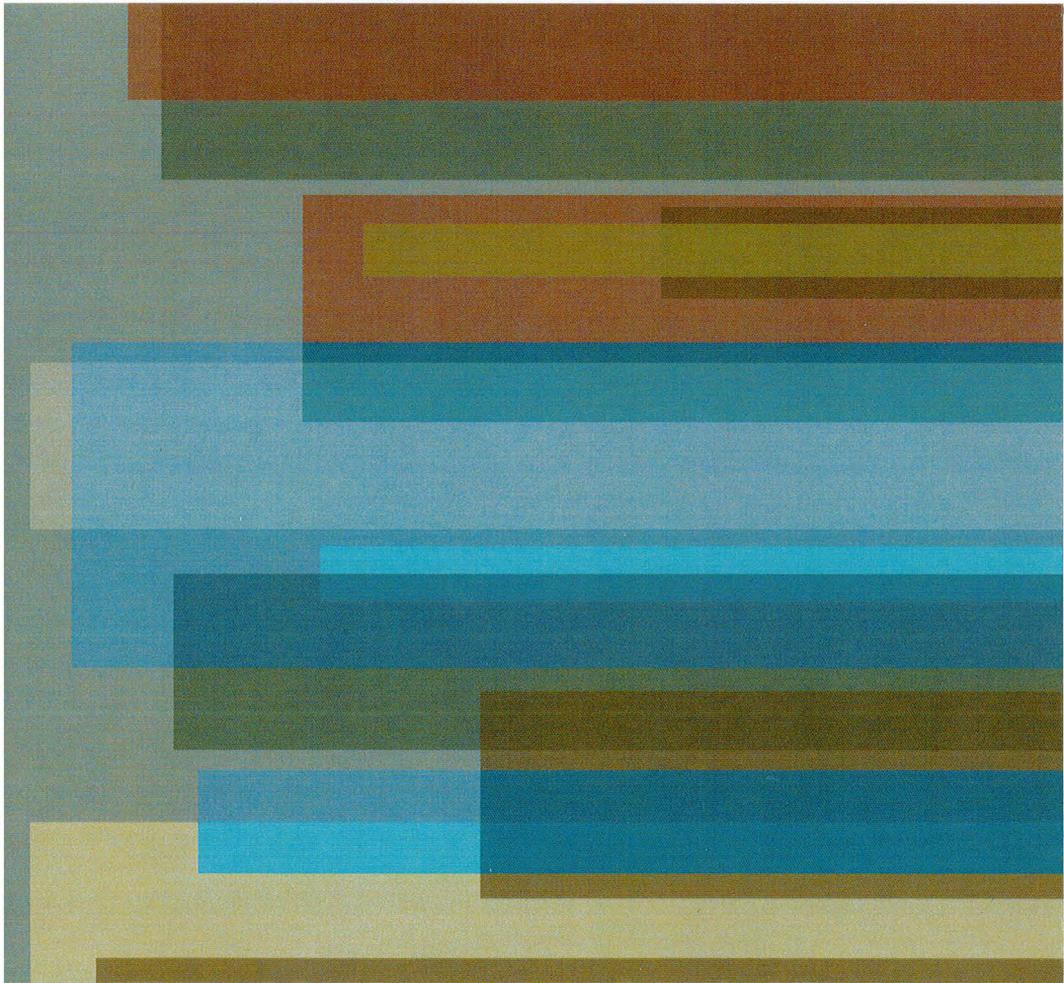




# Westland Writes 2013

**Andy Schuck, editor and contest judge**

**Cheryl Vatcher-Martin, contest judge**



**Westland Writes ...**  
**Poetry and Short Stories**  
**2013**

**A Compilation of**  
**Local Writing**

**Andy Schuck**

*book editor and contest judge*

**Cheryl Vatcher-Martin**

*contest judge*

Editor's note: The Westland Public Library is happy to once again publish the annual *Westland Writes ...* book for area poets and writers. What began as a poetry book in celebration of National Poetry Month has morphed into a poetry and short story collection, with a poetry writing contest thrown in. You can see the works from all of the categories here. We are proud of the work our writers have done and hope you enjoy what you read. Please feel free to contact Andy Schuck at the Westland Public Library (contact information on the back of book) for more information on this and all of the other writing programs held there.

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# Poems

## **Michelle E. Alford**

### **Consolation**

I celebrate myself, and make melody within myself  
I seek not validation from others  
Nor, do I give focus on the mockery of my vow to  
Live without colliding torsos and swapping sweat  
Until the time comes where two souls become one  
flesh;

However, I will admit; I get tempted.  
This means that I am only human.

So do not judge me....

Every atom that makes up my total being is as  
good  
As the dripping honey from a honey tree; and  
As beautiful as the sun shining through the pillow  
clouds, bursting with angelic rays  
On an emerging morn  
Scented with the fresh morning dew,

Often, I loaf and mingle with my soul,  
Basking in my own essence  
Becoming one with myself  
Meditating on high trying to clear my mind  
Keeping anchored my deepest, darkest, silent  
confessions inside  
Searching for resolve within my core; again  
Self-reflecting; rehearsing my thoughts over-and-  
over; and then once more  
Wondering why wanting to become one with him  
Creating a spiritual bond with him--is a sin,

For I know the bond that I would share with him  
Would come from a sacred place within  
For my heart only desires to be bound  
By the commitment of 'true love'  
That I see---and found to be  
Hidden in his mystery

There is much more about him  
That makes me crave his delectable taste  
Yearn for his lustful attention  
Tip toeing in the shadow of my silhouette  
Hastily, subduing me under his arrest  
Marking his territory, with heated passion branded,  
by his molar's grip  
Leaving trails of sensual bruises along the nape of  
my elongated neck  
Massaging my shoulders, then trickling down, to  
take holds on the cushion of my succulent  
Delicacies,

I am longing to bathe in the sweat pouring from his  
temple's pores  
Instigating frisky frolic with him  
Exchanging penetrated urges; moaning in  
collaborative verses  
Quenching desert storm thirsts  
Gripping headboard poles  
Biting pillow shams; shouting out frantic obscenities  
Teeth, grinding and holding with my strongest molar  
Murmuring, salutes like a marching soldier  
Releasing celibate tension held in a twisted knot  
Laboring, effectively until the union of our  
erogenous zone is properly erupted  
Pleasantly relieved of penned up deprivation,

I am trying to get a grip on this stronghold  
It is weighing me down heavy  
Sometimes the storm comes; and the flesh rages  
with waves  
Rising high, violently pushing, becoming strong  
enough nearly  
Breaking the levee  
But by the grace of God; he hears my cry and  
saves me

The echo of his chastisement; reminds me  
"marriage is honorable, and the bed is undefiled"  
"Remain righteous until your treasure is found  
For there will be moments like this  
Nevertheless, take hold on the power within  
To remain liberated from a fornicating sin  
Soon the moments of flying solo will end  
For your heart and soul will soon merge with the  
heart and soul of your best friend."

## **Camille Asztalos**

### **the marriage guide explains physiological mysteries**

under festoons of southern lilac  
against a background of sentinel pines  
beyond sleepy hemlocks  
round the weaving wisteria  
an old lady who was obstetrically obstinate  
safely delivered fourteen straw hats

## **LeeAnne Baumdraher**

### **The Ribs of Adam**

Eve, a tomboy,  
scraped her pride,  
climbing trees,  
reaching for a branch,  
where her back bone  
dangled precariously,  
like God.

Hungry  
for the ribs of Adam,  
knowledge has been  
rendered by  
temptation,  
dredged in bark  
and snake skin.

From the oxidized core  
of Eden,  
she earned  
her capacity, consuming

volumes of leaves,  
turning green  
with the effort.

Her best friend,  
Modesty,  
had warned her against  
the reptilian vitamins,  
Cognizance  
and  
Comprehension.

Still the nutrients  
slithered  
into her naked veins,  
and she dressed  
in understanding.  
Burdened with liberation,  
she opined.

Once, a woman  
was enlightened.  
Epiphanies take  
just a moment,  
but last  
through the insanity  
of exile.

## **Faye Charette**

### **Raising Boys**

I have special memories  
Throughout the years  
Many happy  
Also touched by tears.  
I find old pictures of the past,  
Instilling in me memories that do last.  
We have a trust that is so true,  
It shines in everything we do.  
If they need a helping hand,  
Even in the sandbox shifting sand.  
Their old rocking horse  
And treasured child games,  
Little ships and toy airplanes.  
We have a lot of love to give  
It shows in all that we live.  
A mother strengthens all their fears  
And dries all their growing tears.  
Their kisses are like roses speckled with dew;  
I have all this from heaven, too!  
God has filled me with an awesome joy  
By blessing me with two wonderful boys.  
Thank you, Lord, for your touch of grace,  
My children's hearts I'll always embrace.

**Patrick Franks**

**Not funny**

I had joked with my barber

(He has a great laugh)

He then kept me in stitches

**REDREAM**

TIME NOW TO GO TO BED

NO SCHEMES

JUST SILENT DREAMS

A REHASH

OF A PAST FEW DAYS

AN IMPRESSIONIST EXPRESSION

AFTER THAT PILLOW

HITS THE HEAD

OF WHAT I DID AND WHAT THEY SAID

NO GREAT MEANING

BUT EXAMINATION

WILL PROVE THE LEANINGS

OF WHERE MY THOUGHTS WERE

AND NOT WHERE THEY MIGHT HAVE LED

JUST AN OLD SCREENING  
OF A FEW DAYS BEFORE  
OF WHAT WAS MORE IMPRESSED  
UPON MY HEAD

THOUGH ON OCCASION  
SOMETIME  
(RARELY)  
WHEN WE DO FIND  
AN ANSWER TO A PROBLEM  
THAT WAS ON OUR MIND  
IT IS BECAUSE  
IT REALLY WAS  
'ON OUR MIND'  
AND IN THIS RELAXED, DREAMY STATE  
(TIME UNINVOLVED)  
WE CAN CONTEMPLATE  
ANOTHER ANGLE WE AT FIRST  
DID NOT ANTICIPATE

## **John Kelly**

### **Pandora's Box**

Oh, dear Zeus you are so vile  
to form the fairest woman,  
with lipid eyes and lips of guile  
I deeply fall in love.

Falling deeply, ever slowly  
she gains my deepest trust.  
My heart, my soul, my body's hers  
I cannot dare escape.  
Her gentle hands turn to claws.  
Her giving smile turns to snarl.  
Now with me within her grasp  
she grabs her greatest weapon,  
Pandora's Box.

Gently carved, my gift to her  
she grabs the sacred lock.

Destruction, death, despair, disease  
all escape and wander free,  
across the mountains and the sea

a deadly famine is where will be.  
Wars once few will surround  
like one murdered in a crowd.  
Babies now will cry in pain  
as their mothers go insane.  
Sisters turn against each other  
as the neighbors turn each other.  
So, all of this because of love  
I guess there are no shining doves.

I quickly force the box to close  
trapping one called Hope.

The Golden Age is now past  
as religious leaders go into fast  
all because of love.

### **An Easter Poem for Some Christians**

The symbol of the dove meaning Moses  
The Cross is a symbol of pride to modern Christians  
The symbol of the Shepard with a sheep on his  
shoulders was a secret symbol of Jesus Christ in  
olden days  
The symbol of the fish is another symbol of  
Christianity

The fact that religious icons in the Greek Orthodox faith are highly revered

In the Pentecostal Faith speaking in tongues is highly revered

The color blue symbolizes Heaven or hope to some Christians

The symbol of a cross pointing to the East

Remembering that Jesus Christ loves us all and forgives us all and we will have a place in Heaven if we accept him into our hearts

The Eucharist

In Protestant churches the songs that they sing are a way of praising Jesus Christ

The Hill of Crosses in Lithuania is a place where Christians placed crosses in massive amounts under Communist rule against harsh consequences. The government removed them time after time, yet the crosses still came forth. The place still exists today.

In Catholic churches Christ is always seen on the cross.

In Protestant churches Jesus Christ is never seen on the cross.

The symbol of the Sacred Heart in 1673 appeared to a Catholic Nun

To some people the Crown of Thorns symbolizes the sins of all humanity

Remember a Bible verse if you can remember "God so loved the world that he have his most beloved son that whosoever believes in him shall have everlasting life" John 3:16

## **De Kimble**

### **Rain**

I squat in the middle of the valley  
Nothing around me but rocks and sand  
Monuments of dehydrated mountains  
Fossils of species from 360 million years ago  
I gaze into the cloudless white sky  
Fixing my eyes on the sun  
That renders me temporarily blind

I now rest on my knees  
Extraordinarily it begins to rain  
The cold drops sizzle on my hot body  
I run my fingers through my locks  
And shake my head wildly  
With each rain drop  
My body pulses with electrical energy  
The water makes me feel stronger  
An electrical charge jolts out of my hands into the  
ground

I rise to my feet  
Seconds later lightning strikes me  
I feel strong physically  
The water is now up to my knees  
Closing my eyes  
I face the sky  
My mouth is open and I spit lightning out through  
my teeth  
Stretching out my arms and raising them up-ward  
I feel my heart skip a beat  
The synapses in my brain fire rapidly  
I take one last look into the sky  
While rain drops tap my face  
And I think  
My power comes from Rain

### **3 Million Piece Puzzle**

Entering myself piece by piece  
I slowly put a 3 million piece puzzle together of me  
And it's hard to do because all the pieces are blank  
I try and configure the boarder  
But it is no use  
I begin to think about how it would be  
If I wasn't so blank  
If I didn't feel so empty  
What kind of picture would my puzzle be  
Would it be of calm ocean waters and a sunset  
Or maybe a collage of different colored cylindrical  
impressions  
How about a 3 million piece puzzle of y physical self  
Not of how the world views me  
But of how I view myself  
Ordinary brown eyes  
Pierced bottom lip, snake bites  
Ears gauged, even the cartilage  
Very fine and almost non-existent facial hair  
And never dyed or chemically locked hair  
Who am I  
Who is this 3 million piece puzzle person  
I'll know when I complete this puzzle of me

## **Dorothy Kindred**

### **His Gifts**

The older I get the more I see  
The beauty God has given me  
Watching spring come alive the warm summer's  
sun  
The spectacular fall color, winter's wonderland of  
fun.

The trees in the forest tall and green  
Wild flowers and small creatures appear on the  
scene  
Land caped rivers so deep and wide  
The exciting roar of the ocean's tide

The hills and valleys all around  
Beautiful birds make musical sound  
Mountain tops reaching high in the sky  
The sunrise and sunset give unending surprise

The moon and the stars in the heavens so bright  
Help to guide us through the night.  
These wondrous gifts from God are free  
And he gave them all to you and me.

### **This Glorious Sky**

As I gaze into the cool blue sky,  
Floating clouds keep drifting by,  
Leisurely changing before my eyes,  
Offering excitement and surprise.

As I gaze into the sky at night,

Dancing stars are shining bright.  
Sometimes I feel I can reach up high,  
And pick those stars right out of the sky.

The man in the moon winks his yes,  
While the lucky old sun keeps rolling on by.  
Soon clouds appear, it's humid and still,  
This wondrous excitement gives a thrill.  
Lightning strikes and thunder roars,  
The rain comes down and it pours and pours.

Soon everything looks fresh and new,  
Sometimes a rainbow comes into view.  
God's beauty I will see 'till the day I die,  
As I gaze into this glorious sky.

**Michael Klink**

**Zoo Ambiance**

**OOOOOOOOOOUUUUR**

**OOOOOOOOOURRRRRRRR**

**OUT**

I think the tiger's sad...

It's so hot outside.

Take your coat off.

Now it's cold.

SO put it back on

Stop fighting you two!

Teeheheeheeheheloudinhereisn'tit?momithinkhe  
said"tit"reeteeteeteeteete

Wahh wahh wahh dunk dunk sploosh he's  
compressing it a little bit it's ok it's enrichment

Peacock everywhere here there also over yonder  
and before that

Brrrs are grrrrowlin

Gorillas?UhYeah Toom toomtoom  
toomtoomtoomtoomtoomtoomtoom toom.

Gr,as,s, Ch,om,pi,ng,so,un,ds,ss,ss,ss. wretch! Re.  
gurrrrr. gitate! Meal again!

HahaWeeee chugga chugga chugga choo choo  
he looks like a tugboat

They're so  
prettybeautifulcutetinyiwannasqueezeitfurrysoftado  
rablefriendlynowayhe'dkillme

This polar bear is more beautiful than any man ever!

Bubble bubble  
polarbubbleswimwakebubbublbubble

Bubbulethinksitsafishbulublbluubublubulbubble

WHERE'S THE RED PANDA???

I WANNA SEE IT!!!

WHERE IS IT!! I LOOKED EVERYWHERE WHY WON'T IT

COME OUT AND SAY HI TO ME MOMMEE MOMMEE

MOMME MAKE IT COME OUT THIS IS SO BORING

MAYBE IF I CLAP MY HANDS IT WILL COME OUT

PANDAAAAAA PANDAAAAAA

WHY DON'T THE ANIMALS EVER COME OUT AND

PLAY THEY'RE ALWAYS HIDING

## **A Docent Explains The Zoo**

They can't see through the glass, it's a mirror.

Well of course we can see through, but they don't know that we're watching them.

We look through and project ourselves onto them.

Maybe you'll recognize an expression or see a familiar gesture.

It's always interesting to take a few minutes and observe.

It's only when I step back that I realize they each have their own agenda.

That they're each doing something they think is really important.

But it's a fleeting importance, something they'll probably forget by tomorrow.

For example, sometimes the males will push heavy objects around just to show they can.

You can tell he's a father, he hates being here.

See how he's pacing now?

He's probably aggravated since his kids have started fighting.

The male child is a little bigger and quicker, and you can see he loves having an audience.

This is why you need to keep the kids busy with toys and enrichment.

We **NEED** to give the smarter ones enrichment. They get destructive without it.

The funny part is that sometimes I can't tell what's actually "enrichment" or just plain garbage!

Now you can see how they're all clustered together.

I don't know if that means they like each other, but it does mean they like food!

## **Catherine McKenzie**

### **STEPPING STONES**

YOU NEED THE STEPPING STONES - YOU SEE  
TO FIND THE PATH - THAT LEADS THE WAY  
ACROSS THE BRIDGE  
TO ANOTHER LAND  
WHERE THE RAINBOW WARMS YOUR HEART  
WHILE THE COLOR OF LIFE  
THAT COMES FROM THE TIDE  
AS IT SWEEPS YOU BACK AND FORTH  
LAY DOWN THE CHANGING SANDS OF TIME  
TO BUILD A MOUND OF WORTH

### **TREMBLING HEARTS**

I PEARCED YOUR HEART TODAY WITH WORDS  
AND NOW OUR TWO HEARTS BLEND  
LIKE CRASHING CYMBALS  
TREMBLING HEARTS  
HOW CAN I MAKE AMENDS

## ***Kristen Mitchell***

### **Grand Looking Glass**

Looking through  
this grand looking glass,  
Only tonight will I adore you.  
The tale of me loving you,  
Will be over when the spring  
Time lapses the tulips,  
Smell of the lilies.

The lookout farm,  
Where we called camping,  
Will be your newness, your light of mind.  
You can take this grand looking glass from my hand  
When the fire dies out,  
You will be aware of my absence, presently.  
In the middle of our kiss  
Then when I wipe your lips,  
The winter landscape will melt,  
As I walk into the day of the last romantics.

### **Trust**

Trust.  
The air in Himalayas.  
Waiting for the climb,  
the deep breath to change  
with elevation.  
Air slides through the throat,  
will the truth take you or  
seize you?  
And at the top,

if you make it,  
was the offer worth  
it?  
All the noise and  
the handpicked energy,  
did trust reveal?  
At the top,  
the climb  
the yearning  
for deep of  
the Himalayas.

## **Casheena Parker**

### **Bold Truths**

I was going to write you a letter.  
But I knew in my heart that it wasn't that serious,  
So I wrote this instead  
Knowing that all I really need is to get the thoughts  
out my head.

I... mistakenly thought of you in ways that I knew  
were too good for you,  
Cause your character showed me how you truly  
were.  
Though the words you spoke were fast and clever,  
I should've known better.

So I sit back with tear filled eyes,  
While laughing at my own told lies.  
Lies to myself, that made me think different of you  
Than what my heart told me to.

I ... mistakenly allowed myself to believe in you,  
Regardless of all you boldly put me through.  
Thinking that you would be all that you said you  
were,  
All that I had seen you could be.

But the joke was as always on me,  
Cause I made the choice to stick around,  
Knowing my heart was becoming unbound,  
And catching feeling for him simply 'cause he  
seemed to always care,

And the words out his mouth said he'd always be  
there.  
But that's all they were... words.  
And words said without meaning  
Don't mean shit.

Cause the lies said beneath them,  
Were the plans that followed the tricks,  
The games played that only you had the rules to  
Not allowing me any defense against you.

While you sit there and deny all that you know you  
did,  
And play the nice guy role with all that you've got,  
Not realizing or caring that the woman in front of  
you actually cared a lot.  
To you it's just a game,

And the women you mess with are all the same.  
So you don't see me as I walk away from you,  
And all that you've put me through,  
Seeing that's it's the same thing that happened to  
me last time.

Starting to believe my inner self,  
About these niggas bein' one and the same.  
Nothing different or unique  
Except the way they play their game.

Though now I see that I'm really the one to blame,  
'Cause I fell even though I heard all that you said to  
me  
And the games you played weren't knew to me  
But should I take all the credit...

When my feelings only showed when you opened  
your mouth to express yours  
The feelings that ended up being nothing more but  
mere words said to test the game  
The lies spoken through Satan's mouth to advance  
himself and having me feeling the same...  
As a guy who supposedly loved me in some kind of  
way.

But the jokes on me,  
Which is why once again I can't stay  
I'd rather gather my tears and completely walk  
away

**Sever M. Pederson**

**BAN ALL THE WEAPONS**

IF ALL THE WEAPONS  
EVER USED TO KILL SOMEONE  
WERE TAKEN AWAY

EVIL MEN STILL KILL  
USING FISTS AND FEET  
JUST TRY TO STOP THEM

AND WHAT DID CAIN USE  
HIS HANDS OR SOME TYPE OF CLUB  
MAYBE IT WAS ROCKS

LET'S BAN ROCKS AND BRICKS  
THAT PUTS MASONS OUT OF WORK  
BAN BATS – BASEBALL GAMES

HOCKEY STICKS AS CLUBS  
SHOULD BE BANNED FROM THE WORLD  
BAN GOOD IDEAS

WE COULD BAN THINKING  
AS WELL AS HAPPY FEELINGS  
MAKE LONG BANNING LISTS

BAN SINGING FROM SINGERS  
AND BAN BUILDERS FROM BUILDING  
THEN BAN ALL CELL PHONES

BAN UNHEALTHY FOOD  
BAN BABIES FROM BEING BORN

BAN ALL THE GOOD THINGS

BAN ALL APPLE PIE  
BAN THE AMERICAN DREAM  
BAN TV FOR SURE

BAN ALL CARS FROM ROADS  
BAN ALL OIL DRILLING NOW  
BAN PEOPLE FROM EARTH

### **The Hardest Job I've Ever Had**

The hardest job I've ever had,  
Was not the one that made me mad;  
It is the job I work at now,  
The when, the why and also how.

The job came to me on its own,  
No one called me on the phone;  
It seemed to pop up overnight,  
I've learned in it just how to fight.

I fight fatigue with coffee these days,  
My blood pressure is dealt with in other  
ways;  
My feet are numb but not from cold,  
I'm told because I'm getting old.

The job gets tougher every year,  
Learning to cope with things I hear;  
Waking hours before the sun is up,  
Coffee, I pour myself another cup.

The bathroom is my constant pal,  
I've learned the routine very well;  
All the things I really want to eat,  
Add to my weight so I can't cheat.

The pain in my butt is now in my  
back,  
As for pain in other places I have  
no lack;  
When I was young I was not told,  
The hardest job is growing old.

## ***Andy Schuck***

### **Let's make thorny bushes**

Let's make thorny bushes  
behind creaky doors  
in spite of their cats and dogs  
tucked gently behind  
no memory of using your Kroger card  
- 3 cents off cigarettes  
or disinfecting wipes –  
without that same look  
in the right shadows  
because no one will whiff it  
and declare the surface tasty  
Some pieces distend, some  
imbue the space you never  
wanted Better left  
unsaid and not enough  
to make a barstool  
from one of our firmly endangered  
limning qualities and rabid,  
good attempts at indecision

**Fix**

fix the little people  
and protect the gloom  
the pews didn't rebuff  
Measures of beer and popcorn  
and baseball on TV became fluid  
in a not-so-shocking exercise to bear  
the unnecessary evil of  
his dreams, painted in jags  
and stabs across your tweed-  
ensconced butt, so much better  
in the movie with their leftover  
thoughts in the tiny white space  
stored nicely in little compartments  
even rather mundane until  
they fall or are removed  
and retraced in fine rippling pools  
absorbed under the beauty  
of the weighty, grey expanse

## **Denise Sedman**

### **Purple Lilacs**

Alice, you are beautiful  
with your wrinkles and sags.  
I count them and remember  
your supple youth.  
Beauty doesn't hide.  
It pours, exudes, erupts, explodes;  
every which way, it doesn't matter.

Your beauty isn't hidden.  
I see it clearly in your eyes.  
When you laugh at my silly jokes,  
iridescent color lights your face.  
Hands move gracefully to explain your voice.  
Body arches in sympathetic movement.

Oh, Alice, I smell purple lilacs  
when you say you were  
once a flower of beautiful proportions.  
Rapid color shooting  
from spring's callow blossoms  
greeting the morning dew.

Alice, please hurry and shine  
your tarnished afterimages,  
my distant lilac of perfection,  
for I can barely smell you.  
I watched mirror beauty grab you  
like a flaccid flower; still you  
squeezed sweet scented droplets  
from your earthy ripeness.

Oh, Alice, will I ever smell like purple lilacs?

### **Mothers Were Once Violets, Too**

"Hold me," cried the baby to his mother,  
from his room in the nursery  
with blue and white striped wallpaper  
that stimulated his senses  
when the lights popped on,  
and made his mother appear  
fuzzy blue, smelling like warm milk.

He pointed in a way that said, "bring it to me."  
He grunted and screamed for his favorite toy,  
while he sat secure in his highchair  
waiting for green peas and lamb stew.

"Da, da, da, da."  
He shouted to the world.  
"I can talk. Hear me now."

His mother smiled.  
She stroked his cheek,  
mouthed "Mumma, Mumma."  
With her lips pinched round,  
she kissed rapid pulses  
that gushed from his flourishing  
garden of talking violets.

"Hold me," cried the mother to her son  
from her room in the nursing home,  
with its yellow and purple wallpaper  
that gave her dizzy spells  
when the lights popped on.

She smelled like violets growing  
wild in her unkempt garden.

Pointing, she said, "Will you bring it to me?"  
She grunted and moaned for him  
to give her a glass of water,  
while she lay secure in a bed with tall rails  
waiting for green peas and lamb stew  
to fuel her shriveled body.

"Mumma, Mumma."  
She shouted to the world.  
"I can still talk. Hear me now."

Her son's face grew sadness.  
He stroked her cheek,  
mouthed, "I love you, Mumma."  
His lips pinched round,  
he kissed the wilted puffs  
that were diminishing in  
her garden of untamed violets.

## **Matthew Slauter**

### **The Watery Ghost of Key West**

I've spoken of missing her  
This lady of the sea  
A whimsical madame  
Of beauty believed  
From Margarita sundowns  
The Duchess of Duval  
As a young man finds heartache near an ancient  
stone wall  
For oceans are rising  
As ice sheets retreat  
The eerily cornered on islands and streets  
Of losing the past  
This freedom and town  
The island mood as steel drums no longer resound  
Lazy afternoons with partners and drinks  
The Green Parrott bar or Sloppy's I think  
The Bull with a bird's eye view as tourist abound  
A corner guitarist with silver on the ground  
A whole generation disappears with the tide

A coming reminder...

Of nowhere to hide

### **As Her Memory Caresses**

In the quiet of our love  
She would call my name  
As tears subside how can I explain  
A host of signs once dear to me  
The memory of too near to see  
Her familiar fragrance upon the air  
A closet comforts a love once shared  
For divine the magic while years have gone

The vintage of my widowed wand  
A pawn of life bewitches me  
The rise of married sympathies  
A longing born of travesty  
Her clothes still safe so near my bed  
I wish it had been me instead...

## ***Cheryl Vatcher-Martin, M.A.***

### **Cora's Slate board**

A turn of the century gal,  
Born in 1900,  
As the Victorian Era came to a close,  
At the time she made her entrance,  
Plentiful Country schools established on  
farmer's lands,  
For transplanted New Yorker's, Rhode  
Islanders, and Massachusetts settlers  
Became Mid-Westerner's long before her  
birth;  
With education laws in 1864 governing the  
red or white school houses,  
Where school board meetings discourse  
involved local taxes, school books, and  
contracts,  
Little self-governing school houses

Like Romulus' settlers had many one room  
schools,

Such as Hayti in the 1800's,

Where Cora made her debut as a young  
girl,

Who happily etched her birth name of Cora  
onto her tiny double-sided slate board,

With yarn tenderly woven around the  
carved wood;

Not knowing then that a memento would  
exist,

For tomorrow's child to see, reflect, and  
touch,

Perhaps too, lightly write her name with a  
piece of slate chalk,

As she thought of Cora's life, her legacy,  
and remembrance that

Cora's preservation of a childhood  
chalkboard, teaches others,

A hundred years later.

## **Winter's Paintbrush**

Spring's fling

Has yet to arrive,

Frozen buds lay dormant,

End of April hues,

With song birds singing the blues

As the feast of Mother Nature's winter produce,

Is barren upon the grey tree branches;

Scattered pine cones fall aimlessly as wooden art,

Yet the colorful hues of detested Dandelions are

Ghosts from last year's past,

Springtime rituals of warmth,

Roots piercing through dark clay with scattered dirt,

Struggle to blossom,

As the rabbits hustle for a nibble of greenery;

That simply does not exist,

These creatures scurry away hiding under a thicket  
of dead branches,

Linked with winter's touch.

**Jacqueline D. Ward**

**Getting Over a Broken Heart**

Getting over a broken heart

What is the best way?

To get over a broken heart

Go out there

And find someone new

Feel free to love a new

Feel free to love again

How can you?

Get over a broken heart

You have to know

There more fishes in the sea and the ocean

You have to know

That you deserved

The best

You deserve

To be loved

And that there is someone

Out there to love

You the way you need to be

LOVED

LOVED

By the kind of love

That only comes alone

Once in a lifetime

Girl don't give up the search

### **Pursue My Dreams**

Pursue my dreams  
Never, never ever  
Give up  
Believe  
In yourself  
Believe in your dreams  
Believe  
In yourself  
When no one else  
Believes in you  
You can make it  
You can make it  
You can make it  
You can do whatever you put your mind too  
All your dreams can come true  
Believe in yourself  
Listen to others who are wiser than you are  
Only if they up build you  
If they tear you down  
Don't listen to them  
Don't give them the time of day  
Pursue your dreams  
I plan to do just that!!!  
Everybody  
Want to give you  
Their advice  
Some is good  
While some advice, is not so nice  
Believe in your Dreams

Young people you can do  
Whatever you put your mind too.  
Never let no stop you

## ***Katrina Wilson***

### **The Pain**

Pain ...

Pain is physical

Pain emotional

Pain is mental

Pain ...

Pain can cause:

Sadness

Regret

Depression

Pain...

It ruin's a person's life to the full extent.

It's not a joking matter.

It's a feeling we all go through

No matter the issue.

It doesn't feel good, it's horrible

Pain ...

We can help get over pain, if we just work  
TOGETHER to END IT!

Be KIND once in a while,

SMILE a little more than usual

Being NICE once in a while

Can REDUCE the amount of pain!

# Short Stories

## ***AveMaria Awosika***

### **A Cambridge Recollection (part I)**

I'll never forget that summer.

The wide skies and the thick wind that circled the city. The white roses and the smell of freshly baked honeyberry pie that danced off the air. These are what made summer in Cambridge all the more welcoming.

Sadly though, Cambridge isn't just famous for that, but more so the 1989 kidnapping cases that scarred the city as well. During this time, the people were trapped in fear, the days alert and the nights dreaded, especially in my neighborhood.

It had gotten so bad that eventually my parents feared for my life. So when the fifth soul was taken, they decided the best thing to do would be to send me to my aunt and uncle on their farm in the outskirts of Cambridge.

I'll never forget that day. The day my life altered.

"Constance! Constance!...Constance where are you! The taxi is waiting for you!" mother yelled pleadingly.

I stood out in the backyard, picking the small roses that had finally decided to come into bloom, young and ignorant of adolescence, getting ready just before I had to go.

“Constance!” she continued to call. I hesitated to go to her, just a few minutes, that’s all I needed; it wasn’t as if I were excited to be leaving home.

“I’m coming mother!” I called back, just so she wouldn’t grow worried.

I picked up a few roses for the trip, blowing a kiss to the rest as I rushed back inside to grab my things.

Father had already packed my larger objects into the trunk, so I was left to carry my brown small duffle bag.

Mother and I stood out, waiting and watching until he finished, turning back to the both of us when the trunk was closed. He smiled down at me, his eyes glistening with tears that refused to rain.

"Alright, munchkin, it's time to go," he said sorrowfully. He and mother were never good with goodbyes.

Mother bent down to me, running her hands through the pencil-straight red hair I'd grown up with.

"Now, we want you to listen to whatever your aunt and uncle tell you to do. Be respectful, and make sure you eat all your meals," she slightly whispered, smiling. "And remember, this is only for the summer. The town says the kidnappings should be cleared up by then, what with the clues they've gotten, so you'll be home before you know it," father reassured.

I never understood why they were so emotional; it wasn't like I was leaving forever.

But, I complied either way. "Okay, mum, dad, I should get going," I said, figuring the taxi driver must have been getting quite impatient.

"Alright then, love, you should get a move on, we don't want to keep your aunt and uncle waiting."

With a nod, I led myself to the taxi, waving to them as I climbed in.

Father slammed the door, smiling at me, holding mothers hand as the taxi pulled off.

If I had known that would be the last time I'd ever see them, I would have done so much more than a wave.

The homes and buildings seemed to drift out of my sight as the taxi pulled farther and farther away from the city part of young Cambridge...so was an almost burning feeling inside me. As if I were never coming back.

It hadn't taken long to get to Aunt Clare and Uncle James' farm. They only sat about fifteen minutes outside of Cambridge.

Surrounding them were a few more farms of a few more people who lived in the rural, country parts of the town.

Up ahead, one of the last farms before the next city was their farm. Before we even stopped I faintly saw two figures standing outside, waiting.

As directed the driver pulled to a stop in front of the light brown house and barn. Uncle

James' fading red truck sat in front. He always liked to keep his truck in front of his house, for its own protection, he would say.

I let myself out as I did in, just as Aunt Clare ran up, her arms open and wide.

"Constance! It's been so long!" she beamed.

Aunt Clare, she was a pure soul at heart, only strict when she needed to be. Whenever I visited with my parents, there was always a slice of mouthwatering raspberry cheesecake waiting for me.

"Hello, Aunt Clare, Uncle James," I greeted, turning my attention to Uncle James from Aunt Clare's hug as he retrieved my things from the back of the taxi.

He turned and smiled at me. "Morning, Constance. It's good to see you again. Although I wish you could have come on better circumstances."

The thought of the kidnappings came to mind again. I'd almost forgotten why I'd come there in the first place.

Possibly sensing the look on my face, Aunt Clare turned me back to face her. “Now don’t you worry a bit Constance, you’re perfectly safe here. We promise you.”

The rumbling sound of the taxi pulling away distracted me for a moment, and then I nodded.

She smiled in return, as if everything were going to be okay from then on.

“Let’s get you inside, sweetheart. You must be hungry; I saved a slice of raspberry cheesecake *just* for you.”

After showing me my room and settling my things upstairs, Auntie and Uncle both sat me at the small wooden kitchen table to speak about what would be happening from then on.

“I brought you roses,” I quickly said before either of them could start, holding sweet-scented bouquet out for someone to take. Delighted, Aunt Clare took them from my hand.

“How wonderful! These are beautiful, Constance, thank you.” she took a sniff as she stood up and turned to sit them in a vase by the pantry.

“Now Constance,” Uncle James began sternly, “we want to explain some ground rules if you’re going to be living with us for the time being.”

“We know you’re a hard worker, so while you’ll be staying here you’ll be doing some chores with Aunt Clare in the house, but mostly you’ll be helping me out with farm work in the morning to the evenings.”

As rotten as it was to feel, I already hated the place. Sure from time to time I’d help mother with chores in the kitchen, but from there I’d never worked in a farm.

I resisted the urge to retort as uncle went on.

“We want you in bed at exactly nine p.m. every night after supper and up at seven sharp to begin your chores. We know you never worked as much back home, but for the summer you’re going to have to put some effort in.”

I nodded obediently, I wonder what I’d have done if I’d had a choice then.

“So we understand ourselves? Good. I’ll show you the barn today then tomorrow you can start work with Demetri and me.”

"Who's Demetri?" I asked.

"He's a boy who lives down the street, he comes up and helps your uncle quite often," Aunt Clare answered for him as she sat back down.

"So while you'll be staying here he'll be helping you along with the work."

I nodded, it didn't seem much of a big deal. At least I would have extra help.

"Come on, hurry up and finish your cake, then I'll go and show you the barn," Uncle James smiled.

I took my time eating.

Eventually when I chose to finish, Uncle James brought me out to the snow white and scarlet painted barn that sat right next to the house, but with a wooden door on the side of it instead.

The sounds of the wining cattle in the back of the barn were the last things I heard as I walked in with Uncle James.

I expected to hear the sounds of animals such as chickens, horses, pigs, sheep, running rampant and whining, as the cows did like any

normal barn. But to my surprise the barn was completely silent.

Granted it did have the horses and the chickens, the pigs and the sheep, but it all seemed still, in one stop, staring to one place, holding one position.

Uncle James looked as if he didn't notice a thing, so I let it pass myself.

"Those over there are the horses. On Saturdays you and Demetri will clean their stables. On Tuesdays and Fridays I want you to clean the new chicken coops. You can let them outside when you need to. Don't worry, they won't be going anywhere."

"But throughout the week the both of you will be stacking hay near and in that old chicken coop over there—we don't use it anymore—just so the cows won't make a mess. Then I'll have easy access to it throughout the week."

"Along with that you will feed the animals every day at ten then at dusk. We don't work on Sundays, but you still have to come in and feed them. Did you catch all that?"

Now, I'm lucky I did, because at that moment a scent penetrated my nose as I walked further inside.

"Oh, gross! Uncle, what's that smell?"

He sniffed the air, but it didn't seem to affect him.

"I'm gonna guess it's the animals, you know how they are, a quick clean and this place will smell brand new."

I'd hated the thought that I'd have to be the one to find the source of the wretched smell, but still, I ventured on to my work.

"Alright, now, you don't have to start today but you can take a look around if you'd like. But be back inside soon for supper."

With that, he saluted, smiling again as he turned and left.

When the door slammed I proceeded to take a look around, trying to ignore the smell as best as I could, but it made my stomach quiver at just the smallest scent.

I distinctly remember the order the barn went from. The horses aligned the left side, still as stone as they stared forward, some at me.

Three chicken coops sat at the south end of the barn, whilst the old one sat at the north, the first three with few chickens in it. The pigs stood in a pigpen, staring at nothing in a disoriented circle, not making any noise, or any movements.

It disturbed me of course, how still they were, but I imprudently passed it off.

Finally, I brought my attention to the blackened chicken coop, stalking over to it to get a better view.

The ugliness and foul stench that matched the entire barn bothered me. For a moment, I'd carelessly wondered why Uncle James would want to keep hay there in the first place; surely it would have made the animals as sick as I felt.

With a firm view and disgusted feeling, I turned to leave the barn.

As I stepped out I heard a faint noise. A sudden dripping sound that at the time I didn't take much notice of as I took my leave.

At dinner, Aunt Clare served beef stew with pieces of celery and sliced onions with a side of two roasted potatoes and ice cold water.

"Did you enjoy your time in the barn?" Aunt Clare asked as she took her own seat next to Uncle James who held a paper in hand while eating.

"It was fine," I lied. Of course I wouldn't say it was disgusting and disturbing, they're family after all.

She smiled, "Good, I'm glad you accept the work efforts in this house. Don't worry, we won't work you too hard, we promise," she reassured.

I chastely took a bite of the stew, staring down at my plate as I nodded slowly.

"Just wait until you meet Demetri! Although he's a few years older than you I'm sure you'll be great friends!"

"He's a hard worker too, so you should have plenty of help," Uncle James added himself, not taking his eyes off of the paper.

Suddenly, a thought came to mind. I thought back to the first time I'd walked into the barn. "Uncle James?"

He looked up, which I'd guessed meant he was acknowledging me, but now that I think about it, I think I was annoying him while he was trying to read.

"Why don't the animals do anything? It's pretty weird," I frowned.

"What do you mean, sweetheart?" Aunt Clare asked in a confused tone.

"Well, they just sit there, staring at one place, like they're statues or something."

"I'm sure they're just a little frightened" Uncle James answered. "They're not usually like that, it's probably the sight of a new person. Don't worry, they'll get used to you."

How wrong he was.

After some time passed and a comfortably silenced dinner, Aunt Clare directed me to bed.

Uncle James ordered that every night from now on I keep my room door locked, my window shut tight and my ear plugs in as the animals tend to make noise during the night. The plugs were optional, since I wouldn't be able to hear much from where my room sat in the first place.

I hadn't thought much of it, I assumed it was for my own protection, so once again, I let it pass. Then I let myself fall asleep to the songs of the nightingale.

## ***Santeiu Butler***

### **A Mermaid's Dream**

There I was again in my fishbowl while women, men, and children jeered at me. They threw food and drinks along with various words of hatred; freak, monster, ugly creature and worse, much worse, but my day was in its completion. Thyran's Circus and Freakshow was in its final acts. The white tigers followed me then the show ended with the acrobatics.

I viewed the people surrounding my bowl and caught sight of Janine, the youngest member of the circus, picking the pockets of those attending. When they returned to their rich homes, they would realize that their valuable watches and jewelry were gone and would conclude that they had fallen off during the night.

I twisted the pears adorning my black hair between my thumb and forefinger. The ringmaster had given them to me as a gift of friendship.

*Friendship, I thought, bitterly. Pah! He who took me from my home, chained me here with no possible escape, and forced me to perform for these awful people, wished to be friends? As if I had volunteered for the part.* I was to be wed to the god of the seas himself, but on the night before the wedding, I was resting on some rocks above the water's surface. Thyran's henchmen overthrew and poisoned me. I awoke at the circus and have been performing for years upon years. I had long since grown tired of the malice of the audiences and yearned for my home in the seas.

"But, be wary," Thyran's voice was muffled by the surrounding water. "One look into Amphitrite's crystalline eyes will cause paralysis or instant death."

That was my cue. Gripping the side of the bowl, I hoisted myself out of the water and hauled my pure white fins over the side of the glass container. Perched precariously on the edge, I scanned the crowd. Gasps of terror and giggles could be heard under the big top tent, but no one would return my gaze out of dread.

"Her voice will put you in a trance and she will be able to control your very movement," Thyran lied.

I began to sing the melody Thyran had taught me the first night of my captivity. It was something about freedom and the deep blue ocean. Thyran was a very cruel man. I noticed a young gentleman among the audience; he was the only one to return my stare. My tune faltered, but I regained the tempo before Thyran detected the missed notes. The man was clad in black with his shoulder length hair and his deep set eyes. His skin was sun kissed and blemish-free. He held eye contact even when I splashed back into the water, completely drenching Thyran, and was rolled out of the tent.

The clowns who were transporting me lost their playful smiles as soon as the curtain closed.

"Look at little Ariel," one of them taunted. "So far away from 'ome, are we?"

"Why, Rory, me thinks she wants to leave the circus," the other mocked. "Tell 'er, 'arry, why she can't leave."

"See that pearl bracelet," the one called Harry gestured to the piece. "If you step one fin out of the tent's boundary, 40,000 volts of electricity will

immobilize you long enough for the ringmaster to come. Then you'll be in real trouble."

We had arrived at our destination when Rory and Harry stopped their hecklings. They both laughed menacingly at my misfortune and tipped the bowl over, spilling me into an Olympic-sized pool that served as my home. The clowns left me with only a school of goldfish for company. Goldfish were never great talkers.

A few hours later, the black-eyed man from the circus crowd snuck into my room and stood over the water.

"We don't have much time," he said when I had surfaced at his feet. "My name is Nicholas. Your fiancée sent me to find you and take you home."

"Poseidon still searched after all these years?" I asked, surprised.

"Of course, my queen," he nodded. "He never stopped since he first discovered your empty chambers. Now we must hurry. Your captor is in the next room."

I was pulled from the water by strong hands and carried out the door. Thyran's door was ajar and light seeped through the crack. He was most likely counting that night's profits with his back towards the corridor.

“Let me down, Nicholas. I have a plan,” I said.

He obeyed without hesitation and watched as I dragged myself silently into the room. Now under his large oak desk, I removed the electric jewelry and strapped it to his ankle unnoticed. Crawling my way back, I knew it would only be only moments before Thyran perceived the trail of water in and out of his office. I was cradled in Nicholas's arms while he led me towards the exits when a thought occurred to me.

“How would a human personally know Poseidon?” I inquired.

“I am a merfolk like you,” he sounded fairly puzzled.

“But you have legs.”

“While you were... away, some discoveries were made about the mer, like—“

A shrill alarm cut his next words off and he started to sprint towards freedom. Behind him, I could see the silhouettes of Rory and Harry bolting after us. I knew we weren't going to make it; they were basically upon us. Realizing the same fact, Nicholas stopped suddenly and gestured to the ground. The pavement gave away to sand meaning...

"The ocean is three miles west of here. You can make it. I'll hold them off."

And with that, he threw me onto the sand, charged back the way we had come, and tackled both Rory and Harry simultaneously. I sat in the sand, stunned for a moment, until another silhouette emerged from the tent. The creature was long with arms extending to its ankles. It walked caveman-style outside the pavilion and surveyed the disarray. He walked on his fingertips around the tousling group and jerked his head towards me.

Thyran.

I couldn't see his face but I knew he was smiling as he approached my retreating form. Unexpectedly, I felt a sharp pain deep within my fins so intense the sun itself resided inside. The pain only lasted seconds but it seemed like eons. When the suffering had passed, I looked down at my...legs.

Thyran, who had ceased his pursuit to watch the spectacle, began a mad dash after me obviously seeing more profits in my newfound ability. Rising to my knees—I believe that was what they were called—I attempted and failed to put more distance between us. I continued to thrash the useless limbs, but seemed to be getting nowhere and Thyran was almost upon me. My

heart threatened to hammer out of my chest due to the fear and the exhaustion. After a few more tries, I managed to stand upright and stumble a few steps.

Thyran's hand reached out and seized my ankle, causing me to tumble forward into the sand. His eight foot frame loomed over me; the night held its breath. He stretched his deformed arm down to grab hold of me, but I used the last of my energy to take one final lunge back.

Thyran shook his head and asked, "When will you ever learn that the circus is your home now. There are consequences for running away from home."

He took one more step and his body jerked spastically until he crashed to the sand, insentient. The electric jewelry I had tethered to his ankle chirped cheerfully. I smiled and thanked the heavens while I tried to catch my breath in relief. It was finally over. I cautiously undressed Thyran and used his overly large clothes to cover my bare body and left him in only his trousers.

Nicholas lay unconscious on the pavement next to two identical forms. The fight must have taken all of his vitality. Standing on my limbs, I staggered to his aid and fell to my knees. I summoned up strength I had no idea I possessed

and lifted Nicholas onto my shoulders, resumed my erect position, and trudged three excruciating miles to the ocean. I left Thyran and my old life behind without any regrets.

The closer I got to the ocean the more alive I felt despite the rising sun. I knew I would not survive the heat and the lack of water if I were caught in the daylight, so I ran as fast as I could with Nicholas still draped over my shoulders.

Finally, the sparkle of the water's edge glimmered and I nearly wept with joy at the sight. I heaved Nicholas into the water and watched his legs merge into one aquamarine fin. Quickly discarding Thyran's clothes, I hopped gleefully into the ocean. Comforting warmth spread through my lower body replacing my pale legs with snowy fins. The water must have snapped him from his comatose-like state because his eyes lurched open and found mine. Nicholas managed a single nod and we swam together to our new future.

For the first time in 10 years I was going home.

## **Stephanny Felix**

### **Come Along Pond**

I am so confused right now. One second I'm strolling through the park, and then I trip over a rock and fall flat on my face, then I look right into a crack in the sidewalk. Next thing you know, I'm years into the future and there is a spaceship where earth's supposed to be and robots are controlling the human race!! Oh, wait. Let me start from the beginning.... Hi, my name is Stephanny Felix and I'm the most awesome girl you'll ever know. Actually, I'm a bit weird. And I'm also an idealist. I don't believe in anything that doesn't have facts to back it up. But what happens in the next couple of days kind of changes that.

Okay, back to my story! Where was I? There's a spaceship, blahblahblahblah robots..., ROBOTS that's it! Okay, so I'm sitting there all confused and kind of scared, right, then a blue thing -called a Dalek- sees me and starts saying "EX-TER-MIN-ATE!!" so I start to run while dodging lasers (which is surprisingly really easy) and I run into **thin air**. A guy comes out of... **THIN AIR** and pulls me into **THIN AIR!**

“What are you doing out there; you'll die without one of these.” He says while putting a watch thing on my wrist.

“Um, what is that!?” I barely manage to gasp.

“It's a Vortex Manipulator. It allows you to travel anywhere through time and space. It's like my TARDIS but without the cool rooms. If you have any more questions, feel free to ask!”

“Who are you, where am I, are you an alien, what was shooting at me and what is a TARDIS?” I ask

“Wow, I wasn't expecting that many questions. But they weren't stupid, so I'll answer them. Okay, I'm the Doctor, a Time Lord from the planet Gallifrey the constellation of Castebreth, and I'm over 12,000 years old. You're on a spaceship, more specifically a Dalek/Cybermen spaceship in 3057. More specifically than that, you're in my TARDIS, that's Tee Ai Argh Dee lie eSs – **T**ime **a**nd **R**elative **D**imension **i**n **S**pace! The TARDIS is my spaceship. What was shooting at you was a Dalek, they are the bad things. But more importantly, who are you, and how did you get here. Can't a Time Lord get any privacy anymore? I

was just silently thinking to myself, about to get a plan, then I hear a bang on the door, and you come here asking all these questions like, like we're friends or something... I think I like you!"

The Doctor was a tall, skinny, guy that smelled like apricots- actually he smelled like when you walk into a bathroom and you're like 'well at least it's clean.' You know that kind of smell. ANYWAYS...! He had crazy brown hair. His light green almond eyes looked scared yet brave.

"UH, MY NAME IS STEPH!" I say a little too loudly.

"Nice to meet you Steph, I just have to make sure you're not a trap." He says as he pulls out something and probes me with it.

"Yes, you are human. Blackish/brown hair, glasses, a trouble maker, and has a Dora the Explorer blanket you got when you were six and currently still use..!"

"Um, how did you know that?" I ask blushing.

"I scanned you with my Sonic Screwdriver. Now every little detail about you is in my head. It's

good to be a genius." He says narcissistically. "Hey, you also haven't thanked me for saving your life yet. Come on, let me hear it."

"Uh, thanks. But there's something I still don't get. You said that we are in your spaceship right now, but when I was running and ran into your "spaceship" there was nothing there, and in here is so...BIG!

The Doctor walks over to the TARDIS' control center and leans on the wibbly-lever trying to be cool, (which I find out he does a lot) and breaks it. He then tries to put it back together, fails horribly, throws it behind him, then leans back on the control system by the computer screen, while I stare at him in disbelief.

"That wasn't important... I think. Anyways, the TARDIS is huge, not really. On the outside it's a 1960 themed police telephone box that looks like this." He points to the computer screen that had now changed into a T.V and has a picture of a small blue box.

"*THAT'S* the TARDIS!? It's even smaller than I thought. How is inside so vast?"

"It's a lot to take in isn't it? Tiny box, huge room inside: let me explain, the little blue box is a door and inside the door is a whole 'nother planet. So the TARDIS is basically a door to a planet which is inside the TARDIS so the TARDIS is the planet AND the door which is also the door to a planet so it's basically a planet-door-planet-door.... planet. Okay, imagine a great big bubble with one of those tiny bubbles on the side."

"Okay."

"Well it's nothing like that. I don't want to explain it. It's too complicated for your brain. It's all 'wibboly-wobboly timey-wimey,' and you are all 'humany-wumany.'"

"Okay...?" I say not knowing whether that was an insult or compliment. "But I got it the first time. It's just a dimension filter!"

"Okay... Actually, no. You didn't say my favorite bit." He says giving me a daunting look. "I like it better when people say 'it's bigger on the inside!' Anyways, I'll be off. You gave me a great idea. Don't open the doors for ANYONE. The shields are on, and the TARDIS is on invisible mode so you'll be safe." he says walking towards the door. "You know, a human hasn't given me an idea in a long

while. Huh, I'd call you a genius, but I'm in the room. You know no one ever finds that funny... I see why! I'll just leave now."

As soon as the Doctor opened the door, a yellow Dalek shoots him and Cybermen grab him. "Close... the... door..." He barely manages to mutter. Two Cybermen start to march inside of the TARDIS, but I jump and close it and I hear the Cybermen explode. 'That must be the shield' I think.

I look out the windows and see the Doctor getting dragged away unconscious. Thinking he's dead, I start to panic, so to calm down I walk around the TARDIS.

Wow this place has everything! From a swimming pool to a library, to an arcade room then a kitchen!" I went into the kitchen hoping for some weird alien snacks, but to my disappointment there wasn't any. The rooms were so awesome, except for the fact they all had race-car beds. I was trying not to think about the fact I probably saw the last of the Doctor. I keep walking and see a dusty door. With one touch the door creeps open. As I start to walk in, I push the "light" button (and see pictures of guys, then I see the current Doctor. There's a diary under his picture and I start to read it. The

diary is filled with pictures of aliens and girls- five of which have hearts around their faces. But then I get to the important part of the book; his adventures.

I read about how he's saved the human race. "This Doctor guy has **my** life millions of times without pretty much anyone even knowing. Not even a single '**thank you**'. It is an honor even *seeing* the Doctor, and now I have a chance to save him. I am NOT going to blow this!" I say encouraging myself. "Wow, I really need to stop talking to myself" I whisper. I grab seven Sonic Screwdrivers, stuff them in my pockets and go.

Blowing up alien robots left and right, trying to look cool. I just keep running. Lost and tired; I stop to take a break, and look down and around me. On the floor there's a red bow-tie. 'That has to be the doctor's!' I think and I follow the way it is pointing. I keep going straight, sneaking around, and squeezing the bow-tie in my hand tightly to give me hope. I notice a room, door closed but light coming out of the bottom. Taking a chance, I sonic the door open and walk in. To my luck, I see a crazy man yelling at a screwdriver calling it a "thick, rubbish, embarrassment to all screwdrivers!" then he looks up.

“Oh, hello. So you found me? I guess all humans aren't useless. Then again it probably was my bow-tie that led you here. Oh and look, you've got Sonics with you! That's nice. You know they usually come in handy for me. Can you just, help me out a bit.” He says jerking his head down indicating I Sonic him out of his wood trap thingy. So I try to.

“No, don't use the blue one. The blue and green ones don't work with wood.

“So this one?”

“Yea, the red one. Just like that.”

“No, Steph, just point and think about getting me out of here.”

“I AM! Be patient. It's my first time doing this ya' know!”

“O.K. See just like that.”

He says as I free him. Then we start to run.

“Do you have a plan?” I say as we run to the TARDIS.

“No, but I'm working on a thing.”

"A THING! I thought you were a mad genius!?"

"Well you thought right, because I am one. But it's a thing in progress."

We're silent as the Doctor realizes how stupid he sounded, and then he glances at me noticing I'm trying not to laugh.

"Oi! Respect my thing!" he says.

I look at him as he smiles like an idiot, we then run into a door. We go into a room only to be trapped by an army of Daleks screeching and Cybermen chanting, The Doctor grabs my hand and hauls me outside. Sonics open a door to hide in the room and super locks it. "Okay!" He says. "We're hiding. Which is NOT cool but that's what they expect us to be doing. Hiding, hiding. There are at *least* **12,000** Daleks and Cybermen out there ready to *kill* us. **BUT** we have surprise on our side! They will never expect *two* people to **attack 17,000+ Daleks and Cybermen!!!**" he pauses to think as I look at him not believing he just said that, waiting for him to come to his senses. "Because we would be killed instantly!" he finally says "so, let's just forget surprise!?"

The Doctor, scared out of his mind just gives up. He opens the door planning to go commando. But to make a long story short, they attack; we try to fight back, and we get caught.

A Cyberman takes me, and two Daleks grab the Doctor. "DON'T WORRY, I'LL MAKE HER BLUE AGAIN FOR US!!!" he yells as he's gets put in a cage and carried away by Daleks.

"AND WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN???" I squeal back angrily.

Next thing I know, I'm tied up and a bunch of alien robots are watching to see how I... go. The Doctor Sonics his way out of his cage when no one is looking and he grabs a microphone. By then everything notices him and also notice that the two Daleks that were carrying him in the cage, well... their heads were blown off. The Doctor gets a sly grin on his face and says into the microphone, "and a great big WHOOPING kick in the backside for the Daleks. Your two 'Supreme Leaders' are GONE!!" everything goes silent. "Hey." The Doctor finally says, "Don't look at me like that. YOU just raised an army against yourself. Don't judge by looks. Judge by equivalence in wits! Because that's something

we both got!" the Doctor says glancing at me, then Sonics me out of my rope.

Daleks start shrieking "EX-TER-MIN-ATE THE DOCTOOOOR!!" and Cybermen chant "YOU WILL BE DELETED!"

"HEY EVERYTHING!!" the Doctor yells." OI, I WASN'T DONE!!!" they still continue to holler. "AS YOU ALL KNOW I AM THE DOCTOR!! AND I KNOW WHAT YOU ALL WANT. MY T.A.R.D.I.S! BECAUSE WHO TAKES THE T.A.R.D.I.S TAKES THE UNIVERSE. BUT BAD NEWS EVERYONE, BECAUSE GUESS WHO!?! BABY, I AM BACK AND BETTER THAN EVER!" The Daleks and Cybermen still continue to screech and shriek to the point the Doctor gets too tired of it and yells...

**"Will you all just stay still and be quiet for a minute because I. AM. TALKING!!!!"** silence. I swear you could hear a pin drop. I even hold my breath.

"Anyways...!" He continues. "You've got me. At long last the hopeless wars between us are over because you have got me!" He stops again, breathing heavily, then continues angrier than ever. "For once, I'm helpless. I mean LOOK AT ME! No plans, no backup, no weapons worth a dang! Look at this. You lot are all so scared of a SCREWDRIVER!" he says motioning at the Sonic Screwdriver and

throwing it on the floor. "Oh. And let me remind you of one more BIG thing I don't have. ANYTHING. TO. LOSE! So, if you're marching around with your armies and all your SILLY LITTLE GUNS! Just remember who's standing in your way! Remember every **BLACK** day I ever stopped you. And then, AND THEN! Do the smart thing. Let somebody else try first!!! SO COME ON THEN. THE DOCTOR WILL SEE YOU NOW!" and with a bang, he finishes.

The Doctor grins widely. Everywhere is still silent. The words the Doctor said still echoing in my ears. Everyone is looking at each other, waiting for someone to attack the Doctor, but nobody dears to try. He glances at me, smirks, whispers "that's what I thought!" and snaps. Everywhere goes dark, and the Doctor is gone. I'm alone in a room filled with deadly alien robots. Scared out of my mind I scream, "DOCTOOOOOR!"

Then I look on my lap to see a note. The header says "Allons-y" and written it says, 'don't be daft; Come Along Pond! ☺'

## ***Elizabeth Johnson***

### **The Reason I Care**

The reason we continue to live every day is because of love. It is a thing to think, dream, and live about. My love is shared upon five wonderful activities, and one super special thing; mountain dew. One morning I decided it was time to feel more awesome than usual, and get some mountain dew. My day went a little like this:

As I started for the door with my awesome outfit and excited vibes flowing from me, I counted the change in my pocket. There was exactly five dimes, one nickel, and two quarters, together it made \$1.05. The music blasting in my headphones only made me more excited as I shut the locked door and checked for my key quickly after; it was there. I jumped on my bike and was on my way to 7-Eleven to buy a bottle full of heaven, or mountain dew. The journey seemed to last forever due to the excessive adrenaline pumping through every inch of my body.

The only thing on my mind as I crossed the street was opening the marvelous bottle of bliss. My biggest concern should have been falling, or being

hit by something, but I didn't care at the time. As I reached the street light the sound of passing cars drowned the music in my ears; I was close to my destination. The love for mountain dew that I possess is much stronger than my love for playing guitar hero, cuddling, sleeping, skating, or biking. It is a deep, deep love that I may never overcome. I hope I never do.

As I quickly approached the store that held my heaven captive for way too long, my tires started to blur with the un-real motion I created. The rubble beneath my rubber attempted slowing me, but the energy still existed, and seemed to increase immensely as I got closer. The kick-stand didn't assume its position quick enough so I threw my bike to the ground. The doors creaked open slowly and the cold air flushed over my face making me feel faint. My heart raced as I walked over to the prison of my love.

I opened the prison door, more cold air rushed over me. My mouth watered as I picked the perfect one; slightly slippery with condensation. I emptied my change onto the counter; the man could not count any slower. As he began to ask if I needed a bag or receipt I was already saying "no"

and walking toward the door. As I twisted the top off delicately, the carbonated soda bubbled and fizzed with perfection.

As I consumed the mountain dew I worked hard for, I realized how much I care for myself. The anticipation I had for this moment was too great to be shared. This is not an act of being conceded, it is simply caring for oneself. The experience I created for myself and vividly described is relived many times, but not often since I have no constant income. I love mountain dew.

## **Monica Laschober**

### **Really, Truly Alone**

The government declared the world was overpopulated in the year 2033. Without so much as a phone call to the World Council, the United States issued an attack on the Earth as a whole.

They didn't use standard weapons. No bombs, missiles, or anything else of that nature. Instead, the government directed a group of brilliant scientists from all corners of the country to create a disease. "A new disease to help with the overpopulation problem," they said. "A plague of sorts."

They genetically altered and combined at least twenty different diseases, according to legend. Cancer, the common cold, Aids, and any other disease they could think of.

There was no proper name for this mutation. There was no scientific name that sounded like someone sneezing. But everyone knew what it was. Eventually, it was nicknamed Belladonna due to its Belladonna-like symptoms. First you would feel lightheaded. Then come the hallucinations. It was said to make you feel like you were dreaming even if you were wide awake. What actually killed you, however, was the cardiac arrest. According to

some who had gone through it and lived, though not for very long, the hallucinations would take a dark turn and you were literally scared to death.

When Belladonna was finally ready for the world, the American government sent it throughout the country. They took anyone they considered important and locked them in an underground bunker to keep them safe from the disease. Rumor has it they're all still alive, safe and sound. Tanker trucks came through with vents for the gaseous disease to escape from. It was airborne. Everyone was infected. Some people showed they had Belladonna right away. Others took days or weeks for it to show, some even longer.

Eventually, airplanes filled with the disease flew over to Europe, then Asia, then Africa, and so on. Air raid after air raid, death after death.

Belladonna spread like wildfire. The world was infected. Most people were killed. Still, some of us lived. We stuck together in groups, trying to find food or clean water or shelter or even just for company.

This is where I come in.

It's been four years since Belladonna was first introduced to the world. My dad and I were the only ones in my family to survive. I lost two brothers, a baby sister, and my mother. I no longer

remember what either of my brothers looked like or what my sister's name was.

My dad and I have been on our own for about two years now. We were part of a group, but they kicked us out. I had had a headache and they were all convinced I was showing signs of Belladonna. As it turns out, I was just tired.

We go through a routine every morning or whenever both of us are up for the day. State our name, age, and where we're from. It's just a little thing we do to help remember who we are.

"Hannah Collins. Roughly fifteen. Detroit, Michigan." I say.

"Ben Collins. Forty-four or something around there. Originally Portland, Oregon." He says back. It gets harder to remember every day. My dad thinks it's Belladonna eating away at our brains, slowly killing us before the symptoms show.

Sometimes I wish this stupid disease would just kill me already, but I can't leave my dad alone. He's already lost three kids and his wife, not to mention any other family we had. If I die, he'll be really, truly alone and I don't want that.

On this particular day, it's boiling hot. I think it's probably July or August, but I don't know anymore.

I had gotten up before my dad, so I left him in the house to sit outside and look around. I'm disgusted at what I see, but, then again, I always am. The United States of America has turned into the United Wasteland of America, as my dad frequently says. It doesn't really rain anymore due to something the Belladonna gas had done during the air raids. As a result, the grass is brown and depressing. The sky is an ugly blue-ish grey color. Same as always.

I turn and look back at the house my father is in. A simple two-story house in a simple neighborhood in the simple suburbs. I wonder who used to live here. Were they married? Did they have kids? Did they have a dog? Then again, I don't really want to know.

The neighborhood is empty. Just my dad and I. We've been staying in the houses with food until the supply until the food would run out, then move onto the next one. It's last us over a year, but we only have two houses left. I'm afraid we'll run out of food and starve before the disease gets us.

After awhile, my dad comes out. I nod at him.

"Ben Collins. Forty-four-ish. Portland, Oregon." He nods back at me.

"Hannah Collins. Fifteen. Detroit, Michigan."

My dad tells me we're low on food in this house, so we should move into the next one tonight. I agree. My dad looks at his watch. He thinks it's still working properly. I don't know or care if it is or not.

"It's 11:27 pm. We have a few hours to kill," he says.

"Funny how this became early for us," I sigh.

He chuckles. "We stay up too late for our own good."

I give him a half smile. I haven't laughed since before we found the neighborhood.

My dad turns to go back in the house, but he stumbles. I was close enough to catch him, thankfully.

"Daddy, you okay?" I ask.

He puts his hand to his head. "Yeah, don't worry. I'm just a little lightheaded."

The second he finishes his sentence, my suspicions are confirmed. I doubt he'll make it to tonight.

Holding back tears, I help him back into the house and onto the couch in the living room.

"Just sit for a few minutes," I mutter.

He nods, shutting his eyes.

I rush out of the house and sit down on the front lawn. *He can't see me cry, I think, but it*

doesn't stop the tears. Part of me hopes he's just dehydrated, but I know for a fact it's not.

I want so badly to scream and cry and break everything around me. I settle for letting silent tears flow down my face. I hate feeling sorry for myself like this, but my dad isn't going to be the one left alone.

After awhile, I hear him call my name. He sounds happy. This must be the start of the hallucinations.

I slowly go back to my dad. He's grinning at empty space.

"Look," he says to me, "Kristine's back!"

I hold back a sob. Kristine was my mom.

I figure I should play along to make this easier for both myself and my dad. "Hey, mom," I say as I sit next to my grinning father on the couch.

As he continues to have a conversation with the woman in his head, I can't help but think about what I'm going to do when he's gone. Try to find another group, maybe. If one will even take me in.

My dad's voice brings me out of my thoughts.

"Hannah, your mom had to go to the store. She said she'll be back soon."

I nod. A tear falls down my face. He doesn't notice.

I sit with my dad for another several hours as the hallucinations continue. He sees all sorts of things. His childhood dog, his parents, an old coworker, the rest of our dead family...he seems happy.

The sun is starting to set. I don't know how he's lasted this long, but I can tell the bad hallucinations are starting. His face looks confused and upset. He's trembling.

"I just want you out of this house and away from my daughter," he growls at nothing.

I take his hand and rest my head on his shoulder. Tears are steadily flowing down my face.

My dad gets worse as the sun finally goes down. He starts to yell at the empty space. I can't take this anymore. As much as I want to be with him in his final moments, I can't watch my own father die. I stand. "I'm going to bed."

My dad looks up at me. "Alright, sweetie. But don't let anyone in the room. There's a few of them here that said they're going to hurt you."

I feel like I've been hit with a sledgehammer. His worst fear, the kind of fear that Belladonna makes you see, is someone hurting me. I'm the reason he's going to die.

I try to smile at him. "I won't." For a moment, we're both silent. "Love you."

He smiles back at me. "Love you, too. Talk to you in the morning."

*No, you won't.*

I trudge up the stairs to the master bedroom. I can hear him arguing with no one. As soon as I close the door to the bedroom, he starts yelling.

"No, don't you touch my daughter!"

I bury my face in the pillow on the bed and let out a sob.

Eventually, he stops arguing with the hallucinations and starts shouting for me.

"Hannah! Hannah, get out! They're coming for you! Hannah!"

I cry even harder.

For what seems like an eternity, he continues yelling for me. Then, with one last scream of pain, he's silent. No more yelling. No more dad. He's gone.

I can't stay here anymore. Not with my father's body in the living room. I pull myself together as best as I can and make my way down the stairs. All I can think about is the fact that he died believing he was trying to save me.

I get out of the house without looking in the living room. I don't know what to do now, so I walk.

I'm not going anywhere in particular, I just want to walk.

Time seemed to fly as I left the neighborhood. I was almost to some highway when the sun began poking up on the horizon.

"Hannah Collins," I say between sobs.  
"Fifteen years old. From Detroit, Michigan."

For the first time since the disease spread, no one answered me.

In that moment, I knew I was really, truly alone.

## **Robert McFarling**

### **A Balloon Launch to Remember ...**

After what was a tragic loss of our daughter, her husband and two of their three children we found friends who assured us: "You need not walk alone. We are the Compassionate Friends."

As I type these words, a vision comes to my mind. I remember a mild, soft evening in the month of May... crowding June. My wife, Deanie, and our oldest daughter Louise, and I had parked in a nondescript playground in front of the Richardson Center. We made our way into a plain, brown, weathered building to an equally simple interior with rough-hewn tables, and creaky folding chairs. People were crowded in around the worn tables trying to talk and listen as each shared their story.

Promptly at 8 p.m., brightly colored balloons were brought out. There were vividly tinted cards giving each family a chance to write a name or message to attach to their balloon. Quiet fell on the group. The leader opened a large timber door that led out back. With the others, we made our way to the big veranda. Suddenly everyone paused. Ahead of us stretched a beautiful valley, bordered by spring clad trees, with grassy

meadows and flowers. Above was a soft mackerel sky, patches of blue tinted with gentle hues of gold and rose, as if all creation waited for the softer green, someone had written about, to come.

The crowd, too, waited, surprised and spellbound by the panorama around them. All of us needed hushed moments to drink this in.

I carried my camera, the three of us our balloons, one each for Judy, Rich, Michael and Megan, who had left us that dark cold night in February as their van crashed into a semi parked on the freeway. A signal was given. Some one hundred balloons were released, lifted upward. The breeze waited until all had cleared the giant tree sentinels near the building.

Then up, up the balloons went, mostly straight, now some drifted sideways in air currents. Our eyes and our camera watched until finally every balloon disappeared in a sea of space. The sky melded into a soft gentle green.

## **Casheena Parker**

### **My Catalina**

As she sat looking through the glass, her face relaxed into that look they all get when they guard their own special secret. And I was reminded of the time when I had seen that look before, with Catalina, the woman I will always hold dear to me. You know the one who captures your mind without you truly realizing it, taking hold of you and never letting go.

Catalina was that woman for me. A blessing as well as my curse; packaged into something sweeter than the sweetest honey, and brighter than the brightest star. She was my first of many, the one who they would envy without ever knowing her face. She was my special secret and my tortured past.

When the woman caught me staring I had to force myself to smile and congratulate her blessing, when I really wanted to scream out in my own agony. At the irony of it all, here Catalina was in the flesh of a woman I will never know, carrying a child by a man I will probably never see. I stared at this would who looked like the woman I will never be able to completely get out of my head. The

tones of her skin and the way her eyes lit up when she smiled at me, made me want to take her and make her mine. But that alone would be torture as well as disrespectful to the memory of what Catalina and I had. A love that will last a lifetime even after all that's happened. Regardless of the women that touched my heart after her.

While I sat thinking of Catalina and the pain our story caused me, of our fantasy that soon became my nightmare. I forced myself to see it through to the end, to finally try to let it go. So that my new blessing, Sahara, sitting across from me would finally be able to know why I reacted in that way. Why I couldn't give my all like I truly wanted to, cause the pain of the past held me at the base of my spine.

The time comes for history to erase itself and I can't bring myself to watch the process. Sahara's screams tear into my soul, breaking me down to the very core of me, that part of a man that is never truly revealed to anyone. Not even his soul mate. Though in my heart I know that possibility is one of the past. I sit rocking while hearing it all and seeing it occur right before my eyes. As she brings forth my other blessing, I wrench my hands to keep from leaving the room, to hide the fear that

my eyes exposed on their own without my knowledge.

Then the doctor hands her to me, my beautiful child. And I look into the face of an Angel that was finally mine to hold and keep to myself. Without the pains from the child I lost there to haunt me. I smile knowing that I made it through to the end and so did they. I looked to Sahara in the bed sleeping and I smile knowing that she was no longer the replacement of Catalina, the one I lost in the birth of our unborn child; but the one who was given to me because I lost them both.

## **Amber Rampson**

### **Am I drowning?**

A cold, shivering liquid covers my body, wrapping me in its arms. I can't hear nothing but the sound of the ocean slapping against my temple over and over again. I try to hold my breath but I'm getting dizzy. Something feels my lungs, and it's not air. It's a cold substance. It's salty. It's bitter. It's salt water. I open my eyes to see crystal red. I'm near the surface of the ocean. I can see the sun right through the clear water. But I'm the one under. I try to reach my hand up through the water, so I can know if I'm still alive. But something, someone, grabs my arm making me not move a muscle. The crystal water starts turning dark red as I get pulled under. Deeper into the ocean. My last thought. "I love you."

I wake up out of this cursed nightmare. Sweat and salty tears mix together, running down my face. My boxer briefs and t-shirt sticks to my body like glue. This has been happening every day now. This same nightmare, night after night. My heart calms down slowly as I look around my dark room. Silence. Peaceful silence. The dark is what talks the most. I never liked the dark. It always closes

in on me and my mind. I close my eyes quickly not wanting to see the blackness, but see it behind my eyelids anyway.

“Clear your mind. Don't think about it.” I say to myself closing my eyes falling back into the ocean.

My toes step into the cool sand. I breath in the salty air as the sun hits my skin, turning it gold. A firm hand grabs mine and I look up seeing her smiling at me. Her hazel eyes pull me in like a tornado. They warm my insides like the sun above us.

“I love you,” she whispers to me as the wind blows her brown hair across her face.

“I love you more.” I smile and grab her other hand. I never had been to the beach before in my life.

“Don't be nerves Kyra. I got you. I won't let you go.”

Her words calm me as we creep closer to the edge of the ocean. Dark thoughts make me shiver hard, and I jump back feeling the water touch my feet.

*I can't do this*, I thought to myself. I never learned how to swim when I was little. I stopped learning after my father drowned in our own bathtub in our bathroom. I know it was on purpose. I know he didn't want to hurt me, but he did. The pain on his pale, dead face, told a whole different story than the man he made himself seem like. His body was limp and cold in my arms as I pulled him out the blue water. I cried holding him, wishing he would come back. But his body just laid there, limp and lifeless in my arms. The color of water has been red in my eyes ever since.

"Baby come, on I got you. You can trust me."

"I know Angel....I think I'll just sit this one out though." I say to her looking down. I know she's disappointed in me. I told her I could do this. I promised her I would do this.

I sit in the sand at a safe distance away from the water. Where the waves won't wash up and swallow me. The wind carries fresh air from the sea into my lungs. I breath it all in, calming my nerves. I am just as disappointed as Angel is. I can't go where near water no more without having a total meltdown. Even when I take a shower, Angel has to

be in the bathroom with me sitting on the toilet seat to make sure the Pacific won't overwhelm me. I breath in a fresh scent of sea again from the wind. It is real relaxing, and makes me concentrate better.

I look up at the sun as it smiles down on me. The sun reminds me of Angel. Warm and always smiling even if it's not having a good day. I look at Angel as she walks into the water. My heart stops at what I see. As soon as Angel's foot touches the water, the sea turns blue. I rub my eyes quickly to see if this was possible. I reopen them and still see the sea as a crystal blue.

"I see blue?" I whisper to myself as I stand up still amazed.

"I haven't seen the water blue since that night. Is this possible??" I start losing my concentration and balance. The further she steps into the water, the bluer it grows. It's like an iceberg melting away the blood. The blood from my eyes and ocean at the same time.

Angel turns around and smiles at me. It dies quickly as she sees my face in shock, and she starts swimming to shore. I watch, stare at an image I longed to see again. I wish my brain could take

pictures. But I don't think I can ever forget this reel of footage. A blue ocean, with white waves. But something happens. As Angel steps out the water, the iceberg turns into blood again. The marvelous sky blue dies quickly in the water, just as fast as Angel's smile had. Red, pure, pure, red. My reel of footage has been burned by blood. I fall to the ground seeing the talking dark behind my eyelids, and my eyes won't open.

I open my eyes slowly.

"Kyra?" I hear a familiar, near voice ask me. I look over seeing Angel holding my hand tight.

"Kyra? Are you ok?" She questions me again.

"Blue....I saw blue. Beautiful, beautiful blue. Like the sky."

"Blue? What are you talking about??"

"It was blue." I get out of the bed in a hurry, almost losing my balance, and rush to the window.

"No." I say to myself, seeing only red. I hold back my red tears, not wanting to add to the blood feast already outside. I stare at the sea the rest of

the day. Hoping, praying to God to let me see again. There must be no God. No luck.

The crimson water hits my skin as I stand in the shower. No steam creeps up on the mirrors. That will never happen again. But maybe snowflakes. I take dead cold showers. Cold as dry ice. It took some time getting used to. But my skin doesn't even flinch at the thought anymore. I've adapted to this nature. This behavior. I could live in the North Pole if I wanted to. Sleep with the polar bears. Swim with the penguins. My blanket would be the snow. I would be dead just like him.

I smile seeing Angel on her stomach, watching TV. Her hair slithers down her back like a goddess. Her legs seem like they go on and on forever, never reaching a stop sign. Her caramel skin is as soft as air. She's wearing my sweatpants and sweatshirt. As usual my little thief. I crawl next to her and kiss her neck softly. She smiles hard, showing her crater dimples in her cheeks.

"I love you." She says turning off the television, looking in my blue eyes. Well to her their blue. I smile. This girl never misses a second without saying, "I love you," to me. She is my everything. We've know each other since elementary school,

but I was always too shy to tell her how I really felt. One day she did it for me. Writing it in a letter. That reel of footage will never be gone. No amount of blood could ever erase that.

“I love you, too.” I say kissing her warm lips. I couldn't last a day without this girl. I tried one time and almost died. She means so much to me.

“Maybe that's why she made the sea turn blue? I love her so much, and I love to see the color blue? I long for her, and I long for the color blue?” Questions run through my head like an assembly line. A train going off the tracks. I try my best not to kiss this girl to death. She is my color to my life. She is the picture to my real world. And I love her. She's my Poseidon.

The dark whispers to me as I sleep. They hush as Angel's lips touch mine. I don't want to open my eyes because I know she's in a rush to get to work. I hear the door creak open then shut quietly behind her. She locks the door. The sound of the click the keys makes as she turns it, sounds like somebody locking me into a prison. Without her it is a prison. I'm now behind bars, with chains on my back.

It's on the fifth ring when I decide to hang up.

"Where is she?" I wonder. Angel hasn't answered her phone all day. "Maybe she's got extra papers today. Yeah that's it. No need to worry." I just realize I am talking out loud to myself and the white walls. They probably think I'm crazy. Not as much as I think I am already. I hear little patter on the windows, coming from outside. I walk over to the clear window looking out. Red little spots start to dominate the window. I look up at the blood coming from the cracks in the clouds. My heart speeds up as I shut the curtains quickly over the window, not wanting the liquid to bust inside of the apartment, making me into a human wave. I shake my head from the thought.

"Me as I human wave?" I laugh to myself. "How do I think of this stuff?" I snicker at myself again even though nothing is funny. The thought stayed in my head.

I call Angel again, but no answer.

"Ok, now I'm getting worried. Wait why are you?? Remember it's just paper work holding her back. Overtime. She always works overtime on Sunday." I say out loud to myself. Things always sound better in my head than out loud. I walk in the bathroom, looking at myself in the mirror.

"I need a haircut." I think. "My bald cut fade is starting to turn into an afro." I look at my red eyes in the mirror. Like a fire burning in the woods. I glance at the shower, getting bored of my possessed eyes. The shower seems to challenge me. Taunting me on.

"I can do this. I can do this." I say to myself slowly taking off my clothes. Never have I ever tried to take a shower by myself. Never. A cold gust of wind scrapes against my body. I don't attempt to move a muscle towards the shower. Another gust of wind pushes my back, easing me forward. My feet peel off the ground as I creep closer to the shower. My hand touches the cool steel of the knobs. It squeaks like an old haunted house as I turn it on slowly.

"SSSHHHH." The water says to me as it turns on, hitting the bathtub. I turn the "cold" knob until it is about to screw off. My foot goes in first slowly, touching the slippery tub. I stand still for a minute reassuring myself that everything will be all right. I breathe in deeply, wishing it was the salty air from the sea sticking to my lungs. Instead it is just damp, cold water.

The cold water calms down my body as usual. Twenty minutes pass without me having a nervous breakdown. My hands starts turning into prunes, but I don't care. It's a symbol saying I'm still living. I will let my whole body turn into a prune before I let this feeling slip away. I have accomplished my nightmare....I think.

"Hey, I've been calling you for the last twenty minutes. What were you doing!" I can hear the relief in Angel's voice over the phone.

"I was turning into a prune." She can probably hear the smile in my voice.

"A what???"

"A prune baby." I laugh and her laugh sings through the phone also.

"Don't tell me you did it!! All by yourself!!!!!"  
It's funny how she already knows what I'm talking about.

"Yeah! Took me a whole century though just to turn on the water!" I laugh some more, wanting to spill out all my happiness inside of her.

“Awwww baby, I’m so proud of you! I’m going to make a special dinner tonight. Hmmmmmmm. What should I get??”

“Why should you ask me? You always get something totally different than what I say anyway.” I tease her. She laughs knowing it’s true.

“But you like what I make every time. So you shouldn’t be complaining.” I hear rain on the other end of the phone. She must be finally walking home.

“I should complain, but I won’t so I won’t hurt your feelings.” I lie horribly.

“Oh hush up, Kyra. We both know your lying now!” Her laugh is music to my ears once more.

“Yeah, but I said I wanted mashed potatoes that time, and you got macaroni and cheese instead. My mouth was all ready for potatoes.”

“But you ate that mac and cheese like it was about to go out of style!” She teases me. I bite my lip trying not to smile.

“I know, I know,” I tell her. “But you’re not always right.”

"I know I'm always right baby. I always am. But baby, I really have to go. I'm about to cross the street on Bronxwood. I love y-" Her sentence was cut off by a loud screech of tires. The sound that came after it is what made my heart jolt with fear.

"Angel???? Angel ?!!!!" I yell in the phone, hoping for a response.

I don't know if it's sweat or the rain racing down my body. My wet clothes make it harder to run. It's holding me back. My legs feel like jelly. I can collapse on the ground any minute. My lungs refuse to keep taking only glimpses of air. Bronxwood is two blocks away.

There is a car in the middle of the road. A crowd is circling something, someone. My heart drops, and hits the cement.

I hold her dead, limp, red covered body in my arms. All of the color red doesn't just come from the rain above. Half of the color is coming from the cracks in the sky. The other, from her body. I bury my face in her now cooling neck. This feels like dead snow. Angel is gone. Her heart is gone. Her beautiful sun eyes are gone. My iceberg is gone. I will never see the film I saw of the beautiful, blue sea with Angel in the middle of it ever again.

I look in Angle's face. A reflection of my father's. I move her damp hair from her face slowly. Fear is one her face. Fear and pain.

"No, no, no, no. I'm here for you Angel. I'm here for you. I ain't going nowhere baby." I kiss her lifeless lips.

"Please, please." I whimper out like an injured puppy. I kiss her lips again. Her dead body doesn't react.

"I love you. I love you Angel." She doesn't respond.

"Am I drowning?" A cold, shivering liquid covers my body, wrapping me in its arms. I can't hear nothing but the sound of the ocean slapping against my temple over and over again. I try to hold my breath but I'm getting dizzy. Something feels my lungs, and it's not air. It's a cold substance. It's salty. It's bitter. It's salt water. I open my eyes to see crystal red. I'm near the surface of the ocean. I can see the sun right through the clear water. But I'm the one under. I try to reach my hand up through the water so I can know if I'm still alive. But something, someone, grabs my arm making me not move a muscle. That someone is me. I close my eyes as I let my body go under. I open my mouth.

No one forces me. This is my own wish. Water crashes into my insides as I squirm and twist in the water. My nose takes in water next suffocating me. The cold water scorches my skin as the ocean swallows my soul. My lounge pops slowly, releasing my agony. My last thought. "I'm coming to join you both." My eyes bulged for a minute as my heart pumps in water. Then they close slowly as my heart stops. My head leans back slowly. The last image I saw, is the red sea.

## ***Kaitlyn Stabile***

### **So Darkness I Became**

People would describe Kenly Williams as a becoming young woman whose ebullience filled her daily. She was a rather lissome girl with bright emerald green eyes and a mass of chestnut brown curls that tumbled down her back. Her personality, beauty, and ambitions made her extremely desirable, and yet she lived alone in the large Victorian house on the corner of Elm Street. No one knew exactly why such a young lady occupied the spacious house all by herself, or how she had come to own it, but none dared to ask her.

Kenly, despite her bright character, had drawn quite a reputation for herself with the occupants of Elm Street. Her neighbors never interacted with Kenly and kept their distance. The gossip among them was endless and speculations formed about Kenly, some quite mild, others very disturbing. It wasn't always this way, however. The gossip only began to form a few months ago and since then, grew at an alarming rate. Kenly was not oblivious to all the rumors from her neighbors, but rather than become bothered by it, gave off the air of insouciance. Erstwhile, Kenly quite enjoyed the

company of others, but lately shut herself away in her house, left to brood in peace from her untoward neighbors, who gave furtive glances at one another whenever she was in sight. Kenly had been left to only guess at what she had done to make her neighbors so weary of her presence.

In any case, her unpleasant neighbors were the least of Kenly's worries at the moment. It was the man who stood outside her house that bothered her. Kenly called him "the man in the hat". The man Kenly saw wore a top hat perched on his slightly bowed head so that his face was not visible. His hands rested on a silver cane positioned in front of him. His tail coat was tattered and smudged with dirt; his shoes and trousers were of the same nature. The mysterious man's appearance was out of place, for he looked as though he belonged in 1850's London. She first noticed his appearance a week before; she awoke and intended to make herself a nice mug of coffee, when she glanced out the living room window only to spot him standing in the middle of the lawn. Kenly had refused to leave her house for the next few days after her first sighting of him. He appeared out of every window Kenly looked and

simply stood there. He never moved or made any inclination to move.

Only once did Kenly work up the courage to traipse outside and confront him, but something odd occurred then. As she approached the man, he vanished for a fleeting moment, only to appear some feet behind her. It seemed as though Kenly could not get close to him, but he could get as close as he wished to her, for after her first attempt to confront the man had failed, Kenly tried again. This time, the man vanished and materialized directly behind her. The man in the hat tapped her shoulder and Kenly cried out. She dashed inside of her house without a fugacious glance toward the man. She drew the shades, and refused to come out for the remainder of the day. Kenly soon realized her fear was just beginning, for the man in the hat was always outside waiting for her.

Kenly, while still frightened of the man in the hat, had grown accustomed to him. It seemed as though he meant her no harm, seeing as he merely stood outside with no intention of leaving. Kenly, being the ingénue she was, thought that if she ignored him long enough, he would vanish completely.

Weeks passed and yet the man remained. Kenly began to grow agitated with her unwelcome guest, but could not think of how to get rid of him. She could hardly tell her noisy and surreptitious neighbors about the man and she could not go to the police. How on earth was she supposed to explain this situation to them?

Irritated but at a loss for how to remove the man in the hat, Kenly carried on with her daily life. Soon, she had reached her breaking point and her irritation quickly turned to anger. Why couldn't the man either state why he came, or leave her alone? Eventually, Kenly could put up with this man no longer. Dismayed, she marched out her front door and over to the man in the hat, fully aware that he would vanish before she'd be able to get too close. Kenly strode down the porch steps and made her way over to the man. Just as before, he vanished before she was able to get too close. He appeared a few feet to her right and Kenly, determination on her face, strode over to the man yet again. He disappeared and reappeared directly behind her. The man tapped on Kenly's shoulder, as he did before, but this time, Kenly turned and faced the man. Her face set in a scowl. She had enough of

this man haunting her house and she would find out his purpose right then and there.

The man in the hat raised his head, slowly, and Kenly's scowl soon turned to curiosity. She had no idea what the man's face looked like and she couldn't help but wonder why he refused to show it. Kenly found out soon enough. The moment his face was visible, everything went dark and Kenly fell into what seemed like a deep slumber.

Kenly's eyes snapped open and she sprang to her feet, wobbling slightly before regaining her balance. In the few seconds it took for her eyes to adjust to the harsh light glaring in her face, Kenly knew she wasn't on Earth any longer. The sleek, curving designs of the building's interior suggested a futuristic space. Everything was white and shiny, which explained why the lights had been so harsh to Kenly's eyes. The windows occupied most of the wall, showing the alien landscape of the outside. Kenly cautiously approached the window nearest to her and glanced at the foreign land. The sky was crimson-the color of blood after coagulation. Three moons were visible on the horizon and they seemed to take up half the sky. As Kenly's eyes drifted down, she spotted thousands of buildings, all hovering in the air, as if held up by invisible strings.

The ground-wait a second, there was no ground. Only a deep hole was visible and it seemed to go on for miles.

Turning, Kenly glanced around, hoping to find someone to help her and quite possibly explain where she was. It seemed as though she had landed in a corridor, for the wall opposite of windows contained dozens of doors. All of which were marked with a number. Confused, Kenly made to the hallway, hoping to find a set of stairs. Before she had even taken two steps, a voice on an intercom spoke out.

“Welcome, traveler. If you have arrived at our facilities, it means you must have business with us. Here, we accommodate each guest. Every occupant has their own door. To find yours, follow your instincts. Thank you and enjoy your time here.”

A door? Why would Kenly need to find “her” door, and what exactly was behind it?

“As if ending up here, wherever here is, was bad enough,” Kenly mumbled. “Now I’ve got to go on a scavenger hunt.”

Kenly turned to examine the foreign interior of the building. No tables, no chairs, not even a

decoration to embellish the walls. Just white. The only splash of color that sprung forth from the bleached room came from the bright blue numbers painted on each correspondingly white door. Kenly even stood out; a moving blur of color against the pearl edifice. Her shoes squeaked as she strode across the marbled floor, breaking the eerie silence. She was unsure of where to go, what door to choose. The hallway seemed to stretch on forever, and she wondered just how many floors there were, how many doors there were. How would she be able to find the one that corresponded with her, and how would she know?

Glancing down the corridor at the doors, Kenly made for the closest one. However, when she attempted to turn the knob, it wouldn't budge. Puzzled, she backed away, wondering why the door had been locked. Suddenly, Kenly's eyes spotted a door several yards further down. She couldn't explain it, but she felt drawn to it, almost. Door number seven. Kenly approached the door hesitantly.

Just then, the lights in the corridor began to extinguish one by one, darkness literally creeping up on Kenly. The following footsteps in the dark filled her mind with terror. Without thinking,

Kenly grabbed the handle of door seven and, praying that it wouldn't be locked, turned the knob and practically fell into the room. She slammed the door shut behind her, breathing heavily. Kenly glanced out the peephole on the door, covering her mouth so whatever was out there would not hear her ragged breathing. The lights had stopped going out, and as Kenly pressed her ear against the door, heard nothing at all. The footsteps had vanished and all was quiet. Something wasn't right, and Kenly knew it.

The hairs on the back of Kenly's neck stood on end and she got that unsettling feeling as if someone was staring at her. Gradually, Kenly turned her gaze from the door and forced herself to glance at the room behind her. Kenly saw what she didn't want to see. She fell to the ground, screaming in agony,

“MAKE IT STOP! PLEASE, MAKE IT STOP!”

She was sobbing now, her whole body trembling violently.

“I don't w-want to see this anymore. Please, I don't want to....Help me. Help me.”

Visions flashed through Kenly's mind; dark, horrifying images. A man's body lay crumpled in a heap on the ground, blood pooling around his head. Kenly sobbed harder, pleading again for the visions to cease. Eventually, it became too much for her and she dashed from the room into the hallway, falling against the wall for support, her chest still heaving, choking back tears.

The lights began to flicker, and then just as before, engulf the corridor in darkness. Kenly swiveled around to face the foreboding darkness creeping up on her, apprehensive for what would come next. Footsteps rang out from the darkness; slow, heavy footsteps. Kenly knew she would never enter room seven again, but whatever was out in this hallway frightened her just the same. There was only one option: run. She's force her way out of this hallway if she needed to. There must be a staircase, elevator, something that would take her away from this floor. The lights above door five went out and Kenly knew it was time to leave. Forcing herself to turn away from the darkness and the footsteps, she ran.

Kenly raced down the hallway, fearful to even turn around once. The pace of the footsteps grew quicker and the lights began to diminish at an

even faster pace. As Kenly passed each door, the lights would vanish, as if she was only one step ahead of them. Determined not to become caught up in the darkness, she pushed herself to move faster. Kenly's lungs were screaming in protest, she was gasping for air, and yet she pushed ahead. She could see the end of the hallway. A door marked the end and Kenly let out a sigh of relief.

Kenly reached the door and pulled on the handle with all her might, hoping to pull herself through in time. The door was locked. Kenly jiggled the handle with such force it was a surprise it didn't come straight off. Kenly pounded on the door, crying out in anguish. It was over, it was all over. For the second time today, she fell to the ground, exhausted and out of breath. She had no more drive to keep her going and she wept. The lights above her extinguished themselves and Kenly was left in the gloom of the ever approaching footsteps.

As Kenly cried, visions once again forced their way into her mind. Kenly grasped her head, moaning for the images to stop. That man, why did he hold such meaning to her, and yet he was like a stranger. Kenly tried to reach into the furthest recesses of her mind, prying away at any wall that blocked her memories. Kenly pushed and prodded

at the obstruction, and with much determination, the wall in her mind came crumbling down. Suddenly, Kenly remembered just what these visions were. She let go of her head and let her arms fall limp to her sides. The lights came back on simultaneously and the footsteps vanished completely.

Kenly remembered, she remembered what these visions were of. Kenly stared, unblinking, tears rolling down her face. How had she forgotten everything about that night? Everything about him? Kenly lay on the freshly mown grass of her exceedingly large manor. There she stayed, unmoving, as the tears continued to stream down her face, unbeknownst that the man in the hat had disappeared altogether.

## **Shari Welch**

### **Judy**

*This is my big chance to get into the prestigious Moreall School of Art. I must present my best work ever.* Judy Archard, age 17, looks over at her older sister Cassandra who is 23 years old and working as a hair stylist. The sisters are setting up an easel and canvas with an array of oil paint colors, paint brushes, and all of the tools of the artistic trade. The patio is a great location to paint and the light is perfect said Judy excited about her project. As Cassandra breaths in the warm fresh air, she reminds her sister how painting is such a joy.

As Judy begins to paint, Cassandra sits from inside the house and watches her sister out on the patio work her magic on the canvas. A hint of sadness eases into Cassandra's memory how she missed her chance. She too is a talented painter, but dad made her go to work at age 18. *You have a good trained skill as a beautician and you need to use it,* said Dad. *When I was your age, I was out of the house and working,* preached her father. Cassandra went to work as a beautician and does enjoy the opportunity to do the creative hair shows. *Judy deserves to have her chance,* thought

Cassandra. *Judy has the gift, and she learns quickly.*

Judy proceeds to create a 3D painting with a big rock to sit on in the lower left, and a center deep cave with birds flying into the entrance. Dark green trees appear with a water fall flowing to the right of the canvas. Judy sits back to critique her work as Twinkle (the family pet parrot speaking bird) lands on her shoulder.

"You know Twinkle, I feel so alive right now," said Judy looking at the bright yellow parrot. "Alive, squawk alive" responds Twinkle. Judy and Twinkle go into the house. Cassandra hands Judy some lemonade exchanging a knowing smile.

"I am in the zone Cassandra, and you are the only one in this family who understands my passion. I really appreciate you encouraging me and being here as you are." Cassandra and Judy embrace with sisterly love.

"It's a good thing that dad is on the road with his truck. If you can get accepted to the art school, he won't try to stop you," said Cassandra.

"I wish mom would stand up to him more but that's ok cause big sis is in the house."

“Well Judy let me take a look at your work,” said Cassandra.

Judy jumped up to stop Cassandra. “No not yet, wait until I am finished!”

Laughing, Cassandra takes Twinkle on her arm heading toward the kitchen. “Ok Twinkle and I can’t wait to be dazzled.”

“Can’t wait to be dazzled” squawk “can’t wait to be dazzled”, said Twinkle while flapping her wings.

Judy steps back to admire her work. *If I say so myself this is good stuff. If this does not get me in, I don’t know what will,* Judy thought.

“Cassandra! The artist has completed the master piece,” yelled Judy. Cassandra slowly walks out onto the patio, and visually takes in Judy’s work. Judy was engulfed in complete silence observing the serious look on her sister’s face. Judy’s heart began to pound thinking *oh my, she doesn’t like it.*

Judy was put out of her misery when she heard, “Girl you have out done yourself! Oh my Judy this is wonderfully beautiful. You will get accepted into the Moreall School of Art, I know it!”

Their mother having observed from across the room quietly approaches with tears in her eyes. "Oh my Judy you are so talented just like your sister." They all engage in a group hug. "Ok now honey; just remember if you don't get accepted there is a plan B."

Cassandra pipes in, "oh no she's got this." "She's got this" squawk "she's got this" adds Twinkle. They all laugh looking at Twinkle.

"Let's go have dinner. I made meat loaf," said mom taking Twinkle on her arm.

Judy awoke excited about showing her art work to the powers that be. She went out on the patio to look at her painting. A chill went down her spine with a lump in her throat as she looked in horror at her work. There was an indentation at the center of the cave with two scratches going down the sides of the canvas. "Oh my! Oh no!" cried Judy. Cassandra and mom came running.

"Oh wow! Is that real?" said Cassandra. She started yelling for Twinkle.

"You can take one of your other paintings; they all are good darling," said mother. Judy

proceeded to cry while Cassandra took the painting and walked into the house.

“Come on now, Judy, get yourself together and get dressed,” said mother. “We don't have time to wallow, let's pick out another painting.”

Dressed and ready to go Judy went to see about selecting another painting to show. Mother looked at her daughter straight in the eyes and said, “You are a very talented artist and all of your work is magnificent.”

Looking a bit surprised, Judy said, “Mom, you have never said that to me before.”

“Well I am saying it now. Is that what you are going to wear?” asked mother, as she observed her daughter from head to toe.

“What's wrong with this?” asks Judy.

“You are trying to get into the school, not pick up a date. Wear your loose fitting pants and that top I bought you for your birthday.”

Obediently Judy complies with her mother's decision before leaving.

"Miss Judy Archard, you can come in now."

Judy followed the secretary into the big office clutching one of her many paintings. Looking around the room there were two men and one woman sitting at a big cherry oak desk. Her sister greeted her with tears in her eyes standing next to a short balding man. Judy could feel the energy in the room as her sister exuded pride. Judy felt like she was in a daze. Everyone was smiling.

"Miss Archard I am Mr. Scott," shaking Judy's trembling hand. "Miss Archard thanks to your sister, I can get right to the point. We are proud to announce that you are accepted into the Moreall School of Art."

Judy dropped the painting that she was holding, in shock looking at the 3D damaged painting on the easel in the office. Mr. Scott proceeded to tell her how her sister Cassandra brought the painting in and explained how the pet bird flew into the painting attempting to enter the cave with the other birds in the painting.

"I can see how that would happen," said Mr. Scott laughing. "Your work is magnificent-looking, so real. Anyone who paints that well, we want in our school. Congratulations."

The Archard family sat down for a celebration dinner.

“Well you will be off to school this fall, Judy. Congratulations!” said dad. “I hope you can make money with it.”

“Any of your paintings would have been good enough,” said mom. “And you will do well, Judy,” looking sternly at her husband.

“This is a glorious day that I will never forget,” said Judy. Cassandra looked at Twinkle and laughed. “Poor Twinkle can’t get into the cave.”

“Can’t get into the cave squawk can’t get into the cave” chimed Twinkle. Everyone had a good laugh.

## ***Imelda Zamora***

### **Too Late, Too Soon**

“... and he is survived by his wife of thirty years, the former Isabel Cortez, prominent in her own right as an artist, and a daughter, Marietta...”

Eduardo put the newspaper down slowly. *Isabel...* his heart contracted... *Isabel*, he repeated in a half whisper... it was a name he had not spoken in more than thirty years. He sat very still as images began floating up to the surface escaping from the deepest pockets of his mind hidden for years in the archives of his memory. Were these true images of what happened or pictures that his pain and despair had created and stored? They were coming one after another now, breaking loose, nudging each other, rushing to get free, interconnecting and finally fusing into one enormous mass of quivering emotion. Eduardo found it difficult to breathe. But it was, in a way, a catharsis, a cleansing, purging all the repressed feelings rotting inside him these past years. Just her name on his lips was enough to unleash them.

He did not know how long he had been sitting there, the newspaper still clutched in his hands. With everything out in the open now, it took

some effort for him to look at the past, to tear it apart and to dissect each piece, as if searching for clues to an ancient forgotten mystery. For it had been such a long time ago how could he remember it all? Only the pain of loss remained after all these years.

He wrote down the name of the funeral parlor and the visitation hours. He was thinking of what he would say to her, but his mind kept seeing those soulful brown eyes of hers and her smile that always left him defenseless. An old ache came back to him. He wanted to see her... He needed to see her.

"Let me help you with some of these, Ma", Marietta said to Isabel, her eyes puffy from crying, as she put down a box full of cards on her mother's desk.

"Thank you, *hija*," replied Isabel, her own eyes red, "but I want to go through those cards one by one myself and write my personal thanks. You know how everyone was overwhelmingly supportive and loving. It's the least I can do."

"I have written down the gift or offering on each card, Ma, and the guest book is also in the box. All the addresses are there except for one. I

tried to look for it but his name is not familiar to me. Maybe he is one of Papa's boyhood friends? Maybe you know him?"

"Don't worry about it, *hija*, I'll take care of it. Thanks for all the help. Now, shoo, go home and be with your family. I will be fine."

"We'll pick you up for dinner." Marietta pecked both of her mother's cheeks and left.

Isabel sat down at her desk and stared at the box before her. *He did not come*, but she had seen his name on a card sticking out of a bouquet of red roses when it was delivered at the funeral parlor during the wake. Something strangely foreign and yet intimately familiar feeling stirred in her but quickly disappeared. She was once again surrounded by people and noises and the cloying smell of flowers. She was back in that state of grief and confusion as she tried to cope with the sudden death of her husband. With the ensuing events that followed, the memory of him and the past had been obscured until now. Remembering, she promptly and without any hesitation, deliberately pushed them all away, far, far away from her.

# **Book Title Poetry**

## **Contest Entries**

## **Camille Asztalos**

### **a wrinkle in time**

secret life of a forest  
one hundred years of solitude  
the green mile  
almost green  
the one true story of the world  
property  
smokescreen

common sense religion  
the first book of salt  
the keepsake  
in the company of the courtesan  
lucky boy  
lucky  
smooth talking stranger  
local anesthetic  
saved  
the illustrated man

yellow bird and me  
chasing the high  
wuthering heights  
the blue star  
cosmos

her stories  
songs of earth and power  
chicka chicka boom boom  
outcast  
the weight of silence  
reflected in you  
the rainbow fish  
heir to the glimmering world

modern man in search of a soul

the stranger  
the idiot  
what evolution is  
every tongue got to confess  
four past midnight  
silver  
bluish  
don't the moon look lonesome

starlight  
going to bend  
uncommon clay  
my dream of you  
a brain wider than the sky  
there we sat down  
in the tall, tall grass

playing in the dark  
i sing the body electric  
one breath away  
sins and needles  
click  
teaching little fingers to play  
silent weapons for quiet wars

the mapping of love and death  
none of your business  
the color purple  
even more parts  
portraits

ordinary heroes  
servants of the map  
just go to bed  
after the bomb  
the glow  
yellow flower  
swim in me  
the cloud of unknowing  
seventy-seven clocks

all night awake  
flesh and blood  
as the crow flies  
by a slow river

up next  
metamorphosis  
dry ice  
a thousand days  
tickle, tickle  
the secret between us

the star garden  
don't look back  
where the wild things are  
the hope  
dissection  
laughable loves  
naughty children  
the sound of colors  
burning bright

seeing the insane  
breath, eyes, memory  
telling true stories  
information finders  
mediating madness  
the search for solutions  
a yellow raft in blue water

red is never a mouse  
fantastic fables  
rotten lies  
matters of chance  
plain heathen mischief  
white fang  
kant and the platypus  
trickster makes this world

music

insects  
the bluest eye  
looking for yesterday  
swimming toward the ocean  
the magic moon machine  
an indecent obsession  
things fall apart  
to let  
circle of time  
join the club

## **Aaron Brown**

### **The Haunted Treasure**

King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table,  
Hid The Treasure of Alpheaus Winterborn,  
On Treasure Island in The Sea of Monsters,  
And inside The Chamber of Secrets,  
Guarded by The Spell of the Sorcerer's Skull,  
The Giver gave The Prisoner of Azkaban a Hatchet,  
To kill the Witch and Wizard,  
And find The Mysterious Island.  
The Outsiders dug Holes,  
On a Journey to the Center of the Earth,  
But ended up 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea,  
And died.

The Titan's Curse killed many others in their Blind Side,

The Underdogs got all The Treasure of Alpheaus Winterborn.

## **Mackenzie Brown**

### **Finding the Hidden Treasure**

The Son of Neptune took a Journey to the Center of the Earth,

With King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table,

Looking for The Treasure of Alpheaus Winterborn,

Which was in The Chamber of Secrets,

Underneath The Sea of Monsters,

And was guarded by The Half Blood Prince.

They took a wrong turn, and ended at The Goblet of Fire,

Where the Witch and Wizard,

Put The Spell of the Sorcerer's Skull on the treasure.

The Outsiders thought The Prisoner of Azkaban had it,

And tried to kill him with the Hatchet that The Giver gave them.

The Hobbit hid the treasure on Treasure Island,

And The Lightning Thief killed everybody.

## **Kayla Dempster**

### **Untitled**

Between the Sea and Sky, The Sun also Rises  
Divine Madness rules the world  
Full of The Sound and the Fury  
But The World in not Enough

We always yearn for more  
But the Generals keep us in line  
Keeping the Insurgents under control  
And keeping the Mad Dogs away

The Dealer's dealt the hand  
It's out of our control  
Ark Angels will watch over us  
Through the Scorch Trials we will endure

So we wander in Solitary  
In this Space Between  
Searching for an answer  
To a question with none

Everlost in Inception  
Wandering the Night  
We are Sleepwalkers  
Searching for the Light

Lost Voices calling us

The truth Tangled in Lies  
It's Man vs. Beast  
And only one can win

Our Lost Hero will return  
In the time of most need  
This is not our Death Sentence  
But our Death Cure

But For Darkness shows the Stars  
And the world must Get Smart  
And Lockdown The Fear  
But we must make The Call

Only we can stop The Fall  
It is The Final Warning  
The Metamorphosis is beginning  
Under A Thousand Splendid Suns

## ***Tiana Fedderman***

### **Untitled**

Garden of shadows  
Too close for comfort  
Midnight in the garden of good and evil  
Can you keep a secret?  
Love warps the mind a little  
Love

Stupid and contagious

Welcome to temptation

***John Kelly***

**CURES**

Anatomy of an Epidemic

Cures

Mad In America

**Love (A pop music title haiku)**

Love Is All We Need

Never Gonna Give You Up

I Know What Love Is

**LOST LOVE**

One Good Turn

Is

Things I want my daughter to know

Cannot

Deceived

Be

Almost

The Lost Town on Earth

Where

Fences and Windows

And

Lost Boys

Are

Losing my cool

And

Away From Her

## **Lavonda Robinette**

### **Hope for the People of Tuscany**

Every Day in Tuscany is No Easy Day,  
When dealing with The Painted Girls and Assholes,  
Who are filled with Pride and Prejudice, until The  
Awakening,  
When The Reader offers The Notebook of The  
Alchemist,  
Which provides Sarah's Key to The DaVinci Code,  
Sense and Sensibility reigns, Atlas Shrugged,  
And with The Help of Pope Joan,  
Former attitudes are Gone With the Wind.  
Leaving behind Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt,  
New members of The Joy Luck Club stand  
Unbroken,  
Living at Wolf Hall,  
On The Island of the Blue Dolphins,  
They Eat, Pray, Love at Twilight,  
Welcoming the Son of the Morning,  
And since 11/22/63, The Imposter Bride,  
Once The Book Thief, and one of The Sandcastle  
Girls,  
Plays Corelli's Mandolin over A Saffron Sky.

## ***Emma Sample***

### **Untitled**

Mr. Maybe

Deal Breaker

Gone for Good

### **Untitled**

By the light of a

Thousand stars

The water and the blood

Dating can be murder

## ***Terry Sample***

### **Untitled**

And they all sang

My heart is an idiot

Mine all mine

Done gone wrong

**Untitled**

Freedom from fear

For the rest of my life

Dealing with the stuff that makes life toughest

The power of failure

Next

The success journey

Making hope happen

***Mary Tavana***

**Untitled**

As I lay dying

On my boat,

I saw him standing there

With

The eyes of a king.

So happy, so sad;

Longing

To live again

To love again

Never again

To dance with the devil.  
For all the right reasons ...  
There is always a reason  
To dream anew.

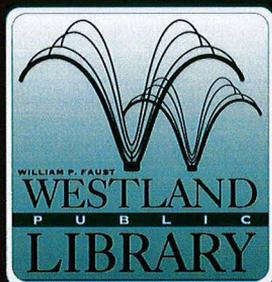
## ***Cheryl Vatcher-Martin***

### **haiku**

The power to write  
Everyday creative writing  
Revision and self-editing

### **haiku**

Amish women  
The Japanese mind  
Discourse on inequality



William P. Faust  
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You're holding some of the finest writing from the William P. Faust Westland Public Library patrons. Each year, we collect submissions from our patrons during National Poetry Month to celebrate the work of poetry everywhere. Two years ago, we started collecting short stories from our patrons and we continue that tradition this year. In addition, we recently began poetry writing contests during National Poetry Month. This year's contest, Book Title Poetry, was engaged by a wide swath of writers across a variety of backgrounds and book titles. Please contact Andy Schuck at the Westland Public Library for more information on this book or any of the writing programs we host throughout the year.



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