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Life. Changing.

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Hills Review

Special Thanks To all the students who trust us with their work each year and allow us to present these pieces to the public. To the Printing Department, we are always grateful for the work you do and the timely fashion in which you do it! For this year's collaboration we included not only our student authors, but also some of our student artists so thank you to the Art Department, as well! We'd also like to thank our English Department Chair, Dr. Ray Slavens, for his unwavering support and enthusiasm for our work with the Creative Writing Club, our Poetry Readings, and *The Hills Review*.

-Tisha Scott and Felix Grygorcewicz, Editors

Hills Review: Journal of Student Creative Writing (anthology)
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LASHAYA CRANSTON

The Loop

I am the road that folds into itself,
A serpent swallowing its own shadow.
Morning finds me where I ended,
Night delivers me where I began.

I am the ticking hand of the clock,
Circling the same numbered ghosts.
A dance of moments well rehearsed,
Yet never quite remembered.

I am the tide kissing the shore,
Only to be pulled away again.
Chasing the moon's indifference,
Never close, never far.

I am the season trapped in cycle,
Blooming just to wither.
Falling only to rise again,
Wearing the same colors differently.

I am the loop the path unwinding,
Only to weave itself anew.
You call it fate you call it habit,
I call it home.

LASHAYA CRANSTON

Echoes of The Past

The past returns in whispers through the night,
A shadow clinging tight beneath my skin.
No matter how I run, I hear the call,
A voice that bends but never breaks with time.
Each memory, a wound that won't close,
Yet still, I rise to meet another day.

I tell myself "it's just another day"
But ghosts awaken silent in the night.
They gather where the open wounds won't close,
Carved deep into the fabric of my skin.
Their echos twist and coil around time,
A weight that drags me back despite the call.

I swore I'd never answer when they call,
Yet still, they shape the way I move through the day.
Their hands reach through the cracks I built with time,
They pass their cold reminders through the night.
A map of scars now written on my skin,
A history my body will not close.

I've tried the door to make it close,
To silence all the voices that call.
To shed the pain that lingers in my skin,
To start a new unburden by the day.
But even dreams are haunted in the night,
And even sleep is measured out in time.

CASSIDY THOMPSON

Laughs exchanged

He was there at that base
Supposed to be learning about his job
But to my surprise, a stranger proved my heart wrong

My god, my Noah looked at a girl
Laughed at her jokes, while he was too busy for me
treated me like I was a joke

She looked at him with her tricked eyes
While I was at home wondering why...

Doth he not care, dumb, was I?
I wanted just him; I wanted us to fly

But herewith came the lies
Looked at me he did, with knives
Telling me what wasn't true until I opened my eyes

I can't even take my thoughts, thinking about his blue eyes soaking up hers
Their faces close together so they each could be heard

The same room where they, and not me,
Noah's lies blinded so I couldn't see

Mel, Myers, Gianna, Melody
Those girls sound familiar to thee?
My heart shatters while his lies shoot me like a gun, why? Why? Oh god why?

I was playing nice.
I'm done.
I'm stung.
His lies were all hung.

Hung up right in front of me like a man who hung himself with a rope
I am hurt, betrayed, even though I did the same

Screw me for acting insane
But to him a fessed up and to me were given lies

They scratch my skin and not hers
My ears bleed but not the girl's

Lips could have been looked at, skin could have been touched, laughs were exchanged,
guess for him I wasn't enough

But here I am, still living and breathing.
Still out here trying.
Why? I don't know, considering I don't know that I'm worth his effort

Dear whoever is out there, do make the lies and hiding stop
Let me go if the other girls are at the top
Let me go if I'm worth a million lies
Let me go if I'm the one to hide

I was sick last year, but not again do I go
Show me love, dear Noah, or let me go

CASSIDY THOMPSON

Perfect plan

Perfection is never guaranteed no matter how hard you try
Wanting things to be a straight line, working hard, day and night
You think to yourself "if I just push myself to this point, I'm golden"
But you find yourself pushing the limits and losing small happy moments

You can't force life to go in the direction you absolutely want
Even if you promise on a hundred stars no matter the cost
I know how bad you want this, how far you will go to get it
But with every rushed step, you will forget to live in the moment

Moments with family, friends, college, the young life
You will be so focused on trying to get everything "Right"
But you must know it's not just win or fail
But it's learning about so many other possible trails

Trails that could allow new characters, lessons, experiences
Trails that you never knew could still help you reach it...
Reach that goal, that dream, that person, that life
That life you want so bad where you think everything will finally be right

But that's just it, nothing will ever be perfect or right
You can know that, but still put up the biggest fight
But remember, what you want, you won't receive exactly how you want it

So just remember to look up while you can, and don't force perfection
don't let your light go out, don't push yourself to where you can't stand
Just because reality scared you, and changed your "perfect" plan

IZABELLA PROSE

The tall lanky figure

I stand before the tall lanky figure. It seems to be made of black smog. I can see its vertebrae arch so it can stand face to face with me. It's almost humanoid. With long dragging arms and a strong frame. Something's off though...

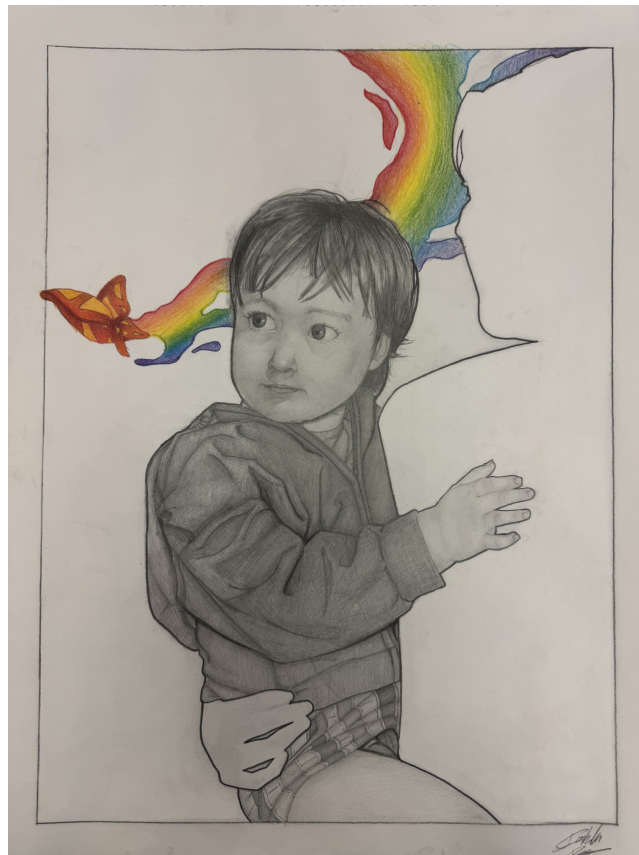
Its smoky tendrils peak from around its large body. I see its bright orange eyes. Like holes into its head going deeper than I want to explore. I stare, and it stares back in a calm, almost rhematic way. There is no chaos in this creature. It shouldn't be here...

It seems methodical. It's searching, analyzing. Just by looking at me it speaks. I can hear its body and the crawling smoke. Only I understand. Leave me alone...

I've tried to explain to others how this creature makes me think, but many don't understand. They look at me like I'm speaking in tongues. Only the creature understands. I stand before it.

Hello?

I'm listening to the tall lanky figure.



IZABELLA PROSE

Gingy: My Most Prized Stuffed Animal

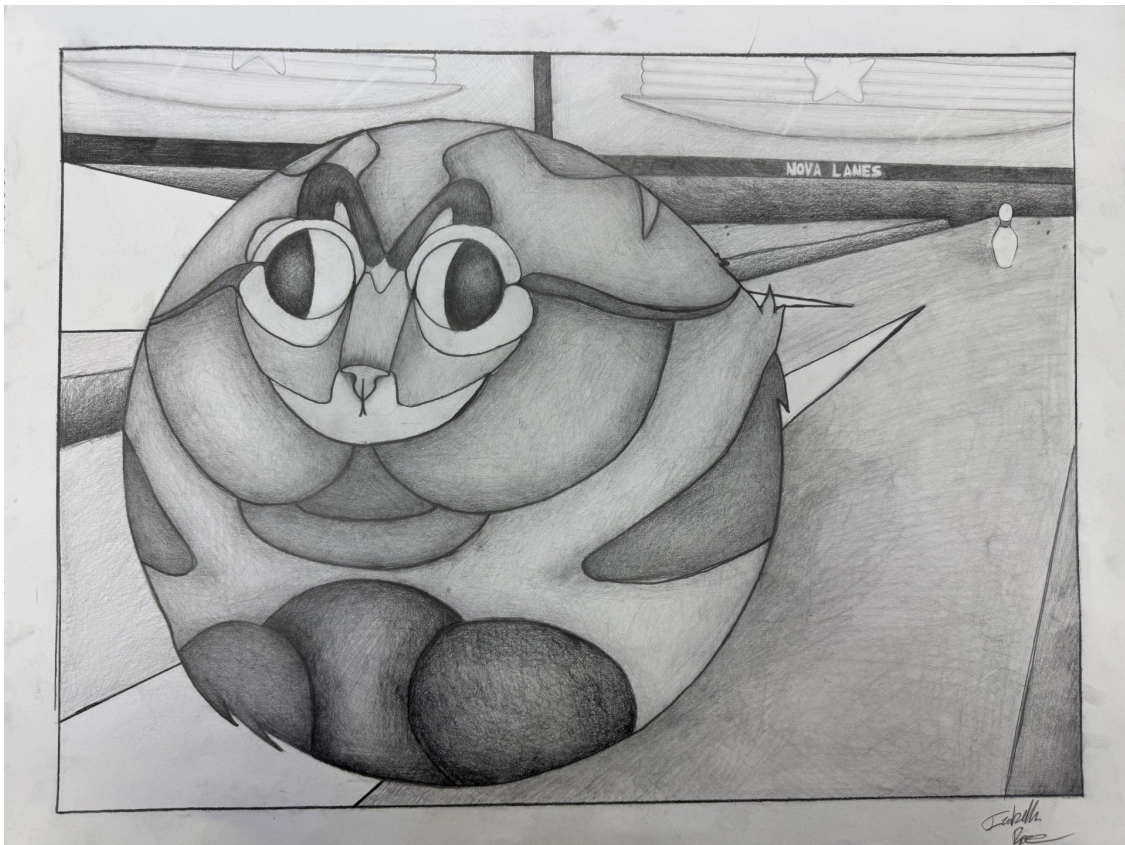
I sit in her bed waiting for her to come back. I hear yelling from upstairs. It's dark. The room is still and cold.

It goes quiet. I hear her footsteps coming down the stairs, quick yet soft, like she's trying to disappear. She opens the door. The cat in her shadow. The door closes with a quiet struggle.

She climbs into bed without turning on the lights or taking off her shoes. I'm tugged into her arms. She squeezes tighter as I hear muffled sobs in my back.

The cat joins the huddle. Purring to help calm down our girl. The sobs turn into sighs as she learns how to breathe again. She releases me from her tight grip to pet the cat. We sit in the dark. Helping her feel anything but numb.

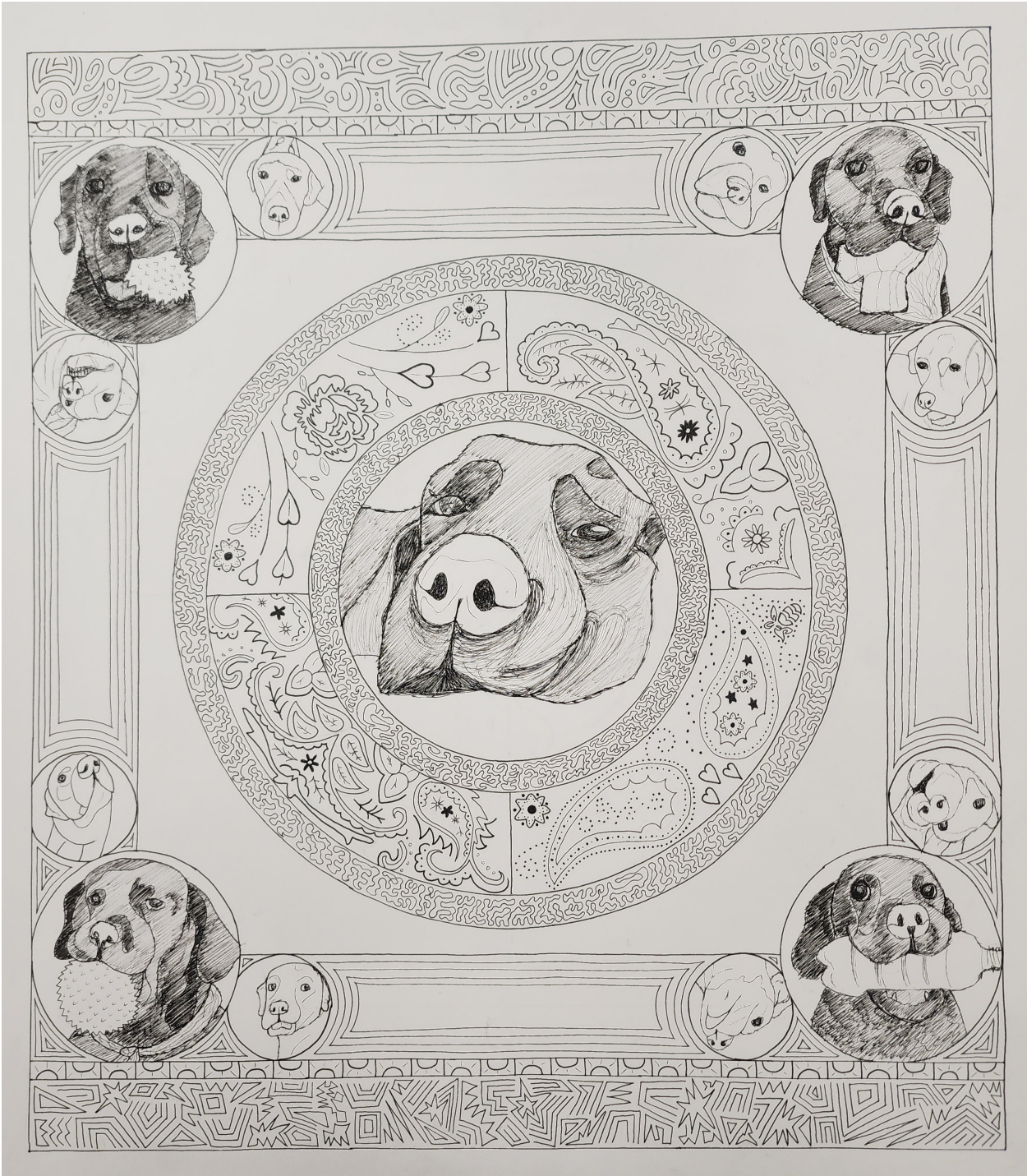
We hear footsteps. The stairs creak. A person that is unafraid to be known. Our girl throws a blanket over herself, engulfing both me and the cat with her. Her breathing stops and her body tenses as the door opens and light screams through the room.



LOGAN BROOKE









ADRIAN O'LEARY

Not so far in the future

"Is this really how people used to live? They seem so carefree. They seem so compliant. Maybe that's how they let this happen." Marley mumbles to no one in particular. *a devise dings* "GOD DAMMIT, FRED, ARE YOU TRYING TO GET US KILLED?! Do you not remember any of your training? Let's move." Marley grabs Fred's phone from his pocket and throws it on the ground, grinding it beneath his boot.

"Hey! I worked hard to get that." Fred protests.

"Then you can die out here, letting the machines get you. Now: further into the ruins." He pauses a moment, not turning around, "Leave the damn phone." The earth starts to rumble, faint at first, and starts to grow.

"What is that?" Fred asks.

"Run." Marley grabs his pack and starts running back to the clover.

ADRIAN O'LEARY

Sometime

9:30 on a Saturday
One of my worst days.
Worried for her health
Playing the cards we were dealt.
I knew the day would be hard
But t'was of ill-starred
I loved her more than myself
It's hard to contain oneself.
Though my tears are dry,
She lives on in my mind

Untitled

It's hard being tall in a world
that wants you to shrink,
hard being Black
in halls painted white
with whispers that say
you don't belong here.

I walked into high school
with skin like history
and hair full of roots,
learning new faces,
new rules,
new ways to survive
without losing myself.

I learned how to bend
without breaking.
How to speak
without being silent.
How to stand
when they expected me to fold.

Every day was adaptation —
new friends,
new stares,
new battles I never asked for.
But I pushed anyway.
Harder.
Further.
Past fear.
Past doubt.

And look —
I made it to graduation
with my head still high,
my name still mine,
my dreams still breathing.

College came next,
another world to learn,
another place to prove
I belong anywhere I walk.
Still adapting.
Still climbing.
Still becoming.

Is it hard?
Yes.
Hard like stone shaped into diamonds.
Hard like roots breaking concrete.
Hard like wings learning to fly
in a storm.

But I always get through it.
Because I am built from
strength,
from struggle,
from survival.

Tall.
Black.
Unstoppable.

And I don't just succeed —
I rise

GIOVANNI HERNANDEZ

i wake daily
i do my silly tasks and talk to the people in my life
i find myself burnt at the end of it
Why do i always get burnt by life?

To some i am a tool ,guiding and illuminating
To some i am pain, burning and transmuting into ash
To some i am danger, to be ostracized and contained
To some i am the spark they needed, to burn and to release
inferno
To some i am only glimpsed, a lighter flick, a stove, a car
engine
They try to snuff me out and have succeeded before
Only for me to rekindle and take on a new form
Blame the fire for burning
Make fire some more
Blame the fire for burning
SNUFF
Blame the fire for going out
Again and again I wake daily.
Have you ever noticed the days are always right after each other?
They never stop coming
“Life is always on I can never get a break from it”
Another quote from drake on the way

“Trust this little light of mine is going to shine, positively”
Why do i burn? Should i stop? I am having fun existing.
You hear about me all the time but they never dare to
mention my name, spoken about and yet short on the fame.
People and flaws
Eureka and how it falls
Clay baked and filled with gauze
Food cooked and receiving awes
A lighter click and a mental massage

To all i am different, to all i am the same
Rewrite the story you tell yourself
And maybe
You’ll realize my name

i am fire afterall

MELANIE FORCIER

Reverence:

I prayed at the parish of her collarbones.
Whispered Hail Mary's against her skin.
Sat in contemplation in her arms.
Murmured confessionals into her ribs.
Served mass with her lips.

Am I not made in God's image anymore?
Am I no longer a dutiful lamb?
Does Hell wait for me every time I look at her?
Have I committed a great sin for loving?
Do I even care?



MELANIE FORCIER

Disillusionment:

What could have been was something tangible

A picture mounted on a wall of rotting ivory and
overgrown weeds A whisper of a hymn echoing off
the walls of an ancient mausoleum A metallic stench
drifting through the air like a sweetly-sinister beast
A taste of honey
 and laughter
 and rotten pomegranates

A feather-like drag of long, beautiful fingertips
before they gouge into lungs
and disappear like smoke

What could have been was tangible
It embedded itself beneath skin
And refused to leave

MELANIE FORCIER

Muscle Spasm:

There is a permanent twitch in my eye.

I am tired,
And I don't know if I am going to fail my classes or not,
And I don't sleep more than three hours a night,
And staring at screens all day feels like staring at death

measured in pixels. And there is a permanent twitch in
my eye.

I am lonely,
And I'm like a dog who's never been socialized properly,
Aggressive and anxious and skittish,
And I feel like I'm stretched thin by giving parts of myself to all who ask
because that's what *good* people do,
And I don't know if the bed I currently sleep in will be

available forever. Oh, yeah. And there is a permanent
twitch in my eye.

And I don't know if my father loves me,
And I haven't seen my therapist in weeks because grades and homework
came before sanity, And crawling into the snow and just laying there while
it softly buries me in a calm, quiet quilt seems more appealing than
maintaining a 4.0,
And my hair wont sit right,
And my clothes keep getting baggier,
And my stomach feels like its full of battery acid,
And I don't know if my father *loves* me,
And I keep saying the wrong things,
And I keep fading into the background,
And I don't know how to be vulnerable without feeling violently sick

And there is a PERMENANT TWITCH:
Twitch... Twitch... Twitch...
In my eye.

Perhaps I'll gouge it out.

NICOLE PREVO

when we touch

when we touch

You tell me that I am pretty, but only when we touch.

You tell me I am a prize only you can win,

but only in front of others.

Why am I not good enough behind closed doors,

why am I only pretty when we touch.

NICOLE PREVO

shooting stars

I knew I was living life to the fullest when you told me you loved me,
Even more so when you called me pretty.
When you left, I felt broken,
Shattered beyond belief,
But then I felt comfort and warmth in the fact that you and I,
Were like shooting stars in the sky
Meant to be a fleeting moment in the night.

St. Patrick's Day Weekend

It started simply enough with a game of Checkers. Checkers turned into Monopoly and then from Monopoly, came Greed. Attending CCD on Wednesday nights and serving mass four times a week would help Patrick mask his favorite deadly sin, but Bradley was much more open about what drove him. Lust. Before Bradley's father was murdered, he loved to boast about the radiance of his son's girlfriends, as if each one of them had been some type of trophy. The apple hadn't fallen far from the tree; the Doctor had struggled with married life for these same reasons. Both families lived life making the most out of what they had, growing up in the country. Their parents believed there was never a reason to be "bored". They were brothers. Blood brothers, eskimo brothers, real (not really) brothers. Patrick had played basketball up until the 8th grade, but made an impulse decision when they announced the start of wrestling practice at the end of study hall. His older brother, Daniel, had been the best Roman-Greco wrestler to ever come from his home town, but Patrick never saw the appeal... until one day, he did.

"I know I'm gonna get my ass beat, but there's something about the idea about being out there, being one on one, with no one coming to save you. I don't know.. It's like the purest form of theatre in a wild way." Patrick was slowly talking himself into trying out for the team.

"I guess," mumbled Bradley. "That, or it's just two dudes wearing spandex trying to dominate each other, maybe using some extra "uMpH" because their parents wouldn't let them quit."

They both laughed. They only witnessed three things bring out the worst in their parents during their younger years: money, youth athletics, and infidelity.

"If violence isn't an answer, then what are we calling capital punishment?" Bradley asked his Mom.

"That's more of an eye-for-an-eye type solution, not a random act of violence" she said.

"So when Dad got shot by Uncle Richard after the divorce, did you consider that an eye for an eye since he cheated on you?" Bradley quipped. His mother was flabbergasted.

"Bradley! Why in God's name would you think that was just, or that I would ever wish that upon your Dad?"

Bradley was in his third year of school at Creighton when Richard shot his own brother six times with Magnum .357 in Larry's driveway in front of the eldest son, Gregory. Larry had told Richard a week prior that he had to vacate his own home because Larry wanted to rent it out to a young couple that were friends of the family. At the time, Richard obliged and said he understood. He knew he couldn't live there forever, rent-free, even though they were brothers... but unfortunately when the time came to pack up, Richard had a

change of heart. People in the neighborhood never spoke negatively of Larry, other than him acting like a womanizer. The murder shocked Monroe and neighboring Appanoose county. There hadn't been a murder in Melrose since the Mulligan boy went missing back in the 80's. The second-generation story was told in a way that made Scotty Mulligan sound like he may have deserved to go missing. There's no honor among thieves, and when one cheats in a poker game, the end results are rarely good...Today, it's arresting the perpetrator at the casino, but once upon a time, it was mauling the thief's dominant hand with a hammer. Or if the crime involved enough money paired with stealing from the wrong people, no hammer...you simply arrived at a pre-dug hole in the middle of a cornfield. Cornstalks reaching six feet could hide a group from gravel roads, and police were even more non-existent then than they are now. Whatever happened to the Mulligan kid, we still don't know.

Patrick craved the spotlight throughout his life but had always felt like he was playing a minor character. Though he was the youngest of six siblings he was raised as an only child. He had a mid-December birthday so he felt cheated, whether this feeling was justified or not was up for debate. It's possible he had ADHD, but if he did he would never be diagnosed. He overheard his parents talking about sending him to therapy but never brought it up to them, fearing this would just thrust them into action. He felt he already had his therapy, and the baseball diamond was it. For these sessions, there was no clock, no fear, no noise. Only hustle, truth, and a stage with endless possibilities.

Bradley and Patrick had known each other since the fifth grade but had attended separate elementary schools, both with small classes. They shared the same Catholic upbringing from their parents, though Bradley's family had experienced a divorce and Patrick's hadn't. They did the same chores growing up as kids, except Patrick worked and Bradley took constant cigarette breaks. Each winter they would haul hay and fill buckets of corn, and each summer they would stack small bales after raking and baling endless rows of dead grass. That's all it was to both of them. Farming was a dead end. A job where you were never off the clock and the problems never stopped accumulating; much like the snow that could vary from late November to the Ides of March. It's not that they hated Iowa winters, it's that they hated what came with them.

As the years passed, the both of them started families, careers, and addictions, but not necessarily in that order. While Bradley was attending Creighton University and getting a DMD in dentistry, Patrick was getting kicked off his local JUCO team for developing a love of the bottle that would rival his love of the game. Bradley's lust for women had now been paired with a lust for hydrocodone, and also internet porn. Though they were both spiraling in different ways, they helped each other in any way they could, sometimes in ways that didn't seem like actual help. They worked out, running 5ks and 10ks together. They drank copious amounts of rum and told stories of their youth. They talked about getting sober while doing lines of cocaine, and debated what kinds of small businesses could thrive in their area. The only thing they truly agreed on throughout their lives was politics. Both were raised by proud Democrats, but both felt like two blue guppies swimming in a very red, and very large Republican pond. Though everyone in their area owned guns, neither Bradley nor Patrick ever felt the need to carry a weapon.

Patrick was never fulfilled by his now twenty-year old habit of gambling. What started with a friendly \$5 game of poker years before, had somehow now morphed into betting

\$500 a game on any sport, at any time, with the minimum \$500 bet sometimes being based on what mascot would beat the other in a no-holds-barred streetfight. Bradley was spewing thousands at a time as well, except his drug of choice was still sex. As much as they wanted to get better, they finally vowed to each other to finally take the steps to getting clean and sober.

“Dude, I think I have a plan,” Patrick said to his partner in crime. “Let’s go to NYC, have a ‘last hurrah’ between the two of us. You can have your Grade-A escorts in Manhattan, we can hit a game in Queens or the Bronx, then maybe finish the trip at the Statue of Liberty and give this sobriety/sex addiction help thing a real shot. Like really helping each other.” Bradley was hesitant about giving up hookers, but he knew they both needed to grow up. They planned the trip the same week as St. Patrick’s day, so it could give Bradley a couple extra days to close the dentistry.

When they landed at Laguardia airport on March 15th, they wasted no time in getting their stuff from baggage claim. They had hookers to find, games to bet, and baseball to watch, not time to waste. They took an Uber to the hotel since it was cheaper than a taxi, then started breaking down plans for their week-long getaway. The first night they decided they were going to see a Broadway production of Hamlet, but not before finding something to spice up the trip.

“Do you know anyone up here?” Patrick asked.

“Not really, but shit can’t be that hard to find. It’s New York, we’re probably less than a hundred yards from a dealer right now. I mean when I was in Jamaica all I did was walk down to the beach.” Bradley had never been to NYC, but he was the more experienced traveler of the two. To Patrick he was downplaying something that could throw a serious wrench into the plan of getting, as they called it, “Franco-eyed.” Patrick didn’t do coke or Molly often, but once his mind was in go-mode, there was no reversing course.

“I get that, but you’re acting like we’re gonna walk outside and have a hook-up. Just because you have an app for prostitutes, doesn’t mean getting blow will be that easy.”

Bradley instantly got defensive. “First off, it’s not an app, it’s called RubMaps. Secondly, I bet you \$100 that once we get to Manhattan I can find someone within twenty minutes.”

“You’re on. I love how you make so much money that you just throw it away.”

When they arrived in Midtown Manhattan at the Broadway Theater for Hamlet that night, Times Square was packed. It was two days before St. Patrick’s Day but Broadway was filled with every imaginable shade of green. As they exited the taxi, they both kept their eyes out for prospects. On the way to the theatre from the hotel, Bradley had been scrolling through RubMaps.

“Patrick not only am I going to take that hundred from you, I might get a two-for-one down here.” His eyes were lighting up brighter than the marquee itself, as they darted from his phone, to the faces in the crowd, back to Patrick. The idea of finding a beautiful woman and an 8-ball on the same street made this vacation start to feel more like Heaven for Bradley.

“You take one side of the street, I’ll take the other, meet back here... well it looks like you have 15 minutes left before that Benjamin is mine, Doc!”

As Bradley weaved through stopped cars to gain access to the other side of the street, his eyes toggled between RubMaps and anyone in the crowd that resembled a possible drug dealer. He scanned the crowd for a sign. Any sign. Then he smelled it.

“MY MAN!!” Bradley casually strolled up to a man by an ally smoking what looked, and smelled a lot like Marijauna. “You care if I hit that real quick?” The man obliged. Bradley inhaled deeply three times, closed his eyes, exhaled and smiled. Vacation was finally here. As his eyelids became slightly more narrow, he thanked the man for the smoke and purchased what he had left. Floating on cloud nine, he spotted Patrick across the street, eating a Chilli-dog by a street vendor.

“God that sounds amazing right now” Bradley said aloud to himself with a smile. “Chilli dogs and prostitutes. Who’s got it better than we do? Fucking nobody, that’s who.” As he began to cross the street, Bradley got an alert from RubMaps. It was Tatiana! He pumped his fist as if he was Tiger Woods at Augusta National after the winning tap-in putt. It looked like the two-for-one special tonight in NYC after all.

“EY PATRICK! I’LL TAKE TH–” ... **THUUD-K-CHHHH**. There were no screeching tires, there was no scream of fear, and no pulse. It happened fast, but because he had heard his name called out right beforehand, it may as well have been in slow motion. Patrick now felt like he was stuck in a continuum, as the distorted jingle from the ice cream truck played on repeat. He thought back to when they would play Twisted Metal as kids, and he couldn’t shake the irony of Bradley being killed by something that so closely resembled his favorite character in the game, “SweetTooth.”

Patrick stood there, fingers laced with his hands on top of his head. Some pigeons had started to pick at the half-eaten chilli-dog that had been dumped into the Broadway gutter.

“God damn it..” Patrick thought to himself. “Why couldn’t you just use PornHub like the rest of us, dude?”

RAIN FLETCHER

Bird Nest Painted Green

Of the many miles behind,
still he turns his back from forward
to look on the crushed shore bird.
Iron baskets hang on the will intertwined.

They were dropped on the forest paths,
cleared & viny with forking branches
easily traversed with your box of matches.
The carpenter wishes more to ask of his laths.

Not appreciated or sought after,
a burden of choosing to adapt
people pleasing causes him to subtract.
The tortoise catches wind of chatter.

Diseased back-wind-talk blows,
shifting the jester's path & fate
of egoism debate.
The hesitant thief asks for a dispose.

To eliminate the cowpoke from his lasso,
but the lion sees no gain or fail
sitting idly by & becoming stale.
In a world with visionary Picasso.

How can the critic choose good & bad,
whether to be shown or hid
kept in a museum or sold for a quid?
How can the boy choose to go with mom & dad.

Or to risk the flight,
to go out and write.

RAIN FLETCHER

Nihilist Jumbo Shrimp

Puzzle pieces fly across a table-top
as the chain-reaction waves crest,
the chaos abruptly stops.
Among the jagged mess
corners give those nice lanes;
stop & start—so plain.
The center/the heart/jigsaw so odd.

You're picked from the bunch.
Caught by your weary scalp,
hoping that you'd fit rested on a' hunch
by someone with martyred help.
Squeezed in with loose nooks & tight edges,
but soon your shape catches.
Masking & cutting, the piece wedges in.

You find yourself lost in your place
& hoped for more celebration.
Can't take in sight at your face.
Sweeping for a clear consultation.
With in & with out you search,
to peeling your heart like birch.
Bloody scenes on porcelain floors drip.

Scraping away at some wisdom,
nothing found but words of Nietzsche.
Even her majesty bears no plums
for they are stolen by the preacher.
Hanging so close to dirty money—
he runs with his slinged shoulder gunny.
Deeper & deeper the shovel strikes.

Stepping on the gas in his Camaro,
while the bison flee in purged piles.
The long road cracks & narrows.
Dusk breaks in colored styles.
Red sand columns touched by harsh wind
shade desert flowers pinned.
It's human to never walk blazed trails.

The phrase that echoes in my medley
of metronomic pluses screaming in my skull.
However— it turns me more deadly.
With orange jealousy for the free gull.

The sea underneath and wind lifting,
with body diving down & miffing.
Where the jumbo shrimp swim further.

WESLEY DAVIS

Finding Hope when Difficulties Arise

In times of great difficulties
It is common to feel hopeless
When the burden of grief and sorrow
Is the thing we mainly focus
But deep in the shadows of night
There is always the light of hope
The hope that lifts you out of despair
And lifts you up like a climbing rope

For hope comes by looking forward
And recalling your joyful times
And by always realizing
The happy memories in your mind
For those memories will bring joy
Joy that's impossible to measure
Joy that's incomprehensible
And is something to be treasured

So when things become difficult
And you are full of grief in sorrow
Remember that it's possible
To find hope in the future tomorrow

WESLEY DAVIS

The Priceless Gift is You

When you go through hard times
You may feel like you're alone
And in the midst of pain and sorrow
You might fear to make them known

You might fear what others may say
Or whether they'll truly care
You may think in your mind
That no one will be there

But even through these great pains
There are people who will support
People who can surround you with their love
Uplifting you and giving you comfort

Who can help you know
That though you may have mistakes or regrets
YOU are of great worth in this world
Something that you should never forget

For you are beautiful and elegant
Something priceless in the world today
Someone who can do great things
And who is special in many ways

So when you are sad or alone
Remember that people can help too
And help you see who you truly are
And that the priceless gift in the world is you

SERENE THOMPSON

Woman

Be quiet
Don't riot
Do as you're told
Keep yourself from looking old
-
Dress up
Sit up
Don't shed a tear
Be conscientious when you look in the mirror
-
Be confident
You're at fault for what he sent
You want a job?
You can have it along with the
disrespect that makes you sob
-
Smile
Walk a mile
Grin
You're too thin
-
Don't wear that hat
Workout, you're too fat
Don't be too strong, you look like a man
Don't forget you're only a lady, a woman
-
Be nice to him
Shut up, don't be dim
He acts that way because he likes you
With what you're wearing, what did you expect him to do?
-
Cover up
Hush up
Don't tell a soul
It will ruin him if anybody knows
-
You're too emotional
Don't be so literal
You're so vain
You aren't in pain
-

You'll be fine
Be proper when you dine
You can be anything
But then you MUST be everything

-

Become a mother
Don't be a bother
You need to cook and clean
Why what happened?! You aren't fit to be seen!

-

No makeup? Are you tired?
Maternity leave? More like fired!
Keep up with all the demands
When your husband is struggling, be a pillar
So he can stand

-

Flowers die anyway
Oh stop, you're ok
I know what's best for you
Catcalls on the street, do you love me too?

-

Don't sleep in, don't stay up late
Don't show too much on a date
You'll tease him and he'll feel inclined
Stop screaming, it's all in your mind

-

Walk to the car with keys in your fist
She was a caring wife and mother - sure to be missed
Set aside your goals and dreams
To help your husband learn what success means

-

It's your duty to help them out
Be the navigator and choose the route
Sacrifice everything just for a man
After all, it's not like he can

-

Change your body
Grow a baby
Cook and clean and don't be lazy

-

Oh, you're struggling? Others have it worse
Maybe don't always think of yourself first

-

We knew you'd be too delicate
You're twisting my words, that's not what I meant

SERENE THOMPSON

What are you scared of?

I'm scared to run I'm scared to dance
I'm scared to (never) take that chance

I'm scared to laugh I'm scared to climb
I'm scared to ruin my own life

I'm scared to talk I'm scared to love
I'm scared I'll never be enough

I'm scared to leave I'm scared to know
I'm scared to stay and scared to go

I'm scared to jump I'm scared to cry
I'm scared to (never) even try

I'm scared to sing I'm scared to think
I'm scared to swim lest I sink

I'm scared to sail I'm scared to fly
I'm scared to know the reasons why

I'm scared of practically everything you see,
But I'm terrified that
I'll never be me

Bios

Wesley Davis

Originally born in Tennessee and raised in Iowa, Wesley is currently studying to become an aerospace engineer. In his free time, Wesley typically writes poetry, does math, and plays video games. He is very passionate about astronomy and is in to writing poetry. He hopes to transfer to Iowa State to get a degree for aerospace engineering.

Melanie Forcier

Melanie is a writer who is studying history. She likes ranting about niche topics and would be best described as an eccentric, hyper-active artist.

Adrian O'Leary

Adrian is from Chariton, Iowa. Adrian is at IHCC studying Laser and Electro-Optics Technology. He is graduating in 2027. He is the president of the Laser club, preforms with the IHCC Theater and in his free time likes to be with his fiancé. After graduation he plans on moving away from home, to hopefully Colorado.

Nicole Prevo

A high school junior who has been writing poetry for about 4 years. Nicole plans to major in pre-law at the University of Iowa after obtaining her A.A. at Indian Hills. Her sister Alys-sa was her inspiration to write poetry to express her feelings.

Izabella Prose

Izabella is from Chariton, Iowa. She attends IHCC and majors in Fine Arts. Her future goals are to become a studio artist and/or pursue graphic design.

Phil Sinnott

Raised in Georgetown, Iowa, Phil is currently studying History at Indian Hills and looks to pursue a Bachelor's Degree in History or Communications when done here. His hobbies include collecting sports memorabilia, writing, and playing with his dog, Austa. He's passionate about music, being a Dad, and loves sports history.

Cassidy Thompson

Originally from Albia, Iowa. Cassidy is getting her associates in theater and plans to work on a cruise ship. She likes to write poetry when she feels passionate about something, sad, happy, or just strongly about her emotions. When she writes her feelings out in a poem, she never tries to make it perfect or plan it out. She simply writes out what she wishes she could speak and it all starts to flow out smoothly.

Bios

Serene Thompson

has always loved to read, but her love of writing came a bit later. The first poem she really remembers writing was in 2021. Writing became a way to make sense of difficult situations or feelings. She hopes that when read, her poems allow people to think, feel, and even relate. She is attending IHCC for her AA while competing on the Cross Country and Track teams.

Markus Graber

Originally from Albia, Iowa, Markus is currently studying Fine Arts and Mathematics at Indian Hills, graduating in 2027. In his free time, he prefers spending time in nature, reading, and participating backstage in theater productions. He is a multi-media artist with a preference for printmaking and ceramics. He plans to continue his art education to obtain a Masters of Fine Arts and become an art teacher.



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