

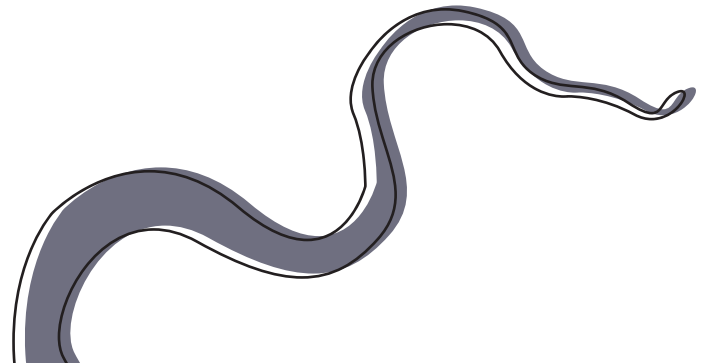


# EDITOR'S NOTE

This year, the staff edited every piece virtually over Zoom, instead of meeting in the English Department conference room A-37, where we usually would lay out stacks of poems on the table and roughly sketch our design on the whiteboard. Creating *The Torch* is always a hands-on process, one where the design team and the editing staff work together in the classroom by the treadmills and weight benches of Union's Wellness Center to make something you can hold and touch.

I'm realizing that this year—in a period of social distancing and student and faculty isolation—we need art. Art reminds us of our physical space, and it draws people together. I hope this journal that you now hold in your hands grounds you in a life of loving and understanding the people who share our spaces.

| Lillie Salazar  
| 2020



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# HONEYSUCKLES

*In Memoriam*

Written By  
**Kaylee Troxel**

We lost a lot of church  
kickballs and candy wrappers  
in those parking lot bushes. On summer  
nights when the blossoms were full,  
the petals lay curled back—soft  
and open—and we would gorge  
ourselves. Pluck, pull, sip, throw the empty  
flowers to the asphalt at our feet.  
They collected there in a wilted  
heap, tingeing brown before sunset—  
each drop of dew dissolving on our  
tongues faster than we could taste  
it. But we ravaged on, only leaving  
them when the mosquitoes bit.



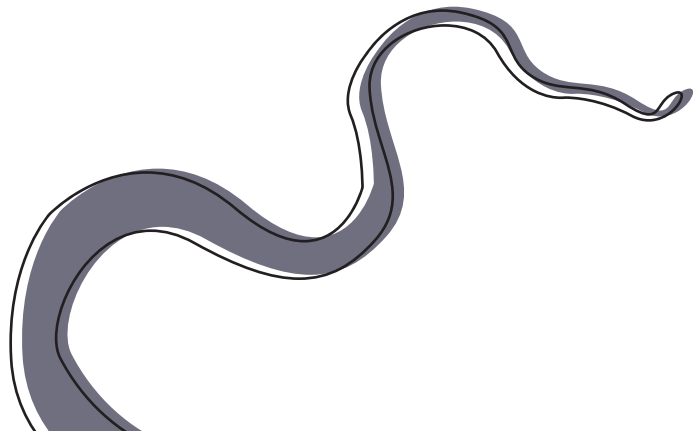
**BUTTONBUSH BLOOM**  
Darius Mullin

**2019**  
Digital photography

# SHAMBLES

Written By  
**Amber Kelley**

The gaunt frame of the house  
at the edge of Ogletree property  
rots with each rainfall. Three deer  
rove the shambles, stepping around  
fallen beams, into heaped leaves  
and mud. Rain drips onto boughs  
then slides down, tumbles, soaks  
into auburn coats and settles deep  
in splintered boards and slats.







**UNTITLED I**  
Camille Wehrman

**2019**  
Acrylic, ink, clay, and oil on canvas  
4 ft x 4 ft



**ZANE**  
Eli Creasy

**2020**  
Charcoal and graphite on paper  
18 in x 24 in



Eyes like rain on pavement

sometimes blue  
sometimes gray

but always bright  
and kind  
and stone-heavy with the suffering earth

tobacco  
cabernet  
cathedrals  
microcosm of pain in a pipe

incense to battle the insensate  
we're embodied creatures, aren't we?

earthworms flounder after storms  
*nous sommes trop petits pour les orages*<sup>1</sup>  
yet through  
smoke  
mist  
tears  
meets the Spirit in all

and rain-eyes grasp Grace.

<sup>1</sup>We are too small for angry storms

# TO THE WOMAN WHO TOLD ME THIS STORY IN OVERTON PARK

Written By  
**Sydney Coffman**

The policeman said the car flipped once.  
The paramedic said twice.  
And my sister said it didn't matter  
because no one died.

Mrs. Johnson was the one to call.  
Told the operator it happened in her front  
yard. A Hit and Run. One car—beige,  
maybe white—swerved and didn't miss.  
And the other's in the ditch. With a lady hanging  
upside down. Nothing holding her in, save  
a belt of four hundred polyester strands woven tight.

When we came up on the wreck,  
they'd already pulled her out of a titanium  
skeleton and carbon fiber bent seven ways  
like a pipe cleaner—the fuzzy  
kind. The ones we'd make crowns  
out of in second grade.

She got on the gurney all by herself. Didn't  
mind the black and mud and blood staining  
her body, but she massaged  
her stomach, sobbing about her baby.  
And the women there said something about Fetal  
Trauma, or Induced Labor, but I was just standing

and staring and staring at that ambulance  
until I could make it something  
else—anything else. I squinted and assured  
myself it was just a white box, a cigarette  
box. Just cardboard and eight letters:  
m-a-r-l-b-o-r-o. That's the brand I chose  
because it's the only one I know. Grandpa caught me  
smoking once, and I never did it again, but, anyway,  
that's how my nephew came two months early.



**GREYHOUND**  
J. Daniel Patterson

**2019**  
Digital photography



**PLATE**  
Camille Wehrman

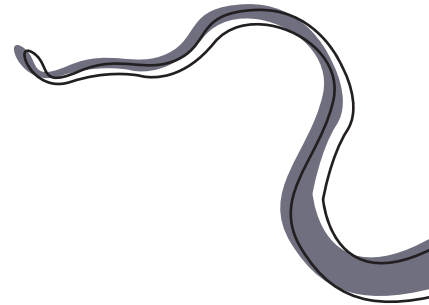
**2019**  
Glazed stoneware



# THE TIME SINCE

Written By  
**Jackson Hall**

You grew up in front of me, joking  
and always smiling—I remember the parsonage  
near the edge of Indiana where you stood  
at the border of the cornfield and didn't dare  
go in—and later when we moved you still  
came over, played in the backyard or watched  
the VCR—you used to slide down the stairs  
on a couch cushion and scare me half  
to death—we took you to the coffee shop,  
bought you a bottle of pop and a gumball,  
and you read comics while the grown-ups talked—  
you haven't come around in a while.  
I think the last time we said good-bye was in the dark  
parking lot of that Chinese buffet.





**FROM *THE HUSTLE***  
Hannah Kate Heckart

**2019**  
Digital photography

# SUICIDE SODA

Written By  
**Sydney Coffman**

At nineteen my mama married  
a man, had my sister, and studied newscasting.  
I forget in what order. Weeknights  
we'd sleep under a four-chair table at Pizza  
Inn while she wore a red polo and wrote  
orders on the back of her hand in swinging  
loops that looked like Cyrillic.  
College boys slapped money  
on the laminate counter as if their god paid  
their tuition. They asked for Suicide  
Sodas. My mama mopped their vomit for a twenty-five  
cent tip. We hoarded those quarters  
in a copper vase with obese cherubs flying  
around its neck, so that I could study *An Essay*  
*On Man* at university. My mama slayed  
some hundred elephants for my Ivory  
Tower, and I dropped out.



**FROM *THE HUSTLE***  
Hannah Kate Heckart





**2019**  
Digital photography

# IN VAIN REPETITION, I FORGOT YOUR NAME

Written By  
**Samuel Sadler**

In vain repetition, I forgot your name.

Its music was the first piece to go—slowly  
Becoming a word, an echo of an image,  
A syllable that didn't make the final draft.

Then the letters dissented as I stared  
Each one into isolation. They hid  
In the corners of an empty page.

One by one, they dissolved  
Into an absence I knew  
Before I learned your name.

But now there is a word of my favorite  
Poem, still missing—one line break doesn't  
Rhyme with the rest, and I am restless,

In vain repetition of the name I forgot.



## **BERRY BOWL AND SHADOWS**

Jennifer Hatch

**2019**

Stoneware



**STILLNESS**  
Elaina Widen

**2020**  
Digital photography



# PATTY

Written By  
**Lucy Baker**

I portioned the grain into the old icing bucket from Walmart: twenty cups of oats, twenty cups of corn—forty total—alternating each scoop between the two grain bins. The sheep out in the barn lot all turned my direction as they heard the grain hit the bottom of the bucket. Lumbie was in one of the lambing pens, walking in circles, pausing to spin, trying to find what was causing the strange sensation.

It's amazing to watch instinct kick in when Jacob sheep ewes give birth to their first lambs. No one has told them what they will feel, what to do while in labor and after the lamb is delivered, and how to lick them and direct them to nurse. Yet they all do it every time.

Lumbie had been my bottle lamb because she never seemed quite right in the head. The scrawny one from a set of triplets, she was never there when Sugar called for her lambs to come nurse or afterwards when the lambs curled up against their mother and dozed off to sleep on full stomachs. Lumbie was usually by herself. Often, she was startled when we approached to catch her, like she hadn't seen or heard us

coming. I would find her along the fence-line alone, nibbling at clover, and watch as her legs tensed and she raised her head, looking for the rest of the flock. She grew skinnier as she missed more and more nursings, so I had been assigned to give her a bottle six times a day

At first, it was hard to catch her in the wide barn lot, but she soon learned to recognize the warm milk bottle. I would sit with my back against the ash tree, place her between my knees, and raise the bottle. Bubbles floated to the top as she repeatedly punched it, and her tail wriggled. The nipple on the bottle squeaked when the milk emptied, and Lumbie looked around, licking her lips. I nestled the bottle in the roots of the tree, and then I tucked Lumbie's legs and settled her on my lap. The sun shone on her black and white fleece that curled in tiny ringlets, and the pressure of her chin on my arm grew as she fell into a deep sleep. I scratched around the four budding horns on her head. After a couple weeks, I no longer had to keep my arms around her—she would immediately settle down and sleep for twenty minutes. I often dozed off with her.

Lumbie trusted me as a mother and followed me everywhere I let her. When I made my morning rounds to feed, I would let her out, and she would prance around, stopping to nibble at a stem of alfalfa or touch noses with another lamb, and then leap to catch up with me. She wandered around the yard with me, and, a few times, I coaxed her into coming up on the porch and into the house. Some nights, I laid out my sleeping bag and slept in the barn. In the mornings, I found Lumbie and curled her up against me; she immediately fell asleep in the warmth of my sleeping bag.

Now two years old and about to give birth, she looked at me and stretched out her neck as I walked past her pen to dump the grain into the troughs. It warmed my heart that after so much time she still looked to me when she needed help. I stopped to scratch her nose and spoke to her reassuringly as I went about finishing the last of my chores, throwing hay down from upstairs. Jacob sheep typically have easy births with no assistance, so I attributed Lumbie's stress to her being different than the rest of the flock.

She yelled loudly, throwing herself down and panting, her legs sticking straight

out from her belly. Soon, I could see a water bubble forming, and the lamb began to crown. Trying to calm her, I went into the pen and knelt down. Lumbie wailed and laid her head in my lap. I scratched her chin and then encouraged her to stand up again; I had to be on the other end if I was going to be any help. She turned around, raising her tail, and I was confused by what I saw.

The nose was showing, encased in the placenta, but there were no capped toenails. I had never aided in a delivery before, let alone delivered a breech, but I quickly realized I may have been looking at one. She pushed again, and my fears were confirmed. A lamb should come out nose first, with both front feet right below, but there were no feet showing. Lumbie panicked, unable to deliver her lamb. I knew that the legs had to be tucked under the lamb inside, and I looked at Lumbie's head again. Using my knee to hold her still against the cinder block wall, I tried to pull the nose. My fingers slid down the mucus, accomplishing nothing. Lumbie hollered, and I reached up to touch her face.

"Lumbie, Lumbie, Lumbie, it's okay, it's okay."

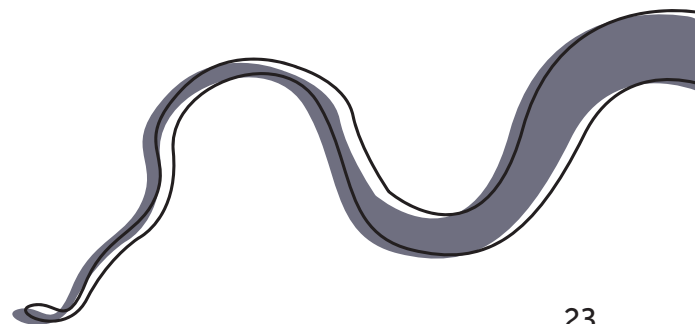
I rubbed her neck and waited. She began to relax and push again in a controlled manner with each contraction. I reached back to the lamb's nose, carefully followed along the muzzle, and slipped my fingers inside. The birth canal was warm and slippery, but once I had gotten my fingers over the forehead, I began pulling. Lumbie arched her back and moaned as she strained to push. Again, I worked my fingers up to the base of the lamb's neck and gently pulled downwards. My knees were shaking. Suction worked against me and held the lamb inside as I tried to move it. I was terrified of pulling too hard and hurting the neck.

I breathed deeply, trying to relax my arms as the head emerged, bloody and wet, the eyes sealed shut. Finally, I could feel the shoulders. Lumbie continued pushing, grunting as the lamb moved inside of her. She didn't wail as much anymore, as she realized I was helping her and we both needed to focus on remaining calm. The head hung limp as my fingers emerged with the shoulders, and I pulled the legs out.

Then, with a rush of fluids, the lamb was born into my lap. I let out a long breath

and smiled. Lumbie collapsed, her neck stretched out, and her ribs heaved. I allowed her to rest for a few seconds and then called her name. It was a girl, almost all black, and she kicked, struggling to escape the mucus that encased her. Lumbie turned and, seeing the lamb, immediately stood up and began licking, cleaning her off, and grunting in the motherly way sheep always do. Her name would be Patagonia. She shook her head and snorted mucus out of her nose. Her ears shivered.

I looked down at my hands. I had forgotten to put gloves on. The blood and mucus on my hands dried in the cold, tightening my skin. I scratched around Lumbie's horns and ears as she nudged her lamb to stand up and nurse. Together, we had brought a new life into the world. As I stood up to go wash my hands, I looked back at Lumbie—she never looked at me. She now had something of her own to care for.





**RESTLESS**  
Emily Drost

**2020**  
Charcoal and ink on wood

# IF I WERE TO DANCE AGAIN

Written By  
**Grace Runkle**

If I were to dance again  
As my six-year-old self  
Without concern for turned-in pirouettes  
Or angled wrists.

Everything in wild humanity  
Daring to escape the fragile  
Edges of my frame.  
To dance without fear of sensuality,

A body without implication.  
My torso a twisting tree trunk,  
Arms branching out, home for a chickadee—  
I wouldn't mind that the tree spins in circles

Until it falls down  
Giggling and dizzy.



# VISITING GRANDFATHER

Written By  
**Lillie Salazar**

Mother holds her breath when we enter his front  
door, when he crouches and attacks me in a hug,  
and I smell the motor oil on his hands and the whiskey  
in his breath, when he spits crushed raspberries on my shirt  
from across the dining room table and colors my blouse  
like blood, when he tickles me on his living room floor  
and I laugh but my side hurts, when he walks his Texas field  
and kicks dirt with his boot and says he spent enough of his  
life tilling and harvesting a land that dries up  
every summer and lies stone-cold dead in winter and that  
by God when he dies, he doesn't want to be buried in it,  
when he shuts his bedroom door and the pictures  
on the wall shake and all we hear is the sound of wind  
blowing through the open window in the kitchen.



**UNCOMFORTABLE?**  
Elaina Widen

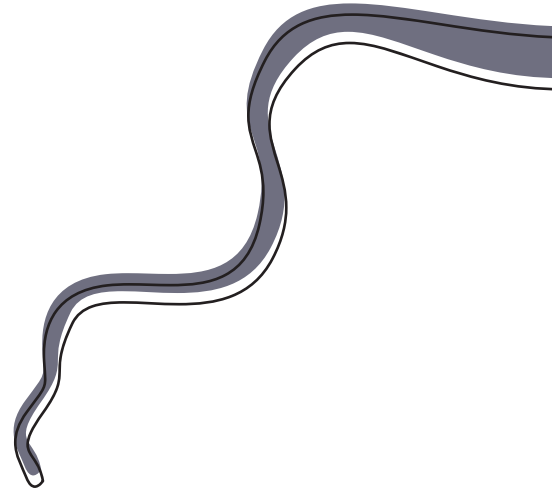
**2020**  
Digital photography

# WARM SUMMER NIGHTS

Written By  
**J. Daniel Patterson**

Party Mart had loomed before us with its expired  
glowing sign, the faint churning  
of an over-taxed machine and piles  
of cardboard boxes stuffed into the corner  
screaming silence and solidity.  
Memories reascend and bottles shone of some  
past game we used to play some time ago  
(when I felt young), where the old wooden swing  
still smelled of years-old whiskey rubbed deeply into wood—  
and you, my dear, would track the stars and try to  
place them on shelves like books.  
But you were never to catch one. And we'd  
sit and swing until we'd fall off,  
laughing and hurting. We were drunk.  
And amidst the haze of our fogged minds,  
I knew, clearly, that you were for me

and I was for you. We were tourists in that  
store, pointing to expensive bottles  
like they were great landmarks ready to be  
traversed. We never had the money.  
Souvenirless, we'd make the drive to  
the grocery store and pretend  
cheap alcohol wasn't our home.  
Sips of Kroger-bought wine usher  
memories that poorly resemble  
the crisp burn that only a fifty-dollar  
bottle of wine can fill—  
but soon, when the bottle is empty  
and we start on another, the taste  
is real and sweet, the burn authentic . . .  
and it stays that way till we sober  
and you realize the glowing star  
in your hand is only a firefly. Then  
you let it go.



# BIOS

**Lucy Baker** is a junior Christian studies major whose roommates accuse her of sounding like a French Bulldog.

**Sydney Coffman** is a sophomore English major who watches too many elephant conservation documentaries.

Freshman English major **Jon Clemmons** clicks around a lot.

Senior graphic design major **Eli Creasy** is okay at drawing.

Senior graphic design major **Emily Drost** is okay-er at drawing (take that).

Junior communications studies major **Jackson Hall** listens almost exclusively to folk-rock from the seventies.

**Jennifer Hatch**, senior art major with a ceramics emphasis, loves jigsaw puzzles and reading fantasy and manga.

**Hannah Kate Heckart**, senior public relations and photojournalism major, feels so fortunate and blessed to have her photography be a part of the last three editions of *The Torch*, and she hopes to see her and her fellow creatives go so far in the future.

Junior English major **Amber Kelley** wants to adopt a beaver.

Junior biology major **Darius Mullin** is an aspiring salamander evangelist.

At a Christmas party, **J. Daniel Patterson**, senior English major, had his ears pierced by a fourteen-year-old girl.

**Cate Price**, sophomore English major, experienced three days of bliss when Cobo had goat cheese at the salad bar.

Senior English and French literature double major **Avery Rist** restores her will to live by hosting tea parties and resuscitating Cobo-to-go leftovers.

Junior English major **Grace Runkle** likes to appreciate the small things, like Tardigrades.

**Samuel Sadler**—junior philosophy major—is the em-dash king—

Before COVID-19, senior English major **Lillie Salazar** was probably sharing a cinnamon roll with her side chick, Camille Wehrman.

Junior nursing major **Kaylee Troxel** doesn't miss the fluorescent lights in White Hall.

**Camille Wehrman**, fifth-year senior art and theology major, was enjoying that cinnamon roll maybe a little too much.

**Elaina Widen**, sophomore art major, will shave her head for an art project one day soon, just wait.



# STAFF

## EDITOR

Lillie Salazar

## ASSISTANT EDITOR

Amber Kelley

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Jon Clemmons  
J. Daniel Patterson  
Cate Price  
Samuel Sadler  
Kaylee Troxel

## DESIGN EDITOR

Emily Drost

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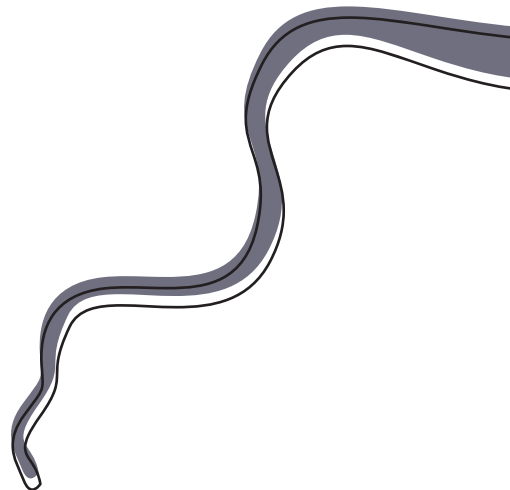
Eli Creasy  
Giovanna DeSouza  
Samory Gueye

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Bobby Rogers

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The background is a solid, textured blue. In the top-left corner, there is a stylized, wavy line that curves downwards and to the right, ending in a small loop. In the bottom-right corner, there is another stylized, wavy line that curves upwards and to the left, also ending in a small loop. Both lines are dark blue with a lighter blue shadow or outline, giving them a three-dimensional appearance.

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