

The Beacon



Unpeel, Good Fruit

Summer 2026 Issue

Unpeel, Good Fruit

A Beacon at Boston University Publication

Unpeel, Good Fruit

Contents

Unpeel, Good Fruit

Editor's Note

The Original Trope, *George Brown** & *Amelie Tonoyan**

I. Blossom

fan, <i>Jay Brecker</i>	1
ਮਾਏ ਨੀ / Mother, <i>Paramjit Singh</i>	2
In Boston with Robin Hood, <i>Steve Nickman</i>	3
Eucharist in Orange, <i>Daniella Parkinson*</i>	5
Where No Road, <i>Xiaoly Li</i>	6
A Snapping Turtle Feast, <i>Matthew Sisson</i>	7
Jesus at Six, <i>David Miller</i>	8
On Hold... Holding On, <i>June Rowe</i>	9
	10

II. Ripen

Ode to August, <i>Daniella Parkinson*</i>	12
Past Ten P.M., <i>David Miller</i>	13
Nightmares Chased Me, <i>Connemara Wadsworth</i>	14
The Color of January, <i>Lo Galluccio</i>	15
Walkathon, <i>Shana Hill</i>	17
the bats 6 meters below, <i>Simran Kaur*</i>	19
Homeless Alphabet: Cul-de-sac, Adventure, Flooding (see Swedish letters below)	21
<i>Gunilla Kester</i>	22
Psalm: The Busboy Who Starred in "The Boyfriend," <i>Tom Daley</i>	23

III. Bruise

Death of A Cat, <i>Eric Braude</i>	25
My Daughter's Baptism, <i>Lisa Rua-Ware</i>	26
ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ / Mud Houses, <i>Paramjit Singh</i>	27
The Decree of the Skies, <i>George Brown*</i>	29
Italian Cinema, <i>Andrey Gritsman</i>	31
It Brings a Perspective, <i>Gunilla Kester</i>	33
"Bild Lilli," <i>Michell Williams</i>	35
This Moment is This Moment's Last, <i>Susanna Rich</i>	36
Lament of a Flutist's Live-In, <i>Eric Braude</i>	37
	38

* Featuring Staff

The Beacon is committed to creating and fostering a space that uplifts young voices at Boston University. With that commitment, all contributors, regardless of their position within the Beacon, are subjected to the same anonymous review process. It is of the utmost importance that each piece is selected based on its content rather than the author at large.

The Beacon at Boston University

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The Original Trope*

The Sick Rose

O Rose thou art sick.
The invisible worm,
That flies in the night
In the howling storm:

Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy;
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.
— WILLIAM BLAKE

The orchard planting party was held in May in Upstate New York, near where the Bouquet River meets Lake Champlain, and just following an esoteric earthquake that had fissured the sandy soil there. A long table was set up, covered in protective whitish plastic, and on it, sweaty cold cuts were spread.

Two rows of holes were to be dug. Each would be two feet deep and spaced fifteen to twenty feet from the next, ensuring optimal pollination. We collected shovels and picks for the occasion.

The first couple of holes were completed without fuss. But, breaking the ground for the third, my father hit something. Corrupted wood fragmented into mist. Then the next hit, and when he raised the pickaxe, it was covered in gray hair.

This was considered a party foul. Discussions were held on whether to call the police, on the nature of this makeshift coffin and its relation to the previous owner. The party went on, though. The orchard was planted.

Two decades later, every October that land produces catastrophic quantities of pocked McIntosh apples. Hopelessly, the fruity deluge is collected for pies and sauces, until the black bears move in with their families to take care of the rotten rest.

Hubris is like that. There is such a thing as too many McIntosh. And, more broadly, it is true: apples are overdone.

From Genesis to Snow White, to Magritte's *The Son of Man*, to *The Hunger Games*, the apple is surely the original trope. This summer, *The Beacon* agonized over the question: "Which fruit?" We decided on the most basic. I could say it is because of the resonance of this universal symbol, and that we endeavor to build on a legacy of reddish, delicate sin.

More broadly, however, I will always love a crisp McIntosh in October.

Throughout this issue, we traverse a cycle of blooming, ripening, and bruising, as the titular fruit is peeled, allowing a figure to emerge. Maybe this figure is the corpse inside that shoddy coffin, which was confirmed to be a beloved sheepdog laid to rest years prior. Maybe it is that form that decays so the orchard may be abundant, so the cycle continues.

From 1876 to 2026, *The Beacon* stands as a testament to the generations of students who have given their time, ideas, and voices to its pages, and to the many more who will carry that tradition forward. Thank you to all those who made this issue possible.

Lovingly,

— George Brown & Amélie Tonoyan

September 21st, 2026

In the deepest recesses of Mugar Library, BU

I. Blossom



The Beacon at Boston University

fan

Jay Brecker

HVACs choir with our fan fanning
the darkness on medium-high

summer—a sleepless child—controls
our bed doing its kind of work—

turning a white cotton cover
stitched in orange thread to a bear-

skin now vanquished folded over
a chair our sheets colorless damp

with heat as we seek the portal
of sleep somewhere within the fan's

white noise only to wake again
alarmed threatened hillsides in flame



"Pine Mountain Lost & Found," photograph by Juli Luke

ਮਾਏ ਨੀ / Mother
Paramjit Singh

ਮਾਏ ਨੀ ਵੇਖ ਰੁੱਖ ਹਰੇ ਵੀ ਸੜ ਗਏ
Mother, look—even the green trees have burned.

ਤੇ ਵਗਦੇ ਦਰਿਆ ਵੀ ਗਏ ਨੇ ਮੁੱਕ
Even the rivers that once flowed have run dry.

ਤੁਰ ਗਏ ਮਹਰਿਮ ਸਭ ਵਾਰੋ-ਵਾਰੀ
One by one, those dearest to us have departed.

ਤੇ ਪੈਡੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਵੀ ਚੱਲੇ ਨੇ ਮੁੱਕ
And our own journey, too, is nearing its end.

ਮਾਏ ਨੀ ਵੇਖ ਵਗਣ ਤੱਤੀਆਂ ਹਵਾਵਾਂ
Mother, feel how the scorching winds now blow.

ਤੇ ਸੱਧਰਾਂ ਮੇਰੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੈਵਣ ਸੇਕ
They sear the hopes I have carried in my heart.

ਸ਼ਰਮ ਹਯਾ ਦੇ ਅਸੀ ਕਰੀਏ ਪੱਲੇ
Let us hold fast to modesty and grace.

ਜੱਗ ਚੰਦਰਾ ਕਤਿ ਲਏ ਨਾ ਵੇਖ
Lest this ill-fated world cast its gaze upon us.

ਮਾਏ ਨੀ ਵੇਖ ਪਰਦੇਸੀ ਸਾੜਨ ਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ
Mother, shades in foreign lands are burning me.

ਤੇ ਠਰ ਪਾਵੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਵਤਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਧੁੱਪ
And the thought of sunshine of my homeland soothes me.

ਕਹਿਾ ਰਜ਼ਿਕ ਨਸੀਬੀ ਲਖਿਆ ਸਾਡੇ
Such is the livelihood destiny has written for us.

The Beacon at Boston University

ਦੋ ਗਜ਼ ਧਰਤ ਨਾ ਕਤਿ ਜਾਵੇ ਮੁੱਕ

I fear I may not find even two yards of land.

Unpeel, Good Fruit

In Boston with Robin Hood

Steve Nickman

We walked down Charles Street, you and I—
therapists used to do that sort of thing
with their young patients,
a way to be together without expectation
or confrontation—
and you told me about grievances
you had with school and family.
Aggrievance
was your ticket of entry.

What stays with me now
forty years later
is how generous you wanted to be
to the owner of a parked car
with a ticket stuck to the windshield.
You pulled it off,
crumpled it, put it in your pocket.
You told me proudly,
Now they won't have to pay!

Eucharist in Orange

Daniella Parkinson

"I know this one!" You grab me by the hand and at once I am dizzy. I am pulled forward, whisked atop some effervescent radio hit, suddenly sparkly and aperol-fizzed in a way that is only you. a

If you were split down the middle, you would part splendidly, all vibrance and perfect symmetry, like a clementine. I almost saw it once, when we were girls and you bestowed upon us mighty reign over our bedroom, slipping atop our feather-pillow fortress as you scurried to make room for me, head kissing the floor in a resounding crack. Our mother was so agonized by the sight of you oozing out onto our tangerine carpet that she took to stress-picking, leaving little piles of eyelashes on the kitchen counter in the wake of each reckless pursuit. Although less thrilling post-reprimand, that winter was just as holy, spent painting our nails a patchy coral pink under ivory ribbons of moonlight, so little that each toe was a single stroke of polish, wielded, of course, with the ferocity of a mighty swordswoman.

I am almost distracted, caught up in your song, your smile, your hand in mine, when I see it.

It lingers, over there, and over there, a moment achingly tender, fall-off-the-bone perfect. It is ordinary and yet so ubiquitous it must be divine: You, in the purple of your mouth, a fanged vacuum for blackberries come early autumn's picking season, our father would tease. You, in the ditzzy spin of my cocktail umbrella, pancake-stuffed and twirling through the kitchen on socked pointe. You, in that stubborn hangnail, ivory and not yet sharp, a perfect waning moonshape, right there, on me. Us, in the champagne flute of a passing waiter, lazing tummy-up in the watery casts of that big runny yolk in the sky. We would trap its reflection in cupped palms, laughing underwater like geysers, liquid gold gliding between pruny fingers: slippery, elusive. I blink and you slip through my fingers like water.

Remembering is like biting into an orange rind. Each time, I am struck with a bittersweetness so pungent that it sticks sourly to the roof of my mouth. I let myself believe that I have found you all around me, but when I look down it is just me in my skin. I am alone in it.

I want to take out bits of me and push it down, crack, and make room for you. I want to peel each reverie to the pith and swallow what I can hold of you in one toothless bite. I want to be hallowed, grotesque – the warped moulting of what's left of someone; and I want your voice, declaring proudly, eyes on mine, "I know this one." I want to look down at my skin and see the theology of us: little scars from tireless autumn scavenging amidst the blackberry brambles, red skin peeling at the knuckles from our sunbaked summers on the lake; and at once I am sick of you and beg to pluck from me the bits of you that reign over my periphery and leave them in a tidy pile on the kitchen counter to rot.

I prayed to god last night and his mouth smelled of aperol and I think I died with you a little.

Where No Road

Xiaoly Li

— my friend Ron's story

Icicles hung
from the rusted roof.
In the dim room, my father's breath
reeked of Schlitz, and pot
was hurled at me.

He dragged me
to the Psych ward,
so electric shock sizzled
out my shouts, my fists,
and my rebellion, bleached
me like the sterile walls.

The night the blackbirds
sang until dawn,
he coaxed me drunk
with a young girl.
I was made a father,
while still a boy.

Crows cawed loud,
he forced me out
of the barren house —
keeping me from
his hunger, his liquor.

When the grass stands
green again I will be
a schoolteacher for kids,
be rain on a dry day —
rise where there is no road.



A Snapping Turtle Feast

Matthew Sisson

I am invited to a snapping turtle
feast. An estranged uncle. Asked
to participate in the butchering.

Out back the turtle waits. Mouth
hooked like a bird of prey, but
larger, open, waiting for a mistake.
Be careful, they can take a finger-
eyes closed. I have no intention
of getting any closer.

He hits the animal on the head. My
cousin cuts it off. Flipped on its shell,
still squirming, a screwdriver is driven
through belly and shell, impaling
carcass to bench. Claws are removed
first, they can still get you. Bushcraft.
You are either in or out.

Some force a hose down the neck hole
to expand the belly. Making it easier
to cut open the underside- This can
rupture the innards, ruining the meat.
He slowly scrapes a knife between
belly skin and shell. Keep a sharpening
stone nearby. You are scraping against
two million years of evolution. Body
removed from shell- the work quickly
finished. The meat, grey and green.

I am committed to family reconciliation.
Have not seen my cousins in decades, but
cannot eat turtle stew- filling my plate with
cornbread and vegetables. Conversation
continues. My uncle says nothing.

Unpeel, Good Fruit

Jesus at Six

David Miller

I'm certain I was six years old
when something first went strange
about God. Or what the grownups
claimed for God – Him, they pronounced it.

Something first went strange when
my question about Jesus also questioned
claims for God, pronounced He/Him/His
though nobody saw Him face-to-bearded-face.

When my question about Jesus threatened
my own immortal soul, I was surely six.
Though nobody saw him face-to-bearded-face
the grownups swore Jesus was real. But was he?

My soul, on loan from God, must have been six
years in my mortal body. Not five.
The grownups swore Jesus was real. But was he?
I already knew myths, fables, moral tales.

Six years in my mortal body. (Not five,
a year too young to question if church stories
could cousin-up with myths, fables, moral tales.)
Jesus was good, I knew. But who had seen him?

Five years was too young to doubt church storylines.
By seven I was playing my self-conscious self.
Jesus was good, I knew that, but who had seen him?
Nobody in church, for sure, despite the pictures.

At seven I was a self-conscious self,
too kid-brainy for a six-year-old's simple question.
Nobody in church, for sure, though there were pictures,
had seen Jesus in the flesh. They weren't *that* old.



The Beacon at Boston University

On Hold... Holding On

June Rowe

Our options have changed, please listen carefully:

Press one for hours and location

Press two for a refill

Three, if you're pessimistic

Four to speak with the pharmacist.

Listen to music while you wait?

First press five, then:

Press one for the elevator.

Press two if you like jazz.

Three if you prefer silence.

Are you still waiting? Still hanging

on hold for the pharmacist?

Are you feeling faint?

are alarm bells going off in your ears?

Press one, if you can't get up

dial 911 for automated instructions

beware, pressing five does no good

you need to start over

I'm not a real person so lets start over press 1

press two to be misdirected

yelling at me does no good

Unpeel, Good Fruit

press one for hours and locations

press two for a refill

I don't understand what you're saying

stop yelling listen carefully

our options have changed

press seven if it has been over an hour

eight if over three over easy

press anything to return to our list of options

CLICK

II. Ripen



Unpeel, Good Fruit

Ode to August

Daniella Parkinson

And just like that! I have devoured July to the pit
I have tempered the curdle of midsummer
And I am emerged, dizzy and unsated
Please, forgive my wine-drunk suckle
Into the hot yawn of summertime –
Drowsy August! I stagger into you
Sticky and sweat-slick inebriate
I am margarine body, gaping – and you!
You are hot and balming to wade into
Open your mouth to me!
And I will climb headfirst into the soft redness behind your incisors
And let you have the first bite

Past Ten P.M.

David Miller

This subway train rests like a contented cow
savoring the evening's cud. Ruminates, placid
at the station, all its doors yawning.
My wife and I are stalled inside its innards,
waiting for the balky thing to budge.

A man stalks up and down the platform,
yards from us, on an unconnected plane.
Furious shorebird on an inflamed beach.
His voice: what is it? Electric sander.
Talk-radio shouter with bad reception.

The train lolls, dull and open-mouthed.
The man hotfoots across his burning sands
till he arrests himself outside our car,
eyes in our direction through the window.
We don't dare look at him, can't look away.

I could claim that his glare shivers the barrier.
But he ensures that with two full-arm,
rock against plexiglass smashes, aimed at us.
Spider cracks spring from an oval wound.
This feels too strange to have truly happened.

I wonder, vaguely, why he doesn't board this stupid,
sleepy beast. Maybe its guts repel his nightmare
as our train wakes at last from sleepy-time,
ambles to its next familiar meadow.

Nightmares Chased Me
Connemara Wadsworth

*

in the dark basement
searching to hide
I am naked
mouth open
mute
I wake in
wet sweat

*

an unpaved road
dusty as Baghdad,
who chases me
I'm clothed
search for help—
a bus, store, a car
there is no
door to open

*

often my cries
soundless, others not
on a weekend with friends
the four of us happy
that night I called
called out, woke
all of us, my companions
cheered me on

*

The Beacon at Boston University

as I descended into
water, I felt the weight
of a child tied to me
I reconciled myself
to drowning but as I
emerge, I sleepwalk
along the pier, boats
still dredging for us,
lost hope—the scene
closes without me, weeping



Unpeel, Good Fruit

The Color of January *Lo Galluccio*

*On the straw of fatalists
The lighted star-foam flows.
There is no absence that cannot be replaced.*
Rene Char, "The Chain"

Sometimes. Sometimes I think your hatred for yourself is exquisitely balanced by your love of death-defying acts.

January...January.

You ask me to come and crawl into your clean sheets with you. You make love to me, and then – you weep until your eyes are the famous plus signs. As if you were my child, I hold you and tell you that tears will build up in your ears if you keep crying – until little men begin to fish in boats in your head.

Do you want that?

Something happened. Before this. I thought about having 300 years. You asked, "You mean for today?" "Or for life?" As if there were any difference between one day in a life and life's time. But I mean both. "What are you thinking," you ask me. A few tears trickle down my temples. "Did you have another dream?" "Are you thinking about your father?" "No, I say, "about you." "About mortality." Now I can't remember what made you start to cry. We were lying there, and the room looked serene. The color of January. White and hollow. Like the ghost of an owl. I said, "Isn't the white light beautiful?" And you said, "Yes, it's Northern light."

Have I made a theatrical career about time I don't have?

Sometimes you scare me. I want to feed your hunger. And bounce back from it too. You say you're like a wild puppy. But once while I was running I saw you as a lean grey coyote baying into the moon. As if you'd lost the earth and wanted the moon to caress you.

Sometimes you say I'm a hot hot star in your bed. "What color would you like me to be?" you ask. I say, "blue."

The Beacon at Boston University

Do you know you hurt me sometimes. Sometimes it's like a needle afterwards. Your back is my Paris. Your mouth is my childhood. Your hands ring bells in my blood. You are the same one as all the ones I lost.



Unpeel, Good Fruit

Walkathon

Shana Hill

I told her she had to pay
The rich lady on Bates Street in Cambridge
Had told her it was a dollar a mile
She was mad from the start but took the pledge for the hungry.
She liked her garden though she probably never touched dirt.
I had convinced her. I told her it's a walkathon.

On that 20 mile walk
I ate an apple. Didn't have to pay
for it. When it got down to the core, I threw it in the dirt
so it could biodegrade. I learned that word on the bridge
we crossed. I wasn't even that hungry
but I had to walk another 5 miles.

When I was on the eighteenth mile
I saw the cameraman. Hammed it up like I couldn't walk.
Pretended I was faint and hungry.
Made my friends hold me up. They should pay
me for this act. But I was just some kid from Cambridge
who loved playing in the dirt

with worms. I liked getting dirty.
I'd never thought about how long 20 miles
was. Some guy measured himself across the Mass. Ave. Bridge
and that was some long walk
to Boston. Never really thought about who paid
for food. I don't remember being that hungry

except for the kind of food I wasn't allowed to eat. I hungered
for Cap'n Crunch and fluffernutter. One time this boy made me eat dirt
I lifted my head. I told myself, Someday I'm gonna make you pay.
I wonder if he'd walk all those miles
too. Does he still walk
through that park in Cambridge?

The Beacon at Boston University

I went to that lady's house in Cambridge
Told her I finished the Walk for Hunger.
Not only that but I'd finished the entire 20-mile walk.
She scoffed at me like I was dirt.
She was ruffled: I only pledged a dollar. As if she didn't know the miles
and for every mile she must pay.

I kicked the dirt of Cambridge on her walkway,
one times twenty equals twenty. It's a dollar a mile.
She paid me in crumpled ones, won't go hungry.

Unpeel, Good Fruit

the bats 6 meters below

Simran Kaur

stepping out the back porch into cobblestone-embedded patches,
i match the hums of jays cascading towards the pines and ebbing.
crimson light pursues my winded eyes with evening grace,
embracing the lulls of the balmy yard—a draft one swims in.

far above curved shingles, the bats trace a sailor's sky—
high, 6 meters above, sparring each other in looping arcs.
they circle above my head, occasionally seizing the pests:
digesting their discards to maintain restless sways.

yet on the most barren evenings, a few stray from the umber cloud and they

swoop—sweeping under the horizon to

carve—carrying their silhouettes on a

scythe—scanning still spaces to

lash—latching their leather wings in a

strike—streaking gashes through an

ambush—aching my sight.

(echolocation no longer traces the space i carry)

Homeless Alphabet: Cul-de-sac, Adventure, Flooding (see Swedish letters below)

Gunilla Kester

Abra Kadabra—it used to be so easy
Breaking a word from the Burning Book
Circling its roots and its branches
Dancing as if Someone is reading

Escaping all rules, names, hierarchy
Fate more like a mirror than a map
Gambling on song since our earth is still round
Hell must be full of interesting tales:

It's a comforting thought!
Joke's on the poor poet who dreams of return
Knitting a yarn for old twice-told silver
Leftover lies from a lifetime of pages

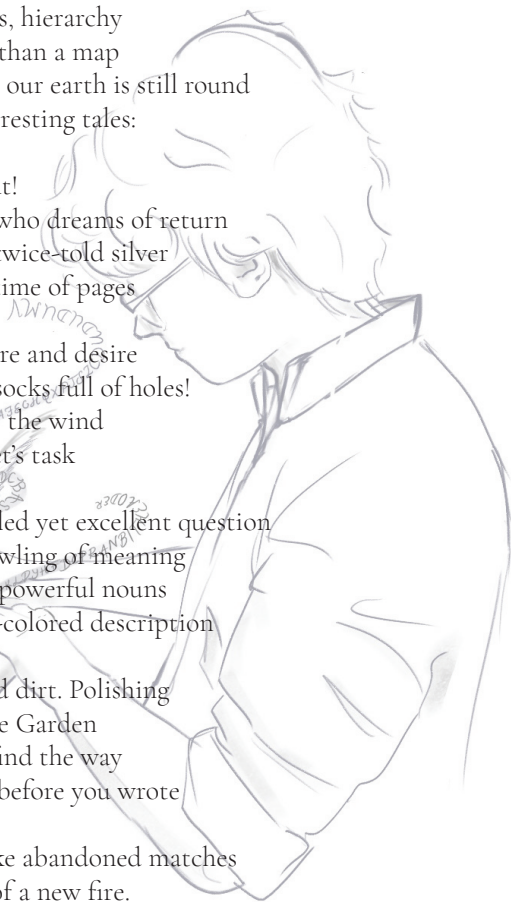
Memory now. Their allure and desire
Need mending like old socks full of holes!
Open their reflection to the wind
Pay attention to the poet's task

Queuing for the last exiled yet excellent question
Raking in loudly the howling of meaning
Sounding out clouds of powerful nouns
The poet's job is copper-colored description

Under years of mold and dirt. Polishing
Verbs growing tall in the Garden
Why, you only have to find the way
Xo. Xo. I loved you too before you wrote

Yesterday's adjectives like abandoned matches
Zooming in, dreaming of a new fire.

Återvändsgränd eller
Äventyr?
Överflöd!



Unpeel, Good Fruit

Psalm: The Busboy Who Starred in “The Boyfriend”

Tom Daley

Tell me, O Lord, he did not rot
to Kaposi sarcoma. Tell me

he did not flush that killer,
kickstand-cracking virus

into his paramour, the guy
twice his age conducting a Karmann Ghia

convertible through Harvard
Square, the guy with Sonny Liston hips

and black glasses frames thick
as Malcolm X's, the guy who flung back

a comradely, “I know,”
when I taunted him, “You’ve got

a live one there!” That was the last
time I saw Jonathan, O Lord, and he

was more of twenty-one, or less.
If he is alive, he’d have sixty

under his svelte belt. He was thin
as a lacquered chopstick then,

tall as a coat stand,
with a rash of acne

cheating on his chin,
his mouth meekly overbit and chippy

with eyeteeth, a cowlick’s tongue
lobbing itself to the left side of his forehead.

Who can forget, Lord, how he roller-
rinked his knees in the Fontbonne Academy

The Beacon at Boston University

production of The Boyfriend
as if he were speed-squishing grapes

in a steel vat while primping his lips with bunk-bed
insistence through his musical numbers.

Tell me, O Lord of sundials and calendars
with perforated pages, that you have not

yet demagnetized his perky alertness, that
you did not corral his kinfolk

back to the funeral home with armchairs
upholstered in shiny black vinyl

before he was thirty. Wasn't it enough,
Lord, that you jammed the tailpipe

of his older brother's car into a snowbank
while he chattered away the Saturday night

cold with his girlfriend and they both
woke up in that heaven where even

the archangels dream in carbon monoxide?
Wasn't it enough that I loved him in part

because he reminded me of my own
lickspittled mimic of a brother, that madcap

cardpack joker who slapped an unlit
cigarette between his teeth at twenty

and sprinted off a ten-story building roof
in the middle of the Good Friday

recess Boston's gold-domed State House?

III. Bruise



Death of A Cat

Eric Braude

In designer orange,
fancy stripes at eyes,
our Wal-Mart greeter
waited at the door,
followed us about all day.
What are evenings for
without Oliver, couch-
sprawled, chin resting
on my hand. He's a star
up there, you say. It's
too down-to-Earth, raw.

My Daughter's Baptism

Lisa Rua-Ware

The priest signs her until she's biblically scented
cinnamon, calamus, cassia, and myrrh,
smells I know only as church on a Sunday morning,
when I once sat in the left pews peering,
my family took up space then, the five of us.

I learned to let my mind wander in church stillness.
Even now, my mother believes this is how we
gain eternal life, relief is her face as the priest crosses
my baby's heart in the name of the Father,
in his absence my father is here, as he was years before,

fighting to stay awake after too many night shifts. I hear him,
pray, whisper, guffaw when a priest asks for more
money, and then I'm a child again, my father holds me
as a toddler, whispering at midnight mass,
explaining we must get in line

to kiss the ceramic baby Jesus. I tell him
I don't like kissing naked babies and maybe this is a story
I don't actually remember but one I've been told
so many times, it becomes a memory inside me,
opening between baptism blessings for my daughter,

sitting on my husband's lap at six months. Her limbs wiggling, unafraid
of tall men in robes, and then I see myself walking down the center
aisle that splits me in two, my first communion,
my hands palm to palm in front of me, nervous I don't forget
to kneel and say Amen when I'm supposed to.

I'm wearing my sister's outdated dress, white ruffles and lace,
the cross still sparkling from the neckline, and then I'm 16
and it's my confirmation. I got to pick the dress, it's purple,
with embroidered black vines that look like they're closing in
on the memory of me, because it's the clothes that stick to mind,

The Beacon at Boston University

my wedding day, my A-line dress, the organza skirt
arranged like cupcake frosting, and then there's my father
walking me down the aisle in his new black suit from Sears,
the one he always said he'd be buried in and then he was,
I was too distracted by the marriage ritual of the day to notice him,

the father I see in pictures who lingers in the center aisle after he lets me
go, looking as if he doesn't know what comes next. I recite my lines,
let church water fall. As I get older, I know this is how it goes,
candle smoke is a current that flows and curves in a line until it's gone,
the priest prays over us, it's my turn to believe.

ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ / Mud Houses

Paramjit Singh

ਕਰਮਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਖੇਡਾਂ, ਨਸੀਬਾਂ ਦੇ ਫ਼ਰਮਾਨ

The play of fate, the decrees of destiny.

ਥੱਲੇ ਧਰਤੀ, ਉੱਤੇ ਅਸਮਾਨ, ਵੱਚਿ ਦੋ ਪਲ ਦਾ ਜਹਾਨ

Earth below, sky above—between them, a world that lives but for a moment.

ਤੇ ਉੱਥੇ ਇੱਕ ਕੱਚਾ ਮਕਾਨ

And there stands a mud house.

ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਜੰਵ ਆ ਢੁੱਕੀ, ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਮੇਲ ਵਧਾਈਆਂ

To the mud houses come wedding processions; the mud houses ring with songs of blessing.

ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਖੁਸ਼ੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਖੇੜੇ, ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਰੂਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਈਆਂ

Mud houses brim with joy and laughter; to the mud houses, souls first arrive.

ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਅੱਖੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਤਾਰੇ, ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਮਹਲਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਨਿਆਰੇ

Mud houses cradle the apple of every eye; mud houses are dearer than the grandest palaces.

ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਨੀਤਿ ਆਵਣ ਸੱਜਣ, ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਵੱਸਦੇ ਨੇ ਪਿਆਰੇ

Each day, loved ones gather at the mud houses; in the mud houses dwell the ones we hold dear.

ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਝਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਕਨਿਆਰੇ, ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਆਸ਼ਕਾਂ ਸਵਾਰੇ

Mud houses line the banks of the Chenab; mud houses have nurtured lovers through the ages.

ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਗੀਤ ਤੇ ਕਾਹਿ, ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਹੁਸਨਾਂ ਸ਼ਾਹਿਰਾਏ

Mud houses have given birth to songs and stories; mud houses have adorned beauty itself.

ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਦੁਪਹਿਰਾਂ ਚੜ੍ਹੀਆਂ, ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਨੇ ਅੜੀਆਂ

Noons pass over the mud houses; the mud houses stand steadfast.

ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਨੀਂਤ ਦੇਵਣ ਮੱਤਾਂ, ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਸਿਆਣਪਾਂ ਨੇ ਬੜੀਆਂ

Each day, the mud houses offer counsel; the mud houses are rich with wisdom.

ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਪੁਰਾਣੇ, ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਨਾ ਜਾਣ ਪਛਾਣੇ

The mud houses have grown old; the mud houses are scarcely recognized.

ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਨੀਂਤ ਚੋਵਣ ਛੱਤਾਂ, ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਲੱਗਦਾ ਢਹ ਜਾਣੇ

Their roofs leak with every rain; the mud houses will crumble soon.

ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਮੁੱਕੀਆਂ ਮਿਆਦਾਂ, ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਕਰਨ ਫ਼ਰਿਆਦਾਂ

The appointed days of the mud houses have run their course; now the mud houses cry in lament.

ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਲਫ਼ੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਕੰਧਾਂ, ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਬੀਤੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਯਾਦਾਂ

The walls of the mud houses flake away; the mud houses are old memories.

ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਲੱਥੀਆਂ ਕਲੀਆਂ, ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਸ਼ਾਮਾਂ ਨੇ ਢਲੀਆਂ

The paint has fallen from the mud houses; evening has descended upon the mud houses.

ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਰਲ ਗਏ ਹਨੇਰੇ, ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਛੱਡ ਰੂਹਾਂ ਚਲੀਆਂ

Mud houses are disappearing in the dark; the souls have taken their leave.

ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਸਵਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਕੁੱਖ, ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਮੜ੍ਹੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਰੁੱਖ

Mud houses—the womb of the cremation ground; mud houses beneath the trees that watch over the graves.

ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਨੀਂਤ ਰੋਵਣ ਸੱਜਣ, ਕੱਚੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਉਮਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਦੁੱਖ

Each day, loved ones weep for the mud houses—sorrows for a lifetime for those who remain.

The Decree of the Skies

George Brown

Look at the goose,
enraged with Spring,

to whom we leave
the remedies of dreams,
and if you are joyful
seeing the chicks

that follow, recall
some small laughter
in their bouncing steps.
All things wish to fly.

Only you and I are weighed
down by want, by Spring,
by each other's frail,
failing hands;

when I, a child,
found the snarling bat,
before the red door, in the red
clover, wings tinsel-torn

by some midnight monster,
perhaps an edgy owl, perhaps
a hidden, humming wire,
and as it found me

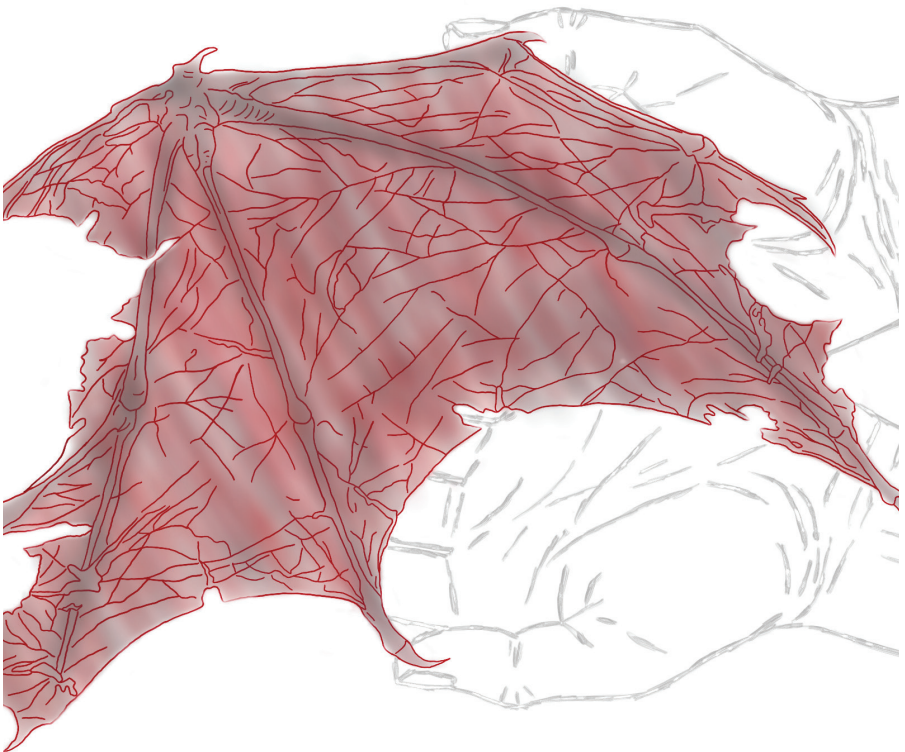
with its biting, beady hate,
the turgid red clover
already busy
with punctual bees

The Beacon at Boston University

who ran, first thing,
to catch the dawn's peonies,
only to find them matted
by the bat's fanatic,

frothing jaws purling
eddies of sweet pink sick,
I wept, and with
weeping hands, killed it,

(as that was its want)
and buried it,
so that it too might fly
in visions without remedy.



Italian Cinema

Andrey Gritsman

That seems to be the end of it.
All these entangled women's legs,
sick souls savoring their sickness,
slowly moving, slowly falling
undetermined, vanishing horizon—
everyone is tired of it. No jump cuts,
no manufactured punch lines
produced from an enormous cookie jar.

This is the end of the eschatology of passion:
cool cavern of the museum, warm lips,
flesh wanting to be flesh and sweat,
rather than a shining televised shadow.
Have a glass of cheap local wine,
look at the heap of somebody's
dark warm hair
somebody who still remembers—
giving.

This is the life we have given up on
and now are afraid to live.
We are asleep in front of the VCR
after a hard day,
snoring, the tape is winding up,
disappearing, counting down the
remaining thirty minutes,
as night continues and we have to get up
early tomorrow, get out of
the mortgaged quarters, turn on
the engine in the leased space

and go around our lives:
pushing, pulling, counting,
counting down, recycling,
shopping, lunching, reconsidering,
turning down, and offering.

The Beacon at Boston University

The screen is dead and the film is over,
no one is there at one in the afternoon
for an “Italian lunch,”
screwing and, after lighting a cigarette together,
thinking of love and death
(they become oneness),
when the shops are closed,
wine gets warm
and pasta cold.

Unpeel, Good Fruit

It Brings a Perspective

Gunilla Kester

The most scandalous ingredient of this famously scandalous painting bought by the state of Franz Joseph I even before it was finished, so goes the story, and hung in its narrow tall

frame in the capital's most admired museum, a building competing with the palace itself and as dusty, if you ask me, overlooking a sun-basted square filled with the dry heat

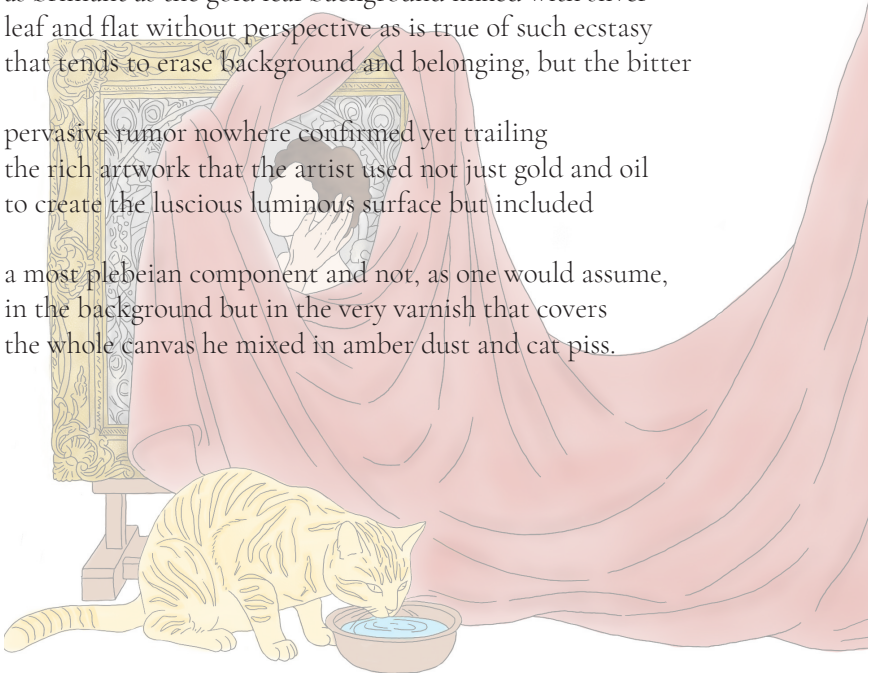
of the Emperor of Austria, King of Hungary, the ruler of all the states and cities of the Habsburg Monarchy including Spain and Bohemia, its most scandalous feature

is not the cheeky scene it portrays, the famous Kiss, the man's face invisible, her leg lifted, foot stretched toes bending, his hands holding her face, a radiant gem

as brilliant as the gold leaf background mixed with silver leaf and flat without perspective as is true of such ecstasy that tends to erase background and belonging, but the bitter

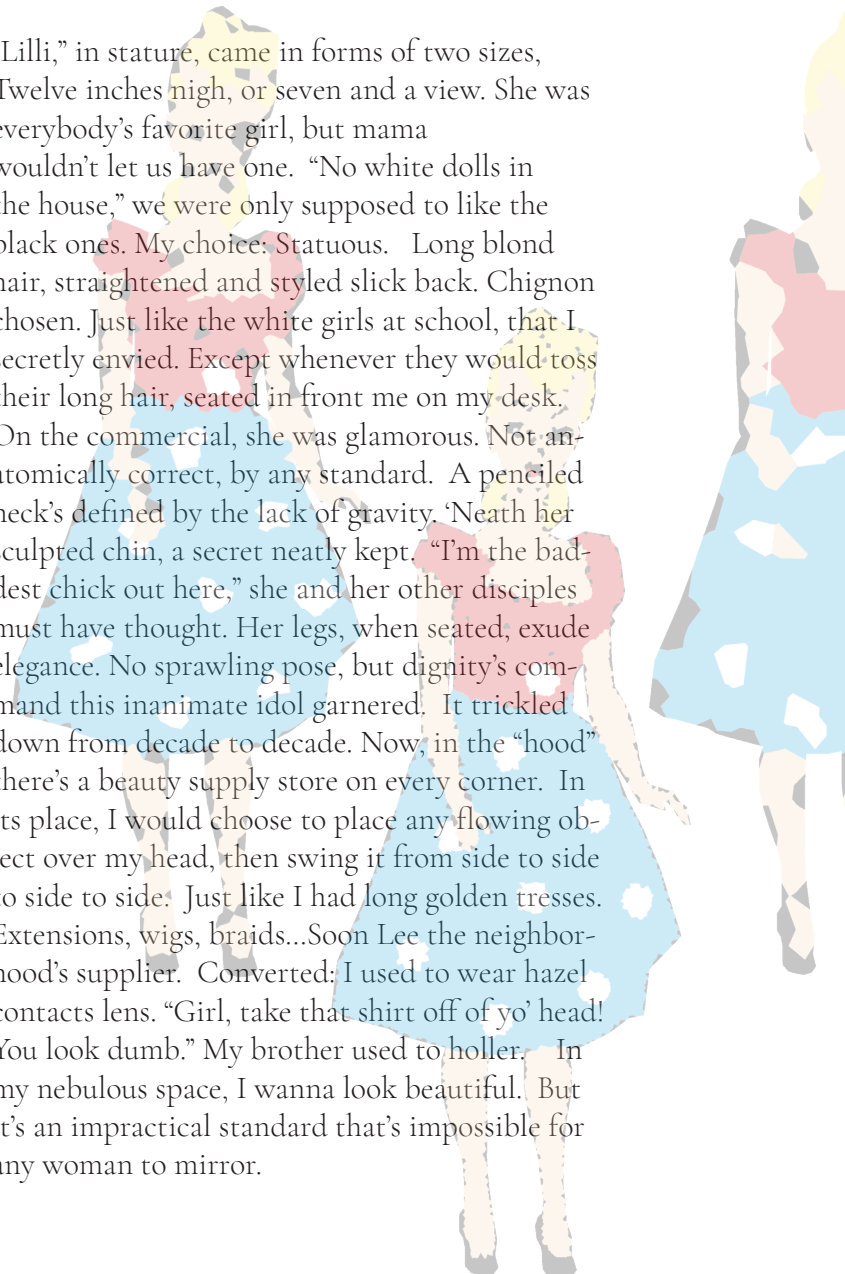
pervasive rumor nowhere confirmed yet trailing the rich artwork that the artist used not just gold and oil to create the luscious luminous surface but included

a most plebeian component and not, as one would assume, in the background but in the very varnish that covers the whole canvas he mixed in amber dust and cat piss.



“Bild Lilli”

Michell Williams



“Lilli,” in stature, came in forms of two sizes, Twelve inches high, or seven and a view. She was everybody’s favorite girl, but mama wouldn’t let us have one. “No white dolls in the house,” we were only supposed to like the black ones. My choice: Statuous. Long blond hair, straightened and styled slick back. Chignon chosen. Just like the white girls at school, that I secretly envied. Except whenever they would toss their long hair, seated in front me on my desk. On the commercial, she was glamorous. Not anatomically correct, by any standard. A penciled neck’s defined by the lack of gravity. Neath her sculpted chin, a secret neatly kept. “I’m the baddest chick out here,” she and her other disciples must have thought. Her legs, when seated, exude elegance. No sprawling pose, but dignity’s command this inanimate idol garnered. It trickled down from decade to decade. Now, in the “hood” there’s a beauty supply store on every corner. In its place, I would choose to place any flowing object over my head, then swing it from side to side to side to side. Just like I had long golden tresses. Extensions, wigs, braids...Soon Lee the neighborhood’s supplier. Converted: I used to wear hazel contacts lens. “Girl, take that shirt off of yo’ head! You look dumb.” My brother used to holler. In my nebulous space, I wanna look beautiful. But it’s an impractical standard that’s impossible for any woman to mirror.

This Moment is This Moment's Last

Susanna Rich

No watch, no phone, no camera,
to take the trees, bushes, stones
to send into the ether, no more
the next the next the next shot—
the river, the swan, the turtle
to post—no lookie-at-me-aren't-I-just...
through images I co-opt
(please don't share),
no marking the path as mine,
no thumbing the small moon
shutter button on my screen,
naked eye, blink for blink for blink—

to be used, instead, by the trees,
yield to the flicker of their shadows,
to the muddy path
of my impressions,
let the river wash through me
its silver emulsion, let the bushes,
once shuttered, finger the shift
in warmth as I pass, let
the small breeze shape itself
to my body, branches strobing
the flash of the sun, marking
and then letting me go—
the sky for itself,
the trees for each other.

Lament of a Flutist's Live-In

Eric Braude

How like a bird,
friends say, *how sweet.*
How sour of them
to forget *me*—who lives

with all those syrupy
chirrup, saccharine
arpeggios—*tries*
to live, that is. I'm

a walking baffle, noise-
cancelled jellyfish. Any
frog-peep sends me
finger-eared into closets.

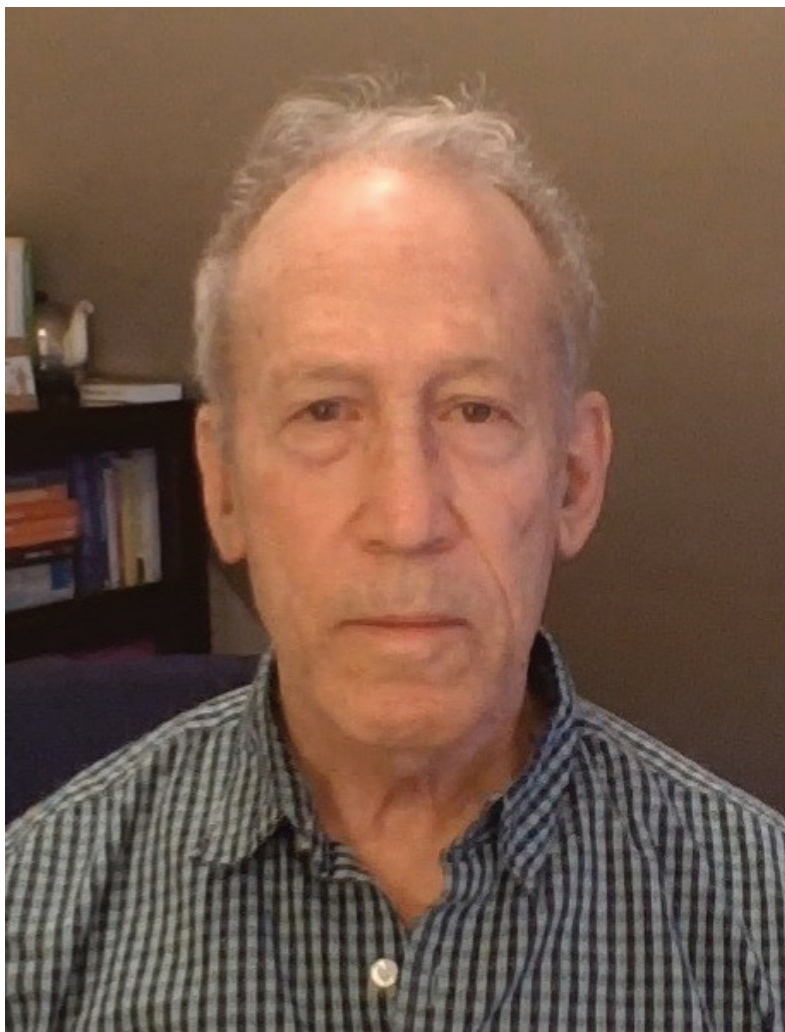
At some late hour,
the flute case shuts,
and there's
piccolo practice.



"Just One More Mile," photograph by Juli Luke

In Memory of Eric Braude

Associate professor of Computer Science at BU; Esteemed poet



Eric Braude grew up in South Africa and was a professor of computer science at Boston University. He won the 27th annual Eagle-Tribune/Robert Frost Foundation Spring Poetry Contest and wrote the front matter poem for the Grey Court Poets' anthology *Songs from the Castle's Remains*, published in 2013. Braude's poetry had recently appeared in *Decolonial Passage*, *The African Writer*, *The Apple Valley Review*, and *J Journal*, and many other journals. His poetry collection, *The Grass in Flames*, is being circulated for publication.

Unpeel, Good Fruit

Beacon Staff

Summer 2026

The staff for our 150th anniversary cycle worked hundreds of hours in a volunteer capacity to make this issue a reality. We are deeply thankful for their tireless dedication in pursuit of exceptional art.

Executive Officers:

EIC/President - George Brown

Associate Editor - Noah Xique

Associate Editor - Amélie Tonoyan

Treasurer - Nicolas Prince

Publicist - Brynn Campbell (*credit front/back cover, pp.1,12,16,25*)

Secretary - Sarah Hegg

Editorial Team:

Camille Morocco

Daniella Parkinson

Cece Petroski

Jahiem Jones

Elizabeth Goldberg

Simran Kaur

Ju Derraik

Owen Steck

Kamya Parekh

Avery Leahy

Tyler Altman

Anum Kotecha

Graphic Design Team:

Kiara Rojas (*credit pp.6,9,36*)

Mrina Reddy (*credit pp.17,22*)

Simran Kaur (*credit pp.15,31,35*)

Juli Luke (*credit for the photographs on pp.2,38*)

