



SPRING 2024 ISSUE

THE PAPERCLIP
BOARD

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SCYTHE MALONE
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ELEANOR GRANSTROM
EDDIE KUMMERER
EVA CHERKASKY
MAX SILVERSTEIN

EDITOR'S NOTE

This time of year always has a wistful sort of energy about it. Spring is a time of transition. It is a time of nostalgia and reminiscing just as much as it is a time for change. With the blooming flowers, the promise of summer sun, and graduation imminent for some, here at the Paperclip we felt that "Beginnings and Endings" was the most appropriate theme for this issue. This season's collection of original student writing and artwork is caught in the tension between the past, present and the future. With both sentimental poetry and prose, and pieces with moods of longing or regret, this issue takes you through a journey that dismisses the linear nature of time. Those who submitted to this issue were fearless with their storytelling when it comes to taking on the vulnerability of memory and the uncertainty of the future. Thank you to all those who submitted, and thank you for taking a look at this issue. With that, you've come to the end of this note and the beginning of the Spring 2024 issue of the Paperclip. We hope you are armed with tissues (for both tears and whatever spring allergies may plague you).

Anonymous

FLOWER

I have no intention to bloom
I'd much rather sit in my cocoon
While away the hours
While my hard shell provides
Shelter from the rain
A part of me starts turning green
I am quite disturbed - unsure what it
means
As a drizzle lashes down
My green begins to grow
Until it pushes past my rigid roof
And a glimpse of a yellow beacon
Clouds my view
As the rays hit my skin I feel renewed
I can hardly believe my prior mood



FIRST TIME



Anonymous

MIRAGE

dreams feel like memories of you

my subconscious painting false days and
conversations

desire filling in the gaps of what I know

you become a person I have fabricated by
my mind

so now I can't help but be disappointed by
the truth



ANONYMOUS



Graduation

Lucy La Fond

An Original Piece

I collected my thoughts while I collected my things from the dorm. My side of the room looked bare and gray; somehow barer and grayer than it always was.

When I first arrived at St. Louis School for Gifted Boys (girls had been attending as of 1985), all my things had fit in one suitcase and one backpack. Yesterday, Dad and I had to go into town to buy me a second suitcase. I hadn't the slightest clue where all this other stuff came from, but I believed Jeremiah and Elizabeth had something to do with it.



Dad peaked his head in just past the door frame, asking, "Hey, kid, you ready to hit the road yet?"

I blinked a couple of times, my voice quiet when I replied, "Hm? Give me one more second."

Dad chuckled, ducking back out into the hall.

I took one last good look at my room. There was this one spot on the wall where the dull paint had been chipped by the spine of Jeremiah's 400 page philosophy textbook as it hit the wall during his most recent Dante rant. I took one last look at the posters on his side of the wall. The Beach Boys, The Beatles, and The Who. Every night, Paul McCartney's gaze would meet mine in the dark and spend a shiver up my spine.

My eyes moved to my side of the room, to my IKEA desk and carefully made bed. The only mark I had left on the room was a faint coffee cup stain on the surface of the desk.

I heard a familiar voice greet my father outside in the hall.

"Hi, Jeremiah," Dad said. "My boy's in the room, if you wanna chat with him before we head out."

Jeremiah's voice wavered. "Yeah, you know what, I was actually looking around for him. Thanks."

Dad must have nodded in response, because there was a moment of silence before Jeremiah entered our room.

"Hey dude," he said, leaning against the doorframe. "Packing?"

I turned to face him. I spent a moment staring at the blonde mop atop his head, his grey eyes, his untucked uniform, and his bright red sneakers. He wore a forced smile on his face, and it pulled uncomfortably at his ruddy cheeks.

"I was just about done," I muttered, answering his question painfully late. As much as I had resented Jeremiah when I had first met him, he was the one I would miss the most.

"How does it feel to be valedictorian of a class you weren't even in?" He joked, trying to start up a conversation. Any other person might have said that out of jealousy or annoyance, but Jeremiah wasn't like that.

"Fine. I don't know. I mean I've been taking senior classes with alot of those guys since the summer."

"Yeah."

There was a heavy silence.

Jeremiah spoke up. "I'm gonna miss you alot, man. Call me, okay?"

"I will." My throat was dry. "Are you going to get a new roommate?"

He shrugged "Maybe if we get a transfer."

"Come on, we gotta hustle!" Dad called from the hall. "Flights in an hour and a half."

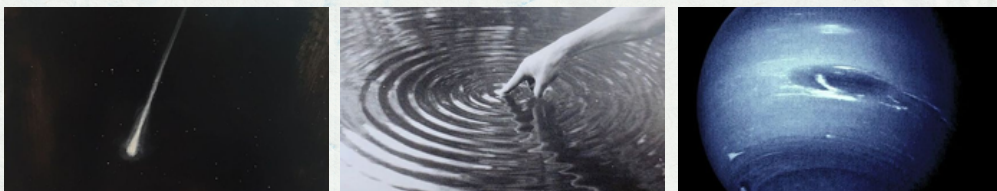
Jeremiah wrapped his arm around me for a brief moment before stepping aside so I could exit the room.

"See you around," he said quietly as I left the room. I walked down the hall with Dad, and Jeremiah stood in the doorway of the dorm, watching me walk away.

I waved back to him before we turned the corner.

BURN OUT

[EVA CHERKASKY]



We had climbed into that hollow space, behind my eyes, behind my gaze
 And we watched the rays of light fall through, illuminating the walls with a soft blue hue
 Upon those walls you painted stars, next to them the planets; neptune, venus, mars
 In that cosmic sea I danced with the waves, ran on the warm sand and explored the caves
 Everything felt at ease, no fear of how fast time flees
 But when you silently slipped away, I stood at the shore awaiting you all day
 When I realized you would not return, the paint cracked, the stars began to burn,
 i became ashes, and the room my urn
 The cracks scaled the wall like a great spider, leaving its web of crevices behind
 There they sat up in the corner, mocking, tormenting my mind.
 The stars fell in the sea, and boiled all the water,
 So when I tried to swim away, my skin began to splutter
 I feel trapped inside this room, no way to breathe or move
 I close my eyes avoid with sleep, and hope memories of the sea will soothe
 And as I slumber the embers fall, coating my body with a gray snow
 All noise fades from my head, as the planets lose life below
 But as the barren land settles in, I suddenly can't rest
 How can I choose to die under this thick snow, in a world I now detest?
 How can I let the spider laugh, the planets sizzle out?
 For even if the sea is arid now, it once had water before the drought.
 And clumsily I hoist my body up, I rebuild all of my bones
 Rekindling the stars, searching for the lost blue tones
 Once again I sit down at the shore, recollecting how it had been
 When the stars were not yet dim, the water not yet a grayish green.
 But I had slept, and cannot hibernate no longer,
 for even if I had once died with the land, I have awakened stronger.

EVA CHERKASKY

A LOVE POEM TO SPRING



The bulbs had shot out through the thick layer of dirt and with them they pulled up the rest of the grass, as if inverting the ground. The soil became soft and malleable, enclosing my shoulders in its soft padding. It was breathable like linen for if I lay my nose down to the ground I could take in the sheer air infused greenery. Flowers covered the land in kisses, petals brushing the lips of the divots and dimples, I plucked them like strings, resting their rootless stems and bleeding heads in my lap.

Amy Schneiderman

INTERTWINED

Life is full of them -
 the first day of school
 adopting a pet
 making a new friend.
 Sometimes they're disguised -
 getting let go from a job
 a falling out
 a rejection letter.
 New beginnings and endings
 doors that open and close at once
 false chapter breaks.
 Life is full of them -
 beginnings.
 Sometimes they're disguised -
 as endings.
 It's never really clear
 whether the start or end is near.

BROKEN BY DEFINITION

GABRIEL THOMPSON

My mind is like a glass rose
 Once pretty, once perfect, a fractal by nature
 Now shattered, Now broken, Never again perfect, a cracked and
 bandaged rose suffering from a sad depressed posture
 Shattered by the insufferable pressure that is success
 Query? What causes something to break, or become broken? What
 does it mean to be broken?

Broken

Contains Two different meanings

By definition

verb

- past participle of break¹.

adjective

1. having been fractured or damaged and no longer in one piece or in
 working order

Under this first definition, Can a heart ever be broken? Can a mind be
 broken? Can a soul be damaged?

Is my mind broken?

Thinking all the time, yet unable to think straight

My minds like a computer with a hundred youtube tabs open

Always listening, yet never able to hear clearly

Telling myself I'll be fine, but finding that I can't even find myself in
 the cloud of my own thoughts

My mind, unable to cope, and instead of fixing the problem engineers
 a solution

Instead of addressing problems, I drown them all out.

Drown them out with music, a constant rhythm to unify the noise and suppress my mental baggage

Are my eyes broken?

My eyes, like a river that has flown for a decade

And for a the last nine years a dam has blocked the flow

The dam, creaking and Cracking from the pressure, appears to stand strong.

I give it a fresh coat of paint to keep people from worrying

But the next thing you know, one Crack becomes two, two to four and next thing you know the damage is too much to ignore

And when the dam finally breaks,

Years of pent-up stress and pressure come flowing out in the from of anger

Anger not directed at anyone but engulfing everything in flames around in flames

Is my heart Broken?

Always beating in side of me, yet never knowing what it means to love

My heart, never skipped a beat or ceased to deliver my breath in the morning or at night

But still in the morning and at night, my heart wonders whether it's truly feeling, or simply working so it might one day rest

Working like the students and adults at school, always working now so they can rest later

My heart, afraid that any mistake made now will cost me my future

My heart, forever stuck in this cycle, scared to make a change and never changing because it's scared

Is my soul broken?

My soul is like a child's teddy bear

Always in the bed at night, never in the bed sleeping

Never sleeping because it was never built to sleep

It was made to comfort the young child when he is frightened at night

It was made to be the one who always listens, the who one wouldn't judge, the one who wouldn't talk back, the one who couldn't talk back

The bears eyes always open wide never sleeping, yet always dreaming of what it could be if it was free

It is because of these things that I am broken

My mind always thinking to much

My heart never feeling enough

My soul never well rested

My eyes forever restless

Me, myself, as a person, forever broken beyond repair, functioning but not fully functional.

Broken

Contains Two different meanings

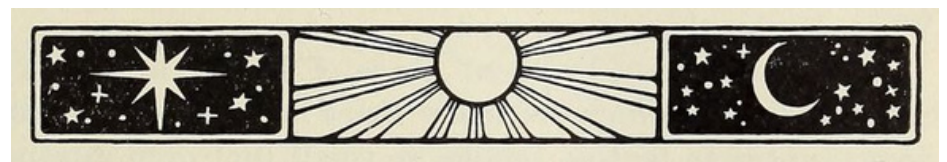
By definition

verb

- past participle of break¹.

adjective

2. (of a person) having given up all hope; despairing.





Anonymous

EARLY APRIL

On Sheridan a dog barks
 He is out for a walk
 Without his little sweater
 And I am wearing shorts!
 Finally the right weather
 The wind whistles
 A kite flaps by - low over my head
 "Do people still fly those?"
 I probably said
 The daffodils in the neighbor's yard
 Were eaten by a squirrel
 And the rainwater spray - from a bike -
 Stains my white linen

I lost a friend
 I am not talking about the one
 Who shut me out just months ago
 That's the one I thought I'd write poems about
 Could write poems about
 Would write poems about
 But I am not thinking about her
 I am thinking about
 The one from seventh
 The one who understood
 Now he sits
 Buzzed.
 We used to walk
 Our minds
 Buzzing
 Sober.
 Drunk on the wild thoughts
 Of how life
 Could go
 Would go
 Didn't go.
 I wish I could talk to you
 Make your mind
 Buzz
 In the good way
 Bring you back to where you
 Should be
 Could be
 Would be
 If we had stayed friends
 You would be better
 And I wish we could walk
 But we don't
 We won't
 I lost a friend

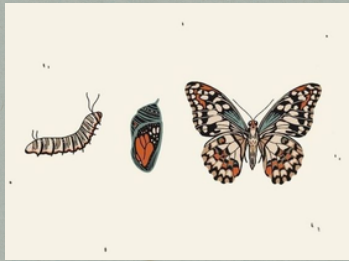
ANONYMOUS

**NOT
 WHO I
 THOUGHT
 THIS WOULD
 BE ABOUT**



SUDDENLY

[ELLIOT HOFFNER]



I remember standing on tiptoes to rest my forehead on the cool plastic of the fridge shelves. Suddenly I have to lean down. I remember when the glasses were for the adults. Suddenly the plastic cups are for the kids. I remember the sweatpants I bought three years ago that I had to tie at the bottoms. Suddenly they're too short. I won't trip on them anymore. Suddenly sneakers don't have Velcro and my mom's shoes are too small to slide on. Suddenly the high schoolers in the movies are my age. A lot of the nice things are gone. Suddenly the world isn't simple.

But there's new nice things. There's car rides with my dad where I sit in the front seat and listen to Billy Joel and Tori Amos. There's talks with my mom about anything and everything. Suddenly I can walk to the bakery by myself and pay with my own money. Suddenly I can make plans without asking my mom to ask your mom. It's freeing. I am my own person.

Some things stayed the same. I still have Curious George books on my bedside table. I still pile blankets and stuffed animals on my bed. I still like skirts and headbands and princess movies. I still like taking the train downtown with my dad on the weekends. And I still rest my head on the fridge and wear those suddenly-too-short sweatpants because sometimes growing up happens all too suddenly.

Aminata Sow

ONLY I6

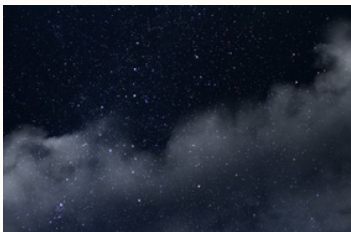
I'm only I6
 If only they knew
 As I have shed way too many tears
 Not sure if I have enough for you
 I'm only I6
 As I look out the window
 And I notice one side of the street is covered in melting snow
 And the other is perfectly glistening under the sun
 Wondering the time I'll ever feel that type of warmth again
 I'm only I6
 But I'm supposed to grow thick skin
 Shove happiness in the sight of pain
 As my smooth brown skin grows thicker in pain each day
 Invisible scars layered on top of another
 I'm only I6
 And I'm already too tired of displaying my smile
 White teeth out
 Corners of my mouth reaching each ear
 I can do it all day
 Wouldn't you call that genuine?
 After all, I'm only I6
 Trying to be as grateful as I can
 But I can't seem to fulfill the greatness in me
 Because I keep on falling
 And falling
 And falling
 Without knowing where to land
 I'm only I6
 As I look out the windows
 Cars passing by freely
 People witness a girl with deep brown eyes
 Looking out the windows
 Wondering about the potential the eyes hold
 If only they could get a closer look
 If only they could see how saddened
 And lonely these eyes are
 If only they knew
 I'm only I6

Oh, Darling

OLIVIA TANKEVICIUS

An Original Piece

The moon rises before the chance to even enjoy the sun
 But darling, we're made of stardust
 Why make memories with the risk of forgetting
 But darling, we're made of stardust
 My presence in a crowd of individuals is not significant
 But darling, we're made of stardust
 If it's all temporary why even bother
 But darling, we're made of stardust
 We're so small compared to the universe so why even care
 But darling, we're made of stardust
 Life is so short in the history of time
 But darling, we're made of stardust
 How can I enjoy this futile life when the only thing I can be positive to expect is death?
 Oh, darling
 Every person
 Every ounce of your being
 Every atom
 Was created long before Earth was ever formed
 Inside a raging star
 It's so easy to forget
 But why waste time worrying about the inevitable
 The unchangeable and constant
 When you can enjoy what you have
 What you are
 Oh, darling, we're made of stardust



ANONYMOUS

ENDINGS TO NEW BEGINNINGS



I didn't realize it was an ending,
 It was the last time we would talk,
 The last time we would laugh,
 The last time we would watch a movie,
 The last time we would talk about boys,
 The last sleepover,
 The last facetime,
 The last summer,
 The last text.
 I didn't realize that we weren't gonna be friends forever
 I kept hoping we'd talk again
 But when i see you it seems you've moved on
 Maybe I finally should too.
 Here's to new beginnings.
 letting go of those friends,
 Releasing the pain and pent-up guilt,
 Freeing myself from overthinking,
 Letting myself feel my feelings.
 Here's to new beginnings,
 New memories
 New hopes
 New dreams
 New best friends
 Here's to finding myself.

The Ending

Anonymous

An Original Piece

I laid my head on your shoulder
and allowed myself to rest

And you didn't think about kissing me
you didn't wonder if your collar smelled of enough cologne
you didn't try to remember something profound to say
to try and make me laugh
you just let me close my eyes
and press the weight of my exhaustion into you
and of course I didn't love you
but in that moment you understood
and it was euphoric

I think you asked me questions
with my hair against the warmth
of the curve of your neck
to try and dissect my endless fatigue
and I was breathless at the wonder
of having something to answer

When my alarm finally rang
and I opened my actual eyes
I was still very tired
and your shoulder was nowhere in sight

And that is when I was positive that
this feeling of being exhausted and understood
with my head comfortable against your skin
could never really have been real



Notes On College(s)

ELEANOR GRANSTROM

Acceptance Rate: 92%

Location/Distance: Allendale, MI. Around a 3 to 3.5 hour drive from Evanston.

Further Details: Twenty minute drive to Lake Michigan from the campus, according to my mother. Fifteenish shuttle bus ride to the nearest city, Grand Rapids, according to our presenter. The spread of concrete, buildings, and concrete buildings on the edge of Grand Rapids scream Midwest. Even farther out are a tangle of highways arching over and under one another, and lead in and out of the city. They also, might I add, scream Midwest. As you delve (drive) deeper into the city, it begins to slope up into a gentle hill. Small colorful shops with black awnings populate the first floor of closely packed buildings. Green metal chairs and tables sit outside restaurants. My mom and I got lost.

If you drive from Grand Rapids to the actual college, any and all city remnants melt away. The ground becomes flat and green and the singular highway stretches on. It doesn't feel precisely rural. (Maybe because you just came from a city.) But you can see the entire sky. The buildings are different colors. Some are old white stone, others are reddish orange bricks, and a few are various shades of gray. A metal bridge crosses over what I cannot describe better than as the tiniest ravine to exist. At the bottom is a small stream. I asked our tour guide if anyone went down there, and she said some environmental or agricultural classes do, but otherwise there isn't much reason to. I felt embarrassed and my mom smirked at me.

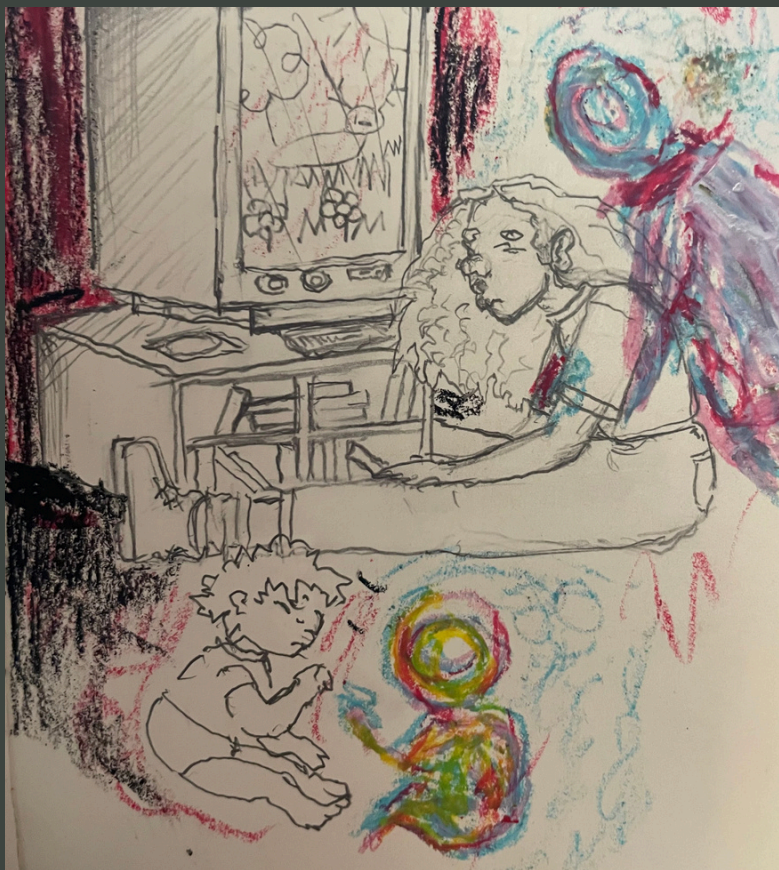
Number of Students: 19,239

Avg. Cost After Aid: 17K

Creative Writing Program Details: Cross out 'creative' and you've got it!



GHOSTS



D



ANYA GILL

IN TWO YEARS TIME



In two years time
 I won't live here anymore
 I will visit instead
 And familiar faces will blend together like watercolor
 Seeping into a swirl of gray
 Like a film reel with scratches in it
 I will flip through a book of memories
 Not remembering
 A new face
 Drawn in freshly sharpened pencil
 Will ask me about everything
 And I will attempt to rewind it
 To capture my reality two years prior

THEIR LAST DAY

AN EXCERPT FROM AN ANONYMOUSLY WRITTEN SHORT STORY

The end of everything can sometimes feel like a new beginning. The phrase itself is a contradiction. "New beginning" is redundant. Isn't it? Every beginning is new. Everything new is a beginning. But things aren't that simple, not all the time at least. For example, a human life. Does it really have a beginning, middle, and end? If so, is each "newborn" baby really new? Some cultures believe that each soul is derived from pure light. Others believe that a baby can be anything, not just what you see. It can be an old ancestor, the bringer of all evil, the doctor that will cure every last disease. It is difficult to comprehend that what you see isn't what's really there. Nonetheless, science suggests that each baby- each human organism is a combination of genes that's never been created before. Biologically, each kid is passed on every allele from both parents, but only some are translated into traits. What happens to the other traits? Are they secrets if you aren't trying to hide them? What if the difference between you and the stranger next to you is nothing but one single gene pair, one calculation our bodies made we didn't even take note of? How can you say the person next to you isn't family?

This is a question I run over and over in my head- constantly. Incessantly, without end. It would be painful, don't you think? To expect a new thought to arise- a new beginning, but each time the cycle ends, it starts again. I begin to think of how it's possible my own family could forget, and just when I think the thoughts have been mulled over, extracted from every last crevice of my mind- it begins again. The agony.

However, I'm getting ahead of myself, the story has only just begun. I first have to explain to you the surroundings, the setting of the story. My minimal years of schooling taught me that much. So, the setting. It begins in the countryside- somewhere unremarkable. The only thing that mattered to me there was the house. In my head, I gave it a name that doesn't seem appropriate anymore

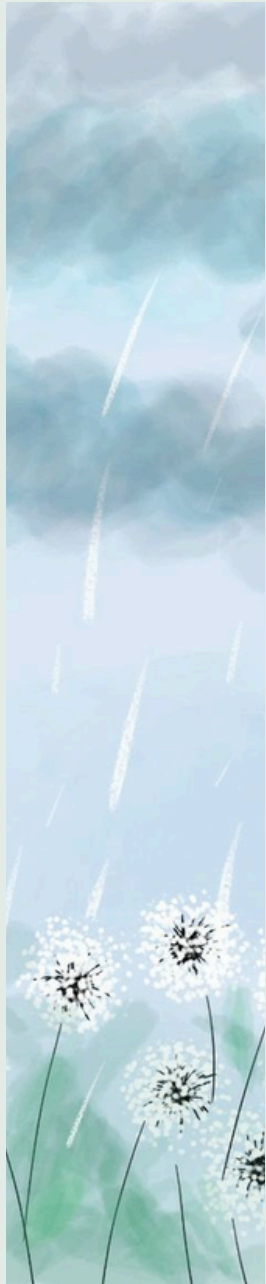
I can't bring myself to write it down. I don't think I will- this story, whatever it may be to you... Well, there are just some things I can't write. Some things belong to me, and that's that. It's all I have left in this world, that house. Nonetheless, I'm hoping that by writing down this story, I can abate some of my treacherous thoughts. That's what the psychologists tell me to do. Write. So I do. At least when I feel dangerous. I never thought I'd be someone who follows orders, but I've learnt that every single bit of individuality I could have here is gone. The singularity I believed would set me apart as a child has now disappeared. I've been proved wrong many times. And yes, it's painful. Painful to be proved wrong, painful to circle the same thoughts, painful to feel my hands cramp as I write this, and painful to digress. Yet, I do.



The house. In this house lived a lovely old woman named Saint Agatha. She wasn't a real Saint, but that doesn't matter. To me she was. To everyone she was. I remember, when I was younger, trying to sneak out of my own little house, and traveling across the expansive fields to reach Saint Agatha's house. She was never unkind- just unfair. I'm not sure I should be saying this. One day, as I said earlier, I snuck out of my own house, an old barn my mother had fashioned into something of a charming abode. That's what she liked to say. I haven't heard her voice in a long time. I'm sure if she saw me now, she wouldn't say a word, and that wouldn't matter much to me either. I'm sure she'd sob. At the end of the day, it doesn't matter, there are no ends or beginnings for me here, and even if she did forgive me, it wouldn't mean a thing. At the time however, when I snuck out of our "charming abode" to go visit the house, I was unaware of the guests there. I didn't knock, being the rambunctious little boy I was. This wasn't uncommon in the south where we lived however. I was well acquainted with the townspeople, and each and every neighbour knew me. My father used to say that I had a face that was hard to forget. I think I was proud of that at some point- I don't remember it all that much now. I haven't seen a mirror in a long time, but my hands are soiled and grey, just like I remember Agatha's hands being when I walked into her house that day.

This day was no different from the last, except that everyone in the house was there... Well, it would be the last. Day I mean. Their last day. I don't want to seem crass, but really, everything that happened... Well, it wasn't my fault. I know what you're thinking, and it really wasn't. I simply wanted to explore the house. It was a nice house. I started in, after Saint Agatha opened the door. I bound straight up the stairs. I really didn't notice all the people at the table there. My clothes were bright and crisp compared to theirs. The dirt on mine didn't compare the soot on their old suits. If it seems like I don't remember much about them, it's because I truly don't. Funnily enough, when I came down from running around through the expansive hallways and rooms of the old house, they weren't there. I didn't have a chance to see them, that's all.

That's why I don't remember them. The psychologists try to tell me that I killed them. They say their blood was on my hands - not metaphorically. They say that I, an eight year old at the time, took a kitchen knife and bludgeoned them to death. But that's all to expect, don't you think? A disturbed child, abused by his father and mother for his formative years, snaps and kills a group of unassuming senior citizens. It seems expected because it is. Nothing about that night was expected though, and I didn't do it. Their blood isn't on my hands. Wasn't. It may have looked that way when I walked out of the house, my hands in my pockets, my gaze cast away from the sun, shielding myself from some sort of audience that wouldn't arrive until days later, but it's true. The blood never was, and still isn't, on my hands.



TESINA MATO

THE RAIN'S MESSAGE

When the earth was warm (and as were you),
The Sky a sunny cloudless blue,
She weaved a darkness of which gray depend,
And she pitied you, for quintessence ends.

Her hands reached far, her figure broader
Her presence comparable to ink in water
Her eyes grew heavy as time went on,
But sleep ne'er granted thereupon.

And so rained down her thunderous wails
Of ancient words and fairytales
And so the Earth, upon receiving,
Was quenched of thirst and silent grieving.

You watched from inside a windowpane;
She'd away'd your prejudice of the wailing Rain.
You hoped, foresworn by a candle lit,
She'd never stop, should Sky permit.

But her stories began to disappear.
She tucked her hair behind her ear.
You needn't know what she tried convey,
For she smiled, winked, and walked away.

"Come back!" you cried, "you mustn't go!"
And crumpled, defeated by despair's
bestow.

The Earth just laughed, "leave her be.
Her constance means death's guarantee."

You realized what sweet Earth had meant.
Had she never stopped, she would not
relent.
Her words would have carved the earth
anew,
Stolen the air, forsaken the blue.

You asked the Earth, "how could this be?
Aren't presence and absence contradictory?"

"Sweet soul," the darling earth replied,
"The same rings true for any applied."

And this, my dear, is all to say,
The same deed blooms both life and decay.
So may you be grateful for beginning's
attend,
Be just as grateful it, too, must end.



Amy Schneiderman

CAT MATH

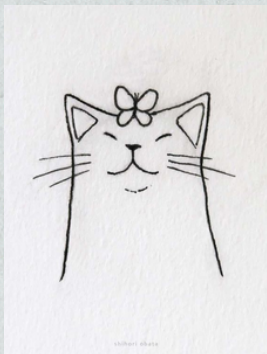
When all are home one
is home and when favorite
is home, one is home

wake you up early
no reason. but other times
food is the reason

see bottom of bowl
matters not if empty, full
empty is the bowl

if I sit on you
I will stay unless I feel
one twitch. then I'll leave.

Home is my kingdom
Obey peasant! When I came
home, I became King!



ANYA GILL

ECLIPSE SHADOWS

Dark spots on cement
They dance around
Why here? It is dark
And no one is looking down



THE CYCLE

MILES FOSTER

“COULD I LEARN TO LOVE?”
MY REFLECTION SHAKES ITS HEAD.
“MAYBE TOMORROW.”



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Submission Form:

