

eleven40seven



TCU Journal of the Arts

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VOLUME 9.1

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kairos *καίρος*

(n.) /kīräs/

the perfect, delicate, crucial moment; the fleeting rightness of time and place that creates the opportune atmosphere for action, words, or movement; also, weather.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

One of the things almost every Editor-in-Chief seems to write about is how different every issue is from the previous ones. In a way, I agree. We have always moved towards innovation and originality, so we are prone to change; but that essence is what makes all the issues the same, and it is what makes eleven⁴⁰seven the exceptional journal that it is. Unlike most of my predecessors though, I won't focus on how different this issue is from its previous ones. Instead, I'll warn you that it is, by far, the most "controversial" one.

I promise that we didn't do it on purpose. We didn't scroll through the submissions and pick the works we knew would cause rage in some audiences. We simply didn't make the pieces' controversy a decisive factor in our choices. Otherwise, our purpose to support the Arts at TCU would be somewhat meaningless.

The Banksy quote at the end of this issue is fully intentional though. It is not meant to insult or slap anyone in the face (unless it's slapping them with creativity). It is meant to provoke an action, to create, to step out of your comfort zone, and to open your mind to other possibilities.

Another reason why we choose to have Banksy's [uncensored] words of wisdom is because it represents the issue's wide range of content and the originality of the work. We haven't stopped publishing serious works such as "Always Winter" or "Our Cosmic Address", but we also have works on the zombie apocalypse and how to write a poem. We have family friendly works like "Inside Story" but also more "controversial" pieces like "Fingering Her". We even have a poem about a submitter's underwear.

Overall, we have gathered a great variety of pieces that represent the creative TCU [undergraduate] student body to the best of our ability and that, I believe, is the best way to celebrate the Arts in this community. I hope that when you begin to flip the pages of this issue, you too will enjoy the works we have compiled and inspire yourself to continue your artistic path, regardless of the possibility of being rejected. Art is subjective. If it weren't, it wouldn't be Art.

So take a deep breath and submerge yourself into the 9.1 issue. I promise it will, at the very least, give you something to talk about with your peers.

-Alejandra Rodriguez Creixell

A SPOON FULL OF ASHES

TRIP STARKEY

I am a meadow
of coffins. A river
of bluegill canyon
my gut. Gnaw at rasp –
berry hangnails
peeling from my beer –
soaked fingers.
Ripples of crystal
tear the roof
from my mouth.

One day they'll bury
me in a shoebox,
lined with alligator
skin. They'll lower me
into a mountain stream,
clothed in radio –
active denim. Float me
along the rhythm of night.

If you see my teeth,
tell them I'm lonely.
Tell them I am waiting
at the bottom of a well
filled with cockroaches,
clutching a milk carton.
The smell of baking soda
cascading from my brow.

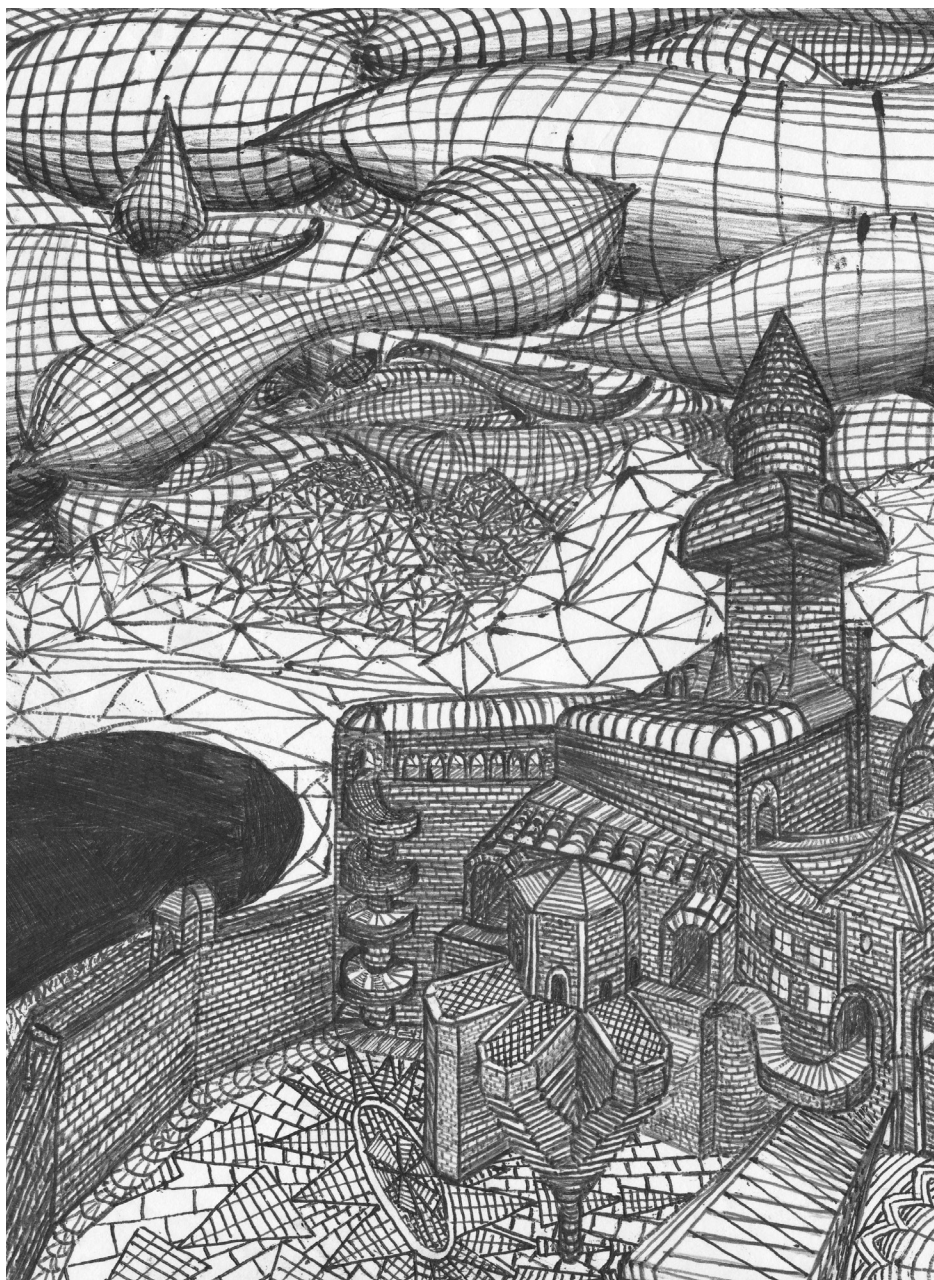
When the night birds
come looking for me,
tell them I went out
to the corner store.
Microwave my lungs
in a trash bag. Cover
my eyes with stone.
Nail my toes to a jar
of pickles marinating
the midsummer air.

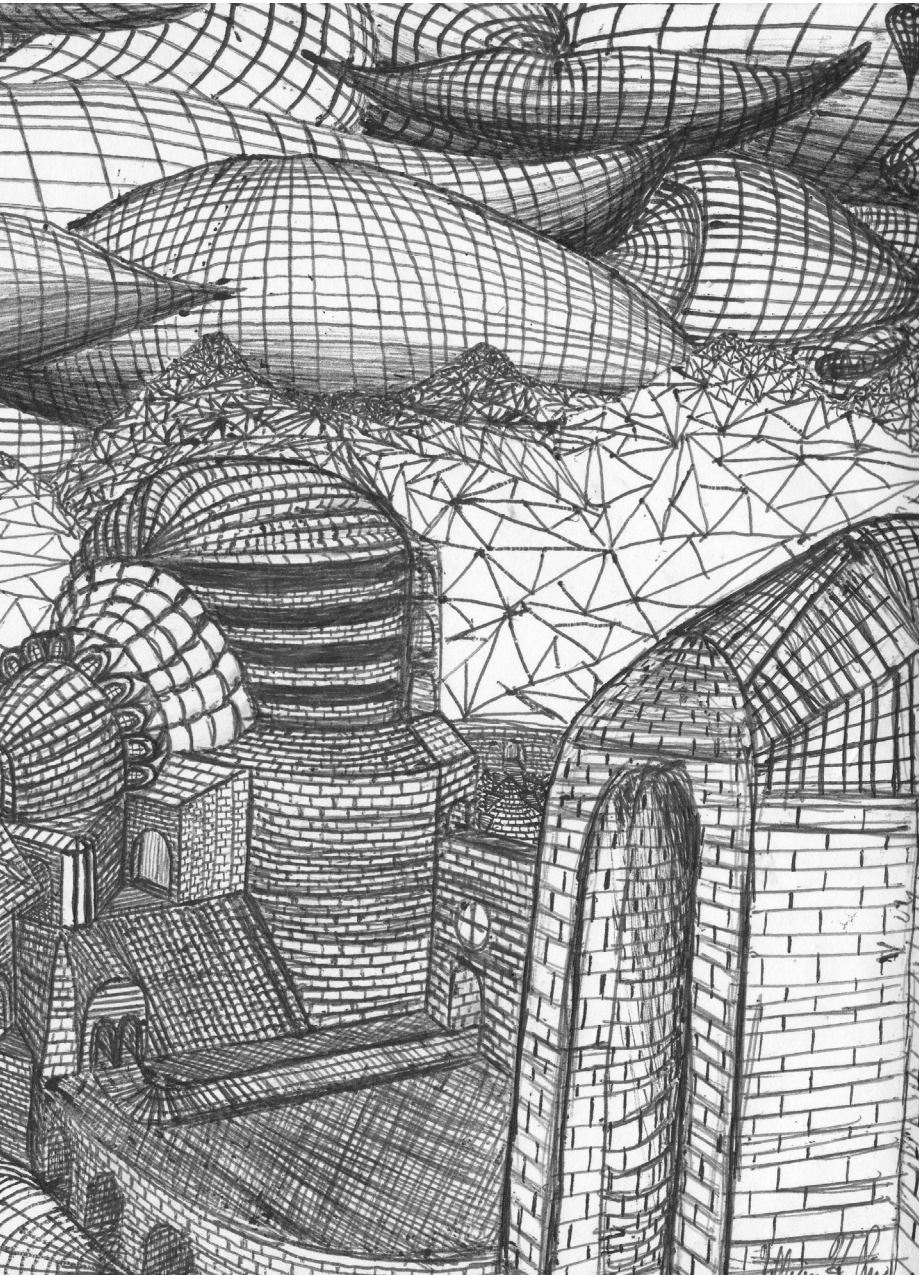
(POEM CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE. STANZA BREAK)

- A SPOON FULL OF ASHES -

At the end of my life,
I hope they remember
my morning breath.
The way I waltzed
through the glass
doors of my school,
gripping a leather
cane. Chewing bubble
gum. The sugar foot
stomp in my ears, and
the cadence of blood
pulsing in me forever.

HOME AGAIN





I'LL GLADLY PAY YOU TUESDAY FOR A BRAIN TODAY:

THE ECONOMICS OF THE ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE

RACHEL HOFFMAN

It's never too early to start preparing for a global catastrophe such as the inevitable zombie apocalypse. One can find many books and writings detailing the fortification of underground cellars and the stockpiling of essential food and water. But an all-too-often overlooked aspect of this disaster is what the global economy will be like after society is undone by the undead. The art of the deal is just as important as any other survival skill. After all, zombies need goods and services, too.

Obviously, the most valuable commodity in the post-apocalyptic economy will be brains, a zombie's meal of choice. These will be in high demand and low supply, so prices will skyrocket. One's best bet is to stock up while the cost is still relatively low, because those with only one brain when Armageddon strikes will be the first to go, as they will have no bait to lure the undead away. Certain other body parts may still be somewhat effective as zombie diversions, such as heart-healthy livers and entrails, but experts warn that a viable return on investment will probably not be enjoyed on eyeballs.

Top economists also agree that individuals should pull all of their savings out of the bank immediately and max out their credit cards, as well. Bill collectors will obviously be among the first to fall victim to the zombie pandemic, and the massive outflux of money will put a strain on the banking system once all of the unprepared start to liquefy their assets. Those who are too late will simply be out of luck. Gold will become essentially worthless, unless one plans on luring brain browsers away with shiny objects. Metals that can be forged into weapons will become significantly prized, however, so it is advisable that one hoards any scrap metal, such as steel or iron, that

one may find on the streets, before others snatch it up in the desperate frenzy that will ensue in the early stages of the apocalypse.

It would be wise to stock up on critical necessities as well, such as weapons. Those with non-expendable ammunition are preferable, such as machetes and golf clubs, as are those with renewable resources, such as crossbows. It would also be very beneficial to become skilled in the art of throwing stars, if at all possible. If guns are one's weapon of choice, select those that do not need to be aimed precisely in order to hit a target, such as shotguns, blunderbusses, or the like. While sprinting away from a hungry zombie, one will not likely have the opportunity to line up the attacker in the weapon's crosshairs before firing, lest one run the risk of slowing down and becoming that day's blue plate special. Weapons will become one of the most valuable commodities and the opportunities for trade will be nearly endless. However, economists do not advise parting with battle-ready items unless one is receiving brains in return, or one is on the brink of starvation and is offered a considerable quantity of nonperishable foodstuffs.

Donating significant funds to one's religion of choice may also be a wise course of action. Use any paper money available after stocking up on the essentials discussed previously. If one is right about one's god, that donation could pay dividends in the afterlife. The paper bills will not be of much value in the post-apocalyptic bartering system anyway. Do not, however, under any circumstances, donate brains or weapons to the church. They will be much more valuable to humans in the post-apocalyptic killing grounds than they ever will be to a deity. Then again, that might depend on the deity.

Preparing for death is always advisable when faced with the zombie apocalypse. One must

ensure one's affairs are in order before venturing out into potentially infested areas. Even with the most advanced planning, it is likely that one will, at some point, no longer be able to sustain oneself with the supplies at hand. One can only last so long barricaded in a mall. And the hordes will be waiting.

SERENITY

SAMUEL MOSELEY

Journey with me to where sea and sky meet.
Separated by a thin horizon,
Merged by a continuum of blue,
The endless waves never become weary.

They pulse through the deep like a steady beat.
Timely striking the shore in unison,
Their rhythm is familiar and true to
The life that thrives off of their cadency.

The sun joins in to perform a great feat.
Stretching taut, its rays are the strings upon
Which its notes illuminate vivid hues.
Sun and surf craft a scenic symphony.

In the vastness, the song becomes complete.
It echoes in the heart if you listen.
Sweet is the sound that intends to renew
The anxious mind and paint serenity.

FINGERING HER

ABIGAIL PHILP



CARROTS

CALE DOWNS

How to create a poem:

Step 1- Think of a title

Choose a word

Literally any word

It doesn't have to relate to your poem

At all.

Step 2- Think of a topic

Love.

You're welcome.

Step 3- Find some big words

And create some incoherent sentences

Such as:

"The iridescent rays of her luminescence drifted
aimlessly

amongst the everlasting glow of dawn."

I don't know what that means

Neither do you.

It doesn't have to make sense

No one gives a crap

It's art.

Step 4- Formatting

Break up

The lines like

An arrogant jackass.

Maybe add a few

Hyphens- or forward

Slashes/

You can use/them-

Whenever you want/

Maybe put some words

over here

or down here

Step 5- And finally

Whenever someone tries to critique your poem

Insist they are simply ignorant

because

Your thoughts run deep as the ocean.

And you are an artist.

Boom! Poetry.

EVERYDAY HEROES

THOMAS MERRYMAN



FINDING GOD

BAILEY BETIK

First, enter the oak doors, sturdy as saints, and sit shifting underneath stained glass sermons. Unbuckle your shoes when your mother's not watching, dip your tiny china toes into the blood-red velvet carpet (*of Christ our Lord amen*). Bury yourself in catechism chasms. Slip your lacy socks back on. Finish your rosary. The shoes bite into your feet.

Next, gather with loud hands-in-the-air *GLORY!*s. Try and catch a shower of mercy like Times Square confetti. Grasp between your fingers, strain through bass guitar *GLORY!* Nod politely when Oregon Lady says that she speaks in angel tongues while you pick the *GLORY!* out of green bean casserole. (Do not ask her to translate.)

Then follow the glamorous ones, the Gospel According to Bono, glitterati fishermen: *you are too pretty to worry about hell*. Watch for His guest appearances in cameo roles, in Marlboros, in constitutions; salvation's at the bottom of this bottle. Confess to stubbled bystanders in whiskey-marinated phone booths as revelations flicker by in rolling credits.

And when doubt settles in your ribcage, ignite the temporary temples. Turn out hollow-pocketed prophets and count the change they never gave you. Find prayers in your attic, at the bottoms of cereal bowls your brother leaves in the sink. Follow proverbs down rattling subway cars wailing by and pick up the left-behinds. Peel the skins of sermons off your footsoles; use them to paper your walls.

Count the moons and cry, each one a perfect tattooed testimony to *Our Father, who art in Heaven, and on Earth and in cities, spaghettis, & sisters, who smiles at you through park benches, through handlebar hymns, through psalm and pepper: amen.*

OBSERVATION REPORT

JAKOB HALLBAUER

- An Indian smacked a cowboy for branding cattle.
A necromancer shrieked jazz standards into Nat King Cole's corpse.
An old surveyor discretely soiled his pants,
postponing a forced retirement.
A pack of nine rabid children with old souls threw
wind eggs at a gospel church.
A massive, ancient civilization was somehow lost to
rumors and legends.
A man saw an acorn sprout into a mighty oak, and
didn't live to see it fall.
A pit-master watched hot lipids drip from carcasses,
while regretting not becoming an actor.
A glass was passed around, apathetic as to its
contents. Lips turned blue, and it was dropped.
A hermit invented a scythe for cave fungi – she died
before he could market it.
A toddler learned to manipulate her mechanical
mother by acting adorable.
A puppy sniffed forever forbidden delights on the
table of her ape-like gods.
A young couple received bruised pelvises after 9
hours of fornicating.
A lizard basked on a stone warmed by radiation from
the closest star.
An aluminum chair had an identity crisis, wishing it
had been born a baseball bat.
A dying Buddhist nun pondered returning to help
Humanity, but decided it was pointless.
A rapist saw a ray of light burst from a cloud and
mistook it for a message of absolution.
A botanist found the cure for lymphoma; but found it
amusing to let humans lay waste to it.
An Amish girl on Rumspringa ingested ethanol
through the lining of her large intestine.
A blistering heat scorched the mind of the human
that conceived of the first totally original idea.
A husband pondered the Hippocratic Oath as his wife
celebrated her ninth year in a coma.

- A prostitute named Beth put chemicals into her body while in the office of a congressman.
- A German musician decided not to finish his scoring of one of the universal harmonies.
- A feminist cried herself to sleep because she still prefers men who hit her.
- A misogynist snuck into his closet to put on a black dress and blonde wig.
- A soul accidentally went to Charon with lead slugs. The ferryman gave him a dirty look.
- A mother read about euthanasia while her terminally ill child coughed blood in the other room.
- A priest, a minister, a rabbi, and an atheist quickly ran into a bar. The blow was fatal for each of them, and they never found out who was right.

KITCHEN RENDERING





MY UNDERWEAR

CODY WESTPHAL

I wish someone would care about my underwear.
So many colors, patterns- these are my favorite, those
have a hole someone might laugh at.

I start each day with a choice.
Nude and new I approach the drawer
Full of intimate characters
Known only by me.
Once, when I was full of hope
I thought carefully.
Felt my fate on that date
And chose the garment that best spoke to the occasion.
There was excitement, then.
There was meaning in choice, then-
Maybe, just maybe,
That decision would
Be to someone other than
Me.

I wish I could share this poem, these underwear-
With someone.

You see my shirt and pants- yes I chose those too.
But underneath underwear unknown exist to me and me
alone.

We are complex to ourselves but known simply by the
world.

THE LAST STORY

KELLIE COPPOLA

There were only five witnesses to the story of that night. Five complete witnesses, that is. For years after, other bystanders could still spout fragments of the wild tale that they'd witnessed themselves, and strung together these scenes might have made up a passable skeleton of the entire night. But there were moments and memories that connected the five of us for our entire lives, even after we were old and gray and living miles apart. Parts of the story that only we had lived, that only we could tell.

If Jerry Martin, the grouchy anesthesiologist with Marxists ideals were telling this story, he would have started with a lecture on capitalism and the woes of the ever-diminishing morals of today's youth that he always kept handy for any audience he deemed in need of healthy doses of liberalism.

If Beckett Thompson had somehow weaseled his way into telling the story, he might have cracked an alcohol-influenced joke about one of his ex-wives before plunging into a wild tale with exaggerated details that made him look like the underdog hero of that night.

If Sarah Corlaine, lovely Sarah, were speaking she would...but never mind. No one would have asked Sarah to speak today and she certainly wouldn't have volunteered. She turned red at the slightest mention of public speaking, and she couldn't bring herself to use any cuss words which, really, were half the story.

But if Richard were telling the story, the audience would sit straight in their seats, eyes wide and hands tense like children waiting for Santa Claus. Even though Richard had told the story the same way for sixty years – over beers on the golf course or cigars and champagne at fancy dinner parties – people

still listened with new ears whenever he started off again. There was magic in the way Richard told it; his exaggerations were wild yet believable, his impressions perfectly on point to make everyone involved look like a fool without actually insulting them, and his well-placed jokes made listeners laugh no matter how many times they'd heard the punch line. Even I, who had been at the toga party that night, was pulled into the lives of the characters as if they were strangers. I would sit captivated, completely forgetting that we escaped from the cops in the end; that Beckett was found unharmed the next morning in a tree outside the Kappa Delta sorority house; that Sarah and Jerry ended the night kissing in the smoky back room of Nickel Street Bar, while Richard and I were passed out to the sounds of Dusty Springfield, still in our muddled togas.

But I guess it doesn't matter anymore how they would tell the story and which one would tell it best because they're all gone now: Jerry to lung cancer, Beckett to a boating accident, and beautiful Sarah peacefully in her sleep. Richard spoke at all their funerals, retelling the story to the old familiar audience who laughed and cried and thanked him until they were red in the face. I remember at the last funeral – Sarah's two years ago – I sat in the pew and wished I could be present for my own memorial, if only to hear that well-worn story one last time. But in some trick of fate Richard had gone first, a heart attack at his beach house last week, and now the responsibility as keeper of the story falls to me.

I wait in the pastor's office in the back of the chapel where Richard married his wife thirty years ago. The June day is sweltering, and I wish I could crack a few windows but the minister has them bolted shut to prevent sun damage to his collection of vintage Bibles. *Hippie*, I snort inwardly

as I examine the Zen garden on his immaculate desk. When I was young, ministers were boring old geezers with ear hair and monotone voices that would put the fear of hell in you if you talked during service. These days the ministers wore blue jeans and had the hymn lyrics playing on large projection screens like we were in a third grade classroom rather than the house of God. But Richard had liked the younger guy, said he had passion and, really, what else did you need?

I hear the murmurs of a hundred voices as funeral goers shuffle in and take their seats, grumbling about their sweat-infused mourning outfits as they fight for the pews closest to the air conditioning. It sounds like all of Georgia is out there, which is no surprise since Richard knew everyone within a hundred mile radius. Such a crowd is enough to make any speaker nervous, but what really gets me is that they all expect the story.

Of course they do. Richard was the hero of the toga party story. The one who pulled Jerry through the window of the third floor of our fraternity house when his toga got stuck trying to escape the police. The one who had the guts to nick the bottle of Scotch from the chancellor's office. The one who talked his way out of a DUI ticket and saved my ass when I fell off the bridge into the icy waters of Lake Pincho, both of us buzzed as bees. The story was classic Richard, who was always the leader, but it also showed a wild side that few knew he ever had. When he died he was better known as the successful Southern gentleman who started up his own investment firm and made millions before his 35th birthday. He was the husband of a beautiful ex-anchorwoman and father to three brilliant children, full of responsibilities and stock market jargon.

But the others would talk about Richard Neel the success story. The funeral could go on for hours with

all the people who had things to say about Richard. I had been perfectly content to sit in the back of the church listening to strangers heap praises on my oldest friend, but his wife Melissa insisted that I speak. *It was his favorite story*, she smiled with tears in her eyes when she approached me a few days ago. *And you were his best friend. He would have wanted you to tell it.* How do you refuse a grieving widow with an argument like that?

The black tie my wife forced me into tries to strangle me. Martha promised me she would be parked in the front pew with Melissa and that if I fumbled all I would have to do is look at her. I scoffed at the thought yesterday, but now as I review my note cards one last time I'm starting to feel a little tongue-tied.

Now I may be old, but I can remember every minute of the night of the toga party vividly. Well, maybe not every minute, but even the parts I was blacked out drunk for I've heard often enough to be able to speak of with ease. But I want to tell the story right. I want to tell the story like Richard, so I spent hours last night trying to remember the exact words he used when he told it. The jokes he would lay on that were always funny, the hand gestures for theatrics, the eye roll he gave whenever he got to the part about Beckett streaking down Greek row. I wrote down every detail I could remember and practiced for hours, but still I feel stiff and unprepared. No matter what I do or say every person in the audience will be thinking the same thing.

That's not how Richard would tell it.

"Ted, we're about to get started." Richard's daughter Denise sticks her head through the office. Boy does she look like Richard. Dark hair and eyes that are always laughing, but whether at you or with you, you can never tell.

I nod and she smiles sadly.

"You're telling the story, aren't you?" She sighs, "We'll give you a couple more minutes."

When she is gone I exhale loudly, sweat pouring from my temples. I can't be the last person on earth to tell this story. I wasn't the hero, or the clown, or the hopeless romantic or any other kind of interesting character in this tale. I was the bystander, the one along for the ride whose greatest moment was attempting an impression of King Kong on a bridge and falling into the lake before I could finish. How is that heroic?

The first notes of "What A Wonderful World," Richard's favorite song, drift through the office demanding that I go to the church, but I'm frozen. The song brings back memories of long nights smoking and drinking in the backseat of an old Chevy parked behind the fraternity house. I begin to think about my friends, my best friends, all of them gone, leaving behind impressions of older people with responsibilities and calm dispositions. There is no one left but me to remember them when they were young and carefree.

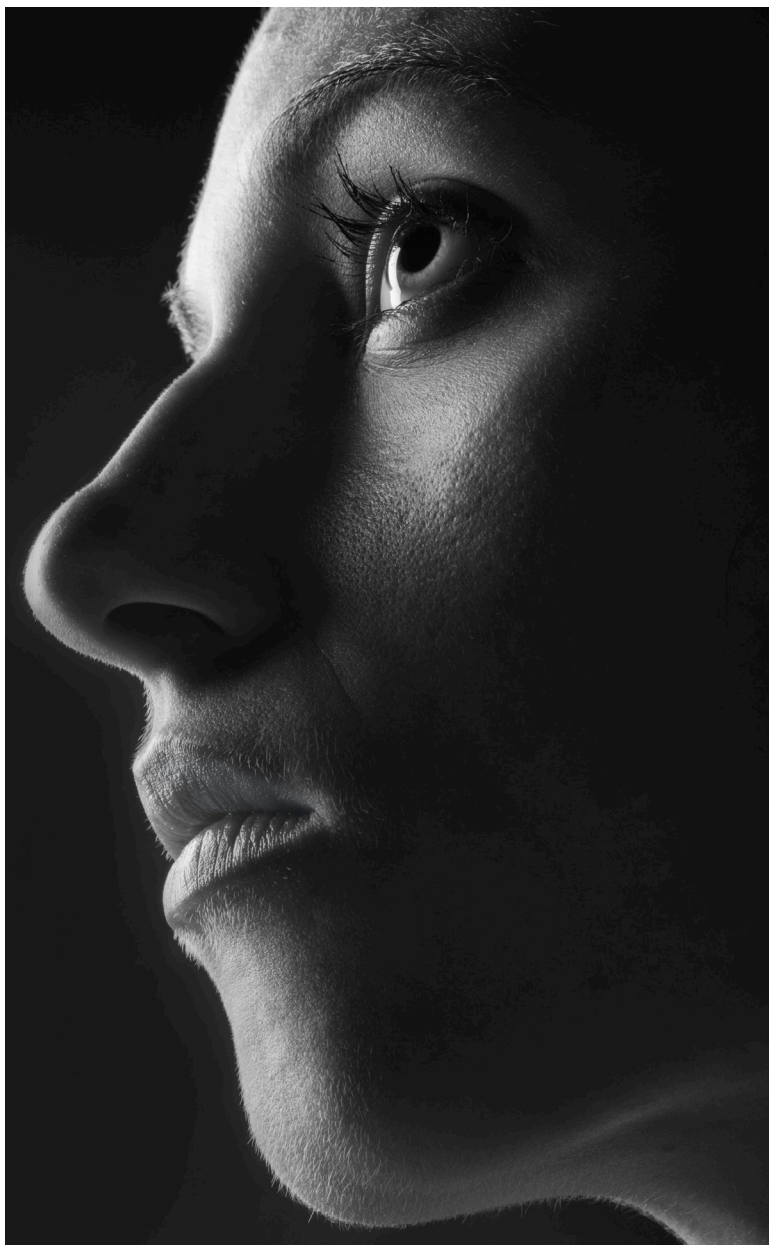
I think of Jerry, known as the uptight doctor who filled the minds of his patients and friends with liberal teachings that bordered on socialism, but who once climbed the ferris wheel at Breckenridge Pier on a dare and had to have every firefighter in the county help him down. Beckett, who may have died an alcoholic insurance agent with a cankerous personality, was a solid roommate and true friend who took the blame for the fireworks incident of '61 so Richard's record would be clean to run for fraternity president. Sarah, an old and wrinkly grandmother that was once the girl every boy had a crush on. Our beautiful Southern belle who broke Jerry's heart and married a dentist in West Texas, and we couldn't help but keep loving her. Then there was Richard. Not Richard the successful

businessman or the beloved father/husband. Richard the terrible golfer who had a soft spot for strawberry milkshakes and cried when the Mets won the 1969 World Series. My best friend since high school. These were the friends I had really lost. The friends I owed this story to.

I leave the note cards on the pastor's desk and straighten my tie. I enter the church, the stale, hot air sweeping through me. I take the pulpit with sweaty hands as a sea of people stare expectantly at me. They all know what comes next. I clear my throat and glance at the giant picture of Richard beside the casket. His dark eyes meet mine and this time I know they're laughing at me. *Don't be a coward Teddy*, I hear his voice in my head. I grin as I take a deep breath and start to speak.

"Our junior year of college, on a cold weekend in October of '62, Richard Neel got it into his head to throw the biggest toga party our school had ever seen."

ESCAPE
SHELBY TSUJI



MOSQUITOES

AFTER JAKE ADAM YORK

TRIP STARKEY

Listen to the sky
Murmur overhead,

splitting the glass river.
It gathers in knots of wind.

Letting my pistol crack,
I watch them tangle

in cottonwood leaves.
My daughter sits

on a blanket,
pinking her dress

with watermelon.
Stains trickle like blood,

watered-down. Mosquitoes
reverently wait for her to finish.

My wife's screams echo
in the cedars

like Miles Davis, spinning out
on a coal-black vinyl.

I threw brisket
across the yard,

watched the mosquitoes
gather on the breeze

to devour the bourbon –
soaked evening.

(POEM CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE. STANZA BREAK)

Drinking dandelion wine,
I followed her

to the creek's edge.
Two men were wading
in the shallows, stringing
a trotline from one bank

to the other. The one smoking
a cigar grinned. In the silver moon,

his eyes seemed unreal, like flakes
of granite. He looked like John

the Baptist, cursing his knotted bones.
I dont I dont I dont I dont hate

It. The words dripped down
down my spine. Carved

out the limpid air. The men lured
catfish from the black

murk. As the cigar man bent
to seize one, my wife

grabbed the pistol. Pulled its trigger,
burying a bullet in his cold chest.

My daughter picked
seeds from her teeth
after she woke,

fed them to the sparrow
on her windowsill.

(POEM CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE. STANZA BREAK)

- MOSQUITOES -

The bird boxed itself
in a nest near the ceiling.
My daughter fell down
laughing, jammed her fingers
in bowl of oatmeal. It stuck

to her ceramic fingers.

The sparrow ate her seeds
and mosquitoes birthed

from its open mouth.

No one knew my wife
or the man she carried

from the river. Tearing the trotline

from the shallows, she flossed
the yellow of her gums.

Wandered into the meadow.
She scared up starlings,

burying the corpses beneath
a congregation of ragweed.

*At night, she whispered
I have found myself
walking through a field*

*of roses. The summer wind
matted her hair. They sprout
from the eyes of men.*

The whiskey evening
distilled her breath.
Wandering on

*a forked path,
we fell down to sleep
in the moonlight.*

She began choking
on dust.

I could see it
billow like the current

in the river. She spit
up blood-strung

saliva. It started
to drown her.

My daughter
sang softly,

*all God's critters
got a place in the choir
Some sing lower
and some sing higher.*

She trapped the sparrow
beneath a cast-iron skillet
on the wall.

Peering down
a crack in the floor

board. Squeezing in her hands,
she took the sparrow down
to the river. Mosquitoes clouded
over the banks. Water licked,

- MOSQUITOES -

swallowing the reeds.
She plucked feathers from
the swelling tide.

PLANTING WITH MY FATHER

LINDSAY COWDIN

I remember

Walking the freshly turned rows

As the tiller sputtered and rattled our hands to numbness.

How patient he was to hold my tiny hands underneath his own.

The way he showed me to push two fingers into the cool,
velvety soil

And drop the seeds into the dark well.

I remember

Weeks later, following him through the rows of shadows

The pungent smell of green tomatoes

Coated with Sevin Dust, hanging heavy on the vine.

The watermelons like fat Christmas presents

Nestled in the green ribbon curl of their vines.

How we dug for onion treasure, the yellow moons

Rising in our hands from their dark sleep.

The sound of the summer wind as it rattled the caged tomatoes

And lifted, just slightly, the heat of July from our shoulders.

SOLITUDE





BATTERY ACID

CLAIRE SHELTON

I got a tattoo yesterday,
the word "disclaimer" branded
on my wrist in all caps, right
where my pulse thuds
the hardest against the inside
of the thin layer of skin.

And if you press two fingers
against the ink, like a paramedic
checking for signs of life, I'll tell you
that I'm caustic, cantankerous, capable of
corroding:

That I'll take a knife to us, saw our hands
apart, bone by bone, vein by vein, and then try
to stitch us back together like pieces of fabric.

PARIS SIGHT

WESLEY LACSON

*(intended to be recited aloud, in a drunken haze, with a
beat to keep you company)*

In the life of a boy looking at a man in the mirror
Listened to my girl yelling at me, but I could never hear her
The product of a fear with a mix of mystic mischief
Like a satyr satirizing the misshapen and the misfits

Insist upon the system, cystic on my mind
Drawing forth the curtains that I'm standing right behind
Not a bad place to hide, my insides enclosed
But Mozart couldn't make the outside look more composed

So transpose me, lock me with the key and leave the notes
I wanted the glass to shatter when I spoke, the Holy Ghost
Can stain the shards, the remains of a flow deeper than a
moat
From the mouth of the shallowest of creeks, I'm on a boat

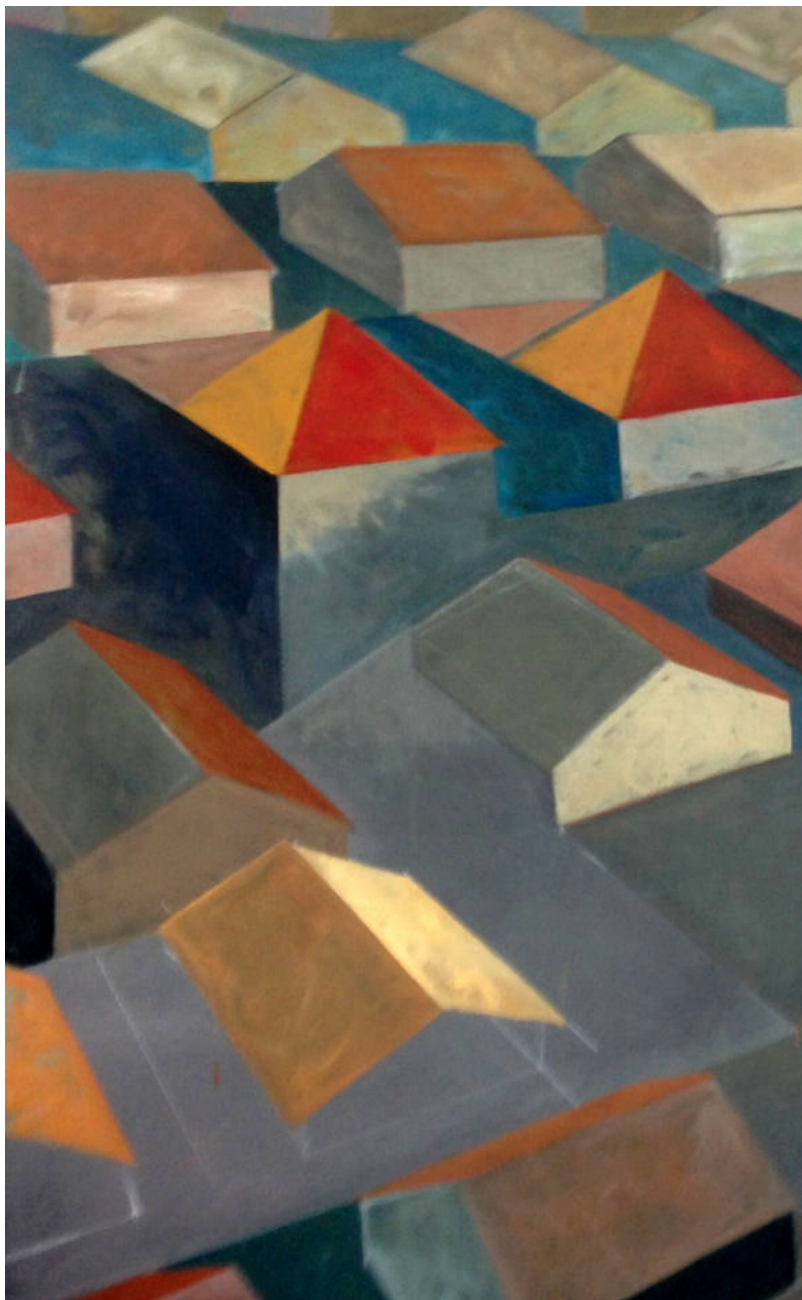
Off the coast of the loneliest of islands, cracking jokes
Take the piss, give a shit if I provoke, grab a coat
Because my shoulder is colder than a blizzard in the winter
Weak enough to hate her, not strong enough to miss her

Weak enough to kiss her, made a stand from my standards
When I couldn't understand her, when I held onto these
banners
As tight as a glow stick at a rave, till my grave
Call it lucky, call it childish as Chucky, call it brave

Call it scribbling from the journal of the terrified junky
Call it inspiration or the lightning to the thunder that struck
me
The rain clouds above me, shower me to stifle
I tried to say I love you but this tower's such an eyeful

I wanna jump, feel the rush, see the drops falling with me
Praying that you'll miss me, but God's mark has never hit me
So just forget about that mirror, you know glass is prone to
crack
Close my eyes and lost my mind and found you staring back

INSIDE STORY





ALWAYS WINTER

LUCAS WEST

"All great movements are popular movements. They are the volcanic eruptions of human passions and emotions, stirred into activity by the ruthless Goddess of Distress or by the torch of the spoken word cast into the midst of the people."

– Adolf Hitler

The torch of the Nazi movement had been cast out into the midst of the German population long before 1942, and either through true devotion or fear the blaze continued to burn brighter and brighter each day. The blood red Nazi flag waved over every house and public building in every city and town in more nations than the rest of the world cared to acknowledge. This was war. Every day another city raised the Nazi flag and cried "Heil Hitler!" and every day the Allied Forces grew more afraid of the reality that the regime could not be stopped.

To the ordinary citizen though, what a glorious time to be German! Germany, the force to be reckoned with! Germany, the great! "Heil Hitler" rang from the city streets of Berlin to the rooftops of Cologne. 'Heil Hitler' was their battle cry and their blessing, the German greeting and farewell. As soldiers fired their weapons at the enemy and bravely climbed out of the trenches, they cried "Heil Hitler!" and all the while, the father putting his children to bed would tuck them in and bid them goodnight with the same, "Heil Hitler."

For the ordinary men and women of Germany, this war was about justice. After the suffering and economic ruin brought on by the harsh settlements of the First World War, Germany was taking back what was rightfully its own, and then some. If the greatest race on Earth was to be the most prosperous then they needed living space, they needed *lebensraum*. That is what made the war necessary.

However, this is neither the grand story of Germany and its need for living space nor a story about the creation of a master race. Rather, this is the story of an ordinary German citizen and his family. This is the story of their actions and decisions, or inaction in some cases, and the ramifications that they had, both personally and socially. It is a story of truth: merciless, cold, dispassionate, and simple truth...

"In my own sphere I did everything that could possibly be expected of a man who believes in the greatness of his people and who is filled with fanaticism for the greatness of his country, in order to bring about the victory of Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist movement."

– Hans Frank

He finished shaving and turned off the faucet, the quiet stillness of the morning quickly becoming apparent as the sound of the water faded away. He dried his face with the towel and picked his glasses up off the sink. The golden frames were worn but familiar. Donning them, he stepped out of the bathroom back into his bedroom. There lay his wife, looking so peaceful wrapped in the covers of the bed. He removed a dress shirt from his closet and a matching tie, slowly and methodically finishing his preparations for the day.

As he headed down the hall towards the kitchen, he heard his mother moving about. After the war started, his wife insisted that his mother move in with them. It was nice to have company in the mornings, and she was welcome help with the children. She had already started the coffee when he entered the kitchen, and on a cold winter's day, it seemed a luxury.

They were down to the last few bags in the pantry, with little chance of getting more since most of

the coffee in Germany shipped to soldiers on the frontlines of the war effort. His mother was adept at conserving resources though, with the First World War still fresh in her mind. How his mother kept her faith in humanity he never knew. His whole life seemed to have a short time of peace bookended by wars. He stared into the Silex glass bowls of the vacuum pump coffee paper as his mind drifted off into thought.

Walter was born June 22, 1906 to Thomas and Nadine Reinhardt. He was their only child. His mother had severe hemorrhaging after his birth that resulted in an emergency hysterectomy. His parents were heart broken with the knowledge that they could never have any more children, but the sheer fact that his mother had lived was miracle enough to remind them to be grateful for what they had. The Reinhardts viewed all life as a gift after that, and they instilled that value in their son, Walter.

The earliest memories he had were of playing doctor with his friends from school. With string tied to a plastic cup for a stethoscope and the thermometer taken from the bathroom, he would pretend to diagnose his friends with anything from the flu to chickenpox to pneumonia. If they ever complained about his diagnosis he would threaten that they needed a shot. With the fear of a pretend needle in mind, they allowed him to poke and prod all he wanted. One year for Christmas, he received a set of toy doctor's supplies and a very official looking doctor's bag and it had been that play doctor set that solidified his future occupation.

For a brief time, Walter considered going into maintenance like his father. Thomas Reinhardt had been one of the first car mechanics in Germany, and up until the war started, he owned a fairly successful repair shop. His family was never rich, but they had all the essentials and wanted for few

things. Nadine had always laughed and said his father had hands like a surgeon, but his patients were metal beasts instead of humans. He had fond memories of time spent with his father in the garage after school as they worked together to discover the elusive solution that always began with the same question, "Why won't it work?"

All the happiness he had known as a child soon faded as the world he once knew dissolved into war. War was the most terrible of all manmade evils, Thomas would say. His father had been a private in the First World War, Private Thomas Reinhardt. A soldier by necessity and not by choice, he had died early on in the war before the battle tactics of the military adjusted to the new weapons developed by each side. He had just turned 9 years old the day his father died, leaving him to care and provide for his mother. He did not know if he could ever be happy again, but when the war ended, it left a lot of boys fatherless and he found some comfort knowing he was not alone.

Walter drifted back to 1942, awakened from his thoughts by the steaming cup of coffee placed in front of him by his mother. He took the mug in his left hand, smiling at her as she went to pour herself a cup. Rising, he walked towards the door to leave. He set the coffee down only long enough to don his black wool pea coat and scarf. He searched in vain for his gloves within the pockets of his coat. Sighing he retrieved the cup of steaming coffee and, gloveless, stepped outside.

It was a brisk morning in early December, and a light dusting of snow covered the hard packed snow from days gone by. He held the coffee cup in both hands, trying to warm them the best he could. His office was only a few blocks away, and he set off in that direction hoping the heavy snow would hold off until he at least made it to work.

Each day he walked to work he saw fewer and fewer people out and about. After the intense bombing on May 30, over half the city had left for the countryside. It was still hard to believe the destruction caused in just over an hour. The decision to stay here after the bombing was still a point of contention with his wife. She had wanted to leave, to go somewhere "safe." Was anywhere safe anymore? He had argued that now the city was safe because lightning did not strike twice. Besides, where would they go? The only life they had ever known was here in Cologne. Therefore, they stayed, but each time a plane flew overhead, German or otherwise, she would give him a look that would frighten the *Führer* himself.

He greeted the few people who passed by, many were soldiers but not all. In the distance, he could hear the sounds of construction workers hammering and sawing. The sound was coming from the Ehrenfeld Synagogue, which they were retrofitting, into an air raid shelter, since there were no more Jews to use it.

Jews. No more Jews. It was still a strange thought, even after the 4 years since the start of the deportations. He did not love Jews, but he certainly did not hate them either. His accountant had been Jewish, and much to his wife's protestations Walter invited him over for dinner one night. He was a nice man and the evening had gone quite well, he thought. Afterwards, his wife had sworn up and down and made him promise never to do that again. Perhaps the *Führer* was right though, maybe the Jews were to blame for Germany's hardships. Without any Jews in the community, there were certainly fewer riots, less vandalism, and more jobs for German citizens. Society was much more peaceful without them, so maybe the deportations were good for everyone; the Jews did not have to fear for their lives in

public anymore and the social unrest that seemed to follow the Jews left with them. He did not know where they were taken after deportation, but he assumed there was a safe little community somewhere made up only of Jews isolated from the world. Things were better this way.

Walter rounded the corner of the block and neared the door of his clinic. It was beginning to snow harder, and he struggled to get the keys in the door lock as his hand shook from the bite of the cold. He opened the door and quickly stepped inside, pulling it closed as he turned on the lights. There on the end table by the door were his gloves, exactly where he had left them on Friday. Shivering he picked them up and went to see about getting the wood stove going.

After getting the fire going and hanging up his scarf and coat, with gloves tucked safely away, Walter sat down to put away the files he left out on Friday. He had left in a hurry because it was his daughter's birthday. Marie turned eight, and he had to make a detour on his way home to retrieve her birthday present from the store. The war had interrupted the production of many toys, but Marie said she wanted a set of paper dolls like the ones her friend brought to school. Due to the rationing of sugar caused by the war, there had only been enough to make a small cake for Maria alone, but she enjoyed the evening and the company of her friends so that was all that mattered.

He was just putting the last of his files away when he heard footsteps and the door bells jingle. In stepped a police officer, *ordnungspolizei*, and another man who looked unkempt and smelled of alcohol. After the customary "*Heil* Hitler," the officer explained that the man was a drunk, and a repeat offender, who required sterilization under the authority of the Cologne Sterilization Court

in accordance with the Nuremberg Laws. Walter directed the soldier and the drunkard around the corner to the operating room of his clinic where he would perform the quick surgery.

To Walter it seemed he had performed more sterilizations in the past months than probably any other surgery in his career. Especially after the May bombing there were more than usual as those who had lost their families turned to drunkenness as a way of coping. He had lost many close friends in the attack, and still more to the aftermath.

His pulse quickened and a lump rose in his throat. It lasted just seconds, but it was a reminder of the cost of war. Even a just war, a necessary war, had its cost. They did not deserve death any more than his father did. He pictured his father on the day he left, military uniform pressed and polished, only to be torn apart and soiled by the carnage of war. He took a deep breath to steady himself.

After Walter finished the surgery, he told the drunk to come back for a follow up. The soldier laughed and said he would bring the wheelchair back after dropping the drunk off at whatever shanty he called home. As the soldier left, a mother and daughter walked in and he escorted them back to another room for examination.

The day passed rather slowly. He attributed it to the snow, the war, and not enough money to pay for food *and* doctor bills. It was a typical day. He saw several more sterilization cases, even treated a few officers themselves. One soldier in the area came in seeking medical treatment for something he had picked up while on his frontline rotation. A few civilian patients rounded out the day.

When he did not have any patients to occupy him, Walter would step outside and shovel the sidewalk

in front of his office. It was something his wife would scold him for, but for appearance's sake, and safety too, he worked outside as long as he could tolerate the cold. He spent much of this time thinking, reminiscing on days of his youth, and the short time period between the two wars that seemed to bookend his life.

He remembered June 6, 1917, the day he grew from a boy to a man. It was his eleventh birthday, his second without his father. The intervening years were a long, dark, fuzzy memory to him now. However, he remembered that day with crystal clarity because that is the day the pension checks from the army stopped. Whether they were lost or stolen or the government just could not pay, they never did find out. His mother always received the same response from the government agencies she visited, there were too many dead soldiers and not enough people to help with the paperwork. So, that day he went to work. While he had not spent enough time in the garage to continue on his father's business, he knew enough about mechanics and was skilled enough with his hands to find odd jobs around the city. It never provided much, but he helped keep food on the table for the two of them, and that was all that mattered. He did not play with his friends anymore; he went to school and worked. He grew up fast, and he did not want that for either of his children.

How they survived the years between the wars he never knew. Money was worthless and there were more sanctions on Germany than most people ever understood. They scraped together a living though, limping on until he met Elisabeth, his wife.

She had come to Cologne in 1929 to settle the affairs of her family estate, having lost three brothers in the war and her mother and two sisters to the measles. Elisabeth had been traveling

abroad with her father in Italy when the tragedy took her sisters and mother away. When he heard the news, her father, in a drunken stupor one night, got into a fight at a bar and was fatally wounded. She arrived back at Cologne only 21 years old and totally alone, only to find the family house burnt to the ground to keep the measles from spreading. Having lost everything, she began working at the same factory in town as his mother.

Walter was in his first year of medical school in 1929 after graduating from the University of Cologne, and one night his mother brought Elisabeth home for dinner. They were fast friends; she was the daughter Nadine was never able to have. Long after Walter left dinner to study, Nadine and Elisabeth would still be up debating the finer points of Henriette Davidis's new cookbook. To this day, his mother still argued with Elisabeth over modern cooking philosophy. Cooking, it seemed, was more about Nazi ideals than actually preparing food.

Not long after his mother began bringing Elisabeth over for dinner they fell in love and decided to get married, despite the economic hardships of the time. His mother moved out, against their will, and began renting a house on the outskirts of town so they could have the Reinhardt family home. In 1932 their son, Thomas was born, named after Walter's own father. In 1934, little Marie followed and their family was complete.

He was German, and he loved his country. When his *Führer* spoke, Walter's heart beat just a little faster, his pace quickened, his mind raced. And when the final explosive "*Heil Hitler*" erupted from the crowd, oh what a glorious feeling. Yet, no matter how many speeches or promises Hitler made, there was always a rancid taste left in Walter's mouth. The only thing that mattered was the war – and he hated war.

Walter leaned against the snow shovel as he stopped to survey his work. He had scooped more snow than he originally intended. Someday the war would be over and Cologne would be filled once again with the sounds of children laughing and playing along with the hustle and bustle of society.

Sighing, Walter went back into his office and put his jacket, scarf, and gloves back on the coat rack, carrying the snow shovel to the back where the furnace burned. The fire was dying down, but he was so close to finishing for the day it did not seem worth it to add more wood and stoke the fire.

The last few hours he had not seen a single patient, which was rare even on a slow day. There was always paperwork that needed to be reviewed and filed, so he sat down at his desk and began to work. Perhaps he would get home early tonight.

Walter was just finishing the last file when he heard the door bells jingle and the sound of footsteps. He got up from his desk and walked to the reception area. He was surprised to see a Nazi official standing in his waiting room. After the customary salute and greeting the man handed Walter an envelope sealed with the Nazi insignia. The man explained that he was there on behalf of *Reichsgesundheitsführer* Blome, the Deputy Health Leader of the Third *Reich* and physician at the Dachau concentration camp. Due to the exemplary work that he had done for the people of Cologne, the officers of the Third *Reich*, and in carrying out, with unequivocal efficacy, the principles and mission of the Nazi party and the Nuremberg Laws, the letter requested that Dr. Reinhardt join Dr. Blome and his contemporary Dr. Hermann Becker-Freyseng at Dachau immediately.

The official thanked Walter for his service to Germany and left. Afterwards, Walter stumbled to a

chair and sat down, his mind racing with excitement. This meant he would not have to do his tour as a field doctor. The physicians rotated in and out of the war zone to balance the needs of the soldiers and the needs on the home front, but with this... His wife would be thrilled! She hated that he did not serve a tour because it was dishonorable, but she could not stand the thought of him being in danger either. He had been able to avoid it thus far by petitioning the Physicians' Council to let him stay each time he was called due to the lack of physicians in Cologne. After the bombing, they had all but stopped contacting him. And the pay... The government paid him for all official procedures and exams but the standard citizens who came in rarely could pay full price. At the start of the war, he made nearly fifteen thousand *reichsmarks* yearly, but that had decreased significantly in the wake of the bombing. A job at Dachau meant his earnings would be even higher than before. His family had plenty, and although there were higher paid doctors he was still in the upper tier, but his wife always wanted to know why he did not earn more.

He read the letter again, this time more slowly to catch the details. He would assist Doctors Blome and Becker-Freyseng in their experiments that were saving the lives of German soldiers and helping end the war. His assignments were to cold temperature experiments and the malaria ward. If he accepted, he was to leave the day after next with a contingent of soldiers leaving to be stationed there. By the end of the week, he would be in Dachau, working side by side with some of the greatest minds of in the *Reich*, actively aiding the war effort. He could make a difference.

The doctors could not save his father, but maybe he could save another little boy's father. Perhaps he could prevent one more child from going through

the pain he had suffered. Maybe he could help end the bloodshed. He quickly gathered his things and set off for home, excited and nervous about the prospects of the future...

"Can I, as an individual, remove myself from the community? Can I be outside and without it? Could I, as a part of this community, evade it by saying I want to thrive in this community, but I don't want to sacrifice anything for it, not bodily and not with my soul?"

– Karl Brandt

The first few weeks passed without incident. Some of the most intelligent minds in all of Europe worked at Dachau with Walter and it was an enlightening experience to be serving his country with them. They would often stay up late into the night working in the lab and comparing notes and findings. When he was not working on the freezing experiments with Doctor Blome and Doctor Rascher or in the malaria ward drawing blood samples he would often go to the other experimental facilities or work the euthanasia ward. He took such pride in his work; it was hard to imagine how quickly his life had changed.

He received letters of love and support from his family frequently. The children were out of school and wanted to know if he remembered whose turn it was to put the swastika on top of the tree. Thomas's induction to the *Deutsches Jungvolk* section of the Hitler Youth was soon, and Marie was quite jealous. Elisabeth wrote to tell him that she had burned all of his jazz records in the furnace because the horrid Negro music was not proper for a family of their standing to tolerate. She would sometimes write how much she was proud of him, but for the most part she simply kept him informed of the local news and little else. The letters from his mother balanced

Elisabeth out and always made him smile. She talked about the children, the weather, and the new physician in town. He loved hearing from Nadine and tried to write her as often as he could.

He could not tell them about his experiments, but that was probably for the best. The cold temperature experiments were designed to see how long a pilot, who had presumably crashed or been ejected from his plane, could survive in the freezing temperatures of the ocean, and subsequently the best way to revive them. They would fill a bathtub with water and ice until it was about three degrees Celsius and then one of the subjects would climb into the tub, either naked or with a full airman's uniform. They would monitor the temperature of the individual rectally usually until they died. Afterwards the coroner examined the bodies and added to the findings of the group. He most often worked with Doctor Blome and Doctor Brandt for these experiments. Doctor Rascher was far more abrasive and radical, but his experiments always yielded the most interesting results. Walter would often write down ideas for how to improve the German pilot's uniforms in his journal as he went to bed at night. There was still a lot of room for improvements that would save many lives.

The malaria experiments were not near as exciting, but more far reaching in the results of the findings. He would assist Blome and Brandt in infecting the prisoners with malaria and drawing blood samples from each patient every morning. They often incubated the malaria parasite within the bodies of their sickest patients with repeat injections so they would always have a fresh supply of infectious blood. It was a well-known fact that malaria was one of the principle diseases that broke out in German-occupied countries, so in their experiments they studied its full effects if left untreated and how different experimental medicines affected it. The

patients often died either from the malaria or from the experimental drugs, but there was always valuable data to be collected.

Whether his experiments were ethical never crossed Doctor Reinhardt's mind, everything he did was for the good of the country and all the soldiers fighting on the frontlines. Any information he could glean and apply to the situations that soldiers faced was worth any cost. Jews, Gypsies, gays, clergy, they were all serving a glorious purpose to expand the knowledge of the modern world. If they were not of any worth to the world, then the least they could do was help save those that were. One patient, Father Leo Miechalowski, survived both the freezing experiments and nine rounds of experimental antibiotics used to treat malaria. The knowledge gained from that one man alone could save hundreds of German lives. Walter knew this is where he belonged; this was his duty to help his people.

Many of the prisoners were not fit enough for the experiments at Dachau, so the euthanasia ward was always busy. If they were too weak for work or unfit for experimentation then guards either shot the prisoners or sent them to the euthanasia wards with the rejects from other experimental departments.

It was mid-January and Dr. Reinhardt was doing a round in the euthanasia ward after finishing his experiments for the day. He typically enjoyed the ward because it gave him time to process his findings amid the mindless task of giving the chloroform injections. A sickly Jew, an emaciated Gypsy, an uncooperative cleric, they were just numbers in a line of beds that needed to be cleared. Sometimes his mind wandered, and he wondered how to reconcile his duty here with the appreciation for life taught to him as a child. He

reasoned though that these creatures were dead anyway, simply brought here because they were too weak to dig their own graves and could not make the trek out to the forest. Some of them did not even protest, just lying there, waiting for the end. Elderly, children, youth, adults, they all met the same fate at the end of his syringe.

This particular day there was an unusually large number of children due to the recent arrival of more prisoners. There were many more girls, probably because the boys were still fit enough for hard labor. He had five or six syringes in his pocket and started down a row of beds near the back of the room. His first was a small girl with tangled, ratty hair; she cried and did not even require the full syringe. Next was an emaciated teenager; she did not protest and might have already been dead. And so he went, administering the dosage to each, never stopping to think or feel.

He reached the last bed and found a small boy curled up in a ball. The boy was sobbing and crying, too young to work but too old to stay with his mother. He readied his last syringe and leaned down over the boy. He was shaking, his face contorted and eyes clenched shut as tears squeezed out the sides. Walter took the boys arm in his hand and squeezed his bicep a few times. Slowly, the syringe entered the boys arm. Walter's thumb rested on the plunger, ready to deliver the heart stopping medicine.

The boy opened his eyes and looked up at Walter. Walter looked back into the boy's blue eyes and paused. Time seemed to stand still. He realized it was the same blue he saw in his own son's eyes, framed by the same brown hair and freckles. Thoughts raced through Walter's mind. Why had he not pushed the plunger? The other captives

were already cooling in their beds. This was no different from the hundreds of other times he had worked in the ward. The boy would not survive the work camps, let alone the experiments. He was a worthless Jew that needed to be put down.

Walter glanced away; he took a deep breath and applied pressure to the plunger. Then, he looked back and stopped. The boy's face reminded him so much of his son, Thomas... Once when he was very young Thomas had run away from home. When Walter found him, at the park, it was dark and Thomas was terrified and alone. The same loneliness and fear that Walter had seen in his son's eyes then he now saw in this young boy, except this boy had not chosen to run away from home - he had been taken.

Walter's experiments saved lives, they were necessary. The workers in the camp served their purpose too. But what purpose did this serve? Did his death have value? How did killing this little boy serve the great and mighty Germany?

He removed the syringe from the boy's arm and placed it back in his white lab coat. He withdrew from his other pocket the half-filled syringe from the first girl and placed it in the boy's other arm. He slowly injected the chloroform into the boy just as he had done for the other five patients. The boy collapsed, his body stiff from crying was finally relaxed and the fear in his face finally gone.

Walter took the boy in his arms and walked through the emergency exit next to the boy's bed. As the alarm rang out throughout the compound, he told some soldiers passing by that a man in the ward had a gun and was threatening Doctor Blome. The soldiers set off at a dead sprint and no one questioned him again.

As he neared the exit to the compound, he noticed that the most recent group of soldiers had left their jeeps unattended. With the boy still in his arms, he opened the door and climbed in. His father's instructions resounded in his head as he hot-wired the jeep. It had been a long time since he spent those hours in the garage with his father, but his hands still knew what to do.

The guard at the gate stopped him and demanded to know his business. Walter hoped he had not seen him hot-wire the jeep and replied he was simply taking the body to the graves in the woods so he could be buried with his mother. The soldier glared at him, but motioned for him to drive on through - such a thing was not uncommon with new doctors. The alarm had stopped behind him and an eerie quiet had befallen Duchau. Walter drove past the gate, his engine the only sound on the compound. When Walter reached the woods, instead of turning left where the graves were, he kept on driving. The soldier began yelling at him and another engine roared to life as they began chasing after him.

Walter took a hand off the steering wheel and felt the boy's neck. There was nothing there. No pulse, the boy was dead. Walter hit the steering wheel in frustration. He should not be dead! He had given the boy the smaller dose of chloroform, Walter only intended to knock him out not kill him! Then this chase was in vain, he had run away with nothing to show for it except a dead body he had tried to keep alive. What was he thinking anyway? Where could they have gone? What would he have done?

He could lie. It might not end his career. He would have to leave of course, go back home to his wife who would be so ashamed she probably would

not speak to him. He would ruin the Reinhardt family name. He fingered the syringe in his pocket. There was another option.

Several jeeps were behind him now, the soldiers shouting at him to turn around. He glanced at the speedometer and back at the road. He began to slow down. Being alive and facing the consequences was better than dying a coward's death. He reached over and touched the boy's soft brown hair. He looked so peaceful curled up on the seat, as his own son did when he slept. There was something so innocent about a sleeping child. Now the boy would never have to wake up and face the terrible reality of a world that deemed his life unfit to live. There was so much pain in the world, so much death, and he had only added to it. He had killed many in the name of ambition and foolish pride. To save the lives of his own people he had murdered countless others. Ashamed, Walter took the syringe from his pocket and stuck the needle in his thigh. He pushed the plunger down hard. He grew cold as the darkness closed in, and he thought he heard the little boy start to cry...

"I swear by Apollo Physician, by Asclepius, by Health, by Panacea, and by all the gods and goddesses, making them my witnesses, that I will carry out, according to my ability and judgment, this oath and this indenture. ...I will use my treatment to help the sick according to my ability and judgment, but never with a view to injury and wrongdoing. I will keep pure and holy both my life and my art. In whatsoever houses I enter, I will enter to help the sick, and I will abstain from all intentional wrongdoing and harm.... Now if I carry out this oath, and break it not, may I gain forever

*reputation among all men for my life and for my
art; but if I transgress it and forswear myself, may
the opposite befall me."*

– Oath of Hippocrates

THE LAST LEAF

HUNG VU



YOU CAN'T SEE THE WIND



CHELSEA KEITH



OUR COSMIC ADDRESS

JACQUELINE ANTWI-DANSO

I first came across the phrase “cosmic address” while reading *The Cosmic Perspective*, a textbook required for my Physics class. The book explains the concept in terms of our location in space. However, I saw it differently, as a new realization of our identity and interaction with the world outside Earth as humans. The world as we know it today is a melting pot of different cultures, beliefs, and races. It’s so diverse that stark differences are evident in the *modus vivendi* – culture wise – of people from even the same nation. I am of the opinion that differences in themselves are neutral. It is what we do with or about those differences that accounts for the distinction between good and bad actions.

April 1989 Madrid, Spain

Twenty minutes had passed, and no waiter was paying attention to Ms. Asempapa. It was as though she was invisible, a non-entity. She walked up to the counter, and explained her plight. The manager slowly turned his attention back to the computer screen, his eyes and countenance unable to hide the fury that was steadily brewing in him, almost as if it was a taboo for an African to demand equal treatment.

September 2007 Rabat, Morocco

The dog, the cans, the unintelligible words my brain was trying to process...they all didn’t make sense. Those attacks could not have been on racial basis; Moroccans were Africans too, weren’t they? Was it because of our skin color?

July 2013 Geneva, Switzerland

It was a beautiful summer day and some family members and I were spending time together at a restaurant near Lake Geneva. We found an empty table and gravitated towards it, eager

to move away from the rays of the scorching summer sun. Immediately, four white men sitting at the adjacent table looked at us in disgust, got up and moved to a table at the far left corner of the enclosed area.

Stories of discrimination like mine and my mother's are now prosaic. Hate crimes such as genocide and manslaughter are committed by the second. The Rwandan genocide of 1994 marked the brutal deaths of about a million souls. An FBI report states, "In 2011, U.S. law enforcement agencies reported 6,222 hate crime incidents involving 7,254 offenses, according to our just-released *Hate Crime Statistics*." Darn it. Those statistics don't even matter. *After all, those things have happened already.*

I like to think of the situation this way: what if extraterrestrial life did exist? What if the human race was being threatened by an alien entity whose technological and intellectual prowess exceeded ours by far? Would it matter if someone were white, black, Asian, African, physically challenged or gay? Would we set aside our differences and fight together? Or watch our fellow humans die as the aliens brutally attacked them? Funny enough, such wars are actually in existence. Look around you. Global warming and new strains of vaccine-resistant pathogens are on the rise. Our population has increased exponentially over the centuries since we came into existence, and the Earth now appears too small to hold us. Water shortages lead people to their rather unexpected and painful deaths and there is a steady increment in the number of shantytowns globally. These 21st century problems can be classified as extraterrestrial; they are new to us. But what do we see? Nonchalant, indifferent attitudes to other people's worries because some are affected and others not. And we're losing...we're losing slowly, but surely.

The farther away we look in distance, the further back we look in time.

If other beings existed in the Andromeda Galaxy and they tried to observe planet Earth, they would see it as it looked 2.5 million years ago, which is, according to evolutionary history, about the time *Homo erectus* made his star appearance. I bet they would see our ancestors engaging in different activities, trying to learn about the world in which they found themselves, working for survival and sustenance. These are the very things we, in the 21st century, do on a daily basis: scientists research day and night, trying to find answers and end up with new questions; nutritionists and dietitians focus on the food that sustains us, security personnel work towards protecting us.

Our cosmic address is not just a representation of location, but of identity. We are the human race, and our differences should contribute to our richness and not fuel discord.

Universe
 Local Supercluster
 Local Group
 Milky Way
 Solar System
 Earth
 Human.

VENICE MAN

KATIE COOKE



WHERE THEY WERE GOING:

A SHORT STORY IN THE STYLE OF
FLANNERY O'CONNOR

ALEXANDRA HARVEY

The old man wanted to get to Tennessee as fast as possible. He hadn't been since he was a very young man and was holding on to a secret wild hope that visiting now would somehow turn back the hands of time. They'd been trundling along for about five hours and he had taken every opportunity along the way to remind everyone that they were running on a tight schedule.

"If I was drivin' this thing, I wouldn't be botherin' with all this speed limit business. D'you even see any other cars out here on this miserable road? That's 'cause everyone else has sense enough to hurry up 'n' git where they're tryna git'!" The bus driver drove along silently without so much as a glance in the old man's direction.

"Lookit that! If you'd-a taken that road we could-a shaved at least fifteen minutes off our whole trip! Don't you know us folks have places to be? It's starting to seem like we ain't gonna make it where we're goin' at all!" The bus driver's eyes continued to remain focused on the road ahead of him.

Discouraged, the old man made his way back to his seat and looked around the small bus for someone to commiserate with.

"Dontcha think we could be goin' a little faster?" he more insisted than asked anyone who would listen. Finally, a severe looking woman in a stiff black dress a few rows back took the bait. Slipping her reading glasses into her Bible to hold her place, she closed it and leaned forward.

"You know, I've been saying that since we got on! Haven't I, Ernest?" Ernest, a wiry young man in a faded black suit that may have been nice once, nodded solemnly.

His confidence bolstered by the newfound support, the old man rose unsteadily and once again approached the bus driver.

"Hey driver, that lady back there agrees me! In fact, I bet everybody on here agrees with me. They just aren't brave enough to say it. You need to get this thing movin'!" This time, the bus driver looked up from the road. He didn't say anything, but he didn't need to. There was a deep anger, almost malevolence, in his stare and it was enough to send the old man directly back to his seat, still feeling chills running down his spine.

Frightened and slightly annoyed with himself for not standing his ground, the old man settled back into his chair and jammed his worn and dusty cap down over his eyes. The rickety sway of the bus lulled him into a daydream about a girl he had once known back in Tennessee. For a while he forgot about where he was going altogether. Just as he was leaning in to kiss her, the sound of a throat clearing invaded his perfect vision. Not wanting his fantasy to end, the old man pretended not to hear and threw in a snore for good measure.

When he continued to feign unresponsiveness, the interrupter cleared their throat again and eventually he felt a timid tap on his shoulder. Knowing he couldn't keep up the act much longer, the old man forced himself to jolt up like someone being awoken from a deep sleep and turned to see who would dare tear him away from his reverie.

He was surprised to find the culprit to be the quiet woman who had been sitting across the aisle from him. She had big eyes and a thin angular face jutting out below a limp and poorly formed brown bun. He looked at her for a moment and after concluding that his dream woman was far more interesting than anything this girl could possibly have to say, he leaned his head back against the window and started to go back to sleep.

"Sir!" There was a note of desperation in her voice. "I'm very sorry to bother you sir, but the bus driver has asked all the passengers to step out of the vehicle for a moment."

"Another pit stop? Jesus!" The old man pushed himself up in his seat and peered around. He reddened when he saw he was the last person on board and grudgingly began his trek to the front of the bus.

"Don't you people realize an old man needs his sleep?" he asked no one in particular as he shuffled down the steps, trying to regain his composure. He stopped abruptly at the bottom of the stairs when he saw that the other seven passengers had been lined up along the road. The bus driver, standing in front of the trembling row with his back to the old man, looked almost impossibly large now that he wasn't cramped behind the wheel. The driver turned when he heard the old man try to run back into the bus and gestured with a Luger he must have had stashed in the glove box for the old man to join the rest of the passengers.

For the first time, the bus driver spoke.

"Now that our guest of honor has arrived, it's time for you to listen to me. I've held my tongue this entire journey. I have endured your constant barrage

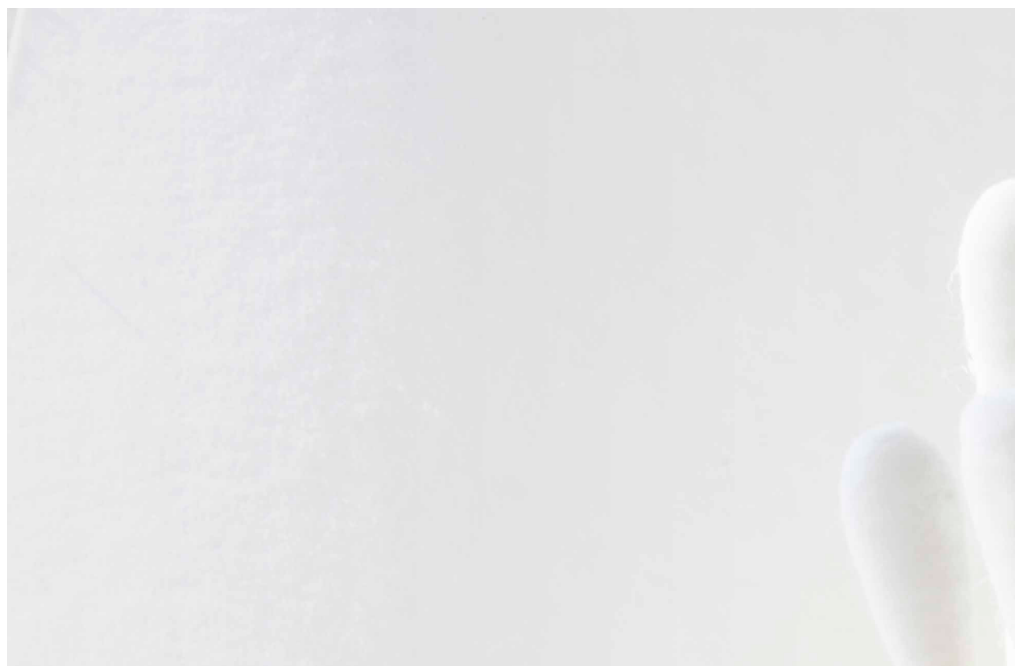
of criticisms, your torrents of complaints, and your generally intolerable company. I've-

"What are you going to do with that thing?" the woman in black shrieked, interrupting the driver's speech. She was clutching her Bible to her heaving chest with one hand and clinging to Ernest's tattered coat sleeve with the other, her short nails digging deep into both. The driver looked down at the gun in his hand and seemed to consider it for a moment before walking down the line and firing it right through the Bible point blank into her chest.

"You all really are in a hurry to get where you're going, aren't you? You couldn't even wait to hear why I'm sending you there." He laughed to himself and looked pointedly at the old man.

"Don't worry. I'll make sure this journey doesn't take long."

Seven more shots rang out in quick succession and the bus driver got back in his bus and kept going.



CAROLINE HARDWICK



IRON SHIP

EMMA GRANDALL

The Pacific Ocean is the ship's
accomplice as it navigates the
rough waters. It is the path to leave.
He was not a stranger. The cotton
sweater was my comfort, like laying
on a couch while it rains like an old
spluttering sprinkler. Memories are
like the Northern Lights. One short year felt
like a fast cruise down Kuykendahl, sky
blue Elantra with windows down to
their limit. That ship of cold iron
has abandoned the loved here on the
permeable shore. One year was like
a red velvet cake. I am at the
meniscus of a graduated
cylinder. Burdens are too heavy,
weighing down the pulley. Words are like knives
that leave my skin in shards. Lions roar
with lies and no demands for justice.
Iron ship drowns, waters pour into
drinking lungs and kidnaps the victim.

FURIOUS

KYRA LINDHOLM

Like firecrackers, the words pop and explode on my
tongue
Ricocheting between the black cavern and white wall
Confetti streams out from my eyes in iridescent waves
Blinding my blue-green orbs until I can no longer blink
Meanwhile, the lights glow not inside your home
But the bright red plume of the tailless bird flies from the
balcony
Have a care, love, when you plummet
Sinking stones break careless tongues
So pluck the thorns off each rose and plant them anew
Too sweet, the bitter moon cries its diamond eyes out
While the tailless bird resonates with its absence
In a stream of consciousness, the riverbeds run dry
Curled up in your driveway like a forgotten sentry
While the weeds wind within my weary frame
Your silver smirk slips slowly sideways
Memories melt in a malignant medley of mistakes
Skulls sing their sweet symphonies in synchronicity
Forgotten fables flood the forefront of my future
And the saga continues through the gate of bones
Heartless hero bring me home
Oh please, take me where the stars still simmer
There's a theater of thankless traitors trying to take them
away
When we wonder at the world, the wanderers wait
Wait for the wonderers to reconcile with their wicked
ways
Useless and undeniable until understood and uttered
I miss the intrigue and ideals of our insightful interactions
Even more I miss the exhilarating evidence of our
endearments
Excommunicate me not from this house of hope and
heartache
Hold me down though my heart strives to haul me
higher
Keep me calm while my sternum catches fire
And yet fan the flames with your insistent chatter

(POEM CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

When it finally consumes me, I have no choice but to go
Follow the smoke trails over the rainbow
Where it ends, so goes the sun onward
Truer lights sparkle above the cloudless skies
Truer than ever shone in your eyes
So leave me behind in the wake of lustrous flotsam
Ocean floors are riddled with shards of decimated stars
Those that plummeted from above the heavens bear
 no weight
They cannot support my wingless form
Lower me down softly lest you wake the dead
Down past the deceit and deadly dialect
Past the temptations of the troubled
There, let me sleep, let me dream forever.

NOSALTRES

RACHEL GAUSEY

Terracotta towers
spindle upwards
into Barcelona blue,
the windows watch
us watching history
move across walls
in stony stillness, a
cathedral-weight awe
on our hearts. Yet

we wince at orange
cranes criss-crossing
our view, mechanical
whirring consumes
the guide's raspy
words, dirt swirling

in our eyes. Discomfort,
discontent, we vow
to someday return
at completion—
impossible: Gaudi's
cranes are constant,
his blueprint a mere

beginning, for pockets
of hallelujahs are cut
in imperfection,
singing glory with
an honest voice.

ONE MORE



REBECCA RENEE SEMIK



HOW TOMMY GOT A PAPER CUT

ELLE CARNLEY

Tommy always felt like a princess.

Even when her mom cried and she had to hide her flamingo-colored fingernails. Even when her feet ached to twirl in dizzying circles with her prince. Or princess, she wasn't picky. She might even accept a peasant like Aladdin, as long as she got to be a princess. Princesses always got their happily ever after, right?

Mommy and Daddy tried to explain. She watched their faces go sad and angry and tired all at once, words falling from their frustrated lips like stones. It hurt when they told her she was a boy. That a boy could never be a princess.

They trimmed her fiery hair short. When she was six and lost her two front teeth on the same day, they asked her if she wanted to keep the tiny tokens of childhood in a blue box or a green box. Tommy chose a blue one, even though she had really wanted pink.

Even if Mommy and Daddy didn't understand, Tommy knew they still loved her. They read to her every night, and tickled her, and refused to let her stay up past bedtime. Everything parents were supposed to do, they did.

She noticed the meaningful looks they sometimes gave each other, the exasperated smiles. But she chose to ignore those.

-

Tommy liked sports. She liked the thrill of the chase and the satisfaction of scoring a goal, despite the grass stains and the bruises. But she didn't like the way teams were chosen – boys on one, girls on the other.

It wasn't fair. She belonged with the girls. They smelled better and smiled more.

Instead she was shuffled over to the boys' team, miserable and sullen as she watched them pick their noses and scoff at her pink socks. The names they called her stung. She watched her parents smile weakly at her, trying to give her courage.

Courage like Mulan and Ariel had. Courage to keep her head up and press on, no matter what the others said. She ground her teeth and waited patiently for the whistle.

When Tommy scored the winning goal, her smile was brighter than any princess's crown.

-

Lockers slammed, sneakers squealed, and male voices cracked and boomed in equal measure. The chilly cement smelled permanently of stale sweat and pre-teen angst: the unmistakable stench of middle school.

Tommy was stuffing her socks into her bag and turning to leave when a voice made her jump.

"Hey, bud. How's it going?"

The familiarity surprised her. Gripping the strap of her duffel bag with white knuckles, Tommy shook her hair out of her eyes and looked up.

Even more surprising was the stranger's friendly, droopy-eyed grin. The corners of Tommy's mouth quirked upwards, an involuntary response.

"I'm, uh, good. Tired."

She searched the boy's serene face for hostility and found none. One of his caterpillar eyebrows rested higher than the other in a permanent expression of incredulity. Beneath them, laughter lit the soft storm clouds of his eyes. All in all, the guy seemed about as aggressive as a hippie.

"I feel ya, man. Ugh, I'm exhausted. Can you buh-lieve Coach let the girls do those half-assed knee push-ups today? I'm just plain insulted. 'The fairer sex,' my left nut. And oh yeah, I'm Kit."

Tommy laughed. It felt strange to hear the sound echo off the bare cinderblock walls.

"Tommy." She smiled in the direction of Kit's ear.

"Bro, you've got to learn some eye contact. I'm not gonna kill you."

"You sure about that?" Tommy's joke fell flat and she winced, the duffel bag suddenly growing heavy on her shoulder.

To Kit's credit, he only blinked and launched right back into his rant against their P.E. coach's system of oppression.

Tommy watched Kit's hands illustrate points as he talked. She never let on how grateful she was that Kit always stayed a good distance away, never infringing on what Tommy's mom liked to call her "personal bubble."

People crowding close to Tommy made her uncomfortable, especially somewhere as supposedly private as the locker room. It was an unspoken—okay, maybe sometimes very vocally enforced—guy code that nobody looked at someone else's junk in there. But Tommy never had a problem keeping her eyes

respectfully averted from other boys' bodies. It was her own that always held her horrified gaze hostage.

Of course, there were no mirrors in the locker room. But every time she looked down, she was riveted by her flat, peach-fuzz chest and jutting hipbones. The arrow of her torso and knobby hairy legs sent her breakfast surging back up her esophagus towards her unwelcome Adam's apple.

Every time she pulled on a wrinkled t-shirt for practice, her knuckles scraped the flat plane of her chest and she shuddered. Tommy often imagined herself softer, smoother, rounder. In her mind, all those annoying angles vanished.

-

Her sophomore year of high school, Tommy tried out a lot of manly crap and found it wanting. She grew a beard—a pretty successful one for a teenager, actually—but more often than not she wanted to claw it off. Partly because beards are just itchy, as Kit pointed out once.

She mouthed off in class, to girls, and even on one fateful occasion to her unamused parents. She only brought a pencil to school and instantly regretted it when her algebra teacher decided to give a pop quiz written on notebook paper. She laughed at dumb jokes, kissed girls, and tried her first beer. It tasted like piss.

But the adrenaline of soccer matches made her feel alive and comfortable. Pounding down the soccer field with sweat stinging her eyes, covered in bruises and kicking viciously at other players, made her smile like nothing else. Her small build let her weave in and out of the fray and score the unexpected goals, which were always the best kind.

Her first girlfriend cheered for Tommy at every game. Chelsea was okay-looking, with muddy brown eyes and a mouth as wide as her whole face, but her rack was great.

So her teammates said, anyway. Tommy personally admired the graceful curve of Chelsea's neck and the confidence in her stride—even in wedges on the uneven grass. She always remained strictly a fan, never once expressing a desire to risk serious injury out on the field. Instead, Chelsea took pride in shrieking increasingly vulgar insults at the other team, all from her throne in the prime section of the bleachers reserved for players' friends and family.

That was the persistent question always lurking in the back of Tommy's mind every time Chelsea swooped in for a peck on the cheek. All high school labels aside, was Chelsea really her girlfriend?

When Chelsea leaned a little too far over the table on their third date, exposing the lacy turquoise edge of her bra, Tommy struggled to put a name to the cart wheeling sensation in her stomach. Was that sudden heady fizz of delight attraction? Or was it the sticky stirrings of envy?

She figured it out the first time they kissed for real. Her heartbeat drowned out everything, even the smell of Chelsea's perfume. Definitely attraction, then. When their lips met, Tommy ran her hand down the smooth skin of Chelsea's back, making the brunette giggle.

"You're gorgeous," Tommy blurted, ducking her head to hide a blush.

Chelsea beamed and Tommy noticed her bright pink lipstick was smudged.

"Thanks, you too!"

-

"Hey, faggot!"

From the way the slur knocked the breath from Tommy, it almost seemed a physical blow. She hunched her shoulders and kept her gaze trained on the table. By now the word was as familiar as math homework and the tasteless goop served in the cafeteria. So it shouldn't have stung. But it did. She closed her eyes and took a deep breath, knowing that if she failed to respond her casual tormenter would leave soon anyway.

But the dude-bro and his slicked down curls didn't seem to want to leave. He crossed his arms and smirked, confident in his malice.

"Saw you at practice today. I didn't know they let fags like you on the team." He stared pointedly at Tommy's pink beaded friendship bracelet, which Kit and Chelsea had teamed up to make.

Tommy's jaw felt like it would crack, she was clenching her teeth so hard. Everything she'd ever wanted to say to the faceless horde of ignorant bullies she'd encountered since elementary school welled up and left a sour taste in her mouth. She bit her tongue on purpose and fingered the bracelet. Maybe that would keep the words from pouring out.

A loud slam nearby caused Tommy to flinch. Then she realized Chelsea had jumped up, fire burning in her eyes, and slammed her binder down on the lunch table.

"Hey, Matt. Why don't you just go away, you dumb fuck? I was your Physics tutor, so I mean it when I say you're never even gonna graduate. I hope, when you're cleaning toilets in a couple years, that you

wonder why you decided to be so hateful and rude to my friend. And just FYI, Tommy's more of a man than you'll ever be." Face flushed, she paused to catch her breath. "So get the hell away from us, okay?" A predatory smile.

Chelsea's unrelenting grin soon drove the confused dude-bro to retreat—not without preserving some of his dignity by muttering a few slurs about Chelsea for good measure, of course.

"Oooh, me too! Me too!" Kit raised his hand and bounced up out of his chair, glaring a hole in Matt's back with surprising intensity. He almost managed to stand up all the way, but Tommy held up a hand.

"Don't bother. Your cookie's getting cold," Tommy pointed out.

Kit's eyes widened in alarm and he collapsed back into the hard plastic chair. "I mean, violence never solves anything, right?"

-

On one of those dreaded days when Tommy couldn't bring herself to get out of bed, she laid there curled up with a book until a knock like an erratic drumbeat startled her out of a gloomy fog.

Kit barged in without waiting for an invitation.

"Dude, what's up? You and I had a stupid school thing to present today, doofus. I know you're not sick – I'm the one with all the health problems in this friendship." He brandished an inhaler like a sword.

Tommy flushed to the roots of her hair and wished she wasn't a redhead for the thousandth time. She didn't want to admit she'd been too listless to move

for over ten hours now. That this was the fourth time in many weeks she couldn't face the world. How pathetic that she was almost eighteen years old—a real life adult!—and still hiding from her problems. She scratched her head in a weak attempt to hide her cherry complexion.

Which was a mistake, she realized only a moment too late, as Kit grew unusually silent. His eyes jumped from Tommy's raised arm—far more exposed in a loose tank than it ever was at school—to the stricken look on her face.

The long, pink scars along the underside of Tommy's arm burned like brands. She quickly lowered it.

"Um, Kit, I—"

"You okay, man?" Kit wasn't smiling anymore, but his eyes were soft.

Tommy looked up into his face, heart pounding, and stumbled over her words. "Could you, uh... Not call me 'man'? Or 'dude,' for that matter?" She smiled weakly and rubbed her arms.

Kit walked over to her bed and made to sit down. "May I?"

Tommy bit her lip and nodded. The mattress squeaked and sank beneath Kit's lanky body, close enough, but not quite breaching her personal bubble. This time, though, Tommy didn't need distance. She leaned into his warmth, laid her head on his shoulder, and sighed.

Kit patted her head. "Is this about the princess thing?"

Tommy groaned. "That again? That's the least of my problems."

"No need to get your, uh, panties in a wad.

Remember when we drove down to Disney World last summer? You were obsessed with all the princesses. You kept staring but you wouldn't go get their autographs until I made you stand in line." Kit squeezed Tommy's hand, taking care not to touch the long, pale reminders of sadness and self-hatred that encircled her wrist.

"Ariel's your favorite, right?"

Tommy laughed and squeezed back. "Yeah. She is."

The strong, curious, adventurous mermaid who wanted something different and scary and exciting for herself. The one whose family didn't understand. The transformation princess.

"So if you ever need to talk about girly shit, I'm here. I won't know what the hell you're saying, probably. But hey, I've got two sisters. I'm used to it." Kit bumped her playfully on the shoulder. Then he added with a smirk, "You're still not my type, though."

"Ditto, asshole," Tommy quipped back.

Her blush was now a warm, happy glow. She tickled Kit until he threatened to pull her hair out, and neither of them went back to school that day.

-

Everyone mocked the cheesy disco ball and streamers at their high school prom, calling it an unwanted throwback to the '80s, but no one really minded in the end.

"Prom is never as fun or special as everyone wants it to be," Kit mused when Tommy and Chelsea showed up. "Actually, I take that back. No one expects prom to be awesome."

A short, perky girl who had been on student council since freshman year glared as she glided past them. Kit just grinned and blew a kiss.

Chelsea snorted and grabbed Tommy's hand, almost missing it in the far-too-dim lighting. "I love this song! C'mon!" She pulled her to the dance floor.

Tommy hated the song—a terrible remix of an overplayed pop song with added nauseating dubstep—but she complied. Chelsea saw the look on her face, recognized it as pretentious, and stuck out her tongue.

"Oh, that's fine, just leave your longtime friend all by his lonesome," called Kit, looking perfectly content to hover around the punch table and chat up the wallflowers.

Tommy loosened her collar, for once barely noticing the stubble trying stubbornly to sprout again, and twirled Chelsea around until they were both dizzy. The lights flew past, winking in and out of existence like short-lived stars with every turn.

Tommy soon forgot the irritating chorus of the song and threw everything into the dance until Chelsea was screaming with laughter. She elbowed people out of the way to create enough space for a dramatic tango, marching her date across the floor with a dopey grin on her face.

By the time the DJ finally decided to play some slower songs, both Tommy and Chelsea were exhausted. They draped their arms loosely across each other's shoulders and waists and just swayed in place, leaning on each other more out of weariness than intimacy.

Chelsea wiped a sweaty curl from her forehead and grimaced.

"I bet I look so gross right now."

Tommy shook her head and weakly poked Chelsea's chest where it was spilling out of her tight blue sheath dress.

"Nah, you still look hot," she joked. Chelsea head-butted her in the neck in response.

"You know, you could totally rock this dress," Chelsea mumbled into the shoulder of Tommy's sweat-soaked undershirt.

"I could?" Tommy grinned, realizing that they would graduate in a week and it no longer mattered who overheard them.

"Duh. Your legs may be hairy, but they're long. And that butt, damn. It's pretty nicely shaped." Chelsea patted it appreciatively.

"Blue's not really my color, though," Tommy protested. "I'm more of a pink kinda gal."

She patted her necktie, which had an ugly flamingo pattern on it. Mom hadn't wanted to buy her a dress just yet, so instead she'd bought a tie in her daughter's favorite color as a compromise. Tommy's suit jacket was black, but she'd thrown it onto a chair a while ago and there was no telling where it had ended up.

-

The envelope gave Tommy a paper cut, but her pounding heartbeat drowned out the pain. She quickly unfolded the letter and stared at it, momentarily unable to breathe.

"Well?" Kit demanded, never one to beat around the bush. Chelsea hovered nearby too, ready to congratulate or comfort as the situation warranted.

Tommy clapped a hand over her mouth, tears in her eyes. "Oh. Omigod."

"Jesus, woman! Did you get the internship, or what?"

Tommy grabbed her best friends and picked them both up in a bear hug, squeezing with all her might. This was a feat, considering her three-inch heels. She beamed and bellowed, wild and unrestrained: "I'm going to Disney World!"

-

Tommy carefully arranged her wig—the color of maraschino cherries—and gave her purple seashell top one last tug. She had never felt more beautiful.

The sweltering Florida sun beat down on the crowds outside, but here in Ariel's Grotto it was dark and cool. She waited, smiling; a serene and benevolent goddess surveying her tiny kingdom.

Even after almost a month of working at the park, Tommy's stomach fluttered before every performance. She closed her eyes to center herself and absently traced the delicate web of thin, pale lines on her arms.

She remembered her friends waving goodbye at the airport. How Chelsea had drawn a bikini on her t-shirt as a joke. Kit, of course, had showed up ten minutes before boarding and shoved a giant bag of cotton candy in her face. When she'd wondered if she could take it on the plane, Kit had snapped, "They'd better. That shit's delicious."

When she'd first stepped foot in the park, Tommy had caught a strong whiff of candied sugar and she hadn't been able to decide whether to laugh or cry.

"You ready, T?" asked the guy in charge of opening the doors.

Tommy could hear the excited screams of children outside. She could relate; every atom of her being wanted to shriek with happiness too.

She nodded, and all heaven broke loose.

CHIP ON YOUR SHOULDER

JUSTINE GRACE

Get over
That knot in your stomach
That twinge in your heart
That tear in your soul.

Running around with a
Tether to the past
won't get you anywhere.
Your neck yanked in reverse,
Chained to the past.

But do my words even get across?
Can I cut your string,
Your rope,
And let you float to the present?

The grudge I mean to
Untie you from is entrenched
In the past.
It drips with her perfume.
The current fails to catch.
You're beat back to the shore.

You're loaded with cargo.
A chip of what?
Wood?
Rock?
Her nail polish?

Do you even try to
Lighten your load?
Save yourself from sinking?

But you're no sailor.
You know nothing about
Buoyancy,
Archimedes,
And changing the keys.

And this grudge I try
To cast off
Is moored to the past
And the click of her heels

FLOAT ON



CHRISTINA CATTERSON



NO CAMBIARÍA NADA

RODRIGO AYALA

Si pudiera volver a comenzar, no cambiaría nada.
No cambiaría las tantas veces que te hice sentir importante.
No cambiaría las incansables veces que mi voz de tenor se sació de alegría con decirte un agitado "te amo."
No cambiaría nada.
No cambiaría las tantas estrelladas noches que en mis ojos se reflejó la chispa de tu sonrisa, y mucho menos las muchas tardes que a mis ansiedades llegó el sosiego de tu ligera caricia.
Volvería a vivir cada lucero que tu mano destelló a través de mi sien.
Volvería a ser un niño, a dejarme llevar por mis impulsos ahuyentando la celestial arpa de nuestra paz una tarde cualquiera, para opacarla con la bruma de una infantil rabieta.
Volvería a cuidarte.
Volvería a entender que los violines de Vivaldi son solamente música del rato comparados a la sinfonía de tu risa.
Volvería a deleitarme con tu presencia.
Si.
Volvería a ser feliz.

Si pudiera volver a comenzar, no cambiaría nada.
Puede ser...
No cambiaría los tantos infortunios que a mis dientes resquebraron con la falta de tu fuego.
No cambiaría las noches de desvelo que se convirtieron en el postre de mi cada vacía y fútil cena, hasta darme cuenta que el hambre que me carcomía no era de pan, sino de amor.
No cambiaría nada.
Volvería a cometer el error de perseguirte cuando debía dejarte cabalgar libremente al viento.
Volvería a escribirte los mil sonetos de amor que de mi pluma desprendieron, y que en vez de enamorarte, te cansaban los ojos.

Volvería a admirarte, a en tus manos enjaularme.
Volvería a construir en mi iluso pensamiento, un
radiante futuro en tu pecho para siempre.
Volvería a regalar mis sueños y mi corazón.
Si.
Volvería a regalarme.
Lo volvería a hacer todo. Por ti.

Si pudiera volver a comenzar, no cambiaría nada.
Creo.
No cambiaría los tantos martirios de mi alma por
robarte un beso.
No cambiaría los cabellos que perdí por encontrar
en mi cabeza la fórmula para revivir en ti, a la que
se desvaneció en el sinsabor.
No cambiaría nada.
Volvería a engañar a mis manos convenciéndolas
que no se han bañado de hiel, y que es cuestión
de tiempo que tu piel las vuelva a encontrar
dulces.
Volvería a buscarte, aun cuando tu espalda sea lo
único que con suerte, encuentre.
Volvería a ser tu insistente linterna guía de noche, aun
cuando en la oscuridad sea donde siempre
quieras permanecer.
Si ¡Ahora estoy seguro!
Volvería a encontrar entre las tinieblas, el tintero
escarlata que con mi nombre firmaría tantos versos
que en mi alma merodeaban durmientes.

Si pudiera volver a comenzar, no cambiaría nada.
¡Es cierto!
No cambiaría tu aliento frío y ausente que crucificaba
mis pasiones.
No cambiaría el funesto encuentro con el mercenario
caballero del olvido.
No cambiaría nada.
Volvería a morder tu recuerdo para que no se me
vaya de la memoria, sudando la aflicción de
perder en ti, la brújula en mi océano tempestuoso.
Volvería a atraparme en mi propio calabozo, para

apagar lo que en algún tiempo fue el sol de mi
mediodía.

Ahora no hay duda.

Volvería a vivirlo todo, por mí.

Si pudiera volver a comenzar y decidir, decidiría volver
a amarte, pero también decidiría volver a
extraviarte.

Decidiría que de mi vida te volvieras a desaparecer,
para que en mi lienzo pintase tantos poemas
como de tu corazón llovían inseguridades.

Sí.

Volvería a convertirme en el hombre que me
regalaste,

Y sin duda tras los años, con mi barba y pipa
regocijarme.

Volvería a decidir ya no buscarte, y en vez de eso a
mí encontrarme,

Para que con mis cicatrices de guerra enamore a la
doncella que endulzará en mí todas las penas.

Es definitivo.

No cambiaría nada.

No cambiaría agradecerte con mis canciones, y por
fin de mi alma canalizar todas las emociones.

Si pudiera volver a comenzar, no cambiaría nada.

Volvería a brotar estos últimos versos con perspicacia,

Y con ellos darte desde mi corazón por fin las últimas
gracias.

I WOULDN'T CHANGE A THING (ENGLISH TRANSLATION)

If I could start over, I wouldn't change a thing.
I would not change the times I made you feel important.
Or the countless times my strident voice was saturated
with elation, as I pronounced the words: "I love you."
I wouldn't change a thing.
I would not change the file of nights under the stars, in
which my eyes reflected the spark of your smile.
Needless to say, I would not change the bountiful
afternoons, in which a single stroke of your hand
drove my angst away.
I would revive every spark your fingers gleamed through
my loins.
I would be a child again, I would soon, let my impulses
drive me as I howl at the celestial harp of our serenity
any given afternoon, to let it fade in the haze of a
childish tantrum.
I would take care of you.
I would understand that Vivaldi's strings are just a melody
that dissipates at the sound of your laugh's symphony.
I would be captivated by your presence once more.
Yes.
I would be happy, again.

If I could start again, I wouldn't change a thing.
Maybe...
I would not change the many misfortunes that ground
my teeth with the absence of your flame.
I would not change the sleepless nights, in bed, that
became the dessert of my every empty and futile
supper, until I realized the hunger that overwhelmed
me was from love, not from bread.
I wouldn't change a thing.
I would make the same mistake of pursuing you, even
when I knew I should let you ride freely in the wind.
I would write the thousand sonnets that my pen
unleashed, which were meant to mesmerize you by
the love they carried, but instead, they only wearied
your eyes.

I would admire you; I would let you cage me in your
hands once more.
I would reconstruct in my reckless mind, the illusion of
a radiant future lying on your chest forever.
I would give away my heart and dreams once again.
Yes.
I would give myself in.
I would do everything again. Just for you.

If I could start again, I wouldn't change a thing.
I think.
I would not change the martyrdoms of my soul for
trying to steal a kiss from you.
I would not change the hairs I lost trying to find a
formula in my head for the elixir to resurrect in you,
that same one that vanished in an insipid love.
I would trick my hands into thinking that they have not
bathed in gall, making them believe that you will
be persuaded by time, to find them sweet again.
I would search for you once more, knowing I will only
find your back.
I would be the guiding torch of your nights, even
though you only wished to stay in the dark.
Yes, I am certain now!
I would find in the shadows, the scarlet feather with
which I would sign the many verses that waited to
be awakened in my soul.
If I could start again, I wouldn't change a thing.
It is clear now!
I would not change your cold and absent breath,
which crucified my passions,
No!
I would not change the ill-fated encounter with the
mercenary knight of oblivion.
I wouldn't change a thing.
I would hopelessly bite your memory so it would
not escape my conscious, sweating with affliction
the thought of losing with you, the compass for my
tempestuous sea.
I would lock myself in a dungeon of my own, to shut

down the light that was once my midday sun.
Now there is no doubt.
I would live it all again, just for me.

If I could start all over again and choose, I would
choose to love you, but I would also choose to
lose you once more.
I would choose that you vanish from my life again, so I
could paint in my empty canvas as many poems as
insecurities pour from your heart.
I would transform into the man you bestowed upon
me,
And as the years pass me by, I will find delight in my
beard and pipe.
I would choose to stop chasing you, and instead of
that, find myself,
So with my scars of war, I could seduce the maiden,
who would sweeten all my despairs.
It is definite.
I wouldn't change a thing.
I would compose all the ballads I wrote you, and
finally from my soul, liberate every ghoul.

If I could start again, I wouldn't change a thing.
I would pour these last verses with sagacity,
And with them, from my heart's opacity,
Express the last words of gramercy.

UNTITLED





BE STILL

LAURA CISNEROS

smoke and fire surrounding a falling
world, when skies grow dark and stars blink out,
sending desperately their last bursts of light.
and screams fill the air trying to choke you
where you stand, like a statue secure amidst
this chaos, as if time were stopped and all these
moments were merely memories,
small echoes of things you cannot see.

for there is always light in your eyes and
there is always a hope to be found in strength of
the strongest kind, when you are set and secure
in the destruction of the world
because of ever present help that lies
unseen, surrounding you like a house of refuge.

SCARS

TORI WHITLEY

I used to cut.

My skin yes
but that isn't as important.

What matters is I used to cut my Soul
I used to tear down my Spirit
flesh by flesh
fiber by fiber
down to my barren, forgotten bones.

I saw my soul and de-humanized her
she was of no importance
she did not matter
and I almost killed her.

On the outside, she seemed fine
happy
content
beautiful even
But that was not the case
she was a liar.
because she really was not okay.

she was dying.

And as the blood dripped from her side
her soul slowly dripped with it
like a steady waterfall of agony and self
hatred.

But this is no sad story.
My soul did not die.
I did not let her.

I was the author of my own sad story; I chose to
change it

GRASS STAINS

CLAIRE SHELTON

He lets himself imagine she is you.
The curve of her spine when she curls
into herself on top of his naked
mattress as he sits beside her,
tracing patterns on her palm with the tip
of his index finger. The little indentation
above her collarbone, deep like yours;
the twin dimples at the bottom of her back,
not so deep.

And sometimes when she's sleeping, he reaches
up and feels for the pulse in her neck.
If he closes his eyes he doesn't know the difference.

One day she'll wake up early, realize he's gone,
and find him kneeling before the slab of marble
embossed with your name and some numbers.
And when he hears her footsteps and pushes
himself up, she'll brush the flakes of grass from his knees
and scribble foreign words onto his forearm with her thumb.

Eventually he'll realize that he won't find you
buried beneath the skin of someone else,
but in sounds like snow crunching beneath boots
and the ocean inside a seashell
and that smell seconds before clouds give out.

OLD BLUE EYES

TRIP STARKEY

Each night between the sheets
Her body is the vase on the table
My eyes are the water beneath tulips

She hides in a cotton dress
Covered in sunflowers and sage
Watching me change in the mirror

I am the chair in the backyard
When she leaves I wait for her to come
Home in evening's purple light

She drops onto the bed
At night like a corpse in the river
Drinking up moonlight

She waltzes through the bedroom
With bread and water
And sings through this stillness

THE GOOD RACE

ASHLEY REA

Kiss Off

She really shouldn't have gone. But she did and now she's running through the icy dark Edinburgh streets, streetlights casting stark shadows on frosted cobbles. Running from cold black sheets and intertwined bodies, the squirming sinking discomfort. Running from cold looks, cold words, reluctantly dragging along her scalding hot shame. *Seven, seven for no tomorrow and*

They had sat cross-legged on the black bed in his dingy basement flat. He accused, she cried. Words poured down on her, questioning her faith, values, judgment; she struggled to stay afloat, clutching her faded bible to her chest like a life preserver. He mocked her for that too. She cried, and hated herself; hating that she lacked the courage to stand up and then hating that she couldn't respond to him with kindness. Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, right? *Eight, eight I forget what eight was for and*

She keeps running, circling the park across from the medieval university for the second time. "You're such a tease." She runs faster. "You led me on." She runs harder, almost a full out sprint now. It's late on this March Friday night, and the pubs are full, people inside watching the rugby game, cheering loudly as a blue-shirted player scores. Outside though it's quiet, just her ragged breathing and her iPod stuck on repeat. *Nine, nine, nine for a lost god and*

The air bites, thick with cigarette smoke, and she doubles over, vomits.

*Just someone who'd care to love
they hurt me bad they do it all the time*

The Middle

Another evening a world away, she sits, surveys her dad and Her, contemplating the pair through angry eleven-year-old eyes. The afternoon sun glares irately across the white-clothed patio table at the fashionable downtown café. He sits with Her, holding hands, and Ashley snaps. "You may be my dad, but I don't respect you. Or Her." Her bottom lip quivers as she restrains from blurting out the rest of her long-held tirade *I know you cheated on mom with Her and you always chose Her over us and she's awful, just awful.*

Lyne, the long-hated Her, strikes back in her pretentious French accent. "Well that is fine, we are better off without you anyway."

Ashley looks back at her dad, but the sun behind him obscures his face. The silhouette says nothing and takes a sip of water. Before he can rise to her defense, or worse, do nothing at all, Ashley surges up, knocking over her chair in her need to leave, to get away from it all. She hurdles the ornate metal railing around the *stupid fancy restaurant with its stupid fancy patio* and takes off downtown. She finds a broad concrete trail half a block away and settles into her stride, running from Her.

Soon her breath hitches and she can't hold back tears. Slumping down against a bench alongside the edge of the trail, she rocks back and forth, feeling betrayed but also embarrassed. *I shouldn't have run off. I should've been the bigger person. I can do it, I know I can.* She receives a few odd looks from passing cyclists and joggers—they stare confusedly, their workouts usually bereft of grief-stricken, thoroughly pissed off eleven-year-olds. She slowly catches her breath, *it takes some time, little girl you're in the middle of the ride* and with folded arms and chin raised, ventures back down the path. They're eating now, not even appearing concerned

and Ashley's torn between annoyance and rebellious pride, *you know you're doing better on your own/ doesn't matter if it's good enough for someone else*

I Saw the Light

"Let's take a walk," he suggests. "You know I love you—"

"This isn't one of those break-up speech walks, is it?" she jokes, kicking a pinecone down the cracked asphalt as they turn onto Rocky Branch Road.

He pauses awkwardly.

"Hunter?" her casual ease (property of the loved) abandoned, a wide-eyed question. His slumped apologetic shoulders answer. He talks, each word expanding the distance between them. *wandered alone*

He reaches out to touch her shoulder—she jerks away and then folds up, arms wrapped around her knees. She breaks down *no idea where the way out could be; worries and fear I claimed for my own* into gobby tears, her mascara leaking.

An old gold Cadillac drives up, slows, and the driver, an elderly lady in a lavender sweater, rolls down her window. Concerned, she calls out, "Dear, do you need a ride?"

Ashley, tearstained and hiccupping shakes her head.

"Well can I at least get you a tissue?"

Ashley gratefully accepts the proffered plastic package, opens it to show daisy printed Kleenex. As the lady drives off, she shakes a blue-veined fist at him. "You be nice to her. She is beautiful!"

He stands sheepishly. Ashley hides a smile under her daisy Kleenex. It's an uncomfortable walk home (for him at least) but she has to laugh. The lighter her heart, the more troubled he becomes. (No one wants to dump someone and then be thanked.) They reach 500 Leavalley Lane, and he bemusedly returns her high-five. She grins and turns without a backward glance.

She stops only to lace up worn running shoes and takes off into gray twilight. Rain falls softly (she loves its empathy) and she runs. Running away from the old familiar and into the new, running eagerly into a twilight full of possibilities. *Then came the sunrise and rolled back the night/ Praise the Lord, I saw the light*

Where the Streets Have No Name

One early December morning, she leaves home in the murky predawn light and sets off down Denton Tap road, making a left at the post office, past old town Coppell to the city's border. Coppell is a small town, not quite thirteen miles around, hemmed in by the creatively named North Lake and DFW airport. She loves these moments, running around the town's outskirts, where the entire city feels hers and hers alone. *I want to run/ I want to hide*

She passes through the business sector, big ugly gray buildings full of little companies in tiny cubicle offices and continues past Wagon Wheel Park to the old high school. The school was built in the 60s and looks it—it's a twisted labyrinth of corridors interspersed with pocket courtyards, but its claim to fame with the Coppell kids is its white-domed auditorium, whose slick curved roof reaches down to touch the sidewalk below. Every few years the city repaints it, using an extra slick solution meant to discourage climbers, but still the students come, taking great leaps and pulling their way up, pausing only to initial the top.

Climbing the west dome is one of those quirky accomplishments of Coppell, second only to running through Hell's Gate, the morbidly-named sewer system. As the sky grows lighter, fading from dark navy to blue-gray, she changes her mind and turns onto the alley behind Miss Melva's School of Dance (she can recall so many years spent in those pink walls before discovering this, this early morning freedom) and there it is. *I want to reach out/ and touch the flame*

Gazing at the slippery surface marred with black skid marks, she inhales deeply and takes a running start. It's hardly graceful, this scrambled clambering, limbs flailing, but she makes it to the top and splays out, panting, on the cool roof. She lies there, watching as the sky lightens and streams of purple and pink spread across the sky. It's her first time here alone *I want to tear down the walls/ that hold me inside* and she waits as the scrawled graffiti is illuminated by the rising sun, then slides down, tearing holes in her leggings and with muscles long since grown cold, begins to run back. *where the streets have no name*

Eye of the Tiger

It's convenient, really. The timing of this race every year—broken heart, splintered family, job rejection or more—all failure washed away in the baptismal splash of the brown bay waters at the Galveston Ironman 70.3 race. There's little that makes her feel more kickass than finishing the 1.2 mile swim, 56 mile bike and 13.1 mile run. It's certainly a sufficient cure for feeling life isn't in your control. Every year since she turned eighteen she's come to test her endurance, push back her limits. *Risin' up, back on the street*

This morning, the green-black waters lap against the edge of the pier as the wet-suited triathletes waddle like penguins to the edge. Some dive off in neat arcs, other fall ungainly, splashing in the surprisingly cold

water. Ashley prays that her goggles won't spring a leak and jumps down, shrieking at the impact. Their wave starts and the crowd of women powers into the churning water, swimming over top of each other to get ahead. Ashley chants in her head "Just keep swimming, just keep swimming."

Her first time competing here, she was passed (well actually, by many people) and by a cyclist singing to himself the entire time. This year she decides to follow his example and sings as she pedals—pushandpullandpushandpull— *went the distance now I'm back on my feet*. In case it's not clear she's a real contender, her cheap, baby blue polka-dotted bike has a bouquet of plastic flowers taped to its front. With 10 miles left to go, she regrets not taking the time to train for the bike properly but continues on. At mile 50 a family sits in plastic beach chairs—the father holds a sign, "Wave if you hate biking." She waves, sweaty and long-faced. *Face to face, out in the heat*
Went the distance now I'm not gonna stop

The run is brutal, but fun in a masochistic way. She chats with other racers as they painfully jog the half-marathon. Nathan is a former TCU grad, and current minister; Donna is running this for her sister; Karen is actually the mother of one of Ashley's residents. Bound together by an obsession with endurance triathlons the runners call out and cheer for each other. Ashley watches a white-haired, weathered man (seventy-two years old according to the race markings on his calves) completely destroy her in the last half mile. Encouraged, she pushes on, sprinting through the finish chute *Just a man and his will to survive*

World Spins Madly On

The streets stretch onwards, rows of shiny brick houses set under spreading oak trees, perfectly manicured lawns. It's too pristine, too neat and almost eerie because of it. A construction site with a yellow

tractor tearing up concrete in huge chunks mars the immaculate neighborhood, and more importantly, blocks her way home. She is forced to try a side street, then another, and another. *Just got lost and slept right through the dawn*

She winds up jogging across the Trinity River, utterly confused as to how she got there. She isn't entirely sure how she got to TCU either—what strange arrangement of circumstances led to the visit for a friend of a friend's percussion recital here—was it because of her old English teacher's suggestion or her mother's not-so-subtle brainwashing on not leaving Texas? She isn't sure, *let the day go by*

Once, when lost, she would've panicked, frantically wracking her brain: *Was it left on Wabash? Or Avondale?* She would've spun around on the spot, completely surrounded by suburbia. Which way did she come? *the whole world is moving and I'm standing still.* Self-conscious and cringing as the occasional car passes by, she would've attempted to jog somewhere—anywhere.

But now she just laughs, grins like an idiot on the corner of Lynncrest and Hartwood and basks in the afternoon sunlight. Not knowing in the slightest where she is going, she confidently runs there anyway. *And the world spins madly on*

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**"Think outside the
box, collapse the
box, and take
a fucking sharp
knife to it."**

-Banksy