

A G O R A  
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# AGORA

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# AGORA

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Spring 2017

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Cover Art:

Saint Patrick's Well

Anne PARLMER | Photography



# AGORA



...καλέσασθε δὲ θεῖον ἀοιδόν,  
Δημόδοκον· τῷ γάρ ῥα θεὸς  
περὶ δῶκεν ἀοιδίην,  
τέρπειν ὅππῃ θυμὸς  
ἐποτρύνῃσιν αἰεῖδεν.

*...and summon Demodokos,  
the bard divine, / Whom  
God gave song: the power to  
delight / However his own  
soul urges him to sing.*

Homer, *Odyssey* VIII, 43-5

Translated by Gerald Malsbary,  
Belmont Abbey College



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## 2017 AWARDS

### **Jean S. Moore Award**

The Jean S. Moore Award was established in 1998 in memory of the late Jean S. Moore, an Abbey English Professor. Each year, the recipient receives publication in Agora and a cash prize. This award represents top submission as judged by the editorial staff and is based on creativity and originality.

### **Agora Art & Photography Award**

*Anne Parlmer*  
Being Belfast

Each year, the recipient of this award receives publication in Agora and a cash prize. This award represents top submission as judged by the editorial staff and is based on creativity and originality.

## The Birth of a Show

*Kate* WEAVER | Poetry

Written words are spoken  
Spontaneous drawings are made  
And suddenly there's a set to stand on,  
Songs to sing,  
And people to love.



## All of Me

*Elizabeth* THIERFELDER | Art



# Give Me Sinatra

*Hannah* HOWARD | Poetry

There must be cause  
for all the buzz these days.  
I'm full to brimming,  
my head is swimming these days!

I've not caught a chill,  
say, it's such a thrill to be  
here in your arms!  
And here, as we sway,  
the old fashioned way ...  
this melody's charms

are just what I need;  
I hope you'll agree,  
there are more than a few ways  
to play and to sing, but ...  
give me Sinatra any day!

Here's to long winters: may  
they be bitter and gray.  
That way the summers  
will seem much brighter and gay!

I've got no excuse,  
when I'm with you  
I don't quite feel so drawn.  
Perhaps it's smarter,  
begged, stolen, bartered,  
to have you than not ...

But I'm willing to say,  
some peculiar way  
about you has brought out  
what I'd thought was erased!  
Give me Sinatra any day!

I've not caught a chill,  
say, it's such a thrill to be  
here in your arms!  
And here, as we sway,  
the old fashioned way ...  
this melody's charms

are just what I need;  
I hope you'll agree,  
there are more than a few ways  
to play and to sing, but ...  
give me Sinatra any day!



## Humble Beginnings

---

*Thomas* HAMILTON | Poetry

Always inviting like a local church  
Built from brick and sturdy shingles  
Covered with aged wallpaper from Reagan's time  
Dark and still during the night hours  
Every member of my family loves your peace  
Forget the chaos and traffic of New York City  
Greatness and glory are born in modest places  
Humidity during the summer months  
Invokes moderation and care  
Jazz and jubilee echo through your halls  
Kids, like my younger self, enjoy your space  
Lingering in the woods of a rural city  
Maybe you made me shy and distant?  
Never will I regret or condemn you  
Open and refreshing is the crisp air  
Pouring a glass of sweet tea.

Quit aging my timeless friend!  
Remember the memories made here  
Some things, like you, should never change  
Tomorrow's troubles do not matter  
Under your strong roof  
Vital as water and the sun  
We're here now because of you  
Xenia, or hospitality, is your intention  
Youth and maturity come together to  
Zap out the troubles of life.



## Comfort

*Kristine* ROBINSON | Art



# Telling Time

Anne PARLMER | Poetry

Rain and ringing bells toll the season  
and the time;  
Sounds of water and of brass tell  
ticking, turning, and the clime.

Look, and listen! Constantly  
the water finds its way  
From out the clouds and through the trees,  
muddying the earthen clay.

Three or four times in the day  
the bells above resound,  
Reverberating in the raindrops  
puddled on the soaking ground.

Cloudy skies hang low and heavy  
on the future, present, past;  
Forever and forever does it seem  
the dreary rain will last.

But the ringing—Ah, the ringing—  
answers warmly, soundly certain:  
“Worry not, the Sun will come  
and lift this gloomy, rain-drenched curtain.”

All there is to do for now  
Is live in wait, and listen  
As the laden trees and streets and leaves  
upon them dimly glisten.

For Time, the eldest, strongest child  
of Sun and Human Reason  
Will, and has—from first to last—  
governed every season.

So as the bells ring out the constant  
will of Master Time,  
Ever closer draws the earth  
to milder weather—nature's prime.



# Worlds Collide

*Ashley OSMERA* | Photography



# The Ordinary *Regalis*: An Ode to a Bookcase

Rebecca SIGLER | Poetry

So much relies on a tree's sacrifice.  
Barred from growth—Exhumed from rooted comfort—  
Forced together by metals man-made—  
Assigned a mere dollars-worth.  
Oh, most noble of deaths imparted!  
Life unearthed for modest cause  
of shelving novels, poems, books of kinds.

But know, courteous tree,  
You've not lost your nobility.

Being's not departed from your rings  
as stories of centuries past remain.  
For swingers upon your branches, climbers upon your limbs,  
find a perpetual kind of home  
          mingling between your grains—  
and they are not alone.

When seen with a mind's eye,  
Life lingers amidst your presence,  
as Pan's shadow creeps behind spines  
and Aristotle wonders at the phenomena.  
*Metaphysic,s* he concludes,  
          But Scout and Jem insist it's Boo.

*"Ladies and gentlemen . . . you are  
          charged with the following indictments."*<sup>1</sup>  
What a menacing voice to come from such gentle shelves!  
*Perhaps the woman in the attic,*  
          Jane concludes.  
*Perhaps whatever lies behind the overgrown wall,*  
          wonders Mary Lennox.  
*Perhaps it is only a dream,*  
          Alice doubts.

---

<sup>1</sup>*And Then There Were None*, Agatha Christie

A wonderland, absent of fantasy.  
Immortal souls have heard these tales and  
Sorrowfully have eyes watched Manderly burn.  
Stylishly have women strolled Bond Street.  
Sneakily have ears eavesdropped beneath Juliet's balcony.  
Solemnly have whispering words consoled a dying sister.  
*Severely* has the human heart felt.

The depth of life is housed within your boughs.  
You—as a sacred reliquary—safeguard my romanticism,  
Yet—as simple shelves—you ratify my reason.  
Dead debris though you may be,  
*I entreat you.* Do not entomb ... enshrine me.

No pity. No sympathy.  
Another world into which I am woven  
Falls abandoned to emptiness.

To entrust a tree to treasure, to cherish that which has created me ...  
I doubt your mercies!  
For when reduced to simplicity, what remains  
But callous wood held by iron screws?  
Ordinary objects offer no love  
To worn pages,  
To faded inks,  
To reality.

Reality.  
    *Res.*  
        *Realis.*  
            *Regalis.*  
                Royalty.  
            Real.  
        Things.  
Reality.  
And I doubt no longer.

For simplicity crowns complexity ...  
is that not always the case?

# Ascent

*Anne* PARLMER | Photography



# As You Go Forward

*Anne PARLMER* | Poetry

My suggestion for you is:  
Swim upstream, go 'gainst the grain.  
Precede the verse with the refrain.  
Put inhibitions on the shelf,  
And be congruent with yourself.

That is to say: try harder to be you.

Soon enough it will feel fluent:  
Man was made to be congruent.



## Devotion

*Paul TOSCANO* | Photography



# Endless Possibilities

*Bonnie ABERLE* | Photography





## Pictor Caeli (Painter of Heaven)

*Hannah* HOWARD | Poetry

I saw Your brush strokes in the sky today.  
Carry me on the handle as You paint?  
Let me sit by Your inkwell and watch  
from the table; at this height only You  
know the canvas and see the whole picture so plain.

Black and white, yet not colorblind,  
the grey is all I know how to see with my  
tainted, fading eyes of sin and troubled  
soul, but I'm beginning to understand how  
to listen for Your letters throughout history that guide.

I've heard such lovely backdrops played  
beyond the canvas, within the very light of day.  
The sun cannot draw nearer, nor do we go to it,  
and the sparrow on the sill dares not enter in,  
but we, Your children, have a home here, You clearly say:

"Come one, come all, to Me!  
Come rest, be blessed, and see;  
You'll know Me when we meet,  
though none before would feel it  
had I not chosen your hue ...  
settled the score for you,  
and stretched my skin across  
this wooden frame so broad.

"Dance for joy along My shoulder's edge.  
Be healthy and feel peace and be content!  
Years will fade and time will surely die;  
within My Love, My Heart, you shall abide  
in stillness here, yet rhythm, yet tranquil, no more to dread."



# Dovetailing Hands

*Brenna RYAN* | Poetry

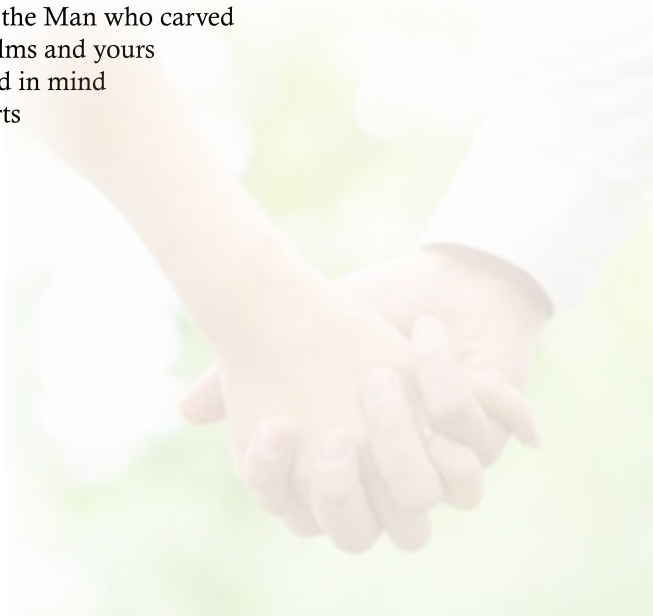
I have many a theory  
On how this came to be  
That your hand and mine  
Fit so perfectly

Is it the amount of tears  
That wore our fingers down?  
To catch up all the sadness  
And turn those days around

Was it the shared joy  
Of memories we've made—  
The ones that bring me light 'til now  
That wore our hands the same?

Or possibly the shared embrace  
After we've been apart?  
For as we held each other's hands  
We truly held each other's hearts

Or could it be that the Man who carved  
The lines in my palms and yours  
Did so with the end in mind  
For a unity of hearts







# When Fate Plays the Cards of Love

---

*Felix* DU SABLON | Poetry

The Jack, a figure played for his heart,  
Among lordly faces he plays the least part,  
He silently stands still and stricken, stuck,  
One place below the Queen: just his luck—

For it is her on whom he has fixed his gaze,  
She, bedecked in diamonds that blaze.  
His looks of love lose their leaping light,  
For he, as a lesser lord, has no right—

It is with the King she takes her leisure,  
From that black spade she finds pleasure,  
The Jack only joins in play with the "great"  
When it is time to keep the royals straight.

But there is another: this one has a heart!  
She too is a queen, and she knows his art,  
Together they flush full of flaming red,  
Those two, hand in hand, together instead.

## A Foggy Symbol

*Jessica* WEAVER | Poetry

A fool can kiss  
As well as a kiss can fool  
But you are no fool  
For you know full well what to do  
To make the kiss fool me



## Hat Lady

*Bridget* WILKINSON | Art



# Of Alveda and Tulips

*Kristine* ROBINSON | Poetry

It was a strange sight to see you there.  
If it weren't for a picture, it would be a dream.  
Yet, in a swirl of colors and pollen, you are here.

Away from home, the sight caught you unaware.  
The colors surrounding you were beyond belief.  
Welcoming yellows, warm reds, and soft lilacs, nothing could compare.

In this indescribable world, you chose to dare.  
To the shock of your lover, you started to roam.  
Amid the tulips, you were lost in an unspoken prayer.

In this paradise, you found home, you inwardly declare.  
Among the windmills and tulips, you began to beam.  
You personified beauty; it's no wonder people stare.

The happiness you found in so humble a country was rare.  
In this iridescent field, it's hard to believe the confidence you achieve.  
Simple in life and love, you were the envy of every millionaire.

However, the thought of leaving Heaven was unfair.  
How cruel it was to leave a place that made you gleam.  
Who would have thought you would return so soon, caught unaware?  
To an immortal paradise, amid shimmering tulips, you were declared a queen.



## \$4.25 on Inauguration Day, January 20, 2017

---

*Rebecca GERLACH* | Poetry

I bought the last piece of Happiness today  
Happiness came on a plate  
It cost \$4.25  
Coated in a blue so light and fluffy,  
It could have had clouds among the azure  
Happiness had little dots of fireworks on the horizon

I sunk my teeth into Happiness, chomping for the sweet  
taste of laughter  
The fireworks melted in my mouth  
I swallowed the glass ceiling of blue sky on that Happiness  
The white layers stacked inside my gullet

I bought the last piece of Happiness today.  
Happiness cost me \$4.25—

Cake.  
Happiness is cake.



## Inexorable

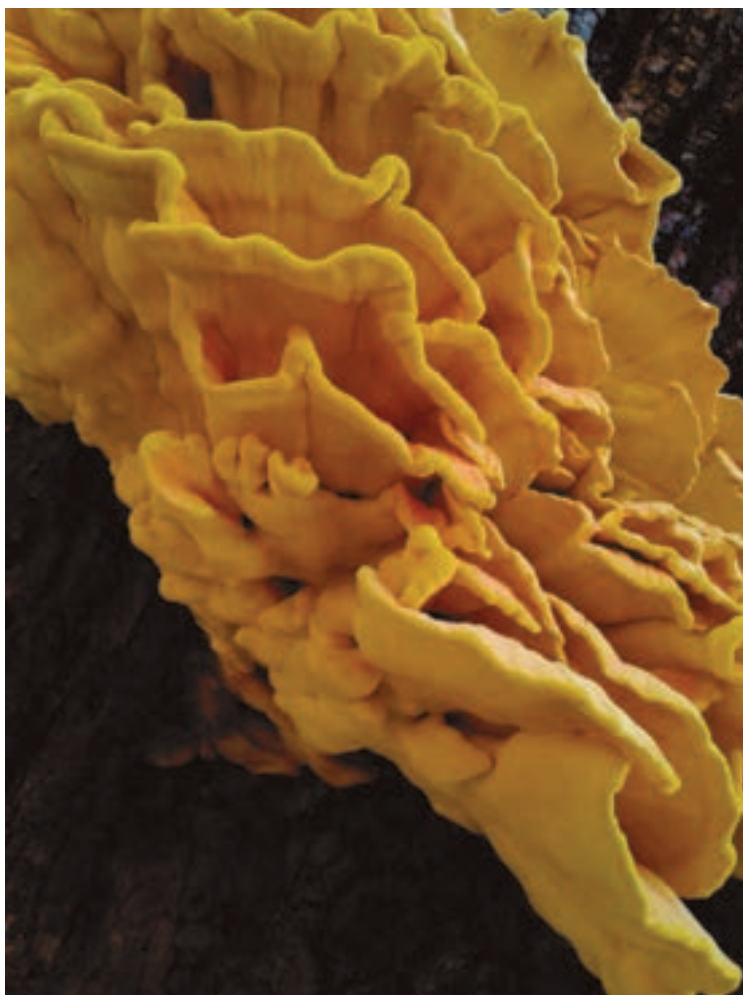
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*Josef GAREIS* | Poetry

Like the fire of Hephaestus was our love,  
Casting darkness from our souls.  
Forging a bond to last eternity.  
Eternity, I see, is but a moment.

Her laughter, sweet to my ears,  
rivalled the flute of Marsyas.  
Such melody must bring tears.  
Behold, now I weep.

May my heart be observed,  
Lying in ruin on the ground.  
May Penthos take pity,  
See this weight I bear.



## Xanthous

*Hannah* HOWARD | Photography



## I-85 Roadkill Blues

Kasey RAMSEY | Poetry

Nine lives run out fast.  
 When i walked the earth, i struck fear into the hearts of men,  
 made them call out *beware, beware*  
 and shudder at the sound of my song,  
 long low howl hanging in the summer air.  
 In the end, there is no salt-pyre, no dirt-mound, no solemn prayer for me.  
 I will have no burial in some soft dark place  
 where the carolina heat can hardly reach.  
 August is the cruelest month, when hot sun beats  
 and threads away dark fur, my black beauty  
 unwound, my undoing.  
 No midnight cloak, no silver nor gold adorn my body.  
 They just don't make sacrifices like they used to.  
 Red ribbon and bell are lost to me now,  
 relics gifted by the third shift girl at the late-night diner  
 who gave me food scraps and gave me name,  
 saw me stalking in the dark and called me *Lucky*.  
 Will the rats there mourn for me, who taught them how to run?  
 Will they ache for me as relics ache for when the saint had breath,  
 missing the thing that changed them  
 now that bright eye and sharp tooth are eaten into dust?  
 All fell away in a roar of steel-meets-asphalt  
 fifty feet back near mile marker 26,  
 my In Memoriam etched out in blood splat relief.  
 I know i'm bad news, but the church bells ring for me now,  
 resounding echoes calling out *somebody must be dead*.  
 I know i'm bad news, but when the rest has crumbled away, i will show you.  
 You will see that there is white inside me too.  
 Come and see where lie the white teeth that gleamed when you crossed my path,  
 the terrible claws that scratched pink lines in skin,  
 brittle bone bleached by carolina sun.  
 I will show you fear in a handful of dust  
 left to rot on the side of the road.

## Asphalt Mirror

*Nathan PEETZ* | Poetry

Beautiful banality  
Endless miles of dark pavement provide unending wonder  
When rain falls, a shiny, flowing blanket on the rugged road  
Splashing, rushing past us as we fly  
And making phantom likenesses appear along the way.  
Light streams freely through its wetness  
Bright red and green twinkle playfully in the darkness.  
If beauty be present in asphalt and rain  
Can not God make joy of our everyday pains?



## Adventure Awaits

*Bonnie ABERLE* | Photography

# The Aftermath

Kate WEAVER | Short Story

It was my turn to dig again. The rain poured down on the bodies that were piled in a heap next to the three of us. I could barely look at their cold faces as my father turned them down into the large, dark grave. My shaking hands grasped the wooden handle and turned another lifeless corpse into the wet earth. I reassembled the over-turned dirt on top of the body and watched the limbs and face slowly disappear under the muck. My brother and father stood and watched my shaking hands hesitate to complete the task.

“Come on then,” my father said gruffly. I nodded, trying desperately to hide the swelling wetness in my eyes. My brother always picked on me for my unwillingness to toughen up. I was only thirteen, but I knew that these were hard times. I flinched as my father flicked on his lighter, holding the weak flame to the tip of a cigarette. The flame sparked my memory, remembering the great fires and storms that had destroyed everything we knew. The images still rattled my mind with a terror that haunted my dreams nearly every night.

I turned my gaze to the corpses, feeling a single tear race down my already wet face. I remembered watching my mother's charred body lie there just three years ago. I held tightly to those radiant green eyes that could calm my father's anger in times of struggle. But, I realize that I was beginning to forget how her voiced sounded. The fading memories scarred me with a terrifying panic, just as the faces of the dead rattled my nerves. I clenched the shovel's handle, my cold knuckles turning white.

“What are you—? Are you crying?” My brother said out of our father's hearing.

“No. Your face is wet too.” I shrugged, jabbing the shovel back into the ground.

“I thought I had beaten all the tears out of you.” His breath was hot and smelled of alcohol.

“You've done enough.” I sniffed his breath. “You've been drinking out of father's sack, haven't you?”

His jaw tightened with anger and fear. “It's been a long winter.”

“I'll tell—.”

“Oh, you will?” My brother turned so that his eyes were boring into mine. I flinched as he faked to strike me. My gaze fell. “That's what I thought,” he said, turning back to the pile of bodies. I held back more tears as I continued to dig.

I glanced up at my father's profile, seeing him in his struggle to keep the cigarette dry. His face was smeared with grime that was slowly falling



away with the streams of rain that crashed down with the wind. I felt my jaw involuntarily clench as the shovel dug into the mushy earth. *A father? Never.* The thought startled me, and I quickly shut it out of my mind. I was terrified that somehow my father would hear. My dependence and fear of his authority often doused my bitterness toward him. A father? More like a military officer than anything: he never cared.

The rain continued to burst from the gray clouds that hung in the sky for almost an entire week. I wiped the wet from my eyes and finished burying two other bodies. I could tell that they were brother and sister: they had the same nose. I hesitated as I went to sweep more dirt over their lifeless bodies.

“Let's go. We need to leave before the lightning catches up with the rain.” My father snatched the shovel from me, and finished piling the mud on top of the two children. I looked away as their noses disappeared beneath the ceiling of the grave.

I wiped the freezing tears off my cheeks, avoiding my brother's gaze. Maybe tomorrow would be a better day.

“The rest of the town died from starvation or cold. Lucky for them.” My brother seemed to have embraced my father's cynical nature with open arms. The two of them turned, leaving the shovels in the eroding soil. I suppressed my desire to defend the dead, knowing from experience that it never ended well. As we turned north, I gazed at the twelve graves we'd dug. Twelve black lumps lying on the wet grass. Maybe tomorrow would be a better day.



Why is it—  
You seem to sop up all the Hurt, while  
I seem to gather all the Ease—

Why is it—  
When the earth cries Tears and groans  
You cry—  
But I can only stand and watch—

Why do you seem—stripped—  
of all the easy and left  
with the difficult  
Why—  
Do wise prophets say the burden is Light—

If the contrast is so stark—  
Quiet Misery and Glowing Empathy—  
in whose countenance  
is more fully revealed Hidden Beauty—



## Ripples

*Liga* PAVSLOVSKA | Art



# The Song of the Astronauts

Joseph YELLICO | Poetry

I dream of soaring above the clouds,  
And fleeing the earth in fire,  
To taste at last the quiet motion,  
Of starry fields beyond our ocean,  
Where sailors dreamt this deep desire.

I dream of landing on the moon,  
To feel its pull take hold of me,  
Perceiving comets as they fly,  
Past Amphitrite and Gemini,  
And perhaps to another galaxy.

I dream of walking on Martian sands,  
And icy precipices,  
Beneath a sky of crimson red,  
Which boasts a future homestead,  
In the Valles Marineris.

I dream of traversing the gargantuan belt,  
Consisting of asteroids,  
A puissant army 40,000 strong,  
Marching diligently in orbital song,  
Exceeding the size of planetoids.

I wish to see the Galilean moons,  
The greatest of Jupiter's steeds,  
Fair Europa and Callisto,  
The fiery halls of Io,  
And the mighty Ganymede.

I wish to see Medusa's head,  
And slay old Scorpio,  
That bold Orion could not defeat,  
As Scorpio stung his starry feet,  
Because of envious Apollo.

I wish to feel a solar flare,  
A gift from Betelgeuse,  
To land on Alpha Centauri,  
Shake hands with beings that never knew me,  
Share Promethean fire and laugh at Zeus.

I wish to navigate deeper still,  
Within the swirling nebulae,  
To see the stars that make Poseidon,  
Inspect a dark Event Horizon,  
That even gods must veer away.

I dream of seeing Andromeda,  
Whose beauty we know so well,  
The Milky Way's lover, his bride-to-be,  
Shall embrace to form a new galaxy,  
But who on Earth shall live to tell?

I wish to encounter Father Time,  
To stretch the strings of Fate,  
Who dwells within a Singularity,  
Controlling the force of gravity,  
And beckons Lord Death to wait.

Yet still I desire planet Earth,  
A gem beneath a starry dome,  
Who cradles life in gentle dew,  
And nurses flowers of every hue,  
The place that I call home.

## Remember?

*Rachel MCKIMMON* | Poetry

How it gradated  
from green to blue,  
so clear,  
like crystal glass?

The sounds of it crashing, pulling,  
slapping the shore;  
rushing water running under our feet?

Remember?

The yellow-white glow  
sharing its warmth and  
kissing our skin?

The two reflecting each other  
from a mirror hanging in  
dimension;  
collaborating their brightness?

Remember?



## How Far I'll Go

*Jessica CAMANO* | Photography



# Sailor Dear

*Nikole* BRAND | Poetry

The world's thy ship, and not thy home  
And every man has far to roam

'Neath stormy skies, o'er grey-hued seas  
Through stretching deserts without breeze

In misty forests, thick and dark  
Following more than just a spark

With eyes affixed quite straight ahead  
With steady heart, and guided tread

For man has hope, and goal, and dream  
And in the end, a memory ream

Of time spent here, or wasted there  
And one does pray the scale is fair

To balance faith, and hope, and love  
Both here on earth and up above

Fo' the world's thy ship, and not thy home  
And every man has far to roam  
—As far as East is from the West—  
Before his long-awaited rest.

## Sore Feet

*Bonnie* ABERLE | Photography







# Paladin

*Nikole BRAND* | Poetry

With sword in hand, and God ahead  
I walk my straight and measured tread

Where children laugh and widows weep  
Through valleys low and mountains steep

Companion comes, a love may go  
To other fights and other beaus

And yet I will go marching on  
And shake my shield with cross upon

With star ahead, my sins behind  
With trust in more than my own mind

I cannot, will not stop to rest  
'Til day is done and berth is blest

As sailor travels through the stars  
So I must march to kingdom far

Ever mindful, vigilant  
Of traps which wish my soul was rent

But fail! For banner o'erhead  
Marks "little one" and "soldier-bred"

So sword in hand, and God ahead  
I'll walk my straight and measured tread.



## Pump

*Kristine* ROBINSON | Art

# Redwine Makes a Catch

Rolando RIVAS | Short Story

The sun wasn't very high yet, but it was still pokin' through the leaves of the big trees, every now and then shinin' on Redwine Williamson's face. The mornin' was cool but it would soon be hot and humid. Texas near summer is no place to be.

Red thought to himself, "Next time I run away to go fishin', if'n I ever do go back, I'm gonna wear shoes." Momma didn't understand what it meant to be Redwine, and eleven, and to be dreamin' about Louisa May Alcott McLusky all night and day. And, besides, what kind of a name is Redwine anyway.

Last night's rain made the ground wet and muddy. Redwine crossed through the soft earth to the edge of the tree patch and found himself at the top of Ski Lodge Point with his rod and worms in hand.

"Boy, watcha doin' out here?" a voice said.

Red walked deeper under the biggest tree on the hill and there he saw him, Rutherford Walcott. Red had only heard about Rutherford, but he knew who he was the second his eyes got hold of his face. Rutherford was dirtier than Redwine himself, and Red'd been diggin' worms.

"Watcha got there boy?"

"Nuttin'." Red approached slow and then stopped as the smell got stronger, *moonshine*.

"You got food in there?" He squinted his eyes all over the place and reached out his crusty hands at Red's cottage cheese container of worms. His eyes widened like he'd just woke up. "You goin' fishin' or what? You got somethin' in there?"

"It ain't people food it's ... it's fish food."

"Give it to me." Red handed it over.

"I just dug 'em up." Rutherford pulled one out and let it hang in the air wrigglin' about. "Outta my momma's garden. Not ... " Rutherford sucked the worm into his mouth like spaghetti and washed it down with sip from his bottle. "You eatin' my bait!?"

"I'm eatin' breakfast." He sucked down another, leavin' mud around his lips. And took another drink. Red dropped his rod and sat down in amazement.

"What's your name, boy?"

"Redwine."

"What?"

"Redwine, like red ... wine, 'cause I got red hair and I is intoxicatin' as momma says."

“Well, your Daddy Jack and I are well acquainted,” he said, holdin' up his bottle.

“Mister, you eat *all* my worms?” Red stood up, anxious to leave.

“Now wait a minute...wait a minute, I ain't done with you yet. Set yourself down.” He scratched his beard, and for a moment his hand seemed to get stuck in all that hair. Red stepped back as Rutherford reached for his ankle. Rutherford's largish hand wrapped around Red's bare dirty ankle and he nearly stumbled backwards.

“Hey, leggo!” Red said, feelin' a bit panicky and all hot in his face. “Leggo!”

Red turned, stumbled a bit, and ran as fast as he could without lookin' back, without his rod or his worms. He just ran and ran through all the trees, down the hill, steppin' on stickers, and gettin' slapped by branches on his legs and his face. He fell down just at the edge of the creek, skinnin' his knee good. He sat down in the creek, still sweatin' and breathin' hard.

He watched the little fish in the stream collect around him. Since he didn't move much they got used to him bein' there. Before he even realized what was happenin', a big catfish swam right up against his leg. The creek felt good and cool. He just sat there for a long while watchin' the fish with their little whiskers wavin' in the water, lettin' the creek go by over his legs.

“Alright fellas,” he said to the fish, “I'm goin' to be gettin' up now.” It was about ten or eleven in the mornin' by then and Red decided he'd cooled down enough. He looked down the creek, checkin' for anyone lookin' for him. He figured by now they'd know he was skippin'.

But instead he spotted her, Louisa May Alcott McClusky. She sat at the edge of the creek. She seemed just to be starin' down at the water. She was dressed all Sunday style in a pretty white dress and a little summer hat with a plastic yellow flower stuck in it.

“Louie May,” he whispered to himself. He brushed himself off a bit and started over to where she was sittin'. As he got closer, she seemed to get prettier. She was the one person he really wanted to see.

“Louie May?” he said as he got close enough to talk quietly. She turned slowly to look at him.

“What?”

“You skippin' school?”

“Your knee's all skinned,” she said, lookin' at it.

Red looked at his knee all red and bloody. “So ...”

“So I got pramishun. I ain't skippin', you're skippin'.”

Red looked back at her, “Yeah? I got pramishun too.”

“From who?” She looked back into the water.

“Me.”

“That not pramishun, that's skippin'.”

“Not to me it ain't.” Red sat down next to her and stared in the creek just about where Louie May was starin'. He felt good like he was sittin' in the creek again. “Watcha starin' at?”

“The water runnin'.”

“Why you watchin' the water? It always is runnin'.”

“Cause it's better than lookin' at your dirty face.”

Red thought she was so pretty, sittin' there all in white. Red felt like he could just kiss her. “Louie May ...” the words were slow comin' out. “You ever ... kiss anyone?”

She stared into the water. “I kiss my mamma ... I kiss my baby sister,” she said slowly, lookin' up at him and then, “I kiss my ... daddy.” A tear filled up one little brown eye and streaked down her cheek. Red froze for a second watchin' that little tear make its way down her pretty face. “But I can't kiss him no more.” Red thought about this for a moment.

“Louie May, why'd you get pramishun to skip?” Louie May started cryin' all out then; tears everywhere were comin' down her face. Slowly Red put his arm around her and just sat there holdin' her. Red remembered once he got to skip school and he had to put on Sunday clothes; that was when grandpa died. And mamma said someday if we was good and went to church, we might see grandpa again, but not for a long time. “Someday, Louie May, someday you'll kiss him if you're good and go to church. That's what my mamma says. Someday.”

“Really?” She looked up at Red all teary-eyed. She sniffed and wiped her eyes. “Do you really think so?”

“I know so,” he smiled at her, and pulled her close with his one arm over her shoulder. She just sat lookin' at him, smilin' and then her nose kinda wrinkled.

“Why you skippin' school?” She rubbed her tears from her face.

“Oh no reason, just to come fishin' ...”

“You don't got no rod or nothin'. How you supposed to fish without a rod, and bait?”

Red thought about his mamma, he thought about Rutherford Walcott, and Red thought about kissin' that pretty face. “I don't need 'em. I just set in the water and catch 'em with my bare hands,” he said.

“You do not!”

“I do so.” Just then he walked right into the middle of the creek and sat down. “See?”

“Redwine!”

“You just set here real quiet until theys get used to you and then pow! You just catch 'em like lightnin'.” Louie May stood up on the rock and tried to watch. “But you gotta be real still and quiet first ... shhh.” Slowly Louie May crept into the water and sat down right across from Red. Her

dress, all nice and white, floated up with the creek and Red could feel her bare legs touchin' his in the cool water.

"Like this," she said, whisperin'.

"Uh huh." He just watched her, quiet and pretty, leanin' over to him.

"Real still, real quiet."

"Uh huh." She leaned closer and closer and closed her eyes, puckered up her lips and kissed him square on the lips. His eyes opened wide in amazement. He never felt anythin' so good. The cool water, Louie May so close, and a real out and out kiss on the lips. He just sat there starin' at her, forgettin' about the fish, and old Rutherford, and his momma.

"I see fish now," she said lookin' into the water. "Here they come all 'round us."

"Huh?"

"The fish, Red, catch one, catch one for me," she whispered. Red then turned his attention to the stream.

"Now be real quiet," he said. They sat and watched and watched until a big one creeped real close to Red's leg. Red moved his arm slow so as not to move the rest of him, and like lightin' grabbed for the fish.

"You got it! You got it," Louie May screamed as the fish came out of the water in Red's little hands, flappin' about and water splashin' all over until it wriggled just enough to get away. Louie May was laughin' and smilin'. "You caught one, just for me, you caught one!"

"But he got away," Red said.

"You just let him go. It was the friendliest fish thing you could do. You're a real fisher, Redwine Williamson, a real live fisherman." She smiled at him, water drippin' down her face and her pretty brown hair all wet.

Red smiled real big. He like that word, *man*. "I'm a real fisher man, huh?"

"Yes, yes, you are, Redwine. Yes, you are!"

Soon the water and day both began to get too cold to be sittin' in the creek for so long and Redwine Williamson and Louie May Alcott McClusky headed back to the McClusky's to get warm. All wet and dirty, the two of them looked like they were made for each other. Momma always told Red he was intoxicatin'. And for once he really was, at least on one mornin' and an afternoon spent better skippin' and fishin' and learnin' how to become a real fisher man. Louie May thought so. And that is all that mattered.



## Mountain Deer Crossing

*Sharon* JOHNS | Photography







## Stars and Stoplights

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*Kate* WEAVER | Poetry

Red and green meld together  
As the stars cry tears  
For the dreams that never came true.

## Night Chase

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*Julianna* RIVAS | Poetry 

outracing the clouds,  
smoky wisps under blue cobalt vault  
one November night.  
'gainst the current of vapor'd fluff  
merry sounds to the beat of a bass drum  
fly. Venus stares, single eye  
as armored miniature worlds  
outrance the clouds of the night.



## The Midnight Hour

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*Kate* WEAVER | Poetry

The earth giggles below our feet  
The stars smile above our eyes  
Soft touches and strong bonds  
Pull us together  
Closer and closer  
Until the salty waters  
Crash eternally together  
Breaths become one  
As the stars and the moon  
Dance between our lips



# She, the Bridge

*Julianna RIVAS* | Art



# The Incomprehensible

Josef GAREIS | Short Story

As I come up and around the bend of the snow-carpeted dirt road, it comes into view. Clear Creek Abbey, daughterhouse of “Abbaye de Notre-Dame de Fontgombault.” Upon entering, I am given a tour of those areas to which a lay person is permitted access. I stop first at the upper church. Upon entry, the frigid air instantly envelops me, and silence pervades. My eyes are pulled immediately to one small corner of the sacred building. I do not yet know it, but I will come to spend much of my long visit in this spot. The sound of my footsteps reverberate across the massive stone walls as I walk toward that which has drawn my attention. Looking up, I behold a stone-hewn depiction of Mother Mary, Queen of Heaven and Earth, standing in an alcove. Silently, I kneel before her statue and feel the cold from the stone floor seep into my knees. All is still as I look up and gaze upon the statue. Her hands clasped together in prayer, she looks down on me with an expression of tender love. Crisp, freezing air fills my lungs as I take in a deep breath, while a whisper of lingering incense turns my mind to a power incomprehensible. Little flames flicker from many candles on either side of the statue, symbols of the prayers and supplications offered by so many to our merciful Lord through Mary His Mother. In this cold, dark church the candles give life to the statue. Casting small shadows on the stone walls around her, they give the whole area an ethereal beauty. Slowly burning, they remind me of the pain, suffering, beauty, and hope present in every human life. How could they not? For each candle seems to represent those hopes, desires, and sufferings of the one who lit it. Kneeling here in the cold and in the silence, it is almost as if I am able to hear the whispered pleas of all those who knelt here before me. Taking a match from one of the small metal tables upon which the candles stand, I strike it so as to light a candle myself. The sizzling scratch of the igniting match hits my ears. I feel the slight warmth of the flame on my fingers, smell the slight odor of burning sulfur from the match, and obtain a sense of absolute peace as I light my candle. With reverence I offer up a personal, heartfelt prayer and watch as the wax begins to melt down the long, slim body of the candle. As I get up, I know one thing for certain— I will be back.



## Winter Sunlight

*Stephanie* LUGO | Photography





# Yet, in Christ, Love Lives Again in Man

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*Joseph KATT | Poetry*

Yet, in Christ, love lives again in man,  
By each who hears his call,  
He does it with a grace filled look,  
He does it with a simple word.  
He was betrayed by the coward's kiss,  
He stopped the brave man's sword!  
His love was strong when he was young,  
And remains ageless ne'er to grow old;  
He pulls us from the hold of lust,  
He quenches the fires of gold:  
He halted Abram's knife, for faith  
Can make the cold to live.  
His love is immense, beyond measurement,  
He bought us, and we are freed;  
His tears, though few, can heal our wounds  
As he speaks in just a sigh:  
For each he loved who ever lived,  
And each man does not die.

~Personal Musings in Response to Oscar Wilde's  
"Yet Each Man Kills the Thing He Loves"  
From "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" 1898



## Following

*Julianna RIVAS* | Art





## Street of Life

*Maria TEJADA* | Poetry

I walked down the head-lighted street  
And watched my three shadows meet  
Whispering a secret to each of their own  
As the setting sun bathed the world in its glow

And as I listened to the peaceful hum  
My three shadows beckoned me to come  
And dance along the lighted way  
To the last sparkle and gleam of the day

And while they were always one step ahead  
We were tied together by a loose thread  
That hung lightly around my feet  
That allowed us to sway to the same beat

We twirled and leapt up miles high  
Until came a cotton candy sky  
And my three shadows bade farewell  
To wait for the time where the sun next fell

And though they sometimes come out to play  
In the blinding light of day  
They never dance as when they meet  
While I walk down a head-lighted street





## Being Belfast

*Anne* PARLMER | Photography





## Free Spirit

*Sabrina* BOLOGNA | Art



# The Monster Within

Ashton HARNAGE | Short Story

Every day is a war to me

A struggle to get out of bed and get on with the day, looking in the mirror, I see what I hate, but I put on a mask, a smile so deceiving I even trick myself, here it comes, another attack, just breathe, don't let anyone see that deep down inside, the monster inside me

Here comes another attack, how many does this make, and it's only eight, *Oh no, they are looking at me, they are judging me, they are making fun of me*, is what my mind keeps telling me, Stop, Just breathe, one ... two ... three ... please don't call on me, I don't want to be wrong, everyone will judge me, they will think I am stupid ... On to the next task, what will happen to me next, my heart is racing, my stomach is aching, I'm not faking, here comes another attack and it's only ten, I want to hide what's within, my mind racing as I go on with my day, what will happen next? Negative thoughts fill my mind, as I feel myself going blind, blind from the world around me, the darkness collapsing in on me, here comes another attack, breathe, one ... two ....

I didn't even make it to three as I wake up to find myself on the ground. The clock says twelve, my stomach feels empty, I guess I'm skipping another meal ... I drag my feet to keep going and the day is barely over, tomorrow feels so far away, last class of the day and there is a test, you've got this, number one is A, two, D, oh no I can't remember this one, I forgot this one too, I can't do this, I'm going to fail, here comes another attack, I'm not even done with my test, I guess I'll just go turn it in, I was going to fail anyways, *You're so stupid, useless, worthless. Why do you even try anymore?*

I lie in the dark, no motivation, I lie there motionless. The clock now says two, I have twelve texts and four missed calls, maybe someone is worried? *No, that can't be true, no one cares*, I curl up in a ball and just cry, make all this end ... please. The clock strikes four, I'm still not hungry, but I'll eat a little something, but I'll just throw everything back up, I'll go anyways, as I put on a brave face so no one will see the pain I'm truly in, I say hello to people I pass by and give them a weak smile

I stare at the plate of food in front of me, I can't eat, I'll just go back to my room and be alone

My roommate is worried again, I keep telling her I'm all right but she sees right through me

It is now six, time to do homework, but this is too hard, I can't do this... This is due tomorrow, this is due the day after and this is due as well, I have so

much to do in such little time, I just won't go to class tomorrow, here comes another attack, how many does this make?

Now it's only eight and I barely ate, I look in the mirror and see what I hate again,

it's ten and I lie down to go to bed; maybe I'll be able to sleep tonight for once,

two a.m. and sleep takes me.

Alarm clock screaming, time to wake up, I can barely get up, I drag myself out of bed again, look in the mirror and see what I hate, here it comes, another attack—



Observed

*Paul* TOSCANO | Photography



# Fear and Trembling

*Jonah* WILAMOWSKI | Poetry

An infant cries from a narthex pew—  
An unintended arrow to the nape.

It is the same as the sound of fingers  
Smoothing faded quilts draped over tiny feet;

The same as smoldered eyes and shoeless feet  
Of snoring chests of smoky rags aslant a wall;

The same as untuned tunes that echo  
In the turns of midnight streets, unheard;

The same as concrete cells of dusty light,  
Caressing eyes locked out of time and touch;

The same as warm, wet kisses from glass lips,  
Poured onto limp lips entwined by grey beards;

The same as blood like rust congealing  
In a breast of blossomed shrapnel and fatigues;

The same as airplane wings lit by a white, unblinking moon  
That ruffle trees like grass with a tornado roar;

The same old roaring rush that  
Leaps and soars and breaks against

The dark edge of the sky.



## Music in the Shadows

*Sabrina* BOLOGNA | Photography

# The Pianist

Jacob BEAMER | Short Story

In the soft solitude and silence, I found comfort in the feeling of my hands sliding across the keys. From Ivory to Ebony, then back again to Ivory, each gentle tap plucked a string. I paused, a torrent of brutalities and agony impressing themselves into every stroke. Images simply awful in nature flashed through my brain, words spoken in anger, fists raised in anger, actions taken in anger. My eyes filled with water, threatening to burst into rainfall upon the Ebony and the Ivory. I managed to keep my friends parched, free from the oppression of my sniveling.

Continuing along my own memory's road, I led the requiem slowly, causing the minor sound to depart. The anger from before fell behind me, and the good times permeated my thoughts. Starting from the bottom, my sound changed. The excitement returned, but still I chose to clutch desperately towards the sorrow and frustration that the anger had left me with. Try as I might, a somewhat bitter undertone maintained itself beneath the melody, choosing to resonate thoughtfully 'twixt the floorboards. I knew that They felt the undertone. They knew that this grasp upon the wistful would steadily win out over the seemingly jubilant exterior. Even the Ebony and the Ivory could sense where it was going. And lo, the piece again took upon itself a crescendo, but instead of the Minor notes departing, it was the Major who were ushered out. I froze yet again, knowing the cruelty of what I was about to do to the Ebony and the Ivory. For even though there were fantastic times, times still inevitably became bad, and these times chose to force themselves upon my mind in the middle of my performance. They knew what had to be. The rise and fall of my hands resembled a paramedic defibrillating a casualty, filled with a desperation to preserve and persevere. I felt my mind declining from focused to frenzied in the space of the beating of a heart. The Ebony and the Ivory screamed their protest.

I paused, lifting hands and feet from Them, allowing all an opportunity to breathe, and the silence to engulf each and every one of them. Forcing myself to calm, I gasped for air in the crowded room. I resumed, but more gently, akin to the beginning. How I longed that all could be as it was in the beginning: simple, carefree, in a state of pure bliss. A time that existed before all the anger and strife. Even so, no matter how brief, I, as well as the Ebony and the Ivory, were satisfied with the respite. Returning to my memory's lane, the melody became full, joyous again. They responded to my mood, content with where They were. And so it continued until finally, I was finished. Rising, I took a bow, and basked in the applause of the empty room. Bidding farewell to my staunchest friends, I took my leave, for the Ebony and the Ivory are not how I make my living, but how I make myself alive.

# Enslavement

Jessica WEAVER | Poetry

This demon claws at the ankles  
And grips the feet  
I drag it through the falling water  
And the blowing drapes  
Regret oozes out of pores  
Silently as I trudge on this empty road  
Evidence is washed down the drain  
But the aftershock remains  
Wet hair clings to the neck and face  
Like it is about to lose its life  
Droplets fall out of their eyes  
From the water that was poured there  
An endless circle of addictions  
Round and round this  
Merry-go-round of regretful lamentation



Caged

Anne PARLMER | Photography



# Hell's Outreach and Understanding Department Members Read Their Movie Reviews

A story in the vein of C.S. Lewis's *The Screwtape Letters*

Timothy TANKO | Short Story

Sathanus adjusts his glasses higher on his nose, smooths a stray lock of hair away from his horns, and peers at the screen. His face lights up. "Reviews are in, boys! Gather round and grab the Jack."

I seize our whiskey bottle, rush to the computer screen, and fight for space with Belphegor. He's got the major advantage of a beer belly. I use the bottle as a shield against his glutinous mass of flesh.

"So?" I ask, as I fight a losing battle with Belphegor's stomach. "What's little Wormwood's rating, then?"

Sathanus pauses, one finger in the air, for obvious dramatic effect. I roll my eyes. Belphegor jams a claw into his back. "Hell's internet ain't cheap, dammit. Go on!"

Comcast arranged a special deal for us—four dollars a minute. Not sure how they hooked up an interdimensional connection, but they're charging us out the wazoo for it. What kind of company isn't scared of price-gouging Hell itself? I mean, seriously. But they were the only ones who'd set up the line. Apparently, most humans frown on doing business with devils.

The reminder that we've spent approximately two dollars already to check on our acolyte's movie springs Sathanus into action. As the boss of our department, "Hell's Outreach and Understanding," Sath's a real cheapskate. Not that any of us are happy to pay Comcast. The Fifth Circle of Hell is currently a simulation of chatting with their customer service.

Sathanus hurriedly scrolls up the page until numbers appear, and then he laughs. "Nine outta ten. We got ourselves another Oscar, lads."

I whoop, clap Belphegor on the back-fat, and hand out some lost soul shot glasses. Old Lucie lets us do whatever we want to folks who drop down here, so we'll take some of them, hollow `em out—and these souls are pretty hollow to begin with—then use them for our parties. I asked one of them, once, whether they could still taste anything. He told me they could.

So, if you've ever wondered, there you go: Hell is the taste of whiskey. For eternity. No chasers or mixers.

Anyway, we down three shots each before we settle down to read the reviews. This is the fun part of our job, watching all the intelligentsia highbrow stuffcoats try to interpret the scripts we send to Wormwood. I should probably mention Wormwood is a human, and that's not his real name. For the sake of his career, I'm keeping him anonymous. Mortals' contracts with demon princes have a way of giving bad publicity. The last

one who got caught red-handed had to resign from the government. Real tearjerker when it happened. But he's a high school principal now, so he's even more useful than before.

I'm getting sidetracked. Sorry about that. Perpetual flaming torment has a way of making you lose track of time.

Sathanus chuckles to himself as we finish reading one of the low-rating reviews. "Look at this drivel. 'Problematic themes'? 'Heresy'? 'Perversion'? There's not a thing in there that the Enemy didn't come up with."

The E-word hangs in the air, and our shot glasses stop their quiet wailing for a second. Even a euphemism for Him leaves my skin crawling. If I wasn't bald, my hair would stand on end.

Belphegor scowls. "Now you done ruined the mood. I swear to Satan—"

"Aw, go kiss a heretic. Ain't ruined." Sathanus waves his hand and takes another sip of whiskey. "Un-damn me, here's a real knee-slapper. '10/10—best Christian movie I've ever seen! So many great values for kids. I can't wait to use it for my Sunday school class.'"

The sour mood evaporates right away. All of us burst out laughing. Belphegor leans back in his chair, making it creak, and burps. "Who said that?" he asks, glancing at me. "One of your critters, Abaddon?"

"Nah," Sathanus replies, before I can. "She doesn't have a contract. She's just a Deluded One."

"The best kind," Belphegor murmurs with a smug look.

"Yep." Sathanus grins, revealing his twisted, blackened teeth. "Paste 'strong Christian values' on the front, then slip the 'modern, compassionate twist' in it and boom!" He tosses his hand in the air. "A whole generation of new shot glasses."

We laugh over a few more reviews before we decide this calls for more than drinking. Sathanus and Belphegor leave to pick up some party food. Devil's food cake is a department favorite, and I think they're also getting some Satan Pie.

What can I say? Chocolate makes everything better. Even burning in Hell.

Since Sath isn't around now to complain about internet costs, I take my sweet time to look through the reviews. Wormwood really outdid himself with this flick. The funny thing is, we didn't include anything in the script that isn't a virtue of the Enemy. Compassion, forgiveness, justice and hope? It's all great material. Not like Lucie rebelled against having morals and virtues, way back in the Beginning. The whole Rebellion was about Lucie's own values. The thing is, Lucie just had a... slightly different opinion on how to apply them.

I smirk as I take another shot from my lost soul. As long as mortals don't care about the Enemy's opinions, our department has good job security in the Christian ranks.

Oh—and plenty more awards to win.



# Yellow Stone

*Jamie* TREECE | Photography





# Lucretius' Atom

Gage HILLMANN | Poetry

Not from nothing,  
Ever existing; you  
Are the foundation  
Of Nature's beauty,  
Though yourself invisible.

Falling, you swerve,  
Whether by the hand of fate  
Or by a will of your own  
Remains to be known.

Ever moving, never resting,  
You fly through the void,  
Dancing and shooting among  
Others of your kind.

Till "tangled together  
In your intricate shapes"  
You bond together.  
And, in your union, form  
The substance of the visible.

The hooked and sharp  
Of your kind are the cause  
Of pain among the living.  
While those that are smooth  
And round bring delight to many.

Though all objects of  
Nature's beauty decay,  
You remain unharmed.  
And free again. Continue  
To rebuild till all that was  
Lost takes a new form.

You are the atom.  
I am Lucretius.

# Juxtaposition

*Jessica CAMANO* | Photography



## Plastic Constellations

*Julianna RIVAS* | Poetry

Permit me to remind you:  
We were young  
Barely tweens  
When we were making  
Rainbow constellations  
In our plastic sky.

Horse-head, dog-head;  
Triangle, T, Heart.

Who can tell  
If nights spent  
Gazing at luminescent sparkle  
Formed us  
Failed us  
Or made us who we thought we were?



## Mountain Glory

*Liga PAVSLOVSKA* | Photography



## Birdsong

*Bethany* GAREIS | Poetry

Bird sings poppy flower notes  
I love her laugh  
Remember the crow's feet her bellows made?  
Don't get to hear the song anymore  
Someone came and tied her feathers to gravity  
Only for kicks. There's no reason.  
Nobody blames her though  
Gotta be hard, a bird without wings ...

Sunflower songs and summer sighs  
Owl eyes gaze the wonders of life  
Nesting notes from heaven in little glass jars  
Glowing for any and every reason  
Bird sings all this—  
I know she always wants to.  
Realizing the gifts her feathers have to give,  
Dearest wings enfold and flight.



# Chasing Paradise

Ashley OSMERA | Poetry

The beginning of the end  
of another day.

As dishes are cleared, a glance  
out the window, "Hey!  
Look at the colors!"

Hearts skip a beat, feet skip carpet  
as all rush outside  
to see the sunset.

Wispy coral floating upon  
still, serene blues.

Through the trees, a glimpse  
of even more brilliant colors  
whispering, taunting, "Catch us,  
if you can!"

Without thinking, I race back  
into the house. "I'm going  
to the top of the hill."

Jacket slung, legs quickly flung, feet  
pump bike petals. Racing  
Racing  
Racing

To catch paradise.

Beating heart pumping, pumping  
with the rhythm of  
the wheels.

Summit comes quickly.  
I gasp, slip down,  
Surrounded by such glory,  
the only worthy music is  
soul hushed.

Floating coral morphs to pink  
swarms of fish, chasing together  
the sinking golden globe.

As I kneel silent, watching, I snap  
a frame, but more effort goes to  
emblazing the image  
on the heart's eye.

A deep sigh sweeps away the  
last sparkles of radiance.  
Sky ocean grows dark and colors  
slowly swim from sight.

In their wake, the painted, intricate, peace-filled swirls  
echo sweet murmurs:  
a sign, a love note,  
an uplifting whisper.  
*It's ok.*

*Rest now. Then stand up.*  
*Begin again.*  
*Fear not, for tomorrow shall bring*  
*new light.*



## Sunset

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*Africa* SCHAUMANN | Photography



# A Stage's Transience

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Rebecca SIGLER | Poetry

What to fashion from this bittersweet sigh?  
For every star yields and life's course aligns  
But a burdensome beauty sways my cry—  
For wonder derives from an actor's lines!

Confident shift with intention unweighed  
To seize another's eyes, drowned in sorrow,  
Crádling in them world entire's dismay—  
Yet moment alive shan't see tomorrow.

If only one could bottle for keeping  
a second which embodied forever—  
*Transience*. Minute with meaning seeping  
that Time's dispassion could never sever.

Life allots no sympathy of sort,  
Yet "I created the beautiful," I must retort.

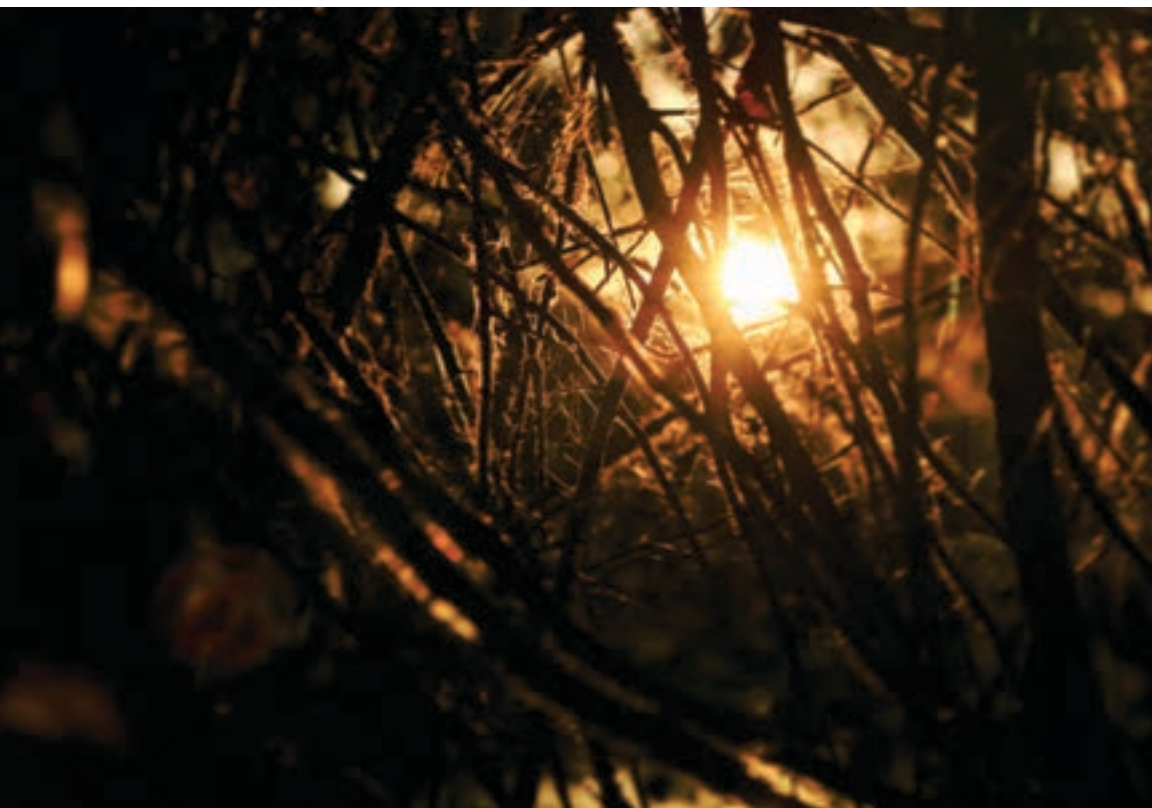




## Camaraderie

*Jessica* CAMANO | Photography





## Entwined

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*Africa* SCHAUMANN | Photography



# Mystery on Myrtle

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*Jane* RUSSELL | Poetry

The woodcutter's cottage from  
some ancient tale dreams on  
in Belmont up a sleepy street—  
all pointed gables, weathered siding,  
damply dormant air.

The woodsman and his lady,  
seldom seen (still grieving  
children lost in forest dark?)  
have ceded yardage  
to encroaching green.

Kitchen garden running riot  
conquers all, with chives  
and onions, Echinacea,  
basil tangled underfoot  
while trees and gangly bushes

barricade the porch and filter light  
but dimly through the panes.  
If Aurora sleeps within,  
her prince will never find her  
behind the hedge. Emerge,

old story-keepers—lose the pain  
and weave your knotted threads  
into our village life again!



## Glory

*Kristine* ROBINSON | Art

# About the Contributors

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## Students

Bonnie Aberle	Junior, Biology
Jacob Beamer	Freshman, Math
Nikole Brand	Senior, Biology
Sabrina Bologna	Freshman, Undeclared
Jessica Camano	Senior, Biology
Felix Du Sablon	Senior, Biology
Bethany Gareis	Freshman, Undeclared
Josef Gareis	Freshman, Undeclared
Rebecca Gerlach	Senior, Elementary Education, Theology
Thomas Hamilton	Senior, English
Ashton Harnage	Freshman, Undeclared
Gage Hillmann	Junior, Math
Hannah Howard	Junior, Business
Joseph Katt	Senior, English
Stephanie Lugo	Junior, English
Rachel McKimmon	Senior, Government & Political Philosophy
Ashley Osmera	Senior, Psychology
Anne Parlmer	Junior, English
Liga Pavlovska	Senior, English
Nathan Peetz	Junior, Business
Kasey Ramsey	Senior, English
Julianna Rivas	Sophomore, Undeclared
Kristine Robinson	Senior, Educational Studies
Brenna Ryan	Sophomore, Undeclared
Africa Schaumann	Senior, History
Rebecca Sigler	Senior, English
Maria Tejada	Freshman, Elementary Education
Elizabeth Thierfelder	Senior, English, Theology
Jamie Treece	Sophomore, Undeclared
Jessica Weaver	Sophomore, Catholic Educational Studies
Kate Weaver	Freshman, English
Bridget Wilkinson	Sophomore, Undeclared

## Alumni

Timothy Tanko	2015
Paul Toscano	1972
Joseph Yellico	2016

## Professors

Jane Russell	Associate Professor of Theology
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## Other

Sharon Johns	Faculty Coordinator
Rolando Rivas	Director of Marketing & Communications
Jonah Wilamowski	Former Student

# Submission Guidelines

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*Agora* accepts submissions of fiction and poetry, as well as works of visual art and photography. Through a blind reading and viewing, student editors select works to be published. Selections are based on artistic quality and space in the publication. Only student entries are eligible for the literature and art-photography awards. Winners are presented a certificate of artistic achievement during the Academic Awards Banquet at the end of the spring semester and receive a monetary award by mail. Deadlines for submissions are announced every semester in the fall and early spring. Submissions are accepted only from the Belmont Abbey Community: students, faculty, monks, administrators, staff, and alumni.

## **Submission Guidelines:**

Please edit written works for grammar and mechanics prior to sending. Send each submission, whether written or a work of art or photography, as an individual digital file, named by the title of the work. Written submissions must be saved and sent as Word files. Send all submissions as email attachments; do not paste them into the body of your email message. Email your digital images one at a time to retain quality. In the body of your email message, include the title, your name, and the date of your submission. Send all submissions to Dr. Rebecca Munro, Faculty Advisor for *Agora*: [rebeccamunro@bac.edu](mailto:rebeccamunro@bac.edu).

## **Categories and Number of Submissions Accepted for Consideration:**

Short stories (1700 word limit, the very high end): Two Stories

Flash-fiction (500 word limit): Two Stories

Vignettes (500 word limit): Two Vignettes

Prose poems (250 word limit, suggested): Two Prose Poems

Poetry: Four Poems

Drawings, paintings, mixed media: Four Submissions

Photography: Four Photographs

**All contributors must be members of the Belmont Abbey family.**



# AGORA

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Belmont Abbey College  
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