

THE 2015 *OASIS* EDITORIAL STAFF



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That Crazy Boy

He is a flame
That devours me
That activates all my senses
That enchants my insides

His eyes are two embers
That radiate like fire
Oh his eyes, his dark eyes hypnotize
They read the deepest parts of my soul

He breathes out passion
Against my cheek and down my neck
And his warm humming in my ear
Entangles me into his arms

Oh his arms, his powerful arms embrace me
They curl me up like a baby
They hold me tightly
And they gracefully place me down

Then he whispers
Utters beautiful truths
Speaks magic
Speaks love

Abigail F. Ledesma

His intensity intoxicates me
His love transforms me
His pizzazz motivates me
His voice lulls me

His thick lips collide with mine
They softly brush against my skin
They magnetize me
They fascinate me

His tongue, oh his tongue thrills me
It tenderly tickles my mouth
As it savors me fully
It electrifies me

We crave, we thirst, we ache, we conquer
We wrestle, we bite, we fuse, we explode

I set ablaze
I surrender
I cherish
I treasure

He- he is my lovebird
He is my admirer
He is my seducer
He is my one and only

He is that crazy boy.

Abigail F. Ledesma

Dia De Los Muertos

On the Go!



Adrian Dominguez

Alexander C. Bryant

Towards Andromeda

As she is silent, she can see through space.
 Beyond the sky, past the atmosphere.
 A distance so great—with her eyes she'll trace
 Celestial clouds, so close, so near.

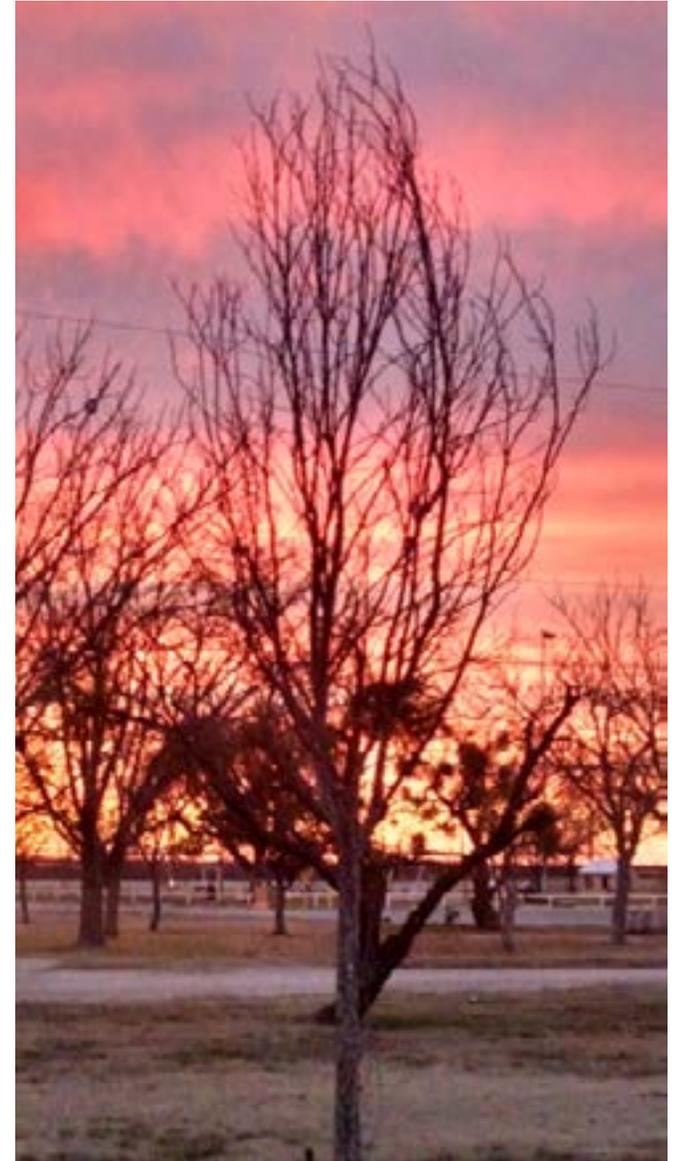
Onward, towards Andromeda! She will seek
 The second star on the right, she will fly
 To that great place where philosophers Greek
 From centuries old tell beyond the sky!

Murky purple, fluffed magenta, the clouds
 Embedded in the deepest pit of space.
 She stares, and gazes at the bright crowds
 Of stars dancing along galactic lace.

A slow blink, or perhaps maybe just two.
 She's brought back to Earth, now staring at you.

I. A. Kisa

Texas Sunset



Melissa Trujillo

BANANA!!!

88 Club



Adrian Dominguez

Alonzo Hernandez

Distance

I hear the thunder roll in the distance,
And I hear the rain patter on the window sill.
Then I smile.

I replay all of our favorite memories on the back of my eyelids as I lie in our bed.
I remember the long walks we took,
Hand-in-hand,
With all of the deep conversations that followed.
I remember all the moments of laughter and silliness.
I remember all of our firsts.

I roll over to touch your arm,
And I smile,
Knowing how much I love you.
Then I remember
You're gone.

Rough Around the Edges

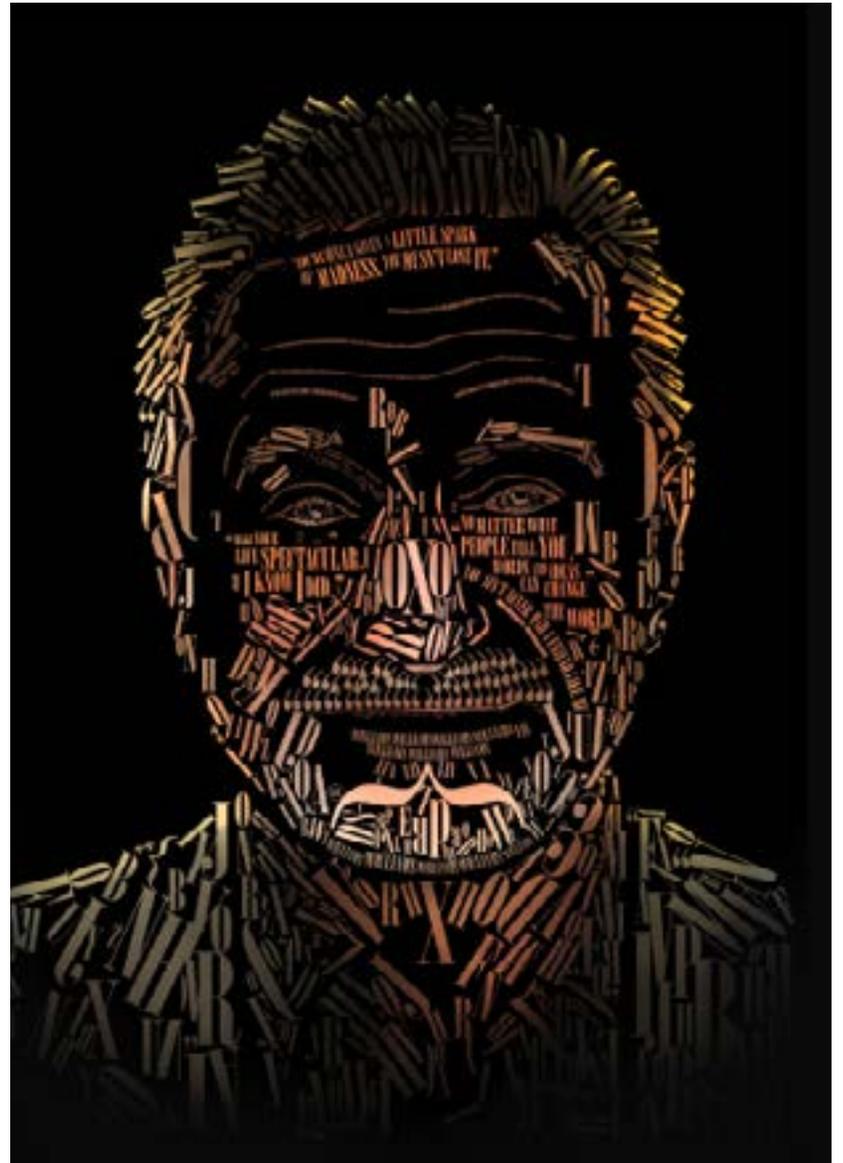


All Bottled Up



Letti Dennis

I'm Font of Robin



Tevin L. Simmons

1 20 years old Iraq
 2 21 years old support missions for Iraq
 3 22 years old support missions for Iraq
 4 25 the heart of Afghanistan
 Over two and a half years of my young life being the best warrior I can be
 following orders and doing what I need to do
 Kill or be killed
 Eat or be eaten
 And now ...
 Coming back home the guy speak
 Hey son
 If you're having trouble tell someone
 tell someone your thoughts
 there are people here for you
 thatll lesson
 you can go talk to someone free of charge and it never leaves this room and

 And hes offering me help
 The lies continue
 they look you in the eyes an just like they got you to sign the line they feed
 you with these lies

the pain is so real that you believe it,
 and hes offering me help and I think I should take it
 you'll try anything at this point because ...
 it just hurts so much and the sleepless nights just keep building and the
 anger just keeps adding and I'm about to over flow but
 I don't see it I feel normal ..
 This is normal !!
 But it's not ...
 I keep getting told ... man you're just not the same ...
 You used to be so much fun what happened
 I think I need help and he's offering it so I take it ...
 and he ask me questions ...
 so here it goes heres my heart
 they made me into a killer theres things I wish I could have never done
 and I don't know when it started and when it should stop so honestly ...
 yes I think about killing myself and yes Im thinking about killing you
 and yes I feel invisible and yes I feel like no one cares ...
 now you're telling me that I'm no longer fit for duty
 that I cant carry my gun
 ive given you everything
 and im left alone
 And heres my 214
 and I'm being discharged
 But thanks for my service
 Well fuck me right

A Wooden Spoon

A Wooden Spoon

takes on the character of the food it touches:
spicy, red, creamy.
Stained by a thousand meals -
faint smells of seasonings past.
Here, a small groove where
fingers clasp.
No matter how many washes,
it still remembers.

A Mother's Love



Arielle L. Reynolds

Elizabeth Starnes

The Moons of Saturn

What is life but the chances we take? A series of interwoven steps made up of uncertainty and of faith. But sometimes, faith is not enough. Sometimes, the uncertainty overcomes us and we don't take the next step for fear we might stumble.

There are times at which we stand upon some cosmic precipice, and we see the whole world above us. And as hard as we try to reach up and touch it, to feel its warmth, something sways our hand.

Fear?

Money?

Family?

The things that hold to you the tightest, the things things you struggle, tears in your eyes, to set yourself free of, are not of another world but of our own. The only monsters haunting us are those we let into our homes. And when we approach a crossroads, and our heart tells us to go one way but the monsters another, what do we do? Do we look back at our burdens and follow their instruction? Or do we dare to take the other path?

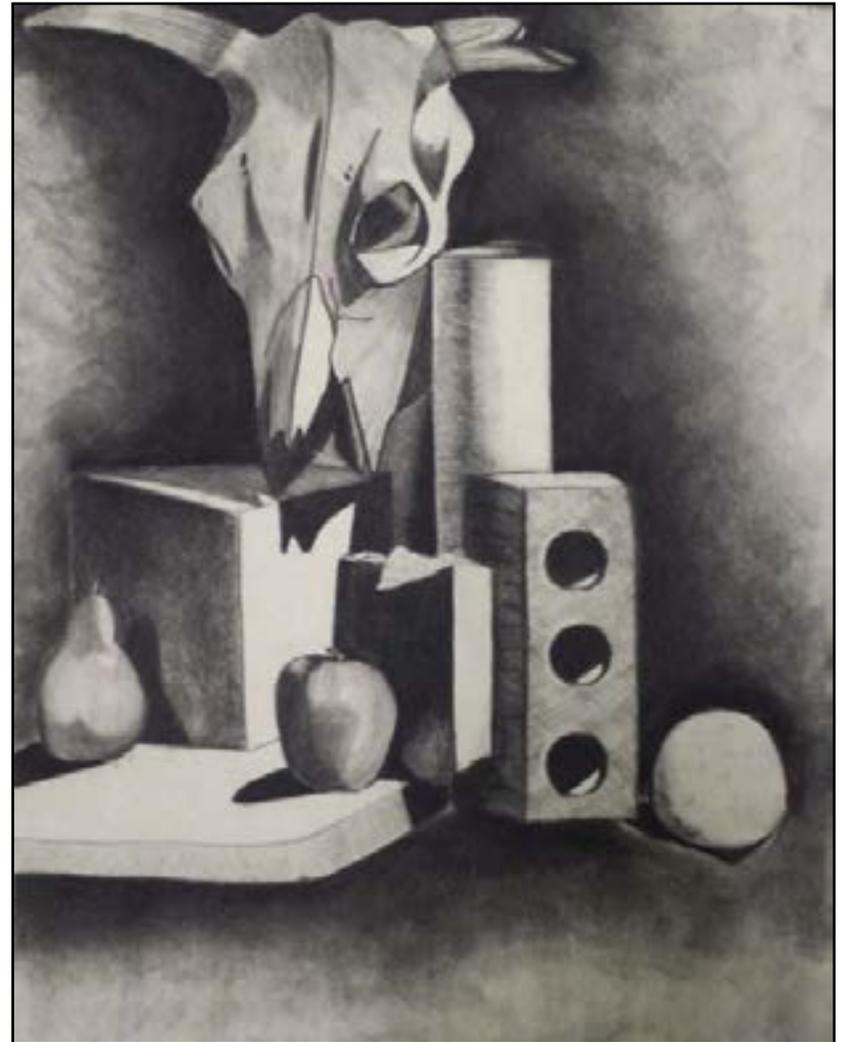
Somewhere in the world, adulthood is on the horizon for a boy and a girl. She walks closely behind him, and she wants to tell him, more than anything in the world she wants to tell him. But she doesn't, and a life that could have been vanishes before her.

We are the chances we take. They define us. And if we fall or become lost in the dark, is it not a small comfort to know that, in the face of uncertainty, we followed our hearts, our souls, and ventured forth? Because we believed, because we broke free of the monsters. It is those who show such bravery who will one day take the world in their hands.

So we must take chances. Because a life in which we let them pass us by is no life at all. So look forward, and take the next step.

Addison Meredith

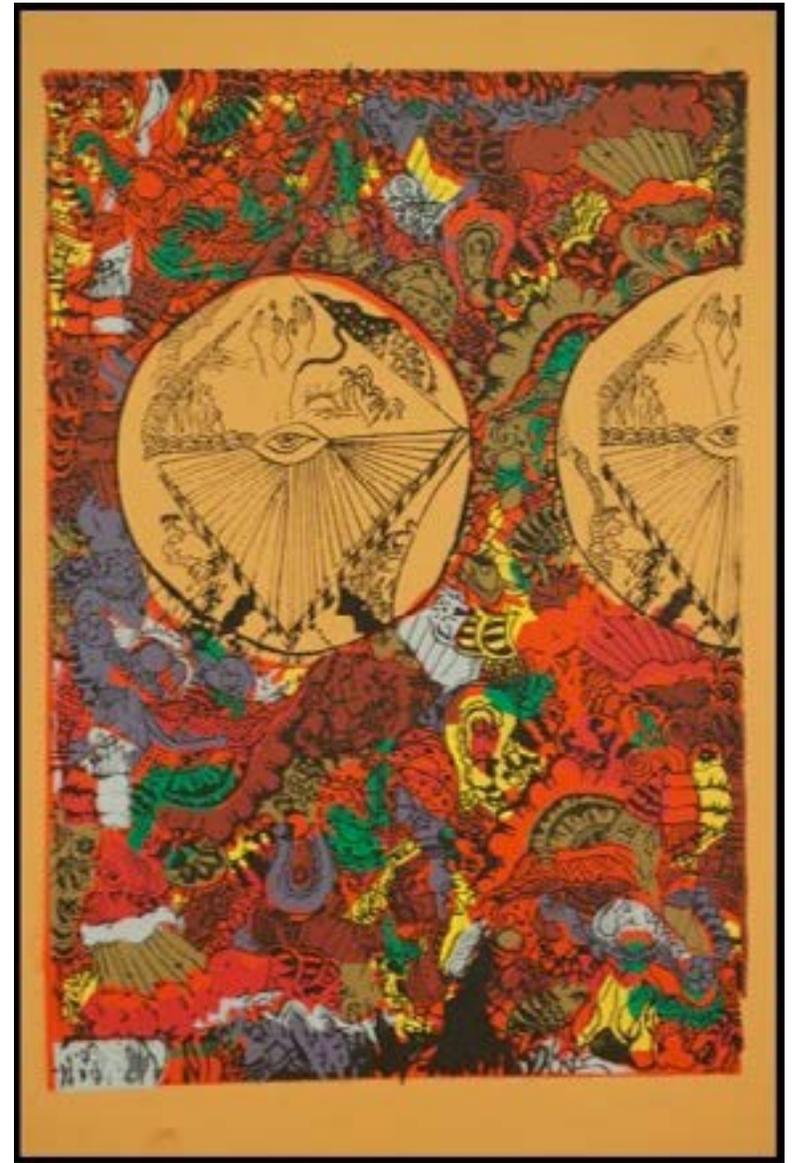
Stilllife



Allison Romo

Coffee Marilyn

Paraiso



Letti Dennis

Linette Castañeda

Convergence Through Christ:

Understanding Flannery O'Connor's Religious

Intent in "Everything That Rises Must Converge"

As Flannery O'Connor famously said, "I write the way I do, because (not though) I am a Catholic" (qtd. in Wyatt 227). From this statement, her reader can assume that O'Connor's Christian beliefs implicitly theme "Everything That Rises Must Converge." Throughout "Everything That Rises Must Converge," Flannery O'Connor uses contrasting pairs to display the tension of convergence, which is the central issue in this story, as well as to demonstrate O'Connor's Christian ideology that assumes humanity is sick with an innate evil nature that prohibits convergence and can only be remedied through Christ.

The title "Everything That Rises Must Converge" has a dual meaning. Superficially, the title contends that humanity must converge as it rises, as African-Americans had to converge, or integrate, with European Americans upon their increase in civil rights and social standing. As the black citizens rose in power, the whites that once thrived on their superior position had to descend. While the lower class rises and the upper class falls, the two groups that were once sharply divided must converge. More significantly, the title reflects theologian, scientist, and poet Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's evolution-based principle: Humanity must converge in order to rise. Flannery O'Connor took the title from an excerpt of Teilhard's book called *The Phenomenon of Man*: "To be fully ourselves it is in the opposite direction, in the direction of convergence with all the rest, that we must advance" (*The Phenomenon of Man* 263). Understanding the origin of O'Connor's title immensely helps her reader to understand that convergence means to forfeit oneself and focus on others ("advance in the opposite direction"), in order to grow, evolve, and "be fully ourselves." This necessary process of convergence is difficult and painful, and

Leah Rappé

I would argue that through "Everything That Rises Must Converge," O'Connor intentionally exhibits that the process of convergence is impossible without Christ. In 1 Corinthians, the apostle Paul discusses convergence with the early church: "I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind" (English Standard Version, 1 Cor. 1.10; emphasis added). O'Connor's Christian world-view contends that in a world full of selfish sinners, unification must be achieved through Christ.

O'Connor's Christian world-view is implicitly but profoundly infused into all of her works, including "Everything That Rises Must Converge." Her religious references throughout the story assure the reader of an underlying, deeply spiritual meaning. O'Connor's religious language shines through in the first few pages, as the narrator compares Julian to a martyr and a saint: Julian waited "like Saint Sebastian for the arrows to begin piercing him", he was "sacrificed to [his mother's] pleasure," and finally, "he walked along, saturated in depression, as if in the midst of his martyrdom he had lost his faith" (405-407; emphasis added). It is also said that "When [Julian] got on a bus by himself, he made it a point to sit down beside a Negro, in reparation as it were for his mother's sins" (409; emphasis added). Moreover, Julian is later described in a serpentine manner. This imagery is reminiscent of the form Satan took in the Garden of Eden: "[Julian] thrust his face toward [his mother] and hissed" (409). These are just a few examples of O'Connor's critical use of religious concepts in "Everything That Rises Must Converge". If it is not enough to know the influence of O'Connor's personal beliefs, one must seriously consider the implications of the acutely religious language within "Everything That Rises Must Converge."

In "Everything That Rises Must Converge," the tension of convergence is displayed by divergence: vastly different characters and ideals contrast each other. According to O'Connor's literary executor, Robert Fitzgerald, "The

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Essay

title refers to the convergence or collision... of the rising Southern Blacks with White Southerners, the rising lower class with the upper class, and the rising younger generation with the older generation” (qtd. in Winn 190). It is these contrasting pairs that form the conflict and resolution of the story.

Flannery O'Connor's characters are each coupled with a polar opposite counterpart. Julian's mother meets her counterpart after she has ironically stated “I at least won't meet myself coming and going,” (O'Connor, “Everything That Rises” 406) believing her exorbitant hat is a representation of her classiness and individuality. If Julian's mother's individuality is based on appearances, she has indeed met herself upon colliding with the black mother with the same hideous hat. However, the characters have distinctly different backgrounds, personalities, and beliefs. Their collision becomes one of the story's most important illustrations for failed convergence. The most obvious difference between the women stems from the fact that Julian's mother is white while Carver's mother is black. If one further examines their differences, he or she will find that in addition, Julian's mother is petty, “innocent and untouched by experience” (406), ignorant, and condescending. Conversely, Carver's mother is hateful, “sullen looking” (415), domineering, and violent. Those are some major differences in character, but in fact, the women are similar in more ways than they would like to believe: They are both prideful and dislikeable, and their actions are both dictated by wrong thinking. In essence, both women are despicably sinful. When they encounter each other on the newly integrated bus, they collide, rather than converge, in the worst of ways.

Likewise, the white woman's son, Julian, is vastly contrary in character to the black woman's son, Carver. While Julian and Carver are both fully dependent on their mothers, the similarities end there. Carver, a child, is completely unaware of the chasm between whites and blacks: “[Carver]...shot across the aisle and scrambled, giggling wildly, onto the seat beside his love [Julian's mother]” (417). Julian, on the other hand, is overtly aware of race throughout

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the entire story. This acute awareness is exemplified through his obsession with the idea of finding a “distinguished Negro” friend or “a beautiful, suspiciously Negroid woman” (414), as well as through “his annoyance” (415) at the unimpressive African-American woman sitting next to him on the bus. Four-year-old Carver naturally gravitates towards people, oblivious to whether that person is white or black. Conversely, Julian tries to force desegregation and manipulate his mother into embracing it: “He began to imagine various unlikely ways by which he could teach her a lesson” (414). It is worth mentioning that a type of convergence does indeed take place because of the sons, in the form of a relational exchange. As Carver sat with Julian's mother and Julian sat with Carver's mother “Julian saw that... [his mother] and the woman had, in a sense, swapped sons” (415). However, this exchange is a short-lived failure, as Carver's mother “swiftly yanked the little boy off the seat as if she were snatching him from contagion” (417). This is substantial because even the innocence of a child, praised by Jesus himself (Matt. 18.3), is not powerful enough to hold the two families together in convergence.

Furthermore, black versus white is not the only area of rising conflict in “Everything That Rises Must Converge”. Another key contrast is between the ascending lower class and the dwindling upper class. The elegant plantation home that once blissfully harbored Julian's wealthy, elite relatives is now decaying and ironically inhabited by “Negroes” (408). While black southerners have risen in class, the social status of white southerners such as Julian and his mother has descended: the neighborhood that Julian and his mother reside in “had been a fashionable neighborhood forty years ago,” but is now full of “bulbous liver-colored monstrosities” outside of which sit grubby children (406). Because of the shift in the social order of the post Jim-Crow era, Julian's family has completely lost their rank, but it hasn't stopped Julian's mother from pretending it is not so: “Your great-grandfather was a former governor of this state,” she said. “Your grandfather was a prosperous landowner” (407).

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In response, Julian remarks, “Will you look around... and see where you are now?” (407). Julian’s mother has ineffectively struggled to play the part of a wealthy southern family, with poor results. While her son has received a degree, it was from a “third-rate college” (412) and “there was, of course, no future ahead of him” (411). This merging of the lower class with the upper class is another source of immense division that goes unreconciled by the characters.

The final area of divergence that I will discuss is that of the rising younger generation with the older generation. The story repeatedly mentions the past, which represents the idyllic, but dying, way of the older generation; the old family plantation alone is described and referenced several times, often in detail (408-409, 413). In addition, the old family nurse, Caroline, is mentioned twice (409, 420), and their important southern relatives are mentioned frequently (407-408, 411). All of these are in conflict with the new ideals of a younger, more open-minded generation. It is apparent that Julian’s mother believes that because blacks are below her and need her pity, as is evident when she says “The ones I really feel sorry for... are the ones that are half white” (408). She also assumes that blacks need her aid: “[Julian] had the terrible intuition that when they got off the bus together, his mother would open up her purse and give the little boy a nickel. The gesture would be as natural to her as breathing” (417). These ideals cannot coincide with the modern understanding that all men and women, black or white, are created equal. Julian believes himself to be vastly more intelligent, educated, and tolerant than his mother, and praises himself as an activist, though even he is more prejudiced than he realizes. Just before he realizes his mother’s life is in peril, Julian offers a significant commentary into the weight of the old generation’s ways versus the emerging generation’s ways: “The old world is gone. The old manners are obsolete... From now on you’ve got to live in a new world” (419). So much of the story’s conflict hinges on the old ideals versus the new. This is another example of collision without convergence, as Julian and his mother are both so

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Essay

self-centered that they never come to an understanding of the other’s beliefs. How could there be selfless convergence if a mother and her son are so sharply divided?

It is apparent that moral excellence, which is quite important for unification, is seemingly absent in Flannery O’Connor’s “Everything That Rises Must Converge.” This stark absence in the story mirrors the same real absence in the world. Upon reading “Everything That Rises Must Converge,” one may find in it little of the kindness, self-sacrifice, and faith that encourages unity. Instead, there lies a plethora of sin: Julian’s mother’s condescension which leads her to give Carver a penny (418); evil, which is evident both in the black woman’s violent response (418) and in Julian’s thoughts toward his mother throughout; as well as desperation, which Julian is faced with during his mother’s stroke (420). All of these events are evidence of a fallen world, which culminates in death. This death includes the physical passing of Julian’s mother as she experiences a stroke, as well as the spiritual emptiness of O’Connor’s characters, and by extension, that of the world.

For Flannery O’Connor, all things in life are made possible through Christ and the redemption that he offers sinners. In *Mystery and Manners*, O’Connor states that “the meaning of life is centered in our Redemption by Christ” (O’Connor 32). Following in this belief pattern, one would conclude that, for Flannery O’Connor, the same Christ-centered ideology rings true for the topic of convergence. Genuine convergence occurs when people are unified in their Redemption by Christ, not through things that vary from person to person. Education, money, skin-color, beliefs, political stance, and even actions may assist in raising one’s social or economic status, but they are not conducive for the pure, selfless convergence aforementioned by Teilhard.

O’Connor’s parallel, though extreme, is very intentional. All of the primary characters in “Everything That Rises Must Converge” are utterly horrific: Julian, who broods with disgust and judgment; his mother, whose ignorance

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leads to her demise; and Carver's mother, whose pride leads to violence. These characters represent the radically sinful world that we reside in. "O'Connor confronts a drastically fallen world in which even the remnants of religious belief are vanishing and the instruments and recipients of grace themselves may be as sordid as the damned" (Wyatt 228). When O'Connor's dreadful characters intersect, their meeting leaves a bloody mess. Manifesting itself the uneasy and divisive era of the Civil Rights Movement, "Everything That Rises Must Converge," offers a bleak, but precise, depiction of fallen humanity. While the city buses and, presumably, the mother's reducing class were integrated (O'Connor, "Everything That Rises" 407), true and full convergence did not take place in the pages of "Everything That Rises Must Converge," as is evident from the violent parting at the end of the story, when the black woman attacked the white, and inadvertently caused her stroke and death.

Why would O'Connor leave the tale with such a dreadful depiction of human nature? "For the central element of each [of Teilhard and O'Connor's visions] centers around belief in a world penetrated by spirit" (Winn 190). Because O'Connor's world-view is centered around humanity's need for Christ, and because of the religious diction, imagery, and concepts found in "Everything That Rises Must Converge," one could say that through this story Flannery O'Connor contends that legitimate unity, or convergence, cannot take place through mere human attempt. Through her use of collisions (between blacks and whites, the lower class and the upper class, and the old and the young), O'Connor exhibits that the process of unification is hopeless without the assistance of an untainted higher power. For Flannery O'Connor, this selfless, sinless higher power is Christ. Only through Christ can humanity reach the desired summit of convergence.

Sugar and Skulls



Digital Print

Mind Balls Compromised



Painting

Lighthouse Steampunk



Pedro U. Arrendondo

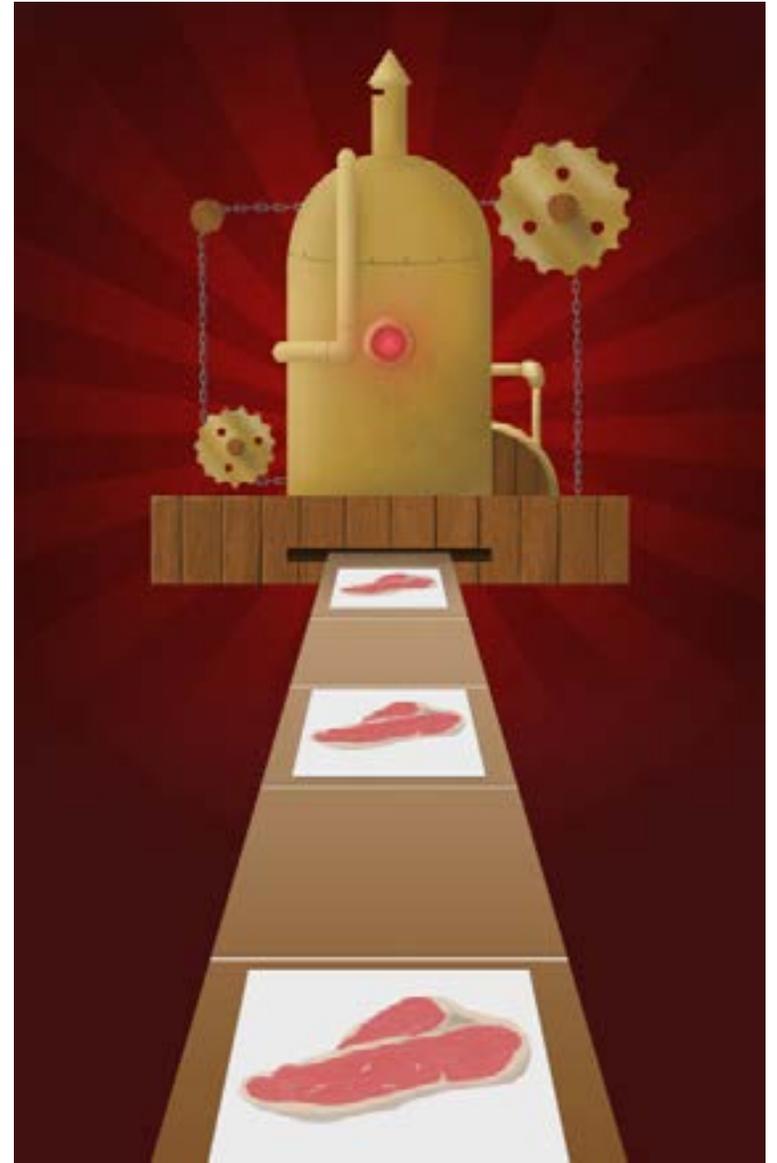
Katrina Trujillo

Scarf Transformation



Adriana Marie Ibarra

Apparatus

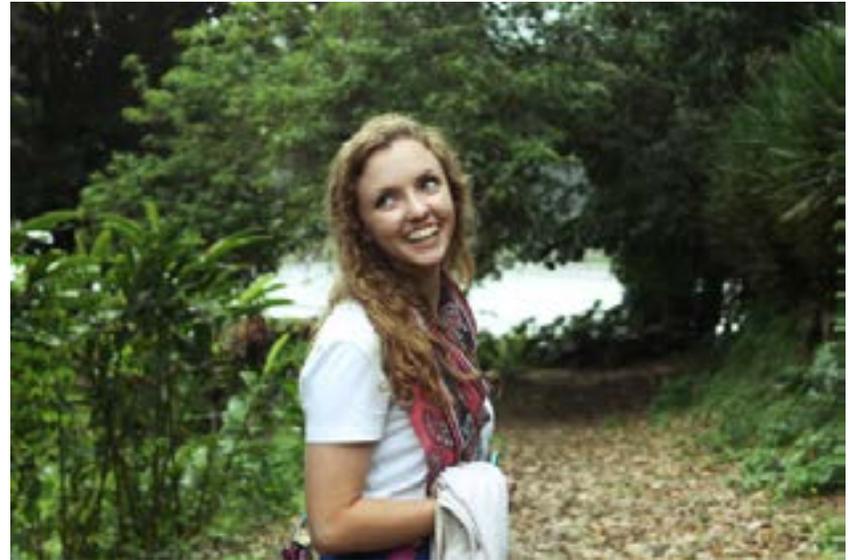


Armando Mendoza

Hang Up My Cinderella Dress

Sensible flats replace glass slippers
Castle tower now a second-floor studio
Pumpkin carriage's oil leaks
Prince Charming flirts with coworkers
Dreams have passed, yet
After all this time
Still in danger
Still believing

Exploring Costa Rica



Tuesday Evening



The Big Blue Bunk Bed

When	I was
a kid,	I had
a big	blue
bunk	bed.
The top bunk was a launching pad for Superman. It was a bed for Paddington the Bear,	Oscar
the Grouch, and a blue Jokey Smurf. It was the site of many earthquakes from the bottom	bunk.
The	sides
were	often
used	as a
crazy	jungle
gym.	It was
where	my
radio	hung.
The bottom bunk is where I slept. I liked to put blankets over the sides and pretend that it was a	dark tent. I shared this bunk with a friendly green Glow Worm. I had Peanuts Gang bed sheets.
Below	the
bed is	where
I kept	all of
my	G.I.
Joes	and
He-	man.

Flower I

Maria Hernandez

The Game

They handed me The Game-
 3,000 years
 Bound at the ends
 Torn and battered.
 Many had played the game and
 Failed.
 "Here's The Game," they said indifferently.
 "Good Luck."
 Most of us said screw your game.
 A few of us accepted,
 Knowing something glorious
 Lie waiting at the end.
 Many more would give up
 The Game was too hard.
 It consumed our thoughts
 Our actions
 Our daydreams and nightmares.
 Our entire lives.
 Only those who became obsessed would win.
 Little did we know, The Game would never end,
 And the glory lie in staying in The Game.
 The Game brought a freedom that those who quit would never know,
 And we would come to love and honor these
 3,000 years
 Bound at the ends.
 Those who gave up, or who never tried at all,
 Were left to toil under the yoke,
 To work with bloodied hands.

Lacy Neuwirth

The Whistle

When I was a young boy my grandparents lived in separate houses. I never thought to ask why my grandparent's lived separate lives, for me this was simply the reality of the situation. Looking back now I wonder if this was not the perfect arrangement for my grandparents. I cannot say if my grandparents did or did not love each other, but their relationship was not the typical one. Perhaps they just preferred the idea of each other. Perhaps they merely needed a more permanent personal space than the rest of us require. Or perhaps they just lived in separate houses so they did not kill one another. Who can say? These two houses were separated by an empty lot that was owned by my grandfather. Each of these houses was connected by a well-worn dirt path leading from my grandfather's back porch to the back door of my grandmother's house. The dry path through the high grass indicated to me that they maintained more contact than two separate houses would suggest. However one incident stands out in my mind as emblematic of their odd relationship.

One day I was spending the day at my grandfather's house. These were great days for me. Truth be told, I was denied nothing and in this way was quite spoiled by my grandfather. Grandpa Tinney had a pension for 7-up and lemon cookies. Both of which could be found in abundance in his refrigerator. You see, grandpa firmly believed that lemon cookies should always be properly chilled, a belief that I have come to adopt. I was always fascinated by the easy manner in which my grandfather lived his life. He was long since retired by the time I can along. In fact I was born the year my grandfather turned 72 years of age. But, it was plain to see that the long years of living alone combined with the years of not having to report to work every day had made him quite adept at doing his own thing.

Wesley B. Tinney

On this particular day my grandfather decided he needed to go grocery shopping. Most of the time, my grandfather would break out his little red wagon and drag it to the store and back. He had that slow turtle like pace that allowed him to walk for days. I had walked with him many times in this fashion. On all of these occasions I would tire long before he did. However, on this day my grandfather needed more groceries than he could carry in his little red wagon. This meant that he would need to get a ride from my Grandmother Tinney. My grandfather did not have a driver's license, even though he could safely operate many different types of motor vehicles. Once he had owned a yellow moped with a blue milk crate strapped to the cargo shelf. This was his primary means of conveyance around the time I was born. But after he crashed into a mailbox and broke his arm the authorities found that he had never had a driver's license and prohibited him from riding it on public streets, something to do with public safety.

Upon deciding to go to the store my grandfather simply rose to his feet and stepped off the porch. This was his manner; he could be a patient as Father Time when he needed and he could pick up and go in an instant. As I rose to follow him the chicken fell in line in front of me. Perhaps I should pause to explain. Grandpa Tinney had adopted a set of baby chicks. The neighbors across the street had raised a multitude of chickens. These chickens had roamed all over the neighborhood. When the neighbors had moved a single hen had been left behind. My grandfather had a food trough on the ground outside his house in order to attract birds. This trough full of seeds drew the lone chicken in. However, my grandfather was not interested in feeding some half wild chicken. So one day he shot at the chicken in order to scare it away. Apparently the shot wounded the chicken and my grandfather found its carcass a few days later. It seems the hen had a brood of chicks, and in his guilt my grandfather took the chicks in. Unfortunately all but one of the chicks died. But the remaining chick grew rapidly into a chicken. How-

Wesley B. Tinney

Creative Non-Fiction

ever this chicken grew up under the false impression that my grandfather was mamma. So this chicken, having no other point of reference or other chickens in which to socialize with grew up believing it was people.

This chicken lived outside, but as soon as my grandfather came out to sit on the back porch the chicken would stop whatever it was doing clamor up the steps and hop up on the back of his chair. It would have seemed mundane had the chicken stopped there...but this was not the case. The chicken would perch on grandpa's shoulder and crane its neck around to look him in the face. When my grandfather ignored the chicken it would hop up onto his cowboy hat. My grandfather was balding...although no one dared to inform him of this. He would grow the hair on one side of his head long enough to comb it over and cover his bald pate. This hair would be held in place by copious amounts of Aqua-Net hair spray. Despite the amazing adhesion of the Aqua-Net this was not enough to stop the hat from sliding all over as the chicken settled in. The top of my grandfather's cowboy hat would fold in under the weight of the chicken creating a cozy nesting place. However, any time my grandfather would turn his head to spit tobacco juice the chicken would become unbalanced and flap its wings in order to right itself. This action would cause the hat to once again to begin sliding all over grandpa's head. Eventually a balance would be found that was acceptable to both parties involved and a period of calm would ensue, at least until grandpa needed to spit again.

This odd procession made its way down the well-worn path between my grandparent's houses. My grandpa, an old man dressed head to toe in dark blue Dickies, followed close behind by a reddish brown chicken who thought it was a person, with me a stringy young boy in short pants, bringing up the rear. When we came to the lean-to that served as my grandmother's carport my grandfather instructed me to announce his intention to my grandmother. "Tell that crazy old woman I am ready to go to the store." was all he said. He then opened the car door and settled in to patiently wait. The chicken jumped

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Creative Non-Fiction

in the open window on the driver's side and began to roam about the back seat. I remember standing there on my grandmothers back steps taking in the scene. I then did as I was bid and entered my grandmother's house to inform her of grandpa's request. Upon hearing this she jumped up from her chair and peered out the window to see for herself. "That silly old fool!" she screeched. My grandmother was a short round German woman with a voice that rattled the neighbor's windows. I tried to make myself small and unobtrusive as she stomped around her house gathering up her purse and preparing to leave.

I followed my grandmother out to the car and climbed into the back seat with the chicken. My grandmother began complaining loudly about all of the things about my grandfather that irritated her, which was not a short list I might add. The car my grandmother owned was a 1976 Impala with Sky Blue paint, it was a tank. Its dimensions were massive which caused it to create deep ruts into the driveway. My grandmothers driveway was not paved so these caliche ruts created a very fine dust that settled over the entire car, inside and out. My grandmother fired up this beast of a car and tore out of her driveway, creating a swirling cloud of white dust and upsetting the chicken which had retreated to the ledge under the back glass. I remember marveling at all the room that I had in the back seat, even with the chicken for company.

As we rode to the store my grandmother continued unabated with the criticism of my grandfather. This is not to say that this criticism was misinformed or inaccurate, I have no way of knowing. They were the blissfully married couple, and I was just a child. What I do know is at some point in the unrequested personal critique my grandfather had heard enough. In his usual unhurried style he very meticulously opened his pocket and drew out a whistle. At this point I must stop and explain my grandfather and his bulging pockets. My grandfather carried everything he might need that day in his pockets. His shirt pockets were always bulging. In fact they were full to the point of overflowing. He remedied this problem by threading a rubber band through the

Wesley B. Tinney

Creative Non-Fiction

button hole and securing his possessions by hooking the rubber band around the button. However this meant that any attempt to recover an item from his pocket required some time and patience.

I will never forget the slow and very deliberate way my grandfather raised that whistle to his mouth. I remember the sound of that huge car drifting down the road with both windows rolled down. I remember the chicken nervously clucking in the back window. I distinctly remember my grandmother continuing in her tirade, oblivious to my grandfather's movements in the passenger seat. I also remember thinking in that second that my grandfather was the bravest man I had ever seen. One huge intake of breath and he began to blow that whistle as loud as he possibly could. The shrill scream of the whistle split the air and all other sounds were drowned. I remember clamping my hands over my ears in a vain attempt to shield them from the noise. This blatant attempt to silence my grandmother apparently took her by surprise. My grandmother jumped and began to scream at my grandfather. What she said I cannot say, all sound was lost to the screaming whistle. My grandmother had her head turned facing my grandfather as she screamed at him causing her to drift. When she realized this she jerked the wheel to right the course of the car. The jerk of the wheel was followed quickly by another course correction that made the car lurch all over the road. This motion caused the chicken to flap its wings violently and cluck ever more loudly. I did not have my seatbelt on and the layer of caliche powder created a slick surface on the seats. I kept my hands over my ears as I slid from one side of the massive backseat to the other.

My grandparents both ran short of breath in the exact same moment and a heavy silence broke out. This silence lasted the span of a breath. Once she had caught her breath my grandmother began to scream at my grandfather again. My grandfather, perhaps thinking that one dose of the whistle would silence her, began to lower the whistle from his lips. But as the screaming con-

Wesley B. Tinney

Creative Non-Fiction

tinued he once again raised the whistle to his lips. This time my grandmother was aware of his intention and she began to warn him against this course of action. My grandfather took no heed and began to blow the whistle again. All at once the car was packed with this cacophony of sound. The shrill blast of the whistle, the wild clucking of a frightened chicken, and the impressive volume of screaming that can only be achieved by an angry German woman. This racket continued for the full length of the ride to the store. The noise was only punctuated by the very brief moments of silence as my grandparents caught their breath. The chicken and I would slide around in the back of the car for the remainder of the trip. Two passive observers in this battle of wills.

Once the massive Impala arrived at the store my grandparents went their separate ways in a hurry. Each one acting as an independent player in this farce. Try as I might I cannot remember the return trip from the grocery store, but I will never forget this episode from my childhood.

Wesley B. Tinney



Taiga

Digital Print



Adrian Dominguez

Aluminum Sculpture

Mechanical Box



Alexander C. Bryant

His-Story

I often times think back on the history text books we all looked at as children, and I catch myself thinking about the photos not the main focus of the picture 'the police officer holding the holding the hose or the protestor being hosed down ,but the men in the background cheering for the for the officer. What is History? I remember the photos of my grandfather marching next to Dr. King, The photos of him speaking before President Clinton, the photos of him embracing Nelson Mandela at the end of apartied. That's his-story a story of a man standing up for the equality of his fellow man instead of just playing through the hand you're dealt. When the man in the photograph's grandchildren look at the same picture what story do they see? Do they see the loving grandfather who can always seem to find money behind their ear, or do they see the hatred in his eyes for another man based on the amount melanin in his skin. Do they see the man who taught them how to fish or do they see a man who doesn't believe that their best friend should be able to sit next to them on the bus because her hair has one too many kinks. During World War 2 the world faced a defining moment do we stand with a man who seeks to persecute groups of people for their religion or do we stand against him. Collectively our generation can say those who stood against Hitler were on the just side of history and those who stood with him stood for hate. Yet in our generation we have those who stand against an entire region of the world based on their praise of Allah instead of Jesus. We have people protesting, fighting and killing others so that they won't occupy the same space as them just because" those people" don't love the gender that everyone thinks they should love. If we chose to stand idly by instead of learning from our past then we are doomed to make the same mistakes. Whether black, White, Muslim, Jewish, Christian, American, Middle Eastern history consistently sides

Bryan Boykins

with those who are on the side of love not hate. I know my grandfather's story and what he stood for. 50 years from now when my children's children look at their history books are they going to see the man they know and love or are they going to see a man who stood for hate. The man in the background of the photo we know history and we know his-story, what will yours be?

Bryan Boykins

Graphite Illustration

Superman Perspective



Aluminum Sculpture

Octopoda Fractalis



Watercolor Painting

Butterfly Kisses



Elizabeth Starnes

Digital Illustration

Venom



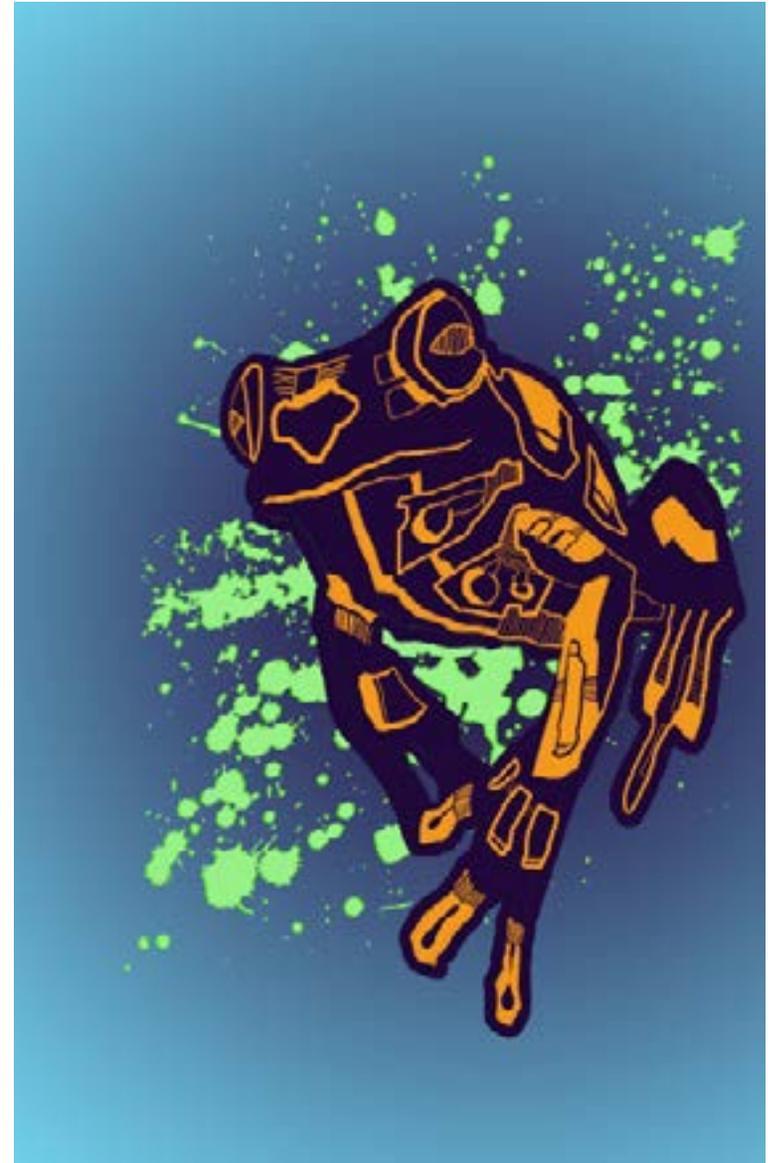
Armando Mendoza

Ladybug



Adriana Marie Ibarra

Frogga



Adrian Dominguez

The Letter

My hands were shaking, blood seeped through my thick black gloves, my lips turning blue, and cracking painfully with every breath. I haven't felt my feet in a long time. The cold bitter wind whipped at my face, making my eyes water from contact. Ice forming on my face where tears fell. The only sounds were the howling of the wind, and the crunching of the snow beneath my feet. I continued on regardless. With each step my lungs struggled, my heart was beating erratically trying to pump something, anything to my now frozen limbs. The winds picked up speed causing me to sway from side to side. My stomach clenched painfully from lack of food, and with every swallow my throat felt like it was on fire. I was told three important things; I was told not to eat the snow, I was told to not stop moving, I was told that it was important that I get to the top. The rough terrain, and deep snow, made it nearly impossible to pass. Sweat beaded across my forehead and instantly froze to my skin. Any movement sent painful waves throughout my body. I looked up and briefly saw my destination peeking through the swirls of snow before disappearing again. The closer I got, the farther it seemed to me. I was going to make it, I was determined to deliver the letter. The snow was no longer white, but blankets of red surrounding me. My lips no longer cracked but split open dripping blood down my chin, and my hands completely soaked in red. I could barely grip my pick ax. A foreign sound captured my attention. A high pitched wailing in the distance. My heart clenched at the wailing that was carried in the wind. The noise got louder and closer. I was able to see a blurry figure in the storm. A wingspan of at least fifteen feet coming at me at full speed. The closer it got, I was finally able to see what exactly was flying. Red eyes, and a snarling beak, blue and broken from the obvious cold. White and silver feathers covered its body and black talons curled inward. It shrieked, sending a wave of chills that vibrated my already sore body. Crashing into the mountain, a wall of snow rose and threatened to bury me. I let go of my ax, and fell out of the snow's deadly reach. Sliding down the mountain side I was able to stop by catching onto an uncovered jagged black rock.

"They sent you to your death." The creature shrieked. Its voice broken up by the wind. "They always send them to their death." A second voice replied. Shaking and losing grip I kicked and clawed my way up to my ax. Sneaking a peak at the creature a second head emerged. Its skin was cracked and bruised. Its eyes were blue with no feathers to protect it from the elements of this environment.

Mikayla J. Mullen

"Good for us, bad for you." Replied the first voice. Digging myself deeper into the snow I attempted to hide. The creature stomped around shifting the already dangerously loose snow. I bit my cheek to keep from making any noise but my heavy breathing gave me away. A pair of claws reached in and yanked me forward.

"You always hide, we always find. Pointless really, but a fun game." Its talons gripped my body tighter and I could see the warm red blood drip from the claws down onto the snow. The first head spoke again, "the last one was fat, didn't even get as high as you did." The second replied with, "But fed us well, scream he did, but didn't scream for long." The creature threw me up into the air and batted me against the mountain side. I tumbled down, too weak to stop myself. I came to a painful stop when my ax hooked my arm. Before I could pull myself free, the creature swooped in and wrenched me out of the snow. My ax still lodged in my arm, blood flowed freely down my arm.

"We like to play with our food." My body was sent flying once again. I let out a silent scream, my throat too dry to produce any sounds. My battered body was once again lifted into the air, but now was hovering a few feet from an open beak.

"Remember, I get the legs, I like how they still kick around when you swallow them." The second head stated. The first head nodded in agreement and continued to lower me into its mouth. I could die! I had to get to the top, I have no choice. I yanked the pick ax out of my arm and jammed it in the red eye of the creature. An ear piercing shriek broke through the powerful wind. Black ooze from the wide opening, throwing itself around the creature writhed and kicked trying to remove the ax, lodging it further into its eye. It flapped its huge wings and took off from the mountain, leaving behind a pool of black snow. The creature disappeared behind fat white flurries. My head lolled to the side and I collapsed into the snow bank. Few minutes passed and I was starting to be buried by a pile of snow, eager to suffocate me, and claim what the creature left behind. I struggled to my knees, feeling for the letter I was relieved to find that it was still resting in my pocket. I continued my struggle to my feet placing one foot after another, I recited left right left right. I started my ascent back up the mountain side. I lost 200 yards of progress and I had to get to the top before nightfall. My gloves were in tatters, and the back of my jacket completely torn apart from the talons that had gripped me. With each step I struggled to keep going. The pain of my back, feet and head getting worse from the cold. I ran a rough dry tongue over my lips and felt the cracked ridges and rusty taste of blood.

I finally reached the peak. At the edge was a stone ledge with strange markings surrounding the perimeter. I reached up and grabbed ahold of the ledge and hauled myself

Mikayla J. Mullen

Short Fiction

up onto the landing. Rolling over onto my back, I took in the sight before me. Like it was carved into the mountain, a huge castle like structure stood six stories high. Pulling myself to my feet I was greeted with a swarm of men surrounding me. All in a blue tunic of sorts lined with white fur and thick black boots. A figure stepped forward, in a long leather jacket trimmed with gold. The person pulled back the hood to reveal an older man, with silver hair and green eyes. Reaching down to the pocket of my olive green cargo pants I pulled out a letter wrapped in a plastic bag. With a shaking hand I held out the letter to him.

“I’m supposed to give this to you.” I assumed it was him anyway, by the way the others reacted around him I figured he was the one in charge. The old man eyed the letter in my hand, and hesitantly took it from me. He open the letter, I followed his eyes as they skimmed the contents. Black dots started to swirl in my vision, my head lolled to the side and I collapsed to the ground. “Get her to the medical wing” was the last thing I heard before the darkness consumed me.

Mikayla J. Mullen

Photography

Chinese New Year



Nayeli Medrano

Photography

Anticipation



Acrylic Painting

Blessed Mother



Fabian Torres

Elizabeth Starnes

Be Just

“This is a bad idea,” I said again as we pulled into the parking lot. The rain had just let up to a reasonable amount but enough to chill us as we got out of the car.

“Will you please give it a rest, Bran?” Louis asked. “I swear you haven’t stopped whining since we got to Savannah.”

We found the tour group easily. They were just about to start under a black banner with the name of the ghost tour on it. The group wasn’t very big, but everyone looked eager with their cameras ready. Our guide, a young man who had an uncanny resemblance to the newest Sherlock Holmes, rested his umbrella against his shoulder. “Here they are. Now we can start.”

“I’m just going to remind you one last time that I wanted to go to Richmond,” I hissed in Louis’ ear. He ignored me. Sometimes I wonder why I bothered.

Our first stop was in front of a Victorian styled house. “This is the Epsy house,” Sherlock started. I didn’t want to listen, but the rain had cleared the streets, so there wasn’t much else to hear. Louis drank the story in and people started snapping photos.

I’d just started to distract myself by reading the back of a man’s shirt when a bush next to me rustled a little. I’d already nearly jumped into Louis’ arms with a yelp when I realized the dark blob seeping out was a cat. The tour group laughed and a teenage girl tried coaxing it to her.

“Ah, and the most frightening beast of the house, Sheba the demon cat,” Sherlock said. “She enjoys pretending to be cute so people will feed her.” he turned back to the house despite losing the attention of over half the group. “Anyway, many people have seen Wesley Epsy in that breakfast room there. He’s quite a mystery, since when seen, he does this,” he put a finger to

B Templin

his lips in a shushing motion, “and whispers ‘be just.’”

“I’m going to have nightmares,” I groaned.

“About what, the ghost or the cat?” Louis snickered.

The night continued as such until we reached a large, rectangular building. It almost looked like a prison the way the windows were barred. Only the topmost window was open, a ghostly curtain blew in the cold breeze.

“This is Candler Hospital,” Sherlock told us with a wave of his umbrella. The group obediently raised their cameras. “In 1876 there was an outbreak of yellow fever. They didn’t have any cure at the time and buried all the bodies under the hospital.”

Everyone listened, engrossed, as he described the number of bodies, and ghosts, that lived around the hospital. As he took the group to a slightly lower area Louis grabbed my shoulder. “I swear,” I started. “If you’re trying to scare me—”

“No, just come here,” he started dragging me towards the entrance.

“Nope! I am not going in there. Louis quit it!” I tried planting my feet, but Louis merely had to take another step to drag me another few inches.

He turned to me with a frown. “Look, I thought I saw—I don’t know. I saw something and I want to check it out. Come on, Bran. Just five minutes.”

“Three,” I huffed and sulkily followed him in. That’s what friends are for, right? Following each other into dangerous, haunted places of death.

The door was surprisingly unlocked, but Sherlock had mentioned kids frequently breaking in. From the little light we let in it was pretty obvious they had. Graffiti littered the walls. The rest of the hall was dark and musty.

I sighed a little as Louis turned on his phone, “Now let’s go.”

“Two minutes,” I reminded him.

We headed up the first flight of stairs we found, which led to a wing of bedrooms. Louis peeked out the window, probably to judge where he was standing when he saw whatever-it-was. “Just a bit further.”

B Templin

Short Fiction

I glanced at my watch again as we went through some double doors and ran into Louis' back. He'd frozen to the spot. The doors had, too, except they were literally frozen.

"Louis," I choked, tugging on his jacket, "Let's get out of here!" Ice was sealing the doors closed and I doubted we'd live jumping out the windows. I shook him again in an attempt to get him to move.

Finally I followed Louis' gaze. Hovering in front of him was a half transparent gray woman. She had long silver hair and white eyes. Her gown was frazzled with age. Chains adorned her wrists.

I stumbled back and nearly fell over. Instead I hit the frozen doors. They didn't even budge. From what I could feel, they weren't going to open to anything less than a battering ram. I looked back to Louis and the woman as she finally moved.

Trembling, she raised a finger to her lips, gaze focusing on Louis. Louis' mouth opened and he whimpered. The woman's face contorted in rage and she flew through him. The room's temperature dropped, and Louis collapsed. His phone flickered out but it didn't leave me in the dark. The woman's form offered a bit of light.

She stared at his body then looked up at me. I shot past her, aiming for the opposite door. It was frozen too. I fumbled for the window latch, but it wouldn't budge. The hair on my neck stood up and I glanced over my shoulder. The woman was there, milky eyes filling my vision. My body froze. I couldn't even breathe. She raised a finger to her mouth and suddenly I could move mine.

For a moment my mind was overcome with panic. Would she fly through me, too? What did that even do? I hadn't had time to check if Louis was still alive. She continued to watch me expectantly. Her posture reminded me of Wesley Epsy.

I took a deep breath, looked straight at the lady and said, as calmly as

B Templin

Short Fiction

I could, "Be Just."

The ghost lowered her hand with a small smile and glided away. The air grew heavier and warmer. My clammy skin started to heat up. The ice on the door and windows dissipated and soon the only evidence the lady had been there was Louis' motionless form.

B Templin

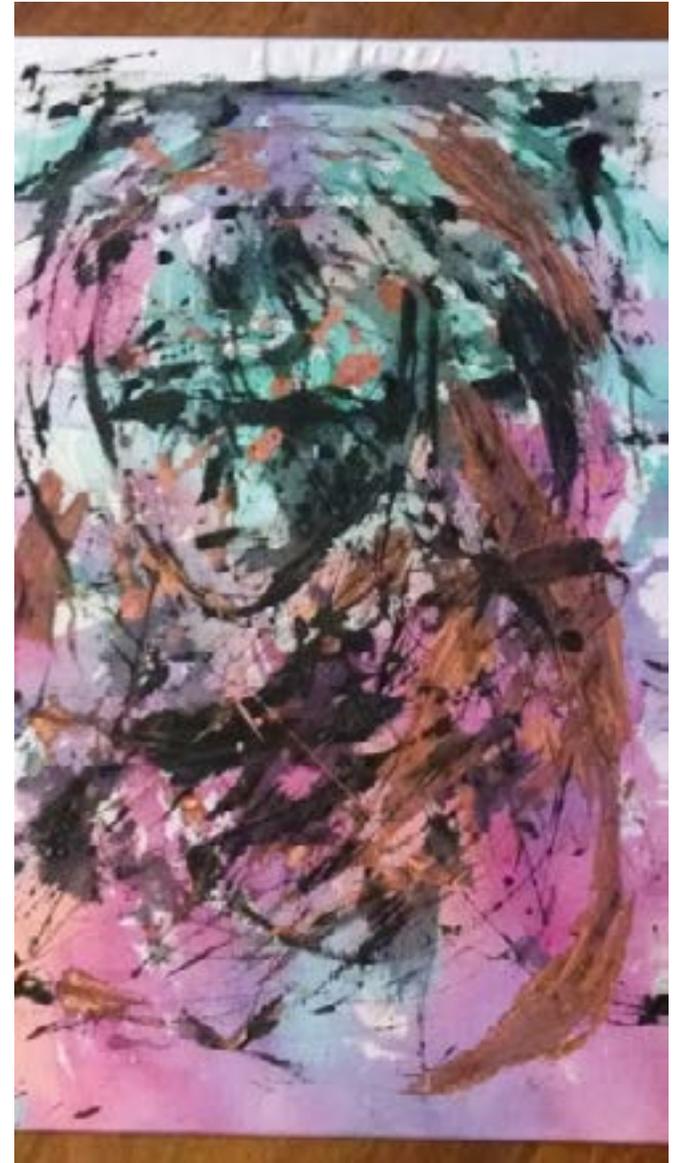
Photography

Cold Highways



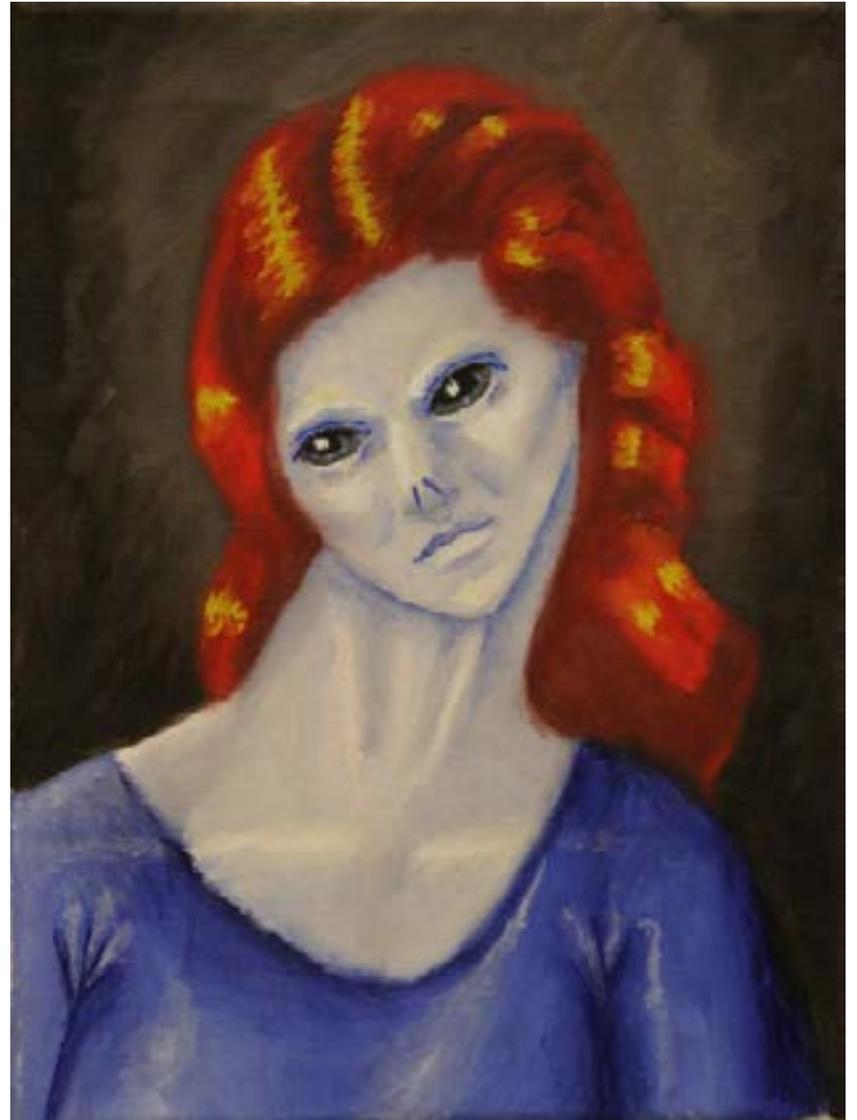
Painting

The Hidden Lady





Katrina Trujillo



Pedro U. Arrendondo

Note to Self

I see you there
in your summer finest:
the almost- too- tight one piece
with the faded rosebud embroidery.

You are wilting beneath the Texas sun,
splotch of white across your nose,
as your so-called friends snicker behind smug hands
because you thought, for once, you were included.

Your salt-thick eyes flicker between disgust and disbelief
as they turn away, tongues shrilling
about lifeguards and suntans
and virgin daiquiris.

I could warn you,
I could tell you about the heavy days that are coming.
The days that rip you open with gleeful hands
and every good thing you dare to claim
is pulverized beneath self-loathing
and a desperate need for preservation.

I could give you a chance to change
your mind a million times,
tell you "Listen to your mother,"
"Go ask him to forgive you,"

Arielle L. Reynolds

"Don't you dare kiss that boy,"
until each horrible moment that lies before you
is erased and you are left
untouched,
intact,
flawless.

But I won't.

I won't warn you because you need the hurt,
the strain of never good enough,
to understand the grace that comes with brokenness.

What sort of life springs from perfection?
Nothing learned, nothing gained,
perfection is a splendid game of pretend
and you would be the winner,
a depthless, hollow girl.

I won't do that to you.
I will not take away what makes you bold,
or fill you with false expectations of security
when the world does not deal in certainties.

So as you watch those girls walk away without you
Remember this:
You are going to be perfect because of them.

Arielle L. Reynolds

Photography

Pencil Drawing

Beauty

Miku



Alexandria Ramirez

Alonzo Hernandez

The Old Man

I saw an old man at the post office today,
 And I wondered where I knew him from.
 White haired, bespeckled, and stooped at the shoulder,
 He shuffled along with his granddaughter.
 We passed in the entrance hall,
 And we smiled at each other unknowingly.
 Queuing up my mind went through the list,
 Of chores that remained undone, they were many.
 Working through my plans for completing them,
 I was struck by a realization, it was Him.
 I turned for a second glance,
 Just to make sure I was correct.
 He was shuffling past the last window,
 Quietly listening to the animated speech of the child.
 But I was right it was in fact Him,
 he had been my step father once.
 My mind wondered back to those days long ago,
 When my mother and he were married.
 I tried to think of the things he had attempted to teach me,
 And all the time we had spent in the same home.
 I thought of the times he had scolded me for doing wrong,

And all the moments he had congratulated me on a success.
 These memories were long forgotten and hazy,
 They belonged to a time that I did not dwell on.
 My thoughts drifted to a time more recent,
 when I myself had become a stepfather.
 I pondered my experiences and feelings in both of these situations,
 The two sides of the same difficult coin.
 I felt sorry for the old man having walked in his shoes,
 I could see now that his position was not envious.
 But much like him I was no longer one,
 Who could be called stepfather.
 I was no longer bound by a marriage,
 to the sons I had raised.
 I saw an old man at the post office today,
 And I wondered if I would one day warrant a second glance.

Cone 10 Crawling Ox Blood Platter

Ceramics



Krista Murr

Negative Pencil Drawing

Negative Lion



Alonzo Hernandez

Photography

The Beginning of the End



Photography

Wishful Thinking



Magic Eight Ball

Suspended in a black, aquatic abyss,
 a shimmering white moon comes in and out of focus.
 I am shaken, often violently, by the world beyond my own.
 Voices whisper into my mind like crackling fires,
 and I am thrown into an underwater tempest.
 Rattled in a fit of urgency,
 while streams of bubbles tickle me inside,
 I am shaken senseless.
 Until finally,
 I am pressed against the glass surface.
 seeing only hands, and demanding faces.
 I mutter an inaudible answer,
 and whether or not this pleases them,
 downward I am plunged,
 deep into darkness again.
 I hit a bottom I only feel when all the shaking stops.
 Only then am I still,
 in my solitude.

I. A. Kisa

Learning From Hussar



Nayeli Medrano

Querido Amor Verdadero

Querido amor verdadero,

No sé dónde buscarte. Te pierdo en mis sueños y tengo miedo de nunca encontrarte. Te busco en todas partes- y en todas horas. Cuento los minutos que se hacen horas, días, meses, y años. Toda una eternidad. Y solo espero pacientemente obesionado(a). Y aun sin conocerte, te extraño.

Quiero ver tu lindo rostro y poder abrazarte y robarte un beso. Quiero verme entre tus ojos y saber que me amas a pesar de mi historia. Quiero contarte todos mis secretos, mis miedos, mis traumas. Quiero compartir mis triunfos y mis alegrías contigo. Quiero que seas mi amigo(a) en mi soledad, mi tranquilidad entre el bullicio de la vida, y mi motivación de amar.

Quiero tomarte de la mano y sentir que nos corre la sangre entre las venas. Quiero acariciarte y sentir tu fuego abrasador. Quiero besar tus labios suavemente y cerrar mis ojos y sentir como tu amor me transforma. Solo quiero amarte y nunca dejar de hacerlo.

Quiero que veas mi rostro y puedas abrazarme y robarme un beso. Quiero que te veas entre mis ojos y que sepas que te amo a pesar de tu historia. Quiero que me cuentes todos tus secretos, tus miedos, tus traumas. Quiero que compartas tus triunfos y tus alegrías conmigo. Quiero ser tu amigo(a) en tu soledad, tu tranquilidad entre el bullicio de la vida, y tu motivación de amar.

Quiero que me tomes de la mano y que sientas que me corre la sangre entre las venas. Quiero que me acaricies y sientas mi fuego abrasador. Quiero que me beses los labios suavemente y que cierres los ojos y sientas como mi amor te transforma. Solo quiero que me ames y nunca dejes de hacerlo.

Sinceramente,
Tu amor eterno

Abigail F. Ledesma

Dear true love,

I don't know where to find you. I lose you in my dreams and I am afraid of never finding you. I look for you everywhere- at every hour. I count the minutes that become hours, days, months, years, an eternity. And I only wait patiently obsessed. And even without knowing you, I miss you.

I want to see your beautiful face, be able to embrace you and steal you a kiss. I want to meet your eyes and know that you love me in spite of my history. I want to tell you all my secrets, my fears and traumas. I want to share my joys and triumphs with you. I want you to be my friend in my loneliness, my tranquility among the hustle and bustle of life, and my motivation to love.

I want to take you by the hand and feel our blood running through our veins. I want to caress you and feel your blazing fire. I want to kiss your lips gently, close my eyes and feel how your love transforms me. I just want to love you and never stop doing so.

I want you to see my face, to embrace me and to steal a kiss from me. I want you to meet my eyes and to know that I love you in spite of your history. I want you to tell me all your secrets, your fears and traumas. I want you to share your joys and triumphs with me. I want to be your friend in your loneliness, your tranquility among the hustle and bustle of life, and your motivation to love.

I want you to take me by the hand and for you to feel our blood running through our veins. I want you to caress me and feel my blazing fire. I want you to kiss my lips gently, close your eyes and feel how my love transforms you. I just want you to love me and never stop doing so.

Sincerely,
Your eternal love

Abigail F. Ledesma

Painting

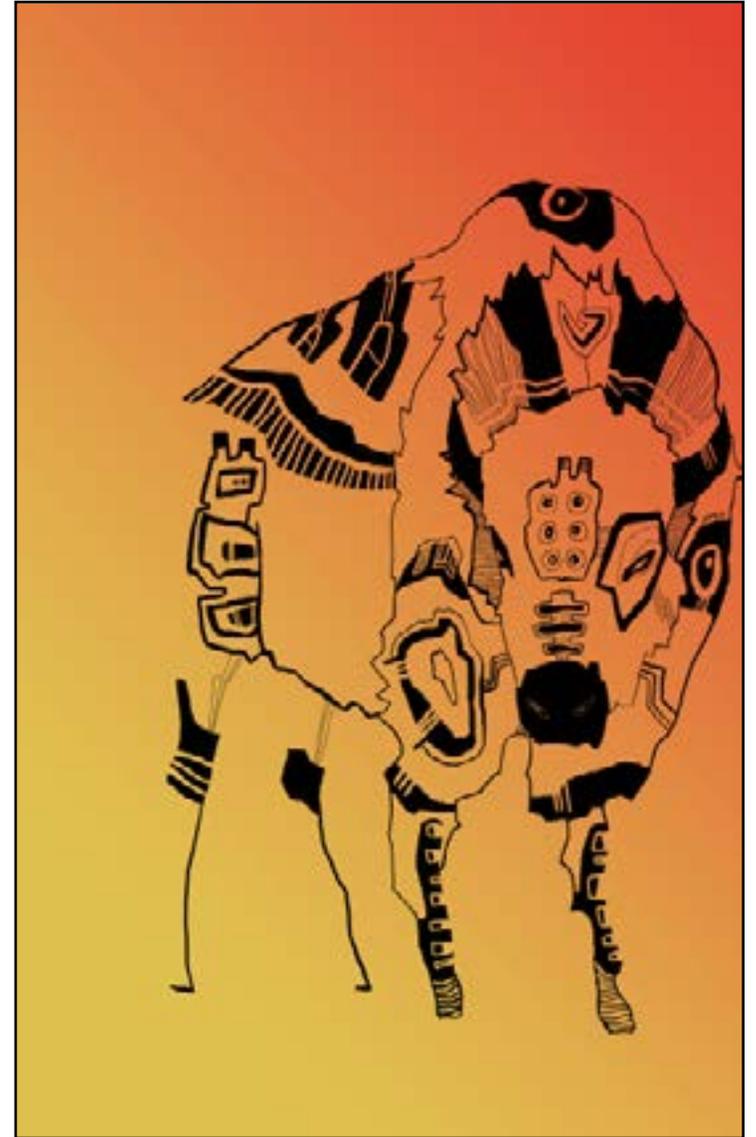
The Truth of War



Logan Brewer

Print

Honor Bull



Adrian Dominguez

Bloom

Drawing



Photography

Christina



Alexandria Ramirez

Melanie Trevino Tamez

My Sister's Green Face

When she was sixteen, I was twelve,
 And starting to get interested in boys,
 But they were only interested in her,
 The pretty one who didn't play with toys.

She believed, though I don't know how it occurred
 That I was somehow there to serve only her,
 Would you run me a bath? Bring me the razor?
 Whip up some egg whites so I can take a facial?

So I did.
 I ran the bath with cold water,
 Obediently brought her a bladeless razor
 And with food coloring, whipped up a frothy green facial.

"Oooooo—what is this?"
 "It's just food coloring," I said.
 "I think it's pretty." But inside,
 I was shaking my head.

She patted green goo all over her face.
 I watched, then explained,
 "I think I'll do this all the time...
 That is, if it doesn't stain."

Bonnie Kennedy

Horror flashed across the mirror.
 She rinsed her fingers. Green!
 She washed her face, but still there was
 A greenish tint that could be seen.

If I was mean through and through
 I would have waited 'til it dried.
 As it was, you could barely tell
 When she went out on her date that night.

It took a few days for the green to fade.
 She stopped asking me favors and that was great.
 It took a few years for me to realize
 The green face in the mirror was really mine.

Bonnie Kennedy

Drawing

London's Calling



Photography

Promise Me Another Day



Alexander C. Bryant

Shania DuBose

Peas in a Pod

Stoneware



Poetry

Hunting Dreams

Like a song my heart runs wild.
Chasing youth like an angry mother.
Children's demons roam the street,
Caressing wishes and terrible dreams.

Sunrise hides my night owl terror.
My head does fall on feather like pillows.
An angel above whispers to me
“ You've better wake up to hunt your dreams.”

My sword in hand I rush to the door.
Locked my future from outside,
Always trapped my beauty hides.
Arms of brick surround the door,
I'll never win my heart's galore.

My fate to age, accepted pay.
Minimum wage throughout my days.
Children laugh at my attempts,
To conquer the world with useless toys.

Rebecca Pierce

Kelsey Pippin

I Am Very Beautiful

My mother thinks that she's been fat her whole life.
 Tulips are her favorite flowers - they remind her of hope.
 Tell me mother, what can the blind see in dreams
 if their minds are too preoccupied with vision?
 In dreams, vision doesn't matter and I
 am a prettier version of myself.
 My name means "Lioness of God,"
 et je suis très belle, mais je suis aussi très laud.
 My fear comes in many shapes, but mostly
 the one called motherhood.
 I regret nothing because love is like burnt toast:
 all slathered in honey and tasting of smoke.

But Also Very Ugly

Hometown Beauty



Komodo Draggin'



Pedro U. Arredondo

I Saw a Wicked Thing

I saw a wicked thing,
and it glared back at me.
It saw me, eyes unsullied
yet it knew of my obscurity

I heard a wicked thing,
and it snarled at me.
It heard me, ears uncluttered
knowing well it made me shudder

I felt a wicked thing,
and it slashed through me .
It felt me, skin unscathed
yet it knew it marred me

I smelled a wicked thing,
and it stuck to me.
It smelled me, skin unscented
knowing well it lingered

I tasted a wicked thing,
and it burned sweetly.
It tasted me, savor unspoiled
yet it knew how rotten I was

Judith Gonzales

Saying Goodbye

Unfurl your wings and fly,
 Into the midnight sky.
 High above the heavens
 Where angels and birds do bide.
 Live in your dreams of faith,
 And never let them stray.
 For in your hand I place
 My heart of friendships grace.
 Do not look back when I'm gone.
 Just smile, nod, and carry on.
 I will watch you, be not afraid.
 I'm your shadows, shadow claim;
 I stand by you, when you're all alone.
 And make you smile when you're sad at home,
 Look to the heavens and the stars when you pray.
 And see the brightest star that day
 Where ever I am, I'll be looking too.
 And almost sitting right beside you
 I'll pray for all my friends to be;
 I'll pray all the time for thee.
 For you to be happy, and smile, and laugh
 Even when I'm not there;
 Our friendship will last.
 Through the harsh winters and rainy springs

Katrina Trujillo

We'll laugh and jump and leap with glee.
 Even when time has passed,
 I'll hold all the good times we've had.
 I'll remember all those times we've fought,
 And all those times when we almost broke apart.
 But you see like the mail that comes through the bleakest of days,
 In rain or shine or sleet and hail.
 We'll stick together no matter the trial
 We have each other, back and heart.
 Even when were miles apart.
 We'll keep this friendship no matter what.
 This is not a goodbye,
 This is just a hello.
 Until the next day I come by!

Katrina Trujillo

Restful Daydream



Melanie Trevino Tamez

Cast Away



Linette Castañeda

Karmapa ChennoCedar

My lowest point dangling off the tree.
 Deep down below, my roots are killing me.

Sprouted with life within the soil.

Tension with time, an unsprung coil.
 Growing darker with days ready to crack.
 My lifeless limbs are breaking my back.

Where once stood a crowded timber,
 a wooded club from once I remember.
 Long ago, but my neighbors grow slim.

My only savior the grass not so dim.

My stump staring in the sun,
 only unique by what nature has done.
 The glistening fear, reflecting morning dew.

Deep in my kindle I grow brand new.

Hidden inside, secluded in the dark.

A fresh new cut behind dead bark.

It was a good year, a good year for rain.

My sprouts took in more life than pain.

It's too late, too late for me.

I'm destined to live.

A good ole dead tree.

The Dragon

In the simmering light before the black abyss
 A fiery demon kisses the dark like a long missed lover
 The glinting of her emerald eyes glow low in the mountainside
 Her glittering red scales quiver in the coolness like a shower of silk upon
 skin
 Her quick warm breath thickens as the horizon swallows up the remain-
 ing life of day
 Her monstrous wings fill the sky as she roars to life
 Cloaked by the sparkling night, she raced onward
 Releasing her angst with the beating of her wings
 Excitement pumped through her veins
 Smoke curled around her vicious snout
 Quickening the pace, she hurled herself into the welcoming abyss
 Losing herself, she cried orange dangerous waves
 They rolled into the night, daring any creature to rise against this ferocity
 She basked in all her glory
 Nothing could stop her
 She dived along the skyline
 Capturing the night

Ashton Secundino

Rodeo

Dirt flung in the air
 From the hooves of
 A horse bucking with
 Wild eyes.
 Hard seats
 Sunday's best
 Babies in boots upon
 Mothers' chests
 Cows upon thighs
 Thighs upon bulls
 Art of the rope
 Rope 'round the neck
 A twisted one at that
 Broken collar bone
 Fractured hand
 Highest ranked prince
 In all of the land
 Take that broken body
 To the bank
 This is our Colosseum
 Christians thrown to the bulls
 Giant gold belt buckle
 Day out of school

Lacy Neuwirth

Mixtape

Unconditional Strength



The Castoff House

His house was rambling thrown together affair, with many oddly placed rooms and 17 doors. This house had been built back in the early 1930's and then added on to innumerable times over the years. Originally the house was built in stone but many of the additions were not. Some were very old Cedar board and batten and the most recent additions were fading Masonite. This gave the house a rather mottled outside appearance. On the inside some of the exterior stone walls had become interior walls adding to the strange appearance of the house.

The house was filled with the remnants of other households. When old family members would pass the unused or unclaimed household items and old furniture would be brought to the house. This was much cheaper than putting the dusty boxes into a storage unit. All past eras of style and popular taste were represented in the odd mish mash of furniture and fixtures.

The resident was a quiet man of the age that most people call middle. He was unexceptional and unobtrusive. His best quality seemed to be that he could be easily overlooked. He lived a predictable routine in this strange old house. Often the ladies of the neighborhood taking an evening walk would see him sitting at his table in the big picture window watching the sunset. They would wave in that obligatory way and he would feel compelled to wave back.

The resident was allowed to move into the house long ago when he did not have anywhere else to go. His kindly aunt had taken pity on him and given him the keys to the old family home on the condition that he take care and maintain the lawn. This was so the aunt would not need to pay a local landscape company to keep the weeds within the cities height requirement. However, he was good with his hands and soon breathed life back into the

Wesley B. Tinney

house.

It was on the first night he spent in the house that the first ghost had come to him. He woke to find a man standing in front of a large picture window looking far into the distance. The man was dressed in Victorian era clothes with a walking cane and tall top hat in hand. The man looked long out the window unflinching, then with no rush at all he fished a pocket watch out of a vest pocket and checked the time. With a snap of the lid he turned on his heel and strode across the room exiting through the middle of a wall where no door had ever existed or will ever exist. He stared at the wall for a few moments and then rolled over and promptly fell asleep.

Weeks later he asked one of his sisters if they had ever seen a ghost in this house or in any other. She claimed that ghost don't exists. She was very religious and felt that ghost were not the souls of dead people. He changed the subject. For him religion was a recollection from his childhood, a memory of a felling. Unlike his sisters who very faithful, he had never had faith in much of anything. Nevertheless, his sister continued to pester him to be better than he was, as his brother wished him to become worse than he was. For him, he simply was.

Over the years he would see many more ghost throughout the old house. Sometimes he would startle and jump at their sudden appearance. At other times he would ignore them completely. He had begun to notice that the ghost did not seem to want anything from him. He found this reassuring because he was not sure what to make of them and the thought of having to divine purpose for their appearance made him queasy. The ghost did not seem to wish for any sort of commutation, they simply moved through the house. Or perhaps they were drawn to the house for some unknown reason.

He never saw any ghost that he recognized although he often wished he could. A visit by a favorite aunt or uncle or from his beloved grandfather appealed to him very much. He would sometimes think about a particular

Wesley B. Tinney

Short Story

ghost. Many stood out from the others. The little old woman with the warm shining eyes and paper thin skin or the man with the muddy boots and wide brimmed cowboy hat. He would wonder about the family that they had left behind. Likewise he would wonder why the ghost did not appear to those family members. This of course led to the thought that perhaps they could not. Perhaps the ghost were not allowed to appear where they wished. And why did he see them? Was he meant too?

In the beginning he had looked into the history of the house to discern if any of the ghost were somehow related to the property. Other than a lucky near miss by a huge tornado that destroyed much of this end of town late in 1954, the history was unexceptional. Although a two deaths had occurred in the home neither of these seemed to be any of the ghost he saw. He looked into the recent death records in an attempt to find a face he had seen and to trace a pattern in their appearance. He found none and soon gave up the endeavor. To him the ghosts were as random as strangers in a train station.

The snow was gently falling on the landscape though the big picture window. Again he sat at the kitchen table with his cup of Earl Grey, spiced with honey, lemon and liberal amounts of bourbon. He felt the warmth rising in his chest and blossoming in his cheeks. His mind wandered over the years roaming from hope and regret to love and loss. Despite his affinity for liquor he maintained an incredibly sharp memory. He was halfway through one of his favorite memories when he noticed her.

She stood near the little gas space heater as if to warm herself. She stood with her back to the window taking no more notice of the snow. He slowly moved his eyes in her direction without moving his head. He had come to the decision not stare when he saw them, he felt that it was somehow rude to intrude into the moments when they appeared. She was shabbily dressed in ill-fitting dirty clothes. She seemed young and alone, and yet her eyes were hard. It startled him when she turned these hard eyes on him. He was sure

Wesley B. Tinney

Short Story

that she could see him and he quickly averted his gaze. After another sip from his steaming mug he shifted his eyes in her direction to find that she was already gone. He shivered despite the liquor.

In bed that night he thought about the girl. He suddenly had the thought that she must have been one of the homeless that the recent cold snap had killed. Guilt at his good fortune washed over him. In similar circumstances it could have been him out on the streets instead of in this old house full of unwanted possessions. With this thought in his head he fell into a final uneasy sleep.

He found himself in the dining room in front of the big picture window. He stood next to the table without remembering how he got there. Glancing out the window he noticed that the snow had all melted and even the grass was beginning to leaf out. He heard the front door open and the measured steps cross the great room. He turned to see his sister slowly open the glass door and step up into the room. She slowly cast her red rimmed eyes over the room. He smiled at her but she took no notice. Instead she took two quick steps and sank into his favorite chair. She stared blankly out the window. He turned and stared out the window with her. After a moment to soak in the view of the world thru the window he turned and strode across the room exiting through the middle of a wall where no door had ever existed or will ever exist.

Wesley B. Tinney

The Scroodle

Anne Marie made a doodle
of a little scroodle
it had big oops
with dangling snoops
bright green umps
with smallish snumps
she drew its lovely snoons
she drew its big floons
it had the loveliest snizzle
and the oddest bizzle
she drew its purple flun
then she said it was done
with a large expanding grin
she named him Engelbert Fin

White Tiger



Death's Gift

A black rose I give to you,
 The thorns all pulled and sweet for you.
 It's held within my skeleton grasp,
 Outstretched for your immortal hand.
 Come take this offered gift to you,
 I hold the rose to give to you.
 Its dew slicked petals dark and black,
 Its leaves so green to match your soulful depths.
 As the night slowly rolls by,
 I stand by your side, gift in hand.
 An ever watchful guide,
 Here to lead you to the afterlife.
 A black rose I give to you,
 The last gift of life for you.
 Come with me, I plead of you,
 Come with me, I wish of you.
 Let me guide you through the light,
 Fear me not, I bring no strife.
 I guide you as a shooting star,
 Over the hills to the horizon far.
 I bid you do not fear the reaper.
 A black rose I give to you,
 I plucked the thorns and tied a white ribbon on for you.
 Do not fear I,
 For I will not leave you until it is time.
 I'm here to guide you,

Katrina Trujillo

My dear, so take the rose, my gift
 And lend me your immortal hand
 And I will guide you to the gates.
 Where, soon to come
 You'll be reunited with all those you've loved.
 And soon you too will start to live.
 An angel among the stars
 A black rose I give to you.

Katrina Trujillo

Dad

Onto your face I look with great despair.
I see your name carved into the bright brass,
Even in the square frame, behind the glass
Your eyes hold that certain delightful flare.
That same strong fire passed onto my same stare.
My heart still lies on that fatal impasse.
Eight years empty has been that cold hourglass.
“I’m always here,” to me you did once swear.

But the sun still shines around your bright name.
The place you have gone is ever better,
And the pain I felt is now overcome.
I still sometimes read your lunchbox letter,
Through it I still feel your ever bright flame.
You are not gone, my heart your place setter.

Love of my Life

Going Back to School

I come to class and sit
 with the wall and my youth behind me.
 Before me, the twenty-somethings sit
 Facing the professor and their futures.
 He is giving us tools we can use to expand,
 Building a doorway to change.
 But one thing the years have taught me; when remodeling,
 Be careful you don't knock down a load-bearing wall.

Bonnie Kennedy

Carnival

A dirty stuffed zebra
 Surrounded by cigarette butts
 The white stripes not white anymore
 From a journey of too many miles
 Five dollars a throw
 Mom, can I play?
 Not today sweet child.
 Bodies bump against shoulders
 Short skirts and brown boots
 Rhinestones and denim
 The smell of old grease
 And cooked meat
 Manure and hay
 An off-balance cowboy
 With one on the way
 The bright lights amidst the stars
 Machines turning high in the night sky
 Screams of all pitches
 Tunes of fun times like an
 Old lullaby

Lacy Neuwirth

Dr. Robertson's Confusion

Dr. Robertson ducked behind a hastily parked car which had one wheel up on the pavement, its bonnet embedded in a metallic red fire hydrant. He crouched low so as not to be given an involuntary shower from the broken hydrant. Peering through the windscreen glass, he saw what looked like a deranged woman sprinting after a man in a pair of ripped jeans, only to decide he was no longer worth the chase and run with the same speed into an alleyway which opened on her right. The sound of sirens mixed with screaming filled the doctor's head. What the fuck is going on?

A relatively large 4x4 mounted the pavement on the opposite side of the road to Dr. Robertson, weaving in and out of a succession of parked cars. The drivers' head whacked against the dashboard as he was forced to suddenly brake when a 2 door red car sped past the perpendicular road of the crossroads. The engine cut out and the passenger door opened.

"Damn psycho!" Came the shout from a bearded, long haired man in a leather jacket.

He walked around the side of the car and opened the driver's side door helping his companion climb out of the car. Dressed in similar attire to the first man, Dr. Robertson could make out the colored patch embodied on the back of their jackets: "AA". Atlanta Angels. These men were part of a motorbike gang.

The doctor stood up from his place of hiding.

"Hey. Hey!" The men heard his second call. "Can you guys help me? What's happening?"

"Don't come near us! Zach get in the car!"

The man who had just got out of the driver's side looked up at his partner. He seemed dazed, trickles of blood coming from a gash in his head.

"OK."

Dr. Robertson felt no need to heed his warnings, a fresh set of screams in the distance stopping him briefly before he continued to walk toward the 4x4. When he came to around four meters from the car the situation became serious.

"Get the fuck away from the car! One more step and you won't be able to take another." The motorbike rider's right hand dipped inside his pocket momentarily and when it emerged with it came a chrome black pistol.

Liam Johnston

"Woah, woah. Don't shoot!" He took a step back.

There was a certain look in the biker's eye: a look of desperation that the doctor had seen before.

"I just don't understand what's going on. Can you help me?"

"Help you? No. Just understand that the world has gone to hell. You know that 'virus' from the middle east that was one hundred percent not getting here? It's here."

Holding the pistol in one hand, still aimed at the doctor, the burly man climbed into the driver's side of the vehicle, shut the door and drove off. Shouting advice from the open window:

"Find a weapon and listen to the radio!"

Minutes after the 4x4 rounded the corner, the cause of some of the sirens flew past the intersection in the same direction: a fire truck. The crew was heading toward billowing smoke that was coming from a building in the center of town. A smashing sound made Dr. Robertson lift his head. A man holding something dark emerged on a first story window of the apartment block on the left side of the street.

"Get back!"

Dr. Robertson ducked, anticipating another gun being pulled out on him; he laid waiting for shouted instructions from the man.

Mike took his first step out onto the window ledge. Time running against him, it was impossible to be cautious, he had to act and act quickly. A woman attempted to come after him, but stumbled on upturned furniture, becoming caught on the leg of a chair.

"Cass, stop!" She didn't seem to listen. She didn't even seem to hear him, he thought.

The rash blockade the woman had been hindered by didn't last long, she made again for Mike. He forced his second foot out onto the window ledge. It was a big drop. Cass looked feral, intent on getting to him no matter what the cost. She made a dive at Mike, the metal chair still clinging to her leg, she face planted onto the wooden floor with a clunk. Mike took his opportunity and threw the mug he had in his right hand directly at her. It's design: the words perfect boyfriend in an oddly shaped heart. As she pushed herself up from the floor the mug smashed across her forehead, she didn't even flinch. Utterly taken aback, Mike slammed the window shut after him, standing precariously on the outside edge of the building. Peering over the edge, blood rushed to his head - vertigo.

Still in his ducked position, Dr. Robertson had heard another shout and a smash. The words had been inaudible, but he was taking no chances if this was another crazed gun-

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Short Story

man, he may not be so lucky this time. The smash had been followed by relentless thumping. Thumping which was still going on. Dr. Robertson thought over his options, the man had already seen him so maybe he should reply to his shouts. Then again maybe he had been shouting at someone else, or the man may even be trying to help him. After a minute of thinking Dr. Robertson's curiosity was fulfilled. He stood slowly; ready to duck again at the first sign of hostilities, but none came. The man was now completely out of the building balancing on the window ledge. He spotted the source of the pounding. A dark figure stood inside the building and was repeatedly beating on the window. As if she was trying to get outside with the man, but was unable to open the window herself. The man spotted Dr. Robertson.

"Hey! Can you help me get down from here? My girlfriend is going crazy inside."
"It seems everyone is now! Do you have any idea what's going on?"
"I have no idea. I was hoping you could fill me in."
"We can talk when you get down. Maybe try to jump to the fire escape?"
"It's way too far, maybe I could..."

The man was cut short as a shattering of glass sounded behind him and a bleeding hand writhed on the other side of the window, his side. Before he could jump in fright the hand grabbed his dark boot and the figure tried to pull it towards her. He kicked in an attempt to release the grip of the hand. His kick successful, the writhing hand let go of his boot after being slammed against the outside wall of the building. Simultaneously, however, the man lost his footing and slipped off the edge that was once his sanctuary. His hands flailed as his body scraped against the window ledge, falling rapidly toward the concrete pavement.

On the journey down the man's right hand caught the ledge of the first floor window directly below his. He halted briefly in the air as the momentum behind him twisted his body forcing his back to slam against the wall. This slam was too much for his body to handle, causing him to lose his grip on the ledge and he once again fell, this time landing with an audible crunch on the concrete.

As soon as he landed his screaming began and Dr. Robertson ran over to him. Screams of pain similar to the ones he had heard earlier echoed in the mind of the doctor. As he came nearer to Mike, his mind, predisposed to medicine, began to automatically assess the situation. Initially it had appeared as if the man had gotten lucky, but as he arrived at the scene it became apparent that the biggest issue was the man's left arm, the shoulder jutted out awkwardly and he was cradling his wrist carefully, moaning in pain. Dr. Robert-

Liam Johnston

Short Story

son knelt down, removed his backpack and rummaged around inside until he found what he was looking for. He pulled out a long, thin needle, pumped to force a small volume of clear liquid out to ensure it was in working order.

"Do you have any allergies?"

"Dogs", he whined through the pain.

Dr. Robertson grabbed the man's forearm tight and inserted the needle into the skin, pushing the plunger until it stopped.

"What was that?"

"Hydrocodone, for the pain"

Pulling out the needle quickly, Dr. Robertson gripped his right hand tightly on the side of the man's neck, and pulled his arm down with his left hand, popping his shoulder back into the place as the man let out a yell.

"We need to get you to the hospital"

"We need to bring my girlfriend with us; she's acting like one of those... things."

"What things?"

"Those people from the news, the people attacking everyone, the people..." He stammered, unable to finish his words.

"Don't worry, we'll get her something from the hospital."

"No. I won't leave h-"

The man's words were cut off as they heard a shriek from behind them. Out of an alley ran an evidently tired middle aged man dressed in nothing more than a pair of boxer briefs, wielding a New York Yankee's baseball bat.

"Get away from me!" He yelled.

Almost as soon as he'd reached the road from the alley came two people chasing after him at a fast jog – the source of the shrieking. The closer of the pursuers made a leap toward the almost naked man and almost made contact with his torso. The man turned and made two swings with his bat. The first of the two was a wild miss and seemed to encourage the assailant even more. However, the second swing connected clean in the head. Dr. Robertson had just witnessed a murder.

"We need to call 911" exclaimed the doctor.

Dr. Robertson pulled out his cell phone and quickly dialed the 3 digit number phone number.

"I'm sorry, but emergency services are currently preoccupied. Please try again".

Another try. The baseball wielding maniac had just climbed on the hood of a

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parked car.

“I’m sorry, but emergency services are currently preoccupied. Please try again.”

“Argh what is wrong with this damn-”

Before he could even finish his sentence the doctor stopped in shock. The man was attempting to swing the bat at the second person who had followed him out from the alley. However, this is not what had caught his attention. The person who had taken direct contact with the bat to the head had gotten back on their feet and was once again lunging, trying to grab at the man atop the car alongside their apparent accomplice.

“I’m sorry, but emergency services are currently preoccupied. Please try again”.

Amidst all the confusion the injured man had moved away from Dr. Robertson and was sliding open a garage door built directly underneath the apartment.

“We need to help him!” He exclaimed, gesturing for Dr. Robertson to get into the driver’s side of the car.

As the doctor opened the driver’s door and clambered inside the man explained what had happened inside with his girlfriend.

“I don’t understand what’s happening, but if it’s anything like what happened up there we need to help him out ASAP.” He said, pointing up to his apartment. “I’m Mike by the way.”

“I’m Ad... erm Aaron”. The doctor held back on giving his real name.

Dr. Robertson started the car and pulled out onto the street. As the blue Volkswagen approached the scene the man was now on the main roof of the car, still swinging at the two attackers, one of whom had climbed onto the hood of the car and the other, who had originally been hit, was on the ground reaching up at him, and missing an eye socket.

“What the hell”. Both Mike and Dr. Robertson said this in unison.

As they pulled up in the car they both shouted at the two attackers to stop, and as they turned around the man in his underwear took his chance and swung at the man on the hood of the car, knocking him clean off and in between his car and Mike’s. However, in doing so, he lost his footing and fell off the side of the car, landing with a crunch. The assailant with the missing eye socket instantly turned and lunged at the man, biting a bloody chunk out of his neck, just as the other attacker climbed back to their feet.

“Drive! Drive! Drive!”

Dr. Robertson stepped on the accelerator and drove off from the screaming man, no longer representing the New York Yankees. What on earth was going on?

Dr. Robertson and Mike tore off toward the hospital, with the two deranged people attempt-

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ing to chase after them, before becoming preoccupied by something unbeknownst to the two men and turning down another alleyway. Dr. Robertson glanced in the rear view mirror and was met by a sight which he couldn’t believe: the man who had just had his jugular torn out of his throat was climbing to his feet, fresh blood still dripping down his hairy chest.

“He... He’s getting up”.

“What?” Mike asked.

“Look... Back at...” Dr. Robertson couldn’t finish his sentence, he just pointed.

“We really need to find out what’s going on”, was all Mike could reply.

The journey to the hospital wasn’t a long one, maybe around 10 minutes on a normal day, with traffic. But this wasn’t a normal day. Dr. Robertson weaved through a series of parked cars and other obstacles, including a fallen streetlight. Every now and then there would be pools of blood on the road, and sometimes uncoordinated bloody footsteps leading away from said blood pools.

The two men came to their first red light at a crossroads and Dr. Robertson held the car to a halt. The light was taking forever. The sound of sirens still going on was overcome by the sound of a car engine growing steadily louder. A truck pulled onto the road directly in front of them from a side street, barely making the turn as they swerved. They drove heading straight toward Mike and the doctor, seemingly oblivious to the red light. The truck fired straight through the red light just as a car was coming from the side of the crossroads with the green light. The car slammed on its breaks as the truck swerved around it, Dr. Robertson forced the Volkswagen back into drive and swerved to his right just as the truck skimmed off the side of their car, taking the left rear view mirror with it. The truck, trying to brake, piled straight into the concrete wall of a sandwich shop.

“Woah”.

From all the commotion came more shrieking, similar to the noise they had both heard earlier with the man with the baseball bat. A woman emerged and began to chase the car that had had to slam its brakes on, she was covered in blood.

The car took off, just as the lights turned green for Mike and the doctor.

Liam Johnston

The Pill

The man stumbled into the dim hotel room. His chest was heaving, and his eyes were bloodshot. The gray hairs on his balding head were thick with sweat. He had to escape. He had to be free.

10 hours before, a letter had arrived on the man's doorstep early in the morning.

"Run," the letter read. "Hide. I am coming after you, and I am going to kill you. Anyone you come into contact with between now and the time of your death, I will also kill. Spare your friends and family their lives. You have been warned."

Since that morning, the man had been running all over the city, looking for a place to conceal himself. It was now late at night, and the men at the hotel whispered to each other as the man had come running in, begging for a room as quickly as possible.

Inside his hotel room, the man panicked. His soaked clothes made his skin feel heavy. His head throbbed from a thousand fearsome migraines.

The man shut his blinds. He locked the door to his room in as many ways as he possibly could. A knock on the door made the man jump.

"No!" he screamed. "Go away! Save yourselves!"

The man washed his face in the room's sink, but his trembling hands could not even pick up the towel to dry off the icy water.

The man ran to the bed, but before he could lie down to catch his breath, his terrified mind was clouded with confusion as he stared at the plate lying in front of the pillows.

On the transparent, glass plate, there laid a clear, red pill that reminded the man of a liquid jelly.

"What?" the man panted to himself. "What? What, what, what?"

Steven McKeown

Next to the plate there was a small, handwritten note. Picking up the piece of paper, the man read its contents aloud.

"Dear man," the letter began, "I know there is someone out there trying to kill you. He will torture you, and then murder you in horrific ways that are too graphic for you to possibly imagine. On this plate lies your way out. It is known as the Escape Pill. However, most users refer to it as the "death pill." Either way, its purpose is to kill you slowly but painlessly so you will not have to endure the killer's pain he hopes to inflict on you. Take it, and you will be free."

The letter ended with, "Sincerely, Angel Fallon."

The man, holding the note in his right hand, glanced down at the red pill. He could take it, he thought, and end all of his suffering. He could, as the letter suggested, escape from his worst nightmare.

Another knock at the door forced the man to make his decision quickly. He ran to the bathroom and quickly filled up a glass of water. Back at the bed, the man picked up the red pill with his left hand as he held the glass of icy water with his right.

"Help me," the man panted to himself, and he opened up his mouth and prepared to drop in the little red pill.

The man's suicide attempt came to a halt when something that sounded like a cold wind echoed from behind him. Startled, the man turned around only to see a shadowy figure standing by the windows, which were no longer blinded and now open.

It was the killer. The man knew it. He was too late.

"Please!" shouted the man. "I don't know what you want, I don't know what I did, but you don't have to kill me!"

"I don't want to kill you," said the figure in a surprisingly calm voice. "Throw the pill away."

"Why?" cried the man. "So you can torture me? So you can kill me?"

Steven McKeown

Short Story

So you can crucify me and spill my blood? Why!”

The shadowy figure protested.

“I will not torture you. I will not kill you. I will not crucify you.

Dispose of the pill, and the one who is out to kill you will no longer be in your life.”

“I don’t understand,” said the man. “How can I trust you? How do I know you’re not lying to me?”

“Does your trust lie more with me or the one whose hands wrote you that letter?”

“I...I...” fumbled the man. “I don’t know.”

“Dispose of the pill. And you will be free.”

The man’s eyes glanced from the pill to the glass of water and then to the letter. He dwelled on the option for a few seconds. Sweat rolled into his outstretched eyes. His fingers trembled and his veins pounded. The air in the room seemed to be thinning.

Finally, in a matter of seconds, the man gulped down the water in his right hand and then threw the little red pill away in the trash bin by the desk.

The man heard the word “free” whisper across the room, but when he turned back towards the windows, the shadowy figure had vanished. The man’s eyes closed. His teeth loosened their grip. His trembling hands went still.

The man then proceeded to leave the hotel room, which was room 18 on the 13th floor of the Revel Hotel. He walked outside of the building and onto the dark streets, with the killer out of site, and out of mind.

Steven McKeown

Poetry

Going Back to School

I come to class and sit

with the wall and my youth behind me.

Before me, the twenty-somethings sit

Facing the professor and their futures.

He is giving us tools we can use to expand,

Building a doorway to change.

But one thing the years have taught me; when remodeling,

Be careful you don’t knock down a load-bearing wall.

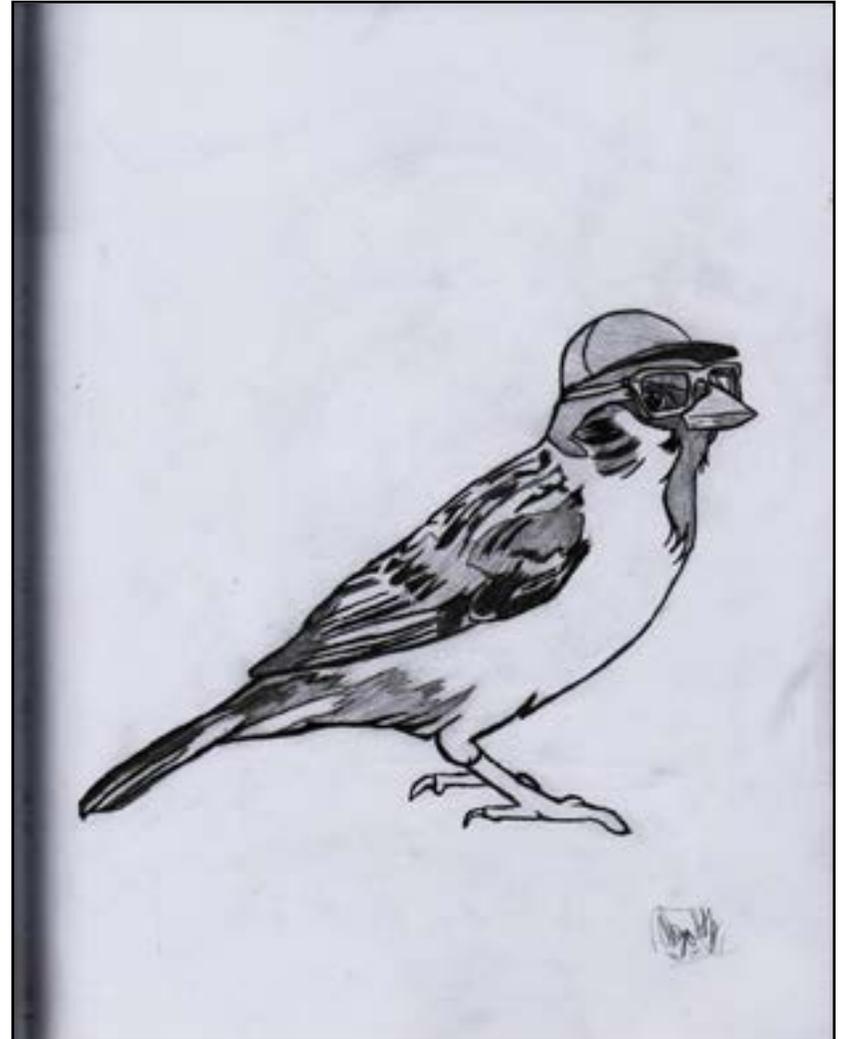
Bonnie Kennedy

Gothic Simpson



Alexander C. Bryant

Nerdy Birdy



Alonzo Hernandez

Listen

When I was small
 my mother took me
 to hear the stars.
 She walked me to the center
 of our hay meadow,
 told me to close my eyes—
 Listen.

Listen to the sounds
 horses make when they dream,
 to the whistle chk
 of the whooperwills
 in the fencerow.

Listen to the coyotes sing far off,
 answering a train further off.

Listen to the sound the stars make
 when they hang so low,
 they bump into
 one another.

Listen to the music of their
 midnight apologies
 for hanging too near the earth-
 for crowding the sky.

Jenni DeBie

She did not tell me to open my eyes,
 look up at the sky.
 We stood there until long after the moon
 crested the treeline—
 Listening.

Jenni DeBie

WORKS CITED

Convergence Through Christ: Understanding Flannery O'Connor's
Religious Intent in "Everything That Rises Must Converge"

by Leah Rappé

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On behalf of the student editors and myself, I hope that you truly enjoy the the 2015 edition of the *Oasis* Art and Literary Magazine.

Warmly,
Rachel Riggs
General Editor

Oasis is an annual literary and artistic magazine edited by ASU students and published by the Department of English and Modern Languages.

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