

A black and white photograph of a woman with short, light-colored hair, looking directly at the camera. She is wearing a dark, high-collared garment with a thick, dark, feathery or fur-like trim. She is positioned in the center of the frame, surrounded by tall, dark grass. The lighting is soft, highlighting her face and shoulders against the dark background.

NOSTALGIA

Volume 60



Nostalgia
Volume 60
Sachem Magazine

Hazel: Catherine Boush (Photography)



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Philosophy

Sachem is an arts and literary magazine composed of art and writing submissions by students from Algonquin Regional High School. Submissions are collected every fall. Then, during weekly after school meetings, staff members select which pieces will be featured in the magazine.

This year, we have continued our tradition of designing our magazine based on a theme. Our staff chose the theme of Nostalgia because of the different meanings it carries for each person, and the unique ways it can be applied to writing, art, and graphic design. The theme is always shared early in the academic year. Its main goal is to serve as a source of inspiration and to guide our graphic design. Submissions can be about any topic and do not have to relate to the theme.

Editors' Note

The term Nostalgia holds different meanings for each of us. We all have different pasts and different memories which we hold dear. For some, Nostalgia might represent an era. For others, a place. To some, Nostalgia can even be for a particular moment.

We chose the theme Nostalgia precisely because of its vast interpretations. In a world which is very much focused on the future, we hope you will take this opportunity to look back and reminisce on the past. Through this magazine, you will be given a unique chance to not only view the world as others do and to see that which they hold dear, but also to reflect upon your own past experiences.



Untitled: Victoria Witkowski (Acrylic)

Untitled: Victoria Witkowski (Acrylic)



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the city isn't hungry for you anymore,
they tell you with your bags already
packed on a bus to take you back
to the place you can still taste like
the dirt caked under your nails.

but you've heard about the wine-dark river
stocked with gold honey fish,
about the mango fleshed girls
born of the salt sea spray,
bout the pomegranate song they play
on every street corner and the
way the hands of the clock carve up time
with a knife when nobody's watching.

and you are hungry.

besides, you've heard the way the city groans
when the taxis tumble by, when the
people tumble by, when the days tumble by.
it is an ancient sound—the oldest that you've ever
heard and the loudest; it echoes in the
the gutters, in the spiderweb cracks
in the marrow of the new cement,
in the screeches of the subway cars
deep beneath the city,
and still it is the tumbling, stumbling
sound of a child.

and you tell them:

the city wasn't hungry for you, either.

The *Burdened Beefalo*

Havya Peddineni

As night dawned on the dewy lands of southern Kazakhstan, raindrops trickled down her chin as she stood under a dark cloud. The rain did not bother her because she was focused on only one thing: her love standing before her eyes.

Bessie was a serious and unromantic cow, who capsulated her feelings inside her body and rarely showed any emotion, but everything changed when Mufasa entered her life--it was love at first sight.

The connection between them was cosmic, and they both felt it. The short, thick fence that was blocking them from any personal contact could not keep them apart.

Bessie lived on a plantation where she was always filled with tension about her owner selling her to someone or making her his next meal. There was a certain heaviness in her heart during her days there, and she longed for the day to escape and roam freely.

Mufasa was a strong and adventurous buffalo, but what can you say? Opposites attract. Bessie greatly admired his looks and intense eyes. There was only the problem of binomial nomenclature, since theirs did not match. However, both of them thought that they were of the same species. Bessie thought he looked rather unique for a male cow, and Mufasa thought she was buffalo who was like no other.

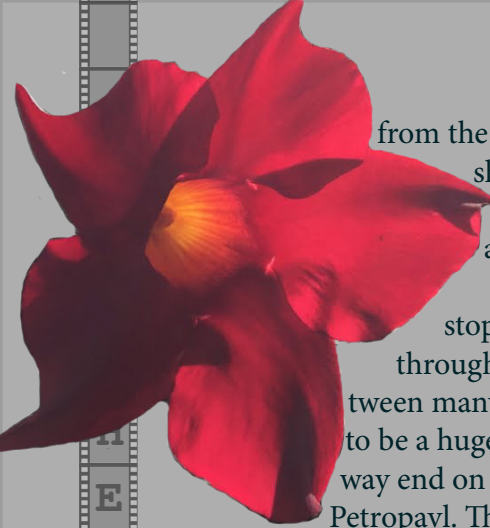
As they locked eyes with each other, they

became more and more hopeless of ever crossing the fence and being together. Mufasa found pleasure by taking risks in life, which is the exact opposite of Bessie. He suddenly came up with a plan to escape these plantations separated by the fence and to run away with Bessie. As he explained his plan to her, Bessie showed reluctance at first because it was a huge step, and they were moving so fast but she was so blinded by love that she agreed to it, thinking that she had nothing to lose.

At night, the two lovers met once again against the thick, wooden fence and followed their plan. Mufasa's coarse feet moved back on the grass, and he bolted toward the fence, shattering it into many pieces. Bessie moved slightly to the side as he was doing so, nervous about the noise it would create and how it would hurt Mufasa. He was left with a few splinters after it, but he hardly noticed in the excitement of finally reaching the other side.

The noise created by Mufasa echoed through both plantations, waking up the owners in their luxurious homes. The sound was loud enough to alert the owners that something was wrong. They each sent a few people to look outside to see what happened, but in that time, Mufasa and Bessie made a sprint for somewhere far away.

They started their journey to northern Kazakhstan. They followed the sun's light heading toward them to a small city called Petropavl. Of course, Bessie suggested staying a few miles away



from the city, the smart cow that she was, because cities in Kazakhstan usually had a large market for beef.

Mufasa and Bessie stopped their long journey through a crooked pathway, between many trees of what appeared to be a huge forest, to see the pathway end on top of a hill overlooking Petropavl. The sight was incredible, and they were a good distance from the city.

Bessie could not believe they made it. All her doubts faded away. She realized that from then on, the future was in her hands and she was no longer under someone's control, worrying every second about what her owner would do to her. The heaviness in her heart that she had everyday on the plantation was barely existent when she was there with Mufasa. All the burden had been lifted from her body, and the only thing she had to think of now was how she planned to spend the rest of her life with her lover.

To be honest, she did not really know what to do from there on with her future. She never had to think of her fate, which was now in her own hands, and this new realization left her pondering for a few minutes about what her next step will be.

However, Mufasa seemed to already have it planned out. He deeply loved her and wanted to travel around the world by her side. The whole world was a mystery to him, and just like humans, he felt an urge to explore all parts of it. He realized that this was not very rational, simply because there were many merchants and farmers with eyes on stray cows wandering near their property. The city had lots of such people and the countryside was more or less just as dangerous, but it did not stop Mufasa from wanting to take the risk.

"Come on!" exclaimed Mufasa to Bessie. "Aren't you tired of always being confined and restricted from doing adventurous things. Life is too short for you to be careful about everything. You have the ability to roam freely now, so you should take the chance to visit new places with me."

Bessie was unsure if it was worth risking their lives to explore more parts of the world. She was always uncomfortable to take part in new

things, but if it was what Mufasa wanted, she was willing to go through with it.

"Okay," said Bessie. "I came this far to be with you, and I love you enough to take any risk to make you happy and live our lives to the fullest."

It was evening by the time they reached the hilltop, and after they fed on the grass that was around them and were satisfied, they both prepared to sleep.

As they lay next to each other on the grass, each looked deeply into the other's eyes and was overcome by love. At that moment, they felt at peace about what was to become of the rest of their lives.

A few months later, Bessie gave birth to a beautiful beefalo. She was excited to have children and to be a mom, but she knew their child was to be different from any typical buffalo or cow. Mufasa and Bessie realized the first night they spent together that they were of two separate species, but it did not change their love for each other.

"Mufasa!" called Bessie. "There's something I need to tell you about."

"What is it?" he said. He could tell she was very troubled about something.

"I know you wanted to go around the world and experience new things, and I wanted to say that I feel a bit guilty for getting too over ourselves and ending up confined to one place. We focused on each other too much instead of taking it slowly. I wish we would have traveled together first to get to see the world and then settle down for a family."

"It's not your fault, Bessie. What happened was meant to happen, and we were too overcome by our longing for each other to think clearly, anyway. It truly is not much of a loss because once the baby is born, we can take our child with us to see the world, and it will be even more fun."

"That's exactly what I wanted to get to, Mufasa. It may break your heart to realize this just as much as it broke mine, but I'm getting awfully weak these days. I truly don't think my body can suffer another month to take care of our baby. My nerves are getting weak, I can't feel my legs sometimes, and I am getting more exhausted every day."

"Well, there has to be a solution, then. During my time with you, I've never seen you give up, and I know you won't give up on our future together, Bessie. Don't just do this for me, but do this for our baby. We came so far and risked so much to be together, so don't

lose hope."

...

As Mufasa was standing over Bessie who was then wearily laying on the grass, she gave him a gentle smile. The smile was not shown by her mouth, but rather her eyes. She felt too weak to even move a muscle in her body, but her deep eyes spoke exactly how she felt. The beefalo was curled under her arms, not making any noise and fast asleep.

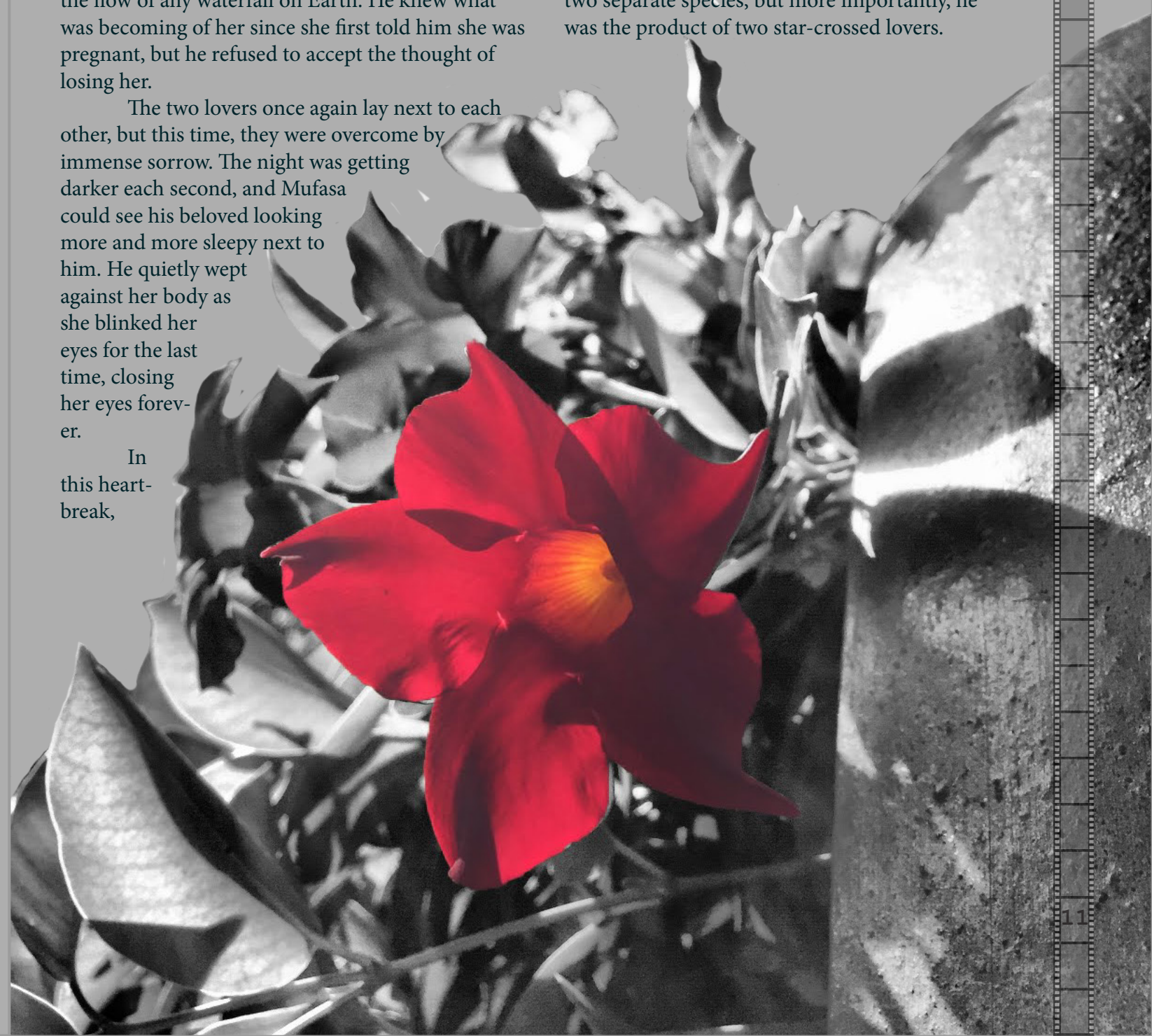
He knew exactly what she meant when she gave him those eyes, and he moved his head toward her to give her a meaningful kiss on the cheek. Tears swelled in his eyes that could directly compete with the flow of any waterfall on Earth. He knew what was becoming of her since she first told him she was pregnant, but he refused to accept the thought of losing her.

The two lovers once again lay next to each other, but this time, they were overcome by immense sorrow. The night was getting darker each second, and Mufasa could see his beloved looking more and more sleepy next to him. He quietly wept against her body as she blinked her eyes for the last time, closing her eyes forever.

In this heart-break,

Mufasa felt very heavy inside and thought there was no other reason to live his life without his true love. His mind was paraded by the fact that Bessie was not there for him anymore, and this pain made him take his last few breaths that night as he went into a deep sleep. His heart-break was so powerful that it took his life from him.

The next morning was dead silent. There was nothing left alive on the hilltop except a baby beefalo, crying for his parents to feed him, but they never would. Little did he know that he was a special type of animal, a hybrid created by two separate species, but more importantly, he was the product of two star-crossed lovers.



control

Kaitlin Wilber

My view has changed
I've grown taller
Forcefully

I liked it better down here
I couldn't see the spikes below the cliff
I only saw sky

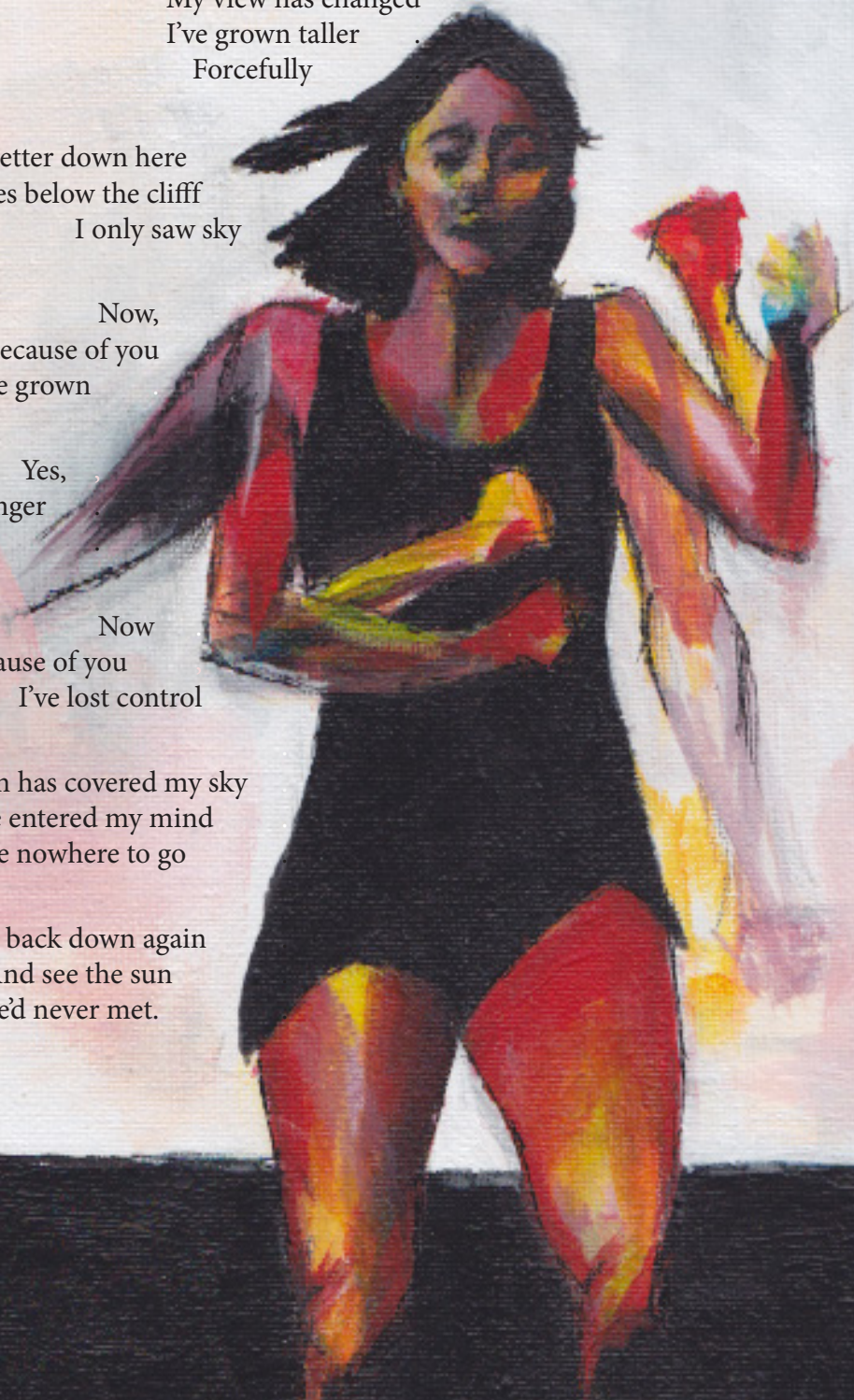
Now,
Because of you
I've grown

Yes,
What doesn't kill me makes me stronger
But I didn't need to be

Now
because of you
I've lost control

The storm has covered my sky
Spikes have entered my mind
I have nowhere to go

I wish I could grow back down again
And see the sun
I wish we'd never met.



Six Armed Goddess: Victoria Haskins (Acrylics on Canvas)

Wanderlust

Victoria Haskins

1
I never told my mother I wanted to eat Asia.

2
Maybe if I had, she would've told me
not to ruin my appetite—we're having America
for dinner, finishing it up with a nice cold bowl of
boiled Mozambique.

3
I say, good, I've wanted to tear the African
Renaissance Monument limb from limb ever since
I laid eyes on it; my mouth waters for the Namib Desert—
I want the sand in everything, everything, everything.

4
I am so hungry I could eat the world raw.

5
I want to rip the Library of Alexandria from you
with my teeth like meat stripped from bone,
tear your empires from you, dine on all your lost cities.
I want to take every stone from every Roman road
into my mouth, deconstruct your Machu Picchu piece by piece,
crush your imperial palace with my jaw.
I want your St. Petersburg raw and unseasoned,
want to wash it down with a glass
of your Dead Sea, want to eat the flag
off the moon in your window every night, want to
get Notre Dame stuck between my two front teeth forever,
want your Pope praying to me to let him out
from under my tongue with the rest of Vatican city,

want Easter Island stuck between my incisors
and want to kiss you with the blood of all of these
places running down my lips.

8
I say, thanks, mom, how did you season the
Pacific tonight?
The Arctic sea ice tastes delicious with it.

WHERE

The lake was an escape, an endpoint for our worries, a destination for our long drives. We parked and snuck through the opening in the wire fence, two steaming thermoses of chai cupped in our hands. Kicking our flip-flops onto a rock overhanging the water, we began to wade through the shallows, just shin deep.

We never talked on these trips, she and I. It was simply not worthwhile. There was nothing that needed recounting, for we were running from everything we had in common. Well, walking, to be literal. There was nothing to hear but our feet sloshing through the water, kicking droplets up to our fingertips. With our hands, we swatted away the occasional gnat; with our toes, we swirled old water into new, sand coating our bare skin.

The sun was beginning to set as we strolled onwards, lengthening our shadows until they disappeared into the dusk. The sky, turning all shades of orange and pink, cast its succulent colours onto the lake. I breathed it in, and I could see her lips turn upwards for a moment before quickly resettling to a flat horizon. I took a small sip of my chai, the warmth bleeding onto my own lips, flowing through my veins, and dissipating throughout my body. I leaned over and planted the thermos in the sand, far enough from the water's edge that it would stay hot for the inevitable car ride home.

It was only human of me, always easily distracted, to bounce in excitement when I spotted a tiny fish swimming its way about my ankles. This, of course, caused it to scurry away, skirting between rocks and pond scum as it disappeared into the water. I became

MEETS



Sunny Days and Sunflowers: Annabella Ferraiuolo (Photography)

THE SUN

determined, I suppose, and all splashing ceased as I stood still as humanly possible. Watching the fish intently as they cautiously reapproached me, I did not notice that she kept walking. She, in fact, was on the other side of the lake, looking only at the water, swaying slightly in time with the breeze. Letting the fish scatter, I half-skipped to where she was standing, soaking my jeans up to the knees.

We gazed out at the endless dusky ripples of the lake. Hypnotic. Her eyes were set on a handful of lily pads, glossy and dew-covered, floating gently on the water's surface.

“Those lily pads. They’re moving closer, towards us.” The first words she had spoken all evening.

And so it appeared, the delicate plants seemingly hopping over each minuscule wave, the breeze fooling nobody, but allowing us a dream. Enchanted, I leaned closer. The droplets on the lily pads reflected the sunset, creating hundreds of tiny lakes on each green leaf. Perhaps they were moving, or more likely, fooling our eyes with their iridescence. I knew they were still, though, rooted in the sand, a thick, stable stem, immovable if undisturbed. I tell this to her.

Yet, she planted her feet into the sand, stretching her arms out towards the setting sun as if to embrace the clouds. She didn’t believe me.

And in that moment, I realized how different we were. A dreamer and a cynic. Yet as I admired the sunlight reflecting off of her smile, it occurred to me that perhaps, in the end, that was just how the two of us were supposed to be.

Sarah Saeed

WATER

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Antonio Giordano

The captain kicked back in his leather chair and sunk his teeth into a deep, blood red apple. The cool spray of juice from the apple spread out in the shuttle's cockpit and came to rest on the polished control console. The captain shifted his mud stained boots and battle-scarred legs, folding them onto each other. Caked on dirt slowly coated the once polished and reflective console into a brown mess. He gazed past the three other empty seats and out the front windshield at the shimmering balls of light that spread out far into the expanse of space. They slowly passed by as the captain let the controls of his ship take the star cruiser and its crew far into the middle rim systems. Voices echoed from just beyond the door to the cockpit. The voices were then followed with the door hissing open. The heavy steps of one of the crew and the lighter, slower steps of the other alerted the captain to who was walking into the cockpit. The heavy steps belonged to Ita the latter belonged to Depresija. The two humans were tough men and fighters, two medal of honor recipients from the Universal Armed Forces, both served in at least two hundred deployments.

"I am telling you that this is important, Depresija! We are likely the first people to have found this damn place!" Ita yelled. The captain could feel Ita's arms swing through the air along with the spittle that often escaped from his chapped, bloodied lips from incessant biting. War was tough. Ita felt it the worst of the three.

"It doesn't matter, Ita. I am telling you this from the bottom of my heart that what you tend to say simply makes me wish I had an elementary school teacher around here to slap the shit out of you for the trash that spews from your sorry excuse for a mouth."

Clearly a heated argument that had been going on for far too long, the captain wondered. He

whirled around in his seat and took another loud crunch from the apple.

"The hell are you two bozos whining about this time?"

The captain crossed one leg onto the other and laid back with seemingly little care for his two friends and crew's bickering.

"Ita says he found something," Depresija said, rolling his eyes just out of view of Ita. He tossed a paper forward with no care or intent to where he wished it to land.

"Something?" Ita yelled at the top of his lungs. The captain glanced at Ita while moving his hand in a repeated up and down motion. Ita followed the sign and spoke in a calmer tone. "There is a gravitational pull the size of the North American States out here in the middle of nowhere. You think the NAS is just takin' a damn waltz on the town out here?" He slapped the back of his hand against Depresija's shoulder. He paused for a brief moment to regain his composure. He began in a calmer, more convincing tone, "This is something that we need to check out. A whole seemingly planet worth of gravity has just appeared in previously charted territory, this kind of thing doesn't happen, Captain."

Captain stroked his chin and non-existent beard. The sheets looked legit. Multiple graphs were lain over each other to give an overall reading of gravity charts for the past eight years in this system. Three days prior the graph spiked to an insane amount. Nearly eight billion times more pressure than before.

"Black hole?" Captain asked.

"Precisely my point, Captain. You remember that guy Bentu who we heard them stories about? Killed in the outer rim along with his whole crew, but saved one guy. They were killed by a black hole. I don't fancy driving straight into an endless abyss. If I wanted to do that, I'd sit in silence for five minutes and listen to my thoughts." Depresija held his arms crossed over his body. His brow was tightly furrowed and curved into a hard glare at the paper.

"Has it stayed in the same place?" Captain asked rolling over to his control console and pulling up a series of general schematics of the ship and area. He expertly scrolled through the pages of data until he came upon the set of gravitational data he needed. "Swiftspace drive is operational. No black hole."

"That easy to tell?" Depresija asked crouching next to the console and looking through the data himself.

"Yeah, you know the story of Bentu yet you don't know the fail-safe of swiftspace drives? If there is a gravity well that is too high, i.e. a black hole, the swiftspace drive will shut down so when you

make a jump it doesn't take the blackhole with you," Ita ranted off. He continued with the minute details about swiftspace and the end of the universe from jumping near a blackhole.

Captain took a moment to think about the graphs and what his crewmate had given him. "So why don't we go there? We're just a few jumpers coming back from a shipment. It's my business and I say finding a never before seen planet will give us a lot of recognition and," Captain turned to face his crewmates and rubbed his right thumb and pointer finger together with a crooked grin on his face, "that my friends seems like a win-win."

"And what about the rest of the crew?" Ita asked.

"They're jumpers, drop 'em off at the nearest spaceport with a casino and prostitutes. That's what quenches my boredom around this barren wasteland." Captain smirked then plotted a course for the nearest space port.

Captain sat back in his control console with his eyes barely open and his thoughts racing about him. The thoughts of becoming a discoverer of a whole new world made the man's mind run wild. News stations all across the middle rim would be bustling with the news that a previously unknown and undecorated veteran from the Great Reclaiming had found a new planet right under everyone's noses. It would make him a fortune. A multi-billionaire. He would own a world. Or maybe it wasn't a planet.

Maybe it was a secret cell of hidden Kaiser troops who had escaped him and the rest of the Universal alliance during the Great Reclaiming. Intimidating as that would be to come across a cell of likely millions of people who were hell bent on destroying those like him who had taken power from them in order to restore justice and peace, he enjoyed the thoughts of slaughtering thousands more Kaiser swine. Captain embellished the thought of dying amongst a mound of desecrated bodies and armor as he rose to the heavens with the soldiers which he had

fought with all those years ago. That was a glory fit for a true man. A true warrior. Ita's voice snapped Captain from his daydreams. "We're coming up on the planet." Captain turned in his chair to face Ita who was pointing to something outside of the cockpit. The captain followed Ita's finger and his eyes began to widen the more he studied the large mass of a planet that sat in front of him. His jaw nearly fell to the floor as he stood and stumbled over to the front of the glass and peered out at a large bright green mass that sat in front of him. Rivers of deep, rich blue snaked along the planet's surface and fed out into even richer and more inviting looking oceans and seas. The whole planet was a deep yet bright green, it invited eyes to gawk at the sight. There was no distinction between the poles and even out in the vast expanse of space, that was nowhere close to a star, the planet seemed to radiate heat and life. Even from thousands of miles away Captain felt like he could see the surface of the planet forming and moving with every second.

"Holy," Captain said, running a hand through his thick hair. "You ever see anything like that?" "Nope," Ita whispered, his eyes could not remove themselves from the entrancing planet. Captain's hand fumbled around the control console behind him as he tried to grab onto the commlink to call Depresija to come see the planet they were closing in on. He held the commlink close to his lips and could not find the words to speak. He regained control and clicked a button on the side. "Depresija, come to the cockpit. You'll want to come see this."

A few moments later the sound of a rubber ball bouncing on the floor and back into a hand came echoing through the door. The metal door slid open with a hiss of air.

"What did y'all need?" Depresija asked. His question was answered as he let the rubber ball drop from his hand and roll into a corner. His eyes widened into pure amazement and his jaw too slid down to his chest. "Guess you were right?" Depresija said after a brief moment of awestruck silence.

"Hell yeah I was right," Ita said, sitting back in a chair in the corner of the cockpit. "I suggest we strap in and get ready to touch down."

"I don't know," Depresija whispered walking down next to Captain by the cockpit window. "I've got a bad feeling about this place." His arms were crossed over his chest and a frown was set on his lips. "Why is that?" Ita asked.

"Reminds me of Earth. Before they nuked it at least. Have you ever seen the pictures? Such beauty, exactly like this," Depresija stepped away from the window and began walking back to the control console. "There's no way we could have wandered into the Milkyway is there?" Captain turned around with his hands on his hips. "It's illegal. We would've been tracked by now."

"I turned off our tracking," Ita said from the control console. "Everything is off except the essentials. I didn't want anyone following us out here." Ita tossed a holopad at Captain who snatched it out of the air. He scrolled through and looked at all of the red blocks that sat next to their only forms of communication.

"So, we're out here all alone?" Captain said tossing the holopad back across the room.

"All alone with no one to call. No one even knows we're out here," Ita said.

"I don't like that," Depresija said, leaning on the control console. "No help. No back-up. Just three guys with plasma rifles on an unknown planet with who knows what on it."

"Better to keep it that way," Captain said, pacing in front of the planet that grew closer with every passing second. "I don't want anyone else to know about this place until we've claimed it for our own and explored as much of it as we possibly can."

"I still don't like it. We've got to be careful; we don't know what's down there."

"Suit up," Captain said, ignoring Depresija's comment. "I want to be on the ground as fast as we can. It's new territory boys and a whole lot of money and fame is on the line if we can pull this one off, and I intend to pull it off." The other two men nodded. Depresija grabbed his ball and slid out the door to the cabin. His soft footsteps disappeared almost instantly. Ita remained in his seat, staring out at the planet.

"I wonder what's out there. What do you think?" Ita said sliding down in his chair and crossing his arms over his chest. Captain spun around to face the planet and thought for a long moment. His gaze blurred as he slipped deeper into thought.

"Riches."

"What was that?" Ita said leaning forwards and turning his ear more towards Captain.

"Our names," Captain said, loudly turning around to face Ita.

"I doubt it," Ita said. He glanced over to Captain for a

reaction. The captain simply stared at Ita's knees. "Yeah?" "Yeah." Captain buried his head in his hands and rubbed his eyes until he saw flashes of white. He stood from the chair and began to walk out of the cockpit.

"Where you going?"

"I'll set up a drone and send it out to scout the landing area before we touch down. Set the ship in orbit and we'll wait for the drone to send back enough information."

"No problem, Captain."

Captain punched his information into the keypad and slid the door open. He stepped through and began to walk down the hall. The soft hum of the engine echoed throughout the corridors and slightly vibrated the walls and ceiling. The sterile smell of the ship drifted into Captain's nose as he climbed a flight of stairs and began to walk to the launching bay.

Captain reached the door and clicked on the buttons and grabbed the handle. He stepped through the doorway and was greeted with a mechanical voice and the loud steps of a robot.

"Good evening, sir. What do you need?"

"Ready up the drone, SR-01."

"As you wish." The robot stomped over to a rack of drones and grabbed one on the top. He pulled it down and began tapping at a keyboard. He plugged in a wire then pulled open a computer and handed it to Captain.

"We'll check the air quality, life, and have the drone send it back as soon as possible. I want to be on the ground in no more than an hour. Ready the ship for a landing and get the heavy equipment out in case there are hostiles."

"As you wish," SR-01 beeped.



Scan here to find out what happens next!



The first time I saw Death he was standing over my mother as she sobbed on the basement floor. I was young at the time, too young to truly understand what his presence meant, or why I would never see my uncle again. It was confusion, not grief or sadness, that I felt as I played with my siblings in the cellar of the church. I can kind of remember it, walking along blood red carpet, catching a glimpse of the classic wood arches and pews before I was ushered away, feeling the strange somber cloud that the figure in the corner admitted. The reality of the masked man in black who hid in the shadows had not yet grasped my small brain, and the gravity of the situation wouldn't truly hit me until later in life.

The second time I saw Death I knew he was coming. I understood who he was and what he did now, being in the eighth grade, and I had seen him lurking in the shadows for months. I had spent my whole life with Hershey, but sixteen was old, especially for a dog. I could see him watching her,



dering who must have died to bring us all together. She was a junior in Highschool and was only a year older than me when she took her own life. My parents would barely say it at first, making the decision to emphasise that they weren't sure what happened, which at the time they weren't. Death remained at my house for a while. I'd see him with a hand on my father's shoulder as he made somber phone calls and he sat on the couch with us as we watched her parents talk on the news. I remember feeling his presence behind me as I bite back tears while the Good Samaritans talked to us, only to go home and find out that while I was sitting in health class my parents were sitting in the pews of yet another church. I wasn't allowed to go to her funeral.

I saw death again quite recently. This time he passed me a pamphlet that had been sitting on my kitchen counter. It was the itinerary for the funeral of a five year old girl, one of my father's friend's daughters. I'd known she was sick, I didn't know she had died. When we're little we, or at least I, was

The Times I Saw *Death*

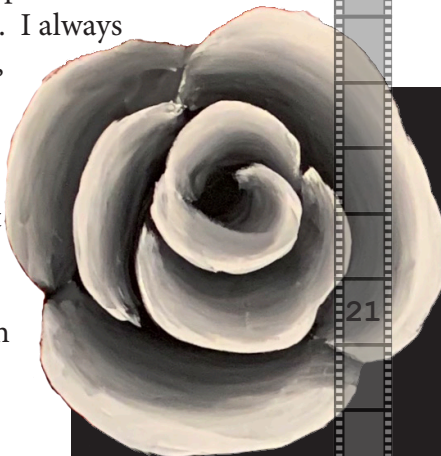
Catherine Boush

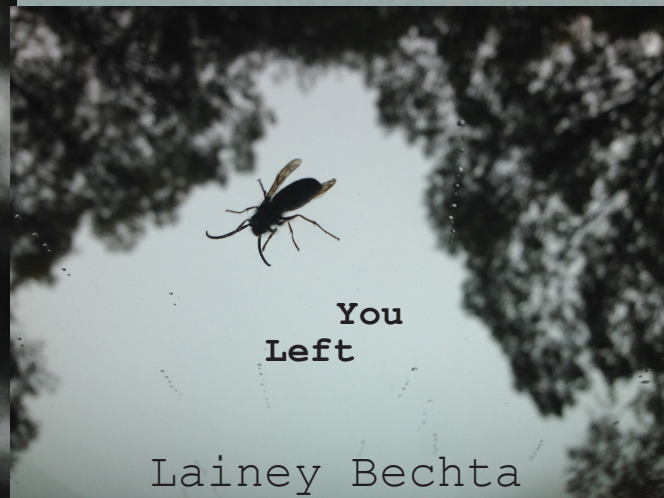
waiting. I swore I could see his hand glide over her in her sleep, and many nights I would panic, shaking her awake before he could grab a hold. I saw his shadow looming over her during every seizure and senial moment, until finally, one morning, he stood ready to take her away.

The third time I saw Death he had taken a stranger. I'm still not exactly sure how I was related to her, but I think she was my dad's cousin's daughter. She was 23 when she died, and had been on a run when something went wrong in her brain. Death had done his job, so he was long gone by the time we arrived at the church, though his presence still lingered in the air. It would have been sad, the funeral, and it was really sad, in those brief moments the preacher wasn't cracking a joke or advertising his band. What really amazed me was what happened after the funeral. They called it a celebration of life, and really there is no other way to describe it. The joy that came from celebrating this bright life chased away any lingering darkness from Death, and we went home with lighter hearts.

The fourth time I saw Death was also the first time I saw my father cry. My mother had called us all into the living room, and I remembered, jokingly, won-

made to believe that Death is hurricane. He comes once in a blue moon and destroys everything and everyone, leaving nothing untouched. He'll rage and storm until everything is decimated, almost beyond repair and all we're left with is the destruction left behind. I now know that Death is not always a hurricane. Yes, sometimes he can feel like a tsunami crashing over you, but he can also be a quiet storm cloud in the distance, or even a puddle you just happen to walk by. He's the downpour that's trying to drown you, but he's also the slight drizzle you only notice when you step outside. Death can be a tornado that lands right on your house, or the only evidence of his presence can be the debris left in your yard. I always knew Death could be loud, but I never realized just how hushed he could be. Because yes, I have seen the soul crushing sobs, but I have also experienced the quiet tears and solemn silences that fall in the path of death.





Your life lives on.
The books are still on the shelf
Arranged by the joy they brought you
The bookmark I gave you
Still tucked at your favorite page
Just like you left it.

Your life lives on.
The posters on the wall
From all your favorite movies
All still hung up where you left them
Along with the pictures we drew
When we first could hold a pencil
Just like you left them.

Your life lives on
Every pin is still there on the drapes
God, you must have hundreds of them
From every friend and every trip
Even the trip you cried
15 kids was probably too much weight
To throw on your sleeping body.
The pin is near the top corner
Just like you left it.

Your life lives on
Your favorite t-shirt sits on the dresser
Your untouched dress shirts in the closet
Collecting dust, as usual
I doubt they notice your absence
But your top hat does
Perched atop your stuffed cheetah
Just like you left it

She sits there sometimes,
At the foot of your bed.
Staring at your wall of awards

Ocean

Lainey Bechta

We waited until the curtain of day had lifted
And the glass sky was no longer opaque.
You took my hand and offered the cosmos
As if they were something you could give.

The light from the streetlamps flickered dimly
Faraway from our sandy sanctuary by the ocean
We sat; our feet dipped in one great black void
As we craned our necks to stare at the other above.



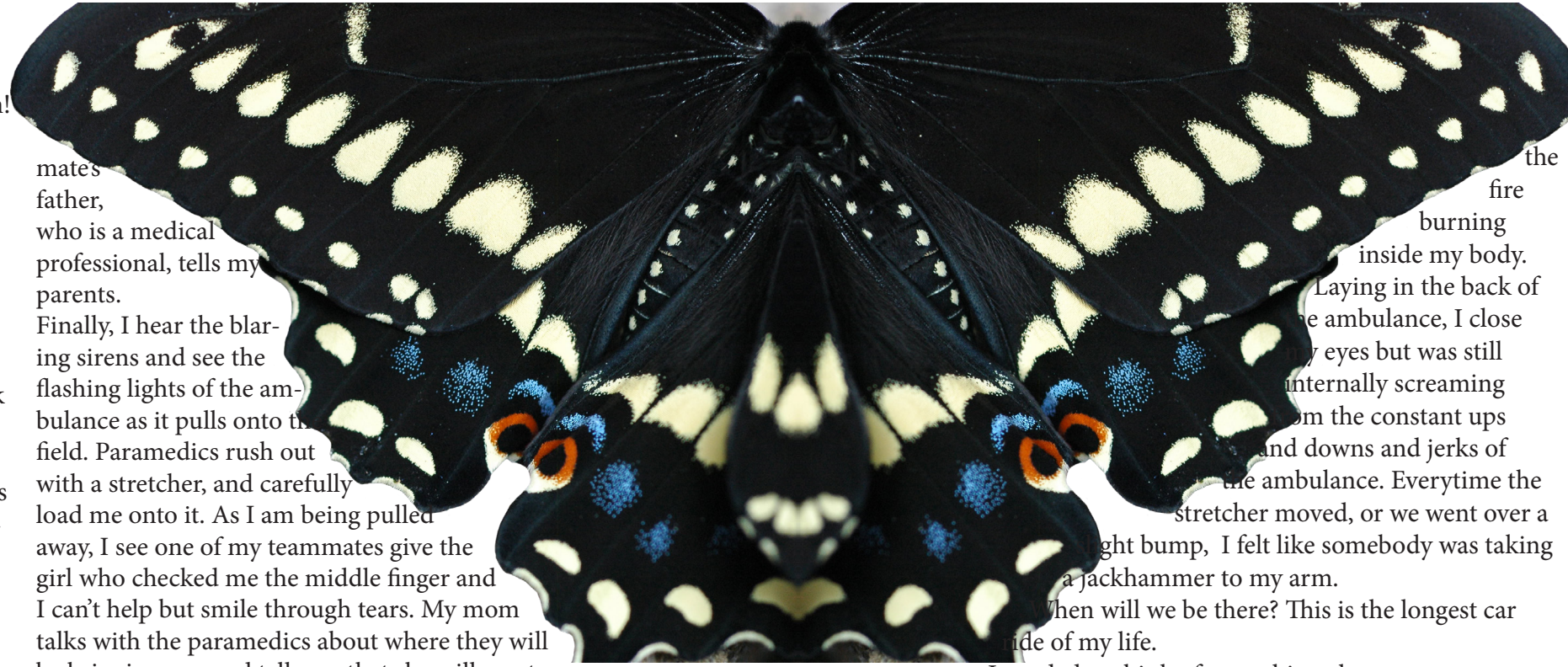
Mountain on the Sea: Annabella Ferraiuolo (photography)

Come on Lizzie! Run faster! Open up for the pass. You got it, you have the ball! Run! Shoo--

THUD!
SNAP!

I never scored the goal. Instead, a rather large defender side-checked me before I could even shoot the ball; I flew down so fast, I never got the chance to brace myself for impact. I landed on my left arm, which was perfectly straight when I struck the ground. I was lying on my stomach in the middle of the field, with my left elbow about two inches to the left of where it was supposed to be. I don't remember screaming, but teammates later told me that the noise that came out of me when I hit the ground didn't sound like it could possibly have come from a human being. "You better get her off of this fucking field before you restart the goddamn game!! Look at my daughter! Her elbow is broken and dislocated and she can't move!

mates father, who is a medical professional, tells my parents. Finally, I hear the blaring sirens and see the flashing lights of the ambulance as it pulls onto the field. Paramedics rush out with a stretcher, and carefully load me onto it. As I am being pulled away, I see one of my teammates give the girl who checked me the middle finger and I can't help but smile through tears. My mom talks with the paramedics about where they will be bringing me, and tells me that she will meet me there. Finally, I see my dad holding my grandmother who came all the way from Wisconsin. I guess she got a lot more than she bargained for. "Okay, Lizzie, this IV right here is for Fentanyl. It will help with all



teating christmas cookies. After the procedure when I was being rolled through the halls, an African American lady with a big afro passed by and I said, "OH MY GOD I LOVE YOUR HAIR. YOUR HAIR IS SOOOOOO COOL!!" Also, I told the doctor how impressed I was that he went to Harvard, and I asked him if he had a girlfriend because he was SUPER CUTE AND WENT TO HARVARD. My mom made him get a picture with me, because I probably wouldn't remember it. In Au Bon Pain, the cafe in the hospital, I told everybody in line that I had just smoked crack with Santa Clause and I had a candy cane on my arm. I expressed how much I loved the guy who made my mixed berry smoothie and chicken soup. "Everybody should dislocate their elbow," I murmured to my mom on the car ride home as I fell back into a deep sleep. Unfortunately, the ketamine high wore off,

Butterfly: Sophia Mehta (Photography)

Everything Happens for a Reason

Lizzie Meschisen

What kind of referee are you that'd you'd even consider that!" My infuriated father screams at the official that's acting as though nothing happened and wants to continue the game. Both teams are huddled together now, and parents stand concerned at the sidelines while my parents and coach hover near me. Everything is a blur and I am dizzy from the excruciating pain. It seems to be coming from everywhere in my body, and I don't know what is it that I hurt. I turn my head and look at my dad and see my elbow. Tears begin streaming down my face and I can't cry because of how much pain I am in. The pain that seemed to have been coming from my entire body rushes to my elbow, and that is all I can focus on. "You need to call 911 right now and get an ambulance. Even if she could stand up, it is not safe for her to do so. When she fell, she may have hit her head, and you wouldn't want her walking until we are sure she is fine. Her elbow is definitely dislocated. She might pass out from the pain," a team-

the pain you are feeling right now. I will be back with the doctor who will talk about what will be done next, but what most likely is going to happen is he will just pop your elbow back in place, and put you in a split," the nurse says with a pained expression on her face. All I do is nod my head because I am in too much pain to even move my lips. When the nurse leaves, my mom says, "Oh my god, Lizzie I am going to get you out of here. This is a psychiatric hospital and they don't deal with injuries like this. I will not let them just 'pop your elbow back in place'. And you're on a Fentanyl drip for Christ's sake." My mom makes a call to my friend's dad who is an orthopedic surgeon at Boston Children's Hospital. He tells her that she has the right to request an ambulance to Boston Children's, and the insurance company is required to pay for it if the hospital cannot offer me proper care. Once again, I am loaded back onto a stretcher by two EMTs, this time in a sterile hospital room and not a muddy soccer field. I internally scream as hard as I can when I am placed into the back of the ambulance. "Lizzie, what kind of music do you like? We can play anything you want," one of the EMTs asks me when the doors are closed and the engine starts. "Can you play beach waves? I just want to listen to the beach," I mumble back. Part of me didn't want to admit I like teenage pop music, but also all I wanted was something relaxing to help sooth

I needed to think of something else. "Have you ever watched Silence of the Lambs? This reminds of Silence of the Lambs. When Hannibal Lector rips the guy's face off of his and gets loose after killing everybody in the ambulance," I

announce to the EMTs who probably think that I am the most psychotic person they've ever met. Once again, I am loaded off the ambulance, and into the much more friendlier atmosphere of Boston Children's Hospital. All I remember is sitting in the hospital room with my mom for what seemed to be days, just looking at the animations of jubilant animals on the walls. My body began to fill with electric energy from the constant discomfort. Finally, I couldn't take it any longer, and cried. "Mom, it hurts so bad. The morphine isn't helping. Please mom do something, anything. I just want it to go away," I sob to my mom who is sitting by the side of my hospital bed. She won't let me see it, but I know she is crying too. At last, I am brought to the room where I will finally be fixed. I explain to the doctor that I am in so much pain, and just want it to go away. The doctor, who is a Harvard Medical student, assures me that I will not be awake when they put my elbow back in place. "You will be put under a drug called ketamine. It's kind of like anesthesia, but you will be able to dream, and have a sense of what is going on. Don't worry, you won't feel any pain. I promise." To this day, my mom and I still talk about what I said as the ketamine was wearing off. My cast was red with white tape around it. However, when I was still half asleep, I thought it was a candy cane. Not only did I think it was a candy cane, I thought I was in the North Pole, smoking crack with Santa Claus and Mrs. Clause, and

and reality snapped back into me in the morning. I was prescribed Oxycontin, but the excruciating pain was so bad that it wasn't even worth it to take it. Not only that, but it dawned on me that I wouldn't be able to do gymnastics for a very long time. Thankfully, I competed in USA Regionals the morning before my soccer game, and didn't have any big meets coming up, but I was missing the rest of spring and the whole summer of training. I was able to return to gymnastics the fall of my freshman year (I dislocated my elbow in the May of 8th grade), but it wasn't the same. I quit a couple months later, I decided to become a diver. Now, I compete at the international level, and am committed to dive at the Division 1 level in college. If it wasn't for dislocating my elbow, I would have probably continued with gymnastics for the rest of high school, and never became the person I am today. I couldn't see it then, but when I was body checked by somebody three times my size, my entire life had changed.



Twilight Meadow

Lainey Bechta

We stood there and watched them die,
Those last rays of summer sunlight.
Watched them fade into obscurity,
And lit sparklers to mourn their absence.

The air was warm and sweet,
The grass but a shade or so cooler.
I sat down and watched the sparklers too,
Have their turn at fading out.

You sank down in the grass next to me,
Pale in the moonlight, your eyes like glass,
Fixated on our burnt out sparklers

While I peered past the stars,

And looked beyond the twilight meadow.

If They Were Being Honest

Leona Sungkharom

If he was being completely honest, he wasn't sure what to do. He hadn't talked to this girl in three months, purposefully ignoring and distancing himself from her. Now he was stuck in English class, partnered up with her to do a graded peer edit. He didn't want to be the first one to say anything and apparently neither did she.

The girl sat unmoving her eyes scanning the page in front of her, writing down a few notes, underline a few sentences and then going back to reading. Other than the occasional glance around the room, she didn't make any movement to talk to him, or even look at him.

Which he supposed was what he wanted. But now he kind of wished that she would just say something. He missed her, but he wouldn't say that out loud. Especially for her. But he missed her. A lot more than he wanted to even admit to himself.

Watching her work, he remembered all the time they spent together. Where had it gone wrong? Was it his fault or was it hers? Maybe if he had tried harder? He wished he could go back in time and fix everything. But he couldn't.

"I'm done," she said jolting him out of his thoughts.

The boy looked at the girl and then down at his paper, "I'm not," he said.

"Ok, I'm going to the bathroom" the girl said looking at the clock, "Here's your paper." she slid the paper over to his desk and stood up. Without looking back at him, she signed out, grabbed the hall pass and left the room. The boy looked down at his work and sighed.

He wished he could go back and fix everything.

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BumbleBee: Sophia Mehta (photography)



Bee: Sophia Mehta (photography)

If she was being honest with herself, she would have left a long time ago. The second she heard her name with his, she should have just booked it. But no, she stayed and edited his work because she was a good person. Or at least she liked to think she was a good person.

She could feel his eyes on her as she worked but she refused to acknowledge him. For the longest time after what had happened, she just wanted him to say something to her. But now, all she wanted was for him to go away.

The girl wasn't quite sure when her feelings changed, maybe it was yesterday, maybe it was two months ago. She wasn't really sure. But sitting next to him now made her feel claustrophobic like she couldn't breathe. He was too close and she needed him gone.

She couldn't feel this way for him, not anymore. Everything that happened in the past was done.

"I'm done," the girl found herself saying. She didn't look at him, instead, she busied herself by reading over her edits. She didn't actually expect him to reply to her.

"I'm not," he said, his voice sending pins and needles down her spine like it used to do.

She had to get out of here, "Ok, I'm heading to the bathroom, here's your paper." she slid the paper over and rushed out of the room, his eyes on the back of her neck. She couldn't feel this way for him, not anymore. The girl locked herself in the bathroom and closed her eyes tightly. She just needed a minute to breathe.

Nothing. She told herself, you feel nothing for him.

Then she opened the door, washed her hands and walked back to the classroom.



# An Old Man's Gripe

Lainey Behta

My aunt used to own a farm around here,  
Just on the other side of the woods.  
As far as the eye could see was wheat fields.  
Wheatfields, meadows, and woods.

I set out to explore one day, a bag full of food.  
I was ready to spend hours exploring,  
I was ready to walk miles and miles in the woods  
To where only the animals know the roads.

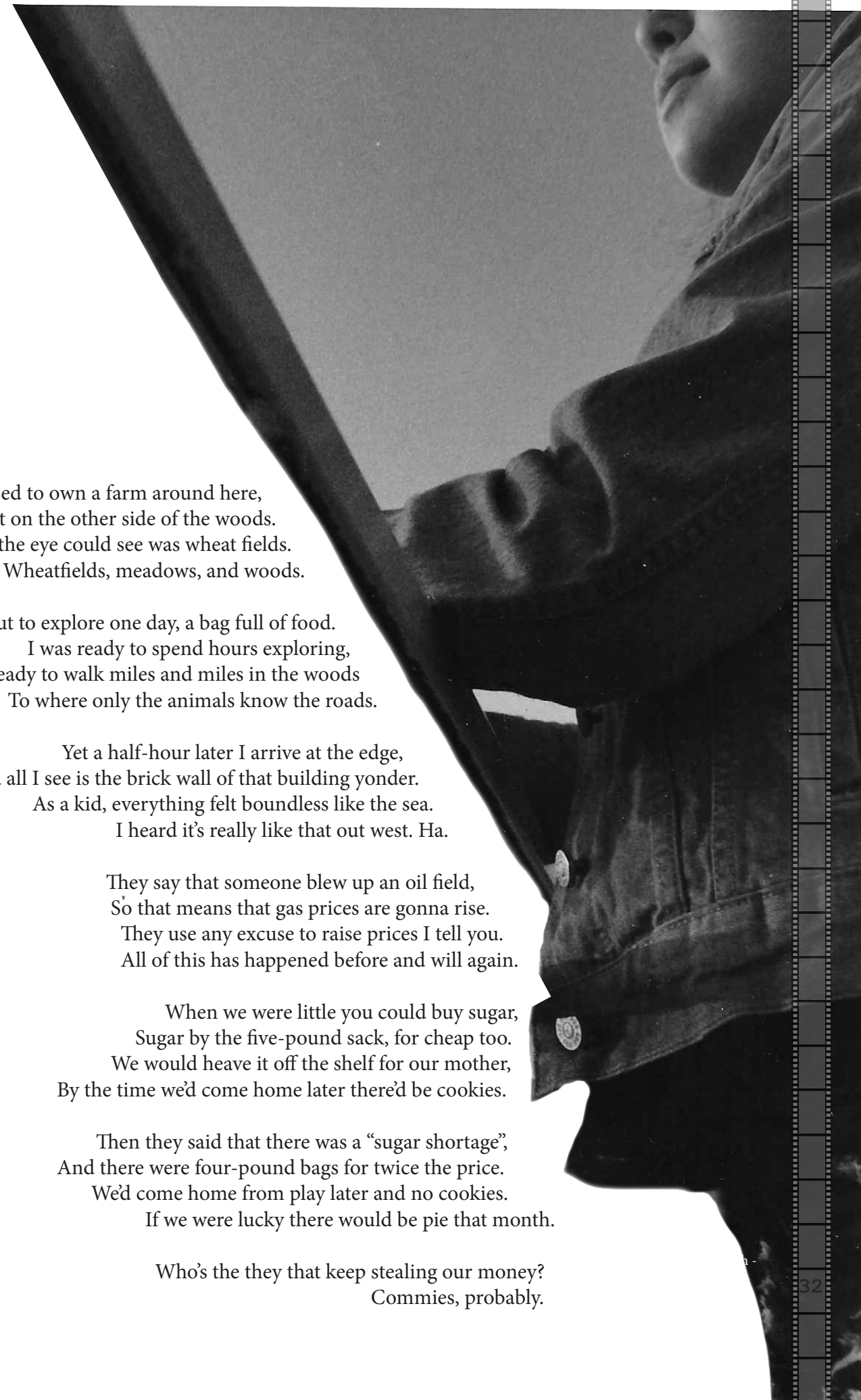
Yet a half-hour later I arrive at the edge,  
And all I see is the brick wall of that building yonder.  
As a kid, everything felt boundless like the sea.  
I heard it's really like that out west. Ha.

They say that someone blew up an oil field,  
So that means that gas prices are gonna rise.  
They use any excuse to raise prices I tell you.  
All of this has happened before and will again.

When we were little you could buy sugar,  
Sugar by the five-pound sack, for cheap too.  
We would heave it off the shelf for our mother,  
By the time we'd come home later there'd be cookies.

Then they said that there was a "sugar shortage",  
And there were four-pound bags for twice the price.  
We'd come home from play later and no cookies.  
If we were lucky there would be pie that month.

Who's the they that keep stealing our money?  
Commies, probably.





# Thanks

Thank you to the administration at Algonquin Regional High School for enabling us to run coffeehouses and create our magazine.

Thank you to the Northborough Starbucks for their continued donations to our annual coffeehouse.

Thank you to Ms. Betar for helping us to secure funding for our publication.

Thank you to Ms. Coppens for her continued support of our publication.

A special thank you to Ms. Sheppard and Ms. Whalen who were essential to our ability to work on the publication from home this year. Without them, this edition of *Sachem Magazine* wouldn't be possible.

And finally, thank you very much to Mr. Querino for being a wonderful and dedicated advisor.

# Colophon

This edition of *Sachem Magazine* is available to download at <https://sachemyay.wixsite.com/sachem>.

Members of the Northborough and Southborough communities were informed of its release and location through a One Call email sent to the students and parents of Algonquin Regional High School. This information was also featured on the Algonquin school website.

The fonts used in this edition were Courier New and Minion Pro.





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