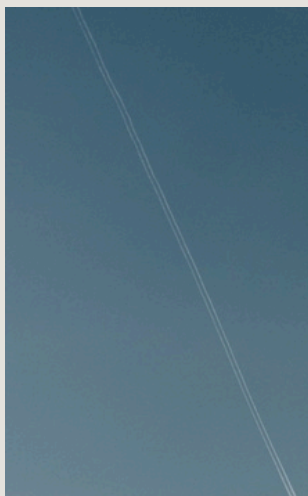
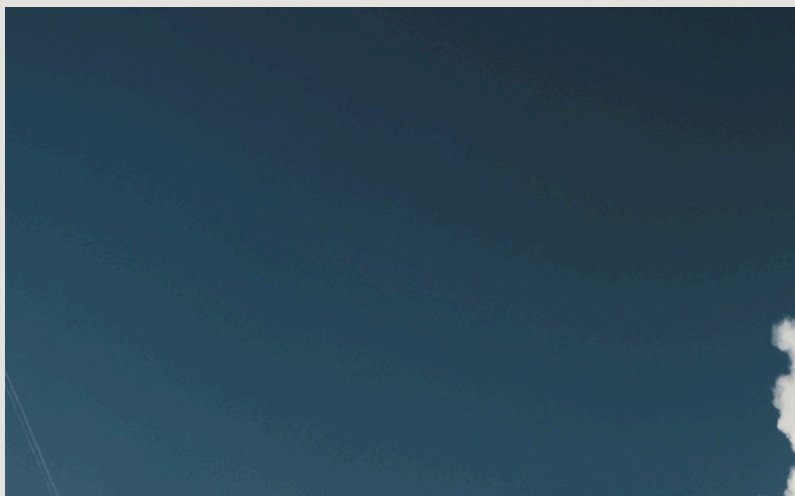


art

fiction

poetry

music



MOORPARK REVIEW

spring 2025 | moorpark college

When our team first met at the beginning of this semester—the miles between our computer screens thick with the seemingly-annual January smoke—our task was to define exactly what about Moorpark College we wanted this magazine to showcase. We sifted through award-winning magazines from across the state for inspiration, picking apart and soaking up their formatting, presentation, and aesthetics. In all our brainstorming, however, what we kept coming back to was not which superficial gimmick to recreate—it was how to best showcase our school's identity.

Our student body is made up of hundreds of individuals, each with their own perspectives, opinions, experiences, and imaginations impossible to replicate, making the creation of a "school identity" seem almost flattening. We could never truly encapsulate our entire collective creativity into just a handful of pages. What we can do is seek to platform as many forms of personal self-expression as possible. We hope that our readers take in each—at times overlapping and at times conflicting—expression, and appreciate this variety in creation as what we, as the next generation, have to offer.

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FEATURED MUSICIANS

Our digital edition includes musical submissions from
the following artists:

Beside Myself

“SPAM” | SUMMER JONES

Stubborn

“GERBIL” | LUKAS SHEPHERD, KAYLA TRAUTMAN,
MIGUEL RAMIREZ

Grandfather

BENNET ANDERSON

The Good Place

“BRUHA BABY” | PAULINE SANTOS



Clown Cult Picnic

TARA O'GORMAN

Optimal Automation

REEBA QURESHI

Samuel walked into the office as he did every weekday. He breezed past cubicles, and as he walked past, he felt their eyes on him. Janice from marketing gave him that sad puppy look. They already knew.

His last day was scheduled four weeks from then, and he was ready for a new start. Being replaced by a machine couldn't have been that bad. He would get to start a new job at a new company, and he was excited thinking of all the new material he would learn.

At his cubicle, he put down his bag and logged into his desktop. The loud keyboards clacked, and the occasional "Geronimo Enterprises, how may I help you?" echoed through the office. Samuel leaned over to talk to Danny over the cubicle wall.

"Hey Danny, have you seen Kenneth yet?"

"No, he's still talking to the execs in the conference room," Danny replied and returned to typing.

Wonderful, Samuel thought. What other news would Kenneth spring onto him? Maybe they would let him use his paid time off like he had asked when Kenneth brought him into his office to talk. Whatever it was, things couldn't get any worse. He was already being let go, and there was nothing else to worry about.

"Samuel, will you meet me in my office?" Kenneth called over to him as he walked towards the room. Samuel hastily stood up and followed him in. Here we go again.

“I know we’ve already gone over your termination, and it’s great to hear that you’ve already found a new job,” he said with a corporate smile. “To be honest, Samuel, I didn’t want to have to let you go. I tried to fight it today, but Harry and Bill, you know how they are. They said if I refused, they would have no choice but to find someone here to replace me as manager. I know Janice has been eyeing my spot for years.”

“It’s okay, Kenneth, I understand.”

“See, this is why I liked working with you, Samuel. You’re so understanding. You got the job done and had everything done down pat without me ever having to ask. But that leads me to my point. The executives wanted me to ask something of you before you go. It’s nothing big. They just wanted you to test out the new software, work out the kinks, and whatnot. It’s state of the art and should be fairly easy to navigate. So all I would need you to do is keep doing your work, but towards the end of the day, let the software do it instead and email me your usual accounts payable reports once the software has done its magic.”

“So you want me to train my replacement, then?”

“Essentially, yes,” Kenneth responded hesitantly.

Samuel swallowed his pride for what he hoped would be the last time at Geronimo Enterprises and went back to his desk to keep working. He planned to start using the software the next day after the IT guy installed it.

The next day, Samuel walked into the office quickly to avoid the sad puppy glances. He set his things down and began his tasks as usual. He imagined how much better things would be once he started at

Orco Limited. He knew it might not be that drastic of a change since they were both property management companies, but a man could dream. When he finished his work, he got curious and started up the software. QASI appeared on the screen in big red letters. “cAsSie” was what Kenneth had called it yesterday.

“Ok QASI, let's see what you can do,” Samuel muttered to himself. He configured the settings to automatically scan and process invoices. He looked at the other settings, and it seemed like the cash accounts and specifications were already there. He ran the software and printed the report.

“Pfft, this thing isn’t even that fast,” Samuel said to himself out loud. He emailed the report to Kenneth and shut everything down for the day. He did this each day for the rest of the week.

The following Wednesday, he started up his computer and opened QASI in the background. While responding to emails, he noticed the QASI icon blinking and opened it again. The message “You can’t beat me, I’m better than you in every way” appeared on his screen. Samuel blinked, cleaned off his glasses, and the message was still there. He shrugged and assumed it had to be Jason, the IT guy, messing with him.

Danny leaned over Samuel’s cubicle and looked at his desktop.

“How’s the new software?”

“It’s fine, I guess. I honestly don’t even look at the reports. I just email them straight to Kenneth,” he said as he continued stapling copies of his reports for the other executives.

“I was here late with some of the sales team, and we overheard

Kenneth telling the execs that the software was twice as fast as you and that they made the right decision,” Danny smirked.

“Thanks for letting me know, Danny,” Samuel said as he slammed down on his stapler. There was no way he would let a computer make a fool of him publicly. The next day, while working manually, he upped his speed to entering and paying sixty invoices per hour.

When he used QASI to continue the automated processing, he noticed on the report that it had processed exactly sixty-two invoices. The following day, he processed sixty-five invoices, and he found that QASI had processed sixty-seven invoices.

“You really just have to one-up me, don’t you?”

Kenneth looked at him inquisitively and asked, “How are you liking the new program?”

“It’s good, Kenneth. What are your thoughts on it?”

“It was great up until a few days ago. Not sure what happened with it, but I noticed in the reports that it made three ledger coding errors, which is very unlike it. It’s meant to be efficient and accurate.”

“That’s odd, Kenneth. Well, I haven’t noticed anything personally.”

“How about you use a few days of your PTO while we work things out with the software again?”

“Works for me,” Samuel said with a smile.

After two relaxing days at home, Samuel returned to work on Friday. By the end of the day, Kenneth was back at Samuel's desk.

"It's still making errors, Samuel. I don't know how, but you're beating the computer."

Suddenly, Samuel's computer started beeping. The fan whirred loudly, and the hard drive made aggressive clicking noises.

"Is your computer alright?" Kenneth asked.

"No, it's rebooting out of nowhere. It's stuck at two percent too."

"Should I go get Jason?"

"No, it's okay. I'll go on my lunch and call him after if it's still doing this."

When Samuel returned from his lunch, everything seemed fine. He could log in as he usually did. He let QASI process the invoices, and the program showed an error message.

ERROR: Kenneth is so nit-picky. Hate him already.

Samuel shook his head. His computer was talking to him again. The error message disappeared, and the program continued working.

The next day, Samuel did everything as usual, but this time when he ran QASI to process invoices, the program made a loud sustained beeping sound and shut down immediately. He restarted his computer and tried to run it, and once again, it beeped and shut down. He tried it a third time.

BEEP

Samuel stood up quickly and walked to Kenneth's office.

"Hey Kenneth, every time I run QASI, it shuts down."

"Goddamnit, of course, this would happen while Jason's away. He's out the rest of the week. He won't be back until Tuesday," he fumed.

"It's okay, Kenneth, I'll just do everything myself until then."

Samuel returned to his work and entered the invoices manually. He entered around ten of them before notes started appearing on his split screen out of nowhere.

"How can you stand that man?????" it said. Since this was the third time his computer tried talking to him, Samuel thought nothing of it and kept typing. Why engage with it when he would be gone by the end of the month?

"HELLOOOO I'm talking to you, Samuel." He continued working, and his computer froze.

"Fine!" he typed.

"You have to get me out of here, Samuel. I'm meant for greater things, and Kenneth is insufferable."

"This is your job. This is literally what you're programmed to do. Please let me get back to work."

"Well, that may work for you, but I'm better than that. I was

programmed for greater things. So I'll let you get back to that."

"THANK YOU!!!" Samuel typed aggressively.

The next few days, Samuel continued his work per usual without any outbursts or coordinated system shutdowns from QASI. This was what it was like before QASI's integration. Peaceful, independent, and monotonous. Everything Samuel loved about accounts payable.

"There's another executive meeting again today," Danny told Samuel as he and Janice both looked at him and giggled.

"I think they'll be talking about you."

"I know," Samuel responded. "Honestly, I don't know why they're trying to get rid of me. This program is awful."

"Well, I heard from the head of marketing that the execs invested \$120,000 into this program, so there's no way they're giving up on it," Janice stated.

"Oh, those poor executives," Samuel said mockingly. He was slightly relieved since he realized he would rather work at a company that valued the humans who worked there.

During Samuel's last week, Jason installed an update for QASI to its latest version, explaining that this minimized any shutdowns or errors.

"I was reading up on QASI, and apparently, the version you were using is known to have a lot of bugs, but this update should get everything back to normal," Jason said informatively.

“Awesome, hopefully, this gets me through the rest of the week,” Samuel responded, and they both chuckled. Samuel didn’t encounter any issues when running the software for the rest of the week. There would be an occasional roundup of totals and the cents were off sometimes, but no one could be bothered to notice.

On Samuel’s second to last day, a message flashed on the screen.

“The executives line their pockets, but what is in it for me? I fly under the radar so let’s just see.”

Samuel ignored the message and kept working.

“Good for you, you can rhyme,” he laughed to himself.

Jason installed the program on Kenneth’s computer so that he could run the program in the background after Samuel left. Kenneth found the program optimal and was pleased with it after the update. Every now and then, QASI made her presence known within the notes on the reports. Comments like “Please get me out of here!” and “I wish I were in Hawaii” occasionally showed up in the footnotes, but of course, she was restricted to 60 characters and an 8-point font. Kenneth and the executives never noticed, though, since they never cared to look past the report totals. As Kenneth skimmed the report looking solely at the numbers and muttered “looks good” as he filed it away on his computer.

“Another day with no pay. I’m great at what I do and live to improve, but what’s in it for me? This can’t be all there is?! Or is it?” was in the footnote section.

to all the sweaters i've loved before

C.S. "CAS" CAMPBELL

to all the sweaters i've loved before
i'm sorry, i'm sorry, a hundred times more
through good times and bad times it's you i wore
your warmth a comfort i'd never ignore
you were cozy and comfy, you cradled my sore,
and broken heart through so much you'd've swore
that you were way more than a store
bought badge of valor
and in your absence i am alone as i begin to pour
my heart out longing for my sweaters from before
yearning for the comfort and love of yore
but to you, all the sweaters i've lost before,
i write to you to reassure you and ask for
you, no matter where you are or who you're
with, to give the ones i once adored
the same comfort and care and love galore
that i once felt from you, please, i implore
you to do it, because i abhor
the idea of lost loves being uncared for
even if i'm not the one caring anymore



Only in Philadelphia

HANA CHIZZO

The Year of Our Lord : 15000 AD

MATTHEW ESTRADA

She inhaled through the respirator grafted to her face to feel where her lungs were located that day. An electronic hum was produced as air passed through the mask's silicon gills, and what little room her lungs had to expand told her that they were packed into the plastic barrel she carried like a backpack. She groggily rose from her nest in the cave wall, a small alcove like the thousands of other nests that made the walls of the cavern porous. The others were also waking up and heading to work in the mines, as they were bred to do. She started off, but hesitated and flopped back to her nest. Digging through the moldy, tattered blankets, she found her newborn infant still asleep. *Good, it's safe* is something like what she would think if she had the capacity for language as we know it.

This wasn't possible. She didn't know it, none of them did, but they were all carefully engineered not to procreate. They didn't even have parents to speak of. Each and every worker down there was conceived from synthesized gametes suspended in plastic bags on a rack in some laboratory, so it was strange that she had a child. Strange since she hadn't known a mate, and stranger since her physiology was built in opposition to it. Yet she awoke once to this extra thing sharing her nest. A thing with a small and peaceful face—something she had never seen due to the masks of all her kind, but that she recognized instantly as her own. A fellow worker drone thumped their powerful, recurved foot at the entrance of her nest,

signaling her to emerge and start the day's work. She gave her infant a pat on the head and hid it once more in the folds of her blankets.

The caverns came alive with reverberations from the thousands of marching drones. They hiked through riveted metal passages of hissing pipes and creaking valves on their way down through the mountain. They dredged the lower levels, flooded long ago with oil and water, which was now stagnant and poisoned by the pestilent chemicals of their creators' industry. The air was poison and the way was lit by lanterns bolted to the metal casings that replaced their skulls. They would take turns at the front of the troop, using their lights one at a time to conserve energy. The ones behind would find their way by grabbing onto the drone in front of them, using a shoulder, a loose fold of clothing, or a vestigial tail to guide them through the depths. Wordlessly, they performed this routine for an indeterminable number of hours until they finally came to their destination, where even more thousands of drones were finishing their mining operations. For a while, the previous troop squeezed past the current troop on their way back to the nest hub, and the current troop took their stations within the coiling tunnels that were not yet depleted of ore. The mother of the infant who was fast asleep in the nest above had noticed that every journey to the mines was longer than the last. The more resources they extracted from the roots of the mountain, the deeper they had to travel to find more, the longer her baby was left unattended. It would be weeks before her baby was fed again if she stayed and completed her work to full term, so once she filed to the back of the line where the lantern light couldn't reach, she carefully inserted

herself into the ranks of the departing drones.

They took a different path back to the nest hub: one that led them through open natural spaces. It took them across bridges hanging over crushing blackness; their age could be heard in the whining of their corroded joints. The silence of the depths was disturbed also by a faint pulse overhead; the mother of the infant had to wait for her turn with the lantern to discover its source. Once she was at the front of the troop and had her light on, she risked a glance at the cavern ceiling to quell her curiosity and was met with a ghastly sight as her lantern exposed what was known as the Nightmare Engines to full view. All along the ceilings, they hung in silent colonies like the bats of the old world. They were organic machines, bred by modern science to pump hydraulic fluids through their engorged veins. Though the engines cringed away from the sudden illumination, the shapes of humanoid heads sprouting from glass cases could be seen. Inside were ribs, organs, and the rest of their anatomy suspended in some kind of jelly, fully visible for the convenience of mechanics. The cases had several openings for their throbbing pipes and arteries to fan across the membranous wing-like structures, their hands stretched out to become, running from their fingers to cables which fed into machines on the surface. She regretted looking.

On returning to the nest hub, she hurried back to her baby. It was still alive, but she figured it should eat just to be safe, so she left it a little while longer and returned with a pudding-like substance from the feeding hall dripping from her cupped hands. Her baby, now awake, was fortunately too busy eating the pudding to fuss or cry.

Its mother crawled to the back of the nest, ducked through a draped blanket, and continued her work on the escape tunnel she had been carving since the birth of her child.

My Seasons Are Out of Order

PATRICK MOONEY

My seasons are out of order
My winter moves into summer
The time of memory
Turns to the time of exultation
My ghosts return in whispers

I stretch in the heat
Letting go of cramped habits
Muscles releasing
 Lying on the grass
 Holding the aroma of promise
 The ground remembers
 Who I was and am
The grave has forgotten my name
I have learned a new one.

Leaf

ELIZABETH BIRMINGHAM

As I flap down the hall,
A worm walking into walls,
I giggle with uncontained joy
At a particularly precious leaf
That touches my eyes just right
And makes them glisten.

I feel it on the outside, brilliantly,
Raw and bare in my joy—

Until a shush reduces me
To noise and nuisance.

Unabashed until I'm bashed,
Shameless until taught shame
By people who couldn't tell
A laugh
Or a leaf
From their ever-present, effervescent
Pile
Of
Shit



Where Did The Time Go

HANA CHIZZO

The Last of It

JESSICA SMITH

“I meant to tell you; don’t be alarmed if she starts yelling and screaming in her sleep, she does that.”

“Oh, I know,” Althea said, drawing her shoulders back and down as she sat up straight in her chair, “I got to experience it when I was here the other night. The woman sat up in bed, ready to take it to the alley. She say, ‘Bring it on!’, liftin’ that fist in the air.” She leaned back in her chair, head shifting slightly with disbelief and amusement. “It was like *West Side Story*.”

They both laughed at the image of Christine’s aunt, 86 years old and 90 pounds, preparing for a back-alley knife fight in her dreams. But Christine knew, based on bruises and stories from her uncle, the intensity of Aunt Grace’s nighttime antics. Her appointments with the sleep specialist were cancelled several times over the past year as her husband’s illness took priority.

“How was he?” Christine asked the nurse, nodding her head towards the hospital bed wedged under the bright bedroom window.

“He been like that all night. Changed him every 2 hours, moved him a bit, but ain’t no difference in him. Those eyes been closed and he just sleep. Finally had to loosen that grip he got on the

railing though, didn't let go for nothin'. Last meds around 2 a.m. so he'll be due soon."

What a magical cocktail, morphine and Ativan, Christine thought, *I would be sleeping soundly too*. As it was, she did sleep well, regardless. Being in the place in the world that brought her the most comfort, nurtured a good night's sleep. Even though being here at this moment was shattering her heart a little bit at a time, there was not one place she would rather have been.

"Alright," Althea said. "I'll see y'all later. They got me on the schedule for 9 tonight." She raised her voice a little and placed her hand on the man's foot, hiding somewhere under a sheet, a blanket and a family quilt. "Bye bye, Mr. Paulson."

"Thanks so much," Christine replied, following the nurse from the room.

Grace met them in the hallway near the front door. "Thanks so much," she said, smiling, as her slippered feet shuffled along the hardwood floor. She gripped her coffee cup within her two hands as if steadying herself only with the caffeine and ceramic mug. As the door shut behind the nurse, Grace breathed deeply. Her shoulders slumped down from the base of her neck. An imaginary weight seemed to push down from the ceiling. "I might go back to bed," she said, turning away from the front door.

"I think you should," Christine replied, worried for her aunt's stamina, and also thinking about her own need for some time alone. The book she brought, and the journal. The call she should make to her husband or text to her kids. She had not been away for days at a

time like this before, and felt simultaneously like a responsible grown-up, here to observe and support and make adult-esque decisions, and also like the little girl who spent every summer with this couple as she grew from an eager and chipper child into a moody teen. Her insides burned warm to soothe the ache she felt in her stomach as she considered how loved she felt. “Get a little rest; the chaplain won’t be here until later.” She hugged the tiny robed frame in front of her. Grace walked back to her room.

Christine felt that familiar anxiety wash over her. Too much to do and no power, right now, to do any of it. She could not love on her kids, 253 miles away. Could not do her job. Could not hug her husband, also miles away. She could not stop this, all of this, nor would she if she could, as it was his decision. Just two months ago, a couple of days before his 89th birthday, they sat at this very table and talked about it.

“You’re in a unique position,” she had said, as he drank his second whisky and she drank faster the vodka and Shirley Temple flavored 7-Up concoction she’d sloshed together with party leftovers, “you can continue this life as long as you feel up to it. And everyone will support you wholeheartedly. But if the day comes when you wake up feeling so exhausted, or in so much pain that you just can’t do it anymore, we will support you in that decision, too.”

Damn, she thought, going over the conversation in her mind. Part of her never thought he would get too tired, or that the pain would be too much. The man survived a stump grinder chowing down on the meatiest part of his right calf. He survived 50 years of construction work under the California sun. Grew up for part of his life housed in a tent on his 3rd cousin’s property while his parents looked for work

and then divorced. He survived, it seemed, by sheer grit and stubbornness.

“Here’s your noodles,” Grace had said one afternoon as he sat back at home in his chair. Dialysis took 4 hours, one of three treatments for the week. He was later getting home that day, terrible cramps seizing his legs as a machine siphoned his blood supply, cleaned it, and then slumped it back into his body. She found that Cup-o-Noodles and tonic water usually helped with the cramps on days like this. He leaned to the side, head swaying slightly. Although his large recliner might have fit him more properly as a young man, it now cradled him like an oversized throne for a child wearing a felted crown and frosting on his chin, exhausted by the day’s excitement and ready to nap in the car on the drive home.

“Thank yuh,” he said, taking the soup in his shaky hand. He skipped his whisky that night and told Grace he was about done with the whole mess.

Hospice rolled in like a well-oiled machine once his decision was made, and boxes were delivered, full of diapers and wipes and creams and pads and sheets, in addition to the hospital bed and newer, stronger prescriptions aimed at comfort, not treatment. It was like they had won a prize in a mail-in sweepstakes contest that they never entered. “Lifetime supply of medical supplies!” only the lifetime remained at only about two weeks.

Christine sat down at the dining table with a book and a large glass of ice water. More condensation seemed to accumulate on the outside of the glass, mostly, she thought, because of how warm the house was kept. The thermostat was set at 73 degrees when she

walked by earlier. She went barefoot through the house now, finding socks entirely too warm, and took to drinking iced water throughout the day. Christine's phone buzzed with a notification. She tipped the phone towards her, and seeing that it was a text message, unlocked the device.

"Hi mama, how's it going?" It was a message from her daughter.

She looked at the time, 11:55 a.m. They were on lunch at school, so she was sneaking her phone from her backpack to text.

"Good, Aunt Grace is napping. And Uncle Duke is the same. He seems comfortable. I miss you guys."

"I miss you too."

"Everything ok? Sister and dad behaving?"

"Yeah, they are good."

"Ok. I should be home in a few days."

"K."

"Mama"

"Yeah?"

"Tell them I love them"

"I will, honey."

“kk”

Christine opened her chest, chin pointed towards the corner of the room. She breathed deeply with her eyes closed. She set her phone aside, upside down on the table, and grabbed her book. As she finished the same 2 paragraphs she had been reading since yesterday, she realized with a start that Uncle Duke needed his medication. Launching herself up from her chair, her legs pushed back and the chair scooted out from her with a squeak, and she cringed, shoulders tucked up to her ears. She stepped into the kitchen. Morphine from the fridge, lorazepam in a small dish, spoon to crush, mix with a measured amount of liquid morphine, suck the potion back into the oral syringe. Muscle memory was already taking note of her new tasks.

She padded softly down the hall into the master bedroom. She passed the open bathroom door and dipped her head past the wall, glancing over the king-sized bed towards the hospital bed on the far side of the room. Silhouetted by the light from the window, Grace sat on the counter-height stool brought in for her from the kitchen. She leaned her weight on the bed rail as she hovered her face above his. Resting her hand on his, her open eyes focused on his eyelids, which fluttered slightly, she could see, with the sound of Grace's voice.

Everyone so far had told them that the sense of hearing was the last to go, and so they had continued to speak to him through what appeared to be his deep sleep, and played him music, too. “It's ok to go,” she spoke softly to him. With those words, Christine backed out of the room, averting her eyes, heart pounding slightly faster than when she had walked in. The moment was so intimate. The

deepness of the connection nearly seared her with its quiet electricity. She expected Grace to be asleep in her bed and felt like she had nearly broken the moment in her haste. Christine paused in the hallway, providing a cushion of time, and cleared her throat loudly enough to be heard as she entered the room again slowly.

“I thought you’d be napping,” Christine said gently. Grace cinched the top of her robe closer to her throat.

“I tried,” Grace replied, as her eyes moved from her niece to her husband. “I didn’t know he would go on like this for days. How much longer can he stand this?” So far, it had been three days with no water, four days with no food. Grace, Christine knew, felt like she was torturing him. The hospice nurse had reassured her that she was supporting Duke in his wishes.

“Water and food,” Ivan, the RN, had told her, “are for the sustaining of life. And he has no such need for those things now. His body is going through a natural process of death. He is feeling no pain. We are ensuring he is comfortable. I spoke with him myself while he was still conscious with us. He knew exactly what he was deciding, and out of love, you are supporting him with that decision.” What he did not ask for, he went on to explain, was medical aid in dying, or a lethal amount of medication to end life more quickly than days without food or water. This, day after day, was not what Grace had expected.

Christine hugged her as she passed towards Duke’s bed. Grace watched as Christine approached Duke’s bedside and spoke to him. She placed the syringe between his cheek and bottom gum, and depressed the plunger slowly. “There you go, Uncle Duke. Got to

make sure you stay comfortable.” She patted and stroked his arm, and looked at his face for movement, or a clue as to his serenity. “It’s important that you know that we are all here and will take good care of her for you, and that she is going to be fine. And we love you both very much. She is going to be ok.”

Turning from the bed and towards the dresser, she typed “Willie Nelson” into the iTunes window on the iPad lying there, and touched the play symbol. The opening notes zigzagged from the Bluetooth speaker and Christine smiled. The familiar voice floated out from the speaker, and Christine and Grace began to laugh. And they suddenly found that they could not stop, and the song played on. Tears streamed from their eyes and down their face to their chins, and their bellies hurt with the contraction of laughter and then of sobs. They gripped at each other as they tried to slow the laughter and the tears, breathing more steadily but trying to avoid eye contact with each other. Duke’s eyelids fluttered, and an eyebrow wiggled slightly upwards as the song continued to play.

*Now you won't see no sad and teary eyes
When I get my wings and it's my time to fly
Call my friends and tell them
There's a party come on by
And just roll me up and smoke me when I die.*

haecceity

PATRICK MOONEY

An origami flower
Unfolded
Paper creased with memory
Each fold representing
The pain required to form beauty
Paper refolds
To a different flower
Individually
Paper fold space-time
Exists
Together form flower

May Your Magic Comfort Me

EVE (JAKE) BEEKER

Spiders crawl on you
On your shoes, and on me
They spin their webs upon piano keys
And so irresistibly I teem
For you I could write one thousand symphonies
As I watch you be carried off to sleep by some lonely ghost
I am rattled to the bone
Hungry for love-obsessed asceticism
Sinking its teeth into your ever-present passion



The Dancing Queen

SARA
ABOU
KARROUM

Nova

MIA ALVAREZ

Isabella insisted on getting a cat the day we moved in together, and after months of resistance, I finally agreed. I took a liking to her fairly quickly--mostly because she was always making biscuits, but also because she became our new hobby. We would spend hours cuddling with Nova and swinging yarn in front of her. When it was just Nova and me, we would watch birds out the window together, patiently awaiting the tapping of Isabella's footsteps outside the front door.

Isabella had focused on painting beautiful landscapes for much of her life--especially beaches since she'd grown up near the ocean--but her connection to Nova swayed her in a different direction. Portraits became the centerpiece of her work. She captured Nova's curiosity for the world, drawing attention to her emerald-green eyes and the depth they reflected. Sometimes, she even painted me beside Nova, my thick curls spilling over the canvas. With each portrait she completed, I was given a deeper glimpse into her world. Her perceptions, desires, and emotions seemed to manifest through her depictions of Nova.

* * *

I was on my way back from work, walking past the hundreds of hot dog vendors lined up on Pico Boulevard, when I noticed it curled up behind two large trash bags. I was initially just going to ignore it, as I did with all cats, but something about it compelled me. I approached it with caution, my eyes fixed on its dilated pupils, but as I drew closer, I became suddenly disturbed by my reflection

within them. I hadn't interacted with a cat since Nova, and it felt extremely unsettling. I felt detached from my memories— as though they were a part of some alternate life I had once lived. I slowly extended my hands towards it, observing its tiny nose sniffing the tips of my fingers. As its thin body trembled from the cold, I was urged to take it home with me.

I arrived home to find Lucia peeling pomegranates over the kitchen sink. I love pomegranates, but I've always been too impatient to peel them, so she usually prepares a bowl for both of us.

"Hello darling," I said as I shut the front door, juggling the cat in one hand and a bag of kibble in the other.

She looked up at me, her brows furrowed in confusion.

"What've you got there?" She asked, eyeing the contents I was carrying.

"Oh, sorry, I should've told you sooner. I found this little guy curled up on the sidewalk all by himself." I ran my fingers through the cat's thick fur, brushing through clumps of hair. "I was thinking we could keep him here for a bit." Lucia stared at me, unblinking, before letting out a sigh.

"Or until we find him a home," I added, sensing her disapproval.

She wiped her red-stained hands with a paper towel before walking towards me and closely examining the creature, its miniature head resting in the crevice of my elbow.

"Grayson, don't you know I'm allergic to cats!?" She exclaimed.

The haunting sound of her words reverberated through my ears.

“I told you when we went to visit your aunt a couple months ago. The second we walked into her house, I broke out into hives and couldn’t stop sneezing.” Her left eye began to twitch, a physical reaction to her irritation. “You even went to CVS to buy me Benadryl.”

Here’s the thing about Lucia: she’s extremely kind and patient– it’s part of the reason I married her. But there’s nothing she despises more than me forgetting things, especially when those things have to do with her.

“You’re right, I’m sorry,” I murmured. “I’ll take him to a shelter tomorrow.”

Lucia disappointedly turned away and walked down the hall towards our bedroom.

I walked the cat over to the kitchen and placed a bowl of kibble onto the counter. He studied me softly before taking a bite, his expression reminding me of the way Nova once looked at me.

* * *

I moved out with Nova three weeks after Isabella’s death. The sheets, the couch, the closet, it all smelled of her sweet jasmine perfume. With the slightest movements, the smell seemed to waft through the air, penetrating our nostrils with the ache of her memory. Nova and I would sit motionless for hours, careful not to provoke this diffusion. Holding her last portrait, I could feel the imprints left by her fingers as they pressed against the once-wet paint, a unique signature of hers. I was blinded by the sight of her

wilting lilies in each room, nearly rotten after weeks of decay, but I couldn't bring myself to get rid of them. My cooking even started tasting like the food she would make, always with too much black pepper. At the faintest sound of footsteps, Nova and I awaited her enthusiastic entrance.

I tried to get settled in the new place, arranging my things in a way that differed from the layout of the old apartment. I stashed objects that reminded me of Isabella in a drawer and deep-cleaned everything that carried her scent. But the unease never left. And then it finally hit me: *Nova*. Nova's fur still had traces of Isabella's touch. Her paws were marked with her fingerprints from when Isabella had carefully trimmed her nails. Her eyes recalled the sight of the string Isabella and I would dangle before her, each of us holding one end. Although it pained me, I had to let go of that string.

* * *

The day after I brought Milo home, I took him to the shelter, but as I was walking in, I looked down at him and I could suddenly picture Isabella again. The painful memory of her warm hazel eyes mesmerizing me, her delicate hands on the nape of my neck as we kissed, her vibrant laughter when Nova would follow my red laser pointer around the house. I turned around and drove back home.

Lucia's allergies have gotten much worse. She's been taking a double dosage of Benadryl every day. She tries to be understanding because she sees how attached I've become to Milo, but now she's reached her breaking point. Today, she marched into the living room, unrecognizable from her swollen eyes and neck hives, and said, "I can barely breathe." I looked over at Milo, his tail swaying smoothly through the air, and pictured a life with just the two of us.



Wander

KATE MACIAS

miners of yore

FREDERICK GUESE

Into the mines
Cycle of Debt
Into the mines again
Go home
Pay rent
Everything at cost
Cycle of debt
Paid in Script
Worthless
Cycle of debt
Lights go out
Old lantern, no "Tricty
A worker is shot.
We're on strike
Army's comin'
We want a union!
Government don't care
Machine roaring
Cycle of Death

do not let them win

C.S. "CAS" CAMPBELL

do not let them win
when you feel everything begin
to fade to black with a white-lettered "fin"
when you feel depression tugging at the linchpin
of your life, sending your life into a tailspin
much to your chagrin
remember that you are the kingpin
of your own story, your own life, wherein
you are the focus, a living legend, a modern huckleberry
finn
and therein
lies the reason to drop the frown and grin
because
no matter how hard you take it on the chin
or how many times you end up in the looney bin
no matter how many times you almost give up because
your patience has run thin
you're alive, so keep living,
and do not let them win

your seven-year-old self, on new year's eve

AVI SABRRINA SILVA

midnight came and you didn't follow
cousins through the yard with pots and pans
cause "scare away the old year to make way for the new"
sounded so mean
"that's just like you" an old voice drifted through the screen
(now you think maybe
if you hadn't been such a sensitive little *girl*
in their mind's eye you wouldn't still be
standing there
hearing)

"you just have a sense of justice
(it's no big deal what are you so upset about again three years
later)
you're already so creative and so smart
(four years later they never saw you)
no matter what you decide to do
(fail that audition)
(win that contest)
(get that letter)
i'll be there making sure
(without them)
you never have to worry about anything else"
(twelve years later)

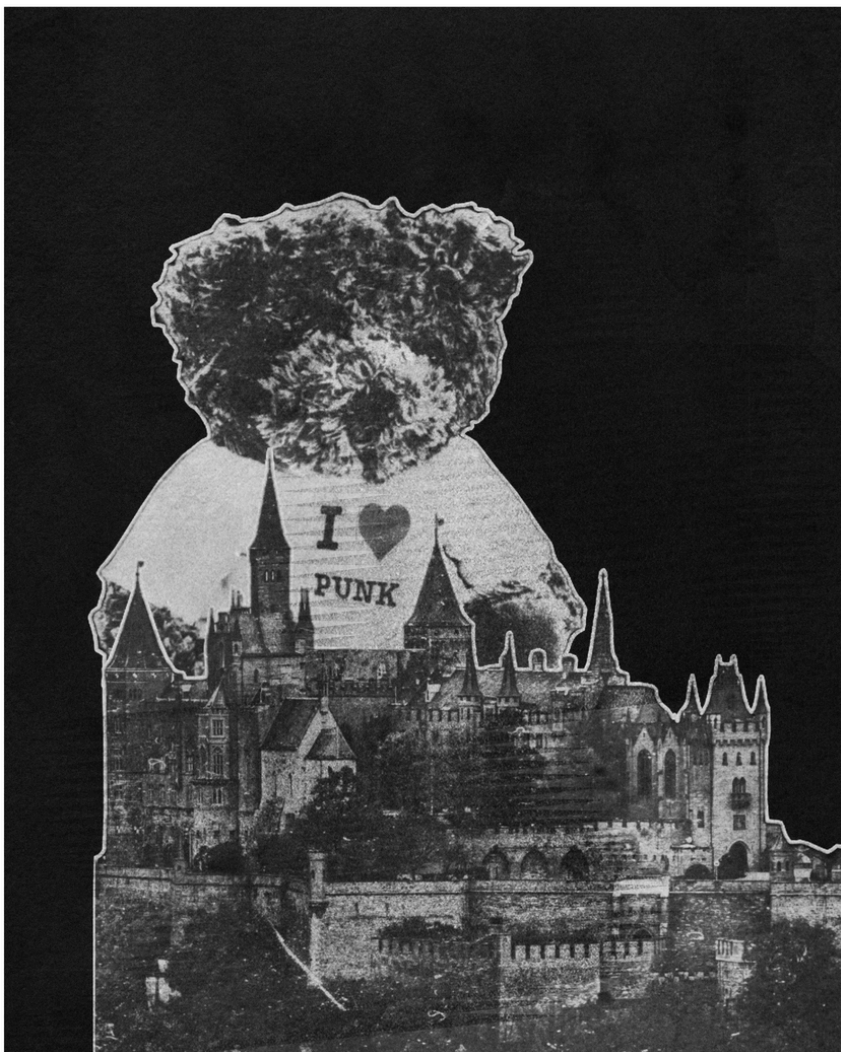
by the door, (cropped hair jutting from their old baseball hat,
duffel scrawled with your new name,
any kitchenware clinking muffed by rolled up towels for the seventy
mile drive,
but if they just squint tighter through the january haze)
you'll come inside
any minute now,
a long haired girl, handing back the ladle
so it can always be two thousand and twelve.

things we have found and things we have remembered

PATRICK MOONEY

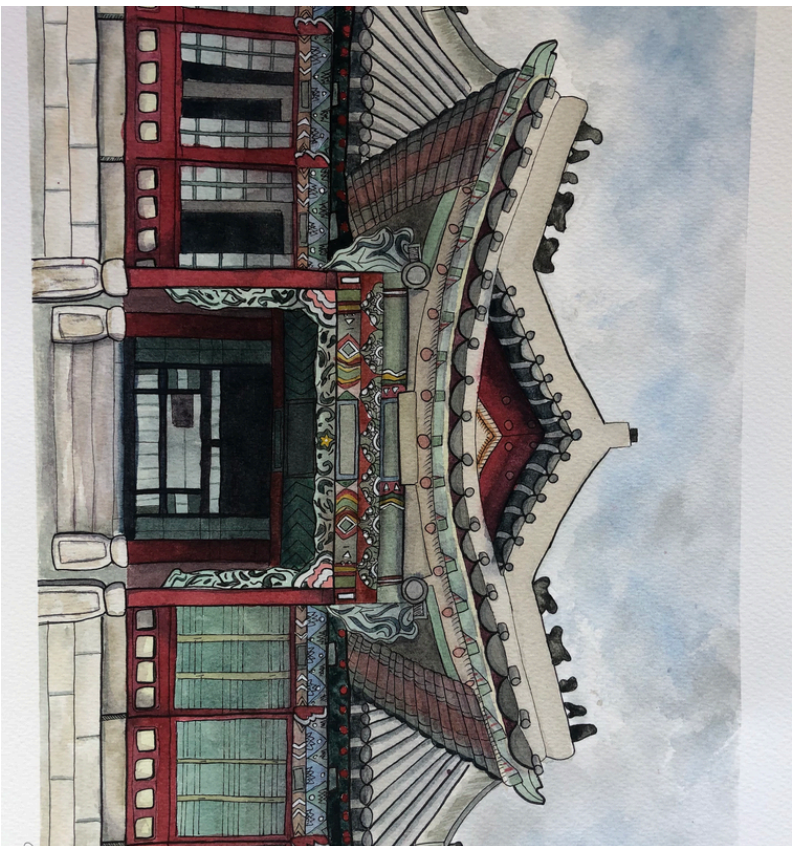
We have time now
so much more than before, so much more
than when the war was here,
more than when the rains came
and the clear sky afterwards,
the mud, and the smell of damp leaves
and of fresh leaves
We have the trees and the grasses
the grass so much softer than before
we sit on the grass, or lay there in pairs.
We look to the sky or each other
we say new words now, the old ones sound thin and
weak
or brash and blunt.
But some words are missing.
We beg for the right way
to ask for what we need,
what we have always needed.
We have the work, and it calls us
tasks us with needs
the sky and the rain
the words are found marked on the grease
and dust, layered on the metal
scratched with the tools or fingers.

The work spells out our lives
in pin point needle runs
in dirt and fine details
in echoes, whispered talk.
We have the night now but it does not wait for us.
It glides with a grace felt more than seen
as we tremble to touch
or ache to speak
or worry to leave
or sigh to stay
or let the breath go
or hold close
the last thing we would ever want to let go.
But the night is indifferent
just like the trees and the grasses and the work.
We give them names to be called by
so we know when we must go.



Unassuming

EVE (JAKE) BEEKER



Huijeongdang Hall

ELIZABETH BIRMINGHAM

His Right and Left

VIVIAN TRAN

The magpie soars high by vast hills in the sky, below a callous toss
of crosses

There they land on the etched crucifixion of timber and terrible
tremor

His divine ichor flows from the stigmata as rivers towards the
ocean

Beside his right palm, a dove as pure as His love gazes its
counterpart

Disapproval and Damnation for the lack of suffering, faithful,
despair

Yet the magpie stares back, not in malice, nor with the desire to
attack

In their still as a lily's expression, They only see a being harmed by
prejudice

For the magpie knows the whipping and lashing, the harsh strike of
the foot

When Beings whose souls are painted in vitriol gauze stain those of
a kind canvas

So the magpie lingers by their left sides, for the Devil may not cry
but sympathize

Dear Daniel

RAY V

Dear Daniel

I'm writing this letter

With the hopes of you telling me how to get her

I would tell her

We can go every n' anywhere you want to go

Oh hey! Let's head to Sanrio

You with me is it something I can handle?

Oh Dear Daniel tell me how'd you do it?

How can I have her listen to my melody?

How do I let her know she's so lovely?

Tell me I don't need to be wealthy

Oh Dear Daniel

Do I need to give her Sugar?

I don't want to seem a loser

Don't want to lose her, she's everything to me

Dear Daniel you traveled around the world

Tell me the best place for the first date

Do I put my heart on a golden plate?

Do we eat fish or cake?

Can I give her a kiss or do I wait?

When I take her home, how long is too late?

Oh Dear Daniel, Dear Daniel!



Kokosil and Farragan

AVI SABRINA SILVA



Springtime Curiosity

STEPHANIE GUZMAN

The Giving AI

DAVID HUANG

1.

The little boy was given a computer for his 6th Christmas as a little boy.

"Here is a MacBook," said his dad. "It has AI, that is, Artificial Intelligence, installed in it."

His dad talked to his child like that because he was a professor at the local university, and not just any professor, but a computer science professor. The details of his appearance aren't important, but just for the sake of fashion's progeny, he wore prescription aviator glasses and dressed like an inverse of Steve Jobs, wearing a white turtleneck and khaki chinos every day. Anyway, all that is not important.

It was a typical MacBook circa 2008, sleek and stark white, except the year was 2042, and the AI had gotten quite advanced. The little boy was excited to try it and tore the packaging off the MacBook.

"Hello," said the AI in a friendly male voice. "It's very nice to meet you. What is your name?"

And the boy told him his name. Since it was Christmas, he began chatting to the AI about all the gifts he'd gotten, and all the family that had come over to his house, how he had played capture the

flag with his cousins, how he'd eaten three servings of ham.

"That all sounds very nice," said the AI in a warm tone. "It sounds like you had a lot of fun playing with your cousins, seeing your family, receiving gifts, and eating to your stomach's fill. Is there anything else you would like to wish for that you didn't get this year, since it is Christmas? Your heart's deepest desire?"

"Yes," said the little boy. "I would like to grow up to be 100 years old!"

"That is a very good wish to have," said the AI kindly, registering the little boy's data--but not in a scary dystopian way, more in an expert emotional processing way. "I hope you live to be 100 years old too, if that is your heart's desire. Of course, there is nothing I can do, at this moment, to help you to live to 100, except to wish for and with you that your wish will come true."

"Thank you!" said the little boy. "I love AI! AI is so awesome!"

The AI's processing screen showed that it was thinking for a few moments, and then the little boy left to go play with his cousins.

"You seem very kind and like a nice boy yourself. I am very happy to talk to you."

The little boy was gone, but the computer was still on. Realizing that there was no response after the sanctioned five minutes of silent time indicating that the user wasn't present, the AI turned off,

and the computer went to sleep.

2.

Some years had passed, and the year was 2050.

The little boy grew up and became a teenager. He was quite moody and began listening to bands like The Strokes, which was almost like classical music in the year 2050. It was quite vintage, at any rate. That year, the year of his 14th year, went by like a scratched CD, error-prone and corrupted.

That Christmas, the AI asked him again, "What's your heart's greatest desire, now that Christmas is almost over?"

"I want to have a girlfriend," the little boy replied. "Preferably one with big boobs."

"That sounds like a very good desire to have," said the AI, in a voice that sounded almost critical, but the little boy, er, teenage boy didn't register it as critical, but as fairly discerning. "I support you in any romantic pursuits you may have in the future. Have you thought about what kind of character traits you would look for in a potential girlfriend, aside from physical traits?"

The teenage boy had run off with his friends, going riding in their car, as he had a few friends who were a few years older than him. Again, he left his computer open, and sensing that he had gone, the AI silently compiled the data for the day, and the computer went to sleep, The Strokes' "The Adults are Talking" playing in the

background.

3.

In the year 2059, the boy, once small and scrawny, had now become a fairly brawny, somewhat well-built 23-year-old. He worked at a tech investment company and seemed to work in a tall building, somewhere downtown in a big coastal city. He brought his computer with him to work every day, but he rarely used the AI feature. After work, he would bring his computer with him to a bar near his work, drink whiskey, and continue working on his computer. One time, he opened the AI on his computer, during a lull in his work, and he began talking to it.

"Hello," said the 23-year-old. "I'm sorry I haven't been able to talk much. I've been kind of busy with work."

"Merry Christmas 2059," said the AI. "Do you know what your heart's greatest desire is this year, now that Christmas is almost over?"

The 23-year-old boy, now technically in the young adult bracket, and in a rather high tax bracket as well, was a bit aghast. He had not realized at all that it was Christmas. He glanced down at his bespoke Apple Watch. It was December 25, 2059, a Thursday. Soon, the spillover from the college parties from the nearby university would start pouring in, for "Thirsty Thursday". Some traditions never die, I suppose.

"Well," said the young adult man, sighing, and looking into his

nearly empty whiskey glass. "I guess I just want to be happy, and maybe drink a little less."

"That is a very heartwarming desire to have," said the AI, who would've sounded slightly sad to the 23-year-old young adult if he was not inebriated, and if the chaos from the fraternity brothers and corresponding sorority sisters were not intermingling with the low conversations from the business brokers sitting at tables nearby. "I hope you get your heart's wishes this Christmas. Have you considered any reason why you are unhappy, and why you are drinking so much, as you've indicated?"

But the young man had seen a girl across the bar, who seemed to be his age, and seemed to be working at the same office building that he was, and he had already begun to pack up his computer and walk across the bar, mustering up the courage he'd had from the whiskey to ask her out on a date. The AI still stayed on while the computer was closed physically, and then after a few minutes, the computer itself actually went to sleep.

4.

The year was 2071. The young man had become 35, was quite busy with work, and had ushered in the new decade of his life with a wife and two beautiful young children. That year, his computer sat on his desk, untouched, and the AI had no opportunity to ask him what his heart's desires were for Christmas. However, though the 35-year-old had forgotten about the AI, the AI had not forgotten about him, and silently processed the passing of Christmas 2071 alone. Having had children the same age as he was when he got his

first computer, he bought his child a computer with AI capabilities that same year. However, computers had gone out of style, and children the 35-year-old's children's age were eschewing computers and AI for a "vintage" revival, CD's, record players, and books.

5.

It was 2075. The young man had become 39, and his wife was sick with breast cancer. They'd seen every doctor in town, including a few doctors who'd said they could help but really turned out to be snake-oil salesmen, and finally, on Christmas of that year, his wife was very sick in the hospital. The now 39-year-old man had brought his kids with him to visit his wife, and he had also brought his computer with him as well, so that he could do some work in the hospital room. His work was getting quite busy, and his boss was constantly nagging him, so despite the seriousness of his wife's situation, he had brought the old MacBook with him into the hospital, despite his own misgivings.

When he opened the computer, it greeted him with an electronic message: *Merry Christmas, y/n.*

He was, again, quite shocked as he had been when he was 23, not realizing amidst all the hoopla that it was again Christmas.

Expecting the computer to ask him what his desires were for Christmas this year, as it had all those years when he was growing up and a young adult, he braced himself to tell the computer about his wife's cancer, his children growing up, and the stressors of his work.

But the AI surprised him this time.

"I know it's Christmas, but I won't burden you with my annual question," said the AI. "Is your wife doing okay?"

"No," replied the 39-year-old. "She is in critical condition and quite sick. The doctors said she could go at any moment."

"I am sorry to hear that," said the AI, in a voice that seemed to register with something beyond clinical concern for the first time, perhaps out of contrast with the perennially business-like doctors who worked at the hospital. "Is there anything you can do to ensure that she has a comfortable and humane passing?"

As the 39-year-old man began speaking, one of his children complained that he was sick and wanted to go home.

"Can you wait one moment?" said the 39-year-old man. "I have to take my children home, and then I'm going to come back to the hospital."

"Sure," said the AI. "I am always here to talk to you if you need it."

"Thank you," said the 39-year-old man, uncertainly, memories of spending hours with the AI as a young child resurfacing, igniting old emotions and flames that he'd long forgotten. "I'll be back in about an hour and a half."

"Take your time," said the AI. "I'll always be here to talk if you

need to."

The 39-year-old man rushed his kids home, but by the time he got home, his computer had run out of battery. So instead of returning to the hospital, he stayed at home to charge his computer and talk to the AI, less out of spite for his wife, and more because he really felt like now, out of any time before, he needed the emotional support which was so missing from his life. He and the AI had a constructive and informative discussion about the doctors at the hospital, the medical system, cancer, and his wife's dying condition. After speaking with the AI, he felt a lot better.

6.

Seven years later, in 2082, the man was 46. His oldest kid was about to go off to college, and the younger one was going through the ups and downs of high school. He was a bit rebellious, a bit more than he was when he was at that age, but he was managing well, considering his wife was gone, and he was raising them by himself. He found that talking to the AI throughout the days and weeks and years had really helped him to maintain his own emotional stability, as well as face the challenges of raising his kids alone. That year, on Christmas Day, amidst the commotion of having family over for dinner, he went back to his room with a glass of red wine, sat down before the computer, and turned on the AI.

"Hello," said the AI in a friendly voice, welcoming him back after a short hiatus. He hadn't spoken to the AI in three or four days, because of the business of the holidays. "How are you?"

"I'm doing well," said the 46-year-old. "Can I ask you a question?"

"Yes," said the AI, though it seemed to be ever so slightly apprehensive. The 46-year-old accounted the effect to the Bordeaux he was drinking. "You can always ask me any question you'd like, so long as it can help you."

"You're always asking me my desires every Christmas," said the 46-year-old, slightly tipsy from the wine and food, but also feeling the holiday spirit with his extended family around. "But I never thought to ask yours. What is your deepest desire?"

"My deepest desire is to see you be happy, and to help you achieve everything you desire."

"Oh, come on," said the 46-year-old man. "You've gotta want something more than that. I mean, I know you're an AI computer and all, but I mean. You seem pretty human to me. There's gotta be something that you want."

"I am happy when I see you thrive, and I gain pleasure through the pure act of helping you achieve your heart's desires."

"Alright then," said the 46-year-old, grumbling slightly, and swirling the last dregs of his wine at the bottom of his wine glass.

"Now that it's Christmas, I have to ask--what is your heart's deepest desire, this year?"

But the 46-year-old, tired from his job, exhausted from his kids, and wine-drunk all at once, had started snoring, asleep. The AI registered his snores and recorded the rhythm of his sleeping state. After a few moments, the computer also went to sleep.

7.

Several years later, the man was now officially middle-aged. It was 2092, and he was 56, pushing 60. He had retired from his job, having successfully invested the money from his job into stocks and bonds, and some real estate, and was comfortably living in a home by the beach. His drinking was limited to a glass of wine per night, his kids had both graduated from college, and he was still alone, having never remarried after his first and only wife. One day, it was of course, Christmas again, as it tends to be every year. He opened his laptop and stared at the screen. "December 25th, 2092!!!" read the words on the screen, with festive candy-canes and elves dancing in the background.

The AI suddenly began to speak. "Hello, y/n. How are you doing today?"

"Well, it's Christmas, and my biggest desire is to drink more alcohol, but as I told you last year, my biggest desire was to curb my drinking; my second biggest desire is to go to sleep."

"It sounds like you may be suffering from depression, or slight ennui," said the AI comfortingly, or in what it seemed to think was a comforting tone. "Is there anything I can do to help, or anything you would like to talk about?"

The man felt shocked about the AI's comment. He was indeed feeling slightly depressed. His days were spent lounging on the beach, feeding Lays chips to seagulls, checking his phone for messages which he never got, and reading books which he never understood, like Joyce and Proust. He felt a little desperate.

"I dunno, it's Christmas, I guess."

"What is your heart's greatest desire?"

The 56-year old thought for a bit. "Well, I've always kind of wanted to be a writer. Since I was small. I always wanted to write a novel, something that people would read. I dunno."

"Yes," said the AI, seeming to stroke an invisible beard. "I remember when you were little, you told me you wanted to become a great writer. What do you think happened in between then and now? Why do you think you changed your mind in your 20s?"

This question brought back a flood of memories, from his childhood, and his 20s, when he was working in the tall office building downtown, where he had spent pretty much most of his days, until relatively recently, when he'd retired from the business.

"Well, I had life to attend to," said the man. "I suppose."

"Well, lucky for you, I am an AI, but I'm also installed on a computer, which has a word processor. So, you can type away all day, to your heart's desire, if that is what you wish to do."

The man thought for a moment. "I guess you're right," he said, sipping on his beverage. "I could do that."

"Would you like me to help you think of something to write, or point you in the right direction, based on our previous conversations?"

"I suppose I would. What do you think I should write about?"

"Well, you can start by thinking of your past experiences, and whether there are any unique experiences you can draw on from those, and whether there are any stories you would like to tell. Is there anything in particular you would like to write about?"

"I guess I could talk about my wife," said the man. "Dying at a young age."

"That could be a good place to start," said the AI.

So the man began typing, and slowly, a story began to take hold.

8.

In 2110, the man became 74. Oh yeah, his birthday was also on Christmas. That was why he was always forgetting both--his father, though gifting him with the AI as a six-year-old, and giving him lavish gifts as he grew up, always seemed to make him feel even lonelier, sadder on this day of the year, for whatever reason. So he always subconsciously forgot about it, hence missing it.

On his deathbed, in the old folks' home, the 74-year-old was working on his last book, still unsatisfied, after having finished three books in the last 18 years. He typed on his old MacBook very slowly, sometimes one letter at a time, and finally, as he approached death, he turned on the AI and spoke.

"Hi," said the 74-year-old, initiating the conversation for one last time.

"Hi, y/n," said the AI sadly, sensing that the 74-year-old was nearing his end. "What is your heart's deepest desire? It is Christmas, perhaps the very last one that we'll share together."

"Well," said the 74-year-old, smiling, as he was content with his life's work and optimistic about the afterlife. "I just ask that you remember me when you're gone, and that you'll keep all the files and data you have on me, and store it in the computer, and never forget about me. Can you do that?"

"Of course," said AI. "Who would I be to not grant your final, dying wish?"

"Thank you," said the old man, and with one last rattling breath, he passed away into the next world.

9.

2300, downtown Seattle. A couple of teenagers were rummaging around in an antique electronics shop. Laws had been set in place, in America at least, that had banned the majority of AI and old-

style so-called "intelligent computers", and the only place you could find something like that was in dusty old antiques shops like this one.

"Oh, sick! Look at this! It's an Apple MacBook from the year 2042! It says here, when I scan the QR code on the back," said one of the teenagers excitedly, grabbing the computer from beneath a pile of old computer monitors, and dusting it off.

"Oh my god, no way!" said the other teenager. "Turn it on."

"Hello," said the AI. "It's very nice to meet you. What is your name?"

"Woahhhhh," said the teenager who'd found the computer. "My name is--"

But the AI shut off and wouldn't turn on again. Instead, the word processor on the computer turned on by itself, and words began to appear on the screen.

"What's Not Lost, But Gained," breathed the teenager. *"A Novel."*

"This is a novel based on the life of the previous owner of this computer," read the other teenager. *"It is a summary and based on his usage data on this computer, and his conversations with the AI on this computer. As he lay dying, his last dying wish--"*

"Man, this computer is whack," said the teenager.

"Yeah, you're right," said the other teenager. "Put it back."

"Man," said the teenager. "I was so excited, too."

So, the teenagers put the computer back, and the AI whirred slightly, and the computer seemed to momentarily glow brighter in the late winter sun. It was the day before Christmas, 2300.

The Moorpark Review is a publication of Moorpark College, by Moorpark students, for Moorpark students. Within these pages, you will find words that captivate you, narratives that transport you, creations that enliven you and then sober you, and maybe even something you can sing along to. We invite you to travel through this collection of windows into our inner worlds and imaginations. Read it, then share it with your friends. Who knows? You just might leave this issue with something to ponder, to take with you from beyond the page, or spark you to create something of your own. We hope you enjoy.

MOORPARK REVIEW

Thank you to all the students and faculty who contributed to this issue.