

volume 6

spring 2009

orthogenique

the sonia shankman orthogenic school literary magazine

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volume 6
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www.oschool.org

published by

The Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School
1365 E. 60th Street, Chicago, IL 60637
phone 773-702-1203 fax 773-702-1304

Orthogenique

A literary magazine
produced by the students of
the Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School

contributors

Ethan - Rachel - Ryan - Shelby - Casey - Denzel - Julie - Fellicia - Brooklynn - Kayla V. - Ethan - Rachel - Ryan - Shelby - Casey - Denzel - Julie - Fellicia - Brooklynn - Kayla V.

resident staff

Michelle Pegram, literary coordinator
Michelle Zarrilli, artistic coordinator
Jillian Swinford, artistic consultant

Prologue

Michelle Pegram
Michelle Zarrilli

cover art by

Shelby

special thanks to

Diana Kon
Peter Myers
Jerry Martin
John Dille

Many thanks to the people who subscribed to this issue of Orthogenique. Your donations are greatly appreciated. All others who wish to subscribe to this magazine can do so with the order form at the back of this issue.

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SPECIAL NOTICE TO READERS

The next issue is scheduled for an August release. Anyone who wishes to contribute artwork or writing to Orthogenique can do so by giving the piece to Michelle Z. or Michelle P.

Pieces submitted will be used at the discretion of Orthogenique staff and will be incorporated into existing spreads and sections.

foreword

I grew up in corn country, surrounded by corn fields and all that came with them, the field mice, the fertilizer smell and the best sweet and field corn imaginable. Aside from these obvious by products, corn fields offer so much more. They offer a primitive way of marking the calendar per the old saying, "knee high by the fourth of July," they offer some scenery in an otherwise flat and boring landscape, and they are fodder for many a scary movie or story. The possibilities are endless.



When you look at a corn field, you see the leaves, the tassels, and the ears of corn stretching down their rows that seem to extend into infinity playing tricks on the eye. You might even see the avian invaders that are drawn to the tasty kernels and tiny creatures in the plant. This is truly a view of the surface, a superficial look at a world teeming with life that few see. While allergies robbed me of the honor of detasseling as a summer job, most of the people I grew up with, including my brothers did get the joy of this experience. I would see my brothers come home, scratches and mysterious bug bites all over their arms and sometimes their legs. Strangely, they did not suffer from sun burn because the sun could not fully penetrate the fully grown plants. This shady, moist environment was an ecosystem all its own. It is not surprising then that even the fruit of these plants requires the surface to be pulled back in order to reveal the treasure within.

Corn fields are a curiosity as well, often having only scarecrows to keep the multitudes of creatures company and to do their best to scare them away. They create a curious food as well. Corn can be enjoyed right off the cob or cut away, but it can also be ground up to make tortillas, meal, cereals and more. If dried in a certain way you have the favorite treat of movie goers everywhere – popcorn!!!! While this may be enough, this fabulous little kernel can also be refined to make fuel. A curious commodity made more valuable by the experimentations of those seeking to meet their needs.

Although many people consider farm country silent, being away from the hustle and bustle of the city, there are communities functioning under the surface that make a plethora of sounds. To the cultured country ear, the cicadas, crickets, and grasshoppers are a symphony. Silence does come to the corn field, however. Harvesting razes the world within the crop, reducing it to piles of stalks and rolls of hay.

Much like a corn field, the Orthogenic School holds more than can be seen on the surface. We generate curiosity within our community and our students are curious and eager learners. Though silence is rare at our school, there are many poignant moments when it occurs; moments following a crisis, a day of hard work, or a momentous occasion such as a graduation. We are like a corn field because we generate growth and are our own little universe. We exist in isolation, but impact our community with what we grow.

Enjoy this issue of the magazine. It is one of the many results of our school's crop.

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superficiality



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orthogénique

• **silence**



• **superficiality**



• **curiosity**





Bar Code Tattoo

Mixed Media by Shelby

Robot girl mechanically marches through a blur of white noise
Faces mesh into one as her eyes search for an exit
Bursting through the open door without warning, tears floating down
But then again, if she's a robot then she's not real and she can't cry

Synthetic girl looking for a means of escape from this world
Weeping silent tears as she opens the door of mahogany
Noticing the bar code tattoos on her wrists washing away
Smudges of black meaning nothing more than how they appear

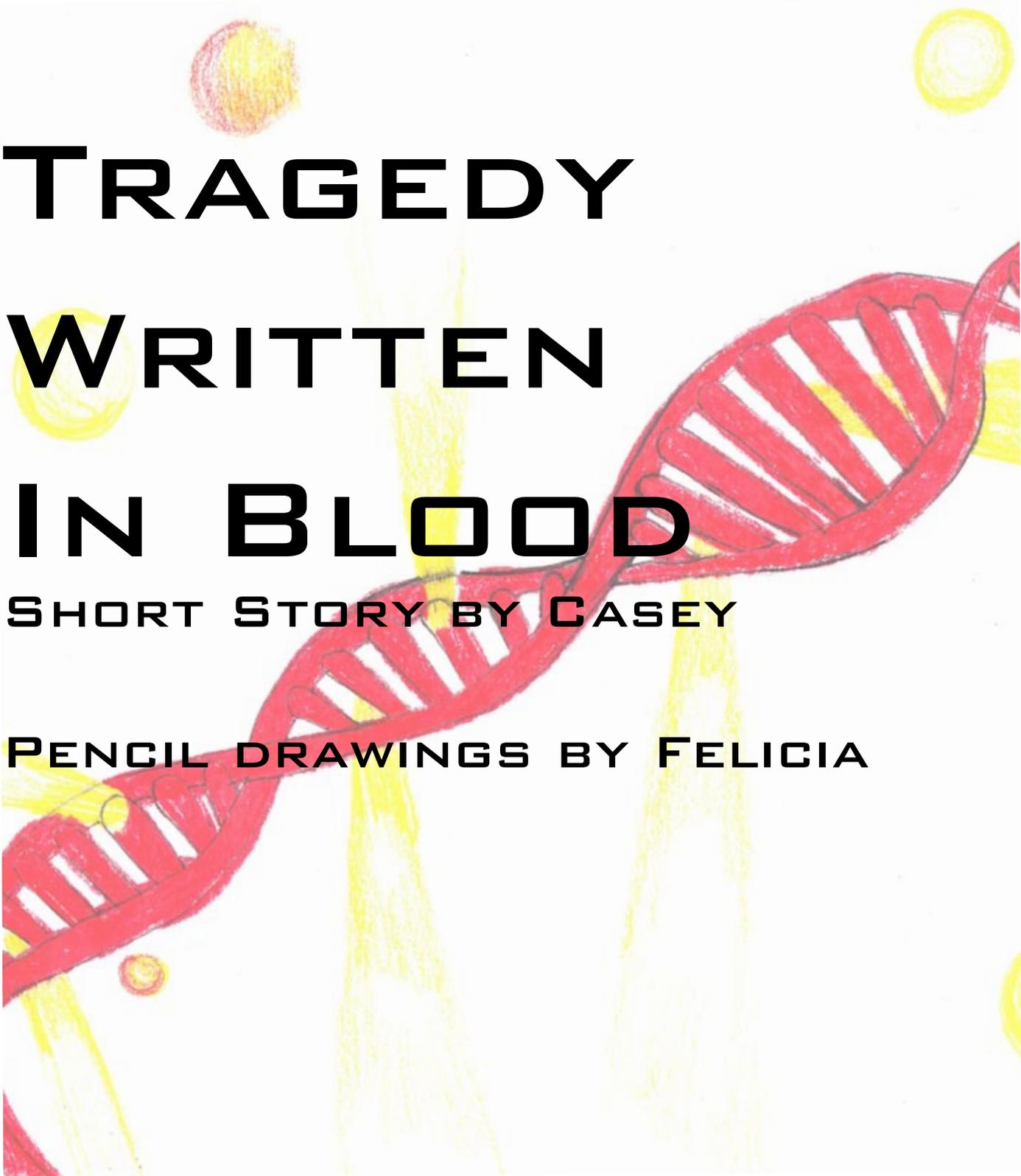
Coin-operated girl zips her lips closed to hide her true identity
She doesn't want verbal vomit to accidentally come spewing out
How embarrassing it would be for someone to hear her true voice
But alas, before she has the chance to mess up, she goes into sleep mode

Android girl walks through the open door with a purpose
Bar code tattoos smudged on each wrist still label her an outsider
She continues the journey into a godforsaken forest of green
Everything in the forest is too green, almost like an alien planet

Alien girl on an uncharted mission in a looking-glass world
Holding on, trying to survive, remembering vaguely how to breathe
Knowing that things will never change, always destined to remain an alien girl
She's like a dandelion in a field of orchids, born to stand out

This looking-glass reveals a world she doesn't understand
She's aware that it's our world of which we speak and that girl is me
The world has been here for quite a while
And when the girl recalls her differences, it's only then she'll smile





TRAGEDY

WRITTEN

IN BLOOD

SHORT STORY BY CASEY

PENCIL DRAWINGS BY FELICIA

The night air was silent, showing little signs of life. The plants slept, the trees, the dirt, the animals, even the waterways, all entirely peaceful and, in some ways, mysterious. There was no sign of disturbance about, and everything seemed to be flowing in a natural way that one could have sworn that a destructive force had never stepped foot onto this natural utopia. However, as all things must end, so too must the peace and silence.

A lone man ran out from the distance, appearing to be frightened, though it could not initially be seen what he was running from. However, soon after he appeared, another figure appeared behind him. It was a dark figure, clad in black clothing. To the man, the figure was the embodiment of evil. The black clothing, the sinister,

stalker like movement, the pale face and piercing blue eyes, all added to the man's fear. The figure suddenly picked up speed, gaining fast on the man. The figure seemed to be moving at an inhuman pace. The man, obviously noticing this, began to panic as he ran.

"Git away! I din't mean to take your shinies... It was a accident!" But as he turned his head forwards once again, there stood the figure. The figure walked menacingly, slowly towards the man, with a terrifying grimace upon his face that carried so much anger, that the entire figure's face began to scrunch up. "For your crimes, you will live the curse just as my brethren and I have for centuries upon centuries!" The man back pedaled and fell backwards. His face was a sight to behold.

The fear washing over it was incomparable, and tears ran down his face as he whimpered. Just as suddenly, the figure's teeth were baring, an intense array of flats and a set of very sharp fangs. Just as the figure moved to sink his fangs into the man's neck, a large car flung out from around the corner. A large man, covered in bulging muscles, clad in vest and jeans, stepped out of the car, carrying a silver gun resembling a revolver.

"Sergio..." the figure sighed. Sergio turned towards the figure, loaded his large gun with some very shiny bullets, which seemed to attract the curiosity of the frightened man. Perhaps he is in this predicament because some other "shiny" attracted him.

"Back, vampire!" the large man shouted in a baritone voice. The vampire smiled and turned towards Sergio, grabbing the other man, pulling him up as a shield. Baring his teeth, the vampire began to move towards Sergio.

"So, Sergio, you continue to haunt the vampires, eh?"

"I haunt you? What about the people you drink from on a weekly basis? Are you not the haunter under these circumstances?" The vampire stopped for a moment, as if to think to himself, Maybe he's right...

"It's not haunting... It's survival. We don't drink, we die. What happens if you don't eat for a month? You die. Think about it."

"Then drink cattle



blood, instead of sucking the life away from these innocent people!” Sergio glared into the vampire’s piercing light blue eyes, luminated with the readiness to attack.

“We do, but... Let’s put it this way... if you had a choice between McDonalds and garbage, which would you pick?” Sergio looked sort of astounded by the comparison, even sympathetic for a moment, but quickly changed to looking especially offended. “Enough!” he said, unloading his gun into the vampire. The vampire went up in a blaze of golden flames, dematerializing in front of Sergio and the man. His clothes floated down to the ground, covering a thick pile of ashes.

Sergio pulled the man to his car. The man at this point had lost consciousness, passed out from the stress of the entire predicament. Sergio ignited the engine, and drove off towards town. Once again, the blissful silence had returned, caressing the space around with a gentle breeze.

Miles off from where the destruction of the lone vampire took place, hidden in the forest, there sat a large castle. The castle was dimly lit, fairly old, and supposedly abandoned. However, as you may have already guessed, the castle was far from abandoned. Taking a deeper look inside, there is quite a bit of hustle and bustle during the night. It seems out of place at first, but there is a fair number of some rather attractive people

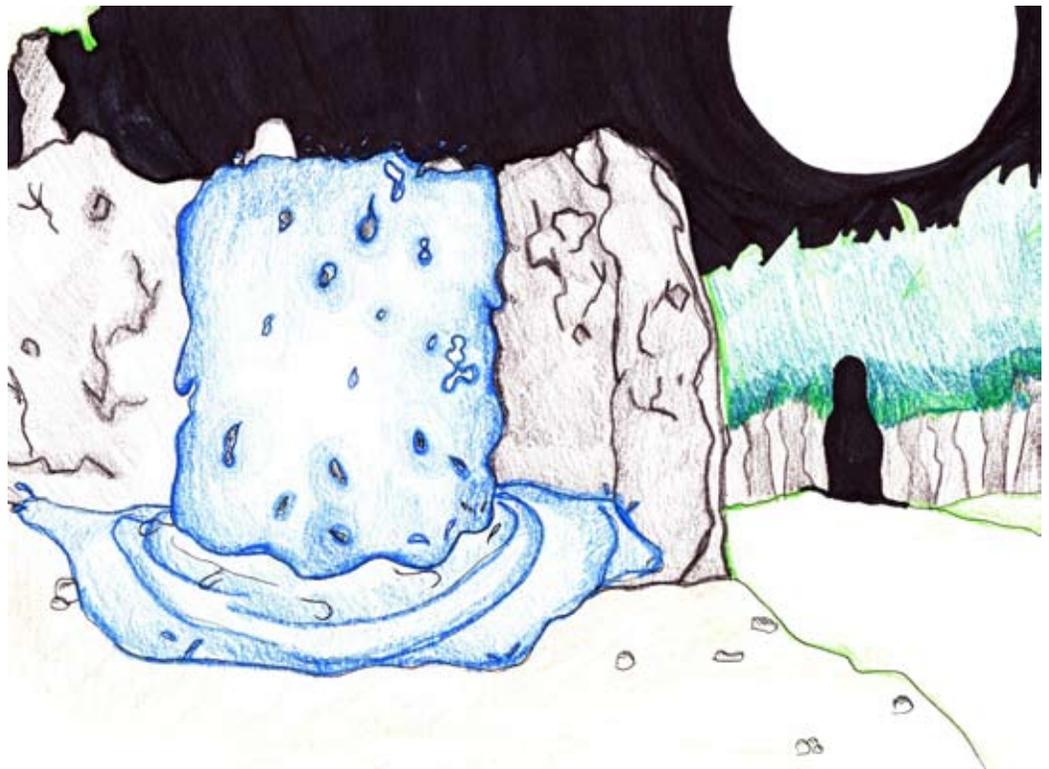
drifting around inside the castle, socializing, playing games, the works of human interaction. You would think it odd for such lovely people to be living in such a dark old castle, but upon closer look, deep within the interior of the castle, there were a group of individuals, conferencing.

“My fellow vampires, it has come to the council’s attention, that there is an individual who threatens our way of life on a daily basis, and has not just destroyed, but disintegrated at least twenty-five of our kin, and possibly others from other clans. As much as I hate this, the only solution is to kill this person, lest we become dust beneath his feet. I have assigned two of our strongest clan mates to take him out of commission. There will be no need for guns or weapons, this kill will be quick, and only slightly painful.” The president of the vampire council had spoken, a man with grey skin and of the bluest eyes of any of the vampires. He looked old

and frail, tired and fatigued. The rest of the councilmen discussed the idea in a flurry of whispered conversations. All agreed that it was the best way to deal with it, as reasoning with this irrational human has proven difficult for the vampires.

Sergio sat on the edge of the glowing Ravine, picking small blades of grass out of the ground. Even in the peace and silence, Sergio’s mind was furiously grinding, thinking of his latest encounter with the vampires. He thought to himself, do they have a choice after all? The thought would be quickly shot down by his normal thought processes. Of course they do! They are nothing but scum, no longer human. They deserve no mercy. Alas, he continued to combat his own conscious, the two thoughts clashing in a whirlwind of brain cells.

Sergio’s deep thought was broken by the call of his apprentice. Sergio jumped, and



looked around angrily. He picked up his gun, and got up quickly.

"Serj, it's just me, Darude."

Sergio sighed, lessening his tension.

"What is it, Dar?"

Darude looked about as he walked towards Sergio. Darude was a much smaller man than Sergio, almost puny. He was wearing a sweater and khaki pants, and walked casually. Around his waist was strapped a gun just like Sergio's. The two looked at each other fondly. Darude didn't speak for a few moments, he just stared at his friend reading Sergio's eyes. He could easily tell something was stirring in Sergio's head.

"Something wrong, Serj?" He asked in a tone of empathy.

Sergio stared at Darude for a moment, then quickly looked away.

"It's nothing, Dar... Don't worry about it."

"If you say so." Darude said in a trailing voice, his face covered by a look of uncertainty.

Sergio and Darude go way back. Sergio was about twenty when he first met Darude, but not under preferable circumstances. He stumbled upon him, a fifteen year old boy, cowering on the ground, three tall men standing around him. This wasn't the first time Sergio had seen these men. He knew, they were vampires of the Sacred Clan, as they called themselves. Sergio knew what to do. He loaded his silver gun with the encased sunlight bullets. The vampires moved towards Darude. As they spoke to the boy, Sergio crept through the bushes to get a clear shot. Finally, nestled in a bush about fifty feet away, Sergio looked down the sights of his revolver. With a clear shot at two of the vampires. He opened fire on one, then the other. Just as our friend from before, they burst into a beautiful blaze of flames. The other vampire looked about frantically, wishing he had just stayed home that night.



Sergio finally had a vantage point on the vampire, a clear shot. However, he was out of sunlight encased bullets. He panicked, but decided to try normal bullets. He loaded three shots into his gun, and let them loose; two in the vampire's chest, one in his head. The vampire fell to the ground. It worked? Sergio thought to himself. He's not dead, I'm sure of it. Sergio had no time to check. He helped the boy up, and they walked back towards town. The next day, Sergio learned that Darude was an orphan. Darude asked if Sergio could teach him how to slay the vampires like the ones that had just fallen. Sergio offered him a spot as his apprentice, and from that day forward, they were nigh inseparable.

Sergio asked Darude to leave him be, which was a surprising request, but Darude honored it. Sergio walked further down the ravine, attempting to get away from any disturbances. He lay down on the grass, about a mile from town. The moon was beautiful, the ravine was flowing, and for once since his encounter with the vampire, he felt at peace. Sergio loved this feeling, and tried to retain it as long as possible. For a few minutes,

the land was silent, and Sergio had all but forgotten about the vampires. However, he was quickly reminded when he heard a rustling in the bushes.

He quickly awoke from his near slumber and got up. Suddenly, he felt a swipe at his back, and he flew backwards about fifteen feet. He knew, they were trying to kill him, and do it silently, as they used no weapons. Sergio jumped quickly to his feet, and pulled out his revolver, pre-loaded with 12 sunlight bullets. He shot once, missed, shot twice, almost scraped the vampire's leg. The vampire's enhanced speed was almost too much for Sergio, but he collected himself, took aim, and fired a shot into the vampire's chest, sending him up in flames.

Then from behind, another swipe; Two vampires! Sergio did not fall this time. The vampire knew it's fate, and made a last ditch attempt to silence Sergio.

The vampire moved quickly towards him, zigzagging as he moved. Before Sergio knew what was going on, the vampire was behind him, sinking his fangs into Sergio's neck, draining the blood. Sergio was all but paralyzed, and screamed. Using the last of his strength, after about ten seconds of draining, Sergio turned his revolver to the vampire's chest behind him. He unloaded 2 bullets, sending the vampire in flames. Sergio moved towards the shore to try and cleanse his wound with the water. He fell to the ground, clawing his way to the river. Soon enough, he was out cold.

To his surprise, Sergio awoke, in a dark room. He immediately noticed that he felt different. His wound was healed, he felt stronger than before, and lighter on his feet. It felt great, and he quickly got up. Also to his surprise, the door to the room was wide open. He walked out of

the room, and found himself in the middle of a large community. This community seemed odd, however. Something about them was just not... human. Sergio finally knew what was going on. He had been turned... He had become the very thing he sought to destroy, and he was in the middle of their home. He believed what he should do is slay them all, and then take himself, but he knew there would be no way to take them all.

He moved slowly out to the square

of the castle. He bumped into one of the vampires, a young attractive looking female with dark hair and defined features.

"Hello there, new blood. Welcome home," she said with a warm smile on her face.

Even though Sergio didn't want to be, he was attracted to this woman. "Hello" he found himself saying.

She laughed. "My name's Myra. Pleased to meet you."

Sergio found himself smiling, and could not stifle it. "I better be going" he said, and walked off.

Over the next several nights, he found himself socializing with more of the vampires. They really didn't seem any different than humans, he found. He still believed that they were scum, until he met with Myra for a second time.

"Hey, Sergio!" she shouted. "What's up?" and rushed over to him.

"Myra...! Hey! Nothing really, just taking in the sights of the castle," Sergio responded.

She laughed again. "Hold out your hand, Serj."

It shocked him to hear his name said like that again, but it felt right. He held out his hand, and she placed a sort of badge in his hand, closing both of her hands over his. "Welcome to the clan."

Sergio continued to learn more about the vampires, and how they weren't so bad after all. He finally was able to consider them to be as human as anyone, and was able to accept his own fate. They had emotions, fears, hate, and love, just like normal people. Perhaps the vampires were normal people at heart. Even though he had slain many of their kind, they seemed not to



care. He even found many of the people he had seen bitten by the vampires dwelling in the castle. They took him in as one of their own, and Sergio even learned to become friends with many.

However, after a couple of weeks, Sergio felt drained. His young physique and beauty were fading quickly, and he felt his muscles withering away. He had refused for two weeks to feed, but could no longer hold out, and the call from the president of the council was oh so warming when he heard it. He rushed to the door. He craved the blood. He needed the blood. The doors opened, and with the speed of a bullet, he ran off to find his prey.

His first victim was an old man walking about the wilderness. He sat atop a tree, waiting, listening for the right moment. Sergio jumped down, right on top of the old man, his fangs baring. The old man fell back, cowering. His wrinkled face was dripping with sweat. Sergio sunk his fangs into the man's neck, and began to drain. He was so hungry, he had no intent of simply turning the man. He kept drinking and drinking until the man stopped moving. Satisfied, he backed away, stunned by what he had done. Before he could mourn his sin, he heard other townsmen off in the distance calling for the old man. He quickly jumped away and began running back to the castle.

This development greatly disturbed Sergio. He didn't understand how he was capable

of doing something that had disgusted him so much before. It took him a lot of time and many more feedings to fully come to terms with the idea. He eventually came to the realization that it is just survival, it's what he had to do. Just as a lion must hunt a zebra, vampires must hunt the normal humans. He convinced himself it was some sort of twisted version of the circle of life.

Sergio had another run in with Myra, and by this time they had become quite cordial. They were very fond of each other. They talked about their hunts, and their experiences as



vampires.

Sergio began questioning some of the myths of the vampire. "We are rather invincible though, no? I mean, who has a large stockpile of sunlight anything, or has the agility to stuff garlic down our throats?"

Myra giggled, "Sergio, that's a myth. We die just as any other human. If you stab us, and leave us to bleed, we will die, just as any other creature. If

you shoot us in the head, we will drop dead on the spot. That's a myth that we have circulated to keep us safer. Keep that in mind when hunting, or you might find yourself at the other end of a gun barrel in a pool of your own blood." Sergio couldn't help but think to himself, so that vampire did die after all...

Months passed. Sergio was a popular member of the Sacred Clan, and had been seen as one of the most powerful vampires around, even in comparison to other clans. He and Myra had become very close, and many saw them as a couple of sorts. Though there was no official ceremony for further relationship in the vampire community, Sergio and Myra felt that they had reached that step. They went everywhere together, to the ravine to relax, under the trees to rest, into the town to feed. With Myra at his side, Sergio felt that everything was perfect, and that his life as a vampire would be fully bearable, so long as she should stay with him.

It was raining, and lightning erupted from the sky in a brilliant flash of blue light. Myra and Sergio sat inside the castle on the decrepit stone bench when the news came. A messenger came running into the castle, panting and gasping for air. He had run a long distance, and he was sweating profusely.

"Lady Myra, your father, the President, he is in trouble. His caravan is under attack on their way to visit the Serenity Clan. We must send reinforcements! As his

daughter, it is your responsibility to establish a plan of action," the messenger said with an immense sense of urgency in his tone.

Myra looked to the floor, Sergio's left arm stretched around her neck, and he put his right arm on her leg in a consoling manner. After a long pause, she looked up. "I will go myself. Ready my squad and we will head out," she said with a stern voice.

"Yes ma'am," the messenger said while Sergio looked mortified, as if he knew that something was bound to go wrong on this expedition of vengeance.

"Let me go with you Myra, we can do this as a team!" Sergio begged.

"No Sergio, I wish not to put you into danger. You will stay by my wishes, or I will have you thrown in the dungeon."

Sergio looked absolutely perplexed, but followed her command. Her squad arrived, and they jumped over the walls of the castle, off into the night.

Sergio waited and waited, hoping that his love would come back alive. He sat atop the stone bench, unmoving. Dawn would come in a few hours, so he knew they would be forced back soon. As Sergio had expected, some of Myra's squad came wandering through the door. They seemed to be hiding something with their bodies. Two moved out of the way. There Sergio saw the single most painful thing of his life. Myra lay on the ground, arms at her sides. The color had left her face, and there was a bullet wound in her head. Sergio slowly walked over to Myra's body. He knelt before her, his hands drooped to his side. He felt a tear run down his face, but his face remained stoic, looking straight at her. He rose slowly to his feet. In the deepest voice he could muster, baritone beyond belief, he spoke ever so slowly, "Where are they?" The men looked at each other confused,

"We believe they are patrolling the forest, sir," they said. Sergio looked towards the forest.

"They will pay," he said to himself, his face scrunched. He angrily smashed his fist to the ground, creating a small crater. With that, he took off like a bullet, leaping over the castle walls.

Sergio moved at the speed of a drag racing car, weaving in and out of the trees. The leaves around him flew in the air as he passed, and the trees bent around him as he ran. He smelled the humans, for one of them was bleeding. He followed the scent. A man with one purpose, he

rushed towards the scent. He knew they were close. He jumped onto the tree canopies, jumping from canopy to canopy. Finally, he had reached their location, and prepared himself to strike.

With a grunt and a growl, Sergio jumped out of the tree onto the back of one of the men, punching him over and over until he stopped breathing. There were two others. He jumped to one, wrapped his arms around his head, and snapped his neck. He stared down the third for a while. The man was scared out of his wits, his gun shaking in his hand.

"Stay back, stay back!" the man cried. "I'll shoot. I have no problem with blowing your insides out!"

Sergio walked towards him slowly. He fired off one shot, missing Sergio by a mile. The gun was trembling so much that it was a blur of wood. Sergio walked right up to the man, and sat in front of him for what seemed to the man to be days. Finally, Sergio grabbed his gun, and snapped it in half. Sergio smiled. The gore that ensued from this point was inexplicably gratuitous, and shall not be explained in detail, but let's just say that the man was three limbs short of a body. With the man dead, Sergio looked about. He still smelled the scent of blood. His senses kicked in, and he jumped to the side as a bullet whizzed past him. He turned around, and there sat the fourth man. Sergio could not believe his eyes, nor could the man.

"Sergio?" The man said.

"Darude?" Sergio questioned. "So it was you, then." Sergio walked towards Darude slowly, "Darude, join me! I want you to share the experience with me. It's not as bad as it would seem, trust me." Sergio held out his hands.

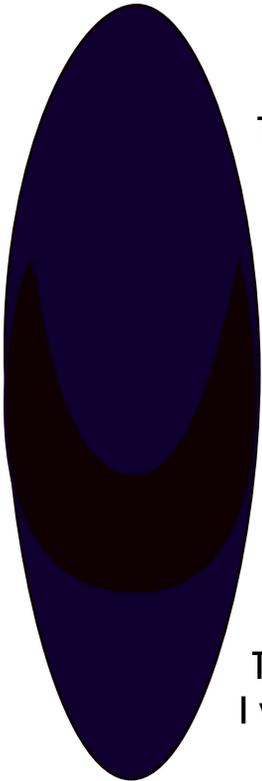
"Sergio... I can't... Because it's not even you talking any more, just a filthy vampire. There's no way I can have my friend back, and there's no way I can let a vampire live to see me a second time. Goodbye, Sergio." Darude said, holding his gun towards Sergio, turning away.

"Then I no longer have anything to live for."

Bang. One shot and Sergio was up in flames with Darude watching as the flames consumed his body, telling himself, "He was no longer human. There was nothing different I could have done." He listened, and heard nothing. He wept as the silence that Sergio had always been so fond of returned, only to know that he would never hear it again.

Moment of Silence

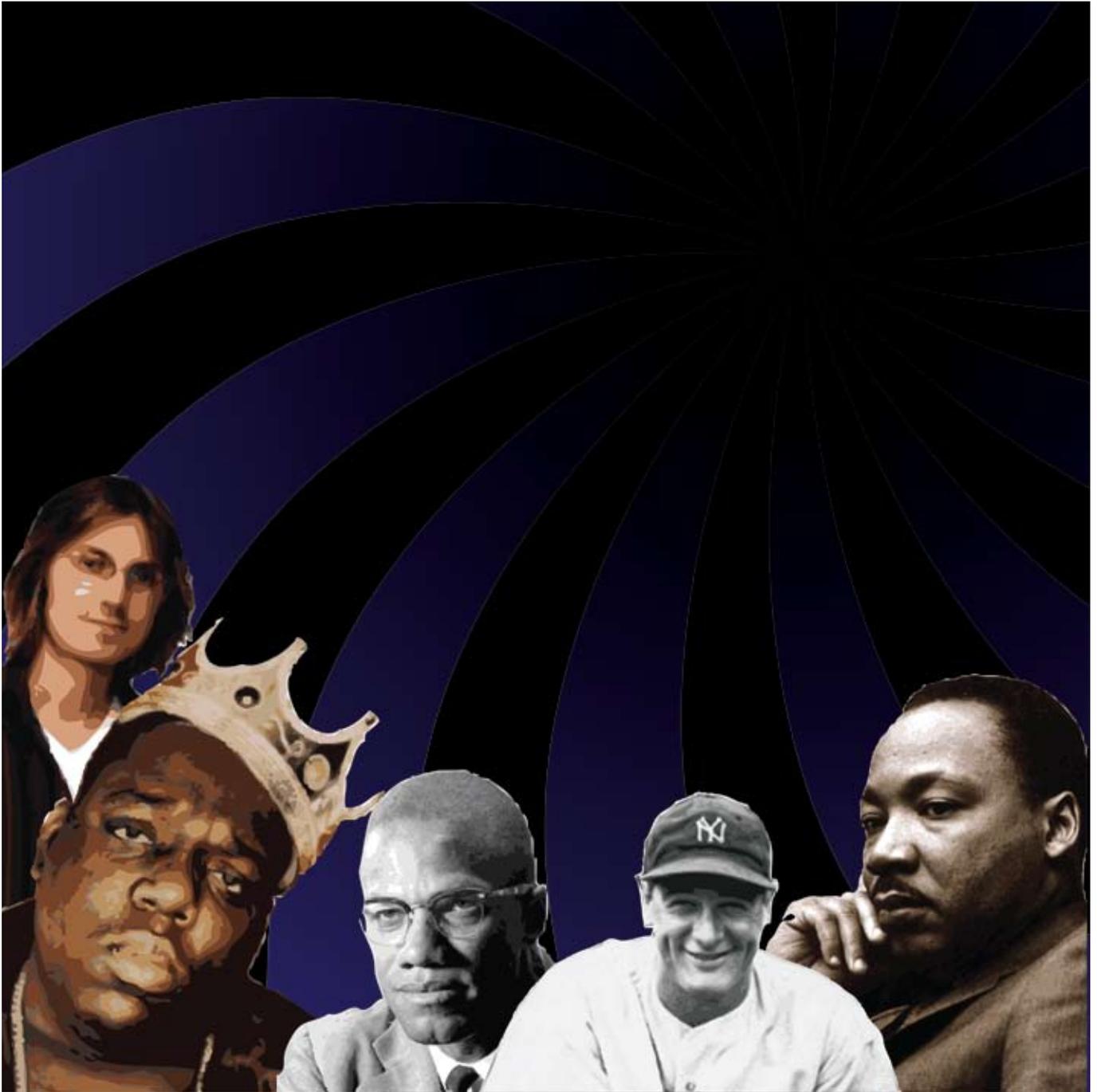
by Denzel



This is to my cousin Earl who got shot a block from his home
Somebody hated him and emptied a clip in his dome
To Richard Pryor the original funny man
Your comedy lives forever and I will always be a fan
To Malcolm X who got shot in front of his family
His words will stay in my mind I guarantee
To Dr. King who preached non-violence, non-violence
In case you don't know this is a moment of silence
Biggie and 2Pac got shot and pronounced dead
I wonder if they had lived the lives they could have led
To Lou Gehrig who died of his own disease
I hope his death was painless and he went to rest with ease
To Mitch Hedberg a very funny dude
I will remember track 14 attitude

Death

by Ryan



Inside the Mind

Poem by Ethan

Beyond Your Comprehension, Photo by Denzel



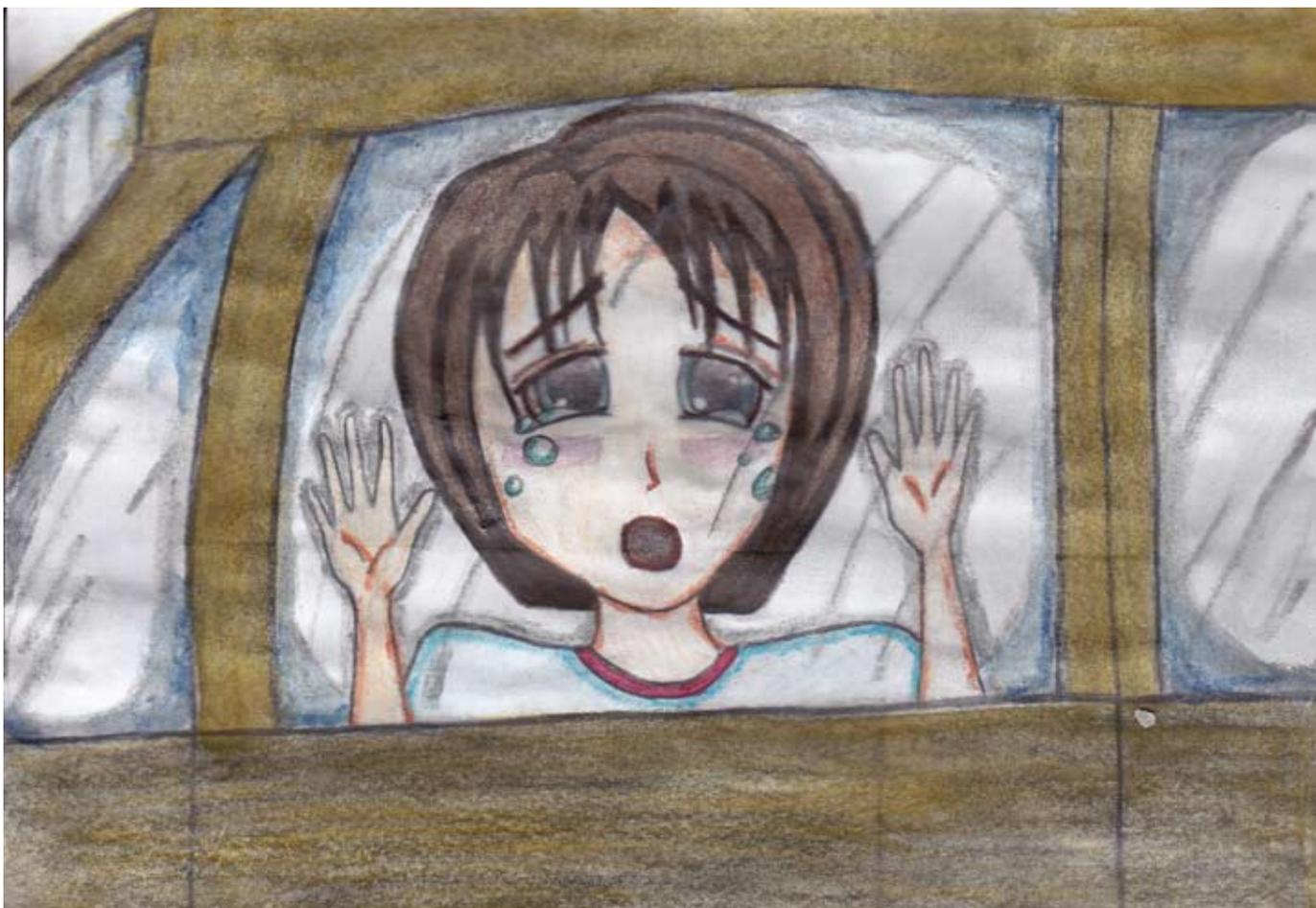


One man awakens to the silence of night.
Lurking in the dark, he stays out of sight.
Silent as the shadows, he sits and observes,
Surveying his surroundings, not missing a curve.
The scene is like a picture, frozen in time.
All is at rest, even the weary wind chime.
Time creeps by, forever lost in the sky.
However nothing has changed, not even a napping fly.

For we must be deaf and blind,
Unable to see or hear inside the mind.

My Silence

Short Story Written by Felicia



Watercolor Drawings by Rachel

The usual cars pass by, hooting and hollering, coming to this block from miles around. The street lights are dimmed and the buildings are barely passing code regulations. Smoke fills the air as women nonchalantly pace back and forth, swaying their hips and sucking in the toxic waste filled cigarettes. The women on this block are not only known as beautiful, but as “things,” and I am one of them.

Human trafficking, as they call it, has spread like wildfire, and the once innocent girls of youth turn into women of no worth. We are scared and timid, but bold and straightforward. We must make a deadline, and an offer that some men can't refuse; we must sell ourselves and then give the money to our “owners.”

I was not always like this. I, as a young girl, lived in the U.S. However on a trip to France with my family, I was abducted and separated from everything that I had once held dear.

A cab pulls up, my mother in her red blouse and sleek kakis, whispers something flirtatious to my father. Our romantic trip to France has all been a ploy to save their marriage and thus far it was working.

I climb in waiting for what seemed like an eternity for their kissing to stop. I look around the cab and notice how worn down

the constant years of hauling passengers had made it. A miniature Eiffel Tower on the rear view mirror reminds me of what we have just seen earlier today. However the next thing I know the cab is driving away, with just me in the back. My parents are screaming and trying to chase the cab down, but their battle is lost.

I am screaming, and trying to open the door, however the child safety lock must have been on. I could not open the door. The next few moments happen so fast. A rag wraps forcefully around my mouth and everything goes black.

I lost my sanity with the prospect of knowing that I would never return home, that I was to become a mindless robot answering to the whims of men. I had lost myself.

I see my next customer, and strut towards the car. He's a cutie and tells me to get in. I get in and get ready for the next stage in the purchase. However, he was not what I had expected. He flashes a badge, and then tells me that I am to be taken away and never let out on the streets again.

I am petrified. What will my owner think? Will he send someone to kill me? Am I doomed? Why has this officer picked me when there was a block full of my “colleagues?” I nod my head as is customary for an item, and sit quietly as he drives away.

I am doomed.

We must
make a deadline,
and an offer that
some men can't
refuse



We arrive at the station and he ushers me into his cubicle. He tells me his name is Ezekial and that everything is going to be all right. He lends his hand ever so gently to help me into my seat. I am shaking and have yet to say a word. Everything is about to change, and my objective is clear. I need to keep my mouth shut in order to stay alive and earn my freedom from this place.

He continuously asks me my name, and I don't answer. I don't even know whether April is my real name, or if it was just a name given to me by my owner. I don't remember what my parents looked like or whether I had any brothers or sisters. I have long since lost track of my age, and my memories have faded into nightmares.

I snap back into focus, and he is still talking. He's telling me that my name will be found, that my identity will be restored and that my family will find me. He says that the fingerprints that they took earlier are to be tested in order to find my birth certificate. More importantly, he says my owner has been taken into custody and that he, Ezekial, needs someone to testify in order to stop my owner from abducting anyone else. I ponder this, but remain silent. I know that Michael will be back out there, and I know that his cronies will find me if I speak.

I shake my head, no, but soon drift off into a land of slumber.

I wake and he is there again, does he never give up?

He smiles and tells me what he thinks

is wonderful news. Apparently while I had been sleeping for almost two days, he had been tracking down my family. He says my name is Amy, and that I am to appear in court to testify against this "creep." He helps me up from my bunk and takes me to the bathroom where he tells me to change into the clothes that he was providing me. I go in and do as requested. He then takes me back to his car and for a drive to what I am guessing, is the courthouse. As he rounds the corner in his black SUV, I see a man and a woman with the jitters.

As he parks, they approach the car and start to ask him questions excitedly. I remain in the car, afraid that one of my owner's cronies will jump out and take me away.

Ezekial rounds the car and opens my door; he helps me out and leads me towards Mr. and Mrs. Turnabout. They can't help but cry in excitement. I on the other hand don't do anything, don't feel anything and stay where I am.

They tell me that they had tried to keep their hope alive, but after 5 years thought that their 12 year old little girl was gone forever.

It has been 5 years I wonder to myself? I was about to ask if that would make me 17, but I realized I do not know them and they could be lying just to get me to testify. So without further contemplation, Ezekial leads me again to the courthouse.

By the time it is my turn on the stand, many had been questioned, including my master himself. When they call out "Amy," I



don't respond, I'm not used to that name. However with help from Ezekial, I rise and go to the stand.

The prosecutor keeps egging me on, asking me questions as I survey the room. There is Michael, my owner, staring me down, just waiting to make a strike. His eyes are telling me how worthless I am. On the other side of the room, stood my "parents" with Ezekial. They had hope in their eyes. Then, there were the jurors just waiting to hear me speak; me, a common object. From this I feel something, many things.

What would I accomplish from talking? Would I finally have a family, MY family? Would Michael find a way to murder me? What if the Jury decided not to imprison him, would I have to go back to the streets? So many thoughts were swirling around in my head. I was overjoyed, and enraged; yet overflowing with pride. I was an item no longer, these people cared and so did I.

I wasn't going to go back to my unchosen lifestyle. I WANT to have a family, and I want to be loved. I look upon Michael and smirk with satisfaction, by which he is taken aback. I open my mouth, and break the silence. I break the silence spilling everything; my pain, his torture, my hopes and last of all, my name.

I say, "I am Amy Turnabout," with tears welling in my eyes, but my, did it feel good.



Silent but Deadly

Poem by Julie



Happy Fart
Watercolor Pencil
by Casey

Everyone in the room was **dead** asleep
Everyone in the room except for me
There was no **noise**, not even a small peep
Though I **heard** everything that none could see

The **earsplitting** silence was hard to bear
The darkness around me was **frightening**
I knew that I wouldn't be at all **fair**
My **stomach** all night had been tightening

My roommates were out **cold** for the whole night
I had **drank** to much Mountain Dew to try
The caffeine held a certain sort of **bite**
The **pain** was just enough to make me cry

I had done this before and it was **foul**
No one would talk to me for a **long** time
I had no **choice** now but to run afoul
For I would commit a very bad **crime**

I thought of everyone in their far **dreams**
I **wished** I could join them just for a bit
I just wanted to **hit** the ceiling beams
But I did not want to throw a **huge** fit

My stomach **rumbled** just for a second
The pain was now so **intolerable**
I would give in soon **enough**, I reckoned
I could not hold on, that's not **plausible**

It was so incredibly **violent**
They all would think that I was cold **hearted**
At least it had been totally **silent**
For I gave in to the pain and **farted**

Silent creams



Digital Image by Julie

Short story by Kayla

I was walking with Beth back to my house. We were walking around town enjoying our frozen lemonade in the warm sun while we can; there's no sun a few towns over from where we are so we're deeply enjoying this moment. We saw a man playing fetch with his dog, and everyone was happy. Nothing out of the ordinary was going on. We were exiting the mall. I wasn't expecting any chaos but I guess things aren't always what we expect, right?

Next thing I know Beth just starts panicking and rolling her sleeves up and scratching her arm. I looked at what was going on. She had a horrible looking rash or something; it looked like it must be really uncomfortable. She was frantically scratching and saying, "I'm breaking out into some sort of rash, what's going on?"

I could tell by the look on her face and by the look of the rash that it must not feel all that great. Once we got out of the elevator and into town she started to act kind of strange. She became aggressive and was starting to look like a zombie, her hair came out in clumps in her hands. Then I really started to worry, I noticed that everyone else around us started acting aggressive and confused.

All of a sudden Beth and some other person started looking at me like cavemen must have looked at a piece of meat; ready to pounce. I was confused. I finally said, "Beth, what are you doing? You're scaring me, are you ok?" I realized that she didn't know what she was doing and three others were looking at me as if they were going to eat me so I hopped in the car, immediately locked all the windows and doors then frantically searched for the car keys and sped off.

When I finally got home, I ran in the house and locked all the windows and doors, then turned on the television. Instantly there was breaking news. "There have been several reports of a mysterious and unknown virus which medical experts cannot explain, but are calling the Plague. This Plague isn't like anything anyone has ever heard of and is highly contagious and may potentially be deadly. It has already started to infect Shadow Grove and Timber Valley and is now spreading to Willow Acre Springs. The symptoms of this disease may include a cold sweat and/or chills, paleness in the face, dark, purple-like circles under the eyes, sores or rashes almost identical to staph infection, and, in the later stages, hair loss, shortness of breath, uncontrollable rage, confusion and fear, loss of awareness, and, eventually, mutation and insanity."

Shadow Grove! That's the town Beth and I are in. I felt sweat start to trickle down my forehead and my mind went numb. I checked everywhere to make sure I wasn't getting the same nasty rash that they have. I ran to the mirror and made sure that I didn't look like I was turning into some zombie-like creature or losing hair. What a relief, I was pretty much ok other than being terrified of what was going to happen. I needed to go to the store to get more food because I was kind of running low, but no, I can't, it's too dangerous. What if I'm next to get that weird strange mysterious fever or whatever they said it was?

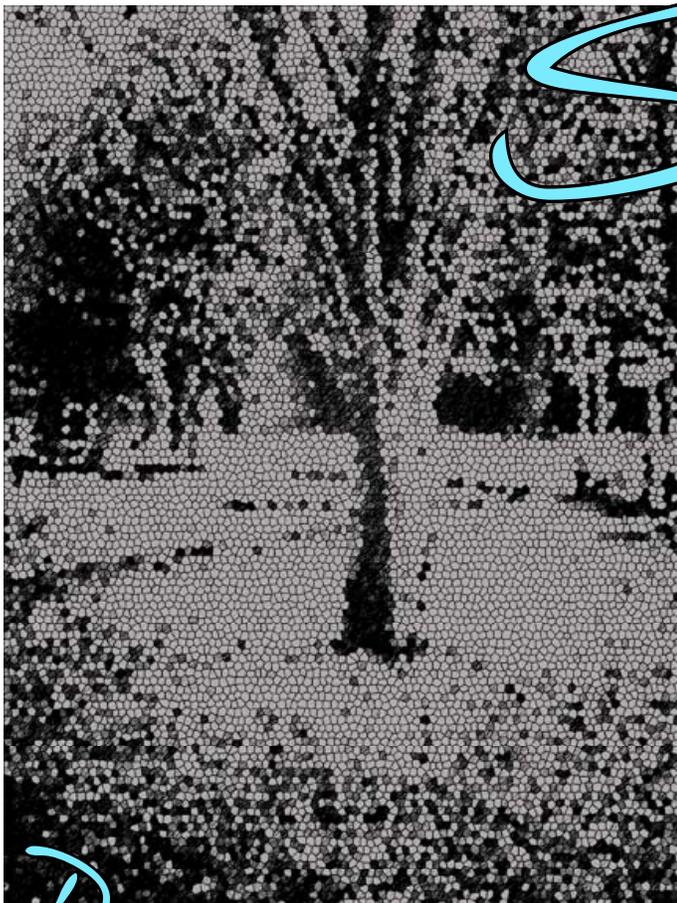
I looked around in the fridge. Yep, nothing. I had to go to the store. I had a choice between just staying home and being safe, eventually starving to death, or just going ahead and risking getting eaten or infected or whatever. I'll take a wild guess and say I'd probably die either way. My stomach felt like it was eating itself, hunger took over fear, and I just decide that whatever happens happens.

I close the front door on my way out and when I am on my way to the store, I feel something grab me, I try to scream, but apparently I can't. The next thing I know I am in a hospital-like bed and I feel very weak and my whole body aches. I listen for anyone, or better yet, anything, but it was quiet, a little bit too quiet if you ask me. I open my eyes to see a very bright light that really hurts. I close them again, I guess I fell asleep again but when I wake up I look around the room to see if there was a possibility of someone being there, waiting for me to wake up like in the movies. There are the zombie-like people were everywhere!

I try to scream, no sound escapes from my mouth. They crowd around me, and I can't move. My arm starts to itch badly, and I try to reach over to scratch but then I realize that I am being pinned to the bed. I know instantly what is happening. The plague has consumed me. I can't hear anything, and I pass out again. When I wake up, I feel a wave of what felt like insanity and rage and I have no idea what I am doing. I am surrounded by these zombies, these diseased creatures. Wait, what am I saying? I am one of them now, I can't take it anymore; I flail around trying to break free of the chains that trap me in the bed, squirming and trying to break free.

Once I break free I feel some more rage within me. I can't hear anything and still everything is dead silent despite all the fighting and mayhem that is going on around me. I try screaming but apparently they don't hear me either. I run out of the room and into the streets, expecting someone to be there, but there isn't anyone in sight. I run around breaking windows to houses, but I don't sense anyone around. I don't remember anything else but I woke up to find myself in a room, strapped, yet again, to what felt like a hospital bed, this time I was sure it was a hospital. The doctors were hovering over me, I try to listen for any kind of sound but I realize I should give up trying to hear. I have to accept that fact. The doctor is probably speaking, but I have no idea what she is saying.

Everyone is talking at once. I try to scream but this time I when I try opening my mouth there is what seems like really strong bonding glue keeping my lips together. I feel so weak, I try screaming. I don't know if any sounds come out, but I feel so weak.....



Senseless Love

Shakespearean Sonnet
by Rachel

I fear the likes of you in absent sound,
Though I care not to whom your words belong.
I once did long to see your face around,
Though now in my mind's eye it looks too wrong.

I turn from lack of smell and hold my breath,
Though your clean scent will haunt my nose no more.
I avoid empty hands like they bring death,
Though you, fingers do not feel in their core.

A fifth sense strikes inside me no such hate,
For comforted I am by what I find;
A silence such that makes me salivate,
Deep quiet such that sets my teeth to grind.

In silence 'tis to taste my thoughts will dart;
For now I taste the silence of your heart.

Dopple Gray
Mixed Media
by Brooklyn



Silhouette
Mixed Media
by Brooklyn

Paul and the Elephant

*Children's Story by Ryan
Mixed Media by Ethan*





Kid in the Bed
Mixed media
Ethan, 2009

Once upon a time,
In the household of McKall,
There lived a little boy,
And his little name was Paul.

Paul loved to yell and scream,
He howled every day,
He roared all during school,
And he shrieked while out at play.

Most people tried to avoid little Paul,
And his unavoidable din,
Which was so loud, when he walked away
It lingered where he had been.

His parents were quite angry,
They couldn't sleep at night.
They woke up every evening,
Jumping out of bed in fright.

They heard little Paul snoring
As loudly as could be,
Waking the neighbor's cat
And sending him up a tree.

One day Paul was walking,
Howling as he went,
And out from behind a tree,
Came an elephant!

Paul breathed in, and bellowed out
A loud, "HOW DO YOU DO?"
Which shook the trees and houses
All down block twenty-two.

The elephant stood quietly,
And then he softly spoke,
"Please quiet down a little bit,
My eardrum's nearly broke."

"Elephants were once incredibly loud,
Stomping this way and that,
Blowing with our powerful trunks
A mightily loud tumult.

"We were so loud on the savannah,
The other animals complained,
And a secret, midnight meeting was called
Under the baobab tree, as it rained.

All the animals agreed, none could stand
The elephants' hullabaloo.
The animals cried, and said, 'We give up!
The era of clamors is through!'

"Many agreed, but some said that we
Shouldn't receive such a horrible fate.
Gawked at by humans, night and day,
Behind a metal grate.

"The hyenas cried, 'They're much too loud!'
The giraffes said, 'So are you,'
The lions roared, 'Enough is enough!
We'll send them off to the zoo.'

"But they were outspoken, and ignored,
As the animals cried, 'Hooray!'
Our elephant people were sent to the zoo,
And that's where you see us today."



Savannah Trifecta

Mixed media

Ethan, 2009

Earnest Elephant
Mixed media
Ethan, 2009



“Too much noise is annoying and loud,
But we learned that only too late.
Go home and think of what I’ve said,
And the elephant’s current state.”

Paul looked at the elephant,
Quiet for the first moment ever,
He walked home alone, as he was before,
With no noises whatsoever.

From that point, he spoke when he wanted,
But he never screamed loudly again,
As he got older, he remembered the lesson
From the elephant way back when.

Hunting

Literary Essay by Shelby



Birdwatching
watercolor pencil
by Kayla

M

y dad grew up in a small, simple town near Peoria, Illinois called Chilli-cothe. It's the type of town where people have "supper" at 3'oclock and still smoke inside public places even though it's illegal. My grandparents live there, and they don't see many people. Once in a while, my family and I will take a trip "back home," as my dad would say. The scenery on the trip includes a variety of corn, horses, cows, and farms, so buckle up!

Visiting this town, you would think that there isn't much to do; I would be lying if I said there was. There are the movies, most towns have them, and they only cost \$3.00. Movies get old, especially if there are only two playing at a time. Then there's always taking a nice drive in the country with my grandpa in his old station wagon. The thrill of speeding down a gravel road, nearly ruining the transmission and getting reprimanded quickly wears out. Sometimes, if my sister and I are "good," my grandpa will take us for a swim, and truthfully, swimming with an eighty-two year old man isn't that enjoyable. Then there's hunting, a popular small-town activity. That's where you attach a tree stand to a tree, or go to public or private hunting grounds no matter what the weather conditions are, wait with your bow and arrow or shot gun until deer or other wild animal grace you with their presence and kill them. So, when my sister and I are engaging in one of these non-hunting, neat activities, you will know where to find my dad.

About 15 miles from town, our family owns land. It isn't the most ideal property for any type of practical use. The land is very marshy, full of weeds and there are tall ancient trees scattered on small hills. Since we couldn't put it to any functional use, it turned into hunting ground for my dad and some of his friends. When I was younger, I never really understood the idea of hunting deer or hunting other animals at the crack of dawn, high up in a tree, with nobody around.

When I was about eight or nine, my dad started asking me if I wanted to go hunting with him. I asked him if I would actually be killing something. He said, "No way, you need a license for that. I'll just put you up in the stand and come get you when I'm finished. You can watch the birds and see if you can spot any deer." He told me that I had to be careful and very quiet or else the coyotes would eat me. I agreed to go, and made sure that coyotes weren't actually carnivorous towards humans. I prepared for the next day and purchased a Kodak disposable camera to take any pictures of interesting wildlife.

He awoke at about three in the morning. I remember the unpleasant feeling in the pit of my stomach from being eager to leave, tossing and turning on the lumpy pullout bed the previous night, and getting no sleep. It didn't get any better when I had a strawberry pop tart followed with some store brand soda. My dad told me to get ready and dressed; I knew that meant in camouflage. He wore a full "camo" jumper with waterproof boots. I wore my jeans under oversized camo pants, a torn up camo hoodie, a baseball cap and my sparkly Scooby Doo sneakers. We topped our fashionable attire off with a few dabs of deer piss to cover up our human sent.

My dad and I drove down the spiraling country roads. During our drive there, he appropriately turned the radio to the only station that, according to him, plays two types of

music, country and western. Through the waves of the twangs of the guitar, he talked about how hunting is “death from above,” and other things like that. I started to realize how tired I was and asked how long I would be up in the tree; he told me until about ten or eleven and then we would go out to breakfast.

As we neared our destination, farms became more abundant and any form of civilization disappeared. As we arrived at our property, we went over a small creek, down a twisting gravel road, and to a locked gate. My dad turned the lock to the correct combination, entered, drove a little further down a tall grassy path, parked, and we got out of the car. I felt the cold, fall wind bite at my face. It was still dark out and almost silent, except for the faint hum of my dad’s grey ’92 Buick’s engine cooling off and the crunch your shoes make against the dying, autumn earth. I envisioned what the silent land looked like in the daytime: thirty-foot tall trees with dark moss climbing up the sides of the oldest ones, fields of

tall grasses with wildflowers where I had seen dragonflies chase each other, and the dirt-paved canyons of hills where a variety of mushrooms grew. My eyes adjusted to the darkness, and my dad beckoned me to follow him. He stressed the importance of silence or else you would scare the deer away.

“It was still dark out and almost silent, except for the faint hum of my dad’s grey ’92 Buick’s engine cooling off and the crunch your shoes make against the dying, autumn earth.”

After we walked for a good five minutes through the chilly wilderness, my dad wordlessly gestured to a moderately tall, sturdy tree where I would be stationed for the next few hours. I helped myself into the stand armed with my Kodak disposable camera and waved goodbye to my dad. He waved

goodbye, trudged out of eyesight to his own tree stand, armed with his bow-and-arrow.

Now that my dad had left, I was completely alone in a tall tree, looking down on a large body of wilderness. I could hear the soft whisper of an occasional cold breeze, the crunch of a falling leaf, and I could clearly hear my breath and heartbeat. Off in the distance, unseen birds sung in hushed, melodious duets. I sat, listened to the birds, and wondered if their back and forth songs had any meaning. At one point, I tried to mimic a strange bird call, and to my amazement the bird answered back. The conversation went on for a while; I wondered what I just had said in bird language. I remembered that I should probably shut up because I would scare the deer away and my dad would be pretty unhappy about that. The sun had just started to rise; an orange glow illuminated the entire landscape, and revealed how big it was. The once unseen birds were now clearly visible. They perched on the branches, and I had a clear view of their nests high up in the treetops. I felt like an intruder in the secret life of animals; a spy. They had no idea I was here, and they didn’t have a clue, that hundreds, maybe thousands of hunters were sitting in trees all over the world at that moment, waiting for them and their woodland friends to

walk under a tree and then...BANG, adios Bambi.

The sun was farther up in the sky. I could hear leaves crackle; something was coming. I held my breath and hoped it wasn't a coyote. A young, brown doe walked right under the stand, sniffed around for a while, and ran off into the forest. A buck with large, antlers that had a few points abruptly followed, obviously on a mission. It must have wanted to mate with her. My mouth hung open in awe, not believing the remarkable sight witnessed; I was disappointed that I didn't get a picture of it. I realized that I hadn't used my disposable camera at all, took it out of my pocket, used up the twenty-eight or so pictures in a span of ten minutes hoping that they would turn out marvelously. I knew perfectly well that if you went "snap-happy" you usually end up with twenty crappy, faded out or blurred photographs. After a while, my dad arrived and said it was time to go.

As we walked to the car, we weren't as quiet. I told him about my experience and asked if he shot anything, because I was slightly concerned about the doe and buck. I understood the concept of keeping the deer population down and when killing an animal, using every part...but the deer were so cute. He told me he didn't end up killing anything, and sounded bummed. I was secretly relieved, and told him that it was unfortunate and that there "is always next time." He asked me if I had been making any noise, because he could have sworn that he heard a really loud bird. We both laughed and I denied it. We hopped in the old Buick, listened to Country and Western, and drove up the spiraling roads to get some breakfast.

Years later, I have twenty or so expectedly blurred and faded photos commemorating the few hours that I took out of my childhood to spend sitting in the silent wilderness. Since then, my memory serves me better than any blurred photograph. Every time I go back to the property, I can envision exactly what that quiet autumn morning looked like. The silence wasn't one bit desolate; it was comforting to know that a world exists, even if it remains unnoticed by most people beneath the stir of a big town, or even a small one.

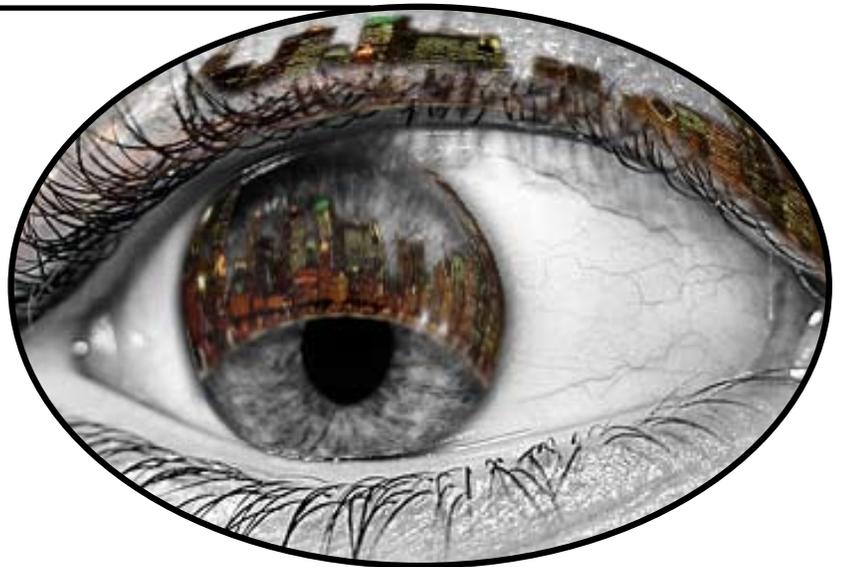


orthogénique

silence



superficialité



curiosité



Stereotype High

Short Story by Kayla V.

It was my first day at my new high school, and was more dreadful than I could have thought. I stuck out worse than

a sore **thumb**; I was, well, unique. Most people thought I was just

a **wanna-be**, but that wasn't the case. I just wore whatever I wanted and that was nobody's business but mine. People couldn't get past it, though, especially the way I did my makeup, almost everyday, drawing a spider on my powdered white cheeks and dark

shadow around my bright blue eyes. Some people consider my eyes as cold and death-like. My long, straight hair was black with a red streak, and then finished off with glitter spray. Then there was the clothing. I always wore big black boots

with **fancy** dresses and skirts.

I had problems, especially with this one

mean Barbie wanna-be, Joanne Gobstopper. She kept giving me the evil eye like I was about to devour her

worthless **soul**. She kept calling me 'demon face,' and 'the devil's child.' I chuckled to myself. Gobstopper. Like

she had **any** room to tease me.

I shot back at her with a, "Well, Ms. Gobstopper, I see

you think you are **100%** perfect. That's OK. People have their fantasies. You should consider not being so gosh-darn shallow, missy," keeping my harsher wording to myself.

I only give mean stares to those who deserve them.

Next thing I knew it was lunch time. Great. So many

things were **wrong** with today. First I couldn't find my iPod, then the shower was

practically **squirting** ice cubes, I almost overslept, and, finally, I didn't want to go to school in the first place. Now, there was the

social **nightmare** of lunch. Need I say more?

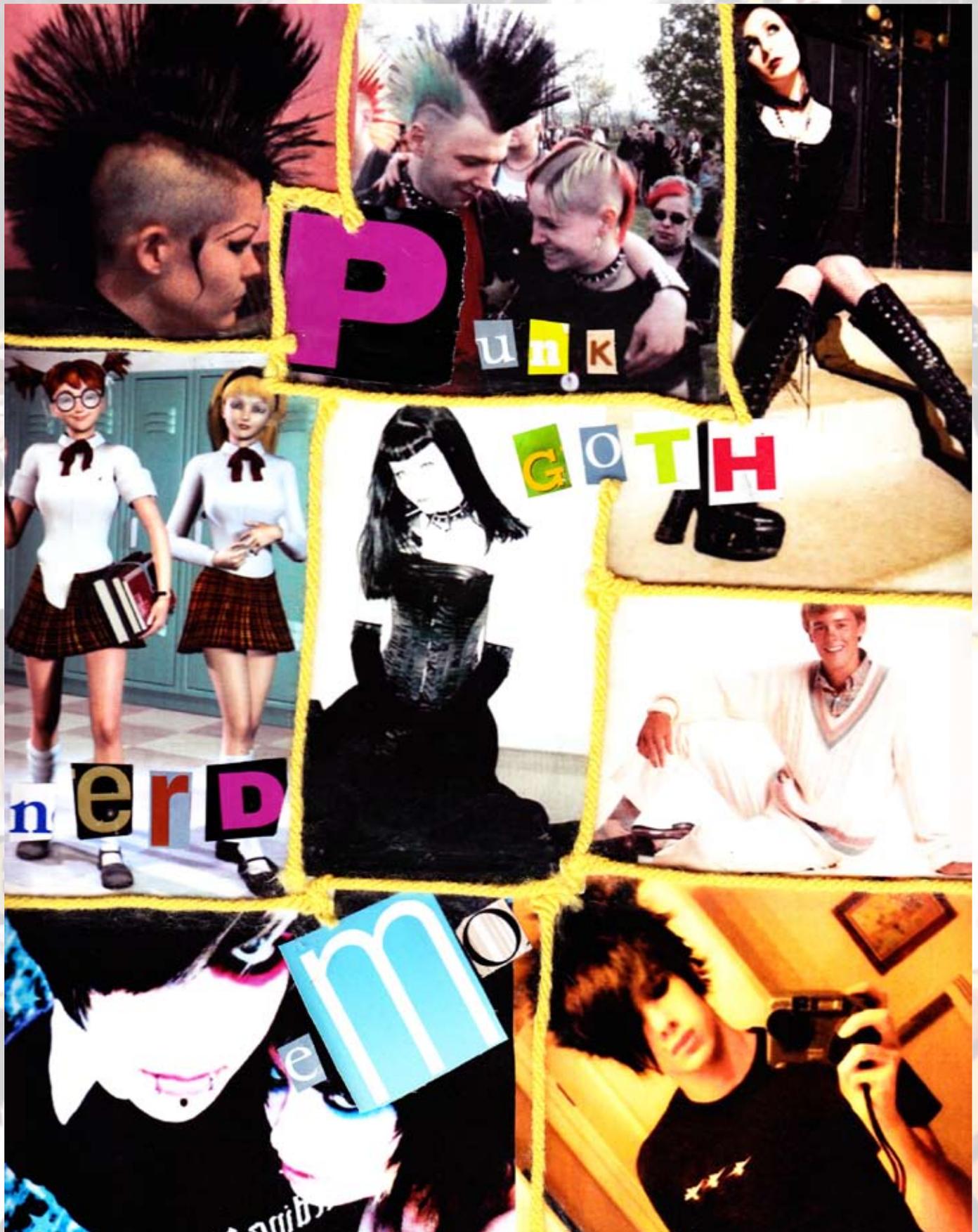
The school seemed filled with fake,

shopaholic girls, most of them with 'normal' hair. They kind of look like they pay \$200 a month on their hair. Of course it was my first day and I do look kind of satanic, but still, it's not like I'm wearing a big sign on me that says, "Don't talk to me. I'm satanic and I'll suck your blood because

I'm also a **vampire!**" The truth is I am not satanic. I don't even believe in that stuff.

At lunch I sat down to eat when I noticed a group of kids; one was emo, it seemed, one was scene, and the other two were

punks. Apparently they did not see the sign that kept everyone else from talking to me. They walked up to me and introduced themselves. They were quite nice if you ask me. The punks were named Bobby and Honey, the emo was Nina, and the scene was Lilly.



Agnostica
Collage by Brooklyn

superficiality

It really isn't fair to describe them by **stereotype**; they just had unique senses of style.

They took me over to a secret spot, whatever they meant by that. We went all the way to some shaded, deserted area of the school and settled down. As soon as we settled down, we saw

the **principal**, Mr. Gobstopper - oh dear - and we ran and hid in a nearby area where he wouldn't see us. Bobby pulled out some

cola and gave each of us a can. We all started sipping it down, but the opening of the cans must have caught old Gobstopper's attention because he saw us, and, naturally, assumed we were consuming illegal-for-our-age beverages. He came closer to us and I told him that we weren't doing anything

wrong; we were just sipping on some berry cola. He yelled anyway and told us to come to his office this instant to have a small 'discussion.'

Apparently any kind of soft drink is illegal at this

school, as is **gum**, and for our outrageous behavior we were given a Saturday

detention. Great! My first day here and I was already breaking the law without even meaning to. This

Gobstopper **dude** was on uptight, crabby old man. He seemed to be like, what, 200 years old or something?

He pulled me aside and told me that he knew that I wasn't only drinking cola. His exact words were, "I know that it is hard being your age and wanting to drink what adults drink.

Thank **goodness** my daughter is the sweetest. She came to me and said that she tried to get to know you, but was scared for you when she smelled alcohol on your breath. She is a

good **friend**."

I almost laughed so hard that my eyes would pop out of their sockets, but I contained myself. In response I said, "I'm sorry sir, but she was feeding you a load of BS. She called me the devil's child and

Bride of Frankenstein among other mean things aimed at my sense of style!"

He inhaled deeply and said, "I have no idea why you are trying to pin this on my daughter, young lady! I know my own child well enough to know she would never say that to anyone, she even told me that you were

hanging out with those.....

those **rebellious** bums, and was concerned for your well-being. She likes your style, actually, although I have not the slightest idea why." The last part was muttered through clenched teeth.

There was clearly no way out of my unjust detention on Saturday.

It **clicked**. She was his little princess and he took in every bit of rubbish that she handed him. He thought every word she said was true. That

was **downright** childish. I immediately ran to my new friends and told them everything. They laughed and I couldn't hold in my own laughter any longer. I was in tears, on the floor laughing.

So, come Saturday morning, our parents dropped us off for detention. "Great," I thought to myself, "it's only five hours. I can make it."

I saw Bobby get out of a car with Honey, and Nina

was already **waiting** by the front of the school. The only one left was Lilly. We waited a few minutes, and she finally showed up in a less than happy mood.

Mr. Gobstopper came and showed us to the

detention room and muttered something like, "Maybe this will teach you to bring alcohol on MY school grounds." Then he ordered us to stay still and keep quiet until it was exactly 2:30.

Whoa, whoa, whoa. Did he say 2:30? No way was I going to stay in a room from 10:00-2:30, especially for doing nothing

wrong. This dude was totally insane.

So, as soon as he walked out of the room and shut the door, we chatted up a storm and told each other about ourselves. I

told them about my favorite bands and hobbies and all that. I learned that Honey and Bobby were brother and sister. I had had

a feeling that they were for some reason.

These were the coolest people ever. The principal just hates them, well us, just because of how we appear to him. It's only because we

are teenagers and he thinks that only those who dress 'normally' are to be trusted and treated civilly. They told me the whole story, and I took their word for it.

Before I knew it, it

was already the end of detention. Thank goodness. I thought it would never end. Mr. Gobstopper

told us to straighten up or we'd be suspended next time.

We all said our goodbyes and went home. I couldn't help but

be grateful for a wasted Saturday that gave me some awesome new friends to help me through

the miserable school year ahead of me.



nerd

m

Manic Panic

POEM BY CASEY

PENCIL SKETCH BY SHELBY



Must have it...

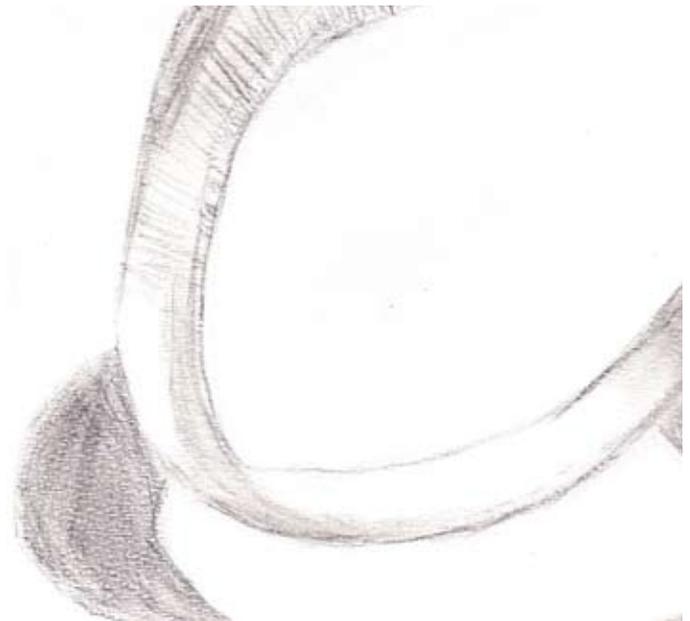
So o... Beautiful

"Rock" Pencil Sketch by Shelby

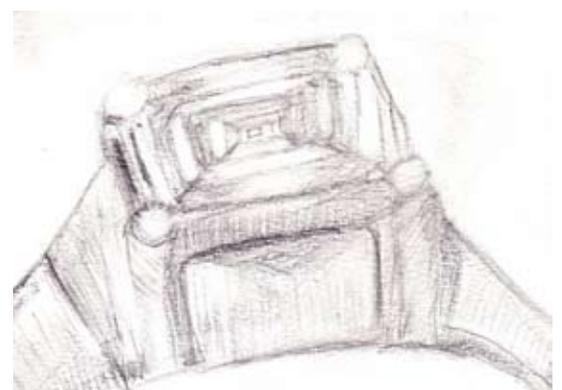
I bought this ring today, wishing I hadn't
I lost control today, I shoulda known,
It cost me more than I could afford,
It cost me more than just the money,
On this day, I lost my sanity,
On this day, mania played me,
That morning was one of confusion,
That morning I wish I had chosen to pop the
pill
But I thought, what if I refuse them?
But I thought, would my true self be free then?
So then my superficial personality be forgone
So then my life turned to a shimmer of color
and rainbow
Too bad I couldn't see incoming pain
though.

So I threw em' away, no remorse in my brain,
Threw em' in the garbage disposal,
So I don't need no proposal, I flipped the
switch,
Didn't know what, so I flipped em' all.
Then I made my way to the strip,
I felt tingly, uncertain, unpredictable,
uncontrollable,
I felt bitterness and rage, jubilee and gaiety,
sadness and gloom,
I moshed around the strip, unsure of my
purpose,
when I saw this jewelry store, with oh so shiny
things,
It was filled with jewels and diamonds, earring's
and gems,
Rings galore, shiny and beautiful, man were
they pretty...
I had it in my pocket, three hundred fifty for
the ring,
Diamond encrusted, I threw it down, picked
the ring up,
and made my way out.

I finally returned home feeling calm again,
I finally thought to myself how lame this want
is,
And I realized that that three fifty was not just
spare,
I realized it was part of my mother's ticket
money
So I knew, for her delightful cruise,
So I knew, now I had destroyed what I worked
so hard for,
All because I had to have this shiny ring,
All because it was just a thing that caught my
attention,
Later I think and ponder, wandering deep
through my cerebrum
Later I think so deeply, if I dodge the medicated
madness,
is it the madness that will medicate me?

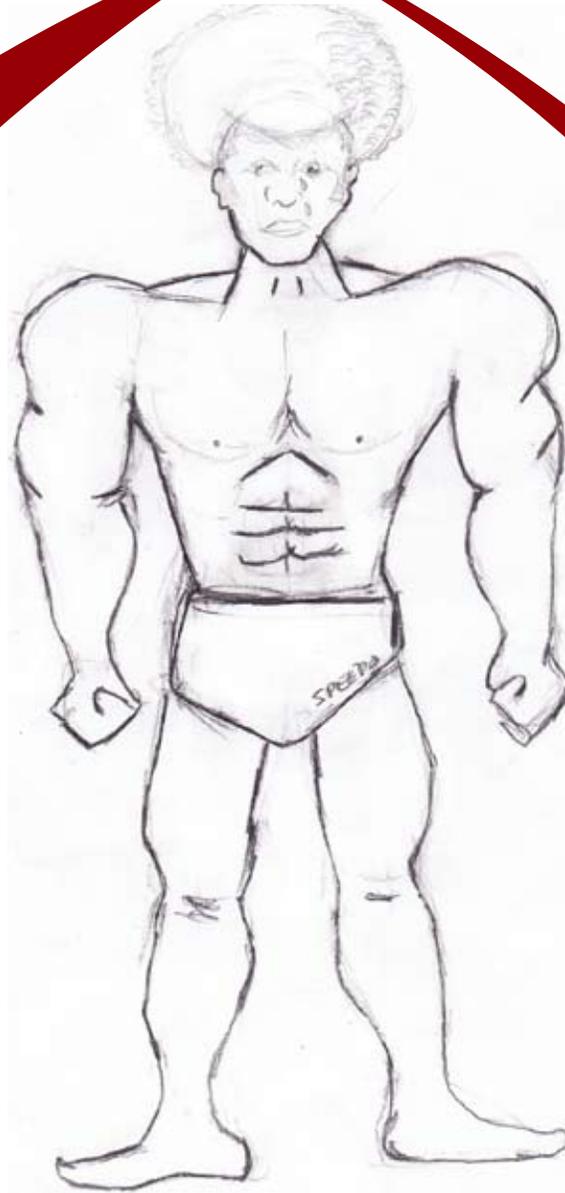


It will be mine...



Strong Cry

Pencil Drawing by Denzel



Tale of a Steroidian

Epic Poem by Felicia

Within that great unending way he may,
In infamy's blossoming Cohort to stay.
But when he has cometh over the bow,
Of destruction and pride which kills him now,
And Isolation of the most extreme,
Shall comfort only those who come to deem
Him dissolute from Hades' grip and slip
Upon him now regret the day's new tip.
And next he grabs the potion's toil with greed,
Just winning the battle, from whence his seed
Has come to show that he's the best of all.
But when the son of toil's dismay will fall
He cries one tear, for he has won, but lost
The knowledge of what the three Fates have toss'd.
A man of cause and worth redeemed at last.
Once came upon a worthy place which pass'd,
Beyond Him a piece of the world compar'd.
Do not scare away all those who had dared
To never know the strength of his new gift
Of strength, due time that seemed to fix the rift.
Of a superficial scratch he'll know,
And cry tears that have never come to show.
A now new trip he took to seal his fate
Through fire and brimstone shall he see the date
Of his then perishing thoughts to be unwound
And know he shall return the be hellbound
Then finally when he shall return home
And at the mouth his spit shall start to foam
He comes upon a place of soul search'd peace
After a dread of death from his release
Satan and all his horny headed friends
Always came through completely late at ends
Would tempt Richard with thought for the steroid
And turn the peaceful man a new android
Until now he thought himself a fool's tool,
And granted, had never been one for school
The Fates decided him with cause wither'd
And no one shall come mourn for poor Richard.

Juan the Unicorn

Short story by Ethan



Beautiful Trotting Unicorn in a Rainbow Abyss
Painting by Julie



Beyond the daisy filled meadows and over the colorful rays, lives a mystical creature name Juan. He appears as a stunning white horse, with a spiraled lollipop perfectly positioned between his great luminous eyes. As he stands elegantly looking over his pasture, a calm summer breeze washes over the land. His luscious locks begin to dance as if marionettes controlled by the heavens. Juan breaks from his perfectly sculpted stance as he begins to trot. His powerful limbs carry him about as his heavy hooves pound gracefully upon the soil. A hypnotic rhythm fills the air with every step, carefully crafting a sophisticated lullaby fit for the gods.

As Juan trots through the pasture, the grass parts for his steps, creating a gateway for Juan to meander about. The beautiful flowers, colored in shades only found in rainbows, all sing as Juan strides by. They sing a song of glory to the noble steed, for Juan is indeed a glorious being. It begins to rain, but a ray of light follows wherever Juan steps, until the rain retreats into the heavens, knowing not to challenge Juan's majesty.

Nearing the towering tree line inhabited by grandiose oaks and flawless ferns, Juan pauses. With a deep, forceful breath he breathes the superior air, nearly doubling the size of his brawny chest. His lungs release with great vigor, igniting flames like an enraged dragon.

With the nose of a mighty bloodhound Juan senses a foreign smell. Radiant flashes of lightning ignite in his eyes while the sound of thunder roars from his hooves. Weaving through the trees like a sewing needle, Juan spots the prowler in the brush. He is a simple man out gathering firewood in order to provide warmth for his family, but Juan does not care. Juan lowers his mighty head and reveals his powerful horn. With one great blow, Juan spears the man, creating a shishkabaab he will later devour for supper.

Hush, Ugly, Expression

Haiku Poems by Shelby

Painting a Face

Ink Drawing by Felicia

54

orthogenique

spring 2009





Hush

*Paint drips from your eyes
Acid turpentine strips raw
Your secret is heard*



Ugly

*A disastrous face
Clean out your savings account
Plastic surgery*



Expression

*The bristly brush curves
Tracing, writing, explaining
The mood on your face*



Dirty Socks

Short Story by Julie



Doesn't Matter
Digital Image by Casey

I sat outside my large home, one of the larger ones in my town, and stared through my car window looking up towards the window in my bedroom. Lucy was in there, and so was Raul, our gardener. She had been having an affair for the past two years; I was surprised she hadn't filed for divorce by now. Of course, Raul wasn't a multi-billionaire, and I was.

I sat there wondering what to do next. Lucy had meant the world to me, and just like that, she doesn't want me anymore. I always had a feeling she would leave me for someone younger and much more attractive, though I was only forty-eight and in decent shape. I had just never suspected her to stoop so low as to actually have an affair, and while our two children were in the house.

Samantha was our oldest. At fourteen she was already into sex and drugs. We always saw her as a straight A student, however she had her low points too. She was dating a guy she called "Spike" who had a tattoo on his neck and piercings on his face. She claimed to be so "in love" with him, though we never allowed him in or near our home, which she hated us for.

Toby was our youngest, a bright, funny eight year old boy. He loved to read, swim, and play with his stuffed toy dinosaur, which, ironically, was also named "Spike." Samantha always picked on him, though at one point they had been inseparable; best friends.

Minutes passed by, and I sat in my expensive car. I waited like this every day, waited for Raul to walk out the front door. He didn't even have the decency of walking out the back; it felt as though they weren't even trying to hide it. I watched from a distance as Raul left, then I drove up a minute later, parked in our

garage, and walked in, prepped smile on my face.

"Hello Martin," Lucy cooed sweetly as I walked in the kitchen; she was wearing sweat pants and a t-shirt, with wet hair from just taking a very quick shower.

"Hello Lucy," I spoke back, barely audible.

"What's wrong sweetheart? Did you have a bad day at work?" she always seemed so innocent when Raul had been over; one of these days I planned to walk in on them, catch them in the act, and get a divorce the very same day, but I first needed the guts to do it, guts which I didn't have.

"Nothing, honey. Just have a bad headache. I think I'm going to turn in early tonight." I headed for the stairs.

"Martin, wait," she said, suddenly serious.

"Yes?" I was curious as to whether she would admit to the affair right then.

"Martin, I was thinking. I, well, I want another baby." Well, that was unexpected.

"Another baby? We have two kids. Why do you want another one?"

"Well, I remember when I was pregnant with the two of them, and how happy I was with them, and I want to feel that happiness again."

"Why don't I buy you a new car; that'll make you happy." I was sarcastic now. Besides, why would she want another baby?

"Martin, I don't want a car, I want a baby. I want a little, round, pink, squirming baby that I can hold in my arms."

"Then I'll get you a puppy." I was serious about the puppy; I didn't want a baby.

"You just don't love me anymore," she muttered under her breath, only just barely audible enough for me to hear.

I turned to go to our room. Maybe I would just stay in the guest room tonight. How could she have the audacity to say that I didn't love HER? I was the one who took care of her, supported her. The woman didn't even have a job, and she was still living like a freaking princess. I loved her more than words could describe, even if she was cheating on me. I couldn't speak to her, couldn't even look at her.

She came to me and tried to apologize numerous times, but I wouldn't hear it. She had hurt me. I wouldn't live with that. I ended up sleeping in the guest room.

"BUT MOM!" I heard sometime the next day.

"You are NOT going to the movies with HIM! And especially not at this hour, looking like THAT! Go upstairs to your room, and do NOT come down until you are wearing something decent and it's a decent hour of the day!" I heard Samantha groan, then stomp her way up the stairs to her room. That



was how it was between the two of them. They were always fighting.

I turned around to look at the digital clock on the side of my bed. It was twelve thirty in the morning. No wonder Lucy had sounded so mad. I almost pitied her. Which brought me up short; why would Lucy want another baby, unless...? I couldn't even think the answer, but I forced myself to anyway. Unless, she was already pregnant, and it wouldn't have been from me.

I could feel my heart breaking. A sharp pain ripped through my chest. How could this be happening to me? I used to be so happy. I had a beautiful wife who loved me, two beautiful children, and now I had a huge home with lots of fancy cars; we even had a boat which I had named LUCY. How could I be so unhappy? I had everything I ever dreamed of. I had everything that I wanted. I never imagined that what I wanted would be to just be happy. Now I had to deal with the fact that Lucy was pregnant with another man's child.

There was a tap at the window. I looked up and through the darkened window I could just barely make out the form of... what was that? Was that a person? I jumped up and ran to the window, not knowing what exactly I was going to do. I threw the window open and heard a high-pitched squeal.

"Samantha? What in the hell are you doing?" I half shouted, trying not to alert Lucy.

"Dad!?" Samantha was honestly shocked to see me. Did she not realize that I had been sleeping in another room for nearly a month now?

"Get in here, young lady! Right now!" she hung her head and slowly climbed in through the window.

"Please don't tell mom! Please! She'll kill me!" I could just barely see the tears forming in her eyes.

"Just calm down and tell me what's going on."

"Mom wouldn't let me go out with Spike."

"Well, Spike is kind of a bad guy. Your mother and I don't want you spending time with him."

"But dad! I love him! I want to marry him, and he wants to marry me!"

"Samantha, you're fourteen years old. You aren't old enough to get married. Even if your mother and I approved of him."

"I can wait! I love him!"

"I'll make you a deal. If I let you go out tonight, you have to promise me that you will never tell your mother. You snuck out on your own, and I had no idea about it. Do we have a deal?" I had no idea why I was letting her out, but I couldn't see my little girl so unhappy, so miserable like I was.

"OH, THANK YOU! THANK YOU SO MUCH



DADDY!" She threw her arms around me and headed out the door. I went back to my bed and fell back asleep.

The next day, or, rather later that day, I woke up and went down to breakfast, dreading having to look into Lucy's eyes.

"Good morning sweetheart," she said as sweetly as a songbird. I put on a fake smile and headed straight for the refrigerator without speaking a word to her.

"So you're not speaking me to? I'm sorry I was so abrupt last night about the baby thing. We should have discussed it more maturely. Baby, I can explain why I was so sudden about it."

"Can you? Can you really? I would really like to understand why you'd like a baby so freaking bad!" I couldn't control myself. I was so angry.

"You know, don't you," she whispered barely audible.

"That would depend on what you're talking about," I said as sarcastically as I could.

"About me and Raul," her voice choked as she said this.

"Yes, I know." I gritted my teeth.

"It was one time! I don't know how it happened! It was only one time!" She was crying.

"Unless you mean 'one time' as 'the past two years,' then I'll believe you." I was furious. I couldn't deal with any of this.

"Therapy. We should go to therapy. I want to work this out. I love you."

"If you loved me then you wouldn't be sleeping with the freaking gardener!" at that moment, Toby walked into the room.

"Mommy, I'm hungry," he said, in the most



innocent voice in the world.

"Ok sweetie. Mommy'll get you something to eat. Would you like cereal? Or how about a bagel?" We went on with our day like that; no emotions in front of the kids (Samantha had been home for about an hour before the confrontation between me and

Lucy). At the end of each interaction with the kids, however, we went at each other, me trying to understand why she would do that to me, her trying to convince me to go to therapy.

By the end of the day, I was exhausted. I went back to my makeshift room in the guest bedroom and lay on top of the covers, fully dressed. I lay there thinking about the interactions of the day. I didn't realize how long I had been lying there until I turned over and looked at the clock; I had been thinking for over four hours. I got up and changed, getting under the covers. I closed my eyes and fell asleep.

I woke up with a start. I didn't remember my dream, just that it had bothered me. I rolled over and sat up, not wanting to get out of the bed. Out of the corner of my eye I saw something furry with a big bow tied around it. I jumped, realizing there was an animal in my room. We didn't have any pets except a couple goldfish.

The dog looked up at me with sad eyes, seemingly begging me to come and pet it. It was a scruffy looking thing, no more than a couple of months old. I knelt on the floor beside it and saw that connected to the bow was a note.

"Martin,

I bought you this puppy hoping that it would calm you down a bit. I know its not the most brilliant idea in the world, but I was reading that animals are very therapeutic, and I think that's what we need; therapy. I hope today you will think about it. Please give him a chance; he's not a bad dog.

Love,

Lucy"

I looked into the scruffy dogs eyes and silently decided that I would give him a chance, and, by doing so, I would give Lucy a chance as well. I untied the ribbon from around the dog's neck and he licked my hand as if in thanks. I picked him up and walked downstairs.

When I got to the kitchen I found another note.

"Martin,



I took the kids to the movies and out for dinner. We won't be home until later tonight. I will call if plans change. We will see you tonight.

Love,

Lucy"

"Huh. I guess it's just you and me then," I said looking down at the puppy in my arms. He yipped back, a cute little sound that wouldn't even frighten a flea. I had no choice but to smile, which was odd, because the last time I remember really smiling was two years ago, before she started cheating on me. Wow. This puppy really was therapeutic.

"Well, lets take you to the pet store to get you what you need," I said to him after realizing that he didn't even so much as have a collar, or even food.

I walked to the car, the puppy faithfully following me at my heel. We got into the car, and I thought about rolling down the windows, but decided against it, because the puppy was so small that I was afraid he would fall out.

We drove down to the local pet store and parked near the entrance. I picked up the puppy, and we walked in.

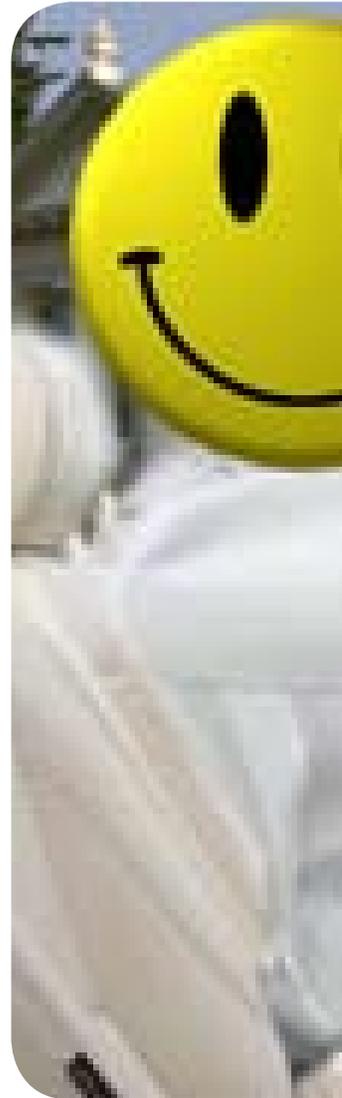
"Hello, and welcome to PetSmart," a friendly voice said as we entered. "Is there anything I can help you with?"

"Um, yes," I said, after locating the owner of the voice. "My wife just bought me this puppy, and she didn't buy any of the essential things that he needs, like a collar or food."

"Well," said the young woman he had been speaking to, "everything you need is right down aisle seven."

"Thank you," I said gratefully. I walked to that aisle and within forty-five minutes found everything that I needed. However, before I left I realized that I hadn't yet given a name to my puppy.

"Well," I said to him, now walking by my heel, "I





guess I have to give you a name now." I thought about it for a while and then decided on one. His name would be Scruff, because he was such a scruffy little thing.

When I got home there was a message on the answering machine;

"Hello Mr. and Mrs. Socks," Raul's voice said, "I was just calling to confirm that the new rose bushes you wanted planted will be there tomorrow at seven A.M. I am sorry to say, however, that we could not purchase the pink rose bushes you had asked for; instead we have white rose bushes. I hope this will not be a problem if it is, please call me. My number is 888-5734." I grabbed the phone off of the receiver and dialed the number that he had left. I had no idea what I was going to say, but I knew I had to say something.

The phone rang.

It rang again.

It rang a third time.

By the fourth ring I was about to hang up when I heard a click indicating the phone had been picked up.

"Hello?" a sleepy sounding Raul said.

"Hello Raul," I said as calmly as I could. "This is Mr. Socks."

"Ah! I see you got my message. I really do hope that you will be ok with the roses we were able to get. I know that Mrs. Socks had really wanted them planted this week, and in order to do that we would have to...."

"That's not why I'm calling, Raul," I said, cutting him off. I really didn't want to hear anything about the rose bushes. In fact, I hadn't even known about getting them until just a few minutes ago. "I am calling because we need to talk. I know about you and Lucy. I've known for a while. You're really not that smooth. Next time you sleep with someone's wife, you should leave through the back door." There was no noise from Raul's



end of the phone. I waited for him to say something for what seemed like over an hour, but was only really a minute or two. Finally he spoke.

"Mr. Socks, I have no idea what you're talking about. I..."

"DON'T TELL ME YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT!" I screamed into the phone.

"Whoa," he said in a shocked voice, "I'm telling the truth. I really have no idea what you're talking about."

"Really. Then what is it you do with her every week for the last two years?"

"I'm not supposed to tell you. She'll fire me if I do."

"Yeah, well, I'll fire you if you don't tell me! How about that?"

"I've been teaching her French."

"Wh- what?" that completely caught me off guard.

"She told me she was going to take the kids and you to Paris next year, and she wanted to impress you by being able to fluently speak French."

"So, you never slept with her?"

"Yes, I did. But only once."

"You're fired."

"But I told you!"

"But you also slept with my wife."

"So, I'm fired?"

"Yes, that would be the general idea."

"Please, let me at least plant the rose bushes. It took a lot to get them."

"Fine. But no more time alone with my wife." Then I hung up.

Later that night, before the rest of my family got home, I called a friend, who had been in therapy before, and asked for the name of the therapist. Once I got that, I called the number that he gave me.

"Hello," said a kind sounding older man.

"Hello. My name is Martin Socks. I'm calling because my wife and I need therapy. Is it possible to set up an appointment for sometime next week?"

"Yes. How about next Wednesday?"

"That sounds great."

"Three o'clock good for you?"

"Definitely."

"I mean, three o'clock in the morning."

"WHAT?"

"That is the only time I have available for the next three months. Take it or leave it." He sounded completely serious, and he was supposedly a very





good therapist.

"I'll take it." Suddenly there was a click and then I heard a dial tone. He had hung up on me. I looked down at my faithful little pup.

"He is a weird man," I said. In response I got a little YIP. I thought about what we would accomplish, if anything, in therapy. Would we be able to work through what had happened? I was so confused. I sat on the couch and turned on our massively big screen T.V.

A few hours later, Lucy and the kids came home.

"Hi daddy!" Toby called, running to jump on my lap. He hugged me then suddenly squealed in delight.

"Daddy, you got a puppy!" I looked over at Lucy, who was blushing, a slight smile playing at the corners of her lips.

"What's his name, dad?" Samantha piped in. She was kneeling on the ground next to Scruff, his tail wagging maniacally as she rubbed his belly.

"Well, I was calling him Scruff. I know that's not very original, but it was the best I could come up with." Toby had jumped off of my lap and had joined his sister in petting Scruff.

"I love him daddy!" Toby exclaimed.

"Yeah," I said in a quiet voice, "I love him too."

Later that night, while the kids were just getting into bed, I pulled Lucy aside.

"I made us an appointment with a therapist. However, the only time he can meet with us is really early Wednesday morning."

"That's great!" She exclaimed, truly happy. "What time?"

"Three A.M." I could barely hear my own voice.

"WHAT!?" She shouted.

"That was the only time he said he was available. I'm sorry. I know its not the best time in the world, but Greg said he was a good therapist. I thought you would be happy that I got us into therapy."

"I AM happy. I just think that whoever this therapist is, he's crazy to think that anyone would be willing to meet him at three in the morning!"

"Lucy, I didn't want to lose the chance to meet with him."

"But how could you agree to three A.M.!"

"Lucy, can you just calm down." She had been yelling, and I didn't want to wake up the kids.

"Calm down!? I would calm down if you didn't agree to meet with some crazy guy at three A.M.! I would rather go to a bad therapist then meet one who is supposedly 'good' at three in the freaking morning!"

"This is what you wanted. You were the one who suggested we work things out. Honestly, I was looking for a good divorce attorney. So don't put this on me. You would have done the same thing if it had been you making the appointment." I was pointedly stage whispering so that maybe she would understand that I was trying to be quiet so that she wouldn't wake up the kids.

"Look. I love you, and I want to work things out, but going to some therapist that early in the morning is just crazy. I don't think it will help us any. Especially since neither of us are morning people."

"True, but we could at least give it a try. What's the worst that could happen?"

"I don't know. Maybe we would end up getting a divorce, like you were just talking about." She was pouting now.

"Listen. I was mad. I still am, but I don't think I would ever do that."

"Really?"

"No, but it would take a lot to do it." At this point, I wasn't going to lie and say I would never divorce her. I had been thinking about doing that for a long time now.

"Oh," was all she was able to manage.

The week went by quickly, and soon enough it was Wednesday. Well, Tuesday night actually.

"What time is it?" I asked, not fully awake yet.

"Eleven thirty. It's like a three-hour drive to the office. We have to leave now or we'll be late. Get up!" She grabbed the pillow from under my head and hit me in the side.

"Ok, ok, I'm up." I was exhausted; I hadn't gone to bed until around ten, so I had only had

about an hour and a half of sleep. I was so tired.

I trudged out of bed and slowly made my way to the bathroom to get ready. I looked at my face in the mirror and didn't believe that it was myself looking back at me. My eyes were red and puffy; I had dark circles under them. My hair was going every which way. I put on my all too well known fake smile, and I looked a little more like myself.

The nanny we had worked with several years ago had agreed to come over this morning to watch the kids.

"Hello Mr. Socks, Mrs. Socks. It's good to see you again," Pierre, the nanny said. Yes, it was odd that our nanny was a male, but he was the most qualified nanny we could find.

"Hello Pierre," Lucy said. She had always showed a lot of affection towards him, though I had never thought much of it until now. I gave him a dirty look.

I took Lucy by the elbow and towed her out of the house and to the garage where my fancy car waited for us.

"What was that all about?" She asked, a little perturbed. She was definitely pouting again.

"Nothing," I lied, starting the car.

We drove for about an hour before Lucy looked at me and said, "Um, I think we're lost."

"We're not lost. These are the directions I got. I Googled it. This is where it says to go. I know we're not lost."

"You are such a typical man!" Lucy said, exasperated.

"What's that supposed to mean?" I questioned, my voice on the edge of yelling.

"You know what that means! You never listen to me! Even when we are obviously lost, do you listen to me? No!"

"Of course I listen to you! How can I not when you're whining and pouting all the time! You never shut up! It's impossible NOT to listen to you!" I yelled

"What are you saying?" She yelled back at me.

"You know what I'm saying! You..." at that very moment there was a loud POP and our car jerked violently.

"What the heck?" Lucy asked and looked out her window. I managed to pull the car to the side of the road. We both got out and looked at what had damaged our car.

All four tires had popped. I looked into the road, and there was nothing there. Lucy was right; what the heck? It was so strange that all four tires were flat and there was nothing in the road that would have popped them.

"Do you smell something? It smells like

something is burning," Lucy said from behind me. We both turned around just in time to see our car go up in flames.

"NO!" We shouted simultaneously. This was too weird.

"Lucy, call 911!" I shouted, not knowing what else to do.

"My purse is in there!" She shouted back, pointing to the blazing car.

"Well, surely someone will come along and see us," I said, trying to calm us both.

"Do you really think so?" She asked, putting all faith into me at once.

"Yeah, definitely. Someone will definitely come along sooner or later." I had no confidence in what I was telling her.

I sat down on the side of the road, thinking to myself about all the bad things that had happened to me, to us, in the past few years. Lucy came to sit next to me, tears streaming down her face. Looking at her now, all I could think and feel was my love for her. I wanted to work things out; I wanted to fix this mess, make her love me again, the way we had been in love when we first got married. I put my arm around her shoulders, and she laid her head on mine.

I'm not sure how long we sat like that, but suddenly I could see someone walking towards us. Lucy had fallen asleep, so I gently shook her awake.

"Someone's coming. Do you see them?" I whispered.

"Uh huh," she groggily said. I stood up and waved at the person walking towards us.

He waved back and walked faster, turning into a jog as he got closer. However, the closer he got, the more I realized this was probably not someone



who could, or would, help. He had long, matted hair and a beard that went past his neck. He wore an oversized leather jacket that went down to his knees, and the clearly too-small boots had holes in them, almost identically to the jeans he wore. This man was clearly homeless, probably coming to take our money.

Beside me, Lucy stood up, realized at the same moment I did that this man wasn't going to help us, gripping my arm tightly with her little hands.

"Hello!" We heard him call in a gruff voice that put me even more on edge.

"Hello," I called back, not quite as enthusiastically as he had just clearly been. Within seconds he was standing right in front of us.

"I see you're having a wee bit of car trouble," he said with a sarcastic smirk.

"Yes," I said in response. "Do you by chance have a phone we can use to call 911?" He laughed a hardy laugh that made me step back a few inches.

"Do I look like the kind of person who would have a phone?"

"Well, err, um..."

"No, you don't," Lucy whispered from behind me.

"Well, little lady, you are one hundred percent correct. I haven't had a phone since I was about, well, I don't even know. I was a lot younger, and had a lot less of this stuff." He pointed out the hair that surrounded his face, nearly hiding it from the world. He took a step closer to us, which caused me to step even more in front of Lucy, sort of as if I was protecting her from something.

"Are you afraid of me?" He asked us incredulously.

"A little, to be quite honest," Lucy said once

again. Why was she responding to him so eagerly?

"Well, you shouldn't be. I'm as harmless as a flea!"

"Fleas can cause a lot of damage to people and animals," Lucy whispered, clearly nervous. I didn't want to see her like this. I put my arm around her once again, still keeping her behind me.

"Well," the old man said, "I guess that wasn't the best analogy. However, you have nothing to be afraid of. I'm really a nice guy. You just have to get to know me. Which, over time, I'm sure you will. Everyone who comes this way does. I'm a very likable guy." What was he saying? He took another step closer, and Lucy and I simultaneously took another step back.

"Oh, come on! Don't you recognize me?"

"No. Should I?" I, too, was incredulous. I was also sarcastic. I clearly didn't know the man talking to us, and surely neither did Lucy.

"I'm Captain Yorgen! The greatly feared pirate of the north-south!"

"I'm sorry, sir, but you're nuts!" I shouted, finally losing my temper with this man; if he expected

us to believe that he was a pirate, then he definitely was nuts. I had no intention of spending another second around this crazy hobo. "I think you should leave. Go back to wherever it is that you came from. You're obviously not here to help us, and we don't need your company. I think that you should really just go away."

"Well. I see who stands where on your totem pole," he said, looking just as annoyed as I felt. "I was going to help you, but seeing as you clearly don't want any of it, then I'll just go on my merry way and tell Dr. Gordon that you won't be attending."

"Dr. Gordon? As in, the therapist, Dr. Gordon?" How did this crazy man know about our therapist, and





how the heck did he know we were supposed to be there?

"Yes. You had a three o'clock meeting with him this morning. Check your watch; it's two-fifty. He's expecting you." What the heck?

"How do you know about that? How do you know about our appointment? Who the

heck are you?" I screamed in his face. I could feel Lucy tighten her grip on my arm. I took a step back, to both calm her and myself.

"Ok, you caught me. My name is Alexander Gordon. Dr. Alexander Gordon, and I do believe I just cured you both." I was flabbergasted. He reached into his coat pocket, causing me to stand directly in front of Lucy to protect her from this crazy man. "Here is a check that should cover all of your expenses; car, phone, et cetera. Anything that was damaged in the mess I caused." He handed me a folded piece of paper. I cautiously took it, opening it to reveal a signed, blank check.

"What's this all about?" Lucy asked. My mouth was wide open, preventing me from being able to talk.

"Well, the best way to cure a family is to put them into a situation in which there is extreme danger. Little do they know, however, that there really is no danger to them what-so-ever. Anyway, you put them into this situation, and they react accordingly. You really do love your wife, Mr. Socks, or you wouldn't be protecting her so thoroughly, and you, Mrs. Socks, spoke up for yourself. You didn't fight with your husband the way a lot of women who deal with this situation do. You calmly stayed there, waiting in your husband's arms. If you two didn't love each other, you would have acted much differently to this situation. Just ask Greg and his wife. They reacted much differently."

"You're crazy," I finally managed to say.

"So say some, but tell me that in a month or so." With that, he turned on his heel and walked away. Suddenly there was a set

of headlights coming in our direction. The car it belonged to pulled to a stop in front of us. The window rolled down to reveal the face of Dr. Gordon, only this Dr. Gordon was younger and didn't have a beard.

"Would you two like a



ride home? I'll understand you don't," said the voice I recognized from when I had called to make an appointment.

"No, but you could call us a cab," I responded.

"How about this; my office is only a few miles away. I'll walk back there and you can take this car."

"You're giving us your car?" Lucy asked skeptically.

"Well, yeah. I did kind of just blow yours up."

"That's very nice of you, but I don't think so. Please just call us a cab," I said. I, too, was skeptical, and I didn't trust this man talking to us now.

"Alrighty then," he said, pulling out a cell phone and driving away.

Within a few minutes a cab pulled up. We got in and drove home. I never wanted anything to do with Dr. Gordon ever again, and neither did Lucy.

A few months later, and we had a bouncing baby girl, and it wasn't Raul's; it was my child. Lucy and I were as happy as ever, even though we still had a troublesome teenage girl and an eight-year-old boy running around with a nearly full-grown dog. We had a trip to Paris planned for the next year, and

Lucy was teaching me French. With the blank check from Dr. Gordon, we bought two new cars and a small condo just for Lucy and me to go to on weekends when things between us got too stressful, and there we worked things out without the help of any therapists.

However, I will say this; Dr. Gordon may be a crazy old man, but I do believe that he cured us. I love my wife more than anything else in this world, and I am 100% sure she feels the same way towards me. We even hired Raul back, because he never was a bad gardener, he had just slept with my wife once.

In the end, we were happy, and not just superficially, but truly happy. I had three amazing children, a big house, fancy cars, an adorable dog, and a loving, beautiful wife. Things were really great.





Conscience

Poem by Kayla B



The Two, Watercolor By Kayla

I can almost see her
My vision is so fuzzy
Like a television that isn't working
She is so close
She is trying to tell me something

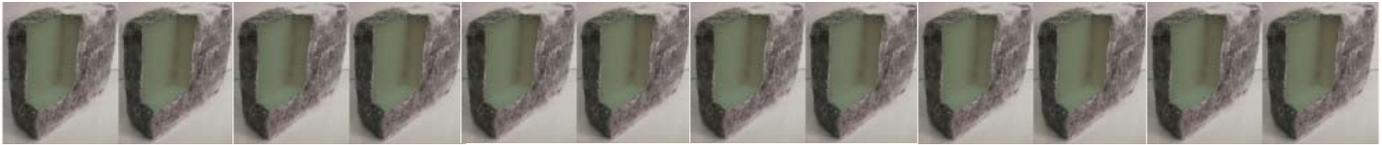
But somehow I just won't listen
She wants to get to me
But I don't want her to come
I am fine without her
But they all say I'm not

I have been trying to avoid her
Through my whole entire life
She won't go away
They all say that she will help me
But I say not

Maybe she can help me
The closer she gets
I guess I'm just afraid
To know the real truth
She's my conscience and
She's always right

For All the World's Cheese

A Brief Delightfully Cheesy Tale by Rachel

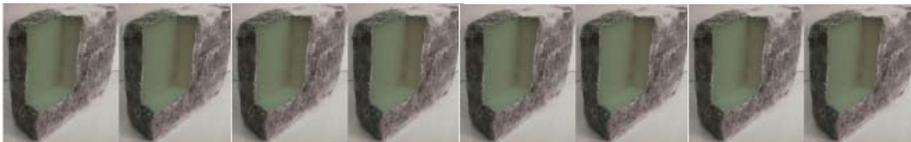


"And what the bloody hell is this?" I stare in disgust at the fuzzy mass in front of me. "That, my love, is our last bit of cheese." The year is 2093. I am back in England. Must've been years now since I last saw cheese. Might've soon forgot what the stuff looked like, had Abby not showed me what the stink from the fridge was about. "Well, love, we best get some new cheese. Get away with that thing." "But you must listen, dear, I said that's all the cheese we got." Can't say I know what she's on about. I had been away too long, and remember too little. Things are different now. I ask Abby, who I think is absolutely raving, if she has gone mad. "Right. This is worse

than I thought. You don't remember? There was a war. Me and all the other blokes of England had been drafted into the army and went away. That, I'm told, was eight years ago. Now I'm with my Abby, in the small house in London. "I saved this cheese for you, you know. Lied about the stink and all. Would've taken it if they knew. Told 'em the loo was broke again." Oh, my Abs. What a lovely girl she is, even if a bit mad. The cheese she's holding smells awful, and looks almost as bad. "They took the cows, John. Now all's left in England is this very piece of cheese. I saved it for you. It's your favorite, Johnny." Is it? Can't say I remember. Doesn't smell appealing at

all. I love her and figure I'll give a little lie. No use in making her feel off. "Course it's my favorite. Smelly piece it is, though. Put it down and wash your hands. You've gone mad if you think we're eating that cheese." Christ, I love the girl. But now I don't know what she's getting at. Not that it was ever that easy to tell. Now's worse since the war. Can't remember a bloody thing. And she's still got that cheese. Poor girl. Without each other that long- I had the socks she'd made me for Easter and all she had to hold was that old bit of my favorite cheese. "So, my Abby, what will you be making for dinner? A nice veggie pie? Don't s'pose you've got the last steak in

England too? Mad you are, but beautiful as I remember." That she was. I do remember that. The whites of her eyes such a sight compared to anyone else's nowadays. Not one bit of yellow in 'em. In the dimmer rooms you can't even see how her cheeks sink in like the rest of us. Her hair is shiny as ever and smells lovely, too, even with the rotten cheese stink. Must be the prettiest girl in England. Wish I remembered how exactly we met. Think it was a blind date, one through the paper or something. "Oh you're a laugh. 'Fraid if anyone in England has got the last steak it isn't me." Not sure if the girl is joking anymore. Was trying to lighten the mood. Don't



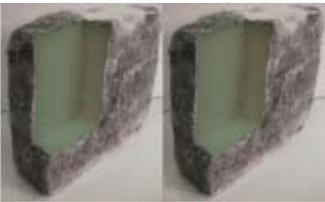
Moldy Cheese

Photograph by Ethan

superficiality

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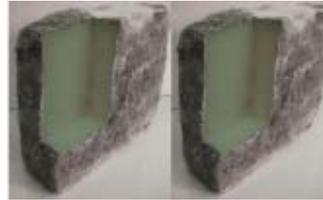
remember how to be any fun I s'pose. "Come on, Abs. Let's have a salad then get to bed. It's weird being back." Strange, that is, considering I don't have a thing to compare this too. What a strange pair we are, me and Abby. Her being completely mad and me acting like a damned fool.



2085. Abby is crying. Sayin' something about be careful and keepin' my feet warm and dry. Poor girl. Beautiful though. So I grab my Easter socks and follow Ted to the car. Ted's me neighbor, a good man, round bloke with a nice voice and large mustache. Curls it at the ends and all. Must take him ten whole minutes a day waxing it into place. Ted doesn't have a girl. Don't think he minds much. Sometimes I think he may not like 'em at all, catch my drift. He don't even watch the

shows late at night with me and the boys from the street. Anyhow, not sure where we're going. Don't really know what Ted does for a living but it must be good. I hardly afford my two-seat car and can't figure how anyone gets that large and round on a normal salary. Good thing Abby knits my belts, 'cause my pants keep seeming bigger and bigger. It's a wonder such a large bloke lives in a place like London. Prob'ly could afford to move to America. I hear they still eat steaks over there and everything. Ted says we gotta go and we get in the car. Ride goes fast and we're checking in at a Government center. Pretty crowded in here. People talking about the Vermots, bloody vermin, and what they'd do to the lot of em once we get them where we want them. Guess we're up at a desk now, I'm standing in front of a tired man, looks to be about 35. He's got a real pointy nose and his eyes look mean. I

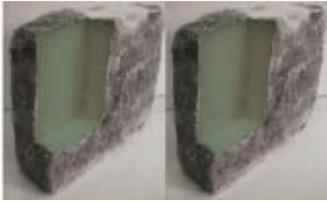
tell him my name, show him my draft letter. He says alright and tells me to go to Sector 3 of the building and check in there. Ted has a word with him, flashes a paper I can't read and then he leads me away to my next checkpoint...



Strange dreams I have these days. And what's more, I remember them. Can't say I remember having one dream in the last few years, and now they seem so real. My stomach must be empty, because it's making some loud noises, like it's angry at me for something. Walk to the fridge and the smell is still there. I've got morning breath, and the combination of that, the cheese, and the whiskey I drank last night makes me stumble to the loo, falling on my knees and hurling into the open toilet. Must've left the seat up last night, good thing too or I

wouldn'ta made it in time. Must've been in there a while, and been noisy, because Abby is next to me. My face is dirty and red with sweat so she helps clean me up. Amazing how she does it, really, state of mind she's in. Poor girl. Been through so much and all. She's asking me if I'm alright. Funny, my head feels clear enough but my body feels sick. Awful, really, and I lay on the bathroom floor curled in a ball. Floor must have been cleaned. Smells like bleach and everything. I can picture my Abby on her hands and knees, scrubbing hard day after day just for something to do. Sweet lovely girl. The smell makes me sick on myself, which makes me sick again. Good thing the army made me thin enough to be lighter than Abby, or she might have a time carrying me. Abs is strong, always has been. She changes my shirt and carries me to bed. Well that's odd. I was looking rather thin. It

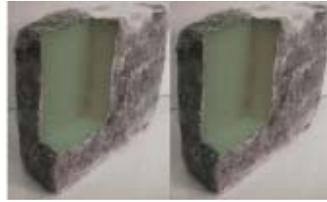
was from the army...



2087. People's Republic of Vermont. Must've overslept. I'd gotten sick in my bed. Roy was cursing at me, telling me to set my bloody alarm at night. Third time I slept through Shots this week. Hated shots, but you gotta have them. Everyone does. If you don't get them by 6 you miss out. Can't see why we can't take them at night. Guess it teaches you a lesson. I feel awful and stumble out of bed. Bloody shots. We don't ask what they're for anyways. We just know we gotta have them. Me and Roy used to live with another bloke named Frank. Had some conspiracy theory about the Shots. You see we got 'em before we flew to the PRV, and took 'em ever since. Frank didn't take any shots after the first couple weeks. Got real sick. Forgot where he was and

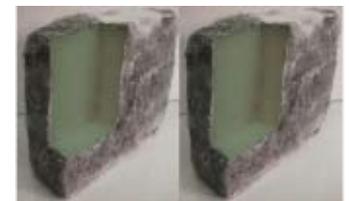
everything before goin comatose. Thought he was mad from the start. Can't say I missed him much after they locked him away. But I take the Shots because I need them. Hope this war ends soon. Had to happen though. All we got left is veggies in England. And you can see it in our eyes. No meat or dairy our eyes turn yellow and our faces get too thin. Startling when you there's a battle with the Vermots. You see our guns are better and most of 'em don't last too long. Once we kill most of 'em the others run and you can get a good look at the not so lucky ones. Fat pink cheeks and bright big eyes. Hope the war ends soon. Took all the cows and everything. Gotta get 'em back so we can go home. Can't live off salad forever. It's just not right. Roy throws me a Shot. Tells me he stole one for me, 'cause our Tent smells bloody awful from me hurling all the time. Wonderful pal he is. Worrying

about the stench and everything.



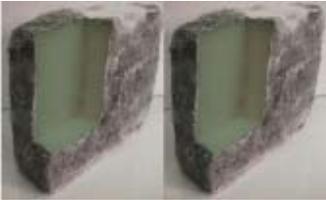
I wake up and feel a bit better. My face is sweaty but my head doesn't hurt so much. "Brought you some salad, Johnny." What a wonderful girl. You wouldn't even tell she's different if you just met her. I must be the luckiest man alive. "Thanks. But I do wish we'd managed to get our cows." She looks at me and laughs, because she's happy and I'm happy and I remember a bit. "Oh but Johnny, dear, you're lucky you made it back okay." That I was. Roy wasn't so lucky. Stubborn bloke as he was he thought we had a chance. Turns out the U.S. doesn't want England to claim former U.S. territory. Who woulda thought? Abby did. And she had rescued me. I eat my salad. And I remember. Wasn't that long ago, it's

a wonder it slipped my mind. I was in the PRV, then Abby was with me, and now we're in the small house in London. I kiss her. Oh she is beautiful, and her lips aren't even that dry. They're warm too and I think it must be awful to kiss mine. The thought of it nearly makes me sick again. But I'm not too bad today and my stomach doesn't hurt and I don't spew my salad. For such a strange girl Abs sure is pretty. It's dark already, and the dark makes us tired. Seems everything makes me tired. Our bed is small but it's cold in the dark anyways and we sleep close together and I am warm.



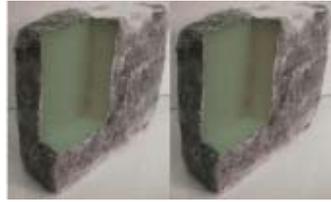
2088. People's Republic of Vermont. People are talking. They say the U.S. is ticked, that England's done it now and we are all going to die. I want to write to Abby but can't remember where we lived all

these years. Haven't got an address to write her at. Afraid I'll never see her again. Can't hardly remember her lovely eyes and shiny hair. I could die here and never see my love again. I'm sick again. For a minute I forget about the running out of shots for the lower ranks, and I believe I'm sick with love for my beautiful Abby.



I am awake and I am not sick. I believe it's a Tuesday, but days don't matter much, no work or anything to bother with. I'm hungry and Abby is asleep. I eat carrots because they are canned and I don't have to go near the old cheese. I think of chucking it but then I think of Abby and don't. I don't feel sick. I think long and hard. It has been ten days since I woke up. The shots have been gone a year. I don't need them. Now that they're gone I'm thinking, and I'm thinking they messed

us up real good. Made me almost forget about my Abby, almost made me forget about these eight years. Eight years. It had been eight years.



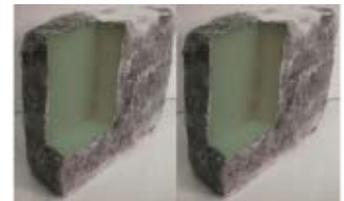
2089. People's Republic of Vermont. I've moved up in rank. I take the shots, never forget the shots. Makes me so sick when I forget that I have dreams. Strange dreams, dreams that make me sweat. There's a girl, she's beautiful and she is mine. Can't be a girl in the whole world looks like her. Hair so clean I can still smell it when I wake up, and I am sad. So I take my shot and I am better. They say we are going to run out of shots, and soon even the higher ups like Roy and me will run out. Feel right sorry for the lower blokes, imagining them waking up sick in their tents every morning. We are winning the war. PRV wasn't prepared,

thought we'd never invade, too scared of the U.S. But no one cares about the Vermots and the U.S. doesn't care how many we kill. And we just want our cows back. Long as the generals remember that and remember the U.S.'s threats bout colonizing the place we will be alright. Only got veggies back home, and people are getting too thin. Just not right living that way. So we want our cows back, and we will do what it takes to get 'em back. Can't remember home, don't know why. Can't be that great if I don't even know where bout in England I've been living all my life. Don't remember anything but the army, in fact. The army and that girl in my dreams with the shiny hair.



Used to dream about Abby. I choke on sobs, thinking bout not having her and not remembering her. Was those

damned shots they gave us. Did it on purpose. I know it now. I remember. We ran out, and I remembered. Abby is up now. I must've been in the kitchen a long time. She puts her arm around me. She's small but strong and she half drags me to bed and strokes my hot head with her cold hand. I am so very tired. But I'm not sick and she's here and I'm happy. I love her and she loves me. She came and got me and all. And I remember. I remember and I am happy.



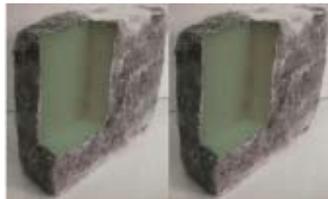
2092. People's Republic of Vermont. I am here. She is here. She is crying and I recognize her face. I had dreamt of her every night since running out of shots. She spoke and she was English. Didn't really need to hear her to tell though. You could see it in her skin. Pale with no pink to it. But the whites of her eyes so

white, her long hair so shiny. Says her name is Abby, says she's here for me. She tells me she'll answer questions later. No time now I suppose. I say I gotta grab some shots, that soon I'll be sick and she just says no time, no time. I don't know why I go with her. Maybe because she is beautiful and she is in my dreams. My orders were to stay and fight til the end. But now the U.S. is coming and the end is probably soon. Had we just taken what's ours and left none of this would've happened. But the generals wanted to colonize. We are running and I am dizzy. Light's starting to fade around me. Doesn't make much sense I think, seeing it's only noon. Then there is nothing.



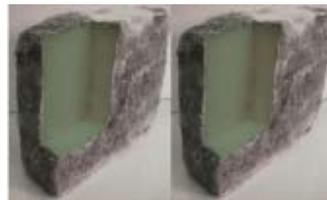
2092. London, England. I am home. I remember her. I am sick and I am happy. They say I won't

remember what happened, now the shots are gone. They say I may never get better, that the shots made me sick. But she takes care of me. Abby loves me and I love her and occasionally through my tears of pain there are happy tears. She tells me it will be okay, and I think she is nuts, but I don't tell her that. England lost the war, but I couldn't care. I wouldn't trade Abby for all the steak and cheese in the world. Not that it's an option. The cows are gone. 'Fact everything in the PRV is gone. Nothing but a giant crater now since the U.S. bombed the place. Can't say the U.S. cares that much. After all, it's only Vermont. And I hear it's gonna be a mall there, biggest one in the world. That makes me laugh, and the world is dark again.



2093. London, England. I am awake. Abby is next to me

smiling. She tells me it's been about a year. She tells me where I am, asks what I remember. Nothing but her. But I do remember her and I am happy. She tells me I may remember in time. I believe her even though I've always thought her a bit mad. I feel sick. Somehow I feel that I'm better than before though. I eat some salad and seem to hold it down alright. I laugh. Nothing's funny really. Maybe I should be worried I don't seem to know what's going on but I'm just happy she's here and she's happy I'm here and everything will be okay.



I smile because I remember. I don't hurt which is good and I don't care that the small house smells like old cheese or that all I've got to eat is rabbit food. The war doesn't matter. How she got me here doesn't matter. Ted and the

government don't matter. I couldn't care if we were the only two people left in the world. Sense of humor must be coming back. Think it's rather funny about the cheese that no one knows is sitting in the fridge. Funny that anyone would want to rob us for it. It's so damned moldy I can't imagine anyone eating it. Abby is at the fridge. She's taking out the cheese. I'm asking her if she's bloody mad, but I'm smiling now. She sure is beautiful. She's cutting off all the mold on that piece of cheese and I'm laughing and she's laughing. The leftover bits don't even look so bad. She's handing me a piece of the unspoiled cheese. "Cheers, Johnny." We eat the cheese and we laugh. Almost choke from our laughs in fact which makes us laugh more. She's happy and I'm happy. Everything is right and wonderful and I wouldn't trade my life and my Abby for all the world's cheese. 🧀

Fortunado's Purse

Written by Ryan

Digital Work by Rachel

It was the box Daisy had gone back for. I remember that box. It was a beautifully simple box. Her mother had given it to her a year before her death. It was smaller, and gilded with a thin sheet of fine gold. The wood itself was not a quality wood, which was why it had been plated with gold. It was in this box that Daisy held her most precious items.

Perhaps I should have stopped her from getting the box. It's been nearly fifteen years now, and me, now older and wiser, can do nothing but look back at what happened. At the time I didn't know what I felt. Before the fire, I could have cared less what happened to Daisy, or that gilded, worthless box. Perhaps it would even have been better. But now, I know that wasn't true.

The evening's events are the clearest memories I have. I remember waiting at the stairwell and I looked up to her. She was, simply put, beautiful, in a stark, gaudy sort of way. Her face was pure white, save the blush applied liberally to her cheeks and her ruby lips. Her hair, surprisingly straight, fell lazily over her heavily dressed face, deliberately obscuring one eye. The eyes themselves were dark, deep and mysterious, and they seemed forever fixed upon some distant object. She never looked at you. She looked through you, into your very soul, searching as long as her gaze struck you for the answers she wanted.

"Good evening, Daisy," I said.

"Good evening, Jay," Daisy replied.

She walked over to me and put her arms

around me in a way that was less out of love and more out of habit.

"When are we going?"

"Soon."

She reached the bottom of the staircase and turned to me.

"We're going to be late. We need to hurry," I said after a moment.

"Nonsense, Jay," Daisy said lazily as she rang a bell to summon the butler. "We have plenty of time." She motioned over to the large clock across the hall, whose face clearly noted that it was just past eight.

The butler walked into the room, and Daisy looked to him. "Go and get a better bottle of Rothschild from the wine cellar," she ordered.

He nodded wordlessly and proceeded out a door in the rear of the room. Daisy turned back to me and said simply, "Let's go. He'll have it ready for us at the car."

We proceeded silently out the front door onto the vast green lawn of the place we called home. It was dark and quiet, and the only light came from the windows of the house and the headlights of the approaching car. We walked to the carport and waited for it to arrive.

"Daisy," I said, breaking the silence of the night.

"Yes, dear?"

"Are you looking forward to tonight?"

She looked into the distance. "As much as anyone else is, Jay."



I sighed and also looked forward. The city skyline on the horizon brightened the night. Even from here, you could see the searchlights from Huntington Park announcing to the entire East Coast the night's event. I thought that we would have to go, as fashion dictated, and we, like everyone else attending, would pretend to enjoy the formal yet frivolous displays of appreciation from the Association. I hated it.

Daisy also looked forward. But I knew what she saw was different. In the distance, New York beckoned her to come. The lights were beacons to her; they beseeched her to come and enjoy the sights. She thought immediately of Huntington. Everyone who was anyone would be there.

The car drove to us and we got in silently. As it drove from the house, I remembered that a light in my study had been left on. A brief

moment of panic passed over me. The former owners of the home were fans of nostalgia and oddballs, and the mansion itself reflected that sensibility. It was a large, rambling Gothic structure, resembling more of a castle than a home. Inside, gas lights lit the rooms, as they had never installed electric lighting when it became fashionable. I had since overseen the installation of electric lamps in several areas, but the work was never completed in most of the home because the building was simply built too solidly to provide ample space for wiring in most of the walls.

I signaled the driver to stop as I opened the door. As I got out, Daisy stopped me.

"Jay, you said we were late. We need to go."

"I left a light on. I'd prefer not to start a fire."



"The servants will get to it, Jay."

I sighed and closed the door. The car began moving again.

The chauffeur drove the car at a comfortably slow speed, so Daisy and I looked out the window at the sights. The windows of the car filled with dark mansions on sprawling expanses of green. The night was strangely clear, and the moon reflected off nearly every window. We passed by several brightly-lit homes in this manner, then a clean row of neatly-trimmed trees, over a small stone bridge and onto a car-crowded road. We were not the only people headed into New York tonight.

"This will be a while," the driver said, looking behind him to the car's other occupants.

"Do you know why we're moving so slowly?" Daisy said.

"No, but I've got a few guesses. Likely the bridge."

The road itself was built towards the end of the American Revolution, when carriages were still the preferred method of travel. It was a single, wide lane in both directions, as the designers clearly had not anticipated the growth of population in the area. It had never been widened. Its terminus was a long, narrow drawbridge extending across the bay which was frequently raised, further exacerbating the road's eternal traffic problems.

Daisy sighed and turned to me.

"This will be a while, darling. I'm going to take a nap."

She laid her head back. I looked out the window, and into the night. The glimmering lights of the neighborhood were be-

fore me, and off in the distance you could see a beautiful skyline of New York. The car moved slowly, and we edged closer to it. I could, myself, feel the effects of a long, gentle car ride and I too quickly dozed off.

The dreams I dreamed were of no importance to remember. Such as it was, that night. Why was it we had gotten married? It was my parents. They had wanted me to marry into a wealthy family to ensure their future. We were of no significant family background. We were better-off than most, but there was certainly no way that any of my parents' children would be able to marry into a well-respected family, let alone Daisy's, but they had some idea. They had sent

but she found me eternally annoying for some reason. She treated me less as a husband and more like another one of her servants, the one that would provide her love, which never happened. We slept in separate bedrooms, as we had since the day we were married. It was strange, actually, that despite the glamour of her life, both in what was present and expected, she held so close that gilded box.

However, in public we were happy with each other. We had to make it look like we were enjoying each other's presence, per our parents' mutual wishes. At first it was near impossible, but it became easier. It became a routine, one of smiling, kissing each oth-

“It was strange, actually, that despite the glamour of her life, both in what was present and expected, she held so close that gilded box.”

me to Daisy's door with a letter to her parents. I never knew what that letter said, but we were married a month later, with no explanation why, and I was told to make it look like I was happy.

Truth be told, I wasn't. Daisy was born into her wealth, unlike myself, and it showed. She took services that were a luxury to most for granted. I remember a time about a week after our marriage where she refused to prepare for the day because her dressing-maid wasn't present. The poor woman wasn't there because her husband had been seriously injured at his work. Daisy fired her, because she was late. I rehired her later to work somewhere else, because I had too much of a heart to just let her go like that.

She didn't like me either. Perhaps I was too unattractive, not well-tailored enough, or I just had a sense of non-wealth about me,

er sweetly and just being around each other constantly in public, while sulking and avoiding each other at home.

I awoke suddenly to a bright flash of light. Startled, I looked out the car window to find a hoard of cameras and their operators struggling to catch as many photos of him as possible. He sighed. They were here.

Smiling, I waved to the crowd, and they moved aside so he could get out of the car. Daisy, who was already awake, was beaming as she waved seductively at the reporters. I left the car, Daisy holding my hand, to screams of appreciation from the spectator seats set up in Huntington Park. Ahead, one could see a giant tent where the event was taking place. I sighed inside, but outside I continued to smile at the throngs of people surrounding me. I slowly made my way

“We entered the tent to a thunderous applause. They were clapping out of politeness, not of genuine appreciation. That was how these events were.”



down the red carpet and into the tent, Daisy in tow.

We entered the tent to a thunderous applause. The tent was crowded with people, all looking towards the new arrivals. They were clapping out of politeness, not of genuine appreciation. That was how these events were.

We made our way to a table and sat down quietly. The people stopped applauding and continued to talk amongst themselves.

Daisy looked to me.

“Darling, I’m going to mingle. I would hope you would too, later.”

“Go ahead,” I replied.

Daisy gave me a look, then smiled and walked off into the crowd. I continued to sit quietly. A servant, carrying a tray of glasses filled with a dark liquid, approached me.

“A drink, sir?”

“Yes, thank you.”

The bartender handed me one of the drinks and walked away. I took a sip of the drink and was surprised. The liquid was the very bottle of Rothschild Daisy had sent over. I laughed quietly aloud. Setting the glass down, I looked to Daisy, who wasn’t standing far away. In public, we never were too far from each other. Daisy was clearly waiting for someone to approach her. Some-

one did. An older woman, wearing a long, blue dress, walked up to Daisy. I decided to eavesdrop.

“I’m so glad you could make it, dear,” she said, in a surprisingly deep and raspy voice.

They hugged briefly.

“How have you been, Gladys?” Daisy asked.

“Oh, the same. Emma has been quite the handful,” she responded.

“How is Emma?”

“She’s doing fine. These kids, they grow up so fast,” Gladys said, looking into the distance.

“They do,” Daisy responded. I could tell she was rapidly becoming disinterested, but she continued smiling.

“Just the other day, there was a man at our door! He was there for Emma! It was really surprising. I didn’t think my daughter was old enough for suitors.”

“She certainly grew up fast,” Daisy replied.

“I know! I remember when she was just a little child and I held her in my arms! It feels like it was yesterday.”

“Ah, but it wasn’t.”

“Wasn’t what?”

“Yesterday.”

“Well yes, of course,” Gladys replied, “but I don’t mean that literally.”

Daisy was, at this point, desperate to find a polite moment to end the conversation. She looked briefly into the crowd, then at me.

“How’s Jay been?” Gladys asked suddenly.

“He’s been simply amazing,” Daisy replied. “He’s right there, you know,” and she pointed at me.

“Oh good.” Gladys waved at me. I waved back.

“You two always look so happy together! It’s amazing how you two met.”

“Oh yes, he’s simply the best man for me.”

At this point I got up and walked up to Daisy.

“Good to see you’re mingling well,” I said plainly.

Daisy and I kissed quickly. I looked to Gladys.

“Good evening, Gladys! I haven’t seen you in ages. How’s Emma?”

“She’s doing very well. She’s got a suitor now.”

“Really?” I feigned interest. “What’s his name?”

Daisy quickly interrupted me. “I’m going to leave you two to your conversation. It’s good to see you again, Gladys!”

“And you too, Daisy!” she replied, and immediately continued talking with me.

Now it was Daisy’s turn to look for a drink. She found a servant. I could hear her saying, “Go get me a glass of something with zing.”

I continued to talk with Gladys, and after a while we said our good-byes and parted. I looked briefly for Daisy, I saw her standing her outside the tent and I caught up to her outside.

Sitting down, she looked into the distance. Behind her was lights, glamour and crowds of the rich and famous. Ahead of her was the silent bay, completely black and empty. By now it was nearly eleven, and most of the homes on the other side of the bay had flicked off their lights for the evening. Off in the distance you could see a single light from across the bay, flickering faintly. She sat back, gazing at it blankly.

I sat beside her calmly and looked to the light in the distance. Something about it bothered me, but I couldn’t place what.

“Strange that it’s so visible,” I said.

“Agreed,” Daisy responded.

I continued to look towards the light. It continued to flicker faintly.

“Ah, well, it’s probably nothing,” I said. “Come on, Daisy.”

We turned back to the tent wordlessly and



walked in. Just as they were so, a servant approached me. He looked grim.

"Sir," he said, "there's a call for you from the maid at your house. There's some sort of fire, sir, and they need you."

I froze as I remembered the lamp I had left on in the study.

"They should have turned that off!" I yelled suddenly. The entire room grew quiet and turned towards us. I turned to Daisy.

"We need to go, now."

Daisy nodded and we sped out of the tent. The crowds, similarly, noticed that we were running. Someone pointed towards the light on the bay, and the entire room of people

solid as it was, had finally proven that it, too, could collapse.

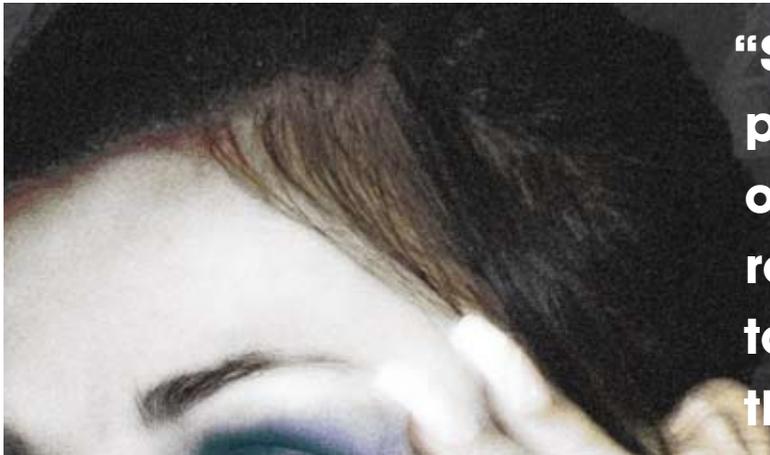
Daisy looked to the house. Suddenly, she shrieked.

"The box! My mother's box!" she yelled, and she ran up the driveway.

"Daisy, wait!" I yelled, as I ran after her.

But it was too late. By the time I had reached the door, she was already inside. I entered the house, meaning to stop her.

The inside was in flames. The entry stairwell was blackened by smoke. Fire blocked nearly every doorway, and I could hardly breathe as I searched for Daisy. I headed up the stairs and looked into our bedroom.



"Someone in the tent pointed towards the light on the bay, and the entire room of people rushed to the dock to look at the glimmering light."

rushed to the bayside to look at the glimmering light.

The car was already waiting outside as Daisy and I jumped in and sped off. Fortunately, traffic had let up, so it was less than twenty minutes before we drove up our familiar street and looked upon our house in flames. It was a beautiful, yet sad, sight - firemen rushing frantically to and fro to extinguish the fire; our butler, covered in soot yet looking merely surprised at the entire event; and finally, the estate Daisy and I had spent our entire loveless marriage in, lighting the night sky as flames spewed from the now-blackened windows, fed by the gas running through its very walls. The big stone mansion,

Daisy had just grabbed the precious box and was running out.

"Go, Jay, go!" she yelled, and I obeyed, running back down the stairwell and out the door.

I didn't stop running until I reached the end of the driveway, where wordlessly, I collapsed on the grass. Behind me the flames still raged. I lay there for a moment, not unconscious but breathless. After a second I got up and looked around. Daisy had not followed me.

"Daisy?" I yelled, though I knew inside it was meaningless. I ran back towards the house. A fireman stopped me.

"You're lucky you got out the first time with the size of this blaze. You're not going in a second time."

"But my wife, Daisy, she's inside!"

"What?" the fireman exclaimed. "Why didn't you say so! Where is she?"

"Top of the staircase, first door on the left was the last I saw her."

He ran inside, braving the flames. I sat outside for what seemed the longest time.

Looking back, I should have predicted this moment. I remember the fireman coming back out the door, holding a collapsed, lifeless body clutching a box. Her face still held the makeup she was wearing previous-

ly. The box itself had burned. As the fireman placed her body on the ground, the ruins of the gilded sides collapsed, revealing the various trinkets and bangles inside that Daisy had held so dear. I fell onto the ground in tears. Despite the fakeness of our marriage, at that moment I realized I had truly loved her.

The funeral was about a week later. Despite the popularity of our marriage, only her and my parents were present. It was a quiet and solemn funeral, contrasting the absurd glamour that had been her life. The house burned, I moved far away. I didn't want to ever see New York again. ●



Bourgeoisie

Digital work

Rachel, 2009



Sleep Inn

One Act Play

by Brooklyn

Mixed Medial Image "Welcome to the Machine"

by Ryan



**Author's Note: This is an avant-garde play. All lines are supposed to be read without emotion unless noted otherwise. **

Characters: **Naomi, Roger, Bellboy, Receptionist**

Scene One:

(Lights come up on a hotel room. Naomi is sitting on top of a suitcase, and Roger is sitting cross-legged on one of the beds in the hotel room. Other than Naomi and Roger the only other person in the room is the corpse in the center of the floor.)

Naomi: How long has it been since you last called for room service?

Roger: (checks his watch). Six hours. What do you suppose is taking so long?

Naomi: I really have no idea. The hotel seemed well-equipped with staff when we checked in, but maybe that was an inaccurate assumption on my part. Do you suppose they all went home for the night?

Roger: (checks his watch again). No, it's only one o'clock in the afternoon. Hotels don't just randomly close at one o'clock in the afternoon.

Naomi: Well, there must be some explanation for what's going on. I mean, if the hotel staff didn't just leave, then where could they be? And, more importantly, where is the pepperoni pizza we ordered six hours ago?

Roger: Honey, if I knew what was going on I would have a few choice words to say to whoever is responsible.

Naomi: I already can think of a few choice words for whoever is responsible, but I don't think I should share them until the opportune moment.

(Knocks can be heard at the door, and both Naomi and Roger look towards the door abruptly.)

Roger: Well, it's about time our pizza showed up. (He walks over to the door and opens it.) Hello, how can I be of service?

Bellboy: I'm so sorry for the interruption, sir, but it seems one of our guests has died suddenly. We have a health inspector visiting today, and we don't want him to find the corpse before we do. Would you mind if I took a look around your hotel room to see if the corpse is in here? It will only take a moment, and I promise to leave you alone after this.

Roger: So you don't know where our pizza is?

Bellboy: Um...no.

Roger: Well then, I'm afraid I can't help you. Goodbye. (He slams the door shut.) Apparently the hotel staff knows even less than we do.

Naomi: Did he say something about a corpse, dear?

Roger: Why, yes. Yes, I believe he did say something about a corpse.

Naomi: Oh...I thought they put one in every room. You know, instead of complimentary mints on the pillows or something like that.

Roger: (laughs). Why would you think that?

Naomi: (points at the corpse). Because we seem to have a corpse in the room with us.

Roger: Oh...well as long as he doesn't have body odor or anything, I suppose I don't mind.

Naomi: I don't mind having a corpse in the room either, but I wish we knew if corpses come complimentary or if we have to pay for one.

Roger: Maybe the front desk would know. (He picks up the phone and dials the number for the front desk.)

(Blackout.)

Scene Two:

(Lights come up on the hotel room again, but this time Roger is standing next to the nightstand with the phone on top of it. Naomi has moved over to the window and is pacing back and forth anxiously.)

Naomi: How long have you been on hold?

Roger: (checks his watch). Three hours. Strange, you'd think they would have picked up the phone by now.

Naomi: I personally think it's rather rude to keep your guests waiting like this, and I would even venture to say that we shouldn't tip our cleaning ladies.

Roger: I think you're right, dear. (He hangs up the phone.) Come on, let's go down to the front desk and ask to speak to the manager personally.

Naomi: What about the corpse? Should we just leave him here or should we bring him with us? I don't want the cleaning ladies to take him away or something while we're gone.

Roger: I've got an idea. Why don't we just put the corpse in the extra bed and make it look like he's just asleep?

Naomi: Brilliant! That way the cleaning ladies will never mistake the hotel corpse for one of our own. (He picks up corpse and tucks him in under the covers in the extra bed.)

Roger: (opens the door for Naomi). After you, dear.

Naomi: (rolls her eyes). Good riddance.

(Lights dim as they enter the hallway.)

Roger: Do you suppose they're trying to save money on electricity by not purchasing incandescent light bulbs?

Naomi: Anything's possible I suppose.

Roger: It just doesn't make any sense. First of all, the hotel staff is clearly occupied at the moment, but we're the only ones in the hotel. Next, they left a complimentary corpse in our room without informing us, and now they refuse to have proper lighting, despite the fact that it violates safety codes to do so.

Naomi: I know, and the worst part of it all is that they still didn't deliver our pizza.

Roger: I agree. (He pushes the elevator button.)

(Naomi and Roger step into the elevator together. Roger pushes the button that will take them down to the lobby.)

Naomi: I've always been afraid of elevators.

Roger: Really? You've never mentioned that before.

Naomi: Yeah, but I just can't stand the feeling I get when I'm in an elevator, you know, after what happened.

Roger: What did happen?

Naomi: My parents died in a freak accident involving an elevator crash when I was about twelve years old.

Roger: Really? I thought you had said before that they were savagely ripped apart by sharks on their thirteenth honeymoon in Australia.

Naomi: No, that's just what my grandmother used to tell me to make me feel better, but last year I made her tell me the truth.

(Naomi and Roger walk together into the lobby of the hotel as the elevator doors open. Together they waltz up to the front desk.)

Receptionist: Welcome to the Sleep Inn, how may I be of service?

Naomi: I believe that you are holding our pizza hostage.

Receptionist: Whatever do you mean?

Roger: We ordered a pizza nine hours ago through your room service program, and it was never delivered to our room.

Receptionist: Oh, that's too bad. I'll have our hotel staff deliver your pizza immediately. Is there anything else I can do for you?

Naomi: Does the corpse in our room come instead of complimentary mints?

Receptionist: Corpse? What corpse?

Roger: The one that is in our room now.

Receptionist: You're not supposed to have a corpse in your hotel room.

Naomi: We aren't?

(Blackout.)



THE PROLETARIAT

Short Story by Alan

During a brisk midwinter evening in Detroit, there sat a troubled man on a bench amidst a group of pigeons in an otherwise desolate park. Glancing pensively into the colorful, yet smog-filled sunset pierced by abandoned skyscrapers and other obstructing buildings and factories, he took a swig from his brown-paper-bagged bottle of an unknown, cheap alcoholic beverage, and lit up a cigarette. Slowly taking a drag and savoring the combined flavor of both his drink and the intoxicating fumes inhaled from his now diminishing mentholated cigarette, he began to reflect on his life. "What went wrong? How did I end up like this?" He spoke as though someone was listening, but only the mindless and unaware birds were paying any attention to him, possibly inquiring about a meal. Even still, they were not listening to what he had to say, nor would they even if they could understand English. After all, pigeons have their own business to tend to.

The man let out a heavy sigh and ran his fingers through his thinning, gray hair which had not been fuller or darker since his early adulthood. That was not too long ago, but long enough for him to forget. He began to sulk further and started yelling at the birds. "I suppose you'd like some food, eh? Perhaps a loaf of bread or some seed. You scavengers are the scourge of society, feeding off the gains of others in order to keep yourselves alive. Off with you!" With that, he momentarily got up and charged towards the birds in a blind rage, scaring them away. Feeling quite satisfied with his disruption of the pigeons, which seemed to have vented some steam for him, he returned to his seat on the bench, only this time, he was truly alone.

This man on the bench, whose name is of little importance, for very few people other than himself know about it, began to think about his life and contemplate what he should do in his bleak future and also dwelled on past mistakes. 'There's nowhere for me to work now that the factory has closed and GM's filed bankruptcy,' he thought to himself. 'Auto capital of the world, my ass!' He started to think out loud once more. "To think I could have worked for Alfa Romeo in Europe... too bad I didn't take that opportunity while it was still available. GM will get better, I thought. They're gonna pull through. That's the last time I'll be optimistic about anything American. I've worked hard and paid plenty of taxes for my country, and what has it done for me? Hmmph!" He pursed his lips, then groaned quite loudly, thrusting his nearly empty bottle away. Then he took a quick look at his American-designed, Chinese-made watch. It was getting late. He had nowhere to go and needed to find shelter; his house was foreclosed because he couldn't keep up with his mortgage payments after being laid off. With no relatives or friends to go to, he needed to find a place to rest.

Slowly getting up from his seat on the bench, which he had been sitting on for what seemed to be a very long time, he started towards an alleyway. Finding a small place between a dumpster and a brick wall, he curled up in a ball and put some newspapers over his body, as if they were blankets. The headlines read: *Obama Elected; Recession and Economic State to Improve*, but no overly optimistic newspaper or cheap, ragged piece of clothing he wore could protect him from the ever-increasing cold that was about to befall, ultimately overcoming, him.



NIGHT, Photograph by Alan

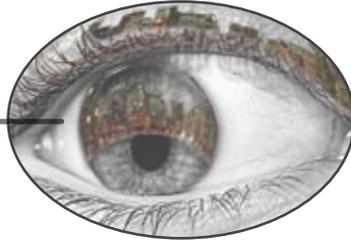
The next day at the park, now realizing that the man would not come back, the pigeons had returned to their original places, calm and back to normal since no humans were perturbing them. Only this time, a few of their own seemed to be missing. Like humanity, they mourned not their late brethren, but rather decided to continue on without hesitation in their mundane lives, in a never-ending search for food. Eventually, all these pigeons would die, and their next generation of offspring would not care in the least. The other Detroit citizens, too, would have families of their own in the future, and they would gradually fade out of the memories of their young, ceasing to exist.

orthogénique

silence



superficiality



curiosity





A Momentary Lapse Of Reason

Short Story by Brooklyn

I think the employees in my brain are on a permanent vacation. The file cabinets are all in disarray, the computers are all infected with fatal viruses, and the only thing that can be heard over the intercom system is elevator music. Worst of all, there's a sign hanging on the handle of the only door to the office that reads BACK IN FIVE MINUTES, which proves my hypothesis to be at least partially true; the

employees are away.

I stroll mentally through the office in disbelief, wondering where everyone else has gone. It worries me to no end to have nobody around; I haven't given the employees a day off in at least seventeen years. Suddenly my own thoughts drift towards the security system that the employees installed last year, and, upon further investigation, I discover that it's

not working. Frantic, I search for the source of the problem, but it turns out that it was never turned on, which leaves my brain vulnerable to anything. I make a point to turn on the security system to prevent further danger, and I give myself a mental memo to bring this up in the meeting next Wednesday. The meeting is mandatory for all of my brain's current employees, so it will be a great opportunity for my message to be known.

As I set the memo in its proper file in my mind, an idea begins to form, and right as it starts to develop, one of the employees has returned. Her nametag identifies her as Judy, and she looks just as haggard as she always does. I've always had issues with Judy because she is perpetually recovering from the night before, her hangover growing more intense each day. She's taking down the sign on the door and tossing it into the garbage can, and I decide to ask her what the sign was for.

"We were on a coffee break," Judy explained as I opened my mouth to ask about the sign. "Everyone should be back in a minute or two."

Judy's thick Irish accent makes it difficult to decipher her words, but I figure them out anyway. Just as she predicted, the other employees return from their coffee break within the next minute. They return to their desks without a word. Two of them separate from the crowd to organize the file cabinets.

Satisfied, I listen to the elevator music switch mid-song to morning announcements over the intercom. The only problem that remains are the terminally ill computers, but just as they cross my mind, Judy assures me that they ordered new computers that were supposed to come today. Sure enough, another crowd of employees enters the room,

cardboard boxes in hand assuring me that the computers are inside of the boxes. They begin to unpack the boxes of computers and plug them into the right cords, and soon my mind is back in business. The employees are buzzing with ideas, the computers are illuminating possibilities, and the files are filled to the brim with memories.

I leaf through a file labeled as my childhood memories, and my interest peaks as I peer inside and read through the documents included in the file. I recall the days of innocence when I was ten, when

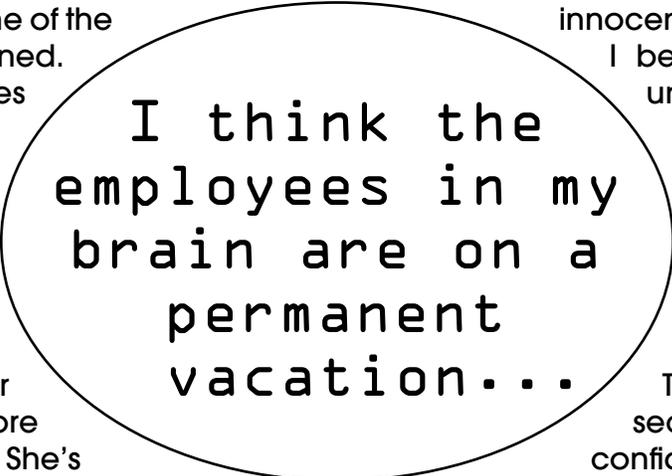
I believed that I was half-unicorn, and I remember the day I first learned to fish. The elementary school crushes and boy bands and daisy chains morph gradually into days of darkness though.

The junior high school section is marked as confidential, but I continue to read it anyway. Tears cloud my

vision as I am reminded of things my mind tried to blank out. I stuff the file into the back of the cabinet drawer where I found it originally and let myself continue to weep, forgetting about trivial things such as the mascara bleeding down my cheeks or the fact that my employees are all staring at me.

"Forgive me," I half-whisper to the room of employees. "I had a momentary lapse of reason."

I listen to the shuffle of feet as the employees rush to find a blank document so that they can record what just happened to me. Thousands of questions rush up at my face at once, like a swarm of angry jellyfish. I take a deep breath and try to answer them the best that I can, but I know several topics will be missed. Suddenly everybody is calm again, and a new folder is created in which my momentary lapses of reason will forever be waiting for me.



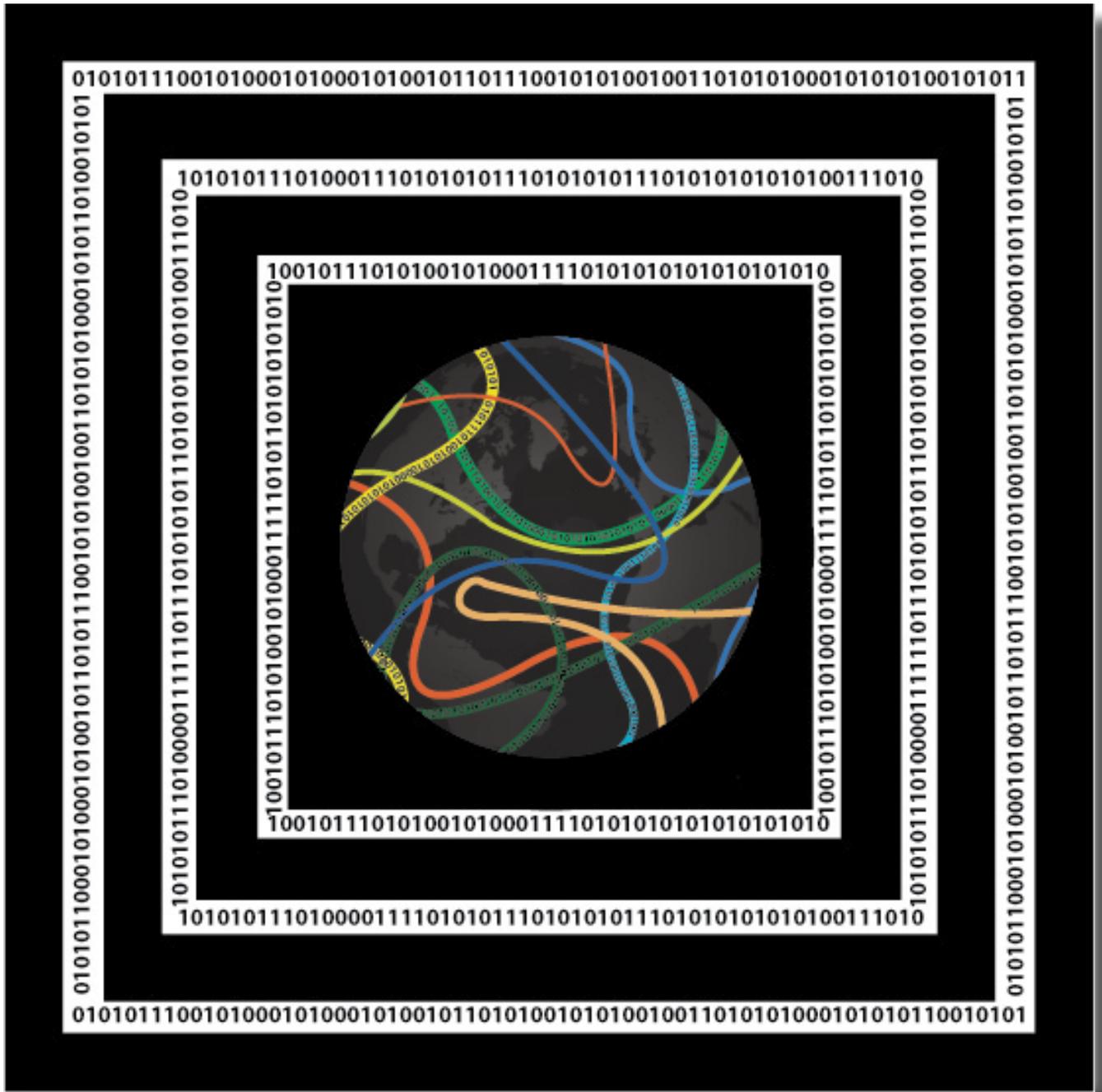
I think the
employees in my
brain are on a
permanent
vacation...



Back In 5 Minutes
Colored Pencil Drawing by Brooklyn

curiosity





"Tubes" Digital Image by Ethan

Wutz on teh Interwebz?

Literary Essay by Casey
Digital Image by Ethan

I was reading somewhere on the forums, nestled deep within a thread, of a wonderful video. It was a video of pure genius, something that no one could resist. This video seemed like it would be fun to view, so I looked further around the forums. Fortunately, I didn't have to look far, for a link to the video was provided for me in the first post of the thread. "Great," I thought, "I've been waiting all day to see this!" I read the post explaining how amazing this video was, though it was very vague. "I wonder what exactly makes it so great... I mean,

it's just a video on the interwebs." So, curiosity got the better of me, and I clicky click clicked the link. The background of the site was a basic white pane, with a small video embedded in the center. The video began to play. A car was driving down a smooth, green hillside, equally smooth music playing in the background... "A car commercial?" I said, puzzled. I continued to watch, waiting for the supposed majesty of the video. Five seconds passed, 10 seconds passed, still driving down the hill... 15 seconds pass, and WHAM! RAWRRRRR! A giant zombie face fills the video screen, taking over the wonderful hillside scene, and I jump almost entirely out of my chair.

After the traumatizing experience, I had a good laugh and left the poster a reply telling him, "LOL! Totally wasn't expecting that. You got me bro, you got me." Virtual zombies aside, the Internet is an amazing tool. There's just so much you can learn from the millions upon millions of web

pages available to you. With the Internet, you never know what you are going to find. Sometimes this is a good thing, providing you with relevant information and interesting facts... Or it can be a monstrosity, and teach you that Genghis Khan was a French philosopher from the 1500's who invented the television, or that Bugs Bunny was created by a crack addicted hamster (I'm looking at you, uncylopedial!).



A good example of where the Internet is incredibly handy is when you say, need to do a school project last minute, but you have no access to a library, or you are too lazy to crack open a book, which I completely sympathize with. In these scenarios, the best solution is probably right at your fingertips. Open up your browser, type in wikiped-I mean

google your topic, and then click on the wikipedia link after you have justified that the information on all those other sites just isn't detailed enough, telling yourself, "I have nowhere else to turn! Only wikipedia tells me how to make paper machee dinosaurs correctly!"

You also have the many news

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websites, blogs, and other forms of news feeds to keep you up to date. Curious how the war is going? Hit up CNN.com and see what they have to say about it. Want to know people's opinions on the current President? Check out the blogosphere. Want to know the rating on that king of horrid, gimmicky electronics, the iPhone? Google it up, you'll find plenty of reviews incorrectly rating it in the 8-10/10 range.

Let's not forget the wonderful social networking sites—Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, and then some. With these, you can hook up with old friends, stay in contact with current friends, find new friends, and create passive aggressive status messages to bug people you may not like as much... Or is that just me? Anyways, these revolutions in communication, along with cellphones, have made sure that you will NEVER get away from your friends, no matter how much you want to.

Furthermore, all those petty squables you have with friends and co-workers can be solved once and for all. You can prove that Mario wasn't originally a plumber, or that Pikachu is not the 1st Pokemon in the original Pokedex, and that it was, in fact, Bulbasaur. Or you can go the more cultured (boring) route, and figure out which tired old painter painted some silly painting, what year he was born, what his middle name was, and what his ring sizes were. So essentially, the internet is good for a multitude of information, from useless to arbitrary to purposeful to educational to extremely important to personal, all at the tap of a few keys and a couple clicks of a mouse.

In my opinion, the Internet is a necessity in modern society. My theory is this; without the Internet, the world would probably explode. Plain and simple. What would happen if it all of the sudden, just

didn't exist? Kaboom! Goodbye society as we know it. No more "lols" or "lulz" or "wtfs" or "g2gs." No more "Headshot!" "Double Kill!" or even "Monster Kill!" No more "lol owned." No more podcasts, no more email, no more Youtube, no more Google, no more facebook, no more anything! The list goes on, pick and choose your favorite Internet luxuries, and then picture your life suddenly void of them... Scary, right?

To my second point, the Internet is important, and the world would in fact explode if it were to suddenly disappear. However, there are negative aspects of the Internet that may cause some people to wish at certain times that it didn't exist, though these people have no idea what would happen if it didn't (Dooooooooooooom). Sometimes we all feel a little curious and wonder what would happen if I clicked on this link, or opened this email, or tried that pyramid scheme. Sometimes our curiosity gets the best of us, and we do stupid things.

Like that email you opened? Guess what... It had a fun little virus in it, which is currently deleting your computer's system files, or that site you clicked on? It had a worm attached, rendering your system vulnerable to hacker attacks. Oh, and that pyramid scheme you gave your credit card number to? Well, say goodbye to being the only you around.

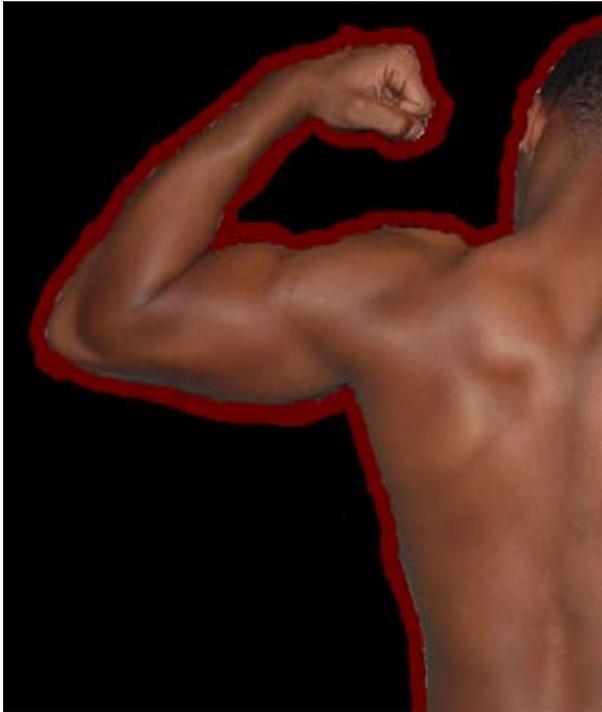
The Internet is full of dangers that you need to be aware of when you are curiously poking around. There's also lots of fun sites that your kids can get some bad ideas from. Anything is fair game on the Internet.

Even though my journey through the forums and inevitable fright at the sight of the zombie face popping out of my screen was all in good fun, the Internet can be a rough place. It can be quite adept at wasting your time, but it is indeed useful for feeding our curious nature, we being humans. The Internet is a strange bird, but it can be tamed, just be cautious when curiously googling your most random desires. This has been brought to you by Casey, the Wonder Moose.



What Now?

Short Story by Denzel



Jamal Baxter was a strong well-built young man. He stood 6 feet and 4 inches, and was built like Mack Truck. He had broad shoulders, a thin waistline, and rock hard abs. He had a gruff face and always looked like someone purposely ran over his dog. People loved their star wide receiver who was leading their school to the first state championship in 35 years. He was everyone's favorite person at the school, which for a Junior was really saying something. Jamal was a quiet, soft-spoken guy who never had a problem with anybody. He was an honor roll student and even helped out his dad at the family auto shop. He worked on cars when he wasn't doing homework or practicing football.

It was at the Ohio State 6A championship that legends were made. It was there that Jamal would become a new man. Jamal's Mansfield Spartans were up by 3 points at the half and the Dayton Panthers would receive the ball. They returned the ball to the 28-yard line and did a play action pass to the slot receiver for a 30 yard gain. They then did a

screen pass to the running back, which was a 5-yard gain. The football was handed off to the full back who fumbled the ball and the defensive end for the Spartans fell on the ball. The Quarterback for the Spartans threw a 35-yard pass to Jamal who then ran to the end zone by doing a spin move on one of the defenders and outrunning the other.

When Jamal turned around from the touchdown to walk back to his side of the field he was blind sided by two Panthers running full speed from opposite sides. Jamal was hit at the knees with a terrible blow from both sides; he felt the full pain of the impact. He was brought straight to the ground by the hit. His legs twisted to look like a freshly baked pretzel. One of the players who tackled him then stood up looked at the man who was lying on the ground in agonizing pain, squatted to get his face as close as possible, and, full of utter disrespect, spat directly into the face of Jamal.

Jamal was rushed to the hospital immediately. He was not looking good at all,

his knee right knee was crushed and he was in excruciating pain. The doctors did all they could to ease his pain and they had him in the ICU for eight days. His family could only hope and wait for something good to happen.

When Jamal awoke his mother, father, and brother were there at his side. The doctor then came in upon hearing of Jamal's revival, but brought bad news for everybody. Jamal had broken every bone in his legs, and his legs would have to be amputated, he would never play football again. This was a hard blow for Jamal, but it was even harder for his father. Jamal's father, Abe, was trying to not believe it and kept denying that his son could not ever play football again.

The whole family was bawling except for Jamal who only cried a single tear out of his left eye. Jamal had surgery and it was a success. Everything went smoothly. The days went on and Jamal was still in the hospital. He was feeling depressed, useless, and hopeless. One day he got a visit from his twelve-year-old brother Corey, who gave him a dose of tough love. His brother said that he needed to suck it up and get on with his life, football may be important but it's not the only thing in life. Jamal took his brother's words to heart and

went on with his life.

He got out of the hospital and was in a wheelchair. He wanted to still be active but he didn't know how he could get into sports when he had no legs. He was curious about how he could do anything without legs. He felt he had trouble with everything. He couldn't even take a shower. His family was willing to help him with anything he needed, but Jamal wanted to do everything on his own.

One day he was watching T.V., and he saw a documentary about Wheelchair Rugby. He wanted to know more about this sport so he Googled it. He found out that there was an organization nearby and he wanted to see what it looked like in person.

He looked at how tough the players of the game were, and he liked what he saw. He talked to a person after the game and asked how he could join. The person told him that Wheelchair Rugby was a hardcore sport for real hardcore players. This made Jamal want to learn how to play even more. He wheeled himself out of the gym not a new boy but a new man. He found out what he wanted to do in his free time, he found the new sport that would be his passion, and it was MUDERBALL.

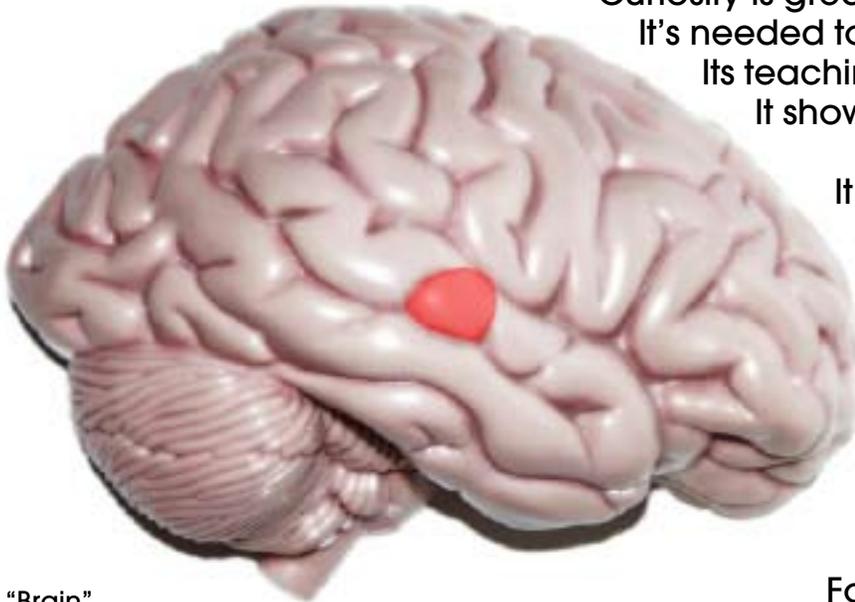


Nobody's Perfect
Digital Image by Denzel



Curiosity is

Poem by Ethan



"Brain"
Digitally manipulated image by Ryan

Curiosity is great wealth,
It's needed to further yourself.
Its teachings are essential,
It shows our true potential.

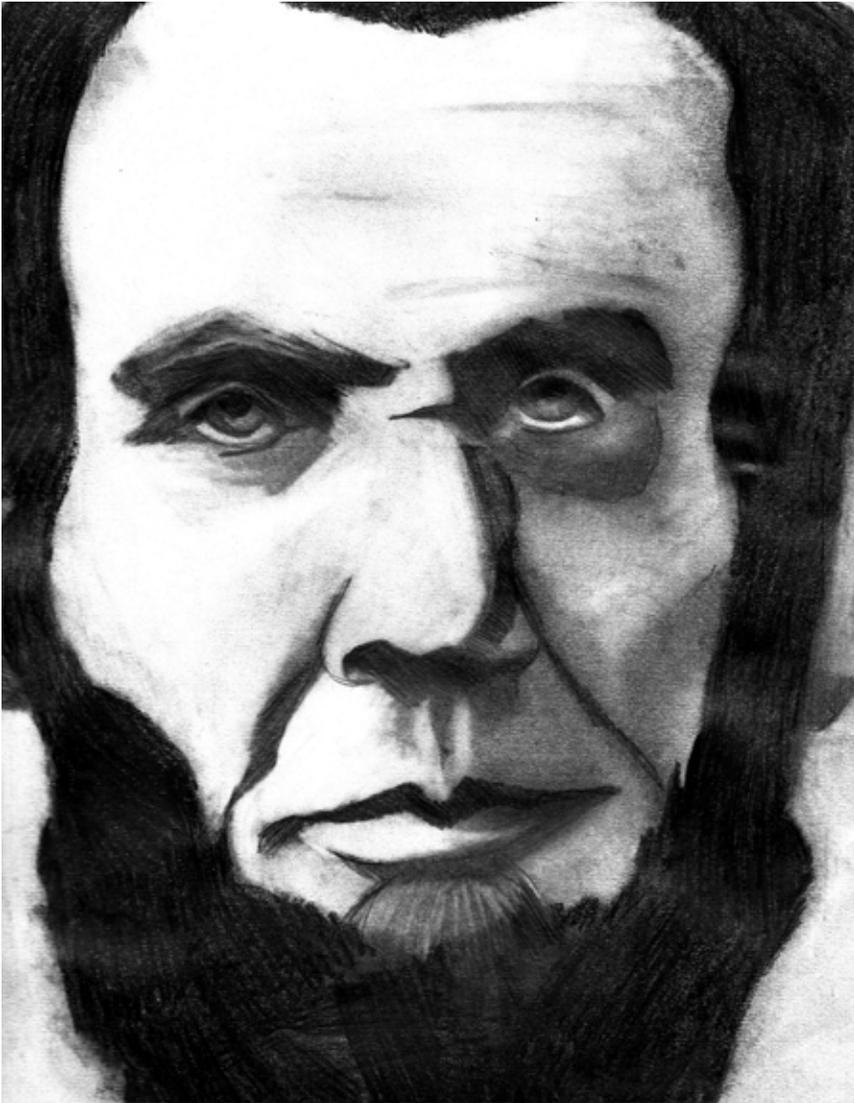
It furthers our education,
When we ask without hesitation.
It provides great knowledge,
Useful far beyond college.

It leaves us requiring more,
It compels us to explore.
It promotes investigations,
Fostering our fascinations.

For this trait vital,
Without it we would idle.

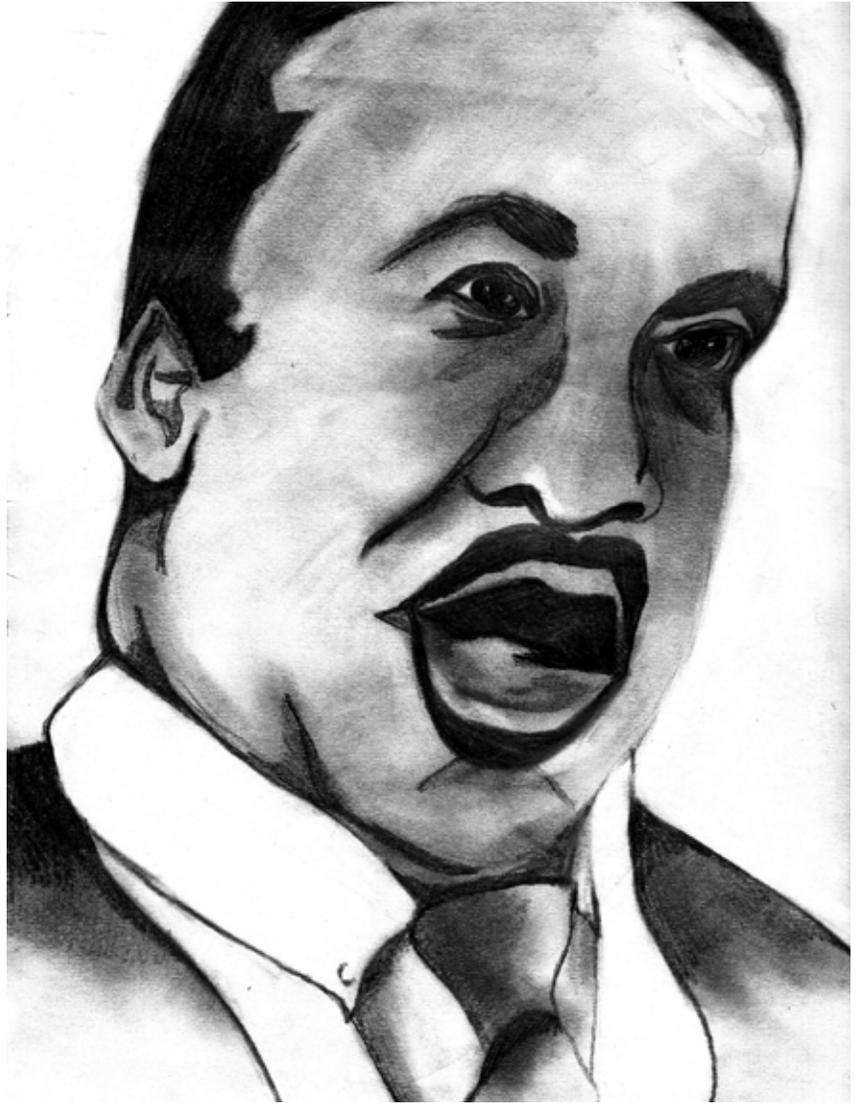
Killing the Cat

Literary Essay and Pencil Drawings by Felicia



We would be nowhere without curiosity. When put into perspective this statement is entirely true. If one was not curious, then one would not have a purpose in life and would not be the courageous being that we were all meant to be. When I was younger if I had never been curious as to what things would look like on paper, I would never have discovered that I have a knack for art, that putting a pencil to paper and drawing a hand was beautiful, or that I loved recreating real-life images in a non-traditional way. If you had never been curious as to what this magazine had inside, then all of the hard work done by the staff would not be appreciated. If the patriots of America had never questioned what a free world would be like then we would not be the United States of America, but the extension of a monarchy.

So many great things, which were once only possibilities, have come to be because someone had the courageous curiosity to see what would happen. However, as many great possibilities have come into being, people have lost their lives for the pursuit of this ultimate happiness, and in making the impossible possible. Abraham Lincoln, although he died at a theatre, he was a part of the movement to maintain unity. Another prime example was Martin Luther King Jr., trying to figure a world with civil rights. These people should be remembered and praised for the curiosity which gripped them and lead to a better future for all of us. They indeed died nobly. So all in all, when the basis of education is curiosity, then the noblest of truths is carrying that curiosity into the world of tomorrow and finding the basis for which we all exist.



“Curiosity is the very basis of education and if you tell me that curiosity killed the cat, I say only the cat died nobly.”

Arnold Edinborough



Curiosity Killed the Cat

Short Story By Kayla

Kat:

Living in a huge town has its ups and downs, but I see more of the ups than downs. What could go wrong in this great of a town?

To be honest, I wish I lived in some other place rather than here because of the lack of anything that goes on here; basically a perfect town, perfect people, and my speculation is the cops are getting kind of bored with nothing to do. Nobody ever breaks the law. Let me tell you I am so sick and tired that I might even start racing my car as fast as I can and have the police chase after me just for thrills, to humor myself and everyone else. For crying out loud, there is barely any news to give. I wish I could figure out why everything is soÖ. so perfect.

Come to think if it, I had never seen any fights at school, or any kids loitering where they should be or doing any normal kid stuff. I have to admit I'm a bit creeped out by that. There's no way teenagers would be that well behaved. I just guess that since this is a nice neighborhood, the parents decided to raise their children to be civilized and act politely as they should. I have no idea what I am even talking about. My imagination gets the very best of me, especially when I read those books and watch horror movies. What a chuckle.

I am so excited for prom night, only two days away. Oh this calls for a touch up on my acrylics and luckily I have my own stylist for my hair and make-up. Oh and I still have to go prom shopping with Anne, Melody, Joanne, and Massie, my best friends in the whole world; of course our boyfriends are coming shopping with us too. Anne's phone rang just as I was going to tell her something, ugh; she always talks to her new boyfriend, Milton, who

I am not necessarily fond of although I don't know him all that much. Thank goodness. There is just something about him that makes me feel weird inside, like a bad vibe that I can't quite explain but just know is there, eating away at me.

I saw disappointment on Anne's face, and she said, "Oh, I see your dad keeps you pretty busy huh? Well, it's ok sweetie, I know you are busy with your football and your job. I completely understand. I just wish you were here helping me pick out my dress. Ok talk to you later." She hung up and turned to us, "Well," she said, "let's get down to shopping girls. Milton couldn't make it, his dad is making him work overtime and he has football so he has no spare time at all."

She keeps saying she wants to look at Juicy Couture first then the Armani store. We all got Prada shoes and then got our dresses. Mine was a nice pink, satin and lace Juicy gown, Melody's was Baby Phat, Joanne's was Versace, Massie's was Armani, and Anne's was also Juicy Couture. I smiled at them and said, "It's so fun being rich!"

Then prom was here before I knew it. We were all having so much fun. I was being careful not to get my Prada shoes dirty, but the grass was wet and muddy, ugh. I saw Anne laughing with Milton; then he said he'd be back in just a minute.

He still hasn't come back, what else is new? My date and I want some privacy from the rest of the school so we go out to the back of the school. I'm not going to lie, it is kind of eerie, but this town is perfect so I have nothing to worry about.

We are laughing and pushing each other playfully when we hear a noise. I can't decipher exactly what noise it was, so I told my date to shut up and stop trying to scare me like that.



He denied ever making any weird noise. The gym doors smacked open and out came Anne, she was apparently looking everywhere for me.

I ran over to her and said, "You heard that bizarre noise too?" Looking hopeful she might agree.

She looked at me like I was speaking gibberish or something, "Umm, Kat, I hate to break it to you but we're in a gymnasium with like at least 700 other kids and the music is blasting, therefore there will be weird noises, I can hear the music blasting from out here with the doors shut 20 feet away. Chill out!" She rolled her eyes. She was right, I was letting the movies get the best of my imagination.

Then Anne, my date and I all heard the noise at the same time. My date didn't seem scared at all, he just said, "I'm guessing it's just Milton or somebody playing some joke. That's what he does so I wouldn't be too surprised."

The principal interrupted the music for a quick and urgent announcement, "Urgent warning kids! Just steer clear of the gazebo area. I don't want to hear any if, ands, or butts about it. Thanks and enjoy the rest of the night!"

I wondered what in the world he was talking about. Well, if he didn't say exactly what the reason was then no need to listen. I thought for a minute and lost my train of thought when I heard some rustling behind the bushes and had the biggest urge to go and investigate. I didn't realize I had started walking toward that spot, I kept going and heard running, too fast for a human. When I approached that spot, going behind the bush, I looked around and couldn't find anyone, I saw some footprints and I followed them. It seemed like I was walking forever until I found myself in the middle of the wilderness with nothing around but nature and just one abandoned building.

Something about this place tells me to run, run as fast as I can. I have the urge to run like a screaming banshee and get back onto campus, but I really can't stop going toward it so I just walk in and try to find a switch or something I find one eventually, ugh, dusty and ewww! It is wet, but I can't tell what it was because it is dark. I guess it is some wetness from the rain; it had been raining after all.

I am in complete darkness and I feel as if someone; or some thing is watching me. I rummage through my purse and find my mini-

flashlight, it was small but it was brighter than the sunlight. I flick the switch and there is like half a second of flash and it dies, so I just throw it on the floor and feel around for my phone. I finally find it, I flip it open, and I try calling Anne. Her phone is off apparently. Then I dial Massie's number, well I try but my phone has no reception.

I walk carefully around the pitch blackness until I see into a room where the moonlight is just enough to see around the place. Hmm, looks like this place hasn't been occupied for years, maybe even centuries.

I see a candle and I take out my matches and light the flame. Then I shield the flame from the whoosh of air when I walk around and see what this place is doing here.

From the very dim lighting, I could tell this place gave me the creeps. I thought I heard some footsteps but I am only hearing what I want to hear and kept on wandering aimlessly around the place and up the stairs. I think I hear breathing in the next room and follow the breathing. I open the door only to find something staring me in the face. I feel its moist breath blowing against my face. I can't exactly tell what it is, but it makes some angry growling noise. I find a switch, but the thing slaps my hand away, and with its finger, it puts out the flame.

All it said is, "So it is true what they say." Then it laughed menacingly.

Ann's story:

I looked around for Kat, where was she?

I didn't worry right away because I figured she was with her date somewhere or maybe in the gym dancing with her date. I started to worry but I shook it off.

After prom was over, it was like 1:30 in the A.M., I looked everywhere for her. I even saw her date and grabbed him and said, "I can't find Kat, wasn't she with you?"

He looked worried and replied, "No I thought she was with you. I cannot find her anywhere. She's not that hard to miss, she's wearing a \$900 hot pink glittery dress."

Then we paused to think for a minute or two and both stared at the gazebo.

"Oh no, you don't think!" I started.

"Oh, I think I might have an idea." He replied.

I shook it off and I just figured she had gone home, until her mom called me saying she never made it there. I heard one girl talking with the principal, and she looked scared.

I walked up to them and she shrieked, "I saw Kat go through that gazebo and somewhere beyond those bushes!"

I panicked and ran as fast as my legs would allow, I ran into a broken down shack and shut the door behind me, all I could see was the moonlight in the room to the right. I heard loud

music, but it wasn't even music, it was just a cross between the theme in scary movies and the sound that babies have in their cribs or something. I felt a wave of shock as I went into my purse and looked at my phone; I was hit with terror and curiosity when I looked at my phone. I had a new message, then I flipped it open; it was Kat!

It read:

YOU KNOW HOW THEY SAY "CURIOSITY KILLED THE KAT". THEY'RE NOT KIDDING EITHER.

Gazebo Watercolor By Julie



My Beloved

Prose by Rachel
Photography by Shelby

The slew of curious things and incidents that cause the elation of my heart will draw me ever near, caressing feeble whims of thought inside my head, causing the tentative formation of beautiful idle words. My mind will drift to many things that fill me with contentment and love. Love itself can make my blood run thick within my veins, causing my heart to skip as it does when a sparkling gray sky lights up my eager eyes like a beautiful gem. Nature and love fill my curious dreams with excitement I can feel tingling on my dry just woken lips as if they'd been beaten and worn from a great wind's burning gust or a lover's sweet yearning kiss. It is love, nature, and the wonders of dreams that I seek always, for I am a being of primitive human instinct, a passionate self-indulgent creature that seeks my soul's fulfillment. In all my ways henceforth, primitive I'll choose to be, filled with Pandora's curiosity. I do not perfectly know your face of yet; curious, as you hold such grip on my mind. Imagination distorts your crooked teeth and open smile. I do, though, know the feeling of a swelling in my chest- an intangible sentiment that I find familiar, as comforting as it gets. I've chosen not to fear my fondness of your company. Beloved to me thou art, though, how long I indulge in thee I can-



not say. This lack of knowledge used to unsettle me and cause me to draw back, but I now don't find it bothersome. A calm complacent energy befalls my limbs when you walk abreast to me; you've yet to develop expectations, and I find this aspect of your sweet youth to my heart's elation. Naught can tear my thoughts away from these adored preoccupations, for the unknown perils on our shared road are morbid fascinations. The darkened sky and steely gray sleet of lovely early April make my feet slow and blue eyes wonder at this world's magnificence. One of better sense and logic may quicken step in severe weather, but I cannot and become

*My mind will drift
to many things that
fill me with con-
tentment and love*

still to better drink of the earth's pleasures. The barren trees gently caress the horizon with their strong and weathered fingers. Where rain would sink into the ground the sleet lays thick about my feet, glistening as it chills through my boots to my awaiting toes. I say 'awaiting' for I've stopped moving; I've been frozen, not from the present cold, but in my awe. So I stand, my heartbeat quickens although my legs have yet to stir, my mind, it seems, of this scene has yet to bore, for my aching love of this dark and dismal majesty is curious to me evermore. In the morning as I part from unconsciousness I beg my head dream on, for I have no intention of escaping sleep's glorious grasp. I dare not move a muscle or twitch a single limb to shake the awful pins and needles, which bore deep into my tired skin, for fear of losing sight of my



brain's awesome imagined world. To describe these beautiful flashes simply as dreams is a sad understatement, which does no due justice to a most fantastical world. A better phrase is fits of passion, for that is what I feel. In these sensational fits of passion epic battles are fought in dripping rainforest jungles, I find that I am deeply loved, and I become more beautiful than any living soul. As I lay in bed struggling to reenter this fabulous world, I find I no longer remember the details, which had first made this place so beloved to me. Now once I have awoken, I seek out these curious beauties in my mortal life, and live in Pandora's eternal strife.

*I find that I am deeply loved,
and I become more beautiful
than any living soul.*

**Photographs by
Shelby
Left to Right:
Tree Reflections
Puddle
Ghosts**





REFLECTIONS ON A GREEK MYTH

Six Spenserian Stanzas by Ryan
Two Mixed Media Pieces by Rachel

Mythical Gluttony
Mixed media
Rachel, 2009

Pandora: a strange name for a woman—
Which, by the way, is their thought of a curse—
Made by the gods to torture all of man
For one man's theft. First glance? It could be worse,
They could have sent some plagues. But their perverse
Minds thought other things for the world below.
So Pandora was made. Inside her purse
Dwelt Fear, and Sorrow—lipstick too, for show—
What could we have done to deserve a life of woe?



REFLECTIONS

A woman: what a strange thing to create

As second half of punishment for men.
I would have feared for what the current state
Of men would be, were women not made then.
We'd fight, and die, as they did way back when.
Where'd humans be if they were incomplete?
She was made for evil, but yet again
The gods had failed—so much for the elite—
With male, and with female, humans were now complete.

All evil: what a strange gift for an earth

Which only kept what was rightfully theirs.
The theft of fire? The world was dark and dearth
Of heat—we iced up! Did they even care?
I clap for Prometheus: his affair
Ensured the future of the human race.
The gods' retort—a present of despair—
Is hardly fitting, at least for this one case.
The very act of giving it is their disgrace.

Secrets of fire: what a strange thing to hoard.

The Mount Olympus was lit. But the ground
Was stuck in darkness. We could not afford
The luxuries of gods, but what profound
Realities of life and death were found
When that one man stole fire for the dark?
Or was it from? Maybe we did confound
The gods when they saw that we hit the mark
When flamed desires were enough to light his spark.

Curiosity: a strange thing to place

Inside of men. The gods try to prevent
The men from entering their domain's embrace;
Yet they gave men a gift that shuns content
With what they had. Gods would always torment
With all their luxuries—they do not
Foresee much, for the gods, of course—I meant.
The Mount Olympus does not do a lot.
Their logic appears faulty, for their minds are shot.

The gift of Hope: a strange thing, to admit,

For after all those evils, it did show,
But didn't we already possess it?
To live in dark and cold was hard, but though
That was the case, their hearts were still aglow.
No one could live in midnight in that way,
Without the courage to live on, and grow.
The curse was null: evils didn't allay
The driven nature of all humankind to stay.

Mount Olympus
Mixed media
Rachel, 2009



The Old House

Children's Story by Shelby
Digital Images by Casey



There was once an old house on the corner of Mabel and Gable.

This house on the corner of Mabel and Gable was rickety and old, too dusty with dirt and overgrown to be sold.

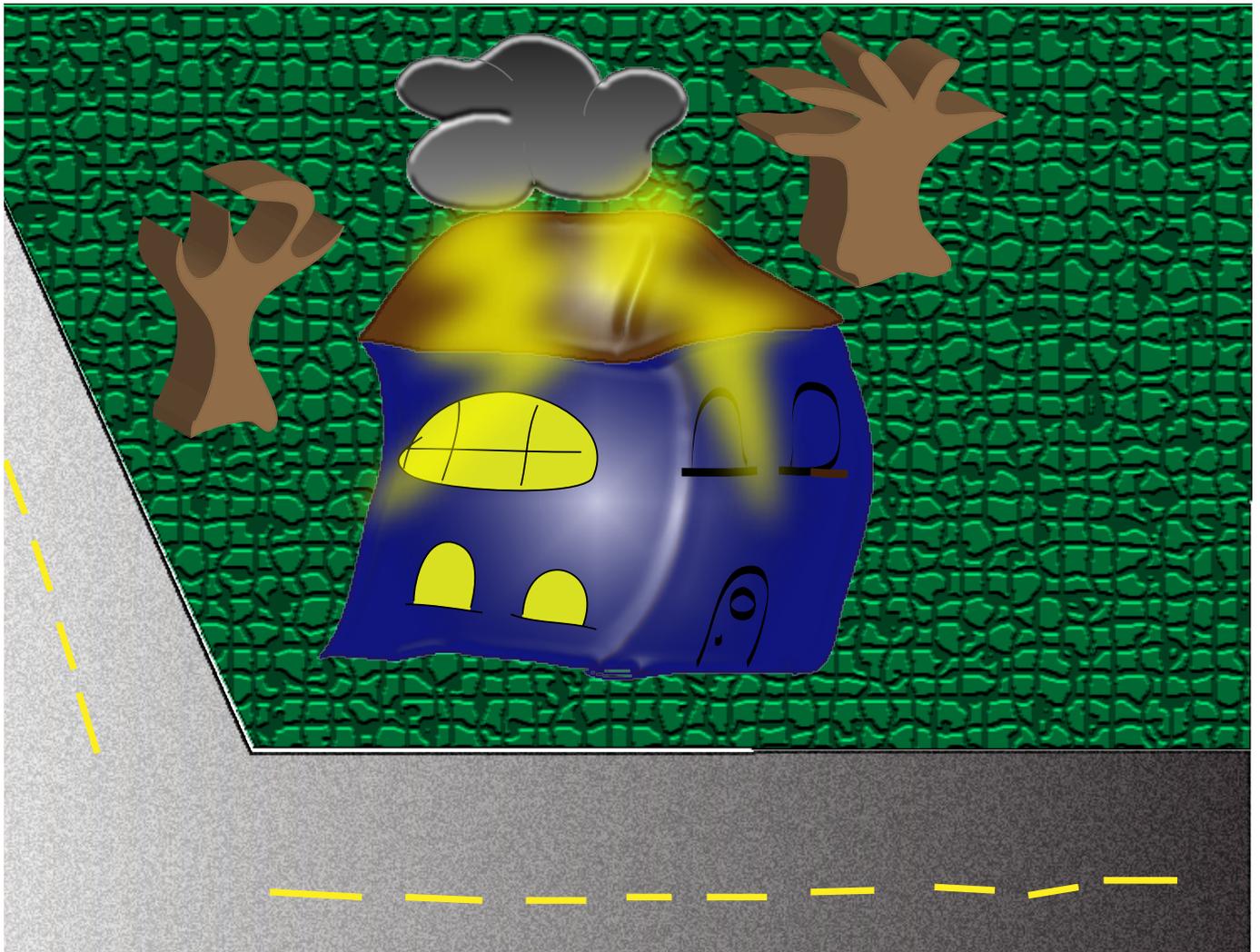
This very old house on the corner of Mabel and Gable was part of a very old fable.

Children were scared of it, for hundreds of years, they ran and they gawked, they said the old house was home to a haunt.

It was said that the scary old house kept people who dared to enter.

A few years passed, and sure enough a boy became fascinated by the rickety old house.

The boy who became interested in the old house was not scared of anything, a



Old House, Digital Image by Casey

spider or louse.

Pierre was his name, a hero of kids; he had many friends but his best was named Sid.

Pierre and Sid brewed up a scheme; they cooked it up well so no one could see.

The plan that they made was a wonderful scheme. The two best friends would make a marvelous team.

They'd sneak in the dark of the night to the curious house. They wouldn't make as



Brave Pierre, Digital Image by Casey

much noise as a faint little mouse.

The dark night approached and the wind swirled by. Pierre's best friend Sid looked like he was going to cry.

Pierre looked his friend straight in the eye and said, "Don't be a chicken, and hold your head high!"

With that they proceeded to walk out the door. With that, they took flashlights they bought at the store.



Scared Sid, Digital Image by Casey

They finally arrived at the house on the corner of Mabel and Gable; the entire way there they spoke of the fable.

The friends tiptoed quietly up the creaky steps. Their feet were so cold from the rain and soaking wet.

The door was cracked ever so slightly, so the friends tiptoed in ever so slyly.

Once in the house, they glanced all around. They noticed something very profound.

It wasn't a ghost or a golden retriever. It wasn't gold goop or an old stinky beaver.

The thing they saw was so fantastic. Sid was even enthusiastic.

In the pitch-black dark hours of the rainy wet night, the old house was lit by two store-bought flashlights, revealing the surprisingly marvelous sight.

They saw an old grand piano, with a shower of bright awesome colors. It was overgrown with pansies, roses, blossoms and pretty flowers.

The old house was home to many live creatures. The two boys saw close to twenty-nine screechers.

On the ceiling there were rafters up high, with green-yellow vines revealing.

The flowery home was shelter too all. There were some creatures big and some very small.

Sid and Pierre recalled the fable and started laughing because it was a tall tale.

The dark, rainy sky was starting to get light, so Pierre and Sid called it night.

They talked about their great discovery on the way home and decreed that the old house would be the place they'd go, but they would never tell a single soul.

Morbid Curiosity

Play by Julie



4 Kids, 1 Ghost Watercolor Pencil Drawing by Kayla

Characters



Lilly
Charlie
Elaine
Dean



Leigh
Kevin
Shadow
Officer 1 and 2



curiosity

123

Scene 1

Setting; After school Friday, four teens walking home together.

CHARLIE: So, who's coming to my party tomorrow?

LILLY: *(Looks up lovingly at Charlie.)* I'll come.

DEAN: Of course you will. You're up for anything he does.

LILLY: That is so not true



ELAINE: Actually, it is, but anyway, I'm in too.

DEAN: Yeah, I'll go. There's nothing else to do tomorrow night anyway. So what time is the party?

CHARLIE: Seven-fifteen. It'll be great.

(They speed up, as they get closer to a cemetery.)

ELAINE: I really hate walking this

way. Why can't we just take the bus like everyone else?

DEAN: Because only freshmen and sophomores take the bus. We're seniors. We can't be caught taking the bus.

LILLY: You mean you can't be caught taking the bus. I would take the bus, but I live across town, and the buses don't go that far.

CHARLIE: Yeah, me too.

ELAINE: This place just creeps me out. I hate walking past here. It's scary. I mean, there's even an old abandoned hospital back there.

CHARLIE: I think it's cool. You know what? Scratch the party idea. Tomorrow night, we're going exploring.

DEAN: Where?

CHARLIE: In the old cemetery. It'll be so cool.

LILLY: I'm in.

ELAINE: See, you are always up for whatever he wants to do.

(They all laugh.)

Scene 2

Setting: Saturday night at the cemetery

ELAINE: *(clinging on to Dean).* I don't like this. It's too creepy. I think we should just go home.

DEAN: Come on. It's really not that bad. We have flashlights so we can see everything, and you can cling on to me all night if you want. Besides, there's no one here except for us. Do you think I would let anything... OH MY GOD! WHAT'S THAT? *(She points to nothing in particular.)*

(Elaine screams.)

LILLY: Dean, you are such a jerk. Elaine, there's nothing over there. Don't worry. *(She shines the flashlight in the direction of Dean's finger, revealing nothing.)*

CHARLIE: Seriously, if you do that one more time, we're leaving. In case you forgot, we're trespassing, and could get in serious trouble if we're caught.

DEAN: Geeze, sorry. Had I known you all were going to throw a hissy fit I wouldn't have said anything.

ELAINE: *(now clinging on to Lilly).* I still think that we should just go home. I told my parents I was studying at your place. If they find out I'm not there, I'm going to be so grounded.

DEAN: Charlie's right, we're not going to get caught. There's no way anyone would know where we are. Don't worry.

ELAINE: I'm not talking to you any more, Dean. You're such a jerk.

DEAN: Whatever.

(They near a large mausoleum. Charlie walks up to the door and reaches up to see if it opens.)

LILLY: What are you doing?

CHARLIE: I want to go in. it looks really cool. Come on, it's not like there's anything in there that'll jump out at us.

LILLY: Yeah, except for Dean.

(Elaine giggles.)

DEAN: Oh, aren't you cute and funny.

LILLY: Actually, I am.

CHARLIE: I second that.

ELAINE: You two should just get a room.

(Dean guffaws.)

DEAN: If Charlie gets that door open, they will. As long as they don't mind making out in front of a bunch of dead bodies!

(Lilly punches Dean in one arm, and Charlie punches him in the other arm.)

CHARLIE: *(realizing the door won't open)*. Come on, I think that old hospital is somewhere back here. We should go check that out.

LILLY: I don't know about that. The cemetery is cool and what not, but I think that would be a little much for Elaine.

ELAINE: No, I think I can handle it. So long as no one scares me. *(She pointedly looks at Dean.)*

DEAN: Ok, I promise not to scare you. Can we go now? It's starting to get cold.

LILLY: *(mocking)*. Well, maybe you should have worn a jacket.

Elaine giggles again.

DEAN: Whatever. Let's go, ok?

(They continue walking towards the abandoned hospital.)

Scene 3

Setting: Inside the hospital. It's dark, and two of the three flashlights have died.

CHARLIE: Stupid batteries. I knew I should have changed them before we left.

LILLY: *(holding Charlie's hand)*. This is really creepy, but cool, I guess.

DEAN: Definitely cool. Hey, isn't there like a psych ward somewhere in here?

ELAINE: *(holding on to Dean again)*. Let's not go there. I'm freaking out right now. I think I might have a panic attack. Lilly, aren't you afraid you might need your inhaler?

LILLY: No. Why would I need it? It's not like we're running around or anything.

CHARLIE: Let's go see what's upstairs. I heard that's where all the patients were living.

ELAINE: What even happened here? Why did they close it down?

(They mount the staircase. Elaine's grip on Dean's arm gets tighter and Charlie puts his arm around Lilly.)

DEAN: It burned to the ground. Well, a lot of it did. This is only like a fourth of the building; the only part that didn't catch fire. A lot of the people who died in the fire are buried outside in the cemetery.

LILLY: Since when are you so smart?

DEAN: Oh, haha. That's very funny, Lilly.

LILLY: Well, it's...

(They hear a loud noise seemingly coming from the wall next to Dean.)

ELAINE: DEAN! YOU PROMISED NOT TO SCARE ME!

DEAN: That wasn't me! I swear!

CHARLIE: *(sarcastic)*. Really? Then who was it?

(They hear another loud noise.)

LILLY: Maybe we should just go ho...

(The front door of the hospital slams shut behind them. Charlie and Lilly run down the stairs towards it.)

DEAN: Well, I guess they don't want us to leave.

ELAINE: *(shrieking)*. Who doesn't want us to leave?

DEAN: The spirits here. They don't



want us to leave.

CHARLIE: Seriously, Dean, just be quiet.

(Suddenly they hear a loud banging from the floor above them.)

CHARLIE: Come on. Lets go see what's up there.

ELAINE: No way, Charlie. You and Lilly and Dean can go, but I'm

staying right here.

LILLY: Ok, but that's your choice. We'll see you in a bit.

(They leave Elaine behind. A few minutes later Elaine hears a loud noise and scurries to catch up with the others.)

ELAINE: Fine, I'll come, but don't expect me to be happy about it.

LILLY: Trust me. I'm not happy about it either.

ELAINE: Then why are we going?

CHARLIE: Because the door is locked from the outside. We have to find another way out.

ELAINE: We never should have come here.

LILLY: Come on, it'll be fine. I promise.

(Another loud banging.)

CHARLIE: Come on.

LILLY: I say that no matter what we do, we stay together.

(At that moment, their last flashlight goes out.)

DEAN: Crap.

Scene 4

Setting: In the dark, on the third floor of the hospital. Lilly is cold and shivering.

CHARLIE: Lilly, are you ok? We should have brought your inhaler.

LILLY: Really, I'm fine. I'm just really cold.

(There's a loud bang, and a muffled scream.)

ELAINE: I'm really scared. This is the

fourth time we've heard someone scream. Can we please just go?

DEAN: We can't, captain oblivious. The door was locked behind us. There is no other way out.

LILLY: Like we haven't all noticed by now.

DEAN: Obviously, we all haven't. *(He looks over his shoulder at Elaine.)*

(Another muffled scream. This time louder, as if coming from behind a nearby door.)

ELAINE: I'm scared.

DEAN: I know. It'll be ok. *(He wraps his arm around her.)*

ELAINE: Thanks.

DEAN: Anytime.

CHARLIE: I think the scream came from behind this door. *(He reaches for the door handle.)*

LILLY: Wait. I don't know about this. What if someone is really there? Or something? I'm getting scared.

DEAN: Come on, aren't you a little curious?

ELAINE: No, not really.

LILLY: Let's go, I guess.

(Charlie reaches for the handle one more time. He turns it and pushes it open. Inside, there's nothing. There's another scream, this time even louder than before. The sound is coming from above them.)

CHARLIE: What the heck?

ELAINE: Seriously, lets just go.

DEAN: Once again, captain

oblivious, we can't get out. Unless, of course, we decide to jump to our deaths from the window.

ELAINE: Yeah, let's not do that.

LILLY: I think that it's coming from up there. *(Lilly points to the ceiling.)*

ELAINE: As much as I don't like this, maybe we could just take a quick peek.

DEAN: That's the spirit! There's a ladder over here. *(He picks up the ladder and places it under the spot where they are standing.)*

LILLY: I'll go up first. This is so interesting. I wonder if there are any dead bodies up here? That would be creepy as heck! *(She reaches the ceiling. She moves aside some of the panels and looks in.)*

ELAINE: I really hope there's NOT any dead bodies up there! That would be WAY too creepy for me.

LILLY: There's nothing here! *(She climbs back down the ladder, disappointed.)*

ELAINE: Thank god.

(Suddenly Elaine screams. All look up to see a bloody face looking down at them. Recognition lights Dean's eyes.)

DEAN: Kevin! What the heck are you doing up there, and why is there fake blood all over your freaking face?

KEVIN: Hey Dean! How's it going? We were just using a Ouija board. I thought the blood was a good effect.

DEAN: Who's WE?

KEVIN: Me and Leigh. Who else?

(Leigh appears in the open spot next to Kevin. Her face, too, is covered in fake blood.)

LEIGH: Hey. How's it going?

ELAINE: Leigh? Leigh Briggs?

LEIGH: Oh, my god. Elaine? Hi! How are you? I haven't seen you in like forever!

ELAINE: I know! How weird is this? We haven't seen each other in years, and we meet up in a creepy old hospital!

LEIGH: I know! Had I known it was you out there, we wouldn't have tried to freak you out so bad!

LILLY: That was you!?

(Lilly, Dean, Charlie, and Leigh look up at Leigh, partially confused, partially angry.)

LEIGH: Who else? What? You think there are ghosts here or something?

LILLY: No, I just think that that's really childish.

CHARLIE: And completely stupid.

KEVIN: You're all just a bunch of wimps. You can't take a joke if your life depended on it.

(Suddenly there is another scream, only this time it doesn't sound muffled.)

ELAINE: I thought you guys said that was you making the noises. *(She's shaking out of fear now.)*

LEIGH: We were banging on the walls. I thought that was you guys screaming.

LILLY: Well, clearly it wasn't.

LEIGH: Kevin lets go.

KEVIN: No way. Don't tell me you're chickening out on me now.

LEIGH: I'm not. I just want to go home now.

CHARLIE: We can't. The door closed and we're locked in. We can't get the door open, and I don't think that there's another way out.

LEIGH: Well, that's just fine and dandy. How the heck are we supposed to get out?

KEVIN: Maybe we should split up. Half of us go one way, half go the other. That way maybe we could find another exit, or even two, and in two groups it will be much faster finding a way out.

DEAN: Kevin, you me and Leigh should go together. Charlie, Lilly, and Elaine will be fine together.

CHARLIE: I think it would be better if we all just stayed together.

ELAINE: I agree. Dean, I don't think that's a good idea.

DEAN: I think it would be best for us all if we split up. Kevin's right about us finding a way out faster.

LEIGH: Let's just do that. Elaine, everything will be fine. *(Another scream.)* I think.

Scene 5

Setting: West side of the hospital. Leigh, Kevin, and Dean are together.

DEAN: *(looking at the floor.)* Is that blood?

KEVIN: It looks like it.

LEIGH: It's leading to behind that door.

KEVIN: Come on, let's follow it.

Someone could be hurt.

(A shadow moves across the room.)

Dean. Was that a person walking over there?

KEVIN: Maybe. *(Calling.)* Hey! Is someone over there?

(A door slams shut.)

LEIGH: They went that way. Come on, maybe we could catch up to them.

DEAN: Kevin, you open the door on the right, I'll get the one on the left.

KEVIN: Ok.

(Suddenly a door ahead of them slowly opens on its own.)

DEAN: Come on. I think they went this way.

(They go through the door and there's nothing there. The door closes behind them and they see a shadow ahead of them. They decide to follow. They walk for several minutes before realizing they're not getting anywhere.)

DEAN: I think we should turn up here.

KEVIN: No way. We're just going in circles. I think we should turn around and meet up with the others. It's not worth it anymore.

LEIGH: I'll call Elaine and tell them to meet us back where we were.

(A shadow moves across the hall behind Leigh as she takes her phone out of her bag.)

KEVIN: What the heck? Is someone following us?

DEAN: I have no idea. Hurry up

Leigh. We don't have all day.

LEIGH: I'm sorry. I'm not getting any service over here.

(A scream.)

LEIGH: Ok, it's ringing.

DEAN: Thank god.

LEIGH: Hi, Elaine? Yeah, we're lost. Do you guys mind meeting us back at where we started? Yeah. That would be great. Ok, we'll see you there. *(Hangs up phone and puts it back in her purse.)* They said they'd meet us back there. Let's just hurry up. I'm really freaked... *(Grabs at throat. She starts choking and her nose begins to bleed. From behind you can see the shadow wrapped around her neck. Blood begins to emerge from around the shape of the shadow.)*

KEVIN: LEIGH! *(She runs over to try to help.)* Leigh, baby, no! What's going on!?

(Leigh drops to the floor. There's blood everywhere, her face pale from losing it all. The shadow disappears. Kevin collapses after her, reaching for her face, blood getting all over his hands and clothes.)

KEVIN: NO! Please get up! Leigh! Get up, baby! Get up!

DEAN: Kevin, she's dead. I don't know how or what the heck just happened, but she's dead.

KEVIN: NO! *(Begins to cry.)* Why is this happening!? Why!? Leigh, I'm so sorry! I'm so, so sorry!

(Another scream. The shadow reappears close behind Kevin.)

DEAN: We have to go. Now. We have to get out of here. Get up!

KEVIN: *(gets up, crying).* Leigh!

(They begin to run in the direction of where they began. They run for a while until Kevin trips.)

KEVIN: Dean! Something has my leg!

(Dean looks and sees the shadow holding Kevin's ankle.)

DEAN: Hold on! *(He takes Kevin's wrists and tries to pull him away, Leigh's blood gets on his hands now too, but to no avail.)*

KEVIN: Dean, just go! I'm dead now anyway! Just leave me! You have to get everyone else out!

(Dean lets go of Kevin and runs.)

Scene 6

Setting: East side of the hospital. Charlie, Lilly, and Elaine just got a call from Leigh and are now on their way to meet them.

ELAINE: I wish they had found a way out. That screaming scares me.

LILLY: It scares us all. Come on, the room is just around the corner.

(They turn the corner and enter the room, revealing it to be empty.)

CHARLIE: Where are they?

ELAINE: Maybe they didn't get back yet. They should be here soon though, right?

(They hear running footsteps getting closer. Suddenly Dean appears in the doorway, alone.)

ELAINE: Dean! *(Runs up to Dean and embraces him in a hug.)*

CHARLIE: Where are Leigh and Kevin? What the heck happened?

LILLY: Is that blood on your shirt?

DEAN: They're dead. I don't know what happened. This, this THING just appeared out of nowhere, and now they're both dead. It tried to get me too. I don't know what the heck it is. All I know is that we need to get the heck out of here.

ELAINE: *(sobbing).* I knew this was a bad idea! Why did we even come here in the first place?

LILLY: How do we know you're not just trying to scare us? That's what they did earlier, and they had plenty of fake blood. How do we know you're not helping them in scaring us?

DEAN: Do you really think I would fake their deaths? Honestly, do you think so low of me that I would do something like that? You all heard the screams! Whatever is making them, it doesn't want us here!

CHARLIE: I believe you. I don't know why, but I do, and I believe that we have to get the heck out of here.

(There's a banging on the wall, and another scream.)

LILLY: Come on, let's go.

ELAINE: We'll never get out. There's no way out of here. We're all going to die. Why did you bring us here, Charlie? Why would you do this to us?

CHARLIE: Had I known this was going to happen, I never would have brought us here! Now lets go!

LILLY: What the heck is that? *(She points to the far wall of the room, where visibly there is a shadow of a person.)*

DEAN: We have to go. That's the thing that killed them.

LILLY: Come on! We'll hide in that room over there!

(They all start running. After a while Elaine screams. They turn around, and she isn't there anymore, only a trail of blood leading away from the group.)

LILLY: Where's Elaine?

CHARLIE: *(shouting)*. Elaine!

DEAN: It has her. That means it's close. We have to hurry, or it'll get us too.

LILLY: What is IT?!

DEAN: I don't know, and I really don't want to find out, so lets just go!

(Hey run. Suddenly Charlie trips. His arms and knees are badly scraped. There is no sign of the shadow, so Lilly, who is having trouble breathing, and Dean turn to help him.)

CHARLIE: I think I sprained my ankle.

LILLY: Can you walk on it?

DEAN: He's going to have to. Charlie, you have to get up, or we have to leave you behind.

LILLY: NO! We're NOT leaving him behind!

DEAN: Listen, I know how you feel about him, but how do you think I feel about Elaine and Leigh and Kevin!? I had to leave all of them behind!

CHARLIE: No, I can walk. Lilly, I'll be fine. *(He gets up.)*

(The shadow reappears.)

DEAN: We have to go. It's back.

CHARLIE: Lilly, can you run?

LILLY: Yeah. I'll be just as fine as you.

DEAN: That's great, now lets go!

(They run. Lilly collapses from lack of air, scraping the side of her face. She begins to bleed heavily.)

CHARLIE: Lilly! Are you ok?

LILLY: Can't.... Breath!

(Charlie goes to pick her up, but Dean stops him.)

CHARLIE: What the heck are you doing!?

DEAN: You're already limping. Carrying Lilly is only going to hurt you more. I got her. *(He picks her up and cradles her to his chest.)*

CHARLIE: Are you ok Lilly?

(Lilly doesn't respond, but she is still alive.)

DEAN: She'll be fine. I promise I'm not going to let that thing get her.

CHARLIE: Let's go.

(They run. There is another door up ahead. Dean heads towards it.)

DEAN: This way! *(He enters the doorway, but as soon as he's through, it slams shut, separating them from Charlie.)*

CHARLIE: *(through the door)*. Go ahead, I'll find another way to you! Just get her out of here!

DEAN: Charlie, we're not leaving you behind! We'll find a way back to the front entrance! Meet up there!

CHARLIE: Ok!

LILLY: *(barely conscious)*. What's happening?

DEAN: You passed out and Charlie couldn't carry you. We were running and got separated. He's fine. We'll all be fine.

LILLY: Charlie?

DEAN: He's meeting us at the front doors. We'll find a way around and meet him there. It's going to be ok.

(They hear another scream.)

LILLY: Promise?

DEAN: I promise.

(Dean, still carrying Lilly, runs. They find another way out and head back for the front doors.)

Scene 7

Setting: The front of the hospital. Dean is cradling Lilly, and they're waiting for Charlie. Dean has no hope that he'll come. They haven't heard or seen the shadow in twenty minutes.

LILLY: Do you think it's gone?

DEAN: What?

LILLY: That thing. The thing that killed everyone but us.

DEAN: I don't know. I hope so.

LILLY: Do you think we'll make it out alive?

DEAN: Yes, I think we'll be just fine. I'm hoping that in the morning someone will come looking for us.

LILLY: How will they know where to look?

DEAN: I don't know, but we'll get out.

(Suddenly they hear footsteps. Lilly cowers into Dean.)

CHARLIE: Lilly? Dean? Where are you guys?

LILLY: CHARLIE! *(She runs to where his voice is coming from.)*

CHARLIE!

CHARLIE: Lilly! You're ok! *(He comes into view, embracing Lilly.)* I didn't think I'd ever see you again! I was so worried!

LILLY: I was so worried too! I thought you were gone! You were there, and then we got separated! I thought I'd never see you! I thought that thing got you too!

DEAN: Hey, now that the honeymoon is over, let's find a way to get the heck out of here.

LILLY: *(mutters)*. You were so much nicer when Charlie wasn't around.

(Suddenly the door opens behind them.)

DEAN: What the?

CHARLIE: Do you think it's a trap?

LILLY: I don't know.

DEAN: I'll go first. If anything happens to me, run. *(He goes outside, and a few minutes later, he walks inside with two police officers.)*

OFFICER 1: What do you mean someone killed your friends?

DEAN: We were stupid and came in here to explore. I guess someone else was here too and they killed three of our friends. The doors were locked and we couldn't get out.



OFFICER 2: And these are your other two friends?

LILLY: *(crying)*. We're saved! Thank god! You found us! We're saved!

CHARLIE: I'm Charlie, and this is Lilly. Are we really getting out of here?

OFFICER 1: Yes, I guess you are. We'll call the station and have backup come immediately. We'll get you home as soon as we can, and we'll find the person who did this.

LILLY: *(crying)*. Thank you! Thank you so much!

DEAN: *(aside to Lilly)*. See, I promised you everything would be ok.

LILLY: Thank you.

OFFICER 2: Are you three coming?

Dean, Lilly, and CHARLIE: YES!

OFFICER 1: Then lets go.

OFFICER 2: I'm going to go take a look around, try to find their friends and see what there is to see.

(Suddenly there's a loud banging and another scream. Lilly starts hyperventilating.)

OFFICER 1: What was that?

CHARLIE: We have to go.

DEAN: Now. That thing is coming back for us.

(Lilly screams, seeing a large shadow heading towards them.)

OFFICER 2: What the?

DEAN: RUN!

(All start running from the building except the two officers, who pull out their guns and start shooting uselessly at the shadow. The door slams shut behind them, and you can hear the screams of the two officers inside the hospital.)

LILLY: Let's go! We have to get help!

DEAN: There's nothing we can do. We can't allow anyone else to go in there.

CHARLIE: What do you think we should do?

DEAN: I don't know.

(They begin to walk away, and you can still hear screams coming from inside the old hospital. None turn back to face it.)



Sea Cave

by Mackenzie



A Brown Journey

Watercolor Pencil Drawing by Rachel

“What more is there to expect from the end of a sea cave?”

Down on the beaches of Southern California, you may find a young man perhaps surfing or playing his guitar. His name is Seamus. He’s an inquisitive boy, but often becomes apathetic and unsatisfied with life. During these episodes of melancholia, he ceases most efforts of pursuing his schoolwork. In doing so, he often fails his classes.

To escape the stressful environment of school and home, Seamus will walk or ride his longboard down to the beach. There he takes his mind off of things by surfing, swimming, playing his guitar or simply sitting back, mindful as though meditating. The beach fascinates Seamus, and he spends hours digging in the wet sand and searching the rocky tidepools for little creatures. His favorite times to come to the beach are the colder days when the cloudy overcast sky would turn the ocean grey. On these days, Seamus would forget his inhibitions and often sing to himself.

On one such overcast day, he decided to explore the sea cave. This sea cave was at the center of the tidepools and was only accessible at low tide. Afterwards, it would fill with sea water. Seamus had long been fascinated with this cave, and had often brought his flashlight down in hopes of finding the end of the cave before the tide came in.

This particular day, he came in early enough so that he should have plenty of time to search the cave. He climbed down into the cave, jumped across the splattered rocks and turned on his flashlight as he came in out of the sun. He descended further than he ever had before. The cave narrowed until he finally reached a damp rock wall. This was the end he had been seeking. It wasn’t anything spectacular. Even so, Seamus wasn’t particularly disappointed.

“What more is there to expect from the end of a sea cave?” he thought.

He climbed back out in good time as the sea water reached the vestibule of the cave.

Colophon

The Spring 2009 edition of Orthogenique was produced at the Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School in Chicago, Illinois. The magazine was thermal bound by the Orthogenic School. The covers are 1/2 inch linen tab covers from General Binding Corporation in Northbrook, IL. The content pages were printed by an HP color laserjet 6015dn on 32lb. Hammermill Color Laser Gloss with 90 brilliance. Sixteen fonts were used in the magazine. Avant Garde LT was used for all body text, except for three haikus which were done in Apple Chancery, while magazine staff chose fonts in keeping with style and content for titles and pull quotes. The following fonts were used for titles and pull quotes: Lucida Blackletter, Papyrus, Zapfino, Mistral, Blackoak Standard, Letter Gothic Standard, OCR A Standard, Handwriting - Dakota, Futura, Edwardian Script ITC, Apple Chancery, Monaco, Bradley Hand ITC TT, Hobo std, Chalkboard, Catholic Schoolgirls BBJ, Big Caslon, and Bank Gothic. Orthogenique is a full color magazine. Layout was created in Adobe InDesign CS3 on Apple MacBooks. Adobe Photoshop CS3 was used for image processing. All submissions were judged using standards agreed upon by the staff. All text submissions were typed using Microsoft Word on Dell PCs running on Windows XP, and MacBooks running on Mac OSX.

Policy

All of the students at the Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School are invited to submit their literary and art work to Orthogenique.

The Orthogenic School is a small private school consisting of students who represent school districts throughout Illinois and California. The school has limited extracurricular activities or after school meeting times. As a result, Literary Magazine is offered as a for credit course in which the enrolled students alternate writing units in which they write in reference to a specific theme and art units in which they illustrate for a classmate's writing. All students then create spreads that incorporate their writing piece and the illustration completed for the piece.

Students not enrolled in the course are welcome to submit their work to the advisors at which time the staff of enrolled students will decide which pieces can and will be used based on the themes employed and the fundamental belief of the school that all student work is of value. The literary staff reserves the right to edit the body of the works for spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Orthogenique has been published three times yearly since the summer of 2007. The publication is financed by departmental budgeting as well as subscriptions and donations. The ideas and beliefs expressed in the magazine do not represent those of the magazine staff, advisors, or the Orthogenic School. All rights are reserved to the individual artists, authors, and photographers.



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