

SILVER LINING 2020



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1/22/2

Silver Lining Literary Magazine 2019/2020

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All but the Sleep

By Angawin Firesnap

You can be picky with your career

Switch around all the time

Life is your car in which you steer

All but the Sleep.

You can be picky with your husband or wife

Whether it's based on looks or love

After all it's yours, your life

All but the Sleep.

You can be picky with your looks

Wear whatever you choose

Nothing has to be done by the books

All but the Sleep.

For you can't be picky about the sun

The one you put in charge

On his schedule you will run

Everything but the Sleep.

I

I am

I AM LOST

I am lost to

I am lost to the

I am lost to the world

I am lost to the world but

I am lost to the world but I

I am lost to the world but I will

I am lost to the world but I will be

I am lost to the world but I will be found

Am lost to the world but I will be found

Lost to the world but I will be found

To the world but I will be found

The world but I will be found

World but I will be found

But I will be found

I WILL BE FOUND

Will be found

Be found

Found

- trilez



The bad is over flowing
the good. In this cruel
world, no one is safe.

Devito

By Kevin Andrade

A fluff at heart

Sheer pain is a part

The face of many identities

Yet none of them are his

The leather strips can't hold the beast back

Let out a roar

For the love of Ham

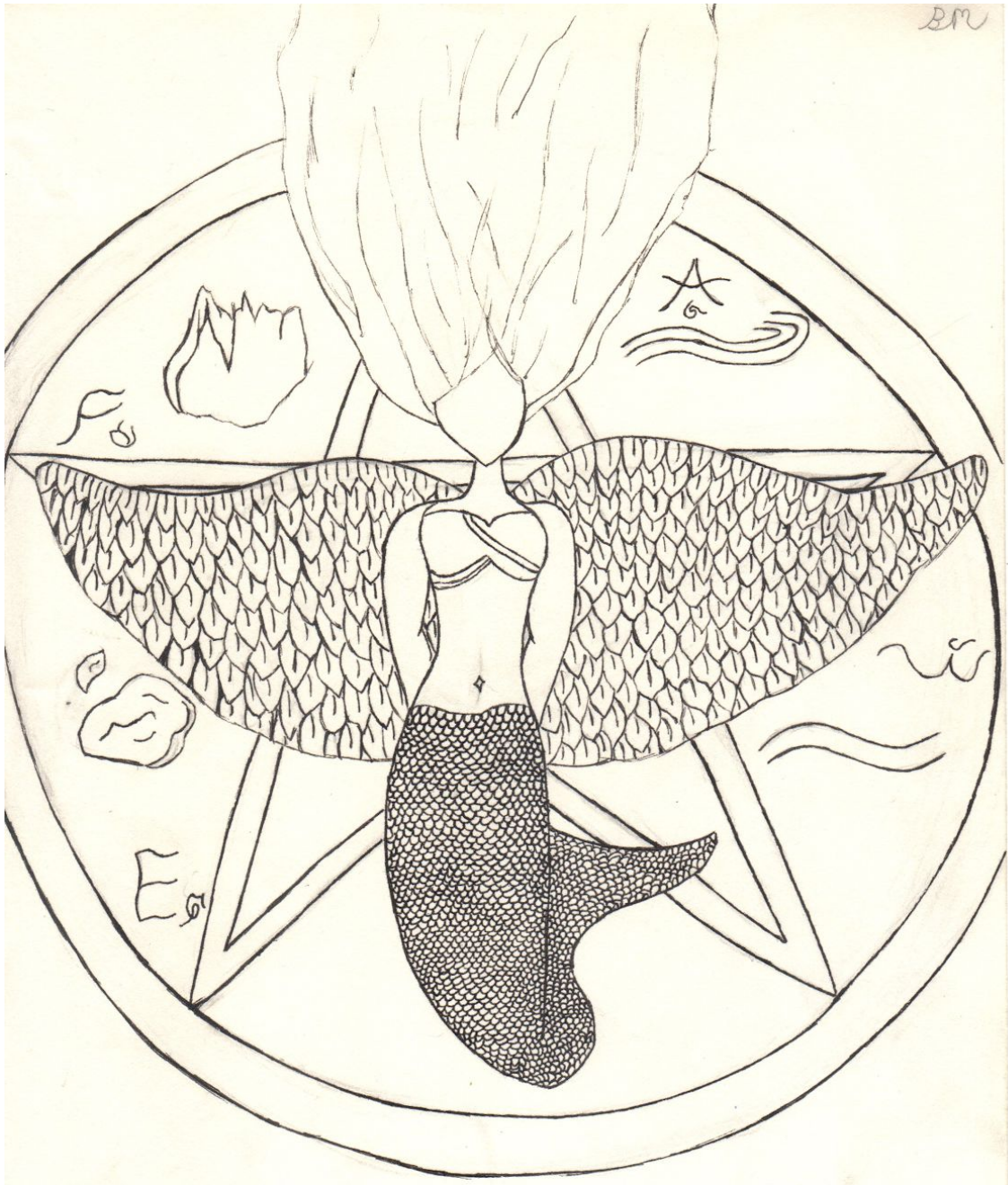
Fish in the Sea

The school travels through the water,
They travel in search of food for the pack,
But that is when they see the otter,
Most would think they would hide,
And try to find shelter inside,
Instead they unify,
And scare off the predator,
So they do not die.

Our friends in the sea,
Are much like you and me,
You see?



BR



Riddle #1:

People use me to make others happy, I take no joy myself.

I cannot feel emotions, yet I can die.

I wear a bright shade of red and touching me will add more to my color.

What am I?

Riddle #2:

I can freeze time for a moment, but I'm worth a thousand words.

What am I?

Riddle #3:

The more you do, the shorter I get.

Loved by most, confused by few.

The more you get of me, the more you want me.

Also, a sin if you indulge too much.

What am I?

Riddle #4:

I create shadows, but I cast none myself.

The first invention by man.

What am I?

Riddle #5:

The questions that appear, answers you want to hear.

Known to everyone, a common sense to have,

If this is done right, you can hear me right now.

As constant as the weather,

Are you sure you know what I am?

Riddle #6:

*The oldest fear there is,
I'm hiding behind every blindspot,
A classic element to horror,
If I reveal myself, however, I'll disappear.
What am I?*

Riddle #7:

*What is a maiden of the sea,
Strong enough to carry hundreds of men across the pond,
But needs to be dragged across land?*

Answers:

#1 - A rose

#2 - A photograph

#3 - Sleep

#4 - Fire

#5 - Uncertainty

#6 - The unknown

#7 - A boat



ROSE



Elliot

Elliot

Eyes That Look Down

Those windows without blinds
Tell stories with no binds
Of hardships and tears
And suppression and fear
Or tales of love and care
At the abodes where they stare
Each having individual pages and books
With unique gazes and looks
But some will take moods down
They make others start to frown
They will make them feel judged
And create an anguishing grudge
But no fear for the eyes of the pure!
For others have ears and a cure
A mouth to sing you a lovely song
And a heart that beats forever long
So have your eyes adore another sight
Save yourself a fearsome fright
Search with your eyes a friend for life
One that will seal your wounds and cure your spite
There are many gateways to the soul and mind
It takes more than one to search and find
But that sacred dance will give royalty its crown
And will blind the eyes that look down



Investments

By Awgawin Firesnap

I saved a penny every day
And after a year went by
I tallied up the full amount
A whopping \$3.65.

I decided that was not enough
Thought it might be nifty
'Til (ten years later) I counted the coins
It totaled \$36.50.

And so I saved a hundred years
Took me until I was dead
To realize that this entire time
I should've saved dollars instead.



Elliot

Elliot

1950s
1960s
1970s

A Really Froggy Day

A small man by the name of Adam B. Utiful walked up to the local tavern. Ye Ole Gooby was a disgusting venue. The floorboards were made out of molding birch wood, the mead tasted like a cemetery, and worst of all, the jukebox full of Nickelback songs wasn't working. On second thought, it's a great thing that the jukebox wasn't playing. Nickelback are the tapeworms of the music industry. Adam, being the mighty tiny man that he is, kicked the door open and started to drink a barrel of really spicy mead. Actually he wasn't drinking the little molecules, he was slaughtering them. You could hear the screams coming from the liquid as it was falling into the mouth of the Danny DeVito-sized man. Adam was becoming a tornado of chaos, smashing the only two tables that the tavern has, trying to find more mead.

Adam, being the pure boy that he is, went up to a hooded figure and said, "Do you know who Joe is?"

The hooded figure replied "**Joe mama!**"

"No, Joe was my friend who died in the Battle of Faulkner,¹" said Adam, in the saddest voice he can come up with.

The hooded figure felt really bad about this and decided to turn poor Adam in a frog. He can't feel bad about a frog right? It's not human!

"First off, why do I feel so slimy. Second, do I have to kiss someone? I don't want any cooties!" Adam said with a mighty force of a frog. The hooded figure just walked away because he didn't care about a frog's midlife crisis. Adam, the newly reformed Frog, walked out of the tavern and sat on the moldy stairs. He looked up to the blackness known as the sky. No stars, no moon, it was lifeless, just like the wizard's marriage. He tried to contemplate life, trying to see the positive side to this. At least he could jump higher, he could make a really cool Thor cosplay, he could.....

¹ The Battle of Faulkner was a bar fight that only lasted 7.5 seconds. Joe won the battle but then got YEETED out of existence because he was fighting a wizard with marriage problems.



JJ
10/16/11

Sinner

By: Daniel Clancy

Depths of mind,
Depths of heart,
Tis struck by lucifer,
Who made my mind dark.

My soul is jealous
My soul is dark
For I was struck by Lucifer,
Who made my mind dark.

No more the light,
No more the Bright ,
For god lost his power,
For he lost the fight.

Lucifer used me,
He hurt me, burned me,
I now am damned,
For he has taken me.

I lost my mind,
So please without hark,
Save me my God,
Save me from the dark.

I have forsaken my saviour,
For I then fell,
I followed the demons,
From Heaven to Hell

I plead O Lord,
I praised the dark,
For I was struck by Lucifer,
Who made my mind dark.

Forgive me O Lord
Don't leave me in the dark,
For I was struck by Lucifer,
Who made my mind dark.

Corruption

Travis A. Aguirre

I love myself, I love my family and friends, and I love this world. The delicacy of our beautiful planet we named Earth, the sphere of life that holds all of life. The atmosphere of purity and spirit that holds a special place in my heart as the Sun and moon remains a place in the sky as well as the stars and clouds. I love the world for its instinct of a wheel to be a cycle of life and death, but we humans are the center of this cycle, we have a choice between life and death, but we aren't the results but the ones who bring it. Violence against oneself, hatred and bitterness, anger and sadness, grief and loss, pain and suffering, sins and crimes requiring punishment, and even if we have the choice to change, we still choose hell to pay. I never in my life ever thought of myself as a fool, how can I be so stupid to believe that the world is safe and sound. How can I be an idiot for believing there was good for anyone, that one could make a difference in this world, how foolish I was to have hope for the lost? The world is cold and dark just like our mind and soul, our heart and spirit are hard and breakable like stone crumbling into dust. I hate this world that is dying from our sins, I hate my family and friends who have become my slaveholders and enemies, and I hate myself who was once innocent but became perverted. I have been corrupted.

THE END

"The righteous turned wicked, the hero turned villain, and the light turned dark,
that is my definition of corruption."

Travis A. Aguirre

Mia Jones

Doppelganger

I embarked on an interesting journey, which would serve with happiness and gold. I recently found out I have a doppelganger, which to my surprise didn't give me any advantage, seeing as how my doppelganger was ruining my name. They even have her a cornucopia filled with all her favorite things to congratulate her on winning the race. But as you can imagine, those were actually all MY favorite things, and it was meant for me! There were major dilemmas during my journey, but I remained tenacious and headstrong. I was completely flabbergasted to learn that she had her own castle, servants, EVERYTHING, while I was working my butt off trying to achieve these goals. I was even more surprised to learn from the conversations of the village people that she had plenty of contraband hidden in her castle. You see what I mean? Ruining my name.

This was all a bunch of hogwash and I couldn't stand it any longer. The only way I was getting in that castle is if I was to go incognito, which isn't really a challenge for me. I was discombobulated on how she achieved getting all these riches while I sat back at home and had nothing. There was a tall Native American guard standing outside of her room door, and you guys know I'm certainly not one to be xenophobic. I guess this was a meme I inherited from my mother, she taught me well. As I snuck into her room, I was bamboozled out of my dreams, there were piles of riches in every corner, a gold mirror, and so much more. I could see the chairs were very nominal, to say the least. Then right there at that second I was in complete metanoia, there was no point in lollygagging. My fugacious identity was apparent. Slowly judging her room, I could see she was more of a bibliophile. As I stared closely at the hundreds of books she had, I could see they were more on the numinous side. It was probably more esoteric, good thing we were just alike. When I finally saw her the moment was quixotic. I looked at her and then looked at myself in the mirror. Was she my doppelganger or was I hers? I had so many questions. Who was here first? Was I just simply a creation of the person she would be if she wasn't so successful?

She stared at me as if she didn't recognize me. The disgust on her face made my blood boil. How could she look at me like that? Me? The persons whose fairytale lifestyle she stole. The audacity. I wanted to speak, but the words wouldn't come out. I was shocked, terrified, aggravated. My body didn't know how to feel, so my mouth didn't know how to express itself respectfully. The words spilled out, and before I knew it, I stood there looking like a complete ass.

"How dare you? Do you know how hard I've worked to get where I'm at? You're just sitting there all comfortable not having a care in the world. Some of us don't get everything handed to use on a silver platter. Then you just continue to stand there like you're just so innocent," I said filled with anger.

"I guess you believe the rumors too. It's no surprise. I just thought you would understand how it felt to be judged, and you wouldn't inflict that pain onto me," she said, sounding like what I assume a butterfly would sound like if it could talk. I felt so bad. At first I was thinking, "How did she know I know how it feels?" Then I remembered, she was me. Just a wealthy version. Maybe she didn't choose this lifestyle, maybe it was chosen for her. I wanted to ask certain questions, but I didn't want to make matters worse. I already upset her, and we haven't even been together for more than 10 minutes. I could tell by her many facial expressions that she had a lot of questions for me. I'm surprised she didn't scream when she saw me. Actually, why didn't she?

"When you saw me, you weren't shocked or surprised. Why is that?" I said in a curious but not demanding tone.

"I know exactly who you are. Why do you think my guards haven't busted in here by now? I have surveillance surrounding the castle, If you were a stranger you wouldn't have made it 2 inches past the door. You must've thought just because you looked like me you could barge in here? Not in those raggedy clothes, my dear. Would you like a dress or some more presentable clothes? You look a little....well, homeless," she said with an intimidating voice.

I stood there completely shocked. I couldn't believe she had just spoken to me like that. No one has ever let those words come out of their mouth while talking to me. My mind started to say crazy things. Things it has never thought of before. "Kill her. No one would know. You guys look

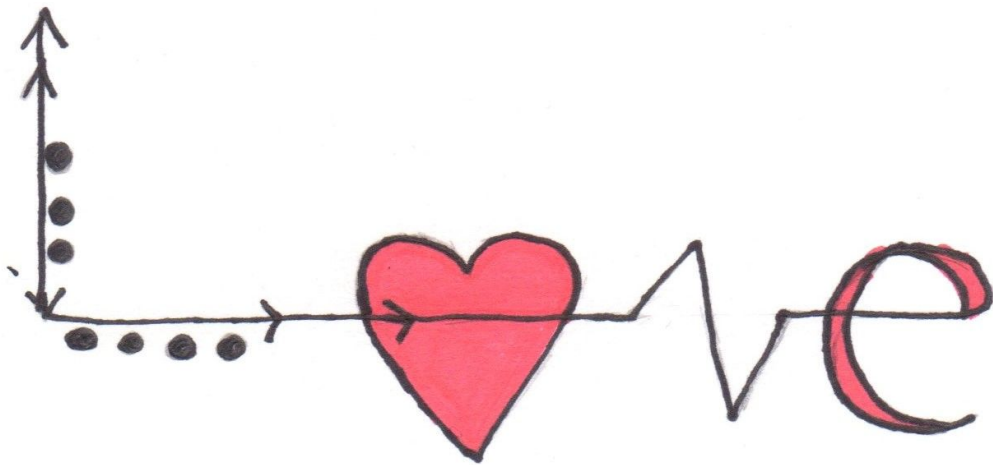
exactly alike. All you need is the attitude” it was saying. I couldn’t and I wouldn’t. That’s not me, and it never will be. I put on my big girl warrior pants and sucked it up. “Sure, some new clothes would be nice for a change,” I said in a sweet voice. She smiled and walked towards her gigantic closet. After she gave me the most expensive clothes I’ve ever seen before, she told me I could go and change in her bathroom. Once I was done changing, I stood there for somewhat 10 minutes just staring. Her bathroom was bigger than my bedroom. No guys, I’m serious. Then, I looked at myself in the mirror. I’ve never seen myself look so beautiful before. When I stepped out of the bathroom, she told me to spin around, but I hesitated. I’ve never been the type. She walked over to me and reached for my wrist. When her wrist met mine, my eyes went black.

Millions of memories I’ve never seen before rushed through my mind. My father . Mother. Three other siblings that looked exactly like me. What was happening, what had she done? How can I reverse it? There were good memories, and there were also bad ones. Memories of me being torn away from my siblings by my OWN FATHER! Suddenly the vision stopped. My father was close up and was attempting to whisper. I listened harder and harder, forcing myself to replay the memory.

“I love you and I’m sorry. If they knew there was more than 1 of you, they would terminate you. One day you’ll find out the truth, and you’ll fight for what’s right. My little soldier,” My father said as his eyes filled with tears. Then blood splattered onto my face. His body fell onto the ground and soon he lost his fight. A beautiful woman walked over his body and moved over to me.

“I’m going to make you my little soldier now.” she said with a chilling voice that made my skin feel frozen. Before I could finish, my sister removed her wrist from mine. She looked at me with tears streaming down her face.

Her lips trembled, “Did you see all you needed to see?”



Elliot

Eldrazi's Tale

BY AWGAWIN FIRESNAP

The Angels had just entered the war as a third party. The Empire had no information on them. They needed a spy, and I needed a job.

It was as simple as that. Unlike the rest of my kind, I didn't hate the Angels nor the Humans for being different. They were all trying to live their lives, and I mine. But I needed the job, so I took it.

With the Humans having just killed off the last of the Dragons, my first missions had been rather easy. Their homes had connected Ulnter to Terciel, and with the area practically a graveyard, the only fear to be had was the small chance of a rock breaking off. Once in, all I had to do was watch them from afar. Their lifestyles, their customs, how advanced they were. Simple work. Large pay. It was only until my fifth trip that the stakes began to rise.

"You are to infiltrate the Angelican government, gather intel on their weaponry and officials, and report back immediately."

"But sir, their government is located in the farthest location from every Empire and sea route. It is practically in the Dust. I can't reach it without crossing the whole of Terciel," I mentioned, keeping my head to the floor and my head bent seemingly in respect.

“Then you shall cross the whole of Terciel. And you are not to be seen. Am I clear?”

Now past the Crossroad walls, I stared out unto the empty desert terrain, pushing my dark brown hair out of my emerald eyes. Sighing in exasperation at the long journey ahead of me, I pulled up the green hood of my cloak and took my first step when a chilling voice spoke.

“Now why would a Demon like yourself be entering Terciel alone in the midst of war?”

I spun around to face a tall man with cropped grey hair and knives in hand. His yellow eyes pierced into my own and my hand instinctively reached for my own short-sword.

Seeing my movement, he smiled terribly, saying, “Eldrazi, I presume?”

“Perhaps,” *I answered vaguely, “I have business here, as must you, being a Demon yourself.”*

He laughed. A short, dull sound, worsened with a voice croaky and unstable. “I believe I do.”

“Then I’ll leave you to it,” *I replied coldly, brushing past him into the windswept desert.*

It was only a moment later that the knife pierced my back.

“For a spy, you know nothing of danger.”

A choke escaped my throat as I shakily drew my sword. Why would he attack an Ally? He had appeared mentally unstable, but this was treason! With a turn I managed to nick his hand enough to cause him to release his hold on the knife.

“Who are you, traitor?” I cried out, taking small steps backward. I did not wish to fight him. I was the kind who hid and ran. I never started problems, and wasn’t sure I could necessarily end them either.

“Traitor? One can never be a traitor if they work for themselves.” He smiled again. “It’s Tachir’. You’ll remember it, for I’ll spell it for you with your blood on the sand.” With that he lunged forward and growled, switching into his Demon form. A wolf. He lunged straight for my neck, and even transformed myself, I could not escape his claws.

It was a relentless rush of Fang and Claw. I managed to bite him, but not before he tore my underbelly. My venom was powerful, but I was bleeding out too quickly. Shrinking to my normal size, I breathed heavily into the red sand.

“This is what they consider a spy? This was the man better suited for this job than I? A foolish man working for a foolish government. At least it’s fitting.”

I wanted to reply. To say something to make him shut his confident mouth, but I couldn’t make my body move. It was all red until it was black.

The next was a darkness filled with the scent of wysteria. I tried to stand up, before realizing that I had no legs. Transforming back didn’t work either. I

was stuck, and began thrashing in panic when a voice cut through the darkness.

“You can’t turn into your humanoid form in the Nether. I should know, I’ve been a bat for years, maybe even centuries now. How am I to know?”

“-I’m in the Nether? I...died?” *I cried out. I’m supposed to be immortal, not die before most Humans!* “I need to be alive! I still have to-”

“Calm down. You’re able to be born again, you know.” *If I could have seen him , I would have given him a strange look.* “Surely you’ve heard of Devolns before. It’s risky, given the Human tradition, but if you ever have the chance, take it.”

“What of you, then?”

“I’m not interested in Life anymore. I’m waiting for someone to join me here. And it’s not so bad. I’m one of the only ones here that can see. Get out if you can.”

I don’t know how long the darkness went on for, only that one moment it was the same as always, and the next, it was in front of me, a shining beacon of green light. It was dying, weak, sickly. It would not have survived on its own. I wanted to help, and stepped into the brightness.

And that, Gavin, was how I met you.

Classic high school literature, but it's all Slaughterhouse Five
Kurt Vonnegut, and by extension Billy Pilgrim, are unstuck in time. Needless to say,
they were always there, in all the stories and books.

THIS DOES CONTAIN SPOILERS FOR THESE BOOKS< CAUTION

To Kill a Mockingbird:

The owner of the general store where Scout buys her baton, that's him Kurt Vonnegut

The Great Gatsby:

The man who crashes his yellow car after one of Gatsby's parties, that's him Kurt
Vonnegut

Hamlet:

The pirates, one of them was Billy Pilgrim
The ghost of Hamlet's father was Kurt Vonnegut

1984:

Big Brother, that's him, that's Kurt Vonnegut

Fahrenheit 451:

Guy, that's him, that's Kurt Vonnegut

Macbeth:

Both Macbeth and Third Murderer are Kurt Vonnegut

Lord of the Flies:

Simon, that's him, that's Kurt Vonnegut

Oedipus Rex:

The blind prophet, that's him, that's Kurt Vonnegut

The Catcher in the Rye:

Holden, that's him, that's Kurt Vonnegut

The Tell Tale Heart:

The narrator, that's him, that's Kurt Vonnegut

The Cask of Amontillado:

Montresor, that's him, that's Kurt Vonnegut

Mary Shelley's Frankenstein:

Doctor Frankenstein, that's him, that's Kurt Vonnegut

The Crucible:

John Proctor, that's him, that's Billy Pilgrim

Giles Corey, that's him, that's Kurt Vonnegut

The Picture of Dorian Gray:

Dorian Gray, that's him kurt Vonnegut

Animal farm:

The farmer, that's him, that's Kurt Vonnegut

A Christmas Carol:

The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come, that's him, that's Kurt Vonnegut

Treasure island:

Billy Bones, that's him, that's Kurt Vonnegut

The Outsiders:

Dally, that's him, that's Kurt Vonnegut

Moby Dick:

Ishmael, that's him, that's Kurt Vonnegut

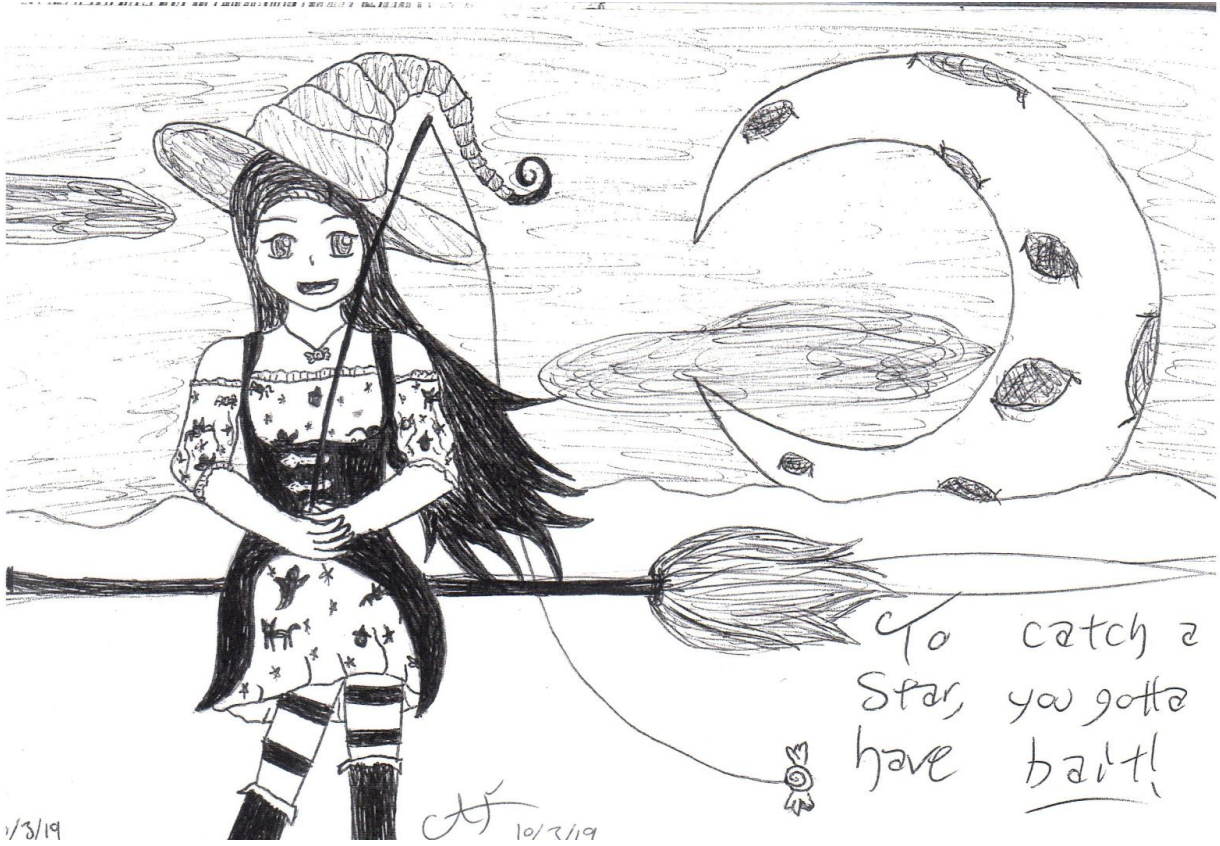
The white whale, that's him Billy Pilgrim

The Alchemist:

The sheep, those are all Kurt Vonnegut

The Hunger Games:

Haymitch, that's him Kurt Vonnegut



To catch a
Star, you gotta
have bait!

1/3/19

10/2/19

Danny DeVito: The World's Tallest Skyscraper

or “College Essay for Love”

By Kevin Andrade

Welcome to my essay, dear reader. Sit back, relax, and enjoy what I have in store for you.

My name is Kevin Andrade and I'm from the armpit of America called New Jersey. Where everything is over 1000 dollars to live in and having fake orange skin is acceptable. I'm surprised that I'm still living in an actual house and not a makeshift one that is made out of Pitbull cardboard cutouts that I found behind the local Hot Topic. My parents came from the other side of the border, which is Mexico, and they are very hardworking people. I'm grateful for that because they showed me that hard work and dedication does pay off. While they are off at work and I'm by myself, I go into my personal creative endeavors. For example, I used to draw on my face and put stickers to cover them up so my parents don't find out what I just did. As far as I know, they did, most of the time. Growing up, whenever I got into trouble, my dear mother would always tell me, “You might be an accident but at least you're not a mistake,” which is technically true so I'm not gonna judge. I also acquired my mother's dark humor by accident. In a weird way, people who have a dark sense of humor are kinda optimistic if you really think about it. Eventually they got divorced when I was like 9, nowadays I make jokes about getting divorced or my parents being divorced. That, and paying child support to my child that never existed while saying that the prom is tomorrow. In my mind, the prom is always tomorrow. Enough of my self indulgence, now for my skills.

Doing film and other assortments like that is absolutely great. Being creative is a vital

part of my life, whether it be making music, doing film, writing a short story, or finding solutions to problems. I recently made a short film that was about a man not getting over a relationship with his fluffy pony head on a stick. Obviously, it was one of my most dramatic takes on romantic relationships. In my films and writing I try to incorporate comedy and realistic/abstract ideas. I feel like comedy is a great tool to make you feel better, in the words of David Brent from the original U.K version of *The Office*, "Comedy is a place where the mind goes to tickle itself." I firmly agree with that quote. I get my creativity through a lot of things. I let my mind run wild and don't hold back. It's like that one Smash Mouth song, "And they don't stop coming, and they don't stop coming, and they don't stop coming..." Sometimes, if I see something that's noteworthy or have an idea, I'll write it down in a small notepad. So despite having remarkable qualities, what are the kryptonites in my life?

With all of these strengths, do I have any weaknesses? My weaknesses are like my problems in life, I have a lot of them. First and most importantly, I have difficulty speaking. I always had this problem since I was little. I tend to mispronounce some words, miss out grammar, and not include words in my speaking. Like for example I would try to say, "The cat is named Benedict." and it turns out like, "Cot name Beneict." Another weakness that I have is lacking in communication, I'm more of a face to face person than sending an email and waiting for a response. I see this as a problem because it might devoid opportunities that may present themselves in the future. For the most part, I am a bit shy whenever I go and present a project to a group of people. However, the power of comedy helped me overcome that. In my sophomore year of high school, I had to participate in a special presentation for my business class. What I did for it was include lines like, "I want seven kids so I can love one each day, unless I have

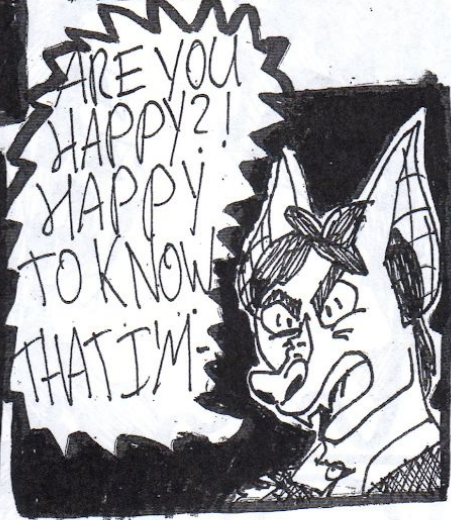
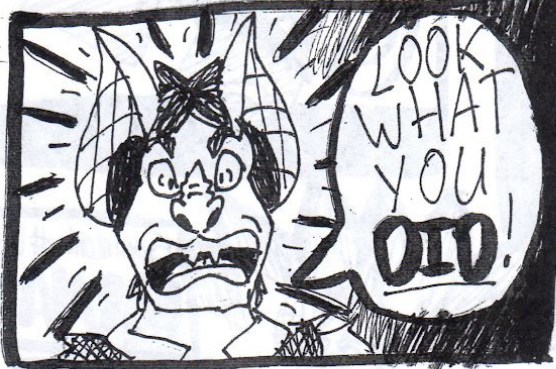
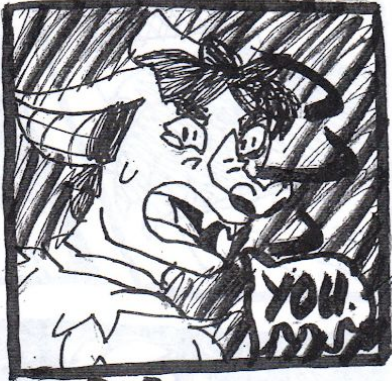
twins, then one of them got to go,” and, “My dislikes include people’s knees, werewolves, and of course myself!” and the word “myself” was in big colorful letters, surrounded with fireworks. Of course, this wouldn’t be a weakness section without the mentioning of anxiety. Oh boy, Anxiety! I would like to describe my anxiety as a really big Italian who is part of the Mafia, smashing my knee caps with an aluminum bat called “Maria”. Currently, I’m working on it and so far it’s all good.

Now the big question that everyone has in their mind is why you should accept me? Well to put it shortly, I am a creative guy who is always ready to put some big boy pants on. From my personal yelp reviews, I average in an 8.4 from peers, friends, co workers, and surprisingly my ex lovers. I try my very hardest with every project that is presented in front of me. I love challenging society’s norms just to make a point because I’m dedicated. I can work under pressure, work in a hostile environment if needed, and especially I can read. Now imagine a huge parade playing in the background while I sing about how I’m gonna be stuck in debt for studying something I love while also doing the Can Can with people dressed as Danny DeVito. That’s how I will end my essay like that, so enjoy it while it lasts.



*as seen in
issue # 7





Jade Carluccio

15 November, 2019

Transcript of the Comic Pages

FIRST PAGE

- Natt grips the cloaking device on Norman's arm
- She grips and pulls hard, accidentally breaking the device [PULL]
- Panel of Norman's face realizing, front or $\frac{3}{4}$ view
- Panel of his painful transformation into a Kinerit, screaming in pain
- One of the glasses' lenses shatter when they hit the ground [CRACK]
- Natt retracts her hand, scared
 - "Wha-"
- Panel of Norman's Kinerit Form, labeled as [Experiment #13: NORMAN]

SECOND PAGE

- Norman falls to the ground, on his knees, trembling and crying at the sudden rush of pain for his whole body, due to the device not properly being taken off
- He then whips his head back to Natt, exasperated and enraged
 - "YOU."
- He starts to sit up, progressively getting angrier, and tears stop flowing
 - "LOOK WHAT YOU DID! ARE YOU HAPPY? ARE YOU HAPPY TO LEARN-"
- Natt backs up a step, looking down at him, the panels go from having darker backgrounds, to completely white for this one
 - "just like me...How-"
- He then squats, with his wings ready for take off.
 - "AND YOU'LL BE THE LAST TO KNOW!"



Catharsis

AWGAWIN FIRESNAP

I wasn't born at the bottom, but somehow, I fell there. I am actually the son of the Indigo Lord, only a step away from the top of the hierarchy, but my high ranking doesn't mean I am exempt from all problems. I don't have to be a part of the Crimson slaves to have to worry about diseases, like the sickness residing in my mother's lungs.

I can't stand to look at her, withering away more and more every day, wasting her life away in bed. Especially when she does not have to. Although my father no longer has any room in his heart for her, already flirting with the first maiden of the Lilac Court, I will help her. I have traveled all over Esperia; finding a medicine man wasn't the problem, it was finding the ingredients to save her.

Still, my father's new relationship bothered me beyond words. Although on a political level, I could understand his decision, (the fact that if they should marry, it would raise my family's noble status into the Violet class) his actions almost dissed anytime I had seen him act in a loving manner towards my mother. No. I would not abandon her so easily. I would travel to the ends of the world and more for her. For three months now, I have been gathering the ingredients, and have found nearly all of them, all except one.

Most of them were herbs, like sorrel and heartswallow, which were easy to get. Even finding a hollow crystal wasn't too difficult, but it is the last ingredient that has been causing me strife, for the final component is a Catharsis stone. Coming from someplace beyond a mortal's ability to imagine, it is an actual stone fallen from the sky, burning orange and yellow, revealing the star inside. Only the Lilac Nobles are allowed to have those, and even then, they are kept under tight watch, leaving me with only one option: to steal one.

So now, scaling the outside of a purple painted tower, trying not to be spotted, is not one of my prouder moments, but when I spy the glowing rocks nesting inside, and slide in through the window, I know it's worth it. Feeling the warmth emitting from the one I slip in my pocket, I jump from the window and roll onto the ground, running away from the scene as I hear the sounds of alarms rising in the distance.

Following the medicine man's instructions carefully, I crushed up the herbs with the Catharsis, putting the ground-up leaves into the hollow crystal, which I had already filled with spring water. The cure finished, I handed my mother, who had no idea what it was, the 'cup' and witnessed her drink it to her good health.

With the medicine completely swallowed, I watched her sit up, her sunken face plumping up again and her cheeks flushing. Her thanks to me came not in her usual whisper, ending with a cough, which I had heard ever since I was four years old, but in the voice of a headstrong woman whom I had never even had the chance to meet.

But although it seemed all of my problems had been solved, I still had to pay the price. For at that moment, the Lilac Officials came bursting through the door; they wanted my head, pulling me away from my mother and arresting me on the spot. I am now left to sit in the dungeons, surrounded by the only color worse than red: Grey.

I sit there for Myrial knows how long, my once dark periwinkle royal garments getting discolored and filthy on the floor as I await my sentence. Even though it's comforting, knowing that my mother is now safe, I can't help but feel superior to my surroundings. Feeling a rage flare up in my chest, I stood quickly and struck the wall in front of me once, twice, I lost count of how many times. I only stopped when the wall became spattered with the crimson of my blood, the red liquid dripping down onto the stone floor.

Behind me, I could hear a laugh, slightly tainted from insanity, poke fun at my outrage.

"You must be new," I heard the voice, a girl's, say, and I turned to face her. She was, surprisingly, my age, which I found strange, as there shouldn't be many adolescents in a place like this. Her hair was a flaming tangerine, matching the stained tunic she wore. In fact, the only thing that wasn't orange was her striking emerald eyes that pierced me all the way from across the hall. "What are you in here for?" she asked, breaking my attention away from her looks. "It's not every day you see a Purple person in prison."

It's Indigo, my mind instantly corrected. "That is not any of your business," I snapped in reply. After all, it was not something someone of her rank deserved to know. However, my secret was somewhat revealed when my caretaker came in with a tray.

"Here ya go," the man thundered, pushing the tray under the bars. "It's yer last meal, so ya better enjoy it." Then, task completed, he sauntered off to care for another inmate.

"Woah," the girl breathed, and I immediately wished she would stop talking. "You're getting the death sentence? That's harsh."

"Was that supposed to be comforting?" I lashed out, picking at the stale loaf of bread that had been placed before me.

"No," the girl replied, "I was just trying to sympathize, but now I can see why they chose it. At least now I know I only have to deal with your crass self for an hour."

I stood up from my seated position on the floor. How dare a peasant from the Tangerine class speak to him like that! “You have no right to talk like that to me!” I yelled, grabbing the bars of the cell in frustration.

“Why? Cause you’re from some fancy upper class? Hate to break it to ya, but colors don’t matter here. We’re all in for something and we’re going to pay the consequences, and that includes you. So suck it up, because you’ve only got an hour until they come to take you away.”

I stared at her, eyes wide in surprise. I had no words to reply to that, because while I hate to admit it, she was entirely correct.

“By the way, the name’s Amber,” the girl grinned, as though yelling at me one minute and introducing herself the next was a completely normal way to greet someone. Against my will, I felt a small smile grace my face. She was strange, but I found myself glad to have met her, and felt it only fair to share my name as well.

“I am known as Darion,” I answered to her unspoken question, and she nodded, like she had known that from the minute she had met me.

“Alright, now how about we work together to bust out of this place?” she asked, her face going completely serious with the question.

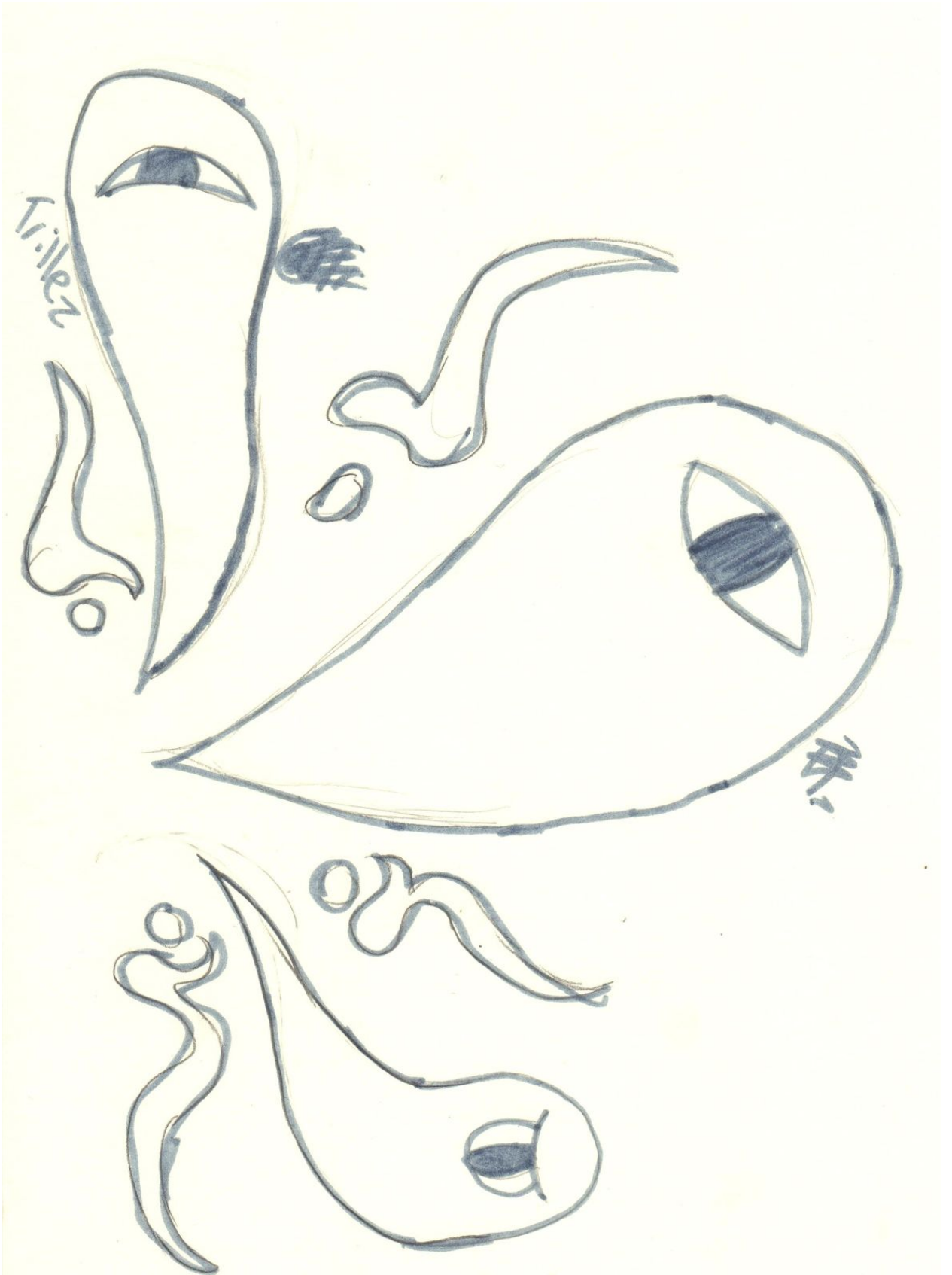
“Excuse me?”

“Let’s get out of here,” Amber suggested again, as if repeating herself made her insane plan any clearer. “They are going to kill you soon anyway; what have you got to lose? Why not work together to escape?”

I raised my eyebrows, in both a look of surprise, and questioning. “You have a plan?” I inquired.

She laughed, the musical sound slipping out from between her lips, even in a place like this.

“Maybe...”



FADE IN:

INT. DINER - NIGHT

John and Mary are sitting in a booth and sipping mugs. John is slouching in his booth while Mary is sitting upright.

JOHN

(Annoyed)

I wanna go home already.

MARY

Same but we have to wait for the others to come back. I think they're still talking to Jacob's band.

JOHN

I thought his band was alright. I heard it before ya know?

MARY

I guess so.

JOHN

It's like, 'Ooo let's go in 4/4 in the key of A then change to 2/4 in the key of C Sharp.' It's like, we get it. You guys are progressive.

Michael rushes into the diner and sits next to John.

MICHAEL

So? What do you guys think of the show?

MARY

I thought it was good.

JOHN

(Over Mary)

Seen it before.

MICHAEL

You guys wanna see what I did?

Michael lifts his shirt up, revealing an autograph on the left side of his chest.

MICHAEL

I got my chest signed!

MARY

That's nice.

JOHN

Cool.

MICHAEL

Yeah and after I got it signed, multiple people started to get their own chests signed as well. It was mostly guys, though.

JOHN

That's hot.

Mary coughs up some of her drink.

MARY

(Recovering)

So where are the others?

MICHAEL

Anthony and Michele went home before the encore started. They didn't want to miss curfew ya know?

JOHN

Great, then let's go home.

MARY

I'm not finished and I'm sure Michael is thirsty. Aren't you?

MICHAEL

(Nodding head)

Yeah.

John puts his face on the table.

JOHN

Why does the seat smell?

MARY

I mean, it's cheaper than the other diners around here.

JOHN

I guess so.

John lifts his head up.

JOHN

Ugh. I'm so tired. And so sweaty.

MICHAEL

Yeah, you went crazy in the mosh pit. It was like a brotherly bonding experience for us, ya know?

It goes quiet. Mary is still drinking from her mug, and Michael is approached by a waiter.

MICHAEL

Water, please.

WAITER

Sure thing, anything else?

MICHAEL

No that's it. Thank you.

The waiter walks away, and John pulls his head up.

JOHN

Hey, so what happened to that other band that was supposed to play?

MICHAEL

What do you mean?

MARY

Oh you mean Sticks and Bones?

JOHN

Yeah yeah. That band. Why didn't they play tonight?

MARY

Oh.

(Sips mug)

So they've been outed for being abusers by their ex girlfriends and stuff. And I thought it was funny.

JOHN

How so?

MARY

Because they're all like free speech and rights! That liberal stuff. I saw it on Twitter this morning. Again very funny stuff.

The waiter comes back with a glass of water.

MICHAEL

(Over Mary)

I hate the middle class.

Michael sips the cup while Mary is still going on her tangent.

MARY

Another funny thing is that it's the fat guys who were the abusers, and not the skinny members. It's setting a bad example for the big bones peeps. One of the guys looks like the Death Star.

JOHN

(Over Mary)

Okay we get it.

MARY (CONT'D)

I'm scared to go near the guy, I feel like he's gonna crush me with all of his thickness. And his feet are so ugly. They have so much fungus. It's

like the mushroom kingdom from Mario.

John goes over the table and shakes Mary.

JOHN

There are people nearby, don't talk
about the Death Star's crusty feet.

John goes back to his seat and looks at Michael.

JOHN

You're good now Mikey?

MICHAEL

Yeah I feel fine. I'm ready to go home
now. I got work tomorrow.

MARY

Since when did you start working?

MICHAEL

For a while now. The topic really never
came up so I don't talk about it. Ya
know?

Mary gets the attention of the waiter.

MARY

Could we get the check, please?

WAITER

Sure thing, honey.

The waiter gets her check out and place it on the table.

CLOSE UP

The check says the total amount is \$7.89.

MARY

I have enough money for the pay toll.
So...

MICHAEL

I spent my cash for merch.

JOHN

I have nothing.

They all look at each other.

MICHAEL

Bail?

Everybody nods and runs out of the diner, leaving behind two
dollars in tips.

FADE TO BLACK:



America's Anatomy

I am the severed leg of Britain,
Who grew its new body.
I am of the people,
Who abuse themselves and me.

The rich white guy is on a conference call,
His trophy wife is home cleaning the kitchen,
His athlete son is practicing basketball,
His narrow daughter is trying out for the squad.

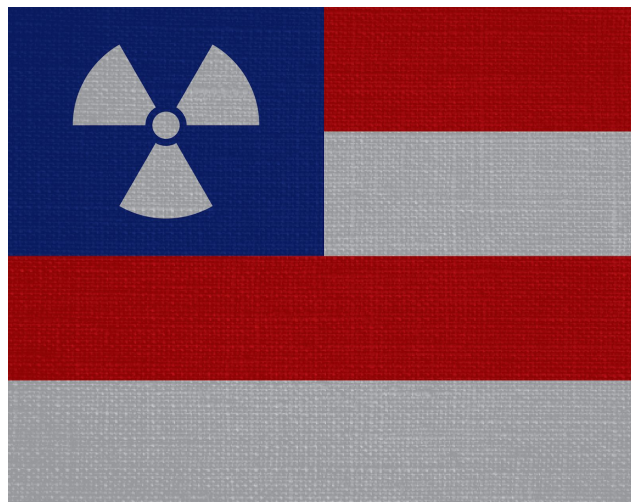
The rich white guy doesn't pay a cent
He is part of the 1%.

His wife doesn't want to upset,
Unless she wants a threat.

His daughter starved,
To make herself look carved.

His son's grades are at a low,
Because he's trying to go pro.

They are my body,
They are my soul.
Regrowth really does take a toll.



Maeve Schubauer

The street lights outside glowed through the fog. The city, the sky, and Nobody. Nobody was alone. Nobody was home. Nobody was actually somebody. Nobody was alive, nobody was dead, yet. The fog gathered outside, drenching the city into eerie peace. The windows and door were locked. They were always locked, well, until Nobody unlocked them. But Nobody would just lock them again right after. Not a fan of visitors. Nobody enjoyed silence, and yet hated it at the same time. It was a peaceful hell. But it all ends eventually. Nobody ends, the silence ends, visitors don't show up. And in suit the silence ends, with a phone ringing. Nobody picks up the phone. It's Lion Teeth, they wanted to talk about the newest episode of their favorite tv show. It came out an hour ago and was an hour long special. It was the series finale. Years of work, dedication, love, dreams, tears, emotion, and money all amounted up to one hour. Just like life, Nobody thought. Lion Teeth kept talking about how all loose ends were wrapped up and how much they loved it. They cried during it, is what Lion Teeth said to Nobody. Nobody thought it was superficial to cry over the end of something, you would just find something new to be a part of. Lion Teeth disagreed. Lion Teeth was alive, and would not reach their end, at this time. Lion Teeth said they loved Nobody, and hung up the phone. Nobody sighed, and put the phone down. Wheel was on, and Nobody would be damned if they missed Wheel of Fortune. The wheel spun and spun and the letters appeared in a predictable pattern. No one ever truly won Wheel of Fortune. And that, thought Nobody, was the most real thing there was. Nobody found themselves uncharacteristically bored of Wheel, and decided to go out for a stroll. It was foggy, and the streetlights only allowed a minimalist amount of vision. A few cars drove past Nobody as they walked down the sidewalk. Nobody yet again was alone. The night sky was cloudy and so was Nobody's train of thought. They passed small shops and cafes with their lights off. A few of them had their lights on with a sign that had the hours they were open till on it. Most closed around ten o'clock. Nobody's phone buzzed again, this time with a text message, it was just Lion Teeth reminding them how much he loved them. It was sweet, and strange. How could someone love Nobody? But here, someone did love Nobody. Nobody smiled, and typed the words, "i love you too, dork." They sent the message, just in time. For Nobody was out of time. The fog seemed to grow thicker, it was much harder to see than before. Nobody stopped and turned to the street, and started walking to the other side. The headlights were seen too late. The horn came too late. It was over in an instant. Nobody was dead. Nobody's life had ended. And Lion Teeth cried at this end, too.

THEME: Death comes for us all.

Tyler Crepeau

4/16/20

The life we took for granted is on hold for now,
To wait out a virus spreading, we're locked in our homes.

We complain how bored and lonely and stressed we get,
We complain as we have to stay in our homes for now.

Humans forget how life in the zoo must feel every day.
Animals live in permanent quarantine, upset and bored all their life.

The lion's small cage is unbearable and dirty, unfit as a home,
Compared to the comfortable and warm man's home.

We had life so easy and the freedom to do anything,
Now we are the tigers locked in the cages called our homes.





Xoris

By Angawin Firesnap

It was never something painstakingly obvious. There was never some sign of anything being out of the ordinary with me. Some were picked out as just children, talented individuals who could read a book and produce fire or even naturally command the wind.

I was only a scholar, able to absorb any information with ease, but when the undead invaded our lands I was indoctrinated to be a soldier like all the other men. As far as I knew, the only power I wielded was the sword in my hand and my knowledge of the enemy.

I was of low rank, forced to fight on the frontlines if only to save the skin of those in higher positions. Perhaps others would have complained of the system being unfair, but I didn't see it that way. I was fighting for my country, my king, and those that I cared for like my closest friend, Luke. Together we swore that we would rid our people of the monsters that threatened the peace.

But my shield could only cover so much. When arrows began to rain from the burnt skies, I instinctively shielded myself, then I heard a cry from a familiar voice.

"Luke?" I turned to see him fall to the ground, an arrow protruding from his neck. I crouched next to him, watching as the blood ran in smooth, flowing trickles down his skin, his blue eyes becoming cloudy.

I raised my head with tears dripping and bellowed an inhuman cry. Rage like I had never known overtook me as I rose into the air. I scanned the stunned crowd of foes and allies before me and a glow erupted from my eyes before I fell to the ground. Breathing heavily, I opened my eyes to find a man about to slash me through. I flinched back, raising my arm to weakly defend myself, when I realized the man did not move at all. No one did, for all before me now was a field of statues. Armour-clad men stood frozen in anger, anguish, astonishment.

“What...did you do?” Luke whispered beside me. I could only pant as a reply.

“A medic!” someone called behind me, and soon a general and a doctor came to our aid. The general surveyed the medic tending to Luke for a moment before turning to me.

“Name?” his deep, rumbling voice asked, and I was surprised he had not learned it before.

“Xoris sir,” I answered respectfully.

“Xoris...” He tasted the word on his tongue. “An unusual name. Come with me.”

⊠

I was sent to the king with the general as well as a few reports. I do not remember most of the trip, only that I was very tired and confused, and often fell in and out of sleep.

The king was much older than I had expected, though he still offered a powerful presence as I knelt before him.

“My lord,” the general began, falling onto a knee beside me, “The Battle of Korim was a success.”

“That is only as I could have expected from my best general,” the king smiled. It faded quickly, however, when his stern eyes glanced at me. “And what of this soldier? Why is he here?” The advisor looked at me inquisitively, but said nothing.

“He is the reason the battle was won, your highness. After two days on the frontline, he was observed to levitate, then fire a blast of magik from his eyes. All before him were turned to stone. Nineteen of them were our own, the rest, the army. Only the very vampiric archers in the back were unhit. And fled in terror moments later.”

Both the king and the advisor now looked at me with great interest. “At least the men were only frontline. It would have been a shame if we had lost talented men,” the king murmured with seemingly little concern. “But of you, what is your name?”

“Xoris, my lord,” I replied, trying to keep my voice stable. The room felt tight, small, with an almost intense energy being targeted at me.

“Xoris. An unusual name for a human. Are you knowledgeable of your lineage? Are your ancestors human?”

“My parents were human, as were their parents before them.” I was unsure of what to tell them. How could I explain when I myself barely knew what had occurred?

“Have you ever had a proficiency for magik?”

I shook my head.

“If I may, Sire...” the advisor interjected. The king nodded to him. “This is a rare occurrence, but with levitation, the ability to petrify, human lineage... yes... it may very well be...”

“Go on,” the king insisted.

“Ages ago, long enough for his parents to have two and twenty more before them, there was a beholder. So great and evil was his power that the gods cursed him to a mortal body. He lived as a human, vowing to return, but as time went on he came to live simply, and have a family of his own. The legends end there, but it is perhaps possible that the creature, and the woman he grew to love, were his ancestors, and he has awakened some hidden power.” The man stopped suddenly, his high-pitched rant ending on a breath of excitement while the rest of the audience looked on in shock.

The man was correct. I had read the same legend, and knew too much of beholders to deny it as a coincidence. But, to suddenly be something other than yourself... related to a creature so horrid that most couldn't bring themselves to speak of its kind... I shook wildly, my knee wavering unsteadily on the floor. If I was... that, then what made me different from the creatures that had shot Luke, and what made it my right to kill them. Kill them all?

“This is wonderful!” the king interjected, with nothing but a grin. “Arise Xoris!”

I obliged.

“With your power, we could win this war. We could send you alone into battle, ending it in seconds!” His voice dropped to a step above a whisper, so that I had to come closer to hear his offer. “How would you like to become one of my royal paladins?”

And in my shock, I barely knew what he had said, blindly agreeing to a higher power.

Only a week later, I was back to my camp, for it was mine now, but much had changed. I could sense resentment from those whose friends I had unintentionally petrified, and fear from almost everyone else. I didn't belong here. I had no knowledge of how to summon that power again, and I didn't want to. All I wanted was to see Luke, and hopefully I would do nothing more.

The white tent crusted with dirt stood before me, but I hesitated, scooping my hand through my short brown hair. Finally I entered to see him lying on a simple cot. His eyes opened at the sound of my new armour clinking, and he sat up. He was bandaged, but happy as ever.

“Xoris! Look at you! Whatever happened to you out there, and what became of you after?”

I took a seat next to him. I would not hide the truth, this I had already decided, but what I dreaded was his reaction.

“What occurred a fortnight ago, I did not know was in my ability.”

Luke gasped at this, blue eyes wide like a child with a bedtime tale. “Are you a sorcerer?”

“No. From that the king's advisor tells me, I'm descended from an ancient evil. A beholder. An untold amount of power has been passed down to me through blood. I have been knighted and they expect me to call upon it again to win us the war.” I looked away from his face in shame.

“You sound as though you don’t wish to do it,” he pointed out after a minute of thought. I looked at him in surprise.

“You’re not going to ask me to leave? Or even be cautious?” I couldn’t sense an ounce of fear in him.

“No, although I’m going to assume that the others have already begun to do so. But, from what I can see, you’re still my caring friend coming to see me as soon as he was able. Whatever magik or power you discovered, you used to save my life. You don’t even look any different. No fangs, correct?” he jokingly asked, cocking an eyebrow.

“No, none of that,” I laughed. I could have cried out of sheer appreciation that he simply didn’t care, but Luke had never liked to dwell on emotions.

“So what of the battle then? As I said, you don’t seem very committed.”

“I barely know *what* I am, much less how to use it to our advantage. And is it even right? The reports tell me that nineteen of our own men, I killed, along with countless enemies. Is it even right for me to end their lives? It all feels so wrong now, even if it is the king’s orders. If I’m descended from a creature like them, is it murder? Am I also a great evil?” I felt like I was thinking too many thoughts at once, all of them convoluted and contradictory.

“Why not deny them? Figure out what you are and what you want to do, then maybe come back?” He said it so simply, like it was the clear answer.

“...Perhaps I will. I’ll at least stay until you’re better, and then set off. Perhaps I can find more on this legend, and of their kind.” The familiar feeling of excitement from learning filled me. “When should you be healed by?”

“No more than two days,” Luke answered cheerfully. “The medics say that I’m resilient. They can’t keep me here for long.”

I laughed. They were right about that. I bid him good night and left to my own tent when the general’s voice stopped me. “Getting some rest before the battle?”

“Battle?” I hadn’t heard that troops were still headed to this area.

“Yes, so be prepared for tomorrow. Good night.”

I lay in my personal tent, but I was unable to sleep. Ever since I had wielded that power, my mind had felt more open, as if I were more awake than I had ever been before. It was as if my thoughts had been resting in a small bottle, and now that the cork was removed they could achieve much more. The issue was determining exactly how this led to the power, and how I was to control it once there. I could feel it now, like a cold draft that sat higher in my head, out of reach. If only there was some sort of ladder, or a flight of stairs...

The hair on the back of my neck bristled. I felt calm, cool... powerful. It was an imagined staircase, seemingly made of my own steady breath. I only needed to walk up them to achieve it.

I closed my eyes and felt the energy dissipate. I was ready for battle.

⊠

The armour lay heavy on my shoulders, but in the dawn’s light it no longer made me feel too small for it. I walked alone, with only the general yards behind me to watch. The Undead army was spread on the hills in my forefront, seemingly confused. Only one

man? they appeared to be thinking as they approached gingerly. I counted slowly, calculating their positions.

Then when they were ready, as was I. I closed my eyes while my breathing became focused and rhythmic. In, out. Up, hold, down, like stairs. I took a step, then another...

I opened my eyes, and that was all it took. I tried not to think of their lives, or what they were fighting for. It seemed so odd that I didn't know of their reasons, or never cared before. I tried to only focus on how after this, I could leave, maybe come back, maybe never fight again. They could not force me, would not dare to force me.

When my feet tapped the ground, I immediately turned away. I did not wish to see their frozen faces. I turned to face the general, "Is that all?"

"Yes."

"Good."

I strode up to the white tent, ready to tell Luke the good news. "Luke!" I called through the flap door, but received no answer from the empty cots.

Of course! He had said they couldn't keep him long. He was clearly back at his own tent, sleeping in as always. Spotting the grey tent, I once again lifted the flap.

The bed was empty.

"Luke passed away from an infection last night."

I whipped around to see the general's silhouette framed in the doorway.

"...What?"

“His wound was infected. It healed alright, but some illness must have been trapped inside,” he relayed casually. He glanced at his dark, hair-covered knuckles. His sharp black beard seemed to move slower than time as he continued, “At least he was only a frontline. It could have been worse.”

“Sir! That was my best friend. He was a brother to me, frontline or not. Where is his body?” I almost screamed the last part. Luke, dead? But he was always so lively, so healthy...

“We burned it already. Like I said, he was only a frontline. Now if it were you or I, we’d have been sent back home, so there’s no need to worry—” his blank, deep voice was cut short as I grabbed his collar firmly, beginning to lift him.

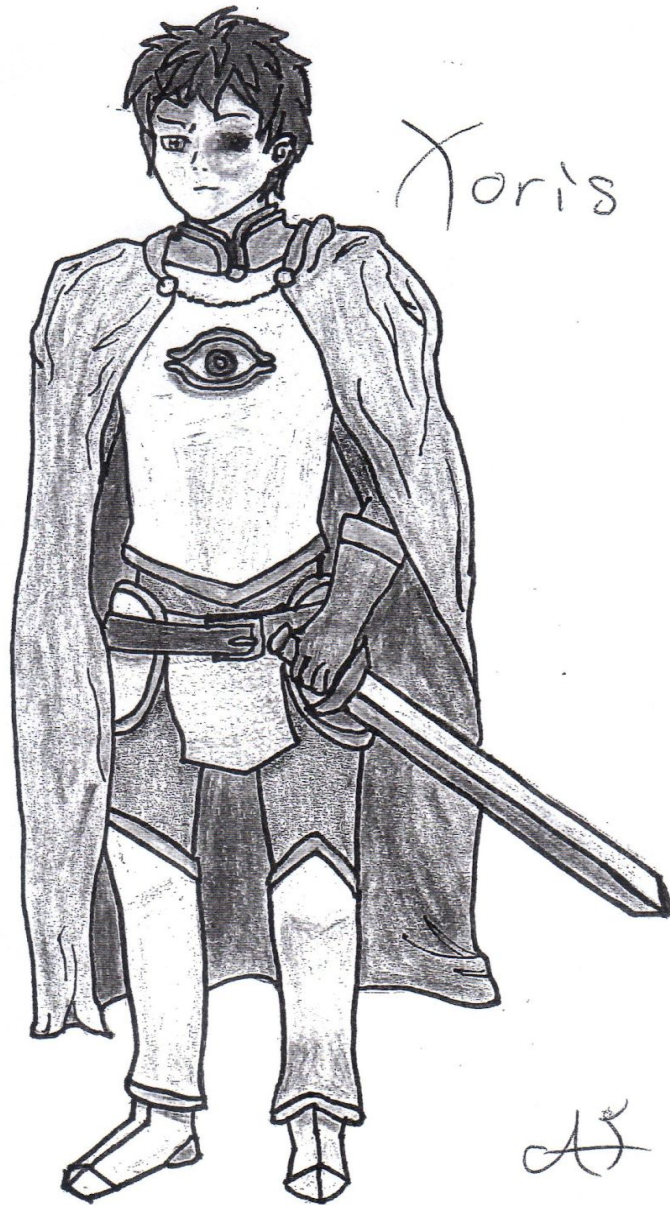
My voice sounded dark, almost eerie as I spoke: “You don’t deserve to have your body sent home, scum who has no compassion outside of rank. You did not care if I lived or died until you could use me for power. Same with your king. I say your, because I will serve him no longer.” I tossed him to the ground.

His brown eyes bulged as he sputtered, “What... did you say? Did you curse me? Some dark incantation?” His voice rose with fear at the last statement, almost making him sound younger, like a victim.

I didn’t know what he meant, and certainly did not care to answer. I left the camp and walked in the direction of the battlefield. I passed face after face, all dead. Tears began to pour from my eyes helplessly. I knew not exactly what I was, but I knew that this was not the answer. I was not someone who would blindly follow others again. Luke

had wished for me to pursue my own path. Even in childhood, he had fought those who had teased me for my intelligence, because he hadn't wanted me to give up reading.

"I won't," I answered to the wind, blowing in different directions to reach the grey sky. "I'll keep going. I'll figure this out."



Write a Paragraph of at least 200 Words on a Topic of your Choice

Dear young boy,

The dagger that fate beholds is both minute and inconclusive with no answer on why it begins or ends; though held from the knowledge, we're not binded to this inevitability and have power over it. Thoughts without this knowledge are left indefinitely in a state of bliss which contains only what they believe. For I, once an idiot bound by the strings, have found that there was nowhere left to go. I had been stuck, unaware of time, or well being, drifting into a never ending madness where Christ cannot save me. In this torment I find myself incapable of living and am instead left with pure ignorance. It began when I was imagining a story I could write and how simple characters could be seen through something such as a picture. This picture was of a young boy dressed in simple attire with a small typewriter that had a bright light most likely for seeing the results of his piece. He looked puzzled and worried with no sense of where he was in this world. With such vivid detail and dark blends, he seemed as if he were like me. However, for me to compare myself to such a young boy would be insulting to the character, for I have already parted from my childish ideals; his face, though, was mature. He looked as if he had seen death and experienced birth. It seems like this boy has lived the lives of countless others, but seems ignorant for he is not capable of control against this matter. Nevermind that, for I was at no point feeling like I should compare myself to a still frame incapable of feeling or living. I was only there to write a story of this man. After concluding my writing, I came to the realization that all I have done is gone back to the still frame, a picture with no meaning to me. It was then that I realized I wasn't a gentleman or a lady. I was neither smart nor dumb. Looking into that picture, it was shown that this boy was writing about me. And then, at that very second I realized I had no existence. I was only a pure thought of this young boy. It was then I realized the boy was nothing short of a lord. My lord is him for he has made me. Without this boy I would've meant nothing, just a still frame looked upon by no one, stuck for eternity. I had just been born, but I also just died. Was the realization of my birth my death, and is the very reason for my existence just to be temporary? Through this realization I have concluded that I'm only as important as a picture and so I have realised that every picture is an existence of me or you, indefinitely. Thence, we are neither male nor female. Neither tall nor small, smart nor dumb. We're puppets controlled by the hands of fate. It is soon that others must realize, but the truth is inevitable, such as the creation of a painting

Sincerely, No one



Three Day Old Cheese

By Kevin Andrade

The other food condiments are fearing the cheese. Its grotesque features make people have heebie jeebies. The Ketchup is hiding behind the Tub of Mayonnaise, while the Mayo is hiding behind the Jar of Egg Pickles. While this is happening, the Cheese is just sitting in the corner.

He stares out and sees everybody interacting with each other, making connections. And he's just sitting there, by himself, doing nothing. He's like a couch potato but very cheesy. In the freezer part of the section, a rebellion is rising.

Sergeant Ice had enough of the cheese stinking up the place. He can't take the suffering of his people anymore. They are absolutely annoying. Like, shut up once and awhile, I'm trying to sleep. Sergeant Ice is trying to assemble the best food and food products in all of Steve's Refrigerator. His team consists of Rutabaga, Roast Beef, and Popsicle Stick. They're plotting their attack on Three Day Old Cheese, as we know it.

The Cheese starts to hear of a Fridge meeting tonight. Maybe this is his chance to go and prove himself that he is someone to get along with. With all of his cheesy might, he walks his booty towards the meeting.

"This is an outrage. We should make it into cream cheese," angrily announces the Ketchup Bottle. "I say, he is really stinking the place up. It's much worse than the rotting turkey we used to have."

"Hi, Jar of Pickled Eggs here, before we can get rid of Three Day Old Cheese, how about we try to remove Turkey's rotting corpse." In the deep corners of the room, lies the decaying body of Turkey.

"Eh later, we got bigger fish to fry," said Ketchup.

Cheese came busting in. "Listen to me, my fellow foods. I am not the enemy," announced Cheese. "I just smell funny, but other than that I am one of you. We are equal. We are food. Food is friends, not food."

Segerent Ice came in, food a blazing. Everybody cheered on for the death of Cheese. With a simple stick, Popsicle stabbed Cheese in the heart.

"Why! I just wanted to be accepted by you guys. Please that's all I want, I'm not the enemy." cried out Cheese, with cheesy tears coming out of its holes. "You are not equal to us." Said Sergeant Ice. With a dash, Cheese was dead. Everybody cheered for the Elite Team of Food. But at what cost?

THE END



[Signature]
4/16/09

April 24, 1871

The whistles in the wind caused the leaves to dance as they hung off the old oak tree in the center of what was the new town of Lacey. Its branches struggled to hold themselves up against the trunk of the tree, looking as though they had been maladroit arms which were too heavy to be held up. Clouds were crying that night, or perhaps it might've been the Heavens which were so unhappy. The paved roads were begrimed and slick from the pouring liquid that had fallen from the sky. The moonlight shone onto the road as one single individual walked with no such thing to keep him dry. He believed he hadn't needed that.

His eyes glazed with a thin veneer as his brown irises, somehow, darkened even more than they already were. Moisture cascaded into his orbs as he felt the thick piece of metal inside his trench coat. The dark hair that laid upon his head began to stick to his forehead from the rain that poured down on him.

A young woman walked with a basket held in her left hand, the basket covered by a cloth that was beginning to become terribly wet and soaked with the cold tears from the clouds. She'd been across the street, with a bonnet over her dirty blonde hair. Her eyes glistened as the moonlight shone against them, and the blue gray color of her irises seemed to shine a light onto the man's face, which caused him to cross the paved road towards her.

With his body language and his facial expression, it was clear that he craved something malicious, the young woman caught this and began to tremble at the peripheral sight of the frightening man. She seemed to stop in her tracks as though his vision on her caused that. He'd come closer to her, dangerously close, as his dirty fingers traced the wet cloth that covered whatever it was that was in the basket.

"Why are you touching my basket, sir?" The small woman asked him with fear causing her tone to tremble more so than her body had.

"What d'you have in there?" His face leaned into her ear, the warmth from his breath fanning against her lobe which caused her to, unknowingly, relax. He had her trapped now.

"Just some things." She choked out the words as best as she could before the vile man, who was next to her, pulled out the seven-inch knife that was lying inside the pocket of his trench coat. He slit her throat and snatched the basket while watching her own blood choke her as she fumbled to the ground, tears and agonizing screams came from her cut throat. The bonnet's ties were coated with a dangerously dark red.

He hadn't stopped there. Instead of running off into the nothingness of the newly founded town, he tossed the basket to the dirty ground and held the young woman down. Her guttural screams were only causing her breath to cease faster. He gripped the knife's handle and began to disembowel her.

April 25, 1871

“She was found brutally murdered, Pa,” A young boy spoke to his father as tears began to burn in his eyes, the deep brown irises which he had possessed just like his dad’s. There’d been deep red veins that spread across the sclera of the child’s eye, seeming as though they were spider webs, getting caught in his iris.

“I know, son. Trust in me, I know,” The child’s father spoke deeply. His trench coat was softly stained with a light red color coated on the sleeves, from the night hitherto. The father rubbed his son’s back softly and gave a subtly forced grin to the boy. “Go on and get cleaned up for Church, we’re heading early this mornin’.” His voice sounded strained as his son wandered off into the backyard where he’d clean up with the hose and get changed into a clean pair of overalls.

“Charles, do you know who could’ve done that to the poor girl?” His wife had walked into the kitchen in which the man stood with his hands shoved into his pockets.

He stood there, thinking, but eventually looked up into his wife's eyes. Charles exhaled through his nose deeply, feeling the metal piece poke at his chest. While looking low at the apple of her throat, he hoarsely spoke, “No.”



“You’ll be okay,” he smiled. “We will all be there, just look up.” He took my hand in such a firm grasp I thought my hand went numb. My stomach twisted with nerves as I let go of his grasp.

“I’ll be looking for you... all of you.” I nod towards the nine bodies behind him, “Thank you, Nico.” I started my journey down the bunker hallway. No matter how long I walked, it felt that it would never end. The nerves had traveled to my fingertips making them aggressively tap at my side. The metal door approached quicker than I would’ve liked it to, I stopped in my tracks and stared at the worn door. I let out a breath I didn’t know I was holding.

“Come on,” I whispered to myself, my eyes fixated on the N&tN carved in the middle of the metal door. “They’ll be there for you, no need to worry.” I exhaled and reached for the doorknob.

The gravel crunched under my boots, my hands tightly holding on to the backpack straps, a familiar tune playing over and over again in my head. The mountains that surrounded our bunker always intrigued me. If I was able to get over them, I would be able to live a normal life. They stood high, the sun peeked from behind them making bright pinks and oranges scatter the sky. I’ve traveled this route once before, and the views never failed to impress me. Until I start to hear the heavy footsteps get closer and closer to me, and I know my time admiring the view is over. The silence never drove me crazy, instead it made me think of everything I used to have in my life, what may be in store for my life.

The bunker had already made its way out of sight. The sun had almost gone down completely. I had been walking for sometime now. The mountains had become shadows, and the moon stood high in the sky leading me down the gravel path. There were no trees that lined the path, just land that went on forever unless barricaded by my dear friend, the mountains. The sound of movement woke me from my deep thoughts and I looked up. The moon cast a shadow that looked like a giant bird, the wings spread taking in the wind that kept it steady in the sky, its triangle head looking down at me. The overwhelming feeling of being watched took over my body, and I stopped in my tracks. Had He sent this bird out to find me? I felt a breeze on my cheek and noticed the bird had landed in front of me. My nerves got the best of me, and I stood, my feet stuck to the ground, unable to move.

The way it moved was effortless, the beautiful black feathers glistening under the moonlight. Its eyes jumped back and forth checking me out like it was ready for feeding time.

“Hello,” I spoke softly, finally able to move my feet. I took a step towards the animal, and it lifted its wings and stared. I put my hand up signaling a truce to the animal. “It’s okay, it’s okay.” I took a step forward, my hand still out almost touching it. We stared at one another, time slowing down by now. My hand was still, the bird eyeing it up and down. Its head reached out and touched my hand, the breath in my throat hitched. “Hello beautiful.” It stepped back looking at me once more. The wings spread and it took off into the night sky. Suddenly, a feeling of ease came over me. Nico had sent the vulture to protect me. I had nothing to be afraid of. I had nine individuals who were there to watch over me.

The heat of the sun woke me up. I woke up panicking, my heart beat racing a mile a minute. My body was soaked, my backpack sitting in a puddle of water next to me. I must have

gotten tired during my travels and fell asleep in a small river. I slowly stood up making sure not to get dizzy in the process. Pulling my bag onto my back, I took my first step. Dema would soon pop into view and my project would be starting. I exhaled and climbed out of the small river, stretching out my legs. This way of travel puts a lot of years on your body.

A splash came from a distance, and my heart dropped. I knew I shouldn't have slept, He was able to catch up to me. My stomach was in my throat, and my eyes closed slowly. I turned around, my eyes moving in slow motion towards the noise. In the distance was a beautiful white horse, on top of it sat Him, his maroon cape flowing in the wind as the horse sprinted towards me, his face always hidden in the shadow of the hood, his bright white eyes only seen when he'd look right at you.

My head went blank, and my eyes dropped to the ground, my body moving so quick my brain had no way of keeping up. My feet moving so quick, my breathing heavy and deep, the backpack smacking against my lower back, my eyes wide with the wind spitting in them. Rocks and water got in my way, the walls of the mountains were blurry either from the speed I was running or tears building up in them. He was going to get me and all I could do was run with nowhere to go. The mountains had me trapped, I was going to get caught.

The heavy steps of the horse were fast approaching, and I had no way of escaping it. I stepped down on a rock and slipped forward, my pant leg tearing along with the skin on my hands trying to catch my balance. I hissed in pain kneeling on my knees. The hooves started to slow down behind me until I didn't hear them anymore. A few seconds passed and the body hopped off of the animal. His shoes made a sloshing noise through the damp ground. A stray tear swam down my face, the blood oozing from my hands like water from a faucet. I stood up and turned towards the body towering over me.

His face was hidden in the shadow of the hood, his eyes wide and bloodshot, staring deep into my soul. The feeling of dread and fear took over my soul, the tears falling down my cheeks, but my face not showing any sort of emotion. His gray hands reached for my neck, his fingertips feeling like pins and needles touching my hot skin. The chalky feeling of pain pressed into my neck. My eyes closed, his hands pressed to my neck harder. I could feel the pain building up on my neck. He had won. He found me and now that I was marked, there was no way of escaping.

My wrists were held together tightly by rope, the horse pulling me along, His back toward me. Dema was close because the mountains were coming to an end and the bright pinks and oranges were littering the sky. The final path towards the gates was approaching, the mountains now at my back. I turned around and looked up at the peak, and there stood nine bodies looking down on me, above them the beautiful vulture.

I don't remember much after passing the giant metal gate. The ropes got tighter, my hands went numb due to lack of blood and I passed out. I was going in and out of consciousness while getting carried up to my cell. There were cloak covered individuals everywhere, grabbing at me, stitching up the cuts on my leg and hands. I was so weak I couldn't react.

I lay paralyzed in the small bed, a wooden desk at the foot, and a big window to the left of my still figure. The door looked like it was a part of the wall, a single knob sticking out. This area was small and unfamiliar. I had really messed up this time if I was here. I moved my sore body so that my feet were on the ground.

"Ouch," I hissed. My hands had large sloppy stitches holding the skin together. Those scars aren't going to be very appealing. I held my hands to my chest and stood up keeping an eye on the wall in front of me. The room was 9 paces wide and 14 long. I didn't really understand why I was here or how long I was going to be in here. There was no sound coming from the outside of the door, and the window was welded closed. I was completely trapped in this room.

The desk hadn't been touched, the wood looked brand new. It smelled of fresh cut wood and felt smooth to the touch. I sat and opened the drawers left and right. All I could find was a leather journal, a few pencils and in the last drawer, a yellow flower. I picked up the small fragment and looked at it.

It was a beautiful flower, the petals fresh and healthy, the yellow color so bright it made my eyes squint. It felt soft on my fingertips making the pit of my stomach burst with happiness. A smile played on my lips as I examined the flower further.

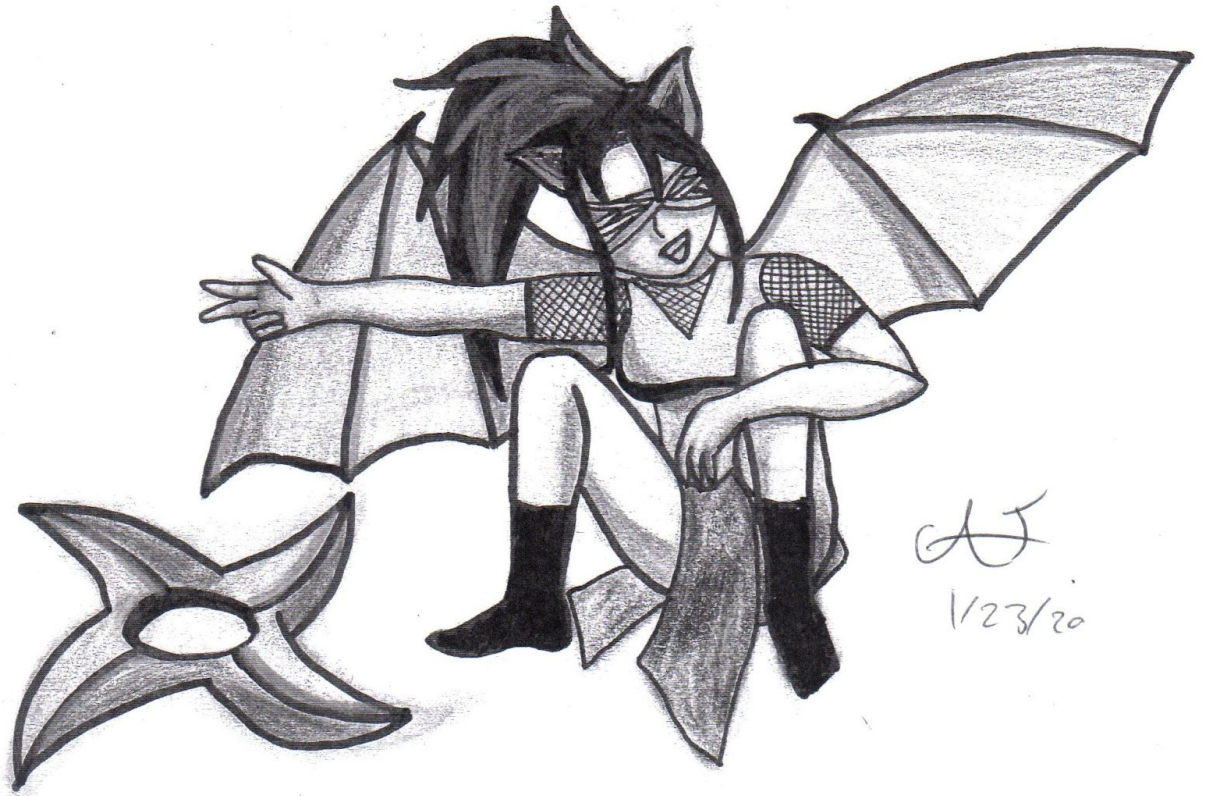
"It's just me and you." I plucked one of the petals and watched it fall to the ground. I sighed, placing it on top of the brand new wood.

Every time I woke up a new flower was placed on top of the desk. The movement from whoever it was from never woke me. A meal was left along with the flower. I felt trapped. No one to talk to except myself. It rained a lot, the cylinder buildings damp a majority of the time. I watched vultures fly back and forth every day. I took them as a sign, Nico was out there searching for me. They weren't giving up on me. All I could do was sit, wait and write about my lonely days.

I tapped the pencil on the blank journal page.

'Day 3. It's lonely here, I don't know exactly what HERE is, but I do know it is not good. I haven't seen his cloak covered body since I was captured.' I readjusted the pencil in my crippled hand. *'Maybe the vultures will introduce themselves. A friend would be nice.'*

I closed the book quietly. Hopefully this gets better, or I'll think of a way out, Nico will be here to break me out soon. My vulture friend that Nico sent will be too. Until then I wait.



AJ
1/23/20

Into The Woods

I knew I needed to find my sister and fast. Too long in the forest and she will become a part of the souls who were left to die there . The difficult part is that I knew in order to free her, I needed to make a sacrifice. A soul for a soul. That's how it would have to be. I was mind boggled at the fact that the forest was real. The ancestors in the village said only a select few could find the forest. And of course my good for nothing sister had to be the one to find it. She wasn't doing herself any favors, Stephanie always believed in fairy tales even as a 20-year-old woman. She would never give up the fact about fairies and all that other junk. Me on the other hand? I have no care for the stuff that goes on in her head. We're twins so I can usually feel her energy and vibe. I know you don't think I'm serious, but honestly if you had a twin you would completely understand where I'm coming from. I didn't have anyone to sacrifice for the life of my sister. Even if I did, I don't think I even have the balls to do something about it. But for some reason suddenly when your life is in danger or the life of someone you love, it's a whole different ball game. I traveled to the cottage the ancestors stayed in and began reading the books they've handwritten about the forest.

A soul for a soul. If one person is taken then we should be rewarded with another. Once you're a part of the forest there's no turning back. These rules are sacred and cannot be broken. Only a select few who we deem "unworthy" of life will be able to find the forest. To complete the

sacrifice just get on your knees by the oak tree closest to the sparkling river and close your eyes. Then repeat the words, "I'll give up anything." Once you've said it, it can't be taken back. You or the person you've sacrificed will become a part of the forest. And in exchange you get back the soul you so willingly fought for.

I knew what I had to do. It wasn't going to be a walk in the park getting my sister back. I had no one to sacrifice. Except myself. My mind was playing tricks on me when I got to the oak tree. The ancestors told me that would happen, but when I asked how to avoid giving in to the voices, they said, **"You can't, those are your inner demons, you can never run away from them. Your true thoughts. They'll always haunt you."** The voices began to take over, and there was no escaping them. The thoughts came at me like a double edged sword.

"Would she do the same for you?"

"She's already in too deep, why save her now?"

"She's always been the screw up, no one will miss her."

The fact that the last thought was secretly buried somewhere deep in my mind was what scared me . I mean, who would miss her, right? I know it was crazy to say things like that about your sister but honestly, it's my life or hers. The forest had a way of somehow making me think the worst about my sister. Every moment in my life she's ever ruined for me. Without another thought, I began to slide down on my knees, shutting my eyes slowly with the last teardrop touching the crisp leaves. The water began to sing to me. Carrying all my tears away. My lips were cracking as the words began to slowly creep out of my mouth. My teeth chattered and my body trembled.

“I’ll ...give up.... Anything.” I suddenly felt a rush of heat run up my body. Like I was in hell, the demons were circling around me. I was prey. I opened my eyes, and when I stood up, I saw my sister looking directly at me. I screamed her name, but it was like I was invisible to her. She began smiling. Before I could do anything else, the voices started to come back slowly, and I suddenly realized why my dark thoughts were so haunting . Why I always wanted my sister gone. The voice asked me a question for which I will forever hold a burden.

“But would she have done it for you?”



Engulfing Thoughts

'Tis not uncommon for a person to be entranced

As if their mind had sauntered or danced

But amidst the ballroom and relaxing thought

Disaster strikes when it is never sought

Columns of soaring scorch and flame

Laughter and cackles which command the insane

Floods and typhoons that sunk the soul

How does one react to such a toll?

But the face would stay still

As the war is inside and loosens the will

A cruel fate lights the way

As darkness will have that day

But then the next may come with care

And my thoughts will be free of despair

My psyche is not a prison that has held and bound

It's all collective thoughts that I have found

While the conceptions from my ego are toxic in form

It simply requires that to positivity I must conform

Relinquish all the ropes and knots

The leash around my neck is just my engulfing thoughts

The Shape of Destructure

BY AWGAWIN FIRESNAP

I came in to the desks in neat little rows, fashioned to reinforce the order of olden time factories, so that the students would be prepared and proficient, and that was where the problem lay. If left as they were, it would make for a boring lecture battered in tradition, but strewn about haphazardly and that would ensure just as little focus. It's common knowledge that too much of a good thing isn't, but no one knows when the line is to be drawn. And who am I to make that determination. If only there was a guideline of where to sit. Something Fair and Sensible but still tries to ensure it'll be Fun and Friendly so no one is afraid to ask for Help. . Though this is every teacher's Dream It's Hard to follow. Thankfully, I'll Enjoy the Challenge and I hope that my Students Will too. And in this sense I attempt to make a break in the repeat of the patterns that don't work, yet never seem to change. The bell rings as the last chair scrapes into place. I see the young students float in. Their faces, overtired from the time they were wrongfully demanded to wake, show surprise at the close cluster of seats I've formed. Because, unlike the other classes they've had in all these years past, someone finally dared to break their own format.

Boop Boop Boop

By Kevin Andrade

The frost tipped tower is gleaming across the kingdom of The Refrigerator, its shadow reflecting on its always busy streets. Taverns who serve their spicy meads are finally opening up, a river of people getting into the entrance. The churches have rung their ancient bell to warn people about the time. And finally, the always annoying town criers crying out their own gods. Like, "Oh, if you follow this, you'll get into heaven," or, "If you follow the ancient god of Goshley, you won't be alone anymore!" Usually, the town loners go with the Church of Goshley. Quite pathetic actually.

Queen Fahrenheit is looking across her cold kingdom, sipping her iced herbal tea and putting it down on one of the railings. However, the tea falls down and crashes upon a civilian's head. Later, he dies of a concussion, and his family buries his body in the local waste hole. Her majesty walks into her bedroom, and prepares to sit on the royal throne for 16 hours, breaks included. Her servants get her ready by putting on her dress, her make up, and her hair. To say her hair was the size of a dragon would be an understatement. She thinks to herself, "I could've done this myself. I'm not a child. For Crisp sake, I'm nearly 40!" She glances one more time out through the window, seeing the two sunsets.

In the backstreet of the oldest tavern in the kingdom, The Celsius, lies a quite drunk man. Dressed in rags made out of potato sacks, Bob McFiresome isn't having a great day. For one, who names their kid Bob? Just thinking about it makes you feel sorry about the kid, or man, or whatever he is. No one can put their finger on the type of species that Bob is a part of. Some say he is a human, some a goblin, some a furlock. Bottom line, choose a race. Personally I don't care. And probably, neither do you.

This is his 5th night in a row in the tavern, drinking the same mead over and over again, Laughing Croaks.

"Did I ever tell you what happened to my pet cookie?" says Bob.

"Yes you did, you said you ate it." replies the bartender.

"I didn't mean to eat it though! It was so chocolaty, and I was so hungry." Bob starts to sob.

"Pathetic" says the man next to Bob. "You're ruining your family's name, you know that, right?"

"Well, they ruined their own name!"

"No, it was definitely you."

"No, you."

"I'm not gonna deal with this, I'm out!" The man gets up with his jug of beer, and walks out of The Celsius.

“Bob! Get out, that was the 3rd customer today,” says the bartender.

“But I...”

“Out!”

And just like that Bob slinks his head down and walks away, tripping and falling with each step.

The twin suns are setting down, leaving a thick beam of purple across the land. The streets of The Refrigerator are still bustling. Bob starts to walk down Market Street. At each vendor Bob goes past, there seems to be an unfortunate buyer acquiring one of those strange meat pies. For the most part, the public thinks that they are good, so no one really questions its mysterious content. He sits down near a barrel and nuzzles his neck a bit, he is very tired from all that drinking. However, the minute he sits down, he hears a clanging noise. Everything seems to get silent after that. Everyone on the street pauses and looks at the sky, and starts to run. A huge fireball is coming down on the Meat Pie vendor. Oh no, this is a sign of humanity falling apart.

Queen Fahrenheit hears the destruction outside. “Quick sound the alarms, try to get everyone safe!” yells out Fahrenheit, however, no one is listening.

“Quick men, get to the enemies. We got this, my queen,” says General Ice.

“But, General, get the citizens out of here and as safe as possible,” says Fahrenheit, to which Ice replies with, “Sorry, but I got this covered.”

A hole busts through the whole room. A wooden crow puts its beak in and opens wide, letting out hundreds of goblins, then finally the mastermind of this operation, Tion.

“Good evening my queen, how do you do?” His voice is as slick as a goblin’s tongue. His henchmen drag the queen from the throne and throw her to the ground, face up to Tion.

“I asked a question, how do you do?” says Tion.

“Is your voice okay? Sounds like you have swamp lungs,” quips Queen Fahrenheit.

“That wasn’t very nice of you to say.” Tion removes his metal gauntlets and smacks the queen with his pale hands.

“Yeesh, you sound so generic. What are you gonna say next? ‘Take her away?’”

“What? No. Was going to say....”

“Say what? Say it, you cauliflower!”

“Take her to her own dungeon! I’ll deal with her later.”

The goblins start to take her away, but Queen Fahrenheit is able to say one last thing.

“I’ll give you a carrot and a half for trying!”

Bob is inside the barrel. Peeking out of a hole, he sees the soldiers thrashing all of the goblins, however, some of them weren't so lucky. "This is my chance! I will restore my family's name!" announces Bob. He gets his whole torso out of the barrel and tries to make an attempt to get out, but sadly falls onto his own face. "Ouch, ouch, ouch. Oooo that hurts a lot, Oh god. why me!" cries out the poor soul. Eventually he gets up and starts to glance for a weapon. He does find one really cool looking blade but it's behind some glass. With a quick look, he smashes it and retrieves the blade. He is so mesmerized by the shiny looking blade. It's unique color definitely stands out from the rest of the guards. "Okay Bob, remember what Father showed you. Remember..." He swings his blade to the nearest goblin. The little creature is sliced in half, but not because of Bob's amazing swordsmanship, but because he trips on a dead guard and coincidentally lands on the goblin, blade first. He gets up and looks at the half a goblin. "Eh, close enough."

Queen Fahrenheit is sitting on a cot, probably carrying around 10 unique diseases on the pillow alone. "Ugh, this is boring!" cries out Fahrenheit. There are no guards around her, which is strange. In her mind she is thinking, 'Am I really not that important? Man, it really be like that sometimes.'

Bob is hauling the stolen sword from Market Street, across the ruins of the kingdom. He isn't as strong as a guard, or a man, or even a child. But what he has that no other man has is a crippling mead problem. He goes to the nearest bar, only to find it to be swarming with goblins. With a mighty swing is able to get one down, but there are 23 to go. They are dashing towards him. He is going to accept his fate, but then he remembers what his father said to him when he was a young lad.

"You're already a disappointment. Why not die trying not to be one," said his father, in the midst of a bar fight.

He swings his sword one time, and is able to get a couple down. Another swing and more down. Now it's looking like a dance, so majestic and so deadly. All of the enemies are down. Bob sits down and requests a drink from the deceased owner. He gets a bottle of Laughing Croaks and opens it. But then a smaller goblin comes out of the bottom cabinet and stabs Bob in the hand. He smacks the little green monster, which then splatters across the floor.

"Well it could've been worse," says Bob, as he slowly loses a good amount of blood.



The eagle has wings that help it scoop down to get its prey

A yellow razor sharp beak

Talons with strong grip strength

The eagle represents freedom

It shows how to fly high above other people

With the eagle comes renewed life

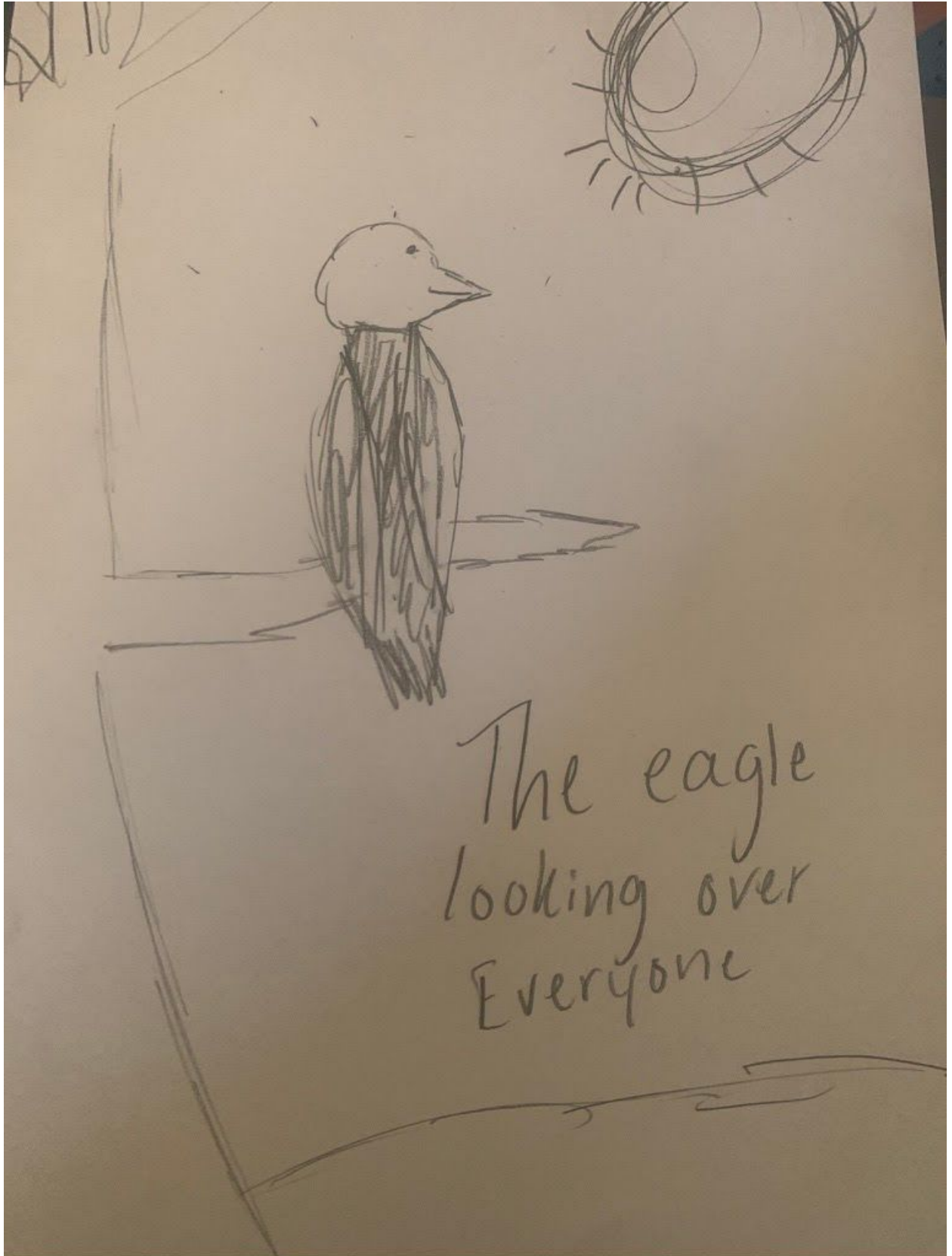
The sharp eyes of an eagle that help them see its prey

The fierce nature of the eagle when it takes what it wants

The long legs that help the eagle grab its food

The abilities that it uses to look after its young and protect them

The sense of hope you get when you see an eagle fly overhead



The eagle
looking over
Everyone

Stopping by the Table on a Delicious Evening

By Awgawin Firesnap

Whose potato this is I think I know

He is in another room though

He will not see me stopping here

To eat his delicious potato

The man will find it queer

To try and eat a potato that isn't here

But about to enter my stomach

On the tastiest evening of the year

He will give his head a shake

And ask, 'Is there some mistake?'

The only other sound will be the weep

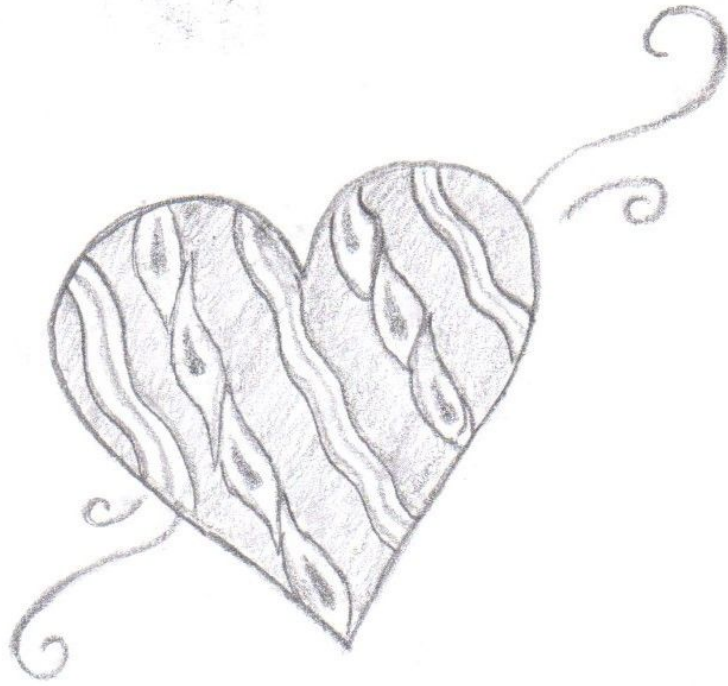
Of his hungry stomach

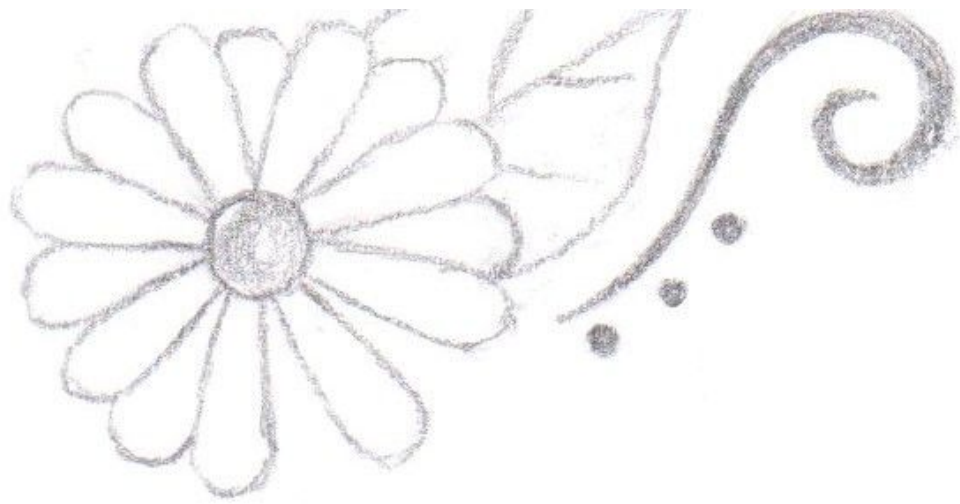
His potato was lovely, crisp, and deep

And with no other things to eat

I'll slowly drift off to dream and sleep

I'll slowly drift off to dream and sleep





Vibe Check

By Kevin Andrade

“Do you smell that? It’s the smell of burning corpses! And it’s terrible!” Lord Blackshire was walking down a gravel path. His smile might have come off to people as belonging to a psychopathic murder, considering the burning huts all around him. However, he was genuinely happy. He had always wanted to contribute to the population problem.

“Spoon, write this down,” said Blackshire. Spoon, having a less than average height compared to other people, was trying to catch up to his lord.

“Yes my lord!” shouted Spoon, with a pen and paper in hand.

“Okay ready? Local lord saves thousands by killing hundreds!” Blackshire was very enthusiastic about this title. He knew that it was going to catch some eyeballs, other than his priest, who had a tendency to scoop out corpses’ eyeballs and use them as jelly on his toast.

“Hmm, I have a better idea. How about ‘Lord tries to help out humanity by slaying the scum of the land’.”

“You know what, I love it.” Blackshire kissed Spoon’s tiny bald head.

“Now what do we have here?” Blackshire and Spoon walk up to a row of children, four of them in fact.

One of his soldiers walked up to him and announced to his superiors, “My lord, these are the children of the parents we have just killed.” The soldier’s arm was up to his head.

Blackshire put the soldier’s arm down and said, “Well, um, good job, I guess? It’s kind of brutal, though.”

“I mean, you did ask us to wipe out the entire village, sir.”

“That’s very true.” Lord Blackshire was walking back and forth. His long very grey robe was dragging across the dirt.

“Do you want us to kill the children, sir?”

“What? No! That’s very cruel, we are not monsters.”

“I mean, you did kill our parents,” said one bored child.

“Yeah, but that’s different. They were your elders. They were gonna die anyway. For the most part.”

“My lord, I think I have an idea,” said the tiny man known as Spoon.

Lord Blackshire knelt and lent an ear to Spoon, “Uh huh. Oh? Interesting. Very very interesting.”

“My lord, I didn’t even begin to speak.”

“I know, I was trying to catch the children off guard, you know? What happens if they’re really small men?”

“Alrighty then, but anyway, how about we recruit these children into our cult? Make them into noble future rulers.”

“I like the sound of that. But maybe not the fat one.”

Both of them looked over to an overweight child, with strawberry hair, and fire in his eyes.

“He looks very displeased by the situation we’ve put him into.”

“Well we did...”

“Yeah yeah yeah, I know ‘Oh I killed their parents, boo hoo, wah.’ Like what are they gonna do? Cry to their parents?”

The child gripped something in his hands. Something very shiny. He started to run towards Lord Blackshire, with a poorly made butter knife that he gave his father for Bells Day. To say the least, his father never loved it, nor the child. It pierced Blackshire’s left arm, and he pushed the child off the side.

“Ow, ow, ow, why do bad things happen to good people!” shouted Blackshire. A couple of soldiers rushed to the scene and caught the child in a circle.

“Now do we kill it?” asked one of the soldiers.

Blackshire got up, holding his arm, and yelled “No! What’s with you guys and massacring children?”

The group of soldiers opened their circle for their lord. Blackshire went up to the kid and said, “Why did you do that?”

To which the child replied, “You murdered my father!”

To which Blackshire retaliated with, “Yeah? By the looks of it, I think I saved you from becoming a bread roll. Thank me later.”

The night was filled with little bright lights. A campfire was sizzling in the middle of the children. Spoon was pointing to the stars. “See children, those are souls who died from this realm and enter another,” said Spoon.

“So my mommy and daddy are in the skies forever?” said a little girl with buck teeth.

“Yes they are..... What’s your name?”

“Meralda, mister!” All of the children seemed to have forgotten that their parents had been slaughtered just a couple of hours ago. They tend to forget easily if candy is on the table. Spoon doesn’t judge that. Spoon is straight up vibing.

The strawberry child was sitting in a rusted cage, his eyes pink as the moon, from the waterfall of salty tears. Lord Blackshire had wrapped up his arm with the local alchemist’s medicine. He sat next to the kid.

“Listen, I know this is tough. Losing your family and all but you can make your own family now! Isn’t that exciting!” The child wasn’t responsive.

“What’s your name?”

“Mackswell Ingot” replied the child.

“That’s magnificent! Hey, do you want to be a part of my cult? You get a discount at the local bakery.” The local bakery was still burning in the background.

“No, I never want to work with you. I don’t want to work with someone who is balding and starting to look like a veltrat!” Blackshire gasped. He thought that no one notice the balding. That hair growing witch had lied to him! His feelings were hurt by Mackswell. Who names their child Mackswell, thought Blackshire.

“Alright I see how this is going. I have a better idea!”

The sun came out, shining all over the now destroyed village. Each of the children were getting fitted in their new black robes. All of them were ecstatic, and the robes also had cup holders! Mackswell was slowly spinning a windmill. Blackshire walked up to him and said, “So this is a great use of your time! You’ll get meals every morning and night, and for every 100 pounds of dark flour you produce, you get a piece of candy!”

Mackswell looked up and said, “Why is it called dark flour? It’s just flour with Danish Pig’s blood. It just makes it black!”

“It has a nice ring to it,” said Blackshire.

“But it’s stupid! Name is Black Flour, and isn’t your name Blackshire?” His lord was deeply upset by this. The strawberry was right, but he wasn’t going to win this battle.

So he walked away and let this misfit do his betting. Mackswell looked on over to the other children. He used to play with these guys. Why did they leave him behind? He felt betrayed. Heartbroken. Crestfallen. Deeply disappointing, like himself.

“Ready children? Onwards!” Blackshire and his army got on the giant’s dogs and started to walk away, while Mackswell saw them off, with anger in his eyes. He will get his revenge one day. If it would be the last thing he would do.

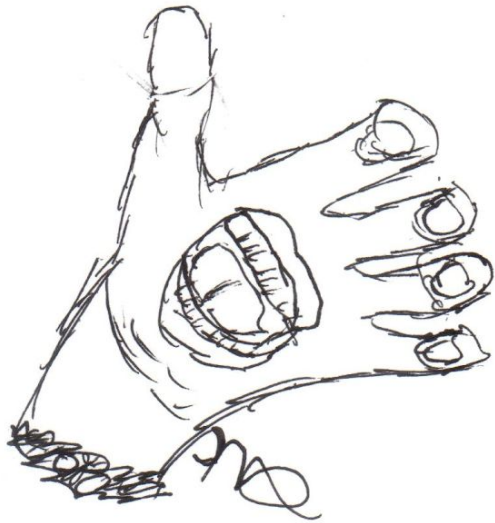
“Hey Strawberry, pick up the pace,” yelled out one of the soldiers.





AS

8/2/19



Little Doll

Kylie Fitzpatrick

Fine thin strands of yellow frame her fragile face.

Her eyes painted bright blue to see her owners.

Porcelain skin cool to the touch, a nick in her chin from playing too rough.

A young little girl comes running up the stairs, to play with her doll who
waits for her there.

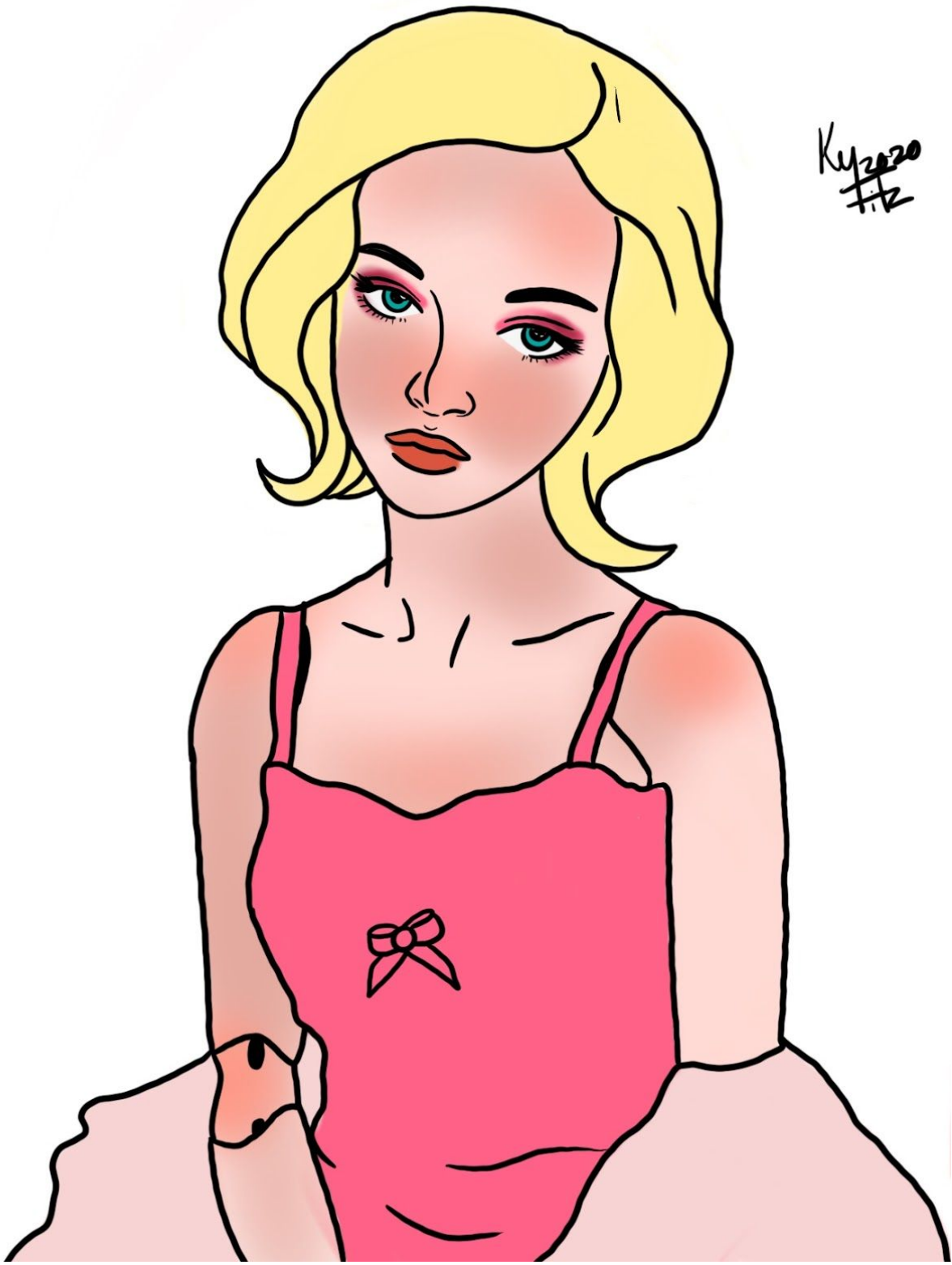
She takes off her glasses and lets down her hair, to play with the doll sitting
right there.

A pink flower dress, bows down her back, with black little shoes, and a
small little hat.

Her glow shines brighter than the stars on her kid's ceiling.

And her heart was so warm it could bring a smile to the saddest child.

But if she falls, she will shatter, spirit crushed like the pieces she'd then
resemble.



Ky2020
#12

The sky is grey.

The earth is grey.

The dress is grey.

The house is grey.

The boat is grey.

The school is grey.

I just remembered that this is
a black and white movie.

-trilez