



KENNINGS
2019

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 Magazine features art, photography, poetry, and prose from the Hanover College Community, including students, faculty, staff, and alumni. All submissions are considered for publication, and selection is made by blind voting of the editorial staff.

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Hanover College

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Amal

In the examination room of the pediatrician's office is a book titled "Hamsters Today." It sits in a rack on the wall, along with "Horton Hears a Who," "Barbie: A Pet Vet," and "Giraffes Can't Dance." A kind nurse with a wrist tattoo tells me to remove my son's clothes. For him, this is the beginning of a nightmare. He writhes and screams and throws tiny, ineffectual punches. The nurse, growing annoyed, pricks my son's finger. Then she applies a Band-Aid to the bleeding tip. My son angrily plucks the Band-Aid off and throws it at her. She tries again with a second and a third and a fourth. All four Band-Aids meet the same fate. They end up on the floor: small, sticky, Minecraft-themed Mobius strips. Later, my son is declared lead-free and in the fiftieth percentile for height and weight. But he only says six words. That's not enough, apparently, so the doctor tells me that someone from the county will come to my house and do an assessment. "Early intervention," the doctor says, "is a free service for people in your financial situation." She adds that signing my son up for early intervention will get me in the system. It's good to be in the system, she says. The system is perfect for small boys who can only say "cookie," "car," "please," "thank you," and "Kanye."

The annoyed nurse gives me a pamphlet that suggests I'm showing my son too many movies. Less Disney, more role play, the pamphlet says. Also, at bath time, I should practice washing a doll with him while pointing to the doll's body parts. That way my son will know what his own parts are called. And I must break him of the binky. Pacifiers impede language development, the pamphlet argues, and almost guarantee the need for orthodontia later in life. Who wants that expense?

In the waiting room, someone has left a newspaper behind. Face up on a glass-topped table is a picture of a little girl on the other side of the world. She is seven years old. She is lying on a cot in a makeshift clinic, too weak to swat the fly from her hand. Her parents can't afford to drive her to a real hospital fifteen miles away, so she is stuck in a parking lot clinic with other starving children. Her bones are on the outside. Her eyes are ink black and unblinking. She will die in a week, but I don't know that yet. Looking at the girl, at her butterfly beauty, I think, there is hope for her. She is seen now. She is known. Powerful people will help her. They will fix this. They will put her bones back in the right place.

My son reaches for me. His arms cast chubby shadows on the wall. His grasping hands open and close in heartbeat rhythm. A line of blood runs down one wrist.

"Please," he says. "Kanye. Thank you. Binky. Please."

Deborah E. Kennedy

Home Away From Home



Maya Zink

L.I.M.I.T.S.

Deep inside me is a tenacious soul
With it, I zoom and zip across the court of life,
Dribbling the rock at the speed of light,
Takin' it to the goal,
Crossing guards, bustin' knees as I go
Playing against teams with ranks so high.
But will I triumph, sweeping the net with a score?
Or will it be my spirit that's shot upon missing what I aim for?

So how 'bout those doubts?
The pencil skimming the air, searching for a point that's not yet there
But in truth, a blank sheet alone can only rest.
It may not handle the truth:
Not every line, curve, or shade will begin at its best.
Will the lead-tipped lover even attempt to search the heart of its destiny,
Sowing seeds that blossom into tangible gardens?
Or will it be cursed to wander the desert of lost dreams?
Dreams unborn with no chance of growing into new realities?

How 'bout those hesitations?
A song may rest on the soul
From the highest summit to the deepest depression,
Pitches find their richness in the way they fly, dive, and roll
Some lay low, hovering undercover, others so eager to toss and throw
thunder.
But how long will it hold?
What if tongues tie into knots and voices deny what they've got?
What if they are gunned down, hurdling, blazing, spiraling, only to never be
found?

Does anybody have a button that silences the brightness with a single click?
If so, what moment is it finished?
Does anybody, in all the earth, have an "off" switch that decides a shining
star's fate to diminish?
Can others shake it? Bend it? Brake it 'til finally meeting its *end*
Disperse its dust beyond Galaxy's edge to never be heard from *again*?
Is there a place I belong? A role where I'm destined to fall?
Whether I stay or go, limits I must know.

Limits? What limits?

Not the files that record failures and faults.

Not those vexing voices who say, "You've peaked and lost."

In which L-I-M-I-T-S do I dare believe and profess?

I mean the one that stands for unknown place and range.

What Lives In Me Is Tremendous Strength.

I mean the chain-bound beast that never leaves me,

Yet it desperately claws to be freed so it may soar to unthinkable degree.

Just how far can those wings extend?

And where will it go? It always depends.

And when tired of finding its way, where will life cause it to sway?

To the basket? To the sheet? To the pitch?

Where on God's green earth can I find that niche!?

I may come up short or excel beyond the given length.

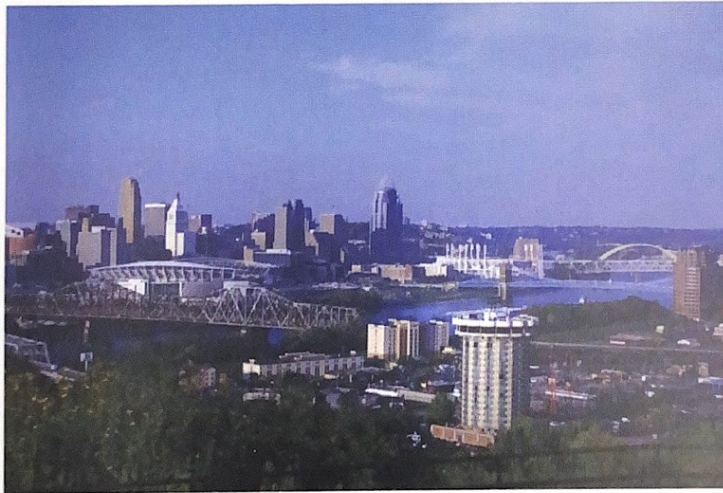
I don't know where I'll end, only where I'll begin.

At least I carry this tiny speck to believe in

Living Inside Me Is Tremendous Strength.

Gabriel Ratcliffe

Skyline



Olivia Shay

Balloon

Ba-ba-balloon.
I still hear it.
It's been seven years, yet
I still hear it.

You thought you were funny.
I thought it cruel.

But you didn't see
The speech practices.
The frantic ums and uhs.
All making me quieter.

Quiet.
I hate quiet.
I love talking.
Talk, talk, talk.
I hear shut up a lot.
But I'd rather hear shut up than
quiet.

I got on stage
And stopped the quiet.
I made noises and sounds.
I lost the ums and uhs.

I was lighter.
I could practically fly.
Each word helium
Raising me higher.

Lately,
I've heard them.
The ums and uhs
Creep back into my mouth.

It's not funny or cruel.
It's just imperfection.

But I fear it.
The quiet.
I fear losing my voice.
Losing my noise.

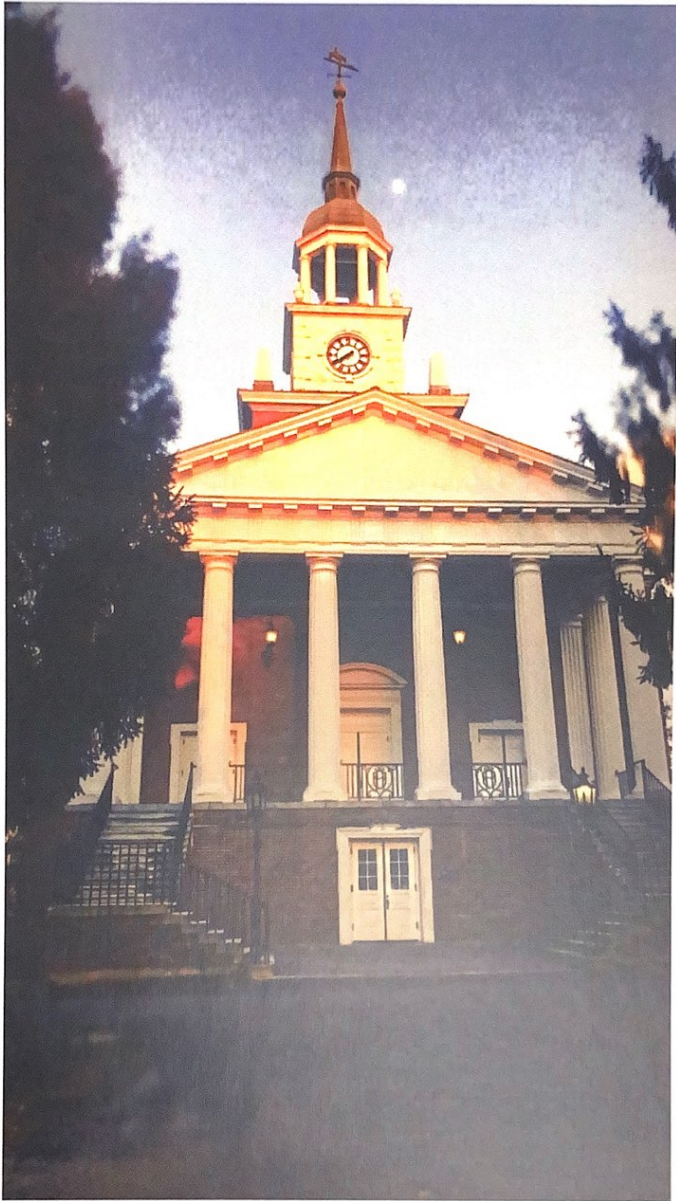
Noise.
I love noise.
I hate quiet.
.....
I hear others talking
But it's all above and not between.

So I'll get on stage.
I'll stop the quiet.
I'll make noises and sounds.
I'll blow away the ums and uhs.

I'll lighten myself.
I will fly.
Each word breath in my balloon
Raising myself higher, higher.

Kailin Mitchell

Parker Sunset 3/17/2019



Amber Holden

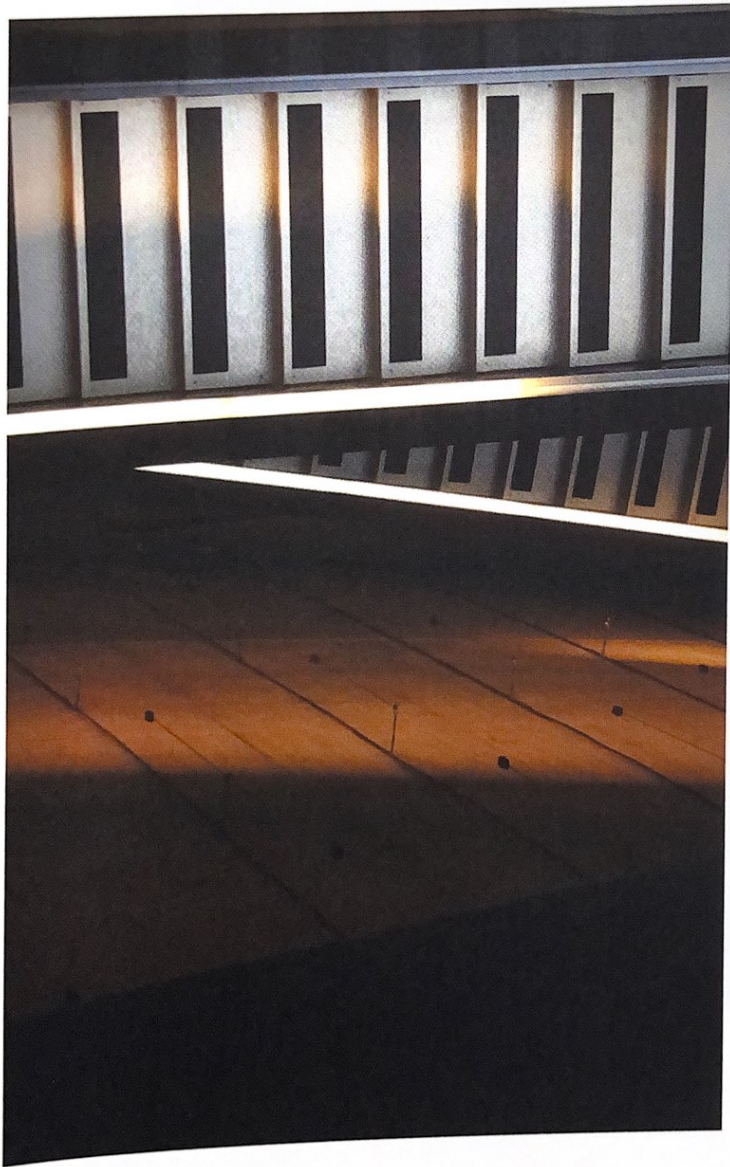
Chair

Sometimes,
It's like a *tipped* chair,
Forever *Leaning*,
Verging on Collapse.
Sometimes,
It's too much to *bear*.
The **triggers**,
Named,
Noted,
Remembered.
But,
I'm on *edge*.
Sometimes,

There's relief,
Days,
Weeks,
And even months.
It always returns,
To consume me,
My being.
I shall Always,
Fight,
Get better.
Sometimes,
It's like a *tipped* chair,
More than I can bear.

Sarah Wooten

Musical Stairs



Olivia Shay

Song of the Ex-Expatriate

I can remember
when I used to drink the night in a crystal glass
and waltz through streets seared by the lights of a city all mine
and now
I have to go to back to frat houses.

I have to go back to dead-end bars
for which music is a tool to drown out the sound of living.
I have to go back to an inebriated rabble
drinking till their eyes float sideways
and their limbs turn to slush,
to dancing in a dusty attic,
to fried chicken and mac-and-cheese.

I understand everything everybody says
but some evenings I'd give that back for a warm mug of Santiago dusk,
served with a meal of jazz and chorillana.

I'd give it back for a table crowning a rooftop,
mine for a starlit hour in which I, too,
am of the people that shrugs its shoulders at time.
I'd give it back for just one breeze through a screenless window,
just one mountain embracing me on my walk toward the sunrise.

This is the price I pay
not to have an accent.

This is the price I pay
not to be an idiot.

Emma Jones

Red Run



Haley Kibby

Our Mother Earth Feels Too

Feverous breath ascents from her winded base.

Escalation diminishes her grasp's torridity.

Relaxed restraints release a sigh, leaving only a meager trace.

Still seeping with humidity,

her excess steam condenses within her soiled lungs.

Blanketing her skin canopies an extensive cloak,

used as temporary isolation from her young.

Hazing our vision acts as her voice; she longs to admit even a scanty croak.

Diminutive droplets portray her overlooked emotions.

Eternally silenced by her indigenous roots—

creates unnecessary commotions.

Transparent remnants provide evidence of her internal disputes.

Inhabitants rely among her ability to triumph her innate feeling.

Bipolar conditions seem to hover consecutively at dawn.

She remains ultimately revealing,

speechlessly announcing her thoughts with a heated yawn.

There appears no cure,

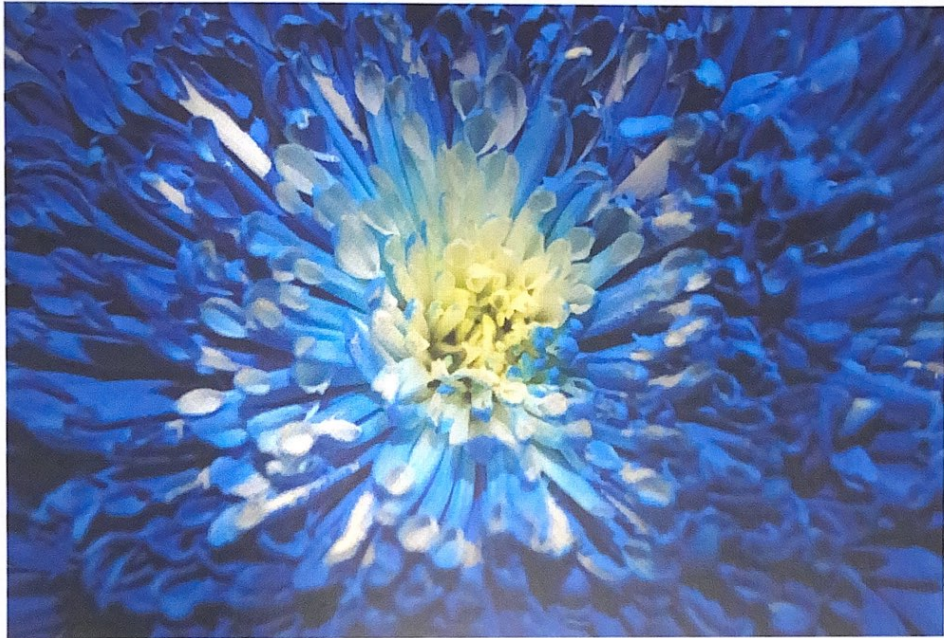
nor solution.

Endlessly obscure,

looking for her placid resolution.

Maya Zink

Blue Waves



Olivia Shay

Berwyn Time

Today Morgan Berwynson slogged into his four hundredth birthday and he couldn't be more annoyed by his family than he was today. He had been specific to tell them that he didn't want any celebrations. No festivities, no heartfelt speeches that go on too long, no cakes, no cupcakes, (he had learned the previous year that his wife would take advantage of that loophole if given the opportunity), and, above all, he did not want a surprise party. However, as he continued his drive towards his home, he knew good and well that he was heading into a trap.

Morgan's daughter had informed him the week before that her mother and brothers were planning a surprise party. Morgan was grateful for the seven days he had been given to cope with the coming endeavor. When she asked him why he was still going, Morgan responded, "Jane, I'm going because the backlash isn't worth it. Rest assured, I'll hate it. I'll hate every moment of it, and you'll be there to join in my hate, Jane."

Jane had inherited her father's hatred for birthday parties. It seemed that she started to hate the events at an even younger age than her father. Morgan had hated birthday parties since he was two hundred and fifty, but it seems that Jane had loathed the annual celebrations since she was twenty-five. When Morgan and his wife, Paige, asked Jane why she had cultivated such a disdain for birthday celebrations all those many years ago she stated, "I'm not really sure. It's not exciting anymore. It's predictable and you know it'll come every year. It's as certain as gravity, I guess. And we don't celebrate jumping, so why celebrate getting old?"

As Morgan pulled into his driveway, he saw that it was empty. "So, this is where it begins," he thought. Morgan approached his front door only to find a large note taped above the doorknob.

"If you want any food tonight, you'll come to this address." -Paige.

Morgan's heart fell to his feet like a broken elevator. This note could mean only one thing: his extended family was in on this. He hadn't had time to properly cope with this. Morgan had only braced himself for his own children and his wife. He wasn't prepared for his aunt Sue, his great great uncle Andrew, his great great great granddaughter Paige, who was named after his own Paige, his fourteenth cousin Gregory, or any other number of family members, great or otherwise, from the dozens of different sides. Morgan wondered if this was how the pope felt when Martin Luther had nailed his 95 theses to that church door.

The drive to the party was worse than the drive home. Morgan knew the place he was driving to: the Hightower Hotel. The Hightower Hotel was some

2 ½ star venue that prided itself on the height of the building, hence the name. Morgan's family had rented out the place for his three hundred and fiftieth birthday. It was only places like the Hightower (and much better hotels) that could accommodate entire families.

Traffic on the highway was moderate but more potholes had formed in the places Morgan drove to avoid the other potholes. Each one of his wheels was acquainted with a new pothole as he drove over them.

Morgan arrived late to his own party. He had to park a few blocks away since his family had taken all the close parking spots. The girl who worked the front desk led him to the main hall. "Here it comes," Morgan thought, "Here comes the surprise." As he entered the darkness of the main hall, light flooded the room revealing the other Berwynsons and the rest of his extended family. As the light conquered the room, the boom of his family's cheer followed. Morgan knew there would be Paige to pay if he didn't at least pretend to be happy.

Morgan knew perfectly well how to feign surprise. He'd open up his mouth as if to permit the entry of flies. This was followed by the raising of his eyebrows to their physical limit. To conclude, Morgan would lift his arms high above his head in surrender to the lynch mob that was his family. The look was complete. Morgan looked like a happy idiot. He'd have to live with the idiot look, but it was the happy look he was selling.

Then Morgan's family began their own out of tune rendition of "Happy Birthday" complete with several different keys and dynamics and tempos. The Berwynsons and their related clans were a musically challenged people. In all four hundred years of Morgan's life, he never learned what he was supposed to do during this part of the typical birthday revelries. During most of his birthdays, Morgan would just stare at his cake, but today he couldn't seem to find it. All he could see were the faces young and old and ancient as they butchered one of the simplest songs in the English language.

The dissonant cacophony felt like a lifetime for Morgan but lasted only a few minutes and then it was over.

Now was the time for him to make his wish and blow out all four-hundred candles. He never knew what to wish for these days. Morgan remembered making wishes when he was much younger. It was always for the selfish yet innocent things one in their youth would wish for. Things such as a chocolate cake, a new toy, and, on occasion, the affections of a special girl. Well, they were little things to Morgan now. The Morgan Berwynson of the past would disagree on what constituted a "good" wish. Though now he wasn't sure what should be a wish. Without making a wish, he blew out the candles, letting the scent of smoke and icing flood his nostrils.

As the party commenced, most of the guests seemed to forget the reason they were there. Morgan was pleased. He sat at a round table with his wife Paige, his sons Devin, Mike, Jay, and his daughter Jane.

"I'm so happy that you came," Paige said.

Morgan's sons laughed at that but quieted down after being subject to their father's glare. "You didn't leave me much choice Paige. I needed to eat and this was where the food was."

"I know you don't like these parties, so it means a lot to me that you came," Paige said reassuring her husband. "You can be a sourpuss, but I know your stomach will win the day in the end. So that helps too."

"She's right, dad," Jane said. "These things are so boring, but Mom's cake helps it all go down. Just look at those three." She pointed across the table at her older brothers as they gorged themselves on cake like piglets fighting over a sow's milk or like infants with their first birthday cake.

Morgan let out a repressed chuckle at the childish display his sons had made of themselves. The triplets were three hundred and seventy-five, but they still had a glimmer of innocence that persisted from their rambunctious childhoods. These three were great great grandfathers and here they were, acting as if they were in their teens. Part of Morgan envied this. Another part was glad he only had to watch. He couldn't stand having to keep up all that optimism and energy. But he could always watch.

Morgan watched as his birthday party continued without his vested interest. Paige and his sons had left the table to talk to others. Jane had been stalwart in staying by her father for a stoic twenty minutes. However, her great great grandnieces wanted to play go fish and "aunty Janey" couldn't refuse them.

"I'm sorry, dad." She said as she was getting up. "It's been too long since I've played, and I think we'll have a little riot if I don't go."

"Leave me, traitor." Morgan said with faux sternness, channeling the playfulness of his sons. Sarcasm dripping from each word. "Benedict and Judas could learn a thing or twelve from you. Play your cards as I continue to age and age."

Jane shook her head as she walked away. "Goodbye for now, father."

Morgan settled into his solitude within minutes. He liked to people watch and, during these past few birthdays, he had become a master of the craft. But watching his extended family became uninteresting before long. They were all so predictable. He figured he himself was predictable in some ways. He knew that Paige would leverage food over him and he knew that she knew that he'd comply. He knew that the triplets would get into some trouble or crack some jokes and all the younger Berwynsons would laugh until their

sides hurt. And he knew that Jane would eventually leave him. He could never have a monopoly on her, even when she was little. It was just the way they all were.

"Excuse me, sir." A voice pierced through the darkness of Morgan's sleeping mind.

"Yes... hello." Morgan said as he yawned. "It's nice to see you Mr..."

"Grumbs, Mortimer Grumbs." He said. Mortimer was a tall man. Lanky and bony, his raven hair receded to reveal parts of his skull white head. He wore a nice black business suit with a blood red tie. In one hand, he held a crimson suitcase that matched his tie. His other hand was outstretched offering a handshake.

Morgan took the hand with an eagerness that showed that, in his sleep, he had forgotten the most basic of human courtesies. "We...Welcome to the party. Now I don't think I've ever met you. Are you with anyone here today?"

"No," said Mortimer with a sigh. "May I be honest with you Mr. Berwynson?"

"I prefer when strangers tell me the truth." Said Morgan.

"I'm not related to you in any way whatsoever," Mortimer admitted.

Morgan sat up. "What was this weirdo doing here?" he thought.

Mortimer sat down next to Morgan. "I've... been quite lonely these past few hundred years." Mortimer began. "No one wants to talk to me or even gossip about me... I'm laying this on too heavily, aren't I?"

"You are," said Morgan. "I'd rather not talk to you, but seeing that I'm bored out of my gourd, I think I can make an exception. Now, did you have a place where we can get away to?"

Mortimer grinned, his teeth white as snow. "I may have a place."

The two walked and scuttled briskly through the halls of the hotel. As they approached a stairwell leading to the roof Mortimer heard a loud wheezing sound behind him. He turned to see Morgan bent over with one hand braced against the wall. For three hundred years Morgan's legs had been like Roman columns in the time of Julius. Now they were like Roman columns in the current day, still standing but cracked and covered in dust.

Mortimer grinned again. "What's wrong? Is old age taking that much of a toll on you?"

"You're not putting me in a home yet." Morgan gasped between breaths. "You walk too fast, Mr. Grumbs. I haven't walked that fast in a few decades. I'm old, Mr. Grumbs."

"And I'm older Mr. Berwynson," Mortimer replied. "I'll meet you upstairs when you've caught your breath."

Before Morgan could muster up a protest, Mortimer Grumbs disappeared in the darkness of the stairwell. "Who is this man?" Morgan thought. "Grumbs doesn't look a day over one hundred fifty. I gotta learn his secret."

When Morgan finished climbing the long staircase, Grumbs was already at the other side of the roof. "How do you move so fast Grumbs?" Morgan asked from across the roof.

"I walked all around Europe for several years. It was the fourteenth century. A marvelous time." Grumbs said.

"That explains a lot," Morgan said with a rasp. He caught his breath next to Mortimer as this strange man looked out over the city. "What are you doing?" Morgan asked.

"I'm just watching the wind blow," Mortimer said with a laugh. Morgan joined in the laugh. "My father says that all the time," Morgan paused. "He's always saying that. His mind hasn't been the same in a few centuries." The two now watched the wind blow together.

Mortimer broke the long and pregnant silence, "I used to be world famous, did you know that Morgan?"

Morgan considered if he had ever heard the name "Mortimer Grumbs." "What was he? A movie star? A writer? Some entrepreneur?" Morgan thought. "I'm afraid I've never heard of you Mr. Grumbs," Morgan said giving up his attempt to recall the celebrity status of this stranger.

Mortimer sighed. "I didn't expect you to know who I am. I know it's normal for fads to come and go, but what happened with me... that was cruel... creatively cruel."

"I'd understand better if you were clearer," Morgan said.

Mortimer turned towards Morgan. Mortimer was slightly annoyed but figured that Morgan had a point. "What was cruel about it was that everyone chose to forget me. They scrubbed me from all the annals of history. Past, present, and most likely future as well."

"What on Earth are you talking about?" Morgan interjected. "You've been reading too many conspiracy theories. Do you really think that there is some plot to erase you from history? Now don't get me wrong, I believe you about being some famous person, but really? Past, present, and most likely future as well? Mortimer, that's narcissism at best and lunacy at worst."

Mortimer pointed towards the sky. "Do you see that bluejay?"

Morgan tilted his head and blocked the sun with his hands and, indeed, the bird was a bluejay. "Yes. What of it." Morgan said as he thought about leaving.

"Do you believe that bluejay is flying Morgan?" Mortimer asked.

"It's not a penguin, is it?" Morgan answered.

"Nor is it an ostrich." Mortimer spat back.

"Get to the point Grumbs," Morgan said. "I've almost had enough of this."

"Imagine what would happen if every single person on Earth believed with all of their being that birds couldn't fly. Or, better yet, that people could fly." Mortimer suggested.

"I'd say everyone on Earth was insane with all of their being," Morgan said.

"Don't mock me," Mortimer said with a stern voice.

Morgan waved his hands over the edge of the roof. "If I jump from here saying I can fly, I will break every bone in my body when I hit the ground. That's just the law of gravity. I'd be put in a hospital."

"Mankind has broken more serious laws than gravity," Mortimer said. "There was a time when you'd never wake up from hitting your head on the pavement."

"Do you mean like a coma?" Morgan asked. "Because people wake up from those every..."

"No! Not a damned coma!" Mortimer's yelling had sent a flock of birds flying. "I mean death. There was a time when, if you were to jump off this roof, you would die."

"I mean sure," Morgan began, "the fall could mess up my ears pretty bad, but I don't think that's a certain..."

"No!" Mortimer interrupted once more. "You'd lose more than just hearing. Sight, touch, taste, smell, even the ability to think would go away. You would no longer be able to breathe. Your ancient heart would not pump ancient blood through your ancient body. You would cease to be. You would die."

"What are you talking about?" Morgan said. "People don't just stop living. People have been living forever. Even animals don't do that thing, what did you call it? Die? That's not like food dye, I'm guessing. So, who are you really, Mr. Grumbs? If you believe in this idea of death, or whatever you call it, why are you still standing here? Why aren't you...dead?"

Mortimer rubbed his hands across his face and through his raven hair in frustration. "I am Osiris, Thanos, Hades, Pluto, if you're Roman, Azrael, Yeomra, the Black Dog, the Horned God, the Grim Reaper, Death. I am Death. You can't erase an idea, but I'm at the border of the abyss. I don't want to go over...I don't want to die. Can you help me? Can you help me not die?" Mortimer Grumbs was on his knees now. The skinny man groveled and crawled towards Morgan's feet in fear.

Morgan was pinned to his spot on the ground. He looked around hoping to spot a rogue psychiatrist who may have found their way onto the roof. His search was in vain. Then he heard a sound. Mortimer was sobbing. Morgan bent down without moving his feet from the spot; patting the head of the man who claimed to be Death. "How...what...what could I do to help you...Mr. Death?"

Mortimer spoke between sobs. "You can still call me Grumbs. D-Do you really want to help me?"

"I feel like I'll regret every part of it, but yes, I'll help you," Morgan said with reluctance.

Mortimer leaped to his feet with a new-found energy that wasn't even present when they first met. "Excellent!" Mortimer grew silent for a moment. "If you are going to help me not die-- well, then you'll have to die yourself. And it'll have to be public."

"Why do people need to see me...die?" Morgan asked.

"So they can remember that they don't get to live forever."

Morgan thought of his wife. "What will happen to my family after I...die? What will happen to me? Will it even work?"

The glow from Mortimer's face had faded. "I will not lie to you Morgan. Man has been trying to understand what happens after death for all of time. I guess they stopped looking for an answer. I would tell you if I knew. That said, if this works, they will follow eventually. You just need to believe strong enough. Consider it a leap of faith. Speaking of leaps." Mortimer motioned towards the edge of the building. "You'd only feel the impact for a second and then you'd be gone."

Morgan looked out over the edge. "Maybe it's your turn to die Mr. Reaper," Morgan remembered something his grandfather once said. "Maybe the Berwyn's not ready."

Mortimer looked puzzled at the strange expression. "What does that mean?"

"My name is Berwynson," Morgan explained. "A long time ago probably in England, before the Vikings came it would have been just Berwyn. That meant harvest to my ancestors. My grandfather would tell my father the Berwyn was ready when he thought I was old enough to go work the fields with him. Maybe mankind isn't ready to work those fields. Your fields."

Mortimer stood beside Morgan looking out at the city. "I think that I have only one or two more centuries in me. I guess I don't need you to make a choice right now. But tell me, Morgan Berwynson, do you believe in me yet?"

Morgan turned toward Mortimer. "I think I..." The man who claimed to be death incarnate was gone. "Was he ever there?" Morgan thought out loud.

As Morgan reentered the main hall, Paige accosted him. "Where have you been? Your guests were worried you had run off like you did five years ago."

"I was talking with Death." Said Morgan. "He's not doing so well these days, apparently."

Paige looked at her husband as if he were speaking old Irish. "I have no idea what you're talking about, you silly thing. Just go over there and say hello to my great aunt, please?"

Morgan sighed. "Ok. I'll go talk to aunt Judy. But she better not tell that story about the goose. That one was old when I first heard it."

As he walked across the large dining room to his talkative in-law, Morgan began to perspire as if he were in the middle of the Sahara Desert. The room stretched and twisted, turning his short walk into a terrible march. Every sound became magnified and soon he couldn't even hear his own breathing. Every step became another mountain to surpass, each more difficult than the last. All he could think of was the pain, the sweat, the march, the pain, the sweat, the march, pain, sweat, march, pain, sweat, march, and death. Morgan was thinking of death. Of dying. Of being dead. Morgan collapsed to the ground. His hand on his heart. The harvest had begun.

Wezi Mulamba

September Sunsets and October Skies

There were days where they were nothing but yellow skies,
Yet those nights grew nigh and dark
And I spent those hours wishing it all could have been different
And I would promise myself not to cry

Because my heart grew lonely with the moon
And those shooting stars shot too soon
The owl sounds somewhere in the branches
And I convince myself the cold is cruel

My September sunsets were bright and warm,
But the heat never stayed long enough--
You never stayed long enough
And I knew how cold the cool could get,
Yet I sat here missing you as if you never left

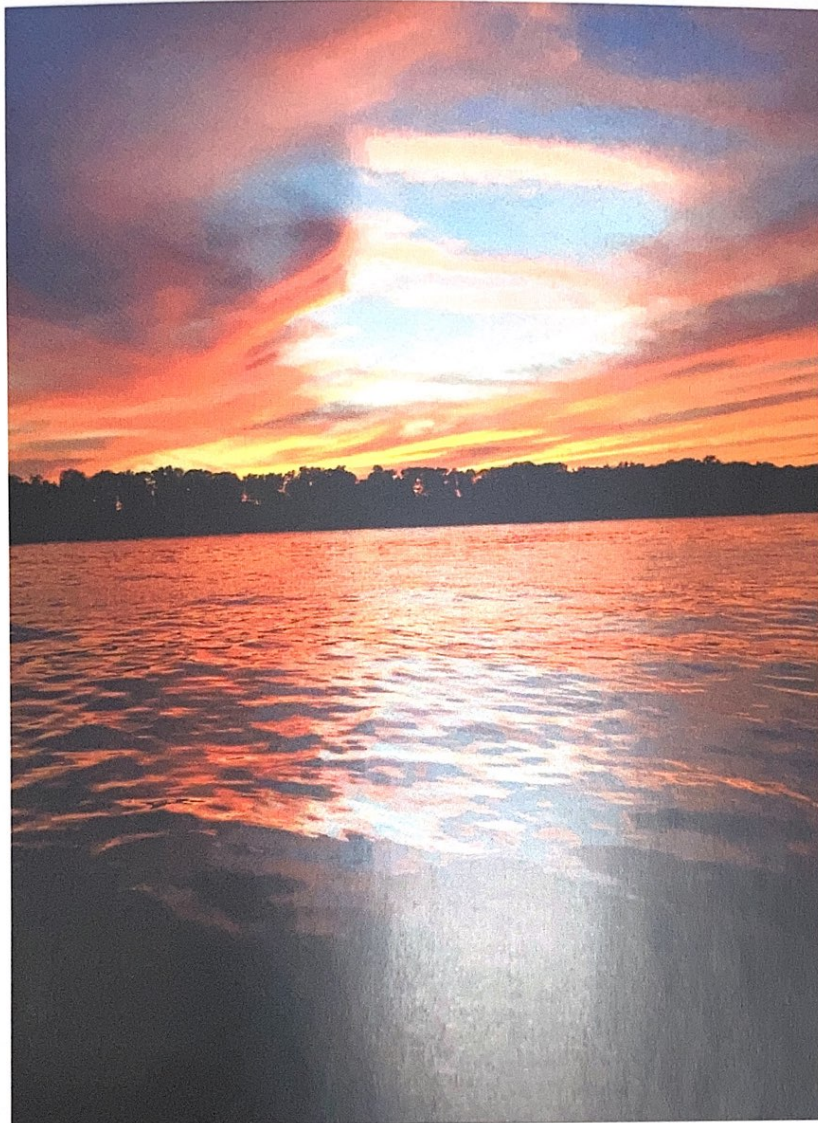
Because you tainted my October skies,
And I forgot how it felt to be happy without you
You were not the light that guided me home,
But the darkness I always got lost in

You surrounded me with thoughts and feelings
I always assumed were mine

But when the sun rises-- as it always rises,
I can take four steps forward and two steps back,
Giving me room to focus on life
The sky turning a riveting sunflower
And slowly thawing all the pain away

Kelly Poston

Sunday, 7:36 PM



Maya Zink

White Cannibalizer, who works undercover for the police (self-titled)

Self-pigeon-holed
On a quest for glitter-gold

Chintzy digger-mole
From the ground round inner-hole

The grapplers' main chimp
Strange happener
Space Pimp

Slick pap-ener
Maker of a glazed gimp
Taker of a fazed wimp

Murd'rer scoots, it doesn't gulp
Under boot and then it's pulped

Made Simp

Fu Dog



Maya Zink

For Kathy Barbour

Search your mind's landscape for childish eyes
low in a field or high in a nest
the beach of Southeast, the rain of Northwest
or deep in the throat of a hummingbird's cry

Forget the restrictions, they're fictions, comply
with the sway of the trees, the beat of your chest
and follow with folly your aortic quest
the plight of your heartstrings, pluck tunes as you sigh

Embrace your dear worries; so long you have fought
the weight of your fears, such hard pills to swallow
that make you think once, twice of taking your life

So swallow that life, take it all, live the plot!
Reclaim your juvenile rosey-eyes hollow
the tree trunk shelters where wisdom loves strife

Rosemary Kent

Serenity



Haley Kibby

The World

The World, She needs not resurrection
but rather global amity.
It's not a complex computation,
no consecrated ordination,
just a plea for empathy,
an end to all discrimination.
Before Her doomed disintegration,
We must rebuild righteously
Through this, we'll find our destination.
Speak now, voice out your frustrations!
but swaddled in your solemnity
I'll plant my seeds of revelation
They'll sprout, infused with sweet inflation
from the reverend majesty
whose oozing wisdom springs generations.
Come now, it's our obligation
To rid our home of travesty
Simple verses of affection
are the key to resurrection.

Rosemary Kent

Lowland



Maya Zink

Toe

The sun beats down on my back.
My hair drips chillingly down
But only every so often.
Just a little plop
When I least expect it.

I stare at the landing beneath me.
30 minutes I have stood in line.
Now only he is in front of me.
My only thought is "Why
Did he have to be here?
If he wasn't I would be next."

There's his big toe.
It hath hair on it.
Ew.
He shifts his weight and
It slides to the right.

He turns and smiles
At me. I look up
From the toe.
I stare back.

"Having a good day?" He asks.
"Your big toe has hair." I say.
At the same time,
His face screws up and
Mine goes scarlet.

"You can go." The lifeguard yawns.
He shakes his head and
Spirals down into the pool.
I sigh, "Fucking, big, hairy toe."

Kailin Mitchell

Stubbed Toe



Maya Zink

If Horton Hears a Whore

According to you, I sound childish
So now I'll try speaking like this:
If Horton hears a whore call rape,
And women are like bits of tape,
After being used, losing their value and shape,
Does she still deserve to be saved?
Is she still a person, no matter how small,
And does she even matter at all?

Tell the one fish, tell the two fish,
Tell the red fish, tell the blue fish,
Make them black fish and make them blue fish.
She asked for it, the sleazy bitch.
This one has a little star,
And this one has a big scar.
Some are sad, and none are glad,
And some feel very, very bad.
Why do they feel so sad and bad?
If you do not know, go ask your dad.

Dear sir, dear Sam-I-Am, I don't mean to gloat,
But I am perfectly fine and would not, could not on a boat,
Nor here, nor there,
Please, not anywhere.
Dear sir, dear Sam-I-Am,
I'm not a very big fan of ham,
And my eggs are fine without your sauce,
So please, Sam-I-Am, just accept this no as a loss.

No fear, little fish, you say as you tip your hat,
But all I want is for you to scat.
I don't like your games,
And I'm unsure of your aims,
So please keep your distance because I have a loathing
For Grinches in Cats' clothing.

Taylor O'Shea

Andrew Cohen Prodigy



Maya Zink

Chosen Paths

As children, some are given a structured advantage;
others are raised to barely manage.
Structure, referring to complete stability,
while many are viewed as a mere liability.
All are born with a multitude of distinct directions:
several **copious** with countless connections.
The remaining—barren in their own solitude—
never once longing to obtrude.

Ages advance as minds do the same;
the parents are now who they tend to blame.
Mistakes, faults, and errors thrown around . . .
up until the point of a complete breakdown.
Life of sorrow or life of success?
This can be determined by avoiding the stress.
No one is granted a life of ease,
even those who offer their foolproof “expertise.”

The chosen direction decides the prospective,
that will later reveal life’s hidden objective . . .

Maya Zink

Classy Covington



Olivia Shay

The Caged Parrot Squawks or Modestissimo Consilium

Dear Hanover students and faculty,

It has come to the attention of myself and those who share in my ancient heritage that this institution possesses a deep sickness. A sickness that has plagued this college, no, this country, no, this very world. A sickness with many names, but I shall use one. That name is simply bigotry.

For centuries, my ancestors – my people – have been persecuted, hunted down like dogs, lynched, and hung publicly. We have been the ridicule of songs, jokes, and dramas. Our language is mocked in the school yards around the world, and our clothing – yes, even our clothing – is subject to the highest form of mockery.

I write this letter because during my time attending this campus on a hill, I have suffered attacks both micro and macro. I cannot escape it. When my people's history is taught, we are regarded as thieves, barbarians, and, dare I say, uneducated. The societal character assignation of my culture is nearly complete. Now even here at this "bastion" of "acceptance" (B of A) my culture is appropriated by a fraternity. I speak of the "Pirate Party" held every fall.

Let me tell you what happens to me every year. When those men erect that crude and unseaworthy "ship," my heart sinks. When my ears are bombarded with those plagiarized "sea shanties," my soul goes overboard. And when I see members of this community, people I considered family, don the cultural attire of my fellow pirates, saying words like "Yarg" or "matey" or even phrases such as "walk the plank," my very being feels marooned on some South Pacific island, unpeopled and uncharted.

Hanover cannot erase the centuries of bigotry and slaughter committed against my proud and most honorable people. But there are things Hanover can do. There are two tiers of demands. Demands that shall be immediate and demands that may be implemented in the next few years. The immediate demands are as follows:

1. The end of the yearly "Pirate Party" and immediate expulsion of anyone who dares to dress in traditional Pirate attire (on Halloween or any other day)
2. Mandatory Pirate Sensitivity Classes (PSCs)
3. Two Gold Doubloons
4. A Pirate appreciation week (PAW) where all Land-Lubber students and faculty are forbidden from stepping foot on campus. Failure to comply with PAW will result in perpetrators walking the plank into our great Ohio River.

During PAW, students who are ethnically Pirates shall have a time to gather together and feel safe from the inherit prejudices of Land-Lubbers. During this time us ethnic (ethnic?) Pirates shall practice our sacred rites of sailing, plundering, burying treasure, cartography, rape, murder, setting our beards on fire, general rowdiness, and drinking that sweet, sweet nectar known as Grog. (Speaking of Grog, no one is allowed to drink rum if they are Land-Lubbers. Also, these Land-Lovers

are not permitted to say "Yarg." That is our word. We have a copyright in the works as I write this. If you Land-Lubbers will not respect us out of the goodness of your hearts, then perhaps you will out of the fullness of your wallets.

Finally, the demands that can be fulfilled within the next few years are as follows:

1. The formation of a permanent and well-funded Pirate Student Union (PSU)
2. A co-ed Pirate fraternity/sorority (a crew, if you will). Like the PSU, this shall be heavily funded, and we will take up residence in the house of the soon-to-be-removed Phi Delta Gamma fraternity.
3. All ethnic Pirate students and faculty will be paid reparations totaling to the sum of \$4,000,000.97. Some of these funds can be placed into several scholarships named after prominent Pirates of the past and present.

If our demands are not met by the college, then we shall emulate the great example set by the students of Evergreen State College.

We exist. We will not be drowned beneath the waves of history. We are Polly and we will have our cracker. You will learn that the caged parrot does squawk, and we shall not be silent.

We remain,
The Caged Parrots

Satyr Rist

Grab My Pussy

Grab my Pussy, grab it tight
but when I ask for it, where's the fun?
Kindred spirit seeks the light
3, 4 candles burn so bright
and soon it will be everyone
who turns their tears. We will unite.
13-ribbers at the brim of the Lord's sight
Lavender Menaces ready to run
for mother and daughter, for father and son, to fight
equal means equal, not man, alright?
So, Big D, when you claim what's right
you don't see with your eyes the sight
that's clearly labeled below my undone
fly, but it's light
That's streaming from my pussy, damn right.
Your hand won't dim this nay of night
not with your petite paws none
because this fly's already in flight
Grab my Pussy. Hold on tight.

Rosemary Kent

Pretty in Pink



Olivia Shay

Gladiator

Dear Caesar,
who thinks himself a hero
So-called divinity in flesh and robes
Who takes pleasure in splattered red paint while sipping fine wine
Your stomach lost excitement at the sight of me
You hungered for Crixus
Marcus Attilius
Spartacus
Sorry but no
Anonymous the Slave is my name

Your disappointment feeds me
Behold the demons plotting sieges against me
Prowling lions
Scheming leopards
Brutish bears
A flash of hatred rides the tip of sharp Gladius
Shield soon follows
Net calls the beasts to stay still
And Trident commands guts to spill
Tightly, I wear my helmet
'Cause in every given show, I'm hell-bent
Making them squirm
Watching breath leave those I thought were my brethren
No time wasted to lament

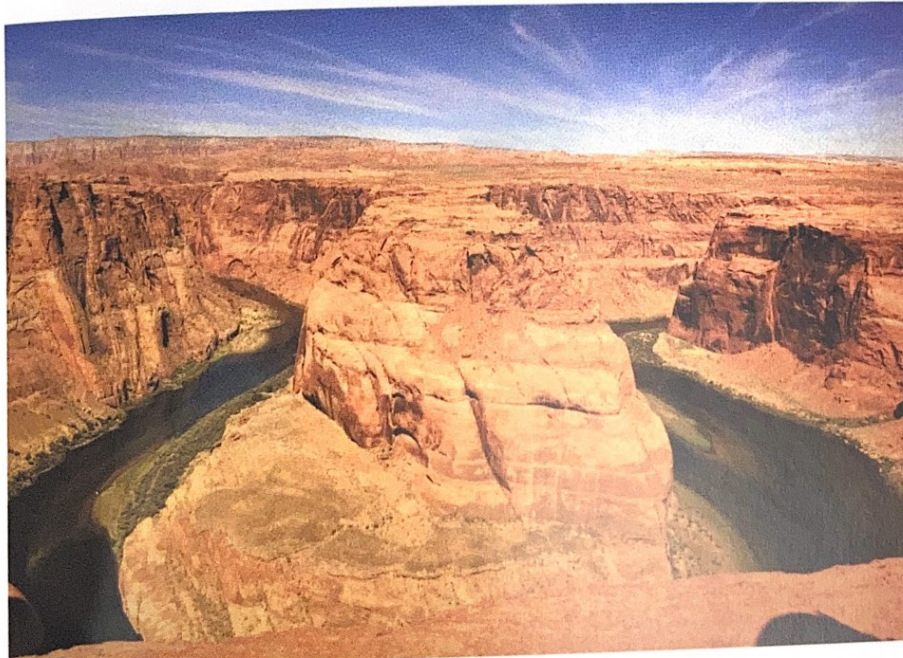
Caesar,
Who deems me unworthy of an upright thumb thrust
Crimson is what you bleed
Same as me
Just look at my chest
Wide open
Burdened with fresh scars
Each one taking me closer to joining the stars
You now sit easy on the throne
But soon I'll be free
Regret the Bandit will shake you down
I'm neither your servant nor your clown

I dare you to set your "holy" soles in this glorious ring
I thirst for the white of your eyes
And as for your back,
I'd be **Glad-it-ain't-turned** to me

Sincerely,
The name that makes your care for me evident,
Anonymous the Slave.

Gabriel Ratcliffe

Southwest Vista



Kara Busemeyer

Sestina of Endless Thoughts

I do not contemplate Destiny
For I am fearful of Death
Instead I retreat into Dream,
Imagining all that I Desire
Why think of the future and Despair
When I could embrace Delirium?

And yet, living in Delirium
Is just forfeiting my Destiny
The thought makes me Despair
Giving up is just another form of Death
And so I will fight for my Desires,
Pulling strength from waking Dreams

For I am a child of Dreams,
Not some madman in Delirium
I must work for my Desires
And not rely on Destiny
Else surely I would Die
Miserable and lost in Despair

Hope is the opposite of Despair,
So I draw hope from my Dreams
Hope to overcome my fear of Death
It fills me with Delight
Seizing control of my Destiny,
Shaping a path towards my Desires

And though I may not get what I Desire,
I will not give in to Despair
Instead I'll make a new Destiny
For I am filled with countless Dreams
Enough at times to make me Delirious
But without them, I'd be Dead

Yet when it comes, I'll no longer fear
Death

Her company will be what I Desire
I'll tell her of my life's Delights
And how I overcame Despair
It will be one last pleasant Dream,
The perfect end to my Destiny

I hope my Death brings none Despair,
Instead may they Desire the gifts of
Morpheus
And like me, Delight in changing Destiny

Thomas Jones

Psychedelic



Maya Zink

Dear Faggot

Dear faggot,

Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind, it is an abomination.

You'd better run, you fucking maggot

That's what you said when I told you I'd had it

With your bullshit when you were expecting my resignation.

Dear faggot,

Tag it and bag it, we're killed while you fuck like rabbits

Just for being ourselves, how dare we be so brazen?

You'd better run, you fucking maggot.

According to you, we shouldn't inhabit

This nation because we're an infestation.

Dear faggot,

God can cure you, you say, but I won't talk to an abbot

Just to be called the spawn of Satan; I don't want your purification.

You'd better run, you fucking maggot.

I'm tired of this but you're still at it,

So next time you use the salutation

Dear faggot,

You'd better run, you fucking maggot.

Taylor O'Shea

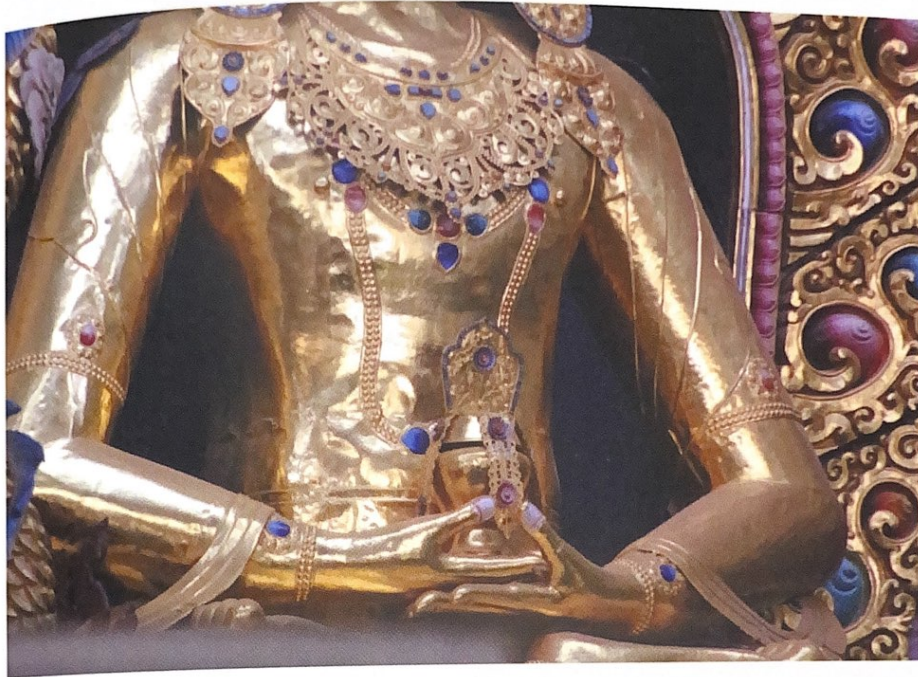
Tennessee Bends



Maya Zink

Religious Contemplation





Dominique DePriest

The Chase

Dark gaze holds me still.
your Black eyes Pierce my heart back
to the wall so that i am pinned there, in this spot.
Never do i blink
but you do look away from time to time.
granite arms, sculpted and veined,
plum color washes your face as beads of
alcohol filled sweat trail down, evaporating and cooling.
you speak, of love and sex and then
you speak, of Hate and Death and then
the table is shaking from Steel hands
and the walls are crumbling from Steel hands.
your feet fall heavy and that pinning, piercing
gaze falls away.
but dare i move?
the pounding of my heart coincides with
the rumbling thunder *you* produce.
as my feet carry me away, yours too flee after me
and soon we are in a chase,
until your feet tangle and down the mighty
colossus goes, down, down.
and red writes on the not so white carpet
stained with years of Abuse.
red ink flows from your head, writing, writing another story.
you lay, in your head now, unconscious and still.
and i lay fallen on my back
for you reached to me when you fell and i too went tumbling,
breathing heavy as sirens flare in the distance,
oh Daddy, why must you always chase

Aurianna Bastin

Steel City



Olivia Shay

An Honorable Death

*Vocabulary terms are defined in the glossary at the end of the piece

This all began the day I was to meet with the barbarians. I tied my hair into a topknot and rolled my bed mat neatly before joining my wife, Heiwa, and son Senshi for breakfast. Midway through breakfast, a smile crept across Senshi's face as he raised my *bokken* from underneath the table and prepared for our daily battle. In the best impression of a stoic samurai, he yelled: "Back away from the princess, you *oni*!" Heiwa overdramatically placed the back of her hand to her forehead as she sighed before saying "Oh, save me mighty Senshi! Slay this *oni* back to the depths of *Yomi*!"

"Quiet, you spoiled princess! I will bring you back to my forest and make you my bride," I said while broadening my shoulders and making myself taller to seem more intimidating. Senshi and I met eyes from across the room as I grabbed one of my chopsticks from the table to my left. I adjusted my chopstick into a proper grip as if it were a *katana*. Senshi wasted no time sprinting across the room with the *bokken* held high in the air. When he was a mere five feet from me, I lightly swung my chopstick "slashing" his abdomen. I held my form and heard "Ughhhhhhhhhh, *cough* *cough,*" from behind me followed by the thump of him falling to the floor. Heiwa had been watching me, and from the corner of my eye, I saw her break character momentarily, revealing her beautiful smile. I heavily stomped toward Heiwa as she screamed, "Great Senshi, you cannot be dead for there is no hero as strong as you! Now hurry, get up and defeat this *oni*!"

"Don't waste your tears! You will join your hero soon enough!" I said as I began to swing my chopstick at Heiwa only for Senshi to hit my right hand with the *bokken*. I let out an overdramatic scream as I dropped my chopstick, and quickly tucked my right hand into my sleeve. I grabbed my stump hand as I looked at Senshi who was standing directly in front of Heiwa with his *bokken* pointed at my neck.

He motioned with his head for me to grab my chopstick as he said, "Grab your weapon *oni*...unlike your kind, we Samurai are honorable, and I will defeat you in combat like a man."

I bent over, retrieved the chopstick, and quickly swung at Senshi, only for him to "stab" deeply into my chest. I fell to the ground closed my eyes and released a deep sigh signaling my death. With my eyes still closed I heard Heiwa cheering for Senshi. A few seconds later her hand touched my face, and I opened my eyes to the sight of her beautiful face. I stared deeply into her beautiful chocolate eyes, attentively listening to her every word.

"Ikari, it's nearly time for you to go to the castle and you have hardly eaten anything. Now hurry up and finish your breakfast." I quickly got back to my feet and turned to Senshi.

"Samurai Senshi...good job," I said, bowing, and he returned the favor with a bow of his own. I scarfed down my remaining rice and pickled vegetables then hurried to arm myself. I easily strapped on my bamboo bracers and shin guards before starting work on putting on my *dou*. I heard a knock on the door followed by Heiwa's entrance.

She slowly approached me and began quickly tying the straps. "Ikari, I think you should begin considering training Senshi," Heiwa said, in a smooth, sweet voice.

"We've discussed this before, Heiwa. You know why I don't want to train him." As my sentence concluded, so did her tying. I turned, and she was standing inches away from me, glaring up at me with a sad look. "I know you don't want Senshi to view you as you view your father, but you know what I always say..." Despite my best attempt to remain stoic, a smile crept across my face and I uttered what she had told me since we met: "Despite my name meaning anger, I have a happy demeanor." Her smile widened, and her eyes twinkled in excitement. "So that means..."

"You know I can't be late today. We're meeting with the barbarians. We will talk about it when I get home."

She lifted my *kabuto* onto my head, and we shared a tender kiss before I left. In a rush, I headed for the door, quickly hugging Senshi on my way out. My home disappeared into the distance as I ran as quickly as my legs would carry me. This was my third time being late this year, and I couldn't afford to miss the peace treaty signing. Luckily, as I reached the main road, I ran into my dearest friend, Uragirimono, upon his white steed. He helped me atop his steed and we talked as we begin our ride toward Uwajima castle.

"I cannot believe you are running late again. What was it this time, Heiwa or Senshi?"

"Heiwa is trying to convince me to train Senshi again, but I just want him to enjoy his childhood while he can."

"You know he's getting too old for all of that childhood play, Ikari. I think Heiwa is correct, my dear friend." Uragirimono finished his sentence as we arrived at Uwajima castle. I quickly entered, not wanting to keep my master, Uwaki,

waiting. He sat facing away from the door, meditating as I entered. "Ikari, nice to see that you are punctual as always."

"Of course, master. Why would I not be? Today is the meeting with the barbarians, master, will I have the honor of providing my services in the negotiations?"

He rose to his feet and faced me. "Your service would be much appreciated if you remembered your *daisho*!"

Nervously, I scrambled at my belt and sighed in disappointment. My mind had been focused on too many things at once--especially the notion of training Senshi--that I left without collecting my *daisho*. I attempted to repair my mistake, saying, "Master, if you give me time and transport I could return in thirty minutes."

"No need, Ikari. Just return to your Isho and spend time with your family. Urigirimono will accompany me during the negotiations. We will deal with your ignorance tomorrow."

Urigirimono grabbed my shoulder and whispered "My friend, take my horse, ride quickly, and return abruptly. Our master should forgive you." I nodded and smiled as I thanked my friend.

Then I turned abruptly and began walking out the door when I heard my master calling me.

"Ikari, don't you dare take Urigirimono's steed! You must walk home. It'll serve as a momentary punishment."

I nodded sadly and left the castle, beginning my long journey home. My feet ached as I reached the outskirts of my *isho* after about three hours of walking. I paused to stretch when I saw an alarming amount of black smoke looming overhead. The smell of charred wood filled the air.

No time was wasted as I sprinted to my home, only to be met its half-charred remains. "Heiwa! ...Senshi!" After five minutes of immense search, to my dismay, I found a blood path that lead from the house into the gorgeous green grass behind. Slowly and cautiously I followed the path only to be met with a sight from my worst nightmares. It was my Heiwa lying with her head against the rock. Her kimono was ripped, her chocolate eyes had been gouged, and her beautiful face had been carved. I collapsed to my knees crying rivers of tears as I held her frail, lifeless body in my arms. Something deep inside me told me there was a chance Senshi still lived, so I followed the trail for another thirty feet to see a horrifying sight. My beautiful boy

was clinging to his *bokken*, broken into multiple small splinters. His head was gone, and his white *montsuki* was now a light red-- stained with his blood. Breathing became hard as I lay on the ground hoping for death.

Hours passed before I rose to my feet once more. I struggled to walk, nearly collapsing with every step as I journeyed back to Uwajima castle. I burst through the door falling to the ground interrupting the peace treaty with tears flowing down my face. Uwaki quickly rose to his feet yelling "What is the meaning of this blatant disruption, Ikari!?"

"Th-they killed S-S-Senshi and Heiwa! Don't sig-"

"Shut your mouth, boy! I cannot believe you, and I can't believe you were about to get promoted by our Lord for amazing service. However, due to your delirious state and tardiness to this meeting, I believe we must terminate your status as a *cukanbushi*. Now leave at once, Ikari!"

"Tardiness? Delirious state? Master, you told me to return to my *isho*!"

Uwaki slapped me across my face. "You dare call me a liar, boy?! I have no choice. You clearly have no honor remaining, since no honorable man would dare suggest his master be a liar. You have now been disowned as a samurai effective immediately!"

Again, rivers of tears flowed from my eyes as I pointed toward Urigirimono, shouting, "My friend, you witnessed our master dismissing my duties for the day. Please, for the sake of honor, tell the truth."

Uwaki turned to Urigirimono with a stern yet curious face. "Yes, my pupil, tell us what you heard."

There was a long pause and tears filled Urigirimono's eyes as he uttered, "Ikari left without being dismissed." A shock fell over my body as I struggled to breathe. Uwaki approached me and began ripping the armor from my body and the ribbon from my hair and whispered, "You're a *ronin* now, so stop pretending to be civilized, boy."

I struggled home where the fire had now faded and located my *daisho* lying in the floorboards where Senshi was told to hide in case of an emergency... I guess he felt it was more important to protect my weapons than to hide. I unsheathed Boronsu, preparing to end my suffering, but a small letter fell out onto the ash-ridden ground. It read: "Father, I wrote this letter to remind you to always be strong like you taught me to be. Mother told me to hide here because some scary men were

coming to hurt us, but I'm not scared. Samurai Senshi will protect us from any monsters." My tears sprinkled onto the letter as I drew the conclusion of what happened moments after the letter was written. I stood, reinvigorated by the wise words of my son with a domineer that truly fit my name. I wouldn't rest until I had brought honor to my family. I would avenge their deaths. A burning rage began burning from deep within as I walked, beginning my quest at the nearest barbarian village.

The air is still, cool, and crisp. With each step the snow cracks beneath my feet, and it's cold. Colder than usual...well, it's the coldest I've been in years. Small villages like this are usually quiet; however, the silence here is unnatural. The villagers are watching, studying my every minute gesture; they're analyzing me. First, they notice my *daisho*, comprised of my *katana*, Baransu, and my *wakizashi*, Gekido, then my long, dark unkempt hair and scraggly beard. It doesn't take long before they come to the conclusion that I'm a *ronin*. I approach a quaint, rustic *minka*, and slide open the door, only to be met by a tiny, frail man.

"Leave! I won't let you bring your *ronin* curse upon my family!" says the man, shooing me with the back of his wrinkled hand.

"I was hoping it wouldn't come to this," I say, before Baransu rips from my scabbard, stopping just millimeters away from the man's neck. I can see the fear in the man's eyes, but I don't care; I came for answers. "The samurai, you saw him come through this town. Where did he go?" My voice is hoarse; I haven't talked in months, but the man understands. A tear runs down his left cheek as he frantically points north of the town, to the forest. I swiftly return Baransu to her resting place, and I head on my way. The sun is setting, but I keep walking despite the arctic climate. Most men would stop or turn back, but they don't have the burning rage I possess, so I continue. I must've been walking for two miles. Then I see him...my former master. He stands approximately twenty paces ahead. Between us lies a torch, making him barely visible; a silhouette blending with the distant trees.

"Ikari, how nice to see you again," he says.

I stand quietly, thinking of my wife, and how she said my name didn't match my happy demeanor. If only she could see me now... it all makes sense finally.

"Now, don't just stand there. It's been quite long since our last meeting. It's been what, four years?"

“Five,” I immediately correct him.

“Ah yes, five years right after-”

“My family’s death! After you disowned me as a *cukanbushi!*” I said, full of rage.

“Sorry about that my boy, and I send my regards to you for your losses. The barbarians are-”

“We both know it wasn’t the barbarians that killed Heiwa and Senshi... It was you.” I struggle to say, as I fight back the tears. “You killed them.”

“You don’t understand, my former apprentice. The barbarians made me choose, your family or mine, and I cou-”

“Liar,” I said, abruptly ending his monologue before it could begin. I had rehearsed this moment in my mind since I learned the truth. I would talk about how I slaughtered the barbarians, and how the last man of the last tribe said with his last breath, “Uwaki did it,” and that it was because he was trying to stop me from taking his spot as master. I wanted to say something he’d remember in the afterlife, something like: “A man’s final words often prove true. Now tell me, ‘master,’ what will yours be?” But in the heat of the moment, all I can manage is “*FUZAKERU NA!*” Sensing my anger, Baransu jumps from her scabbard and into my hand as I sprint toward Uwaki. I raise Baransu high above my head, a rookie mistake that Uwaki exploits. He slices deeply across my abdomen, just beneath my right rib cage, and blood begins flowing from the wound. The smell of iron fills the air, and my head is lighter than a feather, but I keep my composure. “My boy, we have no need to fight. Stop this foolishness now, and I will ensure that your wounds are tended to.”

“Why should I trust your words, old man?”

“Ikari, you know the man I am-”

“The type who allows an innocent child and woman to be murdered!” I shout, causing Uwaki to sprint at me filled with rage. Uwaki wastes no time swiftly swinging from below, trying to cut me in half. However, I narrowly parry the devastating wound, and lightly cut his mid abdomen, ripping his *montsuki*. He lets out an agonized sigh, but then locks eyes with me and smiles, as if saying: “I feel no pain.”

“We both know that hurt. Now, tell me why you would allow them to do that to anyone!”

“ It was the only way for peace.”

“How does that create peace?!” I yell as I sprint at Uwaki. Our blades bind as we both push with the entirety of our might, trying to overpower the other. We exchange powerful punches. My left hook dents his right jaw, but his jab breaks my nose, sending blood flowing out. We both stumble backward composing ourselves. Uwaki grabs his jaw and rubs it while I try to wipe the tremendous stream of blood flowing down my face.

“Fine, boy, since I can’t reason with you, there is no need to let you live!”

Uwaki lunges forward past my guard, driving his blade deep into my right shoulder. Despite my wishes, tears flow down my face as I wail in agony. I can feel the warm river of blood flowing from my shoulder down to my feet. I find the strength to kick Uwaki back. As he flies backward, he grips his blade tightly, ripping it from my shoulder. This only fuels the burning rage inside me, and I focus it into a barrage of quick, calculated attacks not meant to wound, but to tire. My plan is working; I can feel his defenses weakening, and he is becoming sloppy. With a well-placed attack, I sever his right hand from his arm. Blood splatters everywhere and a look of pure shock overtakes the old man’s face. “W-well boy, now is you- your chance. Kill me.”

I keep Baransu pointed at his chest as I motion with my head for him to pick up his weapon. “Grab your weapon, *oni*...unlike your kind, we samurai are honorable, and I will defeat you in combat like a man,” I say, causing a look of confusion to wash over his tired face. Uwaki cautiously bends down, reaching for his blade. He breathes heavily. I can feel it; now’s my chance. Uwaki positions himself in the best guard he can manage with only one hand. Baransu moves like a cacophonous wind, disrupting the peace of both the air and my former master’s guard. Baransu bites into his heart, and with his final breath, my burning rage is extinguished. I kneel onto the white plain bespattered with crimson.

I gaze upon my family’s murderer. I feel...nothing. No pain, anger, or resolve. The last five years have been driven by rage, and now I have no will to continue. I’m bleeding profusely, and death is closer than any village. As Baransu bites into my heart, I feel what I’ve longed for: an honorable death.

Jacob Jarrett

Glossary:

<i>Bokken</i>	A wooden sword used for training
<i>Cukanbushi</i>	The group of samurai; Ikari is a member of
<i>Daisho</i>	A pair of matching, traditionally-made samurai swords
<i>Dou</i>	A breastplate worn by a samurai
<i>Fuzakeru na!</i>	Fuck off!
<i>Isho</i>	Land willed to the samurai by the shogun
<i>Kabuto</i>	A traditional helmet
<i>Katana</i>	A traditional sword
<i>Minka</i>	A feudal style of house used by the non-samurai castes
<i>Montsuki</i>	A formal kimono worn by males
<i>Oni</i>	A demon or troll from Japanese folklore
<i>Ronin</i>	A rogue samurai without a master or lord
<i>Samurai</i>	A rank of warrior in Japan
<i>Wakizashi</i>	A traditional sword
<i>Yomi</i>	The Underworld in Japanese folklore

Snake Hidden in My Daffodils

You're the snake hidden in my daffodils,
Driving me insane, I'm gonna need an Advil.
Slithering stealthily around me,
What will it take for me to be set free?

You're the snake hidden in my daffodils,
I try to pick them by the windmills
But you're always nearby
And I don't know why . . .

You're the snake hidden in my daffodils,
Staring at me, watching from the foothills.
Making me go crazy, catastrophic to my core.
What do you want from me, what more?

You're the snake hidden in my daffodils, bud,
And you're boiling my blood.
Get over it, you'll always miss,
'Cause you ain't ever touching this.

Autum Kimla

Christmas Lights



Haley Kibby

Three is the Magic Number

I, with my flame hair,
will eat up all the air.

No one around me can breathe,
for without air, lungs collapse.

I, with my paper skin,
will devour all the light.

No one around me can see,
for without light the eyes are dark.

My body will ache and scream,
my bones revolt
my veins burst,
and all my mind jumps out and attacks me!

I rock shut,
a box whose hinge is broken,
whose lid will not stay open.

I rock shut.
and they, they call.

They shout and tug at my clothes,
try to pull me out of my head
out of my bed
out of my dead-ness,
but already I am gone.

For out of my life I have died thrice
and three is the magic number.

Aurianna Bastin

Backyards in North Carolina



Maya Zink

There's a Stained Glass Forest Growing in My Lungs

There's a stained glass forest growing in my lungs
It's old and overgrown, it's been thriving since I was young
Years ago it crept into my throat, severed my tongue
And now I can't remember what it feels like to speak.

My styrofoam lungs are sacrifices to these stained glass shards
Trying to get free, to be more than a part of me
One's reached my stomach, it's beginning to leak
But it's not like I needed that anyway.

In all honesty, I forget the last time I remembered to eat
The snow clouds in my stomach have frozen it numb
Maybe now since they're leaking out hunger will come
But I wouldn't bet on it.

My blood is hot wax and due to the snow it's cooling and slowing
For years I've been running constantly to keep it flowing
At least no running means no heavy heaving and huffing
Means more space between me and the stained-glass sentinels in my lungs.

This wax flows from the candle in my head
Lit at birth, glowing ever since, but I'm almost burnt out
Soon I'll be empty but for a charred wick left in my mouth
There's nothing quite like feeling your brain melt away.

There's a stained glass forest growing in my lungs
And I can't remember what it feels like to breathe.

Taylor O'Shea

Quiet Morning



Haley Kibby

Rust

Face fused to knees to muffle my scream
my body's a cage and my soul wants to touch
but the cast-iron casing that plants me won't wean.

You did it again, whittled my bones down lean
your jabs and your prods and your jokes, they're too much
I love you, but right now we're far from a dream.

The dream we began, when we floated downstream
when our limbs weren't so brittle, how lithely we clutched
to the freshness of life, to each other, to green...

Arms open, hearts filled, all we knew of obscene
were the Wind-whispered rumors of drylands and such--
Our worries were nothing but dollops of cream.

From wise soil you plucked me a Flower Queen
stuck Her to my curls, who knew you would butcher
my heart when I found you were looking at Her and not me.

Now the stream's all dried up; it's beginning to seem
that your turned back needs no more of me than a crutch.
Love's careful stitches ripped wide at the seams,
our fresh spirits dwindle, we creak as we dream.

Rosemary Kent

Mountains of Curiosity



Maya Zink

Modern Enduring Emblems

Permanence is frightening to most,
bodies act as the inks' host.
They become lifelong obligations—
too intimidating to those with certain fixations.

Fear may not originate from immutability,
but instead from others' potent, judgemental hostility.
Occasionally created based off of intoxicated dares,
these vibrant drunken portraits rarely wear.

Central fears may not derive from either one,
but instead the stainless steel pigment packed prod at the end of the gun.
Piercing pricks of potentially forty-nine;
and all at one time.

Although, the lingering sting is addictive to some—
especially those with a supportive income.
The allure of the completed depiction,
leaves a feeling of absolutely no restrictions.

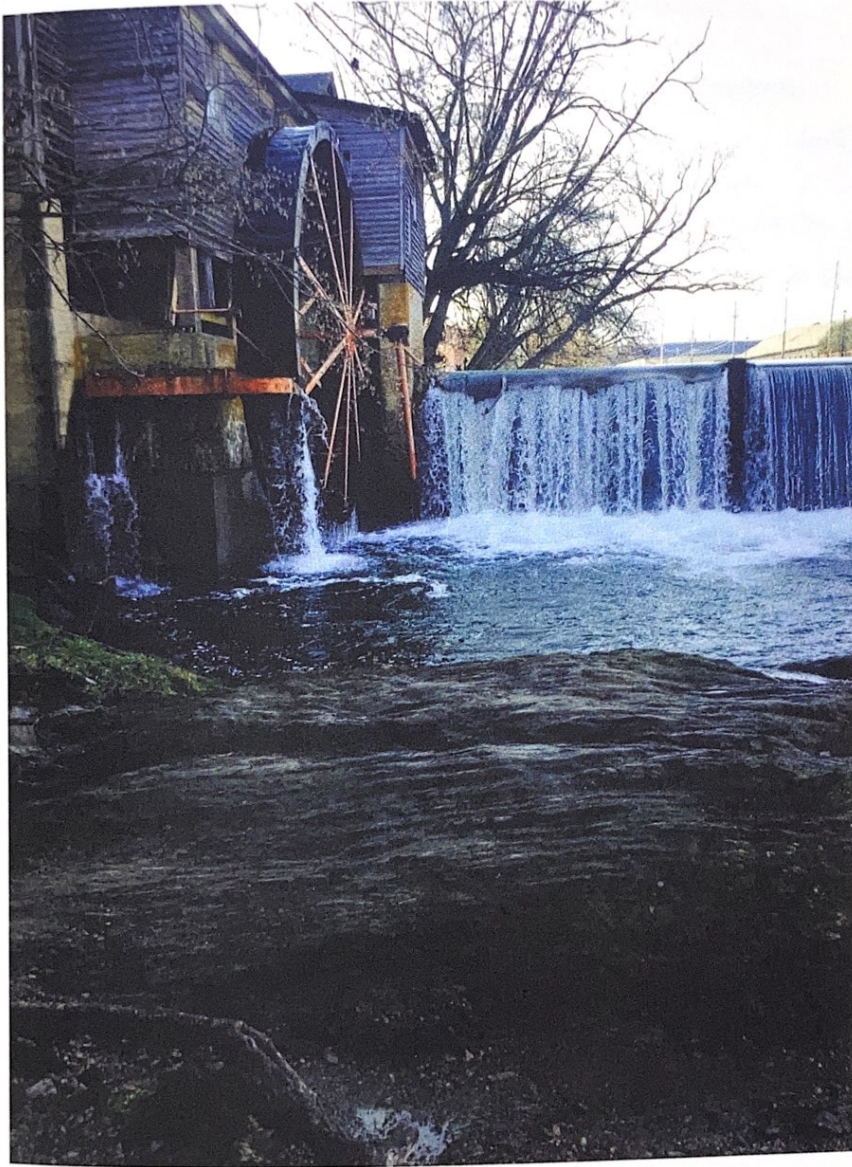
These original enduring designs . . .
serve a purpose that does nothing to confine.
Confine—creativity, imagination, or inspiration.
The topic at hand is uncommonly known as body mutation.

Worn as memories or to trend,
a concept aged generations cannot seem to comprehend.
Artistic alterations today,
represent various sentimental reasons as they overlay.

Confidence is a necessity to the process.
A lack of certainty only brings distress.
Tattoos are passionate, perpetual expressions,
that usually affect all impressions.

Maya Zink

Hidden Behind the Covered Bridge



Maya Zink

(though you'd have the opposite; after all, vaccines only "made me sick")
you would sooner arrange my marriage than let me (a? woman?) be free (or be me)
you wonder, after all of your preaching,
you devil! you dog!
why i don't believe in (god god god god god GOD) you
you fag! good god!
according to you, without (god god god god god GOD) you
i'm nothing.
oh dear.
what a tragedy we have here.

Taylor O'Shea

Life's Natural Steps



Maya Zink

The Abduction of Proserpina

Strong arms and strong hands
Wrap around that which pleas to be free
Such sweet embrace that ends in rape
True emotion rolls down her face
As stretched skin is pulled from him
Veins appear from strength and struggle
Indentations in her thigh prove
His overpowering lust wins

Aurianna Bastin

Windy Wheatgrass



Olivia Shay

An Honest Man

They always warn us girls against men. *Men are dishonest! Cheaters!* mothers caution. *Watch out!* They wag their fingers at us and shake their heads. *It's no use getting swept up in chivalry or looks or adventure.* Most men use these traps to deceive and ensnare us girls. *However, there are a few honest men,* is their addendum to these lectures. *The key to finding one is to settle on someone who is really just nice.* So I did. I took their advice. Every time, I found a nice man, but lo and behold, he was just as dishonest as the rest. A liar. Every one. It seemed only logical that I should have put them through a test. But they all failed, of course. Liars and cheaters!

My mother, after her death, which was after my father's, left me all that I could ever need. I had her looks—beautiful—and her money—plentiful—and her castle—glorious. I had many suitors. But not just any suitor would do. I knew, as I had taken her advice to heart, to pick the honest men. I wanted a husband. I wanted company and support. I needed something to liven up my life. He would be just decoration, naturally, as I had all of the wealth I could need. However, I wanted one, so I picked one.

My first husband was nice. He was sweet and elegant, if a bit extravagant. But mostly nice. Yet I wondered... no, I knew, that in spite of all of this, he was not as honest as he should have been. I left him alone for one evening. One! That was all it took for him to betray me. I knew it. He was useless! He was more useless than the worn tapestries I hung in the castle corridors.

My second husband was nice too. And my third. And my fourth. And my fifth. And my sixth. Yet none of them were honest. All disappointments. I wished that my mother were still alive, so that I could point to their useless, empty forms—these husks of men—and tell her, “Do you see? Truly, mother, I don't believe that there is a single honest man in the world.” That's what I would have told her.

However, I really wanted a husband. So, I married my seventh husband as soon as I found him. He was a nice man. I took him to live in my castle with me and he marveled at the many wonders inside it. Indeed, I did take pride in my possessions within my castle. We lived happily for some days. He was nice and he seemed good. But I couldn't simply assume that he was honest. I began to get the itching, twisting feeling deep in my abdomen. Doubt, I suppose. Or a sensing of a hidden truth. I certainly couldn't remain married to a liar.

I wanted my husband to know how superb his life would have been here in the castle, with me. I wanted him to see every jewel, every gilded ornament, every treasure, every fantastic discovery that my many rooms held within. So, I gave my

own set of keys. Every single key to the castle was on it. I told him that I had to travel, business, but while I was away, the castle was his. All I gave him was one simple instruction: not to use the clean silvery key and enter the chamber that it unlocked. "True nature is revealed in that room, but we don't need to know each other's true natures that way. For we are husband and wife, and will learn to understand and trust each other with time and love," I reassured him.

He agreed. He agreed! The first mark of a liar, I knew. Then I left. I left him with my castle and my keys. I told him that I would be away for a fortnight, far on the other side of the continent, but really I went into the nearby town. I went for a nice walk and shopped in the local markets. I had a lovely dinner. I had a small glass of red wine outside of a little café and watched a cat play with its food. I did innocent, nice, honest things.

Meanwhile, I knew, I just knew, what he was up to. He was going behind my back, betraying me, as all men do, I know. I imagined him trying to distract himself, but failing pitifully. It wouldn't take long for him to open the door with the silver key, so I would know his true nature—a liar. A dishonest man. He would see my first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth husbands hanging up on the wall of the dark, circular room, like flags signaling their wrongdoing. He would see where I had gutted them, sliced them open with a clean cut right below the navel. That allows for the innards to spill onto the floor into a pool of their own blood: a fair punishment, I think.

Poor husband number seven would be so shocked that he would drop my precious key, clean as an unused carving knife, into the puddle on the floor. I had that key bewitched to never lose a stain. It would hold the evidence of the butchering of his promise, his honesty. Timing it just so, I finished up my red wine and headed home.

He greeted me at the door, all very twitchy and nervous. He was surprised to see me back so soon. "A change of plans," I responded reassuringly. I smiled and gave him a kiss, but I knew the key was bloody. I couldn't stand it anymore. I knew him for what he was. I asked for my keys back. He grew flustered, and blushed, and started to shake. I held out my hand. It was no use prolonging his ruse, his continued lies to me. He dropped the cluster of keys into my hand. Indeed, it was wrapped in a thick slime of red, red blood. I sighed and held it up to him, and the blood started to ooze down my fingers. He crumpled in on himself. The great lock of the castle gates clattered behind us, securing our remaining in the castle.

I explained to him simply, "If only you had not deceived me and lied to me. You were planning on going in there from the moment I left the castle grounds." I began to grow agitated, hot tears spilling out of my eyes. The spit churning in the

corners of my mouth frothed. "I knew! I always knew! Yet I married you anyway! Why could not you have been different? You are just as horrible, just as dishonest as my other husbands!" I halted my tirade and took some deep breaths. My husband shivered in front of me, knees buckling inward slightly. His face was somewhat set, however, so I decided to continue explaining to him. "As you went into the room that you promised that you wouldn't, as you lied and deceived me, this marriage will end. I will not be married to a dishonest man. You must join my other husbands as evidence of and as punishment for your true nature."

My husband pleaded with me, asking for some time to clean himself up as he had sweat through his shirt. I was happy to oblige, as that would give me time to sharpen my knife and prepare his eternal place on the wall of the chamber. So, he scurried off to his room and I made my way to the courtyard.

I have been asking myself: if I had known that my husband had invited his two brothers to come visit us on that same day, would I still have hesitated? Would I have let him stall me, as he waited for them? I suppose that I still would have. I cannot have a dirty, unwashed man decorating such an important chamber. Surely not.

I do wish that he had one less brother, but I am afraid that it is impossible for me to win in a sword combat against both of them. I could run, I suppose. I shall not escape far. I am glad that I am so beautiful and young and my castle is so magnificent. My death will be a terrible tragedy because of it. All women, mothers and their daughters, will tell my story of my efforts and my unfailing test.

As the two men charge at me, with swords raised, I think of what I will say to my mother, if I get a chance to see her after I die. I settle on some advice of my own: while all men are dishonest, I suppose it is the ones with brothers that you have to watch out for.

Ursula Kremer

Fountain Fairytales

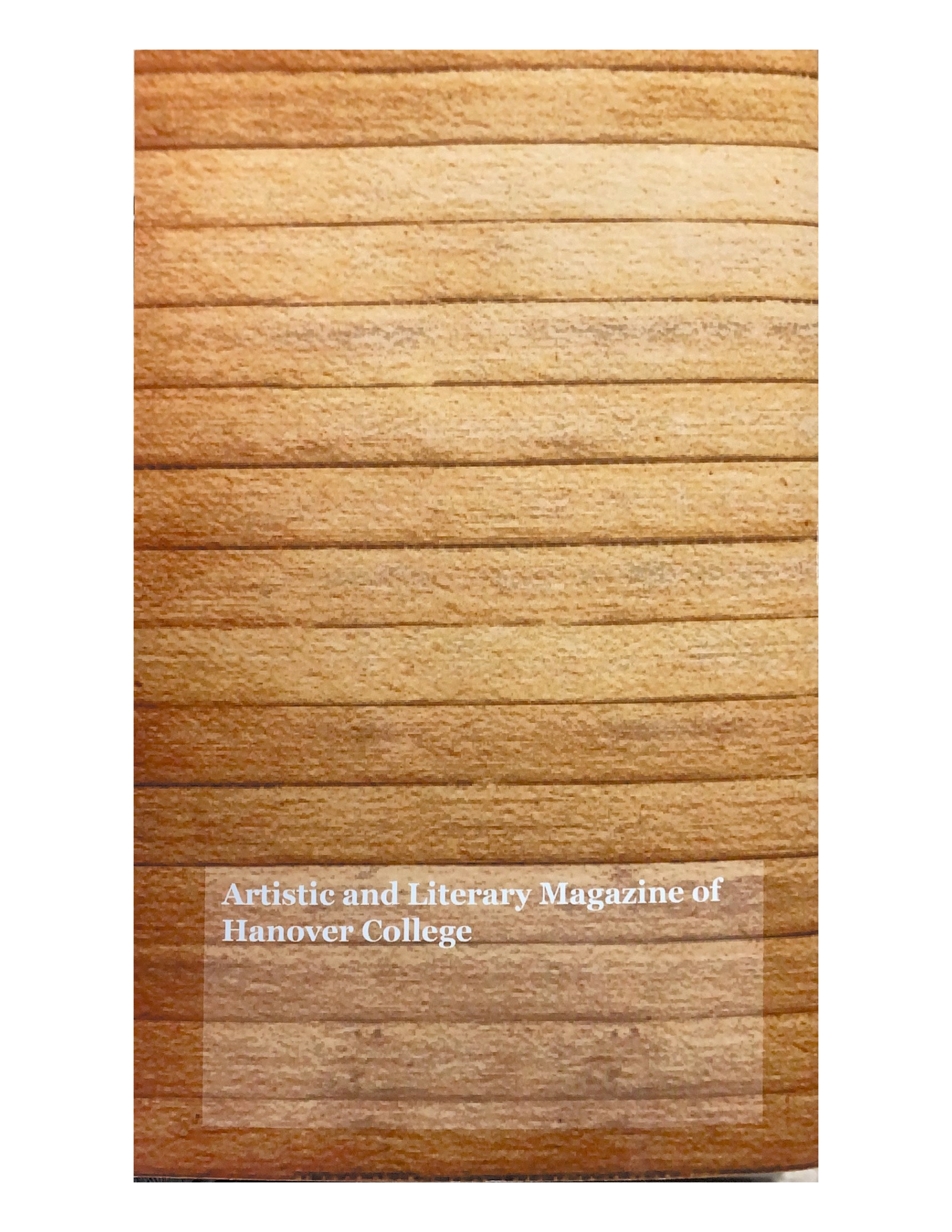


Olivia Shay

Thank You to everyone who submitted works to Kennings Magazine. This work is made possible by many creative, talented individuals, and we appreciate getting the opportunity to share your work with the world.

If you would like to submit work to Kennings Magazine in the future, please send all submissions to the Editor in Chief Gracie Phillips at phillipsg21@hanover.edu

Thank You.



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