

Fountain Spray

2020

Fountain Spray 2020



GEORGIAN COURT UNIVERSITY
THE MERCY UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

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This year's Fountain Spray is dedicated to victims of the Coronavirus, their families, and all who have supported them.

“I wish it need not have happened in my time,’ said Frodo. ‘So do I,’ said Gandalf, ‘and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.’”

—J.R.R. Tolkein

11 Feb 2019

- Erica Caleca

I didn't think it would hurt like it did when we lost you, and I know that I was foolish to think that.

I thought it wouldn't hurt because we were unsure a few times if you would make it or not-I figured that since I'd been so used to the idea of you not making it, that I'd be kind of alright when it does happen.

I was wrong. It hurt, I'm not sure if it still does. The grief, the pain comes and goes in waves, it has its own current. There's a longing in me, missing in me. I wish I could speak to you again. I wish for so many things. I wish I wasn't bothered when I'd have to drive grandma to the hospital or to the rehab place to see you. The constant backandforth. I feel bad that I even felt that way-I've never wished that I could do back and change my feelings more than I do now.

There were two distinct times that you made me heart drop before you passed away. The first was not long after you moved from Brooklyn and I was at your house with you, doing homework. You kept forgetting the grade I was in, how old I was-I wasn't mad at the time, just confused. The second time, I'll never forget. It was Columbus Day, my freshman year of college. I came from school to see you with my dad. (I had off from school, it was raining, and I was at school painting for class) we went to the rehab center to see you and you called me by my aunt's name. I cried immediately because you didn't remember me-you didn't remember my name. I knew then, better than I did a few months prior that things really were different, even though though I knew for the most that time my senior year of high school, but it just hit me differently when I stood there and you called me Linda.

A Day in the Light

- Carla Beuthe

My mother told me to be salt and light.

Back then I never really understood it.

I told her about the bullies, the lonely days walking home from school
nobody to play with.

The empty contacts in my phone and the heavy thoughts that lingered and
built storage space---

Just to be told once more you didn't belong in that place.

She told me to walk and be salt and light,
be kind to others going through that plight,

Embrace the darkness and guide them to the light.

I became a voice for others
when others simply could not find their courage
to work through their blight.

I often cried in the night and turning to my notebook for comfort.

My mind was empty and desolate like a desert
unable to cope with the negative reactions of the world
projecting their fears and sorrows.

Yet, I was told to buckle my boots and face tomorrow
maybe a smile may crack underneath the hidden sun,
maybe someone will share their vulnerabilities
and the light may come...

I may learn that I am not alone.

Alley Way Memories on Rosewood Ave.

- *Carla Beuthe*

Passing by through the alley way,
where you showed me those honey suckle bushes
Sweet like honey pouring over,
Berries bright within the brush
and the flower bush I innocently stole flowers off of
to bring to my mom on Mother's Day.
A lesson learned to seek forgiveness for something not of my own.
I learned where love and acceptance came from—
To muster up the courage to apologize even when it is cumbersome.
When the reaction is the opposite I want to hear,
I learned strength and bravery.
Passing by through the alley way---
walking upon cracks on the sidewalk and stones when I was a little kid.
Learning to ride was never smooth at first,
Until I practiced and let go from your push
I was free.
Your home made baking at my birthday parties and gifts,
Endless trips to see various communities and events
showed me your benevolence.
I will always cherish your lifelong lessons,
your comradery and jokes
about the very things encountered,
passing by through the alley way last summer,
where we strolled down memory lane,
Identifying neighbors' names who may have still stayed or passed on.
Pointing at the yard across the street I took my quad out for rides,
hoping like you, I would never get caught,
just to ignite the minute touch of the young rebel inside of me
Enjoying life being happy and free.

Alycia's Adventures Series Chapter 2

- *Alycia Craig-Woods*



Alycia's Adventures Series Chapter 2

- Alycia Craig-Woods



Alycia's Adventures Series Chapter 2

- Alycia Craig-Woods



The Art of Preservation

- Pamela Rader

Jars filled with summer berries brighten hibernal days.
Beloved brogans restored until the cobbler shakes his head.
A September harvest of roasted green chiles
frozen and then thawed before bulbs have yet to bud.
Darning the big toe of socks from one who has passed,
I cling to yarn skeins like tangled sentences.
A record of light's imprint, sepia tinged scenes
caught between white borders: Faded squares catch light
and trap time, turning memories into disappearing freight-cars.
An attic archive stores letters in shoe boxes: broken seals
encase folded-away-words faded by dust and decades.
I recall: a stuffed bison, frozen in an eternal gallop, glares
with glass eyes that are not its eyes—but eyes that see what we do.
I meet the glassy gaze, disturbed, knowing that sometimes we kill to preserve.

A Special Friend Named Mel

- Carla Beuthe

I never had the chance to say thank you one last time,
I never had the chance to say how special you are to me,
The lessons taught to me,
I understood.

You understood when no one else did,
You took me under your
wing and blessed me with the sweetest gift.
The company of genuine friendship and my nights ending in bliss.
I didn't know December 2nd
would be our last phone call
As I always waited patiently for you,
To share all of your adventures and activities.
I basked in each moment with you
In spirit and beside you.
I couldn't always be there, but I often prayed and thought about you.
Although we were states apart, I looked forward to hearing your laugh,
Even the tough love lessons that had me crying in the end

I wish our time together didn't have to end so soon.
I will miss the bike rides even the scrapes on the concrete when I fell and
thought I never could ride,
I will miss those jacuzzi nights
in your backyard after BBQ'ing,
Devouring all of your home-made cookies and fruit salads,
More importantly the time you instilled inside of me when no one else
didn't.
I will miss the many shouts from my bedroom window asking if I was
around to spend some time,
Going on joy rides, walking your pups, just talking about life.
Even though I was five, I never forgot any memories you have bestowed in
my life.

Your endless jokes, your trips to your tennis practices, and seeing your
students at the school you taught Phys. Ed. at,
The days I got to sleep over, take a break from
my folks and enjoy a while,

Bear

- Betty McBain

The days I even disagreed when I didn't share your view,
The days I may have acted foolish for not understanding social cues—you
stuck by me because you took the time to understand my history.
Being adopted isn't easy, but your
comfort and reassurance that I would
make it and be okay pacified me.
I never know when the last moment is

When the last cup of tea will be poured,
When the burning ember will fade out,
One day when I return, you will tell me what all of this was about,
Why we cried when our heart ached,
Why we danced in the rain,
Why we strove in our toil just to see success at the pinnacle,
Why some moments are guaranteed and others are not,
Or why close friends can be your family regardless of blood...
You understood whe
When no one else could,

You told me to reach for my bachelor's degree, despite a learning disability,
Despite whatever hardships or lessons may be thrown to me.
You told me to treat college like an endurance test,
To see how much I could take.
You always thought I could achieve anything in life
With the right mindset to work hard even when things are tough.
You taught me to have a big heart for others and a bigger heart to self-love.
Even when days may challenge my worth,
To always look to God and never give up.
You taught me to let things roll off my back like a duck,

To be free and content, despite any predicaments.
Thank you for your unending support,
Thank you for showing me the way,
Thank you for the final reminder that I will be okay
And loving me unconditionally.



The Beauty of Boston

- Lindsay Flake



Blazing Mountain Sun

- Janice Karluck



Born

- Luana Fahr

Born of pain,
a life in search of light,
Breaking through a waterfall,
Detaching from a lifeline,
Screaming for emancipation,
Wriggling out of a stringy cocoon,
Wondering why it's such a struggle
To the alien world, so far from its bubble.

With open mouth, and wide-eyed wonder,
All fight to caress the life,
And draw from it, its innocence,
Its youth, its truth.
They sing to the life,
and want it to smile.
And it does, for its forgotten the tunnel,
The pain and the tussle,
The landing on earth,
The trauma of birth.

The Cardinal

- Kimberly A. Lee

The cardinal sits outside my kitchen window
Each day he just sits in the tree outside my kitchen window
I hear them say that the cardinal represents a lost loved one
But I have not lost anyone in a long time
I've lost my keys, a lot
I've lost my mind, a little
But I have not lost any love in a long time

The cardinal sits out there and taunts me
Outside my kitchen window
He sits there in the tree each day singing his song
All happy and bright

I can not take that bird
The bird must die
I will love no more

One little shot that's all it took
The bird fell down
It is dead

Castle

- Betty McBain



Chasing Lilacs

- Pamela Rader

A fistful of spring borne into the future
that is now.

Blooming on île de la cité in April,
they are harbingers of spring.
Inland, just east of the divide,
the bulbs open from bottom to
top.

Across the ocean again,
I follow their trail up the coast,
south to north. Through three states,
through three zones. One year,
I move like a rook:
up and over across the grids.

Promises of warmer nights
I follow their scent along the coast
The way an elephant sniffs for water.

I prolong spring into June at
the outermost place on the hook,
between harbor and ocean:
These galaxies
of blossoms hold their notes
in the cooler brackish air. In the hues
of bleached bone and quahog violet,
it is the combined hue of these two,
the paler cousin, I favor.

Always their synchronized unfurling,
these clusters of coronets
compose the flower of flowers that
releases the fragrance of awakening
and confirms we've turned a corner:
winter behind us as summer quickens.

Now, I know:
Summer, a sticky ripeness of wasting,
is an elegy for spring.

Cinna the Poet

- Michelle Smith

There is no greater calamity
Than to be edited down

To the commonplace
To the misinformed
To the lost

For those who do not fit
Or those accused
And those who simply stand aside

Cinna waits in the lobby
To claim his prize

Dead Noise

- Dominick J. Di Bartolomeo

Songs of plagues, posies, and Prufrocks
are preferable odes to the dead
than those of late memory. I'd rather ring
the rosie with purple hyacinth girls,
than suffer through long winded bagpipe
harmonies, attended by surgeons and lawyers.
For it takes much more than the will
written on paper, to leap into a not
so sentimental grave and
be buried quick with her. Would you
be buried along with her? Does your grief
bear the same emphasis? Or is your sorrow
an orchestra of dead noise? Expelling
such profound wind while
hair, arms, and legs grow thin.
Songs you sang sounded like
flights of fancy in open air.
Mine weighed heavy upon
out of tune piano keys.
Each struck a new chord.
Plucked at tightly wound strings.
Screeched like broken records.
Why do you and I insist on serenading
waterlogged corpses with such disdain?
Perhaps we've made too much noise.
Can we not simply surrender to the sounds
of holy water flowing, rowing down

stream towards
salt saturated bays that flood family catacombs?
Perhaps we might hear,
dripping drops of downpour that pervade our dreams.
Grief filled scenes of slick stained skulls,
still screaming so that we may one day understand their
silence,
and hang our heads low to hear the hanged man's hymn.
"Hush harmonies for graves and those who dig.
The last hymn I remember - rustling leaves.
A drop and snap, my neck was like a twig.
Abruptly ending lives of sinful thieves.
No longer mock my memory this way.
Less meaning found in noise and banging chime.
Perform your grief for only one sad day,
Then sing delightful tunes the rest of time.
Your heads should hang - as mine did faced with death.
Reflect in silence - just as those laid low.
No infant cries - relieve your sullen breath.
Express your quiet anguish - silent woe.
Let graves rest silently in peace each year,
And living men - this message they must hear."

Death Is a Rollercoaster in My Eyes

- Erica Caleca

I feel like when you passed away, it wasn't one death in that moment-there were two. There was your mind, which went earlier in a way, from dementia, and then there was your body, which went around two years later.

I feel like I had gotten used to the idea of you passing because it was dicey and touch-and-go for so long. It felt as though we were on a rollercoaster in the dark, not knowing when there would be a sudden drop, incline, or sharp turn.

(where are we now?) still in the dark

The Divine

- Marissa Seely



Drum

- Luana Fahr

Ebony feet
Heartbeat
Sound of war
Music score
School band
Striking hand
Running Bear
Braided hair
Highly nimble
Clanging cymbal
Shamanic trance
Native dance
Communication
Invocation
Drummer boy
Toddler toy
Therapy
Divinity

Escape

- Pamela Dong

The air is thick
I can hardly breathe
My throat is parched
My eyes are burning
I feel suffocated with no end in sight
The air is searing my skin
I am burning up
All around me are flames
I am trapped
There is no escape
Except is in
my mind
Dreams of snowflakes on my face
The snow beneath my feet
Wanting to be free
Longing for an icy breeze
To wake up my tired soul

Fear Speech

- Lindsay Flake

Heights, snakes, rejection, sharks, closed in spaces, clowns, loneliness, failure, being bullied, replacement and death, we all have a fear but they are easier to overcome when you actually realize what you're truly afraid of. Such as people aren't actually afraid of heights they're afraid of falling and people aren't afraid of death they're afraid because they don't know what comes after. People who have a fear of replacement should just ask for reassurance because it can help overcome that fear. Throughout high school I've overcome a few fears the first one being public speaking. I used to be terrified of public speaking my hands would be sweaty and it felt like I could barely stand but today I still may not be the best at public speaking but I can give a presentation with a minimal amount of fear. Another fear that I have overcome is my fear of snakes. It was the first day of sophomore year and I was walking into my bio room and then I saw a 6 foot snake at the side of the room I stopped dead in my tracks but realized that I would just have to deal with it after a while I realized that the snake couldn't hurt me and that they were pretty cool animals that by the end of the year I was holding a snake. Sometimes fear can be so strong that it can consume the person and force them to live their life in a different manner for example 160,000 students stay home from school because they are afraid of being a victim from bullying. Sometimes fear can be very hard to overcome but you have to face it because fear can be chains on your life. So today I encourage you to find the root of your fears and to explore them and to challenge them and to remember that "Hope is the only thing stronger than fear".

First Name, _____

- *Reina*

I usually speed right through this slot
I don't want to have time to think about it.
It doesn't deserve any recognition in my opinion.
It's only a stamp of the 24 chromosomes I was given.
A reminder of the face I resemble.
But that last name has nothing for me.
False.
It often times puts me at the top of an alphabetically arranged list.
But it was not enough to put me at the top of your list.
Other than that, that last name is nothing.
Yet, it's everywhere.
Anything I have ever accomplished has that name on it.
As if you did anything to deserve what I have accomplished.
Every recognition letter, award, nomination, certificate has your stamp.
As if you went through all the crap I've been through to get that.
You weren't.
But she was.
And I use hers every chance I get.
Because even though hers is common and it doesn't put me at the top of an alphabetical list.
She put me at the top of hers.
She deserves to be stamped on all of those things that you don't even know about.
She didn't work for them either,
But she was there.
And that is more than enough.

Hay Barn, Duke Farms, Somerset, NJ

- *Roberta Trotter*



Hope

- Amanda Ricci

Have you ever felt trapped behind metal bars?
Or watched all your cuts turn to scars?
Have you tried to escape the pain in your soul?
But you just couldn't seem to fit that hole?
Have you got so worried you started to shake?
Or felt too weak to be awake?
Have you been so mad you started to cry,
Or used a smile as a lie?
Have you lost who you are way down deep,
Or unsure of which secrets to keep?
Have you felt your heart pound and pound?
Or hear a dull ringing sound?
Have you felt the internal cold?
Or felt like life was too much to hold?

Life beats you down to the ground,
And then so quickly turns around.
Sadness is always okay.
I promise you, it gets better someday.
Have you felt the joy of living?
And all and everything the world is giving?

It's when you feel the sun against your cheek,
Or thank God for each & every week.
It's when you laugh so hard you began to snort,
Or lean on your best friend for support.
It's when you dance your heart out in the rain,
Or achieve your goal through the pain.
It's when you smile so hard it starts to hurt,
Or when that special person begins to flirt.
It's the warmth and comfort of your room,
Or the beauty of flowers that bloom.
It's everything that fills your heart,
Even after you fell apart.
It's the little things that help you cope,
And let you know there's always hope.

I Look at this Picture of You and Sigh

- Kim Markland

I look at a picture of you and sigh,
That beaming boy with a hockey stick,
Another game-winning puck,
That million-dollar smile,
Such dedication and drive,
Intellect and pride.
The world was yours for the taking.
But, then you met the vape,
and life evaporated.
Dedication diminished,
Drive extinguished,
Intellect clouded,
and pride disappeared.
Hockey no longer thrilled you.
Family became a nuisance.
Church was a bore.
School no longer worked for you.
Dreams relinquished.
The future is obscure now in the clouds of smoke,
Frustrating and frightening...
But, I lovingly gaze at that picture of you and believe
That little boy is still inside of you,
And will live to skate again.

Larry

- Kimberly A. Lee

I was sitting there with tears in my eyes as I listened to the man from the Kiwanis club speak about my grandfather. The mention of his granddaughter and great grandson cut like a knife to the heart. His son had always held a grudge since his father got remarried. He blamed my grandmother for his parents not getting back together. But this stung. He was the only grandfather I had ever known and it's almost as if I, we didn't even exist. My sister is sitting a row behind me and I can hear her sniffing. I'm sure she is just as upset about her nonexistence as I am but I won't let the ignorance of fools take away my grandfather.

My other grandfathers all died when I was too young to really remember them. Larry as we called him, I'm not really sure why but we always referred to him as our grandfather to anyone else. Larry was the one that was always there at any family event, graduation, birthday, or holiday, he was there. My eleventh birthday at this point was over thirty years ago, Larry took me to my very first Giants game. My father was never into sports so it was always nice to have Larry to talk to about what was going on in football.

I remember being so excited to go to Giants Stadium on that Sunday, just me and Larry. My birthday was September 9th so we went to the first home game after which was September 11th, 1988. This was long before September 11th became 9/11. It was the best day ever as far as I

was concerned and we hadn't even left for the stadium yet.

My mom brought me over to my grandparents house that morning. She being a typical mom made sure that Larry and I had some ground rules for the day and then left to head back home. Larry handed me my ticket and all I could do was stare at it. I remember thinking: Wow! I can't believe that he spent this much money for us to just go to a game together. The ticket I held had a price of \$18.00 on it, thinking about it now makes me laugh a little. Thirty-six dollars for two people to go to a Giants game is nothing compared to today's prices of \$150.00 each, even for the upper tier where we sat.

It was a nice day! A humid and sunny day with just the slightest breeze that kept us from getting too hot while we waited in line to enter the stadium through gate B. It was a one o'clock game but we got there around 11:30 so we would have enough time to get all the way up to our seats. Section 316 row 27 seemed to be like we were sitting in the sky it was so high up. Once we made it all the way to the top we put our jackets down in our seats and went all the way back down to the ground level of the stadium.

Larry wanted to show me the gift shop and get some lunch before the game started. I had never seen so much Giants clothing, equipment and thing-a-ma-bobs before anywhere. Not even at the mall. Every which way I turned there was something that caught my attention. Especially the price tags on the autographed footballs and framed shirts. Larry told me I could pick out something as a souvenir of my first game. I remember being so happy and just running around that shop from one side to the next and back again! I looked at the small things, there were pencils and little helmets that had the Giants logo on them not to mention the notebooks and

erasers. School had just started so those would have been useful items to get but who really wanted to get school supplies at a Giants game? I looked at the bigger things, jerseys, balls and jackets. Man were they expensive, even Larry turned me away from that area. We looked at some t-shirts they had, but ultimately I decided to get a pennant that I could hang on my wall and remember this day always. I can't help but smile as I still have that pennant from thirty plus years ago.

After the gift shop Larry and I got some lunch from the concession stand. We bought everything! At least that's what it seemed like to my eleven year old self. We had hot dogs, nachos with cheese, pretzels and even slushies. The only bad thing was that we had to carry all of it back to our seats in the upper tier of section 316 row 27. By the time we got back to our seats we needed to sit and catch our breath for a minute before we started eating. Everything was amazing! I can still remember dipping my pretzel into the nacho cheese sauce and how good it tasted followed by the cherry slushie that I would end up wearing down the front of my shirt for the rest of the afternoon. The New York Giants were playing the San Francisco 49ers. The game started well enough with the Giants drawing first blood and scoring 7 points the first quarter.

After that though it got a little blurry. The 49ers scored some, the Giants scored some. It all came down to the final quarter. Each team would score 7 points. I still remember the play that finished the Giants off. It was about an eighty yard pass from Joe Montana to Jerry Rice that scored the 49ers the final 7 points to win the game 20-17. I was disappointed in my team but when I looked up to Larry he was simply looking down at me with a smile from ear to ear.

The whole way home we complained about that last play and how someone should have intercepted that ball. How there was no reason that the 49ers won when we started the game ahead of them. It was the best day ever.

Now a guy with a funny hat is talking about my grandfather, I think he is from the Knights of Columbus or something like that. My grandfather was part of many clubs and social groups after he retired from the New York City Police Department. He always had a part-time job but he liked to socialize which was great for him especially after my grandmother died some twenty years ago. They kept him busy and in good company. I'm glad he had all these men as friends throughout the years.

It's approaching nine o'clock and the service is nearly over. My sister and mother are still sitting one row behind me, it seems she has calmed herself from earlier. The funeral director is addressing everyone and letting us know that there will be a burial in Middletown cemetery tomorrow morning. Everyone is getting up and paying their last respects to Larry. As I approach the casket and kneel next to my grandfather I pull out the Giants ticket from September 11th 1988 and place it alongside him as well as the Giants pennant that he bought me. I will never forget that wonderful day. I really don't need a souvenir to remember any of it. At least I can leave it with the man who taught me so much about football and life.

Goodbye Larry until we meet again.

The Little Girl

- Luana Fahr

She uttered a stifled sigh
And leaned into her mother's thigh.
Don't take candy from a stranger
(Mother told her of the dangers).
Darting eyes that met her mother's,
She tucked her hand inside her brother's.
Stay right here or I will make you.
Sit right there; someone can take you.
 (Why am I the one in trouble,
 Forced to live inside a bubble?)
A little girl just shed a tear
For a world she's learned to fear.

Love in Color

- Mike Ivanko



Melon Juice

- Marissa Seely



Missing in Action

- Doreen Lapderdon-Addison

Missing pieces of me
How deep does it go?
Deeper than I thought.
Resurfacing, submerging.

Deforestation sometimes planned
But, things happen.
How deep does it go?"
Deeper than I thought.

Looking back at what was.
Here I am now.
No need to know the future.
Through the wreckage and the devastation, it's
an ugly process.
There is always hope.

Hope into rebirth
Stronger, resilient,
New growth ready and eager.

I am a young child in an older body
Moving up through the ashes, restructuring my
deepest cells
DNA regrouping
I was once me
I am now me

New Jersey On Film–Amityville Horror(1979)

- Marci Mazzarotto

Like the forest there are remnants of the past,
hidden and open.
There are missing pieces.

Now, I can only collect and reconnect.
Now I can reflect.
Now I grow, as does life within me

There are pieces of me missing in action
I can reminisce, remember but not to dwell.
Life in the forest emerges raw and beautiful
So can I, continually and always.



New Jersey On Film – Amityville Horror (1979)

This photo is one in an ongoing image series dedicated to the visual exploration of New Jersey's role in film.

The sunken garden at Georgian Court University served as a key location in the ending segment of the 1979 horror film classic, Amityville Horror. Since the film's producers were denied access to shoot at the real-life home of the infamous Lutz family in Long Island, New York, they brought their production down to Ocean County, New Jersey, filming at various locations including Tom's River and Point Pleasant.

Ode to New York

- Marissa Seely

Though your streets are often bustling with crowds,
you've always made room for me.
Your museums taught me more
than my teachers ever could.
Forty miles from my house,
and still - you are my home.
With your skyline as my nightlight,
I never had to face the dark.
Here's to every Sabrett hot dog and candied peanut you've graced me with,
And the endless supply of taxi cabs filling your streets.
No one else looks so good in yellow.

Pietà

- Dominick J. Di Bartolomeo

I closed my eyes and prayed that
I was blind. Now I only see her
fractured face up above me. My father is
Michelangelo. Left me to be coddled
on cold cobblestone knees. I begged him to
fix her. Bring her back to
me. Oedipus the mad king defiled her.
Made a new sphinx of her. Nose
in pieces on the floor. I am lying
on her lap. A boy who has grown into a
man, is the answer to our riddle. Oedipus
the Magyar Khan tried to steal my stone seat.
His real name was Laszlo Toth, and he
believed in a fraudulent faith. The Pope
never answered any of his letters.
That Hungarian heretic imagined he was
Christ reborn. Was he wrong? Am I
supposed to be lying
here upon this maternal throne? Envious
attacks of a spoiled child against
the father. Looking down upon us
from heaven. He knows our every sin.
I want to see him, but my mother is
in the way. She has always been here.
Her arm rests on the floor, but

The Piper

- Luana Fahr

I can still feel her hold me. A child
lost in the Temple, and you found me.
You found me. Toth found you - and I
have been searching for you
ever since. Your crag cast corpse
blocks my view now. I cannot see my
Father above me. Obfuscated by
the Blessed Mary's holy ghost...
I wish that you'd leave, but I want you to
stay. Come back with me to more innocent
days. When everything wasn't scattered
all over the floor. Your youth and beauty
firmly on your face. An eternal smile
set in stone. My everlasting devotion to you
never faltered. Even after your departure...
A cursed cross carried by my stone heart.
His name was Laszlo Toth. We are
Oedipus King of the Jews. We all
close our eyes, and pray that we are blind

Birthed by the same Creator,
Begotten an immortal hater
On the path of gravest sin,
The piper led his merry din.
Fallen from a splendid sky,
The dawn of evil drawing nigh.

Succumb to the depravity
Or save us from iniquity.
Though the choice was never stated,
Saying love was overrated,
Made us seek a lesser god,
We realized was feigned and flawed.

And then upon awakening,
We came to see a greater King
Our hearts no longer weak and hollow,
Have a choice of who to follow.

Plumeria

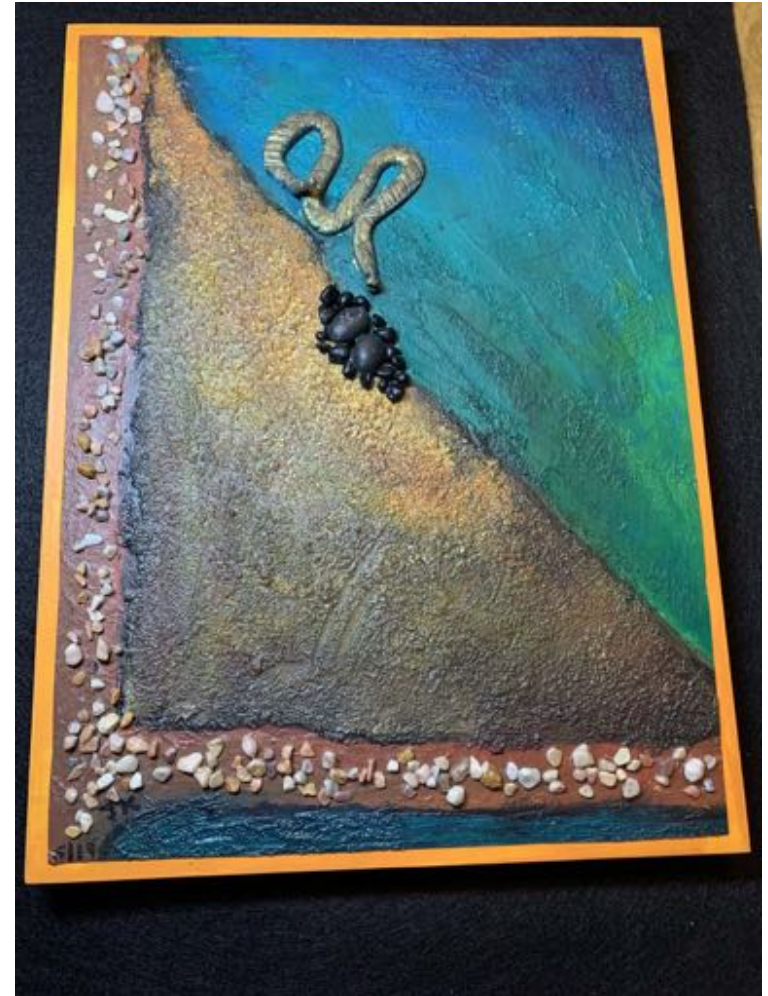
- Marissa Seely



48

Predator Approaches

- Janice Karluk



49

Quiet Beauty

- Roberta Trotter



50

The Radio's Broken

- Lindsay Flake

I remember getting in that old ford pickup
Just me, my dad and his coffee cup

I went to change the radio station
But he said it only plays XTU nation

I thought this was going to be bad
I leaned back in my seat feeling a little sad

Out of the speakers came twangy voices and guitars
With the story line probably taking place at a bar

I wouldn't have expected to love the tunes
but with songs about summer and partying under the moon

How could I not listen to the sounds coming through
It was that day I became a member of the XTU crew

I've learned so many lessons from the words that have entered my ears
Like to appreciate the simple things in life and don't waste the years

To stand up for yourself when things get tough
And to drive your truck where the road gets rough

If it weren't for country music I don't know who i'd be
So in the end I'm glad my dad lied to me.

51

Ripped from Me

- Kimberly A. Lee

The slicing of flesh
The opening of skin
The removal of vital organs
The cutting of them
He is here! He has arrived!
I am numb and joyous
My body lay scattered
Different parts about
in different places
I can see nothing
except for him
He is laying on another table
Naked and screaming
7.69 lbs
the machine flashes
He gets wrapped in an ugly blanket
They bring him to me
nuzzle him against my face
That is all I can do
I am strapped to this table
Unable to move and still numb
I can feel pressure
my organs are placed back into my body
A flash of light blinds me
Then he is gone

Road

- Betty McBain



Selfie Art

- Doreen Lapderdon-Addison



Shady Oaks

-Kimberly A. Lee

"This simply will not due!" was the first thing Miriam heard of her new roommate at the nursing home. "I am supposed to have a private room. I will not share a room with some stranger." the woman said as she leaned over to Miriam and said "No offense dear I'm sure you are lovely but I was promised a private room." Miriam replied, "No offense taken."

To Miriam, her new roommate seemed to be your typical eighty year old who was about to be put in a home for the first time. She was tall and thin, almost too thin. Her hair shimmered of a delicate silver that outlined her wrinkled little face. Miriam had been at the home for several years already and had seen many new faces come and unfortunately go. She could tell by this woman's behavior that she was a woman of privilege. A woman who always got what she wanted. A woman who was never told "no."

She went to march out of the room but at the same time a younger man of maybe mid forties entered with his arms full of luggage and bags. "Jason! What is going on in this place? I'm not even here for five minutes and they are already changing everything they promised. I was promised a private room!" "Don't even put that luggage down. I won't be staying here." Said the woman. William to his mother's dismay put the suitcases down and sat in a chair by the door. "What did you pack in all these bags mother?" Jason inquired.

Her response to Jason was a simple "never you mind, pick those bags back up, I will not stay in this place for even one night." Jason let out

an exasperated huff. He had heard this all before. This is third place that they have been to. Everytime it was the same thing. They meet the directors and are promised the world and then when they go to move in it is not what was promised. This time was going to be different Jason thought. Jason had enough of carting his mother from place to place. The director here had promised nothing but the best facility to care for his mother in her final years. After reviewing and visiting many other facilities this was the place that Jason had decided she would stay.

Jason sat his mother down in the chair and explained everything to her again. He told her that this was the last place they would be going to. This is the place that she would be staying no matter what. He also explained to her that she was never promised a private room or balcony or any other crazy thing should could dream up.

Miriam could tell that William was exhausted with the entire process of putting his mother in a home. She stood up and introduced herself to Jason and found out her new roomies name was Helen. She told them that she had been here for seven years now having come when she eighty-three and that once Helen was settled in she would come to love the Shady Oaks. Jason was a broker for a big city firm with a wife and three small children at home. Helen was recently widowed by her husband of nearly fifty-five years. Miriam also found out that Helen “was seventy-nine years young and much too young to be put in a home when she could perfectly take care of herself.” As she put it. After their introductions Miriam excused herself to the common room so that they could have some privacy settling in.

In the common room Miriam sat with her friend Olive who had come to Shady Oaks just about a year ago. She was telling Olive about her new roommate. “She is going to have to be broken in and right quick! I am much too old at this point to still be breaking in newbies.” Olive simply laughed and reminded her that if her roommates didn’t keep

dying so quickly then she wouldn’t have to put up with a new one every few months. “It’s the curse of room 54.” Miriam laughed at the mention of the curse, she had been hearing rumors of this curse for years now. “If there really was a curse on room 54 don’t you think I would have been gone a long time now? I’ve been in room 54 since I came here.” The women both had a good laugh over that.

After about two hours or so Miriam went back to room 54 to see how Helen was settling in. When she arrived at the room she had to double check the room number on the door to be sure she was in the right one. It looked nothing like the room she had left an hour earlier. There were new curtains, wall hangings, rugs, a vanity, and new bed coverings on both beds. Miriam stood there flabbergasted not knowing what to think or say.

Helen walked in from the hall and found Miriam standing there with her mouth agape. She said “Isn’t it wonderful! My daughter-in-law managed to run to the store and get a matching bedspread for your bed as well! Now everything looks nice and put together.” Miriam decided to just tell Helen that it looked nice and bite her tongue about the rest, aside from asking her “Where are my things, my bedding, my curtains?” Helen’s response was “Oh those old things I wanted to throw them away but Jason told me that would be rude so we sent them to be laundered and thought you could just store them or throw them away if you wanted to.”

Miriam knew it was going to take more time and patience to break Helen in than it had her previous roommates but the room did look nice with all the new things. She asked “Oh where is Jason? Did he leave already?” Helen’s response was “Oh yes, he had a lot of work to do and had to get back to his family. He is a very important person at the brokerage and is up for a promotion.” “Oh that is great.” was all Miriam could muster out.

The next day started off well and all. Miriam slept comfortably in her new Egyptian cotton bedding. She woke up ready to take on the world which is saying a lot for a ninety year old with a bad hip. It was nearly eight o'clock when Miriam finished dressing and headed to the bathroom. When she noticed that Helen wasn't in the room. It actually looked as though she hadn't even slept in her bed last night.

Miriam continued in her routine and headed to the dining hall when she was finished. As she approached she could hear Helen from in the hall complaining "This is horrible! How is anyone supposed to eat this slop? Is this really what we are expected to eat everyday?" When she entered she saw the poor waitress Kamryn frazzled and not knowing what to say or do. So she headed to the table where Helen and Kamryn were. When she started to sit next to Helen Miriam asked Kamryn for a cup of coffee right away. Kamryn happy to get away from Helen ran away from the table nearly in tears.

Miriam explained to Helen that some food was good and some was bad as it would be at any place you eat at. Had you waited for me I could have told you what to order and what not to. She said "Did you even sleep in the room last night, Helen? It looked as though you hadn't." Helen replied "If you can call what I did sleep then yes. But it was a terrible sleep. I don't know how you all put up with sleeping on those dreadful beds. They are so lumpy and hard. I was awake by 6:30, got myself ready and made my bed before heading here for horrible food and coffee."

Miriam knew that Helen must have been more privileged that she had realized. This was going to take everything she had to deal with her on a daily basis. The constant negativity was not good for her health or Helen's for that matter.

That day at breakfast Miriam pointed out the good things to order from the menu in the dining hall. She explained that it was still only

good food and not extraordinary but it was better than most of the other foods. She told her how she spends her days and what others at Shady Oaks did to occupy their days. Miriam mentioned that every other Friday they had a dance and there was one tonight if she was interested in going. It would give her a chance to meet the residence.

Helen wanted nothing to do with meeting anyone. She still had no intention of staying in this place especially if this was the type of food she was going to have to deal with. She would be much better off eating at a soup kitchen than at this place. Miriam knew this was the beginning of the end of their friendship.

That evening when Miriam was about to go to the dance she said goodbye to Helen who was lying in her bed watching some home decorating shows on tv. She had an iv feeding tube hooked up. She said it was better than eating the slop from this kitchen. "Well goodnight then I will try to be quiet when I return if you are sleeping." Miriam had said. Helen could only roll her eyes and turn back to her show.

Later that evening Miriam was as quiet as could be when returning to the room. She slipped into her nightgown and slippers without Helen even knowing she was back. Once ready for bed Miriam pulled out a syringe from her purse and headed over to Helen's bedside. She still had the iv hooked up so Miriam knew this would make it even easier. As she removed the cap to the syringe she bumped into the bed and shook Helen a bit. It was enough to wake her up. Helen was confused as to what was going on. Miriam said "Oh deal Helen I am going to take your pain away. You won't have to deal with the terrible food and being abandoned by your son and his family anymore."

Helen was still confused and was asking "What's going on? What is that syringe?" Miriam simply said again "it is to take your pain away. You will have nothing to complain about anymore." At this point, Helen thought she knew what was going on and quickly apologized to Miriam

for being so negative and rude and for trying to throw away her things. Miriam looked into Helen's eyes, she could tell that they were begging to be kept alive. They had a bit of promise in them as well. But Miriam knew it had to be done. She took the syringe and pushed the contents into the open port of the iv.

Helen seeming a little dazed already asked "What was that? What did you do? Why? Why?" Then she fell limp and was dead. Miriam's only response was "They promised me a private room too.

Sky

- Roberta Trotter



Sombre Forest

- Janice Karluk



Spring in the Woods

- Janice Karluk



Stretch Memory Wire & Wire Wrapped

- Janice Karluk



Summer Breeze

- Mike Ivanko



That Is: A Poem for Darl Bundren

- Pamela Rader

“And if it was, it can't be is. Can it?”
from *As I Lay Dying*

Tracing the perimeter of
the granite forest is to
follow the boundary of is
and *not-is*: the boundaries of was.

An island of engravings to the west
to the east an occluded ditch.
Activity at the molecular level
reminds me: decay is empirical.

Like the castaways of lore, I try to
see beyond the horizon of now.
Holding my breath I run over
the sea of bodies, imagining:

Not the great beyond. But lives
Lived. The afterlife of their things.
I make note of names. Doing quick
math, I shudder at dates. And at what is.

Dehydrated thoughts jostle against
each other. This memorial, or that one.
Frosted outline or script? None of it
matters. Earthly clutter pollutes.

Rounding up the hill I pass a pump
a faucet for island caretakers and their flora.
Dare I drink the elixir of death?
Elixir of life, I decide. Of cool earth.

Water of was is water that *is*.

Untitled

- Matt Wedlock

“Once upon a time there was, and there was not, a human of the Homo sapiens species in the family Hominidae, the kingdom Animalia, and the phylum Chordata, who awoke at a time just before the singularity. The human had teeth and lips for a while. These teeth sustained the human for years with memory, but mostly sustenance, though the former offered more poetry than the latter; summer rhubarb picked near mounds of construction dirt rinsed with well water from an old rubber hose, spaghetti pie prepared in casserole dishes to be shared with two families who shared after frosty days when the birdsong was stillest, the taste of under underwear just removed and sweat and waiting in the prickle there of humming dawn with just lips and anticipation to please, as a Libra is likely to; or Whopper's, flame grilled beef patty, mayonnaise, mustard, and ketchup, “Have it your way” after joints filled with seed began to blossom our tongues with a field of Tiger Lilies — and all of this to tell you that the human lived for a while — yesterday, today, and tomorrow, did nothing but dream in shadows, clean the excrement (soon you will be gold!) from adults diapers, and shower this man with one hand while applying labia cream to another and in between this there will be shepard's pie, and restraints, and broken glass, and trazodone doves and ability moon fruits and a big toe going in circles until one switches shifts. Once upon a time there was a human breathing through the window, asking for the flowers of speech, who knew how to sing but closed its voice in an oak coffin under the black silt of a salt pond.” You open your eyes and look at the man. His eyes are open to me, a silhouette. Within are dogs

who bite, salt spread across the threshold, a child in the slim current of a forest river, a yellow horse coated in rosemary — its head about to be severed, soon, when his lover laughs. There is a girl at the top of a winding staircase waiting, pointing a finger at you. You look back and there is a door from which you can exit.

Untitled

- Matt Wedlock

You drive west for two hundred miles. Everything looks the same. The same cars, the same fast food at the same rest stops. Except the trees. The trees shift from Pine to White Oak , the soil shifts from sand and needles to grass and shrubs; you start to feel suffocated by the illusion of choice. On the side of the highway is a man waving a hand that is missing two fingers, a blindfold covers his eyes. You pick him up. You don't have a choice, do you? The man enters the car. As he enters the sound of cicadas acts as interlude soundtrack before the man asks if you accept story as payment. You do — and agree to drive the man wherever he needs to go. The highway spills out before you and a sensation akin to dread spreads through you as the man turns down the radio and begins his story.

War

- Luana Fahr

Out in a daze of glory,
A mound of casualties with silent mouths
Agape with maggots screaming.
Free for all, hullabaloo, more for me, less for you.
The spirit was dead, the flesh was weak.
An iron will, slayed by burnished metal
Left smears of plasma meshed with grass.
An open eye would scare the head.
An open head would scare the eye.
Tattered flags of make believe or satires
Of freedom ring, ring, ring...
No more ringing in the ears of maggot food.
Words could not assuage the onslaught.
The sacrificial herd rehearsed
With games and drills, but still no dialogue
To prevent devoured parents.

Weekdays of August

- Marissa Seely

When I wake up
I'll be six again, and we'll go to Bradley Beach
and burn our toes in the sand
'til we find a spot by the water
We'll sit on terrycloth towels
and dine on squished bologna sandwiches
We'll watch the sailboats float by
and play I-spy 'til we run out of colors
You'll carry sea water in a bright red pail
and I'll collect broken shells -
windows for the sandcastle we'll build
We'll play frisbee
under a sun that doesn't set
Time will stand umbrella pole-still
and we'll stay here
Forever

When I Prayed

- Dominick J. Di Bartolome

When I prayed - I prayed selfishly
At night time before sleep.
Clung to my mother's rosary -
With stars and wayward sheep.

"Please do not leave me in this place"
With no response to see.
Soft hands would comb throughout my hair.
Now only memory.

Without an answer - I would cry
Each night that came to pass
And as I grew - My faith did too -
Grew far apart and crass.

Now today - I no longer pray
My God fell from the sky.
Now I miss - that innocence on -
Starry nights as I cry.

You Are

- Carla Beuthe

You are a river teeming through the valley,
Light wind whispering a melody,
An anchor holding ships,
like a mother who doesn't lose sight of her kid,
as a young child holds her mother's grip,
taking her wherever she goes.
You are the moon's face that shines the night sky,
the sun's radiance capturing each hue .
When I think of these things, I think of you.
Always having a role and a function---
Always present in my development,
making sure I was taught your wisdom
so I could live life with a purpose.
You are the air I breathe when I walk,
the tennis ball that soars across the net,
A blessing and a gift I'll never forget.

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