A Note from the Editors

Thank you for picking up a copy of the Spring 2011 edition of Chavez! We are also proud to announce that Chavez can now be viewed online. Visit blogs.shu.edu/Chavez to share our publication with your family and friends.

We hope you enjoy the poetry, prose, photography, and artwork produced by many talented members of the Seton Hall community. Since its inception, Chavez has been committed to showcasing the literary and artistic excellence of Seton Hall students, faculty, and staff. Congratulations to the wordsmiths and artists whose works were chosen, and to our dedicated staff for helping us to compile this issue. We trust that this installment of Chavez will live up to the high standard set by previous editions.

As graduating seniors, we are thankful for the opportunity we had in editing this magazine, and have enjoyed sharing the creativity of Seton Hall with you for the past three semesters. We have both invested a great deal of time and enthusiasm in this publication, and we hope that our new editors will surpass our efforts and continue to share the artistic sentiments of the Seton Hall community.

Sincerely,

Gesina Phillips and Brittany Biesiada
Editors in Chief

Assistant Editors: Jennifer Borland, Samantha Khoury, and Kathleen Pagliaro

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Jessica Nguyen
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To Be Young Again
Jesse Igbokwe

Remember when life was no more than an autumn breeze,
Long before those pesky birds had ever met those damn bees.
When Jack could sleep with Jill and nobody would care,
Because girls were just boys—with longer hair.

Remember when recess didn’t end with I-O-N,
Long before money was saved, but uncaringly spent.
When Mommy was has happy and Daddy was too,
Because all of their focus was on spoiling you.

Remember when Saturday mornings beat Saturday nights,
Long before chocolate milk became Miller Light.
When the best shows were “All That” and “Boy Meets World,”
Because boys were still boys and girls were still girls.

Remember how everything changed when you turned fifteen,
And those hormonal birds met those pubescent bees.
When Jack saw Jill in a whole different light,
And neither was sleeping when she came over that night.

Remember when money abruptly, stopped growing on trees,
And Mom and Dad began arguing over how to pay fees.
When divorce suddenly seemed like the right thing to do,
Because love with no money was meat for fairytale stew…

…Remember when they told you, not to grow up too fast,
To cherish your childhood and make each moment last.
Because one day, the “real world” will start to suck you in,
And all you will want, is to be young again.

March 27, 2003
James Cafone

The war is especially brutal
The blood is naturally red.
The children are crying and dying
And nobody cares what you said.

The bishops are specially meeting.
Their agenda is naturally weighty
I never thought I’d ever be
Especially glad to be eighty.
Potpourri
Kathleen Pagliaro

This room is always cold, the one where mom and dad sleep. Smooth breaths of cold familiar air. I don’t like being home alone.

Twenty seconds in and my hands sting. Piercing cold. I wandered in here out of boredom, remembering the time my mom said I should read that book on her shelf.

What book was it again? I plop onto the stiff bed rest made of oak. With my hands snuggled between my armpits, I see myself in the mirror over my mom’s dresser.

Patches of dust have gathered on the mirror, like a furry grey moss covering an oak tree. Two shiny glass bears stand on the dresser in a tender embrace. In her modest wedding dress, the girl bear rests her head on her lover’s shoulder. Her eyes closed in a warm and gentle smile. Dust has settled round their bear paws like a fluffy welcome mat.

With a sudden quiver I breathe out, as if to thaw the air with my breath. Next to the cuddly newlyweds there is a white porcelain container painted with delicate pink flowers, and inside there is a handful of brittle potpourri. Cinnamon, lavender, jasmine.

The smell’s nice for a while, but it don’t last forever, my mom once told me. I drag my finger slowly across the dust that’s gathered on the clouded mirror. The frigid air has turned my nose red. Life moves slower in the cold, you know.

Oct. 22, 1997
James Cafone

In the autumn bright blue days my mind gets cloudy Things grow hazy light incredible the ways You lead me to be lost be nobody at all I still believe.
I Tremble When I am Alone
Amber Wozniak

I am a sheep,
And I want to touch your skin.
But I am Judas,
I won’t deny you
I won’t doubt you
I’ll love you and I’ll confess it
Every time
I’ll betray you.
Your flesh is so sweet to kiss
And
Your heart so warm to hold
And
If they asked me why I do it,
Despite, because of, all this,
I’ll simply weep into
My Lady Macbeth palms.

So Many Questions Asked in Life
Jessica Soorial

So many questions asked in life,
So little time to respond.
Nobody has all the answers.
It is just something that is beyond.

Beyond what we know,
Beyond our understanding.
Life is the question
To the answers we are demanding.

Melissa Cotreau

Enlightening
Heather Iden

As the pages continue
As the plot thickens
The smooth rhythm of the characters
Rises and falls with the wind

The smoke fills the room
A heart must be broken
Although a barrier hangs in the balance
It must be outweighed by the situation

The beat of a heart
Can’t disturb the pattern
The aroma was sweet
As was the taste, but the feeling was ee-rie

The severance will be hard
But the strings are too heavy
The freedom will prove good
And in the end, enlightening….perhaps
Sonnet
Caitlin Timmerman

Those who dream at night
are the safest of mankind.
They are the ones lacking might
to act what's in their mind.

Those who dream by day
are the ones to fear.
They are able to obey
what the brain displays clear.

The daydreamers act
upon impulse and passion.
For they are able to extract
what the subconscious can fashion.

Beware the ones who know
what the darkest parts of the mind can sew.

Haikus
Caitlin Timmerman

Heart beats a tattoo
of passion and pain entwined.
Emotion: unknown

The blood is the ink.
Feelings bleed onto the page;
this is what is real

The Palm Holding The Eye
John Lienesch

Graveyard digger digging through sand
No apparent difference through time
Like the palm holding the eye
The past the present and the future in its view
The sand keeper has a hole in his bag
Exposing all your dreams and others alike
Your meeting with another
The love doctor lost his potion
Causing you to collide and shift
Like the plates lying far below us
My palm holding the eye
Through time and space
Hoping to collide and shift into you
Once more
Someone is calling his name
Summoning his greatness
Let him excise his power over one and all
He was once the beginning and the end
but that is true no longer.
Omnipotence is fading fast, now.
Ignorance was bliss, knowledge is killing his power.
Willing to prevent evil but not able.
I know it for the lie that’s written on his face;
his pale, ethereal, fleeting face.
Power over us is found again;
malevolence shining through.
Able to prevent evil but not willing.
A salvation fraught with contempt and self-loathing.
An end to means that comes far far too late.
He is both able and willing.
But from where comes evil then?
Or is he neither able nor willing?
Then silence your calls, my people
for salvation shall never come.
‘Cause Baby You’re a Firework  
Monica Fallon

Your calming eyes pick up a whip and command my stubborn temper  
Your effortless grin travels deep inside my soul melting away all the negative energy  
Somehow you always know just how to brighten my mood  
Your optimism is infectious…  
‘Cause Baby you’re a firework.

Your arms, they slither around the sides of my waist  
While you nuzzle your nose into my neck and I savor every second of it  
I know this feeling of comfort so well,  
But still somehow your touch always releases the caged butterflies within my stomach…  
‘Cause baby you’re a firework.

You call my name from the other side of the room  
You use a high pitched endearment that exists only when we’re together  
You step to the I-home and turn on our favorite house song  
Forcing the rhythm we dance, just us, in the middle of your 2 by 4 dorm room…  
‘Cause baby you’re a firework.

I watch you study microscopic molecules and significant figures.  
You watch me study prepositional phrases and writing abstractions.  
We are polar opposites and we collide in every way  
But at the end of the day your arms are the only arms I can fall asleep in…  
‘Cause baby you’re a firework.

I still remember our first concert together, Dave Matthews Band.  
The lights and the music intertwining together were just background effects  
They couldn’t even compare to the chemistry building between us that night  
And when our lips finally met with the help of “Crash into Me,” my heart grew triple in size…  
‘Cause baby you’re a firework.
This Is Not A Poem
Jesse Igbokwe

This is not a poem; I wouldn't do that to you;  
Have you read rhyming words about how I love to  
Kiss your lips in the night when you’re barely  
awake,  
And your eyes slowly open with that “Let me sleep”  
face;  
But I can’t help myself so I kiss you once more,  
Because my lips have a sickness and yours have the  
cure.

No, this is no poem; I wouldn’t force you to read  
About the times we’re apart, and all I can see  
Is your warm silhouette everywhere that I look;  
Like a worm on a fish line, it’s clear that I’m  
hooked  
On your love, your touch, your thunderous thighs;  
I could write a whole poem ‘bout those thunderous  
thighs.

But this is no poem, no sonnet, or song  
To bore you with how you’re the right to my wrong,  
The pitter to my patter, the tic to my tac,  
You’re love sheds new light on the words, heart at-
tack;  
And that’s just what you did, attacked my  
heart,  
I put up defenses, you tore them apart.

One year ago, never thought I would say,  
“I love you, I love you,” in every way.  
“I love you, I love you,” every second, every  
hour.  
“I love you, I love you,” to the seventeenth  
power!  
And that’s it, no more; I’m done with this  
rhyme,  
Because this is NOT a poem…  
…I hope that’s fine.

Naked
Dianna Pfister

Naked shadows before me  
This is what they want me to see  
But there is no cloak for these  
Teeth and howls rumbling towards me  
There is no mask for reality  
I will therefore rely on my mind  
For my mind is a powerful tool  
Allowing me to convert energy  
So that I may be all that I can be  
Like a soldier I will do my duty  
And deliver my message with head held  
high  
And confidence pouring from my veins  
and like a flowing river all eyes will flood  
proud men and women  
I salute you
Bricks
Amber Wozniak

Flesh
Is not what we are,
Soft and ripe like the fresh, shining apple.
Bricks
Sun baked, stone walls,
Replaceable. Destructible.
Is what we are.
We slide into one another,
Create that perfect hold.
We deny one another,
Push away, become cold
From anyone that is unfamiliar,
Anyone that may hurt,
Anyone that may point out those
Inconsequential cracks,
Anyone.
If I’ve learned anything from
That stony, patriarchal love,
It is that we’re never as safe,
Immovable,
As we think.
And only ever half as strong.

Lines
Karina Kainth

There is no oh well for her,
Sitting on the edge of rocky with her knees drawn up high.
The act of allowing, concavity- none of it touching her.
Her form floats just above them in a beautiful array of lines.
Heights of light and dark-pursue them, don’t get caught.
At this moment the wind and rain and tumult are being deflected by the rocks and her body--
at this moment. But:
Sinewy arms are still, eyes are jagged slits of jewels, lips are dark and full- mouth is full of
useful words.
She thinks in forever kind of terms.
She starts to hear lacings of past mistakes in the wind and they overtake her-
Failure: “Now, what can you do so that this doesn’t happen again?”
“What can you do…”
“do…”
Done.
Meanwhile a boy on the other side of the jetty is singing about whether or not he wants to live.
Confusion must feel nice.
Remember
Dan Dello

I remember every little detail about us.
How we first met and I knew we would be together
How at orientation you stayed with me while I was sick.
How nervous we were to tell each other our feelings.
And I remember all our firsts.
The first time we held hands at Harry Potter,
And again in the car when your brother was being annoying.
The first time we napped after camp,
And how happy you looked as you slept with your head on my chest.
The first time we kissed in the parking garage,
And how I felt like I was walking on air after.
I remember walking you back to the train station,
And how lonely that walk was back without you.
I remember the late nights talking to you,
And the even later nights helping you clean up at work.
I remember you coming to school early so we could nap,
And me missing so many classes just to nap longer.
I remember ever little detail about us.
Do you?
Just Me
Heather Iden

Alone in the alcove of life
I see the drifts pile
I feel the ache rise
I can’t find my place

I am trapped in desire
As the whirlwind of fire
Embraces all that I am
Or could be

The devastation takes control
And the rope tightens
The breaths I do take
Are short and desperate

As the ocean turns
I feel the life inside
But I can’t get to it
It is out of reach or grasp

I feel every feeling
Every desire
And receive every let down
And all that denial is

To be subject to fantasy
To deny myself
The compass changes directions
And I remain motionless

If there is a reason
For all that engulfs me
The illusion of it
Does remain a mystery

So I take a step back
Feel all that is me
See the pain and strength
That I do posses

The walk will be a hard one
Through the overgrown world
But I stand emotionless
Trying to decipher all that I am

The night grows darker
The smoke grows thicker
As the calm air takes my mind
I am just me in the end

Catriona Hill
To Spring
James Cafone

Yesterday the path was lost:
The woods were one with snow.
Today the woods are many:
Paths are everywhere I go.

Winter had been wonderful:
When it wasn't snowing;
Footprints told us where we were
And where we had been going.

Springtime trails are muddy
And I often walk alone,
Making better time
By making new paths of my own.

Incarnation
James Cafone

Conversation of the blind
Means reaching out to find
The skin, bone, inflection or tone,
The anything to ground it
So the sound alone won’t be
Too thin, like burning bush
Or laws in stone, the living One
Who hung upon a tree,
The bread and wine
Or you and me.
Wizard of Oz Poster
Samantha Khoury

The poster hung crooked on the wall
Pointillism – the art form adopted to create the picture
Dots and colors blending together in proper order
But taking the place of the little circles are letters
The printed glossy characters
Each a different color,
Symbols that have been inked into proper place
Grouping together to shape the image of
Oz, jade-colored, laying in the distance
The poppy fields, pink in between
The rolling hills, viridian touching
A twinkling sky of
Cerulean fusing into indigo.
The brick road, winding gold beneath
Shoes, red and sparkling,
Sprouting legs covered by a dress of powder blue,
And a ribbon decorating brunette.
Dorothy stands beside her friends,
All arms linked together as
The Lion in his coffee-colored fur coat
Whisks his tail to and fro in gentle thrill
As the Scarecrow, with weak knees
Right foot lifted, ready for the next step,
While the Tin Man with a slight sheen
Bows slightly to the majestic metropolis.
All heads gazing forward,
Looking in awe at the city:
A jewel propped upon a golden band
Delicately cushioned by green velvet;
The shimmer of light beckoning them onward.
Sleep
Heather Iden

Sleep
Turn the dreams
Spin the reality
Open the mind
Listen to the heart

Sleep
Dance with passion
Leap with freedom
Scream with feeling
Wake with desire

Silence!
Alexandra Schwanborg

A feather flew across the room
Silent, graceful, like you

I didn't see it, but I felt it
Like I feel your fears and rivers of emotions
that run through your veins
and make of your heart a deep and immense ocean

Mysterious and calm
like your presence
and your touch.

Seahorse
John Lienesch

The seahorse stares at the glass
Where your fingers are pressed against it
Fingerprint residue forming a pattern
Of small lines
The seahorse with all its curves and points
Stares and presses its beak
To the glass
Following each line
Analyzing a masterpiece
The sea creature confined
By four glass walls
Notices who you are

Melissa Cotreau
The dreamer wakes; the dream dies,
Goes back to the night with its sorrow and sighs;
The beauty fades, and all that remains
Is the sleepless and silent with her thoughts and pains.

If only instead the dream could awake,
And the dreamer pass on for her lovely dream’s sake!
Or if only, perhaps, God had seen fit
To not make the dreamer who dreamed of it.
The Wall Holding My Heart
John Lienesch

Have you ever felt your spirit try to rip through your chest
Knowing that if you unleashed it you’d take out anyone close to you
Knowing all these years of practice have made you able to create
Create such beautiful and happy moments
Create something that makes you feel alive
Behind every beauty lies a dark side that it was bloomed from
So dark that it could shatter dreams
Shatter everything you hold dear
To calm this rift
I’ve built a wall holding my heart together
I stared the reaper in the eye
He asked if I was afraid
I told him I am not afraid just not ready
I told him if he stands next to your bed side
I will be the one waiting for him when it is his time
I asked him to move on from you and not to look back
This deal forcing my love and hate
To build inside
To make my heart shake
To make it pound through bones
To make me speak unwanted truths
To face what hides in me
The wall crumbles and I feel alone
I remember your face
And I hold onto hope
Every time I come to visit
I believe you are getting better
I do
I just miss you
I build my wall again
I try to be strong
I clear my mind
And I hold your hand
Hoping you’ll whisper back
I love you too

Sheila Linz
Vengeance
Jessica Soorial

Why Vengeance?
There is no explanation.
Whatever the reason,
He has no salvation.

He has no humanity,
His ways are all cruel.
All humans in this world
Are trapped in his pool.

Who could be this evil,
So evil as to kill
Without a feeling of guilt,
But a feeling of thrill.

He attacks fast.
His evil will last.
When he attacks a victim,
He forgets his past.

Vengeance is the devil,
He has no sympathy.
No mercy, no compassion, no pity…
Only a sense of apathy.

Humans live,
Live in fear,
The devil could be far,
The devil could be near.

Consider him invisible,
Impossible to find,
Due to the devious ways
Of his clever mind.

When he shall attack,
One never knows.
It comes all of a sudden,
The victims shiver to their toes.
Streetlight
Olivia Innamorato

By chance, have you felt it?
As though you were a somnambulist till you woke up next to me.
Running in circles through your maze of sleep
Finding doorways within every torn seam of your dreams.
Locked with no key is the stale tone of your story.
I can feel you’re alone on this crowded street.
So, I pull you in close with one graceful sweep,
And we duck within a menacing alley,
Where we would not go, normally,
But tonight, you must know, every shadow feels like home.
And we find home in every chance to be alone.
And now I do beneath this tunnel of light focused on you.
This sky has been heard crying,
The evidence, Dark tears dripping down our sides.
And we’re breathing heavy, but we swear weren’t trying.
I’m biting my tongue to muffle my sighs.
By chance, would you like to dance?
Beneath the street’s tall lamps
We sway in time to the roars of the passing cars.
My gift is a dance floor beneath the stars.
All we own can never amount to who we are.
The lamps’ bulbs flicker their last lives,
And we’re praying tonight, “Please don’t die”
For we need a chandelier in this darkling sky,
Lord knows the moon won’t do,
Nor its minions of ill fated love so true,
Armies have fallen where I now hold you.
By chance, have you opened your eyes?
Though I feel I’ve only ever stood with you beneath this light,
I’ve missed you all my life.
The resolve of dreams only last for as long as you sleep.
So stay awake with me.
Fearless
Yusuf Yesil

Even though it feels like you’re near
They tell me you’re somewhere up in the atmosphere

Free from the world’s restraints
You can now create your future out of easels and paints

In Heaven or Earth, you’re a gentleman since birth

The long journey has been masked by a wall of smoke
But I still treasure the moments full of laughter and jokes

The odds were against you, yet you played your hand
Everything you did was strategically planned

In times of despair, you simply shuffled the deck to avoid problems or a large wreck

Summer or winter, you lived beside your cigarette
In the end, you lost by placing your life as the final bet

No worries, so now just enjoy dining with the greats
Based on my future and fate, I may be early instead of late

Heroes are not men of wealth, but men of principles
The ones who cause tsunamis out of small ripples
I’ll see you in the great halls, the day my honor falls

Jessica Nguyen
Oneonta Yankees or PicHouse7?
Danielle Pic

My father, a self-taught athlete, stands on the pitchers mound, sweat dripping down his shiny forehead. It’s early July, countless days throwing batting practice have only just begun.
Today my brother can’t hit, we have been waiting on this field all afternoon. Frustrated my father reaches to touch the back of his neck, leaving white fingerprints on his sunburn.
“Keep your weight back, hands together, knees bent,” he yells, Jeremy nods also sensing the problem.
I look up from munching my fingernails, just in time to see my father flash a smile.
I know what he’s thinking, he’s talks about it every day during baseball season. He’s noticing how much Jeremy looks like he did, back in ’75 when he walked through that big gate in New York. The same unruly dark hair, face littered with freckles, tall body, timid voice.
My father launches a fastball towards my brother’s blue metal bat. Finally, we hear the sound of leather soaring through the air.
In slow motion my father watched the ball soar in front of the sunlight. My father held his eyes closed to blink away from the sun, remembering that choice. Does he regret choosing my mother, the curly haired beauty, over the long hours he would have spent on a packed bus?
My father opened his eyes just in time to see the ball fly over the silver metal fence.
In his eyes I saw that, no, he wouldn’t have wanted it any other way. This was really his dream all along, to watch his children achieve theirs.
Still In The Game
Chucks Asoluka

When the football player is taken off the field
Most will count him out and think that his game is over.
But before the panic of competition is over, he is back to the field,
To score the winning point, because he is still in the game
Being out of the field does not mean you out of the game
When you are in the game, you are like in a battlefield
That only hope spurs you to win.

You cannot compete when there is no hope
The battle of life is fought on mountain of hope.
True success comes with efforts based on lasting hope
Hope never dies and it should be kept alive in all races
Even after you have lost the competition or missed a dream
There is always hope to win the next race because you are
Still in the game to win

Everyone’s destination time is not the same
Some might get there first and never survive the heat
Others will make it later while retaining their trophy
For some, winning take turns and curves while in the game.
Even on a straight smooth road, there are some that will
Jump long hurdles before getting to the appointed destination.
Getting late to a destination does not mean a late denial and
Missing one’s track in a long race is not an exit from the game

Hope helps you to exercise the engine of your mind
It strengthens your weak muscles for life’s other journey
Don’t be distracted when others finish before you
Never lose hope because of errors and failures of life
Even when the world seems ahead of you, just believe
There is a Maker who promised that you will get to your
Destination port, only if you trust hope again
Purple Jelly
Danielle Pic

I’ve cried out all my tears, they’ve all dripped on my t-shirts and have been dried up by the hot summer air.
Outside I hear the wind before the storm,
I cringe knowing I can’t even enjoy my favorite weather.
I knew it would rain today, I had that nervous feeling. The one in the bottom of my feet, the one I got that day waiting for the phone call in kitchen…Hunched over the stove, I waited not even expecting it to come.
Mom was sweeping up the remains of pizza dinner, smiling over my shoulder at our latest cooking venture.
Other than my bubbling pan of jelly, her broom bristles sliding across the wood, it was silent.
Everyone else went to soccer, mom and I would walk down later. My purple goo bubbled and popped, coloring my fingers.
The phone rang, I drew a quick frightened breath sucking in the smell of summer berries, blue and red, that sickly scent of burning sugar. Mom walked slowly to pick it up, she sighed, relieved when she saw dad’s number. I looked back anyway and saw the confusion on my mother’s face, followed by the first tear. The phone dropped to the floor, she sobbed, I rushed toward her leaving the jelly simmering.
I held her, like she used to hold me, while she shook with fright, anger, and sadness the cancer alive and spreading through her body.

Today I’m waiting for her to come home.
She’ll never be the same, only close, and that’s why I’ve cried.
It used to feel so good, the wetness pouring over my skin. Now, using the rain, I’ll let the clouds do it for me.

Michcella Tiscornia
A Girl, A Boy
Dan Dello

This story is simple. It is about a girl. I don’t mean a girl as in child, no a full grown adult capable of making her own decisions in life. She isn’t some one’s personal object, slave, not even some one’s wife. Her entire life was laid out brick by brick by her parents. Her parents “paved” the way for this girl and refused to let her try to build her own path. They felt that the one the has laid out was perfect because they were the adults and they knew what was right.

This story is simple. It is about a boy. I don’t mean a boy as in a child, no a full grown adult capable and making his own decision. He isn’t some one’s personal object, slave, not even some one’s husband. His entire life was a jungle, his parents did nothing for him but provide for him a small path that ended quickly and let him build his own path. They felt that if one was to live and grow they needed to work and be held responsible for their decisions.

What happened next was nothing short of miraculous. The boy swings his trusty machete cutting away the dense jungle and stumbled onto a nice brick road. He hears a whistle and having been alone on this rough journey he turns longing for some human interaction. He turns and sees her…she is being lead by her parents by the tips of her fingers and he knows instantly two things. She wants to run and explore the world and that he wants to be with her every step of the way.

As she was walking along with her parents she heard a rustling off to the side. She turned and saw a boy coming out of the jungle. He was dirty, disheveled, and had this dumb-bass grin on his face. She breaks free from her parents grip just for a split second and runs over to introduce herself. She does something she never had done to a stranger before…she hugs him. She knew then that this boy was going to show her the world and never leave her side.

He made a decision from then on to be close to her. He was always out of her parents’ eyes but not hers.

She looked out for him and saw him make silly faces at her. Every time she giggled her parents looked for what was so funny and could never find it.

Whenever they got the chance they would walk together for a while. Every summer for one week he would go visit her and walk and talk with her about how her life was. Her parents didn’t seem to mind some mangy little kid hanging around their beautiful daughter and that meant the world to both of them. This went on, one week of walking together followed by 51 apart, for 5 years.

Finally the time came for her parents to let go at least for a little bit. It was like she was put onto one of those dog leashes that with the press of a button the leash stops and the dog gets jerked backwards. To her this meant more freedom because she was no longer holding hands and had freedom to explore…at least a little bit. To him that was slavery, it was controlling and demeaning, but she was happy. That is all that mattered to him.

Their paths started to intertwine and intersect like the double helix of a DNA strand; they just spun around each other. The spin grew tighter and tighter until she walked half in the jungle and half on the brick path that lay before her. They finally felt perfect…like this was what was supposed to happen from the first day that they met.

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They held hands as they walked and each time the button on her leash was pressed her stopped in his tracks and waited for her to gain a little more freedom. Pretty soon she had the freedom to forge her own path a little bit and the boy handed over his machete and followed her. Though before she could get anywhere, her parents pressed that button and she got jerked back. Faithfully he stopped and waited for her.

One day...they got caught. Her parents found out what was happening. The reeled that leash in so fast that he didn’t even get a chance to say goodbye. He looked on and waited and saw her being dragged down that brick road. For the first time in his life, the boy wept for someone else. He kept his distance; her parents were looking out for him. When they spotted him they chased him away but he was persistent. He never left her side for a second but he was too far away to be able to help.

Eventually, they each believed the other hated them. They gave up fighting for each other. She walked on her brick path, he listlessly cut circles and serpentine paths through the jungle trying to find another girl, or maybe god willing, meet up with the her. This went on for longer than anyone thought it would...two years, three months, eleven days.

That is when he was heard a rustle. He guarded himself and suddenly she came bursting into his path. She was dirty, disheveled, and had this dumbass grin on her face. It was very tentative at first...there were no hugs this time around, just words. The words they both waited to hear for two years, three months, eleven days. “I missed you.” They both stammered out, tears rolling down their cheeks, as they embraced. Finally they felt whole again and nothing was going to tear them apart this time around.

Tango
Diana Bockhahn
“Hey, how about giving your new friend a dolla?” he asked, forcing a smile. He held his hand out expecting some sort of compensation for his company.

“Nah, I’m good,” Kyle said, skating away from him.

“How bout you, sunny d?” he said, motioning to me. “I know you gotta couple a dollars for old Ray.”

“I dunno, man,” I said. “What’d you need money for?” It was a dumb question, but I was trying to avoid getting suckered in by a panhandler.

“What’d you mean, main? I need money just the same as everybody else. I gotta eat, I gotta survive.”

“I dunno…” I didn’t have much sympathy. I’d seen him around before, always drunk and hassling people. He didn’t seem to be making any effort to change.

“Just three bucks, man. That’ll get me a four piece meal at Church’s,” he said.

“You’re really hungry? Let’s go to Church’s,” I said pointing across the street. I figured he’d say no. If he was really starving, there was a food pantry on Warne Avenue. My conscience would be clear, and realizing that I wouldn’t give him any money, he’d give up.

“My man! Let’s go,” he said, clapping his hands together and motioning me toward the street.

I couldn’t believe I’d cornered myself like this, but for some reason I felt obligated to try to help him. My friend Kyle, on the other hand, was pissed. We’d come across the city to skateboard, and now I was wasting our time with a rummy. He followed us into Church’s anyway.

Ray ordered the nine piece meal without consulting me, and sat down in a booth, telling the cashier I was paying. He didn’t say thank you, and he waited for his food ignoring us. Kyle thought I’d learned my lesson and storm off, but for some reason I was now too curious to leave.

Ray directed most of his energy into awkwardly eating with the few teeth he had left, and he abandoned his friendly demeanor when he saw that I wasn’t going to leave. It took a bit of probing, but after a while he told us he had been in the army, and that he’d played high school football. He said he didn’t have a wife, but that was because he didn’t want one. He claimed to never have a problem with the ladies.
He laughed, telling us he didn’t know if he had kids. He said he could never be tied down anywhere, that he would wander around forever, taking it one day at a time. It was a nice thought. Eventually we left, and Ray still tried to get a few dollars from us as we walked down the street. Kyle, still agitated, finally gave him a buck to send him on his way. I tried to ask him where he was going, but he just mumbled something and wandered off.

“God, man, why do you have to do that?” Kyle said as we started to skate down the sidewalk. “Does it make you feel like you’re a saint or something? You’re not helping anybody when you do that.”

“Yeah, I know,” I said. “Sorry, I’m just kind of fascinated by him.”

“By what? He’s a bum, a hobo, they’re everywhere. I bet everything he said was a lie anyway.” “Never mind, I’m sorry.” “Damn right, you are,” Kyle said, as we started to skate toward The Fox.

Even now, I don’t really regret going in there or paying for the meal. It might’ve been a waste of money. Ray still walked off ungrateful, probably to go get drunk. He might’ve lied about everything he told us, but I still smile sometimes thinking about him as a wandering ladies man.

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**Untitled**

Amanda Wong

Brought into the foreign, vast world that is called Earth, a young bird took flight for the first time. She stared into the sunset that was full of wondrous colors of a haunting red, crispy tangy orange, strands of yellow hues, and shades of blue. Minutes slowly turning into seconds, the youngling took in the breathtaking sight as if savoring a precious gift from a beloved. Parting her smooth yet gentle black feathers as dark as a midnight sky, she took her leave of her nested home to begin the flight of her life. Into the air she went like an armored warrior heading into the battlefield for the final fight. As fine as a stroke of a paintbrush, she soared into the large, passive sky of fluffy, white clouds with a quick flap of its wings. Passing through the marshmallow clouds, she felt of freedom and joy above the many sightings. As if time stopped around this creature, a powerful emotion erupted inside this small, beating heart of a bird. Like a speed of a bullet, the bird mustered its strength and headed high into the abyss where small, shimmering stars can be seen. A passerby on land held a camera and with wonder, took a picture as the angel of dark flew upward, creating invisible patterns in the sky like a rollercoaster at a theme park or simply carving her own picture on the unknown, blank canvas. His callous and wrinkled hands, like erosion that’s been aging the world with time, continuously pressed the shutter button, capturing its adventures. What wonders will this bird paint? A token of love? A symbol of god’s gift of giving it wings to fly? The man wondered with curiosity as his blue-green eyes followed the feathered one. Unbeknownst to the elderly man, the bird let out a soft tune into the cool air as she fluttered her wings. Singing a melody so comforting, like a mother cooing a crying baby to sleep, she pours her own whistles and chirps into the heavens for the gods and goddesses to listen. A brave soul, alone on a stage surrounded by uncertain eyes that were watching and ears that were listening, its mind did not care who was around, what only mattered was that its passion for singing was unrelenting. The elderly man set his camera down and lifted his head towards the darkened sky and said to himself that the bird was painting a gift to the heavens, without any paintbrushes or paint, it was a colorless yet secretive message that only the deities can hear.
Nights Spent at the Bar
Mike Behan

It was just like any other Monday. I went to work and went through my miserable life, just so I could get home and make it to the bar. After work I would take the subway home, and when I got there, I would stare at my apartment and I would see the couch, which didn’t even have a dent in it anymore because I barely sit on it. Then I would go into the kitchen and see the pile of empty dishes. I hate washing dishes so they just piled up whenever I ate at home. Then finally I would walk into the bedroom, which seemed more like a hotel to me now, nothing in the room seemed moved, I didn’t look “lived in” and I hated that. I would want to leave. So I would go to the bar around the corner. I’d go in alone, and leave alone.

I’d walk into the bar down the street and the bartender knew what I wanted as soon as entered. I’d sit at the bar without ever speaking, and then the jack and coke would just appear beside my hand. She was a good bartender in that way.

I’d look down the bar and see some of the same faces every day. I didn’t talk much; I didn’t see much of a reason to. I was only there to drink my problems away, and by 9:30 every, night they usually went away.

After a few hours of pretty heavy drinking I’d start to come out of my shell. Sometimes I’d talk to women in the bar, but usually just small talk, I never felt like really getting to know them. Sometimes I’d talk sports with one of the guys around me. I knew some of the guys, because some of them, much like me, made drinking at this bar their getaway. Then other times I’d talk to the bartender, but she wasn’t much of a talker. She just liked to pour the drinks and make tips, but that didn’t bother me.

Around 10 o’clock I’d put my coat on and walk out of the bar. It wasn’t always the same time but 10 o’clock was the average time, it all depended on how I felt that day. And that’s what I did pretty much every day, the same thing, over and over. Drunken night followed by work, and then another drunken night.

Recently things have changed though. Usually after I drink I am able to walk home and just pass out, but in the past week I’ve been sitting up, thinking, because on my walk home I’ve been being followed.

For the past few days it’s been the same thing. I leave the bar, and as soon as I reach the first crosswalk, I notice this woman across the street. She waits directly across the street, and when the sign says, “WALK” I walk, and so does she. She keeps the exact same pace as me, and she is always looking at me. Whenever I would stop so would she. In fact on the second night, I tested her, I would randomly stop walking but she stopped too, as if she read my mind, no delay, she just stopped simultaneously with me. She even seemed to look familiar; she had brown hair, with a black coat. I began to wonder if this was just my drunken mind fucking with me. Then after the short two-block walk she would still just stand on the other side of the street, even after I got into my apartment.

The first night I didn’t think much of it because I didn’t look out my window, but the second night I looked out my window and she just stood there all night, across the street from my apartment. She still looked familiar, but it was a big city street so I couldn’t place why she looked familiar. Her brown hair and thin, but not too thin shape was attractive to me. I wanted to sit there all night and try to figure out who she was but I was too drunk, so I passed out in the kitchen chair by the window, but when I woke up I looked out the window and she was gone.

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On the third day I went through my whole day, and no sightings of this woman. Then when I came out of the bar, she was there again. Yet on the third night the walk felt different. She didn’t seem to worry me at all, it was kind of nice actually, and I had no idea who this woman was but it felt good to walk home “with” her. And on that night I decided to yell across the street. I yelled hello but there was no answer. She just stood there parallel to me. I yelled again and still no answer. I began to walk back home, looking at her every couple of seconds, and now it seemed like every time I turned she turned too, so I couldn’t make out her face at all. That frustrated me.

The next day I walked out of the bar and it was raining. I was drunk enough that I didn’t care about getting a little wet. In fact I got soaked. I saw her across the street again. And I was perplexed by what I saw. She was standing there in the rain with no hood on walking the same pace as me. I was drunk so that was my excuse. But what the hell was her excuse, why would someone walk in the pouring rain so slowly. I yelled out to her again but there was no answer. I got to the door of my apartment building and stood there looking at her drenched black overcoat. All I heard was the rain pouring on the sidewalk. I stood there a little longer and then the doorman opened the door and said in his English accent, “Mr. Thomas, come inside sir. It’s pouring out there. You’ll get sick.” I walked inside, but I looked back at her, and as she disappeared from my vision I knew I had to meet this woman. She looked beautiful drenched in the rain as I stepped into the elevator.

I got into my apartment and she was still there, across the street. I began to think that she must be crazy, just standing there in the rain. I looked at the couch and I decided to move it. I moved the couch into the kitchen, because the past couple nights I sat there and watched her on a hard kitchen chair. The couch wasn’t very big so it fit right in front of the window. I finally made an indent on the couch that night. When I sat there at watched her I began to feel more at home.

I wanted to know who this woman was, I wanted to know why she walked home across the street from me, and most of all I wanted to know why the hell she just stood across the street all night, even in the rain. For five nights, she just stood across the street from my apartment, never moving. Then she was gone, every morning.

On the sixth night I tried to throw her off, I never went to the bar. I just walked near the bar; I never took a sip of my “therapy.” It was now 8:30 and I had been walking around for a while and there was no sign of her. I thought maybe I was walking out of the bar was like her signal or something, I don’t really know what I was thinking but I just wanted to get to the bottom of this. I walked into the bar and walked out, but still no sign of her. Then I walked across to her side of the street. I stood there till ten and she never showed. I was so pissed. I spent an entire night trying to find her and she never showed.

When I got back to my apartment I just sat on the couch, in the kitchen, looking out at the empty sidewalk. In my sober thoughts I was thinking that I was a freak to sit on this couch in the kitchen, but I didn’t move it. I knew soon she’d be back and I’d look out at her and I’d be attracted, and happy, like I was falling in love again. I was very disappointed; all I wanted was to find out who this girl was and I couldn’t.

Over the next couple days I’d walk near my apartment all night. My apartment was in a residential part of the city, so it was much less traveled. I’d sit on the sidewalk and just look around, and a few people would go by and look at me, but none of them were the girl I wanted so badly to see again.

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Finally I gave up. I said fuck it and I just went back to the bar after work. While I was in the bar, the best idea yet dawned on me. This guy Joe was at the bar, he was there most nights like me and I’d talked to him about hockey a few times before. So I asked him if he had ever seen this woman when he left the bar.

“Nope,” he simply stated. “Oh.” I said.

“So where have you been the past couple days? I haven’t seen you around.”

I didn’t want to tell him the truth so I lied. “I’ve just been working a lot lately. My boss is making me do this thing where I train all the interns.”

“Well that must be annoying. Where did you say you worked again?”

“At a publishing company over on 45th.”

“I see, well good luck with that, I gotta get another drink then get home to the wife. You know what that’s like.”

“Yea, alright I’ll probably see you tomorrow.”

Then I drank until ten, like normal. I got so drunk that I stopped think about the woman. I even tried to pick up this girl who was sitting near me, which I hadn’t done for a very long time. I staggered over to her and said some stupid shit like. “Hey honey you wanna come home with me.” She almost ran away, she didn’t quite run but she moved away from me as quickly as possible without being a track star. She gave me that look like I had no idea what I was doing. And she was right.

The bartender laughed at me, when I went back to my seat. She said, “Hey Tim, a little out of practice there?” I didn’t respond, because none of these people really knew me. Even though I had spent every night there for the past few months, no one really knew much else besides that I was Tim Thomas, the thirty something man, who comes in from his publishing job, gets drunk, then leaves and my job, only Joe knew.

I picked up my stuff and began to walk out. I closed the creaky door. And my face was met with the cold winter air and there she was. I began to panic, what the hell does he mean, I’ve looked for her for so long and now when I least expect it she shows up. It must be a drunken mind fuck. So I ran across the street. I had to know who she was. “Hey miss!” I said as I was running across the street. I began to get closer to her so I said, “I’ve seen you out here the past few days, and I just wanted to ask you…” I got over to her and for the first time her head turned towards me. I looked at the green eyes, brown hair, and perfect figure. She didn’t say anything. She just stood there; not moving, and she looked so real, dear God she looked so real. For the first time in a long time I felt alive. But she couldn’t be there. I buried her, she’s the reason why I drink, and I’ve been so lonely without her. I tried to talk to her but she just stood there. So I began to cry.

A few moments of just standing there and I was still crying, and now the flow of tears began to make a spot on the sidewalk, was she real? I don’t know. This guy walked by me. He just looked at me and picked up the pace, like I was a homeless person asking for change. I panicked. So I ran home. I got to the door of the building and I looked back. She stood there staring at me, but with a smile. I walked to the elevator and got off at the 35th floor. I got to my apartment door and opened it. I ran to my kitchen couch and looked out the window and there she stood.

I never spoke of this ever again. I was too scared to, everyone that knows me knows my wife died, and they would think I was crazy if I told them she followed me home every night. So I kept it a secret, a way to keep her with me, I got used to her being around when I came out of the bar.
A Glass of Red Wine
Brittany Biesiada

He was there every weekend, the old man in the back of the bar. I haven’t been there in years. I used to frequent a certain bar in college on the weekends. I used to wonder about him when I was there. Sometimes, I’d avoid looking over because seeing him alone made me sad. Eventually, I just stopped paying attention.

I remembered him when I was sitting in a restaurant with my family. A man alone in the booth next to us ordered a glass of red wine. He sipped his wine slowly and rubbed the rim with his thumb until he finished the glass. He declined another, and read a book until his meal came. He looked tired, but satisfied, as though he finally had time for what he wanted.

My husband asked me on the ride home why I had watched him during dinner, and I said I hadn’t realized I had been watching him. I hadn’t. I hadn’t realized that I’d kept stealing looks at him, and rubbing the rim of my glass the way he did.

After we got home, I opened a bottle of red wine. I poured a glass and sipped it at my counter. I placed it down in front of me, and stared it, trying to recall when I first began to enjoy it. I couldn’t remember. I heard faint music coming from the living room, echoing from the television. It was a sad, old song, and I couldn’t place it until I sipped my wine again. Suddenly, I was back, sitting at the bar in college, watching him, remembering I had ordered a glass of wine after wondering why he drank it every Saturday night.

He drank a single glass of red wine for hours. He always wore a crisp white button-down and brown slacks. His white hair was smoothed back neatly. He walked unsteadily. He kept his head down. He frowned when he disliked a song being sung loudly, usually off-key. Sometimes he, too, would sing, standing near the jukebox, or once or twice at the karaoke machine.

From my place at the bar, I watched him. I wondered if he had a wife. Why didn’t she come with him? Maybe he had one, but she had died a few years ago. Maybe she died many years ago and he had come ever since to the bar… where they had met. Maybe they used to come here every weekend and sit at that table. She ordered a red wine. She was a pretty woman with short brown hair and a kind face, who liked to carry white leather pocket-books and wore wide-brimmed hats on sunny days. They had four children, maybe one of them died when they were young. They never got over it, the death of their youngest. The man had been in the military perhaps, a member of the Army or the Air Force. Maybe he was a businessman who had a nice house, and his family helps him maintain it now that his wife has passed. It feels empty without her, and he’s closed the extra rooms off. They used to hold big family gatherings in the dining room, and sing on holidays.

He has a lovely singing voice.

That’s really all I know about the man in the back.

I wonder if he still goes there, to that bar, and if the kids wonder about his life, or if no one notices him, or if they see and simply forget.

I wonder if maybe one day I’ll sit alone at a restaurant, thinking about the man who introduced me to red wine. I wonder if maybe someone there will think about me. Maybe all they’ll know is that I have a lovely singing voice.