

The Literary Review

Colorado Mesa University | 2022



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Chantae Bryant | Editor-in-Chief

Writing allows for the depiction of our deepest emotions that are held within us. Whether it be love, pain, trauma, and everything else that can be too hard to voice. For this issue we wanted to emphasize the duality of our experiences as human beings. Emphasizing how light is the accompaniment of dark and we cannot have one without the other. Within these pages you will find the words of people who have bore their hearts onto these pages. I implore you to take your time with these stories. Walk in the sunshine as well as dwelling in the shadows — experience the intricacies of another’s humanity.

Julie Holland | Assistant Editor

Writing is like breath. It fills our pulses and gives us oxygen, so we can keep living another day. It is instinctual, natural, and giving. It flows out of us in such a way that a blank page might be daunting, but not writing is simply not an option. In a world where balance is hard to find and even harder to maintain, writing is the steady air that keeps it going. Words are powerful, and words are life, just like breath. Today, it is difficult to see past all of the hate, fear, and separation. But it is when we write and create that we are given a space to just be. A space to relate. A space to build a home. That is what this anthology offers, an opportunity to create a space of understanding and build a home. All of the creation found within these pages is a moment of breath filling a blank page.

Elias Born | Design Editor

Good design is invisible, but that doesn’t mean the design can’t be sick. This edition is all about opposites. Black and white. Up and down. Left and right. Every mind that contributed to the works of art on display this edition deserves praise. Hours of effort go into each piece, and it all starts from an idea. No illustrator works the same, but most find themselves picking up a pencil and sketching before ever putting ink to the page.

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At the Desk

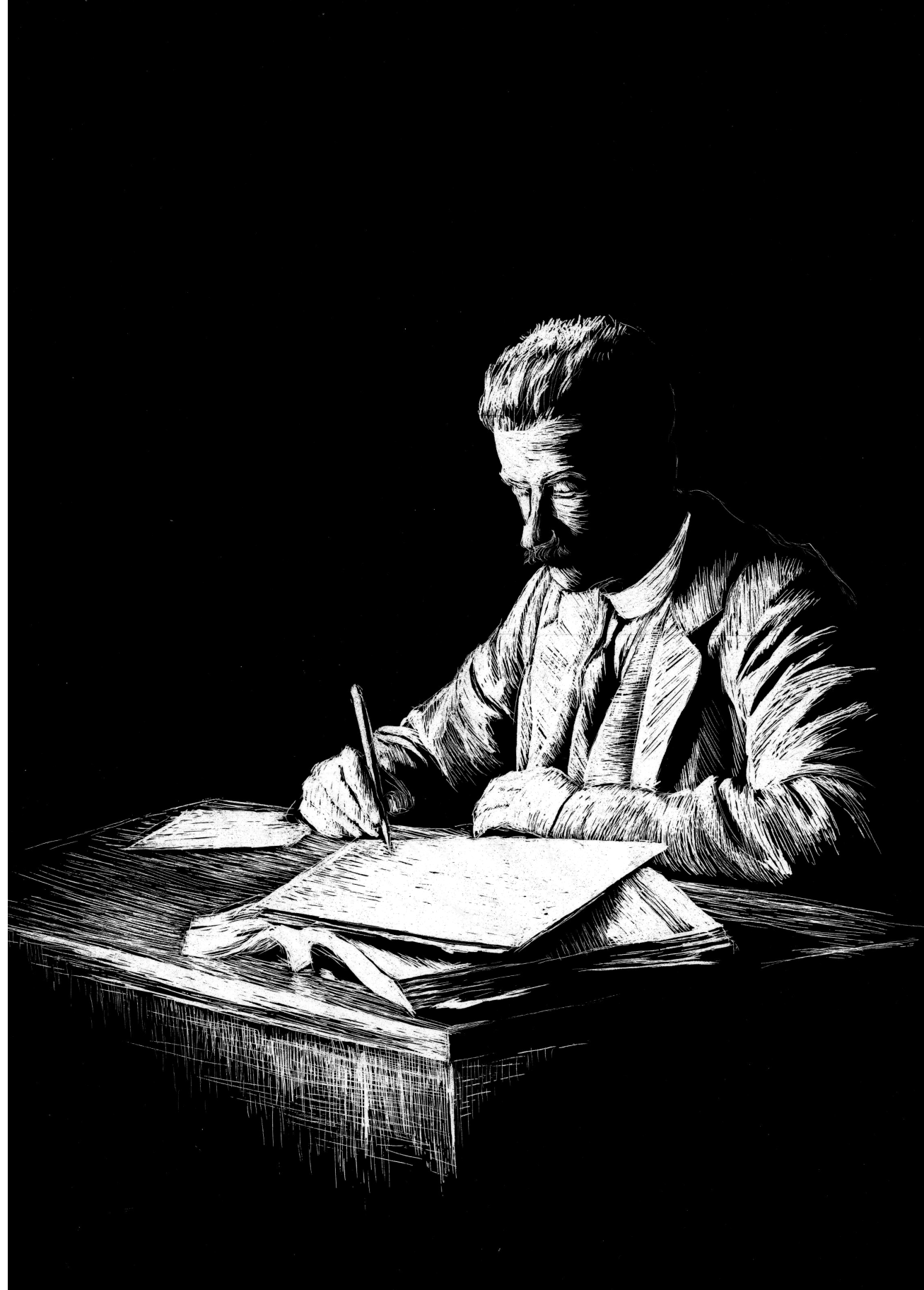
Rhiannon Bergman | Poem

Emily Mendus | Scratchboard

Where are the ears for the ears?
I know of botanists who have
plucked every budding sage and lilac
bush in their garden, only to turn and fill
their arms again in the coming spring.
The salmon run every year, for the black
bear and the fisherman; their red-coined
lips salivate for the barbed hook.
Mountains erode slowly for the rock
climbers, giving time and space for
them to straddle their peaks.
What's there for the poets?

There is the tauntingly silent blank page.
The eager but exhausted pen.
There are eyes that peer into other eyes,
but the poet's eyes always droop down.
There is no room for mouths while
the poet fulfills their purpose.
The room's light leaks slowly,
ink smears and runs out.

Other tongues bruise from neglectful
lovers, like the awaiting arms that never
embrace, but neither enter our sphere.
For the poet there is a suddenly full
stillness — a shimmer above their desk —
and the slump of their weary
shoulders with today's words.



Trauma

Mia Brabaek | Poem

Nate Hanson | Dip Pen

Withered

My bones are showing again
 Still white and shining but
 My skin's puckered around them
 Like I have no life in me
 Even though I do
 I'm just tired
 So tired

Shards

They're falling apart, shattering
 Sending a thousand pieces of themselves
 To the floor
 Mirror shards
 They don't hold light anymore
 They don't hold me anymore
 I try to pick up the pieces
 Each cutting into my palms
 But I wipe away the blood
 And put them back together
 Put them back together
 Put them back together
 Until I have no blood left

Pieces

If I make one more
 wrong move
 I'm going to explode
 and my pieces will float down

and disintegrate
 in the hands of
 someone
 who thought they
 were holding me together

Fight

Dark storms raging make the sea
 Climb higher and higher onto my rock
 Waves foaming at the lips, lick their chops
 Waiting to drown me as I cling for life to
 The only person, the only one strong enough
 to keep me from being washed away
 It's all I got left

Untitled

Loving hands shove a
 spear
 Through my chest
 When I thought they
 would hold me

Bleed me dry I guess
 I didn't think you'd
 Be the one to
 Kill me

Balm

My heart is bleeding
 Wounded
 Gashed deep enough
 To soak through my shirt
 So everyone can see the red
 Blossoming across my chest



No one asks what it is
That's okay, I don't want them to

But I need your Gilead balm
To close my split flesh
So I can live
And walk and hug and smile
without staining anyone else

Recovery Isn't

Recovery isn't
sunshine, smiles, and I'm better
It isn't
miraculous changes
Recovery isn't
It's all good now, don't worry, or
better yet
It's like it never happened

It's gravestone gardens
cracked smiles like cracked hearts
because you'll never forget
forget
the empty eyes that tried to look at you
as they searched
searched for that something
to end their life

Recovery isn't
over
but those eyes have life now
and so do I

Place

Sierra Angel | Poem

Leo Manuppella | Dip Pen

Stars in the night sky softly danced
and caressed the tips of the flames.
Embers eagerly emerged from
the glowing pile of sputtering
firewood, eager to embrace
our cozy, wool woven blankets.
The smell of smoke effortlessly
arose from the fire pit,
clinging faintly to the crispy
shell of the golden marshmallows.
From guitar strings strummed passionate
notes, each one prancing with the
dwindling evening summer breeze,
only embellishing its short
fleeting rhythm.

Here we are safe.

Here we are empowered.

Under the night's dancing stars,

Here we redeem our freedom.



Paper Cuts

Amber Lobato | Poem

Ana Ibarra | Scratchboard

A tree itself is not alive,
But instead the one who moves through it,
Allows its leaves to bask in living rays,
And allows its roots to take up water.
Gradually, yet certainly,
Changing like seasons to another life.
Written like scripture,
Well thought out and followed by many.
A pioneer on a page,
Touching lives as gentle as turning thin paper
Where tears are forgiven,
Paper cuts long forgotten,
And words not yet read.



Both

E.P | Poem

A single daisy, amidst the field;
 Perpetually fixed on the Son and His guiding light.
 Transfixed in awe,
 in worship,
 in wonder.
 Revolving as He leads, forever
 In a dance of glory across the expanse.

Pondering the brilliance of the field,
 The one is left to reflect on his worth.
 If he finds himself alone, he is left to fade
 And the rest follow suit, while despair feasts.

Rather to breathe, to thrive,
 For the lone flower to accept his part;
 To be a portion of splendor is enough.
 Flourishing with those nearby,
 Together in the everlasting pursuit
 of mercy,
 of love,
 of life.

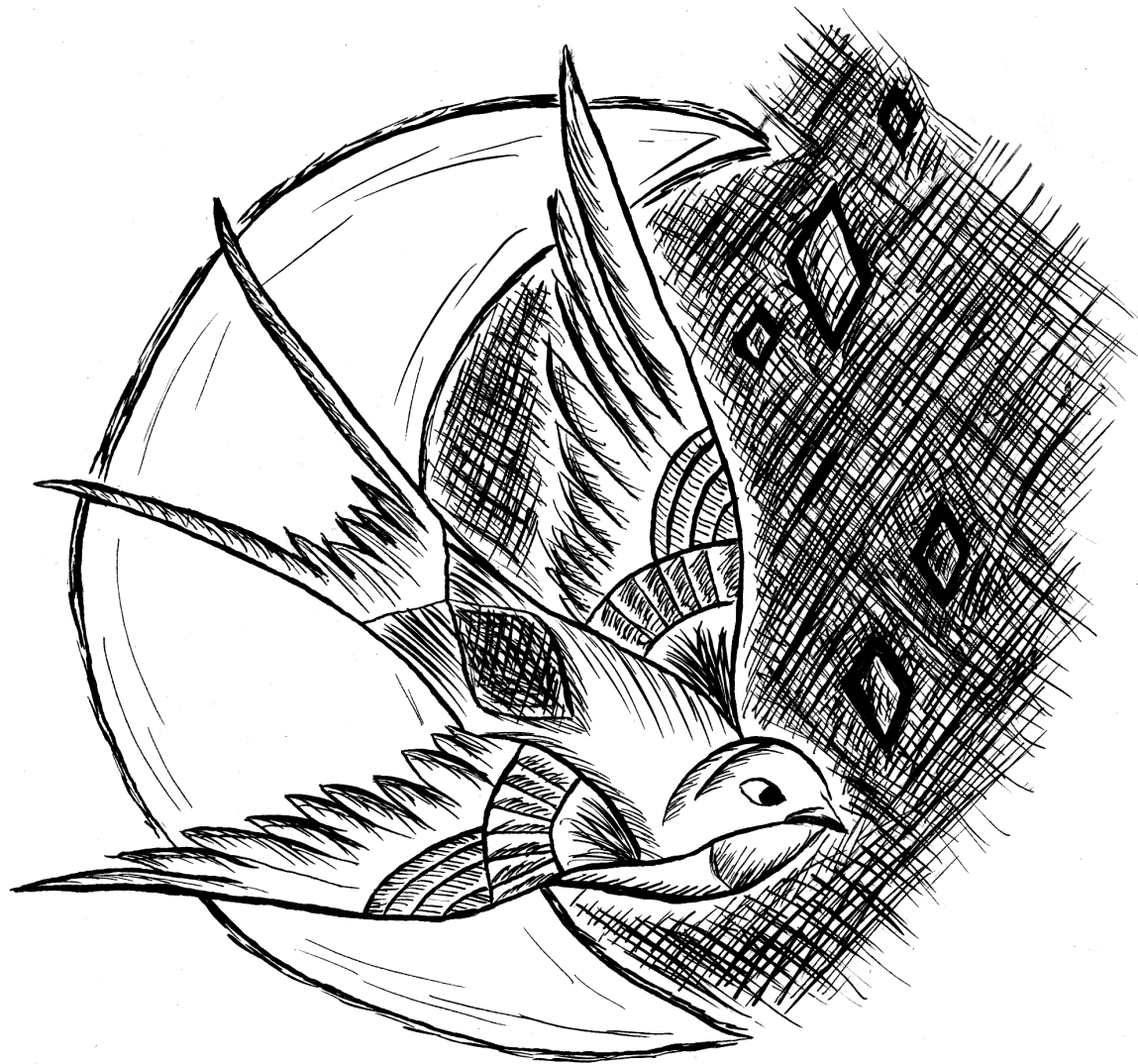
Is glory found in the one? In the whole?
 Hear me, reader, it is both.

To reflect the beams of joy from above,
 To savor the unique self,
 To become a living wave of gold in unity.
 A harmonious testimony,
 we are here
 Weathering the storm together,
 we are one
 Eternally seeking light and warmth,
 we are His
 In both lies the beauty of the field.

3am

Lizzette Gonzalez | Poem

Mikayla Olave | Dip Pen



My phone didn't used to have a tone at night
'Cause it was as silent as a bird in flight
But then I learned a lesson I would never forget
One that would force me to second guess
Because suicide isn't just a word
And depression stings it doesn't just hurt

I wish I could say it turned out okay
But three suicides later and I wondered if I was okay
Did I feel the same way
Did I want to shoot myself today

The thing is
The devil will scream louder than God
Because God will speak to those that seek
The glory he speaks of

And I almost lost him in the midst of it all
God why did you let them fall
But it wasn't his fault at all

It was a battle they had within
One they didn't think they'd win
But I did

So give me a call at 3am
Talk about everything wrapped up in your head
And how you don't think you'll ever win

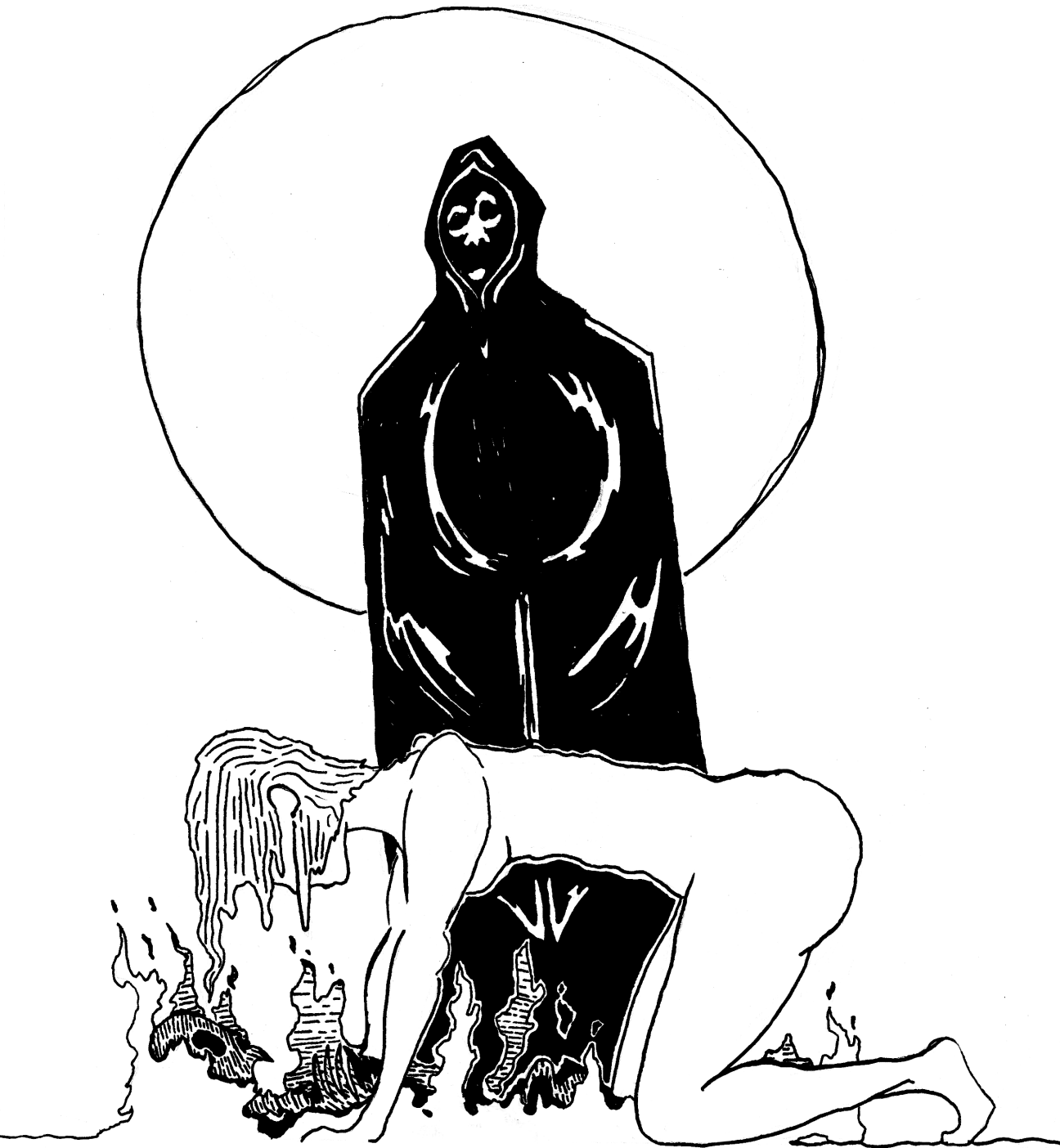
Slivers

Rhiannon Bergman | Poem

Cole Smith | Dip Pen

The wet sensibilities of the velvet night fall off sharply, deeply, to the more primal part of ourselves. After a praying mantis mates, the female grips the exhausted male in her arms and mows on his head. A sliver within me recognizes the sliver in her: the shard that recoils at her reflection in the dewdrop as she devours. That cries out for her mutilated lover and the murderer who has sentenced him so...

All because she could not go without his embrace.
All because they drew each other in — shadow to inky shadow — and the sliver of a moon only twinkling coldly above.



Lost

Kaia Hofmeister | Short Story

Elias Born | Scratchboard

“You’ve got to be kidding me,” I whispered under my breath. My 2003 rusted and beat up green Dodge Neon, or my “mold-mobile” as I liked to call it, lost power and rolled to a halt on the side of the road.

I turned the key so that it lay in the off position and opened my car door. I was more irritated than I’ve ever been with the squeaky hinges that screamed desperately for lubrication. Squishing my cigarette into the gravel that outlined the black pavement of the road, I grabbed my phone and checked for service but had none. I had barely twenty percent battery left on my phone and smoke billowing out from the hood of my car.

“Of course,” I mumbled to myself. “Just my luck.”

I glanced around me. As you might expect, getting stranded couldn’t happen anywhere near a gas station, a house, or rather any sort of industrialization at all. I could only see trees, and to be frank, that’s basically all I’ve seen for almost thirty minutes driving through this mountainous area of Oregon. I was attempting to travel to Eugene from Twin Falls, Idaho for college, and I was a good thirty minutes from reaching the outer region of the city.

Ever since I was a child, I had dreamed of going to the University of Oregon. After all, my father had attended that very school right after he graduated from high school. My father was a marine scientist, meaning he spent a lot of time near the ocean. I glanced down at the 90s-style watch that I received from him on my eighth birthday. It had a blue wrist-strap, a silver clock, purple hands and numbers, and a small blue dolphin in the center of it. I wore it every day to feel closer to him, and even though he picked it up from the gift shop when he first got his job at the Oregon

Coast Aquarium, it still remained important to me. My mom on the other hand, was a stickler and refused to move away so she could remain close to her side of the family. As a result, my parents split when I was four. I didn’t see my father much, so going to this college would not only bring me an hour from the coast, but it also gave me hope that by attending the same college as he, I might feel closer even when he wasn’t around. This was a new start for me, a place close enough to go home on occasion but also to spare me from surprise visits from my mother.

The trees were old with big strong trunks towering over me, stretching with long arms over the road. They extended towards the sky, grasping for a glimpse of even the tiniest bit of sunlight. They consisted of firs, pines, aspens, and redwoods, and between them weaved a rocky shallow stream that flowed swiftly with freezing cold water. Ahead of me on the road there was a SPEED LIMIT 45 sign with a curved, right-pointing arrow warning drivers of the next upcoming turn. I hadn’t seen a car for a little while, but considering how close I was to Eugene, I knew it was only a matter of time.

I popped the hood and paced around the front of my mold-mobile and accepted quickly that I don’t know jack about cars. I could hear an engine echoing behind me through the trees, so I positioned myself to be protected behind the front of my car but also to be seen by upcoming traffic. As soon as I could see the beastly roaring semi coming around the curve behind me, I began waving it down. The driver of the semi squealed his truck to a stop.

The driver parked his truck in front of my car, left it running, and jumped down from the driver’s seat. He walked around to the back of the truck to greet me. He looked like he hadn’t showered in several days, and definitely looked like he slept in the back of his truck. He wore a worn-out gray sweater with holes in it, some resembling ash burns from the droppings of a lit cigarette. His beard and teeth were stained yellow, and on the top of his head perched a dirty old camouflage baseball cap.

“Is everything okay over here?”

“Uh, I guess not,” I half-heartedly laughed. “My car stopped running out of nowhere and I’m trying to get to Eugene.”

“I don’t have time to give ya engine help or a tow, but I could give ya a ride down to Eugene if you’d like,” the driver offered. “Hop on in.”

He began walking to the front of his truck on the right side, as if leading me towards the passenger door. A small smile crept across his face, and he gestured for me to follow him.

I’ve never been one to judge a book by its cover, but the way he smiled formed a pit in my stomach. I hesitated. If I left my car, I would be going into Eugene with no way to get back out there. There was traffic on this road, and I felt there was a solid chance that someone else would most likely pull over and offer to help. Additionally, I didn’t know anyone in Eugene yet, and part of my gut told me I should stay put and wait for either a tow or help on my car.

“That’s okay,” I replied. “I think I can get it figured out.”

“Are you sure?” The driver insisted. “I really don’t mind the company. I’ve been driving for days with nobody to talk to except for when I stop for gas at truck stops. Really, I don’t mind.”

I paused and considered but denied the ride again. “No, that’s okay. But I really appreciate the offer.”

The smile dissipated from his face. “Suit yourself.” He nodded goodbye and turned to walk to the driver’s seat. He climbed up into his truck, sat there for a short while, then proceeded to drive off.

A feeling of relief settled in my chest. I know it might not have been smart to deny a ride into town, considering the sun was on its way down and I was nearly missing my move-in time for the dorms. But I told myself it’s better to move in late than not move in at all.

I jumped up to sit down on the trunk of my mold-mobile. I’d hear cars approaching, jump down to wave them, but none of them slowed down to help. I began to get nervous again, wondering if maybe I had missed my only chance for a ride into Eugene. Maybe an hour passed, the sun making its downward shift back towards the horizon. I noticed the darkening shift from afternoon to evening as the sun slowly crept behind the trees.

Eventually, a black Passat came around the corner and hit its brakes. This vehicle pulled around in front of me, to the same place that the semi had pulled over, and a young gentleman stepped from the vehicle. He looked like he was late 20s or early 30s and wore a black business suit with black dress shoes to match. He had a fresh shaven face, with kind eyes, and a sort of gel-styled hairstyle. A comforting appearance in comparison to the semi driver — in fact, this guy was almost attractive.

“Do you need help?” he asked.

“Yeah, if you could,” I almost begged. “My engine stopped running while driving to Eugene, and I have no idea what’s wrong with it.”

He walked over to the popped hood and started peering inside of it. “Could you try turning it on for me?”

I explained how it started smoking when it shut down. He stopped and looked at me. “When was the last time you changed your oil?”

I shrugged. “I’m probably about due.”

He pulled the dip stick from my engine and inspected the shiny tip that should’ve been covered in oil.

I gasped. “I’m an idiot,” I admitted.

“At this rate, I can’t really do anything for you. There’s no way your car will get started with no oil, and your engine is probably fried. I can’t

tow it with my small car, but I can get you a ride to town. Do you know where you're going?"

"The University of Oregon," I answered. "Today is move in day. I'm a freshman."

"You'll love it there. I grew up in Oregon and graduated a few years ago. I'm Kyle." He stuck out his hand for me to shake it. I took it.

"I'm Kate."

"Go ahead and grab whatever you think you'll need. I don't have much space in my car, but we can cram the back end full."

I popped open the trunk of the mold-mobile and started pulling out my suitcases. I heard Kyle open the back end of his vehicle and begin shifting things around, I assumed to make space for my things. As I turned to roll my suitcase over to his car, I felt a hand grab my arm. I tried to turn to see what grabbed me and caught Kyle with a malicious smile on his face. I panicked, but before I could do anything else, I felt a hand wrapped with cloth cover my face. I looked him dead in the eye while trying to scream. His face became serious. His hand with the cloth tightened over my mouth and nose. I couldn't breathe. I struggled. I became light-headed and began to black out. I knew exactly what was going on. Chloroform.

* * * * *

I woke up in a dark musty room, propped horizontally on the firm mattress of a metal-framed bed with my hands bound behind my back. Immediately I began to panic. I peered down to see that my ankles were bound with rope. I tried to wiggle free with no success, but that didn't stop me from continuing to try. I tried to free my wrists, feeling my joints pop as I pulled and my skin scrape against the roughness of the rope that held them together. My eyes darted across the room as I looked for anything to help me cut through it. I saw puddles of water covering the cement



floor and I saw windows high on the wall, close to the ceiling. They were boarded up so I couldn't see what lay outside of them. A glimpse of light shimmered through a crack in the boards, drawing the question as to whether it was daytime or if there was some other source of light outside. I didn't know what day it was. I didn't know how long I'd been unconscious for. I had no idea if the college knew I was missing or if my family was aware. The thought of being unnoticed by the people that mattered to me shattered my heart, and I couldn't help but to get worked up and cry.

I heard a scuffling upstairs followed by footsteps on stairs. I froze to listen. They sounded like a rubber sole hitting wooden stairs, but I couldn't be too sure. My mind was racing as a door behind me whipped open. I rolled onto my back to look behind me, feeling a sharp pain of the rope being forced into my open wounds from trying to unbind my hands.

"Good morning sunshine," greeted Kyle as he sat on the bed next to me. He looked me closely with the eyes I once mistook for being kind. He put the back of his hand on my face to comfort me, but I pulled away in disgust. "Oh, come on darling. Don't be shy. You and I are going to be very close, and I can't wait to show you our room and the rest of the house. I just have to be sure that you won't run away from me first."

I stared at him, reminding myself to remain calm and to carefully choose my words for my reply. I tried to contain my anger and fright but eventually gave in and stammered. I tried to act as controlled as I possibly could in my response. "What — why — what is going on? Where am I?"

He leaned in and nearly whispered to me. "I saw you," he replied. "On the side of the road. You looked lost and lonely, and I knew right then that I could be the man to take care of you, and you could take care of me. We're going to be so happy together. But you have to trust me." I remained silent and continued to stare up at him. "Can I trust you?" he asked.

It may be a little redundant in consideration for any other kidnapping story, but I knew that if I fought him, I'd only be backsliding my escape.

If I had any hope of seeing my father or the rest of my family again, I'd have to choose my actions carefully.

I nodded in agreement and forced a smile. "You can trust me."

Kyle beamed. "I was hoping you'd say that! Now, let me make some arrangements and I'll come back for you." He got up to retreat to the door that he first emerged from. "I'll see you in a few days, Kate."

"Wait!" I screamed. "A few days? What do you mean? Can't I come with you now?" I pleaded.

He turned and looked back at me before closing the door behind him. "Oh no, my sweet darling. I must make sure I can trust you completely." He closed the door and locked it, and I followed the sound of his heavy footsteps as they pounded back up the stairs. I listened as they traveled across the house, and as another door slammed shut. I heard the sound of a car start up and drive away.

Twelve stairs, I counted. Nine steps across the house and I'm outside. I shrieked in frustration. Twenty-one steps 'til freedom. Add the maybe eight steps from me to the base of the stairs, that's thirty steps. The farthest thirty steps of my life.

I began searching again for anything to help unbind me. The walls were plain, a blank cement with the exception of some random empty hooks. The floor was empty besides the puddles I noticed before. The ceiling was blank, apart from a solo lightbulb with a short string dangling down to turn it off and on. I looked again at the boarded-up windows, now knowing that I'm in a basement and they probably lead to the ground outside. My head was spinning in circles. Bed, hooks, lightbulb, puddles, boarded windows. I racked my brain trying to figure out what I could do with any of these items.

Suddenly, I had an idea. It was far-fetched, but any idea was better than none. I rolled myself off the bed and despite landing in water and being

sprayed in the face by my own impact, I began kicking with both bound feet at the legs of the bed. They weren't welded together, only held together with bolts. Nothing was happening.

I adjusted myself to get a better angle on my kick, pushing myself further into a puddle of water. With every forceful kick, I had to spit water out of my face. With still nothing changing, I drew a large breath in and kicked with everything I had, causing my body to slide across the floor. But at that moment, I heard the pieces of metal grind against each other. Something was moving. I looked towards my feet and saw a leg being pushed from the main frame. I shifted backwards to kick it again. More shifting.

My body hurt from sliding across the cement floor and I was freezing from laying in the water, but I had to keep trying. I kept sliding and kicking and sliding and kicking the bed. The piece I wanted was circular, maybe a foot long and nearly an inch wide with a hollow center. After the fifth huge kick, I felt the leg give way. The bed tilted towards the ground in that corner, where the leg previously had been, but leveled back to its initial resting position.

I shifted around to grab the metal piece with my hands behind me. I wormed my way over to the wall, curled up into a ball with my back facing it, and used the leverage of my elbow to push me into a sitting position. From here, I planted my feet firmly on the ground and shimmed my way up until I was standing.

I jumped toward the center of the room until I was almost directly underneath the lightbulb. I bent over and threw the metal pipe towards it with hopes of it shattering. It missed and fell, echoing loudly as it hit the ground. I jumped to chase it. It came to a rest in the corner of the room, and I realized quickly that in order to pick it up again I had to repeat all my last actions from laying on the floor. I squatted down and fell on my side so I was laying down again. I felt around for the pipe, found it, and found my way to shimmy back up. This process took nearly twenty minutes.

This time, once I lined myself up with the lightbulb, I did mental and physical practice shots without letting go of the pipe. I took a deep breath, paused, and went for it. I heard the lightbulb shatter, and I felt the back of my neck get hit with broken glass. I searched for the biggest piece and laid down on the floor again to grab it. Immediately I felt for the sharpest edges, causing it to cut my hand in the process. I began to rub the sharpest side against the rope and realized this was going to be a time-demanding task. Shortly after, my hands began cramping, and I could feel the glass becoming loose in my fingers as blood drained from my cuts. I focused on how much I missed my family, and the fear of my unknown future drove me through the pain and kept cutting. After what felt like an hour of repetitive cutting back and forth I finally broke free from the rope.

“Oh my god,” I whispered to myself relieved. I wiped the blood from my hands on to my leggings and attempted to untie the rope at my feet. It was incredibly tight, so I began sawing again with the piece of glass. At this point I had a second wind of energy and had already gotten the hang of what I was doing, so I was able to free my feet within about twenty minutes.

Once they were free, I took a few minutes to stretch out my arms and legs. It took some getting used to walking again, and my hands hurt from my cuts and gripping glass for so long. I debated what my next move was. I took the metal pipe and went to the door. I began slamming it against the doorknob trying to break it off, but it wasn't budging.

I inspected the windows and tried to pry off the boards. I tried using the pipe as leverage against them. Nothing moved. I raised my voice again in frustration. How could I be so close yet so far from freedom? I wiped the blood again on my leggings. I sat on the bed to reanalyze my situation.

At that moment, I heard a vehicle pulling up outside. I heard the engine turn off and a car door open and slam shut. I wasn't sure if this was Kyle or someone else, so I grabbed my metal pipe again and stood to hide behind the door when it opened.

He said he'd be back in a few days, but I still checked my watch to remind myself it hadn't even been two hours.

I held it up ready to swing, and heard the same heavy shoes slowly thump down the stairs. I wiped my hands and gripped the metal pipe tighter. The doorknob clicked and the door slowly opened. I could hear my own heartbeat pounding in my chest. A figure emerged into the darkness of the room, and I noticed quickly that it was Kyle. I bashed him in the head as hard as I could with the metal pipe. He fell to the ground and I lept over him to run up the stairs.

From the top of the stairs, I noticed I was in an old, abandoned cabin. I glanced quickly around the room and looked for a door. Upon seeing one, I ran over and whipped it open. Outside it was daytime, and it looked like the same forest that my car had broken down in. I sprinted outside, ran straight ahead and didn't look back. I saw Kyle's car in the driveway and immediately hated myself for not grabbing his keys. I couldn't go back now; I couldn't take that risk of being held captive again. I kept running. I didn't know where I was or where I was going, all I knew was that I needed to run fast.

I heard the front screen door swing open behind me. Another wave of panic spread across my mind. I ran with everything I had.

I heard a loud pop and a sudden sharp pain pierced into my back. I looked down and saw blood draining from my stomach and filling my shirt. Another loud pop and I was lying face down in the dirt. I was screaming and crying, I had nothing left to lose now. I kept hoping that anyone would hear my wails. I scrambled as I tried to crawl forward, but my body hurt all around. My hands and my wrists ached. My stomach felt like someone was wringing it out like a towel, squeezing out every bit of life and fight I had left. I was losing blood fast. I could feel myself becoming dizzy. It hurt to breathe. I looked at my watch as if it could give me any sense of comfort. The front of it was covered in blood, I couldn't even see the dolphin on the front. I closed my eyes as I pictured

what it looked like before. I pictured my eighth birthday. I pictured my father and my family. I pictured anything but reality.

I heard twigs breaking under footsteps as they slowly approached me. I opened my eyes as Kyle's shadow came into focus on the ground beside me. He hovered above me.

"You dumb bitch," I heard Kyle remark. "I knew I couldn't trust you."

Burden of a Small Town

Nahi Luzena | Poem

Kasia Kucera | Scratchboard

If you don't know my face, you know a face that knows me.
I know your face from the face that knows me.
That's where anonymity fails me.

I dream to be unseen the way the wind is the breeze and the water is the sea —
You can't find me — how I wish to be.

Even as I sleep there is a face down the street whose seen me,
and knows faces, who know faces, who know me.

I felt free on a beach far east rather than here, but here
the trees call to me the way the peaks bleed spring and I breathe green
wildflowers — to be free.

I dream to leave, hope to leave, plan to — will leave...
So there are no faces down the street who know me.
So when you don't know my face, a face you know won't know me.



Moving

Rhiannon Bergman | Poem

Ana Ibarra | Dip Pen

Symphonies of sunwork, frozen in their
eternal push towards the skies, my
mother's flowers wink at me across
the table in their brown vase.

She brought them here four days ago, surviving
the hour long drive from home
where they grew out of an old tire bed —
a wild bush in the harsh adobe.
They stand, mouths agape, in my new
apartment, amongst jars of cheap spaghetti
sauce and uninhabited corners.

Their long stems track the drowsy migration of
clouds burdened with water: a legato of grey camels.
Bursting at the tips — white, cadmium, bright
fuchsia — these common flowers during the holy zenith,
the summer's allegro, nearly obliterated themselves
for joy.

This morning they remember waving in the breeze
of my parents backyard. They tremble, send me
the last of their perfume, attempting to share this
orchestra of transformation.



The Carpenter

Amber Lobato | Poem

Emily Mendus | Scratchboard

It was first gathered out of a thought by a carpenter,
But Seemingly forgotten, long awaiting His return,
Left as tall and as slim and as old as It was,
All of its dust gathered in corners,
Its crooks and crevices creaked.
Being recognized immediately and marked for erosion,
It had finally surrendered to a boundless gale.

Until the earth and sky had fallen away to reveal His hands,
Hands that could allure the mightiest of redwoods,
He gave it walls like a wingate and halls like a winding valley,
So that the wind no longer withered it,
But moved through it like a breath through an instrument.

All had been forgiven and built new
For the old had passed away.



Tourist Trap

Kaia Hofmeister | Poem

Kasia Kucera | Dip Pen

In the small town valley of sunshine
Filled with grape vines and great views,
There's a few summer visitors
That sleep until near noon.
Some come for a vacation,
Some vow they won't stay long,
Some happily cozy themselves right up,
And pull their vans out on the lawn.
What are they coming for you ask?
Why do they stay so long?
They've found out about our secret,
Our sweet little claim to fame.
It's what keeps us all in business,
These small berries are to blame.
One sip, one swallow, maybe one swirl,
It puts venom in their veins
Keeping all the tourists attached,
Claiming victims without shame.
It's easy to say, the verdict is clear —
People are happiest when they are here.



Keep Me in Your Wallet

Mariaine Gonzalez Martinez | Short Story

Elias Born | Scratchboard

My dad has a photograph of me in his wallet — or at least he used to. It is a photo of me sitting on my grandma’s eroded emerald green steps in her home in Jalisco, Mexico. I am wearing a baby pink shirt and some blue jeans. My hair is up in two little pigtails and my hands are holding a mini guitar — I think it’s green. I am looking at the camera with a crooked smile plastered on my face. That photograph must have been taken when I was about two years old.

According to my mom, my dad once had lush hair that was the color of burned caramel. Slowly, though, it began to thin until he eventually became bald. I would hear stories of this man constantly, never really understanding who he was. All I knew was that he would come home occasionally, and we had to travel to meet him other times. I do not recall wishing he were home, and I also do not remember hoping to see him. It was a superficial relationship in which I was told to love him and so I did. When I asked why he is gone so often, my mom would say something along the lines of, “He is not home because we need food. Don’t you like eating ice cream?”

I would nod my head and whisper, “Yes, I do like ice cream.” There is not much a child can do in such a confusing situation, and so I stopped asking about him and began to forget him, too.

He was absent for about a year — at least I think so — before he returned home. I was four years old, and the last time he had visited I was almost three. When he arrived, he might have been wearing a red jacket, but I do recall his blue snap-back, a Marlboro cigarette hanging from his lips, and the red box was in his jacket. Dad is a smoker, it is evident in his yellow stained teeth, wrinkled cheeks, and constant cough. He smelled like tobacco and sweat, and his face was red, just like the

tomatoes he hand-picked in Los Banos. I stood at the door as he smiled and said “Hola mi niña.” My eyes widened and I began to slowly step away. I was afraid, unaware of who he was.

After running inside, I screamed for my mom. I might have said something like, “There’s a weird man outside! He’s red and skinny.” There was no way for me to understand who he was because I was too afraid to ask. My breathing was fast, and my hands were cold. My mom laughed and scolded me for being disrespectful to my dad. It was not my fault I had forgotten him. I did not recognize him; how could I have known? He came inside and set his bag down. His wallet was near me, just next to my hand. My hand reached out and touched it as I scanned the room to make sure no one caught me looking at the stranger’s wallet. Although I cannot recall the exact state of it, I assume it was rectangular and a red-brown color. He once told me he prefers those wallets. Inside, I saw a couple of photographs, all of them were of my sisters, mom, and I.

I must admit, the rest of this memory is quite blurry. The secret mission was quickly aborted because I was not a nimble child. My idea of being secretive involved panting relentlessly and running frantically to the corner of the room with the wallet in my hands. My memory ends there. I hate this hazy memory; I wish I could recall more vividly. After I immigrated to the United States, he became aggressive, deceitful, and arrogant. These characteristics might have been present since I was two, but I didn’t know him then. Sadly, those memories of me hiding and running away from him are more vivid than my 20-year-old photograph memory.

I had forgotten about this photograph and the recounter until my senior year of high school, when I was asked for a baby picture for the yearbook. My bright pink photo album covered in flower stickers had more than 200 photos then and finding the best one was a tedious task. After flipping through the plastic pages, I came upon the same photograph that was in my dad’s wallet. His bright red face appeared in my mind and haunted me, but in some strange way, it was soothing. I wondered if he still had the photograph in his wallet. He might remember me as a two-year-old with a

crooked smile, but all I wanted was for him to remember.

I sat with the album open on top of my legs and felt angry at myself for not being able to recall his embrace. I could not remember him when he crossed a nation to see me or his arrivals from sunny California — but I remember his wallet. Those slightly crumpled photos, each with some sort of stain, he seemed to have admired them a lot. I cannot blame myself for not remembering him because I was oblivious of the power of time; but if I could remember it all, I would.

Three years have passed since I last saw that photograph, and six months have passed since the last time I saw my dad. He was lying on a hospital bed, tubes around his arms and a bloodstain on his blanket. That day, six months ago, he said he had a heart attack. I hurried to the hospital in Glenwood Springs, CO, hoping that maybe he was lying. Hoping he just wanted to manipulate me. I was wrong. His decades of smoking have caught up to him, and now his lungs and heart are slowing down. Months later, I am still unsure about how I feel about his slowing heart. I still wish he were lying. I still wish he were trying to manipulate me.

In the hospital room, I saw his wallet on the green counter next to a window. I wanted to look inside it — I wanted to find the photograph. I wondered if he still looks at those stained photographs that follow him wherever he goes — and if he feels love and endearment when he sees them. Even now, although my photograph is two decades old, I hope he keeps me in his wallet.



Spanglish

Lizzette Gonzalez | Poem

Leo Manuppella | Dip Pen

3rd gen genetically
But mouthwash will take the whitewash right out of me
Cuz something that you can't see
Is the Latina brewing up in me
The hesitation of
"oh does she speak?"
Dos idiomas, fluently

They say, "there's no way you could be,"
But yes,
My grandparents crossed the border for me
And I won't hesitate when I say
Soy mexicana
Duranguense
Con la sangre de zacatecas por mi padre.

Yet it's not enough
Por que siempre tienen algo que decir
Is the color of my skin the only thing that you see
Cuz thats the negativity you bring to the 3rd gens like me.

We'll never be enough to fit into the categories you bring
Judging left and right
Esta gringa ni puede hablar
But do your grandkids speak?

I might be whitewashed but I don't trash talk
Cuz I bleed on two flags and yet
I don't bleed enough on one.



Echo of Red(s)

Red Tomanek | Poem

“...Mother Nyx, bear me, mother who gave birth to me as a retribution for the blind and the seeing.” – Eumenides by Aeschylus, line 321.

Cardinals in pine trees,
Her favorite bright stars
On her winter birthday.
Red was her color (blue was her favorite),
Seen in the birds and pennies.

Penny Mae Brant, Mistress of the Shadows,
Unwound galaxies because she loved her husband.
Constellations of knowledge at the snap of her fingers,
Shared between five children, eleven grandchildren,
Hundreds of used-to-be third graders.

Everyone came to visit Miss Penny Young,
Earth's very own supernova.
Kitchen littered with handmade trinkets,
From all different holidays,
Years of school and lineage.

Summers were strewn with family,
Each child coming home from all over the night skies,
Colorado, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, China,
Their own children coming with them,
To spend a black hole's time with the matriarch.

Eventually, the clock caught up with her,
At five P.M. on March 14th, 2014.
But 'do not stand at my grave and weep,
I am not there, I did not die,'
She said from the mirror.

Typography Notes

The body text in this edition is set in the elegant Garamond typeface. Garamond itself and similar serif typefaces are named after French type designer Claude Garamond, although there are many different versions made over the centuries.

The elegance of Garamond is paired with a geometric and heavier sans-serif typeface named Europa for the titles, designed by Swiss typographer Fabian Leuenberger.

The story credits were typed with monospace typeface Prestige Elite, a stark departure from Garamond and Europa. Prestige was designed before the popular monospace typeface Courier but never achieved the same levels of popularity. While Howard Kettler, the designer of Courier, is sometimes attributed with Prestige's design, other sources point to Clayton Smith designing it for IBM in the 1950s, where Kettler also designed Courier.

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