



Talking Leaves 2023

Volume 26

Talking Leaves 2023**Volume 26****Managing Editor**

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Policy and Purpose

Talking Leaves accepts original works of prose, poetry, and art from students at Indiana University-Purdue University Columbus and Ivy Tech Columbus. Each anonymous submission is reviewed by the IUPUC Division of Liberal Arts Talking Leaves Design Team and judged solely on artistic merit.

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From the Managing Editor

It is my great privilege to present the twenty-sixth volume of *Talking Leaves*. This year, IUPUC invited Ivy Tech Columbus to help create an unparalleled magazine with a record-breaking number of contributors, with works ranging from shocking to comforting and from heartbreaking to uplifting.

My greatest honor in working on this publication has been seeing the strength and vast individuality of student voices present at both IUPUC and at Ivy Tech. Creativity, tragedy, life changes, and inspiration are expressed in each genre.

My thanks goes out to our Design Team, who gave many hours to ensuring this publication displays fairness and encouragement in valuing student voices. I could not have done this without you!

Thanks to Dr. Siefker Bailey, *Talking Leaves* has remained a beacon of student voices and creativity – and in this way the twenty-sixth volume is no different. Her unwavering guidance and dedication have been of immense help in discerning the life and motion of this volume.

Submitting your work can be daunting, so I applaud all contributors for your trust in this publication. I pray you are inspired, shocked, and humbled by these works, as I am.

As we move forward in this ever-turbulent world, Therese Hauersperger's cover art "Mended Web" tells the story of healing and second chances. My hope is that as you read this volume, you open yourself to the journey our students have laid out for us and find connection and healing in what you can.

Zoe Lawless

From the Faculty Sponsor

Welcome to *Talking Leaves*, IUPUC's magazine of art and literature. In using this title, we humbly honor the Cherokee scholar Sequoyah who referred to words on paper as "Talking Leaves" and invented the Cherokee written syllabary in 1821.

On behalf of the Division of Liberal Arts, I remind readers that *Talking Leaves* is a student literary magazine which encourages IUPUC and Ivy Tech Columbus students to find empowerment through self-expression. As such, we have kept copyediting to a minimum in order to preserve unique voices, personae, and ideas.

Special thanks this year go to Shelley Arroyo in Student Affairs who expanded the launch party platform and helped inaugurate our collaboration with Ivy Tech. We also want to thank Ivy Tech's Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Dr. Jackie Fischer and Professor Patrick Nevins for working with us to include Ivy Tech students to make this edition of the magazine an AirPark Campus first.

Most of all, we thank our IUPUC leaders, Division of Liberal Arts Head Dr. George Towers, an untiring proponent of creativity and mentor of collaborative work, and Vice Chancellor and Dean Dr. Reinhold Hill, who champions IUPUC's commitment to supporting student voices by generously funding this publication in both digital and print forms.

Dr. Lisa Siefker Bailey

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Cover Photograph:

Mended Web | Therese Hauersperger

Inertia

An object

When it is in motion stays in motion and stays in motion and
stays in motion and never stops

While

An object

At

Rest

Stays

At

Rest

And

Stops.

A person

When their mind is running with thoughts ideas possibilities
questions wonderings answers

Is stopped,

So

Does

Creativity.

When a movement

Is sparked enlightened raised from the shadows brought to the
media brought by the people

Is killed

So

Are

People.

Unless acted upon by an unbalanced force
Injustices, deaths, mass shootings, protest after protest after protest
Will stay our rest.
Equity, Love, Freedom, Happiness,
Hope and Justice for All
Currently are our motion.
One day they shall be
Our rest.

Elizabeth Pike

Still Life



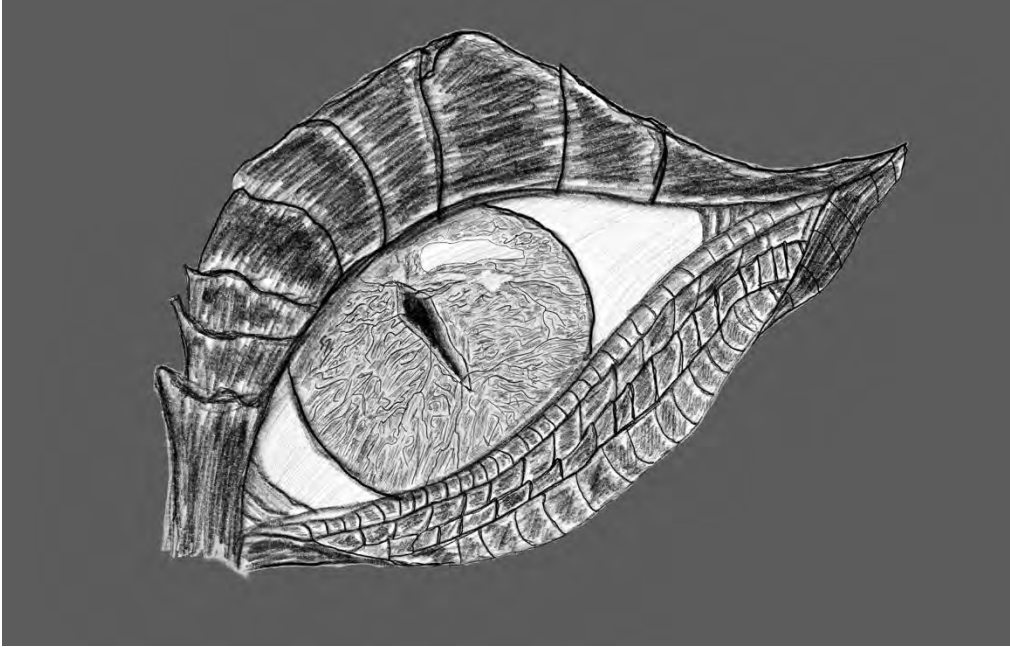
Zippy McQuiller

Jan Van Eyck's Portrait of a Man



Christy Casey

Eye of Vanera



David Walby

Miss Kitty

I have a cat named Scout
I still remember the day I picked her out
She was at the local animal shelter in cage number one
It was very hard to pick just one cat but this one was all alone
When we took her out, she immediately started purring and
licking us
Together we decided to take her home with no fuss
When we adopted her, she was already two years old
Now she is sixteen years old
If you make her mad, she might growl, hiss, or bite
Not to worry though because her bites do not hurt but warning
she likes to play at night
She is like any other cat and enjoys sleeping the majority of the
day
However, do not disturb her sleep because it is best to just leave
her be wherever she lay
My cat makes me so happy
I hope that she feels the same way about me

Molly McGinnis

The Cat Haikus

Humble purring is
The warmest companionship
A kind cat can give

Cat ears are cockeyed
With black and brown spots to light
The path to jade eyes

Cats are silly and
Lots of fun, but *never* dis-
regard their cunning

Silent observers –
Helpful at all times, leaving
Their fur everywhere!

Zoe Lawless

Misko



Anela Jukic

Vargus the Wolf



David Walby

My Dog Kayla

My dog's name was Kayla, and she was a little crazy
However, her best trait was being lazy
With age she was sometimes grumpy and growled
She had some Husky in her so when she was excited, she howled
Her favorite toy was a squeaky red fox that is referred to as her
baby
If you are playing with her baby and make it squeak, she would
take it away
Kayla did not sleep in a dog bed or the floor because she
preferred the couch
When she cuddled with you, all eighty-something pounds of her
laid on you making you go ouch
She was a dog with fur of many colors like brown, black, and
white
Another one of her favorite pastimes was sitting outside in the
sunlight
Kayla was also a devout beggar for any and all food
When she was able to have a bite, it would put her in a happy
mood
Sometimes, she could be a pain in the butt
But by being a Saint Bernard, Husky, Boxer mix, she is and was
my favorite mutt

Molly McGinnis

Self-Growth



Charlsie Rukes

My Inspiration

I sit on the soft, blue oval rug at the front of the room alongside my other classmates, ready for what Miss Bodkins has in store for our morning meeting. We ease into the start of our day with calm, enjoyable conversation. Each letter from the alphabet is displayed on this large, comfy rug in tiny little circles of many colors, and I choose to sit on the letter "O" for the start of my name. Excitement wells in my chest as Miss Bodkins enters the oval. I wait patiently with my legs crossed and hands in my lap as she asks everyone the question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?"

I listen to my classmates go around in the circle and share their passions about their dream careers for the future, and I see one boy jump in the air. "I am going to become an astronaut and go to all the planets," he exclaims.

"I will become a doctor just like my mom to help anyone who is sick," the next says with uttermost confidence in themself.

"When I grow up, I will be the president of the United States of America," another declares.

An important lesson Miss Bodkins wanted us to understand was that when it comes to your career, it is important to follow your heart and choose the path that brings you the most happiness. I had never given much thought to what I would want to be in the future because it was so far away. I couldn't even imagine being an adult with a career on my shoulders. How could I possibly know what I would choose when I became an adult? However, one thing I did know was that I really admired all my teachers and loved coming to school to learn every day. Several of my peers shared what they wanted to be in the future,

and now it's finally my turn. I say with confidence, "I am going to become a teacher to make a difference," and I see Miss Bodkins gleam with pride.

Growing up, I always liked to play "teacher" with my little brother and cousin, where I would instruct them how to write the ABCs and simple words on the big green chalkboard on the wall in my grandparents' basement. I would teach them songs to sing along with such as "The Ants Go Marching," "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes," "The Wheels on the Bus," and "The Itsy Bitsy Spider." I would also go through my made-up agenda for the day I had planned on my blue, sparkly clipboard, including recess time and lunch as their break. However, I never thought anything of this, other than it being a fun game to play with them at the time.

I am always drawn back to the days where I am sitting at my desk doing my morning work, or creating a project at my table group, surrounded by the hundreds of smiley faces hung and displayed about the room because they were a part of Miss Bodkins' passion and brand. Our classroom was always filled with such happiness, excitement, and opportunity. It's the one-hundredth day of school, and Miss Bodkins is dressed in the most ridiculously unique outfit, so silly it makes the whole class, including me, giggle and smile until our stomachs begin to tighten. There was never a day where I felt left out or bored in this classroom because we were always involved in many fun activities and conversations. Each student brought in one hundred of one item, and I had decided to bring marbles. We all gathered on our beloved blue oval rug and talked about our treasures. One of my friends brought one hundred pennies and shared them evenly among the class, making us rich! Another

brought in miniature dinosaurs, and Miss Bodkins brought in one hundred smiley face stickers, which I was not surprised about. I just remember reflecting on my response I gave that one day on the rug with all my peers and thinking there is no better career path than becoming a teacher.

I did not realize it at the time, but Miss Bodkins was teaching us so many valuable lessons, and yet she made it look so effortless. I was in such admiration of her ability to bring positivity to the classroom every day without failure, and I thought it would be so incredibly fun and easy to become a teacher just like her. I am back in third grade, watching and listening to all of her crazy and funny animated stories, and I feel the anticipation of seeing who won the raffle of the morning. If we had good behavior throughout the week, we got to grab an “admit one” ticket at the end of each day. Friday comes, and if my ticket number matches the ones Miss Bodkins displays on the projector, I will win and get to choose a prize from the magic box. My friend, Reagan, and I cross our pinkies together as we watch the tickets get presented under the doc cam, hoping to find a match. To our luck, we both get matches and shoot our hands up in the air with excitement that we won. Miss Bodkins would often put old jewelry from her own collection in this box, and us girls would feel like the coolest people on earth if we won them. However, this time, she had put a sloth beanie baby in the box, and I knew he had to be mine. I took him home and named him Jerry.

While I still carry the same passion for teaching as I did as a little third grader, now that I am an adult, I am faced with the reality of teaching in the modern day. There are a number of struggles that come along with the career path, such as: lack of

funding and effective communication, administration being too removed from the classroom to comprehend fully and understand the restrictions they place on classrooms, as well as a shortage of staff to meet the needs of students. As I am moving through my teaching program, I am diving into the rewards and challenges of becoming an educator, and I always find myself going back to Miss Bodkins telling me the numerous rewards of teaching. She told me some of the greatest joys of being an educator, especially in elementary education, were: seeing a student's lightbulb come on because they learned or realized something new or challenging, being a positive, safe, and encouraging part of students' lives, and building relationships with families that last far beyond the time they are with her in third grade. As a third grader, I did not know what it truly took to become a teacher, besides passion and a kind heart. It looked so effortless and exciting when I was a student, which truly sparked my interest in pursuing this career, and still encourages me to keep moving forward, despite any challenges or doubts I may face.

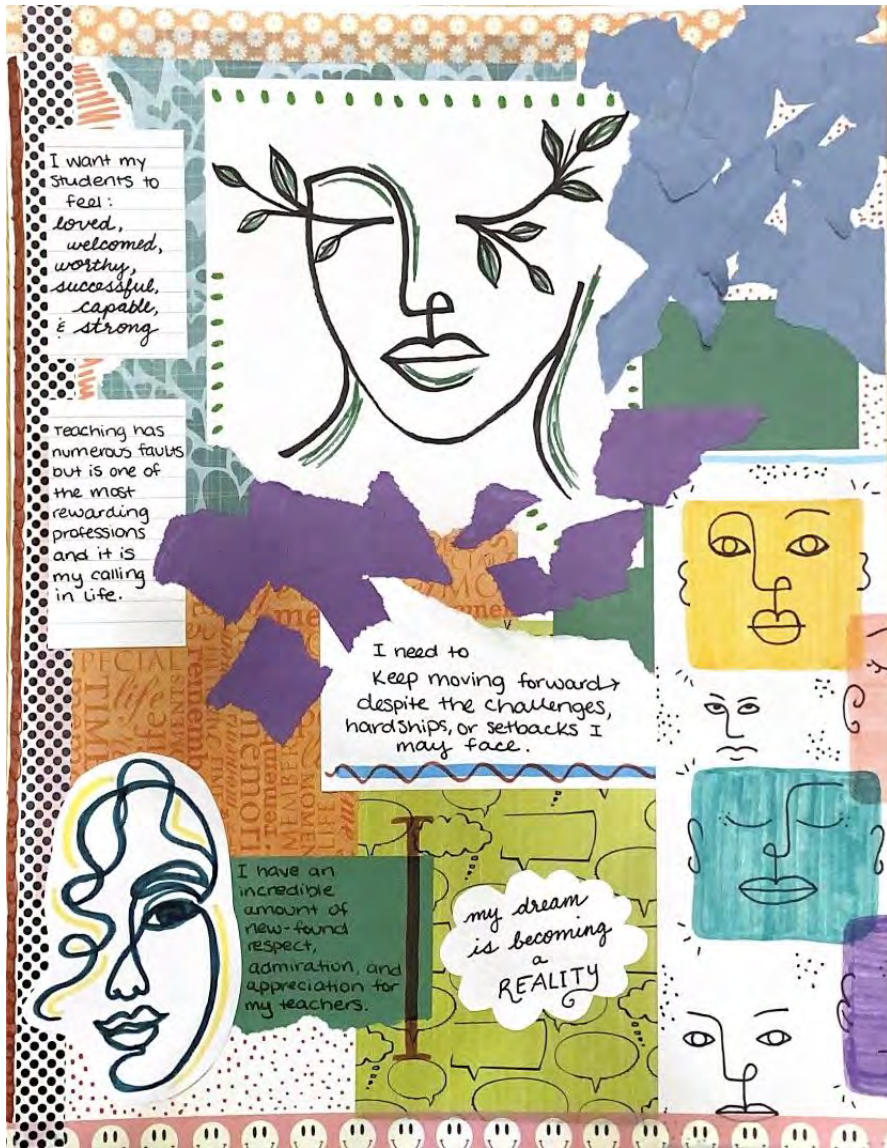
Now, as an adult, I am so close to my dream of becoming an educator. As I go further into my studies, I realize the challenges that my past teachers have had to face in order to become the inspiring educators that they are. I have an incredible amount of new-found respect, admiration, and appreciation for Miss Bodkins, as well as many of the other wonderful teachers I've had throughout my school career, for showing me what it truly means to educate. While it can be such a rewarding career and truly a job to love, it does not come without its faults, and it takes a strong and kind-hearted individual to make it look easy and keep all students engaged. I aspire to become the type of

teacher that ensures all her students feel loved, welcome, worthy, successful, and capable every day they step foot into my classroom.

Olivia Wojie

My Inspiration





Olivia Wojie

The Dance

Circles

Colors

In

Swirl

All

Surrounding
the
dancing couple

Up

Of

And

Out

Down

And

In

One with colors

One with each other

One with everything

Zoe Lawless

The Abstract Giraffe



Savannah Dwenger

Track Star



Savannah Dwenger

Croatia



Anela Jukic

Perfectly Perfect

Your eyes
Sparkle with perfection
I get lost in the olive-green shade
With rings of golden magic

Your Smile
Lights up the room
Like the moon
Peeking through the morning fog

Your hands, simple yet mighty
Delicately wrapped around mine
With warmth all through the body

Your face
The loving look I see
When you find something you
Truly love

Your dancing skills
You dance like there's no one else in the world,
No judgment, no hurt, just happy

Your heart
The most beautiful thing about you
Through all your struggles and all your hurt
You manage to still love, to still care,
To keep going

Katie Underwood

The Frenchman's Daughter

"Where is she?" a young man grumbled, tapping his foot in a compact town square.

He looked around for the third or fourth time within the last few minutes, straining to see through the night. But nothing had changed. The narrow conjoining cobbled streets remained devoid of life, and the surrounding houses sat quietly with low candlelight leaking out here and there from the windows.

He shivered slightly at a sudden breeze. His dressing of a simple navy-blue shirt adorned with faded golden buttons and embroidery, lavender leggings, yellowing white stockings, and loosely hanging sage green cape provided little protection from the autumn's chilled weather. The young man had originally expected to be back in his bedchamber by now, sitting next to the hearth with some biscuits or wine on hand.

"Why am I even doing this?"

He knew, of course. His father had spent several summers explaining it to him, every dawn before the morning meal and evening before supper. A true son of Kent, he constantly claimed, should always remember his duty and strive to follow it religiously. Yet this gave the young man little comfort.

As the son of the reputable Viscount Elrich Lucadil, albeit a third-born, Tyren's only role in life was to find a well-standing girl of reasonable complexion and play the dutiful husband. Perhaps supplying his father an heir or two to carry the family name. And for the last several years since his fourteenth name day, he endured several nights of gratuitous babbling and fawning from the kingdom's "fairest" maidens, if they could be

called that. A few, he supposed, were memorable. Such as the subservient Lord George Smythe's daughter, who – while an incredible boor at festivities – was quite lovely to look at. Almost like a flame: mesmerizing to look at, yet impossible to be close to.

His father selected them himself often. He typically picked the girls at his frequent banquets where all the prominent names in Kent and beyond were invited, basing his decision simply on their loveliness or how expensive their dresses seemed. With little care for anything else, his father sent the unfortunate girls to Tyren. On a few occasions, when Tyren was especially unruly toward his father's wishes, the man would instruct the girls to wait in Tyren's bedchambers and jump him when he retired.

Within the last few months alone, he had courted five different girls, two of whom Tyren had the guards escort from his room. The sixth and most recent girl, however, whom his father arranged for Tyren to meet only a few days prior, was late for their present engagement.

Tyren had yet to be introduced to her. He knew not her face, height, hair, nor her name. It was odd when his father approached him with news of this meeting. Not even he had any knowledge of the girl aside from that she was from a kingdom in *Francia* and the daughter of a prominent trader. Though the most peculiar fact about her, which stuck with Tyren at first, was that she preferred private arrangements. Tyren had initially believed his father would disregard her as an improper foreigner; but, after learning of her family's immense wealth and fleet of ships, his father's compliance no longer surprised him.

Tyren blew a short breath and closed his eyelids to relieve the small twinge of fatigue growing in them. He wondered why he entertained his father's schemes. This girl would probably

turn out like all the rest: shrill little infants that constantly demanded attention. Furthermore, she would only desire Tyren's name, which would elevate her and her family's societal standing. The girls also enjoyed his handsome features, though it appeared more like a welcome bonus for their efforts. Thus, they would overplay both their veneer with flowing gowns of various vibrant colors and their attempts at seduction with lingering touches and sultry promises.

After waiting for another few minutes and noticing the peaking moon, Tyren concluded with an exasperated sigh that the entire night was a ploy created by his father. Turning to the main road, he began to walk toward where he hoped a tavern would be ready to drown his temper before he felt a light tap-tap-tap on his shoulder.

Tyren heard a soft yet nasally voice with a heavy French accent: "I 'ope you weren't waiting for too long."

Slightly annoyed from her heedless entrance and the needless delay, Tyren moved to face her with a growl forming in the back of his throat, "Of course you —"

Astonished, Tyren's words froze in his mouth. Instead of the extravagantly dressed maiden he had expected and prepared himself to face, a humbler sight stood before him. What should have been a creamy silk or rosy velvet gown was a stained and faded ocean-blue vest that laid over a loose, dirtied white shirt and a pair of brown breeches. What should have been a pair of laced sandals upon her feet was a pair of scuffed black boots. What should have been necklaces of golden chains or delicate beads was a single fiery scallop shell tied around her neck with a thin piece of string. And what should have been tightly tied

down and concealed under a veil or barrette was flowing pitch-black hair.

Noticing her waiting look, Tyren realized he had yet to answer her. He was certain he looked like a daft fool, a mistake that – if the Lord was merciful – would never be seen again. With reddening cheeks, he awkwardly cleared his throat and composed himself, hopefully hiding his initial surprise.

“Of course not,” he coughed out, “I only arrived here a little while ago.”

The girl, though Tyren used the term loosely, smiled amusedly, “Oh, *très bien!* I was worried about you. It is freezing out here, no?” She took a moment to look around the town square and threw her arms in a wide motion as though trying to seize the whole city. “And your kingdom is a labyrinth! It took me some time to figure out the right direction.”

Tyren felt the corners of his lips quirk up, shocking him more. He had almost smiled. Not a forced one like he always gave at his father’s banquets nor a fake one he gave his failed courtships: a real smile. Tyren could not remember the last time he had one, but it was a familiar feeling. Almost like reuniting with an old friend after being apart for ages.

“Yes, I would imagine it is a bit overwhelming for newcomers,” Tyren responded before remembering the etiquette he should have given when first meeting her, despite her present appearance. Bowing his torso and head and holding his right hand toward her, “Pardon my rudeness, my lady, I am Tyren Lucadil, third son of Viscount Elrich Lucadil, ruling Lord of Canterbury.”

He waited for her introduction until he realized that she would not return the favor. Raising his eyes briefly to meet hers,

Tyren spoke with a faintly crotchety voice, "Might I trouble you for your name?"

If his father were here, he would have reprimanded Tyren for his imprudent question. "A proper nobleman should wait for a lady to give her name willingly, not brashly ask it of her," or so his father had taught Tyren as a developing young lad. If she were a prim and proper maiden, she would shrug him off as an ill-mannered child and leave without another word. He braced himself for her reaction, suspecting she might strike him and leave.

Instead, he felt a gentle touch glide across his fingers.

I suppose she knows something of social conduct, Tyren thought, ready to bring the girl's hand to his lips. But it kept moving down his fingers, passing the second knuckles. It continued down his hand and quickly turned from the common courtesy Tyren had grown accustomed to into a startlingly strong firm grip on his hand.

His head shot up, and he beheld her beaming face with wide eyes, "*Enchantè* Monsieur Tyren. I am Addeline, the only daughter of the grandiose *commerçant* of the North Sea, Philippe Allard de Motier."

With her hand in full envelopment of his own, Tyren noticed two things. First, although he had expected it to be as silken and smooth as most girls' hands normally were, her hand was rough. It was as if he were having a test of strength with one of the field laborers, who worked tirelessly in the hot sun with splintered tools. Second, in spite of the nipping cold air, her hand was fairly warm. While it brought some feeling back to his numbed fingers, Tyren grew uneasy.

“Shall we tour your ‘ome then?” Addeline questioned, pulling her hand away.

Resisting the urge to check his hand for any damage, Tyren cleared his throat and gestured to the closest road on his right, which he presumed would take them to a nearby undisturbed garden behind the old cathedral. It was unlikely anyone would be roaming there at this time of the season. There he could ensure that his unsettledness by this peculiar girl would be unnoticed.

“Yes, yes, right this way.” Tyren attempted to lead Addeline with an arm placed behind her lower back, reclaiming some control in his predicament, but without warning she began to sprint. Tyren watched as she reached the exit, hair flying behind like a puff of smoke. His legs strained against his stiff leggings to follow her at equal pace.

After struggling to catch up with her and stumbling on the uneven road a few times, Tyren saw that Addeline had slowed to a stroll. Whether she had done so due to exhaustion or simply out of pity, the exhausted Tyren did not seem to care. As they walked down the road, he snuck a few glimpses at her, assuring himself that this was a girl and not secretly a man playing a trick on him. Thankfully she appeared oblivious, instead focusing her attention on their surroundings. Her gaze darted all around her, taking in every detail: the closed butcher shop with freshly cut lamb hanging inside, the homes that lay dormant, the tavern that was strangely silent. Addeline continued walking steadily, yet her pace became increasingly faster than Tyren’s. Fearing she might run again, he jumped forward and lightly touched her arm. “Is something the matter?”

Addeline quickly turned toward him and smiled excitedly. “No, nothing is wrong. There is much to see, and I ‘ave little time

to take it all in. I'm only visiting for a few short weeks. Not nearly enough time to see everyzing."

"Why are you leaving so soon? Your father seemed to be enjoying himself a few nights ago."

"Yes, but that is the life of a *commerçant*. Toast to the good business, then leave before the work."

"Why were you not there? My father told me you dislike social events, but that seems unlike a person of high standing. Especially the daughter of the infamous Philippe Motier."

"Infamous, is he?" Addeline smirked. "How so?"

"Well, of course, from his renowned talent with negotiating —"

"Negotiating?" she laughed. "My fadzer would be 'appy to hear that people consider 'is excessive inebriation and crude stories as 'negotiating.'"

Cheeks tinged with pink, Tyren muttered, "Then why aren't you more like that then?"

"Because I possess my *maman's* more moderate personality," Addeline retorted. "That and her tendency to become worse than my fadzer after a few drinks."

"Maymon?"

Addeline chortled, "I am sorry. It sometimes slips my mind that I am among Anglos and not my fadzer's men." She turned toward him and spoke slowly, "*Ma-mone*. My modzer."

"*Ma-mone*," Tyren repeated, trying the word on his tongue, before remembering seeing her father wooing several young heiresses at the previous banquet, "Does your mother know that he plays with other women?"

“She did, but she did not mind. My *maman* knew he was a lover at heart. He missed her so terribly on ‘is voyages that only another’s attention could console him.”

“Did?”

Her smile slipped from her face, “My *maman* passed away a few winters ago from fever.”

“I’m sorry for your loss,” Tyren said sincerely.

Addeline said nothing more. Instead, she appeared to slip into her thoughts as if reminiscing. Her face grew wistful, leaving Tyren at a loss. He had little experience comforting women. Most that he met were annoyingly cheerful and flamboyant, losing their cheeriness when Tyren would inevitably reject them. Normally, he would leave it at that and not waste time on their spurned feelings.

They continued to walk near the end of a string of houses, then turned left. Several of the cathedral’s spires started to peek out from behind the rooftops.

“Were you close?” Tyren heard himself asking. Addeline snapped out of her thoughts. But by her arched eyebrow, he surmised he was not clear enough. Swallowing the saliva gathering in his mouth, he tried again, “Were you and your ‘*ma-mone*’ close?”

“Yes,” Addeline confirmed plaintively, “we were. She was there when Fadzer was off on one of ‘is trips.” Her smile started to reappear, though ever so slightly. “She loved taking me to wander the countryside and ‘ave picnics. Sometimes she would bring her brushes and paints with us.”

“She painted?”

Addeline nodded. “All her paintings were so different from one another. Some were of trees scattered across the hills,

some of the seabirds flying over the shore, but they all included a little girl with a white dress in them. I still 'ave a few back 'ome behind my chest."

"She must have been a wonderful person."

"She was. Caring, too. Once when I was only knee-'igh, I had snuck myself a few of her sweet tarts. It was not until after I ate them all I found out..."

Tyren stopped listening. Yet it was not of boredom as he was prone to do with the previous girls who droned on about themselves or how "important" their families were to the kingdom. Rather he found himself focused on her brightening face that became more animated as she spoke.

"Beautiful..." he murmured.

"What?"

Tyren's eyes rounded like saucers and a blush returned to his cheeks. "Your mother! She must have been beautiful."

For a split second, Tyren thought he saw Addeline's smile twitch higher. "Probably the most beautiful woman of *Francia*. Though I wonder, Monsieur Tyren," she noted with her brows raised as if she knew something Tyren did not, "how you could 'ave guessed that."

"W-well, I-I..."

Addeline laughed loudly. "Relax, *mon petit chaton*. I'm only teasing."

This, however, caused Tyren's cheeks to redden brighter, most likely appearing more like a newborn than a man. He would have defended himself, but he noticed they arrived at their destination. The cathedral, known throughout all of Britannia, was Canterbury's most majestic and well-crafted structure. It stretched far up into the sky with several spires that could

brush the feet of the Lord himself. Looking around the left corner of the building, Tyren found what he wanted: a narrow dirt walkway that led to a pair of iron gates.

Gently guiding her toward the path, they walked through the gates and weaved their way around the various clusters of trimmed hedges and flower patches until reaching the arbor at the center, under which rested a single stone bench overlooking the garden. Six alder trees stood behind it in an arch with amber leaves that fell every so often, filling the golden moat around the pair.

Taking a seat, Tyren and Addeline listened to the trilling crickets. The garden provided a menagerie of plant life and decor that were carefully selected, trimmed, and situated throughout its confines. Vines sprouted from the ground and curled up and around the statues and Romanesque pillars symmetrically laid out across the garden grounds. Autumn flowers of subtle sunset pinks, blood reds, and fiery oranges – dahlias and celosias, if Tyren remembered correctly – sprouted enclosed from soft patches of dirt near the side of the cathedral and the garden walls, swaying slightly with the breeze. For the first time that night, Tyren felt at peace and unburdened.

“What about you?” Addeline asked, breaking him out of his tranquil state.

“What about me?”

“Are you close to your *maman*?”

Tyren thought deeply before answering. He had not known his mother long. At most he could remember a hazy image of a smiling woman; however, he was uncertain whether that woman was her or one of the wet nurses that had taken care of him.

"No, she died when I was a child."

"Oh," she said thoughtfully, "I am sorry."

"You needn't be, I was too young to remember her passing anyway," he said despondently before adding, "but thank you."

Addeline's cheek creased with her returned smile. Tyren stared at her face, which grew clearer to him from the unobstructed moonlight and the shorter distance between them. It was plain in color without any kind of cosmetic. An odd sight to behold, if Tyren were honest. Every noblewoman in Kent never went outside without wearing layers of ghostly white powder and tart red lip color. Yet Addeline possessed a more natural beauty than any of them.

A question popped into Tyren's mind. "Can I ask you something, Addeline?"

"You just did."

Cracking a smile, he chuckled under his breath, "I suppose I did."

"Ask away, *mon chaton*."

"Why do you dress as you do?"

With a quizzical tone and an underlying inflection of offense, Addeline countered, "How do you mean?"

"Most girls I know prefer wearing gowns, corsets, brace-lets..." Tyren coughed, realizing he was losing his point, "But you wear," gesturing to her clothing, "this."

"Is there somezing wrong with my clothes?"

"If you were a sailor or a commoner, no, but are you not a lady?"

Her posture grew stiff, "I am a trader's daughter. My entire life 'as been on the sea. What use would I 'ave for gowns and 'brace-el-lets' on a ship?"

“But –”

“Besides, why should you care? You do not seem to fawn over those other women, no?”

“How would you know?” Tyren retorted, indignation rising in his chest.

“Because I’ve seen you, *monsieur*.”

“What?”

“You forget that my fadzer and I’ve been here for the better part of two months now. Since coming here I’ve seen you with two girls, both of whom were dressed like pretty dolls. And yet that did not impress you. Rather, you seemed...”

“Respectful?” he pitched, glancing at a nearby statue of a saint Tyren could not identify and avoiding her accusing gaze.

“Tired.”

Shocked, Tyren sat silently. She was not wrong, he decided. He was tired. He was tired of his father’s desire to uphold the family name, tired of being told to create a “legacy” for himself, tired of the endless line of girls that want nothing more than a marriage of convenience. But most importantly, he was tired of his life.

The now familiar hand touched his arm. “Am I wrong?”

“No. No, you’re not.”

“Would you prefer I wear something else? You’ve seen me run, I can make it to my wardrobe and back before the sun rises,” Addeline offered jokingly.

Laughing softly, “No, what you have on is fine – perfect, even.”

“Oh?”

“It’s been a while since I have been with someone who has genuinely acted like herself, so you’re refreshing to be around.”

“Then I am ‘appy to help.”

They sat together and stared out at the horizon. It probably would be a few more hours before the morning sun made its way into the sky again, a sight Tyren was beginning to dread. Despite how he thought the night would go, he realized he had more joy than he had on any of the previous nights with the other girls. However, he knew that it would not last. Come the next morning, he would have to return to his father empty-handed and the cycle would restart a few nights later.

“...with me?”

Tyren broke out of his thoughts. “Excuse me?”

Addeline was smiling at him, but behind her smile was an emotion that he could only guess was hope.

“I was asking if you would like to spend my last couple of weeks with me? I enjoyed tonight, and I do not want this to be the last time I see you. Especially when it is ending on a sad note.”

Tyren returned her smile in full, “Yes, I’d like that.”

He might not be able to live the life he wished, but Tyren felt at ease. For the next few weeks, he would at least have a friend and confidant to relax with and speak freely to. Whatever the future had in store for Tyren, he knew he could look back at tonight and remember Addeline de Motier, a peculiar French girl of questionable clothing yet beautiful personality.

Logan Covey

Just Floatin'



Cheyenne Smith

Cupids

FADE IN

EXT. CITY STREETS – MIDMORNING

(A young woman quickly walks along the sidewalk. She narrowly avoids several other people; she's not paying much attention to things around her. She passes many small businesses and glances in the windows. Not seeing what she wants, she walks on. She comes to a small store that's brightly painted. The large show windows have shelves of vials, bottles, and containers filled with different colored liquids. The sign above the old wooden door reads "The Bubbling Bottles" in swirling letters.)

CUT TO

INT. THE SHOP

(Another young lady is behind the counter separating different bottles of potions from a large box in front of her. She's barely paying attention to the work she's doing, absentmindedly shoving the similar bottles together into other small boxes. She has on a large black pointed hat; the tip curving in on itself, almost touching her face. She nearly drops one of the bottles as the door of the shop slams open.)

GIRL FROM OUTSIDE: Hey, hey, hey! Good to see you again.
Nice hat.

(The shopworker glances up briefly. Unsurprised and seemingly unimpressed she returns her gaze to the bottles.)

GIRL BEHIND COUNTER: Weren't you just in here like two days ago?

GIRL FROM OUTSIDE: Yes, Ash, I was but I'm already out. I need some more, the same amount as last time.

(Ash looks up from the bottles, her eyebrows raise in question.)

ASH: How are you already out? That was a ridiculous amount of love potion. We can't just give you our whole stock. We need some for the other lazy sad sacks that won't just try talking to people.

GIRL FROM OUTSIDE: Look, I know it's a lot—

ASH: A ton...

GIRL FROM OUTSIDE: Buuuuut, I need more, I kinda slipped up with that last batch... It didn't go to who I needed it to.

ASH: Oh god, Liza, don't tell me you're one of those... That's low even for you.

LIZA: Yes, I'm a cupid! It's not low, I'm helpi—

ASH: "Helping" people immorally force others into loving them.

(Liza glares at Ash across the counter and folds her arms.)

LIZA: It's not that bad... I won't do it if they're already with someone!

ASH: How sweet of you...

LIZA: You're the one selling it...

ASH: Hey, it's not my store yet so I can't take it off the shelves. Trust me, as soon as it's mine, we will no longer be carrying it.

LIZA: What!? Where am I going to get my stock from! Your aunt is the only person that will give me more than two or three bottles at one time!

ASH: Don't know, don't care. *(Ash moves out from behind the counter. She grabs a few of the boxes and begins to walk around the store, stocking different shelves. Liza follows her around the shop, continuing to whine and complain about how she'll get what she needs if Ash kills her shipments.)*

LIZA: Look, I know you don't like it but it's my job. I need more of it, just do me this favor, please? Pleeeeease?

(Ash peers up over the boxes to look Liza in the eyes.)

ASH: What's in this for me?

LIZA: I don't know. What do you want? Or who do you want? *(Liza winks at her and motions at the bright pink glowing bottles in front of them. The light from them turning both their faces a soft pink.)*

ASH: No... Absolutely not. But I do have something you could do for me... *(Liza perks up with interest until she sees that Ash is smiling. Ash doesn't smile often and this one seems to be filled with*

evil.) There's this guy that comes in the shop like once every two days just to gawk at me. I'm tired of it, he never buys anything, and he's creepy. I want him gone.

LIZA: Gone?

ASH: Gone. Not dead if that's what you're thinking, just scare him off or something. I don't want him in the shop anymore. You've probably seen him here before, you're both here way too much.

LIZA: Kinda short? Hair covers his face? Really jumpy?

ASH: Yep... That's the one... He should be here soon, didn't come in yesterday.

LIZA: Alright, challenge accepted. I'll get rid of your creeper, and you give me a case of potions, deal?

ASH: Deal.

(The girls shake hands and nod. Liza idles about the store, watching Ash work, as she waits for her target.)

CUT TO

INT. SHOP DOOR

(The kinda short, jumpy man with hair that covers his face, Ryan, enters. He glances at the counter and then turns to stare at the nearby shelves. The girls make eye contact across the store and Ash nods. Liza

points at the doorway into the staff-only part of the store, and shoos Ash in that direction. As she walks off, Liza makes her way to the shelves.)

LIZA: You owe me extra for this job... You have to find me a new place to get potion! Your soon-to-be girlfriend is getting rid of it when she takes over.

RYAN: Well if she's going to be in love with me, can't I just ask her not to?

LIZA: Probably won't work, she'll love you, but the rest of her personality won't change. And with how stubborn and hateful she is about it, I doubt you just asking will do much...

RYAN: Can't you just use some other spell or potion or something?

LIZA: No... In case you didn't notice, I'm not a very good witch. Which is why I have to use potions for this. If Ash wanted to be a cupid she wouldn't even need a potion. She could just wave her finger, say some crap under her breath and it'd be done. Buuut I'm a little cheaper than most, and I get it done fast.

RYAN: Alright... I'll figure something out; I'll find a new place. So what's the plan?

LIZA: We've got a few options. *(Liza pulls several small bottles from her pockets.)* This one is like a perfume bottle, so I could just spray her in the face. This one is just a vial of it, so I'd have to put in something to make her drink it. I have a tiny syringe, and if

you're any good at magic we could disguise it as a bee and make it sting her.

RYAN: I can't do any magic. Why do you think I hired you? And are you sure she won't figure out what we're doing? She's pretty smart.

LIZA: Relax paranoid, we'll be fine. She doesn't have a clue; she thinks I'm out here trying to get rid of you.

RYAN: G-Getting rid of me?

LIZA: Don't worry about it... What are we doing?

(Ryan stares at Liza and the bottles. They both stand pondering their options until they hear something coming from the staff room: a loud, high-pitched whistle. Liza smiles.)

LIZA: I forgot she likes tea... This should be a breeze.

RYAN: Are you sure? What if something goes wro –

LIZA: SSSHHHHHH! It'll be fine. I've got this. This isn't my first time at this. Now get out, she won't give me the potions if you're in here. Shoo! *(Liza shoves Ryan out the door onto the sidewalk. He looks at her through the window nervously. Liza waves him off, and walks back to the counter.)* Allllll done! Your problem has been taken care of, and in record time I might add.

ASH: Wow, you actually managed to pull it off. How'd you do it? *(Ash pushes her way through the curtain that separates the staff and customer parts of the store. In one hand she is holding a tea kettle, the other is holding two expensive looking tea cups. She sets the cups down on the desk and fills the one closest to her. Liza tries not to stare at the cup. Her eyes dart back and forth from Ash and the cup.)*

ASH: Tea?

LIZA: I'd love some.

ASH: So how'd you get rid of him?

LIZA: Made him a deal... *(Liza watches as Ash fills her cup.)*

ASH: What kind of deal? *(Ash raises her eyebrows, as she slides the other cup toward Liza.)*

LIZA: Can't say. What goes on between me and my clients is private information. Can't have them think I'm a snitch or something. I'm a professional!

ASH: Suuuuure... You can only act so professional when your "job" is basically poisoning people.

LIZA: It's not poison!

ASH: I'd call it poison; this one just damages you mentally instead of physically. Do you want sugar?

LIZA: It's not that bad... and yes I want sugar...

(Ash turns back into the staff room. As soon as the curtains cover Liza's view of Ash she quickly yanks the small vial of potion out of her pocket. She rips the cork out and pours the entire thing into Ash's cup of tea. She watches the surface of the tea, the ripples that run over it are heart-shaped for just a moment and then they are gone. Liza quickly pockets the evidence, and stands up straight again. Ash comes out from the back room with a small glass bowl of sugar cubes.)

ASH: One or two?

LIZA: Two please! *(Liza is smiling now, as Ash drops two small cubes into her cup and then one in her own. Ash picks up the cup and lifts it to her face. She takes in a long deep breath. She takes a big drink.)*
Good?

(Ash nods, before spitting all the hot tea into Liza's face. Liza staggers, covers her eyes and falls to the floor. Wailing about her stinging eyes. Ash points her finger at her cup, and it begins to float, purple smoke covering the bottom. She moves the cup a few feet and pours the remainder of her tea into a nearby trash can, and pulls the cup that was Liza's closer. She takes a sip.)

ASH: You really are bad at this, aren't you?

Hope Zimmerman

Watch and Learn



Cheyenne Smith

Eternity of Slumber

Oh the irony
That the light in the tunnel
Is really the darkness
That encompasses my mind
When I sleep at night.
Every next breath
Is a test
Will I make it?
Or will I snap at your sweet caress?
I yearn to slumber
For at least an eternity.
But forever isn't long enough to heal my mind
To forget about my heart's thunder.
My thoughts are always racing
I feel like I'm running a marathon
And my fate?
Not accomplishment
No, no, I can't be proud
When every step is agony.
No, my fate is no more than the Greek soldier
A martyr without pause
For he got an eternity of slumber

Rachel Cooper

Sleepless Night

Stars in the sky.
They're shining life-less
Life into the night.
Burnt out beauty, stars are.

Crickets grace the grass.
Creating a monotonous symphony
For the creatures of the night,
For me, hopefully.

I should greet Sandman soon.
Should tuck in before
Color bleeds into the sky.
Before I, too, burn out.

I can't though.
Mind's a racing
With this or that.
How can I sleep
When the night has the gall to motivate me?

It's such a lull night, though.
A night on the cusp
Of a new month actually.
One that bring showers
That then bring flowers.

No showers tonight though,

Can't wake up the family.
I'll shower tomorrow. Today,
Actually, later this morning.

I should go though.
Sandman's demanding I shut my eyes.
That I put an end
To this sleepless night.

Elizabeth Pike

The Butterfly

A year you've been gone now.
And how I miss you.
I miss the way you would listen
after a long hard day,
even if you didn't understand
a word I would say.

And you my sweet Mary,
A year for you too.
Where did you go?
What did you do?
Were you the one
who landed on my shoe?

I dreamt of you returning,
Just not in the way you did.
You flew back to us as a butterfly.
And we finally got our proper
"Goodbye"

Margaret Carson

Betty the Buick

My first car was a blue 1998 Buick Regal that I named Betty
She was a year older than me, but she was still steady
I saw she had only one previous owner and hardly any miles and
I was sold
Her age did not matter to me because who cares if she is a little
old?
She had a few issues here and there like a window that
sometimes would not go down
So I could not go through a drive-thru every time I wanted which
would make me frown
She also had an air conditioner that would not get cool for a good
while
But once that was fixed, I could not help but smile
Betty helped me get through quite a bit in three years
Especially because when I started driving I had so many fears
Then came the saddest day of my life
I had to give Betty away to my brother and his wife
I warned them that, when driving her, she occasionally creaks
But not to worry she is just a little old and does not have any
leaks
After being in their care for less than a month, I got a phone call
saying she had fallen apart
I am not sure what they did to her, but I will always have a piece
of Betty in my heart

Molly McGinnis

The Ones with No Pity

It was Sam Crooks' first day in the big city. He was now away from his small-minded friends.

When Sam was growing up, his parents were mostly too busy with work then to give Sam a good, healthy understanding of life's standards. His parents had failed to answer his questions and Sam had failed to listen. That left him with no real moral compass. This is what Sam became, and this is the cause to the story I'm about to tell you.

As Sam walked down the crowded street, a young boy, who was no older than thirteen, was panhandling. He wore a faded white T-shirt that looked like he had been in a brawl the night before. His old-style knickers weren't any better. Honestly, there was nothing special about the boy. Sam tried not to make eye contact, but when he did, he saw the boy's bright blue eyes.

Sam was hoping to just pass by because he was running late. And with his new boss he wanted to make the best impression. But, alas, the boy stopped him.

"Sir, sir do you have any food? I'll trade you for this," the boy said. He then stretched his hand out, and in it was a small cross that had obviously been carved by hand, but a poor job of it. It was also painted a washed-out white color. Sam was angry that this boy had stopped him. By the time he looked up he had missed the crosswalk.

Sam turned back to the boy and said, "I have no time and need for your pleading and your little cross. I'm late and I bet that your parents are sitting in a nice car waiting for you to come back with all your money. And you'll drive home to your nice house that you've made with the money of others!"

The boy looked down where the cross was still in his hand. Sam followed his eyes and saw that the cross was now smooth and solid black. There was a silence.

Then the boy said, "The ones with no pity. They have a darker soul than they care to believe." The boy tried to hide his emotions as he thrust the cross into Sam's hand. When Sam looked up, the boy was gone.

Therese Hayersperger

Black Heart



David Walby

The Trapdoor

Caroline and I decided that Tuesday's new house isn't haunted, even if it was built in 1860. We talked about the things we saw on the side of the road during the drive home, and I decided maybe we were haunted. When I was trying to comfort her, she said she didn't *think* she saw, she *saw*.

Tuesday's house had a trapdoor. It didn't have a handle, so Caroline grabbed a crowbar insistent on opening it. The whole time she struggled with it, I just watched. Lost in thought. Thinking there must be a dead body below the house. It couldn't have been true. You could still get into the space below through the cellar, that's what Tuesday told us. But it didn't matter. In my head, there was always a dead thing hiding. When Caroline and Tuesday finally pried it open, it was dark. Nothing was dead yet. I shined my flashlight down and it was empty. Of course. I couldn't tell if I was disappointed or relieved.

On the way home, Caroline hit a bump and we laughed.

Roadkill. How can we laugh at death as people who believe in ghosts? We become so desensitized to dead raccoons and squirrels from how they sit on the road so long they end up flat as paper with tire marks as signatures. I once saw a dead cat on my way to school. I came home an hour later because I threw up in the nurse's office. The cat was gone.

(I thought about how cats have nine lives and "satisfaction brought it back" but the cat had still died, flattened on the asphalt. Roadkill.)

In another timeline, I don't believe in ghosts.

(Just every other supernatural being, maybe even God.)

In another timeline, I didn't run that stop sign, so I don't drive like there's a bomb in the car. In another timeline, the mileage sign after Winamac isn't caving in on itself.

In another timeline, we never opened the trapdoor. In another timeline, there is a body beneath it. In another timeline,

it's mine.

Across so many timelines, we live
infinite lives. I think about how the cat lives
infinity times nine. How it doesn't
actually matter because here, it's roadkill.
Here it's a dead thing not hiding.
Maybe that's worse.

Kylie Brooks

duct taped.

The first time someone said *duct tape*,
I heard *duck tape*, but
I knew what *it* was.
It could be a billfold, bookmark, belt, boat.
It could fix, too.
So I wrapped it around my head and my arms
to create a chrome, molded mask.

The first time
someone said *chrome*,
I really thought *crimson*.
Crafted, shiny, artificial expression.
Leaving a metallic taste lingering on tongues.
Two eyes taped open, one eye seeing nothingness black.
Feeling crimson pumping inside my pulsating wrists, my pulsating
neck,
my arms and regretful fingers wiggling under faux metal bars, tape
pulling against tape,
hair ripping and crimson rolling off my skin, slipping through the
breathing pinholes and cracks.

Trickling, twisting,
catching glimpses
of a reflection,
I *quack*,
and huff,
and understand the wail of an ugly duckling.

Cheyenne Smith

Connotation of Red

Two people.
Petals clutching to a rose stem,
wine pouring into fragile glasses.
Cherries hanging from a tree,
blood rushing to both cheeks.
Warm hands, lipstick stains
smudge and rub and skid.

Rose-colored now seeing red.

Pricked, leaking iron fragrance,
shattered in a puddle.
Hanged from a cherry tree,
blood running down both legs.
Cold blood, blood stains.
One person.

Cheyenne Smith

Scratch

Scratch, scratch, scratch.

She wouldn't stop clawing at her forearms. Maybe there was something in the water, but this new painful habit was spiraling out of control. She was doing their evening dishes, blood trickled down her broken skin and mixed with the soapy water. Sweat tickled her temples as she worried her son would be home soon, and yet she found herself unable to pull her jagged nails from her wrists. Repeated motions, constant digging, more blood flowed.

Scratch, scratch, scratch.

She began to whimper as the pain withdrew soft tears from her eyes, and each new sting made her claw deeper into her raw and deep red skin. She couldn't stop if she tried, and believe me, she's tried – and it merely made her intensify the digging enough that clumps of her own mutilated body would latch onto the ends of her nails. The blood, fresh like rose petals, had traveled from its source all the way down to her bony elbows, and her whimpers had turned into shrill cries. She just wanted it to end.

Scratch, scratch, scratch.

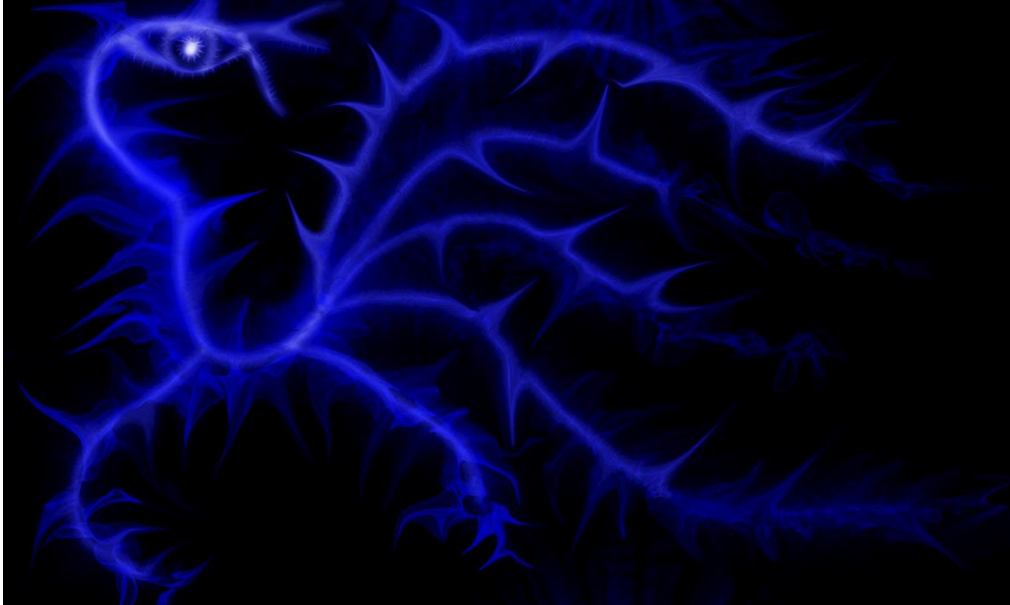
She heard jingling from outside her apartment door and began to shake, at least more than what she had already been doing. She hurriedly reached for the white dish towel intended for drying the dishes that were now bloodied, she bit her lip in quiet agony as she wiped her raw and messy wrists clean. However, when she dropped the towel, she began to scratch again. She was dangerously close to her veins.

Scratch, scratch, scratch.

The apartment door clicked unlocked, she sharply turned around to face her son's desolate face. She feverishly attempted to hide the mess she had made, but it was no use; her son had already seen her horror. She could do nothing but hold her breath and wait for him to speak. He opened his mouth, and said: "Damn it, mom! Not again!"

Elleena Carman

Astral Wraith



David Walby

Copper Sink

I share a bathroom.

It has one trash can, one counter, one toilet, one shower, and
One sink.

All in one space, upstairs in-between two bedrooms.

I'm used to sharing. Shared with another brother
Before he moved.

But it's been four years, and nothing changed,
Until it did. Five months after June.

A time of thanks and giving.

Be it toys or candy,

Dreams or hope,

Tears or cuts.

I know I gave something that month.

Something shiny and sharp. Something asked

For two weeks into the month of thanks and giving,
but I hesitated giving.

Should've kept hesitating,

For it changed things.

It changed the sink, for one.

No longer was it a purely-peach-colored sink,

Instead droplets of copper appeared.

Unnoticeable - until I was scrubbing away

Chunky clumpy toothpaste gunk clinging to the curve of the sink.

The copper caught my eye only then.

Like rustic copper, it was flakey and dry.
Latching itself underneath my fingernails.
Like copper, it smelled metallic. As
I tried scrubbing it away the scent clung to my nostrils.

'This is new' is what I thought.
A new stain, new marking of territory,
But it's an odd one.
My other brother never left such stains.

So I asked, "Do you know where this
Copper came from?"
"Shaving," was the response. "Sorry, I'm still learning."
Trusting, always trusting, I said "okay."
And walked away.

This bathroom has washcloths,
Did I mention that?
Blue ones, green ones, soft ones, coarse ones.
New and old ones, too.

I have one from when I newly moved
Into this house, into my new room.
A spotted pink one with a stitched flower,
A little piece of my childhood.

Childishly, I hoped
It would always stay clear of stains,

Would always look new.

One day, several months before another June,
While washing my hands, I grabbed it,
My pink-spotted flower-stitched washcloth.
While I dried my hands,
A smell wafted from it and into my nostrils.

Metallic and strong.
Flipping over and over, I noticed stains.
Rustic-colored, dried stains.
Copper stains.

Again, I wondered 'Where did the copper come from?'
Again, I asked, "What happened?"
"Nicked myself," was the response. "Sorry,
But I cleaned it. Won't happen again."
Trusting, but not too trusting this time,
I lift a pinkie up.

"Pinkie promise?"
Pinkies twined, but no promise said,
No promise kept.

I knew the truth but left it alone.
So, it wasn't until six months into the New Year
Did I acknowledge it.

Not when copper stained the whole sink,
Not when copper stained my pink-spotted flower-stitched

washcloth.
Not when copper stained those long-sleeved T-shirts.
Not when copper stained the bedroom across from me.

I'm sorry for those nights.
The ones where I turned away from the copper.
Let the copper fester and flow instead of
Sewing it to a close.

I'm sorry I wasn't better.
I knew but I couldn't say.
I just wanted the copper to go away.
The rusty, metallic truth of it all, is
I couldn't handle it.

So, I left it alone.
Until I *only* had the copper sink.
I left you alone,
And *forever* I am sorry.

Elizabeth Pike

Ocean Floor

Blue, green, teal
Opaque

Bubble, bubble
Floating up
Away, out of reach

Pressure, wrapping around
Comforting,
Confining

Bubbles
Less and less
Almost gone

Lungs screaming
Protesting
Begging

Weightless yet
Sinking
Drowning

And then,
Finally
Peace

Beautiful

Purple, indigo, black
Solid
Crushing

Yet
Peaceful

If only

I could

Breathe

Paige Wilson

Echoes of a Broken Heart

Érase una vez, dos amantes se encontraron,
Sus corazones eran puros y el amor estaba establecido.
Se prometieron amarse para siempre,
Su amor era fuerte, pensaron que nunca se rompería.

Pero la vida tenía otros planes, no era justo,
Su amor fue puesto a prueba y comenzaron a desesperarse.
La distancia entre ellos, creció y creció,
Y lentamente su amor comenzó a someterse.

Lo intentaron y lo intentaron, para mantenerlo vivo,
Pero el amor que tenían, no pudo sobrevivir.
Sus corazones estaban pesados, con un dolor doloroso,
El amor que compartían, ahora estaba en juego.

Los recuerdos que tenían, eran agridulces,
Como sabían, tenían que aceptar la derrota.
Su amor se perdió, en el paso del tiempo,
Un amor que una vez brilló, ahora ni siquiera podía sonar.

Sus corazones se rompieron y se derramaron lágrimas,
Como pensaban en el amor, que estaba una vez por delante.
Su amor había terminado, y era difícil de soportar,
Mientras trataban de seguir adelante, del amor que una vez
compartieron.

Ahora viven sus vidas, con un vacío en su corazón,
Como piensan en el amor, que alguna vez fue una obra de arte.

Su amor era verdadero, pero no podía durar,
Mientras se separan, con un pasado doloroso.

Así que aquí está el amor, que una vez fue tan dulce,
Pero al igual que las hojas que caen, estaba destinado a flotar.
Su amor era hermoso, pero ahora se ha ido,
Y siempre lo pensarán, con una canción triste.

Thomas Reilly

Based on Fictitious Events

Maybe this relationship was based on fictitious events
Was it just me getting too caught up in the moments?
Was it you who led me on instead?
I was hanging on to every last word you said

Maybe I should have seen the warning signs
And not let my emotions cross the line
Because I got way too attached
Even though my parents warned me it wasn't a match

Maybe I'm color-blind, not knowing what I've seen
Cause I swore those red flags were green
Your sweet nothings gave me a good feeling
They gave me a thrill, but now I'm sinking

Maybe I should have listened to my friends
When they warned me you would leave me in a tragic end
That you didn't know who you truly were
When I asked if you wanted to date, you said, "sure"

Maybe that should have made me pause
You were like a race car, driving without a cause
I used to call your recklessness "spontaneous"
I told everyone you were unique, even "anomalous"

Maybe I should have recognized it before,
Because you were on every warning label in the store
You told me I was worth more than pearls
But now that scripted line makes me want to hurl

Maybe love isn't what's blind
because love is supposed to be kind
And you played with my heart like Monopoly
Writing your name on it so sloppily

Maybe it's infatuation that's blind
I remember I thought you were such a find
believing you meant your religion
It makes me think I was just your minion

Maybe it was so you could feel better about yourself
To think I thought our story could be found on a bookshelf
I was so infatuated
I thought you were also captivated

Maybe you didn't mean it when you said you loved me
otherwise your approval wouldn't have cost a fee
How dare you require perfection
When you were interested in nothing but my complexion

Maybe it wasn't my fault
But you said it was when you yelled on the asphalt
We were only sixteen
Evidently I'm not too keen

Maybe I'm the odd one out
Other girls saw right through your need for clout
But I was tricked by your devious deeds
Thinking you would at some point lead

Maybe my mom was right when she said
That you had never before in your life led
I thought you could learn how
But I was wrong, I can see that now

Maybe it's bad to have expected you to change
Now the idea seems strange
Because you have never matured in your life
In fact all you do is cause strife

Maybe I will make the same mistake again
Like how I should have left you in the rain
But this next boy,
I don't think he has a single ploy...

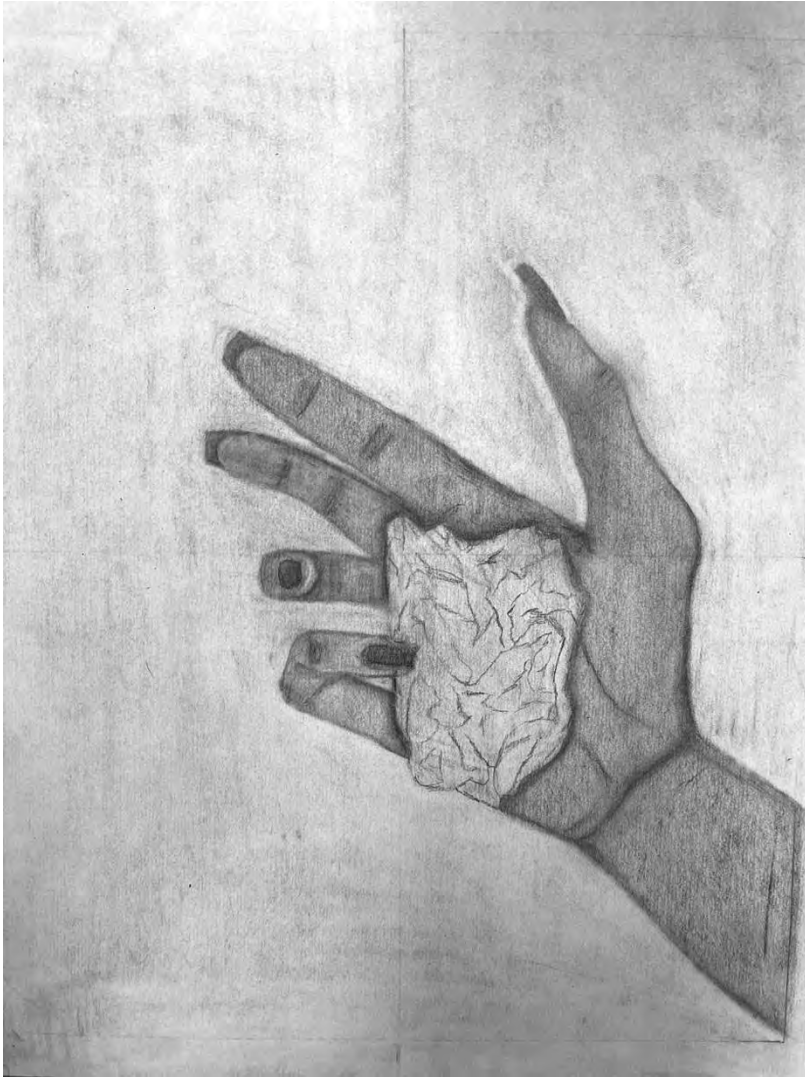
It's been a few weeks
That new boy I thought was unique?
Well he too made me weep

Maybe I go for the toxic guys
because I've been traumatized
Cause the new guy had all the same traps
Is there a way I can avoid them? Some kind of a map?

Maybe I made the same blunder
Because the new boy left with angry thunder
I'm doing something wrong
Am I singing the wrong love song???

Rachel Cooper

Crumbled Draft



Savannah Dwenger

unaccomplished decision

September nights,
I would find
Myself, looking out the window.
My eyes would glisten
Cause he never listened.
When the city lit sky,
Dipped into my eyes
I felt like
I wasn't deserving to cry.

I caught myself in a tug o' war
Two lovers sliced me with infected scars.

They fucked up my heart.
It was Carlos,
It was the music we shared when he took me home.
It was Leo,
It was making morning coffee when I awoke.
It was me not letting them know.

Lately, I've whined like the pup I've become.
Did I know if my playmates felt the same?
Probably not, probably don't, how could I know?

Being lonely – retracts honesty – that could turn into being happy.

Tonight, I return to my breezy autumn opened window,
Now my frowning cheeks are the ones

That are glistening,
I want it to be Carlos!
I want it to be Leo!
Would either decision just keep me stuck here
(atomically [*sigh*] all alone)

Clayton Ham

Till Next Time

Our paths were meant to cross
But never intertwine
Even if he acknowledged all the chaos
We still wouldn't have time to bind

Clare Haversperger

The Park, the Home, the Loss

I didn't have to turn; I knew she would follow bounding. It was the perfect day. Few but whole cotton balls in the sky. The air is clear and fragrant. People are far enough away that I'm not afraid. Any human noise is faded and all around is clear and verdant save for the target tree. I would have completed unpacking the leash I always brought with us if she ever needed it.

"Hey, it's a cat!"

I am so proud. She's my best friend, my greatest love, and I can't wait for her to be in front so I can witness her enjoy the day. A treat compared to our night walks. Here, she got to climb big fat trees and chase small fat bugs.

When she got me up in the morning and I walked to the kitchen, she would prance behind me and hug my ankles. She was full of excitement that I wish I had given more of. She would run about and leap over the bar counter. She would chase her tail more and more excitedly until she was doing multiple twirling corkscrew flips for it.

When a friend told me about her, he said that she just sat behind the couch, depressed, and wouldn't eat or drink. I brought the teeny teacup home, and I got to examining her. I don't think I had ever seen so many fleas on one animal of any size. I can't believe that she suffered through so many baths in her early life and managed to forgive me for it. For the first couple of baths, she was still too small and miserable to fight me. That didn't last long. Thank goodness we had a bathtub.

Outside of the more enjoyable, endearing moments, there were difficulties. Her playfulness was a double-edged sword. I didn't so much mind that my arms were regularly mangled by

her murder mittens during wrestling, but computer cables are expensive. Also, it so happens that you need them if you want to do something on a computer. I can't believe I would get frustrated at her racing about and running through or into things. I mean, she was awesome and had energy while I was just terrible. It wasn't too long until I regretted my frustration, though. I began to look at her and remind myself that I'll terribly miss how stressful things are when she's rambunctious indoors. Anything she ever did wrong was my fault anyway.

I was especially more appreciative after she lost her first tooth. She was nestled in my crossed legs and playfully chewing on my shirt, as one does. I heard and felt a little bitty *pop!* and looked down at her. A single little drop of blood was on my yellow shirt. Somehow I found a wee fang in a shirt crease. Treasure! I had an extra contact lens case I could keep it in.

Yesiree, we had a future together. She would get older and grow ever smarter. I would get better, start having a life, and then I would get to come home from work or school to just her, at our own place, and I could ask her how her day was before chilling on the couch sharing snacks and a beer. I wonder what was on Netflix back then. Actually, with the timeline I'm picturing, it would be what's on there today. What's on Netflix today? What happened to Netflix? Last I heard, they keep their head up their ass. How times have changed.

Loss. Now I have to figure out how to say that I lost her. It was a strange neighborhood to us. We were in the car's passenger seat. I don't remember why we stopped and I opened the door. She wasn't supposed to bolt out of the car. I chased her until she disappeared under a fence. My boyfriend wouldn't let me knock on the door. "We will come back tomorrow and look

for her." I can't believe my guilt toward him made me trust him. I don't like to think about everything that should have happened. It would have been nice if I had knocked on the door anyway. It would have been nice if I had not taken her with us for a ride that day. It would have been nice if I were someone else.

I spent a lot of years wishing I could disappear, too. Any enthusiasm for hobbies was gone. I gradually abandoned video games; I never felt like knitting; I hardly remembered I had books anymore, let alone that I ever enjoyed them. Dozens of half-gallons of liquor sure made the dozens of months without her fly by, and what did I care if I damaged and embarrassed my present or even future self? There was no more reason to go outside, ever. It hurt too much to even remember that place existed. People are totally lame and don't understand when the loved one someone loses is not one of those humans with responsibilities and thumbs and platitudes. Gross.

Looking at my self-forbidden Facebook album of her, it's as if someone snuck in and faded every image I had saved outside my mind. Now I see just how much others couldn't see. It is not because of my post-seizure memory problems that she is so much more beautiful in my mind. I already knew she wouldn't seem special emotionally to others; that's largely why I didn't take or share as many pictures as I could have, another regret. None were ever good enough, though. She really was just more beautiful in person, as so many things are. She was a calico, swirling orange and black fur with a white underside. She had cute wittle tufts at the tips of her ears that everyone admired, which matched the long lashes framing her yellow eyes. She had grown to be a powerful, confident titan. She was more than I imagined I

could have raised from the scrawny, blue-eyed puff on the kitchen floor.

I've lost her baby teeth that I kept in an extra contact lens case. I wish that were all I'd lost. What really mattered were her muscular hugs and greeting trills. I miss how sore my hips were in the morning from not moving and disrupting her while we slept on our twin mattress. She would yank my leg back to her to use as a pillow; I couldn't even creep away. Now every time I'm lying in a sore position I think of her. In most dreams I remember, she's around. Most nights I find her, and every day I miss her. Still, I am sorry I didn't get to worry enough.

Bonnie Fuller

The Park, the Home, the Loss



Bonnie Fuller

The Bushy-Tailed Bird

I was walking through the woods the other day,
When I came across a squirrel
With arms flapping and chirping like a bird in May.
I stopped and turned in a circle.

I approached back and bent my knees.
After watching him hop and struggle, he stopped for a second.
And turned himself toward me.
He tried to speak, so to my ear I beckoned.

“What do you want,” he asked, “Can’t you see I’m busy?”
“I know, but I must know what it is you think you’re doing.”
He looked down for a moment, before looking back giddy,
“Well, my friend, I’m trying my best at flying and cooing.”

“But why? You are clearly a squirrel, furry and flightless.”
“Despite my appearance,” he grinned, “I am an eagle at heart!
So you see, I must learn to soar, for this I am doubtless.”
Upon seeing my skeptical sight, he smiled and quickly embarked.

“Watch now, friend,” he shouted behind him, “I’ll prove it to you.”
He raced toward a creek, and climbed up onto a limb,
The highest on the tree, surely giving quite the view.
The squirrel slowly crawled to the end, nothing stopping him.

“Now watch in wonder, friend, as I glide over this creek!”
Staring determined, he raised his arms and flapped.
He bent the branch as he waited for its swinging peak.

The branch was so high and so low,
I feared it might have snapped.

Yet still the squirrel prepared for his leap
That would send him sky-high.
Then with one last labored squeak,
He jumped, ready for new heights.

Time stood still for a moment or two,
As the squirrel's eyes kept skyward.
But what the spirited sparrow could not see as he flew,
Was the water waiting under him, left ignored.

With a *thunk* and *splash*, the squirrel's flight ended.
He raised his head – now wet with flattened fur to me.
I smiled and snorted, and before I offended,
I called out, "Believe what you will, friend, but it just will never be."

Logan Covey

My Moon

I wish for the moon!
Wish for it more than the stars,
More than the sun. The moon
Has my unbreaking attention.

I long for the moon in my hand.
To have and to hold,
To cherish and to honor,
Till death do we part.

I *know* the moon best.
Know exactly when
It rises and when it falls.
Know its every day routine
Better than anyone else, even the moon itself.

I love the moon.
No one understands the moon's needs
Like I do. And the moon -
Oh, the moon! - so beautiful!
I must have only my eyes on her.

I wish to capture my Moon.
Her supple, smooth surface
Compels me. She entices and manipulates
Me! I have such dangerous thoughts about her.
No one understands how bewitching Moon is.

She *must* be mine!
Such a youthful and naïve thing
Could corrupt underneath the wrong tutelage.
If Moon – sweet, sweet Moon – is mine,
All will be fine.
She shall bloom beautifully beneath me,
Willingly.

Moon – Oh Moon! – she will be mine.
The marks I shall place on her,
The correcting I shall do,
Will all be for the greater good.
I'll give her everything.

Only the best for *my Moon*.

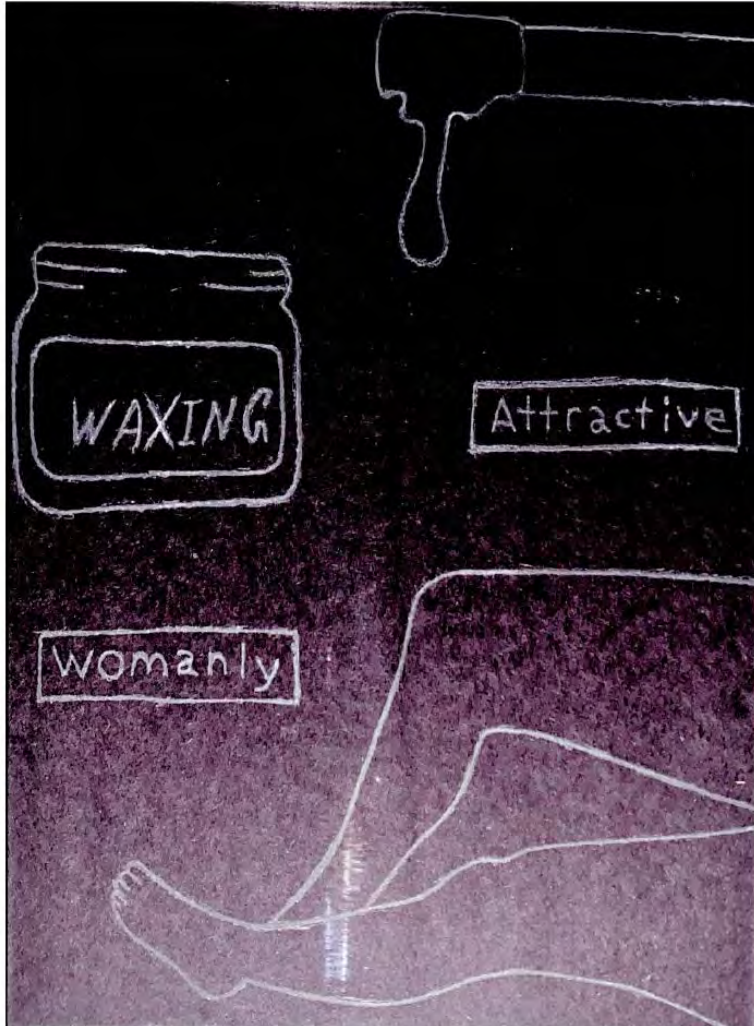
Elizabeth Pike

Stardust

She is curious to me.
I'm afraid I'll hurt her; some facts are hard to digest;
there are pins and needles down the esophagus.
Her love cascades and burns bright watered flames
The star every man can see as night wanes.
The star they've wished for with all their might.
Intense energy she creates within the night.
And though, she delivers what they truly desire,
their hands are soft and cannot hold such fire.
They stamp her out with ash and dust,
To ponder such wanderlust.
There she lay wearing her ashes.
Her stardust fades and then it dashes.
She smolders and burns,
Wondering where the tables turned.
Tomorrow, she'll regenerate
the energy she's destined to create.
She'll gather herself, the dust will voyage back
The sky will whisper faintly, all will be black
She'll fly again, through the elms and cumulus clouds
All men will envision, her division internally loud.
She will float amongst the comets and many of Saturn's moons.
Then man will realize with proper care
her starlight and beauty would have nestled bare.
Patience and consistency tend to every feed,
followed by love and acceptance to overcome need.
When a man wishes for a star so bright,
A man first must admit how to handle it right.

Kaylee Gaddie

An Attractive Woman Is a Clean Woman



Elizabeth Pike

My Body, Your Choice



Stacy Arnold

My Tears Are Marble

I am a work of art
My tears are marble
And my brows etched with distinction.
“Come sweet death”
Is the rhythm of my breathing.
Shakespeare’s sonnets cannot compare
With the entries in my tear-stained journal.

I am a work of art
For art is stitched and woven with sorrow.
But I don’t want to be art
I just wish to be happy

I am a work of art
A piece made of marble.
A statue
That will never change.

Rachel Cooper

Rainbow after Rain



Zoe Lawless

Wind Chime

I know that love is not an artifact
Because I saw you on the front porch
Wearing your winter jacket in spring
Hanging up a wind chime
I was hung up on the meaning of it
The wind chime was pretty
A gentle combination of small fake flowers
I wanted to know if it was a good day
So I asked what you were doing outside
You said nothing and I got my answer
How I hated the sound of you turning away from me
Quiet like every betrayal
We both said nothing for the rest of the day
But I kept looking back at the wind chime
Wondering what it had that I didn't
Because you bought it at the store
More important than the milk you forgot
And then hung it up in the early spring cold
More important than the maybe you gave me before
When I asked if you were coming to my recital
More important than me
You forgot to tie it properly and I heard it
Hit the cement with a clang
Nothing like a song, similar to the chaos of music class
I had feigned illness the day before because I was sick of singing
I had fainted that morning but didn't think I could miss two days
in a row
You were facing the porch, watched the wind chime fall

But you didn't move immediately
I was thinking how we, the wind chime and I, were alike
You didn't ask why I was on the floor either
Or maybe you've always known more than I give you credit for
After I got ready for school that morning, the wind chime was back
Up, still in the cold air
It, too, was quiet and said nothing all day
I watched you sit on the front porch
Each morning, until you ceased to need your coat
Once, I heard you humming the song I sang
At the recital you didn't go to
Days are just like the wind, coming and passing through us
Knowing it's there but not where it's going
Today is a good day, so I won't worry about it
Each morning after that you grew
A little warmer too, speaking more and softer
I don't think I can thank the wind chime for that
But somehow I know
You hung that not-forgotten wind chime
Just to hear the earth sing back

Kylie Brooks

Foggy Sunrise in Niota, Tennessee



Zoe Lawless

Alphabetic Enchantment

An enchanting evening approaches as I
 Blow on a fluffy white dandelion and its seeds take off,
 Catching streams of the fading sunlight, perfectly,
 Dancing to and fro in the humid
 Easterly wind, as if elegantly
 Fighting for their final moments of
 Grace. They shout
 Hallelujahs of freedom, giving the
 Impression that the months of
 July and August will overflow with adventurous
 Kindness and joyful
 Laughter.
 My, how
 Nimble those dandelion seeds float in the
 Orange and auburn rays.
 Prancing with the
 Quintessential lightness of children's laughter.
 Rumbblings of a heavy evening
 Storm reign through the air, and
 Thunder thickly
 Undulates in my bones. But catching sight of the dandelion seeds, the
 Vastness of the storm seems small, and I
 Wonder how I can keep this feeling of lightness and life. The
 music of soft
 Xylophones dances in my heart, and I
 Yearn to watch the dandelion seeds float forever, as the
 Zampogna melody leads me to stay dancing in the rain.

Zoe Lawless

Snowbank



Therese Hauersperger

Sunflower

No longer silent
No longer afraid
No longer violent
 In my crusade

No longer small
No longer weak
No longer a downfall
 For me to seek

No longer fearful
No longer disturbed
No longer tearful
 Because they are absorbed

Now there is strength
Now there is power
Now there is length
 I am a sunflower.

Julia Colson

Aristolochia Grandiflora

Give life to me Aristolochia Grandiflora.
Give strength to the weak; clearheadedness to the unstable mind.
Give a new perspective – nay, a new way of being;
the strength to look beyond the surface,
to see that true power and grace is not found
in Petals and Leaves; but in Stems and Roots.
Give me strength. Give me healing.
Heal me and my unstable mind.

Julia Colson

Madam Willow

She reaches as high as she can
and droops in her excess.
The stretch was exhausting,
and her limbs need to unwind.

Her tall upright neighbors tease her
because she tires easily,
But she is so admired by little children
that she delights to be herself.

Some feel sorry for her weariness
and have mislabeled her as mournful.
But she simply prefers the easy path,
and only digs as deep as she needs.

She sways in the songs of gentle winds
and whispers tales of all she's seen,
Giving refuge to birds and wanderers
who rest against her.

I close my eyes and listen to the rustle of her branches,
Breathing deeply the serenity she offers as we both unwind.

Zoe Lawless

Angel Trumpet

I saw angels today

– beautiful in every way,
in bright colors and radiant hues.
Carrying horns and harps –
music flooding all around;

No wonder I couldn't stay away.

I saw angels today

– they beckoned me, promised me
that my pain would go away.
They would carry me through the
meadows of melancholy, to the rivers of rebirth.

No wonder I couldn't stay away.

I saw angels today

– who would have guessed something so pure,

would be the thing to take me away

Julia Colson

War for Life

Rolling thunder echoes as the depths of the forest are exposed by radiant flashes of electricity.

Parched earth becomes mud while deprived tree roots reach ever further into the layers of soil; worms wiggle to where they won't drown.

Dirt- and dust-caked rocks beg to be cleansed. Their beauty is partly revealed, yet their full splendor not fully realized.

Stiff leaves, weighed down by their many pure guests, let the droplets pass to other places.

Long-neglected brooks overflow with exuberant waters, yet fail to wash away piled-up sediment.

Though the night is young, it is fully dark, as the light of a full moon is hidden by a cloak of warring gargantuan storm clouds – a scene which is not so different from the nation around me:

Immersed in darkness, yearning for light, yet afraid of what it will reveal. Thirsting for the water of true Life and Salvation, yet addicted to the conflict. Glutton for growth and change, yet unwilling to admit true fault. Sinners, unaware of their opportunity to choose.

Will morning come to the forest? Each tree makes that decision for itself. To accept the Son is an individual choice, and one tree's choice does not determine the fate of one's neighbors.

Thunder rumbles again, silence is scarce. But in this world so can be the Light. The path to Life is narrow and time is running out.

Glorious flashes lessen, gales slow and cease, and torrential rains give way to delicate drizzle.

Dawn breaks, but the Divine light does not bathe every tree.

Will you let Him wash your feet? Will you let Him make you clean?

Zoe Lawless

Leave the Battlefield

Soft hills of past battlefields roll up my spine, leaving a chill of unease. Terrible things happened here, and the souls of the slaughtered are haunted.

Evil is all around, eagerly waiting for temptation to become unbearable. For brother to turn against brother, sister to gossip about sister, parents to forsake children, children to despise parents. For battles to begin and turn into wars: nation against nation, nation against itself.

Shiloh reeks of blood, and changed family names tell of disharmony and hatred – victories of the devil.

I wish I were alone here, standing at the edge of the forest, looking on the soft hills where generals abandoned their men. But there is little veil between the two realms; haunted souls mourn all around me – crying to be freed from their pain.

I will continue to stand here, a witness to their constant suffering, so that maybe, just maybe, my generation won't make the same mistakes.

Many in our nation paid their highest price, but this we seem to have forgotten. We hate our neighbors as though our hatred will convince them that we are right and that they are wrong. We hate as though we expect positive change to grow from dissension. We hate, thinking that if we hate enough, we can force peace.

But hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that.

~Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Peace knows no coercion; it cannot be forced. Peace is rest. Peace is forgiveness. Peace is still waters and green pastures; Peace is restored souls.

Peace is that which is not in our nature. For thousands of years, our knee-jerk reaction has been hatred, war, slaughter. Generals who abandon their men in battlefields of brotherly blood.

When will we realize that our wars do not solve the world, but merely appease one side and brew desires for vengeance in the other?

*Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that.
~Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

When will we let the souls of the departed recover from their aching wounds? But perhaps they do not deserve that freedom... and neither do we. Nevertheless, Peace is offered. Peace is given freely; we have only to lay down our weapons, give up our hatred, surrender, and accept His gift.

We have the opportunity to turn the page, to turn the other cheek, to turn in love to one another. Leave the battlefield and come to the Table of Peace. For He has invited us and we are all welcome.

Zoe Lawless

A New Old Friend

"Why does the sky look like that?" Eve asked her dad. Her age of eight made her think a lot.

"Like what?" He still had more to hoe in the field.

"Like how it does, right now," a point of a hand to the sky got her dad to look, orange, pink, and blue.

"Bed" is all he said to Eve.

"For me? It's not nine yet."

"No, Tale," he said, the name he gave her when her real name was too grand. "The sun will go to bed," he spoke.

"Oh, it had a long day too?"

"It sure did."

"Well, at least the sun is still kind to give us such a sweet gift."

"The sun is kind, Tale."

"And the moon will take the next shift?"

"Yes, the moon works the night shift."

"But we sleep through the night shift."

"Yes."

"I want to work the night shift too."

"Oh? No day shift?"

"The moon needs a friend."

"But who will be my friend? Who will make me laugh in the field?"

"Well, I guess I should be your friend first."

"The moon has a friend, Tale, you just don't see 'em."

"I don't?"

"No, he works the night shift, too."

"Who dad? I wish to meet this friend!"

A bell chime rang through the air, six times and one more after that, church was to start soon. "We must go now, Tale." He was all done with the field.

"But I want to meet the moon's friend!" Eve said with a small kick to the dirt.

"If you go to church with me, you can meet this friend," her dad said to calm her a bit.

"Wait, I think I know this friend, too!" she said with a glint of hope in her eyes.

"I think you do as well," he said with mirth.

"Okay, Dad, let's go see the moon's friend," she said as she picked up the spare tools. The walk down the road to the church would not be long.

"Let's go see our old dear friend," her dad said back. A skip he saw in her step.

Clare Hauersperger

Beloved



Aubrey Schwering

Contributor Notes

Stacy Arnold is a graduate student at IUPUC.

Kylie Brooks is an IUPUC student. “I am an English major with a concentration in creative writing. I love all things book-related – talking about books, reading books, selling books (I work at Viewpoint), and hopefully writing them someday. I mostly write poetry but I love all types of writing, including essays!”

Elleena Carman is an IUPUC student. “I'm real big stuff. I'm a real hot shot. My big goal is to make a name for myself somehow. Now that can be through writing the creative stuff I love and putting it out there, or it could be through becoming a serial killer and immortalizing my name forever. I'm trying to make sure that I make a name for myself through the former.”

“Scratch” Artist Statement:

“This derived from a short writing exercise in Dr. Siefker-Bailey's Intro to Fiction Writing class, and I was happy to be able to write its draft in a short pressure-induced time and further develop it in this submission.”

Margaret Carson graduated from IUPUC in May of 2023 with a B.A. in English on the creative writing track and a minor in English literature as well as a minor in women's, gender, and sexuality studies.

Christy Casey is an Ivy Tech student.

“Jan Van Eyck’s Portrait of a Man” Artist Statement:

“This is an original recreation of Jan Van Eyck's *Portrait of a Man*. This image was created by me, the summer of 2020, out of 3,500 pearler beads.”

Julia Colson is in the Transition to Teaching Journalism Education Program at IUPUC and in Bloomington.

“Angel Trumpet” Artist Statement:

“Though beautiful to look at, angel's trumpets are highly poisonous flowers. Ingesting or simply touching an angel trumpet can cause hallucinations, paralysis, memory loss, seizures, and even cardiac arrest.”

“Aristolochia Grandiflora” Artist Statement:

“*Aristolochia Grandiflora*, or the pelican flower, is considered to be one of the world’s ugliest flowers due to its large oversized burgundy leaves, white veins, and the unpleasant odor it produces. However, indigenous to the Caribbean and Central America, this flower is harvested from the wild and used locally in traditional medicine.”

Rachel Cooper is taking classes at IUPUC. “I have been writing poetry for a couple of years now, although I have been writing for fun since middle school! My favorite poets are Elizabeth Barret Browning and Emily Dickinson. I’m still in high school, and you can usually find me reading, hiking, or hanging out with friends. Most of my poetry is rather pessimistic, but in reality I am a joyful optimist. Thanks for reading!”

“Eternity of Slumber” Artist Statement:

“I’ve always been an ideas person, and that has come with its benefits and side effects. My mind is constantly racing, and sometimes I get frustrated with just how many new thoughts I have. This poem is all about comparing racing thoughts to the first marathon runner, a Greek soldier, running to warn others that the Persians were invading. He ran so hard, and so fast, that eventually he did get his rest.”

Logan Covey is a junior working on his Bachelor of Science in IUPUC’s mechanical engineering program with a minor in mathematics and plans to have a career within this field. During his spare time, he enjoys reading, analyzing, and creating various stories based in fantasy or supernatural settings. Basing his creations on stories and myths of old with a more traditional sense on life, he creates and writes different adventures and conflicts that reflect the human condition and growth.

“The Bushy-Tailed Bird” Artist Statement:

“This work was created with intention to be a ‘cutesy’ bedtime story you might tell to a small child, who dreams of the impossible. While it is good to strive for certain symbolic attributes some animals, objects, and characters may possess, such as a lion being seen as courageous or an owl as wise, it is also important for the child to understand that he or she cannot be a bird, dog, car, tree, superhero, etc. in actuality.”

Savannah Dwenger is an IUPUC student.

Bonnie Fuller is a freshman at IUPUC, returning to school after a lengthy hiatus for mental health. "I'm getting back into hobbies such as reading, writing, and knitting. I hope to complete my first pair of mittens by autumn of 2040."

Kaylee Gaddie graduated from IUPUC in spring 2023. She encompasses her education with her social perspective to articulate the human experience through her written work.

Clayton Ham, an IUPUC student, is pursuing a degree in English on the creative writing track and a minor in women's, gender, and sexuality studies. He primarily writes lyrical poetry that captivates the hearts of his readers in a contemporary style and has been published twice before in *Talking Leaves* and in an anthology by Z Publishing House. Clayton hopes his writing can help change the world as both a writer and human rights activist.

Clare Hauersperger is an IUPUC student. "Nobody actually reads these, but since I'm here: I'm twenty-one, I'm still uncertain of my future, and I like pineapple on pizza. I have little to fear though, for when God walks with us, our minds may rest."

"Till Next Time" Artist Statement:

"It feels unfinished, yeah, I know."

"A New Old Friend" Artist Statement:

"This story consists only of one-syllable words. And it's about God; subtlety is overrated."

Therese Hauersperger is eighteen and a senior in high school taking college courses at IUPUC. “My favorite author is C. S. Lewis. And I think that more people should drink chocolate milk. It's good for the soul.”

“The Ones with No Pity” Artist Statement:

“My story is short and to the point. To me, it shows sometimes the truth stares back at you and yet all you do is ignore it. Don't be like Sam.”

Anela Jukic is an Ivy Tech student originally from Europe. The artist brings their love of nature and animals into many of their pieces. Bringing their imagination to life.

Zoe Lawless is a senior at IUPUC, majoring in English with a concentration in literature and minoring in psychology. She is Managing Editor of *Talking Leaves*. “I love my family, my friends, and my Almighty God. I enjoy hiking, learning, painting, reading, hanging out with my cats (shoutout to Nicholas and Noel), and resting in His peace. I dedicate my works in this volume to my parents.”

“The Dance” Artist Statement:

“This poem is inspired by Leonid Afremov's painting, *Delightful Waltz*.”

Molly McGinnis is an IUPUC student. “I am in my final year in college. Even though I am majoring in community health advocacy and minoring in medical sociology and psychology, I have always had a passion for English and writing.”

“My Dog Kayla” Artist Statement:

“This poem is dedicated to my dog who passed away in the fall of 2021.”

Zippy McQuiller is an Ivy Tech student. “This ‘Still Life’ project was made in a program called Blender. This project was a bit of a challenge, but eventually I got the hang of it. To be honest I don't know what inspired me to create a still life. I really wanted to add more objects to it, but Blender wants to act up. I decided to upload this project because I feel confident enough to show others my creative skills. There were other projects I could show other people, but I wasn't confident enough to do so.”

Elizabeth Pike graduated from IUPUC in spring 2023 with an English major and communication and sociology minors. Her hobbies are jewelry making, glass etching, playing video games, and reading.

Thomas Reilly is a student at Ivy Tech.

Charlsie Rukes is a visual communications major at Ivy Tech in Indianapolis, who is twenty-eight years old and a return student after nine years of exploring her own personal art style.

Aubrey Schwering is an Ivy Tech student.

“Beloved” Artist Statement:

“This is a painting of Jesus in acrylic paint on an 18x24 canvas depicting a moment of compassion and love for his beloved. I

painted this with the intention that people look at it and see that Jesus is not about rules and perfection, he is about being a guide and loving father to those who are lost.”

Cheyenne Smith is an IUPUC spring 2023 graduate.

“Watch and Learn” Artist Statement:

“An original character from a webcomic/graphic novel I'm working on, known as Gizmo.”

“Just Floatin” Artist Statement:

“Original characters of mine that I intend on making a webcomic/graphic novel with. Their names are Quincy (blue) and Kay (orange).”

Katie Underwood is an IUPUC student. “I am a nursing major, with the goal to become a forensic nurse in the future. I enjoy sewing and painting in my free time. My end goal in life is to be the person someone could go to on their worst day and show them it can get better.”

“Perfectly Perfect” Artist Statement:

“I wrote this poem for my first love and everything about them that was perfect.”

David Walby is a local writer, poet, and artist. He can always be found doing something creative whether it be writing a story, painting a picture, or carving on wood. He is an English major at IUPUC and hopes to pursue a career in the arts.

More of his art can be found at:

<https://www.deviantart.com/davidwalby1>

Paige Wilson is a senior majoring in psychology at IUPUC.

Olivia Wojie is an elementary education major at IUPUC. “I have wanted to be an educator since I was in the third grade, and I want to make a difference in my community. I am an artist, and I have always enjoyed showing my creative side to express emotions and beauty.”

Hope Zimmerman is an IUPUC student. “I've grown to love writing more and more as I go through life. I just like the idea that I can create whatever world I wish existed or like the idea of. I hope to keep writing as I get older, and hopefully I'll keep being able to be a part of books! I really like the idea of getting to share all the worlds I can make with others and getting to see what they think of them.”

