

The background of the entire image is a complex, abstract geometric pattern. It consists of numerous triangles of various sizes and orientations, creating a faceted, crystalline appearance. The color palette is primarily light blue and white, with some darker blue accents that provide depth and contrast. The triangles are arranged in a way that suggests a three-dimensional structure, possibly a modern architectural facade or a close-up of a mineral surface.

# **The Alchemist Review Staff Zine**

# Table of Contents

transience by kov x. magana

Step Grandma by Daniela Arizmendi

I love you not by Daniela Arizmendi

Ever Wander by Kate Rose Dumstorff

Forgotten Dreams by Kate Rose Dumstorff

Approaching Spring by Kate Rose Dumstorff

The Towers by Diana Vazquez

James Madison Was The First American President to Declare War by Vika Mujumdar

What it is to Fly by Alexandra Simpson

Barbie Dreams by Kayla Jean

Good Morning by Kayla Jean

Photos courtesy of unspash.com

## transience

kov x. magana

in you,  
I saw fleeting pink ballerinas dancing  
with the wind as their partner  
scented with the salt and brine  
of the rolling shore

in you,  
I saw ribbons of gold streaming  
through thin white curtains  
caressing the potted plants  
on the windowsill

in you,  
I saw rusted bronze petals falling  
from trees stripped skinny and bare  
yet standing tall in shadows  
that linger longer

in you,  
I saw crystalline tears cascading  
down the cheeks of unseen angels  
weeping with blinding joy  
of a year survived

in you,  
I saw the pink ballerinas awaken  
from their beds in green buds





## *I love you NOT*

*I love that you can't see how good I can be.  
I love that you would rather be with them than with me.  
I love that you are shy with me.  
I love when you are without me.  
I love that you can't even see me.  
You are so close yet so far away;  
I wonder if you will ever look my way.*



## Step-Grandma

December 18, 2019 San Miguel Laderas; Ixtapan de la Sal Estado de México, Mexico. It smells of grass and water outside, the view from our home in the mountains is incredible. My grandpa is cleaning his corn sitting on a bucket that's upside down getting it ready for vendors. My step-grandma tells him to come inside for lunch. Having a step-grandma is so weird. It has only been a year since grandma passed away and grandpa has already found someone else. No, he didn't replace her. I know what you are all thinking. He claims he won the lottery when he found her, she's a retired nurse and cares for my grandpa. Did I mention she's also younger than him? Grandpa is 75 and she's 55, she's almost my moms age but trust me she looks older. Step-grandma is thin and her skin has scars, not very different from grandpa's.

Grandpa is old school he needs someone to cook, clean, and do laundry for him but most importantly he does not like being alone, no one does. My step-grandma has to make hand made tortillas for grandpa for lunch and dinner. She makes them inside the garage on a fire pit, she inhales all the smoke from the griddle.

I'm not upset that grandpa found someone to accompany him but it does hurt that he talks about her better than he would talk about grandma.

Mom believes that my step-grandma is going to inherit all the money grandpa leaves behind... as if money was the only thing that mattered.

Grandpa has always depended on someone else, and when grandma died his world fell apart. I don't blame him for wanting to rebuild his life, grandpa is happy again and that's all that matters.



## Ever Wander

My fingertips grazed the Everglades  
My toes touched the Irish Sea  
My gaze has risen with a South Carolina sunrise  
The sight of Zion brought me to my knees

My hips swayed to Tennessee's twangy rhythm  
My feet dangled off a rocky Colorado peak  
My breath has danced with  
the wind atop Arthur's Seat  
The red blush of Sangria painted my lips on a  
South Pacific Beach

My soul has been drawn to travel  
For as far back as my mind can reach  
Captivated by the world's many wonders  
Unparalleled marvels I'm waiting to greet



## Forgotten Dreams

It flickers on the edge of your mind  
Ever elusive  
Just out of reach  
A memory forgotten?  
Or a moment made up?

## Approaching Spring

The world sits serene on the cusp of dawn  
Waiting with baited breath  
An underlying impatience simmers  
Restless fervor held within the softly swaying  
blades of grass



## The Towers

There it is. *The Tower*. There are forty-eight of these; one in each continental U.S. state, located in the center of their respective state's capitol. Its construction started fifty years ago...and ended *five months ago*. And in those fifty years, there's been a lot of speculation about the true purpose of these towers. My father believes that they will be luxury apartments while my mother believes that they will be used for vertical farming. My brother believes that the government is planning to release a disease or a virus, and that the towers will be FEMA camps while my sister believes that the U.S. is turning into Panem from *The Hunger Games*. Me? I don't know what to believe.

Yesterday, my family received a card that resembled a lottery ticket. At first, we thought that we were the only ones who had received one. That is, until my uncle called my father to tell him that he'd received a card resembling a lottery ticket. My father told him that we'd received one too. Then, my mother called her sister, her brother, her parents, everyone we know. All of their households had received one too...but no one knew what the lottery tickets were for. Guesses, rumors, conspiracy theories...but nothing from the U.S. Government.

errrrr errrrrr errrrr errrrr errrrr

"Gooooood morning!" A high-pitched voice greets through a loudspeaker. "Please do not be alarmed. My name is Sophia Tremblay and I am the Director of Project T50. If you do not know already, every household in the continental U.S. has received one lottery ticket. On the front of said lottery ticket, you will see your family's last and the number of people living in your household. And on the back, you will see an identification number." *Moore. Five. M5040820*. I memorized it last night. "One thousand families -per continental U.S. state- will be selected to live in their respective state's tower. If you and your family would like to increase your chances of being selected, you may purchase additional lottery tickets for-Oh my God...I think my brother is right..."

## James Madison Was The First American President to Declare War

I've never bowled. I don't know how to bowl. It's just throwing a ball at pins, how hard can it be? My friends take me bowling. It looks very seventies. It's very dark; the few lights are neon green and purple. The bowling balls are bright-- orange and green and red. They explain how to bowl, and I insist I will figure it out. Everyone around us is bowling well. I haven't managed a strike yet. The answer is very. Whoever loses will buy ice cream when we go to the museum.

Bowling is very American. I am very competitive. I buy ice cream when we leave the museum.

We go to the museum the next day. I know nothing about Abraham Lincoln when we walk in. No one seems to have liked Mary Todd Lincoln. My friend did a project in middle school on Mary Todd Lincoln; she looks around for clothing belonging to Mary Todd that had Lincoln's blood. It is no longer there. We go to the Illinois Gallery. The exhibit is about JFK. I confuse JFK and FDR. I am reminded of the time I was at History Club Trivia Night. The question was which president was the first to declare war. I know very little about American History; I'm a history major. The answer is not what I think it is. Everyone knows who the first president was.

She remembers it from the last time she visited the museum. I ask my friends if JFK was the one with the new deal. George Washington is not one of the four options for the answer.

## What it is To Fly

A brawny beast canters beneath me  
Splitting the wind like a blade  
Seat rolls with the tide of his gait  
The swell and collapse of a wave  
Legs hug that heaving ribcage  
Thighs contract, ache, protest.  
His perked ears fixed  
On an ivory fence ahead

Time collapses, a vibrating pulse  
Silence punctuated by hooves  
By breath and heartbeat  
The earth rattled by each stride  
A beating tribal drum  
Ba-dum, ba-dum, ba-dum  
His grunting breath marks  
Each torpid crawling second

Rocking back on those bulging haunches  
He thrusts us into the empty air  
Everything stops.

Adrenaline spikes  
Sweet catharsis  
No heartbeats or heaving  
There is nothing but  
Air.

Freedom.  
Bodiless, weightless.  
We fly. Wings beating broken dreams.

Gravity: it jealously sucks us down  
That viscous slurping force  
Shifting back, convex neck slipping  
Up through my closed fists  
Hooves sink into the gritted earth

Head and neck swing gleefully  
His joy mirrored on  
My sweat-streaked face  
Heaving breaths sting our lungs  
As we laugh  
Breathless, dizzying laughter.

## Good Morning

The day started normally for Nancy. She got up. She got dressed. She went through her handwritten note cards one last time while eating breakfast. Her excitement at being allowed to bring snacks outweighed the nerves of finals. Nancy has a gray Walmart sack filled with apple slices, strawberries, chocolate chips, Everlasting Gobstoppers, and a container of Cool Whip. However, Nancy will not be making it to any of her finals today. As she steps out her door, a strange sensation comes over her body. Almost like the feeling one would have when clicking down on a prank pen. She tries to stop the pain with her thoughts, but it doesn't end until the transformation is complete. Upon opening her eyes, she catches sight of herself in the reflection of the glass storm door and realizes she is too big for the porch now.

Oh my goodness my mother is going to kill me! Did I just break the porch? Oh my god! I broke the concrete on the porch. I mean it was old anyway but dammit I'm going to be grounded for life. Literally. For. Life. Also, how in the heck am I supposed to take a final like this? I can't hold a pencil! I sure can't let people see me like this! Oh my god! Oh my god!! How are we going to explain this to the neighbors? A giant ass hippo in the middle of Decatur!?! Well, hey... I might make the news that way. I could be famous and popular! I can tell my mom to get me a tutu, a pink one like off Fantasia and we can create an act and get movie deals and be a star. I could do that! This might be the coolest thing that ever happened to me. These are the thoughts that we can assume went through Nancy's head as Nancy the Girl came to terms with being Nancy the Hippopotamus.

## Barbie Dreams

The Barbie Dream House still sits in the corner of her room, despite her twenty-two years of age. There is dust on the roof and sometimes she thinks of cleaning it off. Then she remembers that is something Jack would have asked her to do, so she refuses. A small act of rebellion he will never know. It is better that way, she tells herself. She is unsure of why she keeps it around. It isn't the sort of house she would have dreamed of; the bathtub is much too small.

As she lies in bed, there are a million and one things she would like to do today. The weather app says that it is going to a mildly warm, partly cloudy day. That's the perfect walking weather, and she considers adding dog park to her list. She thinks about their last walk. It was chilly and downtown was still harboring it's string lights across store fronts and light poles. Her and the dog were mesmerized. The dog ran up to each pole, smelled the little dots of light, and tried to pee on them only hitting the bottom of the pole, where it meets the concrete side walk. Glowing. That's how she would have described that night. But the next day, her dog did not greet her as she came home. He was still asleep under the bed. For a few moments, her house sounded empty and she was able to imagine the life after her dog is gone.

She decides it is not time to get up yet. Instead, she searches for the remotes, television and DVD player. She knows what she watched last. She cocoons herself inside the softest, thickest, fuzziest blanket she can find. Then, the movie starts. It is *Pride and Prejudice*, the Kiera Knightly version. She is watching it for the second time in five days. Eventually, her dog joins her, using her arm as a pillow.

