

Creative Writing Club

ANTHOLOGY

EHIS 2007

*... et parallèle au S! les diarmètres apparaissent et les
Reviser à travers les planètes, les réflexions dantesques et les
l'accomplissement des vêtements autour du soleil.
L'opération de la lumière est extériorisée.
Si "est pas indifférent qu'un observateur soit fixé
au mobile dans son appréciation de la luminosité, y est
en permanence soumise à composition avec elle à la
maître et il en résulte une division de la lumière.*

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What Makes Me Cry

I am.

I am full. Full of life, full of unshed tears.

I feel distant and separate from my peers

I am whole, drawn to the broken and lonely.

I want more-I want you-if only.

But this is me, no more

This is what will break down my hearts door.

Stories of love, of loss, of lust.

Stories of those who do what they must.

Songs of loneliness, solos, duets

Langston's poems, Shakespeare's sonnets

Willow tree figures without faces

Artful eyes with hopeful traces

Dancing alone on the stage

Heartbeats slowing, turning the page

Mysterious characters, wild and free

Hoping that someone out there will love me.

Chains and torture, noble causes

Living alone through terrible losses

Letting someone you love go

Knowing what becomes of snow

Being rejected, falling roses

Strange and beautiful human poses

Injustice in today's society

Hopelessly buried in dead propriety

Shells of souls yearning for love

But knowing it's something they can only dream of

Beautiful oceans, large and blue

Enjoying them with someone like you

-Hannah Hall-

The Sky's Embrace

The warm scents of herbs and spices danced in my nose, driven by the cool night breeze that wafted up from the valley below. Littered with stars, the sky stood majestically above us, looking down upon our activity with curiosity. Particular attention was focused on me as I proceeded toward the group. Tonight was my night. Hanging lightly over my back sat a black cape which brought me here without drawing attention to myself. I thought that that would be best so I wouldn't end up having any suspicious followers. No one else could know about us. Everything would be over if someone was to find out.

Silhouettes dotted the cliff edge; members waiting by the fires for my arrival. The air carried bits of their hushed conversations to my ears, tantalizing me. I couldn't wait. Quickening my gait enough to reach them sooner, but not so much as to seem too eager, I caught the attention of an icy-blue eyed man. The talk died down to a soft murmur, then to silence.

Since I first found out I was one of them, I had come to these gatherings; the process wasn't new to me. The man who saw me approaching walked to the front of everyone and raised his arms. Closing our eyes we waited to feel it, to feel the pulse in the earth and air, all around us. Once we felt it, each of us in turn would join the pulse. Our hearts and bodies moved in rhythm with the surroundings; became one with them.

When the last person was felt joining, we opened our eyes. The leader locked eyes with me and his eyes pierced into the deepest recesses of my mind, searching for something—fear. He wouldn't find it there. Sensing I was ready, he nodded, signaling me to remove the cape.

The strings at my neck slid apart at my gentle pull and the cape slithered to the earth, unveiling my golden wings. Above the crackling of the fires, a whisper on the wind told me to go now.

I followed a path lined with flames that led to the edge of the cliff; the group stood waiting at the head. Our hearts beat as one as I dove off of the cliff. Gravity pulled me to the ground, but that would no longer be a problem for me. To tease it I put my arms out and threw back my head, as if accepting the fate gravity had in store for me, but at the last possible second my wings stretched out and I know nothing but the sky. It welcomed me and held me safely in its loving embrace.

By Heather Nelson

We made it. We made it all the way to the final battle. Even when I thought we couldn't and even when the chances said there would never be a way, we made it. This time however, chances will be right, our luck will run out and we will cease to exist. That black tower stood surrounded by the enemy, and in the back sat the goblin king, to sit and watch seven people be slaughtered by ten thousand. The biggest army to ever face us.

I turned. I brought my six better halves, my six best friends into this with a dream, an impossible thought and a joke. I could cry. No more 'we can do this'; we have no words of encouragement but the simple truth. We were going to die.

I started my speech, "This isn't a football game. There is no score but life and death. There isn't any half time, no breaks. We, who are about to die, shall tell these creatures that know nothing of life what real courage is. Not with words because words are quickly forgotten and abused. We shall not stop gutting each evil heart until we have given our best and are completely satisfied with what we gave. Actions will tell our courage. Even if they are misread, we will understand. Even if they are forgotten, we will remember. Even if this courage is not enough to be remembered or read, we will not care. If our best isn't enough, who is to tell us what better is? For friendship, courage and love, let's fight."



- Emily Hall

Illuminate Me

I'm not afraid of death.
 Of loss of life, loss of breath.
 I don't know if I could stand being nothing
 But I don't think that'll be everything
 Since I believe in a life after death
 I'm not scared of no life, no breath.
 What I am scared of, though
 Is what I'll miss, but-no
 I'll be happy-or at least content-in death
 With no life, with no breath
 I want people to think of me, only
 I know they'll think of me untruthfully
 They'll speak of my death,
 My loss of life, my loss of breath
 And they'll turn me into a martyr, a saint,
 When I know that I'm just a mask, dripping paint
 So when I am about to meet my death,
 When I lose my life, when I lose my breath,
 I'll watch, and pray
 That one day, someday
 At my death
 Loss of life, loss of breath
 Someone will know all of me
 And express that, so everyone will see
 Hannah

By:

Hannah Hall

Sanctuary

Jay Parker stared up at the mansion, and sighed. If only his parents could be here with him. He tugged on the strap of his black messenger bag and trudged up the hill that led to the mansion sullenly.

Jay was sixteen, lean, and lanky. His brownish-black hair was cut at his chin, albeit somewhat choppily because he had cut it himself. He had bright green eyes that he hid halfway under his bangs, and a very light cappuccino complexion that suggested that he hadn't been out in the sun very much, which was true, because Jay was a vampire.

Born of two vampire parents, one with a strange affinity for fire, Jay had been a vampire since the day he was born. He suckled a mixture of mother's milk and blood on the day that he was born, as did all vampire babies.

Not only was he a vampire, but a pyrokinetic one at that. He had inherited from his mother her power over fire. Because of this, he never had to go a day with freezing himself half to death.

Then tragedy struck. At the age of ten, Jay's parents were killed in a car accident, leaving Jay to be shuffled around between relatives until he was finally emancipated at fifteen. Since then, Jay has been living wherever he can, staying with friends, sleeping in parks, even going so far as to live in a cardboard box once.

Somehow, the people who lived at this mansion in Portland, Oregon had found out about him, and offered him a place there. He was being provided with a place to sleep, and a place to learn, something that Jay's parents had always stressed to him.

Jay reached the doorway. He took a deep breath, and knocked at the door. It opened at his touch, and he walked into the mansion tentatively.

A few twists and turns later, Jay was at an office door. He knocked on the door, and opened it. Jay found the sight of another man sitting behind a desk, also in a suit. The man looked up, and a slight smile played across his features, which were somewhat gaunt and reminded Jay of a wolf staring down its prey.

"Jay Parker, I presume?" he asked. Jay nodded. The man stood. "Welcome. I am Professor Wexworth. It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to Todd Academy." He extended his hand.

"Thank you, sir," Jay replied shaking Professor Wexworth's hand.

"I knew your parents very well," Wexworth said. "I'm sorry for your loss. They were some of my best friends."

"Thank you." Jay looked somewhat confused. Why was this man, who he had only just met, bringing up his parents?

“Would you like to sit down?” Wexworth gestured to the chair in front of his desk. Jay complied gratefully, as he had walked from downtown to here. “Now, Jay, this is your first year at Todd, am I correct?” Jay nodded. “Okay then, you’ll need this.” The professor handed Jay several papers. “There is your schedule, your map, and your room number. These papers are going to save your life here at Todd. Trust me. I went here, and I got those taken from me by some jerks. I was lost. So I make it my personal mission in life to save all first years from that.” He grinned broadly.

Jay glanced over the papers briefly. “How many years does this school provide for students?”

“Essentially, this school is like a public high school- 4 year program, take as long as you need to pass all four years. Sound good?”

Jay pulled out his schedule once more. He was only signed up for four classes. “How many classes are in a day?”

“There are four. Is that a problem?”

“No, it’s just that-“

“I understand. Most high schools have at least five classes a day. But then, we are not a normal school.”

Jay smirked. *Definitely not normal, if you let people like me in.* “What about uniforms?”

“We have a normal high school dress code- except you are welcome to wear boxers for your pants as often as you like. We like to promote some individuality. But other than that, standard rules apply- no excessive perfume or cologne, no briefs or smaller undergarments showing, the works. We provide clothing for our less fortunate students.”

“What about food?”

“There’s a wide variety of food. We accommodate all students, including our young vampires and werewolves. We keep a blood bank open, that we restock every month or so. We encourage non-vampire students to donate blood.”

Jay smiled. “All right then. I think I’ll get on fine here.”

“Excellent,” Wexworth replied, standing up once again. “Allow me to show you to your room.” He opened the door, and beckoned for Jay to follow him.

Jay’s room was on the second floor. Some of the students and teachers had passed by and greeted both him and the professor, but other than that it was a relatively quiet place. Almost too quiet.

Professor Wexworth opened the door to Jay's room with a key, which he then handed to Jay. There were two beds in the room, and one of them was already occupied. Or, at least, mostly occupied. The boy was sprawled across the mattress, back up, and the blankets half off his body.

"Ah, Joseph!" Professor Wexworth said, and the boy looked up. "This is your new roommate, Jay Parker. Jay, this is Joseph Wilson."

Joseph had somewhat tan skin (from what Jay could see of it), stormy blue-grey eyes, and bright blond hair with some blue streaks on the bangs. He nodded at Jay. "Hey," he grunted. "Call me Joey."

"Look after him, will you Joseph?" Professor Wexworth asked.

Joey rolled his eyes at his given name. "Sure thing, Professor."

"I'll leave you with Joseph, then, Jay," Wexworth replied, and he left the room.

Joey pushed his blankets away, stood, and stretched. He wore only a pair of plaid blue pajama bottoms, and appeared to be working on a six-pack of abdominal muscles. He pulled on a blue hooded sweatshirt.

"So, what's your case?" Joey asked.

"Excuse me?" Jay said.

"What is your special 'talent,' if you will," Joey said.

"Oh," Jay replied. "I'm a pyrokinetic vampire."

"In English, please," Joey said, rolling his eyes.

"I'm a fire-controlling bloodsucker," Jay said. "That good enough for you?"

Joey smiled. "Great. I'm a werewolf." He stuck out a hand towards Jay, and the new roommates shook hands.

A bell sounded throughout the school.

"Dinner time," said Joey, smiling. "I'll show you the way to the cafeteria." He opened the room door, and Jay followed him down to the cafeteria, along with the rest of the students.

When Jay got there, he was surprised to see that the cafeteria was huge. In truth, he was expecting something small, like the cafeteria back at the elementary school he had attended when his parents were alive. But this- this made that cafeteria seem really tiny.

And there were so many students! Jay was shocked to see that there were so many, considering the size of the facility.

One particular girl caught his eye. She had dark hair with pale skin, much like his own. She seemed cool, confident, and popular (judging by the number of people around her). She saw him watching her, and smiled slightly. He smiled back, and felt a rush of warmth in his heart.

“Well, I’ll say this for you, Parker,” Joey said, clapping him on the shoulder. “You’ve got good taste in women.”

“Who is that girl?” he asked.

“That, Parker, is Roxanne Zedane,” Joey replied. “One of the hottest girls here.”

“Zedane,” Jay said, tasting the name. Where had he heard it before? It sounded so familiar.

“Joey!” called a low voice. Joey took Jay by the arm and led him to a table, where several other students were already sitting.

“Hey guys, what’s up?” Joey said, pulling a chair up to the table.

“Who’s the new guy?” asked the voice, coming from a dark-skinned boy with dreadlocks.

“Say hello to Jay Parker,” Joey replied. Jay raised a hand somewhat shyly. “Jay, these are my friends.” He went around the table, naming his companions off. There were three girls there- Lily Samuelson, who was next to Jay on the right, Stevie Hoffman, who was next to the boy in dreadlocks, and Jamie Rose, who was on Joey’s left. There were also two guys- the boy in dreadlocks was called Ben Adams, and the other was Marco Montoya. Lily, Marco, and Jamie were common with Jay in that they were vampires, as was made prominent by the glasses of blood at their places and their somewhat pale skin. Stevie and Ben were both shapeshifters, and Joey was a werewolf.

“So where are you from, Jay?” Ben asked, taking a swig of his drink.

“Everywhere and nowhere,” Jay replied. He had never stayed in one place for too long. People tended to get suspicious of the “illness” that seemed to afflict everyone he drank from, and he had to keep a low profile for fear that he would be killed. “I’m a wanderer. And you all?”

“Seattle,” said Lily and Jamie.

“The Bronx, New York City,” Marco replied.

“Detroit,” Ben said.

“Los Angeles,” Stevie said, and Jay could tell her skin was incredibly tanned.

“Spokane,” Joey said. “I love East Washington.”

“Never been,” Jay replied. “Where can I get some food? I’m starving.”

“Line’s over there,” Ben said, pointing at an area that several students were congregating in. There was a section of the area that Jay could see had some glasses of blood, which pleased him. Now he wouldn’t have to bite people to keep himself alive.

He grabbed a tray, and picked out some fried chicken, curly fries, an apple, and a carton of chocolate milk, as well as the necessary utensils. The chocolate milk helped Jay drink his blood easier. It had always been that way, since the days of his childhood.

He reached for a glass of blood, when his hand touched someone else’s. He looked to his left, and the girl that had caught his eye earlier looked back at him.

“Go ahead,” she said, smiling softly.

“No, it’s all right,” Jay replied, blushing.

“Are you new here? I don’t think I’ve seen you before,” she asked, cocking her head to the right slightly.

“I just got here today. I’m Jay Parker.” He extended his hand to her.

“I’m Roxanne Zedane,” she replied, taking his hand and smiling as she shook it. “I don’t know why, but I feel like I already know you. Have we met?”

“Not that I can recall. I can only go back to about eight years ago, and I don’t ever remember seeing anyone like you.” Jay smiled broadly.

“You just seem really familiar to me. I-“

“Roxy, who’s this?” said a voice, and a boy with bright blond hair and pale skin was at Roxanne’s side.

“Oh, Jimmy, this is Jay Parker,” Roxanne said, brushing a strand of hair back from her face. “Jay, this is Jimmy Sand, my boyfriend.”

Jay nearly dropped his tray. Boyfriend, she said? “Oh, sorry, I didn’t know. I’ll just...go.” And he picked up his tray, with a new glass of blood, and walked back to the table, an angry glare on his face.

“Hey, what’s wrong?” Joey asked when he got back to the table.

“You didn’t tell me Roxanne was taken,” Jay replied softly, but in a dangerous tone.

“Sorry, thought I mentioned that.” Joey took a bite of his steak.

“You’ll have to excuse Joey,” Jamie said, reaching across the table for Jay’s hand and patting it sympathetically. “He tends to forget things quite easily. Watch- Joey, what did you eat for breakfast today?”

Joey paused, and scratched his head. He took a stab at it, “Eggs and bacon?”

Jamie rolled her eyes. “No, you had cinnamon toast and a mug of coffee. See, Jay? He didn’t do that purposely- it’s just the way he is.”

“Oh,” Jay said, pouring his chocolate milk into his blood glass. “Whatever. I had a friend like that once. It was weird.”

“Why do you do that?” Marco asked, indicating his chocolate-blood mix.

“Everything goes down easier with chocolate milk,” Jay said. “You want some?”

“Sure,” Marco replied, holding out his hand for the glass. He took a swig, and said, “Ooh, that’s good! Lils, try this!” He passed it to Lily, who also enjoyed it, and then it went to Jamie. All three approved, and asked where he had gotten the idea.

“My mom,” Jay said. “She pretty much got me hooked on chocolate for good.” He smiled.

“Cool,” Marco said, making a mental note to try that again.

“I take it you’re all second years, then?” Jay inquired. All of them gave the affirmative. “Damn, I feel unfortunate.”

“Sorry,” Joey said. “But if you want, we can help you out with stuff. What classes are you taking?”

Jay handed him his schedule. He was taking History of Vampirism I first period, then he had a break, followed by Pyrokinesis Control, lunch, English 101, and finally Study Hall. The only class that was required for Graduation was English, strangely enough.

“We took History last year,” Marco said, indicating himself, Jamie, and Lily.

“And we all took English last year with your teacher,” Joey added. “He was pretty cool. You’ll like him.”

“All right then,” Jay said. “I think I’m gonna like it here.” He took a sip of his chocolate milk-blood, and smiled.

By Emma Spencer

Here's the thing: one day, the world ends. It doesn't end with a bang or a whimper or any of that; it ends in fire and ice and the destruction of civilization as we know it. And – theoretically speaking – it can be blamed on one person. But see, here's the second thing: when the events that set the end of the world in play began, that person was a kid. Just another twentysomething, innocent as all out. Innocent as the next guy, even.

Theoretically speaking.

And, okay, here's the third thing. That person – the twentysomething, the innocent, you know the gig – when they started this chain of events – when they were the butterfly flapping its wings in China – well, I mean clearly, they had no clue that the drink they were having with this guy, this real cute one that spoke just swell – well, this drink was the one that breaks the surface-tension of the universe. There's no way they can know.

And this is all just theory, yeah? Not, like, serious or anything.

So here's another theoretical – or are you tired of that word? We can use hypothetical. So here's a hypothetical: say you know all this. Say you know that this kid is going to be in this bar with this guy on a certain day in a certain year, and you know how it's gonna end. You know that there's no way around the ending once that butterfly done flap its wings. But. Say you can go back to China and find that particular butterfly, make sure it doesn't flap its wings. Make sure that little dust storm it raises doesn't turn into a sandstorm in the Sahara and a hurricane heading straight for Nawlins and that itchy trigger finger on Mister President of the United States' right hand. So. What do you do? Do you go back to China, or to the bar, whatever, you know what I mean, and make sure that butterfly don't flap its wings or that kid don't have that drink? You know. To save the word.

Hypothetically speaking.

Okay. One more. Say the kid in the bar – say she's your big sister. Say you know what's going to happen ten years down the line, after she has that drink, after the world goes to hell in a handbasket with first class tickets. Say you know that she turns into not a real nice person. What do you do then? Does that change your decision? No? Yes? Here's another – I know, I know, but just one more: okay, so the guy she has the drink with. He's a real nice guy. Real angel of a guy, actually. They don't make men like that no more. Say you know – and you're real sure about this part – say you know that you're gonna get, shall we say, *involved* with him. But. If he has this drink – with this kid, this twentysomething, you know, your sister – then the world ends. If these two *meet*, period, the world's gonna end. Civilization as we know it is going straight down the drain. So. You have to make sure one of them *can't* meet the other.

So what? Do you do it? The world's on the line here, chickie. The hero business isn't all fun and virgins, you know. On the one hand, she's your sister and he's your guy. On the other – it's the world we're talking about, babe. Some things are bigger than you and your blood and your squeeze.

Hypothetically speaking.

Cambodia Poem #5

I am exhausted
 Ten hours teaching fifteen-year olds
 Wrings it out of you
 And a cup of Earl Grey with honey
 Has my name on it at the
 Valley Café

I drive the short distance
 In my warm car
 In my well-made clothes
 And grab my leather wallet with cash in it

Snow is falling and some inside complain
 My tea comes, steaming in its sturdy enamel mug
 I smell the bergamot... finally...

But the honey in its bear-shaped bottle has crystallized
 It sits, a block of amber on the glass-topped table--
 I chunk at it with my spoon,

All I wanted was a simple, decent cup of tea
 And for a misplaced moment I feel real anger

Absurd moment.

I gaze out the windows, static with snow
 And back into my almond-colored tea
 It's the color of skin
 Not my skin

It's the color of skin in Cambodia
 of skin-covered stick children
 But lush, well-rounded names:
 Siem Reap, Tonle Sap, Battambang, Pnom Penh

Even Pol Pot is fulfilling
 The sound a comfort
 If isolated from the atrocity
 Pol Pot, Pol Pot, Pol Pot...

The children are lovely
 Their parents limbless
 Selling vegetables or chickens to us, to me

I've been sent to write curriculum
To study literature, and temples
Of people with no clean water
Whose infants perish from diarrhea
Who are still blown up in their rice paddies
Who must sell their daughters to the sex trade.

I do this because I am a teacher
And I will come back to make a difference...
But I am still right here
In my warm café, my car outside
My hands cupped around this bone-white mug,
Watching honey-colored faces in the snow.

- By Cathie Day

Suspended

Minutes hours and days pass by
But the time feels all the same
Searching for the answers
In this little child's game
As I lie suspended
With the firmament above
I think of you and wonder;
Is it me you're dreaming of?
The grains of sand keep falling
But I can't make them stop
And all refuse to pause and help
For fear they too will drop
If I stand breathless waiting
Will our souls collide?
Or must we keep on moving
Through this endless shiftless tide?
I can't wait forever
But Forever's all we've got
To find if time will lend us
What it is we sought
So as I lie suspended
With the firmament above
I think of you and wonder;
Is it me you're dreaming of?

By Mindy Alldredge

Memories

Emily Hall

“Emerald May!” Crystal shook her head and spoke gently still exclaiming. “I know you better than that.”

Emerald laughed, “I’m fine really.”

“Don’t lie to me.”

“Who said I was lying?”

Crystal looked at her. “Nobody had to.”

Em sighed and barely rolled her eyes, “Crystal, you’re so persistent.”

“Another word for that is determined, and that was never a bad thing.” She glanced down at the others; she could barely see their hands.

“Crystal!-“

“What?” She glanced back at Emerald not letting her speak. “I know something is bothering you and you need to tell me. Em, just because you’re not feeling well or ...down doesn’t mean you should keep it to yourself.”

She stared at the horizon, “It’s not that important.”

“Then what is it?” Crystal spoke quieter, “Em, if you aren’t important, what is?”

Emerald scoffed, “That’s a laugh.”

“Em, you’re one of the most important people to me.” Crystal was surprised, Emerald was usually the happy-go-lucky and she never seemed depressed.

“Am I really or is that just a lie?” Emerald stated more than asked.

“After ten and a half years of friendship, you think I’m lying to you?” Crystal raised her eyebrows.

“Okay fine.” Emerald took a large inhaling breath-closing her eyes, Emerald seemed in a trace of her past thinking and remembering, and when she opened them again they looked far off-and began to speak. “That conversation we had earlier reminded me of my sister, that’s all.”

Sister? I don’t remember a sister. Oh wait, Emerald did talk about her when we were younger. I haven’t heard much about her.

“How so?”

Emerald messed with her hands, “She was very nice around my parents, I wouldn’t believe that she was...mentally abusing me either if I was them.”

Mentally abusing? What? I have never heard this before, why did she hide this?

Emerald began to laugh softly, "Everyday after school, when my parents weren't around she would call me fat and cuss me out. And other things that I wasn't suppose to know until middle school but mostly fat...or obese."

Emerald stood looking far into the gray horizon, "Everyday it got worse, and Cinnamon was so sweet, gentle and real around my parents, for the longest time I was confused. When I turned nine I began to listen to what she said, before I just went away and cried."

Crystal watched as Emerald began to have tears collecting in her eyes, "So when I listened I tried to stop it by being thinner, not as fat, for Cinnamon. On the day I decided to stop eating for Cinnamon she told me that no one would want to have a friend or girlfriend that couldn't look good in a bikini or didn't have a waist they couldn't fit their hands around. I had looked at her stomach and saw something that I wanted and aspired to be. I wanted that. So I just stopped, food wasn't appealing and didn't fill my wants. It seemed all too easy."

Crystal felt her own self esteem lower as Emerald told her story. "But you were the skinniest girl I knew."

"I couldn't see it." Emerald shook her head gently and had a tear in her eye, "I believed my sister and even though I knew that she was wrong I forced my way into trusting her. You guys would write, especially Lilly, notes on my arms and hands everyday at school telling me not to "forget" my lunch. Yeah I bet you remember that."

Crystal nodded, remembering all those days that Emerald had come to school without a lunch and always said that she would remember it the next day but never did. She had such a straight face when she was younger that anyone would believe her. Daisy, Lilly, Lilac, Dot, Seashell and Crystal had always offered part of their lunches and only rarely did Emerald take anything.

"So one day I was washing off one of Lilly's notes off my hands after school when my sister walked in. CC was eating her own lunch when Cinnamon had come in barging through the kitchen to the fridge and took out juice. I tried to be out of her way and unnoticeable but when the glasses are above the sink it's difficult to be out of her way. So just when I was moving, she glanced at what I was washing off."

"I can still remember that fear when she grabbed at my arm, that voice of mockery and laughter. 'Remember your lunch, love Lilly'? It sounded so cruel, I was trying to do something

for Cinnamon and she didn't care, she didn't realize anything that she was doing to me. I hadn't realized it at the time either but I was broken. I had tried to explain what it meant, but Cinnamon wasn't stupid. She knew that she was getting to me. The next day CC and I had come home and Cinnamon called me ugly."

"Again I believed her, in her words a 'mix of pig, cockroach and worm'. Ugly, after I had enough of her cussing me out, I walked into our room and stared into the mirror. I was ten...and in those moments I completely changed my perspective of my self. I wasn't anything special, or unique. My mind was filled with the three words, worm, cockroach, and pig. Over and over I heard three words and that night I swear that's what I dreamed about. Being not perfect for someone who was tired me. So I started stealing her makeup only small things but things all the same. Then of course Cinnamon told our parents that I was taking her stuff, so I got in trouble for doing that. I couldn't even steal something right."

Wow what a contradiction.

"So after that I was ugly, fat and stupid. I was working on getting thinner and stupid there was no explanation. I just was. That's what Cinnamon told me anyways. 'Some people just are'." Emerald let a rushing, raging river fall from her eyes.

"Emerald, I'm sorry." Crystal looked into the gray sky that seemed lifeless and unhelpful, like the gray abyss of despair waiting for her to drop into its lies.

Emerald stood, wiping away the tears that dripped. "Sorry? I'm sorry. I wasted six years of my life listening to what she had to say when really that's how she felt about herself. I am deprived of the childhood I should have had. Cinnamon put the burdens and cruelty of the world on me when I hadn't even been introduced and given it my own fair trial. I don't what the world did to her, but whatever it did; she put her loss on me. On me! The sad thing is that I kept going when I should have told her that I loved her and wanted her to be my sister, not my demon. I could have changed what happened to us both."

"We could have been sisters and friends not by blood but actual sisters. Like Daisy and you are my sisters. I never had the chance, when I was twelve she ran away across the Melipoless lake and I don't know why, where or who she is with now. She could be dead or being a successful woman. I don't know what fairyship she was appointed all I know is that more anything I want to tell her that I surpassed her by inside beauty. ...And that's all that matters

anymore.” Emerald stared crying didn’t stop or sit down, but stared confidently into the horizon with the sun beginning its glorious reign over night.

“That’s all you want?” Crystal stood next to her crying friend.

“I have so many bad memories from her that if I could just see her expression from that I would be satisfied. Even if she cussed me out one last time. What harm could she already do? After going from fat to transparent in her book, what harm could I, the younger, fat, ugly, stupid, weak, transparent little sister do to her?” Emerald smiled as the breeze ran through her hair and the sun fully came over the mountains in the distance. “What harm could her words do to me anymore? What harm could my words do to her, especially if I’m not insulting her directly?”

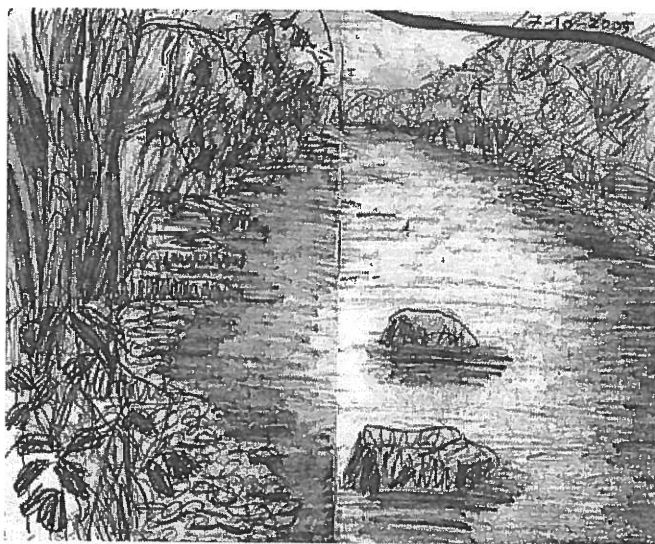
Her simple smile of longing, peace and laughter shone more brightly than the sun while Crystal began to wonder of all the years that Emerald had been suffering and never told a soul. “You went through that all by your self?”

“No. Daisy found out.” Emerald sat down again, “I went over to her house on the weekend and I passed out. I hadn’t eaten in two weeks. When I woke up I began to tell her, well more like she pried it out of me but still...I told her I didn’t care about my health as Daisy told me it wasn’t good not eating. That’s another thing that reminded me of my sister, Daisy told me the same thing that she had to Ash yesterday, ‘Yes, well when you’re not hungry for weeks then I’ll be impressed’. She began to feed me normal sized meals until I ate them on my own. She would stuff all this food into my body that I got sick, but I healed at the same time.”

Crystal laughed as Emerald began to laugh with her but slowly her giggling deceased. “That’s how I first got into music. All day when I wasn’t up for Cinnamon’s screaming, I would go home and walk down to the Corner Music Store. The owner, Jim, he after a while would come up to me and tell me things about music. Small things at first like notes, clefs, key signature, so and so forth. Everyday for weeks I would walk down there and listen to other people learn and learn things myself. Jim began to teach me how to sing, that’s were I really got into it. I had the lyrics that I had written when I felt Cinnamon, and how I felt that she would never leave me alone. I began to sing them and then write music to go along.”

Parking Lot

In the scrubby meadow kingdom of gravel and grass, where weeds and sticks mingled in the dead leaves, as ants build their empires and spiders made their solitary hermit existence amid the bare trees, as the first insects take to the air in the warm day that is not full. Not complete. As the princes of wasps flew and made home in the first pig's house of paper, full of houses and hollow. As they bring them to a string on the undersides of peeling roofs, attached to sheds and dusty spotted glass windows, shattered, looking with dark interiors over a land of paper and cans scattered across a wilderness lawn. Turbulent leaves rustle over the small forgotten land in a breeze. Fruitless alleys, rock, gravel, tires, newspapers, the Insect realm that is small yet covers the earth. A bird sings in the trees above the long-dead tumbleweeds in the shadowed gravel alleyways, canyons of brick and steel.



--Hannah Charlton--

On his good days, Chris is almost lucid, and can pass as normal so long as no one looks too closely at him. On his better days, he weaves slightly as he walks, and his eyes are distant and turned inward, but he can still function as a homicide detective, although Matt hesitates to trust him around weapons and witnesses.

On his bad days, Chris stays in the dark corners of his basement office, arms wrapped around himself as he rocks, tears streaming down his face as he babbles in a dozen languages he never learned to speak, mind torn between timelines.

Matt has heard the rumors murmured among the uniforms, and even among the detectives. They say that SCU has gone mad, that the brass don't realize what they're doing, keeping Matt Carmichael and his team employed by the city. What they don't know is that the SCU detectives have the highest solve rate in the city, and that the brass are too scared to let them all go at once, or even one by one. SCU isn't what it used to be.

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Today is one of Chris's good days. Matt notices that Halden is driving when they arrive in one of the SCU SUVs and approves; Chris has let his license lapse ever since his...episodes...started, but Matt and Halden have spoken about it, and both agree that Chris can't be trusted behind the wheel of a car. Usually he drives with Jimmy, but Jimmy is at the scene already, grouchy and interviewing witnesses and other cops.

For a heartbeat as Chris gets out of the car, Jimmy going to meet them, Chris is fine – easy on his feet, joking with Halden, dressed in some approximation of professionalism – but as he steps out of the car, he stumbles and drops to one knee on the curve. His mouth moves; Matt can't hear from where he is, two floors up watching from a window, but Jimmy has caught him, arms wrapped around Chris's shoulders, pulling him carefully back from the edge. Chris's head jerks back suddenly, catching the bridge of Jimmy's nose, and Matt can't hear it break but he can see the spray of bright blood on Jimmy's face. Jimmy doesn't flinch, just gathers Chris carefully into his arms and helps him back into the SUV. It's only after he's fastened Chris's seat belt and closed the door that he turns back to Halden, ducking his head for what little privacy they can have out on

the street with uniforms hovering at the edges of the crime scene tape. When he turns away neither he nor Halden looks back; both go about their business in opposite directions.

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Matt has turned away from the window by the time Halden makes it to the apartment, his gloved hands moving lightly over the couch where Sarah Lewis died. "How is Chris?" he asks when Halden has closed the door behind her.

Her lips press together. "He's been better," she says, opening her kit. "Jimmy is with him."

Matt dusts a brush over the wall behind the couch. He thinks there's a handprint there, but it's hard to tell. He tilts his head, considering. "Did he say anything?"

"Of course." Halden takes the entertainment center – small and spare, but there are marks in the dust on the television that might be runes. "He said he was sorry."

"Sorry?"

"For not being fast enough."

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Jimmy wears gloves whenever he's at a scene. He tries to wear them all the time – easier in winter than summer – but he's careful never to touch anything with his bare hands unless Matt asks him – only as a last resort, of course; he can't testify about what he's seen with his hands. Matt has noticed that he only touches Chris with his bare hands.

He has black leather on his hands when he meets Matt in his office, face composed. "He's been good," he says before Matt can say anything. "He's been real good. It'll pass – it always passes."

"He was in public, Jimmy," Matt says.

Jimmy stiffens. He works his fingers over each other, the leather drawing tight on the knuckles, and says, "It ain't his fault. He can't control it."

"I understand that." Matt picks the evidence bag up his desk and flips up the slit seal. "I didn't call you here to talk about Chris."

Jimmy blinks. "You didn't?"

"No," Matt says, and offers up something that may be a shadow of a smile. "I need you to touch something."

"Oh," Jimmy says, and strips one glove off. His hands are pale in the artificial light of Matt's office, laced with a faint tracery of scars from the explosion. "Give it here, then."

Matt puts the evidence packet in his hand and thinks about falling.

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When he meets Halden and Schock down in the morgue later, Schock is cordoned off in his own corner of the morgue. He lifts Sarah Lewis's skull and turns it around while he speaks, the entire time pointing out the abnormalities on X-ray while the skull revolves in front of Matt and Halden; they have the option of looking at the pictures or at the real thing.

"Her skull exploded outward," Schock finally concludes, and the carefully pieced together shards of bone fly apart, hanging in midair before they slowly segue back together. He reaches over to cradle it gently in his hands, lowering it to lie in its usual place before Sarah Lewis's severed neck.

"So the cause of death was natural, then," Halden says, and looks to Schock for confirmation.

"No," Schock says. "She had no natural condition that would explain her death — I've been over her body extensively. There's no normal reason for her to have died, especially this way." He smiles at Matt and Halden. "That's your job, I'm afraid."

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"It could be someone like Schock," Halden says, sitting cross-legged in Matt's apartment with the case files in her lap and a glass half-full of whisky in her hand.

"A surgeon, you mean?" Matt says dubiously, glancing down from his vantage point on the couch.

Halden shakes her head. "No. Someone – like Schock. Or Jimmy. Chris."

"Ah," Matt says, and looks unhappy. "It might be hard to prove. Especially to a jury."

"We might get a confession," Halden says.

"We need a suspect first," Matt reminds her.

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Chris is sitting on Jimmy's lap when Halden walks into their office, Jimmy's hands splayed on his back, one on either side of his spine. Chris looks up at Halden's entrance. "When the time comes," he says, voice clear, "kill him, even if he still looks like the man you knew."

Halden blinks at that. "Hello, Chris," she says.

Chris ignores her. "I thought we hadn't happened yet," he says to Jimmy.

Jimmy blinks too. "Let me talk to Halden, Chris," he says, letting Chris slide off his lap. The rules that apply to Special Crimes Unit aren't the ones that apply to the rest of the world.

"Be careful," Chris tells Jimmy solemnly. "It's going on right under your nose."

"I'm always careful," Jimmy says, stepping toward Halden. As they move into the hall, he shuts the door behind him.

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Jimmy puts his bare hand on the door handle. Images, emotions – impressions, really, some combination of the two of them – flash through his mind. "We're at the right place," he says, slipping his gloves back on and pulling out his gun.

Halden and Matt nod at each other, and the two uniforms they've brought with them brace themselves. Matt knocks on the door. "Boston PD. Open up!"

"Wh-what?" someone says from inside the room, and then something breaks. None of the locks snap open, though.

Jimmy shrugs and kicks the door open. The man inside shrieks and skitters backward.

"Not so brave when it ain't a scared girl, are you?" Jimmy snaps.

"Get away from me!" Luke Braga flicks a hand out toward the detectives. One of the bookshelves flies at them, books falling away and joining it in midair. Halden ducks; Jimmy and Matt both jump aside. The bookcase shatters when it hits the doorway, but one of the uniforms cries out when the shards fly into the hallways.

"This is why we should start bringing Schock," Jimmy says casually, next to Braga. Braga jumps, and Jimmy kicks him in the face. "You're under arrest," he adds, kneeling down to cuff him.

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Chris is waiting outside the station on Mulberry Street when they bring Braga in, arms crossed in front of him. His eyes are bright behind his glasses as Halden and Jimmy march Braga past him into the building.

"How are you?" Matt asks, pausing by him.

Chris smiles. "Aces," he says and looks straight at Matt. "Sometimes," he says, "you just gotta trust people."

THE WATERS REMEMBER

The waters remember,
You can dam them up, levy their paths,
Redirect, hold back,
But in the floods,
When fury
Is spent in the muddied rivers rushing brown,
The waters remember.

As they destroy,
And flatten the trees; they once walked by,
The rivers remember.
They remember the paths,
They once flowed in the day,
Before steel,
Before concrete, cement,
Before wires or beams,
The waters remember.

As you dam the rivers,
Creeks, streams,
Before you hold back
What you fear may destroy you,
The waters remember.
They go back.
They don't remember houses,
Sidewalks or schools,
They couldn't care less for bridges or
Boats,
All they remember
Is the paths they once walked on, flowed on.
The rivers remember.
In their time of strength,
Destruction,

The waters remember.

— *Hannah Charlton* —

Cherry Tree

Sitting beneath a cherry tree,
Blossoms fall on you and me.
You hold me as I try to sleep,
A careful watch you always keep.

Sitting beneath a cherry tree,
Five years have gone, now it's just me.
You went away to the war in Iraq,
Now I'm scared that you won't come back.

Sitting beneath a cherry tree,
Another year and it's still me.
My heart is heavy and so is my head,
I'm still scared that you are dead.

Sitting beneath a cherry tree,
You finally came back to me.
Each day you were gone I cried and cried,
Each day you were gone I felt like I'd died.

By Emma Spencet

Numb

Rage burned behind Roger's sleep deprived eyes. Everything was over; ruined. Fear, anger, shock, and reckless abandon filled his mind and heart. It consumed him. His brown wool jacket rippled as he moved. Three days worth of stubble scratched at his calloused hand as he wiped his face in hopelessness. Nothing would ever be the same. Like smoke in a lounge, the stench of not showering for days lingered around him. Since that godforsaken night he hadn't been able to lose consciousness at all, and yet the events played over and over through his head. Working on overload, he was trying to sort through what had happened. What the cause of them leaving might have been.

With his wife and kids gone there was no point waking up; no point in making the journey to the bathroom to shave, or to feed his ravenous stomach. There was no indication that Silvia was unhappy, and the kids were doing well in their everyday activities. How they would just up and leave utterly shocked him.

Half of a week had passed and there was still no sign of Roger's wife or children; half of a week of torture. What had he done? Everyone seemed perfectly content. There were no words to express the anguish he felt, and there was no one he could talk to. His entire life had brought him here, standing in his paper littered home-office holding a bat.

The long slender grip of the bat felt cool in his rough hands. Upon raising it he recalled his boss, the very same day he found his family missing, firing him. Black eyes stared out from his head as the smooth wood came down on his brand new computer. The glossy brown stick came down several times on the computer and he moved to the fax machine, the lighting, and the stereo. *There's nothing left in life.* The man shattered the glass windows in the French doors to his office then left to the next room.

Visions of his wife kissing him goodbye that day crossed before him as the bat next came down on the family pictures on the mantle in the living room. Shards of glass from the frames flew in all directions, a few lodging themselves in Roger's arm. Swinging at the antique lamp given to them as a wedding gift from his mother, a night from the previous week flashed before him. Weren't they happy together? The broken ceramic cascaded to the ground. Next, the television ceased to exist.

Drunk with the flood of emotions swelling within him, he stepped out into the world outside. His ebony eyes burned in the sunlight. To shield from this intrusion of light he lifted his arm to the sun, casting a shadow over his eyes. His other hand still held the bat and Roger advanced on the Volvo gleaming in his driveway. Blinded by tears, he bashed in the windows and lights after beating the hood, windshield, and roof. The darkness began to lift from Roger's eyes and he looked at the silver mess he had created. All of the rage had disappeared and only hopelessness remained. Collapsing to the asphalt, he made out a figure in the next yard over. Beneath the stream of tears he noticed the person go back inside his house.

He lay there for what seemed like a lifetime, staring at the clear blue sky through a saltwater veil. Years later, it felt, Roger caught the sound of sirens approaching. Numb, he waited there, sprawled on the driveway.

By Heather Nelson

Lover's Soliloquy
 (A parody of *Hamlet*)

To pine, or not to pine—that is the question:
 Whether 'tis wiser in the mind to suffer
 The agony of unrequited love,
 Or to protect thine heart with abstinence,
 And by avoiding such feelings dodge the
 Stings and burns of love. To withhold—to deny
 No more; and to deny we watch it end
 The desperation and confused madness
 Of a brain twisted by a heart's own pangs.
 'Tis acid to mine own mortal being:
 A fire to ravage my soul. To hold back—to deny
 To deny—perchance to lose: ay, there's the rub!
 For in that life of solitude and lone
 A heart grows cold and marbled with regret.
 To lose a chance more precious than mine own
 True safety and security—the swells
 Of passion coursing through thine studded veins
 Like liquor—intoxicating mind, soul,
 Heart, bone: no life complete without such sense
 And so we stray from sense and fall as prey
 Under the raging current of true love.

Written by Contest Winner Madeleine Brown

Sidra and Me

“Writing is just a socially acceptable form of schizophrenia”—Anonymous

Some authors can make profiles of their characters, noting on their hair, eye color, height, weight, and favorite jelly bean. Some authors will talk to their characters, and due to a rather dry and long period of critical Writer’s Block, I decided to strike up a conversation with the star of my novel, Prince Sidra.

Me: So, Sidra, how are you?

Sidra: No. You’re just trying to exploit me for the anthology.

Me: Wha--? What are you talking about? Why would I do *that*?

Sidra: You don’t care about me. Now go away.

Me: What do you mean? How do I not care about you?

Sidra: You killed my mom, made my brother a moron, and made me fall in love with Lily. And you haven’t worked on my story for three months. I should sue for author neglect.

Me: There is no such thing! And how did you learn about lawsuits anyway? You live in a wilderness of rock and tree in a beautiful white city!

Sidra: White cities are cliché.

Me: Well, I had to start somewhere.

Sidra: And why did I have to fall in love with Lily?

Me: Why? What’s wrong with Lily?

Sidra: Well...she’s pretty, but she’s a fair maiden with long black hair and rosy lips.

Me: So? Don’t you like long black hair?

Sidra: I don’t know...I kind of like Rose.

Me: No!!! You’re supposed to like Lily! Lily! They’re sisters, for the love of cake!

Sidra: I like Rose.

Me: No! Arc loves Rose!

Sidra: Hey, where did you get his name? Is it short for Archie or something?

Me: Don't change the subject! Why don't you like Lily?

Sidra: Who died and make you Yente?

Me: Arg! You go...polish your sword or something.

Sidra: I don't have a sword. You never gave me one.

Me: I did too...!

--Hannah Charlton



It's amazing what will come out of your mind if you let it.

Jacob and Rose

A story by Ellora Wahle

“Damn it!” He stumbled, his own two feet becoming more tangled as he neared the sharp wooden corner, *THWAP!* His hand caught the battered old table top just in time. Righting himself, he continued to sway uneasily. Finally, the world stopped spinning and he recognized his surroundings—home. Eerily silent, though. And he’d caused such a commotion. Where was the worried wife, the questioning children?

Sickness struck again as he was in the middle of bellowing, “Rose!” and doubling over from sheer nausea. But the ill-feeling faded quickly leaving him alone in and frightened by the scary silence that occupied the house.

“Rose!” he tried again, even more fiercely than before. The anger hid his growing concern.

“I’m in here, Jacob.” Rose’s soft voice fluttered to him from the living room. A hint of annoyance edged her words and irritation laced them tightly.

“‘Didn’ ya hear me nearly die out there?” Slurred words escaped his mouth. Hiding where he’d been for the last six hours was becoming surprisingly difficult.

She was sitting with a perfectly straight back on their old, poplin couch.

“Yes’m, I sure did,” she replied flatly. Jacob noticed an antique, dusty book resting heavily in her palms. So frail she was, but not in a helpless sort of way. Her frame was delicate: long, slender fingers; high cheek-bones with no rouge; thin lips drawn straight, restful; legs crossed revealing white ankles and freshly painted toes. She was beautiful and she had a heart as big as Texas, brains as sharp as knives. He admired her in

silence for a full minute before recognizing fury in her perfect, almond eyes. When had their blessed marriage gone so wrong?

“Well, *why* didn’ ya come ‘n’ help me?” His mind—poorly connected to his mouth—was spouting anger while his heart was full of love. He loved her. He truly did. But he was an uneducated country boy with an accent as thick as the forty-foot birch trees that had divided his family’s shack from the McElroy’s Southern Plantation Estate. Working plowing fields all his life, he never dreamed Rose would fall for him. He—one of her family’s many underpaid, overworked farmhands; she—the eldest McElroy daughter, destined for a college degree, a doctor husband, a comfortable suburban home. But social status and her planned-by-mommy-and-daddy life hadn’t mattered when they were the ripe ages of nineteen and twenty.

The fire burned within her eyes, growing quickly, fueling the words, “Frankly, Jacob, I am *done* helping you.” She slammed the book shut yet refused to direct her livid eyes at her husband of twelve years. “And,” she continued, “I am *done* puttin’ up with you!” Tears began to well in her hazel eyes and her usually dormant accent retuned with a vengeance. She still didn’t face her husband who was frozen beneath the doorway that divided the cozy living room—with its original brick fireplace—from the narrow hallway—with peeling wall paper and crooked picture frames as decorations.

Heavy silence consumed them. Jacob tried to focus his mind, tried to grab it by the horns and force it to the ground like an unruly calf. But his efforts proved useless. The alcohol had penetrated his cells, causing him to continue with his charade of false anger.

“Put up wi’ *me*?” he spat nastily, shattering any calm that may have been forming between their fragmented conversation.

Rose retaliated, “Yes, Jacob! You an’ your stupidity! Work all day ‘n’ don’ even come home t’ say hello t’ your chil’ren?” She paused to let the accusation sink deeply, praying that it would affect him as forcefully as the beer had.

He said nothing.

“Then you head on out t’ the bar with your buddies,” she continued, “not even *thinkin’* ‘bout the family that stares at th’ empty place at th’ dinner table, wonderin’ if you’re still *alive*.” No verbal reaction reached her ears. Bravely, she turned her head and faced his weathered skin, his sun-streaked hair. A single tear trickled down his cheek.

“Well *la-de-da*,” he said haughtily, brushing his cheek and wiping his nose at the same time, trying to disguise his sudden display of emotional weakness. “I jus’ ... I, uh ... I ... jus’ thought that—”

“You’re pathetic,” interrupted his wife. “Selfish ‘n’ pathetic.” She stood up, book clenched in her fist, and stomped her bare feet on the tattered carpet. The deep, muffled thud echoed throughout the house. She knew the children would soon be listening in on their parents’ argument.

“I am *not* selfish!” he retorted. Taking a few steps towards his wife, he noticed that he had not yet regained his balance.

She wasn’t surprised at his inability to admit his faults. “Not selfish?” she said, her voice rising in pitch.

“Who brings th’ money for th’ food ‘n’ th’ bills?” he asked, rhetorically. “I do. An’ I fix th’ washer when it’s broke. An’ I care fo’ th’ cows before dawn. An’ I—”

"Yeah, you care for those cows mo' than your own chil'ren," she mumbled to herself. But his red ears caught her harsh words.

He stepped towards her, curious, and asked, "Wha' was that, Rose?"

"Nothin'." She crossed her arms in satisfaction; she knew he'd heard her clearly.

"Don' you go pokin' fun at me," he said matter-of-factly. "I ain't in no mood fo' fun."

"Well, I ain't neither. I'm leavin'," she said without shame to shake her potent words. "I'm goin' t' stay wi' my sister an' her family," she explained. "We can figure out th' details an' divide up th' things in a while." Rose was face-to-face to her husband for the first time that night. Set confidently with her decision, there was no room for compromising. And as she stared into Jacob's soulful yet bloodshot and sleep-deprived eyes, she knew he understand that, too.

Nevertheless, Jacob was still taken aback and he let the quiet recapture the house. They had been fighting constantly for the last few months now, his late-night outings becoming more and more frequent during that same time frame. However, the statement still shocked him. To prepare for something drastic like this was impossible for any human being. Thinking they'd work it out eventually, he had washed away his troubles with pints from the local brewery. Some of the fellows from his job had accompanied him, too, but they were all still single and couldn't offer any meaningful guidance. Now he wished he had come home to Rose on those nights instead. He wished he would have tried harder to patch up the holes in their relationship and strengthen the one he had with his two beautiful children—a daughter and son, ages four and seven.

"Rose," he breathed, "please...." His voice trailed off into uncertainty, a fragment of hope appearing unto his mind's eye, replacing any trace of alcohol-induced anger. Maybe he could save his marriage. Maybe he could remind Rose of their deep, true-blue love for each other. Maybe he could go dust the mantel or wash the dishes and show her he was willing to change. Maybe he could take the kids out right now for a good old-fashioned picnic.

But reality hit him with the *GONG* of their clock. There would be no picnic: it was now three a.m. And there would be no saving his marriage, no changing the imminent future.

Sighing, "Jacob....," she glanced at the clock. Pausing for a moment, she remembered the enchanting butterflies she had felt when she had first seen him sweating behind a plow as he worked to prepare her family's plantation fields for the next bunch of seeds. They had locked eyes only long enough to exchange a mutual spark of interest. He was covered head to toe in dirt and grime but somehow she knew that he wasn't going to be just another guy to her. He was special. And ten months later, in the fresh summer heat of June, they had tied the knot during a gorgeous outdoor ceremony. Twelve years later, in dreary October, they were ready to untie it.

As she shook herself out of her memories, her body ached with an intense, all-consuming pain. Yes, she was fed up with Jacob. Yes, he had neglected his family, an almost unforgivable crime. But those facts couldn't take away the agony of saying goodbye to the man she loved.

"Take care of the children while I'm gone," Rose said hurriedly, feeling the choking tears springing up again. She stepped past him and walked down the hallway.

Opening the closet at the end, she slipped on her fraying black coat, her scuffed leather boots, and grabbed a conveniently placed suitcase. She shut the door slowly, sensing his solemn presence following close behind her.

Looking so helpless, she could barely stop herself from falling back into his arms; he gave the most sincere, most comforting hugs. Instead, she forced the words, "It wasn't all bad, was it, Jacob...all those years?" and formed a weak, apologetic smile with her thin lips.

He didn't reply. The alcohol may have forced him to exhibit anger, but it couldn't keep him from showing sorrow. His arms at his side, shoulders slumped in sheer despair, he watched her as she sighed and turned towards the front door.

"Come back, won't-cha, Rose?" he whispered. She turned the knob and slid the heavy door towards her. It was battered by years of ruthless weather and creaked on its rusty hinges.

She turned and met his eyes once again; her down-turned lips uttered no words. A brief moment and she exited suitcase and all, leaving him with a nasty headache, a broken heart, and a painful weight of regret and guilt on his shoulders.

Untitled Sorrow

I'll always remember that summer morning
When I woke up and you were gone—
Only leaving a dent on your side of the bed,
A hole in my heart,
And the faint smell of that perfume you always wore,
Even on our first date
When I was so nervous
That I accidentally spilled the entire pitcher of soda
On your lap,
Which although you didn't say it—
Completely ruined your polka dotted dress
That now hangs in the closet
Of the room and home that you abandoned
Without a backward glance
Or even a note on the fridge
To explain why you are now gone—
Leaving me alone with my thoughts
And the dress in the closet
That is stained with the memory
Of your presence.

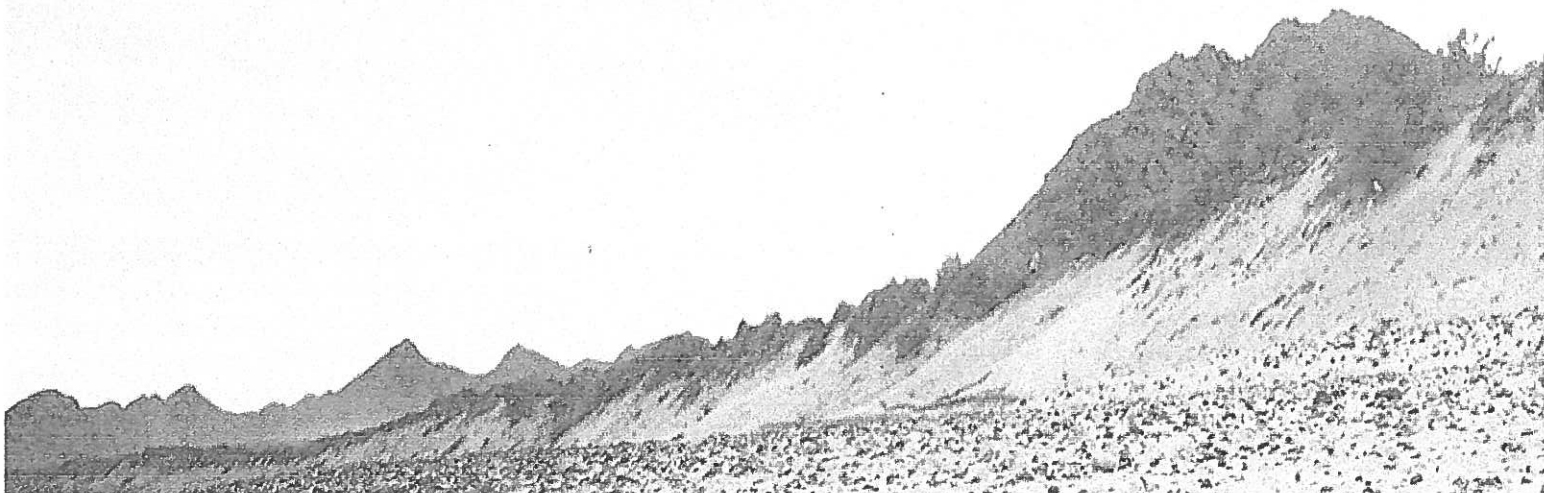
By Mindy Alldredge


Life


Wind sweeps over an empty land, a lifeless land. Grey sands blend easily into slightly darker waters, and a brisk chill warns all away who approach this barrenness, deathly still. But magic is gathering here. It pulls, intertwining with the air, forcing it to become something else. The still land stands aside for this intrusion, and the waters stir, being drawn into the void of magic. Earth is drawn into the vortex, spinning, twirling into a new creation, and laying at rest in a cradle forged by the cosmos. And there is life. Fire rushes into an unseen heart, Air into unseen lungs.



Electricity burns throughout an unseen body, and in a last burst of flame, Ice surrounding the body melts, and Earth shudders. Eyes open. New eyes, unseeing eyes. Eyes that will soon see a world that is aging, ready to die. Immortal eyes.



— Hannah Hall —



I love the song "Funkytown" its a good song, it is a Disco song. SWEET INSERT DISCO BALL HER →  HA! Disco, nabisco. Disco here

disco there. What are discoballs made of? I KNOW! Little government agents the size of a clothing tag rush into the Kebleer elves tree and go into the employee bathroom and steal the faculty ^{however ya spill it.} mirror. Man if you think about it that is alot of trees? DING = I love the cookies! They are better than oreos.  They remind me of Monster truck wheels. Ok

What is the deal with those Hotwheels? They are like this big. ^{ye tall} Man I wonder what happened if you blew up a twinkie  POP  OK so last

That would be like cool. And everywhere.  OK so last night I was listening to my Ipod and I was going down the stairs and the volume was like whee whoo whee e e o o wha. You know what I want? Those glasses with the fake noses and fluffy eyebrows and mustach.  Whoever invented those are my hero. They are the best for a comic relief. I mean you know the part on Nacho Libre where Nacho is all mad at his skinny dude (can't remember his name) when he throws the corn on the cob? Insert fake nose glasses. Instant comic relief. OK you know the instant soup

junk? I put one of those in for like a minute. Took off the lid and blew on it twice. And then ate it. My ~~throat~~ throat was so burnt it hurt for like ever. OK you know the science books. Did the dinasours really breath through their foreheads or were noses just for looks? Have you noticed on the water bottle that on the label where the nutriten facts are? It says "Hi, me 5d

Talk about awsomey bad grammer! WOW! I want to write the waterbottle indrusty a ☺.

- ARIEL

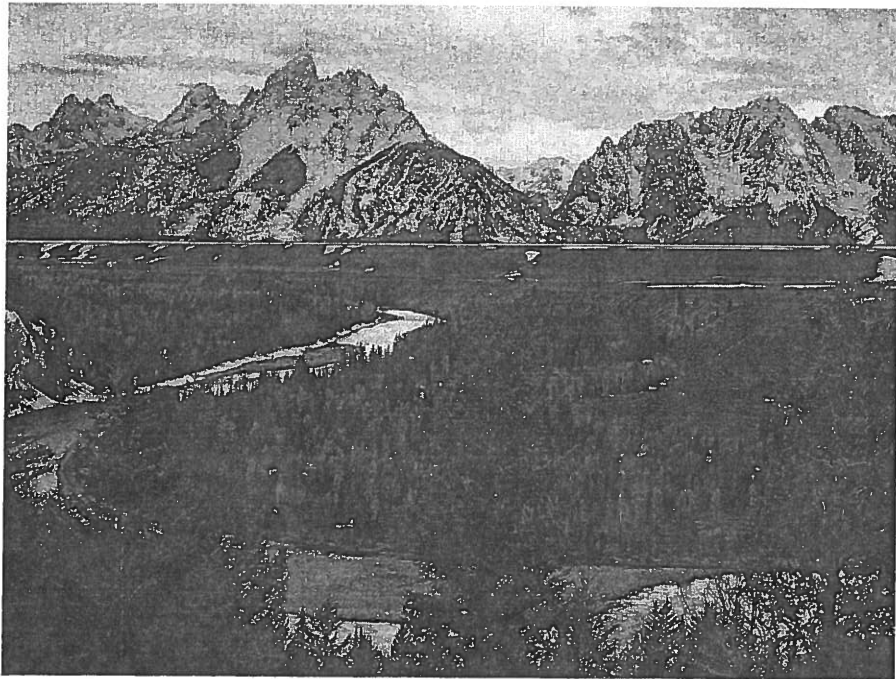
Winter

The snow falls under the street lamp
I see it drifting slowly down
To land upon my sueded sleeve
Where soon it is lost among folds of fabric
But—venturing outside the lamp's glow
I feel the flakes touch my smiling cheeks
Melting through the freckles
Toward my soul.

Sometimes

When the sun falls under the mountains
And the moon comes with the black night
I watch the heavens
I see the infinite stars
And all the world fades away

By Mindy Alldredge



The World at Peace : By Contest Winner Nicole Prigge

I couldn't sleep,
 There's something so peaceful
 About being the only person awake.
 To enjoy the sounds.
 Of a world around you.
 Completely asleep...

So I sit on my deck
 Pen in my hand
 Watching a slide show.
 Seeing the stars
 Dancing there slow
 Enchanted dance
 Across the charcoal sky.
 Witnessing them
 Fade into a sunrise.

A blood red sunrise.
 One that cuts through the fog.
 Of life and all its tragedies.
 All the worries, tears, and heartaches.
 The red fades from pink to orange
 Leaving me with a sense of calm
 And a trace of wonderment,
 "If the sky can change
 then why can't I?"

A mocking bird twitters above me
 Singing its carefree tune
 Of innocence sharing his pleasure
 With whomever cares to listen
 Even though his song will soon be muffled
 By a world to hasty to move

Sadly the peaceful silence
 Will soon be broken
 By the rush of life
 A rush I can't comprehend

How can a world grow
 Yet not see anything?
 Not see the joy on a child's face
 A tulip in bloom
 Or the uniqueness of a snowflake?

A white translucent beauty
 That words cannot describe.