



# TAHOMA WEST

– FICTION – NONFICTION – POETRY – VISUAL ARTS –

2017  
VOLUME 21





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2017  
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Tahoma West welcomes submissions from all UWT students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

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## 2016-2017

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# EDITOR'S NOTE

This was a year of summoning a stronger voice. Much like the editing process, we outgrew layer and layer, old versions, and transformed the original work with creativity. Words hold so much power. As seen in the various signs held up at protests, like the Women's March, that empowered us. New alliances formed out of a vision for inclusion. Many people pulled up their sleeves and got to work in our community. We changed how we wanted to shape our country. From protecting water rights to welcoming strangers' families and friends at airports. We witnessed bold action.

Granting our voices to keep American literature and art alive is a thankless craft but well worthwhile. The artistic action and expression valued so greatly is also treasured here in the Puget Sound. These local artists are not only Writing Studies majors, they graduate with countless degrees, from Social Work to IT. These pages are filled with the dedication of nontraditional students, staff, and faculty that each have a culture with enough ceremonies to live for generations.

Our team of editors worked hard to put together a book that would be a cohesive representation of the University of Washington Tacoma in 2017. Our University's 'Statement of Commitment to Diversity' speaks volumes as to what UWT represents. We approached the submission process with discernment. Creating this outlet for works of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and visual arts isn't a piece of cake but the results are as sweet. We hope you enjoy this edition of Tahoma West. We couldn't have done it without Elizabeth Hansen who we appreciate incredibly for being an advocate that was always there to lean on, JM Miller for creating rich experiences through artful teaching and sacred healing, Michael Kula for providing the insights that shaped us into writers with artistic endeavors, and of course our brilliant contributors. Many thanks!

Wishing all the best,  
Alexandria Nickerson  
Editor-in-Chief



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FANTASTICAL FOREST

*Long Tran*



# A MOMENT IS

## *Cassie Creley*

*Poetry*

---

A moment is a little  
dandelion seed  
drifting on its  
puff parachute.  
A poem is when you  
take the seed, let  
it rest in the crinkle  
of your hand, and  
whisper to it so  
it flies away, then grows  
into something bigger  
than it was when it began.



# LEARNING TO LOVE YOURSELF

*Jaclyn Schulte*

*Creative Non-Fiction*

---

The world is full of beauty. I have witnessed it with my own eyes.

Our car wandered down an unfamiliar winding path on the wrong side of the road. My eyes looked out the window, scanning the scenery, taking it all in. That is when I told my uncle to pull the car over. My aunt and cousin, the other two passengers in the car, seemed confused by my request. After all, we were in a foreign country in the middle of nowhere. Something told me to stop the car that day, almost as if I was beckoned by something greater. It was late September, the sky was the same gray as the abandoned stone castles we had passed on the way to our bed and breakfast. I had nowhere to be for the next two weeks except anywhere my soul led me.

I sat down to rest on a bed of emerald moss and lavender flowers that spilled over the edge of an Irish Cliffside. I stared into the vast Irish sea, feeling the sea spray my face and smelling the salt as massive waves crashed against the black polished stone below. I enjoyed watching the wind send ripples through the soft rolling hills of lush green grass. My hair billowed in the wind and I closed my eyes so all I could hear was the sound of the sea.

To be in the country where my ancestors came from and feel so connected to the land. That moment was beautiful. Through the course of my life I have come to realize that beauty is not just in the places we go but also in the people we meet.

In the 1800s being a larger woman was seen as desirable because it showed that you were well fed and therefore had a lot of money. It's funny how time changes standards.

What determines the parameters of beauty? Who has the authority to deem one thing as beautiful and another as not beautiful? The answers to these questions are not clear, yet we receive messages about beauty every day telling us what to believe. We see them in magazines, on television, on billboards. They whisper in our ears and say "skinny is beautiful." "You need to have perfect hair, perfect make-up, perfect teeth."

So many messages bombard us that this whispering becomes screaming. What they are all really saying is, “you’re not good enough.”

When I was a child, I would sit with my big sister as she put on makeup each morning before school. I would watch the careful way she smoothed her skin with foundation and powder. I always noticed how she would lean over the bathroom sink and get real close to the mirror. How she masterfully applied black eyeliner and mascara to make her blue eyes look both piercing and feminine. I remember she’d add bronzer to add definition to her cheeks and finish with pink lip gloss, her trademark. To me she was so pretty I wanted to be just like her with her honey colored hair and stylish outfits. I was only 10 years old, I still felt uncomfortable in my own skin, but I didn’t quite feel right putting make up on just yet either. To be honest, I think I was still trying to figure out exactly who I was.

In the 1920s, a short, thin, flat chested figure was the most desired. This was the era of flappers and women who rebelled against rules like the prohibition. They were considered more attractive than those who played by the rules.

Someone once told me that I light up when I talk about my passion for writing. They said when I describe what writing means to me, my story lines or characters, I come alive in a whole new way. I can describe places and people in such detail at times and with such feeling. Why is it hard to think of my own self this way? It is because I’ve forgotten how to love myself.

Dear self in the mirror,

Please don’t call me names anymore. How can you talk to me this way when you’re supposed to love me? It hurts to look at my reflection and hear you taking inventory of my flaws one by one. You rattle them off quickly because you have memorized my imperfections. I hear the insults in a continuous loop: double chin, chubby belly, love handles, fat thighs, stretch marks, fat arms, stubby legs, ugly hair, dull teeth, baby face, and it goes on and on. Can I make an observation? You wouldn’t dare saying such cruel things to your friends. Thoughts like that don’t even cross your mind about them. If you heard someone saying these things to them you’d be angry with their attacker. So why do the insults come so easily when you talk to me? Why do you look at me with such disgust? I don’t know how we got here. How did you grow to hate me so much? Why? I am a good person. I promise. I deserve and am worthy of your love. Please believe me.

By the 1950s, the more curves a woman had, the better. Women like Marilyn Monroe and Elizabeth Taylor were the most attractive women on television. People were encouraged to buy products that would make their figure fuller.

I sat in the nail salon the other day and realized for the first time that I have come to love the smell of the chemicals used there. They are very potent chemicals. In fact, if you aren't used to the smell, it may give you a headache. I say I have come to love it because it hasn't always been that way.

All I know is that it has something to do with the human brain being amazingly associative. I figured out that I associate the smell of chemicals in the nail salon with feeling beautiful because I feel beautiful after getting my nails done. Just like I associate the smell of exhaust with my dad's old pickup truck and fond memories of riding in the passenger seat to get ice cream with him from time to time.

By the 1980s body ideals had once again changed dramatically. In the 80s, the best look was the super model. This look meant that woman should be tall and thin like Elle McPherson. Men wanted women who had "legs for days" and a flat stomach.

I am starting to think that conforming to what others think is perfect, is impossible. Our idea of perfect is always changing. Take me for example, I am short, ideal for the 1920s, but curvy, ideal for the 1950s. There is no way that I would have been able to conform during the 80s to the super model look. My legs are not long for days. If I would have been the age I am now during that time, I am sure I would have felt even worse about my body image than I do today.

My sister never did see herself the same way that I saw her back then. She always surprised me when she looked in the mirror after all of that work and disappointedly said, "Oh well, good enough." The funny thing is that I knew the real Christa, the Christa without makeup, and I thought she was just as beautiful without it on. I knew that my sister's beauty was always present, but convincing her of that was a whole other story. She still does that. I guess the only bully we can't stand up to is ourselves. Now today, I often look at my reflection in the mirror as an adversary instead of an ally. But I'm working on it every day.

By 2010, the ideal body image became the skinny woman with a large booty. Prime examples being Kim Kardashian, Nikki Minaj and Jennifer Lopez. A large bust, small waist, and large backside are considered attractive.



No matter what the ideal seems to be at any certain time or another, I've come to the conclusion that there is no possible way for every woman to conform to every ideal. How are women supposed to keep up with such impossible standards? Yet we still subject ourselves to this unrealistic pressure and expectation. Why?

Dear self in the mirror,

I need to tell you something. I've tried asking you nicely to stop and it hasn't worked. It's time for me to start being brutally honest instead. You wear me down sometimes. All I ever hear from you are the negative things about myself and I am drained because of it. Do you know how exhausting it is to take criticism day in and day out with no rebuttal? I need you to start contributing positive thoughts instead of only negative ones. The bullying, the self-degradation, and all of the horrible things that you say about me, has got to stop. I'm sick and tired of being told by you that I need to lose weight or be prettier or smarter or more successful. It's time to call it like it is, you're a liar. You tell me that if I don't do all of those things then no one will love me but I know it's not the truth. Because of you I spend so much time putting myself together to please other people, when the real work I should be doing is trying to please myself. I need to learn to love me first before I try to make others love me. Frankly, I'm done taking your bullshit.

The woman in the nail salon used many tools to shave down, round out, and apply more acrylic to my nails. She was careful with her instruments, like an artist: smoothing, painting, and perfecting. She worked hard for a long time to make my nails look flawless. I studied her face as she worked. Her expression reflected both concentration and pain. You could see the sadness that had settled into the deeply set lines in her brow and corners of her mouth. Her hair was pulled back into a plain braid and a strand kept untucking itself from behind her ear and fell over her face. She would readjust it like a child trying to mind their manners. She didn't wear any makeup, and I noticed that her nails were not done.

Although we come from very different places we connect somehow in silence and art. It was a beautiful moment to reflect on our differences and similarities. I looked at her and thought to myself, she is so lovely. That realization spurred another thought. Maybe there is more than one kind of beautiful.

It was about this time that I started to unravel the idea that beauty comes in millions of forms. Beauty can be the flowers in your garden or a song that touched you deeply. Doing something out of the kindness of

your heart, as well as all different shapes, sizes, and colors of people too. Maybe we are so used to our own features that we don't appreciate them as a stranger would. I wonder what would happen if we all just stopped trying to conform and instead decided to be ourselves? Would we then finally see that beauty is not about having a pretty face and more about having a pretty mind, heart, and soul? When will we learn that happy girls are the prettiest girls?

I stand in front of my mirror again today, this time determined to see myself as I really am. It is night time, I have taken all of my makeup off and am in a plain white t-shirt and sweat pants. I stare at my reflection for a long time. I don't let any negativity leak in this time. I didn't place any expectations on myself and something happened in that quiet moment in front of the mirror. The voice in the mirror went silent. Even with all of my self-proclaimed imperfections I now know I am just the way God intended me to be: petite, curvy, blonde, with freckles sprinkled across the apples on my cheeks and the bridge of my nose. I am a person with kindness rooted deeply into her morals. I am acutely reflective and an inward thinker. I am an old soul who loves black and white movies and musician like Frank Sinatra and Ella Fitzgerald. I am not the cookie cutter image that I've tried so hard to conform to. I am a product of love. "I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

I blink my Irish green eyes a few times finally seeing myself through a new lens. I feel the pressure lifting off of me. I can breathe now. I am perfect just the way I am in this vulnerable moment and a thought crosses my mind once more. The world is full of beauty. I have witnessed it with my own eyes.



PIÑYA (PINEAPPLE)

*Karl Nathan Tolentino*



BALLET SLIPPERS

*Olivia Bidleman Carson*







# SEAHORSE

*Chris Pizzano*

*Poetry*

---

Currents

brought  
the diver  
into homerange, the horse  
captured among a kelp  
forest. Quiet equine  
asserting  
camouflage the color  
of yellow sea grass. Coronet  
bowed, once held high  
in a salty sea.  
Do you give  
the horse,  
its  
strength? \*  
comes to mind. Once  
amongst Indian Ocean  
coral,  
a castaway, soon  
ground  
into  
powder.

\*Job 39:19

# POINT DEFIANCE

*Jenny Miller*

*Poetry*

---

I walk alone  
beneath  
a  
mottled  
green  
sky.  
Finally  
I Can Breathe

The moss massaged trees

know not my name  
wee fungi spores  
dancing  
in  
my  
lungs  
know not  
what taunts

my tenderized

nerves

this sun pocked

Prozac bottle

wonderland,

Only waits

to sip

on my

80 proof stress

exhales

to cleanse

my grated soul

And replenish

my world heavy eyes

with Sound's brine breath.

# WATCHERS

*Marcela Martinez*

*Fiction*

---

Vicky pushed open the glass doors to the pristine Royal District's interrogations office, a far cry from the inner city's dungeon. Stepping up to the front desk she flashed her badge to the burly guard, a flat screen projecting the words: THE WATCHERS PROTECT YOU.

"He's in block A-9," the guard said after glancing over her badge. "You've got a real handful this time, Vic. This guy's a nut-job."

"Thanks, Charlie. I'll try to not get too excited."

Charlie flipped a switch and two reinforced steel doors slid open, leading Vicky into a similarly bright hallway with smaller steel doors lining the walls on both sides. Near the end of the hall a man and a guard stepped out of a room. As Vicky neared them, she saw the trails of sweat running down their foreheads.

"Johnny, what's going on?" she asked.

"Oh, you're here," he shook his head. "We can't get jack out of this guy. I don't know if he's got balls of steel or what—"

"Beating up the criminals doesn't always work, Johnny."

"We tried talking to him first! Asking questions, playing the whole good cop spiel but it was no go. Just kept refusing because we're, 'too stupid to understand,' Well, at that point I just figured screw it and started wailing on him."

"That you wouldn't understand what?"

"I don't know, whatever point he was trying to make I guess. But there's something about him that just seems...wrong. Like he's in on some cosmic joke that I'm just not getting."

"I'd better go in and talk with him," Vicky said.

Johnny stepped between her and the door. "Wait, Vic. I don't want you going in there by yourself. This guy is way out of whack."

"Who was the one who passed the combat exam at the academy with an A and not a C+?" Vicky smirked. "Certainly not Mr. Johnny Lowe. Keep the guard here in the hall if it makes you feel better."

"Bring up old wounds again why don't you," Johnny mumbled.



“Take five, tiger. You need them.”

As the door shut from behind her, all humor wiped itself clean from Vicky’s face. The room’s already tight space was made even more cramped with the inclusion of a metal table and two matching chairs. In one chair sat a young man, his face covered by hair and shadows as he looked down and wiped blood off from his nose. The other chair laid across the floor in one of the corners.

Vicky crossed the room and placed the chair back in its spot. She took a seat across from the man, letting him look at her before speaking.

“My name is Victoria Mendoza. What’s yours?”

The young man’s eyes narrowed. “You have my file, why are you asking my name?”

“Politeness. Call it a force of habit,” she shrugged.

His laugh began so quietly that Vicky almost thought he was choking on his blood. He finally lifted his head to address her, his face marred by bruises and cuts.

“Is that how you talk to all the crazy people around here?” he asked.

“Do you think you’re crazy?”

“Doesn’t matter what I think does it? Nothing matters here except I pulled a knife and got caught. End of story, right?”

“I want to know why you did it,” she said.

That made him pause. His expression changed from defiance to silent confusion. “My name is Evan Ryder.”

“Good, now we’re getting somewhere,” she said, pulling out the case file on Evan.

Scanning the brief biography, she found his date of birth. He wasn’t that much younger than her.”

You just had a birthday recently, how was that?”

“Why is my birthday of any importance?”

Vicky shut the file, giving him one of those looks of authority that her mother used to give her as a kid.

Evan shrugged. “I didn’t throw a party or anything. I was working that day.”

“No family then?”

“No. I don’t have any family.”

“How did you start working at that marketplace?”

“You know how I got that job. Same way that you got yours. Same way that everybody gets glued to their occupations for the rest of their lives.”

"I want you to tell me your side of the story."

Vicky got the impression that he must think she was the weirdest damn Watcher he'd ever come across.

"How about you tell me a little about yourself first? Since you want to get to know me so badly, it's only fair that I should get to know you too right?" He smiled.

Vicky raised a brow at his coyness but didn't argue his request.

"Go ahead."

"You don't seem like any of the cops I've met. Definitely not like that asshole who beat the shit out of me," Evan said as he gently rubbed the side of his face.

"You're somehow different from other cops."

"What makes you say that?" Vicky asked.

"I overheard your conversation. Sounded like you got a perfect rating compared to your partner. What the hell kind of criteria did you have to meet to get that score?"

"All it took was a little dedication and hard work, that's all."

"Sure it did. So from what I can tell you actually want to be in this job. That's interesting," Evan laughed.

The sound of papers shuffling against the metal table reflected the sigh Vicky kept inside.

"The criteria was just standard combat knowledge; hand-to-hand, how to handle a wide breadth of firearms, the basics. Now, I answered your question so you answer mine."

"You sure don't waste time," Evan gave a broken grin. "It was when I was sixteen. Normally they don't permanently employ minors but I was a special case, being that my parents were gone by then."

"They had the accident by then?"

Evan held up a hand to her.

"I'm afraid it's my turn again, Vicky."

This time she sighed, leaning back in her seat to give him the floor.

"Why did you become a cop in the first place?"

"You know the system just as well as I do. They deemed me fit for the job so I took it."

"Believe me, I know the system very well."

Vicky flipped a few pages of the file to find one with a photograph attached by a paper clip. The photo was of a switchblade knife, its handle made of a deep red wood with the letters M. R. carved at the bottom.

"Then why did you pull that knife on your coworker? Obviously you

knew you weren't getting away with it."

"I got the clerk job because they said I had a 'special talent for making people feel welcome,'" Evan chuckled. "But that was a load of crap because I never liked people even when I was a kid."

"These letters on the knife. Are they initials?" She flipped the file around and pushed it towards Evan. He nodded.

"My dad gave me that knife when I was about 11 years old. Called it a family heirloom."

Vicky turned the papers back towards her.

"You don't hear much about heirlooms these days."

"That's kind of sad. Your old man didn't leave you something special?"

"There wasn't any 'old man.'"

"Ah," Evan curled his fingers around his chin thoughtfully. "So it was just you and mom, was it?"

Vicky's jaw tightened only a fraction.

"The parental figures of my life, absent or otherwise, aren't really important here are they? I'm only here to represent the law."

"The law is fucked. I know it, I know you know it. I bet the dead pieces wrapped in plastic knew it while I was selling them to those Superiors."

His voice carried with it the thickness of acidity, nearly spitting out the last word with pure abhorrence.

"Is this why you attacked your coworker in a Royal District market? You're just another one of those delinquent anarchists?"

She was certain he would have taken great offense to her comment, but surprisingly the anger in his features almost washed away completely with the resurgence of that crooked smile.

"I like to think I at least have some level of tact."

"Could've fooled me. My partner caught you before you had time to escape," she said.

"I didn't try to escape or hide. I knew I would have been found eventually. I have to hand it to your guy though, faster with his fists than his brain, but he sure got there pretty quick."

Vicky decided not to acknowledge that quip.

"Well, if you say you have more tact than an average anarchist, what was your real reason for causing that disturbance?"

"Before I get to that, can I get an ice pack or something for my face? It's starting to hurt like a real fucker right now."

Vicky went to the door to tell the guard and in moments returned with a frozen thermal pack. Handing it to him, Evan held it tenderly to the red swells now turning a deep purple. She couldn't help but feel the slightest bit of pity for Evan. Johnny beating up the kid that bad was going on overzealous.

A few seconds of silence passed. Evan's gentle patting of the pack against his broken face becoming absentmindedly repetitive as his eyes stared vacantly at a spot on the floor.

"You know, I just got the beating of a lifetime yet it's actually not the worst pain I've ever felt."

Vicky's brow furrowed at the emptiness in his tone.

"The reason I attacked the guy I've worked with for almost a year, the reason I couldn't fucking take it anymore, why I refused to spend another eight hours shelving yarns of hair and packets of minced leg meat, was because of that knife. Because of my father and my mother."

"What was it?" Vicky almost whispered but kept her voice steady.

"It was around the same time when I was given that knife. It was during one of those riots when the Superiors were starting to come into power. The streets were so crowded and reeked of the sweat and blood of protestors and Watchers fighting; many times killing each other. My parents only brought me there to show me how unjust the Superiors are, for wanting us to be nothing but cattle and slaves. They were part of the rebel group against the Superiors, planning on taking them all down with whatever means necessary. I grew up watching them strategize in secret of plans to kill the Superiors. During those years I didn't know of whom I needed to be more afraid of, the Superiors or my own parents. Until the day of that riot at the Centre of the Angels eleven years ago."

Vicky's spine became rigid as stone. It took all of her will not to make a sound of complete shock.

"I was pressed between the side of a car and my mother's body shielding me from gunfire overhead," Evan continued. "My dad and a few other rebels were trying to hold their own against a group of cops. One by one, they were killing us off. David, Amber, Lily, all of these people like my parents being killed in front of me. Then out of the corner of my eye I saw him standing there on a street corner. I remember it so clearly because somehow that corner was empty except for him. A thing that seemed so human but there was nothing human about it. That was when I knew what I should have been afraid of, what I've been afraid of nearly all my life until now. In that instant my mom saw him too then

she whispered to me, 'Run.' It was like I heard it through somebody else's ears, but my body moved for me. The car exploded behind me and threw me—how far did it throw me? God, it must've thrown me across the world. Everybody was screaming and running without knowing where to go. I could have easily died there trampled on the pavement if she hadn't picked me up. A girl I'd never met before saved me that day."

Lifting his gaze to meet hers, Evan's expression darkened. The hollows of his cheeks and circles under his eyes became more prominent, making him look years ahead of his time.

Vicky's mind flatlined, though her face remained stoic. Staring blankly down at the case file, she shuffled through the pages again.

"You remember don't you?" Evan spoke low but firm.

His cuffed hands pressing onto the table, the thermal pack forgotten now.

"You were there at the riot that day, you lifted me up from the ground and took me to the nearest hospital. You told me your name that day and asked me mine. I'm very good at remembering names," he ended with a humorless smirk.

She folded her hands together atop the table.

"I'm afraid I'd have to charge you with impersonation of another person's identity as well," Vicky said, "there is no information in your file that states your parents died from an explosion. It says they died in an automobile accident. A crash. Not an explosion."

Evan burst out in sudden, burning anger.

"Don't you see? They hide everything from you! It doesn't matter if you're a Watcher taking orders directly from the Superiors, they don't trust you or any of us!"

"I'm afraid I'm going to ask you to keep your voice down, Evan," Vicky said coldly.

He complied, sinking further into his seat with veiled composure.

"I'm telling the truth. I know it was you who saved me that day. 'Vicky Mendoza,' that's what you told me your name was."

"Say that I do believe you, what then? That doesn't change the fact that I'm a law enforcer now and you're a criminal. What happened in the past doesn't matter anymore."

"My mom used to say the past can change everything," Evan said. "Why were you there that day? Where was your mother?"

"She was on duty," was Vicky's stern reply.

"So a cop too, huh? Funny coincidence."

The two of them stared at each other intently. The white light of the room slowly burned behind Vicky's unblinking eyes, causing darkness to creep around the edges of her vision and casting Evan's silhouette in dim shadow. His mother believed that past events had an effect on the present. Vicky's mother always told her never to believe in coincidences.

Evan broke the silence. "If your mom was a Watcher too, then I don't think she would have been too keen on you being at a riot."

"She didn't know," Vicky said as she turned away. "I never told her."

"Because you believed in the rebels, didn't you?"

Her head snapped towards him.

"I can see that you're not like the others. I could see it then at the Centre of the Angels and I can see it even now, when we're on different ends of the spectrum. But that spectrum is just where they place us to divide us, from each other. It doesn't exist if you don't let it. The power they hold over us, it's all fake. I know you understand what I'm talking about. They hide everything from us, Vicky, while they use us as their playthings. My parents saw it and fought to have others understand, but people are too comfortable in their ignorance to just see what's right in front of them."

"Evan, what you are saying is liable to get you locked in prison for a very, very long time. And if it is true, if your parents really were killed while defending you and what they believed in, then you're a fool for squandering the freedom they allowed you to keep."

Vicky was nearing her breaking point, every word she spoke only tightened around her chest like rope.

"None of us are free," Evan said as he burst from his pent up rage and shot up from his seat, "giving me a job, letting me live as a 'citizen' was just a part of their plan. They kept constant watch on me, just like they do with you. With all of us."

"Sit down, Evan," Vicky said.

He didn't listen.

"They don't trust us. They're afraid of us. As long as we're not on their dinner plates or hanging up on their walls, purchasable from plastic containers at stores, they don't know what we're truly capable of. They like to think of themselves as all-seeing gods, but they're not. That's why they need people like you, Vicky. You're their eyes in this city. As much as they treat you like you're expendable, they need you. But if you let them see only what you want them to see, you have the power."

Now Vicky stood.



"You know, I'm trying hard, Evan. I really am. But you're making it increasingly difficult for me to not think that you're utterly insane."

"I'm not crazy and you know it, I can tell. You're not like any of the other ignorants out there, Vicky. You see it too, the way they treat us like cattle even while they need us. We can change everything if you could just help me. We could help everybody."

Evan paused to take a steadying breath. The eyes that looked right into Vicky's held in them a desperation that she hadn't seen since that day she sat next to a young boy in a hospital waiting room.

"That's why I let myself get caught today, I needed to find you. I've heard about you on the news, all the work you had done. And I immediately recognized you. So I committed that crime today so that we could meet again and so I could tell you the truth. Because I knew you were the only one who would understand."

Vicky found that her resolve had shattered into splinters. She turned away from Evan.

"My time is up, Mr. Ryder," she said and slapped the file shut.

Evan remained motionless even as she stepped towards the door.

The last words he spoke to her came as only a whisper, "It will be if you keep playing their game."

Without another look back, Vicky left the interrogation room and met with Johnny's expectant gaze on the other side.

"Vic, what happened? You look like death," Johnny said.

"Nothing," she quickly turned down the hall. "I have to go."

"Vicky, wait! What did he tell you?"

She broke into a near run until reaching outside the interrogations office, a burning sweat on her face meeting with the crisp chill of the night. Footsteps caught up behind her.

"Vicky, seriously, what's wrong with you? I've never seen you so shaken up."

Vicky stayed quiet for a long moment as her quick breaths became slow and steady. A wind loosened some of the strands of her ponytail.

"Do you ever think that what we're doing is all worthless?"

"What?" Johnny asked.

"They're using you, they're just using you."

Evan's words played back in her head in rapid succession, making her wince in the wake of another headache.

"Never mind," she played it off with a small laugh. "Just a migraine again, I'm fine. See you at the station tomorrow."

With that, Vicky walked the short distance from the offices to her car, leaving Johnny behind in the cold.

Driving through the streets of the Royal District always gave Vicky the sickening feeling of vertigo. The neon lights and glowing advertisements swirling together across her field of vision almost blinded her. A red light signaled a moment's rest from her nausea, which she gladly accepted with a heavy sigh.

All the events of just a couple of hours ago weighed heavy making her neck and head ache, as if the ponytail at her nape was tightening to rigid tautness; a horse a slave to its reigns. Vicky brought a hand up to massage her forehead then slowly felt a quiet gnawing overcome her. She was being watched.

The sensation was more akin to the weightiness of dread, heavy with familiarity. Through the sea of passerby outside of the side window, she located the eyes of a man burning right into her.

Those eyes. The eyes that Evan saw before the place where he stood burst in flames.

Suddenly she felt like she was seeing the man through Evan's eyes, into that pallid shade of nothingness. An empty pit yet much worse. Instead of falling through the heaviness of the dark, those eyes made her plummet into feather light emptiness. The man shifted against the wall of the cafe he was leaning against and Vicky found herself shifting with him from the driver's seat. Did he know what she was thinking? Would he inform the Superior? The only coherent thought going through Vicky's mind was the image of him igniting her car with roaring flames.

Then he turned on his heel, blending into the surrounding crowd and vanishing.

Vicky snapped back to the road, the light turning green at just that instant. Her body switched to autopilot, her foot on the gas pedal blurring the lights into a never ending splotch of anxious color.

They're afraid of us. They like to think of themselves as all-seeing gods, but they're not.

Back in the grey darkness of her cramped office, Vicky shed off her blazer and tossed it aside without paying attention as to where. Sitting in the center of her desk was her laptop, the blink of a cold blue light on the corner indicating an incoming video call.

The Watcher's Superior Enforcer would have been informed by now that Vicky had gone to the interrogations office like he had instructed her earlier that evening. Now he wanted all of the details that she had

gathered so that he and the Superior Justices can decide what to do with the criminal, Evan Ryder.

Vicky sat in her desk chair and opened the laptop screen, the call blinking with the ID name: Superior Enforcer. The ringing was so distant it may as well have been just the quiet roar of her pulse in her ears.

Only let them see what you want them to see. You have the power.

She remembered a conversation she had with her mother the day before the Centre of the Angels riot, before her mother was killed during one of the many shootings.

She had said to a fourteen year old Vicky, "In this cruel time we live in, you can't believe in coincidences. If something happens, that's because it was meant to. Even if it means it's you against the whole world."

Vicky reached back to the tie at the nape of her neck, pulling it off so that her hair fell across her shoulders in waves of black.

"I have the power," she said into the empty room.

Closing the laptop, she cut off the only source of light so there was nothing but darkness.

# INTERSTELLAR: THE SPACE BETWEEN

*Jessica Foust*

*Creative Non-Fiction*

---

When a star runs out of fuel, it dies and swells into a red sphere, expanding and engulfing everything within its solar system. After it sheds its outer layers, the only thing left behind is its core. This core, a white dwarf, may suffer two different fates; it can either fade and radiate all its energy away or it can steal matter from its companion star. When the white dwarf acquires too much matter from its companion, it explodes, creating a supernova. The supernova is so bright, so brilliant, and so striking, that, on occasion, it can be seen from Earth.

My dad went into retirement when I was born. He hung up his cigarette stained Les Paul guitar, cut his hair, and bought a house. But good ol' Rock n' Roll was far from dead: it scratched on a turntable, was danced to in the living room, and read like the bible. He adored me and his guitar Gods.

"They're geniuses," he would often say. "And you're my baby."

But Janis Joplin died of an accidental heroin overdose, Hendrix choked on his own vomit after taking too many barbiturates, and Keith Moon swallowed a handful of prescription pills that disabled his esophagus. I often wondered how a genius could do anything like that.

During long car rides that we often took to the Oregon Coast or the countryside, my dad would choose a CD and turn up the volume so loud we couldn't speak and tell me to just listen so I did. I learned most things about my dad this way. I learned most things about people in general this way. So I listened.

Naturally, I developed a similar love for electric guitars and men who could create music and words to match out of nothing. I spoke of them as if they were timeless philosophers or decedents of Shakespeare, the same way my dad did.

"Long live Jesse Lacey," I would think.

The poet of my generation. A master crafter of words. The frontman of my favorite band. In that order. If I ever questioned anything, he could find a solution as long as I just listened.

I was young the first time I fell in love. Completely certain I had met one of them: the men I thought had the answers to the universe. I carried my heart, now three times its original size, around with me. He assured me his had grown too, and together we became stronger as we lugged around our swollen organs. We were completely vulnerable carrying these pieces around exposed, but knew we couldn't live without them. Because, after all, your heart is as necessary as hydrogen is to stars.

Oh, and he played guitar and wrote his own songs. And me? I was his muse. His vessel into another time and place.

Humans and earth exist in the Milky Way galaxy, one of the millions of galaxies in the solar system. We co-exist among a large combination of stars, gas, dust, and dark matter bonded together by gravity. Galaxies can take the shape of grainy orbs or contorted particles swirled perfectly unperfected. They can be tentacle like or completely symmetrical. They can be both dazzling and frightening.

Zelda Sayre met a man named F. Scott Fitzgerald who could do similar things with words, as galaxies can do to onlookers. She eventually became Mrs. F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Fitzgerald said of Zelda, "I love her, and that's the beginning and end of everything." What he said of me could have been a bestseller, too.

The first time I went 24 hours without a meal I walked with a victory march. Emptiness gurgled inside my gut, boiling over, making my throat hot. I had fooled my friends and parents by assuring them I had already eaten and that I was not weak with the pangs of hunger. When I went 48 hours without so much as a bite I grew weaker still, but managed to keep going until my body failed.

When stars lose fuel, they explode. When people lose fuel, they collapse.

My very own lyrical genius had to pick me off the cold laminate flooring where I had slid after slumping against the wall.

Over a million living organisms exist on earth. Surviving, prevailing, enduring. NASA spends its funds searching the sky for life on other planets, sending our very own to explore. While nothing has turned up at this point, many still fear what truth they may uncover. The uncertainty of the unknown compels humans to be ignorantly blissful.

My poet and I would sit on old wood benches beneath pine trees with a beautiful acoustic guitar on his lap and words spilling from his mouth. I would hum along, soak in each line, and knew for certain that every word was for me. He assured me Jay Gatsby's gestures to win over



Daisy were juvenile compared to what he had in store for me. No wonder he sang for me as loud as he could in public places.

We sat in an empty field during an Oregon spring. The grass was soft and warm beneath our bare legs. We laughed and talked about future plans, which included his intentions to share his music across the country with me as his travel companion. He assured me that he would immortalize me in his songs.

Fitzgerald wrote, "I wish I had done everything on earth with you," but that was trivial compared to doing everything in the galaxy with him. We could live forever in places where time moves differently.

At one point he stopped and told me to shut my eyes. He helped me up and I blindly followed his lead as he sat me down again on a new patch of grass. He wrapped his arms around my waist and told me to open my eyes. I was suddenly staring at a view of the sunset I could not see before.

"I just wanted you to see something that took your breath away like you do mine," he said.

Eventually our bodies grew weary from wearing our hearts on our sleeves. It was nearly midnight and I waited for him to call with my face pressed against my mattress and my phone lying next to me. I fought sleep and ignored the agony forming in the pit of my stomach from going too many hours without a meal and too many days without hearing his voice. They tended to go hand in hand.

Finally, the phone rang. I clung to every sentence as I always do with boys who strum guitars and sing their own words.

"Why didn't you call earlier?" I asked.

He read, as if he had written in perfectly crafted stanzas, the pieces of me he could no longer endure. He described in detail how the sound of my voice was now not a part of his artistic vision and how the touch of my skin was no longer a force of nature.

The study of metaphysics is a branch of philosophy that considers existence. We know that various species populate our planet and that we are alive by all intensive purposes. These things can be measured, classified, and documented. But what happens during? What happens after? How did it start? What occurs in between? Aristotle warned young philosophers that first they must understand the natural world before attempting metaphysics, for it could not be so easily calculated and categorized.

We met for a ride in his muscle car. He enjoyed revving the engine and speeding down back roads. He said he just liked to see me smile.

We would turn up the radio and just listen together. When I slid into the front seat he handed me a folded piece of paper and once opened, I saw my name in his carefully crafted handwriting.

“Right over my heart,” he said, pointing to the spot on his chest where he wanted it etched into his skin.

He explained that sometimes he felt like Dante, journeying through the nine circles of Hell. Currently, he was in circle two, contemplating how to distinguish between love and lust for they felt an awful lot alike.

Want and need were also suddenly blurred. How unfortunate for me, because I depended on him like plants do sunlight.

Organisms each have their own life cycles. Sometimes the process is slow and sometimes it ends prematurely. Environmental conditions and surroundings affect this system as does genetic mutations. Humans’ life cycles are relatively simple: we start as a fertilized egg, and then fetus, then infant, then adult, and usually reproduce to continue the process. They, we, and us, consume, dominate, love, are born and then die. Our biological goals are simply to survive.

Animals have defense mechanisms that allow them to survive. Bees sting their enemies, sea cucumbers morph from solids to liquids in order to escape dangerous situations, and grizzly bears have incredible strength and agility.

Jesse said to that:

*If it makes you less sad*

*I'll start talking again*

*You can tell me how vile,*

*I already know that I am.*

Instead of fighting the jury like Socrates did in The Apology, I hated myself first, before he had the chance. When words failed him, I inspired more, as I’ve always done. I would raise my hands and let him fire away, already braced for impact. Our starship crashed and burned often.

Somehow, I managed to function by consuming coffee as if it was oxygen. It subdued the cravings for solid food and allowed me to stay awake.

When he decided I was no longer qualified to contemplate over, which happened like clockwork, I took charge. I knew that I didn’t deserve the comfort of such a basic human function. In fact, hunger was the one thing I could control. More importantly, it was something to mask the sharp slice of his words as they escaped his lips. The same lips that once compared me to otherworldly phenomena.

I can take a punch easier than I can take his rejection.

Jesse sang:

*It's cold as a tomb,*

*And dark in your room*

*When I sneak to your bed*

*To pour salt in your wounds.*

Once the pain of hunger no longer hurt enough, I resorted to drawing blood on my own skin. I wore long-sleeves everyday that spring.

Janis suddenly seemed to make a lot more sense.

My parents begged me to leave, but I couldn't bear the thought of saying farewell to my gatekeeper of words when my convictions relied on his lyrics and the notes from his guitar. They promised this was not the way and that in time I could move on. However, they were unaware that I, like Zelda, didn't want to live but rather, "want to love first, and live incidentally."

I was somehow the exception to biology. Surviving was a secondary objective.

Even Jesse said:

*Glad that you can forgive,*

*but only hoping as time goes,*

*you can forget.*

But how could I pretend that we had not floated through the ceiling and sailed through the galaxy together? We were extraterrestrials, condemned to a life of misconception and exile. Earthlings would never understand how his words existed for me and I existed for his words. How could I forget the conquering of planets as we fought for a place to call our own? We vanquished celestial creatures and dodged asteroids. And sometimes we stood in front of those asteroids, instead.

*A crown of gold*

*A heart that's harder than stone*

*And it hurts a whole lot*

*But it's missed when it's gone.*

We traveled at light speed, narrowly avoiding black holes that beckoned us forth no matter how appealing jumping into them would be. To feel darkness cover every inch of our skin and take us. But, everyday was not a grand adventure. Because even if the moon was really made out of cheese, I wouldn't have eaten it anyways.

Zelda died locked in a psychiatric hospital awaiting electric shock therapy. A fire broke out and engulfed her once full of life body, reducing

it to nothing but ashes.

I awoke, sitting straight up with my eyes open wide. Without hesitation, I dialed his phone number and put the receiver to my ear. I locked away the existence of us and sent it off to another dimension. I knew we could no longer collect from each other in the same place, so we endured in a parallel universe. We now lived, no longer as a binary, on the same earth. We continued to simply survive, as all organisms aim to do, pretending that we had not traveled through time and space together. I told him farewell before the supernova could destroy everything we had touched.

What people don't tell you about dying stars is that after they explode they can distribute debris throughout the universe. Many of the elements found on Earth are made from the core of stars. New life begins with death, and so on. But don't take it from poets when they say we are made of stardust. If you stop listening and start looking, you will see it for yourself.

# BLOOMING

*Tori Roozekrans*

*Poetry*

---

Strangers on the fractured sidewalk  
slow to check on the progress of  
my budded flower,  
bruise purple,  
swaddled intimately around itself.  
Waiting to see if today  
it will burst open like an  
overripe melon of acceptance.  
They whisper to it as they walk.  
“someday, someday.”  
“maybe you just need  
another flower  
to coax you out  
of your cocoon.”  
“I can peel back your  
petals and make you  
look oh so pretty.”

The silent judgement  
of shadows on the pavement  
entreating,  
demanding,  
requiring,  
my solitary flower to contort  
itself to their expectations  
of its worth.  
They hold no value  
in the sage leaves erupting  
around it like a summer storm,  
or the roots which have  
made a war-zone of the  
concrete beneath their soles.  
If they knew the blossom  
would never bloom,  
would they still admire it  
for these subtle beauties?



# MOUNT RAINIER

## *Jaclyn Schulte*

*Poetry*

---

White wintry summit peeking through a veil of ice crystals  
greeting the new dawn.

A champagne colored jewel rises in the atmosphere  
and winks back.

Rivers and trails wind down and around her sides  
like veins creating road maps to the people.  
Life is abundant in her forests.

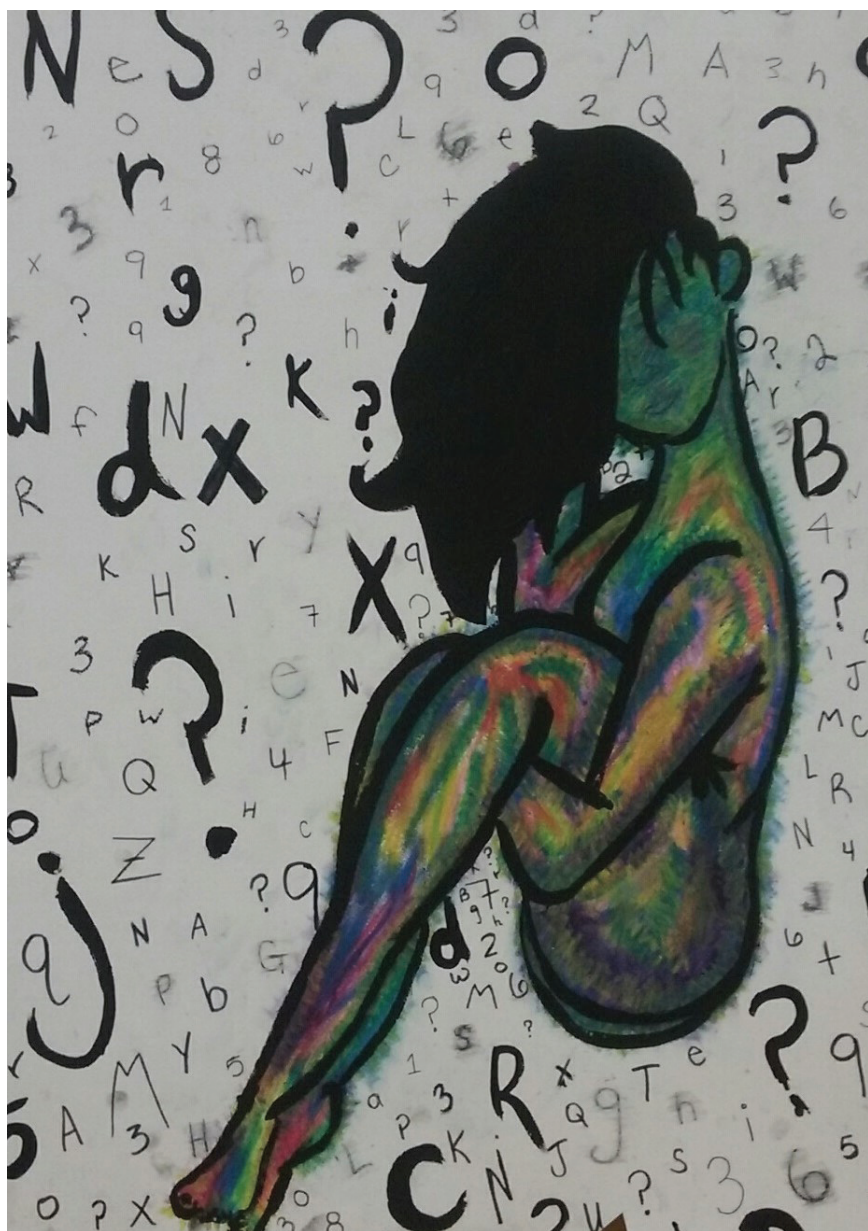
Down at the foot of this monument  
olive colored clovers run rampant  
periwinkle Harebell, blush Rosy Spirea, and ivory Thimbleberry  
wildflowers bloom and multiply endlessly  
sprawling in all directions.

Her glaciers glow  
an ambient light blue hue.  
The only sound for miles is the wind  
hushing the restless mountain to sleep.

She knows what the people choose to ignore.  
With each new day temperatures rise  
and the glaciers cry and the land grows dry.  
Deep inside of her core  
her blood boils anxiously.

Yet,  
she continues to give  
so much of herself.  
500,000 years of beauty and glory.

I stand at the trailhead of the volcano,  
walking stick in hand  
and pause to give back  
the admiration she deserves.  
One should be humbled in her presence,  
for she is wiser than I.





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REBEL HEART *Olivia Bidleman Carson*

# GOING BACK

*Kelsie Abram*

*Fiction (Play)*

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## CHARACTERS

MASON A man in his mid-20's. He is trapped by the line that holds him and his ex-girlfriend, ADELINE.

ADELINE A woman in her mid-20's. She is MASON's ex-girlfriend who has sought him out for reconciliation.

CHLOE A woman in her mid-20's. She is upbeat and blissfully unaware of the history between ADELINE and MASON.

## SETTING

*A busy suburban coffee shop. A makeshift counter is near the center of the stage. The line to order is excruciatingly long. A small buzz flows around the room due to idle chatter.*

## TIME

*A Saturday morning in fall.*

## SCENE 1

### AT RISE

*(Lights up on MASON and CHLOE standing far back in line to order coffee. MASON and CHLOE study the menu above, trying to decide what to order.)*

### MASON

Know what you want, hun?

CHLOE

Probably just my usual. I'm gonna run to the bathroom really quick.

MASON

Well, you have more than enough time.

CHLOE

Ha! I'll be right back.

*(Kisses MASON on the cheek. Leaves stage right.)*

ADELINE

*(Enters stage left with a bag over her shoulder. SHE looks around the shop, spots MASON, and walks towards him.)*

Mason?

MASON

Adeline?

ADELINE

In the flesh.

MASON

What, did your espresso machine break? [Beat.] I thought you hated this coffee shop?

ADELINE

Yeah ... but you don't. I kind of hoped I'd find you here. You haven't exactly been answering my calls, so....

MASON

I wonder why that is.

ADELINE

I was hoping we could talk about...things.



MASON

There really isn't anything to talk about.

*(MASON turns around and moves up in line.)*

ADELINE

Mason, I made a mistake.

MASON

You're just realizing that now?

ADELINE

Look, I know I messed up, okay?

MASON

Messed up would be an understatement.

ADELINE

Can you just listen to me for one fucking second?

*(Looks at the person standing in front of MASON.)*

What are you looking at?

MASON

God, Adeline. Calm down.

ADELINE

I can't. I'm a wreck without you. I can't sleep, I can't eat. I barely even have the will to put my makeup on in the morning.

MASON

Give me a break.

ADELINE

It's the truth!

MASON

It doesn't matter. You can't take back what you did.

*(MASON and ADELINE move up in line.)*

ADELINE

Why can't we just forget it ever happened? Move on and be happy again? Be in love again?

MASON

I can't just forget what happened.

*(MASON whispers.)*

Adeline, you slept with my boss.

ADELINE

And it meant nothing. It was one time. One stupid, stupid time.

MASON

You know, I can still picture walking in on the middle of ... it. You didn't even notice me. [Beat.] Too preoccupied, I assume.

ADELINE

That's enough.

MASON

I probably stood there in our doorway for a good minute or two. I don't even know why I didn't say anything. [Beat.] I guess I was in shock. Especially once I realized it was Brody on top of you.

ADELINE

Mason!

MASON

I just don't understand why you had to fuck him in our bed.

ADELINE

People can hear you! We are not talking about this here.

MASON

Well, we're not talking about it anywhere else. [Beat.] I have nothing to say to you.

*(MASON and ADELINE move up in line.)*

ADELINE

Please, Mase. Just hear me out.

MASON

What did you think was gonna happen here, Adeline? We get back together just like that? I've moved on.

ADELINE

You can't say that you don't miss me. That you don't think about me.

MASON

I –

ADELINE

I know you aren't over me. Jack said you ask about me.

MASON

So I could avoid run-in's like this! I'm seeing someone else, Adeline. And I never wanted you and her to meet.

ADELINE

Ashamed of your past?

MASON

Ashamed of my past? No. Ashamed of you? For damn sure.

ADELINE

Whoever she is, she can't give you what you need. Not like I did. Not like I can.

MASON

She's great, actually. Much better ... Hell, one thousand times better than you.

ADELINE

*(Looks at the person in front of MASON again.)*

Why don't you take a frickin picture? It'll last longer!

MASON

Adeline, you should go.

ADELINE

What if we went to counseling! Talked it out with a non-objective third party!

MASON

I am so not going to counseling.

*(MASON and ADELINE move up in line.)*

ADELINE

Why?!

MASON

Because I don't want to tell some stranger all my secrets!

ADELINE

God, that's not what counseling is!

MASON

It doesn't matter. That's not the point, anyway.

ADELINE

No, the point is that we need to work on this. On us. Get back to the good times.

MASON

What good times?

ADELINE

The Christmas morning we went to your parents?

MASON

What about it?

ADELINE

Remember the locket you gave me?

MASON

Vaguely.

ADELINE

Well, I remember it like it was yesterday. It was wrapped in that beautiful Tiffany blue paper. I looked over at you, and you had this glint in your eye. You looked at me with such awe. I pulled it out of the box and just stared at it. All silver and shiny and perfect. You fastened it around my neck ... and you whispered that you loved me for the first time.

MASON

Adeline, that was such a long time ago. Way before everything happened.

ADELINE

It doesn't feel that long ago to me ...

*(ADELINE reaches under her shirt to pull out the locket, making it visible to MASON.)*

I never take it off.

MASON

Adeline ...

ADELINE

*(Moves closer to MASON, touching him on the arm.)*

We can get back to those good times, Mase. Have those good times again. I know it.

MASON

I –

ADELINE

Buy that old house on Hickory Lane, fix it up like you wanted to and move back in together. [Beat.] We'll wake up in your creaky bed, me in nothing but your old flannel. Watch those Frank Sinatra movies you like, warm up by the fire.

*(Grabs MASON'S hand and puts it on top of the locket on her chest.)*

You can learn to love me again.

MASON

*(MASON leans into ADELINE'S touch. THEY stare at each other for a long while.)*

ADELINE

What if we go back to my place? Catch up and-

MASON

No ... no I can't do this.

ADELINE

Mason ...



MASON

*(Reaches the front of the line.)*

Finally! Can I get a

ADELINE

A 20 oz. 4 shot caramel macchiato, please.

MASON

Actually, I'll get two 16 oz. Americano's, black.

*(Puts a ten-dollar bill on the counter and walks away to wait.)*

ADELINE

What, you changed your drink?

MASON

Chloe's got me on a diet. We're running a marathon together soon.

ADELINE

You, running a marathon?

MASON

Yes, me. I took up running a while ago. It's a great stress reliever.

ADELINE

Wait, did you order two drinks?

MASON

Yes.

ADELINE

What, are you meeting your new "girlfriend" after this?

MASON

She's already here.

ADELINE

What? Where?

MASON

In the bathroom. Line must've been long.

ADELINE

And you're just now telling me this?

MASON

I told you to go. You chose to stay.

ADELINE

A second ago, I thought you were gonna go with me.

MASON

Not a chance.

ADELINE

Oh, give up the act. You were putty in my hands.

MASON

Adeline, I'm with Chloe and you're just going to have to accept that.

ADELINE

I'll never accept that! We belong together and you know it. If I had never cheated.

MASON

But you did.

ADELINE

Right ... I just hate to think that's the only reason we're not together.

MASON

In all honesty, that probably is the only reason we're not still together.

CASHIER

*[Voice from off stage.]*

Two 16 oz. black Americano's!

MASON

*(Looks towards voice, but doesn't leave his spot.)*

You know, before all of that happened, I was actually contemplating proposing.

ADELINE

You were?

MASON

Well, we had that trip planned to the coast, and I knew you wanted a beach proposal. I went to a ring shop and everything. Had one on reserve. [Beat.] I don't know why I'm telling you all of this ... You were a big part of my life, Adeline. I can admit that. But you really hurt me. If you wanna talk about not eating and sleeping, you should've seen me the first couple weeks after I walked out. I don't think I'd ever cried that much in my life.

ADELINE

I'm sorry.

MASON

I know.

ADELINE

Beat.] Alright, how about this? Tell me that you no longer love me, and I'll walk away. I won't bother you ever again. I won't even step foot in this coffee shop. But you have to look me in the eye and say it.

MASON

*(Long pause.)*

I don't love you anymore.

ADELINE

*(Nods.)*

CHLOE

*(Enters stage right.)*

You got the coffee! Sorry, that line for the bathroom was ridiculous. And who is this?

MASON

Chloe, this is... an old friend.

CHLOE

*(CHLOE puts out a hand to shake ADELINE'S.)*

Oh, I've been wanting to meet more of Mason's friends!  
What was your name, again?

ADELINE

*(Shakes CHLOE's hand while looking at MASON.)*

Adeline.

CHLOE

It's nice to meet you, Adeline.

ADELINE

Yeah, you too. I should...uhm...get going. [Beat.] Goodbye, Mason.

*(Exits stage left.)*

MASON

Goodbye, Adeline...

*(Walks over to the counter and picks up the two Americano's.)*

CHLOE

C'mon, baby! We're gonna be late for breakfast at your parent's.

MASON

*(MASON hands CHLOE her americano. HE puts an arm around CHLOE and begins walking towards stage right.)*

CHLOE

So, how did you know that girl again?

*(Lights go out.)*

***END OF SCENE***



HOURLY PARKING IN COLOMBIA *Jenny Millr*





UW TACOMA AUTUMN TIME     *Meiling Sproger*







# THE STARS

*Kelsie Abram*

*Fiction*

---

Lilith was only ten when she first heard about the beauty of the Old World. Her father had pages about it hidden under his chair. Apparently, the Old World was amazing and beautiful and everything you could imagine. Nothing like the place they live now.

Eight years passed, and Lilith still tugged out her father's pages every day. Dreaming of a place she so desperately wanted to be. The best part of the pages were the stars. They were brighter than anything she had ever seen. They emulated real light. Her pages spoke of a Milky Way, and constellations like Orion's Belt and The Big Dipper. But her favorite of all was Cassiopeia. All zig-zagged and unique.

But Lilith would never see those stars or stand on the lush green grass captured on her father's pages, because venturing to the Old World was forbidden. No one from Stonehollow had traveled there and no one ever would.

Besides Lilith, her father, and her boyfriend Will, no one else in Stonehollow knew of the wonders the Old World held.

Told at an early age of the Old World's inability to sustain life, the people of Stonehollow felt much safer in the steel box they and their ancestors had lived in for over five centuries.

Lilith's teachers all told her the same thing; the Old World was destroyed by The Great Fire. Apparently, it quickly engulfed millions in its orange flame, allowing only fifty people to survive. With burnt flesh and blackened hair, the first fifty found Stonehollow inside a mountain. She knew what a mountain was because of her father's pages. They were magnificent, yet sadly a foreign concept to the rest of Stonehollow's population.

She opened the grey stone door of her room, shutting it quietly behind her. She dragged her toes across the red velvety carpet of the hallway, not wanting to disturb her neighbors. With it being 3 a.m. and the hall lights already shut off for the night, she had to rely on her memory to make it to William's room. His family was located on the

other side of Stonehollow in a room much smaller than hers. William's father was a part of the Custodial Unit, while Lilith's father was head of the Engineer Department. The bigger the job, the bigger the room.

"William?" whispered Lilith as she tapped her pinky finger on the door.

The door opened to William's crooked smile. It was obvious he had been sleeping, his hair unruly and his eyes still adjusting to Lilith's.

"Lil, what're you doing here?" he replied.

She grabbed his hand and pulled him out the door, leading him to the lift down the hall.

"We're going to watch the stars."

William allowed Lilith to drag him along, hitting the Level 1 button while stepping into the lift. As they rode down, Lilith thought about how they hadn't traveled down there since the incident.

"Lil, what if someone sees us? You normally never want to go this late into the night."

The lift doors opened and Lilith peaked out her head, making sure the officers had gone to bed for the night. She gave William a thumbs up and led him to the place he was already anticipating to arrive. Lilith knew William was apprehensive to return to this spot, which is why she coerced him to go late into the night. If he wasn't aware of the trip, then he couldn't decline.

She excitedly jogged through the several rooms they normally ran through, opening the last door slowly. She let out a sigh of relief.

"The stars," Lilith breathed.

She sat down on the tattered, old blanket that William and she had found so many years ago. Looking up at William, she saw him smile. Lilith knew he wouldn't regret coming down here. This was the only place their steel box allowed them to actually live. Patting the spot next to her, William allowed himself to fall in place by Lilith's side.

"They look so bright tonight," William whispered.

Lilith laid down next to him, softly putting her head in his lap. The light of the Milky Way shined through the skylight, creating a makeshift spotlight that landed directly on the two. Lilith turned her head to see William already staring down at her. His face glistened from the night sky, his eyes reflecting a unique sparkle.

"One day we'll finally make it out," she said. "We'll be able to look everywhere, no skylight to block out the rest of the world."

When Lilith first told William about her father's pages, he dismissed

the idea completely. He couldn't fathom that the Old World could be a beautiful, wondrous place, but then she took him down to Level 1 and shoved him under the skylight. Even though it had to be miles above them, William stared in awe. She saw the realization hit him that there could be more to life than living in Stonehollow.

She had found the skylight one day as a kid while exploring Stonehollow. Before that day, her father's pages felt like fiction, like a story some amazing writer printed with great illustrations. Just like William, Lilith couldn't believe her eyes. Suddenly it was all real.

"Lilith, you know what happened last time we tried to leave..." William said.

Lilith did know, but she didn't like to think about it. About that day. About the thick red blood that rushed out of her father's chest. About the screams coming from William as he was beaten with an officer's bat. About how close the three of them were to leaving Stonehollow.

Lilith could still feel the officers dragging her away from that violent scene. If she was silent enough, she could still remember the last words her father spoke; You'll make it out there, Lil. I'm sure of it. You're the one.

Lilith sighed, closing her eyes tightly.

"William, I can't just give up. It was my dad's dream," she replied.

Lilith's father found his pages within the Stonehollow library. They were wedged between two seemingly unopened novels, folded neatly as if they were waiting to be discovered. Since that day, her father studied those pages with meticulous detail. As each year passed by, Lilith's father became more and more convinced that Stonehollow was keeping the wonders of the Old World a secret for a reason.

He began questioning everything Stonehollow enforced. After inferring about the possibilities he believed the Old World held to the Stonehollow elders, he was placed in solitary confinement. His questions were deemed preposterous and his plans to try and leave were forbidden.

After being released a few days later, her father decided to keep his thoughts to himself. While his faith in Stonehollow had been squandered, his faith in the Old World had tripled.

Lilith had drawn up at least ten different plans to leave Stonehollow since the day her father lost his life to his dreams, but none of them were good enough. They needed to be great. This time, she couldn't fail. This time she had to make it, to prove her father was right.

"What if we" Lilith began.

“Do you want to go back to that isolation room, Lilith? Because I sure as hell don’t” William said, turning away from the stars.

The aftermath of their failed escape haunted them both. Lilith’s father wasn’t the only one punished for their crimes. William was immediately sentenced to solitary confinement and was forced to remove his pinky finger for insubordinate recognition. By the ninetieth day, William felt so hopeless that he knew he couldn’t go through that again.

Since Lilith was a woman, she only had thirty days in solitary confinement. Even though the isolation was supposed to be a punishment, she strangely didn’t want to leave. The plain white walls in her cell were a much better setting than the home her father would never return to. Lilith knew his glasses would still be on the kitchen table. His boots would still be by the front door. The sofa would still smell of his cologne.

When she was released, she found herself to be right.

Now, she shuffled mindlessly through a home that would never feel like home again.

“I have to get out of here, Will,” she said, beginning to cry. “I just have to.”

Lilith knew that a second offense in Stonehollow resulted in execution, but she would rather face death trying to make it to the Old World than never make it at all. She knew William was thinking about the same thing. She understood why he didn’t want to go, but she selfishly needed him by her side.

“We should probably head back before anyone notices that we’re gone,” William said, interrupting her thoughts.

Lilith followed him back to the lift, watching the metal doors slam together. They reminded her of a metal crash depicted in her father’s pages. These things called automobiles would collide while moving at high speeds, denting the metals in the process. She wondered why the lift’s doors didn’t dent when they slammed together.

“Hey, Lil?” William whispered.

She looked up, seeing his eyes brimmed with tears.

“I’m scared,” William said.

She intertwined her hand in his, pulling him flush against her.

“I know,” she replied. “So am I.”

Lilith watched William look up at the ceiling of the lift, avoiding eye contact with her own emerald green eyes.

“Look Lil, I’m more than willing to leave everything behind for you.



My family, my friends..." William said. "But I can't watch what happened to your dad happen to you."

She knew that William had promised her dad he would keep her safe, no matter what. She knew that William took that promise seriously. Lilith pressed the stop button on the lift, halting its movement. She closed the space between her and William, putting her arms around his neck. Lilith could feel their heart beats sink together, growing quicker with each passing second. She could feel William's hot breath on her neck. Her eyes fluttered at the small gush of air.

"William, you don't have to come with. I can do this on my own," she said as convincingly as she could.

William cupped Lilith's face with his large hands, touching his lips to her own. Lilith returned the gesture, opening her mouth to deepen the kiss. William pulled away, smiling at Lilith.

"Alright, baby. What do you have in mind?" William asked in a whisper.

Lilith pulled away, hitting the stop button again to allow the lift to continue its ascend. Glancing down at her watch, she realized it was already 5 a.m.

"So you're in?" Lilith asked eagerly.

William nodded his head, pulling Lilith in for another quick kiss.

"Go pack your stuff, and meet me in my room by 2 o'clock," Lilith said with a smile. "Tonight, we finally make it to the Old World."

When the lift opened to their floor, they each went their separate ways. When she reached her room, she took in a deep breath, taking in the only home she had ever known for the last time. She knew her father would be proud of her courage. He had always been the brave one of the two of them, and now it was Lilith's turn to take the lead.

Lilith walked over to their small table in the middle of the room, grabbing her backpack off it. She hadn't opened it since their last attempt to leave.

Unzipping it slowly, she smiled at the familiar contents. Her father's silver watch lay at the bottom, a token of love he had given to her for her fifteenth birthday. Even back then he had been planning their escape.

She reached in and pulled the watch out, attaching it to her small wrist. She shuffled around the bag, quickly taking inventory of their unperishable rations and water filter her father had stolen from the Stonehollow storage room. Reaching under the backpack, she made sure the rolled-up blanket was still fastened tight.

As she began to zip the back pack up again, she realized she was missing something. Running over to her bed, she lifted her mattress to pull out her father's pages. They were what started all of this. She couldn't leave them behind. Lilith folded them up and gently placed them in her backpack.

After waiting for what felt like forever, William walked in her room with an identical backpack.

"You ready?" William asked. "We only have an hour before dinner starts."

Lilith nodded and followed him through the door. She looked back at her home one last time. She silently said goodbye to it, knowing that if her home could reply, it was saying goodbye, too.

Lilith and William walked through the hallway until they reached the central cafeteria. They both halted, realizing the seats that were supposed to be empty were filled with the people of Stonehollow. Turning around to abort the mission, they realized they were trapped. Two Stonehollow elders were walking down the hallway they had just came from, engrossed enough in conversation to not yet notice the two teenagers trying to escape. She looked from the cafeteria to the hallway trying to figure out their next move, but before she could come up with a plan, she felt William yank her into what she assumed was one of William's father's custodial closets.

"I thought you said dinner didn't start for another hour?" Lilith whispered in a panic.

She wondered if this was how it was supposed to end, them getting caught before their journey even started. How naive was she to think she could accomplish something even her father couldn't do? Lilith's breathing increased rapidly, looking over to William to search his brown eyes for guidance.

"Damnit, Lil, I'm sorry," William replied. "I forgot it was Thursday."

Every Thursday night in Stonehollow was special. To honor the First fifty, dinner was served an hour early to make time for the Great Fire ceremony.

This event included a reenactment of their journey, a sacred song to honor their bravery, and the passing around of the Fire Stone. Having been brought into Stonehollow by one of the First fifty all those centuries ago, it was meant to have special healing powers. Many believed it was the Fire Stone's powers that saved their ancestors from the Great Fire. She could hear the beginning of the sacred song, giving her an idea. She

dropped her backpack to the floor and grasped the door knob.

“When the song ends, head to the Floor 8.” Lilith said quickly.

Before William had time to ask questions, Lilith walked out of the small closet. She headed into the cafeteria, pretending to sing along with the rest of Stonehollow. Looking to her right, she noticed her neighbor Mrs. Shirley, an old woman who considered herself a true Stonehollow patriot. Her father and her never saw eye to eye.

Turning to the left, Lilith spotted the big blue button she had been looking for. Slowly shuffling toward its wall, Lilith searched to see if anyone was looking at her. Realizing Mrs. Shirley and the rest of Stonehollow were occupied by the sacred song, Lilith took the last few steps towards her destination, pressing the button with a light tap of her pointer finger.

Hearing the alarm blare from the intercoms above, she jumped away quickly and feigned shock. Everyone stopped singing and began to panic, running around the cafeteria to gather their belongings and head back to their rooms.

“Please, please, everyone, form an orderly line and calmly exit the cafeteria,” one of the Stonehollow elders yelled out.

Lilith ran towards the far lifts, knowing the panicked Stonehollow population could not use them, as all their rooms were located the opposite way. Looking back to the hallway, she spotted William running towards her. With all the commotion, no one seemed to notice the two backpacks William held in his hands. Lilith reached the doors to the lift, opening them just as William caught up to her.

“Great idea to hit the evacuation button,” he said with a laugh. “I’m sure their checking the oxygen levels now.”

Handing Lilith her backpack, they stepped inside. As he hit the Level 8 button, the doors quickly closed.

Lilith took a deep breath and felt the lift rise fast, taking up four stories in mere seconds. The doors opened and she looked forward into the pitch-black hallway. Even in the abyss she could feel her father’s presence. She knew if she walked a few feet forward, she would most likely find her father’s blood stained on the carpet.

William took Lilith’s hand and pulled her into the hallway, turning around to let her retrieve the flashlight inside of his backpack.

“Okay, Lil.” he began, handing her the flashlight. “Once I blind the camera, you go and break down the door.”

She nodded, giving him a reassuring smile.

This part of the plan had been Lilith's father's. He knew that if a bright enough light was aimed at the camera, it would hide their figures on the Stonehollow security screens. It wouldn't work long but, like last time, it was their only viable option for escape.

Lilith looked at William and nodded. She watched him grasp the flashlight tightly, moving to get into position.

"1...2...3...Go," he whispered, jumping in front of the camera and shinning the flashlight towards its lens.

Lilith ran to the door at the end of the hallway as fast as she could, knowing time was of the essence. Once she reached it, she pulled her father's hammer out of William's backpack and hit the door handle as hard as she could.

She pictured her father in the same position she was in now. Her father had barely dented the handle before the Stonehollow elders caught the three of them. They fired the gun before he even had time to turn around. Granted, he had only about a minute before he was shot.

She continued to pull the hammer back and hit the handle with all her might. Her hands had begun to perspire, making it harder to grip the base of the tool. Squinting, she could see that she was beginning to warp the handle.

"It's getting there," Lilith whispered as loud as she could to William.

After hitting the handle a couple more times, Lilith heard the lift.

"Is that what I think it was?" Lilith asked.

She and William glanced down the hall, watching the light above the lift flicker on. The Stonehollow elders must have noticed the skewed vision of the Level 8 camera.

"I think so. Hurry!" he replied.

She knew this was it. Either she broke down this door, or she would die just like her father. Pulling the hammer behind her head, She gripped it with both hands and threw it down with all her might, meeting the handle with a crash louder than she expected. Then she heard a thud.

She felt for the handle, realizing it had dropped to the ground. She used her shoulder and pushed against the door, watching it open swiftly.

"William, let's go! I got it!" Lilith yelled, no longer caring who heard her.

William moved his legs quicker than she had ever seen, reaching her position swiftly. She could hear the lift getting closer to their level, knowing they didn't have much time.

"Are you ready?" she asked.

He nodded slowly, smiling a toothy grin. They walked through the threshold together, knowing how close they were to the outside.

Just as they heard the lift doors open, they shut their door with a low creak. He turned around and shone the flashlight ahead. All around them was scattered, old furniture. Pea green loveseats, dark wooden benches, bright yellow stools with flowers covering the legs.

She walked deep into the room towards a rather large rose sofa, looking above.

"Shine that light above me, towards the ceiling," she said.

The flashlight revealed a latch on the ceiling, exactly where Lilith's father told her it would be. William lifted the end of the sofa, setting it down sideways so him and Lilith could reach the latch.

"Here, stand on my hands and climb on top," he said.

She stepped on William's enclosed hands, pushing down to catapult herself atop the sofa. She slowly stood up, careful not to let the couch fall back to its rightful position. Steadily, she pulled on the latch, feeling an inch of dust puff into her face.

It opened with ease, revealing passage that was barely big enough for them to fit through. Looking up, she saw that one side of the passage had a ladder attached that went up as far as she could see.

"I think we can climb up this thing," She said.

As Lilith climbed in, she heard rather loud voices.

"I think those kids made it into one of those rooms!"

Loud footsteps proceeded, and she assumed the voice came from one of the many officers now searching for her and William.

"Get up here! We need to move quick," Lilith whispered.

He dragged one of the flowery stools towards the sofa and stood atop it, pulling himself onto the couch.

"Start climbing, I'll be right behind you," William said.

She began climbing carefully, making sure to grasp each step as tightly as she could. As he held onto the first step, they both heard the door burst open.

Light shone brightly into the room like the headlights of those automobiles on her father's pages. He pulled himself up two more steps, when suddenly a shot rang through the room.

She looked down, seeing William's face change from focus to fear.

He took one hand off the ladder and touched his side. Pulling his hand back up, Lilith realized it was stained with blood. William looked down, seeing where the bullet went through his shirt.

"It's okay, Will. Keep climbing. You can do it" Lilith said, quiver in her voice.

She began to panic, seeing him slowly deteriorate.

"William, please. We're so close. Look at me. We can make it. William, don't"

She watched him stumble backwards on the sofa. He looked up at him and spoke at a barely audible volume.

"Keep going."

William's foot slipped off the top of the sofa, causing him to fall to the ground. She watched the Stonehollow elders walk up to William's still body, one of them bending down to feel his pulse.

"He's still breathing," he said with his fingers still touching William's neck.

The other Stonehollow elder held his gun steady, firing it directly at William's head. Lilith watched blood splatter the floor, covering her mouth to stifle her sobs. She couldn't go the Old World without him. She could barely stand going without her father by their side, but now she was alone.

Feeling tears run down her face, Lilith looked back down to the scene below. As the Stonehollow elders search the immediate perimeter, she watched the Stonehollow elders holding the gun look up to where William had fallen from. With a slight flick of the head, he locked eyes with Lilith.

"There you are!" he yelled up to her.

Lilith climbed up the old latter as fast as she could, knowing that he wouldn't hesitate to shoot her as he did William. As she continued to ascend, his voice slowly drifted away. She didn't think the Stonehollow elders would follow her up the ladder, but she moved quickly just in case. Just as her fingers became numb, so did her heart. She had now lost the only two men she had ever loved. Yet somehow, she could hear William and her father's voices encouraging her to go on. She let her eyes close for a brief second, allowing her to see the two men standing side by side. She knew they would always be with her, even if they really weren't.

Glancing above, she searched for the end of her climb with no luck. According to her father, Stonehollow was buried almost 10,000 deep inside the mountain and since she had only been climbing for ten minutes, she assumed she still had a while to go.

So she continued to climb, only stopping three times to catch her breath. As Lilith's legs began to quiver, she looked at her watch for the

time. Finding it to be 7 p.m., she knew she had to be close. Just as she was about to stop for her fourth break, she felt the air change; it was crisper, colder, different.

She felt a burst of adrenaline run through her veins, climbing up the latter at a pace she didn't know she could reach. Looking above, Lilith could finally see the end of the claustrophobic tube she was climbing. Light peaked through the cracks of a latch similar to the one she entered from below. Could it be moonlight? Lilith had seen it secondhand through her skylight, but never had she felt the real light it could emulate.

Lilith wondered if this was it. Had she made it to the Old World? Had she done what her father so desperately spent his life trying to do? She wished him and William were with her in this moment. She wished they could feel the wonder she could feel pouring out of her soul.

Timidly, she pushed on the latch, opening it with little struggle. As she put one hand out, she could feel slick, plastic-like fuzz below her hand.

Pulling herself up out of the passage, she sat on her knees and realized what she felt was grass. Her father's pages were filled with it.

Lilith looked to the left and saw what she knew to be a tree, something that also filled the pages tucked safely in her backpack. It stood taller than anything she had ever seen, filled with a million little leaves and at least a thousand bendy branches. To the right, she could make out a body of water. A pond? A lake? She couldn't remember the exact word, but that didn't matter. It was water.

She stood up and walked towards the water, lightly dragging her finger on the surface. Looking closer, she could see her reflection. Brown hair tangled and face clammy, shirt slightly torn at the shoulder from the climbing.

Bringing her face towards the water, she could see the stars behind her. They shone all around her face, gleaming almost as vivid as her eyes. Turning around, she smiled.

There they were. The thing she dreamt about since she could remember.

Lilith stood up, pulling her backpack off and unzipping it to pull out her father's pages. She sifted through them until she found the one she was looking for.

Holding the page up, she compared it above. Moving her eyes around the never-ending sky, she spotted it. It was beautifully crooked and wonderfully perfect: Cassiopeia.



# THESE HANDS

*(For Mom and Dad)*

*Travis Holloway*

*Poetry*

---

These hands built America.  
They held the hammers and nails to build our cities.  
They wielded pick, shovel and axe to glean the continent's bounty.  
They tilled its fertile soil with blood, sweat and tears,  
And when the harvest moon was full  
They reaped the fruit of their toil to be placed upon our plate.  
Roads, rails, bridges, airports and harbors  
These hands have paved the path from sea to shining sea.

These hands belong to a dreamer.  
When newly formed, they were told of all that they may one day hold.  
First baby soft, they gripped pencils, baseballs, and the bicycle horn.  
Later, with calluses earned and the vigor of youth,  
They reach for that dream they have been told from birth:  
All of this can be yours, with a little elbow grease and grit.  
These hands have been told that hard work shall reward  
And with that belief, they are bent eagerly to the task.

These hands take the shape of life,  
One determined by that which they hold.  
They are roughened by friction and burned by forge,  
Scared from mistakes and failures until twisted to a new form  
With which they try so desperately to hold onto the dream.  
Before dawn and after dusk, these hands can never be still.  
Each day they scratch forward, each night with bloody nails, they dig in.  
In the fight for today, they are numb to the years that trickle away.

These hands now hurt.  
Bent, scared, buckled and twisted,  
These hands can no longer be trusted to provide.  
Instead of the tools of worn with the patina of their grip,  
They hold back and rub knees that are old  
Before their time.  
The promise of these hands has been wrung dry  
As the dream slips away.

These hands made America, and America made these hands.  
So strong, so proud, they have never been extended for charity.  
When this country needed a flag to be raised,  
An injustice set right, a refuge for huddled masses yearning to be free,  
That's when these hands proudly raised for the call.  
But when that call has been answered and the day's work has been done,  
Where lies the comfort for such hard-working hands?  
Where is the balm to gentle their pain?

These hands held America,  
And now America needs to hold these hands.  
Where is the shoulder to rest these hands upon?  
As they stumble towards the night?  
Shall their dream prove nothing more than a fantasy?  
These hands deserve more than to tremble and hurt.  
These hands deserve more than six feet of dirt.  
Not so much do they ask –just that which these hands have earned.

# SHADOWS OF A CHILD'S PAST

*Ashley Blanton*

*Fiction*

---

I remember the black iron fence beyond the castle garden. I would squeeze past the bushes to peek into the little town. I watched as the citizens laughed and whistled that morning unaware of the shadow that was casted upon my home. I found myself cursing them in childish curses for being so happy when it had always been said that the world turns grey when someone you love is dying. So why were the shadows only on my side? Behind my black iron fence, I remember thinking how cold and cruel those strangers were to be so happy when my mother could barely move. Honestly, I think I just felt guilty for my lack of action in being able to ease her pain. I just wanted it all to end and for everyone else to understand.

Lunch time would soon arrive as I found myself remaining in the garden most of that morning. I didn't eat because my stomach felt queasy and something just didn't sit right with me. I don't know if you can predict death, but it felt like today was the day and I found myself willing my mind away from such thoughts.

Alexander soon came to retrieve me. He, like myself, had been raised in the castle. He was a butler, more specifically mine. He was the one that found me upon the doorstep that fateful night about 18 years or so ago and had been my support as I grew up. He was still sometimes a nuisance.

"Your dress is a disaster. The seamstress made it especially for you," he commented.

He said it lightly not like his usual judging tone of a princess should be like this or a princess shouldn't do that. It was strange for him to watch his tone as if he was stepping on shards of glass. I must of took it negatively because I was quick to give a snarky remark.

"Well your suit isn't messy enough," I said having stuck my tongue out and made a troll face for effect.

I was so childish at that age, but I felt so proud at my comeback and the uneasiness in my stomach settled.

He had made a clicking noise, but provided me with a soft smile as he dusted off the loose dirt on my mint colored dress. He gestured for me to follow him as he finished and I remember it took me a second.

I looked towards the giant, oak doors and thought about the contents beyond them. I'd rather have stayed in the garden where the birds kept my mind occupied but I followed him.

He guided me like a child as he held my hand to lead me through the corridor. I knew where we were going and even today I can remember the short but agonizing trek to get there. It was usually mid-afternoon when we would take these treks and the corridor would be bathed in rainbow shadows from the patch-worked windows.

I remember happier times of running up and down as the rainbows would stain my clothes in many beautiful colors. Alexander would chase me, his normally composed face, red with frustration. I much preferred that face than the one I saw.

He wasn't very old, just 25 years but his face looked so cracked and aged. Vainly, I thought his weary face was because of me. I was always doing the opposite of what he told me, still he stood by my side and chose to stay there. Sometimes, I feel as if I took advantage of his kindness.

I watched my sandals become dyed by the shadows on the wooden floor. I hadn't bothered to watch where we were going and just allowed myself to be pulled along at Alexander's side. We soon came to a stop in which I noticed another pair of nicely dressed feet in front of the door. Though the shoes were nice, they were untied and had a few scuffs upon them.

The man that wore them was not much better and I watched as his hand shook while reaching out for the crystal knob before him. He never touched, but simply stood there with his hand only inches from it. It felt like minutes as he finally pulled his hand away and brushed through his hair. The peppery strains looked as if he had spent the night before running through it backwards.

"Your Majesty," Alexander bowed, but I just continued to stare up at him with curious, unknowing eyes.

Now that I think about it, I should've spoke up for the man that had been a good father to me for some time. If I had spoken up, I wonder if he would love me now. Deep down, I think I still love him. I cannot think of that man as a father when he so obsessively blamed me for my mother's death, though he deserves the blame more.

He turned, shocked at the sound of Alexander's voice, but he did

not look at him. The man's dull brown gaze peered down at mine and they searched within them for something. Whatever it had been, he didn't find it as he sighed and gritted his teeth in a way that seemed like he was crushing words between them.

"Father?" I called to the man out of concern, "we can open the door for you. She would be very happy to see you."

It was so innocent, but he walked off without speaking a word and I remember feeling angry and rejected. I couldn't consider that this gesture would be the first of many.

"Come, Princess," Alexander said as he quickly grabbed my forearm to prevent my escape.

I wanted to chase after him, to yell that mother needed him, but Alexander's grip tightened and his dark eyes pleaded with me. I wanted to at least know why. I knew I would get no answer and I doubted it mattered anyways.

With ease, Alexander turned the crystal knob that the heartless man had been unable to even reach and I remember thinking that it was a win for me against him.

The light from the large bay window bathed us as we entered. The curtains were pulled back and warmth filled the small room. It wasn't mother's room but the doctor and the man who called himself my father had put her in there. The doctor went on and on about how the brightly lit room would be good for her health even though it had felt more like they were hiding her. How dare they shove her into a storage closet. It may have been nice but it wasn't hers.

I forced a large toothy grin, something I had never had to do up until then. I had always been a rather cheerful child that was filled with energy and mischief but during that time I only thought about what I hadn't done.

I didn't listen to Alexander and his lessons, I didn't help my little sister and I had left the castle when I wasn't supposed to the day my mother grew sick. She slowly turned and smiled back.

"Hello mother," my voice squeaked as I quickly ran to the side of her bed.

I reached out for her hand and grasped it hard in my own. It was frail and I felt that if I held it tight enough the warmth from my own would help hers to bloom again. I think I just spent too much time looking at flowers. Her greying blue eyes turned to take me in as her wheat colored hair fell over her face. I used my other hand to brush them

away and remember her hair reminding me of an overused brush with the wiry feel to it as well. I tried to think of ways to comfort her but the only thing I could think of was the piano.

My mother and I had always been close even though I wasn't her real daughter. When I first appeared on the doorstep as a newborn baby, she had been unable to conceive. Five years after I arrived, she would conceive my sister. Even after that we had always had a strong bond. One of the ways we had bonded was through music.

In the corner sat a piano that looked stained with age due to its off-white color. I was lectured many times about the color by Alexander and he would say it was made of ivory and was not dirty.

Mother would always laugh at our exchange as if it never got old. We would practice together most nights and it was the one interest that only she and I shared. I think she was always worried about me feeling like I wouldn't belong after she had my sister. I had always felt like I belonged with her. I loved her and she was my only mother.

I made my way to the piano not far from her bedside. As I situated myself, I turned to look at her noticing the shimmering in her eyes. This was something that I could do for her.

"What would you like me to play?" I asked as my hands found their place upon the keys.

I watched her mouth open, but sound failed to follow as she mouthed the words. I noticed her expression drop as if defeated by her inability to communicate with me. I tried to think quickly as I turned away and started to play. I picked her favorite song. It was a solemn tune about a girl unable to touch the world. I still don't understand why she liked such sad things. Her face lit up as if I made the right choice, so I started to sing:

*Little shadows dancing around my feet  
I hold so dearly so close to me  
A silent creature with in the night  
Falling into a grave  
Out of sight.  
Shall you scream  
No one hears  
The deathly cries  
Of one so near  
I hold no heart*

*A soul to part  
For I am timeless dear*

My voice at nine probably didn't do the song justice, but my mother listened with smiles in her eyes. I watched as her mouth curved upwards and cracked. I watched the shimmers in her eyes fall as she wet her lips. I had thought I had done something wrong and quickly stopped out of concern. I started to walk back to her side to help her clear the tears from her eyes.

"Mother? Please don't cry. I can play you a different song, a happier one."

As I was in thought, she had slowly lifted her hand towards me. I kneeled beside her as she caressed my face like she had done many times before. I felt my own eyes shimmer in reaction to her eyes which continued to water. Even though they still appeared full of tears they had stopped falling. I leaned into her touch and remembered thinking how her hand was just as cold as the iron fence.

Alexander rushed over and quickly placed a finger on her other wrist. I know now that he was checking her pulse but she waved him away. He bowed politely. I remember hearing him exit the room. I should have known something was wrong. I should have done something.

She pulled her hand from my cheek and I heard her let out a weak breath as she turned her head to the ceiling. I wanted her to be able to tell me it was okay or to at least say I love you but I would never hear her voice again. Smiling towards the ceiling, she turned her head back and seemed to be asking me to continue playing. I nodded and returned to the piano. The piano seemed to bring her peace and it was the only real thing I could do at such a young age.

The song poured out of my mouth. I watched her and remember my mind willing her to die, though the word die wasn't as clear, I feel like it meant the same. I just wanted her to have peace to leave this place and the people that pushed her away in her time of need.

My hands stopped playing as I felt a need to be near her. I reached for her hand as I sang the notes in a voice that reminded me of when she would sing me lullabies. Her eyes slowly shut as I held her hand to my chest and felt tears streak my face. Her hand went limp as I kneeled beside her and continued to sing. I did not need a self-proclaimed doctor to tell me she was gone and I continued to sing as if trying to hide the fact from myself. She looked so peaceful laying there and as the last words left my mouth I heard the door open.



Alexander had rushed in with the doctor on his heels. He quickly pulled me away and gave me a somber smile as he turned back to my mother. Not wanting to stay, I walked out the door as my sister rushed past me. I could hear her wails as she heard the doctor's cold words.

"She's left us," the doctor said.

I was now halfway down the corridor unable to hear Alexander's reply. I don't know why I just walked.

I walked towards the man that had refused to be there. He looked out the stained-glass windows as if he couldn't hear the wails down the hall. My eyes found his as he turned towards me.

"She is happier now," I told him and I watched as his face turned dark.

He must have been appalled by my smile with tears still staining my face. I think he would have preferred if I was wailing like my sister but mother was at peace. She was no longer in pain and no longer had to be pushed away like storage. I don't regret the words I said or the way I said them. All I wanted was for her to be happy and for the man to feel her pain. I remember the black iron fence beyond the garden and I remember the man's painful gaze.

# ARCHANGEL

*Enriqueta Berry*

*Poetry*

---

My heart gives in with your lingering presence  
Even with fortifications, my self defense weakens  
Addicted to the flirting with marginalized permissions  
Like the heat of infection, burning through my veins

Stumbling back into this predicament  
Where once my heart opens, out pours my feelings  
Vulnerability takes its stride, forcing me into submission  
My mind justifies but I can't deny this innervation

The deeper we descend our hearts keeps mingling  
With our souls intertwined, I feel alive with remission  
Your light brightens mine, when it's dimming  
Needing this when my moon is slowly fading

Drifting back into this tempting deep end  
As if changing my destined leaves with your season  
And here I am glancing at my reflection  
Peering into the other side of your graceful Eden



# The Color of Supremacy: Beyond the discourse of 'white privilege',

ZEUS LEONARDO

In the last decade, the study of white privilege has reached currency in the educational and social science literature. In April 2002, the City of Pella, Iowa, hosted the Third Annual Conference on White Privilege. Concerned with the circuits and meanings of whiteness in everyday life, scholars have exposed the codes of white culture, worldview of the white imaginary, and assumptions of the invisible marker that depends on the racial other for its own identity (Frankenberg, 1993, 1997; Hurtado, 1996; Kidder, 1997; Rothenberg, 2002). In particular, authors like Peggy McIntosh (1992) have helped educators understand the taken for granted, daily aspects of white privilege: from the convenience of matching one's skin color with bandages, to opening up a textbook to discover one's racial identity affirmed in history, literature, and civilization in general. In all, the study of white privilege has pushed critical pedagogy into directions that account for the experiences of the 'oppressor' identity (Hurtado, 1999).



# MEDICINE FOR HOPE

*Kelsey Ferrenberg*

*Fiction*

---

Fog, like dust, clung around Ana as she stood on the peak, looking down to the oblivion of gray below. It was just starting to snow and the fat flakes disappeared and blended into the gray scenery around them. Ana clutched her bag of medicine close. It wouldn't be long now before she and her companion, Afwer, reached Hope, the small human settlement to the west of the peak. It would be quite a journey down the rocky, icy hillside, but Ana knew Afwer grew up climbing and exploring the mountains. She didn't know much about it, but she trusted the Nihonian.

"Ana." The pale young man appeared through the fog, running his fingers through the feathers he had instead of hair. "The clouds are dark. A storm is coming."

"Then we need to hurry."

Ana took one last glance into the fog below and stepped away from the edge.

"There's a way down this way."

She hoped to the gods and goddesses of the planet that they wouldn't have to go back down the way they came. It would take too much time, and they had to get the medicine back to her home as quickly as possible. Then, after all was well, maybe they could finally work on an alliance between the humans the Kurhytians.

When Ana's grandmother first came to the planet of Niho, relationships between the Kurhyt tribe and the human settlers were quite rocky. The humans hadn't meant to make their landing on the rocky planet nor meet with the natives. Though the Kurhytian tribe, which had settled in the mountains above where the humans had crash landed, were friendly enough, the humans were still on guard and defensive. This led to many years of indifference between the people. Now at last Ana could show Ivan and all the rest of her people that it was possible for the humans and Kurhytians to work together towards a greater good.

This first task between them was to save the humans from the fever that was now infecting them. The Kurhytian Council had sent one lone

adventurer with her, Afwer, which she had been grateful for. Afwer knew these woods and cliffs a little better than she did. Together they would carry the medicine home to Hope. Kurhytian and Human. It was history being made.

“Let’s go this way.” Ana gestured for Afwer to follow her along the cliff’s edge and into the fog. The Kurhytian nodded and pulled his medicine bag closer around him before following Ana into the thick, gray clouds. “Can you see anything through this?” Ana asked. She knew that native Nihonians had better eyesight than humans. Their eyes were better adjusted to see through the thick fogs that were often present against the slopes of the mountains.

“No. Not this.” Afwer said. The fog gave way partly, as they walked. Before them was a long slope, down from the peak with a cascading waterfall of boulders, and mounds of snow and ice.

“There.” Ana sighed with relief. “That should take us down quickly.”

“I agree.” Afwer said.

“You lead the way.” Ana said, “You can see better through the fog than I can.”

Afwer nodded and took a step ahead of her, leading her down the slope of jutting boulders. The fog grew thinner as they made their way down. Where it had once choked the air and clung to the earth and ice like a cloak, now it was only swirling wisps among the drifting snow. Despite the scene being so familiar, the boulders, the ice, and the fog, Ana still took a moment to admire its silent beauty.

“Ana, your people... when we arrive back at Hope, they’re not expecting me are they?” Afwer said, jumping off a tall boulder down to solid ground.

Ana didn’t answer at first, she sat on the edge of the icy rock, looking down at him thoughtfully.

“No. They aren’t.” He held out his hand to her and she took it. “I went without permission. But you must understand, it was the only way. Ivan is the leader, he never would have let me go if he knew where I was going. He’s stubborn and arrogant, and... he won’t ask for help. He thinks that we can find a cure on our own, but I know we can’t. Besides, why can’t humans and Nihonians work together? After all, we share the same planet now... I kept trying to tell him... Your tribe, Afwer, you Kurhytians are our neighbors. I believe it would benefit all of us if we could set aside our small differences and work together from now on.”

He helped her jump down from the tall boulder.

"I've thought so too." Afwer said.

"It's why I've studied your language for so long." Ana said.

"Some of the ways you say things is funny, though." Afwer said with a grin.

"Hey, I have limited resources." Ana frowned.

The rest of the way down was a long incline, leading straight into a grove of towering coniferous trees. Ana sighed, the rocky grove reminded her of the place her ancestors had made their homes from the scraps of the mothership. They had to hurry. Today had been wasted on small talk.

"Come on, Afwer! This way."

It was late afternoon by the time they reached the roaring rapids of Wyatt's River, as her people called it. She wasn't sure what name Afwer had for it. It was an enormous, freezing river that frothed and roared across boulders and ice, coming down from one of the mountain range's many glaciers.

"This river leads through Hope?" Afwer said.

"No, not through Hope. Near our village we used a piece of the mothership to build a bridge across into better hunting grounds, but it will take too long to go around. We must find a way to cross near here. There must be a place where the water is shallow..." There was silence for a moment as Ana led Afwer along the rocky riverbank.

"Ana? What is a mothership?"

"It's how we came here. It's like a boat for the sky."

"A boat for the sky..." Afwer looked up wonderingly. "My people always assumed that perhaps you were our sibling race, sent to us by Ayog and Oia."

"The God and Goddess? Maybe we were," Ana said. "Look! A log!"

Ana pointed over towards an enormous fallen tree that spanned across the river. "We can cross there!"

"Is it safe?" Afwer said.

It looked safe at least on the outside.

"We don't have a choice. We must cross here, Afwer. There may not be another opportunity for hours. We're running out of time."

"I understand, here." Afwer pulled a long rope out from his bag. "We can use this. If one of us falls in the river..."

"The other can pull them out," Ana said, taking one end of the rope and tying it around her waist. "You go first."

Ana gestured towards the log. Afwer shook his head.

"You lead." He replied.



Ana offered him a smile and then shakily climbed up onto the top of the log. She held out her arms for balance, trying not to look down at the rapids below. The rope was long enough that Ana was able to cross first before Afwer started out. She breathed a sigh of relief when she at last jumped off the log onto solid ground.

"Come on!" She called out to him, though she knew he couldn't hear her over the roar of the water.

Afwer climbed up onto the log and began to steadily make his way across the water. Ana mumbled a short prayer to Ayog, the God of the earth as she watched him reach the middle.

It all happened in seconds, before Ana could shout a warning. Afwer set all his weight on the middle of the log, and he was about to take another step forward when the entire tree broke in two. Its middle shattered into a million rotten pieces, and Afwer came tumbling down with it into the icy rapids below. The rope around Ana's waist jerked and pulled her forward. She grabbed the rope, pulling with all her strength. It cut into her waist and into her hands. It burned and tore away the skin on her palms, but she refused to let go. It was her fault they were in this mess and she was terrified she might lose Afwer because of it. Her eyes filled with tears and they clung onto her lashes, freezing in place.

"Come on... come on..." She kept pulling, despite her hands burning and her waist aching. Afwer surfaced, at last, coughing and gasping for breath.

"Afwer! Thank the gods!" Ana reached out and grabbed his hand, pulling him to shore.

He shivered, even his Nihonian blood wasn't used to being wet in such cold temperatures. The droplets of water on his pale skin were already beginning to freeze over.

"Here," Ana draped her own cloak around him, "hope is just down the hill, this way. There we can find you some dry clothes."

"Are you alright?" Afwer said.

"I... I'll be okay. Once we get back to Hope... once we... finish this. I'll be okay."

"Ana." Afwer took her hand, "Lets finish it then."

Ana could hear the growling of the generators that had been built from different parts of the mothership. Unfortunately, there was someone on guard at the bridge, though Ana should have suspected it. She took a deep breath and stepped towards him, Afwer following close behind.

“Gabriel?” The old man looked up from the white rapids below the makeshift metal bridge with wide eyes, his breath was being caught in the cold air by turning into mist.

“Ana? You’re alive!” Before Ana could even reply Gabriel threw his shaking arms around her, and squeezed her tightly. “I was so worried after you disappeared!”

“I’m alright, Gabriel, I promise.” Ana said, hugging him back.

Gabriel looked up to see Afwer and Ana felt his embrace tense. The Kurhytian was confused, he only knew a little bit of the language Ana used. “It’s alright.” Ana pulled away from Gabriel with a grin. “Gabriel, this is Afwer. Afwer,” She switched back to the Kurhytian’s own language. “This is Gabriel. He’s like a father to me, really.”

Afwer made a short bow, and Ana turned back to the older man. “I went to the Kurhytian council, Gabriel, like I said I’d do! They agreed with me, they think an alliance...”

“Ana.” Gabriel said. “You know how Ivan is going to feel about this. He is your leader just as much as he is mine.”

“I know, but...”

“He is already furious that you’ve been missing. How do you think he’s going to react when he sees this Afwer?”

“We’ve brought medicine, Gabriel! They gave us a cure! As a way of offering a peaceful alliance.”

“A... cure?” Gabriel said. “Impossible! Ivan’s scientists did more research than they ever have and...”

“The Kurhytians have been here for much longer than we have, Gabriel...” She trailed off before continuing. “I don’t have to argue with you or prove anything to you, do I? I know you trust me. Let’s find Ivan. We need to get this medicine to the people as soon as possible.” She gestured to Afwer for him to follow her. He nodded, holding his bag of medicine tightly.

“Are we going to administer it to the people?”

“We have to talk to Ivan first.”

“You know as well as I do that people are dying, many can’t wait a moment longer.” Afwer said.

“I know, but if I don’t talk to Ivan about this an alliance will never be possible. If he even attributes all of them getting better to us finding the cure. He’ll believe we did this behind his back and that it was some sort of untrustworthy act. The man has a temper, and he doesn’t really trust anyone but himself.”

Afwer shook his head. "I understand. You lead the way. No matter what happens, I'm sure we can find a way to get the medicine to your people."

"Follow me." Ana took his arm, but Gabriel called out before they went into the town.

"Ana, if anyone sees you with the Kurhytian there could be trouble."

"We'll be careful, Gabriel, thank you."

"What did he say? I didn't catch it all."

"He says that people will go tell Ivan if they see you, and if Ivan finds out about us before we can get a word in... I don't want to think about it. Let's go around the back of town, I know the way. No one really goes there, especially not when the snow's this bad."

The afternoon had turned into a small blizzard, the snow hitting Ana's cheeks and stinging her skin. She was ready to go inside and wrap herself in warm wool blankets by a fire. Her eyelashes were still frozen from tears that never fell. "Ivan's house is just this way."

"Who's there?"

"Ana, look out." Afwer pulled her away from what she now saw as the light of a torch.

Daniel, one of Hope's best hunters, spun around to see who he had heard. Even through the thick falling snow and wisps of fog he caught a glimpse of them. She had made a mistake, completely forgetting about the afternoon guards who took turns marching around the town, including behind the houses. It was apparently Daniel's turn tonight, and he would certainly turn both Afwer and Ana in to Ivan.

"I said, who's there! I know you're out there." Daniel swung the torch forward, and the light fell across Ana's face, burning her eyes.

"Well... The little run-away comes back," Daniel said with a huff.

"Ivan will be glad to see you're alright."

"Ivan will be what? I doubt it."

"And who's your friend..." He trailed off when he saw Afwer stand up tall.

"My name is Afwer. Ana and I would like to speak to your leader."

"What the hell is he saying?" Daniel said, looking over at Ana.

"We need to get to Ivan, privately. You know what he'll do if he finds out about us before we have a chance to get a word in."

Daniel was hesitant, Ana watched him shift his weight from foot to foot as if he was weighing both of his choices.

"Alright fine. We'll go the back way, but I'm escorting you there."

Daniel said. "You go on ahead. I'll follow."

He was warily eyeing Afwer as Ana took the Kurhytian's arm and led him on towards Ivan's large home at the end of town.

The wind was roaring in Ana's ears now, pushing her towards the houses. As she neared Ivan's house she could smell smoke. There was a bonfire somewhere in the woods to her right. She didn't dare ask Daniel what they were burning. Had the fever taken more lives?

"Is this it?" Afwer asked.

Ana didn't answer, she took a deep breath, and rapped her knuckles on Ivan's metal door. There was a moment of silence that made her hold her breath and then Ivan's familiar rough voice.

"Come in."

Ana slowly opened the door to the warm glow of the small light above Ivan's table. The man himself was sitting by the wood stove, his hands stretched out before it. He looked older than when she had last seen him tired, with dark circles under his dim blue eyes.

"Ivan," she said, surprised at how aged he looked. It had only been a couple weeks. Was he sick?

"Ana," Ivan clenched his fists and stood slowly. "Where in the name of the gods have you been?"

"I told you where I was going," Ana said, crossing her arms and stepping towards him. Ivan seemed to notice Afwer for the first time, his dim eyes tracing back and forth between the native Nihonian and Ana.

"You disobeyed me," he said as his face went pale.

"I did what I thought was best. What I know was best," she said.

"The Kurhytians know this sickness, Ivan! They have medicine! Besides that, if we can make an alliance it would..."

"You could have died, Ana, for the sake of the gods! You could have... and all to go beg at the feet of the natives!" He laughed, shaking his head.

"Ivan..." Ana said, "you're... bleeding."

"Forget it," Ivan wiped the blood away from his nose. "It's just the fever."

She hadn't been around to see this and Afwer hadn't told her. The fever made them bleed from the nose? How many people had died after all this? Her stomach churned and her knees grew weak.

"You know as well as I do, that we need help. Look, I have the medicine here. We can be cured. What about your daughter, Eva? What about..."

"She's dead," Ivan said, lowering back down into his chair by the fire. "What?"

"Eva. My..." He paused, clearing his throat, "My Eva is dead."

"I... Ivan, I'm so sorry," Ana said, tears filling her own eyes. "If..."

"If you had been here!" Ivan said, jumping up again before Ana could place a hand on his shoulder. "Ana if you had just been here!"

Tears were rolling down the man's cheeks and into his dark beard. His eyes were red from crying. "Everyone. Everyone is dying! Sick! I've been alone... You were my closest advisor! You should have been here!"

"I'm so sorry, Ivan," her chest felt tight. "If you had only listened to me sooner..."

Ivan's clenched fists tightened and his knuckles grew white. "How dare you. How dare you speak to me that way!"

"If I really was your closest advisor, you would have at least paid attention to my advice. The Kurhytians and the humans! It's historic! It's the best thing that could happen to Hope! Can you imagine the trade? The new information? And besides that, you said it yourself, everyone's dying. The Kurhytians have a cure. We need their help. This isn't time for pride, or for anger. Look, Afwer and I are going to give this medicine to everyone. Don't try and stop us."

"You trust him?" Ivan nodded towards Afwer, who had stood respectfully off to the side during their conversation.

"With my life."

"Go." He gestured vaguely towards the door.

"We'll give you some first." Ana said.

"No," Ivan shook his head quickly, "Do what you want. I won't stop you, but leave me alone."

"Will you be alright?"

The response she received was a shrug. Ivan's nose was bleeding again, but he didn't bother to wipe it away. He sat down by his fire once more, staring into the flickering flames, mesmerized. Perhaps dreaming of Eva.

Ana turned back towards Afwer.

"Come on, then," she said with a deep sigh.

"Is he alright?" Afwer asked.

"I think he should be. When everyone else has had the medicine, we'll go back to him. He needs time," Ana said. "And so do we. We're quickly running out." She led him outside, back into the falling snow and fog. "The medicine, do you think we have enough?"

Afwer looked around the town, and then back over towards where they had smelled the smoke. Ana knew he was probably calculating, just the same as she was, how many of her people might still be alive.

“Yes, I think we’ll be okay.”

“Come on then. We’ll start with the children.”

She started leading him towards the first house, but he reached out and took her hand before she could.

“And you, Ana? You’ll be alright?”

She paused and smiled up at the Nihonian, watching the snowflakes settle in his dark brown feathers, like little stars.

“Yes, Afwer,” she said, squeezing his hand, “I think I will.”

# IN THE CANYON

*Jaclyn Schulte*

*Poetry*

---

I slept under the stars.  
my fear had dissolved  
with the resurrection of the sun.

At the fringes of an immeasurable  
copper and garnet painted cliff face:  
the sun glinted off the white capped river  
below.

I watched a loose pebble  
beneath me  
shift and fall away.

Down the pebble plunged,  
down,  
down ...

Into the deep, deep nothingness. It went  
bouncing off thorny cacti, falling faster  
than a Peregrine falcon, past the gaze  
of rainbow scaled lizards-  
colliding abruptly with the base of the canyon.



The canyon floor was silent for a long time;  
every pebble insignificant  
among the great and daunting walls  
surrounding them.

Slowly the golden sun rolled across the sky  
and shadows enveloped the land-  
an embrace of darkness.

One by one, holes were torn  
in the pacific blue fabric  
of the night sky,  
light radiating,  
sparkling brilliantly.

In the darkest of places  
the stars shine the brightest,  
and a canyon is not a canyon  
without pebbles.

# CLING

*Natalya Glebova*

*Poetry*

---

never certain  
whether it's the  
melting icecaps  
or dancing molecules  
the churning  
of the butter  
the washing machine  
cleanse  
soap suds or snot  
unneeded  
salty rainwater tears  
on the edge of the brim  
a broken lava lamp  
goo seeping through a crack  
watercolor paints  
flirting  
with the edge of the liquid border  
hushed and swirling  
moving   alive   breathable

foam-cradled  
it shivers  
  
the miscarriage  
of diamonds  
  
the lifecycle  
among the immortal  
  
the dying immune  
  
clinging icicle fingers  
holding a tsunami  
warning  
  
hanging on,  
with the desire to be  
  
a crystal soul  
innocence receiving  
a death sentence  
  
becoming of us  
the end of an era  
  
predicted          unprepared

The end

# MY TA-50

*Jenny Miller*

*Poetry*

---

A middle-aged man wearing an old Patriots jersey and burnout  
Sized me down slowly from mouth, chest, hips, and back up again  
Tossed three pairs of BDUs size M in men's at me, then winked, yelling

“next!”

A middle-aged woman wearing a stained tee and a hangover  
Shoved my feet into several different sizes of black boots  
Threw two pairs of size 7 in men's at me yelling,

“next!”

A sergeant in his forties wearing a wedding ring and lust  
Joked about the number 69 on my paperwork  
Gave me the key to my stagnant barracks room winking,

“see ya later, sweetheart!”

I, a nineteen-year-old, wearing a new oversized hoodie and unease,  
Organized, folded, and polished all of my new Army gear.

I made them mine:

1 -Half Shelter, Green  
500 –Addresses: “Sweetheart, Honey, or Hottie,”  
1 –Shovel, Foldable  
100-Sex Invitations From My married NCOIC  
1 -Reflective Belt  
250 –Orders to “smile, honey’ From Supervisors  
1- Ear Plugs with Case  
45 -Ass Grabs  
1- Compass  
25- “Unintentional” Boob Grazes  
1- Eye Protection, Ballistic  
15 – Uninvited Hands Slid Up My Thigh to My Vagina  
1- Flashlight  
9 –Emails Containing Images of Women Having Sex With Animals From a Sergeant  
2- Towels, Brown  
1- Sexual Harassment Court Marshall Against My NCOIC, Everyone’s Favorite NCO  
1- Permanent Marker, Black  
1,000- Comments: Stupid Bitch, Cunt, Fucking Liar, From My Peers and Superiors.

# RESTING HEART RATE (49 BPM)

*to the 49 of my siblings killed in Orlando*

*Beck Adelante*

*Poetry*

---

My mouth opens and you fall out.

I wish you were dynamic rather  
than stuck, now—  
one voice one image one narrative—if  
you could speak as no one else has, as if  
the silence is in  
Your Honor.

But I can't stand that one minute, eleven more seconds  
than there are of you.

(Could I would spend each one learning  
your language that I abandoned, living  
en una comunidad con muchísimo orgullo  
as I never have.

But the fear.)

*we are we:*

I hear your cadence and your trills and your  
music and your rhythms and your  
love and your past and I know  
the vibrance in what I had to leave.  
and what you could've shown me.  
and what I'm afraid to know, afraid  
to hear, because these Two Selves  
never comingled, they are  
my badges front and back.  
They don't meet, save

outside myself.

In you

You should be here  
to show me, to  
guide my tongue over Words  
still  
elementary.

To sway my hips in  
patterns  
left behind years ago,  
in music still tainted—  
the fluttering guitar and  
accordion, in riffs that stain  
my throat— in the rippling  
ping of the last shell casing—  
in the chilling cell phone  
chimes that rend the hazy air—

*Answer.* you should be  
here.

You should be there.

Instead we've built you underground houses of stone and wood and we hope you  
like them better than

bathroom stalls and bar countertops and dance floors at 3 am.  
we've left you cold and naked and bare

but we'll dress you up in acceptability so your graves pass HOA inspection.  
we'll trip over your names but we'll pretend we're not spitting them this time and  
with the wind you will pass, your homes stalwart because  
we've buried them out of sight.

But I hope you visit  
my chest is open      my mouth  
is yours      my hips will hold you  
my fingers can dance for you:

I can hear you at night

past the tinnitus

like the swirling of an ultrasound;

*I can hear you Pulse.*



# KEEPING ACCOUNT

*Chani Gomes*

*Poetry*

---

1.

The man without a coat to his name  
has to hunt.  
He becomes a savage beast,  
Hunting for his next meal.  
For every meal.

2.

The woman pushed to the ground  
again by her loving husband.  
Unable to get up  
her fractured leg,  
her shattered rib,  
her broken heart,  
Yet she stays, she cannot leave.  
She has no choice  
if she wants to survive.

3.

The boy who's chased down  
thrown onto his back  
beaten.  
They take turns. Make it a game.  
Nose bloody, eyes swollen,  
a princess sticker torn from his backpack,  
stomped into the hard ground.  
It wasn't his choice.  
None of this was his choice.

4.

The young girl,

A child of war.

Loses sleep,

she lost her dad.

She imagines the last sound he heard

as the bombs fell like rain on their camp.

She flinches. She cries.

Tears pool in her eyes,

she shakes the sound from her head,

but it soon is replaced with the image of his

lifeless body,

forever haunting her memory.

5.

These accounts

are forever without end.

# BLEW AWAY

*Natalia Glebova*

*Poetry*

---

What is it darling? What's troubling your mind?  
You don't understand how the world  
Has become like it is.  
Come closer sit down let me tell you a story  
of long ago times and long ago skies

//

painted cyan, aquamarine, royal and steel  
shaded with sapphire, azure, navy and cobalt  
The hues a young child's eyes will never get to see  
The home for blue jays, the hair of tall oak trees,  
And a home for eagles, just as distant as our blue.  
  
It's the color of your father's eyes, crystal ball blue  
The color of *that car! Right there!*  
Though not exactly true.  
It's in the way you move when you wake up  
Its in the stillness of the waves  
Its in the way you feel when no one wants to share.

Its bright, electric like neon lights  
Stare too long and it'll cause your eyes to see  
Dancing caterpillars all around.  
It's a blanket of velvet  
No one can touch.

//

Our world decided not to share, that's why this all began  
Why you my dear can't see the sky your grandma  
Played under as a child.  
It started with dark smoke, black oil  
It seeped into our roots, from those roots we breathed out  
Murky gloomy shadows into our air.  
The atmosphere filled with haze  
And darkened up our blue,  
It disappeared, leaving murky gray  
The color that now reflects my eyes.

# TIN FULL OF SKY

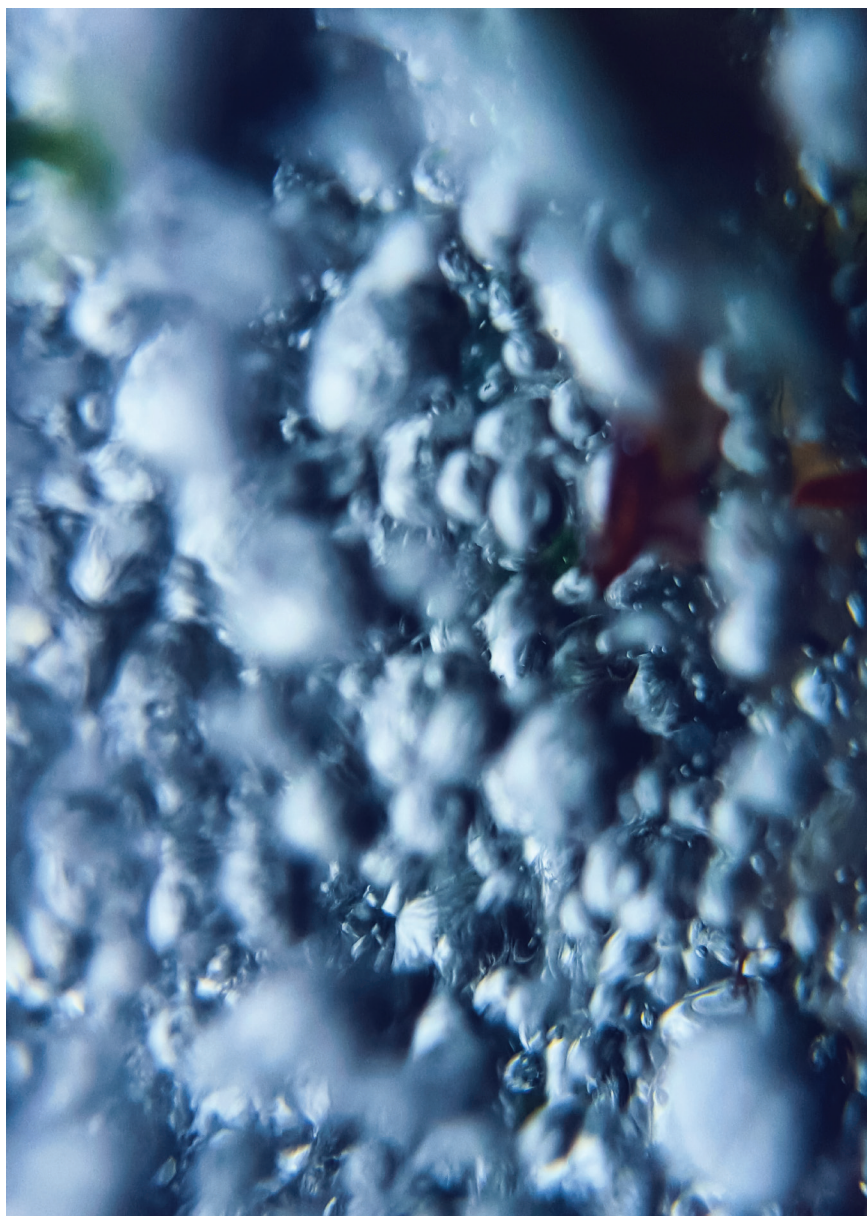
*(For Amanda)*

*Cassie Creley*

*Poetry*

---

I keep a tin full of summer sky  
on my bookshelf  
for the days when warmth  
seems like a foreign language.  
As I set the metal  
tin on my knees, clink  
the lid free, I hear  
the clouds rustling inside,  
like wafers of paper  
brushing the silver  
tin sides. They are not inked  
with words, though the clouds  
resemble the pages of a new book.  
And they speak to me.  
Of tree whispers and  
wisteria-touched wind.  
Of the deep scent of  
hot blackberries and fragrant  
grass. Of flowers turning gold  
under the touch of sunlight.  
But mostly, they speak of blue.  
That blue. It can't be captured  
by photos, in paint, or in words.  
So I capture it in this tin.











# CONTRIBUTORS

## 2016-2017

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ASHLEY BLANTON

Ashley Blanton is an aspiring veterinarian currently majoring in Psychology. Writing is a passion and hobby of hers. She’s currently working on three different novels that she one day hopes to publish.

- *Shadows of a Child’s Past* ..... (Fiction, p. 68)

BECK ADELANTE

Beck Adelante is a mixed race and genderqueer student, originally from Arizona. They are on the literature track for the Arts, Media, and Culture major. They recently read at the Tacoma Lit Crawl this past October. With a love of Shakespeare and most literature, they aspire to become a professor in the same field.

- *Resting Heart Rate (49 bpm)* ..... (Poetry, p. 92)

CASSIE CRELEY

Cassie Creley graduated from UWT’s Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences program in 2007 with a degree in Communications. She has 8+ years of experience working in Communications with a local library.

- *A Moment Is* ..... (Poetry, p. 03)

- *A Tin Full of Sky* ..... (Poetry, p. 98)

CHANI GOMES

Chani Gomes is a senior pursuing a double major in both Psychology and Writing Studies. She is a dedicated student with hopes of making the world a better place. She is passionate about helping people, eating food, and petting animals. She is the loving owner of 2 dogs and a freakishly old fish that just won’t die.

- *Keeping Account* ..... (Poetry, p. 94)

CHRIS PIZZANO

Chris Pizzano is a junior majoring in Creative Writing Studies. She hopes to gain her MFA at UW Bothell when she graduates. She wants to teach writing studies to students in the future.

- *Seahorse* ..... (Poetry, p. 13)

ENRIQUA BERRY

Enriqua Berry is a Social Work major who describes herself as a rose. Pretty and delicate with protective thorns that work as a barrier against the oppression of people who love her petals. She also believes roses that grow from concrete are the most beautiful of all.

- *Archangel* ..... (Poetry, p. 74)

JACLYN SCHULTE

Jaclyn Schulte is a Writing Studies major on the creative writing track. Her pieces are inspirational and heart-warming. She hopes to start building her career as a published author.

- *Learning to Love Yourself* ..... (Creative Non-Fiction, p. 04)

- *Mt. Rainier* ..... (Poetry, p. 34)

- *In the Canyon* ..... (Poetry, p. 86)

JENNY MILLER

Jenny Miller is graduating in March with a Bachelors in Creative Writing and minor in Spanish. She’s a photographer, writer, and activist. She loves the outdoors, coffee and chocolate. She has two teenage boys who own her heart and drive her crazy. Her passion is bringing people together through art.

- *Let’s Hang* ..... (Visual, p. 12)

- *Point Defiance* ..... (Poetry, p. 14)

- *Hourly Parking in Colombia* ..... (Visual, p. 51)

- *Your Endless Blue* ..... (Visual, p. 54)

- *Crazy Beautiful* ..... (Visual, p. 75)

- *My TA-50* ..... (Poetry, p. 90)

- *Coming up for Air* ..... (Visual, p. 99)

- *My Favorite Things* ..... (Visual, p. 100)

JESSICA FOUST

Jessica Foust is a senior majoring in Communications. She’s originally from Portland, Oregon but currently resides with her husband here in Washington. She enjoys the sport of powerlifting, spending time outdoors, live music, and of course, writing!

- *Interstellar: The Space Between* ..... (Creative Non-Fiction, p. 26)

JORDAN STOVALL-PAYNE

Jordan Stovall-Payne grew up in Olympia, Washington. She’s a senior with an Art major focusing on visual arts. She has been making art her entire life and hopes to become either a muralist or an illustrator for children’s books.

- *Woman* ..... (Visual, p. 36)
- *Culture Jam* ..... (Visual, p. 76)
- *War Story* ..... (Visual, p. 102)

KARL NATHAN TOLENTINO

Karl Nathan Tolentino was born in the Philippines and moved to the U.S. at the age of ten. He’s a junior majoring in Arts, Media and Culture. He’s the graphic design/marketing student assistant at the Center for Equity & Inclusion. He uses altered materials to create unique textures and patterns in his artwork.

- *Piña (Pineapple)* ..... (Visual - Sculpture, p. 09)

KELSEY FERRENBURG

Kelsey Ferrenberg has been writing since she was little. Now she is continuing her education in hopes of graduating with a degree in Creative Writing. Her favorite genre to write is sci-fi or fantasy fiction, however, she is just beginning to discover and fall in love with poetry as well.

- *Medicine for Hope* .....(Fiction, p. 77)

KELSIE ABRAM

Kelsie Abram is a junior working as an Arts and Entertainment writer. Currently, she is pursuing her Bachelors in both Writing Studies and Arts, Media, and Culture. She enjoys writing, reading, and spending time with her family and friends.

- *Going Back* ..... (Fiction - Play, p. 38)
- *The Stars* ..... (Fiction, p. 55)



LONG TRAN

Long Tran has a background in cinematography and editing. He’s a Communications major and Gender Studies minor. He is an award winning nineteen-year-old filmmaker who has had his work featured on NBC news. His films have been screened in Seattle, Los Angeles, and New York. He’s also worked on projects with Costco, T-Mobile, Miss USA, and Microsoft.

- *Fantastical Forest* ..... (Visual, p. 01)

MARCELA MARTINEZ

Marcela Martinez is a Writing Studies major who is also working on her minor in Gender Studies. She received her Associates in Arts and Sciences from Tacoma Community College in 2015. She has studied a breadth of creative writing genres including poetry, playwriting, and creative nonfiction.

- *Watchers* ..... (Fiction, p. 16)

MEILING SPROGER

Meiling Sproger is a landscape and bird photographer. She is a Communications major and Global Engagement and Politics minor. She has been taking photographs since she was young and carries a camera almost everywhere. Although she was not formally trained in photography, when inspiration strikes so does she! She admires nature, clean lines, and simplicity. Her interests include filmmaking, politics, photography, and serving the community.

- *UW Tacoma Autumn Time* ..... (Visual, p. 52)

NATALYA GLEBOVA

Natalya Glebova is a senior attaining a Bachelors in Social Work. She aspires to work with families and children within the community. She’s always loved the outdoors and considers herself a nature lover. This quarter was her first attempt at Eco-poetry. She learned so much and enjoyed it very much!

- *Cling* ..... (Poetry, p. 88)

- *Blew Away* ..... (Poetry, p. 96)



# OLIVIA BIDLEMAN CARSON

Olivia Bidleman Carson is an Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences major. Her main interests include film photography, editorial styling, brunch, and Game of Thrones. She captures personality and place with her dynamic portraits.

- *Pirouette* ..... (Visual, p. 02)
- *Ballet Slippers* ..... (Visual, p. 10)
- *Rebel Heart*..... (Visual, p. 37)

# TORI ROOZEKRANS

Tori Roozekrans is an Arts, Media, and Culture major. She is an aromantic asexual living at home with her parents and two cats while working part time at Target and B Natural Music. She wishes to save up money to purchase a tiny house and a chunk of land.

- *Blooming* ..... (Poetry, p. 32)

# TRAVIS HOLLOWAY

Travis Holloway is a transfer student from southern Idaho. He's lived in Washington for about a decade. He was employed in IT since the turn of the century but eventually grew dissatisfied and decided to pursue a career in programming. Writing is an undeveloped skill that he stumbled upon through the process of his return to education. He's married to a wonderful woman and has a precocious 5-year-old who is the light of his life.

- *These Hands* ..... (Poetry, p. 66)



ASHLEY BLANTON

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