

An aerial photograph of a forest. A dark, narrow path or streambed runs diagonally from the top right towards the bottom right. The surrounding forest is a mix of green and brown, with some areas of bright red and orange, suggesting autumn foliage. The texture of the forest floor is visible, showing individual trees and undergrowth.

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And Then I Died

And then I died. My life did not “flash before eyes” like fuzzy graffiti on a passing freight train waiting in a car for the red-lit gates to lift. I didn’t stand in awe of a divine-burnt light that choked me into a moisty skinned slug cowering from the salt sun. I wasn’t brave—I just thought about myself and, well, um, how I really just didn’t wanna die. My last thoughts before dying were: “fuck, I’m dying.” And then. Then I died.

Black lights on all sides—Is, is that even possible? The bards won’t sing of *my* name.

I opened what felt like my brittle eyes, candycoated in crust like fresh M&M, surprised to find a spring-loaded playground pony standing parallel to me amidst a tumbleweed town from a John Wayne film. His eyes were painted clumsily on by kindergarteners—maybe mine were too. All things possible!—And I saw a chipping eternity in him—two cracked mirrors perched parallel, each reliant on the other to exist without end like the amount of times you can flip a coin—and I was just heads, always heads. A one-sided coin that landed on its other side and stopped existing like downtrodden Pluto the Planet—the gargantuan, icy albatross of the charcoal stellar skies. The pony opened its mouth to sourceless applause and there I saw God, or maybe Zeus or Santa Clause (because it’s hard to tell the difference between all those beardy old white bros) and so God cursed down to a village below:

“Oh! Stormwed crash, a flash in the marshmallow heavens—bow before me, only my might can make it rain!”

Said a villager back to God “then I’ll stand under a dewy tree and shake it when folks walk by.”

“Oh, shit, wow man, I didn’t think of that,” mumbled God, kickin’ up dust with his shoe all bashful-like.

And unsurprisingly now, dew shook from the skies like a dog shakes droplets from its snake muscley tail—and, oh, it’s probably worth mentioning the ground took the place of the sky, roots reaching down as rope ladders for the me the water droplet to climb so I could get my Gym Class A. A—A grade so tragically denied to lunchable downing circle boys with equally circular glasses and asses. Come my children! fatboys McFlurried into me; we were absorbed by the root stream, a playground wooden blood cell. I became all things as all things became decidedly unnecessary like flabby plastic pieces at the ends of mechanical pencils, withered so quickly like so many promises—and, geez, now I sound like a little bitch...

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“Eat your vegetables dearie, and no swearing at the dinner table,” cooed Cosmic Mother Earth to the all things called me, her soup spoon spanning endlessly down my mouth to throaty eternity as I blue-skidooed down my own throat like a 90's Dad coat turned unfortunately inside out; the outside in me an inverted catastrophe all things stuffy and dreary in purgatory—a place that smells like baby powder where sinners like me are forced to spend 47 minutes talking to every individual person's least favorite aunt and eating vanilla creme wafers (which, admittedly are the best kind of crème wafer) until I re-opened my eyes and found myself lathered by those crusty, crumpled and familiar washclothes in what could only be the grease on pre-packaged artificial pepperoni.

Everything smelled like an American cheese and cracker tray at a forlorn family reunion. The kind nobody really wants to go to.

The crackers weren't even Keebler—that is, obviously, how I knew that I was in hell.

Kevin Cooley

Sinatra's Back in Brooklyn

I've got the world on a string

Hanging of my leather caressed skin

Floating gently off empty spaces over grass and

My leg becomes its very own porch swing. . .

A pendulum for the weary staring back and forth because

I'm sitting on a rainbow and they can't really tell how high I actually am because faces really become
nothing but empty spaces in an Allegany midnight

I've got the string around my finger so I don't forget where I am

Where I came from

Maybe this string will be replaced by wedding rings expressing unity

You and me. . . illuminated by Boston's Harvard lights and

Brooklyn's beautiful flowerty that flowed you to me and

Caused us to dance together like dust particles that do nothing but intermingle with each other and find
a place to rest peacefully before getting swept away because according to the world artists like us mean
nothing to society

But honey we. Are. Precious
And nothing will stop us from
Writing or
Cursing the names of people we once loved or
Sitting on rooftops having a beer and kissing the lips of the universe. . . or eachother
And we'll laugh
And sigh
And say
"What a world, what a life- I'm in love"

Makeda Loney



"Winter Trail"
By Tim Crino

Dammit Cheerio

dammit cherrio why u so delicious
i eat u so much my mamma is suspicious
she like “do u have high cholesterol or something?”
and i’m like “no they so tasty it’s like im eatin dumplings”
it’s a grainy explosion in my mouth
they make them from the crops in the south
sometimes i eat them with chocolate milk
the cheerio so creamy i feel like i’m chewin on silk
i hate it when my mama gets fruit loops
especially cause she knows it give me rainbow poops
and i’m like fuck the creators of coco puffs
you can’t even touch cheerios stuff
who do wheaties think they are attacking cheerio’s turf
if it were up to me i kick them off this earth
i’m sick and tired of all these other cereals hatin
on what the people at cheerio and co. are making
and im sick and tired of lucky charms
that shiz is made out of puke from farms
every other cereal just need to step off
or ill get my boys called the bloods cough cough

its crazy how i feel this way about somethin so small
i would back cheerios up in a brawl
dammit u cheerio why u so freakin fly?
i will be ur friend till the day i die

Kevin Caufield

1.

There once was a box, and in the box was a girl,
Passing by was a fox,
with a smile that curled.

Said the fox to the girl curled up in the box,
“Whatever are you doing, here?”
Looking up with tears at the fox by the box,
Said the girl in the box to the fox at her ear,
“This is the only safe place,” she said to the fox
A jewel of naivety whispered in fear.

Now, the fox wrapped the girl in his tail you see,
As the wind had grown cold and so shivery was she,
“Come with me, come with me,” said the fox with glee,
“I’ll warm you right up and have you fed if you please.”

So the girl in the box went along with the fox,
Whose quaint smile concealed his very sharp teeth.

2.

There once was a tree by a girl by the sea,
But this tree was dead
and this girl was free.

This tree was shade for the girl and for me
As we talked about life, and the law
that killed me.

For the tree that stood, proud and dead by the sea
Was the tree where the law
Had proudly hung me.

Because in the bark of the law’s favorite tree
Was a heart with initials
From this girl and me.

Karly Gombert

Cellar Door

As I stand before the backdrop

Of a beautiful summer's day,

I ready my brush and easel

As the songbirds chirp away.

The vibrant greens leap forth!

And the passive blues away,

The earthtones wink, and in the wind

The reds and yellows sway.

The deer below - in the valley,

Calmly cease their play

Heeding the coming darkness

That hearkens the yielding day.

They move now towards the forest,

In the fields down past the bay

Where in those dancing waters,

Fish lull now in the spray.

The birds chirp in the coming dark

Though they quickly cease to say;

Stoic now, they pass the night,

Lethargic on this eve of fey

The waning sun peers over trees

Casting down a final ray

That alights a nodding flower,

For a moment - the darkness held at bay.

Shadows invade that peaceful place,

And rout the peaceful day

A chill enters that solemn land

as the light meekly fades away.

I step back from my easel, smiling.

"I am the director of this play!"

The vivacious scene before me?

A violent self-portrait of grey.

Carl Beacker

Crawl Space

From the beginning of time we are brought into this world simple and faulty. We manage to stumble, and eventually waddle from place to place. As a baby we crawl and then after time, begin to reach out and walk. Then after we learn, we forget about some of the places.

We get more concerned with faces.
Expression, actions, deceptions,
Was this safe?
Why is this wrong?
Why does my finger hurt when it gets burned?

We begin to open things and search for more and more room. We may even complain about the size of it, and ask why our sibling's are much bigger and cooler. They have bigger beds, more room for their favorite pop star posters. More shelves and more toys. Toys that they refuse to be anyone but theirs. We learn to share. Sharing everything we own, or think we own. We learn the difference between a bright yellow Big Bird sesame street phone and a real one. As our bones grow, they begin to shape our bodies as we impatiently adjust to our surroundings.

Things change, time passes, we start to think about classes.
Homework, projects, friends, lovers, referrals, write-ups, sports practices, play rehearsals, graduation ceremonies, weddings.

We keep creating new spaces for things in our heads, or our once seemingly little crawl space.

We grow older and our bodies continue to adjust further. Until we feel we can walk, stride for stride with those giants we once considered tall.
And we begin to realize we are small.
Small like your pinky toe, or a mouse, or bread crumbs, or laundry lint.
But then, the steel hits the flint, you can't see anymore and you are forced to squint. You can't see the road signs, or even your kids faces, you can't tell anymore if Julia still has braces. And you begin to crawl into much smaller places.

We don't remember much. Our world has shrunk, our body is drunk, it needn't quench for thirst any more. We are in a mindless-perpetual funk. So we pack our things up into a large wooden trunk, and we are told that we can't walk anymore. We need to be helped by others who can run, and they will continue to help us, at first we will think it is fun. But then we see our reach has shortened and we fall like we did way back when we couldn't quite reach the top shelf, or the cookie jar.

Way back when all we could do was look, observe, and stumble from place to place. Our knees didn't mind the rug burn, we were not yet old enough to learn. But now we see that time has taken its turn and as we sigh and smile, we weep softly. You cough a little and make your peace, you die a little inside, and then you are released.

George Allan

I'm Learning

Eighteen
Freshman
Naïve

Thinking
Believing
Dreaming

Never knew existence 'til it hit me in the face
Never knew what hate was 'til I found its home
 Never knew love 'til I found this place
Never knew friendship; now I'm never alone

Never knew betrayal 'til she ruined my week
Never knew trust 'til they saved me from the hurt
 Never knew strength 'til I wasn't weak
Never knew a 'home' as a place of comfort

All of these things I never knew
None of them I expected to find answers to
But in such a short time, only 15 weeks in
It's clear that college is where life begins

There are answers inside of the classroom
 But more are found in halls and dorms
I may not have been prepared for the lessons I learned
But I've got 3 more years and friends to whom I can turn

Brianna Wilson



By Paige Winston

Ivy

Leaves cover brown brick in spring,
Green popping out to add some bling.
Sun sparkles on the summer sun dress,
And in the ivy birds build their nests.
After summer comes fall, as we were told,
And the gown turns to brilliant crimson and gold.
As winter comes, leaves fall away,
But the vines are there to stay.

Amanda Tkaczow



*“Fall Storm”
by Tim Crino*

Today

My faith is enduring a natural disaster, pleading for your hands. It needs to be carried. It needs to be held. But you cradle my faith with your silence while the world lifts me up in the air higher and higher until breathing is impossible to do so. And I am trying to survive here, trying to feel what you want me to feel. Trying to see what you see because it's not always like this. There are times you have made me feel like a boat sailing without the wind, like a tree ready for new leaves. But today I feel like I am wilting. Today I am the winter that has not yet seen the snow. I need some wind chimes to wake the eardrums of my faith, but more than anything, I need a faith that is scared of dying. Pick me up. Now bury me in your chest, with the dirt of your love, so I can start all over again. I want to be reincarnated.

I want to die and when I wake up, I want to be born again with the heart of Jesus. I want to be free. I need to be free, so I can drop these crutches and live in a miracle. You are my nicotine, inhaling me as I inhale you, and you enter the veins of my body rushing in like acid, shoving through like a stampede, but kissing me like a new-born. You enter my blood like you are parting the Red Sea, making your way into all that is me. You are the ground to my pine tree, sustaining my roots, holding me so I won't lose my balance. And I want to remember this today. Today when I feel like biting the edges of my uneven soul, today when I feel too small to compete with the world because you are here now, the lungs of my breathing faith.

Alexandra Henry

lareldlecanik

Behind the tinted window framed against the wooden door, stands my favorite Bonaventure memory. Her blonde hair sprinkled with a brown undertone extracts power from the light. The strands glow against a winter's cynicism and form the center of my bad day. A down to earth outlook contrasts her beauty, and her glance disarms me. A dose of kindness formed foundation for belief. A friend of coincidence, at my most vulnerable moments, I pass my memory often.

Phillip Nichols



By Paige Winston

Sordid Summer Days

I kept my men in a box between battles.
Endlessly, they fought in the afternoons.
My drowned commands barked out amidst gunfire;
alone, I basked beneath the stark white sun.
Loathsome, I have long since lost,
that box, and with it my dreams.
My stoic plastic brothers scorned,
my summer, lost in a day

Carl Beacker

Light

Gloom envelops the village.
Life has fallen to the ground.
Menacing grey clouds loom
With no promise of departing.

Rain conquers the town,
And more desolate rain is promised.

When tears are about to fall
And before all despair,
An illuminated white flutters down.

Some whine at the sight,
For they loathe what the white brings.
But others cheer excitedly.

What crystallized rain brings
Is light to displace
Gloom of late autumn.

Alone snowflakes light
The village as it awaits sun.

Amanda Tkaczow

Vonnegut free-write

I saw this with more endearment than anything else, as it's a communication system that ahs transcended and good days, bad days, holiday depression, Sunday trips to church, work promotions, report card reveals or underage hangovers.

My fiancé's family barely ever yells. Well, fiancé isn't exactly accurate, it's more of an impending realism, which is interesting seeing as his sister's an optimist, brother's a cynic, cousin's a lesbian, uncle's a Lt. Colonel and he's a brunette - but I'm a Leo, so I guess that evens everything out. Naturally, we Americans are a loud, obnoxious people. Our sports fans are loud, our patriotism is loud, our Walmarts sare loud, and most importantly, our dependency screams about as loud as Mom did when she found porn in my brother's bedroom. (Now, he was 12 at the time, so you can imagine the hysteria and invocations of Mary).

But, it's not so much that we yell as it is what we yell about, or really, when something's so horribly wrong that no one's yelling at all. *Karly Gombert*

Lines Composed in Sad Little Plassmann 305 as Swan is Raised Outside

What you really have to understand when you're—MERP MERP MERP MERP MERP— into Wordsworth is that he—choom, choom, choom—like Blake. Blake had an immense love for the city—BRUM—don in spite of its “fallen world” tendencies, but—CHIZeeeeeeee—a country boy. As a nine CHIZeeeeeeee—would roam the Lake District and find his way home who—BRUM BRUM—a wandering cat. Calling him just a nature poet is—“Hey, is mrum mrum mrum where you want that or mrum marum?”—immense disservice. The guy had a near Romantic—really, I mean it, the love kind—relationship with the untamed land and the—BRUM BRUM—inhabited it, groomed its soils—MERP MERP MERP MEEEEP—wrote sonnets about it. The independent farm folk—ponk, ponk, ponk chizzzzz—last stray cats...they didn't have a choice but to pack—BRUM BRUM BRUMPH—the city and take jobs in industry—the literal business of business building. Can you—BRUMPH BRUMPH—can you guys hear me alright? Really? Okay, because, I mean—“yeah right there is good Chuck, mrum mrum come on man mrum mrum”—if anyone wants to move to the other side of the room that's okay. If there was something we could do about it—yeah, close that window. MERP MERP CHIZeeeeeeee...eee...eee—Urgh, so anyways, um, yeah, this theme of the taming of that which was never meant to be tamed—choom choom choom BRUM-BRAMPH—evident in Wordsworth's honest mas, choom, piece, choom, “Michael”, choom—because, financially speaking, Michael might own his land until the bank comes in—Baaaahh-reeeeeeeeeach. BRUM BRUM BRUMPH MERP—own land like you can own the air or the ocean or ten minutes of a sunny day—and God, did Wordsworth know that. BRUMPH—Michael is the Father, the father of it all—he tends to sheep, the land—choom choom CHIZeeeeeeee—his need for it, bathes in his own simultaneous inferiority to it and synthesis with it, and—CHOOM CHOOM BRUM BRUM BRUMH. Yeah? Okay, you with me—just ignore it, we've gotta make due for now. But when the city comes—Fumpfump BRUMPH—when land ownership and the bank and the business of it all come into play Lucas is ripped away from that life style like a c-section and that family I never and will never be the—is...guys? Hey, is anyone...

MERP. MERP. MERP. MERP.

Is anyone even here?

Kevin Cooley

Mrs.

My lips, they shake with shock at words you say.
By phone you treat me like a child, stranger.
One thing's for sure I won't include you now.
You broke my heart and told me I was wrong.

My heart, it pounds with blood that's not for you.
You lost my trust; you lost my respect, too.
My voice, it shakes for standing up alone.
By making my point I'm stepping on feet.

My hands, they tremble awestruck at your war.
You wage the weapons at my face and shoot,
I'm weak at knees and red in cheeks for life.
You aren't the one who will oppose me.

Kimberly Bates

Pompeii

The red blooded tears matched the unveiled, unanticipated,
thick, orange burnt, molten fluid rock which glided
against the soft curvature of flesh—
adorned with despair trembling.

Now,
uncovered , a revelation of perpetual confirmation
of the temporariness of time
and of the immortality of passion.
Pompeii thriving in a static moment.

Helen Ventura

Off-roading

Plastic pedal to the metal.
We zoom around the house.
Enjoying A.C. in our green Hum-V,
a Hum-V the size of a mouse.

Hands go through the sunroof and
Grandma yelps out in surprise.
Once small and frail, a big dog wags her tail
and stares at us, confused at our size.

Grandma cruises through the kitchen.
Junie follows not far behind.
A high speed chase, a dog and Bug race,
off-roading on roads that aren't lined.

We come across cracker crumbs,
dust and the TV remote,
Grandma's lost ring – "I lost that last spring!"
Grab it later, I mentally note.

By the couch, we're out of juice
and dust and dirt are sticking.
The toy Bug wins, Grandma finally grins
and Junie commences her licking.

Emily Steves



*By
Paige
Winston*

Condensing the Universe

Condensing the universe
Appropriate remarks are few. Let it go
Rolling off the tongue and into existence
She is right, or she is not, I'm not to know
Stay sharp on what's to come, from a distance
We, or, yes, at least I have an idea
Of how things will develop and/or turn
Study the structure and look at the sphere
Faced with decision when watching it burn
The world is smaller with technology
Cities shrink people know everything, yes
Stars line in place, study astrology
Decode the cryptic message's essence
Find relevance in man, God, or myth
We're commonly equipped with common sense

Phillip Nichols

Plain English

How can you get emotions from words?

They're nothing but vowels and consonants

strung together intricately with the skinning of teeth and the tip of the tongue flicking the roof of your mouth in harmony

You say I sound emotionless when all I am doing is speaking the English language

How does emotion sound?

Does it sound like the rain hitting the windshield of your car as you rush home to your dying mother?

Or the footsteps in the distance of the airport arrival area, getting faster and faster along with the crash of your luggage to the floor?

Similar to the crash your heart makes in your head when your bodies press together

Similar to the crash on the interstate that killed your sister

How do emotions work?

I laugh when I'm nervous

Scream when I'm the happiest girl in the world

I'll sing lullabies to get rid of my nightmares

And these nightmares sometimes present themselves in broad daylight so I can't wish upon stars to help me out

They spill over out of my brains and through my ear canal down to my mouth so I can scream to who ever will listen to me

To those who don't care it would be nothing like those loosely hanging words that won't matter in a certain context

I may tell you 50 different words when all I'm trying to say is "help me"

If you don't hear it I'll scream it until you do

Similar to those screaming for their lives

Similar to those screaming for happiness

My papers and loosely strung words might mean nothing

Just like those street kids that can't speak proper English and use papers to roll blunts

But my papers might mean the world to someone else

Similar to a fourth grader's first research paper

Similar to the cloud of smoke and pages up in dust over the Manhattan skyline just passed 9 when these pages traveled over the Hudson, over Brooklyn, into my hands

Slightly burned at the edges

Slightly more important than anything I've ever said.

Makeda Loney

Plassmann 202

I sit in a room on the second floor
Of a building where I've often been
Where I've spent my days and nights it seems
Filling my mind with facts and dreams
As I gaze out at the world outside
Through the lofty portholes that stand
Beside my desk and between we - I
Between me and my world outside
hanging,
lank shadows in the thoughtless breeze,
that flows, water through a choking stream,
intermittently through the cracked windows,
and into the whole of the room.
Whimsically, my eyelids flutter,
Slowly, my speaking stutters,
Quickly, my mind unravels,
And I leave the sweltering room.
I enter the peace of a thoughtless dream,
But still over me looming seems,
Seems to stand a visage grim,
Of the shades that hang unyieldingly,
Blocking out my sunlight.
SO dark and violent they seem,
harbingers of listless dreams,
standing before the lofty beam,
that flows down from the heavens.
So like soldiers dressed, in rank
standing there before that light
praising God, to them that is,
an angry Fuhrer addressing them.
They blot out the sight of day and night
They steal my dreams, my passion, thought,
These violent little men that yield
Not to night nor break of day
Just stand stoic - despite the breeze
Which reminds me of the dwindling day
The autumn air, the scent of leaves
And wakes me from a pleasant dream

Carl Beacker

The Recruit

It's dark even though there's sun...
and me... I'm the only one.
So lonely am I in these halls.
My spirit weeps and trips and falls.

Confidence has disappeared
and me... I'm facing all I've ever feared.
I thought I would leave my mark...
the sun's still out, but it's dark.

Does my face show how I feel?
I'm scared, alone and not even real.
It's dark even though there's sun...
everyone's here, but I'm the only one.

A tear or two makes its way down
aiming for the snow-covered ground.
I thought I could easily leave my mark.
It's sunny out, but to me, it's dark.

Emily Steves

Robert's First Flight

Bye bye plane
fly so far
away.

Over trees
and homes and
all that you've
loved.

And me.

You'll fly over me.

The plane gains height
Up, up, up you go,

Bye bye plane
fly so far
away.

We've had some
turbulence.
But we're still we.

Fly away
but come back to me.

Emily Steves

Who am I?

African American born in New York, is this who I am?

An English Major fearing for her future, is this who I am?

The girl that gets angry because her father's dead and can't get him back, is this who I am?

That girl that clings to her boyfriend because she feels she will be all alone, is that who I am?

The girl that laughs too loud, or talks loud enough that you have to say shhhhhh, is this who I am?

The girl you just want to punch because she's all talk and no action, is that who I am?

Who AM I?

That I don't even know, waking up each morning is like holding the gun to your head wanting to pull the trigger and then you realize you don't have any bullets. I don't know what I Believe anymore, I feel lost at sea without a crew or food. Life drifting by I notice people getting ready to leave to go to bigger and better things. Some days I just want to let go and through in the towel and quit, then I would feel bad, that guilt would hover over me saying "You know your mom when through hell to play your tuition why the Hell would you end it all now" then reality kicks in and I'm again going to class like normal.

Ask you self this question "Who am I" and if you have to say : what color you skin is, where you are from, who you hang out with , etc then my friend you are in the same boat as me.

When you figure out who you **really** are then find me and show me because I can't see what others see, or maybe its I don't want to see what other see... , but let me know the process you went through and maybe I can come to the same realization.

Tawana Jones-Smith

Would you Kindly?

I held her hand and whispered once
Don't you dare let go
And watched the room spin wildly
Like glistening flakes of snow

I could see the tiny walls
That contained us in this room
Like those that own glass houses
While people peer on through

I clutched her head against my lap
And whispered in her ear
I spoke of strength and fortitude
While my eyes welled with tears

I felt her heartbeat quicken
I felt her breathing slow
And the glint that lit her porcelain eyes
Had begun to dim its glow
I felt her blood upon my skin
I felt it seeping in
Warming against the snowflakes
That sickened me within

I felt her begin to stiffen
And close her eyes in shame
Knowing what I refused to know
That I was the one to blame

She pulled me closely towards her
And asked me not to weep
And asked me would I kindly
Hold her hand as she fell asleep

I clutched her hand and shouted
Don't you dare let go
How could you bear to leave me
Alone in this blinding snow

She smiled as she whispered
And quickly then was gone
But I heard her well before she left
"You've always been alone."

Tyler Beacker

What Type of Day?

A day with no rain is not very great,
The rain trickles like slugs inside your feet,
It never makes one comfortable in
The very least, even in a wet seat.
A sunny day in summer is not cool,
But it is hot as a sauna in heat.
Or maybe as hot as a cooking pot,
Boiling dinner for two, steak as the meat.
But today is not rainy or sunny,
But it feels just right for a time to meet
A dear friend who likes to talk, walk and brag
About the time we had met on the street.
I like today, because it doesn't rain,
But snow is okay if people are sane.

Paul Finley

Capitalist Opportunity

Those wounded
sleep in the infirmary -
opportunity.

We watching
catch thick drops of oil
leaking from their wounds.

With oil-stained fingertips

she crosses her heart, in thick fog,
like chalk's dust. she balances
on a steeple as slim as a staple
muttering the constitution

backwards.

Helen Ventura

UP LATE TALKING
30 October 2012

Listening and laughing.
Smiling then replying.
Sharing to discover
Meaning in each other.
Insights and reflections,
Enjoying small affections.
At the end, the sweetest bitter,
Good night, I'll see you later.

Emily Jo Manchester

Midnight Bike Riders

Insomniatic daydreamers glide.
Air pulls and uplifts chins
with tendencies to plummet
due to undiagnosed lethologica.

Streamlining through plumes of
smoke interlaces mist and music.
Gears one to ten link the chain
between two wheels, and our
inhabitation of clouds and blacktop.

A course of infamy is at hand.
Where liquor and ales enflame
passions of Bukowski and Byron.
Sparks to rekindle reside in the air.
Oxygen's fuel rushes through nostrils.

Euphoria of metaphors ensue, veins
pump inspiration to the fingertips.
Papers should distort with rushed ink;
instead I grasp handlebars with no brakes.

Steven Kuzara

Life

Dedicated to my Gram

When the storm cleared,
I realized that I still had two
strong legs beneath me planeted
firmly in the ground.

Your song remains the same.
The melody is even louder in my ears,
and I'll proudly sing the harmony
you taught me when I was younger,
when I was reckless,
when my hand was planted firmly in yours.
I used to be fearless,
now anything but careless.

The roots don't grow straight down,
but rather twisting and turning,
unforgiving of the soil that
nourishes the growth.

The Maple tree still has some leaves on it.
And the thumbnail in the sky glows eternal.

When the song stopped playing,
I still had the words stuck in my head.

Jacob Fischer

Brain Matter

William Butler was an atheist. He was an atheist until the moment that gun went in his mouth and seconds before the trigger was pulled. But even then, the brain had already sent the message to the tendon of the hand with the finger that would deal his fate. Emotions could not travel faster than impulses that day, and as the hammer of the gun reached back, only to snap forward and send the bullet into the back of his throat and spinal cord, Butler realized who God was.

He was not a man sitting on a golden throne amidst clouds with silver linings and trumpets singing heavenly melodies from the buzzing lips of cherubs and guardians, but rather He is the hope William had dismissed for the weeks leading to the whiskey flavored firearm lodged in his mouth. William didn't lack faith, but chose to ignore it.

As he was sent for his judgment, his body folded onto the floor like the shirt at the end of the drunken night when you can't take the extra four steps to the hamper. William was not dead, only brain dead. His body was alive for a few seconds as he fell to the floor, the handle of the revolver bouncing in a puddle of blood on the hardwood floor. His body could not process breathing, and the last of his breath left his lungs and his blood stopped moving through his brain. Life is body and mind, and William Butler was not dead until both died in unison.

God was as real as a the paper bag 40 diet William put himself on to ensure his feelings were numbed to the point where teeth could be pulled with no consequences. His apartment above a bar allowed him to avoid the windshield stopping him from flying out of the automobile on a back road after one too many old fashioned. He floated every day, back and forth, thinking of the gun in the safe within his closet that housed his tattered clothes used only to cover himself on the walk downstairs and to work at the desk that housed inhibitions of a life wasted. Now the tattered felt jacket was tainted with the blood of a drunk. It folded beneath the body neatly, but was soaked red.

William's thoughts carried him above to the palace of the almighty God. A sign hung on the door said trespassers would be prosecuted, beware of dog, home is where the heart is. Hell was not eternal damnation, but waiting outside for someone to come to the door. His presence wasn't welcome at the gates of heaven, but instead he was sent to an eternity of knocking on the door in a white shirt and skinny white tie, holding the book he never finished about a life at sea filled with adventure, hoping that someone would finish it. But no one wanted the manuscripts of a failure. No one wanted the company of a desperate stranger. He felt grief and sorrow, a sense of being lost and hope leaving his body in the form of a crippled old man on a rickety old rocker towards a porch where no kids were allowed. William accepted his fate, and would spend all of time alone, alive and in death. He accepted no one, and was given no one.

He began to drink and smoke countless cigarettes outside on the great lawn, never looking angels in the eye as they drove their flashy cars through the gates and into paradise. William concluded that he didn't want a part of heaven, even though he really did. The drinking consumed William's life, rejecting the Lord's poor advice and screaming at kids that played catch over his head. William found the tallest building in the town of Purgatory, climbed it, killed the bottle of gin he kept strapped to his jacket like a bible of soldier fighting the good war, and stepped off the roof, plummeting to the ground. He awoke with another bottle of gin, an unfinished book of grief and solitude, and the sun of Heaven blinding his eyes. He looked around and remembered that same lawn he had careened around drunk in hours ago. He had covered every inch of madness, but the bottle offered greener pastures.

William Butler was an atheist, and he was each and every time his life passed before his eyes.

CHANGE

22 October 2012

I am heavy and light.

As my life changes

I am held back

And I am pushed forward.

My Yesterdays have bound my hands,

But Dawn is calling my name.

The cool Moon tugs on my heart,

The Stars' passion burns in my eyes.

But the Sun's warmth excites my soul

And beckons fervently at my hope.

I am driven wild by choice,

Scorned by my freedom to select.

Dedicated to Mark Marcello who inspired me to write again without even realizing it

Emily Jo Manchester

"Bloody Ivy"
Tim Crino



Under Windmills by the Lake

In the now too irregular stillness of night, lying in tall grass where spiders swing on spun hammocks, belly hot and palms open in warmth is a gazer.

More so my melancholy gawking of astrological feats hands of this size merely cannot clench. Not even wisp through her twirling, but still fingers reach out like a fly tied at the end of a child's shoe-string. Tugging at the demoralizing restraints of this mortal body.

This suspended mind traces out the woman's aching face that is our moon. All while a fire dancing Goddess spins alongside me and slurs through her pulsating hula-hoop that it's only a waning gibbous. Reassuring me that soon enough her stone face will be full again.

I'm hoping around the time I can confess to her she's like the pockets of hot air that tease the body to perspire in the midst of a cold front. How her revolving outline of hot embers could break the barreling winds and arc through us. We could inhale the mixture of a thousand gasps of air and release a new offspring into the world, lifting this stale emptiness up to carry the blistery weather of love in her dance.

This woman glistens in the shadows of this windmill by the lake, eyes shut and feeling the heat tease her skin as she rotates.

Then here I am,
headphones shuttering the external,
pulling smoke through filter after filter.

Staring at the blinking lights of floating airplanes that align with Orion's Belt, stretching his waistline. His seams burst, exploding from consumption and feasts that reward gluttony. Stammering breath constricts my veins with zip ties as my eyes digest the gorging of this vast spectrum in the sky.

This collective conglomerate of a man is always on the edge of the earth, spine running along her infinite curvature when lying in the grass.

Resting.
Resting.

Rest eyes shut underneath knockoff Ray-Ban sunglasses. Allowing my chest to grow with the circular breathing preach that is nothing short of God.

All under the forever living stars and stones over there.
Beneath colossal wind absorbing turbines that plummet, spin,
and lastly the rushing blazes of a woman who dances with fire.

Rival

An ensemble of screeching violins
a solid rickashey of a harping A string
zoom in on the second violins you'll see a twig arm reaching over for the bow
casually readying her index finger for a poorly pronounced vibrato
we're tuning, really?
her ethnicity slaps her in the face because racism aside, she says and I quote that her asian descent
makes her better than the section
except she's still forgotten her legs swing around the foot holds of
the last stand in the row of second violins
the concertmaster sits five rows away from her
an audience couldn't view her corduroy flats if they squinted through a pair of an 83 year olds bifocals
I sat with a clear view of her ego next to the percussion
because percussion knows of this joke called a musical group and they know that tyrants come in the
form of blinded back seaters
so the archenemy disguised as my best friend repositions herself in the folding chair
I make my way over, protected by the stench of superiority
you never know what victory feels like until you're sharing bow space with a 4'9" superstar swinging
her thin ebony stunted shoulder length strings attached to her head
because when the music finally plays i see those tiny lips curl into the underbrush of an oversized chin
I see the screech of a poorly performed note ruin the entire song
because her tuning and pre-game has worn her out
and the rest of us have memorized the song

Marissa Bruno

Target Market Mask

Speaking of oppression in the past tense declares freedom.
Suggesting such for the sake of being civil, society chooses to ignore.

Consuming to consume, enough's not enough.
But, can you not feel the binds?
Enslaved by the trade, believing you're making choices?
The only choice you've made is your puppeteer.

They've got you hook, line and sinker, doing just as they'd like.
Walking advertisement, you symbol their new target market.

A mask you wear to be "everyone else."

Michael Paasch

World of Indifference

Waking in the dream that worries me,
reality loses grasp of precedence.

The world I once knew is now distant.
The dreamscape I'm lost in: reminiscent.

I can't seem to tell the difference,
as everything's wrong, but it all seems right.
My internal world, a place of indifference,
realities with me, asleep for the night.
Waking in a dream, I can't tell the difference.
My search for reality: life's great eternal fight.

Michael Paasch



"Black Eyed Susans"
Tim Crino

Kindling

Fruit flies dive in and out of a half-cup of beer as if it's a swimming pool.
They scatter to the next pool as the clumsy hand waivers over the plastic container.
Over on the left side of the court is the ash Tommy left a few nights ago.
He'll leave another pile in the right corner by the look in his eye tonight.
The green sheet offers an abundance of choices, but the majority goes to the Blue Mountains.
I may add, though, the taste wouldn't do you any good.
Andy disposed of his shirt some weeks ago, leaving the net responsible for it.
Familiar faces gather round the grimy piece of wood, giving it more abuse as the night drags on.
For some reason, I don't think it's complaining.

Kyle Zamara

french porn not very good

an ode to my translate app

urban rivals

because of the blackest night gold,

crew wine bar mitzvah,

make me smolder.

Sophia Imperioli

A Prayer

Should I wake one day to find a cold wind on my face,
should I taste pain on every breath and at every meal a bare plate,
should I find myself, someday, lying
in my blood, and upon my lips
“Adieu,”

Remind me Lord ,
when life feels spent,
When I have nothing,
There is you

to be the voice that answers me
when in the dark I call,
To lift me back up to my feet when from you I fall.
As a sentry, above me, on guard at night,
When my wrong bones do lie as a soldier with me in the fight when all the rest do fly,
I pray thee Lord, to hear my prayer--
When in bed on field I lie, should I have failed thy moral test-- forgive me as I die.



By Paige Winston

Finding Burnt Island

The young creature searches to break the dead,
silence that deafens the ears of a hound.

A loon shrieks to the docile crowd of boys,
but their number grows smaller as the stars
peak out and expand across the black.

Clouds creep over combing the chill away.

Kyle Zamara



“Self-Portrait of a Young Woman” by Amy Jarrell

Soften the Blow

Headlights show the end.
Stained-red glass hides the sheer lack
of sobriety.

Jacob Fischer

#3

Clinging to the Earth
It pauses, waits, and breathes life
Not sure how to stop

Alexandra Henry

#4

The ballerina
Twists, turns, glides. Don't fall on me
But to you I fall.

Alexandra Henry



*"Portrait
By Kileen McGovern*

One summer night

On a particular summer night there was an interesting phenomena occurring, a bright light coming from the sky approaching, they stood very close together because they didn't know what this unique light was, the sweat dripped from each of there foreheads waiting in anticipation, both could barely move with the grasp of suspense firmly holding their legs, As it started to fall in the distance they finally could picture what just occurred , On a particular summer night they witnessed something special, On a particular summer night they witnessed a meteor.

Max Lundt

Unrelated Iambic Pentameter

There once was a Knight dressed in black and gold
Dreamless seas - starry nights; unwelcome dreams far into the night
Shadows reach across the land; a beckoning tale of fright
A shallow well; an uneasy breeze in the night

Still I wandered, watching, waiting alone.

In truth the dark is harkening to the end

A frail light lit the darkened halls of the dead

The awakened man pawed at his glasses; terrified.

The turf smelled the same as always; of pain and dreams

I watched the man walk from the edge, perplexed

Carl Beacker

Dear readers,

In your hand, you hold history. No other literary magazine has been consecutively published for as long as *The Laurel*. This is our first year as editors, and we are extremely pleased with the issue we have put together, but also apologetic as there was a slight delay in putting the issue out, as there was a great deal of work we spent the year becoming familiar with.

The Laurel is a point of pride here at St. Bonaventure University, and we believe that this issue continues the tradition of creative and talented work in the form of poetry, prose, photography, and artwork. The works are all done by students here at St. Bonaventure, students who devote themselves past their studies to art and literature.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Richard Simpson, Steven Kuchera, Chris Hill, and anyone else who helped us in our maiden voyage. We will continue the levels of excitement and commitment handed down to us, and hope that this new chapter in the history of *The Laurel* will be long remembered as we enter the 114th year of its publication.

Thank you, and always keep writing,

Jacob Fischer & Chloe Farmer
Editors-in-chief

The Laurel

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"A writer is someone for whom writing is more difficult than it is for other people"
Thomas Mann

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