

# PHIZZOGS

Volume XLVIII

Carl Sandburg College  
2400 Tom L. Wilson Drive  
Galesburg, IL 61401

*Phizzogs 2021* honors the following writers and artists:

**Poetry:** Hannah Bennett, *Big*

**Prose-Nonfiction:** Heather Bjoin, *Sunrise*

**Prose-Fiction:** Kaitlyn Siebken, *Zipper Girl*

**Painting:** Addisynn Hensley, *Sunrise*

**Mixed Media:** Joshua Hinkle, *Names Removed*

**Drawing:** Joshua Hutchings, *Separated, Together*

**Photography:** Heather Bjoin, *Lights That Call Me Home*

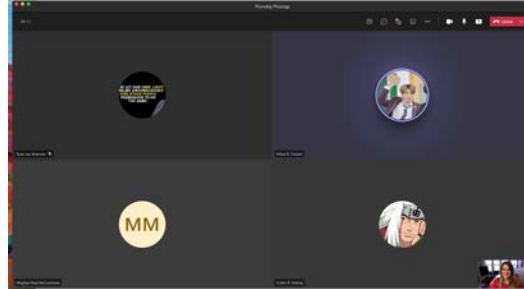
**Cover Art:** Joshua Hutchings, *Clock Strikes None*

*Phizzogs cultivates the discovery and the refinement  
of the story waiting to be told.*

## A Letter from the Advisor *Working Together, Alone*

If I had to choose two words to describe the 2020-2021 school year, including the making of *Phizzogs*, they would be “adaptability” and “flexibility.”

Last year, the big challenge was finishing *Phizzogs* during a pandemic. This year, we had to figure out how to make the entire magazine that way. Like many classes during 2020-2021, *Phizzogs* (English 141) met online. Not only were we, as a class, meeting online, but with so many other Sandburg students learning remotely, we had to change how we promoted the magazine and its submission deadlines. We focused on online PR efforts this year, such as email and social media. Our staff got creative and made videos to share, too.



A glimpse of a Phizzogs class meeting, 2021-style.

Another change during 2020-2021 was that we offered the *Phizzogs* course both fall and spring semesters instead of just spring. The fall class wrote a new mission statement, created an online submission form, got out the word about submissions, and offered virtual writing workshops. I look forward to building on the success of our first fall class during Fall 2021.

As it does each year, *Phizzogs* acts as something of a time capsule, giving us a glimpse into the thoughts, preoccupations, feelings, hopes, and fears of our Sandburg community at a given point in time. This year’s subject matter includes, not surprisingly, some pieces about the pandemic but reflects other aspects of our students’ experiences and dreams, too, such as the ingredients for a Brazilian feast in “Beans for Feijoada,” and a tribute to the magic of winter in “The Frost and the Frusen Okänd.” The paintings and essay “Heat” by Joshua Hinkle tackle the struggles of veterans returning from war. For those of us who taught, worked, and learned from home this year, Ellen McDowell’s photos of the Carl Sandburg campus remind us of what we have missed and get us excited about returning soon. Cullen Vickroy’s poem “Senior Year” helps convey the monotony of pandemic life, and our cover drawing, “Clock Strikes None” by Joshua Hutchings, perfectly captures the strange movement—and non-movement—of time during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Sharon Trotter-Martin  
*Phizzogs* Faculty Advisor

# PHIZ ZOGS 2021



The *Phizzogs 2021* staff met virtually this year using Microsoft Teams. Top row, l-r: Meghan McCutcheon; Lucas Dantas; and Khloe Trulson. Bottom row, l-r: Sharon Trotter-Martin (faculty advisor); Alyssa Ingles; Ryan Bowman; and Kaitlyn Pleshko. *Not pictured, but a welcome addition to this year's staff: Staff pets who attended many meetings.*



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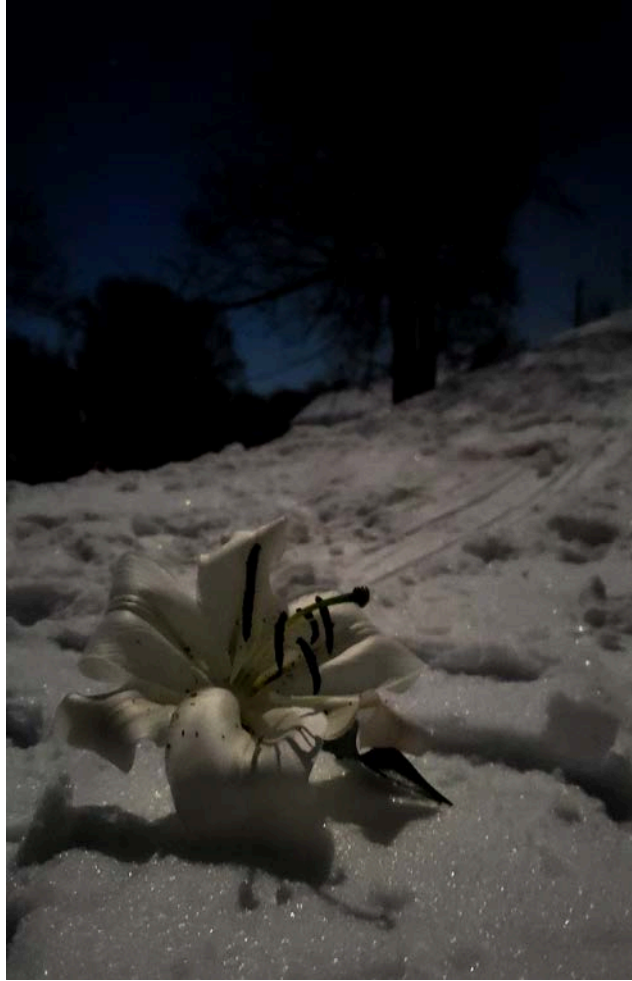
## *Phizzog*

Carl Sandburg

This face you got,  
This here phizzog you carry around,  
You never picked it out for yourself  
at all, at all—did you?  
This here phizzog—somebody handed it  
to you—am I right?  
Somebody said, “Here’s yours, now go see  
what you can do with it.”  
Somebody slipped it to you and it was like  
a package marked:  
“No goods exchanged after being taken away”—  
This face you got.



*Be the One*/Ellen McDowell



**Friday, January 15, 2021**

Nikki Ponce

Our flowers are wilting, and our hearts are still hurting. I am trying to help my children's hearts to heal, trying to help them make sense of the loss they are enduring. I tell them that we hurt so much because we loved him so much. I tell them the social distancing and stay-at-home orders made it possible for us to spend a year with our grandpa. What a wonderful year. We got to build a relationship that so many don't get the opportunity to have. To hear stories; to joke, to laugh, and to enjoy our grandpa. But, with that, we hurt because now the house is quiet. We don't hear the "Where's Dennis?" or "So, anyways, how's my kids?" or "I love you." We don't get the hugs or hear the laughter.

It's quiet now, and his chair is empty.



# Poetry

Tyler Bitar

What is poetry  
who defines it?  
How can I know  
if there's meaning behind it?

Do I have to rhyme?  
Does it have to flow?  
Do I have to try  
to do this every time?

Poetry, does it need a certain structure  
Or should each stanza flow independent  
Even though I have much to write  
The inevitable problem is,  
Really how can I know if  
You, the audience will even care?

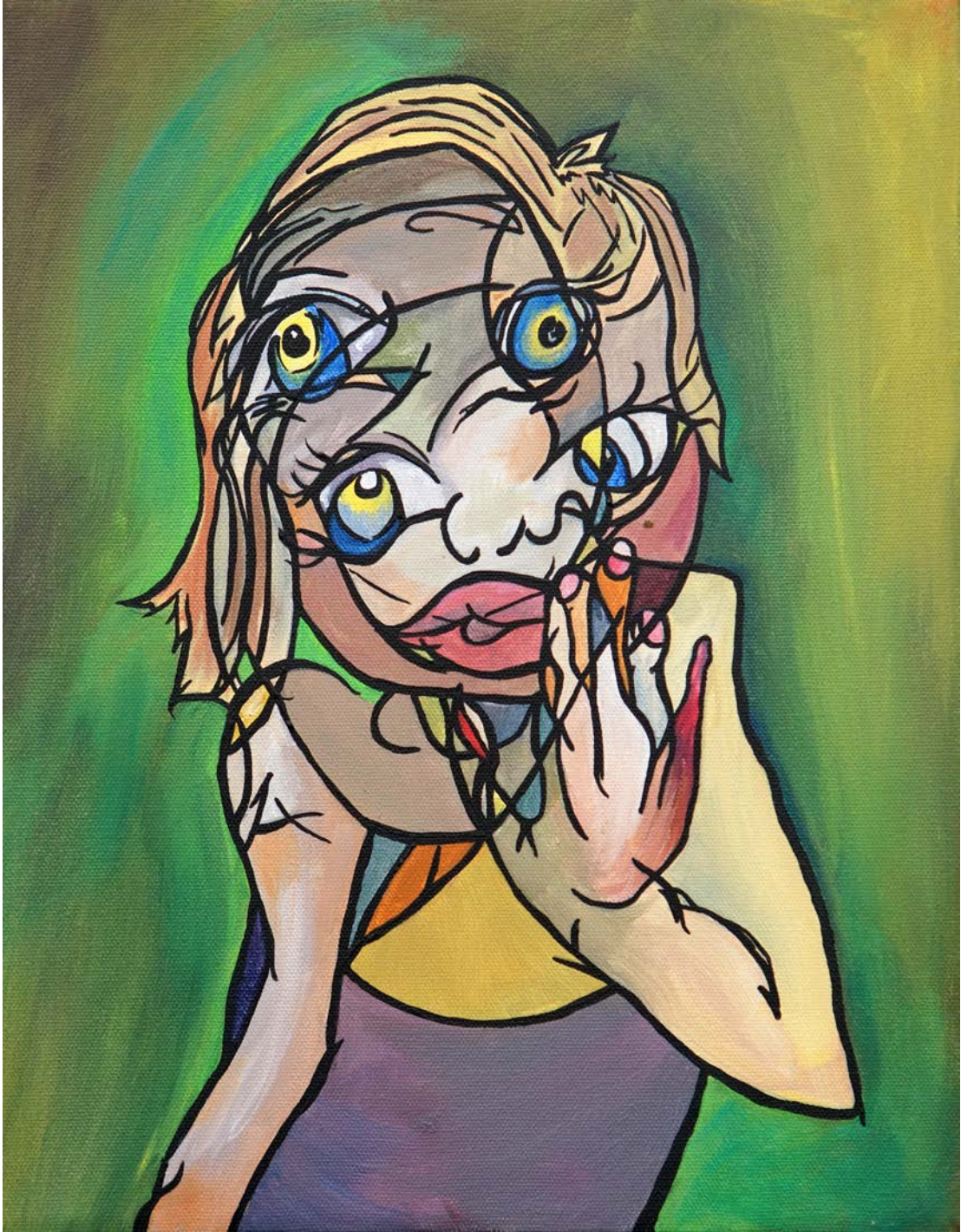
How can I ensure  
the words I write  
aren't just muck?  
That I won't just end up  
trailing off and getting stuck?

What are the rules?  
What are some examples?  
A plum, a red wagon,  
a relationship that is less than ample?

I try and try  
and I start to cry  
writing line after line  
hoping I can make words mine  
utilizing that one question that mystifies

Really, what the hell is poetry?





Opal/Nikki Ponce

# Crossroads

Khloe Trulson

That summer had been one of the weirdest in Grange yet. The birds became brave enough to land haphazardly on students walking home and dumb enough to fly right into the glass doors of homes and scare the living hell out of anyone who happened to be inside. The adults began to enforce heavier curfews that the teenagers certainly had a fit over but broke anyway as soon as they possibly could, and the local parks became something to avoid more than anything as more missing posters than any small town should ever see lined the cork board usually reserved for old 'help wanted' signs and out of date holiday posters in front of the post office. It was as if the world had turned its back on Grange, sliding it under its shoe and slowly crushing it until it was nothing more significant than a speck along the broken down concrete of a sidewalk.

Siwoo, or as his friends called him, the town's 'golden boy,' had always said he liked it in this little place, where the street lights only worked from 9 to 11 at night and the one in the middle of main street always flickered at exactly 2:34 am, up until a month before his face joined the missing posters on the cork board.

"I've got a bad feeling." He said one night, laid out on his back on the hardwood of Wonshik's bedroom. He was wearing these ugly pajama pants with a bunch of off-neon colors that didn't suit each other and it was distracting for Wonshik watching his bent knees bob back and forth in them, a mixture of hues that the motion turned into a muddled mess. The t-shirt that displayed a band Wonshik wouldn't pretend to recognize that fell over his shoulders was too small for him, probably an old one from their freshman year that he refused to let go of--Siwoo's parents had always been tight on money, and the kid hit a growth spurt in their sophomore year. He didn't like to bother them with such trivial stuff as new clothing. Wonshik would never forget the way Siwoo tilted his head toward him though, a hint of seriousness in the off-balance smile he sported in such a tired state. "About this town, you know? Like it's gonna suddenly sink into the ground and swallow us whole if we don't get out."

"You're being ridiculous." Wonshik teased. It wasn't like Siwoo to say anything bad about Grange, not even when things were actually shit--he'd praise the small town life into his death bed if he could. The thumb of Wonshik's left hand turned off the screen of his phone while his other fingers locked tightly in the smooth fabric of a pillow resting against his side. He threw it, aiming at the crooked smile that taunted him.

There was a muffled laugh, Siwoo's knees coming up in a jerking motion as he reacted to being hit in the face with the light blue mass of expensive plush. It came flying back at Wonshik as Siwoo retaliated, but fell flat on the ground uselessly light as a feather as it was blocked by a quick hand. It was almost laughable, the quiet 'plop' of it hitting the hardwood next to Wonshik's bed.

"It's not ridiculous. Obviously nothing like that will happen, but what if?" A seriousness seemed to lay flatly over the room as Siwoo sat up, crossing his arms over his knees and resting his cheek against the bump of his bicep. He was still looking at Wonshik like he expected him to know how to answer, like he knew all the secrets of this dainty little village with nothing more interesting than the time they found a dead deer hanging gruesomely in the backyard trees of the high school's notoriously hated teacher. It wasn't so much interesting as it was disgustingly horrific, but Wonshik supposed the two walked hand in hand when it came to such a boring life.





*The Light in the Dark/Heather Bjoin*

“Are you asking me what if the ground split open like that dumb 2012 movie and just destroyed Grange?”

“No, I’m asking you if you also have a bad feeling.” That smile of Siwoo’s was almost completely gone, slowly disappearing with such a depressing topic, and Wonshik found himself wishing it were back, racking his brain for something a little less serious-- anything to get him to stop talking like this.

“No,” Wonshik answered instead, “not anything more than usual.”

Siwoo didn’t seem to like that answer if the way he tilted his face to rest his forehead against his forearms was any indication. This hid his face from view, a sense of relief mixed with the underlying feeling of regret settling in Wonshik’s stomach. Siwoo had always been a very laid back person, sitting in ways that made his chair look too small for him and wearing these loose-fitting flannels that almost always had holes in them somewhere from being too careless. He spoke with a sort of need for positivity and looked at people as if they could do no wrong--storing negativity somewhere deep down and making people feel almost at ease in an instant in his presence. Wonshik was usually one of those people, but the way Siwoo’s tone shifted, leading into a deep confusion, made him feel like the guy was hiding something much bigger than a simple bit of negativity.

“What has you worked up?” Wonshik tried.

“Huh?”

“I mean, is it the birds? It’s hot out, their tiny brains can’t see glass. It happens.”

“No, no.” Siwoo lifted his head and Wonshik found himself wishing he hadn’t as the serious look on his face nearly gave him a headache. The way his lips turned downward in a pout and his eyes stared at the ground a few feet in front of him, one might assume he had completely zoned out, but Wonshik knew he was listening. Thinking.

Siwoo was no ugly guy if Wonshik had any input on the matter considering their relationship, but something about the way his eyebrows tilted inward scared him. “I mean I feel like something bad is about to happen. There’s been 9 missing cases just these past 6 months; what if one of us is next or-”

“Don’t say that.” Wonshik interrupted, not meaning to allow the anger into his voice but it seeped into each syllable, staining it with a clear dislike for such a suggestion.

“What?” Siwoo looked up with confusion written all over his features. Wonshik would never admit it, but Siwoo looked like the dumbest person on Earth saying that in that moment.



*Martyr/Lisa Walker*

“None of us are going to go missing. Don’t be fucking depressing.”

“I’m not being depressing. I’m being realistic.”

“Since when are you some kind of statistic mathematician?”

“Wonshik.”

The two stared at each other for a moment, a thin line between bewilderment and anger separating them. After 6 months of a relationship that seemed to be more up than down, Wonshik found himself wrinkling his nose to find that a down was that Siwoo rather enjoyed talking pessimistically--a large contrast to his ever happy view on life. When they found that deer, the one in that teacher’s backyard that firemen spent hours untangling its entrails from the trees, he remembered the way Siwoo laughed. He had been covering his mouth with the palm that wasn’t firmly in Wonshik’s grasp, muffling the sound but never minding to bother hiding the way his shoulders bounced under the weight of his humor. It was the edge of February, and Wonshik’s stomach churned looking up at the way the gore wove through the branches of the trees, deliberately strung up and hauntingly sad. He didn’t understand how anyone could look at it, let alone laugh.

But Siwoo had, quiet behind his fingers.

“Do you remember the deer they found? Back in February, behind that teacher’s house?”

Siwoo stared at him silently for a moment, those ugly eyebrows pressed downward in the middle, “Yeah, why?”

“Why did you laugh?” Wonshik sat up, swinging his legs over the side of his bed and tossing his phone blindly against the pillows that remained behind him. He wasn’t sure why it bothered him, especially now that it had been so long.

“Because he got what he deserved.” Siwoo moved as well, crawling the short distance between them to sit on his heels and press long, gentle fingers over the wide curves of Wonshik’s knees. “He was a pervert. Hid cameras in the gym lockers ‘n shit. Sure, pretty sad for the deer, but damn. At least it got the police to search his house and find all the teen boy porn.”

“Ugh, don’t say that.” Wonshik pressed his palm into his boyfriend’s face, trying to hide the smirk that adorned Siwoo’s lips. Siwoo just ducked, faking a bite at Wonshik’s thumb. “It’s a little bit of a weird thing to laugh at, don’t you think?”

“Why? You think I did it?”

“No! I just feel like... it was so gruesome and horrible.”

“For someone on a paranormal investigation team, you’re a pussy.”

“That’s not very nice.”

“Teach me a lesson then.”

Silence fell over the room again, this time surprisingly more comfortable as Wonshik ran tanned fingers through Siwoo’s noir hair, pushing it out of his face and forcing him to lift his eyebrows out of that downward, tensed shape. Wonshik wasn’t sure why he disliked it so much, watching the negativity begin to show in the subtle curves of Siwoo’s face--the way his eyes searched for a safe space to stare at or how his lips pressed inward when he found himself uncomfortable, the hardness in his cheeks when his teeth clenched and his jaw squared under the pressure. Wonshik seriously wished he could just morph his skin like clay, fix it in a happy expression and let him stay and feel that way forever.

But soon enough Siwoo was speaking again and Wonshik found himself regretting allowing himself to relax his shoulders and feel even remotely at ease in the little time he had; he was a fool to think Siwoo would let such a peaceful moment stay so refreshing and calm. While he often brought the warmth into a room, he also brought the incessant heat, the need to always keep the energy up and to a fault. “Let’s run away.” He said, quiet but clear and especially daunting in the way his honey brown eyes refused to lose the hold they had on Wonshik’s.

“What?” It was Wonshik’s turn to look confused, feeling his own hypocritical eyebrows tip downward and his hands falter against the soft embrace of pine scented hair. What was he thinking? Had the cigarette he smoked, leaning out the bay window of Wonshik’s bedroom just thirty minutes ago gone to his head so fast? He could smell it now that he thought about it, the hints of smoke on his breath that ghosted warm over his lips from their proximity and the burning scent of paper and nicotine clinging to the fabric of that too-small shirt on his shoulders.

Wonshik would love to say he was an expert on everything Siwoo--he understood his habits, his tics, the way his ears turned red when he was embarrassed and his fingers liked to drum absentmindedly over Wonshik’s hips whenever he could, but he was coming up completely blank in this moment, lost in the way Siwoo’s eyes stared at him so expectantly and sure, like he held all the answers he could possibly need, like he was the only thing keeping him on the ground in this very moment. It made him wonder if Siwoo wanted him to say no, to turn him away and call him obscenities so he’d have a

more solid reason to leave than a terrible feeling deep in his gut. Siwoo had always liked security.

“You heard me.” Siwoo said more firmly, letting his hands trail up the length of Wonshik’s basketball shorts to frame his hips between his forearms. It forced Wonshik’s knees to fit snugly under Siwoo’s armpits, locking him in place like Siwoo never wanted to let him go. And maybe he didn’t. “I’m already packed. Just say the word and we can walk the train tracks out of Grange. Away from all these bad feelings, away from the bullshit of being teenagers, somewhere where you don’t have to worry about being outside after 6 fucking pm.”

“You’re crazy.”

“A little bit.”

“A lot a bit, what money are you expecting to use? Where are you even trying to go?”

Siwoo actually laughed, and a noise that usually brought Wonshik joy began to make him angry; he could hear the bitterness in it. “I’ve been saving up, why do you think I’ve been playing hookie during lunch at school?”

Wonshik stared at him, disbelieving and unbelievably confused. He never took Siwoo as the type to run away from a fight; he knew how to punch back hard be it figuratively or literally. Wonshik watched him get through his parents’ divorce last year, being diagnosed with depression right after, the time he nearly died getting hit by a huge truck getting off the bus in middle school—hundreds of things big and small adding up into a clusterfuck of instances that could and should have made him drop to his knees and beg for mercy and yet here he was, on his knees in front of Wonshik like he was some sort of god, asking him to leave the town he spoke so dearly about because he’s scared—Wonshik can see it in the way his irises flick back and forth to look him in the eyes.

“What do you know that I don’t?” Wonshik asked, quiet and unclear as he pressed gentle hands into his boyfriend’s shoulders, trying to stabilize him as if he wasn’t already so stiff under his palms. He could feel the tension in the fabric of Siwoo’s shirt, hard and upsetting.

Siwoo let out a choked hum, “A lot of things.”

“Tell me some of it?”

“I don’t want to. I just want to get you out of here too.”

“Well I’m not going.”

Siwoo grimaced, the first signs that he may just cry beginning to show. Wonshik knew them too well for his own liking--Siwoo had never been much of a crier, not even when he was a child, but you could easily tell when things got too much for him, like a switch was flipped and suddenly he couldn’t see color anymore. It made Wonshik feel horrible, but he didn’t reach out to fix his words, just watched as Siwoo’s gaze dropped to the navy blue of his t-shirt and his eyes outlined the wrinkles Wonshik’s chest created as it moved under the fabric.

“There’s something bad going on... Like really fucking bad, Shik.” Siwoo’s voice cracked under the pressure of his voice and Wonshik finally reacted to him, pulling his head towards his stomach and pressing chapped lips into his hair. “They’re planning something; taking those kids and throwing their bodies out like trash.”

Wonshik knew Siwoo wasn’t messing with him, but the outlandish words he spoke were doing a number on his believability. This couldn’t possibly be real--it already sounded like an outlandish story he would tell to try scaring their friends around a Halloween bonfire, his voice loud while he ruffled Wonshik’s curly brown hair into his





*Untitled/Faythe Law*

head teasingly sweet. Grange had always been a constant for them though, a place they knew as home no matter their feelings on its size or its people; Siwoo would never speak so harshly on its name unless he was painfully and dreadfully serious.

“I know I sound crazy but I swear. There’s a fucking cult or some shit in this town and I’m pretty sure I’m next.” Suddenly Siwoo was sitting up again, nearly clipping Wonshik in the chin with the back of his head. He stared up at Wonshik like his life absolutely depended on his next words. “So please, come with me.”



“Okay.”

By the time they finally fell asleep—tangled up in each other on Wonshik’s corner bed with tear ridden cheeks and fingers held tightly together—it was very nearly Sunday’s sunrise. It wasn’t the warmth of the smell of cheap cologne and pine needles against Siwoo’s chest that Wonshik woke up to but the imprint of what remained of him clinging to his sheets when he rolled over to get out of the glaring sunlight from his windows. He was utterly alone, left to question if Siwoo had spent the night at all save the baseball cap that sat on the edge of his nightstand, displaying a sports team neither of them followed but Siwoo’s father had enjoyed for quite some time now. He had reached for it, finding the pack of cigarettes he hid from both their parents resting half empty underneath its confines, and he knew something was wrong.

Siwoo wasn’t answering his phone for three days before they finally declared him missing—a word that now formed a permanent pit in Wonshik’s stomach that he couldn’t help but compare to how Siwoo described it that night while clinging to his knees, gaping and upsetting in the way it made him want to throw up a breakfast he never ate.

People rallied, protested against the subtle workings of fate deep in the woods and yelled out the various names of young people in hopes to hear a reply, a sign that they were alive, until they suddenly stopped. Until the missing posters gathered in stacks, sat crumpled and wet in gutters and blew past people holding down their hats against the wind on the streets. Until it became so much that nobody had time to grieve or care, when it had collected so high that saying the girl down the street was gone now only elicited quiet groans from family members behind newspapers in the mornings.

No one bothered to look anymore, missing posters turned into clipped lists that no one bothered to read unless they were morbidly curious for the name of the last victim of what they had begun to call the undertaker. The police began to turn it into a joke, something to giggle about over coffee outside of the high school because of how ridiculously bad they were at their jobs, and Wonshik never stopped blaming them for it—the eventual dissipation of joy that Grange lost when Siwoo went missing.



*B Entrance/*Ellen McDowell



*Separated, Together*/Joshua Hutchings



# Cycle

Kaitlyn Pleshko

Waves crashing into one another  
Sea foam spray across my face  
No blink  
I don't blink  
Storm thundering overhead, don't look, can't look  
I don't look  
Lightning chases the sky - my fault, it's my fault  
Trying, i'm just trying  
Cloudy dark  
Too dark, I can't see  
Underneath the sea  
Where they're all waiting for me  
Floating bodies, drifting hair  
Vacant skull stained eyes  
Dresses free, current caught  
Waiting, they're all waiting for me  
Cold fingers to drag me down  
Grasp their hands  
Let me drown - my fault, it's my fault  
Ghostly smiles, haven't caught me yet - I'm going down (coming?)  
Vicious claws, my only addition  
Tearing through skin and teeth  
Ruined hair  
Ruined joy  
Ruined relation..ship  
Waves still crashing  
Sky still churning  
Can't leave, I can't leave - my fault, it's my fault  
Shedding skin  
Metamorphosis  
Let me out let me out!!  
Rolling waves, rolling endlessly  
Take one down  
Just as they've started to breathe

Rain fading  
Skies clearing  
Someone new in my place  
I don't know this one, I don't know any of them  
Unfamiliar  
One day. One day  
A reflection  
A ghost  
A mirror

# **Fight.**

Cullen Vickroy

Fight.

Scrub your face.

Fight.

Tie the hair far from your eyes.

Fight.

Clench your fists.

Fight.

Look forward.

Fight.

Distract yourself by tapping your foot.

*Fight.*

Ignore what they say.

*Fight.*

Avert your gaze.

*Fight.*

Don't say it.

*FIGHT.*

You have to do it.

*FIGHT.*

Someone has to do it.

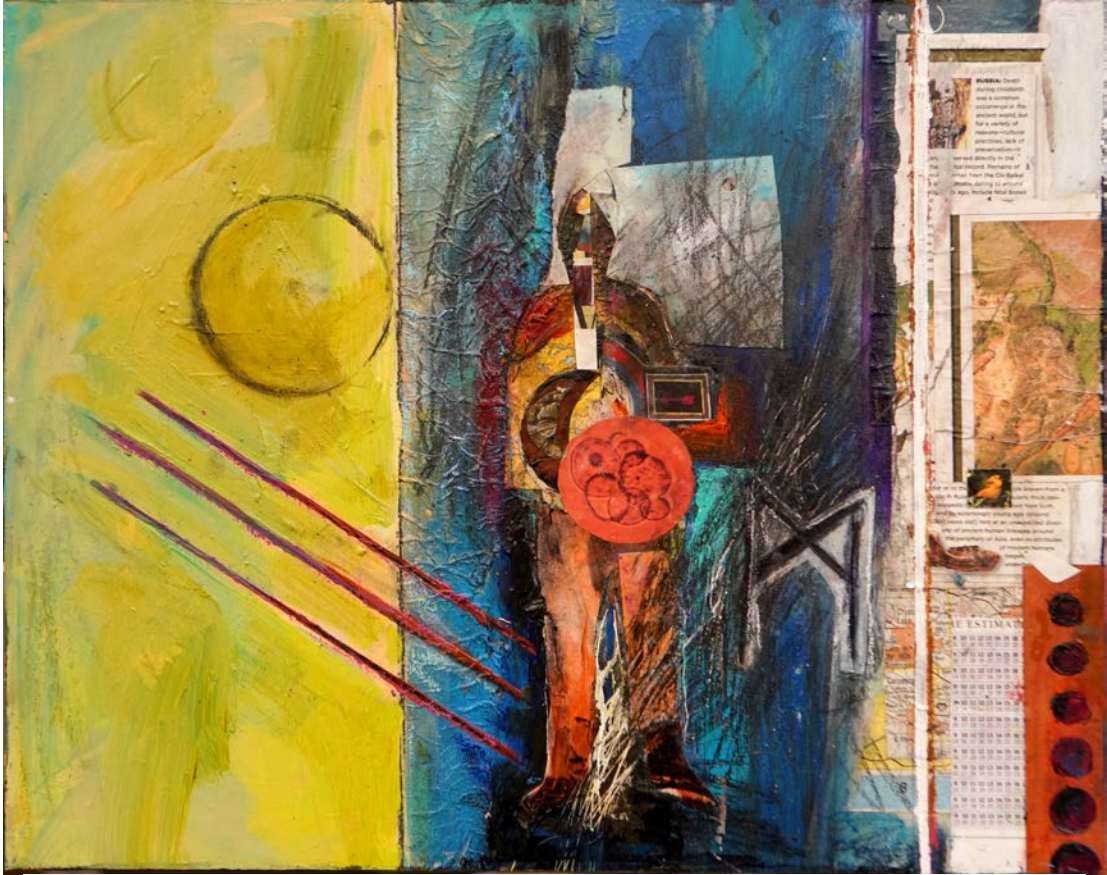
*FIGHT.*

Don't say it.

*FIGHT.*

Don't you fucking say it.

*I'm sorry.*



*Widow's Mites Amongst the Grass/Lisa Walker*



Untitled/Nikki Ponce



# Big

Hannah Bennett

I know that I intimidate you.

Of course I do.

I mean, I look like everything you were told you could not be.

I am big.

I am boisterous.

I am loud. I am a leader, and a natural born boss.

I am the unstoppable force and the immovable object.

I am the big bad boom They warned you about.

I am everything you were told a girl is not allowed to be.

I often take up more space than I know what to do with, I can fill a room with kind words and

toothy grins, like helium in a balloon.

I can cause grown men to crumble with the careful tip-tap-tip-tap of my fingertips on a computer's keyboard.

I have my mother's gift of words and her same sturdy shoulders.

I look just like her when I cry

And when I think.

This much I know to be true: I am so much stronger than you because a woman stronger than anyone else raised me.

I am Atlas

I will bear the weight of all the young ones watching me

Of every callow being who has ever been mocked for their long prickly leg hair, or stretch marks. I feel their curious eyes burning holes in my back, just like I feel your sharp words burning holes through my ears.

But you cannot belittle me, for I am far too big.

And of course I'm big

How else would I tear this whole place down?

# Dissociation

Megan Reed

What color is the sky? I think I forgot.

What's the date today?

What's the weather like?

How long has it been since I ate something?

I can't remember the last time I read a book. Reading is my favorite hobby. At least, I think it is.

I should probably shower.

I feel empty.

Why am I here?

I haven't fed the cat in days...

Wait, do I even have a cat?

Who am I?

How did I get like this?

Is it still March? I can't remember.

When was rent due?

I haven't fed the dog in days... Wait...

Who is that in my bed?

Oh, it's me.



*Fog*/Ellen McDowell



Untitled/Nikki Ponce

# Zipper Girl

Kaitlyn Siebken

I am a zipper girl.

The slim metal was surgically attached by expert hands. Those five digits belong to a man I want to call an artist more than a Dr. The placements are perfect along my breasts, stomach, hips, and thighs; accentuating every line. Looking perfect no matter how large or small I choose to make them.

That's the job of these zippers, to give me the power to change my body as I see fit. A little flip to release the tab and then a smooth glide of teeth opening to allow access to the elastic pocket that I can fill with silicone. No more staring in front of the mirror full of disgust and hate with every change of what's considered beautiful. Skinny tastes better than food. Real women have curves. I can fit into whatever clothes I want. I can look however I want whenever I want.

I am a zipper girl, and I love it.

I am a zipper girl.

The company paid for them, the zippers. I never could, I wouldn't do this job if I could. During the day I wear baggy clothes to hide the lines. I see the women who wear barely there outfits showing off the metal that has been colored to match their nails; I hate them.

At night I go into the "office" an hour before I have to meet my client. I will go to my 6x6 prep room, there I will strip down before three technicians who have the clients order. They will jerk open my zippers ignoring my wince as my skin is pulled, and change my body to fit the order. When I go to meet the client I am someone else.

I am a person who has to smile and flirt while ignoring how wrong my body feels. How every jerking motion pulls at the skin around the zippers making me want to scream. Scared that the company cut too many corners and my body is one pull away from ripping open. But I can't scream or show my displeasure. I am not myself six days a week.

I am a zipper girl. It's my job.

I used to just be a girl.

I went to a party. I thought I had kept an eye on my drink; had watched it the whole time. I woke up in a dingy hotel room. When I looked down my stomach looked wrong, so wrong. It was bulged out in strange areas and in the middle was a thick rusty zipper. My skin around it was swollen and crusted with blood that someone barely tried to clean up.

I don't remember when that party was. Time means nothing. I live in cars and dark rooms with men that constantly change. My diet is sandwiches, water, and whatever drug is in the needle that they shove in my arm; that I crave more than food. Everywhere I go I'm laid out on a table where they open the zipper, pulling out what had been stored there. If they forget to let me lay down and open the zipper while I stand my intestines start to fall out with the baggies.

The skin around the metal is turning a weird color and they have to wipe away pus before opening me up. I don't think I'm going to live through this. I'm going to die as nothing more than a living duffel bag.

I am a zipper girl.





*Sunrise*/Ellen McDowell

# Hopscotch

Khloe Trulson

The night it happened,  
the campfire burned throughout the night  
unattended,  
flickered a few times,  
smoked down into the logs  
where it surely died among the embers,  
only to flare up again within a moment's notice  
like a dog waking from a nap.

It moved at random,  
leaning right then left  
then somewhere in between,  
only to dip up and down  
as if bobbing in the waters of the lake  
just a mile away.

It rose high,  
then low,  
then simmered,  
then burned,  
then smoked.

All while the campers meant  
to watch over its flickering heap  
hopped in and out of reality  
like children over chalk markings on the concrete,  
smudging the colors with the undersides of their shoes  
and determined to find the best path of action  
through the patterns of hopscotch.



# Childhood Lost

Jason Harris

Thinking back on all of his possessions that he ever had owned,  
The memories of his childhood, which he misses most of all since he has grown.

A time where days passed on by carefree without a worry while he played.  
Clouds flying through the air playing with the birds in the midst the month of May.

Thinking back to all his friends on the soccer field in the autumn chill.  
Looking at a pond at sunset with the water oh so very still.

At the circus with family and friends – a guy walking the tightrope.  
Grandparents taking him to Chicago to watch a Cubs game full of hope...

... for a win, which he got over Montreal in the summer of '84.  
Living through a life better than can be expected in a family so poor.

But the family was rich with love, tenderness, time, and care.  
Christmas musicals, ball games, and music concerts, they were always there.

Since then I've acquired knowledge, wisdom, and a life I now call my own.  
But reflecting about my childhood lost, I realize I was never alone.



*Water's Reflection of Tranquility/Heather Bjoin*

## Poster

Khloe Trulson

When I saw your face again, I knew it was fate,  
but I hadn't expected it to be on a poster,  
It listed your height and your weight,  
and the clothes you wore on the 17th of November.

The color of your eyes and that tattoo on your wrist,  
that you got when we all traveled to Japan.  
The hue of your lips that I memorized when we kissed,  
and the date of when your life began.

I will admit that I was surprised,  
I never thought this town would snuff out your light.  
But I suppose that was when I realized,  
maybe even the good can lose a fight.

## Hues

Khloe Trulson

You had always been a bright red,  
drawing people in with your streaks of different shades.  
You could never stick to one hue,  
switching every single day.

You described your life in colors,  
the tone of each one you saw.  
It was a gift they say you were born to have,  
something real and raw.

And now that you don't yell at strangers,  
"Hey, your shade is blue!"  
I would almost think that you had gone blind,  
to the hues that meant so much to you.



Sunset/Addisynn Hensley

# The Dream is Gone

Jason Harris

Crazy            or just different  
follower  
dazed            or maybe confused  
imploding

Stranger leaves the corps with his

Room full of people contracting

The Stranger enters the room  
Preceding the Storm to come.  
Prophesizing the coming doom;  
Now the Dream is gone.

Token friendships  
back  
Broken promises

Smiles to your face and knives in your

Laying on the floor all around him

The Stranger looks out the windows  
Preceding the Storm to come.  
Concentrating – he now knows  
That the Dream is gone.

Forced to conform  
Required to perform

Looks and attitudes not acceptable  
Finishing what needs to be done

The Stranger leaves the land.  
Warnings falling on deaf ears  
That the Storm is now at hand.  
It is the Stranger that everybody fears

The Stranger sits in the night  
Watching the destruction by the Storm.  
Reflecting, he tried to do what was right.  
His thinking just wasn't the norm.

The Stranger took his knowledge west  
Leaving the Storm that everyone now hates.  
The Stranger learned on his VisionQuest  
That the Dream is yours to create.

That the Dream is yours to create....  
Until the Dream is gone.



*Creative Imagination/Heather Bjoin*

# Come Back Again

Kaitlyn Pleshko

Melt away my worst imperfections  
Cracks and bruises wash down the drain  
Like water on a wood board  
They soak back in

Try and try and try  
Again, melt them again  
Melt me, if nothing else  
Reforge me into something better

But no one's coming  
I'm alone, until a gentle kind soul says  
'I'm sorry,  
'There's nothing to be done,

'Melt all you want,  
'But these pieces,  
'Your pieces,  
'They'll always live inside,

'Down where you can't quite reach,  
'Down where you can't quite clean,  
'They live and fester,  
'They can't be melted away,'

And I look at him  
And he at me  
Tears in our eyes  
For each other

'I have to try,'  
He shakes his head  
Hand on my shoulder  
And says, 'good luck my friend'

And then he's gone too  
And I'm alone again  
Pouring molten metal across my skin  
But they always come back again





*Six Below: Initiation/Lisa Walker*



*Sun Rays/*Ellen McDowell

*This essay was written in response to a prompt for the Sandburg Proficiency Exam, an essay exam that all English 101 students are required to write near the end of the course.*

## **The Pandemic Garden**

**Brandon Fink**

The current global pandemic has been felt in every corner of the world and has reshaped our lives in myriad ways. We continue to hope that our friends and loved ones are spared disease and suffering, and we seek out comfort and reassurance. After I was laid off from my job in March, I began to dream up a verdant vegetable garden filled with lushness and abundance. The course of the pandemic was beyond my control and comprehension, but, personally, my favorite spot during the pandemic was my vegetable garden: it supported a healthy lifestyle, calmed my anxious mind, and satisfied my intellectual curiosity.

During the course of the pandemic, our relationship with food changed, and my vegetable garden was a pivotal part of my healthy lifestyle. Thankfully, I was not among the millions of families who worried about affording groceries or food insecurity. I recognize that my hobby garden was a privilege: it was not born out of necessity. Yet, the vegetable garden was a focal point of my life. Over the course of this year, I have incorporated more vegetables and locally-sourced food into my diet. In addition to consuming my homegrown vegetables, the garden was a symbolic representation of the vitality I wanted for my life. In the face of a global health crisis, I spent many hours of physical labor tending my garden. I resolved that I could focus on improving my physical and mental well-being with productive activities like gardening.

A pandemic causes many sources of stress and anxiety, but when I was working in my neat rows of vegetables, my mind was focused and calm. I will admit that I have always had a nervous disposition. Even as a child, I was weary and cautious of perceived dangers. Naturally, during a pandemic, my anxiety spiked when I fixated on the number of virus cases spreading across the globe. I consumed the data compulsively, because I somehow thought that this information would aid me. However, what truly helped my anxiety was busying myself in the garden. In many ways, it was easier to nurture the tender shoots of spinach and kale, and, engrossed in my efforts, my mind would settle. Instead of focusing on the unrelenting spread of the virus, I researched, planned, planted, weeded, and devised how to keep marauding deer from eating my vegetables. The calming benefits of vegetable gardening were an added bonus to my initial objective of healthy eating.

In addition to the health benefits my garden afforded, it also satisfied my intellectual desire to learn new information and skills. Since it was my first attempt at vegetable gardening, I poured over information online long before my physical labors began. I enlisted the help of supportive friends: my friend Roger, a dedicated vegan, was happy to send some heirloom seeds to me. Once I was in possession of the seeds, I researched when and how I could plant my leafy greens during the cold, wet Spring. When I visited a local greenhouse, the ladies there were happy to share tips and knowledge. True, some of the vegetables would feed my stomach, but there was also a sense of adventurous learning with my new hobby. Of course, not everything thrived in my vegetable garden. Despite my best efforts, there were cucumber tendrils that wilted and died, and the heads of cauliflower never matured. However, I learned a great deal of what to do and what to avoid.



Unfortunately, the pandemic is still part of reality, and my vegetable garden was a seasonal respite. The garden started as nothing more than an idea, but it took root and blossomed. When I reflect on how and where I spent my time during the pandemic, I fondly recall the time I spent gardening. It was my tiny corner of the world that I could control and manage when everything else was chaotic. My pandemic vegetable garden was an important part of my healthy lifestyle, it eased my worries and anxiety, and it provided the opportunity to make mistakes and learn. Years down the road, I am confident that I will still be proud of my vegetable garden. Until people are able to gather safely around the table, I will enjoy an extra helping of vegetables and try to treat my mind and body well.



*Meanwhile, in the Backyard/Sharon Trotter-Martin*

## **Pre-pandemic:**

Megan Reed

Before lockdown...

Before the required masks...

Before the looting and riots...

When thousands gathered at a concert without a worry...

Before weddings were called off...

Before my motivation died...

Attending in person classes was an everyday chore... (A chore I sincerely miss) ...

Having a normal sleeping schedule...

Traveling was common...

Amusement parks were open...

When you could watch your favorite team play from the sidelines...

When you could visit your grandparents...

When you could plan birthday parties...

When you could be absolutely carefree...

A midnight Walmart run with your best friends was a necessity.

Parades...

Airports were busy...

When nursing homes and hospitals looked a little different...

A new mother could be acquainted by her family members...

The economy was better...

Movie theaters, malls, and restaurants weren't considered a luxury...

When getting a mild illness was not a terrifying occurrence ...

When holidays felt a little different ...

I miss that life ...

The one I unknowingly took for granted ...

# Explosions in the Horizon

Jason Harris

Explosions in the horizon seem to be coming this way.  
The lone important decision; do I run or do I stay.  
Do I stay and fight for my country while the sky falls from above?  
Or do I run to save my life and to see the wife that I love?

Sounds of distant thunder rings through the air.  
The soldier starts to wonder why the hell he's here.  
Forced to fight and kill an enemy he does not know  
In a foreign land and country far away from his home.

“Will I ever see my children go to school and grow up?”  
While I ponder this question the ground starts to erupt.  
The enemy charges towards my group as I hear the word “RETREAT!”  
I think of it as victory, the rest think it's defeat.

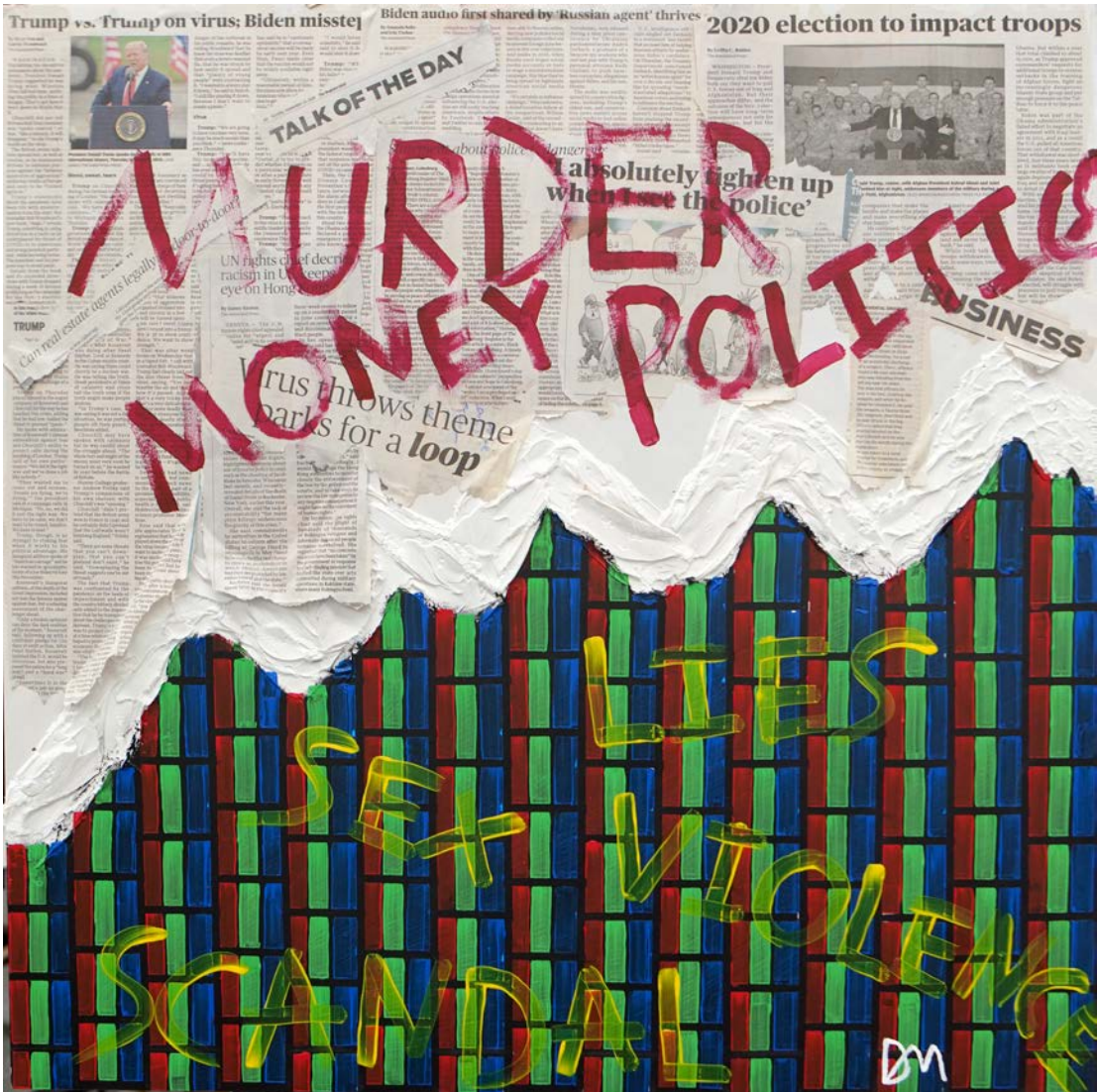
Sounds of distant thunder rings through the air.  
The soldier starts to wonder why the hell he's here.  
Forced to fight and kill an enemy he does not know  
In a foreign land and country far away from his home.

Explosions in the horizon seem to be going away.  
The government ordered us to retreat and to return without delay.  
“It was a war that we could not win and could not afford to lose.”  
I'm able to return home and live the way that I choose.

I feel for the thousands upon thousands to died.  
I've nightmares about dead in a plain that's open and wide.  
Million people risked their lives for their country and their land  
Because political leaders show no compassion and don't try to understand.

Sounds of distant thunder rings through the air.  
The soldier starts to wonder why the hell he's here.  
Forced to fight and kill an enemy he does not know  
In a foreign land and country far away from his home.





Does It Make You Sick?/Dakota McDorman



*Falling*/Joshua Hutchings

## The Tanker

Lucas Dantas

8000 pigs per day  
every second there is a pig in my face  
the Chinese guy on my left side does it like he has done it for years  
slice. slice. slice.  
there is a whole system  
the faster you do it, the more you can rest  
the more you do it, the easier it gets

# Primary

Khloe Trulson

Red has always been the color of passion,  
of the strain in singer's voices  
or in the harsh sound of boots hitting the concrete.

It is loud,  
inviting,  
and does not beg for its attention,  
but rather demands it  
as it begins bubbling up in your throat  
and releasing in your screams.

It burns in your gut,  
trembles in your hands,  
jumps to attention in your feet.

Without it, the world would be cold and dark,  
sluggish and slow,  
void of yearning and energy.

Red is what brings people together.  
the excitement in the air just before a concert,  
or the stamping of hands against thighs during a laugh.

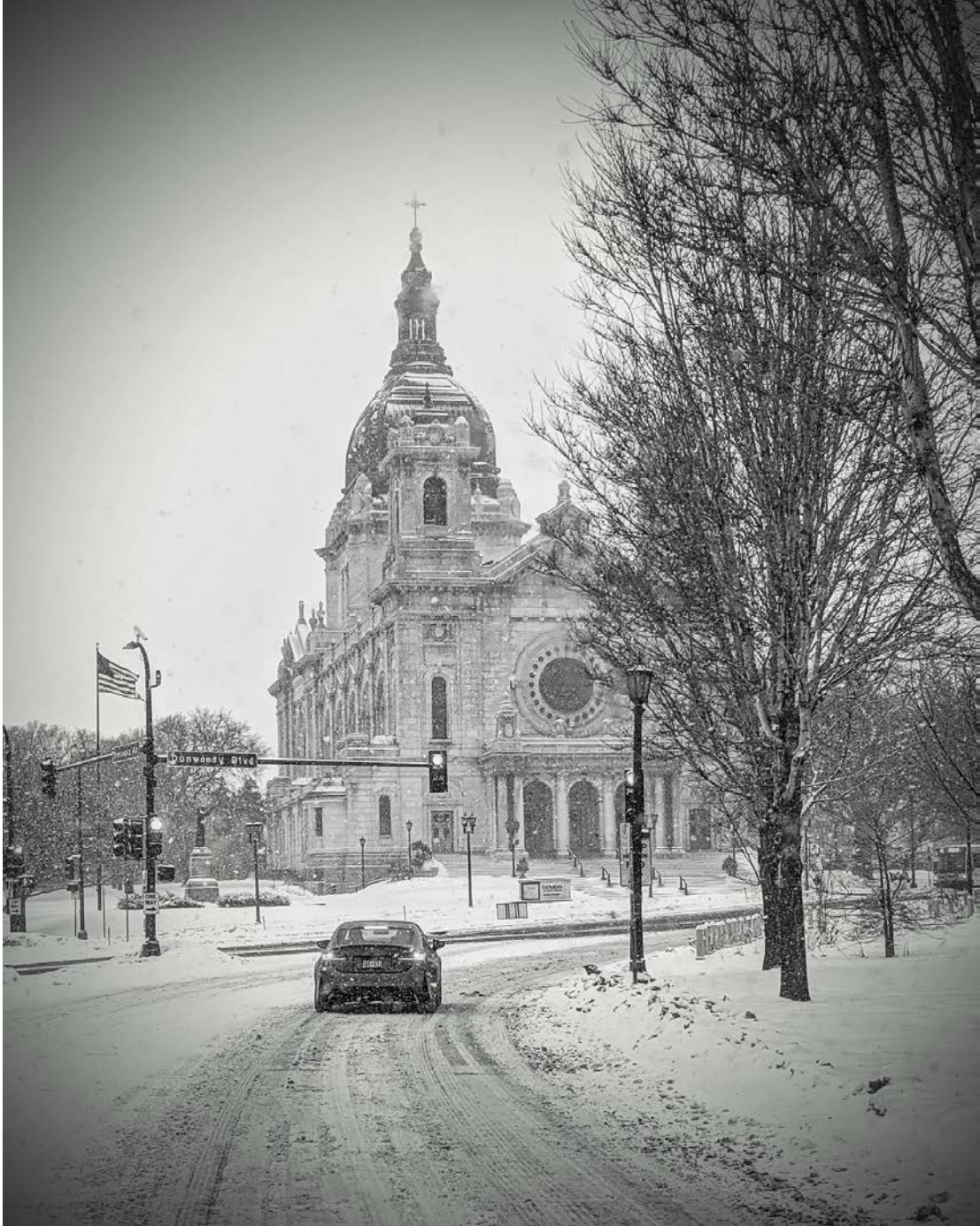
It brings warmth to your chest,  
hard but light in its form  
as it spreads evenly throughout your body  
when you feel content.

# The Frost and the Frusen Okänd

Heather Hoadley

The grandfather clock strikes the midnight hour, jolting me from my slumber. I rise from the chair and rub the sleep from my eyes. Cold air crawls across the floor, chilling my feet. January is always the coldest month in northern Sweden. Old wooden floorboards creak beneath me as I walk to the window. Icy frost ferns grow from the base of the windowpane, creating their own crystalline artwork along the glass. The moon illuminates the intricate details on each fern. Tiny shadows move outside the window. Snow glides past the window outside. How could it be snowing with the moon so bright? I grab my boots, scarf, cloak, and gloves, and leave the warmth of my cottage house. Snowflakes twirl, dance, and glide with the wind in the light of the moon. Each movement of the snowflakes are mesmerizing. The flakes capture and soften the sounds of the frozen forest. Crystals form with every exhale and billow into the night air. The moonlight illuminates the path before me. I must go on. Snowflakes sparkle like diamonds with every gust of wind. Every step, every breath, is watched by the eyes of the forest. Pine branches sway in the light breeze. I look down and spot animal tracks leading further into the forest. I immediately identified it as a wolf track. My back stiffens as I notice it is still fresh. It must have passed through no more than twenty minutes ago. The wind picks up and moves through the needles of the pine branches. Their strong scent filling my nostrils. Snow continues to fall through the shelter of the trees. A sound catches my ear before me, splitting the deafening silence. Echoing past the dancing snow and into the forest it goes. Fearing a wolf, I look around for the sound. I spot a Snowy owl soaring above the treetops. Its wings clinging to the air like an unsung memory. Talons sharp and cold, reach for the snow-covered branch of an old hickory tree. The white feathers of the old bird act as camouflage. Perched on the branch, it observes me with its big blue eyes for a moment. The great Snowy Owl urges me on with a flash of warning in its eyes. Snowflakes fall harder as time passes and the wind grows ever stronger. The northern wind whips my hair in my eyes. Turning its head, the owl dives from the tree and soars above the treetops towards the light of the moon. One. Two. Three heartbeats pass. Silence is ever silent because of the snow, except for the howl of the wind. I continue forward on my path. Into the cold, into the snow, into the frozen unknown I go.





*February Miracle/Heather Bjoin*

This essay was written for a Compare/Contrast assignment in English 101.

## Super Monsters!

Tyler Bitar

*If you make yourself more than just a man, if you devote yourself to an ideal, and if they can't stop you, then you become something else entirely ... A legend, Mr. Wayne.*

—Ra's Al Ghul, *Batman Begins* (2005)

In horror movies, there are typically clearly defined antagonists (easily spotted by the wardrobe choice of rags), as well as clearly defined desires of said antagonists. The same can be said for superhero movies, where the protagonists usually dress in bright spandex and also have desires that they make increasingly clear to the audience. The lines between hero and monster aren't as clear as some people might assume, however. While each of them dish out their respective forms of violence, horror movie monsters as well as superheroes have each been known to have sympathetic backstories, make up social constructs in real life, and even similarly brutalize those around them.

In the 2005 movie *Batman Begins*, Ra's Al Ghul fights Batman in a legendary battle for control over Gotham City, the fictional main city in the Batman stories. While our hero is using his skill of instilling fear in his adversaries as well as his brute strength to rip apart the very head of the league that raised him to ensure the safety of Gotham citizens, another villain, Scarecrow, is busy unleashing his "Fear Toxin" to the masses in the city. Batman does eventually get around to stopping both Ra's and Scarecrow, but while dealing specifically with the thugs and anarchists within the toxin, he gains the appearance of a man made of maggots, a swarm of bats, or even a solid shadow with blood pouring out of his mouth. Here, there is a running theme of Batman using fear to deal with the criminals in Gotham. In fact, an ever present detail in nearly every iteration of Batman is that he deals with his prey by making them fear him.

In the 1979 film *Alien*, the audience gets to see through the eyes of the crew on the "Nostromo," a space vessel used for the transportation of freight. In the movie, a crew of seven have an encounter with an unidentified alien; an all-black "Demon" with a long tail used for stabbing, and acid blood as a natural defense mechanism so that when it is shot by regular bullets, the rounds immediately dissolve upon entry into their bodies. With Batman in Gotham, criminals can be seen outright refusing to take jobs at night due to the fear of Batman alone. After "The Alien," otherwise known as the "xenomorph" is discovered, spacefarers start to refuse jobs on unpopulated planets. Both the criminals of Gotham and the spacefarers of the Alien universe think twice due to the unknown possibility that their respective threats lurk ready to hunt them down. Superheroes and monsters really aren't all that different. While people associate heroes with having great morals, and monsters from horror movies only wanting blood, they each resolve conflict with incapacitation and gratuitous violence, and they also both leave their own marks on society, both within their respective "story worlds," as well as in the real world.





Wall Frog/Ellen McDowell



What do Jason Voorhees, Freddy Kruger, Michael Myers, Ghostface, and Pyg/Jigsaw all have in common? A common argument would be that they're all horror movie antagonists who live for nothing more than blood, whereas characters such as Superman, Captain America, and Daredevil fight for their morals such as truth, justice, and the American Way. In truth, however, a horror movie monster is almost never so one-note. In the movie *Friday the 13th*, Jason is a vengeful spirit who presides over the old summer camp he was once drowned at. His parents entrusted his care with less than careless camp counselors who would sneak off to have sex and do drugs rather than watch their immature campers. After being made fun of for not being able to swim, Jason was drowned by his fellow campers, and left to die. Years later, Jason returns to the camp whilst under the possession of his dead mother, being told to kill the ever irresponsible camp counselors for abandoning him in the past, as well as the new young campers to seek revenge for what happened to him years ago. Jason is not just a slasher without a purpose, and neither are any of the others.

For example, Freddy Kruger from the *Nightmare on Elm Street* movies seeks revenge for being burned alive at his camp, Michael Myers from *Halloween* was possessed by the spirit of the boogeyman at the young age of eight, and unwillingly kills unsuspecting teens on Halloween night. In the first *Scream*, Ghostface is really a pair of high school teenagers damaged by a society that prides itself on popularity: Ghostface number one, Billy Loomis, is a "high school bad boy" who takes his role in that society too far, and Ghostface number two, Stu Macher, is a dopey kid who is peer pressured by Billy to don the mask to achieve his desire to be cool and respected. Jigsaw in the *Saw* series only forces people he deems to be scum (cheaters, murderers, corrupt law-enforcers, etc.) to play his deadly games, much like Daredevil fights small scale injustices in Hell's Kitchen, even calling himself the "judge, jury, and executioner." Pyg, Jigsaw's henchwoman formerly known as Amanda Young, has been stuffed inside a suit with a bear trap inside the mask and is forced to capture people for Jigsaw, or else Pyg herself will die. All of these so-called monsters have tragic backstories, and they are all killing for what they believe are just causes. Whereas Superman or Iron Man might shoot a laser into a man's chest for trying to rob a bank, Jigsaw pulls a several times convicted murderer from death row to play his nearly impossible deadly games as a form of rehabilitation, and he gives them a shot at a clean record and a new life.

On the note of how and why violence is carried out, superhero novels and movies seem to be built on stopping the main antagonist, no matter the cost. In the 2015 movie *Avengers: Age of Ultron*, The Avengers take on a deadly foe with the threat of destroying all of humanity. This foe, Ultron, was constructed by one of the heads of the avengers, Iron Man. At the end of the movie, Ultron is eventually stopped, but at the cost of areas of earth literally being torn apart, and even hundreds of deaths due to the collateral damage of two heroes, Hulk and Iron Man, fighting amongst themselves! The damage is later touched upon in *Captain America: Civil War*, but the negative feedback The Avengers received for fixing their own wrongdoing was miniscule compared to the praise they received for it; meanwhile, in *Alien*, the xenomorph only kills four crew members, and doesn't even kill a kitten trapped in a cage when it gets the chance! The other two members that end up dying are by the hands of the crew itself. The Avengers fight and continue to fight amongst themselves, leading to the deaths of hundreds, merely because they are all too hard-headed to agree whether they need regulation or they are the regulation. On the other hand, in *Alien*, the "Perfect Organisms," the "next step in evolution," the "unstoppable killing machines," the xenomorphs, kill so their race might grow more prosperous and colonize other planets.

Both superheroes and horrific monsters have unique purposes in their own world, with backstories that make sense for their characters, and whether heroes mean to or not, both groups end up taking lives to suit their own personal agendas. The biggest way in which heroes and monsters are both alike and different, however, is the way they end up impacting societies in both their story worlds, as well as the real world. Superheroes are often seen as symbols of hope, beacons of how we should strive to act. Many members of the Justice League as well as DC comics characters are portrayed in a way that likens them to Gods and Goddesses of mythology, giving people impossible standards to attempt to live up to. Wonder Woman is literally a Greek Goddess. Meanwhile, Marvel Comics seems to have a different design philosophy, but similar intentions, attempting to make their heroes more relatable to what humans can achieve, rather than what they can only dream of achieving. The Black Panther was named after the Black Panther movement, while the X-Men is a metaphor for oppressed minorities, as they are under the lead of Professor X, who has a name referencing Malcom X, and has the morals of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and with Magneto, Professor X's rival, taking on Malcom X's ideology.

Horror movie monsters shouldn't be excluded from this pantheon of relatable story subjects, however, as many of them can contain valuable lessons we can strive to learn. The *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* cautions what could happen should one attempt to desert their homeland in times of war, and *Split* offers that scarred people shouldn't be ashamed of their tragic pasts, but rather, should wear their scars with pride, acknowledging their knowledge of true pain and using their pain to do fuel their most extraordinary acts— much like what the aforementioned X-Men teach. *Scream*, a horror movie meant to parody horror movies, can teach people the valuable lesson to simply try to be true to one's self, or even to work against corrupt societal norms, as they could be harmful. *Jaws* even started a movement across America to ensure American beaches were more carefully monitored and that sharks were kept safe and away from humans trying to play on the beach, much in the way that the superhero Aquaman inspired heavier regulation on illegal fishing and more pollution control in the water.

Horror movies are always fun to watch for the over the top violence and added scare factor, and superhero movies are nearly always fun action films for all ages to enjoy, but if one looks deeper into either of them, they may find that they both have core values that define their films that individuals can use to better themselves in life. After all, both types of stories contain characters with depth and backstory that people can relate to, both have elements of over the top violence that is used to fuel the narratives of their stories, and even though horror movies are more typically cautionary tales, whereas superhero stories have more inspirational plots, both can teach humanity lessons that build character with icons they can aspire to learn from throughout their everyday lives. While the Xenomorph may be called the "Perfect Organism," Batman is called "The night. Fear itself. Vengeance," and remembering that each of them “mostly comes out at night, mostly,” only to wreak havoc, spread terror, and encourage their general populations to conform to their lifestyles, the lines that separate even one of the most beloved heroes is practically one that is drawn in the sand when compared to one of horror's most renowned killers.



Untitled/Nikki Ponce

# My Neighbor Teddy

Tyler Carlson

My neighbor Teddy is weird. He's not mean, or angry, just weird.

My mommy says I shouldn't talk to him.

My daddy says he's harmless.

I know Teddy likes my mom. Whenever he's around, he always smiles at her like my dad does sometimes. I always give him a smile and a wave when I see him. I don't want to be mean, since he's new to the neighborhood. He seems pretty lonely too. He's always alone by himself. I never see people go in or out of his house aside from him. I guess I feel bad for him.

The only weird thing is, the week he moved into the block, our dog went away. We went to bed and woke up and she was gone. Lilly was a good guard dog, barked at the tiniest squirrel that dared to enter our backyard. She was so sweet, I'd hate to be anyone that would try and break into our house. But she's gone, and Daddy can keep us safe. One day, she'll show up.

Some nights I'd go to My parent's room and see Lilly lying just beside my mom's side of the bed, facing the door. Now whenever I go to lay with mommy and daddy, I see Teddy on the floor, sitting besides my mom's side of the bed with that warm smile. I give him a wave, and he returns it and places a finger over his lips. I miss Lilly, but I guess Teddy could protect them. He's just weird.

# The Narcissist's Handbook:

Megan Reed

I don't care.

I never said that.

You are too sensitive.

You are overwhelming!

You have too many trust issues.

I'm not the crazy one, YOU ARE!

It's not always about you.

You'll never find someone better than me.

You ask too many questions.

You are weak.

You are foolish.

You are insecure.

No one is ever going to believe you.

Your feelings are irrelevant.

You look tired.

You should smile more.

You're too needy.

You're selfish.

Stop playing the victim.

Look in the mirror.

You're the problem.

It's all in your head.

I don't understand you.

Maybe you deserved it.

Why do you always bring up the past?

You're delusional.

Sorry not sorry.





*iWorld/Dakota McDorman*



## Senior Year

Cullen Vickroy

Work. Eat. Work. Work. Get Frustrated And Watch *Naruto*. Work.

Work. Swim Practice. Work.

Work. Get Frustrated And Watch *Naruto*. Sleep.

Work. Sleep.

Go Home And Watch *Naruto* And Fall Asleep.

Feel Ashamed Of Little Work You Did Yesterday. Work. Stress Out And Fail To Fall Asleep.

Go To School Brain-Dead. Come Home Brain-Dead. Try To Sleep. Fail To Sleep.

Call Into School Because No Sleep For Two Days. Fail To Sleep Again. Gets Up At 3 To Shower. Tries To Do Schoolwork But Too Tired To Do So. Gets Frustrated. Watches *Naruto*. Finally Falls Asleep.

Wakes Up At 4 AM. Tries To Go Back To Sleep. Fails. Gets Up For School Early. Heads To School. It's Saturday.



*Lights That Call Me Home/Heather Bjoin*

# Trina's Song

Jason Harris

A moment out of time and space brought us together in this world and place.  
Making my heart start to race as I gaze upon your beautiful face.  
You added depth to my being and unlooked for love to my heart.  
It would take more than the earth and heavens to tear us apart.

A family is what we want and it starts with us two.  
Rambunctious Noah, Little Ethan, Brown-eyed Megan, me and you.  
Sweet angelic Ashley and Jaidyn to finish off the squad.  
Just the thought of all of us together makes me sing out loud.

I Love You and only you. You make my dreams come true.  
We belong together like suns of yellow and skies of blue.  
Like fluffy clouds of white and soft grass of green.  
You, and only you are the girl of my dreams.

Someday I'll write songs instead of working a nowhere job.  
You'll be playing with the kids and calling me a slob.  
Wrestling with the boys and doing the girls' hair,  
All of us as happy as can be without a care.

A moment out of space and time brought us together with a single mind.  
Both of us realizing that, no matter what anyone says, we're two of a kind.  
Same hopes, same fears, same dreams of passing the years  
With the ones we love full of happiness and without tears.

I Love You and only you. No one can take your place.  
Strong will, lots of confidence, a solid emotional base.  
Great looks, lovely eyes, a beautiful smile that beams.  
You and only you are the girl of my dreams.



*Maria/Nikki Ponce*

# Sunrise

Heather Bjoin

**3:00 a.m.** I awoke . . . I missed the sunrise.

**3:05 a.m.** I awoke, the room was dark, but I could see the light outside . . . I missed the sunrise.

**3:30 a.m.** I awoke terrified. A woman was in the hotel bed, pressing me into the mattress, her hands on my chest. I could smell the rot on her breath as she said, “You will never see the sunrise.” I begged her to leave. I screamed my niece’s name as I fell to the floor between the two beds remembering the time I sat in the background like an overused trinket unworthy of attention. I sat quietly, afraid to make a sound. If someone noticed me, they would notice only my flaws; they would never see my true smile because the smile was only there to hold back the tears and keep them from falling.

**3:45 a.m.** I awoke in a cabin. The sun’s light filled the room. I got dressed and walked outside. An old friend sat on the porch of the neighbor’s cabin; I waved and smiled even though I had missed the sunrise.

**4:00 a.m.** I awoke to a song being played from the “Boom Boom” playlist my niece and I created before we left the city. My thumb moved the flashing bar to snooze. *Just another ten minutes.*

*Did your Groundhog’s Day dreams teach you nothing?*

*Right, right, I’ll get up.*

I kept the music playing while I crawled out of bed. I figured MaKalea would be better off waking up to the music rather than my voice. (She read that and said, “no”).

**4:50 a.m.** Light was beaming through the blinds. Panic sunk in as I double-checked my phone. The sun wasn’t supposed to rise for another fifteen minutes.

“Ready? We got to go. I’ll tell you about my dream on the way.”

**4:52 a.m.** I told her the series of dreams and explained to her my fear; I was about to miss that magical moment once again. She calmed me; no one could have done it better.

**5:00 a.m.** We parked the blueberry in the same spot as the night before and walked the same dirt path through the trees down to the Black Sand Beach, which is filled with more lake stones than sand.

**5:02 a.m.:** The sky was a pale, fresh blue appearing as though it had just awoken from another long night. Out on the lake’s horizon, I could see a sliver of pink.





Path/Heather Bjoin

**5:05 a.m.** Sitting on the rocks, we cracked open our Bangs and found stillness in the chilled Minnesotan air. My anxiety dissipated as the arch of the sun peeked from behind a thin stretched cloud. There I was -perhaps, for the first time- watching the sunrise.

**5:15 a.m.** It brought back a memory of a small note written in 2004.

*“Just because you don’t see the sunrise, doesn’t mean it isn’t there . . . Never stop smiling because you never know who is falling-in-love with your smile . . .” The note was chicken-scratched on my back while my fingertips pressed on the keys of his piano, trying to mimic what he played.*

*“What are you doing?” I asked.*

*“Don’t you worry about it, just keep practicing.”*

*The first time I read what he wrote it brought tears of joy to my eyes, as did the second read, the third, the fourth, and every year I read it since. The note was a small light that said I was not alone. Yet, somehow, every time I shoved it back into its secret hiding place I found myself alone in the dark, making friends with shadows. They blanketed me with the belief that they concealed all my imperfections. If I just stayed out of the light and made myself unmemorable; I would just be forgotten.*

*And once forgotten no one could use my faults against me. I would have no reason to be ashamed; yet, I was.*

*I was content. That was my favorite word to describe how I was, complaisantly content. I lived my life afraid of what others would think of me, afraid to be me. I was lost in the moment's darkness, complacent with the past, and afraid of the future. I hid from the world, subsequently limiting moments of happiness and all the potential memories. I watched the sun from a dim-lit room, and all I wanted was for once to see the sun bask on my skin rather than the facade I was playing for the enjoyment of the people I loved.*

*I didn't realize that until a friend (the same who wrote the note years prior) said to me, "No, I'm holding you to higher standards."*

*Thoughts hindered me to articulate my tongue, causing a soft exhalation instead of speech. I sat on the opposite side of the kitchen island. Cryptic words and confused emotions coiled into an enigma. I fought the tears and traded them for a smile that kept my thought a secret: Why would you want to change me?*

*It was a question brought on by embarrassment, intimidation, and the feeling that I could never live up to any set standards. At that moment I felt I didn't belong. I wanted my comfort back. I wanted to run back to what was easy. A place where I was content. But in that place... even there I wasn't me. I was someone hiding, in the eclipse of a still picture frame. Hoping, wanting, desiring, as I struggled to get out.*

Nothing is more terrifying than walking into the unknown. The frame held me captive and as the hands of the clock continued to move; I waited for the magical moments: the right person, the right time, and the right place.

Well, it took me long enough, and I am here . . .

**5:30 a.m.** sitting on the beach, watching the sun rise up over the horizon. It was a moment I fantasized about a thousand times. And in all of those thousands of fantasies, I had a man sitting next to me. It was romantic. Yet, for my first sunrise, I didn't have that. I had something better. I created a moment, and I didn't do it alone. I did it with the only person in the world who could look at me on a public beach and say, "Take your shirt off." I looked at her like she was bat shit crazy. But then she said, "We're going to get your picture."

She didn't forget, and she didn't let me forget. She didn't let me back out or change my mind regardless of how I felt. I knew she wouldn't. But she made me do exactly what I set out to do: make the sunrise powerful.

See, it is people like you I want to keep in my life. People like you willing to push me to a better place, hold me to my words, and never let a memory pass.

**5:36 a.m.** Another still frame was captured as I fell in love with my smile while watching someone fall in love with theirs.



*Clouds*/Ellen McDowell





*Your Country* is the smaller piece in front of the main piece, with the soldier saluting and the gray wall at the bottom.

*Our Struggle* is the larger, main piece. *Your Country* opens to reveal the painting 22 on the other side (p. 66).

All pieces in this exhibit by:  
Joshua Hinkle



**National Suicide  
Prevention Lifeline – Crisis  
hotline** — 1.800.273.8255 -  
TTY Line 1.800.799.4889

**Veterans Crisis Hotline** —  
1.800.273.8255. Press 1

# Heat

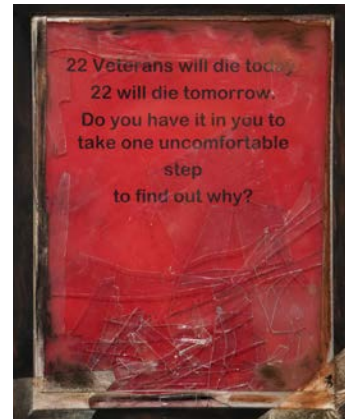
Joshua Hinkle

The summer after my graduation was not unlike most American teenagers at the time. I found myself stuck in that place where it's still fun to do immature kid stuff while also trying to find a place in the world and exercise your newly won freedom. So it was for me that entire first summer of adulthood. I can still even remember thinking that we were still back in school, and nothing had really changed. Well, except the weather because my Gods, was it hot that summer. It seemed like every day we would meet around mid-morning in the middle of nowhere, and we would do things the teenagers do. We even had an old broken-down dilapidated husk of a car that we all hung out around. That car must have been a thousand years old, but man the stories it could tell. It was as much a part of our story that summer as was anyone or anything else.

As a matter of fact, that rundown car became the landmark that signaled our day's start. I know that once that car appeared on the horizon, I would soon be surrounded by my friends. We had the time of our lives that summer as we really didn't have a care in the world. Looking back, maybe we should have, but what can you ever tell a group of eighteen-year-olds? We smoked, we joked, ate, laughed, cried all the while trying to keep the hands of time from moving forward, and wished to stay like this forever. But what child doesn't want to stay young forever with his friends.

Looking back, we really didn't have a clue about the grand scheme of things. Most of our summer was spent finding bugs for our multi-tiered insect Fight Club. A Fight Club I never once won, but that's another story entirely. We told inappropriate jokes, we laughed at each other's inevitable misfortunes. We even took the time to mess with cars as they drove by. I can only imagine what the drivers and passengers of these vehicles thought of us as we poked fun of them as they drove by. I can even remember a couple times that we got the cars to stop by standing in the middle of the road. As you can imagine the occupants were plenty angry. Let's be honest, the drivers had every right to be mad. They would just be driving along when out of nowhere. Some punk kids would seemingly randomly decide to position themselves in the road so that your car had to stop? I know that they say crime rates rise when the temperature increases because people can no longer stay inside. They go outside. They're miserable, so they go and do things that they wouldn't typically have done if it wasn't so hot out. After that summer, I wholeheartedly believe that there is a link between weather temperature and crime rates. We were indeed heat-induced hoodlums that summer.

I can remember the events that transpired during one of those hoodlum style traffic stops as if it was yesterday. It couldn't have been long after the lunch hour 'cause I remember being very miserable out in the heat with a full stomach. It felt as if I had weighted chained dragging behind me constantly slowing me down. I remember the temperature being more unbearable that day, even more so than usual. I kept feeling the sting of the salt-infused sweat as it slowly dripped down my forehead, finally coming to





rest in my already sensitive eyes. The next few moments are a complete blur as one of the guys managed to get a car to stop.....

Time itself slowed to a crawl as the car in front of us turned itself into a rolling fireball that exploded right before our eyes. I can remember screaming "contact right" as the Iraqi militia opened up with small-arms fire as the car exploded in our checkpoint. It was an ambush and one that we were entirely unprepared for. I took shelter behind the shell of the burnt-out vehicle we had drug into the middle of the road to serve as a barrier in our checkpoint zone. It was then that our months of training and preparation finally kicked in as I raised my M-4 rifle and began to return fire. Months of boredom had finally given way to the adventure we had all signed up for earlier that summer. We had all graduated from the same basic training when the Iraq War began in earnest. The year is 2003; it is two weeks after Allied Forces took the capital city. I am on the outskirts of Baghdad, Iraq where the heat-induced hoodlums had been tasked with manning one of the hundreds of checkpoints around the city. So it was, despite the explosions, heat, and small arms fire, that a great sense of pride overtook me. I was after all a descendant Norse people of Scandinavia.

My ancestors set foot in these ancient lands hundreds of years before I was born, yet here I was following in their footsteps. It was the Norse way to fight, wage war, and spread their culture around the world. I could not help myself from feeling a deep sense of belonging. Once again, a Viking son had gathered a war party, set sail across the ross the ocean, and waged war with his enemies. Odin, himself, would be proud of the current state of affairs because as I returned fire, I had finally become a Viking in these modern times.



22/Joshua Hinkle

# The Sara Chronicles

Kaitlyn Pleshko

## Part One

There is no starting over  
I won't keep looking back

Charcoal fingers disintegrate under pressure  
I wither under pressure

Too hard to stand upright  
With the weight of my anger

Hanging round my neck  
The medal I never wanted

The only one I really earned  
Only one I can't set down

## Part Two

Why would I start over?  
Looking back is all that keeps me sane

Charcoal dust painting the floor  
Misery hiding behind the door

If I can't look back on my mistakes  
I can't suffer through them again

Can't stand on broken legs  
I hardly exist in my crisis

Survive, survive, just survive  
I've nothing else to do

## Part Three

I won't start over  
Living with my history

Charcoal smeared on my hands  
But I've cleaned them off the floor

If I can't learn from my mistakes  
I'll suffer them again

Standing on healing legs  
The ache reminds me I'm alive

Just keep saying the truth  
I'm alive, I'm okay, I'll be alright

# Invented Memories

Jason Harris

Voices in my head, I'm not alone.  
Choices of my life were not that very strong.  
Invented Memories filling up my past.  
Time standing still seems to go by way too fast.

Reality is an illusion, just a game that people play.  
Immortal for a limited time no matter what you pay.  
Jealousy running through my mind all night and every day.  
By myself talking to myself so I know what I say.

Schizophrenic, we're doing better now.  
Lost my sanity, don't remember how.  
Invented Memories, easier to do  
Then to remember what is really true.

Reality is an illusion, just a game that people play.  
Immortal for a limited time no matter what you pay.  
Jealousy running through my mind all night and every day.  
By myself talking to myself so I know what I say.

Invented Memories filling up my past.  
Time standing still seems to go by way too fast.  
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Reality is an illusion, just a game that people play.  
Immortal for a limited time no matter what you pay.  
Jealousy running through my mind all night and every day.  
By myself talking to myself so I know what I say.



*What Comes Before the Beauty/Heather Bjoin*

This essay was turned in for an assignment for English 101. Students were asked to write a persuasive essay using logos, ethos, and pathos, and to include secondary sources for support.

## Secrets

Tyler Bitar

*“Hy-aaaargh!” the lady sitting in front of me, a zombie, indicates her last brain of the day is mine as she looks at her watch with a look of seemingly-forced surprise, and then to me with the same face.*

*“So, are you eating okay? Getting a lot of exercise? How are you doing in school?” The lifeless corpse was going through the same motions as the two previous times I came to visit her.*

*I remember thinking I had less time with her now than in my previous sessions. Suddenly, with startling speed coming from the hollow body, she got up and gestured me out the door and to the elevator of her two-story building. On the ride down, I started to speak, “there was one other thing, actually, if you wouldn’t mind?”*

*“Sure! But try and be quick! Erm, I mean, your mom is waiting for you outside and I think it’s raining!”*

*“Sorry,” I responded, “I don’t know, I’ve just been feeling like maybe I’m not worth all of this trouble.”*

*She glanced at me and said, “Remember what we talked about, and just get good exercise tonight, then if you still feel this way, talk to me tomorrow!”*

*“Right,” I said, “But I guess I’ve just been having these thoughts—”*

*“Wait!” She stopped me dead in my tracks. “You aren’t having thoughts of . . . hurting yourself, are you? You know I’d have to inform authorities, right?”*

*I did not say anything as I heard the door shut behind me. All I got before I could say anything was the usual, “Anyway, we’ll talk more next week!” as I went to hug my mom and tell her I was fine.*

Suicide Awareness Voices of education estimates that around 123 Americans per day die by taking their own life. Every one of these deaths are preventable, but it can be shockingly hard to find someone who wants to save a life, especially when there is a law stating that therapists must report patients who are suicidal to proper authorities. Therapists need to be able to listen to their patients’ suicidal thoughts and behavior, especially when they are paid by the customer to listen, it can be extremely hard on the patient’s family if the therapist doesn’t listen, and because so few people are willing to listen in the first place.

“I couldn’t afford therapy, so I just watched ‘Frasier’. Season 4 was a breakthrough”: This quotation by Cristela Alonzo, as humorous as it is, makes for a very relatable truth. Therapy costs money. While I could not find any exact range of costs of therapy (mainly because therapy prices vary greatly), therapy costs an average of 80 to 150 dollars a session. If a minimum wage worker in America spends an entire two days of earnings on therapy, one would expect them to get the help they so desire, but as it turns out, money really can’t buy everything. Only after paying for one’s first session will they find out they can’t even give someone money to listen to them talk about their thoughts of suicide, decreasing their sense of self worth and making them feel as though their time means nothing.

The USDA estimates parents spend an average of \$13,000 a year on raising a child. Holly Johnson with “The Daily Capital” reports the average cost of a funeral in



2012 was around \$7,000. A single suicide can put a strain on a family so easily, not only emotionally, but also financially. To go to work everyday and put in extra hours to raise a kid, and then having to pay for a surprise funeral when a parent finds out they never actually provided enough for their kid is tolling in ways that a person should never have to know. It puts a hole in the heart of a family, especially ones that thought they were close enough to talk about things like depression, but because the suicidal person felt they had nowhere else to go to, especially when therapists seem to not be willing to help, some families only get to find out how their relatives really feel after it's too late.

It may be objective to state that suicide is an uncomfortable topic, and that's partially because death is an uncomfortable topic. Not many people can cope with death, and it is fair to say that therapists deal with such heavy material every day that having to deal with people who are suicidal would be too much to ask. At least, it would be if it were not for the suicide prevention hotline. The suicide prevention hotline offers free, anonymous, 24/7 support for people who are dealing with thoughts of suicide or self-harm. The suicide prevention hotline is rare, as there is almost nobody else that people can go to for talking about suicide, but contrary to expensive therapy appointments, they do it for free. If authorities didn't have to be informed by therapists when a patient feels suicidal, people would feel free to talk to more about their problems.

Suicide is always preventable, but when people who have jobs positioned around helping other people through their problems aren't willing to take on what would be the hardest part of their job, it creates a feeling of hopelessness amongst anyone who is struggling with thoughts that nobody should have to think in the first place. Therapists should be allowed to talk with patients about suicidal behavior; life is too short to waste time with not finding adequate help, and too long to have to live in a lonely world anyway.

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**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – Crisis hotline —**  
**1.800.273.8255 - TTY Line 1.800.799.4889**

# **But All of This Doesn't Compare to You**

Jason Harris

A cloud of mist hangs over the land.  
The serene beauty is more than I can stand.

A breeze is flying through the trees.  
A bird is gliding with a soul that's totally free.

A glorious morning in the middle of spring.  
The flowers in bloom; who knows what this day will bring?

I see my reflection in the running stream.  
I want no end to this wonderful dream.

Here are the mountains rising like towers.  
In the breeze is the fragrance of the flowers.

The sun's heat is warm and true.  
But all of this doesn't compare to you.



*Iris/Nikki Ponce*

# The Last Time he Lied

Khloe Trulson

They say life is a series of choices, each minor error splitting off into tangents that create millions upon millions of timelines spanning throughout the universe like the curved designs on the silk wings of a butterfly. They say such a small and fragile creature stirs the wind in its wake, flapping its wings just enough to form the disastrous body of a hurricane days later, not unlike the chaotic and uncontrollable way life repeats and continues, stops and sputters in its wake in each passing second. They argue with booming voices over the construct of time: is it reality? A social experiment? Or perhaps the results of the human brain trying desperately to cling to a solid form of comfort, to know that the floating rock they call their home has a purpose in the way it spins and is never random in the way it does so?

Lance had never believed in things like divine intent until the nightmares began. At first they were little glimpses of fear, but they quickly began to grow stronger until each night felt like he was getting doused in freezing water, his blood standing still in his veins and his entire body wincing at the impact as if he had been shot--though it was also nothing like that either as he had felt the hard bite of a bullet in his arm before. This was indescribable in the way it constricted his chest and forced a dryness in his throat he felt could never be relieved. His therapist chalked it up to sleep paralysis, said the nightmares were a figment of his overactive imagination and the results of spending far too much time in the uncomfortable embrace of the police force in which he worked. Though Lance, despite never being much of a religious person ever since he was a teenager and rebelled against the Sunday family bonding at church, couldn't help but feel the draw of punishment in his luck.

He had only begun seeing Lillian—the strikingly blonde woman whom he now visited every other Thursday evening—after a particularly bad case the night after he turned thirty three; it wasn't hard to understand that nightmares began directly after they finally cracked the case of what the force nicknamed the 'Black Swan', and it was even easier for him to sit idly and allow himself to be analyzed like a fish on a hook. With being a witness to something as brutal as the murder of over a dozen women in the biggest restaurant on the busiest street of Busan came a mandatory session or two, but Lance never stopped coming, not even two years later. Perhaps he felt attached to the clinical atmosphere, the light dotting over that never became personal but filled a gap where no woman had yet to stand since he was a young boy. How terribly pathetic he found himself, clinging to the ankles of his therapist as if she were a cherub sent from God himself to allow him a rope out of the hole of his sins.

Lillian's long, manicured finger pressed against the inside of his cheek, tugging it until it was almost painful as he felt the sharp tip of her rosy pink nail press into his skin. She always loved that color--somewhere between a soft and gentle baby pink and a vibrant and bold hot red. Except Lance was very aware that his psychiatrist was neither in his bedroom nor on top of him, pressing her bony knees into his chest until he couldn't breathe, and the numbness of it all was a clear sign this was exactly as she had detailed--sleep paralysis. It reminded him of the women they found in that freezer, their skinny little bodies impaled at the shoulders to keep their toes the only thing brushing light against the frosted ground. He wanted to gag around the protruding limb, tasting of metallic blood and the scent of her rosy but cheap perfume turning sour in his nose as if it were coming off her in waves like heat off a radiator.



The crook of her finger was his own hook—holding him in place and bearing his teeth like an angry dog—and he was forced to watch as she told him in that feather light distant voice that he was simply a lost cause, too insane to continue walking around with a badge on his breast and certainly never going to escape the lonely thralls of his current life. He clung to the skin on the sides of her knees where her skirt didn't cover, numbness in his limbs holding his palms flat over the edges of the fabric.

Until she was gone, a shadow against the blinding light of his balcony as he sat up and coughed until her lingering, ghost of taste was ripped from his mouth, choking so badly he nearly threw up against the thin sheets strung out over his lap. His lungs had clawed for air and he had drooled a puddle into the bowl of his knees.

Lance didn't bring up this event in his session later that evening. Instead, he insisted that his night was spent dreaming about absolute blackness. From the way Lillian, now sat comfortably in a black armrest a few feet away, scribbled against the notepad resting light against her knee, Lance knew she didn't believe him. He focused on the slight chips in the pink of her nails, tried not to imagine them as marks left by his teeth.

"Absolutely no dream at all? That's odd coming from you. You have a brilliant imagination, Mr. Jones." She pressed the pad of her thumb into the end of her pen, shutting off its flow of strikingly red ink and turning the fierce green of her gaze back to him.

"Thank you. I would gladly pawn it if I could."

Lillian didn't laugh, but she did smile. She never quite divulged in his jokes, and Lance had learned to stop insisting on them. "Well, perhaps you should trade it for some honesty."

"I don't think you should be insulting your clients."

"I am not insulting you, Mr Jones." Lillian adjusted in her seat, lithe legs unfurling only to curve over each other the opposite way. Lance's eyes were drawn to the movement, anything to get away from such an intense stare. "You are a very average man who is unhappy with the current stability in your life. You are not in search of a cure, you are in search of an answer."

"Then give me one."

"I can't. Two years you have come to me and not once have you spoken the truth—at least not fully. Why is that?"

"Can't you just spit out a bullshit reason?" Lance scoffed, "Tell me it's because my dad was never home as a kid or because my first girlfriend cheated on me in 10th grade? It's always something stupid like that; never the fault of the person who lies."

"Do you think this is your fault, Mr. Jones?"

"Absolutely."

"And why is that?"

"Because I'd be even more of a damn liar if I said otherwise."

Lillian's smile faltered on the edges, a slight tip downward that had Lance's eyes drifting along her face to their plush, light pink. She was stumped, facing a roadblock that her client refused to shift elsewhere and suddenly Lance felt a surge of pride. No one could solve such a complex case as someone who chose to expose himself to the horrors of the human psyche—Lance had no reason to blame his mother for neglect or his father for a heavy hand for he never had such problems, only that of a liar born of self-hatred.

"Your time is up, Mr. Jones. I will see you again on the 15th."

"Of course." He lied.

# Guilt

Tyler Bitar

Shaking intensely  
Yet paralyzed

My eyes  
Its eyes  
Stare at each other  
Our bond of mutual hate

We know the deal  
it has happened before  
As the first time  
It left me on the floor

I wish It would leave  
'stead of standing  
over my bed  
I wish It would  
just get out of my head

Then there's the worst part  
I know I'll be standing there  
tomorrow, I'll be where  
It was, and everyday  
I will feel the decay It does

A ghost, a shadow, a sin of the past  
A morbid future, a time yet to pass  
My worry, my anger, my anxiety  
No, I choose not to believe  
what it tells me  
It simply cannot be me



Names Removed/Joshua Hinkle





*Reflection/*Ellen McDowell



# Cursed: A Demon's Haunting

Heather Bjoin

There is no sanctuary in this cold, dark room. The feelings of isolation and fear have completely consumed me and so I sit here with my back pressed into a corner, hoping that the walls are enough to hide me from the demon who haunts this place. He has not always been here, no. He followed me from my past.

I thought that by running away he would never find me. Perhaps I did not run far or fast enough. Perhaps I stayed too long here in this place I decided to call home. I should have heeded the warning signs: the driving through every yellow light, the streetlamp that blinks on and off in a frantic motion. The universe was trying to tell me he is back. Instead of listening to the warning cries, I told myself it was just the crazy talking. *Demons do not exist.*

And that was my first mistake.

Regardless of what people believe, I know the truth and it's time that I remember that. I have seen their faces, felt their presence, and wished that I too lived blind folded like the millions of other people out there.

See, demons do not care if you believe in them. In fact, they hope you never do, and they hope that humanity continues to blame all their chaos on diseases of the mind. For if you never believe in them, you will never find the way to defeat them. However, I am afraid that this time I remembered that all too late; for he is here in my home I can sense his presence like the bitter wind blowing in the night.

He found me the same way he always does, through my dreams.

I moved into a house with some friends, maybe a lover. I don't remember which. It was exciting and beautiful, with large bay windows and cherry hardwood floors. We had yet to get furniture, so we laid blankets in the middle of the living room floor with a fire burning in the fireplace. It was a peaceful day that darkened into an accursed night.

The fire dimmed, leaving only the coals with a smoldering light and a smoke that crept from them. Although the room did not physically shrink in size, it tightened around me, suffocating me as I tried to sleep. I tossed and turned. Something was wrong, I could feel it crawling up my spine like tightening fists clenching to something they refused to let go of and all the while I heard him whispering, "mine, mine, mine."

My eyes widened. Even in the dream, I knew what was happening. Afraid to say the words out loud, I thought to myself, *please not again.* But still his voice reverberated like a crescendoing reply to my thoughts, "mine, mine, mine."

I watched my breath as it left my cold lips. The soft exhalation was all it took for him to show his pale, thin-to-bone, decaying face. My, how he aged without me. His black soulless eyes matched up with mine as he pressed my shoulders to the floor. The cold of his hands caused the stinging pain of frostbite to my bare skin. Death reeked from his lips as he hissed the words I will never forget, "Mine, I always find what is mine."

I awoke, frozen in place. The small amount of light streaming in from the window allowed me to see a darkened shadow slither above the bed before scampering out of sight. Every muscle in my body tightened as I told myself the same old lie, "It was just a bad dream, you are alright."

I had to pee, but I couldn't get out of bed. Because what if he was hiding under there? What a stupid thought, I know.

My phone glowed from the nightstand next to my bed.

Alex, I thought. Hoping it was him. Hoping that somehow, he just knew I needed him. We haven't talked in a while. But I swear we still had a connection. It was something unlike anything I had ever felt before. The tension was that of pulling worlds that coalesced two beings, not in body but in heart, soul, and thought. And I still believe that if anyone was awake and willing to talk me through another dark night, it would be him.

But then, there was that soft, tantalizing melody ringing through the speaker of my phone. The music was soothing, adding comfort and warmth in the middle of the cold night.

I checked my phone, no messages. But the sound of the piano continued.

*Why do I still believe he thinks of me? That he cares for me? After all these years, why would he? After all I have done, said? Even if I told him everything, should I be surprised that he wouldn't message me back, that he doesn't care? I was horrible to him.*

I stopped my thoughts for a moment because I knew all too well where they were going. It was nowhere good, and they were going to take me right back to that place I escaped from eight years ago. I was a different person then, and I cannot keep living life in regret and remorse for all the things I have done. That is no way to fight this.

*And he still cares, he still loves me, he told me so. If I just message him, if I tell him about my nightmare . . .*

"He has his own problems, I am sure. Does he really need yours? Does he need this again? Are you really going to be so selfish, Haley Lynn?" And there he was inside of my mind.

*God damn you. No, he is not there. He was never there, Lector Lucious never existed. It was all in my head. He wasn't real, this is not real.* I took in a deep breath and for a moment I forgot to breathe. I was trying so hard to fight all thoughts. I didn't want to think anymore. I wanted it all to go away. But it was dark, and it was cold, and there I sat, so alone, all alone, with not a single soul in the world. Tears formed in my eyes.

I reread the messages that Alex sent to me over a week ago. His replies were short, almost nonexistent. I thought for a moment about messaging him.

"You really are a selfish girl, aren't you? All for a little attention."

*I have always been here for him. If he ever has a problem I will be there to help him. How is that selfish?*

"He doesn't want you there. He will never come to you with all his problems. He has better friends for that."

The demon in my mind is a termite, eating away the last bit of a solid foundation as he consumes every good thought I have.

*Alex is just a closed person. There is nothing wrong with that, there is nothing wrong with our friendship. He cares for me. He wants me in his life. He said so.*

"Does he, though? Really think about this, my dear. Nobody wants you in their life. You are just an annoyance, a pest, a parasite. Remember that? Those are your words, not mine."

*He is right, that's all I have ever been. No STOP!* I screamed it in my mind while I rubbed the tears from my eyes with the palms of my hands and moved them to the back of my neck. The tension was building there. I need this voice inside my head to stop.

Shutting off the music that played from my phone, I found the courage to step out of bed and walk to the bathroom. I turned on every light as I went. The light didn't seem to matter; something was watching me, following me.

I got to the bathroom, closed the door and did what I needed to do. The whole time I felt like I had just locked myself into the smallest room with the worst monster imaginable. I stood still as I looked into the mirror. The faucet was still on. I liked the sound of running water because it drowned out the other voice inside my head.

A large gust of wind pounded like a slamming fist against the window, and the cold crept in through the small gap above the ledge. The cold brought back the feeling of his cold, dead hands against my skin. I closed my eyes to shake the image. "It's not real." I told myself. I repeated the words over and over again. I braced myself on the sink and bent in towards the mirror. My eyes were red and tired, my skin as pale as death. The demon was sucking the life right out of me, and I was letting him by refusing to believe he was there.

"Lector Lucious does not exist." I said out loud.

The lights flicked off and with the dark came his voice, "Say it all you want, my dear. I am here and I will never leave you."

A quick flash of light filled the room. Through the mirror I saw the demon standing behind me; staring at me with piercing eyes and a devilish smirk, he said, "I never leave what is mine."

The roaring wind crashed into the building covering up my scream as the lights gave one last flicker before they went out completely.

Now I am here in this cold, dark corner hoping that I have enough time to tell you what happened from the very beginning. All so you can do what I have failed at; defeat the demon that haunts your mind.

## Beans for Feijoada

Lucas Dantas

From the time we opened our eyes  
The beans must be already harvested  
Wait for us!

And the cook full of respect  
The mastery art  
You must have already hit the chest  
And prepared and set aside

The component elements  
Of a tasty sauce  
Such: onions, tomatoes, cloves  
Garlic - and what else for the unlucky

Meanwhile we are talking and laughing  
Not that we are not happy  
We watch the cooking eager  
Taking our whiskey on the rocks.

Once the beans are cooked  
About four hours  
We yawning our boredom  
We will look for the stove

Juicy dried meat  
Fat and delicious bacon  
Ears of piglets  
That make it excessively opulent!

And — attention! — modest secret  
But man, without touching the feijoada  
A fresh naked tongue  
Set to cook with everything else.

Needless to say, meanwhile  
They must fry, all happy  
Beautiful slices of sausage  
And dump into the crockpot

Farofa? Today is the day  
But let it be in butter!  
A sliced orange  
and that's it.

What more pleasure does a body ask for  
After eating such a bean?

— Evidently a network  
And a cat to pass the hand . . .



*Leaving You/Lisa Walker*



# The Things You Never Did

Brandy Lowry

Looking back across the years  
    To when I was just a kid.  
I find myself remembering  
    All the things you never did.  
You never made me feel unloved  
    When I did something wrong.  
You just helped me learn my lesson  
    And you never stayed angry long.  
You never went back on a promise.  
    You were never too tired to play,  
No matter what was to be done  
    In the course of your busy day.  
You never forgot to kiss me goodnight  
    As you tucked me snug in my bed.  
You never rushed out in a hurry,  
    Without a story being read.  
You never treated me as if I was a failure  
    When I didn't do well on a test.  
With your encouragement I came to learn,  
    The importance of doing my best.  
You never skimmed on giving advice,  
    Whether I actually listened or not.  
I swore I would never admit it,  
    But your words always helped a lot.  
You never made fun of my crazy hair.  
    Or make-up I did all wrong.  
You were there to wipe the tears away countless times  
    When I felt I'd never belong.  
I haven't said this nearly enough,  
    But I hope you know  
All the things you never did is why I love you so much



*Autumn*/Ellen McDowell

# 123 123 123 look at me look at me

Kaitlyn Pleshko

## State of Thoughts

Mind scribbles on the wall  
Broken blinds  
Binding dismembered books

Senseless and shattered  
Hanging unseen  
Pages across the floor

Useless, a puzzle  
Dusty and forgotten  
What is the order?

Meaningless to all but me  
Drooping, depressing, devilishly me  
No one may know

Broken pencils all I can be  
Devastating my barren cold heart  
Not even me

## State of ...

When do you know?  
Under the sea  
We'll find the endless

You were never meant to be  
Where all my dead float  
Hiding in me

The world doesn't want you  
The drifting thoughts  
Your thoughts are endless

You're just a disease  
Try to remember  
Reflections of me

Burned in the embers  
Forgetting everything  
Shattered mirror

Ashes unseen  
You thought you were worth  
Lost in the ground

Under your resting  
The thoughts of your mother  
Welcome to forever

State of Me

Dancing on strings  
My silver razor wire  
Wrapped around my throat

Cut them on my word  
Cut against my skin  
Every word I've said

Sharper than steel  
Blood my only aspect  
All my regrets

Never-ending torment  
When you see me  
Living up inside my head

Always going back to me  
I'm always falling from my tight wire  
In the memories I've tried to forget



*Sunflowers Don't Care/Sharon Trotter-Martin*



This piece was written as an assignment in Creative Writing I to practice writing openings and the first pages of a short story.

## A Good Day

Tyler Bitar

“Wake up already, it’s time to go! Hey, Don, get up!”

Donovan Floyd, a seventeen-year-old boy with long, dark hair lies in bed staring up at his pet lizard’s cage, comparing it to his room.

“Don, if you don’t get up now, you’re going to miss it!”

Don continued to lay in bed as the girl shouted from above him, her snow-white hair falling against his face. Don was still unwilling to move, especially not after yesterday’s fight where his mother had again scolded him for not trying out for any clubs at his high school.

“Alright, take your time, but when you’re ready I’ll be outside!” The girl got off the still shaken seventeen-year-old and vanished out of his room.

After what seemed like hours, but was really just a few minutes, Don willed himself out of his bed and started to get ready for the day. Looking outside at the mid-summer sky, he noticed a thick layer of fog covering his small countryside home. This was strange, but he wasn’t used to getting up at four in the morning, so he shrugged it off and proceeded to follow the girl’s orders and – the girl... Come to think of it, who was that girl anyway? He lived with his mother, father, sister, and brothers, none of which sounded like her, nor did they possess her snow-white hair. A waking dream maybe? But he could not remember falling asleep last night, mostly out of fear of his nightmares from nights prior. A trespasser? But how could a trespasser be so friendly, or know his name, nonetheless.

Don mulled these thoughts over while pulling himself into his clothes for the day. He packs the olive nylon backpack his parents got him for the semester half-full of food, a portable charger, his father’s knife, and his leather diary, along with a few of his favorite premium black pens. Not even an hour after Don had gotten out of bed, he had cleaned up, gotten dressed packed his bag for travel, fed himself, and even made himself his morning drink of choice, gourmet black coffee. He couldn’t tell which was more unusual, the mysterious girl in his house, or himself actually getting out of bed on a Saturday because he was curious about what awaited him outside.

Before leaving, Don looked at his pet lizard, Morgan, and examined the feces and dead crickets littered across her cage’s floor mat. Don then looked at his own room and studied the dirty clothes and trash strewn about his floor. Making a silent vow to clean both cages upon his return, he feeds and waters Morgan before turning to the door. Finally, he walks out of his stuffy, cozy home, and into the cool summer breeze of the open outdoors, still unable to pin down the sensation that had lured him outside.

# Prayer of Stars

Khloe Trulson

With a short puff of air, the burning wick of Felix's candle extinguished in a trail of feathery smoke, drifting up into the air and slowly dispersing as it went as if a ghost of the flame it replaced. His eyes fooled him into believing in a blanket of darkness that draped itself over his shoulders like the heavy weight of his favorite cape, irises taking their time to adjust to the now gentler light of stars and galaxy that made up the night sky above his head. He couldn't help but admire its greatness for a long moment, the bright reflection of two moons adorning the sea of stars, embellished by the varying sizes and colors almost as if each one was painted by a delicate hand. Nestled into their own perfect little spots with careful, gentle fingers.

He leaned further against the sill of his window--taking great care to scoot the heated metal of his candle's holder to the side as to not knock it over--until the hard wood pressed against the soft of his belly, arms crossed over its threshold and supporting the new weight with a light creak of the old house's boards. He leaned until the crooked bits of wood that hung off the edges of the roof above him no longer blocked any inch of Corasis, the moon that shone closest and thus brighter than the other much further behind its great mass. Her luminescence washed the street below in white brilliance, her slow form a physical nod to her existence as the goddess of light and the very same goddess who Felix prayed to every moon cycle for the safe return of his father.

It was believed she gave every citizen of Paradisus one wish to fulfill in her honor, freckles coming as the embodiment of her kiss and her undying blessing. Those littered with such spots--as Felix was, bathed in their light brown along his shoulders and even lighter along the bridge of his nose--were considered her harbingers, those whom she gifted to wolfkind as any with the innocence of her light were bound for an undyingly great future.

Such a myth has long since been forgotten along with other tales as old as time itself, cultures and beliefs changing as creatures of all kinds began to live together in villages they called hotchpotches. With such a great mixture of practice and faith, it seemed many wolves just like Felix had forgotten about Corasis, the harborings of destiny holding her in chains in the sky for all to see her sorrow within the deep wounds of craters that made up her surface. Felix's books told him she was once perfectly smooth, a light gray that felt sweet and nurturing even from such a distance. Corasis no longer appeared such a way but it was as if Felix could still feel her, reach up and brush feather light fingertips along her cracked surface as a returning gesture of comfort.

"I know my father adores you just as I do, Goddess." Felix didn't speak loudly, for fear of the sleeping form of his mother lying amongst her blanketed nest deep within the comfortable darkness of the room may stir. "Please keep him safe despite his short-comings. I pray in his place."

The boy reached to his left, a thin but tall bottle of siren scales--given to him by a mage in trade of three of his mother's fresh apple crisps just three days ago--sitting among other witch-like ingredients, idle along the floor boards as he had no spells to cast with such little natural magic in his bloodline and no books to teach him the ways of the art. He reached for the scales, careful in the way he leaned his bottom back on his heels and fully relieved the sill of his light weight. The cork was airy, easily pulled out by a quick twist and pull of his fingers around its head, but his shoulders scrunched at the

sound of the ‘pop’ of air rushing from its container, waiting to hear the mumble of his mother as she turned and scolded him for leaving his nest at such an hour. It never came.

“Please accept these gifts, Great Goddess.” Felix lifted the pad of his thumb against the shimmering surface of one of the scales, pressing it into the hardwood of his window’s shelf and doing so again with two more. Such a daunting task as asking a Goddess to protect a man who was surely never able to keep up with his prayers deserved a higher reward than just one scale, no matter how rare and beautiful. They seemed brighter, more saturated of a blue in the moonlight. When Felix shifted, slight in his change, they morphed with his movement into a brilliant purple that gave his stammering little heart a large bout of wanderlust.

He was certain his father had nothing to give out in the Feroxlands, his banishment coming in the form of sure death among the feral creatures that roamed that area. He had always been a very strong man, lifting his mother with ease and returning home with the meat of bears and the soft fur of vixens often. He rose to challenges, growled with strength, did everything he could to keep his heart beating just as always, and yet Felix felt a horrible anxiety should he ever skip on his prayers for him.

Before he could feel the alluring urge to take such objects back into his possession, he pressed the cork back into the glass jar’s opening, jamming it inward and secure with the curve of his palm to be thorough in his surety it would not come off. He pushed it aside and bid his goddess a quiet farewell, crawling on hands and knees into the crooked array of blankets and pillows that made up his resting place. By morning the scales will be gone and he will have more faith in his father’s return with each blessing pressed gently into his skin in the form of freckles like the stars that littered the sky outside his window.

# Champion

Noah Northrup

Take me back to the time when I was a kid  
Those days we would swing and just forget  
When laughter was our best friend  
We were young and filled with innocence  
Life was much sweeter wasn't it?  
Sometimes I wish I could go back  
Maybe I would do something different?  
Would I make those moments lasts?  
But they say you can't change the past  
I was told that nice guys finish last  
So forget that advice  
Be yourself and be kind  
You will find your peace of mind  
Close your eyes and repeat after me  
Tomorrow will be a better day  
Wipe those tears from your face  
Today is yours  
Finish this race.



*Fountain/Ellen McDowell*

## CONTRIBUTORS' NOTES

### **Bennett, Hannah** *Big (23)\**

Hannah Bennett, of Monmouth, is a student at Carl Sandburg College, where she is studying to pursue a career in early childhood education. Bennett says she is “forever inspired by the women in my family, who never let anyone tell them who they could or could not be. I am inspired by everything wonderful female poet who came before me, and every single one that will come after.”

### **Bitar, Tyler** *Poetry (8); Super Monsters! (48-51); Secrets (70-71); Guilt (76); A Good Day (89)*

Tyler Bitar, of Monmouth, is a student at Carl Sandburg College. While he is attending primarily to earn his associate’s degree, Bitar said he is also enjoying “studying creative writing, game development, physical therapy, and even information technology while I’m here.” He plans to transfer to a four-year school after finishing his studies at Sandburg. About a few of his pieces featured in this issue: He says that “Guilt” was inspired by his own past dealings with sleep paralysis, and his once waking nightmares “of some previous guilt or future anxiety manifesting itself to me when I used to go to sleep. It wasn’t anything serious, but at the time, I felt like it was . . . so given the mysterious nature of sleep paralysis, I thought it would be compelling to try putting a name to the fear.” About “Poetry,” Bitar says, “This was also partially inspired by one of my now favorite poets William Carlos Williams, for how his poems can be about anything as trivial as a plum and yet still be so profound and important.”

### **Bjoin, Heather** *The Light in the Dark (11); Water’s Reflection of Tranquility (31); Creative Imagination (35); February Miracle (47); Lights That Call Me Home\* (57); Sunrise\* (60-62); Path (61); What Comes Before the Beauty (69); Cursed: A Demon’s Haunting (79-81)*

Heather Bjoin currently lives in Minneapolis and is taking courses online at Carl Sandburg College. About her piece “Sunrise,” Bjoin says, “There are people, such as my niece and my friend, who were my inspiration. Then there was that want to create a moment. The nightmares—sadly, all were true—the night before I was supposed to watch the sunrise. And the moment we made it happen.” Bjoin says that the world the people closest to her have a “powerful influence” over her writing, adding, “They are my motivation, my inspiration.”

### **Carlson, Tyler** *My Neighbor Teddy (53)*

Tyler Carlson, of Knoxville, is a Sandburg student. He is still determining his focus for his studies, with possibilities including art, writing, and philosophy. Carlson says he had a lot of fun writing “My Neighbor Teddy”: “Growing up, me and my friend would always stay up watching scary stories, or ‘Top 10 scary home alone stories,’ or something like that. So that was definitely a big inspiration.” Carlson says he likes Edgar Allan Poe’s work, and he has been greatly inspired by J.R.R. Tolkien.

### **Dantas, Lucas** *The Tanker (44); Beans for Feijoada (82-83)*

Lucas Dantas, of Galesburg, is a Sandburg student from Brazil. Dantas has always liked technology and says he has recently fallen in love with digital marketing: “I feel, at this point, that if I can join my tech background with what I am learning in marketing, I will be able to help a lot of businesses, especially small businesses, which I have always been fascinated by.” Dantas says, “Creativity doesn’t always just occur with me, so I try to pick



up on things I can relate to, a conversation, a previous life experience from me or someone I know.” His poem “The Tanker,” he says, was “basically me overhearing someone’s conversation.” Meanwhile, “Beans for Feijoada” was “mostly me feeling nostalgic about the time I used to live in Brazil.” Dantas says that when it comes to writing, he gets inspiration from film directors and script writers such as Francis Ford Coppola, Clint Eastwood, and Quentin Tarantino.

**Fink, Brandon** *The Pandemic Garden* (39-40)

Sandburg student Brandon Fink lives on a farm in Carthage. He plans to obtain an English Education degree from WIU so that he can share his life-long love of the written word. Vegetable gardening was a new hobby for him, but he encourages others to try their hand—they might be pleasantly surprised! His literary influences are many, but he owes a debt of gratitude to naturalist authors and philosophers like Henry David Thoreau.

**Harris, Jason** *Childhood Lost* (30); *The Dream is Gone* (34); *Explosions in the Horizon* (42); *Trina’s Song* (58); *Invented Memories* (68); *But All of This Doesn’t Compare to You* (72)

Sandburg student Jason Harris, of Galesburg, is studying IT-CyberSecurity. When it comes to his artistic influences, some of Harris’s favorite musicians include Pink Floyd, Rush, Foo Fighters, and Led Zeppelin. He listens to “rock, pop, country, classical, jazz, and blues . . . really, almost anything.” Some of Harris’s favorite writers include Isaac Asimov, R.A. Salvatore, and Neil Gaiman.

**Hensley, Addisynn** *Sunset\** (33)

Addison Hensley, of Galesburg, is a student at Carl Sandburg College focusing on earn her general education credits and taking “some elective classes in hopes of finding something that I am passionate enough about to study.” She has considered a career related to design and home improvement, or perhaps environmental science. Her painting, *Sunset*, was the first painting that she completed for Sandburg. “We were very free to choose whatever subject we wanted,” Hensley says, “so I chose one of my favorite things, which was the sky. This piece doesn’t exactly have a hidden ‘deeper meaning’—the intention I had was to purely capture a particularly beautiful moment I had witnessed while driving.” Hensley says that one artists whose work she appreciates is Australian photographer and filmmaker Ryan Pernofofski, who “captures stunning moments of the sky and ocean together.” When it comes to writing, Hensley says she enjoys Rupi Kaur’s poetry and style.

**Hinkle, Joshua** *Your Country-Our Struggle-22* (64); *Heat* (65-66); *Names Removed* (77)

An Artists’s Statement from Sandburg student Joshua Hinkle about his work: “By the time it takes me to complete my Ph.D., some 58,100 veterans will have taken their own lives; 58,100 of our nation's finest people will simply no longer exist. The number of people affected is beyond counting because each one of those deaths represents an entire family and possibly the end of a bloodline . . . Approximately 22 veterans commit suicide every day. I was almost part of this statistic, but I happened to be placed in one of the Veterans Administration's only art therapy programs; it changed my life. Before two years ago, I had never so much as picked up a pencil, much less the ability to make giant works of art. All these pieces combined, in my opinion, are the embodiment of the concept of conceptualism in art.”

**Hoadley, Heather** *The Frost and the Frusen Okänd (46)*

Heather Hoadley, of Kewanee, is a student studying Art at Carl Sandburg College. She plans to pursue a bachelor's degree, and perhaps a master's degree, in Art. She hopes to become either an art teacher for secondary school or a college art professor. Having become interested in art at a very young age, Hoadley says, "I started with doodling on my papers in elementary school, then I really got into art when I was in junior high and high school. Art is my therapy as well. Every time I create an artwork, I block out the outside world and I am only focused on my artwork." Hoadley's inspiration comes from "music, movies, nature, and my emotions." Her piece "The Frost and the Frusen Okänd" is "inspired by the magic of winter." Hoadley says that ever since she was young, she has loved winter and activities such as "ice fishing, ice skating, and taking a nature walk through the woods. There is something unique about every season, and I believe winter tops the list."

**Hutchings, Joshua** *Clock Strikes None (Cover); Separated, Together (18); Falling (44)*

Joshua Hutchings is dual enrollment student at Sandburg. In the fall, he will attend Savannah College of Art and Design, where he will pursue a degree in animation. Hutchings says "Separated, Together" "represents how I felt during my early high school years. I always ended up being left out and ignored, but one day I found someone who felt the same way, and we bonded on our being ignored by others." Meanwhile, "Falling" was one of his first abstract pieces. "I still have so little experience in the field," Hutchings says, "but I was so intrigued by the concept that I kept trying and I eventually came up with something that felt like it was, falling off the page." Of his cover work, "Clock Strikes None," Hutchings says it was "the first piece I created after we went fully online at school the second time. It felt so much worse than the first time because we had the chance to do better, and we didn't. It felt like the end of the world all over again. That's why I created this piece. I had so many emotions built up, and this was the piece I created to release all those emotions." Some artists who inspire Hutchings include Salvador Dali and Piet Mondrian.

**Law, Faythe** *Untitled (15)*

Faythe Law, of Galesburg, is a student at Sandburg studying to get her general education courses completed before transferring. Originally planning to major in Zoology, Law says she is "still unclear" about what she wants to study and pursue, though she has always enjoyed natural and environmental sciences and hopes to find a career in this field. Law made her piece *Untitled* for a 2-D design class. "It was an abstraction of a self-portrait I did about a year ago," she says. "The idea was to abstract something we could see may it be a sack of books or an arrangement on a desk. I decided to do my face because I enjoy doing art of people." One artist whose work stands out to Law is Yayoi Kusama, "who is obsessed with polka dots. She makes amazing art using canvas, figures, objects, entire rooms, and even designs her own clothing which I think is absolutely remarkable. Her story of growing up as immigrant Japanese female artist in the United States in the 60's and 70's showed such resilience and power that I find her an amazing inspiration."

**Lowry, Brandy** *The Things You Never Did (84)*

Brandy Lowry, of Monmouth, is a student at Carl Sandburg College. Currently in the ADN program, Lowry plans to pursue a career in nursing. About her poem "The Things You Never Did," Lowry says, "I wrote this poem for my daddy, because a daughter's love never changes with age."

**McDorman, Dakota** *Does It Make You Sick?* (43); *iWorld* (55)

Dakota McDorman, of Galesburg, is a student who is studying Art at Carl Sandburg College. After finishing at Sandburg, McDorman plans to transfer to Knox College and to major in Art. McDorman says “Does It Make You Sick?” was inspired by the song “End of the World” by Dead Sunrise: “I was inspired because it's a song about the things that the news chooses to show us. Even though that song came out in 2009, the lyrics are still relevant today.” McDorman’s other piece, “iWorld,” was inspired by the song “Mr. MTV” by Nothing More: “The song is about the issues of consumerism and how we will pretty much pay for anything. It also touches on how some relationships will be based on lust instead of creating a real relationship and bond with someone. The song would always give me some mental imagery and that imagery is what is shown in the piece.” McDorman’s inspiration comes not only from artists, but also bands, Youtube Channels, and artists on Instagram such as Lee Howard and Gus Fink.

**McDowell, Ellen** *Be the One* (6); *B Entrance* (17); *Fog* (25); *Sunrise* (28); *Sun Rays* (38); *Wall Frog* (49); *Clouds* (63); *Reflection* (78); *Autumn* (85); *Fountain* (92)

Ellen McDowell, of Wataga, is a member of the Sandburg staff, and, at times, is a student, too. I just love to learn. It is always a good day when we learn something. When it comes to her photography, McDowell says that her goal is to try to find beauty in the every day. Regarding her pieces in this year’s magazine, McDowell says, “I was not sure where to begin with such a vast collection of photographs, so I chose to start where I started, at Sandburg. This collection is some of the beauty I have captured on campus over the past four years.” McDowell says her biggest inspiration is nature: “I walk every day and center myself in the sunrise every morning. I am a wanderer. I am also inspired by anyone who can tell a story with a lyric, poem, verse, a photo or any visual art.”

**Northrup, Noah** *Champion* (92)

Noah Northrup, of Kirkwood, is a student at Sandburg studying to be a Physical Therapist Assistant. One artist who is a source of inspiration for Northrup is singer and songwriter Paul Simon, “whose words fueled me to write as a child.”

**Pleshko, Kaitlyn** *Cycle* (19); *Come Back Again* (36); *The Sara Chronicles* (67); *123 123 123 Look at Me, Look at Me* (86-87)

Kaitlyn Pleshko, of Galesburg, is a student at Carl Sandburg College studying English with an emphasis on creative writing in hopes of becoming a professional writer. Regarding some of her pieces featured in this year’s magazine: Pleshko says that “The Sara Chronicles” were written with months that “I was trying and failing to learn from my mistakes.” She says that rather than accepting mistakes as a “natural part of life,” they “consumed me and felt like a coffin.” This poem “split into three parts, is an exploration of the journey from guilt-ridden to . . . growth.” About “123 123 123 look at me look at me,” Pleshko says it not “a habit of mine to read a poem in a pattern rather than the way it was written. Although this concept touches on a very important piece of consuming literature. The original interpretation of the piece is the most important to the reader because this is the reading that reveals the state of mind in that particular moment.”

**Ponce, Nikki** *Friday, January 15, 2021* (7); *Opal* (9); *Untitled* (22); *Untitled* (26); *Untitled* (52); *Maria* (59); *Iris* (73)

Nikki Ponce is Sandburg faculty and teaches a variety of art courses. She has been working on a new body of work that is focused on blind contour drawing and says, “the results have been great.” Her focus, she says, “has been on family, my children, which are people that I know and love. I have also included musicians and models that I find creative or beautiful. I work blindly and create the sketch, I follow that with acrylic paint. I can clean up the lines making them bold and defined similar to a print.” Ponce was a printmaker and has shifted into painting over the last fifteen years. She said she loves “a bold outline and to contrast that with color,” and that doing so has helped her has “find a groove that I have enjoyed working in for the last year.” Marchel Duchamp, Robert Rauschenberg, Kara Walker, and Kiki Smith are among the artists she cites as inspirations.

**Reed, Megan** *Dissociation: (24); Pre-Pandemic (41); The Narcissist’s Handbook (54)*

Sandburg student Megan Reed, of Galesburg, was recently accepted into the Western Illinois University School of Nursing, where she will attend this fall to obtain her RN/BSN. She hopes to become an OB nurse and to work with children. She says her poems featured in the magazine represent “the emotions I felt during the peak of the pandemic in March 2020 and also living through one in my late teen years and early twenties, and how miserable and lonely it felt in the beginning, and how it sometimes still feels like a nightmare you can’t wake up from.” Some artists that she admires include SZA, Megan Thee Stallion, Rihanna, and Nicki Minaj.

**Siebken, Kaitlyn** *Zipper Girl \* (27)*

Kaitlyn Siebken, of Galesburg, is finishing her Associate in Arts degree at Sandburg. She says that her inspiration “comes from random places.” Some of her favorite authors are Kelley Armstrong, Jim Butcher, and Sarah J. Maas.

**Trotter-Martin, Sharon** *Meanwhile, in the Backyard (40); Sunflowers Don’t Care (88)*

Sharon Trotter-Martin is an English instructor at Carl Sandburg College and the Faculty Advisor for *Phizzzogs*. She took the photo “Meanwhile in the Backyard” last spring of the pandemic garden happening at her own house. “Sunflowers Don’t Care” was a photo she snapped in her parents’ backyard last summer. “They seemed so optimistic,” Trotter-Martin said. “There we were, in the middle of the pandemic, basically staying at home most of the time, wearing masks, social distancing, and keeping an eye as the Covid numbers kept rising in our county and across the country with no end in sight. It was overwhelming, and most of the time, it didn’t feel like a carefree typical summer at all. I found something about the sunflowers’ insistence on growing and being beautiful so reassuring.”

**Trulson, Khloe** *Crossroads (10-16); Hopscotch (29); Poster (32); Hues (32); Primary (45); The Last Time He Lied (74-75); Prayer of Stars (90-91)*

Khloe Trulson, of Monmouth, is a student at Sandburg. She is studying to earn a degree in the Arts and “hopes to move on to acting and writing in the future.”

**Vickroy, Cullen** *Fight (20); Senior Year (56)*

Cullen Vickroy, of Monmouth, is a student at Sandburg studying education and writing with plans to transfer to a four-year school and to become a high school writing teacher. Vickroy says rather than finding inspiration in a particular writer’s work, he likes

“experiencing different stories and writing new ones.” About his poem “Fight,” Vickroy says the inspiration came from “That one scene from *Attack on Titan*. THAT one.”

**Walker, Lisa** *Martyr (12); Widow’s Mites Amongst the Grass (21); Six Below: Initiation (37); Leaving You (83)*

Lisa Walker, of Galesburg, is an Assistant Professor of Art, and Carl Sandburg College’s Art Program Coordinator and Gallery Director. She is inspired by many artists, including Kiki Smith, Anselm Kiefer, Madgalena Abakanowitz, Joseph Beuys, and Vincent Van Gogh.

## **Acknowledgments**

*Phizzogs* would not be possible without the help of many people.  
In particular, we thank the following individuals.

*Lisa Walker*

An honorary member of Team *Phizzogs*, you make it possible for us to feature the gorgeous artwork that graces these pages. Thank you for the extra efforts that had to be made this year, in particular, to pull off our pandemic photo shoot. Finally, thank you for all you do to inspire our students and to support the Arts at Carl Sandburg College.

*Bill Gaither, and the Marketing & Public Relations department*

The photos of the artwork are stunning, and they were taken by Bill Gaither, of the Marketing & Public Relations (MPR) department. Thank you, Bill! We also want to thank MPR for its help in promoting the magazine.

*Barb Coleman*

Barb, thank you for all you and Paula Knox do in printing to put together the magazine.

*James Hutchings*

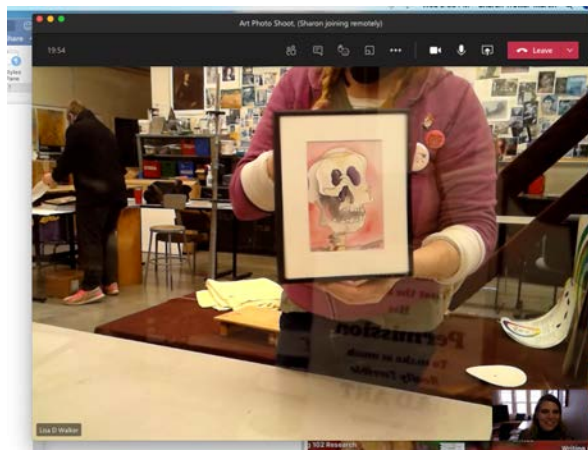
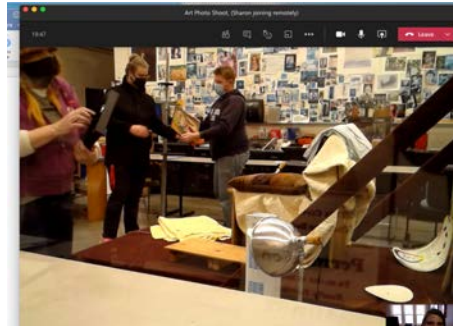
*Associate Dean of Humanities and Fine Arts*

Thank you, James, for your continual support not just of *Phizzogs*, but of all of the Sandburg Arts programs. Thank you for helping make Sandburg a place where students can find their creative voice and take joy in the expression of it.



## **A Photo Shoot to Remember**

Usually, there are two photo shoots for the art submissions for *Phizzzogs*, one in November, and another in February. This year, we had to forgo the November shoot due to the pandemic. The February shoot proved challenging as well. Usually, the *Phizzzogs* staff is on hand to help with the shoot, but not this time. We pulled it off via Microsoft Teams, thanks to the efforts of Lisa Walker, Bill Gaither, and student helper Joshua Hutchings.



*Communicating via Microsoft Teams, Art Professor Lisa Walker shows an item being photographed to Phizzzogs Advisor Sharon Trotter-Martin, who recorded the names of submissions and artists.*

# THE FINE ARTS *at Carl Sandburg College*

## Fall 2021

**ART 121 Two-Dimensional Design**

**ART 131-132 Drawing**

**ART 141-142 Painting**

**ART 171-172 Ceramics**

**ENG 141 Literary Magazine**

**ENG 211 Creative Writing I**

**MUS 122 Instrumental Ensemble**

**MUS 123 Sandburg Choir**

**THE 120 Acting I**

**THE 128 Theatre Construction & Stagecraft**

**THE 129 College Play Production**

## Spring 2022

**ART 122 Three-Dimensional Design**

**ART 132-133 Life Drawing**

**ART 141-142 Painting**

**ART 171-172 Ceramics**

**ENG 141 Literary Magazine**

**ENG 212 Creative Writing II**

**MUS 122 Instrumental Ensemble**

**MUS 123 Sandburg Choir**

**THE 128 Theatre Construction & Stagecraft**

**THE 129 College Play Production**

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