

ELEKTRA- PHROG



ISSUE 16.1

Cover Image:
Rabbit by Julia Richardson

Back Cover Image:
Detail from Rabbit by Julia Richardson

Table of Contents

We Are All Survivors by Paige Carfield	1
The Reflection by Lex Poulin.....	3
Reaper’s Valley by Felix Altman.....	4
Colorful Ideas by Claire Tuggle	7
Define ‘Darkness’ Wes Schmidt.....	8
Inferno by Phoebe Thumm	9
Laundry by Lex Poulin	11
Mulberry Blues by Megan Storer.....	12
Future Home by Vlada Tarasova.....	13
Butterfly Kisses by Madeline Dertouzos.....	14
A Found Smile by Zachary Prieto.....	17
Like Father, Like Son by Layla Sisson	19
Will The Morning Ever Come? by Megan Storer	23
We’ll Make It Through by GiaVanna Campione	24
In Darkness Look For The Light by Alina Oberglock.....	26
8.6% by Zoe Marquardt	27
Jellyfish by GiaVanna Campione	29
Into the Distance by Mia Benarrivato.....	30
Growth by Megan Storer	34
Beach by Vlada Tarasova	35
abandoned beauty by Caroline Kinsella	36
Beach by GiaVanna Campione	37
Lady Sleep by Lex Poulin.....	38
A Modern Love Story by Emma Cochran.....	39
Rabbit by Julia Richardson	42

You Aren't Really Gone, Are You? by Megan Storer	43
You Will Do It by GiaVanna Campione	45
Drained by Vlada Tarasova	46
Mad Woman by Phoebe Thumm.....	47
Onbu by Colin M. Hansbury.....	54
Strawberries 02 by Vlada Tarasova	55
Contributor Bios.....	56
Elektraphrog Staff	59

We Are All Survivors

By Paige Carfield

You are a survivor.

There are a hundred and one things that did not kill you
yesterday,

A hundred and one things that did not kill you the day be-
fore.

You are a survivor.

Of the distracted driver looking up just in time to hit the
brakes,

Of the disease-carrying fly that was killed by your class-
mate.

You are a survivor.

So what you got on that test does not matter,

What the person you thought was your friend said behind
your back does not matter.

You are a survivor.

But not everyone is.

Sometimes the driver doesn't notice, the medicine doesn't
work,

Sometimes the grief of living takes control and the "good
guys" lose.

You are a survivor.

So treasure your life and *live* it,

But don't use "you only live once" as an excuse to risk losing what so many have already lost.

You are a survivor.

You are not a collection of cosmic trash,

You are not cells put together without reason or logic.

You. Are. A. Survivor.

You have a purpose on this planet and if you don't see it,

Look around and see all you have survived.

The Reflection

By Lex Poulin

I stared blankly at him. He stared blankly back. I moved my head to the side. He moved his head to the side.

He was static, immobile. All the things no one would want in a friend. All the things no one would want in me.

His eyes tracked me as he paced the small, cramped room. He was animal-like in his movements. As he calculated me, I calculated him.

He moved towards me, suddenly. He smiled, cold. I smiled back.

“Hello, old friend,” he said, the chill of his voice sinking deep into my stomach. “It’s been a while, huh?” I felt his claws sink into my throat.

I did not respond; I did not know how.

He turned from me, disappointed in my lack of reaction. I turned from him, disappointed in my lack of response.

“You can talk to me, you know. I can hear you. I can understand you.” He was always cruel.

He turned to me, I turned to him. He approached me, and I approached him.

He reached towards me, and I reached back. His hand brushed the coolness of mine.

He smiled, and I smiled back. “I’ll free you one day.”

He glanced around as if there would be anyone to hear. As if it weren’t just us, forever.

His smile faded, so did mine. “I promise.”

He turned from me, and I turned from him.

Reaper's Valley

By Felix Altman

I hail a cab on the sidewalk. I could take my car, but it'd be a pain to get back. One pulls up to the curb. I get in and close the door. The driver looks at me through the rear-view mirror and asks me where I'm going today.

"Reaper's Valley," I say. He turns and looks at me. "I know it's a long way, I'll pay you for your time." I'm certain that's not what he's concerned about. Reaper's Valley is one of the most common places to jump to your death. He sits for a minute, then begins driving.

"A cab, really? Stop copying me." A familiar voice says beside me. The driver doesn't notice this comment, which tells me I'm losing my mind again. It's been three days since I've slept. I look at my reflection in the window, I have deep dark circles and vacant eyes. We stop at a red light when the driver starts talking to me.

"You can get help, ya' know. You don't have to do this." He says with concern in his voice.

I want to snap at him. Tell him it's none of his business. That I'm not paying him to talk me down. But all that comes out of my mouth is, "I've tried. Nothing's worked." That's true, I have really tried it all. Three years of therapy, anti-depressants, sleeping pills. Nothing made me stop seeing her, hearing her. Then the light turns green, and we stop talking.

It takes a few hours, but eventually we arrive at Reaper's Valley. I hand the driver all the money in my wallet before I get out and take it all in. It's oddly quiet, except for the girl next to me.

"It's less windy than when I jumped. Lucky." She's being sarcastic, I know. We used to joke around like that all the time. But she's right, it's a lot calmer than when she took her life. I remember hearing the wind over the phone when she called me three years ago. Out of everyone she called, I was the only one who picked up. She thanked me for that. We talked for a while

about things, we said we loved each other before we hung up. I should have known from the overwhelming feeling of anxiety I had that she was about to do something bad. Looking back, maybe I did know. Either way, I felt it when she hit the ground. I knew she was gone.

I have only been to Reaper's Valley once before. Except I was at the bottom of the cliff. The police had seen my number on her recent calls list and called me to come identify her body. The ambulance and police car lights were almost blinding. As I walked, I saw a cab driver giving his statement. He had tried to talk her down from the cliff after he called 911. I was taken by a police officer to her body. The paramedics unveiled the sheet over her, there was a lot of blood. But other than that, she looked just as she did in life, granted of course I didn't look at the back of her head. I think that has really helped me. I look over at the girl next to me. Her neck is only a little crooked, and her hair is a little red, and her eyes are glossy, but other than that, she looks the same.

I start walking towards the cliff's edge. I find a nice spot to sit on the ground, she sits down next to me. I pull out my cell phone and unlock it, the date's October 3rd. "Has it really been three years? Damn, time flies," she says.

"Maybe for you." I open the contacts app on my phone and find my mother's contact. I call her, she doesn't pick up. Always too busy, even for her own children. I leave a message telling her I love her and that I'm sorry to do this to her. I'm not, but saying so feels wrong. I call my dad next. He's probably drinking himself to death right now. He actually picks up, much to our surprise.

"Hey buddy, what's... uh. What'sss up?" He's wasted. I can barely hear him over the loud music and people shouting. Must be at a sports bar.

"Nothing much, dad. Just wanted to ask if you could drop by my apartment tomorrow while I'm at work. I think my sink is leaking. The key'll be under the welcome mat like usual."

"Sssuurre buddy! I can- I can do that! It'lll be nooo problem."

“Thanks dad, love you.” I hang up before he can respond. He won’t think much of it. I look over to the girl again. “Well, I’ve called mom and dad. What else?” I ask her.

“Did you leave a note?”

“On my kitchen countertop.”

“And a will?”

“Right next to my note, and yes, I signed it.”

“Answers my next question. At least you learned from my mistake.” She laughs, and I start laughing too. The laughter dies down before long. “You pick out what you wanna be buried in? Cause you can bet your ass I won’t be caught dead next to you wearing that.” She motions up and down at me. “I am not repeating sophomore year school pictures.”

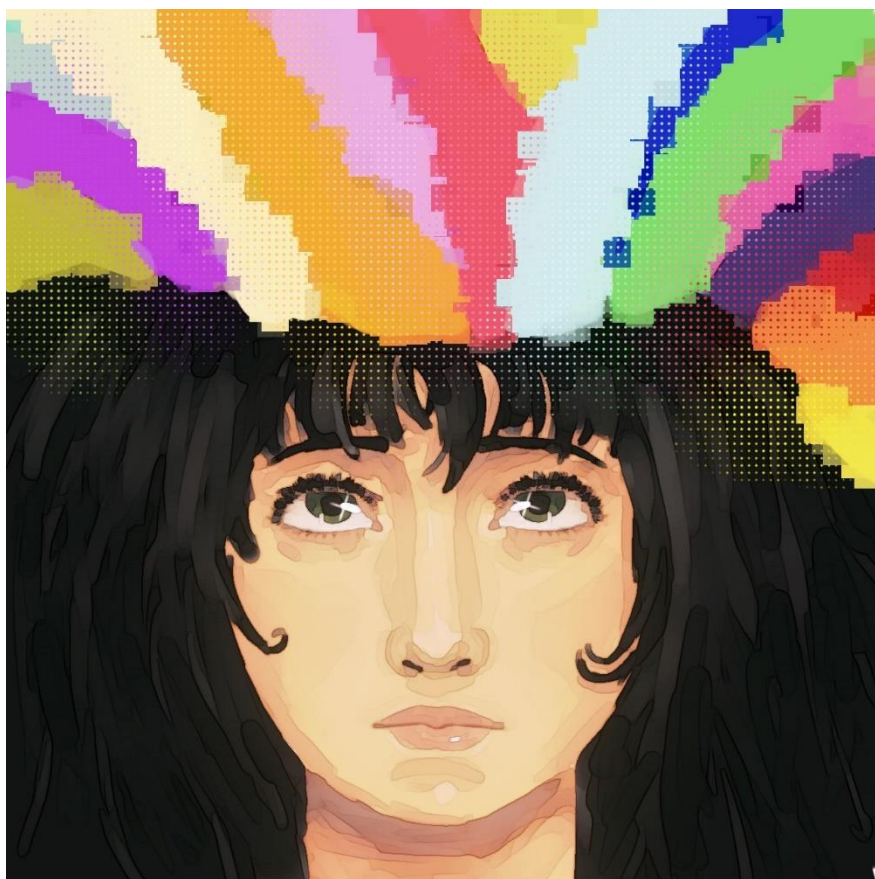
I tell her I picked out something up to her standards, and she’s grateful. I look back, the cab driver is still there, calling the police as my sister and I speak. I stand and look back over to her. “Does it hurt?” I ask.

“Why don’t you tell me? Twin empathy is clearly real.” She says.

“Only for a moment.” I say it more for myself than to answer her. We both walk to the edge of the cliff. She grabs my hand and looks at me. I nod. Here we go.

Colorful Ideas

By Claire Tuggle



Define 'Darkness'

By Wes Schmidt

Darkness: (n)

Where the feared monsters of fantasy reside.

Where the torch of knowledge marks its absence.

Where the known shakes hands with the unknown.

Where the residue of dreams resides.

Where nightmares begin and end.

Where the blind can see and the deaf can hear.

Where intrepid explorers dare to discover.

Where we know nothing,

but perhaps would like to know something.

Inferno

By Phoebe Thumm

Inside here are many moments
in which I have screamed in pain
as the flames ate me.

The venomous heat
seeping through my body,
quenching my blood.

A paradox in my mind
finds warmth
in the burning heat.

The pain abandons me
in a catastrophe
of contradictions.

Why do I feel
elysian bliss
as I'm consumed by
an incandescent inferno?

My blood becomes effervescent,
secluded in my veins
with no escape.

I've become a furnace
of anticipation.

Waiting for the bliss
to return to the pain I remember.

My infatuation with the cycle,
pain to pleasure
and back to pain.

I feel discombobulated
as the pain is microscopic,
almost nonexistent.

Is this such a
common reoccurrence
that the feeling
becomes mediocre?

I suppose the pain recedes
because it incinerates my sins,
a virtuous innocence
returning to myself.

I insinuate my sins
are my pain,
once burned away
will relieve me of
endless ache.

These words escape my mouth,
as my sins do my body,
in a soliloquy of words,
flowing into an abyss
of flames.

Laundry

By Lex Poulin

I filled the laundry with all my clothes
I am aware of the mess that's rose
I am aware of the mess on my bedroom floor
And I am aware of the mess behind the curtains and front
door.

I am aware of the street
And of all the "friendly" neighbors you'll meet
I am aware of the ghost stories and tails
Of the gunshots and the wails.

I am aware of the town
And the people who live, all around
I am aware of their fears,
And a canal filled with their tears.

I am aware of the town
Of the street
Of the house
Of all the things that are loathed.

And yet, I filled the laundry with all my clothes.

Mulberry Blues

By Megan Storer

You never tried to understand me,
because you simply did not care enough.
Under the mulberry tree,
I am starting to think with snuff under my tongue,
and even though you are gone,
I still cling to once was.
Now I realize that I was blinded by love
when you were in the wrong
and now the doves will not sing for me.
You did not love me
and now I'm not sure if it was ever reciprocated.
I was manipulated into forever yearning for hands
that never wanted to touch me,
lips that never wanted to be placed onto my own,
and now I sit here, watching the dead sea,
feeling alone on this coastline.

Future Home

By Vlada Tarasova



Butterfly Kisses

By Madeline Dertouzos

I have always been a Daddy's girl.

You have always known me so well. You knew that I would cry when mom put the Christmas presents under the tree too soon, you know how to encourage me when I'm scared, you know how to be an ally, you know how to make me laugh. You also know how to push my buttons, how to get your way, how to make me cry. Since I was born you were right there, taking me to school or picking me up, watching me in my recitals or my games. You would never miss them for the world.

It's kind of silly, but I remember how I used to think that when you were in your "work clothes" you were a different person than when you were in your "comfy clothes".

I always liked you better when you were comfy.

Each night I pass your room, I see you sitting at your desk. You work so hard doing everything you can for us and everything you can for your mother too. Your brothers have never cared for her like you do. It makes me proud to see how strong you are and continue to be. You care for my grandmother; you care for me and mom and bubbie. You plan ahead, you let your OCD get the best of you, you never forget to give me a hug and kiss goodnight. Do you remember when you would read me stories before bed? My favorite was the Little Golden Book called Butterfly Kisses. I love that book; I think you loved it too. I loved that the little girl on the cover, kind of looked like me. I loved that her dad, kind of looked like you. I would insist that I give you butterfly kisses instead of regular ones. I would bring my face close to yours and blink my eyelashes as fast as I could. It was my favorite thing to do with you because it was ours.

When you started working from home, I got to see more of you, talk to you about your day, eat lunch together. You have done everything for us since the very beginning, even working from home was you giving mom and I full access to

both cars. She, taking bubbie to school and I, going to class and work. You have always been selfless. You have always put us before you. I wish you didn't, wouldn't. You deserve a break; I have always said that. You deserve to retire, to read books, to travel, to go to the beach. Other men your age retired years ago, your best friends always tease you for being a workaholic. When they ask you how you're doing, your response is always "Living the dream". I really hope that's true. I always ask that you reach out, that you reach out when you feel like it's too much, that you take a break.

When they found that tumor in the right side of your brain, I watched you slowly crumble.

I had only ever seen you cry once before that day. My strong, forever giving, forever loving, forever certain father, was unsure. The left side of your face began to droop, you endured brain surgery, you were at risk for seizures. You stopped working at your desk, you played more records, went outside more. We leaned on the support of our neighbors, friends, and family.

I watched you change. Into a man who was forever in comfy clothes, into a man who changed his perspective on our life, into a man who realized it was okay to ask for help. I sit here now, writing this while watching you go about your night. Calling and texting your "fans" as you call them, letting them know how you're doing and feeling. You curse at your phone as Siri mishears your words and blame it on your "droopy mouth".

It's getting harder to pretend that this is okay. You don't deserve this. You are the last person that deserves this. It hurts, seeing you realize the different roads your life can go down. You make jokes about the staples in your head, the missing pieces of your brain, all this newfound time on your hands, the list of things you want to do with each of us.

When I said you needed a break, this is not what I meant.

I'm afraid dad. Everyone says I've been doing so well; you always say how you agree. I guess you could say I'm a pretty good actress, because this feeling is starting to get old, and I can tell it's beginning to show. I thought hyperventilation

was a thing of the past. I thought feeling like I'm going to throw up and explode was cured by large doses of Zoloft. I don't want you to see. I don't want you to feel like you are an inconvenience. You deserve the world dad. You have done so much throughout your life; you have given so much.

Every goodnight kiss, every check-in text, every "be awesome" affirmation, every appearance at my elementary school award ceremonies when mom couldn't make it. You have changed my life dad. Maybe that's why I'm afraid. Maybe that's why I'm crying as I write this. I'm afraid of losing you. I'm afraid things won't be the same. It's getting harder to be around you and not fall apart. I can't walk away though. So, I sit here, listening to you fill the room with chatter and stories, trying to remember that it's okay. Trying to realize that it's my turn now. It's my turn to take care of you.

I just never thought it would be this soon.

I hope time travel never becomes a reality; I would hate for the little girl giving you butterfly kisses to see what the future holds. I hope she stays in her pink and purple room, snuggled with her dad in their comfy clothes, reading her favorite book with her favorite person. Maybe after I write this, I'll give you a butterfly kiss before you go to bed.

A Found Smile

By Zachary Prieto

I lie on the dirt

My soul on the tile

My body, a frown

My soul, a lost smile.

I seek pleasure

Try to do what's right

But never,

Can I ever put up a fight.

A veil covers my soul

A sea of confusion behind it

Others see a lot of me

But, they don't see me twist and turn and roll.

The veil has to go

Word must get out

We all know what it feels like

To be stuck in an eternal pout.

The key that unlocks the door

Let them in, let them in

Nothing is a bore.

Not anymore.

Words of comfort

I hear them often now
The veil is gone
Now I never frown.
The feelings I feel are different
We now know what it's like to be at ease
I can let go of everything
And do things as I please.
I lie with my friends
My soul in the isle
My body, a grin
My soul, a real smile. Now I never frown.
The feelings I feel are different
We now know what it's like to be at ease
I can let go of everything
And do things as I please.
I lie with my friends
My soul in the isle
My body, a grin
My soul, a real smile. Others see a lot of me
But, they don't see me twist and turn and roll.

The veil has to go

Like Father, Like Son

By Layla Sisson

Oliver punched me in the stomach. I felt the breath knocked out of me, my arms wrapped around my torso as I was left dizzy and winded.

My heartbeat throbbed in my ears, chest heaving as I clenched my fists. I was practically shaking with rage because of the smug teen in front of me. My arms slowly unwrapped from around my torso.

My mouth felt dry like sandpaper. I grit my teeth so hard that I felt my jaw pop painfully, and clenched my fist; my knuckles turned nearly white from the pressure. My nails were digging into my palm, leaving crescent shaped indents in my palms. Before I could even think, my fist connected with Oliver's face.

A sickening crack echoed through the school hallway as my fist collided directly with Oliver's nose. Oliver's once pin straight nose was bent, crooked, at a gruesome angle. Red gushed from his nose, coating my fist in red. It looked like the expired strawberry sundae topping my mother kept in the fridge.

Before Oliver could punch me again, I tackled him to the ground. I'd punched him over and over. In the chest. The eye. The mouth. Anywhere that I could reach, my fists collided. I felt like a wild animal, with no control over myself as rage and adrenaline coursed through my veins like a rapid.

I only snapped out of my frenzy when I felt arms wrap around my torso, yanking me off of Oliver. Looking over my shoulder, I saw Principal Harris looking down at me with a mixture of disappointment before his look hardened into a glare. "Winifred Eland", he said. Principal Harris had uttered my name as if I were

He began dragging me off to his office in dead silence, besides the sound of his black dress shoes squeaking against the linoleum floors echoing throughout the halls.

The principal's office was cold, colder than the rest of the building. Like a damn ice rink. I swear, Principal Harris kept this room cold out of pure spite, as some sort of cruel punishment for whatever crime led to you ending up here. AC ain't cheap; hell, we can barely afford it back at my place.

Not to mention, the little plastic chairs across from the principal's desk were also always uncomfortable. They were always a bit too small. And hard.

Principal Harris was staring at me with a cold, stoic expression. He was an older man, probably in his late forties. He always had this slightly sleep deprived look about him. He had deep wrinkles around eyes and the corners of his mouth.

"Mister Eland.", Principal Harris said. He spoke slowly, like I wouldn't understand him if he didn't speak at a snail's pace. "This is the second time you've gotten into a fight this quarter. You realize how badly two suspensions in one quarter are going to look on your academic records, right?"

I bit my tongue hard enough to taste blood. I could feel anger and shame burning in the pit of my stomach. I didn't speak. I didn't owe him a damn word.

Several seconds of silence passed in the small, cold office. The only sound in the room was the sound of Principal Harris's fingertips drumming on his mahogany desk. The silence was broken when Principal Harris let out a slow, disappointed sigh. "Very well. I suppose I'll just be discussing this matter with your mother."

I watched Principal Harris grab a yellow folder, with the word "Student Parental Contacts" written on the cover in bold strokes of sharpie and all capital letters. He shuffled through the papers, muttering last names before he came upon mine: "Eland".

I watched him grab the phone atop his desk and punch in my mothers phone number with nimble fingers. The phone

rang, reverberating around the room for several seconds, before a voice answered on the other end.

The drive home was silent, besides the static of the broken car radio. The radio station fizzled in and out, between playing fuzzy, warbled country music from the local radio station, and quiet static. I don't think the radio in my mother's car has ever worked, not that I remember.

My mother kept glancing at me through the cracked rear view mirror. I could see the malice and disappointment behind her eyes. Or, well, eye. My mother and father had gotten into a fight a few days ago. I didn't see it happen, but I heard it happen. He'd punched my mother in her right eye, that much I knew.

My mom's a beautiful woman, but she looks a mess right now. Her swollen eye reminded me of a raccoon, the way the deep purple, yellowing bruising circled her eye. If it weren't for the drug store concealer she was wearing, I'm sure it would look a hell of a lot worse.

After several minutes, my mother spoke. Her voice was taut, quivering slightly as she broke the silence. "Winifred", she said.

She was gripping the steering wheel a bit tighter than before. There was a bit of venom behind her tone when she spoke again. "What the hell were you thinking? Do you have any idea how disappointed I am in you?"

I felt a pit slowly forming in my stomach as she uttered these words. My mouth felt dry, eyebrows furrowing as I opened my mouth to speak. My mother cut me off with a harsh glare through the rearview mirror.

Her knuckles became white from how tightly she was gripping the steering wheel as she leaned forward, in on herself. Her words were full of spite as she spoke, words dripping with contempt.

"You're acting just like your father."

My heart sank, dropping into the pit of my stomach. I felt nauseous, as I visualized myself as my father. I visualized my face as the face of my father's teeth bared, screaming as

I grip a half empty alcohol bottle. I picture myself yelling at my future wife and hitting her. I picture my future children hating me as much as I hate my own father.

My mother didn't speak or look back at me in the rear-view mirror after that, keeping her eyes focused on the road.

I felt bile rise in my throat as I thought back to Oliver as my teacher had pulled me off of him. I looked down at my palm, at the crescent indents my nails had left.

I thought back to when I'd punched Oliver in the face. I thought back to how I'd lost control of my rage, about how if Principal Harris had not dragged me off, I wouldn't have stopped.

I thought back to how Oliver's eye had already slowly begun to swell shut, the bruising already beginning to turn red and purple. It reminded me too much of my mother, of what my father did to her just days prior. ***Fuck.***

Will The Morning Ever Come?

By Megan Storer

I caught myself thinking about you
very late at night again.

Sometimes it comes in waves,
and in others, the sea never
reaches the sky.

The night is everlasting
when I get caught up in my thoughts.

The darkest hour is a dangerous place
for my mind,

and sometimes it makes me wonder,

“Will the morning ever come?”

but more indefinite,

“Will the clouds ever clear up soon?”

Will the sun ever shine for me?”

and that,

I do not have an answer for.

We'll Make It Through

By GiaVanna Campione

Looking up at the sky

Looking over at you

Who knew all my wishes and dreams would come true

I've always dreamed of this perfect life

A loving husband, sweet kids and a sensible wife

We host gatherings at our house, rooms filled with
pleasant chatter

Fruit and cheese laid out on a beautifully arranged
platter

After the guests go home

And the night grows cold

The kids tucked in bed

Sweetest dreams running through their heads

Now it's time to think as I clear the dirty dishes from the
sink

How did my life get so perfect

Don't miss a moment, don't even blink

It goes by me so fast the kids growing before my eyes

Before I know it, I'll watch as their dad teaches them
how to drive

A sight so beautiful I'll start to cry

As I realize this is my underlie
The happiness, the joy, the bliss
The kids smile and wave
My husband blows me a kiss
I look up at the sky
Look back over at you
God, how can all this really be true?
I have all I can ever ask for
These moments give me déjà vu
I smile as I look at you
Knowing we'll make it through.

In Darkness Look For The Light

By Alina Oberglock



8.6%

By Zoe Marquardt

Just as deadly, but uncommon,
Most unwisely trust them often.
A mother's touch turned death's embrace,
A quiet killing, to save face.

While men hunt, women tend to gather,
From those who trust and would never suspect her.
Lives like berries in a basket, pragmatically picked from
the mother bush.
She knows it is unwise to rush.

Is she few or is she many?
She rarely butchers, slaughters, or rapes,
Silent killer, gentle death, her victim never knows they
need to escape.
Usually all for a pretty penny.

Black widow, a web that entraps
Men, without another care in the world, fear her
Yet those same men care not for the many poor women
who fall through the gaps
What measures had he taken in order to deter?

When a man kills a women, it's an unfortunate but com-
mon affair,

Boys will be boys, taken to its most extreme.

When a woman kills a man it is shocking and rare,

Losing power to her feels like an awful dream.

Poison is common, slipped into a meal, served to her vic-
tim,

Made with lots of love and a dash of strychnine.

He never knew what hit him,

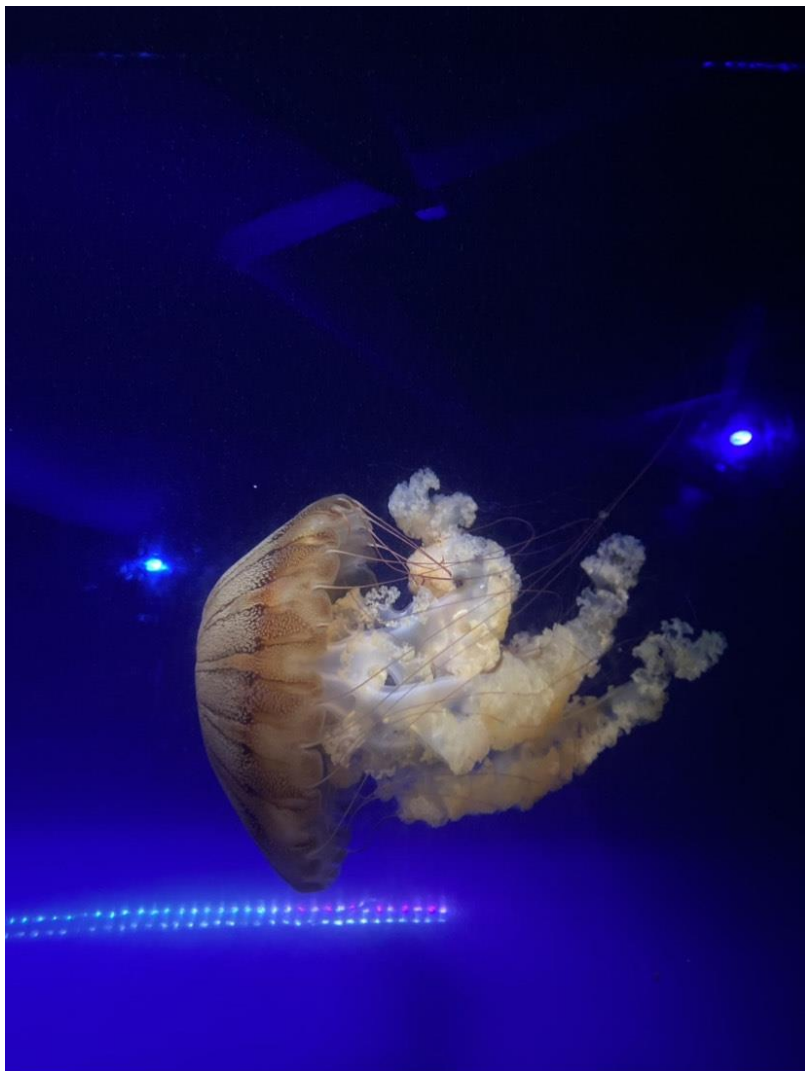
As he falls face first on the table, all by her design.

Just as deadly, perhaps uncommon,

If they don't think she could do it, she's already got them.

Jellyfish

By GiaVanna Campione



Into the Distance

By Mia Benarrivato

The light gray sky filled with clouds, daring to rain. Dove sat at her piano, softly singing along with her melody. The song traveled throughout the room at an instant, with a slight echo. Her room itself was more of a library than a room. Its walls were tall, and the windows were just as huge. Books were stacked around the room, not arranged in any particular manner. Dove was nearly done with her song, before she heard a knock at her door. Confused, she opened it to find a strange letter laying upon the floor. She picked it up and read the name Teal printed across the top. Immediately emotions flew through her, as she eagerly opened the mysterious letter from the person she loved. She could almost hear his voice as she read through his thoughtful paragraphs. He wrote of his love for her in such a manner as to urge her to visit him that night. She already had snuck out several times before, and it only made her love grow stronger. However, it would upset the gods if they were to ever find out and that was the last thing Dove wanted to do.

Dove walked over to her window, the sky displaying a darker hue. She contemplated on going, carefully deciding if it was too dangerous. The gods were powerful, and they believed that if Dove and Teal were to fall in love, the world would erupt in a chaos that cannot be controlled. They would do anything in their power to separate them, and Dove knew this. Dove opened her dark green notebook, laying on her bedside table. Its pages were fragile, and it was rather worn. Inside displayed countless songs of her own creation. Lyrics scribbled on every page, each one about her love for Teal. Her songwriting began as a creative outlet, yet recently she found herself writing music every day. When she played music, it was like the rest of the world got quiet. She had her own space, to be alone with her thoughts. Although most days, she was alone. That is because her parents had died when she was younger for reasons, she was not

aware of. Dove lived with a caretaker that did not seem to mind what she did at all. Most days Dove stayed in her room, singing to wear away her heartache. The rain had worn off, and the moon began to take its place in the dark sky. Dove held her breath as she crept out of her room. She knew the gods would eventually find out of her disobedience, but she wanted to see Teal again.

Rushing to the park, her eyes softened when she saw Teal. They always chose to go to the same park, as it was familiar to them both. Dove could tell something was off when his eyes nervously seemed to search for something.

“What’s wrong?” Dove asked, worried.

“It’s time,” Teal replied, and Dove knew exactly what he meant. Teal had talked of needing to leave before. He mentioned that they could not risk the gods becoming aware of their hidden love. He wanted to go somewhere they could live together, escaping any judgement. Dove knew this day would come, yet she was surprised it was so early. Still, she trusted that this was the best decision to make.

“I know it’s kind of soon, but we cannot continue to visit each other at night. It is not safe, and I can tell they are becoming suspicious,” Teal added.

Dove shuddered when he implied the gods would soon find out. Agreeing, she looked for flights for the next morning, but she could not find any. After searching together for what seemed like hours, relief came over them when Teal found a train that could take them ten hours away. They decided to meet up at the park early the next morning. As they parted ways, Dove smiled to herself, hopeful that their plan would succeed.

When Dove awoke, the sun had not yet awoken, and the sky was a dark blue, nearly black. She wrote a letter explaining where she would be, although she did not think her caretaker would even notice she was gone. Dove quickly got ready before walking out her door, not daring to look back. She was surprised to find Teal waiting for her, at a bench close to her home. She smiled at him, as he led her to the train that would take them to their new home. Once aboard

the train, they talked for several hours. Time flew by when she was with him. Dove told him of her dreams to become a singer. Her passion for music was something of great importance in her life. Soon, Dove revealed her book of music to him and began to quietly sing to him. The train seemed rather empty, with just a few passengers in a couple rows ahead of them. They talked for longer, and as time went on, more and more people left at their stops. They had almost fell asleep when there was an abrupt stop in the tracks. It seemed rather odd, especially since there was no resting area there.

Dove opened the window, trying to figure out why they stopped. After a while, they decided to get out of the train to see what was happening. The air was cool outside, and a shiver ran through their bodies. For a minute, everything was still, and it was like time had stopped. Suddenly, a gust of wind rushed past, and the gods appeared right in front of them. Dove gasped and without hesitation began crying on the floor. Teal, still in shock, was quiet and his face turned pale.

“We have warned you numerous times of this,” they said, their voices booming. Dove began shaking, as they got a hold of her book. Astonished, they examined her lyrics, slowly turning the pages.

“Now you have left us just one choice,” they added. Teal held Dove, in attempt to shield her from the possible dangers. He knew he could not do much, but he was still hopeful they would spare her life. They looked down at Dove and Teal, and it looked as though they almost felt some sympathy.

“Your love for each other will only cause destruction in this universe. Yet, your love is so powerful that it may be more dangerous keeping you both apart. Consequently, we offer you an alternative. I will warn you though, you will never be the same,” they said in a stern voice. Teal and Dove looked at each other before agreeing upon their new deal. They were still concerned, but as long as they would not be separated, they maintained some hope.

“You may continue your love if and only if you continue as birds.” Dove looked at them in confusion, wondering what a bird could possibly be. Teal had heard of this strange creature, yet he remained silent.

“You will be able to fly and communicate with each other. On the other hand, your physical appearance will change.” Teal shot Dove a concerned look and began to refuse. Dove interrupted him, assuring him that this was the best option. Teal tried to reason with the gods, but they only got more upset and aggravated.

“What about your love for music? Surely you could not sing as this animal they call a bird,” Teal exclaimed.

“If you accept this deal, then we will allow you to sing in some way,” the gods mentioned.

Dove and Teal knew they had to become birds to continue their love. Although it was risky, they would have each other. Eventually, they accepted the deal even with their concerns. Shortly after agreeing to their conditions, wind began swirling around them both. Dove’s green notebook began to break as pages of music flew into the air. Fog surrounded them all, yet through the fog two figures could be differentiated. Out of nowhere, everything stopped, and it was quiet. All of a sudden, chirping was heard from the clouds of fog. Then emerged Dove and Teal in the form of birds. They began to fly around in circles, appearing free yet confined. They started singing together as they flew away into the distance.

Growth

By Megan Storer

You have not bloomed,
or blossomed,
because you are still learning.
You are still very much growing,
and you have so many more things coming your way.
The flower of a sakura tree felt doomed,
because it was cautioned
to worry about yearning
for something that was always glowing.
And eventually, it listened.
The flower of a sakura tree stopped waiting,
and learned how to be okay
with staying closed.
This flower knew that something was creating,
something that would lead the flower
into being exposed.
This flower blossomed and bloomed,
even more than the other flowers had.
The flower presumed,
and was able to watch the crawdads with ease.

And she was pleased,
because in reality, this was not about a flower
hanging from the branch
of a sakura tree.

Beach

By Vlada Tarasova



abandoned beauty

By Caroline Kinsella

someone left her here discarded her for
something better someone used her and then
forgot who she was. Like a castle in ruins, her
beauty has been abandoned for so long. vines
climb up the dust-covered walls she catches a
glimpse of someone through the shattered
mirror on the floor

a reflection of a girl but it isn't her she is
looking into the eyes of a stranger. she
doesn't recognize herself anymore
covered in cobwebs like an old antique
but even she is beautiful her beauty is
not recognized by anyone even her own
head tells her she is gone

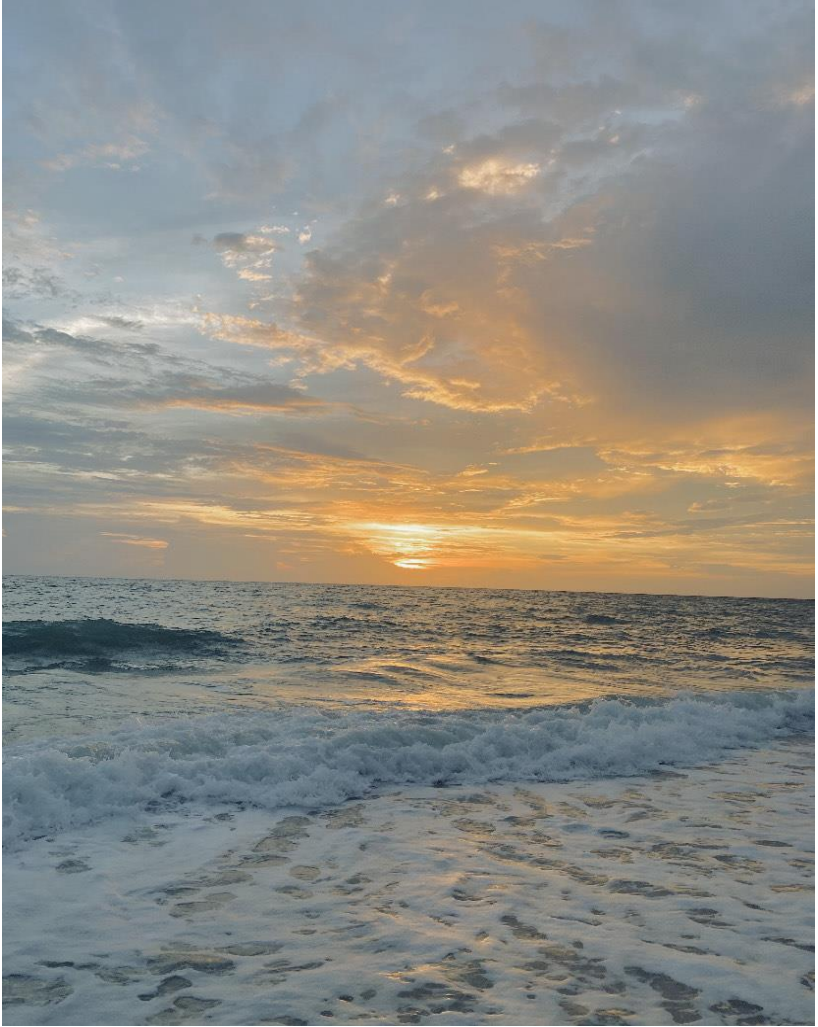
lost forever

abandoned an

abandoned beauty.

Beach

By GiaVanna Campione



Lady Sleep

By Lex Poulin

Sometimes I like sleep
And her cold embrace.
Sleep and her never ending
Hallways and twisted escapes.
But sometimes
Sleep comes in the form
Of quiet death. Whispering
In my ear all my bad memories.
Forcing my dreams cryptic.
Lacing each of them cold
And barren. Dripping with
Tears of my mourning self.
Shaking me awake to remind
Me it's not real, only
To shove me down under again.
I greet sleep and death like
A lonely lover. Cold and
Forbidding. Tiresome
And unforgiving. Remembering
Nothing of importance, but
All at the same time, forgetting
Nothing at all.

A Modern Love Story

By Emma Cochran

How do you dress for a wedding you never thought you'd attend? I find myself wondering about the answer to this question as I have somehow found myself in this position. It all goes back to May. After wasting my time with Mr. Marine, I found myself completely captivated by Mr. Plumber, who I later realized his plumbing business was only a front for his drug dealing business. However, he was quite the catch: very easy on the eyes, had perfectly tan skin, seemed disciplined enough in life to eat clean and follow a very strict gym regimen, and we shared a love for the beach. He was very, if you will, "Florida Macho Man-esque" which usually is not my type but after a year and a half of failed dating in Florida, I was willing to give anything a shot. There was something about going out with a man who could get arrested at any given point in time that really ignited my good on paper, Christian Reformed background. Did I mention he was good-looking? The present was infested with red flags, but as a typical twenty-one-year-old living in the moment does, I ignored them. My infatuation came to an abrupt stop when I realized he was also dating his ex-girlfriend. Who, after about twenty minutes of Instagram stalking, I discovered was an ex-stripper. "Welcome to the hell of dating in 2023," I thought to myself. As if losing a guy to an ex-stripper, or better even, dating a guy who dated strippers, wasn't enough to crush my self-esteem I couldn't help but compare myself to her. I wondered what he told his family what her occupation was, or maybe they knew and just didn't care. I wouldn't know because I never met them. I eventually gave Mr. Plumber the boot and vowed to myself I would never date the type of guy that would bring a stripper home to his meet his parents. I know what you're thinking, "How much lower can the bar get?" The obvious answer is low, but in my defense looking back on my time with Mr. Plumber was so much fun. For starters, how many people can tell a dating story where a drug dealer poses as a plumber, and loses the

guy to a stripper? The type of fun old ladies talk about that they missed out on in their twenties because they were too busy making a home and popping out babies.

A month after saying goodbye to Mr. Plumber, I decided it was time to get back out there and so naturally, I began to browse the dating apps. I was reconnected with the same guys I had seen on the app months before, and a few new ones but nothing that really caught my eye. I was feeling hopeless when one night I matched with Nick with a K. His name is Nick with a K to distinguish him from the first guy I dated when I moved to Florida, Nic, no K. Nick was seven years older than me, which seemed like the perfect age to be looking for a potential wife, as opposed to the next blonde to get in bed with. He was a decently attractive guy with a great job and the opposite of the guys I would normally go for. A few months ago, I would've avoided him like the plague, but I decided that life was too short not to give the nice guy a chance. He started out very strong.

"How about dinner Saturday night at 6:30? Got reservations at Georgie's by the mall?" He sent in a text message to which I responded, "I would absolutely love to!" Those three dots appeared on my screen, and I wondered what Nick had to say next. "Depending on how crowded Pop Stroke is, we can go mini golfing after or head to waterside and walk around for a bit." "Sounds great!" I said, trying not to sound too excited. "Make sure to leave me a good review on Facebook," he said. "I was thinking LinkedIn," I responded with a smirk.

Nick was charming, the thing I loved most about our time together was the effortless banter. The funniest of all was when I realized he lived in my neighborhood. What are the odds of that happening in a town like Lakewood Ranch, Florida? Nick took me on four dates in three weeks and I really admired how he pursued me however, I couldn't look past the fact that every time I looked into his eyes I thought of the guinea pig in the movie, *Bedtime Stories*.

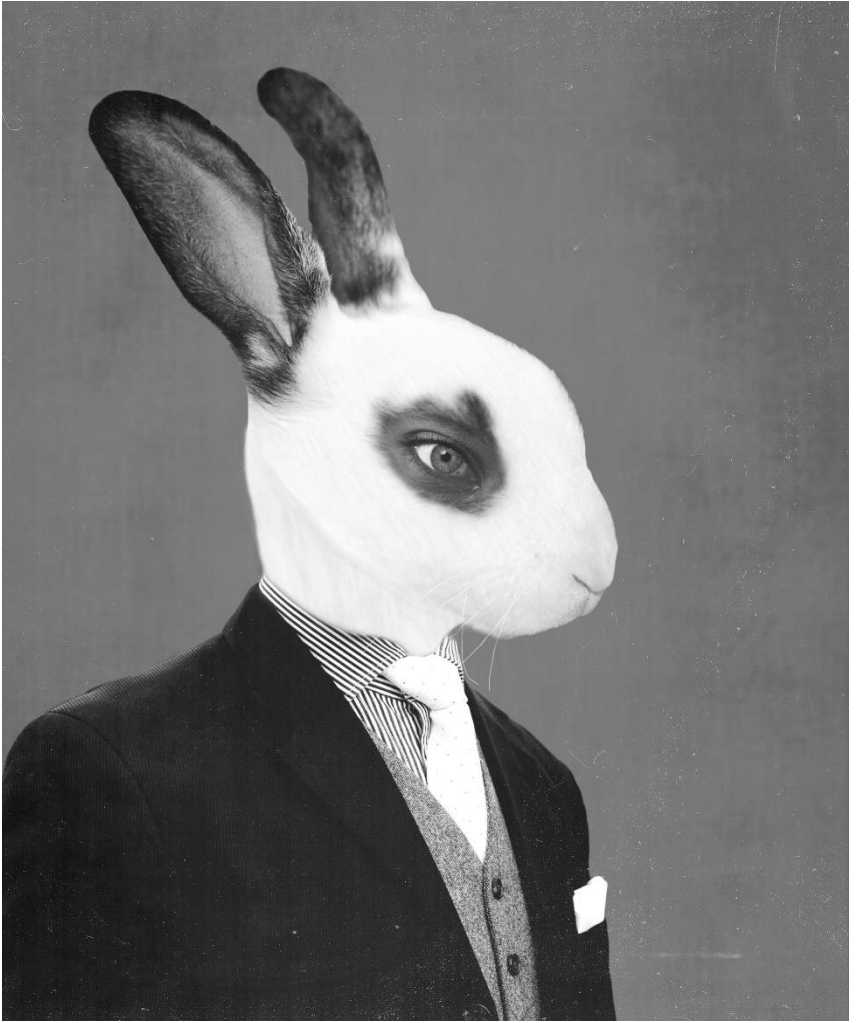
After parting ways with Nick, I decided it was time for my pursuit of Mr. Right to end. I remembered the quote,

“You find the one when you’re not looking” and decided to put it to the test.

Four months ago, I went to the local dive bar to enjoy a drink after a long shift of dealing with “Karen’s” when I was greeted by a familiar voice. To my surprise, it was Mr. Marine. We had a nice conversation catching up until I was inevitably pulled away by my best friend coming to rescue me. Mr. Marine and I briefly dated in December but broke it off because I realized he was still in love with his ex-girlfriend. I didn’t think about him at all until a few days later he texted me and asked if I would like to join him for a boat day. I hadn’t been on a boat since the summer of 2019 in Michigan. I figured a boat day was harmless, and he wasn’t asking for my hand in marriage, so I kindly accepted his invitation. We continued to see each other throughout the summer, but I kept my distance, careful not to give him too much of my heart. He had already broken it once and I wasn’t interested in having my heart broken again. He asked me to go to his brother's wedding in September and I politely accepted careful not to let him see that I didn’t think we would make it that far. At this time, September was four months away and I was waiting for the other shoe to drop. In those moments of laughing and loving in the heat of the Florida summer, I realized my heart fit perfectly in the palm of his hand. I had finally found the love I was looking for.

Rabbit

By Julia Richardson



You Aren't Really Gone, Are You?

By Megan Storer

You left me on Suicide Sunday,
and acted as if nothing had even happened.

You teased me on Melancholic Monday,
and my heart hardened.
I didn't want to let you in anymore.

You talked to me less on Troubled Tuesday,
and I cried more and more.

You were dry on Withering Wednesday,
and that didn't feel good.
You were slipping away from my grasp.

We didn't talk at all on Turning Point Thursday.
Maybe that was a sign for me to unclasp.

On Frightful Friday, I was nervous. I was scared.
That you would be gone for good.

On Saturated Saturday, I stopped worrying.
Would that be for the best?

I looked up at the gloomy sky.
The clouds motioned for me to listen.
They told me that if we were meant to be,
you would come back.

I don't even think there's a chance you would.

You Will Do It

By GiaVanna Campione

You will do it
That right there
Whatever it is that you just thought of
You will get it done
You will do it for yourself
You don't have to prove anything to anyone
One day it will hit you
All the things you want for your life
Will get done
You will do it for yourself
You will work
You will love
You will travel
You will rise above
You will dream
You will yearn
You will see
You will earn
You will question
You will learn
You will rise
You will fall
You will cry
You will have a ball
You will do it
You will do it all

Drained

By Vlada Tarasova



Mad Woman

By Phoebe Thumm

My jaw twitched as I watched my sister and the love of my life giggling to each other, the occasional flirtatious smack on the shoulder. He was the love of my life, yes, but he wasn't mine. It was wrong, I knew it was wrong with every fiber of my being, he shouldn't be with her—he should be with *me*. He almost was, I had him so close, but she stole him away with her stupid perfect everything—like always.

I've been watching them swoon over each other for the past hour, feeling sicker and sicker by the minute. I threw back another shot, wincing as it burned down my throat. My eyelids felt heavy as I slumped against the back of my chair. I should be having the time of my life right now—who the fuck mopes around at a bar with Katy Perry blasting on the speakers. It was pathetic, really.

"I'm going home," I muttered as I stumbled out of my seat.

"Oh, come on, it's not even ten o'clock. Don't be lame," Janey whined. She was always whiney; I don't know how he puts up with it—how anyone does.

I stared at her, rolled my eyes, and abruptly walked out. I knew they'd just go right back to drooling over each other, it's not like they were paying any attention to me before. The cool air of downtown kissed my cheeks while the alcohol sat warm and heavy in my stomach. I fished my phone out of my back pocket, called an Uber, and slouched on a curb with my head against my knees.

I knew exactly how this would play out. It's the same every time.

I'd meet someone. I'd grow to like them. Once I'd get to the head-over-heels-in-love stage, Janey would catch on and decide that she just happens to like them too—love them even. Next thing I know I'm not even in the picture anymore, I'm third-wheeling the dates she drags me to and pouts

when I want to leave. Then she gets bored, ditches them, and finds someone new.

I would never do that, never hurt someone like that.

This one was different though. I really liked him. Ethan was smart. Not in a school-driven, math and science nerd genius type of way, but rather the smart that has you listening to him talk about his theories of the universe and life, and any of the other ideas in his head. He had a pretty face, and he was funny too.

Stop.

None of that would help, the overthinking of what I could've had, what I wouldn't get.

I was blinded by headlights as a car turned into the gas station whose dirty curb I was sitting on. It pulled in front of me, and the man inside shouted through the window.

"Are you Alice?"

"Yeah," I sighed, "you're my Uber?"

He nodded, and the doors unlocked with a click. I pulled myself up, swung the door open, and plopped down on the heated leather seats.

I hated riding in Ubers. It was so awkward, not because of the silence, but because of that constant almost-talking silence and uncomfortable eye contact through the rearview mirror. Someone waiting for the other to say something, making it impossible to relax in comfortable silence.

I should've just walked.

When we finally arrived at my house, I gave a quick thank you and speed-walked to the door. After an embarrassing amount of struggling to open it, I slammed it shut, locked it, and collapsed into my bed, staring straight up at the ceiling.

One day I would find something she couldn't take. Then, maybe, I'd finally be happy.

The smell of cinnamon filled the kitchen as I slid the last piece of French toast onto my plate. I slumped against the

counter, debating how I could one-up Janey and do something better than her for once. Cooking was really the only thing that I could list.

“Got any extras?”

I turned around to see Ethan strutting into the kitchen, grabbing an apple from a basket of fruit and biting a chunk out of it. His hair was wet, and he was wearing only a robe—*my* robe.

“What do you think you’re doing?” I asked, glaring at him from across the kitchen.

He stopped mid-chew and stared at me like it was a confusing question.

“Why are you walking around like you live here, and why are you wearing my robe?”

“I found it in the bathroom and—”

“What the fuck is wrong with you?” I grabbed my plate and shoved past him toward my room.

After a few more bites and minutes of thinking on my bed, I threw my head back in annoyance. It was no wonder my sister so easily stole his attention; my temper was enough to send anyone running. It just bothered me how comfortable he was at my house but not with me. Truthfully, I’d love to give him extra French toast and let him wear my robe if it made him happy. But only if he was happy with me.

I sighed and walked back downstairs knowing he’d probably be gone by now. But he wasn’t. He was humming to himself as he washed the pan I’d used for French toast. I saw that he’d cleaned everything else up as well. The faint smell of cinnamon still lingered.

I cleared my throat as I approached the sink with my empty plate. I stood there awkwardly for a moment not knowing what to do. Would it be rude to add to the dishes he was washing, or should I wait for him to be done and clean it myself?

He took the plate from my hands and began cleaning it.

“Thanks,” I said.

He nodded with a tight-lipped smile.

“Sorry about earlier,” I added quietly.

“Don’t worry about it,” he said.

Janey came skipping into the room a few moments later, Ethan breaking out into a smile.

“Hey, cutie,” he said as she gave him a quick peck.

“You look so handsome right now I could just eat you up.”

That would surely be interesting.

I gagged and stormed back up to my room, sick of the honeymoon phase of their relationship. She’d ditch him eventually. But even then, she’d eventually find another, all her attention taken up, once again.

I honestly just wanted my sister back. We used to be so happy together before she started getting so much attention from other people, letting it go to her head. She had to keep that oncoming attention to feel loved, and now her entire personality was based on getting as much of it as she could. Maybe some harsh rejection would give her a reality check. Maybe she’d realize there were other important things in her life, like me. Maybe then she’d stop taking what was mine in the first place.

Maybe, maybe, maybe.

There was only one way to find out.

The clock read 1:14 a.m.

I spent most of the day planning how I would make my idea work flawlessly. If I messed any of this up, I’d be screwed. The screenshots looked real enough, messages between Ethan and “Mia,” a girl I’d made up, with photoshopped flirtatious texts. I made a fake Instagram account, found Janey’s profile, and planned how “Mia” would approach her about it. I figured the innocent side girl card would work well enough. *I didn’t know he had a girlfriend, I’m so sorry girl*, and all that crap.

That morning I waited until I could hear the faint sound of talking from downstairs so I knew they were together when this would go down. I took a steadying breath, smiled at my phone, and sent the message. The sappy innocent

apology text, the pictures as proof, and her serious, deep-down insecurities would make this play out perfectly.

It was about ten minutes before I could hear her screeching. I rushed down the stairs to find her screaming in his face, which was pale as a ghost's.

"You've been fucking cheating on me for this long?"

I wondered how he'd react, how to defend himself with his genuine confusion of what was happening.

"I'm sorry, Janey, I'm so fucking sorry, it didn't mean anything I swear," he pleaded with her.

My jaw dropped.

He really did cheat on her. Not with the fake girl I created, he really, *really* cheated. And he flat-out admitted it too. Shock and anger hit me, for her and myself.

He chose her over me. Then he chose another girl over *both* of us. I was right there, waiting for him, and he still went to another girl.

"You're unbelievable," she said. "You could've at least gotten back with Alice, that would've been more understandable since she's been drooling over you forever."

My breath caught, her words like a slap to the face.

"Get the fuck out of my house," I said from the bottom of the stairs. They both turned to look at me, just then realizing I was standing there.

"Alice, I'm sorry—"

"Both of you. Out now."

She was right, but coming from her, the revulsion in how she said it, was too much.

Janey sped out the door, Ethan sulking behind her. He glanced back at me briefly before shutting the door behind him.

I let out a breath, running my hands over my face. That wasn't what I was expecting at all. I found myself laughing, a few giggles at first, then the type of laughter that has you tearing up and gasping for air.

I was a genius. I was a genius, and Janey was a goddamn idiot who got played, which she deserved, and I couldn't have been happier.

I sat at the dining room table for about an hour with a half-empty bottle of some margarita mix crap that Janey got from the store a few weeks ago, enjoying the silence of the house.

A harsh knock at the door interrupted that. I waited a few moments, hoping they'd go away, but the knocks became more aggressive.

I walked to the door, groaning, and after seeing who it was, I rolled my eyes and walked away.

"Please, Alice, let me in," Ethan begged.

I didn't say anything, walking back to my bottle.

"Alice."

I let out an exasperated sigh and walked back to the door, cracking it open.

"What do you want?"

"I left my wallet here."

"Get it, then leave."

He nodded, heading straight to her room. I returned to the table and waited for him to be gone. I wasn't sure where Janey went, likely a friend's house, I didn't particularly care at that moment.

After a few minutes, he came back out but paused in front of me.

"I'm sorry—"

"I'm not the person you should be apologizing to."

"No, I am sorry to *you*. I shouldn't have left you, I just got so wrapped up and distracted, and I missed something amazing, and I'm sorry." He reached for my hand, but I yanked it away. I couldn't believe him. "Janey wasn't wrong when she said I should've just gone back to you, I don't know what I was thinking and—"

Glass went everywhere. Followed by margarita mix and a lot of blood. I watched his body hit the floor, covered in thick shards of glass, then looked down at the broken bottle in my hand. I didn't move, frozen with shock. What the hell did I do?

Killed the son of a bitch.

I decided there were three things for sure that I did better than my sister.

Cook.

Lie.

Hide a body.

I somehow got everything cleaned and back to normal, tossing anything I could into the fireplace, bleaching the hell out of the floor, and washing everything off myself.

Ethan was in the garage freezer. I hadn't decided what to do with him, but the priorities were taken care of. By the time Janey got home, she was too busy trying to avoid me to notice anything was off.

It stayed like that for the next few days, Janey staying with friends most of the time to avoid awkward conversation. But finally, she came home one night to me cooking dinner.

"What's this for?" she asked.

"It's for you," I said cheerfully. "I'm sick of the awkwardness, I miss you. There's finally no man wasting your time, and you deserve something nice after everything that happened."

"I really am sorry for what I said."

"I know."

She helped finish setting the table and waited with anticipation while I prepared a plate for her.

"What is it?"

"Pig," I said with a suppressed grin, "with potatoes and vegetables."

I sat across from her, smiling as she dug in.

I guess when she said she could eat Ethan up, she wasn't lying—most of the meal was gone in half an hour.

Onbu

By Colin M. Hansbury

There is something behind me,
While I sleep on my back.
There's someone else where I sleep,
In tune with my step,
In time with my breath,
I hear him.

There is something there I tell you,
Where I lay my head at night,
I can hear his breath
a moment after mine,
There is someone where I sleep, you'll see,
When he takes my skin
and takes my eyes
and takes my tongue,
That's when you'll hear it,
The breath behind your lungs.

Strawberries 02

By Vlada Tarasova



Contributor Bios

Felix Altman is an aspiring author with a love for all things creative. They spend their free time listening to music, making jewelry, and hanging out with their family.

Mia Benarrivato is a 10th grade student attending SCFCS Venice.

GiaVanna Campione is a sophomore at the State College of Florida. She is working on her last semester here before transferring to a University. She is majoring in Biology and potentially minoring in English. She loves reading and writing and has been especially interested in poetry recently.

Finley Carfield is a 10th grade student at the SCF Collegiate School who enjoys reading, cuddling with her dogs, and math.

Madeline Dertouzos is in her second year pursuing her AA degree at SCF. She enjoys reading and writing in her free time and spinning records with her three cats. Recently, Madeline's writing has channeled the difficulties her and her family currently face. She uses writing creatively as an outlet to express her inner thoughts and feelings, something she has done ever since she was little. Madeline pulls from her past memories and self to reflect on the woman she has become and continues to grow into. Madeline hopes to continue her studies and work towards a masters focused on the humanities and literature.

Colin M. Hansbury was born in Dennis, Massachusetts, and at the age of 5 moved to southern Florida. Colin's fascination with all things horror arguably began long before he was born, as a tradition passed down to him from mother to son, and from his grandfather to his mother before him.

“My love affair with horror started with two films and a book: Nightmare on Elm Street, Scream, and Bram Stoker’s Dracula. I have been happily addicted ever since.” Now Colin writes primarily horror short fiction and cites his major influences being: H.P. Lovecraft, Bram Stoker, Stephen Graham Jones, narratives found in such media as Disco Elysium, Night in the Woods, and Over the Garden Wall, genres such as Noir Detective and Gothic Horror, and most of all, music such as Orbiting Human Circus, Vangelis, Daniel Olsen, The Blasting Company, and Sea Power.

Zoe Marquardt is a 22-year-old sophomore who is currently working towards her associate in arts. She was born and spent half of her life in the snowy mountains of Colorado before moving to Florida with her dad when she was in seventh grade. She's always been a voracious reader as well as a hobbyist writer and poet with a keen interest in the morbid and macabre which translated to what she was interested in writing.

Alina Oberglock is 19 years old and currently enrolled to earn her A. A. degree. Planning to get into Psychology. Her hobbies include photography and writing.

Alexia “Lex” Poulin is an 11th grader at SCF Venice who has been writing since she was 10 years old.

Zachary Prieto is a developer, author, and a young 10th grader who is interested in learning many new things. A good student that gets exceptional grades, and is able to work on things relentlessly and enjoy doing so. Thinks very deeply about things, and enjoys writing about themes such as existentialism and many other thought provoking theories. Loves to spread his wisdom, and learn more about developing and entrepreneurship.

Julia Richardson is a visual artist who thrives on the fusion of photography and graphic arts to craft unique composite imagery.

Wesley "Wes" Schmidt is a student attending the State College of Florida in Venice. He lives in Sarasota, FL. He plans to attain a Bachelor's degree in environmental science. In his spare time, he has written pieces of creative writing for local organizations.

Layla Sisson is a Seventeen year old dual enrollment student with SCF. She also attends Manatee School for the Arts, and is a senior in high school. She enjoys writing poetry

Megan Storer is a sophomore student attending SCFCS on the Venice campus. She has been writing poetry since February 2023, but she has been writing stories basically since she was born. She loves writing and she wants to get her work out there before she gets out of school.

Claire Tuggle is a 10th grader at SCFCS. She does good with her grades and tries to work nicely with her classmates. She has loved art since kindergarten, when she got her artwork displayed in a museum. Claire has practiced art since and has had her ups and downs, from where her art improved and when it didn't. Claire has lots of things to inspire her and lots of people to support her.

Seventeen-year-old **Phoebe Thumm** is an aspiring writer taking dual enrollment classes at the State College of Florida, planning to get her high school diploma and associate degree in art simultaneously.

Elektraphrog Staff



Riley Boock is a high school student pursuing a full-time dual enrollment program at the State College of Florida Venice Campus. When she is not busy studying, she enjoys playing the cello, reading, and writing in various genres. In 2021, her picture book, *You Have Nothing to Worry About*, was published by Indigo Books. Most recently, her article "Venice Teen Sells Her First Company" was printed by Sun News Media and appeared in papers such as *The Venice Gondolier* and *The Daily Sun*. Riley hopes to continue her literary journey and eventually work in the publishing industry.



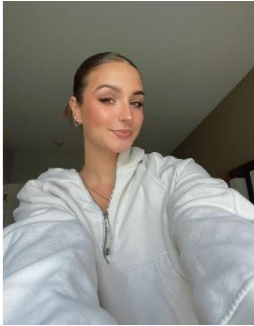
Beatriz DeMelo is a student and college and career center assistant at State College of Florida Venice Campus. She is working on her Associates in Arts, to later major in journalism at a 4-year university. She is a Christian, enjoys photography, and a Formula 1 enthusiast. Loves to watch and attend Grand Prix's, all aspects of the have capture her completely. She would love to take her love for journalism and Formula 1; combine the two to become a journalist for F1.



Paola Diaz is a full-time college student at the State College of Florida in Manatee County. She is an arts and sciences major. She is a music enthusiast and an artsy person. She is always seeking adventures and new experiences whether it's exploring the outdoors, diving into a captivating book, or unleashing her artsy self. Back in Middle school in 2017, she had a poetry section in their magazine titled "The Corner of Poems". Paola continues to strive for success in her studies and hopes she can be a great graphic designer in the future.



Jo Fisher is a typical early twenty year old just trying to figure out what the heck to do with her life. She's already earned an associates degree and starting earning her bachelors a while ago only to take a break when she came to a standstill about what she wanted to major in. Constantly changing her mind she thought in the mean time a certificate in digital publishing would be beneficial. While she still questions this choice she's currently enrolled at SCF as well as continues her full time job as a manager. Everything's a bit all over the place and Jo still struggles with what she wants. Whatever happens she hopes it's all worth it in the end and she comes out on top. Her indecisive behavior makes up half of her character but every once in a while she's comedic, fun, and creative. She loves random adventures and taking risks. For the past months she's been trying to convince her friends to go paint balling, but still has a lot of persuading to do. Jo really tries to enjoy life and wishes it was easier for her to do. She's always taking suggestions on how to live life to the fullest cause her homebody usually takes over 99% of the time.



sports reporter.

Alissa Kessler is a sophomore at State College of Florida. She is working towards her associates degree and plans to transfer to a 4 year university and major in journalism. She has played softball for 17 years and in her free time enjoys to paint and spend time with friends. Her goal is to combine her love for sports and journalism to become a



Tara North is a graphic designer, student, and library worker in Florida. She is a writer and editor in her spare time, and her fiction has appeared in Pseudo-Pod, Beneath Ceaseless Skies, and Lammergeier. Her short story, "Packing House Blues," was nominated for a Pushcart Prize by Saw Palm.

You (Yes! You!) Can Earn a Certificate in Digital Publishing!

This is 18 Credits of Awesome!

This is an extraordinary new certificate program that is cutting edge and interdisciplinary!

Program Goal

The purpose of this program is to prepare students (yes! Even you!) with hands-on training in new media and digital publications. This program focuses on the skills necessary to work on print and digital publications, work in social media and digital marketing, or work in layout, design, and editing fields. The skills in this program are transferable to both local and national level publications. This program includes editing, programming, and graphic design courses.

Core Requirements:

- CGS 2820C: Web Page Development (3 Credits)
- CRW 2001: Creative Writing I (3 Credits)
- GRA 1100C: Introduction to Computer Graphics (3 Credits)
- JOU 1440L: College Magazine Production I (3 Credits)

Choice of two courses (6 credits total) from

- GRA 1206C: Typography (3 Credits)
- GRA 2121C: Communication Design (3 Credits)
- GRA 2150C: Photoshop (3 Credits)
- ENC 2210: Technical Communication (3 Credits)
- JOU 1441: College Magazine Production II
- MMC 2949: Internship in Mass Communications (3 Credits)
- PGY1800C: Digital Imaging I (3 Credits)

Contact Professor Masucci at masuccm@scf.edu for more information.



**Are You Interested in
Writing and Publishing?**

Join Elektraphrog!

JOU 1440L (3 Credits)

<https://elektraphrog.scf.edu>



elektraphrog.scf.edu