

# Ivy Quill

A decorative horizontal line with several black ink splatters and dots extending from the end of the title.

Volume 1:  
Class Issue

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For all interested in submitting to the next issue of IvyQuill.

\* Include your name; First and Last.

\* Make sure your piece has a title.

\* All work must be submitted electronically via the club email:  
ivy\_quill@yahoo.com

\* Each person is limited to 3 submissions max,  
the voted best of these (1) will be selected for the publication.

\* Please include a short bio.

We are accepting all forms of creative writing and art.

Please be note that not everyone will be selected.

**We will not accept copyrighted work!**

**Submission deadline:**

**August 22 -- September 16, 2011**

If you have any questions contact us via the club email or talk to either  
Teshawn Massey, Claire Roof, Eshanya Walls, or Kim Hively.

**Class Poem**

Creative Writing - Eng 201B - Spring 2011

Billows of buoyant blue bubbles bouncing lazily on the wind  
 Children playing softly, capturing memories to frame.  
 Glass eyes tickle the brains of the gasoline fueled tears.  
 I feel nothing inside, that's why I bluff when I'm  
 High, but at least I have the decency not to  
 Make things up when I lie.  
 I have a voice, but dislike small talk.  
 The earth glows as I look upon it from a star.  
 Brown eyes are as smooth as chocolate.  
 With hips that could shake a priest's faith,  
 And lips as good as gold.  
 With hair as black as raven's feathers and eyes as green as jade.  
 She sat upon the tiger's tail, and ran when it did roar  
 I am tired of all this snow, it must go go.  
 We could dance in the window and watch the frost out the world  
 On clouds as we sit refusing to come down.  
 No, not now, I don't like the ground.  
 Oh but I fail to see the conflict in this situation,  
 To understand it, would be the end of me.  
 It drips morbidity from my fingertips,  
 It brings the darkness into my eyes.

**Lavander Dreams**

Tashaun Massey

Lying in bed asleep is a dreamer.  
 Held up in quaint silence.  
 Ghostly intuitions whisper  
 Their constant despair.  
 In sleep, the dreamer is led to neglect  
 The calming essence of lavender.

The sweet and fragrant lavender.  
 Deep in the mind of a dreamer.  
 Alone, smothered with neglect.  
 The unconstant constants of silence.  
 The wretched hum of despair  
 Lulls at a deep whisper.

A sweet and calming whisper.  
 Air soaked in lavender.  
 Quietly sitting in despair  
 Is the thought provoked dreamer.  
 Welcoming the longing of silence  
 While bathing in the pain of neglect.



The child-like victim of neglect.  
Whipped and tormented by a whisper  
In the depths of silence.  
Hues of dark lavender  
Form in the dream of the dreamer.  
Is it at an end, this despair?

Fearing the thought of despair.  
Contemplating the neglect.  
As the quivering dreamer  
Slowly begins to whisper.  
"Breathe in the lavandula."  
Again, ushers the silence.

Sweet yet unwanted silence  
Of the constant woes of despair.  
The dreamer awakens to lavender.  
While still covered in the pin of neglect.  
The ghostly whisper  
Returns to the dreamer.

"The call to lavandula erases neglect."  
While the silence soon overcomes despair.  
The whisper fades away from the dreamer.

### **Nun versus Prostitute**

Eshanya Walls

Nun  
Untouched, Unrevealed  
Glorifying, Harmonizing, Praying  
Mary Margaret, Lady Escort  
Reoccurring, Betraying, Flirting  
Battered, Revealed  
Prostitute

"Sister Mary Grace, why did you burden me with this unholy secret?  
For my ears burn and my heart cries out for the Lord."

"Sister Mary Margaret, my soul weeps for forgiveness. Our father forgives me just as he forgives you.  
Can you not forgive me?"

Sister Mary Grace  
"Your whole time here at the convent is based on lies, all lies. You must go, go speak to the high  
r and repent. You know, Sister Grace, this could place you in exile."



Sister Mary Margaret-

"Please do not speak of this to anyone. Please let me explain...

As a young child, I was adopted into a God fearing home, but before that, I came from the most unholy.

Born a bastard and damned to shame, I was sold for my earthly body.

I survived by doing what I was told. Not once did I enjoy my parents' lifestyle,  
not once did I know I was forsaken into an earthly hell, and not once did I know my every gesture was a sin..."

Sister Grace-

"I do not want to hear your excuses."

Sister Margaret-

"PLEASE, let me finish! I accepted my life early on, never hearing of God or his word.

Around the age of 13, I was forced onto the street.

I was told to provide income for my parents' habit of drugs.

I became pregnant and I struggled within my heart of what to do with the unborn child.

God must have heard my cries, and he sent the answer in the form of members of the Catholic Pastoral Staff. It was they who provided God's world and a new Christian way. T

hey took me in to the convent not knowing of details of my u

pbringing. For the first time I felt love, the love of humans,

and the love of God. I vowed that day to never speak of my past and start anew .

I have lived amongst these walls for 57 years without ever needing to

tell anyone of my past, then for some reason I felt the need to tell you."

"Sister Margaret, I still think it would be best for you to tell the higher, I do not want this burden of your secret."

"But Sister Grace, why did you think God guided me to tell you of my secret?"

### **The Color Red**

Lisa Holt

The color red makes me look dead

I don't think red is suppose to be read

Why do I dread the color red?

Red is said to be vibrant.

Not violent.

The color red makes me look dead

Red is passionate, intense and I'm love'n it

So I guess red could be a part of it

But why red I said

I just don't like that color I said in my head

When it makes me look so dead

I just can't bear it

Please don't make me wear it.

The color red makes me look so dead



## The Cat And The Butterfly

Jimmy Glenn Greenway



One fine sunshiny day in the dappled shade of a large leafed Catalpa tree a calico cat was sat perched on the generous bottom ledge large open North facing window. The drowsy cat was enjoying the warm morning rays when along came a vividly vibrant beautifully brilliant butterfly first looping and swooping, then swooping and looping along on the gentle currents of air which tickled whispers of the not quite asleep feline. On seeing this this unexpected delight the cat sat up quickly, instantly alert. The now wide awake and excited cat wanted very much to play with the wonderfully colorful, fluttering floating thing. The cat made a quick wish, when suddenly, a big gust of wind whooshed the helpless creature through

the large open window. Whooshing past the surprised cat and right into the middle of the room. Still fluttering, still floating, still flying about, but in a rather confused manner and a good bit befuddled.

"Wow!" thought the Cat, "I got my wish." and began to enthusiastically jump and swat and swat and jump...and jump and swat and swat and jump. A very shocked Butterfly quickly swooped low to avoid the cat, who jumped high. Then as the Butterfly frantically looped up, the Cat barely missed with a high swift swat. Instantly, the speedy butterfly swooped again as the enthusiastic Cat swatted and jumped excitedly all about the place. Just then, the very tired Butterfly, who needed so terribly to catch his breath, landed gently upon the highest place to be found. This happened to be a nearby lampshade. Once securely perched upon the edge of the shade the flustered butterfly stood sternly with one hand on his hip and the other he held to his chest. Nearly exhausted, the butterfly gasped as he asked the joyful kitty, between gulps of much needed air.

"Why...gasp...are you...gulp...jumping and...gasp...swatting at me?" gulp.

"Because it's fun!" laughed the delighted cat, still bouncing around happily, "It's soooo much fun! Don't you think it is great fun? I think it's fun, fun, fun, ever so much fun! Don't you must think it's fun...because...well...it's fun!"

"No indeed, no indeed I do not! It is definitely not fun! Not for me...definitely not fun!" huffed the still bothered Butterfly who then floated down to land on the surface of table. "Do you realize you almost broke my wing... my wing! It is a terrible thing for a butterfly to have a broken wing, a terrible thing...and just look my antenna... ooooh my antenna, why they are tangled up like a pretzel."

"Oh!" replied the puzzled cat. "I'm very sorry. I wasn't thinking about what it was like for you. I just got so very carried away with all the swooping and the looping. I just love swooping and looping...plus the jumping. Who doesn't love jumping? And of course, the swatting...I truly adore swatting. Why, I always have, ever since I was a little kitten. My mother used to tell me I certainly had a talent for swatting...but Oh My, it was very thoughtless of me, so very thoughtless of me, to not consider you and your feelings. I certainly wouldn't want to harm such a beautiful wing and ...I do like pretzels."

The Butterfly deeply touched by the sincerity of the apologetic cat couldn't help but smile. "Well, I'm fine this time, but please, please don't do that again!"

"Okay, I won't...not again...no more swooping...no more looping...no more jumping"...dismay crossed her furry spotted face as she sighed a big sigh... "and no...more...swatting..." the once so jubilant cat mewed sadly and then grew quiet.

"Now what's wrong?" The Butterfly asked concerned, as he carefully detangled his mangled antennae.

The Cat replied sadly, "Well...it's just now I don't have any reason to swoop and loop or swat and jump, and that's like my most favorite things in the world to do."

"Oh," said the Butterfly softly and then fell into silent thoughts of how to cheer up his new found and now so dreadfully glum friend. So sat the cat, thinking and about swatting and swooping and looping and jumping, while the Butterfly scratched his head, quite busy buzzing with ideas. "Hey!" cried the Butterfly suddenly, startling the cat and even himself a little. "I've got a great idea. I can loop and swoop just a little higher than you jump and swat and you can jump and swat just a little lower than I loop and swoop."

"Oh, Mr. Butterfly, that's a simply wonderful idea! A simply marvelous idea. How very clever of you to think of it!" explained the once again joyful Cat shouted while dancing about with glee. So, together the Calico Cat and the Beautifully Brilliant Butterfly very happily swooped and looped and swatted and jumped and looped and jumped and swatted and swooped happily to their hearts content all the rest of the fine spring day.

### Soul Wonders

Claire Roof

Blue pitcher engulfs the lemonade here,

My mother's summer table...

We count the boxcars...

My sisters and I gleam in summer short pajamas,

My brothers build forts and blow things up!

Do you really think you have power here, King Death, Master Marauder, and Deviled Egg that you are?

Your only wins are summer accidents.

I press my hand to my nine-year-old chest; feel my heart bird pound fast,

Your details bore me...I look for my bathing suit and find the sprinkler.

W don't swim in shark waters yet, only the kiddies pool, safe in the back yard

Of heaven...my mother grows so many flowers...they could suffocate you, Mr. Clean! You

would never have a chance oh Wicked Bird Man...

Gloat over your winnings about the city of July and August arguments and allies!

Ring up your gunshots and knife wounds, my mother is a nurse. She can heal anything, any riff in any broken blue sky...tornadoes fear our house I say!

Look for dangerous angels...they fight you dirty, or clean, they avenge

This place almost every day.

### Flaws

Kim Hively

Ann spit her toothpaste in the sink and caught a glimpse of herself in the mirror.

Normally, she would avoid anything more than just this momentary glance, but this time she stopped and took a good long look at the face staring back at her. It was the same face she had been looking at all her life, with a few changes. Wrinkles were starting to form around the corners of her eyes. Crow's feet, as her mother had always called them, although Ann liked to think of them as smile lines. There were also the streaks of gray running through her hair and the eyelids that were beginning to droop, just like her fathers. Ann looked at that face for a good long time. She was looking for the physical manifestation of the flaws that had always kept her just on the outside of all her meaningful relationships. But there was nothing, just the same plain looking face that had always stared back at her, with a bit more wear on it.





It was a week past her forty-fifth birthday and life had changed drastically over the last few months and yet not at all. At Christmas, her girlfriend of two years had asked her to marry her. Ann was euphoric. She was head over heels in love with this woman and the thought of joining their lives together more permanently was more than Ann had ever imagined possible for herself. For years, Ann had joked that her soulmate had been killed in a tragic childhood accident. This seemed to stop questioners from continuing to grill her about her lack of a husband and children. It was a tool that Ann had learned to use to cover over the flaws. Now, here she was, excited about marriage to this amazing woman who truly was her soul mate.

It was less than three month later and the whole thing was over. The marriage was called off and the amazing love had packed her things and left. Ann was still uncertain about what the hell happened but there she was, staring at herself in the mirror looking for those flaws. There had to be something there, something horribly grotesque and awful, like horns or warts, or maybe even worse, just what stared back at her.

Ann stood there staring at herself. Where was it? Where was that flaw that always made her less than? Where could it be hiding, that horrible defect that placed her squarely on the outside, always looking in at other people's lives? Where was the grotesque blemish that kept her at such a distance? As a child, Ann was held to critical standards. She had to not just succeed in school, but anything less than above average was criticized. You need a job, why don't you have a boyfriend, what are you going to do with your life after high school, what good is a college degree, ...? Ann was pushed and she pushed herself, but nothing was ever quite enough. There was always one or two things that just weren't quite right. Always on the outside, always with that little flaw.

Ann worked her way through college, always having at least a full time job and taking as many classes as she could afford when registration rolled around. Any friends she had were quickly disappearing, with lives of their own, and her schedule being what it was. She got the occasional phone call, but they also eventually stopped. She dated from time to time, but boys seemed to be more interested in her sister and her friends than in her. Even when she was on a date, she was always a bit anxious and uneasy. At twenty-five, she finally realized why. Ann had fallen in love with a girl. She was excited about finally feeling love and sick over the fact that she loved a woman. The romance was intense and burned out quickly. Ann was broken inside. She had finally figured out why she couldn't feel enough and when she gave all those feelings to someone, she was told it had to be kept secret and eventually had all of it handed back to her with accusations and name calling. She looked for the defects then and looked for them for six years before she ventured out into the dating world again. This time she was aggressively pursued. The relationship should have lasted a couple of years and went on for nine very long years. Soon after Ann's lover moved in, she began criticizing Ann, showing little interest in her life and restricting Ann's conversations. Ann spent many nights looking for blemishes, trying to do better and be better. Nothing was ever quite good enough. Ann resigned herself to being less than and feeling alone in a room full of people. Ann didn't have much reprieve outside of her home, either. Once her parents found out that she was a lesbian, they immediately told her sister that she was to keep her children away from her. They constantly referred to Ann's lover as her roommate, when they were talking to anyone outside the family. They let their disappointment in Ann and in her choice of a partner clear every chance they got. They never asked her how she felt or anything about her relationship. Ann had to keep that part of her life secret and quiet.

Ann stood looking in the mirror remembering the first time she had met her soul mate. It had been years earlier, when both were involved in other relationships. Ann couldn't recall the conversation, but she could recall the enthusiasm and joy in what was being talked about. She could also recall in detail what she was wearing and the exquisite smile that stood in front of her. Every now and then Ann would find a reason to stop by and see her, just to get a glimpse of her smile and feel the warmth of her spirit. There had even been a few times, in those years when her relationship at home was really lonely, that she desperately needed the glimpse and the warmth.



After Ann finally got her lover out of the house, a full year after the relationship had come to an end, Ann resigned herself to being alone. She had come to the decision that she felt less alone being alone than she had felt within the relationship. She certainly appreciated being able just to be without someone reminding her that she was not quite enough. In the transition of getting her lover out of her house, her mother's only response to the whole thing was, "so, are you finished with girls now?" Ann forced a smile and thought to herself, "for now." It was then that she realized that after all of these years, her family still didn't really know who she was nor did they want to. They were both embarrassed and ashamed of Ann. This realization made Ann feel lost, orphaned and yet without the benefit of not having to meet family obligations. Still on the outside, being forced to look in.

The relationship with her soul mate began innocently enough. A dinner with a colleague. There was laughter and amazing conversation and a feeling of ease that Ann had not felt in a long time. She left dinner that night wishing she could meet a nice girl like that to spend the rest of her life with. Ann had no idea what was in store. The romance blossomed quickly. Within a couple of weeks, they were dating, doing crazy things like necking in the car, things Ann had never done even when she was a teenager. One night, very late, after a long night of work Ann went to her soul mate's apartment and they spent two hours just kissing. Ann staggered out her apartment that night, partly from exhaustion and partly from euphoria. There were long, nightly conversations that were awkward at the end. Ann couldn't find a way to say goodbye. Two weeks after they began dating, Ann walked into the apartment of her soul mate and said, "It's harder not to say this than to just come right out with it. I know it's only been two weeks and if this is too much, too fast than I completely understand, but I love you." She was met with that amazing smile and the response, "Just remember, you said it first and I love you too."

That was the beginning of an amazing journey of love and laughter and everything Ann had ever imagined and more. For the first time in her life, she felt more like herself and more accepted and more loved than she ever dreamed was possible. This was where she wanted to be for the rest of her life, wrapped tightly, forever. Forever lasted just a little over two years and it fell apart as quickly as it began. Ann still couldn't figure out what she had done wrong. What defect had she seen? Where was that damn blemish? The accusations of not having enough emotion, of not fighting for her, of ...

Every day, Ann had told her soul mate how much she loved her. Ann expressed her gratitude for all the love she received from her soul mate. Ann had done her best at what she knew how to do every day that they had been together. She had lost a full time job because of her involvement in this relationship. She was constantly at odds with her family over this relationship, fighting for love every step of the way. Once again, it just wasn't enough. Once again, Ann felt like a failure and less than. When would it be enough? "Really, God, when will it be enough?" Ann screamed out in her head. She hated God for opening her heart that wide only to have it broken into so many tiny pieces. The worst realization for Ann was that she would survive this. She didn't want to survive it. She wanted to close the door of her heart forever. She wanted to hide the flaws and the blemishes.

Then, a really funny thing happened. Ann's mother, who had always called daily, said, "you don't sound good." Ann, who would have usually made some excuse about being tired or not feeling well, was beyond even making excuses, "I'm just sad today." The first few times Ann said this she just got the response of, "Oh." Slowly, the response opened up to a bit more discussion and Ann explained that she was really in love and that she felt lost. Somewhere, in the midst of the sadness, her mother finally got it. This is who Ann was, someone who loved women and was affected in exactly the same ways when it didn't work out, as everyone else. Somehow, the outside got just a little closer.

Then another really funny thing happened. Ann, who used to be elated to go to work because it meant seeing her soul mate, now dreaded the thought of having to walk into the building because it meant having to see her soul mate who no longer wanted her. About a month after the break up, Ann's soul mate started dating someone new. At first, Ann was devastated, but then she noticed something. When Ann would walk

through the door into the room where her soul mate worked, no matter what was going on, her soul mate would smile at the sight of her. Whatever crazy stuff was going on at work was suddenly forgotten and she would glow. The new girlfriend didn't illicit this response. There was no amazing smile or warm glow, just a greeting. Whatever frustration and stress that might be putting a damper on the day remained. That wasn't true before. Ann also noticed that her soul mate, whose expressions she had been pretty good at reading, didn't look truly happy. She was putting on a happy act, but her eyes told a different story. Her attitude told the same story, she was often snarky with others and had begun to act childishly, often drawing attention to herself. One day when Ann was working, the soul mate made it a point to walk by where Ann was sitting with the girlfriend purposely trying to draw attention to the two of them. Ann supposed that she was trying to play on some jealousy that Ann might be feeling, but what Ann was really feeling was embarrassment for her and sympathy. Ann was still in love with her and everyday mourned the absence of her in her life, but this wasn't her. This was someone else. Someone who Ann didn't even recognize and only pitied. This person seemed very unhappy and lost.

Ann stood looking closely at the face staring back at her in the mirror. If there was going to be a physical manifestation of all the flaws it would be just behind her eyes. She had seen that in her soul mate's eyes. The emptiness that used to be filled with love and joy. Ann looked closely into her own eyes, looking for that emptiness, for the defects. What stared back at her was someone who finally felt at home in her own skin and with her own flaws and there were plenty of them, but they were relatively small and lacked the horrible grotesque nature that she had always imagined them to have. Ann saw into the eyes staring back at her and there was love there. Lots of love, love that she found in the small moments of life, in the smile of a friend, and in her place in the world. Just on the outside, always looking in gave her a unique view of the world and someday she would find someone who wanted to be on the outside with her, ready to accept her love and all of her flaws. Ann had hoped it would be the amazing woman who she believed was her soul mate. The loss of her soul mate has left Ann feeling a bit lost, looking for a new path, not quite sure how to navigate, but she was navigating one day at a time. Getting out of bed, some days forcing herself to be productive, but getting through each day.

Ann gathered her things after the third attempt from her soul mate at getting a response from her. Work was slow and there was no reason to continue being there. What she really wanted to do was tell the love of her life that she was grateful for the time they shared, that regardless of the ending, it had changed who she was in a profound way. She was now out in the world with a much more wide open heart and that she had learned to be grateful for the moments. A lesson she had learned in the moments they had shared together. Ann wanted to tell her that she had made a permanent impression on her heart and the joy that they had shared together has spilled into everything else in life. Ann knew, however, that anything she said would only fall on deaf ears, so she quietly left the building. Maybe another day or in another life.

Ann looked into the face staring back at her from the mirror. She could see all the flaws. The lines around her eyes from all the smiles and laughter that life had brought her. The streaks of gray in her hair that reminded her of the lost loves and struggles that she had endured that brought her to this place in life. The drooping eyelids, that looked just like her father's, were proof that she had lived and mourned and loved. She looked at the wear and tear of a life lived to the best of her ability with the tools she had to work with at the time. Ann recalled a time when her soul mate had apologized for the look of her body, that had given birth to four children and lived a life. Ann's soul mate had apologized for her flaws. Ann smiled at her at the time and said, "I think it's perfect and that your absolutely beautiful just exactly the way you are." Staring at the face in the mirror, Ann thought, someday my flaws will be perfect and beautiful to someone. Ann dropped her glance from the mirror and turned toward the light switch on the wall saying out loud to herself, "And when that day comes I will have found my true soul mate. I just have to trust and believe and have faith that it will happen when it's supposed to." Ann flipped the switch, navigating through the familiar dark of the house toward the bed that would bring another tomorrow.

### The Shadows of Utopia

Sara Emmons

We live in Utopia  
Where everything seems right.  
We have no fear of darkness  
We have only love of light.  
And yet there's still a presence  
A shadow hangs in the night.  
Those who question disappear  
And those who wonder fight.  
Secretly we stay hidden  
Yet publicly I write.  
In different names and places  
I speak of a great white knight.  
One legend to save us  
From those who tell us outright.  
That we are in Utopia  
And will never again have blight.

### Can You Ear Me??

Larry Redding

*On a late night, sleep in the bed, lefty wakes up and tries to talk to his brother Riley.*

(Lefty)

*Whispers*

Hey! Hey bro! You sleep man?

(Riley)

*Half asleep and mumbling*

Aaaahhh yeah man. leave me alone! I've been up all day!

(Lefty)

I just had a bad dream and I need someone to listen so being the guy you are, I figured you could listen.

(Riley)

look man, I can pretend to listen for a while, but I'm not promising you any feedback.

(Lefty)

ok well, can you hear me? I don't wanna wake master up.

(Riley)

*irritated*

I can hear you just start the damn dream already.

(Lefty)

*still whispering but talking very fast*

Ok. Well we were disconnected from master and we had legs like he does and we walked around the city and people were staring and we could... can you still hear me or am I just talking too fast?

(Riley)

*annoyed*

I can hear u just talk dammit!!!



(Lefty)

alright already! Sheesh...

*Master rolls over on top of Riley as he falls back to sleep. Lefty doesn't notice but he keeps talking. Well we could hear everything so well because we were the size as master. We heard heart beats, thoughts, and stomachs growling. It was so overwhelming and I couldn't take it... Are you still listening bro?*

*He waits for a reply, and he gets none.*

Can you hear me?

*As loud as he can, he yells to Riley.*

CAN YOU HEAR MEEEEEE!!!!

*Master mumbles and rolls over on top of Lefty now!*

(Riley)

Finally! Now I can get some peace and quiet. He just doesn't know when to stop!

*As Riley goes back to sleep, Master wakes up and starts scratching Lefty because of the vibrating from him talking so much and goes back to sleep.*

*End scene.*

### **Interment**

Richard Bisnauth

*Different here without you, mom*

I wasn't there to see you cry

I wasn't there to hear your final good-bye

Then God saw your tears and knew you were in pain  
While you sat at death's doorstep, and I wish it was in vain.

A limb was broken from our family tree

And I constantly hear you say, grief not for me.

I remember you said to keep on smiling that the sun will shine through

But what do I do when my light depended on you?

I sat by your bedside for many days, I sat and listened to the silent sound  
I contemplate on you being gone, and the thought seems all so profound

It's months now since you passed, my wounds are healing slow

I want so much to hear your voice, to see your smile aglow

It's different here without you mom

It's as though there is no sun

You were a mother, a father, and a best friend all in one

Somehow, I must find faith in God and let my life go on.

I miss you dearly and I shall keep up my chin,

Until that day comes when I shall see you again.



**Mya**

Sara Emmons

I woke with a start, instantly on alert. My breath was short and frantic, waiting for an attack that wasn't coming. After a few minutes, I took a deep breath and relaxed. I had been afraid for a long time. Looking over my shoulder had become a part of the norm for me. A nightmare, again. I couldn't remember this one, but the feelings were still there, still the same as always. Anger, misery. No, not anger. It was more than that. It was white hot hatred that burned my soul to ash every night. I didn't understand why my dreams made me feel that way. It was almost like I was dreaming about a me that wasn't me.

"That doesn't make sense," I chastised myself. Rubbing my temple, I looked around, hoping the light of the moon would have changed my hiding place into something a little less grimy. No luck. The metal crate on the New York City pier looked, if it was possible, worse than it did yesterday afternoon when my sister, Patty and I had chosen it as our hiding place.

My name is Evelyn Masters, but I'm known as Evey for short. I am also known as teacher, mentor, friend... and murderer. I didn't do it. I didn't...did I? I couldn't remember. That had been happening a lot since the accident. I'd had a son, Jeremy. He was wonderful. My baby boy. He was lost to me now.

My husband, Maxx, had picked him up from a soccer game. He'd been disappointed to find me missing from the stands, but Maxx had made him feel better, telling him that there was a good reason I was gone. I don't think he believed his father, but didn't ask again. Jeremy was turning seven and Maxx was supposed to be bringing him to a surprise birthday party at Jeremy's favorite place, Wonder Waterpark. He had been begging me to take him ever since it had opened back up. It got worse right after school had ended. He had more free time to beg. Our friends and family were already there and waiting with me. I had set up hours earlier, greeted everyone as they arrived, and we all waited at the water park for Jeremy's arrival. We waited for hours, but they never came. Everyone left after a while, leaving me alone with my worries, a mountain of presents, a cell phone leaving message after message on Maxx's voicemail. Finally, a call, but from a number I didn't recognize.

"Hello?" I asked hesitantly.

"Mrs. Master's?" a male voice asked from the other end.

"Yes."

"This is Dr. Sheltz from the Jefferson Hospital in Albany. We need you to come here immediately. It's about your son and husband."

My heart stopped. I ran for the door, leaving everything behind. Albany was an hour away. I made it in half the time. A nurse at the front directed me to the critical care unit on the sixth floor. Two officers and a doctor stood outside the door.

"What happened?" I asked frantically.

"Mrs. Master's?" an officer asked.

"Yes. What happened?" I asked exasperated.

"I'm Officer Blacum and this is my partner Officer Mckenzie. This is Dr. Sheltz. We have some bad news. Your husband was sitting at a red light at a busy intersection. Two men were driving drunk and didn't bother to try and stop. They rear ended your husband, knocking him out into oncoming traffic. A semi hit the passenger side and killed your son on impact. Your husband was hurt badly, but Dr. Sheltz is optimistic that he will get better over time."

My mind shut down. I don't remember much. I remember crying a lot and staying at the hospital with Maxx. One night, I got up to stretch. I left Maxx's room and walked the halls. My mind blank, I walked like a zombie not seeing or hearing anything. Just walking. I heard my name called and turned. Officer Mckenzie came jogging toward me.

"I have the information you asked for."

"What information?" I asked, confused.

"You're funny," he laughed. "By the way, last night was amazing."

"Last night?"



"Yea. Remember you came to my house and asked for copies of the police reports on the accident and all the info we had on the drunk driver and his passenger. I'm sorry, but we still haven't found them yet."

He handed me a manila envelope. I took it, wondering what he was talking about.

"Well I'll see you later." He winked at me and smiled slyly, hinting at things I didn't even think were appropriate. Sure, he was young and extremely good looking, but I was married.

After that, time flew. I had more black outs and lost time, but I didn't care. My husband was released from the hospital, but I couldn't handle going back into that house. I left Maxx in the care of a friend of mine, a mother of a friend of my boy's. I stayed at my best friend's. I must have fallen asleep earlier. I didn't know why, but I woke up on her couch naked. I called my friend's name. No response. I checked for her car. It was still in the driveway. I knocked on her bedroom door. She hadn't closed it completely so I pushed it open and screamed. Blood coated her bed and was splattered across the walls. The words Two More were written in blood and the mirror. My friend stared blankly at the ceiling. I called the police. They asked a lot of questions, but I didn't have any answers.

An ambulance worker was checking my vitals when a familiar voice spoke.

"Mrs. Masters." Officer Mckenzie stood before me looking sad and anxious. "I'm so sorry to have to tell you this, but your husband and the friend that was staying with him have also been murdered. They were murdered last night."

I lost all sense of everything. My mother sold my house and everything in it that wasn't mine. I stayed in her guest bedroom. I didn't eat or shower or do anything for that matter. After a while, my mother forced me to eat and get cleaned up, but she had to do everything for me. I had forgotten how.

Officer Mckenzie came by one day. I had finally come out of the bedroom. His visit wasn't pleasant. He had come to arrest me. He said they had found substantial evidence that showed that I had committed the crime of murder. When I asked who, he told me it was one of the men from the hit and run that had killed my boy. The passenger to be exact. An odd feeling of disappointment that the driver hadn't been murdered also rose in my chest. I didn't understand it. When he started to cuff me, Patty grabbed a gun and we ran. Here we were. A thought had been present ever since that day. One more, one more, one more it said. One more what? I asked myself. I didn't know, but something told me that my mind did. I'd been to afraid to look or even admit it, but a strange presence had taken up residence in my mind since the death of my baby. I knew my mind held the answer I sought, but I also didn't think I wanted to know. I finally gave in. Searching, I found that my nightmares were memories of a me that wasn't me killing all of them. Revenge. They took my boy.

Patty came in, soaked from the rain. Tired and wet she turned.

"Evey, are you here?"

A knife slid smoothly between Patty's ribs.

"No, but I am. My name is Mya and I have one more to kill."

Mya dropped Patty's body and stepped out into the rain.

"Just one more baby boy. One more."

### Distance

Alexander Millard

Why'd you go and do it?  
 And why'd I let you get away with it?  
 You got my heart pumping  
 And my mind racing  
 And we've never even met.

I keep dragging my feet  
 And hiding my thoughts  
 While you keep pulling them out  
 And pushing me on  
 Even though you've no reason to.

I have nothing to give  
 I'm hardly alive  
 Just another face in the endless grind  
 Yet you say you adore me  
 As you sing me to sleep

You're inside my head, inside my dreams  
 I keep finding it  
 So hard to think  
 Because every where I turn, it's you  
 And not the thought I need

You're nothing but patient  
 And nothing but kind.  
 Somehow you understand.  
 And even as you destroy me  
 You rebuild me into something new

And I hope you'll stay this way  
 And I hope I can change.  
 And I hope to finally meet you  
 So, I can finally say  
 Those words I need to say.

### **Writers Block**

Michael Kindelan

floatin free, speak fresh like an ocean breeze  
 you're trying to learn more but i wont let you close to me  
 im aching inside, my baked eyes need somthing new to see  
 i grew to a steady beat, this rhythem isnt new to me  
 its natural i flow like a kite floats  
 still hazy from the pipe smoke, whenever i write quotes  
 and im quite close to the edge, just give me a slight shove  
 i tried to stay in the box but it wasnt wide enough  
 im slippin like time does, just waitin to make jams  
 livin like im 8 tryin to get paid with my rake hand  
 ive got the same stance, nothing gonna change soon  
 my minds blocked now, it wont let anything come though  
 thoughts are dumb down, too lost to find home  
 exhasted my stay there, theyre sick of my tone  
 ive got to many thoughts, stuck behind the brick wall  
 i tried to climb over, but i guess im too small



i cant think straight my mind is blocked  
i cant think straight my mind is blocked  
someone pull that lever, and knock this wall down  
and we can all give praise, and watch it fall down

im to ahead of myself, need to slow down  
trying to bring meaning to words, but my mind is a ghost town  
oh sounds come back to me, i miss you so much  
the warmth you once gave me is replcaed with a cold touch  
why do i need you so bad, i fiend for a main stage  
starring at you, you smile back with a blank page  
its an easy concept, put that pen to paper  
ive known you for so long, so why are we now strangers  
i once could connect with you, where did the love go  
somthin fell apart, lost my heart for the hussle  
you promised you would wait for me, patiently  
now im stuck here, my mind's filled with the vacancy  
i cant wait any longer, cant take the emptiness  
this block is my new ruler, i can feel it inching in  
but theres nothing more to say, no one left to suffer with  
you took my heart from me, now i can never love again

i cant think straight my mind is blocked  
i cant think straight my mind is blocked  
someone pull that lever, and knock this wall down  
and we can all give praise, and watch it fall down

### **The Track of My Tears**

Richard Bisnauth

In a little village in rural South America, lives a young lad who has tried to understand the rare sickness he suffers. Today, his fate for initial cure has been decided, and his parents can now sleep better at nights without tasting their tears. Through the generosity of the natives and the greed of the far away foreigners, they traded gold in exchange for enough to cover medical treatment for little Luis.

This young couple has been plagued with the hard way of life. At the birth of their first born child, they grew fearful because they themselves can hardly afford to meet the basic demands to merely exist. They were well liked by the natives of this remote best kept secret of a village that not even the civilized citizens in the nearest town knew existed.

A kind and intelligent young lad who, if healed, can become the next president, who knows, but now it is all possible thanks to the power of money.

Each morning Gabriela would walk the pathway of the green grass that leads up to the mountains that overlook the immense ocean where she once stood watching as that ship disappeared into the lonely sea. The ship that has taken to a foreign land, the one that she loves even before love was invented, or so she thought. She has never stopped searching the horizons. Her hopes to see him again would grow when she stands at the edge of the mountain while the sun rises at dawn, but will die when the sun sets at dusk and could no longer see her own shadow. She's waited the return of Luis for twenty years now.

Her parents hoped that there existed another way, a better way for their only daughter to live than in loneliness so that she might triumph in her battle of love.

For that reason, they arranged for her to marry the son of the family's closest friend. They fear that they must go against the counsel of the old wise man in the village, who warned that it is better that Gabriela spends the rest of her life waiting for her Luis than to marry someone she does not love.

Luis and Gabriela met in what we know as the first grade of school. For them, it's while spending some time of the day with the schoolerman. In the days ahead, Luis' soul anchored itself in the love and beauty of the young Gabriela, and before soon, Gabriela herself fell deeply in love with him; he became her reason to exist.

Though young they were, and love they did not much understand, they both felt the happiness that surrounds them when around each other they were. The schoolerman would sweep the dandelions off the dusty dirt ground at the end of the day, dandelions Luis would pick from the prairie on his way to the schoolerman.

Gabriela would be most happy even though they made her "aachool!"

Gabriela broke down in tears on that gray November morning when she found out about Luis' illness. Her dilemma started not by knowing that his parents could not afford medical treatment for her prince charming, but that he had to journey to a foreign land to be able to receive any medical attention.

Then, the day came when Luis can now return into the arms of his sweet Gabriela. It has been twenty years since they last seen each other. Everyone in the village also waited anxiously to see the boy, now man, whom they have donated everything they had to be able to save his life... two decades ago.

Gabriela, now a canvas painter, paints the sun and sand and sea, today she trembles uncontrollably because Luis, now a medicine person, is gonna take her hand; tonight, only for them will the wedding bells in the little makeshift chapel ring.

Then months later, Gabriela starts painting a new portrait, Luis is a daddy to be.

November brought the fever, Luis was right there by her side. The old medicine man told him that he's sorry but Gabriela needs his prayers tonight. The stillness of the night broke the silence and the morning light brought his daughter, but fever took his better half.

Luis then set foot aboard that ship again as he hold his baby to his chest. He looks back to see the edge of the mountains where she once stood and knows that she will be waiting for him but this time on a long distant shore.

*-Being alive is being vulnerable to fate-*

### November Wind

Jimmy Glenn Greenway

November Wind came blowin' in  
and took my heart right from the start,  
As the Autumn leaves swirled all around our feet  
we found a love that seemed so complete,

Passion blazed like the sun in hot July  
oblivious to the frigid world outside,  
Warmed by the heat of desire set afire  
A lovely dance of sweet romance,

But then December's chill  
came and cooled the thrill,  
With an icy breeze which froze our hearts,  
So on a snowy winter's day with nothing left to say  
my November Wind just blew away.



**Little One**

Eshanya Walls

Little One, she is so dainty and petite, sits at the breakfast table with thoughts traveling around her mind. While her siblings' words are in her ears, and their excitement of the play that the hot summer day may bring, it makes her think. She cannot help her different thoughts all mixed together. Her imagination taking her to the excitement of summer child's play and the reality of the neighborhood twins wanting to play house scares her.

While her thoughts take her here and there, she hears her mother calling, "Kids", in the background, "Can you kids please go outside and play?" Little One knew at her young age her mother is always sick and needs peace in the house to rest. Her mother has Lupus and although Little One does not fully understand what this sickness is, she knows that the slightest setbacks irritate her mother's illness. Besides, it gave her answers to her uncertain decision of the day's activities. She is a young child, and of course, the innocence of her own child's play takes over all her fears.

Once outside, while lying in the cool grass, she looks up at the clouds allowing her imagination to make pictures almost as if they were gifts from the heavens. She is a sensitive girl, with a heart of an angel. She has special qualities that are as kind as the summer breeze. She is raised not to hurt others feelings and she is naive of the dangers that others may bring. She has siblings to play with, but recently she is often by herself. Little One is often sad, she even sometimes cries herself to sleep at night, if she is able to sleep, but at the age of seven, she does not understand where the sadness is coming from.

While laying there in the grass, she hears familiar voices coming up the sidewalk. These voices bring a sense of fear, the same fear she felt at the breakfast table. "Hey, do you want to pet our dog?" With a love for animals, and strength of connectedness, she stands up anticipating the dog's moves. This dog will bite if his masters tell him. "Go ahead, he won't bite," the girl twin said. Little One extends her small hand forward, and allows the dog to sniff. "He's being nice to me today," she says with a smile forward, and allows the dog to sniff. "He's being nice to me today," she says with a smile on her face. "He wants you to come over and play with," the twins said together. With no hesitation, she goes. Her wanting acceptance from the animal that would turn on her with a command from its owners overpowers her better judgement. As they walked through the door of the twins garage, Little One hears the girl twin say, "Let's play house, I'll be the mom, you'll be the dad, and Little One you'll be...". The words fade into the background of her fright. All of her emotions pour on her like a spring rainstorm. Little One knows what comes next, but she says ok, she knows that the fluffy, lion looking dog now in a stance of attack is waiting to pounce if she cries, kicks, or disobeys.

The actions of the twins house lay and Little One's responses to their orders teach her what real parents do when their bedroom door is shut. It reminds her that real babies feed off their mother's breast milk when they suckle. The time passed by so slow, the minutes turned into hours, and finally Little One hears her mom calling from a distance, "Kid it's time to eat." She looked at the girl twin putting her shirt on. Then, she looked at the boy twin, his face expression showed disappointment, shame and guilt, just as strong as Little One's did.

On the way home, she is reminded that the dog she wants to accept her as a friend will bite her if the "house play" is told. Little One promises not to tell the secret.

Once in bed after trying to wash away those uncertain feelings, her thoughts scramble once again. She knows of fears, uncertainties, and the ungodliness that runs through some people's veins. Little One cries because she does not understand why a game of house feels so horrible. All she knows is what her soul tells her that that kind of play is not right and what the twins said would happen to her if she were to tell.

Once a frail, dainty, innocent, and petite young girl, Little One is now ashamed, confused, and scared. Her innocent is taken and sensitivity is hardened. Without the secret of the twins being told, Little One grows into a young lady with devastation molded into her decisions. She fights to become the young woman that she should

have been, never really feeling at ease with life. The confusion she gained as a child carried on into her adult years and she realizes that to have the type of peace that she felt so long ago she would have to help others who carry the same type of shame she once felt.

Little One is called upon often for those who are in need. She is confident and concerned and a hero to some. She has a voice for the innocent who suffer the same as she once did and seeks justice in the place of blindness. She is proud to hold her hand out to so many and her future seems bright again. Once you may have cried tears for her, but now you can smile with her.

*Dedicated to all the innocent "Little Ones" who may not have a voice.*

### **Summer War Poems #1**

Claire Roof

These blue and white cloud days,  
Sunsets sailors' delight red sun sinking  
Into Lake Michigan's ceaseless horizon

These are the summer's singing rip tides awakening  
Sand shifter, waves curling, push, pull, swirl, waiting  
For early mornings, lacking definition of night and day

Make this the summer...  
Falling in love with blinded summer's eyes  
Kissing this someone goodbye,

Off to war in a foreign land,  
Like a mantra appears in the moonlight  
Come with us the slow banging on the drum

Works with the waves like clockwork,  
Like a dreamtime, is this real?

### **December 16th**

Alex Millard

My official investigation into the Adam Fox case has ended. When I asked for additional time to look into the details of his death, I got some strange looks. Everyone else in the station agreed that it was mostly an open and shut case - a clear example of suicide and how one person taking his own life can cause a chain reaction of deaths in a community. Lieutenant Ford saw no reason to keep such a simple case open, despite some oddities that I considered worth looking into.

There was something strange in Fox's suicide note that sent chills down my spine. I wrote the entire thing down while I was at the station so I could reproduce it here:

"Sorry. So sorry. Never imagined that this is how I'd die, cold steel in my own hand, pressed to my own temple, finger slowly squeezing the trigger. I didn't think I'd die like Jenna. I still remember finding her there, lying in that crimson-filled bathtub, her arms split open. I didn't understand the note she left. I wish I had realized my sister how incredibly sane in those last moments as she wrote those words. I didn't

believe that this was all because of someone else's suicide. I couldn't understand how reading a note could make someone take their own life. Now I know what Jenna meant. Since I read those words, I've felt this compulsion to end it all. All week, I've considered stepping into traffic or off of a building. I've made a noose without realizing it. I nearly slipped rat poison in my own food. I can't live like this anymore, and so it ends with a gun.

I don't want to die. I DON'T WANT TO DIE. This is just so fucked up. There's still so much I want to do. This isn't fair! I know I wasn't a good person, but I don't deserve this. Jenna deserved it even less. And to whoever gets this note... I am so sorry. I couldn't help but write this, just as I cannot help but pull this trigger—"

The only thing left on the page was random scrawls and blood spatter.

The Lieutenant considered the writings nothing more than the pre-mortem thoughts of an unhinged mind. After all, Fox was a drug addict and had a previous history with depression. I found heroin on the table next to his bed when he killed himself.

Maybe it's simply because I was the first one to find his suicide note, but I felt a need to investigate further. I was allowed an additional day to look into the case. I did not like what I found.

A friend of Fox's sister helped me understand what Adam meant when he mentioned Jenna. Ms. Fox had stumbled upon the body of a homeless man hanging from a tree in Central Park a few days prior to her death. I can only assume she'd read his suicide note, just like Adam found her own. I can only assume it spoke of reading someone else's last words and how soon she would write her own.

I checked the recent case files and, fortunately, Jenna reported the dead man to the police. I was able to obtain the box of his belongings. Inside, I found a bundle of papers. Each was someone's suicidal writings, and each referenced a previous one. The chain was fourteen notes long. This homeless man had clearly conducted his own investigation before his untimely suicide.

Most of the notes were similar to Fox's: filled with grief for the person who came before, despair at their own coming demise, apologies for leaving yet another link in the chain. Three notes stood out to me. One mentioned "memes", or the concept that an idea can pass from person to person like a virus. This writer, a rather prominent sociologist, theorized that perhaps this was the first fatal meme. Another was by a local museum director. He'd done some digging, pulled some strings, and gotten his hands on the final piece of the homeless man's chain.

This last note was written almost purely in Latin. I was only able to understand one word from it: Thanatus, Greek god of death and the Freudian word for describing humanity's tendency towards self-destruction. I recognize it from my college literature and psych classes. Never expected those things to ever actually be useful.

That note was a dead end, the trail going cold, and I had to officially close the case. However, I took the bundles of notes home with me from work today. I leave it here, with this note, my note, in the hope that whoever finds my body will pick up where I left off. Get this thing translated, find a name or a place from it, and try and figure out what the hell is causing this.

I've been fighting off the need to die ever since I was called to Adam Fox's apartment. I keep hearing voices in my head, telling me to join them in their never-ending sleep. I don't know what is making me do this, but I just can't resist it anymore. I can only hope that you are stronger than I am. That you can carry this torch and go further than I was able to.

I am sorry I did this to you. I am sorry I wrote this and trapped you in this same dark spiral, but I just couldn't help it. It's like my hands started moving on their own. It felt like if I didn't write all this down, it'd be like telling my heart not to beat. I get up, leave this note behind, and in a blink, I find myself back at my desk, pen on paper. I am so, so sorry. Be strong. Fight this. Don't give in, as I am about to.

I still love you, Rose, and I pray you are not the one who fin—

**Untitled**

Michael Kindelan

Do you ever get the feeling that there really is no purpose to life? I mean, I definitely don't believe there is a purpose in the grand scheme of things, but I'm talking about your immediate life. Is having a fresh pair of Nike's or a hot cup of coffee in the morning really that important that I must continually wake up at an unwanted time? Wake up so I can shave off the stubble that I'd rather just leave there. Wake up and comb my hair and tuck my shirt in, in hopes that the person that I answer too will keep supplying me with the means to feed and take care of myself?

Its four thirty A.M. and my alarm clock has been going off for like 30 seconds and I would like more than anything for it to be a living thing. I would love to slowly squeeze the life from this wretched device, as it stares up at me and begs me to spare its feeble existence. I would keep hold of it several minutes after it passed, only to enhance the feeling of what I had just done. Two minutes have gone by and the noise is no longer bearable. I switch the off button and smugly climb out of bed to start my daily routine. A routine I have come to know even better then the bottom of a Pabts' can.

A foul stench of vomit crept through the air. It was so thick it was as if I could see it lingering. I could barely remember what had happened the night before, but after seeing my coffee table shattered into pieces on my living room floor, it was beginning to become apparent. I staggered down the hallway into my bathroom, the light was already on and there were several beer bottles stashed about in peculiar places. I paid it no mind as I started the shower and sat down on the toilet. As I sat there, the sound of water falling to the porcelain gave me a little peace of mind. For a slight moment I had completely forgotten that for the next twelve hours I would be mindlessly placing heavy sheets of metal on hooks. The sound reminded me of simpler times. As hard as it was to think of a life that was simpler then the one I lived now; it brought to me a feeling of contentness. This feeling was of course short lived, as I stumbled into the shower. As I stood there, blindly cleaning myself, I begin to think how wonderful it would be if the power at the plant would somehow miraculously go out before I made it to work. Maybe my line will have broken down and they will have to call us off for the day. Maybe. False hope is better than no hope at all, isn't it?

Clean and dressed, I grab my thermos filled to the brim with the strongest black coffee that my coffee maker could muster and walk out my door towards my beaten down wreck of a car. It turns over twice, then finally the beast roars loudly and it is awoken from its slumber. I had driven down my road towards the plant so many times it was as if the car knew the way without me guiding it. As I watch a passing bird swoop in for an early morning snack, I suddenly feel and hear a loud thump and my body jerked forward into the steering wheel. I slam on the breaks, though there was no need because some unknown source had already braked for me, and try to gather myself. As the wind slowly comes back to me, I look outside my windshield and notice a man's hand reaching upward attempting to grasp on to my hood. Fear overwhelms me as I fumble with my seatbelt and dash out my door. I run to the front of my car and there he was; an older gentlemen maybe in his early fifties. A well trimmed black and gray beard, with more gray then black, covered his wincing face. He wore a green and black suit which had looked as though it had been purchased from a thrift store.

I jaunted over to him and cried out. "Are you okay?!?"

The man looked up at me as though the question I had just asked him was completely asinine and replied, "Of course I'm not ok, were you even watching what you were doing? Have you been drinking? You better hope you haven't been or you are in for some rough times ahead of you boy." I reached for his arm to help him up, and he snarled "I'm quite capable." I back off defensively and watch as he picked himself up with little to no problem. He stood up and placed his hand on the hood of my car looking down at the road. He seemed to be collecting himself as we both stood there in an awkward silence for what seemed like an eternity.

Finally, I mustered up the courage, to say something and muttered in a nervous tone. "So what now?" The man

looked up at me as if I had just asked him for his last cigarette. He looked as though he was about to say something but stopped and looked inside my smudge covered window at my thermos. "Is that coffee?" He asked in an anticipating voice. I was a little taken aback by this, and surprisingly answered. "Uh yeah?" The man then walked towards my passenger door pushing me aside, opened it, sat down and then closed the door. He then unscrewed my thermos and took a big, powerful whiff of my freshly brewed coffee. Without question he unscrewed the lid and begins to sip the pitch black liquid, looking forward towards the road. I didn't know what to think of this, I was still trying to take in all of the events that had just occurred and here he was sitting in my passenger seat calmly sipping my coffee.

To Be Continued...

### Music & Me

Larry Redding

If music were a person he'd be my best friend.  
We'd laugh, cry, and rejoice together.  
He'd be there to the end.

If music were physical, I'd keep it in my pocket.  
It's mine and only mine.  
Put it in a safe and lock it.

If music were an emotion, I'd feel it everyday.  
Feel it in my soul and with the words that I say.  
I'd feel it in my bones, like a marrow transplant.  
I'd feel it, and love it, and never take it for granted.

If music were edible, that's all I'd ever make.  
A nice 5 course meal to share with my date.

If music were a person he'd be my best friend.  
Everything I'd ever need.  
Music & Me!

### What Do Your Parents Do?

Kim Hively

"Why do I have to be the one to talk to them? They're not my kids."

The response was typical, "Because the wrong one of my kids gave birth to my grandchildren. You're the one they listen to and the one who seems to get through to them."

Joy sighed. This was a long list of conversations she had with her sister's kids. She was the one who got stuck explaining puberty to both of them and it had become an all day event. The whole thing started when her niece had started her period while both parents were at work. Everyone was crying, the niece, the sister (the niece's mom), and of course, grandma. Joy got to pick up the whimpering girl/woman and take her to the store to acquire the appropriate items. The beauty of all of this would be that there would be no coddling, because that just wasn't Joy, there would be teasing.

Joy picked up her niece, who was still whimpering, and drove her to the pharmacy. She took her down the aisle where the baby diapers were. "Well, if you think you can get your big butt into these,

this is certainly one option." She got the disapproving look. Joy then took her down the next aisle where the adult diapers were located. "And then there is this choice." This time the look went from disapproval to horror. Joy then proceeded to the giant wall of feminine hygiene products. "And then there's this option." Joy waved her arm toward the wall of merchandise like a Price is Right girl. This time the look was one of being overwhelmed. Joy knew exactly how she felt.

The problem with this shopping experience was that Joy was going to have to explain all of the merchandise. Tampons got ruled out almost immediately. Joy wasn't the least bit surprised at this. The explanations continued. While Joy was going through all the explanations, she noticed that her niece was distracted. Joy looked in the direction of the distraction. There was a young man stocking shelves on the other side of the aisle. "Don't worry, he doesn't want to hear this conversation any more than you do." That got a little smile. Joy finished telling her niece about all the options and then asked what her niece thought she wanted. There was only a blank stare. Joy pointed toward a couple of items and got the nod of approval. "Ok, so do you want wings or no wings?"

In a rather loud, confused tone Joy heard only one word, "Wings!" Joy couldn't help but laugh. What else was there to do at this point? Both girls checked out their merchandise and headed for home. Upon entering the house, the girls were met by Joy's nephew, "What's in the bag? Is that period stuff?" Joy just looked at him. How to respond. "Yes."

Joy went into her niece's room. "So, do you know how to use these?"

"No."

"I need a pair of your underwear. Preferably a clean pair." Again, the look of disapproval. Joy proceed to take one of the panty liners and the pair of underwear and then said, "The most important thing to remember is sticky side down." Joy saw the look of utter confusion.

She smiled. "Sticky side up means it would stick to you and that pulls lots of hair and it REALLY hurts when you take it off." Joy gave her niece a big toothy grin. Finally, there was some laughter, but Joy saw that her niece was still looking pretty miserable. "I know this part of being a girl is gross, but we all have to do it. This is what we get for the privilege of being able to have babies. But remember, we don't want babies any time soon so get used to the gross."

"Is it going to hurt? I've heard girls talk about how it hurts."

Joy looked at her seriously. "Maybe. I get cramps, but your mom doesn't, so I don't know what yours will be like."

"Do cramps hurt?"

"Have you ever had a charlie horse in your leg?"

"Yes."

"It's not that bad, but it's still a cramp like that, only it's in your lower stomach. The good news is they make drugs to make it feel better. Your mom probably won't know which ones to take, but I do. So, if you get cramps, call and I'll help you get what you need to feel better. Ok?"

"Ok."

If this could have been the end, Joy would have been happy, but this was only starting. As she walked out into the living room her nephew said, "So what kind of stuff did you have to get?" Joy sighed. "They are like small girl diapers."

"Gross."

"Exactly."

Joy's nephew gave her a serious look. "I know all about puberty."

"Yeah. Tell me everything you know."

Joy's nephew proceeded to tell her all about periods and growing hair and knew more than she expected him to know. The he looked at her and said, "Do I have to do all of that too?"



Joy had to bite her lip to keep from laughing out loud. He did know a lot. Everything except that this was about girls. "No, dude. You're going to have whole different set of problems."

"So what's going to happen to me when I have puberty?" Joy only wanted to know one thing. What the hell did their parents do? Why weren't these damn kids asking them all these questions? "Well, your voice is going to get deeper, which is a good thing. You won't be able to scream like a girl anymore and my ears will be very happy about that. You're going to grow hair all over, not just on your legs and under your arms."

"All over, where?"

"Well, on your legs and under your arms and maybe on your chest and back. And when you get a lot older out of your nose and on top of your ears."

"That's gross. I'm going to shave the hair on my legs and under my arms like my mom does."

Joy gave him a funny look and said, "Well, you could do that, but you might want to think about being a professional swimmer because they shave to swim faster. Most boys don't shave there and if your friends find out and you aren't a swimmer then they may give you a beat down."

"What else? Where else will I get hair?"

Joy mockingly scratched her chin. "On your junk."

Joy's nephew gave her a very confused look. "All over it?"

At first Joy wasn't sure exactly what he meant and then suddenly it hit her. "Haven't you ever seen your dad or one of your grandfathers with no clothes on?"

"No."

Joy just looked at him. How was that possible? "Well, I think you should."

Joy got a disapproving look. "But where exactly?"

Joy thought for a minute about how to explain this. "After puberty, boys look like an elephant with a beard."

This really got a look of confusion, but Joy could see his mind working. Joy loved kids at this age because they were so transparent in their expressions. Suddenly, he got that look of understanding on his face. "So, you get it?"

"Yeah. That's funny."

"Thank God. I didn't want to have to draw that picture. I don't draw a very good elephant. I'm much better at dogs."

This talk was going to be harder. Again, Joy wondered what the hell their parents did to parent these two. Why did she have to have all the hard conversations with them? Joy's niece was being teased at school about Joy. Someone had found out that Joy was a lesbian and all the kids at school were teasing her niece and she was really upset about it.

Joy pulled up in front of the house and gathered her thoughts while both kids, one of the kids friends and her sister assembled on the steps in front of the house. Joy got out of the car and walked over to where they all sat.

"So, the first thing I need to do is ask you a question and I need you to be completely honest when you answer. Don't worry about hurting my feelings, just give me the truth. Are you embarrassed by what the kids are saying about me?"

The tears flowed immediately. "Yes."

"Well, here's the thing. I know grandma and grandpa and most of the people in your lives are ashamed of this part of me, but I'm not. I have probably been this way my entire life and I know I have been this way for your entire life. The only thing different about me than most other people you know is that I like girls instead of boys. Now, what I do know is that chances are before you graduate from high school you will probably find out that one of your friends is just like me. They like the wrong person. So, will you quit being friends with them because of that?"

There was a response of no from all. "So, then what's the problem? Why are you so upset?"

Joy's niece looked down at her feet. "I don't know what to say when they ask."

"Well, you have choices. You can tell them the truth or you could deny it, but sooner or later, if you decide to lie, you're probably going to get caught. All you need to say is, yeah so and she's my favorite Aunt too. You don't have to tell them I'm your only Aunt, just your favorite."

Joy smiled at all of them. This time there was a mixture of tears and laughter. "You both know that I love you. I'm pretty sure you love me too. I was this way yesterday and I'll be this way tomorrow. It's just me. The same Aunt who loves to tease you and tells you both about puberty and who will answer any other question you ever have. None of that will ever change. How you want your friends to see me is up to you, but if you look embarrassed or ashamed when they ask about me, you'll probably get teased. If you act like it's no big deal, then the other kids will get bored and leave you alone."

For Joy, this was a hard conversation. She had to expose herself and how her family felt about her to the kids. She had to talk about the shame. This wouldn't be the last hard conversation she had to have with the kids. Joy and her niece were headed to dinner, listening to the radio, talking about the week and what was new. All of the sudden her niece turned to her, "Some of the kids at school told me that it was better to smoke marijuana than to drink alcohol. Is that true?"

Inside her head, Joy was screaming, "What the hell do your parents do? Do they teach you anything?"

Joy took a deep breath, "Well, there are probably less chemicals added to marijuana than to alcohol, but, at least at the moment, marijuana is illegal at any age. Alcohol will be legal when you're twenty-one. But just know one thing, both marijuana and alcohol make me puke and like it or not your genetically linked to me. So, if you decide that you're going to get high or drunk, just remember you may just end up puking and that's definitely a buzz kill, plus you'll have really bad breath."

Joy's niece gave her an understanding nod. "So, have you tried any other drugs?"

Joy laughed. "I didn't do the easy one's well. Anything harder and it probably would have killed me."

"How many times did you smoke marijuana?"

"Twice. I thought the first time might have been a fluke. I puked both times. I gave it up after that."

There was silence for a minute. Joy looked at her niece, "Do you ever ask you mother any of these questions?"

"No. I get it when you explain it. She gets all weird and mom like."

Joy nodded in understanding. So, there was never going to be an end to this. She was always going to have to be the one to explain the hard stuff. She was going to spend the rest of her life parenting these two. Joy had heard the phrase "it takes a village" and she guessed that these kids needed all the help they could get, since the adults around them were more like the village idiots. Joy took a deep breath. "So, what other idiotic things are your friends telling you? Oh, and by the way you can get pregnant the first time."

There was that look again. Joy felt that this look must mean that she was doing what she was supposed to here.

### **Flow of Thought**

Teshaun Massey

Addicted to sights and sounds, grasping outward towards the waves as they ripple in the space between you and I pulling it closer in an attempt to keep all life's beauty to myself hiding in a hole peeking up through the gaps in the wood that cover it at the sunlight that bathes the world in the warmth that is only partly the equivalent of your embrace wings arise from my back as I soar above reality with you trapped inside my heart happily dancing in the spring of our future.

### **Purple is Beautiful**

Lisa Holt

Purple is beautiful  
a luscious jewel  
flawless as a diamond  
rich as a ruby  
clean as an emerald  
Pure as a pearl

Purple is creatively made in secret in a dark cool place as a pearl  
Awesomely breathtaking and mysteriously beautiful  
valuable as a lost jewel  
Flawless as a diamond  
Mysterious as a ruby  
Interesting as an emerald  
Confident as a pearl

Purple emerges and compliments the emerald  
in the way of shimmering lights bouncing of a pearl  
The striking color screams I'm beautiful  
Valuable as a lost jewel  
Flawless as a diamond  
Vibrant as a ruby  
Envious as a an emerald  
Secure as a pearl  
Purple is more than a jewel  
More flawless than the diamond  
More valuable than the ruby  
Yes, and more confidently creative than the emerald  
Pure as a pearl  
Purple is beautiful

### **My Family**

Bridget Cummins

My angel who I have loved forevermore  
Our son who is now is sixteen has now happy with his loved one who will soar  
We now have a beautiful daughter who looks so much like her father  
She is always light as a feather  
She was born a half angel  
She sings like seraphim a choir of angels  
We are so proud of our family and hope many more beautiful futures to come

## The Taste of Pomegranate

Teshaun J. Massey

*New age twist on the classic Greek myth of the gods Hades and Persephone.*

[Fade In]

1. Ext. Club – Night

*PERSEPHONE is out with a group of friends, laughing and talking while waiting to get into the night club, LOS NOCHES.*

**SANGITA:**

*"Alright ladies, who is buying the first round for the birthday girl?!"  
Whoops and wails of excitement spread through the group.*

**PERSEPHONE:** *(While laughing.)*

*"Come on guys, y'all know I don't drink like that."*

**GABRIELLE:** *(Gently nudging Persephone with her elbow.)*

*"You only turn 21 once, Per. You deserve to have a bit of fun, you've been bust'n your ass in class all month. Its spring break and we only get a week to party, what better time to start than today?"*

*GABRIELLE smiles and sways into her. PERSEPHONE*

*returns the smile and shakes her head at her overly excited friends who have begun dancing in line to the pulsing music they could hear through the brick coming from inside the club.*

**PERSEPHONE:**

*"Alright...alright! But somebody better be taking me home."*

*(Pointing to each of her friends.)*

*"I don't wanna be left passed out on anyone's living room floor."*

[Fade In]

2. Int. Club – Night

*PERSEPHONE and friends inside the club in the middle of the dance floor enjoying themselves. HADES spots her from where he sits at the bar.*

**HADES:** *(To the bar tender, yelling over music.)*

*"Anala! Do you know her?"*

*(Points to Persephone)*

*"The girl dancing with the full arm floral tattoo?"*

**ANALA:** *(Nods in the direction of Persephone)*

*"Yeah! Her name is Persephone, she comes in here every other weekend! Why?"*

*HADES watches PERSEPHONE, obviously smitten with her.*

**HADES:**

*"What is she drinking?"*

**ANALA:** *(Grinning)*

*"Pomegranate martinis all night!"*

**HADES:** *(Quick laugh, speaking to himself.)*

*"Perfect."*



### **Digression of A Crazy Man**

Charles Phillips

I drive my car with one arm and one eye ever vigilant.  
For my other arm and other eye lay, lay and looking back to the West.  
The land of my past.

A past with no future in sight of my mind.

The hot steam of the burning car engine resonates in my nose.  
I smell the fear that is my own fate.  
And yet I gladly keep driving toward my own end.

Still with my one eye and arm ever vigilant.  
My other arm grabs hold of my past and keeps pulling me back.  
I want to strangle it and chew it off much like the coyote so I can proceed into my destiny.

A destiny that I'm not sure if I'm ready for it.  
I hold my head up high and laugh into the winds of time.  
Time is no longer on my side.

No longer on my side.  
As I fight the current of the mighty river of life and still hold on to my past as it helps anchor  
me to who I am.

And in one fail swoop I let go.  
No longer myself and not different all in the same.  
I am at peace with me.  
For once I am happy in my mind.

Would you like to see my pet?

He guards what's left of my sanity and fear.  
Sometimes I'd like to see him put down.  
My sanity is nothing like what I act.

I act like a mad man running in the winds.

I hold my past once more.  
But this time even tighter than before.

My brain is a cliff, I want to jump off it.  
Oh how sweet it is says the man one face.  
Because my two are laughing at him.

I end where I began, Unannounced to myself or my former friends.

**Freedom is Home**

Eshanya Walls

I walk within mother nature's wind,  
Welcoming, nurturing blankets of peace.  
Calming jesters of unrecognized hatred,  
I have found the meaning of freedoms attraction.  
We will come home, I will come home,  
For freedom's aura is divine.

We whisper in freedom's divine,  
And capture grace in the wind.  
I shall meet you at the door of my home,  
And in ourselves we will find peace.  
We have anticipated the attraction  
Of the unwelcoming of hate.  
We have before hated,  
We have ignored the divine.  
We have been attracted,  
To the shadows in the wind.  
I have found peace,  
We are home, we are home.

Now that we are home,  
We no longer have hate.  
We have crossed paths with peace,  
We have bowed before the divine.  
We smelled freedom in the wind.  
Freedom was our attraction.

My beautiful one, you are attracting,  
It was you who brought us home.  
We heard you calling our name in the wind,  
For freedom shows no hate.  
Your song is of the divine,  
We have found freedom, it's peaceful.

Freedom is peace  
Freedom is attracting  
Freedom is divine  
Freedom is home  
Freedom has no hate  
Freedom is the wind.

Peace is our home. We are not attracted to hate.  
Freedom is divinely wind.

**My Life**

John Futa

Glass eyes open and close  
Emotion like a roller coaster  
Thoughts about running  
Who's right?  
Me, us, you, them  
WRONG  
Fine point remarks cause justice  
Who's life?  
My life

**Pie All Gone**

JimmyGlenn Greenway

To those fine folk, who might read these sincere words of confession,  
it was intention of mine to leave behind, but a crumb of Aunt Peggy's peach pie,  
It happened quite quickly, the memory now just a blur  
The regretful incident to which I now refer,  
In this moment of rare weakness with no selfish motives in my mind  
I held the gleaming utensil firmly in my grasp and  
one small nibble became a bit,  
and in that instance, self restraint fell away to undeniable sweet seduction  
by the incredible crust so flaky, the fabulous filling so tasty  
My traitorous right hand with the help of the tree tined stainless steel pusher  
Lead me helplessly into an alarming pie snarfing frenzy  
All control was lost to the scrumptious peach enticer  
as I deliriously feasted on the deliciously sugary delight  
Until sadly the frantic fork found only plate  
It was then too late...the pie had been ate.

**Two**

Kim Hively

For two beautiful years  
 I chose you every day,  
 To love you with my whole heart,  
 But you chose a different way.

I never imagined you to be the victim or broken,  
 I only felt the joy when your name was spoken.

We planned a future and a life,  
 You even asked me to marry you.  
 All of this flooded my heart,  
 The day you moved because you needed to find you.  
 I still don't know where that leaves me,  
 I'm alone, but not set free

I often pray  
 For the very day  
 You love will come forever my way.

But if that never come to be,  
 Thank you for the amazing moments you shared  
 With me.

**Anya Lost**

Sara Emmons

Time... How much had passed? Did enough go by? I was supposed to sleep for long enough to get to the space colony. Normally you wouldn't have to be put to sleep, but my fear of flying and claustrophobia had made the sedative necessary. The small capsule I was escaping in had a window in it so I could see, but what I saw was not a space colony. At least, not what I thought the space colony was supposed to look like. I had never been here. It was dangerous to stay on Earth, but I had inherited my mother's fears. The earlier humans had ruined such a once gorgeous planet. They had polluted the natural world that surrounded them so much it was forced to evolve. It attacked. By "it" I mean the plants and animals of nature. The animals evolved into larger and more aggressive beings. They attacked first smaller towns and cities. Then, they moved to larger targets. Sea animals evolved to walk on land for short periods of time to defend themselves. The humans retaliated. They used their nuclear weapons to eradicate this new species. It was catastrophic. Their bombs had the opposite effect. It forced the plants and animals to evolve farther. They got even bigger and more aggressive. It also had an effect on the humans too. It changed them into us.

At first, it was physical distortions, then it was mental handicaps, then everything changed. They wouldn't consider us human anymore. We had evolved into something different. We still looked like they did, but our internal structure had changed dramatically. We no longer aged as quickly like they had, living into our two to three hundreds. Scientists speculated that the change in gravity and temperature could have relieved the stress on our bodies, keeping us younger longer, but nobody actually knows why. A lot of people



think that they are just trying to compensate for their lack of knowledge by making up any excuse they think people would buy into. I wasn't buying. We also began to use more of our brains than they had. Scientists didn't know what had kept them from using the rest of their brains or what had made us evolve into using more of ours. We were all ten times smarter meaning, that nothing had changed. Sure people were smarter making us more efficient, but people were still people. Just because we had the smarts didn't mean we had the common sense to use it.

The Evos finally decided to build space colonies and move off Earth. By Evos I mean Esblygiad. That's the name the new government gave us. It was Welsh and it meant Evolution, hence my slang word Evo. I loved history and had spent a lot of time in the ruins of their libraries, searching through their words. I was trying to find out what they had done to ruin this place. What could have had such an impact that would cause World War III? I found that nobody expected World War Three to be fought against nature. They always predicted it would be the once called Middle East. There was no such thing as that here; not anymore. Those who still lived on Earth all cooperated for survival now.

My family had stayed because of my mother. She had a severe fear of heights and claustrophobia so she couldn't handle the escape pods they wanted to put us in. I was a baby at the time, but my father promised to protect us here if she wanted to stay. He had protected us for a long time. A year ago proved to be the end of his protection. I felt like it was my fault he died. I knew he never blamed me, but I still felt responsible. My best friend Mandy had always been reckless. Her sister, Grace, was dying and the cure was in the forest. The forest was forbidden. Her father had tried to go out alone to get the herb that would be the cure for Grace, but he never came back. My family had adopted his girls ever since. Grace however, was still dying. So, Mandy decided to go out at night, the worst time to be outside much less the forest, and get the herb herself. She got it, but she also attracted fireflies to our camp. They set our town on fire, causing a lot of damage. Grace got her cure after the fires were put out and we thought the worst was over; we were wrong. Red foxes attacked our camp soon after. My father kept everyone alive, except for Mandy. She was the first victim. It was her screams that woke us. I should have stopped her. I knew she was planning on going out there. It was her scent that brought them in. More animals picked up the scent of blood after that and we were forced to flee to the old shelters. After we almost ran completely out of food, we ran for the escape pods. Only a few of us made it. Me and Grace were the only ones of our family. Two men named Sebastian and James and their wives Tabitha and Raina made it. Tabitha's niece, Coraline, and her daughter, Elizabeth, made it also. A boy my age named Jay also survived. He protected Grace and I after my mother died. He didn't have any family either. So, here I was, waking up from sedation and supposed to be on a space colony with my new family, and I was looking up at a blue skinned, bald headed, black eyed alien.

## Sky

Claire Roof

He Walked on the concrete of home...

Let his feet feel the movement of the loose stone  
Took his shoes off for the sand of Lake Michigan  
Wondered where his woman was...

He ran into the water, blue, freshwater, freezing miracle....

Laughed at the ridiculous advice to stay ashore and take pictures  
Thought about the girl playing her cello next to him back in New Orleans,  
Post-Katrina...post Nine Eleven...post Osama bin Laden

He swam towards a daughter who didn't acknowledge music  
 Exhale at the books he had lost over time  
 Acknowledge Ahab had gone after all  
 Had hard landings when he came to the sand

He bent his knees up at an angle, looked for darkness, prayed for moonlight  
 Built a fire surprisingly correct,  
 Towards a future he had not anticipated  
 And not forever, but longer than he imagined or  
 Ached for...

### Meiko

Charles Phillips

I clean out from under my bed once every two weeks or so  
 You know, to make sure that everything's good  
 But, every time I do, I keep coming across this box of photos  
 These photos are of me and you and the many places we went to  
 The bars, the picnics, the homes and the holidays  
 You ask for me to take you back but I can't  
 You're still the same you, you were when we left the way we were  
 the way that we once were but aren't anymore  
 nor could we ever be again  
 But I still find myself wading through all the memories that I have with you  
 Like the one from Halloween where you're the vampire and I'm the one that's drunk  
 the year that we spent running in circles because everyone told us 27's too old to trick or treat  
 but, they gave us candy when we said it was for our sick son.  
 Stupid people, if they only knew we don't have any kids  
 My favorite memories of us is when  
 When the time would pass by and we'd just stare at the ceiling after a good screaming match  
 most of which weren't out of anger but boredom and the quite became the enemy.  
 I don't think I could ever look at you with anger in my eyes  
 Damn these pictures making me feel nostalgic  
 I hate these feelings because they make me want you more  
 but I know that you haven't grown up in one bit at all.  
 So I start staring up and the ceiling surrounded by my pictures of us  
 the photo's that remind me of you  
 remind me of us  
 remind me of when  
 Time is really nothing anymore.  
 I keep thinking and wondering,  
 asking myself why I don't burn the pictures  
 but continue to keep stuffing them under the bed in that little green box  
 Hell, there's even a picture of me and you holding the little green box that the pictures are in

The day we went into the flea market and I made the comment about your eyes and how the box looked just as green in the sun light.

In all honesty, it doesn't bother me that the stories of my heart are spread across the floor

as the spilled contents of the green box full of photos that I can't get rid of

So, I look at the phone and almost call you to let back in

But I won't call and you'll show up next week like you always do asking for me back

So I stop and pack them back up and slide the box back under my bed until next time

Next time my heart is spread across the floor telling my story.

### Melting Clocks

Mike Kindelan

I had been glanced upon for the 67th time in a 12 minutes and 32 second period, and by now the 6 eyes that starred at me had been beaten with tears. It felt like I hadn't had this much attention in a lifetime, for someone to actually just stare at me like there was nowhere else in this world to stare. Whew. The larger of the three morsels was, to say the least, not gonna make it. Yesterday, for a 3 minute and 49 second period, he wouldn't stop hacking blood and then, 2 minutes and 9 seconds afterwards his breathing had slowed down considerably. Suddenly, a face I was already too familiar with, entered the room only to give me a second glance and not look at me once more for the entirety of his stay. The eyes that had once focused on me as if I were the air that they breathed, had left me out to dry only to praise their new god. Why fear him more than me, is it because of his ability to kill you faster? Does the distance you travel on a winding road to nowhere matter to you so dearly that a far superior being such as myself no longer receives your attention? That's fine, you'll be back, the ones who live always return to the one they fear most.

Suddenly, a shot was fired, and the once docile cries, were replaced with agonizing screams, begging this tall darkness for forgiveness. I watch as the door slams and I am again alone with my victims. It won't be long now; soon the fear of my steady hands will replace any thoughts of their fallen comrade. It had already been 5 minutes and 58 seconds since I had been gazed upon and by now I was beginning to lose hope. Finally, after my hands had been pacing round and round, I was covered with a familiar glare. A glare that was begging me to grasp my hands around her neck and squeeze until I was no longer a part of her life. Squeeze until any recollection of my existence was ceased and, maybe some sort of peace could be had. I'm afraid it isn't that easy my dear, for unlike my apprentice, speeding up the process is not something that I am capable of. Hell, even if I could end your suffering I wouldn't, for your suffering is my fix and we all know I need my fix.

Four hours 5 minutes and 29 seconds, has passed and finally, one of them stirs. It makes me so angry that these being are so weak and unaware, that they must shut down for hours at a time. Mortals. Ah yes, open your eyes, it's about time for both of us to feed our addiction. An unexpected thump above our heads shook the entire room and a cloud of dust replaced the stale air. Now, both of them were awake and instantly their eyes were filled with fear. The beat of footsteps echoed above them and their eyes followed it, as if they could see the sound that was performed for them. The noise slowly grew, and it was apparent that seconds from now, that

door would swing open and I would again be ignored. Ah the irony, student has surpassed teacher and I am too stuck in my ways to ever allow him to teach me anything. I knew what was about to happen, this darkness, who's goal is to make me suffer, would take away the only thing I hold dear. I knew it, and they knew it. In those final seconds, we said our goodbyes, and it was as though a mosquito had bit them, how abruptly the door swung open. The two beings cried and plead, lunging towards their captor as far as their shackles would allow. Two shots simultaneously went off and the room was as it once was. Empty. The door closes leaving me alone yet again with no one to fear my powerful hands.

## **Compromise**

Lisa Holt

I am Compromise just waiting for Desperate to give up her principles or, standards so that I may indulge myself in her scandals.

Compromising costs too much.

My main goal is to make sure she doesn't know her identity.

If you must know, I asked Desperate if I can come in and she said, "sure I'm feeling low." Desperate, being proper asked "what is your offer?"

So, Desperate and I worked out our opposing claims. Her integrity, her identity and my hot, exposing flames.

Compromising value costs too much.

Her valuable reputation for my dangerous manipulation, so I can make good on my mutilation.

Compromise, which is I, make things tantalizing to her eyes. My main goal, if you must know, is to lower her guard to expose her heart.

In this state "everyone" looks great. I sneak in like a snake hoping and praying she doesn't awake. My main goal, if you must know, is to have her write in fine print her own disclaimer as Desperate has now undermined her own value in order to pursue what she knew she shouldn't do...

Compromising her value.

Compromising "you" costs too much to do.



### **Your are but powerful**

By Richard Bisnauth

You are but powerful. You are here to stay.  
I should be afraid, my muscles you have taken away.  
My eyes have too deserted me,  
And the future no longer I see.  
To touch my nose I cannot tell,  
Now all the wonderful things I cannot smell.  
The dark sky is hovering near,  
And the roaring thunder I distantly hear.  
These organs in my body you have defeated,  
Now finally I am but forfeited.  
You are but powerful. You are here to stay  
And that is why the others are walking away.  
Oh, this ground so cold and bare,  
Empty and obscure with nothing to share.  
Now again I feel so free and pure  
But for the cancer I hope they find a cure.  
You are but powerful. You are here to stay.

### **The Legend of Oonagi: Land of Justice**

Larry Redding

I didn't know how we got there. I woke up and we were butt ass naked in a dark cellar like room, and the only light available was from the typical swinging ceiling lamp hanging loosely in the sky going back and forth... Back and forth... Back... and forth. There were no doors, no windows, no ventilation, and no way we could communicate with the outside world. Only thing we had... was each other.

Examining the room more closely, we notice that we weren't alone. Not only were we butt naked in a dark ass cellar tied up to some cold metal sitting on the cold ass ground, we were naked in a dark cellar tied up to some cold ass metal sitting on the cold ground around a bunch of butt ass naked females. This must be heaven... unless it's hell.

For all of you just tuning in, I go by the name Justice... Justice McGhee. This here two-ton, strong-arm, meat bag is, my brother and muscle, Bear. He doesn't say too much. Bear and I are Oonagi. We protect the land of Mufaamu from the Renegade from destroying our region and taking over making this shithole worse than what it already is. Somehow, we got caught, stripped, and locked up. All of our equipment is missing; our weapons, our clothes, and my favorite hat. I'm pissed off, and as of right now, there's nothing I can do about it.

So, as I was saying: We're trapped in this cellar with all of these women staring at us. I asked one of the ladies what's going on and if they knew why we're naked in this cellar chained up to shit. They all immediately started to withdraw from out of the light, leaving us befuddled and brisk.

Next thing we know, the top pulls open and a ladder unsnarls down to the bottom of the cellar where a fat white man in his mid thirties slides down with pistol in hand and a mean look on his face. A look I'll never forget. Think of the ugliest person you can think of. Now picture them fat, white, dirty, and with a lazy prosthetic eye that stares deep into your soul and analyzes what kind of man you really are when no one is around; that's him. He stares at us, we stare right back at him. I then begin to smirk when Bear sees me and gives me a little nudge. He

knew where my mind was. I turn to Mr. white man again and see him staring directly at me, instead of in my vicinity. He signals one of his henchmen down towards me, and as he slowly lifts his gun to my penis area, he cocks the gun back and with trigger finger in position... BOOM!

I kicked the gun out of his hand just in time; somehow, my hands were free again so, I hop up; grab the guy, and put him in a full nelson and wrestle him to the ground so I could talk to him a little better.

"Who are you?" I yell "And what is it that you want with us?"

"Bravo, Mr. Justice. I'd expect nothing less from the Legendary Oonagi," said an ominous voice.

As I snap the big guys neck, another white man walks down the ladder. But, this man had a different look to him. Something about him just didn't feel right. He had the eyes of a dead man with a vendetta or something. I suddenly got the chills every time I even thought about looking at him. His presence just feels evil, and it makes me... excited!

"Just who are you and why are we down here naked with all of these slaves?" I said to him.

"Slaves? I like to refer to them as... Free labor, huh?" he says with a chuckle. "You, on the other hand, have a HUGE and I mean HUGE bounty on your head alone. If I bring your brother in, as well, I'll be rich for 3 lifetimes! Take 'em up boys!"

As he retreats out of harms way, not knowing what's about to go down, he sends his goons down to take me and Bear up to his mansion where I'm guessin' we were gonna wait to be traded, sold, or slaughtered. So, being the hero that I am, I grab the first thing I could find around me and I make use of it. I grab this small chicken bone from off the ground and break the end off inconspicuously. One of the guys lunged toward me; Bear tripped him, and I shoved that bone down his throat and stole his weapons. After tripping the guy, Bear crushed two goons' skulls. I grabbed a gun that was on the floor; shot the last goon up top between the eyes, and we were out. Since all of the guards were dead, I told Bear to get the ladies out of here safely while I went to handle Mr. white man. We went our separate ways and since then, I haven't seen nor heard from Bear.

I approach the big, white, intimidating mansion with a smirk on my face ready to take on whatever he has in store for me. Standing in front of the gates, I take a second to breathe what may be my last breath. I feel the hot, gritty sand between my toes as the sun beats down on me like a buzzard soaring around its prey. I reminisce on my past with my brother and family, because I don't know what my future holds. I suddenly realize: They were watching my every move. Waiting in the cut... for the fight of their lives. I fix my hat, grab all available artillery lying around, and proceed into the mouth of the wolf.

Jumping the gate was the hard part. What was waiting on the other side was going to be a piece of pumpkin pie. I land on the other side of the gate, and run through the long courtyard. BOOM! One down to my left. POW! POW! Two shots for the goon in front. Aware of my surroundings, I notice two goons with swords coming at me from both sides. I stop, take a step back and duck in the nick of time before I get chopped to bits. They hit each other and fall to the ground. I grab each sword and stab them in their chests.

I continue to run with swords in hand up to the front door. SLASH! Sword to the gut of the giant in front of the door, followed by lead to the throat.

I kick open the front door to a dark, gloomy living room.

"WHITE MAN!!" I yelled at the top of my lungs. "SHOW YOURSELF!!" silence fell over the room. Breathing lightly from the battle before.

"DON'T MAKE ME COME AND FIND YOU!"

I start my search for him in this dark, huge, old, dusty mansion. Searching every nook and cranny of the building, I come to realize that he may no longer be here. He doesn't seem like the type to hide from his opponents: Especially not me, the legendary Oonagi. I've killed many people in my years. I own this land and I won't allow any thug, crime boss, organization, or governmental personnel try to come and seize control over my people and me. I swore to keep this land safe. Until there's no more life in this body of mine, I'll keep that promise. I am Justice: the legendary Oonagi.

## Artist Bios

Charles Phillips – an offbeat poet, singer, songwriter, and actor that was raised in Edwardsburg, Michigan. While he experiments in many writing styles, he prefers to write in a form of poetry called Pocket Lice, which is just as offbeat as he is. He hopes to become well known in the writing circuit like some of his favorite writers. He is inspired by Charles Bukowski, Jim Morrison, Bootsie Collins, Tom Waits, and Matsuo Basho. He likes Handlebar Mustaches, The Transformers, and Tetris. You can find his work here: <http://chuckiebobphil.deviantart.com>

Sara Emmons – Born and raised in Plymouth Indiana. She graduated Vogue Beauty College in 2009.

Eshanya Walls – A poet /creative writer who attends Ivy Tech, South Bend, IN. She enjoys raising her three children, and writing about people, events, and situations she has encountered in life.

Larry Redding – A spiritually driven person with an intense passion for music. He is currently working on getting a record deal and gaining reputation for his musical endeavors. You can find his work here: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Music-On-Command/185582564802160>

Lisa Holt – A jewelry artist who lives in Elkhart, Indiana and attends Ivy Tech, South Bend, Indiana. She loves to write short proverbs, stories, and learn new things.

Michael Kindelan – A student at Ivy Tech South Bend who has no idea what he wants to do for his college education, though he is passionate with his interest in the written/spoken word. You can find him and his fantastical works here: <http://www.youtube.com/user/guse100>

Richard Bisnauth – A young aspiring writer and a sophomore at Ivy Tech Community College. Education has been a significant influence in his life. He is currently undertaking a double major in foreign languages study and mathematics. He will use his education to become a professor where he shall work with minds that open, and a future of a person that will unfold and principles that will grow.

Teshaun J Massey – Inspired by Anne Rice and Edger Allen Poe at a young age, she is an aspiring author in the midst of writing her first novel. Along with writing, she enjoys photography and tinkering with photo manipulation on Photoshop. Her works can be found here: <http://teshaun-jenea.deviantart.com>

Alexander Millanrd - Enjoys SciFi and Comics, believes Batman to be awesome.

Jimmy Glenn Greenway - A lively artist from Georgia whos personality shows in both his abstract paintings and his play writing.

Claire Roof - Graduated IU Bloomington Indiana 1981, Began teaching and tutoring at Ivy Tech 2007, became a member of the full-time teaching faculty in 2009.

Kim Hively - Profesor at Ivy Tech since 2000. Under Grad Degree from Bethel and Grand Degree from IUSB.

John Futa  
Bridget Cummins

