If heaven allows outgoing messages
I'll send my "I miss you"
One day in the rainy weather.

All the battles one could have
And I was given mine
Who knew a little tumor could be deadly
When found by the spine.

The saddest part
Don't knowing you'll die
Or even the internal pain;
It's ever your family
I and tines dry,

How open your eyes
And notice
She wears different colored skin.

But like other children
She runs around
Chasing butterflies
Yet she'll never catch
Why does her differently shaded skin matter?
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Editors Note

Serendipity, what is it? How can I start off this note without telling about how it all came about? Over the weekend I was parking cars at the Chasco Fiesta on Saturday evening when one of the Mobius Members contacted me and told me that we needed a last minute Editor’s note for the final touch, in which to this news I replied, “You just had to drop the bomb on me, didn’t you?...Serendipity, that it is.”

Serendipity, not predicting the unpredictable. Every event: love, hate, heartache, birth, death, and every trauma of this world is serendipity. Every historical event of our past is serendipity.

As to you; my fellow readers, I hope you find everything in this magazine, like this note, serendipitously amusing, emotional and exciting.

Sincerely,

Terralyn Sanden
Mobius Editor-in-Chief
*Fish Nuggets*

-*Victoria Robinson-*

“What are you saying?”

He sighed, and it was easy to see he was struggling. “I’m not gonna come to dinner tonight.”

She sat back and looked away, noticing, for perhaps the first time, the normality of her surroundings. The café was cold, even for the number of people in there. It was loud as well, and the music playing in the background didn’t help. The waiters shouted the names of the patrons when their orders were ready. Someone passed and she got a short whiff of the potent aroma of fish nuggets. I hate seafood, she told herself.

They had snagged one of the few available booths. He sat across from her with his elbows leaning on the table; his body hunched forward. He didn’t shave this morning, she noticed. They hadn’t really had problems before. From the first day he sat himself at my table we’ve gotten along just fine. I had a friend. But then he dropped it on her. “I really like you” he had said. What about the age gap? She remembered pointing that out. “I’ll wait for you.” The line that hooked her. “I’m sorry.” He broke her concentration. “I’m just not ready for it yet. Maybe in a few weeks.”

She didn’t answer. What was it you’re wasn’t ready for? She was confused. I’ve been the one to try and take it slow. You’ve had the petal to the metal from the start.

I really like him though, she tried to convince herself. He’s sweet and funny. He always tries to make me laugh. And we have a lot in common. But recently she had felt that they were growing apart. She had really only asked him to dinner as a test. Her parents were supposed to be there. If he wants to take it fast then I can too. But I don’t think he likes that idea.

And they were both in school. She knew that she hadn’t been as concentrated on her studies since they began dating. I’ve been compromising, she realized. Skip a class here, late paper there. I’ve always put my education first before this.

“You’re not saying much.” He nonchalantly stated. “What’re you thinking?”

She didn’t quite know what she was thinking. She didn’t want to waste her time anymore. But she also didn’t want to hurt him. I have to think about what I need at the moment.

Fish nuggets were being served at the booth behind her. She just happened to look at him as the repugnant smell wafted her way.

“I don’t think this is gonna work. I’m sorry.” She flashed him her most apologetic face.

She wasn’t too surprised when he tried to hide his relieved reaction. Me too.” He placed his hand over his chest to seem sincere. “Let’s just go back to being friends.”

She scoffed and walked out.
Our Lullaby
-Destiny Goins-

The piano strikes a white beginning,
The color of our lullaby.
Crawling, standing, walking, running,
The white musical canvas starts poking flowers of green
As the flute starts whistling.
Constantly growing and changing,
The green gets speckled with orange as the drums start beating.
Life continues with splotches of yellow on the horizon;
The bells echo in warning.
But the heart ignores and seizes what it yearns
Scorching the once pure white with red,
And the guitars rifts play throaty in the background.
The fires cool to blue, but the saxophone is still breathy,
Turning to gold as the high pitch xylophone jumps into the symphony.
The airy sounds of the clarinet paint the purple ceremony of two hearts.
Eventually everything comes to an end
As the mournful cry of the cello stains the gray ending heart of one lover;
And the dark tears of the violin
Brings the song to an end,
Drawing out the last black chord to the color of our lullaby.
Pollution Paradise
By Lindsey Brooks
Do you know ghosts grow on trees?

I learned it after planting teeth.

I spit them out with all my lies

And sowed them deep within my mind.
Sunset Shadows
By
Rhema Bunker
Mostar
By
Hanca Dautbasic
In this house, pictures hang on the walls, painted from a lifetime of memories together. Now though certain emptiness resides in the place of her, leaving a hole so large it reached his mind. So many things forgotten, but fresh is the memory of losing her. Every day, now the day after the death of his wife. Every day we explain that it has been several years now as we refill the vacant crevices of his mind.

He looks around at a home that they used to share with love in his heart he wishes he was there. Blaming himself is a thing to do to pass the time because after all this just happened yesterday, every day.

Dementia is tough, heartbreak is tougher yet. So we try to entertain and try to amuse but his life has ended with the death of his muse. An empty shell, no will to go on. Is what has become as his body shuts down while he watches. No sons and no daughters instead he has us, to watch over him and care for him.

Soon he will go meet up with his bride a happy ending to the story his pain will subside.
Aversion to Ribbons
-Roxanne Roos-

One single ribbon, one single color
An abundance of meaning
For every single person.

You turn to me with lit
Cigarettes burning
A hole in my chest
And breath warm with
A pungent alcoholic odor.

Seven millimeters
Of darkness inside you
According to doctors.
Though you have shown me
The darkness
Had settled in a long time ago.

The shine I once saw
As your “shining star”
Was only a lighter’s flame.
The veil of innocence
Covering my childish eyes
Burned away with age.

Your bottles left stains
On my heart
And poisoned my love for you.
Yet here you sit still
Another can in hand
Drowning in your abyss.

You tried to end
What little life you had
But we couldn’t close your casket.
I guess the saying is true
You can lead a horse to water
But you cannot make it drink.

Seven millimeters
Of darkness inside you
Sitting, waiting.
You could end it all now
Yet here you sit still
Another can in hand.

Though you still talk and breathe
I sit in mourning
Twirling this ribbon.
Though your body is alive
You died
A long time ago.
Technicolor Heartache

-Colton Lawver-

We didn’t fall in love. We crashed. Full force.

Every color of your energy collided with my soul. And though you wiped away the mess You left a stain behind.

I haven’t tasted your lips since Eve took that first juicy bite. But now I fry my eggs the way you cook them.

A spot of yellow.

I haven’t seen your beauty since the face of Helen launched a thousand ships. I sometimes stumble on that stupid show you love. I still hate it.

Just for different reasons.

A drop of red.

I haven’t heard your laugh since Scheherazade spun her thousandth tale. I still tell that joke about the carpet.

Few people laugh. But you did once. And that’s enough.

A splash of green.

I haven’t held your hand since Juliet’s cold skin tore her husband’s heart. But your pull still guides me down certain paths. And holds me back from others.

A pool of blue.

You vanished entirely. And never left.
Remembrance and Renouncement

-Haley Vaughan-

Silence permitting,
May I mutter the pervasiveness?
Of a mind eluded by which means it may
Circumvent itself,
Save through self-consumption
Which appeases only through dulling?

The written word,
As it is one’s writ,
Serves only in the preservation of self
With profound implications
Wrought in the abatement of empathy,
Standing, shuddering
As the loss of remembrance
Lynches it.

And so I write of you,
As nothing exists to be unloved
Though that which loves you must forget
As memory becomes a dull ache
For loneliness is a companion to the sightless
And a master of that which remembers.
Watercolour Mosque - By Hanca Dautbasic
By

Jasmine Delgado
Funny How Things Change
By Jena Musgrave
To my lover,
Only with the rhythmic pattern of syllables can I express my passion
Ignorant people state they love more than words
They are not poets

I cannot feel the flickering of the hands as they hover over numbers on a clock
Stagnant in their position
my focus remains in an unwavering commitment to the deep brown meeting my sea of blue
for a moment, there is nothing else

I cannot see the quivering of my fingers as if they were playing Beethoven's Pathetique
With sweet tenderness, a mere brush of your lips on mine crash like a tsunami over an island
An isolated piece of land, captivated by solitude
Unsuspecting of lurking dangers

I cannot hear the whimper of ecstasy as it escapes my imprisonment
A fortress built over a decade
Penetrated in an instant
your voice is a melody reciting a tune called "I love you"

And then I see you
The smile on your face releases me from my incarceration
I feel the warmth of your body as I let my words become audible
"I love you"
In an instant, I am free

To my Lover
-Sarah Marie-

Clichés
-Sarah Marie-

I love you more than words
I looked into your eyes and time stood still
You broke down my walls
Trudging wearily down the ramp, one among the hundreds just like her, she looks down at the garbage, awash and bobbing in the murky water below. Following the lapping waves with her eyes, outward from the pier and up towards the gray sky, she studies the green patina that runs in rivulets down the torch and seeps from the folds in the lady’s gown. The fabled lady is not bronzed and glowing as she had imagined, and she wonders how this could be. Her reflection is interrupted by the insistent push of the crowd. All of them hunched and bony, clutching children and grappling with bundles, impatient to reach the finish line. All with thin faces and visibly damaged spirits, all wear the same expression. Excitement from their safe arrival has been wrung from them like the dirty mop water sloshed over the sides of the boat during the past two weeks. Her husband volunteered to clean the bathrooms below, as a means to get milk for the baby and extra bread for themselves. The milk was often sour, or nearly so, and the baby fussed endlessly. But, sour was better than none.

They make their way to an enormous building with many long hallways lined with wooden benches and occasional checkpoints. Stern, uniformed men and grim matrons direct the throng along the hall. The cavernous building is dimly lit by thin rays of sunlight straining through the large leaded windows, and when she is instructed to find a seat, she is relieved to find an empty spot where the light has managed to breach the gloom. Grateful for a moment’s rest, she sinks into a bench. Glancing down, she realizes her son is asleep, and she takes the bottle from his mouth and holds him closer. Wearily closing her eyes, she breathes in the faint scent of warm milk from the baby’s breath. In that brief respite, she knows, as she has known since childhood, she is destined to be here.

Father’s slap still stings her cheek. I hate the gypsies! Why do I have to bring them milk and bread? “Because they are hungry,” he says, “Because they are human beings.” That is all the explanation the six year old will get, and to ask for more is to invite the strap.

As she walks the path through the fields and woods and approaches the colorful wagons around a fire in the clearing, she grudgingly admits that she does like how they dance crazily to the frantic and seductive sounds of their violins. She is quite charmed when the women snatch their skirts and make them billow to the music. She thinks it romantic when the men clap and howl as the women snap their heads and fling their long raven hair like whips through the air. But look at how they live! Here today, gone tomorrow. Why not settle down? Why have so many children? Why not work on Papa’s farm and get a proper house?

She wakes, though not because of the din of crying children, or the hushed or suddenly raised voices, but by the violent, shaking cough of the man sitting next to her. She glances at him, not without pity, but with no compassion or words of comfort to spare. She looks away and sees her husband has joined another line. He motions to her to wait; he will come and get her when he has some news.
Sighing, she shifts the baby in her arms, who is now awake and smiling, and takes his hands in hers. Soft, chubby fingers curl around her thin and calloused ones, clasping tightly, trying to draw them to his mouth. The scent of milk, now mingling with the odor of stale food and musty clothes, hangs in the air like the shawls and oversized coats that shroud the countless shoulders pressed around her. Nothing to see, so she closes her eyes again, drifting.

Arriving at the clearing, the still warm milk and bread in her arms, she is aware that her trek has been observed by an ancient gypsy woman for some time. Pointing with a long, misshapen finger, the gypsy summons her closer. Ogling the food with greedy, beady eyes, the woman grabs the bounty as soon as it is close enough, along with the girl’s hands. The witch will not let go. Holding the girl’s hands fast in her own, she pulls the girl even closer! Trembling, the girl tries to loosen the gypsy’s grip, but the old woman does not relent.

“I see you brought us some gifts, little one! Ah, but we have nothing to give you in return. No music today. No dancing.”

“I don’t want anything! Papa made me bring this to you and I have to get back!” But instead of releasing her grasp, the woman roughly turns the girl’s hands palm up, and stares intently at the trembling birds she has imprisoned in her talons.

“So, a lucky one,” she cackles before finally releasing her prey. Tiny eyes grow large as they come to life, and as she raises them to look directly at the girl, they glint menacingly. “Lucky one! You, girl! You will someday walk streets of gold. America, my child, America waits for you.”

Angrily, the girl turns to flee back along the path, kicking at stones and tearing at branches, all the while the old woman’s screech echoes in her ears. “Lucky one… lucky one.” What does she know? Crazy old gypsy woman! America! If Papa wants to bring them anything more, he can bring it himself from now on!

The girl hears stories from the soldiers. Neighbors share letters from their cousins and relatives who have survived the crossing. Stories that Allied soldiers told after they burned down the town hall, which had stood proudly in her village for over two hundred years, because remnants of the vanquished Nazi army were supposedly hiding inside. The real story was that only old men, women, babies, and the starving skeletons of widows and orphans inhabited that space, and then only when it was raining bombs.

America. Everyone is equal, free to pursue happiness, whatever happiness is. It is the calling card of the invading soldiers. They boast of hunting in strange places like “Kentucky” and “Wyoming,” and show their prowess by killing the remaining chickens that provide eggs for her starving family as the war winds down. The Promised Land. A land where food is plentiful; where expression and individual thought is encouraged; the land where hard work is rewarded with security and prosperity!

She awakens with a start. Her young son is sleeping, dreaming in her arms, and she looks anxiously for her husband. He is moving in the line, and he turns to look at her, giving her a reassuring small smile as he waves for her to come join him.

“Well,” she thinks angrily, as she gathers their bundles and boosts the baby against her chest. “Damned gypsy didn’t tell me about the two sons who would die before they could speak. Old crone couldn’t bother to warn me about plums and birthmarks.”
She shakes away her resentment and rises clumsily from the bench to stand with her husband. They drag their bundles along corridors filled with the shuffling and displaced masses who have also heard the stories. Stopping every few feet, it seems, to be interrogated by a new representative of the Promised Land. Answering the same barked questions, again and again. Replying in her best broken English to every question, careful to show deference and submission, because everything rests on saying the right thing, showing you are worthy of admission. Running the gauntlet, and unaware that a daughter already assured of American citizenship is with them, they eventually emerge into the sunlight, only to be dumped onto the streets of a place called New York City.

Directions and curses, busses and trains. Sometimes the wrong ones, because some smart ass thinks it’s funny to trip up the dirty Germans. There is no Yellow Brick Road that leads to New Haven, but they arrive there just the same. New Haven. Surely the streets are golden there. But, this “haven” is squalid tenements, filthy streets, and a cacophony of vulgar voices shouting and shrieking in an incomprehensible language, an assault. She misses the quiet of the forest, and the sweetness of the mountain air. She says nothing. She can’t. There is no going back, so they will only move forward.

Eight months later, a baby girl is born. Her husband finds work that consists of hard and long days, and though the work is far removed from his abilities and intelligence, it pays enough to keep the family in a small apartment with pretty curtains, a plastic covered couch, and a set of Green Stamp dishes in the cabinet. She finds work in a factory and her hands bear witness to the harsh conditions. Her hands pass the care of the children to the second generation Polish neighbor, Magda. Magda knows all the ropes, and how to get things done. She is good for the kids.

Magda tries to help when the birth certificate arrives bearing an Americanized version of the baby’s intended name. Magda takes her to City Hall and stands in line with her, repeating over and over, “Just explain that it is not what you wanted, and they will fix it.”

“Lady,” the clerk finally says, “This is America. This name is American. Ever hear of the movie “Mildred Pierce?” Joan Crawford ring any bells? Listen, someone did you a favor by correcting your mistake. All you stupid immigrants are the same. You don’t know what you want, or how things work here. Learn English and get a job. Next!”

Later, sitting in the darkened theater where Magda takes her as sanctuary from her public humiliation, tears silently fill her eyes as she watches Joan Crawford on the screen. A tear falls onto her daughter’s hand, and she gently wipes it away. Taking the baby’s hand, she turns it up and cradles it in her own. Tenderly tracing the tiny lines in the soft pillow of the baby’s palm, she softly whispers, “So, lucky one. Are you to finally be the lucky one?”
Sunset Sipping By
Lindsey Brooks
NYC - BY Hanca Dauthbasic
listen to her 
little soft youthful voice, 
it's full of curiosity 
and wonder 
just like every other 
innocent child's.

now open your eyes 
and notice 
she wears different 
colored skin.

but if like other children 
she runs around 
chasing butterflies 
that she'll never catch 
why does her differently 
shaded skin matter?

she's human 
and will make mistakes, 
cry tears infected with 
temporary pain 
and shout 
screams thundering with venom; 
the same ones we all do. 
so why should her ethnicity 
determine the way she's viewed?

she smiles 
identically like everyone else 
for the same reasons: 
bliss, love, and joy.

forget her language 
forget her skin tone 
and forget her gender 
she smiles like every other girl,

entonces por qué 
importa su apariencia, 
si como todos 
sonríe con su alma.
We abridged the dough
Into chilled, autumn shapes
Which wept as my innocence prevailed,
For this was goodbye in a Thanksgiving pie
And our family would rupture soon after.

Those maple leaves soon browned
Atop the pumpkin pie,
As summer relented its fervid heat
To the briskness and apathy of fall,
And my grandmother, she spoke of springtime,
A girl relinquished from the throes
Of a bitter and lonesome winter,
Though her death would be the winter of me.

I hated pie
And still, we spent hours
Puckering dough along the pie-pan sides
As she soothed every wrinkle
And I arranged the autumn shapes
As if they had fallen upon the filling in incident
Though their arrangement was predetermined
And in her passing,
They deemed my pies better
Though it was a lie
Just as family is never forever
My Nana, she left me those cookie-cutters,
Or rather, she left them for me,
As a challenge to discover before
My grandfather threw her everything away
And married a -
[Lovely woman]
Who had never tasted pie,
So that I could collect the few of us in her wake,
And bake as we had together,
With a gentle hand on my shoulder
Though I could not feel it
And her love scarring my face as warm tears
That fell upon the dough
As I abridged it into chilled pieces
And baked a pie
I could never consume,
As her loss consumed the rest.

Absence and the Abridgement of Loss
-Haley Vaughan-
Hope
By
Erica Jones
Stay

Taylor, I offer my deepest sympathy
Unsuspecting victim of my curse, you sought only love
Valuable as you are to me, I must caution you
‘xams accumulating and my chances diminishing
Weighing me down is the burden I placed upon you
Your eternal solitude conserves my position in this battle
Zones of war separated by wards and white coats
Another week wrapped in your arms, glued to the bedside
Barricaded in darkness
Cruelty neither of us escape
Damage is written as plainly as words on a page
Every moment of my short time, I will use any strength to reimburse you
Facing the blinding light to see the sun illuminate your eyes
Grieving a painless slumber as I pray for selflessness
How many more days will I take from you?
I love you, I need you
Justification does not exist for my request of your presence is unforgivable
Kindly, you kiss my forehead and say everything is fine
Lie, exposed from the exhaustion wearing on your face
Many times I tried to push you away, saving you
“Never, I will never leave you”, your words unwavering
Overwhelmed with happiness that you didn’t leave
Petrified with fear that you stayed
Quietly, you hold me tighter and I hear the beat of your heart
Remaining in our prison cell
Selfishly, I thank God you will never leave me and write a poem to offer my condolences to you
Eiffel Tower
By
Hanca Dautbasic
Reflection By Erica Jones
Shadow Children
-Britney Branan-

I see you.
I see the pain deep inside.
I see the feelings that are hiding just below the surface…
Each morning you wake you paint a pretty picture.
But, remember dear,
It’s only paper thin.
It will tear at the slightest tug.
A tug towards those feelings.
That one phrase, that one harmless remark.
That’s all it takes to make you break.

People are so brittle,
Breaking like thin ice all the time.

But I see you, I feel it too.
You are not alone.
Though the feeling that you are never leaves the back of your mind.
You always will feel it, it never leaves.
One day you will just wake up, accept it, move on.
You will be ok with the aching feeling that you could die and no one would notice.
No one would even remember your name.
We are all insignificant.
And you will accept it,
One day…
Heels clicked on tile as she hurriedly made her way down the narrow hallway towards the exit. A quivering bottom lip stayed clenched between teeth. Shaking hands rose to cover her mouth in hopes of catching any potential whimpers before they were released into the empty hallway and echoed back to her. Her chest was beginning to feel heavy and breathing was starting to become an issue. Tunnel vision narrowed in on the glass door that was a few feet from her. Her pace quickened until she met the door, which she furiously threw open before she made her way outside.

She dropped the one hand that had still been holding her emotions inside and allowed the sobs to finally be released. Glassy, tear-filled eyes looked toward the night sky as she raised her flushed face and wiped her tearstained cheeks. A watery laugh escaped as her eyes focused on the stars. She had been prepared. Knew this was coming. She thought she would be stronger than this when it came down to it, but obviously she was wrong. Months of preparation and she was still reduced to a sobbing mess. She knew she needed to get back inside. She needed to clean herself up and be there for him. This would be the last time she would be able to. Nora took one last deep breath, looked back up to the stars, and then made her way back inside.

Long pencil straight dark hair blew in front of tired and defeated eyes. Shallow breaths escaped from slightly parted chapped lips as River sat on the broken ground. She hugged her slender form in hopes of getting even a small amount of comfort. Bruised and raw knuckles split back open from the force she was using to grasp herself to make sure she was really still there. Empty green eyes looked out to survey what was left of the once pristine world she lived in. Death and decay surrounded her at every turn of her head. She had lost everything she had been fighting for. Rory. Keira. Her parents were the first to go. She released a bitter laugh at the thought of it. Her parents were lucky not to see their youngest child perish as the ground split open and River was left powerless to do anything but watch as the young boy she had been trying to protect fell into the dying planet’s newly opened wound. A tear fell down a pale and dirty cheek. River angrily wiped it away. She had told him to keep up. That their lives depended on it. Still, guilt had not left her in a week. She hadn’t been able to sleep without replaying the scene in her head. She had thought Keira’s death was bad, but she was able to keep going after that for Rory’s sake. Now, her
brother was gone. There was no reason for her to keep fighting against the inevitable.

As River stared at the night sky, she remembered when everything was normal. News channels reported on global warming and climate change, but she had ignored them because none of them had affected her directly…yet. Days were spent juggling school, work, family, and friends. She had thought life had been hectic then. Now, she spent her days running from the sun, self-proclaimed Lawmakers, and the memories of her dead family and friends. River was tired, but most of all she was alone.

Nora’s hand found it’s way to her husband’s arm. He had been unresponsive for the past few months. She had grasped his hand in an almost deathly grip at first, but as time went on Nora found it harder to even touch her husband in the comforting way that she had desired to. She was becoming almost as unresponsive as her husband. She found irony in the fact that the person who had dedicated his life to researching the brain was now succumbing to brain cancer himself. She had watched his body and mind whither away until he became the shell that lay before her, attached to machines through wires. Machines and wires that reminded her of the “cyborg” he had been transformed into, only kept alive by technology and medication that only deterred the inevitable outcome. She withdrew her hand from his arm to rub tired, blood-shot eyes. She had run out of tears to cry. She recalled his calming voice as he explained what would happen to him all those months ago. He was the expert after all. She turned her attention to the machine as it beeped and let out a sigh.

River still sat staring at the sky. She remembered when the stars were different. She remembered nights spent lying on the hood of a car staring at them and talking about the future with Keira. Keira. Her best friend. There was no such thing as good memories for River anymore. Everything reminded her of the loss of all she had ever known. Her home, friends, and family. And Keira. Keira was the only one that was able to talk sense into her, give her guidance. Keira, with her happy-go-lucky attitude and keen fashion sense, brought light into River’s sarcastic view of the world. The two equaled the definition of “opposite,” but that’s what made the friendship work so well before and after the world collapsed. Because of her athletic tendencies and courage even in this environment, Keira was the soldier. River was the brains behind everything with her often mundane, but always realistic point of view. It was River’s plan and Keira’s bravery that got Keira killed.

Food had become scarce for everyone since the world changed. Many of the “missions” that the trio
had planned were just for the purpose of getting food. Rioters that had dubbed themselves the Lawmakers had banded together and pillaged everything that they set their eyes on for supplies, leaving everyone else with little to nothing. The Lawmakers traveled in convoys that were easy to pack up and move when the light started to get close. Security guarding these bases was high, but most of the men were untrained. Keira and River used this to their advantage. They would spend a few nights staking the bases out in order to find the best point of entry and exit. While the girls were the runners, Rory stayed hidden, much to his dismay. River was too protective of her brother to actually let him close to the action. Usually, the younger boy would stay hidden while watching the two girls from afar. On this particular night, the three had only done two nights of scouting before they decided to follow through with the plan. Rory was positioned underneath some brush on an elevated part of terrain that overlooked the camp. River and Keira were to enter the camp on the south side and make their way to the RV located in the middle of camp that was fully stocked with food. River and Keira crouched behind one of the vehicles as cover. The plan was for Keira to take the lead and River to be back up. The girls used the darkness to their advantage, having spent months surrounded in it and letting their eyes adjust in fear of the star that once gave their planet life, but now caused death and destruction. Keira stepped away from their cover and began to quickly weave between the cars towards their destination. River followed, but stayed one step behind her best friend, in this case it meant one car behind Keira. River was about to make her way to the van Keira was hiding behind when she heard some voices coming closer. She stopped dead in her tracks and pressed her back to the SUV that was currently providing her cover. She slowly moved to peer around the corner and look back to where Keira was, which was only a car ahead in the opposite row of vehicles. River turned to look around the other side of the SUV and spotted two men making their rounds with flashlights.

River cursed herself. Rounds weren’t supposed to start for another fifteen minutes. She turned back to the side of the SUV where Keira was hiding and locked eyes with her best friend. River knew that the men were too close to her to be able to try and make an escape. They were shining their lights behind and under all of the cars. If she tried to run they would hear her and shoot her right where she stood. She accepted the fact that it was the end for her, but Keira could still get out of there and River knew that her best friend would take care of her little brother. The two shared a silent conversation. Keira looked torn, but River silently urged her to go.
That’s when Keira did the unthinkable. River felt as if everything moved in slow motion as her best friend quickly stood up from behind the van she was hiding behind and ran into the middle of the row of cars. River’s heart started pounding as Keira started banging on an old worn down truck. The two men took off towards the sound that Keira was making. River watched in horror as the men rounded the corner into the row that Keira was occupying.

As soon as the men’s eyes met the sight of Keira, they lifted their guns and aimed at the young girl. River couldn’t look away as the men shot her dead right as they saw her without a second thought. Keira didn’t make a sound as she fell to the ground. Silent tears started to stream down River’s face. Her feet felt heavy like she was tied to cement blocks. She was gone. Her best friend was gone. Rory. River vowed that she would never let anything like what just happened to Keira happen to her brother. With that in mind, River ran to where her brother was hidden.

River watched as light started to creep into the sky. She found no use for running anymore. The sun was steadily growing close to the planet and as the planet slowly stopped rotating, the sun killed everything in sight. There were little to no places to go that were safe. Most places were affected by radiation, had little to no air, or had no light at all to keep plants alive. River didn’t know if she believed in an after life, but she liked the thought of being reunited with everyone. A smile remained on her face as light completely took over the sky and River faded away.

Nora recalled their first date. He had taken her on a picnic right as the sun set. All of her friends had commented on either how romantic or how cheesy it was. She remembered how after the sun set he had told her he actually preferred the night sky over a sunset. According to him, the universe is remarkably similar to a brain cell when looked at side by side. She always found that interesting. Was she just a character in someone else’s imagination? What would happen if that person were to die? Would an infinite number of universes die along with that person? It made her head hurt just thinking about it and was one of the reasons she had kept her husband on life support for so long. But she couldn’t keep him alive anymore. He wasn’t actually there. So, when the nurse came in to hand her the final papers to sign, she did so without hesitation. She placed a kiss on his forehead before she left the room. She couldn’t be there when it happened, couldn’t hear the silence of the machines and watch as his chest stopped rising. He wouldn’t be alone though. His family entered the room and gathered around his bed as she left. They had urged her to do this sooner, but she wasn’t strong enough then. She made her way through the same hallway she had broken down in before to the same door and stepped outside. She walked towards a lonely looking bench and sat down. Releasing a heavy breath, Nora looked up at the stars.
Upon the Loss of Ignorance

-Haley Vaughan-

That which the world has not touched
Seething in naivety,
All but a child, and still
Innocence prevails unerringly,
Is that why you smile
Whilst grasping at your face
As clear springs emerge
From the cracks between your fingers?
Tremors have never wracked you,
For everyone has been so kind
And patted your cheek
Though never loved you,
As a child’s perception
Is rarely of truth
And your chest is soft, unmarred
Yet you, foolish and damned
Grin into the abyss.
Dare not meet my lips,
Time is fleeting though
You captured its bewilderment
As I could not bear to witness
And turned as you do,
Though not smiling.
Never smiling.

I fear what trauma
Will make you a man.

Profundity

-Haley Vaughan-

Nothingness
And a suffocating silence
Wrought with the profoundness of
Unspoken lyrics –
The Aria of those strangled
With chilled fingers trailing into night
And blind eyes lolling sightless
In an arid swamp of the inescapable.
Dead is she with lithe limbs broken
And her soul crawling from between rotted lips,
Grasping toward the placid sky
Carelessly painted on the bulging underbelly
Of Heaven, with ceiling tiles
Falling, fingers deathly white,
Plucked from their scaffolding
And whistling noiselessly
Into a stagnant void,
That of the blind girl,
Manifestation of the Aria
Of the Magnet for Misfortune.

Artwork-
Rebecca Mann-
Freedom
By
Erica Jones
Drain You
By Jena Musgrave
Dear young girl,
Identity is the one of the important possessions you have
When you know who you are
Life offers clarity
But should you know?

Realization
Truth comes neither fast nor slow
But when the click of knowledge sets in
Savor it
Do not doubt it
You have to know,

Honesty
You know but the world remains ignorant
Although you trusted in vain
I want that mask torn from your face
As the painted on porcelain smile shatters
You stand on the precipice of freedom
No not hide in your impasse.

Hesitation
I feel your tears as he enters
As every pore screams from the pulsating blood pounding against your skin
“I am teaching you straight” he justifies
Lesson learned.

Just three words
The hesitation is the boulder smothering you as it stays stagnant on your heart
The world placed it on your chest
He placed it on your chest
You will utter the words to a lost mind
Years into dementia allow for the acceptance you need
Would a clear mind be accepting?
Will your mother?
Will God?

Second try
The words slip out, shameless
Judgment does not follow
There is no pain
No forceful pedagogical errors
You think about just being yourself?

And it was that day; I chose to do just that

Hesitation
The damn weight returns
The world is as terrifying as the unknown in black depths
Can I tell the world?
Can I speak the words?
I answer with strength
And I answer with courage.

Why?
I prepare myself for the question that always arises
There is no reason
I did not choose this
My dad leaving was a deviating tornado that tore apart my life
My mom’s stroke took her right mind and left me wounded
The tattooed stars on my arm representing passed loves ones multiplied
And they account for all of my strength
But who I love was never a choice

Love
Her hands tangle in mine and when her lips brush my cheek
The wings of butterflies flutter to the tips of my toes
When the stares burn holes in me, leaving only vulnerability
She squeezes tighter and I stand taller
Her safety offers a needed shove
I am ready.
Power
The speed of my heart jumps as the three words linger in the air
Willingly they escaped imprisonment as I recite them
Sweet bliss stomps out retreating thoughts
The roles I played in the past race through my mind
But I am no actress anymore
I am ready to let my words be heard
And let them burn down the hate I no longer acknowledge
I will be no one else.

Freedom
Now within reach
No hesitation
The fear withers away
The three words ignite and I will not extinguish the flames
I let them out
And become engulfed in the unknown pleasure of freedom.

I am gay.
Drinkable Arts
By
April Johnson
Reflect On - By Lindsey Brooks
This is not the day for "Happy Endings;" just another day along the road toward "After" and I can't promise that it won't all be so grim but I can hope. Though we battle the urgency of our lungs from the bottom of this sea, I know these waters to have seen greater love stories.

Because I have felt them, in each stone I overturned searching for a home. Lead by a chain off some monster's eloquent tongue (or maybe she's some other's god), I traveled to the depths of a sea my mother warned me against. Because she promised youth and apples so long as I could hold my breath.

Drowning is a funny thing because if you're determined not to breathe, it feels as if you've freed yourself from time. I tug at the gold chain binding my ear to my captor's grinning mouth. Her long hair and green skin are much like my mother warned me. The plumed serpent on the beach had said she is called Love and is as much a monster as a god.

"A snake with feathers is no better," I whispered back to my mother. And I answered Love's promising hum but with the tide came the chain. Not that I minded, really. I battle the skepticism of my mind from the depths of hope.

I battle the desperation of my heart from the pit of reality. I turned a pink stone in the shape of a ring, waiting for my yield of Love's bargain. I was met with a lover's story.

"There was an element of certainty yet there was no decision. Not that I minded, really. It was just that, in an instant, I knew that I would love her. You understand. "And that's not to say it was love at first sight. Even, right then, I didn't love yet and I had known her before. It was... Nothing until it became everything all at once. And I knew immediately that I wanted everything. "There's always someone there to tell you, 'Don't go out to sea, Love will drown you.' But what's the point of breathing if your heart's not beating?"

I remember when I was younger, I was sure that I could tell the future. I felt an entitlement to understanding the workings of Fortune. I remember I was certain I would never need to find a home because I belonged to stars, I could even see them in daylight so I never bothered to enjoy the dark.

But as I got a little bit older, it became harder to sleep through the night and I could hardly wake before the rise of the sun. So my mother would hiss at me about the dangers of disobedience, she would raise her wings yet slither across the ground and I would sense the smoke in her commandments. And I
became so desperate to find a home when I couldn't detect stars anymore that I found myself here. And Love is still smiling with my ear chained to her tongue but I've been given neither youth nor apples. I turn the blue ring resting at my feet and am met with more of the lover's story.

"You know the feeling that everything is taking too long to progress. A lot of things were like that until you look back and, actually, everything was just right. There's this constant eager hopefulness, maybe an uncertain anticipation... Even though you're so sure of everything. There are no questions even when there's no actual guarantee. You have no contract or stakes with the universe, all of this should be questionable but whenever there's anything to talk about, you know without a doubt that you're going to talk about it with her. I think maybe that's the prelude to being in love, that... I don't want to call her my best friend, even though she's the best friend I've ever had. It's different from that. A best friend is a companion. She's... Well, a 'partner' because there's no one in all of creation who you'd rather have at your side when you face the world. There's nothing better than that, that's something bigger than a friend. That's your sun when your best friends are just stars.

"Maybe no one deserves that kind of pressure. Maybe it's wrong to ask someone else to love, to drown the sun just because you're going down. I'm far from perfect."

And I wonder if I've made the wrong choice, entering the water. I wonder if I'm loving wrong. I wonder if I'd rather have the sweetness of Love's fruit than the wisdom of my mother's age. And I wonder how I lost track of the stars and was left wandering for home. I remember an old promise to go drifting on the wind, but my lungs are sure there's no such air down here.

What's the point of breathing if your heart's not beating? I battle the urgency of my lungs from the bottom of this sea and I have been fighting my will to run for my whole life. This is not the day to stop; just another day along the road toward "After."

I overturn a third ring, and this one is a white stone, to be met with the final part of the lover's story.

"You will taste apples and you will have youth. Just as surely, you'll have death. You'll do things wrong but you'll never feel confused, even when you're lost. Most songs will sound different, you will feel damned... And, as well, you'll hope the story never ends. The drowning never will."

This is not the day for "Happy Endings;" just another day along the road toward "After" and I can't promise that it won't all be so grim but I can hope. And as I battle the urgency of my lungs, I smile because I'm home.
By
Rebecca Mann
Baby Gator
By
Joseph Carr
That evening you didn’t love me
I became a child once again
For the first time in my life
As my existence wept
For the lost love I had never received
Because that evening,
You didn’t love me yet again
And for the first time I had heard,
You wept like September rains
And I forgot that I was alone
For my beloved lay weeping
Because he didn’t love me

My fingers ramble through thick meadows,
Your moors of thick russet hair,
With soft breaths on my cheek like autumn’s approach,
Such becomes our withering refrain.

Maunderer dear,
Though only once was it our aria
Sung, moments lament their exclusivity,
As we entrap our dreams with twine and feathers,
To find only they duplicate within
This shared heart of ours
As it oft overlooks measures
Within your chest
And swells to bursting too oft in mine.
By
Jasmine Delgado
those now extinct years liberated
and abroad, aged me into you.
i became a selfish bigot
the exact man i didn't want to
become.

and now you're extinct too.

all i have left is this sealed
finale, to us. and i regret
parting myself from my kindred.

as i sit here, alone
i know i'm not lonely;
i have your conclusive words
to accompany me
on this cold dreadful
midnight.

before i release your
hindmost words concerning me,
i decide to start a fire
as we did on nights like this.

as the fire sparks up a limited
warm light, i can't help
but recall our nights here together,
mostly arguing sports

or me bashing you
for being a fucking drunk.

shit, you were so emotionally
cruel. never physical,
but you knew how to
anger and beat me with words
and actions.

nevertheless, you made it clear
that even monsters
can be great fathers.

now, you're dead
and
i can't say anything to you.
but
as if nothing ever changed
i get to listen, not speak,
while you lecture
your "wisdom."

" miguel,
te amo hijo. pero tengo
mucho orgullo y prefiero
que leas mi perdón
que decírtelo en persona.
creciste muy rápido,
pero te convertiste
en el hombre que sabia que
ibas a ser. tu no me debes
ni un solo perdón, pero
yo si quiero que sepas
If I Can
-Cristian Saldivar-

When I'm gone I promise
If I can, send you a letter.
If heaven allows outgoing messages
I'll send my "I miss you"
One day in the rainy weather.

All the battles one could have
And I was given mine
Who knew a little tumor could be deadly
When found by the spine.

The saddest part
Isn't knowing you'll die
Or even the internal pain;
It's when your family
And loved ones cry,
You're left speechless and tongue tied
With a lot left to explain.

I guess that's the truth
I was born to suffer,
But darling world
Don't worry, my reality didn't
Make me weak
But stronger.

So if I can,
From heaven
I'll try to say hello.
But before that,
I must learn to say goodbye,
And for now let go.

que te perdono. y estoy mas
que orgulloso del hombre que
hoy eres. todo el dinero,
todo el pinche alcohol,
y todo los otros momentos
que no fueron memorias
con ustedes,
ahora son basura.
hijo,
todos tenemos una vacuidad,
que llenamos con algo,
para mi tristemente fue el
alcohol. yo quise ser como tu abuelo
y esa fue la mejor manera que yo
pude tenerlo con migo siempre.
tu hijo eres como yo, pero no tomas
y demuestras mas tu amor.
nunca cambies hijo.
te amo. siempre.

adiós. "

you fucking sublime drunk,
i love you too.
as i cry, i realize
that my emptiness has now been filled.
and i throw the letter into the fire.
because there's nothing more beautiful
than a lion's final roar, and
this moment can't be relived.
goodbye father.
i arise from my sleep
at the perfect time;
the sun's slowly ascending beams
make their way past the window
and brush your face
one by one,
i smile
as the sun continues
to put a spotlight
on you.
then you say,
"why are you staring at me?"
as if you knew
i'd been admiring
you the whole time.
"i just can't get over
the fact that i
get to be the first person
every single day to appraise
the only awe-inspiring beauty
left on this earth."
and before you disagree with me
i kiss your lips
which kindles the spot
in my heart
reserved for you.

My Delicate Flower

my delicate flower
you flourished uniquely
despite the severe
external conditions;
and for that
you'll always be my favorite.
it's a shame i didn't
admire you
when you needed it the most
but i commit
to reassure you daily,
that you're loved.
because if the world
were to dry up
and run out of water,
i'd water you with my tears
until i dehydrated and died
because i'd rather die
then see you suffer.
for now i'll keeping
smiling every time i see you
and fertilizing you
with the love and faith
you deserve.

-Cristian Saldivar-
Anderson Park Flowers
By
Rhema Bukaer
MOBIUS

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