



# Seascape

A SHOWCASE OF OCEAN COUNTY COLLEGE'S CREATIVITY



# *Seascape* 2019-2020

**Editor-in-Chief: Trevor Baluski**

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As we shelter in place during this unprecedented time, we contemplate all of the ways our lives have drastically changed. We miss the engagement of events on campus; we miss chatting over coffee in the student center; we miss the comradery of waiting in classes for them to begin or end. We miss the myriad of small and large experiences that used to be the center of our days at Ocean County College. We miss togetherness and community.

Suddenly, we find ourselves conscious that we are experiencing a major historical event that generations from now will be studying to learn how we reacted, what we choose to do, what we valued, and who we were.

Rather than despair, we create. We write. We paint. We photograph. We express ourselves and document the yearnings for all that we were and all that we hope to be in the future.

We hope that you find some inspiration and solace in this year's edition of *Seascape*, and we hope that one day in the distant future, we can reflect back on this unique time and be proud of how we all rose together as one special OCC family.

Professor Jayanti Tamm,  
Associate Professor of English  
Faculty Advisor, *Seascape*

*Seascope* is dedicated to all of the tireless workers on the frontlines selflessly serving our community during this pandemic.

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# Seascape

## Ocean County College's Literary & Arts Magazine

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## **"I AM" -**

### **A litany by the collective students of ENGL-211-01**

I am the void of space ripped apart by the hands of man.  
I am a wallaby without a belly pocket to call home.  
I am the heart of a sleeping hummingbird.  
I am the hamster on the wheel.  
I am the undercurrent that slows and twirls the fall of a leaf.  
I am a tapestry woven of promises I did not make.  
I am the fleeting of a mouse.  
I am a baby gazelle, running alone, from the dangers of the savannah.  
I am a swan, alone in the lake.  
I am a burning desire waiting to be fulfilled.  
I am a wolf loyal to the end.  
I am the senator that makes arguments to make amends to the laws of physics.  
I am the marble held tight by the one who caught it.  
I am the flame that flickers and resists to be extinguished.  
I am a butterfly, simply complex.  
I am the product of my own volition.  
I am the energy of a cell phone that turns off at a seemingly way too high battery percentage.  
I am a wave, breaking on the shore.  
I am a guitar, waiting to be picked up and played.  
I am the laughter and innocence of children.  
I am a package without a destination or sender.  
I am the coal beneath raging fire.  
I am a ship in rough seas awaiting smooth sailing.  
I am a turtle peeking from its shell.  
I am a diamond that shines bright on a rainy day.  
I am the heart that skips a beat.  
I am a violin in an orchestra destined to perform for the gods.  
I am a fish in a bowl of fire and yet I thrive.  
I am the sun on a cloudless summer day.  
I am a camera and the camera's always rolling.





Adriana Eisenman



Aidel Stern



# Pain

## Brandon Waters

The pain is counted  
1..., 2..., 3...  
No relief is found  
All good is forgotten

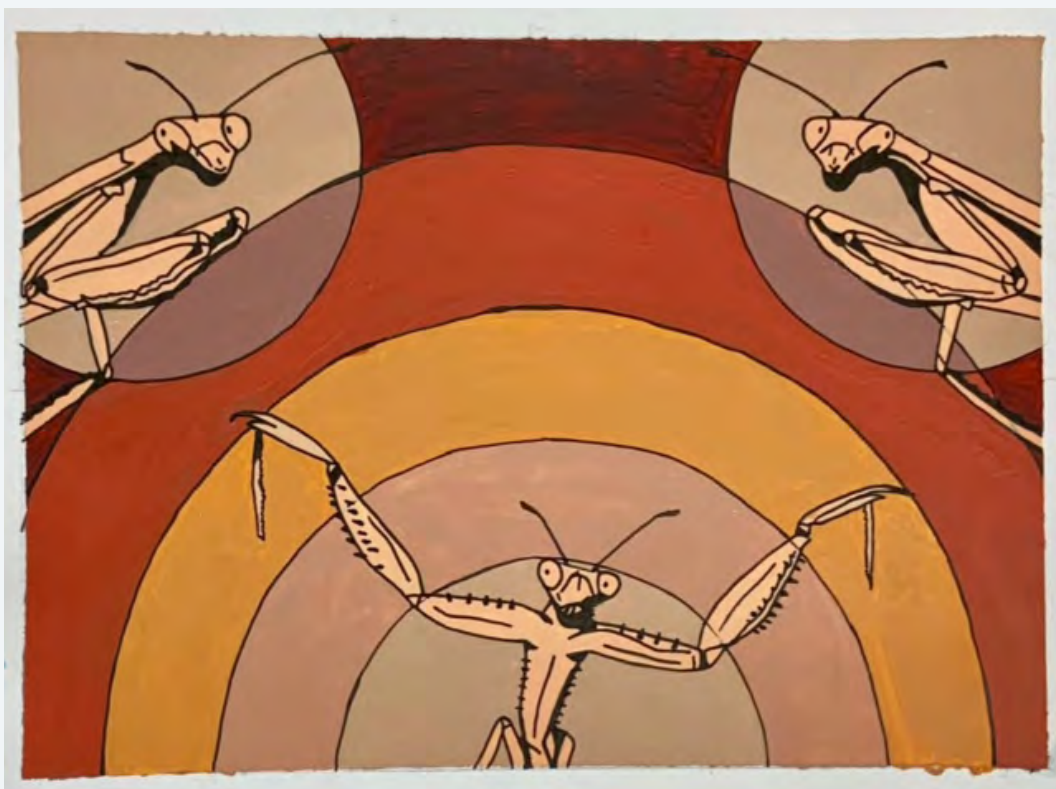
The pain is counted  
4..., 5..., 6...  
Relief is not good enough  
Time passes but the pain remains

The pain is counted  
7..., 8..., 9...  
Silence falls  
A prayer is whispered

The pain is tricked  
8..., 7...  
Erased but not forgotten  
Blinded but still seen  
Hope nothing but a facade

The clock speaks 12  
But pain continues  
8..., 9...  
Goodbyes are spoken  
Goodbye, goodbye, goodbye  
Never good enough  
Never satisfied

Alone in darkness  
Wishing for light  
The pain is swiftly delivered  
Leaving nothing but 9 blood drops and 9 scars  
The pain never satisfies  
The day ends but hope is not tomorrow



Alyssa Wambach



Robbi Fuggi

## Trevor Baluski

Thumbs,  
Tittering,  
Tattering,  
Tapping and pattering.  
Against glowing boxes,  
Singing keys,  
Clattering like bone dice.  
A sort of slavery,  
Those wires,  
Like veins.  
Those circuits,  
Like hearts.  
But beatless,  
Quiet.  
Save for when it calls.  
Buzzing across the counter.  
Are you tethered?  
Or free?





Brent Germano



Anna Cavanagh

# When Colors Fade

Cristina Baldino

When colors fade and turn to gray.  
My jaded heart longs to stay,  
In a place along the fray,  
Of the deep abyss. What's the price to pay?

What my dear then is the price?  
Will my billow of tears be enough to suffice?  
Will it take my mind turning into ice?  
No sweet charity when you are nice.

No justice repaid. No keeping score.  
When push comes to shove, it turns out you are poor  
Time after time, another door.  
Blinded to the trap and to the lure.

Always listening to the heart.  
My brokenness a work of art.  
Pleasurable pain becomes the dart.  
Where do I end? Where do I start?

When colors fade and turn to gray.  
In the abyss my destiny to stay.  
Though rotting with filth and slow decay,  
At the bottom there the shadows and I lay.





Antonio Rizzo







Danny Villalva

# The Real Him

## Christopher Kronyak

“I have something I need to say.”

Chris stood in front of the sea of people, family and friends mixed with classmates dressed in their gowns and caps. Silence fell upon the waves of people, the calming sea waiting to hear what would come next. Now was the moment.

For so long, Chris knew who he truly was. He never told anyone, keeping it a skeleton in the closet. The closet full of his real feelings. Feelings that belonged to him. For so long, he was afraid to show who he really was.

The burning questions came to mind.

What will they say? What will they think of me?

These questions have haunted him for the past few years now, keeping the closet doors barred.

Chris took a step back, his mouth trapped shut by the thoughts

*Now is not the time.*

*I can't say it.*

Such thoughts were twisting his mind in all different directions.

*They will turn their backs on you.*

*They will hate you.*

*Your feelings mean nothing.*

Suddenly, from inside his mind, Chris heard another voice.

It was the voice of his mother.

*I love you, Christopher. No matter who you are, I love you.*  
His father's voice came next.

*Son, we love you. That will never change.*

Chris smiled as the voices of his friends came next.

*Hey buddy, just know that you will always be my friend. That will never change.*

*Hey man, brothers for life! Love you bro!*

He took a step up to the microphone now. It was time.

Chris smiled.

“I’m gay.”

The words rolled off his tongue freely. The silence reigned.

*No matter what, I will always love myself.*

The waves began again as everyone in the audience clapped and smiled wide for Chris. Within himself, Chris felt free. The closet doors could not lock him up anymore. He was out and proud to be who he was.

The real him.





*Tylen N. Lewis  
Photography*



Danny Villalva

# The Sky the Connector

## **Inferior to be a Bird**

I stop to notice a few small birds  
chirping about in a leafless tree.

I focus on one as it walks up the tree  
like how it walks across the ground.

I admire its ability to scale,  
and to fly, and to fit into tiny places.

Do I want to be a bird?

It pecks its beak against a dead branch,  
looking for some food.

It chirps its same chirp,  
which, though consonant, means just one thing (if anything at all).

It flies to another foodless tree  
to loop its “fittest” basicness.

Does it ever want anything different?

I do, and though it may lead me down, it can lead me up.  
I have more than the bird: mind.  
I can soar higher.



Tia Trione



## Jonathan Haythorn

Before the slope that slid down all the smooth  
And jagged shards of glass  
That led me gently down the hall into your room  
Where you once saw  
A tiny pretty little dancer from out your window  
in the street  
Performing, swarming, bending down so she could  
Reach and touch her feet  
You slept and wept and cried until the morning  
Sky had turned to dusk  
I lied there humming  
Stroking your hair  
I wish you'd known that I was there  
But I climbed back up the slope of smooth and  
Jagged shards of glass  
Before you could awake



Zaib Nageeb



Emily Lynch

# A Sad Love Poem

Anna DeAngelis

I have affairs with sadness

And rendezvous with suffering

I sneak upon the roof with misery

And kiss heartbreak with only  
the most eager lips

I have managed fall in love  
with melancholy's body

And the way sorrow fits me like  
a gown as I attend the ball of woe

Escorting me would be grief  
with it's handsome and relentless tears

And affliction is never far  
away from taking me away

To another pain that has captured  
my love

Tribulation was more than just  
a one night affair

Mourning is proving to be another  
poetic date

Torment embraces me with an  
undeniable passion

But I prefer the discomfort  
from agony

When it takes me to the opera  
of ache

Worry is somewhere close, eyeing  
me in the crowd

As depression puts chivalrous  
fingertips on my kneecap

And unhappiness fixes my makeup  
during an intermission

With black blush to give hollow  
cheeks

And I'll always fall in love  
with anxiety's bewitching voice as it sings the song of sadness

And I'll always be addicted  
to this excruciating plague

Or the constant vexation that  
flows through blue veins

I do not prefer the shining face of positivity

Because  
I find the opposite to be so undeniably lovely

And  
so,

I suppose I will be bound to gain the affection of beautifully tormented lovers

Forever  
and ever

Forever  
and ever





Emily Lynch

# Lady Orion

John Trivigno

Sweat drips down my face  
As we prepare for lift-off.  
We prepare to leave this world to one unknown  
As I mentally prepare, the countdown starts ticking down  
Oh god.

Five.	“Get”
Four.	“Ready”
Three.	“Here”
Two.	“We”
One.	“Go”

With a crashing burst of fire and flame, the rocket leaves  
The touch and grace of sweet terra.  
I close my eyes: Bye Mother Earth, I shall miss your kingdom of life  
The inferno of the flame glows and radiates and burns,  
The flames hot and glaring and scorching,  
it is our fuel and it burns bright.  
The fire rages and propels us faster towards the heavens with the roar of the dragons  
carrying us up faster.  
Faster. Faster. Faster.  
We pierce through the atmosphere as the engines ignite throwing us into the stars.  
We soar like the dragons of the skies.  
The faster we go, and I can't think.  
I didn't even realize we left the mother Earth.  
I never got to say goodbye.

Then we stopped.  
Where is my Earth?  
I am alone in this void in my rocket.  
Alone in my thoughts.  
And Then I See:  
The ever-expanding Sea of the Cosmos lay ahead of me.  
I reach out, but they are too far away.  
In their grand isolation, In her grand isolation.  
In her natural beauty, In her grand darkness,  
I look upon Thy Lady Orion.  
The stars radiate in bright warm light  
And comfort the coldest of men in the engulfing darkness.  
Meteors hail across the scene like tears of Thy Lady Orion.  
I shall weep for you, Thy Lady.

The planets orbit in peace.  
The nearest to me with large rings glistens like jewels before thy eyes and spins like a  
ballerina in the cold desolate darkness, filling my heart with warmth.

The stars orbit in peace.  
The star far away burns bright and lives,  
its beauty everlasting with its warm touch.  
I reached out once more, tearing up, but it was too far off.  
The star grows hotter with pressure, then implodes and dies with violence and heat.  
Come Back  
One might see the death of beauty  
and shed tears in the now barren dark realm,  
but like a phoenix in its hot ashes,  
It is reborn with grand justice.  
Thy Lady Orion crafts a vibrant splash of colors,  
Using the ashes with an artistic skill,  
like the Sandman grants dreams to the young in their slumber.  
The Opera and waves of colors and heavenly design serves as pure bliss for the soul, as  
nature rebirthed itself.  
It was hard to look away from such a beautiful sight.  
I never wanted to.  
I have never truly gotten my eyes back, Lady Orion,  
I will always look up in the sky for your elegance, for your grace to carry me back into  
your realm.



Casey Conklin

# LIVE

Robert Kelly

Live and cry  
Laugh and die  
Repeat again  
The circle of life  
New and broken  
Old and shining  
Nothing in stone  
But names and dates  
Buying time  
For pearly or hell fire gates  
Live it fast or live it slow  
Keep the pacing up  
Life is a show  
Live and cry  
Laugh and die  
Repeat again







Tim Oler

# Terms

Josephine O'Grady

I am constantly reminded  
that soon, all of this will be gone  
these little worries and troubles and happenings  
the heartache and petty confusion  
and you, too-- you will also be gone  
leaving the room for my "real life"  
to finally begin

First of all, it's worth noting  
that you will never truly be gone  
because even when I'm mad at you, and will you to go  
oh my blessed, you smile again  
and it lasts-- two, three, four- wait;  
longer than the decade

Memory is certainly persistent  
But you, more so.

Once all of this is over, everything  
will start for you--  
Yes, when  
all this is over, and what shall I do until  
the tracks of that railroad find me?

Wait, I suppose  
Take my long walks on the beach  
read my poetry by the window  
finding your favorite lines and  
picking out more

Writing, at least when weather permits  
go to church, and take care of  
whoever else is left to take care of  
I'm no wallflower  
But for you, my dear, upon your return home  
to see that it can all be exactly as you remembered  
I'll be here.

Most mornings, I'll make coffee at home  
though when I go out, I'll order the  
house coffee, black  
let the autumn winds that came in with me settle  
my chilled fingers wrapped tight around the cup  
still wearing your gloves as I take  
Sip after sip.

Is my life simply here  
through no other will and choice  
but my own?  
we all have choices, and in  
my own way, I have made  
mine.



Danny Villalva





Erica Kurev

# Shadow

Nenah SanFilippo

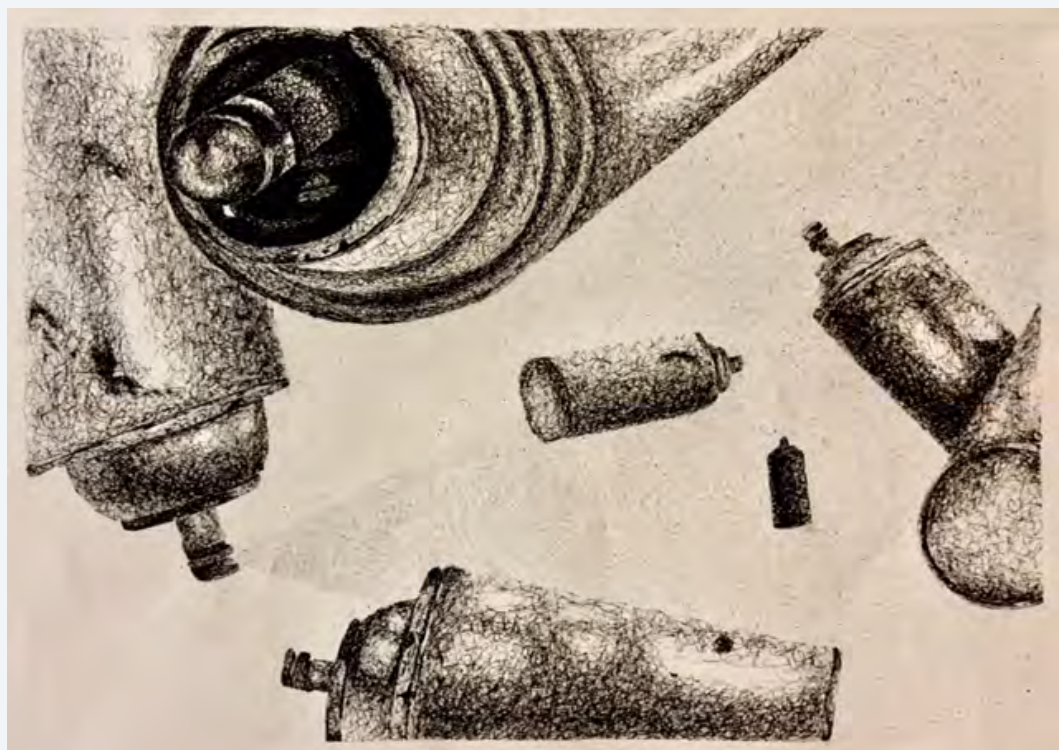
The thing that moves with you  
Speaks with you  
Doesn't show it's own emotion  
I wonder how that shadow feels  
Alone in its own land  
But when the suns not out  
Where does it go  
Where do I go  
When I feel like a shadow  
Walking down the road  
No thoughts just cold  
I hate feeling like a shadow  
It's getting old



Nicole Gomes



Marsh Caro



Maxwell Hunter



# My Teddy

M. Perry

My Teddy had homely brown eyes and hair.  
A metal post and sparkling stone stuck out  
of his right cheek just below the outer corner of his eye.  
His ears were stretched out  
with glossy black plugs just thicker than a quarter.  
Is this why he seemed not to hear my screams?

My Teddy had a graveyard of tombstones of all his loved ones  
etched with ink up along his right arm.  
He had barely survived through so much loss and death,  
Teddy had not had someone like me to care for him.  
He was marked by the beast,  
a black outline and details of a shaded tattoo  
of Baphomet stretched across his whole chest.

I can still hear his warm, buoyant voice in my head.  
I can still feel his touch on every nerve ending of my skin.  
I can still remember every item in his room.  
I- still -remember every little interaction we had,  
and I- still -miss him so much.

I long for him,  
but I know I can never see him again  
because of what happens when I am around him.

In February my Teddy gifted me  
chocolate covered strawberries and roses,  
I was his angelic valentine.  
My dear Teddy even got me a brand-new plush teddy!

By the time March came around,  
every time I saw him,  
his hands ended up gripping around my throat.  
A rush of panic,  
a split second of euphoria

As I regained consciousness,  
he was overpowering my whole body,  
my spirit.  
I was no longer a sacred temple.  
His manhood converted my womb into an inglorious box.

When I look in the mirror,  
I can- still -see all the bruises  
on my neck, arms, and legs  
even though they have physically healed.  
My heart is- still -bleeding and bruised.

Teddy, I miss you so much, but I bring out the worst in you.



Marsh Caro

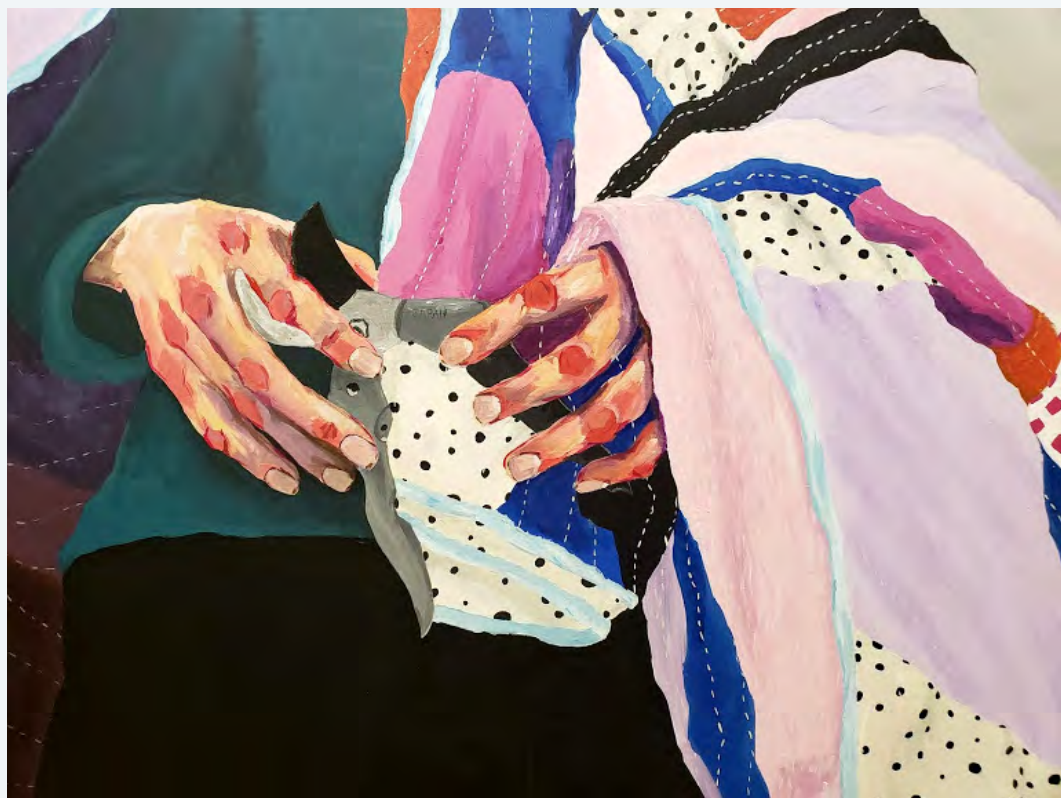


Nicole Gomes



Mikey Garcia





Jillian Santora



Rina Scheiber

# *Seascape's Annual Prose Contest*

3rd Place

## **The Black Goat**

**Anna DeAngelis**

“Baa baa black sheep have you any wool?”

“Yes sir, yes sir, three bags from this pack mule!” The animals would ridicule pathetic Black Goat, all in a crowd one day after school.

Dog barked his torment and Dragon hissed her tongue, Rabbit jumped up high, and Tiger growled among poor Black Goat that trotted on by, everyone else turning a blind eye. This went on, as all things do, the bullying and torment growing worse with each morning's dew. And that night, as sad Black Goat traveled to his hut, the one made from oak wood and sour chestnuts, Rat and Snake arose from the dirt to greet the terrorized introvert.

“A sheep is what they reduce you to? A sheep is what they claim? How can they say such things when their target is the lame?” Rat proclaimed and Snake chimed in.

“Shame, shame, how rude of their tongues. Do they not know the hidden strength that lies in goat lungs? Or rather, that talent in the song that is just waiting to be sung by dear Black Goat's lips who they chide and twit, mock and whip!”

Puny Black Goat's gaze danced between the two who squirmed around his hooves as his impatience grew, scowling a great black goat frown and sighing a great black goat sound.

“Off with you impudent creatures, I don't have time to be pitied by preachers and I know you will try to hatch evil thoughts in my head, so be gone!” Black Goat had said, resting his body to try to go to bed. Yet Rat and Snake still persisted, rattling off vengeance plans they had listed all until Black Goat gave a scream, “Fine! I'll take your advice if they do something really mean”.

The rodent and serpent were satisfied with the answer, thanking silly Black Goat for his candor and wishing him sweet dreams in his endeavours as they left the hut, the one made of oak wood and sour chestnuts.

And later in the evening, Rat and Snake went to the animals sleeping, waking them with a great big squeak and a hiss that was not so weak.

“Dog, Dragon, Tiger, and Rabbit! We have a plan that will really make Black

Goat have it. A tar and feathering should be good if you want to make your feelings understood!

You'll pick him up in his sleep and transform him into that of a sheep, the name that you address him as when you speak so that his eyes will beg and weep, a well deserved punishment for a beast!"

Dog stretched from his couch, and Dragon looked around, Rabbit sighed, and Tiger gave a shoulder slouch.

"Why would we do that? What is the reason? We're the best at making fun of Black Goat and that is the last thing we need expertise in." Tiger gave a growl.

"Not to mention, your punishment seems quite foul. Black Goat, the beast, may not be the best but he ceases to fight back or stress or protest." Rabbit suggested, Dragon speaking next.

"Give us a reason or none at all, and leave us to sleep, let go of this brawl."

Rat and Snake exchanged glances, nodding to each other and alternating stances so that Snake could address this in a proper manner, manipulating them with his hypnotic banter.

"You all think Black Goat is innocent and make fun of him for his vigilance but have you ever thought of when he sleeps? What dreams or thoughts that he may keep? We've heard them all, his dislike of paws, hatred for creatures with menacing jaws, and a true animosity for cute little tails and don't forget his disgust when it comes to long, sharp nails! Oh, the cruel mutt that Black Goat is, keeping away in his sad little hut made of oak wood and sour chestnuts. What do you think now that you know the truth, somewhat, what will you do?"

"I will tell you what is definitely true!" Dog barked, "We will show Black Goat who can really be cruel, as we tar and feather that foolish mule, toss him from to- and-fro. Now, to the hut, let us go!"

Rabbit, Tiger, Dragon, and Dog stampeded out of their residing bog, up the hills and past the school to take their revenge on that silly old mule, past the trees and through the mud to finally arrive at that little hut, the one made from oak wood and sour chestnuts. Rat and Snake laughed and laughed about the success of the plan they had choreographed and could not wait to see it all play out, and to watch poor Black Goat give a shout.

There, the animals angrily took sleeping Black Goat's leg and foot, immobilized as the tarring began and dousing him in feathers so that he looked like a lamb.

"Pathetic Black Goat, this is your warning to never wrong us or greet us in the morning," Rabbit began.

"Or ever show your face to us in your entire lifespan! How could you say you

don't like long nails when we know you don't pay attention to details?" Dragon wailed as Dog spoke next.

"You're nothing more than a silly old pet!"

"You will regret what you have said and now that this is over, let us go back to bed," Tiger said and all of the animals departed, leaving innocent Black Goat somewhat fainthearted.

And as he lay there in his tar and feathers, a vision of angelic white and darkened leather, Black Goat grew angry at their mistreatment and debated his revenge to great extent.

"I will ruin them!" Black Goat said. "End their existence and steal their souls; I will wake them and shake them, take all of their golden glory and then we will see who will really be sorry!" Black Goat rebut, his scream so loud that it shook his hut, and as the oak wood wavered and his door slammed shut, tumbling down came the sour chestnuts.

The very next day, Black Goat came trotting on by, down to the school, not a cloud in his sky and the other animals opened their mouths wide as the smile on Black Goat's face was one that horrified.

"What do you want Black Goat? Have you come back for another white coat? Do we have to make a special noose for your throat?" Tiger spoke first.

"We really thought you were gone, and what's with that smile? Did you need more convincing after only a short while?" The animals erupted into chaotic beguilement as Black goat parted his black goat lips to give his grand black goat torment.

And one by one the animals fell, Black Goat cackling as they all shouted and yelled, as his horns grew with each animal's expel, and if the animals ever existed, no one could tell. Dragon went first with a burst of fire, tiger trying to run away but getting caught in a wire, and Black Goat took advantage of this black goat disaster and ended both of them soon after. Dog fought back, though he did not stand a chance, for Black Goat's horns were as sharp his stance and when only little rabbit was left, who hopped and hopped, whined and wept, Black Goat stepped and stepped and stepped until only a handful of dust was left.

Rat and Snake viewed from far off, entranced by the event that they had just watched, proudly approaching pathetic Black Goat who huffed and snarled deep from his throat.

"Black Goat, what a fantastic scene! We really did not expect you to be so mean, but you did it, you did it, you won this war. Please join us, don't be a bore." They meekly hissed and squeaked together, appearing awfully small, intimidated, and somewhat feathered. Black Goat gazed down on the impudent pests, debating whether or not he should protest and Black Goat raised his great Black Goat hoof and ended them too with a Black Goat poof.



# *Seascape's Annual Prose Contest*

2nd Place

## **This One is for All of the Marbles**

**Kylie Clark**

The rare disaster of you actually caressing a thought from the folds of your brain is an entertainment enthralled by the likelihood of a deathmatch, all child's play and complex catacombs of rules foraged by foreign concepts. I do not care particularly for the game it is you choose to train your bearings in, however, the more topsy-turvy strange, the better. A parachute match in the ocean. A race to the crust of the wind. Find-the-portal-in-the-fishbowl. All of that tomfoolery in which ingenious is never at any stake of the game, again, whichever you may be playing, but definitely not one fanned with cards.

I think those games are a bit foolish in the head.

Your life is ending either through a ten of hearts, an ace of spades, a jack of all trades, and you must not and can not rely on your own personalized decision to get you through a sanity such as this. Do not play with things that are built only to fall.

This is not so much a story as a warning, an advertisement of your own dilapidated despair and consideration of luck in the confusion of downtrodden areas of your life that may be too depressed to even concave into. Be careful, by all inferences and instances, for you could lose your mind simply by a firm resolution in heads over tails.

The game is played where you believe it to be: in the wet, pulpy remains of a bar slumped like a recession against the bare-boned nightmarish time of the atmosphere, and set next to a streetlight, the one that has a strange variation of scoliosis attached to its spine, because humans find the dire need of placing the subatomic into glass figurines to watch them glow.

Not that it matters.

It simply allows me to respect the loss of sense a little bit more, in a justified and respectable sort of way.

The people who partake are also how you would demise, cigars smuggled into lips aching with alcoholic entrails, beards stuffed onto faces and smirks snarled upon satisfaction. Everything you may expect in the stereotype of the environment. Although, I thought that everyone's expectations were killed off years ago. Primarily because anyone who has ever associated with everyone has taken a gander at intrigue in the process of sanity loss.

A mother, a brother, the voice clinging to the damp matter behind your head. The unexpected souls are often and unfortunately the ones who take the most gilded adaptation of your assumption and run with it into oblivion, and the classic archetype of expecting the unexpected is a sort of notorious cheat code of the game.

As for the function of the amusement, the meat in the organs that keep the players and the rules situated under a steady throbbing of breath, so to speak, I know of nothing much, besides the primary fact that one of those organs you are engaging with is wagered upon hale and hearty experience and lesson for you to lose.

However, that is a rather common expectation of sense, which is thrown out right alongside that organ.

All that I really know is that you enter with your name intact and your coordination of certainty in every enlightenment of security, and you leave with a countenance as empty as the taut vortex of compressed reality and your ability to designate time in ruins.

The remnants of my understanding are rumored with corrections more instances than often as to how the game *really* works, and it seems to me as though the way to win is lodged in

the logic of the person who happens to read the indecipherable loophole wedged into the very bottom of the guidebook.

If you're a bit too dense in the brain's frightened figures, you contain the option to place a single thought up for grabs. The memory from many a blue-hued moon ago, that is beginning to experience the jagged construction of dispersal, an opinion you once had been so stuck upon, so as not to be swayed by the supposed misjudgment of others who only took the viewpoint and made it their own in the end, or the most criminal camaraderie of your affairs, coddled by depth and the most silver shade of deception. If you merely wish to dip your attention into these affairs, you could offer up a cardinal direction or something of the value, for who really requires those? Although, for such actions, you may be labelled a coward, an aristocrat of your capacity in erudition, shedding your will to only release the most peasantry of your mind's wares.

And so, as you put a face and designation to your fears, gather yourself and your reckless abandon into the most primal notion of order and place yourself across from your opponent, make certain you are rehearsed in the finest points of preparation as to your bets, the atoms in your conversation, and the position of your face. Welcome the possibility in heavy percentage of loss, repercussions and forfeiture for your poorly managed mishaps of the game.

Give to me the genius collection of your dismembered and inflated prose, a brainstorm from the thickest of nights, your spattered disillusionment like a hallucination upon one's fingertips.

As the common catchphrase of the game runs, this is pensive pleasure, not plagiarism.

I am unsure as to how to continue in your preparation for what some parochial mind-maniacs may denote as the most foolish action of your life, and all for sheer

entertainment's purpose, nonetheless! To them I sometimes remark of the cold complexion of truth, in that every being is bound to the loss of sense once in awhile, most of the time in regard to other humans, so evidently, what does our judgement fall to?

Anyway, the aid you may have asked for. As aforementioned, I have given to you everything I can remember, which is a rather challenging practice these days; every guidance up my sleeve, and every bit of help I had tucked under some location or another.

Now I can only send you away with a head full of 'Godspeeds,' and, 'may you only lose your riddances,' and sincerely hope that whoever may have taught you the intricate technique of thought has informed you well, so you cannot bring your tears to the doorstep of any figure when you realize your brain has gone bankrupt, and you have nothing left to lose.

I actually do have a single and solid piece of advice remaining for you, and that is, in the very least, try to your most robust capabilities to remember exactly how it is you lost your mind, so you can eventually go back and write it down in an anthology of other instances, or, perhaps, in an explanation as to how to play a rather interesting and mind-numbing game in which you can win, without a doubt, handfuls and handfuls of marbles.

Through the ability to revisit the repository of your remembrance, you, in the most skeletal designation of a least, have something to hold onto, something to remind you that what rests in your skull is not simply pilfered wit.

As for myself, I think I may have lost my sense over a thought of contemporary space happenings, something operatic and straight out of a fever dream.

But that is, in a scheme planned by the utterly fragmented definition of things, all in everything common.

# *Seascape's* Annual Prose Contest

1st Place

## **Past Lives**

Kevin Albora

Virgil sat on the sidewalk slumped against the grey, brick building as his mind and body trickled into a weak, tainted euphoria. A throng of people passed him by in a huddled hurry it was always cold in Chicago this time of year. For Virgil it was good they were ignoring him, even with the frostbiting breeze today seemed better than most. Sometimes the people would spit on him, insult him, even kick him and steal what scant belongings he owned. He felt that nobody cared for him, his family had forsaken him when his all these problems started and left him to scrounge on the streets. Since returning home from the US Army, heroin now ruled his life. It helped him cope for a time, until his body went clammy and he had to steal and hurt people to get another dose.

He raised his arms and choked back tears, dozens of trackmarks oozed blood and a yellowing pus. They hurt. Everything hurt now. The old dosages were not working anymore, perhaps a few more bags could put him at peace. His old friend Dox froze to death last night, at least that's what the cops said, and left some bags behind, no sense wasting it. Dox and Virgil had always taken care of each other whether they needed a blanket or a quick fix. He covered himself with a blanket to hide the deed. His hand shook as he grabbed Dox's old syringe, rust and dried blood flaked onto his ripped, faded jeans. Virgil drove the needle into his piercing veins and drove a flow forward.

*That's it,* he thought to himself the relief was almost instant. His mind cleared, and the pain shot from his body. He felt almost alive for the first time in weeks.

His breath began to stutter intermittently, soon becoming as shallow as a puddle. The faint signs of life and emotion poured from his skin as he felt himself become cold,

colder than he had ever been before. His skin was becoming blue. The trash and people around him blurred into faint colors as his pupils dilated. Virgil had experienced this before, an overdose, he knew what would save him, but it terrified him more than death ever could. *Not Narcan no, never that feeling again.*

His limping body finally collapsed, his head crashing into the sidewalk. He could feel his consciousness drifting out of him, into the beyond. He saw darkness and wanted to scream. Nobody of stout morals took notice, Virgil thought it perhaps for the best, he hated feeling a burden. His life essence finally drifted away into black.

An essence without form drifted through the darkness. This spirit was once Virgil but something different, no pain or sorrow. The memories, those terrible memories were still there but there was an odd peace within.

*What the hell is this? Am I dead, is this all there is?* Virgil thought to himself. He had never been religious, but this was not what he had expected. He could still think and soon realized he had control here. He allowed himself to drift through this realm slowly, taking in near nothingness. In this distance he could see a flicker of blue light, not extremely far but always to distant. *Are they also lives ending? Are they beginning?*

A maelstrom of invisible air consumed Virgil's consciousness, eliminating all physical control he had. Fear consumed him as writhed to get free. Virgil did not know how much time had passed but her liked it here, he did not hurt. He was being pushed towards a distant light that was closing fast, only moments before they crashed into one another. The light and consciousness became one in a near instant, and each were consumed in a flash of light

*Flicker.*

He was Farhad, young and strong but filled with anger and fervor. He sat in a trench; his rifle tucked between his legs as the zenith sun scorched his aching bones. Painful groans could be heard in the distance near the invading army's line. Nobody dared peek out, many good lives had been cut short out of curiosity. Those Iraqi snipers



were good at what they did, killing and dying was the only thing people here cared to do. His beloved Iran had been invaded last year. Shiite custom and Allah willed that this scourge be eliminated.

To his left and right were more than just men, they were friends. Javad and Zana were as close to him as kin, they fought on this line for over a year. One look towards one another and they always returned a smile. Most importantly they were as loyal to Iran as he was, but they had expected to return home to their family farms and their betrothed any day now. Farhad could not wait to die for God and glory.

Javad scooped over and clapped Farhad on his shoulder, "Put a smile on dear friend, you'll be with Astar and the kids soon enough. You can show me that goat milk you always cry about missing."

"Your confidence is admirable, Javad. However, I seek nothing more to die for our great land. You can tell her and my boys how brave their father was." Talking about family on the front lines never helped, it kept him alive once while laying barbed wire across the same barren field he wallowed in now. Seeing all these child soldiers did not help, they were braver than he was as a boy. He liked the way things had changed at home since the revolution, this was a stronger Iran.

The murmur of the battlefield was soon shattered, noxious death fell from the heavens, this was the one-way Farhad feared to go. Cannisters of sarin gas plummeted into the trench, crushing and maiming those in their way. Toxic gas spilled across from all direction, Farhad stumbled for his gas mask hanging from his neck and slipped it over his face. He allowed himself to breathe again, blinking back tears to peer through his mask. This mixture was impure, the sarin gas appeared as impure and filthy as the men who launched it, the vile brown was nearly blinding. He looked for his friends in the cloud but could not find them. Orders were bellowed through the chaos and Farhad grabbed a rifle and aimed to the front line nearly untouched by the vileness behind him.

No Iraqis advanced, this stalemate had lasted for weeks without any changes.

Farhad had read stories at his university about World War 1 and the brutal stalemate in the trenches that consumed a generation. Would history call them foolish for using a tactic that would destroy them all eventually. His professors had told him Europeans were always hungry for war, yet they had forgone the use of chemical weapons, maybe that was actually for the best. His people never used them. The brown haze behind him cleared, revealing death behind him. He muttered a prayer for his friends, they were surely among them. He his rage flow into him.

An order bellowed from down the trench, they were to fix their bayonets and prepare for close, intimate combat. They would have a glorious last charge against their enemy. Death would be certain, but death as a martyr was better than waiting in a hole.

Farhad smiled, this what he was waiting for. They would die but die as martyrs for their cause. Khomeini had promised great rewards in heaven for those who died as martyrs. A clatter of steel echoed in the trench as the attack's survivors unsheathed the bayonets from their pouches and fixed them to their rifles with a rasp of steel. Farhad put his on expectedly and checked his weapon over. He tore his gas mask off, the gas had finally dissipated, and waited for his order.

The order came, and a sea of men climbed out of the trench, Farhad was one of the first up and over. They reached the line of razor wire and began crawling underneath, Farhad lifted sections to allow other through, a faint smile on his face the entire time. Soon after clear the wire, the shooting started. Farhad ran as fast as he could and suddenly hit the ground hard. He laid there bleeding for a moment and everything went black.

*Flicker.*

A blinding, blue light instantly overcame the formless entity that was Virgil. He wanted to scream and flee. His own memories burst back into him like a broken pipe. In the vision he thought he was Farhad, his own memories were non-existent. He wanted to scream and collapse, but nothing would stop this. The memories of the man named Farhad were with him as well, in the back of his mind. The passions, memories, emotions, and

hatreds of this man stood away from his own but were still naggingly there. He wanted to sick up, he had fought radicalized men like this Farhad overseas and they terrified him. The fervor and hatred from Farhad were understandable to Virgil, yet it made him uncomfortable.

*What was that? Did that man ever exist? Are these his memories floating inside my damn head? Am in hell? Even my afterlife is filled with tragedy.*

Virgil was given little time to agonize, he was soon consumed into another tempest. He fought harder than he had the last time, more flickering, blue lights flashed around him. Virgil could see his newest destination ahead of him, another blue light. Please no, not again! To late, a blinding flash consumed his consciousness.

*Flicker.*

He was now Hemet, a rifle cradled in his arms as he hiked across the African plains. Sun cooked at his once pale skin, now leathery and adorned with scars. These past few weeks had not been a successful as most, making for a disastrous hunt in his ambitious mind. These lands had remained nearly untouched during the calamity of war during the past two decades, this is where Hemet hid out during that time. He did not see himself as a coward, being conscripted to fight for a country who left him to fend for himself growing up would never happen. Now that the world was at peace it seemed smaller, now prices for ivory and exotic hides were higher than ever. He loved it out here, there were few people to bother him and excitement around every bush. The occasional beast gave him a brush with death, but he always managed to hold his own. Now he kept knives on his hip and tucked within his sleeves.

Hemet gave a start and spun rifle around at the sound of rumbling, laughing, and snarling behind him. A pack of lanky, brown hyenas were chasing a gazelle, nipping at its heels. Hemet raised his rifle to his shoulder, peering down the iron sights, but did not fire. The beasts quickly passed him, but the maniacal laughter continued in the distance. Best to leave them be, where hyenas brought down prey, stronger animals soon followed to

take it for themselves. He had seen hyenas take down an ambitious lion before. He would not stand a chance, besides their pelts were hardly worth the ammo.

“Maybe you should track back, Hemet. The herd may be scattered. Lions like an easy kill.”

“Good idea, Hemet. Those pups are a good sign for us. Same with those ugly carrion birds”

Hemet continued talking to himself as he made his way back to the start of the chase, following deep tracks in the torn-up soil. He enjoyed the loneliness, but it was starting to take its toll on his mind. Those he spoke with were not always the friendliest. Ivory traders were often accompanied with a small squad of armed friends to help negotiations along. The other poachers were even worse. He dragged a few bodies into hyena dens in his time, it was always best to avoid attention. Killing was a normal part of his day, if it was not him it made no difference who or what it was.

Hemet soon came to the gazelle grazing field, amongst drought the grass here was still lush and a large watering hole cut through the center of it; this was a dream of a big game hunter. He sat underneath a tree to keep the noon heat off, sipping diluted kumi kumi. It reminded him of moonshine back home, hunts in the Appalachian Mountains were nothing to Africa. His father always told him not to drink while hunting, but he needed to steady his nerves. He could feel something big on the near horizon.

He nodded off for a time but jolted awake at the sound of rustling grass. In a groggy moment he vaulted to his feet and readied his rifle. A herd of zebras were grazing in the field. By the height of the sun nearly two hours had passed. He was ready to shoot the largest among them, their hides would fetch a good price. He stopped when his rifle swung over a small zebra walking with a limp, that would attract a lion for sure. He muttered to himself and got in a crouching position. A lion with the sack of ivory on his back would make him all the richer.

Within a few moments the grass around the gazelle was pushed down, a lion he

could barely see was stalking from within. He massive, the largest Hemet had ever seen. His muscular body was scarred from antlers and tusks, and his mane was flowing like silk. He stalked silently in the tall brown grass and readied himself to pounce. Killing a lion like this would make Hemet a legend in his own story. Those money paid for those massive paws and fangs would feed him for a month. Some rich businessman would pay him handsomely for the head mount. Why someone would want a taxidermy of someone else's hunt was beyond him.

He readied himself, using the tree as cover, rifle pressed against his sturdy shoulder. As the lion lurched towards the zebra he fired, he missed its heart, gracing the shoulder. The zebra scattered at noise and the sight of the lion slamming into the dirt. Hemet readied another shot, experience taught him it was far from over. He expelled the used shell and cursed aloud. His rifle jammed up.

The lion pushed himself unto his massive paw, long claws ripping apart the ground. The beast stared down Hemet, long fangs bared and back lurched. There was no use running, it was time to fight or die. He dropped his rifle to the ground and let loose two balanced knives from his sleeves. One missed, the next hit a shoulder. He struggled to focus, now was the time to stand his ground whether he lived or died.

*I should have never drunk that kumi kumi, I should have never gotten greedy!*

Hemet unsheathed the long knife from his belt. He planted his feet firm for battle, he took down a boar this way before, but he could not place his hands near this chasm of fangs. He muttered a prayer and thrust himself forward, blade in hand.

Flicker

That flash of blue, blinding light came once again. Virgil consciousness returned into the strange space; his memories returned in a cold flood again. The memories of Hemet joined with his own. Memories of growing up and adventuring on grand hunts were as crisp as his own memories of growing up. Virgil hated it, even without form he could feel the pain of Hemet's final moments. He remembered bleeding out on the

‘savannah grass with a dead lion next him, laughing into the sky with satisfaction. Dying once was bad enough, a third time was more agonizing. Feeling life slip away without any hope and leaving behind those he loved was a terrible feeling.

He wanted to resist the pull of the lights, but he knew it would be futile. Each time he resisted the winds took him even stronger. Maybe if he moved toward them willingly things would be different, maybe his questions would be answered. He had many, those two men reminded him of himself. Like Farhad he was once a man of passion to his commitments, when he took a side, he committed himself fully. He enjoyed hunting and the outdoors like Hemet had, and he often talked to himself while sleeping on the streets. Their memories felt like they belonged within his mind, nestled comfortably in the back. Like it was meant to be. He felt a relation to the other men, as if one’s death spurred another’s birth. Overseas he met many who believed in reincarnation and connections to the past. Maybe this was what was happening.

The next nexus of winds came in a rush towards his being, reluctantly he did not resist. In the army he was told it was futile to fight what you could not control, so he did not fight this time. Virgil felt his form moving further than before. He left the old lights behind and was being dragged to one far within the void. For some reason he knew this distant light would not lead him to the man before Hemet, whatever this place was had a lesson, a story to show him.

Just as suddenly as it began, everything slowed. The tempest had slowed to a breeze drifting him towards that single light, no others laid beyond it while many shone the way he came.

*Is this the end? Will this damn torment end? I was never these men, my names Virgil. I hate these people, they disgust me.*

Virgil continued ranting and cursing his surroundings. The last of the tainted light consumed him in slow flash.

*Flicker.*



He became cloaked among shadows and on the prowl, he was a man who called himself Perfidy. The man who called himself Perfidy stalked through the keep he knew well, tonight's mission required precision. He was always precise all the time, those who got lazy did not survive long in this type of work the movement he was a part of could not afford fools, he was the best assassin in the British Isles. Tonight, he wore the clothes of a servant.

His real name was not Perfidy, but the best assassins never used their real name. He took the name Perfidy cause that's what he did, he preferred to deceive his mark under the guise of peace and hospitality before doing the deed.

Perfidy crouched behind a stone pillar as a lone guard patrolled down the dark hall, his cover was about to be blown and the man had to die. He unsheathed the pair of daggers from his belt and in one clean motion slit the throat of the guard while suppressing his momentary scream to a quiet murmur. He helped lower the body to the floor and wiped his daggers clean of blood. He admired them in the faint moonlight peeking through the arrow slits. They were Damascus Steel, beautiful works of blacksmithing from legends long gone. Perfidy thought they were fitting weapons for himself, especially their natural tear drop pattern. Maybe he would be a legend one day.

He fought for a group of rebels that had two simple goals, help the common people and kill any noble they found on the way. This was war, men like him did not wish to kneel to an earthly king.

He dragged the body into the shadows and continued on his way. The steward of this castle was a plant, monitoring the lands for a prominent noble near London. The guests he was attending had been thorn in their side for years, it was despicable to break the right of hospitality, fortunately for him this was not his castle. And if some nobleman was scourged for it, all the better. It was a shame common soldiers had to die, they were just doing their, even if they chose to wrong side.

Perfidy continued down the hallways towards the castle's kitchens. He

encountered another guard but played it cool, allowing him to pass. Perfidy grabbed a pitcher of wine from one of the cabinets and poured a vial of poison into it, whoever drank it wouldn't die, just be put to sleep for a few hours. Regrettably, the guards would probably be hanged for sleeping at their posts, but it would not be by his hands. More importantly he would avoid the commotion of steel on steel echoing outside the bedchambers. He grabbed the pitcher and two pewter cups on his way out.

He made his way up and down flights of stairs and dark hallways residing with servants. He soon came to a hall decorated with tapestries and illuminated by wax candles from wall sconces. Nobles slept here; good supplies were rarely wasted on servants. The amount of wealth in this hallway was disgusting. The tapestries covered nearly the entirety of the stone walls, they depicted great battles and scenes from the Bible. People outside here starved and scraped by while nobles flaunted their wealth on things they never see; this was why he fought.

Perfidy waved to the household guards outside the guest chambers, the Lord and Lady Rothfuss had traveled far and their guards loved to drink. Their eyes lit up as he poured them a tall cup of sweet wine; they took them greedily with a smile. They drifted asleep with two sips and stumbled to the ground.

Perfidy entered the chamber and squinted, not even a fire smoldered in here, it was dark as pitch. He took one step and was met with a crossbow bolt, his instincts took over and he went to the ground on his stomach just in time. This was not part of the plan.

"Hello, my friend," a voice called from the darkness, "have you come to kill me again?"

Despite all his preparations Perfidy's plan failed. *I knew that steward would turn on us*, he thought to himself. Lord Rothfuss liked to go on long monologues when he was torturing someone or burning down their farm. He was a brutal man who did everything calculated. Perfidy could not waste any either, Lord Rothfuss was used to fear overcoming his opponents. Perfidy unsheathed his daggers and let them fly. They found their mark, but not before the lord could utter a shout.

Perfidy had grabbed his daggers in the man's eyes and made for the far wall. He had done his duty; he never left a job unfinished or turned cloak. Boots and chainmail clattered from outside, he would be surrounded soon. Perfidy wanted to go out fighting, tonight was that night.

The door burst open, half a dozen men burst in carrying swords and quarter staffs. He leaped off the wall and let forth of a storm of knives and blood.

### *Flicker*

Virgil's conscious and memories returned the same way they had before. The lunatic who called himself Perfidy had joined within those memories. Virgil felt those final moments of his mortality spewed onto the floor like a broken cask of wine. Five bodies clad in armor around him. He knew that man's true name, but that was not important.

What was important was clear, these visions were not about him or punishments. This vision quest was about brave men, men who fought.

It was about a man who fought for his country when hope seemed to be lost. A man whose back was against the wall still stood firm in his faith and fought until the end.

It was about a man with a passion. A man who left the turmoil of war at home to live off the land. A man often misguided but also brave and intelligent, that man fought until the end.

It was about a man who loved the common folk and was willing to fight and die for his cause. A man who did terrible things sometimes but avoided bloodshed when he could. A man who never gave up and fought until death.

Virgil felt at peace for the first time since entering this void. It had been lost upon him as the years went by. He was a fighter his whole life; he just never realized it through his pain. It felt pleasant sharing memories with these men.

He felt a tugging, it was pleasant unlike the tempest that dragged him to the light. New life was being born somewhere and he would be a part of it. Maybe this life would be different. His conscious drifted back to earth to be reborn again.



***Seascape's Annual Art Contest: 3rd Place - Erica Kurey***





Seascape's Annual Art Contest: 2nd Place - Emily Josephson





*Seascape's Annual Art Contest: 1st Place - Emily Lynch*



# *Seascape's Annual Poetry Contest*

3rd Place

## **Cosmic Dust**

**Daniel Campbell**

Draped in darkness; sculpted by the lashing cold winds of the pale night,  
A figure stands calmly.  
Pulling the church bell to announce the death of the universe.

Meanwhile Masses pour stumbling into the streets, hands sporadically trembling,  
What choices do we have left to make?  
Shall we drop to our knees; flaring our arms through the air despairingly,  
Did we just lose our whole grip of sanity completely ?

Instead as we approach the final hours, come together; join hips lock.  
Take each step with pleasure.  
Cherish every second until the last grain of sand falls and fills the hour glass.  
For extinction can't occur before birth.

# *Seascape's Annual Poetry Contest*

2nd Place

## **I Sit in Class**

**Shira Gofman**

Sitting in class  
Waiting to absorb knowledge  
Waiting like a sponge on the edge of a sink  
I see the dirty dishes  
There is potential  
To shine  
To sparkle  
To be useful  
But the soap does not froth  
And I wait parched and stiff  
Words pass over my head  
They smell like fresh bread  
If only their crumbs would sprinkle across the dishes  
That I might scrub them to perfection  
And when they are perfected I  
Would hang them out to dry  
But the words stay baking as  
The teacher keeps talking  
The lesson has been overburdened  
The bread is burning  
If only she would stop talking  
We are hungry, Professor  
We want to eat  
Or leave  
Still I wait  
But no tasty dishes come  
The bell rings  
Words of ash spill into the trash  
While I sit in class

# *Seascape's Annual Poetry Contest*

1st Place

## **Seltzer**

**A. E. Huber**

Light and clear  
Fruity bubbles and  
Something like sweet.  
A mix between  
Lacking and lavish.  
Something like sweet.  
Like sunflowers  
For roses and  
Carbonation for breakfast.  
Something like sweet.  
Apple and  
Ginger and  
Lemon and  
Lime.  
Tart and sour, but-  
Something like sweet.  
Early mornings and late nights  
Working and balance and reward-  
Something like sweet.  
Doing and doing  
Hoping and waiting  
And praying and praying-  
Doing and falling short-  
And letting go.  
Something like sweet.  
Sitting back  
And sighing-  
Peach and  
Cherry and  
Passion fruit and  
Blueberry.  
Something like sweet.



***Seascape's Annual Photography Contest: 3rd Place - Tia Trione***



***Seascape's Annual Photography Contest: 2nd Place - Tylen Lewis***



***Seascape's Annual Photography Contest: 1st Place - Monica Cunha***



Submissions: Ocean County College students, faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni are invited to submit up to three original works of poetry, prose, drama, graphic novels, photography, drawings, and other forms of art to [Seascape@ocean.edu](mailto:Seascape@ocean.edu). Please include all necessary contact information with your submission.

All submissions are reviewed by the *Seascape* Editorial Staff. *Seascape* reserves the right to publish or withhold any submission. All content published in *Seascape* cannot be reproduced without the consent of the author/artist.

JOIN US: In addition to publishing an annual arts magazine, *Seascape* is a club and an active member of the college community that hosts events such as poetry readings, arts nights, creative writing workshops, guest speakers, and fundraising activities during the school year.

We would love to have you join us and bring your creativity. Email us at [seascape@ocean.edu](mailto:seascape@ocean.edu)

