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ARTS

FALL 2016





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Steppin' Up . . .

Thank you, *Freedom Arts* staff!

The *Freedom Arts* Alliance:

Carol Gulley . Julie Hanson . Holly Hill . Katy Johnson.

Michelle Mayer . Michelle McCay . Juan Morales .

Richard Rodriguez . Tony Salinas



*Sunset in the West*

*Rachel Perry*

## Spaculty Fonsor's Note

As I've noted before, each issue of *Freedom Arts* seems to find its own synchronous identity, an unintentional but unmistakable convergence. Readers can count on us at all times for examples of the sublimely absurd, as Winston has forever been a hothouse of irony and blithe sarcasm—it is clearly in our DNA. But, it seems to me that many of the creative minds at work in this issue are consumed with searching for identities in a post-apocalyptic world, which begs the question: have we already arrived there? Are we the clockwork citizens of a broken world? When the veils lift, will we see our plight more clearly through the discerning eyes of such writers as Gabriela Auber, Caleb Esquivel, Andrew Zwaan, and Evan McGinnis? Of course, while darkness will inevitably feed our snarky postmodern mayhem, our child spirits will still always yearn for, and therefore elicit, the heartwarming tea-coziness of the Mr. Tilburts of the world, too. All are welcome between the covers of this latest issue of *Freedom Arts*—anarchists and bewhiskered four-footers alike.

## Headitor's Note

Much as it was in the beginning, the new *Freedom Arts* editorial staff is on fire. The suffragan editor and junior suffragan editor (Morgan Carolin and Matthew Alsip) have worked away diligently to arrange the collection of work you now hold in your hands. This year, Mr. Alsip has shouldered the herculean burden of designing the magazine, under Morgan Monet Carolin's watchful, if somewhat stealthy, eye. (We're still not sure what she does with that other eye.) The staff holds the highest confidence in both of them. As always, the magazine contains a collection of visual and literary works from emerging and established student artists. Read, absorb, and revel. You will not regret it.

# **We're All Monsters Now: A Novel**

Andrew Zwaan

## **Prologue**

Before the Earth became a living, breathing embodiment of hell itself, if you asked someone what their worst fear was, their answer would probably be something along the lines of clowns, spiders, snakes, maybe even natural disasters. Well, times change. Sure, people can still worry about those things, no doubt, but there are much worse things to be afraid of. Especially if you tried walking in my shoes for a day.

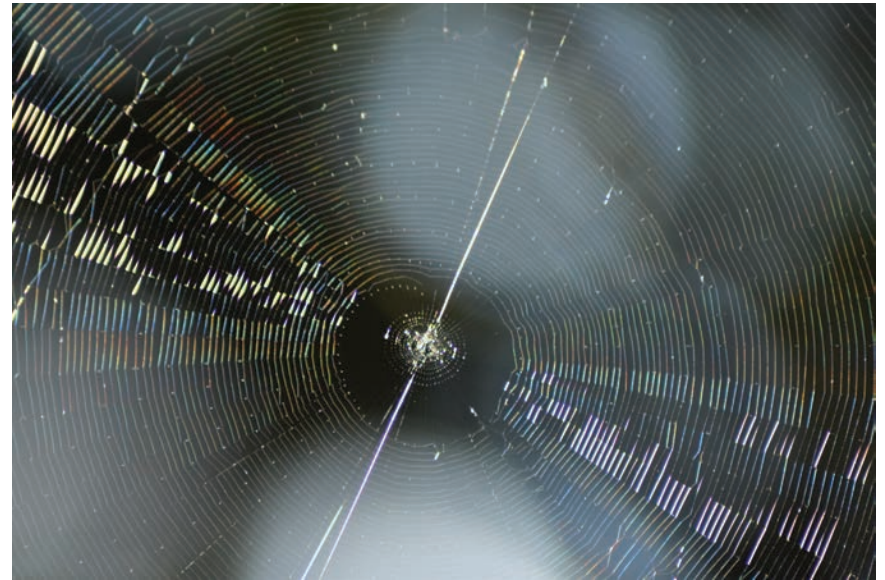
Now, the cold is everyone's worst fear. It latches onto you and never lets go. It consumes you. The cold is like your shadow. No matter how hard you try to get away from it, it will always be right behind you. It'll follow you when you're six feet under and still haunt you. You are a slave to the cold. A prisoner of its everlasting effects on your body.

Eventually, you'll lose your mind and go insane. And if hypothermia doesn't kill you first, then famine will. Most people don't survive long outside. That is, if they get a chance to survive at all.

If you find yourself in the outside all alone, you might as well already be dead. At least, that's what my Uncle Liam has told me.

He's told me stories of what life was like before our world became completely desolate.

And the worst part is, we did it to ourselves. I was only two when it happened. After a huge nuclear war, fourteen megatons of black carbon shot up into the sky along with dust and smoke. The first several explosions killed off seven-hundred million people. That was just the beginning of the end. Over the next several days and weeks, others perished either from famine or gargantuan amounts of radiation poisoning. The dust, smoke, and other particles blocked out roughly 10% of the sunlight.



*Gossamer*

*Arthur Trickett-Wille*



*Hammock Panic*

*Morgan Carolin*



Wave after wave, stroke after stroke. The two men carry on,  
Not giving in to the alluring things bellow.  
I send creatures of dark to stop these foes,  
For those who come into my deep, stay in my deep,  
And become the things that float and decorate the black.  
One stays and fights, sword flashing,  
Cutting through flesh and bone.

I sink deeper into the dark, and watch.  
The man slashing through the beasts, is wild and fierce.  
He is not breathing in the deep, nor will he ever.  
Fear is all I feel.  
Death comes to any who cross this man.  
Killer of whale-beasts, he is.  
Slayer of creatures from the deep.  
So he swims on, struggling to catch up to the other man.  
And he is gone.  
Vanished.  
Vanished from my deep.



*Basiphobia*

*Diego Morales*

My parents knew what the consequences of a war would be, so they drove halfway across the country to Michigan. They named me Emma. My parents worked for the government, and they had to give me a better chance of survival. Both of them were scientists. They were always passionate about their work. Despite loving me so much, there was a small chance that if they stayed behind and left me, they'd be safe inside a bunker. There, they would try to figure out what exactly happened to the planet. If not, the bunker would turn into another distant memory just like all the other buildings.

My uncle told me that my mom, Sara, who I got my light brown hair from, was always adventurous. She loved traveling to other countries. I don't remember either of them, but my uncle has said that my dad, Isaac, was rambling several weeks before the war started about how the world was going to end.

Liam would always just write it off as pure gibberish, until one day, he saw it on the news. The anchor spoke about the consequences of a nuclear war, and my dad and uncle talked about it over the phone. My uncle told him that he had heard of an underground settlement about four months back. Unfortunately, they didn't have the same opportunity.

My uncle raised me here in Detroit. Every so often, he and a group of others go outside to search for resources. The two of us live in the Cavern, an underground settlement designed to protect what's left of humanity. It's got everything a person could ever want: a school, housing, fresh food, running water, and most important of all, electricity.

It was supposed to be a Cold War. No lives should've been lost; everyone was going to make it out alive. But that's not how it ended up.

The way I look at it, every so often there is some sort of mass extinction level event. First, it was the dinosaurs. Then, it was the Black Death, and just about twenty five years ago, it was the Ebola virus. We beat the odds and survived every single one of

them. It just so happened that this time, we didn't win. It's a bit ironic, how everyone thought that we'd die either from the sun exploding or from a virus of some kind. The sad thing is, we did it to ourselves. We became greedy and selfish, and now even more so. Whoever thought that we, the ones who basically made the planet what it is today, would end up becoming its downfall?

Everyone was so self-centered. They didn't even stop to think about what the consequences would be. The billions that would end up in the ground. The families that would be torn apart, piece-by-piece, limb-by-limb.

My uncle told me that the first nuke that hit America shook the entire country. He described it as giant fireballs that lit up the sky like candles. It looked like a giant firebomb exploded beyond the clouds, pushing them away.

Not long after all the nukes devastated various continents around the world, the earth was shrouded in darkness, hovering over the planet like a blanket. The black was seemingly endless. And then, the bone-chilling cold followed.

The never-ending dark sky cooled down the planet's temperature. There was barely any sun to be seen.

It took about eight years until it showed its bright, vibrant face again. But even then, too much damage had already been done. The snow was here to stay. And stay it would. People predict that the winter won't go away for at least thirty years.

Government is completely nonexistent. Now people just wander this winter wasteland, longing for food and family. Other things, too, like hope. In the weeks before the nukes struck, everyone handled their last days differently. When the speculation grew of an impending doomsday, some people just ran wild, doing whatever they pleased. They murdered their enemies, looted stores, set buildings ablaze. Others spent it with their loved ones, making sure never to leave their sides. And a few people didn't want to play victim to pure destruction, so they ended themselves before the environment even had a chance.

sure of millions of ships.

The ones above, clinging to life, I let the wild beasts feed.

On occasion, I let one live.

I watch their sanity drain away,

Their minds to be fried, their skin to be burned, until they come willingly to me with open arms.

From them, I receive a smile and a kiss,

And they gladly breathe in the deep.

Ready to forever sleep.

The beasts of the deep snarl and fight over the ornaments that decorate the black.

They take swords of steel, the shields of warriors, and the chain mail of war gods.

Each one succumbed to the cold chasm of endless depths.

Each one added their noise to the steady hum of the deep.

Whispers seep with the tide and bubble to the surface.

Wailing and gurgling escape each burst of air that finds its way out of the deep.

No one but the sea birds that fly overhead, can hear the noise that comes out of the

Pockets of precious air. The last cry of souls who had much more to say.

It was a silent current that carried two men to my depths.

They swam dressed in armor with swords at the ready.

Strong arms and legs slapped and cut through the deep.

Two men shoulder-to-shoulder, grimacing with effort.

Waves pound down on them,

And I wait for them to sink.

I wait for them to breathe in the deep.

I wait for them to fade, and give in to the black that swallows

You whole, until you are nothing but a speck in a chasm of endless black.

## Whale-Beasts

*Rebecca Ruth Brown*

The darkness is where I lay.  
Forever submerged in the black, even on the brightest of days.  
The endless chasm is where I prey.  
Currents ripping and twisting, I drag souls deep down and far away.  
Never to see the rays of day, or the stars that creep out when the sun hides away.  
They will breathe in the deep and become it.  
Skin once tight and smooth, will prune and wrinkle.  
Hair will forever float and sway, like the algae that clings to any moving thing.  
Another ornament for the black to keep.

I am what they breathe in. I am what they fear.  
I am what they pray at night to never meet.  
Ships come and sail through my deep,  
As if nothing lurks bellow their feet.  
Treasures piled high in the belly, I sink their ships.  
Flashes of light quickly glide and sway to the bottom,  
Joining my hoard that lies far below.  
Faces of horror and despair clinging to anything that floats.  
Some only hold on to the medals, chalices, plates of silver, and precious gems  
That corrupted their hearts.  
These are to be toyed with the most.

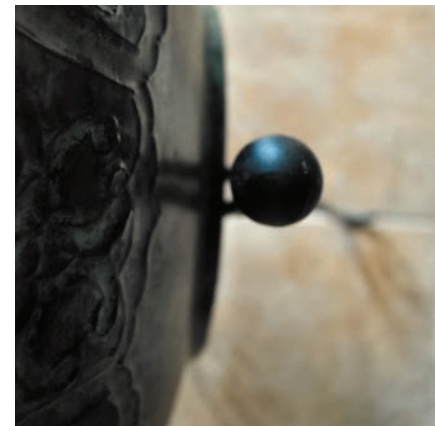
I take them down to my hoard, and let them gaze upon it.  
Wide eyes turn to greed, and they forget what they desperately need.  
They breathe in the deep. Greed consuming them, they fade.  
They are forever falling in the black, gliding slowly before the trea-

It's not like a movie, where just as it's about to end, the main character finds an unbelievable way to somehow reverse the effects instantly. No, these effects stay with you forever. The people you've lost don't come back from the dead, and it's definitely not science fiction, you don't end up finding some miracle cure that saves everyone, either.

There is nothing that can compare to what we go through, just to persevere, just to wake up the next morning. Life here is much worse than any sort of movie. Something that you wouldn't even want to wish on your worst enemy.

In my world, there is only one option: survive. No one in this day and age ever ends up happily forever after. The best life anyone can hope for is a bleak one at best. For some, it's a struggle for survival every single second. No longer are the days of stepping outside in the warm summer to watch the beams of sunlight break through the trees. The world is hell. And it has frozen over. Kids don't ride their bicycles around the block anymore or hang with friends. In the past, meeting a new person started with shaking hands. Now, it's started by whomever shoots first.

The future was supposed to follow in the footsteps of the past. But how can it when that past no longer exists?



*Inside the Bell*     *Elizabeth Shaw*



## Change through Peace

Thomas Marotta

On October 9, 2012, fifteen-year-old Malala Yousafzai, an education activist, was shot by the Taliban. The bullet entered through her left eyebrow and traveled eighteen inches through her neck, down her left shoulder, and lodged in her back. Luckily, she survived, but the bullet wound affected her brain. After countless surgeries, physical rehabilitation, and being forced to leave the only home she ever knew in Pakistan, Malala continues to fight for equality and education for everyone. Though she is world-famous, she has lived somewhat of a normal life: fighting with her brothers, going to school, and hanging out with friends. From reading her book *I Am Malala*, I have learned about her experiences, ranging from gender discrimination, to successes in school, and what it is like to survive a shooting. Malala and her father, Ziauddin Yousafzai, have inspiring stories which have led to world changes that would not have been possible without their bravery against terrorists for the right of an education for all.

Malala is a great ambassador for equality and education for everyone. This is largely due to her father, Ziauddin Yousafzai, who overcame his problems by relentlessly pursuing his dreams. Growing up in Swat, Pakistan, he was constantly teased for being too short and dark, and having a stuttering problem didn't help. When he was twelve, Ziauddin entered a public speaking competition, even though no one thought it was a good idea, especially his father. During his speech, everyone was surprised, because his passion and delivery were fantastic, and he was awarded first place. It was the first day his father was proud of him. From that day on, he knew he could overcome anything, if he kept pursuing his goals. After graduating from college, his dream was fulfilled when he opened a school for everyone in which race, social, or economic status did not matter. Unfortunately, in Swat, this was unusual and looked down upon, since Ziauddin allowed girls to

holding the ring up. "The Armada hunted it for five years before it was caught. But alas, I didn't fully burn all its ashes."

Oh yes, Deacon knew the symbol on this signet ring very well. It had been the symbol of a well-known pirate family in the Resistance, the Nightingales. After five years of hunting them after they'd fled Valencia fifteen years ago, Deacon had finally managed to find their ship before ordering his troops to attack. He thought all the pirates of the ship's crew had been killed. It wasn't until after the battle was over that one of the dying clockworks managed to quickly report to him, before shutting down, that two members had escaped with their lives: Gaspard DeVole, a runaway guinea pig from Valencia, and the five-year-old daughter of the pirate couple who had captained the ship, a human child named Aurora.

The girl's eyes widened once more, before they narrowed into the deadliest glare she could muster. "It was you!" she screamed. "Ye're the one who ordered the attack on their ship! Ye're the one responsible for their deaths!" By this point, she was in tears, "I'll destroy you, ye blackguard!"

"That'll be quite a hard promise to keep, considering your situation," Deacon mocked. He brought his gaze to the officer. "Put her away," he ordered.

"Yes sir," the officer said before marching out of the room, dragging the netted girl behind him.

Once the door had closed, Deacon sat down at his desk. He looked at the ring again. 'Finally,' he thought, 'After ten years of back-minded searching, the last singing Nightingale will be silenced.'

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troublesome in the future; the officer was right to pick this one up. Not that Deacon cared. Any Spiral being that wasn't a clockwork was imperfect within the eyes of the Armada. Especially if the being in question was a pirate. Pirates were things that the Armada absolutely despised.

"Have you anything else to report?" Deacon questioned.

"We confiscated these items from her," the marine said, lifting up a pair of daggers with his free hand. "These were the weapons she used in the fight."

Deacon nodded once more. "Anything else?"

The officer held up a golden ring. "We took this off her person," he told his higher up.

The girl looked at the ring in surprise. "When did ye? . . ." she trailed off.

Deacon strode over to the officer and gingerly took the ring from him before beginning to examine it carefully. It was a signet ring, a family heirloom. Intricately carved into the metal was a singing bird with the word 'Nightingale' inscribed under it. If Deacon's eyes could've widened at that moment, they would have. He recognized the symbol.

"Put that down," growled a feminine voice. "It ain't yers."

Deacon looked at the girl to find her holding a steady glare towards him. He looked back down at the ring he held, turning it over a few times in his snow white hand. "Tell me, young Pirate," he began, "Where did you get this ring?"

The girl was taken aback by his question. "Um . . ." her voice faltered, "I found it."

Seemingly satisfied with her answer, Deacon walked over to his desk. The girl let out a sigh of relief. Deacon then turned his head to look at her once more.

"You're a very bad liar, little Nightingale."

The child's eyes widened. "How do ye know me name?" she demanded.

"I know the symbol on this ring well," Deacon explained,

be educated. It took him several attempts to form a school, due to floods, money, and finding teachers. Also, he became a political activist, preaching for equality and education against the Taliban. Because of her father, Malala was able to go to school, unlike most girls who are not allowed to attend after the age of six. Ziauddin paved the way for Malala to go to school and inspired her to speak for women's rights.

Malala's family was known throughout Swat, because her father owned a school and was a political activist. Despite this, her family largely lived a normal life, with her two younger brothers Atal and Khushal. They were more of a modern Western family than a Pakistani family; the family had three children, as opposed to the average of seven. Everyone had an opinion, which was unique compared to other families, where the mothers and daughters were servants to the men. Malala was sensitive growing up; she would easily get upset when she fought with her brothers. Not surprisingly, she became upset when she learned that girls were not allowed to be educated. She did not have to look far to see this, with her mother and aunt unable to read or write. Malala and her father saw women in their society being taken advantage of and robbed of their futures. As a result, her parents pushed Malala to do her best in school, knowing it was a privilege, especially for girls. Malala is a hard worker, just like her father, always finishing the school year first or second in her class.

In 2007, the Taliban started taking control of Swat, using violence and fear to control its citizens. Malala and her father never let this interfere with their causes; instead, they became more vocal. Malala started writing a blog to speak about education for women under the name Gul Makai. Eventually, she revealed her real name, while participating in interviews with Pakistani and American journalists. At this point, the Taliban were fed up; they threatened Malala and her father to stop, or else they would be killed. Her parents were deeply concerned; her father suggested that she stop speaking, but Malala instantly replied, "How can we



do that? You were the one who said if we believe in something greater than our lives, then our voices will only multiply even if we are dead.” Instantly, Malala and her family’s lives had changed because they chose to fight for their rights even if meant their deaths.

It was just an average school day for Malala during her finals week. She was going home from school on the bus when the bus driver was stopped by two armed men; one got on the bus and demanded to know which girl was Malala. No one said a word, but her friends innocently looked in her direction, giving her away. The gunman shot her and quickly ran. Everyone was scared, rushing her to the hospital. While speaking at a meeting for the Association of Private Schools, her father was told, “Your school bus has been fired on.” He was the president of the association and there were over four-hundred principals in attendance, so he quickly finished his speech. He rushed to the hospital, knowing it could be Malala, and when he arrived his fear became a reality. Meanwhile, her mother was left in the dark; she had no idea what was going on and later found out on the news.

Ziauddin found Malala unconscious on a bed with bandages on her head. The local hospital did not have the proper treatment for her, so they took her and Ziauddin in a helicopter to Peshawar. When she arrived, Colonel Junaid, an army doctor, had to perform emergency surgery on her swollen brain. She would have died without the surgery, which allowed her brain to expand. The hospital staff did not know how to treat her properly, and the possibility of her getting an infection and dying were high.

Miraculously, Fiona and Javid, two physicians from Birmingham, England, were in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, teaching Pakistani army doctors how to do a liver transplant. They agreed to help and were taken by helicopter to Peshawar. Once they arrived, they saw she had an infection, but knew they could save her, but only if they had the best resources. Therefore, they took her to a

## **The Last Song of the Nightingale**

*Gabriela Auber*

Tap, Tap, Tap! The door swung open and there stood an Armada officer. Deacon looked up. His hollow gaze landed on, not the officer, but what the officer was holding; an angry human pushing and struggling against the net that entangled it.

The human looked to be a female, around fifteen years old. The young girl had fair skin that, along with her clothes, was covered in dirt and grime, hinting to Deacon that she was a street and sewer rat of Scrimshaw. Her hair consisted of long, unkempt, black spring-coil curls. Her golden eyes burned with fury as she tried to escape her bonds. Tied atop her head was a black bandana with a white feather whose color had rusted to a light yellow with time. The child wore a dirtied white, long sleeved shirt under a black crop vest. She wore a pair of gray pants under a bright yellow, uneven skirt that went down to her knee on the right side and rested an inch or two below her thigh on the left. Wrapped around her waist was a gray sash. She wore a pair of black knee-high boots with a single, golden buckle on the front of each. Tied at the top of each boot was a yellow ribbon.

Deacon couldn’t help but watch, sparks of amusement dancing within his empty black sockets, brought forth by the girl’s feeble escape attempts. He finally, though reluctantly, pulled his gaze from the child and transferred it to the officer.

“What did you get this one for?” the elite asked casually, his tone cold and emotionless.

“Interference and assault,” the clockwork marine reported. “She challenged, attacked, and destroyed an officer who was in the process of questioning former pirates in Scrimshaw. She managed to take down a second officer and severely damage a third before detainment was achieved.”

Deacon nodded. Someone this rebellious and showing signs of piracy at such a young age would undoubtedly prove

through the ups and downs!"

Mark became a hero at Westlake Elementary, and all the girls were so jealous of Ericka, because she was the only girl that the "One Armed Wonder" would talk to. Every year "The Varsity Yellows" would creep up in the standings for Best AAU Team in the country! When Mark entered middle school he was told by his parents he was going to have a baby sister. Immediately after he found out, he asked, "Is she going to have one arm, too?" Mark's parents said, "No, silly, not everyone has one arm! She's going to have one leg!"

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*Monkey*

*Rebecca Ruth Brown*

hospital in Birmingham, England. Though the army put pressure on her father to go with her to England, he refused, saying "I can't leave my wife and sons here alone."

On October 16th, Malala woke up for the first time since she was shot, lying on a hospital bed with tubes in her neck. She was grateful to be alive, thanking Allah for giving her a second life. She knew she was not in Pakistan because the nurses spoke English, and her parents were not there. Her family was stuck in Peshawar. They had been waiting for several days for the army to take them by plane to England. Malala's mom told the army she would starve herself to death if she could not see her daughter. Soon after, they were on a plane to England.

Malala finally saw her parents sixteen days after her shooting. Her mother cried as she saw that the left side of Malala's face was lopsided; she was also deaf in her left ear. The doctors solved this by putting a small electronic device called a cochlear implant inside her head, which allowed her to hear. After the swelling in her brain went down, the doctors put a titanium cranioplasty in her head, consisting of eight screws. In January of 2013, Malala was released from the hospital, and they could finally be a family. Thankfully, the Pakistani government paid for her treatment cost of around \$200,000. It was too dangerous to go back to Swat, so the government paid for two apartments in Birmingham. Ziauddin was given a job as Pakistan's education attaché at the Consulate in Birmingham, and Malala was awarded the Nobel Prize.

The Yousafzai family has enjoyed life in England, since women have rights there. Though they miss Swat, they are grateful to have their family together. Malala and her father are inspirational because they never gave up on their cause, showing that just a father and daughter can change the world. I admire that they did not play the victim; instead, they continued to work hard to fight for the right to an education for all. They put their lives on the line for their cause, which speaks to how badly they wanted change. From an American's perspective, it makes me realize how



grateful I am to live in a country where not only everyone has the right to an education, but it is the law to be in school until sixteen years of age. Malala and her father showed great courage in the face of adversity. It was a miracle that Malala survived, which means she has her “second life” to change the world.



*Backwards Prayer*

*Ashton Venzor*

## **Slice**

*Martha Day*

Wakes up dizzy and dazed,  
Surprised she's still awake.  
So much ringing and wailing in the lobes.  
A shooting, intense pain,  
Burning on skin.  
Drop,  
Drop,  
Drop,  
Tears and the devil's colour mixes.  
Would anyone like a slice?  
No?

help you shoot!”

After that recess break, Mark ran in the building with joy, because he'd made his first-ever basket. Nobody believed that he had made it, but there was Ericka, standing up for him once again and defending his case. When Mark's mom picked him up from school that day, he said, “Mom, I'm going to make the NBA!” His mom looked at him with the same look that any mom would give kid who said that, and said, “Okay, good luck!”

Mark's work ethic was unbelievable the next day; he told his mom to sign him up for 1-on-1 basketball lessons. Mark's parents actually found a trainer for basketball who had one arm as well; at that point, they knew they had found the right person to teach Mark. He was not just going to be Mark's basketball coach, but his life coach, too! Only Mark's coach recognized how gifted Mark could be. It wasn't just the talent level and speed—it was his basketball IQ and will to get better.

Day by day, Mark worked with his basketball trainer. One day, Mark's trainer said to him, “Imagine if we combined arms—we would be a normal person.” Mark worked so hard to perfect his jump shot! The summer of Mark's kindergarten year, he decided to create a nickname for himself: “The One Armed Wonder.” Mark and Ericka hung out every day in the summer and became very good friends. Ericka was still the only person Mark could really trust!

Mark signed up to play for his AAU team, “The Varsity Yellows.” The Varsity Yellows were known worldwide for their JV and Varsity teams, however nobody knew about their 8U team. They were making worldwide headlines for having Mark the “One Armed Wonder” on their team! Mark had a ton of media members at every one of his games. After he scored his very first point, the team actually called a time-out. Sportscasters immediately walked up to the bench to interview Mark. When asked, “How does it feel to score?” Mark replied, “This one wasn't for me. This was for the doctors, my parents, and Ericka for being there for me

study at the hospital, to determine the cause of his twitching.

During the overnight study, Mark had one episode that was very worrisome. The nurses and doctors rushed in and wheeled him in a gurney to ICU. Mark went immediately into a coma! The doctors didn't even tell Mr. and Mrs. Adams what happened. They were trying to keep this as quiet as possible.

#### Fifteen Days Later

The doctors walked into the room and said, "Guys, we have bad news." Without hesitation, the Adamses said, "Don't say anything! We believe in G-D, and we believe Mark will make it"! Mr. Adams said, "Give me twenty-five days! If he can't make it after that, then we will call it the end."

#### Thirty-Nine Days Later

After twenty-four days of Mark's vitals all at near-zero, one of his vitals started improving a little. Mark's dad ran around the room screaming and saying, "I was right! My baby is alive!" Mark came out of his coma immediately.

#### School

On Mark's first day of kindergarten, he walked into West-lake Elementary and saw for the first time just how different he was. At his first class, Mrs. Hill greeted him with a very odd stare, as if she had never seen a physically impaired person. Mark was bullied throughout the year by everyone in his kindergarten class, except for one girl named Ericka. Ericka was the only kid who would ever stand up for Mark. One day at recess, Ericka asked Mark if he wanted to shoot baskets with her. Mark stared at her with a very odd look and said, "I have one arm," and then started tearing up. Ericka looked at him, then at the basket, and said, "Don't worry. I'll

A lonely wanderer,  
Limps into the night,  
Holding what's left of her.  
She laughs at the memories passing by,  
"Your god is good."  
Your god is damn good at destroying!  
Maybe he would like a slice . . .  
Yes, take me!  
Says she,  
Instead of my heart who lives far and beyond my eyes could see!  
She walks into the forgotten trails,  
Leaving slices of her,  
And bails.  
Why confuse a "child of god?"  
Why take a beating heart,  
And leave her in the smog?  
Learning to slice away pain and see and feel new pain is a disaster!  
Miracles?  
Can't you come any faster?  
Before it is too late . . .  
She's trying,  
Crying,  
Slicing,  
But must stop!  
Don't tell her this god is good,  
When all he does is make humans rot!  
Wakes up dizzy and dazed—  
I'm still here?

#### **Poet's Heart**

*Martha Day*

In the eyes of a poet,



there is an intent emotion.  
The tears,  
clear like crystal,  
make one oblivious.  
make one oblivious.  
As a poet writes,  
the empty feeling  
ironically  
keeps them living.  
The feeling of nothing,  
becomes something, dripping from their lips.  
The poet will always try to conceal the murdering cries,  
bleeding inside the peeled, pulsating organ.  
The poet escapes to her healing locale,  
and just keeps writing  
from an empty,  
Yet heavy, heart.

## **Tiger**

*Martha Day*

Shed tears,  
Yet fearless.  
Cunningly silent;  
Recklessly defensive.  
Ominously omnivorous.  
Encounter the eyes of power.  
A protector;  
Battling to gain Strength.  
A hard lover.  
Prancing heroically.  
Meaningless death reeks around  
Low growl from the soul—  
A magnificent sound.

## **The Underdog**

*Joseph Klein*

On March 13, 1998 Marissa Adams and her husband John were in the hospital, as Marissa was getting ready to give birth to their first son. Three months prior to this day, Marissa and John went for a checkup with Marissa's obstetrician Dr. Gonzalez. After Dr. Gonzales did a thorough ultrasound evaluation, he asked, "Are you guys ready?" As Marissa looked at John with a great deal of excitement, John looked back in horror. You could tell John didn't have a good feeling about what was going to be said. They both hesitantly said, "Yes," and Dr. Gonzales replied, "Your son only has one arm, and he might have some mental conditions, too!" Both Marissa and John were in tears, but said, "We believe in God, and He will always be on our side." Every night before bed, Marissa and John would get down on their knees and pray for five minutes that their son would be able to make it through!

Marissa and John planned to go to Austin, Texas for the weekend, but Marissa said, "I'm not feeling too good." Ten minutes later, she passed out. It was a good thing John was a doctor, because he knew exactly what to do. He immediately called 911 and told them he thought that his wife was about to give birth!

Hours later, Marissa woke with a newborn baby on her lap! The baby was 14 inches and 4 pounds, and they named him Mark. Mark wasn't the easiest child to care for. When he turned one, he had to go to the doctor to get a prosthetic arm. While the doctor was putting it on him, Mark kept moving, but not because of his energy. As his parents described it, it was almost like a twitch. The doctor was not capable of putting the prosthetic arm on until the Adamses found out what the reason was behind their son's twitching.

A few weeks later, the Marissa and John finally got Mark in to see their pediatrician Dr. Johnson. After a major evaluation, Dr. Johnson said he wanted Mark to be evaluated for an overnight

The Shadow Queen is gloating now, raising her arms and shouting for the crowd to support her. As Warrior watches, her anger grows. With all of her anger summed up inside her, Warrior thinks her deepest and darkest thoughts—everything she wants to do and see done to the Queen to take her down. She focuses all of her energy into her thoughts. Suddenly, she pictures a huge supernatural creature with three heads, long fangs, long sharp dagger-like claws, and bladed tail. She imagines what this creature can do to the Queen. In the blink of an eye, a portal opens up right next to the queen. The creature she has imagined steps through, shocking everyone, but most of all Warrior! What is this creature, she wonders? Where did it come from and how did I make it come here?

Distracted from her anger, the creature disappears. Warrior is shaken and can't concentrate. The Queen laughs and strikes her down again. The battle is over. Warrior is still captured . . .



*Illuminated Timberland*

*Stanley Crenshaw*

Fearful ones,  
Lay low at night;  
The Tiger prowls,  
A beautiful sight.  
Black—  
Stripes blend with the night sky.  
Who is thee Tiger?  
'Tis I.

## **Broken**

*Martha Day*

A being, being faced  
With beings.  
Being forced with forces around.

Confusion,  
Allusion, and  
Delusion.

In a world not existing.  
A horrid mind;  
Reminiscing;  
Of not existing.

A quavering body,  
Overflowing with toxins;  
Taking her away from the inflictions of herself.

A scraped up human,  
Picking up random pieces on the earth;  
Covering what's left of her.

Words being thrown in her face.

People expecting her to catch with her mouth.  
Her bloody hands already filled with tools of destruction.

It's a disgrace!

Noticing not caring about the nature around.  
Tis a myth being said—homeward bound.  
No home in town.  
A corrupted world being run by clowns.

A poet writes,  
A poet thinks,  
A poet cries,  
But only inside.

Poets are lost.  
So they—or this one—  
Keep writing until something of them (her) is found.



*Dreams*

*Jean Paul Lacombe*

this to keep me captured! I challenge you, Shadow Queen, to a duel in the morning. Winner gets their full wish, even if it is my death."

The Shadow Queen snickers, but she accepts. "A duel it is. And if I win, then you will be bait for Dusty to come to me."

"I accept. All I require is my freedom to leave. And that of my friend, Skystorm," fires Warrior.

The very next morning, Warrior is abruptly awakened by a kick to her side and a loud siren-like noise. She is dragged to the center of the camp, still bound, to watch the sun rise. The Shadow Queen waltzes out of her cabin dressed for battle. She looks down upon Warrior, tied and looking pathetic, lying in the dirt. The Queen laughs and says, "Look at this pathetic tiny creature who is supposed to be the greatest of all of the warriors of her kind! Why would anyone ever fear this ridiculous wolf?" She laughs again and the whole crowd laughs with her. Warrior looks up with great hatred in her eyes and heart for someone so cruel. What is she talking about, "the greatest of all the warriors of her kind?" Warrior knows she is fierce and well-trained, but is there something she is missing?

The sun rises over the field. Skystorm is attempting to flirt her way out of her capture to the best of her ability. The real fighting is about to begin. The guards cut Warrior loose and she stands opposite the queen. The fight begins as all fights, dueling with swords, as the Queen and Warrior take turns getting the best of each other. Out of the blue, the Queen swings around and strikes Warrior in the back with the flat of her sword. She is toying with this pathetic creature who is supposed to be powerful. What a joke, the Queen thinks. She knocks Warrior to the ground and kicks her in the side. Warrior winces in pain and curls in a ball. Everything she has trained for is slipping from her grasp. She is confused, hurt, and unsure of what to do next. Sandfur, the medic, runs over to check out her medical status. She waves her off, "I'm fine! I just got the wind knocked out of me!"



bloodcurdling call, "SHADOW PAAAACK!" rings out in the distance. This chills Warrior's blood to the bone. Her family's enemies were just a short distance away and within her reach for the night. Suddenly, right under the window, there appears a sleek, purely black wolf with glowing blue eyes staring up at them.

"I'm calling you out, Warrior!" yells the stranger.

Warrior and Skystorm run down five flights of stairs as quickly as possible and out into the street to the challenge of this stranger. Unfortunately, they are all waiting for her by this time. She and Skystorm are captured by the Shadow Pack. What Warrior doesn't know is that each Shadow Pack member has large metal hooks grown into their shoulders and hips; the hooks allow them to surround someone and hold them captive very quickly without the use of any weapons. Warrior is appalled that she has been tricked so easily. She vows to herself to never be tricked that easily again.

"I'm not finished," she whispers to herself, as she contemplates a way out of the situation. She looks over at Skystorm, who is looking broken and weary. Her friend winks at her and Skystorm understands the game—look defeated and worn out to hide the surprise attack when they are ready. She agrees, winks back, and looks exhausted. The Shadow Pack assumes that the two of them are unarmed, but each of them has hidden weapons to be used at their choice. What Skystorm doesn't know is that Warrior expected to be captured. It was all part of her plan to make it into the Shadow Pack's lair. Skystorm is livid, but Warrior will just have to let her stay that way for now.

They are taken back to Shadow Pack's den right outside the city of Rhea. The Shadow Queen greets them with great laughter. She is overjoyed to have the Princess of the Predacon Empire in her clutches. This will definitely draw King Dusty into her trap. Warrior begins laughing loudly herself. The Shadow Queen whips her head around and shouts, "Just what are YOU laughing at?"

Warrior stands up and shouts, "It will take a LOT MORE than

## Mr. Tilburt's Adventure

*Rebecca Ruth Brown*

In the cloudy, crisp morning countryside of England lived a Mr. Tilburt. He was a nice little dormouse. He always had the best of manners, and he was never late for anything. He lived in an old elm tree deep in the woods. His little hole was no more than three inches wide, and it sat snugly in an old knot in the middle of the tree. It had a marvelous view of a small clearing that was overrun by wildflowers. Inside it was quite spacious for a small dormouse. There was a small kitchen, a living room, a pantry, and a bedroom. His bed was a mix of straw and grass, neatly woven together. It was on this cloudy crisp morning that his little adventure began.

Mr. Tilburt snuggled deeper in his bed, pulling the red and white checkerboard blanket over his face. The soft sound of birds singing slowly drifted its way into his house, gently waking him. He sat up and rubbed the sleep out of his eyes with his little paws. His whiskers twitched, as he smelled the air. Rain was definitely on the way. Why, I do believe it smells like rain! he thought. He scurried out of bed and poked his head through the hole. Dark, grey thunderclouds covered the sky, and the soft rumble of thunder far away made his little heart jump. He always loved a good thunderstorm. Slipping his head back through the hole, he made his way to the kitchen and sat down in his little wooden chair. He grabbed some honeysuckle from one of his cabinets and started nibbling on it. What I wouldn't do for some wild blackberries right now, he thought, as he glanced out the window. Well, why shouldn't I? I can go before the rain comes and be back with plenty of wild blackberries! Not wasting any time, he grabbed his little black boots and his little navy raincoat. He slipped on his shoes and tied them with a single black string horsehair that he'd found near the barn. His little navy raincoat was a little harder to put on, for it wouldn't button around his round belly. Oh dear, he thought, frowning his brow, I need to lay off the honeysuckle. He patted his

belly, smoothed down the reddish fur on his head, and grabbed his umbrella, which was made of two leaves sewn together. Nodding with satisfaction, he scurried out of his hole and down the tree.

On the ground, Mr. Tilburt picked up the little brown bag that Mr. Peabody had borrowed and left by his tree. He brushed some dirt off of it and swung it over his shoulder. Taking a deep breath of fresh air with a determined face, he set off in search of his wild blackberries. As he walked, he hummed a little tune to himself, enjoying the smell of the oncoming rain and the cool air. The path he followed was a little dirt road that snaked its way through the trees and went all the way to the barn on the other side of the forest. "Hello, Mr. Tilburt!" called a friendly voice. He looked up to see his friend Squirrel Branch jumping from tree to tree. "Why, hello, Squirrel Branch!" he called, waving his umbrella at him. "Nice weather for tree jumping, eh?" "Oh, indeed, indeed!" Squirrel Branch called back and waved to Mr. Tilburt, before jumping out of sight. Mr. Tilburt chuckled to himself and carried on walking down the path.

The clouds got darker, darkening the forest. "Oh, dear, I better hurry," he mumbled to himself, quickening his pace. He broke off from the path and came to a meadow where cows grazed. Their soothing moos mixed in with the thunder that rolled off the clouds. He walked cautiously through the cows, their giant hooves stomping from time to time, making Mr. Tilburt jump with fright. He didn't mind cows that much, unless they tried step on him, of course. Safely passing the herd, he headed for the forest on the other side of the meadow next to the farmhouse. All of a sudden, the sound of oats being shaken echoed across the meadow, and then the ground started to rumble. The cows' moos grew loud and excited.

"Oh, dear," Mr. Tilburt said, and turned to see the herd of cows thundering towards him. He gave a startled yelp and jumped down on all fours and sprinted as fast as he could, but

doesn't care to live by all of the rules that everyone else in the empire seems to live by. He is a bit crazy, but that is why Warrior is seeking him out. He will definitely help her come up with a plan and he will know where Jay is hiding out.

They come across Charger as he is staging an impromptu music competition in a local bar. He has bright red hair and is covered in tattoos—nothing like you would expect—and playing the guitar. His laughter fills the room. They walk up and Warrior is not one bit impressed. Warrior likes order and following expectations, but she needs Charger to make things happen.

"Hey, Charger!" Warrior yells over the music. "Can I interrupt you for a moment? I need to talk to you about something important."

"Excuse me!" "EXCUSE ME!" She shouts louder, without success. She walks around the backside of the band and unplugs the amp. Dead silence hits the room. Charger looks up and shouts, "Warrior! What brings you here? What a great surprise!"

After discussing the details of her quest and her need for more man/woman power, the team breaks up to find a place to stay for the night. Charger is off to find Jay while Skystorm and Warrior set out to find a place to rent for a short period of time. Skystorm isn't excited about staying for more than a week, but Warrior knows different. She is expecting to be around for as long as it takes to accomplish her mission. Luckily, they are able to secure a small place on a back street that is sparsely furnished. After settling down for the night, they think they can get a little rest. Skystorm sleeps on the floor, while Warrior opts to sleep in the bathtub.

At 1 o'clock, a loud BANG wakes both wolves up with a start. Warrior runs to fling open the window, but when she pushes on the edge, the entire window falls through! She catches her balance quickly, before she almost falls five stories to her death. Close call!

Outside, she sees and hears several explosions. Then a

evil. Shadow is the most powerful contract, as Warrior will one day see.

The hike through the forest takes no more than half a day's time. Both wolves are quiet through the forest as they contemplate the task ahead of them. Skystorm tries to make Warrior laugh several times, but Warrior is in no mood to be funny.

"What the hell are we doing, Warrior?" Skystorm finally asks out loud.

Warrior snaps out of her silence and answers, "Doing what my uncle Dusty never had the guts to do—taking back the land that belongs to us!"

"So, it looks like we are heading to Rhea? Is that right?" asks Skystorm.

"Yes, there are a few people I need to find. I hope they are willing to help me. I may have to bribe them, but all of them like a good fight," answers Warrior.

They continue to lope until they reach the edge of the forest and can see the gates to the rundown and almost abandoned city of Rhea. Rhea is a city where all of the packs meet up because it is centrally located. It also seems to be a place where all of the homeless and lost souls come to live. At this point, each of them takes a moment to transform into their human shapes, so they can walk in without being recognized as Predacons. Even as a human, Warrior is still a foot shorter than Skystorm. She may be small, but she can take on and beat her friend any day of the week.

The first order of business is to find Jay, one of the wolves who left the Predacon Empire to go out on his own and is now a hired warrior. He is highly sought after for his skills and his contacts for manpower. Warrior is willing to barter with Jay for his services and will repay him, but she is working on a plan for how to do it. To get to Jay, she has to go through Charger.

Charger is a carefree and crazy wolf who lives moment to moment. Everything he touches is golden. He can fight, he can sing, he is athletic and romantic. He is an amazing wolf, but he

the cows caught up, and in no time at all he was in the middle of the stampeding herd. He jumped right and left, dodging giant hooves as they came crashing down. "Ahhhhhhh!" he cried, as his tail was nearly stepped on. "If I survive this, I swear I'll go to Badger's church services every Sunday!" he cried. Just then, an opening appeared to his left; he bolted for it and didn't stop until he was safely under the cover of the woods, where he flopped down on the ground, panting. He lost his umbrella somewhere along the way, and he was covered from head to toe in mud. "Ugh!" he said, trying to brush off the mud that clung to his fur. "Just look at my boots! They're ruined!" he exclaimed, pulling them off, then the raincoat.

A boom of thunder crashed through the sky, shaking Mr. Tilburt's ears. "Oh, great," he said, as rain started to pour down. Mr. Tilburt sat in the rain—cold wet, bruised, and hungry. At least the rain is cleaning the mud off me, he thought, trying to see the bright side in all of this. Suddenly, he smelled something sweet through the rain. He followed the smell under a patch of bracken and came to a giant wild blackberry bush on the other side. The wild berries glistened in the rain, making them look irresistible. Mr. Tilburt couldn't believe his eyes. He scurried over to the bush and picked as many as he could carry and looked for a dry spot to sit, settling under a sandy bank that shielded him from the rain. He curled up on the soft sandy floor, munched on his wild blackberries, and watched the rainfall outside. Warm and full, Mr. Tilburt was lulled to sleep by the roar of the rain.

$$\left(\frac{F}{V}\right)$$



## Humanity

*Evan McGinnis*

Humanity is a keystone of our species.  
However, there is one thing we forget.  
Sometimes, the inhumane roam free.  
Throughout time, we see many examples.  
The inhumanity of one,  
Can cause many to lose their freedom.  
The next time you choose to show humanity,  
Make sure you're not letting inhumane  
Leave in disguise . . .

## I Am

*Evan McGinnis*

I am you,  
As well as the person beside you.  
I am all around you,  
Yet I am nowhere near you.  
I am here.  
I am everywhere and nowhere.  
I am everything and nothing.  
I am everyone and no-one.  
I do and don't have a face.  
Who am I?  
I am the embodiment of abstract thought.  
Now—  
I ask you,  
The true you.  
Who are you?

that she is the runt never bothers Warrior. Her spirit more than makes up for her smaller stature. Her target is the Shadow King and Queen and the land that they once stole from her pack many years ago. Dusty was deceived and tricked out of this land which was lost from his clan forever.

Warrior is lucky, though, to have a dear friend and fellow-fighter on her side—Skystorm. This wolf Predacon is fearless and crazy! She loves her friend Warrior and will fight to the death for her. Together as a team they mean BUSINESS. Eventually, their friendship is put to the test, but I get ahead of myself.

When Warrior is banished out of the empire to begin her journey, she and Skystorm step out of the castle, bags in tow, with her newly-crafted blade strapped to her side. The morning sun streams down on her face as she sighs deeply, thinking about the fact that she is leaving home and may actually never return. She looks over at Skystorm who barks, "Let's DO THIS!" and runs out ahead of her. Warrior strikes out into a full gallop to reach her friend, just as they enter the deep forest edge.

Skystorm has been Warrior's best friend for many years, but the two of them finally have a chance to set off on an adventure together. She is a "Wind Creature"—someone who can harness the strength of the wind and use it for their own power. She has only recently discovered that she has this power, and Warrior is a bit jealous that she doesn't seem to have any power of her own, except that she is a great fighter.

There are five different contracts that exist: wind, lightning, fire, light, and shadow. Having one of these contracts means that the wolf Predacon can use the element for power. Wind is what Skystorm has, although she is still developing her talents. The Lightning contract involves controlling lightning and electricity. The Fire contract can command and control fire. The Light contract controls and calls on the good in the world, using light, spirits, and spells that focus on good. The Shadow contract can then cast shadows, control shadows, conjure up evil, and control

## Warrior's Quest

*Raven DeForest*

### Prologue

In the Predacon Wolf Empire, whenever a princess or prince is about to become queen or king, she or he has to leave the kingdom and prove through a trial that they are ready to rule. This takes place when the young wolf is around 15 years old, at which time the wolf is considered a young adult. They are old enough to marry, serve in the warrior army, and drink adult beverages. The underling has three different choices of accomplishments to choose from: bringing back land to the pack, bringing back a queen or king from another land to marry (which also means bringing land back to the pack through marriage), or returning something that has been stolen from the Predacon pack.

Dusty was a king who had been up and down over the past 50 years. Sometimes he was on top and other times he was at a loss. You see, Dusty was a bit of gambler which is where Warrior got her daring persona. Since it is now her time to strike out on her own and make a name for herself, she knew exactly what she must do. To prove her worth, Warrior set out to do the one thing Dusty never seemed to be able to do . . .

So begins the story of Warrior S. Wolfkon, an up-and-coming Predacon Wolf princess who was of age to prove herself to the world. Her beginnings were humble and her secrets were many, but we will get to that much later.

### Part One

Warrior is the runt of her family, so she is smaller than all of the other wolves. Predacons are wolves that can take more than one form. They can also alter their form to become more human-like. They still retain some of their wolf-like qualities, but they are able to walk through human crowds unnoticed. Knowing

## My Phantoms

*Evan McGinnis*

Everywhere I go, they follow—whispering ideas and influencing my thoughts and actions. Well . . . I guess phantoms is the wrong term. They are beings constructed from my thoughts. Demons that feed all the corners of my mind. Some are large, like my demons of sadness and joy. However, some are small, like fear and greed. These do not compare to “him”—he who represents my corrupt thoughts. He freed only my hate, my lust for blood, my fondness of violence and power. However, he feeds on my regrets. Every time I fall or do not make or can't make a decision, the worst of my regrets is the decision I chose not to make. “He” is the demon who has no face or name. However, he is the most observant. “He” always watches even . . . right . . . now.

### Sacrifice

*Evan McGinnis*

To die for one's people is a great sacrifice.

To live for one's people—

An even greater sacrifice.



*Grass Tips*

*Ashton Venzor*

## Abraham's Plight

*Tij Jefferson*

Abraham Fletcher slowly maneuvered his truck down the winding gravel road that led to the lumberyard. It had been rough the last few years, thanks in large part to a fire that had ravaged somewhere around 80,000 acres of forest, but as Abraham looked around, he could see the beginnings of the new forest growth, young green trees sprouting in the ashes of their fallen brethren. It made him happy to see it, partly because of the fact that it meant more trees to cut and money to make, but also because he loved being in the forest. He loved the cool darkness under the leaves, and the rustling of the leaves as wind passed through them, the crisp coolness and dewdrops in the morning, and the calm, safe feeling the shade provided. He continued down the road, entering the section of the woods that had escaped the flames largely untouched. The gravel crackled and popped as he drove over it, announcing his arrival to the man pacing in front of the lumberyard, who walked over to the truck when it came to a stop. The man was Dave Whitehead, a tall, friendly man with short, fiery red hair and one of the finest beards Abraham had ever seen a man grow.

Dave greeted Abraham as he stepped down, and the two began walking through the lumberyard, a maze of stacked logs waiting to be processed.

"Well, what is it, Dave? Why did I have to come out here and miss Cathy's soccer game?" Abraham said.

"We got a problem Abe, the, uh, the deal with Harper Construction fell through, so now we got a thousand trees in the yard, and nobody to buy 'em," Dave said, biting his nails between words.

Abraham stopped walking. This deal had been in the works for almost six months.

"What do you mean, fell through?" Abraham said, running a hand through his hair.

and steady pace of reeling and pulling. Half the time the fish will more than likely get away, but that's okay. As I said before, fishing is a sport where you have to be able to repeat things over and over without fail.

On top of being a relaxing and perpetual activity, fishing is all about being calm and patient at all times. The waiting and extreme efforts to catch a fish aren't as bad as it seems, because fishermen live for that kind of stuff. The casting of the reel and pulling it back in is what makes fishing so fun and interactive. It gives you something to do other than just focusing on our daily and regular lives. It teaches you the virtue of patience, and what better place to do that than on a beach, pier, or boat. It allows you to be with nature and enjoy all the surrounding waves and sounds that are offered. Some people find comfort in fishing, because to them it can often be regarded as their safe place away from all the noise and bustle of the world.

Fishing has always been a traditional rite in society, for children all the way up to adults. It's something that gets people together to do something fun and relaxing—from the tug and pull of the line all the way to the blissful wait and quiet. Fishing is a captivating experience from start to finish, and always has people coming back to the coast for more. Not only for the sounds of the waves, or the breeze at the beach, but more importantly, just for the full experience itself. You might surprise yourself as to what you might catch. You might catch a tiny little fish or you could catch a big, fat, juicy drum.

$$\left(\frac{F}{V}\right)$$



## La Pesca

*Sergio Medellin*

Fishing . . . an activity that commonly involves a father and his son enjoying a nice and relaxing weekend. Having a few laughs here and there, but also sitting in long silences and just staring at the water going up and down. Waiting for the ever so slight “tug” on the line to get you going and haul that sucker in. It’s supposed to be fun, but it teaches you a lot in a way. It’s one of those things that you do every once in a while and enjoy. Kind of like drinking coffee, fishing is meant to be savored and enjoyed over time. No wonder all the dads in the world want to go so often. Despite what some might think, fishing is not easy and requires patience to be able to wait for long periods of time with no action.

Funny enough, fishing isn’t necessarily about the fish, but more about the distraction itself. It’s about breaking the routine of our everyday lives and being close to nature. That is the adventurous aspect of what fishing is about. If you type in the word “fishing” in google, you can see the reason why so many people find joy in this relaxing, hobby-like sport. Some may even consider fishing as a meditation-like activity. It really makes you focus on the task of just sitting quietly while waiting for something to happen. Luckily, the only strenuous part about fishing is when you actually have to bring in the catch of the day, but until then, it’s smooth sailing. And, at the end of the day, when you catch that one fish, you’ll feel refreshed and, more importantly, accomplished.

The most exciting part about fishing is when you actually catch something. One minute you’re waiting and then suddenly feel a pull on your line. That’s when you’ve got to kick into high gear and start fighting that fish with everything you’ve got. Staying engaged and pouring all of your efforts into reeling in the fish is the most crucial part. Even the smallest fish can put up a challenging fight, so it’s best to not let your guard down. Also, making sure that the rod doesn’t go down, and that you keep a strong

“Exactly what it sounds like Abe, they don’t want our logs anymore,” Dave said.

“They say why?”

“Well, I was so shocked that they hung up before I could ask ‘em why.”

“Okay, I’ll go back to town and call and ask them myself,” Abraham said, as he turned around and headed for the truck.

As Abraham walked back and got in his truck, he thought about the deal. Why would they have pulled out so suddenly, and without a reason? His drive back to town was quiet, the only sounds the birds twittering and chirping in the trees above him, and then the dull hum of tires on asphalt as he turned onto Main Street and headed for his office. After almost an hour of driving, it came into sight. His office, if you could call it that, was little more than a one-room shack. It had a tin roof that rattled like nothing else when it rained or hailed, and it was painted with the most godawful shade of mustard yellow paint Abraham had ever seen. It didn’t bother him enough to paint it a different colour yet, but every time he saw it he thought his eyes bled a little.

He pulled into the parking lot, got out of his truck and went inside. He picked up the phone dialed Harper Construction, and asked to talk to Don Harper, the CEO. After being put on hold for fifteen minutes, Abraham gave up, and put down the phone. He sat down in his chair, holding his head in his hands. What was he going to do? He needed that deal in order to make a profit for the last two quarters. Sure he could sell the logs, but he was sure he couldn’t get enough for them to put the finances back in positive figures. He would think of a way, he decided, and then he checked his watch. It was only 5:30. If he hurried, he could still get home before Mary-Ann and Cathy, so he could surprise them.

It took him just fifteen minutes to get home, and, seeing that he had gotten home first, he went into the living room and waited. After only five minutes, Mary-Ann and Cathy walked in the front door. He hugged his daughter, and then quickly pulled

Mary-Ann into the kitchen to talk with her.

"What's wrong, Abe?" she asked, seeing the worry in her husband's eyes.

"We lost the deal today," he said.

"What happened?" she said after a pause.

"I don't know, and I can't get in touch with Mr. Harper to find out."

"What are we going to do about money?" Mary-Ann said.

"I don't know yet Mary, but I'll think of something," Abe said.

They ate dinner in silence, with only Cathy looking up from her plate occasionally to say something about her soccer game. She kept asking for things, and finally got upset when her parents wouldn't talk to her. She started to throw a tantrum, and Abraham had to put her to bed. He came back out to the kitchen, grabbed a beer out of the refrigerator and sat down at the table. Mary-Ann walked over from the sink and sat down across from him.

"Tomorrow will be better," she said.

"I hope so," Abraham said, taking a sip from his beer.

Mary-Ann reached across the table and took his hand. "I know it will be," she said.

The next day, Abraham was up and out the door by 8:00. He drove straight to his office and called Mr. Harper. This time he got through.

"Hello, Mr. Harper, this is Abraham Fletcher," Abraham said.

"Yes, Mr. Fletcher. May I ask what you're calling about?" Mr. Harper said.

"It's about the contract you had with us, sir. It's come to my attention that you have terminated it," Abraham said.

"Yes, I did cancel it," Mr. Harper said, "because I found a Brazilian company that will sell me the wood for half as much."

"Well, I would be very grateful if you were to reconsider your decision, Mr. Harper. If you used our logs, you could say it was made with American materials," Abraham said.

able to get through the anticipation.

I try to find ways to distract myself from the anxiety. The things I've tried include eating, meditating, and other forms of relaxation. Eating, for one, can distract me from a lot of different things, even certain things that are important. Meditating is something I am willing to do often, whenever I feel stress about anything. I've also managed to distract myself with fidgeting, music, and comedy. Fidgeting is a good one; finding something small and soft to fool around with helps me a lot. Music is also a common remedy for a lot of different people, depending on your love for it; it can be very nice when you're stressed. Comedy is usually my number one remedy, though. If I can make humor out of something, usually I get very comfortable. I know I will find some path to kick my anxiety away—there's a light at the end of the tunnel.



*Claustrophobia*

*Diego Morales*

## Anxiety

*Ben Sacchetti*

Anxiety . . . I don't know why I have it, and ever since I was young, it has gotten worse. Usually it has not benefited me in the least; instead it has just damaged me socially. I don't think it will ever get better, but all I can do is hope. The worst thing about my anxiety is that it really cuts into my life as an entertainer. I have heard that most people have it like I do, but theirs get better; mine just either doesn't change at all, or it gets worse. I wish it weren't as bad, but it is, and it drives me crazy! There really doesn't seem to be a cure. Again, all I can do is practice fighting it, and maybe, just maybe, it will somehow or some way get better. I feel like I have fought it pretty well, actually, and I feel like my friends think the same . . .

Basically, my mother knows I have anxiety and she has tried to help it like I have, but it still exists. Sometimes it hits me hard, but sometimes it hits me softly. Usually it really starts to affect me around the afternoon and later; maybe that's because I'm much more tired. Unfortunately, there are barely any medications to resolve the problem, but if I somehow find one, that will be amazing. My mother has helped me try to overcome it, and so far she has helped me quite well, but I don't know how much longer she will be able to. The feeling I really get besides being anxious is also a bit of depression as well.

There was this event at my school called Coffee Arts, and some performers had to read their stories or poems; I had to read a short story and my anxiety definitely shot up the wall. When I walked in for the event, I felt very insecure. I hadn't done something it for a while, so I didn't really know what I was doing. The worst thing was that I had a lot of time to feel the stress before I had to perform. As I was called to the front to read my story, my stress was boiling inside my body. When I read my paper, I felt a little better, but not by much. I felt slightly better because I was

"That's an interesting point, Mr. Fletcher, but I would need you to do one more thing. I want you to match their price."

"I can certainly do that, sir, and thank you for being willing to reconsider," Abraham said.

Abraham was seething on the inside as he set down the receiver. He popped a hinge loose when he slammed the door as he left. Match their price? If what Mr. Harper had said was true, and the Brazilians really were selling for half as much, that would mean that, even with all one thousand logs, he would still just barely break even. He needed a beer or five to calm himself down before he went super nova and trashed his office. As he drove to the pub, he wondered how he would tell Mary-Ann about it. He decided that he would just tell her about the fact that he had sold the logs, and leave out the part about halving the price.

He got to the pub, ordered his first beer of what he thought might become many, and sat down to watch the TV. A baseball game was on, the Cubs and the Mets, but Abraham could see that the Mets had already won it, so he asked the barman to change it over to the news. He watched as news of terrorist attacks, sports deals, and celebrity marriages flashed by. Finally, something caught his eye. They were establishing a new national forest, and in Maine, no less. It was close enough to home that he was already planning his visit. He kept watching to see where it was. And then they said it. It was in the town he lived in—Rangeley—and it included the section of woods that he had logged his whole life. All he could do was sit there and process what he'd just seen. It took almost five minutes for it to sink in that his entire career, along with his income, had just disappeared. After he saw that, he simply stood up and walked out the door. He ignored everything, from the bartender yelling at him to come back and pay up, to the fact that he had just been screwed over by Don Harper.

As he drove home, he now had to think about what he was going to, not from a lumberjack's standpoint, but from a married father's standpoint. He no longer had a job, and now the only



money coming in was from Mary-Ann's part-time job as a waitress at the diner. How would they pay for Cathy's school, or more importantly, her food and clothes? They would probably have to sell the house, and maybe even his truck, to cover the taxes for the next few months even if he found another job. And then there was the biggest problem: Abraham didn't have any other qualifications. All he had ever done was log. He had no experience with any other job, even something as simple as working at a fast food joint. That was when he noticed the flashing lights in his mirror. He pulled over, and the officer, Jimmy Reese, a lifelong friend of Abraham's, walked up to his window.

"Why'd ya pull me over, Jimmy?" Abraham asked.

"Well, Abe, Patrick down at the bar says that you just walked out without paying for your drinks," Jimmy said.

"Yea, I guess I did, but you got to listen to me, Jimmy. They just made my woods a national forest, so you tell him that I'll pay tomorrow, but tonight I need to go home and think."

"No can do. Patrick wants his money tonight, and if you don't pay him, then I'll just have to haul you back to the station with me," said Jimmy.

"Well, then you'll just have to cuff me now, because I don't plan on going anywhere but home tonight," Abe said, holding his arms out of his window.

"If you say so."

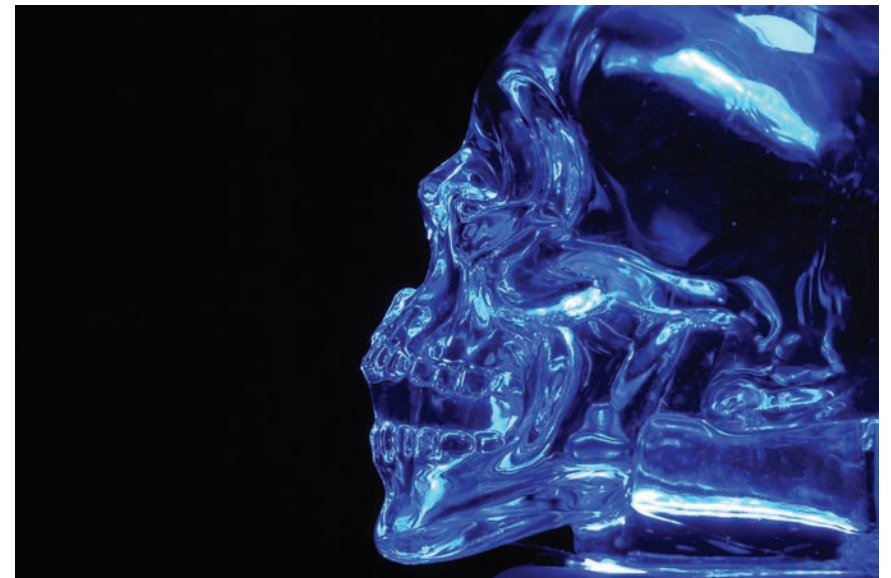
And sure enough, Jimmy cuffed him right there, threw him in the back of his car, and started back toward downtown, leaving Abraham to think about what his life had become.

$$\left(\frac{F}{V}\right)$$

don't have time for the others anymore. Even if Pokémon liked being captured, as you trainers claim, that would mean that you put something that you love (that loves you back) onto a shelf never to be freed again.

The fact is that you kidnapped all these Pokémon, ripping them away from their homes, friends, and families. After you kidnap these poor stupid creatures, you force them to fight for you—and against other Pokémon, no less. PETAP is asking all trainers to turn in their Pokémon to one of our rehabilitation centers; we will treat them and take them back to their native regions. Also, if you pledge \$50 a month, we will put you on a waiting list and then on a roster, and if we deem you acceptable, we might put your name on another list to adopt a Pokémon virtually. We, as an organization, will continue to help Pokémon in a peaceful manner, until three years pass. After the third year, PETAP will be taking all Pokémon by force and imprisoning all the people who have kept them captive.

The time starts now; so, make your decision wisely.



## The Truth about Pokémon

*Caleb Esquivel*

Pokémon are beloved by all, but do you know the truth behind what they are faced with every day of their pathetic lives? Pokémon are being captured every day by horrible people known as Pokémon trainers. We are an organization called PETAP, or People for the Ethical Treatment of All Pokémon. We at PETAP exist for the sole reason to free and protect Pokémon.

All people who do anything at all to oppress Pokémon in their vicinity can and will be overwhelmed with strongly-worded letters, because we as an organization are very easily offended and will let everyone know that. How dare you trainers force these poor creatures in those tiny Poké balls? They are cramped and hate their lives.

The argument you trainers give is that they want to be with you, but they fight their hardest not to go into the Poké ball after you defeat them with Pokémon you've already enslaved. Pokémon battles are like dog fights. The Pokémon trainers just send these Pokémon into a ring to nearly kill each other, and then do nothing to help them, but scream orders. The battles are not even the worst part: the fact that trainers put all these Pokémon through these horrible bouts for their own gain far worse. Trainers make the Pokémon do all the hard work and then take credit. It's not even for money or anything; it's just for a title and a badge.

We at PETAP are also against the fact that you trainers feed your enslaved Pokémon nothing but berries, and you give them no nutritional foods; if you do, you feed them other Pokémon. How can you trainers say you care for Pokémon when you hunt them, trap them, and make them fight each other? How can you say you care when you eat them as much as you make them fight? You trainers just use these creatures as tools to further yourselves in your own careers; then you eventually stop letting them out of their prisons, because you have caught more Pokémon, so you

## A Good Rule of Thumb

*Tij Jefferson*

The human hand is one of the most impressive things in nature. With its four fingers and opposable thumb, it has allowed us to create our civilization. Or is it five fingers, one of which happens to be called a thumb? That, ladies and gentlemen, is the most important debate currently facing our nation. It could forever change the way we think about our hands. As it stands, humanity is divided into two camps, the Fingies, who believe in the five finger theory, and the Thumbies, who argue that the thumb is a unique digit, independent from the fingers.

The Fingies are staunch believers that the thumb is in fact a fifth finger. They argue that being slightly different does not prevent it from being a finger. Similarly, they believe that the thumb serves the same basic purpose as a finger, since it is one. It is simply the fifth part of the grasping mechanism. During an average day, an activity that would damage any of the other fingers could just as easily damage the thumb. The ultimate form of hand wear, the glove, is always thought of as having five fingers. The band, Five Finger Death Punch, for example, has a clearly stated understanding of the unity of the digits.

The Thumbies, on the other hand, think that the thumb is its own unique type of digit. They feel that the differences between the thumb and the fingers are drastic enough that they can't be considered the same thing. Being in the same general area is not enough to be considered similar. If the thumb were truly a fifth finger, you would be unable to hold most man-made objects, since they're designed for four fingered folk. They also argue that being injured doing the same thing means nothing. For example, stepping on a base in baseball can injure your toes, ankle, knee, or hip, none of which are the same thing. The mitten, the quintessential hand wear, clearly distinguishes the roles of the finger and thumb. The anatomically challenged band, Five

Finger Death Punch, would have to face the music and change their name.

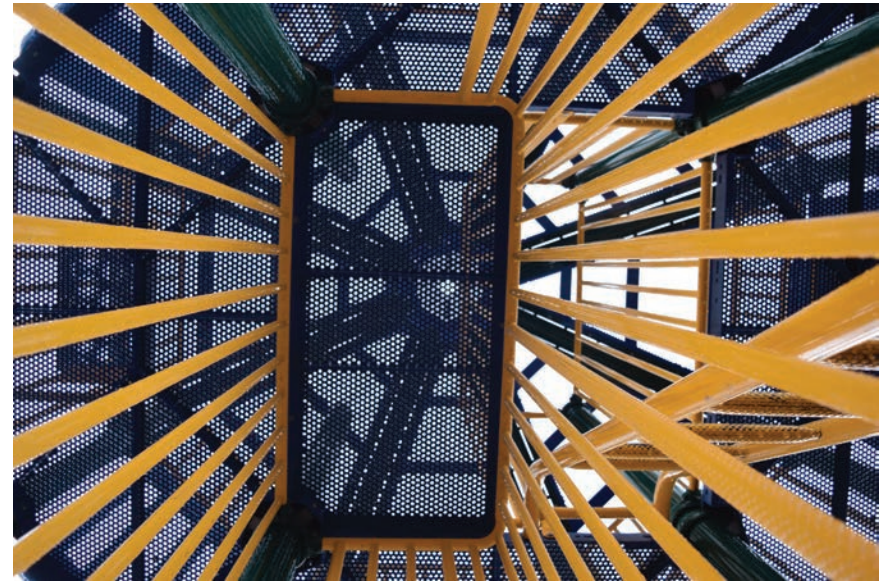
I identify as a fusionist of Fingie-Thumbie thought. I feel that the thumb is separate from the fingers. However, I don't think that it is a unique digit, but a second type of finger, one that works in union with the other fingers. The thumb does do the same thing as a finger, but it does it in a much different manner. In terms of injuring something, you're more likely to injure a thumb and a finger doing the same thing than you are a toe and a hip. The thumb's difference from the other fingers is necessary, because it is simply not possible to function in society without using a thumb. I do feel that mittens are the most comfortable kind of hand wear on the market, but I also think that a band called Four Fingers and a Thumb Death Punch sounds kind of silly.

In summary, I feel that thumbs are simply a sub-set of fingers. But this is a very polarizing topic, and one where there is no clear resolution in sight. The Fingies will likely never submit to a world where they have four fingers and a thumb. The Thumbies, however, would rather die than have their thumbs lumped in with the fingers. However, since no side has a clear advantage, this argument will likely never end, just like the chicken vs. egg argument.



*Backlight*

*Diego Morales*



*Jaime*

*Sergio Medillion*



*The Break*

*Sarah Strybos*



## Lenses A Gallery



*Array*

*Arthur Tricket-Wile*



*Lunch 11:35*  
39

*Morgan Carolin*

## The Forsaken Ones

*Caleb Esquivel*

Millions of years ago, a war lasted thousands of years, with no end in sight. The war was fought by none other than Heaven and Hell. The mortal humans were dragged into the conflict and forced to choose sides and fight for who they believed were right. After so many soldiers were lost, with destruction everywhere, both Heaven and Hell decided on peace. In this peace, demons could go to Heaven when they pleased, and angels to Hell. The peace lasted for seven hundred years, during which time the angels and demons began to interbreed. They gave birth to hybrids of the two; these infants had extreme power, even as newborns. The leaders of Heaven and Hell felt threatened, because they could be easily overpowered by the hybrids. Heaven and Hell decided to ban all interbreeding and kill any hybrids that were born. Parents of the forsaken beings were devastated, as they were separated, never to see each other again, while also having to watch their children die. Some parents decided to toss their children onto Earth as a safe haven, because the angels and demons were forbidden to go to Earth. The children who lived were found by humans and raised by them, not knowing who they really are. They also had no clue about what was to come and how it would change their lives.

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Lucian had just finished bringing in the wheat harvest with his father; on the way back to their house, his father was attacked by a cave lion and was mortally injured. Lucian was able to get the cave lion off of his father and brought him back to their house to try and patch him up. After twenty minutes, though, Lucian's father bled out. Lucian was saddened and horrified. In the moment of his father's passing, he saw something, an angel, the Angel of



Death himself. Lucian saw the angel take his father's soul away up into the clouds. He asked his mother if she had seen what he saw, but she said he was just too distraught from the situation.

No matter: Lucian knew that what he had seen was real, and he wanted to know why he saw it. He went to church the next day to ask the priest about it and to see if he could get some answers. The priest blessed him and prayed over him all night and when Lucian woke up he claimed to have had a vision. The priest believed him and wanted to know all about the vision, but before Lucian could say anything about his vision, the priest died of a heart attack. Lucian waited by the body and once again saw the Angel of Death come down. He saw the angel bend down and go into the act of picking up the body, but instead he only picked up the priest's soul. The priest's soul looked just like the man, though ghost-like and unconscious. The Angel of Death started to walk away, but Lucian needed to know what was happening, so he called out. The angel heard him, turned around and whispered something, just to quickly disappear.

Lucian returned home and tried to sleep, but he couldn't, because he wanted to know what the angel said. He closed his eyes and heard the angel whisper clearly: "I thought I had lost you, my son, but no—this is forbidden." Lucian woke in tears and ran to his mother to see if she was alright. She was fast asleep. Lucian knew he felt some sort of a connection to the Angel of Death; he didn't know why, but he thought he might know. Lucian looked through dozens of books and finally found the answer—the story of the Forsaken Ones. The book he found said that some of the Forsaken might still be alive and have a connection to Heaven and Hell.

Lucian was starting to understand. He wondered if the Angel of Death was his father, and if so, he then wondered who his mother might be. He needed to know, and he was ready to do something drastic to find out. He went into his mother's room and slit her throat in her sleep. He waited next to her body, praying



*Sunset in the Caloveras*

*Rachel Perry*



*Changing Map*

*Theo Crenshaw*

## 2D Art Gallery



*Crossing the Line*

*Analise Beres*



*Space and Time*

*Will Endersby*

for her soul and asking for forgiveness. As Lucian was sobbing, he saw the angel's approach.

When the Angel of Death appeared, he was revolted and asked Lucian, "What have you done?"

Lucian sobbed out, "I am so sorry, Father, can you ever forgive me?"

The angel did not respond. Lucian told him, "I needed to know if you really are my father."

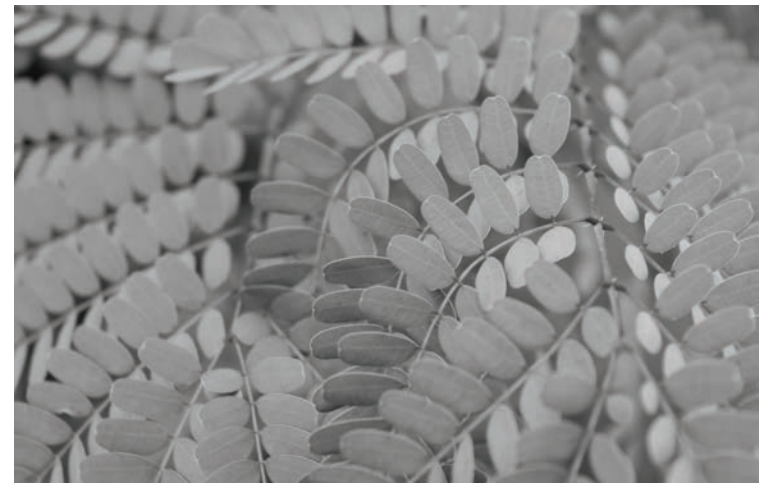
The angel pulled back his hood and said, "Yes, you are my son, and I am your true father."

Lucian looked upon the angel's face and saw his own; he knew this was the truth.

Lucian asked him, "Who is my true mother and where is she?"

The angel told Lucian he could not speak to him any longer, because it was forbidden by God and Satan themselves. Lucian screamed out, "No! Don't leave me! I need to know what's happening!"

Lucian's true father, the Angel of Death, took his mother and disappeared.



*Metallic Waves*

*Elizabeth Shaw*



## Cars Faster Than Planes?

Katy Shaw

What vehicle is the fastest? This question has plagued the minds of distracted students since the creation of cars, or schools, whichever came first. When traveling, most people immediately think planes, but they can be so boring. Surely, a game of Eye-Spy would make the time pass quicker in a car than on a plane. Furthermore, you could not very well play Eye-Spy on a plane; all there is to see is clouds. Along with this, travel times and delays need to be considered. This, along with a simple change in perspective, proves the point that cars are indeed superior. Cars, in many respects, are faster than planes.

First, consider this scenario. You need to get from Houston to El Paso, and you want to do this as quickly as possible. So, you think you should fly there. However, the only flight headed to El Paso stops in Washington and Quebec. In this instance, driving would be much quicker than flying. In another situation, you are flying from Cape Canaveral, Florida to Tampa, Florida. However, there are nasty storms and tornado warnings in the area, and you are delayed several hours. While you were sitting there, waiting for nature to take its course, your friend has already begun his journey in a reliable car. He arrives there in significantly less time than the delayed flyer. These examples, along with a change in perspective, help illustrate the fact that cars are quicker than planes.

When you are walking along the sidewalk, and you see your surroundings, you may have noticed a few key details. While planes inch along across the sky, cars can be seen zipping past the observer at break-neck speed. From your position in relation to the moon and the sun, the cars are perceived to be moving faster. Therefore, they are, in fact, faster. For example, if someone poked you at the speed you saw a plane going, it wouldn't hurt much. While if you were poked at the speed you are going on a

Except for me

(Of course)

$$\left(\frac{F}{V}\right)$$



*Night Awaits Its Prey*

*Dakota Carrisalez*

From double-lung cancer  
(Heavy smoker)

Meth-mouth's hubby  
(Cap, polo, and soul-patch)  
Dresses so poorly  
It's sinful in itself

My dad's friend  
Ogles my dad's ex-mistress  
With whom he remembers flirting  
During a separation  
From his wife

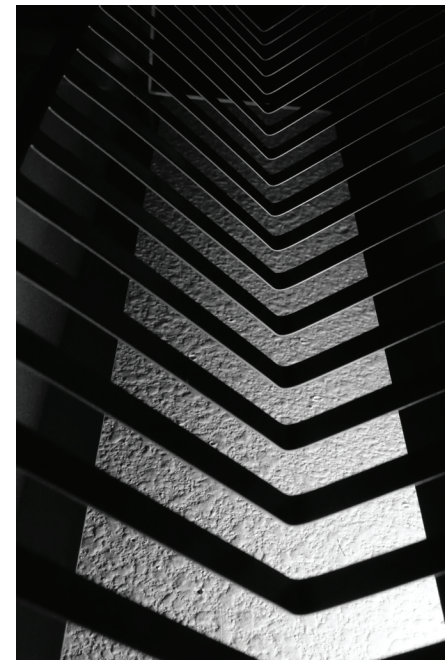
My father and his sister  
Split time between doting on the Linchpin  
And spit roasting  
Grandpa  
Her son  
Who walked out on them  
(Aged two and three)  
(Respectively)

And there sit I  
Behind my camera and my lens  
Feasting on the blood of lambs  
I needn't cut myself

Granny Linchpin spies me  
She winks  
And pierces me  
With her needle of feigned dementia  
Though the needlepoint is just too small  
For other eyes to see

highway, you might be impaled by the offending finger. Some may blanch at the idea and cry, "But wait, the fastest plane has a speed of 7,200 kilometers per hour, but the fastest car is clocked at 464 kilometers per hour. This is ridiculous! Go and be stupid somewhere else." Well, to the naysayers, I say numbers are stupid. The only perspective that matters is your own. Clocking devices are unreliable.

In summary, cars are superior in speed, and entertainment, to the lesser airplane. The fact that you can distract yourself while in the car passes the time lets us get there seemingly quicker, while also beating the overly long flights. The science is in the eye of the beholder, and obviously, cars move quicker than planes do in our perspective. While delays can trap you in an airport, cars allow you to continue on your way. Just try to stay out of traffic.



*Escalators*

*Diego Morales*



## Teeth

*Arthur Trickett-Wile*

Twenty-some-odd people in total  
Most of them strangers to each other  
None of their hands are clean

Cumulatively  
They have a thousand years' experience  
And a hundred thousand years of sin  
None in a single time or space  
Until this very moment

At the head there sits the Linchpin  
Ripe  
A century old  
Many times a senior  
To the red wine she sips

Next to her  
Her sister sits  
Her mind can split hairs and cut glass  
She sits next to her sibling  
To cut her lamb  
Into little pieces

The sister's daughter sits  
Spouting off  
At my mother about her cousin  
Grandpa  
(Who she said was adopted)  
(But wasn't)  
Rumored to have misused  
His little sister

(Who was adopted)  
(Though the sister's daughter thought she wasn't)

My mother sits with the adopted aunts  
One an enabler  
The other a gossip  
The gossip thinks she knows just about  
Everything at the table

Her brother-in-law  
(Who served as her father)  
Had married himself a black widow  
She had accrued the estates  
Of three passed husbands  
And married the brother-in-law  
After the stroke he had

Mother sits on  
Dissecting the situation  
Into little black and white boxes  
To carry around in her head

She gossips about my father  
Who is there with his ex-mistress  
Complaining about his father

Who invited his ex-mistress  
And with her  
Her dopey-dim husband

She with her meth-mouth  
Smiles gappily at Grandpa  
Brother to the sister  
Who died at thirty-five