



# THE PHOENIX

**SESQUICENTENNIAL EDITION**



**SPRING 2016**

# The Phoenix

## Sesquicentennial Edition

### Spring 2016

#### Editors-in-Chief

Ashley Johnson

Amanda Zimmerman

#### Chief Editor of Layout and Content

Ashley Johnson

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Nathan Flory

Audra Franley

Dr. Mary Theresa Hall

Ashley Johnson

Dr. Jared Johnson

Tina Kramer

Kourtney Polvinale

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Jordan Smith

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#### Cover Artwork

Joseph Pouliot

#### Faculty Advisors

Dr. Mary Theresa Hall

Dr. Jared Johnson

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# Rowing

Allen Morrill



## Note from Sigma Tau Delta Advisor

Dr. Mary Theresa Hall

### **Welcome to *The Phoenix*, Thiel College's creative literary and artistic publication!**

New life from the ashes of the Civil War! In 1866, Thiel opened its doors, and the life and energy it has put forth for the past 150 years has proven to be the light of the world (*lux mundi*) and the word of God (*verbum Dei*). This issue is dedicated to the Board of Trustees, alumni, administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents, and friends who have graced this campus and taken care of it judiciously so that Thiel may celebrate its 150th birthday this year.

With this edition, we sponsors of *The Phoenix*—Sigma Tau Delta, the English Department, and the English Club—are pleased again to share with you the poetry, fiction, artwork, and photography submitted by our students, faculty, and alumni.

The variety of literary and artistic contributions we receive each year makes the editorial board's selection a wonderfully challenging and enjoyable endeavor. This year, we had the privilege of reading and evaluating approximately eighty submissions and of working with dedicated and conscientious editors and the editorial board. I am especially grateful to each member.

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.

# Fragments of My Mind

Nathan Flory

I. Br/ok\en

Worthless, nothing (\_\_\_): how I feel

Above all else, the pain is real

Betrayed and b-r o k\ e n all I am

Below all else, I'm just human

I've been betrayed but

I'm a betrayer, too

Stabbed in the back but

At the tip of my knife was >you.

Everything seems to be a shadow of the past;

Were those things not meant to last?

There are plenty of "could"s and "should"s that are not.

These pages I write are the words left unsaid;

The poison spills out of my mind as ink on paper while I write

I'm not perfect, and never will be.

I'm haunted, insane,

Flawed beyond repair.

XLII. Seventeen and all your dreams

Knocking on your front door;

Twenty-five you realize that

Nothing is the same as before.

I'm halfway there, from one to the next,

Wondering how I got here.

Twenty-one and those same

Dreams are nowhere near.

**You aren't alone, there's  
more than a few**

**Who struggle with doubt-  
fear-anorexia-anxiety-too-**

**peerpressure-depression**

**I know I left some out, too,**

**You're not alone in this;**

**there's a company of us**

**And we're called h-u-m-a-n-s**

So many people  
—Both good and bad ones—  
Are huge parts of who I am.  
Not just memories, but  
Who I am.  
I am proud to be a mosaic  
Of both myself  
And the actions and words of  
Such valuable others  
Who have helped form me.  
And in return,  
I give a piece of myself to each person I know.

XIX. I'm so lost I'm not sure I'm lost anymore  
Too busy to even know I'm lost—  
Maybe that's the worst kind of lost,  
Or the best.  
Sometimes frustrated by my inability to do everything,  
But where's the fun in not testing and pushing the boundaries and limits in life?

Ever love and hate at the same time?  
Want to die and live simultaneously?

Yet I yearn for consistency  
Intimacy, depth, meaning  
That I've not yet found;  
I ache for assurance;  
I long for longevity;  
I hope for Heaven;  
I expect eternity.

XXXVIII. Do you ever feel like you're  
Chasing the sun on the horizon;  
You occasionally get such beautiful views:  
The fluorescent rays across the sky,  
A blindingly golden orb,  
But just keep striving  
Without ever fully grasping it?

XXX. I'll try a rhyme scheme once again,  
I thought I ought though I'm still broken,  
I've come a long way, I think,  
From that brink I was on, man, I didn't sink!  
Cause people will push you and people will test you  
But often enough, who's toughest on you is you;  
The pressures pile high  
And one day, one day, you might wanna say goodbye.  
But it's okay to be broken, it's really brOK  
That it's tough sometimes to get up for the day.  
It's a real-world issue; it's not just you:  
You aren't alone, there's more than a few  
Who struggle with doubt-fear-anorexia-anxiety-too-  
peerpressure-depression  
I know I left some out, too,  
You're not alone in this; there's a company of us  
And we're called h-u-m-a-n-s  
So the next time you get pushed to that brink, that ledge,  
You try but you cry and you just wanna die so  
You leap—

But you don't fall,

You fly.

## Snow Faeries

Kyley Raskob

Frozen

Cold

Bittersweet the frostbite

Hurtful yet numbing at the same time

Icicles hanging from trees

Snow falling against the night sky

Like glitter

The ground littered with sparkles

Little twinkling fairies swirling in the night

Gravity pulling them down

Who says magic doesn't exist?

## Greylock

Allen Morrill



## Autumn Faeries

Kyley Raskob

A light Chill

Shivers

Summer fluttering away like the crisp colored leaves headed for the ground

Fog sweeps the grass

Covered in cold morning dew

Sparkling in the rays of sun still peeking through the clouds

Gold and silver light glinting off of the blades

Like magic

Dusting the soft dying grass

Don't you believe in fairies?

# At the Mid-September Ball Game

Chris Moinet

The scoreboard flashes,  
Cavalry charges are played over the PA system,  
And players hustle down the baseline as if it mattered,  
But we all know better:  
The few thousand fans scattered throughout the rows of empty seats,  
The bored stadium operatives,  
And even, perhaps most surely, the players themselves,  
Playing out the string, far out of contention, in the last weeks of a six-month odyssey  
Begun in the hopefulness of April;  
Now, autumnal, with winter looming,  
Bittersweetness, with a subtle chill and the smell of  
grilled hot dogs, pervades the air,  
As we all try desperately to ignore the standings,  
And the calendar,  
And our deep weariness.

## Lament for Innocence

Tina Kramer

**I remember a memory  
Of a time I thought crime  
Was black and white.  
That you were inherently  
Good or evil and the  
Darkness existed to  
Balance the light.**

## Invitation to the Masquerade

Kayla Cramer

Carriages ascend, the beginning of the end  
Friend and foe promenade across the floor  
Uniforms of colored gowns and tailored suits

Smiling trenches on paper masks  
Sharpened claws inside white gloves  
Weapons of pearls and gold

Lace covers shallow scars  
Snipers whisper in laughs  
Artillery low as the burning candles

Carriages carry away the worn and beaten  
Embers of melodies haunt the night  
The faceless ghouls guard fresh graves  
As war drums fade to a chorus of violins

# To Catch a Predator

Vincent Kuznicki

I sat at the end of the bar and stared into my glass of rye. A hard day calls for a hard drink, and every day is hard when you're a private detective in New York City. The dicks down at the NYPD think they've got it bad just because they see a couple dozen corpses a week, but that's small potatoes compared to my beat. There're parts of the city where the cops don't care to go, run-down neighborhoods where the freaks and criminals run the show. The city proper walls itself off, lives in its fancy high-rise apartments, pretends the other places don't exist. But when your daughter disappears in the middle of the night, you can bet some mutant from the slums is the one that took her.

And I mean mutant literally. I don't know if it's something in the water, or something that should be in the water, but sooner or later most of the poor bastards who live down there start to change. Some just get all deformed, like they were made by a kid playing with clay. Others end up growing horns or hair all over. But the most dangerous and violent are what they call the lizards, guys who start to grow scaly green skin and rows of fangs the size of your finger. The worst of them even get the eyes, big and yellow with a black slit down the middle. Those are the ones you gotta watch out for. I'd fought the bastards more times than I'd like, and it was starting to take a toll on me. Mess with my head. Sometimes I'd look in the mirror and see two slits staring back at me. That's when you need a cold shower or a hot meal to get your head right.

One of the bug-eaters was probably behind the case I was working, the latest in a string of missing persons. Kids were being snatched right out of their beds, at least one a night for the past week, and not a single one had been found. It was definitely related, but without a clue as to how, I had to hit the streets and smoke out some answers.

It was late morning, and the bums under the bridge were just waking up to their familiar hangovers when I arrived. You didn't get the best information in the morning, but at least they stayed put. Later in the day a hobo is just as likely to run away or shove a rusty shiv in your side as he is to beg for some change.

I picked the man with the least glass to his eyes and gave him a nudge with my foot. "Hey, fella, I need to ask you a couple questions."

He looked up and squinted at me. "Spare a dime, mister?" His speech was slurred, whether from drink or deformity I couldn't tell.

"I've got a penny for every answer you've got," I replied, flashing a shiny new copper cent at him. "Gonna help me out?"

The bum's eyes widened at the sight of the coin, and he tugged on his beard as if it started the gears of his brain. "Well yeeehaaaah, I think I can help ya! Whaddaya need?"

"I've got a whole flock of mother ducks wondering where their ducklings are. You know anything about that?" I figured the situation called for some subtlety.

The hobo scrunched his face and let his near-toothless mouth hang open in confusion. "Ducks? Who the fuck is lookin' for a duck? You some kinda pet detective?" He chuckled to himself, the wheezing laugh quickly becoming a hacking cough.

"It's just an expression, you mook. A metaphor. I'm looking for some missing kids."

"Well why didn't you jus' say so! If you're lookin' for kids... I dunno nothin' about any'a that stuff! But Little Jimmy might," he grinned his gummy grin, eyes locked on the penny. I dropped it into his palm and he continued, "He's a little blind boy that sits out by the church," the bum cheerily lay his head back on his newspaper pillow and promptly passed out. I sighed, dropped another penny on him, and went to follow up on the lead.

I was surprised that this part of town had a church at all, but I guess heaven seems even sweeter when you live in hell. The building wasn't much, just a rickety wooden thing with a short steeple that looked like a light wind would topple it. A few people milled about on the sidewalk outside, dragging swollen, misshapen feet or hiding their maladies under tightly wrapped clothes. What I thought was a small pile of brown rags in the alleyway beside the church turned out to be Little Jimmy, a sickly-looking boy who might have just been a particularly tiny man. I wouldn't put it past any of these people to impersonate a kid, hoping to prey on just that little extra bit of sympathy. His ears stuck out from the side of his thin face, making him seem even more childlike. Or maybe rat-like. It's a fine line, sometimes.

"Jimmy?" I asked.

He looked up, his watery little eyes only adding to the rodential mystique. "Yeah?"

I knelt down beside him. Kids usually respond when you get on their level. "I need to know about some children who have gone missing. Can you tell me anything about that?"

"Kids go missing all the time, here," he said softly, sniffing and wiping his nose on his sleeve. "What's so special about these ones?"

"Their parents hired me to find them. They're really worried, and I know they'd appreciate it if you could help me."

"I can't," Jimmy shook his head before looking down at the ground. "I can't help you..."

"Why not? What's wrong?"

“No!” The kid looked panicked now, “I can’t!”

“Calm down, kid, I’m just trying to-“

“No! No no no no no no no! They’ll find out, they’ll come get me, no!”

“Who? Please, just tell me-“

“No!” Jimmy shut his eyes and pressed his palms to his ears, flattening them against his head as he shook it back and forth, repeating that one word over and over. He was starting to attract attention, and I knew my little interrogation was over. With no other leads, I spent the rest of the day walking all around town and getting nowhere.

So now here I was in some dive, staring into my drink, trying to take the edge off my frustration. I was almost to the bottom of my glass, almost feeling good, when a man walked through the door. He was big, and judging by his work clothes had come straight from the docks. The kind of guy who looks like a New Jersey accent sounds.

I ignored him at first, even when he sat down just a stool over from me. He sat silently for a while before speaking, though he never looked at me once. “I know where they are.”

“What? Are you talking to me?”

“The kids. I know where he’s keeping them.”

“How did you-“

“I saw you asking around.”

“Shit.”

“Don’t worry, he won’t know you’re coming. I just want to help stop him. I want out.” He slid me a scrap of paper with an address on it. “He calls himself Gecko.”

“Figures. I bet he thinks he’s clever.”

“Clever enough. Be careful.”

I nodded my thanks, finished my drink, and walked out into the night. If this guy was telling the truth, I couldn’t afford to waste another moment.

The address on the paper led me to a hovel on the edge of the slums, by the river. It was barely more than a shack with a window, and looked completely deserted. I snooped around a bit, making sure the coast was clear before slipping inside to look around. It didn’t take long to find a trap door half-hidden under an old wooden bookshelf. Pushing the shelf aside, I found that

the door opened easily to reveal a ladder. As I began to climb down, the last thing I remember is the door swinging shut on my head.

He was huge, an absolute monster with thick scales, blood-stained fangs, and claws bigger than any switchblade I'd ever seen. Weirdest thing was, he spoke damn good English. "One dip in that pool and you'll be one of us. We've been watching you for a while."

I woke in a large chamber that seemed to be part of a natural cave. A pool of thick green liquid, almost like a pond full of nothing but scum, bubbled nearby. And then I saw the children. Almost a dozen boys and girls, bound and gagged, huddled in a corner of the cave. Two of them were already dead.

"Hello, detective. Nice of you to finally wake up," a deep voice echoed around the chamber.

"Who are you?" I sputtered, still trying to get my bearings. This was not the sort of situation I was used to.

"My man already told you my name," the voice responded. Gecko.

"Your... aw, dammit. I knew it was too good to be true." I'd fallen for the oldest trick in the book, and I was about to pay for it.

"That's right. We need some new blood, and you're the perfect candidate. You see, you've been hunting down too many of my boys, putting bullets through their chests or locking them up in cages. You're good. A natural predator," Gecko grinned as he finally stepped into view. He was huge, an absolute monster with thick scales, blood-stained fangs, and claws bigger than any switchblade I'd ever seen. Weirdest thing was, he spoke damn good English. "One dip in that pool and you'll be one of us. We've been watching you for a while."

"But what about the kids? How do they play into this?" I wanted some answers, even if it didn't matter anymore.

Gecko grinned wider, drawing his long, forked tongue across his gleaming fangs. "Bait."

# To The Terrible Teacher

Tina Kramer

I should hate you, old educator.  
For your game is quite unappealing  
On the first day of class, you kept us writing  
Bell rung; no matter, read for tomorrow.  
I thought for sure you'd be my foe.

I should run from you, new mentor.  
For your tests are a trap of thought  
The review day did not prepare me at all  
Not finished; no matter, pencils down now.  
I thought for sure I would throw in the towel.

I should avoid you, dear teacher.  
For your criticism cut too deep  
When unprepared, you asked me to explain  
Not sure; no matter, try again for tomorrow.  
I thought for sure you'd be my foe.

I should love you, terrible teacher  
For your thoughts were too large  
When I thought I was smart, you showed more I need know  
Not ready; no matter, you will be by the end.  
Terrible teacher, best ever friend.

## Your Hurting Heart

Sean Oros

**I've seen your pain, your hurting heart,  
Your lonely soul that's torn apart.  
Dismayed, it seems, by all you love,  
With wavering faith of God above,  
A tired body and a weary mind,  
Longing for just someone who's kind.  
Your former pillars now ruined heaps,  
Loves, once strong, with sadness seep;  
Friends are distant, too far to help,  
And no one hears your hurting yelp.  
What's gone is gone, not to return,  
Yet still for love your heart does yearn.**

# The Death Stand

Sean Oros

Hold the line and hold it fast.  
Our final fight has come at last!  
Take the walls and stand your ground,  
For we are surely all death-bound.  
So cast aside your hope or fear;  
Only pain is certain here.  
Grab your foe and face your fate,  
Your final moments consumed in hate.  
Grapple demons or roar in rage—  
All the same you shall not age.  
Die where you stand, no point to run,  
For night has come and life is done.  
They come, they come, in teeming hordes!  
Now string your bows and raise your swords.  
Die with honor or run in shame;  
You'll still all die here just the same.



## New Student Orientation

Allen Morrill

# From Here

Noel Stanger

There's a pharmacy in Little Brook, but the one in Pyhrrie County is right off of Route 66. The towns are separated by a few miles, but the lure of a road that slices through a continent with so little hesitation always overrides the impatience of last minute and late night errands. The keys clink in my hand before the thought is fully strung.

If I were honest, I would say I've been looking for reasons to drive at night. The white noise of the ignition muffles everything small and solid. On any road, the world shrinks, but at night, my side of it rolls away from the sun, then melts and stretches into the whole of the vast and magnifying universe. There, synapses of star clusters spark and fire. Gravity loosens its grip. With enough practice, you can feel the slope of the galaxy shift; an expansion; a small release.

It's a belated answer to the feeling I get when I walk through the travel section of any book store, which I always accidentally find. I make concentric circles through varnished wood, see it in the corner of my eye. I move in closer, step back, step right, step in. I run my hands haphazardly up and down spines; India, Israel, Spain, The Baltic Coast. I choose one and turn randomly to this page or that: Stories in miniscule font; "Best Places to Eat" in Essex; "Can't Miss Beaches" of the Greek Islands. I put the book neatly back on the shelf when I notice my stomach has been twisting. Suddenly violent, the urge to move heaves into my throat until I taste acid, and I run to the safe stagnation of Literary Criticism, where I spend the rest of the afternoon arguing in margins.

In the car, I am very aware of the vinyl on the steering wheel, the soft static cling of it, as the stitches print small indents in my skin, and somewhere nearby, all the people I might have been meet in the dark to whisper stories to each other, begging me to change the angle of my velocity by a few degrees. We sway to soft rock and the sound of neighboring planets and pulsars rushing past the open window, crashing into each other and exploding with pure energy that reverberates into millennia. Pushing softly on the pedal, I edge closer to the speed of almighty thought; 299,792,458 m/s is all I need to stop time and see the whole of my life with complete clarity, each movement side by side in wood and stone.

Until then, each of my choices flash in kinetic energy and bounce into the endless universe with no chance of return or retrieval, dazzling, but helpless against the crippling weight of passing time. But all the while, potential energy pulses just below the surface, all power and possibility; maybe a wave, a roar, a waltz or a spinning tire. It crackles in a derisive smirk, a bowed head, the right words or the very wrong ones; it gives gloss to miniscule print and supernovas; the obstinate currency of time, seeping out in small bits; hand to paper: cosmic waste. What we all know instinctively but science cannot explain adequately, is that if it sits unused for long enough, even infinite energy decays and implodes, pulls with unimaginable force, destabilizing from the inside, and that-I strongly suspect-is how black holes are formed.

A bell on the door of the drug store gives a tinny jingle. The fluorescent light is unforgiving, and I look up at my pale reflection in the aluminum ceiling. On the way to the counter, I impulsively grab a box of hair dye: "Cinnamon Stick 40A." It reminds me of the email address I created in high school to send anonymous messages to some boy whose name I spent months repeating to no one in particular, but whose face I haven't been able to reconstruct in years.

I take a Diet Coke from the cooler and plan to put it in the freezer when I get home. I'll find it in the morning and try to remember that during the day, life is in the details.

# Thirty Pieces of Silver

Sean Oros

Betrayal is a bleeding wound,  
A knife stabbed in the back;  
Few other things so hurt a soul  
Than this, true friendship's lack.

One's trust is a fragile vessel,  
Delicate, ornate, yet strong—  
Capable of holding gallons,  
But shattered by too great a wrong

Like Jesus and Iscariot,  
A bond torn apart by lies;  
False friends betray their loyalty  
And so their bonds despise.

Intent, perhaps, was not for harm,  
But intentions are not rules;  
What matters is reality  
Not what our pride so fools.

So bear in mind your purposes,  
And keep close to your friends;  
We are but weak humanity,  
With many and various ends.

## **The Existentialist**

Tina Kramer

**He speaks his word and thinks his thought,  
Like a fiddler with music, he enhances the world.  
He comes with new battles, always fought  
Like a boy, a boxer. Hands in fists, fingers curled.**

**His mind is torment, with so much doubt  
Of God and good, of events untold  
I guess that is what life's about  
Room without heat, he is not cold.**

**In times of glory, he sings "Amen!"  
His brilliance is sometimes ignored,  
Misunderstood by mortal men.  
His neck is covered, on graduation, with cord.**

**I got to know him, this man of high thought,  
I shared mine, and together, we fought.**

# Woodland Ballet

Katherine Orzeck

Limber, yet strong,  
    Willow branches waltz in the breeze  
Cautiously walking,  
    Stepping out of bounds  
Family of the woodland  
    Joining the dance  
Hand in hand  
    Two young lovers  
From cheek to cheek,  
    Smiles, dimples, and twinkling  
Gray rolls over  
    Clouds weighted together  
Lion angry in nature  
    Blowing through the arbors  
Quieted by Daniel  
    Fear no more  
Hand in hand  
    Together sweaty palms  
Releasing  
    Eyes downward, small grin  
Finding the heart  
    Wooden door awaiting entrance  
From ear to ear  
    Dazzling white sparkles  
If only it could  
    Turning back time  
Clouds above  
    Magic carpet of love  
From ear to ear between  
    Around the room a waltz  
Onward continuing  
    Possibility to make  
Arm in arm, hand in hand,  
    Warm souls blend.  
Like a deer,  
    Frolicking through the meadow  
Warm rays of sun

From cheek to cheek,  
    Smiles, dimples, and twinkling  
Hand in hand  
    Gliding and floating  
Like fallen autumnal leaves,  
    Dancing in the breeze  
Time on the mind  
    Freeze it please  
Stuck in this moment  
    Forever and ever.  
Hand in hand  
    Apart arms width  
Disappearance  
    Confusion more  
No longer beside  
    Commences search  
Woodland loneliness  
    Safety released  
Not alone  
    Follower, quick adversary  
Foreign nature  
    A home unknown  
Relentless pounding  
    Break in the sky  
Closing together  
    Washed away with gray  
Shadows galore  
    Discovery extraordinaire  
Again together  
    Different bodies blend  
Sacrifice taken  
    Need of healing wounds  
Like church mice,  
    To safety scurry  
Above, below, beside  
    Stronghold is found

Brighten the forest  
Disquiet appears  
    Wrong in the air  
Together we are  
    Together we will stay  
Inquiries arising  
    Betrayal and distrust  
Love whirlwind  
    Confusion abounding  
Hand in hand,  
    Apart arms width  
Hand separation  
    Pedestrian flight  
End behind  
    No more to lose  
Separating on no occasion  
    One are soul and body  
Forever together  
    At one with my spirit  
God and I  
    Need not more shall we  
Relentless pounding  
    Droning continuing  
Rising sunshine  
    On leaves rays dance  
Denseness rolling in  
    Heart taking toll  
Differences decide  
    Together apart  
Young lovers  
    Separated in plight  
A light seen  
    Glimpse end tunnel entry  
Together no more  
    Lovers no more  
Evermore and evermore  
    Together no more.



Tree  
Alison Schemrich

# Reason

Tina Kramer

Her head was seasoned with grey hair mingled within her curly brown locks. Her glasses were purple ovals. When she was going out, she would spend hours putting curlers in her hair and brushing make-up across her cheeks and eyelids. Mostly, she spent days at home, leaving her beauty equipment untouched and her natural beauty shining through. I regret to say she never thought herself as beautiful; she would cut herself out of pictures and avoid cameras. It is a shame that often the world is too busy looking to see true splendor.

For hours, she would sit with me at the kitchen table. We would do spelling words. If I got them wrong, I would write them, five times each. Five times each. Five times each. Five times each. Five times each. She would hold up multiplication cards. When I would get one wrong, she would sing the answer to me. To this day, I hear the melody of “six times eight is forty-eight” in my mind when the time comes to know this fact. Once, I remember a friend at school telling me he received a C in a subject. When I told my mother that I didn’t have to get As or Bs in school but instead could present a report card full of Cs, she told me an important motto: “Kramers don’t get Cs.”

I would cry and scream at that table. She would encourage me but I would tear her to pieces. Over and over, I would whine and ask to leave. Can I go? Can I watch TV? At the end I would end up sitting at that table and carrying a report card home containing only As and Bs. Kramers did not bring home anything less.

Pretty soon, I did not cry and scream. It became fun. I would anxiously await those high marks and I loved the look on an adult’s face when I excelled. I quickly began engulfing myself in literature of every kind—my mother loved the written word, and she encouraged this habit. Her sisters would purchase books and then share them with each other—all six of them—and then call each other, discussing plots and who was next on the list to get the book. Once, I begged her to let me read the chosen novel of the week. It confused me more than I ever wanted to admit. I was eager to grow up. I sat at the adult table in an effort to avoid ridicule from the younger children at family parties. I was not popular at school with anyone except the teachers who had to think I was a total nerd (which I was). By the end of grade school, I was pretty set in my ways. I remember battling with another boy to receive the best grades in the class. I usually came in at a very close second, which I am okay with now. The younger me, however, found this very frustrating.

I will never forget and always forget my first week of junior high school. Some of the memories are as crisp as the first bite of an apple. Others are as fuzzy and rotten as a forgotten peach. Still others are non-existent, like a pear that has been stepped over for so long that it has decomposed and been totally removed from recognition.

I feel bad for that doctor. He had to come into that small room, filled with children, a husband, a young married couple, and deliver that line. I remember his words. They rang in my head like an alarm I could not turn off. Someone said they wanted to see her, as if to make sure that it really happened. I did not want to go in. I myself wanted to run in the street and be killed by a car. I wanted to go to sleep so I could awake to find this place a dream. I wanted to be held and allowed to cry for the rest of my life. I don't remember the tears coming, but they must have come. When I saw the hollow vessel, I felt relieved. They had made a mistake; there was no way that woman with the discolored skin and frozen limbs was my mother. I almost said so, but as I turned to see the rest of the family react, I realized I was the one who had made the mistake. This person was the same, the one with the flash cards and spelling words. The one who made people laugh and smile—now all that looking at her face caused was sobbing. What a horrible truth it is, that death rid her of this quality.

She is no one, yet everyone —  
she is nothing, yet everything.  
She is hope and pain, my  
aspiration and my kryptonite. My  
reason to die. My reason to live.

For the rest of my life, she will forever be frozen in this time. I will not know her any deeper than I knew myself at the age of twelve. That is just my story, my life, and that is how it is. To you, this woman would have been nothing. The woman in front of you at the grocery store, the woman who was in your ceramics class, the woman who raised a few kids. But to

my family and me she was so much more—and she always will be. And I am so much more to a few people, and to some, you are so much more. Maybe you are or were that person at the kitchen table, the person who didn't let someone quit because you knew they could do it. Maybe you were me, the one who whined and whined, but now realize that one person is the one reason your life is the way it is today. She is no one, yet everyone — she is nothing, yet everything. She is hope and pain, my aspiration and my kryptonite. My reason to die.

My reason to live.

One of the reasons I smile every day and take deep breaths. One of the reasons I have faith and fear. One of the reasons I love.

What—or who— is your reason?

## He Burns

Sean Oros

Maybe it's true his days are past,  
Maybe it's true he's beat at last;  
A fallen warrior crawls in pain,  
Nevermore to rise again.  
A final blow has knocked him low,  
A crushing weight drags him below.  
Now his fires fade and flicker,  
The fog around him grows ever thicker;  
Dreams of glory seem long lost,  
For this warrior has met his cost.  
Fate-defiant, he raises eye  
To meet the fate that he must die.  
The darkness closes, the world now fades—  
But something flickers in the gloom!  
He burns  
Blazing flame that throws off doom,  
Phoenix rising from the ash  
The warrior rises like a flash  
A burning bush that's not consumed,  
A beacon bright to all thought doomed;  
Rising sun or waxing moon,  
Relentless will or heaven's boon,  
The hordes of hell he'd dare to face  
As, blazing bright, he stands to fight.



## Wild Eyes

Crystal Durachko



**Dark Architecture**  
Crystal Durachko

## Night is the Young Lover's Friend

Tina Kramer

There's no work tomorrow, so don't close your eyes  
There's eternity here; one night is its disguise.  
Here in the night, while everything feels right,  
Heartbeats and warm breath in harmony.  
Untouched until now, but here, allow me  
To kiss you. To love you. Slowly.  
Relax.  
Fulfill my every fantasy  
As the moon shines in the dark.  
For I find brightness in your remark.  
How young lovers think of the future,  
While the past is still on the doorstep,  
And the present is apart.  
Dark eyes. Dark hair. Dark night. Still, I see light.  
The soul cannot hide every feeling inside,  
So I must confess my obsession,  
Though there is too much to mention.  
Tonight I lie alone, no Prince to hold me close,  
Yet I'll still love you forever,  
And wait until there is no need to let go, ever.

## My Other Half

Kayla Cramer

**You don't know me and I don't know you. But,  
I'm waiting... for what? I simply don't know.  
Staring at the ground my heart is shut,  
So afraid to take a chance. Although,  
I glance up hoping you see it too.  
The same blue sky, felt the same warm breeze  
I wonder if you think about me too?  
About some girl you haven't met? Oh please!  
Tell me I'm crazy for feeling this way.  
A timid girl to scared to take a chance,  
Is still dreaming of some magical day,  
when this endless journey might have romance.  
Maybe? But like I said you don't know me  
Perhaps, you'll have courage to disagree.**

# To an Angel, Far From Here

Tina Kramer

This is a day, special to everyone here,  
Two lovers are joined, both without fear.  
Look at their eyes, full of joy and care,  
The beauty is almost too much to bear,  
The bride in white and the groom in suit,  
Everyone says, "Aren't the two of them cute?"  
The music plays, after toasts are made,  
As the lights begin to fade.

Though the brightness fades, the love will not,  
Nor will our memory have forgot  
A woman absent from the parents' table,  
Though I know she would be there, if she were able.  
A beautiful and caring mother, full of love  
Now in heaven, with wings like a dove.  
In this place, we will dance and sing,  
And above the clouds she will do the same thing.

When I see the new bridal bond,  
I know our mother's heart would grow fond,  
Today is a day, special to everyone here,  
And even to those not so near.

To a mother we miss and love  
Once on Earth, now in heaven above.

In Loving Memory:  
June Marie Kramer

# Everything is under Control

Kayla Cramer

You ask “are you okay.”

What a harmless, thoughtful question, but

How am I supposed to answer?

I could risk saying the truth

Or maybe not. Would that make things confusing?

What...What did you want to hear?

Here we are, you and I standing near

But what about me makes you ask if I'm okay?

I'm smiling as I always do so I'm confused.

I know the truth...but

Could you somehow see that same truth?

Answer me honestly and maybe I'll give you an honest answer.

Do I look Okay? Maybe it was my laughter

Or the doubt weighting on my shoulders nearly

Breaking my resolve. Well the honest truth

Is I'm not okay.

Simply... I'm not, but

I'll pretend. I hope you're not confused.

I'm simply scared and refuse

To let you see it. I hide behind my laughter

Like my mother taught me too, but

It's not that uncommon to stand so near

To someone who isn't “Okay”

And be unaware of the truth.

Others like me, we practice to be this smooth.  
We know how we feel and refuse  
To let others see that we are not “Okay”.  
We hide doubt in confidence, misery in laughter  
Only a hairs breathe away from the edge. Nearly  
Falling every time we get up but...

Back to your question. What  
Will my answers be? Smoothly,  
Flawlessly I'll lie even with you being so near  
So caring. For I simply refuse  
To let you see that this laughter  
Isn't real and I'm not Okay.

You asked a simple question hoping for an honest answer?  
I will refuse to admit the truth and you'll be none the wiser  
I reply "I'm fine. Honestly, I'm okay"

## Battle Creed

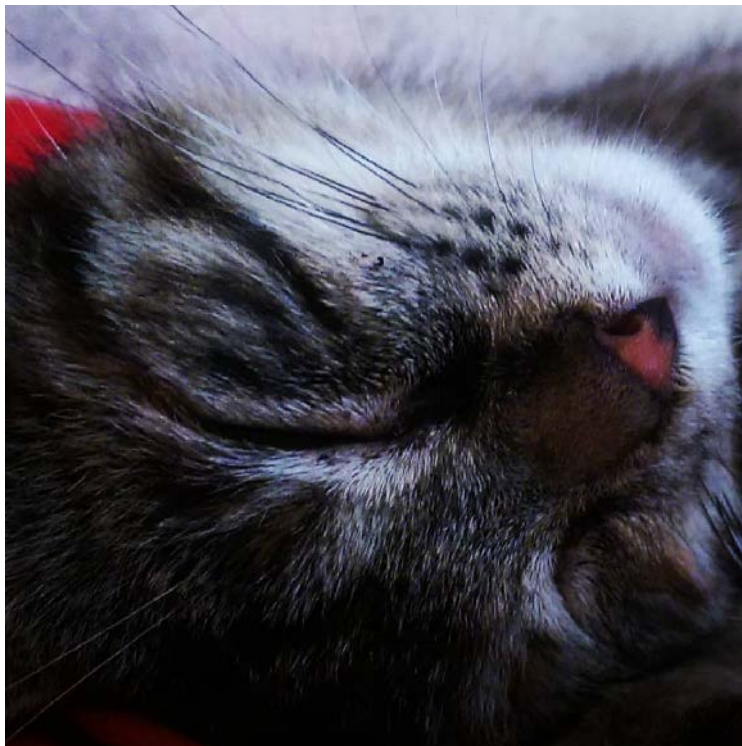
Ellie Lauver

Our minds are Torn,  
Our minds are Tattered,  
Our Minds are irrevocably Shattered.

We fight Daily,  
We aren't weak,  
We will Find the answers that we seek.

## Soft Nap

Crystal Durachko



# Grace

Vincent Kuznicki

The smell of boiled broccoli filled the kitchen as the family sat down to dinner. There was other food, of course, but nothing invades your nostrils like the scent of something you hate. Ian scrunched his nose as he stared at the wilting vegetables on his plate, the warm afternoon light adding ambience but unfortunately not flavor. He was squeezed in at the small kitchen table between his two older brothers, who made matters worse by elbowing and pinching him when Mom and Dad weren't looking. "Ian, why don't you say grace tonight?" Mom asked, smiling sweetly at her youngest son.

He looked at the portrait of Jesus on the wall, sighed, and bowed his head. "Dear God, thanks, and if you loved me vegetables would all be destroyed. Amen."

Dad grumbled something about that not being quite right, but was too hungry to push the issue. He dug into his meatloaf with the hunger of a hard-working father, wordlessly chewing the spongy, gravy-covered lump. Ian worked through the meat well enough, but hit a roadblock when it came to the broccoli. He stared at it, sizing up his mortal enemy, wondering why anyone would eat something so foul. His eyes narrowed as he imagined facing off with a giant broccoli monster, fork-sword in hand. Normally he had to finish his vegetables before leaving the table, but tonight, he wouldn't give in. He wouldn't eat it.

His brothers, for their part, had devised a system to deal with any food Mom and Dad forced upon them. Hold the nose closed, slam a cola chaser, and it wasn't so bad. They cleared their plates and got up as Ian sat, arms crossed defiantly, still staring at his plate. His stomach turned just looking at the sprigs before him, and an idea popped into his head. Maybe he could use the feeling to his advantage.

"Mooooom, my stomach is upset. Can I please be excused?" Ian tried to really sell it, tightening his arms across his stomach and bending over in his chair.

Dad spoke up, "Oh no you don't. I can tell a faker anywhere, you sit right there and finish your vegetables." He glared at Ian with that Dad-glare that usually ends any problem right then and there. But Ian was resolved to win this fight.

The doorbell rang, putting everything on hold. A wall blocked the kitchen from the living room where the front door opened, and as his brothers answered the door Ian couldn't tell exactly what was going on. He strained to hear, but could only make out faint mumbles from his linoleum-floored prison. After a minute the door swung closed.

"Who was at the door?" called Ian. His brothers poked their grinning heads into the kitchen doorway and took turns answering.

"Kids on skateboards, asking about you."

“Really?”

“Uh-huh, they want you to teach them some rad tricks.”

“Yup, but we told ‘em you were busy.”

“Nuh-uh.”

“Yep, we said you’re stuck in here ‘cause you’re too much of a pussy to eat some broccoli.”

“Language!” Mom was still in the kitchen, already starting the dishes and keeping an eye on Ian at the table. Dad grunted his support as he finished his meal, passing the plate to Mom. He looked at Ian. “They’re right though, you have to eat your broccoli. Now go on, we’re not leaving the table until you finish.” Dad crossed his arms and added, “I could sit here all night.”

Ian frowned and replied, “So could I.”

Ian looked around the kitchen, wondering how long he could actually hold out. Surely he could outlast Dad, who had better things to do. He studied the floral-print wallpaper, the checkered floor, the roaches that scurried in the shadow of the counter. His attention soon returned to his plate, and he began to think about the injustice of vegetables. Broccoli could ruin a whole meal if not properly contained. Left unseparated it had the potential to seep into the other foods, corrupting their taste, tainting everything. The kitchen faded into the background of his vision like a thin black mist was shrouding everything but his plate. He felt like he was about to faint when something brushed against his leg and pulled him back into the moment.

Mr. Bones, the family cat, had wandered into the kitchen to see what all the fuss was about. The black tomcat mewed and rubbed against Ian’s leg, begging for a handful of people-food. Ian had fed unwanted vegetables to the cat a few times before (usually only to find them coughed up on his bed later), but with Dad watching so closely it would be impossible to sneak any.

“Come on, it’s almost been an hour,” Dad was starting to sound upset.

“It’ll be never’o’clock before I eat this stuff,” Ian responded with a childish huff.

“Well I’ve got things to take care of,” Dad growled as he got up. “But you’re staying right there in that chair until you grow up and finish your dinner.” He turned and left the kitchen, going off to do whatever Dads do in the evening, but stopping back now and then to keep tabs on Ian. Mr. Bones had scurried off to chase roaches, and Ian was left alone to contemplate his fate.

“Doing okay, honey?” Mom peeked in to check on him.

“Still feel sick,” Ian put on his best sick-vice and groaned at Mom.

“Don’t be silly, it’s just some broccoli,” she replied with a reassuring smile. “You’ll be okay.”

The doorbell sounded again, and again Ian was left out of the loop. He called out like before, “Who was at the door?”

His brothers’ voices answered him, “Kids on BMX bikes!”

“No way, you’re lying!”

“Nope, for real.”

“Yeah, they’re asking if you can show them how to bunny hop.”

“Liars.”

“Nah, it’s totally true.”

“But we told them you’re sitting here pouting at a plant!” Their laughter sounded through the halls as they abandoned their brother again. Eventually, Ian heard footsteps in the hall, angry stomps headed right for the kitchen. He braced himself, knowing that sound meant trouble.

Dad burst into the kitchen with all the fury of a Japanese movie monster, the vein in his forehead throbbing as he yelled, “This ends now! Eat the goddamn broccoli!”

Ian knew better than to argue, fumbling with his fork as he speared a sprig on the end of it. He gulped, ignoring the chants of “Dad’s piiissed, Dad’s piiissed” from his brothers. Mom looked on as well, hands clasped with worry. Ian closed his eyes, took a breath, and took a bite.

As soon as the soggy stalk touched Ian’s tongue, he felt vomit rising in his throat. He tried to hold it back, cheeks bulging as he held a hand to his mouth.

“Okay, dinner’s over, go spit up in the bathroom!” Mom recognized the situation first and rushed in to take the plate away before pulling Ian’s chair out. “Go go go!”

“Bullshit.” Dad crossed his arms, skeptical, but not enough to get in the way of Ian rushing out of the kitchen.

His brothers just laughed and laughed. But he had won.

Dad burst into the kitchen with all the fury of a Japanese movie monster, the vein in his forehead throbbing as he yelled, “This ends now! Eat the goddamn broccoli!”

# Dreams of a girl in a blue and white dress

Kayla Cramer

I wonder what my life would be like then,  
If I could escape to some far off place,  
Down the rabbit hole and back again.

Imagine the sound of the flowers walking down the  
lane.

The beautiful music not fit to sit in a glass vase.  
I wonder what my life would be like then,

To never have to sit at this writing desk chained  
In place. Free to follow that rabbit on a grand chase  
Down the rabbit hole and back again.

Yes, wouldn't it be great to run away from this plain,  
Ordinary life for something splendid, full of grace.  
I wonder what my life would be like then?

It could be full of dread creatures to be slain,  
Or surrounded by loving friends to embrace  
Down the rabbit hole and back again.

Although I stare at the clouds dreaming in vain,  
Although you look at me with that straight face,  
I wonder what my life would be like when,  
I go down the rabbit hole and back again.



Alison Schemrich

# Unchanged

Kyley Raskob

Ticking

Precise constant even ticking

Spaced a second apart

Never changing or wavering

Ticking

Each ping each sound

Bringing endless excruciating pain

Escapable

No

Louder

A bang ringing in my head

Pain in my body

Crushing my soul

Bang one second

Bang another second

Curling up in a ball

Trying to ward off the pain

Bang more pain than before

Screaming against agony

Warding off Hell

Unable to stop the endless pattern

# The Best Thing Since Sliced Bread

Ellie Lauver

**I put it on in the morning,  
And wear it all day long.  
Its comfortable and pliable.  
It makes me feel strong**

**Just slip it on, its easy.  
You don't have to take it off.  
No one can even tell,  
So they won't laugh or scoff.**

**Eventually you'll fool yourself,  
That you're like this all the time.  
It can be beautiful and Grand.  
It will be totally sublime.**

**It hides everything on the surface.  
And pushes down what's deep inside.  
You needn't panic nor worry,  
With this, fear will subside.**

**Trust me, its easy,  
To slip on a mask.  
Everything will be fine.  
Now onto the next task.**

# Tangled Love

Kyley Raskob

They were different, so different  
One with a mother too caring  
One without a family or a home  
Meeting under stressed circumstances  
Hiding from the law  
Threatening her safety  
Making a deal and sneaking out  
The jewels exchanged for the dream  
Meeting obstacles  
Fighting  
Arguing  
Pulling him along  
Following unhappily  
Trying to understand him  
Trying to talk her out of it  
Chasing  
Running  
Meeting new people  
Hurrying along  
Sharing their secrets  
Someone might as well know  
Beginning to understand  
Beginning to feel something  
Seeing the light in her  
Seeing the passion in him  
No longer fighting  
No longer running  
Having fun  
Enjoying each other's company  
Staying together  
Dancing  
Singing  
Watching the stars  
Alone on the lake  
Alone under the light

Caring  
Loving  
Starting to need her  
Starting to want him  
Starting to love  
Seeing the dream  
Paying the due  
But wanting to stay together now  
Wanting to stay together forever  
But they are separated  
Pulled apart  
Forbidden from staying together  
Forbidden from loving  
Captured  
Kept away from one another  
Needing to save her  
Needing to see him  
Breaking free and going after her  
Waiting for him to come  
Closer until he reaches her  
He comes  
He saves her  
He is hurt  
Now it is her turn to save him  
She sings to him  
She cries for him  
He dreams of her  
She dreams of him  
They accept each other  
They love each other  
They decide to be together  
Forever  
Always  
Tangled up  
Their love

# Which Am I?

Ellie Lauver

I look into the mirror to find the physical attributes that I share,  
I have my Dad's eyes and fair skin;  
And I have my Mother's nose and embarrassing "Toe Thumbs"  
There has to be more than that though.  
I think Which Parent am I?  
Because, Their war has internalized in Me and I am their Battle Grounds.  
I try and look harder, but all I see is my Dad and My mother's Resentment.  
I have my Dad's Blonde hair,  
I have his smile, I have his height.  
Fuck, I even have his knees and feet.  
And It dawns on me:  
This is why I see my mother's resentment in My face;  
I am My father's Daughter.  
Now I try to think if I even have Anything in common with my Mother,  
After all, there's more than DNA right?  
I close my eyes and try to think past that;  
I have my Father's of Terrible humor sense of Humor and love of Puns.  
But what about me do I have in common with my Mother?  
Then a scary thought comes to me,  
I have my mother's "Mind"  
We both take medicine to control our imbalanced brain chemistry.  
I have her "Crazy"  
I have her fear of emotions and of making actual human connections.  
We are both quick to judge, and we both hold grudges.  
My God,  
The similarities keep pouring out of my brain faster and faster;  
I can be neurotic like her, I can be loud and hard to handle  
I can be scary and pathetic.  
And now I'm scared that my worst dream has come true  
...that I have become my Mother.  
I open my eyes and look around.  
No, I am completely different.  
I ask for help, I don't let my quick judgement's cloud the second impressions.  
I accept that I have Depression and Anxiety and I don't hide or feel ashamed of it.  
I am not letting our shared fear of emotions keep me from loving.  
I try and work past the grudges that I hold instead of hoarding them.  
I accept my Flaws and Faults and admit that they are Mine,  
Its all clear to me now: I am not pathetic, I am Strong.  
I am Not my Mother-I am Not even my Father.  
I am Me.

## 150 Years of Growing

Sean Oros

150 years of growing  
Since "Thiel Hall" first opened its doors.  
Founded in classics, but looking to the future,  
Thiel, from its founding, taught women and men  
The value of diversity,  
The power of perspective,  
And the love of knowledge.  
150 years of growing  
Have shaped Thiel into a place of sacred learning  
In the liberal arts,  
Not just to train successful employees,  
But to teach successful people.  
This is Thiel's legacy:  
That each generation will give back something,  
From Barbara and Louis Thiel,  
Who gave the first gift, the College itself;  
To Greenville, which gave Greenville Hall;  
From Passavant, who gave structure;  
From the Roths, who gave leadership;  
To newer names, such as the Langenheims sisters,  
Howard Miller, James Pedas, or the Johnsons;  
So many more have given,  
With faith in Thiel's mission.  
The vision of Thiel is an investment  
Not in an institution, but in the lives of the future,  
In young men and women who will shape the world  
In their own unique ways,  
Appreciating both business and art,  
The humanities and sciences alike.  
This is the legacy of Passavant, of the Roths.  
This is the legacy of Sawhill, Hodge, and Harter,  
Of Florence West and of Rhodehouse,  
Of Pedas, Bush, Bly, and of Stamm,  
Of the Dietrichs, and of so many others.  
This is the legacy of Thiel,  
And of all who have learned and grown with it.