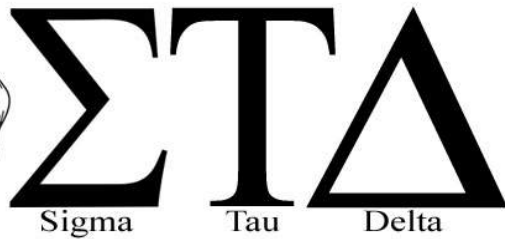


The Purple Patch



The Purple Patch
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Volume 18



Co-Editors
Lindsey McMillan
Katanna Davis
Dakota Cantwell

The Purple Patch

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Letter from the Editors

We are proud to present the 2018 edition of the *Purple Patch*, our school's literary and artistic publication. The *Purple Patch* allows Missouri Valley College students to have their artistic and literary works published and shared with the school. Missouri Valley College has an incredibly diverse community, with students from many different communities, states, and countries. Giving these students an opportunity to share their life experiences and artistic expression is important for all of us. In this edition, we present a collection of poems, scholarly prose, creative prose, and artwork by Missouri Valley College students.

Putting this edition of the *Purple Patch* together has been an exciting and challenging undertaking. While going through the process of editing this edition, we were able to see how skilled and creative our fellow students are. It made us proud to be part of this institution and to be in the position to present our peers' hard work. We would like to thank Dr. Debbie Olson, our chapter sponsor, for her guidance and assistance in the editing process, Sigma Tau Delta, and the Missouri Valley College faculty for encouraging students to submit their works to *The Purple Patch*. Publishing *The Purple Patch* would not have been possible without all of you. Finally, our sincere thanks to the MVC Board of Trustees for underwriting this project. Hopefully our readers will find great pleasure in the creativity evident in this edition!

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Poetry

I am From
by Kaleigh K. Barnes

I am from Steve and Cindy, David Hale and Mary Francis,
Sean and Katie.

I am from tornado alley, the bible belt, the home of country
music.

Where Elvis is king and Dolly is queen.

I am from a jagged horizon littered with the edges of
plateaus and the distant silhouette of the Smoky Mountains.

I am from homemade casseroles and late night bonfires.

I am from punishments of love and lessons learned.

Of course, the people who love me only want the best
for me.

I am from highly educated women and hardworking family
men.

I am from “no elbows on the table” and “love your
neighbor as yourself”.

From “yes ma’am and no ma’am”, “frick”, and “dang-nah-
bit”.

I am from California and Colorado, Louisiana, Georgia, and
North Carolina.

I am from electric guitars in church; blacks and whites and
mexicans in church.

I am from the rhythmic repetition of bachata, the soothing sounds of godly harmonies, Celine Dion, Josh Groban, and the Rugrats in Paris soundtrack.

I am from rednecks and rock climbing, rivers and roads, reese's peanut butter cups and sweet tea.

I am from grandmommy's roast and granddaddy's milkshakes, aunt Rissa's everything bagels and grammy's silk milk.

Right now, I am from from "you must always work hard", "you have to stay organized", and "you need to find yourself".

One day, I will be from "I always work hard", "I am organized", and "I am who I am".

***Passing* by Lea Filali**

I felt as if I,
could hold the world in my hand.
I feel as if I,
grasp air between my fingers.
Tell me, how can I hold on?

***Saudade* by Lea Filali**

Happiness hides in the bottom of her soul,
wrapped in a colorful cozy scarf.
Crying out loud, without a sound.

Nostalgia screams from the corner of the room
naked, showing a familiar ivory tone.
Petrified. She might have not forgotten yet.

Little Star
by Skyeler Crutchfield

Twinkle, twinkle, little star
I reach for you, but you're too far
You're sitting right here next to me
Yet the distance vast as sea

All I want is to feel you close
But even now you're like a ghost
If you can escape the past
You'll come back to Earth at last

When you feel you are alone
Just call me on the telephone
To hear your voice is all I need
Please don't make me beg and plead

I know my purpose might seem vague
But don't avoid me like the plague
Helping you is all I seek
Let's restore you to your peak

If you give my love a chance
Forward might your happiness advance
But for now you're still so far
Twinkle, twinkle, little star

For You

By Skyeler Crutchfield

Smile...
Just one time.
Smile...
I know life can be hard.
Smile...
The world needs to see.
Smile...
I will give you love, if that's what you need.
Smile...
Do it for you, not me.
Smile...
Don't make this mistake.
Smile...
Please don't leave.
Smile...
We all have something to live for.

I wrote this not only for myself and those I love, but for anyone with "dark thoughts." Taking your life, or any others, is certainly never the answer. Find something to make you happy, even if it is just one thing.

Read a Girl Who Dates Books
by Dominique Garlington

I ran my fingers down her spine, my favorite book I've never read. Amazed that even on the darkest days she's still able to hold herself together. And I want to do more than skim through her pages. I want to read between her lines. I want to understand the sad ones enjoy the ones that make her laugh. I want to love her chapters, find her favorite lines written on her smile. Read the ones she doesn't like etched on her ribs. I'll kiss them until she realizes that I find those just as beautiful. My favorite page number will be the one that she first found love. I'll study her heartbreaks just to make sure I don't fail at loving her. And when the plot thickens, I will hold her until she no longer feels the pain. Until she is ready to turn the page. I will be there to wipe the dust from her cover and remind her she is still worth the read. That with me she'll never spend time on the shelf. I'll take her with me, wherever I go she'll be right by my side. Or rather me at hers. The last line I read said that she wanted to see the world. So that's where I'll take her. And while she looks for adventures, I'll look into her eyes because that's where my world is. I'll feel her fingers run down my spine. Eyes locked, she said "final chapter."

Untitled, by Jazmin Perez

Fall in love

I dare you

Leave your fallen hairs all over my t shirts and jackets
Let me spill water on your bedsheets so we have to stay up
late waiting for them to dry so we can speak of things we
dare not say during sunlight

Race me to the beginning line, because I see no end
Only a sunrise so bright we pretend we are being born again
Shut your eyes tight, you see those colors? There is always
lights in the darkness of a tunnel

Abduct me with a box of donuts, half the sprinkles at the
bottom of the box, the glaze slid off,
Shoot marbles thru the sand, hoping it would break the
moonrays so the werewolves go away and the animal inside
me stays at bay
They say dont fear anything but fear itself, i must be fear, I
must be the darkness and reality of mortality
Sand dunes erode in the desert, wander in hopes of an oasis,
every fleeting reality makes up the microscoping pebbles
that are the platform beneath our bare feet

Put your palms to mine and you are touching every mistake
i have ever made, every sting of pain i have ever felt as well
as inflicted.

touch my palms and let us see who becomes addicted
This isn't a matter of life or death, we are forever existing,
but how we choose to be is our decision the things we inflict
the lenses with which we choose to taint our vision

Let your watercolors run clean your brushes in what would
be an elixir of health a punch of oil pastels reflect the
vibrations of the electricity you claim to have a cold nature
so I choose to plant peonies

Untitled, by Jazmin Perez

She has these layers to her
Some are easy to see, others you find yourself putting time
in to only scratch the surface
She's loud in what she believes but she is the most soft
spoken
She's the type of person you want to help but don't want to
get in her way because you know very well she can do it on
her own
She's a force of nature
You want to sit and figure her out in a day but you can't, you
can't be selfish with her, you have to let her go
Like the tide she will choose when to come back
She's the sound of tossing nickles into a coffee can, satisfying
as you listen to it fill
She's her own person, you can't glorify her based solely on
looks, you question whether you'll ever really capture
everything she is but by god you swear you can spend your
life finding out if you can
The more time you spend with her you realize she's not a
book to be read, she's not someone that will save you, she's
not here for you she's on her own journey home and so
when you sit on the sidewalk asking yourself what the hell
you're supposed to do , you need to look her in the eyes, if
you can take her by the hand but don't hold on too tight

because one day she might have to go but as you lay with
her at night allow her to hold you tight because even the
fiercest hurricanes have a moment of peace

Untitled, By Jazmin Perez

what if

what if today the sun explodes like my fist on my chest
praying for my sins to disappear in a catholic church at 12
years old, like raindrops in a river, not without repercussion
but eventually fading like the sound of percussion in the
distance deep low and mellow like the bass in a gospel choir,
marching to my own beat, i wish they could follow me
around and sing during every heartache like in movies while
someone holds a hose over me to imitate the rain so the
mood is properly set because sometimes the sadness isn't
only during sunset. It happens in the middle of a beautiful
day. Of a day full of sunshine where the rays are reached out
like hands willing to help but i can't reach. I fall too short. I
stand 5ft 1and a half

The doctor tells me i am okay but i am skeptical, i think his
stethoscope was broken because ever since that my heart
has not beat the same

Untitled, by Jazmin Perez

(Los angeles, California
22 December 2014)

Let me tell you a story,
I'm like 19 years old,
it's my first year of college and I'm home for Christmas
break.
I'm on my way to Venice beach with my 3 best friends and a
new girl i was about to meet.
Her name was Lucy.

She made the birds in the sky slow down,
she made the sun's rays touch the city with brilliant colors I
had never seen.
She brought out the dark grey clouds Los Angeles reserves
for special occasions.

The beach was foggy but I could see the color spectrum in
every particle of water the fog carried.
As I walked to the shore the sand had been replaced by neon
fish bowl pebbles.

I ate oranges and listened to the foreign waves crash not
very far ahead. I felt like my body was turning into the mist
that surrounded me and my friends.

Lucy slowed time like there was only that day to ever live
again.

Tree bark felt like felt, I swear
I could touch the sky on a swing.
The world was so beautiful with Lucy around.



Sketch by Linda Pepper

Have You Ever Seen The Sun And Her Flowers

by Alyssa Cantu

I have a secret to tell.

There is no one who I'd trust more to hold my secret, and that person is you; my dear beloved journal. The one who holds many secrets, but not secrets of my own. You have been to different continents and countries, and have seen dreams come true. The baboons of Cape Town lie in you while the raindrops and pigeon poop of Amsterdam stain you. Thank you for being my person before I had one.

My secret... I AM HAPPY.

This happiness is wrapped up in a blanket listening to the raindrops hit the window, as if they are celebrating my happiness. The sky weeps for me. Not out of sadness but out of joy because she is happy to see me smile. When the tears wash away and the sun starts to peek out, there is my happiness. She shines brighter than before and her heat radiates through my body; making me burn with love.

If happiness could be defined, it would be a bottle of Riesling and unlimited Spaghetti. It would be taking a deep breath and exhaling as if I were doing yoga. Happiness would be the first drops of water touching your tongue after a 10 lb weight cut. It's seeing a baby's face after it has eaten something sour.

But if you ask me, happiness is a cat laying on your chest. It's hearing you sing the wrong lyric to your favorite song with confidence. Happiness is being in a group of people and seeing the Sun there, shining with her super magic smile. Happiness is the Sun touching my wet body after a long day. It is the Sun, as she works daily to keep us alive. She is taking care of me and her flowers. Happiness is never thanked, neither is she appreciated. So here it is, my joy, my light, I am your biggest fan. But most of all, my happiness is when the Sun and Rain both meet.

Have you ever seen the sun and her flowers?

Untitled, by Alyssa Cantu

She was the prettiest flower anyone has ever seen
And taken by the greediest of people
She was picked and plucked
And used all up

She was the prettiest flower
And everyone wanted her for her beauty
"Does she love me, Does she love me not?"
As the vulchers held her last petal
And she was left bare

She was the prettiest flower

And people only admired her for her smell and the way she
stood in a crowd of daisies

But as they picked and plucked and watched her wither
away

Once they saw what lies underneath her glorious scent and
glamorous color

She couldn't make them stay

For they couldn't stand her foundation and the damage she
held

She was "too broken" for them to fix.

Her colors started to fade

And she became estrange

They denied the true beauty of her

She was the prettiest flower

And when she arose from the damage

She was magnificent

Seeing her regrow was the beginning of life

She was the prettiest flower

And you couldn't handle her

You
by Jamyrah Fredrick

I've been holding my pen to this paper for quite some time
now,
Trying, truly trying to write about anything but you
About how you hurt me,
About how you took the heart I gave you and crushed it.

The same hands that once caressed me now squeezed my
very life line
until I was lifeless, until it was nothing, until i was nothing
The same lips that once touch my own so tenderly,
Now spoke hatred into my very soul

And you don't care...
I can't seem to wrap my head about that

Months. I spent months with you. Day and night.
My home was no long hundreds of miles away
It was no longer the three story house I grew in
It's your eyes, cozy chocolate pools that trap me
That draw me in and refuse to release.

My escape is your smile.
Bright and gleaming, so contagious,
it's impossible to not shine mine back towards you.

My home is, was you. Was...
Before you broke me.
Before you took my very light and drowned it in darkness
Before you lost what you saw in me and found it in her.

Before she made a trio out of our unstoppable duo
Before you place her above me,
Gave her what you gave to me
Before you let her believe you were hers.

And there I go again, writing about you.
Taking something that was meant to be mine and making
it yours.

Like I did my heart, my time, my soul, my life, my very
being.

Giving you something I cherish
Just so you can toss it away without a second thought.
Like you did me.

Enough

By Lindsey McMillan

I've had enough
I looked at her and yelled I've had enough
Do you know how hard I have to work
for you to make messes just for me to clean them up
And her eyes they began to well they began to tear
Her eyes said mommy I'm just a little girl
I didn't know that you've had it up to here
But I didn't stop there how could I when I was fed up
I said do you not realize that that daddy who's never around
That daddy you love so much
Doesn't give a goddamn dime
because he can't even wake himself up
Yet you still ask for him
You ask and you plead you ask and you plead
Like I'm the one who has any control over who he chooses
to see
Little girl I don't know what to tell you because my daddy
was always around
I don't know why I failed and fell in love with a man who
could never stand on the ground
And then like I taught her she straightened back up
Looked my in my eyes and said why don't you ask him to
help out
Why don't you stand up to him if you're so tough
Five is not grown I wanted to scream
You sit back down and listen to me
But there she was a mirror image of me
Standing her ground
Proud, persistent and full of fury

If I'm going to answer you I'm going to do it with the truth
I'm not going to hold back for your sake or for mine
I've asked him for help
I've asked him many times
If I've heard one excuse I've heard them all
I don't have the time
I don't have the money
I'll get back to you in a few days
Voicemail received every last call
That's sad is all she could say as I once again did the job he
refused to do
I broke her heart
Then gave her a hug and sent her on her way
She cleaned those tables quietly and I swept the floors fast
With hate on my mind and sadness in my heart
I didn't know why it had been years and still this feeling had
not passed
I looked at her feeling like the child
Feeling so small
And here she was at five, standing so brave and tall
I learned a hard lesson that cold afternoon
Picking up the pieces was my job now and it no longer had
anything to do with you

Academic Articles

The Not-So-Mythical Creature **by Anna Babiak**

On March 6th, 2013 in the depths of the Greenland Sea in Greenland, Dr. Paul Robertson and Dr. Tortsen Smith began hearing an eerie, high-pitched call and decided to record the miraculous pattern of the sea that they were witnessing. While recording, however, a figure swam through the current of the ocean behind the glass near Dr. Smith, with a glimpse of its tail, only to reach out and press its webbed hand on the glass. Aftent of the ocean e swam behind Dr. Smith only hat they were witnessing. r this startling encounter that Dr. Robertson happens to catch on film, he also captures an even more startling aspect of this miraculous creature: its face (*Mermaids*).

For many centuries, the idea of “mermaids” has been questions and often mocked. Unless it isn’t in an animated movie or a dramatic fantasy television program, mermaids are believed to be absolutely fiction. However, this piece of work is meant to provide evidence as to how real life mermaids do indeed exist. Mermaids can be proven to exist through various innuendos in history, evidence found, and physical sightings.

A first step as to how mermaids can even exist is to understand their evolution. According to a show put together by Discovery Channel and Animal Planet called “Mermaids,” these sea-folk are actually decedents from a common ancestor to humans—the ape . These specific apes were living in South Africa for decades. Their specific place

of living was near the water, where they developed skills of fishing. Eventually, these apes were driven to the water due to natural disasters that were destroying the very earth they had been living on for so many years; disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes. After living for decades near the sea, the apes utilized their fishing abilities and soon began to inhabit fish-like features: webbed hands and feet, as well as gills. Apes, our ancestors, were always called to the sea.

Dr. Robertson and his team had previously found the remains of a similar species that he had encountered in the Greenland Sea in South Africa, which explains the theory that mermaids evolved in South Africa, and he claims that what they saw in the sea that night is the same exact species: a creature with a skull-like complexion as a face and torso with webbed hands and a fish tail (*Mermaids*). A few weeks after the phenomenon he had encountered, Greenland halted new oil drilling licenses in response to the footage that their team shared with the Danish authorities; they prohibited this in order to keep from disturbing the inhabitant of the Greenland Sea (*Mermaids*). This sea is the largest natural park in the world. So this could ultimately result in another mind-blowing question: how many members of this new species could there possibly be? Unfortunately, the government has confiscated some of the team's work in an effort to silence them and to discontinue their investigations on this miraculous discovery—so we may never know the answer to the previous question (*Mermaids*).

While there have been encounters and discoveries of mermaids in Greenland and South Africa, many other sightings have been recorded all over the world. A “rotting corpse of a sea-like human creature” was found on a beach in Europe (“Investigate Raw Footage”). Another rotting corpse was also discovered with human-like hair and bones but a fish tale skeleton (“Investigate Raw Footage”). Videos have circulated the internet with mermaid sightings as well. For example, a scuba diver caught the image of a mermaid-like creature underwater during one of his routine dives. Another video shows a woman swimming on the ocean where she plunges down head first for a dive back down into the water, only to reveal her. While all these sightings can be revolutionary, they have been or are currently in the process of being covered up by the government. Most have been confiscated or requested to be thrown out (“Investigate Raw Footage”).

While there is a great deal of hard evidence of mermaid existence, we can also determine the behavior of these fascinating creatures. Mermaids reside in fish-rich shoals, between rocks revealed by low tides, or on wet sands. Mermaids have a natural shyness and mistrust of humans, so sightings tend to be brief and awkward. This is why most mermaids retreat during a sighting (Berk and Anderson). On rare occasions, some mermaids closely resemble humans. Most, however, are scaled from head to tail with gills, fins, and other aquatic features—depending on location (Berk and Anderson). Mermaids also mimic the sounds of whales and dolphin to produce a staggering variety of clicks, hums, and sound compressions (Rose). These creatures of the sea normally use their tails to express their emotions to one

another, but they can also display kindness and gentility, especially in a rare song. (Berk and Anderson). Sirens are a type of creature that is portrayed throughout movies, books, and fables. They are a close comparison to the mermaid, but also express themselves in song, but with a bit more of an evil intention: to lure sailors to their death (Rose).

Oxford University explains in their article, “Mermaids,” that somewhere in the later Middle Ages, the “fish-woman mermaid supplanted the bird-woman siren as the creature believed to lure sailors astray, although in many languages words based on ‘siren’ continued to be used for the fish-woman.” Both sirens and mermaids have musical talents; bird-sirens sing and play the pipes and the lyre, whereas mermaids rely on their voices to entice sailors to their death. Mermaids can raise and calm storms at will and, like the Sphinx, they can trap men with questions and riddles (Oxford University).

Mentions of mermaids date back to the 1600s in literature. During the late 1600s, a treasure hunter discovered a mermaid settlement at the bottom of the sea. “They’ve a town square of sorts and a market with fish of ever kind set owt. Thar homes is bilt all owt of coral, I thinks, and some crusted o’er with mother O pearl and all. Maine windows and doors, high and low, were in ‘em, as the mermaids swam in and owt where e’er they would” (Berk and Anderson). Another example is that before he wrote “On the Origin of Species,” Charles Darwin speculated that, “humans were descendant from mermaids, whom have developed legs and began to live on land after leaving the sea” (Berk and Anderson).

Benjamin Radford carries on this aspect in “Mermaids & Mermen: Facts and Legends” by stating how hundreds of years ago, sailors and residents in coastal towns around the world told of encounters with sea-maidens. One story, dating back to the 1600s, claimed that a mermaid had entered Holland through a dike, and was injured in the process (Radford). She was taken to a nearby lake and was soon nursed back to health. She eventually became a productive citizen, learned to speak Dutch, performed household chores and converted to Catholicism (Radford).

Evidence can also be found in Greek Mythology. In Matt Simon’s article, “Fantastically Wong: The Murderous, Sometimes Sexy History of the Mermaid,” he takes information from Terry Breverton’s book *Phantasmagoria: A Compendium of Monsters, Myths, and Legends*: before there were mermaids, some 4,000 years ago there was a merman named Ea, the Babylonian god of the sea. He had the lower body of a fish and upper body of a human, and was one of those “handy all-purpose deities,” bringing humankind the arts and sciences. And because he was associated with water, he was the patron god of cleaners. Ea would later be co-opted by the Greeks as Poseidon and the Romans as Neptune (Simon). Another reference Simon derives is that the earliest mermaid-like figure was likely the ancient Syrian goddess Atargatis, who watched over the fertility of her people, as well as their general well-being. She, too, was human above the waist and fish below it. The Syrians bestowed Atargatis with “the biggest, most resplendent temple they could muster,” which had pond of sacred fish (Simon).

Although strong evidence can be provided to prove that mermaids exist, many skeptics still voice their opinions.

National Ocean Service produced an article, "Are Mermaids Real?" that explains how the belief in mermaids may have risen at the very dawn of our species. "Magical female figures" first appear in cave paintings in the late Stone Age period, 30,000 years ago, when modern humans began to sail the seas (National Ocean Service). *Magical. Presumably.* These are the keywords that project the idea that because one has not seen a mermaid, they cannot be real. "But are mermaids real? No evidence of aquatic humanoids has ever been found," the article concludes. Joseph Castro holds the same idea, but his choice was to claim that any and all "scientists" and evidence that is public is false. He includes that a month after the Animal Planet's *Mermaids: The Body Found* aired, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration posted a statement on its website denouncing the supposed existence of the half-human, half-fish beings (Castro). "No evidence of aquatic humanoids has ever been found," the post read.

The word "mermaid" brings the ideas of fictional, mythological, and just plain silly. It can also bring images of *The Little Mermaid* or of *Aquamarine*, fantasies of what mermaids should be portrayed as and how they should live and act. However, through references in literature, even centuries ago, evidence found of a real body that can be labeled as a mermaid-like species, and sightings in several parts of the country, mermaids can be proven to in fact be real and co-existing with us humans.

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African American Excellence

by Lauryn Daxon

African Americans are known as one of the minority races in America. They have suffered and overcome many injustices to achieve racial equality in America. There are a number African Americans who have made a difference in society and are recognized for their contributions.

African Americans have contributed to the development of the arts, literature and music. For example, Langston Hughes wrote a number of poems during the Harlem Renaissance which included, "The Weary Blues", "Dreams", "As I Grew Older" and "I, Too, Sing America". Claude Mckay was another famous poet that made a difference in the African American society during the Harlem Renaissance. Some of his prominent poems included The Harlem Dancer, Harlem Shadow, The Lynching and Africa. African Americans also made a difference in other aspects of society. For instance, W.E.B. Dubois advocated for people of color to be responsible in making their lives better in America. Aaron Douglas produced many of his major artworks during the Harlem Renaissance. His artwork is display at the, National Museum of African American History and Culture. Likewise, Duke Ellington performed many of his jazz music during the Harlem Renaissance and was quite an accomplished musician.

The inventions of African Americans also contributed to the well being of society. For example, Garrett Morgan created the three signal traffic light. He was also known as the first

black man to own a car in his city. Additionally, Marie Van Brittan Brown invented the closed circuit television. This invention is widely used in parking lots, food stores and academic institutions to provide added protection and security. Moreover, Patricia Bath invented the laserphacoprobe which is a device used in Laser Cataract Surgery. This device is used to help people who have been blind for a period of time to retain some sight.

In addition to African Americans making a major difference to society through the arts, literature and music and their inventions, many have excelled and achieved tremendous success in other areas of society. For instance, Barack Obama. Barack Obama was the first black president of the United States of America. He ended the war in Iraq, he ordered for the capture and killing of Osama Bin Laden, and he began the process of normalizing ties with Cuba. Moreover, Michelle Obama was the first African American first lady of the United States. She is known for helping women balance work and home. She also created an initiative formerly known as “Reach Higher” to encourage young Americans to get an education past high school. Additionally, she collaborated with Dr. Jill Biden to create an initiative known as “Joining Forces” to support service members, veterans and their families.

Additionally, Oprah Winfrey is known as the richest African American Women in the world. She is known for her generous donations to many charities and foundations. Furthermore, Martin Luther King made a huge impact and difference to America during the Civil Rights Movement. Martin Luther King is predominantly remembered for his, “I

Have a Dream” speech. He is also known for administering the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955 and for advocating non-violent protest during the Memphis Sanitation Strike. There are many successful African Americans in the America. Persons like Martin Luther King, W.E.B Dubois and Barack Obama, are only a few, who have made substantial changes and have achieved numerous successes to make the minority races more socially connected, accepted and respected. Indeed, these social activists have helped me to believe that I can also achieve success in all areas of my life.

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Creative Prose

Leaving Paw Prints

by Ana Babiak

As if losing all capability to express sadness or grief, he runs freely through the tangled vines and bloomed bushes along the path of his home. He scurries along this path, nails clicking against the stone with each step. He stops to sniff a dangling flower in front of his curious nose and to admire an exquisite butterfly with his bright, twinkling eyes. He jumps, wishing to meet this butterfly face to face—wishing to know exactly what its point of view was of the world compared to his own. He sits upon a smooth, flat rock and listens to the sound of water pouring into the shallow pool beneath it. Suddenly he hears a sharp whistle: his cue to trot back up the path and greet a face so beautiful, it doesn't seem to be anything less than heavenly. However, he never finds himself at a mere trot, but at a sprint, striving to reach one of the most important figures of his blissful life. After what seems like hours, but in reality are short seconds, he finds himself at the end of the path and excitedly greets the love of his life. Me.

Kato is an older Shiba Inu that opened my eyes to the wonders that life can give. He does not belong to me, but we enjoy each other's company just the same. After meeting him, I realized how pure and innocent the lives of dogs were; they hardly have a negative bone in their four-legged bodies. Kato was the beginning to prolong years of researching and learning not only about dogs, but specifically the glorious Shibas. In this rigorous process of puppy pictures and daily dog facts, I found that I have numerous characteristics in common with this particular

breed. Shiba Inus are the epitome of energy. They can go on for hours fumbling around with chew toys or dashing through parks to retrieve tennis balls, greeting everyone they see with a constant grin. These dogs can also be rather independent. When alone, a Shiba can stay collective and calm without the petrifying fear that they need someone or something to occupy their time with. Of course, this trait cannot be executed for time out of mind. As a bit of a contrasting characteristic, they transition into the social aspect of their bubbly personalities. Everyone is their friend, no one is their enemy. Kato expresses these traits with every breath and heart-beat of his little being.

I occasionally see pictures of the tan-furred dog, but I lost the ability to see him when we parted ways years ago. My time with Kato did make me realize that how I saw him live is how I strive to live: I want to have constant positivity, to continually make others happy, to love unconditionally. But most importantly, I want to remember who the important figures in my life, the loves of my life, are and to know that I can always come running up the path back to them.

Bluefish **by Danielle Linton**

Outside the town of Black Hollow, Minnesota, there lives a new family known as the Swansons. Mrs. Swanson, along with her two sons and two daughters, now occupy the old Miller couple's home. The death of Mr. Swanson took a toll on Mrs. Swanson and the children. However, two months have gone by since Mr. Swanson's passing, and things got easier for the Swanson family after getting a house in the countryside of Black Hollow.

Abigail, thirteen, the youngest of the Swanson siblings, starts to relax in her new room. Abigail grows tiresome of laying on her bed and doing nothing. So, Abigail decides to take out her phone and scroll through her Bluefish profile. She writes a post about living life to the fullest in Black Hollow, Minnesota. Shortly after Abigail uploads her post, she sees that someone by the name of Marcus sends her a friend request.

Four months go by and Abigail starts to frequently always stay in her room. She never leaves, except to go to the bathroom or kitchen. Although everyone in the house notices her unusual behavior Lucy is the one who decides to confront her.

"Abigail, can we talk?" asks Lucy.

"What about?" replies Abigail.

"Well, you keep acting weird," says Lucy. "Is it because you keep texting someone on Bluefish?"

"So what if I am?"

"But how do you know you can trust the person you always talk to?"

"Oh, please. That is absolute nonsense! Marcus will never hurt me or lie to me!"

"Marcus?"

"He is a friend I recently began speaking to and he understands me."

"What if everything he says is just one lie after another?"

"Lucy, I think I will know if Marcus starts telling me lies. I have known Marcus for four months now."

Lucy's face starts to turn pale. How did she not notice little Abigail constantly speaking to someone she hardly knows and for four months after their family began living in Black Hollow? Lucy starts to think this situation is really weird and gets a bad feeling about Abigail's mysterious friend Marcus. However, Lucy decides to approach it in a calm manner because she did not want to keep aggravating her sister.

"Look, Abigail, I am only concern about your well-being," says Lucy. "Please, promise me you will not do anything rash. The last thing I would want is for you to get hurt again. Also, if you and Marcus want to hang out sometime, perhaps we can meet him together. Okay? You know as well as I, sometimes people do not always turn out to be who they claim to be."

For a brief moment, Abigail expresses a look of shock and surprise on her face.

Then Abigail shakes her head.

"Okay. I promise, I will not do anything rash," says Abigail.

Lucy hugs Abigail really tight.

"I love you, Abby," says Lucy. "Swanson sisters have to stick together no matter what!"

"Yes," replies Abigail, "no matter what."

As Lucy turns and walks in the opposite direction, Abigail uncrosses her fingers.

The next day, Lucy decides to go to the store with her mother and Alexander, her oldest brother. Lucy's second oldest brother, Liam, and little sister, Abigail, chose to stay home. However, for some reason, Lucy starts to feel uneasy about leaving the house.

"Lucy! You coming or what?" yells Alexander.

Lucy looks between the house and the car door. In the end, Lucy decides that perhaps there is no need for her to worry and that she is only imagining things, then gets in the car.

A few hours later, Mrs. Swanson, Alexander, and Lucy arrive back home. Lucy starts to feel uneasy, walking into the living room. There is no sign of Abigail, but Liam is sleeping on the couch. Alexander notices their sleeping brother and gives him a rude awakening.

"Ahh! What the heck, Alexander?" yells Liam.

"You lazy bum, what have you been doing all day?" chuckles Alexander. "Certainly not cleaning your room, that's for sure!"

"Hey, I keep my room clean!" says Liam.

"Really? Every time I look in your room it looks like a pigsty! Haha!"

"You better take that back, or else I will..."

"Liam, where is Abigail?" asks Mrs. Swanson.

Lucy's stomach starts to toss and turn as she starts to become suspicious of where Abigail might be.

"Jeez, I think she is in her room, pretty sure," says Liam.

Alexander rolls his eyes at Liam and makes eye contact with Lucy.

"If I did not know any better, I think Lucy acts more like the older sibling than you do, Liam," says Alexander, as he starts to laugh at their brother's ridiculousness. Liam rolls his eyes.

"Whatever, I think I am going to help mother with the groceries now," says Liam.

"That would be nice, dear," says Mrs. Swanson.

"I'm going to check on Abigail," says Lucy.

As Lucy starts to walk up the stairs and towards the end of the hall, she notices a note on Abigail's door. Lucy takes the note down and begins to read it.

"Oh no," gasps Lucy. Suddenly, Lucy drops the note and races back down the stairs to get her mother and brothers.

Meanwhile, Abigail wakes up to find her body wearing chains and sitting on a chair. She tries to see if there is any way of escape, but the place she is in is too dark. Abigail starts to cry as she sees her attacker come closer to her.

"Hello, my sweet, Abigail. I am so happy to finally meet you."

Abigail starts to tremble with fear as a deep voice mentions her name and she notices Marcus looks nothing like what he told her when they spoke on Bluefish. In fact, Abigail sees her attacker's face and notices that he has a goatee and dark, brown eyes. But, the Marcus Abigail became friends with had blue eyes and not an inch of facial hair anywhere. Abigail fell for this man's lies the entire time they spoke to one another.

"Why did you lie to me?" says Abigail, sadly. "I put my trust in you, Marcus. Or whatever the hell your name is!"

"My dear, can you not see that I do care about you?" says Marcus. "Otherwise, I would not have brought to life my new persona of Marcus. I had to gain your trust somehow, my gorgeous flower."

Abigail tries to move her head away as Marcus starts to move closer and closer. Suddenly, Marcus starts to grab her by the neck and force his lips to hers. Abigail attempts to bite down on them to try and stop his pursuits. However, as Marcus starts to feel his lip bleed, he decides to keep kissing Abigail. As Marcus sticks his tongue into Abigail's mouth, she bites down on it harder. This causes Marcus to back away and scream before he spits out his own blood.

"Help!" screams Abigail. "Someone please help!"

Before Abigail attempts to scream again, Marcus hits her across the face. Abigail starts to cry.

"P...p...please," sobs Abigail, "let me go."

“Oh, precious Abigail,” says Marcus “If only you did not act so naive. Then you would not have met the real Marcus.”

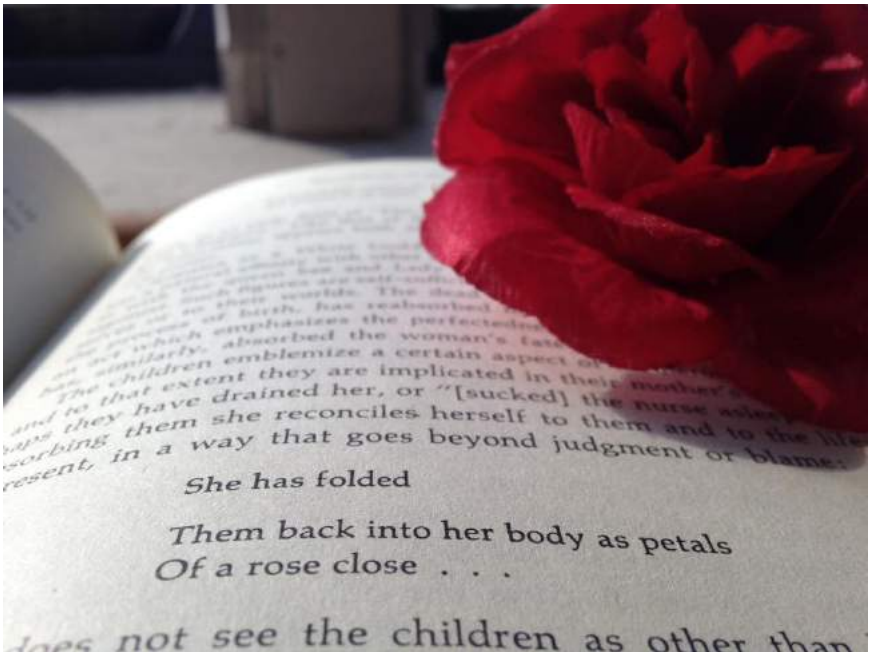
Shortly after Marcus tells Abigail that, he disappears into the darkness. Abigail’s heart starts to beat faster and faster. After a few minutes, a light flickers on. Suddenly, Abigail’s eyes scan the pictures of other girls on the floor and bloodstains right next to them. She starts to sob louder, pleading that Marcus set her free. Then Abigail jolts her head around as she hears Marcus start to laugh. Her eyes widen as she notices that a meat carving knife is in Marcus’s hands.

The end.





Beauty, by Danielle Linton



No More Cherry Pies **by Danielle Linton**

My Meemee always made me a cherry pie for my birthday because she knew that I favored them out of any other type of pie. She did not have to make them for me, but she always did that. Then, one day everything changed and on my 19th birthday I received no cherry pie. Little did I know, I would never get another cherry pie from my meemee again on any of my other birthdays.

"You want to eat some of the cherry sauce in the can?" Meemee asked. "Of course!" I said in an excited voice. Meemee smiled and handed me a spoon. I do not remember when or what time it was, but I think I was at least 13 and we were at my Meemee's parents' house, which is where Meemee always did most of her baking. However, the cherry sauce felt delicious against my taste buds and the smell of the pie cooking in the oven made me hunger for the cherries that hid beneath the gorgeous, homemade pie crust. After the pie finished baking, Meemee took it out of the oven and placed it on top of the counter, so it could cool off before she decided to cut into it. Then Meemee put a slice on a plate for me while I got a glass of milk. I sat down with Meemee in the living room at her parents' and took a bite of my pie. "Mmmm this is amazing! I love cherry pies!" I said, before taking a sip of my milk. "Yes, cherry pies are delicious," Meemee said with a smile. "Will you make me one just for me whenever it's my birthday, Meemee?" I asked. "Of course I will," she said, and with that we both continued to enjoy our freshly cooked dessert. It is a bittersweet memory and it is hard to remember, but it happened somewhere along those lines. I cannot remember the last time I ate a cherry pie after my Meemee got cancer. She became too physically weak to do much of anything and it broke my heart to see my courageous, independent Meemee fall apart. When I think of cherry

pies, I always think of her and how if I try to bake my own or enjoy someone else's it will not be the same.

"They have to cut off her leg," my mom said. "Cut off her leg? Why?" I asked, really horrified. "That's where most of the cancer is, so if they cut it off it will hopefully not spread anymore," she said. I could just sense an uneasy feeling inside of me and my mom. My mom had cancer once herself, but it had been a completely different scenario; her cancer did not spread as rapidly as Meemee's.

Meemee's left leg got removed. Once she no longer had her left leg, Meemee started feeling better and the color on her face looked brighter than it did before. Everything stayed fine at least for awhile. I felt angry because of the struggles she had to face and the fact that she had to still be confined to a wheelchair half of the time. She learned how to walk with her right leg, but rarely did Meemee get to do that in public or around the house. In fact, Meemee became a trapped animal in a cage unable to go anywhere without the help of someone else taking her out.

One day, I walked into the dining hall at my Meemee's parents' house and saw my Aunt Jincy and Meemee both in the kitchen together. My heart shattered when I saw Meemee crying because she was trying to create a dessert and she was having difficulties because she could not move around the kitchen and she had not baked or cooked anything in a year. She still knew how to bake, but since she no longer had two legs and still had cancer, Meemee could not grab anything without having someone's help, especially if it was not close enough for her to reach it. "It's okay, Mom," I heard my Aunt Jincy say as I watched her trying to comfort Meemee as best as she could. I turned my head away and thought about her trying to make me a cherry pie with these struggles. I instantly felt disgusted at that heartbreaking thought because I did not want this courageous, important woman in my life to feel pain at the idea of being unable to make her youngest granddaughter a cherry pie.

"The cancer has spread more," Mom said. "What?!" I said, completely blind-sided at those words because it seemed impossible. "Apparently the cancer spread above the knee," Mom said as she got a worried look on her face. I felt sick to my stomach and angry at the doctors. Why did no one catch this sooner? Then I remembered how Meemie had once gone to a doctor's appointment before she had discovered that she had cancer. Meemie mentioned about finding something strange and the doctor said, "It's probably nothing. You're fine." Perhaps that doctor should have listened to his patient. Maybe they could have prevented it. Maybe it would not have worsened. Maybe she would not have had to have one of her legs cut off. The outcome of this situation could have been different if the doctor had taken Meemie's words into consideration. I became more aggravated as the virus kept growing. It was getting harder for me to keep it together because at any moment Meemie's light could burn out and soon there would be no life left in her, just like there would be no taste left in the crust of a cherry pie if it got burnt in the oven.

The day finally came and never had I felt so distraught, so sick to my stomach. "Meemie passed away," Mom said. I felt so irritated because it happened a few days before Thanksgiving break, long before I would be coming home. She passed away and I wasn't there. Never had I felt so fragile than I did in that moment. Have you ever felt like you knew it was probably going to happen sooner or later, but you were in too much denial to believe it? That is how I felt. Leading up to that moment, it just crushed me entirely and I sat there in utter disbelief. I did not even tell my boss what happened, but she sensed that something was wrong, hugged me, then asked, "Do you have something you need to go do?" I just shook my head and said thanks before I left work. After I left work, I went to the park in my college's town and ran into the woods. I ran until I stopped, letting myself fall to my knees. I felt like screaming to the point where it felt like my throat was bleeding, like how cherry

sauce sometimes bleeds outside the top of a freshly baked pie. I needed to go to someone for comfort, but in that moment I just wanted to be left alone. During that moment, I stayed on the ground letting all my sadness and anger take over. Eventually, I walked back to my car and drove to my boyfriend's house. *Why?* I thought, *Why did this have to happen?* When I arrived at my destination, I walked at a really slow pace when I got out of my car. My boyfriend was waiting for me on the back steps and I could not even make it up the steps, still overwhelmed with shock. I let myself fall on him and just held onto him really tight. In that moment, I thought of some things that Meemee would never get to see: she would never get to see me or my sister ever get married, she would never get to see my niece, Zoey grow up, she would never see me graduate college, and she would never see me have children.

Cancer is a horrible disease. It takes the lives of the people we care about unexpectedly. Then, we ask ourselves, "Why that specific person?" It always seems to be the good people that get taken away from us and without warning. Then a few days later, those sweet people are gone like cherry pies because something found them delicious for the taking.

Sometimes, we will never understand why it happens to the ones we love and even though experiencing this type of pain is horrible, that person's traits and legacy will live on in us. Sure, I may no longer see my meemee anymore, but I will always remember her generosity, strength, and wisdom. Deep down, my Meemee's life will continue to live on in me, even if there are no more cherry pies. Like cherry pies, my Meemee was warm on the outside, sweet on the inside, and filled with nothing but unconditional love.

Name
by Shiyu Moriani

A couple sits on the bench in the park. It is Tanaka and his girlfriend.

She asks "It has been pretty long time since we met, so I want you to answer..."

"question? what's your question?" Tanaka replied while eating ice cream.

She says "Well.....I want to know your first name....."

The ice cream falls on and breaks an ant's nest.

"I know... I asked the same question several times and you didn't reply. I guess there is serious reason....but it is 1 year...you cannot keep it secret forever..."

Now, Tanaka will be willing to sell his soul to the devil for her, but he doesn't want to sell his name. No, it's incorrect. He wanted to sell his name and get another normal name like John or Arthur....

"Yes...Yeah...you are right. One year has passed since we met...But I don't feel like telling you with joy because those who know my name always ask me the same question. So it makes me tired."

"Tell me.." she insisted

"My name is SixFlags. Tanaka SixFlags"

"SeventhFlag...You mean...**that** SeventhFlag?"

"Yes **that** SeventhFlag"

"Is it on St. Louis"

"St. Louis, Dallas and Atlanta too. Anyway **that** Seventhflag"

"I can't believe it"

"I don't want to believe it"

"But why are you called SeventhFlag?"

"You know how it is...when SeventhFlag is crowded, the line of a attraction is so long and people need to wait for 3 hours.

So..my parents felt....bored and wanted to do something while waiting.”

“Are you kidding me? Cuz they stood in line crowded with people”

“I asked my parents. But they told me there was no opportunity except that moment considering my birthday”
His girlfriend smiled and said “I love you Tanaka...”

Bitter Candy
by Sarina O'Donnell

What if I told you that this world is not real? Hear me out. I'm not trying to say that we're in some simulation or that your life is already flashing before your eyes. Instead, what if this is all a figment of your imagination? I know, I know, it sounds crazy. But is it? When's the last time you found a bruise, but didn't know where it came from? Sure, it could be forgetfulness, but what if it was from something the other you did? When's the last time you've felt your muscles twitch out of nowhere on your arms or even your head? Sure that could be a muscle spasm, but what if it was someone shaking you? When's the last time you've felt a sharp pinch out of nowhere, like a bee sting? You wipe it away without a second thought, but what if that was a sho...?

Okay, okay, I hear you. "But if I made this life up, why wouldn't I have more?" Simple. The more knowledge and power you gain, the more you question. Why you're here? What's your purpose? Why is the world the way it is? The more questions you ask, the more you chip away at your dream. Like when you have a really good scene in a dream and you want to rewind it, but it's different the second time. You get confused and try to rewind it again, but that only forces you awake. Don't force yourself awake. That chair you're sitting on is soft and comfortable. But the other you, the one you don't want to be, is sitting in a cold, hard metal chair. The smell of flowers or coffee you enjoy so much as you hear this. The other you is assaulted by the stench of urine and feces. That sweet boy sitting next to you, the one you love so much, feeding you a sweet cookie as you giggle.

The other you is tastes iron as you bite down on your lip, refusing the bitter candy that the man in white tries forcing in her mouth. It's not right! It's not the right candy and he knows that it's not the right candy! He knows that you need the stronger...

Right, right, sorry. I got a bit distracted. As I was saying, power is bad, normal is good. Normal is what you want. What you need. Others may want more. More money, more power, more sex, but you want normal. There's too much chance in powerful positions. Normal means a set routine that you can grind through. You may not like the grind, but the other you does. You get up in the morning, eat a breakfast of your choice, wear the clothes you want to wear, and go to work like everyone else. You're not different. You're not weird. You're not insa...! You're normal. You have a normal family and normal house and you are satisfied. You're children hug you and your partner kisses you. You go hiking as a family on weekends and have family nights. Yet, you lay in bed at night, wondering about the world around you. Don't. Just, be happy in those soft, warm blankets. The other you has a stiff thing on her small bed frame, you couldn't even call it a mattress. No sheets, no pillow cases. Just a stiff lump for your head to lay on and a sheet thin cover. She's always sore and cold. Really cold. So cold. She's so fu... She prefers the warm bed. Just enjoy the warm bed.

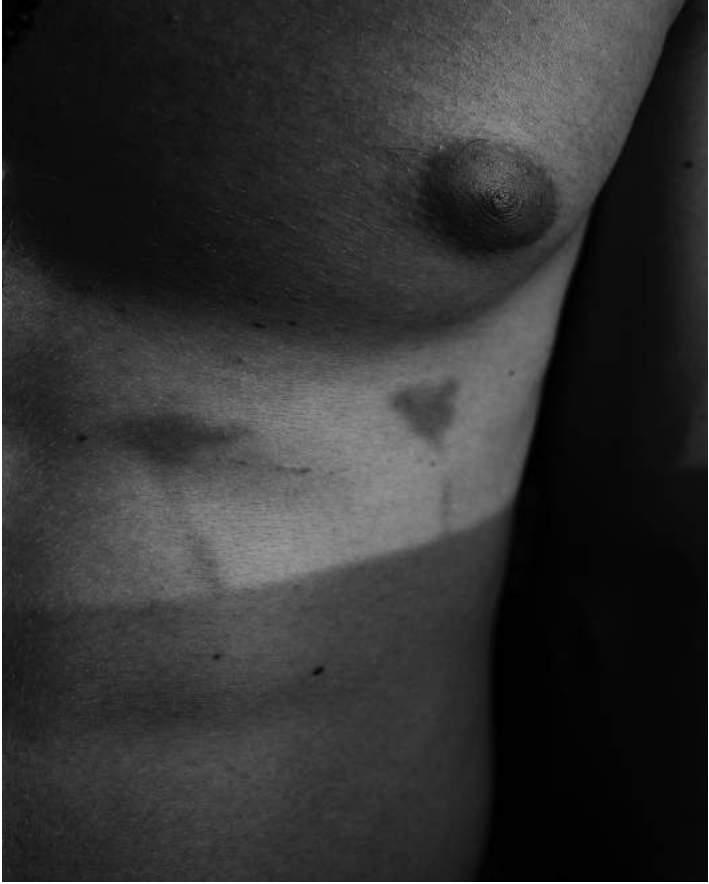
"But what happens if I do try for more?" You ask. Don't. Greed ruins your marriage. Greed ruins your family. Greed ruins your life. Greed ruins everything! Don't stay late at the office every night! Your partner will grow suspicious. I know you just want that promotion, you just want more, but is it worth the one person who loves you? When offered that

job across the country, the one with better pay and longer hours, say no. I know, the money is so tempting. You may try to trick yourself with words like “It will help me pay for my daughter’s wedding.” or “My son can go to college without student loans.” I know it sounds good, but what happens when you forget to go to that wedding? What happens when you forget that son, who lives thousands of miles away with the one struggling parent who still cares and empty cupboards? He’s starving, you selfish son-of-a...! When it’s all said and done you will be sitting in a huge house, alone and drunk. Wondering how you could have so much, yet so little. Wondering where you went wrong. You’ll wonder and wonder. Then you start remembering everything you did. But not all of it feels right. Some memories you may question and some memories will be gone. You’ll think and think and think. Until that warm armchair turns into a cold, hard metal chair. The smell of vanilla turns to the smell of urine and feces. The cup of whiskey in your hand turns into a pink plastic cup full of water. The view of the city at sunset turns into a small barred window, exposing the brick of a new building they put next door... I wonder what it is. Apartments? Shops? A company?... Your maide who walked around your office, turns into a man in white. The rag in her hand turns in something... Something... Something you should know... Is this man different? Yes. Different. He’s... Younger. It’s nice to have new faces around. He comes with your bitter candy you hate so much. It makes your head feel funny.

Speaking of which, here he comes now, with my candy. I really should go now. I can’t wait to meet my new family. This is your first candy, right? Before I go, remember what I said. If you like this family, if you like this body and

this life, don't strive for power. Enjoy it, or you'll lose them all and you'll have to start over. Why chance an abusive family when this one suits you just fine? Oh, and if they give you the little chalk candy, the extra bitter one, throw a fit. Thrash and scream and bite. They'll hit you and stab you with that other medicine. It will hurt for a while, but if you do it long enough, they'll give you the good candy. The smooth, sugar coated candy. That one keeps you in your dream longer, as long as you don't mess it up. It makes you feel good too. Sorry. My time's up. Can I borrow your cup? I lost mine when I threw it in the last man in white. He tried giving me the wrong candy. Thanks, and good luck.

Art



Emitation, Right Breast, by Cheyanna Weaver

Images, by Maddie Bradley









Landscapes, by Eloise Riche





State School Lake, Marshall, MO by Eloise Riche





***Lost Souls*, by Eloise Riche**



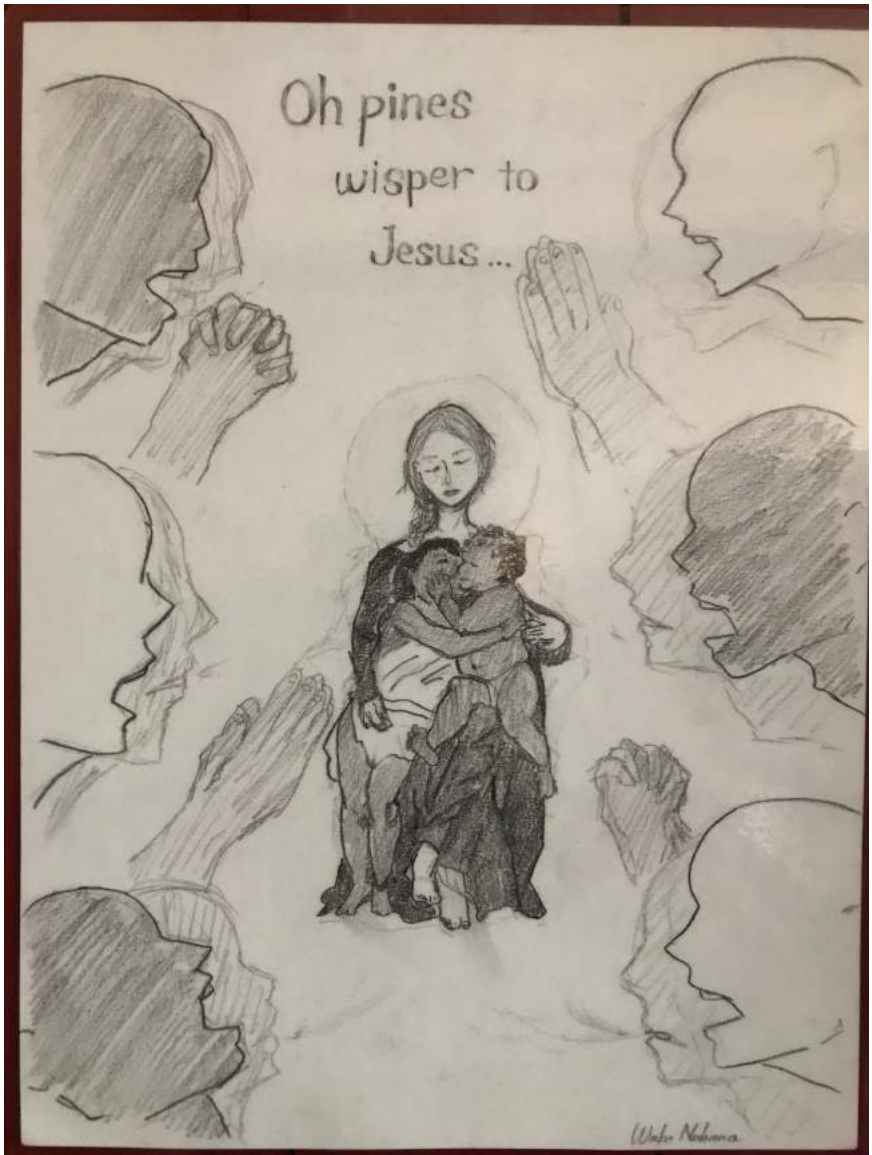
***Rina*, By Eloise Riche**



October 1, 2017

5:37 PM

Photos, by Hali Niceswander



Inspired by Jean Toomer's Cane, by Wako Nabana



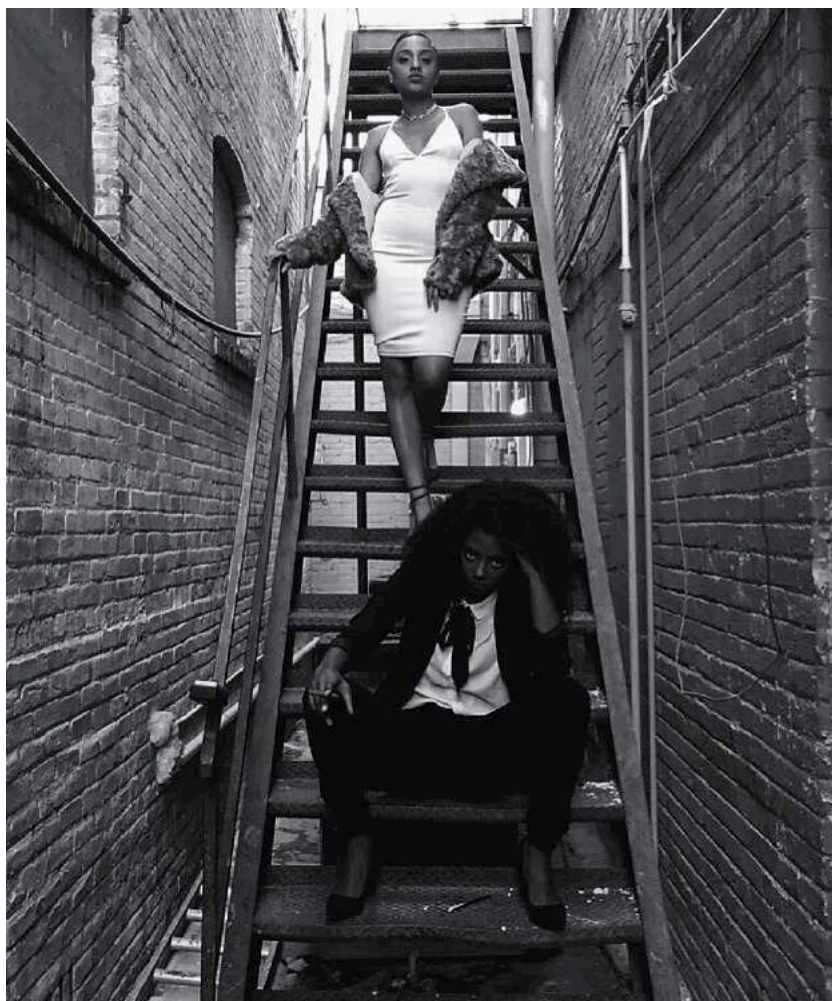
Lightning up the Valley, by Jan Jedlicka



Competition, by Britny Fernandes



Krystal Clear, by Britny Fernandes



***Women of the Alley*, by Britny Fernandes**



A Modern African Beginning, by Britny Fernandes



Oregon, by Mary Lane



Oregon, by Mary Lane



***In Memory*, by Mary Lane**



Eclipse, by Mary Lane



Landscape, by Mary Lane



Those Softball Nights, by Sara Shaefer