The staff of Rune would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who submitted personal artistry for consideration. We would also like to thank those among the Robert Morris University administration who contributed to this composition of creative work:

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Front Cover:
(Top) Untitled - Christopher Rossitto
(Bottom) Eyes On the Future - Julie Nelson

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Poetry
1. Promise by Scott Leff
2. When I Was Ten by Ann Curran
3. From A Misogynist by M Yanko
5. Haitian Wedding by Angele Ellis
7b. Raven by Jay Carson
9. Liberty by Kevin Williams
11. Pink Dandilion by Andrew Dickson
12b. Haikus by Amanda Dzurek
13. The Nice Nazi by Valentine Brkich
14b. Koan by John Lawson

Prose
4. Untitled by Suzanne Grove
6. The Trees of My Life by Valentine J. Brkich
16. The German Quarter by Joan E. Bauer
17. Highland Park by Heather McNaugher
22. The Guy on the Couch by Kelly Kaufmann

Photography
FCa. Untitled by Christopher Rossitto
FCh. Eyes On the Future by Julie Nelson
IC. Flightless Bird by Mandy Fierens
8. A beautiful sight in a scary storm by Leah Grabiak
10a. My Game Face Includes Mascara by Alissa Dorman
12. Untitled by Scott Leff
14. My Game Face Includes Mascara by Alissa Dorman

25. La Tour Eiffel Illuminée by Kristen Lawrence
BCa. Untitled by Gavin Buxton
BCb. A Hidden Garden in Canada by Alexandria Antonacci
I’ve turned to poetry again, at forty-two. Now Ticking off friends like a physician Ticks off symptoms.

The pious one numb with the death of his only child.
The devoted one slashed by a parent’s betrayal.
The gentle one slowed by multiple sclerosis.
The exuberant one assassinated by the gun in his father’s mouth….

We were the chosen,
Born with the post-war promise of America Great golden in our hair.
Tanned (before ozone depletion),
Well-fed (before cholesterol),
High-achieving (before down-sizing),
Idealistic (before… Now).

Rock and roll’s gone gangsta rap.
Come hear our keening.
Aunt Eleanor told me to marry a rich man as she slipped her bed sheets, husband’s dress shirts, curtains through the mangle in her tiny two-bedroom house. I thought her husband was a rich man but maybe not then. “It’s easy to love a rich man,” she said. “Just as easy as it is to love a poor man.” She taught me how to play solitaire—just in case.

In time, her houses grew in size until she found herself in a hotel in Venezuela where she bought amethysts to send home, delighted in carnival as folks threw water-filled balloons at each other. He kept the books for the steel works, then took her home with deadly cancer. She loved him, I guess. He never recovered from her quick death.

He hit her today
He never did before
At least not with his fists
Her daughter saw it all
We could see it coming
When he hid the phones
Classic spouse abuse
Really almost corny,
Until you see her face
Something about the mother-in-law,
Coming from Wisconsin
Bringing her a plane ticket
Bet she doesn’t go
Bet she says “it’s my fault.”
Bet I’ll discover
I’ve no respect for women.
Last fall I walked the long corridor of the Park Hyatt. Considered the marble floors that have felt my body’s weight at nearly every age.

On the metro, my brother and I listen to the commuters swap stories from a collective childhood spent on frozen ponds. We reach out subconsciously and touch our faces. The scar below my bottom lip. The cut beneath his left eye.

This spring I watched his mouth bend to accommodate the long and short vowels that disguise his native tongue.

Waiting beneath the streetlights along Rue De la Montagne, we engage in unacknowledged moments of code-switching, our language something not entirely our own.

We watch those familiar green signs change from miles to kilometers.

We hear “Oh, say can you see,” and we sing, “The True North strong and free.” My navigation of Yonge Street on the way to buy lunch is an exercise in muscle memory.

But the man at the deli asks where I am from and I can only reply,

Je suis Américain

The syllables fall from my lips, and I suddenly, but suddenly understand what it means to be lost in translation.

My brother’s only now realizing the fever of patriotism: In Montreal he stands awkwardly, as if afraid to reveal some imaginary American flag draped over his back, the stars and stripes running the length of his shoulder blades. In a southeastern state along the shoreline with his friends, he hesitates to remove his shirt, afraid to reveal the maple leaf burned into his chest.

This painting’s daubs of sunlight (the art dealer said) were made at night under fluorescent tubes.

Now Port-au-Prince is in darkness slashed by searchlight crumpled walls chalk-white bones.

Against my wall a pink patchwork cathedral and palm trees flaunting sea anemone fronds.

Twelve crosses in an acrylic sky.

The pale bride towers over her dark groom.

Somber priests stare like icons from perfect arches.

The couple’s golden getaway car foreshortened floats above running saltwater a miracle like Christ striding toward his astonished fishermen.
The one in my backyard that PapPap planted oh so many years ago.

The black walnuts that drop grenades every other year that shoot out from underneath my lawnmower, and that the squirrels tirelessly squirrel-away for the winter.

The little ol’ pine that my neighbor violently ripped out of the ground with his bare hands as I stood by, shocked, chainsaw in hand.

The ones along Third Street dressed in white lights under which my daughter pauses to touch the “ABCs” on their plaques as we stomp along the brick sidewalk.

I wonder...what trees may come?

A pitch black arrow thrust from Akhenaton’s bow, a god’s chiseled hieroglyphic from a time when greatness was shared with beasts;

lightening swift slate spear shot from dazzling day through green tree leaves, dives steeply.

Picking over dead brown prey.
Still he is raven,
from rat to rook to Ra.
Another day sweeps by
Colorless, quiet, numb
Another day drifts by without perspective
The messenger is sent away again

Too weary from his travels and too different in his tongue
Too misunderstood by the Lady and too neglected to stand up
Too far away and too radical in his Sunday routine
The messenger is sent away again

Everyone knows the Lady, while She cares only for Herself
She once welcomed Her messenger with a proud hand to the sky
She invited him inside, promised him gold, and kept him safe
Now She hides Her visitor in the darkness of Her torch’s shadow

Only Her affairs will matter now
As another day sweeps by
Without the weary messenger, whom she has sent away once again.
Utter disconnection
reality was of course known to be pointless,
but this other consciousness which showed
promise
seems to be but an illusion
so many troubled young minds
confused and alone only further outcasting
potential comradery
is it selfish to consider a dandelion for a rose
if the dandelion is a shade of red
in a sea of yellow
or does its very nature prohibit higher thought
it’s simply bleeding and bleeding
but this is nothing extraordinary
nothing that would amuse the sun
nothing that would stir a number two pencil
just a flower aware of its singularity
unable to change its exterior
changing slightly to pink
soon to be a blank sheet of paper
I saw a Nazi today
Rollin’ down the road
In full Nazi regalia
A lost soul
An alien from another world.
(An alien would have startled me less.)
Did you steal through a tear in time
Mr. Nazi
For some devious purpose?
Because if you did...
But wait
What’s this?
You stop
To let a man and his dog
Cross the street.
Not very Nazi-like
If you ask me.
But that’s a good thing.

Haikus

Amanda Dzurek

My cinnamon bun,
A gooey and round spiral,
Looks like a spring snail.

No black in rainbows...
That’s nature’s way of saying,
Life continues on...

A strong gust of wind,
Breaks free the dandelion,
Like our dreams—scattered.
She's pacing back and forth—lazy, slow-shifting weight swings from side to side. Stop! Restless eyes catch movement—meat. The tiger pounces, launching her heavy, muscled body on her prey. She eats with ivory blades drawing blood that dyes white fur an unnatural orange.

She lifts her dripping face—tongue slipping between her teeth. While she licks the last bit, she turns her head, amber eyes gazing at the faces of people leaning like children, noses pressed, against the glass.

The tiger bows her head, looks up at her fence, awaits her next meal…
In the mirror I see the dour Ernest, my grandfather. I carry his name (and the incipient curve of his jowls). In his photograph: short & pear-shaped, dressed in gray, avoiding the light. I wonder: Did he ever speak to me? And is that him—that German quarter—part of me, that grips tight the passports & plane tickets, insists on driving, while holding the map?

Grandpa Ernest came to Salt Lake from England. His parents from Frankfurt. He built the Bauer Box & Lumber Company. In the Depression he lost it all settled his family to Los Angeles, drove a linen truck, delivered folded towels & sheets.

At age 60, Grandpa Ernest went to France alone, brought back postcards of what he called the Follies Brassiere. He’d been unlucky in love, marrying an Irish soprano, The Voice of the Hudson Showcase, who didn’t love him. After forty years of repression & insurgency, he and my grandmother negotiated a truce. When my father would ask, How are you? Grandpa would answer: All quiet on the western front.

It has snowed all week, a little each day, getting ready. I’m not afraid. I’m with Dan, his thick legs, his flat chest and penis; his rough man’s voice carries up and through the icy branches.

Together we trudge the hills. Dan goes where I lean and veer, left on Heberton, right on Wellesley, down the middle of the cobblestones, or along salted walks. I am steering a beautiful blonde Buick with my elbow and will. Not a talker, Dan talks. I ask him about symbolic logic and off he goes for the next six blocks. I’m committed. I think I must be the first ever to ask this guy anything about himself. I sharpen this thought between my thumb and forefinger, where it catches.

I nod a lot. I ask him why linguistics, what’s calculus 6. All over America it’s Saturday and women are asking and nodding, hmm? and wow and really?, steering the way.

But it snowed, finally, all week, as if getting ready for me. In the hoary ice-coated azalea hedge is a cardinal, my second today, the quiver and color of heart. And along these back roads, leaded stained-glass, local slate. You’re missing it, you blockhead, is everything I don’t say.

Overhead is the slow crackle of ice, endlessly melting and refreezing. If static makes a sound like stillness, sssshhh, then God’s work here is done, and I’m all ears, listening. I’m listening.
Somewhere in legendary New England, a closet is perpetually locked. Two keys divvied between sisters.

Through the keyhole in the dark, a pale blue dress sways on a hanger like an executed felon.

Faded strawberry juice stains on the sleeves from a mid-morning snack devoured beneath the pear tree or inside the barn. Convenient alibis. Sacrifices for an unknown brother’s protection.

The head of a broken hatchet lies carelessly on the floor, discarded by guilty fingers.

Spread on the blade thick with father’s abandonment. Stepmother’s intrusion.

And neatly arranged on the shelf, sits a stack of pea-colored bills.

This day could surely use some wetting down. The rain gods are trying; they should.

Dank as Hell on Devonshire, red oaks made over, a black labyrinth netting the old mansions. They are trying hard to make rain; they should.

This day a Polish lady tiny, dagger-eyed, shrill, remembered her long-past youth when she threw rock-filled snowballs at wounded German prisoners on parade at last in frozen, rubbled Kracow.

As the iron clouds burst, reporting how the Krauts bled, what she screamed:
This is for my father!
This is for my sister!
This is for my Warsaw!

Rain comes. Nothing washes away.
When I die it will be spring: 
before dawn, only the dim 
fluorescent above the stove, 
the distant burble of birds. 
I will be alone and calm, 
will survey the graying sky 
like a farm boy setting off. 
I say this, knowing full well 
it might be blood and panic; 
it might be winter. Knowing 
it will not be my choice.

**Spring**
Ziggy Edwards

**Goldfish**
Shane Spirik

I read your note, 
But pretended like I hadn’t. 
I went to your place, 
Even though I knew I shouldn’t.

The empty tank spoke volumes, 
Although the room was silent. 
Why have a fish tank? 
If you don’t keep anything in it.

You left behind this box, 
Made of four glass walls and 
As transparent as your feelings. 
I see right through it.

You took my goldfish, 
And left behind everything else. 
Filter, fake plants, pebbles all remain, 
In an empty box of water.

I read your note, 
But pretended like I hadn’t. 
The empty tank said everything 
You so cowardly, couldn’t.

**We Can Never Be More Than Friends, You Say**
David Majka

Divergent natures, warring forever. 
Please let me be your lover, come what may; 
You say we’re Armageddon together. 
Trouble occurs when tectonic plates grind, 
Loosing Pandora’s unstoppable force; 
Free wills, gimlet eyes, and judgmental minds, 
Heralding exhaustion, or worse, divorce. 
Yet even discord yields quite lovely tunes 
As it plays out on the romantic plain; 
Together and apart, love among ruins, 
Kisses and clashes, the sunshine and rain. 
So your charms make you, O ill-struck Penny, 
All the more valuable to me, and thus 
Why deny yourself the pleasures many 
Of becoming Gaia to my Gaius?
Man is action. I’m the guy on the couch—the guy, the dude, who sleeps on the couch throughout Half Baked. A stranger, outsider—content, asleep, in a room full of strangers. Stirring occasionally to eat, piss, or smoke some more weed; even when I’m awake, I’m still sleeping.


I keep three garbage bins—one trash, one paper, one plastic. At the end of the month, faced with the stuffed brims, I throw them all in the outdoor trash together. It’s easier. I feel I am contributing.

I argue about politics, spewing feminist theory. I’ve never protested, marched, or demonstrated. I’ve never made a sign, never sent a letter, never stood on the corner of Braddock and Forbes. I am a hypocrite—slow cooking pot roast for my husband. I let him teach me about yard work, machinery, and jump daintily onto a chair when I spot a bug. I load the dishwasher, scrub the toilets, and reign supreme over my suburban Cape Cod. Each gender perfectly relegated to its traditional role. I call him big bear and fake my orgasms like a good girl. I am the destructive female.

I have a cherry mahogany guitar that I don’t play. I love the way it looks leaning against my closet wall. I keep an Italian dictionary for all the times I’ve never been to Italy and for my community college Italian class—a class I’ve never attended. I paid a hundred dollars. It was two miles away. I call friends, initiate plans, then text last minute with a migraine, flat tire, family emergency. I’d rather sleep on my couch.

When did I go to sleep?
Michael died.
I was half awake when Emily called.
And I don’t know that I ever woke up.

Far cast the diamond eyes,
A shadow possesses the weary heart.
Making way to cracked sidewalks,
And chipped porcelain skin,
To feverish highs,
And empty halls.
The flutes no longer play,
And children no longer sing.
No flowers bring to me their joy,
But wilt under lovely hands.
Why? O why,
Do thy demons haunt me so,
Beckon to my darkened moon?
Do they cry, as I have cried,
Or bleed as I have bled?
No, they do no such thing,
And cackle malevolence.
They gnaw, to the bone they break,
Cheery grins of distaste they bare.
Bring to me my sorrowed breath,
To aid me,
Destroy me,
For I have nothing left.
Rune is the literary magazine of Robert Morris University. The magazine accepts poetry, artwork, photography, creative writing, including short fiction, dramatic writing, and creative non-fiction. Rune accepts submissions from the Robert Morris University community as well as artists and writers from the surrounding Pittsburgh area. E-mail rune.lit.mag@gmail.com.

Special thanks to Donna Lowman and staff at Ikon Office Solutions, for their diligent work and exceptional cooperation during the production of this Rune edition.

Also the Rune staff would like to give a special thanks to the Penguin Bookshop in Sewickley, www.PenguinBookshop.com. We absolutely loved being able to work on Rune in their gorgeous store.

Submit to Rune
rune.lit.mag@gmail.com

Back Cover:
(Top) Untitled-Gavin Buxton
(Bottom) A Hidden Garden in Canada-Alexandria Antonacci