

Tower

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Peanut Butter Sandwich

Connor Marston

Waves crashing down --soft to the touch
Screams of excitement as I glide down with speed.
The shore, a
 creamy beige, almost
 fluffy, almost stiff.
 Chanting from the crowd,
 matching the anchored cones guiding my board
The plank, foam, brittle, stiff, supporting my voyage.
 A carve, spin, trick, move
Crashing to a still end, every other wave, every other glorified surfboard.
 Another ride, a zenith.
Spectating the crowd as himself, a trip around,
 A childish flow --giggles to a linear canvas.
 Plush~crushing seas
 gagging young bodies of spirit
 Parent clouds interrupting,
 the motion set, elongated
The crowd reaches
their shore, destined
 floating oasis.

Rain

Colby Millsaps

Inky waves,
Soaked strands plastered upon his forehead
 Cotton turned translucent
 Revealing rippling muscles beneath
 But most notably
Those clear balls that cling to everything he is

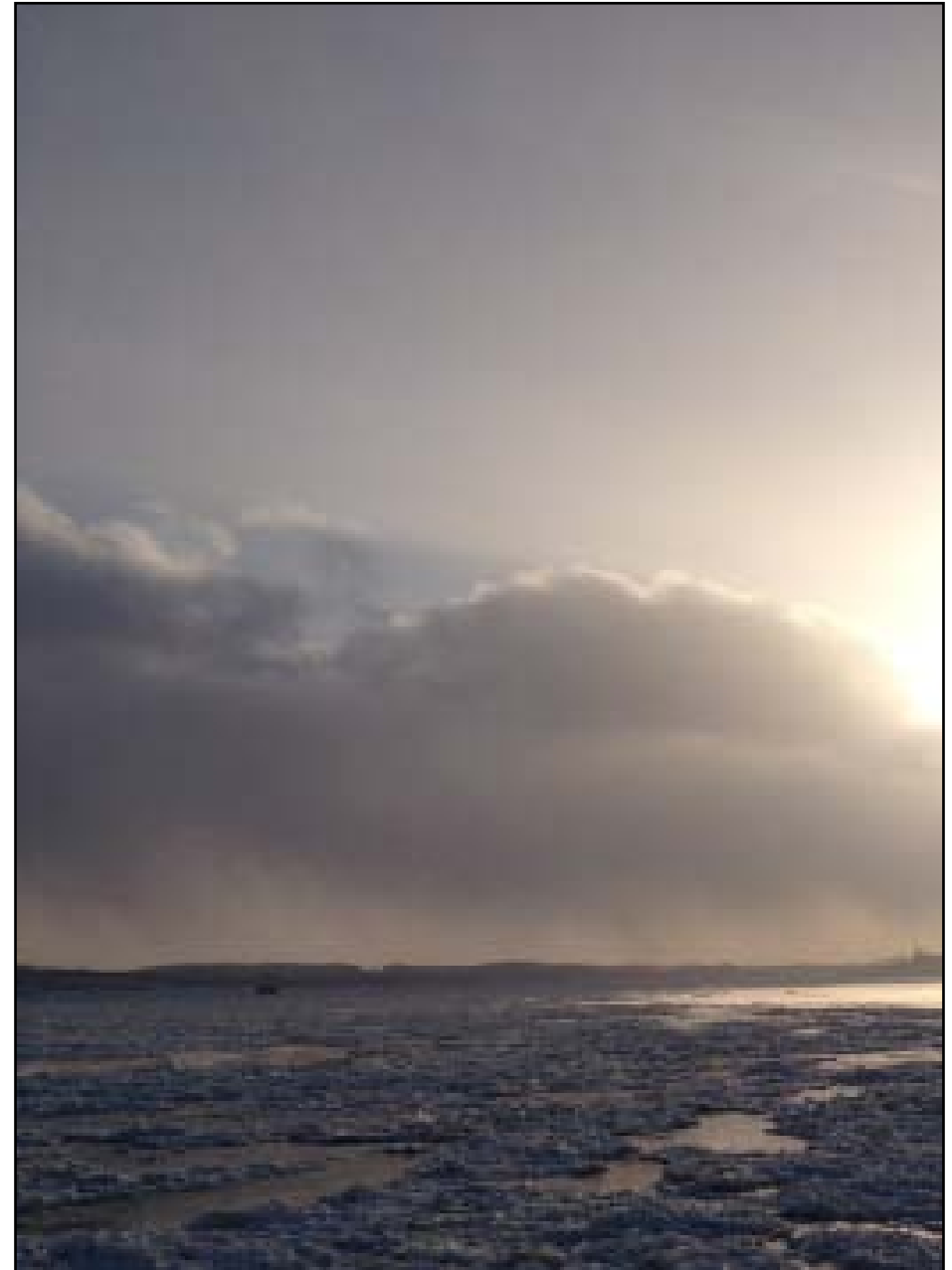
 The Dots
 That decorate
 Ridiculously long lashes
 The Specks
 That splash
From the tip of an overly pointy nose
 The Sprinkles
 That rush over forearms,
Weaving paths through a spattering of hair and sliding off clenched fists

Fingers brush away the drops from skin.
Eyes blazing heat on everything they touch,
As dark and insidious as the clouds above
 With such intensity,
The icy spatter is forgotten

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Nature's Whim

Justin Asari



le mort d'un ami

Chloé Soucy

simply
simply
simply
gone
gone
gone
my cold fingers upon her cold
face

unalive and undead
within and
with
out
my fingers leave smudges
on the mirror.

My Ode to Music

Tyler Pascucci

My music is language
My language is music
When I hear the sounds
It makes me think
Why the author
Wrote that in ink
The lively, energetic sounds
In the piece they play
Is so amazing to me
I have to say
I never break
From the natural sounds
So as I listen
To the records go around
It brings me in
To the things that surround
It takes me in
To let me see
I love music
Like music loves me

Threads

Lacey Fehrenbach

Eight spindling
threads of terror
weaving themselves
flawlessly
across the tiles,
never intertwining,
never tangling,
always graceful.
Sharp, quick,
fearless as they
charge forward,
pursuing their intention.
Tremble at the
very sight.
A great and
mighty beast
for strands are persistent
and refuse to shy away.
Such a beauty;
suspended above and by
every fraying twig,
a fragile spud is held.
Sympathy a stranger
but not a desire,
nor known,
nor missed.

All this heart knows
is the dancing,
bobbing wires
and their goal.
Squawks, squeaks.
and screams;
giant bludgeon
crashing down,
destroying every
careful fiber
set upon
the lonely tiles.
More shrills,
then tiny fingers
caress the slender,
brittle strings.
Only five
terrified threads
left to squirm
in a gentle palm.
Giggles, sunlight,
welcoming wind;
and the heart is
free again.

Engraved Heart

Stefanie Amargo

A little girl stands
Her hands tightly clasped together
Silence.
Her weeps and cries
Heard only by Him
Movement.
Suddenly, out comes a hand
Outstretching, reaching
The music swallows her body whole
Leaving footprints engraved in her heart
Forever.
She is alone
But never for too long
Only for a short breath of cold air
Black swirls of clean wishes
Are hushed between her white lips
She feels Him prick her finger tips
Not a sound He makes,
But a crash He makes.
Louder than the most magnificent mountains can withstand
Higher than the most glorious skies can with take
Still, she is the same little girl
Movement.

Are Haters Your Motivators?

Tim Wood

Before reading, just take a second and think about what motivates you most. What drives you to do great things and be successful? If you look inside the word “motivate” or “motivation” you see the word “motive”. Essentially, what is the base motive or reason that you have for doing what you do? I’ve always chuckled a little bit when I see or hear the phrase “haters are my motivators”, because if you think about it, that phrase is saying that haters are the reason or motive that you do what you do. I have a couple problems with this phrase. One is that it seems extremely selfish. Why do other people, who supposedly hate you, have any impact on your life at all? Instead of being affected by others, influence other people by what you do! Also, the phrase suggests that you are running away from something: in this case, haters. But your reason or motive for being successful should not be running AWAY FROM something, you should be running TOWARD something. If haters are your motivators, what is the destination? Where are you trying to go? It would be the same thing if you are motivated by failure. Are you motivated because you are afraid of failure or because you have a desire to succeed? If you are motivated because you’re afraid of failure, you will eventually have to face failure anyway. But if you are motivated because you want to get somewhere, that is when you have the right mindset. Because in that case, even if you face failure, the goal should be able to motivate you to get through failure. So what then should motivate you? When thinking about what I wanted to get across in this blog post, my mom gave me an excellent example (she is much smarter than me. #Harvardgraduateschool). She’s been in a few triathlons and long bike rides and stays extremely fit. She told me that when she used to train for them, it was hard stuff. What motivated her to get through the soreness, the grueling workouts, and her annoying coaches (i.e. her kids)? She didn’t have any haters that she brought in on the sidelines to motivate her. That would be ridiculous; no one could hate my mom! She knew what the reward would be if she persevered through the hard work, and when she finished those triathlons and her 100 mile bike ride, she knew that she had accomplished something great. My point is, if you really want to be successful, haters will not be your motivators. In fact, if haters are your motivators, you will more than likely be LESS successful because you are so focused on the haters! So be motivated by the knowledge that if you work as hard as you can in everything that you do, you will be able to do great things. Instead of simply wanting something, use your will to achieve that thing, whether it be getting into college, joining a sports team, running for an office position, or just being the best person you can be. If you do that, then you will be successful, and that is the truth.

Sam
Colby Millsaps

A teacher
with an ever-present smile
and a happy-go-lucky way of life
who gave off the feeling that he would always be there.
He taught me how to be a best friend
that everyone has a bad day,
sometimes someone just needs to be alone for a little while...
But to always be within reach.
He taught me to always answer when someone calls.
You never know what you could miss out on.
You never know who could need you that very minute.
Life waits for no man.
He taught me to be there for the ones you love.
To be a shoulder to cry on
To provide heat in the cold
To be the reason behind that smile that finally breaks through the tears
He taught me how to find the good in everything,
That there's so much you would never know
If you don't look long enough,
If you don't forgive at every chance.
He taught me that when your favorite song comes on,
don't be afraid to dance.
Don't be afraid to do whatever it is you want to do,
Just go for it.
But also,
He reminded me to slow down and take everything in
That it's okay to go your own pace.
it's okay to just be you.
A teacher
with four enormous paws
and shaggy black fur
who couldn't live forever.

The Dark Poet
Molly Gardner

This man
frowned upon as a no-good-raging-alcoholic.
Who suffers the loss of a pure-eternal-everlasting love.
He who lives in a black-white-world-where-he-sees
Color.
Read-between-the-lines man.
Pulling-the-demons-out-of-the-dark-corrupting-the-light man,
Making the dark age rise.
Nevermore.

A poet whom takes-the-devil-by-the-tail-abiding-him-a-challenge,
while ravens dancing-whirling-breaching-the-air.
Whose mind-washed-bleached-punctured-with-madness.
Nevermore.
It is he who lost touch with reality,
living in this ugly-putrid-unforesaken hell on Earth,
Without love.
The dark poet,
creator of the gothic era
Will be forgotten
Nevermore.

Incineration
Delia Patch

It is recrudescant,
A wound reopening,
My nightmare...

Wake in a familiar room
Suddenly you find yourself someplace new
A staircase, curling claws behind you
Letting blood and pus from a festering laceration above
In the form of red hot rock,
Drip down its wrists
Pour onto the floor.

You step back. The movement is slow-
You sink backwards into quicksand
That is the air
You turn to run-
Your only hope has left the door swinging behind them.

run.
Run.
RUN!

Trapped between two lakes of fire.
There is nothing to do
But let the flames peel the muscle away,
Lick the bones clean,
and the magma swallow you whole

Nature's Majesty

Dominique Frechette

The greens, the whites, the grays and browns,
All clash, morph, mix and twirl.
Alive they are, yet when seen from afar, they make a frozen painting.
A liquid puzzle,
Each texture, shape and color fit perfect.

The sounds, the shades, the movements and lights,
Together make the stage.
A silent director commands this scene.
Like an outdoor play,
Every line, light, and prop is put in its place.

The foliage the mist, the rocks and roots,
All move, bend swerve and grow.
Nature this is, and when it is close, it shows like visual harmony.
Like beauty defined,
Understand, not words, but each color that is seen.

The creatures, the shadows, the glimmer of sun,
Mold into quite the gallery.
Each piece knows their part,
To make this picture come alive.

This forest is majestic,
But look a little closer,
What's found is more than what is seen,
Each detail understood,
Like the inside of a painting.



Young Field

Peter Georgacopoulos

Road Trips and Constant Getaways

Kiara Kelii

Dreams of inconsistent scenery
blurring and meshing,
a backdrop of color,
white puffs hanging in a sea of blue,
and sounds that hang in virgin ears.
Fantasies about dials
turned all the way up,
hardly being able to hear
over screams of laughter,
bones shivering
with freedom by day
and growing frigid by night.
Minds conceiving thoughts
of breathless endeavors
through mountains and landmarks,
auras of wonder lightly dusting
everything pictured from the open windows.
Reveries filled to the brim
with clear lakes and vast oceans,
breathing in stale air
ripe with freshness and vitality,
along with admirable strangers
becoming the cast of thoughts
and giving a new adventure.



Still Peace
Peter Georgacouloua

Irrational Obsession

Rachel Hatch

It starts out subtle.
A spider on the wall, coming ever closer,
a warning, nothing more.
It progresses suddenly,
rapidly
to consuming thoughts,
never able to leave the mind, trapped.
Before she knows it, the spider and thoughts explode
into pain so riveting it almost becomes real.

Images of skulls dancing about the suffering,
glands swollen to bursting with pus,
fevered bodies in the street
stripped of their clothing at their own will,
murmuring hushed last words.
Haunting images, ever present
when assured vanished.

Around every corner, unavoidable,
a monster of a creature,
yet a victim all the same,
abruptly leans over in the hallway
and vomits violently.

Brain melts,
autonomic division takes the reins.
Every situation becomes one of urgency,
alarm- flight, don't fight.

Even when all seems at peace,
the dark wrapping its warmth around the child,
thoughts creep back, the spider stretches itself over the her head,
warning.
But now it is too late, the danger is known.
The terrors of the world, the hideous images
play through the child's mind without end
as the spider grows in the shadows.

Huggy

Victoria McCulloch

Inside a bench seat is also a chest; dug deep a bunny doll was found. When I showed it to my mom, she said I got it as a gift when I was one.
That day, I started carrying the rabbit everywhere;
I named him Huggy.
I dragged him along the floor, because I thought that was what I was supposed to do, but stopped because it seemed stupid and just carried him.
Over time, he became my favorite doll, and I brought him with me many places.
Sometimes I would bring him to school,
and to summer programs too.
But Huggy was and still is everything to me;
when I moved all the way from Missouri to New Hampshire,
I held him to my heart very close;
when I was excited about my first boyfriend in elementary school,
I hugged my Huggy as I jumped for joy;
after every breakup I ever had, I went to my bunny for comfort.
I slept with him in my arms nearly every night, I still do.
It's not for fear of the black cold night,
but for love that I hold in the history of my heart.
I will continue to confide in and hold my bunny doll until I am
twenty-seven... thirty-eight... forty-four... seventy-six...
I will squeeze my life into that bunny doll until I die.
Even after I have given it to my child, if I do...
when I was very young, Huggy became me, and I became him...
This is Huggy. He loves hugs.

Advice to Underclassmen

Tim Wood

Aaaahhhh the joys of being a senior in high school. I'm at the top of the food chain! Because of this, I think I have a pretty good understanding of some of the things that underclassmen should do to be successful. Some of these are funny, some serious, but I hope all of them are useful. So here are 7 pieces of advice to Freshman, Sophomores, Juniors, and even some Seniors.

1. Work first, play later. Procrastination is one of the worst traits of high schoolers. Take it from an avid procrastinator, it is not the way to go. Just get the work done asap so that you can have ample time to do other stuff! And this will also help you in the long run in preparing for colleges or job applications. If you don't work hard in the little things, how will people trust you in the big things?

2. Be practical at school. There are two things I mean by this. First, you do not need to bring everything you own to school every day. We all know what freshman bags are. It's not just that people will make fun of you, but do you really want to carry around a 10 pound bag every day? I don't think so. Second, if you haven't noticed yet, 7 minutes is actually quite a long time. Don't just rush right to your next class. Hang out with friends, meet someone new, check out the scenery! In a single school day, there is almost an hour in between classes. As you can learn from 5 hour energy commercials, there is a lot that can be done in that amount of time. Use that time wisely!

3. Get involved. At any school there are many clubs, organizations, or sports in which students can be involved. Step out of your comfort zone! join the chess club, or try out for the basketball team! You never know what can happen, what you'll learn, or who you'll meet. Take advantage of the opportunities presented to you on a daily basis.

4. Be mature. There are two extremes in underclassmen. They are either extremely cocky and obnoxious, or they never talk at all. Find a balance! Be humble, but be confident. Be respectable, but express yourself. Be level-headed, but be creative. Juniors and Seniors, though they may not admit it, can look up to underclassmen as leaders as well. This is a rare occurrence, it is true, but it's up to you whether you want to be respected and admired!

5. Stay out of drama. I don't know how many times I've heard from people, "oh well I don't get involved in drama." Then they proceed to tell me how this one girl did that or how that guy completely ignored them. Guys, this is ridiculous. It's not difficult. Don't spread things that aren't true and don't sneak behind people's back. Just treat others as you would want to be treated! Something my mom has said to me since I was little is coming back to me: "If you don't have something nice to say, don't say anything at all!"

6. Set goals. These should be both short-term and long-term. What do you want to do after high school? Can you try making the honor roll? Can you pass that last class to

graduate? Don't just passively go through your high school career. If you do that, you're going to be graduating and say, "why didn't I do more?" And setting goals helps you in all of life! When it comes to goals, know your limits, and try to exceed those limits.

7. ENJOY IT!!! This is probably the most important one. I think a lot of times students can get caught up in everything. school, college, work, family, sports can all be extremely overwhelming! But I think students just need to step back, take a deep breath, and remember that these are supposed to be some of the greatest years of our lives! Don't let them pass by without living them to the fullest! Count every day not as a drag, but as an opportunity! If you do that, you'll be able to look back through your life, remember your high school years, and say, "wow, that was the best time of my life; I'm really glad I lived it well." That is the truth!



Beauty In Faith
Peter Georgacopoulos

Family Reunion

Mary Baker

I walked upstairs, having finished my business in the basement, and start preparing for the guests. I clean tables, counters, and vacuum and sweep every floor in the house; can't do to have a messy place when family and friends are coming over. Appearances are very important.

I start dinner after cleaning; the monotonous motions help calm my slight nerves. It was the first time I was hosting our little get together, so I was a bit tense. But the slicing and stirring motions of cooking were doing wonders on my nerves. I managed to lose track of time, and when I looked up again it was ages later.

The doorbell rang. I wiped my hands off on a hand towel, and then ran to the door. The first guest had arrived. It was a boy, with messy brown hair and glittering hazel eyes. He smiled at me, almost confused, and I smiled back. I told him about the surprise in the basement, but didn't tell him what it was. It was a surprise, after all.

He went willingly, and when he saw what it was he was most certainly surprised.

We went back up, and when reaching the top of the stairs, we embraced. It had been a long time since I had seen my brother.

He went into the living room, and sat down on my uncomfortable couch. I frowned slightly at the thought – I will have to replace the furniture, soon, they were impossible to sit and sleep on. He squirmed a bit when sitting down, but when I brought him out a glass of water he accepted it gratefully, drinking out of it greedily, almost spilling it all over the front of his shirt. I laughed at the sight. My brother had always been enthusiastic.

Shortly after, the doorbell rang again. I rushed towards the door, having wandered back to the kitchen to watch the food, to make sure nothing boiled over or burned. Opening the door, I was met with the sight of a blonde girl with brown eyes, smiling joyfully at me. I smiled back, and let her in. I told her of the surprise; she seemed excited – she loved surprises. I brought her down stairs, and she was almost vibrating with anticipation.

When she saw it, she gasped aloud. I smiled at that.

We walked back upstairs, and I embraced her tightly. It had been a long time since I had seen my sister.

We both walked into the sitting room, and my brother stood and hugged my sister. We had spent so long apart; it was nice to be together like this. They stayed there, perched upon the uncomfortable furniture, talking and laughing, catching up. I smiled at the sounds of their happiness from the kitchen.

When the food was done, and I was taking it off the heat, and was straining what needed to be strained, was dishing out what needed to be dished out, when the doorbell rang for a third and final time. I was confused; no one else was supposed to be coming.

I walked towards the door, trying to think about who else may have been invited, or who else may come over unannounced. I opened the door, to be met by a scruffy looking girl – her hair was frazzled, sticking out of a loose ponytail, and she was flushed and sweaty. She must have run.

We did not do much in ways of greeting – she waved, then walked in when I opened the door wider for her. We couldn't go down to see the surprise now – it was supper time, and it would have to wait. But soon, right after the meal, we would go, though I had not planned enough for three guests. However, I was resourceful, and I would make do with what I had.

We ate supper, almost glowing with happiness. We laughed and talked all meal long, my brother and sister just so pleased to be with family again after our long separation. Our third guest, the girl, was not one for talking. She looked on at us, observed us, watching us laugh and talk and gesture. I did not mind much – some people just liked to watch, while others liked to do. I was a doer. She was a watcher. That was all.

She kept catching my eye from her place on the other side of the table then off to the side. She smiled every time she did, and eventually I began to smile back.

After the meal, my brother and sister went off exploring my home. It was new, or rather, new to me, and they had never been over before. They were excited to see what was where. We had been planning on moving in together, so as to keep our family from separating again. I was very excited to show them around, but the third guest, the girl, she wanted some of my time.

We sat in the sitting room, I perched uncomfortably on the stiff couch, the girl lounged out in the love seat, slouching and taking up space. I thought it strange that she could get comfortable on my furniture while I could not, but pushed the thought from my mind.

I decided to focus on her, instead, and not her actions, and studied her frumpy hair, the worn, childish floral print blouse she wore, the shorts that ended well above her knees. Her large, almost unfocused eyes were looking at me, and she seemed to have a habit of biting her lip, and it smudged the color that was haphazardly smeared on them. She was not put together well, not like me, with my smooth, straight hair, and a collared shirt opened slightly for the casual nature of the get together, and the straight black skirt. We were different – almost opposites.

She began speaking then, drawing me out of my silent contemplation of this strange guest in my home. In my home, no matter how comfortable she could get on my furniture. She spoke with a slight drawl to her voice, which made me smirk slightly, though I doubt she noticed, or even if she could notice. I humored her, and spoke back, giving her the conversation she wanted. Before long, it seemed that I had gained her trust, or some such thing, as she began smiling more, biting her lips less, and her unfocused eyes became brighter, if not focused.

Then she mentioned the people in the basement. I frowned. I asked her what she meant, and she gave me this look, this knowing look, and it made me very nervous, very nervous indeed. I just tilted my head however, not letting on, and told her I didn't know what she meant. She shrugged, laughed, then stood up, rolling her shoulders. She turned and walked from the room, when she suddenly broke into a run, and made for the door.

I leaped to my feet, and called to my brother without words, in the fashion we had always done, and had had to resort to these many past years, when we had no voices of our own to call out to one another. She was already out the door and running around the back of the house, the back of my house now, when my brother

and I made it through the door. Silently, we decided to split up, I following this girl, this stranger, and he going the other way around.

I reached her first, but she had changed. Her eyes were no longer unfocused – quite the opposite now, it seemed like she could see me, see me a way no one except my family should be able to, and her shorts and clothing no longer seemed childish, but a good disguise, a disguise that I had fell for, blindly, a child myself. She had been behind the house longer than I had, and had managed to get a rod, plucked from one of the infernal trees in the back of my house, the ones I was planning on having uprooted. She held it in her hand like a sword, like a weapon she was not quite accustomed to but could handle deftly if she had the need.

I kept my distance, and I fell down into a crouch, mirroring hers, as I had forgotten how to use a body like this, it had been so long, so many years. My brother came around the house after this, and didn't understand, not soon enough, and he was suddenly there, suddenly to close to this stranger.

I tried to warn him, tried calling out to him, call out Danger! and Stay back! But my brother had always been enthusiastic, and it had been long since he had had a body, since he had had the chance to feed properly, and he ignored my warnings. He stepped in, lunging at her, but he was out of practice, it had been so many years since he had had a body of his own, and the girl, this stranger just stepped deftly to the side, and swung at him.

It connected solidly just as I yelled out at her, she could not do this, not when I had just got him back – But it was too late.

My brother looked shocked in the moments before he erupted into dust, the body not being able to withstand the energy his mind and soul gave off as they combusted at the nearness of that infernal tree.

My sister had heard my yelling out, and came running around the house, as I started circling around this stranger, this murderer who had come into my house. I warned her back, and she stopped, but then she saw our brother's remains, and she could not deal with it, not like I was, and she lunged out, shrieking.

My sister looked angry, lost, and scared in the moments before she erupted into dust.

It was just me. I was the only one left. The loneliness of this fact towered up over me, over the head of my new body, and threatened to crash down and crush me, reduce me to dust like my brother, like my sister, like our entire family had been reduced to dust so many years ago. I had to live. I had to continue on. I knew the methods of creating others, creating new brothers and sisters, though they would not be my brothers and sisters, they would be my children. Like I was a child myself, to my mother, who had had to change her body many times, as she grew larger, her mind and soul growing brighter with every feeding, with every creation of a new child. These bodies were not designed to hold us for long, but we had no bodies of our own, spited by the cruelties of fate.

I crouched down, and looked at this stranger who I had so gravely underestimated. She just rearranged her grip on the rod, the infernal rod she held in her hands. I ignored the remains of my brother and sister, even as a breeze swept in and carried off components of their bodies – their new bodies, that they had only had for such a short time. I would not do me well to lose myself in emotion, like my sister.

The girl lunged, I dodged. I lunged, she side-stepped. We started a dance, myself creeping closer to her, extending my hands towards her throat, towards her spine, towards her heart, and the girl fended me off with a clever maneuver with the infernal rod. She would get close, and I would dodge aside, be pushed back.

We were evenly matched, but time wore on, the sun began to set – the sun I was to watch with my brother and sister in our bodies from our house but could do so no longer – and we began to wear ourselves out. She managed to swing closer to me, as I was no longer able to jump aside as quickly as I had. And she could not keep me so far away from herself, as her arms grew wearing from swinging a weapon she was not used to. One would fail, and the other would prosper, and it would happen soon. I could feel it, almost taste it in the tension that was tightening in the air between us.

But suddenly – I slipped up, a backwards jump meant to take me back a few feet instead resulting in my feet sliding out from under me, and I leaned backwards, to catch myself, to keep myself away. But this stranger, this practiced murderer took advantage of it quickly. Simply. She struck me with the rod, that infernal rod, and I felt myself expand painfully. It only lasted a few seconds, before suddenly everything was gone.

All that remained was the girl, panting in the oncoming darkness, outside the house of her dear friend, who had once lived here. The dear friend whose face had been attached to that thing that was not her friend she had just destroyed. She surveyed the pile of dust, and turned to look at the other two, who had once been her brother, the other his girlfriend.

She shuddered, one part disgust, one part chill, and went inside. She went to the basement, heart thundering away in her chest. She and her friend had been studying on these things, having heard rumors that they were in their town. They used their resources, compiled by those who came before them who had done the same as them, killing things to keep the world safe for those who would be nothing but prey and victims to them. She had read descriptions of what happened to the victims, had seen pictures, both hand drawn and in yellowed black and white photographs. Hesitantly, she raised her hand to the door, and pushed it open. She walked down the stairs, down into the darkness, and groped at the wall to find the light switch, terrified as to what she would see in the eerily silent room.

She turned on the light, and saw what she had only seen in pictures, had only read about before; the gore was everywhere, splashed across the floors, and up the walls. Terror and defeat gripped her body, sucking the air right out of her. The world spun, and she put her knees out to help stabilize her, and they hit the ground hard as she fell, sobbing.



Foliage
Peter Georgacopoulos

Masters of Magic

Paige Welch

Upon the tumult Hell of the sea
For our last bid at life we plea

Fingers made of pure flame
Lick and dance for thy blame

Oh, sweet, harrowed vengeance
The Baron demands his penance

Whose penance shall we pay?
For we never get the final say...

The Skull Man, that's what the god of death is called in New Orleans. The poem as aforementioned is sung in the streets of the Big Easy so to avoid having him dig the graves of men too deep and push them in before the Lord has deemed them ready to join him. But this Skull Man, like so many other gods of this bizarre religion, resided not only in the voodoo-ridden streets and minds of New Orleans. He traveled across the world, seeking death and making sure that those who had experienced death stayed in their place...

In an ancient graveyard, which many had forgotten, a raven sat on a branch above a grave. It cawed and cackled like any bird, but the grave over which it perched was not like its brethren. The ground was hard and cracked and reeked of sour, foul earth. A slight rupture had formed there and waxed and waned as if a small mole were just beneath the surface searching for a corpulent worm. It even seemed as if some poor night-crawler was escaping its doom for a slender, wiggling, white object protruded up from the ground. It grew as the rest of its slender, slimy body came out from the grave, but it soon became apparent that this white worm was attached to a much larger being. Eventually, the bones of a fully-grown man's hand were jutting out from the rank earth. The fingers and palm moved on their own accord and were grasping at the frigid, night air. Thin, white nerves twirled around the bones and fanned out at the tip of each of the fingers. The stringy muscles encased the phalanges next and quickly encompassed the whole hand. At last, the pale skin wrapped the entire appendage in a leathery covering.

A second hand burst forth from the grave and ripped apart the earth held before it. A partially flesh-covered man dug himself out of the tomb and stepped out in the ragged clothes in which he had been buried. The raven flitted down and landed upon his shoulder and pecked at the bare bone on his high cheek. The cataract-covered eyes turned towards the raven and in response to the Morse code being tapped out on his cheek. Paper-thin eyelids hid the eyes for but a moment and as they opened once again the color changed from milky white to a clear grey. The remainder of the face was covered by the same pale leather that covered the hands and formed bags under the stormy, piercing eyes. The man walked and gave a smirk to the bird upon

his shoulder.

"Hello, my old friend," the mustached mouth mumbled. He continued to walk and left the graveyard where he had slept for over one hundred years...

In New Orleans, a parade was passing for the death of one who had gone to see the Lord. On a fence sat an ugly figure that no eye could see. A top hat sat on his head and he wore a black tuxedo, which had it been rented the shop owner would've forced him to buy it. He held a glass of rum in one hand and a fat stogie hung from his lips, but his partying during the funeral was not what was gruesome about him. Half of his face was made of bone while the other half had flesh, much like how a previous fellow had been when he left his grave. He tapped his foot to the jazz that was poured from trumpets of the mourners.

A young, black priest came before the people and gave the last rights of the poor, departed fellow. His arms would fly and the sleeves would form the white wings of an arch-angel avenging the Lord, but rather than fighting with a sword, he fought with words. The thing continued to sit on the fence and smirked every time the priest flapped his wings. At last the priest finished his sermon.

"May Baron Samedi bury your body with the sweet earth of New Orleans, so that you can't come back to haunt none!" exclaimed the priest. Everyone in the crowd bowed their necks and mumbled the familiar ending to any Christian prayer, "Amen." The mourners then left with the music blaring, and men shoveled dirt into the hole. Eventually, even they left and the figure came off his perch and strutted over to the freshly covered grave. He took up a handful of dirt and whispered something in Creole into it. He sprinkled the blessed earth over the grave and walked away into the street. He puffed a cloud of smoke into the air and stepped through the ring it formed.

His footsteps were now echoing on the streets of Baltimore. The Baron went past the old graveyard and checked on the ancient graves that had lain undisturbed for years. He looked over each grave and paused when he came to a grave that sat under a dead tree's branch. He stood at the foot of the grave and stared at the crack that had formed from the earth that had been ripped open. He grabbed a mound of dirt and sniffed it. Most graves did not give off such a funky smell. The Baron threw down the earth and stomped on down the street in search of the missing dead man...

The raven was still sitting on the shoulder of the mustached man. He leaned his shoulder blade against a monument of sorts that was decorated with a bust of Pallas Athena. The raven fluttered off his shoulder, perched upon the bust and cawed. The man grinned and said, "Nevermore, my feathered friend nevermore is not the truth. For soon shall my sweet, departed love shall breathe the sweet air I breathe. No longer shall she be covered with the white shroud of death, and she and I will walk once again intertwined in matrimony."

A night's grisly work was ahead of him. He had to find the grave of his beloved first. She had died in New York and was buried there as well; of that much he was sure. He hoped that the grave was still there and had not been disturbed by the foolish living.

Now, for the average person, it would take quite some time to get from Baltimore all the way to New York on foot. However, since our formerly departed friend was not average he took the magical way out. He closed his eyes and a looked of hard

concentration was etched upon his placid countenance. His very form wavered until a man could easily pass his hand through his chest. He disappeared soon after, and was nowhere to be found in Maryland but rather in front of another grave with a headstone marked "Virginia Clemm Poe." He took off his jacket, which had been fixed via magic so no longer looked like a rag, and placed it on the soil. There he knelt and began to dig into the old grave with his hands. He never tired, never felt thirst, never felt hunger, but only dug into the ground without rest. He dug for several hours and had hurt his hands on multiple occasions, but he continued to dig ever deeper until his fingernails scratched against a piece of rotted wood. He dug around it and eventually exposed the ancient coffin. The wood was easily broken through revealing the bones of an unfortunate, young woman. The man lovingly and gently placed the bones into the jacket on the ground. He stroked the jaw of the skull before he was interrupted by a loud bang.

"Stop, Edgar!" shouted a deep voice. The Skull Man was sprinting down the street towards him. Quickly he gathered up all the bones in the jacket and holding them tight to his bosom he disappeared into the night. The Baron halted before the place where the formerly dead man had just left. He stamped his foot on the street. He was so close to that darn poet! The Skull Man knew that it would be pointless to try and search for Poe, so he didn't, at least not until the morning. For the rest of the night he sat up in a tree drinking and smoking away, not that he needed to worry about health. He was a god for Christ's sake! He knew that he would catch Poe, but at some other time.

Poe on the other hand, had made it all the way to Boston, his birthplace. There was an old textile mill with a cellar into which he had trespassed. There he decided his love would see her first glimpse of the modern world after coming back from the dead. He had laid the bones out so that they were in the correct place in the human anatomy. He stroked the jaw of the skull but once. He placed the pad of his index finger on the center of the frontal bone and bowed his head. Unintelligible words were uttered from his thin, pale lips, clearly of some ancient hex long forgotten through time. When he looked up the bones had not changed. He frowned, but there were other ways of bringing her back. By the end of the next night he had tried them all. Even the most simple of them, saying a prayer to the Lord, had been done by him. At last, he had given up all hope. He threw himself over the skeleton and wept, and wept, and wept. Nothing more he could do. The very reason for his coming back had failed.

Deep sobs shook his frame. But alas, he felt the bones move, and before his very eyes nerves were forming intricate webs on the body of his dearly departed. No more were his tears those of sorrow but of exuberance. His tears fell into the mouth of the skull and the jaw twitched. A gurgling noise became apparent from the throat of the skeleton even though no cartilage had formed thither, but oh how quickly it came to be. The heart formed next along with all the other muscles. At first, only a small clump of cells had formed in the chest, but eventually it beat loud and clear and from this heart sprouted the veins and arteries that spiraled around the body, and from the blood the flesh was formed. Slowly but eventually the entire skeleton was covered in flesh and appeared to be more of a young doctor's cadaver which he must dissect. Poe was too stunned to do much more than watch his wife breathe again for the tears he had shed over her. Soon skin began to form around the navel area, and

Poe ran off to find some cloth so as to not allow his beloved go naked. He fashioned a primitive tunic with old cotton and some rope he found. He would have to find her better clothing of course, but it was the best he could do in the moment.

When he had come back to his love everything had formed but her lovely face. He caringly placed the tunic over her head and made the ugly thing seem decent on her beautiful form. When only a small piece of cartilage could be seen she opened her bright, blue eyes and smiled at her husband. She sat up and they embraced each other. How long had death kept them apart! He kissed her nose, now covered with skin, her lips, her cheeks, her neck, and forehead. She nestled her head into his bosom and they swayed to and fro in an embrace that seemed as if it could not be broken...

The door was burst open by the Baron, "Stop right there!" "No... no, no, not now, please not now," pleaded Edgar.

"You and your freaky wife ain't even supposed to be alive! Of course I'm sending you back now!"

"Please, just for the rest of the night, let us be together," begged Virginia, the wife of Edgar. The Skull Man considered her compromise. This was the one part of his job he hated. There were rules against this type of stuff. He couldn't let them be together alive, but he could pull some strings and let them be together dead. It was better than nothing.

"I can't do that, but I can let you both go to the Underworld together. I'm sorry, but that's the best I can do," responded the Baron. Virginia nodded and so did Edgar. They held each other one last time in life and with a quick swipe of the Skull Man's hand the two of them became nothing but a bunch of bones, and so was the second demise of Edgar Allan Poe and his wife, Virginia Clemm. The Skull Man, Baron Samedi, whatever other names there are for him walked down the streets of Boston. It could've been any street anywhere and it would've been the same. He placed the bones of the husband and wife in the ground next to each other. He hated his job, but someone had to do it. He spoke into the dirt as he had done earlier to keep them from coming back, again. The Skull Man drew a cloak around himself and disappeared from the streets of Boston and landed somewhere in Louisiana. He sat at the roots of the tree and drank and smoke waiting for the next poor chap to die so that he could do his job.

Me

Victoria McCulloch

When I dream
I see, hear
and experience lots of things.

I am
in so many
different situations.

The most
recurring
theme;
me.

I am
the target.
I am being
hunted
or
chased
I am being
thrown away.

I am being
hurt
sometimes to
protect
someone else.

No matter what
it's always
me.

I'm always playing
a major role
in the
plot.

The hero
the villain
the damsel in distress

It's always me.
Always
always
always

but
what am I
in real life?

Their Problem

Taylor Dervishian

His problem is that he's an easy-come-easy-go type of guy

One minute he loves her

The next he could care less

His problem is that he cares what *they* think

Friends, bystanders, and girls he once wanted

Unimportant

His problem is that he's jealous

Audaciously asking questions

About her feelings for another,

And he gives her that same face

Draped with the saddening I-thought-you-only-wanted-me look

Amongst a red face and glassy eyes

His problem is that he's *ignorant*

Never has he called or texted her

Yet of course he expects that much of her

His problem is he'd kill-to-see-her tonight

But tomorrow morning,

That will change

Along with his endless desire to talk to her

His problem is that he's a walking contradiction

And just because his eyes scream that he cares about her

Doesn't mean he gets a free pass to be a hypocrite

His problem is his addicting persona

Endlessly drawing her in

Abusing this privilege

With pure knowledge of it

Her problem is that she can't separate the past from the present

Or his eyes from the ocean

Engulfing her

Drowning her

Her problem is his voice

A velvet rasp covered in a deep coating

And sounds of his laughter

Reoccurring

Tower Winter 2014

Her problem is how often his name echoes
In the crevice of her mind
Sullenly

And their problem
It's the accumulation of times
They look into each other's eyes the same way
Speechlessly opening their mouths
But instead they both see the is-it-even-worth-it look
Amongst their peers
They are so involuntarily isolated
Ignorant
Because all they are concerned with
Is
Seeing each other's eyes

Their problem is they are no longer friends
Only acquainted strangers
His stubbornness intertwined with her *obsession* of being right
Does nothing
His problem is that he's an easy-come-easy-go type of guy
And hers is that she can't stop wishing
That one morning he'll awaken with a
Sudden desire
To be someone that he's
Not

Transparent Bible

Connor Marston

A prison, mind, body and soul
Spirit, belief, creationism in flowing, boiled syrup.
God, a conviction? No, a freedom
Living bound by a book of thoughts without perception.
God, a maestro, his body a scripture through which all look to attain
by striving, success, others with blood and substance.
God, an objective, reached at the apex of a creation
autobiography, key to a lock, a puzzle piece in a scavenger hunt.
Something just out of reach yet hidden under our woven skin,
Wrinkles in fabric, the seamstress will pick out and redo and redo and redo.
Just as perfect patchwork to a cradled baby, life is. --hope
Granted one will take it away if not held so dear, but not too dear or it will
sing the senses.
As stained glass shatters the silence, only he laid crucified on the
wood of a savior,
Structure of our own creation and house of our true desires.

Tower Winter 2014

Heckle

Mary Greska

Trying to climb
Trying to get up to the tallest branch.
Providing food, warmth, nourishment...
Home.
Little body slow, pale, camouflaging to the leaves and branches.
Only defense is not to be seen
Stay invisible
Stay safe
Slime trickling up the tree
Like a trail of bread crumbs leading to destination...
Tracks...
Something's tracking me.
First there's one, take it down
Red and fiery, hungry, fast
Bigger than he, but slow...so slow...
There are more of them.
Legs tackle, mandibles bite and open flesh
Strength in numbers, fighting is futile
Just have to get home...
But no.
They won't stop... never stop...
They sense fear, antennae beating fast against you, faster than the cadence of your
heart,
Armor on flesh
No voice to cry, no arms to swat...no way out.
The inevitable fear, inevitable thoughts,
Am I ever going to get home?

Husky

Mary Greska

Thoughts race, heart pounds...run.

Run. Run. Run.

Try everything to numb the sense of humiliation
panic....no matter how hard... you never run as fast as they can.

And they stare. Silent thoughts pound at you...

Smiles do more harm than vacant stares.

You stare at the feet thudding in front of you

try to follow their pace;

feel your head getting lighter, emotions growing number.

All in your head. A matter of willpower.

Even though it seems a short distance,
your body makes it feel like a marathon.

Every breath you take sends shudders;
you can feel it to the marrow of your bones.

Pandemonium.

A reckoning that thwarts every optimistic thought you had in your head.

Feet start to hurt,

every thud is a reminder that maybe you won't make it. Maybe...

Not being numb is enough. It's not enough.

It's not enough.

20 feet. 15 feet.

10 feet.

Almost there.

Everyone gets to zero, and turns to watch you.

The numbness gone,

Breathing heavier and the realization that you are...

The fattest person in gym class.



Hands

Denis Mwaura

Laughter

spacious giggles
through gapped teeth,
punctuating shrill voices
full of adolescence

Stories

recollections,
plunging into fiction
borderlining fantasy
sprinkled with innocent lies

Whispers

petty problems,
childish gossip,
stolen lunches
hair pulling

Memories

remnants of recess antics
spacing out a span of eight years
ending in newfound appreciation
for small schools and forever friends.

If Those Benches Could Talk

Kiara Kelii

Tower Winter 2014

mrotsrednuhT

Chloé Soucy

under the bed lies a
blond little girl,
a mutt-looking dog wearing a collar labelled "Bobby"
and maybe some
dead bugs.

the thunder roars,
we shield ourselves from the wave.

in our toolkit:
milkie,
blankie,
a tendency to talk to oneself.

"we buried her right there,
in our backyard"

"would you like to say Grace, Chloé?"
"Yes.

Thank God for
Bobby's soft ears."

Hands With Fern

Denis Mwaura



Tower Winter 2014

Promises

Meghan Donovan

Taking your first breath
Is your first promise
A promise you owe
To the world and its people.
To your parents
They strive for new beginnings.
The hope of being
Our-child-is-an-honors-student-bumper-sticker parents.
The people around you, your family,
They will watch you succeed in life.
Your breaths are your promise.
People unknown to you
Will one day need you.
As a crutch, a friend
A breath of fresh air on their darkest days.
Everyone needs you,
You just did not know that yet.
As you grow up more promises are made.
They turn from breaths, to pinkie promises to handshakes.
They build high on your back
Pressing you into the ground.
School begins to get too much.
Grades fall downhill with a crash.
Your parents give you the you-are-so-smart-what-happened speech.
Running upstairs crying, Look out the window.
Your mother.
Ripping the sticker off the car,
Tears collect in her eyes.
Promise no more.
You break,
Feel every bone in your body snap.
Become limp.
Desperate fingers run
To find something lethal.
Anything.
"No more promises to break"
Were your last words.
You feel free for all but two seconds.
Your eyes follow movement below you.
They have found you,
Terror is heavy in the room,
It is suffocating.
Your mother is on her knees,
Holding your face in her hands.
Your father is behind her
A what-have-I-done look
Upon his face.
All the promises you left
Are shattered around them.

My Darling Boy*Devin McMahon*

It was during Mom's funeral that I found the letters.

All three hundred forty-six of them, written to a boy I'd never heard of.

They were left lying in a box on her bookshelf, between the classics she never read, but Daddy had loved. The box was made of perfect wood, shades of brown blending with deep cherry. Swirling patterns were engraved at each corner, guarding the secrets held within. Where the overlay touched the base rested a shining, golden lock, waiting for its matching key to open. Mom never told anyone, not even Daddy, what she was hiding in that perfect, little box.

But the day of her funeral, once everyone had paid their respects and gathered in the living room to talk, I wandered into her office. Everything was dark; the windows closed and lamps collecting dust. She hadn't been in her office for months before she died, and none of us had either. Standing in the doorway, bittersweet silence encasing my limbs, I could see her there, sitting at the wooden desk, rolling around in her leather chair. Fingers would be madly typing at the keyboard, her hair disheveled from a long night's work. Crumbs would litter her lap, a cup of tea gone cold at her side; she would see nothing but words painted across the screen, and the truth behind each one. I could see it all in my mind, taste it all in my mouth, smell it all in my nose, hear it all in my ears, but if I opened my eyes it was gone. So I stood in that silence, my eyes closed and seeing. Her desk. Her chair. The computer she loved. Books piled high on the table and placed nicely on shelves. A box...the box. I saw it, and my breath caught, my eyes opened. Sitting there, behind the leather chair and wooden desk, between the classics she never read, but Daddy had loved, was the box.

I knew I shouldn't touch it; what was in that box was Mom's, not mine. But she was gone now. Someone had to find out what laid inside it. I walked farther into the room, knots eating my stomach, warning me to get out while I could. I kept walking. With each step closer my heart beat became louder, echoing in my ears and shaking my chest. Slowly I reached towards it, a slight tremble revealing my nerves. When my hands finally touched the box I was surprised by how cold it was. And smooth. It really was a perfect little box.

"Neila, what are you doing?"

I gasped in surprise, pulling my hands from the box as if they'd been burned. Turning around I saw my sister's lanky frame shadowed in the doorway.

"Aoife! Why are you in here?"

"I'm in here 'cause the door was open, and I saw you," she paused, her inquisitive eyes searching my face, reading my uneasiness. Her voice grew threatening as she repeated, "Neila, what are you doing?"

Pressing my lips tightly together, I looked her steadily in the eyes, "I miss Mom, Aoife. She was always in here, so I thought that maybe I would feel closer to her."

Her wide eyes turned to slits as she sauntered towards me. Her tone, now a forced whisper, seized my stomach, "I don't know what you're up to Neils, but this, right now, without Mom, this is hard for me too. If you don't want to tell me what you're doing, then whatever. I can't make you. But when you need help, Neila," her

voice hitched momentarily, "I promised Mom I would take care of you, so that's what I'm going to do. But you need to smarten up, Neils. No more sneaking around in rooms Dad doesn't want us in."

She waited for my reply, her hot breath tickling my face. But all I gave her was a nod and a mumbled, "Okay. I'll be out in a second, alright? I just, I need to find something." She nodded her head slowly, and then walked into the hall, closing the door behind her.

I was alone again, but I didn't move. I just stood there.

Closing my eyes, shutting out the world around me, I breathed. In and out. Then I turned around. Again reaching out to the box, I felt the material beneath my hands. This time I held it, lifted it off the shelf, and placed it on the table. But when I reached out to lift the top from the box it wouldn't budge.

I didn't have the key.

A slight tension gripped my chest, spreading itself through my body like lava flowing down a mountain. If I was going to see what was inside that box, I would need its key. The golden key with a spiraling end and a dated look. The one Mom would twirl absentmindedly around her fingers, biting her lips in concentration. The key was perfect, just like the box. And I needed it.

If I were a key, where would I hide? A drawer. Leaning across the surface of the desk I grabbed onto a drawer handle and pulled it open. There was nothing but folders and paper. The next drawer held the same, and the next as well. The top drawer though, held pens and pencils...

And the key.

I felt the edges of my mouth quirk up while reaching for the box and sliding it across the desk top. Now to open it, I thought to myself. To open it and I'll finally know what's inside. But once I thrust the swirling figure of rusted gold into the lock of the box and threw open the cover, all I saw were envelopes. A lot of envelopes. In fact, the whole box was filled with them, and they were all from my mom. Frantic, I began flipping through the pile. December 1987. Last month. March 1984. Four years ago. June 1981. February 1979. January 1973. There were only dates. No names, no addresses. Only dates. I searched for the last envelope in the pile, dated December 1967, lifted it from the pile and carefully peeled it open. Inside laid a neatly folded letter.

My Darling Boy,

*You may not know who I am. You may not remember me.
But I think of you every day.*

As I took in the words, my body sank into the chair behind me. Looking straight ahead, I tried to decipher the meaning of the letter. Who could be my mother's Darling Boy? Who was she writing these letters to? Breathing slowly, I continued reading.

I am sorry to have left you, but there was no other way. It wasn't safe for me to be there, and you were too young to travel so far.

Frustrated by my ignorance, I ran my hands through my hair, pulling through the knots on my head. I didn't understand this. These letters, they were to someone she left somewhere. Someone she obviously cared about. But, why would she be writing to a child?

Then I saw the end.

My Darling Boy, you may not know who I am, and you may not remember me, but I am your mother. And I love you very much.

I had a brother.

"What do you think these are, Aoife?" I sat beside my sister while she read the letter. I watched as her brow slowly furrowed, and her mouth tightened as though she had bitten into a bitter lemon. She looked, not upset exactly, but... betrayed.

"They're letters, Neila, quite obviously," she responded, her tone sounding as bitter as her face looked.

"Aoife, you know what I mean."

"I can't. I can't do this Neila. I can't read these, knowing that Mom kept her son- our brother- a secret from us. And he's probably been kept from Dad too. She- Neila, she lied to us. And now she's gone, and I can never ask her why. I can never talk to her about the son she has, and never told us about," the look in my sister's eyes as she spoke to me was frantic, her voice raising and her words spilling out faster and faster, then she sighed, "I don't know what to think."

We were both silent for a moment, trying to understand. Aoife reached out and took the box of letters, her fingers brushing over the engraved patterns and outlining the golden lock. Carefully, she lifted the lid and pulled out the letters from inside, "How many did you say there are, Neila?"

"Three hundred forty-six."

"Three hundred forty-six," she repeated the number in a whisper to herself, "Why would she write three hundred forty-six letters, and never send them?"

"She was probably afraid, Aoife. I mean, she abandoned her son when he was just a baby-"

"It never says he was a baby when she left," Aoife snapped her head up, obviously relieved to distract herself with the matter. She always wanted facts, not inferences.

"He had to have been a baby, or at least not much older. The letter says 'you were too young to travel so far'. Kids could still travel. I mean, unless he was sick, in which case he wouldn't be a baby. But that's pretty unlikely, Aoife. He was definitely a baby."

Her cherry brown eyes darkened as her mind whirled; I swear I could see wheels turning behind her forehead. "Ok, that does make sense, but there's still no guarantee that he's not a baby," her words slowed as her brows furrowed in concentration. "Neila, she wanted to find him."

"Well, it seems like she misses him, but it never says she wants to find him. All she talks about is the past," I couldn't understand what Aoife was thinking, especially since she based everything off of the factual information she knew.

Her face, though, revealed guilt. Her eyes shone with contrition, "I saw Mom once, in her office. It- she- I," she stopped and took a deep breath, recollecting herself, "It was late at night and she was in sitting in her office-"

"You said that already." "Neila, let me finish," seeing my inquisitive face, she rolled her eyes. "She was sitting in her office on the floor with the box at her side and the letters sprawled across the floor-"

"Why were the letters on the floor?"

Aoife pursed her lips in annoyance, but answered calmly, "I don't know anything more than you do Neila-"

"Actually, you do, because you're the one telling the story."

"Really, Neila?" She let the exasperation flow freely into her tone, "Do you want to hear what I saw or not, because I don't have to tell you."

In response I bit my lips together and sat staring back at her.

"Okay," she began again, "So the letters were all over the floor, but she had one in her hand, and it looked like she had a picture too. I think it was a picture of him," she whispered to me. "And she was just sitting there, on the floor, hunched over that letter. The reading light cascaded over her, illuminating the picture's shine and lighting each tear's sparkle. Her shoulders shook with silent sobs and her hand slowly stroked the picture. I- I knew I shouldn't watch, I mean, whatever was going on she obviously didn't want others to witness, but I couldn't leave. So I just stood there," she paused, her lips becoming still, her eyes remembering pictures my own could only imagine. "Right before I left, I heard her whisper to the picture, 'I'll find you someday, Darling. I'll find you someday,' and then she wiped her tears, cleaned up the letters, and stood steadily onto her feet. I left before she came out, and ran back into my room. Then I tried my best to forget."

We sat together on my bed for a little while, frozen in our own thoughts. Then Aoife silently reached across me to the box of letters and pulled out the last one. Carefully opening the envelope, she unknowingly bit her lip in concentration, and then pulled out a shiny paper. A picture.

I gasped, my eyes quickly widening, "Aoife, is that-?"

In response she just handed me the picture. The picture of my mom, when she must have been around my age, cradling a swaddled baby in her arms. Seeing her so young and happy, with light beaming from her eyes and a smile lighting her face, my chest swelled with longing and my eyes filled with tears.

"She's so happy," I whispered.

"She's so young. No older than sixteen."

"What are we going to do, Aoife?" She looked back at me, her eyes as lost as mine. What could we do? "Should we tell Dad?"

"No," in this her answer was clear. "It won't do anything but hurt him. We have to find out what's really going on, and then we can tell him."

"But we don't know what's going on. I don't think anyone does."

All we had was a box of letters and a picture.

"Well, then we have to find more," Aoife's eyes sparkled with determination.

Her lips quirked with a smile. "This could be fun, you know. Researching our family history, travelling to Ireland-"

"Who said anything about travelling to Ireland?" I glanced at her in surprise. We didn't have the money to travel to another country. We would need passports and plane tickets and places to stay. "Aoife, we can't travel to another country by ourselves."

"Neila, I'm going to be eighteen in a few weeks. And we don't have enough information to travel to Ireland now anyway. So in a few years I'll be in my twenties, you'll be out of high school and a legal adult. We can go then, when we know more about the situation. Maybe we could even find out about Mom's parents, and write to them. They might know what's going on."

"Mom never even spoke about her parents, what makes you think we can just get their address and write to them? And if we can, why do you think they'll write back? And if they do write back, why would they know anything more than we do? There's no way, Aoife."

My cynicism couldn't sway her, she just looked me dead in the eye, "Neila, do you want to know the truth here? Do you want to know who our brother is, and why no one ever told us about him?" I nodded my head once, in reply. "Then stop being so negative. We are two, intelligent girls who are more than capable of figuring all this out."

It was true, I wanted to know the truth. I wanted answers. But I didn't see how we could find them. "Mom is the only one who knows anything about this, Aoife. How on earth can we start looking for answers if the only person with them is gone?"

"We'll read the letters."

For the first few months, we did what we could to learn about Mom's past. We casually brought her up in conversations with Dad, to see if he had any information we did not.

He knew nothing.

We asked her friends if she had ever talked about living in another country. She hadn't.

We scrutinized each letter, making notes, highlighting key information. We were hoping to find bits and pieces of information that we could glue together to make a whole picture.

We couldn't.

There were no answers anywhere. Nothing we read hinted at her previous life. Each letter told of her life in America, with us. She would mention memories she had of her son, but never speak of why she had to leave Ireland. We could find no clues as to where her son would be, and so eventually we stopped trying.

It didn't happen right away, but each time we thought we found something important, and then ended up with nothing, our motivation cracked a little more. We stopped meeting in my room every night to read letters to each other, and we stopped asking questions about Mom's life. After about six months, we stopped thinking about the letters at all.

The box was placed back in Mom's office, seated between the classics she

never read, but Daddy had loved. The golden lock lost its gleam, and the perfect wood was covered with dust. The key returned to the drawer, and laid there rusting as the days went by. Our minds were filled with other thoughts, and the brother we never knew was buried beneath mounds of useless information. Everything in those letters was lost and forgotten; my brother in Ireland remained unaware of the family he had. Our lives returned to normal, no longer clogged with thoughts of the past.

Aoife finished her sophomore year of college, and is in Ireland for her semester abroad. I graduated high school, enrolled in college and prepared to begin my life as an adult. No longer a child, I was ready to take on the world. Go to college, begin a career, maybe even fall in love and have a family. My life- my adult life- could finally begin.

But then the phone rang.

"Hello?" I answered, assuming it would be a friend calling to hang out or my dad calling to check in.

"Neila? It's Aoife. You need to come here."

"Come where? Ireland?" I figured my sarcastic tone would hint at the ridiculousness of what she was saying.

"Yes." Her voice was breathless.

I laughed into the phone, "Are you kidding me Aoife? You want me to go to Ireland? Right now? Just drop everything and go?"

"Neils, I found something."

At first, I didn't know what she meant, and then it dawned: our Mom used to live in Ireland. Our brother lives in Ireland now, "Should I bring the box?"

"Yeah. I already booked a flight. You leave in five hours. I'll be at the airport to pick you up," and she hung up the phone without waiting for my reply.

I was completely alone on that airplane, sandwiched between two people, hunched over a laptop and one single box of letters. The reading light cascaded over me the entire flight, illuminating the golden lock and lighting the tired words. Darling. Remember. Joy. Sorrow. Heart. What is his name? Why wasn't anyone told? How much does he know?

I had no idea.

All I knew was that he was my brother, he lives in Ireland, my mother left him there as a baby, and no one ever spoke of him.

I was going to find him.

Dear Reader,

One might assume that the 200th anniversary of Pinkerton would be celebrated in this letter, but that will be saved for the Alumni Edition of Tower. We have all heard quite enough about this upcoming anniversary. Instead the focus will be on the most important part of this magazine: the reader.

From an artist's earliest infancy, they are scribbling upon paper with crayon or forming miscellaneous lumps with Play-Doh. Eventually, these scribbles and amateur molds become paintings, short stories, sculptures, poems, or plays that express the very character – the very soul – of the artist. It is a reader's job to interpret these scribbles and molds and to see the man or woman behind them. A poet would not be a poet if no one ever read his lyrics. You, the reader, are what make Tower even possible. Within your hands are the hearts and souls of the youth, and these things are there because you made it so by buying this magazine and reading it. Always remember whenever you read over your favorite poem or story that you are the greatest inspiration for these aspiring artists. Art is meant to be seen by all. Poetry is meant to be read by all.

So congratulate the artists whose works appear in these pages, but also remember to congratulate yourself for supporting them through all their stumbling and mishaps. We, the staff and the artists, cannot thank you, the reader, enough for buying this edition of Tower.

I also want to thank the staff and our advisor for editing and producing this treasure for the reader.

Enjoy what you have in your hands, and continue to support the artists of this generation.

Paige Welch
Tower Editor and Treasurer

Cover: Icy Forest -- Justin Asari -- Digital Photography
Title page: Winter -- Morgan Jaquith -- Digital Photography

For next year's edition(s):

Submission forms are available in Room 415, the Publications Center

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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