

eleven40seven

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# eleven40seven

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“Every moment of light and  
dark is a miracle.”

**Walt Whitman**

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# Editor's Note

As we finish another issue I can only be happy if not a little sad. I have loved working on this issue. The work submitted has been phenomenal. At this point all there is left to say is a huge thank you to those of you have submitted, told others to submit and the amazing people who made this issue possible. You all have done a fabulous job. Thank you so much for all the amazing work and your devotion.

Sarah Dozier  
Editor -in-Chief

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# Takeshi Takahashi

## Failed Rhetoric

Is it a paradise lost  
Or a dream deferred?  
The shallow breath  
Of the impassioned playful  
In unison in sin  
Between the tousled sheets.  
Can't help but feel ashamed  
To be a sole soul  
On an impenetrable night  
Broken only by moans  
And sexual tones from  
My passersby in life  
Simply wanting their company  
That sickly succulent synthesis  
Of a predilection for pleasure  
And making it mean less.  
It's a fantasy of futility  
For my intrinsic intentions.  
I'm genuinely frightened  
That I've been in an accident  
That I broke my archai  
Demolished my ethos  
Forgot about logos  
And bowed down to pathos.



Takeshi is a junior english major from Albuquerque, NM.  
(For more of Takeshi's work, go to [www.1147.tcu.edu](http://www.1147.tcu.edu))

# Diana Dunigan

## Sangre

There's glass in the air I'm breathing  
Slowly ripping me apart.  
My lungs hang shredded,  
tattered within my chest  
Ripped and bloodied like old army fatigues.  
I try to breathe, clawing at my chest  
attempting to free myself in vain.  
I'm drowning in it,  
that crimson liquid of life.  
My blood clings to the air with each exhale,  
like a hematic rain storm,  
my lips the blood red clouds.



# Reece Challinor

## Sunlight Sonata

The trumpet blare of day break  
Announces dawn's first light.  
Cue ethereal notes on woodwind  
that resonate in morning air.  
Allegro tones of violin  
become rays of heaven ablaze;  
as percussion slowly builds  
and heralds twilight's end.  
Cue brass, cue horns, cue tuba.  
Vibrant notes of orange,  
Chords of blazing amber  
In keys of majestic purple.  
Bring forth a symphony of rising voices.  
A chorus in praise of,  
life embodied.  
Crescendo  
The cymbal crash of sunrise  
echoes in all  
the Divine.



# Lauren Stewart

## Puzzle Pieces

You always seemed too good for reality  
and now that's been confirmed  
Like missing puzzle pieces  
we tried to fill the blanks all wrong.  
A piece for young stupidity  
another for lack of time  
and a dash of a hundred hidden colors  
that were somehow left behind  
Now we've formed a monster  
to rear its ugly head  
and I am tired of fighting, for now  
my perfect picture's dead.  
But I know that I am much to blame  
I saw only what I sought  
parts of you were good, I loved  
but now, others are really... not.  
And some were never even there,  
just an image from my mind  
to seal the blank you couldn't fill  
in a puzzle that made me blind.  
So give me back my pieces  
especially my heart  
for a time when someone taking them  
can finish what they start  
You always seemed too good for reality  
the truth of this goes far  
Missing puzzle pieces...  
dear, that's all you really are.



# Jordan Cohen

## Catching Tadpoles

Swirls of mud rose in the water, circling Juliana's mid-calves as she hunkered over the creek with her arms stretched out and her hands cupped. She wore her jeans rolled up just above her knees. Dirt and sludge streaked across her t-shirt and arms, and thick tufts of honey-colored hair stuck out in every direction from beneath her baseball cap. It framed her face as she stared at the water, unblinking and holding her breath.

A moment passed, and she squealed and plunged her hands into the water, clasping them together below the surface. Then she brought them to her face and peeled them open. Droplets of muddy water ran off her palms, leaving them soiled and empty. She kicked at the water in disgust, drenching her jeans.

"Ski-ipp," she called. "I need help! I'm not catchin' any!"

"Will you shut up, Joolyana?" came a voice from the black gum tree leaning over the creek. "You're gonna scare 'em all off!"

"Skip," Juliana said, putting her hands on her hips and turning to face the tree. "Quit spying on birds, and help me catch these guys. They're too quick. They keep running away from me."

"These ain't just any birds, you dumb girl," said Skip.

"This right here is our state bird, I'm pretty sure. And you ought to be proud of it. It's a mama cardinal, and she's feeding her babies. If you keep quiet, they won't have to skip breakfast."

"Really? I wanna see!"

"Well, climb on up here, then. But you better quit makin' so much noise, or there won't be nothin' to see by the time you get here."

"Promise you'll help me catch tadpoles afterwards?"

"I'll promise if it'll make you shut up."

She climbed out of the creek and sloshed across the muddy bank to the base of the tree. Grappling for a low branch, she scraped her shin against the bark.

"Ouch!"

"Shhh!"

The branches creaked and swayed as she ascended, scrambling for footholds and places to grab. At last she reached the middle of the tree, wincing at the dozens of tiny cuts that had formed on her legs. A scrawny boy with freckles and curly brown hair turned to face her.

"Look," he whispered, pointing at the nest.

Her face brightened, and she leaned over him.

"Wow."

He nodded, his eyes fixed on the scene: a dull red-gray bird with a worm wriggling in her beak. Four screaming babies with intermittent feathers filled the nest, their eyes welded shut.

"Bet you never would have found this."

"I would too have, Skippy."

"Naw, you have to be a Boy Scout to find stuff like this," he said, whistling through the gap in his teeth.

"Nuh uh. You don't have to be a Boy Scout to do nothin'."

"Oh yeah? Well, at least Boy Scouts can catch tadpoles."

"Prove it."

With the agility of a chimp, he maneuvered his way to the ground. She remained in the tree. The cardinal broke off pieces of worm and tossed them to her babies.

"Watch this," Skip yelled.

He scooped up a chipped glass jar that lay discarded on the bank and stepped down into the creek. Juliana looked on between branches.

"This is baby stuff," he said, dunking the jar into the water.

After three tries, he held the jar up, and it glistened in the sunlight that passed between the trees.

"See, Joolyana? Didn't I tell you it was easy? I already caught two of 'em."

"No way," she said. "You're faking."

"Come down and see it for yourself if you don't believe me. It wasn't hard at all."

She turned and began scanning the tree for the right branch.

A sudden noise perforated the air like a corn kernel exploding into a white puff. It echoed. Juliana shrieked, and Skip dropped the jar into the water. The sound was followed by another, another, another. The cardinal released her worm and tore away into the woods.

"Skippy, what was that?" Juliana whispered.

"Be quiet, Joolyana. It wasn't nothin'."

He reached for the jar.

Another blast. Then several more overlapping.

"Uh uh, I definitely heard somethin' that time," she said.

"I'm not kidding either. Skippy, I'm scared."

"Shh—"

Grown-up voices murmured on the opposite bank, becoming clearer and louder.

Skip froze, halfway bent over.

"I hate the squirmers," said a gruff voice. "They got no dignity when staring down a barrel. It disgusts me."

"I don't know. I kinda like to watch 'em wriggle. Makes it all the more satisfying to put one right between their eyes."

The voices cackled.

Three silhouettes appeared in a clearing between the trees. They were walking closer.

Juliana's mouth dropped open. Skip slowly stood upright, neglecting the jar.

"Good riddance," said the tallest of the three, slapping his hands one across the other. "That bloke's been giving us trouble for too damn long. It was past time we saw him off."

Skip's eyes remained unblinking as he made his way across the creek toward Juliana, dragging his feet to avoid splashing.

"You bet it was. That was the bloodiest pulp of a man I've seen in months."

"He shoulda been, the way Snake Swiss-cheesed him."

He pulled himself onto the bank and motioned for Juliana to climb down and follow him. She didn't move, didn't speak, tried her hardest not to breathe.

"He was always so nervous, shaky hands and shifty eyes. He didn't have me fooled for a minute. Shifty eyes 'til the very end when we shot those suckers right out of his head."

Skip gestured to her again, this time with greater urgency. Juliana shook her head violently, fear visible in her eyes.

"The coward."

They were drawing closer, their shadowy bodies attaining distinct features as they made their way to the creek.

Skip gave Juliana one final pleading look. She remained frozen. He darted away from the tree, towards home.

"He was a whiny little jerk. Despicable."

Four strides later, he stepped on a branch, and it snapped.

He lost his balance and fell to his side. His right foot stabbed into the ground, catching in a hole.

"Ai-ieee!"

Silence.

"Did you hear something, Rex?"

The biggest one grabbed Skip by the collar and ripped him from the ground.

Skip's chest quaked with accelerated breath.

"Probably just a squirrel or a bird or something. Don't be so paranoid."

He hiccupped.

Silence again.

"There's someone else out here."

He hiccupped again, clasping a hand over his mouth.

Juliana's knuckles grew pale as she tightened her grip on the branches. Blood coursed hot through her veins.

Skip writhed, but his foot was stuck in the earth. He pulled at his leg, his face twisting with exertion.

"Let's go get him. I love a good encore."

The men approached purposefully, examining their surroundings.

Skip coiled and rotated like an angry serpent. He hiccupped again, wincing.

The trio made their way to the water's edge on the opposite side of the creek. Juliana could see them clearly.

One stood a whole head taller than the other two. He had dark hair, slicked back, and he wore a black t-shirt wrapped tightly around his muscles. The man to his left was skinnier, moving faster – wild red-brown hair and wiry limbs. The third was fat and balding, wearing slacks and a dress shirt.

"There he is," shouted the skinny one, pointing. "Told you."

"He's just a little kid," said the man in black.

Skip stared at them in horror, struggling still.

"Yeah, and if there was ever a tell-your-momma-about-the-scary-men type, it's this kid. Look at him."

The three waded across the creek like a gang of bloodthirsty hunting dogs. They climbed out of the water and headed straight for Skip. Juliana's heart began beating in her ears.

The biggest one grabbed Skip by the collar and ripped him from the ground. He pulled the boy's face inches away from

his own. Skip's legs dangled.

"I didn't see nothin', Mister," he squeaked. "I swear."

"Is that right? And I'll bet you didn't hear nothin' either."

"No sir. Not a...not a thing."

"Whaddya say, fellas? Do you believe him, Hal?"

"I don't think so, Rex," said the wiry one. "Looks like he's lying to me."

"Hal knows a liar when he sees one," Rex said, facing Skip again.

Skip whimpered; tears streaked down his cheeks.

"Please let me go."

Juliana shifted nervously, moisture collecting in her own eyes.

"I don't like crybabies," said the fat one, playing with his gun.

"Me neither," said Rex.

She rearranged her grip on the tree limbs, her hands and lower lip trembling.

"The world could do better with a few less of 'em," said Hal.

A branch cracked and fell to the ground. Juliana nearly lost her balance. The fat man looked up at the tree suspiciously. She held her breath, trying to regain her grip.

"You're always so quick to pull a gun," said Rex, not taking his eyes off Skip.

"I know what you're gonna do, kid," Hal said, prodding Skip in the shoulder. "You're gonna run home and tell Mommy, aren't you?"

Sweat slicked Juliana's palms. Her fingers began slipping. The fat man continued to stare at the tree, like a watchdog wary of something unwelcome in the unseen.

"This kid's target practice," Hal persisted.

Juliana's fingers slipped further. The fat man narrowed his eyes.

"Why do you always take so long to make up your mind?"

"Because if we all listened to you, Hal, we'd shoot everything with a pulse. If we didn't gauge the situation carefully, we'd be sitting ducks for the cops."

Juliana struggled, clenching her fists.

Without warning, the fat man whipped out his revolver, pointed it at Skip, and pulled the trigger.

The gun clicked, and Skip's face scrunched.

"Damn. Out of bullets."

"I used all mine on Squirmy, too."

"Looks like we're gonna have to do this the hard way."

The big man tossed Skip over his shoulder, holding him in place with between his forearm and bicep. Skip screamed and flailed his limbs as the three men stomped into the woods, talking and cackling.

Juliana's heart thudded in her chest, as she listened to his screams fade into nothingness. She wrapped all her limbs around the biggest part of the tree and sobbed silently. She felt as though her voice had been swallowed up into her stomach forever.

A chirping sound resonated. The cardinal had returned to finish feeding her young.



# Ujaala Rashid

## Inseparable

At day's end, there you are  
Walking home  
Washed out by waves of fatigue  
Tired and accomplished and ready for rest  
At day's end, there you are  
Walking home.  
But beside you strides that shadow  
Your silent partner, your secret admirer  
Closest to you as the sun sets,  
Like you, hot and tired.  
The one that will never leave you  
Because she's yours and no one else's  
Who is always right behind you  
Even if you forget  
She is like you, hot and tired  
Let her be your net, your safety catch,  
Your reservoir  
So when your heart is lonely, empty  
Allow it to fill, knowing  
That you are loved  
By God, unconditionally  
By your mother, tenderly  
By your friends, unselfishly  
And by her, earnestly  
Honestly.  
And while that shadow cannot  
Reach up and grab your hand  
Each evening  
Her heart is wrenched and bursting  
With her desire to do just that.  
An impossible desire  
That keeps us bound.  
That keeps your shadow always walking you home  
Wherever you are, at day's end.



Ujaala is a senior international economics and spanish & latin american studies  
double major from Coppell, TX.

(For more of Ujaala's work, go to [www.1147.tcu.edu](http://www.1147.tcu.edu))

# Carrie Engerrand

## Legacy



# Carrie Engerrand

## Shadow of Antiquity



Carrie is a senior art history major from Houston, TX.

# Elora Davis

## An Evening

I liked the way the evening sky enwrapped me as the wind  
soaked                      my skin.

I watched the clouds blot above me like coves washed out  
from                      within.

Across my vision from the right flew a cutting bird  
cawing in its little language, "Life is absurd."

Its black silhouette faded like a mist in the sky opaque,  
and ignorant of this, all of the people eating my birthday cake.

I wish that all was still and frozen like this trampoline.

I've sprawled my limbs upon it, blocking out the obscene.

Only when I dive, fly, dip, twist through all of that blue can I  
sleep                      forever.

Only when the elusive mystery appears can I run to the hills of  
heather.

"Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you,"  
says the sky and all of her sparrows.



# Ross Harrison

## Porch

The faded blue chair creaks as I rock,  
And the water patters, and splatters  
On the grey tin roof.  
Lightning screeches and illuminates the fields around me,  
And thunder moans off into the unseen.  
And my chair creaks as I rock.  
The old house groans and shifts its weight  
As the storm beats down.  
And the lightning screeches and shows the way.  
All that can be seen is in the lightning.  
The storm sheds light and speaks.  
Just clear your ears, and listen.  
And the thunder moans.



Ross is a sophomore english major from Shreveport, LA.

# Catherine Paris

## Souls

Have you ever had an easy bake oven? I did. I used to relish the opportunity to create confections for willing and unwilling taste testers. Of course the only item on the menu was a heart shaped chocolate cake. My favorite kind.

He came on a cool April day. The sun was shining behind him and the leaves on the magnolia tree were a deeper shade of green than usual. His smile was awe-inspiring. Full of spirit, it had a way of taking you in completely, making you feel like you're the only one in the room. There was promise and a future in his steps. It was a day just like any other when he came. I was three years old then.

He walked into the kitchen and we had a strange introduction of sorts. I was wrapped in an oversized apron carrying a tiny tray with huge oven mitts. The kitchen smelt of burnt food, but to me it was the sweet aroma of hard work. He walked in on this humorous sight and for a moment we stopped and looked each other in the eye. Well, I mostly

glared; who was this stranger? His name was Charlie. But I could call him uncle Charlie. "You want some cake?" I reluctantly asked. Of course he did; who could resist a three-year-old with cake?

So I set to work with my easy bake oven, meticulously measuring and double-checking the instructions. Carefully removing the tray with surgical precision from the oven I began to examine my work. Spork in hand I started to map out my plan to equally disperse the cake.

I placed my misshapen masterpiece on Charlie's plate with pride. He looked at the cake, to me, to the cake and back. Then he smiled. Just like that the ice was broken and all guards were down. We became as much friends, in my mind, as a three-year-old could be with someone Charlie's age. The day was just like any other. He left. I met someone new.

He came again that night. Three years had passed; I was 6 years old. The moon was out that night and the air carried a chilling wind. The leaves on the tree outside had turned

I dreamed  
that two  
ethereal lights  
struggled to  
overcome each  
other.

brown. Their deep green faded and their smooth texture became dry as the leaves turned in on themselves, died, and fell. He didn't look the same. No, he was different. Though his image in my mind was like an old sepia picture fading away, it was apparent that the smile that once was so beautiful now belonged to a foreign face. A fatter, older face that looked like it had seen a lifetime and more. No longer was his step light and buoyant, now hindered with a cane. He, Charlie, was somehow decrepit, somehow fragile to me. He came again and I didn't recognize him. He was like a shadow, a phantasmic mist that so contradicted the Charlie I knew. This time, instead of serving him chocolate cake, I watched with veiled eyes as Charlie arranged his pills on the table and swallowed them in one gulp. I saw but I didn't perceive, I knew but I didn't comprehend. Charlie was sick. And not just the flu that I imagined. He was going to die.

There were others there. But Charlie and I only talked to one another. I didn't notice their hushed voices over his spectral and hollow voice. It never occurred to me that so many of his family was gathered to do more than pay him a visit. In my mind it was only a reunion. Our families had come together after three years and now we could catch up. I didn't have much to tell him other than I

His image in my  
mind was like an old  
sepia picture fading

had made it to the first grade and found it very easy. As for my easy bake oven, I'd stopped using it after I'd run out of cake mix. My parents never got around to buying me any more.

As for him, there wasn't much to tell me. He assured me that he thought of me everyday and that he was sick now but going to get better. A smile slid across my face. I knew it couldn't be something that bad. I heard someone cough on the other side of the room. Everyone was silent for a moment and uncomfortable stares stabbed into Charlie. I didn't notice them. I was only aware of Charlie. It was a cold night. He left but he didn't. He was only a phantom of my Charlie. A specter masquerading as the man I knew. That couldn't have been my Charlie, could it?

He didn't come that day. Instead I was the one who was brought to him. It was dark outside but not cold. All the leaves had fallen off the tree outside and now it was some foreign thing that formed nightmarish shadows outside my window

at night. I was eight years old then. I was aware that our destination was the hospital but I didn't know whom we were to see. I imagined we were going to visit some elderly person that perhaps I met in my younger years but had no recollection of. The car ride there was serene and I slept and had strange dreams. I awoke to the gentle rhythm of someone carrying me. I waited as my eyes became adjusted to the hospital lights before stirring. When my eyes finally opened I saw the person we were here to see. It was Charlie, or at least it resembled Charlie. There were tubes sticking out in every direction. A breathing machine mechanically filled and emptied his lungs. And his bloated body lay limp. This was not the man I knew. No, he was different. I gazed at this for only a second before someone turned me away.

This reunion was not what I expected. I was asked to sit in the waiting room while the others were taken to his room. I still had not grasped the gravity of the situation; after all Charlie did tell me not to worry and that everything would be all right. I had grown restless and decided that I had to see him. After all, it wasn't everyday I got the chance to see him. The white walls of the hospital made the atmosphere surreal. With wide eyes I saw doctors rushing, panic in their eyes, knowing that somebody's life depended on them. Then there were the sick. Each seemed to be perfectly still, locked in their own world but they all looked so much more than tired. My heart broke for them.

Inside Charlie's room our families peered down at him; their outlines resembled morbid figures dressed all in black. I could see nothing at first. Then I saw his face. His eyes were frightening. The look in those eyes suggested an ending somehow. That our meeting would be cut short. I knew it wasn't just until next time. There wouldn't be a next time. A nurse had seen me standing there and ushered me out and shut the door. She looked just as tired as the patients. I sat down outside the door and rested against the wall. My eyes seemed heavy so I let them close. A vision as I had seen Charlie that first day invaded my mind even though I had long forgotten it. I knew someday I would see that again. I let myself slip away into sleep. I imagined I looked very still like the sick I had seen earlier. That day was a day like any other. He didn't come that day but I had seen him. He left and I had strange dreams that night.

The rain slid off the umbrella so thick now that it seemed

like a veil for the mourners. The sky was gray but the sun peeked through. The casket lay closed it was our gathering point. The minister flipped a page in his Bible and began to read. It all seemed so unusual to me. I had come to see him again. But Charlie was so still. My little cousin fidgeted as he tried to free himself from my hand. I barely noticed it but a new revelation was dawning on me. Just as Charlie had changed I was changing now too. Death is what happened to him and I knew that death would happen to me also.

I had a strange dream that night. It was simple but profound. I dreamed that two ethereal lights struggled to overcome each other. It wasn't a fight. It was only one taking the place of the other. One had grown dim and let the other shine brighter so that it illuminated everything and eliminated the darkness.

Something in me had faded away and something else had taken its place. Innocence was gone and the veil had lifted. I could see what before had been invisible and decipher what had before been a mystery. Death was staring right at me the whole time and now I could clearly see. I knew for the first time that Charlie was not coming back. Although I never knew him well, this realization made tears well up and fall out of my eyes. Suddenly everything was new and terrible. Something had changed. I was different.

Now my mind pondered the meaning of it all; of Charlie's living, and his death, then I considered my own life and what death would be like. My cousin continued to wriggle and for a second my grip on his hand loosened. He did not know what this solemn gathering meant. He did not notice their tears or hear the voice of the preacher reading Psalm 23: "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me." I realized that this meant goodbye for Charlie and me. But I still couldn't help but to imagine that I would see him again; "death is but crossing the world, as friends do the seas," (Penn, Fruits of Solitude). Death would overcome us but we will always be, just in a different world, a different time, in a different way. Our souls would be together still. The rain was coming to an end and the last drop fell on his casket to ground. The sun shone a little brighter. A ray had fallen on my face and it wasn't so dark anymore. That day had been a day like any other day. Charlie had left. I was different. I was not a child anymore, the era of innocence had dimmed and faded away, and a new era had begun.

Catherine is a freshman broadcast journalism major from Houston, TX.

# Rachel Blackmon

## Initiation

The purple poison enters my blood:  
I am free.  
Flying down the road in the back of a truck,  
I spread my arms wide open;  
As if to embrace the world –  
In actuality, this is the moment  
I begin to shut it out.  
The cold glass clanks against my teeth  
As I try earnestly to ingest as much as possible  
Of this formidable concoction,  
With the hope of being admired for my accomplishment  
By the pack of hungry wolves waiting in line behind me.  
A thousand surges resonate against my armor,  
From the inside.  
It's as if I have been rewired  
On a much stronger current than before:  
I am hooked.  
I stare at the feathers regrouping  
On the glass tube that threatens to steal my soul.  
Exhaling,  
I smile triumphantly:  
I am good at something.  
I belong.



# Rachel Blackmon

## Phase 2

I never could get back to that first time,  
God knows I tried –  
In so many ways I lost count.  
Up for days,  
My eyes as big as quarters,  
I wash a few pills down with  
An old bottle of whiskey,  
And pray I don't die.  
I've become empty,  
And hard.  
No longer a temple –  
My body is only a commodity,  
And my voice:  
The equivalent of an infomercial.  
Scared and hollow –  
All that is left of my former self  
Is a tiny seed  
That was planted  
In, what feels like, another lifetime.  
Nonetheless, it is there...



Rachel Blackmon is a senior english major from Fort Worth, TX.  
(Series continued at [www.1147.tcu.edu](http://www.1147.tcu.edu))

# Justin Davis

## Perpendicular Lines

### PART I

John looked up from the sink at the mirror. His eyes were sunk and the bags under them looked like old purple bruises. He felt drained and tired for no particular reason. He dried his face, and banked the paper towel off the wall. He always did that, an old childhood habit.

"Heya Princess, who are ya sprucin' up for? It's only me," Bill shouted through the door. It had been ten minutes, and his wife was setting down dinner in twenty-five. He needed to get going. He cracked his joints nervously, his patience losing a beat with every snap.

"Hold on, Farva, ya chicken shit." John opened the door and mustered a squeamish smile, keeping his eyes fixed on the cracked floor. Farva was Bill's nickname. The station

It wasn't justice, or honor,  
that they were defending.

They were in it for  
reputability and fear.

had always called him that since an old lady gave him a non-descript brownie; he unassumingly ate it. To his surprise, it turned out to be a "special brownie," but that's a different story.

John and Bill had been partners in the police force, on the crime scene together for 19 years. They were both winding down towards the end of their careers. They had a familiarity with each other like a blacksmith can craft hot iron.

They didn't talk much during their time together. If they did, it was shooting the shit, making fun of some shared moment or having a good laugh. Neither John nor Bill wanted to finish their career running rounds from one middle school campus to another. That's why they were partners; both simply wanted a piece of the action. It wasn't justice, or honor, that they were defending. They were in it for reputability and fear.

The two had raised their kids together. Their families celebrated Easter together, and broke in January 1st by

watching the ball drop in New York from the comfort of John's living room. Bill and Madison brought the red wine and beer, while John and Melissa chipped in with the finger foods and dinner. Their lives ran down parallel tracks. Both men had alcoholic fathers. Both had been in the outs, and come back from it sober. They went to the same non-denominational church. Their families even shared Tex-Mex lunch after the service.

On the ride back to the station, everything moved by the window slowly. The Sangre de Cristo Mountains had silver-grey rain clouds perched above them. Out John's side of the window were the wind beaten houses of Broken Arrow. Beyond that lay the dead, yellow grass of a sun scorched meadow. In his head, John could see contour lines of the town map, the main street grid, the compass. He could tell a person where the Golden Eagle Diner was or how to get down to Lubbock. He knew this place backwards and forwards.

He had been having a dream of a childhood memory for the last few weeks. He didn't know why.

In the dream, he was six years old, and his family had taken a day trip down to some sand dunes. It was a dog day afternoon in the Texan sun and they had been on the road all day. His father had a sweat streak down his shirt that stretched to his lower back. The sand reflected the sun and made it feel like a thousand degrees. They sledged down the grainy slopes for a few hours. Every few minutes his mother would wince and fan herself with her hand. The air conditioner wheezed away, but it couldn't muster the strength to conquer that heat. On the way out of the sand, a Mexican woman approached his father. He only saw a minor exchange of some shiny trinket and a few dollars.

Inside the car, his father had hung up a keychain on the rear-view mirror. It looked like an old painting. "Who's that man, dad? Why are you hanging that up?" young John asked. His curiosity was piqued. He had never seen his father do anything like what he did on the dune.

"This is St. Sebastian. He's a very famous Catholic saint, my favorite saint. He'll help if something goes wrong. It's just a small token of our trip I guess," Dad said, and gave little John a smile and a wink.

In the rearview mirror Sebastian looked almost identical to the St. Sebastian that John could remember from an art history class he had taken with his wife a few years back at the Broken

Arrow Community College.

This rearview mirror Sebastian was a small portrait of a painting that showed him pierced with arrows, looking skyward with idyllic ease. His long brown hair matted to his head, and his boyish lack of strength all conveyed purity that he could only relate to his six-year old days.

John started to imagine what he would see if he was in the Old World death scene. Some violin would've been playing

Some violin  
would've  
been playing  
with graceful  
resonance as  
Sebastian died, as  
he left the world  
with the soldiers  
spitting on his

with graceful resonance as Sebastian died, as he left the world with the soldiers spitting on his wounds. He banked the connection in his memory during the forensic breakdown and scene investigation that the two coppers arrived upon.

## PART II

It's not that Broken Arrow was a bad town or was known for crime, but the name had a deeper meaning to those who knew the community. Broken. There weren't many jobs in the small town

outside of sparse farming. Unfortunately, for the locals, most of the farming was done by the border-crossers, too. Cheap labor was best for the farmers. No one in the town had money. The only strong revenue that once kept the town afloat was outsiders coming into the local airport. Big Shots from all over the country came down to Broken Arrow for their deer hunting. This hunting industry gave rise to hotels, bars, and a few petty strip clubs turned whorehouses. Twelve-point bucks were frequent, and it wasn't unusual to drive out of the county with a score on a buck at 178. As long as there were deer and a hunting season, there would be hunters. Unfortunately for the town, the summer droughts in '93, '94, and '96 caused the deer to die or migrate north about sixty miles. Now the town was a shadow of itself. Buildings rotted and crawled with termites. The youth culture of the town was a combination of badly played high school sports, Cadillac Devilles, and barrio gang life. Illegals from Mexico overran the bars on the weekend and clubs started promoting Tejano music. The rich outsiders were gone. The Mexican bars were actually the economical upside of the town. But the elders of the town were fading

away, like a confirmation that time determined every thing's fate. Families that had lived in the area for generations became extinct. The local PTA board couldn't get enough members to have meetings.

### PART III

In two hours, Benjámín had to go to work. He was working a shift he called *ojos de serpientes*. He had two hours to roll dice. That was a lot of time to lose big or win big. He looked down, moved his fingers rhythmically, and tossed the dice.

No, he wasn't on tonight. He had already blown three hundred in forty-five minutes. Benjámín pushed his hands to the bottoms of his pockets to find that he had barely enough money to buy a carton of milk for Estéfano and Manuelá, instead he reached around in his pocket and opted for the pack of Marlboro reds. He took one out, lit it, and breathed deep. The nicotine stuck in his blood cells, and he closed his eyes slowly. Always the first complete puff. That was his heaven, always the first complete puff.

When she died, that's when he started. He looked down at the picture of her he kept on the dash. To be *un viudo* was a trial. It was just a few days before the anniversary of her death. Two years.

The rest of the two hours passed quickly. Benjámín watched the people walking by, wishing for various sexual encounters with each female passerby. With these imaginings, he recalled his past, and the women he had encountered. There hadn't been very many. He thought of the fat Mexican he bent over in Juarez, or that drunk bar queen he threw on the wall of the bathroom. He didn't include the mother of his two children as one of these sluts. His post-death coarseness helped to erase those memories.

He often imagined the people he carted around in his yellow taxi van wanting to have sex with him. He went so far as to bank the images of customers away, and when the night was slow, he would pull into a dark parking lot, and please himself. Benjámín always wondered, after he had finished, what the customers would say if they knew. In his destitute state of loneliness, he wondered what she would say.

The work hours passed normally that evening, customers being ferried by Benjámín around Broken Arrow and the towns close by. There was no point in trying to start conversation with these people, Benjámín thought. Every time

he did feign an attempt, he only received cold glances and one-word answers. It was the worst feeling when the customer slammed their Plexiglas window shut as he started to utter sound. Around three in the morning, a teenager, who looked to be 16, got in the backseat.

Benjmin could smell it before the door was open. This kid was plastered. Fucked Up Beyond All Repair, Benjmin muttered under his breath.

He readjusted the rear view mirror and raised his eyes to examine this new passenger. He could see the kid's eyes rolling back in his head. Damn, Benjmin thought. This called for another cigarette.

"Where ya headed, *hombre*?" Benjmin asked, waiting for some kind of comprehensible response. His patience was thinning just at the prospect of taking some punk kid somewhere.

Al-BA...ALBAKIRKEY. al-ba-...." the kid trailed off.

What was this brat thinking? Albuquerque was forty-five miles away. That would run him about 250 dollars.

"You got the money on ya?" Benjmin questioned.

The kid fumbled around his pockets looking for the cash that he had on him. Benjmin kept facing forward and waited patiently, confident that not more than 30 dollars would appear. As this thought ran through his head, a wad of bills was shoved in front of his face. Benjmin counted 334 dollars. That would leave him some dice money. This was turning out perfectly, Benjmin cackled silently.

Throughout the ride, the kid rolled in and out of consciousness. Benjmin didn't mind; he just got to play his music a little louder.

Albuquerque was like a nightlight for the horizon, 3:41 am.

"Where do you need to go in the city?" Benjmin asked, trying to put on his best Anglo accent.

The belligerent kid sat up, threw a belt around Benjmin's chest and the driver's seat, and drew a small hunting knife to his neck.

"I need a favor. I need you to do something for me", the kid said.

Chinga! Chingate! Jesus Criste! he thought. Benjmin sat silent for a second, trying to control the fear of death. He was prepared for this kind of situation because he legitimately thought something like this could happen. He started to feel sympathy for this poor kid.

"Qu? Lo siento; what is the favor?" Benjmin asked reluctantly,

watching the kid out of his rearview mirror. Benj  min was trying to pull the knife out of his side pocket with subtlety, but he was unnerved by this kid's question.



Justin is a Senior Marketing major from Austin, TX.  
(Series continued at [www.1147.tcu.edu](http://www.1147.tcu.edu))

# Elizabeth Grella

## Innocence Lost

(after Wilfred Owens)

Curved back, like old men after work  
Red eyes, sunken like ghosts, hands on the gun,  
For once in his life a smile no a smirk  
Soon to his ever rest; my lost loved one.  
He grieved alone. So lost from his true track.  
One shot, blood red. Light flash; loud roar;  
Red covers white; that heavy crimson attack  
The wide, rough rivers his body won't store.  
Run! Run! Quick, boys - A delectation of running,  
Reaching his body too late to redeem;  
But someone heard shallow breaths so cunning  
And fighting gasps so like a small child's scream.  
Slight, air rush after his heaving chest falls,  
As under force unknown, then his last breath.  
In all my life, all my helpless calls,  
His empty eyes stare, pleading, haunting, death.  
If in some other life you too could come  
Within the hearse where he so roughly lies,  
That empty place where a young boy will drum  
To see him now, his empty shell a disguise.  
If you could hear, in every face, the tears  
Come spilling out, images cloudy in sight  
Tainted forever, alike in their fears  
Such pain, incurable, lost innocence this night--  
My friend, you would not quickly surrender  
If you could see now your loved ones' despair.  
You are gone now, your life-long fight over.  
The old truth: return to the sky sender,  
High up in the air.



Elizabeth is a Senior Psychology major from Midland, TX.  
(For more of Elizabeth's work, go to [www.1147.tcu.edu](http://www.1147.tcu.edu))

# Kerry Seaver

## Choices

100 years, 8760 hours, 525,600 minutes  
Only 31,536,000 seconds that tick away  
And that's if you're lucky.  
Too many ways to spend them  
What's the use of those 365,000 sunsets that you do not have  
time to watch?  
195 countries in the world  
Most people will visit about as many as they can count on one  
hand.  
And that's if they're lucky.  
6,602,224,175 people in the world  
How many do you know?  
87 majors just at TCU  
You'll finish one  
If you're lucky.  
And even when we choose  
The places we will go  
The people we spend time with  
The things we want to do with the precious time we've got  
We make mistakes  
We take the wrong classes, work in the wrong jobs, and  
befriend the wrong people  
Taking time from the classes that enthrall us  
The careers we have a passion for  
And the people we love  
But even if we get it right,  
Our eyes are still too big for our watches  
And something gets pushed aside  
And sometimes someone gets pushed aside  
And sometimes you don't realize until it's too late  
What you gave up, by not giving something up  
So then you waste your time  
Regret ticks away hours that turn to days that turn to years  
And even visiting 195 countries,  
Watching 365,000 sunsets,  
And majoring in 87 different subjects  
Cannot make you happy  
Because you cannot be with the one you love.



Kerry is a sophomore accounting and economics major from Benbrook, TX.

Candace Ruocco

Stranded



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“Sanity may be madness,  
but the maddest of all is to  
see life as it is and not as it  
should be.”

**Miguel de Cervantes,**  
*Don Quixote*