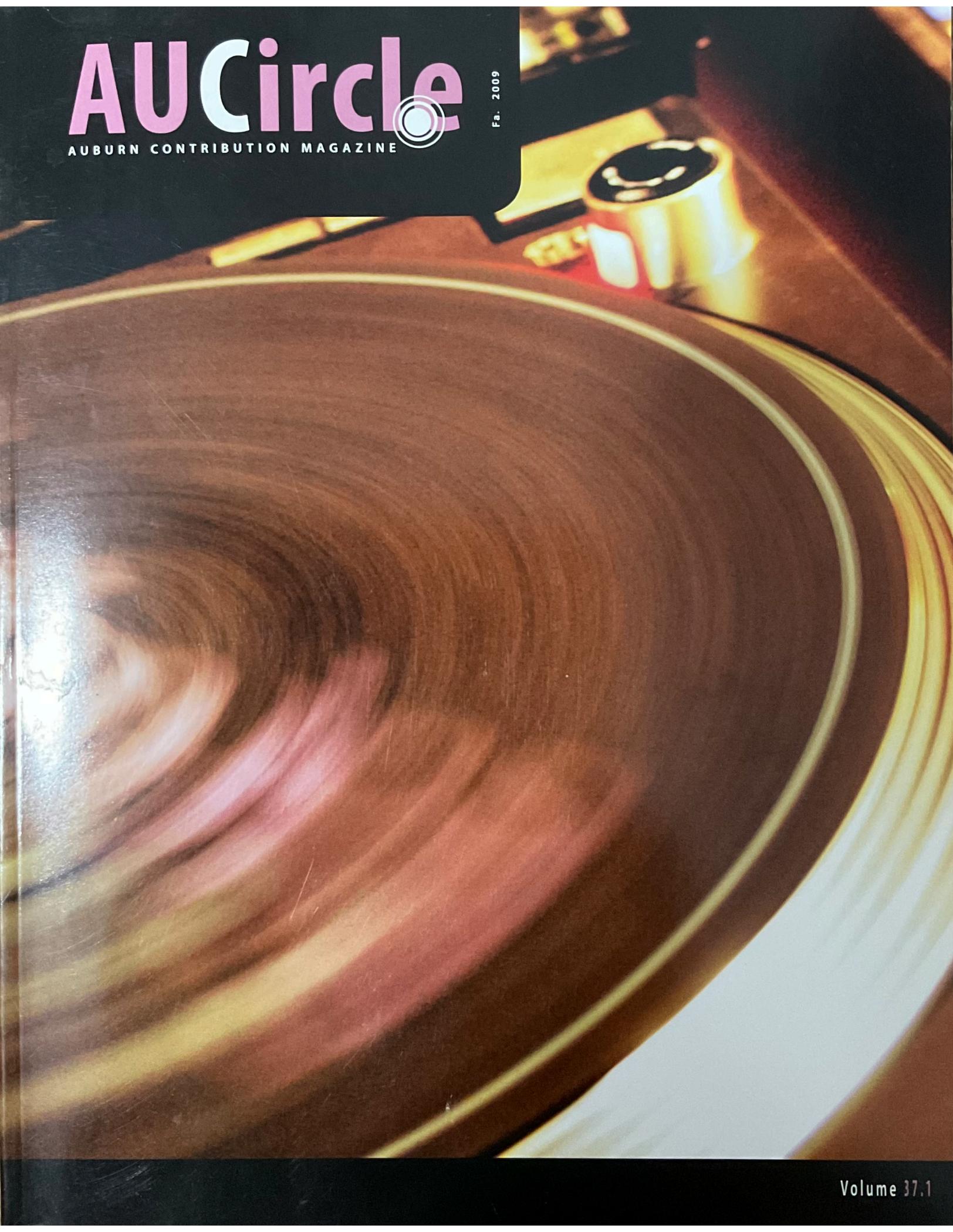


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...not even my closest friends would recognize the re-
 ...between No Epilogue Yet and my reality. But I had
 ...early on into the project that if people were going to
 ...of my story, they would hear the real one.
 ...Grant was such a big part of my life, liking him had
 ...it, in a sense. Without him, I definitely would have
 ...written *No Epilogue Yet*, for sure. I knew I made the
 ...decision every time I read the feedback on my website. I
 ...read one that I copied and pasted on an email to my
 ...who was starting to press me on another book.



The Run 3

Cold. All I can feel is cold. But I keep running. Where am I going? I don't even know anymore – I just keep running. I am sweating, my legs are jell-o but everything is numb. I know I should *feel* something. But all I can feel is the cold.

It all started with a hole in the wall. There was a hole in the wall. It was a fist that brought about this particular hole. I still don't know why. There was a rat in the house. Then a hole in the wall. Then there was a belt. And I ran. But that was hours ago.

Pass the church, cross the train tracks, wave to the nice old man on the porch – try not to let him see my face mottled by tears. He'll ask questions. The kind I don't like to answer. Home. Not sure where that is anymore. It used to have an address. A lawn. A garden. Furniture. Rooms designed by me; I spent so much time painting those walls. Where did that place go? I can't remember. All I can feel now is cold.

Pass the gas station. I always stop here. Except today. Always the same attendant. He'll ask questions too. More of the kind that I don't like to answer. Pass the Wal-Mart, the stop sign, wave to the man on the porch. Cross the train tracks, pass the church.

He'll be worried. I know he worries. He says so. His words are always pretty. Our house is full of pretty words. But all I can feel is cold. Open the door and the cold rushes out. Fills me up and surrounds me. Hits me right in the face and takes my breath away. That icy, slicing cold. All I can feel is cold.

• • • PAGE 51

1. "Love 40": India ink and charcoal on bristol, ALYSSA RACHELS 2. "Cupid's Eros": Kodak M1033, BRITNEY KIRKSEY
 3. "The Run": short story, fiction, ROBYN WILBORN