

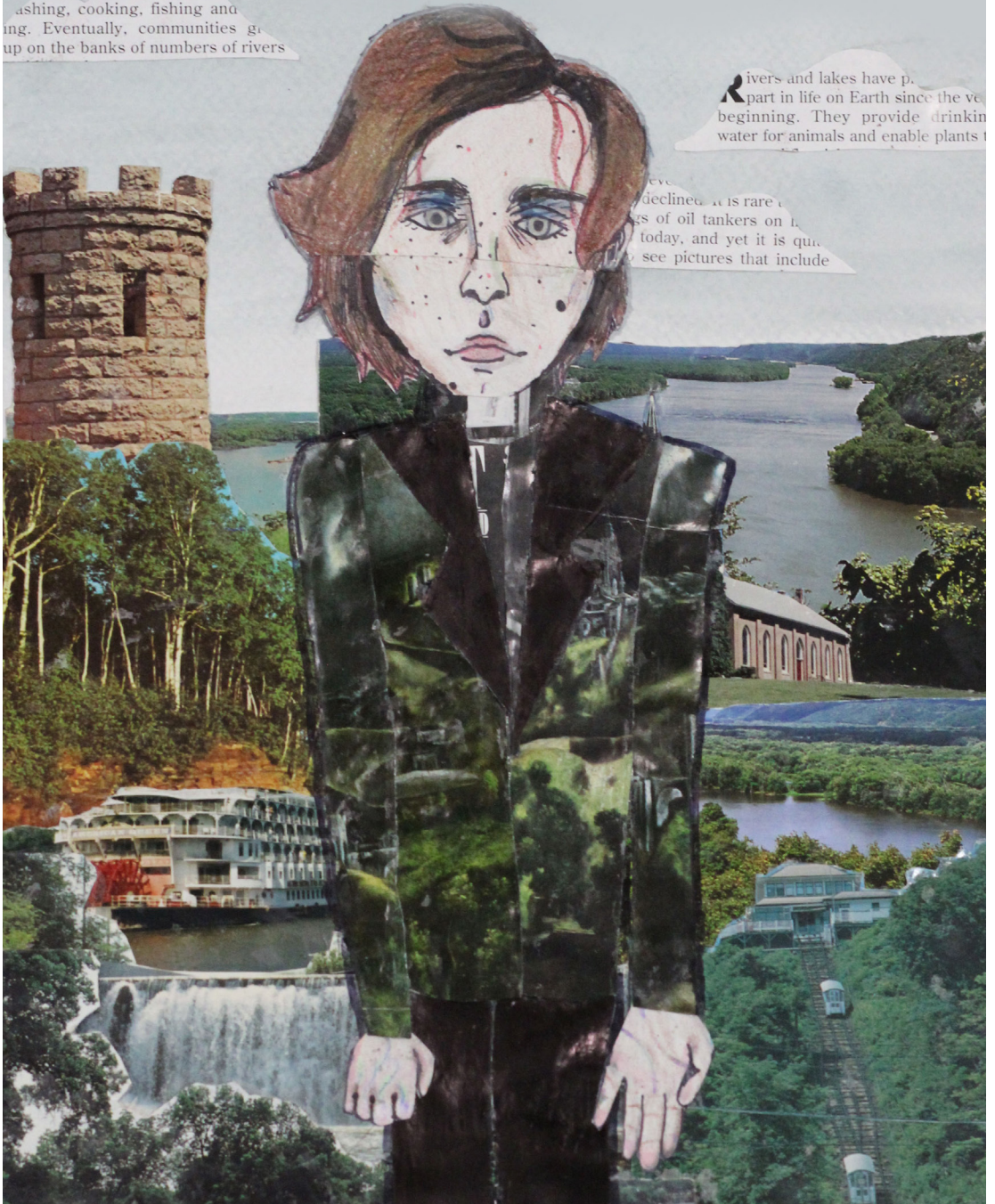
Touchstone

Viterbo University Art and Literary Magazine

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only drinking, but
washing, cooking, fishing and
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up on the banks of numbers of rivers

Rivers and lakes have p
part in life on Earth since the ve
beginning. They provide drinkin
water for animals and enable plants t

level
declined. It is rare
s of oil tankers on i
today, and yet it is qui
see pictures that include



Touchstone is published each academic year by Viterbo University in La Crosse, Wisconsin.

The mission of Touchstone is to contribute to and praise the creative thinking of the Viterbo community. Touchstone provides a creative outlet for publication of visual art and literature. It is also a learning opportunity for students to create a professionally published journal that expresses the culture and education of Viterbo University.

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Viterbo University Mission

The Viterbo University community prepares students for faithful service and ethical leadership.



VITERBO UNIVERSITY

Touchstone

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Art Editor/Graphic Designer/Promotions

Camille Olson

Literary Editors

Ava Stoeckly

Sailor Zarecki

Art Advisor

Kira Peters

Literary Advisor

Vincent James

Front Cover

Dexter Schreck

Driftless Dandy | 2025

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Paloma Blanca | Noe Pacillas

I live in dos mundos, one de sueños y otro de realidad,
But they are both yours,
Because in each one, I go searching for you.

Te pienso en español,
te sueño en English too,
mis palabras son pocas
to express what I feel for you.

Es como si fueras fuego, un fuego
that never burns out,
Each look you give me, my corazón
te llama.

So here I am, esperando, entre
versos y melodía, to tell you in
any language, you're my vida,
my alegría.



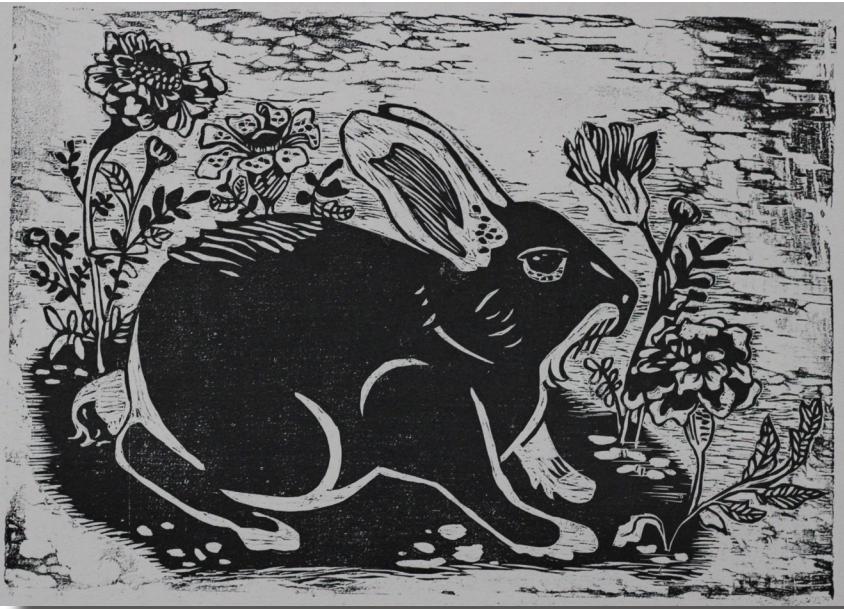
Aryn Marble
Farming Time | Pastel

Young Love Today | Keira Dorado

One day you texted,
Which is not romantic at all,
You were a total stranger, but I still pressed "accept,"
And now all I think about is you.

All of my senses are consumed by you,
Seeing you is like watching a sunset,
Your scent is my favorite smell,
Your hugs are the only physical touch I miss,
I smile when thinking of our dinner dates,
Your voice is my relief to a long day,

You love me to bits,
And I love you to pieces.



Kira Peters
Spring | Woodcut

Midwestern Classicism | Dexter Schreck

There's a temple of Apollo on the other side of town

Sun shines through panes of painted glass

Remnants of the old church are all around

Will you take me there?

On a chill October night

When there's November in the air

The zealots will dance & sing

All dressed in glittery black robes

Turned rainbow by the lights

I'm not a religious man

But when I'm next to you, lit up by the brights

Looking so different than those on stage

I can't help but to be reminded of Apollo

Golden skin, uncut hair, and youthful ways

When the red-lipped man sings the last song

One of acceptance and defeat

I resign myself to always worship

Unacknowledged

At your feet



Dexter Schrek
Driftless Dandy | Mixed Media

A Fragrant Afterglow | Dylan Woodman

As the moon,

Her energy implored.

Tugs the Ocean.

Her reflection

A faint echoe hue.

Warms this seaward breeze,

And stirs

A spring flower

In solfeggio delight.

It whispers its fragrant

Melody

On the soon still air.

The Moon,

Gazes in baleful tones.

As her effortless work

Warms the wandering eye.

This, an evening

Of Fragrant Afterglows.



Hope Regier
Untitled | Acrylic on Paper

Walks | Andree Gonzalez-Lawrence

So much frustration on my mind

Thinking of the bad before it happens

Anticipation results in panic

Small tasks are as hard as climbing Mount Everest

Plugging in my headphones to silence my mind

I walk out the door

Walking taking in my surroundings

Mildewing grass making the tip of my shoes wet

Birds chirping all around

Waves from the rivers swaying the docks left and right

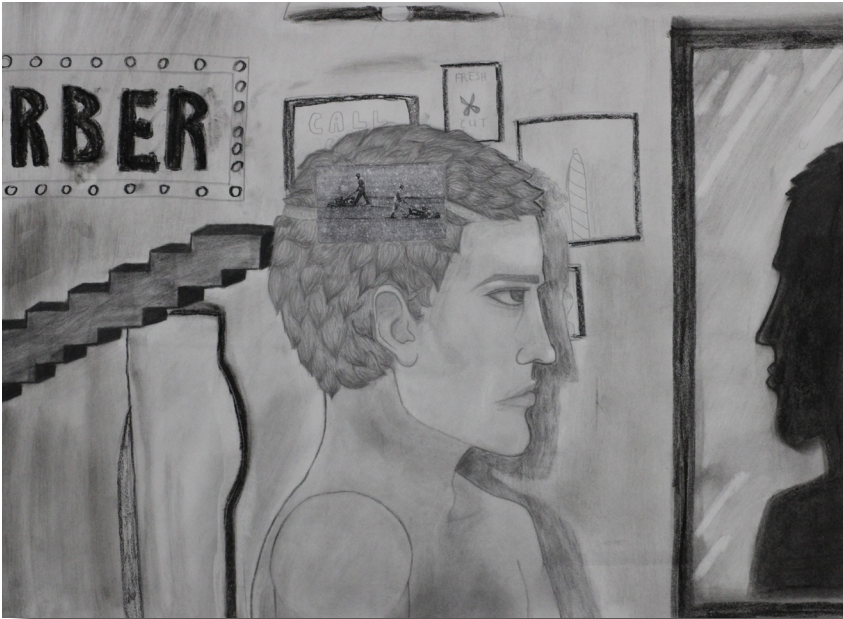
I sit and relax in such beautiful surroundings

Stress leaving my body

Feel at peace until it inevitably comes back



Sherri Lisota



Rita Downing
Shadow of a Man | Charcoal & Graphite

Stay | Ashley Tulley

In the times where everything feels so worthless

Know that you are worthwhile

On the days where the sun never seems to shine

Know that it's still in the sky

When life feels like it's too heavy

Know you have people to help carry that weight

For all those hurtful comments people give out

Be reminded that people give out compliments too

When you look into that mirror everyday

Make sure you like the person you've become

If you feel like you can't hang on

That you can't go on another day

It is important to look around
See everything this life has to offer
All those unexplainable relationships
All those conversations you replay
All the people that you know
Those people are part of you
Connected to you like a puzzle
Making you the person you are today
Just know that people are here for you
Know that people do care
You are so loved
So hang on
Stay



Aryn Marble
Winter's Work | Oil Pastel

Six Feet | Summer Haag

How far is 'six feet'?

This question seems simple

Six feet is seventy two inches

One hundred eighty-three centimeters

But Heaven and Earth are not six feet apart

So I will hold you in my heart

But even the heart hates distance

Even if it is only six feet



Camille Olson
Three Chimney Road | Acrylic on Canvas

The Interchangeable Nature of Nostalgia and Grief
Clare Henschel

I opened the box of Christmas decorations and was bombarded by you.

Each item is attached to a story I fondly remember.

I smile as I reminisce about when you gave me each one.

But I'm reminded of the painful truth those are all the memories I will ever have of you.

We'll never again bake cookies or plant flowers in your garden.

I'll never again see you smile or sing along to the radio.

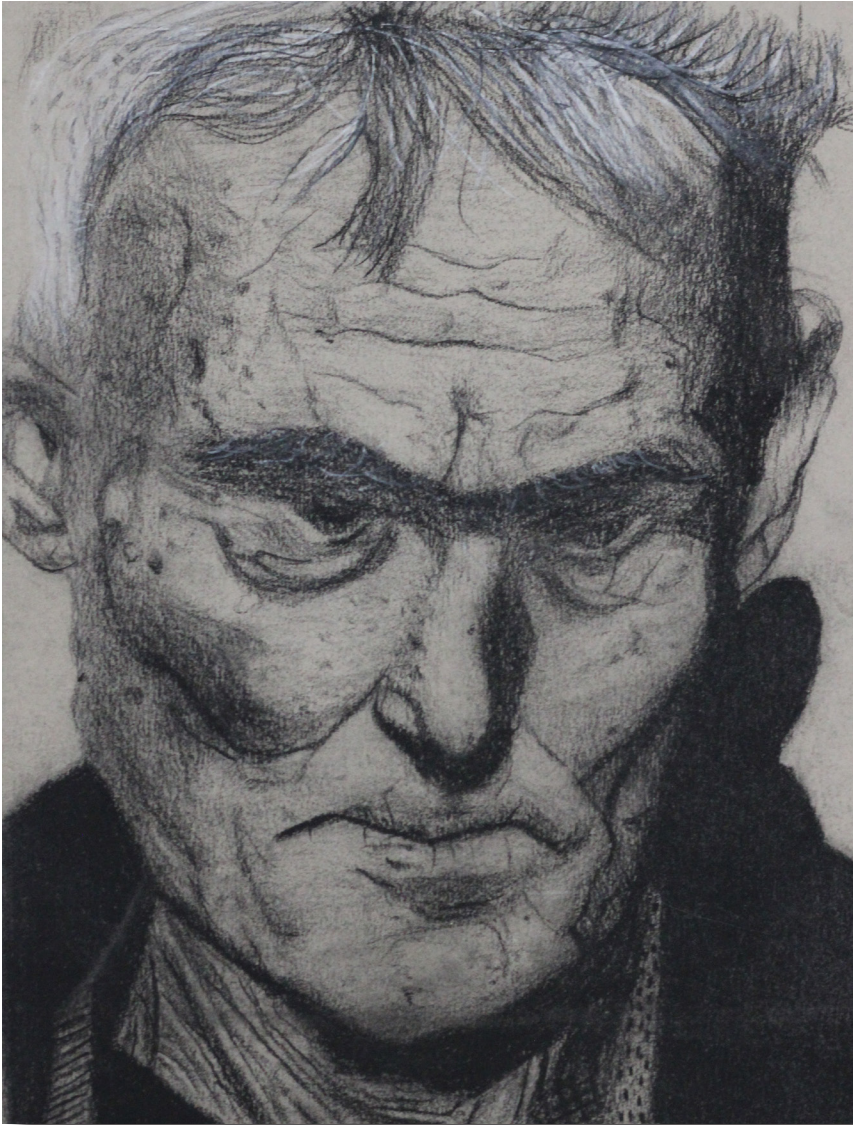
You'll never again brush my hair or impart your wisdom from the years.

I won't again feel the safety of your hug.

I only have memories of the way it was.

The things you touched, the words you said, and the places you've been.

The souvenirs of your life well lived



Aryn Marble
Scared | Charcoal

Another Version of Me | Keira Dorado

For a long time,
I didn't look back,
I had no desire to recall the past,
I wanted to forget the storm that changed me forever,
The storm was growing fainter and fainter,
Why would I want to remember,
If I became conscious of who I was,
It would be like drowning in the ocean.

Looking into my past felt strange,
I feel as if I am an outsider watching someone drown,
Sometimes in denial that was truly me,
All the emotions came crashing in like the waves overhead,

But now I wanted to live,
I wanted to honor her,
I started to swim.

I came to terms with who I was,

I It was like I finally resurfaced,

I Because of her, I can live today.

I She endured the mental abuse,

I She survived the physical abuse,

I learned to admire her perseverance,

I owe a debt to that girl who survived.

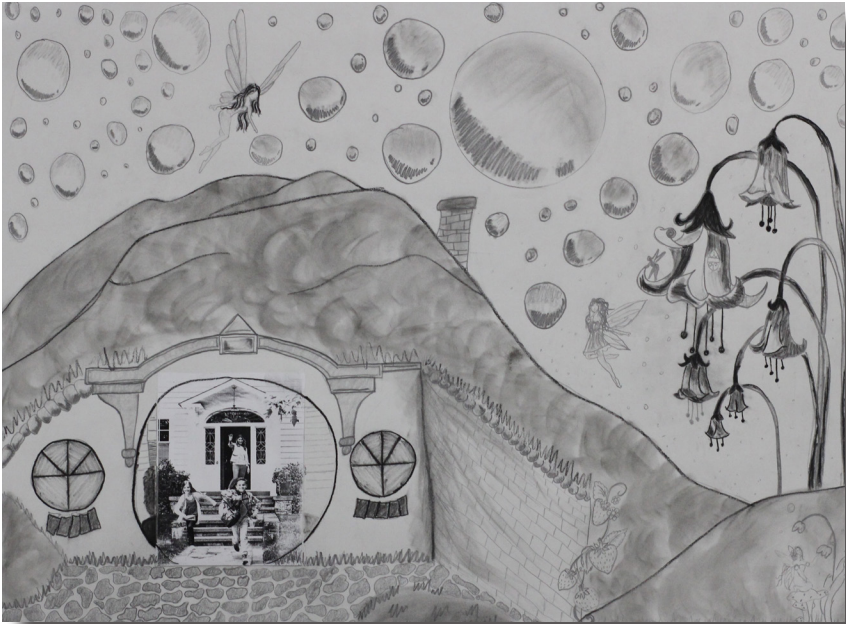
We made it back to shore together.



Clare Henschel
Novel | Acrylic on Paper



April Carroll
Untitled | Acrylic on Paper



Anna White
Fairy Tale | Graphite, Charcoal and Collage



Hope Regier
Overgrown | Mixed Media

Sanctuary of Sand | Dillon Fleckner

I lived in a stained-glass dome beautiful beyond what only open eyes may behold.

I knew its art well, but every day I saw new images hidden in the pieces we picked to ponder.

I could not see through the opaque panels, but the pictures showed me what I ought to know.

I was safe, and so too were those loved, for if we dwelt inside nothing from without would penetrate those walls.

Then once upon a time I wondered, and once I had, that wonder grew. And as I feared it continued to.

The Answer: what might it mean if I ever were to know?

I knew nothing could pierce from outside but what if a pebble were cast from within?

And then with the devastating force of a whisper, as all words that truly wound are so often uttered, it was shattered.

A softly spoken stone sailed straight and true, sending down cascading showers of shimmering shards, all I knew.

No one else seemed to notice. Crashing panes caused sharp cuts leaving still weeping scars.

My dust-stung eyes looked up expecting to see only the broken, instead, all I saw were stars.



Aryn Marble
Holy | Graphite

An Elegy for the Future | Jacob Tank

We wait not for the end, but for the
last echo— a sound swallowed by the
earth before it meets the air.

The future does not rise like dawn,
soft and inevitable,
but like dusk—
its exhale a quiet retreat
into something unnamed.

There will be no final glance, no hands
reaching toward a horizon that has already
folded. Only the turn of a page we never
meant to write, the names slipping from
our lips like shadows too fleeting to hold.

We will not hear the oceans as
they fall silent, nor see the trees

as they return to dust. It is a slow forgetting, not a closing of eyes, but a retreat into something we cannot touch— a space that has always been, waiting, beneath the world we thought we knew.

We—
our hands that once shaped the air, our
voices that once called out—
will be the forgotten footnotes
of a history we never lived.
Questions unasked,
answers unheard—
Did we matter?
Did we listen?
These are the last prayers spoken
in languages we will never
understand.

There will be no monuments, no stones
carved with our names. The earth will
turn on, unmarked, and still, we re-
main— not ghosts, but echoes

drifting just beyond the edge of light.

The future is not ours to hold.
It is the space between
what was and what will never be,
a dark chasm
where we only rest in knowing:
we were here,
and in our absence,
the world will remember us
not for what we made,
but for how we were made—
by the very things
we could not keep.

In the end, we leave only traces— a breath exhaled and carried away, a gesture half-finished before the body dissolves. But those traces become the world we were meant to be— whispers turned to wind, silence turned to song, memory turned to voice.

Perhaps we were never meant to hold
the future in our hands—
but to release it,
like a leaf
from a tree
we never planted.



Clare Henschel
Snail in the Garden | Woodcut



April Carroll
Untitled | Acrylic on Paper

November 3rd, 1959: The Case Files
Corbin Frydenlund

Case File # 2756
November 3rd, 1959:

Inside the locker room at the Los Angeles Museum Stadium, one man, Mitch Webster, was found dead at 2:47 AM by a night-time janitor. Brian Harvey had also gone missing that night but left all of his clothing behind next to Mitch's body. Both were a part of the Dodgers, the World Series-winning team. After a review of the scene, it was shown that the death and disappearance happened around 10 PM that night. It is true to be found that little was documented aside from a few estranged love letters with oddly written descriptions from Mitch Webster and a voice recording taken in the stadium locker room. One spoke of seeing odd things occurring in their life at the time of the murder, but things that were not truly realistic for a human to see. While reviewing the record, I noticed that there were sounds that were extraterrestrial-like and indescribable. It was never found out who was at hand for the murder nor did the public care. But that is what you have been summoned for. Proceed with caution. This case is not for the faint of heart.

Case #2756: Unsolved

Dear Bryan,

Today is the big day, Honey! I hope this letter finds itself where I left it in your gym bag in the locker room. I wish I could see you more than our Private affairs allow us to. If I could live in a perfect world, I would be holding your hand as we walk to the stadium, just like a typical wife would. While I adore and await your letters for Me, I wish they weren't so bittersweet. It is quite odd though. I cannot tell if my imagination is fooling me or if it is reality, but I'm seeing things. For, when I'm alone, or Darla has gone into the other room, I can't help but think of you. Then a cold, harsh breath is felt on my neck. I go to turn around, and no one is there. It feels like someone is trying to get me. Trying to get us, my dear. Our love is stronger than any Paranormal or sci-fi figure to break us up. My golly, am I anxious about the World Series! With you as the pitcher and I as the catcher, we will take home the victory with ease.

Until I may see you in private my love,

Mitch

Dear Bryan Harvey,

I cannot believe we are about to play The game! Let's meet in the locker room after everyone has left. I miss you terribly! My heart aches when we cannot show each other affection in public. I keep having This recurring dream where you and I Walk around Times Square. You're donning a knit sweater, and I a polo. We hold hands as we walk down the street. Darla says I'm speaking of a Lover in my dream: she's convinced it's her, but secretly, I know It's you. The dream always ends with a breath on the back of my neck, and it feels as if it's almost coming from inside my body. When I wake Up at night, that's when I see IT. It stands but when I get up and confront it, it fades away into the mirror, and I only see a strayed, misunderstood version of myself. Then I stand and watch as my Reflection gets grabbed and pulled by mysterious hands. Please, don't think I've gone mad, I promise it's Real. Either way, it's not going to keep my Undeniable love from you.

See you tonight, my dear,

Mitch Webster

November 3rd, 1959. Los Angeles Museum

Stadium, 9:40 PM

Recording Transcription:

Brian Harvey: It's nice to see you now that it's finally over. The season is done, my boy, we may now spend time together in celebration.

the sound of a kiss on the cheek is heard

Mitch Webster: Brian, I have something to tell you before we go any further. As much as I enjoy our love, I can't go any further. Someone *cough* or something is onto us. I can feel them staring me down. They see through my own eyes like they are inside of me. I don't know what to do. We must reveal our love, Brian, before IT truly drives me mad.

a loud smack is heard

Brian Harvey: Have you gone insane?! Just last week it was reported that a man from a gay bar was killed, and he wasn't even in the public light about it. We must stay unrevealed for our safety, Mitch, or there will be no us. I mean they could kick us off of the team! Would you want to lose all of our success?!

Silence

Mitch Webster: Did you hear that?

Brian Harvey: Hear what?

Mitch Webster: Did you not hear that sharp sound? It practically blasted my eardrums out!

Brian Harvey: No, maybe it's the imagination you write about in your letters.

silence. it is inferred that the men were staring at each other.

Bryan Harvey: Mitch, this cannot be healthy for you. Should we continue this, continue us? I mean what would happen if Darla found out?...

silence... a few seconds later a clap is heard

Bryan Harvey: Mitch? Hello? Can you hear me?

silence. it is inferred that a large blunt object was picked up off of the ground.

Bryan Harvey: Mitch... what are you doing? Put that down!
Mitch—

a stabbing sound is heard followed by the object being dropped onto the locker room floor

Not shortly after the echoing sound of the object is heard, a banging sound, like a blunt object or perhaps a head being smashed into a locker.

Silence

*The shedding of skin can be heard. It's inhuman to the sounds being made from the recording. A shriek is followed by a loud plop sound. The sound of the object being picked up off of the ground is heard. A few wet steps can be heard walking toward the locker. A lifting action and delicate slicing can be heard. A loud unhuman shriek is heard again followed by the slurping of a wet substance. Wet steps, and a hovering sound.

Brian Harvey: There we go. *cough* Much better.

Wet footsteps and the shower being turned on. The shower is turned off, and clothes are put on. Only a few minutes later the slamming of a door is heard.

Silence

2:47 AM

the sound of a door opening. A man gasps and then screams for help.



Jennifer Skifter
Untitled | Oil on Paper



Brooke Brieske
Untitled | Acrylic on Paper



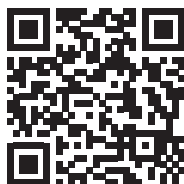
Rita Downing
Esnupi + Other Favorites | Acrylic on Paper



Dan Stokes
Teapot | Stoneware

For more information on majors and minors please visit:

Art Education



Art Track or Minor



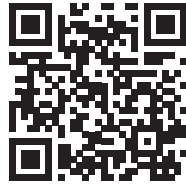
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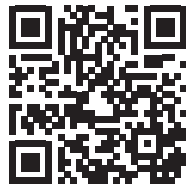
Ethics, Culture, and Society
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English Education



English





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