When I First Sit Down in Dr. Conover’s American History Class
by Brian Cook

Carvings in a desk.
Sink into the wood—pictures of
Small stick men, the words
"Burn in hell" etched below.

Maybe the same kid
Came back each day, scratched
Out another image,
To keep proving he existed,

Just like the soldier
Who scrawled "Kilroy was here"
On a ship hull, sparkling
Others to carve and recarve

The phrase on walls in German Cities, into trees
On the Japanese shore
To prove, prove

There is no line
Where carving ends
And the carver
Begins. Once I saw etches

In black desert varnish
Along the edge of mountains.
I had a rope tied
Around my waist to keep

From falling. I saw
The carving of a pregnant
Goat, a large one with
A smaller one inside

Its stomach. I imagined
A nervous boy, thousands of years ago,
Sitting on the edge of the cliff
With a flint knife in one hand,

Carving pictures into the stone wall.
Once I looked around, carefully, before
Tracing my own initials in wet cement.
Years later, they’re still visible.

Misguided Graduation
by Simone Siddreth

Pacing a hallway of University marble, I mutter amongst
faded paintings of men
who wear thick glasses and smirks.

I say, "This cruise through courses is no gallant with
intellect. Identifying one's — "calling" as you label it, should
be made after a girl's nubility, when a woman's mind vibrates
with urgent demand for more!"

Although their lips stay pressed in awful grins, their laughter
echoes in my head,
"Girl. You want too much."
Hysterical now, I feel oil paint build beneath my nails,
because I know

I am confusing their words for my own,

from The Gone, the New, and the Garden
by Julie Sheen

The lady asked for your name and breed and when I
couldn’t tell her because the water was coming out of my eyes
so fast and was filling up my mouth whenever I opened it to
speak, she took me to the room you would die in and asked me
to write them, which I couldn’t really do either because we had
called you so many things, but I thought of you confused in the
car and picked one of them, Mittens. When they stuck the
needle in your skinny leg a dog was yelping in the next room
but you were purring cause so many hands were on you to hold
you down; I knew they didn’t need to cause you’d think they
were petting you and would lay there content all day. I was
glad to see you go that way, thinking they all loved you. When
you went limp my knees sorta gave and they asked me to sit
down but I just picked you up and held you like a baby in a
way that not five minutes before you would have been too
dignified to allow. Back at our house I thought of calling some
friends to help me dig you a grave under the snowball bush,
except I remembered that they were not there when you woke
me up every morning before school and like in those days, this
should also just be you and me.

Helicon West invites you to share our open mike nights every second and fourth Thursday at 7:00 p.m.
during USU Semesters at True Aggie Cafe’s, 117 N Main Logan, UT. For more information contact
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