



**THE
GRACKLE**

2012-2013

THE GRACKLE

Chestnut Hill College's Literary Magazine

COVER ART:
From Dumbo
Emily Lukasicz 2014

THE TEAM

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DEAR STUDENTS,

Congratulations to the editors and contributors to the 2013 *Grackle*. Each of you is to be commended for your creativity and contributions. The Editors deserve special recognition for taking on this added responsibility in the midst of the academic year when the demands of classes and other commitments are keenly experienced. Thank you for giving of your time and energy to this worthy project. Our entire College Community benefits from this publication. Likewise, kudos to the contributors who have taken the risk to share their creative works in print. Placing your work before the public is both an exhilarating and a frightening venture. We are grateful to you for permitting us to peak into your thoughts.

We are enriched by all that inspires us in the small, beautiful book we call *The Grackle*. Filled with poetry, short stories, and visual art, the publication has something for everyone to enjoy. Looking through the eyes of others, we are able to see what is always around us, but to see it from a fresh perspective. Gazing through the mind's eye of the poets, writers, artists, and photographers, there is always the chance that the reader may be awakened to deeper insights and through that awakening break through to a more vivid understanding of oneself and the world.

I encourage the members of the College Community to let their fingers wander through these pages where surprises await on every page. What joy it is to be endlessly delighted by the talent of students as they express themselves in ways, perhaps, we never imagined they might. As I perused last year's literary magazine, I was amazed time and again by the maturity of the themes, the pain embedded in the thoughts, and the longing that lived through the lines. My mind pondered the emotion underlying the words. My eyes lingered over the images caught by camera and brush. I felt invited into an experience, not just a poem or a picture. Messages floated up from the canvas and spoke as profoundly as the poetry on the facing page. I know I closed the book feeling both sobered and enriched. Often looking through the eyes of others, standing where they have stood, seeing the truth they see produces a confluence of complex emotions that battle with one another for primacy. It is worth noting which emotion(s) prevails.

How good it is when we are open to be touched by the artistic expression of others. I can promise that not only will you will enjoy time spent with *The Grackle*, but you will be surprised and uplifted by the talent and insights of the contributors

Carol Jean Vale, SSJ, Ph.D
President

DEAR READERS,

I think that it is important for me to observe our entire population of artists here at Chestnut Hill College. Students, faculty, and staff represent the creative community by simply being on our campus and taking part in day-to-day activity. Through interaction with one another, existing in walls built before our time, and the daily adaptability to changes—large or small—our community recognizes the beauty and resilience of our place.

When an artist, out of many, steps forward and lends their piece to *The Grackle*, their courage is taken into consideration. The very special thing about the submission process is that students from all divisions allow our Review Board to view their works and discuss them in a private setting. For this, we are grateful.

The Grackle has taken pleasure in reviewing over one hundred pieces submitted by a large pool of different artists for the 2012-2013 edition. Our contributors, those who you will find in this magazine, are comprised of some of our veteran artists as well as a majority of newcomers to the publication.

Each contributor has opened their whole self up to what *The Grackle* is seeking to accomplish this time around. Firstly, we have included the names of places where each photo was taken. Secondly, our contributors have provided one to two sentence-long explanations with each piece (literary or artistic), detailing the different influences and motivations that led to their creation(s). These additions can be found under each photo and in the back of our magazine.

It would be an oversight if I failed to mention the incredible pieces that will not be featured in this edition. It is

easy to view a letter of acceptance or rejection as the “end all” for our magazine, but it is not the truth of our work. Although a publication, journalistic or creative, is truly a business and must run as such; the end-product is never complete. Our business works to feature a small group of products that can be altered at any minute, or thrown away and started anew. This is why it is important for those who have submitted to understand that our work is only permanent because it is printed.

Our best work however, is shared, recreated, and open to growing into other creations. The work of all artists who have submitted to *The Grackle* can be treated this way, and this is why I believe in and respect your courage to share your work with me. Please continue to be as open, understanding, and patient as you have been.

Before I go, I would like to thank our publisher, David Kahn, the artists both inside and outside of this magazine, Sister Carol Jean Vale for her continued support, our hard-working and skilled Review Board, and *The Grackle's* advisors, Dr. Getzen and Dr. McCarthy. Over the past two years, both Dr. Getzen and Dr. McCarthy have applied a much-needed balance of support and challenge to *The Grackle*. They continue to be an incredible team of mentors, facilitators, editors, and colleagues throughout this process.

I hope that you enjoy the 2012-2013 edition of *The Grackle!*

In Appreciation,

Olivia Marcinka '13
Editor-in-Chief

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Natalie

Emily Lukasiewicz
2014

Childhood Calling

Briana Charlton

2016

The mirror shows I've grown since yesterday,
My eyes look a good deal wiser than before,
My tongue speaks now with an intellectual inflection,
Yet my mind is not as vast anymore.

Then, I viewed the world from turret heights--
Spoke a world of languages as I sailed across the sea.
I could see it, dream it—it was mine,
But now I look blindly at what's right before me.

Small before the eyes of superior Earth,
Yet so grand in a world all my own.
I was taller, greater than the biggest and boldest
And it felt better than being among the unknown.

But is the past really as distant as the horizon?
Cast behind and forgotten like a shadow in the fading light?
Or can old age dream the way a child dreams,
Even if those dreams are limited to the night?

Falling Out of Love

Catherine Dempsey

2015

We sit on the curb in front of the pharmacy watching the highway spread west, I hold the open bottle of water for you and you struggle at the foil to get to them. I become distracted by a rolling wine bottle--I could've sworn it was the same from last night. You grab my attention with a tap of a finger on the water bottle and you tilt your head back. I pour some water into your open waiting lips. There's a gulp and a bird watching us. You wipe your lips and say, I love you; then you lean your head on my shoulders. I hear this with some distance and fearfully place my hand under your sweater and on your bare stomach. There is no more fluttering; the bird flew away.



Echo

Elizabeth Herrera
2015



Cede

Olivia Marcinka
2013

Outside Emmaus Hermitage

Nancy Santamaria
Graduate Division

Outside Emmaus hermitage
a tumbleweed rolls against my gate
what message here?
i venture out

cottontail freezes, eyes wide
hello little one
roadrunner poses
on the adobe wall
hush - don't be afraid

small friends,
what have you to teach me?

the soft breezes caress my face
blazing rays
on the ochre New Mexico desert path
warming my forehead, cheeks, neck

Jack rabbit flies
through the dry brush
good-bye little one
roadrunner spins her legs
shows her speed
hush - i'm your student

my friends,
you have miles to teach me.

i wonder who else lives here?
a flower!

emerges from the taupe desert sand
a cactus!
clusters in among the thirsty desert growth
a questing soul!
journeys slowly through the vast desert space

i listen for You
Silence
so great

my footsteps make the loudest sounds
awareness walking - my toes, ankles, knees

Simplicity whispers
gently, irresistibly
one cannot look away
one cannot hold back

Simplicity seeps into me
firmly, tenderly
one cannot hide away
one cannot cover up

It is You!
i recognize You - late -
in the Baptist chapel
in the bitter orange expanse at sunset--
burning desert skyscape.
These lessons aflame in my heart,
after months of slow melting -
Your work stirring in me.
After, it is all different.

Swim

Briana Charlton
2016

If there is one thing larger in my eyes than the ocean,
It's all the mistakes I've made.
They ebb and flow in unceasing sequence
Making my skin burn red with rising blood.

Like sharks below the water, there are thousands.
When they attack, I have no power but to succumb to the onslaught.
If I were to scream, who would care to hear me?
And I'd surely drown beneath a crashing wave of shame.

But as I try to see past all the blackness
I realize I've learned much (how strange)
Because only when faced with the fear of drowning,
Will you ever learn how to kick your feet and swim.



Ocean

Loren Craig
2012



Leaves of Green

Andrea Wentzell

2015

Illusions

Briana Charlton

2016

How life is like a puzzle—
The pieces lost among each other
Can't know what one day will look like
Until the picture comes together.

How love is like a jungle
With a maze like tangled vines
No direction, nothing's certain,
But it's worth it over time.

How sadness can relate to laughter
Though the difference is felt by all
One hurts, the other's pleasant,
Yet they both cause tears to fall.

How the world is an illusion—
Nothing is ever what it seems
It's like a poem with a hidden message—
One can never tell what it means.

Mr. Sailor

Catherine Dempsey
2015

You have the voice of
crashing waves
Pushing and pulling, pushing and pulling
Pleasantly surprising me
every few minutes with a moment of
silence
Never lose your voice
I need it to keep
breathing
when I'm
trapped
be
neath
the



Untitled 27

Beth Bachmayer
2016

A Writer's Bane

Tim Gryzieck
2012

If the pen be the blade's better
Then it is truly dual-edged

For once the contents within begin to bleed
Over the segregated planes
Amidst a poetic congregation,
Temptation's blood has been spilt

Like bacteria in a dish
That spreads 'til snow becomes tar
Dictions and drawings as consummate drones
And words that will the unwilling
Into entangled engagements of effigies

Tentacles suctions their way
Grasping reams, reversing riptide,
Grappling with whirlpools of thought
And oily leakages

The ink flows freely; underwater currents
Infect the recesses ethereal
Filling abyssals and reefs of coral

And now we have a new landscape.

Darian

Catherine Dempsey
2015

Oh you scarlet-lipped beauty
whiskey-chugger
Lolita lover
If only you knew that I wish I were
You
You sweet exaggeration
I stretch you in my cells
Make me feel uncomfortable--
I'm not so used to that
Give me
something
new
You.
Hair of The Ring and small shoes
to fit what syour father calls you
Ms. Darling Sweetheart Pea

Might I call you Darian?
I'm sad when I remember
You
This scarlet-lipped beauty's
eyes taste like mine
as does her smile with no teeth
to show as her daddy taught her
"Stand straight,
Keep sight,
Answer the phone when I call you."
Ms. Darian Darling Sweetheart Pea
Fairy
I will never tell you what to do
Just let me be
You



Botanical

Emily Lukasiewicz
2014

Drowned in Sound

Julia Fusco

2015

The noise clattering in my skull--I'm surrounded by it.
As if...engulfed by it.
Screams and noise, silly chit-chat.
The kind you try to block out.
But this is one of those times--you can't block it out.
If only they knew.
Premature headaches,
It gets louder...much louder--and you know it's trivial.
My head throbbing from a crash two times louder than its natural decibel.
Pummeled by the clanging, laughing, screaming
Beating, thumping. Your heart?
Frustration and simple wishing that I could escape.
That's why they are the kids and you are the adult.
Is it worth wondering why?
Never, because it's trivial and that's all that matters.
As you block it out.

In the Ghetto

Kairi Suswell

2013

There are no singing birds in the ghetto.
Only bullets that cry,
only sirens that howl,
only faces that lie.

There are no green grass paths in the concrete jungle
Only the growl of the hunger,
The love lost from the lover,
The unforgiving chill of the summer.

Why doesn't the grass grow?
Why don't the birds sing in the ghetto?
Many shades of brown,
Too many frowns,
On the face of the ghetto.

All hope is lost,
hearts chill over with frost,
and all those who know,
know why...
No green grass grows.
And birds never sing
in the ghetto.



From Dumbo

Emily Lukasiewicz

2014



Creation

Lea Gavaris
2015

What's Wrong?

Nicole Ehrhardt

2013

It's wrong.

It feels right

Well hold back.

But why fight?

It's your choice.

To choose this? All the hate and the judgment --you think I chose this? To be glared at and screamed at? I'd rather resist.

You deserve all of that.

...For falling in love?

For ignoring gods God's will.

So this is HIS wrath from above?

Yes, you should've kept love between woman and man. It isn't your right to steer clear of his plan.

Well his word is his plan, and his word talks of love. So who are you to say what's determined above?

It's wrong.

You're uncomfortable because you don't understand. You don't feel what I feel, when I hold onto her hand.

You don't see how much I love her, because you always look away.

You don't hear how we communicate, so we're not hurt by what you say.

It's wrong.

For you to judge me.

It's wrong.

To hurt me too.

It's wrong.

For you to say what's wrong. This choice is not for you.

I don't like it.

And I'm sorry, but I will not change my ways.

I hate it.

But don't belittle it with all the hurtful things you say.

I don't believe in it.

And believe me, that is okay. We just ask that you respect it, instead of immediately turning away.

The House

Mary Frances Cavallaro

2013

All human evil comes from this: a man's being unable to sit in a still room. –Pascal, Pensées

“Finally, we’re all moved in,” Anne said as she settled the last trinket on the shelf in the dining room. “Isn’t it lovely here, Edward?” she asked her husband.

“Yes, the neighborhood is quite charming. What do you think of it, Peter?” Edward added, watching Peter examine the neighborhood through the lace curtain lining the window.

“Oh it is just grand, Papa! I do miss our old house though--there were plenty of kids there for me to play with.”

“I know, Peter, I know,” Anne said trying to sound hopeful, “Well, there are kids here too. You can make new friends and play games with them!”

Peter continued to stare through the lace curtain at the cobblestone streets. He studied the neighbors.

“I suppose so, Mama.” Anne hugged Peter and reminded him that it was time for bed. It was their first night in the house and they had a long day of unpacking and decorating.

“Wash your face, Peter, and do not forget to brush your teeth,” Anne reminded her sweet boy. Edward and Anne put Peter to bed and kissed his forehead. The town was asleep. The lanterns on the sidewalk were dimmed.

Anne tossed and turned in her bed next to her

husband until she was shaken out of her sleep. There was a cool breeze, which touched her skin and gave her goose bumps. The hairs on the back of her neck were standing at attention. The breeze that intruded her bedroom was from the window she left open. Anne decided to get out of bed and close it-- while her husband stayed asleep. Before she got back under the covers, she heard an unsettling noise from Peter’s room.

Thump! Crash! There was the shatter of glass. Then, a shriek pierced the night. Peter cried, “Mama!” Anne ran down the hallway, feeling her way through the darkness to reach her boy. She got to Peter’s door and could not get into his room. The door was locked. “Peter! Peter!” she cried, trying to force the door open. After ramming her body against the door with brute force, the door unlocked and she fell to the floor. As Anne steadied herself, she found Peter’s room in shambles.

The Bible on his nightstand was not visible; it was hidden behind books and articles of clothing. The crucifix, meant to be on the wall behind the headboard of Peter’s bed, was on the ground. And the portrait above the nightstand of the guardian angel guiding two children appeared to be a demon luring two small beings with cloaks and hunches. Anne could not feel the weight of her own body, her head was light and her vision was blurring. She looked around and could not find him.

“Peter! I’m here! It’s Mama!” There was silence. Peter was not there. All that remained in the ransacked room were scratch marks on the ceiling that read: I AM RISEN. As she looked up at the ceiling, a dark figure jumped on top of her. Anne writhed and screamed as the figure got close to reveal itself.

She jolted upright in her bed gasping for air, the house quiet and still. “It was only a dream,” Anne said. She could not go back to sleep right away so she decided to check on Peter to make sure he was asleep in his bed. Anne stepped into her slippers and donned her robe and walked down the hallway. The once long, anxious dash to Peter’s room now felt like just a few short, composed steps. She approached Peter’s door and was anxious to turn the knob, fearing it would be locked the way it was in her dream. She turned it, opened the door and looked in. She released a chest-full of air. The door creaked open and there was Peter, fast asleep in his bed. Anne was relieved and felt as if she could finally have some restful sleep.

The next morning the sun shone through the window and onto Edward and Anne. They awoke to Peter jumping on their bed. “Mama! Papa! Wake up! Wake up!” Peter joyfully said. Anne and Edward straggled out of bed and began to make breakfast. She disregarded the dream she had and did not think to bring it up to Edward. It was only a dream, after all. After breakfast, Anne reminded her husband and son to get dressed for Sunday mass. Edward finished his eggs and cleared his mouth with his napkin. Peter brought his plate to the sink and went upstairs to get ready. A few minutes before leaving for mass, Peter started to sweat profusely and became faint. Edward and Anne were concerned and Anne volunteered to stay home to care for Peter.

Their Sunday continued as any other day would and as the sun fell from the sky, they laid their heads against their pillows and slept.

The house was almost silent except for the muffled sounds of a nightmare. Anne was having the dream again. Her eyes opened wide and the grandfather clock in the corner struck 3 a.m. Again, she walked nervously down the hallway to check on Peter. He was fast asleep under the covers. A cool breeze rolled in through the window. Anne suddenly realized she did not have the window open when she put Peter to bed. She walked towards the window to shut it but was stopped by the image of long, bony handprints on the windowsill. Anne gasped as the idea dawned on her that the house was haunted.

Anne ran down the hallway and into her bedroom to wake up Edward. She needed to tell him about the handprints and the dream from the previous night. Edward grunted.

“Honey, you are seeing things. Please, come back to bed.”

Anne frantically replied, “You do not understand. I think there is something wrong with this house! First, the dream and now this?”

At this point, Edward was awake. He sat up with his back against the headboard and looked at Anne. “Honey, this is a new house,” he said calmly. “You are probably not used to it yet. Calm down and come to bed.” Anne nodded, took off her robe and lay back in bed. Edward wrapped his arm around her and they fell back asleep.

It was Monday morning and everyone in the neighborhood was starting the day. As Edward walked

out the door for work, he kissed Anne and Peter goodbye and wished them a good day. Anne began her day with cleaning while Peter stared out the window and watched the children play.

At noon there was a knock on the door. Anne stopped the chores she was doing and answered it; Peter was still staring out the window. "Hello, may I help you?" Anne said to the strangers at the door. It was a woman from the neighborhood with black hair and skin white like porcelain.

She responded, "Hello, my name is Emily. I saw that you moved in over the weekend and I wanted to welcome you to the neighborhood. This is my daughter, Camille. Come on, Camille; say 'Hi' to our new neighbors. Don't be shy."

A smaller version of Emily peered from behind her dress with the same raven tresses and porcelain skin. Her timid smile caused blood to rush to her cheeks and make her blush; the slightest bit of color was noticeable on her snow-white complexion. She was bashful but looked full of life. Camille did as her mother asked; while playing with the light blue satin ribbon in her hair. Crouched down to Camille's eye level, Anne said, "Oh hello, Camille. I am Anne and this is my son, Peter." Peter left his spot by the window to meet Camille. Peter was happy that he had a new friend to play with as Anne invited Emily and Camille inside.

Anne made a pot of coffee for her and Emily, her newest friend Camille and Peter played together in the living room, enjoying each other's company. The coffee pot whistled like a high-pitched shriek. She prepared the cups of coffee and talked to Emily. She

asked if there was anything peculiar about the house because the past few nights had been on her mind. Emily claimed, "There is nothing wrong with the house. Not that I am aware of. The last people to live in this house were a married couple. They were so in love. They moved out because their children were grown; they didn't need the space." Anne was comforted to hear such words but was still unsure. Her dreams felt too real for her to simply move on and adjust to the strange house.

"Oh where has the time gone? I must start preparing dinner. Edward will be home soon," Anne said to Emily after taking the last sip of her third cup of coffee. "It was lovely meeting you, Anne. It seems as if our children play well together. Peter is welcome to play with Camille any time. He seems like such a sweet boy," Emily replied as she and Camille walked out the door.

Edward came in from work and they sat down to dinner and prepared for the next day. Anne had the dream again. Once more she awoke in a panic with beads of sweat along her chest. She went to check on Peter, as she did the past nights, and she found what she always found. Peter. Tucked under the covers. Sleeping soundly. Window open with handprints. Anne ignored it and assumed it was only her imagination. However, as she closed the window this time, there was Camille's blue satin ribbon stuck in the window. Anne was very concerned and took it with her back to her room and went back to bed.

Another day in the new house began. Peter seemed to be quite ecstatic. He pleaded with his mother to play with Camille. He really enjoyed her company; he was so thrilled to have a friend in the new neighbor-

hood. After begging and begging, Anne asked Emily to send Camille over to play with Peter. When Camille arrived, she did not seem like herself. Her already white skin somehow seemed even paler. She looked sickly. Her eyes were sunken and the blood blush color that was on her cheeks yesterday was underlining her eyes.

"Is everything all right?" Anne asked Camille, "You do not seem well."

Camille in a weak voice responded, "I am well. I am really tired though. I kept having nightmares last night."

"You may go home if you are not feeling well. Peter will understand," Anne said.

"I do not want to disappoint him." Camille responded and refused to go home. Anne, in her motherly predisposition thought that it was best for Camille to go home and rest. She promised Camille that she would reschedule her play-date with Peter. "Oh before you go Camille, you left this here yesterday." Anne handed Camille her light blue satin ribbon.

Camille seemed confused and said, "I did not leave it here yesterday, but thank you." Anne was shocked and did not know what to make of it. She did not know what to make of it. All she knew was that something was not right with her house. Anne was terrified to go to sleep again. She dreaded the dreams that were sure to come but after tossing and turning and thinking, she inevitably fell asleep. Suddenly, there was a loud thump coming from Peter's room. Anne sprung up, and ran down the hallway. Once again, it seemed like a long trek to get to his door. Her heart was trying to break out of her chest. She called her son's name. "Peter! Peter!" But she could not open the door until

she pushed against it with all of her might.

The room was ransacked. The crucifix on the floor. The guardian angel picture: demonic. The Bible was nowhere to be seen. And the window was wide open with the curtains blowing in the wind. A dark figure jumped down from the ceiling on to a silhouette on the floor. There was Camille lifeless on the floor. And there was Peter hovering over her corpse with blood dripping from his lips.

It was a sunny morning; birds were chirping and it seemed peaceful. Anne started telling Edward about the dream she had last night but stopped herself because she knew she was still "adjusting" to her new house, as Edward would surely remind her. Edward left for work and Anne cleaned up from breakfast. Peter stood in front of the window again. Staring. Shortly after, there was a frantic knock on the door. Anne rushed to open it and found that it was Emily. She was hysterical, "Anne! Anne! Have you seen Camille? She is gone. I can't find her anywhere!" Anne was unsettled but replied, "No. I am so sorry."

Emily pleaded, "Please if you see her or know anything, tell me!"

"I will. Of course," Anne responded. She closed the door and locked it. Then, she turned to look at her son who was staring out of the window from behind the lace curtain.

Untitled

Tim Gryzieck
2012

It was morning. Early morning. 4:12 to be exact. I would be getting up soon.

It was the storm, perhaps, that had awakened me. It permeated throughout the night, a flash of luminescence here and there, like a cold curiosity. But that had long since ceased only to be replaced by the gentle drops of rain, and remnants of lightning sound. It was a peaceful storm.

My ears having adjusted to the moments of silent reprieve, I heard sweet stridulation of crickets before the dawn. I wonder the workings of their intent, their chosen number of draws, the tempo and beats to each measure. When the chirping stops, I wonder if it will resume, and if so, when.

Between the perfect fifths and pitter-patter, a new musician had taken the stage. The lone Starling, perched no doubt upon the great pine, plays for me the tune of the twilight. How much, I muse, the birdsong is unlike any voice of nature. No, indeed; it's more like air through a

reed, a soft, melodic tune from a flitty, fluttering fife.

The trio thus forms a miniature philharmonic in my own backyard. Percussion performed by the thunder and rain, chaotic fusion of the clashing rhythmic. Strings strung strongly from the crickets, and the Star, the prima donna, mimicking the zenith. Or rather, she is the wistful woodwind, certainly granting the term a whole new meaning.

In and out like divine clockwork, the trio takes and borrows, and I too listen from my own bed's comfort. This ritual of rising begins to take effect, and the soreness of nostalgia overtakes my consciousness. I am immersed now in seas of linen, drowning in thought, destined to swim through the years contained within these sheets. Twenty-three years...two hours...thirty minutes...I find myself again.

Section by section, instrument by instrument, one by one. A pact from Nature's spring is flowing with airs, with She as conductor. And I, as an audience of one, am once again forced to rise, as if to give a standing ovation.



Lake

Loren Craig
2012



The Bondservent Sets Free

Olivia Marcinka
2013

The Circle K Vortex

Nicole Spano
2015

It's pouring rain--but that's not the kind of thing that typically stops Luke from hopping on that rusty old vintage Schwinn and riding over to Circle K to buy herself a tube of Chapstick.

One time she walked out of the apartment into a little snowstorm (Sedona snowstorms are never treacherous) wearing a tank top and cut-offs. She ran barefoot across the freezing Arizona sand to the same Circle K to buy herself a can of root beer for her vanilla ice cream. She does these things all the time. Theoretically I should be used to her erratic behavior, considering I've been her roommate for three and a half years now.

I'm just waiting for the day she storms out in her lace underwear in a hailstorm for a candy bar.

I always try to keep a little something from every one of Luke's obscure food groups in the apartment. There is obscure food everywhere. She likes her marshmallows on the blade of the ceiling fan—which she refuses to turn on even in the sweltering heat of the desert summers.

I can hear her chain clicking as she approaches our building. It's only two floors, and there are two apartments per floor. We live on the left side of the lower level. The apartment upstairs is much more spacious, but Luke hates being upstairs because it's too far from

Earth. That explains her frequent barefootedness.

She enters the room smacking her lips together.

"Perfect," she says with a grin that could melt a man's heart. Not surprisingly, she gets a lot of male attention. All the time. She is oblivious to it or she just doesn't care. Either way, it's somehow unnerving. I can't help but notice, by the way, that she took her top off before entering my bedroom. Her short black hair is stuck to her face and neck, and a drop of rain falls from her nose to the carpet between her feet.

"Please tell me that happened inside."

To my horror, she says, "Down the block, actually. I hate when clothes stick to me." She applies another layer of Chapstick and beams at me. "Did you know they made a strawberry flavor?" Then she turns and heads to her own room.

"I didn't," I say casually. I look at the little wet stain on the pale green carpet and thank her silently for leaving. If I found it hard to avoid looking at her breasts for a few seconds, what reactions did the people outside have? I am embarrassed for her. She would never be embarrassed for herself, so I have to pick up her slack. A lot. I mean, I've seen her naked plenty of times. She's my roommate and we stopped caring about that after about a year. But this time it's different, and I am un-

comfortable.

She runs back in, wearing less than she had been before she left my room. I make a show of looking down at my hands but when she says nothing I am forced to lift my gaze. She is bending over me and before I can even blink she kisses my lips. She leaves again and I blink a few times. I hear her rustling through her drawers. Then my head starts to buzz with questions and blood whistles loudly in my ears.

She leaves her room and I sit there like an invalid at the foot of my bed facing the red sofa she picked out for our first apartment. She turns the TV on to a silly cartoon. Maybe there was no meaning behind that kiss. She sits there in an over-sized white tee shirt facing me but avoids my gaze.

Just as quickly as the thrill came, the exhilaration leaves and silence ensues--save for the childish, high-pitched voices on Luke's cartoon. She catches me staring and pats the cushion next to her with her palm.

"I'm gonna make us some soup," I say. I am shocked at the ordinary sound of my voice, as if nothing changed. Maybe it hasn't. I don't know. I can feel her amber eyes burning me as I walk between her and the TV towards our tiny orange kitchen, where I gather the ingredients. The last thing I need is the pot. Luke mutes the television and I get nervous. She is watching me, evaluating me in some way. The pot clatters to the Sedona-red tiled floor and she rises.

"Shit," I mutter.

"You okay, Chris?" she asks me innocently. "You seem a little on-edge. Know what I mean?"

Could she really not know?

"I'm fine," I snap. She tucks her chin into her chest and I feel guilty. "Yeah, I'm okay. It just slipped, is all."

She smiles and hops onto the brown countertop as I fill the pot with water from the tap.

"Pass the salt?"

She reaches into the cabinet by her head and hands it to me. After I sprinkle it into the water I look at the label. MORTON SALT. When it rains, it pours. A picture of a cute little girl in the rain holding an umbrella. She's so feminine in her little yellow raincoat. Even in her struggle.

"Thanks." I hand it back to Luke to put in the cabinet. She is fluid in her white tee and swings her tan legs back and forth. I am swept with pride that she is my roommate.

"Will you be my life?" I want to ask her.

The soup was good, as was the talk over the soup. Luke is like a sister and a best friend, the Vanessa to my Virginia. The kiss meant nothing. I don't think the kiss meant anything. I know how to test it.

It's now approaching twilight and we decide to go for a walk to the vortex at Bell Rock. It's only a ten minute walk. The climb takes much longer though, and by the time we reach the vortex it is dark. Luckily we can

find our way back home in the night.

I lay myself on the flat top of Bell Rock and Luke sprawls out beside me. The rain is temperamental in Sedona. It rained for the few minutes Luke was out then the sun was back by the time we finished our soup. The red rock is dry. We love the vortexes around Sedona. People think they're a load of nonsense but if you focus all your energy, the energy around you will just blend with yours. You get all this energy from the earth, and the earth gets energy from you. Soon I am no longer I and Luke is no longer she and we are no longer separate from Earth but we are Earth and I kiss her. She looks at me quizzically and the full moon illuminates her curves as she removes her clothing. I do the same and lie back down, high off the energy of Luke, the Earth, the Moon, the Vortex, and myself.

I grin at the constellations. Luke props herself up on her elbow and kisses me with more passion than humanly possible, thanks to the aid of the Earth and the Moon and the Vortex. Then we gather our clothes and head down Bell Rock and back home.

I wake up to hail pelting my window. The sweet and salty and sour weather of Sedona is perfect for Luke. She bounds into my bedroom in her white underwear.

"I'm going to Circle K. Want anything?"

"Put clothes on first!" I yell after her, but she is already gone. "Shit." I need to protect her. She's my room-

mate and my sister and I love her.

I grab a green silk dress from Luke's closet and throw a robe over my camisole and plaid boxers. Running down the dirt path that connects our apartment to the backside of Circle K, I catch sight of her. Her bright white undies and bra glow in the strange gray light of the cloudy dawn. I shout her name but she is already in the store. I hear her scream. There is a round of screaming after Luke's. I can't move.

Gunshots.

I hear my name from Luke's throat and start toward the store. Then I back away. I look at my hand, grasping the silk dress she bought in New York.

A man wearing cargo shorts and a black shirt runs out of the store with a sack. The window of the shop is splattered with red paint. I think.

I enter the shop and the cashier is cowering in the corner, collapsing into violent tremors. Luke is on the floor bleeding from her head. Her eyes are calm and her face is at peace. There is a hint of a smile on her lips. I say her name and she does nothing. Her white underwear is stained with blood and her eyes, burning with the energy of a thousand vortexes, see something she has always desired and I could never understand.

From my hand trails her beautiful green silk dress, punctured from the force of the hail three times.



Nowhere to Go

Tim Gryziek
2012

'Leach

Tim Gryzieck
2012

I hold in my hand
The remnants of a conch.
A chill of the saltwater foam
Still clings to the blue-gray bones.

How naked your spiral
For me to gaze within
Unabashed to envision former glory
Above the rock-face incisions.

You were wedged between the breaker
Greedily snatched by the struggling boy,
Who surrendered skin and blood as payment
For your lifelong company.

But it was a company left behind
In every speck of sand
Along with your former glory
Lost to the airs of Time.

Matt

Catherine Dempsey
2015

I'll try to write one thousand poems today
but none of them will quite do
None will have your scent
your smile
your itchiness before bedtime
that keeps me up half the night

None of them will quite do
Simply because
none of them are
quite
you



Worm's Eye View

Elizabeth Herrera
2015



Return

Tim Gryziek
2012

Falling I

Nancy Santamaria
Graduate Division

Falling
I
sink
down

My
heart, head, spirit
November
aches

Spreading
I
touch
others

Hitting
I
crack
open

This all December happens
while I struggle to exist
while I grab on to what nurtures
while Someone else breathes for me

Springing
I
find
grateful, bare-newness

My
core
September suffers
out
of its shell

Sprouting
I
January
reach
out

Happens this all May
as I allow my "yes" to firm
as I feel sisterhood strengthen roots
as I learn hardly to trust

all this October happens
without my "yes"
without my comprehension
without my insight

Stretching
I
February
hurt
more

All this June happens...
tiny
green
vulnerable
sprig...
peeking out...

Weeping
I
grieve and
re-view

My
roots
March

this Garden is full of friends
home

Halting
I
wait and
question

into
the earth of Christ

O
it is He who breathed
it is They who carried
it is Truth who took root
it is I--- one of them!

This all April happens
as I watch my 'yes' take form
as I am carried by Others
as I feel my feet take steps

Double Dare

Loren Craig
2012

Black.
A split crow.
Block the blizzard,
Heads to chests.
Shadows of
Red bodies.
Restoration
And
Desecration.
Question?
Of actuality
And intent.
Enter my dark,
And,
You can see.
Blind the broad,
Throw the bed.
In color,
Would you
Be afraid?

ART: DESCRIPTIONS

Page 10

“Natalie” by Emily Lukasiewicz

Location: Millstone, NJ

Page 13

“Echo” by Liz Herrera

Location: Newton Lake, Collingswood, NJ

Page 14

“Cede” by Olivia Marcinka

Location: Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Description: My friend Ryan and I found this structure on a three-mile walk around the coast of the island of Majorca (Mallorca). We were in Spain for a total of 21 hours—giving us the chance to sleep on the beach just by where this photo was taken.

Page 17

“Ocean” by Loren Craig

No location or description given.

Page 18

“Leaves of Green” by Andrea Wentzell

Location: Elmer, NJ

Description: Cleaning and weeding of the flowerbeds were common Spring and Fall chores for me, due to my mother’s

fond interest in flowers. The Hostas plant, because of its endurance, symmetry, and coloring is one of my favorites, and commonly found around our home.

Page 21

“Untitled 27” by Beth Bachmayer

Location: Cape May, NJ

Description: Morning sunrise at the Sister of St. Joe’s retreat house after a peaceful weekend get away with close friends of the Chestnut Hill College community.

Page 24

“Botanical” by Emily Lukasciewicz

Location: Atlanta, GA

Page 27

“From Dumbo” by Emily Lukasciewicz

Location: Brooklyn, NY

Page 28

“Creation” by Lea Gavaris

Description: I chose different images for this collage that I love and arranged them in a way that is meant to keep the viewer’s eyes within the piece--from the feather that leads you to a galaxy of stars, to the foot of Lord Ganesha at the very top that brings you back down into the sky.

Page 35

“Lake” by Loren Craig

No location or description given.

Page 36

“The Bondservant Sets Free” by Olivia Marcinka

Location: Fes (Fez), Morocco, Africa

Description: Within the walls of the Medina, the atmosphere is cooler and the lighting is dim. If you’ll notice the small grate on the top right of the photo, that was considered a window for the once inhabited building behind. The Medina of Fez is one of the largest in Morocco, so when inside, I felt stuck—a bit suffocated. This section of the Medina felt like a clearing—with the tile slightly ripped up and large open space with little rubble. I stood in this space for a minute longer than my friend and guide, closed my eyes, and felt nearer to the wide-open Atlas Mountains that I had visited only the day before.

Page 40

“Nowhere to Go” by Tim Gryziek

Location: Manhattan, New York City

Description: This was a candid shot, something that I feel brings more to a photo, and it struck a chord with me in regards to the American dream.

Page 43

“Worm’s Eye View” by Elizabeth Herrera

Location: A Collingswood Garden, Collingswood, NJ

Page 44

“Return” by Tim Gryziek

Location: Washington, DC

Description: During a CHC Trip, I had the opportunity of capturing some cherry blossoms.

LITERATURE: DESCRIPTIONS

Page 11

“Childhood Calling” by Briana Charlton

Description: Everyone remembers how easy and carefree it was to be a child, however, just because one is growing older and life grows more complicated, does not mean that the colorful world of a child is lost.

Page 12

“Falling Out of Love” by Catherine Dempsey

Description: This poem took a lot of effort me to write because it’s very personal to me. I tried to convey how it feels to realize that you are in a bad relationship and that you need to leave to better yourself.

Page 15

“Outside Emmaus Hermitage” by Nancy Santamaria

Description: This poem was written while I was on a personal retreat for prayer and contemplation at a Norbertine Priory in the southwest desert.

Page 16

“Swim” by Briana Charlton

Description: This poem, while written in the first person, makes an effort to speak to all people. When you make mistakes, they can be really embarrassing and damaging, but even through all of that “blackness,” there is always a bright side and only when you make mistakes can you learn from them, or “kick your feet and swim.”

Page 19

“Illusion” by Briana Charlton

Description: Life is an illusion; I feel that it is a layered thing. You can never know the outcome of any given day

or event--you see what you want to see and feel what you want to feel. That is why I believe in living, loving, laughing, or crying.

Page 20

“Mr. Sailor” by Catherine Dempsey

Description: I’ve always had a fascination with sailors, the sea, old sea captains etc. because I find a theme of loneliness, wandering, and a yearning for home in these themes; I sometimes imagine my boyfriend, Matt, as a sailor or fisherman.

Page 22

“A Writer’s Bane” by Tim Gryziek

Description: John Ebersole told me that this piece changed from something as simple as being distracted in an English Romanticism class into something way too abstract, but at least he liked the ending...

Page 23

“Darian” by Catherine Dempsey

Description: I have a good friend, Darian, who is always giving me inspiration to write because she has a great personality and perfect style, so this poem just about sums up who she is as a person and why I love her dearly.

Page 25

“Drowned in Sound” by Julia Fusco

Description: This poem is about feeling frustrated by the noise in my high school. High school is a time to hang out with friends and be silly and be loud, but for someone like me who wears hearing aids, these experiences can feel as if I’m drowned in the sound, and I wanted to escape.

Page 26

“In the Ghetto” by Kairi Suswell

Description: I have had the pleasure in my life of experiencing many social classes in America; I have slept on floors as well as in King-sized beds. In the Ghetto is a piece that details one of my darker experiences, an experience many are blind to. Society has drawn a line between the “haves” and “have not’s.” I would like to believe that my writing serves as both a telescope and a mirror, giving insight and reflecting both sides of the spectrum in the hopes that we might all come to a common understanding regardless of what side of the tracks we live on.

Page 29

“It’s Wrong” by Nicole Ehrhardt

Description: I wrote this poem to let go of my personal anger and frustration. However, I had hopes of it being published in The Grackle, so that maybe it would bring attention to others. With the wrong intentions, people’s actions and words can be hurtful. It is much easier to hate rather than consider the differences in people. John 8:7

Page 30

“The House” by Mary Frances Cavallaro

“The House” tries to break away from the usual “monster under the bed” or “creature lurking in the dark” fear. I always thought that children could be terrifying; think of the twins from the Shining. As in my last short story, “Cellar Door,” I try to scare my audience by making them think or realize that one should not be judged based on appearances.

Page 34

“Untitled” by Tim Gryziek

I suffer from mild insomnia, and there are times when I think it’s useless to go back to sleep. Still, it gives me the chance to witness something beautiful.

Page 37

“The Circle K Vortex” by Nicole Spano

The central theme of this piece is liberation from the constructs of sexuality and identity, but it is also about the search for eternal love, which Luke achieves and Chris is only starting to understand.

Page 41

“Leach” by Tim Gryziek

Inspired by a real-life trip to Cape May and the poem ‘Each and All’ by Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Page 42

“Matt” by Catherine Dempsey

My boyfriend is really quirky and sometimes hard to define, so this was my attempt to write about him.

Page 45

“Falling I” by Nancy Santamaria

This poem was presented at the conclusion of a reflection made to an annual Norbertine Chapter meeting where I was asked to speak on my spiritual life concerning the several months following a personal trauma.

Page 46

“Double Dare” by Loren Craig

No description given

