

Spring 2020

Persimmons

Art & Literary Magazine



Persimmons

Spring 2020

Art & Literary Magazine



Editors-In-Chief

Sophia Fornwalt

Grant Holt

Editorial Staff

Anastasia Langner

Noah Magill

Ian Rowe

Cassie Coale

Richard Shapiro

Isaac Sage

Daisy Dow

Sam Hafetz

Jenny Jantzen

Emmaline Rogers

Sam Mineiro

Lucy Adams

Eytan Cohen

Clay Garfield

Molly Fording

Cover Art by Lucy Adams

Special Thanks To Our Advisor

Professor Thomas Hawks

Grown Fresh at Kenyon College

Persimmons@Kenyon.edu

“How will you go about finding that thing, the nature of which is totally unknown to you?”

-Plato's *Meno*

“I reject your reality and substitute my own!”

-Adam Savage

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Anne Beckwith	4	<i>Antoinette</i>
Molly Fording	5	<i>Avoir</i>
Lucy Adams	6	<i>CaveMother</i>
Jennifer Jantzen	7	<i>Child</i>
Molly Fording	8	<i>Untitled</i>
Cajuan Harris	9	<i>night</i>
Dylan Manning	10	<i>Serenade for Redundancy</i>
Jennifer Jantzen	11	<i>Hanscom</i>
Ian Rowe	12	<i>Waves</i>
Eytan Cohen	13	<i>Snap</i>
Molly Fording	14	<i>Coda</i>

LETTERS *from the* EDITORS

Sophia Fornwalt

It is a continuously radical movement to create a community and self which looks to others and says, “Yes, I will listen to you”. Working as a member and editor for Persimmons during my time at Kenyon has taught me what it can look like to be part of this mode of being which listens and creates a platform for voices both like and unlike my own. I understand writing and the creative arts as transformative practices in imagining the lives of others and, at times, the lives of ourselves as something other than previously accepted. So long as there are listeners, change and solidarity between lives can occur with movements both radical and subtle. Thank you for listening to me, to our creative submitters, and to each other in our worlds both close and far.

Grant Holt

It’s the best feeling in the world to publish something. You feel accomplished, validated, and—in the midst of a potent virus—relieved! It’s easy to think that the future is cancelled because of the pandemic, but I think the existence of this magazine refutes that reality. We made a magazine—not just despite a pandemic—but in spite of it! We did it because Persimmons grew into a thriving organization this year, thanks to our staff who were nothing less than a blessing. All of our staff members are the walking definitions of awesome. You should ask them for their autographs. When we can gather together again, I believe it will be a transformative moment. These sorts of moments are rare. A transformative moment tunes out the uncertainty of tomorrow. We jolt awake and gasp for air as we look over our shoulder at yesterday’s passing horrors. Coming together again might be one of those moments. It might be life-changing. It might be the best feeling in the world.

Antoinette

Anne Beckwith

The little lady's crystal shoes do
get stuck in the mud.

And in the holes her heels made, I found
a daisy petal, pierced all the way
through.

Under the point, where her toes rested, a
scrap of silken cloth, torn from her dress
when she fell.

Beneath the arches of her feet, I sought
and discovered a clump of grass- she
walks the earth, like us savages,
she does not float!

If this little lady is no spirit, we can throw her
body in the fountain in the square,
where all those coins lay dormant
and unfulfilled.

Avoir

Molly Fording

I have come for water. I have come
A long way. Turn your face toward me,
You there by the window. Please,
I have a great thirst, as the French
Would say. They've got it right:
I have it. It's mine. More so
Than teeth or hair, thirst is
A thing we own. I came out of the womb clutching it
To my chest, gasping. I have
Come for water. Please.
I have
Such a great thirst.

CaveMother

Lucy Adams



Child

Jennifer Jantzen

What?

I had a dream that you were the Home Alone kid. Just listen. You were yourself at first, when I entered the thrift store. But as you turned away from me, your trademark hair grew short and blond. Something had changed between us. You didn't make the face from the poster, but I still watched you. I still felt scared.

And then?

We fell for each other because that's what happened in real life. A few days passed. You told me that you wanted to start over in the summer, when you were less busy being Home Alone. Now, in the real world, we ignored all road signs, but in my dream you gave a good argument. I told you I was worried that I would not want you by then. No, you didn't do the face--listen--but you looked at me in that way. Like you were scared. Like you were a little kid.

And then?

I don't remember the end of the argument. I drove us somewhere, a graveyard on either side of the road. Each was speckled with shards of blue pottery; they were lonely, glistening things, all scattered about like raindrops. You kept pointing out pieces and asking me about them.

And then?

And then nothing. There was no point to it, no reason to break, and that was the reason itself.

Untitled

Molly Fording

We roll a beautiful pair of dice when we play the suffering game. With my fingernails shredding your dead skin, we roll around the board like children in a pile of leaves. Outside my body, my lungs hang on a string. I'm the sweetheart of the dancing hall, you're a study in blush. One day you raised your eyes to my face and that was all, after all this time. I go to the river and I weep. Who are you, anyway? I don't think we've met under this tree before, in this violet light. In our restaurant booth, we mash our mouths together, try to whisper with smushed tongues. When we play the suffering game, I scrape together a dowry of all my assorted hairs and roots, glitter glue, waxed string—I want the game to want this too. I'll get you. Surely I'm a prehistoric dream. Surely we have the same good blood.

night

Cajuan Harris

he doesn't see me—
my body, taut and waiting
pretenses curled in my hand like a confession;
i surrender to an unspoken promise (a compromise)
and my skin itches in anticipation

i can feel his tongue, and his name in the roof of my mouth
a soft sigh stretches down my spine
and i pray, silently
to his scarlet lips and cannibal eyes

||

Night unfurls around my ankles:

I don't know the weight of my body
or the surface of my skin, but under moonlight
my blood runs cold with obsession.
I've stretched the way he says my name
into a memory, now
Orange Spice smells like summer in a single evening.
I gnaw crescents into my palms; empty promises
stream down my fingers and curdle under the stare of a dark sky.

and i don't know where he went, but he still echoes against my skin now
and again. i chase his
shadow into the corner of my room. again and again. make it to me again
and again.

Serenade for Redundancy

Dylan Manning

I hate that every
Love poem
That I write
Sounds like a love poem
That someone dumped
Into a bucket of cliches
And then glued onto a bunch of
Saccharine platitudes.
I need to stop
Tarring and feathering
My own emotions

Hanscom

Jennifer Jantzen

Living with the God of Airports is simple. I ask nothing of It. It asks nothing of me. We live under the same rules, the same universe mom who put a roof over our heads.

But sometimes I get scared of It. Maybe this plane is the one, I say, pointing. This one. This one. This. In my hurry to reach I forget that I even have arms, and then I am snowed in by gratefulness until I stop thinking at all.

The God of Airports teaches me math. It charts flight trajectories, pointing out wing types with my pen like a big brother. I am not listening. I am looking at the clouds that stream behind Its children up above, little birds that scream and wail but always come home.

Come home. To the place where universe mom knits stringy fates to swaddle us in. To the place where I become lighter than the contrails. I learn how to breathe again. The God of Airports runs across the sky forever, blinking in Christmas colors above me, making unearthly sounds in the night.

Waves

Ian Rowe

I've never felt so catonic
Until a 4 am walk when the trees stopped talking,
The stars began to rest,
And I traversed through memories

That joyous dance of the unbroken
The river whose waves we followed
The labyrinth was a place to get lost
Only to end up lost from moving forward
Like a ripple in still water

The waves would carry us
Until you disappeared from me
The branches waved goodbye
And a bright wind
carried the leaves upstream

Snap

Eytan Cohen



Coda

Molly Fording

Someday I'll blow this cold air
Into you. I'll sew the buttons onto your shirts,
And stand on my tiptoes to see below my nose

In the bathroom mirror. In free fall I'll
Weigh nothing. You'll know you love me
In all the moments I'm not laughing;

I will eat bread and milk standing up
In the corner of your kitchen
and you'll never notice I'm gone until I'm back.

*“A large persimmon will fall into my
hand, and I will be victorious.”*

-Tokugawa Ieyasu