

TCU Journal of the Arts

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Fall 2020 Volume 16.1

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VOLUME 16.1

FALL 2020

“LET’S GET A LITTLE
CRAZY HERE.”

”
Bob Ross

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EDITORS' NOTE

As everyone at TCU is well aware, this was an incredibly unprecedented semester, filled with uncertainty and anxiety surrounding the state of our campus and the world. However, through all the craziness, it has been so inspiring to see the boundless creativity of our student body, demonstrating their experiences of 2020 through their own artistic expression.

We hope that you find pieces in this journal that you can connect to, and that possibly reflect your own feelings during this tumultuous year. We also hope you find some solace, moments of reflection, or even humor in the art that transcends our current moment in time.

In the face of the unknown, our staff and our advisor, Dr. Rode, rose to the challenge of this semester's production cycle with determination and good humor. Our staff demonstrated incredible teamwork and perseverance during such a busy semester, and made Tuesday afternoons one of the most fun parts of the week. Staff meetings were frequently filled with joy and laughter as we enjoyed one of the greatest comforts people can offer in difficult times: art. College students have so much to say, and our goal here is to show it to you in every medium of expression.

If you've ever had something you wanted to express through art, we encourage you to continue submitting, no matter what major you are. For now, enjoy everything this semester's issue has to offer, and we hope it gives you as much joy as we experienced in our staff meetings.

Sincerely,

Chloe Creed and Madison Wiser

Co-Editors-in-Chief, Fall 2020

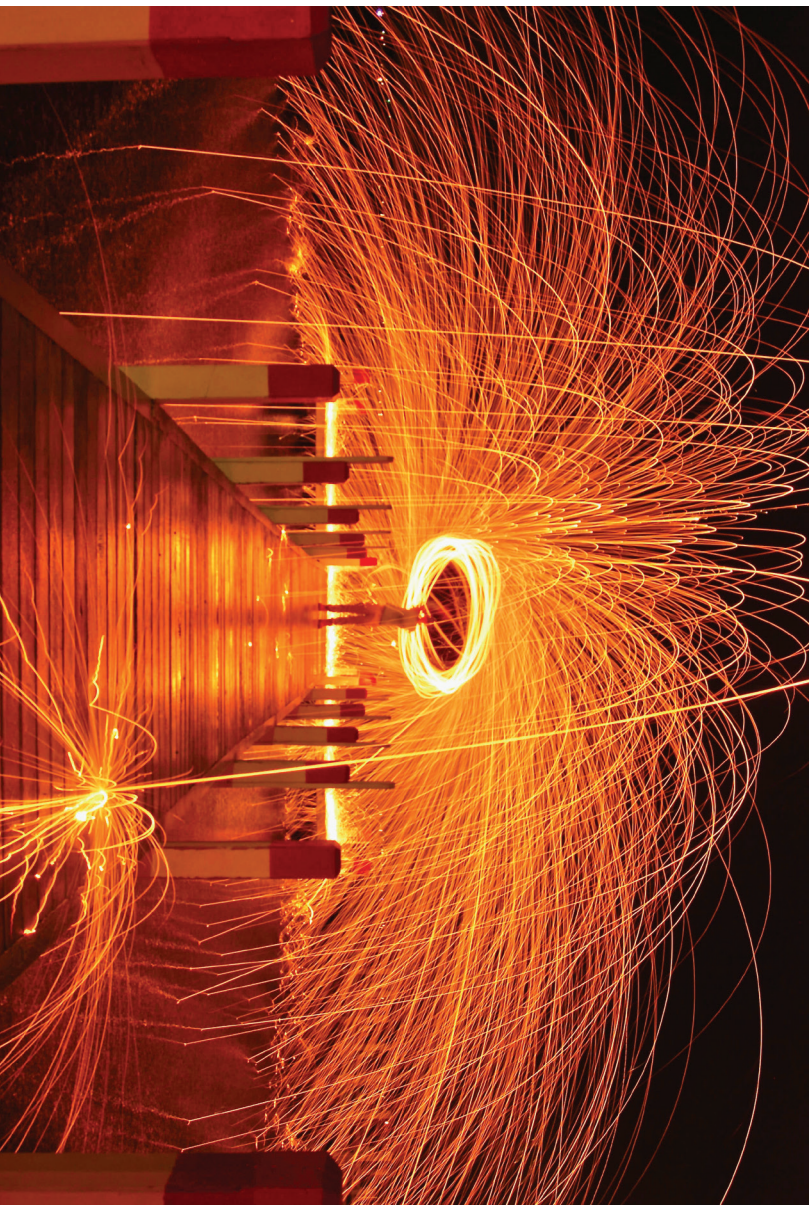
Lacus

Quin Frazier



Ignis Quin Frazier

Honorable Mention for the Helen Hamilton Award



The rest of this collection is featured online

Visit <http://1147.tcu.edu>

Tell Me How This Song Ends

Erica Harkins

As if you could
rest on this piano bench
and resist temptation
to crescendo.
Promise me that our modest melody
stops splintering ahead
on anxious notes,
while andante turns m o l t o,
while melismatic notes reverberate, racing inside me,
I hear your chords.
Accents in your voice
transpose my memory
from honeyed to sobered;
learning to enjoy
symphonies
that you didn't conduct.
Skip the coda, scratch the B section,
sing the ending
early, before we arrive.
No. Hold. Why do endings carry the reins?
Sweeter than all reprises
is the beginning of a
brand new melody.
More than classic,
a rebirth of plain piano keys.
A beginning. Not my ending.

A Color Experiment

Abby Evans



Brainstorm

Brian Dickson



The Morning After

Katherine Bacuta

It is five am when I open my eyes,
curled up along the side of our bed.
I push myself up and move,
legs numb and sore
'til I feel the cracked-paint wood of our bathroom door,
and hear it creak open its rusty hinges.
I stumble in,
and place my hands on our pearly porcelain sink,
propping myself up as I grip the sides of the bowl,
the ceramic cool in my palms.
I breathe.
I flip the switch.

Light spills from our tulip-shaped lamps
filling the room with an old and golden glow,
I stare into the mirror.
My dark hair is oily and split ended,
shiny under the light,
locks messy and mopped,
once tangled within your fingers,
the strands left lying on our pillows.
A tired gaze lies in the reflection
struggling to lift its head,
unfocused yet unyielding,
wavering ever so slightly on its fragile frame.

I lift a hand up to my face,
pulling at the dark bag under my eye,
sigh, blink,
and let my fingers glide down scarred, honeyglow skin,
over my still warm cheek,
into the corner of my mouth,
grazing the dry cracks of the lips you kissed last night
now brown and bleeding in our mirror.
My eyes travel with them,
under my jaw and down my neck
following the path your phantom fingers made,
'til they trace the cherry red lipstick where my arm and shoulder
meet.

Lament

Olivia Eberwein

O' Sorrow! So sweet and liquid in the mind,
Through every nerve you are entwined!
And seep you may through each small crevice of the brain;
An unstoppable force, for a mere mortal will try in vain

To resist its breadth which crashes into the being as waves in the sea
Permeate the space betwixt the grains of sand and the air that flee
From the bathed remnants of pointy rock
And keep in them moisture locked.

So, the grain cannot breathe
And the brain cannot breathe
As sorrow refuses to take its leave.
"Why must you compel my soul to grieve?"

You horrible, malicious thing indeed!
Hear me now, I plead, I plead!
That you will discover someone anew
Another to torture and obtain pleasure through!

A heartless of hearts thing you are
To cleave me open and quit me ajar
To stitch myself together with broken needle and thread
While visions of the dead dance around in my head."

And this be the way I converse with Sorrow;
The woman who cut out my heart and left me hollow.
Only her and I, together we dwell,
Leading me further and further through the circles of hell.

My Virgil who guides me and expounds each level,
Revealing where they all suffer, and how she does revel!
O' the delight their plight brings,
And the gleeful songs she sings!

We tread through the path of Dante before
and she whispers in my ear the lore of yore,
And flares her black teeth in hideous hysterics at the frail

continued, no stanza break

Lament

Whilst their shadows near and wail
And their spirit's flail without avail.

That darling devil, O' why does she plague me so?
Now through the Inferno and on to Purgatorio,
Where I pray she'll take leave of me, in between,
In want of her temperament it could prove serene.

Perhaps here I will discover again my dearest beloved,
My beautiful Avel, the warrior I wed
And when we did wed, I took him to bed
And from that night he did embed

Inside of me a blooming babe to take upon his father's name,
But Alas! From what the gods give, some must reclaim,
And so, one morn I lay in bed
when from between my legs I bled
and there was my baby, small and dead.

In grief, my husband found his friend,
On whom he began to slowly depend;
But off to war he went one day
And I watched him sail away and away

Until his figure faded into the line of sky and sea.
This was the last time my eyes beheld thee,
And now I am left with Sorrow, a friend,
The companion of the lonely who neglect to mend;

She accompanies me wherever I pass,
Through the throngs of championed men, alas!
But my Avel isn't here, and nor is my seed
For they did not commit the deed.

In desperation, I lusted to be free
So, my dearest Sorrow and I thus came to agree
That my fleeting peace would come in death,
And it was then I vanquished my very last breath!

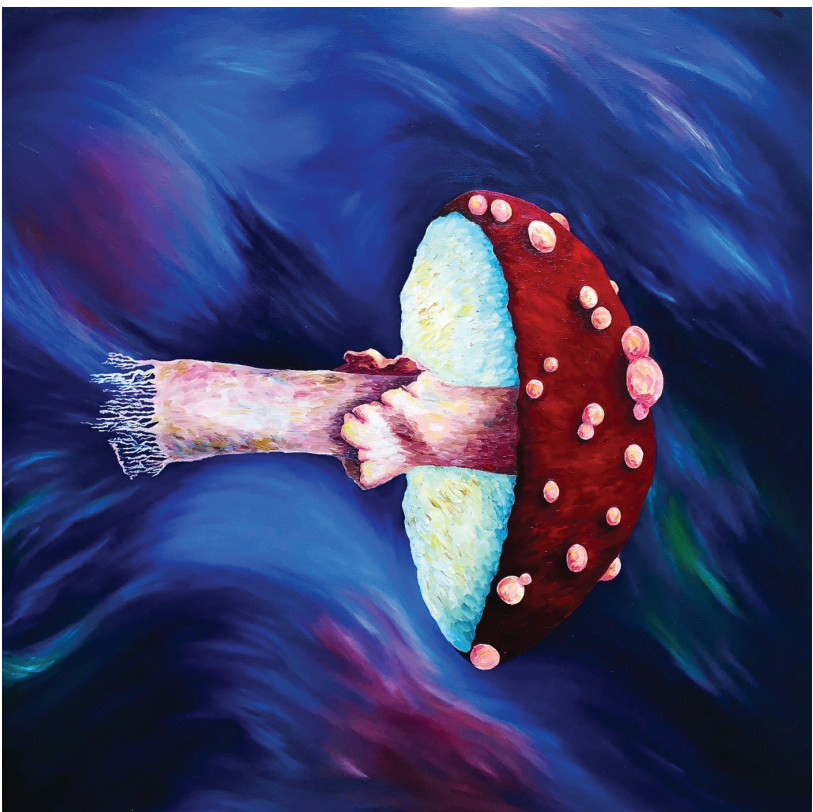
Only to wander in the gloom alone,
The punishment for executing a life mine own!

Cowtown Nirvana
Nathania Davis



Genesis Muscaria

Nathania Davis



Girl

Brittany Murray



Hugo

Lily Margaret Greenway

The rattle of the pea gravel
Shakes the slow movement of my tires
Spare pieces of the tiny rocks
hit my front windshield – dusty rain.
The welcoming committee greets
My arrival. Barking, howling,
Following my boots to the tack.
Scents of worn, well-loved leather, oats,
Brushes combing over coats, hang
In the air like reins awaiting
Their task to connect horse and man.
Meows and barks fade into neighs,
A lock clicks open, I begin
my routine trek down the hill. Armed
with a carrot – cold in my hand –
oats rattle in my bucket. Twelve
pairs of ears poke up. My new friends
all crave the treat tucked in my palm.
Brush and hay cling to my shirt, socks,
Hair. He makes eye contact standing
There in a patch of sunlight, no
fight he will put up today. Horse
and girl begin their ride with strides
toward one another, he complies.
The halter slides over his ears.
A whinny, cry, temporary
Goodbye to his snack. He'll be back.

Fairy Boy

Michaela Bollinger



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Where the Bluebonnets Grow

Leah Marut

Pride sticks to my words like sugar
when people ask about my hometown: 268,820 square miles of land
to choose from and I grew up rooted
in an abundance of love. The grass of the park holds

imprints of a six-year old girl who climbed trees, searched
for ladybugs, and brought home flowers that were actually
weeds (is there a difference at that age?) for her mom. Summer rays should recall
nursing the small vase on the kitchen windowsill that housed seasons of

pink petals and dandelions, imposters picked by chalk-covered fingers
and regarded as gems. Magic buzzes in Christmas lights wrapped
around the neighborhood, through the relic sugar factory; a soft Welcome home
that sings no matter how long I've been away. This city never forgets one of its own.

Streetlamps flash over my elementary years, still hold the shadow
from the pavement as I ran to hug my dad after school, still know
my silhouette, sandwiched between my grandfather and sister, as we laughed over
ice cream and walked along the lake bridge— they keep the memories safe.

My home has seen my first steps and my first heartbreak but there
will always be another drive, another laugh I am saving to share with it. Too many miles
stretch between the heart that longs to be nestled in bluebonnets once more
and the place where the eventide is painted in remembrance of my love.

The Protector

Rebecca Lang



I wore a dress

Julie Papaj

It was pink, a color I used to despise
though now reminds me of wild roses that grew
in your California backyard.

Rich fuchsia painting my sun-kissed skin
running down to my thighs, halting
at my knees where it hung and swayed
in the quiet morning breeze.

I wore a sweater too.

Long, pure, and white
covering my arms, my wrists, my hands
shrouding the pink beneath.

On my neck a shattered teardrop
a gift, of cyan waves, small and fragile
hugging close, its thin gold string
waving for attention in the shimmer of sunlight.

I never said *Goodbye*.

I never said *I love you*, I'll see you on the other side.

All I got was a call, *An accident*, they said
you were gone before we knew,

before I knew I could ever lose you
my dear best friend, my partner in crime.

Surrounded by black, standing here
in this burning heat, I am frozen.

My chest, heavy with breath not yet ready to leave
watching, as they lower you into the ground six feet down.

Words form at my lips, desperate to say
something profound, but my thoughts are drowned
by fresh tears that cool my cheeks, cementing my hollow eyes -

The world stops spinning, the sun grows cold.

I cannot move, I cannot speak, I cannot think.

But I can still live,
for you and for me.

Queries

Mariah Gomez

The stage is bare and lit by one lone spotlight. In the middle stands a young Latino man, MIGUEL, dressed in insignificant, ordinary clothes. HE carries an extremely worn paperback copy of Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* in his right hand. HE faces the audience. The sole spotlight beams down on him and follows MIGUEL throughout the whole scene.

MIGUEL

Call me Miguel. Pretty manly name huh? If you're going to self-name, pick something good yeah? Something that means something. Straight as a pin Miguel. Way manlier than Flores. Seriously people, what parent names a child Flores? I will admit Ishmael was a definite contender, but that would be too cliché. But Miguel, no one would bat an eye at Miguel.

(DANIEL jaunts across the stage and embraces MIGUEL in a half hug, MIGUEL's head playfully tucked under the man's arm. MIGUEL stiffly accepts the hug.)

DANIEL

There you are Miguel!

MIGUEL

(To the audience)

This is Daniel. We're friends. Pretty new ones at that. Roomies. (glances at the man's chest) Bosom buddies.

(To DANIEL)

Hey Danny.

DANIEL

You coming to practice?

MIGUEL

Wouldn't miss it.

Queries

(DANIEL jaunts off stage right.)

MIGUEL

I've always been drawn to the field. I don't understand why. Perhaps it's like Ishmael and the sea. Football was just my way onto it.

(An American football is thrown across the stage. MIGUEL catches it, book still in hand.)

Not quite.

(HE tosses the football. A soccer ball is tossed to him and HE catches it.)

MIGUEL (cont'd)

This one. *Fútbol* not football. Despite my love for the field, I knew I didn't have the skill to get onto it. But Danny...

(HE tosses the soccer ball off the stage.)

Let me take you guys to see how it all started. The moment I met my... bosom bud.

(Two cheap portions of furniture that make up a college dorm room sectional are rolled onto the stage. One piece has a worn, thick Mexican blanket hung over the back. MIGUEL lays down on the sectional part with the blanket, hugging the open-faced *Moby Dick* to his chest. HE grabs the blanket to lay it over his legs.)

MIGUEL

I got moved in quick. I thought I had the whole dorm to myself, for at least a day. I was honestly feeling a bit anxious to meet Daniel. Not that I knew much about him, I had just heard so many horror stories about bad room-mates. What if he acted sullen and distant? What if he hated me right from the start? God, don't you just hate being forced to make friends with a stranger? What if he's-

(The sound of a door opening occurs offstage. DANIEL enters from stage right with a backpack, facing the audience, not noticing MIGUEL on the sectional. MIGUEL attempts to hide, covering his whole body with the blanket. MIGUEL addresses the audience in an aside while DANIEL kneels, rummaging through his backpack.)

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

Wait, why is he here right now he wasn't supposed to be here right now, I was supposed to have time to prepare or rehearse. Oh God, why did I hide, he's going to think I'm weird for hiding, why did I even hide, he-he's just bigger than I thought he'd be, he's going to be one of those mean, surly men, he's gonna hate-

(DANIEL gets up and throws the backpack on the empty section of the furniture while sitting down on MIGUEL's body. BOTH scream. DANIEL quickly moves to one side of the sectional as MIGUEL quickly moves to the other side.)

MIGUEL

(Directly addressing audience)

Please tell me he didn't see me freaking out.

DANIEL

Oh god, sorry, I didn't see you there!

MIGUEL

No, no it's okay. That's my penance for falling asleep on the couch.

DANIEL

Uh, well, I'm Daniel. Or Dan. Or Danny. Honestly, whatever you wanna call me, I don't care. And you're...?

MIGUEL

I'm Fl—I'm... Mi-Miguel. Call me Miguel.

Queries

DANIEL

Nice to meet ya Miguel. Sorry for using you as a cushion there. My parents have been telling me I'm a blockhead for years now. I think I'm starting to see why, heh.

MIGUEL

Well if you're a blockhead, then I'm the bonehead who crashed on the couch instead of his bed.

(To audience.)

What a way to meet a roommate huh? We talked the whole night. Not much in common between the two of us, but opposites attract right?

(DANIEL and MIGUEL inch closer towards each other, smiling at one another.)

DANIEL

Wow, humanities major huh? I couldn't do what you do man.

MIGUEL

I'd say STEM is much more impressive.

DANIEL

Say that all you like, but I suck at writing. I never did better than a C in any of them classes.

MIGUEL

But I mean engineering's important. English majors are expendable. Basically useless.

DANIEL

Nah. All of y'all do the Lord's work. Math and science are easy, simple. It's constant and logical. I can run some numbers in my head with my eyes closed and my hands tied behind my back. But writing? Stories? That stuff's magical. They're what make life... well, fun.

MIGUEL

(HE smiles to DANIEL. Then addresses the audience.)

I- what would you say to that? I've... never heard anyone actually laud my major before. I... He's-

DANIEL

(Inches closer to MIGUEL on the sectional.)

What's your favorite book? All them writers and readers gotta have one, right?

MIGUEL

That's a little-, well-, you'd laugh.

DANIEL

Nah. I promise not to. Even if it was something like a-like a little kid's book, I promise I won't.

MIGUEL

Moby Dick.

DANIEL

The classic? That's not embarrassing at all. But I mean isn't it...

MIGUEL

Boring? At times yes. But-

DANIEL

But it's special to you huh?

MIGUEL

Yeah.

(Inches closer to DANIEL.)

It's real interesting. The narrator Ishmael delves into some deep stuff. He's always overthinking. Which makes his narration a bit dull at times, but-well it's also full of adventure and danger and-and-

DANIEL

Whales?

Queries

MIGUEL

Yeah. A whole lot about whales. Honestly, a bit too much in my opinion.

DANIEL

How much is too much?

MIGUEL

Well, when the adventurous quest to kill a whale devolves into the narrator analyzing every detail of the whale it's a little—

DANIEL

Nah you're playing with me. It can't be every-

MIGUEL

Every part. There's even a chapter that ends with a drawn-out phallic pun of Ishmael describing how the whale's penis is used.

DANIEL

(HE laughs. Then a pause.)

Well don't keep me waiting bud, how's it used?

MIGUEL

Oh, well, they skin the outside and use it as a coat so the person boiling down the blubber is protected from the mess.

DANIEL

Well that's pretty educational I'd say. But, you haven't really told me why you like it.

MIGUEL

Well. Despite Ishmael's... overthinking, the book's great. There's a story but there's also a message in all of it. And sure, the overall message is pretty bleak if you focus on the ending, but there are moments of hope in there as well. There's a lot of talk about how fate isn't one's free will, but how it's instead tied to those around you. If the crew had just banded together to stop their captain from, well, leading them to their deaths, everyone would still be alive. And in a way, Herman Melville seems to be saying that if everyone could just band together in love and friendship, then maybe there wouldn't be any reckless leaders at the helm that would lead their people into disaster. It's really-oh, sorry, that was a bit long and... boring...

(MIGUEL inches away from DANIEL. DANIEL inches closer to MIGUEL.)

DANIEL

What? Nah. That sounds pretty epic when ya say it like that, man. Don't think I'll ever read it, sounds like most of it would just fly over my head, but, honestly, the way you sing its praises, it kinda makes me wanna try.

MIGUEL

(To audience.)

That's... different. He's different. Most people would dismiss *Moby Dick* as boring and move on. But-

DANIEL

And I can't believe you like soccer too man. What are the chances?

MIGUEL

Pretty common I would think.

(To the audience.)

How common is it to find a good roommate? A perfect match practically. How do you find a roommate who's interested in such an obscure book like *Moby Dick*? Seriously, raise your hands if you've actually ever wanted to read *Moby Dick* in your life.

(Pause.)

Ok, how many here have actually read it, start to finish... Exactly. How did I get this lucky. Why is it so easy to talk to him? It's-it's actually weird. No this isn't-, he's just entertaining me for now. Right?

(MIGUEL inches away from DANIEL, holding the book next to his chest to shield him from DANIEL. HE addresses DANIEL.)

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

Messi's the greatest.

Queries

DANIEL

(DANIEL laughs and scoots much closer to MIGUEL.)

Well there's no real disputing that one. But I mean there's also Ronaldo and Neymar and-

MIGUEL

(To the audience.)

Well, he likes football at least. Even if he's just indulging me, at least we can bond over football.

(DANIEL and MIGUEL close the gap between them, shoulders touching.)

MIGUEL

Sometime into our conversation, we just fell... asleep! Fell asleep.

(The spotlight goes out. Three seconds go by. Then spotlight on BOTH.

DANIEL is fast asleep lying next to MIGUEL on the sectional. DANIEL's arm is wrapped around MIGUEL. MIGUEL is still clutching *Moby Dick*.)

MIGUEL

He was warm. I could feel his steady heartbeat. Maybe he was used to falling asleep on the couch with his girlfriends. Or maybe he was just a cuddler like Queequeg. I guess that would make me his—make me Ishmael. I uh- I guess I do overthink like Ishmael.

(DANIEL wakes up, stretches, smiles at MIGUEL, then exits stage left. MIGUEL stands up with *Moby Dick* in his hand. The sectionals are moved, the stage is bare once more.)

MIGUEL

Danny's a little strange like Queequeg I suppose. Not as strange as a cannibal by any means but, strange to me.

DANIEL

(Offstage)

Miguel!

(A soccer ball rolls on the stage from stage left and MIGUEL stops it with his foot. DANIEL enters stage left and MIGUEL kicks it back. They pass the ball between them as MIGUEL talks to the audience.)

MIGUEL

What type of guy makes a friendship like in a single night? But that's Danny. He could make friends with anyone. I on the other hand-

DANIEL

Try to stop this shot!

(DANIEL kicks the soccer ball at MIGUEL. MIGUEL attempts to stop it but fails. The ball exits stage right. DANIEL starts to celebrate.

DANIEL

Hell yeah! That's what I'm talking about!

MIGUEL

And he's phenomenal at soccer. I don't know why he's not playing varsity. Guess he just liked intramurals.

(DANIEL, still celebrating, runs over and hugs MIGUEL. MIGUEL addresses the audience.)

Definitely a hugger. Kind dude. Very strange, but helpful. He was the one who introduced me to the intramural team for soccer. Not sure I would have done it if he hadn't pushed me.

(DANIEL lets go of MIGUEL. MIGUEL and DANIEL face out towards the audience, looking at the audience on stage right, addressing them as the intramural teammates. MIGUEL twists *Moby Dick* in his hands nervously.)

DANIEL

This here is Miguel guys! He's new to playing but knows his stuff!

(DANIEL puts his arm around MIGUEL. MIGUEL looks away and laughs. DANIEL looks at the team and beams.)

Queries

DANIEL

Don't worry guys, I've tested him, and he's got a lot of potential. I bet y'all he's going to end up as our star player soon enough!

MIGUEL

(To the rest of the audience.)

Yeah, I'm not so sure why he has so much confidence in me either. It makes me want to try harder though, for him. Honestly, not sure of a lot of things. M-maybe I was wrong. Maybe he's Ishmael. Queequeg was pretty stand-offish and, weird. But- but Daniel doesn't act weird? He gets along so well with the team. Not like me, you saw me, I couldn't even say anything to them.

(Gestures towards the audience members that were singled out to be the intramural team.)

Queequeg is more like-

(Two rollable blocks are rolled onto the stage. DANIEL and MIGUEL sit on them and begin eating lunch through their conversation MIGUEL still holds *Moby Dick*.)

DANIEL

So... Ishmael's suicidal? And meeting Quee-, Queen-

MIGUEL

Queequeg.

DANIEL

Meeting Queequeg just... cures him of it or something?

MIGUEL

Yeah, I mean... well yeah. I mean Ishmael was depressed and lonely. The whole reason he goes out to sea is to change that. And maybe die there. It's kind of funny honestly, because you'd think they wouldn't get along and that it'd take longer to befriend a man like Queequeg. Not to mention that Queequeg sort of propo-... well he, um-

DANIEL

What's he do?

MIGUEL

Well, he uh- he makes a big deal out of becoming friends with Ishmael. Gives him half of all his stuff—I mean—it's pretty funny—in my opinion at least. But I think it's that initial friendship that really helps Ishmael see the bigger picture. That bonds with people are important.

DANIEL

Heh, deep. Kind of like how a team's gotta work together or they'll get their asses handed to them.

MIGUEL

(Laughs nervously. Then addresses the audience.)

I couldn't say it. Bosom friends. And especially not marriage partners. Both sound... off. You just don't mention that to people, especially a guy friend, right? I really am-

DANIEL

(Looks at and addresses a female in the audience.)

Oh, hey Bella! Whatcha doing here? (Pause.) Oh nothing, just here with the roomie.

(HE places his hand on MIGUEL's shoulder.)

Sure, call me sometime tonight!

MIGUEL

(Pause).

Was that your girlfriend?

DANIEL

No? What makes you think that?

MIGUEL

Well there was- she- you just seemed very-

Queries

DANIEL

Close? Well yeah. She's a friend. Another engineering major. I've had a ton of classes with her, so...

MIGUEL

Then, who is your girlfriend?

DANIEL

What? I'm too busy with classes and sports for girls, man.

MIGUEL

So, you've-you've never had a girlfriend?

DANIEL

Nope. Like I said, too little time to be thinking about—hey, Miguel, you're looking pretty bad man.

(DANIEL puts the back of his hand up to MIGUEL's forehead.)

You getting sick bud?

MIGUEL

Uh, I'm okay, just been feeling a little out of it today.

(HE faces the audience and sucks in a lot of air. After a pause, HE lets out a big sigh.)

How does he- why is-... Well he did say he's busy. Yeah, he's always busy. I think it's his passion for science and math and soccer and—well he's the type that's got tunnel visions easily, right? He focuses on his interests and nothing else. Especially not romance. Or girls. Just his-

DANIEL

If you're sure, then... alright. But yeah, I guess I just don't make time for stuff. 'Cept school and soccer. Hey, don't look so down, I'll always make time for you Miguel. I gotta have the back of our star player!

(DANIEL playfully punches at MIGUEL's arm. MIGUEL dodges and scoots his rollable seat away from DANIEL's reach.)

MIGUEL

I don't—was that weird? Do you think he noticed? Don't look at me like that, it's not that I hate his touches, but I-I don't think I really like them. I mean he is very playful and affectionate and he's- he's- he's really strange right? But it feels familiar, quite a lot like-

(HE looks down at his book. HE twists and wrings it in his hands.)

Melville really was a jokester, wasn't he? That marriage proposal wasn't real was it? I know that if any of you read the book you thought it was a joke. I mean... it's more or less a joke, right? It's a joke that any man would include in his book... About men becoming bosom buddies. Queequeg is just that heroic and loyal, just that willing to help his friend. Risk his life for his friend. Give all his possessions to his friend. It's- it's not about marriage at all is it? Ishmael was just wrong- he- he just heard wrong—or wrote wrong—or thought wrong—or felt wro-

(A ball rolls across the stage. DANIEL gets up and quickly stops it with his foot. The blocks used for seats are rolled off the stage.)

DANIEL

Miguel!

(DANIEL passes the ball to MIGUEL.)

MIGUEL

(Aside)

Why are you passing it to me? Last game, last shot, and you pass it to the only rookie on the field!

(MIGUEL kicks it offstage. BOTH raise their arms up in celebration. MIGUEL still holds onto *Moby Dick*. DANIEL, whooping in joy, runs to MIGUEL, picking him up.)

DANIEL

There's my star player!

Queries

MIGUEL

(Smiles down at DANIEL, then looks at and addresses the audience.)

I don't—I- I know I don't like this. But- (Pause.) No, I-I know I'm not supposed to like this. Not this much. But I don't- I don't want to come down. I don't want him to stop. His embrace really is the bes-

DANIEL

(DANIEL puts MIGUEL down and hugs him.)

Told you you were good enough.

MIGUEL

(MIGUEL hugs him back, tightly, the hand holding *Moby Dick* facing the audience).

Hugging. Hugging is also the best. Not that I would have known it before him... but I'm glad I...

(HE puts his head in the crook of DANIEL's neck for a moment, closing his eyes. A pause, then MIGUEL opens his eyes and addresses the audience.)

It's me isn't it. I'm the strange one. The... queer one. Queer like Queequeg. I wondered why Melville chose that name. Queequeg, the man crazy enough to declare his life bound forever to a man he just met. Just because they had hit it off. Like- Like

(MIGUEL breaks away from DANIEL's embrace and stands, facing the audience, looking down at the book in his hands. DANIEL backs out of the spotlight into the darkness.

MIGUEL

Was it just a joke? Queequeg isn't the joking type. There's the language barrier between the pair, but Ishmael isn't that stupid to make such a mistake... Melville is known to be a progressive. Progressive about a lot of things. Race, religion, hell even about the conventions of what a novel can be. Sexuality isn't that far of a stretch. And people have said the book's a love letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne. Maybe... in more ways than one?

(An additional spotlight now shines on DANIEL, who is standing at upstage left. MIGUEL looks up from the book and then looks at DANIEL. DANIEL smiles at him. MIGUEL turns to face the audience, his gaze looking down at *Moby Dick* in his hands again. For three seconds, MIGUEL looks down at the book. Then HE looks up at the audience while dropping the book for the first time. HE squeezes his eyes shut.)

MIGUEL

My name is Flores. But you may call me Miguel. Manly Miguel. Or Flores. Flowery Flores. Dependable fútbol player. Friend to Danny. Queer as Queequeg. It's a bit cliché isn't it? But it's fine. It's me.

DANIEL

Flores?

(DANIEL walks over to where MIGUEL stands at downstage center. The two spotlights merge into one. MIGUEL and DANIEL turn to face each other. Stage goes black.)

END SCENE

Baby Blue

Alexandria Propst

Four faded truck tires
glued to the driveway,
worn down rubber treads
from twenty-two years of travel.
A for sale sign planted under the wiper,
and a tenacious teenage girl
destined to bring life back to her rusted body.

Dust piled on the dash
like freshly fallen powder,
cracking leather seats
concealed by fresh fabric,
and the earthy smell of mothballs
and cigarette smoke is all
that remains of the previous owner.

I took away the dated metallic handlebars
bolted atop the bed, the baby blue
painted foot rail latched under the frame,
and chestnut embellishments
plastered on the dash.
Took it all off - the peeling paint,
rusted roof, and blackened body.
I gave her a proper cleaning,
standing back in awe as the
warm afternoon sun glistens off her polished body.

I plunge the key into the ignition
and listen as the engine
turns over. Mechanical clicking,
fuel expanding her lungs.
Then a single spark ignites
as the engine roars to life.

Four vintage tires
miles under the hood.
Once neglected now reborn.
Soaring upon the blacktop,
from a black plumed raven
to a blue-eyed eagle.

Z Plays

Brandi Wright



Musings From the Park

Annie Vaughan

I dream of star-lit nights spent snug in bed
Where hands meet face and gentle sighs meet sky
Sweet love-drenched thoughts and tender minds are wed
As side-by-side two clumsy lovers lie
I crave the sound of laughter in the air
When tumbling through the house our bodies crash
Your tangled playful fingers comb my hair
And moment's feeble squabble turns to ash
I ache for conversation filled with trial
Our struggles ache for answers to their cry
Weak and fumbling, breathe our griefs awhile
And air our disappointments out to die
I fancy little footsteps in the hall
Our love's embrace embodied in her squeals
Her joyful motion comes to silly sprawl
As mirroring our clumsy love, she peals
For now, though, we'll sit love-drunk in the grass
I'll wait, my love, till dreamings come to pass

Un Poco de Todo

Arianna Mourra



The rest of this collection is featured online
Visit <http://1147.tcu.edu>

When Times Were Simpler

Natalie Neale



Burned

Robert Benafield

It's 3:00 in the morning, and I'm driving my car. I take an unopened CD from my glove box and put it in my car's mp3 player. I've heard that people deal with insomnia in many different ways. My mom eats these gummies and my sister bakes. I, however, just drive. My blue pajamas that I've had since the sixth grade remind me of my reason for this trip, but sometimes I forget. The radio stutters as the CD loads then a song starts to play.

Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots Part 1. The yellow line on the road twists and turns, snaking along as I weave through roads. I sometimes like to count how many reflectors I pass by in between stop lights, but not tonight. Tonight, I'm just driving. I try to forget where I got this CD or why I still keep it, but the effort that it takes to forget usually brings it back even more vivid than before. I remember driving in the car with my father listening to this song. He would tell me that The Flaming Lips were the best band to see live in concert, and I would just stare out the window. The song and memory both fade.

Casimir Pulaski Day. The song starts, and I turn onto a new road. Whenever I drive at night, I try to make a loop around my house. Tonight, I veer from my usual course and travel a little farther. No one cares where I go. In all of my nights, I've only seen a cop twice. This song was one of my dad's favorites. "Bitterly sweet," he would say when it came on. I haven't listened to it since. I try to cry while listening to it, but I can't. Crying is a strange thing, I guess. Trumpets soften and a new song starts.

With or Without You. The roads are never unique at this time. They all look the same, but somehow, I never get lost. This was the last song that I listened to with my dad. We were driving back from the library, and my dad was singing along with Bono's impeccable vocals. However bad my dad's pitch got, I never tried to stop him. I just listened and smiled. After we had gotten home, he thought he had forgotten the book he checked out from the library. He got in the car and left. I wanted to go with him, but I stayed to finish my homework. A couple hours later, the cops came home to break the news to my mom about what had happened. I was still doing my biology notes.

Burned

I try to shake the memory of that day and refocus back to the road. I start to get a little sleepy.

Nothing Else Matters. I keep on driving and try to remember when I got the CD. My dad burned it for me a week before he left. I had just gotten a car, and he told me he never wanted to drive without “any good tunes.”

I don’t know why I haven’t played it yet or why I chose to play it tonight. Maybe I’m a little more delirious than usual. My blinker is somehow in perfect time with Lars Ulrich’s drumming, and for the first time tonight, I smile. My eyelids start to feel heavier, and I understand the sign. I decide to turn back home, hopefully for some sleep. But right now, I’m just driving.

In The Middle Of The Night...

Private Duck's Complaints

Robert Benafield

Sitting down in the cafetorium
Ready to eat his base's famous s'getti
Squad leader announced
"Platoons bein' shipped off"
Never getting to taste the noodles,
Private Duck walked away and complained

Loaded the chopper and buckled up
Thinking of the day his number was called
Mam heard and cried
Paw gave a pat on the back
Not wanting to leave Mississippi,
Private Duck stood up and complained

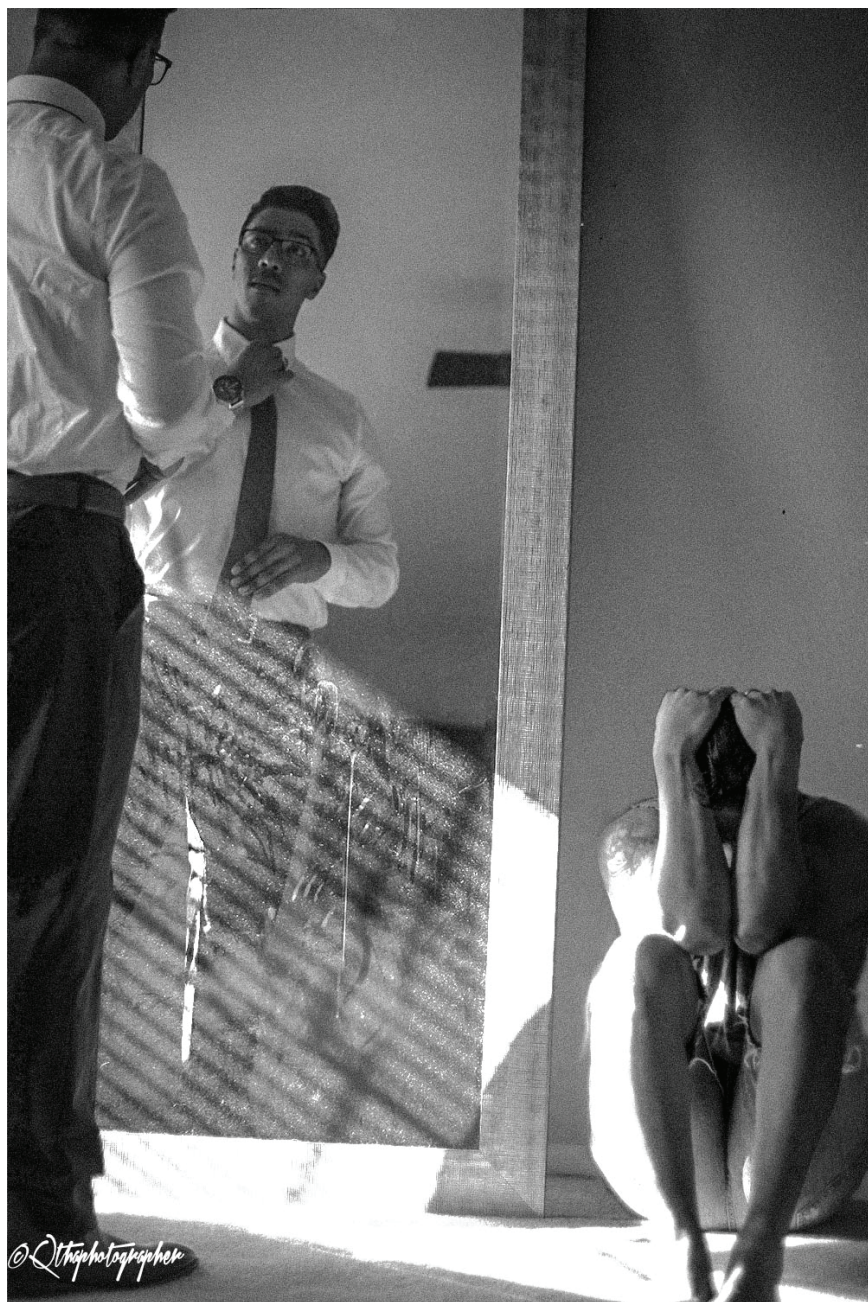
Landed and jumped off into the jungle
Strange noises swimming through the trees
Searched for a nice place to sit
Found a rotten stump big enough
Feeling tired and hungry,
Private Duck sat down and complained

Heard the sound of popcorn popping
Felt the air knocked out of his chest
Suddenly felt very sleepy
Knelt down on the grassy floor
Unable to find a comfortable position,
Private Duck laid down and complained

Privat Duck laid dow and compl ined
P ivat D ck la d dow an c mpl ined
P i t D ck la dow an c mpl in d
P i t D c la ow n c pl in d
P i c a ow n c pl n
i c n p n

The Real World Mirror

Felix Quinones



International House of People

Paulette Watson

I miss IHOP.

I miss

Pancakes made out of Julie's

laughter,

& curious wait staff pauses –

Is she all there?

Who orders this way?

Julie laughs b/c I order

almost identical

Sally from *When Harry Met Sally*:

With

peanut

butter

chocolate

chips

& powdered

sugar

All on the side.

No butter, please.

Do not butter my pancakes.

(I don't want or need it. Plus,
deep dents depress fluffiness.)

IHOP.

Haven of

friendship,

random conversations splashing creativeness,

epic hilarity,

shared secrets.

Once,

This order spawned inquiry

You pregnant?

At the time?

Yes.

You're having a boy!

International House of People

Food tells tales and
predicts gender?
Smile & Nod.

Girl! Boy moms always order weirdly.
If you say so.

Pollyanna idealism, a girl trapped
w/in religious children's home,
2 towns over.

Dis connect ed
from
all I know & love.

There, pancakes found style
beyond butter & syrup.

Caring cottage parents &
girls who aren't sisters.
Pancake breakfast spawns
lively laughter,
shouts speeding upstairs,
around hallways, and
reverberating off windows.

Twelve girls,
some dressed and some in PJs
anxiously await blessing before diving in!
Giggling whispers to top pancakes with
peanut butter, chocolate chips, & powdered sugar!

Hope constructed in
Fluffy sweet concoction –
Never. Grow. Up.

Sacred IHOP.
Our personal Bat-Signal, beacon of:
Friends
Laughter
& Secrets.

Paulette Watson

Random conversations, writing fodder.
Noah's unicorns & questionable waitress habits.
Plus, refracted memories & countless papers.

I miss
International House of Pancakes
(& more).

Beautiful Cruelty

Anna-Claire Wilcox

Like a siren
 you lured me in.
Singing sweetly, promises
to the depths of my desires
consuming my passion.
Whispering my lips
 to you
Like the inevitable tug of a hooked fish
Dragging-drowning me
In your song.
Asking my will
 ripping it out
into your embrace.
Moonstruck-
enchanted, I sail blindly
rearing white flags.
Here, in a garden of razorback rocks
Finally, my eyes drink your perfect shape in.
The music, eerily-suddenly silenced
Broken, in a bed of skeletons
pierced by the angry sea
 I am released.
Deeper I drown, darkness I dream
Gasping.

Write The Next Chapter

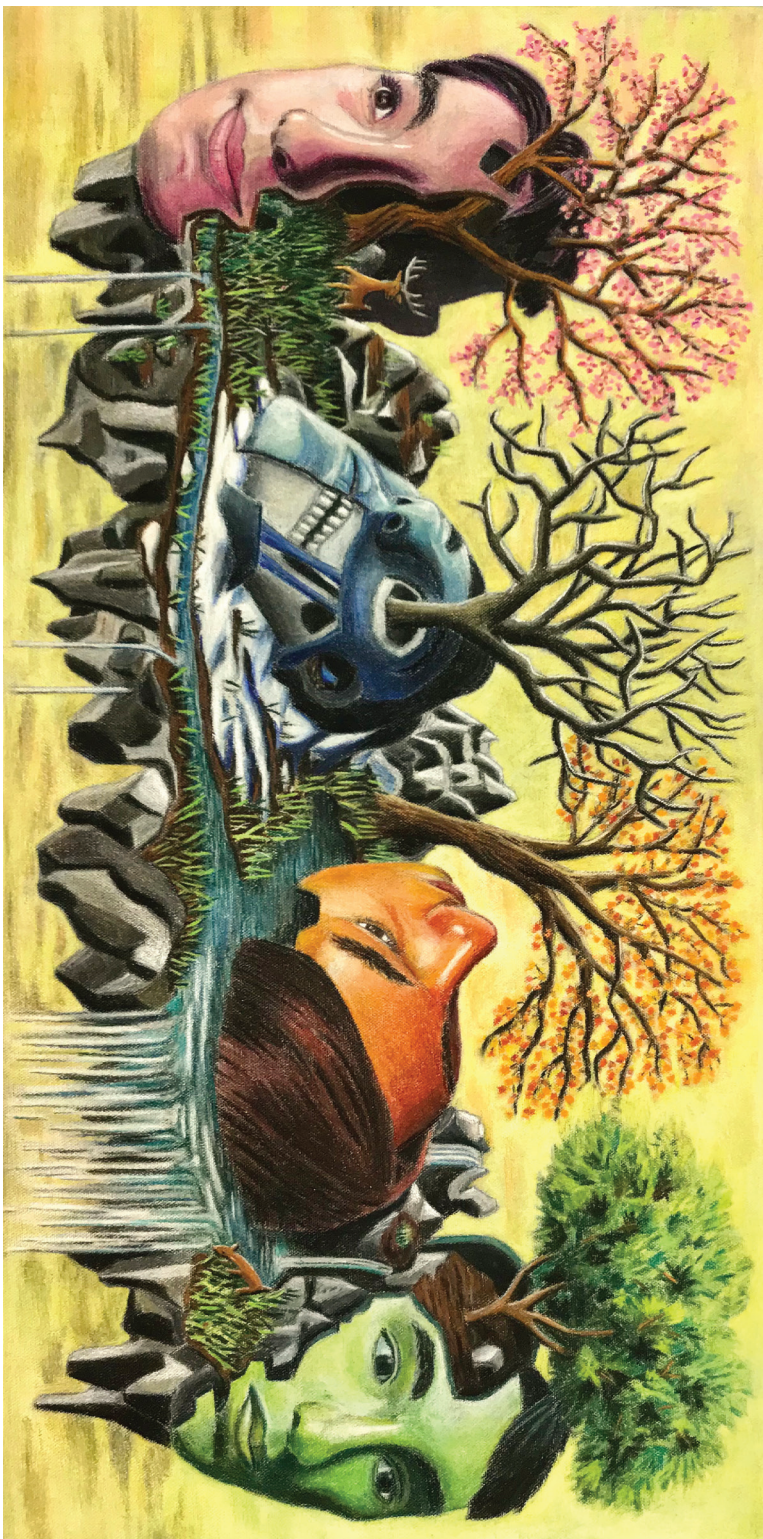
Victor Torres

Helen Hamilton Award Winner



Changing Seasons

Victor Torres



Women Like Me

Charlotte Rubayita

Women like me,
They don't write books about us.

We are not the nerdy boy's crush.
Perhaps Romeo's Juliet is too ambitious.
Not even Bluebeard's wife.

Yet we persevere, here we are:
The Valedictorian, the Preacher, the Medicine "man" and the Healer.
The Black Woman. World on our shoulders.

Won't you write me love songs then, darlings?
When the sun won't go down without a fight
and I want to be strong no more.

Will you let me bask in the sun for your storybook, william?
Walk me by the lake,
And I won't ask you to find my shoe size.

Your heroine bares bruises with armor,
but I am a delicate daughter of a pious woman.
She writes no wills and spares no soul.

Mama, the seventh child of a kindhearted soldier,
She keeps the ocean at bay so I won't drown.
She was birthed by the river.

Remember, I am no queen of drama plots or discos. Be gentle.
And if my character is too complex for you, sir; you're lacking.
It may come to you one day or it may not.

Don't dare ask the world about me,
you may not be prepared for what you will hear.
I can not digest poison and I will not go looking for corpses.

For women like me, gather an orchestra, close your eyes,
compose only when your fingers start to tremble and your breath hitches.

Labels

Nick Sangalis

Ingredients: Diary, milk, eggs, tree nuts, sesame, life, death, poetry, desolation, do it over, dairy, eggs, tree nuts, sesame, those foods that define me, powerfully, renounce my humanity and put me into a box, a label I read half-focused that could ruin me, end me, make me meet that second sentence, do it over, diary, eggs, tree nuts sesame, and me (made of: poison ivy leaves, sledding through slush, a nonperishable soul that I doubt sometimes, a family that loves yet I regret, a father that doesn't doubt and a mother that doubts too much, and probably some more but who can really know), do it over, dairy, eggs, tree nuts, sesame, remind me where I am going, why did I start this, to renounce some form of myself?, to continue on some ill-conceived thought experiment that only I will know?, for what is the will if not that which blinds us, folds us, turns us to rags, do it over, dairy, eggs, tree nuts, sesame, oh you, diary, be my scribe and my muse.

Contains: a lot

New! Now made
with truth and
love!

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matter and recompenses!

Price: 1 moment!

Please read! Please! Buy Now!

Study after Unknown Portrait

Brad Ramsey



Corona Cash

Brittany Murray



Donna Kay Paulette Watson

I miss you every day.

We are listening and we're not blind – Snow Patrol

No one illness or event causes suicide; and certainly no one knows all, or perhaps even most, of the motivations behind the killing of the self.

– Kay Redfield Jamison

Fight flight freeze—my survival instinct
until flight equals self-subtraction, leaving grappling survivors wrestling
new normal. The trouble with suicide,
blessed ignorance vs cursed knowledge. Often people fall upon
triteness disguising inability to empathize &
humanize tragedy. Perhaps,
only familiars truly & freely speak.

Suicide buzzword

ABORT MISSION!

Translation, halt conversation & perhaps
engage extreme, ditch all contact.

-Fabulous.-

Isolation.

Speaking as a child of suicide. Power-
shift.

First, acknowledge I offer up a loaded
secret.

Yes, secret.

In our advanced enlightenment, suicide remains ominously
untouchable

—my mother, weary of the fight,
convinced others of her miraculous healing.

No matter victims claimed in
brief headlines —celebrities— drowned out by
the next scandal.

Second, resist pontificating on Hell's new resident.

I promise

we do not want or need to hear your self-righteousness.

Personal tragedy,

unveils fact,

Suicide is not a blot on anyone's name; it is a tragedy.

continued, no stanza break

Donna Kay

Surely someone should've...Except
you hit cancel.
Alienating me &
silencing my voice.
Watching me wield rusty needles & inky threads,
Refitting my amnesia-like gaps with shattered
pieces of my mother.
What might change if active listening replaces flight?
Really listen, when I trust you with my despair.
Envision crashing & burning.
A relentless Phoenix lighting up a path for
shadow dwellers to find healing. Lulling with hope & assurances.

*Life is bloodless, pulseless, and yet present enough to allow a suffocating
horror and pain.*

Life leaves none flawless. IF it did,
adventures lose luster & none experience growth.
Our uniqueness lures people to us,
but our similarity connects & compassionately reassures.
Naturally, battling stigmas feels
Goliath in a David filled world. Yet,
David-like faith might propel us forward—a future where suicide
revelations
cease paralyzing listener & speaker

*...awareness of the damage...
to individual himself and to others...fears that it may return again play a
decisive role in many suicides.*

I stare down threatening oblivion I illuminate this dead-end.
understanding elusive why
—petrifies.
I struggle to release that siren vise
thwarting deception by protesting muteness,
until it evolves into sharing.
Anticipating redemption arc.

**Hey that grilled chicken over there looks pretty good,
can I have some?**

Emily Krell



Cowboy

Trevor Scott



Life in the City

Sergio Gonzalez



I Grew a Mustache

Nick Sangalis

LEGOs are a funny invention. The product of a desire to increase the burgeoning male interest in manly work, the manifestation of the taxing belief that toys should reinforce some sort of societal value, those little bricks defined my childhood. But, for my sister, they were just accessories in my closet. LEGO did not release its first female-oriented line of blocks until 2012. Their absence was marketed as a blip in the forgetful mind of a misogynist, just a mere sixty-four years after the inception of the male-marketed version. So, as a proud member of Gen Z, young Alexa was relegated to watching her father and her older brother assemble manipulated city-centers and reincarnations of her favorite TV shows. Like all women too young to know, she pretended to like it.

This is why the advent of the Disney Princess Castle was so illustrious, a savior for the relationship between a proud little boy and a robust young woman. Alexa harped at my parents in her youthful high pitch. “We need it! I want it!” were her consistent screams. Even family trips to southern California’s crown jewel, Legoland, could not quench her thirst for buildable versions of her favorite female-marketed characters she happened upon in a LEGO magazine (coincidentally, the one printed exclusively for kids like me). So, like all good parents (or maybe just the tired ones), Mr. and Mrs. Sangalis shelled out for the 4,000-piece meal that was LEGO’s \$350 creation and blamed the purchase on Santa. Alexa thanked Santa profusely.

I rolled my eyes. Santa wasn’t real. He was an excuse for parents to misplace their own applause from their children, a way to distance their efforts from young, malleable minds. Why they would do such a needlessly unselfish thing, I might never know.

If I’m honest, I was a little excited to build the castle. It was a towering thirty inches high, a far cry from the ten-dollar school buses and ice cream trucks and SpongeBob playground sets my hands had known. And my sister also happened to be my best friend. Of course, when you’re young, you ignore all of these things. Maybe it’s your budding hormones or your boundlessly self-centered vision of the universe or the lack of real peer connections, but the plague of the tween is the forgotten acknowledgment of self and others. So, like any sprouting adolescent would, I acted disinterested when my sister asked me to build the set with her as a summer project. I feigned trepidation and mustered all of the aloofness I could, but I conceded her this honor. We built the whole thing in a month.

Summers are more fleeting than childhood, but LEGOs made them forever. Moments lasted like eons in the assembly of prewritten instruction, the mindless coaxing of premeditated ideas of what children should be. And we became those children, and we grew closer not just to each other, but to the expectations laid out for us. Yet, when we were fulfilling that capitalistic ideal for what manhood should be, we felt like kids, we felt like friends. We felt at home. Maybe that's what God is.

And so, when the world became nothing, when LEGOLAND closed and SpongeBob had to halt filming, when hairdressers and grocery clerks and door-to-door salesmen became the heroes of our country, childhood started simultaneously creeping up over our shoulders and resting meditatively on the tailpipes of our backs. My sister and I, both much too old and proud to senselessly inquire about a regular hangout between the two of us, both much too cavalier to pry our eyes from anything other than videos of other teens dancing or the plights of a bizarre owner of a brutal tiger zoo some hundreds of miles away, gave in, then, to childhood. Its gasping ploys, its festering wounds, its wonderful songs washed over us like a soft symphony. And we listened. And we returned to the only thing we knew. LEGOs once again snuck their way into our suburban oasis.

It's strange that it takes the shuffling of the world order to make you understand who you are. Even stranger for some, it requires the nonsensical death and destruction and economic recession of a global pandemic. We were the unlucky latter few. We cracked open a box of Harry Potter's castle Santa so generously gifted us, now dusty. Retrospectively, it was the feeble attempt of our parents to keep my sister and I bonded over the joy of children's toys. After the ritualistic self-dosing of dancing teens and distant friends that rested a pocket's length away, we reunited in the basement for a build. We were less enthusiastic than before. We were a little bit more tired than before, a little more afflicted with awareness of the world, a little older. But we were with LEGOs.

That was the best summer of my life.

Things have come and gone since that first youthful construction project. News stories have come and gone. People have come and gone. Global attention to the joyful interconnection of a shared hellish experience has come and gone just like the fleeting attention to deep-seated racial tension. And still, with all this familiar disappearing, summer felt like an eon.

In a world where very few things are unchanging, summers come and go like a quaking orchestral hit, a beautiful overflowing of emotion and feeling before the desolation and confusion that succeeds it. We would be nothing without summer, and yet the expectation of it seems to loom overhead all year long. My sister and I are no exception.

Around the same time as the LEGO project began that pandemic-infested summer, I sat one day in our family's hammock in the backyard. The sun was vibrant, the trees were protecting, and the coarse cloth caught my gravity and made me a wonderful apple. I had never sat in the contraption before, even though it had been around our house since I started high school. I cursed all that came-and-went opportunity for relaxation. For a moment, I remembered how imperfect I was. For a moment, memories of reluctant submissions to my sister's cry for friendship and angered reactions at her imperfect building skills trickled through my skull. For a moment, I was back in middle school, my youthful face the subject of cruel hormonal jests and my youthful perception the only thing keeping me smiling. For a moment, I was the sullied kid too grimacing to swing for the fences when the bases were loaded, and instead walked home a run so the kid behind me could get the glory. For a moment, I was in fourth grade, selling damaged duct tape wallets in class and wishing I could talk to that pretty girl. For a moment, I was back to when I soured my khakis while playing foursquare because my friend said something too funny and I drank too much water at lunch. For a moment, I was the afflicted shell of who I wanted to be.

But, the sun and the shade and the strings coddled me back to safety, and I closed my eyes. My eyes, a little older now, saw nothing but the sun-tinted color of my upper eyelid, the tracing of dancing leaves on the trees that dangled above. They saw clouds and dirt, birds and worms, handshakes and hugs. A good day of LEGOs and a good day of the burgeoning hopefulness of adulthood.

In gratitude, I saw my hand summon itself to my face, and it tickled the half-grown mustache I had built that summer. An adolescent mustache where once there lived a peach fuzz infection is a pleasant reminder of the way things were.

Mine was a reminder of the way things are.

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**“THE WORLD
ALWAYS SEEMS
BRIGHTER
WHEN YOU’VE
JUST CREATED
SOMETHING THAT
WASN’T THERE
BEFORE.”**

”

Neil Gaiman