

**SPRING
2020**

THE SHEET

**ISSUE
No. 1**

SOFIA FORADORI

Spring 2020

Poetry Competition

Champion

MARI MORSE

Creator's Focus:

Photography

CARSON BARNES

Creator's Focus:

Poetry

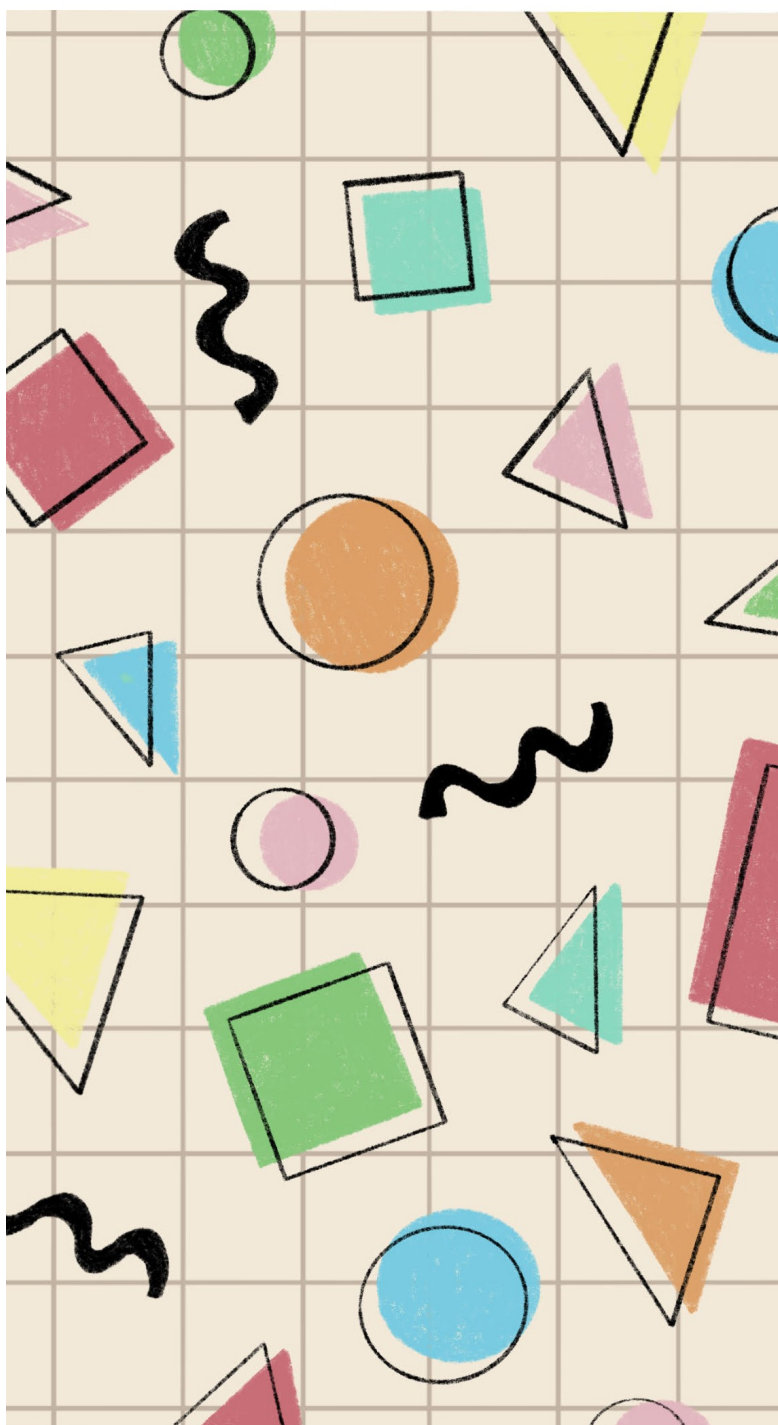


table - of - contents

Page 4

“Ballerina” by Vicki Wang (poetry)

Page 5

“Same Star” by Rowan Fynn (art)

Page 6

“Beast’s Rose” by Grace Langston (photography)

“The Last Ride” by Grace Langston (photography)

Page 7

“Gatsby’s Green Bottle” by Max Rich-ey (poetry)

“Untitled” by Sowon Lim (art)

Page 8

“Beauty of Yosemite” by Courtney Crum (photography)

Page 9

“WARMTH” by Kappy Eastman (short story)

Page 11

Creator’s Focus: Mari Morse (photography)

“Spot of Color”

“Banana Street :)”

“Golden Gardens”

“Salty Season”

“Blooming en Masse”

“Reflection”

Page 14

“Realize” by Adeja Pitts (poetry)

Page 15

“Sunsets” by Bailey Shepherd (photography)

Page 16

“Twenty minutes to hash browns” by Kappy Eastman (short story)

table - of - contents

Page 18

“Lotus Lake” by Grace He (art)

Page 19

“Horse’s Stare” by Grace Langston (art)

“Royalty” by Grace Langston (art)

Page 20

Spring 2020 Poetry Competition

Winners

“when i have healed” by Sofia

Foradori

“A New Pair of Shoes” by Sam Weed

“An Essay” by Maggie Bevard

Page 23

“At Seaside” by Sally Owen
(photography)

Page 24

“Undisclosed” by Vicki Wang (poetry)

Page 25

“Mlem” by Eunice Lee (art)

Page 30

Creator’s Focus: Carson Barnes
(poetry)

“The Lotus-Eaters”

“Winter”

“I Want to Go Back”

Page 19

The Sheet Staff

Get involved!

Ballerina

By Vicki Wang

I am a jellyfish billowing through ocean,
Stretching each tentacle with the flowing ease,
Of arms gracefully reaching in balancé,
When I dance.

I am a mouse scampering through forest floor,
Running with the quickest, miniature steps,
Of feet drilling into the ground in bourrée,
When I dance.

I am a python slinking through treetops,
Twisting ever around with the tightness,
Of a body perfectly controlled in pirouette,
When I dance.

I am a falcon gliding through sky,
Cutting through the air with the power,
Of a leg outstretched in grand jeté,
When I dance.



“Same Star”

by Rowan Fynn



“Beast’s Rose”
by Grace Langston



“The Last Ride” by Grace Langston

Gatsby's Green Bottle

By Max Richey

Blurring faces on shifting bodies
In states of confused certainty
Carnival lights on a black backdrop
Propped on a bleating mansion

Friday night melodies
Drifting between staggering souls
Their minds so far gone
They're back where they started

Minds losing truths once known
Hiding scarring pasts
Under the cloudy veil
Covering the true vestiges

Saturday night melodies
Stumbling through the crowds
Their feet out of time
Their chests out of breath

Bodies trying to emphasize
The many phantoms and ghosts
Like pretentious facades
Obscuring the inner truth

Sunday night melodies
Collapsed upon the floor
The mind is willing
While the body is helpless

Drunkenness beating on
Like boats against the current
The green light shown through a bottle
Flickering on the shores of reality

Monday night silence
Empty upon the sound
Nothing but crashing water
Under the channel light.



“Untitled” by Sowon Lim



“Beauty of Yosemite”

by Courtney Crum

WARMTH

by Kappy Eastman

Illustrated by Eunice Lee

The drowsy tang of wine seeps through the hallways, curling into noses and enveloping the house. The low chatter and occasional burst of laughter coming from the dim dining room have no effect on the dogs slumbering under the sofa. The fire is smoldering; it is low, the flames are a warm orange. Occasional pops of ash startle the cat lolling among the holly garlands on the mantle. He eyes the rich ribbon and glassy beads strung around the evergreen that commands the room from its center; he looks away. He is too comfortable to bother.

The cousins are piled in armchairs and under the tree. Torn scraps of wrapping paper and loose pine needles will leave trails of glitter and scattered patterns swirled across warm cheeks. Dresses and ties, starched and ironed that morning, have been crumpled; carefully tended curls mussed. Trinkets have been dropped from still-outstretched fingers. One child sniffs; another rolls over his sister's newest book. Only one is awake.



She extracts herself from the bundle of bodies, crawls over sprawled limbs and stray tails. She slips over plush carpet, past those still sipping cider spiked with rum and licking marshmallow remains off of forks. The kitchen is deserted, the sinks waiting to be filled. The pointy hands of the clock on the wall will make their rounds once more before glasses clouded with lipstick marks and plates scraped free of residue are stuck under the flow of water and scoured. The maids' aprons, already strung up on their pegs, will not be needed again tonight.

She lifts the dome off of a porcelain plate and puts two of the pastries on it deep into her dress pockets. (If her mother notices the crumbs along the seams a few days later, she doesn't say anything.) She listens once more to the strings of the old cello being expertly manipulated before she unlatches the lock on the kitchen door and steps out.

The frigid air is still; a breath of wind tousles the small strands that have escaped from the gold cord tying her plait. The frost shocks her, brushing the groggy daze off her shoulders and settling across them instead. She walks carefully down the steps, pausing before stepping onto the earth. The fresh snow is powdery underfoot. Flakes drift down lazily, losing themselves amongst their brethren as soon as they land. When she looks up, they mingle with the stars, millions of tiny white smears painted across the deep expanse of inky blue. If she were a little farther north, she thinks, dancing rivers of light would cut through the sky, washing the ground below in shimmering colors.

But she is here, and she is very grateful for that, especially when a five small fingers slide between hers. She looks down to see brown curls, almost exactly mirroring her own, already catching flurries of snow within them. A nose red from heat grows redder with cold as he peers up at her. She thinks he is about to speak, and if he were a cousin, he might have; but he simply smiles and continues to watch as the bitter air materializes around them.

She reaches into her pocket and rummages around a netted bag of marbles and rings to the pastries. He takes it from her proffered hand, glancing at the loops of spun sugar and the generous sifting of candy dust before cramming it into his mouth. Jam beads at the corners of his mouth, and he licks it away. He lifts one foot up, observing the deep hole left in the snow, before meticulously lowering it back into its place.

“Do you want to go back inside?” She asks, glancing through the gauzy curtains half covering the living room curtains to see the dying candles sputtering as they descended into pools of wax. Her favorite cousin smiles in her slumber, shifting to clutch her brother closer. Outside, the small boy instinctively raises his arms, and his sister lifts him to her hip. She brushes off the crown of snowflakes accumulating, sways a little to keep him warm.

“No,” he says softly, after enough time has passed that she forgets it’s a reply. He leans his ear to her neck, listening to the soft thud of her blood. His blood. Shared. The snow, coming faster now, seems to muffle the entire world, but not the beat of their blood. It runs warm and familiar. Soft, but constant.

She says nothing. She sways him until she forgets to and he isn’t awake to notice, until her polished shoes are covered in white and she has forgotten what noise sounds like. The lights across the barren fields, lights of neighbors’ houses, glow through the snowfall. The lights at her back, through curtains and frosted windowpanes, beckon. She turns, kissing his forehead gently; shakes off her shoes and his hair.

The candles shudder and fade when she sinks into a pile of cousins with him close to her chest, extinguished as the last cello note, suspended in the air, trembles to its end.

creator's focus!

mari morse



“Spot of Color”

by Mari Morse

“I am
inspired
by the need
to capture the
moments
around me.”



creator's focus!

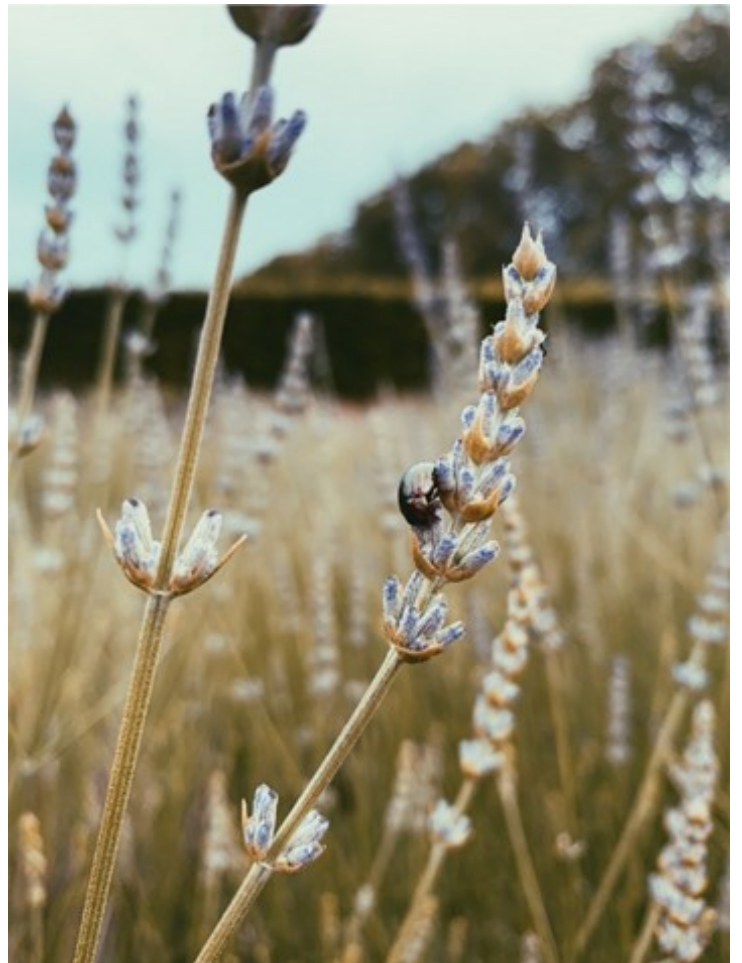


“Banana Street :)”

by Mari Morse

“Golden Gardens”

by Mari Morse



creator's focus!



“Salty Season”

by Mari Morse

“Blooming en Masse”

by Mari Morse



“Reflection”

by Mari Morse



Realize

By Adeja Pitts

It's more painful to fake a smile
Than to confess why I'm hurting.
I'd rather let my emotions spill out
Than to put more strain on my heart
Because It already feels so heavy.

These double knots got tighter over time
That they're harder to loosen now.
I don't like showing weakness,
But if it helps to ease the tension
I will let my weakness untie the knots.

Recalling the past traumas and anxiety,
And admitting I felt hurt
Will make me stronger in the future.
My heart feels less heavy
After moving on from the past.

I have to confront my own problems
Before I go trying to solve someone else's.
I am my top priority in life.
I should show my mind, and body self love
Before I'm able to give it to someone else.



“Sunsets” by Bailey Shepherd

Twenty minutes to hash browns

By Kappy Eastman

The text came thirteen minutes into second block. Class had started, but it was an individual work day, so I had no qualms about opening the message when I felt my phone vibrate against my leg.

Do you want hash browns?

I sat for a couple seconds, too surprised to do much else. It had been sent by a classmate, but not one currently sitting in the room with me; his absence had been officially noted about ten minutes ago and little thought had been paid to it since. I guess I'd thought he had a club event or a twenty-four hour bug, as I'd seen him in the halls the day prior. But now, this inquiry as to my appetite for breakfast potatoes; that didn't suggest home bound to me.

Do you want hash browns?

Two minutes had elapsed by the time I nudged a friend sitting to my right. She distractedly removed an earbud, eyes trailing to my proffered phone a moment later. A snort burst into the classroom, but- thankfully- overall went unnoticed. "I want hash browns," she said. "Say yes and give them to me."

"Hash browns?" a girl across from me repeated, holding one ear of her headphones an inch away from her head. "Who has hash browns?"

"No one," I answered, anxious for our teacher to continue occupying himself with last week's essays and not the slight lapse in busy work taking place.

"Well, that's not true," the girl next to me said, twisting the cord of her earbuds around her finger. The barely-started worksheet in front of her had been thoroughly forgotten. "He has hash browns."

"Not necessarily," I insisted, glancing again towards the red pen still following half-developed opinions on the importance of executive privilege in the corner of the room. "It is a slightly-less-than-remote possibility."

"Hash browns sound so good right now," the second girl sighed, but to my relief she readjusted her headphones back over her ears and went back to focusing on learning the intricate workings of the judicial system. I didn't say anything in response, thinking the discussion was over, until my friend poked me. "What are you gonna say?"

"Um, no," I said, thinking this was rather obvious. "I could get in trouble. So could he."

“What? No one will actually care if you have hash browns.”

“Fast food within these walls? Contraband. He’s skipping to eat a late breakfast, and you want me to accept the proof?”

“You think too much. Be a rebel,” she sighed, and replaced her earbud.

Do you want hash browns?

I mean, the answer of course was yes- who wouldn’t?- but what I didn’t want was to risk getting caught with the greasy evidence of someone else’s morning spent playing hooky. Twelve years of schooling devoted to carefully abiding by any and all rules- why would I break this one, now? Then I considered what had just been said to me: You think too much.

Maybe I did. No, not maybe- I definitely did. I’d spent those twelve years frequently paranoid about making an unconscious mistake and being labeled a miscreant for life. It was senior year- green leaf buds were appearing on the trees outside the classroom window and birdsongs had greeted me while I walked across the parking lot that morning, proof that my time within the school system was drawing to a close. Twelve (more than twelve, really) years of dedicating myself to sticking to the rules; not once purposefully poking a toe over any line. Not a bad thing, but maybe I finally owed this small act of pseudo-rebellion to myself. I was almost shocked by the thought, but no guilt arose when I unlocked my phone to look once more at the text.

Do you want hash browns?

Seven minutes had gone by, according to the time stamp. I silently sent up a prayer that he’d lingered to wait for my response.

Yes. With cheese.



“Lotus Lake”

by Grace He



“Horse’s Stare”
by Grace Langston
(left)



“Royalty”
by Grace Langston
(right)

Spring 2020 Poetry Competition

when i have healed

by Sofia Foradori

if you cut me open
i will bleed words,
then sentences,
till they make stories.

then, when i have healed,
the world will see a garden
of beautiful fables,
but i will see walls
to protect me from doing it
again.



Spring 2020 Poetry Competition

A New Pair of Shoes

by Sam Weed

The name you gave me,
was like a pair of shoes
two sizes too small.
It blistered,
and pinched,
and offered no support.
It pushed me into a mold
that was far too small
for my true self.

And so,
I went
and saved up the money,
and put in the time.
I went to the mall,
and with a grin,
bought myself
a new pair of shoes.



Spring 2020 Poetry Competition

An Essay

by Maggie Bevard

As I sit here, writing still
This lined page I aim to fill
An essay for my English class
(Which I'd really like to pass)
But how sorrowful I feel
When at the end of my big spiel
The word count isn't met
I have not yet paid the debt
That my teacher has assigned
So I take this page that's lined
And I read what I have written
However, I'm not smitten
With the words I have composed
Then the problem is exposed
What I've written is too bare
I've got to add some flair

So I pull up Thesaurus.com
And spice up my paper on Vietnam
Instead of smell I say olfaction
It's not heat, it's calefaction
No, wait, it's incalescence
Elucidate and tumescence
Perfunctory and quintessence
There, I think that's it
Bet the word count has been hit
I think it's ready to turn in
When much to my chagrin
At the end of the last line
Is word number nine hundred
ninety-nine





“At Seaside” by Sally Owen

Undisclosed

by Vicki Wang

They say eyes are the window to the soul,
And I imagine some secluded cabin,
Shielded from the world by sheets of snow,
That cover frosty glass of window panes.
Already they are boarded up,
So to keep prying eyes from stealing in,
And snooping amongst private matters,
Because I can not let them know.
There is a heavy oak door, deadbolted,
Keeping out the cold and wind and snow,
And keeping away the curious passersby,
For only the select with the key may enter.
Unlocked, overflows its secrets to the seeker,
Shining treasures and yet, no riches in gold,
Dusty frames, old photos, and crumpled letters,
Scattered there, but they truly mean the world.
Protected, I say, is my soul from strangers,
Peer into my eyes and they do not reveal,
Dark brown, close to black, and oftentimes blank,
Since these windows are boarded and covered in snow.



“Mlem” by Eunice Lee

creator's focus!

carson harnes

Q: When did you begin writing? Why?

I started writing as soon as I learned how. The first story I ever wrote was called “Snow in Auburn” and it was a page and a half of me rambling about my first snow day. I think I was six. Before that, when I still didn’t know how to write them down, I was always telling stories or acting them out with my sisters. It’s like that line from “Thank You For the Music”: “Mother says I was a dancer before I could walk.” I was a writer before I could write. Once I started going to school and realized I could tell stories by reading and writing them down, it was like a whole other universe had opened up. And then I just decided I liked it in that universe, and I stayed.

Q: What inspires you?

Reading is the best way to get better at writing, so I have a ton of writers and authors I’m inspired by. My favorites are Maggie Stiefvater, Neil Gaiman, J.R.R. Tolkien, Brian Phillips, and T.S. Eliot. I will read anything by them—books, poetry, blog posts, letters, speeches.

Outside of other writers, I’d say what inspires me the most is real life. Most of my poetry comes pretty directly from real-life thoughts and experiences. People tell you to “write what you know”, and I like to start with that. If I’m working on a longer work of fiction, I try to find the truth of the emotions and relationships and weave the fictional parts around those. So, sometimes I write about dragons, but most of my stories have sisters.

Q: What are your interests besides writing?

Most of my other interests also revolve around storytelling, like filmmaking and TV, and I love to read. But I’ll also be studying biology at college in the fall, and I’m really interested in genetics.



creator's focus!

The Lotus-Eaters

by Carson Barnes

We were the lotus-eaters
Caught by the magic of those mountains,
The music in the wind.
Bliss on our tongues
Took us from the first taste of those waters
Took us away; took us home
We were the lotus-eaters
Our isle green and fresh
With sparkling rivers and singing trees
We listened to the land and whispered back to it
Kept our secret selves
In the basin of the world.
We craned our heads back to the stars
And cried for Cassiopeia
We were the lotus-eaters
And we held our hands high,
Reaching for a lifetime
In a stretch of days,
And everywhere else we went
We were only waiting to return.

creator's focus!

Winter

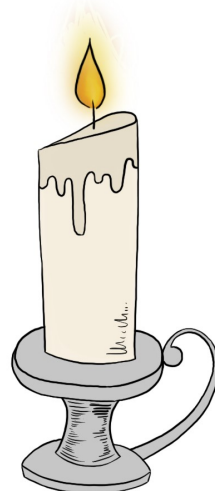
by Carson Barnes

By Carson Barnes

My ghosts breathe all around me
Faces twisted up in crying
They are silent like the nightfall
That witnesses the dying

I can hear the hardwood creaking
See the shadows on the floor,
I hear it failing, fading, falling—
In the snow banks by the door.

The candlelight still flickers
The voices, they're still calling,
But this deadness hangs upon me
And the snow persists in falling.



creator's focus!

I Want to Go Back

by Carson Barnes

I want to take you to the beach
And chase waves across the sand
With you
And spend nights wrapped in sweatshirts
Playing card games
From a beach house balcony.

I want us to drive go-karts together
Feet pressing pedals, hands on the wheel,
Shouting at each other
Through plastic black helmets
Over the roar and rattle
As we race around curves.

I want to drag you with me
To my favorite rollercoaster
And hear you scream at the drop
Leaving our stomachs behind
As gravity fights for control
Laughing, still shaking,
we rush to find our faces.

I want to go back
I want to bring you with me
This time.
All those memories that could've been shared
I want to build a bridge, an overlap—
The people I love most
And the places I've been happiest
I want to fit you in
To that feeling.

Now that I know you
Those moments felt made for us.



Illustrated by Angela Fan

The Sheet Staff!

Editor-in-Chief/

Graphic Design

Soojin Park

Art

Angela Fan

Eunice Lee

Grace He

Writing

Carson Barnes

Kappy Eastman

Advisor

Carley Muschara

get involved!

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**If you would like to be featured for our
“Creator’s Focus” corner, submit a portfolio
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Want to become part of our staff?

Applications will open this fall!

Questions or comments? Email us!

TheSheetAHS@gmail.com



*Thank you
for reading!*