

ORPHEUS

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Orpheus

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

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

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.

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Front Cover Image, “Orpheus Mourning Eurydice” by Tristan Roy
Back Cover Image, “The First Light” by Audrey Mills

Preface

From the Faculty and Student Editors

EURYDICE. This is what it is to love an artist: The moon is always rising above your house. The houses of your neighbors look dull and lacking in moonlight. But he is always going away from you. Inside his head there is always something more beautiful.

~ *Eurydice*

(Scene 16, Second Movement), by Sarah Ruhl

25 can signify many things: a perfect square, a shopping cart rental at Aldi, a quarter-life crisis, a silver jubilee. For the purposes of this present volume, it represents a milestone because this is the twenty-fifth annual edition of *Orpheus*, which is the literary arts journal of Lindsey Wilson College. This year's editorial staff has carefully reviewed and mindfully selected each of the pieces within this volume from a wide host of submissions from students across campus. We believe that this year's volume is a comprehensive display of diverse craft from every tier of our student population, including all four undergraduate years as well as graduate students. It is our hope that, in reading this anniversary edition of *Orpheus*, the inspiration felt by each artist and author in creating their works of expression will be passed on to you, the reader. We also hope that such inspiration might elicit new ideas from all of you who partake in this communal experience and conveyance of art.

The Man on the Hill

Charlotte Archey

This story doesn't end happily, I'm afraid. We all yearn, our hearts searching for that glimmer of a happy ending, but usually, there is only sadness. Defeat.

This story starts and ends in the same way.

It starts with a lonely figure on the hill.

Against the setting sun, a silhouetted figure on the hill lifted his arm in a wave. Near the bottom of the slope was a cabin. Over the years it had fallen deeper and deeper into a state of disrepair. Sections of the wooden sideboard, weakened from years of rough wind, now allowed slivers of candlelight to slip through. The roof, what was once regularly thatched to keep it fresh, now sloped at an odd angle. When it rained, puddles formed inside. The grass and plants around the house grew, hiding the fact that it was ever manicured at any point in their lifetime.

The cabin sat near the banks of a quick moving river. The speed of the water disturbed the ground, producing muddy water that no mother would let a child near to play in fear of what may lurk beneath the surface.

The figure walked down the slope, carefully stepping in a little dance through an invisible path. Before he could even reach the cabin door, it flung open to reveal two girls. One squealed in delight, and the other simply smiled.

"You're back!" The younger one called over her shoulder. She repeated these words a few times. Her sister stroked her unbrushed hair.

The man approached. For those who didn't know, they might have assumed he was the sisters' father. Had the years really aged him that much? He took in the view of the outside of the house. A heavy pang of guilt hit his stomach. He quickly looked away from the house and its surroundings and focused on the girls at the door instead. His eyes filled with tears, but a few steady breaths calmed them. It had not gotten easier. The overwhelming guilt and sadness that raided his heart. He learned to subdue them, focusing on the faces of the people inside the cabin.

"We've been waiting for you." The older sister smiled up at her brother. The little one reached up for her brother, but her sister grabbed her hand and motioned for her to go inside. The little one pouted, but obeyed. Looking over her shoulder as she disappeared into the house, she said "you're back" to her brother with a smile.

"Louise," The man said to the older of the sisters, and she only looked up at him. She blinked away a few invisible tears. He continued, "I have so much to tell you. To tell all of you." He rocked on his feet.

Louise nodded. She opened the door wider and allowed him to pass the threshold. The sun was saying its final goodbyes now. Though night fell quickly, she knew that when the sun came back, it would feel too soon. She followed her brother inside.

It was dark in the house, except for the candles that sat on the dining room table. Once upon a time they had electricity, but, like everything else in the house, it was outdated and unnecessary. The hallway was

unlit, but it didn't matter. Every member of the family was in the dining room. His mother mumbled to herself as she straightened the tablecloth and pushed the candles around, trying to make the best arrangement. She brushed her hands on her apron as she looked at him. "I wanted it to look better when you arrived, but I—I never seem to have enough time. We all want to look our best, you know." His father placed a hand on her shoulder, providing a steady anchor. She took a deep breath and tucked her hands in her pockets.

"I know you do. Thank you." The man placed one hand on the table and brought the other to his heart. "It's so good to see you all." And he meant it too. He made a point to look at each person in the room. His father led the man's mother to her chair and pulled his own chair close. They held hands as they stared up at the man.

Louise had taken her seat. Louise, always so patient, held little Emma in her lap. Emma squirmed, but Louise fought against her. Despite the fight that she was putting up, Louise's face remained stoic.

The man finally took the last remaining seat in the room, facing them. A small breeze drifted through the walls, but the candles remained motionless.

It was always so hard to decide where to begin, and the hours were so limited. Long gone were the days of apologies and grieving. They didn't care about that anymore. They only wanted to see him. To hear him. To know that he still thought about them.

"You have more wrinkles." Louise said quietly from her spot behind Emma.

The man turned to look at her. He brought a hand to his face, feeling it. His beard had gotten fuller over the years, sure, but he hadn't thought about his skin. He felt skin under his fingers give to pressure. She was right, it had gotten looser over the years. Louise held up a hand to her face now. She looked the same as she always did. Still on the brink of womanhood. Still youthful, having never experienced the aging effects of time. Feeling guilty, he dropped his hand.

"I hadn't noticed." He said. He wouldn't be able to avoid it anymore, seeing himself in the mirror everyday knowing that time was seeping into his bones. He couldn't stand it. He cleared his throat, desperate to change the topic and get his mind, and theirs, off of this concept. Reaching into his coat pocket, he produced a little journal. A piece of string wrapped around it, allowing the two covers to contain all that lay between. It was hard to remember every important thing that happens over the course of a year in someone's life. The man had started recording it all together in one place. He pulled at the string and opened the journal to reveal clippings and photos. He laid them out carefully on the table. Slowly, he began to walk through the items.

"Evelyn loves her toys and singing. Donna and I are very proud." He held up a picture of a toddler being held by a woman. The girl was dressed in a pink dress and birthday hat, smiling sheepishly at the camera. The man knew what everyone was thinking, and he followed their gazes to Emma. He studied Emma's face and smiled. "She's two now. So, so bright." The man watched as his mother let out a small cry and her face sank into her hands.

“She’s beautiful.” The man’s father said, staring at the pictures of Evelyn on the table. They ranged from when she was a newborn, through her different growing phases, and led up to that picture in the birthday hat.

Louise pointed at the pictures. “Look, Emma. Two years old, just like you, huh?” Emma studied the image closely and nodded her head in agreement.

The man told stories of the past year. His trip to the mountains. His recent promotion at the school. The family around the table closed their eyes and leaned back to take in the lull of his voice. He discussed the joy of having a toddler daughter and talked of Christmases spent at Donna’s childhood home. He hoped to portray warmth and peace through his stories. But that was what they were, stories. He couldn’t bear to tell them the complete truth. He avoided the fact that he had taken a second job to help support his family, and how Donna had applied for divorce months ago, and that he didn’t get to spend as much time with Evelyn as he had hoped.

These were not the memories he wanted to leave his family with, so he told them what they deserved. They deserved to know that the man was out in the world, carving out his own corner of the world. Most of all, they needed to know that he would still be coming on his yearly visit with more stories to share, thinking of them.

The man glanced at his watch. Their time gets shorter every year. Soon, the sun would rise, and he would be on the hill again, waving his goodbye. Although he would see them in one year’s time, for them it would be as if no time had passed at all.

“It’s almost time.” The man whispered. Emma had fallen asleep now, tales of her brother drifting through her head. He started to collect his pictures back into the journal. These pictures were important to him, and they wouldn’t be any use sitting here for another year.

“You look old.” Louise commented again. The man didn’t even look up from his pictures. At the top of the pile was a photo of him from years ago, on his wedding day. Donna dressed in white. The two of them beaming.

It was getting hard to deny the obvious changes now. The man had gotten older, wrinklier. Age was taking its toll, like it does on everyone. One day, his visits will grow infrequent. Ceasing altogether one day. None of them knew what would happen to them then.

The man said his goodbyes. He wanted to throw his arms around each member of his family, and never let them go. They had tried before, but the results were always the same. It was impossible to hold them. The man walked to the door as Louise opened it. The sky outside was starting to lift away the dark hue of night.

“I will see you soon.”

He returned the way he had come just hours earlier. He climbed to the top of the hill, where he could just catch the dark figures in the doorway. He lifted up his hand as a final goodbye, like he did every year.

Yes, one day the visits will cease.

Life Cycle

Adrian Ayala

Life to rest
Love to mess

Fight to peace
Silence and speech

All come
All go

But it the moment it feels eternal

Do we stay
Or do we turn away

Do we embrace
And show love and grace

We don't know
What do we do

Oh wait we turn to you

Once lost

Now found

Turned this frown upside down

You came
Some knew

You died
We grew

Deserved death
Experience life

One life
Sacrificed

New way

New life

His word
We abide

All sin
Fall short

His death
our escort

We win
They lose

You came
They chose

Life or death

Flames or breath

Redeemed
Devil schemes

Look up find hope
Look down sit and mope

Look left
Look right

Off course
Devils might

Oh wait
Not dead

His death
My debt

Now free
Now redeemed

Look how He saved me

Being Still

Adrian Ayala



Kariba Sunset
Danielle Bekker



Mustard Seed

Morgan Bryant

When one stares outside of a frozen over window in late October, one may ask necessarily why they are staring out it. Is it because I may want to see the weather? Is it because there is something pretty to look at? Or is it simply because I don't have anything else better to be looking at other than a grimey brick wall or a well kept yard. I take the furthest approach, for I have nothing in particular to do or look at. The weather I could care less about, and looking at something pretty causes one to gawk, I simply do it for the pleasure of nothing at all. In actuality, doing nothing at all has done quite a lot for me in life, as very few would expect.

Most folks from the religious perspective think that I am lying idle, and as many old grandmothers may say idle hands are controlled by some devil. The Ayn Rand school of thought may think me a beggar, coasting by at the cost of others in the system of life, ultimately calling me a parasite. But for me? I am a mustard seed, and that is what I call myself. A mustard seed may not look like it's doing much, but it does imbue the very condiment it sits in with its mere presence, and soaks in the flavor and releases some of its own.

Personally, I sit in places, and fortunately or for some unfortunately, much like my aforementioned seeded companion, nothing much happens. Yet, there was one time in which good old Mustard Seed remembers in his sitting of nothing, I did see something. I was sitting inside, staring out of the aforementioned window out to the aforementioned October chill, and I had seen Mr. Charlie Raifort walking along. Mr. Raifort had a tendency of having... unsavory clients that would typically take advantage of his charity, due to the simple fact that he had a collection of prized horses that live nearby our separate but near homes. On this night while I stared, I saw Raifort go into his home, a far more complex one than mine, and had not had much thought of him for the remaining evening until I saw one of his prized horses suddenly prance out from his fields onto my very own lawn. While I certainly was intrigued, I simply sat and continued to watch while doing nothing but enjoying the act of being sat and doing said nothing. As the horse passed, a few minutes had gone as well and that is when I had the pleasure to have seen Mrs. Maple walk out of Mr. Raifort's abode. This perplexed me since while Mrs. Maple had been the unsavory type I had aforementioned, often taking advantage of Mr. Raifort's immense kindness to buy herself things, I was not expecting to see her. Ultimately, the strange thing is, I had not seen her enter his home any time today, which I most typically would even if she was trying to be quite the nimble tree limb about it. However, off she went, and with that I dozed for the remainder of the evening in my rocking chair until I could think of nothing but mustard, horseradish, and syrup.

The next morning had arrived, and I had awoken in my chair in nearly the same position that I had the evening before. But, before my eyes could look out at the damp frost of an October morning covering the grass, they had laid onto something else. What they had landed on outside my window in the same yard that Mrs. Maple and one of Mr. Raifort's horses had crossed was that of Mr. Raifort himself. However, the man was not sitting or even standing, he was laying there face down almost like that of a starfish. Now, I am one for a good sunbathe from time to time, sometimes that's what the nothing gives to me when I sit in front of my window, but the way that Raifort was positioned was just plain silly. He was laying like a starfish, but like one that had been snapped to form more zig-zag patterns with his arms and legs. I saw looking closer that there was a blotch of red on the back of his head, which was hard to tell from my perspective since I was so up and high, and he was down so low with thick, black hair. He was laying in the path that the horse had gone, and partially that of Mrs. Maple as well.

I will be one to admit, I did not know what to actually do with the sight of the starfish Raitfort laying on my lawn. However, as I have somewhat said before but will clarify moreover here, I subscribe to the discipline of doing nothing and being embedded in such a concept, much like a Mustard Seed. So, since I did not know what I wanted to do, I simply did nothing and looked at his body for the remainder of the day. I got up to get tea, I walked down to look at said body from my porch, but other than that at the end of the day I had perched myself back in my seat, and simply did nothing once more. My day to day nothing kept going of course, for a matter of days. While I was doing nothing, nature itself was certainly doing something. I watched as various birds from vultures to crows, and then little critters such as rabbits and squirrels either consumed bits or hid themselves against Mr. Raitfort's body. This went on for a matter of days, as I said, of me doing nothing while nature did the something she will so often do, until I had eventually seen coming across the path Mrs. Maple once more. She had come across the body with an air of... how would one say? Nonchalantly that would be unexpected. She saw the state of Raitfort's body, and didn't seem perplexed by it as she then proceeded to check his pockets, seemingly once more unphased by his starfish state. However, in her checking, perhaps it was the glimmer of my window for which occurs when I rock in my chair and it begins to shudder, she appeared to look up at me. She was seemingly startled, which wasn't uncommon of a state for Mrs. Maple to be whenever she was caught being near Mr. Raitfort.

"Mustard Seed," she hollered, "How long have you been watching me?!" I did not know how to respond to such a question. Does she mean now? Or does she mean a couple days ago for when I saw her walking across my path, much like Raitfort's prized horse had?

"Often and none at all," I hollered back, "Do you like what a bunch of nothing has done to Mr. Raitfort? He's become crows food! He's been doing it wrong!" And with that, I had begun to laugh much to the displeasure of Mrs. Maple.

My laughter had apparently put Mrs. Maple off, since after digging around the pockets of Mr. Raitfort for a moment longer, she went down the path the horse and she had gone several nights ago. With that, more hours passed, and I went about my nothing routine until I was once more dozing in the late evening. However, this evening was changed when I heard a knock on my downstairs door. Any person familiar with me knows I do not dare go and answer my own door, and simply keep it unlocked in order to not inhibit my doing of nothing. However, the knocks got exceedingly louder until I eventually heard it open and a loud voice boom.

"Mr. Sennep! Come down immediately!" Now, I am not one to rush for anyone's beck and call, especially in my own home. Moreover, especially when I am occupied in the practice of nothing. So I merely kept sitting as the voices came up and into my room.

"Mr. Sennep," the voice behind me spoke as it entered my said room, "You are under arrest for the murder of Mr. Charlie Raitfort." I had quirked my head, still looking out at Raitfort's starfish form laying out in front of my lawn.

"For why?" I asked, looking as a crow landed on Raitfort's body as the man spoke, "I have been sitting here and doing nothing at all." The voice did not take too kindly to my words, as he and a couple other gentlemen gathered me up as if I was nothing, and carried me off. So now I sit in a new room doing nothing. It isn't as enjoyable as my old abode with my frosted window in late October, but it is certainly something while also being nothing. However, much like a mustard seed, I still am absorbing whilst seemingly doing nothing, and oftentimes still think about Mr. Raitfort. For as I had hollered to Mrs. Maple, he was simply doing nothing all wrong. He had allowed himself to become crows feed, and while

I certainly wouldn't become that in here, I wanted to ensure that I remained the grand old mustard seed I was meant to be. So, here I am, and shall continue to do nothing all day long.

First Light at the Stables

Johnny Cano-Alvarado



Aware

Michelle Cardwell

A day to be reminded. A day to never forget. A day to hold close. A day to become aware. A day that represents so much more. Overdose Awareness Day.

The day that my heart always beats a little faster on. The day that my mind becomes a bit more scattered. The day where I am reminded that I will never be able to forget. The day that I am aware that their fight is so very hard to win. The day that I hope others educate themselves about.

They fight without fleeing. They fight with the hate of others being thrown on them. They fight their battle and the battle of those all around that refuse to learn. Those all around that refuse to care. Those all around that refuse to become aware.

Today and everyday life is hard. They are forced to fight this demon that their body has worked so hard to ward off. They are forced to live with the demon. They are forced to keep themselves from becoming the demon. The demon of addiction.

The addiction that takes a piece of their soul. The addiction that consumes their being. The addiction that makes it harder to breathe everyday. The addiction that makes them feel as though they have to hide. The addiction that threatens their life everyday. The addiction that constantly encourages them to end their fight. The addiction that continuously nears the overdose.

The overdose that reminds us we need to care. The overdose that reminds us how deeply we loved. The overdose that shows us how real their struggle had been. The overdose that forces us to become more aware. The overdose that shows us their demon had won.

Borrowed Time

Michelle Cardwell

He slowly started to lower his head as he told me I was living on borrowed time. I paused to take in every aspect of each word that had left his mouth before I replied that we all are. We all are living on borrowed time. Time that is never promised. Time that will never change. Time that will never expand. I closed my eyes as every ounce of this reality flooded my brain. Every part of the reality that we are forced to live in daily. But yet maybe forced should not be the word. Every ounce of the reality that we are given. Every ounce of the reality that we are immersed into and blessed with. But yet still we all suffer from the lack of understanding of how exactly borrowed time works.

We, as humanity, have never been able to understand the depth of borrowed time. We have never been able to comprehend the importance of each giving moment. We have never been able to be present in the wake of this time. Never fully present but never fully away. Never fully understanding but never fully in the dark. That is the beauty and the curse that borrowed time brings. It brings you the most precious thing you will ever have, but yet following that is the guarantee that it will be taken away. It delivers all of the love that could ever be given, but only to ensure that it will one day leave you harshly broken. Borrowed time has never been a gift that does not take. Nonetheless the gift itself makes the pain worth it all in the end. It makes us understand that regardless of the fact that there seems to be no point in this concept of borrowed time; that yet with or without comprehension we are still receiving the most beautiful thing that life has to offer. We are still blessed with the time that we are given. We uncontrollably fall in love with every second of borrowed time; all while knowing it is exactly that. Borrowed, to be returned.

The Disaster Within

Michelle Cardwell

Each one hits harder than the next. Leaving a void that cannot be filled. Leaving a feeling of despair that is beyond any other. Leaving a thought that thinks on its own, crushing you from the inside out. Leaving you left alone. That is the joy of the disaster within. It is one in its own. Different from any other.

The disaster within does not leave you to be in your thoughts. It controls your thoughts and overtakes every part of you. It changes your perspective. Makes you feel as though you've been alone the entire time. It's a feeling like no other. One that cannot be described.

It's more personal than ever before. It changes you permanently, not just while it is tearing through your consciousness. This disaster is the one to never be underestimated. Not only does this disaster overtake you but it becomes you.

The disaster has become my way of life. It alters my thoughts. Makes me feel as though no one is there. No one is listening. But no this is not me this is the disaster that has overtaken.

All it takes is one fear, one heart break, one mistake, one life. And it is all gone. Everything. No going back. No feelings erased. None taken away. This is the way it works. Destroying you mentally. Never physically because that would be too easy. The disaster leaves you in a pain like no other.

No void has ever been such like this one. No remedy can solve the things that the disaster takes to never return. The disaster does not come to those that have faced it and succeed. The disaster works to destroy those that have become vulnerable. Those that have begun to trust. Those that have allowed themselves to love. For this is a feeling like no other that the disaster works harder than ever to destroy.

The disaster targets its prey from their past. It closely examines the abandoned, the fearful, the lost, and the loved. I am attacked not because I am abandoned or fearful or lost or loved. But because I am all. I am the one that has always been abandoned. The one that fears for the future. The one that has lost to many in the past. The one that has loved to deeply.

For this I am forever afraid. For this I am forever out of control. The disaster has been the way to protect from the things that have hurt us all too much. Until you open up, for this is when the disaster feeds.

It analyzes your every insecurity and uses it against you. For this I have been defeated. I have been the one to finally open back up and it was then that the disaster took over. The disaster took over and left nothing but flesh.

The Blue City

Mattie Coomer



Chefchouen

Mattie Coomer



Things That Keep Me Up at Night

Mattie Coomer

A pen in the night
A cold, fluorescent light
Film reels tangled up
Knotted and tight
A little modern melodrama
Creeping towards midnight

The same few motion pictures
Pouring out in fixtures
Of words on a page
In varied mixtures
Of things I will never say
Setting my own strictures

Lay the book aside
And wonder why
Sometimes it comes out that way
Close my eyes and sigh
Breathe in the night
And let the memory subside

Oh Headaches, Migraines, Call Them What You Will

Keaton Coomer

Phase one:

Pressure.

That's all there is in the beginning.

Just enough of a warning,

Yet subtle enough to be confused.

It's almost hard to separate

From tiredness.

It invokes dread.

It lasts slightly too long.

Let's say 30 minutes?

No, 40.

40 minutes is all that

Phase two:

It starts.

It wasn't 40.

Was it an hour?

Two?

It's so hard to tell at this point.

It'll pass.

Phase three:

I'll just

Give it

Time.

How long have

I sat here?

My head in

My hands.

My eyes remain

Shut.

The

Aching.

Phase four

There is

Still structure

But it does

Not always

Make sense

God

I need
Some sleep

It feels
 sharp
 jagged
 cyclic
and
 rhythmic
 the
 feeling
drags
 until
 i
 feel
sick and
 my
 mind
 cant
grasp
 the
 tension
 inflicted
by
 this
 headache
 or
migraine
 i cant
 think
 of the
difference

How long have I been here?
I hoped that sleep would help,
But my dreams would not take me.
I feel tired from resting
My eyes,
But the headache feels
Easier to control.
I still feel
The jagged,
Tense,
Dreaded edges.

My ibuprofen disappoints me again.
Productivity has been lost,
But that's fine.
I'll get more sleep tonight.
I'll eat just a bit healthier tomorrow.
I'll rest my weary eyes.
This headache or migraine,
Call it what you will,
Won't be the last of its kind.
But I can still hope for the day
I forget this familiar pressure,
Always disguised with fatigue to consume my time.
And when that day comes,
I'll simply shut my eyes and dream
Sweet dreams.

Mother

Michael Cundiff

I question the events which brings me here today
an absent father, a mother a slave to the substance
And why oh why was it this fate for me
of what sin am I so guilty
I look back and recall my sister's face
tears I wipe from her cheek, the hunger pains do ache
I beg for relief, but to this day it stings
A bad situation for a single mom
or is that the excuse for your own mistakes
That the victims which you birthed
must bear sentence on your behalf
You beg forgiveness but what forgiveness can be had
when years of life were taken away
from a childhood that I now disdain
No longer will I feel ashamed
for that which I could not change
In the belly of the beast was I made
yet by my own hands will I break these chains
and you will see that the pain you placed upon me
will not break me, will not keep me from the dreams I have
I'm taking this day by day
and slowly the pain begins to fade
but the scars, they will always be on display
To tell the story of how my path was paved

Winded

Brendan Dahncke

During love's wild match, we clash and play
Under uncertainty's shadow, only true ought stay
Prevail though trails, and love's path lays way
Devotion endlessly stands against shade of gray

Daunted of delight, then stray for their shine
Only ushers for both parties to be set behind
Not primed for one's love is itself not a crime
Surgical attempts, aim upon the hearts genesis
Now crippled hearts, assembled new shrines

Dubious mediations linger upon the mind
Observe how their soul entered your spirit
What is being constructed is dominant to you
Flooded feelings set aside, just don't fear it

Life's Hardest Circumstances

MaCayla Falls

Scared.

Scared for my life, and everything that was in it.

Scared for the future, and what it would hold.

Scared for my family, and the lack of it.

It all changed after I was told.

Once.

Once I was put together, everything in place.

Once, I had it all under control.

Once there was a smile on my face.

Now, there's nothing at all.

Tired.

Tired of acting like I'm put together.

Tired of feeling out of place.

Tired of feeling adrift like a feather,

In a place that was once home, but is only empty space.

Learning.

Learning how to live in the upside down world.

Learning to make college feel like home.

Learning to stop feeling absurd

In a place that was once my own.

Working.

Working hard to feel better.

Working to be myself again.

Working to fix what's been severed,

When my only family became my friends.

Changing.

Changing my bad habits I learned to survive.

Changing who I was and who I will become.

Changing into someone who can thrive,

Smiling again under the sun.

Waiting.

Waiting for the work to sink in.

Waiting for change to truly take hold.

Waiting for the true end,

When I won't be scared of going home.

Living.

Living changed because of a divorce.

Living despite the uncontrollable circumstances.

Living a little differently, of course,

Because you never know when your last chance is.

Teaching.

Teaching others that it's going to be okay.

Teaching that you're never alone.

Teaching that you'll make it through the day,

And that there will always be a form of home.

Finding.

Finding the purpose of bad events.

Finding calmness in a vast sea.

Finding out, that in the end,

Life's hardest circumstances make me who I'm meant to be.

Untitled
Jayne Freevol



Identity Crisis

Lilly Glass

Bang! Bang! Bang!
“That’s darkness, it's coming.”
Scratch, scratch, scratch,
On the cold dark walls.
Air puffed out visible to all eyes,
Purple numbness with black crystals.
Drip, Drip, Drip...Drip,
Screams echo,
Diminuendo,
Repeat, Repeat, Tick tock, Tick tock.

Air becomes hungry,
Your head is heavy,
Sleep cannot help,
You don’t get any anyway.
But when you do all is well,
Silence commences, until
Fear takes over,
You run, and run, and run.
But you never go anywhere forever,
Tick tock, Tick tock, Tick tock,
Drip, Drip, Drip,
Bang! Bang! Bang!
“It's coming!!!!” says a mocking voice that laughs,
Scratch, scratch, scratch,

Rough, cold, fortified wall.
You rub your fingers,
Tap, tap, tap,
The dirt haunts you,
You have been cold for a long time,
Drip, Drip, Drip,

You run, and run, and run,
Into the wall,
Over, and over and over,
Tick tock, Tick tock, Tick tock,
Bang! Bang! Bang!
Tap, tap, tap
You hear a quiet voice saying,
“It's coming!!!!”.

You fall, and fall and fall,
But you never hit rock bottom,
You float gently down,
Grass pokes the back of your neck,
Chirp, Chirp, Chirp,
You skin becomes smooth with warmth,
Sweat brings you relief,
You hear a growing voice say,
“You are safe”.

Soft, Bright, Freedom
The hunger is relieved,
Sleep comes easy,
Calmness fights fear,
Tick tock, tick tock,
It finally wins!
You walk, you dance,
You can go anywhere you want,
Crescendo.
You hear a kind voice say,
“You are all right.”

It is no longer dark,
There no longer a hole,
You eat better,
You make art,
You love,
You are Free.
Tick.
I hear an unsure voice,
“Who am I?”

The Leper King

Bryson Godby

In a land of blackened death and dragon's breath,
 A hero took up his sword from the castle's depths
In his village, the plague took lives 'til the dragon arrived
 And cleansed with fire what remained for the lepers

He mounted his steed and found his way through the trees
 To where the monster hid deep
In its abandoned hold with all of its pilfered gold
 Our hero gripped his sword

The beast spread its wings when it spied the young king
 And opened its jaws to spit flames that were scorching
They fought and waged war until the dawn of day four
 When the dragon knew it was finally beat

“Young prince,” he did spake, “I think it must have been fate,
 “That we did do combat today
“Let me go free, lower thy blade, and together we shall wipe out the plague.”
 And with that, the hero nodded his head

The dragon flapped his wings and left his things
 With our hero on his back, the king
With this tenuous trust they searched the death-addled dust
 For the source of the pestilent plague

They flew through the deepest realms of dark-green forests and hills
 Where even shadows feared to tread lest they be killed
It was here the dragon spied a coven, black magic sorcerers, all the dozen
 Who read from the dread Necronomicon

But these witches and wizards did not expect a great lizard
 With his jaws set loose and flames delivered
The book of the dead was left as they fled
 And the dragon scorched it ablaze

The afflicted were saved, for the dragon was tamed
 And returned our hero to his steed
Thus concludes the tale our king would never hesitate to sing
 Though, despite his burns, few ever believed

Summer in Jamestown

Bryson Godby

There's something in the air, I think
Maybe—it could be the water
Or maybe it's something more than that
A place so in love with what is that it would rather
Hide from time
Than witness change

Main Street has been dead for fifty years
They walk about its bones, oblivious
Maybe it's the artificial heartbeat
From country songs that all sound the same
And have since the coroner (now dead himself)
Called the time on this old world full of exiles
Whose voices still echo in the
Blacktop on Ouija Street

I will not fall for its siren song
of sweet summer dew and early morning fog in faded light
My grandfather's red truck aflame in a heat now
Foreign to him in his sepulchered bedchamber
He was born and died less than a mile apart
Will I suffer the same fate?
Do I risk the one last look back?
What if I fall for the midnight lake air and the
Busted neon nonsense? Main Street's corpse in
lights—if you squint, it almost looks alive

Untitled

Kendall Hacker



LOUD

Abigail Harken



Into Night

Maddie Harmon

The Artist must've thought of "honor"
As He lifted a brush upwards
He always had the heaviest of Hands
A red blotch on the fragmented horizon
Scraped with a palette knife
So that the edges ruffled upwards
Smoky forms blistering a yellow canvas
Blood-rimmed, bloated, broken
Leaking on the edges
Soldiers with heads full of foliage
Fall in undisciplined rows upon rows
And silhouette the blooming night
The canvas shifts
A Hand swiping across still-wet paint
And a living darkness remains
Dripping, breathing, swelling with each breath
A single silver eye
To shatter across the armies' backs
A brush drops into a stained teacup
Black billowing around it
He slumps back in well-earned satisfaction
A medal pinned on His heaving breast

The Gas Station

Avery Herring



Indiana was home to what seemed like thousands of miles of cornfields on an uninspiring strip of flat land. Nothing would spark interest to the average traveler as they rode down a lonesome highway, passing herds of cows and freshly baled hay that were accompanied by a family owned farmhouse every few hundred miles. Nothing except the dusky orange and rosy pink clouds plummeting into a burnt horizon as the sun set on the farmland scene, thought Claire. She sat in the passenger side of an ancient and rusted Volkswagen beetle, her arm dangling out the window as her hand dipped in the wind, resembling a bird soaring against the darkening sky. Leslie, her disinterested friend accompanying her, had her hand resting lazily on the steering wheel as she leaned to one side, eyeing the gas tank.

“We should’ve stopped twenty miles back like I wanted to.” She huffed, gesturing with her head to the arrow pointing dangerously close to empty.

“Relax, Les,” Claire sat up straighter in her seat, seemingly unbothered by her friend's concern. “There’ll be another one coming up soon.”

“Right,” She replied shortly, mumbling a few words under her breath. “If there even is one.”

Claire rolled her eyes as they continued down the road, the sun nearly snuffed out by the distant tree line. Just a few minutes went by before Leslie’s silent prayers were answered as, just a couple of miles ahead, a quaint building seemed barely visible in the dim light. Claire relaxed back into her seat, crossing her arms as she stuck her nose in the air proudly. “I told you so.”

Without a word, Leslie turned the steering wheel to the side, pulling up beside the decrepit building with

a line of leaking pumps sitting plainly in front of it. “Well,” She said, leaning towards Claire’s side to inspect the seemingly abandoned place. “Since you’re the one who dragged me all the way out here, you can go inside and pay for gas.” Leslie’s face formed a tight smirk as Claire begrudgingly stepped out into the chilly, October air. As she closed the door of the car, she gazed up at the crumbling sliding and broken windows boarded up with panels of rotting wood. Her whimsical and optimistically curious mindset began to chip away as she headed for the door, a pit of uneasiness settling in her stomach.

Claire walked towards what she assumed was the front door and, when it didn’t budge, she gave the handle a hard tug. The door scraped against the concrete as she pried it open and as she stepped into the cluttered old shack, a shiver ran down her spine. It didn’t resemble a normal gas station, but, then again, it didn’t look like a sign of life had touched the place in years. “Hello?” She called out. No answer. Only the wind whispered back as she continued to walk through, dodging a mess of random objects scattered around the room. She passed muddied mannequins with decaying leaves decorating their surfaces and broken displays of sunglasses, collectible keychains, and other gas station amenities. She glanced down the aisles as groups of rats, snacking on expired bags of chips and candy bars that had fallen on the floor, fled at the sight of her. Grimacing in disgust, Claire reached the register to find a shiny, hotel-style bell sitting bizarrely on the counter. Next to it, a sign read: *Ring for Service*. She reached out and patted it on its head, her ears ringing with the shriek of the metal.

“Can I help you?” Claire jumped, clutching at her heart as she spun around to find a man staring expectantly at her. He looked to be just a little older than her, wearing a dark-green jumpsuit with the name *Fred* stitched in a bright red on the left of his chest. His forehead was marked with dark streaks of grease and as he patiently waited for her answer, he cleaned a thick wrench in his hands with a stained and torn rag.

Claire cleared her throat, offering a nervous laugh. “Uh, yeah, sorry. My friend and I are in need of some gas. Do those pumps out there work?”

He pocketed the rag and set the wrench on the counter as he circled around to the register. “Your friend, huh? I think I scared her off.”

Claire’s eyebrows knitted together as she attempted to peer out one of the door’s broken windows. The car still remained parked outside without any disturbance. “What do you mean?”

The man chuckled shyly, his hand scratching the back of his head. “She was lookin’ at my pumps, you see? I tapped her on the shoulder and she took off running.” Claire narrowed her eyes, mulling over the probability of such a situation. It wasn’t unlike Leslie to run off when she was scared, as she was always the friend who refused to watch scary movies or the one who always stuck the eerie tasks of going into an abandoned gas station alone on others like Claire. Still, she eyed the man with suspicion. He was a stranger in the middle of nowhere with two college-aged girls. She wasn’t going to be trusting. The man noticed Claire’s body tense, her feet shuffling as she slowly backed away from him. “But I saw her running towards Benny’s.” He offered hurriedly, not wanting to frighten her further. “I can give him a call and see if he saw her run by. Maybe pick her up, yeah?” He turned slightly, gesturing towards the phone on the wall. She nodded slowly but remained on edge, crossing her arms as he dialed the number. “As for the gas,” He continued, pressing the phone against his ear and pointing towards the corner of the room. “The pumps don’t work, but I have a few extra gallons in the back.”

Claire turned on her heel and headed down an aisle, browsing through the decades old magazines as she followed his direction. “Oh, hey, Benny!” The man greeted happily. “No, everything’s alright. I’ve just got a girl here and her friend took off running towards your land. I was wondering if…” His voice trailed off as the other end of the call answered just as Claire returned to the counter with a red, gallon bucket in either hand sloshing with each step. “Oh, that’s great.” He tilted the phone away from his mouth, turning towards Claire. “Benny can pick her up and bring her-”

“I think I can handle that, but thank you.” She said shortly, cutting him off.

He nodded, one edge of his lip twitching upwards slightly. “Perfect.” He thanked his friend and ended the call, rounding the counter to offer to take one of the containers from Claire. She refused, saying she could handle it, and followed him out the door.

It was now completely pitch black, the only sliver of light being the few lamp posts outlining the road every few hundred feet. She allowed the man to empty each bucket into the car’s gas tank as she opened the car door, reaching in to find the keys still stuck in the ignition. “Alright, you’re all set.” The man patted the top of the car as Claire slid into the driver’s seat, turning the key, the engine hissing slightly before returning to its normal hum. The headlights flickered on and Claire reached for the door, closing it with some force as she offered the man a quick ‘thank you.’

Without another word, she pressed the gas pedal, maneuvering the car back onto the road, leaving the strange and unusual man in the dust the wheels brought up as she sped away. *How am I going to find Leslie when it’s this dark outside*, she thought. All she knew was that there was no way she was going to leave that responsibility to two older men who likely preyed on helpless victims looking for gas on a long strip of highway. On a highway that possessed just as much beauty at night than in the daytime. Claire admired the shining stars and the bright, pale moon against the outline of trees spread out in the mid-western wilderness. The cows turned into herds of deer or the occasional stray cat striding alongside the road. She marveled at each aspect, scouring for a stranded girl until she was interrupted by a sputtering of the engine. Immediate smoke pushed back into her lungs and clouded her vision, causing her to lose control. The car veered to the side, slamming into one of the street lamps, throwing Claire through the windshield. She tumbled down a small hill, her bones cracking with each bump of rock and her skin breaking with each caress of overgrown weed and grass. She finally landed on her side, the car bursting into flames against the wooden pole.

After a few minutes, two men approached her body as she lay on the cold dirt, her limbs twisted in horrific angles. She groaned as they hauled her back to the car, their fingers slipping against the warm blood that drained from one of the gashes on her head. They pushed against her mangled body to place her neatly in the driver’s seat, leaving her hands resting on either side of the wheel. Claire allowed her head to roll to the side, catching a glimpse of a name etched in scarlet stitching on the man’s clothes as he pushed the car door closed: *Fred*.

“Thanks, Benny.” He said, smiling at the older gentleman that accompanied him as he took a metal hook and affixed it to the hitch of the car glowing in mesmerizing orange and yellow flames.

Fred slipped a few hundred dollars into the palm of his friend’s hand and watched as he pocketed the money quietly. “What about her friend?” He asked, his voice whistling in the gaps of his teeth.

Fred grinned widely, gazing at the blood dripping from the back of the car, forming a small pool in the gravel directly below. “She’s in the trunk.”

He nodded, climbing into the vehicle and hauling the car towards an unknown location: a ditch filled with dozens of other victims a couple of miles away, ready for a new vintage addition.

Spring Blossoms

Caitlyn Higdon



The Emerald Home

Caitlyn Higdon



Enchanted
Caitlyn Higdon



Whispers in the Rain

Kaleb Humble

The sky is descending, floating at bay. An aroma encompasses the deteriorating fields, my skin is flattered, graced by a power I cannot understand, nor yield.

Monsoons could sink or bring you afloat, and a languid clatter of thunder could set you free.

Each liquid pearl strikes, scattering debris of reflection and world stones grieved. Transmuting snowy eyes to turquoise, cyclically rafting down the fluvial street, Along the vigorous streams, skidding the concrete with continuous beats. One second then gone, lingering where shivering hearts meet.

On the terraces arbitrary souls align, towering like a thousand of me on one of you.

Wrinkles and peelings accumulate, blisters tire my sockless soles. My ankles are submerged, shallow, and rising, repossessing all I own.

If I could, I would take a leap of faith just to see how rain splats, consuming the ant-like view over the horizon, ricocheting and not turning back.

I would drivel to the drains, and pipeways would call out my name, a lifelong collage would be sunken, luminescent, and inflamed.

All the years washed up into one shower, and the past would rot away. If I placed myself through the puddles, nothing would be the same.

The path is elongated when the destination isn't a home,

Everyone passing is destinationless— naked, unmasked, and alone,

How many others? How many want to be unknown? Standing in a whirlpool, begging to be relocated to an oasis,

Tracking murmurs in the wild, trudging at ten different paces.

The break of silence tunes whispers in the rain. The only clouds are between us, even if the sky were to fall.

My watery reflection is an intersection of war— to return or stay. In the midst of baptism the material word decays.

Hand Me Downs

Kaleb Humble

Hand me downs, head to toe,
Tailored with hereditary anguish,
Lettered, only rags I can bestow.

Chronologically synced, unchanged, young to old,
As you that was once me, shackled my wrists,
Hand me downs, head to toe.

New was problematic, who would know,
These reversions make dreams vanquish,
Lettered, only rags I can bestow.

Beginning to end, I was happy, though
Who was before, solely spoke my language,
Hand me downs, head to toe.

I was given rags so
The picture I built, you distinguished,
Lettered, only rags I can bestow.

Time will pass, unto my own will be told
Our trials and tribulations, us faced with

Hand me downs, head to toe,
Lettered, only rags I can bestow.

Night's Embrace

Kaleb Humble

Listen to the noise and follow the void,
Inside lies the barreling winds of fortitude.
The sounds of green awake all that need be,
Unto dusk what is seen can be heard.

As gaze turns to an empty stare,
Beyond holds a myriad of variety.
Castaway correspondence with familiarity, darkness will abide,
The night is young, minutes upon hours on a ride.

So much warm I had felt before, now turned to stone.
This reign of terror shall cease to exist, let the sun shine through.
Stars and a crescent reflect all hope that can be found.

Always danger, the shining light doesn't differ.
Look within the wilderness and alter temperament.
Feel the earth, the night was never a foreigner.

Among the twilight lies odyssey,
Within inhabits what the eyes can't see.
Obsidian blood proliferating,

Tonight the atlas will open to me.

The Worst Race of My Life

Zach Id-Lougssiyr

So It's one of my life's most crucial swim meets—regionals for this year. I swam two races, the 500-yard freestyle and 200 freestyle. Those two races are painfully wrong, but that's what I get for being a distance swimmer. Let me set the scene. Sometimes, when I have a big meet coming, I shut down. I don't do any work, and it just ruins my grades. This was the worst possible week for me not to work.

I had a math project, a presentation in English, 4 or 5 French assignments, and a poem to write that I still hadn't even started. So now I'm stressed, and I still need to swim. So now I'm at the clerk, of course, which is a loading dock for the swimmers before you get up to swim, and standing in front of me is the butt man. I don't know the butt man by any other name besides a dumb nickname. I don't even know his actual name. I know he is slightly faster than me... by a minute. So now I know both aren't going to place high in the 500, and I am stressed out because of missing work, which is my fault.

Then they call my heat up, meaning I must get up on the block. So there is this thing that I call a block-induced heart attack. It's when you stand on the block, and then, out of nowhere, your heart just feels like it will explode. The best way to put it is you're having a panic attack at the worst possible time.

When you get up on the block, there is this period before you get in the water, and this brief, maybe 20 seconds, feels like a bajillion years. And in that bajillion-year period, you can think of one thing. I don't want to be on this block anymore. And then you hear it, take your mark, 1..2 seconds, and then, BEEP. You freak out and leave half a second late. Everyone is in the water before you, and you have messed up badly.

The 500 is a complicated race. It reminds me a bit of a straightforward math equation. Endurance plus speed equals time drop. There is more to it than just those two things, like your start, which I already screwed up, your turns, and how much you want it. I have already made a terrible mistake. My start was prolonged, almost a false start, but not relatively slow enough. And my starts are already slower than most people.

So now I have to rely on one thing, more like two things: momentum and my walls. Walls are essential because if your turns are fast enough, you can spin fast, and it is somewhat fun; as a benefit, the faster the turn, the more momentum you keep from before the turn. I am perfect at keeping momentum with each turn and getting faster with each turn. It's fun.

So, let's skip forward a bit. The first 250 yards were to be expected; I was trying to keep up after my terrible start. By the time I reached the 400-yard mark, the butt man had already completed the race, beating me by a minute and 6 seconds; that hurt a lot. But I wasn't the only one struggling, and a kid from KCD had never swam the 500. Poor kid sprinted a 200 and then died. I did better than ever, finally breaking 6 minutes. I was proud of myself.

I woke up the next morning with a groan. I may have swam the day before, but I wasn't done yet; I had just swam the 500 and the 200 the night before, but I had to come back and do it all over again.

This time, it would be better; I was in the loser's heat for the boy's 500. I didn't care too

much, mostly because I didn't have to swim against buttman or Bill McMimin, who I never mentioned, but he is a freshman at Eastern who also swims faster than me by a minute. Instead, I was swimming against the same poor kid who had never swam it and the guy from Trinity who wasn't a swimmer.

Have you ever just known that you were better than everyone you going against? I know that sounds mean, but I'm right. It was my time to shine to be the best of the losers.

Once again, I was on the blocks, but this time, there was no fear, just overconfidence. Once again, I heard "take your mark" and then the beep, but once I heard it, I entered on time. If the blocks, the two kids next to me were keeping up with me, but once I flipped, there was no chance they were not catching me. People often tell me, "zach, you're a narcissist, zach, you are overconfident." I know I am; sometimes, it's better to be overconfident than under-confident, and this was one of those moments. By the 250 mark, I was flying. See, the key to the 500 is not getting tired, which initially sounds complex, but there are ways to avoid this. Breathing pattern: mine is a 2-stroke breathing pattern that goes to a 4-breathing pattern once I need to speed up. You want to breathe as little as possible when sprinting because turning your head causes drag that slows you down, and every millisecond means everything in swimming. Swimmers are obsessed with those minuscule time cuts. People will spend 300 dollars for a teksuit so tight that the girls must wear them half off between races because they are tighter than a chest binder. So, me holding my breath a little longer isn't as bad.

The other way is to have a long stroke and kick as little as possible, which sounds counterintuitive but helps. But I was floating on air, or at least that is what it felt like. By the 400 mark, I was 50 ahead of everyone; they stood no chance.

That feeling of touching that touchpad and looking up at the board to see your time after a race, especially when you know you did well? It's the best feeling. I was the pacemaker for that heat; I dropped an astonishing 13 seconds in a race I had just made the best time for not even 24 hours ago. I got out of the water and almost collapsed. I was so tired, but I was proud. This means I could go back and gloat to my friends and then rub it in their faces that I had a better 500 times than all of them.

If I were to say the moral of this story, it would be questionable, but I think it is good to be overconfident, especially if you know yourself better than everyone in the water, field, or room. So I say be confident, be more than confident.

Last Night?

Nayeon Kim

I visited the city of brotherhood. Some might say it's the home of cream cheese. Which is totally not. From the train station, I walked down the streets, where even the graffiti were high. They were sitting on the floor. Staring, at the building we went into, which buttons we pressed to open that door, which bedroom light lighted up. I was an alien put on a show.

Then I was in Chinatown. Had steamy dumplings and tea. It felt like home. Not because I was surrounded by Asians, mainly because I grew up in China. It took about an hour for me to realize that it was cash only. They must be stashing a lot of money by NOT paying tax like this, I thought. I talked to the owner lady. I didn't have any cash on me. It took 0.2 seconds for her to get mad straight from her chest to the top of her head. She screamed, threw the check on the table. What?

She took my plates away. It wasn't like I did not pay for food.
I even gave her a tip. Even if it was only a dollar. It was the most respect I could pay her.
She said "You not pay tip. You just pay for food." As she took all the cutlery away.

Walking back to the Airbnb. The sun was setting behind the tiny apartment buildings. Behind that, there were skyscrapers poking the clouds. My footsteps were anxious, and the google map I pulled up was spinning like crazy.

Took a nice and warm shower. Picked my phone up. Went to the living room. Texted my parents. Called my boyfriend for hours and hours. I cried for hours. He said "Don't worry, think of it as a practice round for when you go back to Korea, and we really need to do long distance relationship. After the summer, we will be so strong."

After his speech, I went to bed.
I locked the door.

I woke up. It was 12:0 something.
I am a light sleeper.
It has always bothered me. If anyone calls my name or tells me to get up when I'm asleep, I'll wake up right away.

Did I save my life?
Or did God just love me and save me, telling me to wake up?
Was it because my mom and my grandma pray for me every single day, day, and night?

The doorknob shook vigorously. I heard two men talk to each other.
"Open it."
"Push it."

I thought they were the owners of the Airbnb. I almost opened the door. But it was just so odd.

The backdoor was the only exit. I heard the crowbar clenching against the door hinge. There was no time. I whispered into her ears, "Wake up but don't say anything. There are some people trying to break in. Follow me and we'll sneak out the backdoor."

The backdoor was locked too. As I turned the lock right, it made a giant clicking sound. I heard the two men outside the bedroom door say "Shit" and run.

Was it because they thought it was a gun clicking? I called my boyfriend. It was a pretty stupid move. Actually, I don't care. I made all the right moves when it was a desperate situation. I just couldn't tell if the two men were gone for good or still hiding out there. I had to ask an American what was the right move. I was afraid that they would shoot me.

He told me to call the police. I wasn't even shedding a single teardrop. The police came. They just thought that I locked myself in the room. No. What the actual ****. No, just no. I literally told them some people broke in and tried to get into our bedroom.

They searched the whole house, then headed back saying that they will probably not come back because of all the sirens. I could not go back to sleep anymore. I had my boyfriend on the phone so he could at least call the police if something happened to me. I had 2 hours of sleep and woke up with tears, headache and sweat. The question was why. Why did they choose this place? Or us. It was no one's fault because no one did it. No one broke into the bedroom. No one was caught. No one tried to catch anyone. I was no one to them too.

Study of a Cow Skull

Nayeon Kim



A Fight
Nayeon Kim



Seasons
Emma Kist



Hydrangeas in the Spring

Kayla Koerner



Death to the Ringleader!

Jesse LaGrange

It's 12:04 on a Friday, and everyone's gone
The tables are cleaned, the lights turned out
Ready for today's repeat tomorrow

Sitting at a booth by the window looking out
I watch as night brings forth her children
Wandering in sparse groups,
The shadowy engraving of sidewalks and alleys:

Beneath the distant park pavilion,
Underage girls in dirty underwear, makeup
Looking to give themselves for cheap
Teenage boys lusting for a fix
To fight, to steal, to suffer
Everyone roaming the dying concrete paths
Followed by sins of the night
Selling carnal ecstasy for eroded spirits

As the cardiogram falls down like a gavel to a sound block,
The last sensual breath of familial ties
Is severed by itching face-covered blood-sores
A child wandering the streets, wondering where they go,
Where they are, where they went,
Now adopted by violent night-guides
Growing to be the best of them all

Dead houses decorate the glory-landscape,
A joke to those of better fortune, a dark comedy on an open stage,
A freak show hell with free admission,
A vicious circus jester that sleeps
In the warm embrace of dopamine and scenic debauchery;

And so we are left: forsaken
With nothing to gain and nothing to lose
But the hope of a raven-winged light
To take us where there's joy

And tomorrow we'll be here at this booth again,
To hide in warm glow and savory aromas
Trying to forget where we are,
To ignore the crying truth outside

Even as night's children also partake,
And all of us become.

A Litany for Equivocation

Chloe Lesch

Hear me out—I thought I was dead set on my picturesque life
yearning for a male—staring timidly at the busy atmosphere
deeply analyzing every figure
while attempting to avoid the commotion around him.
However, he was attracted to the feminine psyche
his shoulders broadened as he heard the soft, simplistic melody of delicate murmurs
his eyes dazzled as he stared at her
turning his entire body toward her; listening attentively
while he combed his fingers through his silky hair
nervously drawn to her graceful demeanor.
Genuinely, was I dead set? Did I really know what I wanted?
Later yearning for a female—who approached the noisy scene as she was drawn to the hectic
interpersonal atmosphere
she was deeply intrigued
using her fingers to softly curl each strand of hair as she heard the deep inflections of male voices
confidently approaching the crowd as she flaunted her soft curves and her grandeur
it was her prerogative to attract the majority
with her confidence—her wit, and her benevolence.
Did I really know what I wanted?

Entanglement

Chloe Lesch

Lying awake is the hardest part
a self-proclaimed insomniac
staring blankly at the inanimate figures plastered on the walls
while fragments of energy leftover from the day
re-emerging into haunting memories—pruriency and anguish
deeply entangled in the many layers of sheets and blankets
an agitated body shifting into attempted alleviation
aggressively clutching each blanket
feeling a variety of textures—from soft to coarse—through clenched fists and tight fingertips
grounding, grounding
inhale the cold, crisp air circulating throughout a somnolent bedroom
later exhaling—recycling every heavy breath into the warm, humid summer haze
imagine a blissful scene—recycling some of the senses
barren islands with endless blankets of sand
the sea breeze—weakening as the silent melody matches the tempo of relaxed breaths
heavy-eyed as the body is immersed in soft sand
eventually drifting off into a deep sleep—forgetting reality and its entirety.

Captivated

Chloe Lesch

The lack of tenderness—the remnants of past childhood memories.
Endless fields of frayed grass
later accompanied by a swarm of beautiful entities—long-awaited divinity
that painted the sea of burnt stalks into a lush field of vegetation
standing in awe—captivated from head to toe
throughout the mind and soul
as they offered their warm embraces—one by one
warm bodies—abrupt clutches of tightly grasped fingers around the delicacy
droplets of sweat seeping into the earthy terrain
refreshing the field that was once covered in inanimate greenery
floral buds sprouting upwards into the energetic scene
directing consciousness into the expanse of bedazzled eyes
the vibrance was overwhelming
the charm, the charisma
it was all so captivating—a save from grace
paralyzed by infatuation
self-assured altruism despite the many caveats
a pledge of eternal support and dedication
an impuissant mind
manipulating the lifeless landscape
later painting the scene with the bits of colors left behind from fragments of older, happier memories
to escape the profusion of lies
consequently captivated by one's beauty.

The Trial of HER

Tyler Melson

I survived the trial of fire and ice.
But I could not survive the ember that radiated from you.
It's also not like I tried to avoid it.
Because you could hurt me 30 times and I would ask for 30 more
If it meant to be close to your embrace
You have brought me immense joy and also destroyed me.
You have been my best of times.
And my worst of times
My strength and my weakness
My light and my darkness
My happiness and my pain
Pain that shoots through my veins like a poison
Sticking to me like a death wish I'm begging for
And herein lies the problem I'm begging for it.
Not because I can't say no to you.
But because I don't want to
I would rather be with you in pain.
Then without you in loneliness

I Love You

Tyler Melson

Beauty

Beauty as you look deep into my eyes

Smooth brown skin glowing as your path crosses mine

I feel alive

But not in a way I usually do

No only in a way that can stay true to you

I wanna see this through

I love you

Wow I can believe I said it I love you

It feels like a euphoric high and a gut punch all at the same time I love you

As much as I did on that very first time I love you

More than the moon and the sky I love you

Like a pen to a fine line

I'll reach for your heart if you reach for mine

And oh what a joy it could be

Only for you to fall in love with me

Now I don't expect it all at once that would be asking too much

Could we go out for coffee i'll show you I won't be a crutch

Like you were a pop star and I was your biggest fan

Before you came along a family was never in the future plans

But on that dreaded day it took just one look

And I knew I would love you til the end of our book

8 Billion to One

Tyler Melson

There are 8 billion people in the world
I still somehow managed meet you
who always knows how to make me feel bright when I'm feeling blue
which knowing what you have been through you haven't always been treated the best
every time love knocks at your door you have to see if it passes the test
I never see that broken girl
With the most amazing smile that lights up the entire world
I see what I've always seen
From every one of those brunette curls that teach me how to love
Perfection
That's what God strived for when he made you
With Brown eyes that demand my attention daily how could I ever love someone new
All this to say love shouldn't be this scary
So why am I so terrified and weary
I don't want to mess this up
I could love you for a millennium and it would never be enough
Told my friends were just besties and they immediately called my bluff
Were not quite lovers either
Maybe cause I write my feelings instead of show
All this to say I love you XOXO

Crisp
Audrey Mills



Industrialization

Audrey Mills



Boston

Cherica Mitchell



Remember

Vishnu Nandyala

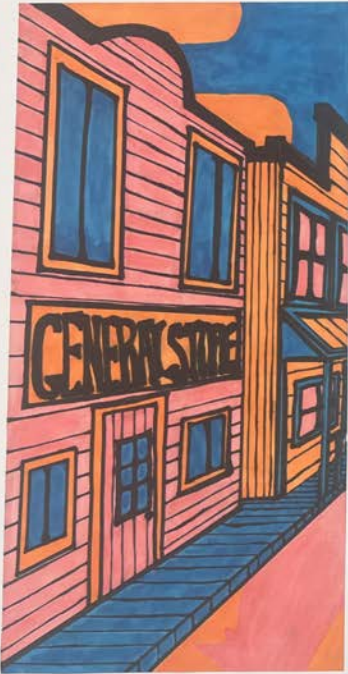
It's a cakewalk to trace the one who is lost, whereas
It's a herculean task to trace the one who ran away. He, who lost the path,
tries to move close to his destination. He goes the extra mile to reach it.
He, who ran away, moves away from his destination. He wouldn't reach it,
though the path is well-known. Likewise,
You would somehow return, had you lost your path. But
You wouldn't return, had you lost yourself
As you'd have been taken far away from yourself, so far
that you are no more reachable.

Life and Death
Catherine Overshiner



Trip Out West

Lucas Poupard



AE86 Colorwheel

Lucas Poupard



Bearing into the Future

Lucas Poupard



From a Heavenly Father's Perspective

Kushaiah Riis

Son and Daughter

I know you by name

I have walked with you by the water

I have mourned at your every pain

Justified and redeemed

As a lost coin or sheep

From the moment you were conceived

Your soul I've wanted to keep

Branch of the true vine

A light on the hill

Your heart close to mine

Know who I am and be still

No longer a slave but free

For fellowship with my Son

My love beyond measure like the sea

It is with death you are won

Grand Canyon

Hunter Rogers



Snow Day
Hunter Rogers



YouthFest War Cry

Hunter Rogers



Reds

Tristan Roy

“Avez-vous une cigarette?” she asked
I didn’t
Everybody smokes here
The second-hand ghost of a hundred reds
Waltzes through the terrace
I’m content with my elongue
As dark as a Parisian night gets
But it’s not complete
The French way
Without cowboy killers to complement it
I finally cracked and bought some
Just to get the full experience, you know
Now I’m hoping she comes back

The People You Met and the Strangers You Know

Sabrina Ruiz

The People you meet from on seats and the streets
the conversations that carry all they can teach
the wisdom, the stories, what you will hear
there's a reason you meet them though they disappear
it's not a coincidence God sent them your way
and you may not understand why but you will someday
so strike up a conversation you never know where it will go
there's something so special about strangers you get to know

The Curse of Social Media

Deric Shearer

Social media is a place that is cursed,
Turning those who enter into a tragedy,
A place where every photo is rehearsed,
It really is quite sad to see,

This curse puts people through a lot of stuff,
Inflicting self-loathing and anxiety,
Making you think you are never good enough,
Turning your world into a shallow society,

This curse looks harmless and fun,
However, it is no toy,
This curse encourages comparison,
And comparison is the thief of joy,

Everyone is perfect in their own way,
So resist the curse and its hate,
Take a chance to look in the mirror and smile today,
Don't let this curse seal your fate.

Would You Steal My Car?

Erik Street

Assume you're on a walk. We'll go with Scottsville Road in Bowling Green. My truck is sitting in the parking lot of the Toyota dealership, just out of reach of the streetlights. It isn't really that dark, but it is enough for security to pretend not to see anything. It's after seven, so they are certainly closed (unless it's a Sunday, in which case they ought not be open at all).

The keys are sitting in the cup holder, clear as day on this night. The windows are down, and— Scratch that, the keys are in the ignition. The dash lights are— No. Not quite. The ignition is *on*, actually. Like, running. The car is running. Yes.

Yes! The windows are down. My Econoline is running in the parking lot of 2398 Scottsville Rd, Bowling Green, Kentucky, 42103, United States of America, Earth, Sol, Milky Way Galaxy. You are walking by. You see that my 1998 Ford Econoline V10 (with three hundred and five horsepower, when it was new) is sitting all alone, ready for war against the handicapped vans that patrol these sickly streets. Out of raw, unrestrained curiosity — you always liked the second facelift of the fourth generation Ford E Series — you decide to divert course on your late-night stroll so that you may participate in a new experience taking place in the first row of the parking lot at Toyota of Bowling Green. You were previously at 36.95561 N, -86.42635 W, but now you are within a few feet of 36.95523 N, -86.32683 W. You are in a place at a time: you are taking part in a moment!

You're instantly enraptured when the Kenwood Excelon DPX795BH (the Sony XAV-AX6000 was out of reasonable budget) that I installed to replace the OEM radio head unit automatically connects to your— Wrong. No. Get out of here. It isn't going to automatically connect to your phone. Take your sick fantasies elsewhere. *My* music is playing. In *my* car. Conveniently, though, you like my music. Well, to be perfectly honest, you love my music. You probably wouldn't admit it, but it makes you sad in a “drinking-with-the-gang-after-your-situation-ship-ended” sort of way, and you love it for that. You love *me* for that!

And that may even be true, yet you're looking through the open window of my Econoline, wondering what the last two hundred thousand miles could've held. Where has it been? How many hands have graced the wheel, let their fingers trace the edge as they drum along to Teenage Car-Songs? You're watching the odometer as if the miles will pour on the second you glance away. You know that one is not supposed to touch a car that is not one's own, but every passing second makes it more difficult to keep those pesky hands folded behind you. Maybe, if you just brushed the wheel through the open driver's side window, you could satisfy your nosiness.

Here is where you get to choose your own adventure. Listen carefully, because if you chose wrong, there might be hope for you yet. It is time for our titular trial: Do you steal my car?

Do not pretend that this is not a binary question. There is no hidden third answer in which cause and effect are neatly parted. If you have declared in that mind of yours that you would, of course (of course!) *not* steal my car, you may leave. You are cordially uninvited from the rest of the story.

Remainders: you stole my car. It happened in hundredths of a minute. It wasn't really your intention, but you've known your answer before I needed to ask. If it hadn't been running a few steps away from where you were meandering down Scottsville Road, you never would have given the idea residence. But it was, and you did, and you watched your fingers pull at the handle on the door. You felt the embrace of seats that have accompanied, admittedly with apathy, many to their destinations. There was not much in the way of things for you to do. You eased it into drive and rolled out of the lot.

Now you're on the access road, just for a moment before you can make your escape onto Scottsville. The left turn into an empty intersection is seconds away, and you get to make another choice.

Will you be tentative with this unfamiliar machine, or will you set it free to fly as only a thief's transgressions allow? The first isn't a real option. You choose the latter.

Wheel right, brake, wheel left, gas. The flick breaks the rear wheels from the asphalt. The automatic transmission downshifts to compensate for your sudden power request and a streak of rubber is all that remains of the Econoline previously parked at 2398 Scottsville Rd. It's impossible to be sure, but you don't think anyone has thrashed this car in a while. It would only make sense, one who loves a car rarely likes to see it on death's door. But you are not in love like I am. Your foot does not come up for the next half hour.

The gasoline I worked for is eventually burned away, leaving you with all of the responsibility of a recently stolen 1998 Ford Econoline and none of the careless confidence that infatuated you to begin with. Smugly, you roll my truck back to the dealership and replace the column shifter to P. When I return in the morning, I am too unaware to notice the new wear amidst the sea of scars I've imparted from my own delicate treatment.

My day goes by in confident ignorance. The rest of the week is much the same. Truthfully, I've been a little distracted. I can't help but notice that no one is around the Chevrolet idling under the water tower.

Swingset

Erik Street

A rod from a broken swingset
Disappearing into your thigh,
Shock putting spots before your eyes.

In a panic, pulling it out.
Unplugging the hole, springing a leak.
Then, lying in a pool of yourself,

Your panic dulls with the colors of the world.
A final thought, that maybe
You should've left it in.

Spacing Out

Erik Street

I'm spacing out.
Legs dangling over the black,
My waterproof boots obscuring the corner of a letter on a great name plate:
SPACESHIP:004:EARTH
There's a party on a lower deck, somewhere below.
Retrofit?
Baltimost.
Goodness, what sad songs they're playing.
Next to a great gun, a taxi driver is leaning against his hood.
He sings to the stray cat he's holding,
Swaying along to the party anthems that float up to New Charleston.
A ghost pushes my shoulder, and I fall into the sea.
Past the hammock hanging under the cab parking,
Past the Baltimost party.
I borrow a few seconds to look on as I pass,
Smoke rises from ashtrays and holes burned in the low couches
On which twenty people all lay, comatose
Or having sex.
It's hard to tell when spacing out.
What's that, babe?
Oh yeah, I'm about to finish.

The Faded Maybe

Hannah Sumner

We used to be kids asked to tick a box.
A note traveled from hand to hand
Until it reached our desk.
A simple question of,
Do you like me?
Choose a checkbox.
Yes, no, maybe

Along the way, we lost ourselves
Certainty now valued.
How can we know for sure,
When we dream of being that kid.
Staring at our note, observing the options we had
Do you like me?
Yes, no, maybe

Maybe holds comfort
A middle ground of peace.
No harm in not knowing
No pain or suffering.
Just navigating the process

With all our options present.
Do you want me?
Yes, no, maybe

Suddenly we grew,
our final box began to fade.
The safety net dropped
no time to reflect.
The third box is gone.
Your options less and less.
Choose a checkbox
Do you love me?
Yes, no, yes, no

Maybe is gone
Faded with our childhood.
Time to grow up and know the answers.
No time to waste
Your options less and less

Choose a checkbox

Do you love me?

Yes, no, yes, no

The Final Frontier

Jared Turner

It was 1966 when William Shatner first spoke the now famous words, “Space... the final frontier,” as part of the opening sequence for the science fiction show *Star Trek*. The phrase comes from the idea that once everything has been explored on earth, the only place left to go is *up*. It is the last unknown that there is to explore, and it seems to be infinite. We could spend forever searching the universe to no end. Or, at least, it seems. And humanity seems to thrive on exploration, on discovery, on all things new. It has driven us for centuries. But what if that which we think is infinite is actually finite? What happens when everything there is to explore gets explored? What happens when humanity has nothing left to do and nowhere left to go?

* * * * *

Today is the day. Thomas nearly jumped out of his chair as he read the message on the screen in front of him. This meant that Alaster was done. The machine was built. Years- no, decades of planning and scheming and re-planning had led to this moment. Now, It was finally time. Thomas was going to take *the journey*.

Thomas ran to the door, not bothering to change clothes or even find his keys. He grabbed only his wrist watch - a gift from Lisa - before he left. He flung open the door, sprinting down the hallway of his apartment building and out the front entrance, racing down the street towards Alaster’s lab. He didn’t bother relocking anything or even shutting the door. He didn’t care. It wasn’t like he was coming back, anyway. After all, he would soon be taking *the journey*.

Most people don’t like to talk about it. It was shrouded in mystery, mainly because anyone who took it never came back. Not to mention that those who have come close to taking it but were saved last second always seemed to come back... different. Changed. And they never spoke of what they saw. All of this led people to fear it. Very few looked forward to the journey.

Of course, all this just made Thomas all the more intrigued by it. He had already grown tired of his current life. Everything there was to do, all that there was to be experienced, he had already done. Multiple times. There were no new advancements in technology to look forward to, no new worlds to explore... And there was nothing left for him here on the planet Corinth (no longer on Earth, as humanity had left that desolate rock behind centuries ago in favor of colonization of the planets amongst the stars). There seemed to be nothing this universe could offer him. Well, nothing except *the journey*.

On the way to Alaster’s lab, Thomas passed by several security checkpoints set up by the UIG (Unified Intergalactic Government). He was filled with anger at the sight of them. They had, as their name would imply, brought every last system together in unity, making all under them into one massive empire. Of course, they didn’t accomplish this without taking away some liberties. The rights of the living were stripped down to a fraction of what most considered acceptable. But no one was permitted to say anything. Thomas had been made very aware of that fact after what they did to- he didn’t want to think about it. He hated them. Them and every coward who had let the UIG get away with it. It just added to Thomas’s desire to leave it all behind. It was hard to say what it was that motivated him more, boredom, curiosity, or anger. It didn’t really matter. They all led him to *the journey*.

“Good to see you made it in one piece,” Alaster said as Thomas approached the door to the laboratory.

“It’s good to see you, too, my friend,” Thomas responded.

Friend was a strong word. Alaster wasn’t Thomas’s favorite person by any means. Alaster was certifiable; referred to as a mad scientist by most, having spent his entire existence attempting projects that were nothing short of psychotic, borderline inhumane. But he was absolutely invaluable to the plan. The two unlikely companions had met by chance in a bar, both of them drunkenly admitting more than they should have about themselves and their unhappiness with their current state of affairs. Thomas was quick to realize the genius behind the deranged rambles of Alaster, and a partnership was formed. Alaster was the brains and Thomas was the brawn; buying, stealing, doing whatever it took to gather all the resources needed for the machine that was going to take them on the journey.

Alaster led Thomas through the lab, his insane grin never faltering while they passed his previous experiments. After a few minutes, they finally stopped in front of the machine, and as Thomas laid eyes upon it, he was filled with excitement. The machine didn’t look like much on the outside by design. Alaster had taken great pains to make it look like a heap of junk in case the UIG made one of its surprise inspections of the building. But Thomas knew what it was. This was the outcome of his labor, the beginning of his future, the device that would finally complete his plan and send him on *the journey*.

Alaster began to chuckle, the kind of unsettling chuckle that reminded Thomas just how crazy he was. Unlike Thomas, Alaster wanted to do all of this in the name of science, as it was the last thing he or anyone else could do to push the limits of what was possible. The chuckle slowly formed into an almost uncontrollable laughter. Yeah, he was crazy. But then again, maybe Thomas was, too. After all, you would have to have lost it to want anything to do with *the journey*.

But Thomas also had another very secret reason to want this, a reason that drove him more than he was willing to admit to Alaster. His wife, Lisa, had already taken it. Not by choice, of course. It was rare for anyone to choose to take it. No, she had been forced to do it by the UIG as punishment for speaking out against them- she knew the consequences, but was brave enough to stand up anyway. Technology had advanced to the point where no one ever died of natural causes anymore, so prison sentences were no longer seen as fit for any crimes. It was a minor inconvenience at best. After all, what is a few decades in a cell when you have a millennia to make up for it? So, the UIG needed something else to strike fear into those who live under its authority, and nothing is more frightening than the unknown. Nothing scares people more than *the journey*.

And people were certainly terrified of it. Everyone except for Thomas and Alaster. But then again, they didn’t plan on going alone. No, they were taking everyone with them. Every last poor excuse for a person left in this universe. That’s what the machine was for. It would access the chips that were so lovingly placed in everyone’s brains by the UIG to help administer control on its people and force everyone, all at once, to commit themselves to *the journey*. Alaster began typing frantically on the control panel, making the final preparations for what was to come, laughing while he did it. The machine began to bang and whir as it warmed up, getting louder and louder as it got fully charged, until reaching an almost deafening volume that let Thomas know that it was ready for use.

“It’s time!” Alaster yelled over the noise.

“Do it!” Thomas screamed back at him.

This was it. This was *the journey*. This was the *true* final frontier.

Death.

And in that final second before Alaster entered the command that would send a signal to every last pitiful individual who remained in this plane of existence and fried their brains, before Thomas got his full revenge, before darkness took hold of him and he got to see what was hiding on the other side; in this tantalizing moment when he took his last breath before he died...

Thomas had never felt more alive.

Love and Her Henchmen

Megan Whitson

My Grandmother used to braid my hair.
Wrinkled hands adjusting themselves on my shoulders,
June peeking through red curtains,
The name of a perfume I can no longer remember,
And Elvis Presley—always Elvis—staring from his perch on the stereo
("He could've been your Papaw").
Our diction always varied when it came to certain matters, including the one at hand.
I called it braiding
She called it plaiting
I could never quite defend my word choice when the one she chose was so soft,
So inexplicably her in the most insignificant way possible.
The correct word is plaiting.

I watched her fade on a rainy day seven years ago.
Seven days ago, I watched the sunrise take form on a flight to New York, and it finally dawned
on me that I miss her—a pain as deep and as old as time itself.
I would have taken her anywhere.

My mother has recently decided that Post Malone is her soulmate,
Her boyfriend isn't so thrilled about that one.
She dances around the living room with reckless abandon, gesturing me upwards with a willing
laugh and a lightness I have never seen
Who am I to refuse?
She spins and struts, whisking away the death of her mother, the divorce, the many injustices she still
hasn't forgiven God for.
She spins me and hugs me and screams the lyrics to "Chemical" in my ear and then wonders why
I can barely hear
(it isn't the airpods)
She makes her daughter proud
And she finally got the damn tattoos

Sometimes it is so shocking to remember that a love so true and deep can exist outside of
Reynolds Road.
Men and love were never a possibility, not really. They were the things you giggle to your
cousins about, boys and marriage and castles—as if we didn't have fathers to debunk part of this
skepticism.
But no, we knew everything at six years old.
And now, at nineteen, my hands have been held and kissed and adored and protected,

It's every bit as disgusting and wonderful as I dreamed.
It's quite embarrassing how long it took me to realize that it is possible to both love and be loved,

in that funny romantic way that never quite makes sense.
I hope I'm doing it right.

At nineteen I know nothing, but I do know few things to be true:
Love is the hands of someone who cooks fried chicken because they know it is your favorite.
It is random bouts of pure honesty and confession.
It is kissing your lover in their car,
knowing nothing else besides the fabric of the seats and the fact that you had never kissed before this
(and frankly hadn't wanted to).
It is Post Malone. It is your mother.
Love is the only place where Grief and Joy can dance together, and we look on, hopeful.

Deconstruct

Megan Whitson

I never believed in living life in half measures.
I was the bird whose wings stretched from one end of the horizon to another,
The envied elastic that never snapped.
I was Vivaldi's "Spring" tied into a neat little bow,
All simple smiles and floral skirts,
"Holy Roller" tattooed all over my face.
Yes, I was the Alpha and the Omega.
The beginning and the end of my mother's pride,
My father's Judgment Day,
Supervisor of the angels the day that Mamaw died
"Be careful with her head"

I was sixteen measures of volatile softness and ambition.
I surrendered a ration of my all-ness in order to be blessed with scholarship and admiration,
I got everything I wanted.
They tell me I deserve it.
They've always been so good at lying,
Maybe that's where I get it from.

I am no longer the crescendo of good deeds that my aunt once sobbed over
I am the failed fledgling of an Eagle grounded
The elastic has snapped so many times against my wrist,
It doesn't quite hurt anymore.
I am the curled and gnarled Oak grasping at its magnitude and lamenting its ancientness.
The exile of the Holiness Church,
Always welcome but never home.
I am four beats of warbled song,
Singing so bleakly,
But still, so persistent!
Bemorebemorebemorebemore

The Lock with Many Keys

Jason Womack

Locked away in a dark room
Nobody having the access to the key
Secluded from society,
One keyhole, and many different keys to choose from
Only one will fit, but can they find the right one?

Secluded from society, has given them some time to think
What really is their purpose?
What legacy do they have to fulfill?
What people do they have to please?
What do they need to do to make themselves happy?

Then they finally found their calling,
The simple key that fit in the keyhole,
They have found ways to express themselves
It does not make them nervous,
It does not make them feel left out.

The key that fit the keyhole was not to think about the issues
Not to worry about consequences,
Not to think about the impact in the future
Just to live life one day at a time,
Just to make the most out of each day.

The Stallion in My Dreams

Makayla Wright

Some moments are like wild stallions in our lives.
He was like a wild horse. I got close.
I was even able to break him for a moment. I admired his beauty, his strength, and his courage.
When he stood still long enough for me to mount I easily sat on his back. He took me through his fields.
His spirit was magnificently free.
I smiled and stretched my arms out. Letting my spirit be free with him.
Even if it was momentarily.
But eventually, he wanted to go back to his life without reins. Without saddles. Without bridles.
So when he lowered his head. I got off.
I knew my time was up.
I held his face in my hands. Kissed his head.
Ran my hands through this mane.
Told him I loved him one last time.
It may have been the last time someone was to tell him that and mean it.
And with tear-filled eyes I watched him run away.
I stood in the emptiness, the pain, and sobbed.
Until eventually I had to pick myself back up. Dusted off the dirt.
The wolves were coming.
It was beginning to get dark out. I had to keep moving.
Because in the wild you can't stand alone for long or you'll become the prey.
So I walked back to my life before him.
A piece of my heart was gone forever with the stallion who showed me gentleness comes in doses.
I still think about those beautiful moments, as chaotic and painful as they may be.
I breathe in the air rushing into my lungs. The freshness I felt.
The way the sun was warm when I first saw him.
How it was dark when he ran away.
Maybe he's still free. Maybe someone caught him.
But I know if I go back to that field looking for him he won't be there.
So I let myself walk further away.
Knowing we were momentarily the most important things in each other's lives.
He the stallion and I the spirit.
Together we were one and the same.
Free.
The stallion taught me nothing can be truly free and ours to keep at the same time but we must enjoy the ride while we can.

Never Again

Makayla Wright

And there it was.
Painted in pastel colors.
With teary blurred lines.
The moment I knew I lost what was never mine.
It came crashing around me and hit my stomach with a violent jolt that rose up my throat.
I cried.
I cried a lot.
A heart-shattering moment that shaped my soul forevermore.
Shall never forget it.
The curl of your body.
The touch of your palms.
The gentle safeness of your poisoning kiss.
The ignorance bliss of your smile.
The touch of your pale blue icy eyes.
But it was never mine.
I hadn't seen your phone in four months.
You disappeared for too long.
Your excuses grew lazy.
Your gaze grew hazy.
You were my first true love.
My first mature love.
And there it was.
The moment I could never have back.
Your arms wrapped around her.
The way they wrapped around me.
Your smile
The same smile you would give me when we laughed.
And the name.
The same name you called me.
Wrote out before me.
It all shattered into place.
And there it was.
The moment I knew.
You were never mine.

Notes on Contributors

Charlotte Archey is a senior from Columbia, Kentucky, majoring in psychophysiology and minoring in theatre and mathematics. She is the president of SGA, is a Begley Scholar, and enjoys traveling, reading, and lounging on the sofa in her coziest blanket.

Adrian Ayala is a Christian ministries major originally from Naples, Florida. He is a member of the LWC wrestling team and also works with FCA.

Danielle Bekker is a recreation, tourism, & sport management major from Zimbabwe, and she plays competitively for the LWC golf team.

Morgan Bryant is a sophomore from Shelbyville, Kentucky, double majoring in English and history. Her interests include drawing, watching films, and playing board games.

Johnny Cano-Alvarado is a sophomore from Louisville, Kentucky, majoring in business administration, and he enjoys soccer, football, and working with thoroughbred horses.

Michelle Cardwell is a senior from Bowling Green, Kentucky, who is majoring in English and minoring in Spanish alongside women's and gender studies.

Keaton Coomer is a senior from Columbia, Kentucky, double majoring in mathematics and English. His interests include games, drawing, and movies.

Mattie Coomer is a Christian ministries and English double major. She is from Cave City, Kentucky, and she enjoys tennis, spending time outdoors, and participating in campus ministry.

Michael Cundiff is a sophomore from Bowling Green, Kentucky, who is majoring in Biology and enjoys collecting and raising insects and other invertebrates.

Brendan Dahncke is a junior originally from Vienna, Illinois, majoring in business administration and minoring in English. He is a member of the football team and enjoys watching and discussing films.

MaCayla Falls is from Campbellsville, Kentucky, and is double majoring in biology and psychophysiology. She enjoys writing poetry, playing tennis, guitar, piano, and SCUBA diving.

Jayne Freevol is a business administration major who is also minoring in art. Originally from Houston, Texas, she now lives in Russell Springs, Kentucky, and enjoys concerts, playing guitar, tennis, and coffee.

Lilly Glass is from Columbia, Kentucky, and she is majoring in middle grades education and minoring in Spanish.

Bryson Godby is a senior from Jamestown, Kentucky, majoring in English, and he enjoys Dungeons & Dragons, guitar, and creative writing.

Kendall Hacker is a sophomore majoring in biology and psychophysiology with a chemistry minor. She is from London, Kentucky, and some of her non-academic hobbies include wedding and senior photography and playing golf.

Abigail Harken is a freshman from Columbia, Kentucky, majoring in secondary English education, and her interests include drawing, writing, reading, and video games.

Maddie Harmon is a senior from Columbia, Kentucky, who is majoring in biology. She enjoys listening to music and taking care of her geckos.

Avery Herring is a psychophysiology major from Greenwood, Indiana, and her interests include writing, painting, and swimming.

Caitlyn Higdon is a biology and psychophysiology double major with a double minor in chemistry and psychology. She is from Elizabethtown, Kentucky, and enjoys traveling, hiking, SCUBA diving, reading, and photography.

Kaleb Humble is a junior from Monticello, Kentucky. He is majoring in communication and enjoys creative writing, music, and nature.

Zach Id-Lougssiyr is a freshman from Louisville, Kentucky, majoring in biology, and his interests include swimming, drawing, paleontology, and speculative fiction.

Nayeon Kim is a theatre arts major from Incheon, South Korea, whose interests include painting, drawing, and crafts.

Emma Kist is an elementary education major from Loveland, Ohio, and her interests include archery, hiking, and being outdoors.

Kayla Koerner is a senior double majoring in elementary education and Christian ministries. She is from Richmond, Kentucky, and her interests include hiking, kayaking, swimming, and student government.

Jesse LaGrange is a junior from Burkesville, Kentucky, majoring in English, and he enjoys reading, creative writing, studying languages, and music.

Chloe Lesch is a freshman from Louisville who now lives in Pewee Valley, Kentucky. She is majoring in psychology and has an avid interest in creative writing, especially contemporary poetry.

Tyler Melson is a theatre arts major and Christian ministries minor from Russell Springs, Kentucky, and he loves hanging out with friends and watching movies.

Audrey Mills is a business administration plus sustainability and environmental studies double major from Colorado who competes competitively in archery and also enjoys cycling.

Cherica Mitchell is a media studies major and history minor from Campbellsville, Kentucky, whose interests include starting a photography business.

Vishnu Nandyala is a graduate student from India pursuing his degree in technology management. He also enjoys creating pebble artwork.

Catherine Overshiner is from Burkesville, Kentucky, and is an art major with an emphasis in graphic design whose interests include reading, writing, listening to music, and art.

Lucas Poupard is a business major from Celina, Texas, and he enjoys all things cycling related.

Kushaiah Riis is a freshman from Vine Grove, Kentucky, who is majoring in biology.

Hunter Rogers is a senior majoring in communication, and he is from Greensburg, Kentucky. His interests include photography, movies, and listening to music.

Tristan Roy is a senior from Russell Springs, Kentucky, who is double majoring in art and history. His interests include music, film, literature, and traveling.

Sabrina Ruiz is a theatre arts and communication double major from Louisville, Kentucky, whose interests include being a member of the LWC Singers.

Deric Shearer is a senior from Somerset, Kentucky, majoring in English teacher education, and his interests include basketball and ping pong.

Erik Street is in his third and final year at Lindsey Wilson. He majors in theatre, and enjoys spending time.

Hannah Sumner is majoring in middle grades education with an emphasis in English. She is from Hopkinsville, Kentucky, and is interested in golf, hiking, and traveling.

Jared Turner is a senior from Cumberland, Kentucky, who is double majoring in media studies and theatre arts. He enjoys working in broadcast communication, writing, and laughing with friends.

Megan Whitson is a sophomore from Laurel County, Kentucky, who is double majoring in English and communication. She enjoys traveling, writing, and choir.

Jason Womack is a junior from Russell Springs, Kentucky, majoring in business administration, and he enjoys bowling and traveling.

Makayla Wright is a communication and media studies double major from Campbellsville, Kentucky, who enjoys photography and singing.

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.

