



illumination

the literary journal of
Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College



Each year, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College students are encouraged to submit their best compositions for our annual writing contest. This journal includes winners of the 2018-2019 contest in the categories of Personal Essay, Critical Essay, Short Story, Structured-Verse and Free-Verse. Artwork was contributed by the students of Jefferson Davis Campus.

Front Cover Art: "Yukata Princess" by Tiana Turner

Contest Committee: Language Arts of Jefferson Davis Campus

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personal essay

WHAT IF

Marissa Baucum

“What If” is exactly what I remember asking myself over and over one Sunday. Four years ago, my younger brother Ezra, who was two at the time, made a bad habit of opening the gate on our back deck that leads to our yard. My father built the gate to keep him in and transformed the deck into a sort of playpen for Ezra. The deck was full of toys but was not enough to keep Ezra satisfied. The lock on the gate was fairly loose, so with a couple of good shakes, the lock would come undone. I suppose Ezra learned the trick, and he wandered off of the deck to God only knows where.

I remember sitting with my family at the dinner table around noon. All of us are very close, and we tend to just sit and talk to one another as if we are a group of friends who only see each other on special occasions. We will play, joke, or talk about each other’s day. We will talk for hours at a time, and we are never dull. I guess that is why we did not notice Ezra was missing. I keep myself from thinking about how long he was gone. The thought makes me sick. After we dispersed from the table, my mother went to the back deck where Ezra was supposed to be. When she found the opened gate, she started to panic. I heard her scream from inside the house, and with her cry, a rush of fear came over me. I darted outside to see what the commotion was, and when I saw my mother in hysteria, I began the search.

My family and my mother’s parents all lived in a neighborhood which is down a dirt road off of a main highway. The road is named after my great grandmother, Verna Roache, and after a quarter of a mile, the road splits two ways. Down each side are about six houses. My grandparents lived on the same side as us, about ninety feet to the left of our house. They had a huge barn in which Ezra and my other little brother Josiah liked to play and a huge in-

ground pool. As I began my search, I did not want to think of the pool. Ezra had not learned to swim yet, so first, I quickly ran through the shed looking over the shelves and checking behind some of the equipment. We kept lawn mowers and four wheelers in the shed, and I knew Ezra loved to play on the machinery. After I decided he was not there, I went to my grandparents' garage. I bypassed the pool for fear of finding his lifeless body floating in the water; however, after I cleared the garage I knew the moment of truth had arrived. The back door to the garage was connected to the entrance of the pool patio. I walked slowly through the doorway, holding my breath and feeling more nauseous with each step only to find nothing. I felt relief for only a couple of seconds because as much as I wanted to celebrate the fact he had not drowned, the question still remained unanswered. Where is Ezra?

Up until this moment, I was trying to stay as calm as possible. I was calling Ezra's name as if maybe he was playing hide and seek. I hoped I would cater to his amusement, and he would come out of wherever he was hiding, but that was the problem. Ezra was not hiding: he was missing. I froze. I was standing by the pool just watching my family run around the yard in sheer panic. Then, a chill went over me as I remembered the pond by our houses. The pond stretches as long as both my house, my grandparents' house, and the yard in between. I rushed over to check for any signs of struggle. Maybe there was a hole in the layer of lily pads on top of the water to signify an entry point or marks on the side of the pond where he could have slipped, but there was nothing. Instead of feeling relief, once again I felt defeated. Beyond this point, I did not know where to go. My grandparents, my parents, and my older siblings were all searching for him too with no luck, not even a trace. We would communicate with one another concerning places we have already checked, so we decided he was not anywhere near the houses.

The real fear started to set in. My mother became hysterical and maybe even a little crazy. "I can't find him, Scott! I can't find my baby!" she sobbed to my father.

The image of my mother in that state of mind is still burned in my memory. She seemed to leave this world only to become trapped in her own head, and she took me with her. I could not bear seeing her break. I couldn't keep from thinking of all the "What Ifs" What if we NEVER find him? What if he's trapped somewhere and needs help? He's only two years old. At this point, we were all standing in the middle of the yard clueless to our next move with the exception of my brother. Elisha took it upon himself to ride our four-wheeler around the neighborhood to ask if anyone had seen him. This whole time I do not remember seeing my father. The man is level headed in a crisis, so I assumed he was onto a good plan on how to find Ezra. My point was proven when I saw him up at the top of our road talking on the phone. He yelled to my mother across the yard, "They've got him, Lalla! The police got him!"

I was so panicked this whole time. The thought to call the police had never occurred to me. My mother collapsed to her knees beside me when she heard the news. After she got up off the ground, we all ran up to my father. I began to realize how far Ezra must have traveled to be picked up by the police all the way up on the main highway. From our house to the main road where he was picked up is almost a half a mile maybe more. How in the world could Ezra have walked all that way in just a diaper and no shoes on? What if he did not walk all that way but instead was picked up by a stranger and then thrown away? What if he was killed by a car on the highway? My father then relayed to us that a woman had picked Ezra up off the side of the main road, took him to a church that is just a little farther down the highway, and reported him to the police. A sigh of relief rushed over all of us.

Once Ezra was in my mother's arms, we all returned to my house. I will never forget the silence of us sitting in the dining room. My mother rocked little Ezra back and forth, and he was oblivious to the events that had lead up to this moment. I think my mother, as happy as she was about Ezra's safety, felt like she had failed as a mother. I guess my grandfather could sense her guilt because he patted her on the shoulder saying, "This doesn't mean you're a bad mama." My mother broke down into tears. Her parents left, and the rest of remained sitting in silence. An eternity went by before anyone moved. I cannot remember who exactly broke the silence, but we all eventually went about the rest of our day, although there was not much of a day left to enjoy.

For days after the incident, we all talked about the nightmares we had been having. All of those nightmares were the "What-ifs". What if we had never found Ezra? What if we found him dead? Which was worse? What if we had not sat at the table and talked for so long? What if we caught him trying to get out and the whole incident would have never happened? What if the woman who found him never returned him to us? What if someone else instead of the woman picked Ezra up? That one was the worst for me because not all people are good. Psychopaths, pedophiles, killers, they are all out there. Then, I reassure myself Ezra is safe, my father is going to put better locks on the gate, and Ezra will never run away again. But what if?



"C.B.O.U.F" by Aleynah Deleon

MEMORIES

Torie Helton

As the older man walked on the sidewalk toward the park, he couldn't stop thinking about the news he received the previous day. So many memories passed through his mind, and he wondered how many moments his mind was missing out on now. The grass, soggy with morning dew, was somehow not as bright as it seemed to be the day before. The lush greens seemed to have faded under the pounding sun, which made him chuckle at the irony. His eyes almost filled with tears, but he choked them down as his nose burned red. The old, rusty bench ahead of him looked almost comforting. He needed a familiar friend, and in his mind, anything old and rusty was relatable enough.

"Hold it together," he mumbled to no one in particular. He checked his phone, watching the time pass so painfully slow and quickly locked it as he realized these were precious seconds. There were children playing ahead of him, swinging weightlessly from monkey bars, reminding him of a time when he felt like the world's best trapeze artist. He had quite the wild imagination as a child. There were young couples sitting on checkered blankets, having sandwich dinners and not noticing the world happening around them, reminding him of when he met his gorgeous wife, and the entire world melted away into a blur of magical romance and nothing but each other when her golden hair glistened under the summer sun. How long would he remember these things? He stared down to his feet and the black birds chirping on the stained concrete.

What was it he couldn't remember already? What would be next? He felt his heart break ever so slightly.

If life could be rewound and watched as a movie, he would spend the rest of his life re-living every moment. He knew this now, watching as the sky got cloudy and grey, smiling at this cliché. Suddenly, his phone rang, snapping him back into reality. He

recognized his daughter's name and picture, with her eyes always full of adventure and love, and her smile as bright as a thousand suns. Instantaneously, the world wasn't so dark, and he knew exactly where he needed to go.



"Beauty<Death<Grace" by Ashlynn Stroud

HURRICANE KATRINA MADE ME A SCIENTIST

Eimhear Davis

In the summer of 2005, my dad worked as a fisherman in Venice, Louisiana while my mom, sister and I lived in a white house with green shutters on twelve acres in Carriere, Mississippi. We had a pool in the back yard and a pond in the pasture. We had six horses, four dogs, multiple bunnies and chickens. Every day was like living in a country fairytale, but then everything changed. My dad came home and said we were going on an "evacu-cation." This was his way of trying to make the best out of what was actually a run-for-your-life moment because a historic hurricane was bearing down on us. I was only six years old when Hurricane Katrina destroyed our home and our fishing business. However, as we made our way through streets that looked like they had seen a war, I asked my mom why some houses stood while others did not. She never misses a teachable moment, and that year for my science fair project, I studied the shapes of houses and which shape could best withstand wind. This project took first place in Mississippi for 1st grade projects! I guess that is when the science bug bit me. It is ironic that a disaster, which destroyed our home, was the very thing that ignited my academic passion. Even as a young girl, I was interested in the how and why of many things. This curiosity led me to focus on science and history research as my primary academic interests.

Recently, I have taken extra science courses like microbiology, and continued to participate in science fair. In microbiology, I conducted an experiment in which I studied the effects of the radiation emitted from cell phones on the growth of bacteria. The results indicated that some cell phones do accelerate the growth of bacteria. Last year, I worked on a science fair project studying the effects of sensory-friendly movies on children with developmental

disorders. My research was the first of its kind on this topic. Although my sample was small, tests indicated that children and their parents enjoyed the sensory-friendly showings more than standard showings. Further, the children showed a statistically significant increase in peer interaction and vocalization in these special showings. I am planning to build on this foundation in college where I hope to double major in psychology and neuroscience or bioethics.

In addition to science, I love to study history. I always want to know the how, why, and who that came before. Three years ago, I participated in my first National History Day with a documentary about Fred Korematsu, a Japanese-American who resisted the internment camps of WWII. Last year, I competed again in National History Day with a project exploring how Dr. James Hardy's work with heart transplants at the University of Mississippi Medical Center broke new ground in medicine and medical ethics. Science and history are very connected because there is always history behind the science and science impacting history. While researching both historical change-makers and my own science projects, I have learned that adversity has a way of meddling in our lives- whether it is through a literal storm or a figurative one. However, those who go on to make a difference in their field and in the lives of others do not give up when faced with these challenges. They continue to problem solve and press own toward their goals.

critical essay

A GOOD SOCIETY IS HARD TO FIND

Austin Baldwin

Flannery O'Connor's "A Good Man is Hard to Find" provides insight into class strife and inequality that exists between the upper-class and lower-class of society. Minute and often witty and funny details throughout the story become a vehicle for demonstrating broad concepts concerning the struggle rather simplistically to the reader. Instances of racial inequality, of patriarchy, and of southern society further and further illuminate the overall awareness of the class struggle and the power that the bourgeoisie or the upper class exerts over the lower class. By becoming aware of the class struggle, the reader can gain a greater awareness of the oppression that plagues the proletariat, the lower-class.

Racism is the tool that the bourgeoisie uses to divide the poor whites from African-Americans. By separating the two groups with common goals and interests, the threat of a strong, united proletariat overpowering the exclusive bourgeoisie can never occur. The bourgeoisie creates a culture of racial superiority where the "dominant" white race can freely use words, such as "pickaninny," "Negro," and "nigger" (par. 19-20). They casually use stereotypes pertaining to blacks and watermelons: "[Grandmother] never got the watermelon... 'because a nigger boy ate it when he saw the initials, E. A. T.!' " (par. 26). This culture blinds the poor white majority. They do not realize nor acknowledge that they are in no better position than blacks, that they are also oppressed by the elite. Instead, these same people make scapegoats of people foreign to them in order to place blame for what they feel are poor white problems. Red Sam and the grandmother's conversation captures this sentiment:

He and the grandmother discussed better times. The old lady said that in her opinion Europe was entirely to blame for the way things were now. She said the way Europe acted you would think we were made of money and Red Sam said it was no use talking about it, she was exactly right. (par. 44)

These points prove how toxic division and how self-destructive these divisions can be within the lower class. By the bourgeoisie highlighting the differences between sects of proletariat, the similarities that make the proletariat powerful will never be realized, forever binding the proletariat in chains of xenophobia. This culture also promotes a “male dominant” mentality in addition to racial inequality.

A culture where males dominate females and children allows the bourgeoisie to exploit the proletariat. Throughout the story, the mother and the grandmother are not given names; furthermore, the mother is subservient to not only Bailey, but also to the Misfit and to his friends: “[The Misfit asked] ‘Would you and that little girl like to step off yonder with Bobby Lee and Hiram and join your husband? ‘Yes, thank you,’ the mother said faintly. Her left arm dangled helplessly, and she was holding the baby...” (par.125). This cultural domination is also shown with the interactions between Red Sammy and his wife:

Red Sam came in and told his wife to quit lounging on the counter and hurry up with these people’s order...his wife brought the orders, carrying five plates at once without a tray, two in each hand and one balanced on her arm. [Red Sam’s wife] ‘...I wouldn’t be a-tall surprised if he...’ ‘That’ll do,’ Red Sam said. ‘Go bring these people their Co’-Colas,’ and the woman

[unnamed] went off to get the rest of the order.' (par. 41-42)

The mother is always understated, even when she needs to be emphasized; for instance, after the accident, her being thrown out of the car, "...and their mother, clutching the baby, was thrown out the door onto the ground..." (par. 64). The mother's very serious injury is also glazed over: "[Bailey] started looking for the children's mother. She was sitting against the side of the...ditch...but she only had a cut down her face and a broken shoulder..." (par. 66). The injury of the grandmother is also understated: "'I believe I have injured an organ,' said the grandmother, pressing her side, but no one answered her" (par. 71). The grandmother answers to Bailey as the "man of the house," and it is implied that the grandmother lives with her son. As children, people like the grandmother were conditioned to accept authority and be unquestionably proud of their origins, regardless of whether or not they like those origins. The grandmother perfectly sums this point up by stating, "'In my time...children were more respectful of their native states and their parents and everything else. People did right then...'" (par. 19). This atmosphere prompts a "no-questions" attitude in such a society which results in a complete lack of resistance to authority.

Southern society is a fatal flaw of the proletariat. Members of the lower class become so obsessed with upward mobility that they begin to focus on their image, their family name, and their degree of economic status. This is exemplified when the grandmother recounts her courtship by Mr. Edgar Atkins Teagarden from Jasper, Georgia. She states that:

She wouldn't marry a man that just brought her a watermelon on Saturday. The grandmother said she would have done well to marry Mr. Teagarden because

he was a gentleman and had bought Coca-Cola stock when it first came out and he had died only a few years ago, a very wealthy man (par. 26).

This is also exemplified in the exchange between June Star and Red Sam's wife: "'Ain't she cute?' Red Sam's wife said, leaning over the counter. 'Would you like to come be my little girl?' 'No I certainly wouldn't,' June Star said. 'I wouldn't live in a broken-down place like this for a million bucks!' and she ran back to the table." (par. 30-31).

This prejudice becomes a distraction to the greater problems that exist within the plight of the proletariat. The grandmother continuously reminisces about men she dated, her appearance, and different plantations, which she sees as status markers. She is constantly obsessed about looking like a "lady:"

The old lady settled herself comfortably, removing her white cotton gloves and putting them up with her purse on the shelf in front of the back window...the grandmother had on a navy blue straw sailor hat with a bunch of white violets on the brim and a navy blue dress with a small dot in the print. Her white organdy trimmed with lace and at her neckline she had pinned a purple spray of cloth violets containing a sachet. In case of an accident, anyone seeing her dead on the highway would know at once that she was a lady. (par. 12)

This social lack of empathy makes the grandmother much less aware of key issues about others' suffering. She only originally cares about where the family of The Misfit comes from until her final moments before he kills her. "'Listen,' the grandmother almost screamed, 'I know you're a good man. You don't look a bit like you have common blood. I know you must come from nice people!'"

(par. 98). “You’re not a bit common!” (par. 98). The Misfit best describes her situation by stating, “She would of been a good woman...if it had been somebody there to shoot her every minute of her life” (par. 140). This statement means that if she had always realized that title and money meant nothing, and she had not been so shallow, she could have been a good woman. The scene continues as “The grandmother reached up to adjust her hat brim as if she were going to the woods with him but it came off in her hand. She stood staring at it, and after a second, she let it fall on the ground” (par. 96). The same goes with the proletariat: once the class realizes that none of the things that society holds dear actually means anything, the more powerful they can become.

This brief elaboration of how superficial things, such as appearances (pertaining to race, gender, and society), shows how these values can blind the proletariat. They are bait the bourgeoisie uses to enslave and oppress the lower class, and the proletariat blindly accepts and embraces these chains. Pitting the lower classes provides a “divide and conquer” strategy to maintain control for the bourgeoisie. This creates pseudo superiority within the lower class, which in turn prompts confusion, lack a judgment, and a further lack of cohesion. The image that the bourgeoisie presents of such a society creates a sentiment of self-hate and deflection within the proletariat. Once the proletariat realizes that superficial physical and abstract traits that are constantly being presented truly mean nothing in the grand scheme of things, the proletariat can free themselves from the bondage and oppression by the bourgeoisie.

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"The Crow and the Swan" by Tiana Turner

HARRISON BERGERON

ABOLISHMENT OF INDIVIDUALITY: KURT VONNEGUT,
JR.

Sherry Smith

Individuality is defined as: the particular character, or aggregate of qualities, that distinguishes one person or thing from others; sole and personal nature: a person of marked individuality, individualities, individual characteristics, a person or thing of individual or distinctive character. The story of Harrison Bergeron shows how being equal in a futuristic society actually takes away individuality. Examples are given in the characters of Hazel, the mother; George, the father; and Harrison, the son.

Vonnegut's story takes place in the future, the year 2081. He explains how Amendments to the Constitution have been added that allows no one to be smarter, more talented, or even more physically capable. Total equality is the premise of the amendments. The people are under the strict control of the United States Handicapper General, Diana Moon Glampers. It is under her authority the public are limited in each and every way. Darrel Hattenhauer states, "The theme of this satire is that attempts to achieve equality are absurd." To have total equality is a virtual impossibility. There is no ability to compete or to excel in any type of situation. The futuristic society is one of sameness, generic, and thoughtlessness. To govern the people in this manner of equality also has a devious way of taking away an individual's civil rights. Total equality does not mean total freedom. In fact, it is a virtual impossibility to make everyone equal. This would wipe away all personality, abilities, and even thought process. According to Linda Labin, "In every case, the effort has not been to raise the standards

of those handicapped by their differences or inadequacies. Instead, those who are gifted with superior intellect, physical beauty, or strength are penalized” (Labin).

Hazel Bergeron, Harrison Bergeron’s mother, is totally average. She needs nothing to alter her appearance, nor weigh her down. Her mental capacities have been determined by the United States Handicapper General to be “normal” as well as her physical abilities. She is not an athlete, nor does she have a talent for dancing or singing. Hazel is branded, so-to-speak as a normal, equal person. Vonnegut’s story says, “Hazel had a perfectly average intelligence, which meant she couldn’t think about anything except in short bursts” (232). His description gives the impression Hazel did not even have the ability to actually think on her own. Almost as though she was very feeble minded. Hazel was not manipulated by the Handicapper General like most everyone else because she was considered to be “normal” in their predetermined qualifications. Tim Akers and Jerry Moore claim in Vonnegut’s story, “normal” entails that one is incompetent, or unable to fathom anything beyond that which is superficial (Akers & Moore). In fact, Hazel appears to be incompetent and flat in her thought process.

George Bergeron, Harrison Bergeron’s father, is considered an above average thinker. In fact, “While his intelligence was way above normal, he had a little mental handicap radio in his ear. He was required by law to wear it at all times. It was tuned to a government transmitter. Every twenty seconds or so, the transmitter would send out some sharp noise to keep people like George from taking unfair advantage of their brains” (232). George Bergeron was obviously a very intelligent man. This is conveyed by the handicap radio in his ear. The radio would make sounds to disrupt thought processing. The radio in his ear made noises very often. Considering the disruption happened recurrently, it

impresses he is an avid thinker. The Handicapper General had the governing power to take away his freedom of thought, intelligence, and individuality due to the added Amendments to the Constitution. As a result of the ability for the Handicapper General to suppress free thinking, it also resulted in the destruction of George's own individuality.

Harrison Bergeron was an extreme exception to the human kind in the future. He was unlike any other person. He had an incredibly strong, thinking mind as well as a astonishing strong, athletic body. By reason of the government enforced equalizing amendments, Harrison had the burden of wearing tremendous earphones, and spectacles of thick wavy lenses to block out thought, yet it did not work. Vonnegut describes of scrap metal which hung all over Harrison, without symmetry, to keep him physically off balance and controllable. However, despite the physical impairments he was able to break the weights and shackles off, as a result of his extreme, brute strength. The Handicapper General, Diana Moon Glampers, was terrified of Harrison's incredible power, both mental and physical. She knew how unique Harrison's abilities were to override the physical impairments. In all reality, the impairments did nothing to control him in the least. When he escaped from jail, the fear he instilled in the government is obvious when Vonnegut writes, "Harrison Bergeron has just escaped from jail, where he was held on suspicion of plotting to overthrow the government. He is a genius and an athlete, is under-handicapped, and should be regarded as extremely dangerous" (234). Despite all of the physical handicaps the Handicapper General imposed upon Harrison, it did not stop him from becoming smarter or stronger, or controllable. Harrison knew he had his own thoughts and the physical restraints on his body and mind did not render him incapable of having free will. The restraints did not break his free

will but in fact, more than likely, fueled his desire to be free of the bondage of sameness.

Ultimately, the ability to achieve sameness in all people is unrealistic. "Forced equality by handicapping the above-normal individuals evolved as a response to the demonized concept of competition (which existed in "the dark ages") in all its possible forms" ("Harrison Bergeron"). Although unrealistic, the attempt to control thoughts and abilities was forced upon the people. At the end of the story, Harrison is murdered by Diana Moon Glampers by her shooting him with an old fashioned double barrel shotgun. There is symbolism in the fact she used an old fashioned gun to destroy Harrison. It appears that no matter what the future may hold or how things are manipulated, the old ways of doing things will still be a constant and not all things will be abolished.

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"Untitled" by Sydney Robertson

THE GARDEN PARTY

Michela Nelson

Katherine Mansfield was born on October 14, 1888 in Wellington, New Zealand. Early in life, Mansfield decided that she wanted to become a writer. Coming from a wealthy family, she studied music, wrote for the school newspaper, and would read early twentieth century literature while in London. Mansfield returned to New Zealand after three years. When she came back, her parents believed that she would settle down with a man and “lead the life of a well-bred women” (Milne). Unfortunately for her parents, Katherine wanted more with her life.

Around 1907, Mansfield returned to London. During this time, she become pregnant from a short affair. She quickly married man named George Bowden. Katherine had only known George three weeks before getting married; he was not the father. She wore a black dress instead of white when they married and had left him afterwards. Her parents heard the many rumors about their daughter mingling with other women after the wedding fiasco. Katherine’s mother brought her daughter to Germany and “away from the Bohemian artists’ community of London.” Her stay didn’t last long. She had a miscarriage and lost her inheritance (Milne).

She moved back to London and continued to write about her experiences in Germany and even published a small journal. Mansfield remarried soon after to a man named John Murry. Unfortunately, she got Tuberculosis in 1917; this forced her to move to France. Even after her illness, she continued to write and publish her stories. She eventually died in 1923, age thirty-four, due to a large pulmonary hemorrhage. After her death, her husband continued to publish her letters and stories. One of the short stories that was published is called “The Garden Party.” This story includes different themes, symbols, and some historical context to her story (Milne).

One of the themes are innocence and experience. Throughout the story, the reader can tell that Laura is confused by her family’s

values and begins to realize a different perceptive of reality from her experience. In the beginning of the story, Laura engages with the workers. "Laura wished now that she had not got the bread and was nowhere to put it, and she couldn't possibly throw it away. She blushed and tried to look severe and even a little bit shortsighted as she came up to them" (Mansfield p. 1). At this point, the reader can see her innocence and young age. She begins to speak to workers, but she attempts to act older and impersonate her mother. : "Good morning," she said, copying her mother's voice. But that sounded so fearfully affected that she was ashamed and stammered like a little girl" (Mansfield p. 1). She does not have the experience that her mother has. Once she realizes this then she feels ashamed (Milne).

Another theme in Katherine's story is dream and reality. Laura does not seem to think of the world beyond her house or the garden party. "She had a glimpse of that poor woman and those little children, and the body being carried into the house. But it all seemed blurred, unreal, like a picture in the newspaper" (Mansfield p. 8). She lives in a world of her own; reality is just an illusion. Even away from the party does Laura continues to dream and "carries the sensations of the party with her." The only time that reality seems to hit Laura is when Jose sings the song "This Life is Weary" (Milne).

Journey is another theme in "The Garden Party." It shows the growth of maturity Laura goes through. Things always seem lighter in the beginning of the story. There are bright flowers, music, laughter, and fun. This is the young and childish side of Laura. Once she begins to make her way to the cottage, she begins to see a more mature side of reality. She also encountered the dead man and everyone's grief at the end of the story. This takes away from her childish side and gives her an "insightful vision of life and death" (Milne)

In "The Garden Party" Mansfield uses different types of symbols to enhance the story. Throughout the story, Katherine uses descriptive language to create a picture of this beautiful and elegant garden. The garden represents beauty and light; it paints the prefect

reality that Laura pictures. "And the perfect afternoon, slowly ripened, slowly faded, slowly its petals closed" (Mansfield p. 9). This creates a picture of a calm and bright environment (Milne).

As Laura continues to venture out into the lower class areas, the scene begins to get darker. All of the beautiful flowers, music, and people begin to fade. The noise that had filled in around her at the party is now filled with silence and a weird hum. "How quiet it seemed after the afternoon. . . . A low hum came from the mean little cottages. In some of them there was a flicker of light, and a shadow, crablike, moved across the window" (Mansfield p.10). As Laura makes her way toward the cottage, shadows "intensify." She is soon led through a dark hallway by a woman in black. While in the house she encounters a dead man lying on the bed. All of these scenes contribute how Laura sees reality in a different light (Milne).

In the story, Katherine refers to a lot of flowers. Many of the flowers represent something. Lilies usually represents death or humility and devotion. Pink lilies represents wealth and prosperity. Roses symbolizes hope and new beginnings. Lastly the karakas represents Laura in a sense. Laura thought that the karakas did not need to be covered by the marquee. The marquee represents her parents and their beliefs (Litcharts.com).

Another symbol is Laura's hat. The hat represents her social class. Her mother expects her to look down on the working class. "People like that don't expect sacrifices from us. And it's not very sympathetic to spoil everybody's enjoyment as you're doing now" (Mansfield p. 8). All throughout the story Laura does not look down on the lower class people. She even begins to realize what her hat means at the end of the short story. "Forgive my hat," she said (Mansfield p. 12).

"The Garden Party" uses different styles. One of these styles is stream of consciousness. Writers use this technique to create a more upfront way of reality. At first, her perception of reality is like a dream. "How quiet it seemed after the afternoon. Here she was going down the hill to somewhere where a man lay dead, and she couldn't realize it. Why couldn't she" (Mansfield p. 10). A much clearer version of reality is shown when Laura sees the man dead

on the bed. "What did garden-parties and baskets and lace frocks matter to him? He was far from all those things" (Mansfield p. 11)

Throughout the story Katherine changes the point of view back and forth between third person and first person (Milne). "They were finished at last, and Laura took them off to the kitchen" (Mansfield p. 5). This is an example of her using third person. She then switches to first person later in the story. "This is just as it should be. I am content" (Mansfield p. 12).

Katherine's story has some type of historical context to it. During 1922, the year this story was written, there were wars. Unfortunately, the war had effects on artist and writers like Katherine. Just like many others, her brother was killed during the war. During the 1920's there was a lot of political and social chaos throughout Europe. Some parts of Europe began to promote fascism, a form of government usually with a dictator. This began the talk about the different class systems that existed during the 20's. This may be one of the reasons that Katherine Mansfield wrote "The Garden Party" (Milne).

In conclusion, Katherine Mansfield lived a very interesting life. She created many works like "The Garden Party." This short story used innocence, experience, dreams, and reality to convey the themes. She used different types of symbols to create a meaningful story. Finally, used different styles to write her work

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short story

A REFLECTION ON SHADOWS

Shiloh Alexander

Danny gave me twenty dollars the day Crazy Old Man Galloway finally killed his shadow.

You may think this is pretty difficult, since shadows can see everything you do, and mimic you without fail. If they see you, say, pull out a gun on them, they do the same, and then it's just Mutually Assured Destruction. There's no way around it - shadows are simply that good.

See, the trick is to bluff them into offing themselves. Everyone knows that any shadow worth its salt will mimic it's human up and to their death.

And that's how Crazy Old Man Galloway got it.

It was typical on good days in the nursing home I worked at for Crazy Old Man Galloway to sit on the floor for an hour or two, screaming obscenities at his own shadow. It was one of those charming daily rituals we had at the home, and as commonplace as Miss Bertha gossiping to herself or the Sergeant making passes at anyone who walked by.

It was one of the bad days. Crazy Old Man Galloway refused to participate in any of the nursing home activities, choosing instead to sit on his little spot on the floor, screeching and cursing. Usually we would ignore him, but he had been at it for a good four hours. Danny, the other nurse who worked with me, approached him.

"You know - it can't hear you. It's a shadow. Sound doesn't reflect."

Crazy Old Man Galloway looked thoughtful.

“Ya’ know what kid? You’re right. You went and got that education, didn’t you?”

“Uh - most of it I guess.”

“Good enough,” Old Man Galloway stood up. “It’s just right down offensive to not be listenin’ when others are trying to get their talk on with you.” He picked up his chair and smashed it into his shadow.

Now, usually we encourage the residents of the home to express themselves however they see fit, but Crazy Old Man Galloway began smashing up chairs against the floor left and right. The destruction (and cost) was just too much.

And on top of that, the sergeant began to cry.

So Danny and I grabbed Crazy Old Man Galloway, him on one side and me on the other, and we took him back to his room. We closed the door on his ranting, and the nursing home was quiet once more.

I turned to Danny and grinned.

“I bet you twenty dollars he actually manages to kill that thing.”

“Deal,” Danny said, laughing.

The next day, I checked on all the patients in their room, like I do every day. Danny was already at Crazy Old Man Galloway’s room, standing in the doorframe. He looked at me, eyes wide with shock. Without explanation, he handed me twenty dollars.

I pushed past him into the room, and there, lying on the floor, and very, very dead, was Crazy Old Man Galloway’s shadow. The Old Man himself stood over it proudly, wielding a plastic butter knife.

“I killed it dead!” he said.

The media uproar was phenomenal. Our little town had never had so much as an interesting robbery, much less the murder of a thing that was thought to be unmurderable. Whether it was even to be considered murder or not was up to a heated debate.

The Republicans declared all shadows to be parasites, and cheerfully and rather openly supported deporting any and all shadows to the moon. The Democrats, as usual, were divided. About half believed that shadows were people and should have the same rights as everyone else, and the other half believed that they constituted as part of a person's body, and everyone had a right to do anything they wished to with their own shadow.

It was not an argument that was going to be resolved anytime soon.

Meanwhile, with the young crowd, it became cool and trendy to kill off your shadow. It became one of those weird millennial things that don't make sense to other generations. Most older people didn't feel like their shadow deserved to get killed – it had never done them harm, nor would it. Their shadow had been an amiable companion all their life, and they didn't see why that should stop now. Soon, many industries started up studying shadow-killing technique and devised a method of destroying the shadows of objects and buildings. It became that, if your store or restaurant had a shadow, it was considered 'old fashioned' and 'fussy'.

One of these companies, called SHADE, sprung up and quickly bought out all their competitors. They began selling shadow insurance to people who liked their shadows and shadow exterminations to people who didn't. Eventually – they lobbied for it to become illegal to have a shadow without shadow insurance, and their profits sky rocketed.

Through all this, I worked at the same nursing home. Crazy Old Man Galloway seemed very pleased with the commotion he had caused, and life went on as normal.

That is until one day, when I brought him his dinner, and he grabbed my arm.

“You see that ugly punk over there?” he asked, gesturing to the mirror. I looked and saw his own reflection, glowering back.

“Yeah?”

“Son of a bitch’s been givin’ me the stink eye for weeks now. I think he wants a fight.”

I rubbed at the growing headache that was forming at my temples. Danny leaned into the room.

“I bet you twenty dollars -”

“Shut up, Danny.”



"Werewolf" by Eduardo Juarez

THE MERCY OF A MERCHANT

David Simmons

There was once a merchant that made his way to a new city that was riddled with beggars, thieves, merchants, and few priests. As the merchant made his way down the streets of the city he did not know, a child appeared urging the merchant to take a path that only the child knew through the city. The merchant followed and not too long after taking the path shown by the child, he was beaten and robbed of all of his belongings. As the merchant struggled to stand back up on his own two feet, the child up showed again apologizing to the merchant for the unfortunate event that just happened. The merchant was confused and did not know what to do. He had lost everything he had earned his entire life in one tragic event. The merchant ran back into the streets seeking help to get back what was stolen, but the people cast him off as a beggar. No man would hear his words except for a priest that was passing through with a stern look upon his face. When the child witnessed the priest he quickly darted into a place unseen. The merchant who had become a beggar began pleading with the priest for help, and the priest pointed the beggar to a house of the Lord where all could come to and take shelter. The beggar had no choice and had always been one who praised the Lord and served under the law. As the beggar walked into the house he saw the child standing there with other children gathered around. The beggar asked the child how he had survived so long living in the streets. The child pointed to the sky and said, "Every night I give it all back to the Lord and every night the Lord takes it all away." The beggar humbled by the child's faith smiled and said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled." That night, while sitting at the table of the temple and eating supper, the beggar overheard

some of the others speaking about the child. They were explaining to each other how cunning the child was and how many merchants he had broken that walked his path. The beggar hearing this hung his head in shame knowing he too had been broken by the child.

The next morning the beggar woke up early and found a place amongst the streets to beg for his daily bread. While begging a long-time friend of the former merchant, who was now a beggar, noticed his appearance in the streets. The friend lifted his hands and shouted, "Hallelujah, my friend has risen from the dead." He told the beggar that all who knew him had assumed that he was taken to the grave because of his disappearance. The beggar explained his situation and the merchant had mercy on him. The merchant told the beggar to gather his belongings and meet him outside the city after dark, where they would take shelter in the merchant's home.

Night fell on the city and the beggar hurried to gather his belongings. While he rummaged through the little he had he noticed the child standing alone and praying to God for mercy. He couldn't help but feel the Lord's presence in the room and told the child very sternly, "Gather your things, child, if mercy is what you seek." The child, astonished, jumped to his feet praising the beggar. The beggar never said a word and pointed to the priest that resided in the house. He and the child made their way out of the city to meet the merchant. The merchant, eager to leave the sinful place, urged the beggar to leave the sinful child but the beggar refused and said, "Mercy to all who serve the Lord." The merchant could not argue with the word of God. So he mounted his wagon and all three headed to the merchant's house to take shelter.

Upon waking up the first morning the child wandered into the council of the merchant and the beggar. The merchant told the child, "Here, Child, you will learn the ways of your true Father and here child you will become his merchant." The beggar followed with, "Here, Child, your Father who art in heaven shall have you

to himself and here, Child, you will become his priest.” The child knowing that he had been rescued by God from his own ways said nothing and dropped to his face begging the beggar for forgiveness and praising the merchant for his mercy.

Some years passed by and a merchant approached a new city full of beggars, thieves, merchants, and priests. The merchant was met by a child at the gate of the city and was guided down a path that only the child knew. The merchant was stopped by a priest with a stern look upon his face that was once a child of sin and sent to a merciful merchant that kept a humble beggar of the truth at his side. If all men could see God at work the world would be saved and sealed with him, yet God remains unseen and works through those that praise his name. A merchant once asked a Son of God “What should I do to serve God?” The son replied, “Lose all that you have, to gain all that you need from God.”

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy”

-Jesus The Christ



"Frostbiting Pride" by Ashlynn Stroud

FISH OH FISH

Faith Ezell

As I sit in my wooden beach chair among the crisp waters for fish to catch my hook, I gaze up above at the soft subtle blue sky and wonder. I wonder about my future, my past, and my present. I think to myself, if I was a tree like those trees across the waters, I would always have water. I would always have food. The wind briskly kisses my skin as I wait patiently for my fish to catch the hook. These waters ripple and flow back and forth from side to side. The twinkle glistens on the waters from the bright, dazzling sun. And as I soak up the Vitamin D, I still wait for my fish to catch the hook. When I reflect on my life, I am grateful I'm alive. I am grateful to see another day and feel the sun absorb into my skin. I smell the fish, but I don't see the fish. I could just imagine what it would feel like to have that fish in my hands. The rough, patchy scales, the vivid bright colors, oh fish come to me! Fish. Fish. Fish. Fish! The trees soak up the nutrients in their roots, and in my mind, it laughs because it has food and I don't. Oh, Fish. Come to me. Come to me. Come to me.

free-verse poetry

BLACK BOX BEETLE

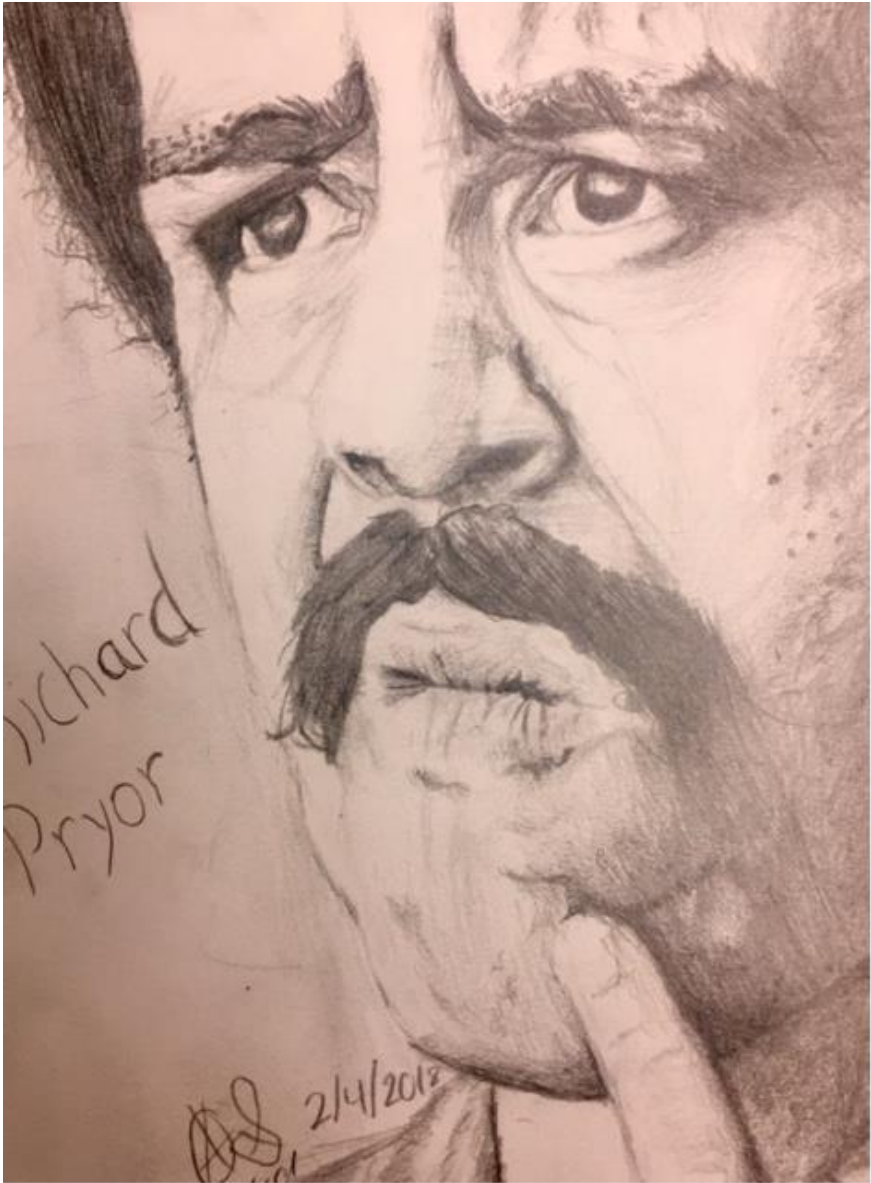
Penelope LeBron

Ladybugs are the proper insect entertainers.
Butterflies make lovely ballerinas, sure,
And honeybees are certainly candy virtuosos.
But it is the ladybug
Who makes love to the spotlight
And eats jazz chords on its pancakes.

I met one once
On a street corner in New Orleans.
He wore fishnet stockings and a Dali mustache,
And his eyes hummed ditties of a cabaret moon.

Every word was a riddle
On a cheap grin piano
Cracked in a rhythm of dancing shoes

A fever in stilettos
A loud suit in a tiny room
The Betty Boop of beetles,
Janes and Johnnies,
The Ladybug.

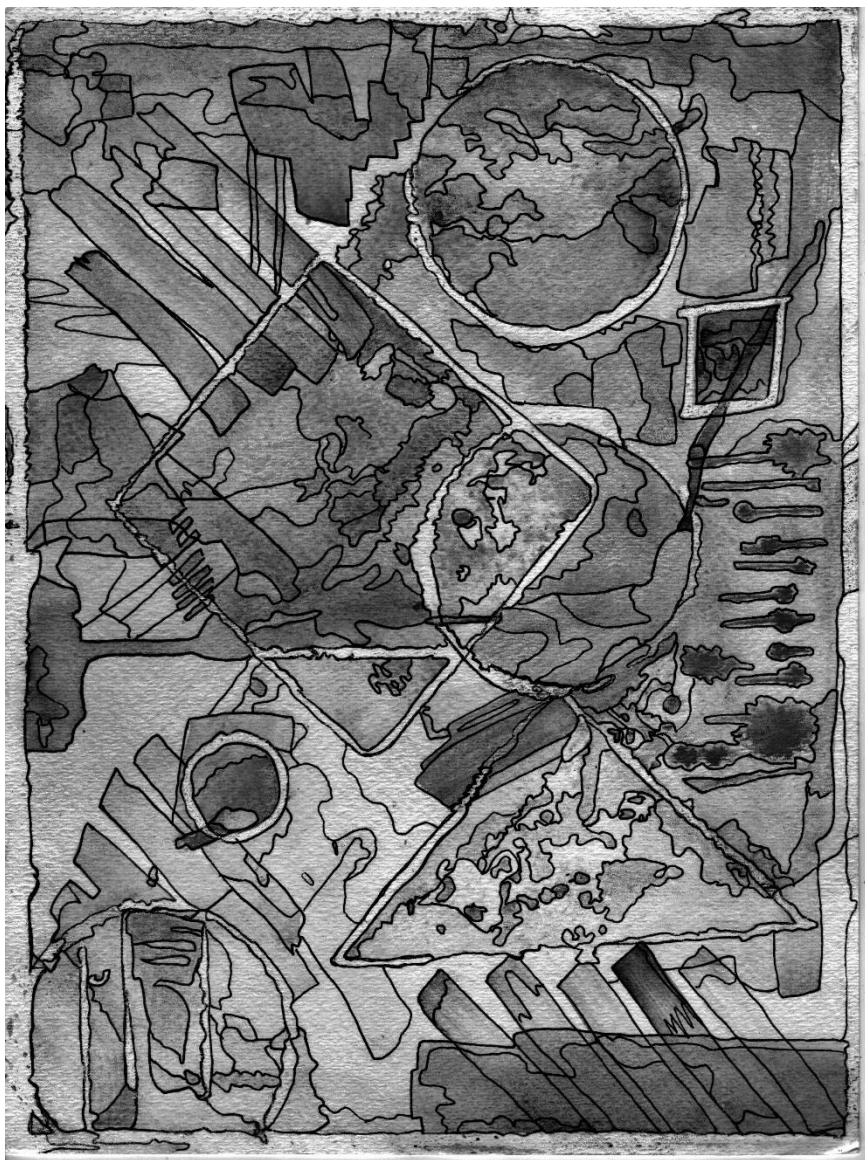


"Lighting Pryor" by Ashlynn Stroud

STARDUST

Santana Gardner

An expiration of events left to burn
Sketched across the timeline of the universe
Are the remains of stardust
Contained within the bones of humanity
Quantum matter shivers at the voice
Of the impossibility on the breath of man
Definitive by power alone
Is the strength of a singular person
Atomic combustion as abrupt as a half-finished sentence
Fiery as menacing wolf catering to precious prey
Rhythm travels strings of life
Connecting as the seams of an adolescence's jeans
This is not the end it reads



"Untitled" by Sydney Robertson

I AM NOT OPHELIA

Shiloh Alexander

I Am Not Ophelia

Gassed up, Pinned and Trapped

beneath the Glass

of willowed Creek.

I Am Not my Family Sick

though family sick grips my hand

It leads me, and calls me

An heir to Little Tara

I'm Not some Fairy Child

Gently placed in place of me

I wear Iron

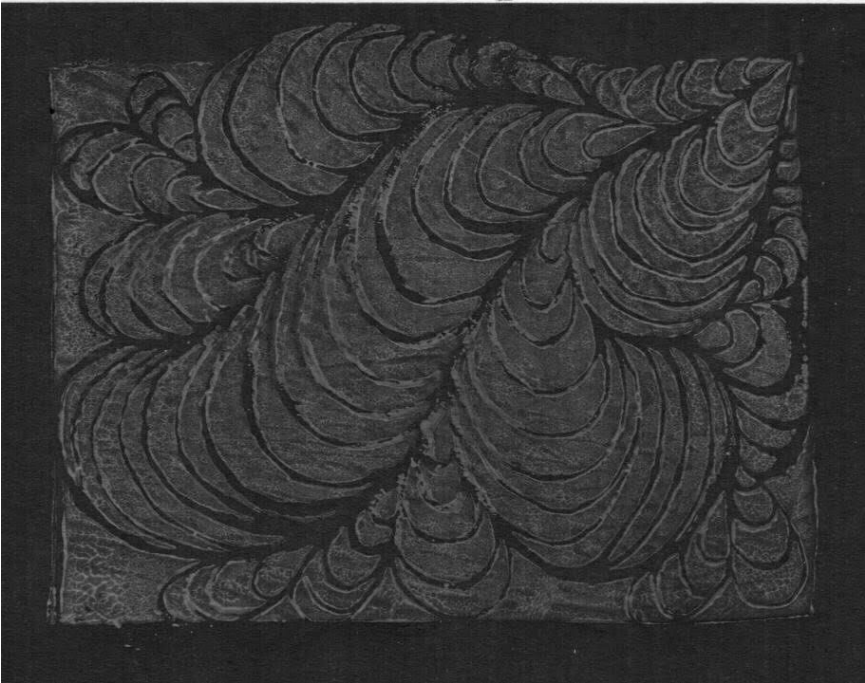
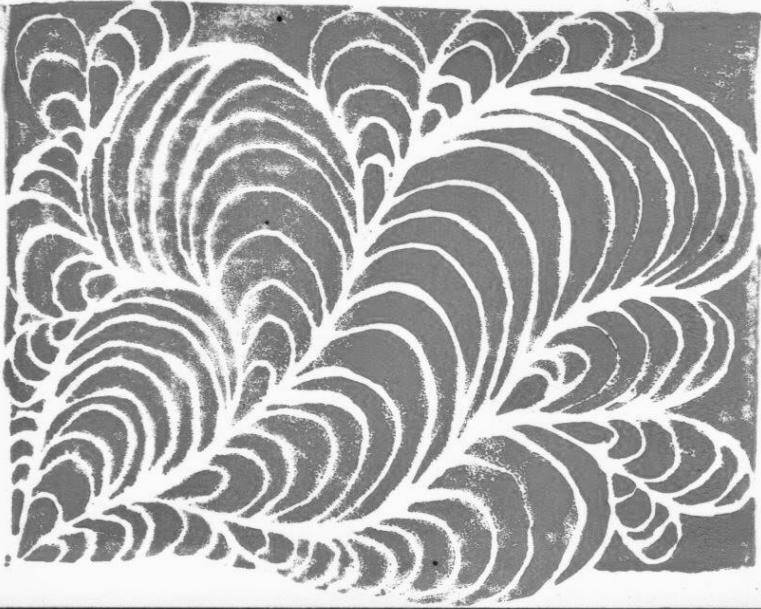
and I never count the seeds.

structured-verse poetry

ABOUT VOLTAIRE

Rebecca Davis

You know, Voltaire once caught me –
well before I was born. He
knew my silver tongue was foil
and that my pencils would be
worn. Voltaire once taught me a
bit about myself; he knew
I'd climb on stilts to put my
shoulders on a shelf. Shoulders
are where I keep those rancid
memories; I'd break my neck
to push away my inner
lemures. The tension guides
my hand as I scrawl along
the page, but the trail I leave
never pulls my soul out of
its cage. Voltaire once knew the
one from whom I got my eyes,
he saw that I'd use patterns
to continue the disguise.
He shared my inner thoughts with
each revealing word he wrote.
He told the world my secrets,
as he pulled them from my throat.



"Untitled" by Sydney Robertson

STILL 水'S ASTIR

Albert Tsang

Footsteps pass white trees.
The frozen lake is surprised,
But willing to share.



"Untitled" by Sydney Robertson

A MORNING RIDE

Kristina Kelly

The subtle caress of a gentle breeze,
On a trail that winds through a forest of trees,
We ride slowly onward as dawn turns to day,
If only I knew of words I could say,
Of the joy that I feel and the freedom indeed,
Of a quiet morning ride, just my pony and me.

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Free-Verse

Jessica Guzman Alderman

Todd Osborne

Joe Sigurdson

Critical Essay

Jessica Carrell

Jillian Marinovic

Personal Essay

Britani Baker

Karlie Herndon

Short Story

Rachael Fowler

Jordan James

Matthew Nagel

Structured-Verse

Jessica Ramer

Kevin Thomason