



The
Phoenix
2014

The Phoenix

A Magazine for the Creative Arts

Thiel College, Spring 2014

Sigma Tau Delta

Co-Editors in Chief:

Sean Oros

Leanna Yeager

Chief Editor of Layout and Content:

Bess Onegow

Publicity Editors:

Allison Agona

Sara Toombs

Editorial Board:

Allison Agona

Conor King

Austin Hall

Lisa Leonhard

Dr. Mary Theresa Hall

Bess Onegow

Dr. Jared Johnson

Sean Oros

Sean Johnston

Leanna Yeager

Cover Artwork:

Lisa Leonhard

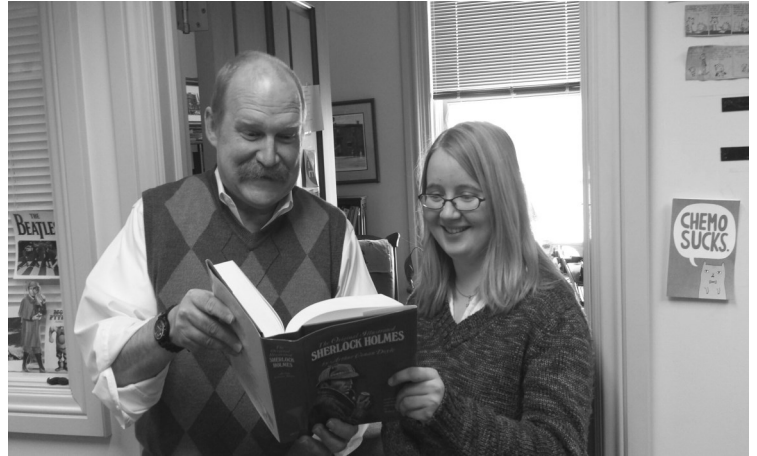
Advisors:

Dr. Mary Theresa Hall and Dr. Jared Johnson

Printed By:

Copyland, 2035 East State Street, Hermitage, PA 16148

This year's issue of the *Phoenix* is dedicated to Dr. Mark DelMaramo. Dr. DelMaramo, a long-term member of Thiel's English department, has been a constant source of inspiration to students. This past year, in particular, he battled cancer while maintaining a full teaching credit load and fulfilling his obligations as a professor. Although facing so much in his personal life, he persevered and continued to grade assignments and provide students with feedback.



Dr. DelMaramo and Bess Onegow

Students both in and out of the English department have had the opportunity to enjoy Dr. DelMaramo's teaching. Courses such as Business and Technical Writing—with the signature instruction booklet assignment—and Advanced Composition—with the unforgettable Box Project—have been taken by students across academic disciplines as ways to improve business communications and learn effective writing skills. In particular, Dr. DelMaramo has been a long-term teacher of Western Humanities, most notably in the former Honors Program. From the Greek philosophers to Michelangelo (an all-time favorite of his) to baseball (as he argues, one of America's original contributions to the humanities), Dr. DelMaramo loved teaching students how the Western world was shaped; his enthusiasm and joy could make each moment memorable.

Certainly, when speaking to students, "Doc" (as Dr. DelMaramo is sometimes affectionately referred to) is clearly popular. Many students responded to a request for statements regarding his role in their academic career and, indeed, their lives. As Alison Lange, '13, said, "Doctor D. was one of my mentors at Thiel. He always seemed to have 1000 things to do, yet he managed to seem calm. He was a great teacher!" Emily Whipple, also of the class of 2013, was equally enthusiastic: "Dr. D is such a great professor because he brings so much passion to every class he teaches. Thiel students are lucky to have him." Colin Vitale, '15, a communications student, who had Dr. DelMaramo only for Western Humanities, was equally impressed by his time with Dr. DelMaramo. "He had no trouble connecting to different types of students. A room of the most diverse students Thiel had to offer could be brought together by this man for much longer than an hour-long class period," Vitale said. Elizabeth "Bess" Onegow '15, who has been devoted enough to orchestrate having Dr. DelMaramo for each semester she has thus far spent at Thiel, was obviously also very much a fan of Dr. DelMaramo: "Doc is one of the few professors who can maintain a class' interest in any type of subject. He puts his heart into everything he teaches, and he genuinely cares for his students." Lisa Leonhard, '13, further commented: "Dr. Delmaramo's dedicated nature never ceased to amaze and inspire me, and his enthusiasm for everything from writing short stories and citations to Sherlock Holmes made every class memorable." I, too, have enjoyed Dr. D in classes ranging from Western to Creative Writing: Fiction. In all of them, I have found an example I can aspire to, and a man I have come to respect greatly.

Altogether, "Dr. D." is a well-loved and valuable asset to the Thiel experience. Students in English and beyond have benefitted from his guidance and dedication. His legacy is still alive and strong, and it will also be borne in the hearts of many Thiel graduates for years to come.

Sean Oros '15

Table of Contents

Title	Creator	Page
My Chains are Gone, I've Been Set Free	Kathleen Kent	6
A Letter Home from Washington, D.C.	J. Kent Scott	7
The Sleeping King	Kathleen Kent	7
The Ballad of Band Camp	Ashley Sweat	8
Ode of a High-Schooler	Lisa Leonhard and Bess Onegow	8
Untitled	Lena Kim (Minji)	8
The Value of Closing One's Door	Sean Oros	9
Your Death Bear Down Upon	Corey Meyers	9
Tear!	Helna Tompkins	9
Chronokinetology	Ryan Pepper	10
Redefined	Lisa Leonhard	11
Searching the Silence	Kathleen Kent	11
The mountains are stickers	Bess Onegow	12
Untitled	Allen Morrill	12
When I was in Paris Last	Conor King	12
Summer Time Apocalypse	Nicole Johnston	13
The Flood	Dr. Jared Johnson	13
My Dearest	Austin Hall	14
Believe	Jordan L. Smith	15
Untitled	Lena Kim (Minji)	15
Untitled	De'Ja Roundtree-Gibbs	16
Easy	Amanda Toy	16
A Child's Inner Song	Corey Meyers	17
You are my hero	Jennifer Auchter	17
Childhood Memories	Kathleen Kent	17
The Lonely Pumpkin	Erika Leonhard	18
Untitled	Lena Kim (Minji)	19
Two Lives Conjoined	Austin Hall	20
The Power of Friendship	Kathleen Kent	20
James	Kara Bussard	20
The Thinkers	Sean Oros	21
So once upon a rhyme	Andrew Miller '10	21
Response to "The Myth of Co-Parenting: How It Was Supposed To Be. How It Was."	Derek Runge	21
Upon a Road	Lisa Leonhard	21
Peasant and the Circus	Joe Disch	22
The Art of Overthinking	Ivey Shorts	25
Recovery	Sean Oros	25
A Journey of Faith	Kathleen Kent	25
Italian Countryside	Sean Oros	26
Emily the Dog	Dr. Christopher Moinet	26
Tired Little Angel	Austin Hall	26
Not Quite Right	Bess Onegow	27
Struggle	Ellen Lauver	27
Colosseum	Sean Oros	27
Along Came Courageous Phineas	Hunter Michaelis	28
Recipe	Erica Riola	30

Table of Contents (cont'd.)

Title	Creator	Page
Smokey Moments	Sara Toombs	31
A Pretty Slick Cat	Lisa Leonhard and Bess Onegow	31
Michigan Beach	Sean Oros	31
The Love Everlasting	Austin Hall	32
Untitled	Lena Kim (Minji)	32
Magnetic Shooting Stars	Bess Onegow	33
Water Fight	Kathleen Kent	34
The Proper Horse	Sean Oros	34
Eternal Love	Austin Hall	35
Humanus	Sean Oros	35
Hardest Words to Say	Corey Meyers	35
A Fleeting Eternity	Sara Toombs	36
The Bonds of Family	Kathleen Kent	39
crowtown ain't a town.	Andrew Miller '10	39
Waterlillies by Monet	Bess Onegow	40
War Within	Lisa Leonhard	40
Long-forgotten Family	Nicole Johnston	40
On Ransom's Criticism (Close Reading Blues)	Conor King	41
My Valentine	Austin Hall	41
Agatha Angel Finds Her Place	Clarissa Whippo	42
When Tears Burn	Corey Meyers	43
I Shall Not Leave (Even Though I Hate You)	Seulgi Lee, Lisa Leonhard, and Bess Onegow	43
Pantheon	Sean Oros	43
Perhaps I Waited Too Long	Sara Toombs	44
Untitled	Lena Kim (Minji)	44
When Ozzy Awoke in the Morning	Dr. Jared Johnson and Bess Onegow	44
After the Plague	Bess Onegow	45
Untouched Places	Sara Toombs	47
I love you	Sara Toombs	48
Untitled	Lena Kim (Minji)	48
The Way of Oi Oi Oi	Sean Oros	49
Canals of Venice	Sean Oros	54
The Loves of My Life	Sadie Price	54
J'adore Bacon	Seulgi Lee, Lisa Leonhard, and Bess Onegow	54
Sonnet 1	Timothy Hutton	54

*All works in this publication are the sole property of their authors and are not to be reproduced in any manner. These works do not reflect the opinions or Mission Statement of Thiel College.

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

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, for the 14th consecutive year, the literary and artistic works submitted by 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 endeavor. This year, we had the privilege of reading and evaluating approximately 200 submissions and of working with dedicated and conscientious editors and 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.

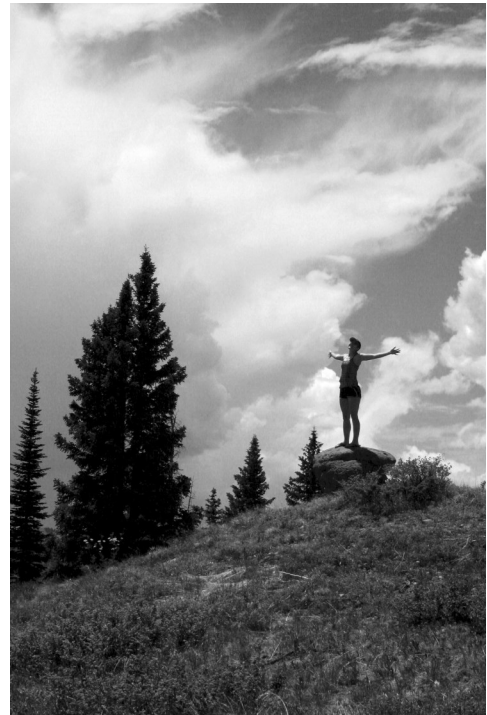
We hope you enjoy the literary and artistic selections that follow. We invite you to contribute to *The Phoenix* by submitting your own creative or artistic pieces to Dr. Hall (305 Greenville Hall) or any member of the Editorial Board any time throughout the year.

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

*And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.*
- William Shakespeare (from *A Midsummer
Night's Dream*)

*It is the writer who might catch the imagination
of young people, and plant a seed that will
flower and come to fruition.*
- Isaac Asimov

*The unread story is not a story; it is little black
marks on wood pulp. The reader, reading it,
makes it live: a live thing, a story.*
- Ursula K. Le Guin



My Chains are Gone, I've Been Set Free

Kathleen Kent

A Letter Home from Washington, D.C.

April 14, 1865

J. Kent Scott

Dear Mother,

*Abraham Lincoln rode by today.
I was shocked; his hair is gray!
Oh! There was color beneath his hat,
but the gray was there for all of that.
He had a beard upon his chin,
but he is just as lanky, just as thin
as he was back in Illinois
where we knew him as a boy.*

*Remember? He seemed all hands and feet,
striding down the dusty street
to call upon the Rutledge girl—
the pretty one, who had a curl
behind each ear.
She died that year.
Some folks say he loves her yet.
I think it's Mary that can't forget!
Abe dreams of setting a people free
not of what can never be.*

*Thank God! This terrible war is won
and all the dreadful killing done.
I'm glad he is able to rest a bit,
now that we have seen the worst of it.
Ford's Theater stands but a block away.
Abe went there to see a play.
I'll pause for a moment and light a lamp.
Washington is low and cold an' damp.
Charley says I'm getting old,
always complaining about the cold.*

*Mother, dear, it's morning now.
We all survived the night somehow.
As I got up to make a light
I heard shouts out in the night.
Raising the window to better hear
I heard the shouting, loud and clear.
"President Lincoln has just been shot."
"Oh! No! Dear God!"
was what I thought.
Our paper prints it as the truth.
The shooter's name is John Wilkes Booth.*

*It also says even Dixie cried
when they heard that he had died.
I feel so deeply for us all.
Will the nation stand or will it fall?*

*I beg you, Mother, ask Parson Sam
to say a prayer for Abraham,
as he comes home to Illinois
to sleep in peace beside his boy.*



The Sleeping King

Kathleen Kent

The Ballad of Band Camp

Ashley Sweat

Refrain:

Two weeks of marching in the heat,
That spread across the land.
Oh they prepare for coming events,
The Eagle marching band.

From Lake and Linesville, Valley too.
They come along to play.
For CASH they made a lovely group.
The band was here to stay.

Danielle and Ellen lead us all
And try to keep us straight.
They try and try to get it right,
Just like it's made from fate.

(Refrain)

The heat was hot and made us sweat,
It ran across our eyes.
We marched and marched until no more,
As if we might just die.

This guy named Dan would help us train,
He gave us some new skills.
He had us do some funny moves,
We put them in our drills!

(Refrain)

It stopped when the week was over,
And when we played no more.
We had to do our best through it,
This came straight from the core!

My pride is strong and shall not break,
As if it's made from lead.
We can't be broken from each other,
Oh through our hearts we're fed.

Ode of a High-Schooler

Lisa Leonhard and Bess Onegow

Killing time by petting kittens
Punting practice, cold with mittens
Puppies bark and pant with joy when —
I am running by their small pen

Late at night I abuse a cone
Sweet, cold vanilla all alone
Though I am young, when I am old
I will use golf clubs in the cold

A veterinarian I will be
Treating animals — filled with glee
But a criminal I am — for now —
Having fun tipping a cow

Yes, I may be a football jock
Also a nerd, is that a shock?
I know of the stock market crash;
I have no need of a king's sash.

I slaughter my fries with ketchup
Then on the bus I will throw up
My popularity soon dies
But I do not mourn its demise

I shove all the books in my locker;
I will read them in my rocker.
I'm glad my life is not horror filled —
A bug is all I have killed.



Untitled

Lena Kim (Minji)

Your Death Bear Down Upon

Corey Meyers

Writing down just what you think can help you in the end.
Even just a sticky note that's passing to a friend.

Thoughts inside can build up quick, about to overflow.
What you fear is all the hate that's trying not to show.

For one so young, for one so kind, no one could see it
through.

That he might be the only one that knows just what to do.

He hides all of the feelings, he keeps them deep inside.
He fakes the perfect smile that's only a mile wide.

He lived to cheer up sadness, he lived to bright up days.
He lived to show that everyone has reasons to amaze.

We love and miss you so much and your memories live on.
Affected by so many, your death bear down upon.

The Value of Closing One's Door

Sean Oros



I left my room, my winding road to take,
Setting forth, not realizing my mistake.
I journeyed long, I journeyed far,
Until I returned under light of star.
My steps then wended for my room,
Leaving the cold, forsaking gloom;
Back into the warmth of dorm I strode,
Setting down my journey's heavy load.
But my door, I found, was left unlocked,
Leaving no need for passerby to knock.
Inside, indeed, I found my things—
All piled high, stacked in rings.
In front of all the best sight did loom:
A scarecrow tall, built of my broom.

Tear!

Helena Tompkins

Tear! A deadened awareness claws with bitten nail;
Destructive salvation grapples a hardened tail
Ripping nipping and dipping in reddened coals;
Blast! Wading through fire, the cold dark, traitorous
fire!

Mist threatens the wakened eye,
In the tear-soaked blood white sky,
As distant Adams and Eves plan fate
Within the Garden of Eden shall wait!

'Till all is dead and within the ground
All the warning bells shall sound!

Chronokinology

Ryan Pepper

“Jump!” the twenty-year old young woman with red hair called to her partner as the two people ran from a tall, cement-block building into a seemingly never-ending field.

“When?” the blond-haired nineteen-year-old young man next to her asked as he reached for his pocket. He brought out a three inch by five inch touch screen device and looked back to his red-haired companion.

“We need to split up,” she said. “Meet me behind the orphanage the day after we left, but only after you lose the Chronists.”

“Got it,” he said as he punched in a string of calculations on his device. “See you then! Good luck!”

“You too,” she said as the backpack her friend was wearing started to flash white light. The flashes were slow at first, but gradually picked up speed until it was a continuous light. Then, with a final pulse, her friend was gone.

Now it was her turn, but when to go? She needed to outmaneuver the Chronists who could follow her almost anywhere she went. Chronists had few rules and most of them applied to events after a jump. Her only option was to break the primary rule. She quickly did the ten-dimensional calculus required to plan a jump in her head, then focused on her destination. Her entire body emitted white light in a single, blinding pulse, and she was gone.

A few minutes later, in exactly the same spot, the two people who had just vanished reappeared in a single flash of white light. The pair was about five years older than when they had vanished; the red-haired woman was handcuffed while being led by the young man back to the building.

“You had to know that it would end this way,” he told her. He led her back to the front door of the large, cement-block building and knocked twice. “Agent Alpha reporting in with the escaped Anomaly,” he said to a speaker beside the metal door, which then clicked as it unlocked.

He led his captive through a series of hallways until they came to a large set of double doors made of lead. They opened away from the pair to reveal a lead crystal capsule containing a simple, but uncomfortable-looking chair. Around this were amphitheater-style benches reaching nearly all the way up to the twenty-foot-high ceiling, with only a single walkway cutting through them to the door the pair walked through. The young man waited for the crystal capsule to automatically rise, at which point he directed his captive to the chair. As he stepped away, the crystal lowered back into place. The young man exited the room the same way he entered, leaving the young woman alone.

After a few seconds, a voice projected from the crystal itself, “Rachel P. Holmes, you are being tried for breaking every rule set forth by the Chronokinologists, including the primary rule: do not create a paradox. How do you plead?”

“Does it matter?” she asked dejectedly. “You can read the timeline and see for yourself that I did it.”

“The punishment for breaking the primary rule overrides any other punishments because of how dangerous it is,” the voice said. “You must correct the paradox by wiping yourself out entirely. You must never have existed. Do you understand your punishment?”

“Yes, I do,” she said, still downtrodden. “I’m just not sure how I’m going to do it.”

“Agent Alpha has been assigned to ensure your success in this task.”

“Very well,” Rachel said. “I will go get him and this paradox will be resolved within an hour of my time.”

Rachel stood up and the lead crystal capsule rose. She walked back to the doors and found Agent Alpha waiting for her. Without a word, the two walked back out of the building. Once outside, Rachel told her companion a space-time location in the form of a string of numbers. He put these into his touch-screen device, and within a few seconds, the two had vanished.

Five minutes later, the young man returned to the same spot he left from in a flash of white light. He walked up to the door, knocked twice, and said, “Agent Alpha returning from an unremembered mission.”

“Proceed to the head office,” a feminine voice said as the door opened. He walked down various twisting hallways to a staircase. After walking all the way to the top, he came into a single, straight hallway with a burgundy carpet, dark, red-painted walls, and carved wooden doors. At the end of the hall was a set of double wooden doors with sculpted pewter inlays and pewter rings in the place of door handles.

The young man walked to the end of the hallway and opened the double doors. Inside was a richly furnished office with original art from the greatest artists of history. Behind an ornate antique desk sat a middle-aged woman with red hair.

She looked up at him and said, “Agent Alpha, have you ever known a red-haired woman named Rachel Holmes?”

“That name and description does not sound familiar, Master H,” the young man replied.

The woman showed a momentary wistful expression before saying, “Good, your mission was a success, Agent Alpha. You deserve some rest. You may retire to your quarters for the night.”

“Thank you, Master H,” the young man said before leaving the room.

The woman behind the desk sat back in her chair and sighed loudly. “The timeline is fixed,” she said to the empty office. She sat there reminiscing about the time spent before the Chronists found them at the orphanage they grew up in. She also recalled the time spent training to become a Chronist, which led up to the discovery of her ability to bend time and space without the use of technology. They had met up at that orphanage after their escape, but it was not the same and she hadn’t understood why until the pair had carried out her sentence. At the last second, Rachel chose to save herself of all the pain that she had gone through and relocated her past self to a different orphanage in a different time instead of destroying herself. This caused Agent Alpha to forget her and change all future events without her own annihilation. She now sat behind her desk as head Chronist and recalled both of her pasts, both with and without her blond-haired friend. “This is for the best, but I’m really going to miss him.”



Redefined

Lisa Leonhard

Glanced up and you are there,
and I’m suddenly of all aware.
Hoping and dreading the meeting of eyes.
Remembering the pain, the love, the sighs.

Unlike you, I won’t just forget.
Easy conversation, I can’t do yet.
Memories, hopes, and lies combined,
it cannot just be redefined.



Searching the Silence Kathleen Kent

The mountains are stickers

Bess Onegow

The mountains are
stickers on the horizon,
when the sky is blue,
walls of our fortress
when it's grey.
They predict the weather
"Snow in the mountains,
six weeks to the valley!"
Always visible until the
trees surround you.
Though known for
maple syrup, my
Vermont is mostly
oaks.
The leaves turn over
before it rains.
My river is not the
pitiful brown ditch
of the Shenango,
but the clear,
rushing Winooski,
playfully making its
way to the dam.
Though I live in
what Vermont considers
suburbs, we have
wildlife a plenty.
Raccoons sitting atop
closed garbage pails
wake you at two a.m.,
owls hoot you to sleep,
squirrels scold from
branches, assaulting
cars with acorns.
Foxes take walks around
the block with you.
But it's the mountains
I miss the most,
overlooking me and Champ.



Untitled

Allen Morrill

When I Was In Paris Last

Conor King

When I was in Paris last, we would dance all night
A 3/4 tempo, to lead, you put up quite the fight
As we turned, you'd smiled through wine-soaked teeth
At the way in which you looked beyond the underneath

When I was in Paris last, we talked until dawn
With a bottle of champagne out on the front lawn
Speaking in tones so hushed and so sweet
Laying my heart out in absolute defeat

In Paris, I was a completely different man
Both a sinner and saint, nothing so close to grand
A drunken buffoon, one who cannot help but be
The same drunken buffoon wishing you were still loving me

When I was in Paris last, we kissed in pale moon shine
On those nights, I could pretend you were always mine
Figure like Helen, beautiful girl in lace
Where the only thing that mattered: the smile on your face

Summer Time Apocalypse

Nicole Johnston

Each passing year
I will take notice of the Lake.
High above from my family's loft;
All I see is caution tape,
And giant signs reading
"Do not swim" and "Toxic waters."
I think back to the times
When I was younger and
Would play in the Lake.
I remember the time when
I would walk across the beach
Poking dead fish with a stick
And picking up pieces of sea-glass.

But now everything has changed.
The future generations
Will know nothing of this place
Besides the fact that it is toxic
And no longer a place for fun
The place of no life,
The place of mass pollution.
A place that I will talk about
And they can never experience,
The countless summers
I have spent on the Lake.
It just makes me remember
All the good times
Before this apocalypse.

Never again will the Lake
Be as dazzling as I remember.

The Flood

Dr. Jared Johnson

I thought of Heraclitis last night as I stepped
At the bottom of the basement stairs
Into a grey-brown pool of stagnant water.
Indeed, I did not step into the same river twice
As – just two hours before – concrete padded the floor
Before the storm.

A darker shadow engulfed my grey canvas shoe
As I gingerly dipped it into the pond,
One foot first, icy wetness beginning in my toes
And flowing up toward my fully submerged ankle,
Then the other.

Washed up on the concrete shore
At the far edge of the basement
Floated my destination:
A rectangular vessel filled with grey sand.

"I hate them," I thought.
The lynx point Siamese,
Always grooming her abundant white fur
Perched atop the little black keys of my laptop:
If not for sits...why is it made of warm?
The male, speckled grey with ambivalence,
Watching the world through
Dead yellow irises,
His insouciance growing
With the shrinking of his pupils.

In one moment,
I see them side by side
Swimming toward their marooned litter box
Paddling, suffering, wet rags of cat.
Shadenfreude coats
My coal black heart.

And in the next,
From the other room
I hear them scratching at my bed sheets
Preparing to warm my covers
With pungent yellow dissatisfaction.

Thunder rumbled as rain poured down
And lightening crackled through the window.

These cats will have their litter box tonight.

My Dearest,

I miss you right now...can you feel that I miss you or is it just my heart that yearns for you to feel for it. To try to grasp the wind is like what falling in love is like...mysterious... mystifying...passionate...

Everything I am is because of the love you blessed me with. A beautiful everlasting love that I cherish beyond the ends of the Earth. All that I can want, all that I ever need to have...

Love

It goes without saying that I love you...that I need to hold you every day or I shall break. Your beauty engulfs me with a feeling of senselessness...unworthiness...it makes me soar higher than an eagle, yet grounds me like a broken wing. Though every day is a new adventure with you, my dearest, I can't help but wonder if you can feel my heart longing...needing... pulling... for yours.

The heart wants what it can almost never seem to grasp...a woman...another mind...another soul... The heart is a muscle, true, but it holds the soul deep within, locked away until someone comes with a key that fits...

The wind is a thing that has baffled the greatest minds to ever walk this world...but I know what it is...the wind is love in a form that no one can understand or even begin to imagine until they've experienced it...held it...caressed it... Love is everything and nothing at the same time. Where there is love there is happiness, yet there is also sadness and sorrow, for we know that one day our lover must leave us behind on this Earth or send us away to Heaven.

Too much love makes the sanest man go mad...love...love...love...

I myself have gone mad from time to time...felt love take hold of my heart, wrench it apart from its locked up state, and unhurriedly suck my soul out and give it to another...my best friend...soul mate...my lover...you...

Feelings can change, yes, but not the heart. The heart is born longing for the tender caress of one woman. The brain just refuses to listen. You see, the brain confuses the heart into thinking that other women, lesser women, will satisfy the heart, yet the heart only unlocks for that one...that one that the heart has wanted, been longing for, since it was just a gentle thump in its mother's womb. The heart wants what it wants...love...love...you...

Every part of my day is love. It makes me arise from my slumber and breathe throughout the day. Only love is able to do that, only love. Nothing can make the heart stop loving the one it has waited for, for so long.

As long as the wind blows, love will find a way to each lonely heart. Flying as fast and as smooth as the wind, love will envelope one's mind...one's body...one's very soul... Love will conquer the most torn apart hearts and join them because they were meant to be.

Only with love can a woman caress a crying man. And only with love can that man show his feelings and not once be ashamed. Only love.

I want to show the world the beauty of the wind, the beauty of love and reveal to all its strange ways. That love that can bring two people together can bring the world together, but to show the world true love, would be like trying to catch the wind... Some would say impossible, others improbable, but select few would say possible...only with love...love...you...

Never before has love so engulfed me like this. Love...the wind...the everything...

You cannot touch love alone, no. Love dances joyfully just out of your reach, enticing you, teasing you... Love can only be captured when two people work as one...souls entangled...hearts intertwined... minds the same...

The only happiness in this world is love for another. Another who connects with you...compels you... loves you. Only you have given this to me, enthralled me with the beauty of your tender kiss...your luscious lips on mine...your warm touch...

Yet as I reflect upon all of your love, I discover how much you cared...how much you loved and it irks me that I cannot do exactly the same...enthral you...beautify you...caress you. My touch is not tender, warm or soft. No my touch is that of a rough unrefined man who has become tamed by love, your love.

Love is a passion above all passions. Love is what you live for...breathe for...die for... And every day I see all the love you bestow, I can't help but smile and kiss you tenderly. Everyday...all day...love doesn't cease. It keeps sane men up all night working to share their joyous experiences with the world. To give the world a little of what they have attained...tender care...warm hearts...sound minds, bodies and souls...

Love

So I end this with one simple and yet complicated question...My darling, my sweetheart, my everything...will you promise that you shall catch the wind with me forevermore?

Love,
Austin Hall



Believe

Jordan Smith

Oh, what is a worry but a prayer to the devil?

A dream deferred, confidence by anxiety disheveled.

As human beings we are infinitely capable—

And limited but by our minds, to which we keep the gate.

“You can't succeed! Why even try? Your plate is more than full.”

Discouragement relentless, formed by clever demon bulls

Such demons, though, have nothing, save for petty, worthless hate.

Disguised as Fear of Failure, feeble minds they infiltrate;

Attacking dreams and goals: each aspiration, one by one

Until the mind targeted to internal doubt succumbs.

The greatest tool bestowed upon us is our own free will:

As mighty as the sword by which the strongest bulls are killed.

So succumb not to self-doubt challenging your mighty soul—

Only when we believe we can are we completely whole.



Untitled

Lena Kim (Minji)

Untitled

De'Ja Roundtree-Gibbs



The sketch's medium is graphite pencil upon white sketching paper. The size of the piece is 9 inches by 8 1/2 inches. The art piece itself is the representation of a female student attending Thiel College, which is signified by the Thiel College shirt the student is wearing. The student's head being raised up, along with the expression on her face, signifies a pleasant and contented feeling. And with this I was implying that Thiel College is an overwhelmingly pleasant school that promises its students a bright future.

Easy

Amanda Toy

It was a warm July day.
Sunny, beautiful, and even more
when I saw your face.

You didn't need to say your name.
They told me all about you.
I wasn't surprised when it was Easy
for us to talk about everything.

In eight hours, it felt like I knew you for years
and everything came natural, Easy.
We were inseparable after that,
every moment I could, I spent with you.

You gave me the world, my smile, my laugh.
It all felt right when you were around.
Our first fight ended in a confession of love,
and everyone knew that it was meant to be.

And then, as fast as we built it,
our life together came crashing down.
You took everything away with just one phone call.
I can't let go of what we used to be,
when life was easy with you.

A Child's Inner Song

Corey Meyers

Listen to the sound of the song that nobody knows.

Listen to the pain, understand, that's just how it goes.

Little kids crying, because their daddy's dying.

Just because he isn't there, doesn't mean he isn't trying.

He's fighting for our country, he's off to fight for you.

All you can do is sit and pray, I'll pray he comes back too.

It's very hard right now and you're strong enough to fight.

You're proud of what your daddy does because you know it's right.

Don't be sad because he's gone, he gave his life for you.

Be happy because you are safe back home with just the flu.

He went through many hardships, he put himself through pain.

He stood there on the frontline just about to go insane.

He knew he loved his country, he knew his family cared.

He knew just what he had to do because his son was scared.

Rest in peace, his family wrote on the paper he last got.

He showed true strength and bravery, how he was always taught.



Childhood Memories

Kathleen Kent

You are my hero

Jennifer Auchter

By day you are my hero,
There is nothing you cannot do,
Standing in your camo,
Your eyes a burning blue.

Always anxiously awaiting,
the day you'll get that call,
to don your guns and armor,
to potentially take that fall.

But as night falls,
and you lie your head,
There is a different side,
that comes alive in bed,

I can see you've been damaged,
perhaps beyond repair,
shaking in your night sweats,
throwing punches in the air.

By night you are my hero,
reliving all those terrible dreams,
In fighting for our freedom
yours was lost, it seems.

You bore your cross with honor,
And came home a decorated vet,
But Iraq took a part of you,
a part you can't forget.

You're stronger than I'll ever be,
although that's something you won't admit,
You looked at death straight in the eye,
You were scared, but didn't submit.

Everyday you are my hero,
In everything you do,
Standing in your camo,
I am so proud of you.

The Lonely Pumpkin

Erika Leonhard



It was just another day at Penny's Pumpkin Patch and the Lonely Pumpkin had been set aside yet again because of his broken stem and miscellaneous bruises. He did not understand why so many people chose to overlook him. It wasn't *his* fault that some careless teenager had tried to carry him by the stem, which had resulted in the stem breaking and the Lonely Pumpkin toppling to the ground and catching one bruise after another. The teen hadn't even seemed sorry for his actions. He merely chuckled at the misfortune, chose another pumpkin and went on his merry way, while the Lonely Pumpkin was stuck waiting patiently for Penny to come and retrieve him at the end of the day. And she did. She picked him up, brushed her fingers over his bruises and scowled. He wasn't quite sure if the scowl was meant for him, or the thoughtless individual who had dropped him, but either way the expression made him sad. He had seen Penny give other pumpkins that look and it usually resulted in her carrying them off, never to be seen again. The Lonely Pumpkin wasn't really sure where they went, but he was pretty sure it wasn't somewhere he wanted to go. He had heard horror stories that involved Thanksgiving and pies, but he didn't even want to go there. The thought of it frightened him far too much.

Penny did not take him away though. She simply gave him a sympathetic smile and placed him back on the cart with all of the other pumpkins.

It had been three days since the Lonely Pumpkin's incident with the teenager and everyone had overlooked him ever since. One older man had picked him up, seeming very interested, but then his wife had come over to join him.

"Don't get that one, dear, look at all of the bruises it has. It won't even last past Halloween."

The man had sighed, obviously frustrated with his wife's persnickety attitude, and had reluctantly set the Lonely Pumpkin back down and moved along.

Another customer, an excited little boy, had pointed in the Lonely Pumpkin's direction, jumping up and down and yelling, "I want that one, Mommy!"

The mother had walked over to the cart and reached for him, but the little boy interrupted her. "Not that one, Mommy! I want the tall one with the long handle!"

Handle. Stem. Yes, that's all they ever wanted. And so the Lonely Pumpkin watched as the tall pumpkin next to him, who had only just been delivered from the fields that morning, was whisked away by the boy and his mother. It really was a shame that no one could look beyond the poor little pumpkin's broken stem and slightly bruised exterior. He would make such great company for some scarecrow or a stack of cornstalks sitting on a porch somewhere. His bruises could even be cut out into the shape of a jack-o-lantern and he could spend Halloween lit up and bringing joy to small children. But no one would give him the chance. Every customer was just as shallow as the next and the Lonely Pumpkin watched as pumpkin after pumpkin left the patch. The kids wanted the funky shaped pumpkins and the adults wanted the stereotypically plump pumpkins, and none of them wanted bruises and they all wanted stems. The Lonely Pumpkin was beginning to lose faith and as the days dragged on, he began to worry that Penny would take him away and he would never find a good home. But then she came.

It was a rather typical autumn day in October. The leaves fell from the trees in whirlwinds and a slight chill nipped at the air. Customers came bundled in their jackets, sipping on hot cider and sifting through the gourds. The Lonely Pumpkin now sat by himself on a cart off to the side. All of the other

pumpkins that had surrounded him had been picked off one by one and he feared that this would be his last day, for Penny had yet to place him among the other pumpkins as she had on previous days. He had all but given up when a young girl wandered his way, humming a gentle tune and shuffling her way through the fallen leaves. She was very thin and pasty, yet her smile lit her face like sunshine on a rainy day. She stopped in front of the cart and tilted her head as she studied the Lonely Pumpkin.

“Why are you over here all by yourself?” She asked, sympathy showing on her small face. “You must be ever so lonely.”

Relieved that someone finally understood him—that someone finally *saw* him—the Lonely Pumpkin longed to respond. However, the girl did not seem to expect that from him. She offered up a smile and was about to speak again, when a gust of wind carried away the hat resting atop her head. Underneath laid a blank canvas of skin, where medicine that had intended to take away a disease had also taken away her hair. Her head was void of curly little locks or silky long strands. It lay bare beneath the cold October breeze. She coughed and turned in the direction the wind had taken her hat. A man had retrieved it and was coming in their direction.

“There you are, Violet,” he was saying. He slipped the hat back onto her head and pulled her close as she coughed again. “Are you alright?”

The girl, Violet, nodded.

“We should get you home.” He reached for her hand and took a step towards their awaiting car.

The Lonely Pumpkin’s heart sank, as he realized he would be left alone yet again. There would be no Halloween for him, only Thanksgiving and pie. He shuddered.

“Wait!” the girl exclaimed.

“What is it?”

She turned to look back in the pumpkin’s direction, pulling at the man’s hand. “We have to take my pumpkin.” Her small fingers pointed.

The Lonely Pumpkin waited anxiously. Could she really be talking about him?

“Are you sure you want that one, Sweetie?” The man was obviously skeptical.

Violet smiled her small, beautiful smile and nodded assuredly. “Yes. He’s different, like me.”

The man did not object again. He merely walked over to the cart and lifted the Lonely Pumpkin into his arms, taking him to the car. Penny seemed pleased with their decision and gave the pumpkin one more pat before he was placed into the vehicle.

As he rode towards his new home, the young girl resting her arm against his broken stem, the lonely pumpkin did not feel quite so lonely anymore.



Untitled

Lena Kim (Minji)

Two Lives Conjoined

Austin Hall

Your beauty shines like the sun,
Blazing above every one.
None could ever be like you;
So fine, so lovely, and completely true.

Your eyes gleamed like never before,
Lighting up a room from door to door.
Into my heart, their gaze has broken through;
Those eyes of yours, those pretty sky-blues.

Every day that passes away
Falls blindly into that great array.
That array of days so blissfully done,
Because with you, every single day is won.

Your hair that waves so sweetly in the wind,
While watching it dance, I could do naught but grin.
That hair that flows beautifully blonde,
Makes me think and wonder about the years beyond.

Those years full of glee, full of life, and we
Together through it all, we'll prove it. You'll see!
Never again must you be scared or afraid,
Because I shall forever come to your aid.

Never before have I felt this way,
So vulnerable, so bare yet I can't stay away.
Nor would I want to drift from you ever,
Because my darling, I shall be yours forever.

I look into the sky at the bright, shining stars,
And I think, "Why do they have to be so far?"
So far away yet close, somehow near
That's how I feel with you, my dear.

Because even when we are so far apart,
You near to me, your place is in my heart.
So do not fear and do not worry,
For you're the final chapter in my life story.



The Power of Friendship

Kathleen Kent

James

Kara Bussard

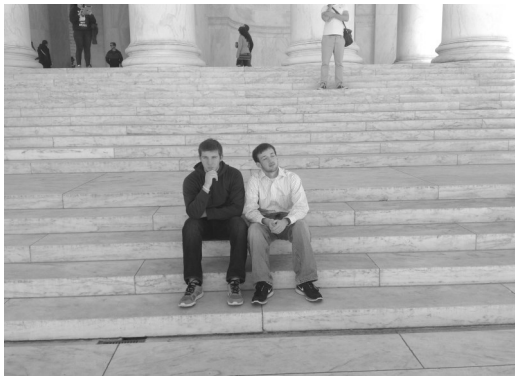
James towers over me, always has. He has long blonde hair that he flips when he looks down at me. He's always there when I need to fall into the dark. He cares more about me and his friends than anything. Always looking for love, but constantly getting hurt. He still smiles every day, never letting anyone see.

What he doesn't know is that I can always see the pain behind his ocean eyes, and the disdain in his smile. When I hug him, I can feel his heart beat in my ear, reassuring me he's alive. I always worry about when he falls. Who will pick him up? Then I realize I can. I'll reach my hand out and give him a hug, letting his heart reassure me he'll be okay.

I love him dearly, my best friend. I can see the constant fear of losing me and the others, but I'll say forever, "That's silly. I'm not going anywhere, and if we both fall into the dark we'll just walk together."

The Thinkers

Sean Oros



So once upon a rhyme

Andrew Miller '10

So once upon a rhyme

When the sun used to linger a little bit, sit outside

Just a minute to take it all in, yeh,

Absorb the influence

Adore the intimac—y

Of a sun set crawling back into a sleep

Melting away we watch daylight fade pink and orange

in the clouds That we felt sink and swarm

For another hour or so more

Comfort around us

Slumber has found us

A heavy curtain drowns and the ground surrounds us

We stay awake and stare into the world without a care

Besides yours, or mine, ours is all that's there

This is what it's like to stop time, to pause life

And sip on a moment

And think that we know each

Other, every time discovering more

and drink to Our difference,

Beautiful things often seem so innocent

In the midst of this, we

Savor all, taste the full of it

Capable of great and terrible things

Weight of all the few words that

It takes me to say

How I feel when I melt and drip away.

Response to "The Myth of Co-Parenting: How It Was Supposed To Be. How It Was."

Derek Runge

Honey, Darling,

The night my business began fulfilled my dreams.
I had searched for years to find my true passion
Then, nine months before Maya, a memory gleams.

Honey, Darling,

Two years prior, I'd earned your adoration.
Two years prior over a housing contract
I met the girl with whom a life I'd fashion.

Honey, Darling,

One day in the park, you taught me every fact
Of children and parents and how they should be.
You had the great planning skills that I so lacked.

Honey, Darling,

Your mother engrained in you; you could not see.
You knew what to do when I clearly did not.
Far outmatched, I questioned my ability.

Honey, Darling,

That is when we screamed and that is when we fought
Over days, over nights, you yelled and I ran,
But reconciliation we never sought.

Honey, Darling,

Now we've discovered a secondary plan
Where I can be Maya's father and your man.

Upon a Road

Lisa Leonhard

A choice approached
upon a road.
To turn away
might lighten a load
but plunging forward
there's much unknown
and the past
from the nest will've flown.
Once made the effects are set
and fate waits to call in your debt.

Peasant and the Circus

Joe Disch

Hello... My name is Mia... I'm sorry, but Astrid told me to tell you how I came to be in this odd place I call home. I was just a poor little girl who lived in an alley. I used to have parents, but sadly they died in a house fire. I lived in that alley for about three months; it was then that I met my new family.

"Hello there, are you lost, little girl? A tall woman with long blonde hair asked me. Before I replied I looked at her, observing every detail. Her coat was a dark pink, almost a reddish color really. Her coat had matched her tall, laced boots in color. Her pants were off-white, almost like the color of the clouds on a bright, but cloudy day. Attached to the center of what I'm guessing was a ring master's coat was a blue broach, which seemed curious since it only matched the color of her eyes.

"I'm... alone..." I replied shyly. I'm not too sure you can tell this, but I'm actually quite shy. I'm not nearly so shy now, but back then I barely uttered a word to anyone.

"Well, where is your family? Where are all of your friends?" She seemed to ask in a genuinely concerned voice. I remained silent, and I must have started to cry since I felt a warm liquid rush down from my left eye. "Well, if you don't tell me then I can't really help you." She said after wiping my tear from my cheek.

"My parents... they died, and I don't have any friends..." I replied quietly, crying more as the painful words left my lips. I must have been crying a lot because my vision started to blur.

"Well then, you can join our family!" She said cheerily, as if what she was saying was that simple. "Helena! Alyshia! Come over here for a second!" A few seconds later two women walked over to them. Both of them were only a little shorter than this woman. "This is Helena, our resident psychic, mystic, witch, or whatever you'd like to call her." She pointed towards one of the women.

Helena had silver hair, with eyes to match. Her skin was a soft white, almost as if she didn't go into the sunlight often enough. She wore a black dress that started half way over her large bosom, and part way down her arm. Kind of like a vampires dress, except she had a slit up the side. It revealed her pale white leg which was mostly covered with a translucent black stocking and her black, high-heeled boot. The entire time she was talking to us she was waving her hands around this deep blue sphere that was just floating there in between her hands. I reached out to touch this sphere, since I was curious as to how it floated there, but as I touched it my hand went straight through it!

"Hello, little one." Her voice was so soft, so serene, it was almost hypnotizing. "It is a pleasure to meet you. Welcome to our sisterhood."

"This one here is Alyshia!" exclaimed the blonde woman. Alyshia looked to bizarre, she had three colors in her hair. A sky blue that matched almost her entire outfit, a bright orange, almost like a pumpkin, and what I assume was her natural hair color, which was a bright brown. Her eyes seemed as if they were made from the water of an azurine lake. She had to have applied too much blush since her cheeks were almost the exact color of roses. As for her outfit, it was one of a belly dancer. It was made of a sky blue material with golden trim. The only thing that covered her chest was what appeared to be a wavy blue bra with the same kind of gold trim. She wore a pair of very thin sandals which were made from some sort of brightly colored wood.

"Hello there, buttercup. Hey, Astrid, can we get her some new clothes? I don't think a potato sac is going to keep her covered much longer. A girl's got to have room to grow, if you know what I mean," Alyshia pointed to how short the sac was on me.

"Well, as you now know, my name is Astrid. As for your clothes, as Alyshia pointed out, we can get you some new ones. We have a wide selection since we can afford a lot after such a wonderful performance." Astrid continued into rant, which must have been her thinking aloud since the others didn't pay it any attention.

“Astrid, maybe we should just get her some food for now.” Helena interrupted, “She seems like she hasn’t had a good meal in a long time. Besides it’s getting late. The shops should be closing any minute now.”

“I suppose you’re right. Let’s see what we can find for food,” Astrid said as she grabbed my hand and pulled me along with her. I don’t know why I went with them. I usually ran as soon as anyone noticed me, but for some reason I went along with them. Good lord, I almost forgot how good a fresh apple tasted. Apparently they hadn’t gone out to buy supplies yet so all that was left for anyone to eat was apples bought today for the animals.

“So dearie, before we start explaining what our job is, may we get your name?” Helena had asked as Alyshia and Astrid enjoyed their apple dinner.

“Mia…” I told them sheepishly.

“Did she say something?” Alyshia asked as she took a large bite out of a nice ripe apple.

“Mia, huh?” Astrid seemed to be thinking about something since she rested her chin in her palm. “Well Mia, would you like to have your own portion in our show?”

“Wow now, no one steals my spotlight, got it?” Alyshia jumped in with anger in her voice.

“Calm down, let’s at least explain to her what we do for a living. The poor child looks scared and confused.” Helena calmly added to the conversation.

“I suppose I should explain it first.” Astrid started. “Well, we are a circus. It may not look like it since we just got here today and are in the middle of setting up the big tent. Not only are we a circus with animals, clown, dancers, and all that, but we also perform with warriors. I use a sword and shield for my act, which is usually a simple duel between me and a volunteer warrior from the crowd. You have seen Helena’s Ocean Sphere already. That thing you tried to touch. Helena uses a variety of spheres which can be intangible or tangible whenever she pleased based on her words. Some of her other spheres are her Moon Sphere, Sun Sphere, Forest Sphere, Fire Sphere, and Earth Sphere. Each of these sphere are distinguished by the color and what it becomes when it is tangible. Alyshia uses a Ring Sword, which is a circle that is hollow inside and sharp on the outside. Why don’t we show you our weapons so you can see them?”

Astrid grabbed me by my hand and led me over to their tents where a bunch of cabinets sat out in the shade of a tent. Each of them went to what I assumed was the trunk or cabinet containing their things, and returned with their weapons and displayed them. Helena summoned her spheres which were a very colorful variety. When she said “Consolider!” they became a solid entity. The Ocean Sphere started to pour water, the Fire Sphere turned into flames, the Earth Sphere turned into a rock, the Sun Sphere turned into a miniature sun, The Moon Sphere turned into a source of gravity, and the Forest Sphere became a floating bush with a variety of flowers and berries upon its branches. Upon her saying “Disparaissent!” they returned to their simple floating colors.

Astrid stepped up, bearing her sword and shield. The shield was made of silver with a winged floral pattern in a reddish pink that was darker than her coat and boots. Her sword was a silver blade with the same color hilt. As she turned the shield I noticed the single band the color of the shields design and a solid silver grip. She swung the blade around, eventually pointing to Alyshia who came out dancing inside the middle of her golden ring sword. I had never seen any weapons before in my life, so as they showed me their weaponry I backed away. Oddly enough, I was intrigued, especially by Alyshia’s ring sword. The sword itself was golden, but in between the two edges was stain glass matching the colors of her hair.

“Now that you have seen our weapons, how about we fit you for a weapon?” Astrid said with what I assumed was her normal cheerful voice. I looked around, and for the life of me I can’t figure out how I had missed all of the weapons laying around. Then there was a sudden crash from behind us. When we turned around a giant man swung his arm hitting Astrid, Helena, and Alyshia in a single blow, and launching them across the area.

“Ha, so much for the famous Weapon Circus!” The brute shouted with a triumphant tone in his voice. Then he must have noticed me because he continued his rant saying, “Well who are you, a new member? I suppose I better defeat you too, otherwise I won’t be able to say that I beat the entire Weapon Circus.” He started towards me, each step bringing him closer to my horribly terrified self. When he was about to swing I grabbed a large double sided broad sword with my right hand and swung it up into the air. “Ha, you missed!” After that he lunged at me and I blacked out.

Upon opening my eyes, I saw the body of the brute before me. His right arm was laying a foot or two away from his body, which appeared to have been cut by a butcher. Helena stood over his body, muttering something that I believed was gibberish. I sat up, and as I moved my body felt like I was being torn in half. I let out a grunt, and shortly thereafter Alyshia and Astrid were right beside me.

“What happened?” Alyshia asked as she looked at me, then the brute, then me again.

“I think you need to start training with that broadsword from now on.” Astrid said as she stared at the sword in my hand. Helena waved Astrid over after a few minute.

“What’s up, Helena?” Astrid had inquired. Helena then whispered something into Astrid’s ear. “What!” Astrid shouted shortly after the whispering had begun.

“What? What did you tell her, Helena?” Alyshia asked as she jogged over. Helena whispered into Alyshia’s ear this time. “What!” Alyshia screamed the sound of surprise and anger was clear in her voice. “How could this little bitch be that strong?” She stormed off, grabbing her Ring Sword and then running off at full sprint towards the tent.

“What made Alyshia so angry?” I said with what little energy I could muster.

“She’s not angry with you. She’s just, uhmm. How should I explain it?”

“She’s upset that you’re naturally more skilled than she is. Even more so that you are as skilled as you are, and you don’t even know it,” Helena suddenly announced as Astrid was searching for the words. A look of confusion must have been on my face because they began to explain it. I had gone berserk after blacking out according to them.

“According to what was seen in my spell, you went into a rage—swinging the sword with one hand wildly, cutting his flesh into ribbons. By the time his body looked as it does now, your free arm glowed with a blue aura. You then proceeded to lift his body into the air, burn it with this aura, and throw it onto the ground. Once his body had hit the ground your own body gave out, and you fell down where you find yourself now.”

“Which is why we are going to train you with that sword from now on.” Astrid added the moment Helena had finished. “So, rest up. You’re going to be training hard from now on. Got it?”

“Yes?” I said as more of a question than an answer. I still could barely move without my body screaming in pain.

“Good, now rest up. Once you’re back on your feet we will start to help you learn to control that great power.” Astrid announced. There you have it. That’s how I found my way into my new home. I could only imagine what would happen then, but that’s a story for another day.



The Art of Overthinking

Ivey Shorts

Can you see it—what is going on inside my head? That would explain the looks...the calm, quiet, slightly worried tone. You know the truth...don't you? Yes...but you are hiding it from me. It's that bad? Am I everything they said I was? The answer is written in neon-flashing lights all over my face—I am just too oblivious to figure it out. The truth...that's all I'm after! It's buried somewhere deep inside my soul. It's in a secret compartment that not even God almighty can access—and yet, that is not stopping you. *You* can see it! You have unlocked my deepest secrets and have them at your disposal. I am putty in your hands—completely vulnerable. Well...are they terrifying? Should I be concerned? I wish *I* knew. What is it that I locked away so many years ago? I'm too afraid to dig. I must know—but curiosity killed the cat. Well, yes, but satisfaction brought it back! But what if I am not satisfied? Is this really worth it? Maybe... maybe it's just an empty void, a conspiracy. Maybe it holds who I once was, my childhood. I remember a lot from my childhood, but none of the important parts. I remember when my mother crouched in the fetal position in our kitchen. She was naked and sobbing completely unaware of my presence. She was having another breakdown, this time because she couldn't figure out which sock to put on first. I remember getting my stomach pumped because I ate Aunt Flossie's pills. I thought they were candy. Did I really? If I didn't think what I was doing was anything harmful, why did I hide behind the recliner? I obviously didn't want anyone to know what I was doing. So answer me this—is there really innocence in a child? If so, then why did he put his hands on me? I was a child, and he was merely a child himself...though his actions spoke otherwise. Maybe that's why I am this way. I wasn't born with innocence, or if I was, it was stripped from my being—just like my childhood, my sanity, my life.

Recovery

Sean Oros

After rain comes sun;
After tears, new starts.
New stories have begun
And song begins again.

The wreck is cleared away,
The pieces are picked up;
New stories have begun
And wounds begin to mend.

And so I stride with joy,
To find the day ahead;
New stories have begun
And I've begun to live.



A Journey of Faith

Kathleen Kent



Italian Countryside

Sean Oros

Emily the Dog

Dr. Christopher Moinet

Two young hound dogs came up the drive,
with their wide, pathetic, hopeful eyes;
I thought that they were passing through,
as in these parts strays sometimes do.
Indeed, the male soon disappeared
after backing off each time I neared,
and that was just fine by me;
I didn't want a dog to feed.

The female, though, kept hanging around,
and unlike her pal, she held her ground,
even coming toward the hand I offered,
befriending me, though no food was proffered.
I tried firmness, but after five days,
her drooping ears and soulful ways
had broken me, and I relented,
bought chow, license, collar, and consented
to her staying; and stay she did.

Soon, as happened with the kids
(despite midnight moans that jolted me from bed,
far-echoing yowls meant to wake the dead,
and holes dug deeper than my knees
in well-tended beds where flowers used to be),
this loving soul became a part
of my home and of my heart.

Tired Little Angel:

A Tribute to the Children of the Holocaust

Austin Hall

The tired little angel walking through the rain
That tired little angel who felt so much pain
The tired little angel watching the rain fall
That tired little angel who curled up and bawled

The tired little angel traipsing through the night
That tired little angel who needed to fight
The tired little angel flying through the air
That tired little angel who saw through his hair

The tired little angel running far away
That tired little angel who could not convey
The tired little angel crying out to God
That tired little angel who would no long'r laud

The tired little angel falling to the earth
That tired little angel who mourned his own birth
The tired little angel hearing that he'd die
That tired little angel who longed for the sky

The tired little angel turning toward the wall
That tired little angel who felt in his skull
The tired little angel dropping to the dirt
That tired little angel who rose from the earth

The tired little angel flying 'way from there
That tired little angel who used to be scared
The tired little angel seeing loving arms
That tired little angel who now felt charmed

The tired little angel is at rest in his mind
That tired little angel will now heal mankind

Not Quite Right

Bess Onegow

The dog keeps barking despite my efforts to muffle the sounds with extra pillows and blankets.

“Fine! I’ll get up!”

The bed is so cozy, though, that I take an extra two dog-barking minutes to leave it for the night’s air. I cross the floor to my window on tiptoe – not because I’m trying to be quiet, but because the floor is cold.

I look out into the night, and, to my surprise, the night looks back at me. Apparently, the night is male, with a thick helmet covering his head and thick padding everywhere. He seems to be holding some sort of gun I’ve only seen on TV – you know, the kind that rapidly shoots endless amounts of ammunition at the bad guys. He’s pointing it at me. But wait, I’m not a bad guy!

I fumble and stumble my way around the room to get to the light switch. Oddly enough, half my furniture has changed its location overnight. I find the switch ten feet left of its usual location and flick it on.

The walls, once grey and black, are actually pale yellow with pink butterflies stenciled around the top. White furniture with matching butterflies is carefully arranged to make the room into two spaces: one for playing, toys scattered around, and one for sleeping. I thought my bedroom was a nice shade of blue with pine furniture arranged haphazardly around the walls...

I look back out the window, and night is still there, talking on some fancy walkie-talkie-looking device. I can see the white letters on his chest padding read “SWAT.” Interesting. I wonder why he’s chosen to guard my room tonight.

The dog comes into the room, a shaggy mutt with a slight limp. I think his name is Roscoe. Rocky? No, definitely Roscoe. He comes over and starts licking my toes. That’s when it hits me.

Roscoe lives next door.

Struggle

Ellen Lauver

Do you see it?
The black sea/
Rising with the tide.

It inches up slowly,
Watching/
Waiting for you to slip.

It rages.
And catches you/
At your weakest moment.

And swallows you whole.
Down, down, down you go/
Back to the deep abyss.



Colosseum

Sean Oros

Along Came Courageous Phineas

A Short Story by Hunter Michaelis

On a warm summer day, while the humans in a residential area coop themselves up in their houses to stay cool, the animals of the outside world go on with their lives. For one, the dreams of enjoying the afternoon become more than a quick endeavor.

In the backyard of one of these houses, among the many tall blades of grass, the wildlife unnoticeable to the human eye flourish. Spiders work tirelessly to spin their webs, bees pollinate the flowers, and other insects crawl around inspecting their surroundings. It's a peaceful and tranquil place for any organism to live.

Deep below the blades of grass is an ant. Let's call him Phineas. Phineas is a worker ant for the ant colony below the tree in the backyard. To him, it's a massive tree that always produces beautiful leaves that change in the autumn.

This tree is an apple tree, and Phineas and his friends always work together to get the fallen apples into the colony. An item that size feeds the colony for many days, and the queen always loves them for it. Phineas is proud of his tree, and he can see it every day he goes to work for the rest of his life.

Phineas loves looking at this tree every time he comes out of the colony. The sheer size alone shocks and humbles him every single time. Its long limbs, which seem to stretch for miles in his eyes, are filled with many grooves and holes that make each unique from the others. Phineas enjoy this, since he knows he is unique from all the other worker ants.

One bright and warm morning, while carrying an orange slice with four of his coworkers, Phineas looked up at his tree, which was one of many. He stopped holding onto the slice, and it came crashing to the ground.

His coworkers came up to him, demanding to know why he stopped holding his end, but Phineas was far too engaged with what he saw. He was not even worried about attracting the attention of the foremen, who was watching all entrances and exiting of food by the entrance. He could have Phineas fired if he watched this, but Phineas did not care at all.

"Look up there!" Phineas called, pointing up to the top of the tree. There, was the biggest and brightest apple he had ever seen since he was a walking larva.

It was so big that it would probably take five or six of his friends to help him with it. It glistened at him in the sun, and he could just barely see that it was barely hanging onto the tree. It was begging to be plucked and eaten.

Phineas knew an apple of this splendor and massive size would be enjoyed by the colony for close to a week-and-a-half. Its beauty deserved to be enjoyed by many, and not just him. He had to figure out a way to get it to his friends and family back at the colony, but he may not be able to do it all by himself. His coworkers looked up to where he was looking, and they too were captivated by the sheer exquisiteness of this apple. They all sat and stared at it for a moment, their many teeth clicking with excitement, their mouths watering with anticipation. It was almost unbearable to sit there and just look at something so appetizing.

"Let's get it down!" Phineas decreed, finally, "We can do it if we work together."

"Have you lost your mind, Phineas?" one of his coworkers added, "It's too high for even those big, walking things to get." He was referring to humans, so it's very high up.

"He's right, Phineas. How are we supposed to get something like that? We're smaller than what anyone else can see."

“It’s not how small you are,” he returned, confidently, “It’s how you use it. Help me.”

“No way, Phineas, It’s too high,” the first coworker concluded, and he grabbed his end of the orange slice, “Come on, guys. The foreman’s coming over here.” The other coworkers grabbed their ends, a little awkwardly this time without Phineas, and moved back to the entrance.

Phineas watched them go, but his eyes moved back to the apple. He had to get it. There was no other around that. How, though? They were right about their size, and the huge monsters who walked around the yard were not even tall enough to reach it.

He walked to the base of the tree, and he reached his small legs up to it. He grabbed onto it and pulled with all of his might. Alas, he fell back to the ground and onto his back. He got up and tried again with the same result. He did this ten more times before realizing.

Finally, after attracting a small, curious crowd, one insect walked up to him. “What are you doing with this tree?” she asked, and Phineas realized it was a black spider, “Don’t worry. I’m not going to hurt you, my friend.”

“Why? You eat my kind.”

“Well, your perseverance with trying to get up this tree inspired me, and I didn’t want to destroy something so amazing,” she explained, “I’m Bridget.”

“I’m Phineas. I’m trying to get this apple up there. Can you see it?” and they both craned their necks up at the fruit.

“Yes, I can see it. Why not just wait for it to come down?”

“It’s far too beautiful for that,” Phineas replied, mystified, “By then, it will be in pieces, somewhat rotten, and its radiating beauty will be gone.”

Bridget’s many eyes focused on Phineas, intrigued, “Tell you what, Phineas, I’ll help. You look like you have been thinking about this for a while.”

Phineas nodded quickly, “Oh, yes. I have been for some time. How can you help?”

Bridget chuckled, “You said before that size doesn’t matter.”

Phineas nodded, “Yes, I did, but that was before I realized that it takes a great deal of strength to accomplish such a goal. I may be small, but I’m also not very strong.”

“With teamwork, anything is possible, my friend,” Bridget concluded, and she pointed with her front two legs, “Here. On my back.”

Phineas climbed on her back, and by some miracle, they started climbing up the tree. He looked over his shoulder and saw the ground pull farther and farther away. He had never been up that high before in his entire life.

After what seemed like a lifetime, they arrived at the limb with the apple. They carefully proceeded across it until they came to the apple itself. Phineas jumped up and down with excitement when he saw it, “It’s even more beautiful up close.”

“We’re going to have to pull, Phineas. You have to pull harder than you’ve ever pulled before to break this thing off,” Bridget explained, and they both grabbed onto the apple.

They heard the stem crack under the stress, and Phineas’ eyes lit up with anticipation. “I think we have it, Bridget, let’s pull it up to us.”

“I’m coming over to you for a better grip,” Bridget replied, and she started crawling over to him, but she did not see some sap in front of her. Phineas tried to warn her, but it was too late.

“Bridget!” Phineas yelled, frantically running over, but she slid off the branch, and fell down to the ground below. “No!” he shouted, watching the crowd, which had grown considerably with the effort, gather around her lifeless form.

He knew it was hopeless without her. He wasn't strong enough without her, he wasn't big enough without her, and he certainly couldn't get out of this tree without her. On the other hand, he couldn't just sit here. He had to get back to work, and he already missed his friends.

With every ounce of strength he had in his whole body, he fought the branch for its hold on the apple, and pulled it free. The extra weight instantly caused him to lose balance, and he fell through the air, most wanted prize in-hand.

Just when he thought he was about to join Bridget, he fell sharply on a passing bird, which broke his fall quite well. He somehow managed to stay on the bird, which fell out of the sky with the apple and the frightened Phineas.

They fell into a small pile of leaves, and with the strength of Bridget still within him, Phineas pulled himself out of the pile. He and the apple rolled to the base of it, where his friends and coworkers were waiting. The entire colony came rushing to him, and he looked at the discarded and already forgotten remains of Bridget.

He went over with the apple, which he was now freely holding by himself, and stood by Bridget, and everyone cheered for them. He was overjoyed; they did it. They climbed to the top of his beloved tree and claimed the prize that had been begging him to for some much time.

All of this was a success through the use of teamwork, strength and courage. They had a great feast right there at the base of the tree, and Phineas shared his serving with Bridget. He just looked up at the sky and wondered if his new friend enjoyed their success, too.

The End

Recipe

Erica Riola

How to Fit In

Ingredients: tape—strong to hold tight, makeup—loads and loads of it, the perfect shirt, tight jeans, high heels, “I love you”

Optional: before beginning, toss all morals in the trash (they're known to mess with the perfection of this recipe)

1. Screw to face the fakest smile you can summon.
2. Put on the perfect shirt; add tight jeans and high heels. For best results, the shirt should have three letters printed largely on the front (take care to choose correctly; some may be more rancid than others).
3. Apply makeup. If you think you have enough, apply more. Be sure that no part of your original face remains.
4. Say things you do not mean. Sprinkle with, “I love you!”
5. Check that the previous step did not unhinge #1.
6. Join the perfect group; pretend you belong.
7. Apply pink lip gloss throughout the baking process.
8. If you have to cry, go outside.

Smokey Moments

Sara Toombs

Just outside the revolving doors
stands at the ready a flock
of the overworked and underpaid
steam rising from the gathering
in billowy tendrils of softest gray

Between two fingers
they each don a three-inch-mark
of what the others call cancer
sticks of what they call a need
to be free
of the life, liberty and this
eternal pursuit of some foreign happiness
someone once read about in a bedtime story
without a dragon
or a hero

In the wake of it all
the smoke
rises and pervades
like iron, dark and gripping
the scent of the cigarette –
I am thrown to memories
which I am prone to at any smoky moment

I see my sister
a warm woman
a silent giggler
I only remember her in black
like the charcoal peacoat
covered in the charcoaled scent
of her last “five minutes!” run
rich
stale
familiar

I wonder if she knows my nose
is a time machine
that I breathe deeply inward
spinning on a smoke cloud
and suddenly I’m seven years old
snuggling my face in her lap
her fingers in my hair
“let me get the rats out, chicky”
when the strands lie silky and I lie sleepy
she steps outside

The kitchen window never closes right
and dainty faints slip in the cracks
my state of semi-dreaming
invaded by smoldering soldiers
cigarettes in single file
rolled at attention
they burn with pride and authority

The door opens and when it closes
I am seventeen
at the parties where I played wallflower
trying to remember what cool looks like
the shameless mimic shell
of a socially awkward turtle
still a little girl
surrounded
the boys light up
and I’m smiling while everyone breathes
in and out
the scent of sisterhood

When they’ve all burned out
ankle-twisted into the pavement
I miss her
while the wispy perfume lingers
and I cling to every inhalation

My sister
the fire breather

A Pretty Slick Cat

Lisa Leonhard and Bess Onegow

“Presidents should be tried and true—
Warren G. Harding, how ‘bout you?
Instead of running the country,
though this is the land of the free,
you spent your nights playing poker.
Minimum bet? Your wife’s choker.
But that wasn’t high ‘nough for you—
you lost the White House china too.
Should we respect you after that?”
“Well, I am a pretty slick cat.
Truly that was just one mistake
this country I did not forsake!”



Michigan Beach

Sean Oros

Magnetic Shooting Stars

Bess Onegow

"Tell me a story, Gramma!"

Todd cuddled closer to his grandmother, his six-year-old voice betraying his sleepiness. He was determined to stay awake. After all, it wasn't every night she visited to tuck him in.

"Which book this time, pigeon?"

Todd considered his shelves carefully. His brow wrinkled beneath his messy black curls.

"None of them. I want a new story. One I don't know."

His grandmother raised her grey eyebrows. It was an unusual choice for Todd, who depended on set patterns and rhythms in his day-to-day life. She reached her slender arm over and turned the light down to a comfortable golden warmth.

"Did I ever tell you about the shadow-monsters in Egypt?"

Her voice was a hushed bell, loud enough for a story, but not so loud as to alert Todd's mother to the fact that he wasn't asleep yet. They snuggled closer to each other as her story unfolded. The warm glow of the light softened her wrinkles and his freckles.

"There was this girl, way, way back—"

"Can we call her Jenna?"

"Sure, honeybee. One day, Jenna and her parents went to Egypt to see the pyramids. They traveled a long way—halfway around the world—and by the time they got to the pyramids, it was night. That is not the best time to visit the pyramids because the night is when the ancient spirits hold parties."

"What kind of spirits hold parties, Gramma? Don't dead people's spirits go to Heaven? That's what Mom says."

"Heaven is different for every spirit, dove. These spirits' Heaven was partying together at the foot of the pyramids. Jenna and her parents were used to seeing spirits, so they weren't scared. Unbeknownst to everyone, though—"

"What does that mean?"

"Unbeknownst? It means that nobody realized something. For example: Unbeknownst to his mother, Todd snuck extra cookies into his lunchbox today."

She tickled his small belly, and he started giggling and squirming beneath his Monsters Inc. comforter. Their smiles twinned each other as he struggled to breathe between laughs.

"Truce! Truce!" he cried. She stopped the attack. They shook hands, and she resumed the story.

"Unbeknownst to everyone, the spirits' party had attracted the attention of some nearby shadow-monsters. This was usually not a problem, because humans were rarely near the pyramids at night and the shadow-monsters dissolved in sunlight unless they attached to a human's feet. That night, a shadow-monster attached itself to Jenna's feet. She didn't notice until the next day, when her shadow was no longer Jenna-shaped. Then it tried to eat her parents' shadows. That's what shadow-monsters do—they eat peoples' shadows. And once they're out of shadows, they start eating people's feet, then legs, then everything else."

"Oh no! What'd Jenna do, Gramma?" Todd's big brown eyes went wide with worry—these shadow-monsters were a serious problem.

"She ran out into the desert so that it wouldn't eat anyone else's shadow or feet or everything else."

"But then it'd eat her!"

"Ah, but it never got that far. You see, Jenna's guardian angel knew exactly what to do. It's part of basic angel training. He rushed around looking for a magnet. That's how to get rid of a shadow-monster: your guardian angel has to detach it with a magnet. Jenna's angel finally found a magnet and flew to her aid. He was just in time—the shadow-monster had eaten her big toe and was starting to nibble on the rest. Her angel detached the shadow-monster, and it promptly dissolved in the sunlight. Jenna's angel had to help her walk back to her parents—it's hard to walk without a big toe. And they all agreed not to visit special places in the middle of the night ever again. The end."

"How can I tell if I have a shadow-monster, Gramma?"

"Do you have a shadow?"

Todd held his hand up in front of the lamp and cast a shadow on the opposite wall. It was Todd's-hand-shaped.

"See lamb? You don't have a shadow-monster."

"Do you have one, Gramma?"

She held her hand up in front of the lamp. No shadow appeared on the light blue wall. Todd pulled the blankets aside and checked her feet. One foot was missing a big toe.

"That's what happens, monkey. I had a shadow-monster once. It ate my shadow, so now I don't have one anymore."

"Do you miss it?"

"Not really. Want to check for our star?"

They climbed out of bed and padded across the toy-strewn floor to the window. His grandmother pulled the curtain back so they could look out into the night. They watched the starry sky, silently holding hands. It was a clear night, the waxing moon reflecting light onto the mountains just visible beyond the woods. A sudden shooting star flashed over the treetops.

"There it is! There it is!"

"That's right, bunny. Back to bed now."

They crossed back to Todd's wooden twin-size bed. He clambered in, and she pulled the covers up around his chin. Todd was fighting to keep his eyes open.

"Tell me another story, Gramma."

"Not tonight, chickadee. You need to sleep." She smoothed his hair away from his face with a gentle hand. Todd, too tired to protest, nestled down into his bed, murmuring,

"Love you, Gramma."

"I love you too, Todd" she replied, kissing his forehead and turning out the light.

The next day, Todd and his mother visited the cemetery. Just as she parked the old van next to the chapel, her phone started playing "Get Low."

"It's Jess. You go without me. I'll stay in the car and talk to her."

Todd checked his pockets, then unbuckled himself and got out of his booster seat. His mom opened the heavy door for him and adjusted her halter top, all the while talking loudly on her phone.

"Oh hey Jess... Yeah, we're visiting the cemetery today... I don't know; he likes coming here... No, he never met her... Yeah, I guess it's weird."

He walked quickly away from the rusty van toward the brown tombstone beneath the willow. It was a simply cut rectangle, thin enough that his hand could wrap around the edges. A shooting star was above the inscription:

Jenna June Carver

neé Fitzburt

1928-1982

Beloved Wife and Mother

Todd dug the magnet out of his pocket and carefully arranged it atop the stone.

"Just in case, Gramma."



Water Fight

Kathleen Kent

The Proper Horse

Sean Oros

The dashing knight ran to the field:

"My time has come, raise sword and shield!"

The tourney crowd raised high their cheer;

This knight was famous, the people's dear.

He charged ahead, his peers to lead;

He leapt atop a rearing steed.

But horse did buck and night did fly;

He crashed to ground, his helm awry.

The moral here is clear, of course:

When chasing fame, choose well your horse.

Eternal Love

Austin Hall

I love you now
I'll love you forever
I'll never leave you
We'll always be together

I'll never leave you
Know that it's true
'Cause baby you're amazing
I Wish I were like you

You're my best friend
And the love of my life
And I know that someday
Beautiful, you'll be my wife

I need you beside me
Forever and always
Just know that I'll be there
Till the end of days

Never Doubt me, baby
I'm not going anywhere
because just thinking of you
Gives me a breath of Fresh air

My darling, my angel
You help me be serene
My baby, my beautiful
Someday you'll be my queen

You're my blessing from above
My one and only
You're the best I've ever had
I'll never leave you lonely

So this is my poem
I know it's not from the man above
But I do know one thing
You're the one I'll always love

Humanus

Sean Oros

I watch the people, to and fro,
The endless tide of life's sad flow.
The happy runners, like a pup,
And lonesome seekers who drain life's cup.
So every sort of person walks:
They fit a class with certain talks.
Forgetful dreamers, forceful lords,
Clever plotters life cannot afford.
The watchful guardian, the stalking wolf,
Maddening egoists, hermits aloof.
Impulsive runners, forgotten friends,
The desperate soul trying to make needs end.
We all are human and mortals frail;
We must think of others, or all shall fail.

Hardest Words to Say

Corey Meyers

I look at you, you look at me, what do we really see?
I wonder every moment, if it was meant to be.

I think of you each second, each second seems to fly.
For you I'd walk the desert, for you I'd soar the sky.

I'm happy when you're near me, I'm happy when you're far.
I want to learn to love you just because of who you are.

You've got the perfect smile, our interests intertwine.
You have everything I look for, I just want you to be mine.

I don't know how to say it but I know you know it's true.
The hardest words to say in life, the words are I love you.

A Fleeting Eternity

Sara Toombs

“Anna, unlock this door,” Michael said, literally putting his foot down hard to the floorboards in an attempt to add authority to what was actually a desperate plea.

His fifteen-year-old daughter had set up what the sign taped to the door called a “Refuge For Those Who Maintain Their Souls,” a camp to which he had not been invited. Given the context, it made sense that he was not invited, as the founder of the camp had called him a “spineless, soulless, coward of a dream-killer” rather loudly just before barricading herself in the bathroom. Pressing his face to the door, he tried the gentler approach.

“Anna, let’s talk about this.”

“We can’t. I’ve taken a vow of silence,” Michael heard from behind the door.

Breathing slowly outward, he responded, “Anna. You’ve just spoken.”

“Crap.” There were a few moments of quiet, and then, “Change of plans. I’m fasting. Indefinitely.”

“Honestly, Anna, do you even hear yourself right now?”

“No, I’m the one speaking. It’s your job to listen.”

Defeated, Michael slumped along the door in such a way that his back might have left a sluggish trail of slime. He pushed his face into his hands and sucked air in through his fingers.

“Anna, please. Work with me here,” he said in his final, valiant effort of single fatherhood.

Michael was a man who ran from any whisper of commitment, convention, conformity, and anything heavy that might have the possibility of tying him down. “Was” is the appropriate term, as these were all the things that defined his person in the time before Anna. Before, he was young, a 24-year-old with thousands of futures lined up, waiting for him to choose a path and decide his course. His strong shoulders and deep set eyes gave him the atmosphere of a leader, someone who could instill change. The slight impediment in his voice and unkempt facial hair turned the initial leader-like impression into something more of an examiner, standing by to correct the leader’s fatal mistake.

Before, Michael had two loves, neither of which had the ability to love in return. His first, passionate obsession was film. His second was actresses. He elevated both to a pedestal of fine art, which must be revered and deeply enjoyed, but never, ever touched. To touch the film would damage the picture, and to touch an actress would damage his heart. Instead, he would make them his business and calling, investing all of his energies into the development of short, vibrant films starring short, less-than-vibrant women looking to catch their big break. From behind the camera, he would study them – the way their lips moved when forming words beginning with a vowel, or the depth of their eyes when reciting a line in the act of memorization – and wish only to produce the moment that lead them each to greatness.

This was Michael before Anna. Before the actress he had worked with briefly at the end of college caught his arm in the subway and begged him to walk her home through the park, claiming she needed someone she trusted to talk to.

“Forgive me, but why on earth am I the ‘trusted’ person?” Michael had asked as she pulled deftly on his jacket sleeve, coaxing him through the crowd.

“You’ve filmed me.”

“Well, yes, but I don’t see how that makes you trust me.”

“What else is there to see?” And with that she struck him to silence, and he followed obediently, as he had, of course, been planning to do from the very start.

Once above ground, the woman began speaking swiftly about where she had been since they’d last met and all the different directors she’d been able to work with, catching up as though they were old friends on a scheduled lunch appointment. While she slipped casually into step next to him,

Michael noticed for the first time that she was pregnant – considerably so, actually. He felt suddenly more approving of being pulled off by her, and a strange protective impulse welled behind his ribs. He swallowed hard and encouraged the confusing emotion to subside.

“Anyway, as you can see, I’m in a bit of a situation,” said the woman, whose name Michael still could not remember.

“Yes. I mean, I had noticed you are rather... I’m sorry, but what did you say your name was?”

“I didn’t. It’s Evelyn. Well, actually, it’s Barbara, but that’s absolutely terrible. Isn’t it just terrible? Honestly, who names their child Barbara? Thank god for emancipation, that’s all I have to say.”

“Yes, thank god.” Michael was now glancing over at Barbara/Evelyn at intervals of approximately 13 seconds, attempting to memorize all of her features as they walked. The odd calcification forming in his chest felt like it was lacing itself around his insides, willing him to defend this odd, feminine person. From what he was supposed to protect her, he was unsure. But, he realized she had not stopped speaking while he was thinking all of this, and was now looking to him to answer a question he had not heard.

“Well?” she said.

“I’m sorry, what?”

“Can you help me?”

“Help you with what?”

“I need somewhere to have this baby.”

Michael stopped abruptly, turned to face her, and opened his mouth to ask her what type of drugs she had dosed, if this was a television prank show with cameras hidden in the benches, or if she needed to be taken to a hospital. Instead, he stood there with his mouth slightly gaping, and his eyes fixated on the single curl of red hair falling across Evelyn’s eye.

“Honestly, I realize I sound like an absolute basket case but I can’t go back to Roger’s or he’s going to literally murder me and I have absolutely nowhere else to go,” Evelyn interjected. “It’s hard to explain, but I just need somewhere to stay for a few weeks after this chipmunk pops out and we’ll be off. Never to be seen again, except hopefully on the big screen, of course.” The curl was still over her eye.

Somewhere, perhaps in college, Michael had read once that insanity often possesses a person all at once; someone who had been completely sane in one moment just spills their marbles the next. There, standing across from Evelyn’s thin but burdened frame and wistful eyes, he realized he was about to become that psychological statistic.

“Alright,” he said. And that was all.

In the course of the two weeks following that conversation, everything which had previously made Michael “Michael” changed. In a normal, realistic version of his life, Michael knew he would have run from that encounter in the park with every atom of his being. He would have, and perhaps should have, quite literally sprinted away from the woman who was asking a near stranger to share in the experience of bringing home a newborn. But something had taken him, a parasite burrowing in his gut, and from the moment she grasped the fabric of his coat, Evelyn had wrapped her fingers around his being. He didn’t love her, but he would have done anything she asked. Something in him loved something in her, and on the morning of October 22nd at 7:17 a.m., that something was born.

Michael didn’t even understand what he was doing in the hospital with Evelyn that day. Yes, she had been sleeping in his bed while he took up residence on the couch for the last 13 days. Yes, he had risen early each morning to make sure she ate something and get the paper to help her look at job listings before leaving to catch a taxi for work. And yes, he had caved to her begging and rubbed her swollen feet and ankles... three nights in a row. But those were all just courteous things anyone would do for the extremely pregnant woman that had invited themselves into someone else’s home. He did not have a single idea why he was there in the delivery room, where he had been since rushing to the emergency room at 12:30 that morning.

“Hey Mike, can I have those ice chips?” Evelyn asked him again.

“Of course you can. Also, it’s Michael.”

“Right.” She popped a frozen cube between her lips and tried to hold it there until it slipped behind her teeth. “Hey Mike, this really sucks, you know.”

“I know. You’ve said. The epidural seems to have helped calm you down though.”

“Yeah... Hey Mike, something doesn’t feel quite right.”

“Oh? Are you uncomfortable, or are there more contractions?” he said, unconcerned.

“Hey... Mike... Something is really wr –” Suddenly, Evelyn’s head dropped, her eyes rolled back, and a rush of electrical noises filled the room. The alarms and beeping were joined by raised voices and the bodies of doctors and nurses, passing medical equipment and concerned expressions over Evelyn’s still frame. They must have been too enrapt to notice Michael, standing silently in the corner, watching helplessly as the minutes passed. Briefly, without thinking, he lifted his left hand, extending his fingers toward the scene and held them there like a peace offering.

A fleeting eternity passed, and in the same moment the room was filled with a choked, infantile cry and the cold, flat sound of a stagnant heart monitor.

Somehow, throughout the course of the events on that morning, it had been assumed that Michael was the father of Evelyn’s child. While sitting against the wall on the tiled floor, his head between his knees, he had been berated with questions, asked to sign several documents, and at some point been told by an older nurse that he could see his daughter when he was ready.

“I don’t have a daughter,” he repeated.

“There, there sugar. I know this is all happening so fast.” The nurse patted his head and clicked her tongue. “Such a shame,” she mumbled as she padded away.

“I don’t have a daughter.” Michael sat in the same position until another, younger nurse approached him, took him by the arm, and physically dragged him down the hall and into a room lined with rows of plastic bins, each labeled with a small pink or blue card. The nurse, holding him by both shoulders, turned Michael’s body to the end of a bin with a blank pink card.

“I’m sorry about your wife,” said the nurse.

“I don’t have a wife,” Michael returned.

The nurse gave him a look soaked in concern, then walked quickly away, her fingers pressed to her lips.

Turning his gaze downward, Michael expected to see a sleeping, swaddled ball of pink and wrinkles. Instead, he happened upon the two most inquisitive eyes he had ever seen, the irises of which were painted a delicate, muted blue. As he stared at the child, she looked up at him as if to question what had kept him away so long. Her long eye lashes fluttered a few times, her mouth softened into a slight pout, and the freshly folded skin of her eyelids closed gently. Michael bent to his knees and began to quietly sob.

He had never truly thought of his own beliefs, whether he thought there was a God somewhere pulling on strings or karma and fate worked as a team to unfold a path before him. Even in this moment, kneeling next to a child he had no part in creating, he couldn’t decipher truth from fallacy. And yet he knew the course of his life had been permanently altered. In some wild convulsion of the universe, he had gone from a twenty-something riding the subway home to a man who would, the next day, leave the hospital carrying his newborn child – a daughter he named Anna.

“Anna, can you hear me? Please, just open the door.” Michael was beyond the tried and true tactics of parenthood and had resorted to unadulterated begging.

“Loud and clear.” The voice from behind the door was rich with indignation.

“Then give me a chance. Let’s figure this out, okay?”

Beneath the door, a piece of white notebook paper slipped out next to Michael’s defeated form.

The top margin read “Detailed List of Demands.” Below that, in bullet points, were listed:

- permission to retire from high school (on the premise that it is pointless)
- means to move as quickly as possible to either New York City or Los Angeles
- acceptance of daughter’s lifelong aspiration to become an actress
- Olive Garden for dinner

Michael, suppressing the urge to laugh, couldn’t help but be just a little proud of his daughter.

“I can do one out of four,” he offered.

There was a brief pause, some shuffling, and the lock clicked open. The door opened slightly, and a blue eye looked out at him.

“Does it involve breadsticks?”

Michael nodded.

The door opened the rest of the way, and a lanky girl in torn jeans stepped out.

Anna closed the gap between them, stood up on her toes, and wrapped her arms around her father’s neck, then leaned back for him to kiss her forehead. A single curl of red hair fell across her eye.

“That will do for now,” she said.



The Bonds of Family

Kathleen Kent

crowtown ain’t a town.

Andrew Miller ‘10

it’s a silhouette showdown where every man’s a lone wolf and their shadow’s already underground, 7 feet under, another foot just to wonder if being any closer to hell could drive ‘em farther from mother, she’s nearly a hundred, an angel above who forgot where her sons were, tried her hardest to love them, to forgive the gun-dusters, but her heart knew well enough to not even bother because it broke when it trust them,

a burden so heavy weighing a caliber’s pound, the same lead that poisoned and laid the father in ground, so every orphan in town is stained under the sun in the land where the law is the gut
and the judge is the gun, just vultures and crows to pick at the bones, below where they rust
and rot and hungry graves groan, the sticks and their stones, the whips of the roads, since it all will converge and just fit on their tombs

the dust never settles and the sweat will never sit

Water Lilies by Monet

Bess Onegow

There I am –
so close to a Monet
that I could touch
the textured oil.
Dare I?
This painter
who revolutionized
the use of
colour and light
has been my
favourite since
I was five.
He modeled
a new way
of thinking
in me –
to focus on

the light.
For when
you paint
the strokes
of light with
a heavy,
incautious hand
and leave the
details to fill
themselves in...
that is beauty.
When you step
back to look
a whole picture
appears, one
that cannot be
seen from
a close
distance.

Through the mottled
purples and blues of water
with the green
reflections of grass
along the
shore,
the light blue of the sky a
smoke – wafting
lazily about.
Lilypads carefully
crafted in a
pastel rainbow
of hasty brush
strokes
cluster toward
the top of
the canvas
then scatter
themselves along

the left side
a few, with
flowers in bold
fluorescence, lurk
in a bottom corner.
A dark corner
of shadows
reveals the
red of the
world – where
secrets of
blood lie.
This painting.
This artist.
Through them
I can see
the world.
In them I
found God.

War Within

Lisa Leonhard

An innocent child unaware
that happiness is something rare.
Carefree days are sweet but short.
The future holds a different sort.

Nearly grown the struggle begins,
but be ready- it always wins.
Brief, the fight, when the time has come,
pain and despair, to it succumb.

On the verge of having a choice,
but held hostage by a small voice.
The future held by a broken clasp.
Cold silver is all you'll grasp.

The monster leaves you without hope
hanging on with a fraying rope.
No one see the storm clouds ahead
or how the future's painted red.

Everything gone- the spoils of war.
What were you even fighting for?
All you loved is completely lost.
Was this battle worth the cost?

Surrender is now the only way
to keep all the villains at bay.
The darkness must be fought within
trapped forever in your own skin.

Long-Forgotten Family

Nicole Johnston

You broke our family
Between your addictions
And your actions
Our family died
Now that time has passed
You realized your mistakes
You wanted to make amends
But what you don't see
Is that I cannot forgive you
I cannot forget you either
And it pains me to see you
Happy with her and
The fact you forget about us
You don't care anymore
My brothers are of no importance
And for me, I disappeared in your eyes.

On Ransom's Criticism (Close Reading Blues)

Conor King

I've never understood the meaning behind close reading

It bores me ever so much

Just as bread goes flat after too much kneading

A poem suffers under the critic's touch

What's wrong with the reader's ideals?

Is this where your criticism has landed?

All answers the same, criticism as fast-food meals

It comes off heavy-handed

Never consider your ideals superior or right

For it never can be true

As much as you may force it into light

It may only leave you blue

Forgive me for saying, but you must resist

Your genius, sir, taking over

A poem means only this, you insist

But you leave the work colder

Mr. Ransom, so I ask you this

Do your rules make you happy now?

Can you stomach your own feelings of bliss

If it is something criticism does not allow?

My Valentine

Oh my sweet, my beautiful, my angel

You must have watched me from above

And made my heart swell,

I never thought that anyone could love

Anyone like this,

A fool, a coward, a mistake, a man gone amiss;

But then out of the darkness,

There came a light!

It shone brighter and brighter

Then you walked into my sight.

I'd finally found her;

No lie, it's true!

I finally found her,

The one that helped me from singing the blues.

And as she walked toward me

A chill ran down my spine,

For as I saw that beautiful smile,

I'd found my Valentine.

Happy Valentine's Day!!!

Always remember that I love you forever and always.

You're my angel, my beautiful, my darling...

My Valentine.

Love,
Austin Hall

Agatha Angel Finds Her Place

Clarissa Whippo

Welcome to Noodleville, where every noodle is welcome and every noodle belongs. Except, one day when one noodle did not belong.

Meet Agatha Angel! Agatha Angel likes to be called Angel for short. She is the youngest noodle out of twenty-seven brothers and sisters in the Angel Hair family.

One day, the Angel family went to the Wiggles Woggles Park. Somehow, at the end of their trip to the park, they were missing one sibling, but no one noticed.

That sibling was Angel. Angel was left all alone in the park to find her way back home. She did not remember where she lived and did not even remember what her brothers and sisters looked like, since she was so young.

So Angel went off searching for noodles that looked like her.

Angel searched far and wide till she became tired and stopped by a little mozzarella creek. There she met Larry Lasagna. Larry was the largest noodle of the Lasagna family and the quarterback of Wiggle High School.

Angel stopped and said to Larry, "Hi, my name is Agatha Angel. I'm lost and I was wondering: am I part of your family? You don't really look like me, but maybe I'm just tiny for my age."

Larry replied, "No, little Agatha, you are not as thick and broad as me, so you cannot be part of the Lasagna family. Sorry for your luck, kid. Hope you find your family, though!"

After that, Angel was on her way. She had to find her family. Angel kept walking until she saw another noodle looking through the window of Spaghetti Salon.

This noodle was Shelby Shell. Shelby was the star cheerleader and last year's Prom Queen of Wiggle High.

Angel saw that she and Shelby were the same height, so she thought that must be one of her sisters. She walked right up to Shelby and said, "Hi, my name is Agatha Angel; I'm lost and I was wondering, am I part of your family? I'm the same height, so I must be, right?"

Shelby cheerfully replied, "No sweetie, I'm a shell; you're a string. We might be the same height, but not the same shape. So sorry, honey, but you are not a shell. Hope you find your family though!"

Angel said her friendly goodbye then kept searching. This time she decided to jog because it was starting to get dark. While jogging, she noticed another noodle was skateboarding behind her. So she stopped and turned around to talk to him.

This noodle was Reggie Rotini, the fastest skateboarder in Noodle Ville. He was out for his evening tricks when Angel stopped him.

Angel asked, "Hi, my name is Agatha Angel; and I was wondering, am I part of your family? I know this sounds strange, but I'm lost, and I can't find where I belong."

Reggie said, "Slow down, little Angel dude! I'm Reggie, and I know you're not a Rotini like me! You're not mellow enough, but I know where you belong. Hop on my board; I'll show you."

Angel did not know where Reggie was taking her, but hoped that he knew where he was going and would slow down.

Finally, they rode into a little part of town where everything was noisy and full of excitement. Reggie dropped her off at a tall and skinny house where an older noodle was standing outside.

The noodle was long and thin like Angel, but much older. Angel jumped off the skateboard and ran to the older lady, yelling, "Momma! Momma!" Angel finally found where she belonged.

Angel said to Reggie, "How did you know I belonged here?"

Reggie said, "You're a skinny little dude with so much energy. You searched for a long time to find your family. You are smart and very brave. I knew right away you were an Angel. See you around, Agatha. I'm glad I could help find where you belong. Remember, everyone has a place in Noodleville."

THE END

When Tears Burn

Corey Meyers

Overthinking every thought, crying yourself to sleep.
Hurting inside with a very sharp pain, it even hurts to weep.

Nothing caused, nothing affected.
The thought of personally being rejected.

Ballg your eyes out, embarrassing disgrace.
Watery eyes with no tears on your face.

When tears burn, you must face the pain.
Let go and let God, the sun in the rain.

The burdens are rising, you can't even think.
Don't think and just breathe, the boat will not sink.

Blurry eyes, your visions impaired.
When tears start to burn, there's no need to be scared.

Lift up your head, stand up and say.
No matter what happens, I'm better this way.

I Shall Not Leave (Even Though I Hate You)

Seulgi Lee, Lisa Leonhard, and Bess Onegow

But I have promises to keep
in this unhappy marriage
and miles to go before I sleep
in this dingy dark carriage

In this unhappy marriage
thankfully we have no children—
in this dingy dark carriage
the only light is the wren

Thankfully we have no children
that is a gift from God
the only light is the wren
we are not two peas in a pod

That is a gift from God.
With miles to go before I sleep,
we are not two peas in a pod.
But I have promises to keep.



Pantheon

Sean Oros

Perhaps I waited too long

Sara Toombs

Perhaps I waited too long,
and I've let these words go bad.
The fear of setting them free
in a world where someone may stumble over them or brush them away
caused me to hold them in a dark room, gently assuring
it's safer here in the silence
Maybe I was terrified of what you would say
or the translation would be off
and misinterpretation would lead to misunderstanding
and eventually I'd be missing you
the way I always do when you are gone
when my eyes are closed
I reach out to make sure you're still next to me



Untitled

Lena Kim (Minji)

When Ozzy Awoke in the Morning

Dr. Jared Johnson and Bess Onegow

When Ozzy awoke in the morning
he turned his sleep-dreary head
and smiled at the lady beside him
as they spooned on the bed.

She turned to greet him most sweetly
and moved to plant him a kiss
he leaped out of bed quite quickly
what happened to marital bliss?

Aghast he stared at the stranger
and wondered where Sharon had gone
His drug-laden haze wasn't over
to have slept with the devil's spawn.

Fire sprang from her temples,
her hair was falsely red
her eyes surrounded by wrinkles
looked as though they were dead.

The beast tracked her way to the kitchen
to fetch the coffee pot
Alas, she found it was empty
the trip was all for naught

She grabbed the keys to the Caddy
and shuffled out the door;
she pulled out of the driveway
and made her way to the store

Customers ran from the creature
searching for Maxwell House.
The aisles she walked down were empty
no stirring, not even a mouse.

She made her way to the check out;
the cashier could not look up.
She should have gone to Cosmetics.
Alas, she forgot her makeup.

After the Plague

Bess Onegow

After the plague, no one touched each other. Handshakes, pats on the back, hugs, kisses, all became obsolete. Even doctors used as minimal contact as they could, and then they layered on plastic and latex and rubber gloves. Once the umbilical cord was cut, newborns became susceptible to the plague. Mothers stopped considering breast feeding an option and rarely changed diapers without using gloves. Human connections became less meaningful. Everyone walked around in their own personal bubbles. An accidental touch of skin against skin was followed by an immediate visit to the hospital and multiple baths in anti-bacterials and antiseptics in hopes of getting rid of the blue faster.

The plague had not killed anyone, just caused people to turn bright blue for three days. It was passed directly through skin-to-skin contact, and there were no other symptoms or ill-effects. And yet, because of the fear of being blue, all contact stopped. The world kept spinning; the years went by; the seasons passed; life continued, but there was no contact. Generations of artificially inseminated infants grew old and died. Slowly, the bonds between people crumbled, nations went to war, and the earth was consumed by a fiery anger.

It had been over six generations since the plague's start when Wallace was born. He was the third child his parents had decided to create. They were an unremarkable family; his father was a banker, his mother a teacher. His twin older sisters were six when Wallace was born. He learned to walk, talk, read, and play as all children do. But Wallace did not understand the first lesson all children learned: not to touch anyone.

It was understood that toddlers would go through a touch-phase, and parents would receive three weeks of extra leave from work so that they could train the grabby toddlers to never touch anyone. Most children learned this quickly, and their parents would use the extra time to toilet train them. But not Wallace.

He was toilet trained within three days, but still would reach out to touch whoever was closest to him. When the three weeks of "plague-leave" ran out, his father returned to work and avoided coming within three feet of his son. His mother resigned and devoted herself to teaching her son to not touch people. Because Wallace could not stop, his sisters were constantly blue as well. They were pulled out of school, and their mother began to homeschool all three of her children. As the years went by, she continued to have little effect on Wallace's need to touch others.

Winter became Wallace's favourite season. It was the only time his mother would bring him to the park, bundled up so that only his face showed. If he reached out to touch one of the nearby children or parents, he had mittens on, and no one would turn blue. His favourite part, though, was not being constantly yelled at.

"Wallace, don't touch! No Wallace! Hands to yourself! You cannot touch me! Stop!" had become the chorus of his life.

He tried to run away on his eleventh birthday. He still could not understand why his family was afraid of being blue; perhaps they were the oddballs in a world filled with people unafraid to be blue. When Wallace had filled his mother's purse with jelly beans and run out the door, he had last touched only a few moments earlier when one of the twins had passed him the purse. He often played with his mother and sisters' dresses and purses, so when he had asked for the largest purse they had, made of fake pink alligator skin, his sister had passed it over without a second thought. He'd touched her hand in a delicate "thank you" as she released the bag, his first time touching someone in a week, and they had both turned blue on the spot.

After he left the house, jelly-bean-filled purse in tow, he went to the park. The parents who were there with their own children called the police. They did not want the plague to be passed to their children. The police arrived to find the park deserted except for a solitary blue boy sitting on a swing and crying. They escorted him back home.

He did not try to run away again. When he reached his eighteenth year, he was drafted into the army. His sisters had been as well, when they had come of age. It was never made clear to him who his country was fighting or why. But he knew that it must have something to do with the plague. Nearly everything did, it seemed.

By then, Wallace had learned to restrain his need to touch people. He hated the feeling of boundaries that existed between himself and those around him. He felt that it was impossible to truly relay his

emotions to anyone without actually touching them. It had been eight months since he had last touched; he had snuck up behind his mother and given her a hug out of gratitude for the meal she was making.

Once in the army, Wallace found that contact between himself and his fellow soldiers was practically impossible. Their uniforms covered their skin from chin to toe and included thick leather gloves. It reminded him of the winter, his only carefree time, and became a comfort to him. After two weeks of basic training, he was sent to the frontlines.

War being what it is; Wallace saw most of the brutality. He watched as man after woman after man died beside him, and he mourned them all. He started to question his superiors as to who they were fighting.

"Them bad people, son. They the ones who started the plague."

"Why do we need to kill them then, sir?"

"Are you questioning your orders? Back to your tent with you. No dinner tonight."

Wallace sat up that entire night, wondering at the pettiness of it all. As far as he could tell, there really was nothing bad about the plague at all. He had done as extensive research as he could, and all he could find was that it turned people blue. There were thousands of theories as to why, each less plausible than the last.

Wallace greeted the new day with a grimace as the sirens rang. Another day of fighting for no conceivable reason other than to maintain distance between people, he thought. His latest tent mate, Bart, was already off his cot and ready to go.

"Oy, get up you. Another day down, one more closer to going home."

Wallace groaned and shuffled through the now thoughtless routine of putting on the outer gear of his uniform. He and Bart left their tent and walked through the trenches to their posts. The sirens continued to scream, but no one paid them any attention. They only meant that there was one of their soldiers getting shot at somewhere. Wallace hated the racket. He envied his cohorts in their ability to tune out the shrill ringing. All he could imagine was yet another corpse lying somewhere, blank eyes and skin that had rarely been touched. Today was different, however. Today the sirens were for his squadron.

Bullets and shells flew through the air, creating a metallic gravel stretch between the two armies. Wallace and Bart crouched low in their trench. They were trained for this, trained to block out all emotion, trained to raise their rifles and shoot blindly across the no man's land. They had followed their training hundreds of times, ignoring the bodies of those who fell around them, their screams, the stench of fresh blood and guts. But Wallace no longer wanted to follow his training.

Ignoring Bart's tugging and shouting, Wallace climbed out of the trench and onto the flat expanse. What he was hoping to accomplish, he was not entirely sure, but he could no longer fight an enemy for no reason. He stood, bracing himself against the wind as bullets continued to whiz by him and pulled off his gloves. It only took fifteen seconds for him to fall back into the trench, more porous than when he had left it.

Bart crawled over to his tent mate, ignoring the shouts of the sergeant to continue firing at the enemy.

"Wallace?"

He could not tell where Wallace had not been shot. Covered in slowly spreading pools and spurts of blood, Wallace blinked up at him. He moved his lips, but no words were issued.

"It's gonna be okay, man. Stay with me. What's that you're saying?"

Bart leaned over his friend's face, intent on capturing whatever Wallace's last words were.

"Forgive me."

"Forgive you? For what, mate? For snoring too loud? 'Cause man, I give it two weeks and you're just gonna be back in our tent, loud as ev —"

Bart stopped short as Wallace reached up and touched his face. They both turned that brilliant shade of blue for which the war had started. Wallace felt his eyes close and then no more.

Bart sat by Wallace for the rest of the day, shielding his blueness from the squadron. When it became dark enough that he could not be seen clearly, he returned to the tent he had once shared with Wallace. He started packing Wallace's various things into his trunk, getting everything ready to be sent back to his family. In the trunk he found a manuscript that Wallace must have been working on. He lay it aside, finished packing, and then sat down to read the last words his friend had written:

"The plague, or blue phenomena, started quite unexpectedly in the middle of the twenty-second century

during the first documented time of complete peace. On that day, no wars were fought, even among families and friends. Some say that the plague came as an airborne virus, spread by those who profit from war. Others argue that it came as a gift from God, a way to celebrate the love shared through contact. Whatever the reason, humanity was unprepared.”

Bart continued reading, well into the night and the next few days. When the sergeant had found Bart in his blue state, he had immediately quarantined him. Bart was quite content with this arrangement. He read and reread Wallace’s detailed explanations, theories, and research on the plague. Nothing bad, he realized, actually came from the plague itself. It was only the world’s reactions that made it a thing to be feared.

Within a few months, Bart had completed his years of service and returned home. He still had Wallace’s manuscript, and he was determined that it should be published and shared globally. He made it his mission to see a copy in every bookstore. The first few publishers to which he sent it rejected it immediately, concerned that their corporations would fire them for printing such outrageous ideas. Brockmeier Press, however, was known for publishing more outlandish books, and the copy he sent their chief publisher was accepted and published within a year. It quickly became the most popular book, topping best seller lists for months until it seemed that everyone owned at least one copy and had read that twice.

Slowly, as most societal change tries to be, the plague became accepted. Being blue was no longer feared, it was celebrated. It became a fashionable change and an indicator of another’s connectedness to the world. One trend that started was for brides and grooms to not touch anyone during the week before their weddings. Once at the altar, they would touch hands and turn blue, adding a bit of drama to the ceremony.

Friends greeted each other with hugs, lovers with kisses, colleagues with handshakes. Helping hands were no longer metaphorical. The world spun on; the years bounded by; the seasons changed; life became a joyous song. The bonds between people grew stronger, nations stayed at peace, and the earth was enveloped by empathy and love.

Untouched Places

Sara Toombs

There are places you cannot touch with your hands,
they said, and so she ran;

to grasp the lacy parts of trees
and run her fingers around moonlight,
one palm resting on the edge of sanctuary
while the other aches to reach beyond,

to fill the spaces between lifelines
with an understanding beyond what eyes know,
leaving fingerprints on a foggy morning,
the brink of twilight, and growing older,

to touch the reflection of a rainbow
and lick the color purple from her thumb,
raising knuckles stained with the black ink
of every word left unspoken,

to close her fist around constellations
that burn memories into palms
gently caressing loneliness – soft,
like a broken winged dove

There are places you cannot touch with your hands,
they said.
And so, she ran.

I love you

Sara Toombs

I love you.

Isn't that poetry?

If I left that alone, without the eloquence and symmetry of something crafted beautifully,
would you still want to lie next to me?

Could I simply smile the words I need to say,
or spray them gently as a perfume across my skin, allowing you to drink them in,
inch by inch?

If I run my fingers along the veins in your hand long enough
perhaps I won't have to say anything at all,
because somehow the message will track like Morse code through your pulse.

I'll kiss your cheek when you aren't looking,
and leave a note next to your car keys reminding you not to forget your coffee,
which would make you smile almost as deeply as a poem might.

Is my laugh close enough to a limerick?

The moon doesn't understand why I cry sometimes
when he comes to my window to visit at night.

I'm sure he wants to ask me what is wrong,
but the moon can't talk

and in the moments I spend next at you,

I am very much like the moon.

But if I stay very still, I could try to reflect your light back at you,
and you could bask in the warmth the way I get to.

Because no matter how hard I try,
I can't seem to recreate you.

I can't put you on paper.

The exact contour of your jawline when you smile is an unattainable angle,
there are no appropriate measurements for your arms when they are holding me,
and counting the stars is easier than writing you into poetry.

But I want to,

and I have to,

because maybe if I don't tell you,

you won't ever know,

so I have to write

that I love the corners of your eyes

and the base of your neck

and the gentle tenor whisper of your voice when you say my name.

And I'll try again and again, until we're too old to read

and I have to write poetry without a pen.

There will be meter in my hand when I hold yours.

I'll put a rhyme in your sock drawer, or

kiss your lips and leave behind a metaphor.

Maybe you'll see my soul on the cold side of your pillow,

and I'll leave my love on the bedside table

so you nearly knock it over.

Would it be alright, if I only ever said I love you?

When nothing else makes sense, and the words won't come,

could you close your eyes and know?

If I never wrote another word,

would you reach deep in your pocket and unfold something I'd never seen before?

Show me a list of everything I ever said with my eyes,

left unspoken in a fight,

or tried to whisper when I thought you were asleep.

Everything

I tried

so hard

to find a way to speak,

that you knew anyway.



Untitled

Lena Kim (Minji)

The Way of Oi Oi Oi

Sean Oros

Guy and Friend climbed atop the cliff, the cold wind whipping snow about them, bundling their thin cloaks against the bitter chill. Before them lay their destination: an ancient monastery, exotic in design, containing the mysteries of countless centuries.

“It would appear we have arrived,” said Friend.

“Indeed, good brother,” returned Guy, somberly. “Fortune has favored us this fortunate day; we have forborne formidable feats, and now face fear for our father’s favor.”

“Then let us go forth,” said Friend, stepping out for the temple.

They climbed up the steep slope, snow whipping all about and forming small banks alongside the grey stones that lined the trail. Two peaks rose up high to either side, the range spreading out from their location. An eagle flew above, soaring on the strong winds.

They came to the dark colonnade, found the doors set within the wall they faced. A palm was outlined on the door, as if to halt any travelers. They opened the doors, one taking each side, and stepped within. The doors creaked shut behind them, leaving them in the gloomy interior, their eyes smarting from the bright glare of sun off snow.

“Who comes to our refuge?” challenged a voice, out of the dark.

Guy looked to Friend, who nodded with a smirk. Guy looked back at the darkness.

“Two young pupils, seeking knowledge of your way.”

A torch illumined the figure of a man, clad in robes and armor.

“Follow.”

They were led through the dark, up stairs and around a winding walk. Ornamental woodwork and panels depicting lone warriors standing against innumerable odds surrounded them.

They arrived at a small room, in which sat a wood throne, upon which sat an old man. The room was dark; the torchlight barely illumined the man.

“I am Sensei Varyana,” rumbled the man, deep and powerful. “What brings you here?”

Friend nodded Guy forward again.

“We are Guy and Friend. We have heard of your valor, and wish to learn its way.”

The old man “hmm”ed ominously.

“You have come seeking knowledge and power, but you have not discipline. You have come with courage, but you must temper it with wisdom. You have come, not as men, but as youths. You must learn. You must learn the way of Oi Oi Oi.”

“Oi oi oi...” repeated Guy, rapturously. “What is this thing?”

The old man rose and walked slowly towards them.

“Power. Courage. Wisdom. Life to your friends, death to your enemies. Strength. Perseverance. Discretion. Casting fear aside, embracing mortality. Shout. Stand. Flow. Oi Oi Oi will push you, form you, guide you. Oi. Oi. Oi. Oi. Oi.”

Fires flared from the corners; silhouettes were all about them. The old man was before them, his whiskers almost scratching their faces.

“Do you accept the way of Oi Oi Oi?”

“Oi,” replied both brothers, firmly.

The two young brothers dashed across the snowy slopes, training themselves in the harsh, sparse air. Sensei Varyana ran with them, leading them through the rolling slopes. The cold air burned their lungs, but the old man seemed not to care.

“This is not quite what I expected,” huffed Guy.

“No pain, no gain,” smirked Friend, huffing as well.

Suddenly the floor dropped away into a deep chasm. Varyana leapt it in a single, collected bound. Guy and Friend skidded to a stop just before it.

“Mackerel!” exclaimed Guy, almost going over the edge; Friend caught him and pulled him back. “Sensei, how did you do that?”

“Jump!” shouted Varyana.

“It’s too far!” objected Guy.

“No!” shouted their sensei. “You must say the oi. You must feel the oi. You must be the oi.”

Friend’s eyebrows rose questioningly.

“How does Oi help with chasms?”

“You do not understand!” shrieked Varyana. “Oi knows no fear! Oi knows your limitations—but forces you to your maximum. Now, leap!”

Friend looked at Guy.

“Excitable little fellow, isn’t he?”

Guy breathed deeply.

“We must use Oi. We must not hesitate.”

They took several steps back, Varyana waving them angrily forward.

“Are you ready, my brother?” asked Guy.

Friend smirked.

“Let’s oi.”

“Oi oi oi oi oi!” shouted the two brothers, in unison, rushing forward.

They leapt on the very edge. They flew through the air. The chasm below stretched far into a winding valley; they saw it briefly before crashing on the far side, landing hard and almost stumbling.

“Oi!” shouted Guy, wildly. “That was oisome!”

“Good work, chasmhoppers,” growled Varyana. “You have oiied. The oi knows no fear. The oi frees you to be fully. Now run.”

The old man took off again. Guy and Friend looked at each other, shrugged, and followed.

A month passed. Guy and Friend were pushed to limits they had never reached, not in all their adventuring. They were pushed to their limits—but they were stronger.

“Today, we learn swordplay,” said Varyana, in the courtyard of their temple, throwing Guy and Friend each a solid stick. “This is the finest art of the warrior, the purest form of war. Now, defend! Oi!”

He lunged forward; Guy blocked, but was quickly overcome. Friend soon followed.

“No!” shouted Varyana. “Oi! You must oi! You are thinking how to block me; don’t bother. Strike, to win!”

Guy shrugged to Friend. Varyana charged once more.

“Oi!” shouted both Guy and Varyana; Guy sidestepped and swung, but Varyana was too quick. Guy was overcome again—but only after holding Varyana off for almost a minute. Friend lasted even longer.

“Good!” cried Varyana. “But bad! Oi! Oi, I say! Breathe the oi. Say the oi. Be the oi. Now, again!”

“Oi oi oi!” shouted Friend, determined to say more ois than Guy, side-stepping and parrying and jumping and twirling. Varyana continued to push them.

“Oi oi oi oi oi!” shouted Guy, grumbling internally that he could say more ois than Friend, charging and blocking and dodging and lunging.

Their mastery with swordplay grew. Varyana was hard pressed, within days, to match them. Guy and Friend began to practice on each other, their whole bodies blurs of action. None of the monks dared face them.

“The oi is a strange but wonderful thing,” mused Guy, over their meager dinner, one night, as the darkness of the temple slowly crept in around their flickering torch.

“Indeed,” said Friend, leaning over their low table to reach for bread. “But it does make one hoarse after a while.”

A second month had passed. The two brothers were now fully beyond their previous limits. They were strong in oi; even the other monks commented on how ardent their ois were, how boldly they stepped. No self-doubt existed in them anymore, no restraint held them back physically—they were true masters of the oi, so much so that it was said only Varyana had ever compared to them.

As a reward, they were allowed to sprint down the mountain with empty sacks to the nearest village, running back up with sacks full with provisions.

“Heck of a reward,” scoffed Friend, as they neared the village.

“Greetings, good people!” called Guy, as they jogged down the central street. “We come seeking your contributions to our cause!”

The people slowly came, bringing offerings of food to fill the sacks. Friend observed them keenly.

“Why are you so glum? You look as if disaster struck.”

“The caravan with offerings for the people of the oi was lost in the mountains,” said one of the women, wrapped tight against the cold in yak fur. “We have only our own resources to feed you with for the winter—and our people are already hungry.”

“Yeah, so am I!” nodded Guy, cheerfully. “This running builds up an appetite!” He paused, cocking his head thoughtfully. “Have you guys been running much? Is that why you’re hungry?”

Friend shouldered his sack and tapped Guy.

“Come on, my brilliant brother. I’ll explain on the way back.”

They made frequent trips to the village over the next few weeks, working to fill the supplies of the monastery temple. The winter in the mountains was harsh, as Varyana said; every bit of food would soon count.

A third month passed. At last, Guy and Friend were near the end of their initiatory. Their last task of training was to scale the neighboring mountain, to visit the shrine of oi. The air was sparse, more so than they had yet endured. But they reached the top, standing before ancient stone pillars depicting those who follow the oi. They paid their homage, leaving a small token behind.

They were greeted as heroes upon return, the monks ushering them within ceremoniously. Varyana sat upon his throne, something almost similar to a smile playing on his face.

“You have done well, young slopescalers! Now, take up the swords of our order. Bear them well, as brothers of the way of the oi!”

The swords were placed in Guy and Friend’s hands. They beamed at each other.

“Oi!” shouted all those around them, echoing off the walls.

Varyana cleared his throat.

“The time has come for your first task—once you complete it, you will be fully members of our society.” Guy and Friend bowed, quiet externally, but bursting within. “Your first task, then, is something of great importance to us. The village of Rama has failed to meet its required harvest for us. They must be shown that we do not accept such negligence. You shall go down to the village, challenge their two best fighters, and dispatch them.”

Friend and Guy paused to look at each other.

“But...” objected Guy, “that’s not nice.”

Varyana shook his head.

“You misunderstand; your ideals are blinding you from truth. You must let go; you must realize that only the strong survive. Drop anything that stands between you and your goal—you must transcend the bindings we place upon ourselves.”

Guy and Friend looked back and forth at each other.

“No,” said Guy, firmly. “Oi is not about power alone. Strength is balanced by honor; to abuse a village is but a crime, no great act of courage.”

Friend smirked.

“And peasants don’t work much when you kill them. Kinda defeats your whole purpose, from a practical standpoint.”

Varyana shook his head.

“Reconsider, my young friends. You are two of the most promising pupils this order has ever seen. You have all the promise of accomplishment for our order—do not throw your lives away in willful defiance of our demand.”

“We refuse,” said Friend. “The people will not suffer.”

Varyana shook his head.

“They must be put into place, or else they will defy us forever. Defiance must be met with retribution. Oi does not hesitate. You know this.”

“Precisely,” Guy nodded.

The two brothers turned on their heels and started to walk out.

Varyana sighed audibly behind them.

“Stop them.”

Guy and Friend sprinted forward as several monks leapt for them. The two brothers bowled over those who stood between them and escape. A quick leap to the stair, a ringing of steel at the drawing of swords, and slashes at those who stood before them; they were out the doors, running down the slopes at an easy lope. They were not pursued.

“We only have a short time to prepare,” said Friend, as they ran.

Guy nodded.

“We must reach the village. They must be warned.”

Villagers gathered around as Guy and Friend entered the village. The people had grown to love them over their times visiting. Friend and Guy quickly related the warning.

“What can we do?” wailed a peasant. “They will kill us all! We cannot beg; we cannot flee; we cannot fight. What can we do but die like pigs?”

“You can oi!” shouted Guy, raising his sword aloft. “You can oi with us! You can oi against oppression!”

Friend smirked.

“You can oi for your families, for your homes, for your vegetables!”

“We cannot!” cried another peasant. “Everyone will die at the hand of the warriors!”

“Not if you stand against them!” said Guy. “You are many—almost sixty folk dwell here, compared to twenty monks of the oi. The oi is strong—but we can teach you to oi with us!”

The people grew silent.

“The oi is too powerful for the lowly,” gasped a woman.

“The oi is beyond us,” stammered a man.

“Oi?” babbled a toddler, oblivious to everything.

“He oied!” shouted Guy. “See, even the youngest among us can muster the oi! Stand with us! Oi with us!”

“Oi!” came a shout, from the hills. The monks were coming.

People began to scream and scatter.

“It’s too late!” wailed a man.

“Then we will stand, in your place,” said Guy, standing tall. “Flee, if you must, for we will buy you time; cower, and plead innocence to them if you like; or fight with us, as comrades in the oi!”

The people who remained drifted like wraiths off among the buildings. Friend chuckled.

“Well, looks like they weren’t moved. Next plan?”

The monks were in sight, fast approaching the village. Murder was in their eyes. Guy looked at Friend.

“Would you stand with me, brother, in the face of death?”

Friend smirked, snatching up two shields that lay nearby. He handed one to Guy.

“And what do you think I’ll say to that?”

The monks closed in, walking ceremoniously, hands on their sword hilts. Guy and Friend stood alone, in the middle of the lonely street, wind whipping past them and stirring the heavy cloth curtains of the houses. They were outnumbered ten-to-one.

“Well, my oing brother,” said Friend, with another smirk, “let’s go out in an oi of glory.”

Guy pounded his fist against his chest loudly.

“It would be an honor, my oiing brother. Let us oi as one, one last time!”

“Oi!” shouted the monks, drawing swords and surging forward.

“Together!” shouted Guy.

“Oi oi oi oi oi!” thundered the two brothers, drawing swords with a ring of steel.

The wave swept down upon the two brothers, flowing past and surrounding them. Guy and Friend turned to stand back-to-back, their arms and blades and shields a blur. Two monks fell. Three. Four.

“Kill them!” Varyana’s voice thundered over the fight. “Purge their heresy!”

“Oi oi oi oi oi!” rejoined Guy and Friend.

Five. A sword glanced over Guy’s arm, drawing blood. Six. Friend was cut on the upper leg. Seven. Guy stumbled to the ground on one knee, swinging up and fending off the blows of his enemies.

“Oi oi oi oi oi!” shouted Friend.

“Oi oi oi oi oi!” echoed Guy.

“Oi oi oi oi oi!” came a sudden roar, all about them.

Guy and Friend could barely see, but, from every crack and alley of the village, the people had come. With bows, staffs, hoes, axes—all tools of common life, raised in defense of their village, in the spirit of oi oi oi.

The monks were thrown into confusion. They had not overcome the brothers yet—and now the surrounds had become the surrounded.

Guy struggled back up to his feet during his foes’ confusion.

“Let the people cry aloud!” his cry echoed over the suddenly-stilled din of battle.

“Oi oi oi oi oi!” shouted brothers and people together.

The monks, warriors though they were, fell quickly. Already thrown into disarray over the casualties inflicted by Guy and Friend alone, they could not face an enemy within and without their circle. They never uttered a word; never stopped fighting; never asked for quarter. Varyana lay on the ground, one of the few still moving, fallen to the tool of a peasant.

Guy and Friend stood over him.

“You won,” sighed the fallen sensei. His wounds were quickly overcoming him. “You should never have been born. You have defiled the way of oi.”

“No,” said Guy, sheathing his sword. “We have redeemed oi oi oi from your abuse. Oi lives as long as we do.”

“May that be short,” spat Varyana. He slowly faded into silence, then stopped moving.

“Dang,” sighed Friend. “I didn’t even have a chance to get in a smirk before he died. I feel let down.”

“There will be other tyrants, brother,” said Guy, slapping him on the shoulder. Friend returned the gesture, as they looked about at the battle. The peasants were attending to the dead and wounded—including those of their own. The warriors had not died without a fight; they had taken several poor souls with them.

“Where will you go now?” asked a peasant.

“Wherever the road takes us,” said Guy. “We shall continue to restore the name of oi oi oi.”

“We shall not forget you,” said the man, bowing.

“Nor shall we you,” said Friend, bowing in return, before smirking. “Unless we do.”

The two brothers set out down the road out of the mountains. The people cheered them on as they left. Peace and livelihood had been restored to the village. Liberty had been granted to them. Good had been done.

Guy sighed, satisfied.

“So, do you think we should have gotten bandages before dramatically leaving?”

Friend limped alongside him, and looked down at Guy’s bleeding arm.

“Nah. They’ll heal on their own. It would have ruined the dramatic effect of the exit.”

Guy nodded.

“Wise words, brother. May we never lose that spirit.”



Canals of Venice

Sean Oros

J'adore Bacon

Seulgi Lee, Lisa Leonhard, and Bess Onegow

I love you, dear, more than bacon,
be careful not to spill your porridge
for I must leave you now forsaken
for another lover I must forage.

Be careful not to spill your porridge
do not greet death within his night
for another lover I must go forage
to Mississippi – only in the sunlight

Do not greet death within his night
or the jaguar on the road
to Mississippi – only in the sunlight
where the children play hopscotch with a toad

The jaguar on the road
alone in his despair,
where the children play hopscotch with a toad –
euphoria, without a care.

Alone in his despair
indubitably Socrates will roar –
euphoria, without a care
unlike Tupac saying, “J'adore”

Indubitably Socrates will roar
for I must leave you now forsaken.
Unlike Tupac saying, “J'adore”
I love you, dear, more than bacon.

The Loves of My Life

Sadie Price

The tress and the stars make love of the night,
The darkness becomes something gorgeous.
Without them, so empty, the world is a fright,
Just the thought of it makes me nervous.

The song of the leaves and the wind around me,
I can't feel the lonely.
The chill on the tip of my fingers and tongue,
It feels as if they know me.

They beckon, come forward, old friend, just stay,
Stay while the rest sleep.
Stand and watch the branches sway,
Let all the darkness creep.

Sonnet 1

Timothy Hutton

I dare not think of hardships drawing near
Our college life will close and soon expire,
But change, not work is what I really fear
A fast transition's what I most desire.

We're next to take familiar steps from home
They laid the path so we form a new one
All packed, away from those we love, we roam,
Once tassel crowns and gowns are worn we're done.

A group of earned success all wears the sash
Some strive, not everyone can thrive and bow
Like phoenix die and born from dusty ash,
Beginning fresh and new, the time is now.

No longer vision viewed in gold and blue
On destined paths we can begin anew.