The background of the cover is a photograph. The top two-thirds of the image is a sky filled with soft, white, textured clouds. Below the clouds, a dark line of bare trees stretches across the horizon. In the foreground, a road or parking area is visible, with a few cars parked. The overall lighting is somewhat dim, suggesting an overcast day.

Bang and Whimper
Literary Magazine
2018
Dominican College

ORANGEBURG

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The Writer's Curse

-Zoe Cruz

Remember poet, not everyone wants
to be a host for your darkest passion.

Promise yourself to be different with this one
to not treat their material as your next material
even though every time you look at their smile
you see the title to your next poem
Their laugh your next word play
Their heartbeat your pentameter
Before your eyes they become your next stanza

Remember poet, not everyone wants to be
your next poem.

An American Family

-Erin Briggs

I seem to have lived a white-picket fence life,
With my white-picket house
and white-picket family;
An illusion so pure I almost forget why
the fence was so white,
Underneath layers of paint
lies the weathered, rotten wood;
From years of decay we have tried
to hide, even I can not deny
these fences were made to suffocate.

"Momma"

-Samantha Colon

Dear momma,

You and me

Me and you

The most inseparable duo.

May 2nd I became your entire world
and little did you know you were creating my world.
Filled with so much light, love, and happiness.
But most importantly, it was filled with you.

The only world I ever saw was one with you in it.
You made sure I never needed any boy to show me my worth,
but you were never quite concerned with
the potential.
The potential what if,
the what if this tiny little world we created just you and me
couldn't be.

December 2013 reality faced me.
Your first chemo appointment.
I just couldn't figure out how could this be,
my entire perfect world threatened by a disease?
This couldn't be me, this is just the type of thing you hear
on TV, a girl losing her mother at 18.

But this was my world, a ticking time bomb.
Incurable, but liveable, what the fuck does that even mean?
We have time, but we might not we just have to fight and see?

Doctors' visits, hospital scares, no hair, everything I once knew left
up in the air.
This is all so unfair, not only for me but for you momma.

So much light
So much happiness
You were the person who lit up a room, you were the glue
that held us through.
I watched that all escape you
and that was the most painful thing I've ever had to do.
Watch your light dwindle low, there was really no saving you.

September 29th, 2016

You fly with the wings god gave you
and I'm stuck here thinking why on earth did he take you.
We had so many things left to do,
College graduation
My very first own classroom
My wedding
and maybe even a grandkid or two.
So much left unfinished.
So many moments without you.
So when you pick up that phone and say "Hey Mom" hold on
to that moment, cherish that moment.
cause there's a lot of people out there like me wishing they could
rewind that moment.
And make sure you say that i love you.
And make sure you thank god for that gift he gave you.
Because the next day isn't promised
And life is too precious, and maybe it takes something like this
to get the message,
But no one on this earth will ever love you,
quite like your momma will.

Photo by: Kelly McCauley



A Love Like No Other

-Lacee Spampinato

How to define a love like no other

One where you look at him and your chest swells with such intense feelings but you can't explain it to him because you just don't know the words yet

One where tears roll down your cheeks at the thought of never having his smell on your sheets again

One where if he left you, you'd pinch yourself to see if you'd wake up because curses like that only happens in nightmares

His touch is like no other

His touch is like heroine coursing through my veins but my dealer is 90 miles away and I'm having withdrawals

His touch is so light that I sometimes mistake it for a feather brushing against my skin

But his touch is so intense that it takes my breathe away like wind in November

His touch is a whisper in my ear that gives me goosebumps but for all the right reasons

He is a man who is like no other

He is willing to brave the pouring rain just to kiss me in it

He is willing to carry me through a parking lot so my shoes don't get wet

He is willing to brush my hair when my depression has my arms bound behind my back and refuses to tell me the code to the padlock

He is willing to kiss my scars no matter how many times I keep making them

He is willing to love me when I feel unlovable

He is the greatest man a woman could ask for

And he is mine.

Zoey
-Katie Bloomer

The door still has scratch marks left behind
The carpet still has stains
Your bed still has fur dispersed all around it
Your collar is still sitting on top of my dresser
Everything looks the same, but it is not
I could not wait to have my first dog
2008 was the year we picked you up.
It was a day I will never forget
I finally found my best friend.
2017 was the year we said goodbye.
When we were at the vet
I was rubbing your paw
I told you that you are going to be ok, but I don't know
if I would be.



Photo by: Sarah Konyak

Reflections

-Nicole Neverett

Take a seat she said,

My bare skin glided across the smooth leather couch like thirst quenching water.

My insecurities engulfed into fabric, dripping out the seams that were once so tenderly sewn together.

Her eyes were an hour glass, the grains of sand dwindled down until it was only a matter of time before she saw right through me, a judgement call.

There's a mask that reveals artificial sweetener that begins to mix into my soul. Nonorganic entities.

Horror movies, I relate to the perpetrator, clothed in darkness to instill fear of the unknown,

but also to the victim who is begging for mercy.

Either way, in the end I'm causing destruction.

You see I'm not the person I once was, I go to remove the mask and embrace my vision once more, but my hand gets stuck at the top and slowly slips down the familiar outline leaving my imagination to drift into unknown territories.

Once I was found, but now I am lost.

They say you can wonder in the desert for 40 days or 40 years, but how can I find the path when I have lost my compass.

Her posture was too practiced, her clothes stiff like her attitude.

She had enhanced lips that wouldn't close all the way shut, causing a lisp.

I wonder who she schedules her appointments with to discuss issues of appearance or abandonment.

Or if she "self medicates" with a joint in her hand talking out loud to bathroom mirror prior to seeing her own patients.

You are more than what meets the eye.

You are more than what meets the eye.

I hear you have someone in your life.

Tell me, she says. Is the relationship strictly friendly or friend restricted.

Are you the tree that bares shade to the weak,

Or are you the sun who's aggressiveness burns the lives of friends and family, a spreading cancer.

I tell her days I feel like a lion, ready to run free and devour my will. But other days I am the lamb, soaked in urine covered fur.

You see I'm not one the one for love, Loneliness is a no-vacancy sign, a room on the left side of my chest that can be booked for free, closing what was once open to the general public.

Listen, she says.

you cannot shrink your heartache to empty like the light on your gas tank, your pain can only be ignored for so long before it requires acknowledgement.

There is no easy way to forget your past anger,

You tend to put others together while your tools are broken.

Nicole you are not a carpenter.

The clock in the corner clicks louder than my thoughts and all

I can think about are the debts I have yet to pay back.

That is all for our session, my bare skin left the smooth leather couch like thirst quenching water,

clothed in a mask.

Photo by: Kelly McCauley



Please Listen
-Ja'Saun Young

Please listen, struggling is a part of life.
Yes I'm blessed, but there's nothing better than your own life.
No matter how hard or difficult it is, things always get better.
Whatever you're going through, poverty, death, no father, violent home, lost in drugs,
to even a person touching you with the lack of consent, emotional problems,
feeling poor mentally and financially.
Every small check pays your rent barely living.
Asking God why you put me here when I have little to offer?
Remember still there is nothing better than your own life.
To those who are fortunate with survivors guilt.
Remember everyone is not built the same.
But we display the same tears and we share the same fears.
For those whose shoes I've already fully or partially been through.
Your life is a blessing.
Even if you lack the big house, the new car or the styles clothes.
As long as there's someone who loves you dearly, even if it's only you.
You don't wanna be a Donald Trump where your wife and kids don't even care for you.
Please keep your head up.
The message I stress do your best and love your life and yourself.
Don't settle for less.
Even when pressures and stress makes you feel it's you against the world.
Don't get stuck. The smartest people ask questions.
Please listen struggling is a part of life, there is absolutely nothing better than your own life.

So
-Mark Dmitriev

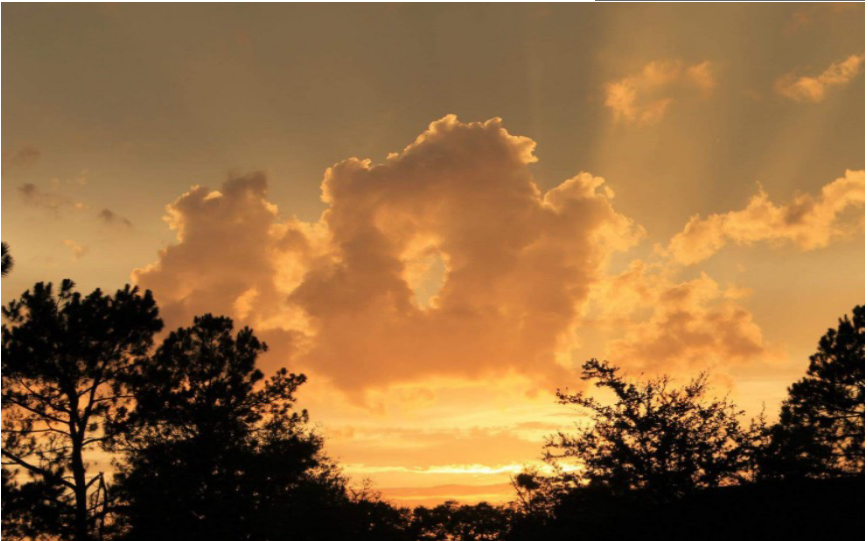
Detach from the cloud from which you laid,
And reveal your shine for all to see.
Turn away the opposers, their injustice in time be paid.
Flaunt your gleam, boast thy beauty, and gift all to me.

For granted, I shall not take thy boon from the heart,
but bring it close to the center of my soul and clutch it.
I will bear thy present in the present, no force could part.
No devil nor demon could succeed to diminish it.

Burn me on the pier if i am twisting my tongue
allow the ravens to feast, if the truth is not present.
Trust in me as if a truth from the preacher sung,
these very words of mine, please believe as my testament

Descend please, thee an angel to my eye
Fall please angel, and bring light to my life.

Photo by: Liji Varghese



Questions

-Lacee Spampanato

He hibernates within my mind like a bear, nearly impossible to rouse
She on the other hand has the energy of a pup, howling and leaping around
Ensuring that her presence is known whether I want it there or not
"Can you come with me?" Yeah
"Can I see your homework?" Sure
"Can you help me with this?!" Yes
She was harmless at first, even welcomed by my family
They disliked when he came around because he
"made me antisocial"
He told me that it was okay to be with him, that he was not a bad influence
He is merely looking out for me.
She got me into parties, events, even kept my friends . . . he was clearly wrong.
"Come grab a drink with me" okay
"Come on, the party will be fun!" Yeah, I'll go
"Wanna sneak out with me?" Um . . . sure
She would not stop but I guess it's okay
Better than being alone
"Take a shot with me!" Oh . . . I don't know
"Take a drag! You'll feel better" you sure?
I reached out to him despite my parents' disapproval
His advice was the forbidden fruit and I played the role of Eve
Spring has arrived, prompting him out of hibernation
"Can you text me the answers to the test? I forgot to study" No.
A verbal slap landed upon waiting ears, turning a mountain into a volcano
Relief washed over my skin like a hot shower after a day in the snow
Liberating, relaxing, I can breathe now
Her angelic figure wielded an axe behind my trusting back
While his rough exterior produced a bouquet to my face, a smile adorning his
Yes is no longer my default response
No is no longer a forbidden word
They tango well together, but rely on only one and a volcano may erupt, taking you in its wake.

Politely Buried
-Christine Ditzel

A touch on your shoulder
Draws your gaze down to their hand.
You glance up as you hear
The inevitable question.
"Are you okay?"
You see the person before you,
Know who they are,
Yet their face becomes a blur
With all the others
Who have ever asked.
There is no hesitation.
Your lips are on autopilot.
No need for thoughts.
Your voice never found
The secret tunnel from its prison.
"I'm fine"
Springs forth with a smile.
But all the while your voice is shaking
The cell bars and screaming,
"No, I'm not."

Photo by: Lacey Spampinato



Her Beauty
-Patricia Simmons

Her Beauty
Raw and unintentional
Her beauty
Spoke words of authenticity
A language spoken in volumes
Yet she stumbled upon each flaw

Her Beauty
Resilient and Powerful
Her Beauty
Radiates from the depths of her love

Symphony
-Karina Rios

I wanna be the sweet melody that brings you to sleep.
With notes so complex no one would dare to replicate.
I wanna write the notes with my tongue sliding left to write
like my pencil gliding across that sheet music.
I made him my muse with one look at those
hazel eyes of honey.
One look, and I was his.
Those eyes had me at a loss for words
Hypnotizing checkered rays of gold, chestnut & green it was
surely a glimpse of autumn every time I took a look.
He taught me how to make sweet music and boy did he
find the key to the music box of mine faster
than any other man.
With a steady tempo, and the stroking of his guitar he kept
my attention for hours.
Gently and slowly he strung his guitar playing
chord progressions that had me begging for more.
And when he played piano he knew which keys to touch
to have my singing those high Soprano notes.

His voice is angelic,
a voice given by the gods surely with Cadenzas that would
surround me in comfort, on cloud nine I'm on when
he serenades me.
And in the moment his eyes catch mine and I'm truly
mesmerized.
It's impossible to hear music in someone's eyes
but wow how that music played.
I've never been a musician but together
we make sweet music.
With duets that would crescendo in perfect harmony and
Sweet symphonies that echoed across the room.
His breath synchronizes in waves coming in and out
Breathe.
This feels like home.
Serenity is being beside him
relaxation is watching his hands Caress me from my thighs,
to my hips, my breast to my neck and finally to my face.
& when he lays me down for once I feel free.
The gentle touch of those hands that surely know what they
are doing feels light as feather but can make water rush
like a hurricane.
Time passes as we write dozens of songs.
You see He's very quickly turning into my muse
and I his favorite instrument.
And When we're together we just make magic happen.

Time Doesn't Heal All
-Jaylyn Graham

I have no more tears to cry, my eyes are burning, and I'm
always shaking.
My hair is never combed, my room is never lit and I don't want to
be awakened.
Panic attacks back to back when God took his angel back.
You knew you were dying and never stopped fighting
October 3, 2014 my best friend got his wings.

Pop-pop you were my best friend, my warrior and fought
for me until the end
How was I supposed to function in a world you weren't in.
First steps, lost tooth, first fight in school
You were there for everything and never missed a thing.
You were always that shoulder to cry on, someone I could forever
rely on.
College graduation, first house, wedding, and future child
Some many things you'll never get to see
It's hard to believe it makes it so hard to breathe.
You were always by my side forever down to ride
you were my partner in crime, you taught to to keep my head
up high.
You taught me everything, how to love, cry soar and even fly.
But I wasn't prepared for the day that you would die.



Photo by: Lia McLaughlin

Traffic

-Stefanie Monaco

Making love is a
two way street
but accidents happen
when we just don't meet

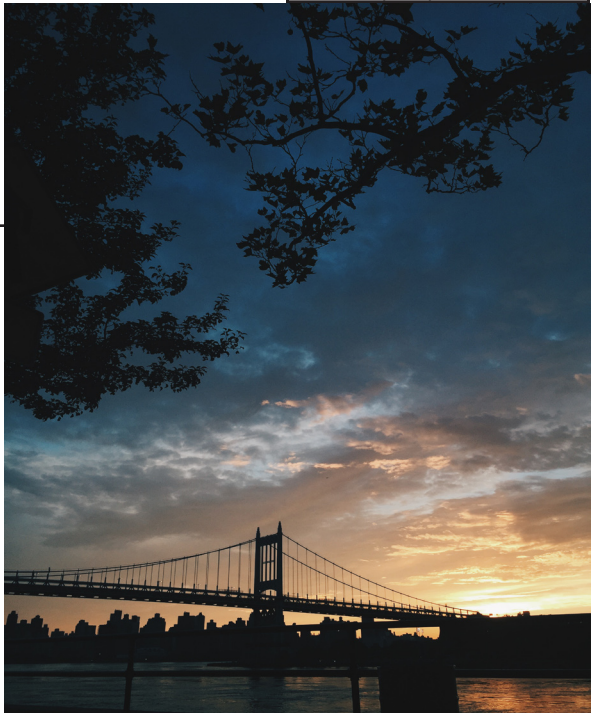
each other's expectations,
specifically mine
it's always when you want to, but
everything's fine

Because when I want to
It's just hormones,
It's not meaningful,
It's just physical

But when you want to
It's a release of your love,
a display of true affection,
a beautiful interaction

But
what if
I just have more love
to give

Photo by: Cynthia Castro



Letter to my Future Daughter

-Luis Bermudez

You are the closed bulb of this flower floating ever so delicately in the clearest of ponds.
You're beauty is not yet defined but when it is ready to shine it will be centerpiece of the pond
For when it blooms it will draw a sea of flashing lights and attention of those who have never seen anything like it.
when it blooms it will rival that of the goddess of love herself
when it blooms it will send love and kindness into the heart of those who only see hate and darkness.
For when it blooms the warmth of your heart will make the "manliest" of men melt like ice.
when it blooms those same men will chase that warmth like a pack of hyenas closing in on their meal.
when it blooms it will be able to fix the most broken of hearts.
For when it blooms they will know that it should be handled with the most delicate of touches.
when it blooms it will empower those closest to you and fill others with envy and hate.
when it blooms and that does happens do not let them make you wilt but instead feed off of this hate like a flower when it comes to sunlight.
When it blooms it will be as elegant and graceful as a figure skater going for olympic gold.
When it blooms it will make life seem like nothing more than a fairytale.
When it blooms it will send chills down the spine of those who doubted it.
For when it blooms, on that day I will be holding you in my arms.
For when it blooms that day I will be you protector, your rock, your shoulder to cry on.
When it blooms on that day you will be daddy's little girl

Why

-Malia Catalina Robinson

He hurts you and it irks you

Because as much as you tell yourself you don't care

You find yourself on the bed pulling on your hair

Because he's stressing you

Again

Boys will be boys so find yourself a man

But when you thought your boy grew up he did the same shit
again
So what now
So many thoughts in your head but you say none out loud
You're not proud
Of what you've put up with
This bullshit
Is everything you said you were done with
So why are you still here?

Dream

-Stefanie Moncayo

Sleep

is not soothing
in the slightest

It is when my vivid dreams
awaken
and breathe fire into my subconscious mind

I dream of
terror and sinister figures
as they make me wish
I had never slept at all

But the worst is
loss, anxiety,
rejection and
infidelity
dreams that can easily come to life

I remember my last waking moments
before it took courage to
shut my eyes

And I remembered that
you neglected to remind me
of your love

Please forget this
when I dream tonight
or a possible reality
will wake me again

Me Against the World
-Kenneth Escoboza

Never was scared but the people around made me
Negativity spreads like cancer cells
Deadly to the soul and destructive to the mind
But I had a resilient mind due to the rejection I got
a million times
Afraid to express my emotions,
I feel like I'm just living through the motions
Like I'm drowning in the ocean
just patiently waiting for someone to rescue me
Feeling like Pac, Me against the world
all eyes on me just to see me fail.
But the doubt I will prevail.

Photo by: Lia McLaughlin



Eyes Closed
-Samira Sangaré

and every night i think about what you do to me
what you did to me
why would you force this
on me
-to the people who took advantage

The Day I Died -Jaylyn Graham

I look at my phone it says, Bestfriend '3:23:39' and counting. It's so late the creeps aren't even creeping anymore.

"Why does she do this to me. I did nothing wrong." All I hear is weeping and crying. "I changed, I did everything right I DO everything right, yet I am always wrong or the bad guy."

I'm dying of sleep I need my bed, it's calling my name Jaylyn ... Jaylyn ... come back. Come back! Lord knows how much coffee I'm going to have drink to survive school in the morning.

Then my thoughts are shattered as I hear "I'm going out for a ride."

The sleep in my eyes have disappeared, my eyes are no longer burning. All I can think of now is how many tears I'm going to cry when my best friend dies.

David E. Calle November 7th 1996 - October 2013.

"David I'll call your mother you better not go out!" I'm looking for my pjs and a sweater because this boy never listens. *I'm in a twilight zone but I can hear him crying. Why can't I find my keys. Now my grandmother is awake and worried. Worried about me and worried about David as she hears all his crazy rantings on speaker.

She whispers "Poom should I call the police?" I'm running through the house like Flash looking for all the things I need before I leave.

"David I am on my way." He's still crying. I don't know how much time I have before he actually leaves. "Don't leave! Let me come get you!" I'm running out of the door. Lord please don't let me lose reception.

"David if we lose connection please call me back." I'm running down the steps. Praying to the lord and the angels above protect my best friend and all the things he loves. I can't hear him mumbling on the phone anymore. I'm downstairs, I'm outside. I can hear him crying and weeping. I didn't lose connection thank you God.

"David I'm in my car now DO NOT move I'll be there

soon." It's 4am the roads are clear, every shadow I see is out to get me. Why did I watch *The Strain* last night? I'm speeding down the streets, violating damn near every traffic violation*. But I don't care, lord please just get me there. To think less than 5 hours ago I was sleeping cozy in my bed before my phones siren went off and it was my best friend.

"Bye Jay, I love you" ...

That was the last thing he said before the phone went dead...

I Turned My Back

-Kelly McCauley

I turned my back and there you were
Talking about me once again

I turned my back and there you were
Pointing and laughing at me once again

I turned my back and there you were
Making fun of me to your "group"
Were you just collecting intel to bring back to them
Were you ever really my true friend

Or

Was it another one of your acting skills at work

Was it you trying to get into the popular crowd

I turned my back and there you were
My friend that I thought I could trust for the rest of my life

I turned my back all excited and there you were
disappointing me yet again.

Scary

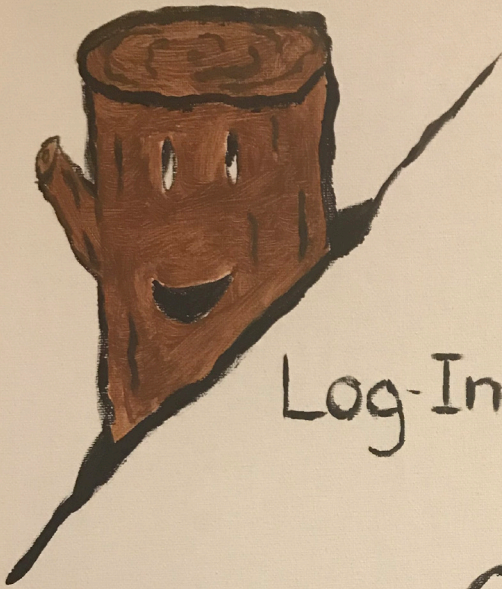
-Kirsorrie Gordon

My scalp has spikes,
Glass breaks above it
Are you still down,
Looking up underestimating me?
You're destined to envy me.
Why envy if we are sisters?
I mean brothers?
You bring the child out of me,
Begging for your attention craving your tongue to speak,
It's okay I'm not important.
But why because I'm not blonde?
Why couldn't it be that I'm bitter?
Can you hear me or are you deaf?
Can you see me or am I too black?
Last night I realized that I shot myself,
Because I died the minute you came to me.
Or did I come to you?
Regardless there's no view if we're killing off our cataracts;
blind.

You are Still a Diamond

-Taphara Brize

You were bright and flawless as a diamond
But innocence died without yelling
Broken, confused, and desperate you are
You want your innocence back
As North Koreans cry to taste freedom
As an orphan begs to be loved
As a persecuted person craves peace
But your excruciating screams are thrown in the trash can
Despite your sad happiness, your loss of innocence, and
your cry for help in vain
You are still a diamond
Worthy, graceful, and unbreakable.



Log-In

Z
Z
Z



Sleeping
Pill



Thunder
Pants

JA