

2024

REFLECTIONS

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LITERARY & PHOTOGRAPHY MAGAZINE





A Dream of Summer

Beneath the endless blanket of winter's snow
The Earth lies still, yet yearns for summer's glow
Like a cycle, an everlasting round
While barren trees like sentinels abound
The dark sky bleak and gray
Anyone who walks is its prey
In this death one hope stands alone
Oh, Sun arise! Melt this heart of stone.
You warm the ground beneath our feet
As new life blooms the wind is now sweet
With each new ray you promise freedom's birth
A thawing hope for all the creatures of the Earth
From crippling darkness to summer's light
Once again all is right.

Grace Inman

All Four Seasons With You

Born under the lingering autumn sun
Fingerless gloves and borrowed thin flannels
Longing for apple crumb and hot pizza
Tightly clasped hands tucked into coat pockets

Metamorphosed into the brutal nights
The sterile coldness of the winter dusk
Sharing our body heat to survive it
Huddling up together underneath that unrelenting
winter sun
Letting myself soak up its warmth for once

Then flowers and pollen and honeybees
Baking banana bread with my friend's mom
Corner store slushies, sitting at the park
Letting myself relax and laugh with them

As the sun began to linger again
Thinking out loud as I gawk at my friends
Lucky to have all four seasons with you

Amber Silverman





Carpe Diem

Mom is tearing up

"I can't wait!"

Dad is smiling cheek-to-cheek

The end of middle school, when it's time to graduate

Driving test passed

"I can't wait!"

On a very special birthday

A new car just to celebrate

The last bell just rang

"I can't wait!"

Summer is here

Adrenaline pumping at a swift rate

Picking out a cap and gown

"I can't wait!"

Bags are packed for college

Starting a new, clean slate

But is it so hard

To master patience?

We seek and rush

But fail to appreciate what's gracious

Family and friends come and go

And tomorrow is always uncertain

Live in the now

Before the past is too fogged to determine

Juliana Burns

Clara Bow

Say hello Mrs. Clara Bow
Flash a smile to make them glow

They came to collect a prize they “deserve”
A prize they didn’t even earn

Strapped to a chair with eyes that stare
My, Mrs. Bow, how’d you get there?

Try as they might, Mrs. Clara Bow
Try as they might to take your glow
You have an audience but no show

An actress in the spotlight, an actress they despise
But Mrs. Clara Bow never lost her shine

David Torres





Follow the Silver Doe

Follow the silver Doe

Its orange ember eyes so hot they melt snow

Run it will with all its might

Run quick and swift into the night

Go far into Wuthering Heights

Below the stars, bright like its eyes

We both know there is no Doe

Only that fire in your eyes that continues to glow

Saw you turn around but it wasn't your face

Was I running through a maze or running in place

Should I keep running or is it already too late?

The past hasn't passed it's only in wait

Your fire grows brighter

An everlasting flame

Run silver Doe, keep up the pace

David Torres

Norman Rockwell

On a blank canvas
One stroke of blue
I'd love to see myself from your point of view

Maybe I need a new color to be painted in
Van Gogh with his yellow or even Frida Kahlo

Rockwell, dear Rockwell isn't it swell
I'm good with my words, in paintings you excel
But I hate being a muse
Waiting for color to only get blue

So long oh Rockwell-
it's been swell

David Torres



Shakespeare

I'll play Shakespeare
I'll use paper and pen
Rewrite the story again and again

Listen to my melodies sung for someone else
Ballads and Laments composed by myself

I'll be that lonely book on a shelf
As it collects dust waiting for somebody else.

David Torres

Come to Vienna

Come to Vienna
Stop and smell her roses,
Sit down, Have a seat.
Step into the baroque and stare up in the sky,
Her buildings a time capsule of the world gone by.

Come to Vienna
Inhale her culture, Let it ignite your soul.
When you're here, that's her only goal.
Taste her favors, oh so lovely and refined,
Take it in, savor the moments, time to unwind.
Lose yourself in her beauty, it lurks in every place.
Here dreams and reality really do interlace.

Come to Vienna
Here all ages thrive
Your soul shall find peace here, its spirit revived.
She invites you to stay,
Feel her embrace, let your worries flutter away.

Come to Vienna
For she is waiting here for you.

Gianna Razzoli





Crocodile Bag

How would you know
Dropping in to brag
To everyone about
Your crocodile bag

Unique to itself
A distinct pattern
Plum and green
Then with yellow of Saturn

Costing more than any ring
Our compliments do flatter
None more scaly than your purse
Spots all speckles and scatter

Charlie Frohnhoefer

Painting a Picture

There's a problem with this generation
We must fight for equality in this nation
If you're not standing you're sitting
Against all odds there will be no quitting
United we stand, divided we fall
I pray for change and justice for all
Martin Luther King Jr. remember the name
Take action, remove color from the picture frame
It's bigger than black and white
It's a problem with the whole way of life
It can't change overnight
But we gotta start somewhere

Emanuel Ross





The Shadow of the Alleys

As the sun descends, glistening its fiery beams on the rapid waters of the Hudson, the shadows of the alleys arise, encapsulating the bustling alleys of New York. The day is at rest, and the alleys die down. From east to west, darkness emerges. The alleys take a new identity, one of terror and one of peace.

The shadows of the night recreate the alleys of the day. A stray cat walks by, to grab his dinner from the wastes of the day: a half-eaten hot dog and a little patch of water. The bats, soaring from above, land on the hanging wires, finding their resting spot, where they can immerse themselves in the peace of the dark.

The howling echoes of the nearby cars rush through the tunnel, each a bullet, dashing to escape its rifle. The sound bolts through the empty space, and creates the chaotic yet melodic music of New York City. As the night continues, the city never sleeps, and the symphony of the city roars on into the early day.

As the night comes to an end, and the sun rises for yet another day, the alleys slowly regain their life, and the streets become bountiful with civilians. But as the day continues, and more and more people walk through, the alleys will never forget their true identity: the one of darkness, the one of terror, and the one of peace.

Drew Cannon

Letter to My Daughter

If you're reading this, you're probably all grown, taking your vows, and if you're seeing this, it probably means I'm gone by now.

But if you're reading this I'll be praying that the spirituals are true, just so I have the chance to yet again be with you. Now that death approaches me, I apologize in advance, that I won't be able to see you grow, I wish I had the chance.

But follow your dreams, and stay off the path that life took me, because in this life, many things will try to take yourself away from thee.

As my eyes shut, and I bid myself adieu, just know your pops will forever love you, no matter what you choose to do.

Drew Cannon





My Life as a Lenape

As I walk to the banks of the Delaware, the sun
Beaming on my back, I look over my shoulder, as the
others Chime a lovely tune as they start to head back
home, where soon the ceremonial ghost Dance will take
place. Although our tribe is sometimes divided, almost
Everyone will be there this evening. The summer is
coming to a close, and Fall is almost upon us. For now,
the sun continues to shine. I cannot help but admire
the Great Delaware River, a place where my ancestors,
and their ancestors before that Have called home. The
greenish blue water, full of life, rushes vastly, towards
the setting sun. I have always loved the Delaware. My
grandfather always took me down here Just before the
sun would set. As I look into the sun, I reminisce about
the past. Soon, I will take my Kids to visit this great
river. It has always been a tradition for us Lenapes to
take our offspring to the river. As I travel back towards
home, the Moon starts to rise. It is full, as we expected.
Tonight, we honor our ancestors, who are with us Now
and forever. As I return home, I am greeted by my
family. We are a part of a tribe that lives On, and will
continue to as long as the gods protect us. It is time to
make our final Preparations, as tonight, we continue the
sacred tradition of the great Lenape tribe.

Drew Cannon



Panko Pizza

It's the new latest craze,
in my home town these days.
Pizza with the breadcrumbs stuck to the crust,
my first thought was that it would definitely be a bust.
I went in for the bite and boy was I wrong,
blends of cheese, basil, and a tomato sauce not too strong.
This delicious new pizza that packs lots of crunch,
is my new favorite go-to for dinner and lunch.
So if you're in Middletown, visiting my neighborhood,
check out Panko Pizza because the price is really good.

Drew Cannon

The Enemy

When the world loses my short-lived color
Who's even there to meet me in the black?
Surely my youth wasn't really so bright
And my age could not really have been so dark
Memory serves not in time's broken flow
Like a misinformed narrator pitted
Against our very continuity
He chooses the important days, weeks, years,
Recalling past times gives warped retellings
Where unneeded emotions change meaning
The enemy of our own mind completes
The malicious mission when we've seen the most
But remember the least, and can taunt us
With youthful days where time's length was different

Samuel Fertal



Eat Your Heart Out, Sylvia Plath

Every word a whisper, echoes of despair,
Aching hearts and minds, tangled in her snare,
Trembling verses, laden with strife
Yearning for solace, in the tapestry of life,
Opulent darkness, her poetic domain
Unraveling pain, like drops of rain,
Reaching depths profound, where shadows dance,
Haunted by demons, in a macabre trance,
Each moment replaying like a never-ending dance,
Artistry in agony, every poet's romance,
Ready to jump before the fall, so cold,
Tales of anguish, penned with ink so bold,
Outpouring emotions, in tale untold,
Unveiling secrets, hidden in night,
Twisting metaphors, in a haunting withhold,
So eat your heart out, Sylvia Plath,
Your legacy leads the path,
Lost in anguish they find your voice,
Vibrant dreams in shadow block out the noise,
Intense and visceral, your words like glass,
Anguish in every breath will pass,
Passion fuels the verses, igniting flames anew
Lingering in the silence, like morning's dew,
A symphony of sorrow, a melody of pain,
Tumultuous emotions, in every refrain,
Happy she made it up with the greats.

David Torres

Extra Innings

There was once an old man in the park
He would never linger after dark
He sat on the bench thinking of glories
Recalling all his life's past stories

By now his hair was gray and thin
His old brown cardigan blowing in the wind
Wearing his wedding band to remember his gone wife
His ninety-year-old eyes tired, but still twinkling with life

He spent the best years of his life at this park, but perhaps the
best times have passed
Long warm summer days and perfect crisp holidays playing in
the grass
As he reminisced, he felt a little bump by his feet
And once he looked down, he didn't expect whom he'd meet

There was a muddy old baseball spinning on the ground
He looked up and noticed a boy standing on the pitcher's mound
A small boy ran up and apologized- his brother's pitching arm
was lame
He bent down, picked the ball up, and asked the old man to join
their game

(cont. next page)

Apprehensive but overjoyed the old man politely declined
But the little boy insisted and began to whine
The old man wondered if he was too old a part to take
But he thought of his memories on the field, maybe there were new
ones to make

The laces on the ball felt just right in his weathered hands
It was almost as if he heard the fans cheering in the stands
He threw the muddy baseball high, high up above
He remembered his baseball career, the trophies he'd won, his old
lucky glove

Amazed by his skill, the two boys asked him if he used to play
He humbly smiled, threw the ball again, and told them of his
career with the A's
The old man and the boys threw the baseball all day and into the
night
His body started to feel sore, but God it felt right

It was getting late and the old man said that it was time to go
The boys protested, he had to give them just one more throw
He promised the boys he'd come to the park and visit again
Old as he was, he was happy to be considered a friend.

Jack Keefe



Time Cannot Be Touched

I'm standing near the sun
Just waiting
And I'm standing near the atmosphere
I'm waiting
I don't know what to do yet
So I'm standing near the sun
Just waiting
For who knows what

Waiting for my destiny?
Or a call from a future enemy
Who has a heart as cold as ebony?
Is there a chance for repentance?
Oh, what, could I be waiting for?

I know there's something big
Whether it's wrong or right
Something is waiting to spring upon my life
I feel there's something coming
And so far life's been pretty good

So, I'm standing near the sun
Just waiting
And I'm standing near the atmosphere
I'm waiting
I don't know what to do yet
So I'm standing near the sun
Just waiting
For who knows what

Waiting for an offer?
Or something that will hinder?
I'll have to become the hunter
To track what is out there for me
This will inevitably be seen
So, I'm standing near the sun
No more waiting
And I'm standing near the atmosphere
No more waiting
Waiting...

Olivia Rich

LBI Ghost Town

People of all ages are happily strolling around.

Their heads are held high.

Aromas of freshly scooped ice cream, and the overcrowded salty beach fill the air.

The hot sun beats down on them and they start to break a sweat.

The gift shops are filled with people visiting the small town.

They buy overpriced sweatshirts, "Long Beach Island" embroidered on the front.

The locals laugh discreetly at them but are accepting of their presence.

The locals know that in less than three months things will look very different.

It will be cold, and very few will stick around .

LBI will appear to be a ghost town.

Savannah Salsman





Walt Whitman and Martin Luther King Jr. in Heaven

Inspired by Hans Ostrom

They talk about many things:
Like how they both greatly respect Lincoln
For he was Walt's captain,
And gave MLK a dream...
Walt and MLK walk together often
Walt wears his hat, with a shirt honoring his captain
Lincoln,
And MLK wears a nice shirt, with the same jacket he wore
On that march on Washington all those years ago.
Walt hears America Singing,
And celebrates everything- even the blades of grass.
MLK looks ahead and sees justice
At the end of the arc of the moral universe.
MLK teaches Walt how to give a compelling speech
And Walt teaches MLK to celebrate all the little things
And they both know why God had them meet:

For God knows all flesh shall be a great poem,
because he had a dream.

Michael Spitalieri

Whispers of Nature: a Dance Tune

Amidst the concrete jungle we call home
Nature's whispers can be heard, as we roam
In the hustle and bustle of our daily life,
Environment, sustainability are unsung strife.
From the smallest seed to the tallest tree,
Every living thing connected, don't you see
The air we breathe, the water we drink
Gifts from Mother Nature we should rethink.
Earth is a garden we must tend
If we want her bounty never to end
A cycle of life, a dance with the land
We hold her future in the palm of our hand.
We must tread lightly, with every step we take,
Make choices that reduce carbon footprint's wake
Innovate and create with the earth in mind
Leave a legacy future generations will find.
For the earth is a canvas we all share
Work of art beyond compare
Let's paint a picture of a world that's green
Where sustainability and environment reign supreme.

Dylan Ciorciari





On Being an Immigrant Child

Being a kid should be fun, right?
You should be able to go to the park with your parents
Go to your school events with them
Watching movies with family
Not worry about money

But being a kid of an immigrant
Is so much harder

At the age of 8
you have to be able to know how to speak English
and help your parents
by translating important documents for them

At the age of 10
you have to stay up late doing work
because you had to manage the household
by cooking and cleaning for your siblings

At the age of 12
you had to understand
that your parents couldn't make it to your graduation
because they needed money for rent

At the age of 14
you have to get a job
and still manage to do well in school

You will always hear people say
"It's going to get better"
but you ask when?
When does life become easier?
When do I stop being my parents?

In the end,
You know your parents are working their hardest
You know that they miss their home
You know they miss their children

They are the only reason I still keep going.

Barbara Galiz

Lost Presence

How do you grieve someone who no longer exists?
Not deceased, but simply vanished, a ghost in the
daylight.
This question haunts me increasingly.
How can you yearn for someone who once was but whose
existence remains unproven?

I hear the voice, like an echo in an empty room,
See the face, a faded photograph,
And occasionally smell the pungent cologne, now just a
lingering phantom.
But everything is different, mere remnants of memories.

The person I once spent every day with is simply gone,
A mirage dissipating in the heat of reality.
The memories are fading too, slipping through my fingers
like sand.
The hatred is rising, a storm gathering in my chest.

(cont. on next page)

I want to wish him well, but no matter how hard I try, I
can't.
Constantly interfering with my life, a haunting presence,
This new, vindictive persona in his stead,
How can this same being bear the same memories of the
kind soul now dead?

This nasty attitude does not look good on you,
A mask that hides the person you used to be.
No one appreciates it, and yet you remain oblivious,
Too consumed by your own ego, a prisoner of pride.

You're losing friends everywhere you go,
Maybe that is what it will take for you to see,
There is no longer anyone who cries for you,
Just a void where connection used to be.

I will always have to live with the damage you have done,
The scars left on my heart, cannot be outrun.
Any thought of you now results in genuine disappointment,
My advice? Schedule a therapy appointment.

Vaness Corso



Styx

The glaring light of the moon
Glinting on the rushing waves below
Stars twinkling it'll be over soon
Falling into the depths that only I'll know

The pale moonlight fades
My eyes only see the light of Hades
Air rushes from my lungs and my blood stills
And I continue to fall deeper feeling only a chill.

Translucent horrors lurk in the dark around
Abyssal creatures in the shape of hounds
Visions of black iron and fountains of colorless liquid
and wandering souls
And a skeletal hand reaches across, looking for his gold

My heart then beats for what may be the final time
And yet all I think of is a rhyme.

William DeJulius

Through the Window

A new house was built
In the barest bush-
With twigs and mud

A white and speckled shell
Brown dots adorning you
Cracked in the night
Bringing life anew

Made of wet cotton gray and prickly.
We looked at one another
Through a gate of glass-
To each other
Though only I can see
For you still- have no eyes
Peaceful in your slumber

But when you wake
With open eyes and
Open wings
You leap into
Death's arms
He waits in the leaves
To catch all who fall

With beating wings
Cotton fluff replaced now by feathers
You join your mother in the clouds

Through the window
A new house was built
In the barest bush-
Bringing life anew.
We looked at one another
Through that gate- long
Enough to ask that racoon
If it was your mother.

Zoe Glavan





2024 Reflections

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