

Timber Creek Literature Magazine
Spring 2018

The Journey



Timber Creek's Spring 2018

Literature Magazine

Life is a journey through which we all must travel. Along this winding path we may be faced with challenging obstacles or extraordinary miracles. Each thing we experience, whether exhausting or exhilarating, helps to shape us into who we are.

Through words and stories and creations we are able to depict our journeys in a way otherwise impossible.

The Literature Magazine provides creative writers an opportunity to share their stories with others in hopes of leaving behind a message or giving their audience something foreign to reflect on.

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She and the Rose

A cold, whispering breeze fluttered in over the frosted balcony and through the dilapidated doors. The rush of frozen air sent a shiver down the length of my spine, only enhancing the eerie feeling of abandonment surrounding myself. I knew I shouldn't have explored this deep into the palace, especially not after her... disappearance. The aged floorboards creaked with each step I took. A glimmer on the distant side of what appears to once have been a bedchamber, catches my eye. I hesitantly wandered in the direction of the mysterious light. Leave no stone unturned, right?

Upon my approach subtle, but intricate flakes of purifying snow cascaded down upon a fragile glass terrarium. It appeared to me, just as she described. Her enchanting words forever etched into my memory.

"Though it is cracked, it had visibly endured the test of time and mother nature's wrath quite beautifully." She'd recount her memory every night from her bed, resting parallel to mine. I'd beg her to tell me more, and of course in her sweet sisterly manner, she would.

"Within the confines of the ancient glass floats a rose," I whispered in time with the reminiscent video playing inside my head. "It was once an eye-catching scarlet - the epitome of elegance. It's youthful hydration long gone, it is crisp with neglect and ignorance. Though, that is only on the inside." My voice rushed and raised with hushed excitement, as hers once had.

Traitorous tears burst through the reservoirs I held within and began to gush freely down my hopeless face. She was the rose, I realized. That's why she came here. To vanish. She was tainted with darkness like this beloved rose - covered with a more-so tangible melted liquid sunshine. Her expensive makeup, and greatly contemplated wardrobe all served as a materialistic attempt to renew her beauty and value; which, in my eyes, was never truly lost in the first place.

Unlike the rose, my dear sister never lost her allure. Her unnatural 'modern age' values served as her own outcry; a futile attempt at resurrecting her not-so-former beauty. An outcry that was completely overlooked. We, my family and I, abandoned her just as the inhabitant of this palace did to the poor rose.

Just as the rose has, she drowned in sorrow and loss, her worth outranked by that of society's synthetic-centered ideals - artificial fulfillment regarded as important over that of mother nature's very own creation.

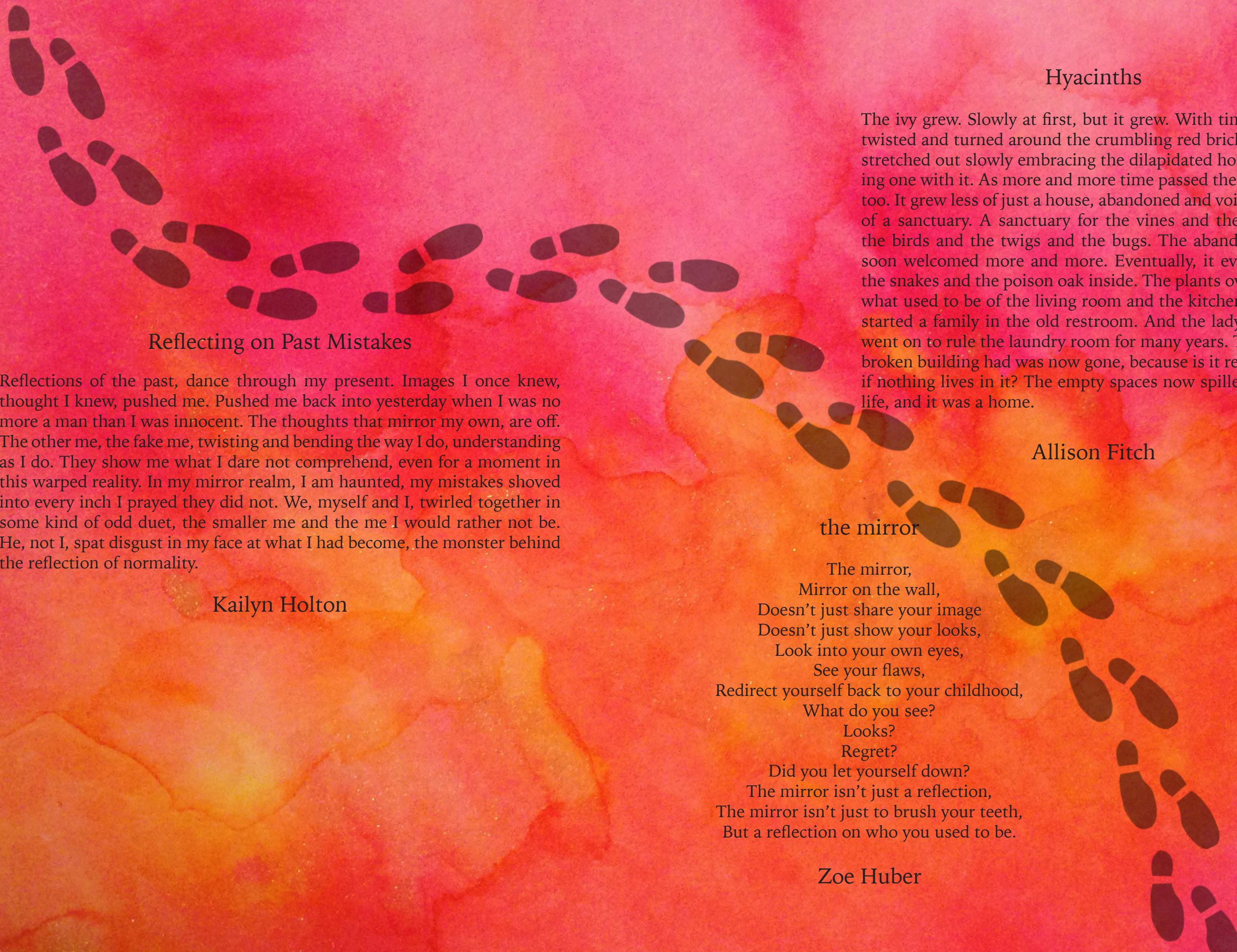
Just as the rose had, she died. She died due to neglect and ignorance. She died by her own hand, with her reflection of a rose by her side. One final win for the materialistic world in which she once lived.

Amanda Lastorino

Hanahaki

may you always find happiness and joy
discover love beyond what love can give
treasure the voice of your lover
and always give what you can't live
may you live all the days of your life
to the fullest and utmost glee
for the joys of your life are the joys of mine
even if they aren't with me
may the flowers of density clear from your chest
and the vines will capture mine
the thorns of painful unreturned love
hopefully end with time
may you always be happy and glad
for you that's all i desire
but the bleeding needles stab at my heart
the situation dire
may you live all the days of your life
i'm afraid i cannot live mine
i wish you all the happiness and love
and with that i fare goodbye

Pip



Hyacinths

The ivy grew. Slowly at first, but it grew. With time the vines twisted and turned around the crumbling red bricks. It's arms stretched out slowly embracing the dilapidated house, becoming one with it. As more and more time passed the house grew too. It grew less of just a house, abandoned and void, and more of a sanctuary. A sanctuary for the vines and the leaves and the birds and the twigs and the bugs. The abandoned house soon welcomed more and more. Eventually, it even accepted the snakes and the poison oak inside. The plants overwhelmed what used to be of the living room and the kitchen. The foxes started a family in the old restroom. And the ladybug's reign went on to rule the laundry room for many years. The flaw the broken building had was now gone, because is it really a house if nothing lives in it? The empty spaces now spilled over with life, and it was a home.

Allison Fitch

Reflecting on Past Mistakes

Reflections of the past, dance through my present. Images I once knew, thought I knew, pushed me. Pushed me back into yesterday when I was no more a man than I was innocent. The thoughts that mirror my own, are off. The other me, the fake me, twisting and bending the way I do, understanding as I do. They show me what I dare not comprehend, even for a moment in this warped reality. In my mirror realm, I am haunted, my mistakes shoved into every inch I prayed they did not. We, myself and I, twirled together in some kind of odd duet, the smaller me and the me I would rather not be. He, not I, spat disgust in my face at what I had become, the monster behind the reflection of normality.

Kailyn Holton

the mirror

The mirror,
Mirror on the wall,
Doesn't just share your image
Doesn't just show your looks,
Look into your own eyes,
See your flaws,
Redirect yourself back to your childhood,
What do you see?
Looks?
Regret?
Did you let yourself down?
The mirror isn't just a reflection,
The mirror isn't just to brush your teeth,
But a reflection on who you used to be.

Zoe Huber

Penitence

The cottage felt cold and unwelcoming as Frankie pushed her way in. It had been months since she stepped foot in here and it felt strange and foreign when she opened the door. Even though it was never sunny here, always humid, and the air was suffocating, she fell in love with the little house. Walking inside made her feel calm and blissfully happy.

Today was different. All she felt was guilt, anger, and a lack of everything else. She closed the cottage door and dropped her only bag by the fireplace. She sat on the bed and she cried.

~

Frankie fell asleep after she cried. When she woke up, the air was still humid, and clouds still covered the sky. She felt so alone and helpless. She had nothing left. Frankie looked down at her left ring finger. A cursive P was tattooed there in the middle.

The P stood for Perseus, her husband. He was really the reason why she was in this mess but she didn't blame him. He did everything he could, but in the end it wasn't enough. He was now sitting in a cell somewhere, maybe hoping for death, maybe starving- she didn't know. Her heart broke and she started crying again.

~

Perseus had come around the summer of her junior year while she was at college. She was walking down the street and he just managed to bump into her. They became close, but it was soon after that he left. When he came back next, he threw her brother in jail. Frankie's brother had done nothing, but he was framed, all because of Perseus. She

couldn't speak to him after that. He tried to win her back for months but it was no use. Frankie was stubborn and unforgiving when someone hurt her family. But he was relentless. Her father was framed as well, another crime Frankie thought Perseus had come up with to ruin them. But just before her father was executed, Perseus stepped in and saved him. Her brother came home from jail and it was as if nothing had happened.

Truth be told she missed him all those months when she was freezing him out. It was nice to talk to him again when she felt like he had made up for his horrible act.

That's when he told her about his father. He controlled all the inner workings of the government. Any law that was passed, any war that was started, any bomb that went off in another nation was because he let it happen. Nothing was done without his consent. Perseus' job was to make sure the cities were unaware and put down any unrest if they did find out. When Perseus fell for Frankie, his father tried to cut that tie. Perseus was not allowed to marry just anyone, because some random girl off the street could be dangerous for the business.

But his father missed one tiny detail. Perseus didn't want to work for the business in the first place and he felt it was cruel. But he was always afraid to stand up to his father because of his power. Frankie changed all that. This could have been the end of the story, but Frankie screwed up. She didn't want the government to work the way it did, so she told everyone she knew. A rebellion was brewing, but the business found out,

and destroyed everything she held dear. Her family was slaughtered, right in front of her, and Perseus was dragged away unconscious right back to his father. Frankie ran for her life but the guilt was eating away at her and she knew she hadn't fought the way she should have.

~

It had been months and Frankie hadn't left the cottage once. Her shame and heartbreak was almost too much to handle. Frankie would die here if she didn't figure out a way to save her husband. She only had one thing to bargain with and she knew Perseus' father would agree to it.

"I'm here to see Mr. McLaughlin." She said into a speaker.

The building was magnificent. Every level was covered in windows that shone like diamonds and looked as if it reached the clouds.

"Do you have an appointment?" The speaker suddenly squeaked.

"No, but he'll want to speak to me. I'm Frankie."

There was a silence on the other side and suddenly the door clicked open. Just as she had expected, two men took her arms and escorted her to the lower levels of the tower. They forcefully sat her down on a metal chair and locked her in the room. Frankie wasn't fussed, she knew he would come.

The door finally opened and Perseus' father entered. Suit and tie, hair cut cleanly and gelled back, he looked like a proper business man. He was the spitting image of Perseus, and if Perseus wasn't so different from his father, she would hate Perseus too- just because he looked like this man.

"I was wondering when you would show up. Perseus is still alive."

"I want to make a trade." She wasn't going to spend any time with fluff. She was on a mission.

He smiled. "Your freedom for his, I assume?"

"In a sense, I guess."

He raised his eyebrows. "I'm interested to hear what you can offer me."

"Take away my memories."

"I'm sorry?" He asked.

"Fry my brain. Take away the memories I have so that I can't threaten you anymore with all that I know. Let Perseus go and I will never spill your secrets again."

"But you want me to let you go after I've taken your memories?"

"Will it matter? It's not like I'll be able to hate you if I don't remember you."

He looked slightly impressed. It brought her a little pride to feel like she surprised this powerful man.

"Alright." He said.

"Really?"

"Yes. I think we can have that arranged this afternoon."

"There's nothing else to it? You're just going to say yes?"

"You're giving up everything and I'm gaining everything. There's nothing to think about." He turned to the door and then paused. "Why did you come here, agreeing to give up your memories?"

"You've taken everything from me and I let it happen. Perseus is the only thing still standing and I have to save him. His life is worth more than mine anyway."

"So you're running away from your mistakes because you feel guilty?"

"Essentially."

"I don't know why my son fell in love

with you.” The man pushed open the door and walked away. She was led to another room, even farther down than the interrogation room she was sitting in earlier. The room was bright and completely gray. There were a few instruments, the ones that would seal her fate. The door suddenly swung open and Perseus was there, trying to drag her away.

“Do you really think I would let you do this? Are you insane? Get out of here right now! I can handle my father!” He had bags under his eyes and he was thinner than she remembered. His skin was pale and he had cuts and bruises all over his arms. And then there was one little scar near his right eye that she had given to him by accident. She touched it lightly.

“The agreement has already been made. Just know that I love you and I want you somewhere safe.”

“You’re crazy, we are leaving right now-” “Perseus!” Frankie said.

He stopped.

“I’m not going anywhere. I screwed up and I have to make something right. I can do this knowing you are free from that tyrant.”

“No-”

She pulled him into a hug. “Destroy this whole thing for me, okay? Get away from here and burn this all to the ground.”

He was quiet when she pulled away.

“I’m not letting this happen.” And then without a goodbye, he left to find his father.

Frankie turned around to the nurse. “Do it before Perseus comes back.”

Frankie lay down on the table as the nurse prepared. She closed her eyes and thought

of her family. Her stomach twisted. All those deaths and it was caused by her. Maybe she wouldn’t be officially dead, but her mind would be gone and that was the best peace she could hope for right now. Frankie closed her eyes and the nurse began the process.

~

His eyes were cold as he stared at her.

“You have no idea who I am, do you?”

She stared right back at him. “Am I supposed to know who you are?”

He sighed. “We have a lot to talk about. I’m Perseus.”

“Frankie. That’s it, that’s all I remember.”

He nodded. “Well that’s a start. Here’s the thing, you and I are going to start a revolution.”

Madison Butler

Begin Again

“The purpose of a poem is to get the reader to think, even for a moment.”

-began again.

The girl smiles wide, a sad glint in her eyes.
The violent memory fading when she sees his figure.

The boy walks out of the store, holding the box.

It’s white wrapping paper

Shining.

Like the stars themselves.

She waves to him.

He waves back.

His dark hair ruffled from the wind.

He pulls his jacket up
To shield him from the cold.

He looks to his right

And crosses the street.

The girl notices too late, once again.

She stands.

Her voice caught in her throat.

The truck sends him forward.

Yet the present lands at her feet,

A single drop of crimson poisons the white glow
of the paper.

She throws off her goggles.

She drops the remotes.

Her knees give out and she falls to the carpeted floor.

She must save the boy.

She stands once more.

Her trembling hands raise the goggles to her face, and scoop the controllers
from the floor.

She must save him.

So she-

Julien Makoutz



The Trapped Boy

I look in the mirror and all I see is the boy. The boy that is me, the boy that is trapped. Inside the reflection the boy stands with sad eyes that call my name, my presence, my soul, to let him free, to let him live. He wants to be let out, let out of my lifeless body. My body that stands with shame, my body that tells its story with endless curves of femininity, smooth skin that does not fit quite right, and to top it all off, breasts that define motherhood, and a vagina that defines womanhood. The lack of a slim waist, the lack of a forest on arms, the lack of a flat chest, the lack of a penis. Lack of oneself. The little boy aches on the other side. Aches with a want, a need. The woman on this side, me, I ache too. Because I am struggling, struggling to live. I am struggling to be the daughter of my mother. I have to kill that boy in the reflection, the boy that wants to live. But to kill him is to kill me. But this is for my mother, this is to save her from the deadly son she does not want. Yes, she will no longer have her daughter. But that is because she just could not have a son.

George Green

Band-aids

Patch me up.
Cover me in bandages.
Wrap up my wounds.
I hurt, but I don't know where.
An empty feeling from inside hurts everywhere on the outside.
A bandaid should do it.
A bandaid from anyone else.
To cover the bruises,
To cover the scratches,
To cover the memory of you.
You hurt too, don't you?
A bandaid should help.
Just put it on where it hurts.
You'll feel better soon.
Then you can leave me be.

Julien Makoutz

i don't miss you

i don't miss you, but i miss the way you looked at me
i don't walk with my head down when i see you anymore, but i
notice when you pretend not to see me
i don't daydream of your skin against mine, but i find myself trying
to remember what it was like
i don't miss you, but i think about you on bad days
i don't remember if you ever meant it when you said you loved me,
but i replay it in my head when i'm lonely
i don't choke when i think about you anymore, but i find myself
pinching my arm every once in awhile when you cross my mind
i don't miss you, but i miss how you gave me a reason to live

K

Valentine's Day

February 14, 2020. It was yet another Valentine's Day, but this one was going to be different. Charissa Rose Jenkins. I called Charissa Rose. I liked her, maybe even loved her and today, well today I was finally going to ask her to be my girlfriend. Philip and Craig both gathered around me as we conferenced on how I was going to approach her. I saw her conversing with her friend, Marylee. I displaced myself from the group and walked toward her as she did me. Her eyes were ocean blue with the sun giving them a beautiful sparkle. I looked at her and before I could say a word, she reached her hands out to grab mine. When I touched her hands, it was like putting frozen meat in a nice warm oven. We stayed in that position for a minute until the bell rang. Philip, Craig, Marylee, Charissa Rose all went into Ms. Willis' class. I've heard rumors about Ms. Willis' version of Valentine's Day. She makes all of her students basically mimic everything she does, and it controls all of their love interest. Basically, her first husband divorced her and her second husband cheated on her, so she hates everything about love and forces all of her students to live a loveless life like she does. I looked through her door as she locked it behind me. I looked at Charissa Rose. She looked at me from the window and, then she was gone. Ms. Willis' spell had rose upon them. They had lost their love interest. She opened the door a few minutes later. I rushed to Charissa Rose to see if she still knew who I was. To my surprise, she did. She came over to me, hugged me, kissed me, and held tightly to my face. I felt her hands move on my face. She twisted, and... "And he was gone." Ms. Willis said. "She was my apprentice forever."

Briahnna Williams

The Show

Little more than a year ago you were telling me that you loved me. That I mattered
We were two leads in a show neither of us signed up to be in.
Somewhere between now and you, the character you pressed over your skin
sucked me in.
In our dance we got lost.
Forgot that every show has an ending.
Sure the curtain was bound to shut, but you pulled it down during a mournful
monologue.
You shut me off before you stopped to see if I was finished.
Now here, on a dark stage, I resent you.
Every time your face appears behind my eyelids, my body shakes.
Here on this dark stage, I am seething.
I fell for your character, not you.
On this dark stage I dare say that I hate you.
Or maybe I hate what you did.
Maybe my bones tremble because they know that no matter how I try to
convince myself, that I am still so desperate to please you.
I cannot lift the curtain with my hands.
Now when I see you on the street, our show plays in rapid reverse in my head.
I stare straight like I don't see you.
But I more than see you. I feel you.
Your pulse amplifies in my ears like clattering cymbals.
Straight-faced I walk like nothing is happening but it feels like my insides are
twisting into knots.
So my show, our show, is over.
And it feels as though, as my character was shelved,
I am put away.

Rin Jernigan

The Match Girl

The withered old lady coughed, pulling her blanket closer. She attempted to turn her head towards the girl but couldn't make it halfway. Her head now resting on the tattered pillow; smiling weakly. She heard her granddaughter talking to the wall again.

"What a strange girl..." she thought, her body shivering.

"Deemo, I already told you this! Grandma said we need to go shopping."

The girl paused as if listening for a quiet sound. She reached her hand out and brushed her hand up against the wall, feeling the rough plaster cracks between her fingertips. The girl then looked up through the hole in the ceiling. Their house was in dire shape, apart from the massive hole in the roof, there were rats living in the walls and the only source of heat was from a gas stove that had no more fuel; useless like everything else in the house. It was only a rusted fragment of scrap now, decaying in the corner. The girl's eyes grew dull and she looked at her Grandmother with remorse.

"We don't have much money, Grandma. What did you need?"

The old lady only weakly smiled again. Her frail body shuttered while a coughing fit came along. After it had subsided, she took a deep breath.

"It's alright Ally, I just need some matches... I'm very... cold..."

She trailed off, closing her eyes and drifting to sleep with a sweet smile on her face. The girl sitting on the other side of the room stood up calmly, gesturing towards the wall she had been talking to. A tall, slender figure materialized in front of her. It was stark black and standing on its toothpick-esque legs. It was seven feet tall and had to bend over her to fit in the small, cramped room. It's hollowed-out eyes pierced through the dark space, seemingly making everything darker, yet Ally still loved her odd friend. A few years back he had appeared when she moved away from her old home. She didn't remember much from then, only that she was very sad about something. She shook the negative feeling away and slipped on her torn coat. It was a long black trench coat; dirty with edges that were once sharp. The inside was tinted blue, now graying from age and use. Ally loved it more than Deemo, but she did not exactly remember where she got the old thing. She shouldered on a dusty knapsack and started out the door into a cold winter's night.

The street was quiet, snow fell from the air and hit the ground lightly. Ally could see her breath as her feet crunched along the run-down sidewalk. She headed north,

towards the city. The metropolis center was a dark place, filled with crime and debauchery. She walked for what felt like miles in her wet shoes. Her hands already shivering in her coat pockets. A car sped by and splashed slush up onto her, sending the poor girl stumbling backward away from the coldness. Ally furiously attempted to wipe away the snow from her body. Her hands turning blue in the process, her cheeks and small nose already bright red, yet she struggled onwards. As she rounded a corner atop a hill just high enough to see over the buildings below, the cityscape opened up in front of her. Lines of smoke drifted lazily into the clouds while she started to make her way down the hill. Random geometric shapes jutted out haphazardly while laying against the white ground; creating a beautiful portrait of a city that at heart, was not beautiful. Residents of the scornful city walked about like ants. Ally's knapsack loosely hung from her shoulders as she reached into it. She removed thirty cents from a small compartment inside and pulled them out with jittery hands. She continued to walk for a while longer before she saw her special friend appear from behind a lamppost.

"Deemo!" she exclaimed, running up to his side.

The figure said nothing, just slowly bending its head to look down at her with his dark gaze. Ally went in to hug him, but her arms went through him like always. Ally didn't mind, she just liked him to be there. When she had stopped pretending to hug his tall legs and stepped away; she looked up at him like a small child.

"Thanks for coming with me! Are you here to protect me?"

She said teasingly. The figure didn't react. He just stared at her intently.

A resident walked up to Ally and pushed her to the ground.

"Freak!" The person yelled, trudging on by.

Ally stood back up and brushed the snow off of herself again. A tear trailed down her cheek, but she wiped that away too. She put on her broken smile once more and pulled the hood on from the hoodie she had under her trench coat. It was a light gray one she had for as long as she could remember. Deemo watched as the stranger walked away. "What makes me such a freak?" said Ally, changing the pace and walking again. Deemo strode a few feet behind; remaining unresponsive to her questions.

"I wish we had a life together, ya' know? I wish we had a house like the people we see, and I wish I could put a little Santa hat on you!"

She laughed at her own words. More and more people walking turned and shot her strange looks. She had been speaking loudly, so she stopped moving and whispered

to Deemo.

“I think you’re drawing attention…”

Deemo just looked back at her again with his quiet expression. Ally realized what she had just said and looked down solemnly.

“Yeah, I know…”

She stuffed her hands back into her pockets and kept walking towards the convenience store on the corner of the street just up ahead. Deemo followed her closely while she walked, looking straight ahead like a soldier on a mission.

They arrived and she entered the brightly lit building, rubbing her eyes as the fluorescent light hit them. Ally looked back to see where Deemo was, but he had disappeared once again. She was alone as she strolled down the aisles, looking greedily upon the bagged chips and soda. Ally made her way towards the front of the store, and saw the matches behind the counter. She fumbled her hands in her knapsack and grabbed the thirty cents, pulling it out to inspect them. She cautiously approached the checkout area, looking up at the cashier.

“Hello, what can I help you with?” said the man, chewing his gum annoyingly.

Ally carefully reached out her hand and let the coins fall on the counter. The cashier raised an eyebrow and looked at her suspiciously. “Uh… what did you need?”

The shivering girl pointed up at the matches on the shelves behind the counter, not saying a word. The man turned to grab the matches, but stopped. He turned back around and chuckled.

“Scram, kid. You need like, \$5. You live in a dumpster or somethin’?”

The cashier laughs again and takes her money, putting it in the register. Ally looks at him stunned for a moment, tears welling up in the corners of her eyes.

“B-b-b-but th-that’s m-m-mine…” she said shakily.

The man only snickered and pointed at the door. “I said scram, or I’ll come over there and drag you out.”

Ally covered her eyes and walked out the door slowly. She got into the parking lot and

sat down, weeping gently into her coat. Deemo lumbered towards her from the gas station, standing above her and looking down. Ally looked up at him and reached a hand towards his stilt-like legs. Deemo stood there, motionless as Ally’s hand went right through him. He peered down and watched her attempt to scoot closer to him. Ally started to shiver violently, her clothes now wet with the snow she was sitting in.

“W-w-why does everyone h-hate me…?” She whispered, wiping tears away.

Deemo said nothing. He just stood there like always. Ally wanted to go home, so she tried to stand up. She got about halfway up before her legs suddenly became warm, and she fell over. Ally was very confused. Her legs were completely numb, yet they were almost blue. She sat there staring at them for several minutes before she went to touch them. Her mind suddenly got very fuzzy and her whole body got very warm. She started to giggle dreamily as she saw Deemo walk in front of her and bend down. His shape suddenly shrank, and he became a teenage boy, about 16 or 17. He smiled sweetly as he crouched down low next to her.

“I’m sorry darling, but I think I’ll be needing this back.” He says, taking her coat off. The boy slipped it on and stood up, looking down at her.

“I’ll see you later, right? I know you hate goodbyes.”

Ally looked up at him and smiled happily. “Tomorrow for sure, Dustin.”

The frail girl fell backwards into the cold snow; falling unconscious, as the boy walked away.

Julien Makoutz



My Hero

He wasn't a hero to the world,
but a hero he was,
to this little girl.

The protector of my heart
counselor of all my pains
A hero in my eyes of love
The blood that runs within my veins

My dad's arms help me reach
the things that are not always in arms reach
His loving and caring pure heart carry me
He truly inspires me

My best memory I'll ever recall
Is the gift of his sweet presence,
The greatest gift of all.

You pick me up when I fall,
You give me strength when I am weak
This is why he will forever be
The best of all.

Julianna Mata

All the Money in the World

Walking down the main road of town you see a lot of different things. Shopkeepers closing up, the few apartment owners locking the gates outside their doors, and those not fortunate enough to have a place to live... or anything to eat. Here you can find just about every kind of homeless person. There's the group of children dressed in rags (who are all either orphans or runaways), the drunkards that blew everything in their life for the bitter taste of alcohol, and there are even just average people who lost everything in some freak accident.

Though all of these people share something in common, there is always something causing a discomfort walking down this road. It's no wonder that the shops and residents lock their doors and gates. Most of the adults in their situation would stoop so low as to break into a house or jewelry store.

But the children, the children all seem content with their situation. It's almost like they don't mind. And late at night, you can hear it. A few of the children playing in the street, singing, dancing, and not having a care in the world. These kids that wear rags and nothing to cover their feet playing just like those more fortunate than them.

I remember one girl specifically. She still danced even when the others huddled around the fire. I asked her if she had the money would she buy a coat. And she told me she was the richest person in the world.

Megan Goin

Fallen Saint

Parody of the First Verse of The Sound of Silence by Simon and Garfunkel

Hello Jesus, my old friend
You've come to talk to me again
Because my footsteps softly creeping
Left their sound while you were sleeping
And the footsteps that were echoed through your brain
Still remain
Within the sound of silence

**

Hello Satan, my old friend
I've come to talk to you again
Because the grace of your great preaching
Left its seeds while I was leaving
And the grace that was planted in my brain
Still remains
Within the sound of silence

Chris Abrams

Rain

I might float away.
The rain dances with us now.
Please hold on to me.

Rin Jernigan

Darker Days

I've seen darker days
the sound of gunshots
out by the bays
where the bodies decay.

The rotting smell is too much to bear,
so how could you sit there and not even care?

You say you love this country
oh,

and you'll do anything for it.

But when things get too hard you just give up and quit!
You say you want change, but instead you just sit there and cry,
so how could something change if you don't even try!

Oh
what's that?
You've had a rough few days?
Trust me, son,
you'll see darker days.

Devin Gilbert



Little Bell

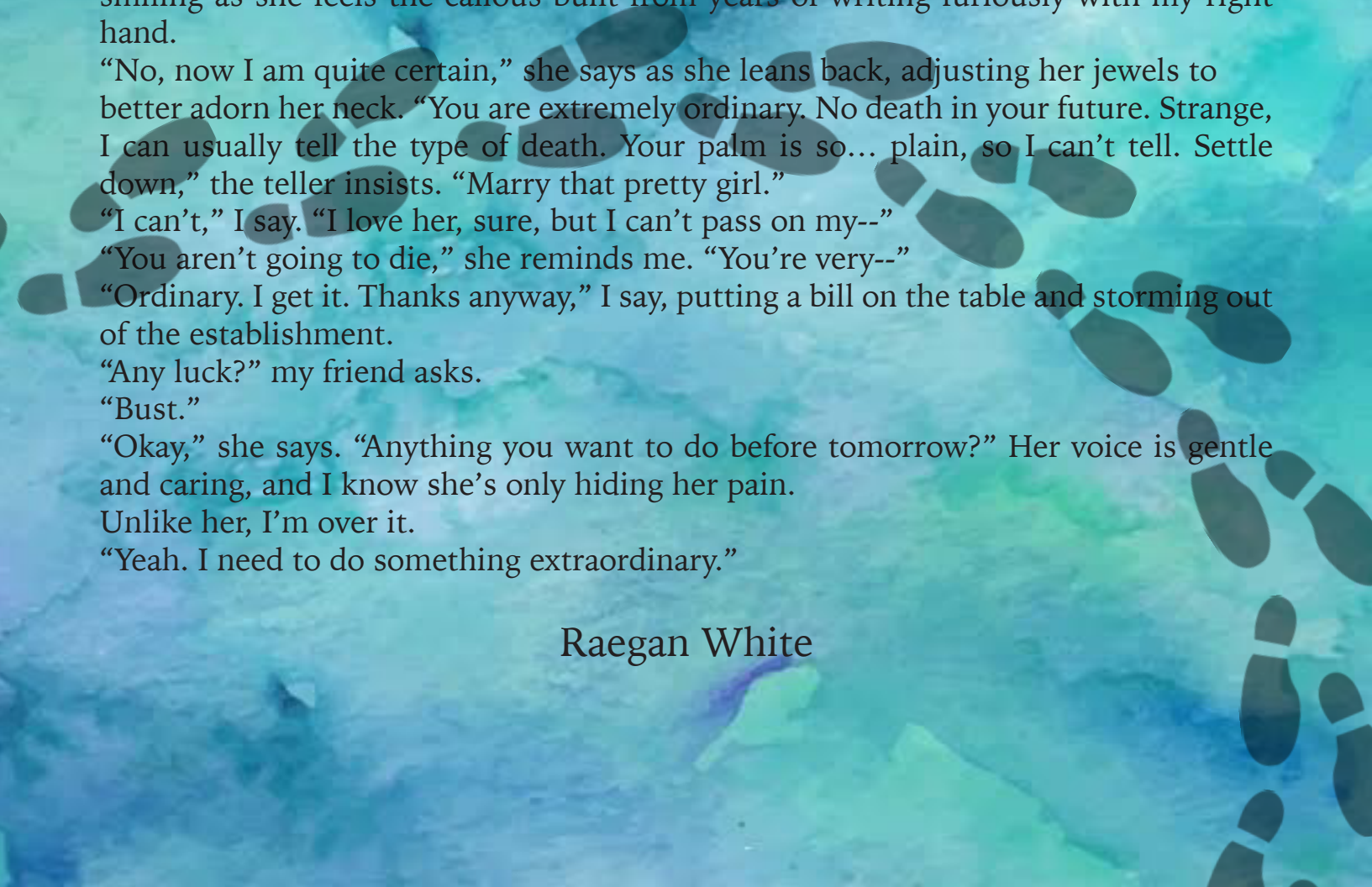
Little bell, the little item that keeps me here.
I'm poorly tied to this
little
world
I'm tall, loud, and big.
But I get lost. I'm just a large
little
kid
I'm lost in a universe bigger than me
So I tend to wander these
little
rooms
I'm surrounded by amazing friends
But I've never felt so meaningless and
so
little
But this little bell keeps ringing
And I keep walking

Julien Makoutz

Extraordinary

"Oh, my," the gypsy says, putting my hand back on the table and giving it a small pat.
"Why, I've never seen someone more ordinary in my life."
"Really?" I ask, flabbergasted.
"Oh, yes," she repeats. "Really, nothing special will come from your life at all. Truly remarkable, how ordinary you are. Amazing."
I scoff. "I knew this was a waste of my time," I mutter, shoving the chair back as I stand. "Nothing extraordinary at all? No doomed fate? No gruesome end?"
"I'm afraid not, son. Why don't you marry that pretty girl waiting outside, have some children, settle down. I can assure you that your offspring will be quite healthy." The palmist stands and tries to lead me back into the seat. "Another feel of your palm and I can determine your firstborn's gender? Only five--"
"You're a fake," I say, jerking out of her grasp. "I'm going to die. Tomorrow. I clearly don't have to 'settle down'--"
"Oh, no!" she exclaims, pushing me back into the stuffed chair and snatching my hand. She traces the weathered lines on my palm to the rough spots on my fingertips, smiling as she feels the callous built from years of writing furiously with my right hand.
"No, now I am quite certain," she says as she leans back, adjusting her jewels to better adorn her neck. "You are extremely ordinary. No death in your future. Strange, I can usually tell the type of death. Your palm is so... plain, so I can't tell. Settle down," the teller insists. "Marry that pretty girl."
"I can't," I say. "I love her, sure, but I can't pass on my--"
"You aren't going to die," she reminds me. "You're very--"
"Ordinary. I get it. Thanks anyway," I say, putting a bill on the table and storming out of the establishment.
"Any luck?" my friend asks.
"Bust."
"Okay," she says. "Anything you want to do before tomorrow?" Her voice is gentle and caring, and I know she's only hiding her pain.
Unlike her, I'm over it.
"Yeah. I need to do something extraordinary."

Raegan White



16 and Crazy

I'm 16 years old and I'm crazy. I've read somewhere that they go together. But why 16 and crazy? I've been many other ages in Keller and Wichita and I always think that I'm crazier than I was the year before. I've read that you can't go back to who you were yesterday because you were a completely different person. I've changed a lot throughout the past year, and each trial leaves silver in my hair and calluses on my feet. I've walked the roads of Washington and I've walked among the clouds, each leaving their consequences.

The harsh reality is that the clouds aren't a common road, but the streets of the city are. Those who walk the clouds in New York bear calluses on their feet from their quick descent from the sky to the pavement as people call them down. My feet are scarred...

I was taught that dreams were for sleep, and it is enforced upon me every day. It's not my fault that I dream with my eyes open. I dream of French bakeries and bookstores in Wales. I dream of the horizon and how only the ocean can kiss it. I wish on stars that can be seen from Texas to Florida, and hope that out of all of the people that wish on that star, mine somehow comes true. I grin at the moon and dance in the rain. I watch the sunset to the sounds of bluebirds singing and each time I am awestruck. I do all of the things because that's who I am, 16 and crazy.

Brianna Gutierrez

Greenward Trail

It was back during my sophomore year in college when me and my girlfriend at the time Alison were going to hang out with some of my college buddies. We went down Greenward Trail which was the fastest way to my friend's house. I had an interesting choice of friends back then, mostly stoners and outcasts, but they kept me going through those years. When we got there my friend Tom introduced us at the door, "Hey! You guys came at the right time! We were just about to go through this whole bag!" Tom revealed a gallon size ziplock bag full of assorted smaller bags of weed. In the back a voice yelled "Tom! Don't just show everyone our weed!" We were quickly ushered inside. At the time, Tom rented out a frat house with his roommate Nick, who also just so happened to be a dealer, Tom supplied and Nick sold, and time to time Tom inhales from his own stockpile with the disapproval of Nick. We go inside the living room and immediately get hit with the smell of mexican food and Marijuana, Alison turned to me and chuckled "these are your friends?" In front of us was a wide couch and a loveseat, in the middle was a coffee table with bonges, pipes, and bags from the local taco shop they frequented. Tom sat down on the love seat and extended both of his legs out as if he was the king, Nick came out of the kitchen with a case of beer, Alison and I sat down on the couch, which felt and smelled like it was picked up off the street. Tom quickly rolled me a joint and handed me a lighter, the first hit was strong, gotta say they knew their stuff, I passed the joint around back to Tom. Alison didn't smoke so she just drank the beer, for a while each of us exchanged stories, jokes, and laughs. Some time passed when I was still in my stoned haze when Alison said she was going to head home, she gave me a kiss and then left. After that I remember I woke up about three in the morning, I looked over and Tom with a joint still hanging from his hand was sound asleep, and Nick had his arms crossed and he'd also fallen asleep, realizing I had no ride to get home I nudged Nick awake, with a groggy voice he sighed "what do you want?" I told him my situation and he grumbled something along the lines of "...fine but you owe me later..." and we were on our way. On the way down Greenward Trail, it was notably Eerie not a single animal or sound aside from the wheels moving along the road, maybe it was my superstition, it being 3:00 AM and all, but it still felt off, halfway through I fell back asleep, when next thing I know Nick nudges me "hey, your girlfriend lives with you in your house right....?" I woke up to see my car in the driveway, but not Alison's. I mean I was pretty stoned when she left so really, she could've said anything and I would've just forgotten. I thanked Nick and we parted ways, I chalked up the idea that Alison was at a friend's house and that I would call her the following morning. The next day I went to the class that Alison and I shared, only to find her to be visibly absent, it wasn't unusual for me to get there before her, but she didn't show up at all. Now I'd like to think I'm a logical guy, so I didn't come up with some crazy idea, I just

thought that she was hungover from last night or even just skipping. When I got home I called one of her friends I thought she might have been staying at. “No she’s not here, and she hasn’t been picking up my pages either.” With no luck I then tried calling her parents, I mean I don’t know why she would’ve left to visit her family but I was pretty much out of options, but neither her family or her friends had seen her. I called Tom and told him my situation, my idea was that me and him would go down Greenward trail to see if she may be on the side of the road or at least find some clues. It was 4:30 and sunny when Tom came with his crappy BMW barely squeaking around, I told him to follow me and to keep an eye out for her car along the way. We headed down the trail with me being significantly faster than Tom, I also noted that the sky was overcast, which was odd for it being clear not too long before, That’s when I noticed a strange fog roll in, I had slow down due to not being able to see, I couldn’t even see the trees next to the road, The fog then cleared a little bit and the air was significantly colder than normal, I looked behind me to see if Tom’s headlights were there, but I didn’t see them, I wasn’t sure what was going on, but I sure as hell didn’t like it. It felt like I was on the same road but also wasn’t at the same time you know? Next thing I know my car dies, just the battery kaputs right in front of me. I park my car, and in front of my car was an old sedan, empty and rusted. I got out to inspect the car, and saw that there were opened empty food containers and wrappers inside, with both doors wide open. I then noticed little scuff marks on the side of the doors, like some animal was scratching the car, but whatever animal it was it had to be big, like a bear or a bobcat from the sheer size of the claw marks. I kept walking down the road and what I saw instantly made my heart sink and my stomach flip, I saw Alison’s car, with many scratch marks on the doors, one of them being open. I rushed to the car only to find nothing but empty chip bags I had left in there long ago, that’s when I heard a twig break in the forest ahead, before then I heard nothing, no animals nothing. I looked out, and could see something in the distance I couldn’t tell what, but it looked like someone crouching. I knew whatever it was, it wasn’t Alison, or human for that matter. You ever have those gut feelings like you know something bad is about to happen and you need to take action now? That’s exactly what happened because I sprinted back to my car without looking back. I didn’t know if that thing was following me but I didn’t care, I just wanted the hell out of this place. I rushed inside my car and fumbled the keys for a bit, I tried to start the car once, twice, no use, I prayed to whatever deity was listening to please get me out of there, I started the car one more time, and my car sprung to life. I cannot tell you how fast I got out of that place. The fog eventually cleared up and I could see the normal road again. Even though I could feel that I was out of danger I still didn’t stop until I got to Tom’s house. Tom stood there in his driveway puzzled. “How the hell did I pass you? One minute I was behind you, then this fog rolled in and suddenly you were gone. Where did you go? Did you find Alison?” I replied softly “no, I think she’s gone dude.” after that Alison’s parents called the police to send a search party for her, but I knew that they wouldn’t find

her. still for the love of me, to this day don’t know what happened, or what that thing was. Years have past since then. Now Tom is a community manager at his local church, he really picked his life up after college. Now we just reduce our friendship to talking on Facebook from time to time, Nick and I didn’t really talk after college. And I got married to the love of my life. Tom and I still talk about what happened that day, and my wife has even chimed in a few theories as well: like maybe I got pulled into another dimension or something, or that the trail is cursed or whatever. I just, I just try not to think about that day or how many people didn’t make it out. But every now and then I see a missing persons report from that road, and it scares me to know what might have happened to those people.

Tim Carrier

Music

Music is sound, sound is life
Without music we don’t have life music is part of my life it can be part of yours,
it’s an escape, an escape from the darkness around me
The darkness that has been eating me like I’m it’s every day meal.
So I listen to music, I play an instrument
If you need an escape, then try to listen to music that makes you, you.

Angel Maher

Brown and Proud

Brown and Proud
It's come to my attention
That there's an under appreciation
Across the nation
That's ruining racial relations

I'm here to speak for my people
Forget papers I don't care if you're illegal
You heard of Cesar Chavez I am his sequel
And I won't stop talking till all people are equal

Trump's portrayed us as rapists who hop borders
As bums who don't work and only have quarters
At least he has brought out the racism in all his supporters
Little girl from Mexico he won't hesitate to deport her

Daily ICE runs up on someone's house
Take him away from his kids and his spouse
Take him down south
And leave him across the border saying wetback keep out

Or easily send a Mexican to the penitentiary
Give 25 to life at sentencing
While his kid is in elementary
Locked up in the cell he wonders is my son even missing me

Police see us in the street won't hesitate to shoot
To make it worse you probably won't even see it on the news
It's all about black lives matter and all of their views
I support that but don't my life matter too

Can't you see that we originally came from poverty too
Can't you see that I'm sobbin' with you
Some Mexicans are racist that's probably true
But black and brown gotta come together cuz we're minorities too

If what all I'm saying ain't the truth then tell me what it is
My cousin got caught with some drugs they gave him 30 years
Remember getting the call everyone was shedding tears
While a white man can get off for raping women and kids

And How we lazy when we mow the lawns, clean the houses and build all the roads
Hell my abuelo been working in the fields since he was 8 years old
All day in the hot and all night in the cold
Picking all the cotton just so it could be sold

I admit we got problems in our community
Someone might shoot you, stab you steal all of your jewelry
These things ain't new to me
But we striving for unity

They might call us beaners, spics and wetbacks
Those words are just setbacks
But mexicans are grinding getting money where the checks at
My mother came from nothing and gave me something you gotta respect that

America through the eyes of many Brown skins i've said mine
But we're still dying of thirst and drowning at the same time
We gotta jump in the fountain so we can save lives
But getting to the top its gonna take time

Nevertheless I am still Brown and Proud
I am still Brown and Loud
I'm gonna take the crown
And rep mi gente even after they put me down

Nicholas Lynch

A Paris Dream

“Laura watch out!” James yelled.

But the motorcycle came speeding toward her. She didn’t have any time to move out of the way before the vehicle hit her head on. She fell, feeling several bones break in her body, and then she blacked out as soon as her head slammed against the ground.

~

When Laura opened her eyes, there was a bright light above her. She squinted and turned her head, groaning as a severe headache hit her. She moved her hands a little, just to see if they would work, and they did. She wiggled her toes and she didn’t feel any pain- other than the pounding that continued on in her head.

“Hello, Mrs. Diala,” A nurse walked into the room. “How are you?”

“Where am I?”

The last thing she could remember was walking by her husband on cobbled streets in France. She was on her honeymoon. Then there was nothing. But this woman didn’t have a French accent and everything seemed familiar.

“You’re in Chicago, ma’am.” She said a bit too loudly. “I will call your husband and we can discuss what happened.”

An hour later a man arrived. He had shaggy brown hair, a beard, and bags under his brown eyes.

“I can’t believe they were telling me the truth.” He breathed a sigh of relief and came running over to her. He grabbed her hand and fell into a chair beside her. “I thought you would never wake up.”

“Of course I would. You didn’t have to bring me back to the states. I’m sure they have perfectly good hospitals in France.”

James gave her a quizzical look and then something dawned on him. “Didn’t the nurse tell you?”

“No, she was waiting for you.” Laura smiled. “I think that we should visit the Eiffel tower the minute I get

out of this bed. We can go back, I’m sure we can swing the cost.”

He pursed his lips and nodded. “Laura,” He took her hand. “It’s 2018.”

She stared at him for a second. The last thing she remembered was the second day of her honeymoon in 2013.

“But-”

“There’s...one more thing.”

“Is this her?” A little girl walked in with Laura’s parents, she was about 5 years old.

Her auburn pigtails bounced as she sat on James’ lap.

“Laura, this is your daughter Layla.”

Madison Butler

Jaisei

Jay walked along his and Lahles’ room. He was deep in his thoughts, thoughts that no matter how much he tried to banish, never left. They surfaced every time he walked past the mirror, the one Lahles tried to convince Jay to get rid of the mirror, but Jay was obsessed.

He’d look into the mirror and try to find who he’d used to be, but his warm rich skin had been replaced by sunken, ashen skin covered with hairline scars that never healed. Luscious brown hair had been burnt black by the unnatural magic that kept him alive. His hair was dead, so the fire-licked hairs on the half his head never grew back. His honey amber eyes had been tainted by that damned magic, and now glowed an unnatural purple.

When he stared long enough, he’d catch a glimpse of himself, not Jay, but Jaisei. A name he tried to forget for too many reasons, a witches name. But no, he was never a witch, he lacked the ability to access the natural worldly magic. He always thought he’d trade anything for a bit of magic, but now that he had this toxic sweet magic pumping through him, he only wanted it out.

He’d reach for himself through the mirror, wishing to return to himself. His cold grey hands would touch Jaisei’s warm fingers, but the mirror would separate them.

He wasted that sickly magic on creating an illusion that the old Jaisei was there before him, clothed in rich purple Tankan dancing clothes, and himself in amber ones. A foolish use of magic, but it was the only thing that kept him going.

They’d dance like Jay always wanted to. Jaisei holding him up as he leaped and spun about, golden and purple ribbons wrapping about each other almost as intricately as they danced, the beautiful past and the forsaken present. Although Jays deteriorating muscles protested the dance of his people, he couldn’t stop. He refused to. This was where his soul belonged, deep in the Tankan desert, dancing away with his partner.

How he longed to join Ivo in his lone dances, it was unbalanced to dance alone, but Jay had an appearance to maintain. Ivo’s inky black ribbons were alone as they spun, alone, just as Jay was now. Although he had the illusion he was young, and he was dancing with someone, he’d always be alone. His youth was stolen, and Jaisei was dead.

Lahles opened the heavy door to their chambers, and Jaisei was shattered, the illusion gone. Jay would stand, staring at himself in the mirror. Lahles would help him out of the twisting dance clothes that had found their way on him, slowly revealing his corpse-like body.

Lahles would dress him, and carry him to bed. He’d clutch Lahles as he bitterly wept. No matter how much he loved Lahl, he’d never forgive him for not letting him peacefully die that hot summer night.

Arden Williams

The Crimes of Love

Rule #1: Never allow personal feelings or emotional connections to interfere with your duties.

The rules were ingrained in all of our minds, implanted into our chemical makeups the moment we were born and constantly relayed to us as we went through training. The rules acted as the very foundation upon which we stood. The rules were everything. They defined us. And I had broken the very first one.

I knew from childhood that I was weak - emotionally susceptible, everyone said. Even my parents were embarrassed of my sentimentality. But I think all those years of being judged and deprecated are what prepared me for my training. I had to fight so much harder than all my peers just to be on the same level as them, and eventually all that effort put me on top. I think those very hardships are what allowed me to grow and be accepted into the system - given the job, so to speak. I should have known I would screw everything up.

There was just something so... captivating about the individual I had been assigned to. She was quiet and sweet, but loud when she wanted to be. She was shy and reserved, but stood up for herself when standing up was needed. And she loved to sit in solitude for long intervals of time, just contemplating life and humanity and silly little things like emotions and psychology. I rather enjoyed when she spent time with just herself, because it meant I could spend time with just her.

I had learned so many things about her from these quiet moments. Like how she fiddled with the hem of her shirt either when nervous or simply bored, and how she chewed on her bottom lip when something intrigued her, her eyes alight with fascination. She was intrigued by so many things, always observant and excited to learn. I loved her intellect. I loved her kindness, her gentle disposition. I loved her beautiful blue eyes and her all-consuming smile. I loved her.

The one thing we were never meant to do, and I had done it. The first rule we ever learned, and I had betrayed it. I was helplessly, unconventionally, wholeheartedly in love. And if ever found out, I would be disgraced and locked away for my crimes.

Tabitha Tomlinson

I Look

I look at your lips
Not because I'm begging for a kiss
But because I'm searching for the words
The words that fly off your tongue
Like missiles ready to kill

I look in your eyes
To find the hidden meanings of your deceitful words
The words you disguise behind lies
Cloaking yourself as a friend

I look at you
Not to tempt you further
But instead to understand what I did to deserve you

I look
To know the truth

Tianna Kell

I Like You

i like you

I type these words you see.
Little do you know I hide them.
In simple spots you won't look.
Kept tidily, unlike you.
Even though you're messy
You're still cute
Our world is big, but I'm
Unfit for anyone else but you

Julien Makoutz



A Broken Heart

I wonder sometimes if you're the reason,
The demon, of why I'm so beaten
Through my struggles, thoughts written in bits
And the sleepless nights there have been
I wonder sometimes if I even exist,
And if I could consist of bliss
With wide open smiles and glassy eyes
Until I've called it quits
I wonder sometimes if you're the one who cries
And if so, you'd be the one who denies
Through the pain with no peep
Within years it's known that it intensifies
You are lovely, dark and deep,
But all I do is weep,
It's my time to sleep,
It's my time to sleep.

Breanna Galle

Thank You!

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- Lit Mag Team