MFA from

George Mason University and currently lives in Northern Virginia, where she works as a business consultant in the beauty industry and teaches at Northern Virginia Community College. Additionally, she serves on the board of the American Poetry Museum in Washington, D.C.

Jay Besemer

[Image Description: In this black-framed instant photo, a white man visible in profile from chest to forehead leans his arm against the pane of a large window. He wears glasses with thick rectangular frames and a lightweight gray hoodie with the sleeves torn off. He has a short, light-colored beard. The picture has a pensive, dreamy feel, and by a trick of the light it appears that the windowpane is bowing slightly toward the man where his arm rests against the glass. (The image is a self-portrait).]

Trans hybrid artist **Jay Besemer** is the author of many poetic artifacts including *Chelate*, *Telephone* (both Brooklyn Arts Press), *A New Territory Sought* (Moria), *Aster to Daylily* (Damask Press), and *Object with Man's Face* (Rain Taxi Ohm Editions). He is a contributor to the groundbreaking anthology*Troubling the Line: Trans and Genderqueer Poetry and Poetics*. His performances and video poems have been featured in various live arts festivals and series, including Meekling Press' TALKS Series; Chicago Calling Arts Festival; Red Rover Series {readings that play with reading}; Absinthe & Zygote; @Salon 2014 and Sunday Circus. Jay also contributes performance texts, poems, and critical essays to numerous publications including *Nerve Lantern: Axon of Performance Literature, Barzakh, The Collagist, PANK, Petra, Rain Taxi Review of Books, The VOLTA,* and the CCM organs *ENTROPY* and *ENCLAVE*. He is a contributing editor with *The Operating System,* the co-editor of a special digital Yoko Ono tribute issue of *Nerve Lantern*, and founder of the Intermittent Series in Chicago, where he lives with his partner and a very helpful cat.

Marlena Chertock

[Image Description: A young white woman with her arms raised. She is smiling and standing in front of a mural of wings painted various shades of pink, purple, blue, and white. She is wearing a green cardigan, jeans, and a T-shirt with triangular prints.]

Marlena Chertock's first collection of poetry, ***On that one-way trip to Mars***, is available from Bottlecap Press. She is the Poetry Editor for *District Lit*. Her poems and short stories have appeared or are forthcoming in Cra*b Fat, Dear Robot: An Anthology of Epistolary Science Fiction, The Fem, The Little Patuxent Review, Paper Darts*, and *Wordgathering*. Find her atmarlenachertock.com or @mchertock.

Junior Dare

[Image Description: A color film photograph by Harrison Swan that focuses on a bearded figure set against a green wall. The figure is white skinned with fading freckles and red spectacles, wearing a pinstripe blazer by Loveless that features a skull-and-crossbones on the breast pocket.]

Currently based in Shanghai, **Junior Dare** is a gender-dissident, abolitionist, crip poet dreaming the post-queer, studying the left of the future and the right of the present. In addition to assorted critical work, previous poems can be found in the anthology WebSafe2k16 and the journal Tagvverk. Solicit more, smash out some favs, or just hit the dxde with a follow @prismxp on twitter dot com. Seek joy.

Maia Dolphin-Krute

[Image Description: A snapshot showing a paper ghost emerging from a bathtub is held by a white woman obscured by the photo except for part of her hand, a black shirt, and curly brown hair.]

Maia Dolphin-Krute is an independent scholar based in Boston, MA. Her first full-length book, *Ghostbodies: Towards a New Theory of Invalidism* (Intellect, 2017), an examination of chronic illness narratives within critical theory, will be out in Spring 2017. She is also the author of a forthcoming chapbook, *Aron Ralston: States of Injury* (glo worm press, 2016). Her work has recently or will soon be featured in *Full-Stop, American Chordata, Tupelo Quarterly*and elsewhere*.* Currently, Dolphin-Krute is engaged in a long term research project about the forms of freedom that become possible when continually modulated by physical experiences and material proximities--about "how do you live with..." More information about her work can be found at www.ghostbodies.com.

Amanda French

[Image Description: A close-cropped color photograph of the painter Amanda French. She is an adult Scottish woman with short reddish brown hair, blue eyes and an impish grin. Though she is sitting upright, the background of the image is at a sharp angle, as if she were cocking her head at you.]

Amanda French was born in Glasgow, Scotland and is now a U.S. Citizen living in Michigan. She graduated from Florida State University in 2016 with a Masters in Fine Arts.

She says: "I draw and paint, I use a variety of mixed media, from a plain lead pencil to oils and watercolors. My MFA degree show MERRY CHRISTMAS FRANK is mixed media from start to finish. Back in Michigan once more, I have begun my life as a professional studio artist and am now applying myself to making inroads into the vibrant Detroit City Contemporary Art Scene. I look forward to what the future holds."

More of her work can be found online athttps://amandaefrench.com/ or on Instagram.

Karrie Higgins

[Image Description: A photo: selfie of the artist Karrie Higgins. She is an adult white woman wearing glitter glasses & blue-gray bobbed hair. She poses with one hand behind her head, casually displaying the large falcon tattoo on her inner bicep. Her mysterious smirk is reminiscent of the Mona Lisa.]

Karrie Higgins is a writer, Intermedia Artist, disability activist, magician, and seamstress living in Colorado. Her work can be found in *The Manifest-Station, DIAGRAM, HuffPost*, and many others. Her essays have twice been notables in *Best American Essays* and she won the Schiff Award for Prose in 2013. karriehiggins.com.

Peter James

[Image Description: Photo of the artist in red light. He is a young man with brown hair wearing a black t-shirt with a graphic of the human skeleton printed on it. There is a green wall with a door behind him displaying signage that reads “Use other door” and “Smoking section.”]

Peter James is an autistic adult who uses art as a means of understanding the world. He focuses on using sensory overload and emotional connections in order to tell a story to the viewer. He earned an associate's degree in art at Tarrant County College, Fort Worth, TX. He has been highly influenced by painters like Amselm Kiefer, George Baselitz, Francis Bacon, and photographers like Frank Gohlke. He currently lives in Fresno, California.

Travis Chi Wing Lau

[Image Description: A black and white portrait of the author standing in a white knit cardigan and plaid shirt.]

Travis Chi Wing Lau is a doctoral candidate at the University of Pennsylvania Department of English. His research interests include eighteenth and nineteenth-century British literature, the history of medicine, and disability studies. His academic writing has been published in the *Journal of Homosexuality, Romantic Circles*, and *English Language Notes* (forthcoming). His creative writing has appeared in *Atomic*, *Feminine Inquiry*, *Wordgathering, Assaracus, Rogue Agent,* and *QDA: A Queer Disability Anthology*.

Noemi Martinez

[Image Description: A selfie taken by the poet, it shows the femme person, a Chicana/Boricua brown person, who is not smiling, with dark red & black curly shoulder length hair, wearing dark red lipstick and a black t-shirt that reads "decolonize-body love" with an image of a fat femme person. Noemi's arm is tattooed with a heart and tree branches and her arm is outstretched, holding the camera.]

Noemi Martinez is a queer crip Chicana/Boricua lupine mermaid writer, cultural critic & single mami living in South Texas. Some of her recent poems, essays and artwork have appeared in *Revolutionary Mothering: Love on the Front Lines, TAYO Literary Magazine, Make/Shift Magazine* and*The Geeky Gimp*. She writes poems that are culturally relevant to living in a brown, chronically ill femme queer body at *Yellow Chair Review* as poet-in-residence. Info on her poem+foto book "South Texas Experience: Love Letters" can be found @ hermanaresist.comor at Twitter @hermanaresist.

Janet Morrow

[Image Description: A white woman with medium-length red hair in jeans & a blue top leans against a table in a cluttered studio.]

Janet Morrow, a *Deaf Poets Society* art editor, is a conceptual artist and teacher. Much of her work examines themes of deafness, disability and otherness. She holds an MFA in Intermedia Studio Art from The University of Texas at Arlington. Her work has been exhibited at Surface Gallery in Nottingham, England, Access Gallery in Austin, The Smithsonian International Gallery in Washington, D.C., and many other venues. She has taught art and Disability Studies at The University of Texas at Arlington and Tarrant County College Northeast and currently teaches art for the MHMR Pine Street Recovery Center. Janet lives in the Dallas/Fort Worth area with her husband Jerry. She has two grown children and is a very proud new Grandma.

Barbara Ruth

[Image Description: Close-up showing part of the face of an olive-skinned woman with dark brown eyes. Parts of her gray and brown eyebrows are visible. She is looking down and has a slight smile and a fairly prominent brown mole under her left eye. Photo Credit: Barbara Ruth.]

Barbara Ruth is drawn to the edges, the in-between, the transitional lenses of her glasses, the equinoxes, the mixing of watercolors on the thirsty paper, the going up and coming down, the phases of moon and tide, not this/not that. She is a physically disabled neurodivergent photographer, poet, fiction writer, essayist, and memoirist whose work has been published in Australia, Canada, India, UK and US, and widely anthologized in disability, feminist, literary and queer anthologies, including *QDA: Queer Disability Anthology, The Spoon Knife Anthology,* and *Barking Sycamores: Year One*. She lives in San Jose, CA, USA.

Lynx Sainte-Marie

[Image Description: Lynx Sainte-Marie, a non-binary Black spoonie with loc'd hair and shaved sides, looks into the camera with a serious expression on their face. They are wearing a Black velvet blazer, a Black dress shirt, a dark statement necklace covered in stones and turquoise earrings with gold trimming. Their Black and gold cane cane can be seen partially in front of them, tilted to the left.]

Lynx Sainte-Marie is a disabled/chronically ill, non-binary/genderfluid, Afro+Goth Poet of the Jamaican diaspora with ancestral roots indigenous to Africa and the British Isles, living on stolen Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee and Huron-Wendat land (Greater Toronto Area). They are the founder of QueerofGender, a grassroots organization and transnational visibility project, dedicated to celebrating gender within LGBTTQQ2SIAP+ Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC) communities. Lynx is also the creator of #BlackSpoonieSpeak, a creative writing workshop series for Black disabled/chronically ill youth on the margins. A writer, multimedium artist, activist, educator, agitator and community builder, Lynx's work and art is informed by Black feminism(s), collective community love and social, disability and healing justice movements. http://lynxsaintemarie.com.

Emily Schwartz

Emily Schwartz is a Deaf writer. This is her first publication.

Whittier Strong

[Image Description: A color photograph of a white man with dark brown hair and stubble on his chin. He's standing in front of a stone building beside a plaque wearing a blue and white checkered button-down shirt.]

Whittier Strong is an MFA candidate in creative nonfiction at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks. He is a regular contributor to *The Good Men Project* and*Anthropoid*. His work has appeared in *The Rumpus, Apogee, QDA: A Queer Disability Anthology*, and elsewhere. His full portfolio is available at http://clippings.me/whittierstrong. Twitter: @WhitNate

Kayla Whaley

[Image Description: A white girl in her mid-twenties smiles brightly at the camera. She’s visible from the chest up. She wears a black and white patterned dress, multi-colored frames, and has a blond pixie-cut. Behind her is the blurry glimpse of a coffee shop.]

Kayla Whaley is a graduate of the Clarion Writers' Workshop and a senior editor at*Disability in Kidlit*, a site dedicated to discussing the portrayal of disability in middle grade and young adult literature. Her work has appeared in or is forthcoming from *The Toast, The Establishment, Michigan Quarterly Review, Uncanny Magazine*, and the young adult anthology *Here We Are: Feminism for the Real World*. She can usually be found buying way too many books or being overly sincere on the internet.

Nimue Fong Yee

[Image Description: Color photograph of the painter Nimue, a young curly-haired Chinese Jamaican Hispanic girl with a mysterious half-smile. She holds out her left hand in a peace/victory sign, and the camera foreshortening makes her hands huge.]