



Bifrost
Spring 2020

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Meet the *Bifrost* Team!

Edina Kremic: Editor-in-Chief

Edina is a senior at Grand View majoring in English with a concentration in writing and minoring in statistics and political studies. Edina was an editor of *Bifrost* last year alongside Alli Jones, and she's thrilled to take the reigns from Alli this year as the head editor. After graduation, Edina is pursuing an internship with Principal Financial Group as part of the Analytics Consulting team. After that, she hopes to find herself in a long-term job that will bring her happiness and let her showcase all of the skills that GV has taught her.

Dr. Paul Brooke: Faculty Advisor

Dr. Brooke has served as the faculty advisor for the magazine since its inception. He loves teaching, writing and photographing. Brooke has published five books including *Arm Wrestling at the Iowa State Fair*, *Light and Matter* and *Jaguars of the Northern Pantanal: Panthera onca at the Meeting of the Waters*. His latest book focuses on a specific population of jaguars in the southern part of Brazil that grow to the largest size in the world. They are also very habituated to human presence so that makes viewing them far easier. He is thrilled to see the book's release because it will teach people about these amazing and very misunderstood cats.

Note from the Editor

Welcome! Like last year's issue, this year's journal does not follow a close theme. While themes can be beneficial at times, I think the lack of one this year has opened the doors to incredible works of art, both visual and written. I cannot praise the talented artists of this year's journal enough; it would be nothing without their high quality contributions.

Given the timing of this year's journal with the cancellation of in-person courses and the urge to practice social distancing, we are left with little to do but look at the bright side. Despite the hardships and adjustments to life this pandemic has forced upon us all, I encourage everyone to look to art and camaraderie for comfort. I know being quarantined and isolated can be lonely and boring, but my hope is that it leads some newcomers to writing and art as a crutch.

Being a senior during this unusual time has thrown many challenges and feelings of incompleteness my way. My support goes out to all graduating seniors who feel robbed of their well-earned lasts because of the pandemic. However, I am eternally grateful that one of my last impacts on this campus is crafting and distributing *Bifrost* with the help of the Advanced Creative Writing class and the advisor, Dr. Brooke. I hope you enjoy it!

- Edina Kremic

"...and then, I've got nature and art and poetry, and if that is not enough, what is enough?"

- Vincent van Gogh

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america: the business of substituting anything.

“if you don’t believe in God you better find a damn good substitute”
– Lt. Glenn, Tuskegee Airmen

SUBSTITUTE SUGAR.

yelled the middle age white woman.

these kids have ruined my damn figure, i used to look like you. Young and Sweet. REAL SUGAR. she said. i watched as the honey dripped from her lips. now i have to substitute. exchanging something so sweet, it is almost as if, it was made for me. into a synthetic love.

but isn’t that what this plastic world is?

substitute mountains. covered in real grass. that my children can roll down. can pluck blades from, one by one. tying the ends together to make a halo of weeds. not knowing what substitute God, they belong to, but knowing that their crowns came from some sort of holiness, nonetheless.



art by Kirstin Lundy

U.S.S. Grandeur Codex ID: 557-JW

Jebediah Wilson

Access Granted. U.S.S. Grandeur Commanded by: Cap. William Varlent
Cast-off Port: Matson Port, Hawaii Destination: Bauan International Port,
Philippines Cargo Description: Unknown Log Start Date: July 2, 2013-----

July 2, 09:04, Start of Entry:

Cargo secured. Ship maintenance complete. Twenty-eight hands on deck. All present and accounted for. Preparations complete. Green light on castoff. We are currently at a slow steam of 20 knots and I plan to keep it that way for the entire trip. Crew morale is high. Apparently they all had a good time over the weekend and came back ready for another trip. It'll be a long one, a week and a half at least. I'm surprised they are in such high spirits after only getting a couple days off between voyages, even if it is Hawaii. We've been through here a few times, so it's nothing new anymore. Regardless, no complaints as of now. I do wish that the corporate would tell us what the hell we're shipping. They made a big deal of keeping this under wraps. Makes me wonder what they put in those containers. I will keep my suspicions to myself. No reason to cause a stir without a good reason. End of Entry.

July 3, 20:49, Start of Entry:

Cargo condition: Unchanged. Ship condition: Unchanged. Crew condition: Unchanged. No issues so far. I think some of the crew must have gotten their hands on some of the "good stuff" while they were away. A couple of them have been reporting noises coming from the hold, but upon inspection there is nothing to be found. Crewmen in question deny any substance use, but none of us are quite normal out on open water, anyway. Weather reports sound like a storm is brewing and it has us in its sights. That's something we don't need when we still don't know what our cargo is. End of Entry.

July 4, 19:22 Start of Entry:

Cargo condition: Unchanged. Ship condition: Unchanged. Crew condition: Less than optimal. The storm is getting close a lot faster than initially thought, heading right at us at about 29 knots. We've dealt with plenty of rough water before, so that's not the issue at hand. What really made things go south was when OS O'Kelly burst into the galley around lunchtime after performing an inspection of the cargo. He was yelling about some kind of shadows or something he saw in the hold. Upon a quick check-up, we discovered he had a high fever and cold sweats, so he is now resting in the sickbay. AB Hawthorne will be taking O'Kelly's place until further notice. Everyone is on high alert, but most of them brushed it off as seasickness and called O'Kelly a [redacted]. I can't help but think otherwise. End of Entry.

July 5, 11:20, Start of Entry:

Cargo condition: Unknown, assumed unchanged. Ship condition: Stable, minor damage. Crew condition: Suspicious. The storm is still hitting us pretty hard. Even as I write this it's still raging outside. We were tossed around a little rough for a bit, but the situation has stabilized. Comms are down, although we're not sure why. Hopefully they will be repaired by tomorrow morning, but for the time being we can't call in for help. The cargo took a couple tumbles in the bay, but the containers are fine and there are no breaches as far as we can tell. We aren't allowed to crack them open, either, which makes things difficult. A few of the deck hands are starting to talk about what's in those containers. They are a superstitious bunch, thinking it could be haunted or it's a government experiment. Some even said it's an alien. I did my best to assure them that this wasn't the case, but it's hard to reassure someone of something you aren't sure of yourself. I just think it's corporate trying to make some extra money transporting some drugs or chemicals. Don't they know I'm not some kind of black-market dealer? End of Entry.

July 6, 14:52, Start of Entry:

Cargo condition: Unknown. Ship condition: Communications are still

art by Nathalie



out. Crew condition: Concerning. This morning started with quite the ruckus. Hawthorne caught O'Kelly trying to break into one of the containers last night, screaming something about "It's here, it's here." A tussle ensued and O'Kelly was restrained only after two ABs tackled him. Crewmen in question are Doyle and Molina. Hawthorne suffered a minor concussion while the other two got some cuts and bruises, but nothing too serious. O'Kelly is now under temporary arrest and has been placed in an empty stowage we've refitted as a holding cell, guarded by two other crewmen. He kept yelling about how only he knew what was going on but refused to go into any detail, claiming it was "too horrible to hear." On top of this, the storm hasn't let up in the least, and navigation is becoming quite difficult with all the interference. I told the navigations officer to keep us on a due east course until we are out of the storm. End of Entry.

July 7, 19:27, Start of Entry:

I'm not even sure what our condition is anymore. The ship is physically fine, but our gear and electronics are [redacted]. I don't think it's the storm that's causing it anymore. The crew is getting restless and starting to complain. Keeping their minds at ease is out of the question at this point. They want to know what's in the containers, but even I don't

know. We are prying them open in the morning. I can't put my crew in danger over some extra cash in corporate's pocket. End of Entry.

July 8, 21:12, Start of Entry:

I don't know what the [redacted] kind of sick joke this is, but I'm through with it. We opened the containers this morning only to find they are completely empty. The crew is very angry, myself included. To add to the trouble, more crewmen are reporting hallucinations and voices throughout the ship. Nothing is ever concrete, and the language they supposedly hear is some form of gibberish I've never heard of. What worries me now is I don't think they're just messing around anymore. Maybe the ship really is haunted. Navigation and comms are still down, so we have no idea where we are, and we can't call for help. Hopefully tomorrow we can focus on fixing communications and navigation. End of Entry.

July 9, 21:57, Start of Entry:

O'Kelly disappeared. Even I'm not sure what to think anymore. The guards were adamant that they were watching the room the whole night and there was never a moment someone wasn't on guard. Night watch didn't see anyone go overboard, either. We've searched the ship from stem to stern and couldn't find anything suspicious. All but a handful of crewmen have reported seeing or hearing something at this point. One even reported something about a black tentacle in the shadows near the hold not long after O'Kelly was reported missing. We are constantly keeping our eyes out for anything suspicious now. Hopefully we can get some clues. End of Entry.

July 11, 00:59, Start of Entry:

Hawthorne and eight other crew members are gone. Two were found dead of unknown causes in the hold after dinner. The area is completely off limits now. The ship is eerily quiet. No one is talking much. What is there to say? Most of us think we are all going to die out here. I'm not giving up yet. I have a 9mm in my nightstand just in case someone or something tries to attack us. All efforts are now focused on survival. I

will record any information I find here. If anyone finds this and reads it, tell my family I love them. End of Entry.

On July 15, the local 5 o'clock news reported that rescue crews have located the missing U.S.S. Grandeur frigate only two days after it was reported missing. The ship was initially reported missing due to a powerful storm but was found around 3000 kilometers outside of Philippine waters. The entire crew was missing except for the captain, who was found in his quarters with a gunshot wound to the head. The weapon was not found on board, but it was suspected to be from a 9mm handgun, but an autopsy is required for further information. There were no signs of a struggle, and the ship's communications and navigation were still intact. No other bodies were ever found. The cargo manifest for the ship was also missing, and the crates in the cargo bay were all empty. Both U.S. and Philippine local and national governments had no comment on the matter, and simply reasoned it to be case of piracy or insubordination.



photo by John Fletcher

Life as a Hamster

Austin Hill

Stuck inside my ball... I think "How could this have gotten so bad?" It all started when I was young. I grew up like every normal kid, I had a friend group, I was involved in a lot of activities, I had loving parents, everything a young man could want. My junior year of high school it all changed. I had a girlfriend for a year. Unfortunately, she was not as clean as she had led me to believe. I contracted a parasitic infection and became increasingly distrusting of people since then. However, this was just the start. It got worse when I moved into college.

College is supposed to be the best time of your life. High school had ended well, and I just wanted to put my past behind me. When I got to college, I was disgusted with the overwhelming amount of communal activities. Whether it be communal alcohol, bathrooms, or people. Almost everything was shared. I participated. I had developed Marburg hemorrhagic fever. This disease is easily spread when you encounter an individual who has been infected. I missed two semesters of school, was left out of my social groups, and cut from all campus activities I was involved in. Once again, peoples' general disgusting behaviors left me untrusting, and disgusted. I needed change. I needed to control my own environment. I dropped out and began working full time as a fitness instructor. I could keep everything clean and free of the disgusting microbes that humans carry around.

My own place was perfect for me. I had spent \$200 on cleaning supplies to get it all clean before I officially moved in. I bought several sets of sheets, so I could keep my bed as clean as possible. With no one else entering my apartment I would finally reach a perfect state of cleanliness.

Days pass, and everything is going perfectly. After two weeks of living in my apartment, the worst thing possible happened. I found

a cockroach in my bathroom sink. I murdered the brute immediately and spent the next thirty minutes cleaning up after this vile creature. However, I began to wonder how this cockroach appeared. Did I not clean my apartment well enough? I began to research other ways to stay as clean as possible. After all, it is going to be hard to keep my whole apartment clean. I need an enclosed area to isolate myself in my own apartment, but if I do that I will need to quit my job. It'll be okay, I have enough money saved up, and maybe I can begin to train clients online. After researching for quite some time, I stumbled across something that resembled a giant hamster ball. I ordered it immediately; this would be perfect for me. It will keep me mobile while maintaining a very clean environment.

Two days pass, and my human hamster ball is here. I sanitize the box before taking it from the delivery man. I blow it up and climb in. This is life changing. I can truly remain as clean as possible in here. Weeks pass, and everything is going great. I have not had to leave my bubble and have maintained an incredibly clean environment. Despite my dwindling supply of money, I believe I will be okay. Controlling my fears of germs far outweighs the value of money.

It has been 3 months since I received my ball. I feel trapped. I have no friends. I have no desires. I am controlled by the desire to be clean. I am incapable of living a human life. My fears have ruined my life. What have I done?



photo by Tyler Fugate

breathe, silently

Madi Franco

i stared into his eyes
they were blood red
(he hated me today)
where did i miss a step?

did i love him too hard yesterday?
i tried to breathe, silently
(because i'm not allowed to breathe too loud)
and it feels so wrong

to wake up in the morning next to your lover
and kiss the bruises
on their knuckles
as they start yelling at you

because you haven't fixed the wounds
that they created
when they were hurting you
yesterday

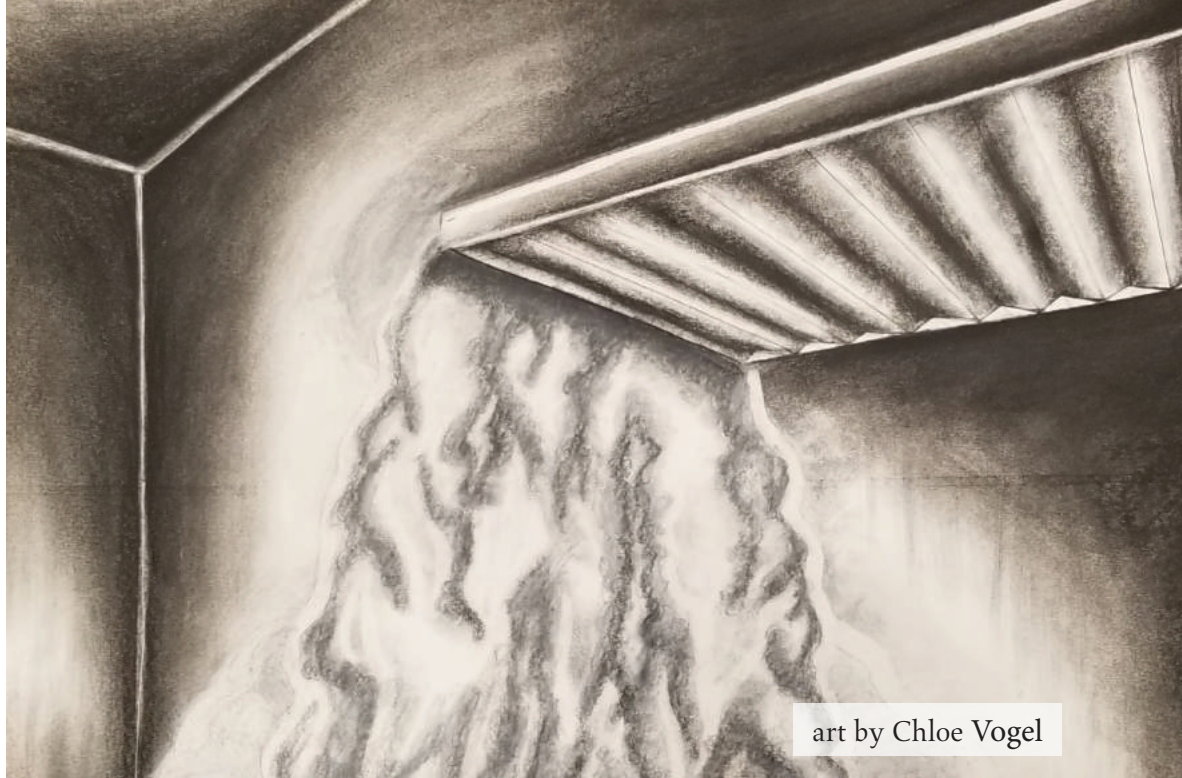
Stay Today

Kirstin Lundy

If I take the cup out of this cupboard, I have to remember it will actually come out of the other.....I have to remember this because even after all these years it still throws me off. If I light the bedroom fireplace, the living room one will light. It used to be a source of irritation, now it's just a source of mild annoyance, small steps forward I suppose. It started happening about, what is it, four years ago now? Time goes by quickly huh, not quickly enough though, not enough to help me get used to this phenomenon only I seem to be experiencing.

The times it annoys me the most are when I need to leave the house and I have to remember that opening my bedroom door will open the front door and opening the front door wi-, well you get the point. It only seems to be affecting me inside my house, though; once I step outside my world is back to normal. I know that if I open my driver's door my passenger door for example won't open. Now, if my car is parked in the garage it's another story.... Today is grocery day and even as I start the mechanical process of brewing my coffee, I'm not sure if I'm up to it. I could go over to the fridge, open the freezer door, and have the fridge door open for me to have a look inside, but I know what I'll find.

Empty, an empty fridge. Last night I had Chinese, from my favorite place, but it didn't really satisfy. In fact, I forgot about half of it, forgot to put the other half back in the fridge. If it hadn't sat out all night maybe I could put off going to the store one more day. But, with most things, it's better to just do them even if I don't feel like it. Feel like it, feel like it, what an interesting concept. I don't feel like doing something, I do it anyway. If I give into how I feel, I feel guilty, sluggish, like I'm not doing what I'm supposed to and a weight is pressing down on me until I get it done. Fine, the store it is, but first the coffee. I need that.... I wouldn't want it to get.... cold. I don't want to



art by Chloe Vogel

be cold, it I mean, I don't want it to get cold. Right, well, drink this and get on my way. I typically don't like Saturdays, that's why I do grocery shopping during them, because I don't like grocery shopping either. It's best to kill two birds with one stone, right? Maybe, I'm not so sure anymore. Saturdays are too much, I can't be in the house, not during the afternoon at least. If I'm here when it turns 2:00p.m. I'll get too worked up. It's not worth it, better to be outside in the real world where 2:00p.m. doesn't mean anything other than indicating the time of day.

Hmmm, it's supposed to be about 50 degrees today, I'll wear a light jacket. Jackets are in the right side of the closet, remember to grab from the left then.... Remember to count them, three over from the right, yep that should give me the right o-huh? What's this? I don't remember there being a note in my pocket. It's just a crumpled-up note, could be a recei-nope not a receipt. What does it say? "stay today." Stay today? What does that even mean? Also, I don't remember ever writing this to myself. Come on, just put on the jacket, maybe you'll remember once you've walked outside, cleared your head. Ugh, right, remember bedroom door for front door. Front door for bedroom door. I look to

the dresser before I move to leave. I shouldn't have, I know better. It reminds me and I know better. It hurts and it's better to move hurt somewhere else when it's too much, when it's too heavy.

Why don't you just turn it over for a while? No, that feels disrespectful, ingenuine. That's not how I feel, not what I want to do, not really. The picture is good, it's a reminder of what is real. The picture holds a person and that person was a part of my life. Yes, they were alive. Putting the picture somewhere else, turning it down and hiding the image doesn't change that. I wouldn't want to change that, but I don't want to see it. When I see it, I want to shatter it, take hold of it and throw it against the wall. Break it. Break it into as many tiny shattered pieces as its glass frame will allow. And when it breaks, I want it to cut me. I want those little shards to draw blood from my hand, and then, maybe then I'll be satisfied. Maybe then my grief will dissipate. It will fade and I will be calm again and I'll look at the picture and it won't be difficult.

But I know better than this and instead pick the frame up gently and look at it. I remain calm and I don't break it. It shouldn't be broken, it should remain whole. Breaking it won't change anything I know that, won't fix anything. I face the frame and I see my husband and I think of the time. The alarm clock on my nightstand tells me. Impassively, it tells me it is 1:55 p.m. Instinctively, I tense, but I don't leave. Leaving won't help. But the minutes slip by and still I remain. Now, it tells me it is 1:59p.m. It doesn't care how I feel it only reflects reality.

Close my eyes, open them, 2 p.m. My stomach sinks as it remembers. A hospital chair that holds me, a small room that holds someone sick, someone who has been sick for a long time. They are tired I know. I know they are tired. My throat is tight and I swallow. They are looking at me, he is looking at me, but I can't speak. My throat is so tight it pulls my voice from me. Instead, I grab the pad resting on the bedside table. The doctor writes his notes on it. The notes I don't want to see, but that my eyes are drawn to. I rip a blank piece off and I write

to him, because I can't speak to him. I wrote.... yes, now I remember, I wrote "stay today." I gave him the note, and he looked at it, then looked at me with his sick eyes. His sick eyes that made me heavy with the guilt of my selfishness. Then I rose, went over to him, and sat on the bed. I leaned over him and kissed him lightly on the forehead.

I told him of my selfishness, said I know you're tired. Why don't you rest now, rest as long as you need. When I left the room, it was 2 p.m. on a Saturday and when I returned again an hour later, he was gone. I scrunch my eyes closed and feel in my jacket pocket for the note. How could I forget something so important? As my hand grasps it and pulls it out I smooth it with my thumb, it is wrinkled. I lay it on the dresser beside the picture and I walk out of the bedroom. I faced something I thought I never could, I remained in my house on a Saturday at 2 p.m. My grief is still heavy, but I can look at it now. Look at it, and face all its painfulness. Facing my grief doesn't make it easier, but it makes moving forward possible.

I walk into my hallway and see my front door is still closed, I smile. My bedroom door is open. I know my front door will open for me and my bedroom door will remain open. My avoidance of my grief is no longer a tool to be used against me. When I touch something now, it will not move away from me. When I light the fire in my bedroom fireplace it will not avoid me and find its way to the living room fireplace. When my grief finds me, I will not avoid it, I will face it and it will no longer move away from me.

Epistolary from Odysseus

Annastacia Stegall

I never intended on measuring this world in wedding bands.
Feeling it wring my vena amoris,
Until I felt a snap.

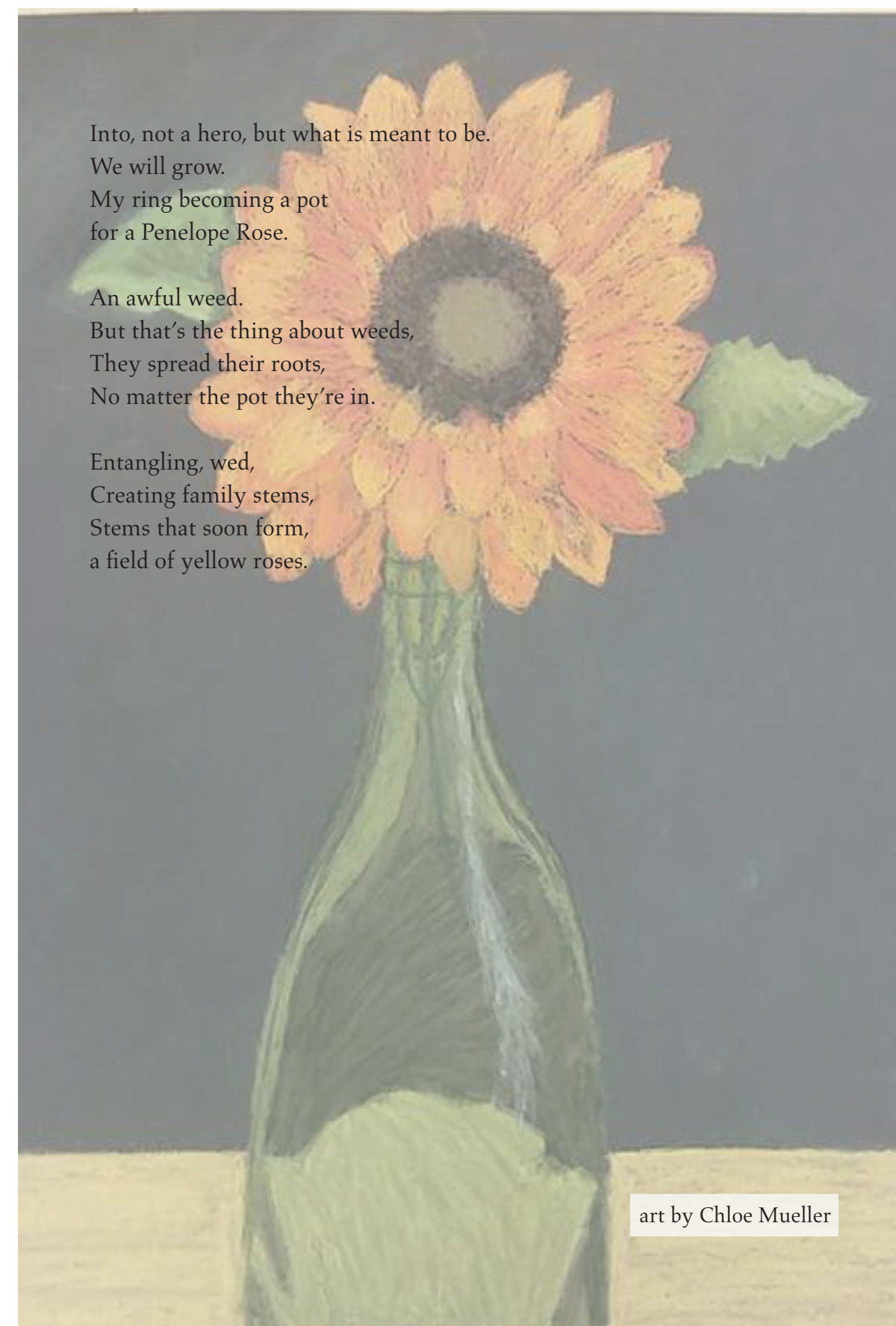
I can no longer snap my fingers,
And be transferred to a field with just
You, and me.

I can no longer count how many times,
My fingers have created friction,
But no sound has occurred,
Upon my hand.

But I know
It is equal to the amount of times,
I have created safe spaces.
Out of ill-fitting adultery.

And how it tastes like wine
Upon my tongue.
Creating sweet hymns
That blow within a new field.
One of nymphs.

This field is abundant.
And I can finally plant my feet
And let my wrung finger, fall into the dirt.
I will grow.



Into, not a hero, but what is meant to be.
We will grow.
My ring becoming a pot
for a Penelope Rose.

An awful weed.
But that's the thing about weeds,
They spread their roots,
No matter the pot they're in.

Entangling, wed,
Creating family stems,
Stems that soon form,
a field of yellow roses.

art by Chloe Mueller

The Sleeping Pill

Noah McClintock

I've never slept before. Ever. Not even when I was a baby.

I've tried just about everything in the book. Drinking water before bed, cutting down on caffeine, exercising, watching less TV before bed, using essential oils, using cough syrup, using laxatives, using vodka, using cannabis, using crack, eating fifteen bowls of rice. All this, and I still can't sleep.

So I decided to get a taste of my own medicine, so to speak, and actually use some advice from my doctor. He can't fail me any more than he already has. Then again, he's no witch doctor. He suggested I take sleeping pills, which is a radical idea for me.

I've never agreed with the concept of sleeping anyway. I'm always scared of the day I fall asleep and never wake up. And what if some crazy dream wakes me up early against my own will? What if I do wake up, but it's past breakfast? I can't deal with having breakfast in the afternoon. That's just criminal.

I was a bit concerned about the health risks of sleeping, but I guess I might as well try. Everybody else does it. If people can survive for as long as they can and they sleep every day, then it must be fine. What am I worrying about? What do I have to lose?

I decided to try sleeping on a Wednesday. Middle of the week, not much to lose there. You only need the beginning and end of a movie anyway, it's not like you'd lose much by ditching the middle of it.

I took the pill. My doctor said it would take maybe half an hour for the effects to kick in. So I laid there in my bed, waiting for that to happen. I waited.

And waited.

And waited.

And about 45 minutes later...

Nothing happened.

They must be defective. Or maybe my doctor really is a quack. After all, I did lose 49 pounds because of him. I'm pretty sure losing that much can kill someone.

I decided to try some other methods. I ran around the bed to tire myself out. Didn't work. I punched myself in the face to try and knock myself out. Didn't work, although I do have a nice mark there now. I put on a really relaxing ASMR video. Didn't work. I turned on a Bob Ross video. Almost worked. Even he was too loud.

I spent hours trying different ways to go to sleep. Not one worked. All of my attempts proved to be more fruitless than a dead cantaloupe tree.

Eventually I just gave up and decided to call my friend. I hadn't seen him in a while, and maybe he could give me some advice. I'd never felt compelled to ask one of my friends for advice. At least not any friends that I still have. He was the only one willing to put up with my shenanigans. I guess that makes sense. After all, he is a Gemini. I hear they're the most trustworthy folk.

We went to meet at some restaurant I'd never heard of called Soylent Green. Sounded harmless enough. It was raining a bit, but at that point I didn't care. I could run into George Washington and not be phased at all. So anyway, I met him at Soylent Green and we started talking about the typical stuff.

How many potholes there are in San Diego, who really killed Bread McMann, stuff like that. Then he started talking about what I was dreading most. Sleep.

“You said you have trouble sleeping?”

“I’ve never slept at all.”

“That’s hard to believe. You’re in fine health for your age.”

“My doctor doesn’t think so.”

“Well what does he know? He’s not a professional. You’re too angsty. I think you just need to try sleeping pills.”

“I did. I took one nine hours ago and it didn’t work.”

“Maybe you should take another one.”

“What if I overdose?”

“I don’t know what to tell you.”

“I may not be in my best state, but it was nice talking to you for once. I haven’t seen you since my last medical emergency.”

“I remember that. You broke your hand.”

“I broke both my hands.”

“I remember that. You got them stuck in a cage at a zoo.”

“A fish tank.”

“Gotta love jellyfish.”

“Gotta love-” I said, as my head hit the table.

I ended up waking up years later. And that was the first time I ever slept. There will not be a second time.

Well... maybe. My doctor's working on that.

photo by Nathan Haynes



Intuition

Mikayla Morris

Beep... Beep... Beep... the monitor in the hospital room beeps ensure Asia Martin that her sister, London, is still breathing, and her organs are still functioning. The room feels as cold as a winter day, and the air has a sharp, sterile smell to it. The lighting is dim except for the sun trying to peep through the window of the 9th floor of the University of Chicago Hospital. Contestants are quietly rushing around on the TV trying to complete their latest cooking tasks, and the nurses are whispering outside of the room, audible even through the thick glass door. Asia flips to the next poem in her book written by her favorite author, Mikayla Morris. The crisp white page is covered in black ink and says:

Black girl, you aren't meant to make it in this world
Racism, teen pregnancy, lack of education and other issues currently
being hurled
But here you are, ducking and dodging
Trying to not be a statistic
Hear me loud
Your life will not be simplistic

A yawn escapes through Asia's dry mouth. Her eyes start to water, and her body feels stiff like she's been trapped in the same position for ages. She wiggles her butt in the uncomfortable hardwood chair, hoping that it will feel less numb. Her legs shake non-stop as anxiety overcomes her body.

Ding... Her phone buzzes while the screen lights up. A picture of her dad appears by the latest text message.

"Hey. Just got off work, on my way. You hungry?" he texts. Little does he know Asia hasn't eaten in days. Every time she tries to eat

something, her body instantly rejects it.

“No, I’ll just eat later,” Asia replies.

Ugh, if only mom were still around. She would notice right away that something is going on with me.

Asia and London’s mom passed away seventeen years ago because of a complication after giving birth to them.

Asia nonchalantly puts down her phone and turns to the next poem in her book:

I move like no one is watching
The sound is groovy, brainwashing
Music, you are inside of me
My body is relaxed and carefree
My voice is under your command
My problems sink like quicksand
Your rhythms and beats are embracing
The African in my blood is racing

Ding... Ding... Ding... Three more texts come through causing her phone to vibrate ferociously.

What do y’all want? Asia thinks as she reads the texts from her family members.

Asia taps the crescent moon symbol on her phone halting all the unwanted alerts. She pulls the not-so-warm hospital blanket up, and her eyes start to feel heavy. Her mind slowly stops all her thoughts and allows her to rest. Her dream is clear as ever, and she feels like she’s trapped reliving the worst day of her life.

photo by Camden Blowers



Lights flashed red and blue
But somehow her heart already knew
Some said it was that twin intuition
But as she ran to her sister, London's body was screaming for a
physician
The sidewalk became bright red
Some were announcing that her twin was dead
CPR, Asia was screaming to herself
She was not ready to say farewell

Huffing and puffing, Asia is awakened in a panic as she thinks back to that day.

A few weeks ago, London told Asia that she was going to the bad part of their neighborhood to meet up with a class partner. Asia's twin intuition went off. As London walked out the house, Asia closely

followed her every move.

As the twins approached the ghetto part of town, the warm wind blew in their faces, the usual strong scent of weed present. Beat up cars with bullet holes obnoxiously sped passed them playing their rap music loud enough for the whole world to hear. Young black children carelessly ran around and the screams of their angry, but concerned, mothers followed them.

Meanwhile, the twins switched from walking on the sidewalk to the streets in hopes to avoid creepy old men and vicious dogs that wildly barked behind their raggedy gates. Not too long after, London slowed down as she approached her destination. A familiar face walked out of the small, shack-like tan house.

Malik? Why would London be hanging with this class clown?

In the twins' school, Malik was known for his ties to the local gang and for never doing anything in class but goofing off. Asia didn't want her sister to have any kind of relationship with him, no matter how good looking he was. Ever since Malik and this other boy got into it at school and Malik pulled a gun on him, Asia had tried her best to stay clear of him. If Malik was involved then something bad was sure to follow.

Dismay slowly overcame Asia's body. She could not believe that her twin was keeping secrets from her. But Asia's anger and racing thoughts were quickly brought to a halt when she heard *pow, pow* followed by a *sssskkkkkkiiiiirrrttttt*, which was the sound of the tires on a car fleeing the site of the scene. Asia's hands were shaking as she dialed 9-1-1. When a calming voice answered the phone, her voice seemed to have disappeared. Then it was like someone had snapped their fingers and everything had un-paused and fast forwarded.

"My sister has been shot," Asia screamed at the calm voice in the

phone.

"Asia, what are you doing here?" London asked.

Ignoring her, Asia took off her cotton t-shirt and applied pressure to the wound just like she saw people do in all those dramatic doctor shows. Another witness was helping Malik with his wound.

Not too long after, the first responders showed up. The EMTs briefly questioned Asia while they loaded Malik in the ambulance. Meanwhile, the other EMTs struggled to keep London's heart pumping. They loaded London into the ambulance and brought her to the University of Chicago Hospital.

Since arriving at the hospital several weeks ago, Asia and her dad have learned that a bullet went through London's head leaving her unresponsive and in a coma. Malik, on the other hand, had surgery to remove the bullet from his chest. He and his family are in the room two doors down. The police are still investigating the crime scene. The last thing the families had been told about the case is that the teens appeared to have been in "the wrong place at the wrong time."

Weeks pass as Asia finds herself following the same old routine. She wakes up, gets ready, and waits for her dad to do the same. Then they get in the car and fight through hour long traffic in order to get through downtown Chicago. The mornings are filled with coffee and car horns as they slowly make their way to the hospital.

Once they approach the tall tan set of buildings, Asia hops out the car and walks in. The lobby is always filled with people coming and going. Most of those people are on their phones and not paying attention. Asia swerves in and out of the distracted people's way until she approaches the elevators. The big metal box lifts her up onto the 9th floor, the ICU.

Right off of the elevator, Asia passes the nurses' station. One by

one their heads slowly lift from their computers at the sound of Asia's footsteps. Each nurse's eyebrows raise, the color in their faces slowly wash away and their lips lower from their smiles as they mentally give their support to Asia.

Ugh... Just the typical pity-party.

As she walks past room 928, she can hear Malik's parents yelling at him.

Ouch, that sounds intense ... I wonder what he could've done from a hospital bed. Asia asks herself and walks faster past his room.

As she approaches room 930, she is struggling to breathe, and her body becomes weak.

"Honey, are you okay? When's the last time you've had anything to eat or drink?" A concerned nurse asks Asia as she is on the verge of passing out.

But before she can even respond, the nurse continues with "when's your dad coming? We have something important to talk to him about."

Asia explains to the nurse that her dad will arrive after he gets off work, and she walks into her sister's room. As her feet slowly make their way into the cold, isolated room, Asia notices something is different about her sister.

Asia laughs and says to her sister "Now isn't that ironic? I'm barely eating, and you are getting bigger each day, London. You must be getting that good IV food."

In her loosely fitted baby blue hospital gown, London doesn't move an inch in the bed. Her long, curly brown hair is flat underneath

her head, and her eyes are loosely shut while the rest of her face has no emotion. However, she has this angelic glow.

photo by Madie Heinen

Even when you're in a coma, you are still cute sis.

She breathes in and can smell her dad's cologne from feet away. Then she hears his voice as he politely greets Malik and his parents. But as soon as Xavier steps foot into room 930, nurses are swarming him like worker bees.

"I'm so sorry Mr. Martin, but we have something urgent to tell you. Can we speak more privately?" the nurse asks Xavier while guiding him out of the room.

"What does she mean 'more privately'? I'm her sister! I should know too." Asia furiously says.

Meanwhile, a tall, skinny black figure slowly makes its way into the room. Malik somehow has managed to walk down the hall with his IV carts without his parents noticing.

"Asia, I know you don't like me, but we need to talk about London," Malik says as his voice breaks.

"Okay, speak." Asia rudely replies.

"Look, London made me promise that I would never tell you any of this." Malik says sternly.

Over the course of the next fifteen minutes, Malik comes clean to Asia about everything. Several months ago, London and Malik were chosen to be class partners for their business project. They exchanged numbers and instantly hit it off. The dark purple sky would turn into a light baby blue while the sun struggled to rise, and London and Malik would still be up texting one another.

Eventually, they decided that they would meet up twice a week. At first these meetings were strictly for working on their project and getting homework done. But then twice a week turned into three or four times a week. Not to mention, the meetings ended up turning into casual, off-the-radar dates. Sometimes they would walk to McDonald's up the street to eat and talk; other times, they would cuddle and watch a movie. No one knew, and they planned to keep it like that.

Even after they finished their project, they continued to see each other. Unofficially, the couple decided to start dating and became very intimate. One night, Malik planned the perfect evening. After getting his parents' permission to use the car, he picked up flowers and was on his merry way. They agreed to meet a block away from her house so they wouldn't get caught. London opened the door to the car and got in. Once she was settled Malik put his hand on her cheek and pulled her in for a very passionate kiss. Eventually the couple made their way to a movie and a fancy dinner. After dinner, Malik was fully prepared to take London home, but she had something else planned. The two love birds went back to Malik's house where the two of them became each other's firsts.

Week after week, month after month the couple hung out, went on dates and continued to fall deeper in love. Malik had even ended all his involvement in the gang. Nothing was going to get in the way of this love. That was until one day London and Malik got into a fight because London was paranoid that Asia was onto them. She secretly left her house to go talk to Malik in person. She approached his house and waited for him to open the door. The couple was just about to go inside when shots were fired at them. The rest was a blur for Malik, and he hadn't seen London since that day.

After Malik was done explaining everything, Asia's jaw drops in awe. Malik patiently waits for her to process everything and ask him

any questions. But the two are interrupted when Asia's dad comes back into the room with Malik's parents. Xavier's eyes are overflowing with tears running down his cheeks. He's bent over with his hands on his knees. Malik's dad is patting his back while Malik's mom approaches the teenagers.

She clears her throat and through her tears she manages to say "London has officially been pronounced brain dead. The doctors don't believe she will ever wake up from her coma. They're willing to keep her hooked up to the machines for another week. That's when they're planning to do a C-section since London is over seven months pregnant."

Later that evening, Granny Ruby and the twins' aunties are summoned back to the hospital. Xavier and Malik's parents fill them in on London's conditions. After several days of hollering, crying and praying, the families sit down to come up with a plan on how to raise the baby.

"Since the baby will be born premature, he or she will have to stay in the hospital for about a month after the C-section. During that time, we should take turns visiting the baby and make sure it's cared for," Granny Ruby says.

Everyone agrees. However, Asia's face becomes flush and she begins to stumble. Her dad catches her weak, light-weight body.

"Child, you are nothing but skin and bones! When's the last time you've had a good meal?" Auntie Donna asks.

"I haven't seen her eat anything in days, maybe weeks." Xavier adds.

A team of nurses works on getting Asia admitted for anorexia

nervosa. The team rushes in another fluffy bed and several IV carts. Unwillingly, Asia gets into the bed and needles are stuck in her to prep the IVs.

“Y’all, I’m fine! We need to get ready for the C-section that’s happening tomorrow.” Asia fusses. Everyone gets settled into their seats or cots, and Malik lays next to London as they prepare for the long night. Hours go past and the families try to enjoy each other’s company. They share stories from the twin’s and Malik’s childhood. They talk about the latest gossip and first world problems. Later on, they move from the uncomfortable hardwood chairs to flimsy cotton cots.

Eventually, the sun rises, and the room becomes crowded with nurses and doctors. They explain how the procedure will go and answer all questions before rolling London and the baby out of the room. As the staff clears out, tension and sadness fill the room. The room is cold— ice cold — and deadly quiet. Two hours fly past and not a single person has moved an inch until they hear the squeaky wheels of a bed approaching followed by a crying newborn.

The team rolls London’s unresponsive body into the room next to Asia. Asia instantly grabs hold of London’s cold, lifeless hand. Meanwhile, the nurse hands the beautiful light skin baby girl with curly brown hair over to the twin’s dad. She coos and squirms in Xavier’s arms. The baby makes its way to Malik, his parents, Granny Ruby and all three aunties before returning to her bed for a nap.

A chilling breeze fills the room, and a figure dressed in all black quietly follows. Immediately, everyone’s heart stops. Their smiles drop, their heads shake in disbelief and small screams escape the families’ mouths. This is the moment that they have all been dreading. A doctor steps toward London and the machines that are keeping her alive. Down the hall everyone can hear the hollering, fussing and sobs of the families as they feel the unbearable pain of losing a loved one. The beeps of the monitors are silenced as Asia lays there holding her dead twin’s body.

Tea Blink


Selena Dominguez

Sitting in the soft Victorian chair, I sigh and sip the warmth of the tea. Every Wednesday night is like this. Out on the balcony, looking across the wide garden that hasn't been taken care of in months. The cosmos droop, sunflowers clash into the ground, and the berry bushes show no signs of colorful round balls. A soft wind blows, steadily moving my hair to and fro. It's a peaceful night, a boring night, a night that I enjoy engaging in every week.

I close my eyes remembering the days in which Julian would sit out here with me. Her giggles and soft voice took me to places I could have never imagined. The small smile she had when I teased her about marriage or the looks of regret as we talked about children filled my mind. The thoughts of her smooth skin and the red of her lips enhance me, while the images of her wearing no more than her nightgown and high heels excite me. The flipping of her auburn hair would always catch my sight. She was a goddess, and she knew it.

We could talk for hours during the night on this balcony. It was a simple gesture of our close relationship. I knew her for two years, heard about her for two more. My best friend would talk about her all the time, exclaiming how everyone wanted her and how she was the most beautiful woman around. At first, I scoffed at this. Why love someone just for their looks, and what about the other women? I felt like he was putting her above the rest. Although, the moment I saw her, all those questions and off-put thoughts went away. She instantly became my everything.

The tea tastes bitter suddenly. It tastes like the moment I found out the truth. I discovered why she stopped showing up to our nightly talks here. Every week turned into every other week, then once a month. I asked what was wrong and she just smiled saying everything

An illustration of a woman with long, dark blue hair wearing large, blue and white headphones. She is shown in profile, looking out of a window. The window view shows a vibrant sunset or sunrise with a gradient of colors from purple and blue at the top to orange and yellow at the bottom, with white clouds and small white stars scattered across the sky. The background behind her is a dark blue gradient with faint white stars.

art by Carly McCoy

was perfect. Never once told me about the other man. It was like a fun secret for her. Toying with my heart while she messed with another. I remember when the maid walked into the room while I sat here in this exact chair. I was at peace, sipping my earl gray. The world got cold as the maid exclaimed the invitation I received. Bells rung in my ears and picturing her in a white gown was filling my mind. Tears stream down my face as I recall my outrage.

The idea of her with him encouraged me to fire all the gardeners. Why shall the garden flourish while I do not? The patch of red roses was hers, so they must wither. The nights of us gazing out into the beautiful fields must mean nothing! Yelling at the butlers and pushing the maids around as I walked throughout the house, I was trying to figure out where I went wrong. Did I do something to upset her? Did I not embrace her enough? My mouth goes powdery as memories of my heart shattering with every step I took flood back to me. The recollection of the cuts aching on my hands as I tore the invitation apart made my fingers flinch. How dare she think I would go! How dare she hurt me!

In the end, I never went. I ignored her calls and had the servants exclaim I was gone on business trips whenever she came around. I let the garden go for good, and even took my anger out on the people around me. I told my best friend to forget I existed, and my family to believe I moved to another country. I wanted a new start to life, to redo everything. I laid off tons of workers from my company and hired new young employees I thought would push it further. I did all this without warning.

Do I regret this? Taking a deep breath, I realize my mistake. It is too late to fix everything now. It is too late to save myself. She will mourn the day she left me. My heart burns as the clash of the teacup echoes through the still night. My eyes shutter for a second, then they stare out into the night sky forever.

Development

Lauryn Hulett

Sought it to become something great,
for reasons that most won't relate.
Why is it so causal,
for the things we treasure most
to be ripped into two?
When righteous amount of potential bursts
at the seams of any existence,
you don't want to break that type of mold.

art by Kirstin Lundy



Change Awaits Nobody's Hero

An excerpt, James Clemons

The sufferings of the mentally ill echoed around David Norton as he laid in darkness waiting for the light of day. He rolled from his back to his side, adjusted then readjusted, looking for a comfortable position on a sandbag-mattress that was atop a bed frame made of steel. He tried fluffing the pillow, but it was pointless. Even though the pillow had four inches of foam rather than two inches of sand it wasn't any more comfortable than the mattress was. It did, however, muffle the sounds that enveloped him: the screams, the cries, and the prayers. He wrapped the pillow around his ears, closed his eyes tight, and continued to wait.

He tried to keep his psyche at ease, allowing it to drift from one simple thought to another without holding onto one particular thought too long. Recollection of his brother Steve's death, however, made that difficult to do. The wrong place at the wrong time best explained Steve's death. David blamed himself for the loss of his brother; he was the one who wanted to stop and eat, but as it played out, eating was not something they'd do that day. David regretted stopping at that Whataburger; he wished the livid customer's card hadn't been declined, triggering a built-up burst of violence from him. The customer shot three dead (including Steve) injured six (David was one of the six) before turning the gun on himself and changing the lives of many forever—all over a declined credit card.

If only he'd done something that day maybe his brother would still be alive. Maybe if he hadn't frozen, he could've saved anyone on that day. David hadn't, though, he'd stood motionless in fear, and three innocent people and one lunatic died because of it.

Their mother blamed him for Steve's death, too. Their father wasn't around to blame anyone, but of course, his mother blamed David

for his absence, as well. It's something she always liked reminding him of, as she'd sit in her recliner, still dressed in her nightgown, the early afternoon hours still fresh, her fourth or fifth whiskey on the rocks of the day settling in her bloodstream.

"First your dad leaves because of your 'special needs' and now your brother is gone," she would say to him and then take a solid drink from her glass before continuing, "Stevie is gone—he's gone because of you! You had a bullet pass through your shoulder, and your brother lost his life. He wouldn't have been in that restaurant if it wasn't for you! He lost his life, probably while trying to save you! He's like a hero—he's my hero and should be yours! You know whose hero you are David? Nobody's, you are nobody's hero."

She would then begin to cry before throwing her drink across the room or sometimes directly at him. Once she'd calm down, he'd make her a fresh drink just the way she liked it: two ice cubes with the finest rut-gut whiskey filled to the rim of her favorite drinking glass, which was amazingly still in one piece, given all the times that it had been thrown here or there. After making the drink, David would then disappear to his room until sleep found her, and that had been their norm over the last couple of years.

Even before that surreal day, his room had always been his place of escape. David believed his mother and brother found pleasure in belittling him with ridicule, insults, and inappropriate jokes in which he was the punchline, and that made family-time in the Norton household something David could do without.

It was safe to say that David had missed his room over the last three weeks, but that was the only thing he'd missed.

David had wound up where he was only because he wanted to talk to someone who wouldn't ridicule, someone who would listen. David quickly learned that he'd gone to the wrong place for that. Only



art by Chloe Vogel

ten minutes at the hospital and being allowed to answer questions but not really talk, David was asked if he was suicidal. Actually, he'd never considered suicide, but David had to admit that there had been times in his life (especially over the last two years) that life seemed pointless; however, death seemed no better an option. When hesitant to answer the question and without "no" spurring from his mouth immediately, David was taken to a secluded area of the hospital. Away from the general public and the outside world, his belongings were taken from him. He was then dressed in a pea soup-colored hospital gown and told that he would have the chance to speak with a doctor within a week's time.

Three weeks had passed. During that time he'd spoken only to orderlies who delivered food, medicine, and other basic needs, but he was reassured all the while that a doctor would be speaking with him soon. Day twenty one and nothing. That shouldn't have been surprising to him, though, when it came to the ladder of mental health care in the fifty states, Iowa was among the bottom six rungs.

A number of loud buzzes sounded, followed by clicks from metal doors unlatching, and then fluorescent lights turned on from above. Once on, the lights created a low, humming sound that would continue throughout the day. He removed the pillow from his ears. The shuffling of feet replaced the sounds that the night brought. A new day had arrived.

David stood and straightened out the blanket on the bed; it only took a moment to do and wasn't required by rules, but David had a thing about neatness. He liked things in their place and organized; his room back home was the only area in the two bedroom apartment that showed cleanliness and organization. He had similar beliefs in regard to littering. David couldn't understand how a person could just toss trash on the ground, and as far as throwing waste in the rivers and lakes, well—it was best not to go there with David. It drove him mad with people's lazy, disrespectful ways. He didn't have a problem with stating how he felt to those types of individuals, either. It was one of the things about him that his mother claimed made him ill.

He stepped up to the room's door but didn't exit out into the area that was nothing more than a large hallway with ten adjacent rooms off the inside wall. There were no windows anywhere except the plated glass that separated the orderly/security room from the patient's area. David remained momentarily where he was; he'd grown accustomed to allowing the other patients access to their breakfasts before he accepted his. Once the six other occupants formed the single file line, David took his spot at the back.

The line moved quickly. It'd been eleven hours since the last meal had been passed out, so most were eager for whatever was on the day's menu. Within a minute or so, he was at the front. Once he had the Styrofoam container and juice box in hand he made his way to one of the padded benches that occupied the wall opposite side from the rooms. He sat down and opened the Styrofoam box. Three thin slices of ham, two pieces of toast (no butter) and a pile of runny, scrambled eggs was breakfast.

Everything was the same color as the hospital gowns they wore. From the tile floor, to the block walls, to the padded benches, to the concrete ceiling—all were the same shade of pea soup green. He stared down at the breakfast. Due to the fluorescent lights and the enveloping pea soup-color everywhere, a greenish tint reflected off the eggs, and David chuckled to himself thinking that perhaps Dr. Seuss was the cook of the day.

The hospital rules said that no form of silverware was to be provided to patients (for their own safety, of course) and he couldn't find it within himself to dip his fingers into the wet, green-appearing-eggs, so he placed the ham between the toast and then took a bite. The ham was as dry as the toast, and David struggled with getting the bite to go down, but he managed. After a second bite, and having the same trouble swallowing it, he placed the sandwich back in the container, opened the juice box and swallowed its contents in one gulp. David then leaned the back of his head against the block wall, looking upward but at nothing, as he listened to the humming-lights. The container and its remains rested on his lap.

“Are you going to eat that?” a voice asked, from his right side of the bench.

He looked toward the voice. Not surprised at being asked for the remains of his food (it was common for that to happen in the place) it was who asked the question that surprised him. She was a young, black woman, probably in her mid twenties, David guessed, which would've made her three or four years older than himself, roughly the same age as his brother Steve would've been. A prominent scar stretched across her left cheek from the corner of her mouth to just below her earlobe. She was unkempt, never smiled, and continuously stared at him to the point of creeping him out. He believed he'd heard the orderlies call her Erica, or something that began with an E, and he'd not heard her utter a word (other than the occasional mumble) in his entire three week stay. He handed her the container. She sat down beside him, opened the

container, and started with the remains of his sandwich. She finished the sandwich off in four quick bites, and David couldn't imagine how she could've possibly swallowed it without problem so easily.

"Nice day," he said, to see if she'd respond.

"Wouldn't know," she answered, scanning the windowless area they occupied while scooping up a pile of eggs with her fingers and shoving them into her mouth. She finished off the eggs with three more scoops of her fingers and then placed the container on the bench between them. She wiped her fingers on her gown and then said, "You'll be leaving today."

Taking her words as more of a question rather than a statement, he said, "I don't know, I haven't even talked to any doctor, yet."

"You will today, you've been here three weeks and act perfectly normal. They'll be cutting you lose today. They don't keep people more than twenty one days, not if they act normal. It's when patients act up that they have to keep them."

You seem perfectly normal yourself, David thought before he said, "You were here when I got here. Shouldn't it be your time, too?"

"I acted up the other night. Wet myself, screamed and cried for hours before they sedated me."

"That was you? Your screams kept me up half the night. What was wrong? I didn't think you could even talk."

"Oh, I can talk. I just don't do it a whole lot—why frigging bother—and I'm fine. There was nothing really wrong, actually. I knew my three weeks was about up and was trying to buy some more time here. I'm not ready to leave, yet."

“Not ready to leave—you like it here?”

“No, I didn’t say that. I just don’t have anywhere to go from here. The streets, being homeless, can be tough. I’m safe here, actually. I have a dry place to sleep, something to eat everyday. You understand what I’m saying?”

David didn’t understand. The last three weeks had about drove him mad. Some nights he laid in the dark listening, thinking that he’d mistakenly came here sane and would be leaving no longer that way. Why would anyone want to stay here longer than needed? Why would anyone want to be here, period? David supposed certain disorders left certain individuals without say in the matter. He didn’t bother her with those thoughts but rather began to contemplate the things she had said.

“Change awaits us all!” a voice screamed suddenly from across the hall.

David looked in that direction to see a thin, elderly man who was on his second week of stay at the Pea Soup Hotel. The man stared at them. His eyes were wide, crazed, and sunken into his pale, white face. His long, gray hair hung tangled and matted. A piece of egg clung to his beard that was also long, gray, tangled, and matted. The empty juice box he held trembled in his hand. His skeletal body swayed slightly back and forth like a macabre Halloween decoration moving with a gentle wind.

“Change awaits us all!” the man repeated before throwing the juice box underhand up toward the ceiling.

The juice box slammed off the ceiling, came back down with a vengeance, and bounced off the top of the man’s head. The man then wandered back to his room to settle in for another day of madness.

As if on cue, the other four patients also made their way toward

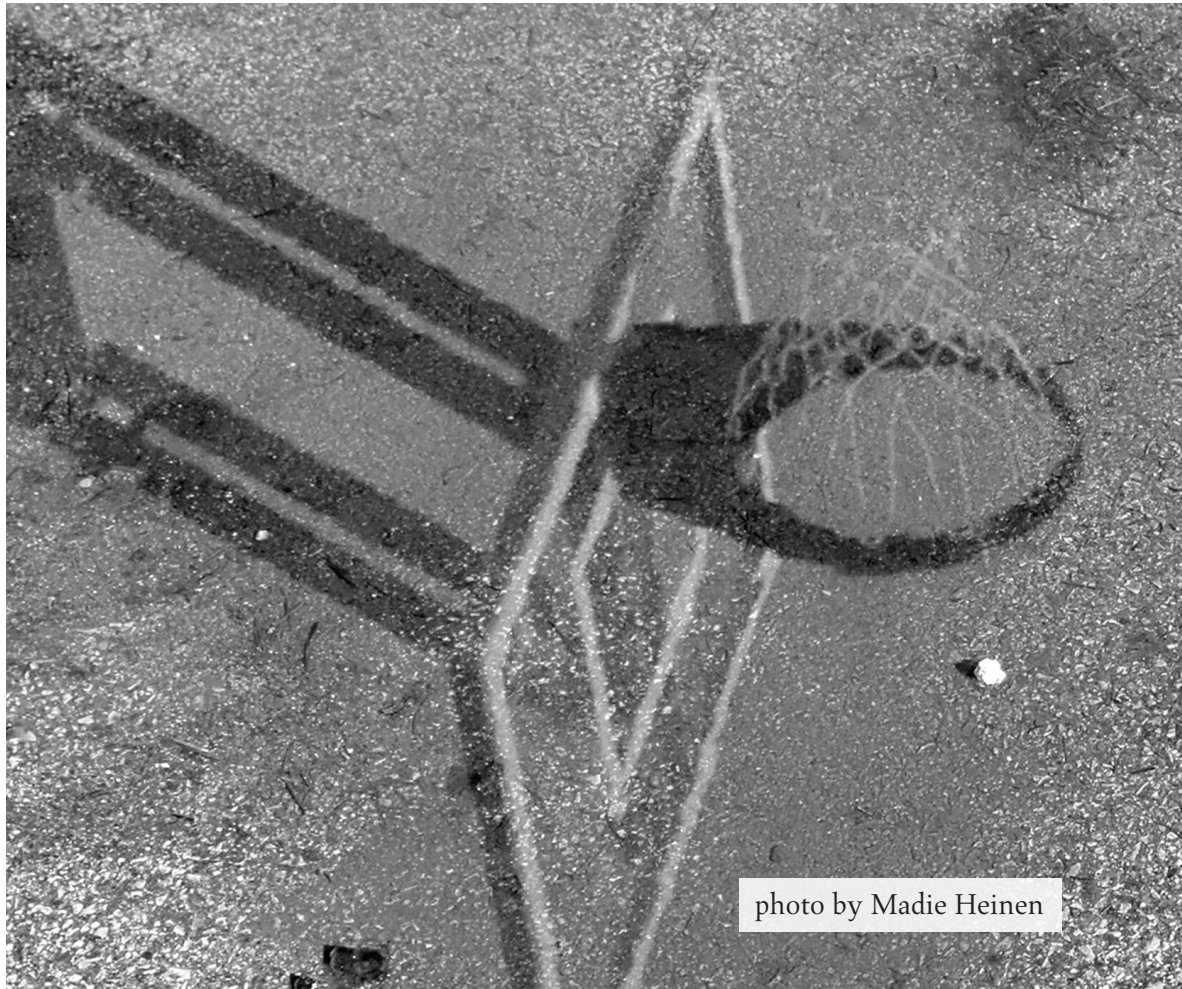


photo by Madie Heinen

their rooms, leaving the two of them alone on the bench. The security door buzzed and unlatched. An orderly stepped out from the office and called out David's full name. David glanced at the orderly and then to the woman.

"Time for you to go," she said.

She stood to go back to her room. As she began to walk away, David asked, "Your name is Erica, right?"

She stopped but didn't turn around as she corrected him, "Emily."

“Sorry, I’m not good at remembering names. It was nice talking to you, Emily. My name is David.”

Emily looked at him and said, “Apparently, names aren’t all you can’t remember.”

She smiled, but it seemed to only deepen her sadness. Emily then turned and walked toward her room, looking back once for a brief second. The orderly called out his name for a second time, so David grabbed the breakfast container, stood from the bench, and walked toward the orderly. He picked up the empty juice box lying on the floor and threw all the items in the wastebasket as he went.

David was then taken to a room where a doctor waited for his arrival. Emily had been right; it was time for him to go. When asked the same suicide-question he’d been asked three weeks prior, David looked the doctor directly in the eyes and answered with an immediate: no.

That was all it took, so after a few more simple questions, David was sent back out into the world with nothing more than the clothes on his back, a dead cellphone, and a release paper stating that no mental disorder had been diagnosed during his stay.



Artist and Author Biographies

Camden Blowers:

Camden is a sophomore majoring in Communication and Media Practice with a minor in Sports Management. Outside of class, she likes to travel and explore what Des Moines has to offer.

James Clemons:

James is majoring in English and plans on completing his Bachelor's degree in 2022. He's an older dog learning some new tricks and continues to race against the clock before time catches up.

Selena Dominguez:

Selena is a Graphic Design and Photography major. Her dream is to be an animative director who makes stories and characters that embrace the reader.

John Fletcher:

John is a senior double majoring in Criminal Justice and Psychology. Following graduation, he plans on pursuing a career in law enforcement.

photo by Anon Ymous

watching movies, writing, reading, eating food and aspires to be a film director or a writer. He has two pet cats.

Carly McCoy:

Carly is a freshman at Grand View University. She enjoys reading, writing, creating art and photography, and loving her pets.

Mikayla Morris:

Mikayla is a senior Communications majors from Chicago who aspires to work in the television and film industry.

Chloe Mueller:

Chloe is a junior from Mitchellville, Iowa. She is double majoring in Math and Data Science.

Annastacia Stegall:

Anna is a senior studying English. She enjoys yoga, writing, reading, traveling, and going to concerts in her free time. When not at school, she is usually found working as a server or enjoying her day at a local coffee shop sipping from a jar.

Chloe Vogel:

Chloe is a third-year transfer student in the Art Education program. She has been working to improve her artistic abilities since coming to Grand View in the fall of 2019. She loves her cat and her houseplants and plans to teach high school art classes after graduating.

Nathalie Wiles:

Currently working towards a degree in Studio Arts with an emphasis in painting, Nathalie has always had a passion for creating. The main focus in her art has always been around the topic of mental health and how it can affect one's creative process.

Jebediah Wilson:

Jebediah is majoring in Game Design with a minor in English. He has been a fan of gaming and creative writing for many years and is hoping to one day be a storyboard writer for many different kinds of games.

Madi Franco:

Madi is a Nursing student. She enjoys writing poetry in her free time. She has one self-published book of poetry titled *forty-two degrees north* and is currently working on her second book. Her poetry reflects her life and experience in health care, addressing love, loss, violence, and mental illness.

Tyler Fugate:

Tyler enjoys Battlebots, working out and playing video games in his spare time. He is a Biochemistry major.

Nathan Haynes:

Nathan hails from Missouri Valley and wrestles for the National Champion Vikings. He studies Organizational Studies with concentrations in Management, Marketing and Human Resources.

Madie Heinen:

Madie studies Accounting and Business Administration while playing volleyball.

Austin Hill:

Austin is a senior finishing up his degree in Psychology. He is a two-time All-American weight thrower, and his dream is to become a school counselor. He wrote this piece while feeling like gerbil. It passed.

Lauryn Hulett:

Lauryn is a freshman Nursing major. She also plays on the Grand View women's volleyball team.

Kirstin Lundy:

Kirstin is majoring in English and Studio Arts. Through writing, she wants to convey a deep understanding of people. When she writes, she desires to connect with the reader and hope that her writing speaks to them in some way.

Noah McClintock:

Noah is a junior majoring in Digital Media Production. Noah likes

