

**IN THE RIGHT MIND**  
MISSION VISTA HIGH SCHOOL  
ARTS AND LITERARY MAGAZINE



**JUNE 2013 ISSUE**

# ANYTHING CREATIVE



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Issue One

# IN THE RIGHT MIND

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Artwork by Megan Paterson

# L'art Nouveau

Un style de conception d'origine du 19ème siècle caractérisée notamment par des lignes sinueuses et les formes feuillages



Artwork by Devin Hogan

# DRAWINGS



*by Christeanna Mares*



*by Nancy Rayo*



*by Anthony Sibley*



*by Bailey Dilley*



*by Alla Veldespino*



*by Marcos Rodriguez*



*by Vanessa Power*



*by Jake Holloman*



*by Stephanie Santiago*



*by Nescen Bernardo*

# Opinion

NIGHTHAWKS BY EDWARD HOPPER, 1920

by Natalie MacPherson

The woman sat at the old Phillie's Deli on the corner of Maple Drive and Fourth Avenue and quietly sipped her coffee. She fixed her flowing red hair that had fallen into her eyes when she was running earlier. Her bright red dress reflected the harsh lights overhead.

"What's a pretty thing like you doing in a boring place like this, miss?" asked Joe, the old deli chef.

"Oh Joe, I don't know what I'm doing with my life. I met a man last night, and we were going to meet at the Italian restaurant down the street from here, but he never showed up," she sighed.

"Hun, I don't know why you go to those bars. You know they're only full of the sketchiest of men," he raised his eyebrow at her while cleaning a bowl.

"I know, I know," she sighed, "I just want to find a man that won't run out on me."

Suddenly, the bell on the door rang. A tall man in a neat, pressed suit had walked in. He seemed proud on the outside, but looking into his eyes, she

saw his true weariness.

"Maybe you should try looking a little closer to home," Joe whispered to her before flashing the smallest of smiles and walking into the back kitchen.

The stranger walked over to her, "Hello miss, can I sit with you?"

She stammered, "Uh, sure. Yeah, go right ahead."

He sat down next to her and turned to face the

beautiful woman. "I'm Smith. John Smith. Pleased to meet you," he said in a deep voice while he stuck out his hand.

"Likewise," she replied, shaking it. Joe quietly snuck out from the kitchen and placed a cup of coffee in front of the man. "On the house!" he grinned. John smiled and tipped his hat to the chef. He picked up the cup and sipped.

"So, what's your name?" he inquired.

"Mine?" she queried, "It's Mary-Anne."



STUDENTS WRITE STORIES ABOUT GREAT WORKS OF ART



Artwork by Jennifer Walston

“The purpose of art is washing the dust of daily life off our souls.”

-Pablo Picasso



Artwork by Rachel Killion



Artwork by Angelyna Rivera-Cantrell



Artwork by Leah Dannals

SOMETIMES ART  
MAKES NO SENSE

# IMAGINATION UNLEASHED



Artwork by Rachel Killion



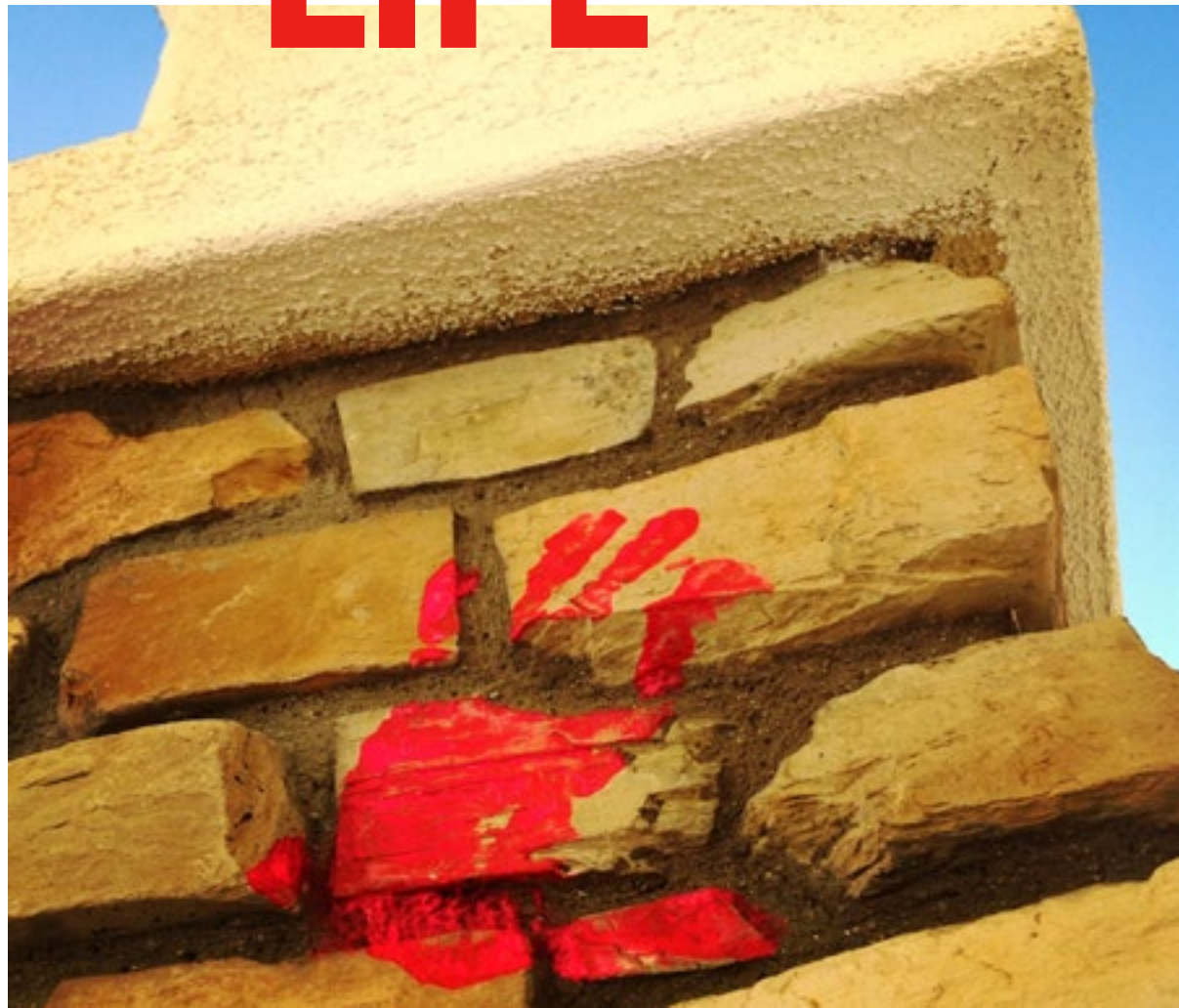
Artwork by Sammi DeCaro



Artwork by Hannah Roshanei

“Imagination is more important than **knowledge**”  
—Albert Einstein

# PRESENCE OF LIFE



*Photograph by Diana Visco*



*Photograph by Miranda Hald*

## Symbols

*by Pamela Narisma*

Symbol were used  
to record  
forgotten lives.  
They come in different  
forms,  
they do.  
Some are hidden  
in sandy  
desert ruins,  
some are beneath  
green moss, so  
wet and musky, that  
you may be tempted to dirty  
clean hands to see them. So odd, those  
shapes seem for they confuse yet  
wonder you.

Snapping green crocodiles?  
stick-shaped hunters, and women with  
soft-looking cat heads and piercing green cat  
eyes? Touching these brick  
engraved symbols to and  
fro a rough, brown wall will mean  
This:  
You are interested to know  
how these  
People lived.  
for they won't go away.  
Their lives  
are set  
in stone...  
To see.





# HOW WIDE IS WIDE IS WIDE . . .



Photograph by Kodiak North



Photograph by Morgan Cunneen



Photograph by Blake Ashby





# Family

“Family means no one gets left behind or forgotten.”

—David Ogden Stiers



*Photographs by Christeanna Mares*



*Photography by Elle S. Siblings*



*Photography by Jessica Read*

# The Circlet

by Caitlin Foster

Joshua made not a sound as he stepped through the copious undergrowth. He slipped silently between the shadows to conceal himself. He held his bow with a birch wood arrow cocked ready between his fingers. Upon his approach, songbirds grew quiet and the underbrush shivered as small rodents scampered out of his path. The dense forest was dim other than the scattered patches of sunlight that pierced through the thick canopy above.

Up ahead, a flicker of movement caught his eye. He sidestepped behind the gnarled trunk of a rowan tree and peered out from behind it. A young white-tail buck, two or three seasons old, stood grazing amidst a small clearing of lush grasses about a hundred yards away. Luckily, the animal had not sensed Joshua's presence due to his downwind position. Taking a deep breath, he sighted the target down the length of the shaft and drew back the bowstring. Sound stopped and his surroundings ceased to exist as he pursed his lips and released the tension. The stag reared then fell; the fatal dart had found its mark. Joshua sighed with relief and slowly made his

way to the fallen deer. When he reached the spot, he removed the bloody shaft and took his hunting knife from his belt.

~

The forest came to life with the melodious arias of wizened owls, elusive kakapos, and translucent glass frogs as the sun dipped behind the distant mountain peaks. Joshua stood up and stretched his cramped muscles after skinning the deer. He hefted a canvas bag of the venison over his shoulder and glanced at the horizon. He turned east, away from the sinking sphere of amber fire, and headed in the direction of his hut.

The forest grew unusually still as Joshua trudged homeward. Nothing stirred nor made a sound. Odd, he thought. He was nearing a small stream when a bevy of quail burst from a thicket, their frantic alarm calls piercing the silence. He narrowed his eyes and set the sack of meat onto the mossy floor. He had heard tales of hunters being attacked by a ravenous lynx or desperate wolves. Drawing an arrow from his quiver, he was not about to lose his dinner... nor become dinner for that matter.

He withdrew an arrow and pulled the cord taught. A twig cracked to his left, a clump of tall grass trembled to his right. Joshua's breath began to quicken and his temples throbbed. A bead of sweat rolled down his forehead. Time froze.

Suddenly, an enormous leopard exploded from the undergrowth - its vicious claws extended, a throaty growl rising from its gaping jaws. Joshua ducked and somersaulted from the cat's outstretched paws. He whipped around as the leopard skidded to a halt and turned to face him.

Hot fury burned in the panther's amber eyes. It bared its wicked fangs and began to pace impatiently around Joshua, eyeing the canvas bag.

"Get back!" Joshua yelled. The cat snarled and flattened its ears.

The leopard crouched down and glared into the eyes of the hunter. Joshua took aim while the panther tensed; its muscles bunched beneath the gold and onyx spots of its velvet fur, preparing to pounce.

Joshua flexed his hand, gripping the yew bow.

The leopard's hind claws dug deep into the soft earth as its front paws left the ground.

He exhaled, a puff of white steam escaping into the chilly air, and released the arrow.

The eagle fletching sang as the shaft spiraled through the air.

Joshua could see his own petrified reflection in the cat's eyes. He squeezed his eyes shut and dropped to the ground - abandoning his bow - and wrapping his hands around his head.

The leopard's full weight collapsed on top of Joshua's curled form, an agonized screech ripped the air.

It gasped, then slumped - motionless - off to Joshua's right. One massive paw stretched over his back, four ebony claws had ripped through his thin shirt.

Joshua struggled out from under the cat's foreleg and examined his waist. He grimaced at the sight. Four ugly gashes laced across his left side, stretching around to the middle of his lower back. Blood welled at the lacerations, staining his shirt. He ripped off the bottom of the remains of his shirt and bound it around his waist to stop the bleeding.

"At least it doesn't appear too deep," he muttered to himself.

He turned around and shuddered at the lifeless body of his attacker. Its jaws gaped open with its cruel fangs glinting in the half-light - the creature's contorted features the very picture of nature's raw malice, forever frozen in time. The arrowhead had plunged

—The Circlet continues

Artwork by Rush Kress

# UNCA TECHNOLOGIZED WORKS



*Photograph by Vanessa Kash*



*Photograph by Anthony Sidley*



*Photograph by Chris Wilson*



## ***Banks of the Seine***

*by Anja Koehler*

The painting *Banks of the Seine* by Paul Signac is very interesting to me. There are many washes making a complicated mesh of colors that fuse together to create an image. The house along the bank casts a peaceful and tranquil feeling that seems like home. It stands out among the different shades of blue found in the picture; my eyes are drawn to it. As for the rest of the picture, the earthy tones and short strokes of the brush make different shapes and figures to make the trees and the lake. I like the complexion of this water color painting.



## ***Composition IV***

*by Anika Garcia*

This piece of art... is breath taking, the way Kandinsky used bright colors to represent happiness and the way he painted a colorful rainbow with black lines above, to me it means that even if the world is dark and mismatched there will always be some sort of escape or something good will come out of tragedies. Underneath the rainbow it looks like he drew the ocean, In the outside it looks like he painted a bunch of random things and colored it with random colors, but in reality he was trying to say something and express his true self.



## ***Starry Night over the Rhone***

*by Cassidy King*

I chose the piece of art entitled, *Starry Night over the Rhone*. This painting intrigued me and provoked the most emotion compared to the other pieces. Generally, I like this painting because it is dark, yet beautiful. It is set at night in a town which seems to be settled next to the shore of the ocean. I personally love the nighttime, and I enjoy star gazing. The painting depicts a night full of stars, and the way the artist interpreted stars into this painting is absolutely beautiful. I think it is gorgeous how the light from the stars reflects off the water. I also love this painting because it fills me with nostalgia from the time I went on vacation with my best friend for her birthday. We stayed on the Island of Catalina off the coast of California. This is a very fond memory because it was so much fun and I loved spending time with my best friend and her family in such a beautiful place. The shape of the shoreline almost exactly resembles the shoreline and the town I stayed in Catalina. It reminds me so much of the nights I spent walking by the ocean and gazing at the stars in that gorgeous little town. "Starry Night over the Rhone" evokes so many happy emotions, and I love it!

*Opinion*  
STUDENTS WRITE STORIES ABOUT  
GREAT WORKS OF ART



*Artwork by Elena Rico*

# Broken

*by Leslie Sierra*

Darkness everywhere,  
Black smoke rising,  
Buildings collapsing,  
Rubble touching broken ground.  
Ripped dolls,  
Scattered across black floor,  
Defeated lonely faces,  
People crying,  
Falling to the ground  
Grieving broken families,  
World watching  
Hearts stopping.  
Millions of tears  
Soaking the earth  
Sorrow, anger, and fear  
Barreling through.  
Fathers, mothers,  
Sisters, brothers,  
Missing or dead  
Candles, pictures everywhere  
For hope  
For finding peace.  
A little girl confused  
Hugging her teddy  
Wanting comfort.  
Wanting mommy.  
Watching daddy cry.  
Not understanding.  
Fear of the unknown  
Darkness of death  
Set in.

# In Our Pursuit

*By Chase Heller and Norris Ikker*

The city was bathed in the evening's warm sunlight. Not a cloud was in the sky. Jerras, the head of the city's anti-terrorism division, led his officers down the dirt road. People were peering cautiously from their three-story terraced houses and from the road. Jerras could hear whispers and murmurs, but he blocked them out as the police rushed toward the residence at the end of the street. The alley became thinner as they went, just as the crowd did. Some of Jerras' men drew their muskets and formed a barrier around the house.

Jerras knocked curtly on the door. "Miss Ash, are you there?"

A man's voice rang out in response. "She is not here."

"We know you're here, Kay. You must acknowledge his eminence's authority." He reflected for a moment on the one who had led him here. I dearly hope your aim is straight, he thought. "You have five seconds," he again addressed the man behind the door.

When no reply came, Jerras flicked his head to the side, signaling to the officer beside him. The sound of footsteps could be heard as the officer lifted his pistol and blew the nob off of the door. Jerras kicked

the door down, and all the police rushed into the room. A young man was coming down the stairway at the far end of the room, and as soon as he saw the police, he jumped over the rail to the ground. Half of the officers fired their muskets. The smoke from their shots quickly obscured their vision, and all that was accomplished was wreckage of the room. The anti-terrorism officers who were not reloading their weapons quickly pursued the young man, who had shut himself behind the door below the stairs. That door would not be a good defense for long.

Jerras walked to the door, drawing his pistol as he advanced. He shot the lock off the door, kicked it in, and drew his saber. He found the man frantically struggling to open a box, and, coldly and unsympathetically, Jerras pressed his sword point to the man's back.

"Where is she?" Jerras pried. The man did not answer. The minister asked again, a slight trace of anger lining his voice. "Where?"

Suddenly, a voice sounded behind him. "I'm right here."

Jerras turned around to see the one he sought.

"Hello, Kay," he said. She stood defiantly at the threshold, a mysterious stillness about her.

"Minister Jerras," she held out her arms, "I am ready to be taken."

Jerras called to one of his officers behind Kay. "Bind her. Search her." The officer complied, and Jerras then proceeded toward them with the man, who was bound and searched as well. "Good to see that someone in the resistance has some sense to surrender," Jerras said to Kay.

"Well," Kay replied, "in this circumstance there was no alternative." Then she turned to her fellow in chains. "We'll be fine, Metas."

Forming a line with the other officers, they all

walked out of the house. As they went, Jerras, out of the corner of his eye, saw Kay glance swiftly at a leather-bound book on the table at the edge of the room.

There must be more to this, the minister thought, although he did not act on it. The march from the residence was silent. The two in chains knew why they were under arrest. They knew what crimes they had committed. They were against the whole of the Dukedom and the city of Dauskora.

The procession seemed that of a funeral. Though the winter was severe, the coldness of the passing spectators offered the most hurt. Although only a select few dared openly speak out against his eminence Duke Parsa and his new government, it was well known that just as few truly sided with him. Many a dark expression met Jerras in the open streets. Such had become common, and so he paid them no mind.

After traversing a few avenues, and a few more intersections, the party came to one of the many great Halls of Reverence. Ancient temples built by the Precursors to their own long-past leaders. The temple upon which they came was of monumental size, with great glass windows that nearly enveloped the entire structure.

At the Hall, Kay stopped. She turned to minister Jerras. "I need to pray," she told him, courteously yet purposefully.

At first, the minister was slightly angered. You are daring, Miss Ash. This is spontaneous, not scheduled. Even for someone of your grief. The loss of your father is no excuse for stepping out of line like this. Still, Jerras did not deny her any freedom here. He motioned to one of his men. "Go with her." They all praised the Precursors. Every man, even he, looked to them for guidance.

—In Our Pursuit continues



# The Journey

Photograph by Rachel Killion



Photograph by Jessica Smith



Photograph by Lluvia Ruiz

“Not all who wander  
are lost.”  
—J.R.R. Tolkien

# My Small Sun

by Noelani Martinez

In the dark  
That is my room  
So many things lost  
In the blackness  
A sense of fear  
Surrounds  
Reaching  
To the wall  
I can feel the cold switch touch  
My fingers  
Lifting it

The sunlight escapes  
And wipes away  
The night the secrets  
Turning into  
Truths  
Confession becoming  
Understanding

I can see all within  
The pond in my eye  
Is shrinking to  
Absorb the bright light  
An upside-down rainbow  
Wiping across my face  
I see my lamp  
My lamp is the thing  
Shining its light

I see how  
How dark  
My world would be  
Without my light.

Photograph by Cammy Jimenez

# Here Comes the Sun

by George Harrison

Little darlin', it seems like a long cold lonely winter  
Little darlin', it seems like so many years since it's been there

Here comes the sun, here comes the sun  
And I say, "It's all right, it's all right, it's all right  
It's all right, it's all right"

Little darlin', it seems like, the ice is slowly melting  
Little darlin', it seems like so years since it's been there

Here comes the sun, here comes the sun  
And I say, "It's all right, it's all right, it's all right  
It's all right, it's all right"

Little darlin', it seems like the smiles are returnin' to the faces  
Little darlin', it seems like so many years since they've been there

Here comes the sun, here comes the sun  
And I say, "It's all right, it's all right, it's all right  
It's all right, it's all right, it's all right"



Photograph by Katie Braverman

# My Music

By Kodi North

Music is always running through my veins  
Day in and day out my music controls me  
Most songs come with sunlight; some come with rain  
You'll be surprised how music affects thee  
I hear nothing when my music plays  
Only it blasting in and out of each ear  
Constantly playing throughout each day  
Night after dark night, year after long year  
Sometimes quite loud, pissing people off  
Always causing my parents to scream  
Sometimes quiet, being ever so soft  
Playing throughout the night as in a dream  
My music plays, it will never quit  
My music represents me quite a bit .

*Artwork by Jessica Smith*



# Choices

by Kaytie Scott

I can hear the voices in my head screaming  
But I'm wondering which one to believe  
One may be deceiving  
When you're left with no guidance  
The choices you make  
Are those whose risk you must take

My irrefutable question is  
How do you know which is right  
If you know not which leads you astray?  
It's being blind with no sight  
No direction or light  
The consequences may be great  
But I know what I choose will be my fate

There is no due date  
There is just time  
Or what's left of it  
I can always change my mind  
But what if it's too late?  
I need to get through the right opportunity gate

My mind is reeling  
Giving me an irresolute feeling  
They say that if one door closes then another opens  
But what if you still need to get through the closed door  
What could the other one be for?  
Opportunity may only knock once

# THE BOX

by Alexa Batac

This small, pearl white box  
Is like no other box I've ever owned.  
It holds beautiful memories, difficult life  
Strong love, sweet happiness,  
And slow death.

No one has ever seen the contents  
I don't think I'd ever show  
It's only for my dark eyes  
To see, to think, to feel  
My eyes see memories  
Events blurring my vision  
Trickling down my face  
My thoughts begin to wander  
Remembering hilarious stories,  
Rambunctious laughs, and warm holidays  
Joy gushing out of everyone  
My strong feelings,  
The hole in my beating heart,  
The emptiness in my soul  
The need of you both by my side  
Then my memories are interrupted  
Interrupted by present times  
Looking inside the box,  
I see the original contents  
In these present times,  
I know that they're gone  
And now I see the reality once again  
I'm just holding,  
Cradling, a small,  
Pearl white box.



# My Pepper Trees

*by Madeleine Meyer*

1-2-3

Brazilian Pepper Trees

canopies of birds & flocks of leaves

leaving little red berries everywhere

attaching themselves to my callous feet

as I crouch on the patio

and draw tide pools with pastel chalk

How tall are these trees?

they seemed Sequoias

shading aloe plants and ferns beneath

leaves fill in the spaces between the rocks

crunching under my dogs as they run

summer dinners, mud fights, bikes

roof of my childhood

# FORGOTTEN

*by Miguel Prima*

Ode to the Forgotten,  
a quickly fading cry.  
To those who cannot be heard  
but still need a voice.

Who never had a reason  
to walk the fire,  
And saw dawn  
through crying eyes.

But never saw day  
through closed ones.

Ode to the Forgotten,  
a slowly fading pain.  
tears we want to lock away  
but always come flooding back.

From conflict too old,  
losses too young,  
reasons too pointless,  
and goals too gone.

Pain we want to erase,  
and tears we need to fight.

Ode to the Forgotten,  
a reemerging will.  
Anger and loss turned to strength and hope.  
And eyes that see through the smoke.

Losses not a loss,  
but incentive for a change.  
Tears not of pain or sorrow,  
but as cries longing for justice.

The fires of evil we will not remember,  
but the heroes we will not forget.

# Daddy Gave Me a Ring

*by Megan Kennedy*

Daddy gave me  
A ring,  
It was once my nanas,  
Before she passed away.  
Shiny and gold,  
Resting on my right hand  
On my ring finger  
Facing towards me,  
Meaning I'm  
In love.  
Feels as though,  
It's hogging my finger.  
The hands stand  
For friendship,  
The heart  
For love  
And the crown  
For devotion.  
When my eyes  
Lay upon it,  
I smile.  
While others ask  
About it,  
I say  
"It was  
my nanas"  
When my eyes  
lay upon it,  
I miss  
My nana.



# Picture in the Wooden Frame

*by Sierra Adams*

A picture that just sits there  
In a wooden frame  
The past of my life  
Joy  
And sorrow  
Love  
And dreams  
In the last picture.  
You had many names  
Sister,  
Friend,  
Mom,  
Grandma,  
But to me you were my  
Great grandma.  
You taught me a lot  
Even though you didn't speak English  
And I didn't know Spanish  
We still connected with each other.  
The day in the picture  
Was filled with joy  
Family and friends  
Even though you're gone I see you everyday  
Looking through a picture  
In a wooden frame.  
Grandma I know you're with me  
Wherever it is I go  
Even though I don't remember much I really truly love you.

# Mirror Mirror

*by Jessie Combs*

When I look in the mirror  
I don't see Horns or a Halo  
I don't see a smile or a frown  
I don't see pretty or crying eyes  
I just see a girl who had to get through the  
day with a fake smile, with lying eyes  
that have deception and hurt with a picture  
of a halo when in public and horns of revenge  
when she was alone with him



*Artwork by Samantha Cartmill*



*Artwork by Elyssa Bactol*



*Artwork by Lauren Spears*

# My Belt

*By Vlad Bondarenka*

My Belt  
B,E,L,T  
That is how it is spelled  
My pants  
Thou have compelled  
So black so long  
Don't let my pants  
Drop back  
Where they  
Shall not,  
Belong  
The leather  
Smell,  
Is the cold metallic  
Buckle  
I ring it  
Like a bell  
The front  
And end  
Together make a couple  
The five  
Plain see through holes  
Whom which  
My buckle  
Top controls  
My belt,  
My belt with  
Design of small  
Leather bricks  
Of belts  
Etched into it  
It's like a  
Belt within  
A belt within a  
A belt  
Ha-ha LOL  
My best friend belt.



Nature Series  
**Flowers of Spring**



*Photograph by Stacy Pittman*



*Photograph by Ariana Huesias*



*Photograph by Justin Dolleton*



*Photograph by Lluvia Ruiz*

“ Love is  
the flower  
you’ve got  
to let grow. ”

—*John Lennon*

# FIRESTAR

## THE LEGEND OF ASH

by Chase Heller



Artwork by Raquel Spafford

On the far away world of Chul, all that Konua Altaer has ever known is a lavish life in the sea-side palace in the city of Arcaya, Benzia. But the palace is only a prison, sealing her off from the mystery that is her own life. Konua has no memory of where she comes from, including her true family. The Benzian queen has kept her hidden away from a society that wields a historical hatred against her kind, the origin of which hatred she has no knowledge.

In an attempt to discover the truth, Konua embarks on a journey to the island Clairon, home to a group of people that the Benzians do not consider fully human, but that Konua believes may be her blood. It will be a journey of unforeseeable risk, but more than that, it will bring young Konua to the truth not only about herself, but about the vast magic and danger that is the world around her – the world that all have been oblivious to for millennia...

### Excerpt from Chapter 2

Konua had come to a clearing. A dried up ravine. She could not find anyone or anything. So, she decided to stop and rest. To think. To wait. Konua sat down on the earthen ground. She stared at the floor. Blades of grass swayed in the gentle breeze.

They swayed continuously, seeming never to cease. Yet, they have nothing to fear in the wind, for they are firmly rooted in the ground, Konua thought. At least they are rooted somewhere. I am rooted in nothing. It seemed helpless now.

Upon that thought, Konua began to weep. She knew nothing of her true parents. The family that she did know, did not know her. They would not know her. They would not respect her. And now, they would never find her. She wept for a long while. Then, after collecting herself, she stood, and wiped the tears from her eyes.

Coming to her senses, she walked over to a nearby tree. She easily climbed it, picked a few beans, and climbed down. She had never seen cocoa before. The beans were small and dark. She looked at them, studying them. She took one in her hand, and held it up. Thinking carefully, she decided it was safe to eat. She bit on the bean, but could not break its shell. Realizing how she must look, she snapped her head up and dropped the bean back into her hand.

When she realized, no one was watching her. Still, she sensed something. Was someone watching? Konua peered into the trees ahead. She did see something. One pair of yellow slits

—Firestar continues



# Summer

*Emily Schoeder*

The blue summer sky lights the way  
Let us go on an adventure, my friend  
Oh, what a wonderful day  
It's quite hard to comprehend this day is at an end  
Now the skies turn gray  
Winter's coming, depressing weather  
The seasons change to my dismay  
The fog hangs over us like a feather  
This will be over soon I pray  
We shed our summer skin  
We will meet some other time, okay  
What a great season it has been  
Our happiness fades away,  
No more summer shorts  
Our winter coats on display  
No more summer sports  
We leave behind our peaceful nights  
All those silly fights  
And the beautiful sights,  
Oh what a bummer,  
We will miss you summer.

*Image by Miranda Hald*

# MY CAMERA

*by Scott Stevenson*

Shutter  
Point,  
Lock,  
Compose,  
Focus,  
Shutter,  
Repeat.

My camera  
This tool I hold in my hands  
A brilliant balance between  
precision  
speed  
and  
creativity.  
My art.

A sculpture cannot create,  
Without his chisel.  
I cannot create,  
Without my camera when I have my camera  
I call the shots.  
My camera turns my idea  
Into my image.

My Shutter  
My Point  
My Look  
My Composition  
My Focus  
My Shutter  
My Camera



*Photography by Trent Haaland*

# Mirror

*By Xavier Vaca*

Hanging from the wall  
So inanimate  
But watching the small  
And square world around.  
It's gateway to the outside,  
Glossing and opening,  
Day in and day out.  
Seeing what comes  
And goes.  
Only friend is a boy  
Who comes only in the dark  
And leaves  
In the light.  
Grateful to have you  
Mirror, mirror;  
Hanging from the wall  
So innocent and comforting.  
The boy always sees  
Mirror, mirror;  
Day in and day out.  
Giving advice which  
Words cannot say  
How excellent you are  
Day in  
And day out.  
Never looking down,  
But on equal terms.  
Mirror, mirror,  
You are my friend

*Photograph by Morgan Cunneen*

# WISHED AWAY

*by Courtney Megison*

Blood sheds and tears drip  
mixed around in a never ending twist  
lit above me like a beaming bliss  
set across the sky  
like a graceful wish.

Unknown meanings not told on pages  
hopes unfilled by meager wages  
young and dying by these hard time ages  
everyone imprisoned  
in lives cruel cages.

Smoke filled skies and silent thoughts  
our heads hung low  
to not get caught.

Beautiful faces covered in dirt  
our hands kept busy  
our minds alert

Every night a dreaded dream  
or a wretched nightmare is what life seemed.

Closed my eyes and wished away  
but every waking moment  
this is where i stayed.



*Artwork by Elena Mora*



*Artwork by Anja Magnusson*

# THE WALL

*by Jessie Combs*

Up against a wall  
no where to go,  
how dare you put me there  
scared and angry ready to blow  
but I stay calm  
you're puzzled  
I will wait to strike as I did before  
this time it will be harder,  
faster, meaner  
but today I leave with a smile,  
a plan and you  
up against the wall.



“You don’t take a *photograph*,  
you make it.”

–*Ansel Adams*

**Seeing is what it’s about!**

**Through the Lens**  
*Photos by Trent Haaland*





*by Delaney Wallace*

The sailors of these boats had a long, dreaded night. They were sailing to find an island that they heard of in stories and legends. Some of the men spent most of their lives trying to figure out a way to adventure the seas and find this mystical piece of land. After sailing for a little over two months they were beginning to get restless and becoming desperate to find the island. The stories they were told growing up said the island was about three hundred miles west of the land they walked on. They would sit on cliffs and dream of the days when they would get an opportunity to go out into

the raging ocean and search for Mystery Island. The elders of their village told them that centuries before their existence, their ancestors thought that there must be more to this life than surviving on this savage land. They spent months adventuring the seas, daring to go far from their home but one night a terrible storm swept them far away and they had no idea where they were. They were beginning to starve and wanted nothing more than to be with their people. Then one morning they washed up on a beach on the island. Two men survived the journey to and on the island and were able to find their way back to tell the stories. No one ever knew how

# Opinion

ETRETAT BY CLAUDE MONET, 1883

they managed to come home, they died months later from some kind of disease.

Now a group of brave and adventurous young men were leaving to search for the island and see if they can find the place of danger and journeys. The morning they left will be one I will never forget, the man I was to marry in a couple months was forced to go by his family. We were young and in love, nothing could keep us apart until now... we spent months together in the fields, we both learned so much about each other and then we fell in love and trust me we fell hard. When his father decided that he would go on the journey we were both devastated, and both knew the risks of him going. Most of them weren't expected to make it home. We all knew this but no one wanted to admit it, we were all terrified of losing someone we love. Micah and I spent long nights together and every spare second we could before his departure. The boats were moved up on to the beach the night before because of a storm that was coming.

*by Katie Weaver*

I wonder about the sand of the beach. The water slowly covers my feet as I shiver in shock. The waters were no good for sailing on this day I thought to me. I should just swim instead. As I enter the cold waters I suddenly notice something beneath my feet. I realize it's a jellyfish. I then run out of the water screaming like a little girl.

*by Nate Rose*

This painting is beautiful in what it represents. It conveys a sense of calm, at the same time the weathered rock face in the distance shows the raw power of the ocean. The boats and fishermen on the beach show that, while the sea rages against rock and sand, the fishermen coexist with it, taking what they need in order to feed themselves and make a living.

STUDENTS WRITE STORIES  
ABOUT GREAT WORKS OF ART



# in dæstrēæl

The future and the past

*Photograph by Justin Dolleton*



*Photograph by Morgan Cunneen*



*Photograph by Diana Visco*

# ODE TO TEA

*By Kyle Beem*

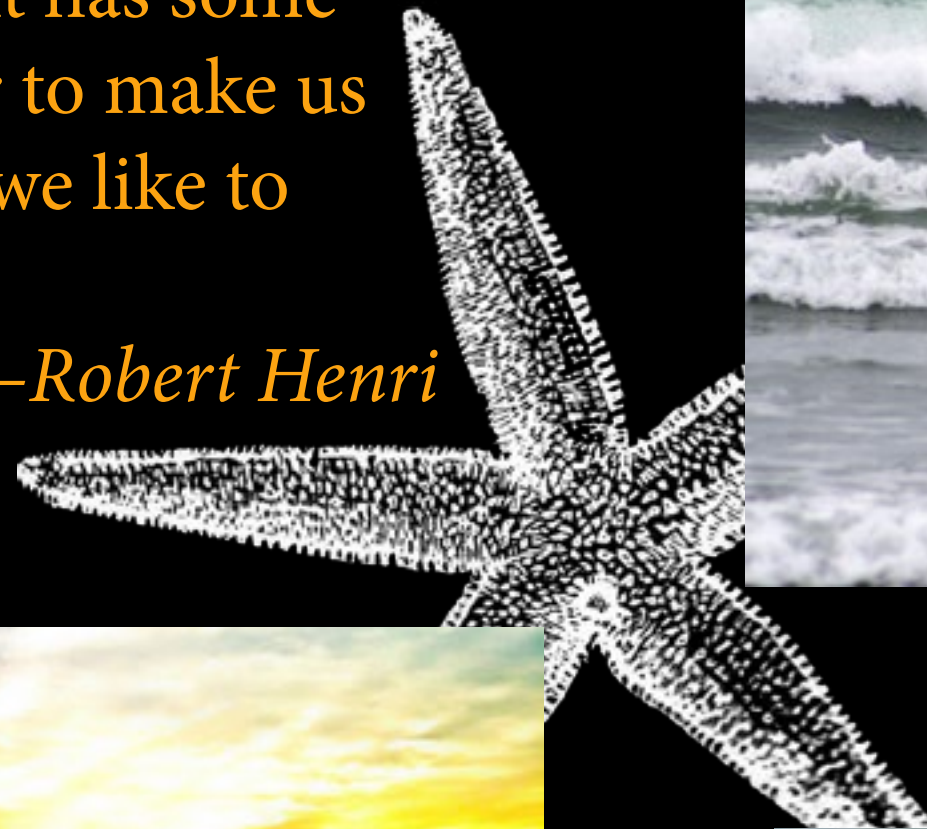


*Artwork by Samantha Saldivar*

a clear pool of liquid  
imprisoned within a mug  
ripples tenderly along its ceramic banks  
as its silver sister whistles softly on the stove,  
spewing steamy wisps  
that cling to the walls  
and returns  
back to a teardrop.  
quietly, gently,  
color gushes  
from the delicate paper bag  
that had cradled fine herbs for many years before,  
and the restrained sea shifts  
to colors as beautiful as a rose.  
dispensing aromas  
of spices and fruits  
and quiet mornings spent laying beneath the sun  
and soon,  
the whole kitchen smells  
of Sundays and blue skies.  
slowly, a pair of lips  
find the edge of the ocean  
and tips the blushing waves  
into its mouth,  
which smiles  
as berries and herbs  
surprise the boundaries  
of its tongue  
tea slides down the throat  
spreading warmth in abundance  
throughout your fingertips  
down to your toes.  
slowly, the crimson  
tides disappear altogether  
until the only memories are lost.  
herbs huddled at the bottom of the mug,  
the lingering scent of a flawless morning  
and a satisfied smile  
with red-stained lips.

“ Why do we love the sea?  
It is because it has some  
potent power to make us  
think things we like to  
think. ”

—Robert Henri



*Photograph by Brianna White*



*Photograph by Rachel Killion*



*Photograph by Jessica Smith*

# Uncategorized Works

*Artwork by Elle Schoelkopf*

*Artwork by Elle S Siblings*



*Artwork by Allison Ball*



# TREES OF SUMMER



*Photographs by Jessica Read  
From the Nature Collection*

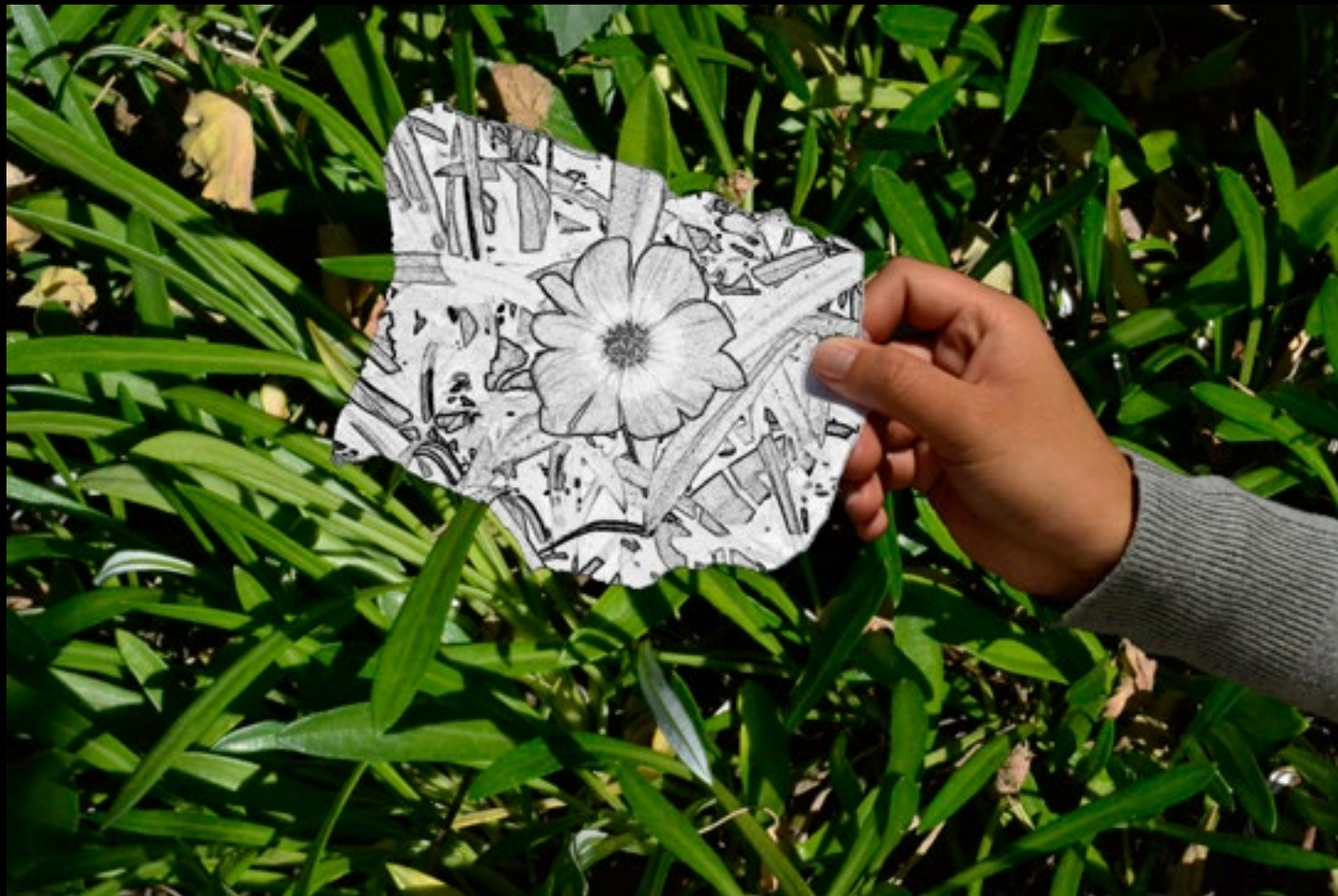


*Photography by Tia Rivera*



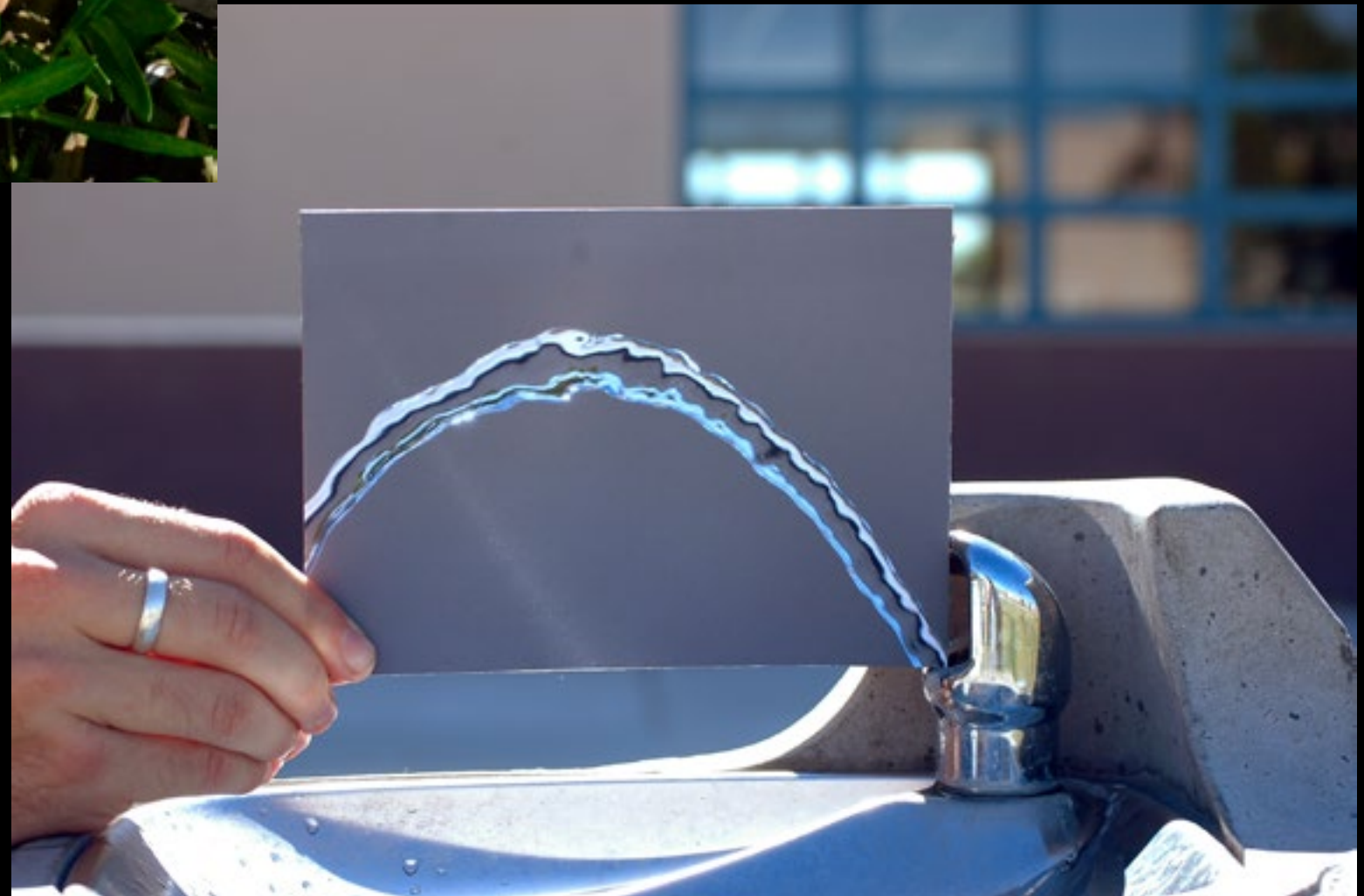


# Perception of Reality



*Photograph by Tiffany Alaniz*

“Every closed eye is not  
sleeping, and every open  
eye is not seeing.”  
—Bill Cosby



*Photograph by Freddy Gomez*

# The Wolf

by Dimitri Davis

We stand in a circle inside the mayors office. We need his permission to do anything else involving this case. To my left is Chief Bayton, head of this investigation, and he has looked after me ever since I finished my basic training. He is a big guy with brown eyes and graying brown hair.

“Tallon,” he pulls his shirt down to conceal his gun, “go find out if it’s time for the meeting yet.”

I nod and walk past Thompson and Fletcher, the other two members of our task force. Thompson looks at me, “And get me a beer if you see one, I’m thirsty.”

I smile. Since I’m the youngest member of this team and the newest recruit, I end up being treated more like a butler and less like a police officer to Thompson and Fletcher, but they were just joking.

Fletcher elbows Thompson, “We’re here to get permission to investigate the city, not for you to get drunk! Plus, why would there be beer here?”

As I walk away I hear them both laugh.

I give a polite knock on the door in front of me and a secretary opens it.

“Oh, you’re already here? O.K. I will let Mayor Black know.”

She turns around and goes to her desk.

I turn and go back to stand next to Chief Bayton.

He nods to acknowledge me.

I look at the floor, “Do you already know what you’re going to say to him?”

He doesn’t change his expression, “Yes, I’ve done this kind of stuff a million times before.”

“No, not Mayor Black. The other guy, Mr. Vexer.”

Thompson looks to me, “Dang it, Tallon, stop talking about him. We’ll get to him when we get to him!”

Remudi Vexer is supposedly the most intelligent person of our time, he was some great scientist or something, but one day his wife died and he was accused of killing her. He ended up being innocent, but they say he wasn’t the same. He then moved to the mountains next to Blackreach, the town we are investigating in, and left his 12 year old daughter to move to the Capital City with her only living relatives.

“O.K.” I say, “I’m sorry.”

Chief Bayton looks at me, “Don’t be, we really should be thinking on how we approach the situati--”

The door opens and the same secretary calls, “Mr. Black is ready for you!”

We all shuffle through the door and then into Mayor Black’s office.

“Charles!” the Mayor calls to Chief Bayton. “It’s been too long!”

They shake hands.

“Yes it has old friend. How’ve you been?”

Mayor Black gestures to some chairs, “All of you take a seat, get comfortable.”

We comply. Mayor Black and Chief Bayton exchange stories about the past couple of years, about their families and whatnot. But then Chief Bayton gets down to business, “So Marcus, about why we’re here.”

Mayor Black takes a more serious composure, “Yes yes, I’ve heard all about your investigation. That Manuel Salamonca guy, yeesh. He sounds terrible! But I don’t want my citizens to get uneasy. What does he have to do with Blackreach? We are two cities away from all of that drug business.”

The Chief explains, “Yes, the capital city is where everything is happening, but we just want to have

a chat with one of your residents, maybe get some help.”

Mayor Black stands up. “Of course you can have a little look around, just be quick, O.K.?”

“Thank you very much.”

\*\*\*

We’re now standing outside Remudi’s house. We had to hike up two hours worth of dirt to get here. We are all tired, sweaty and annoyed.

I fidget my hands. “Maybe you should knock again.”

Thompson knocks again. “That is the fourth time, I bet he isn’t even home!”

Chief Bayton looks at Fletcher, “Fletcher, let me see the bag please.”

Thompson smiles, “It’s O.K. chief, you can call it a purse, Fletcher won’t get offended.”

Fletcher twitches. “It’s a satchel!”

“Purse!”

“Satchel!”

“Purse!”

Chief Bayton looks up. “Just give me the bag!”

Fletcher hands it over, and the Chief takes out a nightstick.

Thompson’s eyes get wide, “Wait, are we really doing this?”

“Yep,” says the Chief as he breaks the window right next to the door. “Everybody in.”

I am searching with Fletcher, downstairs, while Chief Bayton and Thompson search upstairs. I don’t know exactly what we’re searching for, just something that might let us know where Remudi went, or when he might be back. I look on his coffee table. All I see are blueprints, formulas and gibberish that are for more advanced minds than mine. I notice that we are in the kitchen because there is a sink, and no toilet,

—The Wolf continues



# Stories

by Jackie Hempleman

Words imprinted  
On glowing pages  
Keeping secrets  
Sharing stories  
Edged with gold  
Bound with brown leather  
Trapping me inside  
Like a fly in a spider's web  
Pulling me deeper  
With every shared clue  
Making me think  
Letting me see  
A stunning escape  
Into a different  
Time.

Time passing quickly  
The "real" world stops  
For a time  
Showing the obvious.  
With fantastical ease  
Playing with characters pairing  
the greatest strengths  
With the most crippling weaknesses  
Flawless.  
The "real" world  
Demands attention  
But their world  
Still beckons

Photograph by Jessica Smith



# Books

Teagan Lilly Bullard

All paper  
And ink  
And words  
The weight of imagination  
In a dreamer's hands  
Soft paper  
Black ink  
Whispered words  
a writer's gift to me.

The smells of knowledge  
And of fiction  
Of dust  
Of ghosts  
Of stories  
A new life begins  
New breath to breathe  
Still dust  
Quiet ghosts  
And aging stories  
The anticipation  
Of turning a page

Words like honey  
Stick to my lips  
Stick in my brain  
Rest in my lungs  
A language thick and sweet  
A Writers sharp  
Witty tongue

# These Keys

*by Jeff Seeburger*

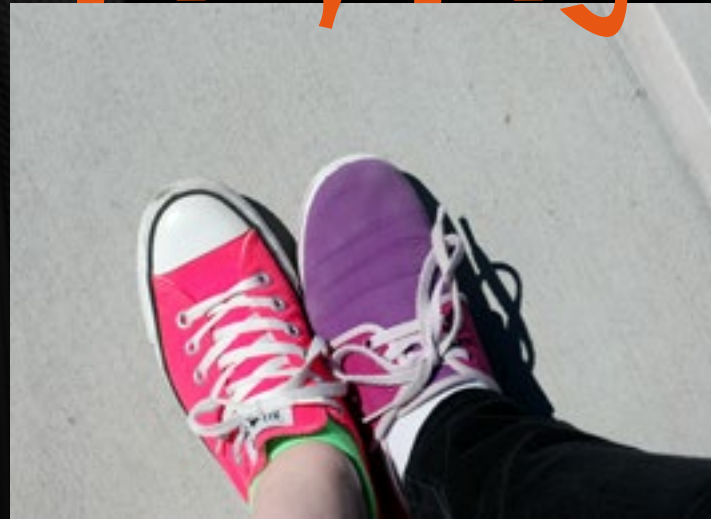


*Photograph by Jessica Smith*

Keyboard, a gift from my mom,  
Unexpected, yet exactly what I want.  
Never taken lessons  
No idea what I'm doing.  
Just feeling the keys,  
Hardly hitting notes.  
Never harmonizing,  
But the sweet softness  
Of the keys  
Kept me going.  
Start off with grand piano,  
An echoing sound.  
Move on to add tremolo,  
Sharp, cut-throat sounds.  
Ever reverberating in the room,  
Only to stop when I release.  
Working my fingers from black to white,  
Black to white.

Keys.  
Chords.  
Harmony.  
Everything I love about it.  
Cold plastic and rubber buttons,  
Caress them to find my sound.  
Rolling my fingers across the keys,  
Clicking as I press plastic to plastic.  
I feel the cold, yet inviting touch.  
Always wanting to hold on,  
Never wanting to let go,  
Of these keys.

# Me, MySELF, and SHOES



‘The time has come,’ the walrus said, ‘to talk of many things: of shoes and ships—and sealing wax—of cabbages and kings.’

—Lewis Carroll

Images by Jessica Read  
Shoes by Stacy Pittman

### **In Our Pursuit continued**

The warden assigned to Kay held her arm firmly as he walked behind her to the temple doors. Kay retorted, "Not so much force. You're as though you were to come at me." She smiled, cockily.

The double doors were Precursor-made. Large, covered in glass. They had no lock, and their handles extended the width of them. When the stringent pair reached the door, Kay extended her arm to open it. Her escort did not make any motion to stop her. She pushed on the heavy metal bar, and walked inside. The guard followed, catching the door when he passed.

They went through an entranceway into the main room of the Hall. Here, where Kay had come so many times as a child, she had always felt a long instilled

sense of belonging, and now again. Given, it was a Hall of Reverence, a place for pleas and consolation. Oh mighty Precursors, she thought, you thought well when you built this Hall. It is as if you wanted it to be a home, not just a temple.

In the main room, Kay

beseached the warden. "I won't try to run," she urged him. At that, he let his hand off of her. Then, Kay took her time in the place she loved. It may be my last.

The floor was a fine mixture of blue and green, and made of some animal hide. Kay fell down on her knees, stroking it in childlike wonderment. The stuff always shocked one's hands. She looked up to the myriad rows of metal chairs, lined in the same blue-green material as the floor. There were at least 300 of them. Then she brought herself to her feet, and walked through the aisle made by the two groups of chairs.

At the end of the aisle was a raised platform, and on the ceiling above it hung two giant blank canvases. Kay could never understand why they hung so high. Perhaps the Precursors were much taller than us, she thought. After all, it was perfectly plausible. No one had any idea how large they were; the statues they built featured every size. No one had any idea what limits there were on the magic they could conjure.

In between the two canvases, hung high on the back wall,

was a sculpture in the likeness of a man. Kilja, Kay thought. According to the Storytellers, that was the name of this bearded man who hung on the wall. Naked but for a loin cloth. Crowned in some inglorious, irregular headpiece. Hands bound to a wooden cross. Face bloodied by his own right. It was not known why he was hung from the cross of wood, nor why his image in this position was so revered. For ages, Storytellers have groped in the darkness for an answer, but the Precursors had been silent.

Kay sighed heavily, remembering the reason she fought so hard. Parsa is no Storyteller, she thought. He has no right to the throne. She again fell to her knees. And his actions show it. Ever so calmly, quietly, tears began their humble lives in her eyes once again. Oh Kilja, she cried, show us a way to end this. Let me succeed, now. So many have died, sacrificed their lives for this. The tears ran down her face now, pouring uncontrollably as she remembered those who had died at the new Duke's hand. Is that what you did, Kilja? Sacrificed yourself? She thought. Why

else would you be on this wall in such a state?

Kay looked up at the sculpture of Kilja. You must have had a cause too. People must have missed you when you died, even though they knew it was for a higher calling. Her own words stung like thorns. I know I should not put my father's life above the thousands of other lives in Dauskora, but he did not need to die.

That was just the notion. No one needs to die. Any innocent person, as well as my father, deserves life. Kay then closed her eyes, stemming the flow of tears. That is why we fought. To prevent any further death. That is why my father fought and died, and why I fought also. Purging her tears away with her hands, she turned around, to the guard who stood waiting in the booth at the rear of the Hall. Why I still...she reminded herself. Fight. The word was branded into her mind. It lingered into fullness, strengthening her for the adversity she knew was ahead.

Thank you, Kilja, Kay thought in appreciation. Then she walked off the stage and back down the aisle, where her warden met her. She was

taken outside to reunite with the minister and the rest of the party, and they started promptly off again.

Not more than a few steps on their way, Metas questioned Kay. "What did they say?" He knew that she would not reveal anything of use to the guards, but anything could be helpful now.

"The Precursors told me that I should not mourn my father" is all she said. Oh, but how hard that is. I cannot think of a greater man to have raised me. Before she knew it, they were in the center square. Kay was torn from her thoughts by a sound of lament. She looked right, to a hurriedly-erected gallows. Three men stood in the noose. Two were already hanging. Kay quickly looked away, trying her best to shut out the sound as well as the sight. There had been far too much hanging of late.

When they came close enough, Kay set her eyes on the Precursor statue that stood proudly at the center of the square. It depicted two men, whose names were not recognized, clad in strange Precursor garb, with their hands

—In Our Pursuit continues

### In Our Pursuit continued

clasped together. The plaque on the pedestal below them bore words in the lost Precursor language. Those words were not among the many whose meaning the Precursors had revealed to the Storytellers. The Precursors show what they want and hide what they want, Kay thought. The riddle of the weird shapes on that plaque was yet still unsolved. And so it is with my father.

She did not know how her father had died. He had simply disappeared after being discovered for plotting against the government. No body was found, but any fool could reason that Parsa was behind it. Precursors, she cried out, with all your magic, could you not bring him back? The words hung in the cold winter air as they moved steadily away from the center of the square.

The rest of the march to the palace was a haze for Kay. She chose to stay with her thoughts, distancing herself from reality. She filed the rest of the way with her arms wrapped around her belly, and her shoulders hunched up against her neck and head, for this winter was

fierce, and her wear was but thin garments and a short cropping of hair.

Soon, she was made to stop, and she briefly forced her dear thoughts away to behold what was before her. The palace. A huge, rectangular building, with weird columns in the front instead of walls, and an odd dome on top. Obviously a Precursor building. The guards standing at the gates let Jerras through, and his men followed with Metas and Kay.

As the gates were closed, both Kay and Metas were blindfolded by Jerras' men. With the final clanging of metal behind them, a true feeling of entrapment began to gnaw at the captives' bones. The only thing they could then be sure of was their walk down the garden-view path and entrance into the palace.

Inside, it was much warmer, as Jerras told them that a fire had been lit in nearly every room. This was of little comfort to Metas and Kay, though. They were led to a long hallway, and each put in a separate room, alone, where they were told to "wait here". Kay assumed that Jerras had gone to speak with Parsa, for she at least

was a prize for the likes of his military force. Second only to Garun Desh in the command chain of the resistance, since her father's death.

She did not know how much time had passed before she was alerted to the creak of a door and footsteps. Then the chair on the opposite side of the table was pulled out, and groaned at the sudden weight of a body. Her blindfold was removed. Jerras was the body in the chair across from her.

Kay moved her own chair closer to the table. "So you're going to do the honors?" she asked rhetorically.

"I conjecture, yes," the minister responded. He put his elbows on the table, and interlaced his fingers. "A simple start. How long had you been living at 431 Y Street?"

Kay did as Jerras had done with his elbows and fingers. Had? I did not think you were that bad with grammar, minister, Kay thought. "A few months. What does it matter? I moved after I lost my father."

Jerras continued, "In that time, were you in any way connected to a storing of weapons for the—"

"Oh, come now, Jerras",

shouted Kay, slamming her hands to the table. "You know I'm a member of the underground military resistance, and even if you only suspected it, that suspicion would be thought sufficient enough to kill me." She sat back in her chair. "Now, I've got an execution to get to, so let's quicken the pace of this. What do you really want from me?"

Kay narrowed her eyes. How simple-minded can the Anti-terrorism minister be? she thought.

Jerras responded to Kay in a like manner. What do you hide, Miss Ash? As though the Precursors had given him the answer, he knew it then. "You have no intention of being executed, do you?" he asked.

"Of course not", the reply came lively and jostling.

Jerras began to laugh. His was a snickering jeer, whose timbre lacerated her ears. Kay did not join the minister, for unlike him, she held hopefully to the notion that her execution would not come, that it could be escaped, however imaginary that notion was. "I cannot fathom your logic, Kay, but I am sure it serves you well," he

In Our Pursuit continues

said after his convulsive bout of amusement. "I have only one question." His intensely sober gravity returned. "What is in the book?" Jerras thought. The book at your house, which seemed so important to you even when you were in my custody. Do not lie to me now, Miss Ash.

Kay returned her arms to the table, her eyes then drilled into Jerras'. She answered intently, declaratively. "Dreams."

Jerras was forced back. "Dreams?" he repeated.

"My father's dreams," Kay replied, still in the same willful state. "He had strange ones of" she paused for thought, "men and women on the backs of beasts, colorful flying carriages, endless water and bright buildings that stretch beyond the sky, and light up in the night." Kay knew that Jerras must have thought the same that she thought. Her father's dreams were of the Precursor past.

Jerras looked at Kay then with pure curiosity. "Only Storytellers have dreams like those," he uttered.

"I know", said Kay. "But his were different still. In each of my father's dreams were..."

—In Our Pursuit continues

### The Circlet continued

deep into the cat's chest.

Wincing, he scooped up his bow from the floor and examined his surroundings. The shadows around him were lengthening and the temperature dropped as the sun set—it was time to leave. He figured he would return in the morning to retrieve the cat's carcass—a decent leopard skin would fetch a fair price in the village. As he bent over to retrieve the precious sack of venison, a clump of bracken, about four or five yards away, shivered with the movement of some creature.

The fight with the leopard had left him nervous and jumpy. He dropped the canvas and seized another arrow from his quiver. The smooth wood grain slid through Joshua's hand as he drew back the bowstring. All of his senses honed in on the rustling, he took his mark. Just as he was about to release the tension, a bundle of auric and inky black fur tumbled from the underbrush. The tiny, whimpering frame of a leopard cub cowered before him.

—Return to the beginning

### In Our Pursuit continued

She did not know how to describe it, just as her father did not know. She sighed. "Sounds. Colorful, high and low, loud and soft, fast and slow." She took a breath. "Like you would do with your voice at times. Moving, only..." she sighed again at the sheer complexity of it. "Emotional."

"That is something," was all Jerras could say. It vexed him as much as her. He took his gaze from Kay then, and looked to the distance behind her.

Kay too broke sight with her counterpart. Following his sightline, she looked out of the window behind her. "What is that?" she asked no one in particular, astounded at the sight she was met with.

Jerras answered her, his tone expressing the same wonderment. "Snowfall."

Kay heard his chair slide across the floor, and his footsteps and as he went to the window. "It happened once in my childhood," Jerras told. "There have only been a handful of them on record."

It was wondrous. Like rain, but slow and white, Kay thought. As though the essence

of the heavens is making its ceremonial pilgrimage to Earth. "Why does it happen?" asked Kay.

"Only the Precursors know that," Jerras responded. "Snow only falls during the coldest days of the harshest winters."

"Precursor magic," Kay whispered.

Then, Jerras did not know what compelled him to speak his next words, but he uttered them in some kind of conviction. "He is not dead, Kay."

At that, she was wrenched away from the magic of the sky, and focused on Jerras. "Your father, he may yet live," he said again.

Jerras could plainly see Kay's countenance turn from simple wonder to rage. "Don't play with me—"

"I'm not playing. I don't know how Parsa did it," said Jerras, "but he took your father, Solan Ash, away from Dauskora."

Kay stared at the minister in disbelief. "Outside the city wall?"

"Outside the city wall," Jerras repeated. "He says there is a world out there. Endless water, skyward buildings. It's all out there, beyond us." Jerras

kept his eyes on Kay, but left his hands to their own devices. "Parsa took Solan out there, and left him I know not where."

Kay was still trying to grasp the initial statement. "This is true?"

"Kay," Jerras' voice lightened in an attempt at sincerity, "there is nothing I believe to be truer. I dearly wish you" he stopped to gather himself again "all of us, could go and see it." Then he added, "You cannot think I am so low as to lie to you now, do you?"

Kay only looked into his eyes. "How can you expect an answer to that?" she asked him. Then she quickly tore away from his gaze, and wondered aloud, "He may live?"

Jerras sighed. "As Parsa tells it, the world outside the wall is not scheduled, not organized. There are no Storytellers to interpret the Precursor's will. It is wild and unmerciful."

Kay smiled, and she returned her hard glare to Jerras. "What tenaciousness can nature hold that my father cannot throw back a hundredfold?"

Jerras' only reply was, "Think about it." Then, he walked to the door, and opened it. At the doorway, he hesitated,

and turned to her once again. "Do not ponder too long. You have an execution to get to." With those words as the last to hang about, along with all else they had spoken, he left Kay to make whatever she would out of them.

Standing against the wall outside, he heard her move her voice slowly up and down. A comforting sound.

—Return to the beginning



Photograph by Angelica Pena

### The Wolf continued

so it is definitely a kitchen. Except there is no refrigerator, the only food is a basket of fruit. It's a lot harder starting a conversation with Fletcher than I thought. It should be easy right? He is the youngest on the team besides me, he's probably in his mid-twenties, but we really don't have much in common besides work. He spends his free time either with different ladies every day or bragging to Thompson about his new car. But Fletcher is still a good guy, I'm glad to be a part of a team with him.

The front door opens, and my heart skips a beat. Fletcher has stopped moving too. A man with a deer hung over his shoulder walks in. He has cold blue eyes. His hair is long and black. He looks like he's in about his mid thirties. He walks with a limp in his left leg, and a slouched back. My first thought is me wondering how he can carry something so big with so little effort. That's a freaking deer! How did he even kill it? I don't see a gun or even a sword. I just see a deer with a lot of blood on it.

He makes eye contact with

me. "Why are you in here?" he says it so calmly it's scary.

"I-um-we..." I try to speak.

Fletcher speaks up, "We were waiting for you, Mr. Vexer. You are Remudi Vexer, right?"

He just stares at us.

The Chief and Thompson come downstairs.

The Chief looks surprised, "Hello, my name is Charles Bayton. I'm here with Richard Thompson, Mike Fletcher and James Tallon. We're police officers who are trying to catch Manuel Salamonca. You know, the Capital City councilman and President of that hunting and camping company."

Remudi cuts him off, "Yes, yes, I know about Salamonca. But what I don't know is why you are in my house."

The Chief explains, "Well we need your help. We don't have any tangible evidence of any of Salamonca's crimes."

"But you know he did them?" Remudi asked, not believing us.

I remember Salamonca very well. It was my first mission- no it wasn't even my first mission, I was just a ride-along, an observer. Their was an anonymous tip, that Salamonca's business was a cover up for a

drug business. So the Chief, Fletcher, Garcia and about 4 other cops ( plus myself, but I was just a ride along) went to Salamonca's factory where they made the camping and hunting materials, and confronted him. He told us that we were wrong but we were free to search. We did, and we were about to leave, when The Chief discovered a hidden hallway. Before we could proceed there was a shootout. He killed all of us except the Chief, Garcia, Fletcher and I. We had escaped. But of course when we charged him, he had covered his tracks perfectly. No hidden passages. No cop bodies. No drugs. He used his status as a councilman to clear his name. The only way to pursue him was to make a Task Force separate from the police. Garcia stayed with the police, but promised to give us help when he can in exchange for any news on Salamonca.

The Chief looked Remudi in the eyes, "He killed my partners, he is a drug lord, and we are going to kill him. But we need your help. You are a genius, and we can really use a genius right now."

Remudi set the deer down, "You need to leave first. Meet

me tomorrow at the Windjammer Café in the center of Blackreach city. I need to eat right now." I couldn't help but look at that big deer. Is he really going to eat that? And with what? I don't see any stoves, ovens or even a fire place.

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The Windjammer Café is a really cool place. The food is awesome. The drinks are awesome. The music is awesome. The people are awesome. I really love this place! The only problem is that Remudi isn't willing to help us. The Chief, Fletcher and Thompson are all trying to convince him to help. I have tuned out as I watch a couple argue a few tables down. The man looks like he is trying to explain something to her, but she won't listen. I tune back in to the conversation at my table.

The Chief is talking, "...only be for a couple of days, then you can come back to Blackreach and live out the rest of your life."

Remudi just shakes his head, "I'm sorry about your situation, but I just don't see why this is my problem. I'm sorry Mr. Bayton, but my final answer is no."

The Chief looks down at his napkin, "This is your problem because just a couple of days ago, your daughter Avery Vexer was kidnapped, and the only evidence was the logo of Salamonca's company drawn on her door."

Remudi slowly looks up to meet the chief's eyes, "You," he speaks very slowly, "tell me that you're lying."

The chief shakes his head.

"Then why didn't you tell me earlier?" Remudi asks. His voice is still calm, but in that calmness is underlying anger.

"We had hoped that you would come around, and we could tell you at a more appropriate time."

Remudi now clenched his fork, "I will help you catch Salamonca."

I was expecting him to say something more, but he doesn't.

The chief's expression lightens, "Thank you. When will you be ready to leave?"

"Right after I finish my coffee."

The Chief nods to Fletcher, and Fletcher takes a walkie-talkie out of his pocket and speaks into it, "Garcia, we have

—The Wolf continues

### The Wolf continued

Mr. Vexer on our side. Requesting an evac from Blackreach.”

A pause. Then Garcia talks back, “I have tickets for you on the train from Blackreach to the Capital. The train leaves in 4 hours, you better make it.”

\*\*\*

The train ride back to the Capital was eventless. We’re now sitting in a circle in a meeting room. Garcia, Remudi and the Chief are going over some plans while I sit here bored. Remudi is no doubt intelligent, but I don’t see why we needed to go out of our way to get him. But Garcia was adamant about not going on without him. The reflection in the window shows that my hair is a shade darker blonde than Fletcher’s. I am really bored, so far the only thing that I’ve gotten out of this meeting is that the Chief has a score to settle with Manuel Salamonca, and that was before the shootout where I was involved. I tune back in when they start talking about how they are going to get Salamonca. It’s Garcia talking, “...in two days, I believe that

would be the ideal time and place. I’m not sure if we’ll get another chance.”

Chief Bayton seems to agree, “That sounds like a plan, Remudi do you have any input?”

Remudi looks as bored as I am, “Not that I’m complaining, but why am I here if that guy, Garcia is it?, has everything already planned out?”

Chief Bayton replies, “Well, I-”

Garcia interrupts him, “You are a genius, and he has your daughter, so I thought if I offered you the chance to help, why not have another man on the team?”

“Speaking of my daughter, I talked to her aunt and uncle earlier on the train ride, and they have a lot of problems on their hands, it would be nice if the city’s government would help them financially.”

About 40 years ago the world was full of problems, the biggest one being the great plague, and after everything was said and done, civilization had been reduced to newly formed city-states, the biggest and most powerful being the plague-free Capital City. Since it is run by 13, coming and

going, councilmen of equal power, it is a little hard to give a steady flow of income to those who need it.

Garcia said, “Sure I can try to arrange that. Back to the plan, in two days the five of you will wait for Salamonca to visit his son in the hospital, and on his way to the parking lot afterwards, you will confront him, and make him confess to his crimes against the city.”

We all nodded and that was that.

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We are all in position. We are all hiding in several locations throughout the parking lot. It is eight minutes past when he was supposed to be here and we are all getting very nervous. I am about to ask for the Chief, when I look to where he was supposed to be and see him being put on his knees by two armed men. I look around and I see it happening to all of us. And yet I’m still surprised when two guards are forcing me down. I hear yelling, but my ears are ringing and I can hear my heartbeat. Salamonca walks out and orders the guards to line us all up. Thompson and

the Chief struggle. Remudi is not at all fit enough to fight back, Fletcher probably knows it is no use, and I am in shock of how this went wrong.

They line us all up and Salamonca stands over Remudi, “It has been too long Mr. Vexer. You should not have left during our contract. I would kill you now, but our contract must still be fulfilled.”

Contract? What is he talking about? Remudi knows Salamonca?

Salamonca stands over the Chief, “Charles Bayton, I would kill you, but our long history hasn’t been forgotten, and you haven’t finished suffering yet.”

Next in line is me. He looks at me square in the eyes, “Newbie, it is too early in your career to kill you, I want you to watch how the world works before you die.”

He stands in between Fletcher and Thompson, “And that leaves you two.” He takes a revolver out of his pocket, and takes a coin out of his other pocket. “Heads, you,” he nods to Thompson, “and tails, you,” he says to Fletcher.

The Chief starts struggling but one of Salamonca’s guards hits him with the back of his

gun. Salamonca flips the coin.

“Heads. Looks like this is it for you mi amigo,” he turns to Fletcher. “You will be useful for me later,” and now back to Thompson. “Before I kill you, you should know why you died. Because your man, Carlos Garcia, works for me.” Thompson’s eyes widen. Salamonca puts the gun to Thompson’s head and squeezes the trigger.

My eyes are closed but the sound of the gun still rings in my head. The guards load us up in a newly arrived truck. I still don’t understand how this happened. Garcia a traitor? And Thompson...dead. Thompson and I had our differences, but he would have taken a bullet for me, and given the chance, I for him. I look at Fletcher, he was closer to Thompson than I. He has rage in his eyes. He is looking at Remudi, and if our hands weren’t bound, it looks like he would attack him, “You worked with Salamonca? You piece of trash! Explain yourself!”

Remudi looked down, “Years ago, when I worked as a scientist for Blackreach City, Salamonca was just starting out his hunting company. He told me

—The Wolf continues



## The Wolf continued

that he would pay me a large sum of money if I could create something that would give humans the senses of a wolf - Nature's hunter. I tried and tried. I succeeded, I had injected myself as a test. I, myself, had taken the form of a wolf and lost control and killed my wife, and almost my daughter too. She wasn't safe with me, so I sent her to live with my wife's sister. I left Blackreach because I didn't know if I would ever be able to control the random outbreaks of turning into a wolf. I did eventually, but sometimes it creeps up on me and I don't want anyone to be around me when it does. And unfortunately for Salamonca, I had destroyed the formula when I realized what horrible thing I created. He probably wants my formula to create it and have an army of wolf-men to stop anyone in his way to making the capital city a monarchy- oh and now it all makes sense. He reports an anonymous drug search on his own company and kills the cops, but leaves a few to seek revenge. He makes sure to kidnap my daughter, and have Garcia request to get

me on the team. And I bet Garcia is the one who pushed for this task force to be made."

The Chief sat there, looking defeated, "It has been about getting you this whole time, we were just pawns."

\*\*\*

I have no idea how long it's been. Days? Weeks? Months? We're being kept in a large room. It is separated into three parts by thick glass walls. One of them is like a hotel, with a table, a few chairs, and even a TV. That's where The Chief and I live. One part is like an exhibit in the zoo, with plants, trees, bushes and some dummies. That's where they're keeping Fletcher. And the last part is a laboratory, where Remudi works on the formula. The days have gone by the same. We sit and watch the news on the TV and every couple of hours they bring us food. About once every three days, Remudi comes up with a new formula to replicate the transformation that he has, but with more control. Salamonca injects Fletcher with it, and is unimpressed by the results. From what I can tell, Remudi can turn Fletcher in

to a wolf, but can't seem to get him to be able to control himself while he's a wolf. I tune into the news, and yet again watch another story about the hunt for Avery Vexer. The ironic part of it all is that it's Salamonca's soldiers who are doing the searching, so the ones who kidnapped her are the ones responsible for finding her. But the headlines in red read:

Breaking News! Avery Vexer has been rescued!

"Chief," I say "hurry, look!"

He looks up from the book he is reading. The reporter on TV speaks.

"The man has not yet been identified. All we know is that he took this young girl to a cottage on the outskirts of the Capital. Councilmen Salamonca ordered his men to get her back safely at all costs. We have a picture, but warning, it may be graphic to some viewers." A picture flashes on the screen, and I fill with rage.

The picture is Thompson. He is lying on the floor, dead. Blood is everywhere and a young girl with jet black hair, and piercing blue eyes is next to him, also covered in blood. It is Avery.

The reporter speaks again,

"Once he realized he had been trapped, the man held Avery at gunpoint, but an experienced sniper had the perfect shot."

I look behind me, and see Salamonca, Remudi and three armed guards also watching the TV. Salamonca is smiling, "You see, I always honor my end of the bargain. Your daughter is safe at home, and she will stay that way, as long as you give me my formula within four days. I can't wait any longer."

Remudi nods, "I'm very close, I think I can get it in two days, now that my daughter's safety is off of my mind."

I'm still angry, I turn to Remudi, "Are you kidding me? They dishonored Thompson! Did you see that? Are you just going to let it happen?"

Remudi is still calm, "By exploding like that, you're letting him win."

Salamonca laughs, "Well it's time for everyone to go back to what they were doing." The guards escort Remudi and Salamonca out. Chief Bayton puts a hand on my shoulder, "James, Thompson will be avenged. Not just him, but everyone else that Salamonca has harmed, don't you worry. Try to get some rest."

\*\*\*

Today is the day we escape. It's been 5 days since Remudi's deadline was set. He bought more time by tricking one of the guards into spilling juice all over the chemicals. Remudi was able to warn us to be ready today at 7:00. It is 6:55 and I have no idea what to expect. The Chief is next to me, I'm about to say something when a loud crash echoes the room. The glass separating the rooms has shattered and a large brown wolf stands menacingly. Fletcher, I think. Remudi shouts, "Lets get out of here!" Alarms sound and guards are entering the room. The room is a lot bigger when the three sections aren't divided. Remudi kicks a nearby guard in the face, and he stumbles to the ground. Remudi throws his gun to the Chief. "Arm yourself, Tallon!" I see Fletcher clawing, biting, and scratching the guards left and right. I pick up a nearby pistol. Whiz! I drop to the ground and roll behind a counter. I spring up and shoot the guard who just shot at me.

He falls to the ground. All of the guards in this room are either dead, playing dead, or

—The Wolf continues

## The Wolf continued

running out. Fletcher snarls. Remudi hands the Chief and I canisters of chemicals, "These are explosive, throw them at groups of guards." He gestures with his hand to follow him through a hallway. It's empty. Remudi leaps in the air, and by the time he touches the ground again, he is a black wolf. The Chief and I follow Fletcher and Remudi. They lead us down different hallways and paths. We occasionally run into a few guards, who either run away, or get mauled by Remudi. Finally I see our escape. The garage. We are in a warehouse that supplies Salamonca's business, and we are in the garage where the trucks drop things off. The wolves lead us to a Hummer. Remudi snarls, and claws the door. The chief opens it, and throws the driver out as he runs away. The Chief gets in the driver's seat, Remudi jumps in the back, I get in the passengers' seat, and Fletcher gets in behind me. The Chief steps on it, as guards shoot us from the garage. I let out a breath of relief, right as a sniper's bullet whizzes past from the rear window and through the dash-

board. "Get us out of here!" I yell. We are speeding out now. Whiz another bullet. It hit's the windshield. The bullets stop. We are far away, but still in sight. The wolves have now turned back to human form. Fletcher whispers, "O.K. I think it's sa-" as another whiz flies threw the air and stops him mid-sentence. I look back and see Fletcher clutching his face, blood gushing everywhere.

I let out a scream and Remudi rips part of his shirt off and covers Fletcher with it, "Take us to the hospital!"

The Chief steps on the gas a little harder, "On it!"

\*\*\*

We're now at Chief Baytons house. It has been two days since our escape. Fletcher is at the grand hospital, the same one where we first tried to capture Salamonca. It looks like he is going to live. The bullet only skimmed his right eye. He lost the eye, but everything else will recover. I'm sitting down on the couch. Remudi and his daughter, Avery, are also here. He got her yesterday, knowing she wouldn't be safe out in the open for very long. She is the

spitting image of him, same hair, same eyes, and they even have the same smile. The Chief is in his room, talking on the phone, while Mrs. Bayton prepares dinner. The Chief comes downstairs.

Avery looks up at him, "Pardon me mister, but if that malicious man is in control of a thirteenth of the armed forces, aren't you in danger being here in the city?"

The Chief replies, "Well, Salamonca insists that his men patrol the borders of the City, so with the limited men he has to hunt for us, I doubt he would try to attack my home. Plus, he favors the people's support, and invading the home of an innocent family of a police officer wouldn't help him at all."

Remudi joins in, "Yes, but I don't suspect that he'll sit passively for very long. Do you have a plan?"

The Chief crosses his arms, "Yes, I was just on the phone with someone who might be able to help."

"Help with what?" I say.

The chief looks at me, "Help with assassinating Manuel Salamonca."

"Already? We just got away from him, don't you think we

should spend some time resting, waiting for Fletcher to get better, or not dying? Not to be disrespectful, Chief, but how are the three of us going to kill a councilman?"

Remudi responds, "It won't just be the three of us. Mr. Bayton, did you contact the man I told you to?"

"Yes, I did. I invited him over for dinner tomorrow. Are you sure he'll be willing to help us?"

"Oh, yes I'm quite sure. This guy has had his eye on Salamonca's spot on the council for a long time. And like most politicians, he is a saint on the outside, but on the inside he's just a greedy little rat."

I realize that Avery is still here, "Remudi are you sure that we should be planning a murder in front of your daughter?"

Avery laughs, "Oh, please I'm twelve and a half, I'm in the middle of college, and my dad is a werewolf. I'm pretty sure I've seen it all."

Remudi looks at his daughter, "I'm not a werewolf, sweetie. I'm a scientifically engineered anamorphic bad."

Mrs. Bayton calls from the kitchen, "Everybody, dinner is ready!"

The rest of the night we just relax, and The Chief shows me to the room I will be staying in.

\*\*\*

The man we are supposed to meet is late. He should have arrived 20 minutes ago. Finally the doorbell rings and The Chief answers it. The man that walks in is tall and slim. He has green eyes and blonde hair.

He also wears glasses. "Hello," he reaches out and shakes the Chief's hand, "I'm Samuel Kamirov, nice to meet you."

"You as well," says the Chief. "Shall we get right to it then?"

"Yes, of course. A man that gets to the point, I love it."

Remudi isn't usually this quiet. I look at him and he is staring at Samuel, studying him. Samuel walks over to me, "First, I would like to meet the team. Hi, my name is Samuel Kamirov, and yours?"

"Hi," I extend my hand. "James Tallon."

Kamirov looks at Remudi, "Ah, Mr. Vexer, I trust you've been well."

"Well enough," the exchange of words was brief, and they obviously don't like each other.

—The Wolf continues

### The Wolf continued

“O.K.” Samuel sits down. “Now to business. Killing Mr. Salamonca.”

We all pay attention to him.

“I have a few guys in his inner circle, they will help, but they won’t take the risk of actually pulling the trigger on him. That’s where I will need one of you.”

Chief Bayton says, “I will be the one to do it. I may be old, but I’ve still got it.” No one disagrees.

“Good then,” says Samuel. “Next Thursday, when the guard count is at its lowest at his home, you’ll get him. I can get you as far as the front door, then it’s up to you to sneak to his room and kill him. I can provide a helicopter to get you out, once he’s dead.”

Remudi asks, “Why will his guard count be the lowest on that day?”

“Because his son will finally be getting out of the hospital, and no doubt will be escorted out by at least a dozen guards. The only thing that Salamonca loves more than keeping his soldiers on the borders of the city, is his son, Hector.”

Remudi says, “Should the

chief really do this alone? I think I should go with him.”

“No, I’ll go,” I say, “We can’t risk you on an assassination, you’re a genius, plus you have a daughter to raise.”

The Chief nods, “Yes, Talon is right, he should come. Remudi, you should stay at my house.”

For the next few hours Samuel goes over how the assassination is going to play out, step-by-step, with the Chief and I.

\*\*\*

Tomorrow is the day we kill Salamonca. But today the Chief and I visit Fletcher in the hospital. We walk in the room he’s staying in. He lies in bed, he looks the same except now he has a bandage covering his right eye.

“Hey Fletcher how are you holding up?”

“Hey guys!” his expression brightens. “I’m glad to see you, its so boring here, the food is good though.”

The Chief speaks, “Fletcher, I’m glad your doing well. What’s that scratch on your nose?” I didn’t even notice that.

“Oh,” he smiles as he talks,

“My girlfriends found out about each other. But luckily I calmed them down, and helped them understand how I am actually the victim here. This eye is really helping me so far. Right now they’re downstairs having lunch.” He got them all to calm down, stop being mad and hang out with each other? I wonder how he talked his way out of that.

“Oh yeah,” says Fletcher, his expression hardens again, “I saw the news report, about Thompson.”

“Well man, tomorrow we’re going to kill Salamonca,” I say quietly. “Don’t you worry.”

We talk, the Chief and Fletcher talk for a bit and we head back to the Chief’s home.

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We’re in position. Right outside of Salamonca’s house, hiding in bushes.

“Ready?” the Chief asks.

“Yeah.”

We make our way to the door, it’s unlocked. Thank you Samuel I think. We silently move down the corridor. Samuel made us study the map of Salamonca’s house. So we know where we’re going. No

guards. Good. Well, I can hear some when we pass certain doors, but none in the corridor and that’s all that matters right now. My hand goes to my pistol by my side, I got it from the Chief’s house. He holds a shotgun. We get to his door. I slowly open it. Salamonca is on his laptop web-chatting with a bald guy. The bald guy’s eyes focus on me. They send a shutter down my spine. Salamonca also turns, he sees us and closes his laptop. The Chief runs to him, kicks him down and points the shotgun at him. I seal the door, and then stand next to the Chief.

The Chief looks intense, “Manuel! We’re here to kill you! If you surrender now, I can try my best to keep you comfortable in jail.”

Salamonca looks at the Chief, “I can no longer be comfortable, not after you killed Katrina!” The Chief never told me how he knew Salamonca, but I assume that Katrina was involved in whatever it was how they met.

“Manuel listen to me. You have committed crimes against the Capital city. You’ve murdered innocent people, you sell and transport illegal goods,

and you illegally assure your’s and your allies’ spots on the council every election. But I am offering you’re a chance to avoid death. And don’t bring up Katrina...ever.”

“Charles,” Salamonca gives a slight laugh, “there are more important things than you know. I am breaking the law for the greater good.”

“The greater good doesn’t abuse power, the greater good doesn’t-”

Salamonca pulls the pin on a grenade that he had hidden in his sleeve. The Chief drops the shotgun, puts a hand on my chest and pushes me as far as he can. The grenade explodes. My ears are ringing. I open my eyes, I see Salamonca on the ground with blood all over. Defiantly dead. I see the Chief. He is laying on his back, covered in blood. I stand up and pick him up. We stumble our way to the window, where a helicopter is hovering, to pick us up. It comes close to the window and I hand the Chief over to the guy in the copter, and then I jump in. The mission was a success. Manuel Salamonca is dead. I think. The pilot is saying some thing but I’m too unfocused. I

—The Wolf continues

### **Firestar continued**

stared back at her through the bushes, watching her. Then it came out.

She knew not what this animal was. It was vulpine, with clean, bright orange fur, the color of fire, and stripes of white on its back. It was closely her size, and it was very lithe. Its snout was long, its nose pink. The creature had long, white-furred legs with dark brown paws. Large, pointed ears, angled towards Konua as it focused on her. Most strangely, the creature had two orange tails, each of them with a white tip.

The animal did not come up to Konua. It did not open its mouth. It just stood where it was, its amber eyes fixed on her. She stared at the animal for a long time. There was something mysterious with it. The two remained still, their eyes locked.

Then, Konua felt a strange shaking. She felt her whole body shaking. But, it was not just her, it was everything. The ground is shaking? Konua thought. The orange-furred animal still didn't move. It remained completely calm. Then it looked to its left. Konua

followed its gaze to a small stream.

Suddenly, twelve large shapes came up from the below the earth. They landed back on the ground as one, and Konua could see that they were not human, or any animal she knew for that matter. Of all the things that could have happened to her, Konua did not expect this.

These creatures looked very strange, almost like they had no place on this earth. They seemed to be encased entirely in metal. Their bodies were gold, and their heads were black and completely round. They had eyes that were either red, blue or green. Their tails were very long, each with sharp, pointed, silver objects at their ends. They were wrapped in thick, wide, golden metal bands that circled around their bodies, from their stout necks to their tail tips. Also, they seemed to be devoid of both elbows and knees. It looked as if they had no need for them; their arms and legs were structured and sturdy, yet very flexible, as if each golden band on their arms and legs acted as an individual joint.

The creatures slowly encircled Konua. She had no

idea what they were, but they seemed to want something from her. She was frightened, but she did not panic. She remained quite calm. She looked closer at them. She found herself studying them. She saw that each of their metal rings constantly rotated cylindrically. The speed at which the rings rotated varied for each individually, depending on what angle the ring sat at. The golden creatures screeched and hissed and clicked to one another. Were they talking? Konua thought to herself. She began to question whether or not these things were sentient, or simply mere animals. Each of them stood on two legs, like a man. They seemed to be studying her, just as she studied them.

They encircled her. She did not dare to move. There was no way out of this. Suddenly, the bands on the one with green eyes started to rotate faster, and the monster lunged at Konua with lightning speed. Just as quickly, Konua dodged the attack. Another of the creatures then swung at Konua's head. She again dodged the strike.

Almost immediately afterward, one of the creatures with red eyes grabbed Konua.

It wrapped its arms around her, and screeched at her. They move like humans, Konua thought as she was held in the monster's grip. She struggled to free herself, but was unsuccessful. These creatures were very strong, whatever they were. She could not break her oppressor's vice-like grip.

Konua thought, calmly, through her situation. She had not many options. She had to be quick and decisive. They were going to take her away. In a haste, Konua punched her oppressor in the shoulder. She immediately snapped her arm back to her breast and held it in pain. The punch had definitely hurt Konua more than it had hurt the creature. She had punched metal, after all. Konua cursed herself once again. Another idiotic decision, she thought.

In a decisive moment, Konua closed her eyes. She did not know what compelled her to, but for some reason, she simply put her hands to the golden creature's metal torso, and pushed. She did not push very hard. Or at least, she thought that she did not push very hard. But, when she opened her eyes, the creature

that was holding her just seconds earlier was suddenly two arm's lengths away from her. Not very hard at all.

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### **The Wolf continued**

look at the Chief, he is bleeding out, he needs medical attention. I hear the radio come on. Samuel is talking. I don't know what he's saying but it seems like he's proud of us. I feel myself blacking out, I'm really tired. Ugh. At least Salamonca is dead, we did it.

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