

The Blotter

Magazine
www.blotterrag.com

What Does the "A" in "MFA" stand for?

Free in Asheville, Athens, Atlanta, Chapel Hill, Durham, Greensboro, Raleigh, and Richmond



We'll take you to Magical Places, courtesy of Emily Eve Weinstein. Darrell Kinsey takes you for a jog. Dr. Heather Hoffman takes you aside for some whiskey kisses. The poems of Nancy Hunt, J.J. Steinfeld, Kelley Harrell, and covert will take you to some kind of poetry-place. Plus, the Dream Journal.

The Blotter is:

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Cover art: Detail of *Snow Camp
Sanctuary* by Emily Eve Weinstein.
See pp. 8-9 for more from this
artist.

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ity by e-mail: ediot@blotterrag.com.

*This magazine may contain typos or
bad words*

Items Worth Mentioning
from the desk of Johnny Pence**Den of Uniquity**

Tell me this: What other magazine in the world would have an ad for a queer literary festival in New Orleans on the same page as an ad for Indian-made "British" motorcycles that are still made by a 1955 blueprint?

I'm really excited to have a new crop of advertisers: Cherry Pie and Offbeat Music in Durham, Motobritalia in the Hotlanta suburbs, and the Saints and Sinners festival.

Thanks to all of them for their pioneering spirit and to all of our steadfast supporters for sticking with us. Blotter readers, please support these guys.

Erratum

Remember last issue where I had this hilarious motif on the cover in which I made fun of people with unlikely-sounding names or psuedonyms by putting a [sic.] after the name in question? I know, it was a real laugh riot. It still tickles me.

But in the wild excitement, I listed a poet named Covert [sic.] there on the cover and forgot to put his poem in the magazine. Duh.

covert [sic.], I'm so sorry about that. I'd gotten ahold of some "funky" ayahuasca, as the nagual called it, and I wasn't thinking like a carbon-based life form. Or maybe the "funky" ayahuasca got ahold of me. Or both. Anyhow, how about I put the poem in this issue? And you can punch me in the arm.

Dolla, Dolla Bill, Y'all

Hey kids, want to make a little extra scratch selling ads for *The Blotter*? You can see how people are totally hogging up ad space in this fine publication. This would be a great opportunity for young gadflies, barflies, and bass players who are already out and about, socializing, meeting people, schmoozing, and networking. It could be very low-impact and we pay commission. In NC, catch up with Marty. In VA or GA, it's me. Details are over there in the masthead.

—ediot@blotterrag.com

Black Guys Clapping

by Darrell Kinsey

Her ponytail holder is pink. It's not a cute one. It's just a rubber band with gold foil woven in with the pink. They come in packs of ten or twenty for cheap, and they're not what are called "scrunchies." Her rubber band is just thin and pink. Her hair is tied up with it, and she got it as tight as possible. The pink rubber band is as close to her scalp as she could get it. She knew she might not like it for wisps of hair to get in her face. Her strands are straight, dark lines hugging her skull. It's easy to see the shape of Angela's head because she has her hair stretched over her head bone. A phrenologist could almost do his work by looking at her hair pulled back so tight. She has a nice-shaped head. It rounds out in the back instead of sloping off.

When she put her hair up looking in her vanity mirror, she saw her eyebrows raise and her forehead skin go taut. Of course, there are a few puffy tufts around her neck and temples that don't reach the rubber band, and they are out being influenced by the wind when there is a stir of some. The hair that won't reach the rubber band is bouncing every time her foot hits the sidewalk.

She breathes. Angela's

cheeks ripple every time she blows a blast of air out, and every exhale is a blast. For a while, she had tried to control her breathing, but now she has her mouth open and she is letting the air blast out like it has wanted to all along. She's been running now for nine minutes. She didn't realize it would take this long. The night before, she had decided on a route and used the tripometer on her dash to measure a mile. She's running in the most fashionable place to run. She is displaying herself on Milledge and Prince. The route is old houses and sidewalk cafes. To run is to parade, and most people get in shape by running elsewhere first. It's very common for a young girl to go to a gym and use a treadmill until she feels satisfied enough with her body to run on Milledge or Prince in the late afternoon. Angela has never jogged before.

She reminds herself that it's okay to not go very fast her first time out. Her goal is just to not stop running. If she can just keep the least little bit of a shuffle going for the duration of her route, she thinks she will have accomplished something. The plastic tips on the ends of her laces keep bumping the plastic on her running shoes and clicking. Her feet hit

The Dream Journal

real dreams, real weird

ghost dump, TV dog

i was friends with a widow, who was maybe 10 or 15 years older than me. she called me on the phone and said she needed my help: she thought her first husband's ghost was upstairs in their old bedroom and was causing trouble. the ghost had the stereo on real loud. i stopped what i was doing, and went to her house. her new, living, husband was there, but he didn't believe in ghosts, and thought i was up to no good with his wife. i looked at some diagrams about brainwaves and we talked about theories of consciousness surviving death and how that might relate to the ghost phenomenon.

i went to bed with my widow friend, which in itself was not unusual. i got up in the middle of the night to take a dump, and before i was "done," i heard my friend call out that the ghost was coming. i hadn't even started to wipe, so i couldn't do much about the ghost. then, the ghost came in the bathroom. i could see him like heat waves. i called out to my friend. i was just terrified. i said that he was coming, but then that he was in the can with me. and then i kinda communicated directly with the ghost -- it was asking me if i was a family member. i said i was. then it went in and asked my friend if i was that family member. she said i was, and that satisfied the ghost. then he spoke with her and comforted her in some ways about his death.

before he died, i dreamed that i was going on the johnny carson *tonight show* yet again. johnny didn't care about interviewing me; he liked my good old dog. it was old hat to us, especially my dog. she and johnny were pretty tight.

—J. P., Athens

Please send excerpts from your dream journals to Jenny at mermaid@blotterrag.com. If nothing else, we love to read them. We won't publish your whole name.

the sidewalk, and her laces fall, and there is a click, one for each foot. There is clicking and there is breathing, and when Angela runs by the vegetarian restaurant, a woman in mid-bite stops her fork in front of her open mouth. The fork is loaded with a pile of rice that is stained electric yellow by curry. The woman is compelled by the rhythm she hears, and she watches Angela pass before taking the forkful.

It's sunny out, but in the shade it's cold. The maples are just turning colors but the dogwoods and pear trees have already lost most of their leaves. The sky is very blue like it starts getting in the fall. A young man who has come with his cousins from Mexico to start a lawn care business is

blowing off the sidewalk in front of a bungalow-style home. The blower is throwing the leaves into a leaf-flock in the air. It's moving the dust around, and the grit sparkles, and the purple and wrinkled leaves are starting to collect in a pile the way he had imagined. The worker sees Angela coming, and he sees her panting. He turns off his leaf blower and moves out of the sidewalk for her. He wipes his face with the sleeve of his flannel shirt and watches Angela pass.

It is cool in the shade, and it is also cool when the wind blows. It is cool when the tufts of hair around Angela's temple and neck are stirred by the breeze. Her cheeks have taken on some color. For most of the people who notice Angela passing, it's hard to tell whether her cheeks have gotten colorful because she's hot or cold. Angela isn't sure either. She feels the breeze, and calls it cold.

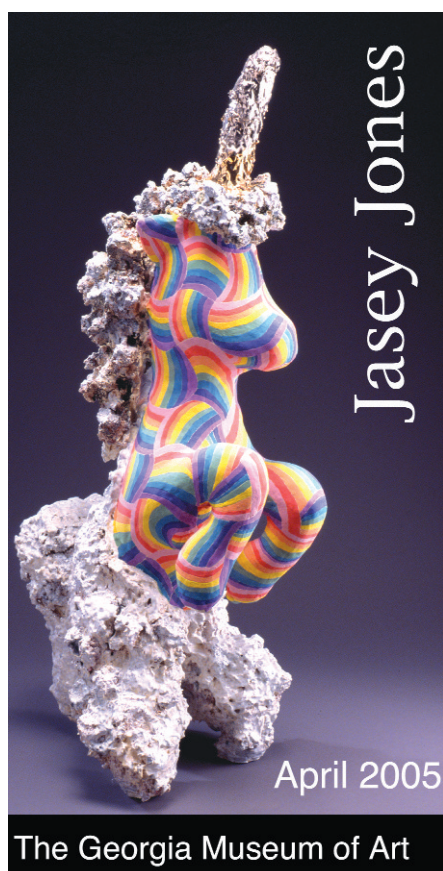
She is about to run past a demarcation on the sidewalk. She can see it ahead. On this side the sidewalk is sparkling and bright beige. She passes the shadow line, and the sidewalk is the blue or gray that it has been in the shades she has been in on this run. She feels the difference. It's cool to her skin, and her receptors recognize chill. But she is also warm. A vapor is around her body. Her pores are pumping

out a fog of perspiration, and she is the heat she feels. Her nerves notice the breezes and the shade, but they pick up on her own body heat gusting in zephyrs too. It's pleasant for Angela when she feels her own heat overtake her like that. Her heat passes over her in waves, and she compares it to walking past the ventilation slots on a Xerox machine or passing over steamy grates in the sidewalk. She is dressed just right for jogging.

Exercise outfits are important. The men usually wear short shorts made out of parachute material, and they either wear a tank top or go altogether shirtless. They may stuff a towel in their waistbands. Girls wear cotton shorts, and they roll the elastic over one time or more. They wear tank tops, and some go in sports bras.

Ponytails are popular for jogging. Angela is wearing a sports bra that is white and light pink. The straps are white. The elastic band around her last few ribs is white, and there is a light pink stripe going over her chest. She has breasts, but the bra smashes them close to her body and sort of groups them together into one wide lobe instead of the two hanging handfuls they appear to be in her street clothes and dresses.

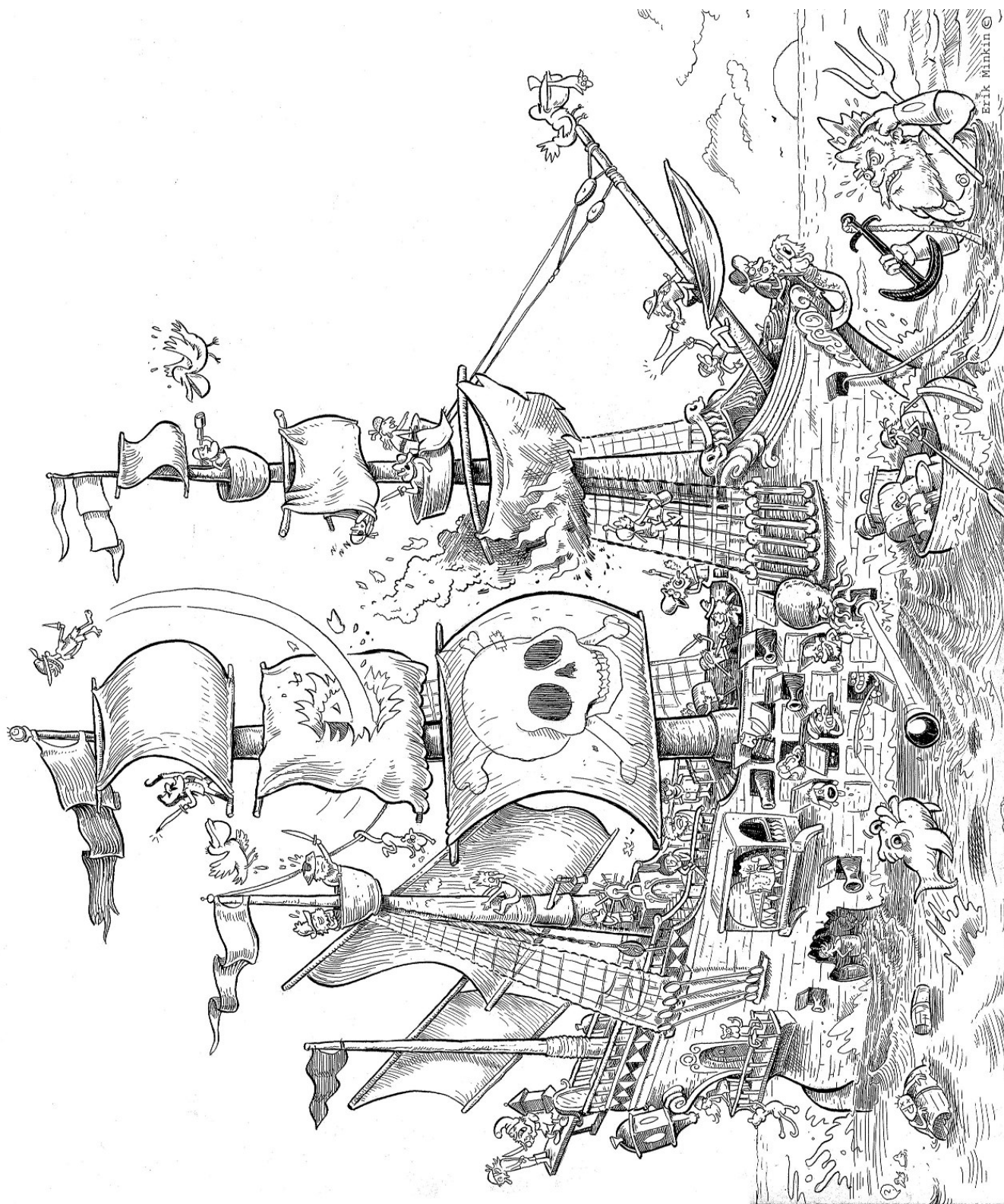
She bought pink cotton shorts to match. The elastic band on the shorts is rolled



Jasey Jones

April 2005

The Georgia Museum of Art



**“arrrrr”
by erik
minkin**

erik minkin is
a cartoonist
from
asheville, nc.
he recently
graduated
from
savannah
college of art
and design

[erikminkin@
hotmail.com](mailto:erikminkin@hotmail.com)

over once. They are low on her torso. They dip past the point where her abdomen begins to curve downward, and even though she is a thin girl, it is easy to see how Angela's stomach might look if she were to ever have one someday. She has on earrings that are dangling silver. They are hooked into her earlobes and swinging to the rhythm of her running.

She is determined to keep moving her feet until she gets back to her car. She is on Prince, and her car is on Prince. She parallel-parked it there on the street around twelve minutes ago. It's parked in front of a nail studio where North Finely comes in. She's running for that corner now. When she started running, it was her side that hurt. Then the hurt moved to her chest and heart. It felt like her heart was going to thump right through her breastplate and crack it into dust. Now the hurt is in her calves. They feel like tight little lumps in her leg, and they ache. Her breathing is a problem too, but there is the rhythm that keeps it going.

His newspaper is tinted green because his sunglasses are aviators. He's sitting on a park bench reading the temperatures in the weather section. This is the first day he has felt like it's cold enough to wear his leather jacket, but he has wanted to since late summer. He has had it out several

mornings but today was the first day he didn't feel silly, and the temperature justifies his jacket, he thinks. The high is only in the lower fifties, and he thinks that's cold enough. He reads through the green lenses of his aviator sunglasses. The temperatures are green. The United States with curling isobars and Ls and Hs is green, and there is a clicking. There is this patterned tapping and a huffing that is falling in with the other street sounds. The corner of the man's newspaper page curls in, and the man looks to see what has caused the breeze. Angela's sports bra is green in the lenses.

Everyone can hear the clicks and the taps and the puffing but the runner herself. Clipped onto the rolled waistband of her shorts there is a little silver sliver of a box. There's a white cord running out of a jack in the side, and the cord snakes up her torso. It wags there over her chest with the motion. It sways from side to side and then splits into two cords above her damp little clavicle.

The cords end in spongy black wads, and Angela has one stuffed in each ear. Music is coming out, and this is the source of her rhythm. Angela is breathing and clicking and tapping and wagging her earrings to the tempo of the music. She is trying to think about the lyrics to take her mind off those cramping little

nuggets in her legs. A man is singing, and the title of his song is scrolling across the display of the silver box clipped into Angela's rolled waistband. There are fuzzy guitars. The guitar player has used a pedal to change the sound, and he is playing fast. The bass player is booming out quarter notes, and the drummer is making hard cracking sounds at the beginning of each measure. There is a climax in the song. Everything is building up. The instruments are getting louder, and the singer is practically at the top of his range now.

Angela is about to meet a boy walking in the opposite direction. She is getting closer to her car, but she can't stop now. For some reason the boy is making her mad. He is wearing a mesh baseball cap, and Angela thinks it doesn't look good on him. He's wearing a vest, and she hates it. The boy annoys her because she is close to her car but not there yet. This song is playing louder, and her calves are like little baseballs in her skin. She passes the boy and is glad. Things are so tough running for her now, just seeing some things really bothers her, and she's glad to be past that hat and vest on that stupid boy. She booms out some breaths and rounds a bend in the street and sidewalk, and now she can see North Finely and the corner where her car's parked. If it weren't for a stupid SUV

parked in front of her, she leather running shoes. She could see her sweet little car looks up though and can see just waiting for her to come her car around the big dumb, running up. She hits the concrete with the balls of her feet stupid, retarded, SUV that's now, and she's taking quick little steps. Her stride is smaller cute little car, and it's just but faster, and that's how the steps. It's steps to her car. It's the music is. It's broken out into She slaps the side mirror, and that's it. That's like running through the tape of a this all-out, high-speed vamp. and that's it. That's like running through the tape of a She's running past the windows of the nail salon now, and there are women with their feet up. Her arms are up in the air. Some women have their feet She hurts, but she feels good. soaking in bubbly suds buckets. It's her first day out, and she's trying to get healthy. She has gently holding other women's feet and rubbing them with never enjoyed sports or exercise. She's standing behind the oils, and Angela thinks about bumper of her car pumping her fists and clapping now. She ran there slapping the pavement the whole way and didn't stop for these last few yards. They're once. She rips the cords out of down there in those little her ear, but there is still music.

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The Blotter

The Illiterati Masterminds behind the New World Odor

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*Darling, we really are having a chic little
underground-literary-magazine
moment here, aren't we?*

Emily Eve Weinstein

magical places

top down, left to right: *writer's retreat; snow camp sanctuary;
henry's brother's ; 3 A.M.; the smiths'; sheila's; family reunion*



"... mobile units are going to be the homes of the future. I was hiking the Appalachian Trail when I noticed several with envy; "Wow! Look! They live here!" A mobile home can be kerplunked next to a grove of old oak by a stream, or wherever! Nothing around needs to be demolished.

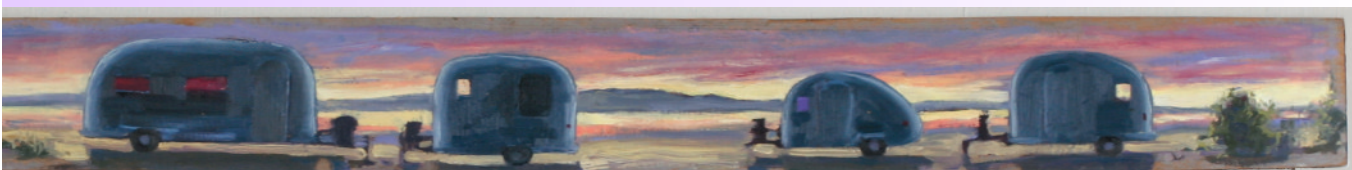
Directly after my AT excursion I produced the trailer series, painted on recycled cedar siding. I also built a village of 30 miniature cement trailers. All of this can be seen at my studio/gallery located between Chapel Hill and Durham."

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Emily's *Moon Book*, *Cat Book*, and *Dog Book* are available at bookstores everywhere. The artist/author is currently working with 25 neighborhoods and environmental groups to complete the New Hope Creek Corridor:

www.Erwinneighbor.org



It's different music, and she can hear clapping and yelling. She stops celebrating and looks around.

The laughing and clapping and yelling is coming from two black guys. They're sitting in a car stopped at the traffic light. They have the bass thumping, and they're bobbing their heads and staring back at her. The wheels on the car are huge silver flashes of light, and they are still spinning even though the car isn't rolling. They caught her whole final stretch, and they loved it. They loved it the most when she hit her side mirror then started celebrating like she just won a race or scored a touchdown in a football game. They think it's cool

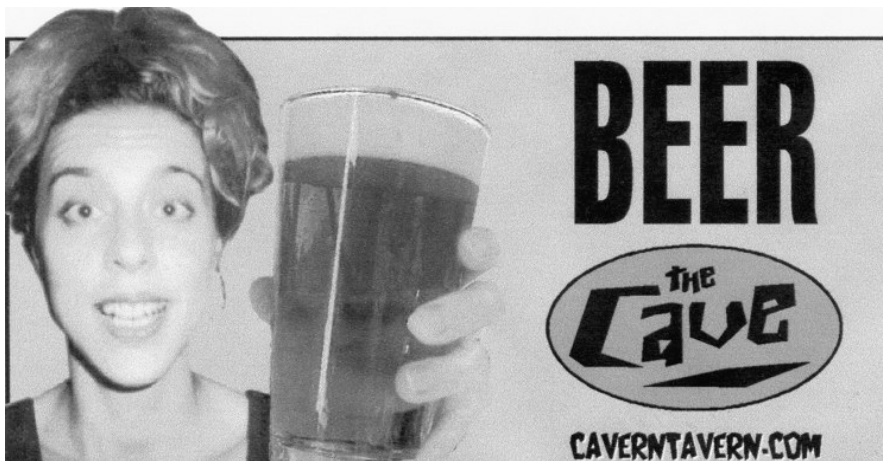
how that girl got so into it, decked out in her matching top and shorts. They're yelling at her and clapping.

The light turns green and their car slinks on. Angela watches them roll by, and they watch her until they can't see her anymore. The driver gives his friend dapp on the knuckles and says, "Black folks don't run down the street unless we getting chased, but that was tight."

"For real," his friend says.

Angela waits for all the traffic to clear before she opens her car door and slides in. Before she cranks up, she pulls down her visor. There's a vanity mirror under a flap, and lights come on automatically

when she flips the flap up. She notices that one of the hairs on the top of her head has almost gotten out of the pink rubber band. It's standing up in a big, looping arc. She pulls the rubber band out, and her hair tumbles down to shoulder length. It's hot on her neck. It's hot in her car. The sun's been getting trapped in there like in a greenhouse, and Angela has to put her hair back up. She holds her rubber band in her teeth until she has the whole clump gathered in her hands. Then she puts her hair through it, twists it and puts her hair through it again. She smooths all the dark lines straight on her head and wonders how long she had been running with her hair out of place like that.



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Darrell Kinsey graduated from the University of Georgia in 2003 with an English degree. He enjoys outdoor sports and making up little songs for the piano. He lives, works, and writes in Athens.

The Art of Kissin' an' Stealin'

a truncated fictional unit
by Heather Hoffmann

Stolen kisses that tasted like whiskey. In the end, that's what I missed. In the beginning, that's what got me in trouble.

I had been drinking whiskey for some twenty years, had my gums rubbed with the amber liquor when I was teething. Something important had to come from it. And something important did.

Whiskey is what gives my state character—it flows from the cypress tanks near the Abbey at Gethsemane into the mint juleps at Churchill Downs. But personal history took me far from that land of sour mash to a land that is larger and hotter.

Come inside my air-conditioned room and have a seat. It's a beautiful day to sit at the window. A noncommittal sun is making intermittent cameos. The gray sky is a blank slate for the ruby, orange, and banana-yellow leaves that flutter and spin on their way to stillness. In other parts of the country, the air conditioners have long been silenced. Here in Texas, they will hum under the roar of the leaf blowers and lawn mowers for a few more months. During the summer, the lawn services make their

rounds early in the day so that the work can be finished before the heat of the afternoon, but in the fall, they come later and later each week.

Pedro wasn't any different. His men started to interfere with my open-air sessions in late October. I had an art class at the Glassell School in the early afternoon. No sooner would I get home and set up to work than I would hear the Latino music that blared from the van. This gave me roughly three minutes to haul my palette and canvas inside, but the easel would stay on the driveway. I would dust the flecks of freshly cut grass off its unstained wood after Pedro left.

I accepted Pedro's new afternoon schedule as another source of domestic annoyance—one of the many necessary disruptions that an artist faces, like paying bills

and shopping for groceries. That's not to say that I grew to like the change. Lately I found change a scary prospect, because I knew that what I really needed was a bigger change. I was growing sick of the portraiture work that kept food on the table and allowed me to live in the toney museum district of Houston, if only in a garage apartment. What I really wanted to do was get my hands back into clay. I hadn't bought any yet. I knew that with clay in hand, there'd be no more heads on canvas, no more fat checks to cash, and no more electricity for air conditioning.

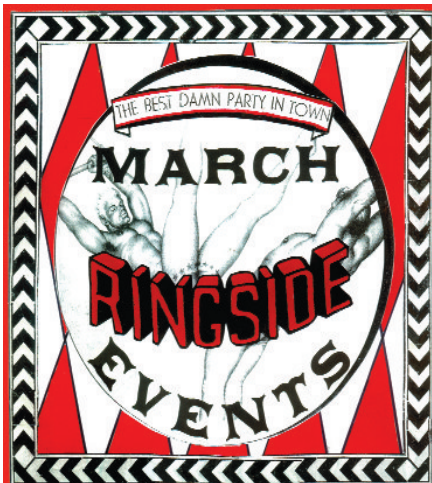
Then I'd be hot and grumpy.

I was painting topless one day, something I do when my landlord is away and I just can't get the creative juices flowing. I had broken into the bottle a little early-okay, two hours before my five o'clock whiskey on the rocks, to be exact.

This time there was no loud music to announce the truck, no sudden cacophony of



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voices, no cranking of the mower. Just Pedro. "*Señora*," he called out as he rounded the corner of the house and entered the backyard.

I turned and looked at him just before I realized that my breasts were out of a shirt. "*Santa Maria!*" he exclaimed, as he made the sign of the cross. I dropped the palette. Splat, the green paint shot out from beneath the board, which had landed near my bare feet. I backed up to get out of the paint, upsetting my Styrofoam cup of whiskey and nearly toppling the easel.

Simultaneously, a river of whiskey and Pedro ran toward me, Pedro with his hand over his eyes as if my breasts would blind him. Sensing that he had a causal role in the creation of this manmade disaster, he was going to help me restore harmony despite my partial nudity. "No Pedro, *no necesario*." I didn't know how to speak Spanish, but it worked because he stopped mid-sprint and turned around, and even though he was facing the other way, he kept his hand shield over his eyes. I grabbed my shirt from the branch of the tree, forced my arms into the sleeves, and pulled the buttons into whichever hole I could find first. When I had covered myself and righted the easel, I turned to find Pedro still as stone. A light brown sculpture in my corner of the yard, draped in worker's clothes.

That's when I knew what I had to have.

I thought about Pedro and the family that I knew he must have. I could almost be certain of where they lived, the apartments in the part of town near the Fiesta market, the area where gang graffiti had first whispered on Dumpsters, then on the sides of buildings before screaming from road signs. The graffiti was not in words. Not ones that I could decipher. It looked more like hieroglyphics. The broadly curving lines conjured thoughts of muscular calves and round buttocks. I was sure that these were not the images the can artist had intended to convey. To those in the know, I bet the graffiti said, "Shitbags, this is our gang's turf." Yes, Pedro's wife shopped at the Fiesta on this marked territory, and she could use some extra cash to buy food for the family. But no, it was *cerveza*. That's what Pedro asked me for the first time that he sat for me. My brain is wired to understand English first, French second, and Italian third. I could find no kissing cousin for that word in three languages. "*No comprendo*," I shrugged.

"*Cerveza*," he repeated, and tilted his head back and took a swig from his hand that represented a bottle; his thumb, the neck of the bottle. Something to drink. Oh. I had whiskey.

When I returned from my apartment, Styrofoam cup of whiskey in hand, he was sitting on a stone bench near the yellow lantana, taking off his T-shirt. That's when I first saw

Santa Maria. She was hanging from a gold chain on his burly chest, just above his Buddha belly. *So this is where East meets West.*

"No Pedro, *no necesito.*" He stopped. This line was coming in handy. His black eyes looked at my brown ones imploringly, all forty-five years of his pride on the line. *Yes, I have noticed your biceps, but no, I want to sculpt you the way that you looked when you stood stock-still because I was half-naked.*

Some sittings and a few whiskeys later, I had a sculpture. I felt bad about my Pedro's outcome. He ended up under a tree in a man's front yard, just two blocks north of my street. Sure, the proximity suited me fine, but this was the home of the man who paid two Latinos to hand-wash his H1 and his wife's H2 in the driveway every Saturday morning. He had help at his house every day. Last Halloween, the help carved pumpkins on the front porch with the children. This ostentation was despicable, and I had to rescue my Pedro from his new lawn-jockey status.

Even before I master-minded the plot to steal my Pedro under a new moon, I considered the bottom line. I would never be able to exhibit the statue. It could never stand in grace next to the other sculptures in the garden across from the Museum of Fine Arts. If I suddenly had the sculpture again, wouldn't it be proof that I was a thief? Circumstantial evidence or something like that? My apartment was small.

Not only would I have to stow my Pedro in a windowless room in the back, I would have to hide him under a sheet.

My resolve grew. After all, what concerned me more, having my Pedro or having a piece of art to display to other people? My Pedro was more significant to me than he could have been to anyone else. The sculpture was my talisman.

We carried it off, all right. Pedro's cousin underbid a job at the house so that he could dismantle the motion sensor lights. I bribed Pedro and his brother with *cerveza*, which I now know is beer, to physically carry out my heist. I drove the black Toyota getaway truck. The brothers narrowly outran the insomniac au pair who was shouting, "Police, get the police." My dirty work done, they shared a ride in the bed of the truck with my Pedro as I drove to Fiesta for more *cerveza*. Just in time to watch the graffiti artist shaking a can of green spray paint.

You'd like to see my Pedro? Come into the bedroom; he's in the back corner.

Oh, no need to turn on the light.

Santa Maria, you taste like whiskey.

Dr. Heather Hoffman is a Texan living in the NC Triangle. She is a real MD-type doctor who no longer practices medicine so she can write.

Waitamminute ...

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violets are blue by Nancy Hunt

reflecting, rejecting
skin against skin
nothing from something
let the world spin.

explosive, compulsive
brown eyes blue
tell me you love me
judas is kin.

yes, fries with that by Kelley Harrell

time is intention's buffer
the space between art
and creation
order of operations
thread for button and hole
i talk it out
ordering food on a menu from gods
this i want
this i create
and walk with conviction
straight to

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by J. J. Steinfeld

Malformed dreams
or dreams of malformation
perhaps if you had another language
accuracy would fit better on your tongue

by the way, you know about good intentions
and covering your tracks
fast-drying regrets your specialty
not much I can tell you

you discern earthly paradise
in the middle of hell
quite the trick
changing street names
naming underground retreats
handing out coupons
for double and triple the normal lifespan

paradise and hell
skirting delusion
but not by much
the difficulty of unearned delight
the mistakenness of elastic ecstasy

who will be remembered
who will evaporate
open a history book randomly
go two-thirds down the page
see the first name you discover
rearrange the letters—
did you find a friend or foe?

my planting by covert

when you spread my ashes
across the plains of kansas,
about the beach in south carolina,
through the adirondacks,
upon that great left coast --
please,
mix them with
the angels' share:
take my softer organs,
my decayed liver
& deceased eyes
& make a paste;
grind my bones into a powder,
pound my teeth & nails
as fine as sand or silt.

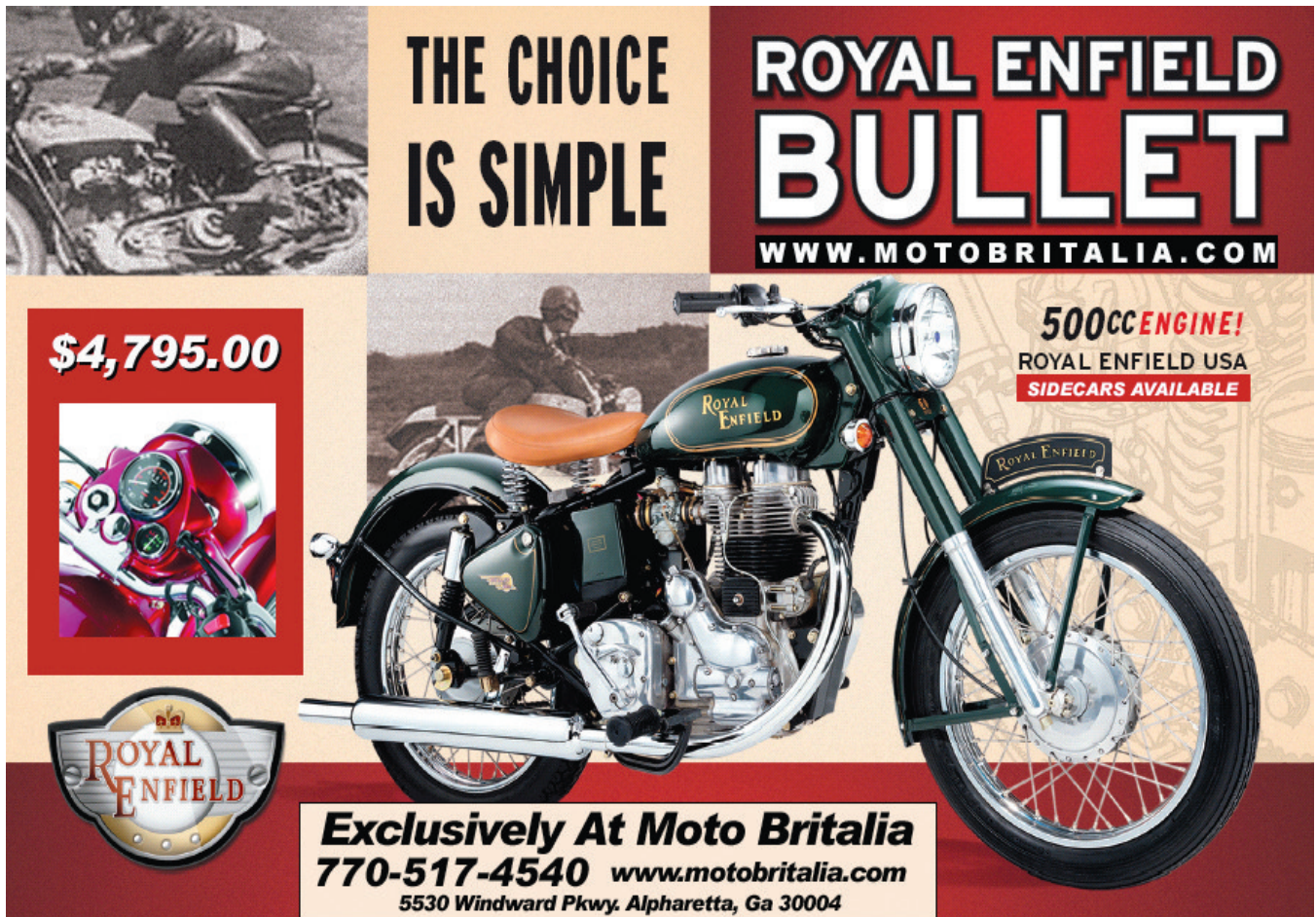
this mixture
you may spread
upon our nation's soil --
forge a statue of my genitals,
which you should plant
& cultivate like barley,
or tobacco.

be sure to pass out
beer
& irish whiskey
at my funeral-planting & statue erection:
remember me
with wine & songs & cigarettes.
in this way
i can smile now
& pray to the gods
that you will smile then,
knowing that i smiled
once before.

"Nancy Hunt is a free-lance writer living in Chapel Hill." —that's all she wrote.

J. J. Steinfeld didn't like the last bio we made up for him, which is interesting because the bios we make up for people who don't supply them are usually really great.

Kelley Harrell is author of a *Gift of the Dreamtime* and a shamanic practitioner who is ready for Spring to bring back the green.



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funddevelop2@noaidstaskforce.org.

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