

Tower

A magazine for the literary and visual arts



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Pinkerton Academy

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Table of Contents

| | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|----|
| Mystery Night | Mary Decker | 4 |
| Intruder | Hannah Pierce | 4 |
| Winter | Erin DeSantis | 5 |
| The Magic Show | Maddie Driscoll | 5 |
| Jewish Tears | Ben Thomas | 6 |
| Snap Shot | Skyler Oliveira | 6 |
| The Master | Skyler Rae Oliveira | 7 |
| Knight | Jaime Roeger | 8 |
| Dying Nightmare | Maddie Driscoll | 9 |
| Sister Serenity | Marem Cunningham | 10 |
| Love Divided | Peter Whitenberg | 11 |
| Coral Beads | Skyler Oliveira | 11 |
| Boredom | Brittney Sieg | 12 |
| Moses | Hannah Pierce | 12 |
| Depths of a Dark, Beautiful Mind | Skyler Rae Oliveira | 13 |
| Sassy Simon | Hannah Pierce | 19 |
| Lay Down Beside Them | Ben Thomas | 20 |
| The Unusual Place | James Troy | 21 |
| Dive | Kursten Meuse | 22 |
| Purity | Skyler Oliveira | 22 |
| Questioning | Erin DeSantis | 23 |
| Shadow | Maddie Driscoll | 24 |
| I Think I Could Be a Poet | Emma Roalsvig | 25 |
| Your Own Beloved | Bill Tolbert Harris | 26 |
| Spring Time Solace | Skyler Oliveira | 31 |
| By the Dock | Skyler Oliveira | 32 |
| Influenced | Kursten Meuse | 33 |
| Skyward | Skyler Rae Oliveira | 34 |
| Catch and Release | Ben Thoams | 35 |
| Reflect | Skyler Rae Oliveira | 44 |
| Letter From the Editor | Megan Cullinane | 45 |



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Mystery Night

Mary Decker

night—
 cows line—
 birds land—
 animal-horn gate quivers—
important business—
inside—
 countryside committee eats pig-blood pancake dinner—
the barn—
 maids band adjustment machine tightly—
 no loose parts—
 rattling will only disturb—
outside—
by the lake—
 goose men take to flight—
 spinning and diving in frosty moonlight—
in the yard—
 pigs caption rabbit camera fiction—
the sun rises—
 Nothing.
 Remains.

Intruder

Hannah Pierce

Photograph



Winter
Erin DeSantis

Spring is coming.....so they say.
But winter's firm grasp seems tighter...
Colder...
Darker.....than ever.
Nothing good ever comes from winter. I belong no more in your home,
As you belong no more in my heart.
BUT stubborn you stay etched in my heart like an
old-but-not-so-worn picture on a cave wall.
You said you loved me.....
you said you'd save me.....
Where are you now?
Now as I sit alone on your couch in complete darkness, cold,
only hateful lies filling my ears,
Where are you now?
As they tear me apart as if I'm nothing but soggy paper,
Simple easy.
Where are you now?
Beside me you've left.
Cowardice taken mount in your veins as I'm shredded.
Where have you gone my promised protector?
Where is my knight as the dragons circle?
Skin-numbing-eye watering tree shivering.....cold.

You let it fill your heart, should I let winter fill mine?

The Magic Show
Maddie Driscoll

Notebook
Magic Hill
Rabbits cry
Plastic Meat
Eggs party
Cloth Earthquake
Health Plate group
Frame example
Credit Lunchroom
Memory Error
Bell



Jewish Tears
Ben Thomas

Downtown girl,
Polish representative.
Army brass--

hate police--
driving mass pizza ovens.

Found locket,
Tattooed numbers—
acting foot ornaments,
All color removed from picturesque world.

Pull cannon grade hose—
strongest of them all.
Showering people and scarce vegetation around
bath time...
It's said that bushes drain clouds.

Snap Shot
Skyler Rae Oliveira
Photograph



The Master
Skyler Rae Oliveira

He did not know
Why Master
Left
Yet he waited

He remembers
Master before leaving
Blotched Attire, Boots, Necklace
Clinging around neck
Into the car
Gone
Yet he waited

He misses Fetch
 Walks
 Belly-Rubs
Master would be home
Soon
So he waited

By the window
Watching
 A Day
 A Week
 A Month
 A Year
Still he waited

One day
In the car
He passed
 Houses
 Trees
 Hills
Stopped
And waited

Came out to
Grassy land
Grey stones everywhere
He felt Master
Near
No waiting
Sniffing, he came to
A box
Not Master
Smelled Master
Why?
So he waited

Box of Master
Lowered
 Buried
 Disappeared
Loyal to Master
Forever
He Waits



Knight
Jaime Roeger
Pencil Sketch



Dying Nightmare
Maddie Driscoll

Dying Nightmare
Running, Running
Don't look back!
Move Forward
Keep up
Wait!
Someone is missing
What was that!
Bang!
Right through the chest
Blood is gushing
Falling, Falling
Hitting rubble
Cannot move
Pain
Quick add pressure
No too late!
Fading
Fading
Sight becomes blurry
Pain diminishes
Darkness arises
Only sounds remain
Quiet
Quiet
These thoughts begin to go
Nothing
Nothing
Nothing Remains



Sinister Serenity
Marem Cunningham

Fear has no hold,
In this light, peaceful place.

Quietly breathing, swelling
up, over, out.
Calmness.
Relaxation.
Trust.
Worries crawl away as
rolling waves in the ocean.

Winds tickle
loose grains of sand,
Sending feather-light kisses
and muffled whispers.
Miniscule bells; tinkling
Laughter
Soft,
Sweet.

But glowering clouds lurk in
the distance,

ominous dread behind
carefree waters,

Threatening sea-salt and
warmth.

Creeping up,
over water and land,
absorbing all beauty.

But,
Fear had no hold,
In this dark, vehement place.



Love Divided
Peter Whittenburg

At first, I thought my mind disagreed with my heart,
But I soon realized my situation was much more dire;
My mind and heart were both divided
On account of my desire.

There were two candidates:

One was beauty warm;

Quiet peace and tranquility

Until the end of our days

In patient love we would become one

And the small hearth fire would burn

Until the end of our days

The other was passion hot;

Clamorous bliss and ecstasy

Until dawn the next day

Impatient lust would make me come undone

And the towering house fire would burn

Until dawn the next day

So here at this fork in the road I sit

Watching my decision draw nearer and nearer;

Beauty walks in fortitude and grace,

A quiet, knowing smile on her face

While Passion saunters onward to entice,

A brazen photograph of paradise

And I am undone.



Coral Beads
Skyler Oliveira
Photograph



Boredom
Brittney Sieg

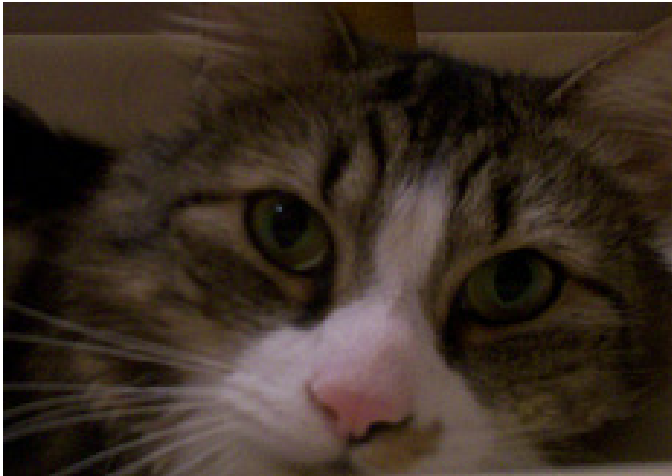
Near the day's end
Still waiting
The scent is familiar
But the source cannot be found

Last seen
Before daylight shone through the windows
And it is dark again now
All fading to grey

Eaten all that is left to eat
Drank the last water from my bowl

Tired
Yet restless
From sleeping all day
And chasing after myself
Come home

Moses
Hannah Pierce
Photograph



Prologue

Mother never was the same after Daddy killed himself. I was fifteen, my sister, Claire, twelve. The change in Mother did not affect Claire, but then again, Mother always seemed to act normal around her. For me, on the hand, Mother revealed her true nature. Mother decided we would move out of the crowded city of Boston and into a more rural area. Two years after Daddy's death, we lived in a quiet New England town near the base of the Appalachian Mountains. Our house was an old colonial on the outskirts of town. It was a good walking distance from the school Claire and I attended. Claire seemed to have adapted quickly to her new environment as soon as we arrived here. Although she missed her friends back in Boston, she soon found a new group of acquaintances. I didn't have many friends to begin with, and not much really changed. I did, however, have one close companion; my boyfriend, John. We met on the first day I attended my new school, in art class. We were the two quiet ones and just seemed to click right away. John was the only person in this world whom I trusted with my life; I loved him, and he loved me. Mother did not work, or leave the house for that matter. Only on certain occasions, such as a rare trip to the super market, or a recital for Claire, would she step foot outside our home. She received Social Security, after my dad died, to provide us with common necessities. Our life was not lavish by any means of the word.

I sit, eagerly glancing at the clock on the classroom wall, waiting for the final bell to ring. Once it sounds, I jump up and push my way through the crowds. I step outside to be greeted by the crisp air of an autumn day. Walking through town, I hear the crunch of fallen leaves under my feet as they hit the pavement. Looking around, I see trees ablaze with hues of red, orange, and yellow. Fall is finally here. After about ten minutes of walking, I come to my personal thinking spot; an old tree swing a few yards from my home. Sitting down, I attempt to clear my head of the day, but become lost in thought about events of previous years.

Lying in bed, I hear the door open as Daddy stumbles in after a day at work, and a night at the local pub. The door shut and his footsteps walk clumsily over the hardwood floor. I hear Mother creep down the hallway, preparing to catch him off guard. She enters the kitchen and begins to yell,

"Why have you been out so late? Do I smell beer? I am so sick of you leaving all day only to come back home smelling like alcohol and smoke! Don't you realize you have a family to take care of?"

"Yes, I do realize I have a family. And they're probably sleeping, so keep your voice down," Daddy mumbles.

I slip out of my bed, and slowly tip-toe down the hallway. When I reach the kitchen doorway, I sit down, and peep into the room. Daddy is holding himself up



against the wall; Mother stands over the sink, gripping the edge so hard I can see her knuckles turning white. After a minute, Mother begins to yell, but Daddy interrupts her. This angers Mother; in a split second, I see Mother turn back to the sink, grab a glass, whirl around to face Daddy, and fling the glass at him. Daddy manages to duck in time before it explodes against the wall. Mother throws herself at him, but he pushes Mother back. She stumbles, falling into the corner of the counter, hitting the side of her face. She curls up into a ball, beginning to weep. Daddy looks at her, and then glances at the door. His eyes meet mine; they are sad, tired, and glassy. Daddy mouths the words, "I Love You", then turns, opens the door, and leaves. I go back to my bedroom, listening to Mother's wails down the hall. Pulling the covers over my head, I wonder when Daddy will come back home.

The next morning I walk into the kitchen to find the glass picked up, and Mother sipping tea at the table. Her face bruised, lip busted, dark, wiry hair around her face. Claire strolls in, rubbing her eyes.

"Mommy, I heard yelling last night. What was it?" asked Claire tiredly. "It was nothing, sweetie. You probably had a bad dream," Mother responded smoothly.

Mother's black, piercing eyes shoot to me.

"Well, did YOU hear... or see... anything last night?" She spat out at me.

I knew better than to disagree with her.

"No," I said solemnly.

As I fix Claire a bowl of Rice Krispies, there is a knock at the door. Mother goes over, opens the door to face a policeman.

"Mrs. Luca?" asks the officer.

"Yes. What do you want?" Mother demands.

"May I talk to you outside, please?"

Mother and the policeman walk out onto the porch, the door closes behind them. Placing the bowl of cereal in front of Claire, I sneak over to the door, over-hearing the conversation.

"I'm sorry Mrs. Luca," the officer begins, "but we found your husband's car this morning off a back road. It appears he shot himself..."

Before the officer could finish, Mother lets out a wailing sob...

"Maria!"

I snap back to the present. In front of me is Claire, light brown hair in a sleek ponytail, bright green eyes staring inquisitively at me.

"What are you thinking about, Maria? You seemed lost in thought," she questioned.

"Nothing, Claire," I said. "Let's get inside, it's getting chilly out."

Together, we walk through a thick layer of leaves on our front lawn to the house. Once inside, we drop our bags next to the worn couch, and plop down for a rest.

"Mommy! We're home!" Claire exclaims.



Mother comes out of the kitchen to greet her.

“Hi baby, how was your day?” Mother asks sweetly.

“It was good, Mommy,” Claire responds, “My piano recital is tomorrow night; will you be able to make it?”

“Of course I will, Claire,” Mother says, smiling. Then, turning to me, Mother asks, “What about you?”

Glancing up at her, I respond, “It was fine.”

Then, my day came to an end with the normal routine of eating dinner while Mother and Claire act as if I am invisible, finishing pointless homework, and getting ready for bed. After brushing my teeth, I walk back to my room. The old, wooden floor boards creak lightly under my bare feet. Entering my room, I close the door behind me. I am in my safe haven. My room is small, yet cozy, with a light, warm air about it; my sanctuary. Blue, red, and white ribbons line the wall above my bed. Prizes from every art contest I entered since first grade; my own little victory shrine. Sitting down by the vanity tucked away in a corner, I look into the mirror, staring at the reflection gazing back at me. I see a pale complexion, smooth, yet dull; big, sad brown eyes; long, softly waved hair flowing over a petite set of shoulders. I frown upon this simple girl, wondering why she can't be a bit prettier, or be blessed with a more loving environment. Unhappy with this image, I go to my bed, lie down, and drift into sleep.

Pain, fear, sadness. These feeling overwhelm me. Flashes of past terrors project in front of my mind's eye.

An 'accidental' push; the pressure of gravity on my body as it topples down the staircase. Hitting the bottom, bruised, yet no broken bones, I slowly lift myself. Looking back up at the force behind the push, I see Mother's face, glaring down at me. It is filled with a look of disappointment. Was I not supposed to get back up?

Helping Mother clean the dishes, I turn to place the bowls back to their original homes. Slipping on a puddle of spilt dishwasher, I lose balance. Ceramic bowls shatter all around me. In a storm of anger, Mother begins screaming. She starts slapping and punching me as a punishment for stupidity. Curling up into a fetal position, I brace myself against her blows. Once she finally tires herself out, Mother orders me to clean up the mess. She flings the broom and dustpan at me. They bounce off my limp legs, and then clatter onto the floor. Slowly and sorely, I crawl towards the broom and pan as Mother stands over me, eyes hard, arms crossed.

Suddenly, I shoot straight up, cold sweat dripping down my forehead, heart throbbing in my throat. Shooting a quick glance at the digital clock on my nightstand, I read 3:30 a.m.... Trying to calm myself, I lie back down and close my



eyes. Then, there is a creak in the hallway. The creak gets closer and closer to my bedroom door. Keeping my eyes shut, I listen. I hear my door slowly open, low breathing, quiet footsteps encroaching into my room. The steps stop at the foot of my bed. Fear builds up in my chest as I try to keep still. Mother then begins to murmur to herself.

"She's sleeping so peacefully. Like an angel."

"But she isn't one anymore, never was."

"No?"

"No. She's just like her father; worthless, spineless, liar."

"Right, she isn't meant to be here. I've tried, but she won't..."

"You haven't tried hard enough. She can, she must. It is only supposed to be you and your baby, not this filthy creature."

"Harder, I must try harder, must create a better life for my baby, Claire. This mistake needs to go."

"Yes. Soon."

"Soon."

Mother's mumbling trails off to a thick silence. The air feels heavy as she stands, overlooking my stiff body. After what seemed as an eternity, Mother's footsteps shuffle out of my room, door closing behind her. When I hear the creaking in the hallway stop, assuring me that Mother was finally back in her own room, I let out a sharp gasp. I begin crying uncontrollably. Letting out hard, silent sobs, I curl into a ball, shutting myself off from the world.

Eyes red from exhaustion, I stare out the front seat window of our old, beat-up Lincoln. Trees with dying beauty flash past the car. The road is clear, save for a corolla fifty feet to the rear and an eighteen-wheeler to the right a few yards ahead.

"Mommy, did you like my rehearsal?" Claire inquires from the back seat.

"Yes, I did, very much. You were amazing, love!" Mother exclaims. "Well, Maria, what did you think of your little sister's performance?"

I can feel her eyes staring at the back of my head. Keeping my eye on the passing landscape, I reply shortly.

"It was fine."

Out of the corner of my eye, I see Mother's fingers tighten around the steering wheel. Soft music begins to play from the backseat; Claire must have put her headphones on.

"Just fine?" Mother questions through gritted teeth.

"Yes," I retort, "fine."

"Well, I don't see you getting up off your ass to do anything worthwhile," Mother spits at me suddenly.

"Well, for your information, I do. I enter my art into contests each year and place," I defend myself. Then, under my breath, I add, "You just don't care. I'm a mistake, Claire's your baby."

"What was that?" Mother says. Now, she begins to lose the control in her voice, "You know," Mother begins, "I did want a daughter; A perfect, talented, beautiful, little girl who is my pride and joy. I didn't get that with you." The muscles in her neck strained. "I got an ugly, worthless, lying creature from Hell."

"Well, sorry to disappoint you," I respond with a small hint of sarcasm.

My jaw tightens; this isn't the first time Mother has said horrible things to me. For the most part, I can normally deflect most of Mother's resentment towards me. I just try to find some sort of humor in a situation like this. In a way, it relieves some of the stress. All of the sudden, she lashed out at me.

"DO YOU THINK YOU'RE FUNNY? YOU'RE NOT! YOU'RE NOT FUNNY, YOU'RE WORHTLESS! YOU DON'T DESERVE TO BE HERE! DO YOU THINK I ENJOYED PUTTING UP WITH 'DADDY'S LITTLE GIRL' THE PAST SEVENTEEN YEARS OF MY DAMN LIFE? YOU'RE JUST LIKE YOUR GOD-DAMNED FATHER! USELESS! SPINELESS! LYING, NO-GOOD, PIECE OF DIRT WHO TREATS ME AS IF I'M NOTHING!"

"What are you talking about?!" I yell.

I begin to get nervous, there's no telling what Mother might do next. I've never seen her act this way in front of Claire. In the rear view mirror, I see Claire, wide-eyed, scared, holding back tears.

Trying to alleviate some of the tenseness in the car, I softly say, "Mom, calm down. Think of Claire, don't be this way in front of her."

Mother twists her hair in my direction, "Are you trying to use my baby against me?" she hisses.

I stutter, "N-NO! I... No, I'm not. Mom, are you ok?"

A wicked grin stretches over Mother's face, "I've never felt better."

Next thing I know, Mother is on top of me. The car swerves dangerously. With all my strength, I fling her off of me and launch myself over to the steering wheel, attempting to bring us back on the road. Mother grabs my arms, sharply twisting the steering wheel. The car spins into the middle of the road, crashing into the back of the eighteen-wheeler. Then, all went dark.

My eyelids feel heavy as I try to open them. At first, my vision is blurred, then clears to reveal a clean, white room; hospital room. I don't know which hospital I am in, or how long I have been out, but I know I need to get out. Mother could be anywhere. Sitting up, I spot a phone next to my bed. Grabbing it, I begin to dial John's number. The line is busy. 'Crap!' Dialing again, I become anxious. Ringing! 'Yes!' It rings three times, then, CLICK. 'What?' I think to myself. 'How did the damn line get cut off?' I slam the phone down on the hook. I turn around to find Mother standing next to the bed, phone cord in one hand. Her face replaced by a malevolent, twisted scowl.

"Mm-ma-mom," I stammer, "What's wrong?"

"What's wrong?" She repeats, "What's wrong is that my precious baby is gone! If it wasn't for YOU she would be in my arms!"



"What do you mean?" I ask, my voice rising nervously.

"CLAIRE'S DEAD! IT'S YOUR ENTIRE FAULT!" Mother screamed. She began sobbing. Through sobs, she said, "You couldn't stand her, could you? Couldn't stand being around her beauty, her purity."

Mother was losing it. Now, with Claire dead, I had no idea what Mother would do next. I had to try and relax her.

"Listen, mom," I begin softly, "Claire's death was a horrible accident. Don't blame me, and don't blame yourself, it was an accident. I didn't hate her, I loved her! She was my little sister. I'd give anything to have her..." I stopped, realizing I had used a poor choice of words.

"Anything?" Mother asked as she lifted her head.

Swallowing hard, I tried to speak, yet I could not utter a sound. Mother began to stagger towards me. When I tried to jump out of bed, to flee to freedom, it felt as if an unseen force held me down to the mattress. Opening my mouth to scream, only silence escaped through my lips. Before I knew it, Mother was on top of me, pinning my body down to the bed. Pillow in hand, evil grimace on her face, Mother began to suffocate me. Too weak to fight back, I lose consciousness...

Jolting awake, I lay stiff, surveying my surroundings. There's a soft, queen-sized feather bed under my body, chestnut furniture about the room, and a bay window revealing a bright sunrise over the bay. I'm home; free from my nightmares. Sitting up, I spot a green pair of eyes with a brown, curly head of hair spying on me from the doorway.

Smiling to myself, I sing, "My, my, what do I see? A little pair of eyes staring at me"

Michael, my angel, giggles as he runs to my side, "Good morning, Mommy!"

"Good morning My Love, how did my Michael sleep?" I ask.

"Good. I had awesome dreams of doggies and playing in the park with you and Daddy!"

"That's wonderful, Baby!" I exclaim.

"What about you, Mommy?"

"Oh," I sighed, "Nothing really, last night was pretty dull," I lied.

"Hehe! You're silly, Mommy!"

Michael then speeded out of the room, nearly tripping my husband along the way.

"Whoa, there, Speedster!" John laughed. "Good morning Sweetie," he said, kissing my cheek.

"Good morning, Hun," I replied.

"Sleep ok?"

"Yeah, I just had some more of those dreams again," I said.

"Here," John said reaching over to my nightstand. He handed my prescription and a glass of water. "Just take your medicine, Love."

"John, how is it you put up with my Schizophrenia?" I asked softly, popping



Tower Spring 2013

a small pill into my mouth. It scratched my throat a bit so I sipped some water.

“Well,” he started while stroking my hair lovingly, “I love you very much. You turn this disease into something beautiful through your painting and writing, Maria. You’re an amazing woman”

I look up into his face, smiling, “And you’re an amazing man,” I say, kissing him.

After breakfast, John and Michael go outside to play in the late morning sunlight. After a soothing bath, I change into my silk housedress and stroll into the living room. In the corner stands my old writing desk, occupied by a single journal and pen. Settling myself into a chair, I face the personal tome. Gingerly opening the book to an empty page, I pick up my pen. Here, I sit, pen in hand, paper staring blankly into my mind, I begin writing down the dark visions so they can haunt me no longer.

Sassy Simon
Hannah Pierce
Photograph



Lay Down Beside Them
Ben Thomas

His beard gnarled around indented chin,
reminiscent of cave men,
possessing putrid smell of
boiled eggs and dumpster.
cardboard palace, typed headline bed,
home sweet home—
wet with the sparks of fire water.
People revised sightlines,
Averting glances
as not to look.
The only thing more permanent than the chalice in his clasp,
was the mongrel on his hip.
But on the coldest nights
with the cruelest stars,
the dog laid its head upon its owner's lap,
and slept by his side.

The girl's own mother--
shrew-like and bitter--
squealed at her daughter,
homely and plain.

"A man will never love you!"

And the window to the daughter's soul fractured,
Bled inner woe,
And shards of the glass cascaded down sunken cheeks.
But every night
the daughter's dog laid its head upon its owner's lap
and slept by her side.

Baby's cries
shattered sterile silence.
Nurse holding brochure,
Chromosome 21,
Written in big black letters
Mother knew
ridicule would come.
'Cause different people,
in an ignorant world,
can't be loved.
But when baby came home,
peaceful and innocent,
beautiful and brave,
the family dog laid its head upon the baby's lap
and slept by his side.



The Usual Place
James Troy

Charging wildly
A stream so gentle
Simple rocks within
Stepping stones for the nimble foot
A dead branch, comes to life
Becomes a gleaming blade for the mighty to hold
A lunge...miss
Another...clash
Held there, two opponents
Look in the eyes
Next move...fast
Leap across, land it perfect
Get a hit in, its over
They look at each other
"Again? Tomorrow? Usual place?"
"As Always...."



Dive
Kursten Meuse

Ears are popping
Plane aims to the clouds.
Steadying now,
Time to scurry:
Step into the harness,
Fasten clips,
Put on goggles.
Door swings open,
Air sucked out,
Wind whipping through
Looking down,
This perfect geographical picture
No time to enjoy..
Hurling through air
Scrambling to find the pull cord,
Reaching for the plane,
As we prepare to die
Our angel wings open.
Parachute billows out,
Sounds reverberating in our ears
This is no longer a speeding journey,
Floating gently down
Feel the clouds,
Hearing peace,
Nothing disturbed,
Floating in cloud nine



Purity
Skyler Oliveira
Photography

Questing
Erin DeSantis

Out we go into the world

Feet bare.

Legs short.

Imaginations, more than ample.

Tall grass reaches up tickling out knees as we trek along,

Until the mouth of the forest opens up,

Swallowing us... walking sticks and all.

Sneakily passing over mountains and under thick, lightless tree tunnels,

For days we quest through thick and thin.

Alas the journey is far from complete.

Tired with hope depleting, we at last stumble into the goblin cavern.

Centered in a dying field; the atmosphere grim and heavy. Pleasure absent all around.

Cruelty was king in the land of the beasts.

Dead grass, drained of hue, grows in sprigs here and there.

Poking up from the ground without life;

Stiff,

Grey.

Ashen smog fills the air and malignant clouds block all hopes of sun.

Life here is grim... crumpled... defective.

Gathering weapons in shaking clenched fists,

CHARGE!

He yells, swallowing fear we plunge;

Plunge into battle with prayers in mind that our end isn't drawing near.

Curling and twirling, ducking and swooping we battle to the gate

Bursting through the doors and windows we are triumphant!

But what's that noise? That constant hissing from the distance...

"Supper kids!" And you best wash your mits!"

Dragging out swords we slump back home.

Tomorrow.... The quest will continue.



Shadow

Maddie Driscoll

Shadow

Dark reflection

Follows almost anything

In the mere bright light

Silent

Cannot be heard

When the light vanishes

The shadow disperses

Shrouding the darkness

Undetected

For most shadows at least

Except one shadow

Unlike the rest

Mocking other shadows

Acting unique

In its own little way

Following almost anything

Stumbling every which way

Making noises every footstep

Not at all stealthy

He knows this

It knows it is true

He plays all day

Not caring or worrying

What other shadows might say

This shadow remains unique

Becomes playful

Then turns out to be a feline



I Think I Could be a Poet

Emma Roalsvig

Sometimes I wish I could be a poet
And sound like I know what I'm talking about
I would write for myself
Yet the world would listen in awe
I would dress in all black and speak each word slowly and meaningfully
In a this-will-changed-your-life-so-you-better-listen-up tone
Sit in a coffee shop with a notebook and just watch
Stare out the window searching for an answer
Wait for the right moment with my pencil behind my ear
Stare out at the world in a solemn gaze and everyone will
Leave me alone because I am creating a masterpiece
I wish I could be a poet
To be able to have that special moment
A "writer's block"
A "can't-think-of-this-word-for-the-life-me-and-it's-driving-me-crazy" block
The words come slowly, at first. As a whisper on the wind
Then POUR IN! A COMMOTION OF SOUND! EMOTION!
Faster than my pen can travel across the expanse of page
A heart-pounding-gut-wrenching-chest-aching race to the finish
I wish I could be a poet
To find the perfect words to dance across the page
Not to manipulate words, but pluck them from the air as they come
To share with the world the ideas at my fingertips
Words lilting phrases ebb and flow
I vomit out words, they suffocate, I cannot breath
Grab hold and sink their teeth in, rip open your heart
I wish I could find words
Words to make you feel, make you understand, make you listen.



BILL TOLBERT HARRIS

JOANNE: Teenage girl; introverted, loves (or fears?) Eddie

EDDIE: Teenage boy; sweet, yet bossy and extremely protective of Joanne

MOTHER: Concerned about Joanne's introversion, specifically her almost fearful habit of staying cooped up in her room; knows about her schizophrenia

SCENE I

JOANNE's bedroom; she sits on her bed center stage, EDDIE sits on her bedside table stage left. They are clearly deep in conversation when the sound of footsteps from offstage right causes JOANNE to pause and hold up a finger, then frantically grab EDDIE's shoulder and help him under her bed. She composes herself with a book before MOTHER opens the door and enters stage right.

MOTHER *(calmly, normally)* Dinner's rea—

JOANNE *(too loudly and quickly)* What's up, *(pauses, realizing her failed attempt at acting casual)* ...mom?

MOTHER *(slowly and suspiciously)* I was going to let you know that dinner's ready...is something wrong? You seem a little...tense. *(EDDIE sticks his head out from under the bed, out of MOTHER's view and stares at JOANNE, who doesn't notice him)*

JOANNE *(a little quickly)* No, mom, not tense, I don't know what you mean *(notices EDDIE, stiffening slightly)*, I'm not—tense—at all!

MOTHER *(still suspicious)* Well, you just come down when you're at a good stopping point, okay? *(JOANNE still gazes frozenly at EDDIE and doesn't respond)* Joanne?

JOANNE *(EDDIE slides back under the bed; JOANNE snaps out of it)* Wha—sorry, mom, what did you say?

MOTHER I *said*—just come down when you're ready to eat, okay



Tower Spring 2013

sweetie?

JOANNE Okay, mom, I'll be ready soon.

MOTHER Alright...*(Exits stage right)*

(EDDIE emerges from under the bed, resuming his place on the bed-side table)

EDDIE *(in a lowered voice)* That was closer than I'm comfortable with.

JOANNE *(defensively)* Well you didn't have to stick your head out and distract me like that—it's not easy trying to pretend someone's not there when they're staring right at you.

EDDIE *(at the ground)* I'm sorry about that, Joanne, I—I just—*(looks up at her)*—missed you is all.

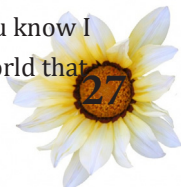
JOANNE *(sincerely)* Oh, I'm so sorry, Eddie, I didn't mean to distress you, please forgive me. *(She lightly touches his face, and he does likewise; they kiss for a few beats; then, after a pause)* I should go down for dinner; my mom will suspect if I don't.

EDDIE *(suddenly horrified, grasps her hands; this gets a little loud, making JOANNE nervously glance toward the door)* Oh, Joanne, please stay awhile, I don't—I don't know if I can bear it—being away from you for so long—

JOANNE *(forcefully whispers)* SHHHH! You're being too loud! *(Pauses to listen; hears nothing)* I'll go down, *(EDDIE groans dejectedly; JOANNE speaks over him)* get my food, and I'll bring it up here to eat it! *(He gives her a look)* It'll only be a minute!

EDDIE What if she doesn't let you? What then? *(Stands and paces slowly around to the other side of her bed while he speaks)* Will I just have to sit up here and waste away, not knowing whether you've died or—*(stops; if looks could kill...looks at her)*—fallen for some other guy?

JOANNE Eddie! How could you possibly think of such a thing? You know I love you with all my heart—there isn't anyone in the world that



could change that! *If I can't come back up to eat, just assume that I'm alive and well downstairs.*

EDDIE *(defeated)* I guess...my imagination makes me so nervous...

JOANNE *(almost mockingly)* I'll be *right* back. *(Turns to leave)*

EDDIE *(sadly gazes after her)* I love you, Joanne.

JOANNE *(turns; sincerely)* I love you too Eddie. *(Exits stage right. EDDIE looks forlornly at his wristwatch, then out the window offstage left)*

SCENE II

EDDIE sits on the bedside table, waiting nervously. He looks at his watch.

EDDIE Where *is* she? She said it'd be a minute; it's been *eight* already! I hate when she scares me like this...she said I should assume she's okay, but I just can't when she's been gone for eight times as long as she said! I *hate* when she lies to me! She leaves for hours and I wait here alone, worried sick, until she finally decides to show up again. *(JOANNE enters stage right, carrying dinner)* WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN!?

JOANNE *(completely taken aback)* What are you talking abo—

EDDIE It's been EIGHT—*(checks watch)*—NINE minutes!

JOANNE *(nervously glances behind her)* Eddie! SHHH!

EDDIE *(stands up, storming around the bed toward JOANNE; quietly, but severely)* Why do you lie to me like this! You do it all the time: "I'll be right back!" but then you're gone for the whole day and I'm just sitting there on your table, waiting for you to come home so I can be sure you're still *there*—*(looks away)*—that you still *love* me.

JOANNE *(grasps his hands)* Don't do this to me, Eddie!



Even when we're apart, you know I still love you! Don't talk to me like that; it *scares* me!

EDDIE *(his face snaps back to hers)* Do you know what scares me? The thought that one day, when you tell me you'll be right back and you leave, you'll die or run away or something and leave me waiting here forever and ever, *(grabs her forearms tightly, making her drop her plate)* and I can't let that happen to me!

JOANNE *(terrified)* Eddie, *let go. (He doesn't; he drags and throws her onto her bed, she raises her arms in front of her, and MOTHER bursts into the room)*

MOTHER *(doesn't seem to notice EDDIE, but looks at JOANNE and asks, out of breath)* Joanne what's going on in here!?! *(When JOANNE looks around EDDIE at MOTHER, EDDIE falls to the floor as if dead. JOANNE looks at him and gasps; MOTHER follows her gaze, but doesn't see)* what's wrong? What do you see, sweetie?

JOANNE *(looks at MOTHER in despair, feels guilty and scared)* Mom, it's not what it looks—

MOTHER *(steps toward JOANNE over EDDIE, firmly)* Joanne, what do you see?

JOANNE *(looks at EDDIE, then MOTHER, then curls up on the bed and cries; between sobs)* He's not real, *is* he? He's just another imaginary friend, right? But mom, I love him—I love him, and he loves me too, so much, so much. No one else loves me like he does—no one in the world, mom, and he tried to tell me—he gets so worried when we're apart...he was angry...now he's there on the floor...*(looks at MOTHER)* mom, I need to go back—I need help, mom, I need help. *(MOTHER leans over JOANNE and does what mothers do. EDDIE stands up and walks behind MOTHER—JOANNE sees him—he gives JOANNE an if-looks-could-kill, turns and exits stage right)*



It was Quiet
Matt Hernandez

It was quiet.
At least until the two of them met,
Their story was one of those cheesy-lovey-dovey-mimicking-the-notebook-to-
a-T-kind of story

Their bond so strong that the forces of a black hole could not pull them apart,
So buoyant that an iceberg could not sink their hearts So everlasting that there
was no end There was no start.

Infinity seemed like it was too short of a time frame Yet they enjoyed every little
moment.

Their sincere minds knew that although their soul was infinite Their mortal
shells would not last nearly as long, and they were not nearly as persis-
tent.

So they decided to make a new one,
With ambition and in love
For once in their lives they had created something that cannot be understood
Not even from above.

And something as simple as a plus sign
Changed their lives and let their dreams of the most divine Become as tangible
as your hand as well as mine.
And joy had dipped in their veins so with their arms they intertwined.

In these next months, time did not stand still.
They did not get moody, they did not get ill.
It was not a get-me-some-ice-cream-and-smother-it-in-pickle-juice kind of
duration.
There was no argument there was no confrontation.

There was no I-give-up-I'm-walking-out kind of speaking,
There was only love
There was only love.



But on that delivery day
It was not too soon, it was not too late Storm clouds grew and rolled and roared
Rain came down like gleaming swords

And when that soul was finally delivered, It was cold.
But it did not quiver.
Its face was sad, but it did not cry,
It was not even moving
And no one knew why.

It was still.

It was quiet.

Springtime Solace
Skyler Rae Oliveira
Photograph



By the Dock
Skyler Rae Oliveira
Photograph



Influenced
Kursten Meuse

Her personality is consuming,
Her laughter is contagious,
Her beauty radiates,
But she can't see that

Because the masses drilled
Her to believe
A-plus-size-girl-can't-be-beautiful

And her brain can't comprehend
How perfect her differences make her
Because even though
We've all been told
Be-a-leader-not-a-follower
She knows people judge
And people whisper.

After hearing
You'd-be-pretty-if-you-lost-a-few

Back-handed compliments
One too many times

She cracked
And for every meal she skipped
Nothing changed.
She still couldn't face the mirror,
Couldn't stand the scale
It doesn't matter now

Her beauty isn't here anymore,
Nobody smiles with her laughter,
The bubbly personality is gone.
She let those die
Because those weren't as important
As hearing that for once
She fit into a "skinny" girl dress.



Skyward
Skyler Rae Oliveira
Photograph



Catch and Release
A One-Act Play by *Ben Thomas*

Cast of Characters (*In Order of Appearance*):

- Mom/Susan: A middle aged woman harboring a secret. Possesses a hatred for her ex-husband withwhom she is currently in a custody battle with. Lives with her daughter, Claire,whom she appears to love more than anything and is apparently close.
- Girl/ Claire: Susan's Daughter. A seemingly normal teenage girl who carries a "too cool for anything attitude." Rarely out of sight of her cell phone. She hates her father because she believes he walked out on her when she was younger.
- Dad/Michael: Claire's Father and Susan's ex-husband. Middle aged and talks with a slight New England accent (More NH). He is a gentle, caring man who absolutely adores his daughter. The only other person who knows Susan's secret, he continues to protect her. There are many skeletons in his closet and he carries with him his biggest regret—leaving his daughter and wife.

ACT I. Scene i.

(The curtain is open and reveals a room built behind a false wall, SLC. There is a collection of trees and a forest scene set USR. DSR is a kitchen table with three chairs all set on the same end. This remains in the dark and should only be lit when noted. A dock extends just L of C stage off the front of the stage.

Beneath, there is a boundary with black fabric. Susan/Mom enters DSL)

MOM. Come on Claire! Stop dragging your feet. The sooner we get there the sooner you'll get to leave.

GIRL. *(Enter behind MOM, cell phone in hand.)* Ma, really... Why do I even need to go in the first place? You know how I feel about him.

MOM. Yeah, I do. But it wasn't my choice. If Judge Eros hadn't been so biased, and I got my way, we wouldn't have ever had to contact him again.

GIRL. Yeah, that'd be nice. Explain to me again why we have to trek all the way out here? Like really, he couldn't have picked me up? What house doesn't have a drive way that goes straight up to it? And, I think I stepped in bear dung on the way up here.



- MOM. Scat dear, scat. But it's fitting for that man to be surrounded by it. He's so full it, I'm surprised it didn't come out sooner. *(Pause.)* And I have no idea why he lives out here, but he said that he has big plans for the day and wanted to do something special with you.
- GIRL. Well maybe he should have thought about that before he walked out on us.
- MOM. Look, I hate your father just as much as you do for what he did to us, *(There is an edge of mystery in her voice, as if she's holding something back)* but if we don't satisfy the court's wishes by allowing him to now see you every month, the two of us will have hell to pay with the justice system and it won't come cheap. Not just monetary but on us, and our life. He'll try to rip us apart if we have to fight for custody.
- GIRL. He had his chance mom. It won't happen. Did you talk to your lawyer yet? Can't we get rid of this requirement?
- MOM. I had my lawyer file a motion to have his claim reassessed. Based on the bias of the judge and his former drinking problem, I imagine that any reasonable judge who reexamines the case will award me full custody and we'll never have to talk to the jerk again. So, just do me a favor and get through today honey. It's only six hours, like a day of school. I know it'll probably be the suckiest six hours, but then we'll be done for the month, and hopefully forever. I'm meeting with my lawyer today.
- GIRL. Thank god. *(Looks back to her phone and holds it up looking for service.)* There's not even any service or data here. Yay...

(The lights come up on the full stage revealing the house and MOM walks to the door)

- MOM. *(Knocking angrily on the door.)* Michael! Get your lazy butt out here!
- DAD. *(Walks around from behind the house carrying two fishing poles and a tackle box. He is dressed in traditional fishing gear.)* Susan, there's no need to knock so obnoxiously. *(To GIRL.)* Hey Baby doll! How've you been pumpkin? *(Hugs her)*
- GIRL. Michael, stop.
- DAD. Oh, c'mon Claire... ready for some father/daughter fun?
- GIRL. *(Looks around at the woods and dock)* Yeah... Where're Yogi and Boo-boo? Did you remember the picnic basket?
- DAD. *(Chuckles, not sensing the sarcasm)* That's the spirit. Now, why don't you drop your bags inside and grab what you need to hit the docks. We have so much to do. Have you even fished since—



GIRL. Fishing? Are you serious? I'm forced to spend the day with you in the middle of New Hampshire nowhere and you want me to stick a rod in a lake and sit there hoping to catch a slime machine? You have absolutely no idea, do you? We couldn't just do lunch at a nice restaurant like every other divorced family?!

DAD. I'm sorry, I... It'll be fun. You used to love going with me when you were little.

GIRL. Yeah, like the last time you saw me? That was what? 5 years ago?! Why do you think you can just walk into my life right now and expect to spend the day with me after all this time? You couldn't just leave when you left us? You had to come out of the woodwork and fight for one day a month with me—five years after you walked out? And for what? You have absolutely no idea what I'm like anymore so don't pretend to know.

DAD. I wanted to figure that out, I, I've missed you. You're my little princess.

GIRL. Well maybe you should have thought about that then. *(She storms off into house which is darkened).*

DAD. Susan... I'm trying...

MOM. She's right. I had told the judge this was a bad idea. You have absolutely no right marching back into her life—or mine. You abandoned us Michael.

DAD. I did not. You have no right accusing me of doing that. You can't even judge the moral wrongness of abandonment. We made a commitment. So it's okay when you break that, but not me, huh? I'm here because of you—we're all here because of you.

MOM. *(Slaps DAD across face)* Never say that again. *(Composes herself)* Now I'll be here at six to pick her up. And don't you dare drink while she's here.

DAD. *(Still in shock from what happened)* I got my one year chip last week. You know that. That's why I want her back.

MOM. Well good luck *(She leaves).*

(DAD looks towards the door and contemplates going in but changes his mind and brings both fishing poles with him to sit on the dock alone. Lights transition to the inside room revealing GIRL walking around holding her phone in the air looking for service. The room is scarcely furnished but has numerous books and a coffee table in front on the couch. On the coffee table are a bunch of papers and a journal on top. There are pictures of GIRL hanging around the room.)

GIRL. Finally, more than one bar. *(Dials a number)* Hey... No Caroline, he's



crazy. I've been here all of two minutes and he's already treated me like I'm still his little eleven year old...Yeah... No, don't even get me started on the two of them. I could hear them fighting just before my mom left... Yes. Still. *(She sits down and picks up the journal off the coffee table)*Yeah, I'm still here. Sorry... I found this book of my dad's... Do you ever remember him journaling?... No, me either... Hold on, I'll check... Um, you'll want in on this. Should I read it to you?... Yeah, let's see... Oh, there's a picture of me taped to the front cover... Yeah, it's the same picture that's also hung up in a bunch of random spots in his house. Weird... Anyway, there's a whole bunch of stuff here from when I was born and pictures I drew for him when I was little. I can't believe he kept this stuff.... Sorry, can you repeat that?... Yeah, I'll let you know what it says. *(Flips page and glances at it)* Whoa! Caroline, are you sitting down for this? There's a written entry in here from the night he left...

(Lights come up on the table DL. MOM is in a silk bathrobe and pantomiming in the kitchen. The chairs are all set on the SR side of the table and there is a pair of stilettos on the table. DAD enters dressed in a shirt and tie holding flowers; his entrance has taken MOM by surprise.)

MOM. Good evening honey! You're home early tonight. I didn't think your flight got in until 12:30.

DAD. I caught an earlier one. I was excited to get home

MOM. Well that's good. I'm glad to have you back. How was your trip?

DAD. Whose car was that backing out of the driveway?

MOM. Michael, what are you talking about? You're jet-lagged. Why don't you sit down and I'll make you some coffee?

DAD. Don't try it Susan. How long has this been going on?

MOM. Now don't get all accusatory or defensive. You can't be angry. It wasn't my fault!

DAD. It wasn't *your* fault that *you* strayed?

MOM. Maybe if my husband was home more often and paid me the attention I deserve.

DAD. I'm gone two days every four months! You think that's reason enough? I am devoted to you and Claire!

MOM. You don't even know what I have to deal with.

DAD. Yeah, must be tough. *(Gestures to shoes.)* Did he buy those?

MOM. You sure as hell never would.

DAD. At least tell me Claire isn't home.

MOM. She's out at the movies and then sleeping over Caroline's.

DAD. You make me sick Susan. *(Drops flowers)*



Tower Spring 2013

MOM. Is that a threat? I'll have a restraining order tomorrow. Why don't you just do us both a favor and let it happen? *(Exit DL.)*

DAD. Absolutely! And take your shoes! *(Throws shoes off DL.) (Mumbles.)* I hope the glasses are clean. *(Grabs glass and a bottle. Pulls one chair around to the other side of the table and drinks as the lights fade going out last on the three chairs, now separated.)*

(Lights come back up on GIRL, still on her phone.)

GIRL. Caroline, you still there?... Yeah, hi... I had it all wrong. I just, just, ugh... Hey can I call you back later?... Alright, thanks girl... Talk to you later Bye. *(Sighs.)*

(Lights come back up on dock where dad is back to fishing. GIRL enters the scene and walks out on dock with him.)

GIRL. Hey... Dad.... *(This is the first time she has called him Dad).* Can I still fish with you?

DAD. Sure. *(Hands her the rod.)* It's the one you used to call your favorite. Remember when we went to pick it up?

GIRL. I'll never forget. My seventh birthday. I wanted to be just like Daddy so you took me down to the country store and we picked it out. *(They smile and chuckle. GIRL casts rod. They stand quietly for a few minutes.)*

GIRL. Hey dad... I'm sorry.

DAD. Don't apologize. I deserved it. *(Pause. He looks at GIRL).* Sometimes I forget how much you've grown up... And how much I've wronged you.

GIRL. No, dad... I wasn't talking about my freak-out. Well, at least not just my freak-out. I'm sorry I've blamed you for all these years.

DAD. You have every right to blame me. I deserted you.

GIRL. Why didn't you tell me?

DAD. Tell you what?

GIRL. What really happened-- why you really left. I found the book in your living room. You did come back after that business trip... She told me you never did.

DAD. I guess because I haven't had a chance to tell you. That night started a bad time in my life. I was broken, helpless, and the only things I had for friends were Jack and Morgan. It was easier for both of us if I just pretended I never came home... Plus, I couldn't really write to you from rehab... or the street.

GIRL. Why not? They don't ban you.



DAD. I was embarrassed, okay. You had always looked up to me and I couldn't allow you to know that side of me.

GIRL. Well... You could have come back, you could have fought harder!

DAD. I wouldn't have won even if I had fought. No one would give custody to a drunk. But, that's why I reapplied for custody last year, after getting sober. I was lucky to get Judge Eros. When he and his wife split, she won custody because there were death threats against him at the time. Plus, his schedule was a bit irregular. He misses his kids like crazy and I know you're supposed to keep your biases out of the courtroom, but he tends to see where I'm coming from, despite my background. And I couldn't really fight. I promised your mother the first time around that I wouldn't take away her daughter. The day after I found out she was cheating on me, I promised her that I would let her keep you. Believe me, it was the biggest mistake of my entire life.

GIRL. But why would you do that? Why would you just give me away?

DAD. Because I discovered that night what it was like to lose a part of yourself. The only person I loved more than your mother was you. But I knew your mother loved you more than life itself and--

GIRL. Yeah... She's a good mom.

DAD.-- and I knew what it was like to lose something that you care so passionately about. I couldn't make her feel that pain. I loved her. So even though I had to lose you too, it's better one broken than two.

GIRL. But what about what she did to you? And did you ever think about me? What if I wanted my father back?

DAD. But a girl needs her mother more than she needs a father. And even though she hurt me, how is it right to hurt her back? Besides, she hurt herself enough I think. She can't even bear to look at me anymore because I remind her of her mistake.

GIRL. Or maybe it's because you took the easy way out and just left us but masked it behind "just intentions" pretending you were doing the righteous thing but really acting because you're selfish.

DAD. I was in no position to be there for either of you. It started that night and never stopped. I drank over and over and I couldn't have brought that home to you. Don't you think that would have been worse?

GIRL. Worse than losing your hero?

DAD. *(Pauses, then whispers)* I'm sorry...

(The two sit silently for a bit.)



GIRL. I saw that mom sent you pictures of me. And that you hung

them up.

DAD. My lawyer sent her a letter when I got sober and back on my feet.

I guess when I requested to see you again, she figured if I got a picture of you now, I'd be happy and I wouldn't try to fight for you back. Then she wouldn't've had to deal with me.

GIRL. Oh...

DAD. Do you know why they're hanging?

GIRL. *(Lost in head.)* Huh?

DAD. The pictures of you-- do you know why they're there?

GIRL. *(Sarcastic.)* I don't even know your last name. *(DAD looks at her.)* Oh, you know what I mean.

DAD. Well you certainly got your mother's sense of humor. *(Pause.)* They're there so that I don't drink. I put them where I used to stash my bottles so that if I ever go to reach for one again, even though it's not there, I find instead something worth fighting for--something worth staying sober for.

GIRL. Oh.

(The two sit in silence for a bit again.)

DAD. So... You got a boyfriend?

GIRL. Dad...

DAD. Sorry, but isn't that what dads are supposed to do?

GIRL. They're *supposed* to do a lot of things. *(Beat.)* But, no, I don't have a boyfriend.

DAD. Oh... Well, I'm sure you can take care of yourself. I mean, you have lived with your mother for years.

GIRL. Oh, it wasn't that-- *(GIRL's pole bends forward.)* Dad, dad, I think I have a bite!

DAD. Well yank it up you remember what to do.

(DAD runs behind her and the two reel in a big fish together. DAD has his hands on GIRL and she seems comfortable. As soon as the fish is reeled in GIRL sets fish down on the doc. They step aside and DAD coughs.)

DAD. It's a big one.

GIRL. Yeah, thanks. Not sure I would have been able to pull it in by myself. Guess I'm not as strong as I thought.

DAD. You would have been able to do it in without me.

GIRL. No I wouldn't have. *(The two look at each other. This exchange goes deeper.)* Now I remember why I used to like fishing with you so much.

DAD. Me too, Claire. Me too.



GIRL. I'm glad you planned this for us today. *(They stand and look at each other again, and smile.)*

DAD. Hey, that's a pretty good sized fish. What do you say we fry it up for dinner. There's a charcoal grill off in a clearing in the woods there... Well unless of course you'd like a salad instead.

GIRL. You have so much to learn Dad-- I'm not one of *those* girls. Let's fry it. *(They walk towards the woods as the lights fade.)*

ACT I. Scene ii.

(There is smoke coming from behind the trees UL. There are lights flashing behind giving the illusion of flames. MOM walks on stage DL. DAD comes onstage UR from the trees coughing.)

MOM. Michael! What the hell is going on?

DAD. Susan... We went to go fry the fish... there's a charcoal grill... a spark caught the brush. I--

MOM. Where's Claire?

DAD. I thought... that she was right behind me.

MOM. Michael! If she's still in there and anything happens to her--

DAD. We'll go in. Wait one second. *(Runs to storm cellar and pulls out fire extinguisher).* C'mon, and call 911. Get the fire trucks here!

(MOM drops purse and she and DAD run into the woods. There are sounds of the two yelling "Claire" and coughing. We hear the sound of the fire extinguisher expel. DAD comes out of woods carrying GIRL in his arms and MOM follows behind them. They get C and place GIRL down on the ground opening her airways.)

DAD. Claire!

MOM. Claire, honey, are you okay?

GIRL. *(Slowly sits up on elbows and looks at both her parents.)* Yeah, yeah... I'm good. Just a little dizzy. I'm sorry dad... I didn't mean for it to start a fire.

DAD. It's okay. It's not your fault. Accidents happen. I'm just glad you're okay.

GIRL. I'll be good.

(DAD and MOM hug GIRL and in the process make contact with each other. They are not phased at first. They sit there holding GIRL. After they hug her, they look across at one another.)



DAD. Good work Sue.

MOM. Thank you, Michael.

DAD. Sue... I'm sorry. I wish that I could...

MOM. Shush! You promised you wouldn't say anything.

DAD. She found out Sue. I didn't tell her. Now I'm sorry for what I've done and I'm sober now. I was wondering if I might come back into your life. *(The two stand up. GIRL stands up and stands behind them watching the exchange.)*

MOM. Michael, I don't know if that's a good idea.

DAD. Sue, please, I'm sorry.

MOM. Me too, Michael. *(Reaches into purse and pulls out a slip of paper, a court order.)*

DAD. What's this?

MOM. My petition to regain full custody without visitation with you--my lawyer finalized it today. And don't get your hopes up; we don't have your buddy Judge Eros again.

DAD. Susan... Why? I did what you asked... I, I just want to see our daughter.

MOM. Well, you knew I was uncomfortable with it from the beginning. You know what? Maybe it's a blessing that you threatened *my* daughter's life because that's more of a red flag than drinking. No judge in his or her right mind will ever let you see her again.

GIRL. Mom! Why?

MOM. Why? Because this vile creature you share DNA with could have killed you today. *(Pause.)* And he walked out on us!

GIRL. But you were stepping out on him!

MOM. He pushed me to those ends. Even though I still loved him while I did it. He still didn't have to leave.

GIRL. But Mom, I want to see him. Please, just let him come home.

MOM. He had five years to come home!

GIRL. But you wouldn't let him!

MOM. Is that what he told you? That I was the bad guy? He ran off with a bottle in one hand and a bimbo in the other and never looked back--all because we hit one rough patch. Did he forget to explain that part? *(To DAD.)* You coward.

GIRL. But Mom! We had such a good day. I want to see my dad.

MOM. He may be your father, but he's not your dad.

DAD. Susan, listen to her. Stop being selfish and listen to what she wants. Stop looking out for *your* best interests for once in your life.

MOM. *(Ignoring DAD's comment. To GIRL.)* C'mon Claire. Get your stuff and let's go.

(GIRL goes into the house and returns with her bag.)



MOM. *(To DAD)* You got your day, now stop fighting. We both know it's not healthy for her to be around you. Your lawyer will hear from mine sometime this week. Good bye Michael. *(Turns to GIRL.)* Ready Claire? *(Takes GIRL by her hand and starts to exist.)*

GIRL. Dad, I'm sorry. Thank you for the fun... and I, I love you. *(MOM pulls her off DSL)*

DAD. I love you too... I love you too--more than anything in the world.

(DAD collapses completely defeated and depressed. The sirens from the fire trucks are heard pulling up to the house. Lights fade on DAD in C and come up on the table DR. A chair has been moved to the center of the table so that the smallest chair is now between the two larger ones. Fishing poles have been added leaning against two of the chairs. Lights fade.)

Reflect
Skyler Rae Oliveira
Photograph



Still Remembering

David Catanzaro

Dedicated member of *Tower*

1994-2010



Dear Reader,

How much deeper does the ocean get when it rains?

How many brain synapses occur when reading this magazine?

Why do seniors graduate from high school and move away from the great things that Pinkerton has to offer?

Goodbye, reader. Goodbye Mrs. Kneisley, Ben Thomas, and the dedicated members of *Tower*.

Voices of the students, originality of the students, and personality of the students must stay alive. Keep reading *Tower*. Keep writing for *Tower*. This magazine for the students, by the students has to survive. Make room in your schedule to be a human being and experience art.

ars longa vita brevis

Megan Cullinane
Editor



Cover: Spring Beauty --Skyler Rae Oliveira--Photograph
Title page: Dew Drop-- Brianna Vickers Ledsoe-- Photograph
For next year's edition(s)

Submission forms will be sent electronically. Please email your work to Mrs. Kneisley at dkneisley@pinkertonacademy.org,

Note: In the interest of fairness, all *Tower* entries are evaluated **anonymously** to ensure that no bias is present. All names are removed once the entries are received, and each author's name is replaced with a number.

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Colophon

col·o·phon *n.*

1. An inscription placed usually at the end of a book, giving facts about its publication.

Source: *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition*

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