



Rocinante: A Journal of Art and Literature









ROCINANTE



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A JOURNAL OF ART AND LITERATURE

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# ABOUT THE JOURNAL

*Rocinante* is a student publication with the intent of supporting and promoting the creative capabilities and talents of the Warner Pacific College community. Initially conceived as a student project for Dr. Pamela Plimpton's Creative Writing class in 2001 *Rocinante* has become the premiere venue for the college's artistic expression.

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# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

I've been thinking a lot about words, lately. Especially how, once upon a time, words were spoken into darkness, and what emerged gave way to our entire existence. We realized that we weren't simply made up of atoms, stardust particles, bones, and flesh but also made up of words.

I recently watched a film directed by Brian Percival, based on a book by Mark Zusak entitled *The Book Thief*. Set during World War II, Germany, there is one scene in particular that comes to mind. It involves a young, harbored Jew named Max and a young, lover of books named Liesel. In the scene, Max gives Liesel a journal as a Christmas present. Written on the first page, in Hebrew script, is the word for "write." Max tells Liesel, "In my religion, we are taught that every living thing, every leaf, every bird is alive because it contains the secret word for life. That's the only difference between us and a lump of clay is a word. Words are life, Liesel. All those blank pages, they are for you to fill."

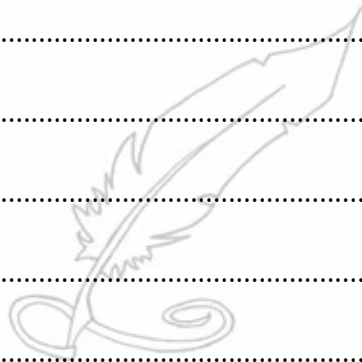
This year's *Rocinante: A Journal of Art and Literature* is a beautiful and thought-provoking compilation of Warner Pacific College community's art and literature. It is a reflection on the human condition. The words and images contained within give our lives meaning. They make us ask questions. They remind us that we use words for inspirations and individual creativity. They are the vessels that represent our efforts to understand the world in which we live.

A dear friend once said to me, "A sentence can change an entire life in a matter of seconds... and sometimes in less than a second."

— Tirzah Allen, Editor-in-Chief

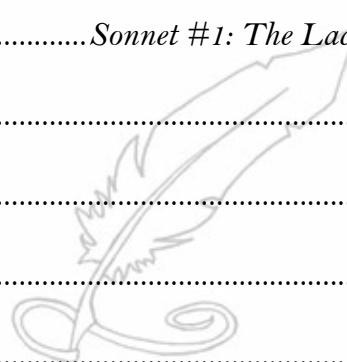


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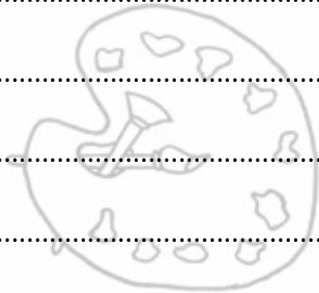
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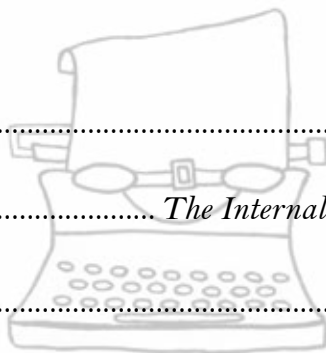
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# *A Slippery Slope*

*Taylor Clark*

It's just a word in my head  
Something I heard, something I said  
But it lingers  
Hovering in the space of my brain  
Like the little ghost Pacman flees from time and time again  
Except more haunting and infinitely more real.  
This word pries at my attention  
Trying to steal my focus  
FOCUS  
Think  
speak  
...  
Nope—can't get past it  
Trying and failing to drown out this racket  
Words, Thoughts, Colors all vying for my attention  
They get so aggressive all building up tension  
Until I crack.



Another piece of me—there it goes  
Like a piece of broken glass  
Except with more of a shadow  
But just as sharp  
And even more easy to miss  
Because every thought that breaks away  
Is followed by a whole other list  
Of variables—pieces of a puzzle that don't quite fit  
And answers are easy as leprechauns  
But that rainbow's tail isn't getting any closer  
So I just walk on  
Me, Myself, and I chatting it up like old friends  
We all know that this conversation will probably never end.  
And I wonder if it's even worth talking at all  
Ask questions so big and what I want is so small  
Just to know—why a life begins and ends  
Who gives directions to all four of the winds  
What does it look like to live and to love  
And will this moment ever really be enough?  
None of these questions feel right in my mouth  
So I swallow them along with all of my doubts  
But that word still chokes me, no matter how hard I try  
Not to fall down the slippery slope of Why.





# *Pleasure Reading*

*Hannah Mierow*

I close my eyes and open the cover. Brace myself for the journey ahead. I know once I open my eyes I will enter into a new place. I will face cliff hangers and plot twists. There will be secret messages hidden in the text that only my eyes will see. I can smell the pages. I can feel the paper touch my dry hands, experienced with turning pages. I know I will fall in love with characters, and will picture every scene in my head. Preparing myself is easy. I've done this a thousand times.

I open my eyes and turn to the first page. I become engulfed in characters' lives, and can imagine myself with them

in their world. There are vibrant pictures in my head, and it's as if I'm experiencing everything for myself. Their problems are my problems. Their struggles are my struggles. Their triumphs are my triumphs. There are no stopping places. Once I start, it becomes a furious, page flipping frenzy. My eyes get drowsy, but I continue on, not wanting to abandon my new companions. I can't let them down. I know the night will be long. Preparing myself is easy. I've done it a thousand times.

I sense the sun peeking into my window and realize that the pages left are few. My journey is almost over. I begin reading



slowly, hoping to draw the experience out for as long as possible. I cringe as I turn each and every page, afraid the next one will be the last. I'm not ready for this journey to end. The characters slowly begin to solve all their problems and I realize they won't need me anymore. They will always be with me though, for there is a lesson to be learned from every book. The lesson is different for everyone but I always learn something. The story begins to slow down and I sense it coming to an end. I've done this a thousand times. But preparing myself for the end is never easy.





# *Parapet Falls*

*Jocelyn Bratcher*

Hands, secured to my hilt, quiver  
A thin mist conceals the moat  
Men line along the parapet  
Here, no one is mighty  
Lands covered by plague  
I fasten my gauntlets  
  
Frost glistens off gauntlets  
Six arrows fill my quiver  
Among men, fear is like a plague  
Bridge drawn from over the moat  
Our fortress is mighty  
Fear does not reach our parapet  
  
Red-black flags decorate the parapet  
Men shift, adjusting their gauntlets  
Sun shines bright and mighty  
Horizon begins to quiver  
Ripples run through the moat  
Here comes the plague



Black clouds spread like a plague  
Approaching the stone parapet  
Lightning reflects in the glassy moat  
Lances, swords, gauntlets,  
Bows, arrows fill each quiver  
Equipment built mighty  
Their numbers are mighty  
Our minds are a plague  
We start to quiver  
“Stand your ground on the parapet!”  
Rings over the clink of gauntlets  
And echoes around the moat  
Now meeting at the moat  
The battle is mighty  
Broken gauntlets  
Lie across land of the plague  
Crumbled stone falls before the parapet  
On our knees, we quiver  
All over, lands quiver, bodies lie lifeless in the moat  
Collapsed parapet, once was mighty  
We have fallen to plague, limping away I fasten my gauntlets







# *The Sailor*

*Emily Shaindlin*

Selene lets shine  
Her pale white light  
And urges the sailor on.  
His Erebusian tales  
Certainly won't fail  
To spur a legend once he is gone.

The darkened waters  
Are nothing but fodder  
For his adventurous spirit to claim.  
For, since that fine day  
He first sailed away,  
He wanted all to remember his name.

He pulls to shore,  
Late one morn,  
To stop and rest a while.  
But lo and behold,  
In his cargo bay stowed,  
Was a monstrous crocodile.



Now this sailor knew  
Just what to do  
For he'd learnt much in journeying.  
He grabbed a tall musket  
He prayed he could trust it  
then forced the croc up the deck, into the sea.

This battle aboard,  
His dear little horde,  
Had captured the town's attention.  
Much had they seen  
But none could believe  
The man's calm, undisturbed action.

After defeating the croc,  
The man boarded the dock  
And asked for a room for the night.  
The man at the inn,  
Too shocked to begin  
Said, "please, stay as long as you like!"

The sailor gave a nod  
Of grateful aplomb  
And walked on with the innkeep,  
But before he crossed the door,  
There rang an ungodly roar  
Out sprang a beast from beneath.

It was a colossus so great  
That its entire weight  
Would've housed four Globe theaters.  
From large, scaly head  
To horned tail's end,  
Never had the sailor seen such a creature.

The sailor drew  
The sword he knew  
Would bring down the great fiend.  
As he swung his blade  
He felt somewhat betrayed  
That he'd run into this after all he had seen.

For he'd fought with harpies,  
He'd scoured the seven seas  
Looking for lost damsels at bay.  
Yet now when he thought  
He'd get rest like he ought,  
Here comes a demon to ruin his day.

The battle wore on  
Well after dawn,  
So much so that the citizens fled.  
The sailor kept fighting,  
Knowing the beast was dying,  
And soon he'd rest his world-weary head.

One final blow  
And the beast then dove  
From a rocky, ocean-drenched cliff.  
And the sailor just watched  
As the beast he'd just fought  
Fell to the watery depths.

The townspeople returned;  
They clapped and they cheered  
For the sailor had saved them all.  
He turned around,  
Threw his sword to the ground  
And to Morpheus' arms did fall.

That sailor he traveled,  
Had many a battle  
And nearly all he won.  
Except for that day,  
Near the end of a May,  
When Death himself he took on.

It was a clear summer morn  
On the cold North shores  
After a fresh fallen snow was lain.  
His last voyage he'd sailed  
and thought he had failed  
To immortalize his well-earned name.

Tucked in a cave  
With only the aid  
Of a feather dipped in blood,  
The sailor wrote down  
His long life of renown  
And, when finished, saw it was good.

At this moment then Death  
Took up his tall scythe  
And entered the cave with the man.  
But as he approached,  
Over the sailor encroached,  
He paused to watch again.

Death waited with a tether  
'Til the man put down the feather  
Before ending his well-lived life.  
By then, he was ready,  
The sailor stood up and then he  
Went willingly with Death to the night.





# *The Beach Boy*

*Tim Jackson*

The Beach Boy of the northwest bay  
had a certain way to say the things one can't,  
he WIGGLED as a baby,  
and stayed soundless as a toddler.  
The doctor's said, "He's an odd-one".

Ever since he could walk and talk,  
when LIGHTENING hit, he felt like dancing and running,  
drumming and strumming, flinging and singing, twanging and banging  
and oscillating with the vocals of an opera of ospreys,  
with the harmony of a million city lights.

Once he started school and was off for the summer,  
and the sun shown through a window in the salty clouds,  
he would zoom down to the Pacific in his sandals,  
SEARCHING the starfish waters for washed up Japanese coins  
carried from the other side of the ocean.

He took each coin down to the local antique shop with a ZIP-ZAP-ZOOP where an old Japanese-American named Kim told him its worth and age. The boy would imagine about the place from where they came: one was thrown in by a small schoolboy flicking his dreams into the tides or a fisherman fumbling for a fag, dropping his spare change in a tossy-tantrum.

One was dated from well before his time, 1942, and Kim told him a story:

About the U-boats and Subs, A-bombs and M-1s, about the Sherman tanks, and German Shepard wolves against the American blood-hounds, Oh! How the two continents COLLECTED dog-tags of heroes in pounds, and then Japan came as an undefined species, a rare fighter, brawling until bombed and blown to disproportions.

Yet a little known story, Kim says;  
Japan used to send out balloons attached with bombs  
through the currents of the Pacific air streams,  
where the weight of war rattled civilians' bones  
and his people cried with amnesty to BLOW the balloons up.

A Sunday school was on a picnic,  
when a kid found one of the balloons and BURST it  
—they all went to heaven, except for the awe-struck pastor.  
Who prayed, “Dear Father, teach me to forgive the ones I love,  
And love the ones I forgive,” and that’s all he could give.

So the beach boy gave all that he could give;  
he equipped small cork and Styrofoam boats with wild flowers,  
attached green army figures to party balloons,  
put a message in a bottle, with a return address  
and TITHED a nickel and two dimes to the deep-blue sea.

He would RELEASE them into the spraying Pacific mist,  
sailing, soaring and sinking until they went so far west  
that they would end up on the most eastern part of the map;  
as if to teleport like the gist of forgiveness,  
landing where it needed to go, because that was where it needed to go.

Japan stuck out, like a cherry blossom among pines,  
a lighthouse among dashed rocks,  
a saint among sailors,  
so that every little penny, note, and toy  
COLLIDED with the Island's shore.

INVADING and forgiving, each vessel hit its mark  
but was pounded on the shore, day in, day out,  
coins were collected, toys were picked up,  
but each note wasn't able to reach a reader...  
until one day.

The Beach Boy got a reply, a Japanese Haiku:

People ponder pain  
as a tempest spreads much waves  
serenity stays  
~Hiroshi Yurushi





# *My Perch*

*Allison Beisley*

I sit and I sit  
Watch the world go by  
The things of the day  
I let go with a sigh

I don't even know  
What I'm doing right now  
And it matters not  
As I unfurrow my brow

My body relaxing  
Letting the world go by  
Breathing slower and slower  
As I try not to cry

The stresses of life  
Never ending or failing  
Makes my heart beat fast  
My Anxiety trailing

But I sit on my perch  
Breathe in, breathe out  
Let my body go limp  
Say goodbye to my doubt

# *To You*

*Jennifer Willows*

There you stand,  
So far away.  
The distance beats out time  
And misty rhythms that I've heard before.  
Footsteps echo down the past,  
Playing the stolid march  
The same old tune,  
And tears stream from my tired eyes.

But there you are,  
Smiling in the distance,  
A distance I am hungry to cover,  
And I am running to you  
Even as the demons crowd around me.  
They catch my shoulders,  
They hold me back,  
And their stench chokes my breath.



I am misfortune's whore.  
I am the foulest Harpy.  
I am Raped by life,  
And rejected by death.  
The mirror is clouded with my blemishes,  
Until I cannot see.  
I wish I couldn't see.  
I wish you wouldn't look.

There is always a light,  
But it only shines from you.  
There is always a pretty melody,  
But I only hear it from you.  
The mirror is discarded,  
For I see myself clearly,  
But only reflected through your eyes.  
You are my sunshine.

The funeral dirge  
Becomes a wedding march.  
The hopeless drizzle of rain  
Becomes angel's tears of joy.  
The Harpy in the mirror  
Is a dove,  
And she flies away.  
She flies to you.



# *SHIPWRECK*

*Daniel Young*

I wake up dazed. Damn.  
The blaring sun.  
A coarseness in my clothes.  
Where am I?  
It's certainly not familiar.  
But this empty sandbar is my home.  
Welcome to Two-Foot Island.

I wade into the knee-deep shallows  
to salvage any thing.  
Sift and sliver, bits of debris  
for my pitiful shack,  
a miserable stack,  
a mound of putrid logs.  
Lifting up a mast I find—  
corpses mixing with the fishes

dyeing red my hopes and wishes  
nightmarish dreams advance this Christmas  
as I'm waiting in the sea.

WATER  
WATER me WATER  
WATER

I ate my dog today.  
How sick is that?  
Starving, close to death.  
At least I didn't have to watch  
him take his final breath.

ALONE, ALONE, ALONE.  
No one can hear me speak.

The Doctor listens quietly,  
and then prescribes some pills.  
—Words betray me.—

Dying, dying, inchmeal.  
Oh, to make it quick!  
Water, water, everywhere  
and nothing at all to drink.

Those taunting birds.  
That laughing sun.  
The mirages out at sea.  
The world is painted, a muted yellow.  
This is killing me.

# *Mute*

*Molly Lindsay*

I'm screaming.  
You can't hear me.  
I'm crying.  
You can't tell.  
I'm laughing.  
You don't hear me.  
I'm sighing, I'm not well.

You're working.  
I can't reach you.  
You're smiling.  
I don't care.  
You're laughing.  
I can't hear you.  
You're sleeping.  
I'm in hell.

We sit in silence slowly.  
We sleep in silent haste.  
We talk in shapes and riddles.  
My words on you I waste.

I realize it's my fault.  
Your faults are in my brain.  
I realize I'm drowning.  
You're perfect.  
I'm insane.



# *Homeless Eden*

*Tim Jackson*

Geography: a jigsaw puzzle  
shaped continents formed with the muzzle  
of weapons that crazed men cradle.

Now we're the furthest from Eden—  
mistress, rum and work are pleadin',  
No child left behind was just an act.

East of east and way out west;  
Columbus took his ship and missed,  
we're now in rush hour doldrums, pissed.

Like madmen in an asylum  
we're running from humanity,  
it's our manifest destiny.

Making millions, can't you see?  
spice, weed, \$5 coffee!  
amp up, get high, let's just die!



Green light gives a go to go  
where one's heart is paved and bound  
detours, shortcuts, roundabouts.

City desert with no water  
where's the water, in the pipes?  
chained below the crosswalk's stripes.

Mind is empty, cool and fine;  
oasis-mind is your lie,  
flesh & blood begin to die.

We are geography,  
wielders of fortune's wheel  
puzzle pieces forced to deal.

Limbs torn to fit the piece,  
triggers handshakes for peace;  
picture not quite perfect.  
Gone in wind blown skies  
a jigsaw piece tries  
visualizing—

Light posts turn to palms,  
traffic lights to stars,  
camels replace cars.

A vagrant now,  
with suits all stripped,  
dresses undressed.

Find water.  
Find some food.  
Basic needs.

Homeless.

Free.

# *Homeless In Prague*

*Daniel Young*

To start the day he positions a towel  
to soften his knees on the stonemason ground.  
He wears layers to keep a little warm.  
He presents his hat upturned  
and bows in the presence of the Lord.  
Here he begins to pray.  
He prays for the city, he prays for the Earth.  
He prays for the nation, and children at birth.  
He prays to the wind, and he prays for the day.  
He prays for people to throw in spare change.  
A monk or a bum? I cannot decide.

# *Pennies*

*Daniel Young*

The penny jar grew and grew  
as copper filled its belly.  
Occasional silver chanced the sea  
but was soon effaced by Lincoln.  
Like under a dripping faucet,  
it rose with slothful persistence.  
So when it began to overflow,  
the reaping now was calling.  
The coins inside had grown quite fearful  
of life beyond the jar.  
The uncertainty was choking,  
for no coin had ever returned.

# *The Internal Musings of a Manic Kitten*

*Jennifer Willows*

Darkness.

The day always begins with darkness, a deep black which fumbles the tall, two-legged ones. I, however, can see perfectly. I can hear perfectly, too. I can hear her breathing, deep and regular, from my perch across the room. She is asleep, even though the day has obviously begun. I can feel energy vibrating through my limbs, and a deep need to attack something, anything, which began as soon as I awoke. She stirs slightly, and I crouch involuntarily, so very ready. Silent as only a master hunter is, I leap from my chair over the heating vent onto the couch. I pause briefly to stretch my limbs, loosening them, preparing them, rejoicing in the feel of my nimble muscles,

and then pad softly across the back of the couch. Once I am across from my prey, I leap down next to her face.

Her eyes move rapidly back and forth behind their lids, a testament to her unseen dreams, and the movement quickens my pulse. What could she possibly have to dream about? She doesn't hunt, she doesn't mate; mostly, when she is in the domicile, she stares at rustling, enticing bits of paper and chases me away from obvious play-things. She does provide food and comfort for me though, and though she is not like me, I know in my heart she is mother. But then there is the male one who comes over. He steals her attention away from me and she frequently smells of him when she returns home. A jumble of

memories—nay, more like impressions—stir in my mind as I contemplate his smell: loud, unfamiliar sounds, and strong hands holding me tightly, trying to feed me. A place I'd never been before, creatures so large they could crush me in an instant. I cried in terror, overwhelmed and so very confused, while they spoke to me in their strange sounds. His smell was strong throughout. But the fog of my memory clears as I remember her and her hands holding me, protecting me and never letting me go.

Back in the present, I look down at her sleeping face with its fluttering eyelids and hesitate. She is mother to me, and I know how she will react to my abuse. Should I go through with it?

Absolutely.

I crouch lower in anticipation of her reaction, still myself, and take a deep breath. I am the greatest hunter. I am a cat. With a motion of pure grace and artistry,

honed by days of careful practice, I reach forward and bat her face with my paw. She snorts, startled from her sleep, and I dart across the room before she can even think about grabbing me to implement punishment. Her voice, angry, stings me as she shouts my name into the darkness but I am too intoxicated by satisfaction to heed her. She shuffles around on her bed, settling back down to go to sleep, and I, too, curl up in my chair, waiting for my next chance to spring.

### **Alternate Ending:**

Back in the present, I look down at her sleeping face with its fluttering eyelids and hesitate. She is mother to me, and I know how she will react to my abuse. Should I go through with it?

Before I can decide, she stirs, and her eyelids whisk open. She draws a quick, startled breath when she sees me and I remain in my crouch, ready to flee or fight as necessary. But then she says what

I have learned is my name, and her tone is warm and loving. Her hand reaches up, and gently caresses my ears and face. For a moment, I am overwhelmed by a need to attack but then I succumb to her loving gestures. I climb onto the bed next to her, meowing softly in response to her low voice, and knead with my claws on the soft blanket she keeps just for me. Purring with satisfaction, I cuddle next to her warm body as she strokes my fur. I can sleep a bit longer. There'll be plenty of time to attack her later.

**The End.**

# *Who I Am*

*Allison Beisley*

I am a walking rendering  
of one place to another,  
holding me together like glue.  
A glue made of love—te aroha,  
and home—whakakāinga.  
A glue that makes me an Other.  
That Otherness sets me apart.  
Can mortal land encapsulate my soul?  
Nay, I am held together by a memory.  
A memory of where I have been, where I am,  
and the prospect of what is to come.  
*This*, is who I am:  
a spirit—wairua, a soul, an idea.



# *A Surrogate Gregory*

*Jennifer Willows*

It was a boring Friday afternoon, and I slouched in my office chair, idly wondering if it actually was going to rain sometime today or just remain ominously gray. I tapped a pen against my press-board desk, trying to emulate a Latin rhythm I'd heard somewhere and scratched the stubble on my chin. In another ten minutes I could justify leaving work, though in truth I had given up all pretenses of productivity hours ago. Actually, I hadn't done a full day's work in years.

I gathered my briefcase and jacket when the clock's hands slid into place at 4:30pm and quickly ducked out of the office. I caught the elevator down to the lobby, completely unnoticed by my coworkers, and stepped into the usual seething mass of humanity which seemed to live in that great marble

space. I fixed my tired gaze on the floor and followed the invisible path my feet had trod so many times before. Get out. Get home. Get out. Get home. My brain said over and over to the rhythm of my steps. It was the unceasing melody of my soul, and had been for years. Get up. Go work. Get out. Go home. Get up. Go. Suddenly, my rhythm was interrupted by a hand on my shoulder and a female voice which inquired, "Gregory?" I turned, building up a series of one-word answers to end this unwanted conversation quickly when my entire train of thought was completely derailed.

Her hair was shoulder length and cascaded from her scalp like rich waves of dark chocolate—not the crappy Hershey's kind mind you, I mean real, 96% cacao, fair trade, dark chocolate. Her skin was a deep



brown and her eyes, slightly crinkled as she tried to match my face to the name Gregory, were magnified by her glasses so that I could see every beautiful, hazel detail. She cradled a sheaf of papers and a legal pad with her right arm and sported a stylish leather purse from her left shoulder. There was a pen stuck behind her right ear and I found myself wishing I could trade places with that pen for just one moment. I then realized with a start that her full lips were moving and she was asking me a question.

“Sorry, what?” I blurted.

“Aren’t you Gregory Shields?” she asked.

My brain struggled for words and settled on a response before I could veto.

“Yes, I am. And you are?”

“Don’t you recognize me?” her brow arched slightly and I felt a bead of sweat form on my upper lip. “I’m Liz Saunders.”

“Oh, of course!” I gushed. “Liz. Right. Hello! Sorry, didn’t recognize you at first. It’s been a really long week.”

She laughed heartily. “That’s fine, I completely understand. Should we be off then?”

“Off? Well, I suppose we should be, yes. After you, my lady.” I gestured towards the revolving glass doors and she walked briskly past me in her heels. My stomach churned as it suddenly occurred to me what I had gotten myself into. I was about to go God-knows-where with this beautiful woman I had never met before and my name wasn’t Gregory. I didn’t even know a Gregory. I said a silent prayer, hoping that God would somehow have mercy on my soul.

# *Because I am Simple*

*Jennifer Willows*

I am an idiot  
Woe is me!  
There are few people  
More stupid, you see.  
No matter my efforts,  
No matter what pains,  
I just can't seem to find any brains.  
A man once stated,  
"Sure, when them pigs fly."  
And I in puzzlement  
Looked up to the sky.  
A woman once told me,  
"The door is ajar, sir."  
But doors are not jars,  
At least, I'm pretty sure.  
Maybe I'm not listening,  
But I promise I try.  
People talk in circles,  
And I'm not sure why.



# *From the Wicked Witch of the West*

*Deborah Landers*

I would say that I am the Elphaba  
To your Fiero,  
But that presumes a connection you don't feel  
Because my life is not a rom-com,  
Where the girl gets the guy of her dreams  
And lives happily ever after.  
Besides,  
While they might have been together in the end,  
Though only on the stage,  
No one knew.  
He was a scarecrow  
And she was a witch  
Whose death  
(Or apparent death)  
Was rejoiced throughout the land.  
What future could there be in such a union  
Except an eternity of awkwardness?

But you sit with her,  
And talk to her,  
And smile with her.  
Is she your Glinda?  
She says she's taken  
But you're closer  
And you're kind  
And I know how your kindness sits in the heart,  
Working its way through the cracks,  
Making a place for you against all intentions.  
I know because that's what it did to me,  
And that's why I feel green.  
I feel like the freak in the room  
Around the two of you,  
Even if there isn't anything between you.  
My life is one of isolation;  
The words don't flow as freely from my mouth.  
I try too hard to hide my thoughts from you—  
I must succeed;  
You never say a thing.  
But I listen,  
I absorb,  
I pay attention,

And, like Elphaba,  
I pretend that I don't care.  
But how many times do I sing  
"I'm Not That Girl"  
And think of you?  
How many times will I chide myself  
"Wishing only wounds the heart"?  
Like Eponine to Marius  
I pretend that I am fine  
Sitting on the sidelines,  
Despairing to find someone to love me back.  
But I can't tell you,  
Because you are looking for someone else.  
And I am right here,  
Helping against my heart.  
If I sound upset,  
Don't worry.  
Tomorrow will be better.  
I will pretend that I am fine—  
Again.  
And you will never know.

# *The End of Night*

*Tirzah Allen*

Her Majesty's sanity stands on the edge of a knife.  
Lightning storms form above.  
Blood drips like black acid, revealing her spite,  
Seeping images of rejected love.  
Leaving holes in her skirt,  
Roses decaying upon scarred feet,  
Returning to the innocence of dirt.  
Gather your dress in hand to the rivers where sorrows meet,  
Ascend spiraled steps,  
To the tower of broken dreams.  
Memories are kept alive by your request,  
In a ghostly reflective glass, knit by nightmare's moonbeams.  
"Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?"  
A pale face appears to the dark scene,  
"Not you, not you," lips whisper of her anticipated fall.



“Everything within you starts to lose meaning.  
Your heart cold as ice,  
A dungeon of abandonment and insecurities.  
Shameful regrets are your vice,  
Filled with Illusions of Grandeur and impurity.”  
The End. of your tyranny screams.  
Goodnight my Queen.



# *The City*

*Alexander Hayes*

Darkness approaches, it only gets brighter  
Buildings are tall, they keep getting higher

The city is hungry, always ready to feast  
Suburbs on the menu, the city will eat

Some think it's bad, do you think it's good?  
Cities killing the environment and stealing the wood

The lights are speaking, what will they say?  
The people so close, yet so far away

To some it is dangerous, to some it is safe  
To some it's a desert, to some a sacred space

Are you a believer in urban surroundings?  
Or do you believe it's where people are drowning?

Whether you believe it or not we still have no choice  
The city is controlling and muting our voice

It's an age old phenomenon that we would like to know  
Cities start small yet they all seem to grow

# *Hands*

*Rebecca Schrader*

**1**

Holding his warm hand,  
ten fingers all entangled,  
nothing but happy.

**2**

Thin, cold, wrinkled skin,  
each line and crease a story,  
listen, warm, and learn.

**3**

Consistently cold,  
each finger an icicle,  
eternally cold.



# *The Memory of A Leaf*

*Courtney Pennington*

While driving  
a leaf hit my windshield  
as it clung tightly all I could think  
was how far my memories have traveled

Along the course, some got swept away in the wind  
and I wonder how if like a leaf  
each emotion strong or dry  
floats down to sidewalks filled with people  
people passing by

Love, friendship, anger, confusion pain...  
fall to the ground and then decompose  
their value forever forgotten

Like a leaf  
on a never ending cycle  
of life repeated

Our memories  
weathered and torn until  
nothing left except  
the tree from which it fell

I try recalling days that happened long before  
but I'm cursed with a mind that is replenished  
recent memories that fog the old  
older memories escaping my grasp  
like chasing a leaf caught in the wind

New seasons bring new leaves  
but I'm afraid to let go  
because once I forget the memories that meant the most  
My soul will sink to the ground  
as a leaf in the fall

# *My Shadow Waves When I Dream*

*Jennifer Willows*

My shadow waves when I dream.  
A long nebulous past  
The horizon where I screamed,  
Good times that never last.  
I wake to the shimmering  
And close darkness  
Choking me  
In my own tired clichés.  
There's the empty auditorium  
That I've written about before.  
And a million reasons to doubt myself,  
Like in that one poem.  
A chorus of shattered dreams.  
Didn't I used to be something?  
But they all turned to stone.  
And there in the land of my fantasy's eye,  
Introverts shine.



They stand for the lady,  
With broad tipped skeletons  
And pale ink pens.  
Like vultures, or men.  
I dream about him,  
But I don't know why.  
I close my eyes to escape  
My flashing dark clichés  
And I see something else.  
A clouded mirror.  
A crowded mirror.  
A red scarf stained with valve oil  
Wrapped around a broken toy  
Sits next to an empty birdcage  
Nearby a crumpled lily  
On top of a keyboard with chipped, tobacco-stained ivory  
Which stands near a stack of canvases, all blank.  
And there's sheet music.  
Stacks of sheet music.  
Mixed with faded photos  
Of faces that no one remembers,  
And the conquered pages of a single book.  
The book I stained with my soul,

But no one wanted to read it.  
When I look closer into the mirror,  
Past the past and all I strive to forget,  
I can never see my reflection.  
I see him.  
And I dance with him.  
He looks just as I've always remembered.  
Just as I saw him last, preserved in a single family portrait.  
I wonder.  
What would he say,  
If he'd lived to see me?  
All of my past in that crowded mirror,  
And there's still blood dripping  
From his heart  
Though it stopped beating long ago.  
I covet the blood—his blood.  
All I have left.  
But it can't reawaken his ashes in the dirt.  
My shadow waves when I dream,  
But I always forget to wave back.





# *Didgeridoo dubstep and dancing dingoes*

*Tim Jackson*

Didgeridoo dubstep and dancing dingoes  
Australian aborigines dancing devilishly  
coral reef tango of fish hued like mangos  
crabs sized like whales, whales like boats,  
boats like dreams, or enslaved screams.

Sandpiper piping on piping hot sand,  
wood smoke like clouds,  
clouds like thunder,  
thunder like screams.

Kangaroos kicking cautious kicks,  
koalas chomping eucalyptus sticks,  
Marsupials dreaming midnight dreams.

Sailors sighting new islands,  
Island's pits will trap the screams.

Screams like dreams of Australian estate.

# *The Yellow Male Beta Fish*

*Abraham Kidane*

Life in a Bowl  
Elegantly swimming  
Dominance  
Presence  
If waters threatened,  
Fins Fan like a yellow Chanticleer.  
Aggressive strokes,  
Deviant turns,  
Beta Rules the Tank.

No thanks for food.  
No time to be rude,  
Beta Rules the Tank!

*Sonnet #1:  
The Lactose Intolerant Cheese Lover*

*Jennifer Willows*

A milky texture and sav'ry taste,  
Though sometimes with a mottled mask,  
Your heady odour having graced  
My nostrils when I ask.  
Truly, is there anything so covetous and fair  
Than the bliss a single morsel of you would bring?  
There is no greater deed which can compare  
When once you make me sing.  
But, my love, my stinky cheese,  
We cannot consummate.  
For now with you so near I freeze,  
You are a poison I cannot accommodate.  
Your pleading eyes shatter my heart, but I must be firm of will.  
Yet, should you prove impossible to resist, I could just take a lactose pill.

# *Balancing Act*

*Lauren Copeland*

We step softly on floors  
made of eggshells, constantly  
second guessing the fragility  
of the love on which we stand.

It's a tight rope trapeze.  
one foot, two feet in front of  
nothing more than the drop  
my heart takes when our eyes  
seem to meet.

This love is a balancing act,  
with no ropes or hope of  
steadyng my feet once I'm  
headfirst, free-falling from the  
strings of your heart.





# *Spoken Word-ish*

*Taylor Clark*

In the beginning there was darkness  
You spoke Light and breathed life  
Blinding us with Your brilliant glory  
Set the stage to uphold what is Holy  
And we fell.

Doesn't matter if the serpent lied or not  
Either way, Eve couldn't take the pressure  
And Adam didn't man up to take the heat, he got  
Thrown out, out grown his welcome in Eden  
The only place humanity has even glimpsed  
God's perfection, His protection forsaken  
With that, Earth was overtaken  
With evil.

We see it every day in the news  
And every single action we choose to take  
We forsake God's love like a valentine  
From third grade, we threw it away

Without a second thought,  
As if it's not enough.  
As if it didn't cost the life of an innocent man—  
The only one who ever loved us  
Has holes in his hands.  
But we look past them  
To find whatever feels right  
But that hole comes back like the dark of night  
And in the morning it starts again—  
The same habits, the same friends,  
Keeping up appearances and following trends  
See, it's kind of like a Merry-Go-Round  
We spent all of our time  
Navigating those ups and downs  
Except we forget that in the grand scheme of things  
We are literally going in circles  
On horses without reins.



# *Chapel*

*Taylor Clark*

The pews echo empty prayers  
As the amps blast cries of desperation.  
The pastor talks about God's love  
And we hear stories of transformation,  
The testimonies of those who have risen  
Above oppression and adversity—  
These heroes provide inspiration  
And hands meet in a symphony of jealousy.

But what if someone told a different kind of story?  
A story with unclear intentions—  
One that made the congregation sweat  
And shift uncomfortably at the realities mentioned

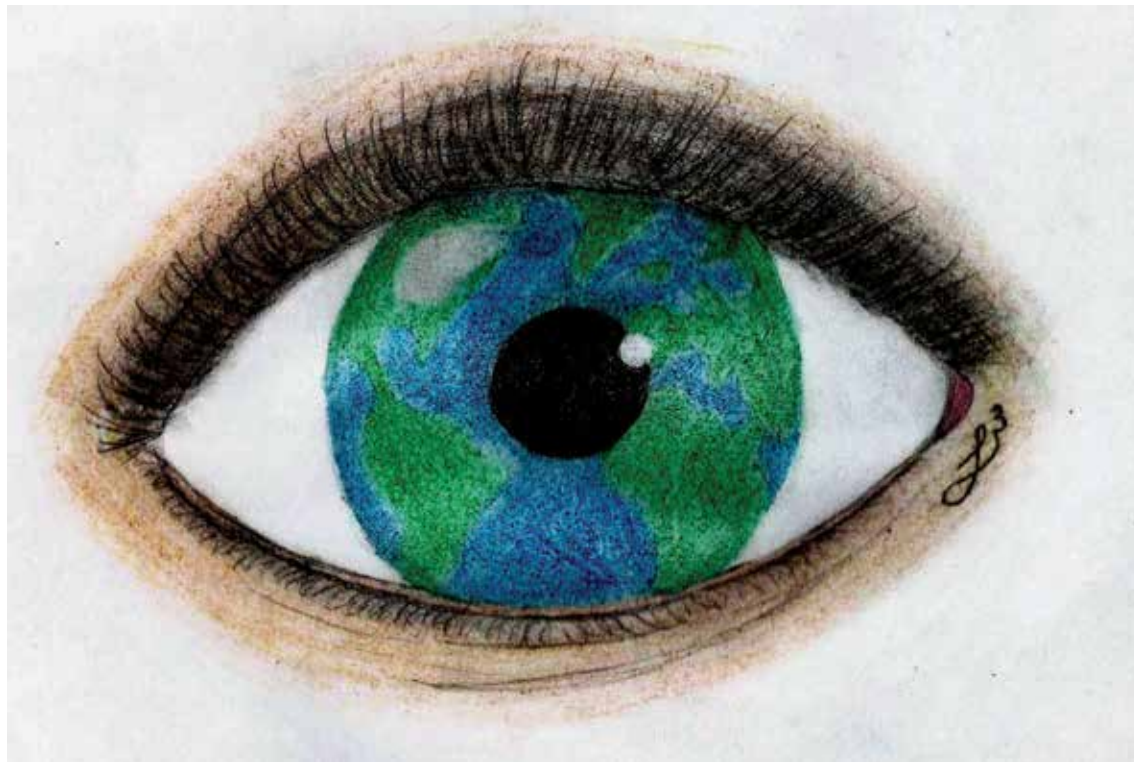
No applause, just darting eyes;  
Some would ask for clarity or boundaries  
But most look away and apologize.

Is it wrong to wish they would think?  
Nodding and clapping is noncommittal—  
What if I hit them low—made their hearts sink?  
Maybe hearing a story isn't always enough;  
Sometimes people just need to wake up.

I will give them a story worth their time  
A tale of love and hate—Christianity for real—  
One that will touch on the parts we hide  
And illuminate the reasons we try not to feel.

One day I will tell a story—  
A tale that awakens more than it hurts.  
Listen up, because once upon a time—  
A little girl sat down in a church.







# *My Great Expectations*

*Jennifer Willows*

There came a day  
Of frightening renown  
When I found a wall.  
The wall was tall  
And stood resolute and bold.  
I was weary and sad of heart  
Too spent to climb o'er.  
So I sat down at the base  
And soon began to cry.  
For, I tearfully lamented,  
I hadn't strength to carry on.  
But as I sat deep in my pity,  
My curiosity did grow.  
With mounting interest I began to think  
Just what this massive wall was hiding.  
For there must be something worth viewing  
Upon the other side.

So I clambered to my feet  
And I began to climb.  
Inch by inch, I made it up  
I found the strength to try.  
But when at last I gained the top,  
My heart sank in my chest.  
I didn't find the wonderland  
To reward me as I had hoped,  
But stretched before me on the other side  
I saw the rest of my life.

# *Viral*

*Tim Jackson*

As I wrote these lines with pen  
I coughed and spat, all over these pages,  
You see, I'm queasy and contaminated.

This virus that affects my hūmors and my bile,  
Is said to be a writer's kind,  
One that kēeps me up at night,  
And makes me looney as a loon,

Yet even throu.gh the thick mucūs in my brain  
I came upon the IDEA to share this, 100% germ free.

I typed it up on a computer, ^  
Sent it to a healthy man,  
WhØ printe-d it, nice and ©lean..

Yet □□□ what I failed to realize,  
Is that computers can have  
this virus too! .....

SYSTEM REBOOTING>>>

...

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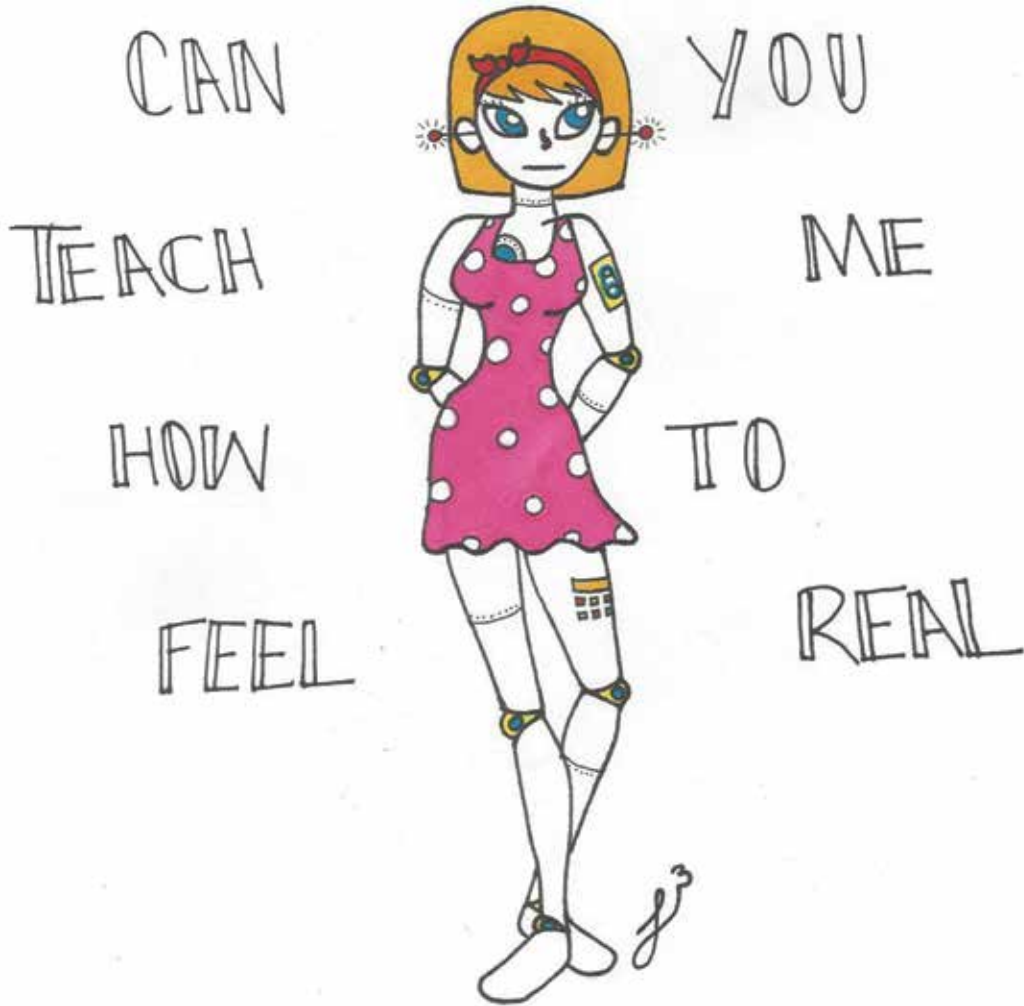
VIRUS REGENERATION

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# *The Actor*

*Zechariah Dirdak*

*Actor in place, Lights Up*

“Oh for a muse,” you see, this stage  
is not a one way street. We are in  
this together. It is life after all;  
the world, on an ocean, on a raft.

I beg you, imagine a raft upon  
the ocean. Let us be constellations.

I am nothing, unless you see me.

*Exit Stage Left, Curtain Up*

*Enter Stage Right, Cross to Center*

The actor is an agent of action, to be  
false to one’s self: impossible, when  
you are within yourself. And the target,  
must be risked. All is lost, or gained.

It never is a stagnant pool, and time  
will never freeze. Take care, don’t hold  
but always grasp: “Wherefore art thou?”

*Lights Dim, Set Change*

*Lights, Enter Ensemble from Wings*  
Go through the paces, back and forth  
a Greek tragedy, the well-made play,  
is made of denser stuff, than man.  
The gods are judge, and this lofty  
globe will, one day, burn down;  
only to be remade anew.

*Exit Ensemble, Exit Time*

*Lights Crossfade, Enter Actors*  
It's you, and me, and this moment;  
to be known is to be loved, and I  
love you now more than any lover.  
In your bright eyes, my reflection  
winks at me and smiles.

*Exit Stage Right, End Scene*

*Lights Down, Spotlight Center*

We shadows of life, are figments  
as unsubstantial as the spider's web.

What will become of us, if this is  
all there is; A parable, a looking glass,  
an Actor on the stage. Oh dear  
friends, there is no end to this  
our play. Now we live.

*House to Half, Actors Bow*



# 42

*Lynzee Felder*

Dear Father, forgive me, I have a confession  
I have this sick obsession with asking all the wrong questions  
    This curiosity's a cancer  
All I want is all of the answers  
    I'm fighting for my life, no  
    I'm fighting with my life  
    We're going toe-to-toe  
I'm givin' it my all against this friend—I mean foe  
    It shouldn't be this hard  
    I just want to know  
    What is life?  
    Is there a start and an end?  
    Or is it a track on repeat  
    Playing again and again?  
I just wanna know what's true  
    It can't be this simple  
There's gotta be more to life than 42.

*Looking Into A Clear,  
Summer Night Sky In Wisconsin's Great North Woods*

*Blair Walsh*









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