

CREATE / ENCOUNTER



OCTOBER 2019

**3RD ANNUAL CREATIVE ISSUE
OF LIFE MATTERS JOURNAL**

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LETTER FROM THE COORDINATOR

Dear Reader,

The Review Board and I were overwhelmed by response we received to our call for submissions for this third edition of *Create | Encounter*. Numerous talented artists took the time to grapple with pressing sociopolitical issues, through a variety of creative media, and they have generously shared those creations with us. We received so many compelling works that the judges truly struggled to narrow it all down!

I am thrilled to share our winning pieces with you. Within these pages and on our website, you'll find works of art that illuminate the lives of the marginalized. Some works are intensely personal, and others analyze the intersectionality of dehumaniza-

tion from a purely empathetic perspective. They all effuse truth.

I am immensely grateful for our submitters, for our hardworking review board members, and for you, dear reader, for supporting us as we actualize a culture of life.

Yours for peace and every human life,



Maria Oswalt

Create | Encounter Coordinator
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CREATE | ENCOUNTER

is a special edition of

Life Matters Journal

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**REHUMANIZEINTL.ORG/
CREATE-ENCOUNTER**

This journal is dedicated to the aborted, the bombed, the executed, the euthanized, the abused, the raped, and all other victims of violence, whether that violence is legal or illegal.

We have been told by our society and our culture wars that those of us who oppose these acts of violence must be divided. We have been told to take a lukewarm, halfway attitude toward the victims of violence. We have been told to embrace some with love while endorsing the killing of others.

We reject that conventional attitude, whether it's called Left or Right, and instead embrace a consistent ethic of life toward all victims of violence.

DISCLAIMER

The views presented in this journal do not necessarily represent the views of all members, contributors, or donors. We exist to present a forum for discussion within the Consistent Life Ethic, to promote discourse and present an opportunity for peer-review and dialogue.

Rubies

by Grace Przywara

1st Place, Poetry

Her color is beautiful. No need to go into wood or food metaphors about it—her melanin needs no reference, no testimonial.

4c hair and eyes that scintillate.

A tragedy that she must prove herself to her pale playmates, classmates, colleagues, and yet

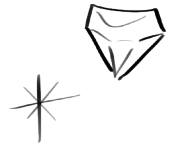
the expectations remain of unbreakable strength: the Harriets, the Zoras and her Janies, the Rosas, “Black women will save America.”

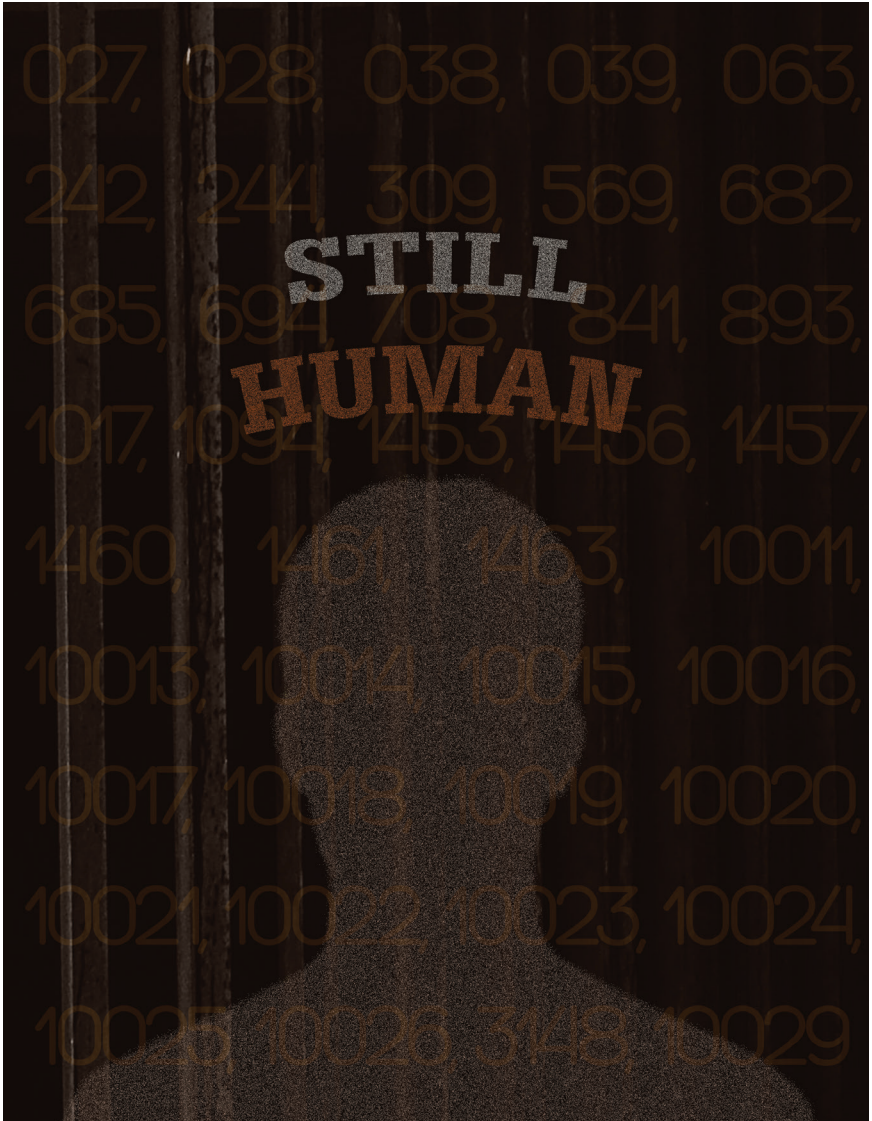
Can't she rest? Can't she take care of herself? Unbreakable as she can be, can't she have the option to shatter once in a while? to be lovingly repaired?

Can she rest from being underestimated, overestimated—from estimation? Can't her worth be counted beyond beauty, beyond what she's conquered, but her existence?

Let every breath be her currency. Each heartbeat her rubies. Give her this. She is tired of asking, of hashtagging her life matters.

Somewhere in the darkness, silently, plans for more precious melanin pass into production. A black queen builds her black princess, and no matter what she becomes or overcomes, she will have her mother's hair, her breakability, and her ruby heartbeats.





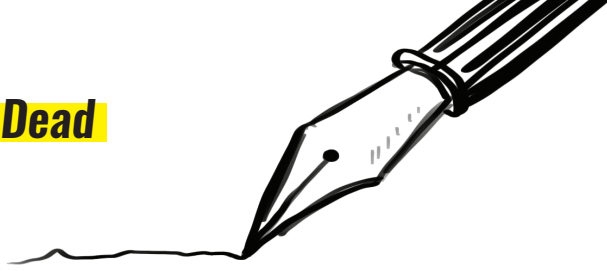
Humans of Guantanamo

by Herb Geraghty

2nd Place, Visual (2D)

Letter to the Dead

by Sophie Trist
1st Place, Prose



*Sonnenstein State Welfare Hospital,
Pirna, Germany
17 July 1941*

Dear Mutti and Vater,

I'm not as stupid as the doctors and nurses here think I am. Because I can't walk, they look right through me and think I don't know what's going on. No one even cares that I'm writing. I'm condemned to *gnatentod*, mercy death, so my words will never leave the hospital. This letter will be burned along with my body.

If I didn't have these few sheets of paper and this pencil stub, I think I would go mad. Frau Geller pressed them into my hands as we boarded the bus for Sonnenstein, knowing how much I love to write. Eva told me that I would get to write my own book one day. She said it in the wild, desperate way girls talk when we dream of the impossible. But Eva is dead now. They took her — took all the others from St. Anna's Home for Handicapped Girls — on the first day. The only reason I'm still alive is because of Dr. Langer's special interest in patients with cerebral palsy. I overheard him tell one of the nurses that he's going to dissect my body after they "ethanize" me. If I think about that, I will go mad, pencil and paper or no.

There were fifty

kids in the ward when we got here, with every type of disability you can imagine: epileptics, cripples like me, the blind, the deaf, a hunchbacked boy, the mentally ill. After two days, there are only about ten of us, most of whom are sleeping now, turning fitfully beneath the cheap, thin blankets that don't keep out the drafts. The few who came to Sonnenstein believing that we would be cured or cared for have been disillusioned by the disappearances of friends and the callousness of the so-called medical personnel. On our first night, the nurses didn't even bother to take me out of my wheelchair. My friends had to help me into the narrow bed and put my nightclothes on me. That was a unique kind of shame. For the first time in years, I hated my body for not being like everyone else's. But my dignity is far from the worst thing this place has taken from me.

I miss my friends so much that it would break your hearts just to feel it. Adeline. Helga. Eva. Otta. Inge. It feels good to write their names, like part of them is still here. I think of how I would sometimes help Eva write letters to her brother, off on the eastern front. She'd

...I hated my body for not being like everyone else's. But my dignity is far from the worst thing this place has taken from me.

dictate her message, I would write it down, and then, at the end, she would add a few sentences in braille, which she taught her brother when they were younger. Their closeness always made me wish I had a sibling, and I wonder how he will react to news of her death. Will he believe the Nazis' lie that she died of some bogus medical complication, or will he suspect the truth? If so, will he do anything about it? Eva was the only one of us who still had any family left who cared whether she lived or died; at least she will be remembered and missed.

I remember Adeline and Helga sneaking into the pantry to kiss when the caretakers weren't looking. They never knew I knew their secret, and though my Catholic upbringing told me I should disapprove, I was glad they had found love. I imagined them making a happy little life together in some remote seaside cottage, away from society's prejudice. I remember how Inge would play long, elaborate games in which she was a princess going on imaginary adventures with fairies, princes, and a whole cast of characters she would make up out of whole cloth. But now, thanks to the Nazis, Eva won't write any more letters, Adeline and Helga won't exchange any more elicited kisses, and Inge won't play any more imaginary games.

I took my friends' presence for granted at St. Anna's. I took St. Anna's for granted. As far as institutions for the disabled go, it was one of the better ones, with caretakers who actually took care of us. But the Nazis are systematically closing down places like St. Anna's and moving disabled people into institutions like Sonnenstein. The two nurses who accompanied us said that

St. Anna's was being cleared to make space for wounded soldiers, but I knew by the stunned and grief-stricken looks on our caretakers' faces, and because of propaganda posters and newsreels I've seen, that this wasn't an ordinary hospital. By giving us "merciful deaths" they will relieve us of our suffering and the Third Reich of the burden of our care. It's ironic, really, because my name, Emilie, means industrious and hard-working, and I'm condemned to death because the government doesn't believe I can contribute to society.

I put this letter aside for a few moments and pulled out the rosary you gave me before you dropped me off at St. Anna's. I had some vague idea of praying, of trying to spiritually prepare myself for the end. But I'd only managed to say one Hail Mary before a nurse came in. Please, don't call my name, I prayed. Don't say Emilie Rahn. I'm just fourteen years old. I'm not done writing yet. I'm not done living yet.

"Nina Mandel," the nurse called. A rail-thin girl with mousy brown hair looked up. I couldn't tell by looking at her why the Nazi doctors had selected her for euthanasia.

"Come on, dear, time for a shower," the nurse chirped.

"But I don't want to!" Nina protested.

"But you must. You can eat and see your parents again after you take a shower," the nurse said.

I wanted to cry out, "No! Don't go with her! Fight!" But fear froze me in place as Nina followed the nurse out of the ward. She's probably dead by now.

Rumors swirl around the ward. Apparently, there are two ways for a "useless eater" to be killed in Sonnenstein. Either they give you a lethal injection, or they do it with poison gas. They only

shoot you if you try to escape, because why waste bullets on us when they're needed for the war effort? If I have to die in this hellhole, I hope I get the needle. I've heard poison gas hurts. Oh, dear God. Oh God oh God oh God! I'm crying even as I write this. I have to put the paper aside so my tears won't smudge it.

How can they do it? How can the doctors and nurses and SS men at Sonnenstein (yes, we do have a few guards here, although not many, because it's not difficult to keep a bunch of cripples in line), look at me and not see a human being? I know my legs don't work, but beyond that, don't I look like their daughters? Their little sisters? Who are they to say that there is only one way to be in the world, one kind of body that is acceptable? What makes them think they are God, to judge me worthy or unworthy of life? I know I asked you this once, when the Nuremberg Laws passed and Jews were stripped of their citizenship and civil rights. Vater, I remember you said, "I don't know, Emmy. But when the government is being inhuman, that is all the more reason for men of courage and moral fiber to stand up and be human." I suppose that's what you were: a man of courage and moral fiber. I suppose that's why they killed you.

You know, I can't help but be a little angry at you two. Part of me wishes that you hadn't had all that courage and moral fiber. The hardest day of my life was when you left me at St. Anna's, even though you told me it was for my own safety, that you didn't want me to get caught in the crossfire of the Gestapo's investigation. Vater, if you had just gotten out of politics when you had the chance, if you hadn't tried to stand up

to Hitler, maybe you and Mutti would still be here, with me, where you belong, instead of... wherever people go when they die. I guess I'll be finding out soon. Will I see Saint Peter at the pearly gates and go to Heaven? Or will there just be nothingness? I hope there's something where I'm going, because I do want to see you again. I take back what I said a moment ago about being angry. You couldn't just stand by and let the Nazis run all over everybody. You had to speak for those who couldn't speak for themselves. I want someone to speak up for me. I want someone to remember me.

**I want someone to speak
up for me. I want someone
to remember me.**

I'm trying to distract myself with good memories. Writing them down helps make them more real. I remember our big house in Dresden, how it would always smell of fresh bread on Mondays and clean laundry on Wednesdays. I remember curling up by the fire with our cat, feeling perfectly normal and wanted and loved despite my handicap. I remember you making hot cocoa and ginger cookies, Mutti. And Papa, remember those picnics we used to have under the old apple tree? The flowers were so white in the spring, it was almost like snow. And you would tickle me and call me Princess Emmy, and we would all three laugh until our sides hurt.

It's no use. I still can't stop thinking about the needle and the gas. The rooms where people die are clean and

white, they say. White like the apple blossoms in springtime. White like the snow, white to leave no trace of their crimes.

There's a bird outside the small, barred window above my bed. Eva loved birds. Even though she was blind, she could identify every bird by the sound it made. I wish I could ask her what kind of bird this is. The bird swoops and dives outside the window, and I hate it and love it for its freedom at the same time. For a second, I imagine I am that bird, that I have the ability and the right to move when and how I want. I imagine I could fly back in time as well as space, back to when we were a family.

More footsteps are coming down the corridor. It's one of the nurses, I think. I hate them more than the doctors or SS, because they feign kindness. They look ordinary, like anyone's aunty or mother. They call us "dear" and "pet" if that's what it takes to get us to go quietly to our deaths. She's coming for me this time. I can feel it.

I know it's selfish to pray for my life. I don't deserve to live any more or less than any of the other kids in this ward, or any of the other people in this hos-

pital, or in however many hospitals like Sonnenstein exist across the Reich. I'm just one girl. My life, my words, will be obliterated. But that doesn't mean they don't matter. That doesn't mean I won't cling to life with every scrap of strength I have. I swear, I will hurt one of them before they inject or gas me. I will punch or scratch or bite. If I leave a mark on one of them, maybe they will acknowledge that I am human.

My heart constricts as the door opens. It's the same nurse who was in here earlier, the woman who took Nina. There's no malice in her gaze as she looks around the mostly deserted ward. There's just a bland, professional disinterest, and that's somehow worse. Our lives are so worthless that our killers can't even be bothered to hate us. The violence is purely clinical.

"Emilie Rahn," the nurse calls.

I don't look up when she calls me. I write even as she approaches my cot and gets my chair into position. If I'm writing, I'm alive. Maybe if I keep writing, keep hoping



Stop (Motion) Erasion

by Alexandra Seghers, ft. Claire Seymour
1st Place, Video (Short Film)



Lost in the Noise

by Nick Sansone
2nd Place, Video (Short Film)





Open Migration (a series)

by Elizabeth Szalewski
Honorable Mention, Visual (2D)

#1



#2



#3



#4



#5

Birth Mothers Are Shadows Afraid of the Dark

by Jen Hawkins
2nd Place, Poetry

When you take the boy,

take my bones, she said.

So they made a key of his cry, and out
trilled her spine like a xylophone. Out
went her arms like kite sticks,
no strings.

Around his neck, a raisiny collar. The rest
slung behind, frown-upside-
down,

crucified Peter or toothless bat.

She was his pale windsock, his vanishing
twin, not the noose but the

slack

not the hand at the cradle but the hushed glove
inside.

She whispered tales of gum-stuck under-
bellies and noble under-
dogs. Promised

to be his Superman cape.

And at night, he kicked off the blankets, that she might see the stars at his feet.



Untitled

by Emma Bucher

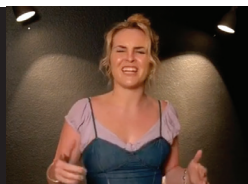
1st Place, Visual (2D)



Ireland

A spoken word poem by Clare McCallan

1st Place, Video (Performance)





The Garden

by Elizabeth M. Ekren
2nd Place, Prose

As an anthropologist, I research the daily lives of refugees in Germany. I'm trying to learn more about what helps them to overcome the different challenges they face in rebuilding their lives. On the surface, it might seem straightforward. Wouldn't refugees be far better off than before, just in reaching Germany? As one economist told me during an interview, "A refugee who comes to Germany at least has safety from the beginning and his or her sociocultural subsistence minimum secured, which, incidentally, is often higher than the average earnings in origin countries or even in the United States." Before they fled, they were doctors and lawyers, business owners and teachers, cooks, tradesmen and household managers. After they fled, they held on to their strength and resolve, their skills and backgrounds, their desire to move on and start again.

Although the flight from war in a home country may have culminated in arrival to Germany, a new kind of flight defines daily life. For the majority of refugees in Germany, the trajectory of this new flight means months, if not years, waiting for asylum claims to be adjudicated and enduring the constant uncertainty of potential deportation. It means work prohibitions, denials of education credentials and long-term dependency on welfare schemes to make ends meet. It means drawn-out

stays in overcrowded shelters, often with no private bathrooms or kitchens, in places that are physically uncomfortable, but psychologically, can never be their own.

Material difficulties and psychological struggles afflict daily life as time goes on because there is constrained opportunity to independently alleviate them. In other words, although the governmental system accounts for basic levels of provisioning, it is complicated to move beyond and exploit for tremendous benefit.

The question they always asked me, but I wanted them to answer, was always, why is it so hard? I remember when the answers first started to make more sense to me. It was after a few days of particularly challenging field visits. Ethnographic research is tedious. Most of the observations to record about daily life are banal or random by themselves. But the point is, when something has been seen enough times that it is not random anymore, there is something to be said from seeing it.

I had visited two shelters in one day. I biked about 20 km. Transport was striking, but the connections between the shelters were poor, anyway. The last part of the ride was in a downpour. I was behind on typing an unrecorded transcript from a 2-hour interview with an Afghani refugee family. Later, at a volunteer group hosting a coffee for refugee women, I listened to a group of German volunteers complain about the refugees they were allegedly trying to help. Perhaps it was assumed that since there were difficulties even with the basic niceties of, "Where do you come from," and "How many children do you have," that it didn't matter that the conversation turned away from

these rudimentary attempts at engagement to open disparaging in German of the others at the same table. The volunteers criticized the refugees for not putting forth their best efforts to engage with them.

The same day, at one of the shelter visits, the opposite accusation arose from a volunteer who complained that a family had too much contact with Germans, wasted volunteer resources and ought to stop trying to engage. In German, this is a *Teufelskreis*, a devil's circle. In English, I would say, damned if you do, and damned if you don't.

In German, this is a *Teufelskreis*, a devil's circle. In English, I would say, damned if you do, and damned if you don't.

I had stopped by the room of Nasrin and Munir, whom I tutored in German, for a tea break between seeing other families. "What?" another volunteer demanded as she barged into their room during our visit. "By my count, there are six volunteers helping this family. This is unacceptable. It shouldn't happen. It's too much."

"We're just visiting and having some tea together," I said.

After eschewing a cup of tea, complaining a bit more and verbally disciplining Nasrin's children for asking for fruit incorrectly, the volunteer left the room. Nasrin turned to me. "What did she mean?" she asked. Before I could say anything, as if I even had anything to say, she told me, "She thinks we shouldn't have German friends here, right? Or get help?"

"I think, she just does not understand how different volunteers and people en-

gage with one another here," I offered as a whitewashed explanation.

In the refugee shelters, understanding often went beyond words. "She isn't a good woman, is she?" Nasrin asked. I shrugged, attempting to be impartial. "I'm not worried," she continued. "I feel full when my house is full. I want to meet other people. Just stay. Don't worry. I don't care what she says. You and me, though? We're sisters. Let's just drink our tea." I tried to smile at the reassurance that Nasrin didn't think the services she received from the shelter volunteer corps would be curtailed, just because we were seen having tea together. But I swallowed enough guilt with my tea, wondering who ought to be reassuring whom.

A few days later, I attended a meeting of the primary volunteer group coordinating refugee services in our city district. The group was trying to decide what to make of a vacant plot of land next to a shelter built out of shipping containers. It was supposed to serve the residents there and act as an inclusive space that refugees could make their own, a place where they might mingle with Germans from the neighborhoods surrounding the containers. It was a well-attended meeting by German standards. There were no refugees there.

On the one hand, the scope of volunteerism during Germany's so-called "refugee crisis" has been vast and wide-reaching. The grass-roots coordination efforts to fill in gaps where the government has failed have largely made possible the initial steps toward welcoming and integrating over 1 million refugees who have arrived since 2015.

On the other hand, the generosity of volunteerism has not been exempt

from the creation of complex power dynamics that can act as an extension of a political system already hostile to refugees' autonomy. Working with volunteers can offer inroads to help. But just like the laws that determine the complex conditions under which benefits are had and asylum status granted, working with volunteers can seem like just another situation in which assimilation, or even capitulation to another's conditions, is a necessary component of moving on. To what extent, as with much of anything the refugees were facing, was there ever really much choice?

During those days, when I thought about what I had seen, I reflected on what incentives refugees might have to engage themselves. What, for example, with regards to the empty space outside, would compel the container shelter residents as an incentive to participating in its development? That was why it was so hard.

Time in the container village ought to be temporary. It was shelter, not home. What incentive would there be to engage with the design of a space, when living in the space was part of the nightmare one wished to avoid?

Being in the container village for years on end would be considered failure at worst, involuntary stagnation at best; psychologically, what incentive would residents have to contribute actively and positively to a (presumably)

temporary state they considered so negatively and wished so desperately to leave? Regarding the physical output of one's labor, what incentive would there be to work to create something that ultimately could not be completed, much less enjoyed?

Admittedly, I found myself initially neglecting these reflections before the answers began to come together, as I wondered if the space ought to be utilized as a communal garden. I reflected first on how many of my conversations with other refugees at other shelters had been centered on the importance of food; missing tastes of home, creating what was familiar, replicating what used to be done. I thought of what one resident at the container village told me about German produce as we cooked falafel together once in the kitchen container, shared among eight families. Omar, who was in his mid-50s, used to own multiple restaurants in Syria, but he could not work in a German restaurant due to training equivalency regulations and language requirements. Omar sighed and told me how he missed the food in Syria. "All the fruits and vegetables were very fresh. A tomato is not a tomato here," he said. "In Syria, they are so big, so red. Sweet! But here, they taste like water."

Even the very essence of food was removed and transformed into something else; because a tomato was not a tomato, a dish made from home only

maintained the appearance, not the essence, of what it really was. Its value as a coping mechanism was thus diminished. It made me wonder, could

What incentive would there be to engage with the design of a space, when living in the space was part of the nightmare one wished to avoid?

residents regain some of that essence or control if they could be allowed and encouraged to produce (and grow) items themselves to be what they conceptualized they should be?

But what was missing from these initial thoughts was the element of time and the necessity of some degree of permanence, as they formed relationships with the incentives and motivation to become invested in a space. In an emergency shelter north of the city, the custodial caretaker repurposed a small plot of land on the property for residential gardening use. Like the container shelter, it was a facility where residents were meant to spend time only temporarily, but stays of drawn-out, unpredictable length were the common and unfortunate result of dysfunctional shelter allocation systems and supply failures.

A young single resident from Bangladesh, Hossain, told me that the garden plot was conceptualized by the caretaker simply as a way for people to pass time while waiting to go. There was no reflecting on whether transience would incentivize peaceful, productive or communal use of the space where residents could come together or utilize their possession of space to pursue more scalable ends. He told me that he never saw residents working together in the plots or trading produce with one another.

In another visit, I asked some African residents from the same shelter to tell me about the garden. Vera, a younger woman from Nigeria, said, "I suppose people can use it, but they have to get the keys. It's not all open." Her neighbor Ama, an older woman, agreed, "It's really hard to get the keys. They wouldn't ever give them to us. I think it is racist against us."

Vera nodded and said, "Yes, of course we would like to use it. But they already decided who can use the space and who gets the keys. Even though some people don't even use the space they have, it is decided already. I would have preferred if that area could be a playground for everybody to share because there are so many kids here who would like to run around and play." The two of them shrugged, Vera told me about another refugee who once put soap in her food because he didn't like the smell as they cooked in the communal space, and we continued to drink our instant coffee like any other day.

I was brought back to my thoughts about the space at the container shelter. Finally, they started to go beyond whether or not a communal garden would be a justified use of the land. The absence of refugees at the meeting was of course problematic for the simple fact that a complete lack of presence meant a complete lack of voice and input. But more fundamental was the question asking why residents of the container shelter would even wish to provide their voices at all. What could be more demoralizing and disincentivizing than encouraging people to take ownership of land where they might occupy themselves, where they might produce something of value with their time, where they might find moments of peace and enjoyment, only to have this ownership removed abruptly and suddenly with the next inevitable transfer to the next shelter?

Why is it so hard? When limited space is exacerbated by limited time, the garden itself becomes divisive, pitting residents mentally against one another, as they wonder why some have access to the plots and others do not.

Some residents fail to make use of what they have, but the lack of exchange between them means that they are left to wonder amongst themselves whether such empty plots sit unattended due to negligence or transience.

Unfortunately, there is no way to communally navigate these issues, take over abandoned plots, or manage together the use of plots within the unpredictable durations that residents live at the shelter.

As in other domains of refugee life, the reality is that use is decided for them from above, from somewhere beyond their control, imposed as a way they ought to spend their time without consideration for the time likely wasted doing so. The garden plots, often themselves the victims of their caretakers' impermanence, are physical reminders of the many life possibilities that can never be tended to or brought to physical fruition. What could be more ironically symbolic of refugees' own experiences of upheaval than such garden plots, initially full of hopeful seedlings waiting to push triumphantly through the challenges of earth, only to be suddenly stunted and abandoned when the next uncontrollable (and inevitable) stroke of power from beyond decides yet again there is no right or ability to cultivate them?

Bahar, an Afghani woman from another shelter with a garden, wondered if plants would even grow in Germany, since it was cold and rained so much. "But the shelter office says we must take care of the plots", she explained. "We must do something with the garden.

I tried to tell the social worker, I don't have time. I have German class in the morning. Then homework, cleaning, cooking. When do I have time for a garden? But, she said, you must."

Later that season, the garden was destroyed when some of the shelter residents got into a fist fight and trampled over most of the plants.

Voice and power come from other channels. The impediments of daily life are bureaucratic, uncontrollable, intangible. They are the passage of time and the torments of waiting through it to see if the garden one is forced to tend to start a new life will grow or be destroyed by other onlookers, a storm, a self-sabotage to finally feel in control of something.

But what is the garden? It is another space in which to keep doing what one would never choose to do, but does to flee from what is no longer survivable

**But what is the garden?
It is another space in which
to keep doing what one
would never choose to do...**

to find hope for a situation that might be. To tend the garden is a protracted dream for something more. It is hardly easy and rarely voluntary. It is to continue the flight from rudimentary conditions to established living, from resource scarcity to security, from starting over from nothing to moving on to something.

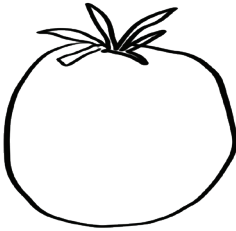
Bahar could not understand why her family's asylum claim was rejected or why she had to wait over a year to find out. When we spoke, they were in the process of appealing the decision. "We're waiting for the letter with the status from the court case, but it has not come," she said. "I hope we get a letter. Maybe then, we can have a big apart-

ment, a car. A big garden. *Inshallah*,” she said. “Right now, there is no apartment. No car. No big garden.”

“A garden?” I asked. “Don’t you have one here?”

“It is not our garden,” she corrected, reminding me of how she had already explained the situation. “We will try to tend the plot here on the weekends because we have to,” she said. “But maybe the plants will grow, and people will stay away this time. *Inshallah*.”

Quotations from this essay are taken from interview and fieldnote transcripts. All names have been changed.



Love Them Both

by Maria Sitzmann Landry
Honorable Mention, Visual (2D)



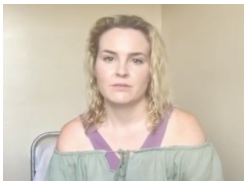
Let Me Live

A song by Randy Clifford
2nd Place, Video (Performance)



Imperfect Perfectly

A song by Rebecca Byrons Donaghy
Honorable Mention, Video (Performance)



Game of Concentration

A spoken word poem by Clare McCallan
Honorable Mention, Video (Performance)

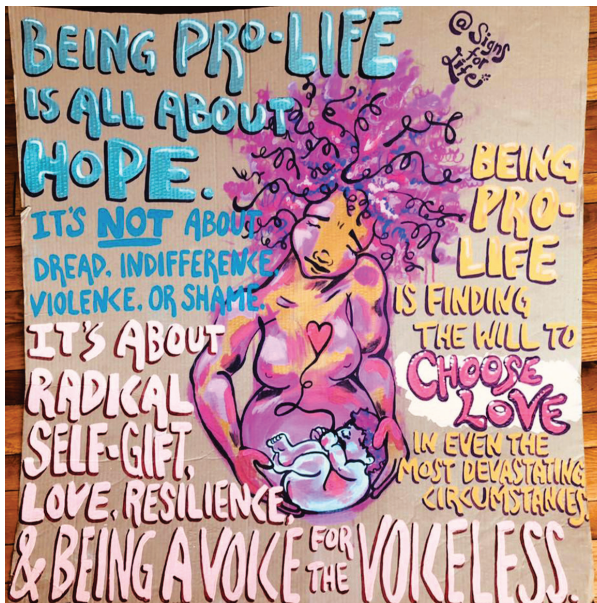




Blossoming Life and Thorns of Destruction

by Jennifer Sapjanskas

1st Place, Visual (3D Installation)



Untitled

by Emma Bucher

Honorable Mention,
Visual (2D)



No Matter the Weapon

by Aimee Murphy
*Honorable Mention,
Visual (2D)*

Highway of Death

by Lauren Handy
Honorable Mention, Prose

“Where did you find that?”

I was just a child. Excited to create art with her daddy.

“Where did you find that?”

A small rusty case. With sand from far away. With tools I’ve never seen.

“They were the bad guys”

They were tools used to get info.

“They were the bad guys”

They were sharp. Some twisted. All wrong.

“Sometimes you just see red.”

This wasn’t the same dad who bought ice cream for breakfast.

“Sometimes you just see red.”

This wasn’t the same dad who played records as we painted together.

“I love you. You’re safe.”

The same hands that tortured, taught me how to mix colors.

“I love you. You’re safe.”

The same hands that destroyed, taught me to create.

Weird Sisters: Initiation

by Jen Hawkins

Honorable Mention, Poetry

“As [my sister Grace] grew, I took to bribing her for her time and affection ...anything a sexual predator might do to woo a small suburban girl I was trying ...”

“Now I can say that I still haven’t had an abortion, but I wish I had ...”

– Lena Dunham

Not hazing; joining.

No handshake secreteer, no code word, no caul
reclining we stand, united we sprawl

When the time is ripe for ripping, make like Eve enticing
set for him your sticking place, beg a serpent come

(Placenta
 an eyelid
he was just
 learning sleep)

and empty of him
in fulfillment of the sisters

Out, damned spot. Damned Tadpole King. Out, you pretty parasite

(slit open
 the blind and
wake him
 in pieces)

and breathe a Lamaze farce a wakeful lullaby

(sleepwalk forever
 for a sweetening sluice)

better a bedknob better a broomstick better by hook hose curette crook
anything but a gavel, Grace

Oh, enormous smallness
Oh devouring little
her cleft pelvis her bearded unlikeness
her red royal carpet uncoiled for the runt

(straddled the cauldron and burned sex off like a wart)

a speechless ghost crowning (kindling)

the women are roaring.

The Day I Went to Omelas

by Sarah Terzo

Honorable Mention, Poetry

The sky was blue, but it should have been black
The day we drove to the clinic.
People are walking, eating, shopping,
They don't know that it's the devil's hour,
the heart of night on the last night of the world.
We pass the public pool.
I roll up my windows
so I don't hear children's voices.
I try not to wonder. Who would she be?
They made me put my phone away.
For privacy, so we can't take pictures.
As if anyone would ever, ever want
to take a picture in this place.
So I won't hear it.
The last-minute text filled with promises
Are you still there? Did they do it yet? Oh good.
I changed my mind. I want this baby.
It doesn't matter. I know it won't come, anyway.
The needle stings, the dark unfolds its wings
I flow like water, away, I never see the man with the knife.
But, that's wrong, of course, they don't use knives.
Suddenly, I'm curled up
knees to chest, hands to face, thumb to unformed lips
heart beating in an ancient rhythm
keeping time with the greater pounding,
as I drift in a formless sea.
Sometime later, in the real world
I'm being driven home
down roads newly paved, all roadblocks gone.
I'm fine - Except there's no rain.
Rain should be falling.
from the empty sky.



