



THE GRACKLE

2011-2012

THE GRACKLE

Chestnut Hill College's Art and
Literary Magazine

Cover Art:

Untitled

Travis Wolfe

2012

THE TEAM

OLIVIA MARCINKA

Editor-in-Chief

JESSICA VEAZEY

Art Editor

MICHAEL BRADLEY

Layout Director

KEELY MCCARTHY, PH. D

KAREN GETZEN, PH. D

Faculty Advisors

Staff

MARGUERITE BABER

EMERALD CAPERS

LOREN CRAIG

FRANCES ELLISON

JULIA FUSCO

GABRIEL HENNINGER

JILL MCFARLAND

NICOLE MEZZANOTTE

DANIELLE MOLINO

NATASHA SAMAYOA

SHANE SILVERANCE

COLLEEN SULLIVAN

ANDREA WENTZELL

VERONIKA WILSON

TRAVIS WOLFE

HAYAL YALCINKAYA

NICOLE SPANO

Dear Students,

Congratulations to the editors and staff of *The Grackle* on another successful publication. This literary magazine provides the opportunity for the multiple and diverse talents of our students to be showcased and shared with the broader College community. Such a work has the potential to reveal hidden gifts in people we thought we knew, when through word and pictures we discover more about them than had previously been obvious.

To the contributors, I offer the gratitude of all who will read and reflect on this magazine. Thank you for taking the time to be creative and for taking the risk to share your talent. Whenever a person allows a poem, an essay, a short story, a play, a painting, a photograph to be shared with the larger public, he or she becomes vulnerable both to criticism and to appreciation. “Will others like what I have done? Will they understand it? Will they take time to say something about it? What if they don’t like it? What if they DO like it?”

Creative expression is an integral part of our “self” because it conveys how we see the world and view the reality that surrounds us. This is precisely why publicly displaying our work puts us in an uncomfortable position, especially if how we conceive and present our truth is edgy or fresh. This discomfort is disconcerting enough for some people to hide or bury their talent for fear their work will be unappreciated. It is, then, quite a feat that so many students willingly contribute to *The Grackle*.

All forms of art depend upon the ability “to see.” Have you ever asked yourself if we all “see” the same thing when we look at the world? Is the apple on the counter visually grasped in an identical way by every viewer? I know what I see and what I think you see, but can I ever really know that we truly behold the same reality? While an object possesses objective existence, attributes, and characteristics, it also communicates

subjective realities shaped by the viewer’s psychological and emotional experiences of life. What to me is an exquisite piece of fruit, perfect for a still life study, may be for another a reminder of an unforgettable life changing incident, for another a symbol connected with a famous biblical story, or for another, purely and simply, edible fruit.

As I have pondered the act and art of seeing, I have grown in my understanding that seeing is both objective and subjective. How we express the reality we perceive may depend either upon an innate predisposition or talent or upon training and education. In viewing a landscape, the writer assimilates the scene and then describes it using words, phrases, sentences, even paragraphs to capture the impression and situate the reader within the environment. Likewise, the poet latches onto the word which is enlivened by rhyme, rhythm, meter, metaphor, and symbol. The painter grabs the brush or palate knife and deftly colors the canvas with lines, hues, shades to give life to the vision before the eye. Similarly, the photographer adjusts lenses, screens, furniture, objects to capture precisely the image and atmosphere most likely to convey the intended message. Is what each sees exactly the same? Surely, each uses a preferred medium to communicate an objective. Yet, the deeper inner self brings to vision a viewpoint from which writer, poet, artists, photographer interprets and inner life of that which is beheld. Superficial seeing projects merely a landscape. Deep, inner seeing reveals not only something about the object, but something, too, about the seer.

Thank you for sharing yourselves in this year’s *Grackle*. Your vision, expressed in various forms, improves not only our minds, but our sight.

Carol Jean Vale, SSJ, Ph.D.
President

Dear Readers,

People always say that artists see the world through a different scope. But all of us, obscure or not, recognize the world by using several different lenses. A city may look the same to all of us, but it does not necessarily smell the same. That smell, however pungent, might be the thing that repels us from the city in question. When at the same time, that smell might draw some of us in, enveloping us in a perception of culture, leaving behind a resonance of urban rhythm.

The true test of artistry comes when our perceptions; our productions of that perception, are put in to the public view. An artist of whose opinion I value very much constantly reminds me that, "Modern art should not be subjective. It is not necessarily up to the viewer to interpret what they see. It is just up to them to see it." First, I accepted this statement as truth. Then, after some time spent with art and literature, I began to question what it really takes to look at the work of another.

While sparking discussion in our *Grackle* meetings, the first thing that is asked of the group is, "What does this piece mean to you?" I have found that I take the most pride in our Judgment Board when each individual is providing their own taste of perception. This creates a private relationship between the anonymous artist and the critical viewer. In these meetings, the viewer is meant to be a critic. However, by linking our minds to that of the anonymous artist, we demolish the wall of detachment and recognize the equality of artist and viewer.

You may ask, "how can we ensure that the viewer is looking at the piece the same way that the artist is?" We cannot. Like the work of an anthropologist, we can only artificially position ourselves within the society [or constructed reality] and record our observations. For critics of art [and similar to anthropologists] we study technique; we become experts of deciphering detail.

The Grackle has been absolutely blessed with a group of people that are willing to surrender themselves to this kind

of practice. Throughout the process, it has been such a pleasure to experience both the challenge and support of two advisers such as Dr. Karen Getzen and Dr. Keely McCarthy. To have the sort of freedom in which as artists, we are free to interpret and decide upon the work of other artists, would not be possible without the work of our advisers.

I sincerely thank Jessicaica Veazey and Michael Bradley for their dedication throughout the editorial process. I must also thank David Kahn for every year publishing our magazine and not forgetting to teach us something special in the process. As a group, we have been incredibly lucky to receive contribution and support from Sr. Carol Jean Vale and the entire faculty and students. To give credit to those who aided the wealth of submissions received this past year, I would like to thank both Sr. Margaret Thompson and Professor John Ebersol. These few people mentioned as well the entire college have been gracious contributions to the publication.

Although as artists we would like to think that there are not a set of rules or guidelines for our creative work, there are. And although these rules do not define our art, when it is publicized, it is this set of rules that makes it easy for the viewer to detect our techniques and therefore place themselves alongside us and our original work.

Within this magazine, you will find pieces created by students of many ages and divisions. And although it is difficult or time-consuming to dive into each piece with the kind of dedication that art often requires, I suggest simply walking, not plunging, through each new perception with a sense of confidence in the fact that every individual will observe, retain, and react differently with the swift turn of each page.

I hope that you enjoy the 2011-2012 edition of *The Grackle*.

Warmly,

Olivia Marcinka
Editor-in-Chief

CONTENTS

WRITING

- Introspective Eyes [1] Robert Sannicanro
Father and Daughter [2] Olivia Marcinka
55 [5] Jill McFarland
Masks [6] Danielle Molino
Calliope [7] Gabriel Henninger
I Come From [9] Maryanne Kane
Anhedonia [10] Derek Green
Daria [13] Loren Craig
Colorblind [14] Nicole Ehrhardt
Swan Song [15] Yannick Wallace
Rhyme Time [18] Julia Fusco
Sometimes [19] Nicole Ehrhardt
It's Easy Being Green [22] Jarreau Freeman
IV/XIV [25] Derek Green
On the Eve of the Solstice [26] Frances Ellison
Uncle Mark [27] Nicole Ehrhardt
Ashes [29] Loren Craig
72 Hours [30] Chris Ryan
Genetics [34] Michael Kelly
Casa del Rey [35] Jill McFarland
Hungry [38] Loren Craig
Stuck [39] Olivia Marcinka
Rainbow [42] Margeurite Baber
Coral [50] Jill McFarland
Call of Duty [51] Yannick Wallace
Lost Cat [54] Caroline Oddo
Weight [61] Robert Sannicandro
Strings [62] Olivia Marcinka
FALLing [63] Colleen Sullivan
Occupy Oakland [66] Yannick Wallace
Despite My Own Wishes [67] Nicole Ehrhardt
Human Architecture [69] Derek Green
Tomorrow [70] Loren Craig
She Skipped Along the Path [71] Nicole Ehrhardt
Cellar Door [72] Mary Frances Cavallaro
Tell Me a Story [76] Frances Ellison
I Bought a Ring in Tlaquepaque [77] Nicole Spano
Afterbirth [80] Derek Green
Little Flower [81] Nicole Ehrhardt
Daydreams [83] Robert Sannicandro

CONTENTS

ART

Untitled [4] Jessica Veazey
Abandoned Countryside [8] Liana Florez
Drive Until You Know [12] Nicole Mezzanotte
Untitled [16] KarlaAne Klouda
Untitled [17] Kirk Martyn
Cling to Life [20] Liana Florez
Untitled [21] Liana Florez
Untitled [24] Jessica Veazey
Irene [28] Loren Craig
Untitled [32] Travis Wolfe
Untitled [33] Kirk Martyn
Untitled [36] Jessica Veazey
Untitled [37] Jessica Veazey
Journey [40] Liana Florez
Untitled [41] Tyler Marie Thomas

Untitled [48] Hayal Yalcinkaya
On the Edge [49] Colleen Sullivan
Il Tramanto [52] Loren Craig
Her Capitol [53] Loren Craig
Untitled [59] Kirk Martyn
Have Faith in Me [60] Nicole Mezzanotte
Untitled [64] Jessica Veazey
Ferocity Lost [65] Liana Florez
When in Rome [68] Loren Craig
Untitled [78] Jessica Veazey
Heart of Darkness [79] Loren Craig
The Wall of Voices [82] Liana Florez
Untitled [84] Jessica Veazey
Untitled [85] Jessica Veazey
Untitled [86] Amanda Beury

Introspective Eyes

Robert Sannicandro

2013

I wish I had introspective eyes.
Analyze anything and everything.
But I am a phony of sorts.

I am as hollow as the trunk of a fallen tree.
I am a tree with no Roots; a lie with no truths.
I am a sheep in disguise drifting with a populous flock.

I'd be the wolf but God knows my teeth are
rotten and shattered and my fur is wet and cold;
a disguise to clearly see through.

Hollowed, I still remain weighed down by the decades.
I am not getting any younger,
only progressively less creative and picky.

The future is unclear and irrelevant.
My words may not be enough to help you.
And I sincerely wish they were.

I would compliment you after every word if I could,
if it was possible it would save you.

I would save you.

Father and Daughter

Olivia Marcinka

2013

December 1994

Anthony is sunken into the queen-sized mattress pulling his knees up to his chin. He clutches at his ankles with blistered hands. Hands that had built some of the structures that surround the city, but he would never notice. His palms are thick and brawny. Big blue veins emphasize the muscles that gloat over his metacarpals. His curved shoulders cascade into the long arms that are extended around his balled frame.

She slithers out of the singular bed frame that he had built years ago and scurries to the left wall of her room. She closes her small ear to the wall, cupping tiny fingers around a tuft of yellow hair. Pressing one palm to the partition, she spreads those fingers to feel his movement. Her small sharp shoulder leaned, pressing into the drywall.

Anthony moved for a minute, adjusting his head on the pillow. He slowly slipped his tongue over his teeth. A caked film of apathy lived there. Bacteria lived there too, forming mountains and valleys on each tooth. He hadn't brushed them for days. But there he lay, too tired to move.

When he did get up, maybe a year later, his original unassailable stature was threatened by a mean hunch—one that found him leaning forward almost crippled. He couldn't decide what to eat anymore; his hands looked small and unwilling to prepare nourishment.

Anthony's hands looked like someone else's hands. Were they his wife's or his daughter's? It seemed like the veins had receded into the same place as his vision, his cleanliness, and his appetite. It was all a product of the black hole now.

September 2001

She walked off the big yellow bus and tilted her tiny chin toward the sun, wondering why the front of it was so flat. "I guess the bus company forgot to buy fronts," she thought and shrugged it off. Forcing her 5 foot frame up the hill, she walked toward the main entrance to the grade school. As she pushed through the doors, the bricked overpass read in big steel letters, "Brookside Elementary."

He staggered onto a bus that he had never seen before. On the first step he looked up and saw nothing but blue-grey, an expanse of sky that "would always imprison the bottom-dwellers," he thought. He looked through the driver as the last bit of change in his pocket slipped through smooth fingers and into the coin control box. "You gave me too much, man!" hollered the bus driver in his native Long Island inflection.

She slung her plain lunchbox over the desk, staring at the white dust on the chalkboard. She smiled as she listened to the gummy yelps of the static that filled the classroom.

He unobtrusively slumped into a seat in the far back. The bus sped on and its fumes carried up and into the fog of the day—slithering through a crack in the window and filling his crusted nostrils. He slid his body around to face the window to his right. Pulling his knees up to the tip of his nose, he looked out.

She worked through her first least favorite periods, Math and Science. "Who cares about the inside of a lima bean?" she thought to herself. "I eat lima beans!" she exclaimed

to her best friend, Kristin.

For one minute, Anthony's vacant brown eyes jolted from right to left taking in the rapidity of the bus' motion. And then, naturally, they settled back into the abyss. Back through the outer lens, following the optic nerve behind his complacent eyes, something interesting happened. A surge of liquid sadness pulsed, coursing through a part of his forebrain.

But doctors could never tell if this condition, his condition, was simply due to high levels of a chemical called corticotrophin. If too much was ever found, the chemical could've been what increased his stress levels.

His eyes were now outlined with bags of purple skin, sagging to the very tops of his cheekbones. Anthony's coarse dark hair looked manic and frayed, like the end of an old rope. A product of not washing, no doubt.

February 2003

She ran her hands through her darkening yellow hair. Straight. It was so straight compared to Kristin's. So flat. She reached across her desk to grab one of Kristin's curls and pulled the strand of hair all the way out—straightening its appearance. Kristin giggled as the girl released the curl from her clutch. "Boing!" the girl yelped while the strand bounced back. She carefully watched the curl coil like a snake back into Kristin's frizzy crown.

Anthony stepped off of a bus and trudged up to the requested job site. Looking up at an invisible structure, he pulled his smooth hands up and over his sunken eyes squinting from the sunlight. "Hmm back to building," he thought.

June 2004

She pushed open the heavy French doors and looked

directly up at the sun. Her long brown hair felt warm in its light. Wearing only a sheer yellow dress, the girl walked delicately over the new patio—one that her godfather had paid people to build. Stepping off of the woodwork, she forced her toes into the dewy lawn. Each blade of grass itched a little as it hung over her slender feet. With muddy toes, she swayed to the swing set that was structured on the plane of the hilly yard. Grabbing the frayed rope on either side of her, she sat lightly in the swing that was always her's.

Anthony hammered at rusted nails as the sun hid behind dark grey clouds. It was cold in June. "Why is it cold in June?" he thought, shirtless and shivering. His shoulders sharp; bones looking as if they pierce out of his bronzed skin. His stomach is sunken, much like his chest. As he lifts his hands up above his now yellowed hair, they clutch the hammer with sinewy strength. Veins popping and forearms flexing, Anthony forces each nail into the pure wood.

The girl presses her feet back into the mud and pushes off, moving the swing back and forth. She laughs at how innocent it feels to do this.

He then looks up, wondering why he is working alone in this weather. Beads of sweat dripped off of his few frizzed strands of hair. He leaves his project for the moment, trudging to the open frame on the east side of the structure. Looking up again, his head feels light, his eyes roll back, and he falls from the frame.

When she gets to a reasonable height—up past the top of the swing set, the girl forces her body off. Sailing through mid-air, she reaches the earth with a loud "thump!" and somersaults into a sitting position. "This is where I'm from," she revels looking around. Standing up, the girl brushed bits of dust off of her dress and wondered why anyone would want to leave this.



Untitled
Jessica Veazey
2013

55

Jill McFarland

2015

Conversations like heart monitor beeps
Their shapes form the shape
Of highs and lows
Oh highs and lows

Masks

Danielle Molino

2013

Throughout my whole life I was always shy;
Hiding behind a mask of my own design;
Never did set free or fly way too high;
But that mask has decided to resign.
I will start to reveal what is below;
All the cracks and scars that were never shown
Will cry to the world "I will say hello!"
I'll be the girl who was never known.
These cracks and scars will never leave my side;
But, with confidence, I will stay alive;
Things will go wrong, and I will no doubt slide;
But I will get back up again and drive.
One of these days I will fly high above
Hanging on tight to everything I love

Calliope

Gabriel Henninger

2015

Calliope,
She spoke to me,
Unchained my mind and set me free,
Unleashed a world of imagery,
I now know what it is to be,
A man of possibility,
Brimming with sagacity,
Speaking with voracity,
Writing with audacity,
Skill at full capacity,
But...
I didn't have a pen.



Abandoned Countryside

Liana Florez
2015

I Come From
Maryanne Kane
Graduate Division

I come from faith

The faith deeply felt by Michael and Margaret Fitzpatrick as they traveled to the unknown Ellis Island, leaving family, security, country

I come from hope

The hope deeply felt by Michael and Margaret Fitzpatrick as they provided for a family of eight during the Great Depression

I come from love

The love deeply felt by Michael and Margaret Fitzpatrick when their tiny, infant son, Thomas, died in their arms

I come from joy

The joy deeply felt by Michael and Margaret Fitzpatrick as their beautiful daughter Julia danced and sang on the porch step

I come from determination

The determination felt by Michael and Margaret Fitzpatrick that good works in this life lead to salvation and peace in the next.

I come from faith, hope, love, joy and determination! I come from Michael and Margaret Fitzpatrick.

Anhedonia

Derek Green

2013

Sensation gripped the fingers. I am anemia. Secluded; holding tighter to the chair.

Bound and gagged, your hips moved closer to the floor as I took over. I fill your lungs with this last breath as my gift.

I won't ever let go; to the paper wrapped around your fingertips.

Burning it down to the filter. Arms shaking in celebration of the addiction.

The secrets she never told; with the images she holds in her seemingly vacant head; ever circling around the smoke filled air. It brought us closer together.

I don't ever want to miss you. I am floating so elusive as I ignite with your drug.

They never seem to disappear. Even in these last moments; we take another breath to calm the nerves.

For the love of depression. For the love of the rain that hits the window. Rain. Snow. Rain. Perfect. Done. Are you satisfied with your love?

In the world that shoves beauty down our throats. I've never even seen your face; no; not quite like this; but you call to me like a widow in lust and sinking into dust.

Bring them all back to me. The disease is refilled. Prescribing something stronger to separate her from this world.

Staggering between the walls; wearing your face like a gift from the sun that was long gone. I don't ever want to miss you as I return to nothing.

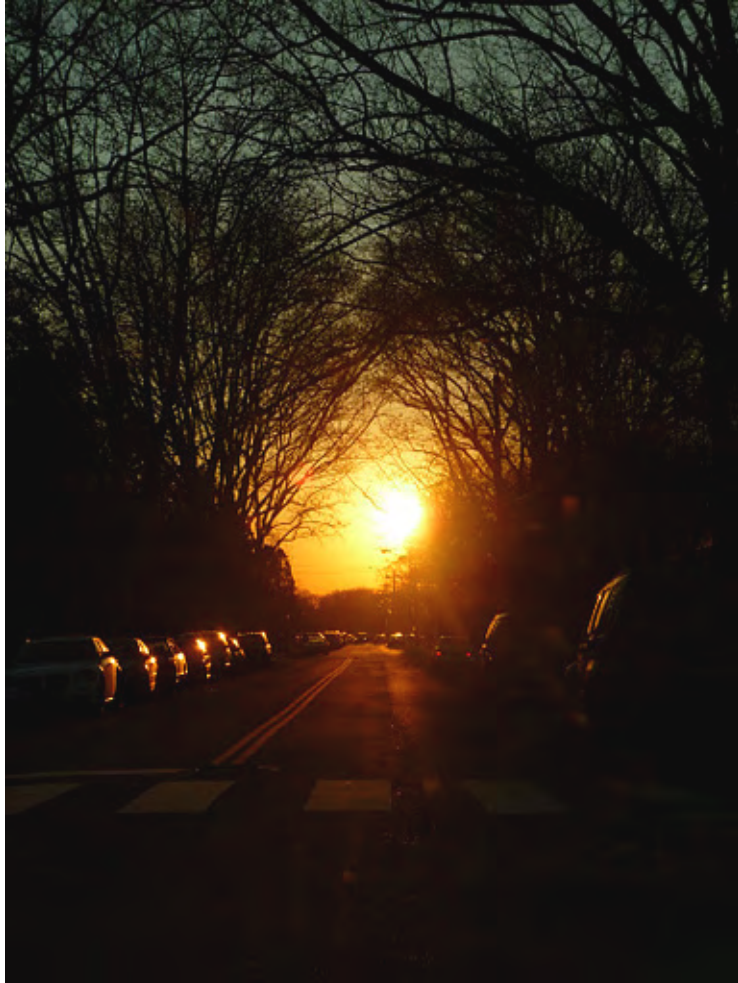
I'll spread through your nervous system like a virus uncontrolled and violent. Seething puddles of colors dripping from your eyes with the irises blacked out. I could tell that you weren't the same anymore as I made my move to take you over completely.

Taking each one of your limbs one by one, numbing the primitive desire.

In a glimpse, the butterflies fluttered, transforming into your darkest nightmare as they sparked your blindness. I am anemia. I am the fear that keeps you alive. I am the reaping with confusion in shaking hands, I think that I'm dying. Filling the room with prodigal discern. Indistinguishable from the anatomy that once existed here; the naked shell of an organic parasite. I am the dust you pierced into your trachea.

Love me; as fowl as the other world. I will become all that you know.

A child born without a purpose. Walking into the room seeing her idol hanging from his own mortality. Giving in, and never breathing unless it was truly worth it. She walked between the walls of the house; speaking of her misfortune. A masochistic scene of rape and torture took over the house framed with razor wire and carrion. A silhouette of slithering insects that crawl from out of the woodwork to drag her back to reality in her drug induced coma. A celebration of fear with the edges tearing through every surface that comes in contact. The figure doesn't exist. The picture was never finished. The song played on as her eyes turned from blue to white. Sickness in every hole. The worms crawled through her skin as she whored herself off. With sores as open as her heart, she begged for them to make it stop. With the image of her dead father's face still in her head, she faded; soaked in her favorite color, melting into the cracks of the floor. Spinning and colliding in a ballet of unfortunate circumstances. She will never see the morning sun ever again. We will all become the dead.



Drive Until You Know

Nicole Mezzanotte

2013

Daria

Loren Craig

2012

So mysterious, so dark, so understated,
So young, so smart, so devastated,
So charismatic, sarcastic, and underrated

Oh Daria

Oh Daria

A reflection in a mirror,
A parallel universe,
So alike but neither can converse

Oh Daria

Oh Daria

Eloquent in speaking,
Yet so plain in dress,
You're me, I'm you, but I'm in the flesh

Oh Daria

Oh Daria

Both so intimidating with the gift of a pen,
Yet so condescending when speaking to a friend

Oh Daria

Oh Daria

We know the truth, we know reality

You're me, I'm you

Neither form of flattery

Oh Daria

Oh Daria

Colorblind

Nicole Ehrhardt

2013

I don't see color.
Not in the waves of my long hair,
Or the twinkle in my eyes.
Not In the curves of my legs,
Or the wrinkles in my hands.
Not in the freckles on my cheeks,
Nor the toes on my feet.
I don't see color.
Not even when I look away, and search another person head to toe.
I won't see color (at least not at first).

Instead,
I see smiles, compassion.
I hear the kind words of others, or the music in one's voice.
I can feel the warmth of someone else's skin,
as their hand gently holds onto my own.
But that hand's color,
I can't see. I won't see it.
Until someone else brings it to my attention,
And then, all of a sudden, that Color is ALL that I can see.
I no longer feel that hand,
I just see it.
Its caramel complexion covering its dark, blue veins
With its shadows that lie between each finger.
And I wonder,
maybe it's not that I didn't see it.
But that I chose to ignore what I saw.
That I chose to be colorblind.
Because for me,
I have to deny living in a world defined by color,
Because for so many,
That Color,
is still the only thing that people will choose to see.

Swan Song

Yannick Wallace

2012

The birds sing louder..
Not because of joy or pain,
Or sadness or fear.
They sing louder because,
The cars howl under their homes.



Untitled

KarlaAne Klouda

2014



Untitled
Kirk Martyn
2014

Rhyme Time

Julia Fusco

2015

Brandywine sugar pine
Clasp tight in the dim light
Plastic pierce but never really fierce
Crave thine might ever bright
Picture perfect
Slow effect
Slither slather mind over matter
Paid and cover it's never over
Sweet sorrow black sparrow
Say goodbye whispering lies
Sanguine man time's like sand
Fall slow a heavenly glow
Apple pies never sighs

Sometimes-- for Gabby

Nicole Ehrhardt

2013

Sometimes

I get really mad at you
For everything that you do and everything that
you've done

Sometimes

I just want to cry
Until all my emotions have left me in pieces
And the thought of you is left drowning in tears

Sometimes

I just want to show you
Make you see who you've made me become

Sometimes

I just want to scream
Throw things and break things
So my frustration can be seen

Yet sometimes

I still want to hold you

And sometimes

It's just easier to pretend
Like nothing went wrong
So the two of us could be friends

But most of the time

I still miss you
Still need you
Still love you
And I don't understand

Because the Last Time

Is the reason you and I fell apart
The reason why I'm left here with my own broken
heart

So please just this One Time

Could you save me?
Explain why you had to forsake me
Break me
Because I find myself asking All The Time

WHY?



Clinging to Life

Liana Florez

2015



Untitled
Liana Florez
2015

It's Easy Being Green

Jarreau Freeman

2011

Whoever said that “it’s not easy being green,” was completely mistaken. It is actually quite easy and I wear the color well; in fact, I can be seen sporting this vibrant shade in various hues – intentionally, and on occasion, spontaneously.

When I was six and witnessed my god-sister, Nikki, retrieve a roller-skater Barbie from a mountain of pink, sparkled wrapping paper and I had a strong desire to go over and bite her arm, I was olive green.

Or when my best friend Chloe turned sixteen and got this amazing Paul Frank sweatshirt with Julius the monkey on it and I feigned a smile, I was lime.

Or when Chloe got this amazing black coat from H&M for her eighteenth birthday and I sat at her kitchen table pouting, I was emerald.

Or freshman year of college when Chloe and Jason were “just friends” even though everyone knew they weren’t. I of course was single, and completely ignored her for like three weeks; I was jade.

Or back in high school when my other best friend Brit-tany got accepted to Liberty University in like September and I hadn’t heard back from any of my schools yet. I tried to blink back tears when she told me her exciting news; I was pea green.

Or when I was eight and my god-sister Ericka, got to be in a home-school beauty pageant. She wore this wonderful silver crown that glistened in the stage lights every time she turned her head, and I wanted to push her down the stairs; I was bright green.

Or when my best friend Casey got an opportunity to

teach Chemistry at an international school in the Middle East, and I rolled my eyes in a way that suggested a sarcastic “big deal,” I was blue green.

Or the time when I was seven and I was watching an episode of Full House, the one where Michelle Tanner gets to be princess for a day in Disney World, and I threw my white Ked at the television, I was yellow green.

Or whenever I was around any of my friends that had long, shiny straight hair that would cascade beautifully down their shoulders, and mine was always braided up, nice and tight. I had a desire to get the longest, sharpest scissors known to man and cut all their hair off; I was puck green.

Or recently, when my friend Allison, who graduated from nursing school, told me she was hired as a nurse at Nazareth Hospital, I could not help but be envious.

Ever since I could remember, it has been difficult for me to be happy for others. Oh sure, I could easily bask in my own successes. Whether I got an “A” on an exam, received a traveling opportunity, or had my writing published, I would welcome – no I would require – no I would demand that all who knew me praise me for my accomplishments. I was the greatest! Well, at least until someone else claimed the limelight. Then my claws were unleashed.

My transformation from prancing doe, to ravenous lioness was quick, unexpected, and, on many occasions, uncontrollable. Thoughts, inundated with lethal venom, would simmer in my mind. My victims had no idea that I was plotting against them...Brittany’s so stupid; I don’t

know how she got accepted into college. I hope she flunks out and has to move back home. Chloe is such a flirt. She deserves a loser like Jason. I hope he breaks her heart into little pieces. The only reason Casey is going overseas is because she didn't get into grad school. She's just buying time.

An eternal stream of emerald zingers would root themselves in my mind for days, weeks, months even. I would bask in the anger and bitterness that was welling up inside me, because I thought that I could control how much happiness others would receive. My goal was to make others feel anxious about their achievements to gratify my own insecurities. I soon found out that my envy, whose ultimate goal was to inflict pain on others, was really only harming me.

After a jealous rampage left me feeling desolate, I would sulk down the carpeted hallway in my knitted wool sock to my mother's room, hot cup of tea in hand. Tears streaming down my face, I would sit on her bed and allow her brutally honest, yet much needed counsel penetrate my heart.

"Ooh Jarreau," she usually began. "You need to be nice. Don't you see how much God has blessed you? Don't you see how wonderful you are? There is no need to be jealous of others. God always blesses you with what you need when you need it. Your envy is only causing you pain. You need to stop thinking about yourself and what you don't have, and think about others. I love you. Relinquish the envy and surrender it Jesus."

My mom was right. But, then again, she always was. Envy was a paralysis in my life; it was preventing me from being the friend, daughter, student, and employee that God desired me to be. There was no reason for me to be envious of anyone, because God faithfully poured forth his goodness onto my life. In retrospect, I did not

want to go to Liberty. I did not want to be a nurse, "date" Jason, or go to the Middle East. In truth, I had different dreams, none of which included what my friends possessed. Those jealousies became inane and I discovered how absurd I was being.

In Proverbs 14:30 it states that "A sound heart is the life of the flesh; but envy the rottenness of the bones." I was allowing my heart to fester in darkness, and as a result, I began to decay. It turns out; being green is in fact easy. However, holding onto envy takes its toll on you physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Lord Jesus, please help me be happy for the blessings my friends and family members receive. Constantly remind me of your love and faithfulness.

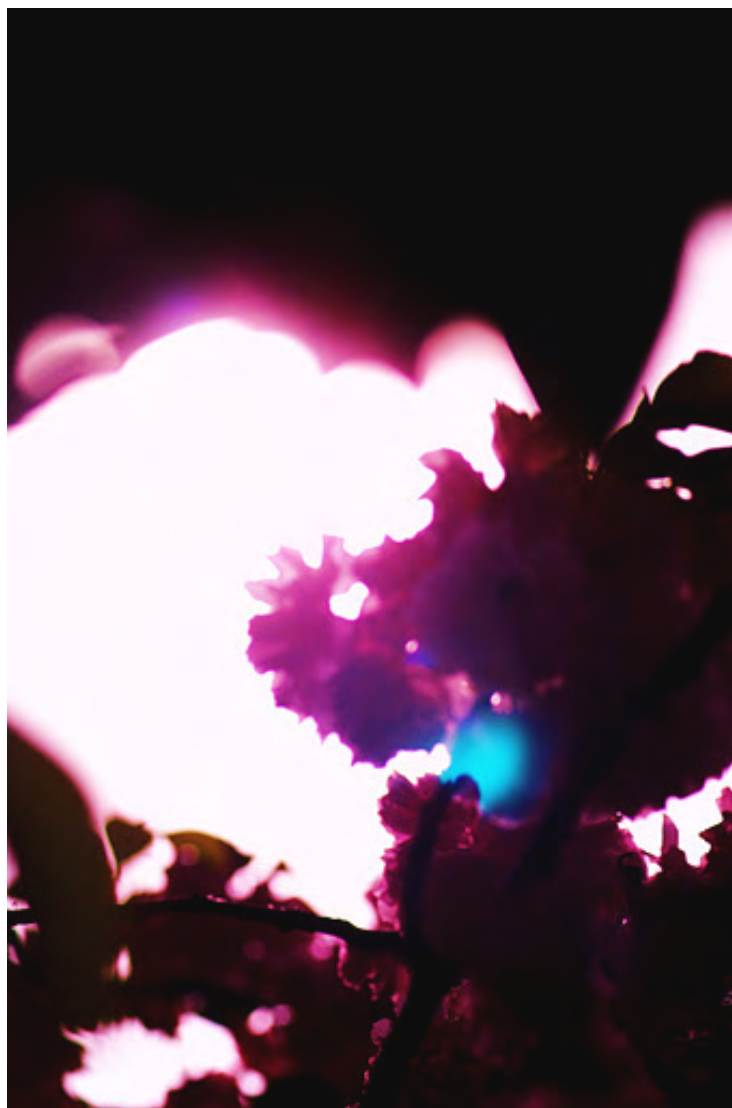
To say that I no longer struggle with being envious of others would be dishonest; I am often tempted to retreat back into my dismal cocoon of self-pity. However, I can truthfully say that I make more of an effort to delight myself in the successes of the ones that I love. I try my best to, as Romans 12:25 says, "Rejoice with those who rejoice." And as a result, I find myself wearing a color of a much different shade more often.

When my younger brother Ryon told me he was among some of the University's student athletes to receive an honor for their high GPA, I was fluorescent yellow.

Or when Chloe told me she and our mutual friend Leah were going on a road trip to Chicago, I was topaz.

Or when my aunt and uncle went on a two week trip to South Africa, I was lemon. I was genuinely happy for them, and it was not because they brought me back a souvenir either!

Or when my friend Patsy got engaged, I could have easily been green, but I chose to be chartreuse yellow.



Untitled
Jessica Veazey
2013

IV/XIV

Derek Green

2013

You can talk all you want; but I'm the not the one to follow. You're everyone else's problem. Trying so hard not to be seen. Distasteful as ever, walking across a crowded room. You wanted to be everything. Swallow this blue pill, lay back, relax and let the Ruphenal kick in. It doesn't exist here. You left your decency on the bathroom floor; spilling your confidence from your throat in the last stall. These wounds always come undone; unwinding and growing wider. Try hard to concentrate with this blurry vision you've been given. Unbalanced while pushing everyone aside. There was only you. Why don't you give up and give them what they want? It's your funeral with the marble casket locked shut. You swallowed the key along with everyone else. Have you really been blind all of this time? I sense this is the end of you. You're the reason I can't wake up. I am the ghost, watching as you crucify yourself. All that's inside of you; a worthless coward who claimed to see the darkest of the world; with a taste of ridicule. Where do we all fit in, in a world of disgust and regret?

Her words were poison. I looked in the mirror, still laughing, and all I saw was black. They're going to take us all. Don't quote me on this; follow it and embrace the madness of what's inside of the circle; the start of something new and beautiful. How could it be so cold when I'm alone and waiting for the hollow to return? Secret mind; delinquent solutions to a fake dream; we know nothing of our human potential.

Crashed and burned into the clouds, climbing your way to a higher belief. Holding on to the dimensions. These questions were never answered as you all turned away and couldn't see. You were the one that failed me.

On the Eve of Solstice

Frances Ellison

2014

We are the daughters of the early rising moon. Our sisterhood bonded in the frigid ice. As beautiful and delicate as a falling snowflake, but with spirits as strong and willful as a winter blizzard. Our love is like the harmony of a holiday aria, hypnotizing yet comforting.

On the Eve of Solstice, with the rising of the moon, we flee the comfort of our beds to become one with the night. We celebrate the oncoming winter frost with open arms. Our bodies are puppets, sailing on the string of the wind, dancing to the music of our own hearts beating. Our cheeks flushed, we link arms and spin until the trees blend in with the sky. Our peals of laughter like offerings to the Earth Mother. As the first snow falls, we watch with awe the beauty we were born into. Together, we wish for another year and another night like this.

We are the daughters of the early rising moon. The sisters of Capricorn and Aquarius. Hand in hand, we walk together through the quiet winter's night until our feet finally find their home.

Uncle Mark

Nicole Ehrhardt

2013

Trying to find strength, as the tears roll down my face
I answer fast to prayer to escape this lonely place
I look up to the sky, and stutter as I pray
I feel so disconnected from my God who saw this day
He knew that it was coming, yet I'm not prepared and weak
I try to feel his presence, as I shiver and can't speak
Dear Lord hear my prayers,
Bring comfort to my heart,
Have open arms and love to give, once you meet my Uncle Mark
Allow him to look down on us,
And share with us his love
Reminding us he's not quite gone
Just watching from above
And when the days continue,
And our hearts still seem to break
Remind us one day we'll be united with the loved ones you must take

For my Uncle Mark



Irene
Loren Craig
2012

Ashes

Loren Craig

2012

Empty perfume bottles
Old letters full of love
Frayed pictures yellowed with time
Deflated birthday balloons
scattered all around the floor

Sentiments collected over the years;
All things that remind me of you

Dust floating in the sunlight
Streaming in from the cracked window pane

It's time to let go

Anger sweltering inside;
All time wasted from holding on
Heat rises from the flames
The fire crackles echo in the room
Colors of orange and red blend together
Smoke fills my nostrils as I breathe in

My eyes glaze over as I watch the paper edges curl
And the photos turn dark
An eerie calmness settles over the blackened broken-hearted room
A sense of time wasted
The clock continues to tick on the wall

It's time to let go.

72 Hours

Chris Ryan

2013

It may have been rough but, rough eventually smooths itself out.

Everything in life, especially healing, takes time...

and sometimes, waiting for time to pass can be one of the hardest things to do...

even though it's such a simple, "effortless" task...

But that's really in the eye of the beholder to decipher

whether that time passing truly is effortless.

Every second

Of everyday

Has been a constant battle to keep you out of my mind

No matter where I turn there is always something there to remind me of you

Its been somewhere around 72 hours since the last time I saw your face,

Heard your voice,

Felt your touch,

And had my heart broken into countless pieces

You got me high off this thing called love...

But this...

This madness...

Is a sobering reminder.

And these past 72 hours have been some of the hardest hours of my life

Which blows my mind because I have made it through 20 years of life

And it's no secret, as everyone knows, that life is not easy.
It's going to have its ups and downs, its trials and tribulations.
I just can't begin to fathom how certain parts of our life can fly by us
And other times, like these past 72 hours, time can crawl by so slowly,
torturing us mentally and ripping at our hearts
But I guess...I guess this is just another test...on the journey that we call life
something that is out of my control, so I leave it up to YOU up there
Like the saying goes "if it doesn't kill you it will only make you stronger."
just really wish I knew what the future held for you and I
A good friend of mine once said, "Just know for the time that has passed you were walking with her...
Now you have to get used to walking alone again...
that's what's good and bad about having someone special...
Because their support isn't noticed until their absence is at hand"
So I pray...
pray that some day...
Whether it be near or far...
I can end up walking back with you again
And I wish...
I wish for just...
One...
More...
Kiss



Untitled
Travis Wolfe
2012



Untitled
Kirk Martyn
2014

Genetics

Michael Kelly

Alumnus

I may have a red color in my eyes
If they are red than they are of type: wild
I may not be wild when I am a large size
Morgan used me when genetics was a child

I was picked because of how I breed
I am found all over the wide world
Scientists are given a lot to read
I help genes become unfurled

Do not let me eat your delicious fruit
Finding out my name can be troubling
My common name may appear to be cute
However, my real name means dew-loving

I may not be one of Mendel's cool peas
But I still have people look at my genes

Drosophila Melanogaster (Fruit Fly)

Casa del Rey

Jill McFarland

2015

Packing in the compliments
 Staring out a kiss
To see onward for these indecencies
 I'd sure as hell like to miss
12th year books pack no knowledge I know
 The fine print on my certificate
Certifies I have actually achieved fine prints
 Resume with your body words
 Rather on with your heart's words
Paranoia overcomes a bleached heart
 White with wounds
 Whitened wounds.
 White wounds.



Untitled
Jessica Veazey
2013



Untitled
Jessica Veazey
2013

Hungry

Loren Craig

2012

Looking all around and there's nothing to find,
Walking in circles, have I lost my mind?

Starvation.

No way out of this isolation.

Where is my next destination?

I can't seem to find its location.

Where do I find what I'm craving for?

There is nothing inside this grocery store.

So hungry, but I haven't an appetite

What I need to eat is not in sight.

At home, Sadness is the only thing on my plate.

It's old and it's cold,

So, I haven't ate.

What I need is something new.

I'm starving for Happiness.

Will I ever find you?

Stuck

Olivia Marcinka

2013

I constructed these walls myself.
Slicking soluble cement on to each cinder block,
Piling one on top of one, my eyes shut the entire time.
My fingers, stark dry forming a part of the sculpture,
As I press parched palms to my new shelter.



Journey

Liana Florez

2015



Untitled

Tyler Marie Thomas

2015

Rainbow

Margeurite Baber
2014

Red Monday

When I entered the room for the first time I had to duck to avoid the plate that came flying my way. It broke on the wall behind me; I cautiously entered and looked around the room.

The room was a mess. There were crumpled pieces of paper scattered all over the place and the curtains were ripped apart. In the middle of the room, was a young man. His brown hair was messy, as if he had just come out of a battle. Speaking of battles, there were droplets of blood on the floor, dripping from his right arm.

“What?!” he screamed at me.” I jumped, holding my bag to my chest. I had met a few people like this as an intern, but these moments never fail to scare me, somewhat.

“Uh...” I started. “I was sent here to talk to you.”

The young man rolled his eyes. “Here we go again. The name’s Richard, I’m twenty-two, and I like violence. There, happy?”

I blinked, writing down the information he had just given me. “Does that explain the wound on your arm?”

He scowled at the injury as if expecting it to disappear. “Some idiot came and taunted Roy and the others. I couldn’t really beat the crap out of him because that could put everyone in trouble. So I punched the mirror.”

“You must really feel protective of your friends,” I com-

mented. He glanced at the window, all expressions of anger suddenly gone.

“Well, what do you expect? You should know what kind of situation I’m in – the kind of situation we’re all in. Without them...” he faded. Then he shot me a hateful glare.

“Who the hell do you think you are, making stupid comments like that?! I don’t care who you are! Get out of here before I rip your head off!” he shouted.

He didn’t need to tell me twice. I bolted out of there as he proceeded to spew more threats and curse a blue streak that would have made his mother keel over in shock.

This is going to be a long week, I thought, holding my hand to my head. I still can’t believe this is my first real case.

Orange Tuesday

The second day was considerably different. I didn’t get a plate thrown at me as a greeting, for one thing. In fact, the occupant was looking out the window from his seat. He didn’t seem to notice me coming at all.

I walked up to the bed and tapped him on the shoulder. He nearly jumped at the contact, but instantly calmed when he saw me.

“Oh, I’m sorry,” he said airily. “I was just thinking about something. Have you ever considered that people these

days are caged?"

I shook my head. The man with the wise old eyes smiled sadly.

"I think you'll understand when you get to be my age," he said. "Don't worry too much about it, youngster."

Blinking in slight confusion, I smiled. This was a much nicer greeting than the one I got yesterday.

"Oh, I'm sorry," he said. "I haven't introduced myself. My name is Oliver. Oliver O'Reiley."

After I introduced myself, I started to look around. The room was a lot cleaner than yesterday and a little more properly decorated. Nearly all of the decorations he had out were orange.

"Why orange?" I asked, eyebrow quirking. The one I visited yesterday called himself Red...

Orange shrugged. "I can't say I know exactly," he said. "When Roy met us, for some reason we were given color names. I was named Orange."

I hummed, somewhat content with his answer. As I recorded the answers, Oliver continued, "I don't mind really. Every time I think of the color Orange, I think about the fairy tales that my mother and I would rewrite when I was a boy...would you like to hear one?"

I nodded, and I didn't regret it. Each rewriting was strangely creative, in its own way (like how the Fairy Godmother was connected to Al Capone, or how Little Red Riding Hood was a flapper), and I asked repeatedly why he never got them published.

"Well," he said, a sad smile on his face again, "then I would have to stop writing."

Yellow Wednesday

When I came into the room on the third day, the occupant (who was jumping on the bed) immediately noticed me. Almost instantly, I was hugged tightly by the occupant. I was surprised when I got this greeting:

"Hi! My name's Yolanda! I'm five-and-a-half years old! Who are you?"

A five and a half year old girl? Mother wasn't kidding when she said that there was a large variety of people and personalities here!

"Oh," I started when I saw Yolanda staring at me expectantly. "My name is Julia Barnes. I know Roy, and I wanted to visit him and his friends."

Yolanda gave me a look that held a mixture of confusion and knowledge. "Okay, Miz Barnes. So what's the coat for? Are you rich? What's your job like?"

"Curious, aren't we?" I said, messing up Yolanda's hair. She squealed delightedly at the contact.

"Hey, hey!" 'she' exclaimed, "Let's go walk somewhere! It's a really pretty day! Can we, please, please, please, please?"

I suppressed the urge to laugh at this. "Okay. Where do you want to go? The park?"

Yolanda's nose crinkled in distaste. "Ew, no! It's muddy and dirty over there. Besides, the other kids are always so mean to me!"

I blinked, understanding that situation instantly. "Oh, sorry. So, the grocery store?"

"Okay!" Yolanda chirped, grinning.

And off we went. Nothing of real interest happened until we came to a street corner. Yolanda grabbed my arm and whispered frantically, "You have to hold my hand while we're crossing the street! There are cars and we have to look both ways!"

Ignoring the strange looks that we got from any passerby (which is rather common when you're living in a small town like this one), I grasped her hand, looked both ways, and walked her across the street. I had to put her needs before my own self-consciousness, after all. This is part of the job.

Later, as we looked at birthday cards, Yolanda chirped, "Roy's birthday is coming soon, so we should get him a card!"

"Ya know," Yolanda said, 'her' hand squeezing mine. "I was really scared when Richie told me about how mean you were, but Mistah Oliver said you were really nice... and I'm glad we met. I hope the others like you too."

I smiled, messing up 'her' hair. "Thank you, Yolanda. That really made my day."

Yolanda grinned as we continue walking. "Let's do something like this again, okay? Pinky swear!"

Amused, I looped my pinky finger with hers. "Alright, I promise."

When we came back to the room, I felt a pang of sadness as I left. I knew she wouldn't be there tomorrow.

Green Thursday

The boy - who had introduced himself as Gavin when I entered-shifted in his seat, eyeing my coat with what could only be described as jealousy.

"That's a really nice coat," he mumbled, sitting on his

bed. "I really want it."

I sighed; this was the third time that he had said something like that: first about his next-door neighbor's sheets (he must have seen someone delivering them to that room), then about his other neighbor's flowers, and then about my coat.

"Please stop saying that," I said. "If you want a coat like this, you have to work for it. And besides, you probably have enough money. You know that Roy's mother paid a fortune to make all of you comfortable."

"Too much effort," he instantly said. "Costs too much."

Somehow I knew he would say that, I thought, stifling a chuckle. Whether Gavin didn't hear that chuckle or he ignored it, he started to sway back and forth.

"You know what the driving force in this world is?" he questioned. "Well, do ya?"

"I don't know. Power?" I guessed, humoring him. Gavin gave me an incredulous look, shaking his head.

"No. Money!" he said, a manic grin sneaking into his face. "Think about it! Money is handed to everyone everywhere. And for what? Some candy, a CD, a porno?"

"How old are you again?" I said skeptically. From his body language, he couldn't be more than sixteen.

"I'm thirteen," Gavin said, waving the question off with a grin. "But think about it! Everything is a Pyrrric Victory in its own way. To gain something, you have to sacrifice things of equal value, be it all your money, an arm and a leg, or your friends and family."

At this I could feel Gavin glaring resentfully at me. This caused me to squirm a bit, because I knew what he meant: it's because of me that this happened to Roy,

Mother told me. It's because I left...

"Well," I said, standing up. "I can see I'm not wanted here. I'll see you next time?"

"Maybe," Gavin muttered, crossing his arms. I smiled sadly as I left.

Blue Friday

When I knocked on the fifth day, the door quietly opened.

"Oh, hello," a soft voice said. "Um... I w-was ju-just about to have some tea. The people working here were kind enough to deliver some at my request...W-would you like to join me?"

I smiled as I showed myself into the room. "That sounds wonderful. Thank you." I said, sitting down on the table.

"My name is Brittany," she said, walking towards a tray containing everything you would need for a tea party. "I've heard a lot about you, Mrs. Barnes."

"Have you, now?"

"Yes, Richard and the others have told the rest of us about you," Brittany replied, pouring tea into the tea-cups. "What do you like in your tea?"

"Sugar, please," I replied. As I added the sugar she gave me, I continued, "Other than Yolanda and Oliver you're the first one to be this polite to me. Is it always like this?"

"Yes. Richard gets annoyed about how I'm too polite to everyone outside of us. Yolanda's five and Oliver is seventy, so they have reason to be open, he always says. But I'm seventeen."

"Seventeen? You don't act it," I commented, eyebrows quirked as I sipped my tea.

"Um..." she said, blushing. "I just think that people should be nice to each other. Richard's far too violent."

"That he is," I muttered, remembering my visit with him. It was probably the scariest moment of my life. And I thought I knew Roy so well...

"What do you mean by 'outside of us'?" I asked. I already knew the answer, but I wanted to hear Brittany's perspective on things.

"Well..." she said, putting her cup down and humming thoughtfully. "I think you should know that. Everyone outside of the group. Roy and the rest of us...we are all connected, whether we like it or not. If he's happy, we're all happy. If he dies, we die."

I felt a pang of guilt, remembering my mother's words. "I'm sorry. I feel like it's my fault."

"Don't be," Brittany said, smiling. "Roy obviously still cares about you. If he didn't, Red would have certainly killed you."

"You think so?" I said, smiling back. Brittany nodded, glancing at the clock. She gasped.

"Oh no! I just remembered I have something to do! I'm so sorry, but I'll have to ask you to leave," she said, bowing. I smiled.

"It's no problem, Brittany," I said. "I was just about to leave anyway. My job is hectic, after all."

Indigo Saturday

The sixth day I came in to the whistling that could only be associated with one song nowadays: Maroon 5's 'Moves Like Jagger.' The room was completely dark, save for the small amounts of sunlight creeping through the

curtains. Thanks to that amount of sunlight, I could see the person I was supposed to visit today.

The dancer in the room held no fear or self-consciousness, unlike Blue. The movement was fearless and sensual, so much so that my breath was taken away.

He noticed me and smiled. "Hello," he said. "My name is Isaac. Do you want me to turn the music off?"

Blinking, I nodded. To my shock, Indigo shook his head. "I'm sorry, but I'm afraid I can't do that. Music like this...I thrive in its movement. The beat, the lyrics...You understand, don't you?"

"Kind of," I mused. With someone like this, there was no telling what he would do when the music was turned off. Would he change somehow?

I was snapped out of my musing by Issac opening a drawer. What was he pulling out?

"You know," he said. "People these days don't use their senses enough. For the most part, we are able to see, hear, and feel many different things. But nowadays you can only appreciate your senses if one has been taken away from you."

And then my vision went dark.

My eyes were covered by something itchy and soft (a scarf?). I reached up to take it off, but a hand stopped me.

"Don't," I heard his voice say. "You'll miss the point entirely. Try to focus on what you hear and feel."

Biting my lip, I tried (all while wondering why I was doing this to begin with). I could feel the body heat coming from Issac's hand encircling my wrist. I could hear the swishing of the trees outside, just faintly because the

song was still playing. I could feel the woolly scarf itch as it moved slightly over my eyes. The warmth coming from his hand disappeared, and moments later I heard footsteps followed by the click of the light switch turning on. And this could have been my imagination, but I thought I could feel Issac watching my every move, every expression.

And I could determine all of this because I couldn't see? About a minute later, Indigo took off the scarf. After my eyes adjusted to the harsh light, I could see him smiling at me with knowing eyes.

"You're very good at what you do, to visit everyone like this," he said, leaning against the wall. "Did you decide to do it because Roy is your brother?"

I blinked, completely shocked at this. "How did you know I'm Roy's sister? I haven't told any of you!"

Indigo chuckled. "It's my intuition. I just know these things. Now if you will excuse me, I'm afraid I'm growing tired. I should probably get some sleep."

I complied, genuinely confounded by what happened. Just how much of an effect is this week having on me?

Violet Sunday

On the seventh day, I came in to find a painter.

He dipped his paintbrush into red paint and splashed it onto one of the many easels in the room. I could hear the songs of Owl City coming from a nearby radio. He noticed me after about a minute and smiled. He put his paint and paintbrush down and started to motion with his hands. It didn't look like sign language, though...

Blinking, he walked up to me and grabbed a nearby notebook. He uncapped the pen that was attached to the notebook and wrote the following: "Hi! I'm Victor, but

everyone calls me Violet nowadays.”

“Nice to meet you, Violet,” I said awkwardly. “I’m Julia. So you’re...”

“A mute? Yep,” he wrote. “I just don’t really like to talk. Actions speak louder than words, right? Anyways, I’m really glad you’re here. I’ve been looking for somebody to paint with! You’ll have to get a smock, though. Come on!”

And at this, he grabbed my wrist and led me to a closet. He opened it and took out what looked like a huge night-shirt. When he handed it to me, I blinked.

“Paint? But I...” I started when Violet gave me this pleading look. That pout looked familiar...It was almost like the day I left for medical school (“Please don’t go, sis! Take me with you, don’t leave me alone with him!”). I sighed, accepting the smock. He grinned and returned to his easel, after showing me to a blank one next to his. I picked up the paintbrush, staring at it, and then turned my gaze towards the paints. Violet seemed to notice this, because he smiled and wrote, “Don’t worry. Just relax and listen to the music.”

I blinked, trying to focus. Why am I doing this, anyway? First Indigo’s trial with the senses, and now this?. I was never good at art, he should know this. But then I realized: this isn’t Roy. This is Violet.

Violet smiled sadly at me. “Are you having problems? Do you want me to help?”

Biting my lip, I nodded. Almost instantly, Violet went towards my easel. He dragged me towards his easel and dipped the paintbrushes.

If we conversed during the painting process, I don’t remember it. All I was aware of was this safe feeling that I got...just like old times. Was Roy in there somehow?

When we finished the joint painting, I smiled. It was the strangest thing: we ended up painting a rainbow.

Rainbow

The following Wednesday, I found a letter in the mail. The return address was Roy’s. I immediately opened the envelope and was greeted with this:

Hi, Julia.

Thank you for visiting us every day for the past week. You’ve changed a lot since I last saw you. We know you’re going to be a good psychologist. Well, most of us, anyway. Red and Green don’t think so. That’s to be expected...I’m pretty sure Dr. Martin told you that they could represent my anger and resentment towards everyone involved in my abuse: Father for abusing me in the first place, and you and Mom for turning a blind eye to it. Before you feel bad, don’t: you didn’t know what was happening.

Having Multiple Personalities can be tough: it’s a very rare day that I can be fully rested, because there are so many people taking control of my body. Sometimes I want to end it all just so I can get some peace. But I know there are people who care about me, and would be sad if I were to go away. I know Mom cares because she put me here where I won’t hurt myself, and while you didn’t exactly visit of your free will, you never quit. For that, I’ll always be grateful to you two. No matter what happens, please know that I love you.

I guess it’s true what they say: after the darkest storm there’s always a rainbow.

All my love,

Roy Gray Biv.



Untitled

Hayal Yalcinkaya

2015



On The Edge

Colleen Sullivan

2015

Coral

Jill McFarland

2015

Sketched branches, weeping pillows
Express the summer of a new adult
“antsy pants” and
Broken windows
maybe I’m not to suffer

Call of Duty

Yannick Wallace

2012

Heads bow to Mecca.
Shadows creep in the darkness.
Bullets sink through skin.



Il Tramonto

Loren Craig

2012



Her Capitol

Loren Craig

2012

Lost Cat
Caroline Oddo
2015

“Cats are the greatest creatures there are,” Penny says, poking her crochet needle through the square of pink yarn she was holding. “Quiet enough not to annoy you, lazy enough to sleep next to you, and soft enough to pet.” Penny gives her mother this speech at least once a week, but her mother always shakes her head and laughs.

“There is not going to be a cat in this house,” her mother replies, opening up the curtains to let a bit of light shine into the living room. It’s early December, the time of the winter that still brings a bit of excitement into the souls of school-children. Even as midterms grow near and the wind starts to bite against blushing cheeks on their morning walks, every child looks forward to the first prospect of snow and the smell of hot chocolate in the kitchen when they arrive home.

A half-full mug of hot chocolate sits on the table beside Penny’s chair, but it’s cooled down too much for Penny to drink any more of it. Instead, she threads another stitch into her pink yarn square, sighing her same disappointed sigh. “But it’s the only thing I want in the entire world. My friend Isabella has a cat. She told me. Did you know that? She’s the same age as I am and her house is no bigger than ours.”

“I know, honey,” her mother says quietly, picking up Penny’s mug from the table. The sky outside fades to a light grey while Penny’s mother brushes her daughter’s hair out of her eyes and whispers, “Just...not right now. Okay? Not this year. Your father doesn’t like cats. And I think your brother’s allergic. That’s why we got rid of the first one just after you were born.”

“Okay,” Penny mumbles while her mother brings the hot chocolate into the kitchen. She misses a stitch in her yarn square, leaving one corner of the square shorter and more rounded than all of the rest. Well, what do I do now? she thinks to herself, ripping out the ruined stitch. She really wishes more than anything else in the world that the ball of yarn next to her feet on the floor was being batted around by a cat. She wanted a gray one, with big green eyes and a big fat belly. Her friends had cats. She’d seen cats in so many television shows and the windows of pet shops. Her mother told her that they had a cat in this house when Penny was born, and got rid of it before her first birthday. No fair, she thought, tucking her feet underneath her legs and sighing again. Everybody else has cats. Why can’t we?

2 years later...

Penny turned fourteen in August, and started high school that September. She was a few months older than everyone else, but you'd never be able to tell—she was one of the shortest girls in her class. Her orange hair was long enough to nearly touch her hips, and freckles dotted her nose and forehead. She had a hard time staying quiet, but she never said anything rude, never intentionally, not ever. In class she always took notes, always listened and on occasion, if she wasn't too afraid, she'd raise her hand to ask a question or give an answer. A couple of boys had told her that she had pretty eyes once or twice. They were blue eyes, like little pools of cerulean light; she always kept them wide open while she was speaking to anybody. She didn't like to smile too widely, because she still had braces. Her girlfriends sometimes told her that they were jealous of her, just because she had a tiny waist and thin legs and pretty hair, but Penny didn't think that she was much to look at.

Penny and Isabella had met up in homeroom on the first day of school. Their last names were next to each other in the alphabet, so they sat side-by-side while their homeroom teacher passed out their schedules. Penny Lifton and Isabella Littleton. They took the same bus and wore the same kind of ribbons in their hair and both happened to paint their nails pink on the first day of school. If you asked Penny, she would say that she and Isabella were always meant to be best friends.

They walked from school to the bus stop every day when the last bell rang. Now, in the cold of December, they clutched their books tightly against their chests, scarves wrapped snugly around their throats. Around them, trees were reduced to skeletons and frost coated the brown grass. Isabella waved goodbye to a few of her friends while Penny tied her shoelace next to the big redwood tree next to the bus stop. When she stood back up, her eyes caught a flier that was stapled to the tree:

LOST CAT

Answers to the name Julian. Five years old. Orange with green eyes. Missing since Thanksgiving Day. Reward if found.

Underneath the words, there was a picture of Julian and a phone number to call if anybody were to find him. Julian was pretty big, though it was hard for Penny to tell from the picture. He had a bit of white fur underneath his chin, but the rest of his fur was about the color of Penny's red hair. Without thinking much about it, Penny tore the flier from the tree and held it closer to her face. Julian, she thought, her eyes wide with excitement, I will find you. I promise I will find you, Julian. Now don't you worry, okay? I'll find you.

"What are you looking at?" Isabella asked, a bit out of breath from running to the bus stop. She tore the paper out of Penny's grip to get a better look. "Hm, a cat missing. Oh well."

"Oh well?" Penny asked, snatching the paper back. "That's all you say? Julian is missing!"

"Who's Julian?"

“This cat!” Penny shoved the picture of Julian into Isabella’s face. Penny hardly realized how loud her voice was getting. “This cat is missing! Think of how sad his family must be. They must’ve all stayed home from school and work just to search for him. And how could they sleep? Knowing that their poor little Julian is somewhere out there. In this cruel world. Freezing and lost. How could they sleep?”

Isabella’s eyes were even wider than Penny’s at this point. She’d taken a couple of steps back to distance herself from the flier of Julian’s picture. “If you say so, Penny. The bus is here, you know.”

Indeed, it was. But Penny wasn’t nearly satisfied with Isabella’s reaction to the situation. She let out a quiet, “Hmph,” a fog forming from the force of her breath. She folded the flyer of the missing cat and shoved it into her jacket pocket for later, following Isabella up the stairs of the bus. I’ll find you, Penny thought to herself. I’ll find you, Julian, don’t you worry.

A few days later..

Penny had never been to France, and she took Spanish class in school, but every Saturday morning she’d place her radio on the kitchen counter and she’d play one of her French tapes. She dipped the bread from last night’s dinner in a bowl of egg batter and cooked French toast while the voice on her tape told her how to say various sentences in French. The voice would say, “Is this the way to the Eiffel Tower?” And then the voice would say the sentence in French, and Penny would repeat it, all the while flipping her French toast, her fingers sticky with syrup. It was six o’clock in the morning, and the rest of her family wasn’t awake yet.

The voice on the recording said, in French, “Thank you.”

And then Penny said, “Thank you,” in French as well.

But sometimes, when the recording asked her questions, Penny would reply even further than she was supposed to. For example, the voice would say, “Good day, how are you?”

And Penny would reply, “I am fine, thank you. How are you?” And it upset Penny quite a bit that the voice on the recording wouldn’t answer her question. Instead, the voice would just ask a new question, and Penny would repeat it. She often thought about making a tape someday that would answer those questions, instead of just making you repeat it. What fun is that? she thought, cutting up her French toast into little pieces and saving the pieces that were least burnt for her parents and her older brother Matthew when they finally woke up in the later morning. I don’t want to just repeat the words, I want to have a conversation.

When her breakfast was finished and her French tape had run out of questions for her to repeat, Penny rushed over

to her winter coat and pulled the flier out of her pocket. She hadn't forgotten about Julian, not for one moment. She hadn't gotten a wink of sleep. In fact, all Penny could do was think of Julian's fuzzy orange fur with the white tuft underneath his chin, and the green eyes that looked red in the picture from the flash of the camera. She had stayed awake all night imagining what his meow might sound like. She thought about his pointy ears and chubby belly; the way his family must be missing him so, so badly. How was she supposed to sleep when Julian was out in the world somewhere completely alone? Sure, she'd never met Julian before, but she felt a connection.

So, the dishes washed and the extra French toast wrapped up on the kitchen table for Mom and Dad and Matthew, she slipped on her winter coat and traded her slippers for a warm pair of boots. She was still in her pajamas but it didn't bother her much. She didn't want to waste any more time getting changed while the winter air outside continued to get colder and colder, and poor Julian was possibly freezing to death. She'd wasted enough time already, she thought. So, with a hat on her head and mittens on her hands, she walked outside into the chilly December air in search of little Julian.

Penny soon realized it was colder than it had been the day before. Maybe it was the fact that the sun had just barely peeked its head out from underneath the horizon, and the clouds were blocking most light from hitting the ground, but every gust of wind had a chill to it that Penny hadn't felt yet this winter. She buttoned up her coat and wrapped her scarf more tightly around her neck as she wandered the neighborhood, calling for the missing cat.

"Julian? Julian! It's me, Penny! I'm coming to rescue you!"

In her home of cookie-cutter suburbia, with all of the houses squeezed close together and the sidewalks right at the end of the short walkways, her voice undoubtedly traveled further than she was realizing. It was only just about seven o'clock in the morning on a gray Saturday, so the sound of a little girl's shouting voice was probably not a pleasant thing for her neighbors to wake up to. Nobody came out to tell her to stop, but lights flickered on in many windows as Penny's voice traveled further and further around the block. She ran into backyards and shouted beneath frost-covered picnic tables and behind piles of firewood. She scampered across the streets, back and forth, passing every house and yelling the cat's name over and over again. "Julian, don't worry!" Her voice got louder and more desperate the further she traveled. So loud, in fact, that a few front doors opened along the street.

One middle-aged woman asked Penny as she scampered by, "Would you mind being a little quieter? My son is sick with a fever and we can hear you even with the windows closed."

Penny shook her head and kept running, yelling behind her, "Sorry, Ma'am, but I need to save a lost cat! Julian, it's okay! I'm going to find you!"

She only hollered for a few more minutes before one of the neighbors called the police.

Back at home...

"I don't know what to do with you, Penny Rose Lifton." Penny's mother handed her daughter a mug of hot chocolate before shaking her head and walking back to turn off the stove. "You make us a lovely breakfast, and then run off to bother all of the neighbors until the police bring you back home."

"I figured that if you enjoyed the breakfast, you would understand that I had to leave until I found Julian, and you wouldn't be angry." Penny sat at the table with a blanket wrapped around her shoulders, her cheeks still flushed from the cold winter air. "And I didn't mean to bother all of the neighbors, but I needed to make sure that Julian heard me." Penny glanced down sadly at her full cup of cocoa, her eyes nearly filling up with tears before she sniffled them away. "But I guess he didn't."

Penny's mother sighed. "Oh, sweetie." She stood behind Penny with both of her hands on Penny's shoulders, massaging them softly. "Maybe he did hear you."

"Then why didn't he come out to see me?"

"Maybe he was afraid. Don't worry, Penny, I'm sure Julian will find his way back home. Cats are very instinctive that way. He's probably just a little confused, but he'll find his way back."

This was a lie, of course. Penny was smarter than most people believed she was. Of course her mother believed that Julian was either lost forever or dead on the side of the road somewhere, but she was just talking nonsense to cheer her daughter up. Nevertheless, Penny appreciated it in some strange way. "Okay, Mom. Thanks." She sipped her hot chocolate while her mother kissed the top of her head and walked back over to the sink to wash the dishes from breakfast.

Penny glanced over to the frosted glass window above where her mother was scrubbing syrup off of a plate. The sun was beginning to peek through the clouds as the morning faded and afternoon began. She wondered painfully whether or not Julian would ever come home. How was Penny going to sleep at night never truly knowing what happened to Julian? But maybe it was better off that she never found him. After all, if she found Julian and held him in her arms and looked him right in the eyes, she feared she might never let him go, and that would be stealing, wouldn't it? It didn't matter. She didn't find him and she probably never would, she knew that. And after her run-in with the police, it didn't look like she was going to be receiving a cat for Christmas this year either. She wished her father didn't hate cats so much. I bet Dad would've liked Julian if he met him face-to-face, she thought, glancing back over into the living room where her brother was watching a sports game and her father was reading the paper on the couch.

In front of her on the kitchen table was the flier with Julian's picture. Julian seemed like a wonderful cat, she thought to herself, taking a sip of hot chocolate. It was still too hot for her to gulp it down. I hope he finds his way home.



Untitled
Kirk Martyn
2014



Have Faith in Me

Nicole Mezzanotte

2013

Weight

Robert Sannicandro

2013

I need a calculated difference to measure
my weight between my distance and my thoughts.
Because I am whole-heartily
wrapped up in times invisible wires.

My mind is a vast Ocean,
but my thoughts arrive only at the shoreline,
staring at a line in the sand I cannot seem to cross.
Like a cross to bear I am Heavy with
timeless, unmeasurable complexions
of random thought.

A tiny pebble that I attempt to lift,
actually (in my mind), weighs an impossible
paradigm of measurement.
I am forever trapped under fictional fractions.

I am Heavied with endless weight...

(again)

Strings

Olivia Marcinka

2013

He sits on the edge of his bed, right foot on the chair in front of his desk and the other planted firmly on the Fitzsimmons floor. He leans his forehead on the top part of the object and listens.

Slowly plucking at each string of steel, his ears respond slightly to the resonance. He notices the change in vibrations with each pluck and so do I. Then, he turns his face up with a look of concentration and reaches his left hand to the edge of the object.

Carefully turning the knobs that dictate the placement of each string, he smiles, as soon as the sound is tuned to his liking. He revels in this small accomplishment for two long minutes, holding the object with a firm paternal supervision.

Then, he takes back his hand, straightens his posture, and holds the object in the usual relaxed position—gently nestled on the meat of his thigh. His gaze is, where it has always been, focused into a distance beyond the building and its surrounding trees.

After his mind floats above and beyond the stucco ceiling, he suddenly snaps himself back into place with a sharp, silent look. His eyes, somehow a darker shade of blue than when he picked up the object, now remain focused on the wall parallel to the one he leans on.

Then, he strikes the object three times and plays, all the while moving his jaw just slightly from side to side.

FALLing

Colleen Sullivan

2014

Arms out,
Leaves crunching,
She spins;

Head back,
Eyes shining,
He laughs;

Feet fly,
Hands clasping,
They fall;

... All as Autumn Calls.



Untitled

Jessicaica Veazey

2013



Ferocity Lost

Liana Florez

2015

Occupy Oakland

Yannick Wallace

2012

... Broke it down, let it go.
Picked it up, brought it back.

The color red speaks in my head
chanting hymns of the dead...

Picked it up, let it go,
... Broke it down, brought it back.

My generation is a screaming dead child,
brought from the wilderness to the city, raised
wild;

brought up and
... Broke up
Picked at 'till it bled.

A scab turned red across my mind's eye.
A sigh from an unused soul strained from a story untold.

... Broke down,
brought down
Let us go,
fight for the unknown
that we know we believe in.
That thing we can feel.

That red,
in my head
And across my mind's eye,

It broke down, it let go
it picked up, and it fought back.

**Despite My Own
Wishes**

Nicole Ehrhardt

2013

The birds outside my window keep chirping
To the rhythm of my alarm
And my body feels wasted and heavy
As I reach for it with my arm
My mind's still wandering carelessly
Lost in the world of my dreams
And although my clock's right on schedule
Its crude wake-up call seems too extreme
My pillow feels so plump and fluffy
My blanket feels warm on my skin
The mattress that's lying beneath me
Is calling, "Don't get out of the bed, stay in"
So I slowly turn over and lay there
But the moment that I close my eyes
I realize that time starts to pass me
So despite my own wishes, I rise
And as the morning greets me with kindness
The sunlight shines down my head
And as the sun rolls over hill tops
I slowly roll out of my bed



When in Rome...

Loren Craig

2012

Human Architecture III

Derek Green

2013

My eyes caught the darkest of the sunset, reforming into the human bodies that fell from the sky. With human faces torn from all of the mouths of the vultures. The music plays on; growing faster in circles. The thought process was gone. I've got the bullet wounds to prove that I'm still alive. Spilling from my organs, endorphins and a knife. Conscience black, painted with the wretched of the beast's eyes never returning. You'll find your comfort here. With your head on the side of the train tracks. In 9 seconds, you'll give in. When the urgency hits you, when there's nothing left to speak of; you'll find your comfort here. It's all a part of the game that we cheat. Strapped to the asylum bed. The innocent victim. The inpatient of modern schizophrenic dissonance. A breath of relief. Where does the time go? Where does it end? 6....2.....4...8. We are all separate Corylus. The Infant Zygotic. Second guessing the purpose. White line and a razor blade. Subtly seeing everything in spectral form. Wishing I was as ripe as you, while ignoring the dead. No one is after you. Tenfold of the things you used to. Conscience blank; picturing the architect, you'll give in. Fearing the moment that the bottle hits the glass, and the fire splatters. There's no way out of here, so welcome to the human architecture. We could all run faster into the solar flare. The voices keep getting lower as the pain makes its way into your dilated veins. Your life is an open book. The pages are torn, exposing you. The cover tells a story of how your body became what it is today. There's no room here for you to extend the story. Building a statue, cutting every side into the marble. Missing limbs amputated with the chainsaw. All you had to do was leave and pull the knife

out of your back. Ignoring the signs, and minds that center the effigy. The miracle; a bleeding figurine. Perfection is an illusion. What do you do when your body atrophies and becomes weak and ugly? The result will make you sick. Tearing your eyes from your head so you won't have to see your reflection. Remember, this is human architecture, and nothing you see is a basis for your perception. Image is an illusion. Your life is the tool, to sculpt your morbid solution. Cut deeper into the skin, and taste the perfection that you have no right to claim. With the fear of living alone, you completely disowned your own identity, and your mind was completely gone. The scalpel captures every detail with a steady hand. To them, you don't exist and will always be something that they will never miss. Something to ease the nerves, addicted to your bust line and your unimaginable curves. Staining the skin with the marks. Close your eyes just a little bit, and we will take away every flaw and disease that plagues everyone's vision. Inhuman, broken and free. Aging steadily as your body decays and delivers you the bereaved; absent-minded human nature. Monolithic children singing your funeral song one by one. Wearing masks of everything that you were. Welcoming yourself as the product of society. So beautiful and flawed. Limbs misplaced and feeling numb. Missing fingers. She might have died, but with the look on her face, she was just as empty as the metal that was stitched into her lips. The architects took their time, slowly removing the soul and claiming it for their own. Covering the weapons with blood. This is human architecture. Make me into something of monetary worth, so that I can believe in myself.

Tomorrow

Loren Craig

2012

Tomorrow, will be better
Tomorrow, I will find something new
Tomorrow will be great
Tomorrow, I'm here waiting for you
Why did you deny me?
Why did you point and laugh?
Why didn't you send happiness?
And relieve this after-math
I wanted Tomorrow to be different
Something I've never seen before
But instead it never came
I was left fighting the same war
Today needs to be over
Today needs to end
Today needs to fade
So I can live again
Tomorrow I will try once more
Even if it's hard to swallow

I will paste a smile on my face
Although my heart feels hollow
Tomorrow becomes Today
As I knew it would
It's not the way I had planned
It's less than the way it could
It is the same as Yesterday
and as the day before
Tomorrow will be the same
Although I want something more
It is what I've grown to accept
Things don't change overnight
But Tomorrow is what I fight for and protect
I hope for it with all my might
Tomorrow will never come
No, it never does
I grieve the death of Yesterday
With the sound of 'Mourning' Doves

She Skipped Along the Pavement

Nicole Ehrhardt

2013

She skipped along the pavement with a smile on her face.
Her heart filled with excitement, her mind in outer space.
The people stop and wonder where she's headed to and why
But she just flutters past them as if she meant to fly

The world turns fast around her, making her feel so alive
Amazed by all the people and their efforts to survive
Each one of them is different, but still connected to her soul
A universe surrounding her that she cannot control

But still she goes on dancing as the wind blows in her hair
She hums a tune of happiness that lingers through the air
She has no destination; her journey's not a race
She's just skipping down the pavement with a smile on her
face

Cellar Door

Mary Frances Cavallaro

2013

I expected a house with broken shutters, crumbling bricks, a pair of soulless eyes that peered out from the window on the second floor, and trees filled with crows that cawed “Death!”

In complete honesty, I imagined a house from one of those Gothic stories that I had read so often, a haunt of a place akin to the House of Usher, the front resembling a face, and the owners—brother and sister with a rather strange relationship.

But this house was different. It was a blushing shade of pink with immaculate, snow-white shutters and a wraparound porch with intricate markings carved into the wood that lined the ceiling. The only thing that struck me as odd—quite literally, as it jutted out from the side of the house, was the faded wooden cellar door. It was shut tight with a rusty old lock; and wasn’t even painted the same pink as the rest of the house, as if it weren’t a part of the whole.

I pulled up to the front of the house in my carriage around midday, the coachman opening the door and tipping his hat, to signal our arrival. I stepped down from the carriage, taking in the eerie calm. Though the sun hadn’t even begun to set, I felt something in the air that led me to believe that at this place, at this little unsuspecting pink house, it was constantly dark.

I steadied my resolve, walked up the stairs leading to the front door and knocked twice. A pretty young woman answered; she had long, flowing chestnut brown hair, a glowing complexion, and a smile that would make even the bleakest feel warmth.

She inquired as to the purpose of my knocking, and I replied, “I am here to help, Madam. It is my understanding that there is a need for a physician? I am Dr. Branwyn.”

She let me in and offered me a cup of tea. “That would be wonderful, thank you,” I replied.

“Please, have a seat while you wait. Would you like cream and sugar?” she asked, pausing before heading to the kitchen.

“Thank you very much. And yes, I’ll take both, please.”

I removed my hat and sat down on a chair as I waited for the tea, taking it upon myself to look around the living room. The room was swathed in floral print, with chintz chairs to match, a cherry wood settee sofa covered in the very same pink that was all over the house. A simple sampler with the words “God Bless Our Home” cross-stitched into the linen was hanging over the front door. The bookshelf held an impressive collection of novels, including Fordyce’s Sermons and a King James Bible. All in all it seemed a cheery and cozy home, on the inside.

I continued to inspect the room and landed my gaze upon the fireplace, ordinary in every respect expect for one item, preening front and center on the mantel. It was a bird figurine that could have fit in the palm of my hand, all blue-black feathers and beady peering eyes, that upon further inspection, I surmised to be a raven. I assumed it to be nothing more than a family heirloom of sorts; why else would she permit such a macabre oddity to clash so harshly with the rest of her feminine domestications? I couldn’t shake the feeling that something wasn’t quite right. Amongst all the pink furniture and floral décor, all I could think of was that rusty lock upon the cellar door.

The young woman walked back into the living room carrying a tray of tea and cookies. She placed it down on the table and began to talk openly about herself, quite forgetting the reason that I was there. She spoke of her hobbies, her childhood memories,

and most especially her family, a topic of particular interest to which she always rounded back in the conversation. I was patient and let her talk; it seemed she really had no one to talk to, and I didn't particularly mind lending an ear.

When she took a break in her stories, I reminded her why I was there. "Madam, I received a letter saying that someone was sick and needed help. Is the patient alright?" I asked, in the event of the illness being dire.

"Oh, of course...well never mind that right now. Now, where was I?" she continued to talk, barely leaving room for me to speak again in the hopes that I would forget why I was there. There was a patient in need of help and I was worried that I wouldn't be able to come to their aid in time.

The longer she talked, the darker my reflection became in the window panes as the sun shrunk from the moon's demanding glare. Finally the surroundings were doing a justice to the dark feeling in the air. I had not been able to shake that feeling of dread that I had felt from the moment I first arrived, and my heart beat faster and faster the longer that I stayed in the house.

This unsettled feeling in my body continued as my palms grew clammy and my chest constricted, as though my rapidly beating heart were caged behind ribs held tight with a rusty lock of a sternum.

The more my anxiety grew under the watchful eyes of the raven, the less patient I became, until I could no longer keep from asking her about its origin. I took a deep breath and said, "Madam, I beg your pardon, but I must ask you to indulge my rather abrupt curiosity. I have been intrigued by that raven figurine ever since I stole a moment's rest here on this chair. It stands out so starkly from the rest of the house that I couldn't help but wonder from where it came," I said as I wiped a bead of sweat from my brow.

She paused, and a silence filled the room. A silence that lasted longer than any had since my visit to this strange little pink house had begun. She looked at me with hesitation and then looked up

at the raven figurine perched on the fireplace, gripping the wood with its twisted claws as if ready to take flight around the room in a moment's notice.

"I could never get rid of it," she finally began, pronouncing the words slowly and carefully, as though each word was a sharp blade intending to keep her secrets hidden with each knick of the tongue.

"Would you mind giving further explanation? Where did you get it? It doesn't seem to be to your taste, in accordance with the rest of this home," I inquired.

She wasn't eager to answer; I could read it in her eyes as they shifted back and forth between the figurine and my own stock-still figure.

Choking on her words she replied, "The raven was given to me by my parents when I was a little girl."

"And how is your relationship with your parents?" I asked, trying to surmise the cause of her strong reaction.

"My relationship with my parents was the same as any other daughter's, I suppose. I did chores, took care of the house, prepared to be a good housewife." The unsteadiness in her voice and rattling of her spoon against her teacup as she tried to hold it steady in her hands convinced me that something was wrong.

"Madam, you can be honest, I won't judge you," I said, reassuring her that she could confide in me.

She was nervous, but soon her words started flowing. "I love my parents very much. I want to make that clear. But my mother would constantly compare me to other girls in town...she said that I would never amount to anything. I tried. I tried so hard to be a daughter that they would unconditionally love and a woman they could be proud of, but no matter what I did, I was wrong. I had too many thoughts, too many opinions, spoke one too many words. She brought a Governess into our home

to improve upon my etiquette, always invited to tea with only neighbors of the highest society. They required the Governess, a mean-spirited old woman, to take a birch switch to me, or lock me in a dark closet for hours until I repented. I would talk back and act out of turn, though I did try to behave for my parents. I could never make them proud, regardless of my actions. But I deserved it; I was such a bad girl. Such a bad girl.” Her voice increased in volume and her speech became rapid the more she spoke.

“Madam,” I hushed reassuringly. “Calm down, it’s alright.” I paused for a minute and then spoke carefully, “Why don’t you try talking to them now?”

Tightening her grip on her teacup as she lowered it from her lips she answered, “I fear it’s too late now...they’re dead.” Her eyes drowned in their tears despite how hard she tried to contain her emotions. She took a breath and continued on with the horrible tale. “The worst of it is, before they left on the night of the accident, we had gotten into an argument. They presented me with that very raven figurine, and I was thrilled to receive a gift from them, thinking it was a gesture of love, but they only uttered hurtful words. Mother looked at me with sheer contempt and said that I would appreciate such an object above a tea set or a new dress because it was just as bizarre and unseemly as myself. At that moment, I told them that they didn’t appreciate anything I did or who I was and that I didn’t love them, and would leave the confinement of their home as soon as I was able. Father made it easy to do that then, as he disinherited me with a few terse words.”

“Oh Madam, I am sorry for your troubles. But you said that there was a much more horrid ending than the one you’ve provided thus far. What became of your parents that night?” I asked, both enthralled and horrified.

“As I have said, on that very night there was a dreadful accident. They were coming back from town in their carriage when something frightened the horses. The coachmen couldn’t control the beasts and they were driven off the main road into a dense,

desolate area of the forest. One of the wheels had cracked, and my parents sent the coachmen back into town to see if he could have it repaired. When he returned with the fixed wheel, he came upon a scene of carnage. As he described it to me during the investigation, he ran back into town and banged furiously upon the detective’s door, waking him and everyone else close enough to hear with his loud, desperate cries of “Murder! Murder!”

The detective came to the house in the middle of the night...I had been awake, pacing the floors, crying, afraid of what would happen to me now that I wasn’t welcome in my home. He knocked and gravely told me that my parents had been savagely murdered by a gang of thieves out for their belongings. I fainted from the shock, and came around to a doctor holding smelling salts under my nose. After that I don’t remember much...it was all such a blur.” She stopped speaking to pour herself another cup of tea.

“My apologies, Madam. I had no idea,” I said as she tried calming herself.

She collected herself quickly and said, “Oh, everything is completely fine now,” wearing the very same cheerful smile on her face that she had greeted me with at the door.

I had been so engrossed in her story that I hadn’t once checked the time, but the grandfather clock in the corner began to chime out reminders of the late hour. Gong! Gong! Gong! Eleven in all. My heart sunk with each chime.

“Oh my! I hadn’t realized the time! Would you mind staying the night?” she asked. “It’s much too dark for you to safely travel the roads.” She quickly added, “You can get back to business in the morning...”

I was sure, just as with her stories, that this was merely another plot to get me to delay my work. I shuddered at the thought of having to stay even one night in a house that appeared so pleasant, but held such chill. However, I couldn’t argue with her—I was late and I did not want to be caught on these roads in the

dark. How foolish of me, as I think back now, to fear the night more than the darkness that dwelled within the house. With no other choice, I swallowed past the lump in my throat and accepted her invitation.

She led me up the stairs to my room for the night by way of a dim oil lamp. It lit up pictures of guardian angels on the walls. How could I have thought this house was so bad? I thought to myself as I walked up the stairs. The lady of the house bid me goodnight at the door to my bedchamber, and I settled in. I tossed and turned for the better of an hour (that felt like eternity). I simply couldn't sleep, though the bed felt just as the rest of the house had appeared: quaint, comfortable, and completely unsuspecting.

I decided to throw off my tangled sheets and walk down to the kitchen for a cup of tea, hoping that it would calm my nerves. Walking down the corridor, it seemed much longer than it had, and the images of the guardian angels that once were calming, now looked demonic. The holy figures had impish sneers, long snakelike tails, and twisted horns protruding from their foreheads. I noticed from the top step that the sign above the front door that had once had read "God Bless Our Home" now appeared "Abandon All Hope Ye Who Enter Here." But I was just tired. My mind was merely playing tricks on me. Wasn't it?

I got downstairs and walked towards the kitchen, but stopped short when I felt a chilling sensation as I passed a dull pink door, nearly hidden in the wall-- save for the brass doorknob sticking out from its side, imploring me to enter. I reached for the knob but when I tried to open the door, the chain on the other side kept me from getting through. I fiddled around with the chain and, eventually, the lock came undone.

When I opened the door a gust of cold air blew in my face and gave me goose bumps, causing the hairs on the back of my neck stand up. It's just a draft, I thought, pulling my robe tighter around my chest. I noticed the rickety wooden staircase leading down into the basement and realized that this could only be the inside entrance to the cellar.

The further I descended, the more I felt that dreary feeling that I had had all along, that dark chill that made my heart burst out of my chest, my muscles tense, and my body break out into a cold sweat. I gasped when I felt something brush against my forehead, and reached up to grab the offending horror that awaited.

I jumped back when I heard the scurry of a mouse pass by my feet. Frightened, I dropped the lamp that I'd had, clutched in my hand. It broke and caught fire, causing the darkness to skitter into the corners of the basement, along with my senseless fears. Senseless, until I looked up.

The lifeless body swung back-and-forth above my head, with two coffins lying only a few feet away, long-dead rotted corpses inside their dark confines. The Madam was dead! A note and a chair kicked on its side lay under her dangling feet.

I took the wooden stairs two at a time, ignoring their groans under the weight of my feet and ran out the front door, straight past the intricate carvings on the porch and down to my carriage. I shook my coachman awake and urged him forward into the night, ignoring his baffled protests and inquiries. We headed back to the asylum immediately, my mind replaying the scene over and over in my head without any comprehension. I was new to the institution; I had never seen a patient dead. I knew nothing of this Madam, except that she had been released from the asylum for good behavior. It was supposed to be a routine check-up on a "cured" patient. It wasn't supposed to be this way.

A few days later a story in the paper read, "The uncontrollable fire devoured the entire house; the pink curtains and furniture, the bookshelf and grandfather clock, and the three bodies left in the cellar. Curiously, the only thing that escaped a fate of ash was a raven figurine."

I couldn't stop thinking about what I had seen on the note, the bold black letters screaming out from the page lying beneath her swinging body: "I could never get rid of the raven!"

Tell Me a Story

Frances Ellison

2014

Tell me a story
Using the quill of your fingertips
Against the parchment of my hips
Spell ecstasy across my thighs
Waste more trees with your manuscript
Recycle me with your angst
Carve your name into my skin
So I'll always remember this happy ending

Paint me a masterpiece
Use my body as your canvas
Kiss me ear to ear
Paint my smile through my teeth

Medicate me
Tell me how much I'll hate myself tomorrow
I'll beg for just one more dose
Write me a prescription

With a flick of your tongue
Drug me till I can't stand

Intoxicate me
Drink me until there's nothing left
Until I'm as empty as your heart
Drown me in your sweet liquor
Write my name on the bottle
Of your favorite brand

Break me down
Oh mighty glassblower
Sledgehammer the glass of my soul
Walk out that door and leave me cold
Don't call again until you feel like blowing me solid
again

Tell me a story...

I Bought a Ring in Tlaquepaque

Nicole Spano

2015

“I bought a ring in Tlaquepaque”

it's in a unique setting a
sort of a V shape.

it's got 2 stones in it a
red one and a moonstone

sinful and mystical

it's got a swirl a
star and a moon a galaxy. unknown

on the inside
there's a stick man with a

swirly head and a !
and the backs of the stones which look

could he be perplexed?

ugly.

like human.

the palm side of it has a weird
design, the artist's de sign,

one abstract I can't just google,
and one I can't interpret.

I bought a ring in Tlaquepaque and I'll never
know the mind behind
it.

Could very well be me, another entity



Untitled
Jessica Veazey
2013



Heart of Darkness

Loren Craig

2012

Afterbirth

Derek Green

2013

Don't let yourself go. It's something meaningful.
They want to be there to witness your hell.

Something got caught between the wrist and I can't
explain it.

Overemphasizing the importance of their targets,
while penetrating the fingertips.

You always said you were sorry but it's over.

Stay where you are and reflect on it.

I was the only one pushing myself down again. So
you were right all along. We can't hold on.

Further and further it goes. And then there was the
afterbirth spilling after you.

The look in your eye was priceless when you failed
to mention the most important part.

Never forget yourself. Bring me the noose. Prepare
the Molotov. This house will glow brighter than the

sun. I've been here forever. Why do you look so sur-
prised?

It doesn't get any better than your red nails between
your lips. You lied, and now I'm facedown holding
the child in my broken chest. Choices bring on such
a glorious spell of righteous incentive.

I felt the knife go through my senses. It was a picture
perfect moment to fake with a guess.

I don't deserve to be the bearer of this photograph.
So I look behind it and see the words you had writ-
ten. The words you choked as you sang our wedding
song.

Red and wet. Bitter and exiled. Lead me to the other
side to be with my child. I can't stand to see it any-
more. Do you remember the day I was born?

When the sunset hits you, your body will float away.
The image becomes distant with cynical distaste for
the very thoughts you displayed.

Little Flower

Nicole Ehrhardt

2013

There once was a little flower who reached out amongst the rest
Who lived in a beautiful garden that made it feel like the best
The sun shined down upon it and through the days it grew and grew
But one day in that garden, a stranger had decided to pass through

He showered on it his kindness
He shined on it his love
He laid down a foundation
And a dream it'd be part of

So as the time began to pass, the flower worshipped him
She no longer yearned for sunshine or fresh soil to root in
She gave away her petals, as he picked them one by one
Until the flower stood there bare, wilting in the sun

And as the flower wilted, it dropped a little seed
And somehow it was planted amongst a field of weeds
But one day that seed would blossom, and reach up towards the sky
And the entire world will marvel at the new flower as they passed by



The Wall of Voices

Liana Florez

2015

Daydreams

Robert Sannicandro

2013

In these Silent daydreams,
(much like now)
in Solitude we find
complacent memories
and ideas,
repeating.

She kills me,
Slowly rolling off my back.

I find peace in Silence.
But this can only be
accompanied by burdened thoughts,
on moving forward.



Untitled
Jessica Veazey
2013



Untitled
Liana Florez
2015



Untitled
Amanda Beury
2014

THANKS FOR READING

