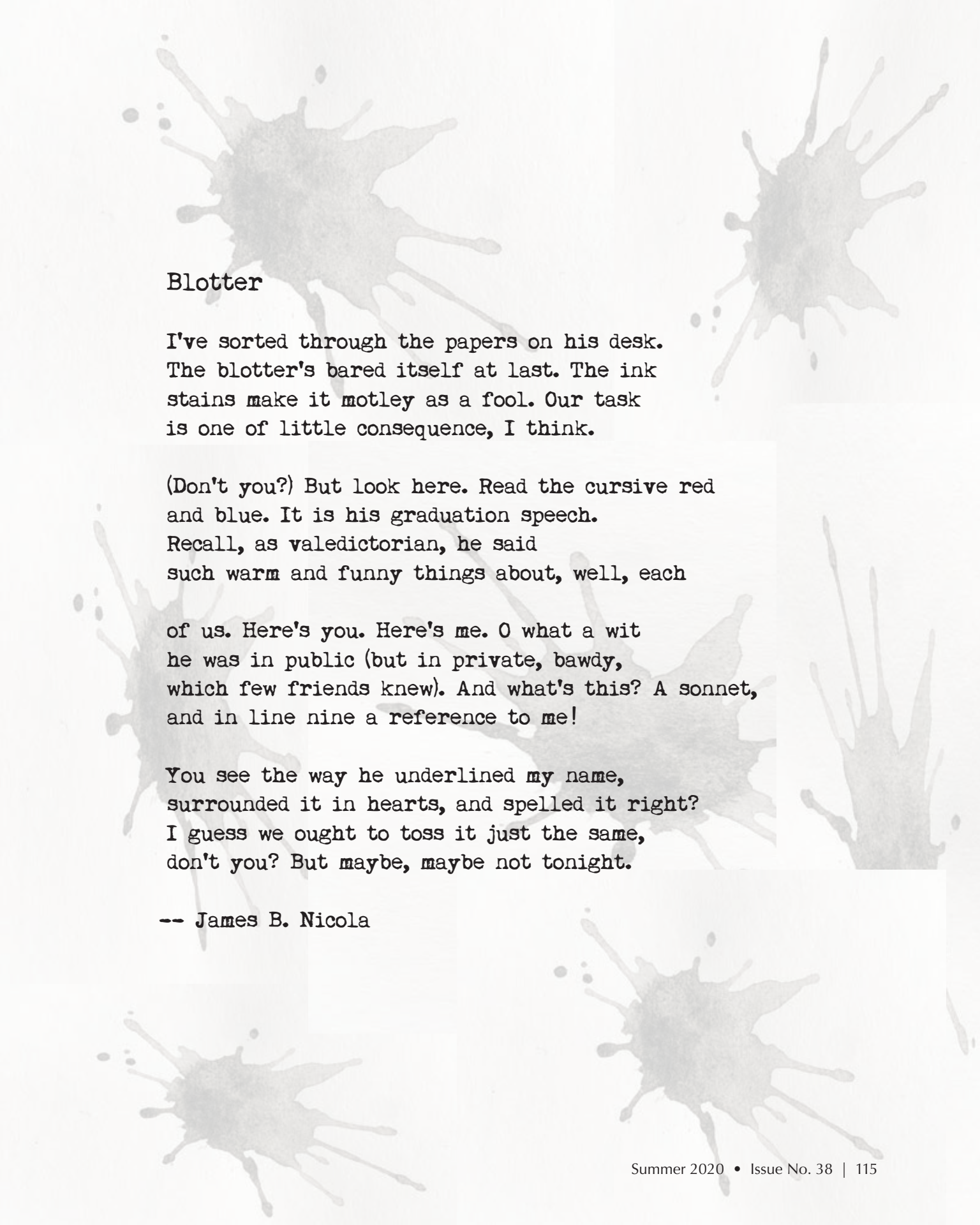


The background of the page is decorated with several large, dark ink splatters of varying shapes and sizes, scattered across the white paper.

Blotter

I've sorted through the papers on his desk.
The blotter's bared itself at last. The ink
stains make it motley as a fool. Our task
is one of little consequence, I think.

(Don't you?) But look here. Read the cursive red
and blue. It is his graduation speech.
Recall, as valedictorian, he said
such warm and funny things about, well, each
of us. Here's you. Here's me. O what a wit
he was in public (but in private, bawdy,
which few friends knew). And what's this? A sonnet,
and in line nine a reference to me!

You see the way he underlined my name,
surrounded it in hearts, and spelled it right?
I guess we ought to toss it just the same,
don't you? But maybe, maybe not tonight.

-- James B. Nicola