

Celebrating 40 years

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Cornfield Review



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Preface

EMBRACE THE CORN.

This phrase became something of a mantra for us as we compiled this year's issue. It's not just part of our name, after all; it's in our roots (recall Marion's historical legacy as the hub of popcorn production). So in this, our 40th anniversary, we take stock of where we've been, a necessary step to figuring out where we're headed. Reflection is a good thing. Embrace the corn.

Once we decided to truly and fully embrace the corn, we committed. A few whimsical submissions this year made us ask: what can we do differently this year to mark this milestone anniversary? Nothing overly stodgy or somber, mind you, but something fun and goofy: thus the Corny Poetry section, which includes cringe-worthy verse from some of our own faculty, was born (thanks here to Hannah Fuller, whose self-explication of her middle-school poem leads off the section). Also, we wanted to pay homage to the original issue, started in 1976 under the guidance of the late, great David Citino. This led to our Throwback section, where we highlight a handful of pieces from back in the day.

Deep roots, hearty stock, and good growing conditions help ensure a good yield, and ours was a good one this year. This could not have come to pass without the help from several fieldhands, however, who deserve our thanks: the administration of OSU-Marion, led by Dean Greg Rose; our talented and supportive English faculty; the writers and artists (some students, faculty, and staff at OSUM and MTC, others citizens at large), without whose creative efforts we wouldn't even have an issue to begin with.

The 2016 Editorial Board went well above and beyond this year, tilling soil and tending the crops that you now hold in your hands. Their tireless work ethic, good judgment, and creative insights have resulted in an outstanding issue. This year's board consists of: Emily Darnall, Ashley Irvin, and Katelyn Hamilton.

Cornfield Review is published annually. The Editorial Board is interested in quality poetry, prose, artwork, and photography. Submissions are primarily solicited from students at OSU-Marion, Marion Technical College, and Columbus State Community College-Delaware, although we accept submissions from off-campus writers and artists as well. For more information, please email me at mc-corkle.12@osu.edu, or visit us online at <http://cornfieldreview.osu.edu>. Oh, and remember: embrace the corn.

—Ben McCorkle, Faculty Adviser

The Cornfield Review Mission Statement:

We strive to represent the literary and artistic voice of Central Ohio by giving area college students (as well as others) an opportunity to see their work published in a professional literary journal. Additionally, we are passionate about achieving a cultural impact that goes beyond local campuses and reaches into the greater community.

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SPECIAL SECTION

Throwback

1976

REPRINTS FROM THE VERY FIRST ISSUE

Dear Readers,

The Cornfield Review has been published by The Ohio State University at Marion for 40 years. Since its inception, the magazine has published poetry, prose, and visual art. While the focus of the publication has been largely literary, over time it has morphed into a truly unique display of talent in both writing and visual art. As an example, there were only two photographs published in the entire first issue. This year, however, the editorial board combed through nearly forty submissions of photographs, drawings, and other visual art alone!

It is exciting to remember where we have been, and to imagine where we are going. To commemorate this milestone, we read through our very first issue, published in 1976, and decided to share our favorite piece from each category with you here.

The editorial process is never easy, but it is very fulfilling to be able to contribute to the assembly of this yearly snapshot of talent from our campus to share with the world. We look forward to many more decades of The Cornfield Review.

*Sincerely,
The Cornfield Review Editorial Board*

Joker

Cards—who are the cards?
Are they the pasteboard
Or the people?
Do the players lead the trump
Or is the trump soul leader Guiding hands to its glory in play
Laughing at the guided?
Is the joker in the deck
Or the deck held by the joker?

—Bud Bricker



Frank Conway, Untitled

Msaishine
GARRETT W. FOX

SUMMER NIGHTS IN INDIANA are usually pleasant; cool breezes balloon lacy curtains, whip them aside, and then reward the patient for their day's labor. Unfortunately, I didn't have any curtains, and even with the brown shade rolled up to expose all of the screen it was still hot inside. Those cool winds seemed particular, all up and down the street they'd rush in one window and then another, but never mine. Perhaps they knew the electricity had been shut off or they had seen the uncollected garbage on the back porch and had decided that I was undeserving of reward.

My warmth, then was not caused by the nude reclining on the chair in front of me. With my bare ass resting on the edge of the cot, I'd been leafing through an old *Playboy*, my flashlight reintroducing me to half forgotten cartoons until I came across "Miss December." I checked the front cover—1966—and unfolded the hinged body so that her head rested on the back of the chair and her legs dangled over the edge. I sipped some beer, placed the bottle between my feet and offered my apologies for not remembering her better. She'd born her years well; the creases across her shoulders and belly were a little more evident but she was still everything a boy could want for Christmas. Her red lips smiled warmly. Her right hand, poised above her head, held some mistletoe tied with a red bow and her left hand seemed to be losing its grasp on the flannel pajamas that in some future time would slip forever from her round hips.

My attention shifted to the drop of sweat that was slowly working its way down my brow. Past the bridge of my nose and on to the tip—"plunk," it found its way into the small opening of the bottle below. I finished the last of the warm beer and went to sleep.

Less snobbish than last night's cool air, the sun easily found my open window. Miss

December watched me light a cigarette and flip on the radio— 9:16, 82 degrees and “Boys and girls, moms and dads, an oldie but goodie: “Summertime, summertime, sum sum summertime/ Summertime, summertime, sum sum summertime”

Since school let out I’d spent my summertime looking for a job. In the past I’d avoided going home by working for a local printing company but they were no longer hiring temporary help. When the dorm closed I’d anticipated the summer’s poverty and had moved my junk into an old two-storied house that a friend and four or five others shared during the school year—they’d all wisely gone home but to not lose the place had paid the rent until fall.

It was amazing that such a small town had so many places where one could look for work. But looking was about all I could do. I’d spent several weeks applying at all the local factories but with no luck. Finally, in desperation, I’d ignored the “experienced only need apply” phrase in the help wanted ads and sought work pumping gas or washing dishes only to find they wanted someone year round or that they actually did want only “experienced dishwashers.” It was definitely a buyers’ market.

There were only two more possibilities left. World Wide Plastics and Weird John. I’d spend just one more day looking and if I couldn’t find anything, well—I’d

head back home to the cornfield.

I’d discovered World Wide Plastics the previous night. Several miles out of town and not far from the dump, it appeared to be an old brick school house made over so that Crawfordsville might capture the world market in plastics.

The inner office surprised me: panelled walls, carpet, and even an air conditioner in its one window. The secretary was less of a surprise. The several dozen I’d seen over the last few weeks all seemed alike; you got the feeling that if one of their girlfriends described them no mention would be made of charm or wit but only “Wanda drives a ‘73 Mustang with mag wheels and four on the floor.”

I filled out the application with all the proper names and numbers. It typically takes about a half hour to print your life history, filling in two pages of blank spaces in order to delight some future anthropologist interested in twentieth century midwestern life.

The next hour’s wait was also typical. As “Wanda” possessed the only reading material, *The Sensuous Woman*, and as I wasn’t bold enough to seek her opinions on whipped cream, I spent the time silently daydreaming about Miss December.

The manager’s performance, too, was familiar. He divided sixty seconds between glancing at my application and repeating a

speech I suspect is passed from one factory to another on a crumpled typewritten page, "We aren't hiring any summer employees at the moment but we appreciate your application and we'll keep it on file and give you a call if anything comes up."

Before he could catch his breath and run out of the office I gave him a suggestion I'd offered others during the last few days: why didn't he save all job hunters a lot of goddamn time and trouble by simply installing a neon sign like the ones motels use, "No Vacancy." His response, probably taken from that same typewritten sheet—or borrowed from a recent *American Journal of Personnel Psychology*—was brief and to the point, "Fuck you."

My last chance to stay in town was by working for Weird John. W. J. deserved his title. Besides being queer, he had a passion for potbellied stoves of the type found in railroad cabooses; in obtaining the most recent addition to his collection he had been arrested. As punishment for being weird he was given a year's probation and expelled from school for a semester.

Besides all that, however, W. J. was a financial wizard; at twenty, he already had a fat bank account, a plane, a new sports car and even a panel truck (for hauling potbellied stoves, I suppose). His

project this summer was to calculate the amount of refund due customers of an Ohio electric company that had been overcharging. W. J. had put in the lowest bid, rented the top floor of an old warehouse and staffed his operation with some high school kids.

John didn't need any extra help but finally hired me for the afternoon. I was given an alphabetized stack of pink slips, all W's, and shown how to calculate the refund and where to record the amount. Later the second runner-up in the "Miss Montgomery County Beauty Pageant" would punch the information onto IBM cards and then an even more expensive, if less comely, piece of machinery would type out the checks.

Four hours later I was finished with Robert Wythers (only a \$42.37 refund, old Bob was apparently frugal with his kilowatts) and yet still had a number of slips left. Then I discovered that the remaining slips all belonged to the same person: Miss Joy Wyuka, it seems, had moved no less than twenty-seven times during the last few years. Each move was beautifully timed to correspond with the arrival of the electric bill as only one was marked paid. (That one was for two months at 1210 Main Street in Dayton—it must be an extraordinarily attractive neighborhood.) I stapled the one paid bill on top of the others and recorded the refund due a more conscientious customer. If the check ever catches up with her, perhaps Joy can settle down—

at least for a few months.

Six bucks for four hours' work. Not too bad, but unfortunately, that was the last day of W. J.'s operation. Still, six bucks was enough to put some gas in the car and finance another day's job hunting, though I really didn't know where else I could look.

The money was the most I'd had in several weeks; I passed up my usual 250 hamburgers and headed for Carl's. The place was deserted—only a few townies—but a cold schooner and a corned beef sandwich left me feeling better than I had for quite some time. And even at Carl's prices I still had enough gas money to take me home.

Home; reason number one for trying to stay in Crawfordsville. God how I hated the farm! My dad's corn fields stretched for as far as the eye can see and—corny or not—that's quite a distance in Indiana. Christ, how I hated those corn fields. I remember one day slowly wringing the neck of one stalk and then throwing the cob as far as I could; I watched it somersault against the summer sky until it descended and brought my eyes back to—more corn, miles and miles of it. No trees, hills or streams, only corn, and no way I could kill it all.

I picked up a wet dime from the change and called reason number two. Janice, however, had decided at the last minute to join

her parents for a week's vacation at their cabin in Nebraska. I asked her grandmother why in the hell anyone would buy a cabin in Nebraska but she didn't answer.

Fitz came in. For some unfathomable reason he hadn't wanted to spend the summer with his parents in California. He too had been unable to find work but did have one last idea, why not work in Indianapolis? Between us we had enough money to finance at least one day's job hunting and if we did find something, it was close enough so that I could see Janice as often as I liked.

Fitz treated for another beer and a copy of the *Indianapolis Star*. It took a good half hour to work our way through the want ads but our labor was well rewarded, for, with mounting joy, we had stumbled across an array of the most fantastic opportunities ever dreamed of:

Summer Employment for College Students! Humanities and Science Majors Only Need Apply. (Who else?) This is not a selling job but one that offers a guaranteed salary and a chance for a scholarship for those willing to perform a public service. Apply room 805 Capital Building.

And on and on, so many jobs just waiting for the untrained college student. Crossing off the few factory jobs we'd circled at

the beginning, we were left with an even dozen ads and each one seemed to have been written just for us. It was agreed; Fitz and I would share expenses and make the sixty mile trip the next morning.

Carl finally tossed us out at closing time and I carefully drove back to the house; I wasn't in beer drinking shape since my dad's monthly checks had ended with the school term. I had forgotten to put the flashlight in the car and so had to grope to find the keyhole and feel my way past the living room and into the kitchen. I opened the refrigerator and discovered I didn't even have a warm beer left. (It had somehow seemed appropriate to keep my case in the refrigerator although it had ceased functioning.) Holding the handrail, I found my way upstairs to the front of the house and my cot. I stripped and opened the shade. I was just at that point of drunkenness where I didn't feel like sleeping; instead, I focused on the summer night outside, at my neighbor's gently moving curtains, at the moths that banged against the street lamp and at my old Ford parked below. Then I remembered the one joint hidden in the car. Bumping into the hallway, tripping half down the stairs, I was outside and opening the hood. The weed was in a magnetic box hidden under the fender panel; as I bent over to retrieve it I remembered that I was bare-assed naked.

Upstairs I smoked, coughed,

and resolved to find a better hiding place for any future grass. I vaguely remember saying goodnight to Miss December as I tucked her between her paper covers.

Our hope for honest employment was short-lived. The first two jobs turned out to be selling encyclopedias door to door on commission. The third "public service, guaranteed salary job," was for selling magazines door to door; again on commission and again with a slick and somewhat less than honest spiel to be memorized.

Discouraged but still hoping, we phoned the remaining ads. The secretaries weren't very friendly but most cooperated; "liberal arts and science majors only" jobs involved, it turned out, selling everything from pots and pans to Bibles. Only two sounded the least bit encouraging and we headed toward the first of these.

"Msaisuhtne" (ma-sut'-ne) yelled the man in front as his right arm, with clenched fist, punched the air above him to punctuate his cry. "Msaisuhtne!" A dozen clean-cut bodies echoed their leader. Each carrying a cardboard briefcase, they marched two abreast from the office we were about to enter—we can't claim we weren't forewarned.

Inside on several long couches sat fellow college students. Most, it seemed, had an appointment with a Mr. Rozelle and as

promised he appeared promptly at 11:00. Except for his haircut he looked exactly like the guy on TV who for the past seven years has conducted “. . . for this month only a search in your area to find talented artists to meet the ever increasing demand of the ART World!” You know the one, he shows you a picture of a hockey player “but you’d be surprised how many people don’t recognize this as a hockey player! They lack the vital gift of ‘graphic recognition.’ ”

But this guy’s line—my God—in five minutes he’d destroyed any cynicism the morning had created, in fifteen any that I’d learned in my twenty-one years, and at the end of the first half hour he could have sold me the Emperor’s clothes. *This* man was no lowly encyclopedia pusher.

“Our concern is education! We wish to place teaching machines in various homes for the edification of children. To encourage parental cooperation you are authorized to give the parents a free set of encyclopedias and, in addition, a ten-year subscription to our information service, permitting them to receive a written answer to any question they have, ten questions a year!”

God! We’d simply be asking parents to help “educators” gain knowledge about the efficacy of teaching machines and we’d get paid for our trouble.

Rozelle demonstrated a model “similar to the ones you’ll be placing” and it certainly was

impressive: lights, buttons, buzzers, and programs for different areas and different age levels.

An hour of complete mesmerism and then Fitz began to ask questions. “Do the parents have to buy the encyclopedias?”

“No! They’re absolutely free—only an inducement to encourage them to use our teaching machines so that we may improve the quality of their children’s education.”

“Do the parents have to pay anything for the machines?”

“No! They’re absolutely free!”

I pushed Fitz in the side—this guy was obviously a saint, only trying to spread the noble aims of Academia in humble Indiana—and didn’t deserve to be given a hard time. Another half hour went by and in spite of my new found faith, I did get the feeling that this saint was telling us more about the encyclopedias than the teaching machines that were to shed Promethean light upon our bucolic land.

But then Fitz stiffened as if he had suddenly seen all the ills of the world laid before him. “Do the parents have to pay for the information service?”

“Not really. We usually charge a fee of \$5 for each question subscribers may ask, but the families you’ll be dealing with will only pay a nominal fee.”

My prospect of an honorable fortune began to fade somewhat but it wasn’t for another ten minutes—the dude seemed to be finishing and was beginning to

ask how many were interested in working in this high paying and humanitarian cause when Fitz asked the final question:

"How much is the nominal fee?"

"Uh! \$3.95" — and then back into the closing pattern.

Everyone seemed pacified but I had grasped Fitz's logic: ten information tickets a year for ten years at \$3.95 each--\$395. We were being recruited to sell encyclopedias, short and simple!

Fitz and I were the only ones who didn't agree to come back the next day to take the training course on how to place those marvelous teaching machines. MSAISUHTNE!

We got some coffee and Fitz called his parents, collect. His end of the conversation consisted mostly of grunts but when he returned to the table he announced he was heading home. He had an airplane credit card and enough left for cab fare. I said I envied him for having California to go home to. He said he didn't know why and left.

Since it was on the way to where the car was parked anyway, I figured I'd try the only want ad we hadn't eliminated.

"Look Mr Campbell, I might save us both some trouble by telling you that I'm not interested in pushing encyclopedias."

Mr. Campbell smiled, "I know exactly what you mean; those encyclopedia boys should be put away! But our product doesn't need to be pushed. It's really like our want ad says, we really do feel that we're offering something the public needs."

I sat down. We made small talk about my college football team while I examined the product: a small plastic fire alarm with a little disk inserted at the bottom that apparently melted at a certain temperature and set off a piercing alarm—"guaranteed to wake the dead and keep 'em up for at least five minutes." I guessed that it sold for four or five dollars and figured it wouldn't be too bad a job if there wasn't any high pressure routine involved.

"Hell no, we don't need any high pressure tactics. All you need is our little booklet; it'll sell them for you."

He pulled out a briefcase with several fire alarms and a glossy pamphlet inside.

"And none of this knock on every door in town routine. We only approach middle class families and older people. And once they see this little booklet they buy one for every room! And besides helping people out there's good money in it for you. You get \$10 for each one you sell. That's a 20 percent commission."

Christ! Fifty bucks for something any half-wit could make himself for a few dollars; but before I could say anything, he opened

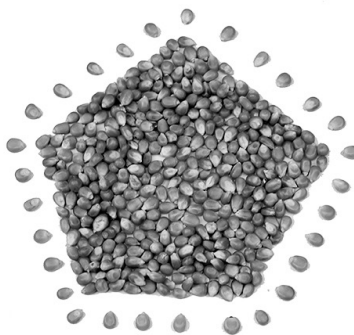
his “self-selling” booklet—glossy photographs of children and old women who had been severely burned.

I was on my feet but Campbell was taking my profanity calmly as though he were used to it. But when he moved to show me the door I removed the disk from the sample alarm still in my hand. It let off an ear shattering noise as I tossed it into the far corner of the room. Campbell rushed toward it as I proceeded to disarm the five alarms in the briefcase. As I left, Campbell was at the other end of the room trying to break the plastic box with the heel of his shoe.

Back in Crawfordsville, I filled the tank, picked up my few belongings and headed home.

A half hour along on my three hour trip I stopped at a roadside tavern and bought a cold quart of beer. My cigarette ash dropped on the seat as I reached for a second sip from the bottle beside me. The sun was just setting and in front of me—and behind me—and on either side—stretched miles and miles of corn.

Poetry



The Nightingale

She offers her voice—
the tremble of glass

an extension of chord,
for a single red rose.

A thorn against her breast,
she understands secret sorrow

and sings
with each note stained

in the beat of her heart.
Strung in succession

of hallowed howls,
her life sketched

into the fabric of a song.
She screams

deliberate beauty
in ordinary silence,

for a love,
that only brings the death of her.

—*Deanna Bachtell*

A Pilot and a Poet

A pilot and a poet so carefully placed apart
with careful precision
mastering each their own art
so clear in front of them, a vision.

With careful precision,
finding the freedom of the letters and the sky,
so clear in front of them, a vision
and you could almost hear the earth cry.

Finding the freedom of the letters and the sky,
seeking and soaring with so many miles away,
and you could almost hear the earth cry
when the slow pen hit the paper as soft as clay.

Seeking and soaring with so many miles away,
so far away with nothing but clouds taking shape,
when the slow pen hit the paper as soft as clay
and the sky consuming everything with the shape of a cape.

So far away with nothing but clouds taking shape,
a pilot and a poet mastering the same art,
but so carefully in different shape,
the change is only near their heart.

A pilot and a poet mastering the same art,
the distance nothing but a length in the sky,
the change is only near their heart

with dreams flying so high.

—*Morgan DeWitt*

Modern Day Coffee

The conversations have changed
Metamorphosed like a rock under too much pressure
Compressed from
“Let’s change the world”
To
“I found a way to memorize names in a fast way,
if her name is Patty, picture her with two buns,
one on her feet, one on her head”

A rock that has lived many lives,
taken many journeys through streams
dumping into oceans of sentences,
our words are pebbles in the waves that
submerge our thoughts.

Our worst thoughts speaking as loud
as the only person talking above the
brewing of the coffee beans.

Our lost thoughts traveling the ropes
of our mind
as a homeless soul picks up the left behind
cigarette butts and wanders into an empty
seat in the warmest and dustiest corner of
hearts and the café.

Our thoughts constantly being reconstructed
with careful precision
like the lines of a newborn poet who sits
not far away
hitting the backspace with frustration.

Our thoughts coming and going,
like the music the guests
can hear through the pauses
in their headphones.

Our thoughts constantly being hidden,
like the ripped couches,
that are so carefully placed out
of eye sight of the passersby,
yearning for new customers.

Our joyful thoughts stored
so perfectly beneath the rest,
stacked like the books
for 50 cents each,
sitting in order.

I order the Kerouac blend
between thoughts of the hurried strangers
and their feet.

—Morgan DeWitt

Letter to Ruth from Carrolton

Dear Ruth: The streets of West Winter street
are lined with broken snow flakes and plastics that were meant to be
recycled but were left behind by the dump truck. I think about picking them up
It's a choice that does not have a universal answer but it's a question that makes
the world take breath like it's been suffocated underwater and has just sub-
merged the surface. Are we constantly drowning under the choice between good-
will and evil? I like to think my answer is always goodwill but
I didn't pick up the left behind plastics. I didn't care enough. Does that make me
Evil?

He didn't care about me, Grandma.

It was like fast-forwarding a movie to see what happened in the end that has no
end. There was no end

The camera in my brain took pictures of my future with him in them
My heart beats back and forth between goodwill and evil like a yoyo being con-
trolled by a toddler that's never played with a yoyo. I've hit the sidewalk a few
times trying to keep the camera in my brain focused on his face
His brain had a camera too. It had a camera that flashed only when I was in the
very corner. Hidden like a report card that was meant to never be seen by the
eyes of mom and dad

Does it make him evil?

Does it make me evil for hating him?

He's evil. He was like a bad haircut, he was like working late on Friday, he was
like running late for school and still having to defrost your windows, he was like
going out to eat at your favorite restaurant only to see that it closed 5 minutes
ago, he was like taking a drink of sprite and finding out it was water, he was like
getting a new pair of headphones and losing them the next day, he was
It was evil to stay somewhere where I was dangling by a thread

It was a goodwill to use my crayon

My crayon is not coloring a picture. It's making new lines with my hand as it's
guide

It doesn't drawing something pretty. It makes it harder for the camera to focus.

There's only one face to focus on now though.

The camera doesn't have any trouble focusing. It's time traveling without time to
flash.

I just see me. I don't see him, the crayon took care of that.

I think I'll buy flowers for myself on the way home. I think I'll rent a movie with
a good ending. I think I'll call someone who wants more than my ear in their
picture. I think I'll pick up the plastic on West Winter Street.

I can't wait to take a picture with you. Love, Morgan.

—*Morgan DeWitt*

Coffee and Cigarettes

A day on Wall Street starts again,
Buying, selling, it never ends.
A simple day from eight to five.
A gulp of coffee to awake the day,
And a headache already strikes.
Dealing with people's wants, you'd rather not,
as they are simply unsatisfied of everything.
A contract's a contract that can't be undone;
Partial ownership is what you wanted and got.
Leaving the desk, taking a break,
People are people who will never change.
A puff of smoke fills the air;
Product markets, resource markets, it's all there.
It's as if people want everything for nothing,
They can't have.
They want a bond,
They wish for high interest rates.
We can't just dish it out,
For it is fixed.
More hot coffee sits beside me,
Becoming a necessity of happiness and content.
Fire ignites the stick of nicotine;
Smoke swirling all around the atmosphere,
As another day on Wall Street has come and gone.

—*Sal Gable*



Brittany Violet Long, "Kentucky Mornings"



Brittany Violet Long, "Wild Horses"

Empty

The rain is dancing across the glass of my car. I'm inside thinking of my life in brief images. A lady walks her dog in front of me looking in to see if I am okay. No, not okay. Pain is creeping in like a needle. Pain at first then just a numb feeling. Actually no feelings at all. Numb, I have been this way for so long. Just needing a moment to feel I press the gas when the light turns red. A car has to swerve but still nothing. Not a thing can drag me out. Where will this lead, this need to find meaning? I drive past a diner as a server pours coffee. The cup eventually runs dry and no matter how many times it is filled again dry. Just a dry empty cup.

—*Ashley Irvin*

Empty Eyes

The wind blows through the hair of one so young
Standing without motion by a dark grave
Empty eyes staring down at a stale face
Eyes peering into a deep chilly soul
A soul that even when alive, was iced

Her mother was nothing but a stranger
Loving the bottle more than her own flesh
Never taking the simple time to care
Leaving a child just wondering why
Why she was never deserving of more

Innocence stolen by actions not her own
Here stands a daughter with dark eyes,
Empty eyes searching for more than this life

A tear running down her pale cheek
She whispers a prayer of compassion
Turns and walks away from a stranger she
Barely knew with empty
Dark
Cold
eyes

—*Ashley Irvin*

This is Life

I look up toward the clear sky
wondering how a tree could grow so high.
I jump trying to reach even the lowest branch
and know I simply have no chance.
For this is life.

A few years pass and I find that I
can climb up the branches and pretend to fly.
Feeling the wind blown through my hair
is when I find, I have no cares.
Life is simply this.

Seasons come and seasons go
and suddenly my heart begins to grow.
I'm carving a heart deep in my trees bark,
hoping that my love for him will leave a mark.
Life is nothing more than this!

In what seems like no time at all
I say meaningful vows as my tree's leaves fall.
Not long after, just the blink of an eye,
my own child looks up to the sky
wondering how a tree could grow so high.
This is life.

—*Ashley Irvin*



Robert Johnson, "Swoon"



Robert Johnson, "Shamaness"

Anxiety

The world is going to die at my door tomorrow.
I'm sure of it.
Or if not tomorrow, then the next day.
Someday,
Someday soon,
Everything as I know it is going to fall apart.
I'm waiting.

—*Ruksana Kabealo*

Irreducible

I'm not good at writing these kinds of things
Because nothing I say feels like enough

I can't just say how I love your laugh
Even though it's the most adorable thing in the world
And I would make weird angles in parking lots
In the dead of winter
Just to walk with you a little longer

I can't just say how I love your eyes
And how they shine
They don't just reflect the light
They shine with this warmth of their own
How they're a deep green
With shoots of brown reaching out from the centers
Like a firework exploding behind each pupil
But sometimes they're different colors altogether
and I still don't understand how that works.

I can't just say how much I love the way you look at the world
How you can care about something so deeply
That just talking about it changes you
You get this gleam in your eyes, this intensity to your voice
And I could listen to you forever

How, for you, it's not a matter of whether there's
good left on this earth
It's just a matter of finding it

Or how much I love every inch of your skin
Scars included

I can't just tell you those things
Because they aren't enough
They're just a various assortment of details
Small pieces of an infinite portrait
They're not you
You are you
And my words can't do you justice

You defy language
You defy any attempt to capture your essence
I can't put pen to paper and capture this feeling
I get in my chest whenever I think of you
Believe me, I've tried

I'm not good at writing these kinds of things
Because you are not reducible to any body part,
any moment in time,
any smile
No matter how great
You are you
And I love you

—*Ruksana Kabealo*

An Ode to the Boy in Dark Blue Jeans on the Pink Kawasaki Ninja 300

The speed limit on my street is 35mph
You race down it at double that, easy
I can hear the roar of your bike's engine a full mile before I can even see your
frame on the horizon
Its summer
Mid-July, in fact
The asphalt radiates heat in waves
Bathing everything in shimmering air
You're no exception
When I first saw you
I thought you were a mirage
Nothing so bold and loud has passed through this sleepy southern town in ages

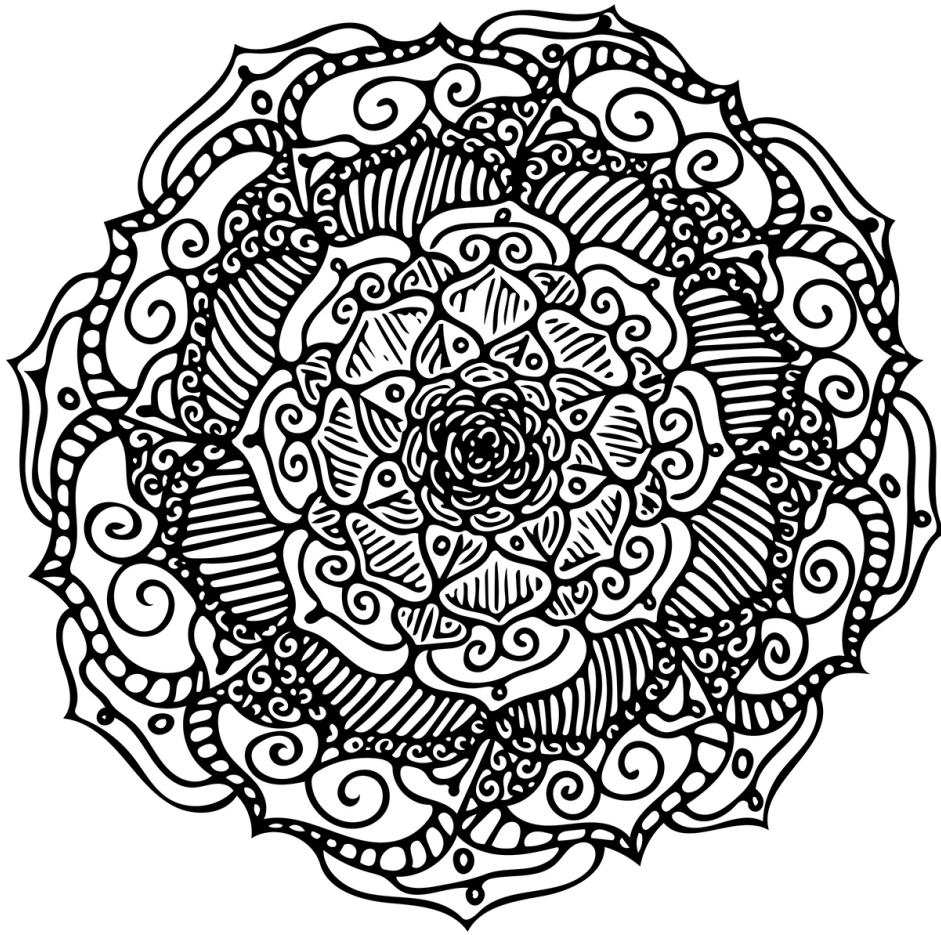
But I knew from the disgruntled faces of reproachful neighbors
Momentarily stirred to life by the noise
That you were, indeed, real
When you take that hairpin turn at the end of the road
The one with a posted speed of 15mph
The one with numerous petitions to be rebuilt
The one with the wall that, by the end of the summer, will be covered in different
colors of paint
Each color representing a car it's claimed
You don't slow down
You don't even think about slowing down
You accelerate
Like your life depends on it
My mother,
Standing at the kitchen window,
Clucks her tongue in disapproval every time she sees you pass by
"What in God's name is that boy thinking? He's going to get himself killed!"
But I know what you're thinking
I want to get out of here as fast as I can too
I want to speed through this small town until it blurs together before my eyes too
I understand
You're punching it like an astronaut escaping Earth's gravity
Helmet on, leaning forward
Needing that extra speed to get across this city limit
Before you become trapped here like the rest of us
Sucked in by the horrible force that is habit
You weren't meant for this mediocrity
You were meant for greatness,
And you're going to achieve it
Or die trying...
Every time you take that turn at the end of the road
After you're out of sight
I listen for that fading rumble
Just to make sure you've made it across alive
I am your mission control
If I can't get outta here,
At least I can watch you try

—Ruksana Kabealo

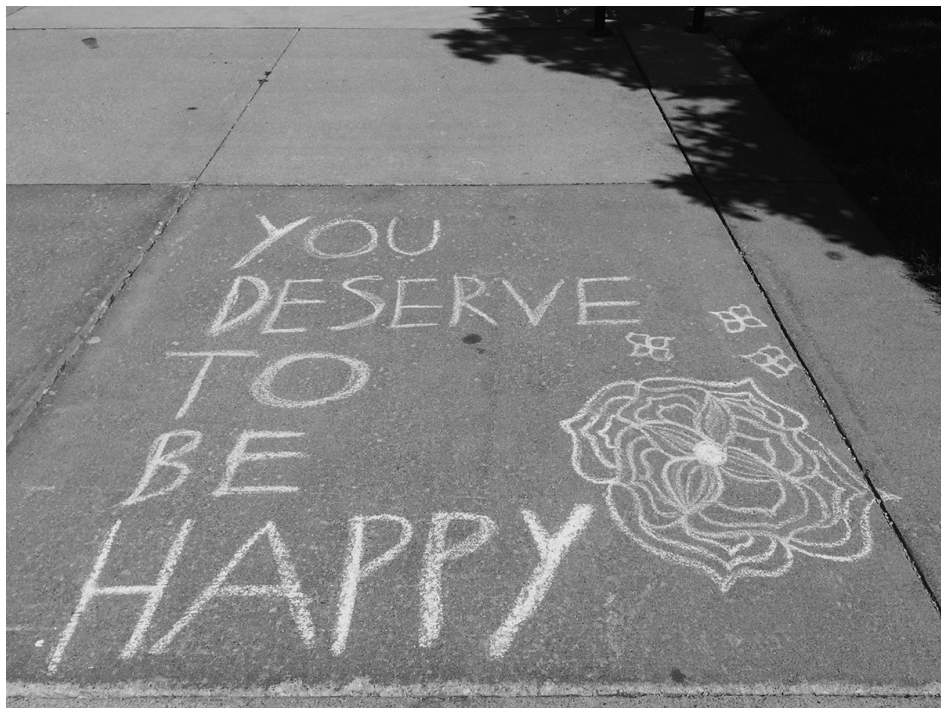
DrugMart/RiteAID

I was listlessly browsing the isles
Not quite sure what I was looking for anymore
And I started thinking about how he worked at a convenience store
in a small central Ohio town
And here I was at a convenience store
in a small central Ohio town.
But it's not the same one he worked at
And I couldn't tell if that made me happy or sad
And I started to wonder
if you added up all the many convenience stores
in all the many small central Ohio towns
how many similar stories you'd find
And I started to wonder
how many different versions of him there were
all bitching about the hours they worked
or how awful their pay was
And I started to wonder
how many different versions of me there were
all half-listening
Our lives were like a play being performed all over central Ohio every night
The story was the same and the characters were the same
but the cast members were all different
For all I knew it went on beyond central Ohio
Maybe it was performed across the entire Midwest
Maybe even across the United States
Maybe even across the world
Because, when you get right down to it,
how different are the convenience stores?
Whether it's in Abuja
or Edinburgh
or Mount Gilead
It's always the same small, square building
with the same limited assortment of goods
It's always either a little too brightly lit or a little too dimly lit
There's only ever one open cash register
despite there being multiple employees
Same messed up parking lot
all faded lines and potholes
And, I mean,
when you get right down to it,
how different are the people?
Really, how different are they?
Millions of guys all over the world bitching about how shitty their jobs are
and millions of disinterested girls pretending to listen

—Ruksana Kabealo



Ruksana Kabealo, "Finality"



Ruksana Kabealo, "World Suicide Prevention Day"

Wat Girls Hear

It's a bad part of town, so don't wear your clothes too tight. You're a pretty girl, so wrap your hair up just right. The neighbors are weird, so try and avoid a fight. Most importantly, never go out at night.

Boys will be boys, they can't control themselves. The only way to stop them is stop yourself. Dressing to impress isn't practical anymore, even if you're trying to improve your sense of self.

Do you have your whistle?

Do you have your spray?

Try as hard as you can to make him go away.

Modesty is important, but respect is too. Self-defense is needed because those with self-control are few. When you look at me you say you like the view, but I didn't put on these clothes to impress you.

—*Bethany Kibler*

Cold feet

Not even the tightening of my muscles in my stomach,
or the flitting of my eyes searching for escape,
or the sticky sweat gathering in the small of my back,
could keep me from wanting to say "I Do."

It's always been you.

Sitting on the veranda, rocking in our
matching chairs with the peeling paint.

Holding hands, your weathered fingers
tracing little circles on the back of my hand.

The high trills of our grandchildren laughing,
watching them grow and learning how to love.

Your frail lips kissing my papery cheeks.

Telling the same jokes that always made me smile.
Our minds doddering as we grow old together.

You've always been the one to keep my feet warm.

—*Brittany Violet Long*

Sunsets on the Savannah Coastline

"This little light of mine,"
an old black man sings with his raspy voice,
where the air smells of sea bass and salty brine.

"I'm gonna let it shine."
The Savannah sun settles, dimming the lights,
drowning out the melody of the city's pastime .

His voice resonates, romanticizing the city,
captivating me with every rhyme.

"Let it shine."
His guitar sounds smooth,
like making love in the moonlight
after dancing and sipping mulled wine.

"Let it shine."
Savannah has a way of seduction,
making you lose yourself in her magic,
erasing the remembrance of time.

"Let it shine, Let it shine, Let it shine."

—*Brittany Violet Long*

Beyond a Distance

Beyond a distance, a fog arose,
an expectation of sullen clouds
that froze themselves and settled to the earth
too still to bloom out of their bulbs of truth.
In such a state I put away my gaze
just out of sight beyond that which one knows.

Trying to fall asleep, I felt a tickle upon my nose.
In a rush from my bed I quickly arose.
I could not believe what had taken my gaze:
Giant white and disfigured clouds
rolling past the window, revealing the truth,
of the great beauty that is earth.

I'm happy enough to live here on this Earth,
where my world seems at the tip my nose.
Of course it is! And I know the truth,
almost as much as I know that that's a rose,
and that those are ominous clouds
that lumber through my glimpsing gaze.

I do not fear what I cannot gaze
upon. All that is real is my beloved earth.
I sometimes see messages in the clouds,
but I fear I cannot see what's beyond my nose.
Am I foolish? I was once, when I arose
like a zombie from a dirty grave and uncovered the truth.

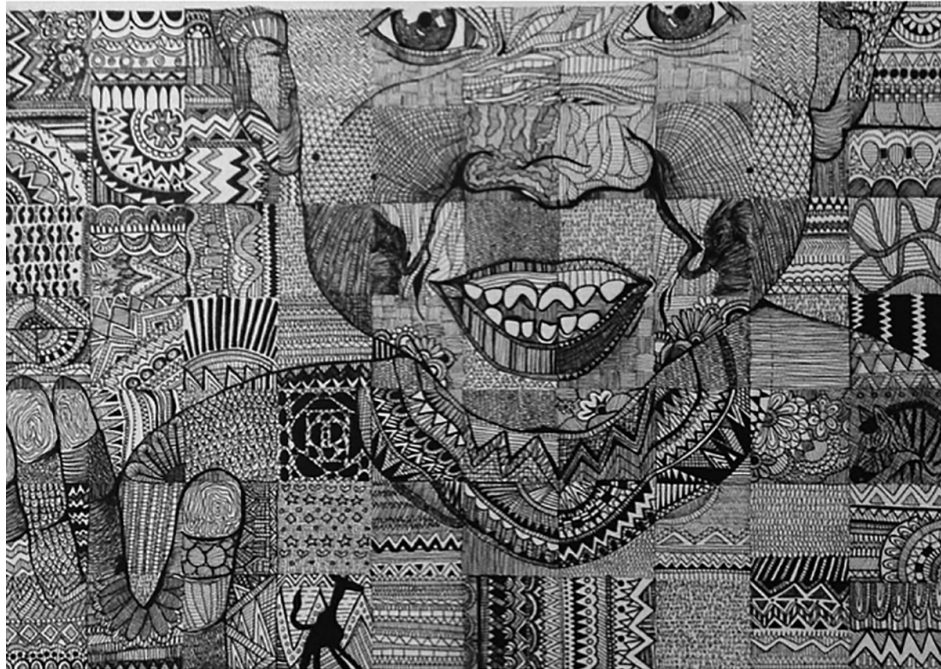
"The earth cannot lie; she is filled with all things truth."
It's a fact I ponder while I gaze
at a universe that cannot be sorted into so many rows.
How blessed am I to be alive on this Earth,
if only she'd tell me all that she knows,
instead of hiding her knowledge in the clouds.

To feel into the soft machine of clouds,
to fill one's heart and mind with seeds of truth,
to see beyond the limit of what one knows!

Democrats, Republicans, straights, trans, bisexuals, gays --
such petty labeling that binds us on this Earth!
It keeps us from mastering the mystery of a rose

and clouds our sight of the angels in ourselves. How they arose
once, are rising still, a truth beyond tongue, beyond eyes, beyond nose,
beyond ears, leaving in an un-gaze, still waiting for their return to us, on Earth.

*—Lauren Chivington, Katelyn Hamilton, Beth Kibler, Stuart Lishan, Mickey
Pfarr, Danielle Wolff*



Kristie Gamble, "The City of Masks"

Beautiful Needless

Sunlight is like a gentle kiss from a deity fair,
and it brings forth the boldest of emotions from man.
Sunlight is like a chiding coo from a mother dear
after her child has fallen and scraped his knee red.
The yellow rays are what keeps the saddened soul
going through the tears and pain of another day.

Then there is moonlight, the calming end to another day,
after one has stretched themselves far beyond what is fair
and good. Moonlight is the balm to a worn-out soul,
the reason why we ponder the existence of man
and beg for answers as to why the sky turns red
when the sun goes to sleep. I can't give you the answer, my dear.

I can't tell you why we dwell on the things we hold dear,
or why we sit and waste away, worrying, about another day
that has yet to bloom before us. I can't tell you why my heart is red
when I am feeling blue. I can't tell you why life is anything but fair.
I can't tell you why a woman is a woman, and a man is a man,
but I can tell you that the sun reflects my passions, and the moon my soul,

and it is to the world that I bare this fragile thing, my human soul.
It is to this unkind land that I am a mistress, a lover, a darling-dear,
to the emotions and passions of both woman and man.
It is by the sun and the moon that I am dominated each day;
bathed in purple light by one, and by the other, scalded red.
I don't mind, though; my natural gods — it's only fair

to be enthralled by something so natural and fair,
such as the simplicity of sunlight or complexity of a soul.
Had I ever spoken this aloud, my face would flush red,
my family send me away, and my dear
would flee my love. Every moment, every breath, every day
I wonder what it is to be something greater than a man.

I wonder — is my heart wasted on love of man?
Is my time and effort to create something fair
and beautiful, needless—like the last rays of light at the end of the day?
I can only hope that, as I grow, my soul
remains pure. If I leave this place, run away from my dearly
devoted dreams, then perhaps they will never see me bleed red.

To man, I can only hope but to be fair;
bathed in the red of passions murdered by the day,
I will bare my soul to the world — a god most dear.

—Mickey Pfarr

Coffee Crows and Pages

Cold autumn mornings
Running late on coffee
I can't think of anything
but the black crows who watch me
and hop along my feet
Carry all my books on back
and maybe a few extra.
I dream of days with nothing
but words on the page.
Where eyes meet words meet mind
But to everything else I'm blind.

—*Erin Rhoades*

A Meeting with Father Time

Those wise words I forgot
and their poor timing later on.
Your complete and utter sensitivity
and my own abrasive glances where I convey too much.
Those loose lips can sink glass houses
and I'd give a penny for any unwatched pot.
Just give me one more moment of your time, Father.

We continue to live in those vacant spaces
The faux pas no one sees but me
I'm the eyes you refuse to meet.
The watches without a battery you'll still wear
And those few minutes that would have made all the difference.
You don't always catch the train before it's come and gone
And I can't live at this station anymore.

—*Erin Rhoades*

Missing Marty

You come to me in leaves
and soft brushes of late spring
Our conversation carries
Like the sunlight
when the clouds finally recede.
You're no closer to me
than I am to the horizon
But for these hushed moments
between the verdant blades
and the cerulean breaths
I've become the birds
and you become my nest.

—*Erin Rhoades*



Robert Johnson, "Red Fox"



Robert Johnson, "Rhino"



Robert Johnson, "Tree Frog"

The Evil Cheese That Rots My Insides and Spits Acid Into My Soul!

Revolting cheese!
I don't like it in my mouth
Or my poetry

—Zane Sexton

The Gumball Machine

(Author's Note: A heartbreaking, sorrowful tale of a quarrel between a quarter and gumball machine.)

My quarter acts like a token,
But promise of gum is broken.
I'm all out of luck
My quarter is stuck,
The Beast inside is woken.

—Zane Sexton

I want to be lightning
and I want you to be
my favorite building



And I want to light you
on fire over and over and
over again

Ruksana Kabealo, "Marginalia"

The Falcon

The ages tell of dragon gold and tell of dragon bone,
Of golden sickles, golden boughs-- the golden horn is blown--
Of cromlech and of dolmen and the rolling of the stone,
Of walkers proud, and shiners bright, and one that's one alone,

Of Winter King and Summer King, the black horse and the white,
The path of darkness, brightly lit by briefest solstice light,
The fiddler in the ring of birch-- nine ladies dance the rite--
The soldier of the gilden spur is riding through the night,

Of sleeping lord, of bleeding lord, sewn up with silver thread,
Of wailing women at the stream washing the waters red,
Of maiden bowered in the moor with roses for her bed,
Of lines and runes and spiraled marks that once the learned read.

Who laid the lintel on the arch, and stood the stones beside?
What is the hill that poets walked? Where did the Rhymer ride?
Where is the sword that Uther bound in anvil as he died?
The falcon bore them all away, where ages past abide.

The biting blade all gone to rust, the king to earth below,
The pages crumble into dust; the great walls bend and bow;
The meanings into riddles turned; the answers none can know
For all are gone who understood, and ever shall be so.

—*Olivia Louise Olowan Varney*

As flowers in their time arise

(Author's Note: In memory of Jeff Buckley.)

As flowers in their time arise
From earth, to earth return
So fires rise from ashes, down
To ashes then to burn.

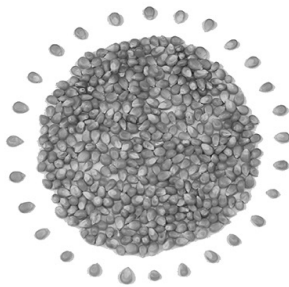
So came the siren from the sea
And briefly to the light,
And blessed those that heard him cry
His song into the night.

Then down he went without a sound
No water rippled there
Only the echoes of his voice
Still rippled in the air

As flowers in their time subside
To darkness, so went he,
And darkness sings now in his place,
Below the depthless sea.

—*Olivia Louise Olowan Varney*

Prose



Heartache & Happiness

CAMDEN T. BROOKS

NOTHING EVER REALLY CHANGES. People never do, the world never does, and it's always such a bleak story. Heartache and happiness coincide with each other, a grim dreary type of feeling. Stemming from which are depression and fear, the most common of feelings as it so happens. She lies, he smiles, and the day continues onward. His desire throws caution to the wind, though every red flag and alarm screams within his brilliant mind. He is convinced he loves her, and she claims to love him however her actions point to the contrary. It is what it is, a dangerous dance of heartache and happiness that coagulates in the depression and fear of the future. She loves someone else, even still she claims he holds her heart and that he is her world, but she can't live without the other either. He tries so hard to keep her close regardless of the ever current storm of emotion that brews within him; the disquiet within the soul constantly sending him through the dark and light like a maelstrom bordering upon the precipice that separates heaven and hell. He walked away once, when she looked him in the eyes and told him she loved another. The empty part in his being was so vast, he felt as though he were the largest of a nesting doll that had the rest removed. He was alone, but not as such as he was when he was with her leading up to that dreadful Thursday. The memories would harken back to the happy days, the happiness before the heartache. Days when they had first met, when there was a beautiful blossoming love between them, they had spent as much time as possible together. Like all good things, it came crashing down. She couldn't walk away from her past, and hence nothing ever changes.

His hamartia is that he can't stay mad. No matter how he is wronged, he still tries to see the good in everyone. That in itself is a beautiful and tragic story in that he is used, and often. A

heart so big and capable of loving and caring, yet everyone else take advantage. The singular greed of people ruins the possibility of a true connection; to have your cake and eat it too. He tries so hard to strip himself of the negative, but she swears she loves him and can't ever be without him. So he allows her back in. On the outside looking in, anyone can see the dysfunction. A dear friend pleads with him, tries to get him to worry more for himself instead of pouring himself out there for someone who shares no equivalence. The friend begs to run, drop the mic and walk off the stage, the stage in which this horrid game plays out on. He tries. He tries so hard to make himself realize that it will continue to be the same cycle. The outstanding zeniths of happiness followed by the crippling bouts of heartache, he struggles to leave. His desire for her, and his desire to return to the days he misses so dearly blur the lines. He can't even tell anymore how a relationship is supposed to be, and sadly he will continue to do the same thing over and over. Alas nothing ever changes.

There is no way any good can come from this. He tries so hard to look at the silver lining, out of his love for her, but maybe the lining is of iron not silver after all. It merely rusts away from him, falls apart in his hands as a rotted bit of wood. She gives him good days,

lifts his spirits to ascending heights, only to shatter his resolve. She plays on his heart, nourishing his depravity and comforting him. He is dancing with the devil in human skin, as he stands within the fire. He slowly loses himself in the darkness, beginning to believe truly that he isn't good enough. That somewhere inside he will never be good enough for anyone, not even himself. Yet he still buys into her words of wanting a future with him while still walking hand in hand with someone else. He begs and pleads to just be let go, relieved of the enormous burden she creates for him. What does she expect to come from all of her actions? She claims she expects to end up with him, the broken hearted lover. He knows it will never work, as she cheats on one while swearing her love to another, that's how their relationship started... and that is how it will end, and so nothing ever changes.

Heartache and happiness, terms of love and lust; until you walk away from him, there can never be an "us". An outlet for my anger, my depression and my fear; I lay fingers to the keys and write about you here. It's coming to its pinnacle, when the water breaks the dam, our hourglass is perpetually running slowly out of sand. You try to keep the two of us in your heart so close, but in the end it'll fall apart and you will lose us both.



Brittany Violet Long, "Cabin Fever"



Brittany Violet Long, "Farm Living"

Tipping Point-

LAUREN CHIVINGTON

IT'S THE EVERYDAY TRAGEDIES. The stubbed toes of our emotions, painful but unacknowledged, small but of such importance. Untraceable, yet once you pull a life apart you will see them everywhere. The synaptic flash in your brain when you realize your feelings are stronger than theirs, closed lips saying everything you did not want to hear. The downward sloped eyes, the tipping point, the moment you know you can't go back. The dullish heart pangs that continue to clang throughout a lifetime of saddened smiles because how can you possibly, possibly explain those everyday tragedies. No, not the breakup, that infinitesimal moment when you finally, finally see the one you love as something you have never understood, can never understand. The slip, not the fall. The moment your breath catches before your hands have time to flail. The heated, panicked, fading pressure as your last foot leaves the ground.

Definition of "Falling Too Hard"

MORGAN DEWITT

(as told by
a 3rd grader)

I GLANCED AT THE CLOCK. It was only 7:03 a.m., I could have sworn it was 7:02 a.m., two hours ago. This means I still have one hour and 58 minutes till gym class where I could finally see the boy of dreams, Alec Rich. Time moves slower while I'm in bed waiting for gym class than it does in the grocery store while I'm waiting for my mom to finish talking to her best friend she just happened to run into that day. It's the opposite in gym class. Time ticks by so fast, it's just like recess, it's there one minute, gone the next.

I can barely sleep till it's finally time to get on the bus. The whole way to school I just dream of his soft blonde hair and pearly white smile. All the noises coming from the boys trading pokemon cards and the girl's braiding each other's hair in the seats around me are blocked out by my thoughts on whether or not Alec will like the pink plaid skirt I put on and the tight curls my mom put in my hair this morning.

"Moooooooooorgannn, earth to Morgan!" Katie, the girl whom I share my BEST and FRIENDS heart necklaces says in hopes of disturbing my thoughts on Alec while I'm walking to gym class.

"Oh. Hi Katie." I say, a tad bit embarrassed to say the least.

"So are you going to talk to him today?"

I forgot to mention the only contact Alec and I have is getting lost in each other's eyes in the reading circle during class. I made a bet with Katie that if I talked to him today she had to give me the chocolate pudding out of her lunch every day for a week.

There he was, running his laps not far from me. I could do this, I could say hi. I picked up the pace, the plan was to casually run past him, do a little whip of the hair, say hi, and get out of there as quick as possible.

I'm two mere steps away from him now, here goes nothing.

"Hi, Morgan!"

This couldn't be real, not only does he know my name, he actually said hi to me. What do I do now? This was not part of the plan.

"Oh, um, uh, well, hi." I knew I sounded stupid as soon as the words came out.

"Gotcha!" Alec said as he ran away like speedy Gonzales.

I was on the ground, Alec had just tripped me. My face had to be as red as a tomato. I asked the gym teacher if I could go to the nurse.

On the way to the hospital my mom asked, "What is you liked so much about this boy?"

I told her, "He smells good. He smells like soap."

The next day, the doctor told me my arm was broken and I needed to be in cast for 8 weeks. That's the last time I got lost in his dreamy blue eyes.

Lemons

MORGAN DEWITT

"THERE'S NOTHING MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN A SILENT LIBRARY," says the only man left in the dusty library, hiding behind the shelves of unopened books that hold dust within their pages. He feels inspired by the emptiness that surrounds him. Only here alone with his pencil does he feel he can let his dreams breathe, only here in the silent dusty library does the page in front of him start to fill with words, only here with cold empty seats around him does he know himself.

"There's nothing more unsightly than a crowded library," the man thinks to himself. He works on burying the thought of the morning crowd of students. All the students swarming in and out, thinking only about themselves and not about the wonders and work that was put into the books that were so close and available to them. Not one of them stops to notice him sitting alone in the corner and this doesn't bother him. It doesn't bother him in the slightest. It's always been like this and he doesn't want it to change.

He could so easily breathe in the scent of leftover stress and the words of all the spoken conversations that surrounded him earlier. It smelled the same every day, it held the same amount of dust and just the right measure of leather from the couches placed so carefully around the room, yearning for students they would never get. A scent he didn't recognize filled the insides of his nose and tickled his thoughts for a moment. Maybe he did remember this sudden change.

A sniff of a warmth and citrus that came together to be freshness. He was remembering the smell. He was remembering who it belonged to. He was gaining sight of her red curls that came down to kiss the arch of her back.

"Hi," her soft voice said casually.

He looked up from the mulch he was kicking around in his size 2 tennis shoes. He had

just moved up a size and he was really excited about it. He wouldn't dare tell anyone this though. Her full blue eyes were gazing down at him, so curious and full of young life.

"I said Hi," her voice wasn't any less soft than it was before. It was like she was simply reminding him of something he had forgotten to do earlier that week.

"Hi," His voice came out rusty like a bike turning its spokes after being kept up in the garage for the winter. On the playground he sat on the broken swing that no one else would want. He did this on purpose so that no one else would bother him. This was the first person that had bothered to notice him over here in the land of unwanted swings.

"Did you know monkeys lay eggs?" She said, obviously wanting this to be a new fascinating fact he had never heard before.

"Monkeys don't lay eggs." He said, looking back down at the ground. He was drawing a monkey in the mulch now.

"Yes they do, silly!" She said like it was ridiculous for him to suggest such a thing. She motioned at him to follow her. He thought about for a long time and thought he saw the monkey he had been working on in the ground nod yes.

He followed her and the scent of lemons was trailing behind

her.

"Why do you smell like that?" He asked

"My mom rubs lemon juice behind my ears every morning." She said, phased by the question just enough to answer it. She was more focused on what she was about to show him underneath the bleachers that were there to watch a kickball game that would never happen.

He looked around in silence. There were drawings of all different kinds of monkeys that she had so carefully hidden under these bleachers. Purple monkeys, baby monkeys, monkeys big enough to be gorillas, they were everywhere.

He smiled at her and immediately realized that he felt something different. He felt something much bigger than the emptiness of the broken swing and the movement of the mulch under his size 2 shoes. He felt like he belonged here under these old bleachers with this girl that smelled like lemons.

"See, these are their eggs!" She said like she was proving a point with her hand illuminating rocks shaped like dinosaurs eggs.

He thought to himself while he gazed at the gap where two teeth use to be in her smile, "Maybe monkeys do lay eggs. Maybe anything can happen under these bleachers."

"Sir, the library is closed."

He thought maybe it could've
been her in the library, the girl that
smelled like lemons, telling him it
was time to take his books home
with him.

He still loves the girl that
smells like lemons.

The Poet of Dreams

SAL GABLE

IT HAPPENED JUST SOME TIME AGO. The day was gloom and rainy and I never would've expected my tragedy to strike. I was in my bedroom gathered in my thoughts, expressing it on paper. I heard my mother yell, "Margaret Marie! Are you ever going to come out of that room?" I ignored her. I was too pleased and overcome with my writing. I tend to spend my time drowning within my poetry and, lately, it has been happening more than usual. I finally took a break as the clock ticked 3:15 PM. I ran down the steps with my white leather purse getting ready to go out to the local café to meet my best friend, Chloe. I was confronted by my mother who was sitting upon the beige, floral sofa: "Margaret, may I ask where you're going?"

"I'm just going into town. I'll be back, mom. I promise."

My dad, sitting beside her, waved 'good-bye' as I opened the door and was out of there with a blink of the eye. The café was nearly close, so there was no need for a taxi or a bus ride. It was just me, my black umbrella, and the smooth sound of the rain surrounding me. There was a part of me that never wanted the walk to end and the other part hated the fact of the rain being so wet. I turned two street corners to my right and saw Chloe waiting inside of the café. I walked in putting my umbrella away and greeting her with a friendly hug saying, "Hello." We sat and talked about life's greatest gifts. I told her about my poetry while she sat ecstatic talking about her engagement. Her and her fiancé, Jack Luic, have been together for nearly four years. They started dating when Chloe was only nineteen years old and have been together ever since. It's hard to swallow the fact of your best friend, being the same age as you, getting married before you even find love. My love is poetry. If I could only marry my poetry or a poet, then life would set. We finished sipping on hot tea, eating croissants, and talking at 6:30 PM. We walked out of the café waving 'goodbye' to one another as I

started to walk back home. The rain suddenly stopped and the sunset began to shine through. Halfway home, I thought of the river down by the forest in Rennes. I wanted to see its beauty once more and suck in nature's inspiration, so I took a detour home. I stopped by the local train station and got on a train that would soon take me to Rennes. I sat in my own compartment and took out a piece of paper where I started, once again, writing poetry. It was a poem of nature's love:

Wind whistling through branches,
The song of birds throughout the
 atmosphere;
Rivers flow oh so clear,
And the beauty sights of wildlife
 surrounded by deer.

I looked up as I felt the train slowly coming to a stop. I felt a shadow of someone in the distance casting upon me watching every move I made. It was soon making me uncomfortable, but I didn't look back. I knew not to. For it was figure of my imagination, nothing more. We were soon off of the train and I was headed directly to my dream escape. My dream of nature. Passed the boulangerie and through the suburban homes, I was finally there. My sweet escape. A beautiful, deep pond the color of turquoise lay sinking within the land surrounded by tall trees and wild flowers all different shades of emerald, lemon, and burgundy. A small, abandoned home sat behind two large trees just barely far from

the pond itself. I sat in the same spot I always do. Under a tall, pink blossoming tree whose petals lay upon the forest floor. A beautiful spot to overview the turquoise pond, all the colorful flowers surrounding it, and a beautiful spot for poetry. The cool, crisp air blew through my apricot colored hair and made the small hairs on the back of my neck rise as I got out more paper and a pen from my little white purse. I decided to write haikus. One cannot enjoy the beauty of nature with writing without a haiku poem. That's what they're designed to do. To make you feel as if you are a part of nature yourself just for the moment you are there. I had written six haikus before I had heard a voice from behind. "Hello, madame. You may not recognize me, but I was on the same train as you just minutes before. The name is Pierre Sage." I stopped and looked up to where my lime-green eyes met his gorgeous sapphire-blue eyes. He looked like a prince from a fairytale with his hair gelled neatly, combed to the side, and was the color of chocolate, a face that looked as if it had been chiseled by the gods, the perfect sized button nose, teeth so white they could sparkle, and a body so fit and form-fitting. He took my breath away, but I managed to spit a few words. "Oh. Hello. Nice of you to say hello. Pardon me, I'm Margaret Marie Janviev." I quickly stood up to where we were both on the same level and my poetry still laying within my left hand as he brought

my right hand to his lips and kissed the top. It didn't last as long as I would've liked. It was poetry he noticed quickly. "You write poetry? How romantic. So, that's what you were writing on the train when I looked over at you." He looked at me with a loving smile.

"Yes, it's what I do for a living. I'm a writer."

"A writer of poetry. Sounds a lot like what I do. I'm a poet."

My hopes and spirits had been lifted. I thought I had finally found the perfect love forever. He took me by the arm as we started our walk around the pond. "You know who *Robert Frost* is?" He asked. I shook my head in a 'yes' way thinking to myself, '*who doesn't?*' "Well, a poem of his inspired me to write a whole series of poems."

"Which one?"

"I shall be telling this with a sigh.

*Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference. "*

I looked into him with such deep admiration. The Road Not Taken was one of my favorite poems that Robert Frost had ever written. Something about this guy didn't feel right. For someone who had just met me on a train seemed to know too much about me and what I liked. I decided it was time to confront him. "If you don't mind me asking, how

did you know I was coming to this particular forest?" There was a moment of silence before he answered. "I...I just decided to go for a walk and I found you here."

"That can't be right. No one ever knows about me coming here. You must've followed me."

There was no answer this time. Instead, he stopped and I stopped to look into his eyes seriously. He put his hands on my shoulders and turned me around to where I was facing the water and couldn't see him. "Do you know what you see?" He asked.

"Yes. It's the pond."

"It's not *just* a pond, Margaret. You out of all people should know ponds are poetic. They're a symbol of life."

I stayed quiet. I wasn't sure where he was getting at, but it surely wasn't anything good. I felt his body press against my back, his hands still gripping upon my shoulders, and his mouth beside my right ear as he whispered, "It's your future." I turned my head to look back at him and saw he had the most devilish looking expression upon his face as he managed to push me into the turquoise bath. I felt my body slowly weighing down in the shivering cold pond. My eyes opened as I saw the surface through the water above me. I tried to push through and swim back to shore, but I was too deep within the water and my foot had become caught on something

below. It was only a few seconds
until I saw my poetry sinking down
with me. Throughout the years
from when I drowned, I don't know
how much I have shrunk or disin-
tegrated. But I'm sure if you look
hard enough and you're as poetic as
I am, you'll find me sunken with my
words in the bottom of the turquoise
bath. They say people die doing
what they love and I am one of the
few.



Brittany Violet Long, "St. Augustine Mailbox"



Brittany Violet Long, "Fountain Heads"

Bound

ASHLEY IRVIN

I KNEW IT WAS A MISTAKE THE MINUTE IT WAS OVER. Everyone knows my face. They will know who it was as soon as they realize what I did. He's dead. No, that can't be. There is no way it was me, but it was. I pulled the trigger. I saw the life leave his eyes and his body fall to the ground. No way. It wasn't I watching his blood begin to pool in a dark glassy circle, but it was.

When I saw him for the first time it was from across a dark room through flashing lights in a bar down on Fifth Street. Upon first glance I instantly knew his type: Rugged, good looking, a bad boy. Damon was dangerous, and he knew it. I knew it too but that made him irresistible all the same. Intrigued I made my way across the floor, caught his attention and let him place his hands on my hips. With each song I slowly felt life as I knew it slipping out of my fingertips, and I allowed it to go.

Our love was undeniable and passionate, unable to be tamed. He had the dark breath of a demon and I fell for him hard. Quickly consumed, he became my life. School, family, friends, nothing mattered, it was only Damon. Just a glance my way from his dark eyes could make me swoon, so when he told me to follow him to Minnesota my heart did not even think twice. To be completely alone just the two of us on an adventure sounded like all my dreams coming true. Now I know that is exactly what he wanted, separation from the rest of those who loved me, and it worked.

We moved away and I finished up my degree in education, not that I would ever use it. The move led to Damon getting the opportunity to start a business. All the sudden we

were rolling in the flourishes of the rich. I went from housewife to trophy wife in what seemed like second. Sometimes being beautiful and supporting a successful man seemed shallow, but it was enough for me, just not enough for him. It was never enough. Damon began to spend longer hours at the office and one night as I waited at home alone drowning in the silence, the office cameras caught his latest extra interest, a lanky brunette he had hired not even a month ago.

I confronted Damon about his office flings multiple times over the next five years, only to get another red handprint on my cheek for being ungrateful and nosey. I was not to meddle in his work life. I was just the wife, the pretty smile, everything he had made me to be, and everything he had crafted, built, molded, bought.

One October, I decided that being alone was not enough for me anymore, so I ran. Ran past houses of men and women who knew and did nothing. Ran past "friends" homes, friends who were only there when there was an open bar at a party where they didn't even know what they were celebrating. I ran until the state lines became a blur and my lungs couldn't handle the running anymore. He found

me. There was a broken rib behind a bruise on my chest to prove my escape had failed, he found me.

For another three years the cycle remained the same. I watched snapshots of my murky life pass like scenes in a movie. I was waiting for the credits, but they never came. I became more and more broken and beat down. I was unable to be pretty enough, supportive enough, mindful enough, fake enough, never enough.

Last September I greeted Damon on the front porch with suitcases in both hands and the car keys around my neck. I was finally speaking for myself and this time I was going to be successful in my exit. It took me three months to figure out the code to unlock the safe holding the pistol in my back pocket. The pistol was the leverage I needed to get into the car.

Quickly my wrists were constrained and I was yanked back into the house. A place I had never considered my home suddenly felt like walls of a cold prison cell. I was thrown to the ground and the pistol flew from my pocket across the hardwood floor. At the sight of it, Damon became enraged. I lurched forward toward it, reaching for hope, freedom. I grabbed it

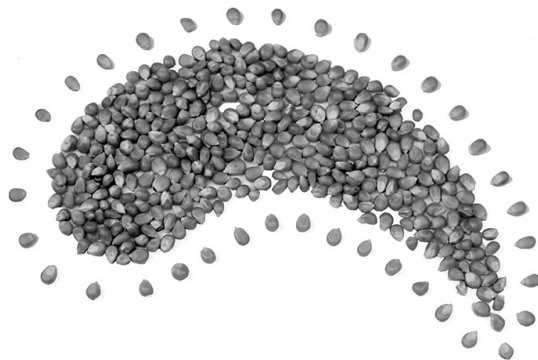
with both hands. Shakily, I demanded he let me go. He laughed saying I could never kill him. For a few seconds we stood in silence. He lurched at me and I pulled the trigger of a gun I did not know how to use.

I knew it was a mistake the minute it was over. Everyone knows my face. They will know who it was as soon as they realize what I did. He's dead. No, that can't be. There is no way it was me, but it was. I pulled the trigger. I saw the life leave his eyes and his body fall to the ground. No way. It wasn't me watching his blood begin to pool in a dark glassy circle, but it was.

I was always bound by Damon, but now I am bound by one word, murderer.

SPECIAL SECTION

Corny Poems



Dear Readers,

The following piece by Hannah Fuller, “Wrong, Right, Dark, Light,” as well as the letter written to her 7th grade self, inspired the editorial board to include this fun section.

It occurred to us that anyone who considers him/herself a writer had to start by writing something. Moreover, it’s highly likely that those writers still have those old gems lying around somewhere. So, we put a call out for faculty members to send us their crappy, angst-ridden, and embarrassing teenage poetry. What we collected from the bravest of those souls is compiled here, for your enjoyment.

*Sincerely,
The Cornfield Review Editorial Board*

Wrong, Right, Dark, Light

Confused...Bemused
No true understanding.
The wind whips my hair...
I linger around the oceans of the dumb,
And rest in the blinding heat of the sun.
No Land is My Land.
That fact is but a fact.
Born and raised uncertain,
Curiosity and be Fulfilling-like,
Like
Mama's bread, fresh and warm.
But, I still glance back at the
Road,
For which I have traveled.
And scoff in the face of wrong...
And right.
Still uncertain,
Like a rooster not knowing to screech
When clouds block the sun.
Of
Right.
And Wrong.

—*Hannah Fuller, 2009*

*A Letter to
7th Grade Me*
HANNAH FULLER

DEAR 7TH GRADE ME,

How you went so long without talking to the guidance counselor is beyond me. Her name is Michelle, knock yourself out while you still get therapy for free. I'm sure she'd love to hear about your existential crisis over the mice you find in the girl's bathroom. "Winter is coming!" You cry. "Who cares!" She cries back while writing on a Maltese off-brand Post-It to buy glue traps.

It's me, seven years into the future. Yeah, it's one of those letters. An intervention to years past. Real Marty McFly. But you don't know who that is because you're too busy reading. Good for your vocabulary, bad for your social skills, kid. And, tip from the future: Twilight? Yeah, just don't.

Now that I've gotten all the horrible clichés out of the way, let's talk about why I'm here. This poem, man. This effing poem. What. Were. You. Thinking?! Let's discuss just that. You will one day make \$8.50 helping people with their college level writing projects. Good thing you didn't put this in your resume.

Let's get started.

Your title. Not pretentious at all. Not in the least, I think it's a bit underwhelming, actually. How could one poem 25 lines long encompass all the emotions of what is Right and Wrong and the Light within us and the Dark? Yeah, you were into the whole "Grey" thing. Multitudes within everyone, how no one is all evil or pure or is always right or wrong, take that parents! I know in 7th grade you were just brimming with answers to these philosophical mysteries and thus this poem was born.

So, capitalization. That's a thing you know how to do on a keyboard, but not so much in a poem. Capitalizing just because you can is an interesting writing choice, I guess. If you can call it that. But props for not using ellipses a lot!

Like your Team Edward shirts, using unneeded punctuation is now reserved for the ironic or avant-garde. Word to the wise: be cautious when figuring out which in people.

Question: "oceans of the dumb" ... I mean, do I really have to say anything about that? I remember that you tried to look up synonyms for "mute" to seem more mysterious. For obvious reasons, I think that backfired. Your classmates weren't too pleased, either. Look at you, taunting your peers through a poetry book. You sure showed them?

Going line by line, I can see that you were trying to accomplish many things with a single poem. Too many things I don't think you really knew a lot about.

I mean, what is this "Road" that you've travelled on? In the physical sense you barely leave the house. In the metaphorical sense, I suppose you've gone to elementary school. That's a path, in a way. A weird path that led you here, writing this poem, but here we are. How do you travel "for" a road? It's an interesting idea but not one that I think you were aware of. Advice: stop writing "for" in random places.

I respect this whole "writing as you go" poetry, but it's becoming very obvious that you're just lazy. "Fulfilling-like. Like"? Did you really just do that? Copy-editing man!

Right towards the end you finally have this great set up for a

simile! I like it, I really do. It seems unfit with the rest of this mysterious poem that you're trying to build, but you're doing a good job! Keep it up!

But I know that you won't. You're not going to keep it up, and not because you get a letter from the future, either. You stop because in eighth grade you realize that you're going to have to make a decision. What to do with the rest of your life.

It's not going to be an easy one. And every day that you spend in high school you'll be dreading your choices to where they have led you. You get awards, scholarships, even, but you still don't feel like it's the right choice.

As I'm writing to you, you've decided that you want to write a novel. You want to be a teenage novelist; you'll even change the words to Bruno Mars's "Millionaire". It's a great party trick, but the years have passed. It became harder and harder to put words to paper. It was all you'd ever wanted. You wanted to be an author. Every year became a delay. "I'm sure next year – I'm sure of it then!"

It didn't happen. Even when you're in college, the one place where you thought you could grow into your full potential, the one place that you thought you could finally achieve your dreams.

It didn't happen. It still hasn't happened.

The reason that I wrote you this letter wasn't just so I could critique you or pretend like I could teach you something smart or profound about writing. I wanted to give you a chance. Yes, you. The one with more acne than friends. The one who has a bigger vocabulary than her English teacher. The one who looks timid but is so loud on paper and in song that they can't help but to sit and listen.

I'm doing this for you. I may have failed you in high school, I may have failed you in college, too.

"Do you think 5-year-old you would be proud of you today?" Oh hell no. And you bet that the day that I get my teaching license I'm going to fail you then, too. But with that teaching license I'm going to do what no one else did for me. I'm going to help kids like you with your writing. I'm going to make writing groups; I'm going to listen to kids who put goals on themselves that are sizes too big. I'm going to listen to their words, I'm going to help them grow, and I'm going to help them realize what you never did.

Hannah, you don't need a title like Author to give you self-worth. You don't need to prove yourself to anyone. Not your teachers, not the local newspaper, not your fantastic family, and not you. Especially not the you that thinks the only way you'll ever be happy is to see your name on a book's spine.

I'm here to give you a gift. Your poem? "Wrong, Right, Dark, Light"? It's getting published. The part of you that always wanted to be a novelist, I've given her a different gift. The title of a Published Poet.

How does it feel, Marty?

Begrudgingly affectionate,

Hannah ~~Cullen~~ Fuller

(NO! Of course you didn't marry Edward, you're still a spinster at 19. Deal with it.)

FACULTY POETRY

Sister Pinoke

Her name's Pinoke,
she's got a nose like a vent,
bum, bum, bum, bum.
she blows her nose in a
circus tent.
bum, bum, bum, bum.
If you don't duck,
you're out of luck.
Oh, what a schnoz she's got!

—Gordon Aubrecht

*(Author's Note: I sort of chanted it to a tune, which is why the bum, bum, bum, bum;
tenth grade, I would have been 16. She taught us geometry. That is embarrassing!)*

The man whose face was the face of a clock

The man whose face was the face of a clock,
Whose every step was a tickety-tock.
The magazine he read was Time,
But he didn't know what was in Life.

—Bob Klips (Class of '68)

I hate myself
for ruining my health.

And I hate myself for loving too deeply...
for thinking about why we were blessed with pain.

My mask is strong and made of glass.

I hate myself for breaking.

—Anonymous

(Author's Note: From 1993 or so. I can guess at the context, but don't recall exactly. I think I was dating a "bad boy" I was drawn to and having trouble coming to terms with myself. Is this anonymous? Although my mask is still strong and made of glass....oh well.)

Fall Fears

With Fall comes what, I wonder.
I do not know at all.
Of yellow leaves and naked trees,
Fear, it comes with Fall.

Fear of life just ending,
Or Fear of prolonged sleep.
Fear that people kill for fun.
And fear that Death will reap.

And then I stop and wonder:
Do only I fear Fall?
The answer comes to me just then:
This fear, it haunts us all.

—Ben McCorkle

(Author's Note: This was written way back in seventh grade. Back when I was a morose little ragamuffin. For some odd reason, I've committed this poem to memory, so it takes up space that might otherwise be used for remembering much better verse written by a real poet.)

My Country

My country is the place to be.
People will die for my country.
There are so many things to see.
I would never leave my country.
Some people go out into war.
Proud to serve our country and die.
Even when eagles do not soar.
Our flag flies proudly in the sky!

—Nikole Patson

(Author's Note: This was written for a 6th grade poetry anthology assignment. In addition to writing our own poems, the assignment required us to collect poems based on several categories, of which patriotism was one. I suspect that partially explains the motivation behind this jingoistic masterpiece.)

CONTRIBUTORS

Deanna Bachtell is a staff member at The Ohio State University of Marion. As a student, Deanna's work appeared in volumes 23 & 24 of the Cornfield Review.

Camden Brooks is a 3rd year engineering major at OSU. He is from Marysville, OH and hates people that don't use turn signals.

Lauren Chivington: I'm from Westerville, OH, and am majoring in English Literature and Early Modern European History at OSUM. I want to go into education and teach literature courses at the college level. I enjoy writing because I have ADHD and writing helps me focus my thoughts and express them more effectively.

Morgan DeWitt: I came to OSU Marion with a bad attitude, one of those people that just wanted to be on main campus. My entire attitude changed when I stepped into my first class and felt inspired by the environment, classmates, and professors. OSU Marion is the greatest and has inspired me as a writer in so many different ways, I couldn't imagine being anywhere else.

Hannah Fuller: "Hi, there! Glad I could catch you at the end of this awesome book with all of these other people - aren't they awesome? Especially her, and him, too! I've been really busy this past year, thanks for asking. I've been in a musical, got on the Dean's List twice, got on the homecoming court for next year, and made a short film. I'm majoring in middle childhood education and can't be more excited to be included in the Cornfield Review again. Now, I'd like to thank The Academy..."

Sal Gable (nom de plume): As a writer, I tend to loathe within the emotions of what it is I am writing to sink myself deep into the imaginative world. Writing is a leisure activity that I enjoy doing in order to take my mind away from reality and give me a sense of peace. I am a Marketing major

whose dream is to someday work for the company of Volkswagen. My favorite novel of all time is *The Book Thief* as it is also my favorite movie. My favorite poet is Henry David Thoreau. If anything else anyone wishes to know, please do ask!

Kristie Gamble: "There is nothing more truly artistic than to love people." - Vincent Van Gogh

Katelyn Hamilton: I am a student at Ohio State Marion currently finishing up my degree in English. I have lived in Marion my whole life. I normally do not write poetry except that I joined a poetry class for my final semester, therefore the piece I contributed to was born. Hope you enjoy our class sestina!

Ashley Irvin: I am a graduating English major at Ohio State, and yes I do plan on being successful after graduation even though people constantly tell me that English is an impractical major. This degree allowed me to become published so take that! After reading my work, you may think that I am very depressed, have no friends, and need an intervention. This is however not the case. I tend to write from personal emotion and then expand on it through character's lives outside of my own. As children we are always told to use imagination and passion in our writing and I guess it stuck with me. I am proud of the writer I have become and I hope to continue to grow as an author and to continue to be successful in my writing in the future.

What can be said about **Robert Johnson**? A former pirate of the Star Lost Brigade, he gave up a life of wealth, power, and spontaneous orgies to pursue creative endeavors that bring him more fulfillment than you could imagine. Follow him at limegrenade.tumblr.com.

Ruksana Kabealo is a maniac with a dream.

CONTRIBUTORS

Bethany Kibler is currently a student at OSUM.

Stuart Lishan is a fellow voyager with the other poets in his English 4591.01 class, a special topics class in creative writing whose emphasis this year was centered on poetic forms. The poem in this issue that a number of us in the class (Lauren Chivington, Katelyn Hamilton, Bethany Kibler, Mickey Pfarr, Danielle Wolff, and myself) wrote is called a sestina. It's a rather challenging form of six six-line stanzas in which the end words of the first stanza are repeated in a certain pattern (see if you can figure it out!) as they become the end words of every other line in the poem. It's a fun form to play with and a little maddening, but like many poetic forms, its rules force one to have to creatively confront and solve a number of formal problems that can enable and inspire one to write astounding lines and images that one would never have come up with otherwise. Hopefully that was the case with "Beyond the Distance"!

Brittany Violet Long is an Ohio State Graduate and a longtime contributor to this journal.

Mickey Pfarr grew up in the countryside of Union County, surrounded by bugs, horses, rabbits, and more bugs. Although

she has always been an avid reader, she never tried her hand at writing fiction or poetry until her freshmen year of high school. She's been hiding in dark rooms and libraries with her journals ever since.

Erin Rhoades: I'm currently a literature major and aspiring librarian. Favorite authors include Edgar Allan Poe, Oscar Wilde, and Chuck Palahniuk. Some of my hobbies include reading, writing and obsessing over cute dogs. Just a small town girl with dreams of one day being surrounded by books and shushing people for a living.

Zane Sexton: I am an 18 year old novice writer.

Olivia Varney believes she has suffered the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune for quite long enough now, and would like to make a formal complaint. When not toiling in indentured servitude she spends her time geeking out about subjects no one else cares about, seething with impotent rage, and occasionally writing. She can be found online at theundiscoveredcontinent.tumblr.com.

Danielle Wolff is currently a student at OSUM.

COLOPHON

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KALWI!

Join OSU-Marion's writing club every two weeks throughout the fall and spring semesters to listen to other students' writing, and share some of your own! This club is hosted in the library, room 105K, and meets bi-weekly. All writers are welcome! For more information, contact Stuart Lishan at lishan.1@osu.edu.