

SPOTLIGHTS

THE IDOL
UNION LITMAG 2019

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The Idol is proud to present the 2019 publication of Union's Literary Magazine. Thank you to everyone who submitted their work, we are always amazed by the talented students on this campus. The selection process was incredibly difficult.

I would also like to thank our staff for all of their patience and commitment through the chaos it takes to produce this publication. We would not be able to do it without all of you and look forward to working with you again. And we will greatly miss the graduating seniors who have been staples of this club.

-Savannah Jelks & Sam Miller

A Note From Sam:

It is hard to believe this is my last Idol publication. The Idol has been a huge part of my life at Union and I will miss it deeply. I greatly appreciate my friends, classmates, and acquaintances always tolerating me begging them to submit. You have made this publication what it is! I also wanted to thank Savannah for putting up with my disorganization and for her dedication, I wouldn't have been able to do it without you.

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Delta by Sam Veith

She stands alone with filling fear as the boys shove off.
With the sun low on their backs, the early autumn wind
fills the hungry sail and tips the boat closer to oblivion.
If her youngest were to slip off the side,
She could reach out her arm from that pier
and hold the nearby pilling as her anchor.
Momma's here - don't fret little one, she would say.
She could save him from the allure of the sea.

Her imagination bucks as the boys
bob in the solitary, black sea.
She has heard the siren song of those low, somber clouds,
and the futile pursuit of where the sea merges into the horizon.

She remembers the final time they were all together
on that boat.
The sun hugged the horizon, reaching its tender arms
across the sky and making each drop of every gravity-defying splash
twinkle with bright majesty.

She was carrying Paulie then, and Gable was still around.
His hair was tangled by the untamed breeze and seasoned from the blue sea.
Armed with a half-smile, he clutched the rudder and rope
in his hands and tacked the family around the sound.
She remembers those times -

She understands the blissful breaths of the free air,
but worries they, too, might underestimate the power of the sea,
and forget about their lives back on shore
as that boat further tips and
brushes against the boundary of the other world.

- but does not forget the sorrow and pain
of that late, autumn night when Gable and Adam Young
pulled the boat from the sea.

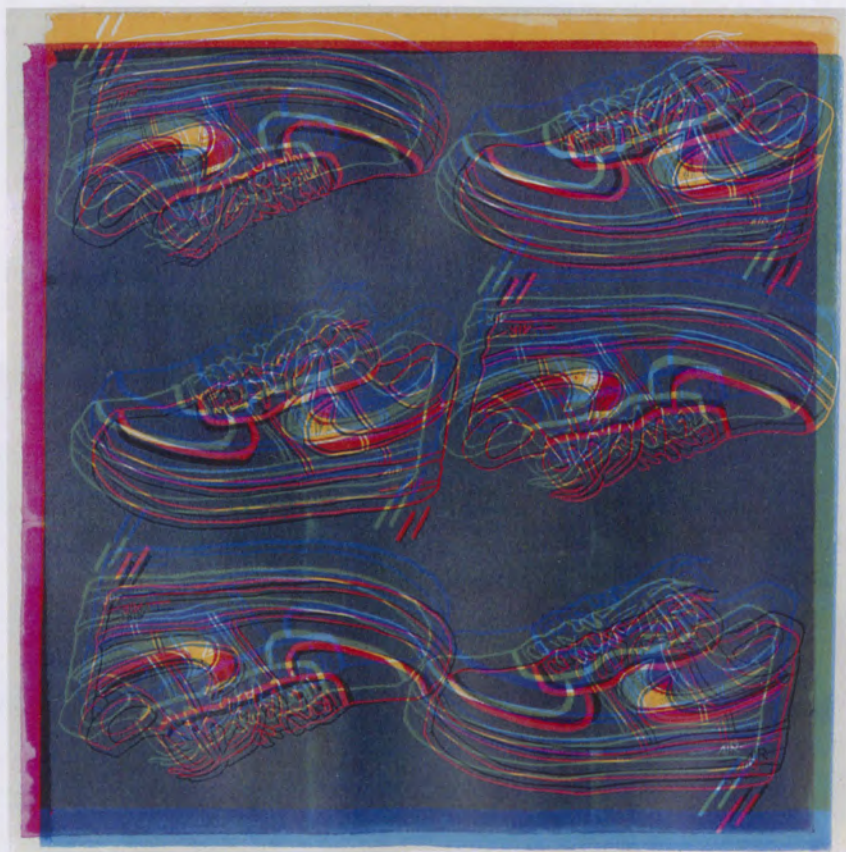
Gable and Adam would go to
The Mermaids' Harp and celebrate another year.
She wanted to surprise him:
to drive him home with good company.
Yet when she parked on the street, she saw Gable leave the alley door with
that hand around Adam's waist.

And watched, now stone, as Gable's hand
wiped Adam's hair back from those blue eyes
creating a moment that stretched into eternity.

She never saw herself standing alone on the pier,
gazing up at the heavy clouds and asking them for a parting story,
before they crawl outward to the horizon.



helium hedonist. Bridget Cunningham. 2018.



White Girl Wallpaper II. Caitlin Buchanan. 2019.



Diffuse. Lauren Capron. 2018.

Winter Snow and Spring Dew: Can't Have Both by Dalila Haden

The best days are the warm ones; the ones with elapsed breezes of wind that blow off the potential for beads of sweat to come down the drapes of your neck, the sides of your face.

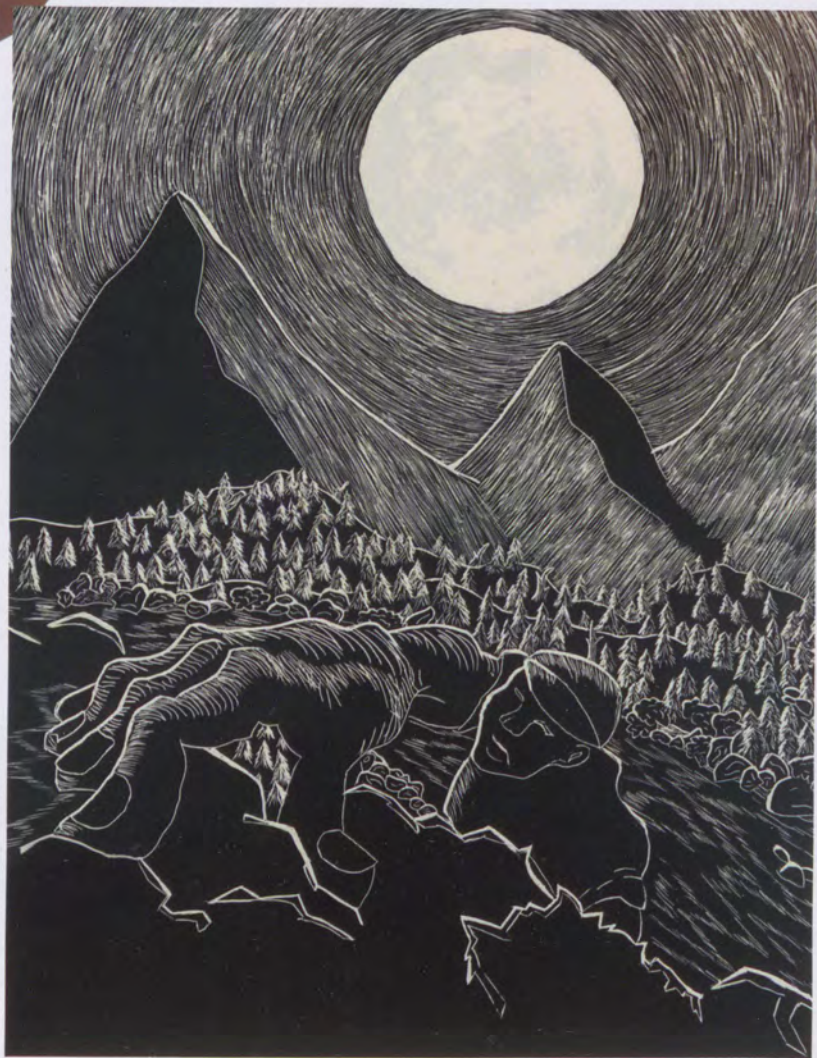
However, the most beautiful days are those draped with the first fall of snow, the night time walks through a town with wintery lights, decorated for the holiday season, smelling like caramel and gingerbread waiting to envelope you to be merry, and cuddle inside. The warm feeling from the cold.

The other half of the beautiful days are the days you decide to be perseverant: you wake up at the crack of dawn on a spring morning, hearing the birds chirp and the trees rustle. The flowers have just bloomed, and the dew is on the window of your house, as you lace your sneakers, and brush your hand down your thigh. The power of an accidental wakeup, with the calmness of morning moisture.

With these, you can't have both. You may love the tender feel you get from being inside after experiencing the beauty of the ivory shining outside, but you cannot feel this with the thrill of an early morning spring dew on the front of your window. They are, essentially, one in the same. Water, weather, outdoors. Though, they know this. The winter encourages the dew, and the dew is new to the surroundings, the signature of Mother Earth showing that nature is blossoming.

Which to choose is the question. One that is familiar and comforting, or courageous and forgiving?

The Climb. Nicolas Kusnierik. 2016.





Gaze to the Heavens. Pamela Rice. 2018.

Because of You Motherland by Jocelyne Akamaliza

Would it be okay if I left to gain knowledge (and come back after?)

Would it be okay if I stayed for a while, got a job and some experience (before I come back)

Would it be okay if I stayed for a while, started a family and grew my social network (before I come back?)

In the end, I will say that I found my happiness in your name Motherland.
I will say that I left you to gain more knowledge,
That it was a responsibility you bestowed on my shoulder
To make you shine, to make you proud.

I will say that you... accorded me freedom to do what I wanted,
That you let me leave, and I learnt, I fell in love,
And part of me wants to stay for more.
Will you blame me Motherland?

Will you slowly erase my childhood memories,
And leave my soul to yearn for your beauty and warmth?

Peony Stipple. Sahar Shakeel. 2018.



Backpack. Lauren Elder. 2018.



Boundary by Sarah Tritt

I stop just beneath the skin
That thick, cold boundary between myself and the world
It's still, to hide a choking mass on the inside
Pushing, burning, pulsing
Hoping, praying
Anything to be free
Anything?
Lose weight, the skin does cling, but it's close to detaching
And in the inside we're close to pulling back, slipping out
But my fingers get too cold
And the world goes too fast
And we get lost before we get out
Anything
Gain weight, press out, push til it's close to splitting down the middle
But it's too hot now, choking
The world pinches in
When the fat and the bone and the blood break through the skin
When the body is opened
We will be free
How thick it seems now
How fragile it might seem then

Softly, Nik Lockwood. 2015.





Dreamlike Reality by Kaitlynn Blow

Chaotic
Psychotic
Dizzy like I've taken narcotics;
A hot brand to the head,
Was it something I said?
Given time, I'm sure I would be lying in
bed.
Necrosis is your diagnosis
But I don't trust your judgement any-
more,
I expect repercussions-
Brute force to curb modern suggestions
I'm subjected to your paternal tyranny:
All hail the patriarchy,

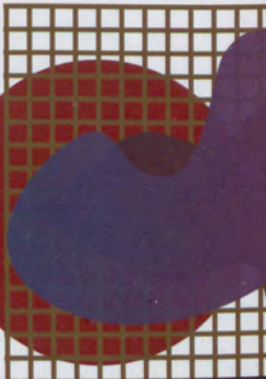
See as your daughter I test your mettle-
If I had more proof I wouldn't have
settled
I'd have sent you to the kennel.
Feme covert
It was never fair.

Fear is the best medicine,
And you expect me to swallow,
I locked my door,
But its not my door.
I bear the cross
I bear the belt
Your hand is a soft caress
If I play it back in slow motion
Father you bear the scars.
A scorned daughter.



Everything is so fragile,
So why did you break it?.
You broke down.
The door.
After I locked you out.
The home was always the women's
domain
So yes you were insane
Never before did I want you to die.
I'm trying not to cry-
Years have passed-
I remember the red of your blood
The red rage as I numbly
Typed
9
1
1.
You felt faint,
I felt constraint.
Like any woman,
I acted a perfect saint.
Daddy's little girl.
Don't make me hurl,

Fragmented reality
Dreamlike,
I give you your iced tea.
Angrily,
I'm the parolee.
All hail, the patriarchy.





Niflheim, Nicolas Kusnierik. 2017.

Shut Up
Listen to the African Woman Speak

By Ella Oppong

They say
I can work hard and never break a sweat
I can marry, cook well, and bear the children
I can do this
I can do that

But
I can't do sports
I can't do numbers
I can't be a boss

Now hear me:
Lift your clouded veils
Enshrouded by biased, patriarchal
And condescending ideals

And Listen:

I am
I can
I will

CLIMB
Mt. Everest
ENGINEER
Spaceships
RULE
The World

I WILL BE
WHATEVER
THE HELL
I CHOOSE TO BE.

EMORY by Florainne Walcott-Taylor

The breeze from outside did nothing for my morning vibes. The swirl of various gray clouds blanketed the morning sky with a mystic beauty that felt more comforting than haunting. The cool breeze intruded that comfort; yet, Marcus laid completely still and unbothered by the breeze. Stepping over the bundle of dirty laundry on the bedroom floor, I went over to the window and pushed the pane down—cutting off all connections with the season's touch—she abided. Marcus' snoring resumed the instant the window shut and suddenly the room felt more alive and familiar. I felt a small smile creep upon my lips. He was beautiful. Gentle, radiating, unfamiliar. My mind traced back to the day we met—when our paths had crossed—then fast-forwarded to the day I lost him at the start of the unrest. His gaze had lasted three seconds until I witnessed him disappear before my eyes. In the crowd of passing bodies upon the city pavement, his body had found a way to vanish in an instant, and for some reason it didn't faze me. Seconds after the bomb had landed, the smoked-covered air manifested everywhere. If I had known that I would've lost him in the crowd, I would've grabbed him by the arm beforehand. I could've gone with him. People scrambled to the closest covering they could find, in hopes that it too wouldn't dismantle and bury their hopes of survival with them. Others screamed for help, for names that awaited responses, for answerable prayers. Some, with all their effort, tried to haul loved ones with them before looking for relief. In the pile of building blocks a few steps ahead, I looked around the rubble in hopes that he would reappear, but he was nowhere to be found. Soon, I heard a faint voice call out.

"Emory!" I turned over my right shoulder, but my eyes didn't meet a single soul shouting out my name. "Emory!" It called again in distraught. This time, fainter. "Emory..." the last letters of my name progressively faded from their voice as I covered my ears in frustration—eyes shut tight. I needed to focus. I abruptly opened one eye, keeping my place in the standstill, surrounded by what was once, a crowd of passing bystanders. I felt something come over me as my shoulders relaxed and the screeching cries around me went mute.

Silence.

I'd begun to take careful steps forward in the direction I'd felt I'd last spotted Marcus in front of me, I braced myself for the worst.

"Who's there?" I called out to the air, but no one paid me any attention. Too busy attending to their own miseries. "Marcus? Can you hear me? Where are you," I demanded with a yell as my brows furrowed, though tears now stained my face. I waited five more seconds before calling out again. "I said, where are you!" Nothing.

Out of habit, I pulled a strand of my dark curly hair down to chin to calm my anxiety. Without much thought, I began to dig under the rumble. The innocent bodies of the fallen, rested way down. I felt my throat get sorer. I was shouting with every ounce of my body, but I couldn't hear it. Everything was mute, but I didn't care. With every

brick and bits of broken walls I tossed aside, I was determined to rescue him. Rescue my heart. From the pain? Even if it was just to lay with his still body, I had to spend his last moments with him. My soul was burning like a cigarette. Closer. Closer. Please. I didn't know my own strengths, but I couldn't get my feet to walk away. Too soon. It's too soon, to lose you. Youth kept my spirits alive.

And then came the touch of someone's warm hand, grasping painfully around my arm. Then the other hand reached up. I gently grabbed onto both. A familiar strength.
"Emory..."

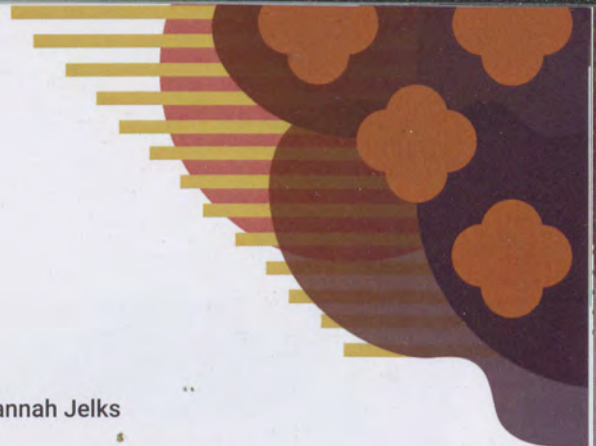
Some shattered paths were ruined by fearful actions, destructed to weaken the hopeful not the hopeless.



Iridescence. Josephine Sasso. 2019.



Forgotten, Nicolas Kusnierik, 2016.



Is This Really You? By Savannah Jelks

It's almost 9pm
I can still smell your skin against mine
And feel the dried salt of my tears
Crinkling against my cheeks

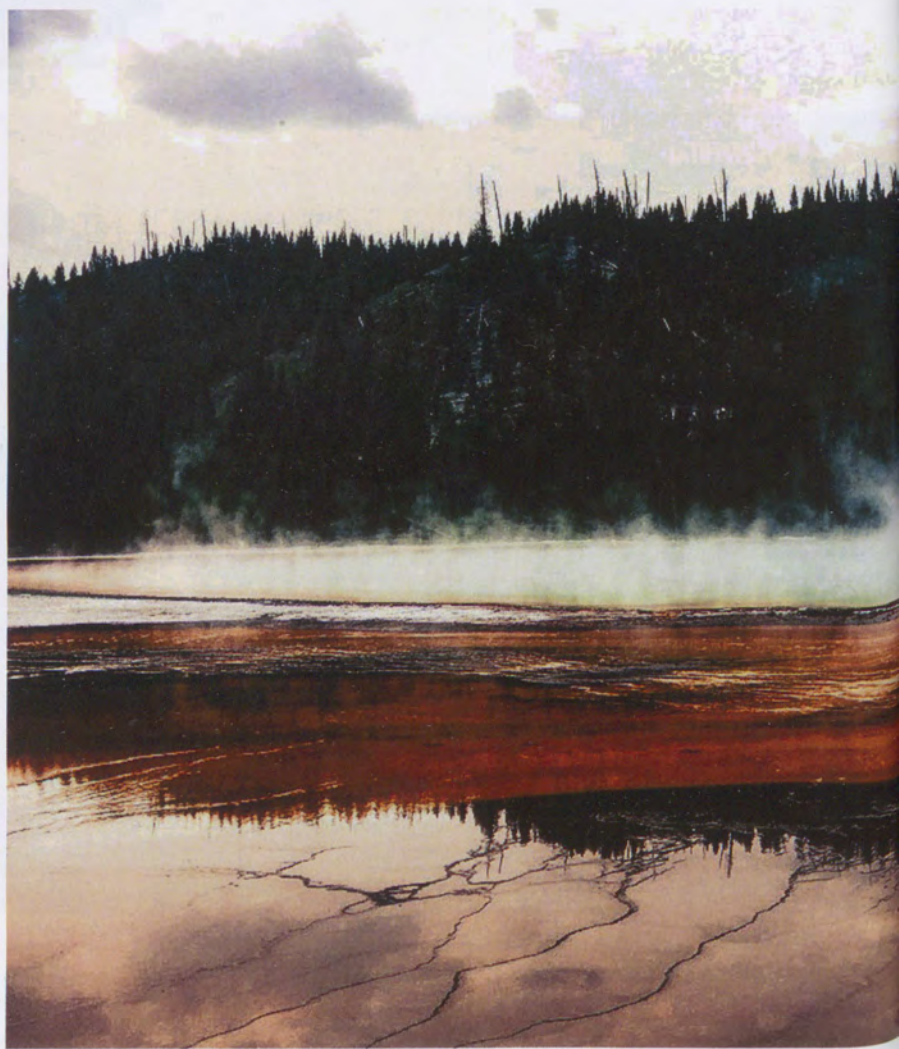
I wanted to ask you, but I was afraid
Of what, I'm not exactly sure
Maybe assuming a darker side of you

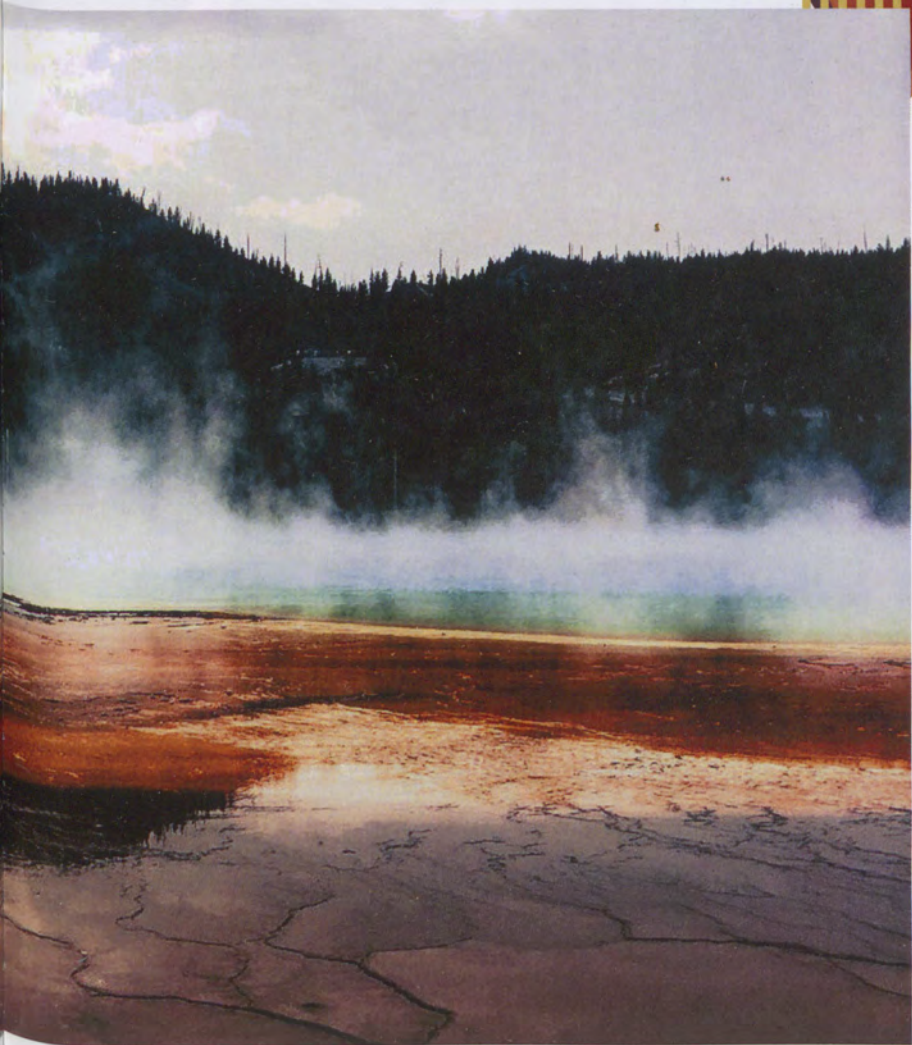
Can you blame me?
For the handful of times I've said no--
You've grown distant, withdrawn
You leave
You say nothing is wrong
You say you're stressed
But how can I not put 2 and 2 together
And draw a logical conclusion.

I don't expect you to be happy when I say no
But maybe I never wanted you to ask it in the first place
Maybe I crave more respect
Maybe when I said I just wanted to lie down
I actually meant just lie down

So forgive me when my heart feels like it's cracking
When you turn away, close your eyes,
Stop talking and get quiet
Forgive me for the tears that fall
But if that says something about your idea
Of what you deserve in this relationship
What does it say about me for almost giving in
Just to not have you be so cold.





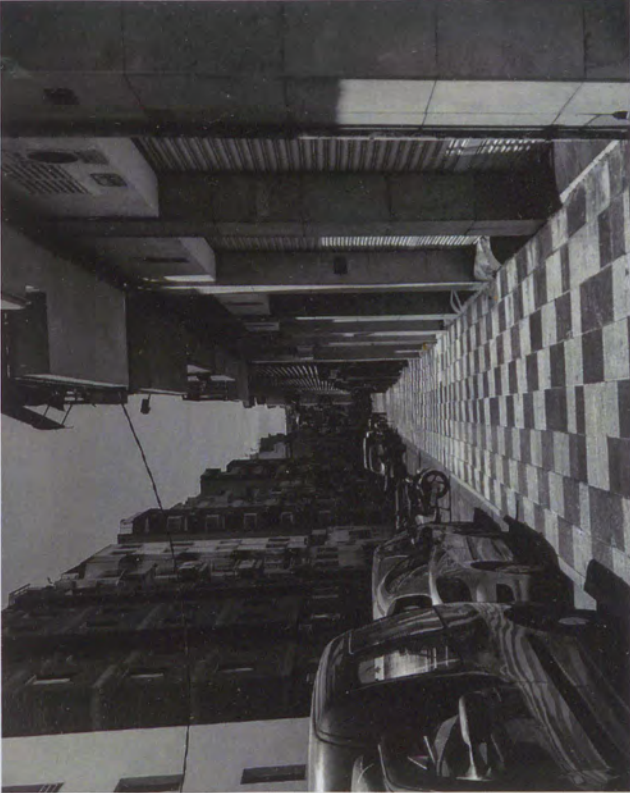


Between Heaven and Earth. Nicolas Kusnierik, 2017.



grounded. Josephine Sasso. 2019.

Plummeting (Barcelona). Lara Atalay. 2018.



In a vision of the future I saw the North Wind by Chris Bendix

"Boreas!" I shouted from my still warm bed,
"you wind who brings cold glass to finger tips,
too early in September dare you tread,
the grass is early kissed by soft leaf lips.
How suddenly did sweet, bright summer pass?
How long have I awoke and walked alone?
Yesterday my child feet first touched the grass,
but now you wind would take me from my home?"
The wind was whirling as I yelled in vain,
through trees and leaves and golden sky he furled.
Boreas spoke "child, I will soothe your pain,
come with me and walk the whispered world."
I left that day beneath the waning sky,
smiling as the first red leaves brushed by.



Open Windows, Josephine Sasso, 2019.

The Worth of a Promise by Savannah Jelks

Words have meaning
But actions speak louder than words
Didn't they teach you that in grade school?

I love you
I love your love letters
I love your words

So why is it that you have no problem
Writing such wonderful words
When your actions speak so differently?

If you wrote them,
Don't you mean them?
Or do you simply wish you meant them?



Castaway. Lara Atalay. 2017.



LILA by Florainne Walcott-Taylor

Oh, mother dear, I'd never meant to set pain to your body. Like a gun shot—a spell-casted weakness—you'd clung onto whatever moments of life that were left at your table. Never devoured, but consumed with patience. What had you been thinking during those final passing hours. To hold your daughter so near, knowing that in moments, flesh and flesh would never attract so effortlessly. The disappointment of an

unspoken future. The heartache of a well fought battle, that left you, my fighter, without victory. Perhaps, it's courage. The courage that declared that human will power wasn't always the loud, boisterous voice that roared "I can, I will, and I am here," but the quiet one that stood at the edge of possibilities, and whispered "Try, try, try, again—brave heart, little soul—there is still tomorrow". But voices can be deceiving. Isn't that right, mother?

My hand gently traced the never worn fabric of her silk wedding gown. Its color resembled that of a freshwater pearl. I brought the fabric close to my chest, imaging the happy ending she never got to experience. From afar, gunshots shattered the once tranquil atmosphere. Silence had fled—gone to find protection from civil unrest. Whatever happened to, please, do not disturb?

"Lila!" His voice boomed down the halls of our small home.

"Yes, coming!" I responded hastily. Stuffing her silk gown into the base of my worn-and-torn, gray backpack. A little piece of innocence to keep me sane.

"Lila, hurry! Or I'm leaving you behind." The threat was serious, but never real. Our bond was too precious. Leaving me behind would disrupt his own sanity.

"Coming, Papa!" I stumbled a bit as I rose from my knees and tossed my backpack upon my back. I looked back to scan the room. I knew whatever was left behind would be ashes, consumed by the fires that took away reality and stripped it down to its humbling beginnings.

I wobbled down the halls, unable to fetch my leg brace for my bad leg.

I was born disabled. Something about there being weak bone structure in my right leg, surrounded by sensitive nerve tissues that lacked the stability to keep me upright without strain. It would only age with me. Wincing with pain, I looked up ahead to match Fen's eyes down the hall—stern but comforting. A few unbalanced steps later, I met him at the back door of the home. Instantly, in what seemed like one swift motion, he grabbed my bag and placed it over his back, then bent down to pick me up. As he carried me in his arms, I closed my eyes and slowly inhaled his natural, rugged scent. Unsure when next flesh and flesh would attract so effortlessly.

Another loud crash from the front of the house echoed throughout our home.

"Papa," I mumbled under my breath. He looked down at me. Fear had never looked so misplaced on his aging face.

"Yes, Lila," he whispered back, carefully stepping out into our wet back yard that connected to a nearby woods.

"Papa, I can't lose you too," I spoke, softly with the rain.

He remained quiet. Eyes searching the distant greenery for a safe route. With a heavy sigh, he looked down at my small body in his arms. He gently kissed my forehead—nothing more—

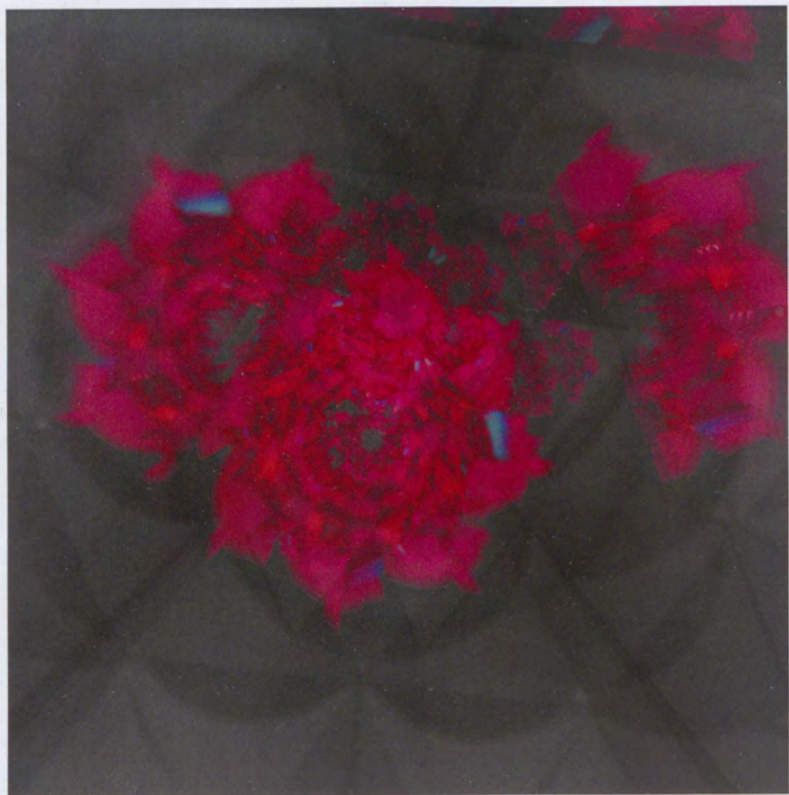
and continued onward, disappearing among the trees like the natural beings that we were, stricken by unnatural mishaps.

*Some hidden paths were born from good intentions,
built to protect the fearful not the ferocious.*



Aware and Ready, Pamela Rice, 2019.

Reflections. Kaitlyn Blow. 2018.



Greetings ≠ Validation
Greetings = Acknowledgment = Opportunities
By Ella Oppong

I grew up in a community where greetings were wel-
comed
On my way to school, I would say Good Morning

Till my tongue got dented ..
But now, I fear to say Good Morning
My tongue feels weighted
People think I say Good Morning
Because I want validation
No, no, No!

Acknowledgement ≠ Validation

People say it is because of the American Culture
But I don't think it is torture
To Receive and Reciprocate Acknowledgement

You will not die
If you said or responded to:

A Hi?
A Nod?
A Smile?

Who is to know
What doors
Will open
If you
Do.



Paris at Sunrise. Stephen Nadler. 2018.



Shoes and Flannel. Lauren Elder. 2018.

Lullaby by Silas Cleveland

Listen listen close my son
Today today is almost done
We've laughed we've cried
Gone and lived and felt alive
But now's the time to rest our heads
We'll wake tomorrow from our beds
And then we can begin again

Listen listen close my dear
Hold me tight I'll dry your tears
The scrapes and pain we have endured
The scars and memories procured
We've had our joy and laughter too
A few regrets we would redo
If we could begin again

Listen listen close my love
Gaze upon the stars above
Wonderfully we lived today
I'm thankful, and to you I say
Goodnight, sleep well, sweet dreams to you
We'll see tomorrow if our wish came true
And together we'll begin again



Platinum. Lauren Capron. 2018.



Witness. Kaitlynn Blow. 2018.

Interrogation, Josephine Sasso, 2019.





Fly High Still Life, Sahar Shakeel, 2018.

Nicholas by Jack Wassik

I could hear the sound of running water all day. As each of the professors tried to say something nice, even if they didn't know Sam. As coach held a mandatory meeting when we were supposed to be practicing. Telling us to go talk to someone, anyone. Him, counselors, our parents. But I didn't listen, the sound drowned out everything.

Everyone was sad of course, their faces were solemn, and some tears, but mine was cold, solid, straight. Coach tried to comfort us, telling us about fond memories, trying to get our hopes up, but... In the end he stood there for a few minutes, and then said, "I'll see you tomorrow at practice."

It took us a while to get up and head out of the pool deck, it took Drew and I the longest. Jamie and few others sat with us for as long as they needed too. Making sure we were all right. How could we be?

We found him...

Drew left, along with most of the people who wanted to stay with us, I don't remember when. Jamie stayed with me. I couldn't get up. I just kept on staring off at the pool. Later, as I sat there, she said that she would go and get me something to eat. She left, and...and...and I...really didn't know what to feel.

I mean I saw him Saturday morning, he was at practice, and he made breakfast afterwards. I saw his snapchat's of him out Friday night. I knew about his.... His issues, but I never thought. He never talked to us about it.

I- I thought he would work through it, like everything else. Coach always yelling at him, him stressing about grad school. Everything. He worked through everything else. I thought this would be the same. I hoped, at least...I guess.

Jamie came back some time later, but by then I was finally able to break free from sitting at the pool, staring. We went back to her place for the night. I don't know when I can go back there. Back to that street.

Maybe I won't....

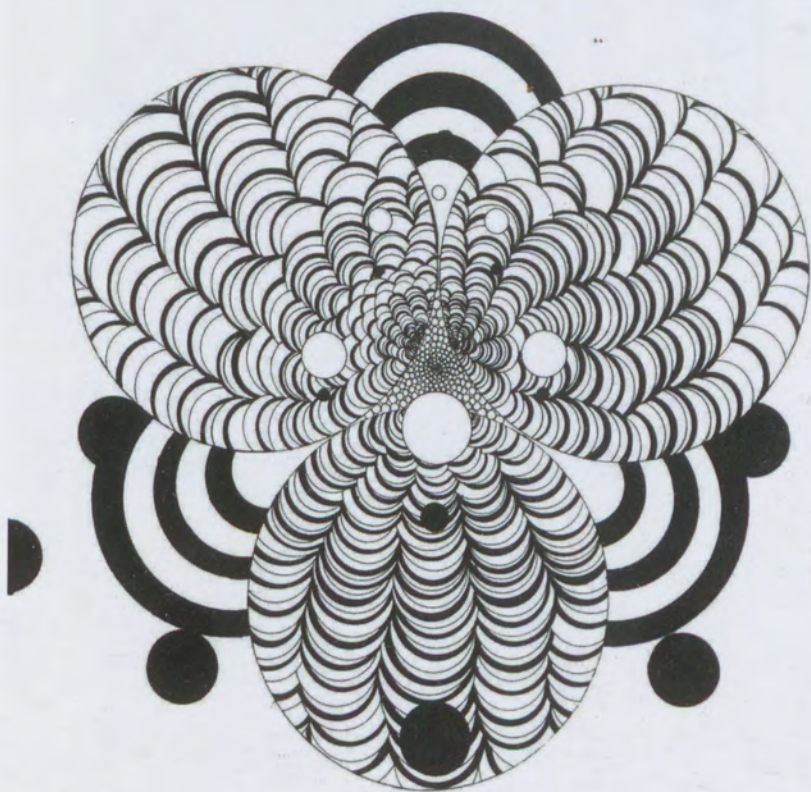


Utilize White Pencils (Parrot), Lara Atalay, 2017.

Numb by Anonymous

I'm gradually coming to
 A buzzing in my legs
 The nerves in my heels starving
 From sitting the wrong way-
 Deep red creases pressed into my skin
 From existing the wrong way
 Shifting.
 Stuck between there, here, and where
 I'm not sure where- just that it's not
 Here.
 I'm not even me,
 Rather a time remnant from there,
 Upon whose back I will ride toward where
 Where I think she wants to be
 Where she thinks I want to be.
 But I'm sorry for how residual this apology is.
 How unwhole it is.
 How late it is.
 It doesn't actually belong here.
 Something else belongs in this space.
 The one where I am standing- carrying.

I don't think I ever apologized.
 I'm sorry
 For all my quotidian grovelling,
 I'm still quite like my father in that manner.
 This doesn't belong here.
 It probably had a nice little drawer back a
 year ago.
 But I needed to carry it along
 To use it.
 Strap it on the plush skin above my knees
 And rip it tight, watching the the pressure
 drain my toes of air.
 Self administered anesthetic
 To allow myself to drag bloodied knees
 Through a voided self
 To where.
 There is no way to tell if I'll see you after I get
 where.
 I'm sorry for my obscene egocentricity
 But, you see- I had to go
 I had to go where
 Where

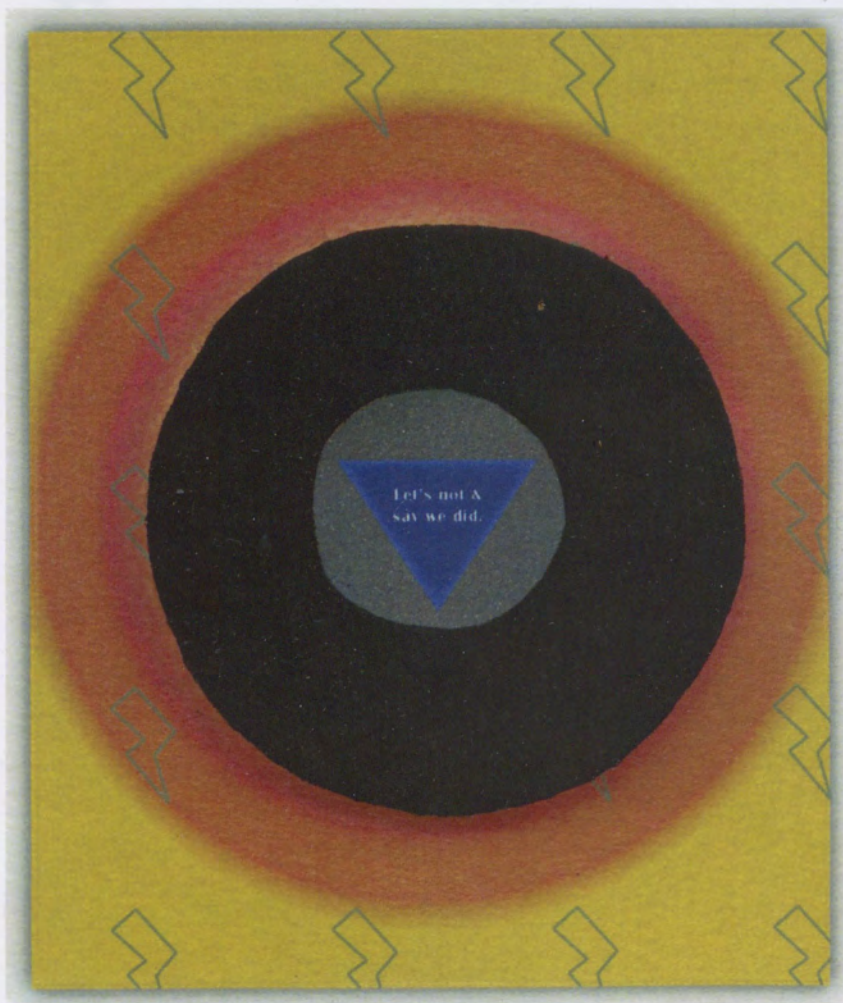


Psychedelic Flower. Sahar Shakeel, 2018.



Inferias by Chris Bendix

There is a Latin word, inferias.
It means, obsequies,
an offering to the dead,
but it translates as, inferrible,
that which cannot be carried.
My first memory of my grandfather
was when I was three.
He would pick me up from preschool,
take me to the Disney store,
and buy me candy without telling my mother.
My last memory of him was when I was eleven.
I brought him a burger and fries,
With a fanta in a glass bottle,
as he lay in bed,
run through with skin crawling tubes.
My mother told me he tried to quit cigarettes
for twenty years.
She told me he was young
when he realized they could not be carried.



Ouija On The Beat. Caitlin Buchanan. 2019.

911 by Eva Erickson

What's your emergency?

It's not mine, it's his.

There's two guys beating up this kid on the corner of Yorkshire and Second.

The inside of my car smelled of blood on cracked concrete.

There was supposed to be a meteor shower tonight. I hoped I didn't miss it.

He looked 14, maybe 15 and his adolescence tore open skin and buried in deep.

Can you give a description? Black? Latino?

Violence breeds behind barred convenience stores and in foreclosed homes.

How many nights has he suffered bruised ribs and mangled pride while lights flew by, wishing on their brightness unanswered?

I stay put. I have to.

The kid is white. He's wearing a red shirt. I don't know about the older guys.

My nails shape crescent moons into palm.

I can't bring my fists to punish more than myself.

Can you see any weapons?

I see anger and hurt and I see betrayal and there's not one side who possesses all.

There's broken glass on the sidewalk and it glints pearl white in the evening gloom.

No... no I don't think so.

I see a neighborhood drowning and I can't help but think of bedtime stories of Atlantis, the great underwater kingdom who still lives on today.

They won't survive the flood.

Where are they now?

I turn Chick Corea down even lower as if it would help my eyes see through the shadows.

They dragged the kid into a house- I can't see them anymore.

As if inside the blood will stain wallpapered flowers red.

Seep into cracked floorboards and sit in lineages of discontent.

We're sending officers to check it out right now.

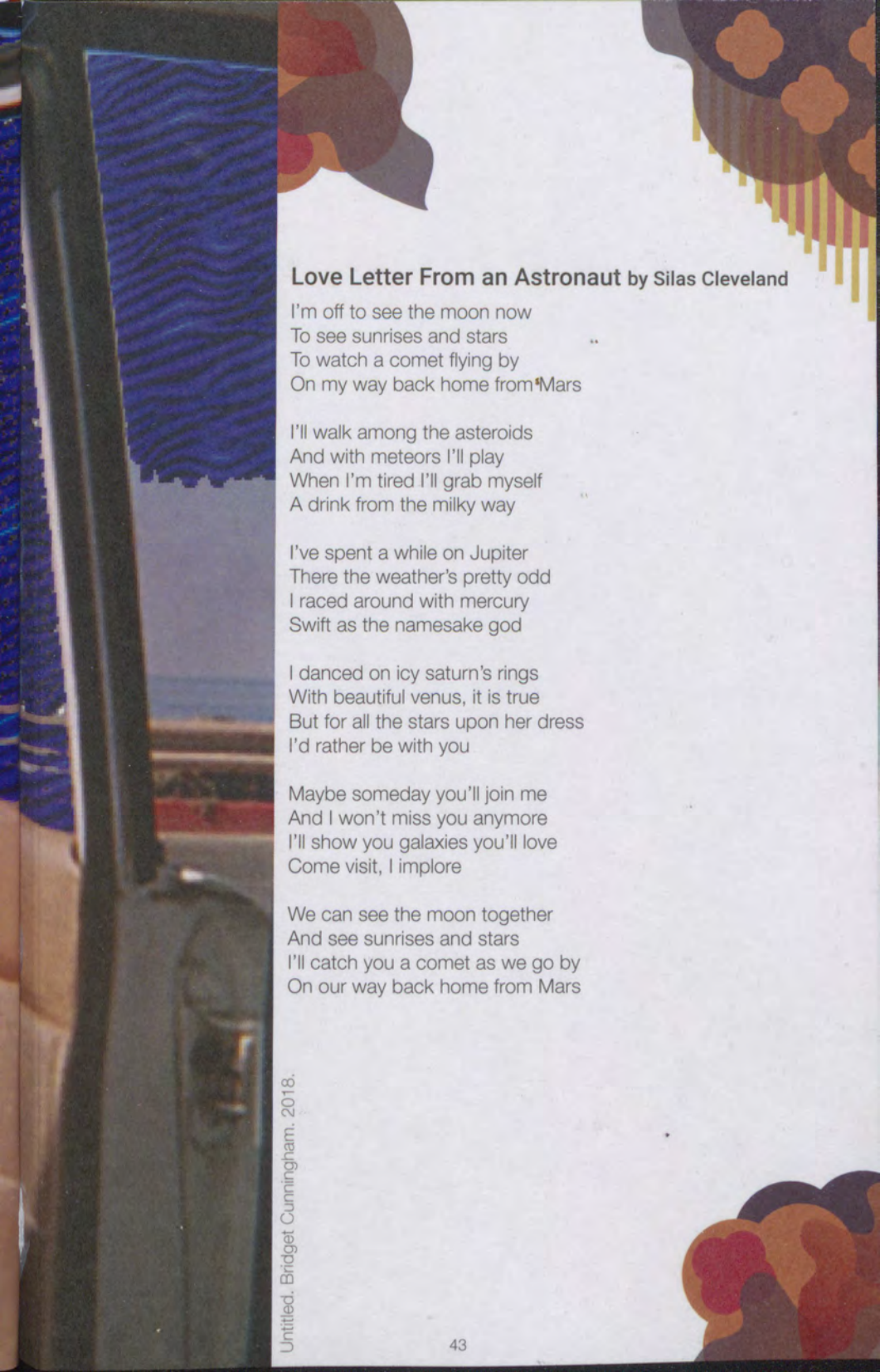
Would their flashlights be enough to illuminate the sadness hidden in empty front porch chairs?

They didn't see the kid's eyes like I did.



Treacherous. Kaitlynn Blow. 2018.





Love Letter From an Astronaut by Silas Cleveland

I'm off to see the moon now
To see sunrises and stars
To watch a comet flying by
On my way back home from Mars

I'll walk among the asteroids
And with meteors I'll play
When I'm tired I'll grab myself
A drink from the milky way

I've spent a while on Jupiter
There the weather's pretty odd
I raced around with mercury
Swift as the namesake god

I danced on icy saturn's rings
With beautiful venus, it is true
But for all the stars upon her dress
I'd rather be with you

Maybe someday you'll join me
And I won't miss you anymore
I'll show you galaxies you'll love
Come visit, I implore

We can see the moon together
And see sunrises and stars
I'll catch you a comet as we go by
On our way back home from Mars

