



HOBART PARK

Spring 2020

HOBART PARK

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Dedicated...

to those who continue to love and care in
new ways during hard times.

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EDITORS' NOTE

Dear Reader,

In past years, Hobart Park has consistently contributed to Davidson College's arts community. We have always been proud of our annual publication, hardback and delivered to each student's door. Given the circumstances of COVID-19, the editorial staff has had to remind ourselves of Hobart Park's values and commitment to sharing the art from and with our community. Now more than ever, when we have been forced apart, art plays an important role in keeping us connected and grounded. Thus, we have collected an array of pieces—from poems, short stories, to photography—that highlight the works of student artists in this past year, as well as their responses to the current pandemic.

Although the digital medium is unprecedented for Hobart Park, it is not only our adaptation to our current situation but also a move towards increased accessibility. Hobart Park has always closely involved our greater college community at each stage of our creative process. By introducing our digitalized publication, we aim to further expand and strengthen our relationship with our readers. We hope that this issue of Hobart Park can provide a temporary break from the distressing realities of our world in this moment and inspire you to rediscover your own artistic selves.

Ariel Chung and Cathy Xu,
on behalf of the editorial staff.

inside



Our Legs Are Not This Long | Cathy Xu

Warning: The following piece involves events of sexual violence and may not be suitable for all readers.

Anti-(Soma)tic Ritual: How to Become Invisible to Men

Margo Parker

The summer before I turned eighteen, I shmeared bagels in a strip mall next to a check-cashing place. A thirty-year-old man, whose cousin owned the bagel store, used to send me erotic stories about what he wanted to do to me, wedged between the walk-in freezer and the bulk orders of sesame seeds. When I say that out loud, it makes the roof of my mouth feel sticky. He sent them over Facebook Messenger. His four-year-old son is his profile picture.

When I worry that this is the only interesting thing about me, the only substance of my life that I can bottle up and sell as a poem, I try to isolate how I felt in that moment. To distill my terror like coat-closet moonshine. I printed out the messages and gave them to my manager. He scheduled the two of us for a 6 AM shift together, alone, so that we could “work out our differences.”

Quiet is a kind of subtraction. He didn’t say anything at all. I wasn’t sure, in the dark, if he was looking at me or not. Which is to say I was unsure if I existed at all. My body was refracting like coins at the bottom of a swimming pool. I was worried that men could turn away from me and I would become incredible, which is to say incapable of being believed. Like dust motes next to a delicate light. The whites of their own eyes in a dream.

On the anniversary of the day that I quit my job at the bagel store, I decided to become invisible to men. I wore my unseen-ness like a cape, twirling at my ankles. I put my feet up on end tables. I took notes on the moments my body existed. Those notes became the poem.

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Mo and Chlo | Chloe Pitkoff



Nourish | Makayla Binter

Savannah

Fiona Stanton

Of course, I remember Savannah Wells. She always had that certain, fly-by-night look about her—the kind Parisian women and some soldiers have: unwieldy in its brutality, pretty but frightened, too. Jack-rabbit, I guess. Halfway angelic.

As girls, we were often left alone together after school and on weekends. My mother was a failed poet and novelist, but a semi-successful advice columnist. One of those careers that depressed and aimless women used to be able to get away with.

Savannah's mother was a homebody, almost an invalid. She wore nurse sweaters and smoked in the house. But she was also wealthy—at the time, wealthy in the way only a certain kind of divorcée could be. Blonde and buxom with her hair going thin at the roots, she was a bit older than the other mothers, but her face was all old Hollywood. She could get out of traffic tickets, and she didn't always have to pay for her smaller groceries: cigarettes, milk, mixed nuts, and alcohol.

I loved Ms. Wells, really, when it came to it. She could have been an absent sort of parent like so many others (like mine, my mother taking hours-long baths, her Sexton idolization, my father listening to the White Album in the unfinished basement with his cheap pot). But she wasn't—she indulged Savannah and they ate breakfast together at the country club on Sundays. Oftentimes Savannah would come to school wearing new outfits, sort of British looking and outdated, but obviously expensive. She taught me what it was to feel jealousy in my throat.



Untitled | Makayla Binter



Savannah | Chloe Pitkoff

in-between



Social Distancing | Ariana Wasret

Names, Assorted

Sanzari Aranyak

hunter raven

the bright blue-green of the sea, waves loudly crashing against a
the faint glimmer of a double rainbow that you try to chase in a
a road trip with your best friends, dancing while you drive to
the shadows of a dark forest at night, when the moon provides
the hug you give an old friend when you see each other for the

maya bina

golden mangoes ready to be eaten;
the laughs of children as they play in their grandparents' home,
the scent of summer arriving — rain and sun and freedom and
sitting at your kitchen table and doing homework after dinner;
the secret joy of solitude

anjana

the soft rushing of a powerful stream as it runs through the
the zodiac, constellations, the lunar calendar, and other human
the twist of a sari worn as pants;
the process of making a woodcut print, chipping slowly away at
surface, printing, printing again, until you are surrounded by a
an ink-stained hand, reaching out

silent beach;
car, even though it never gets any clearer;
your favorite music;
just enough light to make out the dark green of the trees;
first time after too many years apart.

safe in this familial bond;
fruit on the horizon;
a brilliant purple sunset over a school field;

forest, fish and river rocks visible through the water;
connections to celestial bodies;

layers of wood to reveal your art, carefully rolling ink over the
sea of inked art, overflowing and incredible;

it's as if

Savanna Vest

it's as if
that buck lay
in wait of oncoming traffic
on an all too empty i-65.
my grandmother lay
in a silent hospital bed
on the all too loud side of appalachia.
and we lay there
on an all too familiar futon
somewhere between *i'm tired* and *i'm sorry*.

tell me the reason
i mourn everything
before it
has died.



Untitled | Morgan Oestereich

Los Gatos, CA 2007

Fiona Stanton

The revealing of an older brother at the end
of the sidewalk— back from school, his friend's house,

vague in his mournful adolescent shadow play,
a boy who keeps Christmas candy wrappers, Easter

chocolate bunny boxes, folded and stacked
in the space beneath his bed.

A brother projected. Brother, brothers:
tall boys with dark hair, with sour faces,

hating the weather or our mother, laughing
and asking *who is your favorite who*
is your Favorite— fiona?

Boys who walk me through parking lots,
boys distracted by friends coming in the front door,

they pour glasses of root beer and coke
and strawberry milk, grab fudgesicles from the freezer,

tell me I am too sick to play outside,
pop the lock on the baby gate

and put on SNL reruns and leave me
to go to their rooms upstairs, alone, where they might

light up or lie back on unmade beds—

one night, after dinner, my brothers teach me
their word for dusk. They call it *blue-dark*.

It is still a god I hold in my hand.



Flower Thirsty | Yamilex Perez Figuereo

Long-suffering:

patiently enduring lasting offense or hardship; my mother

Emily Trinh

If red means love and luck and happiness,
then stain my wedding reception dress
with elderberries, leaving shriveled peels as gemstones;
paint my lips with Mississippi clay,
so they can harden into a smile that even New Orleans'
humidity can't crack;
stitch rosebuds to my eldest daughter's dress
until the suffocating smell reminds her that her name,
that Trịnh Hồng Hương, is a pocket of dirt
from my childhood street that she must carry,
not the flimsy petals of a pink rose;
at my wedding reenactment, fill the tables
with useless red trinkets: solo cups and Pepsi cans,
disposable chopstick wrappers, anything
until I can spit back the words, "*here* is home."

If I am supposed to be loved and lucky and happy,
then I will bite my tongue for twenty-one years,
letting my blood spill onto my youngest daughter,
cradled in my arms, until she is a garnet in sunlight.

Time means nothing, my daughters, when our chests
rise and fall to cicada chirps on summer nights.
But it's been twenty-three years now, and y'all
no longer live in our tiny brick house.

When I think of home,
there is no red,
there is no supposed love and luck and happiness,
just seafoam on sand grains.



Nausea | Kaikai Wang

outside



Untitled | Paul Stouffer

another word for seen is

Margo Parker

carry a lighter
in your back pocket.

stand up on the pedals
of your
bicycle as you ride
uphill. feel
the fall air

the inside of your chest

kiss

like a girl

eat your breakfast on the bus.

hug your knees without
reaching
for anything else.

open an orange, slowly,
with the soft parts of your thumbs.
hold the thick shards
of peel
in your hands
like flower petals.

later,
smell your palms in the early
afternoon.
this
is a way of loving,
a way to
be held.



*Standing at the border between ocean and
solitude 3 | Kaikai Wang*



*Standing at the border between ocean and
solitude 2 | Kaikai Wang*

A Pilgrimage for My Mom (Excerpted)

Emily Trinh

My mom's room is a history exhibit, but instead of a preservation of the past, it's a petrification of the present. Stapled to her wall are my art pieces from elementary school and a Harry Potter-themed service poster from my sister's high school organization. On the floor, there are empty cereal boxes and candy wrappers. There isn't much space in the room, the back corner taken up by a bunk bed covered with trash bags of old blankets and beside it, my sister's old bookcase. In the middle of the room is Mom's bed: a green hammock with a comforter folded underneath. The hammock hangs low, and each time my mom gets out of it, she has to grip the metal stand.

My mom claims that the hammock is better for her back, but I think the room is her way of reclaiming space from my dad. When he isn't working offshore to fish for tuna, the house is his. Somehow, every part of him spreads throughout the house—even his smell, a combination of hairspray and dental powder. Late at night, he'll watch TV in the living room with the volume at thirty, until the noise seeps into every crack in the walls and echoes. On those nights, my mom closes the door to her room. She hasn't slept in the same room as him in over ten years, alternating between the couch and her hammock, unless he is working. Then, when he's gone, she'll take the undented side of his queen bed, laying her thin green blanket over his covers.

Her room is the one place my dad doesn't touch, a place that's just for her. To me, the room is stuffy, and I can't help but get nervous when I look at all the mess. It wouldn't bother me so much if my mom let me clean the room, but the second I try to throw away a stretched out scrunchie or a rusted hair clip, my



*Standing at the border between ocean and
solitude 1 | Kaikai Wang*

mom snatches it back from me, slipping it into one of the boxes by her hammock.



When I walk into her room, I only hear the hum of the computer modem. In the dark, I can barely make out my mom's body in the hammock. Her breathing is quiet, with just an occasional deep breath. Sniffing, I push half-filled water bottles out of the way and sit crisscross on the floor next to her. I place my hand on her arm. It's smooth and cold to the touch.

"Má," I call out, my voice just a whisper. Part of me is embarrassed about coming to her, puffy-eyed and crying. By the end of graduation, I was ready to leave New Orleans and my family, to get the space I wanted away from my mom. With no response from her, I decide that if she doesn't wake up in the next couple of minutes, I'll try and go back to sleep.

"Má?" Her body twitches, and I see her eyes open. She moves her mouth, like she is trying to warm up before talking. As she shifts in the hammock, the metal chain hits against the metal stand, a clear chime ringing out. I sit there, still, too scared to say anything.

"Why are you up so early?" she asks, scratching her scalp. I don't answer her question, the sound of her voice making me start to cry again.

"Má, I'm leaving you," I cry out, choking on the last word. Her eyes close again, and she turns her face towards the ceiling.

"You're going to have a great time in college, though," she says, "you'll meet new people, make new friends. You won't even think of home."

"But what about you," I whisper. I lean my head on her stomach, feel it rise and fall. My tears soak into her floral shirt, and I like to believe that she ran her hand through my hair, but I know that isn't the way she knows how to love. Instead, she answers my question with another question.

"But Emmy, weren't you the one who wanted to go in the

first place?” The question is only meant to hurt a little, just like everything she says, and it nestles itself into my skin. This is the way we comfort each other, and I feel at home with our bodies beside each other in a dark, crowded room, the humid New Orleans air like a blanket over us.

I don't remember the rest of the conversation, just that my mom's voice sounded like the lullabies she sang to me as a kid.

At some point, she gets up to turn on the light and checks her phone.

“It's only 2 AM?” She asks, confused.

“That's why I was scared to wake you up. I thought you had only just fallen asleep,” I say, stretching my legs out.

“I thought it was 5 or 6 in the morning,” she says, her mouth in a small frown, “well, I'm going to make some coffee.” As she leaves, she turns on her TV, putting on a Vietnamese love show for us to watch.

This is her way of saying, “sit with me, spend some time with me,” and I oblige.



*Are we the Rainbow Nation or is the Rainbow
Nation us? | Sarah Jackson*



Mozambique Fishermen | Sarah Jackson



Untitled | Nate Nido

