

Three Peaks Review

Black Hills State University's
student-run literary magazine



2022 | Issue 4



BLACK HILLS

STATE UNIVERSITY

Three Peaks Review



Black Hills State University's
undergraduate literary magazine
featuring a collection of students'
poetry, fiction, and visual art



Photo By Keegan Baatz

Letter from the Editor

In the Second O of Sorrow, Sean Thomas Dougherty writes, "Why Bother? Because right now, there is someone out there with a wound in the exact shape of your words". This Journal serves a testament to human existence—the pain and the bliss of it all, and

I truly believe that every creative writer at Black Hills State University is healing the wounds of others with the profound shape of their words. This year we still find ourselves living in strange and uncertain times, but we have kept creating and that is something to celebrate. Here's to the Fourth Edition of Three Peaks Review, and to all the people that made it happen—I have endless thanks to give.

I would first like to thank the talented writers who took a leap of bravery and submitted their work for publication, you all made the selection process very hard, and I commend you for that. Another huge thank you goes out to the Photography and Art departments, for spreading the word of our publication and sharing your students and their wonderful work with us. Additionally, major thanks go to the visual arts students, for submitting impactful and beautiful pieces of art—this again, was no easy decision.

Next I would like to give a huge thank you to Black Hills State University, for continuing to support our Journal and our organization. Thank you to the Student Engagement Leadership Center for answering endless questions and ensuring we had every tool needed to make our events a success, and the Activity Grants Committee for funding support. Additionally, I would like to thank the Campus Bookstore for your generous donations and continued support. I would also like to give a warm thank you to everyone at the Print Center, for your integral role in publishing this journal.

My last thank you goes to our advisor, Matt Bauman, whose passion and love for this journal continually inspires members and students, and creates endless opportunities for student writers. If anything is certain, it is that there are infinite possibilities for beautiful and impactful art when you have such a wonderful community behind you, and Three Peaks Review absolutely has that. It has been my pleasure, to write and create amongst all the brilliant students and staff. I will never forget the magic we all have made together.

Without further ado, I hope you enjoy your read.

Sincerely,

Starr

Staff

Starr Paul | President, Head Editor

Audra Lynam | Vice President

Katie Jones | Visual Media Editor

Aaden Roy | Assistant Writing
Editor

Amanda Walterstorff | Assistant-
Writing Editor

Daniel Egemo | Assistant Writing
Editor

Ella Neiman | Assistant Writing Ed-
itor

Emma Seiwert | Assistant Writing
Editor

Matt Bauman | Advisor

Photo: Gentle Existence By Katie Jones

Table of Contents

POETRY

- 2 Gender Envy
- 4 Immortality
- 5 Sorrows Supper
- 6 Ornamental Matrimony
- 9 In The Sunflower Fields
- 11 I Argue With The Gods and The Philosophers
- 18 If You Must
- 20 Spring Cleaning
- 22 It's Always Better When We're Together
- 24 The Death Of Louise Osveert

PROSE

- 12 Don't Close The Blinds

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY

- 3 Untitled By Sophia Clarke
 - 8 In Our Nature By Erin Bender
 - 10 Study Of David Erin Bender
 - 19 Golden Hour By Katie Jones
 - 21 Untitled By Keegan Baatz
- Cover Photo By Kori Teasley

Gender Envy

By Carley Deiss

I'm a woman
in the way coffee is tea,
and a rectangle is a square,
and how brunch is both breakfast and lunch.

By woman I mean
a vague hand gesture,
a lift of an eyebrow,
and a stiff, decisive clearing of the throat.

Known but unknown,
seen but not consumed,
I want to be feminine in the way
that men get to be feminine.
Beautiful for the sake of beauty,
in the way women don't get to be.



Untitled
Sophia Clarke

Immortality

By Ella Neiman

/ i-m r-ta-l -tē /

noun

1. Mr. Cortez died at the intersection of Cleveland and Oak last night. In the morning, they sent a crew to scrub the blood from the asphalt, but the stain remained even after they left. The dark rust smudge looks like the letter W. I visited his daughter two months later—it took so long to find her—and she told me they put a bench in the park with his name engraved on the top slat. I've never been to that park before, but I walk past the W every day on my way to work.

2. They found a Roman grave when remodeling a nail salon. The shattered skeleton was arranged with reverence, buried with enough gold and garnets to forge a throne. A gladius, long and wicked sharp despite time's bite, paralleled the left femur. Naturally, they assumed the skeleton belonged to a man, a centurion who served a tyrant with zeal. Further analysis proved it was a woman, and further discussion said she had been royalty. They caged her in glass with a metal alloy plaque estimating her biography, but what fools they were—she had carried an empire on the bones that were now too brittle to even withstand the weight of the brush archaeologists use to wipe away dust.

3. There is a handprint on the roof of the cave. The palm is small and the fingers pudgy. Is it really so difficult to imagine a child on the shoulders of her father, hand dripping with paint, reaching to smear her existence on stone that does not know how to forget?

4. A student asks what it means to be human. I point to the initials carved on the desk, adolescent promises burned into the wood. Look at us, I say, look at how desperate we are to be remembered.

Sorrows Supper

By Starr Paul

I took my sorrow out to eat today,
broke baguettes and sank them in soups of steam
holding our gaze amid the mounting vapors
as if to confess our intentions,
washing our tongues with drops of oolong
lapping them soundless.

Watching weeping willows flow from her roots
as her trembling hands break the china and I
wonder what a life without her feels like
while the main course rolls in
how tragic it tastes,
how bitter-sweet its infamy.

I took my sorrow out to eat today,
freed the butchers cord from the lamb
and tied up adornment for her collar bones,
chewing on the casing of our cheeks
grasping at ivory utensils,
tightening the twine to the blue of her neck.

Ornamental Matrimony

By Sydney Lunde

We dedicate the snowy daylight
to country club brunches and

kisses on cheeks. Our little
public display of affection

performed for attention. We
decorate pine with ribbons

and ornaments while the camera
flashes, twinkling

like the star on top. Excuse
myself to the bathroom

where I try not to fall apart. I loved you
once. In those days

when daylight's
dedication was a guaranteed

seduction of diving into
lips beside the heat of the hearth.

These days the ever present
emptiness in your presence is

our laundry basket's worth
of squabbles. You'll

rest on the runner and I'll
perch by the door. Together

we'll linger in carnal discord and
send for the architect

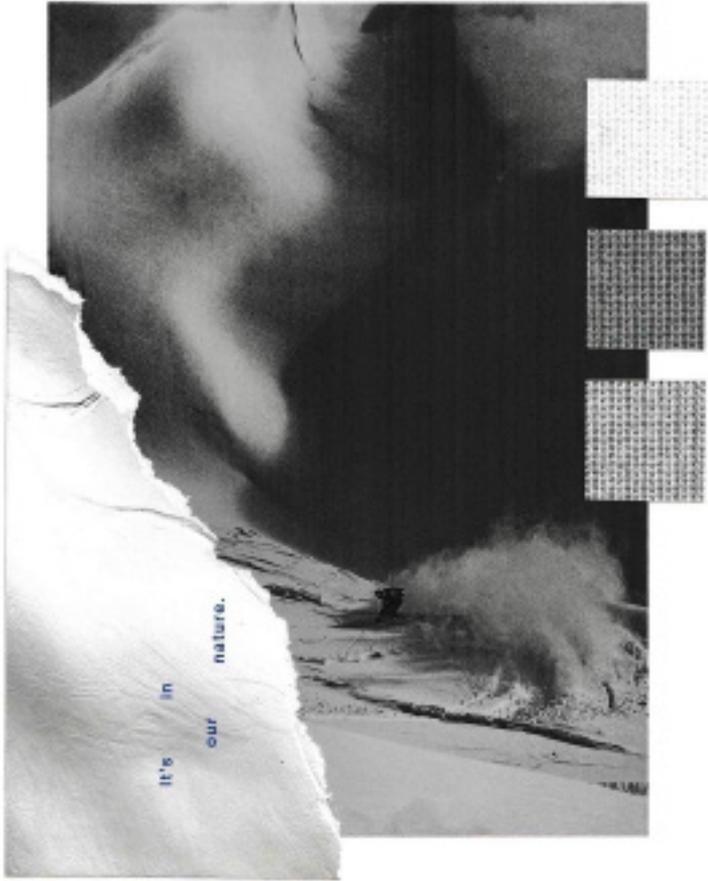
of dismal demise. One heart
burning the other alive.

My muse of
contemplation, of

ornamental fondness, of
reluctant 'I love you.'

Oh, to grow old with you
would be God's great harmonious

hoax.



In Our Nature
Erin Bender

In The Sunflower Fields

By Andrew Toft

In Sunflower Fields in valleys low
between mountains high,
the sunflowers bloom on winter's graves.
The bombs above and bullets below
plant metal watered by blood and oil.

Between the crosses and sunflowers,
a hero lived and loved, saw and lost,
felt and was heard. His pockets were filled with
photographs and chocolate.
No grenades or maps.

A man lies fallen on a road no one has heard of.

His arms are flung behind his body
and only sparrows saw him die,
upon the sunflower fields.



Study Of David
Erin Bender

I Argue with the Gods and the Philosophers

By Ella Neiman

And what are we meant for, if not for bleeding
and screaming and painting portraits
on the banks of the Seine? Is it truly coincidence
that her nose and her chin
fit so perfectly in the crook—
call me a criminal—of my neck?
My hand molds to my father's, his callouses
matching my scars. Surely it was no accident
to let our voices harmonize and break
glass and ripple between canyons
so our mothers might find us.
If I was not meant to love
and be loved, then why is it so easy?
Our mouths know each other—
I have been here before—
and our bodies sing like mirrors.
If I was not meant to create and destroy
and run and swim and climb and hate
and laugh and cry and hope,
then I should not have been given a skeleton.

How could this ever be a mistake?

Dont Close The Blinds

By Amanda Wolterstorff

I hadn't been back to that place since the first time that he brought me there. Quite honestly, it made me nervous just thinking about revisiting, because I always felt that it belonged to him. The locals called it 11th Hour. It was easy to miss with the path tucked between foliage on the right side of Spearfish Canyon, only marked by the Kissing Rocks on the opposite side of the road. The path was a bit unconventional and less of a path than a small beaten down line of grass, and soon enough, that grass turned into a patch of rough rocks where the original line disappeared. The hike made me feel so lonesome, facing the mossy cliffs and climbing up rickety make-shift ladders with half weathered down ropes, and when I made it to the top, everything below felt so unimportant and miniscule, but, at the same time, I felt small, not even measuring up to the height of the cliff opposite of me. Everything was so untouched and unchanged, and I was stupidly disappointed when I realized that he was not sitting and waiting for me at the edge of the cliff. It was easy to picture what he looked like when he brought me there four years before. He sat with a polaroid camera at his feet, shaking the exposed, square, film with his right hand, tapping it against his left palm in a rhythmic pattern. You could tell that he belonged there and being back alone made it that much sadder. So I sat at the edge for some time, running my hands through the fine dirt, throwing rocks over the edge just to see how far I could throw them, and trying not to think about all the memories that had slipped through my fingers. But the sun was burning my nose, and I couldn't stop thinking about all of it. The day that I met him, he was riding a black moped that he had loaned from a friend, and I was bringing a hamper full of books and socks and cups and plastic silverware up to my new, third-floor, dorm room. The moped screeched to a stop—the back wheel skidding to the right a bit on the hot, august pavement—hopped off the moped, and said, I'm TJ! Where do you live? We should hang out later! So, we spent the whole first semester together, eating pizza, watching movies, occasionally smoking weed outside my RA's window, running across campus to one dorm or the other.

I remember that year the school made a big deal about the total solar eclipse that was going to happen on the first day of class. Posters all over campus explained that it was special because it was the first time the US had seen a total solar eclipse since 1918, and it may not happen again for quite some time, and it may not be visible from our specific region for centuries, or something like that. On the day of the eclipse, we found each other—no, we gravitated towards each other—and we picked the perfect spot to sit on the green with the sun beating down on our shoulders, mindlessly picking blades of grass, waiting for the eclipse to begin. TJ handed me a pair of eclipse glasses made from cardboard and some sort of foil that was supposed to protect our eyes from the sun's ultraviolet rays. I remember him looking so goofy, sitting on the grass, head cocked upward with this big white luminescent grin spread across his deep brown visage. His dreads were messy like always, and that was how I like him best: messy and happy. And then it all went dark. The waiting, the anticipating, the counting down, all led up to this moment of shivering and staring and awe and wonder—what he loved the most was the wonder, and what I loved the most was watching him be in wonder. He moved in with my boyfriend in the summer of 2019, and we spent nearly every day that season on the back deck, the sun, hot and sharp, the smell of the logging plant filling the air with sappy pine. I think I liked that era of our friendship best because it always reminded me of the earlier days, the days where we were inseparable. That era lasted for two years. The summers were always knee-high grass and afternoon storms, heavy clouds and rainbows in the northeast and the southeast, lightning striking behind outlook mountain (the direction that the deck faced). The springtime was marked by the row of lilac bushes that disguised the chain-link fence, the plump bundles of lavender flowers strenuously holding onto the branches, heavy with spring hope. The aroma was always strong in the morning from dew drops, and we would lean against the railing, soaking in the scent, the early rays of light, warming our closed, delicate eyelids. From time to time, we'd get into "remember when" contests, trying to see who could remember the most memories from those earlier days.

Teege (that's what I grew to call him) would say something like, Remember when I ran to your apartment in the snow? and I did remember it vividly, because he was encrusted in heavy wet flakes and his pant legs were soaked to the knee when he walked through my door. Then I would say something like, Remember how you slept on the floor in my bedroom, and we watched 'Drake and Josh' that night? and he remembered, too. The winter never bothered him like it did me.

In the midst of the heavy, wet snow that we had back in February of 2018, TJ learned how to give stick-and-poke tattoos, and I made the trek to his house through the snow packed alley, my car barely making it, because I was too cheap to buy nice tires. he put on black, rubber, surgical gloves—snapping them on his wrist after squeezing his fingers into their respective slots, just like how he imagined a real tattoo artist would or like how the doctors did it in the movies—laid out the ink, rubber banded a needle to the eraser end of a yellow, number 2 pencil, and asked me what I wanted. I told him that he could give me anything, yes, anything. What he chose was a sun, and to this day I am not sure whether it is rising or setting, but I guess it depends on how you look at it. I chose the placement—on my sternum in the middle of my chest—and he put on Bay Watch and went to work, diligently inserting the needle into my skin, hunched over, making sure that the lines were perfect. The prodding and the burning and the stinging made me warm all over, imitating what a real sun would do, reminding me that summer wasn't so far away.

I always preferred the heaviness of the summer heat to the snow. I loved how beads of sweat traced my temples with care, how my legs stuck to the plastic lawn chair, and how—when I finally forced myself to get up to get a glass of water—the cold air conditioning pricked my skin when I crossed the door's threshold. I remember on one of those intensely hot days, Teege was stuck to his bed instead of a lawn chair, so I went downstairs to his room, grabbed each of his wrists with my sweaty palms, and peeled him from his sheets. We got out our two bikes from the garage, manually pushing up the garage door because it was bent and broken. His bike was an old Schwinn model with orange creamsicle colored detailing and handlebars that curved down, and mine was a brand new seven-gear covered in a glossy turquoise color. We rode through the campus where we met—both of us were college dropouts at that time—talking about our future, wondering what the hell we were going to do with our lives, not knowing what the next step was (and knowing what I do now, this memory makes me quite sad).

The longing and the possibility of what life had to offer sparked in his eyes, and although he would beat himself up about it from time to time, he never lost hope and, not only did he have faith, but he was certain that something good would always find him. We rode, sometimes racing, toward the Spearfish City Park, and we stopped at a clearing near the river. We dropped our bikes into the dry river pebbles, more like children who were excited for the possibilities of today than adults who were worried about tomorrow.

TJ did it first. He dipped his long, matted dreads into the strong current of the river, shaking the dreads out like a dog when he brought his head up, saying, You next! So I unsurely let my hair out of the low bun that it was in, waded out into the river, and dipped it slowly into the current until the water reached my scalp, making my breath catch in my throat. I pulled back swiftly, throwing my hair up and onto my back, and the cool constant drip from the ends of my hair felt soothing against the sunburn on my shoulders. We took pictures with his polaroid camera, and I went first, posing with my bike, my hair still dripping, by an old cottonwood tree, and he went next, posing in the same manner, and he archived them in a photo album that he pulled out of his canvas backpack, inscribing, Riding bikes with Amanda, beneath the two photos. That was in August of 2020.

We had one more sunny day after that one. The leaves on the trees were just starting to turn yellow, and it was unusually hot that day in early October. I was leaning against the rough wooden railing, and TJ was perched on the white, plastic lawn chair—the center of the seat broken away from either weather or drunken fun or just age. The lawn was overgrown like usual, and TJ's dog was making mazes through the jungle of grass and weeds. Teege said, I am going to start a podcast, with the same confidence that he had with every other hobby that he started and half finished. I can't remember much else about what we talked about that day, but I do remember how hot the sun was, and how it made me want to sink down into the deck and become one with the weathered and warped wood.

I do remember how TJ was wearing his white and blue, Japanese style kimono, and how his hair looked like a hazard zone because the dreads probably hadn't been twisted in months, and because he was spending a lot of time in his bed in those days, and I do remember how he looked at me with his walnut-shell-brown eyes from underneath his wire-rimmed glasses and how he smiled at me with each tooth, and I wish I didn't remember how I did not hug him goodbye and only yelled, I love you, from inside the house as I shut the front door behind me.

That next day was unusually sunny, too. I spent most of the day indoors, doing crafts and enjoying having the window opened, the chirping and the tweeting coming from the cluster of oak trees in my backyard. It was later in the evening when my mom asked me if I wanted to go for a drive, and we stopped on a gravel road where a skinny, old bridge crossed the Red Water River. The old, chipping and extremely weathered planks of wood, the rusted steel of the bridge railing, the lazily moving water, the yellow and orange leaves, the flourishing green pastures on either side of the river, and the sun just beginning to set in the west—perfectly framed by the bridge itself if you looked from the right angle—all added to the ambiance. It was a type of peace that I hadn't felt in a long time, and I remember telling my mom, Today feels like one of the good days. That feeling didn't last for long, though, because when I got home it was frantic phone calls, sobbing, shaking, and shock.

And still today, I cannot escape the grief, because what reminds me of him most is the sun, whether it is rising or setting or high in the sky, whether the season is summer or winter, whether it is day or night, I will always be reminded of our time spent together and the time that I can't remember anymore and the time that I will never get back. Sometimes I wonder why that hiking spot is called 11th hour, and I am still not quite sure. Why not the 10th or the 12th or whatever? And the answer I have curated for myself keeps me awake at night from time to time and it reminds me of the last day that we spent outside on that weathered deck, feeling each ray of sun on our bare knees and shoulders, the day before his last one on earth, and I think to myself, That was our 11th hour—the hour before the clock hands reached twelve.

It took me a long time to understand why the sun affected me so strongly after his passing—it's funny now because it's so glaringly obvious—and it is what anchors me to Teege and what pulls my grief to the surface like the moon does the waves.

The sun is always solace and sorrow and I don't know that it could ever just be a burning, gigantic star suspended in space again, because every time I feel its warmth or when it is absent at night, I am sent spiraling through those memories like I am watching a supercut of our time together. What I know for sure is that the sun will always set, and the sun will always rise, and sometimes it will go dark in the middle of the day, but it will never be gone forever. And if the sun cannot disappear then neither can the energy of the soul that was the center of my universe for four years of my life, and I know that I am not so alone. So I let the sun burn my nose and my shoulders, and I don't wear sunglasses when it is too bright in the car, and I don't close the blinds when I go to sleep, because in the morning I know the sun will rise again.

If You Must

By Starr Paul

If you must begin, begin again
with fresh fringe cut
into the layers of your hair,
a silent homage
to the places she touched you.
For when October called to September's
flora she
simply painted bushes yellow, at Novembers
need
she snipped the leaves.

If you must stay, stay
tucked under a covering warped and weft
by bone tipped fingers, a promise
to the body once sprawled across the cold side
of your bed.
For March defrosts the corydalis lending April
its gilded glory.

But if you must end, end once more
at the streetlight that still dreams
of your midnight foueteés
spun with the neon of barrel aged bourbon, a crosswalk
obituary to the star inside of you.
For June places your shoes in the palms of July's hands
before sweltering suns brand blisters
to your soles.



Golden Hour
Katie Jones

Spring Cleaning

By Sydney Lunde

When you left, it wasn't like a forest fire had latched onto the drapes and spread to the rug your mother gave us. It was more like I was just left sitting on the porch to look out at the road, waiting for you to come back with take-out from our favorite Malaysian place. Of course, life goes on but it doesn't always feel that way, does it? Stuck on the porch built with your two hands, I forgot that homes need to have someone washing the dishes of love and replacing the light bulbs of self-worth. A week after you left, I took my morning tea to warm the dawn, frozen in the moment we kissed goodbye because we don't part like those wildfire couples and their screaming matches and their burning of old pictures. Your amber eyes still decorate my halls like you live there as many nights as you live in my mind.

Love, when we parted I never told you that I didn't want you to leave because I knew you had to go. Ambition led you to a path I cannot follow - and we both knew you wouldn't go if I only asked it. We never said so, but we both were hoping that goodbye would not last as long as it has. So when spring came back and you didn't, I stood up from that rocking chair on the porch and wiped the dust from my lips and the bookcase. You took the trash out when you left, but I forgot to replace the liner so now the kitchen smells like rotting soybeans instead of the flowers you greeted me with on Sundays. Spring cleaning, but this year the dead flies in the light fixtures will remind me how long you've been gone.



Untitled
Keegan Baatz

It's Always Better When We're Together

By Amanda Wolterstorff

Sometimes it sneaks up on you
and you could have sworn you had gotten rid of it,
like a violent boomerang, it always returns.
The knife, it turns, once again,
and the pulsing heart is sliced clean open,
the carefully tended sutures, proving nothing
against the sword of grief.
Can you catch your breath?

It's always better when we're together,
lyrics heard in line at the coffee shop we used to frequent
together, reaching its fingers,
note by note, into my sinewy tissues,
and I did not realize it, until the tear slid swiftly
into the corner of my lips. Frantic hands
brushing one cheek, then the other.
I listen anyway,
turning the knife recklessly with my own treasonous palm.

The boomerang rips the air
from my unsuspecting lungs, and
the amnesia falls away like an unzipped dress,
memories becoming less and less blurry now.
You used to sing it just a little out of tune,
through my forest of auburn hair,
rocking me back and forth on the mattress
that lays lazily on your hardwood floor.

No matter the number of genies and shooting stars
grief will be there again tomorrow,
so, I will dream of you tonight and keep you
time-capsuled in those visions, and
in the songs you sang, and
in the places we went, and
in the way that I feel sick
when I cannot remember your coffee order.

The Death Of Louise Osveert

By Carley Deiss

Just that Sunday I was allowed to wear Grandmother's pearls to church,
I cooked dinner by myself on Monday,
Tuesday I told my sisters I was grown now,
And Louise Osveert died on the third Wednesday of May 1955.

Thursday morning my father cried on my shoulder,
I put black ribbons in my hair that Friday,
I wore Grandmother's pearls on Saturday,
and I buried my mother on Sunday.

I turned fourteen that January after,
My ribbons grew three inches farther from the ground,
They fell out of my hair and into my next sister's in February,
I burnt my last baby curl with a hot iron at the beginning of March,
In April I finally solved how to set my hair like Liz Taylor.

I walked into breakfast just after dawn on the first day of May,
My father gave me a sad up and down and said "You're grown now",
Early-morning he and my brother's went out to the farm,
The cattle had to be to pasture before school.

I remember doing laundry into the morning hours,
homework in-between loads,
the little ones long off to bed.
I found my father's soiled work shirt at the bottom of his hamper.

Straightening the collar,
Unrolling the sleeves,
I put my hand into the front shirt pocket,
And pulled out the remains of loose tobacco.

I sniff it slowly and deeply,
The earthy scent of it filling every part of me,
I flipped the shirt and shake the dried leaf into my hand,
Just a little in the middle of my palm.

My father's tool cabinet,
The one for inside housework,
And I dug through the drawers,
Finding my wants on top of a coffee can of rusty nails.

It didn't take me long to twist and fold the tiny papers,
A skill I had learned during those moments with my father,
and finally I had my desire,
crafted in the darkest part of the basement.

I smoked that cigarette,
my very first one,
I had promised my mother I would never do it,
But she wasn't here anymore,
And I was grown now, wasn't I?

For questions and submissions, contact us at threepeaksreview@gmail.com



Cover photo
by Kori Teasley