

THE LEMURIAN REVIVAL

PUBLISHED BY THE COS WRITERS CLUB

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Prayer of the Unfaithful

By Abby Lark

Now I walk toward the valley of my own death,
 Praying upon saints of which I share no faith.
 And here I stand, with unwilling breath,
 Followed only, ever silently, by a wraith.

Dear Lucia, in this darkness, I've lost my way.
 Please, converse with sweet Venerius.
 I beg you, send me the light of day.
 My blindness in this endless black grows serious.

Help me Jude, oh saint of lost cause.
 Find me among those that are battered and broken.
 Approach me, kind Giles, I am but a beggar that claws.
 I would but render from you a small token.

And so, Monica, lend me patience I pray.
 So that this heart of mine can bear another day.

In this issue...

- Poems by Abby Lark, jazzi, lila, D. M. Freeman, Erin Newlin, Mandy Twitchell, B. G. S., Beckie Hobbs, Sarah Kirby, and Dominique Navarrette
- The continuations of "Gwen's Ghost" and "Before Crisis"
- Essays by f. d. y. and Al Tichy
- Photography by D. Sullivan, Ponepila, and Haylee Elzea
- A short story by Harmony Yerkes
- Faculty Spotlight by Julie Zenkus

Patron Saints

- Lucia - Light
- Venerius - Lighthouses
- Jude - Lost causes
- Giles - Beggars
- Monica - Patience

I really like my independence. Being a girl who has been raised to be able to take care of myself and be rather self-sufficient, I am used to helping others rather than being the one helped. I prefer to be the one who can pretty much go wherever I want, whenever I want, with whomever I want, at whatever time I want. (Erhm, basically, considering I am still 17 and live in a rather conservative home. But still.) I don't. Need. Someone. To. hELp. ME. I've always been fairly independent, taught to think outside the box, and able to not only sustain myself but help others as well. Not gonna lie, I didn't mind it. I liked being the strong person who tried to make myself for everyone else.

Open your Instagram and scroll through your explore feed. Tumblr posts, tweets, threads, thousands of excited hype posts pop out at you, be stROng. You can do it yourself. Who needs anyone else? Don't forget to check the comments below popular posts, and eventually you'll probably get the idea that the "strong independent woman/man (but mostly woman)" image is not only admired but worshiped and seen as something we should all strive to be. Stan a queen who can do it; who needs anyone else? Look at how strong and independent she is; wow I want to be like her. I wish I had her confidence, yaaasss queen...

I'm not some scholarly person writing an intelligent opinion article; I'm a small girl barely in college trying to understand society around me before I get swallowed up. But here's *the tea*.

A couple months ago I found myself in an accident that left me "disabled." I had an injury that prevented me from physically functioning as I normally do. Going to school was frustrating and hard. Being someone who likes to be independent (I'm going to continue to reiterate this so you get the idea of how independent I like to be) and able to do whatever I want physically, it was hard. On my pride. I couldn't drive my car. I couldn't go out with my friends when and where I wanted to. I couldn't bounce around like I love to. It was like one of my most prized possessions - my independence (see??) - was taken away from me. And I wanted to crawl under a rock forever.

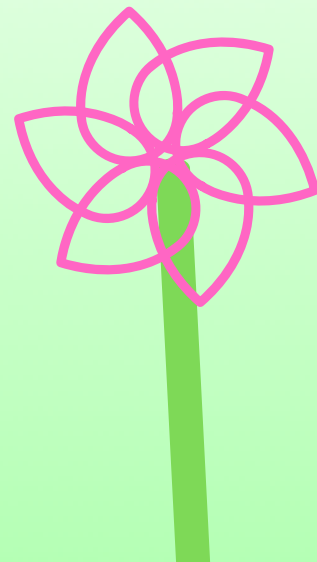
Did I die? No. I'm sitting here late at night, dumping all these thoughts into this paper. Did my pride get shaved off a little bit? Maybe. Probably. Yes. Was it a struggle to have to ask for help?

Not gonna lie, definitely. But I wasn't alone. I wasn't helpless, I wasn't reliant on myself (thank goodness). I had friends who took care of me at school; the place where I most needed both physical and emotional support. I kind of hated it at first. I did not like receiving help. Like most of us, I tend to rather be the knight in armor rather than the damsel in distress. (Please do not come at me because of that reference.)

Over the semester, I found that my previously well-hidden pride was being exposed and deteriorating rapidly. I started to understand that I don't always have to have it together, or look good, or be the strong one. Also, I slowly, slowly, slowly, slowly began to accept that needing other people is okay. Yes, I do admire people who are self-sufficient, who can do it all themselves, who basically make you feel useless because they are capable of doing everything you can and more. But the past few months have come alongside me and slapped my brains, announcing that self-sufficiency, independence, being free of needing other people - is not always a good thing. Depending on other people is actually a good thing. Being vulnerable and honest is a good thing. Vulnerability is not BAD.

I think you get my point by now. Friendships exist for many reasons: to have someone to go out to coffee with, someone to give you a hug when you need it, someone to study with, someone to die laughing with, someone to sit and listen to music with, someone to annoy, someone to lift up and compliment everyday, and someone that you can lean on when you need to. And maybe next time it will be your turn to be the pillar for them to lean on.

- f.d.y.



Just a Woman

By Abby Lark

You can tell me that I am beautiful,
And I will believe you.
Know this before I shake my head
And smile,
Saying "No, I'm not. Shut up."
Blushing ever politely.

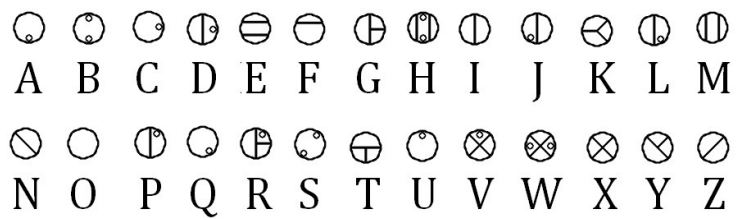
You see, a girl is taught
To be beautiful,
And trained to deny it.
Is humility more attractive
Than confidence?

Do rounded shoulders and
Downcast eyes appeal more
To society than
This straight backed girl?
Head held high,
Mouth painted with loud red and
Turned up at the corner.

Does my quick wit and sarcasm
Scare you?
Do you prefer that I mince my words?
Water them down,
So that I might dissolve your insecurities?
Are you afraid to dive into the sentences I spill?
If you listen, you might just find my thoughts
Or is that the point of my silence?

If I speak
From around the single finger that has been pressed
Against my lips since the day I was wrapped in pink,
Shake my hand as I pry it away.
My fingers will be clasped and unbreaking from that wrist.
I dare you to look me in these green eyes and say,
"You are just a woman,"

Excuse me,
I seem to have lost my place.
Perhaps you might recognize it?
You know, the one you built?
A small cage complete with a kitchen and
A beauty routine,
Let's not forget the small children running around my feet
And the baby on my hip.
You know, if you're not more careful,
I might pick the lock again
And get my hands on some independence.



- Motoran alphabet by Lego®

- *oh, shen*

in the curves of a golden shell,
it is said she plays her beautifully alluring
melody.
listen tentatively as she sings.
her being, the color of an emotional blue.
the kind associated with experienced eyes.
eyes of the all knowing.
you glance deeply into each other.
she knows you.
she sees you.
she gently rocks you into a long lost sleep.
her purposeful movements,
she's always dancing.
dancing to the beat of her calming heart.
a rhythm so captivating,
you find yourself swimming in it.
a rhythm so hypnotizing,
you find yourself drowning in it.
deeper and deeper you go.
sight becomes unnecessary.
feel the inescapable cold,
but know it as her warmth.
let her hold you close.

by lila.

Fluvial Beast

By Mandy Twitchell

Fluvial Beast
Swelling River
Carry me away
Like rocks forever moving
Rapids rip me far from here
Fires that burn on the edge lighting up the
bleak night
Raging emotions in my soul
Visions & Feelings
I'm having a hard time letting go
Something carried me down here
So I put one foot in..
Let's see where this goes...

4 Snippet from "Before Crisis," continued

By Queen Mara & Meredith Rein

xxx

"Huh? Yes... that's right. You know my father?" Stranger danger, the typical lady would've thought—Xiaoqiao knew not who the man that approached her precious Luoyue was but considering Luoyue did not protest to the mysterious stranger, Xiaoqiao felt that he wasn't anyone to fear. Luoyue was a good judge of character like that. Hesitant at first, Xiaoqiao let her feet down for Cao Cao to remove her pink slippers. That was just the easy part; now she had to do her part and move in, which made her nervous. Even if Cao Cao was there to help her down to safety, there was still the risk of falling in the process. She was worried about injuring him if she fell, should things not go as planned.

— but she needed to take the chance and trust her savior. Slippers removed, Xiaoqiao slowly and carefully extended her leg towards Cao Cao, the tips of her toes just barely touching his fingertips. Slowly again, she leaned closer so that her foot was now in the palm of his hand.

Now she was getting somewhere. A deep breath, Xiaoqiao gained further confidence to scoot further down, but she lost her balance when she was no longer seated on the tree branch. She gasped in surprise, but with quick thinking, she threw herself at him, wrapping her slim arms tightly around Cao Cao's neck. Xiaoqiao shook, fearing the worst, but when she felt his body against hers, the shaking stopped.

She didn't crush him like she feared she would.

Xiaoqiao glanced up and took a closer look at her savior. The first thing that was drawing her to him were those dark keen eyes; those eyes that could pierce through the heavens themselves. How could a mere mortal carry such power in their eyes?

"Oh!" Catching herself staring at those perceptive eyes for too long, Xiaoqiao let go of Cao Cao and turned away, flustered. "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to stare." She apologized, before turning back to face him again once she had calmed down. "Thank you for helping me. Does my savior have a name?" she asked, a hint of playfulness in her tone.

xxx

With her permission, his thumb dipped further beneath the delicate hem of her silken slipper, and

with ease it was displaced and removed. The second soon followed, exposing another slender foot, and it was with the extension of her leg and the trust she placed within him that her weight shifted from the tree's sturdy limb, through her body, and into his exposed and steady palm. While he did not expect her to all but leap from the leafy branches of the apple tree when its support was gone, Cao Cao was prepared to catch her regardless, and the hands that had given her miniscule but solid surface to rest upon fell out from under her in favour of finding placement behind her thighs and lower back.

While her body shook, perhaps in fear of collapsing to the ground, Cao Cao remained standing firm like a rock amidst violent, stormy waves. Though upon understanding that she was, indeed, safe and sound, her trembling stopped, and she leaned away from the safety of his body with what could be noted as curiosity.

"Lady Xiaoqiao," he began smoothly, features relaxed, yet oddly stoic in contrast to her expressive display, "there is no need for an apology. So long as you are safe, it is all that matters." He shifted her weight and adjusted his arms beneath her more appropriately, allowing slender frame to fit neatly into the crook of his arms as he whisked her away from the tree, the dirt, and anything that might mar her dainty feet any further.

"And I presume that you are." Safe, that was. A low rumble amusement rolled up within his chest, however it could not be heard, and it was hardly shown upon the features of his face. Given Xiaoqiao's predicament, it was likely that she would be able to feel the contained thunder within his chest as he carried her towards the lengthy stone staircase, though even then the dull vibration was fleeting, for Cao Cao moved to set her down; mindful of her exposed feet and gentle figure.

He knelt then, setting the silken slippers unto the ground in order to pick her foot up by her heel, and just as he removed her footwear mere moments before, Cao Cao slid the first, then the second back into place.

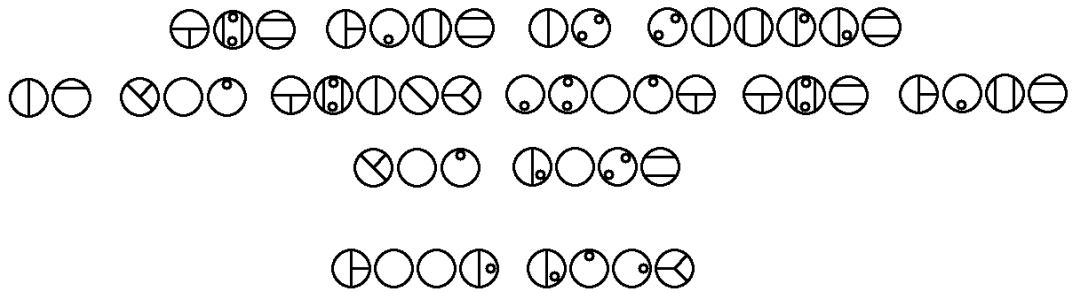
"All I ask is that you endeavor to be safe in the future in the event that I am not there." He bowed his head thereafter, a limb reaching out to curl his fingers beneath her palm. Her knuckles were drawn towards his lips, though he was careful not to overstep his bounds.

"You may call me Cao Cao, my lady."

Together apart it's always true
Deep rooted the blood which ties us through
Words and gestures twins they sound
Heartfelt love forever bound
The ups and downs spent holding hands
Their world together they met demands.
mothers love with in them deep
Daddy's voice is also near
He comes and goes with worried ear
Love of sisters always soar
Sisters chatter endless open door
Laughing giggles silly stuff

Death and dying loved ones, enough enough
Children challenges have made it true
Sister strength excels the children through
Miles apart or side by side
The feeling flows like ocean tides
The good the bad it's in them deep
Grateful days and nights asleep
Sisters sisters strong and mighty
Together the mountains move as one
Storms blow hard but sisters spell has spun
Life is greener warmer still
Feeling safe you know good will

- Erin Newlin



Photography Spotlight : D. Sullivan, pictures from Boca del Toro, Panama





Everyone kept a very close eye on Gwen for the next few weeks. Any time she wasn't with her mother the sisters that taught Sunday school would force her to stay next to them. She wasn't even allowed to go play with the other children during free time because the adults feared that she would just wander off again. For Gwen the most frustrating part was that she wasn't able to slip away from the others and explore like she usually would. Still she kept an eye out looking to see if Claire was ever at church so that she could talk to her again. Strangely, she was never at the Sunday mass or any church events.

Finally, one day came where she was able to slip away with an excuse to her mother that she really had to use the bathroom, and with a stern "Don't take too long" Gwen's mother let her go. Knowing that everyone would be in the main worship room she didn't rush or try and hide walking around. Since she did have to go to the bathroom she went and hurried through that so she could start exploring. While she was washing her hands she heard a sharp cry and thud that made her jump in fear. Cautiously she went to the only place she knew that was above her. Rushing up past the heavy door and narrow stairs she stumbled upon most horrifying sight, one that would forever be burned into her mind.

Claire was hanging there with a rope around her neck and tears flowing down her face. Eyes wide Gwen was so shocked, so afraid and sad that she couldn't even scream. Running forward she clung to Claire's skirts as she pulled not knowing how to get the bride down without an adult but not wanting to leave her alone for even a moment.

Huge tears started to fall from the child's eyes as she hiccupped and sobbed. Letting go Gwen tripped to the chair and dragged it up so that she could climb up to reach for the rope. She was still too small. Frustrated, she teetered up on the rickety arms of the chair, reaching and reaching and . . . falling. She was falling to the floor and she braced herself for the pain when cold arms caught her. Blinking Gwen turned her head to see Claire's sad eyes staring back. A small trembling hand reached up and touched the rope that was still wrapped around the slender pale neck leaving dark purple bruises.

"Oh my poor child you weren't supposed to see this." Claire held the small trembling body even closer and, not knowing what to do Gwen put her arms around her in a desperate hug.

"Claire, what's happening?" Gwen buried her face in the woman's chest noting the slightly minty and strangely muted smell.

"Little Gwen I'm so sorry I didn't know how to . . . to tell you . . . I died. A long long time ago before you were even born I think. It's hard for me to remember just how long ago but it feels like it's been forever. That's why I can't leave here and that's why your priest didn't see me. I am not even sure why you can see me. No one else has."

It took a moment but it sunk in. Gwen was being held by a dead woman. All these years of her mother telling her there were no ghosts or ghouls. No monsters to be afraid of had been a lie. Even worse the sad beautiful woman that Gwen just wanted to help was beyond helping. Perhaps if she had been another child she would have panicked, if she was even an adult she would have screamed and tried to push Claire away but instead all she felt was sad. "Why?" Gwen thought, "Why can't I help?" She just wanted to make the woman happy.

Gwen started sobbing, messy wet sobs that caused her to hiccup painfully, she just wanted to help. Claire just patted the hysterical child frowning down at the shaking figure. Little hands grabbed onto the blouse of her dress and she looked down at those blue wobbly eyes. Gwen's voice cracked a little from the crying, "I just wanted to make you happy."

Those words were like a shot to the heart. Claire trembled and felt the world around her falling, she could see the man who she waited for and would always wait for smiling at her gently. So handsome in his suit on one knee. But that wasn't real and he had long since abandoned her. Instead the one saying this to her was this child. It was this beautiful kind child who wanted to help a dead woman.

"Gwen, just hearing you say those words makes me happy." Not necessarily true but she was happy to lie for the girl.

"Even if you're happy now you won't be happy forever because I'll have to go."

Claire smiled gently. "You can visit me. I won't go anywhere." This seemed to have an adverse effect causing fatter tears to run down Gwen's face. "I'll visit whenever I can. I won't let you be alone."

The spirit patted Gwen's head softly. "Of course, I would like that very much."

Ultralight

By D. M. Freeman

In an emergency, a crayon will light for 30 minutes.
 in an emergence, see, rainbow votives held high
 refract prisms on walls and in the sky, flying flares
 detract heat-seeking missiles and take the blame -
 grateful for aim and gasping for breath
 thanks to lighthouses and harbingers
 we have escaped death and burn with purpose
 like a California wildfire fueled by fierce winds,
 choosing our victims with a logic only known
 by three-hundred-foot tall flames that take
 everything in their wake by storm.
 our prayers reside in droplets of rain
 hovering over clouds of smoke that move
 from here to New Jersey and wind up
 on the news coating everything in fear
 and soot, the tears of mothers dripping down
 on things we could no longer protect,
 dirty black rivulets making their way south.
 Enlightened by loss we remove the handles
 from toothbrushes to take every last ounce
 of weight off our backs, to ease the days
 spent on trails that are thousands of miles long;
 somewhere, someone has recorded all this
 for posterity hoping someone will be alive
 to grasp these leftover asphalt thoroughfares,
 remnants of dams and plastic hills,
 miscellaneous bits of things we left behind
 in our attempts to run from ourselves,
 unidentifiable trinkets that melted together
 to block the natural paths of rivers
 until they forgot how to flow to the ocean.

Mirrored Discernment

By Mandy Twitchell

So intense, the eyes..
 Dimensions of worlds,
 unknown..
 Scars.. Pain.. Torrents of love..
 Eons of experience, concealed
 by the body..
 Untamed like the Sea.
 Conceptual divide..
 Intangible periphery..
 A tranquil navigation of the
 brilliant yet turbulent existence
 that is life..
 Deeply saturated with our own
 perception



By Dominique Navarrette

A man enchained by the love of a soul whose beauty rivals the angels of heaven. So beautiful those chains have adopted a feeling of comfort. An unorthodox amount of connection undeniable by its definition. The amounts of love superseding and drowning out the anguish of yesterday. Unconditional is the premise, leading to unrivaled passion beyond that of the basic minds. A flower that of which has the rainbow on each petal, one different from the other. Of all of the flowers, none fancied him as much as this. One smaller in stature; however, one which is explosive while also maintaining neutrality with the others around her, incomprehensible is her beauty, and unfathomable is his attraction for her. The unbearable need to maintain and promote the longevity of something Our god has created 19 years ago to the day. Many have come and many more shall pass. Even beyond the tangible version of its beauty, it has fertilized and planted its beauty on the blank canvas of his mind. Drawing his anguish, bringing tranquility and a subtle equilibrium to his mannerisms. Uneasy eruptions of angst when he thinks of his flower; however, as wild flowers tend to be, they do not shine exclusively. Who is the man to suppress the beauty she beholds. Many come from all cracks and crevices of the earth to try to pluck the flower without the conscience of destroying the roots. The selectiveness of these creatures promotes the reckless handling of something they do not understand. Ignorance of selflessness may befall the the flower, her beauty drained and abused. However the man will be there forever to protect the integrity of her flawlessness. However, just like the others the man underestimated the roots of this flower, short and beautiful! Resilient and unbudging, she has been gifted with the glory of her god who has created her. The man will do whatever he can to negate the effectiveness of the thieves. Those who do not feel true love can not stand by, silent watching, observing and waiting. The man fought countless battles throughout his lifetime, one after the other prevailing. Until his last breath he never faltered; he was laid to rest next to the flower he spent his life defending. As the years past enemies, did not manifest themselves anywhere near the beautiful flower, then one day a heavenly light shined in on the the flower and the man's grave...sprouting up and towering over everything around them was an identical flower, intertwining of their leaves the two flowers created a beauty to be admired for the millenia to come.



An Excerpt From The Short Story “Walking Girl”

By Harmony Yerkes

Gray clouds hover low, a fine mist coats the sidewalk and everything in sight. The hue of the street lights flicker as the sun settles into bed and the sky shifts from day to night. It is soft and calm. Her heart beats steadily as she walks along the mostly empty streets of a city at dinner time. All is quiet with the exception of the faint sound of DEAN's newest release that is escaping past her pierced ears. Her earbud wire is tucked in to her two sizes too large black hoodie, sometimes getting tangled up in her silver dangling earrings. They are hidden by her plain brown hair that stops abruptly just below her petite yet broad shoulders. There is a chill in the air. Not the kind of chill that stings your eyes and numbs your hands. It is more of a red nose and cold bones kind of chill. The kind of chill that makes you second guess your decision to wear ripped jeans. However, it isn't exactly unpleasant. She feels just fine about her decision to wear her jeans with the gaping holes in the knees. She reaches for her hood and fastens the strings into a loose bow. Her eyes follow her steps, subconsciously counting, one two three, one two three. For some reason her third step is her favorite. I think it has do with the sound her suede boots make when they meet the wet pavement, but you didn't really need to know that. She carries on walking this way for quite some time. She is confident in her stride as she has walked here many times. Even as the night grows older she continues her counting without looking up much. I know that you may be eager to know where she is going or how long it will take her to get

there. Maybe you worry that she will catch a cold or worse, meets an unfriendly fellow pedestrian with dishonorable intentions. Which are noteworthy concerns, and please understand I am not trying to belittle you. Just let me ask you this, does she seem so concerned with these things?

The sun is now deep in the lands of dream; it is a little selfish in this way. As it is now almost winter the sun seems to have given into the desire to hide away in dream land. Linger there longer these days, this is no trouble for her. She enjoys the night just as much as the day. She doesn't dread the sunrise nor count the sunsets. She's merely just content to exist among them. She's often perplexed by the people around her. Why is it that they count their life in days? Putting so much pressure on what they call "tomorrow." Those who believe that the light divides and designates time, spend much of their existence wasting it. Well this is how she sees it anyways. This thought doesn't bother her; rather, it pulls on her curiosity. The fine mist has started to accumulate into dew and oozes down the sides of street signs and window panes. The second wind of the city sweeps through the streets awakening a new crowd. The sidewalk takes on a liveliness of people in dazzling clothes and red faces. The quiet from earlier has ceased. The air is now ablaze with laughter as groups of friends become better acquainted and converse. It feels warmer now, even though the temperature has dropped a few degrees. Laden in this new warmth is a layer of silent sadness. It is subtle, not asking for much attention, but it is there, somewhere knitted between loneliness and laughter.

She murmurs absentmindedly as she meanders along in the luminosity of the darkest hours. Something about how, this can never be that, and how what is will always be until it isn't. She doesn't particularly blend in with the passersby, yet she doesn't blatantly stand out. Her presence among them is neither acknowledged or ignored. At this point maybe you are starting to think this is pointless. If you'd like to make a point or provide a concept you are welcome to make your own embellishments. She doesn't mind, however don't be surprised if she seems uninterested. You see for her this is enough. She knows exactly where she is going. Her hood, once specked with drops of dew, is now thoroughly wet and the cold has begun to seep through. A song finishes and gives her a chance to step out her fantasies. This brings her the slightest amount of grief. No, it is not the reality that grieves her. She does not find reality burdensome. It is detaching from her land of make believe that ever so slightly saddens her. She was thoroughly enjoying walking along the earthy path paved by the tiny troublesome trolls of her day dream. They are such silly creatures, carrying out the most purest of evil acts in their little crimson hats. They pushed over trash cans, sat near signs that read "wet paint" and untied shoelaces to her greatest amusement. Now they are fading away, slowly one by one lost in piles of unsorted memories; the last one closing the door to her fantasy as he takes his place upon the stack. It is now that she lifts her head from her feet and you can see the spark in her eyes. She is a woman who sees the world with eyes of a child. She has not lost her wonder and marvels at things you may find standard. She lives like this in consistent amazement, never growing accustomed to the everyday normalities of this world.

The break in between the songs, all of just a few seconds long, is just enough time for her to realize she has grown hungry. She is human after all. She looks around, more so out of habit than necessity, as she knows exactly where she stands. She takes notice of a change. It isn't a store front display or a new advertisement on a billboard. It is that in the fabric of the night there seems to be something new stitched along the seams of loneliness and laughter. "Hello" she calls out to the thread, then she turns left and heads into the Soba noodle place. There is no reply, but there, is no need. Sitting in the dimly lit shoebox room she adjusts her rings and hums a familiar tune. You probably find her a bit strange and possibly unsettling. Or maybe you think she is refreshing, I guess it is wrong of me to assume. Think of her in anyway that you find fitting.

Now full in many ways, she pays for her meal, says thank you and sets back out into the streets. She is almost there. She is just on the other side of here. The excitement is bubbling up inside her. She takes off running and can't help but let her arms rise up beside her. She speeds past those who are wandering with no direction. She doesn't pity them, she understands them. Maybe you think it is foolish of her to giggle and squeal, but the exhilaration mixed with her anticipation is not something that should be contained. It is

better to feel what you are feeling to the fullest of its capacity. You might regret it if you only experience it within reason. Her cheeks are rosy and her breath a bit unsteady as she slows her glee. She now stops to catch herself. The calm has started to return. "You've come earlier today," she says to the sun, trying to make conversation as it rolls out of bed and hangs up its nightcap. "No dear, I'm here on time." She shields her eyes from its light. "Oh," she said trying to see what the sun was standing on. "You're on time. Maybe I just can't see it because I don't understand." The sun began its dance. "Perhaps my dear, often that is the case with your kind." The sun seemed in a hurry. Already awaiting its visit to the land of the dream. With her breath caught, she embarks on the beginning to the end of her journey.



- *luna*

through the sky, she makes her climb.
her friends begin to wink in the nighttime.
most creatures on earth start to settle down.
she has that effect on them after sundown.

she craters the earth in her soft glow.
lending a gentle light till the next tomorrow.
some stay up with her.
she opens her ears and hears a strained
whisper.

she listens to their night woes.
forever a therapist, never will oppose.
lend her your fragile hand.
you'll find she'll always understand.



Picture by Ponepila: <https://www.deviantart.com/ponweiway>

by lila.



Picture by D. Sullivan

College is the fairest thing I have encountered in this world. Paying for it certainly isn't easy, but earning a degree is a just pursuit. What you put into your college effort equates to what knowledge you earn. I have not found that to be true for anything else I have ever worked at in my life. This being said, should you find college is not to your liking, or that you lack the focus for school as I found myself some twenty plus years ago, then let an old fart give you some advice toward employment.

Do you enjoy the outdoors? Do you like nature? Perhaps you will find gardening is a good fit. It's a great workout, and if you are not yet aware of any allergies you might have to pollen or bee stings, then gardening will soon inform you. Check your pride and attitudes at the door because society doesn't accept any lip from lowly laborers. Also, baby boomers are your number one customer and they will try to pay you wages comparable to the late 60s and early 70s.

Perhaps you already work in retail and think that management position that opened up last week when Gary told that customer where she could stick her...um, well, never mind. Let's just say you think you are cut out for management. Guess what, contrary to what you might think, corporate will never move you into home office. H.R. hires upper management from outside its ranks and never from within. If store manager is as high as you wish to rise then enjoy it while you can. Corporate will keep you only as long as you don't earn too much money, or until someone younger and hungrier whom is paid less comes along and wants your job. Then Corporate will find a reason to get rid of you.

Construction is rewarding. It's damned hard work, but it pays well. The pride you feel when a job is done is great. Be careful, though because it's easy to get injured, and if you don't work, you don't get paid. Do you enjoy high places? In my experience as a construction grunt, those of us cool with heights, frequently end up working on roofs and in attics. If you aren't claustrophobic count on spending some time in crawl spaces too.

Do you enjoy cleaning? Perhaps an occupation in the custodial arts could be to your liking. Hopefully you enjoy working nights, too, because in my experience that's when janitors and cleaning crews typically work. I'm going to be completely honest with this one. A school janitor is one of the most mentally demanding jobs I've ever had. It's not easy cleaning the same things night after night, and little kids can make big messes. Still, it can be rewarding if you work in a school that recognizes and respects your efforts.

Speaking of rewarding, as of yet in my life nothing has been as rewarding as being a firefighter/first responder. Everyone loves firefighters, and it's awesome to combat a wildland fire, or kick in a front door and attack a structure fire. Occasionally, saving a life here or there is pretty cool too, but be aware of a couple things. First, you will see some gory shit, and it will mess with your head, and secondly, I'm not sure what tore my back up worse: thirteen years of being a volunteer firefighter or ten plus years of working in construction.

All right, I'm running out of space here so let's just list some perks and disadvantages of several jobs:

- Street sweeper- wonder what it's like to be invisible? Become a street sweeper and find out. Unfortunately, you will find dust and dirt everywhere upon your persons, even within orifices you didn't even know you had.
- Ditch tender- like running a weed-eater all day? If you answered yes, and if one of your legs is longer than the other, this job is perfect for you.
- Bar manager- drunk dudes break shit! Also, you will either drink a lot more, or a lot less than before.
- Sand Blasting, Cold Sales, and Roofing- suck, suck, and sucks.

I hope this has been helpful for someone out there. I enjoyed writing this, and I love being back in school. I'm looking forward to earning my degree and becoming a teacher. Who knows, maybe I might even get a job teaching at the same school where I used to be the janitor.



Picture by Haylee Elzea

Wine

By Abby Lark

write to play • jazzi

i have this insatiable chaos within me.
her spirit tells me to break every rule i can.
her spirit questions any semblance of order.

she tells me to move past shallow labels,
to run away from grammar rules,
to hide from expectations,
to turn off my brain.

it's the last form of childhood we have left,
reminiscent of the sweet ignorance,
reminiscent of our subtle awareness,
reminiscent of the way we shared knowledge,
before it became life's competition.

art is the best kind of selfishness.
she is meant to please me only,
she only pleases a few,
she might never please any.

i have the right to my own anarchy.
no one can control her.
no one has to see.

Langston Hughes once wrote,
"Life is fine.
Fine as wine.
Life is fine."

Life is red.
Life is burgundy.
Life is fruity with a strange aftertaste.
It is dry and it is aged.
Life is clear and gold and sparkling.

It is so bitter
And unbearably sweet.
It burns as we swallow and yet we are still unsatisfied.
Thirst never quite quenched,
Tongue stained and our fingers catching the last drop from our lips,
Knowing it is precious.
We always reach for another glass.
And another.
And another.
Until we are drunk and dancing among grape vines,
Full of their last words.

"Life is fine.
Fine as wine.
Life is fine."

pieciful • jazzi

i'm a slice of miss havisham's pie.
a stain on the town of blood and a lie.
watch as i weep but listen to him purr.
maybe i'll make a murderer.

i see shadows in the dark gloomy night.
maybe silence means i'm alright.
no one has told me otherwise
if my purpose is only his demise.

have you ever seen true treachery?
fallen victim to his lechery?
it's selfish desire, it smells of musk,
i don't know who else to trust.

They took you in and gave you a home,
from the streets, from being alone
Then fast, faster than your ancestors before you,
you flew
Past tree, past mountain, past the sky so blue
All along they knew,
your end would come with a spectacular view

They sent you into the abyss above the sky,
higher than any human yet to fly
from your hearth, from your home
They sent you up,
around the world to roam
Knowing, that you would die alone

Your mausoleum around the Earth did go,
carrying you with it
until the heavens released you,
and the sky received you

You fell fast, faster than your ancestors before you,
and glew
In a great blaze of light, you were bright
and then taken from our sight
In a celestial pyre, the skies gave you rest
and the world reclaimed you
your paws, your breath
from your long journey, from abyss and skyfire
From your time, everlong, to roam:

Laika, come home

~D.E.T.S.P.

-B. G. S.

please don't let them in our hovel.
they'll end up next to the shovel.
o brother, please don't kill them too.
they only ever look at you.

my fire, i want it to grow more than great, but
maybe i'm destined to follow your gait.
i will do anything for it, even turn dark.
get ready brother, it's on your mark.

i'll always be your piece of pie.
if you told me you cared, i might think it a lie.
we're family, and i won't be led astray.
for i am the reason you did betray.

o brother please—don't go away.



Soviet Cosmonaut, Laika

Faculty Spotlight

By Julianne Zenkus

Let's Talk Business At College of the Siskiyous

Shawn Abbott and Michael Graves are the influencers of the business students. Professor Shawn Abbott is one-of-a-kind person. She is passionate about her job, education, students and family. Abbott has been teaching business classes at College of the Siskiyous for 20 years. She holds a strong passion for economics, and she always makes you think in economic ways from what the quantity and demand for an item will be to making sure you are thinking at the margin. She has taught us students valuable life skills. For example, meeting deadlines, communication, and how to think outside of the box. Professor Michael Graves is a positive and adventurous teacher at College of the Siskiyous. Graves is passionate about his job, military, sports, students and his family. After serving years in the military, Graves decided to come back to Siskiyou County and teach business and computer science classes. He has been at College of the Siskiyous for 20 years, and he has had a tremendous impact in the business program.

Shawn Abbott and Michael Graves are not just professors at College of the Siskiyous, but they are genuine people who make their students feel welcomed and like family.

Remembrance

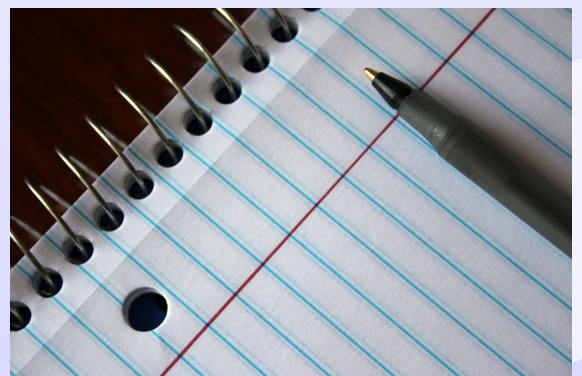
By B. G. S.

With rainy windows memory may bring cold
 in elemental grace or crushing weight
 On wind from North come scents and stories old
 with treasures bold or curses hard, past fates
 The soul oft finds unknown dark depths, warm bones
 of times long past—no roads, and still, no map
 Or white tall mountain peaks with wondrous zones
 of sight and joyous forests make us clap
 Still distant all and out of reach we grasp
 at ghosts far flung, eroded, fading fast
 As time moves on, no matter how we clasp
 the good, the bad, all flows away: the past
 And yet we keep of scenes that make us weep
 a fading ledger, and we smile, in sleep

Join the Writers Club!

Are you a COS student who loves short stories or poetry? Journalism or travel writing? Any and all writers in the COS community are welcome to join the Writers Club!

Club meetings are from 3:30-4:30 on Wednesday afternoons in the Academic Success Center



origami • jazz

Past a subway stop on the way to school, I saw a cootie-catcher, made fresh from homework just returned. It was abandoned by a playground slide.

The field nearby held daisies aplenty. Paper pinwheels spun against the wind oblivious to their whimsy. The clouds passed silently.

Red paper forms an apple, a proper gift for a teacher. I wonder what they learned. It sits on the edge of a desk, an ode to learning, an ode to growing.

A squirrel lay resting beside an abandoned tire swing. The cardstock faded in the sun. It'll live out it's next life between bleak pages of a rich book.

Tucked into a locker, someone declares their crush in a small folded star. It's made from the paper of a well-used sketchbook.

I found an old receipt tucked shallow in the cushions of a cafe chair, folded gently into a sweet butterfly. The worn edges warped from anxious hands.

One parking ticket was discarded on a sidewalk. It resembled a shy swallow. It was wet from the rain pooled in the cracks. Too soon words would smudge and disappear.

A pond of such magnificent green and blue, home to singing frogs and a sinking vessel made from yesterday's news. It floats lonesome half-submerged at the water's edge.

Crisp envelopes are shoved into a mailbox, all of them with hand drawn hearts. The mail hasn't been touched for weeks, the letters without addresses.

In my pocket, I pull out a yellow napkin folded in the shape of a heart. It was our first shared secrets. It's still got the coffee marks from the drink you graciously let me taste.

The sweet valentine bouquets made of rice paper and ink have slowly wilted and torn. The pink tulip still leans against the mirror.

A lonely tissue folded into an aeroplane lay neatly on the top of the trash bin. Tears weighed it down until it could no longer fly.

Chains of one thousand cranes hang gently beside the window. Sometimes a breeze enters making them sway, and

I know you're still watching over me.

Impossible

She is waiting.

She is always waiting.

Today, it is for the sky to fall.

Bits of cloud and blue to lay at her feet.

Stars to dust themselves over the top of her head and shoulders,
Gently sparkling as they fade and die on her body.

She will catch the solar system in her hands,
A world balanced delicately on each fingertip.

Yesterday, it was for the mountains to move themselves.

To pick up their great bodies and gracefully,
As though they were impossible dancers,
Walk past the horizon somewhere beautiful.

The day before that, she stood at the ocean's edge and waited patiently for it to boil.

For it to begin bubbling at the center and,
Sensing this, the fish would grow legs and run to the shore.
The bubbles would turn into a violent roil and spread,
Evaporating,
Until all that's left is a bowl of salt and jagged rock.

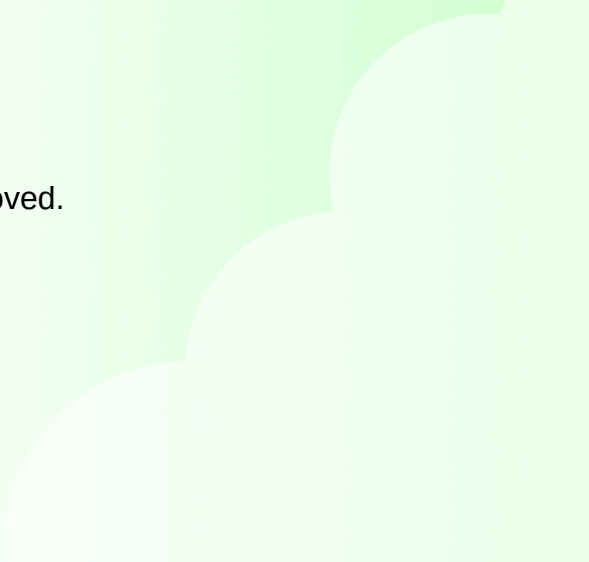
And the day before that, she waited for God to answer her prayers.

On her knees in a cathedral,
Her wrists bruised where they rested on the pews in front of her.
Her eyes did not open as she prayed,
But she could still see the stained glass past the darkness,
Coloring the light in shades of holiness.

And before that, she waited for him to love her as she should be loved.

She waited a long time.

Now she waits for what is possible.





If We Were

If you were to walk up behind me
At three in the morning as I stood by myself
Under a street light,
It wouldn't even startle me.

There's comfort in your gait
And the way your silhouette curves around the air.

There's an easiness in your legs
And a calm in your arms.

You hide secrets in the palms of your hands,
Forever tucked into pockets
Or hidden in the curve of my spine.

The light would hit your cheekbones and create a shadow there,
Just above your jawline.
The only place my lips can reach as I stand on my toes.

If I were to draw you,
I would use a ruler.
Straight edges,
There are no soft slopes on your body.
I swear I could cut my fingers on your shoulders
And leave bloody handprints on your hip bones.

If I were to sculpt you,
I wouldn't touch clay or stone,
But glass.
It looks as though everything could just slide off,
Slip away.
Smooth and cool to the touch.
Delicate, without knowing.
Breakable, as you shatter
Without saying a word.

If I were to paint you,
I would dip my brush in water colors
And let them bleed through the paper.
Transparent yet vibrant,
Filling my empty spaces with color and shape.
Yes, this paint runs,
But holds its place when it
Finds where it belongs.

If I were to touch you,
My hands would trace your every outline,
Find every edge and delicate bone.
Fingers counting every rib.
I would place my head on your chest
And my arms around your waist
So that I would know the timing of your heartbeat
And the force of your breath.

If I were to kiss you,
I would do so gently,
Starting at that shadow,
The one just above your jawline.
If you were to bend your head,
I could fall back on my heels.
I imagine that I could kiss away the fear you hide
Behind your teeth.
The doubt you carry in the lines of your mouth.

If I were to love you,
I would do so without regret,
Without apprehension.
I would wear it on my wrists and my collar bones,
On display.
Open,
An art gallery with its doors forever open
Because who wouldn't want to see this?
As we would be planted under this street light,
Sunflowers would grow from beneath our feet and
Turn their faces to us.

If I were to let you go,
It would be because I had to.
My hands would linger as we said goodbye,
Still staining your hip bones
And leaving red fingerprints on your ribs.
We would watch each other shatter,
Silently,
Our words having turned into watercolors
That pour from our bodies until we are empty again.
We will have broken away from each other,
Sunflowers kissing my aching wrists and collar bones
As I tread on their petals.

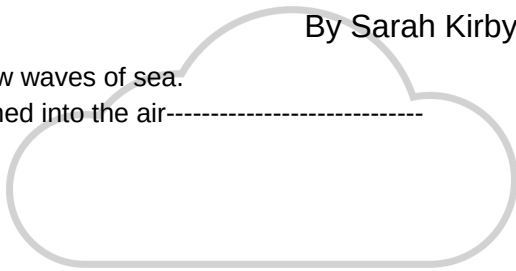
If you were to hold onto my hand,
For just a moment longer than you should,
And tell me that it was all going to be okay,
The sun would rise behind me and the street light would go dark.
I would watch you turn gold with the morning
And try to believe you.

I dreamt of whales.

By Sarah Kirby

I dreamt of whales.
 Thick oil slicks in the saw waves of sea.
 Their massive tales fanned into the air-----
 Waterf

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o off the fins.

I swam with them in the cubed ice water

The sky was a sad, wet dome of grey.

These submerged blackfish rose
 to the surface, needing the same air, the same horizon as my lungs
 They split water to drops while teaching their babies to do the same with their blow holes.

I treaded in the vast marine unknown.
 I bobbed in fear and awe of these warm-blooded mammals.

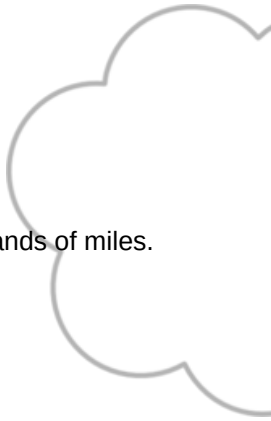
Their scientific name is "Mysticeti"
 containing the word "mystic," and their mystic sonar network sang songs under the waves
 that intersected with the beats of my heart, changing its tempo, changing its temperament for thousands of miles.

Eventually, I went to shore.

A young girl, who I felt was a friend I'd
 always known but never met put a towel
 around my shoulders.

We climbed a hill made of rocky red garnets with others to the
 top of a jagged cliff ---- looking out upon a cracked open egg shell bay that held the frequency of whales in its waters.
 The curved charcoal cliffs were made with pops of resilient yellow moss and dashes of hydrated green.

The wind threw our hair around, while
 she drew her lips closer to my ears,
 so I could hear about the aquatic dance of these wisdom beings
 who read the earth as an electromagnetic map to migrate across oceans
 while ebbing on the flows of timelessness.



PLATO: UNDER CONSTRUCTION By Beckie Hobbs

According to the scientific method,
 emotions are controversial;
 thus, moving the soul
 becomes a multidisciplinary project.

Plato wouldn't go near pathos,
 afraid to cross into the other
 side of the mind: the heart.

He paved a long
 confining road,
 bridging eras,
 every brick placed
 flawlessly.

Plato said: poetry is not real life.
 Poetry is unstable,
 without a formula,
 it is the absence of structure,
 without reason to hold it up.
 Poetry can't be trusted.

We won't let down our god of logic.
 When the song is beautiful,
 it does not matter if the argument is wrong.

In ancient Greece the soul had materiality.
 Even Yogi claimed the soul is tangible,
 even though science refuses to prove it.
 What is science but the poetry of numbers?

My pen says: ROAD WORK AHEAD.
 Insert poetry:
 A song more beautiful than real life.

Plato was a philosopher.
 All philosophers are poets.
 Plato was a poet.