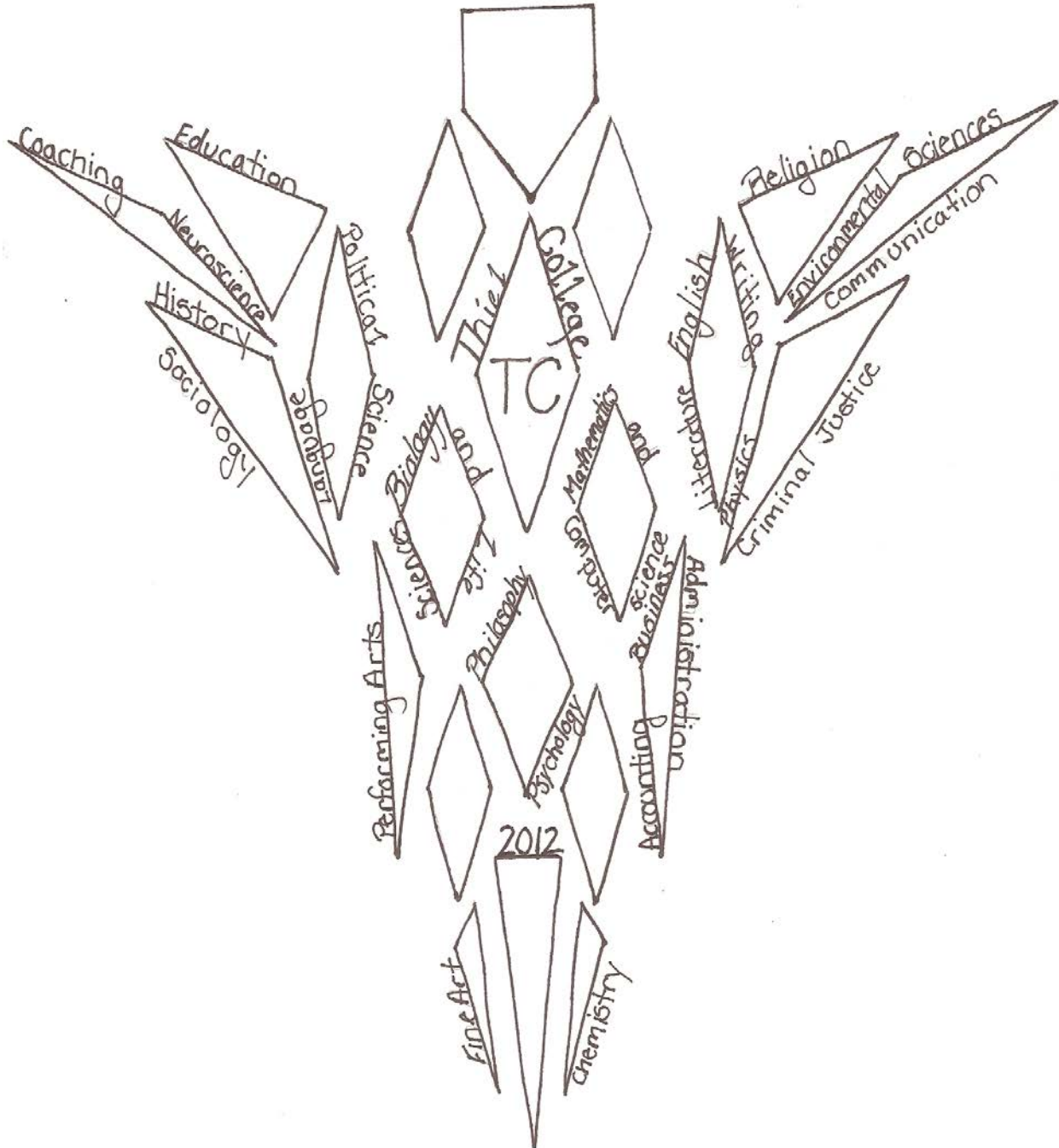


THE PHOENIX



The Phoenix

A Magazine for the Creative Arts
Thiel College, Spring 2012
Sigma Tau Delta

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Copyland
2035 East State Street
Hermitage, PA 16148

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Welcome to Thiel College's creative publication, *The Phoenix*!

As sponsors of *The Phoenix*, the English Department, the English Club, and Sigma Tau Delta are pleased again to share with you, in what has become an anticipated yearly tradition, some literary and artistic works of our students, faculty, and alumni. The variety of literary and artistic contributions we receive each year makes the editorial board's selection an increasingly challenging and enjoyable process. This year, we had the privilege, not only of reading and evaluating more than 150 submissions, but also of an extremely dedicated editorial board and exceptional editors. I am especially grateful to them. In the spirit of the motto of Sigma Tau Delta—Sincerity, Truth, and Design—we dedicate this issue to all of you whose interest in pursuing the liberal arts and sciences inspires you to refine, explore, question, and consider the significance of the written word and the artistic process in our daily lives.

In Egyptian mythology, the Phoenix was a beautiful, lone red bird that lived in the Arabian desert for 500 or 600 years and then consumed itself in fire, rising renewed from the ashes to start another long life. A symbol of regeneration, immortality, and hope, it is an appropriate symbol of Thiel College and of a liberal arts education. Our publication *The Phoenix* testifies to the courage of the Thiel community to use our intellects and imagination, and to share the power and wisdom of the creative process in the selections you are about to read and in the visual pieces you are about to behold.

We hope you enjoy the literary and artistic selections that follow. We invite you to contribute to *The Phoenix* by submitting your own creative or artistic pieces to Dr. Hall (305 Greenville Hall) or any member of the Editorial Board any time throughout the year.

Dr. Mary Theresa Hall
Professor of English;
Advisor of Sigma Tau Delta and *The Phoenix*

Untitled by Allen Morrill

"Dancing in all its forms cannot be excluded from the curriculum of all noble education; dancing with the feet, with ideas, with words, and, need I add that one must also be able to dance with the pen?" ~Friedrich Nietzsche

"If there's a book you really want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it." ~Toni Morrison



Advice to the Lover of Lenore

Matthew Endlish

Take your fears into the night, and release
Them like a spell. Cast out years of heartache,
And the lonely days of yore; throw them out
Into the darkness and in that darkness
Explore—dare to dream the dream no mortal
Ever dared to dream before. And in that
Tempest darkness you will surely find a
Guide, and realize the only thing that can
Save you is what resides on the inside.



Humble by Leah Kook

Pick and a Pen

Amy Jane Matchett

What do I need but a pick and a stone
To etch out these words stored deep in
my throat?
To scream out these feelings I hide
within,
Buried behind the smiles and the tears?
This stone will be my paper, this pick
my pen.
These words are forever.

Exchanges of Knowledge

Steven Morgan

Two adults sit reflecting on their lives,
No two interpretations e'er alike,
The one talks rapidly of childhood,
The mouth slows to a crawl on adult-
hood,
His companion listens, edge of his seat,
But sometimes his mind can drift far
away,
The talking man says what he has to
say,
The listening man hears what he choos-
es,
And then goes on, ever so unclear of
What that man had to say, but that's
just life,
The listening man, of a younger age,
Spreads the talking man's stories of a
life,
And then he becomes the talking man,
A new listening man, differently
unclear.

The Fading Summer

Rebecca Neff

My world seems empty now.
The tire swing where we spent
our summer days seems dead.

As if the day you left, all
the happiness was sucked away.

The leaves that we had once
danced under in the moonlight
have fallen.

the birds, whose
songs we would sing along
with in the morning, have
flown away, never to return
again.

My fears that you would
someday leave are closing
in around me, drowning
me in their darkness.

It's harder to breathe
now that I am alone.
the days grow dark
and long.

People say that when
someone you love...leaves,
it hurts

But no one said it
would hurt this bad.
But each new day,
I hold my breath and
wish that this heart
may one day mend.

Convalescence

Ryan Hart

Been crushed and stretched from
all sides;
Now with tension forever released,
I finally gather my balance,
Shine with a grin,
and go!

After great pain, a Crazy feeling comes—

Ashley Adkins

After great pain, a Crazy feeling comes—
The emotions go wild, like barbarians—
The pumping heart knows it was not she, that
tore,
Not yesterday, not today, not at all anymore

The soul, wounded, walks about—
Of Hell, or Earth, or Ought—
A Lost way
No matter how Long the Time
A Soul will no longer, At All, Shine—

This is the Hour of Numbness—
Forever, this may Linger,
As a brand new Father may lose his Child—
First—Pain—then Anger—then trying to let go—

The Walk

Leanna Yeager

This path has been long and beaten,
There is only so much a person can take in.
The beginning of this walk was happy and
beautiful,
But as I keep going, I become miserable
and resentful.
I've tried to brush all this rubbish aside,
Relying on something I will follow and
abide.

While on this walk, I came across a ridge,
That sat on its edge, there was a bridge.
You can tell that it was once something
grand,
And how strong it used to stand.
I came to options: let it rot or have it burn,
Should I let Mother Nature decide its fate-
ful turn?

I found this bridge stood no chance,
I'm not even letting it show its stance!

I burned that bridge.

Jewelry Box

Keeley Criswell

On the dresser it sat, a reminder of her childhood, of how magical life used to seem. And the world *is* magic. **It's a universe full of wonder, set out before each child,** set out to be explored. For years the world seems marvelous and amazing. Then, one day, something happens; something changes. The child begins to realize his or her limitations and faults. The child begins to search to find a place in this ever-changing world. And somewhere along the way, the world loses its magic and becomes part of a routine—**forgotten, a child's game.**

It was covered with simple things, a sand dollar, a pressed penny collection book, and a two-dollar origami suit. All were neatly arranged, carefully placed so as not to cover up the picture of the ballerina. Strange. Why would the girl care about a pink ballerina? **She didn't like many feminine things.** And a pink ballerina? It was hard to get much more feminine than that. But, yes, a pink ballerina, a reminder of how she used to dance around the house, carefree and weightless, before society left its mark on her, as it had on so many others. It reminded her of how easy life was when she was little, before she could comprehend enough to care about people and the problems they caused. It served as her reminder of a less complicated world.

It sat there, in plain view for all to see, for all to question its purpose in Ashley's life. It seemed so out of place, so pink and childish. Yet, to Ashley, it fit perfectly. It was her own bit of childhood, her own piece of time and an easier world. It was her reminder to see the magic in everything, even those tragedies that seemed to stop the world in its tracks for minutes on end.

* * *

As Ashley reached up to turn out the lights and go to sleep, she thought of all the people in the world and how each and every one of these people has something **that doesn't seem to fit with everything else in their life. For some people, it's of material value,** and for others, it lives inside them: their very own jewelry box.

Freak Flags

Aaron Duafala

Two polar opposites in the mind,
Two stiff brick walls,
That we all bounce between,
As if rubber balls.

Sanity and insanity,
The space between the two.
Is where we all reside,
A foggy cloud in the mind.

Are we not all crazy?
To some extent, some extreme?
Should we cover it up,
Locked away within our minds?

Or is it not more sane,
To display in plain view,
The insanity inside us all,
To let our freak flags fly?

Silhouettes of a Serenade

Alison Lange

The colors float and silently surround
I fall asleep to the lullaby of your guitar.
The world drowns into every rhythm, every sound.

Your eyes joined specks of light in dance
Your hands write such sweet romance

you bite your lips as you seek the words to say
breathing comes slow with each note you play

Serenade me, vulnerable and sweet
leave me struggling to find my speech

tonight, it's all we have, precious memories, flying time
Melodies melt into one last resonating line.

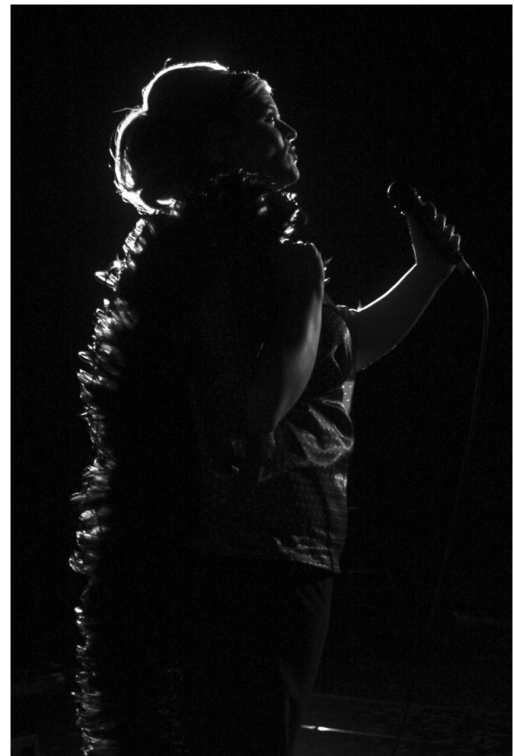
Music-Making

Ashley Adkins

I love to go out onto the stage
among the beautiful, creative, healing, fulfilling music.

To play music for enrichment,
the melodies very challenging, a penalty
I receive for underestimating the genius of
music-making;

and as I sit among other musicians
playing my instrument, creating a sound like no other
it flows almost forbidden into my ears,
as notes usually do, many strong notes
like *percussion* or *piccolo*,
simple, tongue-twisting, enlightening,
when I play, hear the music, and let it resonate
in the creative, healing fulfilling language
of music-making on the stage.



Untitled by Allen Morril

Floridian Sunday

Stephanie Flask '11

The hot weather invites, entices them,
but inside
the glass-stained frame
the ice-chills shiver.

Thump, Thump, Thump.
The bibles plop on the laps
of the carnivorous Catholics.
Preaching, preying, their blind doctrine.

Peace be with you,
the sacrificial lamb.
As you lie on the altar,
bleeding, pleading.

The fasting only to feast.
Thou shall not eat meat, but this is Sunday.
The meat you feast on awaits you in the crib factory:
the nascent assembly line.

Plunging in,
replacing their pacifiers with crucifixes.
Shoving rhetoric down the innocent throats.
the original sin.

The feast complete,
the homily of humility.
Hypocrites.
Peace be with you.

You do not understand the foundation of
your beliefs.
You do not understand the foundation of
your beliefs.

PITTSBURGH RYAN HART

EVEN WHEN PAIN TAKES OVER THE MIND,
AND OUR BODY IS IN STITCHES;
OUR SOUL KEEPS US ON OUR GRIND;
CALLUSED HANDS BUILT THESE BRIDGES.

THIS CITY'S FOR THE MIRACLES
THIS CITY'S ONE OF CHAMPIONS.



Fences by Emily Whipple

Sonnet to Saturday

Matthew Endlish

Wednesday has just arrived,

But I'm not right inside.

Monday went by quite fast,

And Tuesday did not last.

Wednesday has just arrived,

But I'm still dead inside.

Thursday's promised to be good

Like Love misunderstood.

When Friday comes around

I'll never be let down?

Saturday, stay away.

You'll never be the day

People had expected

To be resurrected.

Beauty and the Beach

Brock Porter

Summer 1999

This summer has been a struggle; there is no better way to describe it. It has felt at times like the weight of the world has been cast down on me, actually more on my grandfather than on me. My grandfather loved the beach more than any person I have ever known. He talked about our vacation trip to the beach all year long. The first week we came home from the beach every year, he would start talking about our plans for the following year. I would say he was kind of obsessed with the beach. By the time Memorial Day had come and passed, the two of us began working on his farm from sun up until sun down. It had been a harsh winter and an uncharacteristically damp spring, so there was a lot of work to be done and not much time to do it. For four weeks straight, I met pap at his house at 5:30 A.M. to work on the farm. He would cook the two of us eggs, bacon, and whole grain toast in the kitchen before we headed out to the fields. Pap always told me, "Eat well, but eat light, because the heat can easily make you rent your food." I took his advice because working with him for twelve hours was hard enough without ninety-degree heat.

The morning of June 27 started off no different than every other morning we had worked that entire month. I arrived a few minutes early to pap's house, exhausted from the previous day's work and feeling that my arms and legs might not be able to lift even the lightest of tools. This morning was noticeably warmer than usual. I usually wouldn't break a sweat until we started working in the fields, but I started sweating today on the drive over to pap's house. We ate our eggs and bacon along with some of the finest coffee I'd ever tasted. We went out to the barn and hopped on the tractor. Pap told me to pull the tractor up to the highest field about a half mile up from the barn and park it at the far end of the field. My task today was to plant the last bit of corn we had left before the season came to an end. The ground was extremely dry because of the heat, which made it easier for me to get the tractor up the steep hills by the top field on pap's property. Before I started up to the fields, Pap told me he was going to work with the cows until lunchtime, then he would help me finish planting in the afternoon. I remember feeling relieved that this particular day wasn't going to be too tough because I was basically going to sit inside the tractor all day long.

It was nearing lunchtime. I worked quickly all morning and had only one more full-length trip to make across the field until the last bit of corn was planted. I drank what seemed like twenty bottles of water and even managed to sneak a sports drink past pap to drink on the tractor while I worked. I still felt a little sluggish from the heat, but I was hydrated. After I spread the last batch of corn, I turned around and headed back down to the barn. I looked at my watch and it was just about time for lunch. Pap was always adamant about eating lunch on time. He didn't eat much in the morning, but he got his money's worth at lunchtime every day. He routinely ate three or four roast beef or turkey sandwiches every day for lunch; this never failed, and I knew better than to show up late for lunch. He typically drank a pitcher of sweet tea with lemon while he ate, but occasionally he drank water.

By the time I got down to the barn after the half-mile walk, I was really hungry. I ran into the house to grab my lunchbox out of the refrigerator. I engulfed an entire sandwich before I even made it back outside to eat with pap. Strangely, though, pap was not sitting on the porch where we ate lunch every day. He was always sitting there, eating his lunch at a rapid speed by the time I came out of the house. This was routine. Anyway, I did not think anything of it; I just

figured he was finishing up in the barn and he would be there any second. However, a few minutes passed and pap still didn't show up. I yelled for him, but he didn't respond. I stood up and yelled a little louder towards the barn and told him that it was lunchtime. Again, no response! Now I was concerned! I stood up and sprinted over to the barn to see what was going on. I couldn't find him, but then I realized that maybe he was in the house, using the restroom or something. I ran back over to the house and sprinted up the stairs, calling his name. I could not find him; he was clearly not in the house either. I heard the door to the kitchen open downstairs and I shouted, "Pap, I was looking for you. It's time to eat." The voice that yelled back at me was not my grandfather's voice. It was a voice I did not recognize, but it was certainly a man's voice. I ran down the steps in to the kitchen and a man was standing next to the refrigerator, crying and shaking uncontrollably. I now recognized this man as my grandfather's beloved best friend Jack Reed. I pleaded with Jack to tell me, "Why are you crying? What's wrong? Tell me, Jack, tell me now!" Jack was too out of control to speak clearly, but I continued to plead with him. I begged with him to please calm down and tell me what was wrong. I feared the worst, and now I was utterly terrified. Jack grabbed my arm and burst out through the kitchen door towards the barn. As we approached the barn, Jack said, "Over here. He's over here." There he was, lying on his stomach on the rear side of the barn next to the cow pasture, unconscious and visibly pale. My grandfather had suffered a heat stroke and passed out shortly before lunchtime. I shook him and pleaded with him to respond. He was unresponsive. Jack and I picked pap up off the ground and put him in the car; then we sped off towards the hospital. It was too late. Pap died soon after we arrived. I went into a state of shock and confusion. Pap and I were working together just hours before, and everything was normal just like any other day. Jack was devastated and I could not calm him down. He slouched over in a chair in the waiting room and sobbed uncontrollably. When I saw Jack break down, I broke down as well and sat down in a chair beside him. Both of us were experiencing un-describable waves of emotions.

Mid-August 1999

After pap's funeral, I worked on the farm by myself for a few weeks. I felt obligated to finish what he and I had started. I did most of the work by myself, with some occasional help from my father and uncle. As a family, we discussed whether or not we still wanted to take our normal vacation to the beach without pap. He had always been the prominent figure in our family, and it was going to be very strange without him there. Nobody enjoyed it more than pap and me, and I think I even liked going more than he did. We decided to remain with our plans in honor of him. Most of us felt that pap would want us to go and have a great time even though it was going to be really sad at times.

The sadness I was feeling subsided a little bit when we left for the beach on this gorgeous August morning. I was now looking forward to spending a few days in solitude more than in previous years. Because of pap's death, this year's trip was going to mean more to me than did the trips in past years. As we drove south towards Maryland, I began to yearn for the calm evening breeze coming off the ocean. I began to picture in my mind the bright sun reflecting off the beautiful blue water. I needed to reunite with that place that I considered more beautiful than any other place on earth. I was sad in my heart, and in my mind I was thinking about the tragedy instead of the joy that I would soon feel when I arrived on the shore. Six hours and over three hundred miles of driving later, we made it to the beach on the Maryland eastern shore. I had made that trip so many times before, and, by this point, I felt that I could drive there with my eyes closed. However, the trip this year seemed to take a lot longer than in previ-

ous years. It seemed to take all day.

Something caught my eye as we drove over the inlet bridge towards the shore. It seemed that there was nobody around and no cars on the streets in the town. This ocean town was always so crowded with cars and people this time of the year. At the moment, it seemed like a ghost town. I pulled up to the intersection on the main road in front of our beach house where we stay every year, and there were no street signals or stoplights. There were no lines on the roads and no crosswalks for pedestrians. Still, I saw no people anywhere. There was absolutely no traffic coming from any direction. There was nothing! We didn't see any of the usual taxi buses that transported vacationers to different parts of the shore. There were always a lot of bikers and people riding rollerblades on the streets, but I didn't see that either. This was bizarre! I pulled the car into the lot outside our beach house complex across the street. The lot looked the same as the year before and our house was no different. Everything seemed normal. Like the streets and highways, there was no sign of human life around our beach house. My father ran up on to the dune to look down onto the beach. Amazingly, there was nobody on the beach. We looked south and saw no one, looked north and saw no one. We turned around and looked at all of the beach houses and condominiums on the shore to see if there were people in them. Every building was completely empty.

Our family decided to gather outside our beach house to figure out what was going on. It was pretty clear to us now that the town was shut down. We could see that the restaurants across the street were vacant and that some of the shops were boarded up. The main door of our beach house complex appeared to be open, so a few of us, including my mother and uncle, went over to check. Sure enough, it was open and we walked inside. We were not surprised to find no one inside. I walked up a few flights of stairs to the third floor where our traditional room was located. Every year, we stayed in this same room. The door to the room was hanging wide open. Ironically, almost every door on the third floor was open, and each room seemed to be fairly clean, as if somebody had taken care of them recently. It quickly dawned on me to check the phone lines to see if they were working. There were phones and televisions in every room throughout the building, so I checked almost all of them to see if any of them worked. None of the phones throughout the entire building had any reception. My father and I decided to go outside and walk down a few streets to see if we could find any people at all. The sidewalks and streets were bare and worn down severely. Some of the beach houses and buildings were in decent condition, but others looked as if they had been vacant for years. Some were extremely dirty and had vines growing all over the side of the building, while others looked nice but simply had no one in them. The two of us walked about seven blocks from the street where our beach house was located, and I decided to turn and go back. There was clearly no sign of human life at this section of the eastern shore. By the time my father and I walked back to our house, the rest of our family was standing in the parking lot, talking rapidly and arguing back and forth to each other. For a few moments, things got chaotic. Everyone calmed down and soon reality set in.

All of us, my mother, father, uncle, grandmother, and sister came to the realization that we were on a deserted coastal island in Maryland with no other human beings and with no electricity. We had no food at our disposal and there were certainly no restaurants or sources of life anywhere within our sight. We began to question, was this real? Did we really get involved in these circumstances or was it a dream? I thought to myself, "Was pap really dead, or is that a dream too?" It was not a dream. This was all reality. We were standing in the same parking lot outside the same beach house on the same coastal island that we had vacationed to for the past

ten years. Our family was here together just as in previous years, all except my grandfather.

Everything about the situation seemed so dream-like: rather more like a nightmare than a dream. With this in mind, some strange phenomena still kept this situation from seeming fake, but some element was still so real. Why was this real, and how could it have happened? By this point, I knew the answer to one of those questions but not both. I did not know how this once-beautiful island ended up in a state of disarray and dullness, but I did know why it still felt so real. This entire scene, in all of its ruined, abandoned territory, still contained one *beautiful* element of nature. Although all of its urban surroundings and structures had diminished, and no people were lurking around its territory, the *beach* was still intact and looking as beautiful and pristine as ever! The water was still that perfect shade of blue, and the waves were routinely crashing upon the shore with their usual herculean power. The sand was positioned sturdily under my feet just as I always remembered it, but, on this particular day, I think it felt even softer. The water and the sand appeared to connect more perfectly than it had ever looked before, and the dunes in front of the beach house resembled the quality of those one might see on a top-notch golf course. Everything about the beach's physical structure was as beautiful as ever. I felt the calm breeze coming off the water as it ran through my hair. The breeze combined with the unique smell of the ocean still remains one of my true loves. I broke down for a few seconds as I thought about pap. For a moment, my heart sank to my feet as I realized that I had rarely stood in this position without him by my side. He loved the beach more than anyone in the world; he even loved it more than I do. In the midst of the tragedy our family faced, and the chaotic circumstances we found ourselves in that week, the beach was still beautiful and it meant more to me now than it ever had before.

We ended up staying at the beach for four days, and we each had our own room to ourselves. There was no one else on the entire island, so it really didn't matter. On the second-to-last day of our vacation, or, should I say, interesting form of a vacation, I rescued a stray dog on the beach just several blocks from our house. This beagle mix, who I eventually named Max, ended up being our household dog for the next eight years. He returned safely home with us to western Pennsylvania when we left at the end of the week. Needless to say, Max was a beautiful dog. Rather, *I think Max was a beautiful dog.*



Mountain Man by Leah Kook

Why?

Pastor Bill Bixby

Roots beseech sky—clumped
with lately deep earth—beaded
in clumsy prayer.

(Haiku recollecting an experience of seeing a mammoth tree which had been fully uprooted by a hurricane.)

A Thiel Alum Remembers With Gratitude

John Volansky '56

While in high school, the jobs I had were many—
The pay so small, I was working for pennies!

Delivering pies or donuts to downtown Sharon restaurants,
So tempting it became—
To eat of these pies and donuts, or taking
Some home was my secret aim!

During World War II, I was a high school tenth grader—
The railroad in Wheatland, the job I did was a hater!

Tightening bolts on railroad tracks, Wheatland to West Middlesex,
No lie in that, just the facts—
With a four-foot long, twenty-pound wrench,
The bolts every twenty feet, as we walked along the tracks—

1946: high school graduation, and then to Sharon Steel Corp., Sharon plant
A car in mind, a Ford?—
A common laborer and then a shipping clerk, four years in the making,
But a car I still couldn't afford!

World War II still on, Sharon Steel a call to the high school
For workers to seek!
Forty of our high school class to work we went
Four to twelve-turn, three days a week!

The year 1950: Korean War, North and South start shooting
The Army my service needed—
Two years served, a military camp in Alabama as a corporal,
With all orders heeded!

The G.I. Bill for military servicemen
Will pay my way to college—
Being born a Slovak Lutheran, my choice easy:
The Lutheran Church supported Thiel College!

What college degree to seek at my old age of 23?—
From eighth grade to high school a school teacher I wanted to be.

Taking summer courses, in three years a teaching degree earned, not bought!
My student teaching done at Jamestown High School
With 11th-grade History courses taught.

At Thiel, the class size varied
And one summer class—just one—me!
The Professor said, "Just one?"
The professor got paid, the class not free!
(P.S.: I aced it!)

The Sigma Chapter of the Delta Sigma Phi Fraternity, a Brother was I,
We took a fling—
At the male-only College Spring Sing 1955
Twenty Delta Sig Brothers, including yours truly, we did win the Sing!

In 1956, I said farewell to Thiel College
I was hired, a high school teaching position—
At age 83, I now thank all the professors
For all they taught me, with vision!



Tuesday by Bryce Herrington

Tuesday

Bryce Herrington

Each day
The extraordinary
Lies within the ordinary
Each day we move.

What seems ordinary is extraordinary, perfect in itself. Simple yet complex. Subtle. There is beauty everywhere. Each day as we move through commonality and repetitiveness, we should be aware of the wonderment of each moment, we should see clearly. That is where the extraordinary lies within the ordinary.

Big Max

Chris Moinet

We've been playing old guy noon hoops for nearly thirty years now,
and for most of that time Big Max has been our oldest guy;
well over seventy, he's still big,
but he used to be bigger.
He's been shrinking for decades, receding,
losing not only height but quickness,
then coordination, and finally, sometimes, even simple balance,
so that he crashes to the floor, hard and seemingly without cause,
frequently;
and all that remains intact is competitive spirit
(or, as growing numbers of regulars would call it, cussed meanness),
while his flailing elbows catch more and more noses, and ribs, and
mouths...
purposely? I'm not sure.
But, I'd like to tell them,
even if those blows are intentional,
it's not you he's trying to elbow aside, trying to bloody;
it's not you he detests.

Persistence of Time

Amy Jane Matchett

Persistence makes a memory
That I'm too afraid to keep.
It keeps pushing on faster
As I continue to drag my feet.
I wait for a pause to come,
While I wait for time to tick.
But here comes the rise of the sun -
The morning clouds and their gentle
lift.
And I am left to run -
And leave the road behind me -
Becoming smaller as I move -
Bigger dreams growing inside of me.
I'm afraid that my resistance
Will be no match for this persistence.
Because the persistence of time
Will make memories without me.

Do You Remember?

Keeley Criswell

Do you remember,
In elementary,
How everyone was your friend,
And the only thing you ever had to worry about
Was what you were going to play for recess?

Do you remember,
When your "boyfriend"
Was whichever guy you played with the most,
And your teacher
Was your best friend?

Do you remember,
When you never got yelled at
For grades below an A,
And all it took was a sticker
To make you happy?

Do you remember,
When your only responsibility
Was getting on and off the bus,
And you were never rushed
In doing so?

Do you remember,
When you could talk about anything,
To anyone,
And nobody was mad
Because your opinions were different?

Do you remember?
Because I do.



Untitled by Sean Oros

Careless

Alison Lange

we ride through town and hit the country road,
so careless about where we will go.
coffee cups and snacks keep us awake,
I write your name in the dust on the dashboard,
I whisper that love's my only mistake,
but your charm can't be ignored.
you keep me tuning in to this life,
your face repeats on my reel of highlights.
you kiss my eyelid and i take the wheel,
it's too much to ask if this is real.
our nights are purely a dream,
with one recurring theme.
love rolls off the windshield in a torrential downpour
my body is your umbrella and we don't care anymore.
you hold me in the crook of your limbs,
and through puddles of love we swim.
you and i can only exist,
no one cares about what if's on a night like this.

Young Child

Melissa Beltran

Young Adolescent Child
Went finding and seeking
Finding more than sought
Seeking less than found
Every detail loving
The seeking and the finding.
Pleased equally,
In seeking as in finding,
Each detail loving
Young Child went seeking
and Finding.

A Friend in the Past

Matthew Endlish

I can see her face and it takes me to
A place that does not seem so far removed.
A time and a place that is lost in space –
That will never come back to be again.

But without any evidence to show
Who is to say that it was ever so?

A friend for so long but a friend that is
Gone, and a friend for memory alone.

A Well-Respected Man

Leanna Yeager

You always believe in my dreams,
And hardly ever show any doubt.

Life has shown me many roads and streams
And you have witnessed every smile, tear, and
pout.

Every moment I spend with you is enjoyable,
You never fail to surprise me.

You are funny, intelligent, and just plain likeable.
You, dear sir, are a person I aspire to be.

You have the strength of a bear,
Large, majestic, and well-respected.
You never cower or scurry from a problem like a
hare,
Which has kept me on guard and inspected.

Although there are time we don't agree,
You never let me hang and struggle.

You have grown me to become a tall, strong tree,
To not move and react to every little toggle.

There are many things I can say to you,
But to say the least, these words mean so much.

I love you, Dad.

A Simple Encounter

Helena Tompkins

This is a short love story, a love story that crosses space and time, night and day, trust and deceit. A story about two people who wish to love but are unable to, a tragic love that turns true, when a child of the night and a child of the light call themselves together.

Lilith is a simple-minded girl, not one for asking questions, only taking action. She is strong-willed and determined, and it doesn't hurt that she has a mastery of many different arts. This young girl carries a pendant, one that has been passed down through her family since before anyone can remember. Some even speculate that this black pendant she carries holds the soul of a devil, even though the girl herself appears to be an angel. With raving red hair and golden eyes, many believe she was sent from heaven. Though to those who know this orphan, none of this is true, her inability to love anyone, including herself, has kept her from ever holding a long conversation with anyone. Because of this, Lilith is a lonely person who never smiles, though out of curiosity some people have attempted to engage her.

A boy about the same age as Lilith lives in another time, with different people, and different troubles. Azrael is handsome, more than most, even for his age, though his looks do startle at first, with long black hair darker than the darkest, moonless night and eyes the colors of the moon's glow at the peak of the month. With his devilish looks, many people try to avoid him, scared of what he might do, though the people who are drawn to his charm and the manner in which he carries himself know him as the angel that he should be. He has around his neck a white pendant carried on a simple string of white, a pendant passed down through the generations of his family since before people can recall.

On the night of destiny, a pathway opened to both youths as if beckoning them into a warm embrace. For some strange reason, neither of them hesitated nor did they look back, as if they understood, on another level of feeling not easily seen, that they would never see those villages again and that this was for the best. The magistrate walked forth and kept open the door only so the villagers could satiate their curiosity as to where the light might be coming from.

Crossing onto another plane of existence wasn't as hard for them as it would have been for others. With a faint glow and a hum vibrating their pendants, the destined two walked forward, neither blind nor aware of what lay ahead of them.

It was then that Lilith saw a black silhouette, for Azrael was dressed all in black. Except for his undershirt and the pendant around his neck, he was a striking figure of beauty to Lilith's eyes, and she had to blink several times before she regained her composure.

Throughout Lilith's troubles, Azrael was experiencing his own challenges, discovering that this was the first time in his life that he ever truly looked at someone. All he saw was her startling red hair and set of golden eyes the color of which he had never seen before. She was

dressed in clothes not fit for the woman she was; however, the plain clothes suited her. Azrael's breath was taken from him in this manner and he found it hard to keep breathing in her radiant presence. Though her dark aura didn't affect him, he could sense her loneliness as if it mirrored his own.

The two stood shell-shocked as they stared at each other, neither letting it show on their faces, though it was useless because both could already see past the façade that was their only key to survival.

Suddenly, as if out of nowhere, Lilith wanted to touch his hair and as simple-minded and determined as she was, she marched forward and asked him directly, "May I touch your hair?" she asked nearly turning red if not for her useless stony expression that he could so easily peer past.

"Uh... yes," Azrael said, losing composure for a split second, though his voice didn't betray him.

As she reached out her hand, eyes never once wavering from his, she touched his hair coming from a ponytail laid on the right side of his head; the length of it reached near his forearm. It was soft to the touch, well cared for and brushed often, like silk in her fingers.

Azrael was mesmerized by the sensations he was feeling. Even if it was only a small part of his hair that she touched, he felt electric, as if by her very closeness he was being electrocuted from the inside out. At first, it was unpleasant, a distant unwarranted feeling, until on instinct he raised his hand to stop her fingers that had begun to disconnect from his hair.

As their bare skin brushed, barely enough contact to even call the sensation a "touch," their pendants lit up like stars and shined a dark black and a brilliant white enough to take their breath away.

The doors shut and the villagers saw no more.

Recipe
Allison Kineston

<p>"Breakup"</p> <p>Ingredients: Screams Harsh words/Lies Tears Watching, waiting</p> <p>Stand in front of each other and let feelings fly The screams like a fire truck's sirens, the harshness of the words you don't really mean. The lies that fly like bullets to each other's hearts Watching him look at you with disgust and shake his head, walking away from you; waiting for the pain to spear your heart. The tears that come down like rain in solace and silence.</p>	<p>"Perfect Kiss"</p> <p>Ingredients: Two lips Two people Softness, gentleness</p> <p>Wrap your arms around each other and carefully look into each other's eyes. His touch, her touch, carefully rest your lips against each other's. Keep eyes closed! Gently move together, slowly, romantically. Pull back and look at each other. A perfect kiss.</p>
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Love

Sean Oros

Love is a mistress harsh and cruel,
Who knows no mercy true.
She cares not the pain she leaves behind,
Nor heeds the tears that fall.

Love in family, so rare it seems,
Can be a trap itself.
And hold the people caught therein
In a bitter hold of loyalty.

Love of mate, again so rare,
Can wilt and fade with time.
How often do we let it die,
When never the wound will heal.

Why must we love? Why must we sigh?
Is not all this world doomed to die?
Why bother to grow attached,
When all bonds, in time, are torn?

But is this the end of such a matter?
That hardly, I feel, is true.
For what is life without such love?
Why bother to live at all?

Love transcends our earthly grief;
It comes from Founts above.
In time its Source we'll see,
And we shall truly know.

The Old You

Ellen Lauver

I miss the old you.
Everyone changes, but you changed for
The worse.
I still have hope though—
For the old you—
I miss the old you—
... the old me.

Blissful Ignorance

DJ Martino

You hide behind your ignorance.

You wallow in your pride.

Suffering delusions of magnificence,

You cover what's truly inside.

Don't pretend as though I'm lying.

You know my words are true.

I can prove this without trying.

The only devil here is you.

Beautiful Hate

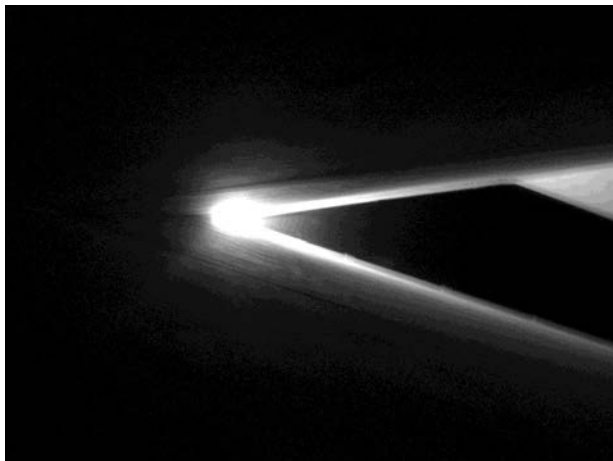
Aaron Duafala

Oh beautiful hate.
fill my heart again,
course through my veins,
Enter my mind,
and consume my thoughts.
That I might write again.
Pain in the heart,
brings truth to the words,
and only with truth is there meaning.
Come to me, hate.
Most powerful force,
Bringer of evil.
Light up my path,
guide my way.
Let my words glisten,
as if written in blood.
Come, beautiful hate,
Become beautiful words.

To Cut Out the Heart of the Heartless

Aaron Duafala

To cut out the heart of the heartless,
to steal the soul of the soulless,
is a most aimless struggle.
And yet I waste pointless hours,
To take possession of that,
which did not ever exist.
False hope I always hold,
That by my feelings of love,
A dead heart will beat again.
But I have not the divine power,
to resurrect the buried dead,
or to give life to that,
which never even knew it.
Perhaps I overestimate my goodness,
Certainly I overestimate that of others.
I was always wrong to think that,
I could create love where there was none.
In every chest that my hand delved,
I found an unexpected emptiness.
And the emptiness in others,
created an emptiness in me,
that I fill with drugs and alcohol.
If only I could fill this void,
inside my heart with love.



Glimmer of Hope by Amy Jane Matchett

Broken

Jessica Sabol

In the Darkness there is a light
Though this heart seems to break
Searching for hope with inspired might
A courageous front I will fake

Going through all of the everyday motions
Barely breathing because of you
Wishing everything didn't lead to this notion
Wondering if you know my heart's in two

Thoughts in my head seem to debate
In these final moments I shall decide
Was loving you a twist of fate?
I'm ready to let go of the piece of me that died.

An Empty Body

Aaron Duafala

An empty body, a hollow whore,
Searching the world for fulfillment.
But you will never find,
Enough to fill you up.
The questions you are asking,
Cannot be answered by these means.
Only more confusion, more emptiness,
Are you bound to find,
On this slippery slope,
To the deepest depths of Hell.
How can you prefer this way?
What meaning, what happiness,
Does it hold for you?
When I look at you,
I see a lost soul.
And a wasted life,
It makes me sad,
Knowing what you are,
And what you could have been.

Don't Leave Me

Ellen Lauver

I strive to live alone.
I can stand loneliness,
Being in crowds scares me-
So I strive to be a self.
-Then-
I met you; I preserved every detail in my mind-
About you.
I imagine so much it's like you're there.
When I hear your voice or see your words,
Talking to me,
I feel saved/but I see your fixation with others.
I fall deeper into a pit-
One plea though-
In memory or life-
Please don't leave me in this strife.
My life alone would return and I would

Be

Gone...

-Already it's enveloping me-

I repeat, friend, my plea.

Don't

Leave

Me.



Language of Love

Amy Jane Matchett

The language of love has never sounded so foreign,
Never burned on my tongue -
Yet today is the day, that I admit pain.
I let you know just how hard you let me fall -
Convulsing, cut open, heart shredded inside.
Empty.

Fé

Matt Eshelman

Believe me when I say this is tough
Believe me when I say your beauty would be
enough
Easy to get stuck on the cover of books but
Believe me when I say it's more than just looks

I have read the pages deep
Believe me this novel I want to keep
Sections read and chapters yet to be
Believe me it's more than pictures I see

If my heart could speak, it would yell
But words can't explain how I feel
And I just don't know what to say

I love you in every way
Believe me, my dearest Fé

Old Shoe by Leah Kook

A Response to John Donne on the Petrarchan Ideal

Conor King

What can I say, sir? I respect your words
And your thoughts, ideals, and all the like
But you seem much too stiff, a board perhaps,
So listen to my words and take a chance

There's a girl, you see, like no other
Aphrodite seethes in jealousy when she walks by
As much a star as a human, I am leaning
But I need you to understand my meaning

She's a Madonna figure looking like Delilah
Jezebel with a hint of Camille
Both pure and dangerous as I can attest
Sending my heart to cardiac arrest

How do I handle this when watching from afar?
Do I move, or do I stay?
Because I can tell you that my "perfect" persists
In the form of a girl who hardly knows I exist

Would you say I move to another
Someone more suited, huh, my lyrical brother?
Or keep going after my ideal
And give myself over to what I feel?

I leave the rest to you, for you have loved
More in knowledge of the subject than I
And give an answer, I am suffering so
Because watching her sends my senses running for the door



Untitled by Sean Oros

Life Toward Solstice

Pastor Bill Bixby

It really doesn't matter
how loud you yell:
"Damn, it's getting dark earlier!"
Night still falls.
Still, I don't think you'll stop yelling.

Of Ill Tidings

Sean Oros

Tell all the truth with thought and care —
Beware of crushing word.
Too fast a telling harms the heart
When truth is full of pain.

As ice will break when rock is thrown
But holds when gently set,
So must we tread with care and love
Or damage deep be done.

Biopsy of a Heart

Rebecca Neff

heart-break: [hahrt-breyk]

noun: great sorrow, grief or anguish

heart surgery: [hahrt sur-juh-ree]

noun: any surgical procedure involving the heart

One would think that heartbreak of any kind can be solved by heart surgery, right? For anyone that has ever experienced heartbreak knows that it is not just a figure of imagination. But when someone you love leaves you stranded, it feels as if your heart is physically break in two; whether it be straight down the left and right ventricle, or crumbling into pieces – the aorta and the atriums detaching themselves. One would think that a simple heart surgery would be able to fix this sensation, fix you as if nothing ever happened.

But if cardio-thoracic surgeons know something about their profession, it is that heartbreak is impossible to fix through surgery, because it is more of an emotion rather than an actual surgical problem. However, the steps leading up to the actual heartbreak, and even the period afterwards spent in healing, are more similar to heart surgery than one may actually realize.

DIAGNOSIS.

When two people, whether it is in the fruit section of the grocery store or even being introduced by friends, it initiates the heartbreak. Now, one would think a large flashing light would pop out of nowhere, warning you that there's a heartbreak afoot. But that's far from happening. Nevertheless, that sign is shrunken down to the minuscule thought in the back of your mind, which is overridden by the "*what if they're the one*" belief. Hope trumps experience? Oh, yes. So we are basically diagnosing ourselves for heartbreak.

In terms of surgery, one is referred to a surgeon by a family doctor, or even rushed to the emergency room because of a trauma situation needing immediate repair. They are introduced, taken to

receive a CT scan or any other required labs, and from there, they are diagnosed with their problem. There may be a lack of blood flow due to a clot in an artery, or even congestive heart failure. Not as a romantic story as the other, but nonetheless, it is a diagnosis of heartbreak; the fact that the heart has stopped functioning in some way or another.

PREP FOR SURGERY.

To sit around and wait for the date to come, whether a scheduled appointment or dinner and a movie, it is a very impatient time. However, once it's here, a sense of routine is set into place to get ready; making sure everyone has washed away their troubled pasts and are now pushing towards the future. Everyone needs a clean start to any relationship. Once the heartbreak has been initiated, is the first step in breaking someone's heart and fixing it if there is any way.

Preparing the surgeon and the patient takes careful consideration. It is necessary that both people are thoroughly cleaned, as well as the actual operation room. In this way, while the chest cavity is open, the sterile organs inside stay sterile; which in turn lowers the risk for infection. The chest is shaven, if necessary, and then cleaned, washing away all bacteria. The surgeon scrubs away all germs that may be lingering on their hands, which are then covered by surgical gloves. It is a very time consuming, yet essential routine, much like preparing for a date.

Showers are taken; cologne is applied – disguising any flaws you may have. It is the time to seem almost godlike, perfect, and sterile. We push away all unsterile parts of us – our pasts and our secrets – in order to prevent any infections early on in the relationship. It may not be right, but it is what has to be done, because the thought is being repeated over and over and over in our heads: *they could be the one, they could be the one, they could be the one, and they could be the one.*

SEDATE AND CUT.

Sedating a patient, in both senses, is vital. For it prevents them from feeling any pain while the surgery is performed. Whether it is placing an anesthetic into the IV, or the so called “puppy love,” neither is meant to cause pain, but simply to blind the person of what is actually going on.

Count backwards starting from 10; 10...9...8...7... That's the last thing you'll remember before being put under. It's painless, pleasant actually. Some even say it's the best sleep they ever had. But anesthesia's purpose is more than to put you to sleep. It causes you to be pain free, while allowing

surgeons to do what is needed to be done without having their patient thrashing around in severe pain. In other words, it disguises the patient from what is really going on and replaces it with a dreamlike state for them.

“Puppy love:” a term generally used to describe the feeling of the quick freefalling love for a person. It is a carefree sense, ignoring any flaw the other person may be presenting and taking them into your heart, even though there may be clear signs that that aren’t right for you. You are sedating yourself from the truth; being disguised from reality and settling for the dreamlike state.

Once the patient is sedated, the surgeon begins the heart surgery by placing an incision down the patient’s chest, making sure it divides the chest in half. This is critical, for if the incision is too deep, it could kill the patient.

After realizing someone has fallen in love with you, it is easy to begin cutting into their heart after they are sedated: putting them down, pointing out their flaws, and not taking the time to share their feelings. It is not a physical cut, but to the person having it done to them can easily describe it as just that – the cut in their chest that began leading to their heartbreak.

It is easy to see how these two coincide – cause and effect. Sedation leads to the first cut, and for those who have already experienced this practice, they can agree with Sheryl Crow in stating that, “*the first cut is the deepest.*” Your very first love is the one you expect to never hurt you. You give and entrust them with everything, and when they slowly begin to make that incision in your heart, it is said to be the deepest and most painful cut ever to be made to your heart.

BREAK, REPAIR, AND HOPE.

Getting your heart broken is one of the most painful things ever imaginable, whether it be when a surgeon is detaching the old heart from the surrounding veins and arteries, or when you are left standing alone. In both situations, your heart is actually breaking, whether it is figuratively or literally.

For the case of the patient, they are sedated. They do not feel any pain while they slumber. In the case of love, you are not in puppy love any longer. So when you experience heartbreak, it is similar to standing unprotected as a scalpel pierces through your heart. Lovely, isn’t it? But that is what it feels like. You are completely benign to the person and then they lay a forceful blow to your heart, crushing it.

And then it is time to heal.

Patients in a hospital are sent to recovery after surgery, followed by a stay in their assigned rooms. They may have complications resulting from the surgery, but it is nothing compared to having a new heart. It is another chance to live their lives, maybe even start all over. It helps to lead to forgetting their pasts and looking towards the future. Forgetting their enemies and embracing their allies, and they can even accept their mistakes. Their broken heart is now repaired, and now they can live in hope that it will stay unbroken for a long while.

Unfortunately, repairing a broken heart for someone that was left stranded when all they need is someone to lean on means gallons of chocolate ice cream, movies without happy endings, and tears falling like thunderstorms. It takes time, a lot of it, to heal. And sometimes you never heal. But even after all this; we carry on, moving onto the next person. All in all, wondering and hoping they will be the one. And if not, we start the heartbreak process all over.

Unintended

Alison Lange

Oh how summer keeps you looking young
No longer my lover still somebody's son

I was always beautiful at looking good
Your secrets could destroy and I knew they would

Innocent love at its best, something pure
For lovers like these, there is never a cure

Sidestepping reality, with narrow a chance
To transform this into a brilliant dance

Guitar strings and vocal chords leave you
locked in place
It's me on your radio, the fact you can't face

Stranger, you sit with tear stains and tissues
holding your broken heart and a love you out-
grew.



Untitled by Allen Morrill



Smoking by Emily Whipple

Figures in the Rain

Joseph Disch

Have you wondered,
Have you thought,
How you can see me?
Look in the rain,
Look in the fog,
You just might see me.
If you try,
If you see...
A lot of people,
Only one is me.
The rest is dreams.
So it is up to you,
To figure out...
Who is me.

Idol Worship

Aaron Duafala

I am a sinner, I am a wretch.
I pray to God for my salvation.
But why should he help me?
I've turned my back on him,
And replaced him with another.
Why should he help me now?
For I am an idolater,
The most terrible of sinners.
Instead of praying to Jehovah,
I prayed to a girl with dark hair,
Dark eyes, and a heart even darker still.
I prayed to her for my salvation,
But I only received damnation.
I sacrificed my health and my sanity,
On an altar of fiery love.
But my prayers went ever unanswered.
For my God was false, just like her words.
I turned my back on God,
And replaced him with what?
A sick screaming little whore?
A demon sent to possess my soul,
Twist my being and destroy me?
The greatest mistake I ever made,
Was to make a god of her mortal soul.

My Cell or My Tomb

Matt Eshelman

I sit in my cold cell alone
No one's home
The voices in my head
My only friends
I stare at the wall
Wish I was out there
But I'm too small—inside
To go where
I shouldn't be
I can't be seen
It's too much for me
But I break down
Pushing through myself
Now stuck in a crowd
I must go back
Into my hole
The dark black—it's mine
And that's fine
How it should be
Does it spell doom
My cell or my tomb
Only they know
I patch the wall—my scars
And sit—only me
Where no one else can see
This side I hide
Believe in the lies
'Cause truth is too hard to find.

Torture

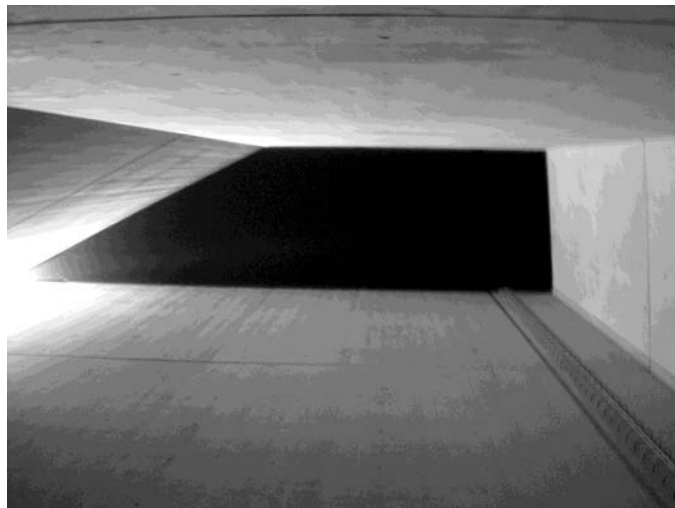
Joseph Disch

My thoughts have been set ablaze
Like a radiant forest fire.
My emotions hung by a wire,
Leaving me in a daze.

A soul shall be murdered,
And no one will call the police.
A heart to be placed in chains by your voice,
Out of your vicious and bitter hatred.

How do I survive this torture?
All you do is turn your back,
And walk away with your heart turned black.
Suddenly my mind begins to fracture.

You turn and see what you fear.
I let go of your memories, and my desires.
You hear my shattered scream as it expires.
I'm finished with you, my dear.



Escape by Amy Jane Matchett

The Real Story of the Three Little Pigs

Keyona Woods

Once upon a time, there were three little pigs that lived with their mother. Their names were Giovanni, Petrarch, and John. They laughed, played, and enjoyed the presence of the kindred spirit of their mother. One day, Mother fell ill. Lying on her death bed, their mother spoke to her baby pigs in a soft sorrowful tone.

“My sons please take care of yourselves, for I have fallen very ill. I love you. I am certain I have given you the essential needs to survive and to live a happy and peaceful life. A small fortune I will give you as a foundation for living. Use it wisely; I am not sure of how long I will live and...”

Before their mother could even finish Giovanni shrieked with misery and rejected the possibility of death. “I love you, too, Mother, but you will live. You will live forever!” Petrarch and John showed displeasure and grief. Tears rolled down the cheeks of her sons as she lay there and breathed slower and slower until she stopped breathing completely.

This devastating tragedy upset the pigs tremendously. Several years prior, their father had died at war. Now the pigs were without a parent and a place to live. Since birth, they had not left their mother’s arms once. Who would clean, cook, and wash clothes for them? The three little pigs gave their mom a proper burial, collected their inheritance, and ventured out into the world alone.

In a place far away from their previous home, the three piglets built three separate houses to live in and to start a family. Petrarch, the youngest and most naïve sibling, built a house of straw. He believed it was a material that he could buy cheaply and build quickly. He planned to spend the rest of the money on a ton of food and concubines. John, the second eldest sibling, built a house of sticks. He believed that it was a material that was inexpensive, that he could build quickly with it, and it would not irritate his sinuses. He planned to spend the rest of his money on a ton of food and games. Giovanni, the oldest, smartest, and the most mature sibling, built a house of bricks. He knew that bricks were sturdy, hard, and would last a long time. He did not care how much it would cost and how long it took to build.

One day, in search of some soup, a wolf with no teeth, ragged fur, and an unknown illness, visited Petrarch. He asked the pig politely for food, but in a hasty remark, Petrarch replied, “No, I do not have any food and I would not give you any if I had it.” The wolf begged and

begged, but Petrarch replied in the same manner. As the conversation continued, the wolf sneezed and the pig's house blew away with the wind. He apologized, but the pig had already disappeared.

Petrarch went to John's house. He told him the story about the visit from the wolf and warned him to approach him the same way he did if he came.

"He is strange and I never say anyone who looked like him," said Petrarch.

"Well, I don't think I'll like him either," replied John.

An hour later, the wolf came knocking on the door and asked John for some soup. John acted as rude as his younger sibling. The wolf stood there and begged as much as he did previously. All he wanted to get was something that would ease his excruciating hunger pains. He began to sneeze.

"AACCCCCHHHHHHHOOOOOOOOOO!!!" sneezed the wolf.

At that second, the pigs fled to their eldest brother. The wolf apologized again, and returned to his quest for soup.

On John and Petrarch's voyage to their brother's house, they, too, began to feel ill. As they were running, they began to feel as though fluid filled their lungs and they began to have a hoarse cough. They grew extremely tired. The two brothers sat down to take a breath. Their brother would just have to be smart and they would visit him later.

In the meantime, Giovanni was cooking some soup in his nice, comfortable abode. He had grown sick from working day and night on his house, but he was happy that he was finally done. As he made himself a bowl of soup, someone knocked on the door. Giovanni opens the door and the wolf cried the same plea as he did previously.

"Please, oh, please may I have some soup? I have traveled long and far and I am sick."

Giovanni replied, "Yes," handing the wolf the bowl he prepared for himself. When he closed the door, the wolf sneezed louder than he had before.

"AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!"

The house remained intact. Moments after the wolf ate his soup, he felt better and napped. The wolf and the two brothers never woke up from their slumber, for they had contracted "Black Death." The greed and prejudice of the two pigs led them to their demise. Giovanni, the courteous of the three, met a wife and lived happily with his new family.

Winteracalypse

Aaron Duafala

The world turned dark and cold,
A death wind constant blows.
The sun covered by a darkest
cloud.
Is this the end of the world,
Are these days the end of days?
Every second out of doors,
Must surely freeze me stiff.
Ice coating every surface,
Snow fiercely biting my face.
The fingers that clench my
smoke,
become so cold they may fall off.
The frigid air within my lungs,
makes every breath a chore.
And even simple walking,
Is complicated by the snow.
One week we have now felt
This frightful frozen hell,
And yet fifteen more,
We must now feel, for,
The Winteracalypse has begun.

To My Love on Christmas

DJ Martino

Much like the snowfall on a calm winter's day,
Your touch is soft, peaceful, and pure.
Like a child listening for Santa's sleigh,
Your spirit is inspiring, gleeful, and sure.

Like the lights adorning every house you see,
Your smile is bright, shining from ear to ear.
Like the wrapped presents sitting under the tree,
You bring new surprises with each passing year.

Although you can be too much to handle,
Like last-minute shopping this season,
Your voice, like an illuminating candle,
Will always give me a reason...to say I love you.



Untitled by Sean Oros

The Magic of Christmas

DJ Martino

The snow falls, blankets of diamond dust,

Enhanced by the lights of the season,

Reflecting rainbows of mystic spirit.

A magic quite natural, yet strangely hypnotic.

A lit fireplace, source of humble warmth.

Yet during this season of unexplained wonder,

It is a place of love, of shelter and cheer.

A simple magic, yet with vigorous potency.

A simple pine tree, adorned with garland and lights,

Lit for the holiday, emanating a tangible peace.

We find ourselves drawn to it, staring in awe.

Traditional, yet mystical, magic that is purely unique.

Christmas Eve, a time for celebration with friends,

A night imbued with a merry anticipation.

Sleep is not easy, but sugarplum dreams await.

A most peculiar magic, yet there all the same.

Christmas morning arrives, and all over the land,

Children are heard laughing, due to Santa's generous hand.

The house is filled with blessings. The air is filled with song.

The most potent magic, changing minds and swelling hearts.

On this most significant of seasons,

One of lights, laughter, and love,

There should never be any reason to doubt,

The magic of Christmas is in the air.

The Fairie Woods

Sean Oros

Once upon a time, there was a stout woodman named Alan, who lost his way in the woods while returning home from his lumbering. The longer he wandered, the most lost he became, until night had fallen and shrouded the emerald forest from his eyes. Strange sounds came to his ears and he despaired of ever reaching home and his wife Myrna again.

“Are you lost, human?” came a high voice with a hint of deviousness. Alan turned to see a little man, not even a foot high, standing in the deep darkness near him. He was clad in

strange garments of bright blue. “It is unwise to stray in fairie land after the golden disk has set, even one such as yourself whom we see so often.”

“I meant no offense, sir,” said Alan, meekly. “I am lost, and fear I shall never hold my Myrna again.”

Alan caught a faint glimmer of the fairie’s white grin.

“Fear not, man. I know you and your wife, who live together on the edge of the forest. If you promise to give me what you value most, I will lead you back to your home and lovely wife before my fellow’s work you harm.”

“Gladly! I will give anything to see Myrna again, even if I must give you my best ax!”

The fairie grinned again and clapped his hands. To Alan’s amazement, the trees parted and form a tunnel framed in limb, leaf, and trunk. The little man set out down the path, Alan close behind. It seemed only moments before they were at the edge of the woods, looking at Alan and Myrna’s cottage, the faint lights of the local village glimmering in the distance.

“Thank you, sir!” sighed Alan. “Now, what may I give you to fulfill our bargain?”

The little man laughed harshly.

“You promised to give me what you value most: I demand now that your wife come and live among us as one of the fairie folk from now on.”

Alan felt the forest spin about him. Never had he expected this; the fairie had tricked him. He had to think fast; already the little man was looking mischievous and loudly reminded Alan of his promise in his shrill voice.

“Very well, I will keep my word. May I have one request, in return for such a high price?”

The little man glowered at him, but at last consented, on the condition that Alan not alter the deal as it stood.

Alan desperately racked his mind for a way around the dilemma.

“In that case, I agree to let you take my wife to live among you—but you must also take me, that I will not be separated from her.”

The little man was angry to the point that Alan thought he would burst. Only after several moments he nodded his fairie head resignedly. Again, the little man clapped his

hands; within moments Myrna, too, arrived, and together she and Alan turned their backs on humanity and became members of the fairie folk.

The villagers claim to this day that Alan the woodsman lost his way and died in the forest, and that his wife was so tormented by grief that she ran into the woods and never returned. But those who are brave enough to venture near the woods at night swear they hear songs and laughter on the distant wind, past the abandoned cottage of Alan and Myrna.

Truth

Christine Reese

You can bend it.

You can misuse it.

You can mold it into something it is not.

But you can never change it.

It can be twisted,

and misused.

But you can never change it.

You can mask it.

You can shake it.

You can even mock it.

But you can never change it.

It is hated,

and upsetting.

But you can never change it.

Truth scars.

It hurts.

It destroys.

But you can never change it.

Emotions

Sean Oros

Emotion is a tide of strength, for either
good or ill.

It adds color to a life, or may its bearer
kill.

To live to love, to love to live; a distinc-
tion must be made.

Or else emotion rules your life, and
takes a different shade.

Anger is our fire; it fuels mighty feats
of life.

Or else it may drive one to an exist-
ence of naught but strife.

Grief and sorrow are strong as well;
they are a part of love.

But, when unchecked, they can be-
come despair of life above.

Love itself is greater still; it is the root
of others.

And yet to give it is a risk to bring in
good or ill.

Life is short; life is long; life is for one
to live.

Why let emotions rule one's life, when
we were made to give?

An Ode To Guy

Sean Oros

Once there was a troubled land,
To which fate had dealt a heavy hand.
Rebellion and sorcery, war and strife,
Broken allegiances, worried life.
The people did gather to end this plight,
And banded in a company of might.
And to their number, of his own choice,
Was added a hero of valiant voice.
Shout oi for the man of the sword!
Shout oi for the wit of his word!

Guy was from Ruidon, the distant land,
And came with signet of prince upon his hand.
He traveled over the foreign wilderness,
Showing the people his willing prowess.
Hope he rekindled in the hearts of all,
Help did he give to cities tall.
Foe did fear him, friend did hear him,
And never did hope seem so glim.
Shout oi for the man of the sword!
Shout oi for the wit of his word!

Their quest was seeking both peace
and war,
A league to stand and quarrel no
more.
And Guy did willingly aid this cause,
In spite of danger, without a pause.
To end of road he marched, so brave,
To seek his goal, whole lands to save.
True he was as warrior envoy,
And bold was his hearty cry of "oi!"
Shout oi for the man of the sword!
Shout oi for the wit of his word!

The Snarket's Hall

Sean Oros

Once inside a market stall,
I came across the Snarket's hall.
It was all dark and drear inside;
I only hoped I'd keep my pride.
Yet still I ran to try to hurry,
Only to run into something furry.
It threatened me with evil glares;
I could naught but stand and stare.
When suddenly I woke up in bed,
Where Mom and Dad keep me, out in
the shed.

Dresden by Amy Jane Matchett



Sinking

Ellen Lauver

I am drowning-
Slowly sinking-
Voices sounding-
Only thinking.
Drifting down-
To below-
Hit the brown-
Earth aglow.
I see black-
My eyes close-
Rope went slack-
The world unfroze.

Rumination

Amy Jane Matchett

Succumb to the darkness quickly approaching,
I feel everything; I know nothing,
Not of what is to come, that of which,
I wish not to know.
Water consumes me, slowly moves me,
Droplets of poison soak into my skin.
Do your worst; envelop me.



Untitled by Sean Oros

Clear Air

Aaron Duafala

There is too much clear air in my life,
I need a burning bridge to cloud my view.
Without smoke, without hate,
I cannot see, I cannot feel.
Hatred is the fuel,
That keeps my heart beating.
Stacking the bodies of those,
Who broke and betrayed me,
Upon the alter of my Hate.
I watch as the black acrid smoke,
Billows skyward from the conflagration.
And it gives me strength,
Strength that I now lack.
Without that fire, I grow cold inside.
I have nothing left, No Love,
No Hate, No emotion.
I feel an empty void.
And am left wondering,
Why I made peace with those,
Who only deserve fire.
Is forgiveness a gift from God,
Or a curse of the devil?

Roamer

Sean Oros

Long and forlorn are the roads of one doomed to roam.
Lonely is the traveler with no place to call home.
Dark and cheerless are the nights spent in foreign land.
But on he presses—ever on—to prove he is a man.

“Heavy is my heart within me,” is his mournful plea,
“For I am outcast, doomed to roam, by ‘wise’ and ‘just’ decree.
“Troubled are my weary steps, and heartsick is my soul.
“But onwards must I ever press, if I am to find my goal.”

Friends he has, and these he seeks; they are his last resort.
And there he stops, for a time, in a welcome court.
With them he rests, but alas, he knows he cannot stay.
The road still beckons; on must he tread, if ever to find his way.

He seeks a companion for his road, to aid him on the way.
But too early is the hour; too troubling is his load.
Though great is his desire, he would but burden with his plight.
Determined he must press on alone to carry out his flight.

Broken was his previous home; this now he sees.
Yet still his heart is lonesome; long he mourns upon his knees.
His mind is confused as to what is truth, and doubts assail with pain.
But the road leads on, and upon it he will make his gain.

The world is new; too long has he been locked in feudal hold.
He, thought a rebel in his land, finds his thoughts are old.
Much there is to learn for him; much there is to know.
But learn he will, if die he must, to string knowledge’s bow.

Life is never easy; lives are always lived.
Many of us are lost or waylaid; seek always to forgive.
Friend and foe, prince and pauper do walk the wearying way.
We all are on a journey; let us all be all we may.



Untitled by Allen Morrill

Wearied Spirit

Sean Oros

My spirit is a troubled soul,
With worries and complaints.
I give myself to all I meet,
And keep a tattered shell.

My face is scarred, my back is weak,
I have not strength to boast of.
All I have are failures and errors,
In an overflowing cup.

Faith in God is what is left,
And that at times is weak.
I hope alone in Him above
To save me from myself.

There have been times, it is true,
I thought my life to take.
Only duty stayed my hand,
Though rarely I heed its call.

I am tired, weak and faint,
Hardly a man of youth.
I have aged before my time,
A 'has been' before an 'am'.

I cannot really complain of life,
Except, of course, for me,
Shall I someday be strong or true?
That we yet shall see.

Suicidal Tendencies

Aaron Duafala

Drops of Blood Fall to the ground,
Suicidal Tendencies unleashed.

A loaded gun,
To temple tightly pressed.
This feels good, this feels right.
A slight squeeze, a light pull,
Of trigger lets bullet fly,
To splatter blood and brains upon the
wall.

This is all it takes, with such ease,
All pain and sadness left behind,
With the lifeless body upon the floor.

But Before the hammer falls,
Saner thoughts return.
What a waste of life,
of future time?

What joys and happiness I may miss?
And worse, the sadness brought about,
To friends and brothers whom love me so.
A hole in their hearts like that in my head,
Such a fate would surely create.

Their love for me is real indeed,
And what greater love could be sought?

With these thoughts in mind,
The gun slowly lowered,
Emptied and put away.
Drops of sweat fall to the ground,
Suicidal tendencies retrained.

Lost Soul

Sean Oros

Scarred and weary, weak and lost, the traveler did press on.
Through dark of night, through heat of day, forever and anon.

Some nights he found a town to stay, but sleepless he remained;

His troubled mind his greatest foe, he never stayed for long.

Friends he met, and help he had; it was his only way.

But never would he stay in place; it was his curse, they say.

His past was dark and twisted, his future bleak and drear;
He, who once resisted, seemed to care not whom he pained.

He permitted no one to love him; he allowed no bonds to form,

Forever more, doomed by himself, a wanderer he remained.



Untitled by Sean Oros

The Bear and the Bees

Timothy Hutton

Deep in the thick forest, there lived a hive of bees. Because of their diligence and dedication to their hive and their queen, they produced the sweetest of all honey. Throughout the spring, they pollinated countless flowers and prepared enough honey so that the hive could thrive through the fall and winter seasons. One summer day, a hungry bear came wandering through the forest. The irresistible smell of fresh honey led the bear directly to the hive. With uncontrollable hunger, the bear reached in, taking handful after handful of the bees hard-earned, precious honey. Unable to be chased away, the bear departed with a full stomach, leaving the bees with an empty hive. Furious and vengeful, the bees plotted against the bear in hopes of his death. Meanwhile, the bear, guilty of his gluttonous ways, picked all the flowers in the fields to help the bees replenish their hive. Upon the bear's return to the hive, the bees swarmed, vengefully stinging the bear so as to kill him. But as each bee attacked, one after the other, they lost their stingers and died, inflicting no harm to the bear's thick skin. With ruthless rage the swarm had attacked the bear, unknowing of his regret, and no bees survived.

“While revenge may provide momentary satisfaction in fantasy,

it may be pointless, with no lasting results.”

Lexicological Conundrum

DJ Martino

C-O-M-B...comb

D-O-N...don

B-O-M-B...bomb

S-O-N...son

T-O-M-B...tomb

C-H-A-M-B-E-R...chamber

Y-O-U-R...your

C-L-A-M-B-E-R...clamber

H-O-U-R...hour

H-O-M-E...home

G-L-O-V-E...glove

C-O-M-E...come

C-L-O-V-E...clove

M-O-S-T...most

B-O-T-H...both

C-O-S-T...cost

D-O-T-H...doth

B-I-N-D-E-R...binder

W-E-R-E...were

H-I-N-D-E-R...hinder

M-E-R-E...mere

R-I-V-E-R...river

H-E-A-R...hear

D-I-V-E-R...diver

W-E-A-R...wear

It's no wonder people are confused.

Even "phonetically" can't be read phonetically.

Literary Critic Criticism

DJ Martino

Maybe it just isn't there.

Would the author truly care?

It doesn't say it, but let us see

What nonsense we can dredge from this story.

He killed his wife. No, it was suicide.

The mother was actually spiteful inside.

Is this a positive stance on war?

These debates in absurdity make my head sore.

Is it a response to some traumatic event?

Did the author want the protagonist to build a tent?

Maybe he wants us to eat more beans.

Some of these observations are simply obscene.

The deeper meaning is "greed overtakes you."

No, it's "don't throw sticks at eagles."

The child's death symbolizes the death of the new.

The firstborn son heralds something regal.

To read it is invigorating, relaxing, and grand.

To discuss it is infuriating, maddening, and bland.

I wish people would quit trying to sound smart

And simply enjoy literature as it is: an art.

Finishing Poetry

Bess Onegow

The rope strangling me
to the chair is tight,
holding me to one position,
not knowing I cannot
be held.

It's a dark basement
they've put me in.
The rats nibble
at my toes,
obliterating my ending
in tiny, bite-sized morsels.

They approach me
with a hose.
"What do you mean?"
I cannot answer,
the dusty cowboy
bandana in my mouth
bites my cheeks.

Thwack.

They rain blows upon
my bare shoulders,
having stripped me
of everything familiar,
everything natural.

They look into my eyes,
but only see the color.
They miss the hidden depths,
the ocean with its waves
crashing at the edges
of my irises.

I only want them
to look at me,
and pour their hopes
and dreams, fears
and weaknesses
into my ears,
then listen
to what comes out.

Crusade of Learning

Sean Oros

“We cannot give more ground. This is our last stand.”

The others nodded grimly. They knew what they were up against. All the strength of Ignorance, a vast and seething horde, surged towards them. The brave crusaders were direly outnumbered. They suffered from ill supply, poor communication, and lack of support.

“We will not give up our hope!” shouted the leader again, raising his sword so that it caught the first rays of the rising sun. “We have been sent to reclaim this city from the foe whom would consume and destroy it, our wretched arch-nemesis Oblivion!”

The crusaders exchanged nervous glances. The enemy was drawing nearer. Soon the contest would begin. The crusaders looked over their shoulders at the city they now defended. There lived an ignorant people, many of whom had been unreceptive to their mission.

“Must we die for them?” ran mutters through the ranks. “They scorn us!”

The captain saw this, and removed his helmet so that the faint wind caught at wisps of his graying ebony hair. His face was scarred and pitted, an ugly testament to the legion of trials he had endured.

“Look at me! I would not bear these marks if I did not realize how to fight and win such a fight! I have seen many such cities as this. It is never any different. When we first arrive, when the first seed of truth is planted in their head, we are openly mocked and looked upon as a foe, an invader. But will we surrender them without a fight? Will we let their folly betray them to ignorance? It would be treason! We may lose our lives, and our efforts will be wasted—but I would rather die honorably than to have never tried to save this city!”

There was no more time to speak. The enemy was upon them. Everything the crusaders had worked for in the past few months was about to be put to the test.

Morgan sat down to face the Western Humanities test.

The Red Pen

Rebecca Neff

*Thou ill-formed offspring of my feeble brain,
Who after birth did'st by my side remain,
Till snatched from thence by friends, less wise than true,
Who thee abroad exposed to public view;
--Anne Bradstreet's "The Author to her Book" (ll. 1-4)*

There it lies in its crimson sternness,
a literary child ready to be disciplined.
Each stroke made may cause an author's
tears, but 'tis only beneficial.
Teach this child of text and make
it learn the proper ways of words.
For this bloody pen should be feared,
but only of the marked flaws overlooked.
Personal perfection is just ahead.
Keep a weathered eye on the horizon,
for mistakes make everyone and
'tis nothing shameful, just an
act of human nature.
So wipe thy damp eyes and grab
novel ink and paper.
A world of scrawl waiting to be
discovered, with literary equipment
enriching the crowning of a work.
Never fear, for this crimson sternness
serves to highlight mistakes--
to better the author's future labors.
For once the offspring is reared,
it is the romancer's choice to
continue with the literary
quest or to cower in the
fear of an infantile attempt.



Untitled by Sean Oros

Do Not Give In To What Will Bring You Down

Ashley Adkins

Do not give in to what will bring you down.
The obstacles will always test your mind,
The light will always shine in through your life.

Some people quit and never do succeed,
But others follow through to that bright light.
Do not give into what will bring you down.

Just like the old and wise would say down South,
“Don’t let no other person tear you down.”
The light will always shine in through your life.

Grenades are often thrown into the mind,
But you are really your own true hero.
Do not give into what will bring you down.

The others in your life will say the same,
You can, you can, you can, you will, you will.
The light will always shine in through your life.

It’s scary sometimes on your own out there,
But you will persevere and break right through.

Do not give into what will bring you down.
The light will always shine in through your life.



Untitled by Sean Oros

Nameless Faces

Aurora Cullison

There they are
Faded and black
You watch as their eyes crack
It burns
It stings
But you can't hear a single thing
Their screams fill a shallow night
But you couldn't make it right
You'll just watch
Drink your scotch
Let the poison take you
Because you never knew
You never saw
But when you think,
Your skin will crawl
As their dead bodies hit the floor
You will drink some more
Let them fly
Let them die
You never knew them any way
Never knew their names

I Run

Steven Morgan

I try to get away,
I run from my peers,
I hear the calling of expectations,
I run from my fears,
but when the dust settles,
my body finds itself in its lecture hall seat,
ready to take on what the day has,
and try to show the world my greatest feat.

The Deal Breaker

Shane J. Martin

There once was a boy named John, who was always making and breaking deals with others. He constantly found ways to avoid fulfilling his promises. When John needed to borrow his sister's money to buy food, he promised to reimburse her; however, a few days later, he said that he was unable to pay her back because he was caught in a fire, and the money burned to ashes. John also promised his friend Bob that he would help him paint his house in return for his help with building a wall. Nevertheless, after his wall was finished, John feigned a leg injury that, he claimed, would not heal for months, lasting longer than the painting of Bob's house. John needed to be taught a lesson about all of his deal breakers, but this was difficult because he always got both sides of the bargain.

One day, John needed a new car because his current car was too dangerous to drive. He did not want to spend a lot of money, so he tried to find sellers with decent cars at affordable prices. On his way to the next shop, he observed a sign on the side of the road that read "Car Sale This Way." John decided to take a look around, but he saw no cars in the lot. As he left, an elderly woman came forward and asked him if he was looking for a car. John disappointingly said, "I am, but you're all out." The old woman awkwardly replied, "Yes, it seems that way, doesn't it? Well, I still have one car left, and I'd be willing to sell it to you." John asked to look at the car; the old woman brought it out to him and said it costs \$5,000. John was fond of the car but did not have the \$5,000 with him, so he inquired if he could return later with the money. The old woman replied, "Okay, you can pay me later for the car. I will give you the car, but you need to give me your word that you will pay me the \$5,000 by sunset in three days." John austerey replied, "I give you my word." In a high-pitched voice, the old woman said, "Very well. Enjoy your car, and I hope to hear from you in three days."

John drove off the lot in his new car on his way home. Arriving at his house, he slyly said, "I'm not paying that old hag for the car. She won't remember anything after today. I pulled one over on her. I'll never see her again! I got a new car...for FREE!" After three days passed, John needed to go to the store for food. As he drove to the store, he passed by the place from which he received his car. Suddenly, the engine failed, stalling John in front of the mysterious car lot. He stepped out of the car to look under the hood; when he closed it, he found the old woman standing next to him. "Ah, I see you have returned to pay me the money for this automobile," she said calmly. John nervously replied, "Sorry, I don't have your money. I was, uh, just driving home to get it at my house." "Liar!" the old woman declared. "You are driving away from your house. You were never going to pay me. You promised me \$5,000 for this car by sunset in three days, and look, it is the third sunset since you bought the car, and you have no money. You gave me your word, and your word I shall have!"

Suddenly, dark clouds covered the sky, and lightning struck with a strong wind. The old woman chanted and began mysteriously moving her hands, as if she were casting a spell. When she finished, John's tongue had been transformed into a rock, and he could not speak! The old woman said, "You gave me your word, and now I have it—all of them! For all of the deals you made, you gave your word, and you never honored it! Your words were as good as rocks and this rock tongue represents all of those broken contracts. Now, not only can you no longer speak, but you also have another broken car to deal with!"

As the old woman walked away in silence, John sat on the ground, sobbing with many tears, but with no sound to accompany them.

Goodbyes Without Hellos

Aurora Cullison

In the corner, all alone
Under a blanket that provides no warmth at all
Next to a picture that's burnt at the corners
Among the living even though she's dead,
According to all who see her
Across the hall is a nursery
Inside of which is empty
Like a drum her heart beats; empty, hallow, and deep
After the heart break, she's amazed that it can beat at all
Under her bed is a box, holding toys she never got to
pass down
Outside it is raining, or maybe it's the tears of the children who were killed
Of those who missed them so much they joined them
On the table sits a bouquet of flowers, dead like her brother who never really lived
After it all we say goodbye, to those who never said hello.



Untitled by
Amy Jane
Matchett

How to Mend a Broken Heart: Recipe Guide

Allison Gardner

Human Heart

Ingredients: scissors, white thread, needle, a red magic marker, super glue

Hold heart as steady as possible.

For best results, do not give your heart away to anyone else.

With the scissors, cut a piece of white thread to the length desired.

Next, firmly attach the thread to the needle.

After white thread is firmly attached to needle, hold your breath.

Stick needle in carefully and begin to intertwine the white thread into broken pieces

Try not to cry, this process tends to be painful.

In order to assure maximum hold, apply super glue over any pieces that are not directly put together.

After super glue is dry, color the white thread with the red magic marker.

At first glance, this will not be satisfying.

This will be a painful healing process.

It will look and feel better over time.

Again, do not let someone else take care of your heart.

Fin

Aaron Duafala

The mercy within my heart,
signals far beyond any doubt,
That I must turn and walk away.
For your sins are unforgivable,
and if I can forget them,
then you are doomed to repeat,
the acts which drove me away.
I have suffered enough in life,
and I don't want any more pain.
If I try to bandage this cut,
the next will slice twice as deep.
And I know there will be a next,
for if you can do this once,
it will happen again and again.
Oh what a pity this turned to be.
I had such hope in this venture.
But for my tender feelings,
you gave not a single damn.
Your harlots breath shall not,
enter into my body ever again.
I thought I asked for so little,
But my requests proved too great,
a burden to place upon you.
And now I sit here in disappointment.
Such similar histories we had,
but very different paths we now take.
I must kill all emotion within me,
For my desire to forgive you,
can only mean pain in my future.



Untitled by Sean Oros



Untitled by
Sean Oros

Gone

Ellen Lauver

Deeply breathing with a
Troubled gaze.
Staring into the fiery haze.
All gone, all burnt away-
Gone are the memories of those
Joyous days.
Everything vanished all up in smoke.
Eyes do water- the air does choke.
Life burns down bit by bit.
And I fall down, along with it.

The Turning

DJ Martino

Remove from your face that halcyon glaze.
I tire of your ignorance, your polite façade.
Your tranquil words, laced with daggers,
Carry a hostile meaning beneath a veil of civility.
Devilish undertones, hidden words of malcontent,
Smiles, seemingly warm, realistically frigid,
Melt the naïve with your falsely kind eyes.
No matter the volume, tone, or inflection,
You are a stumbling fountain of lies and misdirection.

Ex Post-Mortem

Leah Kook

One day, some day, I will die.
Things like these remain unplanned.
What's it like to not exist?
Will I finally understand those things I pondered in my life?
And will I have a place to go?
Will I be rewarded there?
Or will I be punished? Though
These things of grave importance have me cold and stiff, no pun intended,
I must wonder what they'll say. I've planned ahead for when I'm ended:
I'm an organ donor. But a birthmark in a funny place might have the surgeon in a fit.
My name will surely be disgraced.

One day, some day, I will die.
Will I have to wait in line, wherever I am going to? Will I be alone, and cursed,
To wander without purpose but to ponder which of these is worse?
One day, some day, I will die. Unless I am already dead,
Which renders useless tragic thoughts. Although it could be true instead
That I might never die? And will I even realize if I do?
Suppose my dying for the best. Out with old and in with new,
Although some cultures do believe we live again. It seems so rough,
Since twice is quite obscene, I mean, and
Dying once is quite enough.



Magenta by Leah Kook

Into Inexorable

Pastor Bill Bixby

We
push
up
up
through
winter-iced soil
into
inexorable
short, bright, blossom, die-
down
days.

Wisdom is optional.

(A meditation based on seeing crocuses poking through brittle, late February ground, with trace reference to Psalm 90.)

Things Are Different Round Here...

Alison Lange

People not really sure where they're going
Just existing in the same space.
Planning, planning, planning-
While waiting for everything to actually start
Are we really living?
Creating dreams, that we may or may not live.
Short-lived liberation in quiet anticipation
Of nothing extraordinary
The real world awaits our entrance
Differences of opinion strike up different conversation
Our best friends exist in the alcohol and the bedroom.
Real connection seems hard to find.
Leaving behind everything we knew
To enter a sheltered world of knowledge and intellectual falsehoods
What are we waiting and planning for?

Life

Sean Oros

I wonder what life is for,
If all we know is loss.
The flower wilts, the being dies,
And fades does beauty's gloss.
But hope there is, true and bright,
Against the tide of pain;
For here we see but a glimpse
Of Him who is our Gain.
We may accept the beauties here,
Knowing there is something more,
And thereby in that knowledge know
Beauty far greater than before.

The End?

Ellen Lauver

The quiet air breathes steady/
It makes me all more the ready.
The peaceful night closes in/
All is still, silent as sin.
My lids weary with sleep/
Are heavy and hard open to keep.
I sense the end, of this long hard day/
And my eyes close to come what may.