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Table of Contents

My Inky Shadow	1
<i>Ryan Hyunjun Park</i>	
Running Away From College.....	3
<i>Abbigail Christensen</i>	
Nocturne	5
<i>Eun Hye Kang</i>	
Beautiful Imperfections.....	6
<i>Kalpana Parsons</i>	
Waterflower Hair Piece	7
<i>Dana Trickey</i>	
Mom's Cake	8
<i>Ruth Navarro</i>	
Kids.....	9
<i>Tashi Gurung</i>	
La Gioconda.....	10
<i>John Donato</i>	
A New Friend.....	11
<i>Nyre</i>	
The Indigenous.....	14
<i>Alexandra Buscher</i>	
So Begins The Fallout	18
<i>Christina Blair</i>	
Editor's Note.....	19

My Inky Shadow

People grow up mentally and physically at different rates, so everybody has their own turning point to mature by themselves. In my case, after I was faced with a hardship, it made me to get in growth phase. I haven't recovered from the accident yet. Since I was deceived by a stranger's trap, I have had painful reminiscences about protecting people.

Two years ago, while I was walking on the Haeundae beach after Kokushin Karate training, I witnessed a crime. Three guys tried to assault and rape a girl. I ran over to protect the girl, who was in danger. Of course, it was not an easy thing, but I had enough reasons to help because I just followed in accordance with my belief that females are precious. In addition, since the girl looked like my first love, I especially had to move faster than anybody else. At the beginning, when I was protecting the girl by having the girl stand at my aside, the criminals wanted to start a fight with me. At the time, they used a baseball bat and a steel baton, therefore, I felt very nervous. Nevertheless, since I was trained with naked fists and powerful kicks very well, I could dominate the fight with the gangsters. Then, I tried to calm her down and checked her physical condition. She hugged me and cried for a while. Suddenly, she threw some white powders on me, and I couldn't see anything. And then, she kicked me in the crotch. In this instant, I blacked out and realized that I had walked into a trap blinded by my strong sense of justice. In fact, she was one of them and her crew attacked me. Later, I woke up and noticed that my nose was broken. Besides that, I got hurt badly and had short amnesia and trauma after that incident. Since the girl was similar to my first love, this was a huge shock to me.

I think this trauma influences me to have a riot of emotion because I still have vivid memories of that incident. When I dream, I sometimes have a nightmare about this trauma. It is repetitive that I always get hurt in this dream. Every time I wake up during this nightmare, I feel really afraid as if my nose is broken again. Personally, it is a really terrible memory, and I have been trying to overcome the aftershock for more than two years. While I tried to overcome this hard time, I asked myself if I had a chance to go back to that time, what I would do. Since I had this trauma, I have been trying to overcome this by myself, but I think I need more time to forget it because until this time, nothing can heal my trauma. If I can't remember anything about the woman's face or the accident, would it be better than now? No one knows what happened to me. However, I believe that this will be better than yesterday. Sometimes, people need to forget the past, and to be happy with what they have in the present.

In conclusion, I think about several ways to overcome the trauma. Although I still can't adapt to the trauma, I am sure I will recover my condition and recognize the situation whether it was the truth or not. For that reason, I hope I can square up to overcome the afterimage. As time goes on, I also realize that I don't have any reason to avoid my broken past anymore. In the end, now I call this trauma as the other name which is my broken ego that I have to endure the cross.

Running Away From College

I chug across campus. My boots making a heavy “clunk” with every step, my breath made visible by the frosty air. It’s late autumn in northwestern Minnesota, and they are predicting snow sometime this week. I love the winter... being outside. “Hey, I am gonna be gone for a while,” I say, slowly, finding my path towards the only woodlands in these parts. My backpack and jacket weigh me down, pulling on my upper back. I am not used to walking this far with this much load. But I don’t mind. “I am running away from college... I need to get away,” I say. Walking along for only about a half mile before reaching the western tree line, I begin feeling like Henry David Thoreau: practicing my survival skills, becoming one with nature, and trying to make sense of my mind by going to live in the woods. “When will you be back?” he asks. “I don’t know,” I say. “Okay, stay safe and warm.” He says, as I say goodbye. Reaching the interface, I look into the ominous depths of the living timber: twisting and churning paths through the woods. Slowly disappearing, step after step, clunk after clunk, winding, ducking, trying to find some place to hide in silence, in the woods.

Smirking and thumping my feet, I decide it’s time to settle down. Finding myself on the edge of a wheat field, where the trees happen to be strategically placed just so that I can build my hut: working away, in the woods, by myself, with the freedom to be myself. I find an upward curl forming at the edge of my lip: something beginning to fill my chest. Throwing my blanket over the top, finally, my haven is complete. Only big enough for one person, I crawl in, curl up and just lay there alone, at peace.

I see the clouds engulf the sky, giving the sun time to sleep. Closing my eyes, feeling the breeze flirt with my hair, the cold snap at my nose; chilled, I curl up tighter, clamping the warm air in. I lay, listening: the earth bellowing its gallops of wind

giving the old pines their time to dance, almost as if someone is trying to whisper in my ear. The contagious contentment of nature—life—surrounding me; my upward curl infecting the rest of my face—my whole expression: beaming—understanding silence can be so loud at times, though people rarely take the time to listen to its soft voice. Pulling my knees into my chest, I lay, completely at ease within the silence, slipping swiftly into a joyful slumber.

The skies are dimming and the temperature is beginning to drop. Realizing I have been lying on the ground for almost an hour now, my stomach yowls at me. I decide to release my warm pocket of air and crawl out of my hut. I begin to stretch my strained muscles rapidly sensing I am not alone. I hear leaves rustle; a branch snaps. A sudden hush overcomes the field; slowly turning around, I find myself staring into the eyes of a deer. Time seems to halt: with all the earth standing still: immoveable, un-touchable, silence. He stares at me awestruck, I stare at him awe inspired. In an instant he soars into the frosty field, bounding, floating over wheat and air, the world streaming in slow motion. My stomach interrupted my gawking, and I proceeded packing all my stuff back into my sack, realizing running away from college was one of my better worst ideas. With the sky growing darker, I wander out of my hiding place, hearing the hoot of an owl as I clunk my way into the opening. Taking out my phone, “I don’t want to be alone in the dark anymore,” I say, “I want to come back.” “Well, where are you?” he asks. Looking around, I respond, “By the entrance to the park,” nonchalantly snaking my way around the rocks and sticks towards the front. Replying he says, “I am on my way...” I rest my aching body on a boulder. Bit by bit, I begin to piece together my broken world: my existence. Then in a moment, it all clicks. My lungs collapse as I become speechless, “I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what I had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.” —Henry David Thoreau (Walden)

Nocturne

When the Earth is sleeping
Quietude
I see your green smile
You are awake, slow but brave

When your green touch kisses my feet
Enlightenment
I let the air traverse my body
You clean me out, I am reborn

When I sip your green breath
Relief
I snuggle into the hope you compose
You silhouette yourself with green night

Oh our green night-
Green shiny green embrace

Beautiful Imperfections

A shorter than average boy,
Or a taller than average girl,
A mole on the right cheek,
Or a hyena sounding laugh,
What a way to add some class and individuality
We were made to be un-perfect on purpose.

We were made to be un-perfect on purpose.
For perfection is out of the ordinary.
Imperfections are ordinary.

Without them we would laugh at the hyena sounding person,
The person with the mole on his right cheek,
The taller than average girl
And the shorter than average boy

Imperfections
They're what make us human.
Without them, we get even more excited
when we excel at something
Or when someone calls us beautiful.

If you're that weird one with the mole on your right cheek
Realize that it's not so weird.
You'll be able to sleep.

Imperfections
They help define who we are,
And what we may become.

Dana Trickey

Waterflower Hair Piece



Mom's Cake



Kids



Mona Lisa



A New Friend

I had gone to bed early that night. No particular reason, there was just nothing else to do. I woke up a little after midnight, I sat up on the bed and stretched. Feeling quite strange, I stood up, turned around and saw myself still lying in bed, asleep. Instantly, I realized that I had learned how to detach my spiritual self from my physical self.

Now this would take a bit of getting used to. I didn't actually walk, I sort of floated. And not having to open doors... that was a struggle. I wanted to go outside so I tried concentrating on grabbing the doorknob, turning it, then opening the door. After a few unsuccessful attempts, I wished that I could just be outside, and there I was, as simple as that. As I glided up the street, it was like exploring a whole new world. I was so amazed to be outside, aware of everything going on at that moment and still having my body in the bed, sleeping.

I went to the corner store knowing there would be plenty of activity, and I was not disappointed by any means. I saw a woman wearing a dress so small, that it should belong to a ten-year-old. She was trying to flag down every car that rode by. I saw a couple of men doing what appeared to be a drug transaction. Almost forgetting my invisibility, I kept my distance so as not to intrude upon them. Then, I saw a man walking around in an obvious drunken state. He seemed to be looking for someone, his wife, or girlfriend, maybe. He struggled to keep his balance, angry and determined. "Come here pumpkin," he yelled. "Come back home...I promise I won't do anything." He was almost begging. "Where are you, baby?"

I barely hear the mumble that followed, "Wait 'til I find that lil' bitch."

His demeanor was chilling. Who could he be looking for? I strode around to the back of the building and in a dark corner, behind the shadows, I saw a young girl who couldn't have been older than five. She was so precious and beautiful, and so scared. I couldn't tell if she were shivering because of the cold or from fright. I just wanted to pick her up and hold her. But knowing that I didn't have my body, I felt helpless to protect her. Then she looked dead into my eyes and asked, "Are you an angel?" Her eyes were wide with anticipation.

"No," I answered, "I'm just an everyday average person." I couldn't believe that she could see me. After a few seconds of silence, we heard what I knew now to be her father, coming closer. "Come on!" I whispered. She ran with me across the street to a church that stood adjacent to the store. I prayed that a door would be unlocked as she tried each one. The last door that we came to was our last hope. She hesitated before yanking the door open, as if to say, if this door is locked, then I'll break it open. When the door swung wide, I said to myself, "God is with us."

We entered into the basement and saw pictures of bible stories and papers taped to the walls. Some were colored with crayons; many had stars or "A"s on them. This was noticeably a day care or nursery school during the week. I glided into a room that was carpeted and sat down, Indian style, on the floor. She sat down, knees in front of her, in my lap. I put my arms around her, and even though I could provide no physical warmth, our hearts warmed each other. "I wish you were my momma," her voice filled with sadness.

"Where is your momma?" I inquired.

"I don't know." Her words broke my heart.

She soon drifted off to sleep. I quickly followed; comforted in knowing we were safe.

I woke up the next day at exactly 8:53 a.m. I know because I found myself in my bed staring at the clock in my room. I lay in the bed thinking about the previous night. I tried to convince myself that it was only a dream, but it seemed so real. To think it actually happened seemed too fantastic, so I didn't mention it to anyone. That day I drove around the neighborhood looking for her, I knew that if I saw her playing outside then I would know what I experienced was real. I could talk to her and try to get some help. I rode around a seven block radius for almost two hours. I never saw her. My hopes began to fade so I went home and tried to forget about it. It couldn't have been real.

It was a couple of weeks later that I thought of her again. On a Sunday morning, I awoke with her on my mind. "She was so precious," I unwittingly said out loud. I decided to go back to that church in hopes of receiving some spiritual enlightening. But it was 10:20; I'd have to hurry to make it there for the 11:00 service.

It was 11:18 when I got into my car. I was having second thoughts about going. I didn't want to go to church late, especially one that I had never gone to before. I decided to ride over there anyway and then choose whether or not to go in, once I got there. As I pulled into the empty lot across from the church, I saw a little girl standing out front. She was looking left and right, apparently waiting for someone. I thought, "It couldn't be!" I parked the car and looked again. It was her. It was the same little girl. I quickly got out of the car and ran across the street. When she saw me she smiled the smile of an angel. I ran up to her and held onto her for dear life. She held me just as tightly. "I knew you'd come back," she said with tears streaming down her face, "I knew you'd come back."

The Indigenous

I first came into the city in the summer of the Pandemic Wars.

The retreating sun licked the sweat from my cheeks with its coarse, burning tongue, but that was nothing new to me. I did not shield my face, and my feet I kept bare even as they plodded along those smooth, foreign streets: foreign streets in my own land, foreign streets that rushed up into great, shining towers that erupted like a blister on the face of my beloved home. Craning my neck to the sky, I could see more man than earth, and though the large glass walls cast reflections of the sunset and scattered it across one another's smooth, flawless sides, I knew that whatever beautified majesty this Empire created was only a façade, a dream from the pretenses of weak men. The many glowing eyes of the city awakened one by one as the light crept farther and farther beyond the horizon. The parasite lived on.

I recalled again the words of my grandfather. "Never trust the white man," he had told Mother when she was but my age. "His soul is as transparent as his skin. His veins are blue, and his eyes weep as though shamed by the wind's harsh kiss." None were left now but me, her only daughter, to let his words live on. And yet she had begged me to come to this forsaken place, requested on her deathbed that I turn to the white man like blood rushes to the wound. Seek employment. Escape the misery, the poverty, the disease. Embrace the Empire, Mye'ke. It is the only way. Desperation had overcome her solidity.... And so I found myself in the city.

All around me, to the left and right, front and back—yes, even above in the towers and below in the tunnels, I knew—swarmed the denizens of the Empire, scurrying along like termites from chamber to chamber, each with his own empty mission, each dwelling secretly in hunger for the success he was never destined to taste. My eyes laid witness to many strange, sad beings: well-groomed men who looked more like plastic than flesh; they

dwelt in lifeless pallor, whereas I... well, my eyes were dark like obsidian, and my skin was the color of rich soil. They all clothed themselves in uniform, screaming to one another, "Conform!"... but my robes were meant for my body alone, intricate and non-replicable. I was not like them. My stringy, black hair sprang from my scalp as if to rebuke the false order that this race had instilled, and I flattened my nostrils the way I would when the air was thick with sand. There was something perverse about passing a woman who looked like a man, something innately wrong with the way these people shielded their eyes behind their lenses and their souls behind their pocketbooks.

I did not refrain from staring. A young man—even younger than I—caught my gaze and glanced away meekly, pretending to rub away a smear on his shades and diverting to the side. In his wake trailed an android, a man made of metal, cold and empty but following obediently in time with the other condemned wanderers. It had no heart, I knew, but it somehow fit in with the rest of them.

I could sense the man approaching before I saw him; something about the scent of his generic cologne and the strike of his shoes on the pavement whispered that I turn around to meet him. "Hello, Miss?" probed he as I twisted to capture his gaze. It was an older man, probably as old as my grandfather would have been had he still been alive, but this one walked upright as though he were much younger. His pale eyes squinted into my face from behind thick, shining lenses. Peppery stubble crept from his cheeks to the circumference of his head, speckling it like trees around a mountain's bald peak. In his rough, bony hands he gripped a bagged submarine sandwich that I supposed he had picked up from the station across the street. His breath hissed from the depths of sharp, slender nostrils. Altogether, there was something about him that reminded me very much of a vulture. As though to further emphasize this queer similarity, he blinked

his sagging eyelids and continued, "May I help you?" His smile revealed a stripe of teeth in perfect synthetic alignment. Thoughtfully, I looked him over and considered whether or not it would be in my best interest to trust this strange, smiling vulture-man. "I seek employment," I pronounced slowly, selecting each word as it slithered from my lips. Although he was taller than me, I raised my head so that my eyes felt at a level with his. I was not about to beg for his help the way my mother would have. "Ah, I see," said he. He pursed his lips thoughtfully and then shook his head with an energetic whirl as though stirred from a daydream. Gripping my hand cordially, he announced, "Doctor Ritter. Sociology, not medicine. I saw you wandering around, figured you might be lost, Miss Ahhh... And your name would be?" His mouth hung open as he waited for my answer. "Mye'ke," I finished for him. "Well, Mye'ke, the Empire's always willing to take in newcomers, but I suppose you'll figure that out soon enough." He glanced to the west, finding that the sun had now retreated entirely for the evening. The glow of the city splayed across his greasy temples as he squinted towards the gold-lined horizon. "Doubtlessly, they will find a task suitable for you just like they do the rest of us. First time in the city?" A woman passed us by, dressed like a tramp and hiding it badly from beneath her coat. Her heels forced her to walk in an awkward, jerking fashion that these men of the city somehow found attractive. Never trust the white man. By the time he had turned to look back at me, I had vanished in with the rest of the crowd, my legs devouring the ground beneath me. I was not like these machines, never. I was not to be programmed, to submit to their false gods, to take part in the pursuit of imaginary success. They will find a task suitable for you. The thought was like bile bubbling in my throat, worthy only to be spat into the dust and boiled in the midday heat. I am human! I wanted to scream it at this ignorant world, this simple idea that burned within me but was smothered under the weight of the Empire's conquest. I am human, and I will never submit to the Empire! I found myself sprinting heatedly down the street, weaving

my way through the throngs of dead beat phantoms, each without soul or face. They directed looks of scorn and uttered cries of disgust at me as I dashed past their uniform bodies, but their emotions did not mean anything. They were nobody. I remember, then, that through the blur of nameless nobodies, the clammy fingers and the empty eyes, my attention fixed itself on a beacon that had appeared in front of me: an orb of light a ways ahead whose attractive luminescence grew as the silver-speckled mantle of night settled upon the world. Indeed, it seemed to have swallowed the light of the departed sun and stolen its duty for the time being. As I moved closer, close enough to run my hand along its smooth glass side, I could see that it was a dome of sorts: a glorious, radiant rotunda, the sun's lost brother that had fallen to the earth. It wasn't as large as its relatives, but it sprayed light all around as though mindless of this fact. It was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. I leaned my head against its surprisingly warm surface and could see that the most wonderful, secluded universe lay within its protective casing. It was a welcome world of green, a lush garden of delicate, fleshy leaves and thick, strong tendrils that weaved like little snakes around smooth branches and rough, barky trunks. I followed their path all the way to the center of the dome and gasped, for at its heart rested the proudest tree of them all, presiding as a benevolent queen over her subjects. Within her green embrace, I could see a young man in a stained coat smile and crinkle his eyes as a dainty, young woman whispered something unintelligible into his ear. Laughing, she sauntered out of eyesight. Turning, I pressed my back against the glass and looked to the sky, blinking tears from my lashes and wondering if the white men, with their weak eyes and city lights, ever saw the stars. Grandpa had told Mother not. And, as though in answer: "Darling," proclaimed a billboard, adorned with a garishly dressed woman, "we make the stars."

So Begins The Fallout

So begins the fallout....

It strikes and everything becomes just a daze.

Start crying on the inside, but laugh on the cover.

Looking around for a way out of this maze.

Lost somewhere and sinking ever so deeper.

Waiting. Just waiting for the right moment.

Pause and turn just to find more cold space.

Time becomes abstract. Losing shape and bent.

Never would have guessed it was a race.

Here the crack grows larger in time.

Continuing to hurt with the passing.

Thinking, one day you could have been mine.

But accepting instead the idea of dreaming.

And so now begins the fallout of the heart.

As it shrinks back inward and turns away.

Can no longer stand the idea of the depart.

Seals the doors and shutters from the betray.

Quietly disappearing from all sight.

Not a single soul pauses in the way.

Can't even spare a desperate fight.

But finally the soul breaks down to pray.

Editor's Note

By Linnea Barton

I would like to first and foremost thank the other members of our selection panel:

Rachel McCoppin

Owen Williams

John Zak

Sonia Spaeth

I would also like to thank Patti Tiedemann for the production layout and design.

It has been a great privilege to be a part of the production of this first issue. The original idea came from Shou-Ching Chao, former Writing Center Coordinator who made great contributions in the early days to get this project started. Without him, this volume would not exist. It was a great joy to see the creative work of students and staff across the University of Minnesota Campus have a chance to be seen by a great community. I look forward to April 1st, 2012 when we once again get to pour over submissions and see the hearts of the literary and artistic community that exists on our campus.



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