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FIRST LIGHT
VOL. 2 ISSUE 2



VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2:
FIRST LIGHT

Talon Review is a student-run literary magazine produced through the University of North Florida's English program.

Roy Lassister Hall
Bldg. 8
1 UNF Dr., Jacksonville, FL 32224
904-620-2273
talonreview.com

STAFF

FACULTY ADVISOR MARK ARI

EDITOR IN CHIEF CHRISTINA DEANGELIS

**MANAGING EDITOR/FICTION
EDITOR** SETH GOZAR

POETRY EDITOR MARY FEIMI

LAYOUT/DESIGN EDITOR JESSICA WOODMAN

FEATURED ARTIST MORGAN MOTES

READERS GABRIELLA CHRISTENSON

LAWRENCE DUTTON

GIANCARLO LABOY

SAVVY MCLEOD

HARPER WARNER

MIKAYLA WOOLWINE

UNF students interested in working on *Talon Review* should contact Mark Ari at mari@unf.edu, and consider taking his 2020 fall course: CRW 3930 Publications

EDITORS' NOTE

Talon Review continues its rebirth with Volume 2, Issue 2: *First Light*. Over the course of a few months, we received submissions from around the world, and are proud to represent an eclectic, diverse community of writers and the artwork of a fellow UNF student.

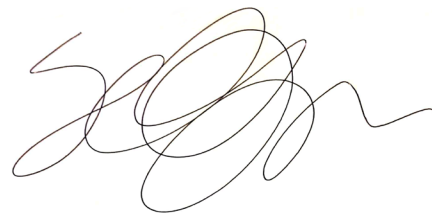
The past semester-and-a-half was a whirlwind for us, with an entirely new staff familiarizing ourselves with *Talon's* guidelines, new image, and social media presence. We are proud of our staff for doubling down on the laundry list of how to run a successful literary magazine, and are thankful for their talented, inspired vision.

First Light is sitting on a park bench at daybreak; the warmth of sunbeams on skin juxtaposed with the cold air surging into one's lungs. Our writers and featured artist capture that wistfulness and reflection one feels when a new day begins, with the old one fresh but surely fading away.

Enter the visions of trains by sunrise, trees unfurled, kites in the breeze, and strawberry summers. We present this new issue of *Talon Review* with the same excitement we felt seeing it come together, and hope you are moved enough to share it with others.



CHRISTINA DEANGELIS
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



SETH GOZAR
MANAGING EDITOR



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Before the Waterfall
Acrylic on canvas
2018

SWIMMING POOL

ALLIE KRASKA

the day the girl fell
off the diving board
the big one
my mother thought I was
dying I watched her
airborne
from side not front
my heightened fear of falling
muted by distraction
she was in a bathing suit
it was blue I was in a bathing suit
it was blue water still
flat and static
she looked just like me maybe
a year or so older
a few added inches
i was next in line and she slipped

and I watched her go
from below my flip phone ringing
abandoned on a sun-bleached tanning
chair my towel bunched over it like a safe
blood watered down like a cherry
snow cone melting 'round your arm
i remember the sound
thud and crack mixed at impact
she looked like she was sleeping
i heard her name was shannon
she was still so pretty

BLUELINE

KUSHAL PODDAR

The can of the field collects rain.
In the haze of my eyes sky herds
kites and crows and pigeons and swallows.

The can of the field is rung with
the leftover of the summer's smoke.
Grass grabs my knees as I disentangle
its deceased kin from my bike's strokes.

What does a bird say to one who knows not
its language? Here. Here. Nowhere. Nothing.

LULLABY
LOGAN MONDS

the intercom
singing
a bullet song

human shadow
blotting out
hallway light

children bent
under desks
in shapes
of worship

and paper prayers
flying like birds

A PERFECT WARMTH

HADLEY HENDRIX

My son is standing in the garage, staring at the kite I gave him for his seventh birthday. He's eleven now, perhaps a little too old to be flying kites, but I know that isn't the reason he's looking at it.

My wife's footsteps thud down the hall upstairs, her heels frantically stomping as she searches the house for him.

"Come on Timothy! I don't have time for this! We have to go!" She yells.

He listens to her. Stomp. Stomp. Stomp. Dust falls from the ceiling, and I imagine he's hoping the flakes that fall down will consume him, and he will become yet another forgotten object in this cluttered mess because that's what I always wished for, and the day I got what I wanted, I wished I could take it back. I imagine he ignores the sliver of light that pushes through the bottom of the garage, and I imagine he feels the weight of the darkness sticking to him, clinging to him wherever he goes, like the sun can't penetrate through the dusk he's stained himself with.

He glances up at the dirty kite, mingling with my tools on the wall. They've remained untouched. The kite's light blue color can hardly be seen behind all the filth, and the tiny printed dinosaurs on it look like blobs of dark blues and purples. I am right behind him, a looming figure peeking over his shoulder, standing in the same spot where I drowned myself in carbon monoxide a little over a year ago. I can still smell it. It's dizzying. I am always so dizzy. The

dust in the air travels through me. There is an immense urge to sneeze but not enough life to. I am stuck in the darkness of the garage, which I have yet to become accustomed to.

I'm so sorry, Son, but the words fall to the floor. Letters clump together in a pile behind him. I try again. *I'm so sorry*, but the kite hears me instead, and the specks of dirt bubble as if they have faces and are mocking me. *You ruined him!* Their lifeless words suffocate me, and I am left with an echo as they sink back into the dull blue, staining it with rust and muck.

My wife's footsteps come down the stairs. Closer, closer, and she appears in the doorway. She struggles to clasp her bracelet, the one I gave her on our anniversary two years ago. The charms clink together, ringing through my ears, piercing my dim shadow self. I want to reach for it. Help her. But I can't. My arms dangle down at my sides, fading into my own empty stomach. *I am so so sorry*. I say it as meaningfully as I can, but it turns to mush, the same way you might say you're sorry to a cactus after watching it die from your stupid decision to water it. *Damn it!* I yell, but it comes out a whisper.

"Oh, Timothy," she sighs. "You know you're not supposed to be down here. Come on, get inside."

He ambles in without a word, and my wife shuts the door behind him but not before taking a glance of the garage. She hasn't been here in months. Her gleaming blue eyes look right at me. Then she turns around, and I am left with the soft click of the door closing, then immense silence.

#

The fluorescent lights of the supermarket zip right past me and land on my son. He is cold. I can see the hairs on his arms sticking up, and his nose is red and running. I look around the store—at the blinding lights showing off static groceries, at the crowd of people clanking metal carts together as they bump into one another, and at the red and white checkered tile floors.

When I took Timothy here, we would play a game where we could only step on the red tiles, and we'd hop through the store grabbing what we needed off the shelves, throwing cereal and bread into the cart. Those were the moments I didn't feel as bad. And when I did feel bad, when I felt the depression eating away at my body—the way stomach acid burns through the lining when you're starving—all the bad things swelled up in my head, and all the good things contorted themselves, like a photograph morphing into something else under the heat of a flame.

My wife bends down to get milk out of the freezer, and a rush of cold air hits Timothy. He scampers down the snack aisle and out of the store.

The sun glosses over him as he stands outside, while I am left with the same coldness I felt in the supermarket. I beg him to go back inside with his mother, say I am so sorry, and that I'm still right here with him, but again, the words fall to my feet, letters boiling into hot pavement, sizzling under the afternoon sun.

He climbs to the top of a trashcan where its green paint has almost completely peeled away, except in a few spots, where it resembles lost puzzle pieces never to be put together again. His sneakers make tiny

squeaks and scuffs as he struggles to pull himself up. He loses his balance—I put my hands out to catch him by instinct—but he tumbles right through them, hitting his head against the ground. A tiny bit of blood runs through his hair and down his face.

He staggers back up, and his eyes turn to a beautiful, glowing, white ladder. Its paint is perfect, and it glimmers in the afternoon sun. He delicately places his foot on each step, not leaving a single speck of dirt behind, and the same perfect white radiates below him. I can't help but think he's been here before.

I follow him up, and when I get to the top of the roof, it isn't a roof at all. My feet buckle, and the world crimps itself into something smaller and better. The gray trashcans droop and disappear until all that is left is colorful, refracting the light of the sun. My mind warps. The good memories come rushing back, and I'm not so lonely, and the silence isn't closing in on me, and I don't feel so empty. I can feel the warmth of the sun pressing down on me, grazing my skin, my body, my soul. My face crinkles in awe as the world tilts. I am no longer a shadow.

Grab a kite and twirl it around in whatever way you'd like. Run across the infinite fields of green, eat the plump fruits that are ripe all year round, or better yet, eat the stems of the trees (because you can eat those too)! This is your perfect land. Welcome.

It grows quiet. We are standing in a field where kites of various shapes, patterns, and colors all roam the sky. They linger in the air, tied down by nothing, ready for their strings to be plucked and

spun.

“Dad!” It's my son's voice—so clear and pure as it bounces off the infinite sea of green, a stark contrast from the distant mumbles I'm used to hearing. I turn my head around, and he's running towards me with arms wide, and I kneel down and meet his arms with mine, and I hold him. We exchange the warmth of our bodies. I can feel a tear roll down my cheek. I can feel.

He lets go. “Come on, I have to show you something!”

I follow behind him, a smile stretched across my face. I focus on how my muscles move to walk, to think, to smile.

He points toward the sky and among the burnished white clouds and vibrantly colored kites, I make out a light blue one with dark blue and purple dinosaurs. The clear, elastic string appears in front of us as if it knew we were going to pick it.

“How do you know this place so well? What is it?” I ask.

“I don't really know—it's just where I go in my dreams, but you've never been in them before.”

“Well, now that I'm here, whaddya say we fly this kite?”

He smiles back at me—such a simple gesture, the slight pulling up of the mouth, yet I miss it so dearly. We run through the fields, the kite twirling this way and that. The wind is perfect, not too hot and not too cold. It pushes the kite's cloth and takes it wherever it wants to go as we follow behind, the kite's string in our hands. Eventually, we let it go back into the sky, where it sits with the rest of the kites, ready to be taken down again.

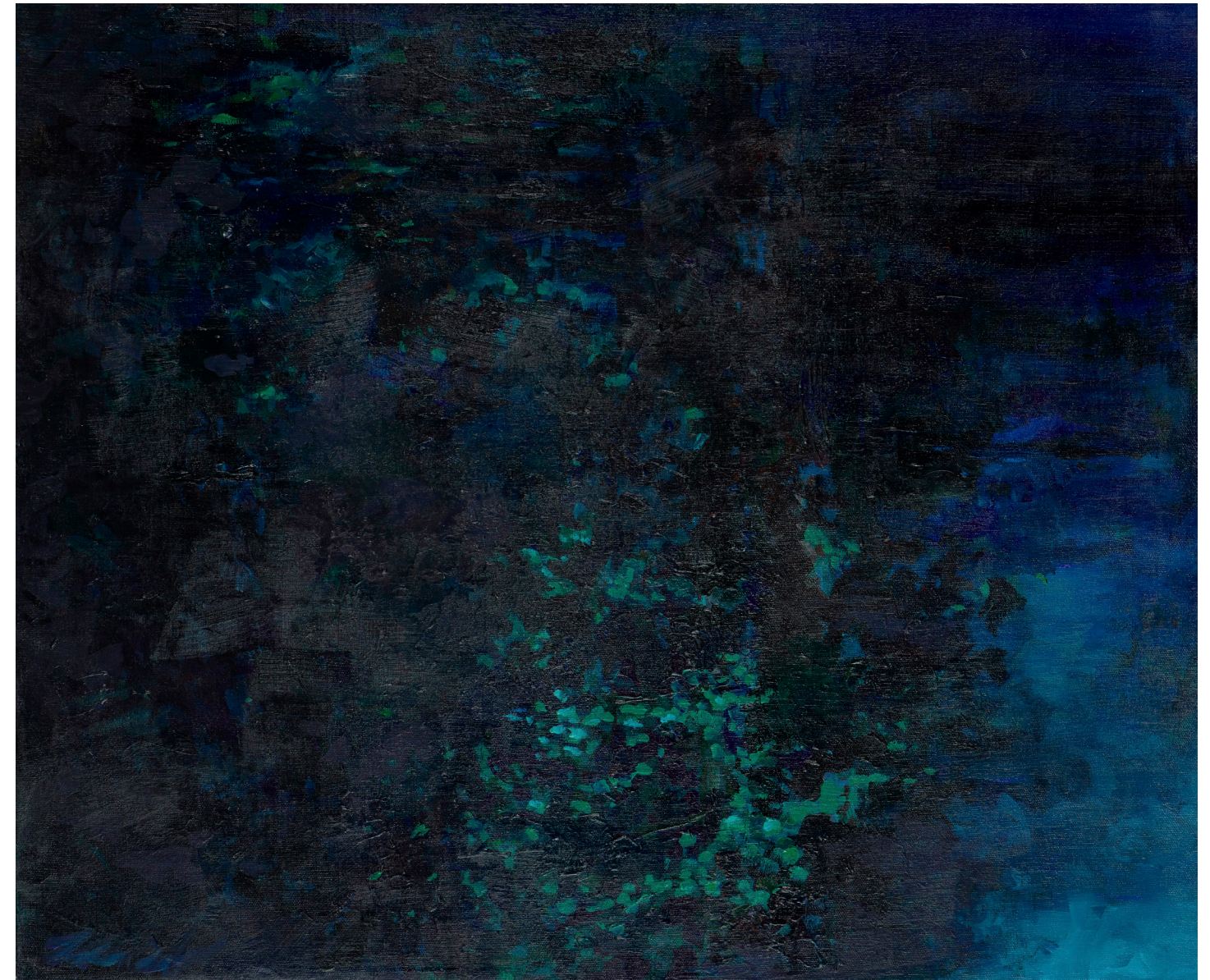
We lie in a patch of dandelions, and

their tiny hairs move towards us, giving gentle hugs as we wilt into the flowers. I look behind me where the ladder was, but it's gone. There's only a sea of perfectly green, fresh-cut grass tumbling down layers of hills and valleys.

SUNDAY

SHANNON PULUSAN

there's a distinct air to those
who intersect before neighbors
open eyes from muted sighs
 those thin walls
lovers smell
like faint shampoo & exchange
in their hands metal coins
silk threads
strings that stay
the scent
of gaining + the desire
to give deplete and renew
 —it's thick
emanates a halo
out from the pews
the priest knows
he presses the wafer into your open palm
lets it sink in
 for a moment
oh god oh god oh god the cries
your niece knows
as you wear her woven bracelet
from the fibers
she peeks
 —you set an example
and confess i love you
convergence
the dog as cornered witness
and deep in its eye two lovers
releasing into the night



Black Water
Acrylic on canvas
2019



Ring Park
Acrylic on canvas
2019



Nocturne: Noontootla Creek
Acrylic on canvas
2019

IN SEARCH FOR CLARIFICATION

ALLIE KRASKA

the azure is you, the drive was you, the drink was you

i put on a slip called lover for a day but i haven't left you
ignore what i say

it's this heart's constant and
simple hold that it
won't quit relearning your
teeth, hopeless to their glint
between parted lips

cancer exists by your name
i wonder if god wants me
the way a dancer twirls
on air
and how eggs crack
against the edge of the pan

i hold my hand out to
the air around your neck
fall into whatever

a library floor
the sand bank's drop off





Building in Rain
Graphite on acid-free paper
2019

NIGHT POEM

TED BURKE

Darkness
drips from the
branches and
powerlines
like spilt, black syrup,
this is exactly
the wrong time
to call someone
to say you love
them for what
might have been
and not the reverse,
there is no such thing
as “just kidding”
or irony before
coffee, toast,
a rushed shave,
someone is hammering nails
into a wall
on the floor below,
someone goes to the
bathroom
and now the plumbing
sings arias
that tighten
the screws in rusty
tricycle bells,
so many powerlines
cross hatch the
full moon,
so many tennis shoes
hang from them all.

THESE WINDOWS KNOW ALL ABOUT LAKES

SIMON PERCHIK

These windows know all about lakes
hiding among the dead—by instinct
the glass freezes, just so

and slowly you carve two initials
as if the name underneath
would follow the way a small hole

heats the ice, lures the fish closer
taking hold though the glare
is already marshland, drains

where one finger let go
the other and the room fills
counts on you to come.

FALL AND THE FOX

CHRISTYN KELLY

When the strawberry summer ended, I caught a bus to Oakland to hop out on the eastbound rails, where the trainyard bulls are lazy, and the weather is always warmer. After a cheap and greasy meal chased down with several beers, I hitched with a truck driver to the Oakland yard when the sun was about to set. In my army pack was a gallon of water, a flashlight, a tarp, a fifth of Kentucky Gentleman, thermals for cold nights and two pairs of wool socks.

The air was dry and insistent; it was the time of year when everyone has the itch to do something new or start over. I was calm, but filled with a lust to get moving, no destination in mind but east. Before it got too dark, I settled into a ditch a few yards into the woods outside the trainyard, where I could hear the trains chugging in and out, but the bulls couldn't see my sleeping spot. It was a tiny clearing littered with trash, toilet paper and empty bottles of booze from other hobos who had hidden there before. My pack as a pillow on the cold rocky dirt, I had a few gulps of whiskey and curled up for the night, intending to get some sleep before the journey ahead.

I was awakened sometime around the blue-gray beginning of dusk by the sound of voices. After all these years, I had learned you have to sleep light—to stay packed up, and ready to run. I could see headlights through the thin veil of trees that separated me from the spiderweb of train tracks making up the yard.

“I saw you running across the

tracks,” a loud male voice bellowed, disturbing some of the birds that slept in the trees above me.

“Get out of here or I'll let my dog find you and you'll spend the night in jail!” He called out from twenty yards away. Disgruntled but aware, I sat up and crouched further back into the shadows, prepared to bolt. There was a soft *crunch, crunch* through the underbrush before a figure came tripping into my ditch. I got ready to run, or fight, but I could tell right away it wasn't the cop. A surprisingly insubstantial person, they crumbled to the ground less than five feet in front of me and stopped moving. The headlights crawled forward, and the man kept yelling into the darkness, his flashlight sweeping the forest lazily as he drove slowly on. I could hear the shadow trying to keep quiet, too, though they were out of breath. Neither of us moved. After a few tense minutes it became apparent that the bull didn't have a dog and didn't intend to venture into the woods to find his perpetrator. The shivering figure shifted in front of me, still breathing hard.

“Hey!” I whispered angrily.

“Quiet!” In the speckled moonlight I could see it was a girl. She was rattled, but affecting fierceness, shoulders back like a threatened cat.

“What are you doing—get out of here before we both spend the week in jail! Jesus!” I hissed. The girl was frozen in place, eyes locked on the darkness that was me and my pack, crouched between two skinny trees. A sound escaped her that I suspected was borne out of a sob.

I moved forward a little and onto my knees, survival instinct and inescapable human

decency warring inside me. The only sound was the squeaking of night-beetles teek teek teeking in the darkness, and our tensely controlled breaths competing for dominance in the silence. She recoiled.

“I have a knife! Don't come any closer!” She sounded increasingly sure of herself, and less sure of me, as her adrenaline abated, leaving whatever energy was left for a whisper.

“Go. home. You're lucky that asshole didn't really have a dog or we'd both be torn to shit!” Looking around at the clearing I had just been sleeping in, she made a dismissive sound that said she didn't intend to let me tell her what to do.

“I'm staying right here. I don't have shit, and you can go wherever you want to.” She hissed, and then began to clear away trash and leaves from a spot not far from mine, scraping at the rocky ground with her boots before laying down, her back to me. I stared at her shape in the darkness for a moment, disarmed but annoyed. She shifted once and then was quiet, and I couldn't think of a single thing to say Tired, out of ideas and still half-drunk from dinner, I moved my pack a few paces further away and lay down with my back to her, too, mumbling curses as I drifted into a light sleep.

I woke a couple hours later to the sound of freights coming in and out of the yard, being loaded and unloaded with loud clanks and bangs. Stiff and bleary, I shifted and sat up to see the girl sleeping in a fetal position not far from me. In the early morning's grayish light, I could see that she didn't have a pack, a blanket, or anything but the clothes she wore: two layers

of dusty flannels and some cutoff jeans. She was shivering a little, the side of her face pressed into the dirt like a pillow, arms crossed, knees pulled in tight. I looked down at her dirty blonde hair, and her ratty clothes and face. She had a pretty, pale face like cut glass—all angles and shadows—and she wore an expression of insolence, even in sleep, that almost made me laugh out loud. I had planned to catch a grain-train out just before noon, when most of the yard employees would be inside at lunch, but judging by the hustle and bustle I could hear, I had slept through the safest time of day to climb on, and would have to wait until evening.

Upon her waking, I quickly learned that her name was Rose, and as much as I tried to convince her to go home, she had no intention of doing so, even though the rail-cops had absconded with all of her possessions the night before. She had nothing, didn't say much, and didn't leave, which annoyed me, but she didn't complain, so I didn't leave her either. She just sat there curled up in that little ball on the ground, and watched me with big, suspicious hazel eyes as I repacked my knapsack and craned my neck to see which cars were coming in and going out of the yard. I had a strange urge to take care of her like one of those mama dogs on TV that adopts a baby piglet, and chews its food for it, or whatever-the-fuck.

Later that day, Rose and I hopped out on the rear unit of a flatbed grainhopper headed to Elko, Nevada. For the first hundred miles all we could see was desert: dry and dusty plains that looked untouched by man as far as the eye could see. We

spoke sometimes over the chug-chug-chug, tka-tka-tka of the train sailing over the dry western expanse. I scolded her for being a stupid young girl alone on the rails, but she resisted my advice with a strong *fuck off*.

“I’m never going home.” The statement lit her from the inside, so I couldn’t argue. I had ridden the southwest route before, but this time the red-gold and yellow desert scenery rushed by like liquid, reflecting in her big, bright eyes in a way that made it look much more alive. When the sun went down there was no light for miles, except the single bright beam at the front of the train, and the stars that were as sharp as broken glass.

“This is unbelievable,” she cried over the wind and noise, hair whipping around her face and in her eyes. “No one ever sees this—this raw, wild place—but us and the conductor. It’s like we’re the only people left on earth.”

As we traveled over the Great Salt Lake in Utah, the air warmed up and smelled of sulfur. When we stopped at the yard there, Rose and I got drunk on the rest of my bottle, and spent the day swimming in the Green River. After more than a week without bathing, it felt like being born again—baptized among the sun, sand, scorpions and spiders of the southwest. Somehow, I was proud to be human, not animal. Proud to be a person, and a man, and a soul, and a body for the first time. I felt everything, and it felt like eating peaches from a roadside stand in Georgia. From there we hitched a ride into town and conspired the perfect plan to steal enough Schlitz and powdered donuts to get drunk and sick, before hopping out again, this time on top of a

coal car where we were high up enough to see the curvature of the Earth before it hit the mountains on the horizon.

The next day, we left the rails to try and make a little money in a town known to be somewhat welcoming to transients and hobos. We washed windows, collected cans and begged for change, and she stuck to my side like a sticky fly that whole day. That night, we camped bundled in my tarp beneath a train bridge. Rose asked me where I wanted to go, and I said I didn’t know.

“I have some friends in Denver, you know...maybe we could get a place together,” she said sleepily. Soon, her breath began rattling with tiny snores in my ear. I sat up watching fireflies, and lights from trains rushing over bridge for a long time after she fell asleep, thinking about home and the future. I had a rule about that. *Never* think about the future. I pictured us getting a place somewhere, smoking on a porch and arguing about dishes and bills.

Noiselessly, and so close, a fox came slinking out of the darkness and sat still, coolly, watching me for a moment that stretched out to eternity. He was so calm and graceful that it unsettled me, staring into my eyes like we were the same. I had a restless feeling and no more whiskey. As quietly and slowly as the fox, I crawled out from under the tarp, and picked up my army pack. I stood watching Rose sleep on the ground like I had eight days before, back in Oakland. It had felt like less time than that, and it felt like more time, too. Eight strange golden days. I set my pack back down on the cement next to her, careful not to disturb the tarp she slept

under. She would need my knife, as she didn’t really have one like she said she did, and my clothes and the little bit of money I still had from the strawberry farm. I knew I could keep going south to New Orleans or Florida, and pick cans or beg for enough cash to get new supplies and more booze. My heart started to race in a strange, heavy way as I walked toward the departing freightliner in the dark. It was picking up speed slowly, and so was I as I walked alongside it, moving on like always, thinking of the fox walking carelessly on, away from me and Rose and all alone. Always alone. I grabbed onto the metal bars on the side of the train and hoisted myself up as it reached speed. The sky grew light at the edges as I climbed into an empty boxcar near the back of the train. It was loud as hell but I curled up and fell asleep watching the corn and wheat fields slide by in a golden blur, and the rising sun warmed the inside of the boxcar like it was a womb.

EXIST

EDWARD LEE

Before the tree grew
I hid myself
in its beginning,
spread my arms,
and waited
to be engulfed
in its hard, dry bark,
my being finally alive
with the possibility
of touching some future sky.



Istria Landscape
Watercolor on acid-free paper
2019

AUTHOR BIOS

Ted Burke is a writer, poet, blues musician, carnival worker and bookseller in San Diego, California. He's worked as an editor, music journalist, bookseller, carnival worker, warehouse manager. He studied literature at the University of California, San Diego, and his poetry and prose has appeared in multiple journals, anthologies, and chapbooks.

Hadley Hendrix is pursuing editing and publishing at the University of North Florida. Her dream is to work as a book editor and write short stories and poems in her spare time. Writing provides her with an outlet for her to create a more intriguing and vivid world than the one she lives day-to-day. Hadley has also been published in *Scholastic* and *Élan Literary Magazine*.

Christyn Kelly is an author, perpetual student, and restless spirit who holds a BA in English and Creative Writing from the University of North Florida and feels a sense of longing every time she hears a train whistle.

Alexandra Kraska is a recent graduate of the University of North Florida where she earned a BA in English with a minor in Art. Alexandra used to be wealthy, and now she isn't—instead, she's your waitress. Her poem, "Swimming Pool," is a recollection of her childhood experience at the Village of Wellington's public pool. Her poem, "In Search for Clarification," is yet another attempt at a pigeonhole on love.

Edward Lee's poetry, short stories, non-fiction and photography have been published in magazines in Ireland, England, and America. His debut poetry collection *Playing Poohsticks On Ha'Penny Bridge* was published in 2010. He is currently working towards a second collection.

Logan Monds was born in Jacksonville, Florida, and attends the University of North Florida in pursuit of a Mechanical Engineering degree. She enjoys long walks on the beach, driving really fast, and math proofs. Logan's work has been published in *Élan Literary Magazine* and *Phosphene*.

Morgan Motes is married to painting but sleeping with poetry while studying at the University of North Florida, majoring in painting/drawing/printmaking along with creative writing. He's a parent to a sweet newt (Binkie), among other things living in water. He likes to go camping and ride immobile bikes in the gym, but mostly making things so he can look at them.

Simon Perchik's poetry has appeared in *Partisan Review*, *The Nation*, *The New Yorker* and elsewhere.

Kushal Poddar, born one summer in Kolkata, India, began writing at a young age, although not until his thirties did he choose English as his only written language. He edited the online magazine *Words Surfacing*, and authored many poems and stories published internationally.

Shannon Pulusan is a University of North Florida alumna, writer, and illustrator based in Jacksonville, Florida. She reviews poetry as an editorial assistant for *Flock*, manages her blog quiet planet, and draws round-faced characters with triangle noses and pepperoni cheeks under the name moonmemo. Her poetry has been featured in *Hour of Writes*, *Asian America: The Future is Now*, *Bridge Eight*, and *Kapwa Issue II: Bahay*.

THANK YOU

How fitting that our *First Light* also serves as our final goodbye for this year's *Talon Review* staff. As an entirely new staff, we ultimately figured out everything as they unfolded before us and found ourselves to be proficient in web design, event planning, and task division. Our time together was well spent, and this final product allows us to look back at those moments with joy.

Thank you to the opportunities Jacksonville's local arts community provided, especially our base at the University of North Florida. Thanks to Mark Ari for being our faculty advisor. We are all honored and grateful you trusted us in continuing the *Talon* legacy.

Thanks to the UNF Gallery of Art for allowing us a space to host events and celebrate UNF's writing community, and the UNF English Department for spreading the word. It was at the Gallery where we hosted the first "Talons Out: Open Mic Night" and where Ari will continue to hold it for years to come.

Thanks to everyone at the Writing Center who let us invade the little conference table in the back room for meetings; to Lianna Norman and the Creative Services at Spinnaker for letting us use their office; and to the English Department for hosting our impromptu meetings with Ari when we needed a guiding hand.

We discovered, took on, and welcomed our featured artist, Morgan, to the team in late January. His artwork and vision truly compliments the pieces we selected, and we appreciate him for jumping in and taking creative control when needed.

To each writer who submitted their work, to each of our authors for collaborating with us, and to each of you readers, reading these words right now: Thank you.

- from all of us at *Talon*

This final page is the last section to be completed in putting together *Talon Review: First Light*. It seals the final chapter of my last four years studying at University of North Florida. I'm thrilled to use this space to thank the individuals and organizations who supported us throughout this endeavor.

In addition to the collective thank you, I'd personally like to thank our team of readers for assisting in the hardest process of putting together this issue: handpicking stories and poems; figuring out how to weave them together; and matching them with artwork. The payoff of completing this issue feels like the triumph of finishing a 10,000-piece puzzle.

Special shoutouts to Jess for putting so many hours into digitally formatting multiple drafts with a smile on her face; Morgan for playing a heavy hand in its aesthetics; Mary for being there from day one and always telling it how it is.

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Acquiring the position of Editor-in-Chief has allowed me to immerse myself in a community of readers, writers, and creatives alike to host events to celebrate UNF's Creative Writing community. I am proud of this issue and the legacy we left behind on UNF campus; I could not have a better community of people behind me to make this all happen.

Finally, thank you, reader, for reading this far. I look forward to seeing what UNF Creative Writing students will accomplish for the future of *Talon Review*.

- Christina