# Seascape 20 1 5

A SHOWCASE OF OCEAN COUNTY COLLEGE'S CREATIVITY



# Spring 2015

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## A production of Seascape

Lilerary & Art Magazine of Ocean Gounty Goffege

## Seascape

is an annual publication produced by the Seascape Literary Magazine Club of Ocean County College. Founded in 1965, it is produced by student editors and is composed of student, alumni, and faculty work.

The editors welcome submissions of any genre and mainstream short stories, poetry, essays, drama, photography, and artwork. All submissions may be given to the Student Life office of Ocean County College.

Submissions are accepted from September through March. Work submitted to the annual short story contest is judged on the basis of plot, syntax, concept originality, character formation, point-of-view consistency, dialogue authenticity and diversity, effectiveness of symbolism and presence of short story elements. Work submitted to the annual art contest is judged on the basis of originality, expression, and composition.

The work submitted to the magazine represents the thoughts and opinions of the writer and not necessarily the magazine or the school. Special thanks to the following individuals for their generous support of the magazine: Jennifer Fazio, Alison Noone, Allison Irwin, Norma Betz, Prof. Nat Bard, Prof. Jayanti Tamm, Dr. Karr, Dean Gilley, and Dr. Henry Jackson. Special thanks also to the English Department and to the staff at the Student Life Office of Ocean County College.

## Note from the Editor

#### Dear Reader,

Time is an incredibly precious thing that we measure by days on a calendar or minutes on a clock. Despite its importance, we let it tick by, minuteby-minute, often paying little attention when we waste it. However, as writers and artists, we have another measure of time. Through the things we create, we can look back on years through the things we wrote or the art we created. For all of the amazing writers, artists, and photographers who are published in this magazine, 2015 is the year that your work was set in ink and published.

We thank you all for your hard work and amazing submissions. It is unbelievably challenging to go through all of the amazing pieces of literature and art and only pick what we can fit within the pages of this book. With so many incredible writers at Ocean County College, it's a battle to narrow down the submissions to a reasonable amount. I also have to thank the Seascape editors for their hard work in the selection process and contest judging. Last but certainly not least, I hope that you, as the reader, will read through the pages of this book and enjoy every piece inside.

Leigh Fisher Editor-in-Chief

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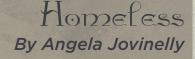
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From this spot I can see all humanity Their actions rarely please me Time to time, they offer me a dime But some things are worth more to me

> How are the people so evil? With their belongings shiny and new-Think I'd feel inferior? Well, it's not something I would do Although I am alone Although I am a mess Although I am unknown I will not rest Every day I say hello and I greet them all And no matter how they perceive me I will always stand tall

> > I have no heat But this heart can warm me I have no food But this kindness can fill me I have no friends-Yet you can see me?

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Friend By Catie Kohl



Cut Paper By Valentina Shadrina

## To Shine Among All By Leigh Fisher

Holding on to hope To prolong the agony And dream of a future With you here with me

Holding on to hope To keep my heart whole And escape the memories Of days that can't repeat

Holding on to hope To find the energy And savor these moments You're still here with me

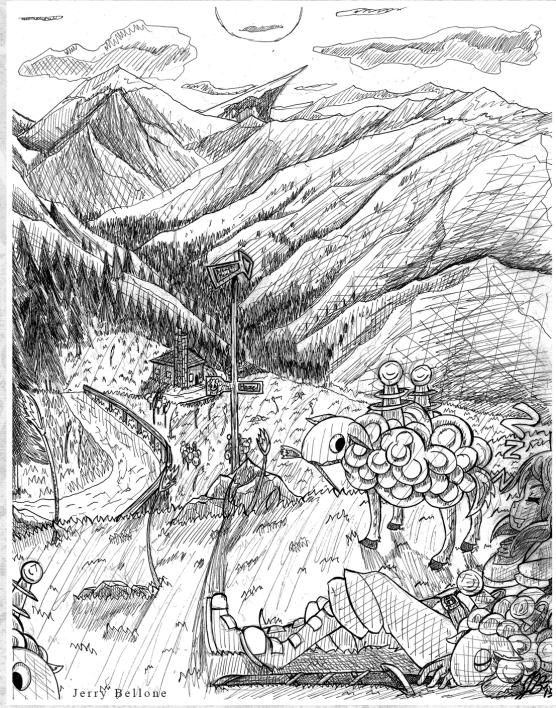
Holding on to hope To wake up tomorrow And smile for you As I quietly fall apart

Holding on to hope To see your chest rise and fall And stay by your side Until all hope is gone Motivation By Mikeala Johnson

> Motivation The drive to get there. What happens to a dream when it's lost? Gain it back Change your mindset. You know it's really hard. Why do you need to change if people already like you? Motivation is not that easy to gain after you lose it.

## The Midnight Storm By Brittany Defelice

The emotions run through my veins Fluctuating sensations Happiness followed by pain But when I'm good It's like I'm in the clouds Looking down My feet are planted Never touching the ground Now I can feel the winds kicking in, That means the storm is coming again Will it last a day? Or maybe weeks? Will I spend thirty days beneath my sheets? The fog and rain make it hard to see And the frigid air makes it harder to breath. It is all a matter of time and patience Because just like a road with an unknown distance An end will come No matter my resistance



Hazel and the Wolligan By Jerry Bellone

## Labyrinth of Deceit By Keira Smith

Honesty is the best policy. Supposedly.

Of course, I don't doubt the value of good old Benjamin Franklin's words; but sometimes it seems that most other people do. In reality, they do not only doubt the value of honesty. Rather, they absolutely scorn it. Just look around in today's culture and you will realize the truth to that statement. Nobody is truthful anymore these days. As far as I have recently observed, honesty has become an obsolete and disregarded virtue.

It all started this morning at the department store. This little excursion on a Saturday morning, at the beginning of the Christmas season, was exactly what I needed after a demanding week. Because I had purposed to complete my holiday shopping early this year, I was contentedly browsing the aisles in search of gifts for my parents. Before long, I found the perfect item for my mother – a new, state-of-theart toaster oven on which she had had her eye for months.

A little apprehensive, I glanced at the price sticker – and breathed a sigh of relief. The item was on sale, and quite a good bargain at that. Hefting the box into the shopping cart, I proceeded to the checkout line.

As the cashier scanned the box, I pulled out my credit card. Only after I had swiped it, though, did I notice the price on the screen.

"Excuse me?" I asked the cashier. "The price came up as fifty dollars. The sticker in the aisle said that it is on sale for thirty."

He shot a suave smile in my direction. "Oh no, miss, the item costs fifty dollars." "But..." I began.

He quickly interrupted. "The sale does not begin until 11 a.m." Consulting his watch, he added, "And it is now only 10:18." I felt my face grow hot. "But the sticker said the toaster oven is on sale! It didn't say anything about 11 a.m. That's deceptive! Can't you just give it to me for thirty? The sale starts in forty minutes, anyway." "Forty-two minutes," he corrected gruffly. "And I'm sorry...rules are

#### rules, you know."

Yes, I do know, I argued to myself in frustration as I accepted the fiftydollar toaster oven in defeat. And last I heard, the rules are that people are supposed to tell the truth. My observations of dishonesty did not end there, however. As I prepared to leave the store, I nearly bumped into a school acquaintance of mine, Brittany Holloway, who was entering through the door. 1 had never particularly cared for this girl, but apparently she was rather overjoyed to see me - in a fake and hypocritical way, that is. "Well, look who it is!" Brittany cried

in a shrill voice as she gave me a hug. "How nice to see you here!" Very nice, I concurred as I vainly attempted to disentangle her arms from my neck. Particularly since you don't even remember my name – as usual

At last she removed herself from me and glanced over me in an appraising sort of way. "Something is different," she commented, tapping her chin with one finger. "What?" I asked. "Oh, you must mean my hair. I got it cut last week." "That's it!" she agreed at full volume, making me jump for a second. Her shrill announcement was followed by silence.

"Well...do you like it?" I asked, trying to break the awkwardness of the moment.

Brittany hesitated only a moment. "Do I like it?" she cried. "Of course I like it! It - it's all the rage! It's fabulous!" Her voice trailed off. "Well," I said, inching towards the exit. "It was so nice to see you here...take care." I made a successful escape before she could interject anything else.

Breathing a sigh of relief, I hurried toward my car with the shopping cart in tow. Only after I had deposited the troublesome toaster oven in the trunk did I realize that I had somehow misplaced the receipt during my altercation with Brittany Holloway. Quickly re-entering the store, I scanned the floor until I located the small slip of paper in the corner. Only after I had picked it up and was preparing to leave again did I notice Brittany and another girl in a nearby aisle. With no intentions of eavesdropping, I inadvertently picked up a piece of their conservation.

"Did you see her?" Brittany was asking her friend. "That's a silly question – how could you miss her with that haircut she's got?" My cheeks grew warm as I realized the subject of their gossip. "Atrocious!" Brittany was saying. "It looked like a raccoon had eaten her hair for dinner! And then some caterpillars got into the leftovers and started gnawing away. What would possess her to get a cut like that?"

I turned on my heel and marched out the door. How could Brittany say a thing like that after she had glowingly praised my haircut not five minutes before? She had outright lied about it, just like the department store had lied about their sale.

Still angry, I plodded back to the car, started the engine, and turned up the radio as I maneuvered out of the parking lot. I needed something to distract me from all this nonsense. What I needed was a movie. I flipped open my cell phone, turned it on speaker, and dialed my sister's number.

My sister, Olivia, answered on the second ring. "Hi, what's up?" she greeted me.

"Hey," I replied. "Are you doing anything?"

"Not really."

"Any plans for the next couple hours?" I added.

"Not that I know of."

"Well, I was just thinking, do you want to go see a movie with me?" I suggested hopefully.

"Um..." there was silence for a second. "Sure, I guess so. Hold on for a second."

Olivia returned not in a second but in a minute. "Hey, I'm sorry, but Lauren just texted me and asked me to come over and do some studying. Actually, we have to work on a project together this weekend. For Biology class. Due Monday. First period."

Hmmm, I thought. Sounds a little suspicious. And a little too convenient, too. "Well, too bad," I said simply. "See you later." I hung up the phone.

Just then I realized that I was passing the neighborhood in which I was fairly certain that her friend Lauren lived. On a whim, I made a sharp turn into the development. Luckily, I recognized Lauren in the yard of one the first houses on the street.

"Hi there," I called, rolling down the window. "I'm Olivia's sister. You're Lauren, right?"

She smiled in a friendly way. "Yes, hi."

"Did you just talk to Olivia about working on a project for school?" She frowned. "No. I haven't talked to her since yesterday." "Are you two working on a Biology project together this weekend?" Lauren looked at me in confusion. "We're not working on any projects. I'm not even taking Biology this year!"

My suspicions were confirmed. After thanking the befuddled girl, I rolled up the window and drove away. can almost expect the department store to be untruthful. I can just about expect Brittany Holloway to be untruthful. But my own sister? 1 wasn't sure which hurt more - the fact that she didn't want to spend time with me or the fact that she had told me a complete lie. Frustrated and upset, I turned on the radio. A commercial was playing for the department store, which I had just visited. "Incredible Christmas sales!" the announcer boasted while optimistic music played in the background. "Come on in and see how much money you can save this holiday season!"

Disgusted, I flipped off the radio.

Exactly what has happened to the value of honesty in today's world? Over time it has crumbled and is now almost completely disintegrated in favor of deceit, falsehood, and little white lies. What has become of the old saying, "Honesty is the best policy?" Is there no one left in the world who will dare to tell the truth even if it might cost them a few extra dollars or the opinions of others?

Our culture is lost in the labyrinth. The labyrinth of deceit. My frustration had still not yet dissipated by the time my car turned into the driveway of my home. Leaving the box in the trunk, I walked up the path to the door. Still I was shaking my head in disbelief. We are completely lost in the labyrinth of deceit, and there is seemingly no way out. My mother met me at the door as I

was shedding my jacket. "Hi, honey, what have you been up to?" she asked.

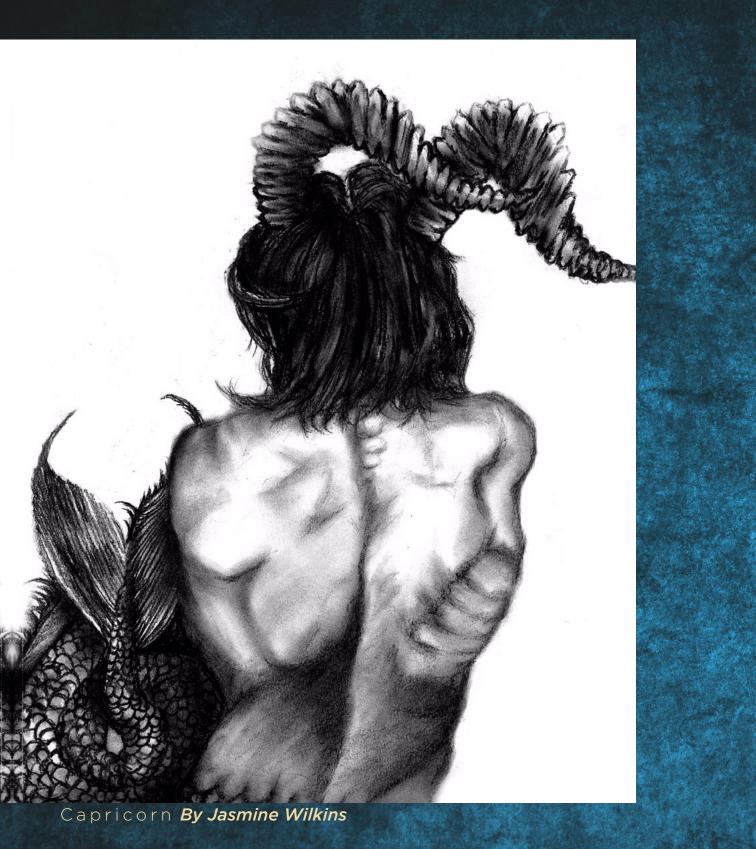
Great. If I revealed or even hinted that I had been at the department store, my mother would suspect that I had been purchasing a gift for her. Since we both knew that the toaster oven was the only thing she really wanted for Christmas, it would be pretty easy to guess what I had been doing there.

"Go to any stores?" she persisted. There was no way I was going to let on that I had bought that toaster oven, especially after all the pains I had gone to in order to get it. That toaster oven had cost me an unpleasant trip through the labyrinth of deceit.

"No stores," I answered with a shrug. "Just out to get gas."



Portrait By CJ Booker



## Weeping Willow By Beccy Banach

Weeping willow—why do you cry? Why do your branches droop so heavily and you bellow on the windy days? Weeping willow—why is your dance so sad as well? Slow moving arms gently sway in the wind's touch.

Weeping willow—what's so wrong? Why do you cry all day long, and weep when everyone else slumbers around you? Weeping willow—why are you so sad? why can't you be glad, silly or mad? what is so hard about being a tree?

Little curious child-- Why do you ask? Why do you ask me all day long when everyone else goes on with their lives? Little curious child—why are you so keen on figuring out why it is that I weep?

Little curious child—why do you care? Are you going to hurt me like the others have? What made you want to figure it out? Little curious child –Why even wonder? I don't think it matters if I am sad, does it— Make an impact on your life so much?

Little curious child— ...I am sad because you're the first to ask



Little Alice, why do you haunt me so? Is it too dangerous to be standing in oblivion In dresses not made for snow? Little Alice, you are in a world of nonsense Where there is no such thing as time Where the snow has fallen through the cracks Of the darkness of what was mine The sanity that is left inside all of us To me, myself, and I.

Little Alice, little Alice What is inside your mind? Are we truly crazy or is this a waste of time? You're the girl who chased the rabbit into the dark Into the hole that may be inside your heart.

And though we never noticed, but maybe you just will That little Alice in a wonderland in the consciousness of mind There was always the insanity inside of you That Alice couldn't hide.



Paradox By Tabitha Blake

## Wanderfust By Danielle Cusanelli

i want to experience things.

life,

and all of its ins and outs.

its beautiful sorrows and painstaking highs.

i am a girl hungry to see the world.

## "Keep Moving Forward." By Vincent Lee Labitoria

Foreword: This story is dedicated to the late Monty Oum and my condolences towards his friends, family, wife and fans whom he impacted. Some quotes were directed quotes from Monty Oum.

"I love you," she said as she retreated her lips from his. She gazed over the distance of the ocean from the beach. Beyond the sandbar was a lighthouse. The sun was just kissing the ocean's horizon, creating a red hue. There wasn't much time left before they had to part ways. "I know. Come, let's walk," he gestured towards her to an old wooden path past the sand dunes and into a field.

She ran in front of him as she asked, "Remember this field as kids?" she chuckled at the thought and looked back at him. "Our parents would have picnics here."

The field was vast beyond what the eyes could see. The sun's position created an ember glow throughout the grassland. Beyond, two children and a cat can be seen running around the old apple tree, then tumbling down the hill. He looked out in the distance and made eye contact with the boy who was with the girl. The boy smiled and the little girl noticed who the boy was looking at and smiled too at the man. The little girl took the boy's hand and they ran off, vanishing with the slight breeze that came.

He smiled, "Yeah, we would play tag and take Noodle out here."

"Remember when Noodle ran away and you came to my house crying? Our parents made a huge search party just to find him under your porch," she said teasingly. "Hey now, I loved that cat! It would be terrible for him to just be abandoned like that on a stormy night," the man murmured, embarrassed.

Their walk continued until they approached the old apple tree. Its leaves were green with a splash of red and yellow. Its fruits were full and there was a plethora on each branch. The red apples were just ripened for the picking. She picked one off. "Do you recall what Nana told about this tree's apples?" she asked. "I don't."

"You reap what you sow, and the fruits shall bear your labor. For the Garden of Eden shall bring peace and harmony towards two who eat its fruit," she mockingly mimics Nana's hoarse voice and continues, "Those who eat these particular apples are said to have their destinies intertwined in the next life to come." She grinned at the memory of their Nana telling them that urban legend. The girl suddenly frowned at the thought of how limited their time was with Nana and now this. She cracked a hollow smile looking at the ruby fruit. The man could sense the empty silence and glanced at the apple. He took the fruit from her hand and took a bite. The girl looked at him with her sapphire eyes glistening, almost tearing up, but not of sadness. There was a sense of comfort that resonated from the man that gave her relief. However, it was more than that. It was hope; it was determination to keep moving on. She took a bite of the apple. Tears overwhelmed her and she tightly hugged him. Reassuring her, he hugged her and rubbed the crest of her back.

However, the moment between the two stopped as another breeze came through. They both lost their footing and they tumbled down the hill. When they reached at the base of the hill they couldn't help but laugh at themselves. The woman smiled, then her face became straighter and looked at him with yearning eyes. She didn't know what she wanted and the very thought of going away struck a string in her heart and churned her stomach. She felt all kinds of emotions: scared, hopeful, in love, hesitant.

"I don't want to leave you. There is so much I- we have to do," the woman cried out.

"Keep moving forward, Princess," he said trying to comfort her emotions. "I don't want to move on. I want to be with you," her voice cracked at the thought of being alone.

"There comes a time we you have to get out of the bedside. We're only human. After all, death is inevitable." "Don't say that. Don't say it like it's that easy! Because when you're gone, where will-who will Noodle cuddle up with?" she said light heartedly, trying to fight the roar of sorrow.

He smiles and bops her nose. "With you, silly."

"Please, don't make it sound that easy. Don't make it sound like you're about to give up; give in to time." She nuzzled herself against his chest, and clutched his shirt. He knew time was against the couple, yet as he marked his words, they were only human. He took a deep breath.

"You'll wake up tomorrow and the sun will set and rise again for another tomorrow. Noodle will be there to greet you every day and I'll be there, always. 'Till death do us part,' remember? I even ate the fruit of Eden with you. This isn't easy for me either. You were the one I chose to spend eternity with. Wake up or not, I'll be right with you. Go on, get going, and I'll meet you there." There was a twang in his heart saying that. He didn't want to nor did he need to, but it was needed to be for both of them to accept.

Her sobs became heavier and she dug her head deeper into his chest shaking her head "no." She nodded no because there won't that physical warmth she cherished beside her bedside. No, because there wouldn't be anyone to call her "princess." No, because letting go meant being alone once more after being so isolated growing up. He was the only one to notice the light in her. She was in denial, because there was so much more planned than this, yet fate was cruel and she knew that fact. The young man reached out for the skies. He couldn't do anything about her needs besides send a comforting smile. The simple appreciation of being wanted from his lover is what he always wanted in this moment. He pretended to grab the first star that appeared before them.

"There is a superstition that says you get to make a wish when you see the first star when it's dusk," he explained.

"What's your wish?" she whimpered as the sobs became calmer and softer. A breeze suddenly erupted and swept them off their feet. He took his hands and laid them on her waist, while the young lady suddenly had the urge to put her arms around his shoulders. The wind started to hum a familiar melody between the two. The man's eyes were closed and smiled genuinely over the sudden waltz into their steps. The girl was befuddled as to what was going on, vet the tension that strained her heart and twisted her stomach soon dissipated and overcame with joy. The pain she was experiencing didn't matter, over the fact that they were having their moment together. The wind's whistle became

louder and more distinct, almost instrumental as they danced under the purple sky. The young woman could not make out why the song they were dancing to was so familiar. Then, she had a realization that the howl of the wind that was orchestrating now, was the tune of their wedding that the couple danced to. She clearly heard the laughter and the commotion of friends and family around them. The couple danced until the night came and the moon greeted them and as in a grandioso move, the young man spun her around and brought her out. Their hands were slipping to their fingertips; the woman's eyes were closed enjoying this moment. A whisper from the wind went into her ear, "I love you too." She felt a force as if he brought her into his arms.

The moonlight kissed her face. The beat of the heart rate monitor kept beeping as she sat her head up from the bedside. The nurse retreated her hands from the woman's shoulder. "Visiting hours are now over," she explained timidly, as she felt bad for waking her up.

The woman smiled at the nurse with a tear caressing the lower part of her chin. The young lady silently got up, kissed his hand, and put her hand upon his. She left the room with the nurse closing the door. The constant tempo of the heart rate monitor was that last thing she heard from him.

## The Impossible Riddle By Tabitha Blake

Spotting new prey Your chameleon claws descend Slippery as ice And just as cold Such elusiveness has no limits An impossible riddle The answer to which does not exist For it is forever changing Blinding the unfortunate pawns in your cruel game

## The Bollon Held Embers By Michael Brothers

The bottom held embers that burned like a fool's mind playing wise. And I fell deep into the furnace; deep into the black. And here, in the hollow abyss, I wept: keep me from the dark, I cried; keep me from the night. But it poured on thick; made my skin tender and mean; enslaved my thoughts; kept them to labor. And like horses that never lay hoof to the ground, I never made sound.

## I Stand By James Journeigan

#### I stand Watching the people walk by Never knowing that I can see All they have been or will be.

I stand Watching the animals roam Never knowing the true purpose All they can offer as a service.

I stand Watching the seasons change Never knowing how it does All I know is that it's all the buzz.

#### I stand

Watching life come to be around me Never knowing it's why I'm here All I know is that I'm endeared.

#### I stand

Watching the trucks come by Never knowing that what they do Will determine the fate of you.

#### I stand

Watching my friends fall down Never knowing that these new enemies Will do anything to make a few pennies.

#### I stand

Watching them come for me now Never knowing how much it will hurt When they saw at me at the legs.

#### I stand Watching their sweat drip down Never knowing how salty and sour it tastes When they drop it onto the new wastes.

#### I stand

Watching the ground get closer Never knowing the sound I will make When I crash down to make me ache.

#### I stand... No more For they have taken me away To be made into paper that will say Everything you've just read...



Perpetual Dreaming By Emely Taveras

#### Grief and Allachment and Everything in Between Bv Eliezer Hillman

Emma recalled her grandfather's face, his amber mustache and strawberry head of hair. But her stomach twisted as she yearned for his presence: to hear him, to feel him, to see him, Professor Bark finished his PowerPoint presentation on death: how it impacts the individual, the family, the community, and how Her grandfather passed away it creates a void and emptiness within and between individuals and families. He instructed the class to divide into groups for discussion. Emma's mind spun, as her memories of her grandfather drifted back. Her grandfather was tall and strong powerful figure, who gave her courage and strength to go on. She couldn't sit any longer; her desk was too tight, the room was too small to bear her thoughts. Emma dumped her books into her bag and swung them over her shoulder. She walked up to Professor Bark. "Professor," Emma explained, "I need to leave early today." "How come?" the professor asked.

"Just feeling, uh, dizzy. A bit sick," Emma explained. "Okay, take care, Emma," Professor Bark replied, "and have a good night."

"Thank you," Emma said. She hurried through the automatic doors to the cold outdoors. Emma sprinted to her car. She sped home, magically wishing her grandfather would somehow reappear. The streets lights flashed through her windshield like lightning in the sky. so soon. It was only three months ago when his life was stolen away. Emma recalled him taking her to the park as a young child and how, later in high school, he would listen to all her dreams and fantasies. But now, in her freshmen year of college, he was gone. Cancer had taken his towering life, too suddenly for Emma to bear. She skidded into the garage and ran through the front door. She didn't want to talk to anyone; not mom or dad or anyone else for that matter-all she wanted was to be alone. The world didn't seem to make sense. How could a goodnatured man who spent his life educating the youth be taken so randomly? She rushed down the staircase, into her room. rolled into her pajamas and dashed under the thick covers.

The moon shone through the

window as jitters exploded like missiles in her heart. Restlessness flared throughout her body; her grandfather was so dear. All she wanted was her grandfather's thick and calming voice-his voice of reassurance, of belonging, of comfort. Flashes of grandfather's reverence rushed through her spine as she lay under the thick down blanket. With a thrust she threw off her covers and ran to her desk.

It was too much. She jumped to other documents, but then digital pictures popped up; her grandfather hugging her. her sitting on his lap in the synagogue, them walking side by side. Hot tears trickled down her cheeks as her mind floated into doubt. Was this world one big chaotic mess? Her head sank into her lap and her hair fell over her neck. "Why?" she mumbled, "why is he gone?"

Seeing her aunt brought warmth to her heart; it was worthwhile coming. Maybe people did care, maybe they did love.

She turned the computer on and searched through her documents. The light from computer shone across the room like rainbows in the sky. She found a story she wrote about her grandfather and began to read it aloud. "My grandfather, a caring man, was everything to me. His tall presence and powerful sermons brought laughter and tears to all his congregants. His command and use of language was phenomenal. He crafted a lecture which connected past. present, and future like links in a necklace..."

She paused. His image in her mind ripped through her chest with thundering bangs.

Her blurry wet eyes returned to the screen. The pictures of her and her grandfather were too much. Click. Click. Click. Delete. Trash. The pictures vanished. Then she brought up the story of grandfather in the blank screen. Click Click Click. Delete. Trash. Gone. She couldn't have it. What was the point in writing about her grandfather if she couldn't have him back? She shut down the computer and snuggled back into bed. Footsteps clattered over the ceiling; probably mom and dad walking across the floor busy with their lives, making money, buying and selling, hectic with

the world of economics. She

buried her head under her

pillow. What was the point? Enough with questioning, she told herself. She needed to rest.

Her eyelids grew heavy, and she welcomed sleep, longing to drift away while yearning to ease into the night's slumber. But, no, the emptiness in her soul pulled her back to consciousness. All her friends, did they really care? Her fivehundred-and-thirty-two friends on Facebook, did they really care? Her head poked from underneath her covers like a turtle from its shell; and she sat up in full posture. She ambled to the desk and restarted the computer. Within a minute, she deleted all her Facebook friends and shut down her blog.

Then her mind pulled on her wanting to attach to something. She looked through the window and needed the outside: the trees, the winds, and the bridge. Within a minute, she was standing outside in her pink and white pajamas. Cold air waved over her body, but coldness didn't seem to have an impact. Her insides were numb and nothing seemed to penetrate. The trees stood bare and the streets were desolate with cars parked in straight rows along the street curb. She strolled down the street, needing to go, to

be in motion, but not sure to where.

Then she remembered her grandfather's brother, Uncle Brenton, who carried the same smile as her grandfather. Her pajamas flapped over her body as she rushed down the streets. Her hair flared up as the gusts of winds blew in the night chill. The moon pursued her to her uncle's home. It just seemed right to go to Uncle Brenton, As bizarre as it seemed, the walking was so quiet and peaceful. A bystander would think she was ill but this wasn't illness. This was her path—her way to discovery. Her pajama pants skipped over the ground as she marched up to Uncle Brenton's staircase.

Knock. Her heart jumped. Knock. She waited a moment. But nothing, then another moment and nothing the house was still like a tomb in the cemetery.

"Uncle Brenton, please open," she whispered. "If you don't open," she mumbled, "I'm going to the bridge. I promise you'll never see me again." The winds danced like bubbling water pressing goose bumps across her body. The door crackled. Was it opening? The door swung open.

Aunt Sue stood there in her

nightgown with wide eyes. "Emma?" Aunt Sue said. "Come on in. You look frozen with your cheeks so red and blue. Come warm up by the fireplace and I'll fix you a tea." She wrapped her arms around Emma and warmed her body. "Tell me, my dear, what happened?"

Aunt Sue showed her to the sofa then placed the kettle of water on the fire. Emma eased onto the sofa, and for the first time she realized how cold it has been. Seeing her aunt brought warmth to her heart; it was worthwhile coming. Maybe people did care, maybe they did love. Her thoughts slowed as she gazed at the wood burning in the fireplace. Aunt Sue covered Emma with a quilt and sat beside her, "So tell me, sweetheart, what happened?" Emma whimpered, "I don't know." The fire slowly danced. "Life was too much without my grandfather Robert." "Ah," Aunt Sue responded. "Losing a grandfather is too difficult. I remember as a child crying for days when my grandfather passed. It's tough."

grandfather passed. It's tough." Emma felt her breath deepen. "Let me wake Brenton. He'll be so happy to see you." Aunt Sue turned to the stairway. "Brenton!"

Aunt Sue screamed until her

voice stretched thin. "What? What's the matter, honey?" Brenton crackled in his sleepy voice from the second floor.

"Come on down," Sue yelled. "Emma, your niece, is here." Brenton cleared his throat with a hoarse cough, "What? Who?" "Yes. Emma, your favorite niece."

"Really, Emma?" Brenton's voice was louder. "You're kidding me. Let me hear her voice."

"Yes, Uncle Brenton," Emma shouted, "I'm here. I really am. Can I see you, uncle?" Uncle Brenton rushed down the wooden staircase. Emma jumped up from the sofa as Brenton's face lit the room. Her grandfather's reflection showered the room as her heart sung with joy. Uncle Brenton hugged her until life and color returned to her soul. He released her at last. Emma slumped to the couch and was swept into the peacefulness of the night.





Self Portrait By Jessica Muckin

You. You saved me. I knew from first sight you would Though at first I didn't understand how I love you, I think I always will You made it easier When he cut off my wings, Though you never said you loved me too. You are the only one Who stepped up. You understood You held me when he invaded and I Broke down. I trust you, Even though I never see you When I do, I regret never trying harder Now, You're gone. I want you so badly You made the abuse, The pain, The horrid things he did, Easier to take

## Both Sides of You By Alicia Goins

I always thought, You would break through the window of his dark, dingy room, And save me. I love you, dammit You know how much it's hurting me And it's been hurting me for years You chose keyboards over lips, Mice over hands You. I guess it's for the best, That the one thing I always wanted Was out of my reach. I wish you would've let me Kiss you just once, To feel your arms around me, And mine around you. You'll never know what you mean to me, More than you do to them Because you saved me, Time and time again, You brought my hell To an end.

### The Pure and the Laundered By Malcolm Rhys Wagner

After drafting and drawing and pacing the floor, I found an emptiness that exists across planes. One that wants to find meaning in the matching. Like the cross-hatched hairs at the nape of your neck and my blind sketches When all I remember is the comfort of the closeness, in between bodies, and behind closed lids. The shutter of the moment eye to aperture, letting in the light. The gray grain of your sheets and the shampoo smell of your hair, When it was nice to wake next to you, if only for the day. It was that first time that I actually felt what they call ease. It seemed so simple to me. But now I sit under desk lamps and try to create "positive space," try keeping you out of the equation. But it's hard when it's open-ended... Our goodbyes were never met. I'm still listening for your song. There's this sameness I'm drawn to. I think you remind me of a girl I once knew.

I, The Tree By Giulietta Passarelli

> I awoke feeling the tickle of sunlight upon my leaves Stretching my arms upwards from the touch of dew I seem taller today At least an inch more It took so long I slept through it The wind blows me dry I quiver from the cool breezes That pass between, swaying Now I am new and gleaming My bark is strong, my lips feathery Sweetened by the taste of broken berries I am deep into the earth From last evening's rain, I am nourished Little visitors come to play Bushy tails, feathered wings, children climb and sit Now I am loved





#### Seascape's Annual Poetry Contest 1st Place Winner



Why can't I be like you? A swift, winged creature Who can fly off into the sky so blue?

How I would love to live your life; For you can fly away from your troubles, Your conflicts, your strife. Danger is only as real as Your will to fly away; Most likely, you seldom worry about Making it to the next day.

You can go anywhere, anywhere at all; Be it New York City, The Great Wall of China, Or a deserted island. It's second nature, and at no cost to you: No fees to pay, no plans to make, no people to call.

Life happens on your accord and no one else's. You hold the map not in your feathers, But in your mind; and you plan The destinations on the fly, Based on what you find. Each moment is yours to command; You answer to no woman, child, or man.

Oh, what I wouldn't give To discover just a glimpse Of the freedom you find each day-In the wind, the sun, the snow, the rain.

But then, I suppose, I've got my advantages, too. For, though I am grounded, I know I am True.

I may try to run from conflict, sure-Though I likely won't get very far. This, however, would not be right. I would not be living life, Only ever taking flight.

So you take your path, My feathered friend, And I'll take mine. Whatever routes we take, though, I'm sure we'll both be fine.





#### Seascape's Annual Poetry Contest 2nd Place Winner

## Doctor Knock By: Nicholas Zrebiec

"To hear a knock At 9 o' clock Was death to surely come, For those who mocked His gruesome stock Would hear his deathly hum."

It happened every misty night, upon the town of Grendil's Moor. Waves crashing, crows cawing, no one roamed the streets or shore. No one roamed the place at all, save the sickly and the poor, But nothing plain, and nothing more.

Daniel Knock was his name, a name so feared and abhorred. He never stole from the sick, and never, ever from the poor, But from the plain, and all the more.

To speak of such a dark man's lore And of his precious Eleanor, Will have his knock thrust on thy door And have thee carve into thy pores.

But since I have come quite of age, His story is my final wage To teach the youth from this torn page A tale complete with love and rage.

Daniel Knock was a poor lad, His father a butcher, and quite mad. Though burdens of bloodline made him sad, He found a girl who made him glad. A girl by the name of Eleanor: A girl whose skin was of most fair, With precious eyes and golden hair, Who gave to him a friendly air Through a tame yet wild stare.

And every night at 9 o'clock Upon her door did Daniel knock In hopes that once again they'd talk, But soon young Daniel fell in shock.

For her father scorned a son, Whose class was low with wealth of none,

And as so did her father's words Make the poor young Daniel run. So then this made young Daniel ponder, Thoughts amuck, and left to wonder If he could change the tides of fate To save him from his own name's squander.

"I'll be a doctor," Daniel said, To practice amongst the meat of the dead From which his father cut and bled, So he can partake in another's stead.

And once his work was then complete He returned to where they'd meet, But time had passed, and Eleanor wed, Leaving Daniel in defeat.

His heart was broken, but not gone For only a battle had he not won. This war of love loomed in his mind, And so he thought, "I will get what is mine." With nervous hands, he continued to knock

Upon her door at 9 o'clock To take her hand from a wealthy man, Who treated her with a sadistic hand.

Her husband grew tired as knocks pursued, Leaving him in a violent mood, An ember that sparked a vicious flame, Thinking Eleanor was to blame.

So on a dark and misty night Out of mean and hateful spite, Eleanor's husband strangled her neck, Believing death would make things right.

For love she never came to show This man that she was forced to bestow Her love and life, but 'twas a scandal, For whom she truly loved was Daniel.

And when the public came to hear The one that Daniel held so dear Was killed, they thought he'd be a griever, But instead he grabbed his cleaver.

And on a night at 9 o'clock There came a very similar knock Where Eleanor's husband stood in her place As Daniel stood with a wicked face.

Then Eleanor's husband came to cry As his face was skinned alive For vengeance did Daniel arrive And for pain did he so strive. A faceless body lay on the ground As Daniel thought without a sound, "I will bring her back to life With the magic of this knife."

For when he found his love's remains Her neck and face held countless strains, Brought by a mean and violent man: The husband which she could not stand.

So Daniel beheaded and stole her rot, And took along with him a pot And carved into faces, including his own To make the face that he had known.

So he vowed to find what he had lost: Skin of which that was most fair, Precious eyes and golden hair, Things that gave a friendly air, And a tame yet wild stare.

Rumor claims he roams the streets, To find finest bits of meats From the plain and everything more, To bring back his own Eleanor.

But if you wish to stay astray From this bad man's wicked ways, Respect your girls and push off greed If you not wish your skin to bleed.

But I must mention one thing more: To speak his name brings gruesome gore,

And if you trust not in this man's lore Listen close: 'tis a knock at thy door.



#### Seascape's Annual Poetry Contest 3rd Place Winner



There is a smooth, white step And it is springtime. It is the icicles of winter that are dancing, Slowly melting, for the flowers to grow. This key likewise sings the chirp of a bird, It glistens like the morning sun. It awakens the joyful soul. There is another step, Which may be lightly pressed, And is further down a path, It radiates the gloom and mystery of night. It is dark and lonesome. It is the glowing eyes of a wolf, growling, awaiting its prey. This step is fear. In between the two steps, rest the lane in between. It is where the darkness and the light are connected, They interact and become one. It is happiness and sadness. In between the two steps is life.







#### Seascape's Annual Short Story Contest 1st Place Winner

#### Picking Up What Feft Down By James Lacomb

Laura lay waiting anxiously, tossing and turning every which way in bed. It was so close to Christmas that she was tempted to run downstairs now to see the presents waiting under their lit up Christmas tree! But she knew better. Mommy had said that she wasn't allowed to come downstairs until she came up to get her this year. Laura made a face, even though no one could see it. Sneaking down before she was allowed was part of the fun. She'd done it every year she could remember with her brother, John. Though, John had said they weren't sneaking anywhere this year.

She made a pouty face. Mommy probably yelled at him about it. It was relatively warm for winter; despite that, Laura held out hope for a white Christmas. She knew it was warmer out than it had been because she wasn't cold under her two blankets tonight. Mommy had said it was cold in the house because the heat was broken. She'd asked Daddy to fix it, but Laura guessed he hadn't had time yet. Daddy was almost always at work. He worked a lot more than usual; he was gone in the morning until really late at night.

John had been in a bad mood recently too. He never wanted

to play anymore. He would come home from school, do his homework, and then he would go to his room. Every so often, Laura would find him talking with Mommy but they always stopped talking when Laura came by. Maybe they were planning a surprise for her? Oh, Laura loved surprises! She couldn't wait to see what it was!

Still, Laura was still excited for Christmas. Just a single sleep more and she'd be running down the stairs with glee. No one seemed to be having fun lately. But that was alright; not everyone can have fun all the time.

But Christmas was sure to cheer everyone up! Just this time of year made Laura happy, all the music and lights just made everything seem better. She had so much fun decorating the tree and putting up all kinds of things all over the house. It was amazing and she only got to do it once a year!

She heard voices downstairs! She froze, instantly, not knowing what to do. Did they know she was awake? Were they going to yell at her? No, of course not, no one knew she was still awake. So, what were the voices talking about?

Slowly, Laura got out of bed. She

tiptoed over to the door, which was left open just a crack and peeked outside. It sounded like her parents. Opening the door a little bit more, she inched out. She crawled over to the stairs at the end of the hallway, trying to hear what her parents were talking about.

Yes, Laura knew perfectly well that sneaking around and eavesdropping was wrong. As was staying up past her bedtime. But Laura was also a curious little girl and such things couldn't be helped.

"What if he doesn't come?" her mother said. She sounded really worried.

"He'll be here, they said he would. They wouldn't lie about something like this." That was her dad. But what were they talking about? They were still up so late. Were her parents having trouble sleeping too?

"I know, but it's almost five in the morning. She's going to be up soon and we've got nothing under the tree."

Laura's heart dropped. There was nothing under the tree? But what about the presents? Mommy said as long as she was a good girl, there would be plenty of presents under the tree. They were going to have a wonderful Christmas; Mommy said so. Had she been bad? She thought she had been so good.

How could they have Christmas? Everyone had been so sad lately. Laura knew Christmas would make it better, everyone was happy on Christmas! Was it her fault? She didn't know what to do. She didn't know what she could do. Trying not to cry, Laura rubbed her wet eyes. "I know that. We just have to wait."

"I am not letting my six year old daughter waking up to find not a damn thing in the house on Christmas! I promised her, Michael; I got down on my damn knees and promised that little girl that we were going to have Christmas!" Her mother didn't sound angry. In fact, Laura thought, she sounded upset. Almost like she was trying not to cry, like Laura herself. Laura didn't like hearing her mom so sad.

"We can't afford to heat the house, we can barely afford to eat. I'm not even sure how we still own the house. I don't want to see her disappointed either, but I can't magic something from nothing!" Was Daddy not happy too? No one was supposed to be upset on Christmas. Listening to how upset they were, though, was making Laura sad herself. Trying not to get more upset, Laura started inching back from the stairs.

But then the doorbell rang. Whatever Mommy was saying, she stopped and ran over to the front door. She opened it right away, saying, "Oh, thank you! Thank you so much for making it!" She sounded so grateful to whoever was at the door. But she was crying. She was thanking whoever just showed up and was crying at the same time. Inching back up, Laura could see the front door at the bottom of the stairs. A man stood there. handing a box to Mommy. He was tall and all bundled up, but there were no sleighs or reindeer in sight. The man just nodded, reached into his pocket, and pulled out an envelope. He handed it to Mommy and just said, "Merry Christmas," before leaving. Mommy closed the door behind her and turned to go back into the family room where the tree was. As she turned. Laura could make out was written on the side of the box. "Girl: 4 to 6."

Laura knew what that meant her. She was six this year. She got up and started walking back to her bedroom. She was so confused. "I told you he'd make it."

"Shut up, Michael, help me wrap this quickly."

"We...don't have any wrapping paper, dear."

There was a pause. It made Laura pause.

"Not even any leftover from last year?" she heard her mom say. There was something breaking in her voice, it made Laura start to cry all over again.

"No, honey. We just made it with what we'd had left over from the year before. There's only a bit left on one roll." Then she heard something she'd never heard before. Mommy started crying. Laura could only turn around in confusion, crying herself. Mommy never cried. It was always Mommy making Laura feel better when cried. Even when Daddy cried because he couldn't go back to work last year, Mommy was the one making him feel better. "I just want her to be happy on

Christmas, Michael," Mommy said as she cried, "Everything's gone wrong and it's all fallen apart. John barely talks anymore, he never asks for anything. He's always worried that we won't make it. Laura's so young, though; I thought...I just thought I could keep her happy a little longer."

All Laura could do was sit and cry. She was so confused. "I know. And she will be. Laura's a good girl. She's going to come down those stairs and no matter what, she's going to be beaming up at you and say, 'Merry Christmas' and everything will be fine, love."

After a few minutes, Mommy stopped crying. Laura did too. She stood up and walked right to her bedroom. She hopped into bed and laid down. It was almost time for her to get up for Christmas after all.

Sometime later, her mother opened her door and peeked in. Seeing her little girl asleep, her mom yelled, "Merry Christmas!" Laura woke with a start, looked around until she saw Mommy. Smiling, Laura yelled back, "Merry Christmas!" as she ran out of bed to hug her. Mommy smiled, looking as if everything from earlier was just a dream. She picked Laura up and carried her downstairs, talking about how much fun they always had on Christmas.

When they got downstairs, they turned to the living room. All that was under the tree was a few plain boxes. There was one wrapped present though. Laura jumped down and ran right to it, looking back at her mother and smiled. Her

mother smiled back. With the reckless abandon of

a small child that's a little too excited, Laura started tearing the wrapping paper away. She was

a little extra ferocious with this present. It was the only one this year, so she had to make it count. As she violently tore the colorful wrapping paper to pieces, she was eventually left with a shiny tin sitting on the floor. Reading the box, she sounded out what they were. Dominoes. An entire two-hundred and fifty piece set of dominoes. She looked back at her mother, standing just inside the family room and said, "Thank you, Mommy!" before she opened the tin and set up some dominoes. Promptly upon setting up about ten, she pushed one down and watched the inevitable reaction happen. She giggled when it reached the end. She set them up once more, this time longer, and pushed them down again. Smiling, she turned to her mother, "You know what I like most about these?" Her mother smiled back, "What's

that, Laura?" She picked up a few dominoes and set them up, "You spend all this time setting them up, until they're just perfect. Then

> you go and knock them all down and ruin everything you just set up." As she talked she looked up, smiling at her mother. It was all she could give her for Christmas, so she made it her best. Her mother

nodded, her eyes slightly red and still wet, "But it's okay that they fell down. Because you can go and pick them all up and make them perfect again." Her mother laughed, or choked back a sob. Laura couldn't tell which. She leaned down and hugged her daughter. Laura could tell she was crying, a little bit anyway. That was okay though. Even Mommy needed to cry sometimes.

## I thought...I just thought I could keep her happy a little longer.



#### Seascape's Annual Short Story contest 2nd Place Winner

## The Memory Golfector By Hope Terrell

I collect memories. I've been doing so for a while now. Sometimes, the people I ask don't want to tell me their stories, but I always manage to get them in the end.

The latest person whose story I wished to collect was old, her face heavily lined. She kept her hand on the door as she eyed me, a stranger who had showed up unannounced on her front porch.

"May I help you?" she asked, her voice bearing the trace of an accent. I flashed my brightest smile. "Hi, Ms. Ben-David, I'm a local historian, and I wanted to interview you for the 70th anniversary of the liberation -" Holocaust survivor Miriam Ben-David tried slamming the door in my face, but I stopped it with my heavy boot. I'd encountered enough reluctant people that I knew to expect this almost universal response.

But I'm a historian. I collect memories, and that was just what I was determined to do.

"I don't like to talk about it," Miriam said firmly.

"In the Holocaust, how many disappeared into the flames, never to be remembered?" I spoke fast, clutching my recorder. "That's the worst part of it- not just that so many died, but that their memories were annihilated. If you don't tell me your story," I added as she pushed on the door in an attempt to dislodge my foot, "you will be forgotten, just like they were." For a moment I saw fear flash in her eyes as she realized the enormity of what I said. She peered closer at me and started to push harder on the door.

"I'll make sure you're not forgotten," I blurted out, dangling that tantalizing offer before her. Miriam stopped pushing on the door and her eyes narrowed as she examined me. I could almost see her turning over in her mind what I had said. As death begins to creep up, so many people realize too late that their only chance at immortality is in the memories left behind. "I'll tell you," she said slowly, "if you'll promise me that. Afterwards, they all said 'never forget', but every day I see more and more people forgetting what happened to us. So promise me. Promise me that you will tell everyone you encounter about my story, so that it is never forgotten."

I froze. I hadn't meant my words as a promise. Usually, I was the one who asked others for it. A promise has a power that few realize. Miriam watched me, her eyes dark glints of suspicion, so I forced another smile. "Of course." "Say the words," Miriam ordered. I swallowed and forced the words that tasted alien in my mouth. "I promise."

Miriam nodded and pulled the door all the way open.

We settled in at the table in the small, cozy kitchen. I placed the recorder in the middle of the table and pressed record. Miriam stared into the distance for several long moments as she looked back into the past that she had tried to forget. "I survived," she finally said, a catch to her voice, "because I gave away my memories."

Like so many, I lost my parents moments after we arrived at Auschwitz. We stepped off the crowded cattle car onto the train platform, and as the bodies pressed forward, I felt my mother's hand slipping from mine.

"Ma!" I screamed for her, but there were so many others screaming and crying, the Nazis yelling orders as they moved us this way or that. "Left," the guard barked, after one glance at me, a small, scrawny child of eight. In his eyes, I was useless, fit only to be burned.

Of course, at the time, I didn't know that. I only knew of the press of bodies as I stumbled along, until we reached the building in which we would all die.

A hand reached out and grabbed my arm, pulling me to the side. Surprised, I looked up into the face of a filthy young woman, a dirtcaked scarf covering her hair. "Listen, child," the woman said as she glanced around. She peered into my frightened face. "Do you want to live?"

Wide eyed, I nodded at her. "Give me your name, then." I told her.

The woman pursed her lips. "Listen carefully, then. Go back to the platform, and wait. Another little girl just like you will take your hand, and you will tell the guards you're twins. Understand?"

"Why?" I asked the question with an eight-year-old's innocence. I lost that quickly enough.

"Because unless you're interesting, you're useless, and they kill the useless ones. Go!"

She gave me a push, and I made my way back to the platform. I'd barely reached it before a little girl my size with my coloring grabbed my hand. I peered at her. "Are you my twin?" I asked.

The girl nodded. But she never spoke, her hand almost insubstantial in mine.

A Nazi suddenly appeared. "Twins?" he barked, and I nodded. And then we were herded away into hell. After they tattooed my arm, they did roll call, calling us by our numbers. I answered automatically to my number. I never heard anyone call me by my birth name again.

As the war dragged on, and the Red Army pushed closer, the Nazis decided it was time to move us into Germany. Shivering in the early morning cold, where we had been standing for hours, I barely noticed when the woman reappeared, until she grabbed my arm.

"Do you want to live, child?" she demanded, peering into my face once again.

I nodded, like I had done before, "Give me vour childhood memories. then."

Nor did I remember

my parents' names.

That was the

moment | grasped

the price I had paid

to survive.

My childhood memories were all but gone. I could barely recall my parents' faces. But I nodded anyway, and that pleased the woman.

The woman grabbed my arm, pulling me

out of line. I expected the guard to shout, but the Nazi on duty never glanced in our direction. "What about the other girl?" I asked. "What other girl?"

I glanced back at the girl with whom I had been in hell, the girl who saved my life by pretending to be my twin. "Her," I said, pointing. "She goes, too." I reached for the girl's hand. My hand passed through hers like she was made of mist. The girl turned and smiled at me, and then faded into nothing.

I swung my gaze back at the woman who held my arm. The woman shrugged. "She was a memory. I work with memories, you know, and I can manipulate them when I have to." Despite my protests, the woman dragged me away.

She left me in the hospital, where other prisoners, more corpses than

people, lay. I lay, shivering, on a cot in the corner. No one noticed me; their eyes passing over me like I wasn't there, and I fell asleep. When I woke, the Nazis were gone. Some days later, more soldiers came. But these soldiers were differentthey came with smiles and hugs and chocolate. And then I was free.

> It wasn't until later. when I found myself at a processing center in an attempt to find some surviving family, that I realized I had forgotten my name. "Your name," the woman at the desk

asked, and I automatically gave her my number.

"No, dear," she said gently. "Your real name."

I stared at her with an open mouth, as I realized I didn't remember my name anymore.

Nor did I remember my parents' names. That was the moment I grasped the price I had paid to survive.

The room was loud and crowded, and I numbly made my way towards the door. Before I got there, I saw the woman who saved my life, but at the price of my dearest memories. "I'll make one last bargain with you, child," the witch said.

I didn't say anything.

"I'll give you a family, and you'll grow up and be successful. Would you like that?"

I finally looked at her. "Would they

be real?" I demanded.

The woman hesitated.

"Or would they just be a memory, too?"

The woman examined my face, so young, so serious, so lost. Then she smiled. "Very well. I will give you a family- not of blood or memories, but We can take care of each other. of experience. Nothing will be false. But if I do that, it will cost you." "What?" I asked.

"All your memories."

"Why?" I asked. "Why do you want my memories?"

The woman looked away. "With memories, one can live thousands of lives," She looked back at me, "So, Is it a bargain?"

What good were my memories now? So I nodded.

"One day," the woman said, gripping my hands, "when you are old, I will return, and I will collect my debt. Understood?"

I nodded again.

The woman pulled free, turned, and pushed through the crowd.

"Wait!" I called after her, but she disappeared through the door. Moments later, the door opened, and a young man entered. He scanned the Now I make sure that same little girl room, his gaze settling on me, and made his way over. "Hello," he said, smiling at me, a smile that was so out of place in this place of desperation, of anguished relatives looking for lost loved ones. But there was something sad behind the smile, too, as he knelt so we were at eye level.

I just stared at him.

"That woman told me you lost your family. I lost my family, too," he said.

"I had a sister, but she died and I can't even remember what she looks like." I thought of the girl, whose memory kept me alive. "Did you bargain your memories, too? I asked, and he nodded.

"Would you like to be my sister? We're family, after all, of blood and experience." He held out a hand, and after a moment of hesitation. I took it.

I pressed stop on the recorder and Miriam looked up, a smile on her lips that chilled me. "I've lived a long life," she said. "Much like you, I would imagine."

I stood and shook her hand. "Thank you for your time."

"I know you, memory dealer," Miriam said, gripping my hand as I tried to pull away. "I keep my promises, so you make sure you keep yours." I vanked my hand free and watched as the recognition in her eyes faded into vacancy. The smile however- that still remained.

I deal in memories. Once, I saved a little girl's life by stealing her name and her memories. Now, though... is never forgotten.





#### Seascape's Annual Short Story Contest 3rd Place Winner

#### The Ghronicles of the Damned By Jenna Geisinger

The pews were rigid in the drafty church, just like I remembered. Father Richard stood at the podium, lisping every s in the sermon. Dad would've laughed if his face wasn't taut with makeup that didn't match his skin tone. Good Catholics were guaranteed salvation for living under the influence of God. He drank the poison, repeated the mantra, but it didn't save him. Katie's face scrunched with concentration. dissecting the grains of the wood in the pew. I put my hand on her shoulder, but she was too absorbed to notice.

Father Richard cleared his throat as he read the passage of a holy shepherd escorting Dad to the pastures of Heaven. We both knew he was lying. Father Richard was choking on the words, surprised the staunch Catholic Church would even hold the funeral for him. Dad was probably feeling Hell's fire biting his bare feet as he spoke.

A few days before he died, we went to the field to play softball. Katie and I filed into his dilapidated blue Hyundai. The sun blasted through the windows, turning us to ants under a magnifying glass. The air conditioner could barely manage to wheeze out a small stream of stale air. "My version of Heaven would be Field 3, just playing short stop day in and day out," Dad said. From the back seat I could see that his piercing blue eyes looked hazy in the rearview mirror. "You know, I read this book about this guy, I forget his name. Anyway, God came to him and showed him Hell for twentythree minutes. He said he was naked and burning. God showed him Hell so he could tell everyone that it was real. Doesn't sound too bad."

Is that where he is now, burning for eternity? The guy that had a pendant of Mary that he wore around his neck every day, even when it turned a spot on his chest green. The guy that carried Holy Water in his pocket, blessing himself every morning. He gave his favorite wooden rosary beads to a girl on my team going through a tough time. They had brought him comfort once but she needed them more. He even brought me to Church before school to light a candle because I was nervous about presenting a project. He told me that whenever I was scared, nervous, sad, or depressed to pray because God was strong enough to hold us up when we felt weak. How does Dad go to Hell? He lived his life in the name of God, so

why didn't God scoop him up and carry him away from his troubled mind? My faith waned at the thought.

"As I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil-" I dug my nails into my palms, clawing at my own flesh. The throbbing felt better than the emptiness that pervaded to every inch of my body, engulfing it in numbness. Dad trained me well. Every time I cried, he yelled louder, angrier. Like each tear that fell was a black smudge on his good name; my sins were his. Once it had made me cry harder, knowing that I could not stop crying or disappointing him. But now I could finally redeem myself by keeping a stony face when it mattered most.

destroy the image of a son she clung to desperately, nor could I lie to her wispy face.

The lights were dim and it smelled of mold, lightly veiled with harsh air freshener. I looked in the mirror. Dad's eyes stared back at mine. Usually my eyes were a stormy blue gray, changing with the weather, but Dad's were a steadfast clear blue. Today we had the same eyes. And of course, the same blood. Complications at my birth led to a frantic need for a blood transfusion, and he gave blood to save me. If we had the same blood and the same eyes, what else did we share? I looked down at my pale arms, picturing the blood spilling down them and staining the off-white sink. I saw it pooling at my chest

Complications at my birth led to a frantic need for a blood transfusion, and he gave blood to save me. If we had the same blood and the same eyes, what else did we share?

The cackle of clinking forks and knives was deafening. I never understood why it was customary to stuff one's face with expensive food when someone dies. At least there was an open bar; Aunt Rae surely appreciated that touch.

"You girls are so lucky to have had a dad like Jerry; he was a good boy," Grandma said.

I excused myself to the bathroom, letting Katie handle her. I couldn't and my stomach. The screams he swallowed were caught in my throat. Was I doomed to be next? Was crazy contagious or passed down like an old family heirloom? I squeezed my eyes shut, "It's not my fault, it's not my fault," I whispered. The words tasted sour on my tongue. Even I knew I was lying.

In the restaurant my second dessert arrived. I ate this one fast too, not

even tasting it. Aunt Rae regaled the table with another story from their childhood. Another forkful of cake, another story.

"Jess, what about you, do you want to share a story?" Aunt Lorraine asked.

I wiped the chocolate that cleaved to the sides of my lips. "Not really." "C'mon, just one. He would want us to reflect on the good times." "Fine. Last weekend Katie and I went to the field with him. We played for hours. He hit us fly balls and we had a contest to see who could catch the most. I lost, what else is new? But he seemed really happy,"

I smiled to myself. One of the few good memories Dad and I had that weren't tainted with my mistakes or his anger.

That day at the field I missed a ground ball, curling in on myself, waiting for his poison-tipped words. Instead he made a joke, his laugh tickled my ears. I hadn't heard it in months. The drought was finally over. My sister's coach stopped by to say hi, telling my Dad when I was hitting that he thought it was Katie at the plate. When Dad told me that his eyes glowed, pooling with pride. In twelve years, I had never earned that look, he only reserved it for Katie. I never deserved his pride I had to be her to finally receive it.

My room looked different than it did yesterday. It looked ghostly and

sad; my posters were curling at the corners, a depiction of things that weren't nearly as important as they were the day before. I took Dad's jersey out of the catacombs of my closet. I snuggled my face into it, feeling the scratchy peeling letters of his last name on the back. Tears soaked the hideous orange shirt. He got it down from the attic a few years ago, wanting me to have it, not my sister, the golden child, but me. I clutched it to my chest, but it couldn't ward off the thoughts that loomed over the precious moments before sleep, the memories that waited to invade my dreams. Mom woke us up in a panic. "Daddy is missing, get dressed." I threw on the first pair of shorts

lying on my floor and threw my hair in a pony-tail. He couldn't be missing. I met Katie at the sink in our bathroom, the hum of bristles on teeth was the only sound. "Jess, will you come with me to the laundry room?" Katie asked. The laundry room was off of the garage. It seemed ominous, waiting to catch us in its clutches. We threw on the garage light and sprinted in. She grabbed what she needed from the dryer and we ran even faster back in, tripping on the three steps to the door. She was a sophomore in high school, but when Dad could have been kidnapped or murdered, the dark is terrifying. Mom called her friend, who was

a police officer, to ask when to report a missing person's case. He came over to walk the property, and my mom told us to sit in the family room. There weren't many windows.

We sat on the couch in silence. The room was dimly lit and the TV was off. It felt wrong to illuminate the darkness when the truth was dodging us.

Katie got up to change her away message. She came back, standing in front of me with doe-eyes. I had never seen her on the brink of tears. She hardly ever cried.

"Jess, his search was still up on the computer."

#### "So?"

"It said, 'How to commit suicide." A car horn honked outside, it was her friend's mom to drive her to school. The school softball team was in states, and she was one of the few sophomores that made Varsity that year. Dad was so proud. She gave me a hug, desperately, drawing strength from me and giving me strength as well. She left me in the dark room by myself, fighting tears. It couldn't be true. But the sirens pierced through the heavy silence, and I could no longer breathe.

I woke up crying and gasping. I couldn't run away from what my core knew was true. It was my fault. The night before my dad took his own life, for some reason I had wanted to tell him that I loved him, and that I was glad he was here. But I hadn't. I wasn't good enough to make him stay. He told me the last perfect man died on the cross; maybe he wanted the same fate. Maybe his cross was too much to bear, and despite all of my attempts, I could not help shoulder the weight.

The empty space in the holder where the butcher knife once sat winked at me. It was another hollowness that threatened to consume me. I grabbed Dad's keys and his tear-stained jersey and walked to Field 3. The three-mile walk seemed endless in the rare May heat, the air sticky and thick with the occasional breeze. The rusty metal backstop reached toward God, skimming the heavens with its jagged posts. Having been the treasurer of the softball league, his keys opened the metal Joe box. I opened it and took the bases and the rake from its belly. Methodically, I raked the field, making the dirt fluffy, perfect for ground balls, just the way Dad liked it. I took out the stops and put the bases in, gently placing his sacred jersey by shortstop. I laid a rock over top to keep it from blowing away. This is where he belonged. It was the Heaven he deserved.







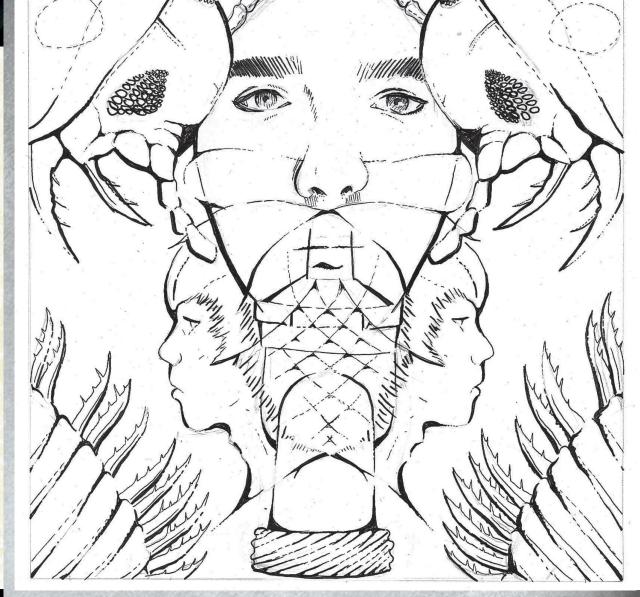


I won't let you crawl back into yourself, your weakening shell. The earth maiden in me is calm and factual when you drown in your doubts. But, swimming in our waters, the twin fish, sucking on your tears, allow me to be the more cushioned love that your sick body needs. And you will reveal your claws; they are incapable of hurting. You'll write with them, some fierce, tidal plea. 'Stay away from me. Stay away from me', and it will not be what you mean. Lose yourself in my eyes if you must, then soften back to reality. I will be glowing flesh, for your coital needs. I will be words and healer's hands when you wish for platony. But I ask one thing, when you power through story upon story, it is for you to allow the moon to cleanse and purify you. Its light is true. And there is no dirt, no

black dog, no ugly ways that keep the Pisces-rising from loving you. Serenely yours. Yours. Calm, deep forest.

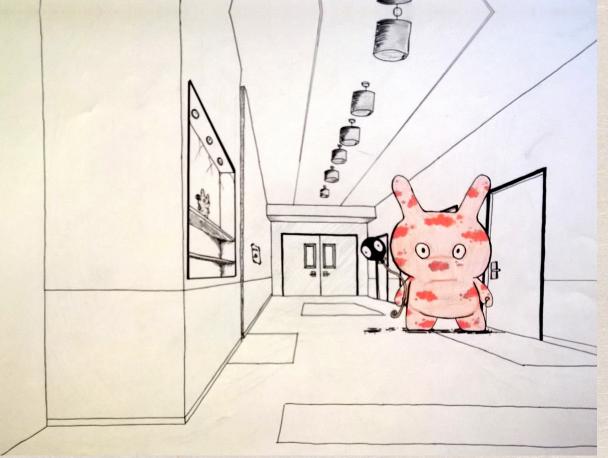


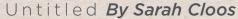
Did you ever look in the mirror and couldn't recognize yourself? Realized you're in so deep you can't get out without help? I've felt that way before, but I know it doesn't go away so fast. So easy to see your future, but hard to put away your past. Knowing every day alone is another second wasted. You had to force that laugh, had to keep that smile pasted. But that dream you used to dream can happen if you try. No use in sulking, all of your tears will dry. Wake up and live the way you wanted before. The way you always dreamed, and live it even more. Because what's a dream without a dreamer? And what's a future without a past?

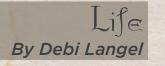


Symmetry By Evan Tortorella









When you walk down that lonely road, think about your life Was it worth the things you did? The people in your life, did you treat them right? Think of the things you laughed at, were they worth the laugh? How about the conflicts that came about, were they worth the fight? For the tears you shed, were they worth shedding? When you're just sitting by yourself think about your life, I hope it was a very happy one.

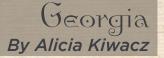


## Wilderness Years By Connor Effenberger

I wanna say I came Isaw I left this world a better place Where I once stood below the trees that danced. They swayed. I shake In the breeze and then I see the birds escape their feet to soar above my eyes. They stalk. I pray my life has chose its way to live with fear from those dear birds who sang I wanna say



A song



The day begins with a light mist in the air. Dewdrops cover every blade of grass. It's amazing how the grass is so lush. Barely any patches are brown. The sun begins to rise even higher in the sky, and the heat intensity grows. Once it gets too hot, that is the perfect time to get a mason jar and fill it with fresh lemonade. The ice cubes make the lemonade seem as fresh as possible as it cools the tongue from the heat outside.

On the left of the porch is a swing that has been there for ten years too many. With each momentary breeze, the swing gives a squeak at the hinge. The wood is rugged, but still strong. It will last at least another decade. The view beyond the porch swing is something quite breath taking. A wide-open field, perfect for children to play tag in. For now, the field only possesses a horse. He is tall, brown, and strong with a white patch just above the center of his eyes. The sky is a perfect shade of blue with clouds as fluffy as a feather pillow.

A gust of wind presents a

refreshing scent that smells like pure air, pure as in without flaws. The driveway ahead of the porch is long. Magnolia trees line the driveway with their tall trunks, hunter green leaves, and blossomed magnolia flowers. The flowers are extravagant in size. The driveway is not paved, but rather a long road of Georgia clay. Pebbles and tire marks cover the road. The view of the house is also a beautiful sight to see. A two-story house proceeds my view, the faintest shade of yellow with hunter green shutters. The porch wraps around which is where the porch swing resides.

Just a glimpse of the land is enough to take any form of stress from the mind. You can help but notice every little detail since the madness of a city is not present at all. In fact, the most traffic you would encounter is a farmer on his John Deere tractor driving on the road for whatever reason he may be. If you walk to the back of the house, you can see where the entire land stretches out. Open fields for miles. A big red barn has its station



#### Cut Paper By Irina Lutsenko

closer to the wooden fence separating the back yard from the field. The red on the barn is not so bright anymore, but is darkened and even chipped in some areas due to several thunderstorms. Like the horse and porch swing, the barn is tall and strong. Bales of hay encompass the barn. Just from walking around, my feet are chalked with the red clay from the driveway.

The birds are among the most never left. pleasant noises you encounter

in the south. Mixed with the blue skies and light breeze, you're surrounded by simplest pleasure. In this month of April, the birds chirp early every morning and sing songs until evening. The heat may actually cause you to feel as if it is summer. Hot humid air surrounds you, but is broken periodically with soft breezes through the air. If I had the choice to stay, I would have never left.

## The Ocean By Eric Raymond

He stepped out the front door for the first time today and was greeted with a gust of cold wind. It was late afternoon and the first truly cold day of the year. The early November sun gave just enough warmth. He had made this walk thousands of times, but the first few steps were always hard. He knew it was three blocks or about seven hundred steps. The wind whipped and swirled its way through the barren coastal town. He put one foot in front of the other and braved his way.

In the distance, he could hear the echoes of children's laughter fade out into the distance. Otherwise, the town was silent. Gone were the tan skinned tourists that packed the town every summer. As a child, he had hated this time of year, but as an older man he had grown to love it. He enjoyed the peacefulness of the town this time of year. He didn't know any of his neighbors anymore so he had no one to miss. Everyone he knew, even his kids, had chosen to move south permanently, but he grew to love the bareness of winter in a summer town. He kept walking at his steady pace. He'd be there soon. He passed the small convenience store that had over twenty different owners in his life. He took a quick glance at the newspaper, which displayed the election results from the night before. There was a time that he might have purchased the paper, but he was wise enough to know that it wouldn't much matter.

He barely watched television any longer and preferred the fiction of a novel to



#### politics anyway.

The paper did provide a brief distraction for the pain in his knees. He was almost there now and could feel the ocean air blow softly against his uncovered skin. He made his way the remaining one hundred and fifty steps until he finally reached the beach. He didn't hesitate and continued his way over to his pier. He grabbed the old wooden railing and forced his body down the pier out towards the ocean. The pier had needed to be rebuilt several times, but had been there his whole life.

After about fifty steps, he reached the end of pier, to his spot. He leaned his body against the rail and closed his eyes. The ocean wind greeted him with a warm, calm breeze. The ocean was the one constant in his life. He had grown old on this ocean and the town next to it. His life and the town near had changed ten times over, but this ocean, the beach never did. His bones were stiff and fragile, but his mind was still sharp and malleable. The ocean in all its force never changed, waves never changed, the air, the sounds, none of it had ever changed.

He used the atmosphere as a time machine that he could jump through the different moments of his life. He recalled holding his parents hands as they walked him down towards the ocean. He remembered bliss filled days basking in the sun and the water. He remembered years of fun memories. He remembered as a young man pondering his life, being in awe of the power of the ocean, and setting all the goals he sought to accomplish. Few of which ever were ever accomplished but that never bothered him. He learned everything he ever needed along these shores, but still had more questions than answers. He made a career on the ocean. He remembered falling in love right on the coast before him. He raised his two kids on this ocean and taught his children the same things his parents had taught him. He remembered more joy than many would think possible. He remembered pain and angst. He remembered as a middle- aged man staring off into the ocean, thinking his life had passed him by. That was nearly a half a lifetime ago. He remembered the last time that he was out on the ocean. It was nearly ten years ago now. He remembered what it was like scattering the only person that truly understood him. The only person that would still be here with him today. He remembered watching the ashes hit the water. He remembered the way the light hit the water. He remembered the way his tears hit the water and mixed with the ashes. He remembered the way they danced as they slowly faded away. And then he remembered them being gone. And then they were gone. That was the most painful part. He knew that a part of him, most of him, had left that day as well. He never went back out on the ocean, but she was a part of this all now. It's where he felt closest to her. He swore sometimes he could hear her, feel her, speak to him.

The old man was awakened from his daydreaming by the sound of a particularly hard wave crash against the jetty. He always loved the big waves. His mind drifted off to the times as a young man, when news of a big storm was coming. Late at night he would sneak

out of the house and come down to the beach. He watched the waves rip across the landscape and barrel into the shore. The first few times it took him several minutes to build up the courage, but soon he would dart off in the water. He loved weaving his way through the waves, feeling the current pull his body a million different ways. He loved the fight; it made him feel alive. He'd fight with all his might, sometimes it took everything that he had, sometimes he'd sworn his was on the brink of losing. Then all of a sudden, in a moment of calmness, he would just lay back and let the water hold him. When he stopped fighting the ocean would hold him, allow him to build his strength. He'd gaze up at the starlit sky in complete awe of what few would ever experience. It was magical. He knew this moment was everything. The old man ached for these moments. He could feel this ache through his whole body. He looked down at his hands resting on the old pier rails. He thought them just strong enough to throw his body over the rail into the water. He knew he'd have just enough strength to battle the water once more. Give everything he had for just a couple minutes more and let the ocean win this one last time. The moment became real and his body ached to act. All of sudden he was hit by a calm wind. It was her calm voice coming to soothe him. This wasn't the way to go. Not for an old man. Nobody should find an old man like that. She was right. His clenched hands now relaxed. He closed his eyes once more, just for a few seconds. He decided it was time to head home for the day. He'd be back tomorrow. With the late afternoon sun now shining on his face, the wind at his back, he began to walk home.

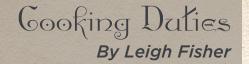


Can one shape the essence by the things they cannot see? Is there an ongoing contentment in this life of fallacy? Take a picture of the world and paint the picture that you see Can you see the beauty in a dying restless tree? Although it withered and prepared to fade away He still sings his praises up to heaven everyday Often times we take for granted the blessings of each and every day When you woke up this morning someone was taking his or her very last breath Can you put into words the sweet murmurs of your heart? The sweet jump that it gives when you sit back and enjoy life

> Does it always have to be that you are racing through time? Are you able to sit and put a still to your mind? When I talk about the essence, I am referring to the positivity The humility you get after you have seen life's victories. Have you ever felt the joy of overcoming an accomplishment?

That dream you pursued and now you finally have gotten it? The essence isn't something you have to receive It is something that can always be seen If your rotate your mirrors and change your view You will have the essence and a peace of mind too.

Seishin By Michael Brothers



Lu Xun was one of the army's newest recruits, though he was given a place in the platoon of the general, Sun Ce. He was a young man with great potential and seemingly endless eagerness to work hard and succeed. Sun Ce was confident that he would become a valuable general in the not far future, but he was still a new recruit. All of said recruits alternated cooking duties when the army made camp for the night.

Lu Xun was pouring over paperwork on one of the desks while one of his superiors did the same. Zhou Yu was the army's strategist and took care of a great deal of the planning for their battles, travels, and schedules. Since Lu Xun was also highly interested in tactics, Zhou Yu had let him organize the incoming reports from other branches of the military. It was a mundane task, but Lu Xun still took it seriously and was careful when handling the sensitive documents while being meticulous in organizing them. He was rather enjoying having a young, new recruit who would do absolutely anything a senior officer asked; he hadn't polished his own weapons since Lu Xun joined

#### their forces.

"Lu Xun, could you fetch another ink well for me?" he asked without looking up from his desk.

"Of course, my lord!" Lu Xun said as he jumped to his feet. It was only a few minutes later that Lu Xun returned with an inkwell and an extra guill as well. Zhou Yu thanked him briefly and returned to work. Lu Xun was undeterred by the lack of appreciation and Zhou Yu tried not to smirk. Zhou Yu glanced at one of his calendars the detailed the cooking shifts to see that it was Lu Xun's night. Though Zhou Yu wasn't thrilled to be the bearer of bad news to someone young and ambitious who could possibly become a rival for his own position as army strategist, there were no exceptions. Most soldiers who wanted to rise through the ranks would not object to dull tasks, but that never stopped them from frowning or responding with the zeal of a three-legged turtle. Zhou Yu set his quill down and cleared his throat.

"Lu Xun," he began, expecting a poor reaction from the young recruit, "it's your night to cook for the men." Instead, Lu Xun nodded and saluted enthusiastically. "Understood, my lord!" Zhou Yu blinked, but didn't let himself look too surprised. "Right. Well, you can go as soon as you're done with this." "Understood," he repeated. "I'll do my best!"

Still admittedly impressed by Lu Xun's readiness to do even the most unexciting task, Zhou Yu returned to mapping out an attack strategy. Lu Xun departed not too long after to head off to the fire pits set up for cooking on the far side of camp. Later that evening, Zhou Yu sat down across from Sun Ce, who greeted him with an informal wave. Sun Ce staved on friendly terms with his closest generals and strategists, one of the many reasons he was popular among his people.

"Enjoying bossing my new recruit around?" Sun Ce asked with a jovial smile. "He's a hard worker," he replied, avoiding the question. Sun Ce elbowed him lightly. "That's a yes."

"Well, you wanted to let him learn more about strategy," Zhou Yu said innocently. "I'm sure he's learning plenty being your little assistant," he said with a laugh. "Try to teach him something at some point though."

Zhou Yu rolled his eyes as

he reached for a bowl of the soup. It smelled decent enough, though they were all accustomed to mediocre food when making camp. Zhou Yu was careful to keep their forces equipped with a good inventory of supplies, but even excellent quality provisions couldn't make up for a terrible cook.

Sun Ce grimaced as he swallowed the mouthful of soup. "How does the soup taste burnt?"

"That...is a very good question, my lord," Zhou Yu remarked as he stared at the contents of the bowl darkly.

"The broth tastes like burned water," he said quietly, remembering that being a leader meant not complaining too verbosely. "It's not even bland, it's just...burnt tasting." "That's not easy to do," Zhou Yu said, shaking his head slightly.

"Who was on cooking duty tonight?" he asked, sniffing the soup perplexedly.

"Your new recruit, Lu Xun," the strategist said as he shook his head. "I'll inform the others to assign him with different duties."

"Please do," Sun Ce said as he pushed the bowl of soup away. "He's more suited for leadership anyway." "That's such a kind way to put

it."



Portrait Illustration By Dez Kaltz

Frizzy and wild Mind of your own I don't understand you Can't tame you Garls By Kara Swisher

You static and spark and snarl under my torturous brush. Suffocate me in summer Hot and heavy, stuck to the sweaty nape of my neck. Rebel at straighteners and curling irons alike, You can't be bothered to fall in line, Or follow the rules and regulations I have imposed.

Maybe it's me, not you. You need someone a little more patient A little more high maintenance I never take the time to listen to you Just chisel and chip away with my primitive understanding, Try to force you into submission without asking your permission, Without bothering to ask how you'd like to be handled. There are things you'd like to do that I may never know.

Arrogant, my belief that I know you better then you know yourself. I give up so easily on you.

You deserve someone who sees you for the beauty you are, Who will sit and study and admire you, See you true.

My little rebel girl curls Fighting the big bad wide world Could I really expect the truest part of me to ever fall in line? You were not designed to be a mink kitten, all sleek and shine Don't let me win, don't listen when I tell you to stay quiet Stay out of sight Always be good; always do what you are told.

> You are frizzy, and wild and free. Speak, my rebel curls. Never stop speaking. I promise to learn how to listen.



#### Leaves By Val Morone

## Time Forgets Nothing By Hope Terrell

One hundred years, shattered, gone, I still hear echoes in the scattering leaves, In the wind I hear artillery. The poster that called is tattered in my mind's eye He said "I Want You" but I'm still wondering why.

It's all a blur now, of blood, dirt, and bone. Still, it hurts in my memory. I think I fell somewhere in France; If I show you where, will you dig up my bones? I'd really like to go back home.

## The Last Stop on the Six Line By Emily Ravaioli

There are four paths out of Union Square, and she can't see any of them, which is fair, given the amount of snow slowly hitting the ground in fat, wet clumps, huddled together on the pavement. She kicks them aside as she pushes open the door of the Strand and pokes her head out of the bookshop, frowning. The street sign that waves precariously atop the metal post in the winter wind is covered in gobs of snow. She sighs and pulls her jacket tighter, leaving with a crinkly plastic bag in one hand and her backpack slung over her shoulder.

There's at least three subway stations around here, she reminds her racing heart as she makes her way through the last dregs of the night crowds. She hasn't lived here long, but she knows that much. All of them have the same train lines and they leave at the same time, so she's fine. She just has to make the right turn towards the station, the one on East, but now she's standing in the middle of Union Square and she's not sure what direction the east side is in anymore. "Percy!"

She lifts her head up, stuffing blond curls under her hat. "Yeah?" she calls into the wind. Someone she knows had to have called for her. She isn't sure who it was, the voice already half-forgotten, but there aren't that many people in the city who know her name.

Percy trudges through the snow, wiping it away from her eyes, her wet mittens sticking to her chapped skin. "Percy! Hey, Percy!" It's so cold. She's aware of it in a dim, slowly spreading way, like snow melting into puddles. Winter in New York City is beautiful when you can actually see it.

She wipes more snow from her eyes and sighs. There's still snow clinging to her eyelashes, and her vision is a blur. There's only one light she can see in front of her, an open warmth in the middle of the snow and the tall, dark walls of stone in the square.

"If anyone's going to be calling for me," she reasons, "they'd have to be in there. No one's out in this weather." She takes a step towards the light and hits solid stone. She sighs in relief, following the familiar descent of subway steps, firm concrete hitting her dirt or tile? She can't tell. She looks up at the arching ceiling with its slope of vines and flowers, their hanging tendrils reaching down to pat her head until she comes to the turnstile.

"Oh," she says. "This must be an art installation, how clever..."

The tree with its low hanging branches shivers, the bare twigs trembling with a rush of

#### She watches the doors stay closed and despairs. One more stop, she promises herself. Then she's home free!

boots with every step. She finally hits the floor and where there's normally tile, her boots hit thick moss. Percy blinks, baffled, and takes her hat off. She runs a hand through her curls and feels the snow on her mittens melt immediately, rivers running down her face. "Oh," she says. "Well. All right."

She makes her way over the lichen clinging to the floor, stepping over thick roots clasped tight to the floor. Is it air from beneath.

"Oh," she says. "The subway's coming!"

She can't find the ticket reader, so she sighs and hops the branches, looking for another set of stairs.

"Where's uptown?" she asks herself. "Where are the signs? Why would the city allow such a big art installation in the subway? Weren't the mosaics enough?"

Percy sighs and takes the first set of stairs she finds. When

she gets off at a normal stop, she'll transfer uptown if she has to.

The flowers grow in great clumps around the stairs. The pillars along the platform are thick trees with gnarled skin. The moss shivers on the stairs and floor. She can hear the subway coming.

Percy watches the train strain forward along the track, its red light flashing. The doors slide open with a slow wheeze. She's the only one to climb aboard, but she's not the only one on the train. There are little gatherings of girls inside, thin and frail. None of them are dressed for the weather, their shoulders bare in camisoles. She keeps her mittens on and pulls herself inward, waiting as the train rattles forward. She goes to brush her hair back only to pull her hand away and find a flower from the station fresh and pink in her cupped palm.

Percy doesn't make eye contact with a single girl. Their whispers are low, conspiratorial, and don't sound like English. Tourists, maybe. The train groans to a stop, and a voice comes on over the speakers that she doesn't understand. Before she can get up and leave, the girls are all gone and the doors have closed. She sighs and slumps against the closed doors, watching the train lurch forward into the dark. The subway car is quiet for a little while. She'll make a run for it next stop.

The door between cars opens as the train moves and a man walks in. tall and dressed entirely in black. He takes a seat across from her, his legs spread like the subway bench is his throne. She shifts in her seat and spreads herself out wider in response, still keeping a tight hand on her backpack. "Books," he says, looking down at her bag. "You read?" "Yeah," she says, wishing she'd brought headphones. "I suppose. You?" "Oh, I do enjoy stories," he says. "People have so many."

She nods and hopes it will suffice. She puts her hands in her lap and lapses into silence. He's watching her with warm golden eyes, picking at a cigarette. It's black, and it has a little skull right where he's placed his fingers. "Good joke, right?" he says when he catches her staring. She curses herself. "It's an English import. They've got a

good sense of humor about smoking."

"You're not supposed to smoke in the subway," she says. "Or walk between cars." "No," he agrees, "probably not."

He puts the cigarette out on the seat and she watches the plastic smolder. He takes a small waxy bag out of his pocket. The color is somewhere between cream and aging lace. It makes her nauseous to watch it wrinkle and fold like old skin as he roots through it. He pops a glistening red seed in his mouth, his eyes never leaving her face. "Hey," he says. "Hungry? You look thin." And she is hungry, hungrier

than she's ever been in her life, like a black hole has suddenly collapsed in her stomach, yawning and wanting. "No, I'm fine," she says through parched lips.

He takes another seed and pops it in his mouth.

"One more stop," he remarks as the subway screeches to a halt. "This is a short platform. I guess our car's not going to open."

She watches the doors stay closed and despairs. One more stop, she promises herself. Then she's home free! She can't see the station outside as the train lurches away, trundling forward. "I really like Brooklyn," he says. "It's a casual place. Not like Manhattan. Everyone rushes, rushes in Manhattan. You can grow gardens in Brooklyn on rooftops, big ones. Do you have a garden?"

"I guess. My roommates and I threw something together. They'll know if I'm gone," she adds.

"Well, it is late," he agrees. "You should be getting home. Something for the road?" He offers her the bag again. She's not sure what kind of hunger motivates her to



snatch the bag from him, plucking a handful of seeds free and dropping the rest to scatter like a bloodstain on the floor, but its sated the second the seeds hit her lips. The train car doors open with a shuddering stop and she flees like a startled bird. The man in black waves goodbye as the car doors close. "See you later," he calls. "The city's so small, you know?" She runs over tiled floor and pushes through a regular metal turnstile, climbing up stairs and hitting the cold air of Manhattan after a few minutes of frantic running. It felt like an eternity. She looks down at the flower still clinging to her mitten. It's

pink and warm, curled petals shivering in her cupped palm. Percy walks the rest of the way home through the snow, a twenty-minute walk, and stands under a burning hot shower until her roommates get home. The flower sits in a pot on her desk, still in full bloom. It stays fresh and full of life the entire winter. She doesn't see the man in black for another six months. But summer eventually rushes away on a wave of heat and musty subway smell, and when she comes back to Union Square one night, the light is waiting, flickering. This time, she rides the subway car all the way home.

## Daughter By Cassidy Magee Lyons

#### Lost.

Drifting absently through a void, separating my adolescence from my truth. Fear snaps me out of my reverie.

Reality sets in, contributing the familiar smell of alcohol on his breath through an unsuspecting restaurant, not yet open for lunch.

I try to find my father in his eyes, but he's been swallowed by the black holes that replaced his pupils.

Inebriation numbs his face in a permanent vacancy.

I watch him try to learn how to use his hands as he stumbles and falls off his stool. I watch the realization of his betrayal stab my brother in the heart.

He knows I've called for help.

He slurs together what he thinks is a sentence,

Begging me to stay.

Begging me to let him take the wheel.

Begging me to sacrifice our lives for his disease.

I refuse.

His disgust hits me like a hand across my face, as I watch him walk out the door, abandoning his children.

I realize that I mean nothing.

The feeling of neglect rang in my ears, louder than the police sirens.

A year passes.

The therapist looks at us, defeated.

My other cheek stings with the comprehension that I have nowhere left to turn. My father can't even look at me through the wall of lies he's built between us. I can't surpass the wall.

I've forgiven more than I ever should have.

I ask him, as I have before, if he had to choose between alcohol and his children, Would he give up drinking?

I hope, this time for an answer.

Silence outweighs the oxygen in the room.

A year of deception and pain flashes before my eyes.

#### "No."

One apathetic syllable rips my heart out of my chest. I again realize that I mean nothing.

I'm done.

His disgust hits me like a hand across my face, as he watches me walk out the door, I am abandoning my father.





Portrait By Kristin Flood

## The Angel on my Shoulder By Kiera Smith

Today I face a crossroads, and I don't know what to do. But the only help I have is from the uninvited two. The devil on my shoulder speaks with smooth and graceful poise, While the angel on the other – he just sounds like empty noise. All he says are trite clichés, meaningless old fables, While the devil on my shoulder brings solutions to the table. I know I shouldn't listen, but when I look inside, The devil's message makes more sense, though in the past he's lied... But now he speaks so smoothly that I find myself impressed, Quickly falling for belief in what he says is best. I turn to him to answer, while the angel madly waves, Though finally relinquishing, knowing I am swayed. So I listened to the devil, and all was going well, Until the day I stumbled...and then the day I fell. And then my life caught fire, and I watched it all burn down, Until the ashes piled in a horrific smoking mound. And as I watch the ashes of my life disintegrate and smolder, I wish that I had listened to the angel on my shoulder.

## H Walk in Gallas By Corey Reynolds

I am riding my bike up to Cattus Island, and as I'm riding there, the memories of the park already start flashing through my mind. I first think of the inviting entrance. It is filled with trees differing in colors, sizes, and shapes. There is a beautiful playground filled with clean, well working swing sets, slides, and other child friendly attractions. There is pavement, but once you get past the entrance sign, there is but a trail of gravel and one that lead into the woods. usually choose the one with the gravel path.

You walk on the crisp, gray gravel and as you look to the left and right, you notice the marshes. The land of the marsh is unstable and mushy to walk on. The marsh lets out a stench comparable to that of a sewer. But it has clear brackish water and is infested with shrubberies and plants. Once past the marshes, there is the large older part of the forest. The forest is inhabited by large trees and unfertile soils that are near the water of the marshes. Just across from the marsh, there



are trees and plants that produce the berries which are food for many animals inhabiting the forest.

Past that section of Cattus, there is the part of the island that has been affected by fire. One can notice all the different layers of soil and the smaller trees that haven't been there as long as the other trees. You can notice there is no longer any gravel. It is all dirt and wilderness for this path. After this section, there is another layer of marshes you must go past, that help conjure the feeling you had before and brings back the familiar sights and that stench.

Finally, you reach the grandest part of the entire trail. That part is the beach. You can take off your shoes and feel the hot, grainy sand on your feet while inhaling the fresh, salty ocean breeze. Water extends as far as the eye can see. There is nothing but sand, water, and the woods leading up to it. It is a near perfect place to be, possibly the best you can find nestled on the outskirts of a city. Hearing the alarm every hour Taunting us that time isn't ours With Jimmy Hendrix playing in the background

Holding cigarettes, wrapped in sheets Another night with barely any sleep

Hot showers and back massages All the signs of pleasure With moaned messages

No expectations, no regrets Just you, me, and a night so intense

While our hands get busy, reaching for the covers In the comfort of each other

I love everything about you And want all that you are You brighten my day Make the world go away Biffy By Jamie Ciancitto

You say my eyes sparkle I like to think that's their smile

When really it's just you That's my reaction to what you do

My body pulses with Nervous energy From a sweet butterfly kiss

Is there a reason for all this?

I hope so, but I don't think there is

All natural Pure and passionate I want to be with you Through all of it

So here's my proposition It's me and you till the end I'll be your present Wrapped up in a bow Because I love you Much more than you know

## **Member Bios**

**Leigh Fisher** is an overly ambitious student who often gets given strange looks when she mentions that she takes twenty credits a semester, gets involved with campus events, and works multiple jobs. She loves to write and has an odd but avid interest in the Three Kingdoms period of China. She writes a great deal of science fiction and historic fiction and is pursuing a literature degree at Stockton University.

**James Journeigan** is a writer of romantic poems and short stories with a talent for creating games. Beyond his writing, he is also a photographer. After he graduates from OCC, he plans to pursue his bachelor's degree in literature. He has an extensive knowledge of zombies and reigns as champion of the Zombie-opoly Tournament of the Seascape 2014 Halloween Party.

**Katie Greco** is a young writer who has recently finished the manuscript of her book of poetry. She is eager to have her manuscript published and shared with the world. She aspires to be a counselor and to help others struggling with hardships.

**Alicia Goins** is an Ocean County College graduate who is now enrolled in the psychology program at Kean at Ocean. She is a poet, a cookie connoisseur, and a movie musketeer. She was the first to fall in the Zombieopoly Tournament of the Seascape 2014 Halloween Party. She aspires to become a school counselor.

> **Lixian Ng** is an avid reader with a wide range of literary interests. She stays up to date with new novel releases and always shares interesting information at meetings. She is a helpful new member who played a large role in judging the Seascape's fall contest.

## Seascape Policies and General Information

1. Submissions: Ocean County College students, faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni are invited to submit poetry, fiction, non-fiction, drama, interviews, photography, drawings, and other forms of art. We strive to publish as many different types of works from as many different types of people as possible. All submissions are reviewed by the Seascape Editorial Staff.

2. You can submit literary works to the Student Life Office. Please include all necessary contact information, including your e-mail and phone number. You also may contact the advisor with any questions regarding submissions.

3. We also would encourage those who can write in a different language to submit works as well. We require that a translation for the submission be sent along with the original work so that we can publish both literary pieces next to each other.

4. Seascape reserves the right to publish or withhold any submission. All submissions are read and chosen by the Seascape Editorial Staff. The works that appear in Seascape cannot be reproduced without the consent of the author/artist. Further questions about this should be directed to the Seascape Advisor. 5. Production: Seascape continues to be interested in any student who has a working-knowledge of key layout software including InDesign, Photoshop, etc. In addition, any student who is interested in designing the magazine cover should contact the Seascape Advisor as soon as possible. The Seascape editorial staff will consider all cover options. Student assistance is very much appreciated.

6. Sponsored Activities: In addition to publishing Seascape, the organization has a desire to work together with the Academic Departments in order to co-sponsor campus events. Seascape strives to be an active member of the college community by participating in events such as poetry readings, arts nights, creative writing workshops, guest speakers, and fund-raising activities during the school year. Those who are interested in helping to coordinate such events with Seascape can contact the Office of Student Life as soon as possible.



#### Observed Design **By Sherri Garcia**

