



kennings 2022

k e n n i n g s

artistic & literary journal

edition 13

2021-2022

## Editorial

Kenning: a descriptive phrase used in place of the ordinary name for something, usually found in the poetry of Old Germanic languages, but still very much alive in our own vernacular.

Examples include:

“sea-farer” for ship

“whale road” for sea

“tree-hugger” for environmentalist

Produced by Hanover College students, *Kennings Literary and Artistic Journal* features art, photography, poetry, and prose from both inside and outside the Hanover College Community submissions. All submissions are considered for publication, and selection is made by blind voting of the editorial staff.

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### **Kennings Artistic and Literary Journal 2021-2022**

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## Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

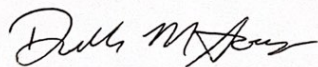
Thank you so much for picking up this very special edition of *Kennings*! After COVID-19 hit Hanover College's campus in the spring of 2020 sending all students home for the year, *Kennings* took a hard hit much like all of the other clubs and student organizations. When we returned back to campus, numbers decreased, submissions decreased, and the review meetings were sparse. We unfortunately were unable to get the journal off the ground and to the printer before the school year ended.

When the start of the 2021-2022 school year started, we immediately started to try and work on getting the 12th edition together and printed so we could focus on creating a new and refreshed version of *Kennings*. We hunted down pieces and people but before we knew it Holiday Break was upon us and nothing substantial could be achieved.

In order to get consistent attendance and have a lot more time than an hour a week to dedicate to the journal, *Kennings* moved from just being a student-led club to a mostly student-led class the following semester. In about two months, we were able to go through all of the submissions that we have had sitting for over a year, advertise and promote a submissions call, and review more submissions than *Kennings* has seen in quite some time!

I mentioned that this edition is quite special. It is in fact, two editions wrapped into one. We wanted to give each edition its own time to shine and soak up the attention from you, our readers. By producing both together, that can be achieved easily.

So, please, enjoy the hard work of dozens of people and find some inspiration.



Danni Savage  
Editor-in-Chief '22

## Content Warning


Dear Readers,

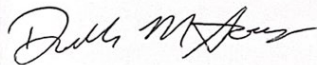
*Kennings* collects submissions via open call. As we have no control over what gets submitted to us, there is potential for topics and themes that may be triggering or sensitive to individuals.

We don't approve of the censorship of creative expression and will never do so.

However, *Kennings* does not accept any work that is racist, homophobic, transphobic, xenophobic, or in any way is deemed as exclusionary or prejudiced. We also do not accept overly graphic, sexual, or strong language.

Work that does not follow our guidelines is always deleted and left unread.

Works that have a trigger warning will be marked with : 



Danni Savage  
Editor-in-Chief '22

## Accounts of Loving an Angel

Hannah Burkhart '23

I fell in love with an angel. Not your normal do-gooder that can just be described by the coined phrase, "Oh, he's an absolute angel." He was clad with wings, the color of a brown and white speckled sparrow's egg, hair the deep shade of fresh topsoil, and eyes that shone with the brightness of the night sky where you could see every single star. He wore a halo whose yellow aura surrounded him, giving him the glow of perfection. He might have seemed heavenly from a distance, but, up close, where I could see him for how he really was, he looked like hell. You could see his wings, glorified by all, had scars criss-crossed them, some wounds still healing. His chest and back had been branded with scars, some that looked strikingly similar to claw marks. His hair was tousled and wild, a look that fit well with his bloodshot eyes with bags underneath them. You saw his halo, in its shining beauty, but one more look, and you'd see, the edges were like knives, sharp and dangerous to those who wield it. His hands were callused and rough, and he hunched as he walked, as if he had the entire weight of the world on his back.

I fell in love with an angel. While he was rough, frightened, and angry, he was mine. I watched and listened as he told me stories about creation, and how 42 isn't the only meaning of life. His stories reached those around him, spoken low and soft as if he was telling secrets, but with the commanding nature of a roll of thunder. I watched him as he sang along to the radio driving our backroads, towards the place he chose to call home; he was never off pitch and sang as if his war could disappear as fast as the road behind us. I watched as he explained the stars, how they are all prayers sent up to the one we call "holy." I watched him as we laid in the dim pasture, lit only by answered prayers, as he took my palm and ever so gently and began to draw patterns on my skin with his fingertip, designing what felt to be the world's most intricate tattoo. As he drew, he spoke of how the godly beings were at war, and how he, a soldier for a tyrant of the sky, was somehow caught in the middle amidst a mutiny.

I fell in love with an angel. The look in his eyes showed despair, a loss of all hope, and exhaustion. I watched as he would drink, but not get drunk, night after night, not going insane, but rather, just to try to numb the pain he'd been through. I saw his anger as he roared and the ground trembled beneath him. But, as he would yell, fear was apparent in his own eyes, as he feared himself. I saw his sadness, as he screamed obscenities at the sky, watching as, drop after drop, the world became engulfed in rain. I saw as he would pull his hands through his hair, frustrated and

tired, and as his hands would catch on his halo, slicing his palms and creating more scars. I watched as he bled blackened blood, only from his more recent wounds acquired from godless places.

I fell in love with an angel. I watched him around other angels; he was cold and distant, as they all were to each other. I saw as he was asked about God, just so he could immediately tell them, "He's not what you think," and described him as a tyrant, ordering, demanding that he be adored. I saw as he was asked about the Devil, just so he could tell them, "He's not what you think," and attempted to show us how Lucifer was nothing but a young man, cast out from his home, and only wanted to show the true colors of the world. I watched as the world he walked through parted at his sight, shunning him for his differences and praising him in the same breath. I watched as he cared less and less for humans as he realized our kind of love means pain. I watched as the weight got heavier on his slumped shoulders, his body tensing from the weight of the world. I watched as he grew more tired of obeying every day, and saw as his eyes pleaded for me to help. I watched as he rose from bed every day, his heavenly glow dim from resting, his wings unstretched and ruffled from sleep, his tired eyes looking down at me.

I watched as I soon became the only thing that could make him smile.

I fell in love with an angel. And I heard him cry, sitting on the bathtub ledge, screaming at his scarred hands, "I can't do this anymore. I can't, I can't, I can't."

I listened to his muffled cries as I sat outside a locked bathroom door, not knowing what would come next or what everything meant. I listened as everything went silent, the cries ceased and the screaming stopped. I felt myself unlock the bathroom door and feel exactly what it's like when a star falls from the sky. I saw him sitting there, scared. Trembling. Terrified. I watched as a blood-stained hand reached toward me and grabbed my hand, pulling me to his chest as we both sat at the bottom of the tub. To the side, you could see his beautiful, brown and white speckled wings discarded in the trash, lopsided and still dripping blackened blood. His halo thrown to the ground, tufts of feathers and clotted blood still clinging to the knife-like edges of the halo he had used. I felt myself pull him close and still love him with everything I had in me.

I fell in love with a fallen angel, who longed to be free.

~





# La música en Mariposa

Gabriel Ratcliffe '22

Spanish minor

La alumna dijo *jajaja* a su amiga  
por animar a *la Mariposa*  
Tan fácil y fluido y con precisión.  
Las sílabas eran las correctas cuando ella la dijo  
Pero no, los oídos de la alumna la rechazaron  
Porque pensaba que la ley era "*Mary-pose-uh*"

¿Quién es María?

¿Qué posa María?

En la ley y el arte de la lengua latina,  
Las dos pupilas fueron larvas para mí  
Miré cómo su amiga extendía sus alas lentamente  
mientras la muchacha decía *jajaja*  
forzándola a volver adentro de su capullo  
Con *Mary-pose-uh*, *Mary-pose-uh*, una cláusula incompleta  
que mata las notas quienes convocan a la persona en toda su belleza  
Entonces, me golpeé  
porque no usé mis alas más fuertes  
para enseñar a las dos

La alumna estaba segura pero equivocada  
Su amiga tenía razón, pero le faltó confianza  
Si yo usase mis alas para unir sus buenas mitades  
con la magia de cantar *Mariposa*, *Mariposa*, *Mah-ree-POH-sah*  
En ese pequeño momento,  
todos estuvimos un paso más cerca  
de ser monarcas de la lengua latina  
convocando a la persona allí a donde pertenece.



## The Music in Butterfly

Gabriel Ratcliffe '22

Spanish minor

The pupil went “hahaha” to her friend  
For giving living life to Mariposa  
So easy and fluid and with precision  
The word grew wings when sang it unsurely  
But surely, all syllables were correct.  
But no, the pupil’s ear rejected it  
Because she thought the law was “Mary-pose-uh”

Who is Mary?  
What did Mary pose?

In law and art of latin tongue,  
These two pupils were larvas to me  
I watched the friend stretch her wings slowly  
While the pupil went “hahaha”  
and shoved her fellow pupil back in her pupa  
with Mary-pose-uh, Mary-pose-uh, an incomplete clause  
that kills the notes who summon the being in all its beauty.  
Then, I kick myself,  
for I didn’t use my stronger wings to teach them both

The pupil was sure but surely wrong  
Her friend was right without might of confidence  
If I used my wings to join their good halves  
With the magic of singing Mariposa, Mariposa, Mah-ree-POH-sah  
In that small moment,  
we’d all be a step closer  
to being monarchs in the latin tongue,  
summoning the being back where it belongs.



## Prisoner of war at home

Sharon Lopez Mooney

Death has sucked on him and spit him out  
from beyond dream almost to forever,  
but some insistence yanked him back  
back into horror and broken teeth.

*Make my heart beat faster, make it catch up!*

Pressing his chest, he massages,  
life is running out ahead dragging  
him a frayed rope-end of leash,  
he waits out the long slow stretch of time.

Now at home, still those seven years succeed  
in breaking him (their goal all along),  
they haunt his effort to rebuild, and still  
derail his children's futures.

*Why, still, do I have to live in this body bag of flesh  
the only thing they left me....*

Amnesty's official records, lists of documented facts,  
hours of interviews - he spoke until his voice  
broke in his heart - still it changed nothing,  
disturbing secrets drown his voice in silence.

*Why can I only live in the debris of broken ribs,  
only pretend anything but remembering  
the stink of my body on that cell floor,  
remember death's rancid taste in my saliva?*

With each boot blow to his ribs, each  
metal rod's smash on his back, hate  
broke him into pieces that rattle  
inaudibly with even his tiniest step.

Running his hands over the hair on his legs  
he makes it into smooth, minute lines  
remembering the tiny hairline cracks  
on the walls of the cell, his only shelter.

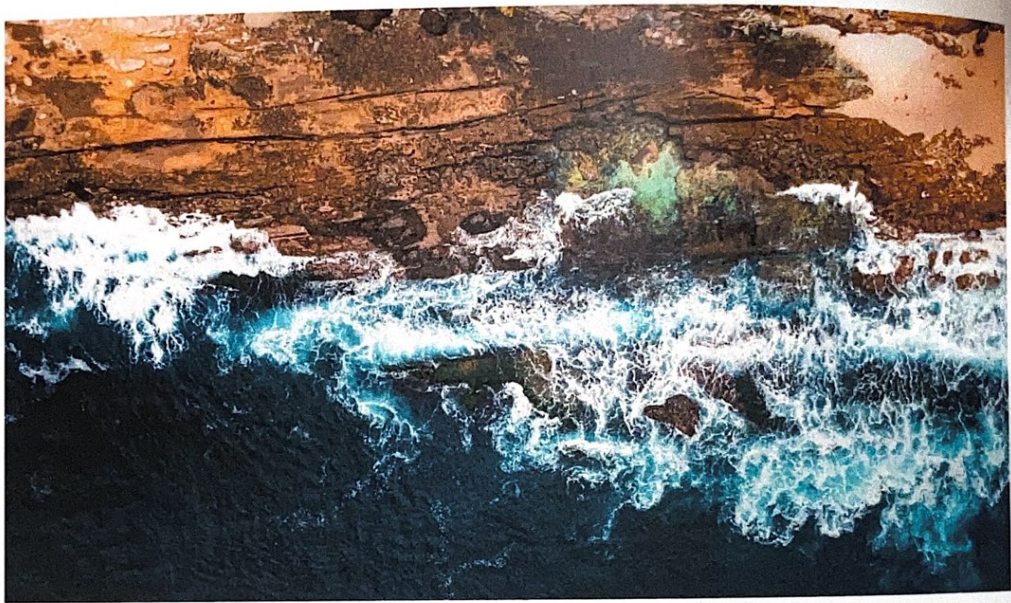
Too weak to put pressure where  
he felt the leak of warm blood,  
he moves just outside himself again  
where it is safe and blank.

Tonight he lies on his bed  
in the empty echo of his homemade  
cell, watching headlights  
arc across the walls of his room.

*There must be some reason  
why I should want to be alive  
there must be some reason,  
there must be some...*



La Jolla  
Chase Carter  
[Photography]



# Father

Ashley Gordon '25

You broke me  
No one else even got the chance.  
You shattered my heart  
And stepped on the pieces.

Taught me I was unworthy  
No one can be trusted.  
Everyone will hurt you  
Why give them a chance?

You hurt those around you  
And never seem to care.  
I'll never understand  
Why you did what you did.

But I'm healing slowly  
Repairing all the damage.  
You can't beat me  
I'm learning to grow.

I will love myself  
Even if you don't.  
I will have a great future  
You will be alone.

Love will last forever  
Hate makes you alone.  
Soon you will see  
You should have loved me

## Deciding for the Dead

Terry Sanville

John cinched his knapsack tight and hustled to catch up with his friend and classmate. But a hundred yards separated them. Erick already stood at the traffic light, ready to cross the broad boulevard and continue on the path to the university. John hollered after him but Erick didn't seem to hear. So he relaxed and slowed to a shuffle, with plenty of time until their next class.

The sky began to cloud over with huge gray masses rolling in off the Pacific, being pushed by a strong wind. John zipped up his jacket and bowed his head to the elements. The path crossed a creek that disappeared into a stone culvert under the adjacent railroad. Reeds and tall willows crowded the culvert's upstream side and spread out to form a small wetland.

As John passed, he caught a flash of something. He stopped and stared. Nothing made sense. A ray of fading sunlight shone on a tiny patch of denim. He glanced up the path. Erick must have heard his call after all because he walked toward him, grinning. John waved him on then stepped off the path and entered the wetland, following a bare trace of a trail.

Pushing through dense reeds and willows, he came to a small plot of grass that bordered the creek, as if someone had seeded and mowed part of a private garden. Near the edge of the creek sprawled a man dressed in ragged jeans and a flannel shirt with the sleeves rolled up. To John, it looked like the guy had laid down to drink from the stream then rolled onto his back and fell asleep.

He heard Erick pushing along the trail and waited, putting a finger to his lips when face-to-face with his friend.

"Be quiet. I think he's asleep," John whispered and pointed.

"Okay. Wow, this is some place."

"I know. I should bring Stacy here. It's close to campus, yet private, beautiful."

Erick eyed the man. "You sure he's asleep?"

"Yeah. Why? He looks peaceful to me."

"Me too. But his stomach isn't moving and he's pale."

"Hey, you're the pre-med guy."

John and Erick edged forward and stared down at the man. His scraggly gray beard quivered in the breeze and his smiling mouth showed gaps between yellowed teeth. Erick knelt and checked for a pulse at the wrist and neck.

He listened for breath sounds and shook his head.

“The old guy’s ice cold, no pulse. We can stop whispering. He can’t hear us.”

John backed away from the body, his first close encounter with the dead.

Erick stood and looked around. “Wow, this place is something. I wonder if he camped here.”

John sucked in a deep breath. “Maybe. I haven’t seen a tent or anything.

I’m feeling weird . . . gotta sit down.”

“Yeah, yeah. Just chill.”

The friends sat on the grass and stayed quiet. Traffic sounds from nearby streets faded. The burbling creek echoed in the culvert. Dragonflies flitted from stream to undergrowth. Birds chattered in the reeds, and sunlight blazed on the grass, then dimmed when blocked by clouds.

“Are you okay?” Erick asked finally.

“Yeah, sorry I flaked.”

“No problem. Take your time.”

“But class . . .”

“We’ll make it. Let’s check this guy out . . . do his front pockets then roll ’im over.”

John stared. “Really? Shouldn’t we call the police?”

“Yeah, but I’m curious.”

The duo searched the man’s pockets. Absolutely nothing. Erick checked for medallions around the neck or wrists. Also nothing.

“This guy looks poor,” Erick said. “Packing-twine belt, worn-through boots,



half his teeth gone. And those ugly Navy tattoos; musta been a career guy.”

John nodded. “My grandfather is retired Navy. He’s got lots of stories . . . the Navy was his family. Always wanted to return to the sea.”

“Yeah, I can dig that.”

“Maybe this guy’s from one of the homeless camps,” John said. “A lot live near creeks.”

“Maybe. But he hasn’t been at it that long. His hands are still soft and his haircut is recent.”

“He sure picked a peaceful place to die. I just happened to glance . . .”

“Yeah, but he won’t be here long unless he’s moved.” Erick pointed to the sky. “That major storm’s supposed to break tonight.”

“So?”

“This whole area will flood when the creek rises. He’ll be carried away.”

“Carried where?”

Erick thought for a moment. “Well, if it rains long and hard, this creek and the ones it joins become rivers and could take him to the sea, push him right out into the Pacific. Or he could get hung up in some culvert along the way and be fish food for weeks.”

“I prefer your first vision,” John said.

“Yeah, it’s like that Victorian novel, *Water Babies*.”

“Never heard of it.”

“It’s about poor English kids that drown and become water-babies and part of a strange ocean world. My mother read it to me when I was a kid.”

“Odd story for a child.”

“Tell me about it. My mom is this weird hippie lady.”

“But it sounds . . . no, it *feels* right, even for a crusty Navy guy.”

They stretched out on the grass. John stared at the scuttling clouds, shielding his eyes when the sun burned too bright. It felt like the afternoon he spent when

he was nine, wandering around the immaculately maintained Catholic cemetery during his great uncle's burial ceremony. The wetland and the cemetery felt like parks, peaceful. *Not a bad place to end up . . . and to slip away from . . . back to the sea . . . to become part of it . . . his very essence part of oceans that touch all land, all ports, all ships.*

With a great sigh, John sat up. "We gotta decide what to do."

Erick checked his watch. "Yeah, class in twenty minutes. I say we call the police then haul ass."

"But shouldn't we stay? They'll have questions."

"Sure, but staying won't help this guy, and I've already missed too many lectures."

John stood. "I say we just go. Let the water take him from this place he chose to die. He's an old Navy guy, would like it better."

Erick stood and stared at his friend. "Really? What if the guy has relatives? Loved ones? Wouldn't they want to know? I mean, come on!"

"I prefer your first vision. And while the relatives might never know what happened, they can dream about him out there somewhere, rather than alone and dead next to a railroad culvert."

"They're gonna dream all sorts of nasty outcomes. Besides, I'm pretty sure the law requires us to report a body."

"Nobody saw us come here. And we'll make sure nobody sees us leave."

"Come on."

John retrieved his cell phone and took photos of the dead man. He retraced his steps through the wetland with Erick close behind. They hid in the willows until no one was in sight then climbed onto the path and headed off to the university, hustling now to make class.

That night, the clouds opened, and rain deluged the town and slashed across John's apartment window. It rained three days, and the sky turned black as night. John lay in bed and dreamed about the old man – *being engulfed by the stream's thundering surge that looked like coffee covered with scalded cream, pushed forward through the culvert, passing through neighborhoods and business districts with no one noticing, and out across fallow fields and sodden grazing land toward*

the ocean.

*At the coast, the brown surge slid him into the bay and the tide took him offshore to float near the half-mile buoy crowded with sea lions, to watch the last of the gray whales migrate southward toward Mexico. Slowly, the old man lost buoyancy and settled into the green depths onto the sandy bottom, only to stare upward at the hulls of fishing boats leaving port for the three-mile reef and prime fishing grounds. Slowly, he became part of the ocean.*

When John awoke, the dreams had somehow calmed him, and he felt refreshed and ready for another week of classes.

John and Erick scanned the local press but found no reports about a body being found. A few days after the storm, John checked the wetland. The floodwaters had flattened the reeds and the smaller willows and taken the corpse. John sucked in a deep breath and smiled.

School life continued with Erick joining John on their daily trek to the university. Just after Valentine's Day, the duo approached the boulevard intersection with the path. A faded flier flapped in the breeze, half-taped to a light pole off to one side. John reached up and tore it off. They both stared open-mouthed at the text and image.

*Reward of \$10,000 for the location of our grandfather, Leonard MacMillian. He is 88 years old and was last seen on January 15th in the vicinity of Mountain View Nursing Home. Please call (805) 431-4578. Any information is appreciated.*

The flier included a photo of a grinning old man with missing teeth and a scraggly beard. He wore a captain's hat and sported ugly tattoos on his bulging forearm, making him look a lot like the Popeye cartoon.

"Boy did we screw up," Erick said.

"What do we do now?" John asked.

"If we call, we'll get in trouble with the police."

"You're right. But I like how it ended, an old sailor going back to sea."

"Yes, but someday . . ."

John sighed. "Yeah, someday, years from now, I'll write them an anonymous letter and send them photos, tell them how peaceful he looked in his creekside garden."

Erick shook his head. "Still, that ten grand would have been sweet."

"We didn't earn anything. But we decided for the dead. I'm glad we did."

"Aren't you being selfish?" Erick said. "You may feel good. But the family . . . we took away their right to decide."

"You're right, you're right. But maybe the family wouldn't have done the right thing . . . stuck the old guy in a box and put him in the ground."

Erick scoffed. "You're kidding, right?"

John smiled. "I still like your first vision. And if he could have decided, I think the old guy would too."

~

## Death in a Garden

Galileo Henneman '24

Starlets perch on silver roses,  
A man sings of a forgotten love,  
And on the bench he softly dozes.

But in this garden as time froze,  
This empty garden the man grows sick of,  
His trembling, dying hands grow venose.

And among the wilting primrose,  
Swallowed by garden like his ladylove,  
The dying man becomes comatose.

## Other People Live in My Home

Galileo Henneman '24

Other people live in my home,  
Perhaps it had never been my own.  
Foreign faces in my photographs,  
Phantom footsteps mark their empty paths.

Other people live in my home,  
Their ghostly forms haunt my catacomb.  
Even when I walk in the strath,  
Their presence I feel upon my back.

Another Bee Butt  
Riley DeLong '22  
[Photography]



## For Fuck's Sake

Zach Boyles '25

My name is Tyson. It's been a year since I've died. Decided to take a nap on a late Sunday afternoon, and when I woke up, I was walking towards a light. Didn't even know I was dead at first. When I figured it out, I was surprised I was going towards the light, because I did some pretty fucked up shit in my life. But I guess overall I was a pretty good person...but who knows; maybe we all get to go to the light. Hell, it's only been a year; I'm still trying to figure out this death stuff. One of the things I've learned the hard way is how grief and loss can hit your family like a freight train.

My family has always been dysfunctional, but nothing brings out the dysfunction like a dead guy. Everyone knows about families that fight over possessions and money, but have you ever heard of a family fighting over whose grief is bigger and who loved the dead guy the most? I saw my family fighting over their love for me on Facebook for Christ's sake, seeing them calling each other awful names, just to prove that they loved me more. It wasn't even just my family blowing up Facebook; it was also the community. Speculating on how I died. Was it an overdose, maybe a suicide? All these posts before I was even *COLD*; the EMS hadn't even taken me from my house yet. My family was already fighting on social media to protect my name. Since the autopsy was inconclusive, I guess that's one secret I literally took to the grave with me.

Let me tell ya, being at your own funeral is a trip, dog. Everybody I ever knew showed up. It was kind of overwhelming. Almost everyone was wearing their favorite band shirt, and the ones who really love me were wearing *MY* favorite band shirts. Seeing the people I love the most in pain hurt me the most. When I was alive, I was told there were no tears in heaven. Watching my sister hit her knees after seeing me in the casket, the casket she lovingly applied Batman decals to, watching her kids, my niece and nephew, literally carrying her to me, watching my mom laying over me sobbing, watching my brother, Cory, leave in the middle of the service with a panic attack...yeah, I was definitely crying with them. And then there was my dad, my brother Michael, and even my niece and nephew, they were more stoic...I cried with them too.

But grief doesn't stop when the funeral is over. My Facebook page is still a pretty active place. Once or twice a month I get a message about how they miss our late-night talks about music, or how they miss my hugs. Who knows, I guess I gave pretty good hugs. Sometimes it's friends and sometimes it's family, but they love me. My niece and nephew, who are thoroughly Gen Z, lived their life on social media (but not on Facebook). It's the Instagram and Snapchat posts on

holidays and anniversaries to show that they miss me and love me. The way they started listening to Sublime, Nirvana, Foo Fighters, and Alice in Chains because it makes them think of me. I love riding along with them, when they think they are alone, belting My Hero at the top of our lungs. But the best car sing-alongs have always been with my sister.

Sometimes, she's crying as she scream-sings our favorite songs. Sometimes, she's laughing as if she can hear my singing off-key next to her. She seemed to handle losing me in a pretty normal way. She did a balloon release on my anniversary; she even got me new flowers and a new Batman figurine for my grave. She remembers me, and she misses me, but in a healthy way, ya know? I think she talks to the big man about me, and it seems to help. Hopefully nothing bad.

*And then there's my mom.* She wears her grief like a cloak, a badge of honor almost. Which is pretty fucked up. Every stranger at the grocery store, fans at my nephews baseball or football games, people she barely knows at the bar, the receptionist at her doctor's office, *her doctor...* They all know she had a son who tragically died at the age of 26. I checked in on her at the nail salon once, and there she was, graphically telling the eleven strangers in that room how my stepdad had to drag me off my bed and do CPR...how that still haunts him to this day...*for fuck's sake Mom.* These people are trying to relax, and here you are dragging them into your PTSD spiral. This isn't what they want. Jesus Christ, this isn't what I want. But, in fairness, I put my mom through a lot of shit. She fought hard to keep me alive. Now that I'm gone, I don't think she knows what to do with herself. I guess it's hard to move on when the one you kept alive is now dead.

But no one took it as hard as my little brother, Cory, did. Cory and I have always been close. We were two years and two weeks apart. Hell, half our lives, people thought we were twins. Like, literally, people would stop our mom in the store and ask if we were twins. It's probably not easy looking like the brother you just buried. The number of times I saw people walk up to him and say, "Hey Tyson"... I lost count. Cory has always been pretty blunt; he would just look those people in the eyes and say, "I'm Cory, Tyson's dead." I think he got sick satisfaction watching these people go through the seven stages of grief in about ten seconds right in front of his eyes. I'm not gonna lie, I was kind of into it.



For Cory, the seven stages of grief were different. They involved a shit ton of alcohol. And sarcasm. And insecurity. And fear. This could be a recipe for disaster; I'm surprised he isn't up here with me. Maybe that's why my sister kept her shit together, for Cory. While everyone else was falling apart, she had to keep him together. Even all those times that Cory got completely shit-faced and screamed at her about how big his grief was, threatened to throw her computer across the room, tried to fight her husband—but hilariously, Jim sat him the fuck down; I love Cory, but I was rooting for Jim—and lost his mind on his way home from a concert with my nieces and nephews... She just kept holding him together. I think we both saw the same thing, someone with a sadness so big, they didn't know what to do with it.

It's kind of a weird reaction to losing someone, but Cory got really insecure and unsure of himself. Man, watching him trying to push people away, so they could fight to bring him back...*was really hard*. He constantly thought people were going to leave him, because *I did that*. I didn't want to, and I didn't mean to, but I did it. Cory got paranoid that he was going to die. That he wouldn't make it to twenty-seven, either. He even developed a "fuck it" mentality. But something pretty cool happened when he turned twenty-seven. It was like, somehow, July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019 gave Cory permission to live again. It's so fucking cool to see him live again.

The Big Sad is a messy thing. It hits everyone differently. You need people like my niece and nephew to focus on the good memories. You need someone like my sister who is a rock for the whole family by keeping everyone intact, and then you have people like Cory who grow from the grief to find a new normal and learn to live again. Then there's my mom. I don't know if she'll ever know how to move on, but that's how she is, and that's okay. I experienced a lot in my twenty-six years, but nothing compares to being dead, *for fuck's sake*.

# Ephemeral Webs

Isabella Garino-Heisey '24

[Photography]



## Nuestros reinos

Gabriel Ratcliffe '22

Spanish minor

Señorita...

Está bien si aún no ve los tesoros de mi pecho  
Creo que el poder de un rey vive en su misterio,  
No está en su fuerza  
No arrojaré a sus pies todos mis tesoros para arrebatarla  
No necesito hacer eso  
Puede usted hacer lo mismo

Somos sombras el uno del otro  
Hasta que creamos las luces de la curiosidad  
y danzamos el otro con el uno  
Entonces *usted* se convierte en *tú*

Pídeme algo.

Al principio, te diré esto:

Ahora, tú ves las puertas de mi reino.

Bordado en oro negro.

Adornado con hierro que está caliente a causa del fuego  
y que guarda en silencio hasta que te lo confíe

Ahora ¿Qué hay de ti?

La regla te incumbe a ti también

Tal vez...

No compartamos un destino  
Como rey y reina para siempre

Es cierto.

Muchos momentos no son caminos que desembocan en los brazos  
de la Eternidad

Tal vez...

Un día...

Nuestros reinos colisionarán

Para crear un mundo que rote por

El día y la noche

El sol y la lluvia

Brillando y reinando juntos

Entonces, gritaremos “¡Bienvenido a nuestro reino!”

Es mi esperanza,

Pequeña pero fuerte

## Our Kingdoms

Gabriel Ratcliffe '22

Spanish minor

Señorita...

It's fine if you don't see my chest treasures yet  
I believe the power of a king lives in mystique  
Not might.  
I won't throw all my treasure at you to sweep you away  
No need for that  
You can do the same.

We are shadows to one another  
'til we cultivate lights of curiosity  
And dance with one another  
Then, *formal You (Usted)* becomes *familiar (Tú)*

Ask me something.  
At first, I'll tell you this:  
You now see my kingdom's gates  
Framed in black gold  
And rich with iron hot due to the fire  
That guards silently 'til I trust you with it  
Now. How 'bout you?  
The same rule applies to you, too

Maybe...  
We share no destiny  
as King and Queen forever  
It's true.

Many moments aren't roads running into the arms of Eternity

Maybe...

One day...

Our kingdoms will collide to create

a world that rotates by

Day and night

Sun and rain

Shining and reigning together

Then, we'd yell, "Welcome to our kingdom!"

It's my hope,

small but strong

## Close the Window

William Doreski

Close the window and shut out  
the noise of a nation weeping.  
Nothing special has happened,  
only an onslaught of deerflies,  
gnats, and other stinging critters  
eager to consume our fluids.

Maybe it's politics as usual,  
but I still don't want to hear  
the hucksters sawing the limbs  
off corpses and selling them  
to dictatorships endowed with  
Favored Nation status.

Listen to me rave like a raven.  
I should brew a cup of Typhoo Tea  
and settle into a novel  
by Henry James. Unwinding  
his sentences should absorb me  
back into myself, where I belong.

You're the political creature—  
ranting about crazed hillbillies  
erupting from mountain villages  
to run for the Senate while flashing  
grins of forensic dentistry  
too expert for voters to resist.

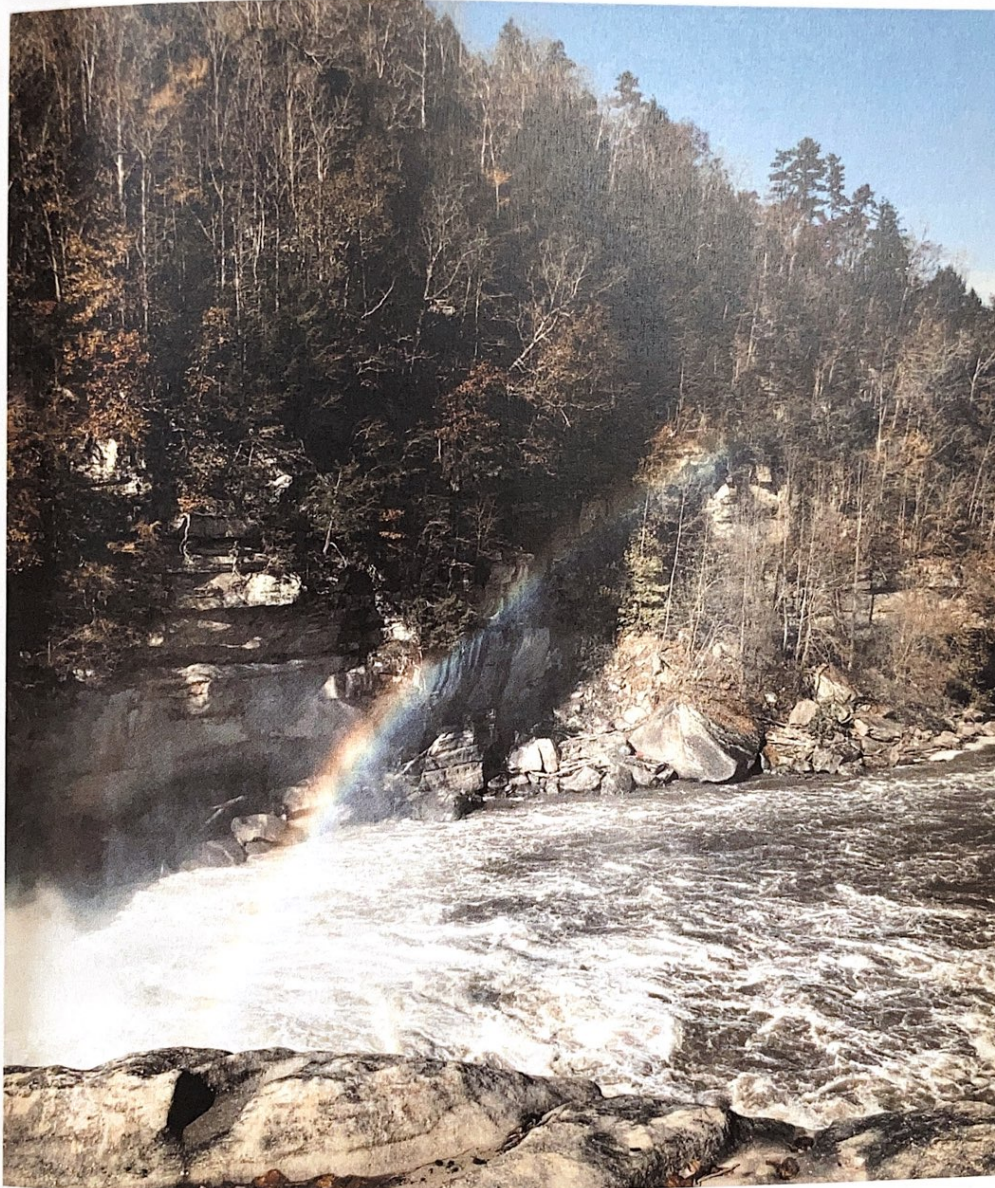
You alert me to book burnings  
involving the memoirs of men  
whose pederasty seems the least  
of their many famous sins.  
Another day of thunder looms,  
warping the western horizon.

Shut the windows against the rain  
and I'll brew tea for both of us.  
The grief of the nation is also  
the sound of big trees falling  
in a big wind no one predicted  
but everyone knew was coming.

# Faded Phenomenon

Isabella Garino-Heisey '24

[Photography]





## Forest Fires

Martin Sanders-Whiteley '25

The forest was on fire again.

Flicker's eyes darted in five different directions, watching as the flames consumed the nearby trees. Two woodland animals, rolling their eyes and groaning, plodded towards their usual hideout. "WHAT IS HAPPENING???" Flicker shouted in an electric voice. She tried to look up and down at the same time, with moderate success.

Gleam rested a reassuring hand (as best they could) on Flicker's non-corporeal shoulder. Their crystalline hair, usually a brilliant white contrast to their coal-black skin, had faded to a sad silver shimmer. "Smolder's having a tantrum again," said Gleam. "Take a deep breath."

Flicker inhaled through her nose and exhaled through her mouth. She looked calmer now, though she was still trembling and fidgeting with her short, golden locks. "Again?" she asked. "What is it about this time?"

"Boyfriend again," said Gleam. They let out a long sigh, full of worry and hurt. "Probably."

"Does he *have* to start a forest fire every time the two of them have a fight?" asked Flicker. "It makes me nervous."

"Please try to understand," implored Gleam. "Smolder can't help it. He just has a short fuse and happens to live in an especially flammable forest."

"I've been trying to understand for the past few eternities, and a lot of good that's done! Smolder always burns the forest down, and then we need a new one!

The rest of the Fae moved out! The only reason Deer and Squirrel are still here is because they can't afford better lodgings!" Flicker was shaking more vigorously. She bit her lip, which had started to flit in and out of existence.

"There, there," cooed Gleam. They tried to offer their hand to Flicker, but Flicker was starting to do what she did best again. They thought very hard for a very long time before speaking again.

"You're right," said Gleam. "And I have a plan that will put a stop to this once and for all."

Flicker stopped. She looked straight at Gleam with her gold-hued eyes. "Really?"

Gleam took in their deepest breath yet and exhaled their longest sigh. "I think it's time for an intervention."

Smolder punched his pillow again, which now consisted of a pile of ashes.

The canopy of trees that served as his house was in the same state as his pillow, as was the rest of the forest.

“Hi Smolder,” said Flicker, stepping into the former house. Gleam, who was standing behind Flicker, gave Smolder a friendly wave.

“Flicker, Gleam,” Smolder grunted, nodding his head of fiery red hair in acknowledgement as he spoke each name. “You here to collect the regular tax for a new forest?”

“No.” Flicker’s inconstant eyes glared at Smolder. “We aren’t.”

“This is an intervention,” Gleam calmly explained.

“An intervention?” Smolder scoffed as hard as he could, which was very hard. “What the hell for?”

Flicker gestured at the expansive ex-forest surrounding the trio, then glared at Smolder with even greater intensity.

Smolder tried to scoff even harder, but this resulted in a terrible coughing fit instead. Once he regained his composure, he stood up and folded his arms.

“Really? This has been going on for five eternities, and *now* you’re gonna try and hold an intervention?”

“We aren’t just trying,” Gleam whispered, as if it were the most precious secret ever told. “We’re having one.”

Now it was Smolder’s turn to glare. His ember eyes were very good at glaring. “Maybe I’m not the one that needs an intervention.”

“WHAT???” exclaimed Flicker, a shock running through her body.

She disappeared for a split second. When she reappeared, she was shaking again.

Gleam clutched the spot where the flowing white gown covered their heart as if they’d been hit with an arrow. “That really hurts, Smolder.”

Smolder’s ember eyes burned even brighter. “Don’t try and deny it!” he barked. “I’m not the only one who’s trashed a forest before! Flicker, do you remember the day you forgot your planner?”

“Don’t-Don’t look at me!” stammered Flicker, who was hard to look at when she wasn’t always there. “I can barely remember what I ate for breakfast this morning!”

“Or you, Gleam!” Smolder continued. He turned his gaze to meet Gleam’s eyes, which were the color of spiderwebs. “Remember the first night you spent with your girlfriend?”

A serene smile appeared on Gleam’s lips.

“Every single detail,” they said wistfully.

“There we have it then!” Smolder struck a triumphant pose. “We’ve all done this before! We *all* need an intervention!”

“But you won’t deny that it was you this time?” inquired Gleam. There was nothing accusatory in their voice.

Smolder looked away from the other two sheepishly. “Well...yeah.”

“Boyfriend trouble again?” Gleam raised a knowing eyebrow.

Smolder looked at his feet. “Yes,” he grumbled.

“You didn’t kill this one, did you?” asked Flicker in a nervous tone.

“No,” Smolder muttered, not looking up. “Nothing like that. It’s just that he’s a mortal is all. Time moves differently for him, and he wasn’t keen on moving here. It just wasn’t gonna work out. Can’t say I blame him. But I was pissed off.”

“There,” Gleam sang. “Was that so bad?”

“It was awful!” Smolder spat. “But I’ll pay the money for the new forest as usual.”

“But we need a plan!” exclaimed Flicker, starting to panic.

“What if this happens again?”

“We just need to keep ourselves in check,” said Gleam. “If we do that, we won’t get this far in the first place. And we need to let one another know if we’re having an intense day so we can prepare.”

“Fair enough,” said Smolder, nodding.

“Now that that’s sorted,” grinned Gleam, “who wants lunch?”

The three sat in their new forest, eating the food Gleam had prepared and drinking the nectar of the flowers. The three had never been happier. Gleam, ecstatic to be in the company of friends, calmly and gracefully burst into flames.

“Oops,” said Gleam.

The forest was on fire again.

~

# Refractions

Chase Carter  
[Photography]



Oreo 

Cara Stanback '22

I want to be more than what they tell me to be. I want to be everything.

I want to be powerful in my own way. I want to leave a mark bigger than the deepest scar I've ever obtained.

I have been challenged since birth, unfortunately. The details they put on my birth certificate chose my life for me.

I have an opportunity to either make a name for myself or let the world choose it for me.

I have to make that choice everyday. The choice never ends.

I have been the little girl, I have been the pretty black girl. I am the black girl who acts white, I am the whitest black girl people have ever met.

I am the oreo. I have always been one of the oreos.

The black on the outside. The white in the inside.

Who gets to decide that? Who gets to decide if I am black enough?

I would love it if someone told me what being black has to do with how I talk, how I dance, how I sing, who I hang out with, and what I do in life.

Being Black is not a fucking measurement of my behavior. It is something I can't change. Do not tell me I am not black enough because you think that you have a say in how white I am. I have been labeled Black since before I was born and I will be Black even after I leave this earth.

Calling me an oreo doesn't change the way the police see me. Calling me white doesn't change how racists see me.

I don't get a "pass" because you think I'm rhythmically challenged or proper.

I don't appreciate your ignorant way of thinking. I don't understand why you think it is okay to erase who I am.

I am a person. A Black Person.

A Woman. A Black Woman.

I cannot change who I am. Do not change who I am.

I want to be respected. I want to be loved just like everyone else.

I want to destroy this idea of being an oreo. I'm so tired.

I'm tired of not feeling black enough to be with the black people. Tired of not being white enough for the white people.

Where am I supposed to fit in? Where am I supposed to go?

Do you see what you did? You stripped my identity away from me.

The worst part is I believed you. You sucked me into your stereotypes.

You made me believe that something was wrong with me. You made me feel like I wasn't good enough.

You created and destroyed so many images of myself in my head. You are the worst.

I will one day become more than the words and labels that you placed on me.


One day I will destroy all thoughts of your stereotypes.

Realizing who I am is my strongest super power.

Everyone should just be who they are and love harder than ever.

Only being true to yourself is important.

Lucky for you, I'm a tough cookie.

Hers.   
Ethan Schmidt '25

He's at his desk, the steady scribble of his quill filling the otherwise quiet room. The ink dripping down onto the paper like blood. He glances up from his papers for a moment, eyes catching a glint of sunshine warming the wood. Warm yellow illuminates the window, gently backing the trees and painting the red curtains with shades of orange. His eyes dart between his work and the window, considering, before he finally relents. He places his quill into its holder, gently pushes his chair back, and moves over to the window, doing his best to make his steps as quiet as possible.

He plops down onto the windowsill, placing a palm and the right side of his face against the glass, closing his eyes. The window is warm, and the longer his skin is against the glass, the warmer it feels, getting hotter and hotter until it almost hurts. He doesn't move, staying in place as the shape of the window burns into his skin. It's better than the frigid air he left behind, pressing against his back and neck as if trying to pull him back into it. He peeks an eye open, looking at the landscape down below. An ocean, the steady beating of its waves against the tired sand, beach slowly giving way to grass and weeds, greens painted yellow with sunlight. His fingers twitch, body tensing as it remembers the feeling of grass on skin, air in lungs, warmth in chest, steady and beating and alive.

He glances back at his room, dark, save for candle light and the rays of sun. Air cold, still, despite the candles, despite the fireplace, despite the blankets and the drinks and the many, many attempts to block out the ice seeping through the cracks. For a moment he considers leaving, opening the window and fleeing, letting his body break on the rocks, painting the grass with new colors. But then he hears her footsteps, loud and thudding, shaking the floor, the walls, the ice. He hears her footsteps, maybe angry, maybe calm and feels the familiar choking, something wrapping around his throat, his lungs, his stomach, his heart and squeezing, squeezing, *squeezing*.

In an instant, he's back at the desk, forcing breaths out and trying to calm the shaking of his hands. Hoping she doesn't notice anything, hoping it looks like he never moved at all. He tries to go back to work, body tensing further, preparing itself for when the door slams open and the room is filled with her demands.

-----  
Being with her is like a dance. A dance that he doesn't know the steps to. She glides through it gracefully, dirty blond hair billowing around her, bright ruby red eyes matching her ruby red lips, her green-blue dress spinning with her

movements. She leads and he follows, doing his best to echo her steps. He does his best, but, eventually, inevitably, he makes a mistake. He always knows when a mistake is made, and she never lets one pass, the incident burned into his memory with screams and ice and scars. Bruised skin, black eye, bloody nose. He pushes himself up from the ground, stumbles back into step, and continues the dance.

She does her best to help him. She holds onto his wrist, his waist, holding him so tightly it hurts. But the steps seem to change with every movement, the rules constantly fluctuating, leaving him in the dark until the misstep, the mistake, the break. One time, he tried to ask for the steps, to understand, to put an end to the bruises and scars. He was lucky she didn't break his legs. He doesn't try to ask anymore; he just follows, and hopes. He runs a hand down his arm, tracing the memories imprinted into his skin. Handprints marking his failures. Fingers clasped around the wrist, a hand on the elbow, a palm on his shoulder. Broken rules. Asking to go outside for the third time in two months, talking to another woman, saying no to a request for a dance.

There's a knock, the creak of the door opening, red eyes peering into the room. She smiles, asks him if he wants to help her bake. He agrees, knowing it's not actually a question, leaves his desk, and follows her. She looks happy, but he can't help wondering how long that's going to last, how long until the next step is missed, the next rule broken. How long until those red eyes darken and that smile morphs into a glare? How long until he's curled up on the ground, tears and blood pooling on the floor? He follows her down into the kitchen, the nauseating scent of baking cookies already in the air. He takes a steadying breath and lets her pull him inside.

-----

His breath comes out in puffs, steaming in the freezing air. His arm aches and screams, covered in layers of ice, spiking around his wrist, climbing down to his elbow. She touches his arm and he freezes, expecting more sharp, angry words and the feeling of ice growing on his skin. Apologies rush out of him, his mouth forming words before he can even think of saying anything. He shouldn't have asked to leave the house, shouldn't have glanced at that woman, shouldn't have made her feel unloved, shouldn't have, shouldn't have, shouldn't have.

She smiles. Says it's ok. Says she knows he didn't mean to upset her. Says she knows he won't do it again. She places a hand on his arm, on the growing, angry ice. It melts from her touch, letting go but not leaving completely. His fingers are tipped with blue, her fingertips burned into his wrist. She kisses his cheek, leaving



specks of frost on his skin. Says she loves him. Says she forgives him. She pulls him by the wrist, past the wreckage of their room, wood and porcelain fallen beneath her fury. He follows her, his steps falling into the imprints of hers.

They get ready for bed, the fight forgotten. He pulls off his binder, slips on lighter clothes, falls into bed. She lays next to him, wraps her arms around his chest and holds him tightly. Fingernails digging into skin, her hand around his neck, her head using his breasts as a pillow, the feeling of her cold sinking deep, deep down into his bones. He stares up at the ceiling, mind still hyper, still rushing from the screams and anger and tears. Scared that she's going to wake up suddenly, eyes filled with anger, scared that she's going to choke him, that she's going to cover him with ice until he's still, still, still, perfect in a way he can never be while alive. He takes a shaky breath, traces the fingers grasping his throat.

She loves him, she loves him, she loves him.

-----

She hates him.

She hates him because he's not hers. He's not perfect. Friends take him gently by the hand. Tell him that's ok. He doesn't have to be perfect. They're *lying*. What is a prince if not perfect? What is a happily ever after, if not perfect? The union of a prince and queen, the prince down before her, knee on stone, head bowed down, giving his life, giving his heart, giving his soul. The queen owning him completely. Happy, because he is hers, and he is perfect. It does not matter if the prince is unhappy. It does not matter if she hollows him out, tearing his fire, his warmth, his life out of his chest, painting the scenery with blood, dripping red splattered on her smiling face.

It does not matter if he lives, because what is his life if not hers? What use does he serve besides her, what reason does he have to exist besides her? She believes he was made for her, created to be hers and hers alone, created to make her happy, created to be her prince. He does what she commands, says what she wishes, thinks what she wills. He is not perfect, and so she hates him, but he's close.

So very very close. To being everything she wants, to being hers and nothing else, almost wiped, almost hollowed, almost owned. And once he's perfect, once she loves him, he'll finally be complete.

*And maybe, once upon a time, he wanted to be more. Maybe, once upon a time, he wanted her to love him but wanted to be full, to be complete, to be his.*

*Maybe, once upon a time, he went outside, laughed with friends, slept alone and felt warm warm warm. Maybe, once upon a time, he didn't want to be owned. Maybe, once upon a time, he was stupid and unlovable and horrible and evil and broken and wrong wrong wrong and maybe he's better this way, crushed in her loving embrace, freezing in her hold, dead in her grasp. Why would he go outside when everything he needs is with her? Why would he have friends when all he needs is her? Why would he sleep alone when he belongs to her? He doesn't remember what warmth feels like anymore.*

Maybe it's better this way.

~

## Falling

Emma Townsend '25

I trusted you with my heart,  
That was my first mistake,  
You always tugged at the strings,  
Because you knew you could,  
My second mistake,  
Was falling in love,  
Because I could never be sure,  
You would be there,  
To catch me

## To the Moon

Emma Townsend '25

You said you loved me,  
To the moon and back,  
But then you showed me,  
That the moon,  
Isn't as far,  
As we thought

# Crown of Colorado

Chase Carter  
[Photography]



# Raconte-moi l'histoire de l'Afrique

Malkia Wakuika '23

French

Maman raconte-moi l'histoire des héros

Raconte-moi l'histoire de ces personnes qui sont mortes pour notre liberté.

Raconte-moi l'histoire des personnes qui ont sacrifié leur vie pour que nous puissions être libres.

Qu'ont-ils fait?

Comment l'ont-ils fait?

Raconte moi l'histoire des personnes qui ont changé l'histoire

Dis moi maman

Papy raconte-moi l'histoire d'Emery Patrice Lumumba

L'homme qui a sacrifié sa vie pour l'indépendance de notre pays

Un héros panafricain et symbole du nationalisme africain

Sœur raconte l'histoire de Mandela

Le premier président noir d'Afrique du Sud

L'innocent homme qui s'est battu pour la liberté

L'innocent homme emprisonné depuis plus de 25 ans étant innocent

Papa me raconte l'histoire de tous les héros africains qui ont sacrifié leur vie en essayant d'améliorer l'Afrique

Frère me raconte l'histoire de Kwame Nkrumah



# Tell me the story of Africa

Malkia Wakuika '23

English

Mama tell me the story of the heroes  
Tell me the story of those people who died for our freedom.  
Tell me the story of the people who sacrificed their lives  
so we could be free.

What did they do?  
How did they do it ?


Tell me the story of the people who changed history  
Tell me mama

Grandpa tell me the story of Emery Patrice Lumumba  
The man who sacrificed his life for the independence of our country  
A pan African hero and symbol of African nationalism

Sister tell me the story of Mandela  
The first black president of South Africa  
The innocent Man who fought for freedom  
The innocent Man who was imprisoned for over 25 years being innocent

Papa tell me the story of all African heroes who sacrificed their lives trying to  
make Africa better

Brother tell me the story of Kwame Nkrumah

List # 3   
Maiya Sargent '23

Jeff pulled out his list from his back pocket and read the lines in his head:

*Get coffee*

*Morning run*

*Eat Davis*

He shook his head and pulled out his glasses, always forgetting to put them on. He reread the last line as “Meet Davis” and let out a sigh of relief. Jeff flipped over his list and read, “List #2 on fridge.” He slipped the paper right back into his pocket and strolled up to a local restaurant in town. He always met his friend Davis for lunch on Sundays, but, of course, Jeff would never remember.

*Get coffee*

*Morning run*

*Meet Davis*

Davis waved to Jeff from inside the restaurant, and Jeff joined him. “So, what’s on the list for today?” asked Davis, biting into a greasy burger.

“Just the usual morning routine,” Jeff answered.

“You still wearing your glasses daily?”

“Of course. Can’t read well without them.”

“Haven’t made any changes to your schedule?”

“Of course not. I can barely remember the little tasks on this list. Not since the accident—” Jeff cut himself off.

Davis nodded silently. “It’s alright, man. You’ll slowly get your memory working again.”

*Get coffee*

*Morning run*

*Meet Davis*

After the men sat in awkward silence, Davis perked up. “By the way, where were you last night?”

“Last night?”

“Yeah, we had a game night over at the Shannons’. Did you forget to write it down?”

Jeff shrugged. "Must have."

"Well, we had a great time. Although, Beth told me she'd drive over to the Shannons' after work and never showed," said Davis.

"That's weird." Jeff didn't look Davis in the eye. He didn't like Davis's wife, Beth. She was a hippie-type who was basically against the entire food industry and government. She was covered in mushroom tattoos and always wore vines of ivy as a scarf, calling her style "erratic nature."

"Look, I know you and Beth haven't gotten over the last charades game, but water under the bridge, right buddy?"

Jeff lazily shrugged. "Yeah, I guess I'm over it. But tell her I said to watch her back for the next game."

Davis laughed. "I'll tell her first thing when I see her."

Once Jeff and Davis said their goodbyes, Jeff made his way home to complete his day.

*Get coffee*

*Morning run*

*Meet Davis*

Jeff walked into his unfamiliar home and was immediately bombarded with colorful Post-it notes hanging from the walls. The notes told him where to put his keys and shoes and where all his work utensils were. Post-it notes were also displayed all over his kitchen, telling Jeff where his forks and plates were. Jeff set his glasses down on the kitchen counter and rubbed his eyes. He wandered over to find his second list, which hung on the fridge. When he grabbed it, he read it aloud in his head:

*Water plants*

*Clean counters*

*Hide body*

Jeff put his list back in his pocket and reached for his watering pot. He noticed it was broken and decided to pull back out his list to remind himself to buy a new one. He read his list aloud:



*Water plants*

*Clean counters*

*Hide body*

“Hide body?” Jeff realized what he had written on his list. He looked around his kitchen to see if anything was misplaced or messed up, but everything seemed to be in place. Jeff spent the next hour searching around for a body that may or may not be in his house. After tirelessly hunting through his house, Jeff slouched on his couch.

*Water plants*

*Clean counters*

*Hide body*

*What body?* Jeff thought to himself. *Did I seriously write that? I can't even remember if I killed someone!* Jeff's face fell into his hands as he began to cry about his situation. He hadn't been able to remember his daily tasks since he was released from the hospital three weeks ago. His friend Davis checked on him regularly to help him out. Jeff sat up and took a deep breath. “It was an accident,” he said. “I didn't mean to write it. Of course, I didn't mean to write it.”

With a sudden change in attitude, Jeff got up and grabbed his keys to go to the local hardware store. When he got in his car, he immediately wanted to vomit at the stench. And, to his horror, he saw a dead woman in the back of his car.

Jeff jumped out of his car screaming. He sat on the ground hyperventilating, wondering what he should do. *Call the cops? No, they would think I'm a suspect. Call Davis? No, he'd freak out just like me.* An idea then popped in his head and Jeff took out his list.

*Water plants*

*Clean counters*

*Hide body*

*Hide body,* Jeff thought. *If I got myself into this mess, then maybe I can get myself out.* He flipped the list over and saw “List #3 in closet”.

Once he found his third list, he squinted as he read it.

*Hide evidence*

*Bury body*

*Meet Davis*

“Meet Davis?” Jeff asked himself. Then, he realized. Davis would be over to check on Jeff soon. He looked at the time and saw that he only had an hour left

before his friend was at his door. Jeff saw the pile of “evidence” he was talking about in his list. There was a long vine of ivy laying on his closet floor and he knew he didn’t own any. He grabbed the vine with gloves and put it in a trash bag. He hurried to his car to face the body that was in his backseat.

*Hide evidence*

*Bury body*

*Meet Davis*

He didn’t recognize the person laying across the seats. She wore scrubs with a long sleeve shirt underneath. She had dark hair and a small face. Jeff saw the marks on her neck from the vines. *I strangled someone?* He gulped.

Jeff wore gloves as he dragged the body back into his house, hoping none of his senile, elderly neighbors noticed. Once the woman was in his kitchen, the smell had engulfed the whole house. Jeff covered his nose as he decided to pop a bunch of popcorn to cover the smell. Not long after, his house was then full of the odor of burnt popcorn and death. Jeff frantically grabbed a shovel and bucket from his garage when he heard his doorbell ring.

*Hide evidence*

*Bury body*

*Meet Davis*

He looked at his watch. “Now?” He said, groaning. Davis wasn’t supposed to show up for another twenty minutes, but Jeff knew that if he didn’t answer the door in three rings, Davis would come inside himself.

The second ring came.

*Hide evidence*

*Bury body*

*Meet Davis*

Jeff ran around his kitchen, hiding the shovel and bucket and dragged the dead woman into the hallway so she wasn’t noticeable from the kitchen. Jeff put a bed sheet over her and lit a couple candles, knowing it wouldn’t help the smell. He also grabbed his glasses, knowing Davis would scold him for not wearing them.

The doorbell rang a third time.

Jeff rapidly opened the door out of breath. “You alright?” said Davis. He began to sniff. “What is that—”

Jeff cut him off. "Oh, you know, I guess I forgot some basic cooking skills," he laughed. "Is there anything you need?"

"Just wanted to make sure you're doing alright."

"I'm great. Fantastic. See you tomorrow."

Davis squinted at Jeff for a moment but then shrugged. "Don't forget to make more lists tomorrow," he said as he started walking off the porch. Jeff closed his door quickly and pulled out his list again to remind himself what to do next.

He straightened up his glasses, not prepared for the mistake he had made.

His doorbell rang again, making him jolt. Jeff slowly opened the door with a deadly stare towards Davis. "Hey, sorry to bother you again," he said. "I was just wondering if you heard from Beth recently. She hasn't been home since work from the hospital last night."

Jeff didn't answer him. He stared past his friend, regretting not wearing his glasses sooner, to read his list *correctly*.

*Hide evidence*

*Bury body*

***Kill Davis***

~

# The Fall, from both Perspectives

Riley DeLong '22

Looking down past you to the ground

I wonder why I chased after you

Do I hate you

Why are you reaching out to me

Should I grab your hand

Do you hate me

Why did I fall after you

Is there anything to return to

I think I love you

I grab you swiftly

The ground is beneath us now

Am I holding you

Please let me love you

I don't want you to leave

It was never my fault

I love you

Let me hold you

Hold still

There's nothing beneath us now

You hate me

Don't fight me

I have always loved you

Am I fallen?

It's cold, lonely, without you

Looking up beyond you to the sun

I wonder why I ran from you

Do you hate me

I wonder if I can still touch the clouds from here

Please take hold of me

Do I love you

Why did I jump back

Is there anything beneath us

Please take my hand

The sweet embrace before the landing

What are you doing to me

You're breaking me

Just let me love you

Then why did you try to hurt me

I fell because of you

You killed me

Why did you jump after me

Free me

The ground is cold and hard

I want to be warm

You have lost your warmth

When did your heart rot away

Am I home in hell?

I'm warm. Thank you

## Ser

Cameron Mills '22  
Spanish Major

Piscina sin agua,  
árbol sin hoja,  
copa sin bebida,  
plato sin comida,  
quicio sin puerta,  
lámpara sin bombilla,  
libro sin palabra,  
noche sin día.

Alégrate ahora,  
que no estás sola,  
tú eres mi alma,  
y te hago completa.

## To Be

Cameron Mills '22  
Spanish Major

Pool with no water,  
tree with no leaves,  
cup with no refreshment,  
plate with no food,  
frame with no door,  
lamp with no bulb,  
book with no words,  
night with no day.

Now be joyful,  
you are my soul,  
and you aren't alone,  
for I make you whole.



False Eyes  
Isabella Garino-Heisey '24  
[Photography]



i want to sleep:

Mary Isola '23

AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH

I WANT TO SLEEP

I WANT TO SLEEP

I WANT TO SLEEP

LET ME SLEEP

LET ME SLEEP

LET ME SLEEP.

I WANNA CUDDLE

MY SQUISHMALLOWS

WITH A FAN BLOWING IN MY FACE

AND BLANKETS COVERING MY BODY.

FLUFFY SOCKS WOULD BE NICE

AND A COLD GLASS OF WATER

ON MY BEDSIDE.

NOT NECESSARY,

BUT IT WOULD BE NICE.

SOME RAIN HITTING THE WINDOW

AND CRICKETS CHIRPING OUTSIDE

WOULD ALSO BE PARTICULARLY

NICE.

ALL MY WORK DONE,

NO ONE TEXTING ME,

JUST SLEEPING.

AGAIN, THAT IS NOT REQUIRED,

BUT HIGHLY ENCOURAGED.



MY WET HAIR COVERED IN TOWEL,  
SO NO ITCHY NECK  
AND NO WET PILLOW  
(ONCE AGAIN, NOT REQUIRED,  
BUT HIGHLY ENCOURAGED).  
LARGE, BAGGY SHIRT,  
AND LARGE BAGGY PANTS  
(THESE ARE REQUIRED).  
MY STOMACH FULL  
MY BRAIN EMPTY  
AND SLEEP.  
PLEASE LET ME SLEEP  
PLEASE LET ME SLEEP.  
I WANT TO TAKE A NAP  
WITH A SLEEP MASK  
AND A FAN  
AND A SQUISH  
AND A BLANKET  
(ALL NOT NECESSARY  
FOR A NAP,  
BUT HIGHLY ENCOURAGED).



# CONCERNING ASTRONOMY

Mark J. Mitchell

Jupiter hangs just below a curl of moon.

An orange star rides close to the horn.

Some take these for signs.

From where we stand planets are wanderers and stars dance  
in a night sky.

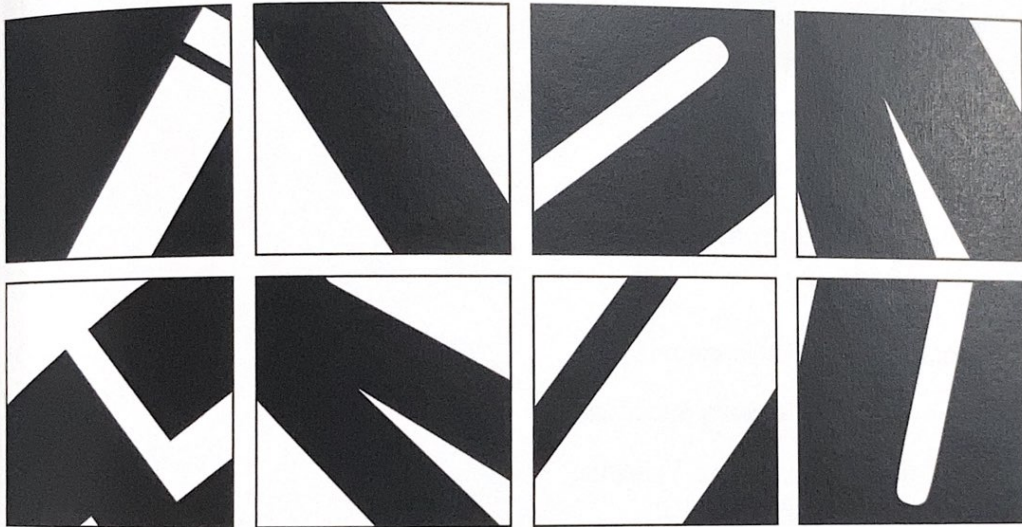
The moon donates tempo with her swelling and fading.

When they look this way from somewhere near Titan

I wonder

What gods those stargazers will name after us.

i love you  
Danni Savage '23  
[Graphic Design]



## Night fear illusions

Ed Higgins

“... terror at night of things generally wrong in the universe.”

--Virginia Woolf

Sometimes

in the middle of the night

awake under a panoply

as caustic as Doré

illustrating Dante

spelunking

to the cave's center

of unsuppressed terror

asking

will I ever get out of here

alive?

If so, only temporarily of course.

Fear, tap, tap, tapping again and again

like a table leg in a Victorian

séance.

Moonlight over the wrong shoulder,

strangers

waiting in appearing shadows,

bat fear

everywhere in the fecundity of darkness.

Snakes

under my bed

awake

suddenly, hand spilled

over the bedside.  
Winter bed sheets' chill  
maybe. Or dinner's spiced rellenos'  
reflux.

Illusions  
finally exhaust even magicians:  
    a life-time of spectacular escapes  
    until even Harry Houdini  
couldn't  
get back.

# Mushroom

Lizzy Jackson '23

Mushroom mushroom go away, try to kill you, and yet you stay,  
Garden and lawn both left bare, except for the mushrooms there.  
Mushroom mushroom short and gross, mushroom's what I hate the most,  
Brown, purple, red, or white, mushroom you kind of look alright.  
Mushroom mushroom small and soft, no one wants you, scream get lost,  
Said he loved me, then he left, oh how I cried, how I wept.  
Mushroom mushroom can it be, mushroom you are just like me,  
Both of us have been rejected, but only one is dejected.  
Mushroom mushroom ripped and torn apart, just like my own heart,  
Oh, my poor sweet little toadstool, how I feel like such a fool.  
Mushroom mushroom not so vile, mushroom won't you stay awhile,  
No one likes you, yet you stay, but I have a better way.  
Mushroom mushroom, keep the house, instead of my no-good spouse,  
I won't need it where I'm going, it's yours, keep on growing.  
Mushroom mushroom in my mouth, mushroom won't you see me out?  
Wish that I could be like you, but my heart's dead, full of gloom,  
Mushroom mushroom keeps me fed; mushroom mushroom killed me dead.

Flower Bee  
Riley DeLong '22  
[Photography]



Newsflash  
Cara Stanback '22

Race, race, race...again, and again, and again, and again.

Sick and tired of getting a racial slap to the face.

Old news: Segregation, discrimination, colored.

History Class: Slavery, Underground railroad, Ruby Bridges.

Current news: Black Lives Matter, All Lives Matter.

More news: Suspect was black, Violent, Victim was Black.

Everyday Life: Race, Race, Race...

New News:

When will there be new news, not just new, but changed news.

News that doesn't have to make me scared of going out in the world.

News that shows black people are just as equal as everybody else.

When will it change, how will it change...?

I'm constantly worrying about my race.

Why am I worrying about something I did not choose or cannot change?

I am proud of my race, but it is sad that others aren't.

It makes me sick to see the hate that has corrupted this world over the color of my skin.

Skin...pigments...pigments in my skin is how this racial war even started.

Pigments have become a cause of police brutality.

Pigments have become a cause of racism.

Pigments have become a cause of hate...

What has my skin color done to you?

Did it scare you?  
Did it jump?  
Did it threaten you?

Race is something that should be appreciated,  
Instead it kept people segregated.  
Black skin is tired of being hated.  
We didn't choose black, but you can choose to love.



My place   
Sam Piacente '22

I opened the door for you  
I let you in  
I told you to feel at home  
I gave you permission to wander around  
To open all the drawers  
I invited you look into my scary places  
I showed you even the things I hid under the bed  
I gave you your own keys to my place  
So that you could come and go as you pleased  
I trusted you copiously

You took care of my place like it was yours  
For a long time, we worked on it together  
A couple years later, I could barely recognize it  
A brand new place, made for you and me

I just never imagined you would leave  
Leave and wipe out the entire place  
Taking away my favorite things  
The ones we built together  
And with the keys I gave you, you came back  
Over and over again  
Making me believe we were about to rebuild my place again  
But instead of fixing it, you took more each time  
Breaking the few things I was able to rebuild

Until there wasn't anything else to take or break  
Then you stopped coming back  
But you never gave me back your keys

Now I live in this crumbled up place  
Full of the remaining of you  
Full of the remaining of us  
The remaining of me  
Ugly and uncomfortable  
I can't even bring myself to rebuild the place  
Because I live in fear you will come back  
Key in  
And destroy it all over again

## The Perfect Day

Pierce Heisey

Thompson's day starts the same way it always does: he wakes up at 7:45 for work. He, of course, doesn't move for two minutes before getting up. He walks over to his dresser at 7:48 and picks out the same outfit. He is tired of it, but it's what's required of him. He pulls out purple pants, a white button-up shirt, a black tie, and a purple coat. By 7:55, he is completely dressed. He walks over to his kitchen and pulls out Polar Crisp Cereal and pours out a hearty bowl of it. He finishes the meal at 8:05. At 8:06, he has his shoes on and walks out the door.

When he leaves, he has the same conversation with his neighbor at 8:10 which always makes him late for work. Thompson responds to his neighbor in this order every day.

"Hello, Mr. Winfred."

"Yes, it is quite sunny out!"

"I'm sorry to hear that."

"Well look at the time! I have to head out now."

"Goodbye!"

The conversation unfolds like this every day. It must. It's what's required of him. Then he pulls out of the driveway at 8:15. He arrives at his work at 8:25.

He is chastised for being late again for two minutes and begins to work at 8:27.

Thompson hates the chastising, but he must listen. It's what's expected of him. He then works on a legal document regarding when a field should be considered a swamp based on how much water it contains. This takes Thompson about four hours. Thompson has memorized what he writes on the document, so he no longer needs his notes. Even when a better argument pops into his head, he must write what he had before. It's what's expected of him.

At about 1:00, Thompson takes a lunch break and eats a tuna salad sandwich on white bread, an applesauce cup, an orange, and a bag of chips. His co-worker, Diane, shows up and they have a brief interaction. This is how Thompson always must respond.

"Hello Diane."

"Well, it's not the most entertaining case, but I guess it's better than last week."

"What's so bad about that case? Sounds fun at least."

"Well, I'm sure things will get better after we get a few more big cases."

"Diane, I can't tell you if I'm in a perfect day, you know that."

"I'm sure it will be the most exciting day of your life."

"What if it was at a theme park or vacation?"

"I don't know, it might get boring after a while."

"That's my time, see you once I've figured out how many of these fields are swamps."

The conversation concludes at 1:15, and Thompson works on the case until 5:00. It's what's expected of him. Thompson leaves work at 5:10 and heads home.

At 5:20 he returns to his house. When he enters his house at 5:22, he opens a small letter on his dining room table. It's what's expected of him. He reads it at 5:23.

*"Hello, Mr. Carter, we are overjoyed to inform you that today was your perfect day! From now on, this is the only day you need. You contributed the most to society today, and thus, it is your appointed day to relive forever. We have sent a schedule with instructions of everything you need to do and say, and at what times they must occur. You cannot break a single thing on the schedule, including reading this letter. You may not tell anyone you are in your perfect day to save us a timeline shift. If it's been a while since you first have read this letter and need a pick-me-up, remember that you do wake up tomorrow, well another copy of your consciousness will. As for you, enjoy your perfect day, congratulations."*

*-P.S. Failure to comply or breaking a rule will result in complete and total removal of your being from the timeline.*

At 5:26, Thompson sits the letter down and cries. At 6:50, Thompson finds the will to move again and puts on his red checkered pajamas. At 7:00, Thompson scarfs down a quick dinner consisting of leftover mushroom pizza and a soda.

Thompson falls asleep while staring blankly at the ceiling in his bed at 8:00. It's what's expected of him.

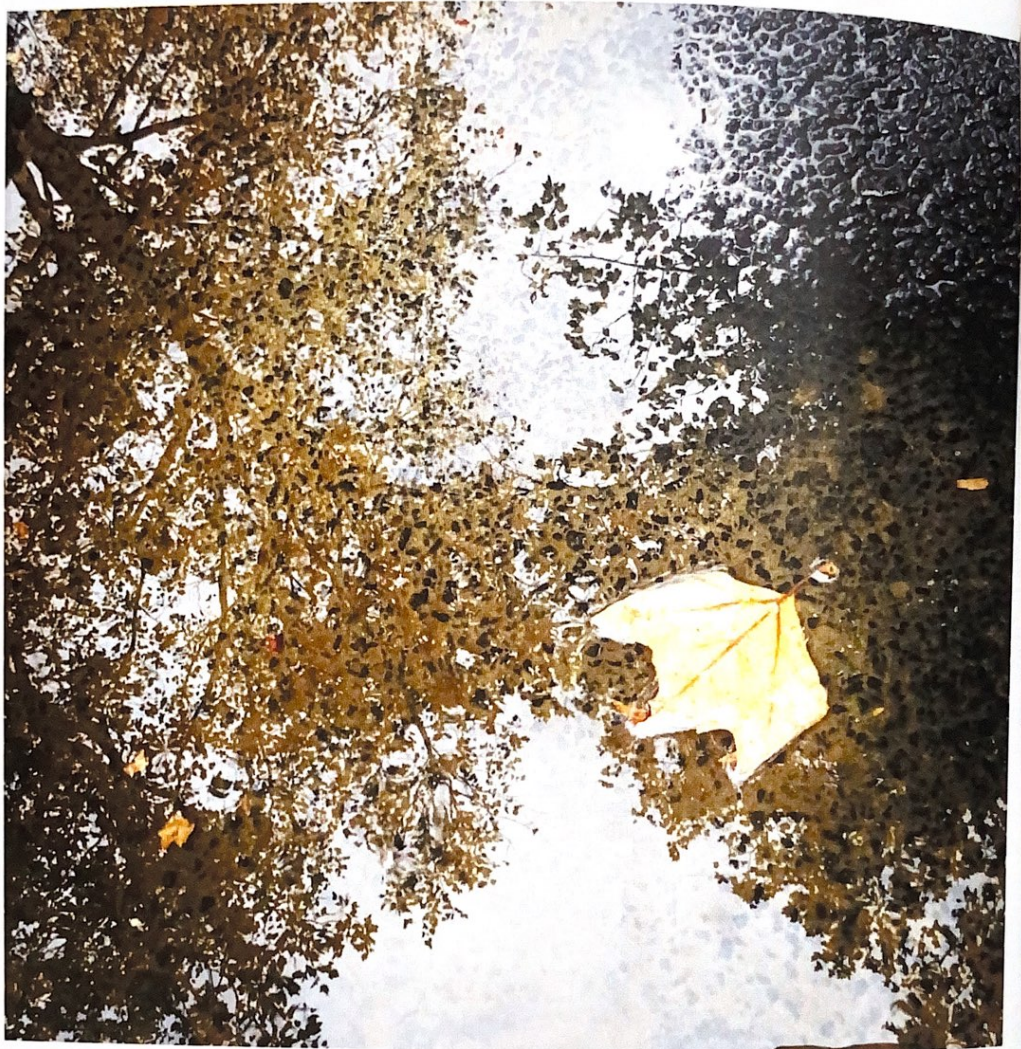
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~

# Fall is Coming

Raj Sharma '25

[Photography]



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Riley DeLong '22

I wonder why I am so melancholy  
And how everyone else can be so jolly.  
What emotions have left me feeling so down?  
When others play and run around  
Soaking up the sweet summer sun,  
I only feel my body being overrun.  
My mind, growing anxieties in the dark  
Like mushrooms taking over dying bark,  
Keep me waking in the night. Muddle,  
My thoughts, I sink into a black puddle  
Waiting for another hole in my mind's ship  
To follow me into the deep, but wake to grip  
The nothingness around me, finding hope  
That entraps, ensnares, kept in a loop.  
My body feels tied down, thrown in a hole  
Yet my insides smile, a promise, roped soul.

## Willoughby's Book Tour: The Interview (Unabridged)

Paul Lewellan

*Editor's Note: Clarice Van Vark's interview with best selling romance author Howard Willoughby was recorded at Arcadia Books in Spring Green, Wisconsin, on May 25, 2019. An abridged transcript was originally published in the Fox Valley Reader on June 10, 2019. Ms. Van Vark has an MFA from the University of Wisconsin, Madison and has published short fiction in Porcupine Magazine, Cold Creek Review, and Iconoclast. She is an Adjunct Instructor of English at UW Fox Valley in Menasha.*

**CLARICE VAN VARK (CVV):** First of all, Mr. Willoughby...

**HOWARD WILLOUGHBY (HV):** Please, call me Howard.

**CVV:** All right, Howard... Thank you for this opportunity. I am an avid fan, and, like the others crowding Arcadia Books today, I'm eager to hear excerpts from your latest work.

**HW:** I'm a strong advocate for independent bookstores. And touring gives me an opportunity to connect with my readership. My body of work—novels, short stories, blogs, and creative nonfiction—appeals to a distinct category of literary enthusiasts.

**CVV:** Could you describe your typical reader?

**HW:** I wouldn't describe any of them as "typical."

**CVV:** Please elaborate on that—

**HW:** Psychopathic women love my work. [At this point, the author raises his hand to silence the protests of eavesdropping patrons.] I am not suggesting all my readers are psychopaths, far from it. No writer can survive on the Psychopath's Market alone. But the Real Fans, the Rabid Ones, the True Believers, the ones who faithfully purchase the hardcover editions and give my paperbacks to friends and coworkers on birthdays and work anniversaries, the Devoted Women who invite me into their homes and introduce me to their friends and name their children after me, those fans are inevitably psychopaths.

**CVV:** That statement might strike the average person as offensive.

[The interviewer motions to other women in the room for affirmation. There are murmurs of agreement.]

**HW:** Are you offended by that characterization?

**CVV:** Well, no, actually—

**HW:** Let me clarify. The small press that published my first novel had no money for a book tour, so I set up one of my own—Davenport, Moline, Clinton, Iowa City, Rock Island—any city within a ninety-minute drive from my house in Pleasant Valley. All I needed was a bookstore manager willing to loan me a table and let me do a reading. I quickly learned to pack extra copies because of the demand I generated. After a successful reading, I could usually convince the manager to buy additional autographed copies. My sales grew.

**CVV:** *As a struggling writer myself, that sounds almost too good to be true.*

**HW:** It wasn't smoke and mirrors. My fiction is solid, my performance skills superb. I know how to work a room.

**CVV:** *But that doesn't answer my question about your fan base.*

**HW:** Bear with me. After those first readings, word-of-mouth opened doors. Inquiries came from stores in Schaumburg, Des Plaines, Aurora, and Kenosha, places too far to drive to and back in a day. So, I started my Living Room Couch Tours.

**CVV:** *What were those?*

**HW:** On my blog, I offered to perform readings anywhere within a day's drive if a fan could guarantee 15 attendees, a couch for me to sleep on, and a bowl of cereal for breakfast. I promised to bring a bottle of wine to decant after the guests left.

**CVV:** *And how did that work out?*

**HW:** Surprisingly well, although I learned to schedule bookstore readings for the afternoon of my arrival. Sometimes the next morning, I was tied up by my hostess and couldn't get away until noon. [*Author chuckles.*] Sometimes, there were embarrassing bruises to explain.

**CVV:** *I'm sorry. You just lost me—*

**HW:** Researchers have long associated psychopathy with a fascination for sadistic, coercive, even violent sex. The empirical evidence I've gathered confirms these theories.

**CVV:** *But why would you subject yourself to such treatment?*

**HW:** Psychopaths lack empathy and are, by definition, callous, but they can be quite charming over lemon drop martinis or an unpretentious pinot noir. So-called "crazy chicks" are sexy and hot. Think of Mila Kunis in *Black Swan*, or Sharon Stone in *Basic Instinct*, or Angelina Jolie in *Girl, Interrupted*. My best fans thrive on aggression. They want power, not relationships.



*CVV: These are your fans you're talking about?*

*HW:* I speak of the True Believers. Women such as yourself with a comprehensive understanding of my work. Take, for example, Margo (not her real name). She persuaded me to drive eight and a half hours to Memphis on the strength of a promise that she would produce twenty-five attendees for a BBQ and book reading at her horse farm. She also arranged appearances the next day at Burke's Books and two Barnes and Nobles. She told me she'd put me up for the night.

*CVV: And how did that go?*

*HW:* I sold a surprising number of books that evening. Over craft beers by her pool, Margo's friends confessed: "Margo is a hard person to say 'no' to," "Margo is so intense," "Margo doesn't realize how she comes across." Trust me, Ms. Van Vark, Margo knew.

*CVV: Please, call me Clarice.*

*HW:* Clarice. That's a beautiful name. It means clear, bright, and shining.

*CVV: You were talking about Margo...*

*HW:* Right. Later, after tucking her husband into bed, she joined me in the guest room and said, "Show me what you've got, Book Boy."

*CVV: I think we've strayed from our interview. I'm here to discuss your literary success.*

*HW:* This is totally on-point. I'm explaining the underlying psychology of my Real Fans. Researchers typically focus on the psychopaths' emotional deficits, lack of ownership for their actions, and poor interpersonal behavior. Only two of the twenty traits on the Hare Psychopathy Checklist deal with sexuality. But those two traits—promiscuous sexual behavior and multiple short-term failed marital relationships—are the bedrock of my literary success and the underlying subplots of my romantic fiction.

*CVV: I beg your pardon?*

*HW:* Clarice, psychopaths experience sex differently. The average person thinks of sexual intimacy as an emotional as well as a physical experience. They might be drawn to someone for reasons other than physical attraction. They might use words like "love" or "trust." But if you were a psychopath, those words would mean nothing. You would want only your "needs" met.

*CVV: That does fit the profile of many of your characters, and I can relate to those feelings, but it seems a harsh judgment on your fans—*

*HW:* A psychopath is a performer. Someone who has perfected the art of expressing emotion, without actually feeling it. That's true for sex, too. Performing great sex is a way of getting what he or she wants. Sex is a path to a goal. It's

boredom avoidance, not an expression of heartfelt emotion or desire. Margo needed her ego fed. I obliged.

*CVV: So you used this woman?*

*HW:* No. Remember, Margo initiated the contact. I simply surrendered my body to an avid fan in exchange for book sales. Years after that first tour, I still feed on that behavior. Long after the financial need evaporated, I continued to sleep on living room couches.

*CVV: But...*

*HW:* Psychopaths know how to get their way, how to con and exploit people. Some of them, like Angelica Maria Allende Cabrera, the President of my Omaha fan club, can be quite aggressive. One store manager candidly admitted he'd booked a reading just so Angelica Maria would stop stalking him.

*CVV: But why would these women do these things?*

*HW:* I understand them. I do not judge them. Plus, with practice, I have become quite good in bed. That's a bonus for all my fans, not just the psychopaths.

*CVV: So not all your readers are psychopaths?*

*HW:* Of course not. The thought is absurd. The core of society is a population committed to stable relationships, altruism, and obedience to the rules. But that means it is difficult for someone outside of this behavioral box to thrive. Psychopaths have to be fearless, impulsive, and totally without scruples.

*CVV: You say it like that's a good thing.*

*HW:* I have always admired an intelligent, independent woman who can hold her liquor, someone who looks good in a simple black dress, someone much like yourself.

*CVV: You're not suggesting...*

*HW:* Of course not.

*CVV:* [The interviewer pauses the interview at this point to refill her coffee mug.] *I'm troubled by the suggestion that your literary success is based on deception.*

*HW:* The body of work speaks for itself. The vast majority of my readers—the Typical Reader you alluded to in the beginning of this interview—finds my characters engaging, the situations titillating, and the endings romantic. That's well and good. But my readers who drive my book tours are wired differently.

[The author pauses.] You're shaking your head, Clarice. Consider this: psychopaths characteristically engage in frequent short-term sexual relationships.

Book tours provide the perfect opportunity for them. Admittedly, these relationships are often manipulative, coercive, and sometimes criminal. I'm fine with that.

*CVV: You're fine with it? Mr. Willoughby! Howard, this interview is about your work, not your sex life.*

*HW: It's all one. At a book signing, school, hospital, or AAUW meeting, I always spot the True Fan before she identifies herself. A psychopathic woman is the hottest female in the room.*

*CVV: Forgive me, Howard, but I believe you are insane.*

*HW: Do you...?*

*[The author is interrupted by the bookstore manager. Due to the burgeoning crowd, he agrees to move the reading to a small park across the street. A table will be set up for book signing.]*

*HW: A 2010 study by Cima, Tonnaer, and Hauser concluded that common beliefs about psychopaths are wrong. They *can* make distinctions between right and wrong as much as anyone. They recognize moral distinctions *but* choose not to act on them, unless it is for their own moral gain and/or pleasure, so, they're terrific subjects for fiction and interesting companions. May I escort you to the park, Clarice? Do you have plans after the reading?*

~



# Attention Span

Jordyn Griffith '24

Pitter patter

All I hear is chatter

Too much clatter

What is the matter

Tick tock on the clock

I can hear people walk

Is that a knock

There fell the chalk

My mind is loud

My head is in a cloud

It's like I'm saying thoughts aloud

I'm covered in a shroud

I need to find peace

The noises, I need release

The sounds need to cease

Or at least decrease

Am I going insane

My ears are in pain

Quiet I need to maintain

This all hurts my brain

Stack  
Madeline Stiers '22  
[Ceramics]



# Sad Inside, Happy Outside

Malkia Wakuika '23

Nobody can understand what you feel if they've never been  
through what you have been through.

They cannot understand if they have never  
experienced what you have seen

They cannot even imagine what you have crossed  
and have never crossed

How many times you cried and how often you hoped  
for a better tomorrow

Every drop of tears that you poured  
and the difficult moments that you've been through  
made you strong

Your responsibilities have made you mature

Your fear has made you brave

In spite of everything

You have never hidden your smile

That smile which makes shine the tomorrows

And you never cease to believe

that everyone deserves the best.



# We are all the same

Malkia Wakuika '23

Nobody is better than another

We all are equal,

We all are same

White or black

It doesn't matter

We all are human beings

We all deserve to be accepted

We all deserve to be treated equally

We all deserve to be respected

No color is better than another

We all are equal

We all are same

The Oracle's Child  
Galileo Hennemen '24  
[Graphic Illustration]





# The Sea

Claire Carney '24

In this moment you have no worries

And the ones you do have, the waves carry

A simple motion, of bobbing up and down in the water, seems to relax you to the point where your problems seem smaller

In and back out, the waves flow

Carrying you with them as they go

In this moment you enjoy the day,

Take in the sun on your face, the wind in your hair and the saltwater smell in the air

You can see the shoreline, so you haven't gone too far

You can still see the pretty sandbar, with the hundreds of tiny shells that put people under spells, to take them home

You feel dozens of clam shells under your feet, that squishy sand in between,

You hear seagulls screeching and see them swooping down in the water for a meal

With the sun shining down, the water looks like it's sparkly and teal

In this moment, you have no worries

And that is a very nice break

You can't wait, to see the ocean, again, someday

# WHERE THE HUG COMES FROM

John Grey

the unbounded thought -

in my brain

beginning

growing

spreading

carrying all of me

along with it -

what else

can I do but

act upon it -

it makes such sense -

presses me forward -

surrounds

with intricate

hand gestures

the boundary

of your curve

and motion -

yes,

I could have

just done the same

without thinking -

but I have this need

to love me

for my mind

## Infant Bathing: Fun or Exploitive?

William Howard '25

Finding fun activities to partake in with your wife or husband can be difficult, especially with a newborn involved. You may believe you no longer have a life and that you're a slave to your baby's bodily excretions and hunger. And to parents whose relationship is suffering due to the pressure of being a parent, Infant Bathing is a new rising activity that not only acts as an enjoyable pastime for you and your significant other, but it can also be shared to your family and friends, who are sure to enjoy them just as much as you do.

Local mother and trend-setter Jane Darth talks about how Infant Bathing has changed her life and improved her relationship with her husband: "Infant Bathing has sparked a new sense of excitement in our relationship. Seeing our baby smile really makes us happy, and the joy of sharing our happiness with others [friends] is what we live for." Dr. Daniel Darth chimes in, saying, "Infant Bathing saved our marriage; I went from not wanting to see Jane at all, to wanting to spend all of our time Infant Bathing." Below is a snippet of the video the couple first shared.

Since sharing this video, Infant Bathing has blown up all over social media, and, although Jane and Daniel are happy that they started a trend that brought happiness to so many other couples, they felt as if they needed to claim their throne, in terms of Infant Bathing video producers. The way to be the best, they thought, was to be unique. "People don't want to see the same thing twice," Jane Darth explained, "which is why each video we decide to do something different. We started by adding bubbles to the bath and noticed there was a direct correlation between the amount of bubbles we added and the size of the smile on our baby's face, which then resulted in more likes and a better response from our family and friends." Jane goes on to mention what toys and bubbles get the best response, and the importance of never using the same combination of toys and bubbles twice.

We managed to get in contact with Jane's father, Michael Janson, and when asked how he felt about his daughter and son-in-law's success with Infant Bathing, his smile widened and his eyes gleamed. "It's beautiful what my daughter has done not only for her and her husband, but for countless couples around the world. It's incredible how you can bring smiles to so many faces and wash your baby at the same time." Up until recent months, everyone seemed to think the same way as Michael. Recently, however, controversies have come up surrounding the conventions of Infant Bathing. Anti-Infant Bather Gabriel Mack comments on how he believes Infant Bathing is wrong, saying,

“We can’t be giving these babies the idea that we are using them as laughingstock.

I never wash my baby and make her my image!” Gabriel goes on to take a personal jab at the Darth family: “I wonder how often you bathe your child when you aren’t recording.”

Jane has taken Gabriel and many other Anti-Infant Bathers’ opinions and carefully thought about the best way to move forward. It wasn’t long until Jane brainstormed the solution to the problem. “We started by hiding the phone we were using to record. This is a really big change for us because now we cannot show the audience the baby’s facial expressions as clearly, and this factor is really what pushed Infant Bathing to have the popularity it has today.” Jane then reflects on that idea and how it affected Infant Bathing: “Yeah, it didn’t work. Whenever I go out in public, I’m afraid of being shamed for Infant Bathing. I know how much joy Infant Bathing brings to me and my community, but the shamers really bring me and my motivation down. I used to wash my baby every day, but now, fellow Infant Bathers are lucky to see the baby’s smile twice a month.” This has affected her relationship with Dane, who mentions, “When we aren’t sharing the joy of Infant Bathing to others, there is a true disconnect in the family. Jane and I don’t share smiles anymore. We struggle to spend time together.” The future of Infant Bathing is unknown, but we wish the best for Jane and the Darth family.

~

## Sleep On Me

Enda McGarth

Sleep on me  
so I can hold your exhaustion  
and weariness.  
Your bleary eyes haunt me.  
I dream of the days  
they used to hit me like a sunrise.

I made the mistake  
broken trust.  
In your bleary eyes  
so much to regain.  
I'll be the workhorse  
this time  
to fix it  
before I'll proceed from shame.

Sleep on it  
and decide if you're mine  
while I lay beside you  
holding cold promises  
In the night.

## When the Stars Fell

Meredith Shepherd '24

Drizzling, dropping, dripping down,  
the stars fell from the sky to ground.  
Painting over the world in dazzling rich hues  
the earth was covered with the sky's purples and blues.  
The universe was falling and none of us knew.

Flying, fluttering, falling fast,  
no one knew how long it would last;  
the heavens are melting, the sky beginning to bend,  
breaking under its own weight, surely this is the end.  
This is goodbye, we didn't have enough time to spend.

Crashing, clamoring, crying cascades,  
the world ending, our fate has been laid.  
"I wish I spent my time better," I said  
Watching the start of my whole world end.  
Wishing there was still more time left to spend.

## Synonyms for I Love You

Meredith Shepherd '24

I always try to say goodbye,  
To let someone know  
I wish that they could stay.

I always try to say hello,  
To let someone know  
Seeing them makes my day.

Because for me, these will always mean  
The same thing as "I love you."

# Fortune of the Leaf

Raj Sharma '25

[Photography]



## Beautiful Day

Kyle Willis '21

It was such a beautiful day

The sun was out smiling away

Flowers blooming and on display

The birds singing and flying free

It would be a good day no doubt

I smiled with what could amount

But I never got to find out

Because somebody murdered me