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ERIKA TILOTTA
Dixie

I couldn't believe what I was seeing. For the past two days, I had known she was ill, but it never crossed my mind that she was dying. However, I should have known after she rejected food and didn’t want to do anything but sleep.

It has been two years since my best friend died. With every death there is a time of healing.

So when will I the wounds in my heart heal? I seem to ask this every time I think about her. Some people think it is stupid to feel this way over Dixie, but what do they know?

I think I was nine when I met Dixie. Walking with my mother in the small store, I came across a group who eyed me in excitement. Two were small and with white hair, one large with black hair, and another with brownish red. That Dixie. I wanted to be friends with all of them, but my mother told me to have only one. The two small ones fought with each other and the black-haired one glared at me. In fear, I stepped back and bumped into the brownish red one. She stared at me with gentle eyes and hope.

I brought her home with me. She came with no name and for some forgotten reason, I called her Dixie.

Now I am struck by the memory of her sitting on the rug. She looked nervous as I sat on the chair. In a way, Dixie knew what was happening to her, but I couldn't I was ignorant.

Living on a block that bore no other children but me, Dixie was my first and only friend. I played with her every day and it was the earliest years of ignorance for me. My mother did so many things for Dixie that I didn't know at the time: fed her, cleaned her, scolded her for messes.

I never knew that she was the one who left the stain on the blue nig.

Though, I too learned of her bad habits. She chewed on my toys and ripped apart a pillow. With her head down in shame, we placed her in the basement

It was cruel, but there is nothing cruder than having to watch your friend fall. Witnessing watery eyes that shot back and forth as the body collapsed. I had shot forward, but then recoiled in fear.

I remember having been afraid for Dixie before. It was gray and raining. I had become a preteen, however, my friend still acted like a child. Dixie went to play
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in the backyard and I had forgotten she was out. When I did remember her, I ran outside. How stupid could I have been?

She was gone. She had run away from home. She believed I had abandoned her in the cold and she left. In horror, I started to search for her, screaming her name as I ran up and down streets. The thought that I lost my best friend forever hit me as hard as the rain did.

However, that memory was not as hard as watching her heavy body spasm on the ground, her arms and legs twitching as foam exited her mouth. Unlike the past in which I helped for her, I did nothing at this moment. My mother called a friend, instead of me, to come over to help her take Dixie to the hospital.

Just like when she ran away in the past, another was able to do something when I could not. I was crying, grieving over my loss when someone knocked on my door. Answering it, I saw a woman who said that she found what I lost. A few moments later, Dixie ran and excited. I too was fresh tears of joy checks.

I promised Dixie I her from then on.

Oh, what a lie. I seizure stopped and she struggled to get up, but She was as confused as I sitting in your living room and suddenly having a seizure?

What is worse than confusion is the unconscious denial.
"She's dying, Erika."
"No. No. She cant be. She's just sick."
I'm sorry, but I don't think that there is anything we can do. She's old."
"No. No! There has to be something! There has to be some sort of medicine."
"Erika, I'm sorry." And with that said, Dixie was carried to the car. It was ten o'clock at night and the dark sky seemed to play tricks on me. I saw Dixie sit up in the backseat. She looked happy because she thought she knew she was going somewhere.

My mother headed for the car.
"I want to go," I pleaded.
"You have to stay home with your brother."
Then the car drove off. I saw Dixie smiling at me through the back window. I never had the chance to say goodbye.
Three hours later, my room came back. She came alone and in her hands she held a necklace. I didn’t recognize it at first, but then I remembered that it had been a gift. I had given it to Dixie and seeing it in my mother's hands, I knew my friend was gone.

She died May 15 in 2002. It was a peaceful death for her, but it's still a war for me. I should be over this. I still shouldn't be crying whenever I think about her. I’m an adult now, damn it! I try really hard to think about the good times we had but I still picture the night she died.

I never said goodbye. I never said that I loved her in the end. I abandoned her again and she died alone among strangers.

Some people say that my suffering doesn’t count. They say that you just need to get a new friend. They don't understand.

I will live with my guilt, as would anyone who lost a friend. Whether it be man or Dixie; my best friend for ten years and my beloved dog.
ERIKA TILOTTA
The Game of Life

John sat on the bench, watching the athletes run to the field. The familiar red and white uniforms of his teammates were on the left field while the yellow and black team took the right. The referee was holding the soccer ball in his arms as the two teams started their own warm-up routines. In a few minutes, the game would start and the crowd would start cheering for their teams. However, the crowd was already cheering when John came out onto the field wearing red and white.

It was another spring, another soccer season. At that moment, however, he wanted to disappear. He hated this. He hated the crowd. He hated what he was.

All of his life, John was known to be a prize athlete. Perfect for his family since they were sports fanatics themselves. His deceased mother used to be on a tennis team while his living father was an ex-quarterback of the football team, the Jets. John knew his mother died when he was four and his father had to quit football because of a back injury.

Sports were in John's blood and he despised it.

The love for the game was gone when he was young. As soon as he turned ten, his father put him on a peewee soccer team. John was excited, but the mood changed when he received his first injury. He had been kicked in the knee, the opponent's cleats raked against his skin and caused some it to break and bleed.

Crying, John limped to his soccer coach. The older man picked him up and then placed him on the bench near the medical kit.

John's other coach, his father, approached them.

"Put him back in."

"No, I don't want to," John whined as more tears were coming down.

His father glared at him. "You get back in that game right now," he snapped in a louder, angrier tone.

The coach tried to persuade John's father to let the boy rest. However, the father thought otherwise and an argument broke out. In the end, the father ripped John away from the bench, yelled at his son for crying, and took his son off of that team.

A week later, John was placed on another team. His first lesson was learning not to cry when he got hurt.

The band was playing now, just a few more minutes before John would have to get up and play a winning game. There was no other option. Bearing the scars hidden on his back, John remembered the times his team had lost.
He knew the consequences if he quit: his father would get the belt, the scouts would stop coming, and the colleges would take back their scholarships.

The first time, the score had been tight: seven to eight; the drive back home was very quiet. His father refused to talk to him until they got to the house.

"How could you miss that shot?! Because of you, we lost!" his father snapped.

"I lost my footing," John replied. It was the truth, but it wasn’t his fault that the team lost. There were other members on the team who could share the blame.

"You lost your footing?!" Then the belt made its first appearance. After four more losses, the scars about his father's even if it was another John learned a T in team.

"Shut up," the crowd continued them to stop cheering as were chanting for the the end, it was really for part of the team: he was

He was tired of it, recognition than his of the grade changes from his teachers.

Last year, the eighteen-year-old teen received a C on a history test Later that week, his team faced off against the hardest team in the county and won. The next morning, John's history teacher approached him with the same test paper. A B plus was placed over the erased C. This shocked John, but then it started to happen more frequently in other classes. Any test that was a B or lower was changed to a high mark.

It sickened him that his own teachers would change his academic record over a win in a soccer game. What made it worse was that it wasn’t a game anymore. It was his future. He had been already approached by college scouts searching for his skill on the field. Each from a different county and/or state and they guaranteed that he would get into their schools with scholarships.

Already, John's future was being planned but he had no say in it The universities only wanted his soccer skill and did not even question his grades.

It was his third lesson: play well and you will get everything.

However, it was not his heart's desire. He wanted to play the game that was fun, not serious. He wanted an activity, not something that was going to be his job. He was tired of wearing his mask and acting as if there was nothing bothering him.
Watching from the bench, John saw the lights get brighter and the grass turn greener. Behind him, the volume rose. It was the signal that the game was about to start.

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw his father in the front row. He was smiling at his son, but deep down John knew what the grin really meant.

Win. Losing was not an option.

John chuckled. "I win in the soccer game, but I lose in the game of life." He didn’t want this to continue. It was unfair to him. He knew the consequences if he quit: his father would get the belt, the scouts would stop coming, and the colleges would take back their scholarships.

His life would change forever. Did he really want this to happen? He had had these thoughts before, but would this be the time that he would make his bold move?

Leave the field to face life in a new direction. Play on the field to continue what everyone wants from him.

The players ran to their positions as John made his decision.

He stood up.
searching through life looking for peace and happiness often failing in the process
not able to decipher friends from foes
self-concept
becomes
misconstrued
need help
but being afraid to ask
been burned to many times still reaching & searching for that happiness at times seeming
so unattainable...
FRANCES C. O’NEIL

Annie

When morning mist turns into dew
   And peaceful afternoons ensue
   And twilight forms a purple hue
       I think of you
When hyacinths and bulbs renew
   And iris bloom and crocus too
And blossomed trees invade the view
       I think of you

When skies are crisp and bright and blue
   And mother birds their nests pursue
And wind chimes jingle songs anew
       I think of you
When gentle voices sing on cue
   And God resides so clear and true
And I kneel and say a prayer or two
       I think of you
I've never known a person who
   Reminded me of shades of blue
In summer, winter, springtime too
       I think of you
The lady was a terror, the very thought of her white, size 10 trainer pounding a person's backside would send even the bravest of the brave into a feverish sweat.

For two months or so, we never got to hold a bat, or a glove for that matter. All we got to see was wide-open fields, with isolated spots of drying grass, around which we were made to run. Ten laps if she was in a good mood, and if she was in a fit of rage—in—twenty. As the sun grew hotter, our mouths dried and the track seemed endless. Tweed piled on the pressure and expected us to perform like perfect machines. Her idea of a school baseball team was a perfect one: trim, toned and with perfect game skills. She would go to any extent to enforce her opinions on us and try to create the 'perfect' team she dreamed of. She was a strict advocate of discipline and most of her training practices came into conflict with that of other coaches. The older boys just couldn't take the pressure either and they often took their frustration out on the smaller ones like me. They cursed us, tripped us and punched us if we reported them. If the pressure Tweed piled on them became unbearable and when her stinging comments really shattered their ego, they hashed each other up.

If by any chance, Mrs. Tweed, with her hawk-like eyes, happened to catch a glimpse of the 'kick-boxing' contest going on in a little corner, the unlucky one or, at times, unlucky ones, would get a nice, hard kick on the backside and would then be chased all the way back to the change room, with the furious woman in pursuit. The lady was a terror, the very thought of her white, size 10 trainer pounding a person's backside would send even the bravest of the brave into a feverish sweat. And the thought of sixty other schoolmates giggling and jeering at
you, as the punishment was being meted out, would do nothing to improve the situation.

It was on one such hot afternoon, as we were running laps around the field, that Adrian Johannes, a tall, burly, sixth grader bully, with a scar right above his chin, ran up to me, put his leg in front of mine and brought me, face flat, crashing to the ground. I lay there for a few seconds contemplating what to do next, when a voice, I recognized as Tweed's, called me from behind, "Get up, you lazy potato! And tell me who tripped you, so I can warm their little backsides!"

"It was Adrian, Adrian, ma'am", I said slowly getting back to my feet.

"Adrian, you mangy little worm, come here!!" screamed Tweed.

All the boys followed Adrian, as he slowly and quietly made his way back to where she was standing. The boys formed a circle around the three of us as she yelled,

"Adrian, you nasty little brat, you've done it again haven't you!"

"Done…, done what….?", he stuttered, looking down at his feet.

"Didn't you just trip him!" she said pointing to me.

**I, I…", Adrian stammered, as she pulled out a nice shining baseball bat from her bag (one she reserved for rare occasions), and grabbing him by the arm swung the bat back and forth, as if waiting for an imaginary ball. She then took one big swing, held the bat right back and took aim. A look of horror filled Adrian's eyes and the other boys watched in amazement as she brought the bat down. But she happened to miss. The next thing I saw was the bat coming right at my face. Slam!

That was all I could remember. The next day I woke up in a hospital bed, my face swollen from the blow I had received the previous day. The whole baseball team and few of my classmates stood around the bed and laughed and joked about how Mrs. Tweed would look, tending to a bunch of noisy sheep in the highlands of Scotland and how the school planned to bring in a friendlier coach, now that Tweed was gone.

Tweed's reign over our minds and our school's baseball pitch had ended. Amidst all the pain I was going through, this thought brought a smile to my face. However, the thought that exalted me the most was that I, of all people, had brought our team and our school this freedom, this relief and this joy that we had for years craved and that we would finally cherish.
I suddenly looked at the regime, its brutality and its lack of direction, from a different perspective. I saw it as a regime that had no future.

"I began to think of my duty: should I fight for my rights or should I go back to my country or should I go on to Pretoria, not minding the insults and return after finishing the case? It would be cowardice to run back without fulfilling my obligations. The hardship to which I had been subjected was merely superficial-a symptom of the deeply ingrained disease of color prejudice," wrote Gandhi, a barrister, a visionary, a leader, a freedom fighter, an ideologist of our times and a man who changed the very definition of the race barrier.

It was a cold night, my family and a few relatives were driving around Sun City looking for a motel. The clock was ticking past midnight and about half-a-dozen white motel owners refused us a room for the and a common excuse vacant. The same motel accommodate the next in. It was doubtful owner would let us in Johannesburg was a kilometers away and we drive back. It was at this the true impact of the on the lives of colored people living in Apartheid South Africa.

This incident had a great impact on me. I needed answers: What was race? How did color make us different? Had the almighty made us different and intended that we remain different? Or hadn't he? How was I to react to this new phenomenon? I searched for answers. I spoke to friends I trusted, my parents and acquaintances I felt I could rely on. My search however was in vain. The answers I got from them were vague and were usually anecdotes of personal experiences and were not explanations of what this invisible barrier- the race barrier -really was. Those who agreed to answer my questions feared the regime, for its spies were everywhere and its punishment was ruthless. Thus, I got answers that were only part of what they wished to express, a reflection of the oppressive regime and how it controlled everyone's right to speak, express their views or associate'.

My resolve to find out more about this issue, lead me to the library and writers and ideologists who had written about this subject and had experienced it. I found endless lists of writers who had expressed their views on this sensitive subject.
quite convincingly. I came across writers ranging from Alan Paton to M.G Vassanji, who had put forward rather forceful and interesting arguments on this topic. I paged through the works of many such writers until I happened to come across a particular book, titled 'My Experiments With Truth*', by M.K. Gandhi.

His book, each paragraph of it, his endless struggles for racial equality, the hardships he endures in this struggle and his conclusions on this subject exposed me to a totally different dimension on this topic. I suddenly looked at the regime, its brutality and its lack of direction, from a different perspective. I saw it as a regime that had no future. I felt discrimination, hatred and oppression were futile and I felt that the oppressors would, one day, regret what they had done. From being lured into the vicious cycle of racial profiling, I was converted into an individual who saw all races equally. I saw my neighbors, friends and teachers as human beings and not as white, black or Indian. I began to feel that everyone had rights, everyone had feelings and everyone shared the same emotions and instincts. An overall change had come over me and I realized that humanity as a whole shared the same desires and baser instincts.

I have read the works of several great writers since then, but no writer has influenced me as much as this one man, Gandhi, who, a little over half a century ago, brought the British Empire to its knees and propelled the formation of the world's largest democracy as it stands today. His perspectives on this racial divide, though simplistically laid out, seem practical and relevant even in today's day and age. However, the greatest thing that this intellectual expedition taught me was that race is merely a barrier that our forefathers created and that our oppressors fostered, and a barrier, which the present generation is bound to demolish.
I'll always remember you
You and all the cute little things you used to do.
You'll never leave my memory
That's where you're final resting place shall be.
Even though tears of you are cried in sorrow
The thought of you will bring joy tomorrow.
Good-bye, little one, I'll give you one last kiss
You barely left me yet, but you're already missed.
The moment you passed, I win always remember
That sunny evening in early September
Why did you have to leave me?
I will always love you, believe me.
Your short yet happy lift has ended
The broken hearts you left behind still need to be mended.
My precious angel, you can fly
My lovely princess, why did you have to die?
ERIKA TILOTTA
Cracked Skin

In the winter, the skin hardens,
Locking into place and tightening.
It stretches painfully across the body,
Turning white as it grows colder.
There is the sound of cracking;
Taps coming from under the surface.
The skin splits and peels away
As the blood starts to seep,
Flesh starts to move,
Pushed down one direction.
The body bleeds as more cracks appear
And then the skin is gone.
It is the river of water,
A body that bleeds throughout all seasons.
In the winter, the skin covers the flesh
And once more, the cracks will form.
WILLIS DUNBAR
"Carnival Ting"

Far from chaotic alarm clocks.
Closer to a dreamy beach,
behind zinc dwellings.
Hearts of pulsating people
beat-bounce,
in rhythmic wave.
WILLIS DUNBAR
11/9 Backwards

Metal, dust clouds, heavy rocks, broken glass,
Body parts everywhere, muddled.
Eye sockets and kneecaps.
Smoke over smoke,
between blood. Distant scream-cries.
Dirt and debris under nails;
scratching for light, for life.
Thoughts of good friends,
the new wife.
"She'll cry-scream
if I don't reach light, reach life."
MARIA NUNEZ
In Every Revolution

Sometimes I'm oppressed
Bound, immovable…contained
Some words and wounds are design to infiltrate
To murder, to throw me violently against a cold STEEL
WALL and my spirit…my soul break

Disillusions are too great
Leaves me barely alive
To fight back the agonizing pain
And yet…
My eyes I raise
I silently disobey
I dare to think, to challenge, to question
Within me broods a blind angry danger
A force, a storm, a hurricane…A Rebellion

…Sooner or later
A light breeze will be the only warning
And there will be no more nights of warming
As the sun breaks morning
I snatch my rightful adorning
JOSE GONZALEZ
Just Last Night the World Stopped Turning

Just last night the world stopped turning
How drastic is this for me to recite
The stars stopped shining
No more brightness in sight
The trees stopped growing
No more bark to ignite
The fire stopped burning
No more cooked food, lets start a fight
The ocean stopped flowing
No more fishes to unite
The wind stopped swerving
No more need to fly a kite
Gravity stopped pulling
No more having a next-day flight
Just last night the world stopped turning
The scientists stopped knowing
No more inventions such as light
Light itself stopped glowing
No more driving late at night
Technology stopped advancing
No more sorrow for the luddites
Transportation stopped running
No more being on time to a court site
Just last night the world stopped turning
NASCAR stopped racing
No more interested people to invite
Baseball players stopped playing
No more tobacco to bite
Football players stopped sacking
No more super bowls, alright
Basketball players stopped dribbling
No more crossovers, fakes, jumpers, or lay-ups to the right

Rappers stopped rapping
No more beats and lyrics that tight
Everything stopped moving
So I must no longer write
Because my world stopped turning late last night
DOROTHY NOGUERAS
The Clock of Life

The clock of life is wound but once,
And no man has the power
To tell when the hands will stop
On what day or what hour
Now is the only time you have
So live it with a will.
Don't wait until tomorrow
The hands may then be still.
They never quite leave us, our friends who have passed
Through the shadows of death to the sunlight above,
A thousand sweet memories are holding them fast
To the places they blessed with their presence and love.

The work, which they left and the books, which they read
Speak mutely, though still with an eloquence rare,
And the songs that they sang, the words that they said,
Yet linger and sigh on the desolate air.
FRANCES C. O’NEILL
Two Buck Came By

Two buck came by to spar a bit
While in the wood a doe did sit
Twas on a cold December morn
Just a little bit past dawn

My dad had died just three days passed
And we were left to mourn the last
Few days before the holiday
When children laugh and romp and play

The funeral was set to start
And we knew we must soon depart
When this sight had caught my eye
And I stopped to question why

I called for everyone to see
This vision that disturbed in me
Emotions I could not define
And feelings I would not resign

For in my sorrow and my grief
I stood in utter disbelief
As I persistently did cast
These deer to loved ones from the past

My morn, my dad, my dad-in-law
This is who I thought I saw
Together they had come to be
Three deer for all of us to see
MAHEEN HYDER
A Walk in Seasons

The shadow came swift and the air chill
Gone are the days of the shine and sun
The trees are bare and green is nil
Summer fades and winter has begun

Snowflakes fall and the ground is white
Time stands still and long become the hours
Days so dull yet morning so bright
Dusk monotonous and incessant showers

Long before the clouds clear
Snow shimmers and the pallid fade
Many are the chirps which I hear
Existence prevails and the grounds turn jade

Trees are speckled with budding leaves
Birds are afloat and heavens turn blue
Air is lighter and pleasant are eves
Vibrant are beings and days are few

The flower blossoms and a scent in air
Star is lofty and warmth is spread
Life is a bustle and summer is there
Broods are out and elders tread

Fruits are borne and foliage thrives
Appear so long but counted are the days
Soon the corner comes and the hour arrives
The toil is over and the new season sways

Leaves turn colors red, brown and yellow
Winds catch speed and clouds start to gather
The sun dims down and air becomes mellow
Insects brew under and a change is aver
Revisit will the days of gloom and freeze
All are seasons and pose equal bliss
Abode if near it’s all at ease
Having said so though even this I miss
CHRISTINE FARGNOLI
Outside at 11 PM

Outside at 11 PM.
Summer Breeze drifting to an autumn chill?
   And its still summer.
   I insist its still summer.
Our music playing in the car.
   Dancing those moves.
Thinking about this weekend's date.
   Holding on tight.
   It's summer.
Still a drop left in the barrel.
We're laughing about the concrete.
   Laughing about the car horn.
   Outside at 11 PM.
ALTHEA S. PALMER
I Be Somebody

I refuse to be hidden in your shadow
Harkening to your dictation
Shuddering to your piercing stares;
There is an identity hungrily awaiting somewhere,
So let me exhale
I assertively embrace
The treasures of life I truly deserve.

Popularity is not my journey's path
Humility is my tool, my liberation to success,
Release me
I insist,
Gravitated by faith
It is my destiny,
One day, some day
I be
Somebody----------
ERIKA TILOTTA
Ode to the Mischievous Butterfly

Ode to the mischievous butterfly
With its beautiful, colorful wings.
As it flies freely around
With happiness it brings.

A little fairy, so gentle and soft,
Quickly defying the wind's places.
A strong, innocent creature
That can dodge cat chases.

Yet in rough times
Where there's trouble and despair,
We see the butterfly in the distance
Acting as if it wasn't always there.

And when there is sadness
No one notices it flutter by.
Because it is so innocent
No one suspects the butterfly.
ERIKA TILOTTA
Do Not Go Gently Into This Good Night

I couldn't stay in the building, let alone the apartment. Dying, in one of the many bedrooms was my love. The battle with cancer was going to be over and it would be her life taken as its prize.

I shifted my coat as I stared at her window. Usually it would be brightly lit by lamps and joined by the sound of romantic music. Now the only light came dimly from a lone candle by the window on the second floor and there was silence. The room was occupied by her mother and brother; both watching their flower wilt in its bed. I tried to stay with them, but I could not. I had no strength to watch my love die. So I fled into the cold and chose to watch from here.

She is only twenty-seven; too young to die. We have known each other since we were five and we never were separated until now.

I feel like such a coward. This is the time that she needs me the most and I abandoned her. Despite being at her side, she was facing the cancer alone. And despite her family being in the room, she was alone. She was alone without me and I without her.

I stared at that window and watched as the flame danced. I remember the parties we attended. I was never a good dancer until she taught me. We would dance for hours until we were kicked out or the sun rose.

Shivering, I pulled up my coat again. It was autumn, her favorite month. She had always told me that she loved the colors from the leaves and the crunch that they made when stepped upon. Scraping and scratching, the leaves rustled against the concrete walk. There was only that sound and nothing more.

It should be warm in there. I could say 'better than out here', but it is not. Nothing is better, best, or even good on this night. It will be better later, when I see her again. The moon wasn't out and everything was in shadow. My gaze did not dare to move away from that window. I didn't care of how cold it would get. I will stay out here for her, for my love.

Hours were passing and still I waited. I watched as the candle began to cry and slowly shrink. I too cried. I can still feel the frozen streaks on my cheeks as I rapidly blinked the stinging cold from my vision. I wiped my eyes and returned my gaze to the window.

It was so dark in there. I wished that someone would turn on the light, but then I felt ashamed. Her eyes may not be able to take any more of the light. Her eyes must be adjusted to the darkness by now. How cruel would it be for someone to turn on a lamp and end up blinding her. Or did she already have her eyes closed? I
pray for them to be both opened and closed. I want her to take one more stand at the disease. Let her breathe and still have her vision to face down the evil that invaded her. And when the pain is gone, let her eyes close for her to sleep.

"Do not go gentle into that good night," I said, under my breath. It is one of the many poems that I introduced to her. She knew of poetry, but not from the masters. Blake, Tennyson, Wordsworth, Thomas, and Frost were a few that she enjoyed. I remember writing my own material based on some other favorites when I was courting attempts, but they were

Would she approve can only hope that she will join her. I refuse to than she is now.

The wind was see the flame on the in size. It was fighting room and its

Suddenly, the on. Light flooded the lawn, walk, and side of the building. However, the enormous light did not reach the second story window where my love was. No matter how bright the lamppost could be, it would never touch the window, nor the flickering light from the candle.

I wanted to absorb the heat coming from the lamppost. I wanted to, but I did not. It would not be fair to her to have so much light and warmth and for her to have so little.

How I wish I could be inside there with her.

The candle continued to put up its own fight against being extinguished. My will began to break and my sadness and anger poured out.

"Do not go gentle into this good night!" I snapped. "Old age should burn and rave at close of day! Rage, rage against the dying of that light!"

The candle began to shudder.

"Though, wise men at their end know dark is right because their words had forked no lightning, they will not go gentle into this good night!"

The flame started to shrink.

"Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay! They rage against the dying of that light!"

The room was starting to turn completely dark.

"Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight, and learn, too late, they grieved it on its way! They will not go gentle into this good night!"
The flame wasn't gone. It was still holding onto the wick as darkness began to overwhelm it.

"Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight, blind eyes that could blaze like meteors and be gay! They rage against the dying of that light!"

Not yet, just a little longer. Please hold on, my love. I just need to stop crying.

"And you, my love, there on that sad height, curse, bless me now with your fierce tears, I pray. Do not go gently into this good night. Rage, rage against the dying of that light."

As soon as I finished, the candle went out. My chest shuddered as I felt truly alone under the lamppost. I turned away and started to move away from the light, into the darkness.

My love, I will see you soon. And like you, I will not go easily on this night.
Eyes that never gave way to signs of absence,
Crystalline and so open to suggestion.
If they were miles away
would still pierce with the same force
Their call ever so clear.
But she fell away
A faint shadow of her former self.
Skin shade of a nuclear winter,
it hangs on for dear life to her corporeal frame.
Closing in on herself, she sings lyrics to songs
No one is supposed to hear
and let's me in on her secret symphony.
Today
I exchanged my tears for pride,
Showered in relief and perfumed in exuberance.
Wore a gown of toilet paper and molded a crown out of clay.
I took a broomstick in hand and
made
myself
the Queen.
I have died a thousand deaths since you've passed. 
Wandering, searching for your presence in the hallways of my mind 
only to find empty corridors. 
A young mind is known to be most impressionable 
Yet my impression of you is just a blur. 
Jealous and angered by the joyful memories of you others have enjoyed 
While I'm here tainted with the single memory of your last breath. 
All that remains now are the tales and inspirations, 
I have none. 
And your love, which was most abundant, 
So I've been informed, I have never experienced. 
Now I must go on and live with the void you left. 
Although unintentional, most painful nonetheless.
CHRISTINE FARGNOLI
7:01- I'm Overdone

7:01- I'm overdone. Overcooked and overzealous.  
It's just like waking up at the crack of night...  
Slightly ironic. So much for metaphors and sarcasm.  
You broke my trust, shattered it like a light bulb.  
Don't bother to repair it.  
You'll kill yourself with crazy glue, get your fingers stuck to your eyelids.  
Won't ever get undone.

7:06- I'm unhinged. Unfulfilled and undesired.  
It's just like finding the second dirtiest Earthworm.  
Slightly bizarre. Slightly disgusting and sickening.  
So much for buried treasure.  
You stepped on my toe.  
But it doesn't hurt.  
Don't come near me.

7:10- I get out of bed.
Staring into his crystal blue eyes, I saw a schoolboy's innocence and yet when he turned his head ever so slightly, dark shadows cast over this clear and carefree playfulness unmasking his rudimentary selfishness. By his straightforward picturesque look, he imitated Michelangelo's sculpted statue that would never come to life but only if he would break away from his stone expressions and marbled features. It was as if he worked simultaneously with every muscle and wrinkle on his face to assume the stance of a Greek Adonis, but it was all for naught. When he smiled at the quick whip of my tongue's desire to convey humor, he mustered up a Cheshire cat grin that Alice in Wonderland would have vouched for as being just as intimidating as the real journey that only she experienced. His shocking statements, inconsistent and double-minded, demanded a certain level of expectation to fulfill infatuated with an image of how a woman should be. He believed in anyone. His eyes, seriously explained to me, "You treated me like a little boy".

In his blank stare, I saw the agony and pain that the cruel cards of life had dealt him. Even though he was preoccupied, I could sense other hidden thoughts circulating through his brain. His hands positioned on his knee allowed his fingers to tap to unheard romance music. I just knew that he was pondering lecherous obsessions that only the male brain could possess. I sensed the rapid tick-tock of his eyes like one of those old 1950's black cat clocks, whose eyes are ever on the go bouncing and swinging to the exact beat of the monotonous drums of life that swing in indecision. I felt his vulnerability and uneasiness with life when he shifted in his seat. I could smell the fresh black leather of his jacket that emulated a false sense of strength. Leather always reeks of that hard-core vibe, but when one puts it on, it just seems to cover and hide one's true identity from the outside world. Just the way a new pair of shoes must be broken into the beat of someone's walk, so had
he been forced into the ways of the world. If he had embraced a platonic love rather than a superficial masculine sex image, then his fragile male ego would never have been wounded.

Observing his nonchalant posture, I realized that his brazen coolness represented his contempt toward the people on the bus. While he squirmed in his seat, he appeared uneasy and unsettled with his own body. In reality, he was posing to be a mysterious romantic, but rather his stone face and wandering eyes communicated his own lustful delight. I don't know if it was his strong masculine Cologne that captured my fancy, but I found myself being tugged by sheer feminine desire.

Perhaps, his overly self-confident attitude was blatantly spilling forth through his mastery of the English language's vilest words that he would flex in curse word form. While admiring me, his lips mimicked unmentionable words to test my limits.

I innocently asked, "How would I get to know you?" He sarcastically replied in a low tone with a sly smirk, "Well, you'll just have to find out". Surprisingly, he smiled thus implying that his sly comments were actually his way of flirting.

His probing remarks were meant to unnerve. "Do you even have a date?" he whispered with a certain level of cockiness and defiant attitude that implied that somehow he was superior.

But then it became apparent with the wry expression of his lips that he was pretending to hide some uncertain aspects of his character. He tried to conceal himself in some mysterious lie that perhaps, he was a Casanova that had all the ladies yearning for his touch.

His posture perked up as the bus crawled like a caterpillar past a garden of memories—our memories. The driver asked if he wanted to get off at this painful stop, but he said that he wanted to continue the ride with his lady. And with that, he reached over and took my hand and whispered a Spanish verse that took us back to a time that had passed by many months ago when I was his lady and he was my Casanova.
JESSICA FARGNOLI
Various Haikus

Behind cool water
Duplicity of nature
Refreshing minds sing

Uncertain futures
Yield fear in the hearts of many
To overcome show strength

Disdain for falsehood
Life is in contradiction
Soon truth will prevail

We fear the unknown
Stay strong for sanity's sake
Fear causes heartache

Lazy summer days
Worry free endless moments
Are choked by school

Lies shrink, truth expands
Open the door to hear the voice
-Honor and freedom

Passionate kisses
Warm conversations and love
Smeared with breakup
SOFIA X. SOTO
The Elevator

I was waiting for the elevator,
When I meet him...

He was leaning on the wall,
Eyes down looking at the floor,
Or so I thought at the time.
He seemed all quiet, mysterious,
And tall, dark and handsome.

Then, the elevator came,
The doors opened,
And we stepped in together.
I pressed the button for the 10th floor
And he pressed for the 11th.

The elevator doors closed,
And began to move.
We were the only two on the elevator,
And he stood right behind me.

He was so close to me,
That I could feel his breath,
On the back of my neck.
I shuttered;
He took a step closer to me,
And whispered in my ear,
"You are so beautiful."

I leaned back onto him,
And he grabbed my hand,
And began to caress it.
Goosebumps raced across my body;
I closed my eyes,

And time seemed to stop,
Or so I wished it did.

The elevator had came to my stop,
    And the doors opened.
He let go of my hand,
    Took a step back,
And I walked off.

As I was heading towards my destination,
I realized there was a piece of paper in my hand.
    It said, "Come get lost with me."
As well as, his name and number.
    I smiled to myself...

Then, this feeling came over me.
    I could not help myself;
I turned around,
Started to walk back to the elevator,
    Pulled out my cell phone,
And dialed his number...

    Ring! Ring!
He picked up,
And said, "Hello Beautiful."
And I said, "Going Down?"
The green fields of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania are very touching, but at the same time, they are creepy place to visit. It once was a small, rural town that became the battlefield to the bloodiest battle of the Civil War. A hundred and thirty eight years later, it is a National Park, which is the largest battlefield shrine in America. It honors those who had fallen during those horrible three days. However, as I was walking through the fields green and rich with life, my gaze fixed upon the setting sun on the horizon beyond the round tops; I had forgotten for those few minutes that I was walking on a battlefield where hundreds of men had seen their last sunset too just before they had fallen.

Once the sun had set, the fields green and rich with life transformed into this foggy graveyard full of nostalgia. However, instead of gravestones, there were plaques everywhere describing the action that took place there. For example, a plaque by the round crossed the south horizon to engage Another example, a Charge and the Angle the focal point of the day of battle." As I walked back to group at the Eternal Monument, I felt my spine and the hairs on the back of my neck stand up. Then, I heard a tear of something being ripped open, rifles going off, horse hooves thundering about around me, cannons exploding, hand to hand fighting and men crying out. The smell of gunpowder, blood and death clouded my senses. The sounds and odors were sickening. I began shaking my head violently from side to side as I started running, trying to block out the ghosts or spirits that haunt this place. I began shaking my head violently from side to side as I started running, trying to block out the ghosts or spirits that haunt this place. I ran through the open field of Pickett's Charge near the Angle, passed the Peach Orchard with the cannon replicas that stood in front of it for reenactments. I looked back at Peach Orchard and by one of the peach trees I had seen a man in a blue uniform with his right arm salute me. I turned my head right back around and picked up my pace. After Pickett's Charge I ran passed Gulp's Hill where on a wood panel going down the slope, monument after monument dedicated to the units who defended that hill were placed on it. Beyond Gulp's Hill was Cemetery
Ridge, and seeing it gave me the creeps and a boost of adrenaline that made me run so fast I became a bicycle.

Fifteen minutes later, while I was barely breathing and my lungs were on fire, I arrived at my tour group's meeting place. As I caught my breath, slowly breathing in and out, I noticed numerous wreaths and dozens upon dozens of flowers ranging from white roses to calla lilies at the foot of the monument giving respect for the men both union and confederate who fought and died for their cause. At that moment, it felt as though the temperature just dropped from chilly to freezing. Then I was holding my arms and jacket to my body, waiting for the rest of my tour group to show up. Once attendance was called and my tour bus was pulling away from the monument, I started thinking and asked myself, "Why did all of these people leave all those wreaths and flowers at the foot of that specific monument?" Then, as if a light bulb in my head went off I thought of what President Franklin D. Roosevelt said, "That monument is a symbol of peace eternal in a nation united." I came to the conclusion that that is why those men full of courage had given up their lives.
ENOCHE NYAMEKYE
I Am the American Dream

-This poem is dedicated to my mother and father, who, through hardships, have raised me up to be the best I can be.

I am the American Dream!
Yes, I am a dark-skinned brother
Whose father arrived in a strange land with one dollar.
A dollar got his wife to join him five years later.
A dollar got his children to experience a lifestyle like no other.
A dollar got two children through college,
and another as an anticipated graduate.
A dollar has taught one son the true meaning of life besides the expectations of strife.
A dollar has taught this son the concept of love that can only be received from the heavens above.
A dollar has brought his son in a position in which he can achieve almost anything.
A dollar has placed his family in history that has been made in mystery.
A dollar has gotten him to be part of a team that shares a common dream;
A dream that can be achieved through one dollar and can be recognized by a family member.
A dream that makes me part of a bigger dream, due to one man's eagerness to take action upon his dreams.
I am that dark-skinned brother Whose father arrived in a strange land with one dollar.
Yes, I am the American Dream!
"this world that is so hard, this life that must end in death, are yet rich in the beautiful and the strange."

Longinus- Peri Hypsous

The stars envelope the earth like a sea of pearls on black velvet. A beetle as large as a bat flies erratically, and gets lost beneath one of the umbrellas that border our hotel pool. It lands on its back with its legs kicking soundlessly-at a crescent moon. Out here, on the Masai Mara life is always juxtaposed with death. And city life seems like a thousand lifetimes away. Here there are no street lamps to light the way. Soon the beetle's feet will stop moving, and dawn's purple pall will prove the sun will rise again to heat the open plain. At night, the moon will carve a place in the sky.
ELAINE REISMAN
1999- Our First Night in Prague

"the tones in the voice of the shadow
were not the tone of anyone being, but
of a multitude of beings..."

   Poe- Shadow-A Parable

Where birds fly at night
a river flows fast over rocks, rearing rapids,
and creating fast moving swells
under the old bridge. A marauding sky
as black as ink, fills the blind alleyways,
transforming their recesses into primeval
shadows in the old city. A darkly scene,
whose essence is punctuated
by a few obsolete lamps that make mysterious
hollows of the dusty streets, remains empty,
except for a shuddering streetcar
that clicks courageously along a winding track-
sputtering sparks into the night, where they dissipate
into a black void almost as soon as they are born.
LORIANN R. BESPALKO
Glancing Into Dorm Room Windows

Walking out of class on a brisk autumn night,
I see the windows of the new dormitory
Illuminated
By the students now living there
Enjoying the life of a college undergraduate.
Peering into one that now seems so high in the air
I see people
Different people
Walking around inside.
That one used to be my window.
The glass panes are now bare,
Not decorated by glittery paper stars and snowflakes on one side
And the sorority Greek letters that should've been my own
On the other.
Walking out of class on a brisk autumn night,
I glance into dorm room windows
And see a life that used to be my own.
I walk on.
CHRISTINE FARGNOLI
Print One
CHRISTINE FARGNOLI
Print Two
MARYANN SENNA
Print Three