# ETHS PAPER (UIP) FLANNEL ISSUE

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# &DITOR'S NOTE

The Paperclip is a magazine of original writing and visual art done by students here at ETHS. We strive to create a space for students to connect with each other and express themselves through creativity. The Flannel Issue means many things to us here at the Paperclip. On the one hand, we're living in a time where many of us are in need of comfort. We're longing for someone to hand us a warm cup of tea, wrap us in a soft, flannel blanket, and tell us that everything is going to be okay. On the other hand, we're also existing in a moment of momentous change. Not only are the days getting longer and the air getting colder, but we are also watching our country, and the world as a whole, shift into a new stage. For some, this is a stage of action and resistance. For others, it's one of hopelessness and despair. This November has come with unpredictable weather and general uneasiness. What do cold fronts, political transitions, daylight savings, and general unreliability have in common? Change. For this fall-to-winter transitional issue of the Paperclip, we asked submitters to focus on themes of movement and transformation. As always, some followed this theme, and others did not. We are all for nonconformity here at the Paperclip. We hope you can find both comfort and means of defiance in this sea of uncertainty we've found ourselves in, and we hope this issue brings catharsis, relief, energy, and whatever else you've been craving this Fall. The creators who have shared their work in this issue were daring in their vulnerability, honesty, and insight. You won't be disappointed. Button up your flannel, warm up your hands, and enjoy your journey through the Fall 2024 issue of the Paperclip.

## THE ANXIOUS GENERATION

Fingers flit and flip Between tabs Passively taking stabs Never sure Impossibly insecure I can feel that from within I've grown translucent skin That they can poke holes in Tethered and bound To "Location Not Found" The search for humanity Is destroying reality It's time we all give it up This morbid maladie



# ANONYMOUS



### AI Can Pull Creative Writing From My Cold Dead Hands (an excerpt)



### JSABEL NIÑO

The lock clicked. Had I known it was a lock, I never would have shut the door. Hiding from the monster was the only thing on my mind, and I had succeeded. He would never find me. I felt safe. As the minutes passed, though, that feeling evaporated into the darkness of the confined space around me. The weird smell that was foreign yet still familiar lost any ounce of comfort, and suddenly I wanted nothing more than to run into the monster's arms. I reached up for the knob that would release me from my self-inflicted prison, a prison I would not know was one until the knob turned but the door stayed put.

My tiny fingers pushed and twisted as the walls I knew were there but could not see closed in. The last option I had was to admit defeat. Losing the game had not been my original plan, but this development threw more than just a wrench in it. My lungs filled with stale air and my ears promptly rang with the sound of my own voice. Nothing. Again, I screamed, more desperate than before. I began to think that this was my new reality, and the monster and everything I had known was gone. All I had now was this damp, dark place, my roommate the ventriloquist dummy on the top shelf.

More time passed. If I had to build a life here, I would at least be entertained. The closet held many things. Player piano rolls, the holes punched in to create a tune that could be discovered using the player piano in the dining room, not in the closet, unfortunately. Baby clothes, which fit me four years ago, still with all the tags. Sheets and other bedclothes piled higher than my four year old stature. The walls had been closing in before, and now had closed. I no longer wanted to be entertained. I was struggling to breathe, whether from actual lack of oxygen or the fear that permeated my body, I don't know. My sense of time was skewed, as preschoolers are not built to recount amounts of it, and my brain was too busy indoctrinating the rest of me to believe I would never see the outside world again. As my eyes became convinced, hot tears welled in them. Preschoolers are not meant to hold in tears, either, and my pink checks became salty. My plan was working too well, I thought. The monster would really never find me.

I turned out to be right. The monster did not find me, but somebody else did. I heard my mother's voice calling my name and I yelled out in relief. The door between my new reality and the life I wanted back opened and I ran into her arms. My dad, who played the monster in this story, joined in my consolation, and everything was okay.



### ANONYMOUS

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SWIERCH

J first heard of AI's potential roles in the creative writing world in my cousin's kitchen in Cincinnati.

The kitchen is small, white, and glossy. The countertops are a gray granite surrounded by high wicket chairs. When my extended family chooses to gather at this house, the kitchen is always filled with relatives, especially in the morning and evening. During a recent one of these gatherings, I entered the kitchen and hopped on a chair to listen to the adults talk. My Uncle Dave, a tall man with one of the loudest, energetic personalities I've seen in an adult, was leaning against another cabinet. He was holding his phone and passionately speaking to my other uncles about how AI can be used to write emails, articles, and the possibility of them writing whole books. My stomach dropped. For years I've dreamed of being a full time novelist. At that moment, my dream seemed entirely uncertain. If AI can write books, what good am I? If they have the whole internet at their disposal, and so also every famous book, they would certainly be better at writing than I. Since that day, I've gained a larger understanding of the capabilities of and conversation around AI. The debate around the capabilities of AI have surged in the public's mind as the popularity and effectiveness of AI apps such as ChatGBT continue to skyrocket. TikTok videos' and Instagram posts' comment sections are filled with the question, "Is this AI?" The 2023 Writers' Guild of America's (WGA) strike was partially because of writers' fear that large corporations' CEOs would turn to AI to churn out scripts and plots instead of investing money into human writers. Fortunately, writers have no need to worry. All in all, AI is incapable of true innovation and expressing authentic human emotion, the ultimate goal of writing, and therefore the quality of its writing is too cliche and to replace all human writers. More importantly, human writers would never let them.

I dove into the water, my heart pounding like a drum, the whistle blew my world turned dark, each stroke a fight, a countdown toward glory.

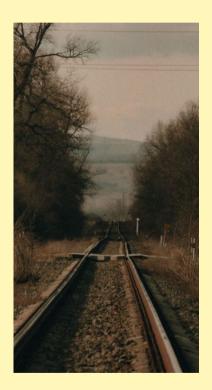
Fingers traced the surface, breath quickened, The victory was in sight, as I turned for the last lap, the crowd blurred into silence, my world reduced to the beat of my pulse.

But as I touched the wall, the clock ticked cruelly. A cruel hand laying down on me, Not even a second away. I clutched the wall of the pool, drenched in hope and disappointment.

Splashes and echoes fade, reality sinks in, an ache draped across my chest. I am less than perfect. The water felt heavy, each droplet a reminder of what slipped just beyond my fingertips.

But in the quiet that follows, a flicker ignites in the water. New races to swim await, more records to chase, not Goodbye to this moment, but a turning tide, a chance to rise again.

## SLIPPING THROUGH MY GRASP...



# GUS BELL

# I THRIFTED IT

I saw it among rows of identicals Naïve hands fold it messy and clumsy A slight fade of color Atop the rack slumps he

Rough touch turns soft with time and love

Sleeves wrap my arms in embrace I can hear and can feel its beating heart Two pulses falling in pace

I hold it close to my body Tight like tucking your shirt in What I found was not a sweater It was my favorite person



## OLIVIA TANKEVICIUS

# FULL

Full It's all about relativity

I'm an extremely moldable object

I look microscopic until you're next to me in the mirror

If it's anything but the utmost enchantment I must have done something Wrong

I can't seem to make you laugh

Knees to my chest my shoulders filling up the room spilling over the windowsill too much and yet invisible

I do not need to be this way for you





# ANONYMOUS

## COFFEE OR TEA

You deserve the world, and overall so much better than you're receiving from people.

People will never see you for who you truly are, and that is the beauty in finding someone who will walk into your house, see the clothes strewn all over the floor, the coffee cups and other dishes piled as high as the ceiling, the un folded laundry everywhere, your messy hair that has pounds of dry shampoo in it, eyes a little swollen and puffy, and they never say a thing.

Instead, they will ask you for a cup of tea, how your day is going by, and if you need anything at all in favor. These are the people who have

seen. gone through. or witnessed the same pain. Though, people normally don't understand the concept of pain, or believe that they are alone in life. But I wish to knock on your door, bring your favorite candy, give you a hug until your heart tells you it's okay to let go, and offer you... coffee or tea.



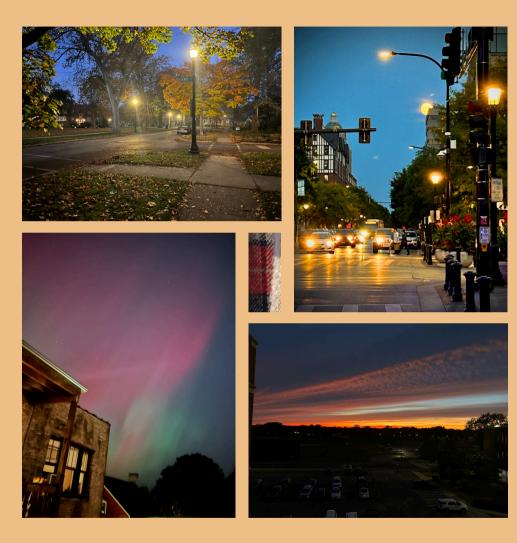
A.C.

## SELF CARE

The sun is shining / Wake up I feel too sweaty / Take a shower I am hungry / Eat breakfast This shirt is itchy / Wear something else I haven't gone outside / Walk to the lake I am overwhelmed / Watch the waves I need to get this done / Work on it I like how the breeze feels / Turn my face towards it I hear a noise / Ignore it I'm tired / Rest for a while I'm bored / Watch TV It's gotten dark outside / Go to sleep

I haven't done anything / that's okay

### ANOUK ROTH



### ANONYMOUS

Eyes Never Lie

Eyes never lie.

#### She is gorgeous.

the way her voice sings a melody into my ears anytime words spill out of her mouth.

The way her blue and green eyes look like a painting right off of a museum wall. The blue being the crashing waves of the ocean, and the green being the calm forest that watches behind.

But her eyes always appear shy, as if she will begin to cry.



Her scent flowing into my nose anytime she walks by with the canada patch on her black bookbag.

Outside, her hair sways with the wind. Outside, her eyes have never appeared more vibrant. Outside, she is her best self.

Though I admire her as much as I do my favorite show

she watches over a boy who peeks over colonies of women.

A. C.

# THE WISHING ROOM (AN EXCERPT)

Ivy's house was many things, none of them good. It was the eye of a burricane. It was the quiet when you thought the thunder had finally stopped. In the literal sense, though, it was just a house. At least that's what her parents said. But see, Ivy'd seen things in her house. Things that weren't normal. Like when a tree's shadow waved at her or when she swore the birds' song sounded faintly like human speech. Of course, her parents never believed her, but she never stopped believing, and that's all that mattered. Today, it wasn't waving trees or speaking birds but the weirdly eye-shaped window in the attic. It was watching her. She didn't know why or when it had started, but she could feel its gaze on her. She tried waving at it, calling out, but it remained silent. Watching. She asked her parents to let her into the attic. "It's too dangerous, Ivy," said her father.

"You could get lost," her mother said.

"How could I get lost in a tiny old attic?" Ivy asked them. Her parents exchanged a look before telling her to forget about the attic and do her homework.

So Ivy went to her room, disappointed. She sat at her desk; her homework opened before her. But she couldn't get the house's eye out of her head. She couldn't feel it looking anymore but knew it was searching for her. The house wanted something with her. Was this because of the weird things she always spotted? Was she not supposed to see those? Did the house want to punish her? She shivered at the thought. No, she assured herself, I didn't do anything wrong. She could only hope that was true.

A while later, Ivy still sat at her desk, her uncompleted homework staring back at her. She couldn't get the eye out of her head, no matter how hard she tried. She had to go to the attic; it was the only way to rid her mind of this burden. When her parents called her for dinner, she walked slowly, sleepily, down the stairs and to the dining room. She sat down heavily, eyed her mother droopily, ate tiredly.

"Are you alright, Ivy?" Asked her father.

"Just tired," Ivy made her voice as quiet as possible.

"Honey, you look exhausted. Have you been getting enough sleep?" her mother asked this time. "I think so. I just couldn't fall asleep last night,"

"Go to bed early tonight, honey. You should get some rest,"

Ivy nodded in response. She finished her dinner slowly and hugged her parents goodnight, insisting she didn't need to be tucked in. She was a big girl now. Ivy walked back to her room by herself and got into bed by herself. Then she waited. She waited until her parents went to sleep. Then, she got up.

She slowly made her way down to the kitchen once more. She opened the counter drawer where she knew her parents kept all the spare keys. Her heart was pounding as the drawer opened, but-it was empty. How could this be? She'd seen her parents putting keys in this drawer so many times. It had to be in here. But then Ivy remembered her parents' look when she asked to go to the attic. They hid them. They hid the keys. She stopped to think. Where would her parents bide the keys? Then she heard it, the faintest metal jingle. She followed the sound into the living room, where she saw the keys hanging on the hook that used to keep a painting up. The painting was now on the floor, and the keys were too high to reach. Ivy groaned, about to give up when she saw it-a moving shadow! The shadow looked like a hand, only its fingers were longer than any she'd ever seen, and instead of being round at the end, they were sharp, almost like knives. The shadow moved toward the keys, and they fell when the band reached over them; Ivy scrambled to grab the keys before they bit the floor.

### **ROBIN VAKROS**

## THE DUALITY OF AMERICA

Why but cars for horses Where emotion is key and accepted Where effort is put to fixing problems Where all are included The land of the just and free Where hard work and effort works Where ideas clash like a artistic masterpiece Why stop exploring and creating opportunities for the people of this

magical place Why be sad with so much ahead of us all

This world works in mysterious ways And all we have to do is take it in and work on ourselves

While others have beautiful horses we have polluting vehicles that maim and murder

Where one word can land a man in prison for life Where corruption and greed takes

public money

Where killers and criminals are put in the same house as women and children

# **ILAN ELLIOTT**

Where ideas kill and destroy lives Why do we continue destroying in the name of exploration while creating borrid jobs ruining mental wellbeing Why be happy in a horror world of killing and destruction This world works in mysterious ways And all we have to do is take it in and work on ourselves



## **CHANGING TIMES**



#### Anonymous

The cold winter sun shines down on the sidewalk

The melting snow is like an eerie cry of the past weeks My ears feel numb as I walk the small alleyways

I hear the screeching of a garbage truck, belching the garbage stew My house is just down the way, I feel the keys jingling in my pocket.

Swerving through my pockets I turn my pockets inside out, I thought I lost them The heavy door opens with a click In some ways, I desperately wish of the key.

#### My heart races as I latch the door behind me

The door thuds with a heavy resonance. My feet waver I slowly trudge up the stairs, but my mind is on something else I think of the times I had with my friends.

Over time we just have grown apart after we went to different middle and high schools. I think of the old lunch table groups I had with them and how we're going our ways in life and wish for times to be different.



I want times to go back to the way they were like a dog waiting in a window I shake my head in silence, as I think of how far I have come.

### **TWO TRAINS RUNNING**

An excerpt from a play by Nyyon Rodriguez

Everybody is at the dinner(Memphis, Wolf, and West) Memphis is coming in to have an interesting conversation and possibly starting a new life.

Memphis: Can you believe it! They gave me \$35,000 for this diner. Say goodbye to it now, because soon it will be city property.

Wolf: Man this is great! I never thought you were going to stand on business and not fold on taking anything less than what you wanted for this place.

West: yo Memphis, what is your plan now? What are you going to do? Are you thinking about leaving and starting a new restaurant?

Memphis: Now that I got more than 25,000, I really want to move back home to Jackson and possibly start a bigger better restaurant, maybe even bring you guys along if you guys are willing to be business partners.

Wolf: That would be great. Ever since I became the head of the mob, I've been wanting a new start... keeping the heat off me. Look Memphis, you might think that it would bring heat to the restaurant by me running numbers and doing what I do but it could really make us rich. What do you think? Memphis: Wolf... I.. I already told you that it can risk the whole restaurant, and possibly risk me losing my license..I wouldn't be able to open a restaurant ever again these white folks would do anything. You've seen how these white folks tried to pay me 15,000 for my restaurant but I stood on what I wanted and got it, Im a self-made, hard-working black man who couldn't be taken out like that. I gotta a lot to lose here but if you could try to convince me I might even consider letting it happen in Jacksonville. West are you in?

(West sits there for a minute thinking about whether he wants in or would he want to keep his funeral home there in  $\mathsf{PA}$ )

West: ... I think that it would be a risk but Memphis as a businessman, You have to take the risk or lose the chance to start something that could change everything possibly...yea, you have to think about the ups and downs of having illegal activity in the restaurant besides worrying about that think about the kinds of people we can attract. The rich folks would mostly wanna be around making bets. We can even try having an underground gambling area. Along with that of course we would keep it affordable so we can have all kinds of customers. The three of us running it and knowing we all had different types of experiences in our lives, we could actually get away with it as well as being smart with it. I will keep my funeral home and move it down to Jacksonville, death never goes out of business, you never know when you are going to die.

Memphis: I like where you're going with this west but I will say I don't know how I really feel about having big ties with the mob in my restaurant...

Memphis: Ay Wolf give me a really good reason why I should have the leader of the mob lead the gambling in the underground room. You have until tomorrow to have something very convincing. West: (west whistles) man man man... we have been here all day talking about this, I really think that it would be a good idea but say let's continue this talk tomorrow. I have a few things to handle, halla at y'all tomorrow night.

(west exits the restaurant. The only people left are Memphis and Wolf)

Memphis: Im going to close up the restaurant for the night. Come on over tomorrow my guy and we" 'Il all talk some more. I have to start getting everything ready, I plan on leaving in a few days. Wolf: already take care man.

cinnamon



#### Anonymous

On a park bench with an umbrella and a good pair of boots it is cold and gray but the sun is smiling behind the clouds

l'm writing you another letter it is very long and very stupid but the leaves are orange and the air is cool and there is a bonfire burning a few blocks east

what is a notebook for on afternoons like these if not stupid, stupid letters? I hope I find out who you are soon I'd love a letter back notebook and pen boots and umbrella it will rain again tonight and I will think of you whoever you are

(Wolf exits the restaurant to and disappears into the night light)

### ARE THE START AND THE END SO DIFFERENT?

I stand still for a moment catching a alimpse of him and try to stop the smile forming on my face but I know it shows like the sun through clouds I can't help the irresistible pull the past few days forming inside jokes adventures, sharing stories, getting closer and closer talking so long it hits 3 am and we didn't even notice I just know what will happen as i look at him now across the room, stealing a glance it's like my hearts dropping, and I feel nauseous my hands are shaking I can't explain it because those are supposed to be bad feelings but it feels good, This feels right our moments together run circles through my thoughts the smile still painting my face, get out of my head I stand still for a moment the music blasting, People singing, the lights dragging over me But it's silent, To me it's so silent l just stare at him people sometimes say when this happens that feeling is like your heart dropping to your stomach, I think it's more like its fully disappearing leaving only a numb tightening sensation ever growing closing into that space where your heart used to be laughing at it, mocking, "why isn't it there anymore huh?" the music is blaring again, lights flashing, people singing I want it to go quiet and numb again that makes it feel like something wrong is actually happening because now it just feels normal the world around me is normal but I'm still broken I want to scream at everyone to tell them what happening to me But I can't I'm nauseous, my hands are shaking, This hurts betrayal and hurt running circles through my thoughts get out of my head

#### anonymous

### HOW DO YOU SOLVE SOMEBODY BEING IN LOVE WITH A TREE?

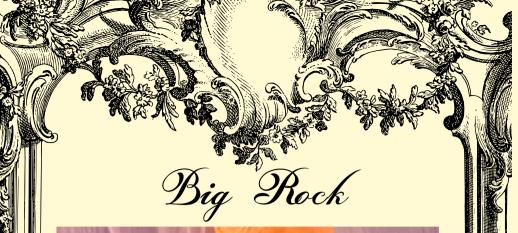


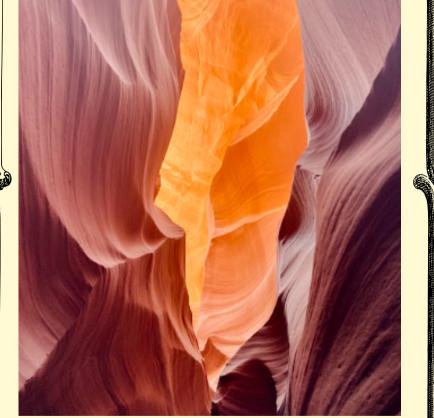
If one loved a tree then where would we go In the summer others find greater lives I wonder if it will survive this snow its graceful branches plagued by hives

All its leaves begin to turn crimson red I fear a fear of finding too much change Every night, count its leaves before bed I awake, only to be in a rage

"Find love true love for thee this is the truth" I lie. I only hear a mere whoosh.

Hasil Cummings





Dnonymous

### A SENIOR'S NOTES APP



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• Health tracking stuff Yesterday Migraines

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Eleanor Granstrom

# NO DIFFERENT

Two books I'd never read and a bat I'd never wear

It's funny how easily what was once flattering becomes pathetic

A bazy shape in the rear view mirror small and sickly pretending to be all grown up

She lulled you to sleep standing on the left hand side of your twin sized bed

She was looking in the mirror and fixing her braids and whatever happened next must have been a dream



# ANONYMOUS





## ANONYMOUS

ou know what's fun? making a funny story of a singer's last name but someone said no so this will be a story for another time so now I'm stuck writing about a puppy that needs to learn how to poop. The funny thing is that it's not even a dog, it's a half cat. That's why it won't poop; it needs a litter box to do its business. The funny thing is that the owners of that dog are allergic to cats, but the number of times they have gone to a hospital is surprising. They have never stepped foot inside a hospital since they wer 17. why? they just didn't want to pay for health care. At this rate they may as well move to Canada(no offense to anybody) so now they have to buy a litter box for the puppy. Poor puppy who has been holding up poop for who knows how long.





# LUCY LA FOND

asil Hallward trudged through the thick quilt of fog. The weight of his bag made his arm smart, but the guilt of leaving Dorian Gray, festering and throbbing like a sore in his chest, brought the man a much more potent pain.

The haziness was ingurgitating. He had to squint to catch a glimpse of the carriage that was barreling down the cobblestone in his direction. He stepped off to the side, but not soon enough to be spared the splash of street torrent that was spewed up from the ground by the clamor of wheels.

"Charming," the painter muttered, quite indigent, running his hands down the front of his overcoat. Adjusting his grip on his bag, he pushed his glasses up the bridge of his nose just for them to slide back down again. He checked his pocket watch. His train was due in 45 minutes.

Picking up his pace, Basil fought his way through the drudge of the cold, lonely night, the clicking of his heels on the cobblestone the only friendly sound for miles.

But soon, Basil began to make out a hazy figure trodding his direction. Through the murk, the man appeared no more than a black silhouette, but as he drew nearer, the painter recognized something about the other man's jaunt that struck him as familiar. As the two crossed, Basil noticed bright gold locks licking the back of the man's neck under his large fur collar.

Basil did a double take, jerking his head around. "Dorian?" His voice cut through the silence of the dead night. It looked for just a moment, to the painter, that his dearest friend's saunter quickened at the sound of his name. But after a second cry, the younger man stopped, turning towards Basil. The older man ran forward, at an almost undignified pace, and rested his gloved hand on Dorian's arm.

Even in the dark of the night, Dorian Gray's beautiful face seemed to shine, his gold hair encircling his head like a halo. For just a moment, the painter saw not Dorian before him, but Saint Sebastian tied to his pole, body contorted, muscles flexing, arrows piercing his chest. His wild blond hair blew about, his valiant blue eyes gazed up to the heavens, and there was a small, archaic curl to his rosy lips. "Basil?"

Basil blinked. He felt his face flush, and he fumbled to adjust his glasses.

"Dorian!" The painter grinned. "What an extraordinary piece of luck! I have been waiting for you in your library ever since nine o'clock! I am off to Paris by midnight train, and I particularly wanted to see you before I left. I thought it was you, or rather your fur coat, as you passed me. Didn't you recognize me?"

"In this fog, my dear Basil?" an odd expression overtook Dorian's facade of youthful beauty. "Why, I can't even recognize Grosvenors Square. I believe my house is somewhere about here. I am sorry you are going away, as I have not seen you for ages. But I suppose you will be back soon?"

"Not for six months," the painter declared, his voice alight with giddiness. "I intend to take a studio there, I-"

"That sounds delightful, my dear friend, " Dorian cut in. His fingers tapped quickly at his side. He patted Basil's upper arm. There was an impatience in the younger man's voice, one that wiped the smile from the painter's lips. "But I must be on my way. I promised to meet Harry at... well, you know that one place. Everyone will be there."

"Oh.. yes, I see." Basil's chest ached. He made one last futile attempt to nudge his glasses up the bridge of his nose. "Of course. Well... I will just be on my way..."

Dorian smiled a sickly sweet smile that made Basil die inside a little. He felt as though his friend had taken a knife and stabbed it straight through his chest. "Good man. You would be well advised not to miss your train." Dorian laid his hand on Basil's arm one more time; a last parting touch before he began to crawl back into the mist. He made no sound as he left, and that was the last time the painter ever saw him.

Basil stood alone on the cold empty street. He thought back to the night he'd first met Dorian. A cold, lonely night like this one, only they were alone together, warm in the parlor of some woman's house. Basil couldn't remember who. It hardly mattered. Dorian had, for so long a time, ruled Basil's art, his thoughts, his life; everything he did was for this man, who's character had entranced him, had drawn him in, as the sirens had the Greek sailors. Was Basil nothing more than a sailor to him? Just another man to make love to, then discard in a pile of bones? He didn't want to believe it. Dorian wouldn't do that.

#### Would he?

Basil shut his eyes for a second and breathed in a long, deep breath, filling his lungs up with the cool night air. He exhaled and glanced down at his pocket watch. He had 20 minutes to catch his train. A part of him was drawn to follow Dorian, to leave behind his dreams of Paris and cling to the man who he believed could do him no wrong. He actually took a step forward, towards where Dorian had disappeared into the mist, before something stopped him. A feeling, perhaps even something greater. He stared out into the fog, furrowed his brows, then he spun on his heels, booking it towards the train station.

Well, it seems you've reached the end. Thank you for reading. We hope you found something that moved you, made you feel sad, or happy, or hopeful, or wistful. We'll see you again soon, but in the meantime, enjoy the changing seasons and go jump in a pile of leaves.

- The Paperclip Editors

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Submission Form:



