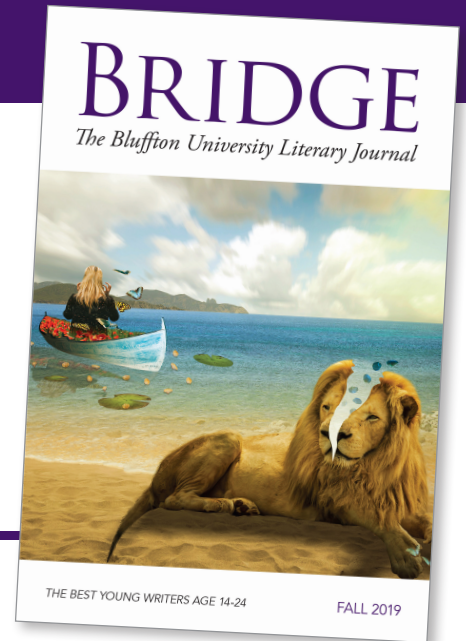


# BRIDGE

*The Bluffton University Literary Journal*



## PURSUIT

Joanna Acevedo

Beauty is one of those things.

"What do you do?" He asked. I was nineteen, drunk in a bar, and I couldn't tell the truth.

"I'm a curator," I lied.

"So you decide what art goes where?"

"No," I said, and now I was telling the truth. "I look for beauty, and I collect it when I find it."

"Is that why you're talking to me?"

There was a sardonic flicker around his mouth. I returned it with a smile of my own.

"Beauty is cruelty," I said. He understood what I meant.

He was pretty as a picture, but I was tired of boys, even the pretty ones. With their hands and eyes and arms, and the way they always wanted something. I didn't mind giving it to them, back when I was eighteen and I didn't know any better about it, but now I was almost twenty. I had my feet under me a little bit more. Still, when he slid over to me with his eyes and hands and arms, and bought me drink after drink, I let him.

Eventually I had to leave him, because he made me feel like I was shrink-wrapped, like all the air had gone out of

the room. That's a sensation one can only tolerate for short, attractive bursts of time. His phone number was in my pocket, but I wasn't going to call.

In the morning I was tired, tired of talking to people and having to express myself, and with a tool as inelegant as language. Words are so tiresome, so clunky, especially late at night and after a few drinks. I was almost disgusted by the thick layer of poetry that had left a residue on my tongue. I am not a great lover of literature.

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He was waiting for me when I got to work in the morning, a grin stretched across his face. "What do you want?" I said. I was hungover, annoyed.

"I love you," he said. "I want to marry you. Let's run off to the country and raise children and goats." There was an unlit cigarette tucked behind his ear. "Have you ever had goat's milk? It's incredible."

I went to the espresso machine, which hadn't been cleaned, and made myself an Americano. Waitressing is not a romantic job. It's not romantic in the grit that accumulates behind the coffee machine, or the grease that lines the inside of the counter where the sponges don't



**JOANNA ACEVEDO** is a student living and working in New York City. She has published work in *Flying Island Literary Journal*, *Seventh Wave* and many other literary journals. In her spare time she likes to be with her cats.

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