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Folklorico

Sergio Medellin



Elena

Arthur Trickett-Wile

Life of an Orphan

Thomas Marotta

Since the beginning of time, humans have craved love, compassion, and a stable home. Luckily, most children learn this from interacting with their parents or relatives. On the other hand, children who do not have parents or relatives (orphans) have to learn these on their own. This was common for orphans from 1854-1929, where abandoned children were placed on trains and auctioned off in the Midwestern part of the United States. These children were auctioned off to families who would care for them, but often they were sent to families who used them as servants. Instead of having a childhood, these orphans had to take on the realities of being an adult. This was portrayed in the book *Orphan Train*, written by Christina Baker-Kline. Though the story is fiction, Kline has researched and interviewed many of these orphans. Kline describes a story of two orphans named Vivian and Molly, who each take a difficult road to find love, compassion, and a stable home. Despite Vivian being ninety-one and Molly being seventeen, they come from similar backgrounds, which is how Molly finds someone who understands her and gives Vivian some much needed closure. Even though Molly and Vivian may be decades apart, they bring the story together because they show the reader the difficulties of being an orphan.

Molly's life has been difficult, due to her parents' unstable home and getting bounced around foster homes. She finds needed support from Vivian and her boyfriend named Jack. When Molly is five, she is placed in a foster home because her father dies in a car accident and her mother is addicted to drugs. While in foster care, she is treated horribly, so she constantly runs away, causing her to move frequently. By high school, moving from home to home has taken a toll on her. She loses interest in people. She feels she just cannot relate to her peers, considering her background as a foster child, and even before that, when she was

a poor Penobscot Indian with little to her name. Molly's foster parents, Ralph and Dina, are the complete opposite of her. Molly is viewed as a careless left-minded Goth, whereas her foster parents are strict conservatives. Surprisingly, she gets along with Ralph, but she and Dina constantly fight. It is sad that Dina only keeps Molly around because she receives financial benefits for taking care of her. At her current high school, she keeps up her appearance as a Goth, so she can avoid socializing. However, she becomes lab partners with Jack and eventually they start dating. Jack is also poor, and his mother Terry works as a maid in Vivian's mansion. One day, Molly is sitting in a public library and sees her favorite book. Molly wants it badly because she wants something of her very own, so she tries stealing the book. The sensor in front of the library goes off and she is caught. She has a choice to do fifty hours of community service or go to juvie for a few months. Jack has his mother arrange for Molly to clean out Vivian's attic for service hours. Molly reluctantly goes, but soon learns that Vivian is not the person she appears to be.

Once Molly starts cleaning out the attic with Vivian, she learns about Vivian's troubling past. At first, Molly is reluctant to clean Vivian's attic because she assumes that Vivian is a rich housewife who will judge her every move. However, Vivian's real name is Niamh, and she grew up in a poor Irish family who moved to the New York during the Great Depression. During the depression, her family struggles, and she has to look after several of her brothers and sisters. Meanwhile, her father is depressed, since cannot find a job, which causes her mother to have a breakdown due to stress. Tragically, her family dies in a fire accident, leaving her alone in the New York. Afterwards, she is taken by the Children's Aid Society and placed on a train that will travel around the Northeastern part of the United States. After two stops, Niamh (Vivian) is adopted by the Byrnes. The Byrnes are a young couple who own a dress business, which is why they adopt Niamh, due to her excellent ability to sew. Before arriving at their house, the

mouth to say something, but Gus held up his hand. "And I'll leave it at that." Willy frowned, and tossed Gus the water canteen. Gus caught it and took a swig thirstily. "One day, you'll get drunk and tell me that story." Gus looked at Willy and tossed the canteen back. "How can I get drunk, if you keep on drinking all the liquor?" Willy paused to think. "Well, we will just have to bring more liquor then." Gus took off his hat and wiped the sweat from his brow. "Sure thing, Willy. Sure thing." They rode in silence, as they made their way toward the base of the mountains toward Eagle Point.

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



Blue Francois

Morgan Carolin

dle. He turned to look at Willy, who was struggling to get up in the saddle. He cracked a smile. "If only Miss Cara could see you know. What would she think?" he smirked. Willy grumbled as he pulled himself up and over the saddle. He straightened his shirt and pushed back his hair. "She would say, Why, now that's a man." Gus snorted. "The only man I see around here is the goat." He nodded toward the three-legged goat standing on its back legs trying to nibble on Willy's pants leg. "He's got more balls than you do." He winked at Willy and spurred his horse off toward the mountains that loomed in front of them, leaving Willy in a pile of dust.

It was past mid-day before they reached the mountains. They passed herds of bison on the prairies, and they stopped when they heard shouting. Willy reached for his rifle at his side, but Gus stuck out a hand to stop him. Gus squinted his eyes at the two Indians on the other side of the prairie. Their painted faces were wiry and grim, and their axes and bows were draped over their horses, right by their legs for an easy reach. The men stood there for a long time, just watching each other. Neither one moving. "We best be going," Gus murmured. He slowly brought his hand to his hat, dipped the front part with a nod, and turned his horse back toward the mountains. Willy trotted to keep up. "Do you think our guns scared them off?" he said, glancing back over his shoulder. "Nah, they're not scared of us. There are probably about six more down over there behind that hill." Willy's eyes widened. "They'll surely ambush us with our backs turned!" "No. They'll let us go." "And why would they do that? I don't know about you, but my damn blond curls aren't something they see every day—" Gus swung his hand and knocked off Willy's hat. "Watch your mouth, huh?" Willy glared his hat on the ground. He clutched the horn and leaned all the way to the side and picked up the hat. He glanced at Gus while brushing it off. "I'm just saying, you don't know that they won't attack us." Gus leaned back in his saddle. "That Indian back there," he gestured over his shoulder, "I did something for him a while ago. He owes me." Willy opened his

Byrnes decided to change Niamh's name to Dorothy. She has to learn how to sew different dresses efficiently and grow up fast, since the workers were all adults. She spends all of her time sewing instead of going to school, even though the Byrnes promised the Children's Aid Society she that would attend school. Several months later, the Depression starts to affect the Byrnes' business, and workers are let go. A year later, the Byrnes have no choice but to let Dorothy go, too; she is taken by the Children's Aid Society to another family. Dorothy did not like the Byrnes; they were strict and treated her like an adult instead of a child, but her next destination is far worse.

Dorothy is moved to the Grotes' family farm, where she is overworked and neglected. Once Dorothy arrives at the Grotes' house, in Hemingford, Minnesota, she notices how beat up it is and the little boy running in the snow barefoot. Dorothy's living conditions are brutal; she has to sleep on a mattress with two younger children, look after them, and take care of an infant. She spends her time taking care of the kids and going to school. The Grotes are always fighting, causing Mrs. Grote to become depressed. After a while, the Grotes never speak to each other and Mr. Grote is never home; he is always hunting to bring food to the family. As Dorothy and Mr. Grote grow closer, Dorothy realizes he wants nothing to do with his kids, and he tells her things ten year olds should not hear. One night, Mr. Grote wakes Dorothy, and he asks her to sit with him on the couch. Dorothy is cold and tired and wants to go back to bed, but Mr. Grote does not let her. He makes her sleep on the couch with him, and attempts to sexually assault her. Dorothy's screams wake Mrs. Grote. In a fit of anger, she blames Dorothy and throws her out of the house. It is freezing outside, so Dorothy knows she has to find shelter. Luckily, she knows about a shed outside of her school, but it is four miles away. She barely makes it there before passing out. The next morning, the school maintenance man finds her and brings Dorothy to Miss Larsen, her schoolteacher. After Dorothy tells Miss Larsen about

the situation, she calls Children's Aid Society. Mr. Sorenson says there is no one to adopt Dorothy. Thankfully, Miss Larsen steps in and says she will take Dorothy to live with her. Miss Larsen lives with several other women in a boarding house. Miss Larsen asks the landlady, Mrs. Murphy, if Dorothy can stay until she finds a family. Mrs. Murphy takes her in and cares for her, even giving her clothes. Dorothy instantly fits in and loves living there. Sadly, she knows this will not last for long. Mrs. Murphy finds a couple who want to meet her, the Nielsens. The meeting goes well, the Nielsen's adopt her, and think she will be great to run their general store.

Dorothy grows up with the Nielsens, finally has a stable life, and makes the most of her opportunities. She goes to school and helps run the store. Their store sells a variety of things, making good money, giving Dorothy a stable home. In school, she knows her peers will not understand her past, so she does her best to fit in. Over time, her classmates assume the Nielsens are her parents, which allows her to blend in with the rest of the community. The Nielsens enjoy her, and ask her if she will take the name of Vivian, the name of their daughter who died at the age of six. Dorothy agrees, and from then on she is known as Vivian. After high school graduation, she attends St. Olaf's college, majoring in business and finance. While in college, she starts to run the store inventory, while modernizing the store, and thus expanding the business.

Vivian is a hard worker, so Mrs. Nielsen says she should enjoy time with her friends. On a Saturday afternoon, Vivian goes with two of her friends to a play out of town. As they are about to enter a restaurant, a man comes up to Vivian and asks her if they had known each other. She does not recognize him, so he asks her if she had been on a train to New York ten years ago. She immediately recognizes him as Dutchy, a boy she rode the train with. They are both ecstatic to see each other. Vivian tells him that she is no longer Niamh, and he tells her that his name is Luke. Luke has a troubling past as well. He is forced into hard labor by an old

to the porch. "I fed that sorry excuse of a goat. You know he ate my favorite shirt last night." Gus raised a brow. "Now, I wanna hear nuth'n nasty about that goat. He's been shot, mauled by a wolf, and disappeared for quite some time. And somehow he made it back here he alive. I respect the damn thing." They both turned their heads to watch the three-legged goat trot its way across the meadow, chewing on the remains of Willy's shirt. Willy scratched his chin. "That thing is gunna out live us all." The goat bayed and then disappeared in the meadow. "There is some coffee and bacon on the table inside." Gus gestured with his head. Willy nodded and slipped inside the house. "Maybe one day you'll wake up when it's warm," Gus called over his shoulder. He chuckled and shook his head.

In a bit Willy was out with a tin cup of coffee and a few strips of bacon in his mouth. "We gunna get the horses and go up to the mountains?" he grumbled through the bacon. "Yeah, I reckon we lost about fifteen cows up there." Willy nodded. "Around Eagle Point is where they're most likely at." Gus sighed and pushed up from the rocking chair. "Yeah, we better get a move on. I want no cattle thieves stealing the cattle we already stole ourselves." Willy chugged the coffee and wiped his mouth with the sleeve of his shirt. "Yeah, I'm in no mood to go after cattle thieves." Gus nodded. "Go get the horses ready." "Sure thing, Cap." Gus watched Willy make his way to the barn, picking up his pace when he saw the goat running toward him eyeing his pants leg. Gus grabbed his pistol and his stained hat off a peg on the wall, and pulled the hat tight on his head. He looked out over the peaceful meadow that was just waking up. He nodded his head, plucked a piece of grass from the ground, popped it in his mouth, and made his way over to the barn.

His paint was all saddled up by the time the cool dawn air was turning into a warm breeze. He ran a grimy hand across the horse's neck, feeling the dirt against his hand and the wiry main. He gave his paint a pat and swung up into the old leather sad-

Gus and Willy

Becca Brown

The symphony of crickets chirping slowly grows faint as dawn approaches. Soon western meadowlarks will begin their morning call. One will start, its sweet song will sing through the Montana mountains and meadows, welcoming the sun back. The cool breeze kisses the tall grass that slowly dances with the new dawn air. And then there is silence: nothing but the whistling from the wind can be heard. The wind takes a deep breath—a breath full of the new day. Nothing has been set down yet: all is sweet, clean, and cool. That's when the meadowlarks start their call. They are the exhale after that deep breath of silence. Then everything is awake.

The dawn slowly swept its way across the mountains, rivers, and gorges, until it lay upon a soft meadow. A house was nestled in between the tall grass. Its wooden frame was old. Rusty nails curled around the wood it held together. The screen door slowly creaked as the breeze pushed it back and forth. A hollow yell from a bison was heard far off in the distance, its yell echoing across the misty mountains. That's where Gus liked to sit every morning, on that old rickety porch, slowly rocking back and forth. His old boots pushed against the splintering floor boards, keeping the rocking chair in motion. He watched everything through squinted eyes. His big strong hands, brown from the sun, rested on the arms of the chair. His nail slowly scratched the flaking paint off. He paused, as a splinter buried itself under his nail. He pulled his finger to his face and furrowed his brow, and then laid it back down and began scratching the paint off the chair again.

The shuffled half stumble of feet came around the corner. Willy appeared, struggling to tuck his shirt in, as he pushed down his hair that stuck out in all directions. "Ah, oh. Morn'n, Cap," he said. His voice was groggy from just waking up. Gus squinted his eyes. "Morn'n." Willy gave up on his hair and walked up the steps

farmer, where he is beaten for trying to run away, and ignored when he was sick. During those years, he learns to play the piano, which is why he was at the restaurant, playing the piano as a job. They start dating, and ten months later, they are married. Vivian loves their relationship because she always feels like she can be herself around him. Luke moves to Minnesota to help Vivian with the store and at night he plays piano at restaurants. A few months later, Vivian is pregnant, and she and Luke are excited to start a family. Sadly, he is drafted to fight in WWI, where he is killed in battle. Vivian is devastated; she does not know what to do with the baby, so she puts her up for adoption. Vivian tells Molly that the choices she has had to live with the choices she made in her life, but they help each other make amends with their pasts.

Once Molly learns Vivian's past, she relates to her because of her own lack of parents, home, and guidance. Vivian becomes a mentor to Molly, who visits Vivian's house regularly, just to talk instead of cleaning out the attic. In the long run, Molly knows Vivian does not want to clean out her attic; she just wants to look back on her life. Therefore, Molly alphabetically organizes everything by date and throws the damaged boxes away. Molly's service hours are completed, but she continues to visit Vivian all the time. Molly also turns her life around academically: her grade point average is a 3.8, and her counselors tell her to strongly consider college. In spite of this, Dina does not care, and one night she and Molly argue over dinner. Molly, a vegetarian, is cooking a meal that consists of fruits and vegetables, which irritates Dina. Dina says, "Buying all this costs too much." At this point, Molly has had enough. She replies, "Doesn't the money you receive for me cover this?" Dina goes on to call her a thief and accuses her of trying to take advantage of Vivian. Dina kicks Molly out of the house, into the cold, so she decides to go Vivian's house. Molly rings the doorbell several times, but no answer, so she calls Vivian's house phone. When Vivian answers the phone, Molly burst into tears while telling her of the situation. Vivian lets her inside and they

talk till midnight. During their talk, Vivian agrees to let Molly stay for as long as she wants. Meanwhile, Molly has been doing research on Vivian's Irish family, who died in a fire, and she finds out that one of her sisters survived and recently passed away in New York at the age of eighty-three. Vivian is happy to know that her sister lived long life. She mentions that she made a huge mistake by giving her baby up for adoption. So, Molly finds Vivian's daughter Sarah, living in Boston. The story ends with Vivian meeting her great-grandchild, giving her much needed closure.

This book taught me that the life of an orphan is difficult because of the lack of guidance and home, especially for the children on the orphan trains. Vivian's story may not be real, but it gives the reader insight on the perseverance of a child just trying to find her way. Kline interviewed many orphan train riders and a common trend was they were at peace with their situation. They were happy with their lives and if not for their experiences, they would have never had the lives they led. Kline also found that most had become financially successful because their childhoods were far more difficult than their current lives. Like Vivian, Molly never truly had a childhood; instead, they were viewed as hopeless burdens. Molly finds a role model in Vivian, and improves in school, which gives her options for college. For Vivian, it had been a difficult childhood, but with perseverance, she becomes successful. Vivian and Molly have mirrored lives, so they help each other. Vivian gives Molly a chance to be happy and safe, and Molly gives Vivian her last hope.

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

Feelings from her lover.
 Heath is a flower,
 Erica.
 Flower represents solitude;
 loneliness.
 Sent them knowing what they meant;
 didn't care.
 "I will live and return to you.
 Even if I believe those words, to me, who cannot even lift
 a finger."
 Heartbreak—
 Mentally, physically destroyed
 Her.
 It's the moon that will rise once more,
 She believes she will never love
 Again . . .



Beautiful Confusion

Elizabeth Shaw

had on his mind. On the fourth day of walking through the desert, Lucian started to grow weak; he could see a village in the distance, but was sure it was his mind playing tricks on him. He walked as long as he could, but then he fainted.

Lucian was sure it was the end for him, but he woke up in a house. A man was sitting beside him as he lay there and told him, "You're lucky I came when I did. I am a poor man, so I was going to rob you and leave you there."

"Why didn't you?" asked Lucian.

To which the stranger replied, "I also like to think of myself as an honest man, so I was going to bury you. I thought you were dead, you see. But, I came up to you and saw you were still breathing and, being an honest compassionate man, I brought you into my home and cared for you until you awoke."

"I thank you, but how long was I unconscious?" asked Lucian.

"Not that long, my friend. It was merely two good hours, and I would say you needed that rest."

"Well, I thank you once more, but I must be on my way."

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

Heath

Rachel Wright

Stated in the first line of the song,
Heath,
An original Japanese song,
"A moon which sheds tears is waiting."
A complicated metaphor—
Singer feels neglected;



Lost

Emily Leaming



Hydrophobic

Becca Brown



Attention Horse



She told him that he had been asleep for at least a week; she had brought him to an inn at a nearby village. She went on to say, "I am the demon of Vengeance. I am not just here; I am everywhere and always, because you humans love revenge, and you love to feed me."

Lucian could not speak at first, but he gathered his thoughts and said, "Someone like you cannot be my real mother."

Vengeance replied, "Oh, but I am. I know that I seem evil, but this is my calling, my son."

"Your calling?" said Lucian.

"Yes. It was humans who created me. Their love of vengeance created me. I did not create their vengeance. I am a demon servant to their own darkness."

She continued: "It is the same with your father. Because humans are mortal and die, he had to be created as the Angel of Death, to take their souls from Earth."

Before Lucian's mother could say anything more, the door to their room was flung open. Angel and demon guards rushed into the room, surrounded the woman, and spoke in unison: "You have committed crimes against the orders of Heaven and Hell. For this, you will stand trial immediately in front of God and Satan."

As Lucian's mother was dragged away, she called out to him: "FIND THE OTHERS LIKE YOU, FIND THE TRUTH!"

Lucian went outside to look for where they went, but they had vanished. He went to find a blacksmith to gather what he needed for his journey. He was ready to find the truth of his life—and all the forsaken ones.

After gathering his supplies from the blacksmith, Lucian started on his long emotional journey to find the others like him, as well as answers to who and what he really was. He walked out into the desert, only hoping to find a city or village before he would succumb to nature and have to face his true father in the last possible way he would want to. He walked for three days without rest because he couldn't sleep with all the questions he

and said, "I need your help to find out who my real mother is."

The high priest was astonished by what he heard and told Lucian that he would help, but they had to be discreet. The man told Lucian to follow him down to an underground study. Lucian followed the priest, but at the last second, he realized that he was being tricked and led into a torture cellar; before he could do anything, the priest knocked Lucian unconscious.

When he awoke, Lucian was chained to a cross and was surrounded by priests chanting. He was tortured for weeks; when he felt himself at his end and ready to die, the woman again came out from the shadows and started to slaughter all the men who were torturing Lucian. She killed each of them in horrific ways, and when she was done and covered in blood, she looked at Lucian and smiled.

The woman was beautiful, and as Lucian looked upon her she spoke: "I am the Demon Vengeance and I am your true mother." Lucian could not and would not believe it, because she had the pure essence of evil, but he gathered what strength he had to speak and said, "Why do you show yourself now and why do you help me?" As the woman unchained Lucian, she replied, "I came because you are my son and I need to get revenge on those who hurt you." Looking around, Lucian saw all the carnage that his mother had caused: he saw men hanging from their own intestines, heads smashed to walls, and bodies hung like wall decorations—blood all over the walls.

Lucian did not want to believe that this monster could be his mother. He passed out from exhaustion, pain, and confusion. When he awoke, he lay in a bed, as his mother sat at its foot. "Where am I," he asked, "and how long have I been unconscious?"

The woman joyously danced around the room and cried, "None of that matters now. I have my son back!"

Lucian yelled at her: "JUST TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON HERE!"

"Fine," the woman said. "I will tell you what you want to know, but only because you are my son."



Morgan Carolin



Beyond the Lair

Martha Day

Let not your feet halt,
But keep slinking before my den.
Your inquisitive thoughts synchronize to my sense.
And so I must reel you in.

I lay low in the depths of the shadows,
Lingering to make my next move.
You cannot see me; however, I can see and smell you.

Let not your heart terminate.
My ears convulse to the sound of your muscular organ.
Your sweat drips, constructing a replica of the Nile.
Do my combatant scars stop you from denial?

As I rise, the fleck of light reflects my eyes.
You have now embraced yours with mine.
What's your move? Check or checkmate?

Let not your back turn from me.
Do not assume I will let you free.
You set foot into the queen's nest.
Know this feline is one of the best.

My claws' engines are turned on;
Prowling in an eight shape.

My move.

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

in your inn?" he asked. "Eight gold a night," the innkeeper said.

Lucian reached into his pouch to scavenge for all the money he could find, but didn't have enough. He told the inn owner that he would be back with the money and went off to find a quick job. He came to a farm and asked the farmer if he needed a hand and how much would he pay. The farmer agreed to let Lucian work for a couple of hours, in exchange for twelve pieces of gold. Lucian worked the whole time and completed his tasks faster than the farmer said he himself usually did. He paid Lucian, and sent him on his way back to the inn.

At the inn, Lucian paid for a room, but as soon as he lay down, he heard guards rushing the town, and he felt sure they were looking for him. As Lucian began to gather his things, he heard shouts of pain and horror. At the window, he saw dying guards and the shape of a woman fading away. Lucian knew that the woman had to be his mother, so he gathered all of his belongings and left the inn. He looked for a horse or a carriage and found an elegant horse that seemed to belong to someone of importance, but it didn't matter to him now. He mounted the horse and rode off on a mission to find out who his mother was, and to find out the meaning of what he had just seen in the street.

Lucian rode for days through harsh rain and blazing heat in the desert trying to find his mother. He went to libraries and churches in all the towns surrounding his, looking for any mention of her. He finally arrived in the regional capital of Belmithia, where he looked for a scholar or high priest to help him understand what he had seen. Lucian went into the main church of Belmithia and asked where he could find the high priest; he was told that he would find the priest in the chapel. He walked into the chapel and found the priest meditating. Lucian reached out and touched the man on the shoulder, and asked if he could speak with him. The high priest led Lucian to his private quarters in complete silence; when they reached the room, the priest finally spoke and said, "Speak, my son." Lucian told the man all he had been through

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.

Not fully understanding what to do next, Lucian went down to a local pub to drown his thoughts and feelings in alcohol. After several hours, the pub owner confronted him: "Hey man, you're drunk. You need to leave." "Just a couple more beers," Lucian replied. Angry that Lucian wouldn't leave, the pub owner tried to kick him out. Lucian lashed back savagely, not entirely conscious of what he was doing. He looked down at the pub owner on the ground and kicked him. As everything finally set in, he realized he had not just hurt the man—he'd killed him.

Looking around, Lucian saw the pub owner's blood all over the walls. He knew he could not stay any longer . . . he knew he couldn't just go home, so he fled, leaving the whole village behind. Desperate, he jumped into a wagon and told the man steering it, "I will pay you good money if you take me far away from here." The driver agreed, but added, "Don't try anything."

Lucian looked back and saw guards rushing into the pub and covering the street corner looking for him. He made his escape with only the clothes on his back. Eight days Lucian traveled in search of another town; he was tired and hungry and felt like dying. After a long journey, Lucian finally found a town that seemed safe; the wagon driver wagon said, "I hope you find what you're looking for, and maybe next time you can pay me." "I am grateful for your help," Lucian replied, "and I hope next time we meet on better terms." Lucian went off into the town, looking for an inn in which to stay and gather his thoughts. In time, he came to one and walked inside. "How much would it cost me to stay for a night

Burgeon Up

Martha Day

Tied up in anthologies,
Being the narcissistic being.
A load of gray matter and a pigheaded heart.
At the borderline of choice.
The trail of tears or the tactful rejection of fears.
Living a tale;
Directed by a figure of imagination.
Bound to scratch the pitiful recollections.
Toss them in the waters of ice,
To freeze them:
Solid.
Tough love; the best love to grasp.
Live without a lover.
Love yourself;
The finest of all pleasure.
Don't let Peter Pan be at the helm of your life.
Erase thou tears and quit bickering over
A gift thrown into the past that never reaches your future.
Swim deep in all the seas of love
Before caviling over the absence of passion.
A comprehension of lust and erudite manners,
Chasing your tail in this tale.
Like a record, playing the Depeche Mode—Useless.
Take that cylindrical disc and break it into tiny bits.
After drowning yourself in alcoholic therapies,
Be the bloke you were born to be.
But first,
Burgeon up!

A Tiger's Velocity: A Mustang's Engine

Martha Day

Orange and black stripes.
Crisp eyes—onward.
A heart—the engine.
My engine.
Like a mustang,
I bolt fast.
My prudence can whiff up the dust
My foes devour.
The speck of luminosity is
The graceful achievement.
A restyling soul.
Put the cage out; clasp it.
The ground will still pulsate to the pouncing of my feet.
Like a night owl,
I sit and linger.
Examine every moment. Even mine.
Outside of my focus, they cannot detect my movements.
My engine gracefully reverberates,
Like an erotic lover.
Are we human?
Or are we spiritual animals?
I was once a snail;
Slow; letting the past prey on me.
Shell fractured after the first lament:
The eagle's cry.
Soaring like a fighter jet.
Sometimes wings break,
Doesn't mean we go back to a snail.
Instead—
Reborn.
Resurrecting.

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 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.

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.

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

The Essence of Writer's Block

Martha Day

The paralysis of the hand to the pen.
The hourglass within the wits.

Pondering over past memories,
Triggering the muscles to incite,
Letting the substance of knowledgeable chemicals cascade
through thy veins.

There goes the volcanic, poetic mind:
Explosions of assessments, to locutions.
Like a running river, there's no end.

What is more alluring:
The fear of endless block or
Fear of endless writing?

Writer's block is divine.
The mind meets with coma.
The heart starts pumping.
Emotions fall like
A glistening waterfall,
And fast like the brown and yellow leaves at fall,
Falling from Mother Nature's topiary.

Reaching the instrument as if it's descending in a black hole,
Must record the mind's rhapsody.

Switch,
Like a grandfather clock,
Tick tick tick.
Time

Time isn't being frittered away by thinking.
You're just preheating before boiling.

The essence of writer's block
Is

Man,
I had it . . .

Preparation

Martha Day

The pant from the predator.
A striped cadence, juddering the paws of the night.
Fearless like a fighter jet pilot, blazing to destination.
Crouched.
Scrutiny.
Detecting beyond the skin and bones;
The pulsating of the heart.
Corrugated brow.
Like an engine: the growl.
A creature determined and destined.
Afraid not!
Of the gold, slithering, serpent.
The capability of the defeating capacity
Will trample over the rivals by the
Trotters of the traveling cat.
Beware of the curled lip.
White as snow teeth performs an insubstantial glint.
Warning the threatening beasts of the consequence.
Long, pink tongue
Slowly polishing the instruments to havoc the villainy.
Once the cat blinks:
Run.

Faces

Caleb Esquivel

I wonder which face I should wear today
I wonder if anyone will care
I'm pulling out my hair thinking of the people who will think the
face I wear is really me
I start to think maybe I should start drinking to drown the pain
I'm going insane with all these faces what should I put on
I'm told I should just push on so I put on my face and do what I'm
told
But I'm really trying to leave this world with haste
How can I go on and go through these motions when I'm losing
my emotions
All this commotion I should just hide away
All of this hate I should just die and let everyone go on their way
I put on these faces to hide the hated person I truly am
But when I can I try to show myself but I'm eaten by my self-ha-
tred
No one likes the faces I put on but they have taken over
It's all over I have no more life it's been taken over
My show is over I'm just gonna accept my fate
Take on all the hate
So I wonder which face I should wear today

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

17 Years

Ben Sacchetti

17 Years it's been bothering me ...
It's affected me my entire life ...
Day and Night, it never ends ...
Anxiety ...
From School to Home ...
Hour by Hour ...
No cures ...
Just hope ...
What can I do ...
No one knows ...
One thing I do know is ...
It's tearing me apart ...
It's tearing me from the inside out ...
Even as I say these words ...
It's here ...
It can never leave my mind ...
Just corrupt me ...
For anyone who has it like I do ...
You know it can't just affect one mind but two ...
It can spread like fire ...
A fire with plenty of space to roam free ...
This fire doesn't go out ...
It only grows larger ...
Finds new minds to corrupt ...
You cannot escape its wrath ...
Just be new prey ...

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



Jaywalking Yankees

Morgan Carolin



Troubadour

Diego Morales

The Lone Rider: An Excerpt

Cris Contreras

We've all heard the stories of a hero saving the day, who in their lives bring peace and order, and in some cases sacrifice everything to become true heroes. This, however, is a story unlike any other—a story of war and peace, and the story of man who sacrifices everything to end an era of battle and war. This is the story of Roran Valyrion.

In the year 380 ABV (After the Battle of Valyra), the kingdoms of the north, south, east, and west had long been plagued with war; famine and trade disputes had left the once great empire of Valyra ruined. During this time, many self-proclaimed heroes emerged in the world and often tried to unite and restore the once great empire. Sadly, all failed, and instead ran the world into even more chaos. However, during this time, in a small village in the north, young Roran Valyrion was born in the small village of Nibilhim. Unbeknownst to him, he was secretly chosen by a young dragon that he would later name Sunfire. Their meeting would come twelve years later, when Roran would lose everything.

Roran's life was a very calm and quiet one. Being a northerner, he had to endure long harsh winters, and was forced to learn how to hunt and fish. From a young age, he was strong and quite adventurous, although some considered this to be more of a hazard than a necessity. One day, while he was hunting, he encountered a very large lizard that at one point almost tried to kill him. Later on, he realized that this lizard was in fact a dragon; because of its size, he estimated that it was only in its infancy—perhaps a year old. Although Roran's happiness was just so, it was not to last. Unaware of the coming danger, the kings of the Western lands set their sights on the North's valuable resources, in order to fuel their military industry. Because of this, the Western lands launched a secret attack on the northern villages, completely destroying all of them within a single night. Nibilhim was among them; Roran's

context. I think family is more than blood-related; it is everyone whom you feel very comfortable around. I understand there is a difference between blood-related family, religious family, and friends. However, DNA does not say it all: your heart says it all. You can be whoever you want to be: that's a decision you have to make, and I have made that decision. I want to keep my family tree alive and keep the traditions and identity of my family alive.



Man-Dog: Defender of Earth

Jake Rivera

sharing my mom's attention. However, I found it so fascinating because the same people that were there for me and had tears in their eyes in 1999 had tears in their eyes in 2004. That night I learned a very valuable lesson: I learned the value of family.

My family is extremely important to me. In a way, my family is like the United Nations. I have a grandmother from Germany and a grandmother from Russia. My mom was born in Russia and my sister was born in China. My grandmother fled Germany at the age of four, on a boat with her family, to escape WWII. My mom and her parents emigrated from the former Soviet Union in 1979 in order to escape religious persecution. On my mom's side of the family, I am a first generation American. I am extremely proud to be a citizen of this great land. When my mom's family landed in this country, they came directly to San Antonio. They arrived without knowledge of the English language, and without financial resources. They were lost in their new homeland. Fortunately for them, the San Antonio community is a rare gem on the map of the United States. This community stepped up and took care of my family. They made sure they had a place to live and a refrigerator full of food. They drove them to doctors, school carpools, taught them English, and helped find jobs for them. If that's not family, what is?

Every Saturday I attend services. If you ask me if I enjoy it, the answer is, "It is not my favorite thing to do." However, I do recognize some things that are unique when I am there. For instance, I feel at home, and part of the reason that I feel that way is because my family couldn't practice their religion in the Soviet Union, and here everyone is the same— we're not in hiding! The other thing I recognize, which is very odd to me, is that even though I can find other things to do on a Saturday morning, it puts me in the right frame of mind for the week. If I am tired, grumpy, or have had a bad week at school, it cheers me up and puts things in perspective. Furthermore, I feel like everyone is part of my family there; even though we are not blood-related, we are related!

Family to me isn't a word that is always used in the right

entire family and everyone he had ever known was gone. In his grief, he saw the true evil that lay not only with the Western lands, but in all the kingdoms, so he decided he would unite the four kingdoms or die trying. Soon, with his new dragon, named Sunfire for its golden scales, he set out to find the Black Company. The Black Company was a militia group whose sole purpose was to wage war against the Western kingdom.

During the next seven years, Roran joined the Black Company, and received some of the most elite training from its commander, Marcus Salterna. He also received training from some of his closest comrades, even from his future wife, Helena Mars, who was acclaimed as one of the best close-quarters combat fighters in all of the company. Helena's beauty and grace were only matched by her ferocity and combat skills.

Roran stood just an inch shy of six feet tall. Muscular, but not too big, he was able to hold a sword, though his constitution was not that of any skilled fighter. During this time, however, training proved to be no comparison when it came to the actual fighting he would face. The scars he would suffer were few and minor, but two of them were notable: one grazed his right eye and the other ran down the left side of his cheek, close to the jaw.

Roran was 19 years old when he first experienced the harshness of battle. Battling the western armies and the southern rebels, he fought in multiple battles, the most notable of which was the Battle of Northfield where, on his dragon Sunfire, he single-handedly incinerated the entire southern rebellion and brought peace to the elves of the southern kingdoms. Although he never traveled as far as the edge of the eastern kingdom, he made many friends, and was even rewarded with a magnificent single-edged sword, the name of which was Oathkeeper. During these long years of service, he made many enemies, the most notable of whom were the mighty warrior Bardock and the legendary shadow dragon Xanatos.

Xanatos was a very large and very old dragon; he had seen

many wars and had destroyed hundreds of civilizations in his time. Bardoct, on the other hand, was an old ally of Roran, but in his anger, he forgot his path and became a mercenary for the Western kingdoms. At first Roran paid no mind to this development, until the alliance between mercenary and kingdom grew strong. Since then, Bardoct and Xanatos ravaged the Western lands and took the throne of the Western kingdom. With their newfound power, they led a massive campaign against the other three kingdoms, a campaign that was far beyond anything the realm had ever seen. However, Roran knew that, with the death of Bardoct, the kingdom would eventually know peace, at least for a time.

Convinced of this, Roran sent a letter to Bardoct to meet him at Fort Menos, an old castle set in the heart of the old Valyra. For seven days and seven nights he waited for the Dark Rider to come and face him. On the morning of the eighth day, while Roran and Sunfire were resting lakeside, a league away from the fort, they heard a loud roar from the west. Roran saw Bardoct and Xanatos flying over the clouds, crying, "You have lived long enough, my old friend. Now I will lay you to rest."



Meteors

Elizabeth Shaw

cro shoes, but one day I wore shoes with laces, and they came untied; I was so embarrassed to ask this girl to tie my shoes. But, she was the only one in the area, so I went up to her and asked, "Can you tie my shoe for me?" I was very lucky that she was one of my friends and an extremely nice person, because most people would have looked at me like there was something wrong with me, and that was how I felt at that moment.

Related

Joseph Klein

On May 31, 1999, at 12:42 a.m., I made my debut into the world. There were so many people around me, and they all wanted to hold me. Many of them had tears in their eyes when they saw me. I really didn't know why they were there, and why they were all so happy, until five years later when my parents called me to their room to tell me that we needed to talk. I had so many thoughts racing through my mind. My logical thought was that I was obviously in some kind of trouble. Then I realized that my mom was holding an envelope. My fear of punishment then turned to a happy thought—maybe I was getting a gift. Well, I was definitely right about the gift part, but it was not the traditional type of gift that I had expected. That night I learned that our family was growing. My parents had spent the past 18 months buried in paperwork, trying to adopt a little girl from China. They never shared any of this with me earlier, because they didn't know how long the adoption process would take. That day they had received the official referral from the agency with the photos of my new sister. That was the gift in the envelope.

My mom traveled to China six weeks later to bring my sister home and stayed there for 17 days. The day they were due back, we met them at the airport with banners and balloons. My entire immediate and extended family was there. I had just turned five. Like anyone else my age, I wasn't exactly thrilled with

Dysgraphia

Joseph Klein

All through pre-school I had to have my teachers do all the arts and crafts for me. I didn't think that this was an issue because my teachers made it feel like they did this for every student. However, when I got to kindergarten, all the students were writing letters and numbers and turning them in. Whenever I would write letters and numbers, my teacher would have to re-write whatever I had written. When it got to almost the middle of the year, the teacher called my mom and said, "Something isn't right here," and then showed my mom my writing compared to the other kids. But, it wasn't just my writing; I couldn't cut with a knife or with scissors, and I also couldn't tie my shoes.

It just so happened that my mom was on the board of the school, and they had a board meeting a few days later. My mom mentioned the fact that I couldn't write or do anything with fine motor skills, and a man who my mom had never met said, "He may have dysgraphia. I know a place that can help diagnose him." When my mom introduced herself to the person, he said he was the headmaster at the Winston School San Antonio. When my mom got the name of the facility, we went a few days later, after we made an appointment. I had a three or four hour test, and after the test, they told my mom that I had a very bad case of dysgraphia.

The first thing that the doctor there asked me and my parents was, "Would you rather be a lefty or righty." He said, "You were born right-handed, but both of your hands are so bad that they are almost equal, so it's up to you." I honestly chose left-handed, partially to be different. I went to Busy Bodies three days a week, for two hours, for three and a half years. I really didn't enjoy it, and I didn't see an initial impact. However, once I was able to write and cut, I was so happy and I felt like I belonged.

One embarrassing story that I remember like it was yesterday was when I was in fourth grade: I had to wear Vel-

Life of a Tincan Sailor: An Excerpt

Tij Jefferson

It was 0740, and Fireman 3rd class Fred Williams had just woken up. The U.S.S. Oklahoma had been in port for several days now, and he was already getting used to not having to wake up to change watch every six hours. He slid his feet over the side of his bunk and stood up. He had to hunch slightly as he stood, to avoid hitting his head on the overhead. He got dressed quickly and quietly, trying not to wake his bunk mate. Despite having been in the Navy for almost a year, he still wasn't used to the cramped living conditions on board Okie. Until he had joined the navy, he had lived in Charleston, West Virginia, where space had never been an issue. After he dressed, he headed topside to get some fresh air. He did hit his head on the bulkhead as he stepped out on to the deck.

The morning was cool and crisp, the smell of salt strong in the air. He put his hands on the guard rail and closed his eyes. The sound of water lapping against the side of the ship was soothing. He had never seen the ocean until his basic training, and now he wondered how he had ever lived without it. The serenity was broken by a mosquito buzzing in his ear. He swatted at it, but missed, and the pest retreated, waiting for another chance. He went back to listening to the surf, and sure enough the buzzing came back. He swatted again, but this time the buzzing didn't go away. Instead it got louder. What had been quiet buzzing was now a drone; low, but loud enough to be annoying. He turned to find the source. Now it was a roar, coming from the north.

As he turned, an aircraft flew over his head, missing the super structure by no more than a few yards. "Jesus Christ," Fred thought, "what the hell are they thinking, buzzing the fleet like that?" He turned back to look at the water. And then he saw them. Three trails of bubbles moving along the surface of the water. Torpedo wakes.

The first explosion threw Fred across the deck. The second and third hit a few seconds later. Fred's ears were ringing. He struggled to his feet, and ran back over to the side of the ship. Where there had before been a gorgeous slab of steel, there were now three ragged holes. As the ringing in his ears stopped, Fred could hear the deafening sound of water rushing into the ship, the sound of explosions on other ships, and the screams of wounded and dying men. The ship began to list to port, and it scared Fred that he could actually feel the list slowly getting worse. Men began pouring out onto the deck now. Most of them had blood or water on them. About half of them were wounded in some way, and a few carried those who were hurt too badly to walk. All of them were scared and confused.

Fred heard planes to the rear of the ship, and turned to see who they were bombing. He watched as at least ten planes dove on the Arizona. They released their bombs, and just barely managed to pull up before hitting the water. The first bomb hit close to the stern of the ship. The next two hit close to amidships. The Arizona was crippled, and burning from stem to stern. The fourth bomb was so big, Fred was able to follow it as it fell and saw it hit close to the forward turrets. Then the Arizona seemed to simply vanish. The fire ball blinded Fred, and he heard a rattling sound as falling shrapnel hit the deck and superstructure. There was a loud crashing sound just to his left, and someone screamed.

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

Though Emmerich was greatly outnumbered, he and his armies pushed through Mara's defenses. Emmerich and Mara battled to the death again, as Emmerich called upon all his pent up anger and hate. He left his army with his right-hand man Gabriel Logan. He then sent himself and Mara into another dimension with one man to return to say if Emmerich or Mara were destroyed. Emmerich was destroyed several times over, but resurrected every time an instant later. He called upon all the power of his idols, and became as powerful as God and Satan combined. He became the most powerful being ever to exist in myth and reality. Surpassing all levels of extreme power (lunar, planetary, galactic, universal, and divine), he destroyed Mara again . . . but not for the last time. There was always the possibility of Mara's return, but for now she was defeated.



Diabla

Megan Jordan

Emmerich: Part II

Sam Fesko

Emmerich was upset about failing to dispose of Mara Aramov the first time around. He had to try again, and he did not like having to do things twice. He knew Mara before he was ordered to kill her, but they had always been enemies, so the order to kill her wasn't a problem—not until he failed to do so.

He realized his failure when Mara attempted to ambush him; she failed, but he was dissatisfied with his failure. Emmerich NEVER fails! EVER! He started getting angry, with an anger that made him the human incarnation of Satan. He started destroying things. When he was done, half the White House was destroyed on the inside. He said horrid things to his staff, but they stuck by him; none of them left his side. In fact, they helped calm him down, and he eventually did just that. He repaired all the damage, made very sincere apologies to those who were within his path, and compensated them for their efforts in calming him.

Emmerich then looked for a way to finish what he started with Mara. They met in downtown Manhattan. He applied a spell to make nothing destructible until he took it off, and then ordered an evacuation of Long Island. When everyone was gone, Emmerich went after Mara and attacked first; Mara countered. Emmerich became angry and started using predictable attack patterns. When Mara realized this, she countered everything. Emmerich finally started to recognize his predictability and switched up his approach. He was running circles around Mara. She attempted to counterattack, but missed every time. When she was utterly exhausted, he finished her off, and this time made sure she was dead. She would not resurrect for years and years, but when and if she did, he would be ready . . .

On the day Mara came back, Emmerich was prepared. Mara's armies and Emmerich's armies battled to the last man standing.

Yellow Hearts

Gabriela Auber

And as this passed, two children walked in the woods

Laughter rang out through the woods, the source being that of two children. A pair of twins they seemed to be; a girl and a boy. The young male strode confidently in front of his sister, a skip in his step and his hands behind his head, a position of relaxation. His sister trailed not too far behind, a hand over her mouth to stifle a few leftover giggles.

"Too funny!" she chortled.

"I know, right?" her brother exclaimed. "I totally tell the best jokes, don't I?" He finished his sentence with a dramatic flip of his short, fluffy hair.

The girl giggled once more. "You certainly tell some good ones, I'll give you that."

Her companion laughed with his sister, joyful that he could help brighten her mood. Things had, admittedly, been fairly stressful for the two since they walked through the strange doors with the blue diamond on top.

Glancing forward, the young boy caught sight of what looked like a setup for a tea party in a shaded clearing. "Hey, sis, look!" he said, pointing in the direction of the tea party. Looking towards where her brother was pointing, the girl's eyes lit up happily at the sight of the tea party. Clapping her hands together, she squealed giddily and ran in its direction. "Wait for me!" her brother called after her, dashing forth to catch up.

When the girl stopped, she was right in front of the table. She pulled out a chair and sat down, grabbing the tea kettle and pouring some of the drink into the china cup in front of her before taking a sip. Her brother finally managed to arrive, gasping for breath tiredly. "Don't . . . run off like that . . . again . . ." he growled between breaths.

"I'm sorry brother," the girl pouted, "I just saw this place and got really excited. Why don't you have some of this tea? It's so nice and warm, and really good!"

The boy sighed before sitting down in the chair next to her. He reached for the kettle, but before he could grab it, another hand, with a blue diamond on top, placed itself on top of it. The boy looked up to find himself staring straight into the blue eyes of a blue-haired young man. "Shouldn't you ask, first?" he asked.

"Gah!" The boy shot up in fright, his chair tipping back and falling over. "We're sorry sir!"

The man chuckled. "That's quite alright," he smiled, "I don't mind sharing." He then took the kettle and poured some tea into the cup at the boy's spot.

"Thank you, sir," the boy thanked him. He took a sip of the tea.

Partaking in tea underneath the trees, they'd never part

"You're very welcome," the man said as he poured himself a cup. "If you don't mind me asking, what brings you Hearts here?"

"How did you know we were Hearts?" the girl asked, gazing at the man in surprise.

"By the yellow marks on your hands, of course," he replied, laughing as if the answer was obvious. "And I take it that the two of you are twins, considering your Hearts are both halved?"

"We are," the boy told him. "As for how we got here; we were exploring and came across a pair of doors with a blue diamond at the top."

"That was the Diamond door," the man explained, "Each quadrant of Wonderland has a door to the next quadrant."

"Is there a way back to the Hearts' quadrant?" the girl questioned with worry.

"Of course," the man reassured her, "But, unfortunately, the doors only go one way. To get back to the Hearts' quadrant, you'll

Filled with darkness,
In a world
Where religion is dead,
Where Angels are gone,
Where animals have fled,

Where love has broken,
Where homes have been violated,
And where stars have been consumed.

That light,
Shining bright,

Is Honor.



Spirit

Matthew Alsip

Homes have been violated.
Love has been broken.

Animals have fled
Angels are gone
Religion is dead.

The world has become a lake
A lake of darkness.
Waves of fury
Of anger.
Of peace.
Reign hard against a single island.

And on that island,
Surrounded by nothing but hate
And Pain
And Darkness,
Sits a candle.

That candle, burning hard against the endless night,
Is alone.
All around it, rages the darkness.
It fights, it claws, it roars.
Trying desperately to extinguish the flame
To have it finally join the eternal dark.

Yet, the candle stands.
Unmoving, unafraid.
It knows it can never relight the world
That it will be alone in the dark forever.

And still it stands, shining bright
On an island, surrounded by a lake,

have to go through the Clubs' door, and then the Spades' quadrant."

"Can you point us in the direction of the Clubs' door?" the boy asked.

The man nodded. "It's that way." He pointed to the right.

"Thank you!" the boy exclaimed. "C'mon sis, let's go home!"

"Yeah!" the girl agreed, happiness sparkling within her eyes. She stood up and bowed in thanks to the man. "Thank you for your kindness, sir!"

"It was no problem," the man waved his hand dismissively, "I always enjoy some good company."

"Goodbye, sir!" the twins said in unison as they ran off.

"Farewell, and good luck finding your way home!" the man called after them.

Once the children were out of sight, the man sighed.

"They never stay long . . ." he whispered sadly. He looked up to stare into the mirror he had nailed into the tree not far from him, gazing sadly at the large, bloody bullet hole in the side of his head.



Ribs

Rachel Perry

Private Upham

Arthur Trickett-Wille

As he plunged the knife,
I could not climb,
But I could hear my brother scream,
And I could hear the soldier,
Quiet him,
Putting him to sleep,
Like a crying, baby boy, who missed his mom.

As I heard his voice leave him,
As I felt his soul leave the earth,
My legs failed me,
And at the top of the stairs,
Appeared to me
The angel of death,
A German soldier.

Outside, the conflict raged on.
The harsh, and scrupulous faces
Of the Germans,
And the American boys,
Who were all raised on farms,
Bailing hay,
Eating hot, apple pies, baked by mothers,
And harvesting corn.

And now, all the soldiers
Traded pitchforks for rifles,
And kernels of corn,
For teeth,
And for tongues,
To make their necklaces from.

Hate swallows
Anger rots flesh
Pain shatters will
And who wins?
Only sorrow.

And yet

Happiness still lightens
Kindness still flourishes
Honor still shines

Hope dies every day,
But from the ashes,
It rises in the night.

Evil may laugh
Evil may triumph
Evil may burn, pillage, and destroy

But
Love will have life

And that, Evil shall never find.

Honor

Kyle Thompson

Darkness.
Flooding the Earth
With no end in sight.

Stars have been consumed,

John

Kyle Thompson

Alone
Infinitely alone.

Lost at the brim
Nowhere to run
Nowhere to fight
Only way out is down.

Jump far, far down.

Flashing lights, drowning brights
Blurred faces, unconcerned voices
All roam the earth, filling it with emptiness.

Nothing left now, only wonder
Wonder of the past, wonder of the end
For there is no future.

Only down.

Moons

Kyle Thompson

Does the sun set when darkness isn't looking?
I don't think so.
What would be the point?

Fires burn every day
Yet ice still cools the night.
Waves pound the shores
Yet lightning still scars the earth.

The German stepped down in the stairwell,
And he gave a peculiar face:
A smirk of distaste.

My bandoleers,
My belts,
Gave me no courage.

He walked into the dust,
Unimpeded by my bullets,
And he left me to join my brother in the tower.



Two Years Gnashed (Sculpture)

Arthur Trickett-Wile

Owen

Arthur Trickett-Wile

From the crack in the sky
Came the giant:
Dark halo,

A beast
With the breath of decay.

Fire of ruin,
Come to claim
The progenitor:

The prophesized.
The destined,
The damned:
A solemn, pillar of Earth.

The ribbons of his chest,
A medallion on his breast,
The mirror of the mind
Is shimmering.

The Titan Banshee,
Screech:
Immolating flames,
Suffocating ash,
Spiteful scorch,
And still,
The hero stood his ground.

He faced the beast,
He was
Stone-faced,
Surrounded, now, in fire:
The Titan coil,
And still,
The hero stood his ground.

From The Wall then,

And evil
And wicked
And sick.

And nothing will be gone again.

Order

Kyle Thompson

Peace, serenity, pain
Attributes of a forgotten past
And of a not so distant future.

For now, bliss
Bliss and darkness.
Light consumed by the all-encompassing warmth of pain.

Fire cools,
Ice burns,
The sick rise and the dead fall.

Anger is peace,
War is just,
Hate is love.

And at the end of night
Dawn will not rise.
All will be forgotten
Nothing will be lost.
Until the not so distant future
When pain will reign again.

44.5421190264017

Kyle Thompson

Peace
Harmony
Justice
All protected
By the sweet love of hate

Everything you know is nothing
Everything you think is wrong
Everything you are is gone
All for the sweet love of hate

Hate knows all
Hate guides all

Hate protects
Hate guides

Hate is all.

You think?
Oh, why do you think?

That is wrong
That is evil
You are wicked
You are sick

You are a destroyer of order

For what are we without order?

Nothing.

Hate shall lead us away from all that is wrong

Came a serpent,
Tongues of flame,
Tickling his face,
Singing the tips of his hair,
And then it spoke:

"Do you know who you are?"
It asked.
The hero stood his ground.

"Do you hold the power of God?"
It asked.
The hero stood his ground.

"Do you know that you are God?"
It asked.
The hero stood his ground.

The serpent was enraged.
He drew his coils tight,
He rose into the night,
And hung above the boy,
An open mouth.

The tar dripped from his fangs,
And the flames that kissed his face
Now lit the tar.

The mouth, now bearing down,
A whisper, a sound.

"I know who you are."
The hero stood his ground,
And then it swallowed him.



Synth Pop

Sergio Medellin



Televised

Emily Leaming



Elizabeth Shaw



Not On Earth

Bury Me in Arkansas

Arthur Trickett-Wile

Steel sharpens steel,
And rust wrought iron,
But my eyes do not lie,
So follow me to the forge,
Before the stippled blades
Have wilted in the coals.

Like an ax through a forest of maple,
Or a saw through a river of ash-wood log,
Come the gnarling roots
To haunt him at the stone.

So as the sun rolls back the rock,
From the face of a cave,
By the light of his own eyes,
He split the black,
Like flagellums—
The wicked whips
On a slaver's back.

From below the moss,
He knows it.
He is helpless.
He knows this, too,
To save the son of his own trauma,
And to enreliquate his body,
As the maggots of time will wriggle,
And feast away at his mind.

The silver slivers from the black
Will grow.

The apple trees
Will grow.
The maple, ash, and mossy stone
Will grow,
And the horny, horny pinecones of the conifers;
All these things will grow,
So when they lay him in the ground,
His stone will not so easily be rolled.

Circle Damned

Arthur Trickett-Wile

I trudged, an aged, weary traveller,
In the bitterness and snow,
'Till I heard the velvet trumpets blowing,
Through the ice that covered me.

I saw a streetlight in the night,
And when I felt its beckoning
To warm the cold and dead,
I knew that I had nothing left to give.

I'd loved for nothing.

So, with the last rolls of my bootheels
The powder beneath my soles wept for my heat,
But I, with ears full of brass advent, the angel ensembles,
Knew my time.

I'd waited centuries.

And then, they carried me,
On my broken, sopping, wings,
Like a crying, baby bird,

started this fight. When the world isn't safe, it causes governments to get bigger to "protect" the citizenry, which infringes on international civil rights. All this is linked together, and if we do not address the problem, our country will drown in debt and collapse from it.

This is not the kind of future the Founding Fathers wanted for us. If the American people want to regain their civil liberties, then the answer is to return to the Constitution. We need to go back to what the Constitution defines: a limited government, with the states and the people providing what the government cannot. The Tenth Amendment states that any powers not given to the federal government in the Constitution and not restricted from the states are reserved for the states and the people. That means no War on Poverty, no War on Drugs, and no undeclared wars that the president decrees. The last time we formally declared war was for WWII. That means that all the later wars in which we have been involved have been unconstitutional. In the Constitution, war is left up to Congress, not the president. That is because the Founders wanted a strong but non-interventionist military. It is not our job to police the world. It just creates more debt, more enemies, and more problems for which the American people get blamed. War should only be declared when we are attacked by a nation who has the intention of destroying us, not because we disagree with the way they run their country. Diplomacy works better than war. Free trade works better than war. Freedom works better than war. History has proven this time and time again. It will prove itself again, either when we realize our faults and correct them, or when we are destroyed from the inside out because of them.

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

door" session of Congress. When Edward Snowden exposed the CIA and the NSA's surveillance activities on American citizens, the Patriot Act was replaced by the USA Freedom Act a few years later. However, many of the government's new powers remained in place. In fact, the government actually gained a few new powers with the USA Freedom Act. All of these unconstitutional powers are said to be used for our "safety" and to "catch terrorists." Truthfully, however, the government cannot name a single terrorist or plot that they have captured or foiled because of this program. This program does nothing to help Americans and simply creates more government overreach. Government is basically given a single warrant for every single American. One of the reasons why the colonists fought their British rulers in the American Revolution was because of unwarranted searches.

The Fourth Amendment is extremely vital to a free and prosperous society. While all usurpation of citizens' rights is extremely bad, the horrors of our foreign policy are almost worse. Many do not know the real reason why the terrorists attacked the World Trade Center. After the attacks, Osama bin Laden stated that there were several motives for the attacks, including American troops on the Arabian Peninsula, US government funding to tyrannical dictators in the Middle East, and ousting democratically elected leaders who did not support the United States. Make no mistake: 9/11 was a horrible tragedy for which someone had to answer. However, invading other countries that had no part in attacking us will only radicalize their citizens and create more terrorists. And it has! Since the US invasion of Afghanistan, terrorism has risen 3000%! They do not hate us for our freedom. They do not hate us for our way of life. They hate us because we are interfering in their own nation's business, and attacking them when they lash out. We spent trillions of dollars on undeclared wars (which are unconstitutional) that could have been spent here at home. The ousting of Middle Eastern dictators is why terrorist groups like ISIS have gained power. Now the world is even less safe than when we

Sitting amidst the shards.

As I was lifted from my shambles
I saw the frozen world below,
Beyond the suffocating winds,
And with my hollow, rattling, breaths,
I froze the tears that drew my face.

But when they brought me from knees,
And set me back upon my feet,
I raged to know
That I would never have my rest.



Drum Major

Will Endersby

Cords

Arthur Trickett-Wille

A red, for all the blood you gave,
A white collar, for sweat,
And a heavy, bronze medallion,
For your time.

An ax, for all the hacking,
And the brown, for dirty nails,
The yellow, for when he crossed
The center-line.

The shock-white, for the Jaws of Life,
Then a black, for all that ends,
And a button on the collar,
To press, when you are hurting:
(The rubber, morphine tubes)
(Pump through the bend)

A white for the life you saved that day,
Shaker-salt for shattered glass,
And the kerchief in your pocket,
That he gave you on your wedding,
For the tears that now may never seem to pass.

An orange, opium poppy in your hair,
And the pressed bluebonnet flowers
From the I-10 roadside highway:
The crash that killed your lover
Happened there.

Place the flower in his casket,
Leaving you alone,

ized, the number of those incarcerated would drop dramatically. The price of drugs from dealers would fall due to the number of people who would start producing them; private industry would start marketing and selling them, which would add more money to the economy and create more jobs. Low drug prices would stop forcing addicts to turn to crime for money and the crime rate would drop even farther. Without the threatening atmosphere, more addicts would start seeking treatment for their addictions. Obviously, some would not give up their habits and continue to ruin their lives. While it is unfortunate, those people are free to live their lives as they see fit. The government doesn't stop alcoholics from drinking, so why do they try to stop drug addicts? Because it is more profitable, with less resistance. However, more and more of Americans are beginning to see the truth behind the "war" on drugs and are starting to oppose it. It is only a matter of time before it is gone for good.

Finally, one of the greatest threats to the civil and constitutional liberties of Americans is the "War on Terror" and the foreign policy that created it. This "war" started after September 11, 2001, when the World Trade Center was attacked by Islamic extremists using hijacked planes. In the coming weeks, the United States passed the Patriot Act and invaded Afghanistan. The Patriot Act is probably the most pro-Big Government, most unconstitutional, most unpatriotic act to have crossed a president's desk, let alone be signed by him. It effectively destroys the Fourth Amendment, which protects Americans against unwarranted searches. It stains the First Amendment by allowing targeting due to religion, when the First Amendment protects freedom of religion. This led to the collection of millions of Americans' cell phone data without their knowledge or without a warrant. The president was given extra war powers, when, per the constitution, he should have none at all. War is and should be left up to Congress and Congress alone. All this was passed by exploiting people's fears and creating paranoia, and all done behind the American people's back, in a "closed

cut 30%, and all the new money and workers that flooded the economy caused the depression to end. The economy and a real free market is the best cure for unemployment, which will lead to higher wages, less and less inequality, and finally, less monetary segregation. Through it all, the government has yet to figure this out. The government is far less effective than private industry at solving problems.

The second government intervention that has resulted in the erosion of civil rights is the "War on Drugs." First and foremost, this "war" is 100% unconstitutional. Nowhere in the U. S. Constitution is it stated that the government can ban substances. This was even known back in the 1920s, when Prohibition legislation attempted to ban the sale of alcohol, through a constitutional amendment that banned alcohol. It was still a terrible idea, but at least the attempt was made legally. The government has no right to tell anyone what they can and cannot put into their bodies. The War on Drugs is totally illegal and only benefits drug lords, who get money from high street drugs prices, while spending little to make them; government also benefits, with money gained from fining as well as jailing those convicted. The real victims are those who are born into addiction through one or both parents, and who have no way of getting the help they need. These victims often turn to crime to finance their addiction until it kills them or they wind up in prison, where there are still drugs. If the government cannot effectively keep drugs out of the hands of carefully contained and monitored prisoners, how can they possibly hope to do the same for everyday civilians? They can't. They just continue to collect funds from fines and the drug dealers keep lining their own pockets with the cash of addicts, thereby allowing them to manufacture more drugs and get more people jailed or killed. Furthermore, the War on Drugs has given the police more powers that go against civil rights, such as unwarranted searches and inspections. Currently, the majority of those imprisoned in the U. S. are nonviolent drug offenders. If drugs were decriminal-

They'll carve the word
Invincible
In cursive, frilly letters,
In the granite that you chose,
For his headstone.

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



Bootleg

Morgan Carolin



The Solution to the Overriding of American Liberties

Kyle Thompson

Civil rights in the United States has been a very sensitive issue in recent history. While the progress of civil rights has most certainly improved since Dr. Martin Luther King's ministry, the problem of segregation due to race, money, politics, and religion has reached a new phase. The problem is now not with the individuals, businesses and the states, but with the federal government. To combat these problems, the federal government has created an endless number of departments and committees and programs to solve each issue. However, these programs have completely backfired. In the endless and seemingly impossible pursuit of a perfect utopia, they have launched three major "wars," which have in turn created more poverty, more crime, and more terror—not just here, but in the rest of the world. By no means are these the only government "solutions" created, but they are certainly the most ambitious.

First off, in response to the Great Depression, the government launched a "War on Poverty" to combat the crippling issue of unemployment. Many government programs were created (funded by the taxpayers, of course) to get people more jobs, money, and housing. What many people do not know, however, is that unemployment was already falling before the government got involved. This was also true in the rest of the world. Private industry was fixing itself, as it always does, because it is built to work. When government "solutions" were introduced, though, the employment rate slowed down. When World War II began, the employment rate did rise, but not because of the free market. The economy was taken over by the government, to fund the war effort; all that money went straight to fighting the war, so the Great Depression continued. However, after the war was over, things changed. The government gave the economy back to the people: one million new workers left the military from the war, taxes were

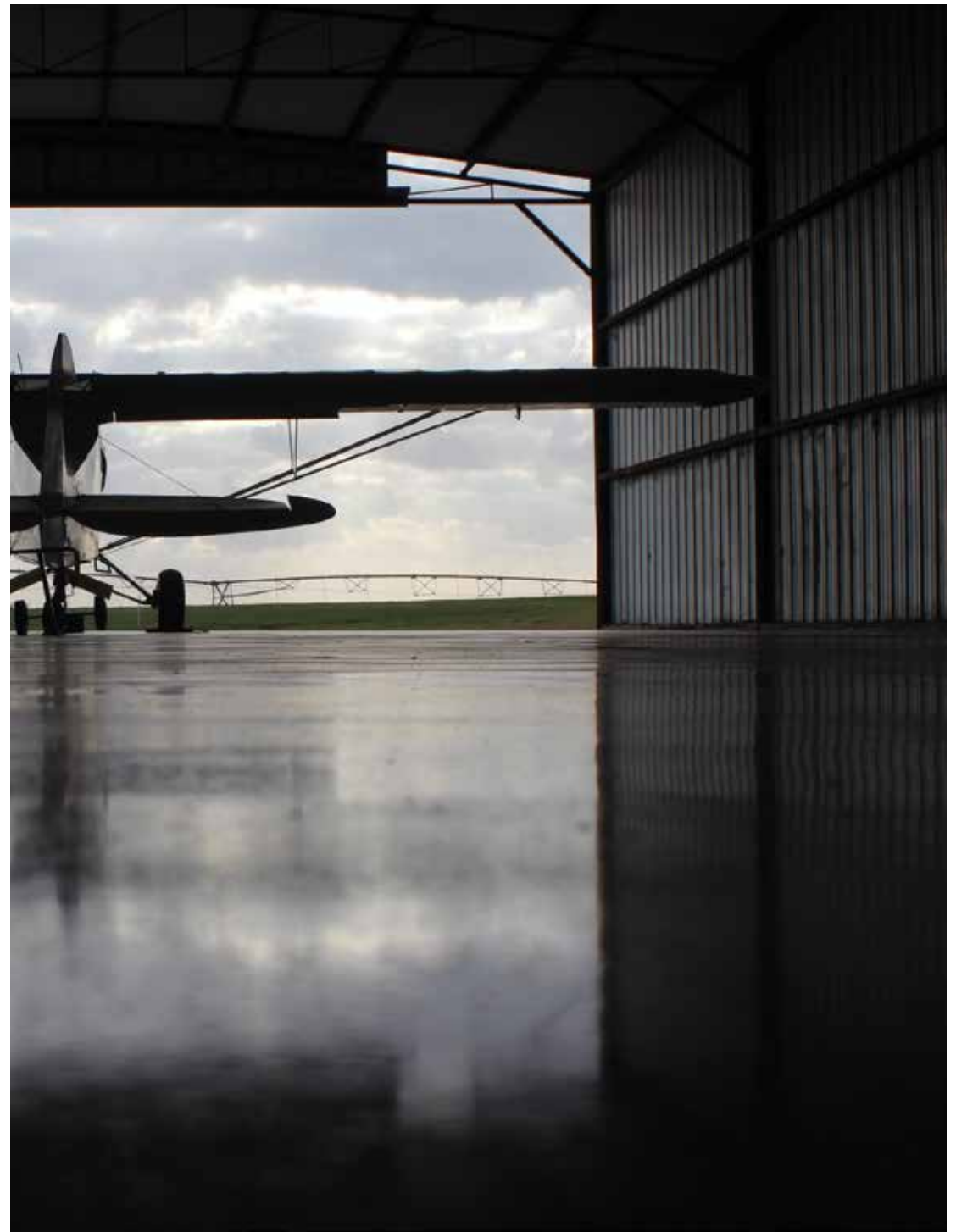
Peeler Cub N50552

My mother opened the basket
Friends and family gathered together
It was a Hawaiian tradition
The basket now floats in the ocean
Then it sinks underwater
Hawaiian flowers were thrown along with
She is underwater
Auntie Rose is a part of the ocean
I didn't seem to cry
Until I grew older
I look back at the memories
I feel so heartbroken
Even though it was a few years ago
I miss you and will always love you
Auntie Rose



Earth Goddess

Elizabeth Shaw



Annabeth Peeler

Tribes

Sergio Medellin

Clay mask,
Adorned.

Clay bodies,
Formed.

True warriors,
Born.

Native origin,
Passed down
From generation
To generation.

We don't know
Their world.
Only of what
They do.

Different.

Their prayer,
Is different
Than ours.

Their principles,
Are different
Than ours.

Their life,
Is different

The constant ringing noise never stops
What is silence?
I'll never know even though I'm deaf
In this world, it's never quiet
Your brain constantly makes noises
For your deaf ears
How annoying and insane it can be

Ashes to Ashes

Elizabeth Shaw

I held her ashes
I remembered her face
I remembered her voice
I looked down at the ashes
That used to be Auntie Rose
I was innocent and did not understand
I looked up at my mother
And asked why she looked like ashes
She had tears in her eyes
I could tell there was something not right
Then I remembered
It was a school day
We were all in the car waiting, sisters and I
She rushed into the hospital
It seemed a long time waiting
She came back
Something was not right
I felt it too
It was silent for the rest of the ride
Now I'm on a dock, going onto a boat
Now I hold a basket with her inside
I look back up
We are in the middle of the sea

Repeat
Repeat
Repeat again please I am so sorry
It's not my fault I'm like this
Almost makes sense
Finally
It is clear
As the cracks begin to show
I understand what you said
Thank you for being patient.

What Is Silence?

Elizabeth Shaw

People laughing
Dashing around the room
Discussing politics
Making up debate topics
Expressions change
Ever so quickly
Sad to happy
Mad to anxious
Using your eyes,
Curiouser and curiouser
Ears feel so small
Eyes feel so wide
From one's perspective
It's quite unique
A silent world
People still seem so loud
Can't it just be silent?
Is that a word?
No
More noise is still added

Than ours.
Much closer
To nature,
They live by.

As it should.

Live
off the land.
Live
By the land.

Nothing more,
Nothing less.

Their ancestors
Live on.

Reborn in
Children
And
Grandchildren

Tradition still lives.

Scar Henry

Sergio Medellin

Spare me, sire.
Please I beg of you,
I have nothing else to give.

Oh, but you do.
You have your life do you not?

I would think that would be sufficient payment.

No! The horror! You
Oh how vile you are, sire!
Don't!

Ah, there you are.
Your head on a pike!
Now you shall address the audience
With a smile as they walk by.

Oh why do your eyes deceive me?
Do you not enjoy being immortalized?
It is as much as you could aspire to be,
Peasant!

The mouth hangs open,
As the words drop out

Long
Live
The King

Smoke Room

Sergio Medellin

When I walked in
I felt a cloud hit me.
As if it was death,
Greeting me.

Breathing him in.

Suffocating,

I pray for my life,
And I relive my death.

I drive on.

Lips

Elizabeth Shaw

Studying them
Watching them move
Making sounds
That don't come out so clear
Facial expressions
Always changing
Listening carefully
All the time
Muffled environment
Loud always
Never silent
How ironic
Being deaf is loud
My brain is not like others
It is a rare deafness
Not like the common kind of deafness
That you see in others
This one silences your brain
Yet it makes it louder
You're dazed but it's not your fault
You are blamed for not paying attention
It is the disease that runs in my veins
It is like a dam
The dam blocks the water
Takes a patient time
For the cracks to show

I heard the tires screeching,
I didn't hear anyone screaming,
The noises got louder again.

The next thing I knew was a world on fire:
Oil and smoke and asphalt.

"Get the hell out right now!"

He was laying on the body board,
Looking at a Ferrari,
Asking me and my sisters
To get pictures.

Ambulances,
Fire trucks,
The blood of the woman that hit us
Chunky, brainy, grey-matter red.

She shouldn't have been texting.

She could have killed us all,
Were we not in that tank of a car.
That's how Olivia's curved spine started.
That's how our PTSD started.
That's how the end of my life started.

That is how everything started.

Every time I slam on my breaks
I feel the heat,
I smell the smoke,
I hear the screech,

Retreating,
Oxygen
Flowing out
But never returned.

Ever present
Cloud of death
Will you ever stop?

Death has children
It seems.

Poor little guys
You were never
Meant to inhale

Their soft pale faces
Accentuate their
Round black eyes
That stare deep
Into my soul.

They know not yet
That they can breathe.
If only
They stepped
Outside
Then maybe
They would understand.

I let out a straining breath
Leaving space—
Between my red body suit,
And my skin.

"Ho hoho
What would
You like
For Christmas?"

To breathe
I would like
To think.

Glass Mansion

Sergio Medellin

How lonely it must feel:
A mansion,
You,
and no one else.
Nothing to distract you from your life that is imminently falling
apart.

The only thing that inhabits your home are ghosts from a distant
past.

Ghosts that raised and loved you but no longer have time for
you.

Now that you have nothing no one wants a part of you.
Another broken piece amidst a grave of shards.

Who will put you back together?
Be hope for the glass to be unshattered.
Glittering glass illuminated by fire, oh, how ash falls dark in its
beauty.

May beauty find its resting place where material no longer exists

Went back to sleep

Veins that cause pain are near



Amelia

Arthur Trickett-Wile

Infinity HWY 46, CA

Elizabeth Shaw

She cracked her sternum.
She saved us all.
She held her ribs together.

Not a typical long day,
The longest day of my life.

It was going to be a family vacation.

Just like my last surgery
 Breathed in
 Breathed out
 Repeat
 Asleep
 It was like I blinked
 And I was awake
 Alone
 The nurse was next to me
 The bandage was on my head again
 I was then relieved
 It was gone forever and for good
 Fluid was causing pain as well as the device itself
 Nurse rolled me back
 Happy face of mother came in
 I smiled weakly back at her
 I felt so good and my head was numb
 I was no longer a ghost of silent constant pain
 Or so I hope
 Nurse wheeled me out,
 Felt as if I was a ghost myself
 No feeling in my legs
 Slightly terrified
 I plead for them not to be paralyzed
 I arrived home
 Sisters hugged me
 I sat there high as ever
 That was all I remember
 Until exactly 4:35 AM
 The unbearable pain of my head
 Shaking, crying, desperate for the medicine
 Sister ran in,
 The meds kicked in slowly
 Relieved, small pain

Nothing no longer keeps the glass mansion from shattering.



Tularosa Ridge

Ashton Venzor

Georgevich

Sergio Medellin

Do you think you know hardship?
 Nobody does.
 Do you know how it feels to look over your shoulder on a daily
 basis
 It's not a playground
 Before your eyes is a murder
 Pure murder that leads into a psychic break
 Numb it, till you are restrained.

They need for you to calm down
 It's not safe here I see demons
 Everywhere

Satan follows me.

I'm not crazy
 You believe me right?
 I knew you would

Everything's beautiful
Everything's vivid
Everything's so real

We're All Monsters Now: Excerpt II

Andrew Zwaan

"Hey, check this out!" Willow exclaimed, pointing off a little bit into the distance.

I turned my attention to her, and saw what she was talking about: an amusement park. I had only ever seen them in pictures and movies before. A Ferris wheel towered above the park with its cars swaying in the wind. It looked like a lot of fun, but my mind was focused on one thing and one thing only: David.

"I don't know, Willow, I think we should keep going," I told her in the hopes that she'd listen.

"Oh, c'mon, it'll be awesome!" she said.

Shaking my head, I replied, "I just don't think it's a good idea. We need food and shelter."

"Emma, you need to relax. Look at what all this is doing to you. Let's take a break. You look like you need one," she said.

As much as I hated to admit it, she was right. After a few seconds, I agreed, "Alright, fine. I'll do it."

She replied, "Trust me, it'll be worth it."

The two of us walked across the street and came to the entrance. "How do we even know if it'll work?" I asked.

"I guess we'll just have to find out," she said.

I sighed and softly said to myself, "You'll get through this. Keep your head up, kiddo." At this point, I didn't know what I felt like, to be honest. I was literally living day-to-day. Yeah, Willow was probably right. I needed this. David could wait.

We went under the large, yellow, faded-out entrance which had the words Wonder Fun World. A creepy looking clown with blue and red hair and bulging eyeballs was painted on next

The terrible pain that made me want to scream
The shock, burn, ache,
Every time I would have to put on the device, no one understood but myself.

A child in pain like a ghost to the elders
The adults thought I was overreacting
No, this was pain and it was horrible
After eleven years of this pain,
Every day I've had to deal with,
My mother finally said what I've wanted to hear for years,
"You don't have to wear that ever again."

She finally understood, as well as the others
I no longer felt like a ghost,
I felt ever so relieved
I wait for the day I have been waiting too long for
Morning came

I stared at my ceiling
Stepped into the car,
Into the hospital
Signed many papers
I was alone in the hospital room
Silent as ever

IV in my arm,
Drugs burned my skin
Fire on skin
Fire on skin
Silent pain

Big eyed, frightened,
Nurse rolled me into the OR
Lifetime in repeat
The lights talked to me once again,
This was going to be a good change
Rock music played as doctors prepped me
Faces stared down at me once again

Eleven Years

Elizabeth Shaw

Early in the morning, dark outside
Terrified, big eyed
The day that changed my life forever
I looked out the window
Saw buildings small to big
The hospital, giant with eager students in classrooms
My mother held my hand gently as I held tighter
Nurses calmed me with medicine
I felt free and happy,
My spirit wanted to escape
Team of nurses and doctors rolled me to the OR
Then I saw them,
The lights
It looked as if they were talking to me, no not the faces that
looked down at me, in the dark room,
It was the lights that seemed to tell me that it was going to be a
change that would affect me for years
I awoke once again with an IV in my right arm,
Happy people stared down at me
Still slightly terrified, deaf in left ear, forever
My head numb
I wanted to feel my head so badly
I passed out mid-fall to the ground,
Woke up late that night, stared at the ceiling, went back to sleep
A few weeks of recovery,
I put the implant on
It hurt for a second, the feeling was scary,
It sparked to life, I could hear for once again in my left ear,
But it was not normal
Improved for a few years with the device, then it happened
The pain

to it. I felt like he was watching me. He gave me the chills. Kids actually used to like this kind of stuff? I thought.

Immediately after the entrance, the park pathway split diagonally into two different directions: left and right. The right had an arrow and a sign saying Aqua Adventure Palace. The left had the Ferris wheel farther back and a long row of rides.

Willow turned around and asked me, "Which way do you wanna go?"

"Left," I responded.

We walked in that direction. We passed a lot of booths, many of which had stuffed animals sitting on their shelves as prizes; lions, bears, bunnies, dogs, one even had some weird guy wearing a costume with bat ears. And just like the clown, I got the feeling that they were constantly staring at me. Yeah, times definitely used to be really weird back then.

Willow walked over to a map of the park, "Oooh, how about bumper cars?" she said.

I had no clue what she was talking about, "Bumper huh?" I asked.

"They're cars that you ram into each other, I think it sounds like fun," she explained.

I thought, Okay, what the hell used to be wrong with people? I mean, I can kind of get on board with the other stuff, but this was just maniacal.

Replying back to her, I said, "What?! No! Why on earth would anyone want to do that? It sounds terrifying!"

She laughed, "No, not with real cars! These are small, only seat one person."

"Oh," I replied, feeling a bit dumb, "Um, alright."

A few minutes went by and we got to the bumper cars, which weren't too far away from the Ferris wheel. There was just one problem. "How are we going to run these things?" I asked.

Ahead of me, Willow stopped and stared at something.

"What are you looking at?" I asked.

I kept walking, and once I was right next to her, I didn't need an explanation.

Lying down against the Ferris wheel was a large blanket and a pillow. Best of all though, was the small electric generator beside them. Someone used to live here.

"If it has enough juice, we could power the bumper cars with that," Willow suggested.

"I don't know how that machine even works," I replied.

"Well, lucky for us, I know a thing or two about generators from when I lived at Baycrest."

When we walked to the generator, we noticed it had a makeshift cart under it, made out of old, worn out wheels and a few planks of wood. That'd be much easier. I bent down and pushed it back to the bumper cars.

"Need help?" Willow asked.

"I got it. Where does it go?" I replied.

She pointed to a small room connected to the bumper car rink, "That looks like it could have the control panel in there."

I wheeled it in and stood back up, "All yours," I said to Willow.

A dozen buttons and panels and symbols filled up the switchboard against the window. I looked out and saw all the different cars. Willow opened up the door in front of us with an Employee's Only sign, and we were greeted with millions of lights and cords and all sorts of electrical equipment.

After picking up one of the cords, Willow said, "Alright you can get in and pick which one you want to drive. I'll try to figure this thing out. From what I've heard, it's just like driving a car. You ever done that before?" she asked.

I immediately thought of stealing David's truck, "Nah, I haven't," I lied, not wanting to think about it.

"Yeah, that makes two of us," she replied.

I headed down to the bumper cars, looking at each of them. I spotted a bright yellow car opposite of the entrance against the

rule. I didn't spend time fretting over frivolous gifts, and neither did he.

But that didn't mean there weren't some things that I longed for. It was in my kind's nature to crave things, after all.

There was a flower. The bleeding blue was lovely, and quite beautiful, in my opinion.

It came in many different shades, though often times it was as sky blue as those sparkling doodles that I recall making me feel like a little femme. I'm not sure if I like it, to be honest.

He saw me admiring them one day, touching the beautiful shaped petals, and I could tell I never stopped smiling as I felt the satin melt brush of the texture against the tip of my claws.

These flowers were even shaped like a beautifully shaped rose, hanging from a vine one after the other. But when they bloomed, they turned into lovely flowers with tinted centers that carried a pleasant scent as my tail flicked the air.

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



Saturated

Arthur Trickett-Wile

me, because I couldn't live without him.

Blood Blue Rose

Raven DeForest

He was by no means a romantic; that much I realized long ago. He could be cold and callous and fairly aloof at times, but I could not help but love him anyway. My relationship with him was a bit chaotic, and by nature, given our opposing personalities.

I was a quiet wolf, mean but gentle at times, with an undeniable air of grace in everything I did. The way I walked and how I carried myself left a resounding sense of eloquence in all who beheld me, I think, and this was a trait my lover seemed fascinated by. In contrast, he was merciless and a fearsome opponent in battle. He struck down all those who opposed him without a care in the world, and often I would seek refuge elsewhere, if he intended to torture someone slowly.

He was different than what I was used to, but I was loyal to him. I stayed by his side and was there when he needed me, whether it was for something simple or in the heat of battle. I tried my best to tend the wounds he often ignored, and I made sure to remind him gingerly with a thick tone of amusement that he was a doctor, so why was I the one stuck with treating his wounds?

Never once did I fail him, when he needed it. He was certainly stubborn about it. Here I was compassionate in nature and more tentative and tender than most, but that did not mean that I didn't have a serious and stubborn side. I like the fun way. This was also a trait he seemed to find endearing, though it was never verbally mentioned by him. Nothing really was, for that matter. But I understood it well enough; he cared for me, in his own way, just as I do for him.

Most couples often showered each other in affection and gifted one another with trinkets and items that were bound to fade eventually, but he and I seemed to be the exception to that

wall. That one was the one I wanted.

I fit myself into the seat and grabbed the cold steering wheel tightly, not really knowing what to expect out of this. About a minute went by.

"Ready?!" Willow yelled, her voice full of excitement.

"Ready!" I said.

Willow started them up, ran out of the control room, and jumped into a blue car on the other side of the rink. I could feel the vibration of the car as I sat in it.

I stared at her, glaring, and she did the same to me. At the exact same time, both of us slammed down on the pedal and raced right towards each other. It took only a second before the front of our cars collided.

On impact, me and Willow yelled and suddenly burst out laughing. My car flew back, hitting others in its path. I steered clear of them, and noticed that Willow's car was against the wall. Perfect, I thought, laughing to myself quietly.

Before she had a chance to do anything, I rocketed forward towards her car and caught her by surprise, ramming into it again. Through several laughs, I pointed at her and yelled, "Got you!"

Willow waved her hand at me, "Whatever, I'll get you next time!" she shouted with a big grin on her face.

So, for the next two or three minutes, we continued slamming into each other's cars. Eventually, it got to the point where we couldn't even get out a single word without laughing. My sides hurt from cracking up and my jaw hurt from smiling for so long. Who would've thought that purposely crashing into tiny little cars could be so entertaining? And, even if it was only for several minutes, it was at that moment when I truly knew what it felt like to be normal. Like an actual kid for once. I didn't have to worry about anything else except having fun. And I *loved* it.



Self-Portrait

"You idiot—" I said.

His eyes narrowed at this, almost as if he were simultaneously confused and insulted. But, I didn't give him a chance to respond.

The pounding of my feet against the cold tiles of the room shattered the silence of the room as I ran towards him.

I wasn't slowing down, even when I got dangerously close to him. I could see the sudden look of surprise that crossed his features, but it didn't stop me from leaping onto him.

My body collided with his, and although it weighed practically nothing compared to his, he still stumbled backwards a few steps from the blunt impact. His stormy gray eyes widened considerably, and for a moment, I felt his muscles turn rigid as I locked my legs and arms around him, clinging onto him like a small child. I buried my face in his shoulder, and my tears ran down his armor and thick coat as his hands twitched by his side. Here I was, clinging onto him like a child with my legs wrapped around his waist and my arms wound around his neck.

Normally, he would have killed anyone who dared to do this to him. But, my tears and muffled sobs grounded him, and he scowled deeply, sighing a bit roughly as he slowly raised his arms to wrap them around me in order to prevent me from falling.

My scent flooded his senses, but mainly the lone flower that carried its pleasant aroma to his nose. A primrose: white in color and small in size.

"Don't ever do that again," I said, my voice nothing more than a pleading whimper, and I felt his muscles slowly relaxing. With a sigh of resignation, he gave me only a simple nod in response. He knew he had scared me witless, and I had in fact been utterly terrified. His fingers laced into my fur, and my body quivered as I clenched at his coat. I had feared for his life more than I had ever feared for anything—he meant more to me than I could ever convey. His life was precious, more valuable to me than all the treasure in the world. I wouldn't let anything take him from

now the perfectly planned strategy that he'd spent months mulling over was thrown off kilter. For all the torture I had to endure as I watched the tattooed male cry out in pain, it was all over soon enough.

For me, I wasn't sure how long it had been. Seconds, minutes, hours? I wasn't quite sure; time seemed to crawl by as I remained by the Surgeon's side, trembling in grief as I was forced to witness him at his lowest. But now, it was quiet. I knew that it finally over.

Darkstorm had his heart back, and Tarnsclaw was defeated, having had the tables turned on him at the last possible second. No more screams of agony from the Surgeon of Death resounded off the walls and reverberated, rattling me to the very core as I was forced to watch him writhe in pain. His heart was made into a toy by the undercover spy, whose allegiances lay with Spiritmirk, the very same man that Darkstorm was defying, which was why he found himself in the position he was in.

I watched him from a distance, following his every move through tear-blurred vision. It was then that he turned, and his stormy gray-colored eyes collided with my glassy evergreen eyes. I wanted to scream at him, to call him an idiot for even giving up his heart in the first place. I wanted to cry at having seen him suffer so much, and I wanted to make sure that he never endured such pain again.

His gaze was penetrating, and I clutched the sides of my armor as I balled my clawed hands into fists, my eyes watering up as I sucked in my bottom lip. All I could imagine was him collapsed on the ground; all I could hear was his wheezing, half-alive breaths and his bellowing cries of torment, echoing in my mind like a nightmarish, broken record.

His eyebrows furrowed as he looked at me, his lips pulling into a faint frown as my shoulders began to quiver, and I sniffled a bit, gripping my armor tighter, until my knuckles faded to white, my hands trembled, and my ears lay flat against my head.



Sergio Medellin

Woodpeckers Only

Sergio Medellin and Arthur Trickett-Wile

"If only! if only!" the woodpecker cries.
If only, if only, if only . . .

The woodpecker dies.
How sad.
I miss its beady eyes.

An optimist in the truest sense;
Peck, peck, pecking away,
Looking for grubs in some hollow, rotten oak.

All the folk enjoyed its presence.
Though, I still sense pecking there;
A sparrow-sword, a tool used for divining,
Sharp in its lining.

But now, his tree sits still,
Waiting for a bird upon its branch,
So that, one day, he may come and pay grace to it.

A little something:
Po-tee-weet!

Still, it makes me smile,
But now, my hair fades white,
Still patient for the day that I may hear him.

Is this a dream? Is this delusion?
No!
I hear it! I hear it! I hear it!
It's peckering chatter, music to my ears.

Will not be my last,
If you could do one thing for me,
Promise to always have
A better tomorrow
Make it better than today.
Fill your life with no regrets,
Live not for yesterday.
Live for tomorrow,
Let the sunrise make your day . . .
When you feel its warm embrace,
That's just me, I'm waiting . . .

For tomorrow.

I Can't Live Without You

Raven DeForest

This wasn't right. No, this was all wrong.
He shouldn't be screaming in pain. He shouldn't be clutching at his chest, where only an empty hole greeted the tips of his fingers that grasped wildly in his anguish. He shouldn't be vulnerable; he shouldn't be in this situation.

He had warned me to stay back. Although I was no weakling, my training had yet to prepare me or properly equip me for handling an opponent such as Tarnsclaw, who was even a challenge for Smokefang.

As much as I hated it, there was nothing to be done. Tarnsclaw would kill me if I attempted to attack him head on and reclaim Darkstorm's heart.

So, I sat beside the Surgeon instead, patiently waiting with an aching heart for him to come up with some conniving plan. He always did, so why should now be any different?

But it was . . .

He hadn't counted on Tarnsclaw getting his heart, and

This Is for Tomorrow

Raven DeForest

Excuse me, ma'am . . . Is this your son?
It saddens me to say,
He took a leap, his luck ran out.
He received his wings today.
But here is a letter, told to give
To those at this address.
As she began to read, they walked away.
A tear fell to her dress.

*This is for tomorrow, if I don't make it today,
I love you all & lived my life,
Don't worry I'm ok.*

I chose my path against the grain,
And followed my own soul.
I chose to climb, trusted my cape . . .
The fault is mine alone.
Don't blame it on my brothers.
Or God not being fair.
Guilt human curiosity to
Justify why you're here.
In this dreadful situation
Filled with pain, filled with sorrow.
My actions irreversible.
My truth you're forced to swallow.

*This is for tomorrow, I didn't make it today.
I love you all & lived my life,
Don't worry, I'm ok.*

Please realize that this life

Can I go now?

I know he waits for me,
In the city of the clouds,
Perched in some ashen, old yew,
And thinking:
If only, if only, if only.

Amnesia

Sergio Medellin and Arthur Trickett-Wile

I stand upon the backlit stage,
A million faces stare at me,
Their piercing judgment.

Tension so heavy,
It brings my eyes down.

I am lost for words.
I do not know why I am here.

I feel so embarrassed—
Why?

Chuckles from the audience arise.
Their grinning laugh turns sinister.

I see distorted faces:
Laughing men,
Turned roaring monsters.

I am petrified.
How do I escape?
Everything collapsing all around me.

The lion at the proscenium; hungry in the eyes.

I feel his heavy breath,
His tail flickers like a fire.
"Out, out you fool. Do not mock me, standing there!"
His jagged grimace smile.

I curl back within myself.
The curtains close to us.

And it is he,
And it is me,
Eternal three,
A fool, a lion, and God.



Pupa (Jewelry) Arthur Trickett-Wile

Spaculty Fonsor's Note (Paschal Murat Booker)

For seven years now, it has been my privilege to sponsor this gem of a magazine. Though a grand design in the high-octane imagination of founding editor Robert Hook, we began modestly, with issues cranked out of the Hook familia home printer. Witness in your hands our transformation! I am extraordinarily grateful to our blessed benefactors, Rebecca and David Hook, and - over the past four years - our sublime literary patrons Valerie Reese and Tom Jefferson. We have been blessed as well by the talents and leadership of our editors Robert Hook, Christopher Hook, John Guerrero, and Arthur Trickett-Wile; I am confident that our suffragan editors Morgan Monet Carolin and Matthew Alsip will lead the magazine into a glorious future, as they, too, have served us well. This, our fourteenth issue, is ample evidence that the arts are alive at Winston, and will remain so, as long as there are those committed to fostering and welcoming the audacious creative minds aflame in our midst. Be blessed.

Headitor's Note (Arthur Trickett-Wile)

Here, you hold the culmination of what may be the most prolific group of writers and artists Winston has seen thus far. This year, Mr. Booker's Seventh-Period class has served as a kind of creative nucleus for the senior writers. Through constant critique, review, and the ever-present creative crank, this group has managed to generate more poetry and prose than any of us thought possible. This edition is the farthest edge: a sword of dark and light. Between the likes of Elizabeth Shaw with her uplifting narratives, and Sergio Medellin in his eternal dark, this edition is rife with the highest grade of material. To my editors-in-training, Morgan Carolin and Matthew Alsip, I hand the torch. Their work on this magazine continues to light the way for the greatest minds; they will carry us all through the fires of what may come. Farewell.

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School Faculty

Faculty Sponsor "Spaculty Fonsor"—Paschal Murat Booker

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Special Events Coordinator—Martha Day

Staff Writer-in-Residence "The Amazicle"—Tij Jefferson

Associate Arts Editor—Elizabeth Shaw

Chief Editor "Headitor"—Arthur Trickett-Wile

11th

Suffragan Editor/Arts Editor "Monet"—Morgan Carolin

10th

Suffragan Suffragan Editor—Matthew Alsip

9th

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

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

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