

Aurora



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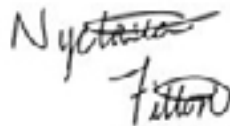
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A Word From the Editor

Wow! Another year gone, and another successful volume of Aurora is in hand. The response we've had from you, our readers, has been astounding. In putting together this year's magazine, I am again amazed at the creativity that is flowing through The Woods. To the students, faculty and staff, alumni, and Sisters of Providence, I thank you for your continued support of Aurora and the arts.

With that, I hope you enjoy this year's edition of Aurora, a 148-year-old tradition. Keeping with the growth and changes coming to campus, I am proud to present a magazine that embraces The Woods tradition, while moving into the future with a modern, new design.



Nyctasia Fitton, Editor-in-Chief



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In the Deep Anne Lenhard Benington '63

Things Left Unsaid

NYCTASIA FITTON

The railroad tracks traveled straight ahead, disappearing in the distance. On either side lay a pair of small hills. The grass was lush, young, and the bright green color could almost hurt the eyes. The young couple, a man hardly older than twenty and his girlfriend, who seemed to have barely hit adulthood, walked down the tracks in the cool spring breeze.

“Where are we going,” the girl asked. She slipped her hands in her pockets, her shoulders rising into a shrug. She avoided looking at him and her long brown hair fell to obscure her face.

“I don’t know. I was just going to walk down here to see what I find,” her companion replied.

“Why don’t we just go down to the river? It’s closer than wherever we’re going.”

“What makes you say that? You don’t know where I’m going.”

The girl sighed, exasperated. “Never mind, then.” She turned toward him, a puzzled expression on her face, still avoiding his eyes. “So, what did you do last night? I tried calling you but you never answered.”

“Nothing.”

“What do you mean, ‘nothing’” she asked.

“I mean, I didn’t do anything last night. My phone was off.”

The girl turned away from him, a frown growing on

her face. She stared at the tracks ahead. “Do you want to see a movie later? You know, just the two of us?”

The man just stared straight ahead of him as he strode forward. He appeared not to have heard her, but a moment later he responded. “Can’t. I’m busy tonight.”

“With what?”

“Just stuff.”

The girl glanced toward him again. “What kind of stuff?”

“Important stuff,” he shot back, his voice lowering threateningly.

“Right. Whatever.”

The pair walked in silence. Every once in a while the man would pull out his phone, checking for messages. The girl caught him, then glanced up catching his eye. He looked forward quickly and pocketed his phone even quicker. She tried to shake off the feeling his action left in her gut.

“So...” she began. She trained her eyes on a crooked tree up in the distance, fearing that she would falter if she saw his clear blue eyes. “Are you waiting for a call?”

The man stumbled slightly, taken aback by her question. Recovering himself, he cleared his throat, “Nah, not really. I... kept thinking it was vibrating...” His voice trailed off, bored. Nonchalant.

The scenery changed from bare, grassy hills to woods. The pair walked through deep shadows cast by the trees. They were forced to slow down, cautiously picking their way over the broken railroad tracks.

“Do you love me,” the girl prompted.

Again the man stumbled. “What? Oh, of course I do,”

he stammered, recovering himself.

“Okay... only me, right?”

“Yeah... Don’t let anyone tell you otherwise. I’m just... really busy right now.”

“Right. Okay, sure,” the frown on the girl’s face deepened, then disappeared as quickly as it appeared. “Let’s go back down to the river.”

“I’d rather not. You can if you really want to.”

“No. I don’t want to.”

“Then why did you say we should go there,” he asked, his voice growing terse.

“I don’t know. I guess I was just wondering if you would go with me.”

“Of course I’d go with you. Why wouldn’t I?”

“Because you so busy with your... stuff,” she drawled.

The girl stopped walking and plopped down on a wide flat rock by the tracks. She rested her chin on knees and stared straight ahead, not looking at anything in particular. The man rolled his eyes as he stopped walking. He did not join her, only staring at her in silence. The girl shivered in the breeze as the man let out an exasperated groan.

“When will you be free again,” the girl asked, her voice growing thin.

“I don’t know. I’m busy all this week though.”

“Right.”

“Well I am, believe me or not.”

“I’ll believe what I want to believe.”

“Okay then. How about you get up so we can keep walking,” the man suggested, inhaling deeply.

“Maybe I don’t want to walk. Maybe I’d rather sit here

and be busy,” she mumbled, sitting up and crossing her arms over her chest. “After all, I won’t have much to do since you’re so busy this week.”

“Right. Suit yourself,” the man said, putting his hands in his pockets. “Do what you will. I’ll just go ahead and go home since you’re so busy.” He turned his back on her and began walking back down the way they came.

“No! Don’t go yet, please. Don’t leave me. I don’t want to be alone here.” At her plea, the man slowed down, but he didn’t turn to her.

“But you told me you were busy.”

“I was joking! Just kidding... Don’t leave, please. Pretty please?”

Silence descended on them, then the man spoke. “Fine, I’ll stay.” He turned towards her. “But you got to get up and walk with me, okay?”

“Yeah. Okay. Fine by me.”

The girl got up from the rock and dusted the seat of her jeans off. She avoided her companion’s eyes as she began to walk quickly towards him, then past him. Her arms had fallen to her sides and her fists were clenched.

“Hey! Wait for me!”

“Why should I? You said we should keep walking.”

“So? I didn’t mean for you to just run away like that. I’d rather not have to go looking for you,” the man snapped. His breath was ragged from rushing to catch up to the girl. When he finally calmed himself, he whispered, “Alyssa, why are you being difficult?”

“Would you shut up?”

“What? Why should I?”

“Just shut up.”

“Why should I,” he growled through gritted teeth.

“Because. Just please shut up.”

“Fine.”

The couple walked, the silence growing heavy between them. Both stared away from the other, the girl at the ground with water in her eyes and the man straight ahead, his expression smooth and empty. The sun shone down on them, deceptively cheerful, and they soon reached the end of the tracks, where they stopped. Suddenly, the girl turned on her heels and began to walk away towards town and her car. The man slowly turned to follow her, but as he did so, he pulled out his phone, checking for messages one last time. His screen was lit up, a message from “Sam” filling the space. His lips turned up slightly, but he ignored it and quietly slid his phone back into his pocket.

“Hey. You okay,” he asked the girl as he caught up to her.

“I’m fine. Don’t worry about me,” she whispered. “I’ll be fine. Just... fine.” Her eyes widened as pools of water formed in their corners. She willed them to go away then, wiping her eyes dry, she said, “Are you sure you can’t go out this week? ‘Cause I’d really like to spend time with you.”

He stared down at his feet. “I’m sorry Alyssa, but probably not. I’ll... try, but no guarantees.”

The girl nodded, fighting back a fresh wave of tears. “Oh... I was just wondering...” she began, her voice trailing off, growing quieter.

“What?”

“Who is Sam?”

The girl's breath caught as she heard a forceful exhale escape from the man's lungs. Clearing his throat, he answered, "Oh, that's... just a friend. No one to worry about."

"You seem to be talking to... him... an awful lot to be just friends." The girl sighed. "I guess there's no point lying about it. I was looking at your phone last week and saw a text Sam sent you. It was pretty... racy... for a guy friend."

"Alyssa. Babe. It's no one."

"Is there something you're not telling me?"

The man didn't answer and his silence seemed to punch the air and the anger right out of her. This time she let the tears fall freely and she continued walking to town, her arms wrapped around her.

"Alyssa! Wait," the man exclaimed rushing towards her.

The girl whipped around and snapped, "What?" The man heaved a deep sigh, and avoided her eyes.

"It's just... I'm... Well... I'm... gay."



Untitled Teresa Dudley



Seasons of the Soul Courtney Chandler

The River

Jonathan Rosengren

A current flowing back in time

But closer to me

To reach me now

A passion moving deep inside

This stream of tears has found me again

Like a twisting turning river bend

Below a cross

No one wants to see

A crying voice

No one heeds

A stake

And a hanging head

Eyes closed

And all the world is blind

Blood matted hair

And this pain is mine

A pale body glowing

In the light between shadows

The colors of death

And black is night

Blood is red

And the moon is white
Water is dirty
But love is pure
On the lips of the thirsty
When He asks for a drink

You can count the dreams
Stolen from tomorrow
Like drops of pain fill a pool of sorrow
You can count the dreams
Stolen from tomorrow
Like drops of pain fill a pool of sorrow
Hope opened a veil
Torn for me
Between heaven and earth
And worlds unseen

This river of blood and water flows
Down the mountain of time to a world I know
It pulses like love in the veins of my hands
I raise my arms to understand
Roots cleave the earth
Branches reach for sky
For one blossom of peace to color my eyes

I am haunted by this awful tree
Watered by the tears of humanity



Creative Creator Courtney Chandler



Misty Morning Light Stephanie McIntyre

The Dreamer

TAYLOR GARDNER

Dreams are something we all have. They fill us with hope. I should know, I am the biggest dreamer you'll know. My biggest dream was to sail around the world with the love of my life and that is what we did. My name is Ashlynn and I am a dreamer.

"What're thinking about Ash?" I look up at Colten's tan face. His brown hair is windblown from being out on deck all day and his light brown eyes shine with pride.

"Just thinking about how lucky I am. I have you and we have this whole summer together. This is our summer, Colten." He sits down beside me and wraps his arms around me. I lean into his hug and lay my head on his chest. I can hear his heart beating like a thousand drums. "Colten?"

"Yeah Ash?" I sit up to look him in the face.

"I love you. I just wanted you to know that." He smiles and tucks a piece of my dark hair behind my ear.

"And I love you Ashlynn. Now let's head to the cabin. Winds starting to pick up. Radar showed a small system moving through."

Once we are in the cabin the rain begins to pour. Colten lays down on the couch and I crawl into the only bed on the whole boat. He told me he would not once sleep in the bed until we were engaged. He has yet to propose, so the couch is his bed. I lay there in bed trying to sleep, but struggle shutting off my mind.

I knew we would be in Greece tomorrow. I have

dreamed of going there ever since I saw pictures of it in history class. I look at the clock and see it has now hit midnight. I look at Colten to see if he is asleep or just lying there.

“Colten? Are you awake?”

“Why?”

“Just checking.” He sits up and pats the seat next to him. I crawl out of bed and take the seat. He shares the blanket with me and turns the lamp on. “I couldn’t sleep.”

“I could tell. What were you thinking about now?”

“Greece. I am so excited to finally go. I have dreamed of,”

“Going there since you were young. I know. You have only said it about a million times.” I softly smack him and lay my head on his shoulder. He wraps me in a strong, warm hug and kisses my head. “You know, if you want to really enjoy your day you got to get some sleep.”

“I know. Can’t I just sit here for a little while?”

“Hmm, lay down on a lumpy couch or sit here holding you in my arms? That is a tough choice. I think I will go with laying down.” He smiles down at me and laughs. “You ask some of the craziest questions. But I love you no less.”

“So, are you going to tell me what you have planned for tomorrow?”

“Did you not just listen to me? I just said something sweet and you are still thinking about Greece?”

“You say sweet stuff all the time. That’s one of the many reasons I love you. Now, tomorrow?”

“A complete surprise that will start late if you and I do not get some sort of sleep.” I roll my eyes and kiss him good-night.

Sunshine peeks through the window and wakes me up. I sit up to stretch and look toward the couch. Colten is already up. He has always been an early riser. I head up to the upper deck and find him getting the boat tied down to the dock. Colten glances over toward me and smiles. His smile always melts my heart.

“I thought I saw something beautiful out of the corner of my eye.”

“Probably the city of Mykonos, because I know you’re not talking about me. I am a train wreck.”

“I think you are beautiful just the way you are. Messy hair and all.” I smile at him as I try to hide that I am blushing. He walks over and kisses. “Are you ready for your day of fun?”

“You bet. I’m going to go get ready.”

I take a quick shower, get dressed and fishtail my hair. I grab my sandals and head to meet up with Colten. I quickly slip my sandals on and he guides me off the boat. He grabs my hand and interlocks his fingers with mine.

We walk the streets of the city taking in the whole new world presented before us. It is like stepping into a postcard. Colten takes a few pictures of me as we walk the streets. I take a photo of him next to the windmills and we also get someone to take a few of us. Then we visit one of the old churches before heading to a local farm for organic wine and food tastings. When we arrived, we were greeted by many of their farm animals. Colten and I took a picture with the donkey. Their wine was amazing and went very well with their fresh cheese and meat platter they had for us to try.

“I don’t think you can top this. The day is almost over.” He laughs and grabs my arm to pull me alongside him.

“I have two more things planned. Right now, we are going kayaking.”

“Okay, that sounds like fun. What’s the other surprise?”

“That is a complete surprise. We will be kayaking for an hour and then we return to the boat. I will pick you backup a little while later.”

“Can you at least tell me how I should dress? And why are you picking me up?”

“Dress nice. And I have a few things to do before I come and get you.” I smile and as we head to the kayaking location.

We kayak around the island and take pictures along the way. We head back to the boat and Colten grabs a duffle bag from his cabinet. He kisses before leaving and walks back into town. I dig through some of the clothes I brought with me. I settle on my pastel mint blue dress that is shorter in the front and flowy, long in the back. I take a quick shower and get dressed. I curl my hair to give me the beach wave look. I apply a small amount of mascara. I hear a small knock on the cabin door. I grab my tan heels and slip them on just before I get to the door. Colten is dressed in white Bermuda shorts, a white V-neck and a light tan blazer.

“You look amazing Ashlynn.”

“Does the dress look okay? I wasn’t sure how it looked.”

“It brings out your sea blue eyes. You look so beautiful.”

He walks me to the end of the dock where a scooter is sitting.

“We have a bit of a ride into town. I promise it is worth it and I won’t go too fast. I don’t want to mess up your beautiful, dark hair.”

“Let’s go before you run out of sweet pick-up lines.”

I lay my chin on his shoulder as we ride through the streets. When we arrive at the restaurant, he offers me his arm and walks me to our table. We dine under the stars, and then to a beach. We take off our shoes. He grabs my hand and we walk down the beach a way. I notice a light and raise my head up off his shoulder.

“I think someone is having a party here.”

“No. This is for us.” We get closer and the light are small lanterns. Colten lets go of my hand. “I knew from the time I met you, I couldn’t imagine life without you. I have loved you since that day. I just didn’t realize how much.” He reaches inside his blazer and pulls out a small box. He slowly gets down on one knee and takes my hand. “Ashlynn, I love you and want to spend the rest of my life with you. Will you do me the honor of marrying me?”

“Yes,” I begin to softly laugh as he slides the diamond ring on. “Of course, I’ll marry you Colten.”

Colten cups my face in his hands as he softly kisses me before wrapping me in his arms. We sit in the center of all the lanterns. He has his arms around me and I lay my head on his shoulder as we watch the sun sink behind the ocean.

How could I be any happier? I am lying wrapped in the arms of the man I love and listening to the waves hit the bottom of the boat. I can hear the rain hitting the roof and then a loud crack. I feel Colten move and I look back at him. He sits up to look at me.

“I’m going to go check on everything out there. I didn’t like the sound of that loud crack just then.”

“Be careful Colten.”

“I will. Looks like we should have stayed in France. I didn’t think it would be this bad.” He leans down to kiss me.

“Love you.”

“Love you too.”

I knew that this storm was coming. We left Greece the morning after he proposed, and we headed to France. Before we left, an old man told me a severe storm was coming and was going to be the worst one of the season. I didn’t say anything to Colten since he told me that there would be a storm that night. I wish I would have said something now. I crawl out of bed to go help him.

As I push the door open, the wind fights to keep the door shut. My black silk nightgown is instantly drenched and clinging to me. I hold my hand over my eyes and look for Colten. I notice that the sail is broke, and a piece is hanging by a piece of rope. I find Colten by the wheel and make my way toward him.

“What are you doing Ashlynn?”

“I came to help. What can I do?”

“Hold the wheel as steady as possible. I am going to try and fix the sail.” I nod and hold tight to the wheel.

I watch as he climbs the post and gets to the broken piece.

That’s when a gust of wind comes through and he loses his balance with the broken piece in hand. I watch as the sail impales him and our dreams of a life together. I rush to be by his side. I cradle his head in my lap. My heart feels like it has been ripped from my chest. My entire world is lying in a puddle of blood and I am helpless.

“Colten!” He touches my face and I lean down to kiss

him. "I am so sorry. I should have mentioned the storm. I love you Colten."

"I love you Ash." I see his eyes widen and then I feel the wave crash over the boat. He grabs my gown and it tears up to my thigh. I frantically grab for his arm, but it is not enough. The ocean storm rips Colten from my grasp like a savaged beast.

My dreams used to be good and pure; magical even. Now they are horrific. Ever since that night, I relive it every time I close my eyes. It is not just a nightmare, I am there in the rain and wind all over again. I feel my dress rip each time, the metallic smell of blood and saltwater in the air. I still sense the last kiss from Colten. You probably think I am crazy, but if you were in my shoes you'd understand. No one understands though, because I am alone with this problem. My name is Ashlynn and I am an insomniac whose nightmares come to life.

Lullabies

KAREN HOFFMAN

The abyss yawns, loneliness awakens

Feed it, soothe it

Lullabies of distractions, temporary pleasures

Hurt cries, nestled back in the deep

Yet never gone



Peaceful Place Stephanie McIntyre

The Mountain

T E R E S A D U D L E Y

Look up at the mountain
Its spires reach toward God
Reminding man to pray
Hills swathed in trees,
Green fingers pointing upward
Valleys, rushing streams, roaring waterfalls
Unchanging, lasting forever
Its beauty and power awes
Then came man, his eyes coveted the mountain
His greed bored great chasms in its side
Searching for black diamonds

His feuds covered hillsides with blood
Many innocent lives lost to his pride and greed
The war of blue and gray divided
Brother against brother, Father against son
Families ripped apart
Mothers, daughters, sisters cry
Homes burned, all is lost in hate

Still the mountain remains
Slowly the mountain changes
Trees grow taller, streams change
Trees fall, streams are filled

By man's unwary hand
His greed blinds him to the signs
The signs of the mountain
It's pain, its warning

Still man destroys the mountain
He searches endlessly for coal
His source of wealth and death
The poor take the danger
From the mountains' defenses
They die to be replaced
By others desperate for work
To feed their families
Obsessed with wealth and power
Owners strive for cheap mining
Cutting the workers' wages and safety
The miners rebel, fighting for their rights
More death and pain from man's greed
Soon machines took their place
But it was not enough
The owners looked to make more
No matter the expense
To the mountain and its people
So they blast the mountain tops
Tearing down the spires
That pointed upward
Filling the valleys
Stopping flowing rivers
And roaring waterfalls
Filling the streams with poison

Trees that tied the land together
For hundreds of years
Fall leaving the mountain bare
With nothing stopping it,
Water rushes down flooding homes
Terrifying the people who made
The mountain their home
Seemingly indestructible, the mountain
Falls to man's greed

Archer's Crusade

EMILY HANSEN

Light rips through the morning haze
Beckons me, beckons me from my daze
Nightmares that dog me er' I go
And nothing, nothing I have to show
Sleep continues to flee my gaze

Stumble through this wretched phase
pray to Goddess who sings my praise
Fury plagues me and pains me so
Deep Breath, Draw, Release.

Goddess, though praise her, fails to amaze
How, oh how, could I show more praise
Finding myself, wander to and fro
But Deserts blur passed, no crop to sow
Why can't I stumble out of the blaze?
Deep Breath, Draw, Release.

There's No Place

BRY'CHELL JOHNSON

As I made my daily commute into West Terre Haute on my way to Saint Mary's, I glanced up at the trees wondering if I'd see a black body dangling from one. I raised my eyebrows surprised at the thought. I had been going through here for years and years and never once had I had this thought. But these are the times. Places like West T probably have all the space and time in the world to do something like hang a body from a tree, and no one would be the wiser...I shook my head loose from the dark, morning thought and kept driving, my eyes, every so often, sweeping the thickest branches above...

A year before, when Black Lives Matter was too loud for this campus, there was a Facebook post I recall reading about a girl who went to Indiana State University. She was black. She walked down the dorm hall to her room after a full day of nonsense, and found on her door, a noose in the form of a note written by fellow dormmates: "Go back to Africa you messy nigger." They were white if you hadn't guessed. Her room had been meddled with as well. She remained poised but was clearly distraught in her post. She wanted her loud pain to be seen and heard. People shared it out of surprise, some thought it was funny, but to the black students on this campus, we knew that this was the low rumbling of the beginning of an earthquake. Only our world would feel it. Only our

eyes would see our nooses. No, her post didn't mean that there would be black bodies hanging from trees at every glance, but these have been the times. The post meant that the verbal war would start. The insults would start. The emboldened harassment would start. The denial would start. No institution administrator here on this campus, or her campus mentioned this girl's viral post. This post simply meant the silence would continue.

Today, I walk through a silent campus as I hang my loud Black Student Association flyers around for our second Umoja Series event on neutrality. This campus has a knack for remaining silent about things...about everything. I walked through the basement of Le Fer posting a noisy flyer in each door way. I ran through the event itinerary in my mind: "A. Introduction, B. Discussion about sense of action, C. "What Would You Do" game, D. "People of Color, You Are Not Oppressed" video..." This event seems so...loud. Let's be honest, who wants to address the fears of hanging black bodies, or racist dormmates, or a racist president? No one? Who wants to talk about me or any other black students on this campus who hate it here because all they hear when they walk around is silence, while the pain inside them is screaming?

It's funny; as a freshman I thought this place would be home. I smirk as I tape up a flyer in the South elevator. In some ways, the familiarity of it feels like home. Yet, living in Terre Haute makes it feel like there's no place that I am truly heard, welcome, wanted, or important. It's funny because the

predictability of this place feels like home, but it's the predictable responses: "You're just making this up", "Stop complaining", "My Irish ancestors were oppressed too, so what?", that makes this place feel like there's no place. There's no place that takes me seriously, no place that wants to listen to our BSA event ideas, no place that wants to truly come to the realization that these are the times where racism and oppression still exists, and are thriving like they just got a personal invite from our grand 'ol president to go full force. I had a dream the other day that I was running from every place because every place was no place to be; not for me. Not for my lesbian relationship, not for my female body, not for my listening ears, or my loud thoughts. Every place was mute, every place was deaf, every place turned its back on all that I am, so I was just running. And when I had thought I found a place, the leader of this place and its people who looked like all of us in the world all at once, came up to me and touched my shoulder. She said, "There's no place for you here." I asked her why and she said that my pain was too loud and would surely ruin her place. I woke and felt more alone in the universe than ever, but these are the times.

I am holding on to the hope of better tomorrows, knowing that even tomorrows are no place for me. My fiancé and I are pursuing education here because we figure that is our way out of this place, but we fear that our next place will look much like this one, sound like this, and feel like the ghosts of hanging bodies from trees...



Bottle Octopus Kelsey Hollis



Lanterns of Light Meredith Williams



Untitled

Laura Herron



Ceiling of the Bellagio

Sara Boyer '03 G'13

On the Day Before The First Day

S U S A N D O L L E

On the day before the first day, all of the colors stood in a circle around the Maker, waiting.

“Choose me,” said Blue.

“No, me,” said Red.

They argued on and on, each wanting to be THE ONE.

The Maker listened quietly.

The first day came and the Glory of the Maker shone as not one, but ALL, were chosen and spread in a mighty cacophony of delight upon all things.

And they knew the Wisdom behind the Beauty of All Creation was Love.

On the Day after Mexican Independence Day in Cambodia

B . C . F A R B O

For: da Riva

I am a Damn Fool...

Leaps and jumps attempted,
from
motorized,
platforms...

(Remember Icarus?

I am the luckier of the two.)

A Hand that won't open...
Raw, sore, a gentle (or not) reminder
of the tuck, and roll behind the Royal Palace.

Leaving the Latin Quarter.

No hat, or stomach can contain,
The stale Tequila (s) of last night...

Please remember me kissing the pavement,
and not the tile.

Motivated first by lonesome,
then a lost phone.

Regrets (or not) from,

The Foolish Gringa Who Thought She Could Fly



Find the Trail of Crumbs Andrea Sutrick

Tribute to Mom

S U S A N D O L L E

No accolades here

No prize or paycheck

No staff benefits

No glitzy shows, attention or ap-

plause

sores bandaged

stairs swept

bills paid

photo framed for the wall

But I know my value

dogs walked, fed, brushed

grass mowed

new-sewn curtains

house trim painted

A heart that warms

the inviting light

a nourishing meal

a soft-sung lullaby

shoestrings tied

sandwiches made

kitchen swept

curtains drawn to close out the

night

Hands that hold

homework accomplished

prayers to end the day

clean clothes

pantry stocked

daisies sway in the garden

A refuge in the storm

walks cleared of leaves and snow

warm beds

baths taken

pillows plumped

stories read

Tomorrow brings more

Too much, too little

All my love wrapped up in living

For I am an Artist of the Home

Papa Was A'Rollin' Stones

A U S T I N S O M E R S

My father told me there was a time
When he truly hated hauling
The rubble of life's meaningless struggles
Up the same damn hill every day
But did it
Anyway.

I don't know if he did it out of
Duty, pride, or optimism or
Was just giving life the finger,
But he apparently
Just kept on
Pushing.

That was a long time ago
Though,

Before he finally realized
Meaninglessness was a myth
After meeting his beloved
Partner in climb:

My
Mother,

Mrs.
Sisyphus.

Daddy's Princess

EMILY HANSEN

My feet are dirty. I am Daddy's princess, but I take great pride in being a power ranger princess (just not the pink one). My hair is wild an long and I make a show of jumping as high as I can on the trampoline. Fourth of July means that I get to stay up late with my cousins and watch fireworks. This is my favorite holiday. I have been running around for hours with my cousins, and my filthy feet are no longer allowed inside. I stare uselessly at my feet now, filthy again, although that very thing is the thing that bothers me most. The wind blows my still wild hair and the sky lights up as the sky rumbles. These aren't fireworks, but the make me feel minisculy better.

The night wears on and my cousins and I have stopped jumping. The fatigue has quieted us, except for the odd "ooh" or "ahh" at the small explosions in the sky. The gold ones are my favorite, but the smallest rumble makes me nervous, and I ask Daddy often if it is thunder. The wind whips around me, faster and faster, as the storm rolls in. Childhood delight has since turned to a feeling of fire in my gut and ash in my mouth. Everything seems slowed down. Fireworks again and I don't jump. I am not afraid. Daddy smiles at thunder, and now I do too.

My dirty feet find their way to Daddy, as always. I don't ask, just climb up onto his lap. Fatigue has finally driven

me away from my more rambunctious cousins and ever to my favorite part of this world. My uncles are laughing, and I snuggle into Daddy's arms. My favorite firework blooms again, and I tell Daddy. Mommy stays inside with my brother. She hates fireworks and has long since tired of my wild personality. This was the beginning of my storm. Here, I am alone. The storm is here. I barely am covered by the roof of the house. Inside, I hear the stairs creak as mom helps him up the stairs. I know his bones creak and hurt they way the stairs do. I know he needs help showering. I know I can't be so dependent, but somehow, I still am.

Daddy carries me as the fireworks come to an end. He says goodbye to his brothers and my cousins, and I cry because I want them to stay. Daddy just continues his goodbyes. I am overtired, and he is just happy to have his princess in his arms, even fussy as she is. The storm whips around me and I want more. I want it to break, fall apart, tear things to pieces. I am empty, devoid of anything yet filled with every emotion imaginable. I am angry, truly angry, and I have no idea why. How could things go so horribly wrong? How could I be this way, and how could he? He is the beauty before and after the storm, and now it just rages like a horrible monster.

Daddy reads a story to me before bedtime. My brother shares a bed with me, yet all I see is Daddy. He is my world. Even now, as images of hobbits and elves dance through my head. Here I am complete. Gollum enters the story, and Daddy laughs as I hide under my blanket. I can't hide from this. The storm still continues, but I have been out too long. I go inside

the house that I grew up in. I can hear him groaning upstairs like needles in my ears. I want to help, so I have smiled through it all. But now is different. I want things to break, to burn, and I somehow know that this is a turning point. I know Daddy won't be okay. We are a freight train stuck on the fastest setting. eventually, we'll crash. This whole charade will come crashing down, all at once, and his princess will be left to pick up the pieces. I sit by the window and watch the storm rage, and I wish that I could too.

Sleep brings dreams, and Daddy kisses me goodnight, and promises to take me out tomorrow. After what feels like days, I find myself back in bed, sketching and trying to escape. I hear him and mom get out, and the water shuts off. I am empty, and long to be back in the storm again. Mom helps him down the stairs, and it sounds excruciatingly painful. I am losing him. How did we get like this? The pain I feel is interrupted by mom calling me (a constant irritant for a teenage girl). I make my way downstairs and my mother passes me, only saying, "Your father wants you." I find Daddy looking frighteningly pale and tired, but his glassy eyes are alight with excitement. "Hey princess!" he says and I smile slightly in response. He looks at me the way he always does: like I walk on water. "Do you want to come take pictures of the storm?" I smile and nod. Better to be his princess through to the end then quit.



Alpaca Harmony Walsh



Untitled Cobie Harrison



Rainy Day Anna Madden



Sunflower Harmony Walsh

Falling in Line Out of Sync

JILL JEFFRIES

In the glowing rays of a morning sun
We weep sandpaper tears on unburnished cheeks
Droplets of lost love fall from a chin now porcelain
While others greet the new day with unfounded hate
The complications of a life uncharted
Or perhaps the loss of their heavenly icon

Hopes of healing by a rite of fire
Amid flames that freeze a mind seeking
Answers searched for in a book of blank pages
Trying to better understand the story
Though it has yet to be written

Blue ink on a forearm, sketch the subtle lines of angst
Musings design a perfect life, fearful of being baited
By a tongue that's vapid and vile with words
That through ages summon myths abided
Reignited by a Mother Earth enraged
A dust storm choking off all thoughts sensible

Misguided by needs for acceptance
Utter disregard for the underlying text
Of praise that a closed mind will never hear

Speak now until the words release pieces
To shape and mold a life of one's own

For now, the empty vessel sits upon a shelf
Among the littered input of others' ideals
Unable to pierce the veil of acceptance
One can't truly sing a song the heart did not write
Just as a songbird couldn't know
The discordant melody of nature in disconnect.



Growth of Creativity and Potential
Rachel R Roetcisoender

Ashes

CHEYANNE MADDOX '17

I'm done being the nice girl.
The good girl.
The compliant girl.
I won't smile at your sexist jokes,
Nervously avoiding eye contact,
Hoping you'll pick up on my
Blatant disinterest.
I won't show you respect.
You've done nothing to deserve it.
I'm not your eye candy;
Your 'hot piece,'
Yours.
Don't tell me to smile.
Don't tell me I'm pretty.
Don't tell me it's a compliment.
Anger,
Blood,
and fire run through my veins.
I will ruin you
with a crimson red smile
and a dainty laugh.
Gone is the quiet girl.
Gone is the girl who made nice.

Gone is the girl who feared the flames.
Never again.
I'm not the nice girl,
the good girl,
the compliant girl.
I've risen from the ashes,
and now it's your time to
burn.

Alone Together

B . C . F A R B O

Alone together,
she flipped from Chet Baker,
back to the tinny Top 40 Hits,
touted to be non-stop.

That is when I knew she wasn't the one.

Convincing myself,
I could love anyone who would bother
to interrupt,
a broke faced Okie in mid-sorrow,
was building a funny valentine upon the sand.



Cannes Un Anna Madden



WVC Harmony Walsh



My Whole World Stephanie McIntyre

The Marriage Flower

JILL JEFFRIES

It began as a seed
Slim odds for success
Struggling against nature of the human kind
Burrowing in it did, patiently waiting to emerge

Conditions were right
Over time root did take
Bonding with soil for survival and strength
Watered and nourished it began to grow

Stable in its footing
Pushing through dirt
Kissed by breezes, warmed under nurturing sun
Flourish it would under skies dashed with blue

It felt adoration
Growing full and lush
Bringing joy to all with its fragrance and beauty
Delicate and graceful it was happy, beginning to thrive

In time it stood steadfast
Tenacious and tall
Weeds grew close for an intimate peek
Sizing up its success and searching for imperfections

Sun blazing for days
Water recedes to a trickle
Leaves turn brown and a petal floats ground ward
Ants arrive to colonize, unsettling its drying foundation

Weeds took to choking
Where was the love?
No matter its effort it was left unattended
Wholly betrayed by elements that'd once been so giving

Mourning the loss of an empty space left...

Ghosts After Dark

K A R E N M U Ñ O Z

Steph heard the stories about some of the ghosts that prowl Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College after dark, and she was no stranger to apparitions, but recent events had definitely creeped her out. It's always a good time sharing ghost stories and spooky tidbits about the school's own history of the paranormal and otherwise unexplainable moments, but when it happens in person, the enjoyment of sharing with the company of friends is immediately replaced with the fear of experiencing it alone in the dark. This is exactly what Stephanie felt this semester with each new paranormal development, especially because it always happened when her suitemate, Karen, was off campus, spending time at home with her family on the weekends.

The first incident occurred during the weekend right after Christmas Break, kicking off the start of the new semester with a few bangs, quite literally. Karen had gone home that Friday after syllabus week, a name Steph had given the first week of each new semester, seeing as it always started out with the handing out of the syllabi and going over classroom rules and expectations.

Stephanie sat in the middle of her bed at two in the morning, with her back against the wall and worked on her computer. She happened to see the string on her fan swinging in circles out of the corner of her eye, which was unusual. So, she looked up and watched it swing for a while before saying,

rather annoyed, “Would you stop?” Immediately, the string went still. She said “thank you” and went back to work. Not long after, she heard what sounded like heavy boot steps in Karen’s room, much heavier to be considered anything other than a male’s gait, clumping with a distinctive heel-toe step. The sound of desk drawers opening and slamming shut on repeat, shortly followed and permeated down the shared hallway, also coming from Karen’s room.

A few minutes later, Steph heard a knocking coming from her door. Looking over, she paused a moment, and when the knock came again, she realized it was coming from the door to Karen’s room and the bathroom and not actually the door to the hallway. Her body went cold and she said quietly, “Please don’t come in. I’m busy.” The knocking stopped, and everything calmed down.

An hour or so later, she was getting ready for bed and flipped her light off. Crawling into bed, she happened to look up toward the balcony, which she does sometimes to check for deer, and saw that her door was open. Frowning, as she got out of bed and moved to close the door, she suddenly saw a black human-like shape moving toward her. She immediately panicked and ran to the door, struggling to unlock it, before running out into the hallway. Steph stood out there for a while before mustering up the courage to go back in and get her cell phone, pillow, and blanket. Sneaking around her own room felt strange, and her eyes were glued on the balcony door as she retrieved her things. Then she retreated back into the hallway and closed the door. She ended up camping out in the hallway until the sun came up the next morning. It was only then that Steph felt safe enough to enter the once safe haven

she considered her room to have been.

The next night proved quiet and nothing of the paranormal sort manifested over the rest of the weekend, which was a huge relief, until Steph saw the state of Karen's room. She had to bring horses in on that Sunday and when she made it back to the parking lot behind the dorms, she found that Karen had just made it back, and they walked inside together, as Steph explained everything that happened two nights prior in Karen's absence. The explanation was cut short the minute Karen unlocked the door to her room and swung it open, revealing a rather peculiar happenstance.

It took them both a minute to process the sight before their eyes. All of the desk and dresser drawers were completely open, pulled out as far as they could go, without leaving the frame. Karen's desk chair was also turned completely around and moved in such a way that it was five feet away from where she left it and faced the center of the room. Stephanie reluctantly followed Karen into the room, as Karen dropped her laundry bag and silently surveyed the scene.

"Why...? How..? What the actual fuck," Karen started. She pulled out her phone to take pictures, maybe for proof that this actually happened and wasn't a dream, or maybe to give her hands something to do to keep her from trembling in shock. Steph watched her put everything back in order, before saying what was on her mind.

"Shit, dude. I knew I heard spooky sounds coming from your room when you were gone, but this...Dude. Bro."

When Steph was but a child, there was this big, old, black, shaggy dog that she would see around the property, where she lived. She would also see him in town, as well. She

knew that it was the same dog, because he would always fix his gaze on her with his piercing yellow eyes. Somehow, she just felt that recognition every time she laid eyes upon him. She told her mom about it, but her mom never seemed to have seen him. He would always disappear whenever her mom looked for him and reappear the moment her mom stopped searching.

It got to the point where she'd start to see him in her house. She'd look down the hallway toward her room and he'd be standing in the shadows, staring, eyes seeming to glow back at her. She never felt threatened by him; instead she was comforted by his presence and took to calling him Shade. After a month or so, he began to sleep in her closet pretty much nightly. Her Chinchilla, Petey, never seemed bothered by Shade, and thus she left him be. Yet still, her mother couldn't see him. She believed Steph had made him up as a sort of imaginary friend.

After a few months of hearing of Shade, her mother became tired of it and told her to knock it off. Steph, upset that her mother didn't believe her, became frustrated and, later that night, begged Shade to show himself to her mother. Apparently, he did so sometime that night, because her mother contacted a Medium the next day. The lady who came into the house didn't say anything about strange feelings or hateful auras, and Steph doubted her. But when she mentioned Shade and his love of her bedroom, the lady's face seemed to drain of all color. Looking down the hall, Steph realized that she'd seen Shade. And he definitely wasn't pleased that the Medium was there. He radiated anger, his teeth bared at her and eyes narrowed to slits.

The Medium closed herself in Steph's room, telling the rest of the family to leave the door closed no matter what, and when she emerged roughly an hour later, the room seemed brighter somehow. A darkness that Steph hadn't noticed before was gone, and the Medium was absolutely exhausted. She only found out later, through prying at her mother, what the lady had said about the incident.

"She said something about a demon" was all the information she could get. Her mother was visibly uncomfortable and refused to speak of it again.

The latest development in the paranormal situation occurred after spring break. By that point, Steph and Karen had grown accustomed to weird sounds here and there and some furniture or objects moving every once in a while, but Steph was never prepared for these things to happen while she was present. It was Friday night and Karen had already gone home for the weekend. Stephanie woke up at three in the morning as a chill went through her. When she looked for the source of the cold, she found her balcony and screen doors completely open, even though she remembered locking it before going to bed, as she does every night.

When she got up to close and lock the doors, she noticed sounds coming from Karen's room. There were no heavy footsteps like the last time, but she could hear all kinds of fuckery going on, such as the desk drawers opening and slamming shut, with the closet door doing much the same, as if somebody had gotten themselves stuck in a loop of open, close, open, close. She uttered a simple "No, please," climbed back in bed, and fell back asleep.

The next night, Stephanie woke at three in the morning

again and discovered that her door to the hallway, that led to Karen's room and the bathroom, was completely open, regardless of the fact that she never goes to bed without shutting and locking it. She got up, cursing under breath, as she closed and locked the doors, before going back to bed. The rest of the night passed without incident.

Steph had been working on a paper in her room the next day when she heard Karen unlock her door and drop her laundry bag on the floor. She heard "Are you fucking kidding me right now," before Karen came over and told Stephanie that "You should come look at my room. Like right now." Steph smiled nervously as she followed Karen back into her room, already imagining what she might see. She breathed out a simple "Well, shit," upon seeing the room.

All of the desk drawers were completely open, as was the closet, and Karen's slippers and sneakers were spread out in various places in the room. Her two grey folding chairs were pushed forward onto the table in front of them and her desk chair was all the way on the other side of the room, against the balcony door, as if someone has wanted to enjoy the view.

Karen shook her head as she began putting everything back and said, "This isn't creepy at all. No, not at all." Steph looked at her. "At least you weren't here when it happened. I heard all kinds of shit from your room Friday night." "Not that I'm complaining, but isn't it odd that this kind of thing never happens when I'm here. It's always when I'm home for the weekend."

"Maybe the ghost misses you, Karen," Steph countered. "I doubt that. All I know is that I never hear anything when

you're gone. At least, not since I 'talked' to the ghost; laying down my only two rules. Don't move my stuff, unless you put it back, because I have a hard time remembering where I put stuff enough as it is. And don't do anything when it's dark, because I'm a chickenshit and I can't deal with that."

"It didn't put your stuff back though."

"Yeah, that's fair, though I suppose it's the idea of ghost shenanigans in the dark that bother me the most. It's terrifying after dark and as long as they don't cross that line, I can live with the furniture being moved."

I Feel Heavy

KATHRYN DOWNEY

I feel heavy,
weighted down.
I feel lost.
I feel small.
I feel regretful
but I don't know why.
I feel the what if's
I feel the bittersweet.
I feel the double-edged.
I feel reckless.
I feel what's the use?
I feel forgettable. I feel forgotten.



Sullivan Lake

Harmony Walsh

Hear My Truth: A Play

HAYLEY COOPER

Characters

MARSHALL, a criminal, in his mid-fifties, receiving capital punishment

KYLE, a young guard giving MARSHALL the lethal injection

Setting

Present day, Texas. A small, dark room.

MARSHALL sits alone, strapped down to a chair. A table sits in front of him. He seems oddly patient. KYLE, a fresh-faced, young man hurriedly enters from the left.

MARSHALL

(After a moment) Running late, boy?

KYLE

Yeah, I didn't mean to keep you waiting.

MARSHALL

Waiting? To die?

(KYLE is taken aback by MARSHALL'S matter-of-fact tone.)

KYLE

Well...I mean...

MARSHALL

I'm only kidding, boy. Just a dead man trying to make light of the situation.

KYLE

Marshall Jones?

MARSHALL

As I live and breathe, for the next ten minutes, that is.

MARSHALL (CONT.)

I've never seen you around here, boy.

KYLE

It's my first day.

(MARSHALL lets out a deep laugh that turns into a deeper cough. He quickly recovers, acting as if it did not happen.)

MARSHALL

Killing a man the first day on the job, that's it America!

KYLE

Me? I'm not killing you.

MARSHALL

Not you! The government. Our government. You know the United States developed lethal injections?

KYLE

I...

MARSHALL

Damn right, they did.

KYLE

Well...

MARSHALL

The one good thing about lethal injection is the last meal. You know, boy, where you can choose anything to eat the day they sentence you to die? Well, I wanted to have a steak, medium rare. Wouldn't even have to season it, some call it simple, I call it easy to please! But that damn greedy Brewer ruined that for all us Texans.

KYLE

Who?

MARSHALL

Exactly what I said. He's the idiot white supremacist who asked for two chicken steaks, a triple bacon cheeseburger, fried okra, three fajitas, a pizza, a pint of ice cream, and a slab of peanut butter fudge with crushed peanuts! Bastard didn't eat any of it. Said he "wasn't hungry." A dying man's one last wish and he ruined it and the worst part is, he asked for chicken steaks.

(MARSHALL pauses.)

MARSHALL (CONT.)

Instead, my last meal will be that slop from breakfast. I think it must have been a meat omelet. Hell, coulda been chunks of shit and I'd say it was the best meal I've ever had in this place. Do you think Heaven has food, boy?

KYLE

Heaven?

MARSHALL

Don't sound confused boy, you've heard of Heaven! You know, the place with the angels, the saints...and GOD? No more pain and suffering, forgiveness of sins, yada, yada, yada? This has to be ringing a bell.

KYLE

Of course, I've heard of Heaven.

MARSHALL

Well then, tell me boy, do you think they have food up there? I'd hate dying knowing my last meal was that shit omelet they fed us this morning.

KYLE

I don't know.

MARSHALL

I know this is your first day, boy. But have you had the slop here?

(MARSHALL does not wait for KYLE to answer.)

MARSHALL (CONT.)

Once you've had it, you'll be prayin' Heaven has food up there, I can guarantee that!

KYLE

You think you're going to heaven?

MARSHALL

I don't think it, I know it!

KYLE

You can't be ser-

MARSHALL

(MARSHALL cuts KYLE off with his quick reply.)

Dead. Serious.

KYLE

You think you're funny? Well, if we're talking about the same Heaven, and I'm pretty sure we are, murders aren't exactly welcomed there.

MARSHALL

You believe everything you hear, boy? Everything the government, "the man" tells you? You're a good little citizen of this fine country. After all, you are here. Here watching all the murderers, pedophiles and junkies get killed off or just rot away. Eliminating the scum of the earth one by one.

KYLE

This is just a job for me.

MARSHALL

Being an "executioner" is just a job for you? Seems to me that you're just as much as a murderer as they say I am.

MARSHALL (CONT.)

(MARSHALL quickly adds, matter-of-factly.)

But I aint, a murderer.

KYLE

You are Marshall Jones?

(MARSHALL nods.)

KYLE (CONT.)

Convicted of murdering his girlfriend in 1999? Sure, they didn't have much evidence, no DNA, but you were here boyfriend and the last person with her. They've held you here since, but you only confessed to the murder two months ago... no one knows why. I remember watching you on the news when I was just a kid. You were the boogeyman of our tiny town.

MARSHALL

You're just like the rest of 'em. Once you hear a story so many times, it's like it becomes the truth. Maybe one day you'll be able to see past what they want you to see. Just to make everyone else feel safe... Even if they got the wrong guy. After all, they couldn't be wrong...could they?

KYLE

If you didn't kill her, then why confess?

MARSHALL

You got anyone praying for you, boy?

KYLE

We're going to go back to this? This is how you want to spend your last minutes?

MARSHALL

Indulge a dying man, wouldya? I only have five more minutes on this earth. And if I can't have my steak, I might as well talk to you.

MARSHALL (CONT.)

I don't have anyone praying for me. You don't believe in God, boy? You say you heard of Heaven, but you didn't seem sure of it. Either you're sure of Heaven, or you're not.

KYLE

(KYLE begins to lay out the needle, the iv, and the cleaning equipment on the table.)

We should really get this started.

MARSHALL

(MARSHALL scoffs at KYLE's reaction.)

“We?” This isn't a tango. There's no “we.” You'd rather give a man his poison than talk about religion? You're a millennial for God's sake, tell me your important opinion.

KYLE

(KYLE continues getting the equipment ready.)

I don't belong to a religion.

MARSHALL

There's that millennial bullshit, boy! But, that's not what I asked. I asked if you believe in Heaven.

KYLE

I believe in Hell.

MARSHALL

(MARSHALL nods, approvingly.)

I like you, boy. I believe in Hell too. Do you think innocent men get sent to Hell?

KYLE

You're the religious one here, you should know God doesn't make mistakes.

MARSHALL

No, boy, you're right about that. But, do you think the devil does?

(KYLE slams his hand on the table.)

KYLE

Listen, I'm only here to get money to help my mom pay bills. I don't want to do this. You think I want to end your life? I don't want to end anyone's life. But it's life or death, for my mom and you. You say you didn't kill that girl, well you could have lived your life the way you had for eighteen years. It's not my fault, God's fault, or the devil's fault you decided to change your story.

MARSHALL

Why fight when you're already dead, boy?

KYLE

What do you mean?

MARSHALL

I've spent twenty years behind bars, boy, all I do is think. What else can an innocent man do? I think about being the so called boogeyman of our little town. I wonder how it happened, why it happened to me. After a while you stop wondering, and just start accepting. I would have drove myself crazy if not've, you understand?

KYLE

Why are you so hell bent on pleading your innocence to me? I'm just the guard, no more and no less.

MARSHALL

You're the last person to see me on this earth, the one person I can tell my truth to.

KYLE

I don't have time to hear your truth, I should have already given you this.

(KYLE begins to clean MARSHALL's arm, then places the IV on the rack.)

MARSHALL

Cleaning my arm seems a little unnecessary, dontcha think?

(KYLE shrugs, annoyance showing in his face.)

KYLE

This is what they told me to do, I'm just following orders.

MARSHALL

You do it well.

KYLE

I know.

MARSHALL

Tell me something, boy. Be honest, it's just you, me, and that needle. Do you pray for anyone? Come on, I won't tell anyone. I know you're not "religious." You said it's life or death for me and your mother.

KYLE

Yeah. I pray.

MARSHALL

I knew you did. For your mother?

KYLE

She's sick.

MARSHALL

I figured, boy. Most people that don't consider themselves religious don't tend to spend their time prayin' a lot. That is, unless they got someone that needs their prayers.

KYLE

She does, need prayers.

MARSHALL

I'll pray for her, boy. It won't be much, a convicted murderer's prayer, but God knows I didn't commit that murder, so maybe he'll make an exception.

KYLE

Sorry about this.

(KYLE sticks the needle in MARSHALL's arm.)

MARSHALL

Apologizing for a small needle prick, boy? Are you going to cry when you put an innocent man down?

KYLE

When are you going to give that up? You, me, and the needle are being honest, remember?

MARSHALL

I've only been honest with you and that needle, boy. I'm sick too.

KYLE

I don't understand.

MARSHALL

I've spent eighteen years of my life here, boy. And, I was going to spend the rest of my life here. I was just a little older than you when I was brought to this place. I've fought, I've given my all. I've given testimonies, I've given DNA, I've done everything to prove my innocence. Once you're looked at as guilty, you might as well be. You can't shake the image of being known as the boogeyman once you've been given it. You're a smart boy, you know that.

KYLE

Wh-

(MARSHALL begins to cough, a small amount of blood coming from his mouth.)

MARSHALL

Let me finish. I came home that night eighteen years ago to find my girlfriend murdered, only to be blamed for the crime because it was the simple way out. A quick way to solve a heinous crime. I had a few drug possession charges, nothing serious, but that was their way in, boy. "The drug addicted

boyfriend goes on a murdering rampage.” It was everywhere. I tried to clear my name, but there was no running from it. You remember watching me when I was convicted eighteen years ago, did I look like a murderer to you?

(KYLE is speechless, as if he cannot believe what he was hearing.)

KYLE

No, you looked like me.

MARSHALL

A young, American boy. Just starting out in the world. I thought back then that my story would be heard, that I would be heard. But here’s the thing... They don’t want to hear you, boy. They want you to shut up and conform. Don’t ask questions, especially questions regarding them and the decisions they make. The government has you, you don’t have the government. I’m a living,

(MARSHALL stops, as if trying to choose the right words.)

MARSHALL (CONT.)

Well, I’m just an example of that. Terminal cancer is just the cherry on top.

KYLE

That’s why you confessed.

(MARSHALL nods, a small smile appearing on his lips.)

MARSHALL

You finally figured it out. It took you long enough, boy! I knew you would, I never doubted you. I just wondered if it would be before or after.

KYLE

You wanted to be in control of something.

MARSHALL

I’ve had everything taken from me, boy. Even if it’s my death,

I want to be in charge. Even if it means confessing to a murder that I'm already believed of committing.

KYLE

You really didn't kill her...

MARSHALL

I really didn't.

(The room goes silent. After a moment, MARSHALL begins to cough, trying to catch his breath.)

MARSHALL

Do it, boy. You know my truth, the truth no one was willing to see... now set me free.

MARSHALL (CONT.)

My ten minutes is up.

KYLE

I'll add your name.

MARSHALL

Boy?

KYLE

With my mothers.

(MARSHALL cannot help but let out a small laugh.)

KYLE

I'll pray for you both tonight.

(The room goes dark.)

Death

MCKENZI KUMPF

I've watched her grow for eighteen years,
And now her time is drawing near.
I'll wrap her in my protective embrace
And take her to my resting place.

Her raven black hair and glistening eyes
Stare intently at the midnight sky.
The frigid water pierces her skin,
As she thinks of times that could've been.

I know the love deep in her heart
And the pain that eats and rips apart.
I know the weight she secretly bears,
And all the evil in their stares.

She has been alone for far too long,
So I'll take her to where she'll belong.
A place where she is finally free,
With no more thoughts of what used to be.

I know the thoughts within her mind;
Knowing she is out of time.
She closes her eyes, and I grab her hand,
To take her away to a distant land.

I lead her to the crystal gate,
And I left her there to seal her fate.
I turn and leave without a sound,
Returning home to the frozen ground.

I descend down to where she lay,
And watch her drift upon the bay.
Her delicate form; lifeless and pale,
Chillingly, breathtakingly, dreadfully frail.

Another life I have claimed.
In many ways, I feel ashamed.
But the cycle continues without a pause
For I receive no final applause.

My Thoughts and You

BRITANY A. JONES

As I lay here,
On my bed,
My thoughts drift to you.
As they get closer,
I'm no longer laying on my bed.

Now I'm sitting on a tall chair by a pool table,
You're standing there with a cue,
Looking at me,
With a smile on your face,
I smile back.

My thoughts change direction,
Replaying a memory,
Of us by the same pool table,
Only surrounded by your friends.

Again my thoughts change,
This time to a dream,
Something I wish to happen,
But that I know won't.

I hear my name,
Bringing me back,
"Britany, it's time to go."
My best friend,
Standing in the doorway,
Holding a bottle,
And wearing workout clothes.

I nod,
Grab my bag and bottle,
And head to the gym.
Hoping I can see you,
Wishing you won't be there,
And praying you would.

Amor Sui

A U S T I N S O M E R S

From our hearts,
Love emanates

Like pink neon light waves
Beaming joy
Out to others.

Such power is but another wonder
Of our short lives
Here on
Earth.

But sometimes those who love most
Give so much
They have little left
To point
Inwards.

And it's a
TRAGEDY
For a heart that once beat so boldly
To fade away into the
Cold quiet night of
Nothingness.

We must kindle their embers
And care for them.

But we can't always
Rely on others
To care for
Us.

So take heed,
Fellow emanater,
And remember
To
Treat
Your
Self.

Reality Check

J I L L J E F F R I E S

We don't always strive for who we are
Instead it's for who we think we should be
Ever afraid of the knowing
That once decided, we may never succeed
The safe haven of our thoughts often remain
Trappings of a blanket meant to comfort

We sit in awe of those we barely know
Not of those who know us deeply
Passing judgement on a glimpse of essence
Spinning our assumptions of self
All while watching others wallow
In the certainty of who they think they are

Be strong in your sense of being
Accept the confidence that resonates within
Disregard the glance cast in disdain
We are beholden to one, penance your option
The light of your truth can bear the brunt
Of heaviness among those dire for adoration

You are whole, release any expectations
For the shoulds that are scribed on parchment

They are inconsistencies of lives lived
Under delusions of clarity among the righteous,
Regressive ideals lie on sand beneath waves
Cresting a shoreline whose history is ever changing.

Accept not what is, but what is yet to be
Revealed in a static film of madness
A fear too often cloaked in soft serenity
An illusion of confidence born unto a wasted life
No longer eulogize the heavy handed as exalted
Faces masked in regret, it was a life lived for someone else.

Nightcapping

B . C . F A R B O

Go,

Intrusive garland of diminished daylight,
a once hot Bing Cherry Red end of a cigarette...
now muted and ashy.

settle

Wrapped for presentation,
tar paper packaged lungs,
who breathe as a pretty gesture.

in

What remembers,
is a sweaty glass that convalesces,
in a lonesome hand

with

Belly up to the dark,
suck through chilled teeth,
that old hurt

the name of someone
you should have forgotten by now.



Charites

Dylan Thomas

The Weak

JILL JEFFRIES

Today

Shadows reach across and through
The night allows for a day renewed
It's yelling that ignites their match
Then the fire rages for not one but two

Tuesday

The sun breaks and slowly rises
High, emotions run like vices
Passion brings the nerves to fray
But patience through love, time surprises

Wednesday

Their spirits swell, a love now soars
Above, minds lost to lore
Bounding forward a heart beating free
No reflection, for a life lived before

Thursday

Fall reseeds for a spring time bloom
Hiding winter lies, amid earthly gloom
Halted mid breath, movements now undetected
Venomous words, leaving neither immune

Friday

Escape to the plain of pleasure forbidden
From sanctity of ideals, miss-given
Lay abreast a skin of warmth
To soulless depths, downward spiral driven

Saturday

Intense light glints on afternoon glasses
Covering shame from feelings, chastened
Hugs and a kiss awash in distrust
Happiness feigned, love passes

Sunday

Chasms grow wide and shadows edge
A world based upon an ages old pledge
Love me or love me not, so it says
Outwardly happy while internally, dead

IT IS DIFFERENT BEING YOU

S U S A N D O L L E

I generally don't even think about race
I don't need to

WHY IS THAT?

I don't think of myself as white first, or even at all, except oc-
casionally I am reminded
like when I am in an unfamiliar section of the city toward
evening
or
when I join you for church

CHOICES

I make

WHY

DO I

NOT

question belonging

?

AND

YOU

ALWAYS

question belonging

I AM A MINORITY WHEN I

young, lunch with the blue hairs
woman, speak up in a meeting of men

educated, have the only college degree among my gradeschool
friends
working, dine with my stay-at-home sisters

BUT THEY DO NOT MIND

when I not only feel different, but less than,
then I begin to understand

PRIVILEGE

being di-vorced
may be the closest I have come to feeling what you feel
as a person of color

SUDDENLY I DO NOT ALWAYS BELONG

even then, those people are not mean to me
they don't see me being different
they don't hate me

they just don't understand I am

EXCLUDED

just me

and there you are



Iris Ann Lenhard Benington '63

Thin Air

JILL JEFFRIES

A lilac scent
On a gentle breeze
Push memories to surface
A time of innocence
Amid the laziest of days
Fascinated by fireflies
Blowing that first bubble
Not spitting out the gum
An epic accomplishment
Like riding a bike
Look! No hands
Ghost in the Graveyard
That summer game
Rites of passage
Moral pressures
Undermining regrets
And you've aged
Winter in full bloom
Reality of time waning
Damp, the scent of must
Claustrophobia of time ticking
The darkening of skies
Breath diminished
Vapor

A Sordid Sense of Humor

A U S T I N S O M E R S

This one guy from my
Neighborhood back home would
Always say:

Never bring
A knife
To a punfight

For the pun is
Mightier
Than the sword.

Well, he's in the hospital
Right now:
Stab wound.

But he'll be
Okay.
He says he's

Getting it all
Sworded
Out.

Which goes
To show:

Laughter may be
The best medicine,
But it should only be
Wielded as a weapon at

Wit's
End.

Dream

KATHRYN DOWNEY

I'm on the run. But I have to see Mom because she is sick. She doesn't leave the bed. Food expires at her bedside table. She stays at Grandma's but it's a different house now. There are many rooms and Mom is in all of them – different versions of her. In one room, it's Mom from a long time ago. She still remembers my sister's name and is asking for her. In other rooms I see the gradual deterioration, but she always knows me.

The real Mom is in the bedroom. She never leaves the bed. As I enter, she moves, cooing in her sleep Mom voice how excited she is to see me. She wants the latest. I tell her I went on a date. She says she knew it, she could just tell. She wants to know everything, but I just remembered I can't stay. They are coming for me. I kiss her and tell her I'll be back.

I gently close the door behind me. I'm at my grandparents'. It's small, not many rooms. They're there looking at me in pain. Like a sorrowful, "just want to keep you safe look." I'm not sure if they know about the things I've done and that they're out looking for me. They might. It maybe it's the look they've been giving me ever since Mom died.

I look just like her.

Rapture

EMMA TAYLOR

He was an intense upsurge
from the tranquil sea.
Intriguing to observe
but only from afar,
in apprehension of
abolishing his magnificence.

And a crisp
stimulating Autumn breeze.
Invigorating,
but only for an instant,
for shattered stipule
does not fare well.

He was,
an abandoned bucolic path.
Jagged edge gravel
concealed in white dust.
Cryptic.
He vanished,
an exodus.

No farewell,
only to leave forsaken
a shattered adolescent heart.



Untitled Laura Herron

It's Not You, Just Everything About You

TIMOTHY FOSTER

Spring 2016

An anxious dread washes over me when I arrive on campus. I don't belong here, and I've already made the mistake of knowing who doesn't want me here through toxic internet comments. The reassurances from faculty and staff don't make much of a difference when every person in your classes who would rather you not be there. I commit myself to razor sharp determination and a clear goal, get in and get out. I think friendships and relationships will only serve as distractions and a 25-year old really has no business hanging out with teenagers (the "dad" moniker still sticks despite my best efforts). Even though I know better, I can't help but have my focus drawn to more posts and petition comments.

"[SMWC] would be better off dead than co-ed!"

"Males are not SISTERS"

"...I think it will be the final nail in the coffin..."

"Is [SMWC] even worth saving at this point?"

"But could I stay in that home, knowing there were what I can only equate as termites in the foundation?"

Is that what I am? A termite come to feed on and destroy the foundation of your home? My first thought is the same thing the suburban white mom says to her pothead

son “I’m not mad, i’m just dissappointed.” I understand traditions and value in continuing one that is 175-years old, but it doesn’t help. There’s no explanation a white supremacist can give to African Americans to reason their hate. I mean, what would they say, “It’s not you, personally, it’s just your race.”? I sit hunched at my desk in the dark, ignoring the reminders on my phone that implore me to start on my homework. I don’t comment, just reading and reading and reading the comments attached to my classmates who furiously make their case to no one about why I shouldn’t be here. I know I’ll see their disingenuous smiles the next day and respond to their boilerplate “How are you?” like some kind of cruel joke. I do everything in my power to avoid retreating into myself, but the disconnect from campus life and my self-serving prophecy that no one would want to make friends with “dad” only fuels my retreat. It’s not entirely my fault, my Munchausen Syndrome always seems to act up right when someone wants to hang out.

I knew it was tradition being defended, a tradition of seclusion and solitary. An opportunity to be disconnected from the traditions of the world and create a haven. A place to argue for inclusion and equal treatment between genders, but where exclusion was masked behind the extrememly thin veil of tradition. Saint Mary-of-the-Woods as an all-female institution was a failing project. The rest of the world was moving beyond the single-gender philosophy, either willingly or not. The College had to decide which tradition to break, remaining women’s only or staying open. For anyone who’s had the op-

portunity to experience the Woods for themself, supporting its closure to prevent “termites in the foundation” should evoke the deepest levels of shame.

SMWC’s future is bright, but a moment of darkness, even for one student, should never be encouraged by classmates who cry out “equality and justice”, but then again, isn’t that the message that men need to hear?

Me and Mama

EMILY HANSEN

In the warmth of the Sun
As it shines on my face
Bare feet wiggle with joy
Back when music filled the wind

Me and Mama would sing
I can feel the dark tune
Of the north where we run
With the hills filled with songs

I can see in the light
Just how beautiful eyes
Can be lit by the tune
Me and Mama and Music

Carpe Diem, Creare Diem

E L I Z A B E T H B O Y E R

Sitting on the playground with a bag full of chalk, I am washed over with a feeling of sadness as several children come to play with me. Shrieks of laughter that border on the sounds of violence pour into my ears. Brothers and sisters call to each other in their pretend games and chases. Someone's child asks me about my drawing and points out theirs. Parents, all over the park, are buried in their phones, laptops, or projects of some kind. Here I am laughing, not only with my own children, but with their children and creating these memories that many of them will remember for weeks to come. I realize the world has become so fast paced and goal oriented that parents can't even take time at a park to remember the drawing their child has done on the sidewalk. Why is memory making not a priority anymore? In a world where speed is key, why do I care? The simple answer to why I care is my parents taught me to. It was never a talk, or an explanation. Just points in time that, though small, became precious to me. It was the greatest way to learn that lesson. There were many times that lesson was made to me, but only one that is ingrained into my soul.

It was a little after ten at night on February 18, 2001. I had been in bed since before nine and had run out of day dreams to dream. The orange light from the dusk-to-dawn

light seemed particularly bright and I stared at the particles of dust floating up and down. With a sigh, I got up. I heard the television giving its low electric hum, knowing my mom was still awake. Of course, she was still awake. Dale Earnhardt Sr. had just been pronounced dead. My family wasn't hyped on Nascar, but she had followed him for much of his career and we had watched the crash live. It was hard to believe. So many crashes we had witnessed. Even crashes involving Sr. himself, yet they all walked away. Why was this time so different? Experts were already being interviewed with explanations of this or that. They all seemed unbelievable. The Intimidator was immortal, wasn't he? As an eleven-year-old, I was confused about the whole thing.

I walked out into the living room with a sense of dread. There was no way I would sleep tonight, but my mother always sent me back to bed with some line about just trying to sleep. In that moment, I knew tonight would be no different, and I would be sent to bed with my stock of day dreams already drained. She turned to look at me and asked me what was wrong. I told her I was confused about Sr.'s death and sat next to her. Surprisingly she wrapped her arm around me and didn't say a thing. We sat in silence watching some unimportant show. Suddenly we both startled at the sound of a door opening. Breaking the vague silence of the house, we turned guiltily to see my dad standing there rubbing sleep from his eyes. It was around one in the morning. Had we really been sitting there that long? He asked what we were doing. My

mother smiled sheepishly. I gave an internal sigh, figuring this would be the moment I was sent to bed. It was, after all, a school and work night.

“Well, we’re all up now. Who’s hungry?” he asked. Like little kids who got caught and were proud of it, we smiled and said we were. The light from the kitchen burned our eyes as my dad flipped the switch on and headed to the refrigerator. Squinting her eyes against what seemed the light of the gods, my mom groped for the stove and turned on the stove hood light and motioned me to turn off the overhead light. Dad pulled out a can of Pillsbury biscuits and a block of Velveeta cheese. We waited for an explanation, but none came. He held out the biscuits to my mom and I seeing if either one of us were brave enough to open the adult jack-in the box. Neither of us were. He smiled and popped open the can silently laughing as my mom and I gave a small jump. He handed my mom the block of cheese and told her to cut it up into sugar cube size cubes and handed me the biscuits to cut into quarters. While we set to our tasks he brought oil to boil. The smell of the oil and raw biscuit dough wafted over me. A smell that would, from that night on, smell like memories and laughter.

Finally, after the oil was ready, my father told us he was making fried cheese-puffs. As my mother and father rolled and fried the would-be cheese puffs, stories began to flow from the two of them. First with recollections between the two of them. Then it morphed into stories from their child-

hood. I've long forgotten those stories, but I know that they were stories only told that night. The feeling of the smile and laughter beginning to hurt my face is easy to recollect even now. The sound of the oil bubbling as the cheese puffs fell into the pan resounded as theme song to the stories. I watched the oil spread across the paper towels slowly as each puff came out to cool.

As the final puff came out of the pan and my dad turned off the stove, the conversation lulled into simple smiles. My mom transferred the cheese puffs from the paper towel to a bowl and my dad walked into the living room. He looked through the stack of VHS tapes in the bottom of the lightly colored pine entertainment center. When he pulled one of them out he put it in the rewinder. The screeching was deafening. He popped it out when he thought it as close to the title. When he put the tape in my mom laughed as she watched a few seconds of Robin Hood Men in Tights. My dad quickly grabbed the remote and rewound till it was at the beginning. We laughed, ate, and quoted most of the movie in the dimly lit living room. The world outside was long forgotten, the crash a distant memory.

As the credits rolled, I rubbed my eyes and hugged both of my parents. I walked to my room, fell onto my twin mattress, and buried myself under my many blankets. No one was going to work tomorrow, or school. That was fine. The night had taught us all something far more important and valuable than either could give us. Family is important. Those

small moments are what is worth living for and it's our job to grab them and run.

Filling my bag with the chalk that had been thrown all over the playground by various kids, I hold onto that memory. I ask the other children to help me pick the chalk up. Hopefully this was something they could hold onto, this random memory with a stranger who was just excited to live that day. I call for my kids. They come running. They aren't too happy that it's time to go home. I hug them tightly and ask if they want to help me make cookies when we get home. This day is far from over. I'm going to make sure they remember it.



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