



Visions

*A Magazine for Art
And Literature*

Volume 15

Dedication

We dedicate this issue of Visions to Ms. Nikki Giraffo for both her hard work and her support of the arts during her time at Central Catholic. As the former moderator of our magazine, she encouraged us in all of our artistic endeavors! We thank her for her efforts, her feedback, her time, and her friendship. We wish her only the best in her future!

~Visions staff

Contributors (In order of Appearance)

- ~Cover photo by Jewel Rodriguez, '18
- ~Photograph by Min Choi, '15
- ~Untitled by Katherine Fitzpatrick, '16
- ~Searching for Renewal by Margaret Devlin, '16
- ~Photograph by Min Choi, '15
- ~Ballpoint by Keara Farragher, '16
- ~Shy or Shut Down painting by Samantha Delois, '16
- ~Mouth Sewn Shut in the Shape of a Smile by Jaclyn Romano, '18
- ~Empty House by Junielly Vargas, '18
- ~Photograph by Jewel Rodriguez, '18
- ~The Oracle's Study by Chantall Ontivero, '15
- ~A Broken Heart Reveals its Gold (artwork) by Grogan Ardizzoni, '17
- ~Somewhere Between Dream and Awake by Caitlin Fisher, '16
- ~Chasing Cars by Keara Farragher, '16
- ~An Eye for Nature (painting) by Michael Lane, '16
- ~The Princess' Decision by Maggie Hurley, '18
- ~The Blues by Jewel Rodriguez, '18
- ~Photograph by Elizabeth Demers, '16
- ~Digital Artwork by Lily Walsh, '18
- ~Greek Gods in Love by Chantall Ontivero, '15
- ~Oliver Sykes of Bring Me the Horizon by Benjamin Wetherbee, '18
- ~The Good Kind of Laughter by Katherine Fitzpatrick, '16

~ Venice (charcoal drawing) by Sarah Berube, '17

~Stuck in a Lane by Jessica Alvarado, '17

~Untitled Photograph by Min Choi, '15

~I Am poem by Mr. Ringuette's Cisneros class

~Bengal Tiger Artwork by Lily Walsh, '18

~Kingdom by Jewel Rodriguez, '18

~Floating Dreamer Artwork by Chantall Ontivero, '15

~Un-Forgotten by Elizabeth Morse, '15

~Jungle Vignette by Jessica Alvarado, '17

~The Attic by Matthew Garneau, '18

~A Vampire Shriek Artwork by Grogan Ardizzoni, '17

~Anxiety is a Smoke Alarm by Joel Parra, '15

~Trust Issues by Sophie Chingris, '17

~Detention by Lexie Lowrie, '17

~The Half Asleep Man by Carina Imbornone, '16

~Sylvia Plath by Sophie Chingris, '17

~Untitled Poem by Aurora Bas, '16

~Photograph by Aurora Bas, '16

~Photograph by Connor Dawson, '17

~The Unfinished Book by Jaylene Miranda, '18



Photograph by Min Choi

Life is such a peculiar thing when you sit down and think about it. We spend our whole lives working towards an ultimatum of happiness when we really had it as a baby. Happiness doesn't necessarily come with age; happiness comes with simplicity and those around you. If you surround yourself with people who love and care about you, then you can find the utmost of happiness in those people and a bowl of popcorn. Superficial happiness will never last you, even though that's what we grow up looking for. You don't need a shiny new car, a big fancy house, and the latest technology to be happy. You can be happy, just like you were when you were only six years old, with your friends, family, and green grass to lay in. We spend our entire lives reaching for the ultimatum of happiness that we believe we haven't achieved. We tell ourselves that there's always another step higher, always another thing that would make us even happier, but in reality we need to take a step back towards simplicity. It's the little things in life that matter the most; it's the little things in life that we will remember most. We won't remember the first phone we ever had, but we will remember the friend who sat with you when you were alone and stuck with you until the very end. Simplicity is true happiness.

~Katherine Fitzpatrick

Searching for Renewal

Margaret Devlin

Could it really have been twenty-five years since she had last crossed this threshold? Emily's mind raced, mentally adding up the months, days, and seasons that had passed since her childhood. She had been a little girl then, in 1925, with the promise of a full and wonderful life ahead of her. How many hours had she spent rolling in the sand on the Dennis beaches, or walking along Cape Cod roads lined with wood-shingled, brightly-shuttered houses? This represented a time of innocence and happiness for Emily, a chapter in her life that was closed for the moment. She made her way from her car to the dilapidated house, musing about how much smaller the cabin looked now that she stood taller than five feet. The whole peninsula of Cape Cod seemed like one big paradise to Emily at the age of eight. Childhood, and the magic that came with it, had faded over the years, but Emily's love and longing for Cape Cod had not.

It was drizzling faintly as Emily set her small suitcase in the front hallway of the house. She flicked on the light, and the yellow glow lifted her spirits as well as casting rosy shadows on the seashells and knickknacks that lined every counter. Emily's father had taught her how to pick out the perfect Cape house; the lawn should have brownish grass covered in pine needles, the kind that gave off a summery scent when one walked on them in bare feet. It was essential that the cabin have painted shutters and a screen porch, which could be utilized for early morning or late-night reading in a cool and comfortable place, surrounded by the sounds of the ocean and trees but protected from troublesome insects. The furnishings should be slightly tacky. Emily made sure that she never stayed in a Cape house without wooden model boats, anchor paper-weights, and captain hats lining the shadowboxes or shelves in the living room. The quintessential Cape house possessed many qualities, the most important of which was the sandy, quirky clutter.

Cluttered was exactly how Emily's mind had felt lately. It had been a hectic and stressful year; in January she married the love of her life, a man named John whom she had hoped to grow old with. By February Emily was pregnant, an event which she considered to be miraculous. At the age of thirty-three, Emily had thought that she would never settle down or have children. Her life had raced by her, and before she knew it, she was running out of time to start a family. Emily awaited the birth of her child with joy and love; she couldn't wait to have a daughter of her own to bring to Cape Cod, to chase seagulls and eat ice cream with. She had begun picking out frilly swimsuits and pink sandals when her life fell apart in April. She knew now that it wasn't John's fault or her fault that she'd miscarried. The doctor had warned them both that Emily should take it easy; being pregnant was a full-time occupation. Emily was optimistic, however, and her first two months of pregnancy went smoothly and without any cause for concern. She was thrilled at the prospect of finally having a child with a man she loved. It was John's idea to go skiing that day in April; it would be the last run of the season, he said, and they should enjoy the snow while they could. Emily agreed, thinking that, at only three months into her pregnancy, she didn't run much risk of hurting the baby. How wrong she had been.

Emily relived her fall in the nightmares that she had every night. She had been skiing for as long as she'd been coming to the Cape, and was proficient enough to ski black-diamond slopes.

With John egging her on, Emily pointed the tips of her skis down the steepest run of the mountain. All went well; Emily whizzed past more intermediate skiers who snaked across the slope cautiously and purposefully. Emily loved the feeling of the cold winter wind blowing across her hair almost as much as she loved the smell of saltwater. The weather had taken a turn for the worse, but Emily kept her eyes trained on John's bright red ski coat so as not to get lost on the winding trail. In later months, she wondered if this had been the crucial mistake; maybe if she had spent less time focused on keeping John in sight and more on looking where she was going, Emily could have avoided months of pain and heartbreak.

Emily could make a million excuses for what happened that day; she hit a patch of ice, her goggles fogged up, John had told her to ski that slope. But in the end all that mattered was that Emily had hit a tree, wrapping herself around a tall spruce while traveling at around 25 miles per hour. Besides breaking three ribs and her left arm, Emily lost her unborn child. What Emily discovered, in the months that followed, was that the physical pain of her broken bones was nothing compared to the emptiness she felt, having failed to give life to her daughter. She had known that her baby was dead for hours before the doctors finally returned with their official findings. Emily could tell that she had lost the child even as the mountaineers carried her down the slopes in their sled; though passersby believed that Emily was sobbing because of her broken bones, her grief had a different cause.

John was as supportive as any man could be, and Emily understood that she shouldn't have blamed him for all that had happened. She regretted the fights, the silences, and the stony stares that had followed her release from the hospital. In a time when she and John should have looked to each other for support, Emily couldn't even glance at her husband without feeling a combination of guilt, hatred, and deep sadness. But John was nothing if not loyal, and he'd suffered through Emily's stages of grief, putting on a brave face and doing everything in his power to bring light back into Emily's life. She shouldn't have kept pushing him away; she should have let him comfort her and heal her, finding solace in the love that her husband provided. Of course, it was too late for any of that now. John, after three months of dealing with a depressed and anxious Emily, decided to rent a small flat only two miles from the house they purchased after their honeymoon. He still bought groceries for Emily and gave her a hug when she opened the door, but the passion John and Emily had once felt for each other was a thing of the past. Though nothing was final, Emily knew that she'd have to work hard to regain John's sympathy and love. It was as hard for John to lose the child as it was for Emily, and Emily had forgotten this while in the throes of despair.

But now she was at the Cape, which was the natural course of events for Emily. Emily had a tendency to run away from her problems, and frequently packed up and left cities, states, or whole countries when she felt that it was time to move on or to clear her head. She needed a vacation from the robe of sadness that had cloaked her past several months; Cape Cod, with its colorful umbrellas, sparkling sailboats, and gravelly roads was just the thing for Emily's downtrodden spirits. Emily wanted to recapture even the smallest slice of what her childhood had been: carefree and joyful, without any serious problems lurking in the back of her mind. As she inhaled the scent of her rented cottage, Emily felt herself relax just a little bit. Some of the tension left her shoulders. She pulled up the green shades that lined the bay windows and peered out through the

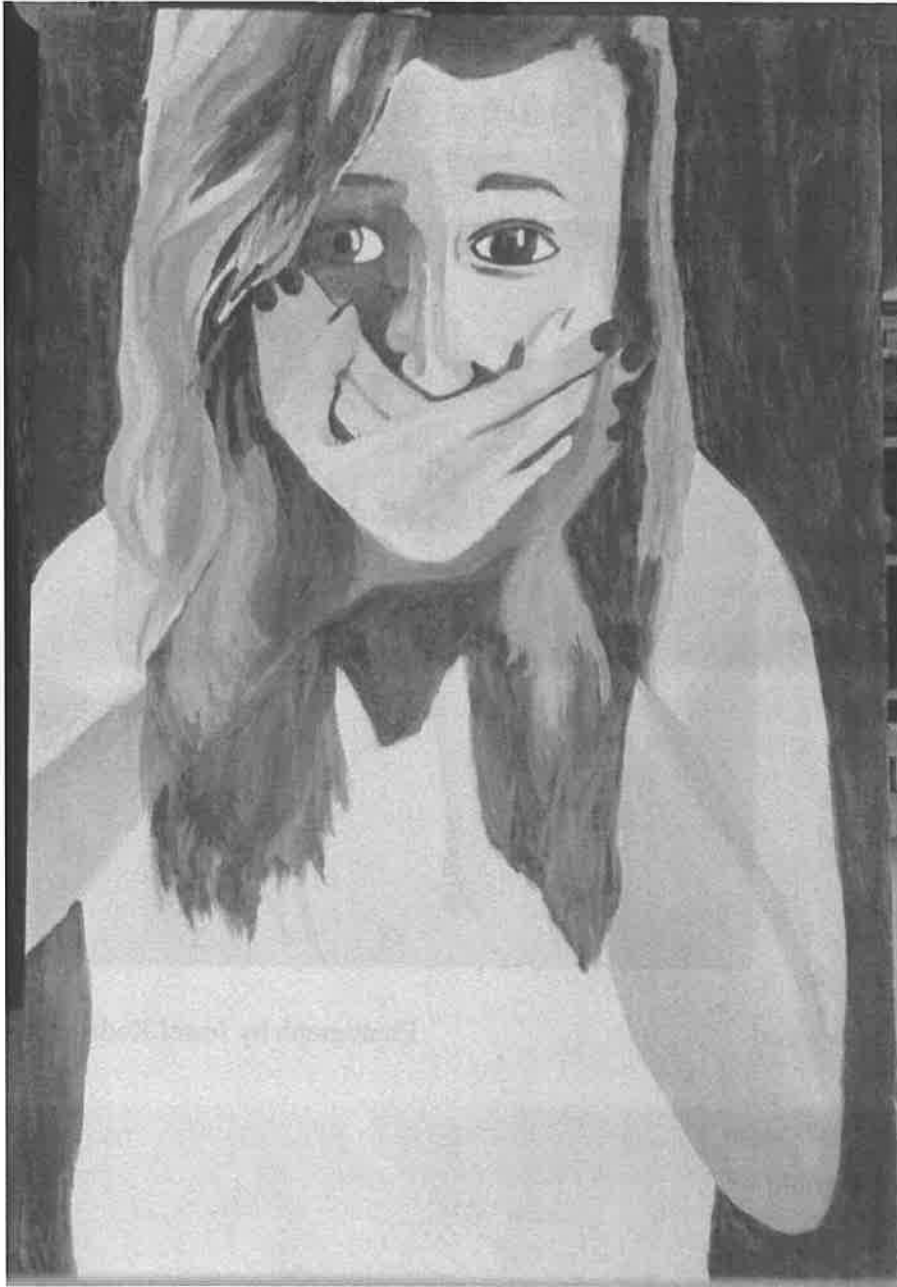
screens towards the grove of pine trees on the far side of the property. While she took out her earrings and put on her nightgown, Emily listened to the sea breezes whooshing through the branches. Exhausted, both emotionally and physically, Emily collapsed into the crisp and cool sheets on her single bed.

Though she was awake long before dawn the next morning, Emily slept better that first night on Cape Cod than she had in months. She hadn't dreamed of skiing into trees, and she hadn't felt any anger or hatred towards John. Instead, the hours that Emily had spent asleep were filled with visions of sandy flip-flops and damp towels. Her body and mind felt revitalized; Emily poured her tea and decided to watch the sun rise. In Emily's opinion, the sunrise on Cape Cod was the most beautiful in the world; it brought with it the promise of a new day filled with sunshine, smiles, and swimming. As the first rays of the sun peeked out over the horizon, Emily felt something inside her give way. It was like the glimmer of light in the distance had punched a hole in her sadness, allowing Emily for the first time to look towards the future without terror and despair. A massive weight was lifted off her shoulders; Emily felt inspired, grateful, and immensely relieved. She leaned forward to greet the new day, and threw open the window to lean out. With her hands resting on the windowsill and her face turned towards the sky, Emily invited the sunshine to fall on her figure. She basked in the glow and the peace it brought her; she had been searching for this sense of calm for several months.

Emily knew, of course, that one sunrise wasn't going to fix her life; she had made too many mistakes in recent weeks for things to go back to normal so easily. However, she hoped and believed that the hours she spent near the sunshine and ocean waves would give her the strength to return home a little bit happier. If she passed enough time tanning on her faded towel or swimming in the chilly Atlantic water, Emily might be able to work up the courage to face her flaws and begin fixing her marriage to John. Cape Cod was a promise to herself; Emily had resolved to start a new chapter in her life with John by her side, and lifting herself out of the pit of sadness she'd built over the course of the last year was the first step. She closed her eyes as the full orb of the glowing sun made its way past the trees, and felt some of the anguish drain out of her body. Cape Cod was a place of new beginnings and new life; it was exactly what Emily was looking for.



Photograph by Min Choi



Painting by Samantha Delois

BALLPOINT
KEARA FARRAGHER

INK-STAINED TEARS SCRIBBLE MEMORIES LACED WITH
TRAGIC ENDINGS,
DIGGING FOR ANSWERS UNTIL OUR FINGERS BLEED.
A HUE OF PURPLE SWIRLS ON THE PAGE IN AN
ATTEMPT TO SPELL OUT THE WORDS OF OUR
EXISTENCE.
THROUGH WRITING, WE SAVE OURSELVES.
NOT BECAUSE IT MAKES SENSE OF EVERYTHING
AROUND US

**Mouth sewn shut in the shape of a smile
Jaclyn Romano**

**My mouth is sewn shut in the shape of a
smile No words I can say
Ever since I was a young child
Daddy said it was for the best I still
hear mommy cry At night I hear
them asking why us?**

Just why?

**I never really noticed it
Until one day at school
When I wanted to tell a secret
But I just had to keep it**

**With my mouth sewn shut
In the shape of a smile**

**As everyone laughs out loud
I sit there in silence
A tear rolls down my cheek**

But no one seems to notice

**I started to get livid or maybe even
furious
I had never felt this way before
And I was quite curious
So I ran up to the bathroom
And took my stitches out
One by one my emotions began to shout
I started to frown and I started to pout
I still can't believe I did this all by myself
But after all it's not normal if you can't
express yourself**

Empty House
Junielly Vargas

They were a large family, says the dining room
A close-knit family, told the living room
A family whose life was changing in many ways
Hollered the basement over flowing with DIY projects
Practically all of them incomplete
Was it the birth of a new member? asked the stroller
Or maybe it was the departure of a baby bird leaving
the nest?
Wondered the moving boxes sitting in an empty room

You see, explained the house,
Things always look different behind closed doors
The change came from the master room, whispered the
walls
Once happy couple, were no longer happy, life had
changed
Explained the house that understood the shifts of life
The once happy couple, were no longer able to stand
each other's presence
Cried the kitchen, who held memories
Happy memories from long long ago

The day was clear, asserted the garage door, whose wood
had been
Painted with washed out navy blue
It was a clear day when the couple could no longer could
bare the situation
The man was furious, told the floor boards
The women was devastated, told the tear soaked tissues
And the children were naive, told the innocence of the
swing set in the yard
But behold, says the pavement, the family was one again
One again within different walls, different windows, in a
different life.



Photograph by Jewel Rodriguez

The Oracle's Study

Chantall Ontivero

Oh how his muscles ached. Black, thin leathery boots tapped their way up the seemingly endless staircase. They did not feel like his own- they struck out before him but he did not feel his feet come into contact with the stone steps. His ribcage and chest burned with the effort as he wound and wound his way up, up so high that the air was slow to fill his lungs. Above he heard the clear echo of voices. One was thin and high, rising in a tone of distress. The blood pumping through his ears and mouth and eyes made it difficult to concentrate, though. In fact they throbbed so badly that he felt as if they would burst out and off of his head. Suddenly the soft halo glow of a doorway came in to view and he gave a gasp of relief. He slowed to an almost crawling pace- as he tried in vain to catch his breath. Leaning against the slick stone wall he panted, the bile at the back of his throat threatening an escape. Through the doorway he could hear them now, the voices from before. One was clearly the Oracle, who spoke little and replied after long, thoughtful pauses. The other, however, he could not recognize. It was a low voice, craggily and prone to bursts of sudden excitement, which reverberated off of the walls in the Oracle's study.

This voice spoke now, impatiently repeating something said before, "What do your eyes say about the war, seer."

Agh, politics. The messenger, for that was his job, smoothed out his travel cloak before he pushed open the old door to the study.

The soft glow of candles dimly lit the room up, bathing everything in a warm embrace of light. Like most studies it was filled with books which towered in stacks or in bookcases that touched the ceiling- however all similarities stopped here. A window filling a whole wall opposite the door commanded his attention, for as if framed like a painting there loomed the Hourglass. Like a warped moon it cast its own golden light upon the window and peered in on the study as if interested in the conversation. The whole setting would have been pleasant, almost romantic- had there not been such a horrid stench in the air.

The messenger had to shield his nose, stepping back wearily as he looked about, his attempted greeting dying on his lips. The Oracle, a hunchbacked fellow, sat on an array of mats and cushions before the window, and stared out at the hourglass as if lost in thought. Something, and judging from the sound it was a glass orb filled with some liquid, was

rolling back and forth on the floor in front of him. Standing between them but closer to the door was a tall, severe looking official, clothed in notably choice attire. Rich, soft fabrics cascaded down about his shoulders and fit about his body in a way that screamed royalty. Both failed to sense his presence- or at least care that he was there.

The seer wheezed something that they could not hear.

Beyond agitated at this point (the messenger noted that the royal had not been there long, as he still wore his coat, which typically would have caused anyone a great discomfort in the heat of the study) the noble strode across the room as if to strike the old man. As if sensing this the hunched figure turned and at that moment locked eyes with the messenger, leaving the latter rooted to the spot.

Beady yellow eyes peered up from the dark features on the seer's face, which were set deep into his leathery skin. His sallow cheeks sunk into his face in clear indication of emaciation. The seer's mouth was gritted into a frown that showed all of his jagged yellow teeth, his lips pulled tight above his black gums. Small ape ears sat at the top of his head and twitched as he lifted his arms and stood to face the royal. The noble stopped when he realized that the creature was not human.

He was lost for words, in fact, and so seemed to be the oracle. The messenger, sensing that this would probably be his only chance, spoke up, "Uh-ehhh- Oracle ser? I've a summons for you.. Ffrom the Palace. And-" he looked about as he spoke, too unnerved by the seer's eyes, "-and its quite urgent, it seems. Here I've- I've a letter-" he turned and reached down to pull the letter from his coat pocket. Just then he noticed one of the glass orbs by his feet. It was a deep red, almost solid in color it seemed, and as he focused on it he saw that it was in fact liquid. As he was about to turn away, however, a dark shape inside of the orb pressed itself against the glass. It turned on its side and the messenger almost wretched. An eye peered up at him, veined and bloated but it still maintained its color, blue. He could make out other shapes floating in the orb now but he quickly looked away, not wanting to see it. The messenger shakily held his hand out, the letter crumpled within his fist, he opened his mouth to speak again but the seer suddenly wailed.

Alarmed, the messenger and the royal watched nervously as the creature clawed at its own face, pulling the bags under its eyes down as it stared up at the ceiling. It wailed and then dropped its voice down to a hiss as it began to whisper odd things. From where he stood the messenger could see the Oracles eyes moving rapidly about. Exceedingly uncomfortable as he was the messenger waited for the Oracles manic episode to tamper out- however the royal was tired of waiting. He searched the Oracles face, "You see something? What do you see- it must pertain to my request yes? That's it, right? Seer? Seer tell me what your vision for tells."

A long pause followed by silence. The seer was completely still as it stared up at the ceiling in horror. The hourglass outside hissed endlessly with dripping sand.

"The children..." He breathed, hands dropping from his face, "heroes.. The heroes.. The ceiling has been breached our walls, our walls have been opened once more. Darkness. Feeling, escaping me. Cold. I'm cold. There is nothing there are no walls or ceilings or floors- the floor... The floor is gone. Where am I. This isn't my home- this isn't under my bed- falling, I'm falling- so fast. Where are they- my friends- where are my hands my hands are not my own I do not see them. I do not see myself. I do not see them. I hear screaming but I do not see them- we are hurdling through the air our clothes are flapping in the wind and I do not see them." The oracles voice had been quiet but had steadily been rising to a scream up until this point, where he suddenly grew quiet again, "Light... A glow like the moon. Gold sand filling the view- filling the world- we are in the sky. My hands are my own again and I see them- I see my friends - but we are still falling and they are still screaming and the earth is eager to greet us. Pain. Sharp and bloody meets us. Earth, charred and flat, slaps our faces cruelly in welcome. I do not feel anything- and then I feel everything. I smell blood. I smell blood and I do not know if it is my own. Darkness."

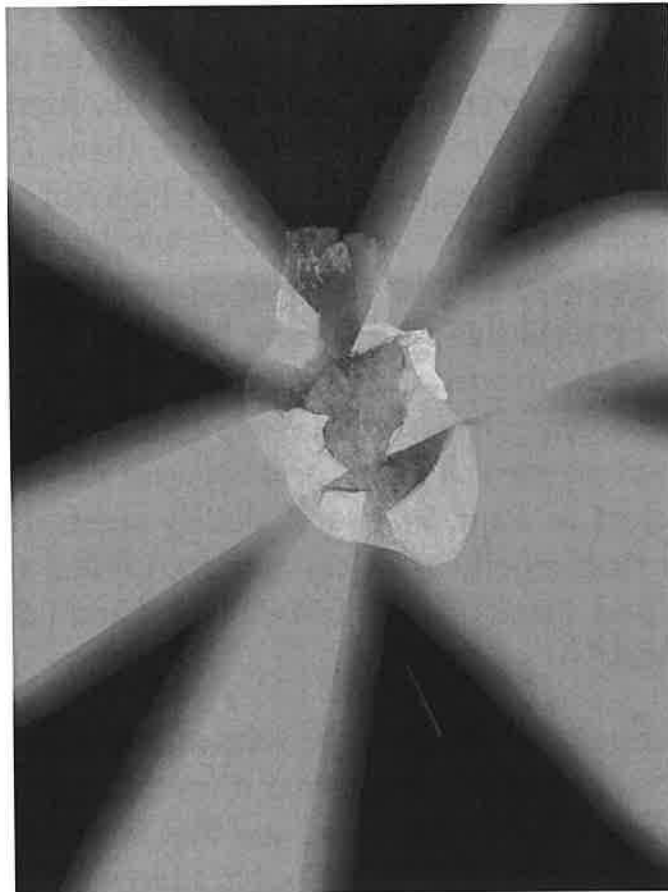
The messenger was afraid and he wanted to go home, he did not understand the Oracles vision but felt that it foretold some sort of destruction. He looked to the royal and saw that he was looking at him, the messenger started in surprise as the noble addressed him, "You heard him, bat- the heroes are to arrive soon- quick! Go to the palace at once to warn our Lord Satin-"

"B-but-"

"Churlish imbecile! Do not question me! Be off now with your message or I'll rip your wings off." Hissed the noble. The messengers tiny wings, useless things by far, twitched at the threat. He winced and lowered his head, turned and dashed out at once.

"Churlish imbecile!" He mocked as he bitterly descended down the steps. I don't get paid enough, he thought, to be threatened by Maire dwellers.

"Perhaps I should have told him that I work for the Dream kingdom." He said aloud, although he knew that, as a messenger, he could not take sides and thus his services were technically for those who needed him most. But he was a nasty brute, he thought. A drop of something fell on his coat then and he looked down to inspect it. He blinked at the dark spot of blood and looked up, half expecting a creature or body to be there. At the same time he touched his nose to check- his hand drew back, bloody. Odd, must have been the altitude.



Artwork by Grogan Aridizzoni

Somewhere Between Dream and Awake

Caitlin Fisher

There was a bus across the street.

It was heading uptown, into the city—final destination, corner of 32nd and 8th. Wendy could hear the impatient yells of the agitated driver as he scolded the mother of a toddler who had dropped their ice cream cone on the steps of the bus. The child's wailing mingled with the rumble of bus's massive engine, and exhaust billowed up from behind, the black smoke marring the cornflower blue sky.

Wendy should be getting on that bus. She knew she wouldn't.

Hesitation. Uncertainty. Never taking the leap, not making the risk, never catching the bus. These were things Wendy was intimate with, an expert on; Wendy could be relied on to almost, but never quite, accomplish her dreams. Mother liked to joke, "Thank God Wendy wasn't the President," or else the war would never end.

Which would be funny, if it didn't remind Wendy of Pete. Pete, trapped in some hellish limbo in bombed out London, witnessing the war that really may never end. For some reason, she couldn't shake the image of Pete's flying over war-ravaged Europe from her mind's eye. Pete's piloting a plane over the gray, choppy waters of the English Channel, looking away from the horizon for a brief moment, to the corner of his viewing shield. There he kept a tucked-away picture of her, the one he took of her last summer in her blue dress and his hat, when dreams were bigger and they hadn't had to grow up quite yet. He'll look back up to the sky, and he'll be surrounded by Luftwaffe planes and his engine will be shot out by enemy fire and he will be lost forever in an endless spiral, down, down, down...

"Hey!" Wendy jumped at the noise, and looked up to see the bus driver, shouting at her out the bus window. "You coming, sweetheart?"

Wendy blinked, leaning heavily against the cool stone pillar next to her. She could go. Last night, and the night before that, and the night before that, she had planned to go. Daddy's copy of The Times had advertised an available writing post. They needed an advice columnist. She could do that, she knew she could, she dreamt of it, of writing, even more than she dreamt of Pete being home. Daddy always said she was a good writer, and Pete claimed she was the best in their high school class, a few years back. She could see herself taking the bus, sitting behind the wailing toddler mourning his lost ice cream and his weary mother. The bus driver would scowl as she got off, and she would walk between the sky-high buildings, going to convince the cigar-smoking, pot-bellied editor-in-chief to take a risk on a young girl, that she could write as well as any man, and it was wartime, what option did he have to turn her down? Seeing herself walking down the street, the sun shining, her triumphant grin spreading infectiously to unsuspecting passersby...

"Well?" The driver commanded her attention once again. Wendy shifted, limbs locked in paralysis, torn between leaving and staying, between dreaming and acting. Her heart hammered, cannon fire in her chest. A gentle June breeze swooped through, pulling the hem of Wendy's dress taut against her legs, wisps of her red hair sweeping into her eyes.

Wendy shook her head.

The bus driver sighed, scowling, irritated by her time-wasting indecision. He pulled himself back into his bus, starting it up. The engine roared once again, and the bus rumbled down the road, around the corner, out of sight.

Wendy watched it go, dazed, one hand resting upon the pillar she had been using as a support.

She squinted through the summertime sunshine, the light almost offensively bright. The usually busy Brooklyn street was quiet now that the bus had left, taking her commuting

neighbors to bustling Manhattan. Dimly, the sound leaking through the open window behind her, she heard the first few strings of Tchaikovsky's "Dance of the Swans." She knew immediately that her mother was pleased about something; for as long as Wendy could remember, her mother played the same, scratched record of score from Swan Lake only in good spirits. The music both soothed and put Wendy on edge, the familiarity contrasted with the tense, crescendo-building notes. Another gentle breeze passed by, carrying that fresh, sickly-sweet scent that could only belong to June afternoons. Wendy felt her insides twist with mounting discomfort as she took in the picture-perfect moment plastered before her, like some postcard for a perfect, idyllic life that didn't exist, at least not in Wendy's world.

How could it, when boys like Pete were fighting a frightening war somewhere far away, flying a plane into some unknown Neverland, where men pretended to be grown-ups, killing like it was a game to be won, a part to play in some Hollywood movie? When Wendy was stuck here, in some place trapped between living and dying, between sleep and awake, awake enough to be dreaming of what life could be like, but clutching onto those last moments of unconsciousness, hoping to be protected from failure and heartache?

White drapes drifted in her peripheral vision, floating eerily in the blowing wind, exposing the darkness of her bedroom. Wendy insisted on keeping that window open at all times, even at night, even in the dead of winter—ever since Pete enlisted last January. It reminded of her children's bedtime tales, the kind Daddy would tell when Wendy was a little girl, when her heart was innocently sure of magic and the strength of dreaming, of wishing something into being. Pete was joking when he told her to always leave a window open in case he was able to win the war single-handedly and wanted to fly straight home to her, and couldn't possibly wait to get through the door. Wendy couldn't do much, trapped by her hesitancy and her fear, no way to bring him back safely, afraid to write in a world torn apart by tainted words and angry men, but she could leave the window open. And so she did.

The world could do with more fairy tale dreams, whimsical ideas of loves flying home through the window. God knew Wendy could.

“Wendy, darling, are you outside? Come home, dear!” Wendy’s mother called, her voice echoing and faint from inside the home, striving to be heard over Tchiakovsky’s orchestra.

“Coming,” Wendy yelled in response, her eyes drawing back to the spot the bus had vacated moments ago. The little boy’s ice cream had melted into a muddy brown puddle, the sugar cone squashed under trodden feet.

She would catch the bus to the city tomorrow, Wendy decided. In some respects, it was necessary to never grow up, to hold fast to childhood ideas of love and dreaming and magic—at least that was what Pete was always telling her. But growing up didn’t have to mean letting go of these things—maybe it only meant holding tighter than ever onto them, and being brave enough to act on your dreams, to catch the bus, to start the story, to leave the window open. To fly off into a land of bigger and better things.

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*Chasing Cars*  
*Keara Farragher*

*Human condition breeds **tragedy**,  
Broken promises always laced with good intentions.  
The world views pain as an omniscient teacher,  
as if it is aware of its effect on our race.*

*Skies turn gray when storms approach, and the  
world seems to halt.*

*What we must learn is that regardless of gray, the  
universe continues on.*

*When the tragic pangs of the living pierce the  
innermost depths of our hearts, our engines cannot  
quiet down,  
for the universe continues singing even after the  
music stops.*

Painting by Michael Lane

## The Princess's Decision

Maggie Hurley

On a summer's day, many years ago a princess was fated to make a choice that would either save or destroy her kingdom. It was a muggy afternoon on the sixteenth day of August. The princess was lounging under a weeping willow tree, fanning her olive toned skin as sweat glistened through her pores.

"Your majesty," a young servant by the name of Kathryn spoke hurriedly, rushing over to the princess and bowing her head in a curtesy before continuing. "Your father requires your presence."

The princess rolled her eyes. She had no desire to leave the relatively comfortable shade underneath the willow. Nonetheless, the princess held her delicate, soft hand out for Kathryn and was helped up from her place on the ground. As the two girls walked, Kathryn slightly behind the princess for the sake of respect towards the Crown, the princess gathered her raven hair, full of frizzy curls, to one side to let the barely moving air blow at her neck.

In the throne room, the princess's parents were waiting for her. Her father, King Leon, was standing tall at his towering height of six feet and three inches with tan skin and dark, dark hair, looking like a Classic Italian prince. His dark eyes were trained on his daughter. Her mother sat next to the king, as different looking from her daughter and husband as seemingly humanely possible. Queen Eliza was fair skinned with rosy cheeks with pale blonde hair and cornflower blue eyes.

"Ah, Violet, my beautiful daughter, sit!" King Leon thundered with his voice that always seemed to hold a wonderful tone of laughter and Italian accent that always seemed so out of place in their lovely English kingdom.

Violet smiled at her father and bowed her head, curtsying slightly before gracefully setting herself down on the chair that was set before the thrones of her parents, and that of her own. A small smile graced Queen Eliza's fair face and Violet felt a sense of dread wash over her. The Queen only showed her nerves when something quite large was at stake.

"Violet, sweet girl, as of Monday, we are at war," Leon spoke gravely.

The sound of shattering crystal echoed through the room. Kathryn, who had been standing at attention by the door, rushed over to clean up the slippery mess Violet had caused by dropping her goblet.

The princess was in a state of utmost shock. The kingdom had been in a state of peace for the better part of two centuries. War was practically unheard of in their kingdom. Her private tutors barely bothered teaching her about war history.

"With whom?" Violet spluttered out, dropping all the etiquette she had been taught to always uphold.

There was no immediate threat she could think of, no alliances teetering on the edge of doom.

King Leon smiled a smile full of melancholy at his young daughter. Just sixteen years on the Earth did not seem to be enough to prepare Violet for what she

was fated to do. Taking a deep breath, Leon stepped off his thrown and crouched down before Violet so that they were eye to eye.

"Violet, you may not enjoy very much what I am about to tell you. Several years ago, when you were just a child a prophecy was made concerning you by Merlin himself. He foretold that Scotland would go to war with the Malos Clan and that the you are the only person who can defeat them."

"Don't you dare leave anything out, Leon!" Eliza snapped in a shrew-like voice.

Leon sighed and opened his mouth to continue, "Merlin also foretold that you would make a decision, one that would either save or raze the kingdom."

Knowing that her father did not mean the good raise, Violet gulped in fear. How could she be the one to save the kingdom? She was just a girl. There was a whole army of strong fighters and warlocks that could battle the Malos Clan. What made her so special? As she drowned in her thoughts, Violet barely heard her father tell her that she was being sent away for protection.

Uncomfortable. That was the only word Violet could use to describe the carriage ride to the cabin she was to be staying in for protection. It was in the middle of the woods. Merlin, she suspected, would be waiting for her. Unless the Malos Clan got to him first, Violet thought, even though she knew it was ridiculous for the Malos Clan to even try to get near Merlin.

When the carriage stopped in front of a cabin, Violet was shocked. Instead of an ancient man in robes, a boy her age was waiting. The boy was leaning carelessly against the wall of the cabin, dressed in dirty, peasant clothes.

"Ah, Princess, we've been waiting for you," the boy said in a thick, Cockney accent.

"Who are you?" Violet asked cautiously.

"The name's Peter," he said, sticky his rather grimy hand out for Violet to shake.

When she wrinkled her nose in distaste and ignored his outstretched hand, Peter laughed in good nature.

"I'm Merlin's apprentice. He's been training me."

Violet blanched. She was not completely sure if she trusted this poor, dirty handsome stranger with a glint of cunning mischief in his forest green eyes.

"Where's Merlin?"

"He's out. Now, follow me, Princess. I'll explain inside. We can never know who's listening out here," Peter said, smirking a little bit as he flickered his eyes around the landscape before training them on Violet.

Her face flushed before she scowled and shoved the lanky boy inside the cabin, dragging her wheeled trunk behind her. Her guards and carriage man took her entrance into the cabin as a sign of safety and took off, back to the castle.

A day had passed at the cabin and Merlin had still not returned for Violet to meet him. Growing antsy, she barged into Peter's room, demanding answers



"Tell me where he is, Peasant!" she yelled, spitting out his social status as if it were the worst kind of profanity she could throw at someone.

Peter rolled his eyes and nonchalantly ruffled the back of his dark blonde hair. If Violet was trying to insult him, it was not working. He figured truth would be the best way to go with Violet, as she seemed very accustomed to getting exactly what she wanted. Grimacing, Peter began to talk.

"I don't know where he is! I haven't heard from the man in three days! He left right after telling me you were coming. I have been trying to contact him, but he has some kind of shield up around him. He's hiding from someone."

Violet stayed silent. Then her words found her once more.

"What are we to do, then? If Merlin himself is scared enough to go into hiding, how do we have any chance at this?"

"I suppose I will have to train you myself, Princess," Peter said, standing up from his chair and walking past Violet and into the main room. "Follow me, lass!"

Violet stayed standing in Peter's doorway. She was so confused, and Peter's inability to explain things was no help to her.

"Train me? Train me for what? Peter!"

Violet took off running to find Peter, needing to know what he was alluding when he talked about training her.

Two weeks passed since Peter began training Violet. When Violet found out what exactly Peter was planning to train her in she told him to get his head examined.

"A witch?" Violet had asked, laughing at the mere thought of it. "There is no way that I could possibly possess the gift of magic! Peter, I must suggest you get your head looked at!" Of course, she had been wrong. Violet was scared. She was scared of the magic. Now that she knew of her powers - the ones Merlin had been suppressing for as long as possible until she needed them per request of her parents - they were out of control. Magic is not something to be taken lightly. Since Violet was scared, her powers were reflecting her mood and randomly fluctuating whenever her emotions got a little high. Violet had no idea how people expected her to defeat the Malos Clan. It was impossible in her opinion, despite Peter's optimism.

"You just need to believe in yourself, Princess!" Peter told her over and over again as she tried to levitate a candle, all while keeping it lit.

"Well I don't believe in myself!" Violet screeched. "I am supposed to defeat this incredibly powerful clan of sorcerers all on my own! The war has progressed far too much, Peter! People are dying! What can I do?"

"Power up. Learn the spell over there. Send the Malos Clan back to the pits of Hell where they belong," Peter said.

"You act as if it's so simple," Violet said, allowing a stream of crystalline tears roll down her cheeks.

Peter shifted awkwardly when she began crying. He was raised in a family of boys and his mother died shortly after he was born. He had no idea how to handle

girls; and something told him that Violet was an anomaly when it came to the opposite gender.

"Violet," Peter said softly. "I need you to close your eyes."

Violet did just that. Letting out a breath and cracking his neck, Peter tried to recall the meditation ritual Merlin taught him when he first arrived at the cabin three years prior to Violet's arrival.

"Breathe deeply and slowly. Now, focus on the thought of a flame. Imagine the warmth, the color, the crackling sound of flames on wood. Picture a nice, calm fire. Once you've got that thought, imagine lighting a candle."

Violet focused on the thought. As she listened to Peter's words, the images started to flow together. Even though she was doing exactly as Peter said, she never felt the tugging sensation in her stomach that Peter described when doing a spell.

I believe, Violet thought to herself. I believe. I can do this. I can light this candle. I can defeat the Malos Clan.

The sound of laughter shook Violet out of her dreamlike state. Shaking the haze out of her brain, she looked up. The room was lit up brightly. A fire was roaring in the previously cold fireplace. She did it. Letting out a sound of mirth, the princess jumped up with excitement and hugged Peter, giving him a quick kiss on the cheek in celebration.

"Thank you! Thank you so much, Peter!"

"What're you thanking me for, Princess? That was all you," Peter said gruffly, his face gleaming a flustered red.

Violet smiled at him, seeing through the gruff facade.

Violet and Peter trudged through the forest. The hem of Violet's long purple dress catching on twigs and low branches. It was dark, the only light available was from the full moon. Peter was leading Violet to a cave that held a mystical element that was essential for the spell Violet was about to cast. Weeks had passed since Violet began to believe in her magic. Peter told her she had to exercise her powers up to the ability to the spell she needed to do.

Out of the shadows, just before Violet and Peter were to enter the cave, a man in a long, blood red hooded cloak appeared. The cloak was a trademark of the the Malos Clan. With lightning speed, the man grabbed Peter and pressed a deadly looking dagger to his neck.

"Princess Violet, leave and never come back and you can live, your friend here does not.

If you should decide to stay, you both die, along with your kingdom."

Violet stayed put, not moving a muscle. Peter was glaring at her, silently telling her to leave. The jagged edge of the blade was pressed tightly against his throat, beads of blood popping up. A quiet gasp left Violet's lips. Peter was going to die, she realized, right in front of her.

"Did you really think you could defeat me? You don't even believe in yourself. Your powers are pathetic!"

Violet glared at the man. Shakily she thrust her hand out. The man went flying backwards into a tree. Vines shot out around him, so that even if he woke up, he would lack the ability to break free.

"Hurry now!" Peter said.

Working quickly, the two dumped the ingredients into the well in the middle of the cave. Nervously, Violet began to recite the words she had memorized.

"Quod malum et vade. Egredimini de terra. Ut-"

Violet's words were cut off by a painful yell coming from Peter's direction.

Stopping immediately, the princess spun around and saw her friend lying on the ground, clutching his stomach. A dark red substance pooled out from under his fingers. A strangled sob left her mouth, and that did it. Her powers fluctuated and the cloaked man flew back, roughly hitting the stone wall.

Unfortunately, the man was resilient - a common trait of the Malos Clan.

"Stupid, stupid little girl. You'll never be able to defeat me," the man snarled.

Violet felt as if the man were right. She was unable to protect Peter, and now here she was, backed up against a wall with a Malos Clan member stalking towards her. The knife used on Peter was still in his hand, dripping with blood. It was a long shot, but Violet had to try.

Breathing deeply and clearing her mind, Violet twisted her hand in a violent fashion. A large rock from the ceiling swung down and hit the man over the head, rendering him unconscious. A victorious feeling bubbled up inside her. Using her magic, Violet tied the man up with chains and left him where he was lying before running over to Peter.

"Hurry," he rasped, "I'll be fine. Finish the spell."

"I can't leave you here, Peter. You'll die!" Violet choked out, tears rolling down her cheeks.

"Violet, now," Peter said sharply.

Knowing he wouldn't back down, Violet nodded. Tears were still falling, but she shakily stood up and walked over to the well.

"Quod malum et vade. Egredimini de terra. Ut super in loco. Egredere. De cetero non redeat."

A bang echoed through the cave and Violet felt a surge of energy rush through her. Looking over to where the man was, she just saw the cloak of the the Malos Clan member crumpled on the ground. He was gone. The war was over. She did it. She saved the kingdom, just like everyone said. Now, she just had to save her best friend's life. An easy fix after what she just did.

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The Blues...

Jewel Rodgriuez

You paint the people around you cerulean with
your eyes
Navy colored jumpsuits,
Turkish colored chains, clipped around our wrists,
heavy under the weight. Because nobody will
bother to hear my war cries, battle scars dug deep
into my inner self.
Put there by faceless men, fighting their own
battles.
Dog tags wrapped around my neck drape the edges of
my rib cage
Sky blue mirrors hung on thinning wires,
Only reflect my regret on being ready to cut the
connection.
They showed me Hell isn't red more like teal.
The teal in your irises
The pale lapis words
Played at a volume to high for me to bare, beating at
my eardrums.
Black and blue tears drip I begin to
bleed indigo
A sort of poisoned purple
You've poisoned me with your teal irised eyes
The Turkish chains around my wrists are tightening
I'm bleeding indigo ink
And I'm wishing id broken the sky blue mirrors
Wishing I cut the connection sooner
I wish
I could've
Avoided the pale lapis tendencies of your cerulean
eyes
Sooner.
Because then I wouldn't have known that Hell
indeed is
Teal.



Photograph by Elizabeth Demers

Greek Gods in Love

Chantall Ontivero

The god of sunlight and song found himself dozing in the orchard of his uncle, Dionysus the god of wine. Under a heavy grapevine he watched the clouds up in the heavens, the rays of Helios speckling his skin. On a day as clear and beautiful as this he could only think of the horrible thing that had transpired in the realm of man. Of course something horrendous and sad always happened in the realm of man- but this horrible thing had affected him more than the rest for some reason.

That morning the god had dropped down into a lonely forest- one where he had played as a child- and was touching the face of a dying flower to bring life back into it. His sister, Artemis, often cared for their childhood playground and kept it alive and filled with birdsong. But that morning it was oddly quiet. Apollo had called out to the birds and creatures of the forest- but they did not answer him. The god, uncomfortable and concerned, broke out into a run in the forest in search of that horrible thing he was sure was lying in wait for him. And then he found it.

A man sat out in the open field, a dead white doe at his feet, his hands bloodied and eyes dark with it. With the lust all men felt for murder.

Apollo rubbed his eyes in hopes that it would dissipate his anger. The man had seen him then and, seeing that the god was glowing, called out to him, smiling.

Disgusted, the god of archery shot him through the eye with an arrow.

Now he sat in his uncle's orchard and brooded, thinking on the dead form of the white doe. Was man so careless that they did not know deer were nymphs of the forest? That they were his sisters maidens? Surely if the god had left the man- his sister would have put him through a much slower and crueler fate.

Just then the grapevine shook and down from its heavy branches dropped Dionysus, a jug of wine forever at his side. The old god stumbled and steadied himself against the tree, he giggled as he looked down at his nephew,

"Apollo! Your melancholy causes my vines to grow brittle and sombre- what troubles you so?"

"The savagery of man, uncle."

"Ah- War and toil for only momentary, fleeting pleasures."

"You know well of fleeting pleasures, uncle." Observed Apollo bitterly.

Oblivious to the boys tone the older god took a swig of wine and chuckled merrily,

"Apollo Apollo-" he sang, "God of light and law- yet sleepy and filled with sorrow- perhaps this shall change tomorrow? Nay- today! A maiden or jug of wine I shall fetch you."

"Do not bother me with such pointless pursuits, uncle- I want no comfort- only to mourn."

"Mourn he says! Find comfort in the arms of a girl or at the bottom of a keg! Both are welcoming and warm."

"Look- ah no listen now!" Continued the God, drawing Apollo by the arm and leading him to the edge of the orchard. Annoyed Apollo had failed to hear exactly what it was that the God of Wine wanted him to listen to- but as they drew closer to the sound the young god caught on. They were soon standing at the edge of the godly realm and were peeking out from the orchard on to a temple. From within they heard a beautiful and sweet voice,

filled with something like mourning. This voice reflected his feelings at the moment and Apollo was intrigued.

Seeing this Dionysus knew he was needed no more and, laughing, retreated back into his orchard singing a song of debauchery and merry-making.

He wondered what kind of creature could make such a sweet sound- for at that moment all of mankind was horrid and beastly- incapable of song so pure and lovely. Apollo stepped out from the orchard and strode into the temple, bypassing the room of women chanting his name. The god of art found himself in a room of marble likenesses- but he paid no mind to these clones. The voice was in the same room as him- in fact he was sure it was beyond the very statue he hid behind now. The god, at the last second, became hesitant to reveal himself to this creature. He peeked out from between the marble legs of an uncanny likeness of himself.

He was shocked to see a mortal. And so her song and the similar songs of the women in the next room suddenly made sense- they were singing a hymn to glorify his name and seek praise from him. The god was familiar with those that worshipped him and he often listened to their songs- indeed he knew all of this. But, he was so eager to join in song with this mortal woman that shared a sense of mourning with him, that he began to sing along with her, taking up the hymn.

Apollo, eyes bright and joyous with the act, made sure not to approach her too quickly- for, like deer, he found that mortal women were so easy to scare.

"Priestess. A voice as delicate as the petals of a flower and pure as the sunlight has drawn me here- does it have a name?" He asked gently, implying that he wished to know her name and who she is.

The god of the Sea lay at the very bottom of it, on a bed of seaweed, lazily drifting with the push and pull of the water. Since his infancy the ocean was his cradle and rocked him to sleep like this, more effective than a mother. Now, however, he found that he simply could not sleep. It evaded him and seemed to grow more distant with the tide. The god was so bothered by this that he called upon the sea nymphs that took up residence in his palace. They danced and sang for him, as gentle and soothing as the waves.

"Someone- find Hypnos and bring him forth to me." He sighed, his voice disrupting their rhythm and setting them off uneasily. Now they knew there was a serious problem- for when one called upon the god of Sleep it was because nothing else could help. At once a handful of nymphs were but bubble streams in the water.

Poseidon stared up at the sun, its face distorted thanks to the leagues upon leagues of water between them. By his side he felt a nymph sit- she was all giggles and soft 'my lord my lord's. He waited for her to calm down and tell him- but like most nymphs this took her some time.

"Spit it out, child!" He spat, suddenly angry. She hid her mouth behind her hands, bright blue eyes twinkling mischievously as she reported,

"A human is drowning- flailing about and dying, my lord."

Anger and sleep suddenly disappeared- he sprang from his bed of seaweed and looked about at those gathered around him. The music ceased as they looked to the ocean god.

"Search for the mortal- lead me to them!" For being a god of destruction like he was- any human that was not drowning by his command gained his immediate sympathy. The nymph that had originally told him of the drowning mortal took him by the hand and began to swim toward where she had originally seen the mortal begin to struggle.

Poseidon soon spotted her at once. Her body was limp and her hair was all about her face. He was by her side and he drew her into his arms. The nymph swam about them, curious, "My lord- she does not breathe water?" The creature did not understand mortals- for she had never been in their world. Poseidon shook his head, brushing the mortal girl's hair out of her face, he saw that she was beautiful.

"No. Humans breathe air..." and to the girl, who was unconscious at this point, "I will grant you a gift- I sense we are alike in spirit." He brushed her

cheeks with a finger and gills sprang forth from them. And he pressed her legs together, forming a strong tail for her to swim with. For aesthetic effect he gave her coral and seashell jewelry.

"Why?" Asked the little nymph, swimming about Poseidon as he carried the mortal-made-nymph down to the seabed. A group of nymphs sat in waiting for him, they marveled at the woman in his arms, "She is unconscious now-" he announced in his kingly way, "but she will be fine. Prepare a bed for her in the palace. At once." And soon his court went off, busying themselves with the task.

The little nymph that had guided him was the last to leave. Poseidon settled the woman on the bed of seaweed and studied her face. She was young and lovely- beautiful beyond even some of those in his royal court.



Artwork by Lily Walsh

"The Good Kind of Laughter"

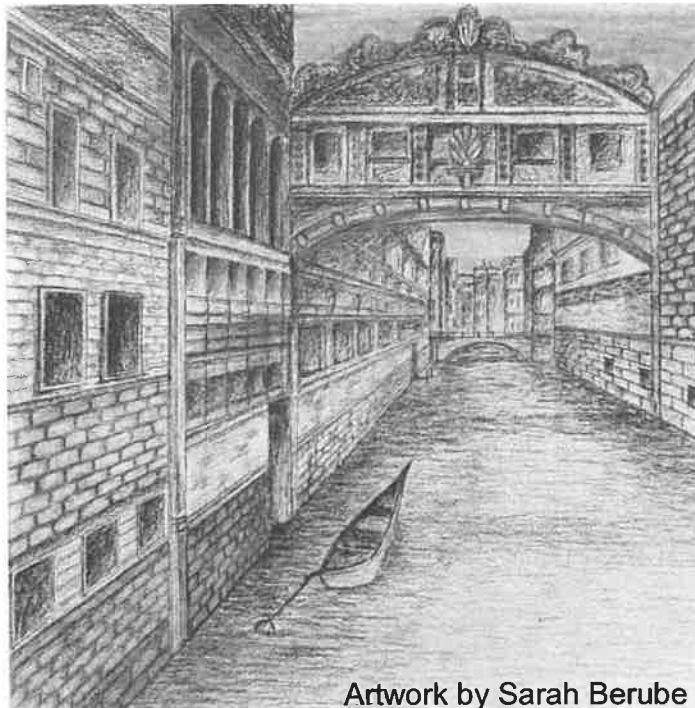
Katherine Fitzpatrick

He is my best friend. Always has been. To this day, his exhilarating laugh still gives me life. It comes on suddenly, like a crack of thunder in the middle of the day. Loud, yes, but soothing, like hot cocoa on a cool night. He's got the good kind of laugh; the contagious laugh like children on Christmas. There is no real build up. A smirk, that is all. Then comes his quintessential laugh. His laugh thunders through the room as he smiles like the Red Sox after they won the World Series. His eyes. They sparkle brighter than the stars. His eyes smile when he laughs. When he laughs that delicious laugh that makes me not care why he's laughing. Laugh more, I'd say, it makes me laugh too. Sometimes, he can't stop laughing. The laugh I've grown to love lasts for a while as it echoes across the room. Echoes, making everyone around him laugh, too. He has a good laugh, I tell my friends. It's sweeter than chocolate, more bubbly than a cold root beer. His laugh is sunshine. It's that bright and happy feeling on a Sunday morning. When he laughs, with his eyes closed and an infinite smile on his face, you can't help but smile and laugh, too. Then, as quick as a summer rain, his laugh is over.

Oliver Sykes
of
Bring Me The Horizon



Artwork by Benjamin Wetherbee



Artwork by Sarah Berube

Stuck in a Lane

Jessica Alvarado

Pools. Swimming. Practice. Etc. Pools.

Swimming. Practice. Etc. Long as life itself, the water stretches miles to the other side of the pool.

I put on my glasses, my bathing costume, and cap. I am ready to dive in to go back and forth, north to south and then back, south to north.

Over and over and over again. For eleven birthdays now. Getting sick of the smell of chlorine, the pool was finally saying goodbye. I was tired of swimming in one lane and getting no where. I want to be like Jack in Jack and the beanstalk. Never afraid of climbing to the top and investigating new expeditions. I want to be reborn into something else, someone else. I want to experience, experience, experience the unexplored.



Photograph by Min Choi

I am from Cisneros

I am from messy handwriting
and sweaty, sore palms
I am from hating the word 'patch,'
but loving the word 'passion.'
I am from eating snow purely
for the feeling it leaves on my tongue.
And I am from hating soda
for that exact reason.
I am from not having a second to spare,
to having nothing to do at all.

I am from purple roses
And smiling all day long
from soft, smooth gnocchi
with vibrant, red sauce
from voices you can hear five blocks away
and dancing in the kitchen all night long

I am from my dad's home grown red
tomatoes for sauce,
and cooking for a large wooden table full of
my family
I am from my Grammy's warm crisp apples
melting on my tongue,
and from my little cousins hiding under
tables when I seek

I'm from what doesn't kill you,
makes you stronger
I'm from the truth
I'm from long nights with long thoughts
From rice and beans with a side of Pepsi

I am from watching the stars
light up in the sky

I am from the quietness of Arrow Woods

I am from frogs in the river
Nicknames, laughs, and jokes
I am from Thomas the train
Farm movies and cooking shows
I'm from the tall mango trees to the dogs
barking until dark
From the chaos of the streets to the crickets
outside my house
I am from the rippling rivers,
to blazing campfires
From the melody of my violin,
to the tapping of my feet

I am from a "Sunday is football day" family,
From Friday Night Lights
at Lawrence Stadium,
From girls stealing your sweatpants
and sweatshirts.
I am from the family that says,
"I love you," everyday.

I am from the sound of boats whizzing by
The smell of boat gas and the lake

I am from a life of kicking of screaming

I am from the rush,
From knowing what it's like to lose.
I am from holding my heart and hoping I won't drop it

I am from "make it a good day,"
From the occasional "suck it up,"
From "everything's going to be ok."

I am from a life where I earn what I need
Not expecting it to come to me

I am from stage fright and performances.
From make-up, dresses
and "be ready when I call you."

I am from the yellow two family house
From the purple carpet
that has food stuck in it.
From the Legos all over the floor.
I am from the Clorox and bleach.
I am from black and blue
From blue and red

I am from the warm grip of a pencil
between my fingers
And being able to draw whatever I wanted
I am from having so so many friends
But feeling the loneliest at times with them
I am from the monkey tree
from scraped knees on the driveway
I am from the ghost of the yellow barn
from you could have lost your eye
I am from rainy days and Monopoly

I am from iced coffee with four
pumps of caramel
I'm from holding my breath and waiting
for 11:11

I'm from long car rides with sleepy friends
From aching muscles and ice baths
From sunflower seeds and Gatorade

From the grasslands of Kansas
I am from the friends who make me laugh and the
boys who make me cry
I am from those moments
A caterpillar turning into a butterfly

~Mr. Ringuette's Cisneros English Class



Art by Lily Walsh

**Kingdom
Jewel Rodriguez**

**I would like to find a kingdom, Bathe in
rivers,
And cleanse my soul in salt.**

There's a fire set in my rib cage,

No strength in my back bone,

I seem to walk more hunched these days

**'Cuz sad to say I have no home, No
one,**

I am the worst kind of orphan,

**An orphan with two living seed bearers.
Things began to bottle up, over flow,
bursting at the seams.**

**Yet I wear my smile like a mask, and hang
my emotions on a flag.**

But I have no anthem,

Instead I was given a tone deaf tune,

**'Cuz birds don't seem to sing where I'm
from.**

**I was not handed life on a silver platter,
More like positioned in line at a soup
kitchen, I'm next.**

**A crown of thorns wasn't placed on my head
more like a crown of push pins. I've only heard
of sin, of my sin, am I a sin.**

**I never went to preschool, instead learned to
read the brochures at the shelter that they'd
give me.**

They tried to shade my eyes,

**Because although we lived where the sun
didn't shine,**

I still could see clearly,

**Could see that mommy wasn't suppose to cry
as much as she did,**

**And daddy, daddy should have been around
more.**

**And I was able to differentiate between a
good touch and a bad touch,**

At a young age,

But I think I was born,

With just a little too much,

Bad luck,

I begin to feel stuck.

I'm in search of a kingdom

So kingdom come.



Art by Chantall Ontivero

Un-Forgotten
Elizabeth Morse

The wrinkled grey door of the attic hangs there, on its frame, swinging only slightly as I force myself to work. I move so slow, not to disturb the life that once was groomed by the walls of this shrinking house. Everything so slightly yellowed, by the years of intense weather. I know only now, why the things I was so afraid to go though are here. Forgotten, but not lost in memory. My gentle hand picks up a box, so out of the way I almost missed it. Tucked into the corner of the moist room, sitting, waiting for someone to appear and take away the letters left behind from a love, lost so long ago. Only one question hanging over my head, with an echo. Who was the love, Elizabeth lost nearly half a century ago, when this box was left in its resting place?

The questions I wish to ask, are forever left unanswered. A life eighty- five years in the making, forgotten. A love forever lost. Her memory has shown nothing, but a fall from the time, I was old enough to have a child of my own. Do I ask the question, that I know will never be answered? The only answer is, to open the broken box of obscurity. But the truth, will it hurt me as it hurt her? So many questions, to answer and so little to know. Tap- Tap- Tap. A rain, as light as snow fall, but still audible. Let her decide, if I am welcomed into her past. If only she could join me.

Her short white hair moves, every so softly in the spring breeze. Holding a book that she can never quite finish. I wonder if she knows that she has been reading the same chapter, for nearly a month. Sad, lonely woman stuck in silence. A woman in the eyes of all, but a child in mine. I wish, oh how I wish, a miracle would occur to allow her to come back to me, if only for a moment. For her to remember the name, that belongs to my face. Oh sadly I am a stranger. One tear, one tear I let fall, and then swallow my thoughts. These feelings are not welcome, and so I smile and walk beside the chair, pointed towards the gloomy grey atmosphere. Does my mother's mother know, I love the rain like she does? I think that once, she knew, but like all her thoughts it fell away.

The seat damp with dew, but a perfect place to read, a past only so forgotten, that the words written are the things left to remember. The wooden cover melted, as though, the weather has morphed the saddened oak, so that, no one could enter the cherished life, no longer remembered. Pop. At last, able to uncover, the undisturbed cream colored envelopes, that are wrinkled with age. The decision, already ingrained in my mind, to read or not to read? The lessen in life, I never quite liked was, the one of no privacy. Family, is for sharing and not for secrets. As, my eyes wondered the addresses on the outside of the letters, I noticed a name. A name that isn't a stranger, but instead, the name my brother grew up with. The name of a man that once lived in this house, with Alice. My mothers father, such a surprise to have not, uncovered a mysterious love that was lost. Instead, opening a door that was shut, by an ache of the heart. Shattered and broken, a life lost. I welcomed the tears, not of sadness, but instead of remembrance. Love. Life. Happiness. Only lessened, by the missing piece. He is with me always.

The word, exit my mouth with a crack. Gram. Tears streaming now. A hand, so soft only one, could possess. Looking up, I see my wish, my wish of her, knowing me. For

only there is love in her eyes. Love for me, not a stranger. I know she knows who I am, because she pets my face, as she did when I was, just a child, trying to comfort me in my sadness. I sit there, just looking into a smile, that could brighten any day. Her eyes flicker to my lap. Sitting there, the papers flap in the cooling breeze. Taking the third envelope, she begins to read to me, as if I was five again. Leaning into the sweet melody of a voice, I had almost forgotten. Sharing with me, her love. The love of my Pap's.

Sadly, silence again, why had she come to me? I, may never know. But, the love shared, was known. Happiness was felt, loneliness forgotten. And a Love, a Love shared, and cherished. Both, for a man, no longer here, and a woman sitting beside me. Forever, remembering and never, forgotten.

Jungle Vignette

Jessica Alvarado

Every morning for as long as I can remember, the gentle man and the gentle woman were up bright and early. When I was a sprout of a little thing, coming home from school was the best part of my day. Walking towards my vanilla-mint shutter house, my sister and I would always see the gentle man working on his jungle full of exotic colors. Which now that I think of it. Smelled pretty nice. His gentle woman, every day would fetch him into the house for a snack. Harry, Harry...come inside, the oreos are waiting for you with a glass of milk. Upon hearing this, he would leave his untended jungle, all for nature to take care of. It would be half past four, and Harry would rush out, with his googles and a book in his overworked fingers and sit down. His gentle woman would join him and also in her soft, yet stiff twig of her fingers, would carry a book as well. Irene, did you hear that manure is good for our jungle to grow? They were the HI couple. That was my top secret name for them. I remember my sister and I loved to observe them. There was something mysterious and alluring about HI that made us want to be compadres.

The times we would go over the HI's house, we would have a grand time, playing their organ and eating Oreos's on their miniature Espresso colored table. H and I would tell us stories of their youth and we would just spend hours chit chatting away, before we knew it, the big star in the sky was saying goodnight to our side of the world. We blossomed into their Compadres.

Until one day my sister and I noticed that the jungle started growing uncontrollably. H and I together was no longer HI, all that was left in that little old, forest of a cottage that was a friend to our vanilla, minty shuttered house, was I. H was no longer. The jungle of exotic smells and vibrant colors that at one point was dispersing with life, started growing back into its cultural roots towards the center of the earth, until finally, it was a whisper in the wind. Just like H. The jungle looked as plain as the nose on one's face. The gentle old man with his jungle were swallowed up into the globe. That was the last we ever saw Harry.

Months passed, and eye was prisoned in her own house by her choice. The very few times I ever noticed her was when she was outside sitting down, and her stiff, twig like fingers held tight onto a book. When did she ever get so ancient? Then one day the gentle woman was picked up in a sparkling car. The music coming out of the car was louder than a lion's roar. Men dressed as twins, packed the gentle woman into the sparkling car and started the loud music again as they were leaving. That was the last I ever saw the gentle old, old, old woman.

The last I heard Irene one day shut down the computer in her brain and went into a deep hibernation. The HI couple were now whispers in the wind. No longer were they found on this rugged circle of creation. Their house now was a nest, overrun by nature. The jungle was no longer so I guess H and I along with their zesty partnership of a name, were now the ghosts of Christmas past. Life is a lottery. All you can do is wait and make the time remaining precious, before your life and the life of others changes for good. H and I's life went from North to South. They are invisible now.

THE ATTIC

MATTHEW GARNEAU

It was an average Tuesday afternoon. The birds were buzzing and the sun was still shining through. Everything in the town of Tremont was humming and moving. Neighbors greeted other neighbors as the other neighbors treated their azaleas carefully. Every house down the streets of Tremont all looked the same and everybody was friends with everyone else. Nobody expressed their opinions publicly.

Except for the couple on 482 Main Street.

Marianne and Johnathan Rockwell was one unhappy couple. They slept in different beds. They barely talked. Most of all, they revolutionized the conformed image of the typical Tremont couple.

Marianne checked the clock on the oven in her kitchen. She then checked her reflection on the oven, only seeing certain points of perspective, such as the bright red lip stain she had on and her dark auburn eyelids.

"Beautiful..." she had to tell herself because her husband made her feel the complete opposite.

She tied her blonde hair up to the top of her head in a circular shape that sat on the top of her head. Marianne was waiting to tell her husband the best news that she could think of. She had really dressed up for the reveal: she fashioned a bright blue dress that went all the way down to her ankles. At her ankles, the straps of her designer sandals

were tightened. It felt odd to wear shoes in the house, but she just felt special to be able to even state the news she was about to.

She heard a car rounding the corner, and all of sudden, the door rapidly slammed shut. He was in a hurry.

“Driving that fast, you’ll kill someone!” she yelled to the faint shuffling of feet that she heard in the foyer.

Then, without signs of introduction, he grabbed her wrists. She thrashed her arms at him, trying to escape his grip. Tears fell from her eyes and slowly fell down onto her ghastly reflection on the oven.

“What are you doing?!” She screamed.

He slapped her face and she yelled in pain.

Without surprise, the next tie went around her mouth. She struggled so much to break free. He was too strong.

He then dragged her to upstairs. By now, all of her makeup had smeared down her face in jagged lines. Her throat hurt so much from trying to desperately make the neighbors outside take a break from perfection to hear her.

They didn’t of course.

She began to thrash around and he dropped her down the stairs. She struggled to get up but eventually got to her feet. She speed walked out the front door and tried to make it to her neighbor’s lawn.

“Hey! You get off my freshly-mowed,” the neighbor yelled, “Wait, oh my goodness! Duck!”

Without realizing what the neighbor meant, Marianne was then knocked off the head, and she fell to the freshly-mowed lawn.

SEVEN HOURS LATER

Marianne fluttered open her eyes. She didn’t know where she was or how she got there. The fog in her brain started to disperse. The thing she was laying on became a plank of wood that became a floor that became a room that became the attic. She began to scream and thrash around.

“Shhh...” a voice hushed as its hands held her down gently.

Marianne began to cry endlessly. She was sitting in a pool of sweat.

"Who are you?" she whispered.

"Ravenna. I'm here to help you," the woman in all black answered.

"How did you get in here?"

"That little board over there," she pointed to the far end of the attic, "leads to a staircase that starts in your basement.

"How did I get here?"

"The only race to blame," she began with upmost confidence, "is men. Men all of all types. They believe that they are the alphas of society, they leave women off to the side."

"I'm married?"

"You were hit off the head pretty hard..."

"What are you talking about?"

Ravenna stood up. She wore a black suit and a black pencil skirt. Her hair was tied up with a dotted veil that went over her face. The only color showing was her bright red lip stain.

"Let me tell you a story," Ravenna began, "Once upon a time, seven hours ago in fact, there was a perfect little town that looked the same for miles and miles and miles. But at the very edge, there lay a box that they called a house. In the box lived a very unique couple. A woman of great beauty and strength, who knew better than to let her worthless husband tell her otherwise, lived there with a man who loved himself and used his wife for money and pleasure. Well, one fateful day, the man had an awful plan to get rid of the woman. He went around to every box on the grid of this perfect small town, and told everyone that the woman was dead. He then pretended to come home from work, and he smacked her off the head with a rusty shovel until he saw red. But her story doesn't end there. He threw her up into the attic of their box, and took the life insurance quote that he had received from the death hoax and skipped quite a few towns west, leaving the poor, pregnant woman for dead."

At that point, Marianne was bawling her eyes out. She clenched her stomach and yelled at John, even though he wasn't there to hear her. Ravenna stood off to the side, for she knew not to meddle in grief.

"When I'm done with John, he'll be rotting in--"

Ravenna stepped in at this point.

“No, no, no, no! You must stay in here. Die for the cause. Honey, it’s 1994, us women have come a long way since denial of voting. Haven’t you ever heard of feminism? I know it sounds so much better to rip his insides out, but if you die here, every man and woman in this rotten town will finally care! If you kill him, you’ll rot in a room much worse than this. I’ll help you live as long as possible.”

And so Marianne agreed to the plan. She got by with the space available. But it was the moments that Ravenna wasn’t there to hold her hand that she hated. Time was rolling and life was going on and couples loved each other and children were playing and time was moving, and she was sitting in an attic until she died.

Every night, when Ravenna retired to the basement for the night, Marianne would reach under the banister of the boarded up window, where she stashed a rusty nail that she had found the first day of captivity. She would then draw a box, its size depending on the measure of her feelings that day, and she write everything she felt, thought, said, did that day. Then, in the far corner she would add a tally mark every night to help her keep track of the days she sat in the attic.

Two hundred seventy-three tally marks and heart-wrenching entries ended up filling the board until she had the baby. Ravenna helped give birth and Marianne named it Matthew James Holmes. Ravenna brought Matthew to a home for orphans because she didn’t want him to be exposed to this.

Every day, when Ravenna saw the markings on the wall, she immediately scolded Marianne. Marianne never ceased to record her pain in the wall.

One day, Ravenna seemed distraught. She began to pace around the entire attic, which to Marianne, seemed to shrink every day.

“What’s the matter?” asked Marianne.

“He-he-he’s back-k” she screamed as she cried in anger.

“Who?”

Now, Ravenna cried and cried and cried and cried. She stood up and walked back to the trapdoor that she had climbed out of so long ago to save poor Marianne.

“I won’t let him hurt you,” she whispered as she closed the trapdoor and she was gone.

Marianne was reeling. Who was she talking about? Why did she leave?

At that moment, a man opened the main attic door. A new man walked in.

Certainly not a man who would lock his wife in the attic.

Too bad he did.

Johnathan Rockwell stepped towards her, yelling at her like he did all those years ago.

"I heard you lived, I had to see it for my own eyes," he smirked.

Marianne screamed at him as she backed up until she reached the wall of the attic. It was an awful scene: Marianne stood crying, screaming for help, while just behind her, well over two hundred stories of pain stood etched into the rickety wall.

Both of his hands went on a pistol, and he cocked the weapon.

"Wait." she stopped him. "Just tell me the date." "The date?" he paused and lowered the weapon.

"Yes, the date."

"February 24, 2004. Why do you want to know that?"

"Because it's your death date." a voice said from the trapdoor. The voice stepped out with a gun in hand and Ravenna popped the trigger and a bullet flew into John and he fell down. Marianne's head pounded and pounded. Ravenna had just killed a man. Marianne's eyes went from the gun to the body to Ravenna to her hands. The light rays of the images seemed to not measure up. Her head raced: back and forth from her life of perfection to her life of ruin. Lines of vision crossed and crossed. Ravenna had just killed Marianne's husband. Marianne's vision blurred. She screamed at the truth of the gun that had been placed in her hand by her vision. What was going on? Why was the gun in her hand?

She remembered what her reflection looked like all those years ago. Her lips were red, her eyes were blue. They were the eyes of a killer.

Marianne had just killed her own husband. Marianne searched and searched for Ravenna.

But of course, she wasn't there.

Anxiety is a Smoke Alarm Joel Parra

Anxiety is a smoke alarm, It gives
you an unsettling feeling
When it goes off randomly
Without a fire being present.

You're heartbeat increases
When you hear the beeping
Just like your chest tightens When you
feel the pressure

In the middle of the night
The alarm gives you fright
In the middle of the day The anxiety
makes you go away

Reality is uncertain
You're mind is in a million places
You begin to feel numb
Your legs feel heavy

The sweating and dizziness
Can't seem to go away
The pain and the suffering They seem
to stay

A smoke alarm is anxiety. It gives
you an unsettling feeling
When it goes off randomly Without
stressors being present.



Art by Grogan Ardizzoni

Trust Issues

Sophie Chingris

*Deciding weather or not to trust someone,
Is like choosing to climb a tree.*

*You can reach the pinnacle of the branch
And be able to successfully look down at
what you have accomplished.*

Or

*You can simply get a splinter, A wound
tattering and tarnishing Your ability to
continue.*

*But for some reason,
People will lock themselves indoors, Where
it would be harder to get a splinter, But also
harder to discover.*

*You can look up to the birds chirping at the
sun, Or climb to see what all the madness is
about.*

*It is not the trust you put in the tree
Or the trust you put in the other person, But
the trust you put in yourself
To recover the madness of the risk.*

Detention

Lexie Lowrie

Not wearing Lands End pants. Not wearing a
Lands End polo with the CCHS logo.
Not wearing a belt.
Not wearing boat shoes.
Not wearing socks.
Wearing a sweatshirt. Wearing boats
shoes that aren't the right color.
More than one earring.
Having colorful hair.
Having your shirt untucked.
Having more than on ring per finger.
Having more than on bracelet per hand.
Having your phone out. Not having your ID
Eating in the hallway.
Eating in a classroom.
Holding a cup in the hallway.
Forgetting a sick note.
Forgetting a doctor's note.
Being absent and not bringing a note.
Being one minute late for school.
Being late for class.
Talking during mass.
Texting during class.
Playing games in your ipad. Using your
ipad for social media in class.
Talking back to a teacher.
Being rude to an administrator.
Not being prepared for class.
Not showing up to morning assemblies.
A boy's hair is too long.
A boy forgot to shave.
Chewing gum.

The Half-Asleep Man

Carina Imbornone

A man leaves home, but he doesn't know yet that he leaves for the last time. On his daily run, a pure glissando sky melts shades of red and purple together into a portrait of his emotions. His mind talks with whispers of dissent, but his voice is silent. No one else is out; why talk if no one can hear you? A car breaks this illusion, and two men appear, suddenly and without the wordless concern of well-meaning strangers. They are dressed all the same, in black and white, with borders of blue in between the seams.

The man wakes up comfortably on a floral sofa with dated pink fabric. A foggy recollection tumbles onto him, and the anxiety of his nightmare captures his heart. His mind screams for some meaning, but his eyes only see the impossible hue of the dreamscape sky. It is too bright. The vivid, fated doom of his dream awakens him. He looks around to release the tension that had built for a few barely-awake seconds. Moments ago, the dream seemed to spend a lifetime, but now, its dubious memory evaporates like rubbing alcohol on the skin. A year from now he will completely forget this nightmare, one bad dream among millions the sleeping world wakes up from every night.

This man runs out the door. He overslept, and now he needs, more than ever, the 6:55 transit to come through. Among the crowd of men and women in black and white, he is an awkwardly angled hitchhiker's thumb amid many straight fingers. The late bus dooms his morning. Resigning himself to the inevitable jeers of his boss, he sits uncomfortably behind two men with harsh caps and blue uniforms. They stare him up and down but don't speak a word. As far as the man is concerned, he is alone in a crowd, with nobody to catch his eye. His mind starts running through how he will explain being late again. He's been having that dream too often, each nightmare beginning with the knowledge he will never return home. Each night, he never returns, a series of logical inconsistencies his sleeping mind blares somewhere in the foggy land between recollection and prediction that only exists in dreams.

In the man's city, the sun doesn't come up until late morning. Unlike most dawns, the sun soars through a smear of salmon pink as the diesel engine vibrates and the skinny bus doors snap shut with an exhaust of air like an exhaled breath. His eyelids droop drowsily shut, and his body nods to the side as if he is a patient on the operating table about to be treated for a nameless, pounding disquiet of the heart.

She looks at him as his eyelids rise like blinds lifted from the windowpanes. He knows her—at the unconscious root of his mind, he has been trying to find her ever since they lost each other far too long ago. She had come on the bus and sat quietly beside him when he was still in slouched slumber against the bus window, waiting for his stop.

As he awoke to the impossible hue of a dreamscape sky, he knew that in some irrevocable way, he always had teetered between the beautiful and the eerie.

Her name rushed from his mouth in a tender, giddy stream as they rode the bus past fields and fogs into the far corners of their maps of the world.

When he had left his home that morning, he didn't know it would be for the last time.

~~~~~  
Sylvia Plath

Sophie Chingris

"No little man lives in the exacting moon. And that is that, is that, is that."

Sylvia Plath conformed these words in her jilted state. The idea of her cheating husband,  
Imbedded into her poetry.

Readers saw Sylvia as insane,  
And she was,  
But that is what makes a writer so great,  
To see the insanity in what is calmly complex. All by the mind,  
The heart,

And the stars that make it so.

But the idea of how vast our universe is,  
To not even be able to fully comprehend as humans  
And in the visible universe we can see billions upon billions of galaxies, Holding billions of more  
stars,  
Is insane.

Then again, the idea that the stars  
Are alined perfectly to depict our fate, Either laying changeable or  
It is already fated for us to want to alter it, So it lays unchangeable,  
Is all insane.

Or the idea that we all exist on a blue planet, Circling around a ball of fire,  
Next to a moon that follows us and moves our seas, Is insane.

The man engraved in the moon and The stardust sprinkled on us is where Each  
And everyone of us,

Get our touch of insanity.

Sylvia,  
Being more blessed than the rest of us, Became scared and in denial  
Of the man in the moon.

Maybe thats why she chose putting her head in the oven as her act of suicide. She wanted to  
burn,  
As you would by the sun,  
The more powerful entity

And opposite of the moon, The man in the moon.

She picked the killer in the sun Than the wise inquirer in the moon.

---

Untitled

Aurora Bas

I always have  
A variety of dreams  
Ones that teach  
Ones that convey  
Ones that predict  
Ones that provoke  
My mind tells me all as I pretend to sleep...  
I once had a dream  
Of the strangest kind  
It sealed my lips  
And it twisted my mind  
While it confused me  
It revealed the world to me  
In this dream  
I had taken a flower  
Plucked it from a cherry blossom tree  
With the petals half shut  
Like my eyes to the world  
And a stranger bent down to me and said:  
"This is you, you right now  
When you take a flower from the tree  
And it hasn't developed  
Into what it should be,  
You have taken a life  
A short life from today  
The life it was given  
Was not yet meant to be taken away"  
And that has stayed with me  
Since I first woke  
From that vision, what else could it be?  
A sign to continue  
A sign to keep living  
When you cut a life short  
You haven't let it be fulfilled  
And if you choose to end it  
You don't know what you have lost  
A gift, a promise  
A cherished awakening into beauty  
The world you see today  
Will change, I promise you this  
But only if you seek  
To keep your eyes open  
Instead of fading  
Into eternal sleep



Photo by Aurora Bas

Unfinished book  
Jaylene Miranda

My life is like an unfinished book  
It sits on the shelf collecting dust  
Day after day. The secrets of my Realm  
all stored in this one book  
Unread, untouched, and unknown

The title page holds the information  
From the day of my birth. The table Of  
contents stays incomplete until  
The day I die. By then, my unfinished  
book shall be complete.

Each page is for every day I go through.  
Each letter is for every breath I take  
Each word is for every thought I think.  
Each punctuation mark is for every emotion  
I feel. And each chapter is for ever year that  
flies by.

My unfinished book is no where  
Near complete. So far it has fifteen  
Chapters and five thousand four hundred  
Seventy five pages. A lot it may seem  
Indeed, but my life is an unfinished book.

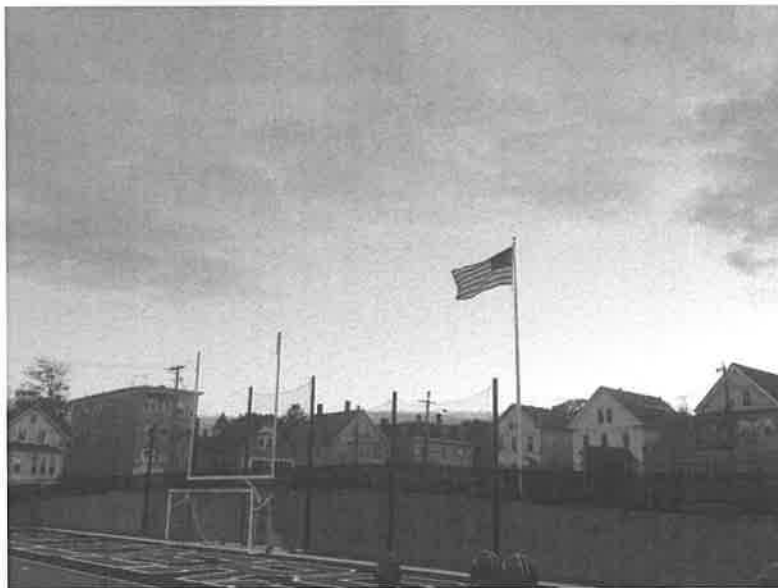


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