

INSTRESS

Journal of the Arts

2015



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Instress has been published by the students of Misericordia since December 1966. The word *instress* was coined by Jesuit priest and poet Gerard Manley Hopkins. Bernadette Waterman Ward describes *instress* thus: “Instress is an action of the will—a moral action, for good or evil. Instress is assent, to use Newman’s term, to an inscape. To call out an inscape is a pleasure, though not one necessarily leading to God; . . . But the ability to see and instress inscapes is the imaginative faculty that makes love possible.” *Instress* at Misericordia is therefore an opportunity of the artistic and literary imagination to make possible something—call it *love* or even *grandeur*—like the following, from Gerard Manley Hopkins’ “God’s Grandeur”:

...
And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs—
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

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AWARD WINNERS

The following are the *Instress* Outstanding Achievement Award Winners:

POETRY

Award Winner: “Inspiration” by Kaleigh Killian

Runner-Up: “I Will Not Wane Away” by Jessica Pachuski

PHOTOGRAPHY

Award Winner: Olivia Anglovich

Runner-Up: Mason Moher

ARTWORK

Award Winner: Maia Painter

Runner-Up: Matthew Gromala

FICTION

Award Winner: “Citric” by Scott Bargisen

Runner-Up: “Finding Home” by Sierra Krohnemann

AWARD WINNER

Inspiration

Kaleigh Killian

The words won't come.

Drip, drip

The water into my sink

My fan whirs and my desk lamp crackles

I hear my own breathing

But the words won't come.

I tap a rhythm with my fingers

Jiggle my foot around

Exhale a sigh of pure frustration

But the words will not come.

My coffee on one side

A box of chocolate on the other

And a water bottle within reach

But the words simply will not come.

The blank page stares up at me

And the words refuse to come.

I stop thinking. I feel.

I place my fingers on the keys,

Shut out the other sounds,

Inhale the smell of coffee,

And the words. They come.

They come, and I write.

AWARD WINNER

Runner-Up

I Will Not Wane Away

Jessica Pachuski

This is just a phase.
You'll grow out of it.

Darling, I'll grow.
I'll blossom and bloom.
Without water,
I'll stretch my flowers
To the heavens.
Without a foundation,
I'll dig my roots
Into my own supposition.
Without sunlight,
I'll flourish by the
Light of the Moon.
La Luna, my muse.
Her beauty cast by shadows,
Illuminates her phases.
You don't speak
Condescendingly of the Crescent
Or weep at the waxing and waning.
Why must you reject my "phase"
When I did nothing
But shine for you?

AWARD WINNER

Runner-Up



Mason Moher

Missing Identity

Morgan Myers

Who are you,
really?

A blurry face in the crowd
as you get swallowed up
by the mixture of faces
around you?
A wannabe model
wearing a mask of makeup
that hides your personality
though layers of color
and fake orange highlights?
A flirt who changes your appearance
to impress someone
who isn't yours to impress?

You're a secret phony.
You tuck your books away,
slipping them into your bag
as your frenemies walk by.
You disguise your eloquent words,
carefully choosing the ones you
hope others won't criticize.

Instead, you keep quiet.
Your story remains unseen,
unnoticed and tucked away.
And you cross your fingers
that nobody will read it.

Meanwhile,
you're a twelve-year-old girl
in an adult's body,
pretending to be concerned with
what she said about you last week.
In your universe,

you are the sun
and the stars glimmer around you.

But I know that
deep down,
you are not any of those things.

So take off your mask
and wipe off the thick concealer,
because the only disguise you're hiding
behind
is yourself.

You may not know who you are
but I definitely know who you are not.

A Fool at Peace

S.A. Hain

She tells me I can trust her.
I tell her she's full of shit.
She tells me that she loves me,
and if I look inside myself, I'll see that I feel the same way . . .
I take a deep breath and close my eyes; it's dark, real dark.
I grope my way through my subconscious; I can't find my way.
It's so quiet that I linger there.
She calls my name. I snap back to reality.
She says, "Well?" expecting an answer.
I tell her that I'm a blind fool wandering in the dark.
I close my eyes, and wait for her to leave.

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Focus

Devin Crevani

The calm is broken
by waves of excess.
And Emperor Pleasure rears his head,
presides over his complete victory,
over his cavorting subjects.

All talk, all air.
They are, oh certainly, they are.
While preaching a supposed desire for good,
while claiming commitment,
they cannot help but admit
only of their master’s influence.

Trembling at the thought
of such utter simplicity and emptiness.
Trembling at the calls of “Indulge!” readily and greedily heeded
as the putrid stench of hypocrisy and contradiction
Rise.

What am I, who am I,
to stand in the face of this horde?
Are doubt and analysis my allies or imposters?
And why
does it all feel so wrong?

Hold back the damn.
Keep the rage at bay!
Stride on.
But how and why?

I once was told, “Apathy is death.”
Apathy is here.
Death surrounds.
Decay.
Why are we so lost?



Elena Uribe

Poetry Reading:

90 Years of Mercy at Misericordia



**Wednesday, November 12
12:00 p.m.
McGowan Room
Mary Kintz Bevevino Library**

The English Department of Misericordia University is hosting a Poetry Reading to honor the Religious Sisters of Mercy, the Mercy Tradition, the Charisms of Mercy, Service, Justice, and Hospitality, and Misericordia University. Faculty and Students are encouraged to write original poetry in honor of our great institution and tradition.

Join your peers and colleagues as they read their poetry
honoring 90 years of Misericordia.



**This event is free and open to the public.
Refreshments will be served.**

90 Years of Mercy at Misericordia

The English Department at Misericordia University hosted a poetry reading celebrating 90 Years of Mercy at Misericordia University. Original poems written by students, faculty, and staff were read in homage to the Mercy tradition, the Sisters of Mercy, and to the university itself. Sister Jean Messaros, RSM, opened with a reading of a song by Sister Regina Kelly, RSM, “I Am Only Me,” followed by remarks about the traditions of Misericordia and the Sisters of Mercy. It was a special moment, and *Instress* is delighted to be able to publish the following poems that were read during the celebration.



Sisters of Mercy and God

Rita Molino

There is a strength within us
And a mercy God bestows
A vision for the type of people
who bring strangers in from the cold.

The vision He created in 1914 began to unfold
When the Sisters of Mercy purchased farmland
And turned it into Misericordia gold.

In 1922, a cornerstone was laid
Mercy Hall became the name
There was no time for the Sisters to gloat
Mercy was their claim to fame.

1925 saw a Charter
Additional buildings became a matter of barter
Sisters reached out with hospitality and grace
Seeking donors for land they'd come to embrace.

When I ask myself how they did this
The only answer could be
They prayed to a God no one could see.

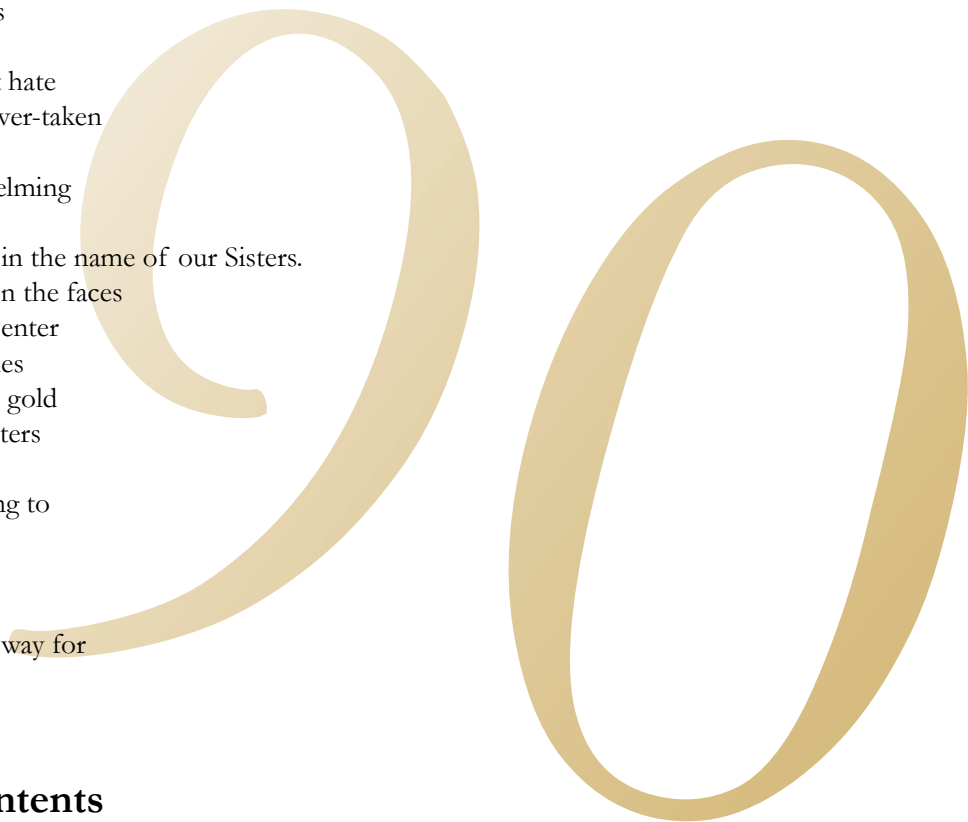
Strength and humility
Moved them forward for 90 years
Prayers, kindness, values, and service
Gave them the ability.

Let us applaud these women
Whose vision took hold
When the Sisters of Mercy
Turned land into Misericordia blue and gold.

Mercy

Rebecca Steinberger

just 5 letters mean so much
generations
of young women
and then men
feisty
fearless
looking burning crosses in the eye
first a tear
then a backward glance
of defiance
resilience.
Our university
a phoenix
rising from the ashes
of religious persecution
gender bias
racism.
But all that hate
has been over-taken
in 90 years
by overwhelming
Mercy
embedded in the name of our Sisters.
Tattooed on the faces
of all who enter
those Arches
better than gold
just five letters
reflecting
those willing to
serve
allowing a
dream
paving the way for
peace



Gerber Cry Baby

For my best friend

Emily Halbing

I have seen my best friend cry three times. And twice was because of me.

“Please take him out,” I pleaded.

The year was 1999. And I was seven.

“He really doesn’t like being taken out,” she protested. I didn’t care. I wanted to cuddle that hamster and I wanted to cuddle him now.

“Please, Callie. I wanna hold him so bad!”

“Fine. I’ll try.” She stuck her skinny arm into the cage, reaching for its small, huddled frame. As her hand drew closer, he shrunk into himself, irritated by the proximity of her open palm. I should have seen it coming. Once she was close enough, he clamped his tiny teeth around her smallest finger. She yelped, bringing her finger to her mouth and sucking hard at the punctured skin.

“Are you okay?!” I became frantic as the pain gradually increased in her eyes. She didn’t respond. “Callie. Are you okay?” Her eyes filled with threatening tears. “Callie, I’m so sorry.” Finally, she took her finger from her mouth, and I examined it. The blood was a deep vermilion, almost black, as it poured from her finger. She whimpered, and I looked at her helplessly. At last, the floodgates opened. I watched as my best friend cried in front of me for the first time. And it was my fault. I made her cry.

Her mom raced down the stairs. “What? What’s wrong? I heard someone scream.”

“I wanted to hold the hamster and then I made Callie take him out...” I continued to blubber, aware that I was now crying myself. “I’m so sorry!”

“Hey, hey, hey. It’s okay. It’s just a little bite.” During a moment of silence, the dark blood dripped from Callie’s finger and landed with an muted *plop* on the carpet. I sniffled.

“Okay, I’m just going to get a bandaid upstairs.”

“It’s....just...I’ve never...seen...Callie...cry,” I said, huffing between each word.

“Well, honey, that’s because she’s such a happy girl. She has nothing to cry about.”

It was the truest thing I had ever heard about my best friend. She was happy. And what right did I have to take that from her? Twice.

Every year, Gerber has this contest to see who has the cutest baby. If you’re going to solicit your baby for money, this is the way to do it.

It was 2006. I found a picture of the new Gerber baby and showed it to Callie, who was sitting across from me. I studied her face as she studied the picture, and I noticed the veins in her eyes began to pronounce themselves, asking for attention, and her irises were bright. *What the hell is wrong with her?* “Are you okay?”

“Yeah, I’m fine. Why wouldn’t I be?” She looked down hastily.

“I mean, that’s a pretty cute baby right?” I didn’t realize what was happening. How could I? This phenomenon was too rare to recognize right away. “Oh my God.” I stared at her, my lips parted. “Are you crying?” She dragged her finger under her left eyelid, rubbing eyeliner that had been splayed across her upper cheek. “You’re crying.”

“YES, OKAY? I’m crying! That baby...” She stopped and shook her head. “It’s so...cute. I just don’t—” She waved me off with a hand as I stared, appalled. Her cheeks were flushed scarlet, and her face was swollen. I didn’t recognize the person sitting across from me (Though, this didn’t stop me from calling her “Gerber Cry Baby” for a few weeks).

Somehow, again, this stranger was crying because of me.

And I didn’t know what to do about it.

She really was the happiest girl in the world. I took comfort in the fact that making her cry had never taken the form of a stolen boyfriend or a forgotten birthday. I felt lucky that the only time we ever cried together was after watching *Good Will Hunting* for the third time in a row (Which *was*, in fact, your fault, Matt Damon).

So when her dad moved out on April 14, 2008, I still didn’t know what to do. It was the first time she wasn’t crying because of me. After all, making her cry was only okay when I did it. It never meant anything when I did it. The happiest girl had been knocked down, and I was left dumbfounded. But does anyone know how to act in that kind of situation? You try to be there. You rub her back. Maybe bring her a glass of milk. But it doesn’t help. It’s like getting “Honorable Mention” at the seventh grade science fair. *Thanks for your volcano, but it still sucked.* The hole is still exposed. That drop of the heart still falls hard. That aching of inadequacy is still there. That feeling that you’re not good enough and you won’t be. Ever. So I just sat there. And I rubbed her back. And I brought her some milk. And I waited for her to feel better, wishing that I had been the one to make her cry that time.

Night Self

Ashley Collins

I am night, stepping lightly,
needing to hide from all eyes—
melting, pulling,
stretching . . .
a sick crumpled mess . . .
like a liquid freed from glass.

I stay waiting.
I am waning
in this sculpted blotch of darkness
with La Luna laughing,
mocking—
I cannot fall prey again.

Yet, I will test you from the shadows
as screaming voices ring like church bells,
unaware of each penumbra,
forever trapped in black and white.

So I am waning,
and I stay waiting,
because someone here has got to break.
Still slightly praying,
expecting no salvation,
“Please let it be the dawn.”



Melanie Quintanilla

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