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Associated Students of the University of Puget Sound
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This year, it snowed in Tacoma four times. The sun has been fleeting, and rainy days have been especially present. Donald Trump is our president, climate change continues unabated, and the Republican Congress tried but failed to repeal the Affordable Care Act. Yet, students are still writing poems, crafting stories, painting, and taking photographs. This literary and visual art seems to get better every semester I work at Crosscurrents. We receive many submissions of pain and loss, but this time around, students produced work about love, family, and most of all, resilience. In times of adversity, it is clear that students at the University of Puget Sound create something meaningful out of misfortune or sorrow.

For graduating seniors, this semester is their last at the University of Puget Sound, and they are all preparing for their next step. I often remember my freshman year in Regester Hall, flipping through my first ever Crosscurrents issue with my best friends who are still my closest friends today. I remember my hesitation as a freshman to get involved on campus, but I am so glad I did. Being Editor-in-Chief of Crosscurrents has been difficult and rewarding all the same. Many thanks to my fellow editors and staff members that have made Crosscurrents a reality and more than anything, I will miss our Thursday meetings full of laughter and literary bliss. I know whoever serves as Editor-in-Chief next year will benefit from the dedication of everyone in the Crosscurrents community, just as I have relied on all of you this past year.

With thanks,

Emily Rostek, Editor-in-Chief
Guest Contributor

David George Haskell

David George Haskell is a professor of biology at University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee. He has written a number of scientific papers, essays, poems, op-eds, and books. In 2013, Haskell published the critically acclaimed book *The Forest Unseen*. *The Forest Unseen* received a number of awards including the 2013 National Academies Communication Award for Best Book. He was also a finalist for the 2013 Pulitzer Prize in General Nonfiction and runner-up for the 2013 PEN/E. O. Wilson Literary Science Writing Award. Recently, Haskell published his book *Songs of Trees* on April 4, 2017. Unfortunately, we were unable to print an excerpt of his most recent book but you can find an op-ed he recently wrote on the *New York Times* website.

The Crosscurrents staff had the pleasure of speaking with him after he spoke about his new book on campus. *Songs of Trees* follows Haskell’s experiences as he visited about a dozen different trees across the world. His book demonstrates his skill in unifying creative writing and biology.

Interview With David Haskell

CCR: At what point did you know you wanted to integrate science into creative writing?

Haskell: I have always been interested in reading in high school and through college and beyond. So for me, it was out of that longstanding personal interest. I’ve always wanted to hang out with a good book—fiction, poetry, and also non-fiction about science. I had been looking for many years—since I was in grad school—to tell some of the stories of the forest to people who are not scientists, people who aren’t involved in scientific research. But I didn’t know what the right mechanism would be, and then I had decided to do a longterm study of just one square meter of forest and so when those two ideas met, then I thought well, this could work. That the contemplative approach to being in the woods and the storytelling approach can converge as one project. And then you know, I know that I decided to try it out as an experiment rather than—‘this is it, I know for sure.’

CCR: How long was the process of your first book “The Forest Unseen?” How did you know that you got it right?

Haskell: The process took about 7 years for the first book because I did a lot of the observations, I wrote some of the book, and did the research. Then I was a department chair for five years in the middle and could only really work on the book in the summers, so that really slowed me up but it also meant that I had time to explore different ways of writing and different voices until I found one that really worked for me. So that one was a fairly extended process. For a
nonfiction book it involves a lot of research and really 7 years isn't too long--I had plenty of other things going on at the same time. The second book, really the idea started in 2012...it crystallized more around 2013, 2014 and so I spent about a year and a half to 2 years doing research and then a year writing the book. And now it's out. You know, I submitted the initial draft of the manuscript more than a year ago. And then last year was spent doing a lot of edits.

CCR: I know you traveled around to all these different trees all over the world. Was it 12 trees?

Haskell: Well some chapters [of Songs of Trees] have more than one tree. So, there are 11 main trees and then some interludes mixed in...so it's about a dozen trees. I went to Ontario, Georgia, Tennessee, Japan, Scotland, Colorado, Chicago, Washington DC, to name a few places. I went to most trees several times.

CCR: Do you have a favorite tree or a favorite place?

Haskell: Each tree is a favorite in its own way. Every single one blew me away with their stories. The two that really struck me because they really taught me a lot about the nature of trees and of human attraction to trees with the sabo tree in the Amazon and then the pear tree in Manhattan. The pear tree is just this really ordinary street tree.

CCR: How does your understanding of nature affect the way you teach?

Haskell: My understanding of nature is that we are part of nature. So a city is as natural as a forest, it doesn't mean the whole world should be cities and that means that we should be participants. So when I’m teaching biology we’re outside or in the lab actually doing things or when I’m teaching writing we’re doing a lot of writing experiments. When I’m teaching about food and hunger we’re in the food bank and we’re growing food and gardens and so on and actually doing—not so much because we will remember more that way but because that’s more real and it supplements and enhances things that we read in books. I think it’s important to read a lot as well but I do think that reading and abstraction and analysis has to be rooted in experience.

CCR: How did you change your writing to engage in science, creativity, and meditation?

Haskell: By having these experiences in the woods and reading these scientific readings and lecturing someone...when I’m writing I’m trying to be true to that so I can convey the scientific idea accurately in a compelling way. I try to write in a way where the sensory experience in that moment is real.

CCR: What gave you the idea to listen to the trees?

Haskell: I started with listening to birds and teaching people to listen to birds
and then once you start to open your ears you’re like ‘wow the trees all start to hear very different’ and very interesting and very interesting and there are all types of stories behind them.

CCR: What do you think that the networks of trees taught you about people?

Haskell: I think they’re all part of the same network—and that’s the network of life. There are chemical connections and physical connections and then social connections and human of course as a species, one of our great talents is social connections. We can use language to convey ideas across generations and through spatial barriers and so forth. One of the characteristics of networks it seems—in all networks—is this tension between openness and vulnerability. A network that is completely open like a computer network or a network between the trees and the soil is going to get overrun with viruses either biological viruses or computer viruses. Same thing is human social networks. If we were completely open to everything we’d get exploited. On the other hand, the other part is completely blocked off and that also doesn’t lead to anywhere productive or alive because life depends on those connections. So for all the relationships there is this kind of negotiation; where is this network going to be on the scale between openness and defensiveness? We have that with my Gmail account, Facebook, and Twitter, too.

CCR: What advice do you have for aspiring writers, artists, or biologists?

Haskell: I mean I guess on the writing side of things, to convey a story or a narrative you first have to experience. So, going outside and having a practice opening your senses, paying attention to hearing, to aromas, to the texture of things, like what does it actually feel like? And if I can actually feel it, I then can move into the realm of actually describing it with words but if I don’t have the actual feel of what it actually is, but without experiencing that, I got nothing to come up with a metaphor for what this actually is. Or an analogy or a perfect verb or adjective. Lived experience that opens senses is a great way to discover new things as scientists, but it also, as a writer, you have to do that to write a compelling story that transports someone else to that particular moment in that particular experience. In some ways, it is often more important with fiction writers because you’ve got so much that you’ve got to make up that you can’t afford to let people think that [their story] is an artifice. So the smell of apple pie or the feeling of hot asphalt on their feet. You’ve got to describe that really well so people will buy into the rest of your conceit which is to suspend disbelief for a bit.

CCR: What’s next?

Haskell: Hopefully I’ll be writing some shorter pieces that relate to the book and also relate to how we think about a rapidly changing world so, there’s this idea of renaming the geological era that we’re in—the anthropocene—so I want to ask what would be the most appropriate word, and how do we mark the beginning of that era? Is it gonna be something bad like the first nuclear test that leaves a geologic signature or is it going to be something else? For my writing, I never know where it’s going to go.
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David George Haskell

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Night

Amy Shapiro
1st First Crush
_Karine McCulloch_

To my first grade, first ever, crush
I spent all of my allowance money
on silver lined, no lace sketcher sneakers
so you would notice me on the playground

I chose to be a cop because
you chose to be a robber,
I liked boys who could run fast
I never did catch you

To my first grade, first ever, crush
you liked Molly M. more than me
she had pretty hair
prettier than my hair

You stuck gum in my ugly hair
everyone laughed,
I asked for the bathroom pass
so no one would see me cry

To my first grade, first ever, crush
you were a total jerk,
you really freakin’ sucked,
yet I still do cartwheels for scumbags
and jump rope backwards for bullies

Crowd Cloud
_Rosie Rodger_
Salmon Song
Grace Piccard

This is a salmon song, a summer shandy, a love story written entirely in the time it takes for my parted lips to meet the soft crease in your neck. This is you: the nuclear west, the dry red rock, the lonely sweep of the high country. This is me: the sweet river, the slow meander, the surging glacier-fed weep. We teem with life, the two of us, with the unexplored, the wilderness. I look at you and bloom like a high desert spring: poppies, mariposa, Indian paintbrush. These are the things I hide between my slot-canyon ribs, a love that ripens and unfolds, an unexpected flush of color. Here are our hands, our feet, our bodies pressed together. The ebb and the flow of the coastal tide, the surge and recede. I recite the Latin names of salmon while you are cooking, drumming my bare feet against the counter: Oncorhynchus tshawytscha, Oncorhynchus mykiss, Oncorhynchus gorbuscha. You are laughing and the kitchen smells like saffron. I want you like a desert drought, like the relief of a thunderstorm, with a ferocity that can only be described using natural phenomena. I want to kiss you for a geological time span. I want to fuck you like the continents are splitting and drifting. You make my sheets smell like sweat, like incense: sweet and heavy. The sun has come out and there are ribbons of light falling through the leaves of the trees outside the window. We go and lie underneath them like children, eating dandelion leaves, blowing the round seed heads off their stems. I tell you to make a wish. You laugh at me but you close your eyes anyway and I am lost in this brilliant dazzle of sunlight and the way your eyes crinkle in the corner when you are smiling. In the garden we pick berries until our fingers and lips are stained rich, ripe red. You joke that we could stay here forever, eat nothing but blackberries, and I am thinking that summer will end and I want to love you when the fall salmon start running. Let me love you then, in the cool quiet break of autumn, in the grey stretch of winter.
Each flower fetus in a leaf skirt
A green and beige shuttlecock
Ready to be padded along across rackets

Each a suspended raindrop,
Face beaming in the wind,
Ready to burst into pink flame.

Each a scratch across our fence to
Break the silence
That lives atop the lettuce boxes.

The rhododendrons know
spring is tomorrow

and though it is raining
and my eyes are half shut,
they will soon blossom.

Rhododendrons
Sophie Meyers

Untitled
Stella Blumberg
In My Father’s Garden
Claire Helmberger

I sit folded in my Aunt’s triangle-puzzle quilt among the bees and lavender in my father’s garden, and count the hummingbirds that feast on the devil’s crocosmia. The red Chevy rolls up the hill, and I emerge from my cocoon and cross the bitter lawn to the garden he hides.

I take the morning glory between my fingertips. Its velvet kisses my skin, its tendrils grip the chain-link fence and bear it upwards. My father says this flower is a weed because it isn’t what he wants in his garden.

He longs for a rose or lily of the valley, something strong and fragrant, not this homely and anxious flower. He vows to cut it down one day, and I believe him.

But now this soft little flower speaks to me, and I feel the wisdom of its frail-looking, steadfast coils, and its will to always wake to see the morning.
Deforestation

_Cody Chun_

—If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?

—Who’s asking? (i.e., how do you know no one is around to hear it?)

_Bridge_

_Matthew Byrne_
You Already Know This Poem

Colin MacRae

You told it to me
In your breath
And the treble clef curve
Of your back

We don’t need to talk
about your eyes
We don’t need to talk
about your lips

Close them and taste
Anticipation
Soft breath on your thigh
A kiss above your hips

And your face
In the shuttered
Night time
Streetlight glow

You already know
The predatory Condor of Los Angeles is out to get me!

Maxx Cohn

I wonder if there wasn’t as much traffic in my life
if I’d be a different person
maybe I’d talk less about music
and more about books
I’d eat better food
and have more friends
I’d take a trip to LA to escape nothing
I’d write more
talk less
and feel sad about things sometimes

Untitled

Anj Cunningham
Daughter of the Moon
Sam Kaplan

with planets on strings, she slips
and slides across the room
in mismatched socks
digging through her chest of drawers
to find—

a-ha! she pulls from her front overalls pocket
a match—she strikes it, throws it
into the inky black; sparks
skitter across the hardwood floor
snagging on the vast net of her bedroom walls

her glinting laugh bubbles
into the room’s shadowed corners
where coppery worlds dance
(you can still see them
if you rub your eyes hard enough)

she kicks a comet aside
like a neon light it illuminates her face;
her freckles glitter and glow
like the galaxies that swirl around her
as she begins to fade from view—

when you wake, you blink
the last shards of stardust from your gaze
her whisper tickles your ear:
open your eyes;
the world is beautiful today.
Condom Wrappers
Julia Randall

I
That thin strip,
like a single strand of hair
lost in your mouth, dried
in the carpet, waiting
to prick your foot.

II
Split in two like a dissected
snowman, half melted, it glistens
happily in the trash.

III
It balances on the bedside table,
bloated and pestering,
glopping around in its embryo,
forgotten in the blue darkness of
weekday dawns.
A Night at the Movies

Maddie Criglow

Tonight we watch a Victorian lady
in a ridiculous wig profess her love
to a ghost, “it’s a metaphor,” she says—
I believe her, but I snicker at her sincerity
and place my hand on your thigh.

Before the ghost answers back
you say “let’s get out of here”
and pull me up towards the glowing yellow
exit to find another way to live
for the next two hours.

My hand in your tight grasp,
we bob in and out of fucking in hotel rooms,
crying on the telephone,
hurtling towards Mars,
running from an avalanche

until you lead me up a sloped carpet
to a sea of empty seats
still waiting for an audience—
a kiss flickers on your face
when you tell me this one’s ours.

Untitled

Emily Katz
SELECT WORKS

An Elegy to the Eel River

Maya Makino

Corporeal

Zoe Branch

Miriam

Hailey Shoemaker

Selected for their strength as works of art, both in craftsmanship and insight, the following pieces are explored by Puget Sound faculty to exhibit their depth and recognize their achievement.
An Elegy to the Eel River

Maya Makino

late August
the center of the river—
a dusty bed of ashen stones
somewhere upstream the last trickle
choked by poison algae

I stand on cracked earth
reliving summer afternoons
spent splashing at the bank
floating watermelon in the soft green water
the hum of cicadas and sizzling heat

long shadows, I turn my back
on the parched alien landscape
sun-seared into my retinas

Poetry Review

Professor Beverly Conner

 Appropriately enough, this poem of wistful imagery and precise syntax crossed my desk at the beginning of Earth Week. At a time when we are asked to raise our environmental consciousness, Maya Makino’s title reminds us with poignancy that some aspects of our natural world have already been lost or are even now in the rapid current of loss. Most alarmingly, in this era of climate change, perhaps they may never be reclaimed.

Though embracing nature in memory—the river that once invited splashing, the soft green water—the elegiac nature of the poem casts “long shadows,” describes a funereal “dusty bed of ashen stones” in the very center of the now dry riverbed, and decries the poison algae that has already choked even the most pristine waters.

Nostalgically, the poet recalls past summer afternoons of “floating watermelon” and “the hum of cicadas,” even while turning away from the “parched alien landscape.” Perhaps this turning away could represent a form of hope, not so much a denial of the damage but of what, with awareness, might still be saved. Even so, the sun sends its damaging rays into the poet’s retinas, and we cannot help but sense our diminishing ozone on this once beautiful river, this once beautiful planet. A deceptively chilling poem, its adjective oxymoronic as our Earth continues to heat.
Later that night, I wonder if he could hide from himself in my scarred body, if my often vacant abdomen could encompass and caress him until his panic emptied itself into my intestines. Could my stomach acid erode the worry lines of his forehead? Could the contraction of my diaphragm embrace him with a pressure so urgent that he’d have no choice but to breathe, too? I look at his fitful shape in the sheets to my left, thrashing like a fish drowned between my fingers. To swallow him whole so his sweetness infects my bloodstream, my organs repairing him while his occupation repairs them—this is the hunger I taste on my lips as I press myself against his back, one arm clutching at his waist.

Zoe Branch’s “Corporeal” is a fierce piece, inhabiting that nebulous space between prose and poetry. Yet, there is nothing tentative about it; its steady drumbeat of visceral images—“my scarred body,” “my stomach acid,” “the contraction of my diaphragm,” “his sweetness infect[ing] my bloodstream,” “my organs repairing him,” “one arm clutching at his waist”—serve to establish both mood and tenor, anguish and redemption. In its reliance on images to do the work of meaning-making, the piece stakes its ground as poetry, an instantiation of that coiled definition of poetry as “language concentrated.” The piece’s formal liminality mirrors its emotional register: the speaker’s surety and expansiveness makes them capable of the exchange-that-is-surrender that marks the beginning of the healing the speaker offers the suffering lover.
Miriam
Hailey Shoemaker

Art Review
Professor Janet Marcavage

Vibrant color and bountiful plant life is found throughout Miriam, a narrative portrait of Miriam Barnett, activist and CEO of YWCA Pierce County. Hailey Shoemaker’s rich collage, part of a summer research series about Tacoma activists, requires careful looking in order to see and make meaning out if its complicated, yet synthesized parts. If one word could describe this work in layered watercolor, pen, ink, and transferred imagery, it would be abundance. The entire space of the canvas is collaged with elements of both interior and exterior space.

A table draped in a striped cloth sits at the low center of the composition. Flowers, a bottle of wine, and a bowl of fruit decorate the table. There is seating for two. Behind the table cloth, there are light filled windows through which foliage is implied. Deft watercolor marks render plants that sit at the window, sharper than the marks used for the foliage seen through the window. But that is not all. Various trees, roots, and a house exterior, to name a few, are puzzle-like elements found throughout the work. Intersecting lines and color spill over onto adjacent parts. The central chair legs become roots. The trunk of some trees in the upper right become part of the window frame. Nighttime colors pour into part of a sun-filled interior.

There is a sense of transformation as one image melds into another, which speaks to the work that Miriam Barnett is engaged in: Many individuals who have suffered from domestic violence have found safety and growth through the YWCA that Miriam Barnett leads. The roots suggest Barnett’s extensions into the community. Words such as “optimistic heart,” “freedom,” and “respect” stand out as collage elements at the bottom of Shoemaker’s composition, which one can assume to be values held by Barnett, who is known to embrace and support people of all identities and backgrounds. The boundlessness and layering present in Hailey Shoemaker’s narrative portrait of Barnett evokes a sense of generosity and proliferation.
Loving the Artist
Georgia Gustavson

I want to be half of her if there was
Ever a knife to splice away prideful flesh to perfection
Without killing the selfhood we learn to love
In an artist.

There is a nerve firing in the artist’s spine,
It charges her with holy light that burns battery acid
In a mortal casing.

I see her expanded, distorted
And I want to carve her image deep into my face,

And when I have the life flooding out of me
I will finally be living
In more than one
Flat dimension.

How do I immerse myself in this bloody wash
Of contradictions, and feel
Somehow whole?

I torch the image of the artist’s body,
Cut up her name into black confetti
When there is no event to held.

I speak in guttural backwards noise.
I swallow my tongue.
I kill the selfhood and love whatever is left.
I love it so fully and vastly that every image of
What my artist body should be
Burns away on contact.
I paint my face nameless
And laugh.
Love of Life
**Georgia Gustavson**

I, [insert name here], hereby swear, on the old bonbon tin in the living room that currently holds my mother’s ashes, to no longer give a damn, in any and all aspects of my life (it’s you, this is about you)

I no longer have the:

1) Time
2) Energy
3) Mental Capacity

to give even the smallest fraction of myself anymore. If I do find myself thinking about you ever again, may God smite me, and inform me of my sins, and give me a lengthy speech as to why talking to you would be, frankly, a bad idea.

If ever you look at me again, I pledge to murder you, at least in the capacity of my own imagination because really, you do not deserve to know I exist or have the pleasure of seeing me even out of the corner of your eye. Furthermore, the next time I walk past you--someone that some other fool may consider “nice” or “cute”--I will not walk in a way in which to evoke your love or interest as I have done in the past. I will not swing my hips or bite my lips. NO! I will swing my arms and kick my heels and also probably trip a bit because my shoes are a bit too big and that’s just the kind of person I am.

I will not think twice about how you view me. If ever you were to attempt to speak to me again, I shall take your liver out of your soft stomach and shove it so far down your throat that you might even shit it out the next day, who knows! The human body is an amazing thing.

--Genevieve Caskey

A Pledge
**Genevieve Caskey**

I, [insert name here], hereby swear, on the old bonbon tin in the living room that currently holds my mother’s ashes, to no longer give a damn, in any and all aspects of my life (it’s you, this is about you)

I no longer have the:

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I will not think twice about how you view me. If ever you were to attempt to speak to me again, I shall take your liver out of your soft stomach and shove it so far down your throat that you might even shit it out the next day, who knows! The human body is an amazing thing.
In conclusion, I do not exist. Any person who is under the FALSE assumption that they have seen me or spoken to me in the past is WRONG and should seek psycho analysis as soon as possible. I will now focus on my true identity, that of an enigma, and take my rightful place as a small yet fashionable old lady that swears under her breath at the supermarket and has a surprisingly booming laugh. I will do things only for myself, friends, family, strangers and NEVER for someone like you again. This is my pledge, and I shall hold myself to the highest standard of maintaining it. I pity any and every person who holds even the slightest resemblance to you. You bastards don’t know what’s coming.
Taco Bell

Maddy Cane

As kids, my dad would joke that
They put something “special” in the meat

Dinners during the Hoover administration
Brought a new sense of adventure to eating
Out a can.

A finger with the pickles, a snout in the soup,
A nation where the fruits of our accomplishments
Went together with rot and spoiled meat.

Demonstrating our belief in conserving natural resources.

Energy

Genevieve Caskey
Mother
Zoe Branch

My mother is pregnant
with me and she will not eat.

Her shaky fingers linger
on her lower belly stretch marks—
the scars I carve into her skin
before she learns how to love me—
as rough tape measure stitches hold together
her midsection each morning.
Numbers grow as I do
and she panics at the expansion of her body’s
mirror image, unable to recognize herself

or the writhing life inside her.
Lips sealed, she tells herself
it’s better to feed me
with her mind—
thoughts are power
after all
and she wants me
to be strong.

So I was born
hungry,
silent,
still,
a thin-skinned berry
empty of seeds,

the strength of my body
consumed by frantic
fingernail gashes

and my mother’s toxic love.
unashamed by naivety, I was
open to accept this knowledge
and foolish to say it through
my own lungs.

pattern-making species seek comfort in
organized chaos
playing games building boundaries and
destroying them, giving names
to the things always changing

how you like the way its phrased
but not the words themselves

no longer
locked in position
like liquid crystals or malleable clay
the worst you can do is wait
as it hardens
too much can never be mended
navigating a shipyard of leaky vessels

sometimes you have to stop
and feel it for yourself as the
evaded cadence slips into
the next phrase -
striving to complete the perceptually incomplete.

Untitled
Anj Cunningham
Geometry
Paul Goudarzi-Fry

I am born of obtuse angles.
What is the measurement of bent elbows
Knees slanted and spread on curved stirrups?
Measure the scream in decibels,
Peel off the film of my circumference,
Incised and inverted, warm blooded and bloodied,
Mark the change, point A to point me –
Replacing the space with nothing else,
Barren. A fleshy Euclidian plane,
Raw-rubbed through layers of dermis,
I squirm in unknown tangents.

Not one but two we are, multiplied,
Added to addle, straddling, swaddled,
Linearly hand in hand. Here we strand,
Becoming independent, we mean it,
An indent rendered as we surrender,
One invert and one exerted, extroverted.
When did I become horizontal?
Squared up with the sanguine traitor,
The screaming intersects in sound waves.

Uncountable black bullet points on my list,
Five years counting away from the origins.
So many shapes came and went through me.
I measure sharpness in angles less than one degree,
Tearing free, note: What’s the hex code for cherry red?

How wide the diameter of this unholy circle,
The temperature of a face blurred purple?
Or the angle of a speeding cylindrical wind,
Thoughts of origami on the wall behind me?
Will the cracks to appear in my spinal Pangaea.
Connect the points to form a perfect kite.

Flailing to escape, read: one battle lost,
One war left to decide the outcome
Of uncaused casualties – zero deaths,
Hot breath pressed upon my neck,
Species undiscovered in opposition to my shapes.
I desire three sides of self, others, God,
A third dimension, prismatic in unity,
Glass panels shattered by the fire – so roar,
Itineraries frayed as my papers blow away.

But we have nothing left as he crosses them off –
A blank-slated man, nearest to my fear,
A fear long-lasting, imposed upon my matrices,
One this mathematician has long since solved.
Consider, the man says, two rare earth magnets,
A ten percent chance of joining together.
After-school practice teaches the undergrad
How many times forty-nine goes into eighteen,
Saving divisions, a queer query, that certain angle.
I learned to love geometry again.
Twelve hours turn twice to form the son,
And I the sun find myself mirrored.
Intention retained in pedagogical puzzles,
Saying no to misery’s mysteries, thank you, milligrams,
A payment plan of chemical proportions.
Though the scars are perpendicular,
Three dimensions emerge from the flood.
One push, one pill, one man to tell me that
My life, counted in his commander’s countenance
Is more than a most mangled mistranslation.
A second chance emerges from the flame,
And I become a single point untamed.

Geometry
Paul Goudarzi-Fry
Snow in Tacoma

Evan Welsh

It all came to fruition outside that house on the corner
in that castle the children had built
out of frozen bricks.
As temperature fell, your feet
made harsher sounds in the snow
while I walked three paces behind,
silently stepping on salted sidewalk.
Looking upward
to glance at the aging moon through the frozen branches
of wilting willows.

My eyes concentrate
on constellations
and all light began to dim.
And all noise, with the exception
of the soft ringing from my subconscious.

But there is a welcoming warmth
To the tinnitus hum.
That sweet drone
whirling within ear canals without end,
ascending and collapsing,
but always present.

From solitude I was torn
by piercing skepticism three steps ahead.
“How do you see them?” they called.
There were CDs that swung from the trees
making sounds like wind chimes or baby chickadees.
“Everything is right.”