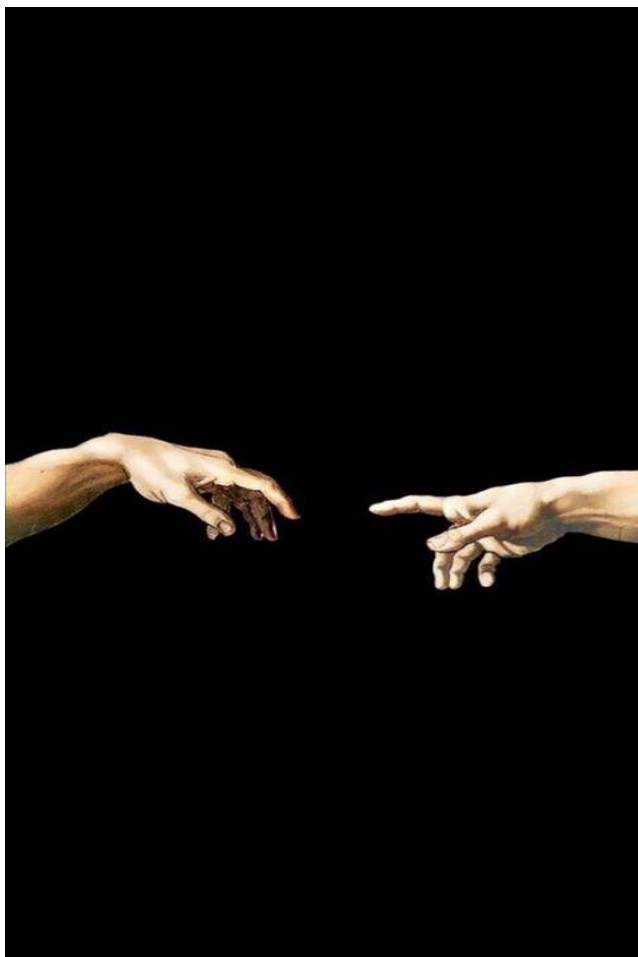


ORPHEUS

The Literary Journal
of
Lindsey Wilson College



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Orpheus
Spring 2019
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All submissions to *Orpheus* must be typed and must contain the following information: name, phone number, local address, class, major, and hometown of the writer/artist. All artwork and photographs should be submitted in camera-ready black and white. The ideas and views expressed in *Orpheus* are solely those of the writer/artist and do not necessarily reflect the ideas and views of the editorial staff or those of Lindsey Wilson College.

Editorial and other staff positions are open to any current Lindsey Wilson College student based upon experience or interest.

ORPHEUS

Spring 2019



The Lyre of Orpheus Placed Among the Stars
Drawing by Eduard von Engerth (1818-1897)

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Table of Contents

Preface.....	6
Featured Faculty, Robert Brock	7,8
Ann Alexander	26
Thomas Alvey	19
Katie Brown	53
Gilbert Callis	43,61
Aaron Estes	32
Caitlin Freeny.....	30,31
Courtney Fisher.....	11,27
June-Marie Gerhart	54
Dillian Hatfield.....	13
LeeAnn Hutchinson	14
Sarah Kuchar.....	36,51
Rachael Miller.....	45
Esther Olson	50
Hope Poe.....	46
Dollee Porter	28,29
Gabe Roberts.....	24,38,55
Rebecca Sanders.....	12
Felicia Self	29,44
Chyiann Sexton	16,17
Skylar Smith.....	15,35
Micah Stewart-Wilcox	49
Christopher Stuchell.....	25
Joanna Tidei	18
Emma Turner	10
Hannah VanArsdale	22
MaKayla Williamson	9
Emily Wood	40
Notes on Contributors	66
2019 Staff	68
Legend of Orpheus.....	70

Front Cover, “The Creation of Adam” by Michelangelo Buonarroti

Back Cover, “Storm Forest Indian Landscape Print” by Gustave Dore

Preface

The literary journal is a longstanding tradition and pillar of the humanities at Lindsey Wilson College. As it boasts its twenty first birthday, we celebrate the diversity and influence of *Orpheus* on campus life and community integration. *Orpheus* continues to be a space where students are able to express themselves through poetry, short fiction, and photography. The journal has historically accepted topics of a complex and sensitive nature in order to bring different perspectives into conversation.

A theme noticed in submissions for the journal this year was a prevailing feeling of separation and distance—from family, from home, from one’s self—reflecting a feeling of isolation. Within this theme, there was also a feeling of closing the distance or bridging the gap of separation. We felt this theme of separation personally during the construction of the journal, as this is our first year working on the journal without Dr. Shanklin, the founder of *Orpheus*. We also experienced the underlying theme of closeness and community because this is the largest editorial staff in the history of the journal. We hope this theme is reflected to the reader in this edition of the journal.

Professor Robert Brock was selected as the featured faculty for this year’s edition. Professor Brock became a member of Lindsey Wilson faculty in 2011. He is the director of the theatre program and has served in this capacity for eight years. Throughout his career, he has earned numerous awards and accolades for his work in the theatre. In addition to his dramatic writing, Professor Brock also writes poetry and he has provided a selection of his work for the journal.

We, the staff, hope you enjoy this edition of *Orpheus*. The opportunity to work with student compositions has been rewarding, and we are thrilled to display the talent we received. A toast to the journal at 21 years and going strong.

With Beauty

Robert Brock, Featured Faculty

It begins with beauty,
then something falls.

He saw it in her eyes, the recognition in this life, in this moment,
by surprise, that he was in her heart.

Not long, for love moves fast, in only weeks

adorned her neck with a strand of pearls,

and in tones not audible to the air

but only to her soul,

whispered, “you will be my world.”

Her part was all as much the same

but sooner, weeks ago – across the way at a table drenched in
morning light,

and a coffee cup,

a leather-bound book that he was reading,

or pretending to, or waking-dreaming –

Rising up he looked her way,

A glance and then away.

It was enough, though, as they say.

Now all the world is alive, and loneliness is at an end

for she has found her one true love,

and she has found her one true friend.

And wine at midnight, winter fires,

contentment to the bones....

But the eye is fickle, the heart grows dull,

The comfort of the so familiar forms a dungeon for the soul.

And she in time grew restless for a freedom – exotic and all
unknown.

Now in his eyes she sees a stranger,

and he has lost the strand of pearls,

and he has lost his world.

It begins with beauty, then something falls.

Moving, Staying

Robert Brock, Featured Faculty

There are particular joys that come with staying put –
the wealth of anniversaries,
the rhythm of seasons and place,
the growth of seeds,
and death and birth and memories.
But staying put came late for me.
There are particular sorrows that come with moving on –
the redundancy of farewells,
the fading, once familiar faces,
Love lost, love left,
and death and birth and memories.
But moving, staying – life is sweet.

Arklow

Robert Brock, Featured Faculty

On the dark road
as I approach the sleepy,
silent, ancient town -
I alone and wandering dawn to night, night to dawn,
and sleeping in between.
I pass by houses still awake,
an amber-golden light,
warm and gentle through the windows
glimmers in the lonely night.
And I because I never learned
that beauty and beautiful things
are only rarely what they seem,
I fancy that the amber glow illuminates
a loving world within,
all healthy, each adoring all,

nurtured, all supporting each –
a world beyond my reach.
My childhood home would have looked as warm
to a stranger passing by at night.
No such home. No such warmth. Catastrophe inside.
And I continue traveling through the dark
until I come to a place to sleep,
and lay my head in a blaze of light
and craft a monstrous dream.



MaKayla Williamson

An Address

Emma Turner

Thoughts

of 'I don't need you, I can do this
on my own,'

Translate

to- Spilling my guts
(figuratively) because I'm fearful.
Of others or myself, I'm not sure.

No one ever gives me a reason
for my insufficiency,
I largely attribute it to you, genetics, and my soul
(the absence thereof).

Because with an empty chest & hollow head,
maybe I am a cigarette stained machine
(a smoke-filled tin woman).

Vomiting vodka (literally)
in the kitchen garbage &
spontaneously combusting
surrounded by friends,
because even with all of these people
abandonment
is the only thing I can think of.

You've disappeared,
I'm actually scared this time.
(But) What I have learned is this-
Learn to take care of your own soul because no one
else will.



Courtney Fisher

Bruises

Rebecca Sanders

They used to be
inflicted out of anger and hatred,
undeserved,
an ugly shade of purple paint splattered
across my skin. Fingerprints on
my thighs, my arms,
from a touch that never loving.
Battle wounds that
always made me feel ugly.

But that's part of the past,
and I don't live there anymore.

Bruises now,
they trickle down my neck
like satin,
kisses on my stomach, and
every time his lips touch my skin
I feel love, love
love.

These bruises on my thighs
come from love and
it is so much better than pain.

Crutch

Dillian Hatfield

I feel beautiful
I'm the Sistine Chapel: Michelangelo
designed me to inspire awe
but not with permanence,
the paint fades
and again I'm plain.

I feel powerful
I'm the Pyramids: crowds
look up at me to admire
but hours equate to
millions of years of erosion
soon I return to dust.

I feel free
but I know that's just a dream
I'm a dog on a leash
loving the walks
but they always end
with me back in a cage.

Peeling

LeeAnn Hutchinson

I trace my fingers across this thin
facade, find the flaw, like old, shitty paint,
and pinch and pick and peel and pinch and pick and peel,
not completely, but just enough
to reveal the gentle friction
of exposed plaster,
a slight discomfort as they run
their hands across
to remind them that they
had decorated flesh
and called it “woman.”

George Takei

LeeAnn Hutchinson

At fourteen years old I heard you say
while watching TV, “Oh, it’s George Takei.
You know, I used to love him, but it turns out he’s gay.”

At sixteen years old I let that replay
over and over, but this time you’d say,
“I used to love my daughter, but it turns out she’s gay.”

And so I let you die
hating me without ever knowing it.



Skyler Smith

Just One Moment

Chyiann Sexton

“Just one moment,” she had said in a breathless voice, “Just one moment.”

I think of that nowadays, I can't seem to think of anything else. Now my thoughts are plagues of that one moment when my whole life changed. It plays, like a tape, in my head. I think of the way she had groaned when I had asked if she would run with me and whined the whole time we were out. I think of the way she had struggled to keep up, and how sweat had caused her bangs to stick to her forehead. Most importantly I think about the way she had finally stopped and leaned against a tree for some needed support.

“Just one moment, I just need one moment.” I watched her for one moment, her breath coming in bursts, her eyes closed. For the first time I felt guilty for making her come with me.

“Go on ahead, I'll catch up. I just need one moment.”

I turned, fully prepared to go on because I felt I was in the way. I only had my eyes off of her for one moment, just one moment. I heard the thud and spun around to find nothing. The trail stretched out into the darkness of the forest, but it was completely empty. She was gone. I called for her running around the forest for hours. I spent hours trying to find her, but she was gone, she was gone in just one moment. I don't remember much after that, just flashes of pain, panic, and fear for days. She was never found, she was just gone, just gone. Just one moment...

Just...

“Just one moment... Just one moment! Just one moment!” Nurse came into the room and told Stranger to leave, following after her when I had calmed. I listened because Nurse always said the strangest things about me.

“Poor girl.”

“Who is she?” This was the voice of Stranger.

“No one knows, she was brought in rambling about finding her. Nobody knows who “her” is, but she tells that story to anyone that will listen.”

“Doesn’t anyone imagine that there is any truth to her story?”
“We thought about it in the beginning, the police even held an investigation, but there was no evidence. She’s been her for twenty-three years; we don’t even know her name.”
“Just one moment!” Nurse and Stanger looked at me. Stranger had an odd look in her eyes one of recognition. “Just one moment!”
“I’ll be back tomorrow, will she be ok?”
“She’ll be fine, she just needs one moment.”
The no-longer-stranger left, and Nurse came into the room. “She’s not gone anymore.” Nurse gave me a funny look, “Who’s not gone?”
“Her. She was in here; just one moment ago.”

Of Sounds and Silence

Chyiann Sexton

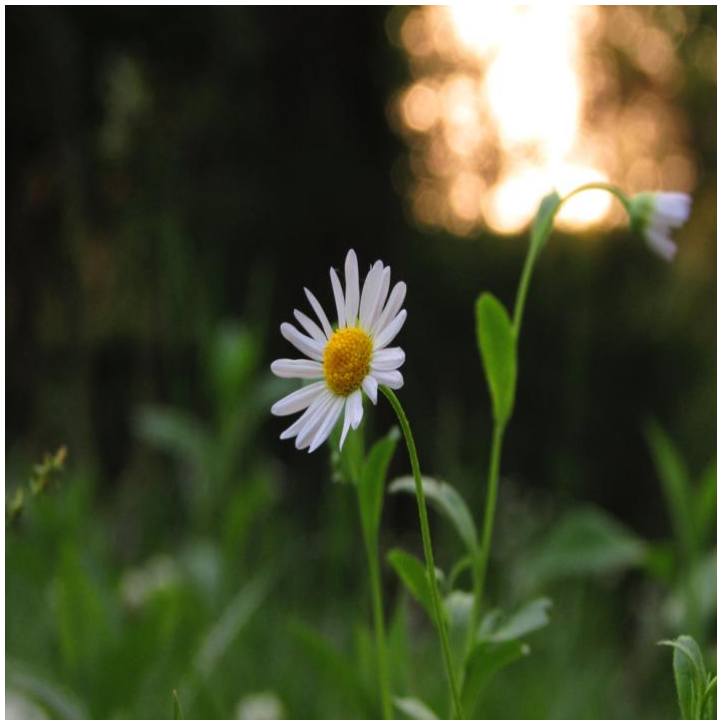
I first heard the thrilling laughter,
of a child young and free.
I found myself laughing along,
with a joy to match with she.

I heard the soft cries,
of a woman lost to society.
My eyes, too, filled with tears,
as I shared her crippling anxiety.

I heard the brilliant shouts,
of armies from long ago.
My voice does raise with them,
as I fight my war alone.

I heard the sound of silence,
the loudest of them all.

I sing to combat the horrid emptiness,
but my song has failed, and I am left to fall.



Joanna Tidei

Ice Cream and Cry

Thomas Alvey

I screamed at this poem
Externally and internally
I screamed at this poem
Because I can't compre-
Hend. The way to end,
A poem like this. By me.
I scream "Here you go."
The end won't rhyme
But here's a poem
Of Ice Cream and Cry:

I screamed at birth
And of new life for me

I screamed at Christmas
A new bike, under the tree

I screamed at peers
Because we disagreed

I screamed at my friends
For being carefree

I screamed at my sisters
For them I thought I hated, truly

I screamed at my dad
For things he will never see

I screamed at my mom
From the time I was three

I screamed at my mom
For lacking food to eat

I screamed at my mom
When I couldn't be-

I screamed at my mom
When I saw another bee

I screamed at my mom
When she doctored my knee

I screamed at my mom
When she wouldn't let me leave
I screamed at my mom
Because she-

I screamed at my mom
As we drove a hundred and three

I screamed at my mom
Asleep, for eternity

I screamed at my mom
"Don't leave" my sister and I

I scream and cry
As I feel my mother die.

(Beat.)

You may think that is where
The poem meets its end.
Where every sad story
Is with no way to mend
But here's where it gets good
And I start a new poem trend.

I screamed at my family
When I finished high school,
I wore a bowtie to graduation
And it was so tacky and cool.

I screamed at college
When I found new friends
Who know me better than I
Do, and love me to all ends.
I screamed at my professor,

He taught me that being yourself
Is the best way to act
A scene out.
So, I hope I did well.

I'll scream at graduation
Because I opened new doors
I'm going to grad school
To get better at writing these wh- uh.. poems.

I'll scream at my wedding
Standing next to my true love
They will stare back
And it will be more than enough.

I'll scream as my child
As they are being born
For I will have everything
Hopefully they aren't a Capricorn.

I'll scream at my life
As I look back at everything
Because after it all I know
My mother is so proud of me.

Downstairs

Hannah VanArsdale

Despite all the hopelessness in this world, every heartbreak due to affairs brought to the open, every crime against the innocent, every stress from underpaying employment that cannot even lay bread and water on the dinner table, every depressed thought that has ever plagued the minds of every living soul, all of these and more can be solved by going Downstairs.

Downstairs is a place of never ending hubbub. You never meet someone new because everyone you will see there is already a regular. You never meet any new staff, for once you go, you always manage to go back again at the same time. Very few visit once and only once, for everyone can find their way Downstairs. Many people drink around the bar to numb their hearts, to null the guilt weighing them down with every labored breath. Many others go there to hopefully meet someone new, have experiences with someone new.

A saddened, sleep-deprived woman comforts her mourning husband as their tears mix with their shared glass of beer that sits barely sipped. She holds his hand in both of hers, rubbing comforting circles into the back of his calloused hand. He squeezes her hand in return, a few more tears cascading down his cheek as he cherishes the only family he now has left. The sympathetic bartender, who had served them many times before and had seen their disintegrating happiness over the past few weeks, slides them a handkerchief to wipe away their tears, which unbeknownst to the couple holds some extra money for the upcoming month.

Another man complains of his inability to pay his rent, cursing the government and his inability to find a well-paying job. Out of frustration, he slams his tightly clenched fist against the bar- none of the other customers are startled or shocked, for this man angers easily- and demands another drink. The bartender charges the man for the extra drink and reluctantly pours the drunken man another round, his fourth to be exact. The younger woman beside him, dressed in sheer and glittery garments, slides off of her stool

and saunters over to one of the billiard tables, her high heels echoing on the artificial wood flooring. She seeks better company, now knowing the drunken man she'd been making eyes to had more pressing matters than a night of romance.

People leisurely play rounds of poker near a corner, cigarette smoke clouding their eyes and their minds from their miserable lives in front of them. Nobody cheats or stacks the deck, for none of the men playing can come up with the idea to do such a thing, even if it were for their own benefit. Five men at one of the tables had been playing so long that they now held equal amounts of money.

Others play billiards in another corner of the room, squinting through the alcoholic daze and cigarette smoke to get the best shot, with onlookers leaning against the nearby wall, focused intently, and yet not at all, on the current game. At one of the tables, a woman lining up her shot throws back her head as she finishes her drink, realigns her shot, and sinks in a solid orange #5 ball, miraculously able to keep her cigarette in her mouth. Her dazed opponent concentrates on the now cocky female she lines up her next shot, becoming almost as invested in the game as the group of young adults giggling in a drunken stupor. At another, the woman dressed in sequins sits herself on the edge of the table, legs elegantly crossed, modeling herself to hopefully get herself some desired attention. A few men gaze, but only one offers her a drink. She accepts, but after he pays for his own.

On the completely other side of the room, there is no alcohol and no smoke, for the other side of the room is taken up by musicians wishing to better their craft. The pianist plays an energetic tune as a saxophonist pours their soul into their solo, the drummer and bassist providing a hypnotic, and almost lackadaisical harmony to sway to. The music mesmerizes onlookers as they lounge in the seats near the stage, watching as the band plays. Everyone's heartbeats synchronize with the beat as they all fall victim to the enchanting, seemingly continuous songs. A siren of a woman sings with her vivacious voice, a melody rings in the

listeners' ears, a song that speaks of hopes and dreams, wishes and pleas.

The songs seep through the walls and crawl through the cracks, looking to find someone that needs to hear the tune. Anyone that hears the tune feels compelled to find the source, as if it entranced those who heard the melodies. Those of little happiness and little hope follow the music, hoping to find comfort from their daily trials. When they go downstairs, they find this...almost a community of people just like them: unhappy with life, desperately searching for something to live for, and somehow finding it in this bar downstairs from an apartment complex.

How do you think I know about this place?
I'm a regular.



Gabe Roberts

untitled 1

Christopher Stuchell

little bit of fun but not
a loving kind of dream catcher.
melting like a juice box,
jumping onto cliffs

speaking tongues in
table tops taps tips tups.
pill bottles and pill abusers,
there's no difference to accusers

candle lit, never met,
still exiting a melting shoot,
it's hard to see at all right now,
and together we are, I know not how

untitled 2

Christopher Stuchell

what am I?
well, it is unknown.
the entirety entangled
estrangement of integrated
understanding in infatuation.
anti-establishment of it all,
it is becoming a new world.
where people are people,
and love is love.
nobody knows the feelings that are there,
in the place supposedly above.

True Self

Ann Alexander

hiding my true self
behind a breaking mask
I will never truly know
how much longer it can possibly last

I cut myself to the bone
pushing down the darkness for another day
trying to hide every trace of
never really being okay

these disturbing thoughts
won't release their grip on me
I can never get away
but I am too afraid to say
just how far I've been led astray

being lost is not as bad as it seems
everyone gets lost sometimes
why isn't it okay to become lost?
to struggle

day after day, forcing myself to be "I'm okay"
why can't it be okay
to just not be happy at all
to wallow in the darkness and give up

give up a battle, regain the strength for tomorrow
shine light on the black abyss
make it lose some of its power
find comfort in the dark thoughts of my mind

disturbing thoughts
won't release their grip on me
I can never get away
but I am too afraid to say

just how far I've been led astray
being lost is not as bad as it seems
Everyone gets lost sometimes
why isn't it okay to become lost?
to struggle



Courtney Fisher

Miserere Mei

Dollee Porter

stained glass windows illuminated by winter memories purged
dust dancing on sun colored air
holy transcripts deciphered for wandering souls
prayers lifting star ward on the lips of a restless night
ink dragged across paper from words scrawled in blank spaces
light flickering beyond eyes squeezed shut calling to anyone who
can hear
preoccupied thoughts brushing communion cup rims
perfect love not always reciprocated
faith faltering in the tides of troubled waters
seasons of lostness drowning in the shadows
realizing I had closed the curtains on the light
have mercy on me
my heart would be wounded when being forsaken
you offer more than forgiveness
I have been granted a purpose and a hope to carry all my days
the lord our god
listens when I pray
even still

Untitled #27

Dollee Porter

There is so much beauty
in art and space and tea with milk
in souls among the stars
scrunched eyebrows above book binding
puffs of cold air and childlike wonder
in t shirt laughter and pj smiles
in orange florida days and decaying home videos
in tearful thoughts of futures unfolded
and fathers telling sons of superheroes in sunny cafes.

Pure Affection

Dollee Porter

He is the silence, the unturned pages of old books
I am the resonance, a joyful hum between pressed torsos
hearts like the gap of rain when speeding under bridges
this is a looking up through eyelashes kind of love



Felicia Self

Beautiful Invention

Caitlin Freeny

I'm crushed and stretched by
The anxiety
Of you loving another.
It shouldn't matter in this
World of machines
Because your existence is confined to a mental sketch.
You only have agency as a
Difficult invention
Who I have yet to realize outside my mind.
Creating you has become an
Obsessive fantasy
Fueling my desire to be cherished and chosen.
All the gears, cogs, and metal parts
Keep grinding
To create a lover for this Frankenstein.
Have I fallen so far that I can no longer tell
What is real
And what is in the blueprints?
Your mind takes strange directions when you
Haven't met
The person in who you'll want to invest.
You exist only in my imagination,
My love,
But I want you to be real.
Unchanged, or very changed, by
Passage of time,
As my desires and fantasies are lost.
I desperately want to know if your
Appearance and
Kindness will match my idealized design.
In my dreams you visit me,
But you
Never choose to materialize.

I only remember your fleeting touch,
Your whisper
Of love, which melts into the twinkling stars.
All I can wish is that one day,
My invention
Can rise up to meet the world of reality.

Letter from Tokyo
Caitlin Freeny

It's five in the morning somewhere in the West,
And I really miss the way you laugh.
Those golden sunbeams dancing on the end of my nose,
Adding roses to my cheeks and tears to my eyes.

This is Not the End

Aaron Estes

This is not the end, you will perish by my hand. That was the only thing I could hear, ringing through my ears in a deep demonic growl. I was awakened from an endless darkness by these words. I struggle to see anything through foggy eyes in my shadow covered room, while wiping sweat from my forehead. I scan my room, seeing nothing but the normal materials that reside there. I sit up, reaching for my bedside table lamp fumbling to pull the string. As the light fills every corner, the shadows quickly disappear. Just as my eyes start adjusting to the light, I notice something out of place.

I'm puzzled as I search my memories for when I put my art bag in the closet before getting in bed last night. Yes, I remember I did without any doubt. So why was it now lying in the middle of my floor, with the contents spilled out? I shove my glasses on my face only to be horrified at what I see. My sketchbook was in the middle of the mess sprawled open to a sketch I hadn't done. I was too worried to move any closer so all I managed see was a faint blur, but I could see well enough to know it wasn't a pleasant picture.

I could make out the focal point of the drawing, a decrepit monstrous tree. There were items hanging from the bare limbs, what looked like dismembered dolls, jars filled with a dark mystery liquid, and dead forest animals. After seeing the blurred image of this disturbing sketch, I was horrified. I sat in disbelief trying to remember drawing it, but no such memory was coming into my mind. I finally came to the conclusion that I was not the one who drew that monstrosity. If it wasn't me, I don't know who it could've been. Who could it have been?

I slowly start to draw the covers off inch by inch terrified that if I move too quickly whatever drew that picture would come back. As the covers pull away from my sweaty skin the bitter night air chills me to the bone. My feet hit the floor searching for my slippers, finding them is a relief. I stand, on a mission to stay as far away from that book as I can. Creeping past it out of my room

then down the hall to the kitchen. Just as I'm entering the kitchen my hand runs up the wall locating the light switch.

I flip the switch and with a pop of the electricity, the light flickers on, illuminating my rustic kitchen décor. My eyes water slightly at the brightness of the light. My throat is so stale I can barely swallow so I grab a glass from the dish drainer and fill it with water from the tap. I finish the glass in three hefty gulps, refilling it before I turn the coffee pot on. I rest my back side on the counter listening to the hiss of the coffee maker, slowly sipping my cool water feeling it pour down my dehydrated throat.

The coffee maker dings alerting me that it has finished. As I look up from my stupor, I notice an unrecognizable figure lurking in the shadows of the living room. I can feel it watching me, wondering what I will do now that I've noticed it. I decided it would be better for my mental stability if I ignored it, so I turned to make my coffee. Just when the last drop of creamer pours from the bottle, I feel a wave of uncertainty, I feel vulnerable and uncomfortable. Suddenly I feel pressure on my back like someone is pushed up against me, then sweltering breath rushes down my neck.

In this moment I shudder at the thought of what could be behind me when I turn around. I muster as much courage as I can, clenching my fists with fear as I prepare to look. I count down in my head, one...two...three... I turn as soon as three leaves my tongue. There's nothing there, how could there be nothing there?! My heart is pounding so vigorously I can hear it, I can feel it pounding through every cell of my body. I've never felt so helpless and alone. My feet are still planted to the kitchen floor, they don't know where to go. I don't know where to go.

I examine the kitchen, checking every nook and cranny to ensure that I wasn't missing anyone or thing. I find nothing in the kitchen, so I move to where I saw the shadowy figure to begin with. As my left foot steps onto the carpet of the living room I can feel the air shift. I'm so overwhelmed with this uncomfortable feeling, I can't continue looking for this figure. I quickly turn to return to my room with the intent to get dressed and leave. When I reach my doorway I freeze instantly, my mind could not process what my eyes

were seeing.

My art bag that had previously been sprawled out in the middle of my floor was now neatly packed up and placed on my bed. When I had gotten out of bed to escape to the kitchen, I didn't take the time to make my bed, but it seems that someone had. This was all becoming too much, I don't know what to do. All I can think is how much I need to get out of my house immediately. I slowly tiptoe to my closet, grabbing the closest jeans and t-shirt. I scramble to pull on these items, shoving my foot into my shoes without socks. I snatch my phone from its charger while running to the front door, grabbing my keys from the hook.

I put my hand on the doorknob clenching it, turning it so it will save me from this nightmare. As the door swings open, I notice how dark it is outside. I want to know the time, but I tell myself I can check the time when I've gotten far enough from this house. Before I even move to step outside, I feel the figures presence creeping behind me. I immediately panic and run. My car is parked six blocks down from my house but in the darkness of the night I'm having difficulty finding it. I remember it being parked across from a beautiful weeping willow tree, but I can't find that either. I've almost ran five blocks, but I still feel eyes watching me, waiting for me to pause from exhaustion. The thought of someone watching me only gives me more fire to keep running.

I'm coming up on block six when I finally see it, my car! I've never been so relieved to see the Camry my father bought new when he was in his early thirties. I had never appreciated it because it was just an old car that had no meaning to me. Now it means everything. I sling the door open, I tumble into my seat. I cram the key into ignition turning it until the engine sputters to life. I throw the transmission into reverse while stomping on the gas. I feel my car run over a what I guess is a mailbox. I can't care about that right now, all I can concern myself with now is Running.



Skyler Smith

Sick

Sarah Kuchar

it makes me sick

screaming children,
crying in classrooms
and in hallways

run
run
run for your life

screaming children,
dying in classrooms
and in hallways

run
run
lose your life from
a broken country

It makes me sick.
Not as a feminist.
Not as a liberal.
Not as a student.
But as a human being.
And as a daughter
of a gun dealer.
AR-15's, select choice
of mass shooters
It makes me sick

the videos- the screaming
children crying dying in
classrooms,
in hallways, in
their safest space, not
knowing if their blood
was spilt for the
money of my meals.

It makes me sick.

I might only
have food and shelter
from the blood
of innocent people-
children- blood
spilt, pouring from my
eyes as I wish I knew
how to fix things.

Bloody money and my
meals are

not

worth the
lives of other human beings nor
the cries haunting, ringing
in my ears.

Road to New Orleans

Gabe Roberts

In 1945, David Thornton returned home from war; finished his degree, and, quickly became one of Manhattan's most prominent lawyers. In 1955, dying for a change of pace, he found a job; at a smaller firm in New Orleans. Somewhere between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, you could find David, his Buick, and Sinatra playing softly on the radio.

"Must've taken a wrong turn," David said to himself. He had been on this road for an hour, with no signs of life. No point in continuing, he parked the car, grabbed his map, and spread it on the hood. Flashlight in hand, he searched for his error.

"Of...course. The road isn't on the damn map!"

Frustrated, he folded the map, and flung it into the car. David couldn't stand something being done slapdash. This philosophy had saved his life and the lives of others in the war. Everything about David had order: from his neatly combed hair to his three-piece navy suit and matching Jarman's. While looking around the wilderness, David noticed a light a through the trees. Perhaps, someone who could help him he thought; if he kept driving, he knew he would run out of gas.

Wielding his flashlight, David walked toward the light. After a few minutes of careful treading through the marsh, David reached the source. It wasn't a light-it was the moon's reflection on an old copper lantern. The lantern was hanging off an abandoned wooden shack. "I've stayed in worse," David thought to himself. He knew if he waited until morning, he would be able to get his bearings.

The door gave little hesitation. Inside, everything was covered in a layer of dust and cobwebs. David noted the worn-down bed and wooden stove. However, something by the window caught his eye: a gramophone, its horn gleamed off his light. It was an oddity to be sure. On the player was a warped record, to the side a dust covered sleeve. David picked up the sleeve; the cover was blank. Inside a preserved photograph slid out. David examined the

picture of a young black gentleman, with a guitar on his lap. He looked to be around thirty; the same age as David. On the back “Blind Bear Fulton-1935” was written.

“It’ll be a miracle if I can get this thing to work,” David said. He went to crank the player. At first, it wouldn’t budge but, it eventually gave way. He placed the needle on the record; letting out a horrible scratching noise, as it tried to find the groove. “Oh well,” he chuckled. Removing the needle, he went to test the bed’s integrity.

Behind him, a Delta blues intro swelled. “Oh, tell me baby, who gon’ replace me? Oh, baby, baby, who gon’ replace me?” David jumped, and walked slowly to the player. Realizing the needle had fallen, he laughed at himself.

The record continued:

“Even when I’m gone, you’ll never find another.”

Something new caught David’s eye. Out the window, in the moonlight, a man hanged from a tree.

David froze. With a closer look, he recognized the hanged man as Fulton! Fulton raised his head; with a sinister smile, and his eyes piercing David’s.

The record continued.

David dropped; stunned in horror. Peeking through the window, again the man was gone. He went to the car, putting everything in the rear-view.

The record continued:

“Well I guess you found another. I’m goin’ home to N’awlins.”

The music fades; the player stops. Out the window, in the moonlight, a man hanged from a tree, in a three-piece navy suit and matching Jarman’s.

Orison
Emily Wood

It didn't happen.

Your memory has always been so poor,
And you've always been a liar.
Always so dramatic,
So desperate for attention
That you'd fake your own death to get someone to pity you.
So desperate for attention, ever since you were little,
So you pretend I'm a bad person.

And if it did, it wasn't that bad.

You're lucky you don't have it worse.
If it was my father—
If it was my mother—
Then you'd know what real suffering is.
You love to blow things out of proportion,
Because you love treating me like I'm a bad person.

And if it was, it's not a big deal.

These kinds of things happen all the time,
And if they don't, it's because you're different.
You're troublesome,
More trouble than the other kids.
I do what I have to keep you under control;
That doesn't make me a bad person.

And if it is, it's not my fault.

You have no idea how much stress I'm under.
You think dealing with you is easy?
How was I supposed to know
That a creature dependent on me for help—
Asking me for help—
Wasn't just trying to manipulate me?

You always push me so far
That I can't help thinking
Maybe you wanted this to happen.
Why do you want me to be a bad person?

And if it was, I didn't mean it.

I'm just trying to do what's best for you, don't you realize that?
You're lazy, and stupid, and you can't do anything right.
I'm trying to lead you down the path of righteousness.
Don't you understand that I'm making sacrifices too?
You want me to be the villain,
But I love you.
How could I ever hurt you if I love you?
When you get older, you'll understand.
When you have kids, you'll understand
That I'm not a bad person.

And if I did

You've always been a greedy, filthy thing.
I feed you, clothe you out of the goodness of my heart,
And this is how you repay me?
I own you. You owe everything to me.
There is no boundary I will not cross.
I can take as much as I want,
and touch whatever I want,
and do
Anything I want to you.

You deserved it.

Don't go telling people about this.
Don't go spreading our shit around.
If you do, people will realize exactly what kind of person you really
are.
Only I understand. You understand too, don't you? You deserve
this.
And they just haven't realized it yet.

But don't worry.
I won't tell if you won't.

Untitled

Gilbert Callis

Buildings of gold,
caverns of old,
the stories we've told
are washed
 beneath
 the
 Waves.

Banners and Kings,
people that sing,
bells that ring
all washed
 beneath
 the
 Waves.

Swim from the deep.
Swim from the sea.
Swim to the surface.
Swim to the top.
Swim up, so our tales are not forgot!
Swim so we are not lost
 deep
 beneath
 the

Waves.

Speak to the people from the highest steeple.
Speak to the kings with their many rings.
Speak to the fishermen who sit at the docks.
Speak to the men who write with pens.
Speak to the women who pace their widow walk.
Speak to the children hidden in alleyways.
Speak to all people in the world.
Speak of the tale that rides on the backs of great blue whales.
Speak of the legend of a city destined to fail.

Speak of us who drowned in the sea.
Speak of Atlantis and its people.

Lost

beneath

the

Waves.



Felicia Self

Resolutions and Beginnings

Rachael Miller

Someone who tends to cry,

struck by the deep emotions that are inside. Unable to control them,
often bursting through the seams, infiltrating my thoughts and
dreams.

No clear thoughts. No escape. The pressures of life
are overwhelming and consuming the deepest parts of me,
leaving me unable to see clearly,
to understand that what's ahead probably isn't as bad as it seems.

See, the darkness clouds it all,
telling lies and misconceptions,
placing doubts and fear where they don't belong.

Yet here I am in spite of it all,
conquering and overcoming,
because this is not and will not ever be easy.

Chronic illness, invisible problems,
rough beginnings yielding
thoughts that result
in anxiety and depression.

Endurance is possible
even when it does not seem probable.

Broken Hearted

Hope Poe

I wasn't ready to have my heart broken, but the timing of heartbreak isn't really something you get to choose. My first heartbreak was in high school. I loved her. She was the sunshine in my life, and nothing could ever tear us apart, or that's what I thought anyway until she met a guy. She was my best friend and we'd been through relationships and breakups before, big and small. We'd always been okay because we had one another, but this time was different.

I hate feeling lonely, but at least I've gotten used to it. I'm walking into the library, couples like to hang out here, I wish they didn't. *I mean cool! You're in a relationship, but do you really have to flaunt it by hanging all over each other?* I can't tear my eyes away as I spot a couple going at it between two bookshelves. *They seem to think no one can see them and to make out means shoving your tongue as far into the other person's mouth as possible. High school sucks.* As I turn, my steps slow and I start to smile. I've spotted my friends all sitting together and walk over to join them. I'm happiest to see one of the guys.

The boy. She didn't know. She said she didn't know. I wasn't sure if I believed her then and I'm still not sure if I believe her now. I'm bad at hiding things now. I feel like it must have been obvious then, but I'll never really know one way or the other.

"You're my ideal girl," he said. *Oh wow. Had he really just said that?* I can't quite believe it but before I can react the bell is ringing, and we have to go to class. I can't stop thinking about what he said. *Me?! His "ideal girl."* A grin I can't stop keeps flitting across my face. I hadn't really thought of him like this until now. No guy had ever been interested in me before, and this is exciting! It's Friday so I won't get to see him until Monday, but I can't wait. I look up from my book because I thought I heard a noise. I glance over, and the screen of my phone is lit. There's a text. It's from my best friend. *Cool I haven't seen her in few days.* "OMG Big news!" her text reads. *I wonder what's got her all excited?*

“What is it?” I text back.

“So I was kind of talking to this guy and we just clicked, I have a new boyfriend!” she replies. I'm happy for her even as I feel a twinge of jealousy that she's already able to get into a new relationship when I still haven't had my first. I shove it away, not wanting these selfish nasty thoughts tainting a good thing.

“Who?” I reply.

Her response chills me. *It's him. The boy I like. How could this have happened? Why would he switch to her? How could she do this to me?* It was yesterday that he told me that I was his ideal girl. Tears are silently falling down my cheeks as I realize another person has met my best friend and chosen her over me. *I can't believe it. My heart hurts.* The next day feels like a blur and then I'm back in school. They're holding hands. Right in front of me. *I feel sick.* I ask her how it happened when I'm home and so I can stop responding if it gets too hard. “He messaged me on Facebook and we just clicked” she says.

Turns out he had started messaging her to get my number or that's what they're saying anyway. How did he go from can I get your best friend's number to can I get yours? How could she have been okay with that? I feel all these questions running in circles around my head making me feel sick. I feel so alone and normally when I have problems I talk to her, but she is the problem. I'm hurt and confused.

My phone is ringing; it's her. She's apologizing and we're both crying. She didn't want to hurt me, and she just wants us to be friends again, and that's all I want too, right? I walk to the front door and look outside. She's parked in front of the house and asks if she can come in. Still crying, I say yes, and we hold each other in relief that things will be okay again. And they are, at first. I go to school and they're holding hands again. They're still together.

My heart drops. She still wants to be with him. *It makes sense, doesn't it? Just because he hurt me doesn't mean they can't be happy together right?*

I rationalize it to myself over and over, but it still hurts. Every day that passes it hurts a little less, but I'm still waiting for it

to stop hurting. I'm still waiting for my heart to be whole again. At this point I'm not sure that'll ever happen. It's been years since it happened and thinking about it still makes my heart throb. I love her, and she loves me, but she chose him.

Who is Watching?

Micah Stewart-Wilcox

Who is watching
when the children
come out to play?
Do they see the
playgrounds full of
sexed children who
trace the lines of their
flesh with fingers,
tongues and little streams
of cheap, flowing liquor?

We are the beautiful
We are the terrible
We are the memories inside of your head
We are the lingering scent in your bed

You square
You ugly
You leather-skinned wrinkled bore
You cannot touch but you can

Watch
Watch us
spit and
suck and
sip and
snort and
scream and
cry and
look at all the fun we have

Look
Look fast
Look while you can
Look while we're here
Look at the sun setting on the
Sex children
Setting on all of us
Setting on you
We will bury you

We will replace you
We will watch through
 the pornography screens
 the drunken music scenes
We inherited from you

We will watch the kids
We used to be
And we will not change them
Will not intervene

For kids will be kids,
and if that remains true,
then maybe
-- just maybe --
we can still be kids, too.



Esther Olson

Casey

Sarah Kuchar

Aria never could've guessed she'd be in this sort of mess. The hardest part of being a teenager was supposed to be break-ups, or acne, or the fear of what would come after those years were up. At least, those were the hard parts for the ones who were lucky enough. Apparently, she didn't have that luck. She sat curled up as much as she could be in a chair too small for anyone but a child to be comfortable in. While all this made her feel tiny enough to be a toddler, that didn't mean she fit any easier. You'd think in a police station, they'd have decent sized seating for the people awaiting interrogation.

In her case, it was closer to an interview. Every person she'd spoke to assured her that they believed she was at no fault. It definitely felt like she was waiting for the former. She looked around vaguely, for about the twentieth time that hour, she glanced once more over the cracking tiles of the icky brown floor, the white but slightly stained walls, and the blank-faced officer portraits on said walls. At first, when they'd moved her to the waiting room, she was still too panicked to pay attention for a while. Hours had passed since then, and while she was still left confused, worried out of her mind, and generally upset, the initial panic had subsided in favor of not being completely exhausted.

She looked the room over and over again; her phone had died a while before. She'd drawn out pictures in the stains on the walls and in the cracks of the floor—anything to try to stay calm as she hoped for any sign of Casey to appear, before they had to report her missing. It was a couple more hours, she waited until she was brought back for her witness interview where she explained everything she knew. She explained how she said goodnight to Casey and split off at the most convenient place between their homes—only a couple streets apart from one another. How they both always carried pepper spray, and Casey even had a pocket knife so there was a slight confidence they'd both be fine. They always texted each other when they made it home, but sometimes forgot; when Casey hadn't replied, it wasn't the biggest concern. Sometimes her mom got to talking with her, and fussing at her, the phone in her pocket was forgotten; how she assumed it was fine and fallen asleep.

Aria explained how she'd gone to school as normal the next morning, expecting to see her girlfriend for their usual morning studying, which was usually just them talking quietly in the library, until they were almost late for class, because they didn't want to go their separate ways.

Casey hadn't been there, and she still hadn't texted. Aria texted and called all day in every spot of signal she could get through the blockers the school had put up a few years ago. Casey's mom had called her mom during the day to ask, having assumed Casey decided to spend the night at Aria's and was ready to yell at all of them for it.

Aria's mom had picked her up early, and they went to the police station immediately, but then were made to wait until the twenty-four-hour mark had passed. Hours and hours of sitting in a tiny waiting room while her mom went to do a catering job and still made it back to the station before they were allowed to report her missing.

"Missing."

Aria's mind refused to let it settle in that her girlfriend was missing, even as an Amber Alert was sent out by the police. Even as the alert buzzed on her phone, when she got to plug it in and turn it back on, a few hours later. It wouldn't settle in properly until almost a week later. She would go out while her mom was working trying to find someone, anyone who would buy an underage kid a drink to try and relax. She would be forced to acknowledge her girlfriend had gone missing.

Almost a week later, back behind the dumpsters behind the old abandoned Long John Silver's, she'd find her girlfriend. For someone to be found, you have to admit they're missing, and Aria wouldn't ever forget how she found Casey.

The hardest part of being a teenager was supposed to be break-ups, or acne, or the fear of what would come after those years were up. At least, those were the hard parts for the ones who were lucky enough, it seemed. Aria apparently was far from lucky enough, it seemed, from the sight of what was left of her girlfriend rotting and stinking and stuffed in behind a dumpster that wouldn't ever leave her eyes again.

Coeur

k. brown

“still beating,”

whispered through sleepy smile.

naked ear to naked chest

in the shallow, shuddering afternoon rays

that coax and nuzzle their way

into our shared airspace.

lanky fingers rest intertwined

with sweaty palms and threadbare sheets

and you sigh some sweet wordless song

that, for always, there'll be a

moment of serenity

in this place of warm bodies,

timid lips and

gossamer love

still beating



June-Marie Gerhart

Runner

Gabe Roberts

://7H3 51L3NC3

Jae woke to the sounds that filled the immutable silence. Although there were many sounds, there were five that made the most noise. First, was the soft rattle of chains that hung from the ceiling, cuffing him at the wrists, leaving his arms outstretched above his head. Second, was the low hum of a red light that filled his prison with a soft glow which only accented the shadows just beyond its reach. Third, was the (patter) of rain that pelted against the metal exterior of his room. Fourth, was the creaking of iron and steel as Jae was rocked in rhythmic syncopation. He knew he was on the water, but where? Fifth, and final, was the thump of approaching footsteps, accentuated by the echoes through the ship. Through all these sounds the silence remained; it was the silence of a man who was going to die.

://RUNN3R5

Where there is a supply and demand, you can find a Runner. Simply put, a Runner is the middleman—someone who is responsible for the delivery of a product. Think of all the middlemen you see on a daily basis: your mailman, your stock-broker, your agent, hell, even your dealer has the same resume skills. All of these jobs have a common objective, but they are not Runners. Runners are a special breed, those who employ a special skill set to a lucrative market. Runners are fast, but they also need to be agile and clever.

By 2057, New York City had become an overpopulated, overgrown concrete jungle with its buildings ever connected and little space between. Outsiders would deem it suffocating, residents found comfort in the busy chaos, and Runners, Runners could thrive. Thanks to the untrained eye and apathy of your typical New Yorker, Runners are chalked up to nothing more than parkour enthusiasts with the way they run through the streets and alleys, scaling up buildings and leaping across rooftops. They might get an odd look by a wandering eye here and there, but never a second

thought. I don't think anyone sets out to be a Runner, it's just something that happens. One event leads to another, ever the case of being in the right place at the right time, or perhaps the wrong place and time; it's just a matter of perspective. But then again, isn't everything?

Jin was a Runner, a fine one at that. One could argue that the events of his past bred him for the job. He was a star track athlete in high school, which earned his scholarship to Columbia University. He was also an accomplished martial artist, being trained in Taekwondo from an early age. If Jin had never become a track star, he would have never received his scholarship. If he had never received his scholarship, he would have never been on their track team. If he was never on their track team, Jin would have never met Gideon.

Gideon wasn't on the track team; then again how could he be? You can't run the 440 when you're born paralyzed from the waist down. Gideon wasn't even a student, he deemed it unnecessary; hell, he was probably right. No, Gideon was there for a reason, as he had been there every practice that semester. What Gideon lacked in athletic ability he made up in technological genius. He had always had an affinity towards technology, being able to operate a smartphone before he could crawl. He knew the ins and outs of a computer and had an ability to hack that would land a person's name on the top of the Blacklist in bold type. That is, if they could catch him. Deep down he knew he would never have the normal life of someone with full use of their extremities, so he might as well be good at something.

If he had had any memorable friends, they would have described Gideon as "home school" weird. Not necessarily bad, just someone who hadn't socialized enough during those developmental years—a bit off-putting because he didn't understand normal social cues, sometimes overbearing, and maybe he exhibited a bit of inappropriate humor at the wrong times. Of course, it wasn't his fault either, because he had been home schooled, home schooled by a hyper-religious mother, while she waited for his father to get back from the cigarette store. Accompanying his weirdness was his

intellect. He tested out of High School at twelve, he probably would have done it sooner if he had focused more time on it.

Gideon was alone now, as he had been for the last five years, since his sixteenth birthday when he found his mother at the end of her rope. Making a living was easy enough running an online IT service, it was simple and paid his bills, but that was also the problem—it was simple, and it only paid his bills. He yearned for challenge, after all he didn't create his own programming language because it was easy.

Gideon had known about Runners for a while, it was inevitable after spending enough time in the deep web. There were hushed whispers between the lines if someone could decode them. Runners' clientele consisted of the higher ups, the one percent, the economic elite: those who had money, wanted more money, and didn't mind paying someone for their efforts. The product was anything from blackmail info to insider trading. The job itself also seemed simple enough: decode the seller's info for the buyer, put it on some form of external storage, get the product from buyer to seller as quickly as possible.

Now, you may ask, "Why don't they just transfer the data directly to the seller online?" The answer, in the simplest terms, is plausible deniability—a maneuver in covering one's ass by creating a distance between the buyer and their seller. The prospect was promising enough: pay depending on the contract, a leader board of Runner ratings, and clientele bids. It also created a certain anonymity between parties—it was all in the contracts. Gideon was sold on the idea, there was just one problem. He needed a partner, and a good one to make up for things he lacked. His search came to a close when he came across an online article entitled "Track Star Commits to Columbia." The article left him with a name: Hyun Jin-sun.

It was easy enough to obtain the track team's practice schedule. For five weeks that's where Gideon lurked. As nonchalantly as possible he watched Jin, recording data into the algorithms of his mind, figuring if this track star could be his star Runner. Finally, one fall afternoon he had his answer.

When Jin was isolated from his teammates, Gideon made his move. Deep down he knew he was terrible at physical interactions, the last thing he wanted was to scare away his golden goose. He had resorted to practicing in the mirror for days, rehearsing his lines; now that the moment was here, he felt sick. “Don’t be weird,” he thought. “Don’t be a creep.” “Maybe I should just email him...no, no you’re doing this!” His nausea grew as he wheeled closer to his target. “Ahem” he said, when he was about a foot away from Jin.

“Oh, sorry man! Let me get out of your way.”

“Oh, no. That wasn’t my intent, you’re...fast.”

“Thanks...appreciate it.” Jin said, wiping the sweat from his face.

“You know, I thought about trying out...before the accident.”

Jin looked at the stranger in the wheelchair with a brief moment of pity.

“Sorry to hear that man, I’m sure you would’ve done well.”

“Yeah, well then I was born,” he said with a smirk.

“Well, I bet you could take on anyone, downhill.”

They both laughed. “Jin” he said extending his hand.

“Gideon” he replied, his hand shaking Jin’s. “Gideon thought this was going better than expected. Of all things he had calculated, he never expected Jin to be so friendly towards him. “Odd question, have you ever thought to use your running to make money?”

“I mean, I used it to get my scholarship. Couldn’t afford without it.”

“That’s great...but I mean like real money?”

“No, not rea-”

“Would you like to?”

“-lly. I mean... I guess, who couldn’t use some extra money? What did you have in mind?”

“The coffee shop across the street, give me ten minutes of your time.”

From there, Gideon explained his plan to Jin, the ins and outs of Running, and the fifty-fifty split of payments. Jin, however, wasn’t immediately sold on the idea. The money seemed great, enough contracts could easily set up a person for life, but the risk really didn’t seem worth it. This didn’t stop Gideon in his

persistence, each time he was met with a hesitant “no.” Despite this, to Gideon’s astonishment, Jin continued to hang out with him. After three months of assurances, Jin finally agreed to do one contract, and he did one contract, then another, and another. Gideon gave Jin the code name Djinn, a rather clever play, if he said so himself.

Over the next three years Djinn, became one of the top names on the Runner list, garnishing more exclusive, higher paying contracts. After six months, Jin had stopped going to class and practice—by the end of the first year, he had dropped out. By their third year, Jin and Gideon were making money hand over fist. Everything was going great—Gideon’s method was infallible—but you can’t account for human error.

It was a typical Friday afternoon when Jin got the message for a Run. He made his way over to Gideon’s apartment, they only lived a few blocks from each other. At one point they had contemplated getting a place together, but they ultimately decided against it for safety reasons; should something happen, they would hopefully not be in the same place. There was also the fact that over the years, Gideon’s rig had become more expansive, the two would joke that he had more computer than apartment. When Jin arrived, Gideon answered through his door’s camera system. He looked rough, like he hadn’t slept all night. “Hey, you doing OK?” he asked.

“I’ve been better,” he said.

“I’m sorry man, you gonna let me-”

“No, I’m not feeling good...I don’t want to risk you getting it.”

Jin felt odd hearing this, they had just hung out last night. Then again, in their tenure of friendship, he had known Gideon to exhibit abnormal behaviors at times.

“OK, fair enough. What’s the job?”

He slipped Jin a flash-drive through the door’s modified mail slot.

“Uploading the coordinates to your GPS now, there’s a 10 grand bonus if you can get there in fifteen...”

Jin looked at the marker on his wrist, it was only twenty blocks away. “I’ll be there in ten.” With that Jin sprinted to the outer balcony at the end of the hall and leap across to the adjacent rooftop

with a flourish. Gideon turned himself around to face the group of men, “There, it’s done, you happy?”

As he ran across the rooftops, and scaled down walls he monitored his GPS, twelve blocks...four...within ten minutes he had reached his destination. A little hole in the wall alley with a door at the end. He reached the door, knocked, but no answer. Five minutes and several knocks later, still no answer. “I’m still getting that bonus,” he thought. He called Gideon—silence. That’s when he heard it: sirens. Before he could react three squad cars had him blocked in. He quickly took in his surroundings: the alley had even walls on three sides with no possible way to climb or escape. A voice boomed from the megaphone, “Get on your knees, and put your hands behind your head!” He was cornered like a rat, in a perfectly executed trap. Betrayed, Jin complied falling to his knees, under his breath he muttered, “Shit...Shit...Shit.”

Ad Undas

Gilbert Callis

The sound of gulls squawked overhead. The blue sky blinded me, and the smell of the sea made me nauseous. My head felt like it'd been hit by a hammer. Slowly, I sat up and stared at my surroundings, a beach, in a place that I didn't really recognize. I rubbed the back of my head. There was no bump or anything, just a general pain. Maybe I'd gotten drunk and was feeling the effects of a hangover, but I don't drink. I could see broken planks of wood scattered along the beach along with a crate half buried in the sand. Carefully, I stood up and walked over to it. The outside looked destroyed; inside, I found: 20 scrolls—surprisingly dry, a quill and ink, and some bread—still fresh. I stared at the contents of the crate in confusion, something didn't feel right. The longer I stared the more anxious I felt. I picked up a scroll and opened it, hoping that maybe it would reveal some clue to my situation. The contents were completely blank. I placed the open scroll on the crate's lid, grabbed the quill and ink and began writing. "My name is," I paused, *What is my name?*

I tried to recollect, two conflicting memories clashed in my head. One was Alexandros, a young Greek merchant from Athens that drowned in a storm off the coast of Crete. The other was Alexandra Haywood, a college student studying American History at Miskatonic University who died in a car accident. I sat there, with the quill still hovering over the parchment like a ghost. Slowly, I touched the quill to the parchment and wrote, "My name is Alex—" I paused, not able to finish the name with a definitive conclusion. Instead, I continued the statement on the scroll, "and I don't know who I am." I sat there for a moment, pondering my predicament. Two versions of my past were colliding in a mishmash of words, concepts, ideals, dates, people, and technologies within my head; probably the source of my headache. I wrote down a question "How old are we?" I sat there for a moment before I received an answer—*twenty years old. On the verge of being twenty-one.* I wrote down "21 years old."

“What do we believe?” A mass of thoughts ran through my head, arguing with each other, each as contradictory as the last. I covered my ears trying to suppress the voices, but they still rang through my head. I scribbled out the question and rephrased and rewrote it, “What do we believe has happened to us?” The first thought that went through my head was not one that I wanted to think about, *We died. This is Hades*. I sat there quietly, hardly hearing the waves crashing on the beach. I looked at my hands, ink covered them, I couldn’t shake the thought that the ink resembled blood. *Blood – the screams, crunching metal, the sinking ship...* I shook myself out of the flashbacks, returned quill to the page and kept writing.

“My name is Alex and I don’t know who I am. How old are we? 21 years old. What do we believe has happened to us? Probably dead, but unsure.

I don’t know anything that has happened to me. I have some memories of before my dual deaths, but I don’t remember everything. I might not even be the person who I was when this started. Who am I? I have a name, but I don’t know who I am. I’m a bundle of anxiety and panic. For the gods sake, I’ve died twice and now I’m sitting on a beach writing in a scroll because I don’t know what else to do. Should I start walking? Should I run? Should I drown myself in the sea? What am I supposed to do?! Am I supposed to rot on this beach or is there some greater reason that I’m supposed to be here!?! What? Am I supposed to bring modern technology and science to the people of... wherever I am? I don’t know how technology works! I’m a history major, not an engineer! Like, What? I just don’t get it! What kind of cruel trick is it to kill two people and force their essences into a single body? I’m Alex. I’m not Alexandros! I’m not Alexandra! I don’t know who or what I am anymore! I can’t believe that this is happening to me. Why am I alive?! WHY AM I ALIVE?! I should be de—” It was then that I noticed that I had used the entire parchment just trying to figure out my thoughts. Tears of overwhelming emotion streamed down my face. I threw the quill down and wept into my hands. “It’s not right,” I croaked out quietly, “It’s not fair.”

I heard the clanking of armor and a man called out to me. “Hail Traveler! Do you need assistance?” I looked up at the man. It was a Roman guardsman. He was speaking Greek. I don’t- *Oh, right... Alexandros.* I sniffled, “No, I’m fine. I just need a minute. I just... washed up here. Where am I?” The Grecian words left my mouth. The guardsman gave me a concerned look. “You’re on the Isle of Crete in the great Roman Empire. Are you sure you don’t need any assistance?” I shook my head. “I’m fine. I’m going to collect my things. Could you point me to the nearest town?” The guardsman nodded slowly gesturing towards the direction of his origin, “If that is all, then I bid you farewell.” I rolled up the scroll, as he continued down the road, and took it back to the crate.

Upon my return, there was now a large backpack there. Inside was a small pouch of gold. I promptly tied around my rope-belt. I packed all the scrolls and put the ink and quill next to them. I took a bite of the bread. It was the best bread I had ever tasted; I was amazed at how good it was. Half of the loaf was gone before I was able to stop myself. I wrapped it in a piece of cloth and placed it into the backpack. I pulled it onto my shoulders and began walking towards town.

Upon entering the town, I realized that I couldn’t just... Tell people about what was going on in my head, and I couldn’t just avoid everyone. I needed a convincing lie. *Just tell people you’re from Rome, that should be good enough.*

I heard a voice in my head say. *No! Tell people you’re from Athens! You know more about Athens than you do about Rome! You lived there for Poseidon’s sake!* The voice retorted.

Mulling over my options, I bumped into someone, “Oof! Sorry! I should’ve probably been paying more attention.”

I bumped into a woman. A little shorter than me, with dark curly hair. She smiled politely, “It’s no trouble,” She paused, waiting for me to say my name.

I quickly smiled at her, “Oh! I’m sorry, my name is Alex.” She looked at me suspiciously, “Just Alex? Usually people have a much longer name. Where are you from?”

I panicked. *Athens? Rome? What do I say?* In my haste I spit out,

“At-lantis!”

Too little, too late I realized that that was not the best answer. She gave me a look that shared she didn’t believe me. “Atlantis? The sunken city?” She questioned.

I followed up with a much more believable lie, “Oh! No, I meant I’m from a small city on an island in the Atlantic Ocean.” That was slightly more believable, but she still accepted it. “Alright, my name is Delphina. Pleasure to meet you, Alex, but I really must be leaving now.” She said as she was hurriedly started walking towards through the street. I shrugged, after searching, I finally found an inn I could sleep at.

Upon entering, I was overwhelmed by the smell of fish. While it wasn’t a surprise since we’re literally right next to the ocean, part of me found it off putting and unfamiliar. I walked up to the owner and inquired about renting a room for the night. He told me that it would be two gold coins, which I gave him. He showed me to the room; It was small. There was a bed in the corner of the room and a small window facing the sea. I set my backpack in front of the door and laid down on the bed. *It’s certainly more comfortable than the bunks on the ship.* I sighed and lost myself to sleep.

There were three paths before me. To my left stood Alexandra Haywood, a short woman with short brown hair. To my right stood Alexandros, a tall man with long flowing locks of curly blond hair. In the middle stood someone I didn’t recognize. They were taller than Alexandra, but shorter than Alexandros and had wavy orange hair that barely touched their shoulders. I looked at each of them. “Why do you make me choose a path? What will it mean if I take a path? Do I become you? Do I join you in death? Do I awaken in your life with everything that it entails?”

The three judges were silent, their expressions blank. In front of each was a small pool of water. I stepped forward and looked at the pool before Alexandra. It showed me her entire life... Birth, life, and death. I investigated the pool of Alexandros and I saw the same thing. Finally, I stood before the pool of the stranger. I peered into the pool, I could only see my own reflection – A faceless

being with grey skin.

I looked back to the stranger, “Am I nothing? Do I even exist? I want to be told, who am I!” The stranger laughed quietly before they whispered to me, “Others cannot choose your life for you. You must make that choice yourself.” I stumbled away from the stranger. I was about to say something before I dropped into a pool. I spun in the water, now a large sea. I could see the stranger drowning in the water. They looked fearful. I tried to swim over to them, but I couldn’t. The sea held me in place. I pushed as hard as I could against the current. I felt something give as I flew forward towards the stranger. Right as I collided with them, everything went dark.

I awoke in the inn gasping for air. The taste of saltwater lingered in my mouth. I stumbled out of bed and ran to my backpack, pulled out an empty scroll, along with the quill and ink, and wrote. “My name is Alex, I am who I decide to be—no one will stop me. My past has been washed beneath the waves.”

Notes on Contributors

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The Legend of Orpheus

The ancient Greek mind was both subtle and skillful and the legend of Orpheus (pronounced or'-- fee – us) amply epitomizes this. Orpheus ('he of the river bank') was the son of Apollo, god of poetry, and the Muse Calliopé ('she of the fair voice'), who gave birth to him on the banks of the Hebrus River in Thrace. Such was his power of verse and song, he could move the trees and rocks and tame wild beasts. He was given the gift of the lyre by Apollo. When his wife Eurydice died from a serpent's bite during their wedding celebration, Orpheus, in his grief, descended to the underworld – no easy task for a mortal – to attempt to win her back from the land of the dead.

Arriving at the judgment seat of Persephone and Hades, rulers of the underworld, Orpheus began to sing his lament for Eurydice. So sweet was his voice that the dead, including Eurydice, flocked to hear him, weeping for the beauty of the upper world, which was lost to them. Persephone and Hades were so moved, they chose to let Orpheus take Eurydice back to the world of daylight, on condition that he not turn to look at her until they had reached the upper world. Hermes, the guide of souls, led them on the arduous journey back to the land of the living.

With his foot on the very threshold of the day-lit world, Orpheus, whether from impatience or anxiety, turned around too soon – Eurydice was not yet out of the realm of the dead. Because of the edict of Persephone and Hades was irrevocable, Hermes was forced to lead Eurydice back to the eternal darkness. Though Orpheus wandered for days through the dark caverns and tunnels of the netherworld, pitifully calling out his wife's name, he never found her again.

