borrowed solace
borrowed solace

borrowed solace issue #1.3 includes works of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and photography. For our fictional works: names, characters, places, and events are products of the authors’ imagination and creativity and thus are fictitious. Any resemblance to actual persons, places, or events is purely coincidental. For our nonfictional works: some names have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals. These are the authors’ original works, any of the works not to be found original are purely the authors’ legal responsibility. borrowed solace is published by borrowed solace. All rights reserved. No part of the journal may be used or reproduced without our permission. borrowed solace has First North American Serial Rights. In three months, all rights revert back to the author. We do request archival rights.

borrowed solace issue #1.3, Fall 2018

cover artwork || chello sherman

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The editors would like to dedicate this journal to the nouns, verbs, and adjectives that make us feel and love home.
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why borrowed solace?

As a group of college friends sitting around a round table every Friday for two years, we toyed around with the idea of creating a blog, a collective book of stories, a website, a journal or a magazine, and so many more things. The last semester, when most of us were graduating, our dreams finally became a reality. We created a website. We created a blog and social media pages. We launched the submissions and began our journey.

But before all of that happened, we first took two little words we liked and smashed them together to create borrowed solace, but the meaning goes even deeper than that. If you notice the initials are a part of a literary rambling we wanted to gather and then release into the world one word at a time. To borrow the works of others for others’ solace. To comfort, to soothe, to put people in a better mood. We pledge to you this is a bunch of bs, but we love our name and who we are because of the words we choose to live by and these are two of them.

how is the journal published?

We intend to publish two online versions a year. Our Spring edition will be our un-themed journal. Our Fall edition will be our themed journal. We will accept submissions from April to July and October to December with our journals coming out in September and March. Submissions come through our website at borrowedsolace.com. We collect four genres: fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and art. We pick selections based on the magic they create, the way they engage us as readers and as writers, making us crave more, and that allows us to walk alongside the authors while reading.
about

Our dream goal is to publish two online journals a year, and a printed version of the best stories from that year. Right now, we publish two online versions of each journal. A teaser for free, and a small fee for all of the stories, plus the bonus content of interviews from the authors, poets, and artists, and craft essays. The journals are sold online at our website borrowedsolace.com.

who are we and what we are about?

We come from all different backgrounds and we each have our own stories, but our passions and interests drive us to the same conclusion. We love writing. We love reading. We love the power and magic of words. We are based in Colorado Springs, Colorado because that is where we all met. One of us was born in California, one in Iowa, and two in different parts of Colorado. But we all converged in one state, in one city, at one college, with one dream.

Our dream is to build up the world with words others said, written, forced out, given to us, lent us. So we can share them with the rest of the publishing world of oceans. The vast blue waters filled with hundreds of stories and poems, with thousands of words, and millions of alphabet letters, and our journal is one ship among the many. A ship to tread the waters, scooping the finer stories out from the new and old authors. Foolish and wise creators and composers of the trade. We are the sailors, the dreamers underneath the stars, and this journal is our borrowed solace. This is what we are about.
Hello dear readers,

We are not like ordinary literary journals, we are here to break traditional molds and goals and become our own. A creation of sui generis, our own kind. A journal that does not play with the meek. This is our second themed journal, of three. We knew these two themes before we even started; we had to capture them in ink, blotted on a page. Hinterlands was our first theme, and we are still appreciative to those artists, poets, and writers, who helped us see what made and broke us as editors and first time literalists. We proudly walked through the dark of the unknown, which was our first theme. Our second theme is home. We are so different: from where we grew up, to family dynamics, to the way we experience life. But one thing remains the same, we all love writing and we all incorporate aspects from our daily lives and that includes our homes.

In this journal you will find art, poetry, and stories that show all that can make a home: lies and monsters, courage and love, walls that turn colors, inner dragons, places that once felt like home that are now somewhere to sleep, smells of home that define us, and those who we live with that can either bring us joy or pain. These depictions will suck out your soul before returning you to your husk with a new, fuller meaning of home as these pages are loaded with the taste of hominess.

Therefore, we ask you, humble reader, as other humble readers ourselves—with a dash of editorial-ness—embrace all that comes your way. And of course we encourage you—no, we employ you—to read with soul.

We also want to say if you like this journal, please check out our other journals on borrowedsolace.com.

Enjoy every piece of home!

editors
borrowed solace
editors

executive & art editor
nicole mcconnell

poetry editor
addey vaters

fiction editor
amber porter

nonfiction editor
nicole taylor
The magic of home is its feeling.
poetry

SAMPLE, NOT ALL WORKS ARE INCLUDED
introduction

Poetry that relates to a theme like home is always interesting to read. I was concerned when we first decided the theme would be home that we would receive many poems that painted home in a good light. I thought we would receive a lot of poems about the fuzzy, warm, feeling of home—about the fond memories of holidays, the traces of family that come and go in a home, about the way a physical space is—and becomes—a home. While we did receive a lot of poems about these things, we received so many poems that took a deeper look at home.

Home means so many things to so many people. For some home is good, for some home is bad, and some people are still figuring home out. The poems in the poetry section for borrowed solace 1.3, home, investigate all of these things. They take you on a journey through a collage of home. We have some wonderful poets from all over the globe who submitted to us and who have graced us with their own unique interpretation of home. I can't wait for you to dive in!

||poetry editor||
addey vaters
Freeways and theme parks swarmed as a beehive, heat from the golden, gauzy light radiating from concrete. Azaleas, bougainvillea, eucalyptus grew, oranges and lemons too, but I watched for the seeds I planted to break through caked soil, dry and fine like sugar. No stem appeared.

My linoleum floor might at any time give way. Nor could I be sure my bedframe would hold. It was a makeshift life raft adrift at sea, and in the moments between sleep and consciousness, I knew myself lost—a fragile island in the ocean of being.

So I followed gray whale mothers guiding their calves north, where lichen clings to tree trunks slick with rain like barnacles to whale skin.
|| conjuring the chesapeake ||

ann howells

Like charms jangle a bracelet,
magic charms,
whispered incantations:

Accokeek
Aquasco
Chicamuxen
Monokin
Nanjemoy
Nanticoke
Pocomoke.

Little whitewashed towns,
villages,
named in the Piscataway tongue—
morning sky blushing red,
and rushing, tumbling rivers:

Choptank
Patuxent
Potomac
Wicomico—
Assateague Island.

This is history I lock away,

bury deep
in the vault of consciousness,
gold coins, sifted through fingers
of my miser’s mind.

To see the rest of Ann Howell’s poetry and ex-
plore
more poetry pieces, buy the full borrowed sol-
ace Fall 2018 Issue at
https://borrowedsolace.com/store/
|| returning ||

elizabeth spencer spragins

lamps glow in windows
of a house I once treasured
while twilight lingers
silhouettes brush fingertips
and brittle bark cracks with cold

~Willow Spring, North Carolina

To see the rest of Elizabeth Spencer Spragins’s poetry and explore more poetry pieces, buy the full borrowed solace Fall 2018 Issue at https://borrowedsolace.com/store/
When you became a recurring event
showing up every Wednesday at five
I started planning to make dinner for two.

As a kaleidoscope
of garlic, mushrooms, peppers and onions,
softened and curled in sizzling oil
I learned that you can’t smell—

you over salt and spice your food,
nix garlic and onion,
their lack of flavor not worth the effort.

Sitting in front of the oven,
watching a German pancake puff
you tell me when your father had to cook
this is what he’d make.
With his schizophrenia
it was the only recipe he could remember.

Lentil stew grows cold in our bowls
while you derive
the Fibonacci equation—
write the sequence in my notebook.
1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34 ... 
The next number determined
by the sum of the previous two.

You don’t come one Wednesday.
The pattern broken.
I ask if you are okay.
You tell me you went into psychosis—
short term memory loss
from trying to remember too many things.

Rice simmers on the stove.
Trapped heat
punctures the surface of the refried beans.
You offer to chop
mushrooms, peppers.
Where are the knives?

A plate slips from your hands.
Before it is done falling
I have accepted that it will shatter.
You kneel on the ground before the pieces—
It’s broken. I’m broken. I can’t put it back together.
As if wholeness determines worth.

When somethings break it matters.

The mind.
The heart.
But not the plate.

To see the rest of Emily James’s poetry and explore more poetry pieces, buy the full borrowed solace Fall 2018 Issue at https://borrowedsolace.com/store/
SAMPLE, NOT ALL WORKS ARE INCLUDED
introduction

"Home" to me is my family and my friends. However, I know that what "home" means to me may not be the same for another. Add that to the endless possibilities of the mind’s imagination, and I had no idea what to expect when it came to reading fiction submissions.

After sifting through dozens of pieces, I found myself drawn to the stories you may not consider the norm for a theme like "home." Stories of dysfunctional people sharing a space. Tales of futures where money means nothing or minds and phones are linked. Yes, there are some that may fit your concept of the theme, but perhaps not in a way you may expect.

So journey with borrowed solace through this fall's fiction submissions. Who knows, we may even meet a dragon or two along the way.

||fiction editor||
amber porter
Eden bought the typewriter online, after a successful crowdsourcing campaign. He didn’t know if the much-hyped tech actually worked; all he saw were the vintage-style keys and the surface of the wood-imitation body, and he lost himself imagining what the bell would sound like after he managed to type a full line. They didn’t make typewriters like this anymore.

He was entranced by the photos he saw online, a machine so far removed from the slick, all-glass body of his smartphone and the accompanying digi-Watch in his arm. He thought, *I could create a masterpiece with this.* And he spent a full month’s pay on it, reflecting that some items are worth splurging on.

Eden’s heart skipped a little when he opened his apartment door on a cold Tuesday morning in January and saw the nondescript box sitting on his doormat. The advertisements of the crowdsourcing campaign came back to him, promises of lifelike waking dreams and a false reality so pristine you could almost touch it—almost. All you had to do was think it, type it out, and walk in your fantasies.

He kicked off his brogues and left them by the door. The brown package felt light to Eden, disappointingly light, but he slid open the cardboard with anticipation. The typewriter itself was nestled inside an inner plexiglass container, satisfyingly modern and gleaming with promise. As soon as he saw it, Eden decided to forego his morning commute over the Brooklyn Bridge, considering the typewriter’s arrival an auspicious sign: maybe he should start working on his long-postponed novel.

He slid the machine out of its glass box and lowered it onto his hastily-cleared desktop. This was the device he would receive inspiration on, the one that would make his dream a reality. Stylistically it resembled a Smith-Corona, one of those old numbers from the 1960s, some eighty years ago. The woodlike body was stained a dark cherry, the keys a deep ebony with gold letters spelling out “AEOLIAN HARP” below the space bar. It was beautiful.

Eden knew from the internet coverage that the typewriter worked by a special combination of fiber optic paper and a connection to your digiMind. He was definitely interested in the tech, but he also yearned to
be a regular, old-fashioned writer. Eden glanced at his slim watch, connected to his nervous system by a wire no thicker than the width of a strand of cotton fiber. The skinny cable that ran innocuously from the otherwise vintage-looking typewriter ended in a tiny metal prong. Eden sat down and perched his fingers on the keys.

He closed his eyes and waited for inspiration to strike. After a minute, he plugged in.

Calliope

Calliope jiggled her heeled foot in time to the low music coming from her co-worker’s cubicle. It was a new band, one they’d just discovered. She just discovered.

“Two o’clock on a Wednesday feels like Hades,” Lily called to Calliope over her music. “We’ve come so far, but there’s so much more week left to get through.”

“So true,” Calliope answered. “Wanna take a walk then? Get a coffee?”

“Fabulous,” Lily replied, tugging her wrist free of her computer and flipping her sheet of black hair over her shoulder. “Starbucks?”

“Awesome.” Calliope hooked her arm around her friend’s. Their snapping heels were hardly heard over the sounds of the busy office space, the clicks of employees typing, the hums of the computers, the beeps of the call-bot. Calliope—Callie as she was sometimes called—was comforted by the white noise.

To see the rest of Lisa Lo Paro story and explore more fiction pieces, buy the full borrowed solace Fall 2018 Issue at https://borrowedsolace.com/store/
In this house time ticked by in musty, languorous clicks, seeming almost to move backwards if observed too closely. An old grandfather clock in the hall, almost fused to the house itself, that couldn’t hear very well but was good at screaming when it struck its fancy, as the hands tickled its chin, even if it didn’t ever really know what time it was. The wood was always sighing and creaking with the weight of itself, as if distressed by its own existence. Intermittent sounds scraped and thudded above the ceiling, moving from room to room, as if something gargantuan were wandering on the second floor. The stairs had caved in at places, the wood rotting from the inside, from the weight of the thing on the second floor making its way down. A sturdy railing that carried an electric platform snaked its way up the outer wall; there was a permanent groove carved into the dividing wall between floors, from where the platform scraped on its way past. It was too large to be accommodated by the space, but it couldn’t be any smaller or else it wouldn’t support the thing upstairs.

There were two bedrooms on the first floor: one of them was small and narrow, where her son who had once lived, her son who had run away, where she now slept; and the other was the room they had once shared—her love from once upon a time—before the descent. The room stood dark, so dark that any light that dared try pierce it was swallowed up altogether with a hiss of smoke. She was certain that if she stepped through the threshold her feet would be met with air and she would fall forever into the infinite blackness. Sometimes, on her worst days, she contemplated throwing herself in and getting it all over with.

At times she could hear a rumbling coming from the belly of the black, and it terrified her and mystified her and sometimes the terror of not knowing was worse than the terror of what it might do. She would sit and stare at it intently, waiting for something to emerge, for the room to belch it out, onto the carpet of the living room. After staring too long, she would see these floating red and blue dots, spores of them, drifting across her vision, and by then the hallucinations had become too much, and she would retreat to her room and lie down to rest. Her strength was always waning, sapped just by breathing in the toxic air inside the house, and with her condition getting worse and her symptoms growing in number and new horrors happening all the
time, she could hardly stay awake for more than a few hours before she would need respite. She slept in her coffin with the ghost of her mother, name emblazoned on the side, slowly changing over time, morphing in the metal from her mother’s name to her own. She knew with more certainty as time—or the lack thereof—stretched infinitely onward, that she would die in this place, that the home she was to grow old in was ageing her rapidly, ushering her toward an unearned, early grave. The only comfort she had in the entire place was a framed picture of herself and her son, taken from days when they were happy, before he had run away from home. She could not blame him, and in fact, would have done anything to spare him her position.

She never slept well, always tossing throughout the night, one nerve painfully firing or the other, stirring her to half-waking. She was always plagued by nightmares; somehow in her misery she believed the Stone Man was responsible for those as well, and he might as well be. The temperature inside was always changing, or maybe she was feverish, but she could never get comfortable, and the house was prone to any manner of indoor storms; sometimes the ceilings rained, and often it was black, sometimes it was red, sometimes it was viscous and green, but there was no shelter from it. Under the bed was occupied by a large mechanical base used to lift one end of the mattress or the other, to provide comfort and accessibility to the elderly and those in need of assistance, as she certainly was, but the remote had gone missing and so the thing served only as an anchor. The fact of the matter was, she couldn’t hide beneath it when the ceilings began to rain and so she had to hide beneath the blankets on the bed, blankets that she had no means to wash and thus were crusted, old, worn, splattered in all manner of dried, vulgar colors, holes seared in some places.

To see the rest of Jay Zahn’s story and explore more fiction pieces, buy the full borrowed solace Fall 2018 Issue at https://borrowedsolace.com/store/
The chair creaked beneath Janice's slender frame. She puffed a cigarette as she stared out at the streetlight beside the road. Moths fluttered about and she listened to the bolts as each insect collided with fate. But her son, Tommy, he didn't flock to the light, or he would have been home by then. Half past nine and she didn't hear his feet running up the long dirt road or he and the neighbor boy Greg hollering when they drew near.

No, she heard only that horrible whistling noise that returned to haunt her town. A decade back when Janice was still in high school, the high-pitched tone had begun. It would last for seconds at a time, and then rest for minutes. There had been jokes about a late-night flautist practicing in the woods, but when the noise showed no sign of stopping residents complained to local government. The source was never found. And after a month of restless nights, the sound stopped as abruptly as it began.

It was a ghostly noise that hinted at otherworldly origins, but it was speculated to be a release of compressed air or natural gas. The local gas company, however, denied culpability after a thorough inspection of their equipment.

Janice slapped a mosquito that landed on her arm and wiped it away, leaving a smear of blood and sweat. The Texas heat kept her warm. It wrapped around her like a mother and suffocated her like a husband. She felt it squeezing the life out of her, forcing her to sleep. And whenever her eyes closed, the chair would creak or that mysterious noise would start again and she would resume rocking and waiting to catch Tommy sneaking through the yard hoping not to be seen by an argus-eyed mother.

Her heart fluttered like a moth looking for its light. Thomas should've been home by now.

To see the rest of Ian Sims's story and explore more fiction pieces, buy the full borrowed solace Fall 2018 Issue at https://borrowedsolace.com/store/
I silenced the alarm, turned on the radio, and lay there listening in the predawn darkness. In measured tones, the newscaster informed me of the grim state of the world. War had broken out in Asia, the radiation zone in Canada was expanding, and the unemployment rate at home finally surpassed fifty percent. I groaned but threw back the covers and rolled out of bed. Once up, routine took over. I got the coffee started, trimmed my beard, showered, and dressed.

The house felt especially lonely in the mornings since Susan left with our two young daughters six months ago. Our relationship had become tense when the company I worked for folded. She grew tired of our constant bickering and decided life might be better with her elderly parents on the west coast. They barely made it out of town before the last trains stopped running. I didn’t expect them to return. In their place, an aching loneliness became my constant companion.

The sun had scarcely peeked over the horizon when I left the house. For nearly a year my aging Chevrolet sat rusting in the driveway. No gas stations still operated, at least any that I knew of. Next door, the Johnson household remained shuttered and quiet. I hadn’t seen them since the last monthly food-distribution day.

My thoughts turned to the perpetual job search. I longed for the structure of work, more than for the money—nothing to spend it on. The government doled out the essentials of daily life and luxuries didn’t exist anymore. Only a handful of items could be bartered on the black market.

* 

The walk into the city gave me time to plan my strategy. I decided to avoid the long line at the employment center. The center’s bureaucracy thwarted job seekers more often than it helped. I saw it as an option of last resort.

In the old days, much could be done over the phone or on the internet, but those services no longer existed in the suburbs. However, in the heart of the city some of the old-time infrastructure still functioned. I counted myself lucky that water and electricity reached my neighborhood. The mail even arrived—a couple of times a week.

A half-dozen men in their ubiquitous, gray suits...
shuffled along the Bynum Highway. Most no longer made the effort. The roadway, a geography of meandering cracks choked with a variety of weeds, led south and connected with the interstate, which fared no better. At least the pavement was cool. Later, for the return journey, the sun would force the walkers to the shoulders of the road.

I decided to cut through Creekside Park. The main trail wound toward the eastern section of the city. Rumors spoke of a factory starting there. It offered a slim hope, but it gave me a goal.

The park’s reputation for crime, drug traffic, and feral dogs kept most people away. I never encountered difficulties, perhaps because I passed through at an early hour. On the homeward trek I, like the others, would make a wide swing around the park.

A strip of abandoned retail establishments bordered the park. Vandalism had taken its toll on the empty shops. In the parking lot amid the weeds and litter, a wizened, old pushcart vendor hawked hot coffee. I never saw any customers, but he manned his station every morning, bound by his routine just as I was by mine.

The decaying bridge which served as a back entrance to the park stretched precariously over the nearly dry creek bed. On the other side, an overgrown meadow awaited. A path wound through a riot of tall grasses and scruffy plants.

The rustling of someone, or something, running through the brush broke through the quiet morning air. I paused. The sound ceased abruptly. The murmur of low voices reached me. I stepped cautiously around a bend in the path. A dark-haired, teenage boy in a red jacket stood over the prone figure of a man. Another teen, a slender, blonde girl, hovered anxiously a few feet away.

“Hey!” I yelled.

The two teens looked my way and then at each other. The boy fled rapidly, taking the girl by the hand and pulling her into the undergrowth. I listened until the rush of their flight faded. When I felt sure they weren’t coming back, I approached the unmoving figure.

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nonfiction

SAMPLE, NOT ALL WORKS ARE INCLUDED
introduction

home

[hohm]

noun

1. The place where one lives permanently, especially as a member of a family or household.
   1.1. The family or social unit occupying a permanent residence.
   1.2. A house or flat considered as a commercial property.
   1.3. The district or country where one was born or has settled on a long-term basis.
   1.4. A place where something flourishes, is most typically found, or from which it originates.
   1.5. informal A place where an object is kept.


Home comes alive in the following pages. Welcome to the emotions, smells, sights, and experiences that our authors have crafted into vivid expressions of home.

||nonfiction editor||
nicole taylor
Oneta’s ears prick. Listening, she stops cutting the large root vegetables on the board in front of her; the small and slender young woman leaves the kitchen. Mother continues the tedious weekly task of chlorinating and then rinsing vegetables in clean drinking water delivered from the embassy; making the locally grown food safe for the family’s consumption. As Oneta crosses the threshold between the kitchen and hallway she stops. Standing in front of her is a brawny young man, near her own age. He wears loose pants and sashed belt, as is the custom of his mountain tribe. Chest hair, fingernails, and toenails glow flame red with henna dye, as does the unruly receding strands mopping his head and flowing down his neck towards his bare dusty shoulders. The gap-tooth grin unnerves the young woman—a foreigner in this hot, desert land—but the jambiya, the large knife with a traditional curved blade, hanging in its sheath from his waist unnerves her more.

They share no common language beyond gestures and facial expressions, but the large butcher knife Oneta instinctively presses into the young man’s stomach needs no interpretation. "Get Out!" she growls in English, knowing he does not understand her words. But the set of her jaw and the dark glint of her eyes behind her tortoise rimmed glasses leaves little room for misunderstanding. Face to face, the smiling intruder is just inches taller than the young woman, but twice as muscled in a sinewy way, carved from a lifetime of physical labor outside. Merely an arm and knife-length apart, she rumbles again "Get out! Get Out!" She pushes the knife blade deeper into his bare midsection so his flesh dimples but does not puncture. He matches her cadence as he backs away but does not retreat; his uneven snaggletooth smile never fading. They are locked in a standoff; he grins, and she glowers. The daggers in her light blue-green eyes are deflected by the mirth of his brown orbs.

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From inside the Black Sheep Café, I sit and gaze out the window at the young maples as they lost almost all of their leaves; a few golden ones still hang on to those ragged branches, desperate for survival. Like a hallucination, an image of my father appears in my mind, an image from a long time ago, from before I was even born. A skinny, young soldier climbing into his army helicopter, just one of many choppers lined up along the dusty runway.

How clear my vision is into the past. The glass door to the café opens and with it the crisp winter air snaps me back. I breathe in deep, take the scent all the way to the childhood etched into my bones to see if I can tell, will there be snow today, or not?

In this Puget Sound region where snow is rare, I long for it, this white beauty of nature. It’s a quiet longing for something I know will not come often to this place. I ache for it, the peace of its silent language, the crisp water scent washing through my body.

Perhaps this affection began in me before I was even born—in a womb—and it festered with age. Blizzards in the winter, blizzards in the spring, sunshine kissing the snow awake on sparkling mornings, snow days, skiing through whiteouts on top of mountains in places with names that roll off the tongue, Steamboat Springs, Loveland and Arapahoe Basin. Building huge mounds to sled down, accidentally leaving a boot behind in the heavy, wet mush. Heating up afterwards at dusk and watching the flakes continue to twinkle under the street-lights from my cozy spot inside. An intrinsic knowledge of a quiet, magical peace settling over the land in a white blanket, this wise, falling, frozen water.

When whole seasons pass without it a feeling that a part of me is missing creeps up from somewhere deep. A broken connection. As I sit here looking out the window of yearning, I imagine that I can will it to fall from the sky. The scent is in the air; it’s been chilly enough, almost. Is it possible I forget what the thick flakes taste like? I spend my time wishing for something I may never have and trying to remember the feel of its soft fingerprints upon my cheeks, my tongue.

I feel this way about where I am from. I struggle to recognize where I began. I tell people I am from Denver. But anymore, even though I was born there, it seems farther and farther...
from the truth. It appears to be a fiction, even though it isn’t. Perhaps a hundred snowstorms that never really occurred?

I was born there, but even though it is where I began, it’s also where my father’s stories of his time in Vietnam originated for me. Before I was hardly old enough to ground myself there in my present, I learned the art of propelling my mind somewhere else.

My dad had a home far away for a part of his life. His Vietnam was full of dust and flat open stretches. Rice paddies and canals covered the landscape. The lush jungles and mountains were miles from where he was stationed; he saw them mostly from his seat in a helicopter.

He arrived in December of 1968 to an army base in Vinh Long located at the basin of the Mekong River Delta. He walked on gravel runways close to aluminum buildings, lived in plywood shacks called hootches and he glided through the air. In this area of the Mekong Delta, the wide expanse of land was wet and muddy-colored. My father used to say there were two seasons over there, the dry season and the rainy season. Monsoon rains poured down and the sky was often hidden by thick clouds. And when the time came, beautiful green rice grew up out of the water. Scents of clean laundered uniforms, cheap beer from the officers’ club, sweat mixed with helicopter fuel, and death followed him like a shadow.

There is so much I don’t know about war and soldiers, so much I don’t know about helicopters, the different kinds, the sounds they make. There is only a fragment I know of all of these things and a little more I have crafted in my head from hearing my father’s stories. As he spoke, I listened, even at times when I tried not to; I latched onto certain details and colored them into richly colored photographs bursting with sounds and odors, full of emotions, texturized.

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waiting
jesse sensibar

Make coffee every morning. Go to bed some
nights. You live in the same house. Over the years you
paint it different colors. You finally settle on purple.
Not because it is your favorite color, but because you
know that she knows it is your favorite color. If she ev-
er comes back to town and decides to drive by the
house you want her to know you are still there. In your
bedroom, with the tilted pine floor through a tiny
doorway your shoulders do not fit through, is a long
narrow closet filled with closet-
cy things. At the back of
that closet, behind a row of shirts with dust on the
shoulders that you never wear, on hangers that never
move, is a picture frame full of photographs of the
three of you. Along with the photographs is a small
hand-
written note on blue lined paper. In hurried print
all it says is

Please leave us alone.

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You are more than halfway through and this house is the culmination of your life. It is trophy to your dreams and everything you’ve worked for. Its ancient wood and peaceful pastel hues which represent every grueling day up the ladder, every perceived chauvinistic insult, every gray day of fear you overcame to become confident. Your house radiates the ethereal love of your man, even though you lived ten years elsewhere together, and now it also blooms with the love of your grown daughter because the two of you have broken bread in the tiny dining room. And there has been wine. Wine on the porch with friends, watching through the fronds of palm and oak, the old witch-faced lady across the street checking her mail three times a day, or standing at the edge of her yard, hands on hips, scowling at the world. Wine alone on the cool couch, reading, all silent in your cocoon except for the periodic clunk of the wine refrigerator tucked at the base of ninety-four year old stairs.

It appears as fantasy at first, or even as a lie, the noir warnings which begin a week before estimated landfall. What storm? you text back to a friend in Seattle. You are sitting on your porch admiring the sun-drenched new landscape through the screen, back dropped by your many orchids, which seem to be doing well since your move near the bay five months ago. You sigh and look around this compact paradise of wood and windows and ancient oaks, two blocks from that body of water you said your entire life you needed to be near to feel whole. No way. You shake off the memory of driving through the popsicle-stick wreckage of Hurricane Charlie south of here, offering bottles of water and sandwiches to the stricken and newly homeless. Katrina and the saturated lives of all those in New Orleans crowd you on your porch, where through the screen a yellow Vanda bloom hanging from a palm tree dances in the light breeze.

Denial is the heroin of your marriage now. The loved one is mainlining Denial, all oblivious, "Oh nothing will happen," he says. (Lucky bastard.) You want some of it, Denial is easier than facing this reality, but you must protect your life and your paradise. Why isn’t he helping? Why does he have the addict’s look of exasperation when you ask him to buy water and make ice? "I have faith in God," he says.
God helps those who help themselves, you re-tort. The Katrina victims in New Orleans also had faith in God. But he agrees that when the time comes, he'll go with you to his son-in-law's to weather it out. Their house is inland; they have plywood for their windows and a generator. You offer to take the witch lady across the street with you, and arrange it with her son via email in Maryland. She smiles her toothless smile and takes your hand, "Oh, the storm won't come here, but I'll go with you when it gets windy. You are so wonderful!"

Readying the house and yard your face stings with private tears. Your life is being pulled away from you, peeling you back into that shy girl with nothing. Every protective plastic bag placed over computer component, every orchid stored under the stair, every memento shoved into drawer or dishwasher is a knife flick shearing the skin off an orange, exposing unprotected flesh. There is too much time to plan. Too much thinking about making ice, boiling eggs, weighing the value of things, what to protect, what to let go. You are a somnambulist, unable to wake up. Strangers in grocery stores and bars all start saying, "Be safe," as a farewell. You drink more wine. Why not?

In the predawn abyss of the morning you are to leave for the safe house, your house creeks under the weight of wind and rain. You lie face up, stare into darkness and nudge the loved one to get up. "Why so early?" he asks. You don't even answer him. He wants his Sunday eggs and bacon. You comply though you want to run off screaming. Or maybe you should just go down with the ship. No, life is more important than all this stuff, you try to convince yourself.

To see the rest of Marisa Mangani's story and explore more nonfiction pieces, buy the full borrowed solace Fall 2018 Issue at https://borrowedsolace.com/store/
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Art is all about putting a piece of nature, imagination, creativity, innovation, love, peace, or home on display. Whether another person gets to see this art is up to the creator. This art section is new to the journal, and like all art is subjective to the beauty standards of the eyes viewing the art. Home can be anywhere, can be felt anytime, and can change throughout life as a person finds their way through their journey.

Home to me is always my dog, my family, my books, my computer. Home to me is comfortable, a place where I can let a storm rage, or let the calmness wash over me.

I hope you enjoy what others call home, what they express home to be, and I hope this art will inspire, connect, and resonate with your piece of home whatever it may be.

||art editor||
nicole mcconnell
author biographies

NOT INCLUDED IN SAMPLE
editor biographies
The saying goes that home is where the heart is. While this is a lovely saying that procures images of love and warmth within a home, I believe it still stands true for even those homes that were a bit unconventional. Whatever home is, whatever our experiences growing up were, however home shows up in our lives now, home always has a piece of our heart—whether for the good or the bad.

The works in borrowed solace issue 1.3 are pieces of the authors' hearts. We are so proud of the diverse representations of home in this edition, and even more proud of the group of authors whose work gets to call borrowed solace home.

We hope to be a home away from home for all the dreamers, artists, poets, wordsmiths, and wanderers. These pages are the walls of our home, filled with breathtaking pictures made out of words, and the writers who make up our family. We hope you enjoyed your time as a part of the family and will come back again and again.
 credits

Pixabay for images

Chello Sherman for front cover art “prayer for the unnecessarily departed”

Brian Michael Barbeito author biographies cover art "water droplets"

Brian Michael Barbeito editor biographies cover art "acorns"

All of the people who made this journal possible
Snuggle, scream, sniff, sigh. An experience that embeds itself in your bones, that's what I call home.