

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

MAKE IT DO, OR DO WITHOUT;  
A Collection of Poems and Folk Memoirs

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A thesis  
submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements  
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## ABSTRACT

The objective of this body of work is to explore the boundaries, divides, and overlap of fact and narrative within rural American life. In drawing from my personal and family histories, I have developed a series of poems and recollections representative of life in rural America, addressing the contradictions of wanting to remain rooted to family and wishing to expand beyond the environment of one's upbringing. Essentially, these poems attempt to "unpack" the concepts related to the national narratives surrounding the American Experience in order to expose and explore both current and latent social systems and reveal the human experiences lost within a standardized national narrative. In exploring my own psyche in relation to my family's history, these pieces aim to lend a voice to others from similar backgrounds and communicate their common anxieties, struggles, and reluctances in relation to transcending social classes without severing their ties to family, history, or origin.

My interest is in exploring the moments when the narratives of a family's shared past, projected futures, or the reality surrounding the concept of the American Dream might differ or clash, and how identity is formed in these environments. Which accounts did each of us take to heart and incorporate into our personal histories? How might the variations in what is supposedly a shared history affect our ambitions or our opinions of the American Experience?

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With great thanks to my mentor, Rob Hume, without whom this project would not have been plausible.

“So Merlyn sent you to me,” said the badger, “to finish your education. Well, I can only teach you two things -- to dig, and to love your home. These are the true end of philosophy.”

— T.H. White, *The Once and Future King*

And with great love to my family, without whom none of this would have been possible.

“If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world.”

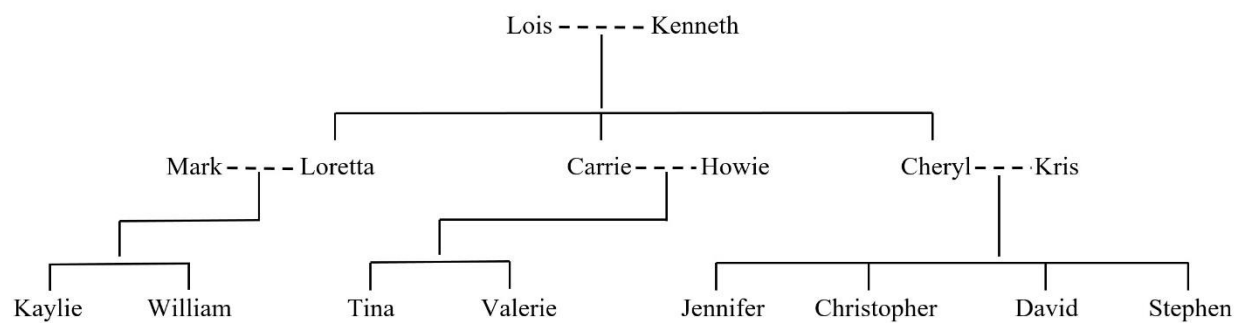
— J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit*

## DEDICATION

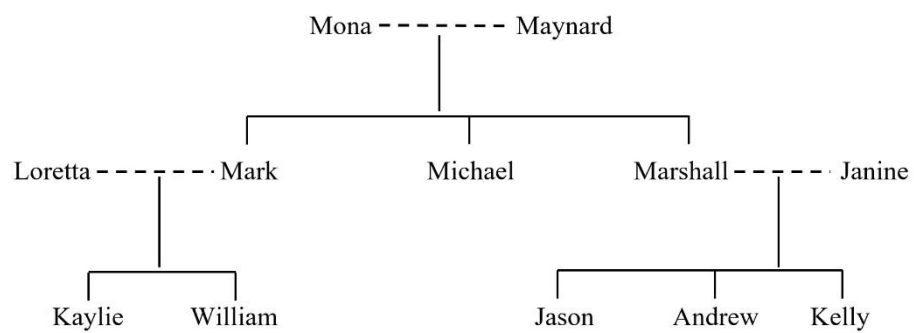
For well-intentioned rabbits and elephants who never forget.

## GENEALOGICAL GUIDE

### Maternal Family



### Paternal Family



## **I. Making**

## Proper Place

I followed Dad to work one day; forgetting  
that a pudding cup is useless without a spoon.  
With pocket knife in hand he taught me  
to carve both bowl and handle from a birch twig.

That day I carved half a dozen wooden  
spoons – while he stacked timber like toothpicks.  
I came home and placed them in the drawer  
with the aluminum-core silver(plated)ware,  
confident that workmanship would hold  
a place, equivalent to the family set.  
But by nightfall, my wooden spoons were  
on my desk; the plated aluminum  
back in its drawer; and great-grandmother's  
silver tea-spoon, still safe on its shelf.

## Euler's Disk

people confuse our baby photos,  
mistaking us for the same child

alike in the same way that the arctic and antarctic are:  
similar scenery,  
but polar in nature

not reflections but the opposite sides of a coin  
standing back to back, hands linked at the edge,  
at the ridge,  
at the point of the press  
of our parent's forge,  
our forgery.

spinning like the quarters we learned to flick across table tops at pizza joints  
only to trap them hard  
under upturned glasses.

spinning,  
spinning,  
spinning,

never seeing eye to eye  
but always back to back

but Brother, I will always take the fall  
just to see you land  
heads up.



## My Father's Care

I remember when my father pushed me.  
on the newly built swing in our rented yard  
on rented time;  
the plaything complete with the crow's nest and ship's wheel  
that my tiny self had begged for –  
indifferent to the ill fit of cast iron peg handles too large  
in my too small hands.

How many times had he measured me?  
trying to gauge how tall I would grow before I lost interest in swinging  
wanting to find the perfect height to hang the wheel;  
placing it at the precise compromise of where I could reach  
and the place where I would grow to need it

I remember how carefully he pushed.  
My father:  
third in his class with a mind for math and figures  
for whom high school teachers foresaw a life of engineering  
dictating, pursuing; living by degrees  
calculating the maximum force that he could provide on my back  
with a single hand's breadth that spanned the entire width of my frame

How hard could he push while keeping me safe?  
just hard enough for me to gasp at the crest and giggle in the trough  
fear-struck and home-stuck in the same breath:  
confident that the next push would send me the whole way around:  
a victim of centripetal force.

I remember the sound at the peak of my momentum.  
when the chains went slack in my hands  
suspended;  
the crack of metal on timber and  
the smack of my body against the warped plastic seat  
dependent on its mercy to hold me in the moments between flight  
and my father's hand.

## Potentia Hydrogenii

In junior high chem class, we experimented:  
we put a piece of pH paper on our tongues,  
tinged with a drop of phenylthiocarbamide  
that three out of four people can taste.  
Yet in a room of thirty people,  
I was the only one to learn  
that phenylthiocarbamide  
is bitter.

It must be in the water, what  
makes your brother grow so tall and strong  
(6'7" in the morning, 6'6" at night).

It must be in the water; the  
fluoride that makes you sick;  
the teeth bleach that the city pumps  
into its water to make the prom

king's smile shine  
bright, while the suburbanites gleam back;  
children primed like old wells  
painted, plastered, ivory, soap, white:

while the bleach turns you green.

It must be in the water, unlike  
that you tasted growing up;  
spring fed, fresh fed, pumped from down below,  
that made your brother grow so tall,  
free of phenylthiocarbamide, chlorine,  
and bleach.

## Conditioning

My mother has a delicate system  
and is sensitive to change  
in climate, temperature, or barometric pressure.

She cannot travel great distances  
or withstand the change in atmosphere  
without medication.

My aunts are resentful that they cannot use their car's air conditioning  
when my mother is present.

The shift from summer's heat to the cool confines of the Honda's interior  
causes my mother's sinuses to swell  
until her head throbs and moisture seeps into her lungs  
where it will remain for days.

My aunts know this, but refuse to believe  
that anyone could be allergic to luxury.

So they complain that my mother is old fashioned  
until she allows them to trade their own discomfort for hers,  
and makes a mental note to call the pharmacist when she gets home.

And then there's me,  
driving with my windows down until well into November,  
forcing cold air into asthmatic lungs until they agree to open and breathe again.  
My makeshift inhaler, forcing air into bellows until they pump again  
while my mother can't stand the draft  
and her sisters mistake insistence for perseverance.

## **II. Mending**

## Namesake

*Alexander; from the Greek, masculine, the defender of men*

*Alexander, Xander...Sandra;  
from the Greek, feminine, the defender of men.*

I thought it was my privilege to call her by her short name;  
I never knew that she hated the seashore.  
But out of her parents' decree of necessity,  
to avoid the confusion of her given name  
(after her grandmother),  
Sandy found her namesake at the edge of the tide  
and comfort in king crabs instead of kin.

But even in the case of names,  
something given isn't the same as something offered,  
and taking is the same as stealing.

So by the virtue of an unpredicted marriage  
to a professor twice her age,  
she moved all the way to Texas,  
to live in the dust instead of the sand;  
to be the defender of men  
and meet the potential  
that she had been introduced to at birth  
but was never allowed to acquaint herself with.

## Grandfather's Swan Song

*August, 1999:*

*A Summer Night*

Racing up the stairs, trying not to trip  
on rubber tread or my own feet,  
I would fling myself around the door frame  
that separated the guest room from mine  
to make sure that you were really going to bed.  
We would tap at our mutual wall for another hour  
*Shave and a hair-cut –*  
*two bits.*  
Pretending we were tapping out Morse code,  
when really we were coding affection.

*December 2008:*

*A Christmas*

Your daughters hated that you performed the standard set  
every time that someone was near enough to listen:  
JFK was the cause of inflation  
(for lifting the price caps on the cost of an automobile)  
You were once a private eye (repossessing cars)  
The damn draft ought to be brought back  
(your grandsons could stand to learn a trade)  
You thought that people didn't listen because you were longwinded,  
so you stopped offering your reasoning  
and tried to get straight to the point.

*September, 2012:*

*A Funeral*

You fell asleep at the handle of the urn  
 just as you had slept at grandmother's elbow.  
 Father and I shook; quaked  
 with silent laughter improper to share  
 and the sympathetic woman behind us tendered two Kleenex  
 mistaking humor for heartache.  
 We feigned somber gratitude; knowing  
 that if we opened our mouths we would laugh the preacher  
 out of his pulpit, the guests out of their grief,  
 and you out of your slumber.

*March, 2016*

*A Birthday*

For three weeks you'd been asking to go back to the house  
 just for a visit, just to sit.  
 Gangrene and diabetes sparring for territory on your legs;  
 red and black tracing scribbly borders like the edge of California.  
 You hitchhiked your way there once, to be a sawyer,  
 and talked about the green redwoods.  
 The doctor said that the red and black were to be expected  
 and as long as there was no green, no living infection,  
 That you could come home – but you slept through our visit,  
 and despite cupcake that I had drawn on your calendar  
 you said that you didn't want a party.

*May, 2016*

*Another Funeral*

My aunts said that you were never religious,  
 so we didn't have a preacher.  
 I didn't mind, but mother did.  
 And I reminded myself that funerals are for the living.

Mother led the service; read a poem; said a prayer.  
She had counted on the family to fill air time with memoirs;  
but the service only lasted for fifteen minutes  
(five of which were taken by a John Denver song).  
They were giving you the silent treatment for wanting to die,  
but I can't hate you for that.



## Resemblance

dad says that he paid extra for  
 blonde hair and blue eyes  
 but I think my mother's German father would say  
 that the best things in life  
 come  
 free

Mona in the mirror the day I learned to make pin curls  
 twisting honey colored hair  
 even tighter to my scalp  
 pinning daddy's curls  
 down  
 tight

supposedly the Indian in me that makes  
 my profile so sharp  
 when the rest of my face lies  
 weather-worn like the Cliffs of Moher  
 rounded  
 out

I was twenty before I was ever told that  
 I look like my mother  
 for the first time hearing  
 a feminine note  
 rising  
 up

## The Sociology of Rural America

The Sociology of Rural America  
offered in the Fall Semester of 2016

I wonder what they will tell them about my brand of American life.

Probably,  
that it comes pre-packaged,  
shrink-wrapped,  
and stamped  
with star-spangled slogans,  
sealed tight  
so the contents can't go stale,  
can't reach air,  
and on the bottom, in small black type:

A Product of Donald Trump Industries

They probably won't mention the guitar garage bands  
playing through amps so old  
that the sound comes out soft  
and fuzzy.

Like the baby bunnies that Daddy always said not to touch  
because the mother would smell your scent  
and reject her young.

What sort of smell  
would turn a mother  
on her own?  
What stench does the human hand leave behind,  
to deny a mother's instinct:  
to nurture?

Sometimes,  
Dad says,  
that a mother will bury her young  
alive  
when her instinct goes haywire  
when she can see the tiny copies of herself  
but cannot smell her scent

In confusion, she will bury them  
to hide them  
planning to come back  
when her head has cleared  
when the human scent  
is gone

She will leave them in a hole  
sealed tight  
so the babies can't go stale,  
can't reach air,  
safe.

...

The Sociology of Rural America  
offered in the fall of 2016.

...

Yet I bet,  
they know nothing  
of rabbits.

Removed

Flora, Robert, Brian, Robert, and Marc.

Struck from the record for:

A bad attitude,

infidelity,

abuse,

more infidelity,

and a psychotic episode,

respectively.

## Aegis

*Jupiter's daughter turned away,  
and hid her chaste eyes behind her aegis.  
So that it might not go unpunished,  
he changed the Gorgon's hair to foul snakes.  
And now, to terrify her enemies, numbing them with fear,  
the goddess wears the snakes,  
that she created,  
as a breastplate.*

*Lack of courage, not the power of the Gorgon, freezes you.*

I have been told that it is my fate,  
but that it is not my fault.

But really I would rather that it be the other way around.

Kith & Kin; A Dramatization 22 Years in the Making

PROLOGUE:

*The family prayed for girls to end 92 years of daughter drought;  
Too many sons shooting up like a garden of weeds with no flowers.  
The first girl, a miracle!  
The second, a godsend!*

*Born three years apart, identical in difference.*

THE CHARACTERS, ESTABLISHED:

She: the dark.

Raven curls, pale of face,  
rebellious, fierce, unmanageable.

*The Wild.*

I: the fair.

Golden ringlets, tanned complexion,  
quiet, curious, vigilant.

*The Strange.*

INTRODUCTION:

*But I saw the seam of patience stitched into her spine,  
and she could see the wild streak painted behind my eyes.*

*In each other we found neither copy nor foil, but reflection.*

ACT THE FIRST, SCENE I:

A field. Fresh cut wheat stalks litter the ground; the edge of a shale pit is indicated where the field ends. Two girls walk toward a bull's skull, situated at the lip of the pit.

The oldest, slightly taller, motions for the younger to stop. She moves forward alone, following a footpath. She bends to pick up the skull; smiling, she steps towards the other girl.

A sharp metallic sound fills the air. Panicked crows take off in every direction. The eldest looks down to see her foot paused in mid-air, a three-inch scuff in the leather.

She drops the skull, sending bull's teeth skittering.

Incisors and bicuspid ricochet off of metal as a bear trap is revealed beneath the wheat.

The youngest puts her arm around her companion's waist and steers her body home. She is careful not to forget the bull's skull, or his teeth.

*Hard-earned prizes ought not be left behind.*

ACT THE FIRST, SCENE II:

A frozen creek. Two girls, older, stand on one side as a younger girl and a dog try to cross the ice. The youngest slips.

The ice cracks and the older girls laugh.

The youngest pauses, stands up, jumps. Her boots thud against the frozen mud at the shore.

The dog begins to follow; the ice gives out under his back legs.

The older girls scream and rush into the freezing water to save the dog.

*Man's best friend?*

ACT THE FIRST, SCENE III:

Time passes.

An outdated highway:

Two girls look both ways carefully before running across the street. Their momentum propels them up the slanted wall of the overpass.

*They come here to learn the curses that will make them an even match for their brothers.*

ACT THE SECOND, SCENE I:

A Christmas dinner.

*How's school?*

*Fine.*

*Text me sometime.*

*Yeah, I will.*



### III. Saving

## True Grit

I've never been West of Eastern Ohio,  
but I know the cowboy way.

Reverend Louis L'amour  
preaching from the paperback pulpit  
while Saint John Wayne sermonizes  
on the silver-screened altar  
and Brother Tom Selleck waits his turn.

All talking about hardness and softness  
and when to use which if you want to be a man.  
How to treat animals and women and children,  
and later, to revise the list,  
how to treat machines and animals and women and children.  
Keep your horse closest,  
know the difference between respectable women and whores,  
and teach boys to be men  
like your father taught you.

Or was it the good Reverend  
who taught you what you know?  
Who preached the virtues of honor, trust, and a man's word,  
while a loaded revolver sat on his hip  
and the communion wine sat a little lower in the bottle than it ought to  
and tasted of moonshine besides.

It's surprising what a girl can learn  
when she's busy being seen and not heard.

## Matriarchs; In Which a Queen Abdicates

Three elephants sit down to tea.

Trunks ladling pekoe into china cups,  
like eels; shifting mass of muscle.

Polite pleasantries masking a truer course;  
Imperial pomp and circumstance laid over need older than Africa.  
A coronation committee of two,  
to offer the third her place in the Memory.

Doe eyes sit in pachyderm skulls.

The question hung in the air like drought,  
for Etiquette forbade them to ask outright.  
She was callous not to answer,  
But she could not be called rude for being polite.

Patience lies in mammoth hearts.

She had formed her own tribe: the savannah's first Pride of elephants,  
with tusks subtly sharpened on stone  
and bicuspid teeth exchanged for fresh grown canines –  
hidden behind close-lipped smiles at teatime.

But for now, eels carry cakes to hungry mouths  
and wipe dust from weary eyes.

All in due course.

## Bound

Every member of my family that I've known to keep a diary,  
I've also known them to keep secret.

That is if they kept any record at all.

Better to pass on and through this life without leaving a mark,  
without marring the world.

Yet their marks are as real as if they had  
kept their own minutes on the hours of their days.

Their stories, secrets,  
feel as though they are written on the inside of my skin.

Scritched out in white ink, ever moving; statically.  
Both dead and alive in me.

My father's book, his skin, tan from the sun and leather-bound.  
A tome of knowledge, of lives led, kept secure in his volume,  
safe from every element but time.

Lives chicken-scratched in white ink.  
Every page laid out just so; a textbook if he only had students

But on the flipside of my skin, words ever-moving.  
An edition, not an opus.

Like roadkill, certainly dead.

Yet when wind rustles stale fur; alive, breathing,  
or so it seems in me

My skin, pale, parchment, unbound.  
More likely to catch fire in the sun and burn –

Than to tan into leather permanence.

My pages, loose-leaf, unbound, still shifting  
Being edited, collated, curated, collared

Into chapters of my own.

## Tradition

The Faithful save for the act of saving;  
for the conviction that they will be rewarded for their devotion to the task.  
The preacher says his prayers once daily, twice daily if needed,  
carries the Good Book with him and remembers the Romans.

But the Learned save for the salvation of the thing itself;  
confident that new generations will need these links to history.  
The scholar quotes his notes by rote, lectures,  
carries the good books with him and remembers the Romans.

So I wonder if it is in the path of the preacher or the scholar that my brother walks,  
when he clings to Famous Amos cookies and cuffed jeans,  
keeps the good books on the shelf and seldom mentions the Romans,  
but remembers them just the same.

Is my brother my Father or my colleague, and what do we save for,  
when we both buy Hostess cakes in bulk and swear by fresh spring water,  
keep the drawl in our speech and dangle participles on purpose,  
quote family lines full of begetting and begotten,  
and never write a word of it down?

And who would remember the Romans without the good books, aside from other Romans?

## The Gorgon

When I was small, my hair was pin-straight.

Yellow like corn and stiff like stalks.

I used to sit at the kitchen table and pop the tops off of Play-Doh cups,

twisting out thick bits of clay and rolling them into snakes between my palms.

Blue snakes, green snakes, snakes the pink of bubblegum;

winding them into river wiggles and coils to be nested back at the bottom of the clay bin.

When I wanted to play snake-maker, my parents would pull the bin from the back of the pantry.

Once, they passed me my serpents, not noticing the emerald among the neon,

mistaking the rattle for the bumping of plastic,

without realizing that they were passing a live viper to me

until I threw it across the room and it left through the hole in the wall that it had come through,

hissing whispers back at me.

We did not know that we had moved into another's house

or that sidewinders had called this place home long before us.

I used to swim with my brother, in a ring of blue vinyl with a leak at the bottom,

and the garden hose permanently hung over the side.

We would loop the hose through the pool, our own private sea serpent,

and swim through its coils as a game.

Once, my brother and I sat shivering in the shallows of the pool at dusk,

while my mother begged us for hours to stay there

and a rattlesnake played music at the base of the pool's ladder;

beating percussion riffs if we ventured too close.

I watched my baby brother's lips turn blue and my hands grow white until my mother, crying, hoisted a steel spade over her head and sentenced the snake to execution by beheading.

The tail rattled for hours, muscles unaware that its body was dead, and my mother shook in sympathy, trembling the whole night through.

I used to run wild in the day, chasing cousins through overgrown woods and polluted streams. Twisting meandering paths through the world, rattling sticks on trees to warn of our coming, plucking creatures from their holes and leaving a flattened path behind us.

Once, we pulled a grass snake from its hole, my cousin twirling its slim green body like the jump rope lassos that we played cowboy with, prying its jaws open to show us the venomless fangs, and chucking it into the stream. His colorblind eyes could not tell the green grass snake from its brown swamp kin.

When my cousins had left, I pulled the drowning thing from its fate; though it hid from me even as it was dying.

I used to have pin-straight hair, the color of corn. It never needed combing, for nothing ever stuck in it, and the women told my mother how lucky she was to have a daughter so tame.

Now, snakes twist in my hair like curlers, making their way through yellow strands thicker than any marsh grass that they've ever known, tinting it gold with swamp water.



Winding and twisting into labyrinthine curls and  
moving so slowly that you'd never know that they were moving at all.

They take years just to reach the scalp, and longer still to reach the mind;  
where I let them nest, and rest.

#### **IV. Spending**

*Arc Eye*

What business is it of ours  
if the sun should choose to visit the candles,  
and melt them with her presence?

## Why the Wild Things Sing

I lost my grip on a silver balloon in a Pizza Hut parking lot.  
My hands, greasy from pizza, and with only three years' experience,  
couldn't hang on to my prize.

Distressed, I resorted to a game of my father's and mine:

Face lifted to my balloon, I howled.

Mother laughed, but my father joined me.

He always said that I was more coyote than wolf; high pitched and yippish.

I always cheated;

sipping air between yelps to refuel lungs too small and asthmatic to bay properly.

While my father howled the proper way; a perfect timbre wolf.

We and our mylar moon.

\*

When I was older, I would play the game alone;

howling from the backyard to set off the neighborhood dogs and listen to their chorus.

By then I'd graduated from coyote to wolf

Perfecting my tone to a solid alto that led the rest of my section in the school choir by day,  
and the dogs by night.

\*

I no longer howl at moons and balloons

and I haven't heard my father howl since he taught our game to my brother.

But when the dogs bark,

or the voice on the radio hits a note too keen;

I still smile.

For I know why the wild things sing.

## Gas

If a canary dies in a coal mine,  
does it make a sound?

Does it raise the alarm,  
or go gentle into that good night?

And which is nobler in the mind?

Can a canary be both alive and dead,  
if sealed in an unobserved mine  
that potentially contains gas?

Or does that only apply to cats?

And what quality of life is that,  
to be both alive and dead?

Or do we only care about the miner?

## Floriography

My grandmother pledged by the edelweiss,  
a flower that she had never seen  
except through the grainy television screen  
during *The Sound of Music*.

Her shelves held bells, each of the many lightly painted  
with the pale white buds of the mountain flower  
and her music boxes sang like Julie Andrews.

*Edelweiss, Edelweiss*

*Every morning you greet me*

*Small and white, clean and bright*

*You look happy to meet me*

When I was small, my grandmother would  
tell me of the men who climbed the alps  
just to bring a sprig of edelweiss to their lovers,  
and I learned that love meant endurance  
and that the small flower with the lopsided shape  
that I found ugly, could outlive the men who climbed to them,  
by hiding on the hillside.

\*

My mother planted lilacs at the top of the lane,  
down behind the house,  
and in front of our windows.

She made curtains and houses for my brother and I to play in,  
out of the flowers that triggered her allergies  
and couldn't be brought inside.

*I made wine from the lilac tree  
 Put my heart in its recipe  
 It makes me see what I want to see  
 And be what I want to be*

She lets the lilac bushes grow large,  
 taller than our house,  
 and reminds me that the woman who was my grandmother,  
 was not the woman who raised her.  
 I reminded myself that lilacs grow in generations,  
 and that one season's white bloom,  
 may produce the next season's purple.

\*

I used to harvest dandelions by the bucket,  
 and press their heads against my skin  
 to stain myself yellow.  
 I painted myself for war or for play in the same way;  
 crushing the lion's heads at the edge of my own mane  
 and pulling streaks downwards to my eyes.

*Prince or pauper, beggar man or thing  
 Play the game with ev'ry flower you bring  
 Dandelion don't tell no lies  
 Dandelion will make you wise*

*Tell me if she laughs or cries*

*Blow away dandelion*

My mother would wash my dandelion face,  
scrubbing my war paint off far more gently than I had applied it,  
and never once complained that the pollen made her throat swell,  
just as the dandelions never complained  
that I plucked their comrades from them.  
And I noticed that while the lilacs bloom and die together,  
there is always the lone last dandelion in August.



## GLOSSARY

- Euler's Disk** Named for mathematician and physicist Leonhard Euler, Euler's Disk is a scientific educational toy, used to illustrate and study the dynamic system of a spinning disk on a flat surface. The toy illustrates the seemingly paradoxical dramatic speed-up in spin rate as the disk loses energy and approaches a stopped condition; the disk reaches its highest velocity just moments before it collapses.
- Potentia Hydrogenii** In chemistry, pH (potential of hydrogen, or "potential hydrogenii" in Latin) is a numeric scale used to specify the acidity or basicity of an aqueous solution.
- Phenylthiocarbamide** Phenylthiocarbamide is a chemical with the unusual property that it either tastes very bitter or is virtually tasteless, depending on the genetic makeup of the taster. Three out of every four people taste it as bitter.
- Aegis** Originally the name of the shield shared by Zeus and Athena in Greek Mythology that bore the gorgon head of Medusa (with the ability to turn those who looked upon the head to stone), the term has come to possess a secondary definition: an individual person's action or intervention, especially such as to produce a particular effect.
- Louis L'amour** An American novelist and short story writer, L'amour's work consisted primarily of Western novels, short stories, and poetry.
- Floriography** Otherwise known as "the language of flowers," floriography was a popular means of coded communication throughout history. Some flowers and their associated meanings still have significance today.

## REFERENCES

### “AEGIS”

First stanza taken from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Book IV:753-803 *Perseus tells the story of Medusa*

Second stanza taken from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Book V:149-199 *Perseus uses the Gorgon’s head*

### “FLORIOGRAPHY”

Second stanza excerpted from “Edelweiss,” sung by Julie Andrews in *The Sound of Music*

Fifth stanza excerpted from excerpted from “Lilac Wine,” by Jeff Buckley

Eighth stanza excerpted from “Dandelion,” by The Rolling Stones

## ACADEMIC VITAE

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### ACADEMIC PREPARATION:

- **BA in English:** Department of English, The Pennsylvania State University 2017.
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- **BS in Art Education:** Department of English, The Pennsylvania State University 2017.
  - Member of Pennsylvania Art Education Association (PAEA), Student Chapter
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### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

- Assistant to the Senior Advisor for Research Computing and Cyberinfrastructure at Penn State (May 2016 – Present)
  - Record-keeping, development of annual and progress reports, managing University-wide communication, creation and maintenance of RCCI's web presence, additional technical writing, etc.
- Art Educator for Penn State's Saturday Art School, State College, PA (Fall 2016)
  - Led 7-week curriculum unit on "Narrative" based in visual and performance arts, secondary level education
- Adult Tutor at Skills of Central PA, State College, PA (Feb. 2015 – May 2016)
  - Part of Penn State's ENGL 495 internship
- Guest Educator at The Child Care Center at Hort Woods, State College, PA (Spring 2016)
  - Developed experiential textile exploration lesson unit over 6 weeks
- Art Class Instructor for the Front & Centre Youth Arts Program, Phillipsburg, PA (May 2014 – December 2016)
  - Led community sculpture and polymer clay classes with learners aged 5-65

### HONORS AND AWARDS:

- **Erickson Discovery Grant** Recipient, Department of Undergraduate Education, Pennsylvania State University (2016)
- **Bayard D. and Ethel M. Kunkle Scholarship**, College of Liberal Arts, Pennsylvania State University (2016 – 2017)
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- **Mitchell Kunkle Honors Scholarship**, Schreyer Honors College, Pennsylvania State University (2016 – 2017)
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- **Penn State Provost Scholarship**, Department of Undergraduate Education, Pennsylvania State University (2013 – 2016)
- **Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant**, United States Department of Education (2013 – 2016)
- **The Witmer Scholarship in Liberal Arts**, College of Liberal Arts, Pennsylvania State University (2014 – 2016)
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- **The R. Walker Society Trustee Scholarship**, Schreyer Honors College, Pennsylvania State University (2014 – 2015)
- **The Undergraduate Education General Scholarship**, Department of Undergraduate Education, Pennsylvania State University (2014 – 2015)