



# *Seascape*

*A Showcase of Ocean County College's Creativity*



# *Seascape 2020-2021*

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## Seascape 2020-2021

Thank you to the 2020-2021 Assistant Editor, Josephine O'Grady and to all of those who contributed their work for consideration. We are honored to be able to highlight the talent and individual creative outlets of Ocean County College's community, especially during these unprecedented times. We hope that the magazine allows you to reflect on the events, both good and bad, that have greatly impacted our lives.

Thank you to Seascape's Advisor, Professor Tamm for allowing this opportunity and constant support every step of the way. Gratitude to Jen Fazio, Alison Noone, and everyone at Student Life for all of their encouragement and support. Deep appreciation to Dean Sheridan and the faculty from the School of Arts and Humanities. Special thanks to Professor Bard and Professor Cecere for helping to showcase their exceptionally talented students.

Happy Trails,

Kaitlin Clutter  
Editor-in-Chief

*Seascape is dedicated to all of the frontline workers that continue to selflessly serve our community, and to the graduating class of Ocean County College for persevering during this pandemic.*



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# Seascape

## Ocean County College's Literary & Arts Magazine

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Imagine a nation beyond borders. Where the Sky meets the face of the Waters.  
Void of matter. Darkness- she eloquently dances and bathes upon the nadir of  
existence. Twilight. Meditating. Darkness bending light. Forging the Will of Fire.  
Starlight, Illuminating the face of the deep.



Camilo Calderon

## *Seascape's Annual Photography Contest: 1st Place*



Thomas Ruocco

## *Seascape's Annual Poetry Contest* - 1st Place

### **Is There A Place for Me?**

Christopher Kronyak

"Did you make any friends?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"I'm too scared."

"People will like you. Please try for me."

"Ok, I'll try."

"I'm glad to hear that."

It's hard to make  
friends.

Who are the  
people who  
will be my friends?

Where can I  
fit in?

Is there a place  
for  
me?





Taylor Reeves

## *Seascape's Annual Poetry Contest* - 2nd Place

### *Deception*

Emily Hamilton

A boat drifting to the stars,  
The waves cradling her.  
Sails fighting for the next breeze,  
The winds whisper into her sails.

"Waves hold no remorse."

She was rocked steadily,  
Floating with the moon.  
Her sails torn with worry,  
Never taking another breath.

"Winds speak no truth."

Waves rebel against her,  
Grasping her bow with bare hands.  
Torturing her lungs with water,  
Falling victim to the swallow of the sea.



Katie Lawrence

*Seascape's Annual Fine Art Contest: 1st Place*



Nien Hsuan Wu - dotting the eye of the dragon





David Spinrad- The Color Around Us

## Connie Wilder

She didn't know what to do. There was a lot of things she wanted to do but she needed help. But no one would help her. There were people, family and boyfriend, that could help but they all looked to her to handle everything. No one even asked if she was ok, how was she holding up. Livy just didn't want to make a mistake. She didn't want to be criticized for the decisions she made. But it made no difference. Her cousin told her boyfriend she thought the pictures at her mother's memorial were old and outdated. Livy's cousin said nothing to her about the pictures. Why tell her boyfriend and not her? Whatever...

Livy had to make the trek back south. She hadn't been back home in many years. Her purpose was to attend her favorite aunt's memorial service. This was the aunt who was so nice to her, gently combed her hair, and didn't mistreat her. Livy was always taken to her aunt's house when the rest of the family were going somewhere and didn't want Livy to go. She also had a task she assigned herself. That was to spread her mother's ashes at the Battery. It was something she wanted to do and she had the odd thought her mother would have wanted it too. Not that she would have appreciated it; Livy and her mother did not get along. But her mother loved the Battery. After church every Sunday, Livy and her mother would walk along the Battery, admiring the grand colorful homes that faced the water. In the distance you could see the fort and the sail boats making their rounds around it. Livy wanted to see the Battery again. She would fantasize about living in the colorful houses, picking out which ones she liked the best. At night, the Battery was magical. The streetlights where the original gaslights and the cobblestone streets were original from the 1700's. The weather was always balmy, giving it a tropical atmosphere.

But Livy wanted to complete something. Come full circle to a place that although she and her mother did not like each other, they both liked the Battery.

Her mother spoke of the Battery with such love, why not let her have a final resting place in a place she loved. That's the least Livy could do.

Preparing to return south took more than just packing clothes and toiletries. Livy had to pack her courage and unpack past hurts. She cared for her mother in her last days. Taking her to the many doctor appointments, trying to make sense of the doctors' prognosis because her mother would order her out of the examination room. Her mother's pride was wide and deep. When mother deteriorated to the point she could not manage herself, Livy was met with a nastiness only she knew from her mother and going back to her childhood. Livy had a sister, but that sister had washed her hands of their mother. To be honest, her sister and mother were "cut from the same cloth" as the old folks would say. Both talented and beautiful, but at the same time haughty and vindictive. As mother became more ill, her behavior escalated; she would roll her eyes at her, hit , and even spat at Livy.

Livy's boyfriend was a huge help. Visiting with her mother, going to the store for her and even giving her medication. Livy knew her mother's treatment of her was personal was because she never, ever behaved this way with Livy's boyfriend. Mother would revert to her flirtatious ways like she was still a young lady when Livy's boyfriend visited. You see, Livy thought she could gain favor with her mother by sticking close to her and subjecting herself to her mistreatment. All of her life, Livy would hear countless stories from her mother about how she was a debutante and preparing to go to secretarial school. Mother was an excellent typist and told everyone so. But there was a Naval Ball and everyone who was anyone attended and that is where Mother met her husband. And that's when she ended up with Livy, the person who dashed all of her hopes. No longer the debutante and no school. Mother was now a housewife and a mother with Livy as the constant reminder.

Livy was thinking about all of this as she and her boyfriend were driving

down south. They started on the road at midnight because they like to do most of the driving when there was less traffic. Excitement coursed through her body and she was very chatty. She told her boyfriend about all of her family road trips and what they saw: the green hills of Ohio, the St. Louis Arch, and the Grand Canyon. They even stayed at an Indian reservation at one time. Livy's boyfriend listened with interest, asking questions, commenting that his family was too poor to travel.

When they arrived at the South of the Border, a sort of melancholy mood came over Livy. They weren't far from their destination and she wasn't looking forward to her aunt's funeral. She had a pressing feeling in her gut because sitting in an urn on the back seat were her mother's ashes. Livy struggled with the thought of having a proper burial for her mother or scattering her ashes at the Battery. She could hear her mother's voice saying, "All things in good order, Livy". Mother always said Livy was scatterbrained, but Livy was so busy trying to please everyone, especially her mother, that it looked like she couldn't make a decision. So, Livy relied on herself to make this solo decision. Yes, family inquired about when there will be a burial, but Livy had a bit of a vindictive streak in her. She purposely told people she didn't know what she was going to do because they didn't or wouldn't help while her mother was alive. Livy and her boyfriend walked around the loud, garish South of the Border. They bought cheesy shot glasses and refrigerator magnets. They had some of the worse burritos in the world and had a long discussion on how you can mess up a burrito. Finally, it was time to get back on the road and continue south.

Livy woke up to her boyfriend gently shaking her awake in front of the hotel. Their hotel was located in the historical section of the city. Livy grimaced at the absolute beauty of the hotel: the intricate iron work, vintage wallpaper depicting scenery from various sections of the city. The history carried a validity depending on who you were talking to. Livy use to question her mother often on



different popular spots: the farmers market, town square, and who made the cool iron gates she used to swing on as a child. Mother would scold her quickly when Livy would jump on an open gate and swing. Really, she just liked to see her dress billow out, especially the orange dress with the pleats. Mother told her she didn't want any trouble with these people and it was not lady-like. If Livy was feeling particularly brave, she would ask her mother "What people?" and "What trouble?" Mother was not given to explaining herself, especially to Livy, and would just continue walking on. Livy had no choice but to stop swinging on the gate and hurry to catch up to her mother.

The hotel concierge pleasantly informed them of all of the tourist spots as they were checking in. The farmers market, municipal buildings, and of course the Battery. Livy's boyfriend was intrigued by all of the information and didn't want to ruin his time, but she going to tell him what all of these places meant and how history reformed them into something else. All Livy was concerned with was attending her favorite aunt's memorial and the task of spreading her mother's ashes. The next day was the memorial and it went by in a blur. She met up with cousins she hadn't seen since Livy went north. The service was of a religion that her aunt converted to over fifty years ago and it separated her from the rest of the family. Livy and her boyfriend were a curiosity because no one knew them and wanted to know how they were related. Once Livy explained that was her aunt, it seemed acceptable to them and explained why they didn't know her.

As she watched the people go off and talk amongst themselves, she knew they were discussing her, and didn't want to be there anymore. She attended the memorial, reminisced with her family, and told her boyfriend it was time to go. They drove around the city looking for a restaurant and Livy pointed out all the spaces she knew and how it has changed. When they got downtown, they walked through the farmer's market. The market dated before the 1700's, with its famous brick posts and cobblestones streets. Livy's boyfriend marveled at the

architecture and how long it had lasted. Before he became too starry eyed about the market, she blatantly told him this was where slaves were bought and sold. Her boyfriend's expression became defeated and she regretted telling him in such a cold manner. Their walk turned into something less happy and it was decided just to find something to eat. They ended up picking up fast food when the area boasted so many five-star restaurants. But the mood had changed and no one was interested in sitting in a restaurant.

Maybe Livy was being a bit vindictive. She laid in bed that night, turning over in her head the recent events that brought her here. First of all, did she inherit the vindictive gene from her mother? She worked so hard not to be that way, but it would rear its ugly head when she felt cornered. She thought about her aunt and how much she missed her. She was the only person that Livy felt loved by and even more so accepted. Livy felt sadder about her aunt passing away than her mother, and what was perplexing was that she did not feel guilty about it. She thought about the further south they traveled, the sadder she became. The city was a place she thought she wanted to return to but so much had changed. Her family were strangers to her and didn't appear compelled to keep in contact, so she would just move on. Livy had a task to do and was going to complete it and finally close the loop.

That morning, Livy and her boyfriend were in a better mood and found a quaint café for breakfast. The sky was clear and bright and the humidity was building. Livy ordered her favorite, shrimp and grits, and her boyfriend stuck with pancakes. Livy teased him about how you have to be raised on grits as a baby to like them. He thoroughly agreed. While they ate breakfast, Livy talked about the history of the city and how hard they worked to make it a positive place to be. Her nervousness grew because she was ready to spread the ashes at the Battery. How she wished that she could gather all the family, have everyone wear their finest white clothes and bid her mother farewell. But it was not to be

and all she had was her boyfriend with her. And that was enough.

They parked at the end of the Battery and began to walk. There was a humid breeze constantly blowing and Livy had to hold on tight to the urn containing her mothers ashes. They walked and walked, with Livy trying to choose the perfect spot. People jogging past her, mothers and nannies pushing baby carriages, casual walkers admiring the view. She wondered what was going on in their lives and if they were curious about the woman holding an urn. Choose a place, Livy thought to herself. Finally, she chose a house that she liked the most. Located across the street, it was antebellum in design and had the most ornate iron fence around it. The color was a pale pink and when the sun hit it, the reflection was like the inside of a seashell. This was the spot.

Livy walked over to the railing and started to prepare to spread the ashes. Her boyfriend lagged behind and didn't stand next to her. He felt this was a solitary moment for Livy. Livy looked out over the water towards the fort. She watched the sailboats glide by and the water was getting choppy. She thought tears would come up, but they didn't. She said the Lord's Prayer and opened the lid of the urn and started to spread the ashes. Livy kind of chuckled to herself when the breeze grew stronger and a bit of the ashes kicked back at her. That was mother having the last say, she thought. Typical. Once the urn was emptied, she watched as the waves quickly took over the ashes. Satisfied it was time to go back north, time to go home.

# SPANO'S



Anthony Bracten



# *Seascape's Short Story Contest*

3rd Place

## **"On Becoming the Main Character"**

Tessah Melamed

All the parts of her that taste like sugar and gasoline, the sacred space between her pale thighs, winding up her ankles like the snake that bit the apple, that dumb slut, scratching her name into the patchwork of veins beneath the left wrist, dreams she spun from gold on swing sets and 7/11 parking lots, she paces her tongue over each vertebrae of the exposed spine, this cinnamon girl: does she like it? It's careful discomfort, the way she provides. And the clavicle, how could she have forgotten the clavicle, the gentle curve of the blood and bone that make her human, the ribs that encase her lungs splinter with every desperate breath but still, she presses on with sage and white candles. She winds a music box. She dips her fingers in the endless honey.

This is how you remove a ghost: recognize that all men are monsters in various ways. Become the kind of woman who yearns. A broken mirror can become a broken clock that becomes a twisted sheet that becomes a shattered ankle that becomes the air you breathe, thick with fog, vaguely tasting of peppermint. Put on the white nightgown. Revel in the endless stream of letters from the war. Tend to the dead. Host a boxing match between your most prominent emotions. Press a towel against the swollen, bleeding lip of sadness. Ice the bruises that circle the eye of joy. It can be romantic. It must be romantic.

All the parts of her that feel like a first kiss, rolling off the railroad tracks as a train screams in the distance, two cracks in a sidewalk met with an Oedipal shoe, lavender, all women should smell like lavender. Extend the arm to brace against the nearest wall and curl into yourself if you feel so inclined, if all that

can provide comfort is your own embrace, because this is how you extinguish a flame. If the first language is poetry, the second is need, pathological. This is the consummation of a marriage officiated by Aphrodite. There is forgiveness here, wrapped in tinsel. The appeal is in the curvature of the top lip. Cradle your kinetic chaos. And imagine, all of this spoken in harsh whispers within the bathroom stall of a bar.

"You are so beautiful," she says, grasping my hands. Beauty straddles me in periods of restless sleep. Her eyes are wide, and I assume if she swallowed me we would become one person, my essence streaming through her pores.

"Okay."

My voice is drowned out by the pulsing music beyond the door, but she doesn't seem to mind that she can't hear me. She sits on the toilet with her skirt around her ankles and stares up at me. Even then, she seems to cup galaxies in her sweaty palms, and I am immersed in her. It might be the drugs, but I think I'm in love with her.

"People think I'm stupid," she confides, and I lean in to accept her words, "but I'm not. I just know how to play the game."

She speaks often of a metaphorical game, how easy it is to catch unassuming men between her teeth. And I nod and I listen, and I pretend that I too am equipped with the kind of sparkle required to induce love. But she doesn't believe in reality, only the suspension of it, only the warped world in which everyone can live the way she does.

"I know," I say, because I know she's not stupid, because I've seen her wax philosophical, because I have held her hand.

I know she's drunk because she struggles to pull her skirt back up around her hips. She grasps my arm for support and stumbles. I savor the five seconds I am permitted to experience her electric touch. I wonder if I'm going to throw up. I wonder if we're going back out to the bar. I wonder if she wants a cigarette,

because I specifically bought a pack of cigarettes in case she wanted one. All the parts of her that taste like smoke and sweat; I want them all. I want to make a home underneath her skin. I want to taste her lip gloss.

"My ex is here," she mumbles in a rare moment of humanity. I lean in, craving her honesty. "With his new girl. Did you see them?"

I didn't. "Yeah."

"Like I don't care, but I do," she continues, rolling her eyes. I nod. I wonder when she saw them. Maybe when she was holding court in the smoking section, or pushing up on the bar for another drink, or dragging me with her to the bathroom. I'm always honored when she takes me to the bathroom with her. Like I'm worthy. "It's whatever."

I know the conversation is over with this. "Yeah."

"You okay?" she asks me with a crooked smile. "You're quiet tonight. Do you want a bump?"

"I'm okay."

"You sure?"

She is a generous and benevolent God.

"Yeah," I say, hoping these words won't be the ones she leaves me on, won't be the ones with which she decides to push open the bathroom stall and disappear back into the nameless, faceless crowd. But she doesn't move. She fixes me with a curious stare. I want more of her advice. I want her to tell me what to feel, how to think.

She wants me to romanticize my life. She tells me that I am the main character, that everything I do has to be a sanctified practice, that I must move with purpose. But I don't know my purpose. I only know her, and the flickering lights of this bathroom, and the way she rests her palm on the wall behind my head and I can smell her perfume and I can count her eyelashes and I can see the sadness that pulses through her like poison, because all beautiful people

have sadness like poison. But she's close to me now, and I feel a spike of nerves in my stomach. I'm not sure what to do with my hands. She maintains our eye contact.

"Don't tell anyone," she says, and I nod even though I don't know what she's about to say. When she presses her lips against mine, full to my mouth, my eyes remain open even though hers flutter closed. My hands find her hips; this feels formal. I move them to her hair. She tastes like hard liquor and cigarettes and something like pride. She tastes like a burst of small magic in the hollow of my chest. I feel her in the crease of my elbows; she pounds in my ears. The music beyond us slows. The swing of the bathroom door, the laughter pouring in, our shoes sticking to the tile floor. Outside our stall is a bachelorette party communally fixing their lipstick, but I stay with her, I meet her tongue, her hands cup my face and I can feel the rupture of stars in her palms. When she separates from me, our only connection a thin strand of saliva, she breathes.

I desperately want her to speak. She offers me nothing but a small smile as she pushes open the bathroom door and disappears into the bar.

This is how you remove a ghost: press two fingers to the inside of your wrist. The confirmation of your pulse will remind you of your breath. This will not calm the throb of your heart, the ache that can only be cured by her kiss, the ache you didn't know existed until she bridged the gap between you in the bathroom at the bar, but you will inhale. Steady. If you're not careful, you will become the wall you rest your head on, but to exorcise your body is to free your mind. You can be all the sugar and gasoline. Dip your fingers in the endless honey.



Seascape's Annual Fine Art Contest: 2nd Place



Owen Shannon- Sydney and the Centaur

# Healing

Arianna Kaminski

Raindrops on pinecones  
Scattered about the lawn.  
Dew drops to settle  
When my time has been called.

A million gumdrops floating  
In the minds of kids.  
Eye drops for the allergens  
Hiding among the weeds.

Finely bristled pinecones  
Dance to the autumn rain,  
While the wind rushes from the east  
Casting away any pain.

*Seascape's Annual Photography Contest: 2nd Place*



Tylen Lewis

# *Seascape's Annual Poetry Contest* - 3rd Place

## **Art**

**Abbie Davidson**

Detached.  
Anxious. Worried.  
The pit in my stomach  
Aches.  
I'm scared.  
Scared that my days are limited.  
And how am I spending them?

In an abyss.  
In static noise.  
With no realness.  
No tangible gut wrenching beauty.

Day to day.  
9-5.  
A force fed society.

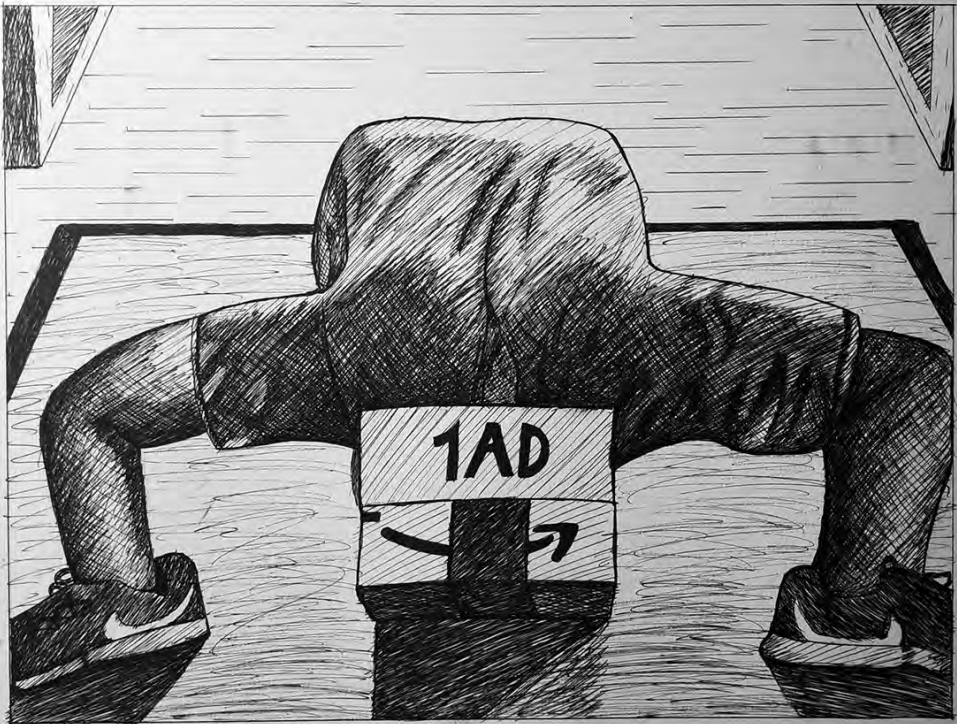
But,  
I'd be foolish  
If I didn't admit

From time to time  
A droplet  
An ounce  
Of that beauty shows itself.

Whispering to my soul.  
What you crave Is there  
But you must go to it.

For all beautiful things  
Have no desire for recognition.



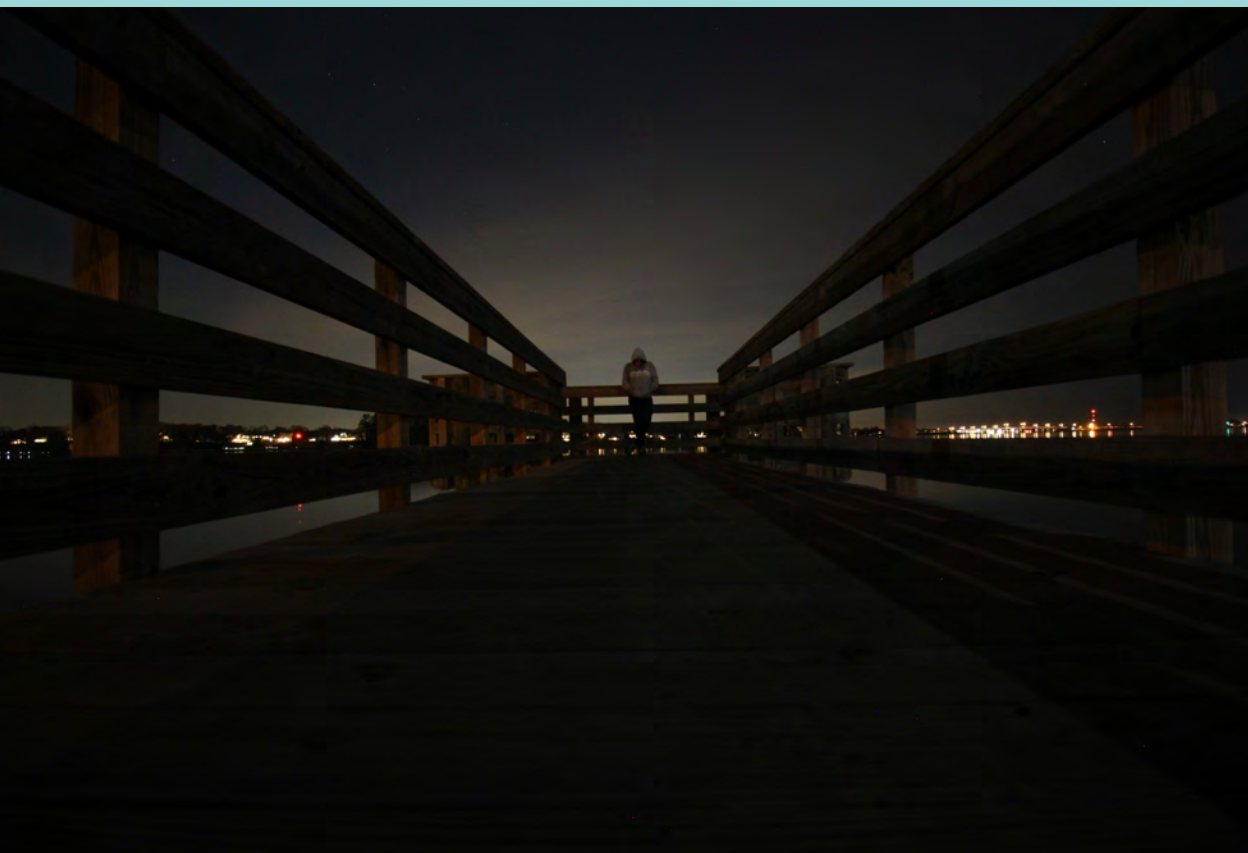


Hunter Maxwell

# The Long Dark Street

Robin Early

She walks down the long dark street,  
Because the night is too nice for a car ride.  
*And besides, she forgot her keys (Again).*  
She peers through the glass people  
That are so blatantly staring, whispering and pointing at her.  
*They think they are better than her, but she knows she's seen them walk the same street.*  
(Once upon a time)  
The roads may have been shorter, and better lit,  
But doesn't that mean she is struggling that much more?  
*They seem to forget the times when she used to lend them her lantern,  
When the streetlights were down. (They watch her wander)*  
She carries her sins in a big red bag,  
And when she walks, they clank against each other,  
So everyone knows when she's coming.  
*But they don't stop her for fear that the glass may break,  
(And it's much too hard to clean up)*  
And they hide all their sins deep in their closets, and under their beds.  
*But she can still see them.*  
(That's the thing about glass)



Thomas Ruocco

# *Seascape's Short Story Contest*

2nd Place

## **In Search of a Town**

**Susan Nowicki**

Amory Howe Bradford stole a quick glance at himself in the mirror.

Instinctively he straightened his collar and adjusted the sleeves of his clerical robes. He had delivered his sermon and concluded his service and was waiting for the meet and greet to ensue with the town's local movers and shakers. His remarks seemed to have gone over okay. He had been intent to promote an idea of the Church as progressive yet conservative, forward yet not too liberal and Christian but not close-minded. Having conveyed a series of talks over the course of the past few Sundays in this very same venue, he felt as if he were on the verge of establishing a more than decent connection. The ranks of a scrappy village attempting to transform itself into a creditable suburban enclave appeared to be at ease with, even appreciative, of his message and preaching style. "Lord only knows," he exclaimed to himself, "West Bloomfield isn't exactly Brooklyn, but I may have found a place for myself here."

Bradford was alluding to the more established city near Manhattan and really more so to its popular Congregationalist house of worship known as Plymouth Church. The latter had come into its own really due to the enormous appeal of its pastor, Henry Ward Beecher, and this was by no means an understatement. In fact, it could be asserted that the Christian minister's approval rating in Brooklyn, and indeed the United States overall, was practically unprecedented.

Beecher, a man born with the gift of gab and the orator skills of a silver fox, had been the pastor at Plymouth Church since 1846. Over the course of close

to twenty-five years, Henry Ward had slowly but surely begun to deliver sermons generating tremendous popular interest. On Sunday mornings his religious observances resulted in standing room only crowds consistently. Even Abraham Lincoln while campaigning for the presidency in 1859 met up with the Brooklyn pastor and paid witness to his preaching prowess.

Beecher's proselytizing was definitely a unique style he was responsible for developing entirely on his own. Not that it was comprised of the utterings of any sort of new theological dogma. No, unlike his more doctrinal leaning father, Lyman Beecher, and his perhaps more studious and academically inclined siblings, Harriet Beecher Stowe and Catherine Beecher, he was not a Church scholar by any stretch of the imagination. Admittedly, he related, and sparing no honesty, he had no interest in "book learning," as he would characterize it. His epiphanies came to him when he was out in nature or in the presence of the opposite sex, the latter being not something that he, himself, deemed especially problematic. And he was right, or for a certain period he was. His overly, and often overtly friendly, manner would not factor as a complication or personal difficulty until after the Civil War, or about the year 1870 or so, when a certain dalliance with an anxious parishioner in need of some spiritual healing stirred up the ire of one said parishioner's spouse.

Thus, whether too many rumors were beginning to circulate in Brooklyn related to Beecher's liaisons or the luster of the minister's aura was starting to wane, beginning in 1868, in the low-lying hills of the state of New Jersey's Watchung Mountains, a faction of city dwellers, hailing from places such as Jersey City, Brooklyn and Manhattan, decided to relocate. Upon their arrival to an area known as West Bloomfield, these new village residents got together pretty quickly to plan to secede from the greater township of Bloomfield, NJ, and form a



separate and distinct civic entity. Ostensibly, the citizens of West Bloomfield were seeking greater autonomy and local control. Debate as to whom would be responsible for the financing of a major railroad line that would connect the region to New York City was the major issue at hand. Truth be told, though, it seemed as much as if a group of men, and it was really all men, were interested in breaking out and making up something they could call their own, and so they did. The geographic expanse between Bloomfield and Orange Townships, did separate. There was talk of different names for the spot involving variations on the word "eagle," yet eventually the notion of a clear mountain or a "Mont Clair" stuck. Thus, the Village of Montclair was incorporated in the month of April; its new citizens were able to seal their fate, they would now go on to search for a faith leader to star in their reality play.

So, fast forward, then, to the summer of 1870, Bradford found himself, at the tender age of twenty-three, auditioning for a pastor's gig in a village comprised of mostly pig farms and cider mills in the state of New Jersey-- removed from Brooklyn by about twenty miles and trying hard to convince a group of city transplants to follow his lead and choose him to guide their newly formed, yet exceedingly earnest flock. Bradford's prayers were answered by the summer's end. As a newly minted graduate of Andover Theological Seminary, he was picked to lead this group of hyper-determined, mostly merchants and businessmen, in their efforts to expand and develop a piecemeal area and of course, to guide its Congregationalist endeavor first and foremost. In retrospect the question could be raised fairly as to whom was really chosen to lead who, but then well, at the time, Bradford was really too inexperienced to know any better, and for the more seasoned and perhaps far-sighted residents, anything unrelated to Beecher's purported wandering eye was recognized as a good thing.

Amory Bradford was unassuming in demeanor and physical nature. He stood at just about six feet and projected a medium build. His complexion was fair, and his slightly wavy hair worn short and favored a side part. Most of the time he sported a moustache. He projected a quality of being older than he was. Seasoned. A man of middle years perennially. So as the last hand was shaken and lingering pleasantries exchanged, Bradford stepped to the side in the vestibule of the village's makeshift worship space and waited for official acknowledgement. He did not have to wait long. A man with a wiry build and a slight limp to his gait approached Bradford almost immediately.

"Well, I think that about does it. It's been a fine month. The weather couldn't have been better, and your sermons made our Sundays all the more sacred and celebratory. We have reached a consensus: on behalf of Montclair's newly indoctrinated Congregationalists, we would like to offer you the opportunity to lead our church. To help us usher in an updated version of Puritanism in tune with the needs of today within a new town setting! Are you interested in joining us, and really spearheading our faith community's mission?" This torrent of words had been delivered by Julius Pratt, a seasoned resident of Montclair as well as long term businessman and single-minded railroad speculator.

As serious and dignified as Bradford wanted to remain, he could not help himself. He felt the impress of a smile forming and then began to grin broadly. "Yes, I will!" he stammered. "I mean, no, I most certainly am interested! I welcome the opportunity and will devote myself here and to Montclair's development with my entire being, so help me God."

At that moment Pratt, along with an additional church goer, Samuel Holmes, approached Bradford. Vigorous handshakes evolved into firm pats along the new pastor's back and ultimately the extension of welcoming embraces from

the two. The town had forged a deal. Not only were they able to identify a new minister more than capable of leading their nascent mission. Amory Bradford hailed from Puritan stock literally. He was an eighth-generation descendant of Governor William Bradford of Plymouth Colony. He was the right man, indeed, to guide a group of disenchanted city folk in their efforts to recreate the strength of America and its Puritan values in the relatively undeveloped region of northern New Jersey, particularly in the aftermath of the nation's highly divisive Civil War.

After the offer to Bradford had been sealed—an annual salary of two thousand dollars and financed lodgings—Julius Pratt cleared his throat and beckoned to Bradford to join him in a saunter down the street toward the thoroughfare of Bloomfield Avenue. He acquiesced.

Pratt walked slowly and held his hands across his back. The noonday sun was strong. Both men were dressed in black; Pratt sported a straw derby while Bradford did not.

"You know, Bradford, we're living in interesting times. Changing times. Things are moving quickly. We have to make sure we move in the right direction...." Pratt announced a little cryptically or in a manner which registered as a bit opaque to Bradford.

"Hmmm, sir. Not sure I quite follow? Could you be a little more specific?" Bradford replied.

"I'm just saying, we're living in a world that is changing rapidly. The nation is still re-establishing itself after the War. There's a lot of newcomers to this country from parts unknown. A lot of crowdedness and filth in the cities now..." Pratt stopped for a moment to draw a circle with the toe of his boot into a heap of sawdust piled alongside a newly planked sidewalk. "We're in a unique position here in that we can really start again. Form a town like something out of ol' New

England. Get back to basics. Reignite the best aspects of this nation's founding principles from way back when.... Are you up for the challenge?"

"I think I'm understanding what you're saying...but I remain unclear as to how this is meant to involve me?" Bradford responded but as he spoke, he began to understand the meaning of the innuendos underlying Pratt's utterances.

"I'm just saying a new town—a new suburban town with a mission to be ideally and progressively idyllic—needs to have a strong ecclesiastical presence in order to ensure everyone's hearts and voices are on the same page, so to speak...am I making myself clear?" Pratt slowed down the cadence of his commentary and seemed to be intent to confer a moment of gravitas.

"So, my pulpit becomes a bully pulpit, so to speak?" he quipped.

Pratt stopped walking and turned suddenly to face Bradford head on. "Listen. Not so sure how to say this other than to state it outright..." He paused and cleared his throat before he began to speak again.

"You're young, but you're not that young or unwise to the ways of the world. As you're more than well aware, your ministerial brethren have a lot of power with the faithful. When well-liked, dare I suggest popular, you're capable of wielding a tremendous influence. Just want to ensure we cultivate a positive influence here, and not anything like what's brewing across the river right now. Are you following me?" Pratt's voice had dropped to that of almost a whisper, but his message remained strong and insistent. "We won't be having any sort of scandal or uncircumspect behavior erupting ever, will we?"

In that very moment Bradford straightened up his spine as much as he could muster and attempted to grow a little bit taller. "I'm up to the challenge. As they say, my orthodoxy will be that of the town as well."

"Excellent response, my dear Bradford! I do think we've reached an important

moment of mutual understanding..." Upon this exchange Pratt drew out his pocket watch and reflected ruefully upon the time. "Heavens! How can it be almost half past the hour? I was supposed to be home by 1pm. I must be on my way! We will confirm details and look forward to your move here as soon as possible. You can make your way to Newark from here alone? Yes?"

"Yes, I'll be fine. Thank you for your time and for everything. God Bless." Bradford related wholeheartedly if not a little pensively or really already in the midst of deep thought as to what his first days would be like as a new church pastor in a suburb focused upon an obvious mission.

Bradford embarked upon his vocation as pastor of Montclair's First Congregational Church in the early fall of 1870. He got married and then shortly thereafter was ordained and installed. For the next three years the enthusiastic and fervent minister would preach to a gathering of about a hundred people weekly within the confines of a rented space in an office building located along the main access route through the town.

One late afternoon upon his walk home from a meeting with locals related to a zoning matter, Bradford slowed down the pace of his steps and lost himself in a revelry of thought. Usually resolved and determined throughout the course of his daily routine, he found himself a bit at a loss. Perhaps even depressed. He watched his steps as his feet negotiated the unevenness of a slate sidewalk. He appreciated the differences inherent in each slate slab--the way they commanded his attention daily by the innate quality chiseled into their very existence of alerting oneself to a possible trip and fall if not ever mindful of a potential variance in grade. Upon arriving at his house and opening its front gate, he observed his wife Julia seated on a swinging chair positioned on the verandah.



"How was your day, darling?" Julia exclaimed to her husband with a questioning lilt to her voice. "How goes the battle?"

His face lit up with a smile upon the sound of her voice. He walked over to the swing and sat down next to her. "Hmmm, I don't know. A bit out of sorts today. Thinking about my mission here. Our mission. What am I doing? Am I a man out of time? Preaching a neo-conservatism tinged with pseudo-progressive values? Am I giving the people what they want? Paying lip service to Christian values served up to fit the needs of a blustering economy and a towns people impatient for growth on their terms?" He stopped himself and let out a hollow laugh. "I'm sorry. I know, I know. I'm not on the pulpit. Stop preaching."

Julia reflected for a moment. She started to say something and then paused. Her hands had been together in her lap, but then she raised one to brush aside a strand of hair from her face. The late afternoon had been hot and humid, but a breeze seemed to be asserting an effort suddenly. It felt as if a thunder shower were threatening.

"Amory, we're here. Do I sound too cliché and stupid quoting Wordsworth to you? 'The world is too much with us...Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers...' She paused and then started to speak again. "Who knows if what you're doing, what I am doing is real? You speak of a new Puritanism, a need to reignite the nation's values or sense of itself before the war. Yes, maybe. I see your ardent interest and admire your determination always, but I see, too, a lot of building. A lot of spending. Yes, there are people that can afford to be here. The cities are a mess. Your parishioners....you...me. We're building a suburban idyll but not all get to come to the party..."

"I am sure you're right, dear. In any event, it is complicated. The economy is ripe, and Montclair is thriving. Are my sermons too one-sided? Old-fashioned?"

Am I out of step with the world? In my championing of literature and the arts, do I come off as nativistic? Isolated? Solipsistic? While the other guy in Brooklyn spews a good talk and wanders where he should not go?" He sighed and scratched his head. He removed his handkerchief from his breast pocket and wiped away a gathering of sweat that had formed on his brow.

Julia arranged the crinolines under her skirt and repositioned her legs as they had started to fall asleep.

"I think we need to tread carefully and walk a fine line. Montclair is beautiful, indeed. Look at this house! We are so lucky to be here. The cornerstone for the new church has been laid. Don't get so down on yourself, Amory. The most important thing, though, is to always remember and heed the pangs of your conscience. I don't have to tell you this. You know it's God's way of course correcting.... Anyway, I imagine I should finish getting supper ready."

Bradford looked deeply into Julia's eyes and grew even more somber for a minute.

"Yes, it's the pangs we feel deeply and then the gnawing is what keeps you up at night. To serve the town well is what I am required to do; to serve my Redeemer well sometimes gets in the way of that...oh the choices I make daily, I can only pray they're the right ones.. Yes, let's go eat." Bradford stood up and helped his wife to her feet. As he proceeded to open the screen door for her, he asked, "Was there anything from the post today? Any mail?"

"You know I'm not certain. It's been so warm. I've been sitting out here and forgot to check. Can you go see?" Julia replied.

Bradford walked to the postbox and there were a few letters addressed to him—a couple from some local parishioners and another from a colleague at Andover. As he sorted through and arrived at the bottom of the pile, he spied

an envelope with the return address of Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, NY. The envelope address was handwritten and looked more like a personal entreaty than professional notice. Bradford took out his handkerchief again to wipe off his brow again. "Certainly is humid today..." he said to himself distractedly as he proceeded to scan the correspondence.

"Dear Pastor Bradford, it would be our absolutely privilege and joy if you would entertain the prospect of serving as a guest minister at our church a few Sundays this month of August. Please let us know at your earliest convenience. Yours in Christ, Plymouth Church Welcome Committee"

Bradford called out to his wife from beyond the screen door. "Julia, they want us! We have arrived! Plymouth Church just bestowed an invite asking me to guest minister a couple of Sundays this August. What do you think? Any immediate thoughts?"

Julia observed the level of pride and joy reflected in her husband's eyes and then spoke. "Well, here's your chance. You've been kind of tossed about on a sea of circumstances beyond your control—good circumstances but alas, controlled by your family's ancestry as well as the powerful citizens of this town. Here's your chance to shine and preach the version of the Lord's good news in a way authentic to yourself. In a way unique to you alone, beyond the dominating presence of Henry Beecher! You should be elated!"

Bradford then got very quiet and waited to speak. "My first years here I struggled to keep up. To do the right thing. To serve my Church and town together and to serve both well. I have been steadfast and determined. I am no boisterous or dramatic speaker. I do not bring the church house down or draw standing room only crowds. But I am a believer, and I am authentic and honest. I do have a contribution to make, and that's what I'll aim to relate from the pulpit at Plymouth!"

"And so then, dear Amory, you seem to have allayed your own doubts and concerns from earlier with the receipt of this letter and its open invitation to you. But be careful what you wish for, as they say... I am certain you will do good work as you always do!" Julia responded wisely and announced firmly, "Of course to all this, but dinner now is really the first order of business. As for Beecher at the moment, let him eat cake...Congratulations, my love." And thus, Amory Bradford and his wife Julia were finally on their way to leading a ministry that wasn't just about Montclair or competing with Henry Ward Beecher's popularity, it became about Amory Bradford competing with himself and spreading the good news in the best way he knew possible, from his most authentic and genuine self.



Kassandra Pozalante





Moses Ojo- Stuck in the Picture

# MOTHER

FREDA OSEI

Mother told me to have fun always  
She taught me the importance of laughter  
She taught me that life is all rainbows  
She consoled me when I was sad  
She never made me see her cry  
But I saw her cry.

Mother taught me to be tough  
She told me that crying is good  
She taught me that life is not all sunshine  
She cried with me  
She made me see her break down  
But I consoled her now.

Mother told me I was moving from Ghana  
She told me I was going to live with my father  
She told me she wanted a better future for me  
She embraced me but never shed a tear  
She called out my name  
But I could only touch the window of the bus.

Mother called me constantly  
She told me that she missed me  
She told me that she loved me  
She told me that she felt lonely  
She told me that I am her heart  
But I could only cry.

Mother, I miss you  
I miss your cooking  
I miss your cuddling  
I miss your laughter  
I love you, Mother  
But I can only mourn you now, Mother.





Nicolaus Armani- West Village Reflection





Marsh Caro

# *Seascape's Short Story Contest*

1st Place

## **The Final Key**

Payton Kohan

The night the bear came, the air was crisp with falling snow. She had only heard stories of it, of the girls whisked away from their families in the night by a monster. They were tales told to children before bed in hopes to scare them into good behavior. They were tales told for centuries in every country, in every language. That's all Maria thought they were: tales.

But it was all very real that night she was shaken awake by her brother, his eyes wild like the snowstorm that raged outside her window. She was told to dress, to bring whatever she held dearest, and to make her way to the parlor as quickly as she could. So Maria did just that. She slipped on her only dress that had not a hole or tear and grabbed her mother's compass off her nightstand. It was with that she left her room, but not without a final glance outside at the snow.

And it was there she saw it, just below as the storm swirled around it. The bear of white stood staring, his empty black eyes into her own. It was all a white blur from there, as if Maria had been pulled into a snowstorm of her own. Her father and her brothers held her tight and whispered their words of strength in her ear. Outside the door the bear chuffed and growled, their goodbyes too long for his liking.

Oleg, the eldest of her brothers, took her by the shoulders and draped around her his thickest fur coat. It enveloped her in its warmth, the little furs tickling her face. Maria turned, wiping a stray tear and gripped her compass in her palm as she threw open the door.



And there he stood before her, wild and giant, with his fur bristling here and there in the whipping wind. Maria's breath caught in her throat at the sight and yet she couldn't look away. It was without a final goodbye that she was thrown upon him. Her hands, red from the cold, gripped his thick fur and as the bear hastened to leave in the dreadful storm, Maria turned. "Wait!" But between the flakes of snow and the distance they had already travelled with the bear's great speed, her father and brothers were naught but specks against the endless expanse of white.

For a long while Maria laid atop the bear's back. Her face pressed into his fur so as to shield herself from the blizzard that had no intentions of slowing. Her hands burned from her grip upon his neck and she was sure frostbite had set in as well. But the fur coat Oleg had given to her did good to keep her warm. And from the white noise of the gusting wind, the warmth of her coat, and the soft breaths of the bear, Maria slowly found herself asleep.

When next she woke the snow and the wind had stopped, and so had the bear. They stood before an old brick manor, covered in ivy and surrounded entirely by woodland. Maria had never seen so much green. And yet, upon them was a soft flurry despite not a single cloud in the sky.

The bear looked at her expectantly, waiting for her to dismount. She did so in awe, glancing over her shoulders as the gentle snowflakes landed atop the leaves. It only took one chuff from the bear to bring her back to her new reality.

He led her into the front hall and through the many corridors, up and along the span of the house. The floors were of various marble and the walls of shining gold wallpaper. Its halls were lit by chandeliers that hung just above Maria's head, and she worried its wax would drip right down upon her. Her delicate footfalls accompanied by the bear's heavy stride echoed across the rooms and in her ears. It was the only sound until they reached a room upon the third floor, which she assumed was designated to her.

With a nod of his head and one final chuff he left her to be situated. She examined the room, the silk pillows and mattress, not too hard, not too soft. She brushed her hair with a silver brush that she could barely lift in her hand. And she ran her fingers over the spines of yellowed books placed on a small shelf in a corner.

Shaking the jacket from her shoulders and placing her compass on the nightstand, she laid upon the bed. For a while she stared at the arrow, endlessly spinning beneath the compass' glass face. When her eyelids finally began to droop, she took one last glance at the compass, and at the final direction the arrow had fixed upon.

East. That night a voice shook Maria from her sleep. For a moment she thought it to be Oleg, shaking her from her nightmare of the white bear sent to spirit her away. But when her vision came to, she could tell even in the darkness that the man before her was not her brother. She still laid in the silken bed of the manor. It had not been a nightmare at all.

The man who stood at the foot of her bed was tall and fit. He made no effort to move or speak; he just stood staring.

"Who are you?"

Maria reached for a candle beside her bed. "No! No, don't set a light. Please, you mustn't see me. I am Leonid, the lord of this estate. I was the bear who brought you here. I apologize for the lack of formality, but you could see I am not my lordly self in that state."

His voice was gentle and his words rang true in her ears. He sounded young, not much older than she. Maria edged closer and he took a seat at the foot of the bed.

"I was cursed by a powerful sorceress who I refused as my bride. By night I am a man and by day, that creature. But day or night, whenever you need me, I will answer to you, Maria. This is your home now. I only wish that you find

comfort here.”

“But my Lord, why mustn’t I see you?”

“You must not see me as I am unless the curse is broken. Only then can you see my face.”

The sun’s first light was breaking through the trees and Leonid stood. “I must go, but there is one final thing. On your nightstand you will find a ring of keys to every room in the manor. You may go anywhere you wish, except for the room the sapphire key holds entrance to.”

With those parting words and a bow, he was gone.

And so on her nightstand laid the keys. They were of all different colors and shapes, and set in the middle of each bow was a sparkling gem. Each one outmatched the last in size and beauty. Maria set out at once, running through the halls and turning the keys in each keyhole she came upon. The rooms were filled with wonders, from a greenhouse, to a library, to a closet full of lavish dresses. By the time the sun set, Maria hadn’t nearly opened half of the manor’s rooms.

That night Leonid visited her at the same time as the last. And so this became their routine. In the day she would roam the halls, unlocking the keys’ matching doors throughout the manor. And in the night she would sleep until her lord awoke her at the foot of her bed.

They spoke of their childhood, to their shared interests in the written word and botany. He started bringing her flowers, each night a different species. Maria confided in him her greatest fears, and in return he told her his. And so this went on for many months until they knew each other better than they knew themselves.

One summer day Maria stood in the middle of the front hall, staring at her keys. She had opened every room, used every key. Except one.

It caught the sunlight better than any key on the heavy ring. And unlike

the others, the entire key was cut of a single sapphire gemstone. Her beloved's words echoed through her head, but in that moment her curiosity got the best of her. She found herself outside a lone blue door and slowly turned the key.

But it didn't budge.

"At night," a voice tickled at her ear. "Come back at night."

And so she did. And when she turned the key that second time in the dark, it didn't hesitate to open.

Before her lying in a grand canopy bed, was her beloved Leonid. On the bedside table sat a glowing candle and beside her ear came the voice.

"Look, before you! Use the candle. He won't know."

Once more her curiosity won her over and she found herself standing above him, holding the candle to his face. And the man she saw was the most beautiful man she had ever laid eyes upon. Maria was so caught up in his beauty that the candle had burnt down, until three droplets spilt upon the young lord's forehead.

He woke with a hiss and at his love's shocked expression he covered his face.

"What have you done? Now I cannot wed you. Oh Maria, why?"

Suddenly before her he transformed there in bed, not to a bear, but to a ferocious lion. His fur stood on end and he released a deafening roar. In her fear, Maria ran from the room and slammed the door, dropping the key.

She cried for hours at the loss of her beloved Leonid, until a voice, tiny and soft, came to her. It was a little man, no taller than her knee that stood before her bed. He looked no older than a child, and yet a long white beard grew from his chin. He looked at her with a gap-toothed smile and batted eyelashes that were three sizes too long.

"Mistress Maria, please do not cry. There is still hope."

His voice was soft. Old and young.

"Who are you?"

"Call me Thistlewisp," he said with a bow. A Nymph.

"But how can you help me? I betrayed my lord's trust and now I've lost him forever."

"You are not the first to be deceived by the sorceress' whispers. Lord Leonid has been cursed for many centuries." He paced around the room, twirling the whiskers that sat on his round, pink cheeks. "When he spurned the sorceress, she transformed him into a measly frog with warts and all. She never imagined a maiden would fall in love with such a mucousy amphibian. But one did, and she fell victim to the same trick as you. The Lord was then transformed into a swan and so the pattern continued. The next maiden failed as well, and then he was a snake. You can probably guess what happened from there."

Maria stood slowly from the bed to face him. "So she failed as well. And then Leonid became my--"

"The bear, yes."

"But how can I save him when all who've tried before me have failed?"

Thistlewisp took her hands in his. "Because, Maria, you have loved him wholly, without an ounce of fear. You are far braver than any maiden who's come before you. Take this." And so it appeared in her hand.

"A final key. If you close your eyes and hold it tight, you will find yourself before a door of twigs and vines. Only this key will open it. Inside, do not look around at the statues, at anything. And most importantly, do not look back. Do you understand?"

Maria shook her head. "Yes, I understand."

"Make your way to the very end of the hall where you will find a basin of water. Inside is the key to ending the curse. Remember, do not look around, even when you reach the end. The last maiden, the bride of the snake, came closest yet. But then she heard the voice of her sister, the bride of the swan, and turned. And so another statue was added to its garden."



He squeezed Maria's hand around the key made of twigs and ivy. "Go. You are ready."

With those parting words he disappeared, and Maria shut her eyes, and held the key tight in her hand. And then she was before the door just as Thistlewisp spoke of. A tall door crafted in twigs and covered from top to bottom in twisting vines. She inserted the key and stepped inside.

It was a long, narrow hall with floors and walls of pebbles, all shades of tan and grey. At the end she could see trees and a fountain, and she knew what to do. As she began to walk, whispers and moans nipped at her ears and from the corner of her eye she spotted statues. They were of all different stones, some of what seemed to be sparkling gemstones. But Maria didn't focus on them nor did she stay put long enough to tell.

Finally she reached the fountain, ignoring the screams hissing at her ear. In one hand she held the key of twigs and her empty one she dove into the basin, searching for whatever would free her and her beloved of the dreadful curse. But she felt nothing. The basin was empty save for the ice cold water that splashed around Maria's hand.

Then in her ear came a terrible screech and the key in her other hand dropped into the basin. When she dug it out, it was no longer a key fashioned of twigs and ivy, but a key cut entirely of glass.

"The final key..."

Before she could turn to leave, the basin slid from its spot on the fountain and landed with a thud before her feet, the water still inside. So she picked it up as well and started for the entrance. But the basin was too heavy and so it slipped from her arms onto the pebble walk. And wouldn't you know, every pebble that was touched by the freezing water was transformed into lush grass and flowers, which gave Maria an idea.

She ran back to the fountain, scooping up the water in her hands and

splashing it all over the room. The rest of the pebbles transformed just as the others. But the statues, when splashed with the water, changed into three beautiful women. Their clothing was dated, but they were not much older than Maria herself. They were the maidens before, the brides of the frog, of the swan and of the snake. They thanked her for saving them and Maria went on her way.

She exited a door of glass, and before her in the hall stood the lion. For a moment Maria trembled, the key shaking in her hand. But then she spotted the leather collar wrapped around her beloved's neck, and in the middle dangled a small glass lock. He roared, but let her approach. When she inserted the key, a great light filled the corridor.

And there before her stood the young lord, frozen in time for centuries, now freed. With a smile that reflected in his steely grey eyes, he took her to him and vowed to make her his bride, which she happily obliged. They were married at dawn in the churchyard, christened by the freshly fallen snow, just as it had been the night the bear came and carried her away.

Together the pair lived happily for many years. And though she searched, Maria never did see the nymph again.

# My mother, my Queen

Shira Goffman

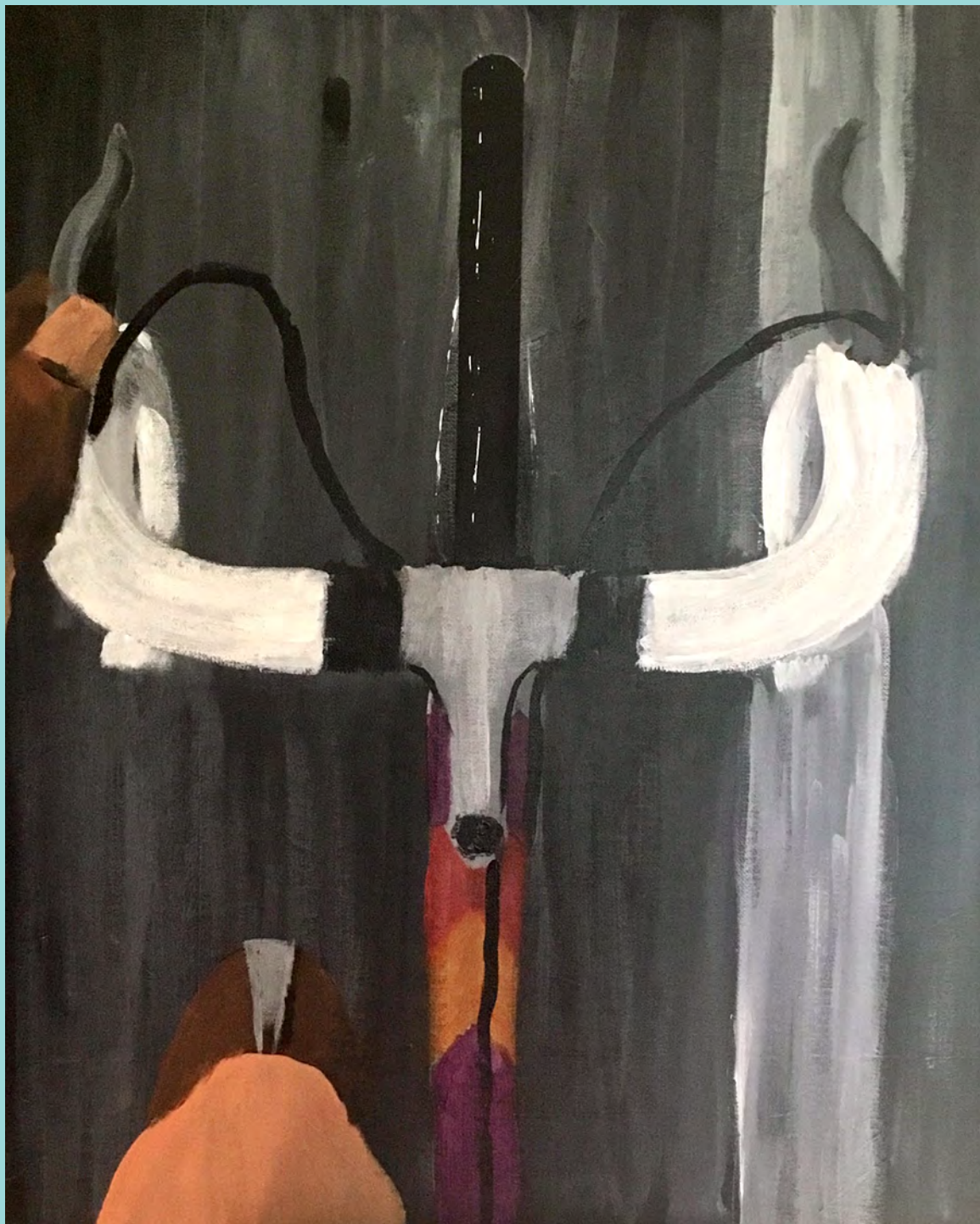
My mother is a Queen  
With no kingdom  
She has been banished from her castle  
Again  
And again  
A wandering Queen

(The king has left  
Long ago  
He wanders too  
He does not seek a kingdom  
Nor a castle  
He seeks no subjects  
He longs only for peace)

Still, my Queen, as you wander  
Please know  
You need no castle  
To be my Queen  
I will always be your loyal servant  
I am your soldier  
Holding steadfast  
The way you trained us  
The way we practiced  
My brothers and sister  
We are your army  
Fighting for our Queen  
That has protected  
And fought  
For our kingdom for so long

Your royalty is in your blood  
In your words  
In your actions  
In your eyes  
I feel your protection  
In your warm hugs  
My dearest mother  
You need no castle to be my Queen

*Seascape's Annual Fine Art Contest: 3rd Place*



Cory Muller

# 30 going on 18

## Stephanie Herbert

"Despite our denial and (at times) blind optimism - it happens...

One day, you're scrunching your hair with a fresh bottle of L.A Looks hair gel and hoping for weekend plans, and the next - YOU'RE A WEEK AWAY FROM 30.

I never really thought too much about the big 3-0. Of course when you're younger, it feels like you'll never get older. You know you will - but there's a piece of you that really feels like it's so far away that you don't even have to think about it.

When you're 15, you want to be 16 so you can get behind the wheel.  
Next, you want to be 17 to get out there on the open road.  
And then of course, 18 - because ADULTHOOD, YAY! (little did we know, huh?)

After that 21st birthday though, we just sort of coast on through, don't we?  
Parties, bars, late nights, different jobs, different friends. We learn a lot. We reevaluate - A LOT.

But, there are few things better than sitting in your car with just the right music, a coffee (maybe a cigarette) and just the right people. Am I right?

A lot of things change as we get older and...it sucks.  
Some of the people we had really great times with slip away. Some pass away.  
Some of our favorite places lose their meaning. We lose touch with some of our closest friends.

We even lose touch with ourselves.

We lose touch with the version of ourselves that thought we had a better handle on things, on life.

And the version of ourselves that didn't worry about bills as much, or about where we were going to be when we were older.

Priorities get moved around, and it slowly sets in - we're ADULTS.

But on the positive side - by now, we have our best people around us, because we've weeded out the rest. We are wiser than we've ever been (hopefully).  
And by applying all of our experiences thus far, both the good and the bad - we are able to navigate through our lives just a little bit smarter.

For the record...I have heard some good things about our 30's! Among these good things, and one that I am particularly excited about is the "comfort in wherever you are in life."

Just the idea of not feeling like we need to be somewhere better or somewhere



more impressive... Doesn't that sound nice?

Another exciting one I've heard...."Feeling more confident in your own skin."

Hmm...yes, please!

Between our heap of high school insecurities, and then some of the social insecurities we picked up in our 20s - it'll be nice to unload some of those!

I make jokes about my twenties coming to an end, and feeling "old"... but I really am excited to see what my 30's will bring, and where they will take me.

I feel fine with where I am in my life.

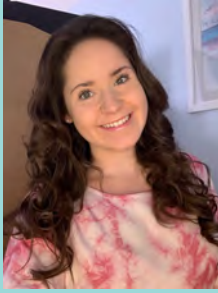
Now... that's not to say I don't want MORE for myself, or that I've reached all of my goals in life - I definitely have not.

But... that's okay.

*Seascape's Annual Photography Contest: 3rd Place*



Jasmine Rivers



Kaitlin Clutter, Editor-in-Chief-- Kaitlin is a Liberal Arts major at Ocean County College. After graduating, Kaitlin will be transferring to Kean Ocean to pursue her Bachelor's degree in English. Besides her work at Seascape, Kaitlin has enjoyed being a Peer Writing Tutor in the Tutoring Center and being President of Sigma Kappa Delta Honor Society. In Kaitlin's free time, she loves going to concerts and cannot wait to attend one post-pandemic!



Josephine O'Grady, Assistant Editor-- Josephine is part of the Ocean County College 2021 Graduating Class, where she is achieving her Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts. Currently, she is also attending Kean University as a Public Health and Prospective Nursing major. Besides her work at Seascape, Josephine has served as the Historian for the Sigma Kappa Delta Honor Society. Most recently, she was elected to serve as Vice President of Kean Ocean for the 2021-2022 school year. Outside of her studies, Josephine loves surfing, kayaking, and other ocean activities.

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

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

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

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

