

the
crucible

2017-2018



THE CRUCIBLE

REFLECTIONS OF LIGHT
AND SHADOW

2017-2018

— ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS —

The 2018 edition of *The Crucible* would not be possible without the support and contributions of the Lock Haven University Student Auxiliary Services, Inc., with special thanks to its director, Jodi Smith; and the English and Art departments.

Our thanks also go to every author and artist who submitted to *The Crucible* as well as the editors who combed through each submission with diligence, determination, and patience.

Thanks also go to all those that helped spread the word among students, including members of the English Club, on campus. Particular appreciation is had for Professors Maddox-Hafer and Washington for encouraging submissions in workshop courses over the year, without which many of our submissions may not have been written.

Lock Haven University is an equal opportunity employer and encourages applications from minorities, women, veterans, and persons with disabilities. Lock Haven University is a member of the State System of Higher Education.

Book cover, page design and typography by
Jessica Long and Megan Rathmell

The Crucible

Reflections of Light and Shadow

Editors

Ellora Figured

Rebecca Glinzman

Jora Lam

Art Editors and Designers

Jessica Long

Megan Rathmell

Staff

Amanda Hall

Jake Houtz

Sarah Markley

Alyssa Mazzei

Graphic Design Advisor

Jason Bronner

Literary Advisor

Dana Washington

PREFACE

We are not static people living in a stagnant world. No, the world moves around us, and we move within it.

Often times the world, life, being, change us. We spend time reflecting on who we are and what we've become after certain incidents. Sometimes we're shadows of who we used to be; we're fractured beyond the point of breaking. Sometimes we're resilient: we keep going in spite of the tribulations.

That is what this year's *The Crucible* focuses on. In one way or another, each piece here reflects a trial, a change of some kind. There are minute moments that change our lives as people forever, and each piece in art and literature shows that.

The Crucible of 2018 is a reflection, an image cast in the mirror of who we are. It is a reflection of light and shadow.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LITERATURE

Flatwater Skies.....	Autumn Hanley	1
The River.....	Tabitha Fisher	3
Pebbles On The River Bed.....	Autumn Hanley	10
Bronze Roses.....	Sam Wesnak	12
Gaia's Symphony.....	Alyssa Mazzei	17
I Made This Just For You.....	Melissa Weber	20
In My Hands.....	Autumn Hanley	24
He Went For Diapers.....	Brian Snook	25
Get Over It.....	Delia Paige	32
Blind.....	Tyler Tallmadge	33
Better.....	Ricky Reinberg	40
Annie, Are You Okay?.....	Rebecca Glinzman	41
Shoot For The Moon.....	Joel Williamson	47
An Olympic Catastrophe.....	Ellora Figured	49
A Sentenced Flower.....	Rebecca Glinzman	57
Monster.....	Delia Paige	61
A Gilded Cage.....	Grace Monroe	62
Lorelei.....	Jora Lam	67
All In Your Head.....	Samantha Osborne	71
Nimble.....	Jacob Houtz	76

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ART

Spoof of Saint Sebastian.....	Richard Kessinger	2
Reaction Two.....	Zach Hommey	11
Reaction.....	Zach Hommey	15
The Fall.....	Zach Hommey	16
drei Schädel.....	Danielle Sander	19
Untitled 4.....	Jessica Tressa	23
Untitled 13.....	Vance Godfrey	31
Wires 3.....	Vance Godfrey	39
Untitled 3.....	Destiny Schmidt	46
Untitled 2.....	Jessica Tressa	55
Untitled 1.....	Destiny Schmidt	56
Male Figure.....	Ying Gu	60
Scribble Gesture.....	Jessica Long	65
Point of Impact.....	Zach Hommey	66
Pelvic Study.....	Jessica Long	75

Flatwater Skies
Autumn Hanely

A paddle dipping into flatwater
breaking the tension and entering
into another world, another dimension

A wilder aquatic world not meant
for me to experience as my own
but to witness from the airy heavens.



Richard Kessinger
Spoof of Saint Sebastian
charcoal on paper

THE RIVER
Tabitha Fisher

It's been a couple of months now, nearing a year. My hair has grown longer, somewhat thinner than it was before, at least I think so; a few light wrinkles have already notched their way beneath Claire's eyes, given ample opportunity to burrow in during the nights she's spent without sleep.

We've all changed since it happened. Our group is a bit quieter in public now, and our peripheral friends hush their voices when we shuffle into a meeting or a class, all together, like a unit. We're all nearly silent when we walk on the dike, and none of us take afternoon dips on the shore of the river anymore. Sometimes we can't even bear to make our way over to the grassy slopes that rise up to arc over the water, keeping the waves at bay. It's hard to stand there and listen to her weep.

It started off innocently enough, like it always does. We were a small group of friends, a bunch of students slogging our way through a slew of different degrees. I was studying economics, torturing myself with something I didn't like for the sake of doing something "useful," something I could try to brag about at parties but not anything I actually could live with in the long term. Francis, a short kid with a tongue that never stopped tripping over itself, was studying physical education, wanted to be a gym teacher. Even though we all thought there was no way he had the gravitas to command a classroom, or a gym full of kids for that matter, we never said anything, not to his face. It wasn't right to crush a friend's dreams like that.

Claire was a math major, tearing through numbers like they were prey, devouring her material one equation at a time. Sometimes she acted like they *could* sustain her, forgetting to pack any food on her late-night trips to the library. That was

when *he* would sweep in, Alan, her knight in shining Dockers, shimmering car keys in one hand and a Golden Arches bag in the other. He was an education major, specializing in Social Sciences. He wanted to teach middle school, like a crazy person. It was something I always teased him about, told him there was no way anyone sane would dive into a pile of hormonal eighth graders and try to teach them about the world. He was always good-natured about it, laughing it off on good days and giving a shrug when I said something that may have hit too close to home. He never seemed to let anyone get to him; it's no wonder she was so in love.

Then there were John and Erik. They were together so often that it seemed wrong to put that "and" between their names; everyone in our group knew them as John&Erik, a singular entity, never apart. John was studying public history with Erik, a longtime friend from high school. John was a local boy; Erik wasn't, but he tried to be. He'd go to John's parties in high school, then parties with John's high school friends in college, and drive out to John's secret townie spots late on weeknights, hands light on the wheel, ready to twitch to the right or left to make a turn he might've forgotten, quickly, so as not to lose face. Sometimes he'd go shooting with friends of John's on the weekends, either for fun or to prepare for hunting season. One time I went with them, without Alan and Claire.

I watched the way that Erik carefully put his hearing protection on and then yanked it off when he saw no one but me, the only girl of the group, wearing it. I saw the way the others stepped up in turn, lined up their shots in frightening silence, and laid waste to the paper target in front of them, *bang bang bang*, the sound rocking my blood like a boulder thrown in a stream. Then Erik would step up, crouch down, and fight to hold back a flinch as his index finger clenched over the

trigger. He shot high, always, and with too-long pauses between shots. Somehow the gun even sounded quieter when Erik fired it off. I saw the way he stepped away from the bench, his shoulders curved, and watched John for his reaction. I felt pity for him.

It was John who first showed us the spot.

It was late on a Wednesday night before the semester began. We were at Alan and Claire's house, sweating in the stuffy heat of their kitchen. It had been raining for the previous three days, and so all that day we'd suffocated in the humidity, lying in our respective beds until night fell and we could bear to walk the fifteen minutes up the road to drink under the kitchen light. Moths made their erratic ellipses around the yellow bulb above us, and gnats threw themselves at the miniature fireball and dropped to the table, either intoxicated or dead as a result of their collision with glory. The guys were downing green bottles of Yuengling, except for Francis, who didn't usually drink beer and never would. Alan and John were going bottle for bottle with Erik, who kept sneaking longing looks at Francis' Captain and Coke. I'd taken the liberty of pouring Claire and me girls' drinks. I remember we were drinking Malibu and pineapple and cranberry juice, a nice mixture if you didn't want to taste anything in particular. Malibu was a good friend; you could drink it straight, because of the coconut, which meant you could mix it heavy without anyone noticing. If people didn't notice, they got drunk much faster. Being drunk made things easier, like always, and I liked seeing her when she was drunk.

I don't know why. She was happier when she was drunk. She bounced. And sometimes she wrapped

herself around me, and sometimes I could feel her.

We were playing Uno, because that's what we always did. Uno was easy, and we'd all played it a thousand times before, and as long as we were doing something, John wouldn't try to drag us out. But it was late, and the gnats were dead in a pile on the table, and we were too drunk to play Uno.

"Fucking A, man, let's *DO* something," John said.

"We are," I protested. I glanced across the table at Claire and saw nothing but flushed skin. "We're playing Uno."

"No one's played a card in ten minutes," she pointed out. I watched her mouth form the words. I didn't say anything.

"Then go ahead," Francis said. "It was your turn last."

"No no no," she giggled, sliding in her seat to rub her shoulder against Alan's chest. "It was Alan's turn."

"Like hell it was," he muttered, a smile on his face as he slid an arm around her shoulder.

"You're gonna contradict the lady?" Francis said.

"I'm offended *for her*."

"I'm gonna offend you real quick."

"Alaaan—"

"Come on, let's *do something*," John broke in.

"Like what?" I said.

"Fuck, wish we could drive," Erik muttered. Erik always drove.

"Shouldn't've gotten so fucked up, then," John said. I could feel Erik's flinch.

"Screw that, man," said Francis, arguably the most sober of us. "I, for one, like getting fucked up."

He raised his cup silently in a toast and downed it in long, heavy swallows. Scoffs emitted from the table, and an elbow to the ribs sent the Solo cup rolling across the floor, dribbling as it went.

“Well, that wasn’t very polite,” Francis proclaimed to a chorus of drunken laughter. John glowered.

“Fuck this.” He stood up suddenly, his chair legs crying against the floor. “I’m going for a fuckin’ walk, if any of you wants to join.”

Alan muttered a, “Come on, man,” as Erik stood up. John was already shimmying his way into his boots and when he stalked outside to take a piss, the pounding of his heels on the floor rattled the empties in the garbage can. Erik shuffled his way into his sneakers and sheepishly followed John outside.

Francis groaned when they were out of earshot.

“The hell is his problem?” Alan asked. I shrugged.

“Bunch of Neanderthals,” Francis muttered, reaching for the orange juice still sitting on the table. “ADD can’t keep ‘em down for two seconds.”

“Come on, Frankie,” Claire said, shifting in her seat. “Erik’s not bad.”

“Erik’s not the problem,” Alan said.

I shrugged and he shot me a look.

“Well why’s he gotta follow him everywhere, Nat?” Alan asked me. His thumb traced the condensation on his bottle, pressed firm against the glass.

“They’re best friends, dude. Been together forever. Of course he’d want to—”

The door slammed open behind me and I jumped, swallowing my words in one gulp. Erik’s pale countenance peered at us from the cracked door.

“Listen, John’s gonna finish taking a leak and then we’re heading out. He says—”

“Come on, you pussies!”

“He says anyone who wants to come get your shoes on,” Erik continued, “and then we’re leaving.”

We all looked at him, and he shrugged. "Come if you want," he said. "I'm going." He stepped out into the night and shut the door behind him.

We sat blinking at each other in the yellow fluorescent light. A moth was flinging itself, over and over again, at the enormous, outdated bulb, caught up in the spasmodic fits that it couldn't control, or didn't want to. Its shadow, blown large, swallowed the glinting light of our glasses, and bottles marred our faces with shuddering shadows. My vision wavered in the light.

"We really doing this?" Alan snapped. Claire ducked her head into her drink; Francis scratched at the table grain. He looked at the group. "Are we really just gonna go along with what he says?"

"He's drunk, dude," Francis said, conciliatory.

"It's just John being John," I said. Alan huffed and sat back in his seat.

We all stared at the table for another moment. We could hear John outside, stomping around, waiting for us to come out. If we left him a little longer, he'd stomp back in, down another beer, and either stick around or stalk off to his house and no matter where he went, Erik would follow. He was always like this when he drank, like his ego fed on liquor. We were all sick of it, had been for the past year, but we stuck with him anyway, for some reason. Maybe it was because he wasn't a terrible guy sober, or because we all knew his mom died freshman year, and we'd have felt bad dropping him after that. Maybe it's because we liked the dumb, impulsive things he dragged us along to do, and we just needed someone to blame if anything ever went wrong. Maybe, in the end, we weren't any more pathetic

than Erik, forever trailing along in John's wake.

"It might be nice to go out," Claire said, speaking to Alan as he scowled into his beer. "Take a walk by the river or something."

That was all I needed. I stood, drained the rest of the murky fluid in my glass, and walked over to the door to slip on my shoes. I balanced, more or less, on one foot, then the other, saying nothing as I snatched my wallet and keys off the kitchen counter. I turned on them.

"Let's go," I said.

* * *

To continue this tale, please go to

http://community.lhup.edu/crucible/2018/tabitha_fisher.html

Pebbles on the Riverbed
Autumn Hanley

If I could choose to be anywhere
in this great, wide universe
I would choose to be in the water.

Not as a heron- with my life
rushing past me as toes grip
the mud, which hides crayfish.

Nor even as a brook trout does
always reaching for the headwaters
of my life's flowing ambitions, but-

Instead, I'd choose to be a pebble,
letting my edges be softened
by the beauty that moves me.



Zach Hommey
Reaction Two
digital photography

BRONZE ROSES

Sam Wesnak

She walked down the long, carpeted hallway. The walls were filled with abstract paintings of bright flowers, and the ceiling had one chandelier after another dimly lighting her way. She was wearing a light blue cami and a pair of polka-dotted sleep shorts. Her feet were bare, and her dark brown hair flowed down past her shoulders. She continued, passing multiple small doors, none big enough for her to fit through. They ranged in sizes; some were mouse-sized, while others were big enough for a cat.

At the end of the hallway there was set of marble steps followed by a large wooden door. The door in front of her creaked open as she made it up the stairs. On the right side of the door was a large, lion-shaped door knocker made from polished silver. The mouth hung open, like the lion was caught in the middle of a roar. She reached out to grab the lion's face and felt her body fly out the doorway. There was no floor to support her, only air.

She screamed as she looked below her to and saw a deep red pool. It was filled with elongated bodies floating face up. She recognized the faces of her friends staring blankly at her. Black blobs swam below the surface. She could see them zipping back and forth, occasionally grabbing at a limb. She was getting closer and closer to joining them. She could even smell the metallic tang of the bloody water and see the dull gleam in the eyes of her friends' faces. She closed her eyes, preparing for impact.

She felt her body slam into the ground.

Wait, ground?

She opened her balled-up hands and felt the dewy grass around her. She slowly opened her eyes and looked up into a grey cloudy sky that had an orange film behind it. Behind the clouds she could see two orbs, one close and white, the other black and far away. She stopped looking and closed her eyes, only to open them again. The grey sky stayed the same above her.

She pulled herself up to her elbows and realized she was surrounded by rose bushes that towered above her, creating walls of a large maze. On the wall to her left hung a rotten wooden sign. In black-etched writing it read, "You have one hour. Don't touch the walls."

She started as a shriek filled the air. She bolted up and ran towards the sound in time to see a young boy who didn't heed the warning. His hand grazed the wall of blooms and thorns as if to pluck one of the roses. The vines of the wall slithered out and wrapped around his body. They squeezed until he was no more, and chunks of his flesh and blood scattered about the ground. Small hand-like tendrils came out of the ground and pulled the chunks in with them, leaving nothing but the green grass.

She covered her eyes with her hands and counted to ten, hoping the nightmare would end. When she removed her hands, she wasn't back in her room with her yellow painted walls and warm purple bedspread. There were no teddy bears to grab and hold onto, no pillows or sheets to hide under. No lights to turn on and scare away the shadows. She was stuck here until the end.

She walked slowly back to where the first sign was, looking desperately for any way to get out. A flash of metal caught her eye. On the ground, she noticed there was a

large bronze pocket watch about the size of her hand that was etched with large roses on the front. The back was smooth and polished. It was attached to a delicate gold chain. She picked it up and clicked the button on the top to open it. Inside was a counter. It read 55 minutes.

Ugh, 55 minutes to do what?

Already she had lost five minutes, and she still had no clue where she was supposed to go. All she could think was that it may have been better if she had drowned in the pool from her dream. At least then she would have been with her friends.

She walked back to where the young boy had been and turned left. She assumed that where he came from was another starting point. She checked the pocket watch; there were 50 minutes left. Another five gone.

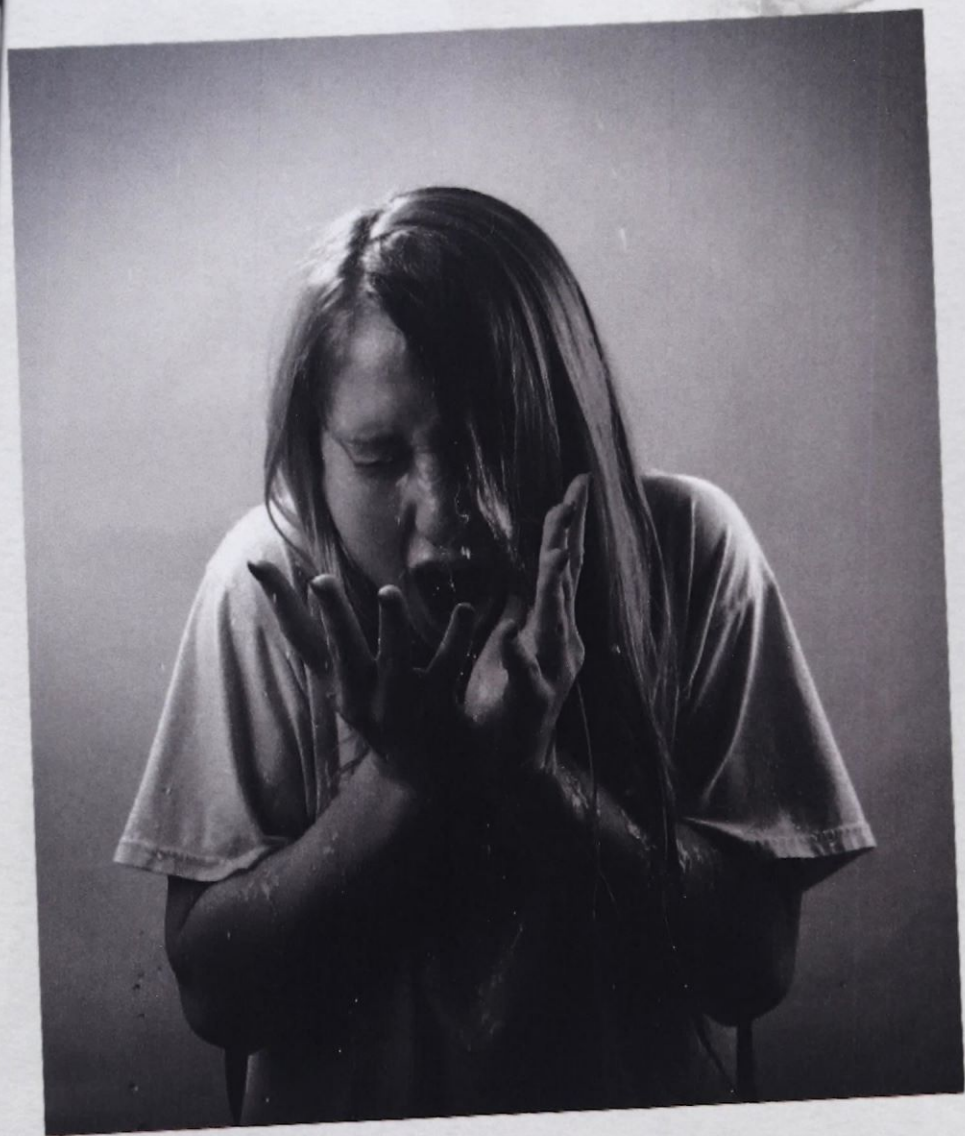
She continued forward. All the vines and thorns looked the same, all a continuous rich emerald green. Even all of the rose buds looked eerily alike. All a perfect deep red paused in full bloom, the petals spread out and silky smooth.

She turned left again and found another wooden sign. "Turn right here. Dead end to the left."

She looked to the left, then to the right, and looked back at the sign again, confused. On the right was another wall covered in sharp thorns, while on the left was a sparse wall of roses. There were barely any thorns on this wall, and some of the roses were a brighter red than the others surrounding them. They almost looked wet.

After seeing what happened to the young boy, she decided to listen to the sign. She stood before the wall to the right and steeled herself for the pain of thorns ripping into her pale skin. She closed her eyes and walked forward.

To continue this tale, please go to
http://community.lhup.edu/crucible/2018/sam_wesnak.html



Zach Hommey
Reaction
digital photography



Zach Hommey
The Fall
digital photography

Gaia's Symphony
Alyssa Mazzei

The sky is filled with shades of blood
reflecting upon the mysterious blues beneath
its waves leap onto the sand
rising to claim those it has lost

Fragments of shells,
tangles of weed,
the carcass of a crab,
all are whisked away.

Pulled under by Poseidon's power.

The colors fade into the darkest of greys
and Scorpius shines bright
where it rests in the sky.

Intrusive explosions of color break the darkness
for a moment
but soon the embers die out,
restoring peace.

Gaia's symphony,
the only sound along the shore.



Danielle Sander
drei Schädel
charocoal and ink on paper

I MADE THIS JUST FOR YOU

Melissa Weber

The first piece of artwork I ever created for someone was a drawing of my family that I gifted my mother when I was four years old. I had just been gifted a brand-new box of Crayola crayons (the 64 count, not the 24 count. That was very important to four-year-old me) and wanted to draw my mother something nice in return, so using the many colorful crayons at my disposal, I set to work drawing my family to the best of my ability.

I soon, however, ran into a problem; the piece of paper I was using to draw my picture on was too small. I had quickly run out of room after drawing both my parents and myself, leaving no room for my older sister or the dog. Frowning, I had become slightly disheartened that I couldn't draw small enough or find a piece of paper big enough to draw my whole family on until I saw it. The living room wall directly across from me was perfect; it was more than big enough to draw my entire family on, plus it was somewhere where my mother would be able to see it every day!

I excitedly set to work, drawing my family with all the detail that a four-year-old boy equipped only with a box of crayons can have. Swooping lines, vibrant colors, and many broken crayons later, I had finally finished my masterpiece, even writing "For Mommy" in the corner of the wall. As I stepped back to admire it, my mother started coming up the stairs from the laundry room, and I took off as fast as my short legs would take me to find her.

"Mommy, Mommy, come quick!" I said excitedly after rounding a corner and discovering her holding a laundry basket. "I drew a picture for you, come look at it!"

Without even waiting for her to respond, I started running back toward the living room, eager to show her my creation. She

followed me to the living room, and upon seeing my drawing on the wall, let out a huge gasp that I mistakenly took as a good sign. "Do you like it, Mommy? I drew it just for you! I even used the crayons you gave me!"

"Derek King..." My mom let out my name with a sigh, bringing her hand up to cover her mouth. "What did you...why did you..." She sighed again and set the laundry basket down.

"Do you like it, Mommy?" I asked again, eager for her approval. After a beat of silence, my mother smiled gently at me, and ran her hand down the wall, tracing the edges of the crayon version of herself. "It's beautiful, Derek," she said. "You did a fantastic job."

I started smiling so much that my cheeks began to hurt. For the rest of the day, I was on cloud nine, so pleased with myself for drawing something for my mother that she loved so much. But that night, when I got up to ask my mom for a glass of water, I found her in the living room, elbow deep in a bucket of suds, scrubbing my drawing off the wall.

* * *

When I was seven years old, I let it slip to the boy that my sister had a crush on that she liked him. Her face grew bright red and all the other kids on the bus who had heard started relentlessly teasing her about it. She got off the bus as quickly as she could, and I stumbled after her, trying to apologize. Ignoring me, she ran straight to her room and slammed the door in my face, yelling at me to leave her alone. I was heartbroken. My best friend was mad at me and wouldn't even talk to me. At seven years old, there is no greater tragedy.

I decided to draw a picture for her. I found a photo of the two of us at Disney World with Mickey Mouse and decided to recreate it with my colored pencils. Surely a picture of the two of us at the happiest place on earth would get her talking to me again. It took several attempts and more time than expected, but I

eventually finished the picture, filling in a small "For Alycia K" in the bottom corner of the picture.

I knocked on her door, drawing cradled gently in my hand ready to beg my sister for forgiveness. "Alycia?" I called out.

"Go away, Derek!" was the immediate reply. "I'm mad at you!"

"Alycia!" I tried again. "I'm sorry. It was an accident. I didn't mean to tell him."

"I don't care!"

"Alycia, please!" I looked down at the picture again. "I drew you a picture." After a few seconds of silence I said, "Will you please come look at it? I drew it just for you!"

I heard footsteps start to come toward the door, and perked up. Alycia opened the door, but before I could say anything, in one fluid motion, she grabbed the picture out of my hand and ripped it neatly in half, not once, but twice. She then stared blankly at me as she let the four pieces drop slowly to the ground. "Go. Away," she said again, before once again slamming the door in my face.

* * *

To continue this tale, please go to
http://community.lhup.edu/crucible/2018/melissa_weber.html

ng"

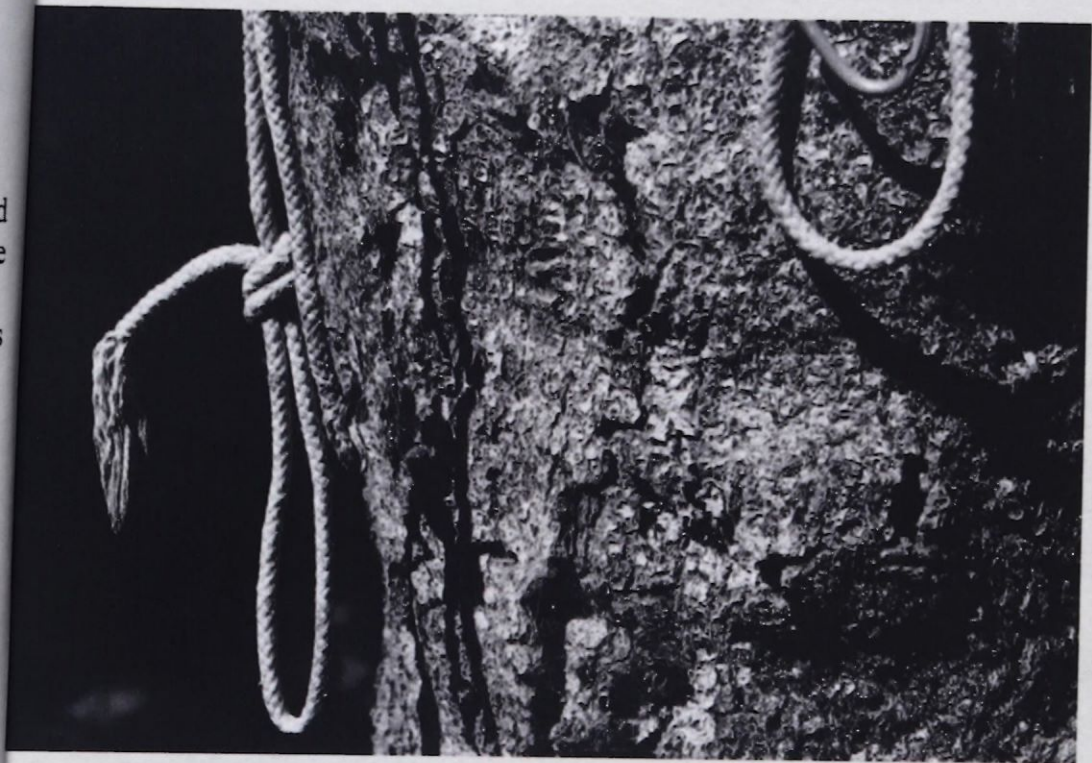
nd,

l!"

d

e

s



Jessica Tressa
Untitled 4
digital photography

In My Hands
Autumn Hanley

I know why my father's hands shake
when he's gripping a fish with one
and battling a hook with the other.

My hands shake in the same way
when a bluegill is gasping for breath
and I'm grasping for the sliver of metal.

The silent commune of water, fish, and girl
broken only by the snap of a rod, a sharp breath
and a leaping papermouth in the sunlight, sparkling.

This tiny life in my hands, a small moment
the black-speckled beauty glaring at me,
slipping out of my hand, a life lived

more wholly than myself, completely in the moment.
My hands, steadier now than then,
casting- only to catch and shake again.

HE WENT FOR DIAPERS

Brian Snook

It was a quiet August night as Vincent sped down the mountain highway. He glanced at the time on his car's radio, which was blaring President West's Greatest Hits. It was slightly past 10 pm. Vincent took a deep breath and slowly exhaled. He always hated driving all the way into the small town of Steele at this time of night. But he promised his wife Ramona he'd pick up diapers for their eight-month-old, Ian. She said it was an emergency, which he doubted, but he tried to avoid the whole "bathroom situation," so he had no room to argue. Besides, he loved them more than they'd ever know, and he'd do anything for them. So he sucked it up.

"On the bright side," he thought. "This is a great chance to pick up the paper and a packa smokes."

Reading the paper had always been one of Vincent's favorite nightly pastimes. He always enjoyed reading about the local crimes and tragedies, or another professional athlete acting scandalous, or even those silly human-interest stories, if only for a good laugh. So, when the local newspaper, *The Steele Standard*, stopped sending their drones up the mountain, Vincent was quite upset. He even wrote them an angry email splattered with cusses. Their reply was pure BS," as he liked to put it. They told him that the signals on the remotes they used weren't strong enough to reach all the way up Chandler Mountain, and the cost to upgrade wasn't worth the few customers they'd retain. This obviously made Vincent upset, but with his newly born child occupying a lot of his free time, he quickly forgot all about it.

As he rounded one of the sharper turns on the mountain, he could see all of the lights in Steele. Most places were closed at this point, but the places that were open shined bright against the forest that surrounded it. In between those nicely-lit buildings, the sodium-vapor street lights gave the asphalt an oddly warm tint. It was mesmerizing. He started to drift a little too far to the right, and the small navy blue station wagon shook and rattled. Startled, Vincent turned his attention back to the road. He knew he had about two miles to go, and he was ready to get what he needed and get home.

* * *

Vincent walked out of the bright lights of the Steele's Walmart and into the cool, dark night. He had hardly realized he spent a good 20 minutes trying to decide which brand would be the best for his son. He wanted to make sure his son had quality, but also wanted to save money. He knew that until he stopped working at Subway and found a better paying job, raising a kid would be hard. The criminal record Vincent earned as teen for assault didn't help either. It wasn't his fault that where he grew up, if someone started talking shit on you, you broke their jaw.

The wrong person just so happened to open their mouth this one time. Jimmy Clickson, the judge's boy. Vincent did a couple months in juvie, but he never felt bad or regretted it. Not until he had a son who relied on him.

Despite all his faults, his wife Ramona supported him one hundred percent. She never once made him feel inadequate or anxious, knowing how hard it was to overcome a shady past. She was born and raised in Long Beach, California. Her parents were incorrigible drug addicts who lived off welfare. She spent her childhood resenting them. In fact, she was so appalled, she

ran away from home after she graduated high school to live with her aunt in Gadsden, Alabama. Her aunt was a real estate agent and taught Ramona everything she needed to know to succeed in that business. There aren't many people who know about the things she saw or heard as a child, but those experiences helped Vincent and Ramona connect to one another. So she'd work all day during the week, and he'd work 3-4 nights. The perfect set-up to raise Ian. They had their struggles, but they overcame them together. Vincent appreciated the life Ramona had given him. He was sure his family was the only thing in his life worth living for.

Vincent loaded a giant box of diapers into the back seat of his car and slammed the door.

"That should last us for now," he said as he yanked the driver's side door open.

Vincent reversed the car and whipped it out of the parking spot. Barely hesitating at the intersection, he sped across the road and into a spot at the small gas station adjacent to the supermarket. The white light shone through the dozens and dozens of posters of various products that hung on the glass. Some were hung crooked, others were ripped, or were nearly falling off. Small gnat-like insects swirled in small masses around the lights that illuminated the front of the store. Underneath the glow sat a young man leaning against a trash can. He was no older than 25, with greasy black hair slicked back underneath a backwards hat, which bore the gas-station's logo. He wore a navy blue shirt with a name-tag that read "Michael." His blue jeans and the red bandana that hung from his pocket were covered in oil stains. Tattoos stretched up and down both arms, extending up past the collar of

his shirt, covering his neck, the most noticeable being the words "ROLL TIDE" in big, red letters on his jawline.

"Hey, what's up, Mike?" Vincent said, getting out of his car.

"Same ole' shit, man," he said, propelling himself up and opening the gas station door.

Vincent walked inside and was quickly followed by Michael. He walked behind the counter and started unlocking the cigarette case.

"Newports?" Michael asked over his shoulder.

"Uh-huh..." Vincent had gone straight to the newspaper rack and was now studying the front page. He checked the date. *July 22nd, 2022*. Before he had time to realize he was looking at yesterday's paper, his eyes got caught on the giant, blurry image in the center of the page. The only thing Vincent could see clearly was a dark, round object. Looking at the headline that accompanied the image only puzzled Vincent more. It read: "LOCAL MAN CAPTURES ANOTHER IMAGE OF UFO".

Vincent walked over to the counter and threw the paper down next to the pack of cigarettes.

"Slow news day, huh?" he asked, taking out his wallet.

"Ehhh, I wouldn't be so sure. Seems like them things poppin' up more an' more every day."

Vincent scoffed and handed Michael a ten-dollar bill. He was right, though. There had been seven UFO sightings in Steele and the surrounding areas over the past month or so. It was actually starting to be a problem. The townsfolk were getting scared that something bad was going to happen. Vincent and Ramona, on the other hand, were incredibly skeptical.

"Listen, Mike. If aliens existed, I'm sure they woulda done somethin' by now"

"Would they?" he asked. He leaned over on the counter and

his dark green eyes grew wide. As he spoke, he lightly pounded on the counter to emphasize his point. "If these space bein's are smart enough to get here, they must think we a buncha animals down here. Killin' each other, fightin' over religions and skin color. It's crazy out here, man. I'd kick back and watch this, too."

Vincent chuckled. "Ay, you know what? You're a pretty insightful guy for someone who looks like a rehabilitated meth addict." He turned and started to move towards the door.

"Asshole!"

"Didn't mean to rile you up and split, but the wife is waiting," Vincent said, smiling.

"Yeah, whatever," Mike replied.

As Vincent walked outside into the wall of bugs, he looked at the sky. It was a clear and beautiful night. He pulled out his phone to check the time and to see if his wife had called or texted him. The phone lit up, showing 10:54 p.m., but no new messages. This was unusual. She was always texting him trying to make sure he kept himself out of trouble, especially at this time of night. He put it away and got into his car. He started the car and hit the road immediately.

* * *

Within about fifteen minutes or so, Vincent was already about halfway home, driving on a long straight stretch with the thick forest on either side of him. He was humming along to the Kanye song on the radio. He had his smokes, he had his paper, and he was on his way to see his two favorite people in the entire world. It hadn't even taken that long at all. The car was speeding down the road, but he had total control of the situation. Or so he thought.

At that exact moment, a huge flash of light whizzed past the front of the car. Vincent, who was temporarily blinded, briefly lost control of the car and swerved into the other lane. He slammed his foot on the brake and slowed the vehicle down as it splashed into a ditch on the side of the road. Enraged at what he suspected was a drunk driver, he got out ready to fight someone. His anger management proved to be no match for a near death situation like this. He had too much to lose now.

When he got out of the car, there was no one to be seen. He walked out into the middle of the road and looked around for car lights, or a crashed vehicle...something. Vincent stood there, puzzled. He ran his fingers through his hair and cursed. After counting to ten and taking deep breaths, he started towards his car.

Vincent was stopped in his tracks, however, when a bright light shone right on him. He looked down the road, but he didn't see any cars heading towards him. It dawned on him that he might not be dealing with a drunk driver after all. Maybe Michael and the newspaper were right. His thoughts were interrupted by an irritating buzzing noise coming from the sky above him. He looked up, squinting. Floating above him was a large metal disc. Scattered on the underbelly of this ship were small blinking lights that surrounded the larger, white light that currently covered him.

He barely had time to mutter a "Are you fu-" before he was quickly pulled up into the ship.

To continue this tale, please go to
http://community.lhup.edu/crucible/2018/brian_snook.html



Vance Godfrey
Untitled 13
digital photography

Get Over It
Delia Paige

A tiny spark in the dark of my soul,
it flutters about like a willow-the-wisp.
It swallows up the happy butterflies
in my stomach, leaving nothing but
the cinders of their crisp burnt wings.
It raises and kisses the backs of my eyes,
its heat causing them to sweat tears.
It engulfs my mind and brews the juices
of my brain, bringing hateful thoughts
to boil. And it cradles my heart,
wanting to burn eternal like a star.
But, I know it mustn't stay as I
exhale a long sigh that suffocates
the fire and extinguishes all traces
of rage. And out of the ashes
births a phoenix of peace.

BLIND
Tyler Tallmadge

His cross blinds me. Every morning when he stays, I wake up blinded by his cross. Today is no exception. The sunlight blazes in through my window, igniting the gold and turning it into a holy blaze. Sometimes I cover the cross with my hand and feel the heat of it, warmed by the touch of his skin. Most of the time, I stare at it, watching it rest closer to his heart than I ever will. Today, I trace the smooth ridges of his chest. I run my fingers up to his neck and press my lips to his cross. "Darren..." The clock behind me ticks, and each sharp click reminds me that our time together is fleeting. "Darren, wake up." His lips fit perfect against mine and at first they're slack, sleeping. Then slowly they wake up and start to engage in an intimate dance with mine.

"Griffon...Mmm. Why don't you wake me up like this more often?" His eyes open slowly, framed by thick lashes. When he stares at me like that, I can't help but feel myself blossom, opening entirely for him. If I weren't careful, I'd reach my peak, and my petals would go with the wind.

"If I woke you up like this, then you'd get greedy." I slide my hands up his neck and cup his face. "I'd hate to spoil you..." My fingers tangle in his hair, locking his face to mine. "Do you have to leave today? We could go to the movies... We could go out for lunch."

"You know how I feel about that, Griff...I don't like going out in public." He smiles down at me knowingly; he's aware that I will never push him. "You understand, right?" I feel my heart deflate as he looks at me with those eyes. I know that he isn't going to give an inch because he likes his privacy too much.

"I understand." I press my lips to his softly and slip out of the bed. The floorboards are cool beneath my feet. Our clothes are scattered across the floor. "Do you want breakfast?" My voice

always gets raspy in the morning, especially after spending a night with him. As I turn to look for his answer, he's sitting up on his elbows, the sheet clinging to his body. I feel my breath catch. He looks so angelic in that moment as his brown honeyed hair frames his soft, pale face. His cross is practically glowing with the light of God on his chest.

"Are you going to make me your famous waffles?" He grins up at me hopefully, his eyes sparkling. He flexes his arms and wraps them around his drawn knees. He rests his head on his knees and winks at him. He knows every one of his angles that make my knees weak.

I shake my head to clear the image of him away as a smile snakes across my lips, "What makes them famous? The only people who have ever had them are you, my parents, and a few friends." The sound my feet make as I walk across the floor matches the beat of my heart, slow and steady. "I don't think that makes them famous." I grab my towel off the rack in my closet and pick out a shirt and jeans. "I'll make them after I get a shower, all right?" The door clicks shut quietly behind me, and I think about locking it but decide against it. We've been playing this game long enough that he can come in if he needs to.

The water takes forever to heat up. I look at myself in the mirror and let out a soft sigh. If my frame were filled out more, I'd be happy. Darren says I'm perfect and if I were meant to look any other way, God would have made it happen. I tell him that his God and I have agreed to see other people; religion and I aren't on the best of terms. My eyes are beautiful. They're just like my mother's, a blue so light they're almost like ice. I turn my head and feel a tightness. I look closely and see the dark blemish. A mark of his affection. He's allowed to mark me as his, but never am I allowed to leave my mark on him. I run my fingers over the hickey lightly, feeling its

tenderness. As I shift my neck around, my hair falls across my forehead. My hair is soft and thick, a dark shade of blond that is almost brown. In the sunlight, it turns into spun gold, shining brilliantly. The longer I stare at myself, the more frustrated I get. But my ritual is to look at myself until the shower has fogged me away. I do it every morning. I do it every night. I want nothing more than to accept myself.

Slowly I watch myself vanish behind a haze of fog and mist, my body barely visible in the mirror. Where my face would be, I draw a smiley face. I can see my face in the lines, a fraction here and a fraction there. I step away as drops stream down from the drawn eyes, tear streaks marring the face. I wonder why the face, despite how happy it appears, always ends up crying. The heat of the shower is intense when I first step in, but I love it. It's a momentary cleanse. I hit the cold water and feel the shift almost immediately, relief from the burning, but the sting still lingers.

I press my cheek against the tiled walls, focusing on my breathing. In...*He loves me*...Out...*He loves me not*...I repeat it so many times that the words stop sounding like words. They begin to lose meaning. I lose myself in my head. I don't even hear it when Darren steps into the shower. I let out a cry of surprise as I feel him press his body against mine. "What're you doing, Babe? Why are you taking so long?"

"I'm sorry. I got trapped in my own head. I'll be out in a second." My smile isn't enough for him. He can see it in my eyes. He can always see it in my eyes when I'm doubting us. He leans down and cups my chin, pulling my face up to meet his gaze.

"You're so beautiful... You know that, right?" He presses his lips to mine, possessing my mouth with his own. He takes me in his hand, and I let out a quiet whimper, feeling

his hand slide along my body. He takes me there in the shower. I look at him, a smile on my face and my body responding heavily to his.

After he's done and gone, I turn the water all the way back to hot. The cleansing heat scorches down again, and I lavish in it as I wash my hair, the suds sliding between my fingers. I run gel all along my back, regrettably washing away his essence. I wash myself, feeling as clean as I possibly can. I turn off the water and drape myself in a towel, stepping out in the steaming bathroom. I don't look towards the mirror. I don't want to see the judgement of the crying face in the mirror. I always take too long in the shower and by the time I'm out, the face is almost entirely washed away by the beading tears.

I slip my jeans on; the resistance of the water on my legs makes me have to jump and wiggle myself more into them. My shirt is loose cotton, a baseball-style shirt with sleeves a different color that reach my elbows. My fingers slide quickly through my hair, water dripping off my fingers and onto the wooden floors. I take a quick look at myself in the mirror and smile to myself. I always look happier after a shower, especially after Darren showers with me.

The kitchen is quiet as I enter, but the smell of coffee fills the air. I can't function a full day without coffee in my system. Darren jokes with me that I might as well just get an IV drip hooked to coffee, it would be a whole lot better than having to drink coffee all day. The truth is, I don't need coffee all day, but I enjoy the feeling of the coffee cup in my hand. It feels like an extension of my arm sometimes. I hold my pencil in my left hand and the white-and-green coffee cup in the other. I look around and notice that he isn't anywhere to be found. He's left. I suddenly am overwhelmed with the lack of him. The energy of the apartment seems to flow more slowly, heavy as if it's tired from straining to keep up with him. On the kitchen counter is a small note. His blocky writing stares up at me:

Hey Griff,

I'm sorry to have to run. I have a presentation I have to work on with a group, and I have to go meet with them. I'm sorry I missed out on your 'famous' waffles. Text me, okay?

Setting the paper down, I can't help but feel disappointed. If I had known he was going to end up leaving so fast, I would have spent more time in the shower. I love to lose myself in the steam because it's the only time I don't seem to be fighting against time. We always seemed to be racing against an unseen clock. I can never seem to earn enough time with him. He's always working on this project or that project or picking up an extra shift at work. It's hard enough to spend time with him when he doesn't like to hang out in public, add on the stress of time restraints and it's nearly unbearable.

I pour my first mug of coffee and add a dash of creamer. I take a deep breath over the cup, letting out a groan of excitement. My first sip is amazing. It's hot and sears against my tongue, my taste buds swelling in protest. I close my eyes and swish it around in my mouth before swallowing. I set the mug down; a small ring of coffee leaks around the base of the mug. I pull out the ingredients for waffles and frown, looking at them and the empty table in my kitchen. What was the point of making a nice breakfast when Darren isn't here to share it with me?

I snatch my mug and skulk into the living room, settling into the couch with my legs stretched out across its length. I take another long swig of the coffee and slip my phone out of my pocket. Scrolling through my contacts, I hum softly to myself. I text out a quick message to Darren: *Hey! I had a good time this morning. Sorry I didn't get a chance to feed you this morning. Coming back tonight?* I set my phone down and stand up, bending backwards and feeling the satisfactory cracking of my lower back. I walk over to my small bookshelf and kneel down, running

my fingers over the spines. I don't know what I'm in the mood for, but I do know that I'm going to take advantage of the break in school work to do some pleasure reading.

I don't know how long I'd been settled on the floor in front of the shelf reading the backs of books, but eventually Fergie's voice filled the room: "*You got me trippin', stumblin', flippin', fumblin'. Clumsy 'cause I'm fallin' in love...*" It repeated that line three times before I got to my phone to silence it. I don't know if he knows I set that as his ringtone, but I love Fergie, and that song really summed my feelings for him. The message pops up on my screen under his name: *Enjoyed this morning 2. I might be coming back 2nite. There better be food this time!!*

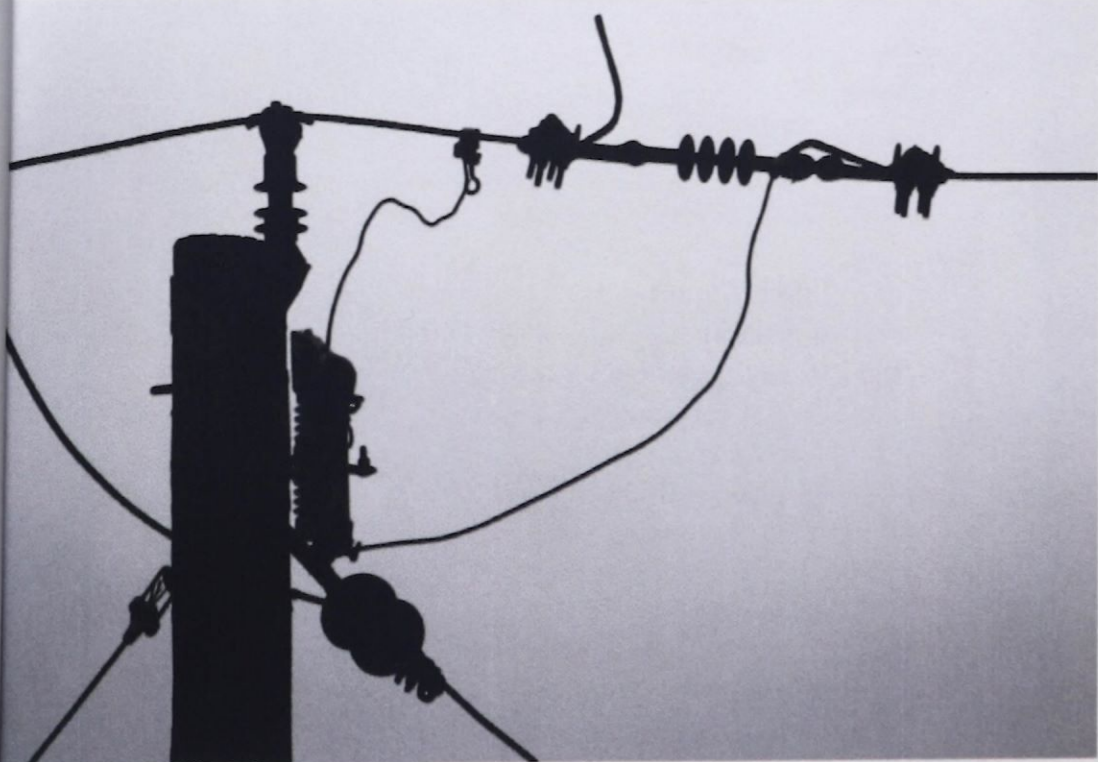
I shot a quick reply back: *There will definitely be food. And dessert.*

His reply came five minutes later: *Cool. C u later.*

I set my phone down and smile to myself, running my fingers along my arms. The book I picked lies on the floor by the shelf, and I go to grab it. Tucking it under my arm, I go to my room. I smile at the bed and the sheets that are tangled from the night we spent together. Stretching across the bed, I pull and fix the sheets. I settle into the small dip that is starting to form from our bodies, propping the book on my knees and starting to read.

* * *

To continue this tale, please go to
http://community.lhup.edu/crucible/2018/tyler_tallmadge.html



Vance Godfrey
Wires 3
digital photography

Better
Ricky Reinberg

I do not want this;
this darkness that consumes me.
I want to get bet-

ANNIE, ARE YOU OKAY?

Rebecca Glinzman

October 29th, 2016; 7:37 AM

People filled the rows of hard wooden benches. All of them socialized with their neighbors, talking about what was to come and what might happen in the next few hours. The tension was surreal in the room. My white dress started to feel tighter than before I had walked through the heavy doors to the courtroom. Following Mrs. Oliver to our table, I saw my parents seated right behind us. Dad had an arm around Mom in a tight embrace. They put smiles on their faces for me, but I could see the anger behind my father's eyes and the grief behind my mother's.

I turned back to find Mrs. Oliver organizing her papers. The redheaded woman was professionally dressed in a black suit with a classy white blouse. She may not have been the highest recommended lawyer, but she was the best one my parents could afford. Besides, she was the right lawyer for me and my family. She was organized and logical, but specializing in cases like mine, she understood my situation and had found ways to work around it without bringing me too much stress or anxiety. She was a calming woman and reassured me that everything would work out as it should. Seeing her in her natural environment, I believed that she would get me out of that mess, and my confidence began to grow.

When I heard the court door open again, the room got a little quieter. I didn't dare turn around because I knew who was walking down the center aisle. He was probably in an expensive suit, looking neat and professional. His lawyers

were probably surrounding him because his parents could afford more than one. I heard the slight swing of the low doors to enter the court area so he and his prestigious team could go sit at their table on the other side of the room from me and Mrs. Oliver. I kept my gaze straight, not letting him cross my peripherals. But I felt a hot stare from icy eyes burning into my neck.

Mrs. Oliver leaned over to me and whispered, "Deep breaths. Take a sip of water. Don't pay any attention to him." Her soothing voice calmed the burning feeling. I took a sip of water as she suggested, attempting to gain my composure back. If I didn't, everything could go wrong for us. All of our hard work would go down the drain. Dropping my gaze to the floor, I turned to my parents, avoiding the picture of him in a suit at his desk, and finding my mother in tears and my father staring lightning bolts across the room. I quickly turned back and reviewed the papers laid out before me.

When the guard announced Judge Gordon, the room fell silent and stood. In walked a man who was very similar to Santa; his hair snowy white with a controlled beard growing and jolly red cheeks. Heaving himself into his podium, he took his gavel in a plump hand and called our case to order. It had begun.

October 29th, 2016; 8:16 AM

I was called to the bench to give my statement, the nerve-racking moment I had been preparing for. Walking to the bench, I ran through what Mrs. Oliver told me earlier that day. "Just tell the story as it happened," she said. "You do not have to look up. Just focus on your hands."

I took my seat and stared at my hands. I had just gotten them done with my mother and Emma the day before. I got a classic French tip manicure, trying to look more professional.

Ms. Ryan," said the judge, "Please explain to us what you experienced during the night in question." Concentrating on my nails, I began.

August 27th, 2016; 8:56 PM

The heat of the dorm room made me sweat. I was finally at college. I was finally able to make my own choices. That was, if my roommate and best friend, Emma, allowed me to make those decisions.

"Are you sure about this?" I asked as Emma started taking out her makeup.

"Of course I am, Annie!" She was acting like an excited school girl. It was only the first weekend of school, and our parents had just left a few hours before, leaving her and me at Penn State University for our freshman year. Emma had the bright idea to go out and find a party to celebrate our newfound freedom. We had met our neighbors, Layla and Jessie, while moving in and asked if they wanted to come with us. They were both overjoyed to have a group to go out with. They were getting ready in their room while Emma and I got ready in ours.

I didn't bring any 'party' clothes, so I threw on my favorite pair of black leggings and a deep red, long-sleeved top. Emma insisted on doing my makeup, and knowing her for the last five years, she wasn't going to back down, so I just agreed to it. Emma started with my eyes. Seeing the palette she was using, there were going to be a lot of dark colors. She made sure that I couldn't see myself until she was done.

"Okay, go ahead." I turned towards the mirror and saw a completely different me. Emma had given me a

dramatic smoky eye with a cat eye liner and a blood red lip that matched my shirt. I had to admit, I looked hot.

"Emma, this is incredible," I exclaimed, almost not believing what I was staring at was actually me. Emma was smiling ear to ear, clearly proud of herself. Once she was done with me, she began working on herself and soon, Layla and Jessie came over, ready to go. Looking at all of us together, we were fierce.

"I found this house party just a few blocks down from a friend who is going to meet us there. Is that all right?" asked Jessie, triple checking her phone. We all nodded. "Oh damn. I'm cutting it close with my data. Emma, could you use your phone to look up the directions?"

"Sorry, girl. Phone has been broken. Accidentally ran over it with my car. Won't be getting a new one for the next few months," Emma explains. Layla and I laughed hysterically.

"How did you even do that?!" I asked, trying to control my laughter.

"Annie, can you put them in your phone?"

I shook my head. "Sorry, my phone doesn't do directions," I said, holding up my Samsung T528G. The girls all stare in disbelief. I put my phone back in its slip around my ankle, pulling my leggings over it to conceal my out-of-date tech.

"What is that dinosaur?" Layla exclaimed, rolling over laughing again, along with Emma and me. Jessie sighed, punching in the directions and we started walking for the house that would be my first college party.

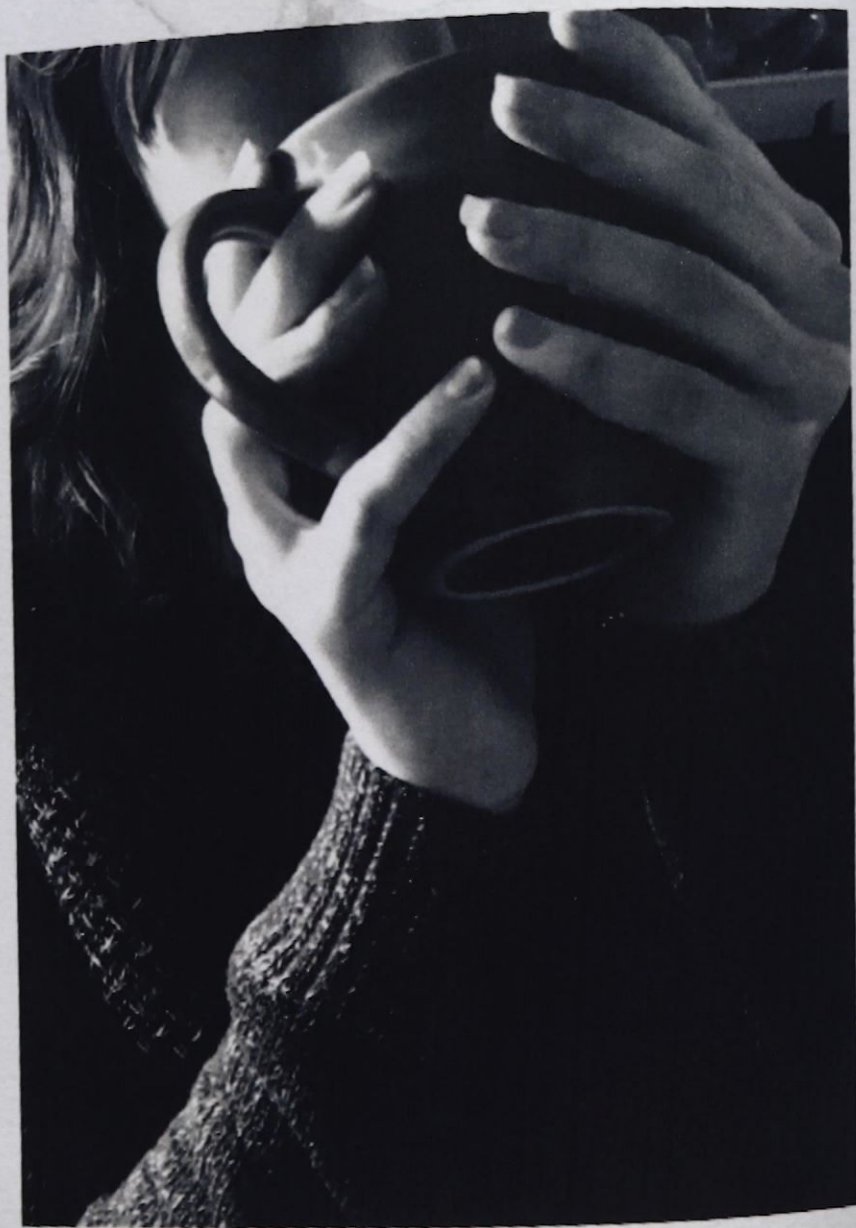
August 27th, 2016: 10:14 PM

We walked into the house, and 80's music was blaring. Red plastic cups were in every hand I saw. Jessie soon found her friend and gave him a hug. She introduced him to us as Aaron. He was tall and buff, like a football player. He took our group to the kitchen and handed us cups with vodka and a Crystal Lite mixture in it. I took a sip, and it was strong.

Aaron then led the four of us around the house and introduced us to people. In every direction I turned, there was one drunken smile after another. Walking through the house, one room, the living room I assumed, had a group of people crowded in dancing, which was also the source of the music, making that room the loudest. After a lot of introductions, the girls and I heard *Don't Stop Believin'*, and we all went to the living room where everyone was singing along and dancing. We drank and we danced, song after song.

I soon felt a hand on my lower back.

To continue this tale, please go to
http://community.lhup.edu/crucible/2018/rebecca_glinzman.html



Destiny Schmidt
Untitled 3
digital photography

“Shoot For the Moon”

Joel Willamson

Shoot for the moon.

Even if you miss, you'll land among the stars.

- Les Brown

“Shoot for the moon” is what some say
year after year, day after day.

I have the gun, since this is America,

(You know... the 2nd Amendment,

Land of the Free, thanks to the NRA),

but I'm missing the reason.

If I hit the moon, what then?

How will this improve my pursuit of happiness?

Will it affect others with the changing tides?

What if I destroy the livelihood of fishermen everywhere?

Try as I might, what if I miss

and my ambitions float aimlessly

through space? Never to land,

words spoken and never heard.

Or worse.

Instead of hitting the moon,

I end on Pluto,

the lonely dwarf planet,

forgotten by textbooks.

Or I am sucked into the gravitational
pull of Jupiter and am whirled around,
known only as "Moon #68."

I will load the gun, placing the shells into the action,
anchoring it firmly on my right shoulder,
push the safety off with a click,
and fire.

My body might be catapulted backwards
into the dirt because I loaded it wrong,
or the barrel blocked, causing shards
of hot metal to pierce my skin,
or the scope to smack my eye, blind in a second.

Or I could watch
the bullet make its way
across the sky, through the atmosphere,
never knowing where it's going or why.
Only to finish life
without making the tiniest
ounce of difference.

But maybe...

Just maybe...

AN OLYMPIC CATASTROPHE

Ellora Figured

She clapped her hands together; fine white chalk particles gather in a large puff, then float down to the ground like a tiny firecracker exploding in the air then dissipating into nothingness. The chalk was one of her favorite parts. She worked so hard and loved to watch the chalk fireworks explode, but hated how they always ruined her leotards.

Today was another amazing competition - three gold medals and a silver. Why one silver? She broke concentration for one split second when she noticed her father stand in the bleachers to leave the gym and take a call. *Probably from work.* Her eyes rolled. It was during her favorite piece that he left. *He literally got up and left!* Out of all the routines she did today, this routine was the routine she most wanted him to see. She knew the routine like the back of her hand, and the music was perfect. It was a pop song from the 90's with a great beat and a tempo that accented each of her turns and jumps perfectly. In that moment when her father stood to leave, her heart dropped a little. Her focus broke just enough, and her ankle went sideways slightly, forcing her to pause and readjust before doing her turn into arabesque into a triple handspring. That cost her 2.5 points from the judges, enough to put her behind Rebecca by 1.5 points. All of that was enough to get her that unwanted silver medal. She was so close to a perfect set of four medals it almost pained her.

She clapped her hands again, still amused by the chalk puffs. That silver didn't matter. She still qualified for the Olympics, which was more than Rebecca could say. She

tugged her green and blue glittering bodysuit at the neckline. It was always too tight, but that's just the way bodysuits were - suffocating but beautiful. She ran a slender hand over her red hair, tucked tightly and neatly into a perfect bun, accented here and there by small crystal hairpins and sparkle-filled hairspray. Ms. Lindsay always told her she had stunning hair. That's what she wanted. She wanted to be stunning, eye catching. She wanted to be a show-stopper. She wanted the most friends, the best pivot turns, and the brightest crystal hair pins of the team.

She knew she was going to make it. *I did make it!* She smirked to herself and tugged at the cuffs of her bodysuit. *Rebecca might have taken my fourth gold, but the Olympics are in my future - not hers. She might have the prettiest leotards and the best eyeliner on the team, but I was the girl chosen to represent and not her.*

She wrapped her ankle and gathered her belongings from the changing rooms. In one sweeping arm motion, her right arm scraped the table clean of all her things, pushing them into the open duffle bag in her left hand. A container of bobby pins, a bottle of sparkle-filled hairspray stronger than gorilla glue, a container of chalk, a bag of makeup odds and ends, and another wrap for her ankle all fell into the bag. She put all four of her medals around her neck, hiding the silver as best she could, and she zipped her bag closed. From here, she was headed down the stairs towards the lobby, *where I'll find my father, likely still on his phone.*

"I'm ready Dad," she said to her father, who was turned to face away from her. "Hey, so are we..." she tried to continue, but was cut short. Dad put his hand up for

silence, still facing away from her. He turned her direction, and put his hand to his lips to hush her, eyebrows knit together as he tried to concentrate all his attention on the other end of the phone conversation. He mouthed *That way*, pointing towards the exit leading to the parking lot. They passed Rebecca. She was standing near the exit. She had all four of her medals on, her lonely gold on top, of course. She was holding two big bouquets of vibrant flowers in her arms. Hugs were exchanged between mother, father, Rebecca's boyfriend, and Rebecca. They glowed with pride. Photos were snapped, and Rebecca waved goodbye to her as she passed.

Rebecca thinks she's perfect. She scowled at the thought of Rebecca's one gold medal—the medal that was rightfully hers and not Rebecca's. *She's got happy parents who are still together, and she's dating the quarterback.* Her fists clenched. *But, she doesn't have crystal hair pins. She isn't going to the Olympics.* She smirked with satisfaction at the thought that Rebecca might be watching her perform her routines on television.

She got into her Dad's too-expensive car that was too low to the ground. It was so fast. It was one of the two cars he purchased after Mom signed their divorce papers. These days, Dad liked his cars fast, just like his women and his big business ventures. She buckled up and waited for Dad to finish up his call, then they headed home. He placed his phone in a tiny compartment near a small soft drink cup that was part of the breakfast they'd picked up on their way to the gym that morning.

"He'll be calling again soon," Dad said to her as they pulled out of the parking lot. "I'm trying to close out a deal with a company in Manhattan that filed bankruptcy some time last year. I looked up this agent's ratings, and he only has four gold

stars. I don't think five-star agents like me should have to deal with agents like that. He has no idea how to do his job. That's why he keeps calling me, breaking my focus or distracting me all the time."

"Sure Dad," she said dismissively.

On the drive, she played with her medals, propping her wrapped ankle on the dashboard to get comfortable. *He only has four stars*, she thought. *Dad has five gold stars. His stars mean nothing really. It's just a silly rating system.* She watched people gawk as Dad drove on the road, flying through yellow light after yellow light just in the nick of time. Dad drove so carelessly, Metallica cranked up, left hand lazily hanging out his window.

She was starting to get tired. They had been on the road for a while now. *The drive back home from competitions was always so long.* Suddenly, through the base bumping a drum solo, Dad's phone rang from the little compartment near the cup. Reaching for it without really looking down, he knocked over the soft drink cup, spilling it sideways towards him. He hissed some expletives under his breath. The orange drink cascaded down this right thigh and started rushing towards the inner seam of his gray dress pants. He started swiping at the drink stain on his pants after propping the cup upright, music still blasting, phone still ringing, accelerating slightly.

"Grab some napkins or a tissue or something out of the compartment on your side," he yelled over the music.

"Just watch what you're doing Dad," she said as she turned the volume back. He had already answered his phone, but was driving with one hand, still swiping at the orange stain on his gray pants with the other. His phone was resting on his shoulder, which was pressed against his ear.

"There's an intersection up ahead," she said, pointing.

She then slid her wrapped leg off of the dashboard, and ducked her head down to search the dark little passenger side compartment for some scrap of paper. Frantically, she flipped the car driver's manual, random straws, and other pieces of nonsense out of the way looking for napkins, but there were none to be found. She popped her head up just in time to see them driving directly through a four-way intersection. Dad, still on the phone and preoccupied with his pants, drove directly through a red light and into the path of a turning tractor trailer. The horn of the truck blared, and she caught sight of the driver, who had his frantic eyes locked on their doomed car. That truck driver knew there was no way he could stop in time. She yelled, but by the time Dad realized it was too late to stop, it was too late completely. *No*. The last thing she remembered was looking over at Dad, who was dropping his phone, and then turning her head to the right to see the large silver grill of the massive truck barreling towards her window. *No*. The truck horn was so loud. *No*. She blinked, and little glittering shards of glass from her now blown-out window showered over her. She felt her body crushing and crumpling so slowly. *NO*. Then, there was nothing - no horn, no phone call, no traffic light, no wrapped ankle.

She propped herself up, smoothing her arms down the length of her legs to her kneecaps. Then they stopped. There was no more skin to touch. There was no more leg. No more ankle to wrap, left or right. No more nails to paint or ankle bracelets to wear. She hoisted herself to the edge of the bed, swinging the wheelchair as close to the bed as she could get it, then plopped down. She rolled down the hallway, past Dad

on the phone at the kitchen table in front of a mass of papers, to the toaster on the opposite counter. The little television on the kitchen counter was broadcasting the morning news. She slid two pieces of bread into the toaster and wheeled over to the counter to watch the report. The five colored rings popped up on the screen, and a clearly out-of-place reporter read some totals and scores. The main screen occasionally cut back and forth from the reporter to the USA competitors. A bundle of flowers in hand, four medals around her neck, a girl stood waving, wrapped in a red, white, and blue bodysuit. *Rebecca*. Eyes filled with tears, she grabbed for the television remote, slammed on the OFF button, and tossed the remote towards the TV. The force cracked the television screen. Tears rolled down her face.

"No!" she heard Dad say from behind her at the kitchen table. "I'm a five-star agent. I will not stand for this!"



Jessica Tressa
Untitled 2
digital photography



Destiny Schmidt
Untitled 1
digital photography

A SENTENCED FLOWER

Rebecca Glinzman

She looks at me strange. I notice this isn't the first time tonight that she has looked at me with those familiar eyes. She has never avoided me as she has tonight. I don't know what changed in the last week, but something must have because this wasn't the sweet and innocent Rose that I knew. The girl here tonight was strange and exotic. Instead of her usual sundress with pink lilies on it, she is wearing a tight black tank top, tighter black leggings with red stilettos. She looks like Sandy from her favorite movie, *Grease*, in the final scene. But she still had the twinkle of innocence in her eyes, but only if you knew where to look.

Ro dances with other guys at the party. She is flirting with them. I'm happy that she is finally getting out there. She is always so afraid that guys won't like her for her, but this isn't her. She isn't the kind of girl to go home with just any guy she meets at a party. She is a go-for-a-walk-in-the-park and have-a-picnic kind of girl. She is a make-silly-arts-and-crafts-projects kind of girl. She is a watch-Grease-all-day-all-night kind of girl. She isn't this flirty, independent young woman that I am seeing tonight.

"Dude, are you two a thing now?" my friend, Derek, whispers, breaking me out of my trance.

I shake my head, "Nah, just really great dragon trainers," I respond with an internal chuckle.

I can see why people might make that assumption, but we are just really great friends. I had known Ro since I was six. We grew up together right next door to each other. We were the cliché of having our bedrooms facing each other. We talked and hung out all the time. We chose the same college and liked to stay close since our freshman year because we were familiar.

Sure, we made our own friends, but we always liked to hang out with the other. That is just how it's always been.

Now, being seniors, we were soon going to have to go our own ways. I will always like Ro, and I hope to keep in touch, but I know I'm moving to Alaska to go on sea voyages to study the Arctic. I leave for the year-long trip in three days. That is kind of what this party is for, a send-off. And Rose has yet to come talk to me or even just say hi to me. She is too busy with the guys that she has been dancing with.

As if on cue, she looks over at me with those brilliant green eyes and starts walking towards me, leaving the guy talking to air. She confidently glides over and whispers in my ear, "Can I talk to you... in private?" I look into her eyes, looking for that sparkle of innocence, but she looks away too quickly, dragging me along with her through the throng of people. We eventually find a quiet, empty room.

I close the door behind us, and she is already sitting on the bed when I turn around. I don't move. She just looks at me with that unfamiliar catty-stare. We stand there for quite some time before she finally breaks the silence.

"Do you really want to do this?" she asks. I look at her questioningly and she must see my confusion because she continues, "Do you really want to leave me? You have so much here and what if all that changes when you come back? What if I'm not able to be here for you?"

I'm taken aback. She knows this is what I've wanted my whole life. I stare at her, trying to figure out what is wrong. This isn't like her. She isn't usually this selfish. I know she is very dependent on people, but she has other friends and family to support her. She knows I would do anything for her, but this, this was asking too much from me. She was asking me to give up my dream.

“Ro, you know what this trip means to me. I will always be here for you, you know that, but I can’t give up this incredible opportunity. What’s wrong? You haven’t been yourself lately.” I walk over to her and sit next her. She is on the verge of tears. I have seen her like this only a few times before, and it was never for a good reason. Now she is scaring me.

“Rose. What happened?”

She dabs at her eyes, careful not to ruin her makeup that she tirelessly worked hard on for tonight. I patiently wait for her to speak. She always needed to take her time when it came to things that bothered her.

It is maybe five minutes of tension, but it feels like twice as much or longer before she parts her lined lips.

“Donny, I’m sick.”

“Ok... that’s not that bad. What do you have?”

A tear rolls down her cheek. “Donny, it’s bad.”

“How bad can it be?” I ask, bringing my hand up to hers.

She turns to me with grave eyes and mutters, “I have what my dad had.”

My heart falls to my stomach. All the memories that she and I had together start playing through my mind, but one sticks out.

To continue this tale, please go to
http://community.lhup.edu/crucible/2018/rebecca_glinzman.html



Ying Gu
Male Figure
pastel and watercolor on paper

Monster
Delia Paige

I am kept in a birdcage;
I do not wish to be free.
I've been here far too long,
the bars but comfort me.

I'm much too old for this.
If I grew tired of your presence
I could forget you with a nap.
I'll awake and you're forgotten.

I could cut ties with you
just as easy as cutting thread
whilst making friendship bracelets
which my shackles leave no room for.

I'd tear your throat out with a kiss,
stab your back with an embrace,
sever your heartstrings with these talons
you so desperately wish to hold.

I'd gut you with fine dining
and poison you with wine.
Though I plead for your invitation,
in truth, I'd force my way inside.

The bright canary in the birdcage
veils the feral crow, ready
to peck your eyes out with a glance.
Please, don't look me in the eyes.

Sunshine on the outside
to hide the dark within.
Smiling on the outside
to mask the monster's grin.

A GILDED CAGE
Grace Monroe

It's a cold morning, and the sun is just touching the horizon and casting a glow over the large skyscrapers straining towards the gray sky. The light, however, provides no warmth, no touch of life to the bland and hard buildings throwing shadows over everything in their reach. She walks to the window, looking out over this thriving city that hums and moves like a living organism. People and cars alike bustle in the early morning rush hour, crowding around one another to get wherever it is they are going. They don't see this cold unforgiving light; they're too caught up in their own lives and busy schedules, forever in motion, never once stopping to think in the city that never sleeps. How naïve they are and how cynical she has become. He crosses behind her, placing his hand on her shoulder. She flinches, feeling his frigid hand through her blouse.

"Why do you make things so difficult for us, Jeanine? If we had just done this my way, no one would've had to get hurt," he hisses, his tone growing colder with each word, colder than his hand on her, colder than the coldest winter she can imagine.

He's a Wall Street executive by trade, so this kind of *transaction* is second nature to him. He turns her around to face him, grabbing her shoulders, and his icy grip is like a vice. Not hard enough to hurt her physically. No, he's too smart for that. It's the fear that truly hurts, the fear of what he could do to her sanity, that he can push her just to the breaking point and pull her back just as easily. Her resolve weakens slightly when she looks into his hazel eyes, the color of fresh green moss and

chocolate that seemed so hypnotic at first glance. They're so warm and inviting, framed by long dark lashes and accompanied by a slight smile. But she can see behind that deception; she can see the pure ambition and motive that lies just beneath his perfectly cultivated façade.

"Just act like the good wife you promised me that you would be. That's all I ask. And in turn I'll give you the life you've always wanted. Comfort, happiness, security. You can have that with me, and you know it." He still holds that small crooked smile, but it radiates a threat, a danger that she can't quite form into words. He glances down at his watch realizing that its golden face reads 8:30 am. "I have to go to work now, but I'll be back for lunch with your answer. Don't disappoint me." With the last statement, he flashes his deal-closing smile. He knows that he's won, and he can tell in her eyes that she's giving in. He grabs his black briefcase, closing it with two quick clicks, and walks confidently out the door.

After she hears the door slam, she stands motionless for a few moments. Adrenaline is pumping in her veins, the petrifying fear still radiating throughout her whole body. When she finally collects herself, she walks to the table across the cold marble floor, her heels clacking on its smooth polished surface. The papers are still sitting there, right where he had thrown them down in a fit of rage. She can still perfectly recall his face, contorted with anger, more angry than she had ever seen him. She always knew that he had a mean streak, but she had loved him despite that, valuing his work ethic and loyalty. They're both different now, but she would've never imagined that he could ever turn to physical violence before today.

He had thrown dishes, flipped chairs, and smashed a framed picture of them together on their wedding day.

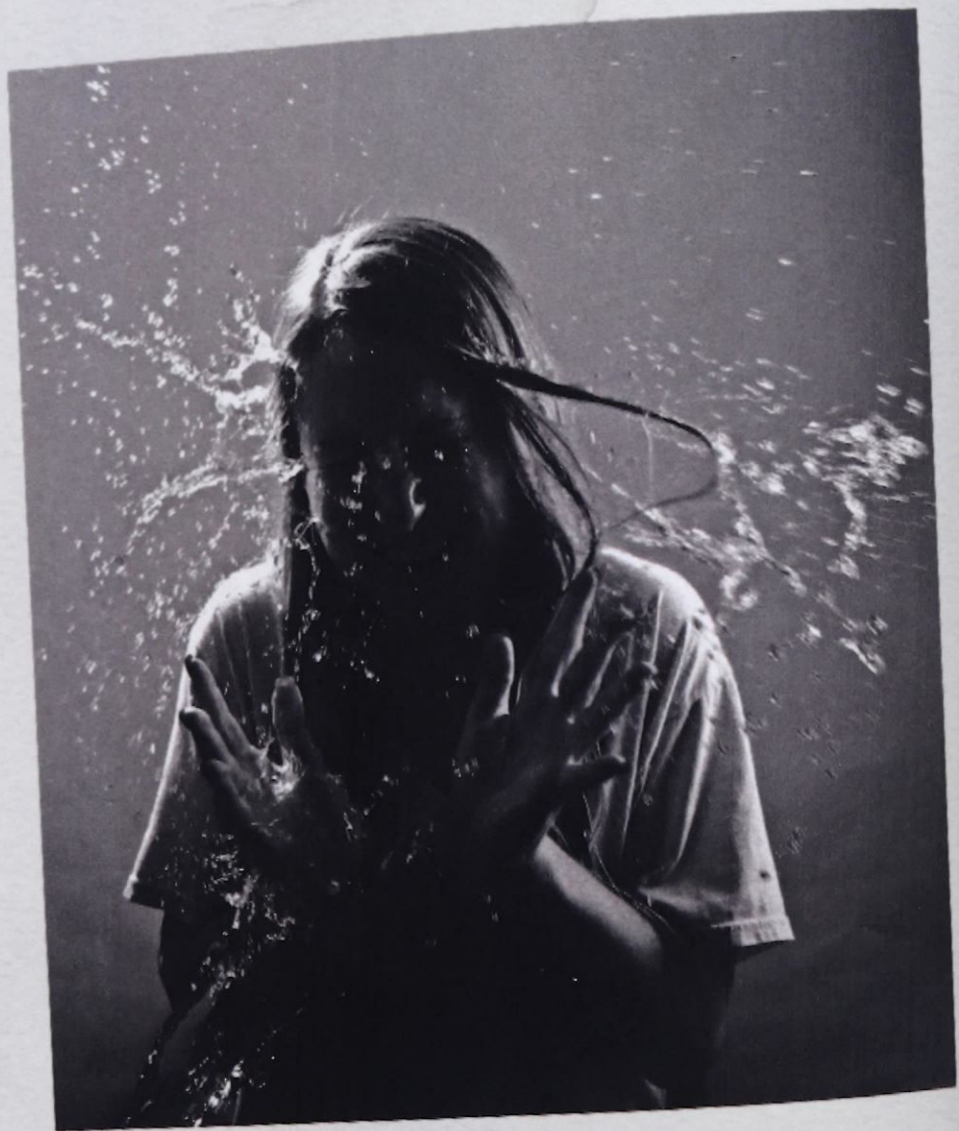
The damage was minimal compared to the wreck that her own consciousness has become. She picks up the papers and walks slowly across the living room to the large marble fireplace floating in the middle of the great room. It has never been used, its insides still pristine white marble, not a blemish or any sign of wear. Lighting a match, she leans in close to the hearth and starts a small blaze. She hangs her head to mourn the tainting of such beauty, and then watches the bundle of papers burn in the large stone fireplace.

Still kneeling next to the hearth, she picks up her head and stares blankly at the wall, looking for something real to anchor herself on. Nothing, nothing in this apartment gives her anything of meaning, not anymore. Wiping her eyes, she walks over to the large gilded mirror in her bathroom and looks at her reflection. Long coifed mahogany hair, large cool blue eyes with long black lashes, and perfectly full lips greet her. She scowls, and although it does darken her appearance, it can't ruin what he has made her become.

To continue this tale, please go to
http://community.lhup.edu/crucible/2018/grace_monroe.html



Jessica Long
Scibble Gesture
charcoal on paper



Zach Hommey
Point of Impact
digital photography

LORELEI
Jora Lam

Mad! You would say that I was mad, madly in love or mad still for falling head first into affection! I answer you, of course, for you see many others have called me mad. They have said that I am a tragedy. That such mad tragedy has befallen me, that so feverishly have I thrown myself into my passions. It is a tragedy, my madness, because I love her! Yes, I love her, more than my own soul, more than the light of the world! She is my sun and moon, my darling, my siren singing on the lake, ivory-pale and hair like spun night.

At first sight I loved her, far more than I loved my life itself. She, when I first beheld her, was loved more than the fair moon as she cradled her full body in the sky and draped with stars. My love was stronger than that of Hades' for his Persephone, who carried her into the underworld to be his lady wife. Persephone was fair, yes, but more so fair was my darling and beautiful Lorelei!

I would dare say that Hades was jealous, sitting on his throne of the dead, with his cold Persephone. Envious of my love for this woman. Envious of my love for this beautiful creature whose voice graced my ears by night. My so beautiful, so tempting Lorelei! And it is irony still, that Hades would have her, to bear her away from me before we ever met!

But of course, how could I not fall in love with such a ravishing beauty? She, with hair black as a raven's feather and eyes warm and honey sweet, beguiled me so! I remember her mouth, full and pink, just a shade or two redder than her porcelain skin. And oh! The whiteness of the skin! How soft it looked, how delicate it made her features seem. And how the silk wrapped her voluptuous body, lace that draped over her bare shoulders. So lovely was she that even upon seeing her portrait I grew sick with pining.

Yes! A portrait made me fall in love with a woman! So deep, so encompassing was my passion for this lady that I succumbed to

the madness of love without struggle. I felt as Paris looking upon the beautiful Helen, struck with awe and desire. Would that I could, I might start a war in her honor with Hades himself.

You see, when I first laid eyes upon that portrait, I was informed by a servant that she had died before my time. Hades had taken her as He had taken Persephone from the world. He had left her shriven, cold and alone in the darkness of death!

My darling Lorelei, so precious, so delicate. A beautiful wraith, a wilted lily among a garden of flowers in full bloom. My precious Lorelei was dead! Dead, long before I ever arrived at the home she once resided in, long before my eyes had ever seen her visage, Hades had seen our coming love, and took her away at once!

I, so madly enamored, cursed vile Death! How could He take something so dear before I had even arrived? How could He destroy such passionate love, even before it had yet to be built? Death had beguiled me. I had been foiled before I could speak my most tender words in her ear. I felt dread and despair. The madness of love turned into madness of grief, for I would never hold my Lorelei!

O, despair!

And once I had learned of her dreadful affliction of death, I longed to keep her portrait in my gaze. It was to ease the pain I felt in the knowledge that she was dead, claimed before I could declare my passions. I declared myself in mourning for my shrouded lily-bride, bade the servants remove the portrait from the walls, and bring it to my quarters. The servants did so but not without hesitation, for they saw that so keen was my love, they feared I might pine away, pass from life wan and weak with wanting!

I would say that this was not so. My passion, my grief, all my mourning and love fueled me. The first night, once the portrait was affixed to the wall above my mantle, I barely stirred from my rooms for so struck with amorousness was I! The servants would say that I was consumed, of course, by madness and by grief, that lady Lorelei would take me to death with her! That I might die before I would leave my chambers, die so that I might lay in the arms of my beloved!

And it was not untrue, of course. I pined for my darling lady to lie at my breast so that I might stroke her hair. I wished to give her a caress, to run my fingers through those tresses as though through the softest of silk. Consumed so by desire, I stared upon her portrait. My gaze became locked for hours long, fantasy after fantasy compounded in my brain as the night passed.

I should admit that I dozed at some point, for I found myself awakening very suddenly at midnight. I do not know the reason of my waking, or what startled me from sleep so suddenly. I was almost disappointed, upset that I had allowed myself to fall into slumber. I had lost hours that I could have otherwise spent gazing upon my stolen Lorelei. It was then, in my midnight despair, that a sound crossed the air between myself and my window.

I confess that I had neglected to close the sash, and the wind had forced the window to drift open. It was enough to let the chill of the night pass into my room. It crept open with such ease that I scarce could say I noticed it, as it was not this chill or the sound of the drifting window that roused me from my rest. No... Rather, there was a sound from outside, in the darkness under the moon's cradle, that drew me from sleep.

This sound struck me so profoundly! A siren song, a sweet, sad singing that drifted from outside of my rooms. Curiosity took me by the hand and bade me go to the open window. I was to peer at the outside, curious to see what would be seen. What might be casting its delicate song-spell across me? And I went, my toes almost gliding across the floor.

My hands met the windowsill and I carefully leaned forward, my eyes scanning the gardens outside, for they were just below my rooms. The gardens of this estate, a lonely parcel of land far from any town by foot, were vast. They expanded into the wilderness, bleeding into the trees with an almost absurd ease. I took in the splendor of ivy and delicate flowers beneath me, and they led my eye to the small lake that made its mark on the property.

It extended around, a curious shape that hooked the manor house and divided its grounds, marking what might be the true end of the gardens.

There, upon the waters reflected stood the lady moon, her color echoing a shine bright across the ripples. The sound had not ceased, but drew my attention still to the water, and there I peered.

My breath came in sharp, my heart skipped, leapt and lunged into my throat, and lodged itself in a violent glee. There, espied on the shore, was my darling Lorelei!

To continue this tale, please go to
http://community.lhup.edu/crucible/2018/jora_lam.html

ALL IN YOUR HEAD

Sami Osborn

As Lena walked down the campus sidewalks, she noticed the posters littering the buildings, pictures of bruised beauties claiming that "he will do it again," handwritten papers promoting new clubs, signs explaining that alcohol is unhealthy and where to get help. Her phone buzzed, and she continued to walk. It buzzed again. And again.

She got to her destination and picked the phone up. Thirteen messages and three missed calls, all from the same person. "Where are you?" one read, "Answer me, Lena" read another.

She replied with the usual "I'm sorry, with my friends."

An immediate reply: "What friends? You don't have any." She put her phone back into her purse and entered the dormitory door, seeing another poster of a black eye and smudged lipstick. Lena took a deep breath. The marks are not always noticed.

Lena walked into her friend Aledia's room. She and a classmate (whose name Lena couldn't remember) were sitting on the bed, biology books and notes spread out, with highlighters in hand. Aledia looked up from her book and caught Lena's eye.

"Lena! Hey!"

"Hey, Ally." Lena walked in and sat her bag down. She heard the silent buzzing of her cell phone and ignored it.

"You remember Lydia, right? She sits behind me in lecture." Aledia pointed to the girl sitting on her bed. Lydia smiled.

"Hi, Lena. Nice to meet you."

"You, too. Now, let's try to get some chapters done so we can get dinner before midnight," Lena said as she sat on the bed, and they got to work.

About twenty minutes passed before the muffled buzzing of Lena's phone became noticeable. Every so often she would see Lydia or Aledia check theirs, then look at her out of the corner of their eye. Lena ignored it and asked them questions about the book, the notes, anything she could think of to try and distract them. They got through a chapter before it was an unavoidable subject.

"Lena, you're really popular tonight," Aledia said.
"I'm sorry. I'll turn it off," Lena got up to check her phone, and there were at least 40 messages. "Damn it," Lena said accidentally aloud, and then excused herself from the room to call him back.

He answered immediately. "Lena, *where the hell are you?*"

"I'm sorry, Deacon. I told you I'm with my friends. We need to study."

"Who? That girl, what's her name, Alana? I told you to stay away from her." There was nothing really wrong with Aledia; she was loud and liked to party, but she was a good friend to have when it came to studying or needing someone to just have a meal with. The fact that Lena spent more time with her than Deacon was too much for him to handle. He wanted to be with her 24/7 and wanted her to feel the same way.

"Aledia, and Lydia, she's in our biology class and we need to study. We'll talk later."

She looked into Aledia's room and could see the girls laughing and talking. All Lena wanted was to have just one normal day. She didn't want to cry or make a scene, fearful that her friends would catch on.

"You're on thin ice, Lena. Make good choices."
He hung up without another word. Lena walked back into Aledia's room, her nervousness apparent.

"Everything okay, Lena?" Lydia asked, a worried look on her face.

"Yeah, I'm just really nervous for the midterm. Biology is my worst class, and I'm already on really thin ice. Maybe I should head out soon and get some one-on-one time," Lena replied as she bit at her nails.

"Who called? Was it Deacon? You guys are so cute together," Aledia said.

Lena gave her a weak smile. "Yeah, he's worried about my grades."

"I wish *my* boyfriend was worried about my grades. All he wants to do is party," Lydia complained.

"At least you guys have boyfriends! Here I am, all alone..." laughed Aledia. Lena tried to smile, but she didn't have it in her. She and Deacon weren't cute. They weren't happy, or anything like the stories and movies say. She wanted to fix him, even if it meant breaking herself, but she never realized how hard it would be. She watched her friends talk about the boys they had known instead of studying, and she found herself envious. They had only left marks of love on their bodies, not small bruises around their wrists. They had only told her friends how pretty they are, how nice they are, how lucky they are to be with such beautiful women. Lena didn't have that. She thought of when she first met Deacon and how he told her she sparkled like the sun, and now how she needed to lose weight and keep her hair long. "Why are you wearing lipstick?" and "Who are you meeting up with later?"

The sound of her cell phone haunted her, as did the sound of yelling and slamming doors that kept her up at night. The posters say that if he did it once he'll do it again, but what do you do when it's been a thousand times, and you can't get out of it?

"Hey, Lena? Are you with us?" Aledia said, snapping her fingers.

"Yeah, sorry, I zoned out for a second."

"Obviously. Well, we're ready for dinner if you are." Aledia and Lydia got up to grab their bags, and Lena slowly did the same. They walked out the door, and there was Deacon, leaning against the wall across from the doorway.

"Hey, Deacon! We're going for dinner, would you wanna join us?" Aledia asked. Lena was starting to think she had a little thing for Deacon, and she felt sorry. She had painted this glorious picture of a horrible man for others to admire.

“No, thanks. I need to get Lena home. It’s late, and she has midterms tomorrow.”

“Oh, well, okay. See you tomorrow then, Lena. Bye Deacon!” Aledia said as she and Lydia walked towards the dining hall, backs toward Lena and Deacon.

He put his arm tightly around Lena’s shoulders. “I have to say I’m ashamed of you, Lena. Spending time with trash like that. Do you know how that makes you look? Not good. I can’t believe you. It’s embarrassing.”

“Yes, it is.” Lena said, as she stared again at the beautiful girl plastered on the wall of the dormitory. The more she looked, the more she began to see herself staring back at her. She was ashamed of herself, too.

Lena and Deacon walked back to their apartment two blocks from campus. The whole time he had his arm wrapped tightly around her shoulders as if she was about to head for the hills. She could hardly take a step without tripping over his shoe, or even her own two feet. This time she was scared.

“Can you loosen your grip? You’re kind of hurting me,” said Lena.

“No,” responded Deacon, without any reasoning whatsoever.

The couple returned to their dark, bland apartment and went into separate rooms. Lena walked into the bedroom, where shelves and family photos once hung, and dropped her purse and books onto the floor. She ran her hand along the bed frame and the newly bare walls.

Lena had been so excited to be moving in with Deacon back in their freshman year of college, before things got out of hand. She and her sister, Amelia, had bought beautiful white wooden shelves to hold pictures, candles, etc. on the walls and an old rustic mirror that now sat busted on the floor. The mirror was a constant reminder of what Deacon was capable of.

To continue this tale, please go to

http://community.lhup.edu/crucible/2018/sami_osborn.html



Jessica Long
Pelvic Study
charcoal on paper

Nimble
Jacob Houtz

A final stand
surrounded on all sides.

Strong and steady,
our hero never blinks as he takes it in.

Hordes of enemies swarm in at once,
a hunter's lust in their eyes,
sharp blades in their hands.

Swords clash
glinting silver,
metal ringing out.
He launches himself over heads.
Spinning like a top,
he blocks and turns,
dives and rolls,
making a mess but staying spotless.

Only bad blood is spilled,
as hordes turn to dust
and foes fall.

Then there is nothing but bodies.
They got their final stand.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

ELLORA FIGURED, a member of this year's editorial team for *The Crucible*, is a junior English major with a concentration in writing.

TABITHA FISHER is an accomplished author and recent graduate of LHU. Tabitha graduated with the class of 2017 and has a bachelor of arts in English-Writing

REBECCA GLINCMAN is a junior at LHU majoring in English with a concentration in writing. She is Vice President of the theater club on campus, University Players, and has done everything there is to do, from backstage work to building to directing. When she is not working on a show, she is found hanging out with friends or facetimeing her family back home in New Jersey to check up on her puppies, Nala and Mia.

AUTUMN HANLEY is best known for loving rocks, books, and waterfalls. She prefers to be outside in the sunshine, hunting for fossils. Autumn majors in geology and will graduate in May 2018. She hopes to spend the rest of her life taking long walks in the woods and helping others understand the natural world.

JACOB (JAKE) HOUTZ is from Halifax, PA and is now a sophomore at LHU, majoring in business management and minoring in English Literature. Besides writing, Jake likes to read, play video games and sleep. Jake can be found working in Sloan (building sets, working backstage or performing onstage), fencing, or hanging out with friends.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

JORA LAM is the pen name for S. Rachel Lam, junior and student of English at LHU. She prefers to write the gothic and macabre with a focus on her combination Virginian and German heritage. She can often be found at home writing, drawing, or exploring the digital expanse of the world (i.e. gaming).

ALYSSA MAZZEI is a junior English major at Lock Haven University. She is a cheerleader and also the Fairview Suites Hall Council Vice President. She started writing in high school, but really began focusing on it after taking a creative writing course her senior year. At her previous college, she took two more creative writing courses. This is the first time she has had a work published.

GRACE MONROE is a junior currently studying English secondary education. She has always had an affinity for English, and it is her goal to impart her enthusiasm for literature to her future students. Grace is active in multiple clubs and organizations on campus, including University Players, the Global Honors Program, and Council for Exceptional Children. In her spare time, she loves to act, paint, volunteer, and of course read and write.

SAMANTHA (SAMI) OSBORN is senior at LHU, an English major with a writing concentration. She is currently Treasurer for the English club and a writer for the Odyssey Online.

DELIA PAGE is a senior majoring in interdisciplinary studies.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

RICHARD (RICKY) REINBERG is a sophomore social work major at LHU from New Oxford, PA, and plans on minoring in English. He is currently the Vice President of the LHU Student Government Board, the President of the LHU Chess Club, and the Vice President of the Lock Haven chapter of Young Americans for Liberty. Ricky is also an RA in Fairview Suites.

BRIAN SNOOK is a secondary education English major. He enjoys ultimate frisbee, fried chicken, and the musical stylings of Kanye West.

TYLER TALLMADGE is a senior English major with a concentration in writing.

MELISSA WEBER is a junior majoring in english and hoping to work for a publishing company one day. Along with writing, she also likes to read, hike, and play video games in her free time.

SAMANTHA (SAM) WESNAK is a recent class of 2017 graduate with a bachelor of science degree in biology.

JOEL WILLIAMSON is a senior majoring in history.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

VANCE GODFREY didn't feel like writing a biography.

YING GU is a fine arts major with a concentration in drawing. She works with multiple mediums including and addresses personal and social issues in her art.

ZACH HOMMEY is a graphic design major from Frederick, MD. He tends to create his work through manipulating images in photoshop. He most enjoys using photos he has taken in nature.

RICKY KESSINGER is a graphic design major with a secondary concentration in digital art

JESSICA LONG is a graphic design major and one of the designers of *The Crucible*. Do not confuse her with her twin sister, who knows nothing about art.

DANIELLE SANDER is currently seeking her bachelor degree in the fine arts with a minor in psychology. She wants to pursue her masters in Art Therapy and work with the mental health community.

DESTINY SCHMIDT is a graphic design major, the photography seen in *The Crucible* is inspired by the blueberry farm that she grew up on and the events of her childhood.

JESSICA TRESSA is a senior communication major with a focus in public relations and advertising with a minor in studio art. She can say the alphabet faster backwards than forwards.

