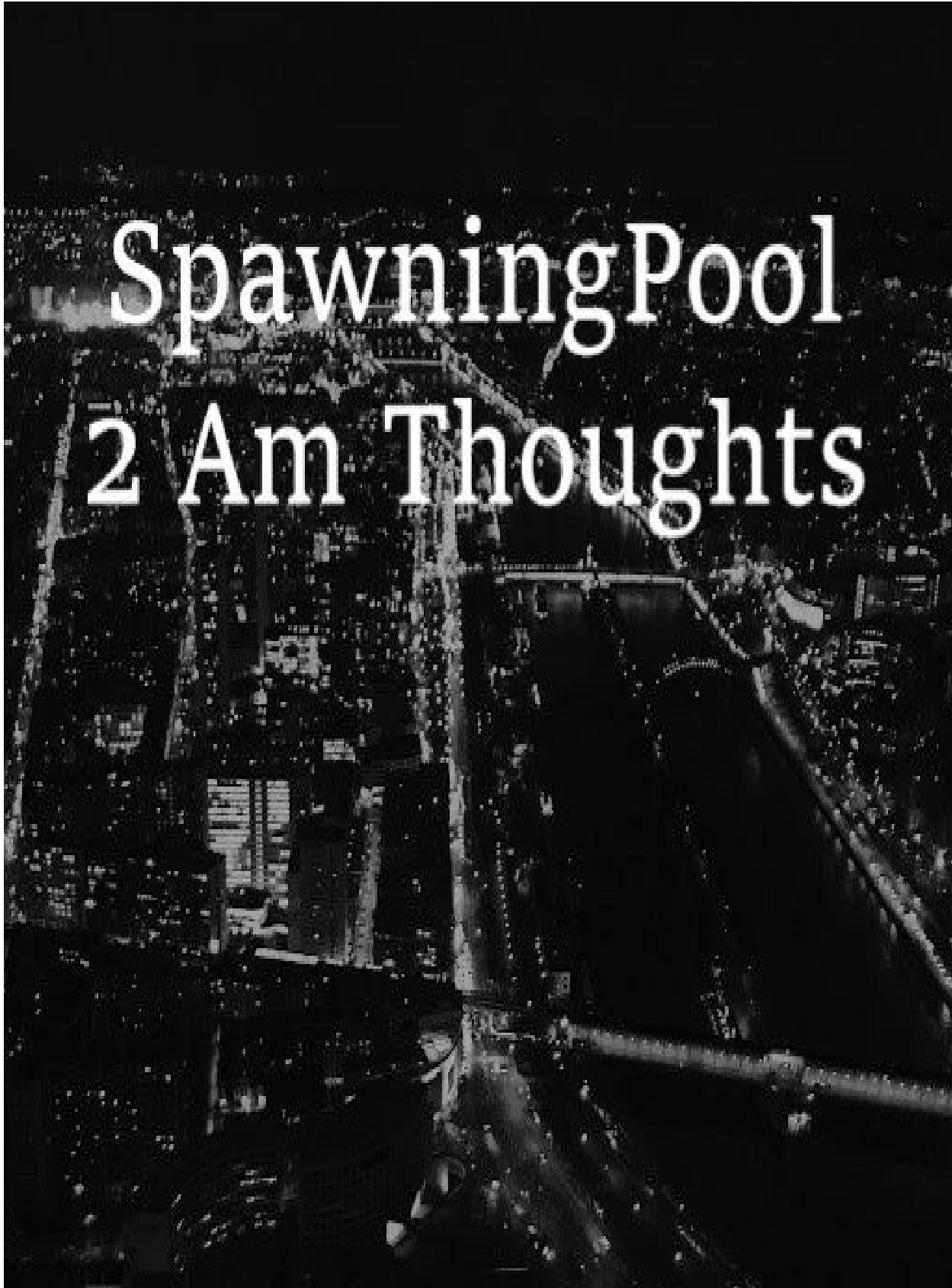


An aerial, high-contrast black and white photograph of a city at night. A river flows through the center, with a bridge crossing it. The city lights are visible on both sides of the river, and the bridge's structure is clearly illuminated. The overall scene is dark, with the city lights providing the primary illumination.

SpawningPool 2 Am Thoughts

Spawning Pool
Poetry Chapbook:
2 Am Thoughts
Spring 2020

Shippensburg University

/or

SpawningPool is a literary arts chapbook published at Shippensburg University by a small and dedicated team of undergraduate students. It is composed of poetry pieces submitted by undergraduate students of the university.

SpawningPool accepts rolling submissions throughout the year, and we publish our chapbook every Spring semester. SpawningPool is a publication of *The Reflector*, which also accepts submissions year-round, and is compiled each Fall semester.

Contact us:

Submissions and inquiries: reflect@ship.edu

SpawningPool Poetry Chapbook, Spring 2020

Text Set in Playfair Display

Printed by Shippensburg University

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2:00 AM ***Ryan Sholley***

Why is it that the dark thoughts always come in the middle of the night?

2 a.m. doubts and fears lit by the moonlight.

Maker's Mark numbs the pain

for it to return again by the second glass.

Cigarette burning in my ashtray.

Crying over things I can't change.

Giving myself headaches that can't be cured with Motrin alone

And I can't try to sleep

I can't focus on anything but the blank wall in front of me.

Getting dizzy

but is it from the liquor or my brain giving me optical illusions?

I could open a bible, but the words never help.

Jesus can't save me, and I can't save myself.

Walls closing in and I'm begging for help.

Gasping for air.

Lungs deflate like balloons the day after a birthday party.

Because the depression hits the hardest right after a manic high.

A celebration of life turns to a wake in my mind

and I'm awake all the time because the thoughts don't stop

A race to infinity with no finish line.

They run until they collapse

and my mind goes empty.

This can't be healthy

but 2 a.m. doesn't give a shit about my wellbeing.

2:01 AM *Abigail Long*

The room went dark

And you suddenly became a stranger

One that captured my attention

And left me begging for more

As we laid there

I could no longer read your mind

Or discover your thoughts

In the way I used to

I couldn't help but wonder

If you were thinking the same about me

Did you want to know more?

Was I a stranger too?

A Feeling *Caity Holland*

Is feeling a feeling the only way to understand it
Or is it possible to understand without the feeling

How does anyone know what to feel
And how to feel
If they do not understand it first

And what about the feelings that are unwanted
What do we do with those

Take love for an example
How do we know when it's real
And when it's only half real

Is a crush a prerequisite to love
Or is it the other way around

Does anyone know?

ah-huh

Kim Johnson

Why am I at Walmart at 2 a.m.,
Wandering aimlessly down the aisles.
What am I looking for?
I can't remember.
Turning the cart to wander down
another aisle of useless objects.
What did I come here for?
I woke up at 1 a.m. in a panic
knowing I needed something.
Once again, I turn the cart
staring at cakes.
Now I remember, it makes my heart ache.
My son's birthday is today
and I forgot.
He just turned eight or maybe seven
It's 2 a.m. I forgot again.

Creamy Dreams

Anonymous

I sprawl them out neatly in a circle
One by one I twirl you around in the sea of cream
Not too long, for you would crumble
But just enough to soften your shell
Lightly place you between my teeth
Where I invite you into my mouth
Now full of a double stuffed surprise
As I chew and chew,
My heart beat soars
My throat *hmmmmms*
Sliding down further
Licking my teeth for just one more taste
And....
And....
.....I've swallowed.
Thank you, you orgasm wrapped in plastic.

That was a damn good Oreo.
Colorfully packaged,
Blue, white, black, yellow, pink,

Crinkles at my touch

Waking everyone to my 2am shame

Revealing your crispy cookie and creamy center,

I've grabbed way more than any normal person

But I still whisk you all away to my room

For another girl's night in.

Dearest Daughter

Abigail Kauffman

My Dearest Daughter
So young and vibrant
Diminished by the passing of time.

Oh how I wish you were still little
So that I may hold you tight
And protect you from the foul creatures
That lurk in the dead of the night.

Oh Dearest Daughter
How I wish you had stayed
Swaddled in a blanket
Instead of wandering the streets.

You blame me, but it is You who left
To clean up the aftermath of your outburst
And all I wanted you to do was to stay in your youth.

Is that so hard, Dearest Daughter of mine?

Dreaming an Ex Friend's Suicide

Anonymous

The grief rattles out
in sobs and ugly wheezing but somehow without tears.
I can't catch my breath.
My lungs fill and deflate without relief, panicked.
Hands rub my back
or clasp my fingers, but no one has the words.
I know what lies at the end
of the car ride and the stopping to puke: a casket and painted skin.

I don't know why he did it. I never tried to know why he did it.
It wasn't my job
to know why he did it. But someone should've been there.
Even if that someone was me
and after years of not speaking, my being there made no sense.
I had his trust when we let go.
Confessions come with responsibility, goodbyes with absolution.
I thought.

The crying won't stop.
Sucking air stops nothing. I can't breathe.

Stop. Wake up.

Senses settle into the soft sheets and the dark room.

My phone.

I squint at the blue light, relief at no notifications, but still...

Tap out a text: *are you ok?*

Stop. Go back to sleep instead of pressing send.

even after you've gone, you're still here

Rachelle Renninger

i miss you

and not because i loved you,

because what we had wasn't love

i miss you

because you were my first kiss

and i can never get that back

i miss you

because you stole away part of my innocence

and i am fragile now because of it

i miss you

because of the fantasies of fairytale romances that you ruined

and i can no longer believe in anymore

i miss you

because of the secrets i told you that you used against me

and now i'm scared of trusting anyone

i miss you

because of the way i thought i could love you

but now i know that that kind of love doesn't exist

and i wish i could stop

Evidence *Kim Johnson*

Death and Destructions,

the EMT said at 2 a.m.

Fragmented bones, glass scattered,

trash cans turned upside down.

The race from death,

swindled from life.

Death and Destruction,

the officer said.

Scraps of clothes, beer cans,

evidence of a broken life.

Fear of Predation

Robert Greenberg

I could say he has feelers,
that scales slip off beneath his cloak,
A horrible mass of flesh is revealed beneath.
I could say his throat overflows with smoke,
And that bile drips from his disguise,
A stench of brimstone seeps
from the pits of his sunken eyes,
But none of this is true.

He is but a man

following

you.

Found *Abigail Long*

A room silently accompanied
By the faint smell of cigarettes
Filled with one too many
Broken souls
Consumed by laughter
That fades once the doors close

But when I see her
The nonsense is dimmed
Overwhelming calmness
Slows the beat of my heart
Placing meaning behind my smile
And our souls become one

Glass Skin. Steel Bones.

Cooper Shirey

He's got hair like the sand,

Eyes like the sea

And even in a single moment

Lying in his arms,

He envelopes you

In sun and silk

Warmth and safety

Memories you buried

In your youth

And you swear,

There's magic in his touch

Runes within his fingertips

Incantations on his lips

That resurrect

A feeling

You long thought

Dead-

Or maybe, one you

Never knew

At all

It isn't long

Before you fall

But even with

A face so sweet

Arms so strong

And all the magic

In the world

He does not

Catch you

I Dream About You (Epilogue)

Anonymous

And this time it's
my turn to tell you
I've moved on, actually.
I'm seeing someone.
You had your chance;
you had plenty, actually.
And now it's too late.
I've moved on, caught up
to where I thought you were.

Ah, I see now,
having woken from the dream,
this has very little to do
with what I feel for you
and everything to do
with having someone new
who likes loves (lusts?)
like you never did,
not in any way that matters.

I have proof now
that someone else can want me,
and I can want them back
with a confidence you never showed
in yourself or brought out in me.
I need that thrilling two-way pulse
to exist in someone who isn't you,
and maybe that's not very feminist of me,
but damn does it feel good.

I Knew ***Taryn Good***

I knew him from the first day

I knew before the words were spoken.

I knew by his hands

I knew by the way he held the belt

I knew before my little brother spoke the words

I knew before I left

I knew before

I knew him and the way he spoke

I knew before my older brother told

I knew our abuser

I knew him as Dad

I now I wish I never known at all

Intraloper

Cooper Shirey

I wish

I could've met myself

The way she met me

I wish I could've smiled

Laughed

Felt my head go light

My heart flutter

I wish it could've been me

Who found myself

In a parked car

Closed in

From a sky

That knew nothing

But dark

I wish I'd never opened up

And seen too far inside

I wish I'd never glimpsed

The sullen eyes within

The void

The thing that skitters

Here and there

As if it were alive,

Dark and formless,

Wretched,

Clawing its way

To my heart

Through my veins

I wish I didn't have to fear

But I already know too much

Locker Room Talk (Part II)

Robert Greenberg

Between you and me
I can't stop thinking about her,
the way her hair flows,
glows in the sun,
how her hips swing as she walks
away, ever faster when I'm around.
I can't stop thinking about her slick cunt.
I bet it's soft,
I bet it tastes like ice cream.
Every time she smiles, I get hungry.
She walks the long way home now,
I get to watch her longer.
I swear, I've got rose-colored glasses
for that heart-shaped ass.
By the time I get home, man,
I gotta make ice cream of my own.
I can't wait for Joey's party Thursday,
I'm gonna ice that birthday cake.
I even got her a present.

Love Poem #48

Andrea Kling

when the world is crushing you,
do not blame yourself
because you cannot stand under the weight.
do not believe the world
when it tries to tell you the wounds it left
will not leave scars,
but know they will not make you
any less beautiful,
they are a testament to the battles
you have fought,
the hell you have been through
and come out alive.
You have so many stories of victory to tell,
please do not let yourself forget them,
do not let yourself forget
the strength you carry in your bones,
the courage pouring from your fingertips,
the love that lives in the corner of your smile.
Do not let yourself forget
you are worth so much more

than what you let the world convince you
you are.

The last thing you need to be
is another chain draped around your own neck;
if you cannot lift your head
to see in the mirror
how beautiful your soul is,
you will begin to forget,
you will begin to remind yourself
only of the ugly things
and believe the venom the world spits at you.
Do not forget that you deserve so much more
than what you have given yourself
permission to take,
do not believe the world
when it tells you there is a price
to be paid for your own happiness,
the only sacrifice must be made
is the death of any notion
that you are not good enough.
Know that you have always been enough

for yourself,
it is why you keep fighting,
it's why you refuse to give up,
it's why you refuse to believe
the lies the world feeds you.
It's why, even if it seems impossible,
you are trying to learn how to love yourself,
and even if you aren't there yet,
you are still on your way.
Even on the worst of days,
you are still on your way.

Love Poem #49 (Control)

Andrea Kling

I have been to counseling enough times
to know that this anxiety
comes from feeling like my hands are tied,
from not having any control over what happens.

I have sat through enough sessions
to know exactly how to wiggle my way
through the labyrinth of my heart
straight to the source of this pain,
but when I get there,
all I do is sit in it
until it's 2am and I've wasted all day
mourning the happiness
that I don't know how to save.

I've psychoanalyzed myself so many times
that I do it in my sleep;
my dreams are strange amalgamations
of symbols and metaphors
that only reiterate the things
I've already figured out.

They are just reminders
that I know what's broken inside of me
but I still can't seem to fix it.

I've been to counseling enough times
to know that I make a horrible passenger.
I always want to be the one in the driver's seat,
the one behind the wheel,
'cause at least then if this car crashes
I won't be left wondering why
'cause at least then I will have myself to blame.
That's what I wanted, right?
Control? The responsibility of everything that happens?
Maybe the blame is just easier to live with
that a million "what if's"
and I'm just scared of what will happen
if I let go of the wheel,
let someone else drive for once.
Maybe I'm just scared of not knowing
where I'm gonna end up
so I'd rather just go nowhere at all.

My Dream of Being the Perfect Daughter: A Confession *Megan Gelsinger*

Take the flashing red and blue lights from behind your car,
And tuck them in a place where you'll never find them again.

2 a.m. listen to the officer on the phone with your mother,
While sitting in the station
Unable to remember why you are there in the first place.
Imagine the thoughts running through her head.
The only thought running through yours is,
You disappointed her once again.

She always said,
“If you ever get arrested, I’m not bailing you out,”
Only to have her pick you up after the call.
See the tears as they blur her eyes,
She opens her mouth,
To speak a line you’ll never forget.

6 a.m. sitting at home,
Across from her,

Confessing your love for self-sabotage.

Look at the disappointment,

Splayed across her face,

Glazing over her eyes.

You've become a monster.

Feel the sting of her hand across your cheek

For disrespecting her as your mother.

But a mother's love runs deep.

Deep enough to bury all of the hurt and pain

You have caused her,

As if nothing ever happened.

Poem 1 ***Kelsey Dunkle***

The white cottage stands tall
as the sea laps at the skin around my ankles

and I think
maybe I could die here

my body floating gently
with the current and the ocean waves

or harder yet
I could live here

Knowing what I do now
about the emptiness of my life

or even the eternity of my suffering

Poem 2 *Kelsey Dunkle*

In the basement, you miss the little things

Christmas decorations, the sound of someone else's voice, the raindrops on your skin

I can't believe I ever used an umbrella

In the basement, you don't have to close your eyes to see the dark

There is one light bulb and it breaks often, sometimes taking days for him to notice

Those are my favorite days

When the light comes back on, it's almost like maybe I've never known light at all

In the basement, the slop we're given is the most exquisite cuisine

Sometimes I think about pepper, salt, maybe even garlic powder

But my meal is gone almost the second it is set in front of me

And you can't keep thoughts like that on an empty stomach for long

In the basement, I think about what I'd be doing if I was free

The future used to scare me: veterinarian, lawyer, princess, who knows what I want to be?

But when the future switches from a promise to a threat, you don't take it for granted anymore

And, for the record mom, I want to be a teacher

In the basement, there are no decorations

I miss that ugly photo of us that I used to tear off the wall
So unaware of how quickly faces would start to fade
Somedays I can't remember what color flecks you had in your eyes
Gold, right? Or maybe they were green

In the basement, you start to feel like a prisoner of war
The battle I'm facing is in my head, against my reality, against my captor
But when he comes, I don't fight. I don't do anything
It feels like the only place I can be brave anymore is my imagination

In the basement, I don't want to talk about it.
I don't want to tell you
The abuse I've suffered from, the things that have been done to me
Just know I don't like the color blue anymore
Or the sound of my own name

In the basement, I think about you.
About dad, about my friends, about the dogs.
I hope you're still looking for me.
I'm right here, mom.

In the basement.

Quenched

Cooper Shirey

I always thought

It would stop

The orchids flourishing in my veins

The little wings I feel inside

Every time I see

Your smile

I thought it would come to an end

The clockwork in my aching heart

That ever so often fluctuates

Away from you, then back

Is it a curse,

I wonder?

To find you in my dreams

To wish that we could ever be

More than we ever were

Or is it just a lesson

That I wish I'd never learned

We tried to set the world on fire

Before we ever burned

Serenadin' Early Mornin'

Kim Johnson

Two a.m. on Christmas mornin'

Pop flew out of bed

heard a clatter,

not Rudolph's hooves

cruising the roof,

nor Santa's *HO HO HO*,

flingin' the window open

Pops dismay.

Two drunks amongst the tombstones

serenadin' the departed with "Silent Night"

full of moon shine passing the jar 'round

"We Three King" being crooned as they

stumbled down the street.

The Line is Busy

Brooke Powell

Every time the phone rings at 2 AM, it's

No good

Never ends well

You wish the phone wasn't yours

Wish the lust wouldn't call

Wish death didn't know your number

Wish the night would forget your name

This is about you

Anonymous

My stomach is pouring and my thoughts are drowning. This impossible thing that we had- I knew it was coming to a close, but I didn't think I would be so crushed from the consequences. My thoughts are plagued by you, but "plague" sounds so dirty. You could never be something dirty to me. You consume every moment of my day, from wanting to touch your sweet face, to sending you a picture of a bird I saw. I can't read poetry without hearing your voice in every line, soft and forceful like the words are flowing right through you from inside your very being. Your smile is contagious to the point that I don't think I could ever stay mad at you when you grin so big and soft. Laughing with you is like a drug and hearing our mixed chuckles in the air is the most potent form. Your eyes when you look down at me that way draw me closer to you- like if I stop looking, I might never see them again. I've never been so enraptured with another human before that the toll it takes upon me is so endless. I can't accept that we aren't destined for each other. I think you feel this way, too. I feel like you're the person I have been waiting for all of my life. The one person who gets me in every way. The person who I feel safe with. You are my person. I guess I'm not yours. Maybe in another life, perhaps, we'll meet again and our love will rekindle itself into the passionate bonfire it's meant to be. I can wait until then, I suppose. I'll stare at the stars and think of you. I'll see you in certain objects and words- the inside jokes we've made. I'll dream of your lips until one day I can taste you again.

This Little Bubble of Mine

Rachelle Renninger

I sit here

Swaying with the wind

Protected in this little bubble of mine.

As the birds each sing,

Their own special little song,

While the sun kisses my skin.

My eyelids begin to flutter close

And I've almost

d

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s

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e

d

But then I hear your scream break the night's silence
As he hits you
Followed by the splintering sound of glass.
His intoxicated words, crashing down
Over my little bubble.
And it shakes and threatens to pop under the pressure.
I want to stay hidden here in my little bubble.

Tied *Yuliani Sutedjo*

Tied

We are tied

By the bond that we've created

By our differences

By our uniqueness

By our dreams and goals

We are tied

To become

One

One in community

One in unity

One in love

One in kind

One in care

One in a family

One

Tied

With

Two

Tied

With

Three

The more the better

It become stronger and stronger!

Unbreakable

Under one mission

Serving and helping other success

Support enrich and nurture

This community

Lots need to be said or was said

Let's act..

Together we are stronger!

For justice and equity

Human right

LGBTQ* right

Feminism

Immigrant

goals, dreams, vision, mission

and any other issues.

Together we are one, tied and stronger.

Timestamp 2:43am

Haley Bennett

What I say:

I'm good at prioritizing work.

What you hear:

I can decide what's most important and do that first.

What I mean:

everything is important and so

work is the priority.

Over sleep and oversleeping

Over eating and overeating

Overworking over work.

Going to bed after 2,

waking up at 7,

and wow that's a solid 4 hours!

A caffeine routine

that leaves headaches

on top of fatigue when broken.

I do not want to write poetry
this late-at-early-in-the night-morning

But when else is there?

Trying ***Rachelle Renninger***

I'm still trying to forget you
Not the part where I loved you.
Trust me, that part was the first to go.

I'm still trying to forget
What you did to me,
And how you don't seem to care at all.

But I already knew that.
Almost 3 years ago, I believed your sugar-coated lies.
Despite how those words bruised my skin.

But you didn't care, did you?
I know I shouldn't let it keep up at night
Because I know its dangerously unhealthy.

But how is it fair,
That I'm the one stuck with the scars
And bad memories?

Two Days

Bruce Washington

A day in our two

And all I can do

In a day I do

And all I can do

In a day I do

A day in our two

In a day I do

And all I can do

A day in our two

A day in our two

And all I can do

In a day I do

Unrequited Love

April Petesch

I didn't eat again today,
And my body had little say,
I didn't sleep again last night,
And my body didn't put up a fight,
Sure, my eyelids were drooping,
And my back was stooping,
But when I closed my eyes,
My body was there for me,

The knife has sliced my body again,
My body does little to complain,
Sure, my body aches and bleeds,
But it does the repairs compliantly,
No bandages needed for a bullet hole,
My heart clots the blood just fine,

A sick brain and a healthy body,
Is the biggest contradiction I am,

Because I simultaneously destroying myself,
As my body picks up and mends the broken pieces,
My body is doing everything it can,
On a such a cellular and microscopic level,
And all my brain wants to do is beat it,
Break it,
And destroy it.

My brain does not love my body as it should,
Not believing in yourself,
Not appreciating yourself,
Not loving yourself,
That's unrequited love too.

Untitled, “Dream One”

Cassandra Smith

Dream one:

I blocked your path
And we collided
I fell back towards death
But your hand caught me
Your nails cut my wrist
As you pulled me to safety
I wouldn't let go
I pulled you away from the edge

Dream two:

You were given a task
You didn't want to do
But I promised to show you
My secrete place if you obeyed
The trees parted at my presence
And I led you to a pond
Surrounded by willows
Fragranced with lilies
You left to complete the task

Dream three:

I was the light
And you chased me
I turned off my light
Surrounded myself in shadow
And dived into the dark
Yet you followed
Called out for help
So I turned back on my light
Found your hand in the blackness
And watched my light spread into you

Why Me? *Caitlyn Harris*

I sit in and bed and wonder why me?

Why do I sit here at night wondering why the sky is blue

And why am I here laying next to you and still feel alone.

I lay there staring at the ceiling wondering why do I feel the need to cut deeper than before

I sit there and wonder why I let the people I let in, including you who haunts my thoughts on nights like this.

People like you who taught me that love can be toxic and full of lies

I sit here in bed again and realize that these are the thoughts I am having at the wee hours of the night as my roommate sleeps peacefully next to me.

I try to hide the sniffles and hope she doesn't see the blood stained tissues in the trash.

And before I know it, I am asleep again, alone in my bed wondering why me.

Eyes *Haley Bennett*

gray blue eyes

to get lost in

to get found in

to find in

to lose in

myself or yourself

or the grain

gritty until

the soft skin

polishes to pearl

and the same color

hidden in between

the folds of us.

trying to say goodbye

Rachelle Renninger

it's hard to look at you without seeing her face

it's hard to hear your voice without hearing her name

maybe being "just friends" was the wrong choice

even though i so desperately want you in my life,

maybe it's best for you to leave

Acknowledgements

Dr. Nicole Santalucia, Advisor of *The Reflector* and *Spawning Pool*:

Thank you for your guidance and patience as we tried to navigate what became a crazy year. None of this would be possible without your help every step of the way. We appreciate you being our biggest supporter and pushing us to give it our all.

Our Executive Board, Anna D’Orazio, Angela Piper, and Luke Hershey:

We are incredibly grateful to work for such a wonderful team this year. **Anna:** Thank you for always offering a helping hand and walking us through the process of creating the Spawning Pool. You are a patient teacher and a fierce leader. We would like to wish you all the best in your future pursuits. Thank you for everything. **Angela:** Thank you for being a voice of reason and keeping everyone organized. You’re always around to push us to do our best and you shamelessly promote all our hard work over the year. We are so thankful for your fun mom energy and positive attitude through the entire process. **Luke:** Thank you for always promoting us and being there for everyone. You are a diligent worker, yet you don’t take life too seriously. Thank you for always being there to ease tension in the room after a stressful day of classes and to entertain us all.

Kim Hess, Creative Services Coordinator:

Thank you for your dedication and your guidance through the process of creating the SpawningPool. We appreciate your willingness to answer any questions we could possibly come up with at any time of the day and allowing us to take time out of your busy schedule. Because of you, we are able to showcase Shippensburg University’s wonderful writers and artists.

Our Poetry Committee:

This SpawningPool would not have been possible without every person’s hard work and dedication. Thank you for being so kind and patient, offering to take up extra work, and being a part of the decision making process. It was a pleasure to work with everyone and to be able to bring your ideas to life. You did an excellent job promoting and we were able to have a record high of poetry submissions. Be proud of yourselves. To all our graduating members, thank you for being a part of our team and we wish you the best of luck. We will miss you greatly.

*“Every heart sings a song
late at night.
some dare to write
while some bleed
through their eyes.*

*I don't know who am I
but when tears are in my eyes
I know I'm still alive
to write
what is burning me inside”*

-Sahani Baleshwar

/or