

glide on

Wright Memorial Public Library
Online Art & Literary Zine



Knowledge is Universal

Ashlee Crowe



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Wright Memorial Public Library

1776 Far Hills Ave. Oakwood, OH 45419

wrightlibrary.org

April 2019

"If birds can glide for long periods of time, then... why can't I?"—Orville Wright

The idea of *glide* and *glide on* began as we anticipated the 80th anniversary of Wright Memorial Public Library on February 14, 2019. The community was invited to contribute poetry, prose, and artwork that was specific, though not limited to, Oakwood, Dayton, and Montgomery County. We were looking for images and ideas that celebrate and reflect on the many facets of life in the Miami Valley: past, present, and future. History, of course, would be a topic due to our rich local history, including former Oakwood residents and library namesakes, Orville and Katharine Wright. We encouraged exploration about what it means to be alive in 2019, as well as what the future might bring.

We were thrilled with the large and diverse number of responses from contributors and are pained that the budget did not allow us to include everyone's work in *glide*, the print edition. We are thankful we were able to include many more of these excellent pieces into this edition, *glide on*, and post it on the library's website.

We believe you will be moved, challenged, and surprised by the way these writers all push possibility and say, "why can't I?" and of course, "why can't you?"

Diane Bengson, Youth Services Librarian
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Wright Memorial Public Library
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Cover: Ashlee Crowe, *Knowledge is Universal*

The Place I Call Home

Laura Vernon-Biteau

It's where I grew up with mom and dad, my home

Unique, Beautiful, Ever-lasting

Childhood Street Wisteria

Running through sprinklers, making snowmen and playing tag

Harman, junior high, senior high

Walking to school, violin lessons, rolling down Wright Brother's Hill with friends

Soccer, basketball, softball – repeat

Tuba tooting, marching, pep, concert bands

Wonderful teachers, counselors, principals and coaches – never forgotten

Forever friendships, local “Oakwoodians” and exchange students

Gap year after high school graduation, Hola España

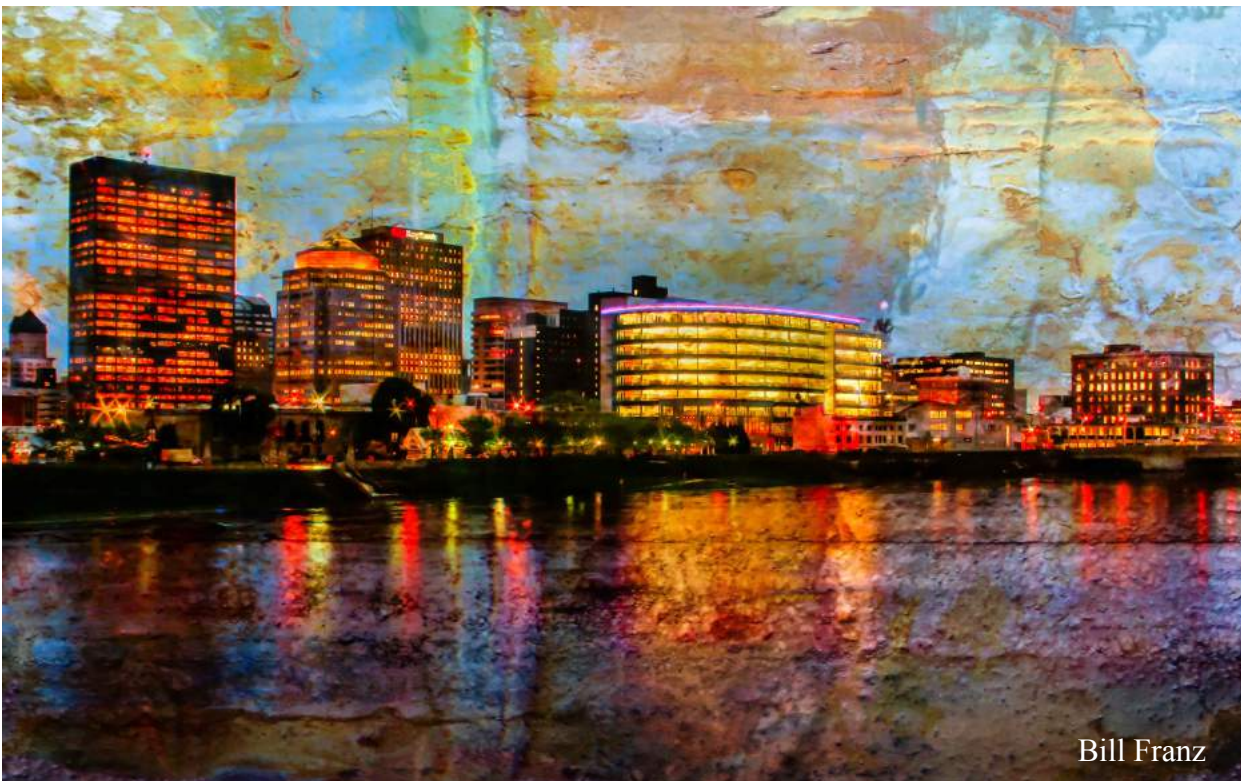
Years abroad – España, Deutschland, La France

New family beginnings – return to my home, it's where I grew up

Houses, children, Beverly, Monteray, Spirea

Unique, Beautiful, Ever-lasting

Oakwood, our home



Bill Franz

Falling in Love with Danny Kaye

Rita Coleman

Eyes the color of cornflowers,
hair burnished red and gold, the color of falling leaves,
nose beautiful as a promontory,
dancing like a spring breeze, whirling like a winter gale,
genial as a daisy.

The week of his 100th birthday (plus 2),
TCM aired his 17 movies and his TV show.

In the mid-60s I was too cool to watch a man in his 50s
singing, dancing on a black and white screen.

I was 15, a changeling time, my first year of puppy love.

In my mid-60s, the winter of bronchitis and depression,
I catalogued his movements, animated eyebrows to tap-dancing toes.

That winter,
I waltzed through celluloid
onto an invisible platform
high above Manhattan
where skyscrapers greeted stars,
where Danny Kaye took my hand,
twirled me across a cloud floor,
and into our own private dancery.

Deth Mask of Mary Queen of Scots

Laura Walters

She glid like blude across the scaffald,
Her silkin dress a ruby drop upoun the blok.
She knelt on lynnyn claith
An' mouthed her Latine prayer
As her lady tyed a curch around her eyn.

The axe fell thre tymes
'Fore she faded,
A blak gluve rieved her auburn hayr,
An' lyfyt her heid
As the Frencheman harled her gowne away.

The waxe was brung,
It slid down her stil-wairm skin,
An' hardened on her sinking cheek.
A plaister on her mortall wund,
A cast of a character bygane.

Now she sits in schadow on the skelf
At Lennoxlove Hous, gaitherin' dust.

Of Honeysuckle & Gargoyles (a triolet)

Anna Cates

Ghosts lurk in the old castle
Honeysuckle wild across the bower
Where Hamlet strut and fret away his hour
Ghosts lurk in that old castle
Fortune's fool—to fate a vassal
Doom—beneath the gargoyle's glower
Ghosts lurk in that old castle
Honeysuckle rank across the bower

First published in *Moon Magazine* (April 2019)



Alison Bour

let's take a walk

Joon K. Shim, MD

alongside
two trails
in this living forest
a couple
unites

exhilarating western red cedar
they walk
tucked away on the wooded grounds
a quiet corner
those quiet trees

moving through unmarked areas
giddy beyond spiritual belief
of its raw beauty
one listening to the other
guiding

july and september
marks our
shooting star and wagon wheel
our meeting
over books and art

we walk to 33rd street
we say our goodbyes
a red cotton string ties me to you
from wrist to wrist
a magical knot of circular wonder

you walk home
i walk home
the evening sky is brighter now
because we know
we walk better together

Judge a Book by its Cover

Drusilla Denning-Corley

Do you avoid adopting a pet from your local pound . . .

believing something's wrong with them – instead that they were once lost and now are found?

Do you avoid people based on the color of their skin?

Dislike people just because they may be too fat or too thin?

Do you only socialize with people within your own sphere?

Afraid to be friends with a person you believe to be queer?

Do you measure someone's worth by the car that they drive?

Think someone has no value because they're living in the streets just barely able to survive?

If someone prays to a deity that goes by a different name . . .

Do you look down on them because your religious beliefs are not the same?

Some of us are guilty of living in a life with preconceived misperceptions . . .

Still others need to expand their thinking and learn to make exceptions.

So take the time to get to know something or someone and take a deeper look . . .

You might find yourself surprised just like that ending in your favorite book.

For you see, I know that some of the best books I ever shall discover . . .

are those books that I don't simply judge by their cover.

enough

Tiffany Shaw-Diaz

you will never have
a day like today
where the clouds tango
gently across the sky
and you will never have
a night like tonight
where the sun falls
gracefully
into its rainbow-glazed bed
ask the birds
the flowers
the trees
if they pine for more
and they'll ask in return
with sweet curiosity
what is more

What Makes America Great

David Warren

America is a tired farmer wiping sweat from his brow as he sits on a flatbed of hay that he's baled in a central Indiana field.

America is the timeless beauty of the orange Texas sun glowing down on the ageless bricks of the Alamo at dusk.

America is a child with a face red from Italian ice, swaying her heels as she looks at the Brooklyn Bridge in New York.

America is a jazz procession following a casket in the French Quarter of New Orleans.

America is a proud old man thanking a soldier in an airport for fighting for our freedom.

America is high school kids with painted faces waiting for kickoff under the Friday night lights.

America is a determined mountain biker negotiating the rugged red rocks in Moab, Utah.

America is a family sitting on Adirondack chairs in Maine peering at the Atlantic Ocean.

America is another family walking past dunes and willow weeds to a beach on Carolina's Outer Banks.

America is the bells clacking on a cable car in San Francisco or a ferry boat horn blaring in Puget Sound, Washington.

America is a smiling teacher because she has a new smart board to show off.

America is a fountain on the town square in Savannah, Georgia, and two grand lions guarding the Art Institute of Chicago.

America is lighthouses on each shore that have stood the test of time and guided sailors towards their destination.

America is two 20-year-olds, in a coffee shop in Portland, texting over lattes.

Americas is a cornhole game in Iowa, and a pig roast in Mississippi.

America is an eagle soaring above the Alaskan wilderness.

America is garage sale signs going up on Thursday night and coming down on Sunday.

America is hundreds of tourists running up the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art just like Rocky did.

America is a surfer applying wax to his board as he prepares to catch waves on Waikiki Beach.

America is coaches teaching kids in baggy baseball pants how to field grounders.

America is a red, white, and blue barber pole spinning around.

America is a throng on the pier of Key West watching a reggae band and admiring the sunset.

America is a moose and her two calves wading in the water in Northern Montana.

America is a black bear cub grabbing berries in the solitude of the Smoky Mountains.

America is a little boy standing atop a hill in Ohio where the Wright Brothers tested their first glider, imagining how it was way back when.

America is a imperfect collection of unique people, interesting places, inspiring monuments, beautiful scenery and fascinating towns and I'm thankful to call it home each day!

Mr. and Mrs. America

David Chesar

She couldn't fix
What who-she-used-to-be broke
She couldn't carry
Who-she used-to-be's yoke

She kept distracting him from the now
He could only see her view
He was doing what could be done
She was looking for something new

Only remembering who they were
Daily she wrote the script
He could never remember his lines
And the important ones he skipped

He could never choose the words
The words she'd understand
She couldn't change her definitions
And his conversations were all unplanned

He never saw the play in her head
He couldn't confirm her world
Neither could control their future
Every deed became unfurled

She wants to walk out of this show
See what open doors she can find
But his will always changes her mind
Because old hope is the hardest to leave behind

Goodnight Children

David Chesar

Today many doors closed one after one
So tonight I will leave the windows open
To let the chicken wire moon rest with you

Now unlock your gates one by one
It time to let wishes taste the mind
And let the light of night take care of us

Feel the ovens bake as the body mends
As breath weaves us a new table
For our dreams to gather like friends

While dusk makes plans to draw the dawn
Close your eyes and let go of the day
And let your heart simmer like sauce

Fill the ponds with memories of kindnesses
Gifts from the past to the future
Take time to swim in them

Heal

Tomorrow we will face another day



Faces

Alanna Morales



The Wright Turn

O. Ervin Gruia

A Bounty of Lessons

Adam D. Adkins

On three consecutive weekends last spring, I found myself in an arena near Cincinnati, taking in all the cheery beer ads and championship banners. Being there called to mind memories of hockey games, wrestling shows and the like. I've been here. This is familiar. But I wasn't sitting at a WWE show or an NHL game. Not this time. That day's attendance was for something entirely new in my life, yet another change in a fluid year. This was a Winter Guard International (WGI) show in Northern Kentucky, and I was sitting there because of my wife. It's quite a spectacle, believe me, and as I watched the color guard performances roll on, I couldn't help but appreciate just how much life can change. And in the middle of it all is her.

Time and experience give one perspective and looking back now it's clear: I had to evolve. Life was going to demand more of me than ever before, and so I believe God provided me what I needed to make it. Much like a different ingredient tossed into a familiar recipe, she has changed it all. I didn't realize what I was capable of before I met this wonderful woman. As it turns out, she has that effect on a lot of people. Love is a beautiful and chaotic experience. Sometimes the hurdles cause me to stumble, but I can appreciate the chaos of two lives slowly merging into one, with all the adoration and angst that goes into it. Building a life together isn't for the faint of heart, as we've both discovered, but anything worth having is worth fighting for, and we fight -- together, as one -- for our relationship.

I've been blessed to discover the performing arts through her, and what a world it is. It's her foremost passion. She won multiple world championships as a performer and is a devoted and talented color guard instructor. People request her services all the time. The effort that goes into these performances is breathtaking. A beautifully executed drill is a brilliant mesh of artistic flair, precision, and raw emotion. I've seen the work that goes into this, and it calls to mind hours of fielding practice on the baseball diamond or endless tackling drills under a hot July sun on the football field. You want to be good at this? It takes work and work and work. Blood, sweat and tears are common.

This is where my wife comes in. Pupils need a teacher, and she is that and more. I know this because her kids send her practice videos daily. I know this because her kids graduate and perform elsewhere but seek her approval on next steps. I know this because they call her "mom." She is always teaching. She is always *their teacher*.

And as any person who works with teenagers knows, it isn't just about the sport or the art, it's how the time spent honing those skills cascades into the rest of your life. Yes, she is working with them on the proper way to spin the rifle, but more than that she's teaching them how to dedicate themselves to something beyond themselves. We miss this. What good is a skill without the behaviors to manifest it?

The activity provides a canvas for teaching life skills. Learning to overcome bad moments and adapt, grow and press forward despite the pain and frustration are fundamental parts of being a human being. To support your friends and work together for a victory not achievable on your own. This is what she loves to do. Seeing one of her kids successfully navigate a thorny life issue means more than a great performance. It isn't lost on me how important it is for kids to have mentors and coaches to show them that. I've benefited from both tremendously. More times than I can count, a key piece of advice sent me down a better path. It makes me quite proud to know she is that person for someone else.

All of that is on display in the arena below me. It's rather stark how different our experiences are during these events, by the way. I'm a fan in the stands, oblivious to the details, only able to recognize big moments. (Wow, what a toss! Oh, a drop!) I clap. I enjoy. I draw nothing more. The nuance is lost on me. My wife carries the burden of skill and experience. She *does* notice everything, and on this day the guard was okay but not great. She was down on field-level, absorbing the performance and noticing what I couldn't. After they finished, I made my way down to her as they cleaned up the props.

"Hey, that wasn't bad!" I said. Remember -- *I'm oblivious*.

"Uh, no. It was," she said, the disappointment and frustration evident. They made a lot of mistakes. They hadn't improved in a few key areas. It wasn't great. She had the look of a coach searching for the best approach. She vented for a few more moments but changed that tone when it came time to address the kids. Curled into a nook in the back of the arena, the guard staff rounded up the team for a huddle. No one was

placated or lied to. The show didn't go as we'd hoped, and there are things to work on. The staff shared reminders of how to handle the pressure of show day and what *had* to be fixed in rehearsal. It was encouraging and challenging -- the message seemed to be, *bad days happen but not twice*.

Plenty of heads nodded. Some sagged. A few cried. Afterward, a few individuals came up (showing some bravery, I thought. It's tough to ask directly, "Hey, how did I do?") and asked for a personal review. I watched many faces light up as she explained how they did, complimenting skills only recently developed. She taught and encouraged them. She was firm about errors but laid out how to improve. There was hope. They wanted her approval and having it gave them a confidence and a resolute bounce in their steps. For anyone, that's important. For high schoolers, growing up in a chaotic world in a particularly chaotic time in *their* lives? That's good as gold. That kind of time and dedication can have a massive impact.

I'll admit, I couldn't grasp why teaching was so vital to her when we first met. It seemed trivial, even. But now? I get it. She is "loving her neighbor as herself" through the guard, and I'm proud to stand with her as she does it. The art is the gateway to the mentorship she craves.

As her husband, I benefit from the same nurturing. I am easily frustrated and prone to anxiety. I see worst-case scenarios everywhere. I doubt myself and fall apart. I've always needed someone to tell me it'll be okay. That's her. She is stability amid the storm, always leading me back to safe ground. She coaches me, too — but with a love that moves the heart.

Life is hard. Careers can demoralize and finances stiffen. Friends suffer and loved ones pass away. No one is exempt. I believe God, in his infinite grace, knows our needs well in advance and provides us people to help lead us along. I needed my wife to come along just like those kids did. I pray that I am the same helper to her, a refuge in crisis, an ever-present outstretched hand. Standing near that huddle, watching her steer the ship through rough waters taught me as much as the kids. Who doesn't stumble? Who doesn't disappoint themselves?

I saw myself in those young performers, frustrated and upset at themselves. And the message she delivered to them is the same message I've oft needed to hear, too: don't give up.

I won't, my love. I won't. This is for you, my great encourager, my friend, and my wife.



Jerry Allison

Man Ponders at Dusk

Hearing to Deaf: An Experience

Steph Brumbaugh

A rainbow painted in my mind,
Of sounds my ears remember hearing.

Tinkling of crystal,
A friend's whisper of secret longings,
Leaves rustling on an autumn afternoon,
The flapping wings of birds on a windy day,
The pitter patter of rain on a roof, during a storm;
The whistling of the wind through the trees,
The crackling of bug lights on summer nights
Crickets chirping, frogs croaking, geese honking:

All this in an instant extinguished,
By a fog,
Forever cloaking the highway of my mind.

The rainbow is hidden,
And rarely appears,
Except for an instant,
Memory has been triggered,
Recognition of my old friend.

For now I have heard
The blinding headlights,
Glaring through the mist of silence.

They show not the way,
But rather distract from it,
Annoying me, constant whiteness.

For white light is made of a spectrum of colors.
As the rainbow of sound in my mind,
Was condensed into
Glaring headlights of noise.

The
 beauty
 has
 become
 mechanical

My Origin

Rosalie Catalano

In his novel *Origin*, Dan Brown asks the proverbial questions, “Where did we come from?” and “Where are we going?” His book’s premise is more metaphysical than I could ever be, but it has prompted me to ponder where I came from, and to write down my childhood memories for my grandchildren.

Grandma Stella and Grandpap Joe

My paternal grandparents came from Palermo in Sicily, the island just off the toe of Italy’s boot, and the largest island in the Mediterranean Sea. Grandma Stella and Grandpap Joe (Guiseppe) and their three sons—Joseph, Stephen (my dad), and Carmen—were bootleggers. They illegally ran alcoholic beverages during Prohibition in the United States, which lasted from 1920 to 1933. My grandparents bought and ran a tavern in southwestern Pennsylvania, where the boys grew up rough and ready. They were young boys during the Great Depression, so they had to grow up quickly.

The tavern thrived and my grandparents sold it and moved a few miles away to a somewhat bigger town, where they purchased and ran a larger tavern and hotel, called the Pennsylvania Hotel. Older men, living strictly on their pensions, rented rooms upstairs, so it was more accurately a rooming house. Apparently, ladies of the night were snuck up to the rooms from time to time.

Many holidays, birthdays, and major anniversaries were spent in the main lobby of the hotel. Long rectangular folding tables were covered with paper from a large roll. My grandparents would feed our entire family, which sometimes included extended family such as my mother’s brother’s family, not to mention several local Italian paisanos (‘homies’), and even a few of the hotel renters who happened by.

My grandparents lived in a two-story brick house just down the street from the Pennsylvania Hotel. The house had beautiful wood paneling and an outdated kitchen. It smelled of Ben-Gay ointment, which my grandmother used to relieve her ‘arthritis.’ I’m not sure I ever saw Grandma Stella cook—Grandpap Joe did the bulk of the cooking. He roasted the best seasoned chicken and potatoes in large baking pans, and cooked the yummiest broth-based soup with ditalini (small pasta tubes).

My mother still talks about the time Grandma Stella wanted to be taken to some woman’s house. She claimed the woman owed her money, and she needed to collect it. Thankfully, the woman wasn’t at home (or knew enough to pretend she was out). My mother later learned that Grandma Stella had a pistol in her pocketbook, and was planning on either warning or killing the woman, whom she believed was flirting, or doing more, with Grandpap Joe. Each time she retold the story, my mother marveled at how she narrowly escaped becoming an unwitting accessory to murder!

My brother, Dan, shared funny and disturbingly similar stories about Grandma Stella. He said she would put a thin layer of talcum powder on the sill of the extra upstairs bedroom—the one farthest down the hall, facing the river. She was convinced that Grandpap Joe used binoculars to view *some woman* across the river—someone whom she believed he was carrying on with. On more than one occasion, when Grandpap Joe, our uncles, and Dan were heading out in the middle of the night for early morning deer hunting, Grandma Stella would suddenly appear, dressed and insistent on accompanying them. Again, she was convinced Grandpap was up to his shenanigans. And along she went, much to the disappointment of the guys!

I’ve also heard stories about my great-grandfather (Stella’s father) peeing out of the window from the top floor. When my parents were first married, they spent their wedding night one floor below, and my naïve mother thought she was hearing rain on the warm night of August 3, 1940.

I don’t recall my grandparents speaking much about Italy. But when I was quite young, they flew back to visit relatives, and I recall my grandmother packing toilet paper. She feared there would be little to none there. The gifts she took for family members seemed rather routine items to me at the time—all things we took for granted. By their Sicilian relatives’ standards, my grandparents were likely considered wealthy.

Sicily is where the Italian Mafia, or La Cosa Nostra (meaning *our thing*), originated. There was talk of our family being loosely affiliated with the Mafia, particularly some relatives living in nearby Pittsburgh, who visited on just a few occasions. There was probably more to it than I will ever know, but this side of the family was tough. Once, Grandpap Joe—along with Uncle Carmen, Uncle Joe and Dan—were returning Dan

to our house after a hunting trip. The house was surrounded by cars and a bunch of guys who didn't look as if they were paying a friendly visit. My oldest brother, a ladies' man who looked like a young Al Pacino, was being held captive inside the house. Grandpap Joe figured out what was going on, and directed the uncles and Dan to station themselves with their rifles. On his command, they were to begin shooting. Needless to say, the guys surrounding the house quickly dispersed. Yes, a woman was involved.

Nonno and Nonna

My maternal grandparents—Angelo (Nonno) and Emma (Nonna)—came from the province of L'Aquila in the Abruzzo region of Italy, geographically central Italy, but considered culturally more southern. Abruzzo is known as the greenest region of Europe because nearly half of its land is national parks or protected nature reserves.

Nonna died when I was four, so I didn't really know her. I remember her body being laid out in the house where she and Nonno lived and raised my mother, Venicia, and her brothers Joseph and Roland. People came to pay their respects at the house. I recall sitting on someone's lap as the hearse took the casket away to the cemetery. This person taught me the phrase "how now brown cow." I later learned it was a phrase used in elocution lessons to demonstrate rounded vowel sounds. What an odd thing for me to remember in light of all that was happening—the mind of a four-year old!

Their house was a duplex 'company house,' originally owned by the mining company for whom Nonno worked. This was a common living arrangement in the 'patches,' or Pennsylvania company towns, where many of the men worked in the bituminous coal mines. Mining companies secured the needed manual labor by providing housing, and thereby controlling their workforce. When the mine closed years later, Nonno bought the entire duplex and rented out the other side to a single man named Tony, also Italian.

Nonno and Tony passed much of their leisure time playing cards and fighting like two wildcats, usually because Nonno accused Tony of cheating! Weeks or months would pass with them barely speaking, and then the cycle would start all over again. Unlike Tony, who was not the cleanest, healthiest or best-smelling person (his always-on sweater and newsboy cap reeking of stale cigarette smoke), Nonno took very good care of himself and his home. Tony ate hotdogs and Twinkies and smoked Camel cigarettes, the fingers on his right hand stained from years of tobacco. Tony also had a glass eye that was perpetually runny.

After the coal mine closed, Nonno took a job in the laundry at the local hospital, about three miles away. He never drove, so he took buses, or rides from my mother and others, to get to and from work. He developed a close friendship with a woman named Rose, who also worked in the hospital, and she often drove him home. He sometimes spent a few days at her house, which I never gave much thought to back then. I'm sure they enjoyed each other's company and alleviated their loneliness.

Funny, but both of my grandfathers were good cooks. Every week, Nonno baked fresh bread from semolina flour—the best bread ever. It as part of our typical weekday breakfast, spread with blue cheese on thick toasted slices of the peasant bread, and topped with Genoa salami. We were allowed coffee with milk, too, from the time we could sit at the table on our own. Nonno also made pasta from scratch, hanging it over dish towels laid across a broom stick between two chairs. My two older brothers learned to cook as well. The oldest took a home economics class in high school to be near the girls. The other one wanted to replicate our mother's recipes, so he could enjoy them when too far away to eat her cooking.

Nonno kept a garden, and my cousins and I enjoyed the fruits of his labor. We pulled and ate sun-warmed strawberries and cherry tomatoes, rinsing them with water from the garden hose. His Concord grapevine, from which he made wine, yielded the sweetest fruit. He soaked fresh peaches in the wine, and we kids enjoyed this fruit.

Many Saturdays or Sundays, when weather permitted, Nonno would walk the three miles to our house and spend the afternoon. I remember resting my head on his lap and falling asleep while we watched TV westerns like *The Cisco Kid* and *The Lone Ranger*. When Nonno played cards with us kids, we would sometimes intentionally cheat, just to get him riled up and hear him chide us in Italian. It wasn't very nice of us.

During the last year of his life, as his health was failing, he lived with us. He was sick largely due to pneumoconiosis, or black lung disease, from years of working in the mine and breathing in its black dust.

During that last year, I listened to his labored and rattled breathing in the bedroom next to mine. That last year is still with me. I was around 20, and in college, when he died. Nonno's death was my first major loss of a loved one, and it hit me hard. I had spent more time with him and was closer to him than my other grandparents. I believe that, and his subsequent death in spring of 1972, resulted in my developing a strong fear of death. Just a few months later, in June, Hurricane Agnes brought heavy rains that pelted our roof throughout the day and night. It was then that I developed claustrophobia and panic attacks, not diagnosed or treated until many years later.

I want to reflect more on where I came from—my origins—and how they define me. Where I'm going remains to be seen.

Movie of My Life

Samuel Huntington

And so another long day winds itself to an end.
Whether it was good or bad hardly matters now.
In an hour's time I'll finally be in my humble home
Resting my weary soul in the old easy chair.
I'll undo my tie and unbutton my black shirt
Get out of these sweaty black slacks and sticky socks.
Get my poor aching feet out of these stuck on shoes.
Get my naked body to the bathroom tub.
Turn on the hot water and listen to it run.
Step into the bathtub and feel the warmth of the water
On my ankles and toes, and then my head and shoulders
I'll towel off and climb into my pajamas.
My beautiful blue/red striped flannel pajamas.
And then I'll retreat into the old easy chair
Turn down the living room lights and close my tired eyes
Quietly watch The Movie of My Life play on.
The stars shine brightly way up in the sky so high.
Casting a laser beam down upon my mind.
"Peace, peace", the Angels sing. "Peace, peace" they sing again.
"Rest your weary heart on the wings of love".

Mi Casa

Rita Beth Ebert

I leave North America for the first time
clearing cirrus on a redeye,
my travel milestone a blip on a screen.
To my right is an oval of black expanse,
to my left, a smiling unshowered stranger
exuding young adult adventures.
My own adventure begins high as the Andes
but for now the marvel of flight is lost on me,
crammed in a foul box for ten hours.

When I arrive at the airport in Asunción,
the man at the gate waves me on to another gate.
Paraguay doesn't get many turistas.
His English is 100 times better than my Spanish,
which is to say it is abysmal.
I convince him I really do want to stay.
"Boda," I hear my mouth fling like a cheap toy.
I try again for the customs agent:
"La boda de mi hermano."

In the airport atrium, I think I see the Wright Flyer
suspended above me like a specter. *No way*, I think,
I did not fly halfway around the world
to land back in Dayton. I parse the plaques:
the airport is named for a Wright contemporary,
an aviation pioneer, a local hero. I hear my name:
beaming strangers who only know my photo
take my bags and kiss my cheeks.
My head spins.

People here show their love with barbecue and beer.
Partly cloudy urban skies reduce the Southern Cross
to a line segment. I glow with sweat and joy.
My brother delivers a heartfelt speech for his new family
in Spanish and Guarani. It brings down the house;
I tell him that he has to repeat the entire thing in English.
His reticence is legendary;
I did not fly halfway around the world
to not know what he said.

Mi Casa cont.

I bring gifts from my exotic homeland
to my brother's brand-new nephews:
little models of the world's first successful airplane.
"Primo aeroplano," I attempt. Only the eldest listens.
"Dayton, Ohio, USA," I say to him, "Mi... casa."
This is wrong, but the boy nods and grins.
He sprints to my sister-in-law
and asks how to say gracias in English.
My heart soars.



Bill Franz

Night Drive

Megan Garrison

Ahmed is driving the jeep. He usually does. One hand on the wheel, the other holding a cigarette between his fingers. His arm rests on the windowsill. The night air whips the smoke back into my face. I breathe it all in. The second-hand smoke and dusty smell of Somaliland.

Ahmed likes to push the jeep to 120 kilometers per hour. The road is a hodge-podge of dirt, gravel and huge pot holes. We swerve and brake and accelerate without hesitation. My hand grips the handle above my head. I like the way my stomach dips and dives with the jeep.

Mohamoud holds his AK-47 casually against his shoulder. The butt of it resting on the floor between him and Ahmed. His hand rests comfortably near the trigger. A lazy sort of relaxation between him and his weapon. He is constantly changing the radio dial. He likes Ethiopian music.

Ahmed swats Mohamoud's hand away. There is a broadcast about the upcoming elections. They both listen intently. I stare out the window and try to make out the words I can.

We are coming back from Hargeisa. It's an uneventful thirty-minute drive in near darkness. The moon is bright tonight. The road is clear in the headlights. The air is crisp; fall has settled into the bones of the desert.

Mohamoud turns to look at me. Some of my hair has escaped from my scarf. I smile and tuck the hair away.

Ahmed slams on the brakes. All three of us lurch forward. Our hands bracing ourselves for impact. Our bodies tense and alert. Ahmed mutters something to Mohamoud. Mohamoud's gun is no longer resting. He holds the butt against his shoulder and the barrel out the open window towards the front of the jeep. His finger now on the trigger.

The headlights shine on the group of men standing in the road. They wear uniforms but no insignia. Weapons spread between the men. A gun here, a knife there. But they aren't looking at us. There is another car that has captured their attention. Ahmed begins to reverse, looking back at me and straining to give me a reassuring smile.

My face hides my fear. I ask Mohamoud who they are. He shakes his head and pulls his gun back into the cabin of the jeep. He seems to let out a breath as Ahmed turns down a dirt path to the left. We'll go around, avoiding the main road tonight.

Finally, Ahmed looks at me in the rearview mirror. "Not who we thought they were, but not anyone we want to meet." I give a nod before turning to look out the window again.

Ahmed blows smoke into my face indirectly, the dusty air invades my nostrils along with it. Mohamoud turns the dial again, landing on an Ethiopian song. His weapon is back to its careless position. Ahmed jerks the car from left to right, bumping along the desert. I like the way my stomach flips.

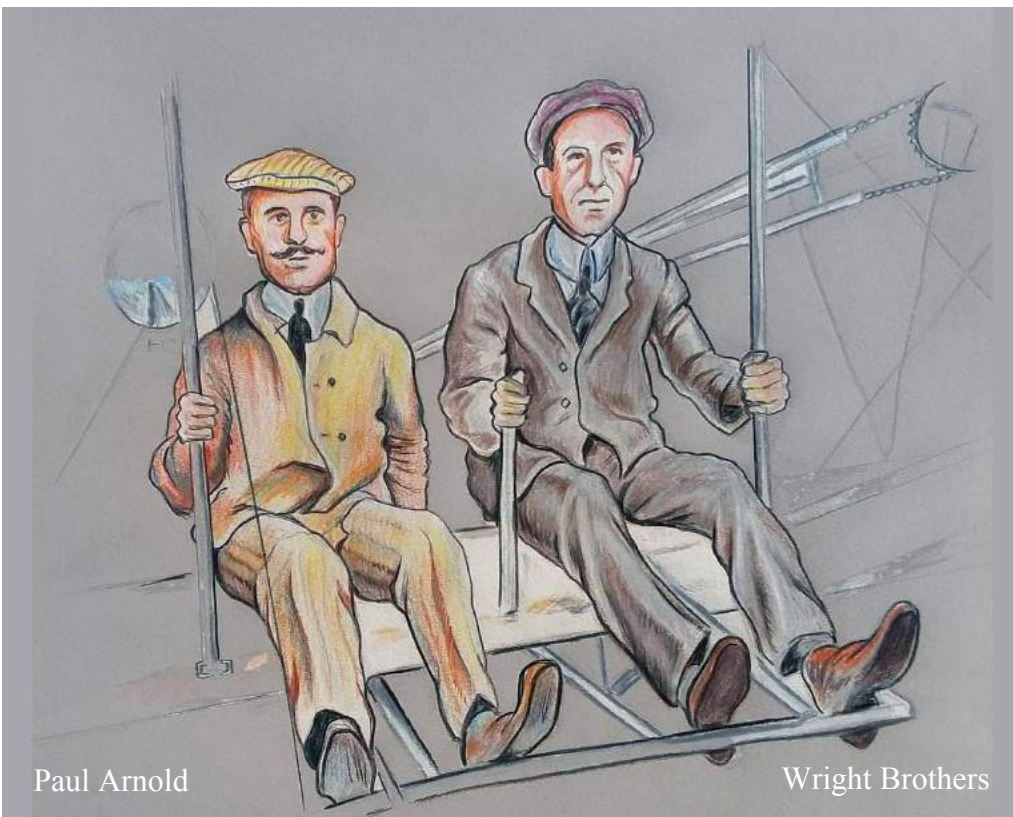
Roots

Alicia Johnson

"Goldilocks," she said as she laid down and felt the comfort and coolness receive her physical form perfectly. Below her, firm, yet slowly reshaping itself to wrap her in a secure embrace. Her whole life had been a whirlwind of rootless moments. Unlike the Phoenix, who proudly rose from the ashes each time better, brighter, more awesome; in each moment of her ego's destruction, she was like a shattered glass, gluing itself together as best she could while some shards disappeared to never be found. And so, she eventually had too many holes where her essence was slowly siphoned off by the indifferent universe she belonged to.

Her mind wandered. Maybe she entered no mind. Either way, the security of her resting place cradled her soul. She began to let go. No more worries. The tyranny of urgency that had so dominated this insecure girl's every minute experienced within this reality, whimpered as she finally let go. "Is this real?" A last passing thought her ego exhaled to the cosmos. That whisper faded as well as the sensation of her dirt cradle. There, beneath an old Sycamore lay a shovel, caked with the flesh of this world. It silently marked the location of the grave she had dug for herself. Or, more accurately, the home she had always pined for.

Roots surrounded her. They had somehow always been her roots, her anchor, her foundation. None of that mattered now. She was finally home, and no one, could take that from her.



Paul Arnold

Wright Brothers

Collocations

Paula Unrau

Unstrung by the slow seep of blood he falters;
The poem slows, ceases. Forsaken by
Mnemosyne his mastery dissolves:
The bard is lost amid his ships.

And so the task of sorting out restarts:
Who's in each one, the heroes with their axes,
Arrows, spears, their cause, their slaves chained to
Their oars, their friends from home, their prizes won.
So laboring the length of coast he calls
Remembered names to see if one calls back,
But some other place has been reworlded
To this shore. Geography's recast,
The syntax rent from landmarks holds but mist;
Disjointed collocations echo off
The great tarred hulls along the shore.

The blood has spread, a Lethe has been crossed.
Not if I had ten tongues, ten mouths, a strong
Unbroken voice, a brazen heart could I
recount and name my path, my place, the nouns
and verbs with which to make my world.

The Stillness of the Unprofligate God

Paula Unrau

Slant sun through tree trunks warns of coming cold
Boreal gods retreat underground like black bears and sap
Soon miracles will become scarce

Unlike the equatorial deity whose rotting fecundity
Produces signs and savage blooms from every dung pile
The boreal god is not profligate

Miracles will still occur but at the grind of glaciers
And will be heralded by whale song heard only below the ice
We rest among the roots and pray for the blossoming of icecaps



Tariq Shaikh

Past Glory

Out of Town Train

Monica Rook

I'm taking the train out of town,
past white houses and rose-lined lanes.
long, flat blue-blackness outside each window
It's the blackberry part of summer.
A little lonely, my face out the window,
Two blinks and I'm home; three blinks and I'm gone.
Leaving smells like evening and fresh baked bread.

From here, I can suddenly see the old days
across my lap like a spread-out yellow map
under skinny, strung-out lines of street lamps
that stand guard over never-traveled roads.
I flicker past these still, blue moments.

Miles more through blueberry fields and lilac rain:
I'm leaving town on the midnight train.

Neverending

Monica Rook

1. Lascaux

You pause at the mossy mouth -- feel its ageless exhale.
Slipping from sleepy honey sunlight
into timeless cool of cave shade.
Inside a sandstone hall with lichen carpets,
smoky torches flicker like ornate candelabras.
The dancing deer on the wall with tiny hooves and branching antlers
eye you with judging, almond black eyes.
Gritty wet dirt smell from being deep, deep
inside a tunnel of rock.
Breathing slowly fills your nose like river water.
A knowing stone resonates and whispers: *"I've been waiting."*

2. Library

You, an academic pilgrim,
neck craned back to admire buttresses of bookcases
that stripe through airy, wide halls.
All that you don't know, and will never know,

has been written down and stored in this big, brick building
with six floors and endless lines of shelves that rearrange themselves
every time you look up from the map clutched in your sweaty hands.
Mother Mary will not guide you.
A fervent scholar hisses “shh!” as you crawl along the bottom row,
digging for a hidden source.
Can you hear the angels sing?
They say: *“You know nothing.”*

3. Subway

The tiled landing suspends you in a sea of transit.
Trains, coming and going, backward and forward,
and sometimes, not moving at all,
have complicated instructions
and delicate nerve endings and crowded arteries.
Lost, unstuck, unmoored
in tides of people moving with such purpose
that you have to wonder what would happen if you
just stopped
and floated.
The PA system speaks:
“Next train in 5 minutes.”

4. Milky Way

Stars low and dense like clementines cluster at your feet.
A milky whirl of other worlds implodes.
Twinkling particles scatter down.
Somewhere, the sharp sound of a door slamming shut.
But it does not matter.
If you hold pink stars in your mouth,
they fizz and tickle like carbonation:
*sweet like childhood soda
and decaying like sugar.*



Wright of Passage

Sarah Allison

Paper Flowers

Betsy Hughes

The child remembered seeing Chinatown.
She held the cherished pellets in her palms,
debating whether they would float or drown.
Although her hands were trembling then with qualms,
she dropped the balls into a water glass
and wondered while the pieces swelled and bloomed.
Each one became a little floral mass,
pastel and delicate, yet seldom doomed.
In later years the souvenir remained:
She felt her consciousness mature, expand,
creating poems like blossoms which retained
exotic mysteries to understand.
Imagination grew to effloresce,
and beauty, truth, would never evanesce.

Waning Crescent

Amy Dallis

Moon, why have you pulled
the cover of night over your face,
leaving just a sliver exposed,
when your dimpled, cratered skin
is so hauntingly beautiful?

Has no one taken hold of you
by your chin of gold
and told you how lovely you are?

The Library Card

Robert C. Breen

"Follow me" the young nurse said, as she stood up from behind the big desk. Shady Pines was one of the more affluent nursing homes in the area. Paul followed the nurse through the small lobby, then hung a right, and the carpet switched to tile. This hallway was extra wide with sterile white walls, and carried the distinctive scent all nursing homes seems to have. *Why do all nursing homes look the same?* Paul thought, recalling visits to his great uncle with his parents. He caught his reflection in a mirror hanging on the wall. Just barely an inch over six feet tall and lanky. His hair was still damp from the shower after basketball practice. He hoped to get this done fast so he could drop by his friend's house to check out his new video game before dinner.

Near the end of the hall the nurse turned left and entered a room. Paul glanced at the name on the wall as he entered. "Frank Donovan".

"Good afternoon, Frank. How are you today?" the nurse asked kindly. Paul observed a bed, a chair, and a table. Only the necessities. There weren't many personal effects, except for a bookcase full of books and a few photos on the top.

"Fine, fine. No worse than I was yesterday." Paul looked at the old man who sat on the edge of the bed. He expected a half-dead man with no hair and no idea what year it was, like his great uncle. But this man appeared healthy and very much alive. He had most of his hair – it was gray and white and neatly combed over the top of his balding head. He was dressed in khaki slacks and a polo shirt with the image of a penguin stitched on it. Upon noticing Paul, the man stood from the bed.

"This is Paul. He's a senior at the high school and he's here to interview you." The nurse said. "Frank has been here three years."

"Hi, I'm Frank." He smiled and extended his hand for a shake.

"Paul," Paul said, shaking his hand.

"They take great care of me here."

"Can I get you anything, Frank?" the nurse asked.

"Not right now. Thanks."

When the nurse left, Paul headed for the empty chair.

"No, let's go out to the activity room. It's a little more lively there. I don't spend too much time in my room."

Without speaking, Paul followed Frank out of the room and across the hall. The old man didn't use a walker or a cane. He nodded and smiled at everyone they passed in the hallway. They came to a large open carpeted area with chairs, tables, and couches. One pair of residents worked on a jigsaw puzzle on one of the tables. Another group sat around a TV watching a black and white movie.

Frank glanced at the TV and smiled. "That's Orson Welles. You know who that is?"

Paul shook his head.

"One of the greats. Look him up. He made a lot of movies in his time."

Frank headed over to two empty chairs and they sat down. "Well young man, tell me what brought you out here to interview an old man today?"

"School. I'm just doing this for a class project."

"Well lucky me. I don't get many visitors. My family only visits around the holidays. When they have to. They live many states away."

Paul nodded, opened the notebook he carried, and pulled a pen from his pocket.

He looked at the crumpled piece of paper on top of the notebook. "What is your full name?" he read.

"Francis S. Donovan. My friends call me Frank." Paul stared at the man. "You can just write 'Frank Donovan.'"

Paul wrote this down. "What did you do for a job?" Paul read from his paper.

"I'm a writer."

Paul scribbled it down. "What is –"

"Wait a minute. Don't you want to know what I wrote?"

Paul stared blankly at Frank.

“Back in the 1970s and 80s, I wrote a lot of thrillers and mysteries.”

“Cool,” Paul said, with no enthusiasm.

“Tell me Paul, what do you like to read?”

“Uh, I don’t know.”

“You don’t read?”

Paul shrugged. “I watch a lot of videos —”

“—on your smartphone.” Frank finished.

Paul stared back with surprise.

“Smartphones came out over ten years ago. I know what they are. I have one.” Frank pulled his phone from his pocket and waved it for Paul. “What’s the next question on your list?”

Paul held the paper close to his face. “What inspired you to do your job?”

“Put your paper down for a second, son, you need to hear this.”

Paul did as he was told.

“My library card. That’s what inspired me. In 1939, when I was three, my mother took me to the library and I got my first card.”

Paul began to write that down.

“Do you have a library card, Paul?”

Paul looked up from his paper, “Yeah, my mother made me get one.”

“I bet you never use it.”

“Not really.”

Frank shook his head. “You, my friend, are sorely missing out. That library card was the best thing I have ever had in this life.”

Paul appeared skeptical. He looked over at the people working on the puzzle.

“When I was a kid, the Depression had just ended and we went to war. Times were hard. Days were long and dark. But none of it bothered me. I had my library card. I would pick up as many books as I could carry and spend days, weeks, reading and getting lost in the stories.” Frank leaned back in his chair. “The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. Ivanhoe. Robin Hood. The Canterbury Tales.” He smiled. “I lived in Waterbury, Connecticut then. But with those books, I got to explore a world that was much, much bigger.”

Frank examined Paul. The boy looked bored out of his mind. With a sigh, Frank asked, “Why don’t you like to read, Paul?”

“I dunno. I just do other things.”

“Ok. Now, tell me, Paul, what do you think of the winters up here?”

“I don’t like them.”

“Have you ever been to Florida?”

“Yeah, my grandparents live there.”

“It’s expensive though.”

“I guess. My parents pay for it.”

“Well, what would you say if I told you you could travel to Florida whenever you want and not pay anything?”

Paul looked confused.

“The library. You go to the library and find a book about Florida and read it. It will have all kinds of pictures of beaches, palm trees, and sunshine. You’ll get lost in the book and experience Florida without ever leaving your house.”

Paul looked at the old man as if he were crazy. “Sure. Whatever you say. Can we finish this soon so I can get going?”

“As you wish.”

Paul looked down at his paper. But before he could read another question, Frank asked, “Do you like sports, Paul?”

“Yes. I play basketball. And baseball. Third base.”

“So you have heard of Ted Williams, Willie Mays, and Mickey Mantle?”

“Yeah, of course.”

“Ok. How would you like to experience winning the World Series for the first time since 1918?”

“How?”

“Read a book about the Red Sox’ 2004 season. That’s how.” Frank glanced over at the TV. “You know, libraries have more than books. They have videos and computer games too.” Paul sat in silence. “They also have music, magazines, and audiobooks, among many other things. Really any form of media you could want. You’re missing out. But then again, maybe that’s what you want.”

Paul looked around the room. He appeared to be thinking. “What kind of books did you write?”

“Thrillers and mysteries. Got pretty good at it too. Some of my work found its way to the Best Seller list. I also wrote some TV episodes and a movie.”

“You wrote a movie?”

“Well, co-wrote. It was about a man who got mixed up with bank robbers and had to run from the law.”

“That sounds cool.”

“That was a fun project. The movie didn’t do well at the box office, but it’s still out there somewhere. Have you heard of Tom Hanks?”

“Who hasn’t?”

“I met him once.”

“You met Tom Hanks?”

“Yep. On the set of a movie. And to think it all came about because I had a library card and used it.”

“That’s pretty cool. I never thought of it like that.”

“Yes, it is pretty cool. A library card is a key to possibility.”

Paul was quiet. Finally, he said, “Well, maybe I’ll check out the library sometime. I still have the card somewhere.”

The Old Guitarist

Cia Scott

I am an old, lonely man. I am always on the same corner, playing my guitar, waiting for her. I’m waiting for my love, though she probably doesn’t love me anymore. It all started about thirty years ago. I was young and poor, yet I still found love.

I was sitting on the corner of Park Avenue dressed in my regular all red attire. Red used to be my favorite color, until time got to me. Some say that red is a feminine color, but it always did well for me. I was playing a song I wrote on my guitar when a beautiful young woman walked up to me. She had rosy cheeks and lips as red as the blood that was coursing through my veins as my heart raced. But it was her eyes, green, evergreen like a forest, concealing mysteries held deep within their bountiful beauty. She was wearing various shades of blue. They were subtle, like the whisper of the wind across the cascading waves of her jet black hair that stuck out like a crow, perched on a fencepost. From this, I should have known. She asked what song I was playing and I told her it was my own. She was surprised, but still, she complimented my talent. She then surprised me by sitting next to me. There were gasps and looks from people walking past us on the now warm pavement. I do admit, it was a rather shocking sight to see a wealthy woman dressed in lace and silk, sitting next to a poor man dressed in rags. We ignored the gawking. At that corner, we sat into the night playing, laughing, and talking of vastly different worlds that we had and had not yet seen. Night fell and she had to go. Weeks passed by and she continued to sit with me, everyday on the corner of Park Avenue. That is where we fell in love.

With all the money I got from playing my guitar on the streets I bought a circle-shaped broach. The

circle, our undying love. It was violet, a mixture of our favorite colors—blue and red. Finally, a way for our unity to be displayed. I soon started wearing blue, and she, red, realizing that the colors suited us quite well. As we walked through the streets all those years ago, guitar in hand, her hand in the other, I took the broach out of my pocket. I slowly opened my palm for her to see the jewel. I didn't even have to explain. She took our love and pinned it to the collar of her dress, beside her heart.

Upon seeing the broach, her father was disgusted and moved her far away, to live with her aunt, without me. She kept the pin and gave me the jewel, telling me to trade it for money and travel the world as I had wanted. She loved me, she said. I never told her that I loved her too.

Thirty years later, I sit here, playing my guitar. Dressed in blue, skin tinted white, heart painted green, and soul forever violet. Violet. I take the jewel from the broach out of my pocket and lose myself in its facets of memories, chained to the corner of Park Avenue on the cold pavement...

I wait. I find myself between satin sheets with a French prostitute. I wait. Begging under a bridge while a storm passes over London. I wait. While pouring myself another beer at a Scottish pub. I wait. On the beaches of Normandy. In the Sahara desert. I don't know where I am. I breathe, "Caldonia." I find myself catching a train to Spain. Crossing miles of land and country, traveling back to that same damn corner. Damn Park Avenue. Damn this whiskey, damn me, damn every woman except her. No, not her. She waits for me, I know it. She waits for me on the terrace of an Italian café. She waits for me behind the walls of Berlin. She waits for me in the Himalayas, across the Soviet Union, into the Pacific. She waits for me in Manhattan, singing show tunes. She waits for me as she pushes her lover away and storms out the door. I wait, here.

A shadow casts over me. It's the figure of an elderly woman. She has rose red cheeks, lips that whisper, "Ishmael." Her eyes look me over and know. They know everything. They smile, reflecting the green that marks a new beginning. She wears a red dress which has the gold trimmed outline of a broach pinned over her heart. I take the violet jewel out of my ragged pocket and hold it out for her to see. My love looks at it with tears in the forests of her eyes. She kneels down, and places her delicate hand over my broken heart. I place my callused hand over hers. We hold each other in this moment and lose ourselves in the depths of our souls, into the infinity of our destiny, which brings us together. Together. We sit at the beautiful, damned corner of Park Avenue, playing, laughing, and talking about our future. We see ourselves in an estate in the Spanish countryside. We see ourselves sailing across the Black Sea. We see ourselves having dinner with her Father. We see ourselves in the swirls of colors in a painting of unrequited love. Shades of blues overwhelm me. I reach out, and add strokes of red. She blends them and they are violet. Ever so violet—as the night sky. It falls and she doesn't leave my side.



Mosaic

Gabriella Stauffer

i don't want to be around when you die
but in the same breath and in comfort
for your soft paws will not pitter
and your tail will not graze my knee

i want you to know me when you die
and feel in your chest cavity a certain great fullness
of little nothings which mean everything
and soft kisses upon the forehead

i want you to know this when you die
that your people have loved you for ages
that you will be missed so terribly
that your sweet silence was the greatest song of them all
and gently, that you are special to me

Station 28 (excerpted from Pilgrimages)

Gary Mitchner

I knew Woolf before I knew West --
Vita Sackville-West, that is.
A fellow novelist but of a different narrative.
I read her son's -- Nigel Nicholson -- memoir
Portrait of a Marriage, discovering
The importance of Virginia's and Vita's
Relationship, probably sexual and platonic.
(that was ok with her husband Harold
Since he was bisexual also).
Vita wrote novels, poems, epics, letters, memoirs --
She could do it all and was popular,
Unlike Woolf who was more literary.
The Sackvilles owned Knole
With its silver furniture and deer park,
A 1,000 acre estate and house
Occupying more than a city block.
When I took the train to Sevenoaks in Kent,
I did not get into the so-called "calendar" house
With its 365 rooms -- actually an urban myth probably --
But I sat under the giant oak where Woolf
Has Orlando sit and write bad poetry --
Orlando, a love letter to Vita
Whose character lives four hundred years
As both man and woman (perhaps
The first "trans" novel?).
You can see that tree in Sally Potter's
Film with the same name.
But I went farther to Sissinghurst,
Vita's and Harold's Elizabethan ruin
With just a tower and one long house.
Climbing another tower or another writer
Made me envious and inspired --
Not an ivory tower but a way to observe
And write from above.
Many reasons exist why I like being above,
In airplanes, tops of trees, and in towers.
(A diversion: in my garage as a boy
I had a wooden door on sawhorses
Where I planned my own city from above --
Matchbox cars and trucks,
Plasticville houses and stations,

And even a miniature White House
With Presidential statues all around).
Perhaps my fascination arose then
As I manipulated my own world).
Sissinghurst is famous for Vita's
White garden -- clematis, anemone, delphinium.
Yet when I climbed to her study in that tower
(now behind bars -- even the kids were not allowed),
Saw the large portrait of Virginia on her desk,
I knew I wanted to read everything,
To love everyone, and to write
My own love letters
To all the amazing places I had been.

Stuart

Jaleh Shahbazi

My heart is broken.
I'm lord of all I see
from the window of this mansion
that's left me harrowingly empty.

She used to roam these halls.
Laughing, breathing.
She was my joy,
my life's purpose.
I looked into those eyes
the minute she was born
and I knew my entire world had shifted.

I looked forward to the years
when I'd watch her marry and see her children roam these halls.
But she's gone now, and I can scarcely breathe.
I wish she were here,
to tell me it's all going to be alright.
I'm dying now, and I'll finally see her light.

These brothers they keep on coming.
Asking me for land.
The only thing I have left.
I agree with one demand.
Dedicate it to her.
Whatever you do.
Make it in her memory,
and it all will go to you.

He died without a worry,
happy to see his child,
and the brothers of Saint Mary were not ones to beguile.
They made the University, warmly called UD.
And when they built it up, she was in the legacy.

Now the angel Stuart, God rest his tender soul,
he watches us from above and must feel joyfully fulfilled.
For within his halls he has raised many a child.
To see them learn and grow into the adults his daughter never got to be.
It warms his aching soul to an infinite degree.

Not only does he get children but grandchildren too,
for those delightful young adults marry and grow old,
and for the love they felt and shared at lovely old UD,
they send their children there and Stuart will always see
the wonderful people they all come to be.

Author's note: At the University of Dayton, St. Joseph's Hall was the first structure at UD. It belonged to a lord named Stuart who planned on leaving the building, which was his mansion at the time, to his only daughter when she married, but she died. Close to death, Stuart left the property to the brothers of Saint Mary who paid for it, at first, with only a promise.

The Critic

Gerald Greene

He sought new ways to pierce the thin skin
of my anemic and faltering ego,
incessant phrases of criticism,
destroying soft tissue that lay below.

His fearsome carping at this feeble door,
like an evil tax collector, brusquely
pressing the poor and innocent for more,
constricts to quell my creativity.

What wants to be written remains unsaid,
supplanted with defensive expression.
Artistic water swiftly diverted,
kept from flowing in Muses' direction.

I've searched uncounted ways to overcome.
Unbridled thoughts gain strength and then die out,
like shooting stars where brightness will succumb,
or tender seedlings planted in a drought.

One poet more was needed in this hour
with words expressing truth—however grim.
But he has intervened with greater power.
One poet less is heard because of him.

The Unity of Snow

Kathy B. Austin

A weak sun glows
behind the gauze of winter clouds,
spits of snow,
and shreds of memory.

Snow covers leaf curl,
the run of footprints
across the yard,
the persistent unfolding
despite oncoming cold.

It covers buried squirrel treasures,
the latent cocoons.

It covers whips of dead grass
and wind-torn twigs
piled under the tree.

It covers the rivulets of yesterday,
and the final waning note
of bird song.

With the drifting unity of snowflakes,
all different, all the same,
the world arrives
for a time
at peace.

Watching the Car

Robert Flavin

Dad drives. Mom navigates.

My sister, brother, and I daydream, fidget, fight, or play license plate games
in the backseat of our family's 1955 Plymouth Sedan.

Our annual summer vacation has commenced.

The Flavins are on the road to somewhere.

We approach a small town alongside our current rural highway.

Mom announces it's time for lunch.

Dad would rather drive another fifty miles,
but he has long ago determined that food-related matters are gender-specific
and has delegated them to Mom.

Dad parks the car, and we enter the restaurant.

Let's sit here, Dad indicates,
picking a table adjoining a window.

We can watch the car.

My father was endlessly correct, structured, and careful.

Having grown up during some of our country's hardest economic times
and having fought in Europe during WWII,
this strong but quiet and intense man had,
at an early age,
already seen enough.

His factory job and his constant vigilance would now insure
that postwar life would be stable and predictable
for him and for his family.

And, yes, it was.

Our small family house in southern Illinois was always tidy and well maintained.

The trees in front were frequently whitewashed,
a peculiar embellishment even in the 1950s.

The family car was always clean and washed.

Bicycle tires always had adequate air pressure.

Forever aware of his sacred duty to provide adequate material care for his family,
my father would go to work every day even when sick.

My siblings and I would be sent to Catholic schools.

We would all attend college, an opportunity foreign to my parents,
especially to my father who had never found great success
at the tasks which schools have always valued.

Watching the Car cont.

My sister, brother, and I would grow into proper and responsible adults.
We would be carefully taught to value family, work, God, country,
our elders, our teachers, saving money, deferring gratification,
home ownership, the Holy Roman Catholic Church,
the miracle of black and white television, the St. Louis Cardinals,
and the Democratic Party at least until LBJ.
My father lived for seventy-two years.
He made certain that our mother would be financially secure after his death.

I am now a seventy-two year old man myself,
and I occasionally reflect upon my own past years.
I am thankful for my father,
for my wonderful wife, and for my dear friends.
I am grateful for my many blessings, successes, and achievements.
My life has been as good and decent as I could have ever made it,
all the while
watching the car.

Important Conversations in History: Mid 1990's The General takes his Wife to Dinner

Theresa Kahle

Alma: It isn't our anniversary, so you must have something on your mind.

General: Well I thought it could wait a bit.

Alma: No, you need to get it out now or we won't be able to digest our meal.

General: (With a smile as he pours wine.) You always know: A toast to my best advisor. Yes, I have something to talk to you about.

Alma: (After the salads have come and silence has been pounding.) Sooo?

General: They want me to run for president.

Alma: Which party?

General: Does it matter?

Alma: No it doesn't. You will win for either of them.

General: Do you want to be first lady?

Alma: Do you want to be President?

General: Not particularly, but is it my duty?

Alma: (Sometime around the arrival of the main course) Do you feel unfulfilled in your duty?

General: Absolutely not. I have served my full run, risen to the top of command and devised a way for others to follow my mode of operating. I need nothing, except of course my precious Alma.

Alma: (With a smirk) So you already knew you would be jeopardizing the marriage if you ran for president?

General: Let's just say I knew it wasn't the kind of thing you do without the troop's consent. Public favor is part of my line of action after all.

Alma: We had been married five years when a crazy man shot the most prominent black man America had ever known. You've been on television a time or two, but as a presidential candidate it's every day. How will you stand it? How will I stand it knowing some crazy man may be working up a silent operation against you like that jail bird did against Dr. King? And everyone knows you will win. All the polls will say that for months and months. It's a long time from announcing to stepping into the safety of the job.

General: So you don't think it is safe enough for me to run for president?

Alma: No, it's not safe, but I know that doesn't matter to you.

General: You are right. What is important to me is will it matter if I become president or not?

Alma: I think the whole world will consider the first African American President a very important matter. You may even win a Peace Prize.

General: Well that isn't exactly what counts for me.

Alma: I know. And you would never be happy being the face of the greatest nation in the world unless

you thought it was useful.

General: Correct. I am not the type who takes on “splendid misery”, as Thomas Jefferson called the presidency, for the sake of it.

Alma: What about the idea that they want you?

General: “Fickle Finger of Fate” as that musical we saw back in the 60’s said. They want me now but as soon as I want to accomplish anything that people will have to tighten their belts to make happen, they won’t want me anymore. With a command you can talk to the authorities and count on decisions made with knowledge. In politics, it’s the feeling of the moment and no amount of intelligence will overcome those gut urges that people get about who is the evil one.

Alma: So you are too good to be president.

General: Hmm, that sounds bad.

Alma: But it might be true.

General: I’m not a better man than George H. W. Bush, but times have changed and a blue blood like Bush looks like the enemy of the people now. You have to have that Clinton Shtick to make people happy now and I just don’t have it.

Alma: You know you will win.

General: I’m not worried about winning; I’m worried about being able to do the job.

Alma: What is the job?

General: And that my dear is the Sixty-Four Thousand Dollar question. What is the job and why would anyone want to do it?

Alma: And who should be president if not you who knows all the necessary things and is wanted by both parties?

General: They want me because I’ll win. The president has to be someone who can sit and smile while his nuts are nailed to the chair. I may know too much to be willing to take the job.

Alma: So let the ignorant take the top command?

General: Certain ignorance may be a necessary factor for suffering through the job.

Alma: Well don’t sugar coat it.

General: Translating issues to the public is my strength, but the kind of sugar coating needed to be president; I’m not sure I’ve got that. I’m not sure I could please people enough for that.

Alma: Not really much of a purpose for you, then.

General: No. We have different purposes.

Alma: (Sometime around dessert) What if I want to be first lady?

General: Should have said so earlier.

Alma: I don’t want to be.

General: I know.

The Ohio State Buckeyes: Thought Bubbles

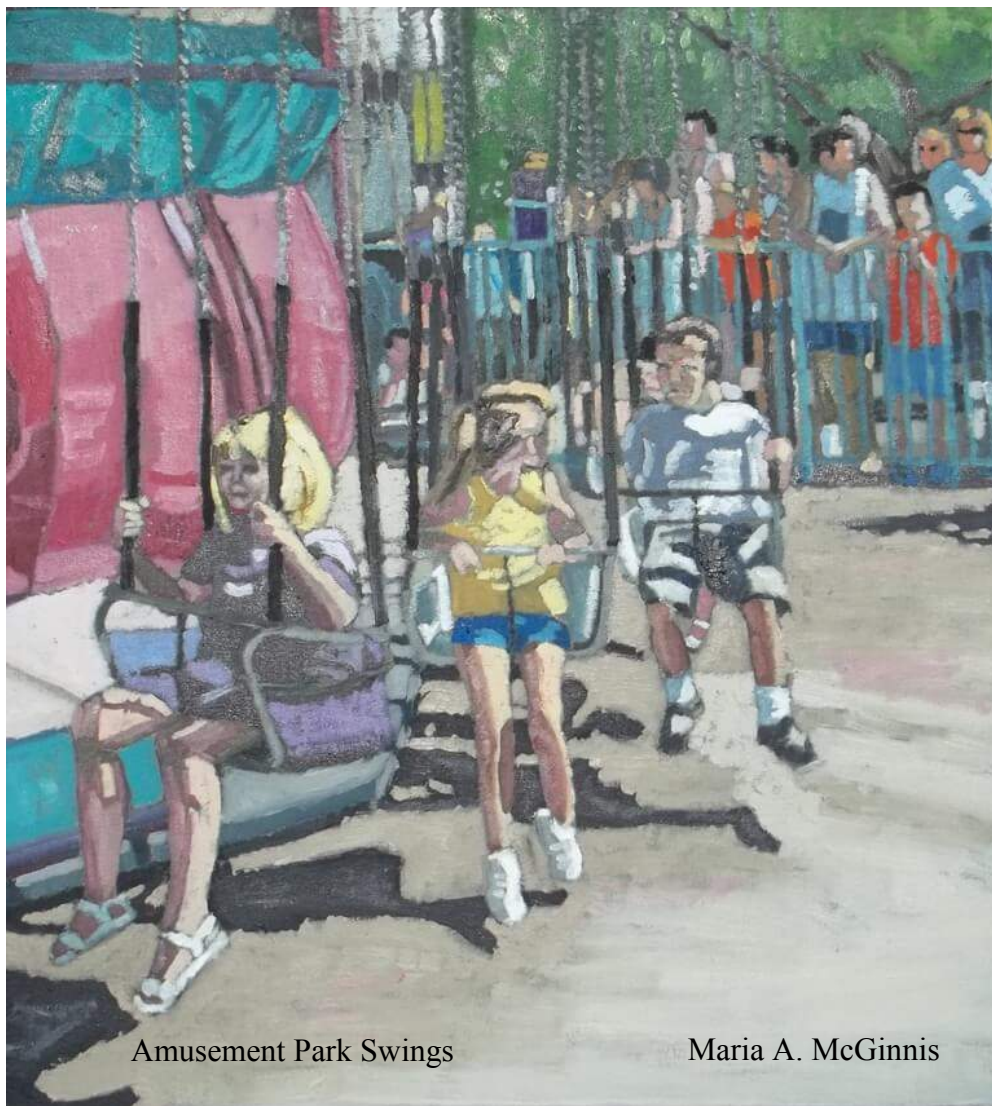
Torey Murphy

Recently I've embraced the concept of football. I was fed up with acting like I knew what I was watching just to drink beers on a Saturday afternoon and shout at a TV screen. Now I am proud to say I can drink beers on a Saturday afternoon and shout at the TV with a purpose! I am no longer a football faker. So it was awesome to attend a live Ohio State football game recently and follow it. Now, I will admit I rely heavily on the yellow invisible line they show on TV. I love the look I got from my friends (and surrounding fans) when I asked out loud, "Where's the yellow line?"

I am still baffled by The Ohio State marching band and their ability to form words and moving pictures on the field. The half time show centered on *Back to the Future* and the band formed into the flux capacitor as well as a DeLorean.

I will be forming my shampoo mohawk into a football today. Or an airplane bottle of Makers Mark. I haven't decided yet. Both equally contributed to the experience.

The tailgating part was awesome too. There was a spirit of comradery floating through the air that you could only feel from being there. The smell of hot dogs and the sound of laughter and the crisp crack of beer cans opening was music to my senses.



Amusement Park Swings

Maria A. McGinnis



Courtney Smith

Suicide Hotline

Thom Talbert

Suicide hotline, this is (me) speaking, where are you?

Up here, in the sound of wind across a phone speaker. I just want to leave.

The emptiness somehow hurts, doesn't it. You'd think you need a something to poke, or prod, pinch, pierce, but no. Nothing pain. A lung with no air in it. Heartburn is a perversion of light from a flame. The answers are hidden but only a little. When you are little they tell you to put your toys away, give you containers and obvious uses, package and mail you to the "real world" where televisions are on display so you never have to open the box. Circles are dizzying in the Big City. Triangles more manageable. Squares disguise finish lines, which you cross how many times before the race is finished. My friend S. said "children must join us where we do not know," and you must, already have, so it may be frightening when the lid is lifted but I am here too, my love. My smile means what it always did only now you can see all my mouths at once and choose which one you kiss.

Ahimsa

Madeline Musico

As you walk along the street you once padded on your way to your morning coffee, a sight catches your eye. A scuttle across the way, up the marbled steps to the bank off 3rd street something stirs. A flash of...someone... something?...then gone...

You look around to see that this is not the place you once called home. Or is it? It seems to be, only different somehow. Everything is empty. Grossly faded and broken. Time seems to stand still as the sun has lost its way through the muck that clouds the sky. Is it morning? Is it night? Is anyone else here?

You are alone.

You cross the street towards the towering bank that's been on the corner since the beginning of time, it seems. Once a proud monument, now a meek skeleton struggling to hold its bones.

Inside those stone walls there is an echoing drip drop of past rains trickling through the cracks onto the cold hard floor. Little light passes through, making it hard to find your way, but the sound of something breathing takes you to a corridor that perhaps once served a great purpose, but now is a hollow cavern merely taken up by what you saw before.

That someone, that something, you saw scurry across the steps, sits in the middle of the room surrounded by a curious collection of what to you are trifles: a toothbrush once used by someone long forgotten, bottles, cans, books...oh, so many books. Pages torn and strewn about the space.

In the arms of the figure is what seems to be a child. A human child. An infant moreover. But how did this creature get a hold of such a precious thing? Where is its mother, where is anyone?-

But wait!

The creature is not a creature but rather a woman. Nursing her child. She is skeletal and hunchbacked, her spine sticking through her skin like a rigid mountain range across a vast land. Her hair covers her face, but through the greasy strands of black straw you see it. Eyes hollow and dark as the hair covering her head. Blacker than the skies towering over the place you once called home.

You lean in but a little closer if only to see....but oh! You've fallen. Exposed. She looks up at you, shielding her child and wielding her teeth, sharp like that of a dog.

Stunned and scared you become paralyzed. What is going to happen? What *has* happened? Why is everything so-

She looks at you, calm. You sees what you are and sits across from you cross legged, heart open to receive you.

She looks at you.

She stares.

She points to her left.

Upon the walls of the broken bank lives the inscription "In God We Trust" carved deep into the marble. And then she speaks:

"In God We Trust..." she reads, followed by an eerie cackle that echos through the walls.

"Trust, an ancient concept. A luxury.

In today's time our people can't imagine such niceties.

My people are Your people. We're all the same.

Looking at me you can't imagine it's what you became,

but it is, and it will...

Since the Dark Days fell over Mother Earth's dead corpse,
things haven't been the same, of course.

But we all know how man's hand played the key role in the death of our land and everything on it."

There is a silence as her black eyes peer further into yours, searching for recognition.

"Don't you?.. Don't you see?"

But you don't.

"Oh...

Well allow me to tell you how what you're doing will lead to what you'll be.
Such horrors happened. I'll tell the tale concisely.

Poisons from places bursting to the brim,
with sweet creatures not knowing their story's end,
crept into the waters from here to there,
it could have been stopped, but nobody cared.

Earth's waters grew murky and full of filthy trash,
the oceans' creatures carcasses floated on thick liquid the color of ash.
Pretty soon the waters that fell from the darkening sky became just as toxic,
and all the plants died.

Food was gone, the color green a memory,
blue became a feeling, not a sight to see.

Everything dead.

Everything but one.

Take a look around,
man is the only thing that roams these grounds,
Grounds grown cold and hard like the heart of our Mother
whose body we raped like no other.

And still do.

Even with her gone."

She places the baby in a small tent like crib in the corner and crawls to her books.

"It's sad. I heard the gods blessed her with so many wonderful things,
waterfalls, valleys, birds that sing.

But all that stopped when the gods made her fatal mistake: Us. Man. A virus in disguise.
She loved us so much not knowing we'd lead to her demise.
And our own of course.
All in good time...

She loved us, but we didn't love her back,
with every grand invention it came as an attack
to her the things she'd grown to love.
She grew weaker and wept and wailed,
it was our job to take care of her and **you** failed.

She slowly died and she meekly fought back with heat, fires, rising waters , too.
It was your warning! to stop! but none of you knew...
Or not enough cared.

And before we realized the damage from our hands,
our Mother danced her last dance.

Sometimes if you listen in the dead of night,
you can hear the whispers of her final plight,
breaking through the silence that plagues many a corner.
If only things had turned out better for her... “

Just then, almost as if She was listening, an earsplitting thunderclap resounds throughout the empty hallways,
startling you.

“Do you hear that? Do you hear her ghost?
Her cries in the night are what haunt these lands the most.

The tears that fall from her mortal remains
are just as gross as her body became...

Each night man flees as her downpour falls
In the night, an eerie echo of her death calls.

Listen closely to her melody's shape,
for you, it's not quite too late...”

And just as quickly as the creature caught your eye, she vanishes around the corner. You follow her swiftly,
not knowing why, but something is drawing your core to hers, there is something she wants you to see.

Just there, outside the safety of the stone walls a violent thunderstorm brews.

Winds whistling a haunting tune, and through the rain Mother Earth cries. You hear her plea in the sounds of
the storm, a weary voice calls from the heavens, and you swear, for a moment, the words

“Help Me...”

muttered through the melody of the madness in the sky. You're taken aback, you stagger into the atrium, *what is going on?*

The creature sits soundly peering up at the sky, tears rolling down her face in mourning for her loss. All of our
loss. She hangs her head and slowly returns to her hovel, you follow at a pace just as melancholy.

Just when you thought things could not be more alarming, you see it. Red.

Red everywhere.

The smell of rust fills the small room and you see in front of your eyes a horror so gruesome and unforgivable
your vision goes dark to block it from your mind.

The creature, she sits in the same place as before only this time the baby is in her lap. It's intestines in her
mouth like a spaghetti dinner.

The baby does not cry for there is no soul left in its small frail body to scream.

You're silent. Choked with shock and fear, a lump forms in your throat making it hard to breathe.

Then she continues her epic as if nothing has changed...

“Mother's spirit relives her final moments in the bleak darkness of the night sky
Each night we hear her as she died.

And when she died, we did too...

With man all that's left on this land, we'll only last so long you see,
Pretty soon. We'll run out of each other to eat.

Some of you can't stomach the blood stains on your palms,
So you let someone else kill, and you remain calm.

Another luxury we can no longer have in my case.
The difference between us is my dinner shares my face.
But fool yourself not, we are no different."

She wipes her face smearing crimson blood across her pale, almost translucent, skin. She carries herself to her corner full of books and writings and continues in building anger:

"The silence of apathy and ignorance of indifference are infections that have spread wide and far.
The antidote lies where all pieces of knowledge are:

Behind the findings of people far wiser than me or you,
Those are the words you should be listening to.

Whether you do or don't is one's own say
But. Take it from me. You don't want to end up this way.

Your future is lived through my life,
My past seen through your eyes.

My future is an end,
But yours can still bend in the favor of you....you...you..."

Her voice trails off and she stares into your soul.

You're motionless. And then her parting remarks ring though your ears,

"The hands of God you cannot trust,
it is your own you must adjust

For this world cannot be left to one,
if it is you'll all be done.

The writing is on the wall, you just need to look a bit closer is all..."

Her boney, claw like fingers point once more to the wall as she did once before only now the words that were once carved so deep into a stone so hard seemed to have been morphed and changed into something entirely different.

You look towards her for guidance, for you do not follow... but she is gone.

All that is left is a pool of blood in which the delicate frame of what was once a child lies torn, shredded, clawed, and chewed.

You break from the sight and gasp for fresh air that doesn't reek of iron or toxins but that's all the world has left to offer you.

You look up at the wall and take a closer look. Written in red, across the stone it stands:

"A H I M S A."

Rose Daughter Dream

Cecile Cary

With roots in richer dirt than now and placed
open to sun and rain, with clearer space
than now for spiky branches to stand free,
would you be strong in spring to leaf pale green,
resisting aphids, mildew, beetles, blackspot
to bloom all summer long, with the thorn's squat
protection as soft petals fold, unfold
to ring in red the fragrant center gold?
Would you bear fruit in fall, first pink and green
globes like new growth, but red against the winter
(my mother made pale jellies from the rosehips)
and then withstand the ice storm glaze that snaps
weak, dead, or dying twigs? — Child of rose
and all the season's dreaming, would you grow?



Elizabeth Schmidt

Contributors

Adam D. Adkins is a writer, social media consultant and web developer in the Dayton region. You can read him regularly at AdkinsonSports.com

Jerry Allison says he is fascinated by the way the sunlight sets on the river near his home. “The best light is after the sun has already set, and the afterglow disperses along the water’s ripples. Every sunset is different, depending on the weather and the time of year. It brings me peace and the understanding that every evening will follow a new morning in my life.”

Sarah Allison describes her photo of Wright Library’s original sign this way: “Everyone passes under this sign upon entering, including Orville Wright 80 years ago. It’s a testament of time that remains unchanged.” Previously published in Transylvania University’s *The Transylvanian*, her photography has been featured in juried shows and exhibitions. When not photographing, she’s found with a cup of tea, a book, and her felines Ollie and Monty beside her. She is a Youth Services Associate at Wright Library.

Paul Arnold was born in Dayton and lives in Miamisburg. He is a Fine Arts graduate of the Ringling College of Art in Sarasota, Florida, and has been painting acrylic portraits for the past two years.

Kathy B. Austin's poetry has been included in the anthology, *From the Tower*, as well as two Wright Memorial Public Library anthologies. Her poems have appeared in *The Writing Path I* anthology, published by the University of Iowa Press, the *Poppy Road Review*, and various local publications. She has been featured on 91.3 WYSO’s *Conrad’s Corner*.

Alison Bour is a writer, photographer and artist who lives in Dayton. While studying post-processing of photographic images, she unexpectedly fell in love with digital art. Her work has been featured at Starbucks and Central Perc in Oakwood, and in *Mock Turtle Zine* and Sinclair Community College journal *Flights*. Her work can be found at alisonbour.smugmug.com

Robert C. Breen is an avid reader and has been writing stories since grade school. He’s a graduate of the University of Cincinnati and Sinclair Community College. He still remembers the day he got his first library card in 1998 and “from then on, libraries have been one of my favorite places to go and let my imagination run free.”

Steph Brumbaugh identifies on the non-binary spectrum and uses they/them/their pronouns. An Indiana native, they have lived on both coasts and currently reside in North Dayton. Steph graduated summa cum laude from Galludet University with a BA in English: Writing. Their passion is to contribute to human diversity and inclusion by being authentic and helping others live their own truths.

Cecile Cary (1938-2018) was an English Professor and Shakespeare scholar at Wright State University for over 30 years. When she retired in 1999 she devoted her life to literature, the arts, and teaching. Her poetry reflects a deep intellectual curiosity and love of nature, and her poems were published in many local journals. She was an active and beloved member of Wright Library Poets.

Rosalie Catalano has written throughout her life, for both work and school, and is happiest when she's writing. She has published business writing, and for years has wanted to publish her personal writing. She hopes to develop her essay into a comprehensive family history.

Anna Cates is a graduate of Indiana State University (MA English and PhD Curriculum and Instruction/English) and of National University (MFA Creative Writing). Her first collections of poetry and fiction, *The Meaning of Life* and *The Frog King*, were published by Cyberwit press. Her second poetry collection, *The Darkroom*, was published by Prolific Press. She currently resides in Wilmington with her two beautiful kitties.

David Chesar lives in Oakwood with his family and enjoys making art and playing music. One of his favorite things is having dinner on the front porch with his family during summer evenings, with friends waving as they pass by.

Rita Coleman writes poetry and memoir in rural Greene County, Ohio. She has two books of poetry, *Mystic Connections* (2009) and *And Yet* (2017). A third volume, a full-length collection, *A Few Questions Before You Go*, is due in 2019. Rita holds a BA and an MA from WSU with a Concentration in Creative Writing, and she is a writing student of poet Pauletta Hansel, Cincinnati's First Poet Laureate.

Ashlee Crowe is a self-taught artist with an illustrative style. Over the last few years, she has found art to be a healing and joyful experience. She experiments with multiple mediums to express different ideas.

Amy Dallis is a lifelong Daytonian with a passion for writing, visual arts, and improving the lives of older adults through her work in the senior living industry. Amy's writing has appeared in literary journals and her artwork has been exhibited locally and nationally. She is an ardent fan of Emily Dickinson and Impressionist art and is powered by coffee and sunshine.

Drusilla Denning-Corley lives in North Dayton with her wife, three dogs, two cats, and one bird. She enjoys expressing her creativity through writing poetry and doing crafts, including stained glass. She also enjoys gardening. She believes in fighting for the underdog, the underprivileged and those who have yet to find their voice.

Rita Beth Ebert thoroughly enjoys living on the Woodman Fen in Dayton. She recently ended a 15-year hiatus from poetry writing.

Robert Flavin is a 1968 graduate of Loyola University Chicago and served four years in the military. He taught high school mathematics for 32 years and then taught darkroom photography as an Adjunct Instructor of Art at Sinclair Community College. He is currently Adjunct Instructor of Mathematics at the University of Dayton. Robert and his wife Lynn live in Washington Township.

Bill Franz created his piece for CareSource's new building as an abstract take on some of his well-known Dayton scenes. In retirement he has become a volunteer photographer, doing photo projects for the Humane Society and for almost two dozen other organizations. His FaceBook page is Dayton at Work and Play.

Megan Garrison is a dreamer who has spent most of her life traveling in 37 different countries. In her writing, she shows her eagerness for adventure as she explores new places. She is currently teaching Creative Writing at Stivers School for the Arts, as well as working at YWCA Dayton to empower women and eliminate racism. She has a poetry book coming out in April 2019.

Gerald Greene is the author of two poetry collections, *Kaleidoscope* (CreateSpace, 2017) and *Turning Losing Forex Trades into Winners* (John Wiley & Sons, 2008). His blog is "Short Stories Rated G" on Facebook. His writings have been published in *Guide Magazine*, *Insight Magazine*, *Compass Magazine*, *The Flash Fiction Press*, *Deronda Review* and *A Story in 100 Words*.

O. Ervin Gruia moved to the Dayton area in 2016, and was captured by the audacity of the Wright Brothers to ignore conventional wisdom and innovate. The Wright Brother Series of paintings are done in focus-point impressionistic style, braiding his passion for impasto in the sky and sand, with an object of interest brought into focus with realistic brushwork.

Lyndsey Hammond says this about her mixed media piece: "Many mourned the loss of David Bowie. He was gifted, yet humble, and is a reminder to us to be truly ourselves while holding on to what joins us as human beings, including the acceptance of diversity in our society."

Betsy Hughes taught English at The Miami Valley School for 30 years. Her first book of sonnets, *Breaking Weather* (National Federation of State Poetry Societies Press) was winner of the 2013 Stevens Poetry Manuscript Competition. Her recently published chapbook of sonnets is *Bird Notes* (Finishing Line Press, 2017). Betsy enjoys participation in the Wright Library Poets.

Samuel Huntington says his poem is about "the culture of endless work, and the need for shelter, comfort, and guidance in an unforgiving world."

Alicia Johnson is a novice artist channeling pain through the art of words. She lives in Kettering.

Theresa Kahle says she probably qualifies as a senior citizen now. She has written poetry and plays during different intervals of her life.

Maria A. McGinnis has been working on her artwork since graduating from WSU, using her life for inspiration. Art also helps her deal with the trials of raising three children on her own. She is focusing on being an art teacher and continuing her career as an artist.

Gary Mitchner is Professor Emeritus of English and the Poet Laureate of Sinclair Community College where he was chair of the English Department and taught for forty years. He directed the Writers' Workshop for many years. One of his poems was included in *The Best American Poetry*, 1991, edited by Mark Strand. He has published in *The Paris Review*, *The New Republic*, *Shenandoah*, *Western Humanities Review*, *Cincinnati Review*, *Flights*, and many others. Currently, he teaches poetry classes at University of Dayton Lifelong Learning.

Alanna Morales was born in Hato Rey, Puerto Rico. Growing up in the South and the Midwest, her love for cultural diversity grew tremendously. Drawn to both writing and drawing throughout her childhood, her interest was further developed through drawing classes. Alanna is very involved in her community as a volunteer, including volunteering at Wright Library. She lives and pursues her high school studies in Dayton, surrounded by her loved ones.

Torey Murphy has developed a writing concept called "thought bubbles," which are light and humorous random statements about life. Her thought bubbles are non-political and non-religious, and are written "to brighten people up in this dark world." She hopes to publish a collection of her thought bubbles as a "coffee table" book.

Madeline Musico is an earth-conscious individual who leans toward the spooky side of things. Her piece "mirrors the state of our planet with an eerie possible future if we do not change our path." Her piece is based on a one-woman-show she wrote at WSU as part of the acting program's curriculum.

Monica Rook is a communication graduate student at UD. As an only child, she would entertain herself for hours by telling wild stories. These turned into a life-long passion for the power of words. Now, in the midst of her graduate research, she likes to write short stories and poems for fun.

Elizabeth Schmidt loves tunnels, stairways, bridges, and paths. She's a poet and an Adult Services Librarian at Wright Library.

Cia Scott seeks inspiration from anywhere and hopes to move those who read her art. Her piece is inspired by the famous painting *The Old Guitarist* by Pablo Picasso.

Jaleh Shahbazi is a 21-year-old Persian-American writer studying English with a concentration in Creative Writing and a minor in theater at US. This piece was written from a dream he had in December 2018, and symbolizes the struggles he has with depression, anxiety, and letting others in.

Tariq Shaikh shows the world what his eye sees and how he sees it—through the camera lens!

Tiffany Shaw-Diaz is an award-winning poet and artist living in Centerville. To read more of her work, visit afterpinkhaiku.blogspot.com

Joon K. Shim, MD is an assistant professor of surgery at WSU Boonshoft School of Medicine.

Gabriella Stauffer is a student at Oakwood High School. She is involved in arts of all kinds—visual, performing, music, and writing both poetry and prose.

Courtney Smith is a graphic designer from Kettering. She grew up loving art, and fell in love with design in high school. She graduated from the Modern College of Design in 2017 and is currently a designer at the YMCA of Greater Dayton. She used her love for hand lettering to design a piece around the iconic quote from George R.R. Martin’s *A Song of Fire and Ice* series.

Thom Talbert was grown in Dayton.

Paula Unrau describes her work as “rooted in the everydayness of the world and in the geographies I have considered home: the Great Plains, the Himalayan mountains, the dirt of central Texas, and now Ohio. From these places I strive toward the numinous. When I have stronger stuff to say than I know how, I visit the ancient Greeks who provide a terrain for the heart that a girl from the Midwest might not have inhabited. Sometimes even the prairie is not enough.”

Laura Vernon-Biteau was born and raised in Dayton and Oakwood and has always loved the area. She equally loved spending time abroad in Spain, Germany, and France. As a teacher of both Spanish and French, she enjoys diverse cultures and peoples. She moved back to Oakwood from France in 2009 with her French husband. They have four daughters and together they enjoy travelling, the arts, sports, and spending time with family and friends.

Laura Walters wrote her poem as part of a series during a semester abroad in Stirling, Scotland. She experimented with writing in Scots vernacular for her poem, which is inspired by the landscape and history of Scotland.

David Warren grew up in the Dayton area and resides in Kettering. Since he committed to writing at the age of 50, he has been published in *Chicken Soup for the Soul* (5 editions), *Grand Magazine*, and *Country Magazine*. He is a blogger for *Dayton Parent Magazine*. His children’s books include *Mealtime Guests*, *The Really Magic Marker*, and *The Really Magic Marker Coloring Book*.