

Scratch



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From the Editor

Dear students,

Every year that I participate in Scratch, I learn new things about myself and about the creative process. Creating is a group effort and none of this can be done by a single person. Working with this small group of editors and the artists and students here at Champlain has taught me that we all need to work together, to depend on each other.

This year we are fortunate for the submissions we have received- I want to thank every contributor who submitted to the magazine. Without you, we would be empty.

I would like to thank everyone who participated in Humans of Champlain. Thank you for your quotes and stories.

Thank you to my fellow editors, who put up with all of my endless emails and worrying.

A very big thank you to Elvina Mae Chern Koay and François Desharnais, for their guidance and patience throughout this process.

And thank you to you, dear reader, for picking up this copy and completing the process.

Samantha Fluet
Head Editor

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Literary Analysis of “St. Lucy’s Home for Girls Raised by Wolves”

David Cox

The short fiction “St. Lucy’s Home for Girls Raised by Wolves,” written by Karen Russell, is about young human-resembling werewolf girls, who have been raised by werewolves, being sent to St. Lucy in order to be assimilated into the Catholic culture by strict nuns. They first arrive at St. Lucy as a joyful pack of sisters, but as their stay endures and their desire to become civilised progresses, they begin to turn on one another and shun their original identities. Overall, this text displays how dominant societies believe that their values and culture are far more superior than those of minority or queer societies. Through rigorous assimilation methods and the degradation of queer identities, dominant societies can manage to make minorities conform to their values; however, their original identity will always linger in their thoughts and actions.

As soon as the young female werewolves arrived at St. Lucy, everything they have been accustomed to beforehand is changed by the nuns or frowned upon until it is changed. Upon arrival, they receive false new names, clothes and shoes to immediately start their assimilation. In fact, the nuns occasionally use the word “rehabilitation” when referring to the werewolves’ assimilation process, as if their original identity is some sort of disease that needs curing (Russell 246). This really demonstrates how the nuns, being a part of the dominant society, are not open minded to minorities and think that their queer ways of life are unacceptable. The werewolves’ customs, such as their dialect, eating other animals and marking their territory by urinating are forced to be changed by the nuns. In fact, odor is something the werewolves use to recognize each other, which

plays a big role in displaying their identity. This being a defining aspect of their identity, the nuns would always clean their bedrooms to eliminate any traces of pack musk, erasing their identity and ultimately making the werewolves “feel invisible” (Russell 240). Not being able to continue their old customs, “eventually [the werewolves] g[i]ve up” on displaying their original identities (Russell 240). They are now forced to become familiarized with human smell and eventually adopt it. Near the end of the story, the protagonist, Claudette, “rub[s] a pumpkin muffin all over [her] body ... to mask [her] natural, feral scent” (Russell 249). This is one example, amongst many, of the nuns forcing their own values and customs upon the werewolves until they adopt the superior Catholic way of living. The fact that the werewolves’ smell is one of their main ways of representing their identity, and this custom is taken away by the nuns, demonstrates to what point the nuns are successful in assimilating the minority and convincing them that their dominant values are better.

A harsh technique used by the dominant-cultured nuns to achieve the assimilation of the werewolves is to degrade Mirabella and use her as a scapegoat. Early on in the story, the werewolves are worried about Mirabella not changing; however, as their stay progresses,

the nuns enforce their beliefs of superiority onto the other werewolves to make them hate and ridicule Mirabella's ways: "[Mirabella is] still loping on all fours (which the nuns had taught us to see looked unnatural and ridiculous-- we could barely believe it now, the shame of it, that we used to locomote like that!)" (Russell 241). Mirabella is continuously regarded as inferior throughout this story and is a disgrace to everyone at St. Lucy. The werewolves are quickly brainwashed and adopt the nun's ideologies, believing that their values from the past are unacceptable. Their change in ideologies is so drastic that their definition of the most successful werewolf is "the one furthest removed from their origins" (Russell 241). Mirabella makes no effort to become like the dominant culture, and this is used by the nuns to motivate the werewolves to become the furthest possible version of her. The nuns, being incapable of assimilating Mirabella eventually muzzle her, tape on party culottes and place her in a dark corner at the Debutante Ball so that she resembles the others and doesn't speak in an animalistic tongue (Russell 249). This is the harshest act of degradation seen in this story, where the nuns literally force their values upon Mirabella, who has no choice but to comply. All this shows to which point dominant societies believe that their values are far superior and that they will ridicule and degrade minorities until they conform to their ideologies.

The degradation of Mirabella by the nuns lead to the werewolves doing the same, making them turn on one of their own pack members. The werewolves' pack mentality is one of their society's most defining characteristics before arriving at St. Lucy: "At first, our pack was all hair and snarl and floor-thumping joy" (Russell 237). The werewolves enter St. Lucy as compassionate sisters, but due to their hatred towards Mirabella, added to the jealousy of seeing Jeanette succeed, their pack mentality dissipates and turns into selfishness and the desire to become humans. The drastic transformation of the werewolves can be seen through the heavy

contrast between the most assimilated one, Jeanette, and the one that has hardly changed, Mirabella. The werewolf closest to her original identity, Mirabella, still displays her compassionate pack mentality when she saves Claudette at the ball by tackling and preventing her from howling (Russell 250). This ultimately gets Mirabella released from St. Lucy, but she unselfishly does this for the good of her own pack member. Contrarily, Jeanette does not respond to Claudette's desperate need for help at the ball when she doesn't remember the dance moves (Russell 250). The difference between Jeanette and Mirabella's response to Claudette's need for help shows how much the nuns have changed the queer werewolves' values and behaviour throughout their assimilation stages. Through degrading Mirabella and using her as a scapegoat, the nuns have convinced the werewolves that their society has superior values and ideologies, ultimately making the werewolves want to become like them.

Overall, the nuns are successful in conforming the werewolves to their dominant culture's values. To them, "being human is like riding [a] bicycle. Once you learn how, you'll never forget" (Russell 246). This quote may be true, but despite teaching the werewolves how to act like humans, it is obvious throughout the story that the werewolves' natural instincts and identities are still present at times in their subconscious and thoughts. At first, they superficially hide their true identities in a "desire to please" the nuns (Russell 241). However, as their assimilation progresses, the Catholic ideologies begin to take over their original selves. Despite the werewolves' apparent assimilation, every now and then, and especially during emotional moments, the werewolves' original identities resurface. After Mirabella saves Claudette from howling at the ball, Claudette confesses that she "want[s] to roll over and lick her ears, [she] want[s] to kill a dozen spotted fawns and let her eat first" (Russell 250). Claudette is able to hide the resurgence of her original werewolf identity; however, this situation

demonstrates that her original identity still lingers in her thoughts. Even Jeanette, the most human-like werewolf, has moments in which she isn't able to hide her original queer identity; when being interrupted as she daydreams, looking at the woods, she would lunge at whoever disrupts her, "momentarily forgetting her human catechism" (Russell 242). These examples suggest that no matter if a queer identity gets assimilated or not, there will always be moments in which one's true identity will resurface, no matter how hard one attempts to hide it or is ashamed of it.

To summarize, the short fiction "St. Lucy's Home for Girls Raised by Wolves" demonstrates how dominant societies believe that their system of values is superior to that of marginalised societies. By obliging minorities to abandon their values until they eventually adopt theirs and degrading queer identities to enforce their superiority, dominant societies will stop at nothing to dissolve these marginalised identities. However, as can be seen in this story, despite being assimilated, queer identities will always linger in one's subconscious, occasionally showing through in their thoughts or actions, no matter how badly they want to hide it.

Works Cited

Russell, Karen. "St Lucy's Home for Girls Raised by Wolves." PBWorks. Granta, n.d. Web. 7 May 2016.

Why I Am Writing

Leena AZ Shear zad

If I didn't say my heart's speech, if I didn't write it on this white paper for ointment of my heart I feel like I sick.

When I write, I remember my childhood, when I saw the flowers and colored butterfly's several hours, I thought about the creation of them when I saw to everything in nature, I become absorbed, thinking always to myself these questions

What is the main reason of God's creations? Why do we become human in this world? In fact, all has a very strong influence on my soul, and, because of this I write.

When I write I feel from drop, change to a river and I hug universe and we both grasp each other. Why I should write? what is the goal of my writing?

In the depth of my heart, there is something like an unsaid secret that only I can know.

All of this called heart feeling. The things I learn from wise of the world I always want to do as a moralist example for life: such Mawlana Rumi, Ferdawsi, Shakespeare and others .

These are the greatest, they are immortal forever because of their wisdom.

They are the beloved son of earth. Earth is the mother of all nature and humanity and the best person is he who can stay always eternal in the hug of the nature and this is my goal.

Those who don't have any effort for eternal life they are not perfect and complete human.

Every human has like the sun, the privilege of giving light to the world.

Every human is unique and unobtainable, so let's make an effort to find the real place for us in the earth.

With Rumi, Avicenna and other Nobel man we always feel proud, but it's important tomorrow we will have who? Let's make another Avicenna, Hafiz and Rumi.

Without being human this earth doesn't have anything.

This is the hand of humanity that dust changes to Gold and stone to Gem.

My valuable message today is this: with trust, bravery and confidence to yourself, we can comprehend the affair of life you should understand the meaning of life. If you want to have a meaningful and unparalleled life you should understand the meaning of love.

Never compare yourself with others; always try to create.

It's Never too late, start today to value everything.

The person who is leaning on themselves they are the richest even they are very poor.

Don't think about the past, today is a new start; see to the tree of your life. Never let it fall. See to every chapter and page of your life, how it is beautiful like spring.

Our thoughts, our believes our morals make our life -season. We have the glorious God who appears every day with light of sun and beauty of moon and stars in the night.

You are the creator of your own fate and destiny's book can only be written by your own pen.

The real place of humanity is not the house or nest, it's the heart of those who love us we just call that place our homeland.

The real grave of humanity is not in the dust or ground it's in the heart of those forget them.

Understand the value of persons who love you more than the things you love.

Today is the best moment for give love to your beloved maybe tomorrow you have love but your beloved is not here.

One day we all will be a memory for others. How beautiful it is to be the sweetest memory of them.
 The real worth of humans is not money and wealth rather it's the thing money can't buy it.
 Days made beautiful, shines of sun. humanity lives by heartbeats, the heart lives by love and life doesn't have any other meaning instead of love.
 Every human has a beauty that everyone can't see.

Original Persian

چرا می نویسم ؟

نا گفته های وجود و دلم را اگر نگویم ، بروی این کاغذ سفید ننویسم برای تسلی دل ام ، مانند بیمار هستم.

انگاه که می نویسم اوانی طفلی ام به یادم می آید با دیدن گل و پروانه ساعت ها به تفکر در باره هستی آنها و خودم فرو می رفتم که چرا افریده شده اند و چرا افریده شده ایم ؛ واقعاً برآیم انقدر تاثیر گذار بود که امروز قلم را به رنگ و نوشتن واداشتم ، وقتی می نویسم از قطره دریا می گردم ، گویا که جهان را در اغوش گرفته ام و جهان من را.

چرا باید بنویسم؟ در عمق وجودم چیزهای است مانند راز های ناگفته که من می دانم و بس ؛ دردی در نهادم است که انرا چون ابر نو بهار یا مثل ابشار بنویسم . اینها همه ایننه احساسات و قلب است آنچه را که اموختم از فرزندگان عالم ، اندیشه های ناب ایشان را بهتوین الگو و سرمشق در زندگی ام قرار داده ام و اندیشه های آنها را با اندیشه های خودم به قلم تحریر در آورده ام . همان گونه که فردوسی ، مولوی ، لقمان حکیم برای جاویدانه زیستن تلاش ورزیدن تا بهترین فرزندان زمین باشند ، نامبرداران این مادر باشند ، در گهواره هستی همیشه زنده و جاوید باقی بمانند من هم هدف و اروزیم همین است.

ان انسان که برای جاویدانه زیستن تلاش نمی کند نیمی انسان است نی انسان کامل .و خوشبختی من زمانی خواهد بود که احساس نمایم جاویدانه شده ام . زنده کنی نام نیاکان خود روشنی چشم عزیزان و مردم خود، رونق پیشین خود را زنده کنم عظمت دیرینه خود را جاویدانگردانیم.

با داشتن رودکی ، مولوی و سینا چقدر زیبا می نازیم ولی مهم اینست که امروز کی ها را داریم و فردا کی ها را خواهیم داشت

هر يك انسان به منزله افتاب توانایی روشن کردن عالم را دارد . هر يك انسان نا تکرار و نایاب است . پس باید تلاش . نمود تا موقع خود را در زمین پیدا نمایم . انسان بیکاره و بیچاره نیست بلکه زمین سیاره ما بدون انسان بیکاره و بیچاره است . این دست ماست که خاک را زر می سازد ، سنگ را گوهر.

ارزشمند ترین پیام من این است که با اعتماد و تکیه بر خود و خلق شجاعانه ی اندیشه، می توان زندگی و بسیاری از مسائلش را درک کرد، می توان عشق را درک کرد. مقایسه را کنار بگذارید. خودتان خلق کنید. خودتان زندگی را تعریف کنید. همه چیز را رد کنید. خودتان شروع کنید، هیچ وقت دیر نیست. خودتان ارزش گذاری کنید. انسانی که به خود تکیه می کند، غنی ترین است، هر چند فقیرترین باشد.

خانه اساسی و واقعی انسان اشیانه های نیست که ما می سازیم ،بلکه قلب انانی است که ما را دوست دارند و برای ما احترام قابل هستند.

قبر واقعی انسان در قبر نیست ، باکه قلب کسانی هستند که فراموش می کنند.

شخصی باش که لحظه با تو بودن يك دقیقه، و لحظه بی تو بدون يك عمر باشد.

Чаро менавесам?

Но гуфта хои дилам ва вучудам ро агар нагӯям ва ба руй ин варақи сафед нанавесам барои тасалои дилам, монанди бемор кастам.

Онгоҳ ки менавесам овони тифли ам ба ёдам меоям ки бо дидани гул ва парвона соатҳо ба тафаккур дар бораи он фуру мерафтам, ки чаро офарида шудаем дилали хастӣ мо ва онҳо дар чист? Воқеан бароиам онқадар таъсири гузор буд ки имрӯз қалам ро ба ранг ва навиштан во дошт. вақти менавесам аз қатра дарё мегардам гӯё ҷаҳон ро дар оғуш гирифтам ва ҷаҳон ман ро..

Чаро бояд навесам?

Дар умқи вучудам ҷеҳҳои аст монанди розҳои Ногуфта ки ман медонам ва дарди дар неҳодам аст ки онро чун абари нав баҳор ва Обшорон менавесам.

инҳо ҳама оинна и эҳсосот ва қалаб аст. Ончи ро ки аз бузургони олам омӯхтаам, андеша зот ноби ишонро бо андеша хои худам ба қалами таҳрир дар овардаам.

Ҳамон гуна ки фирдавсӣ, Мавлави ва луқмони ҳаким барои ҷовидона зистан талош намуда анд то бектарин фарзандони замин бошанд, номбардорони ин модар бошанд. Дар гаҳвараи хастӣ ҳамеша зинда ва Ҷовид боқи бимонанд. Ман ҳам ҳадаф ва орузуям ҳамин аст. он инсонӣ ки барои ҷовидона зистан талош намекунад нимтанаи инсон аст не як Инсонӣ комил.хушбахтии ман замони хоҳад буд ки еҳсос намоям ҷовидона шудаам.

Чаро менавесам?

Но гуфта хои дилам ва вучудам ро агар нагӯям ва ба руй ин варақи сафед нанавесам барои тасалои дилам, монанди бемор хастам.

Онгоҳ ки менавесам овони тифли ам ба ёдам меоям ки бо дидани гул ва парвона соатҳо ба тафаккур дар бораи он фуру мерафтам, ки чаро офарида шудаем дилали хастӣ мо ва онҳо дар чист? Воқеан бароиам онқадар таъсири гузор буд ки имрӯз қалам ро ба ранг ва навиштан во дошт. вақти менавесам аз қатра дарё мегардам гӯё ҷаҳон ро дар оғуш гирифтам ва ҷаҳон ман ро..



Drip. Drip. Drop.

Maggie Rose Johnston

Drip. Drip. Drop.

A man sighs, staring blankly at a patched ceiling.

Drip. Drip. Drop.

Flickering in a futile attempt to remain alight, a lone lightbulb sways above his head. A single insect orbits the glow with drunken movements.

Drip. Drip. Drop.

He's used to it now, so he thinks. The never-ending, ever-present pitter-patter of water, dark and murky, dribbling down his cell's walls. The not-quite silence as leaky pipes cede to the weight of what they carry down, down below.

Drip. Drip. Drop.

A familiar sound; a companion in this small space devoid of warmth. A prison in all but name; he supposes 'basement' would be a more appropriate term for his solitary lair. Light is scarce under the earth; what windows to the outside world he has have long since been submerged by tomes, volumes, vast sources of knowledge slathered in grime.

Drip. Drip. Drop.

Long ago he abandoned books for keyboards, companionship for virtual identities, sunrays for falsely-lit screens. Technology had become his whole world as what lay beyond his cellar grew more and more terrifying. Murderers around every corner, cameras on every wall, toxins in every breath. Too much of a risk, going out there, when one could learn of all they could ever want to know behind the anonymous safety of the internet. It could bring him what he wished at the click of a button; why should he ever need to contact others when a swipe of his fingers accomplished the task?

Drip. Drip. Drop.

He has trouble keeping his mind trained on one thing, now. Tabs would dance back and forth as topics quickly became uninteresting, as the lack of activity threatened to drive him mad. There are so many things to do within the confines of his infinite playground. So many discussions to be had, so

many videos to watch, so many games to win, win, win. But they are fleeting pleasures, temporarily satisfactory but quickly becoming stale. He becomes frustrated easily, now, when things do not go his way, making online encounters just as perilous as those in person.

Thus, here he lies, screen having been smashed into a thousand shining shards against the books, their cloak of dust now floating about the room.

Drip. Drip. Drop.

It came so easily; the vengeance, the violence. But what was he to do now, without his distraction, his safe haven now doomed to be contaminated by things he no longer trusted? How could he take such a risk to his refuge? What would he do now? There was no food that remained here... His lover had left long ago, taking the cat with her.

The man shifts; glass gleams with his movement, yet his bloodshot eyes never leave the solitary light and its solitary worshiper. The fat, bloated fly stills its movements, seeming to assess its situation as he assessed his own. He watches at it begins to clean its eye, shadows dancing to reflect the change.

Perhaps starvation would be the simple answer to those questions, he muses. Perhaps he could simply wait, and think, and reminisce about how oddly wonderful things had been before. Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps...

He sighs, a dreary moan that makes the plumbing's sputterings seem silent, for a short time.

Drip. Drip. Drop.

The fly seems vexed by this puff of breath, or possibly startled by it, and resumes its buzzing, turning round and round the lightbulb, yet never daring to touch its gleaming surface.

He finds his gaze follows this dark, pulsating speck as it skitters about his ceiling, then becoming more silent as it flits through the stagnant air. The harsh coils of the bed beneath him seem less harsh as he watches the insect's desperate dance around the light it so desires. Perhaps he would see the sharp glare of the shattered glass and metal, or the pale speckles of dust in the air all around him, or the quietly shifting rivulets of water crawling down his wall, had he ever let his focus drift from this strange pairing.

Propping his twiglike form up on his forearms, back arched unnaturally from time spent crouched over the keys he tapped at, pale gaze remaining fixed on this odd ball occurring before his eyes, he watches.

And time passes.

And still, he watches.

Drip. Drip. Drop.

The original degenerate dance of the fly has ended; instead, one among its offspring has taken its place. Where it found a mate and a place to raise this maggot, the man does not wish to know.

He simply wishes to know where the small, squirming larvae have gone, how they evaded his now consuming hunger. It battled, almost daily, with his quivering terror.

He did his best not to move, now that emaciation rendered his limbs fragile, spindly things. Though the desire to search, to feed, to survive was strong, so was the fear that clutched his slowing heart when sound entered his humble abode.

Sound, barring that of the fluttering of the fly and the steady song of water along his chamber's wall.

And his fingers twitch.

Drip. Drip. Drop.

Circles, never ending, always twisting and spiraling. This is what the young fly creates as it circles its brilliant god, ever determined to accomplish a task only it knows of.

Now, as opposed to remaining vaguely set on the wavering light and its companion, the man's frantic eyes follow the airborne pest. Trail over its hair-prickled thorax, its bulging red eyes, its translucent wings. His own body, driven to desperation, is beginning to cannibalize itself. He is now too weak to even reach those incessant drops of water.

And his chest heaves.

Drip. Drip. Drop.

One breath, one last inhale. Then, perhaps, it would be over. But a flash, a predisposition for survival, demands one last attempt. One last try.

Stumbling to his feet, one hand finding purchase on a hefty book, he howls, a broken, rasping noise. He howls, and he lunges for the damned fly and its cursed light. The insect flits away, it too weakened, its own movements clumsy. But its instincts remain, ordering it to find shelter, up above the threat.

And his heart beats.

Drip. Drip. Drop.

All his force having gone into this one attack, the dying man sways on his feet, feeling his momentary will to live falter. But then he hears the fly's little buzz, an ill-timed victory cry. Again he spring for his prey.

And he slips, the water sleek under his bony feet.

Drip. Drip. Drop.

The impact is harsh, and would have elicited a gasp had he not no more breath remaining. A dictionary tumbles, smashing his gaunt face into a shard of glass.

And he bleeds, death finding him shortly thereafter.

Drip. Drip. Drop.

Noisy wings bring the fly to sit upon the man's eye, impaled. It tastes him through its feet.

And it feeds.

Drip. Drip. Drop.

Perfect

Samantha Fluet

I'm not asking the flower
to bloom in the winter
burst through the frozen earth
I'm not asking the snow to stop falling
mid-flight, no longer spiralling, no where to go

*

Its harder than it seems
to go on
when you're weighed down
by the weight of your own thoughts
spiralling out of control

When I see you
sometimes
they stop mid-flight

*

A little bit every day
I reach out to you
Your hand is nearly
brushing mine

Its not perfect
but its enough
to go on

Celestial Gazes

Maggie-Rose Johnston

There was once a boy; slight in stature, unruly in apparel and never-ending in his questionings. Many would sight him, perched precariously in bushy pines. A common sight, one all became used to after a time.

Most ignored him; after all, they were only visitors to the park, not its wardens. If this wayward child did not bother them, they would leave him to his nonsense.

Others tried to capture him; he was a feral animal, to their eyes, a poor creature in need of tender care. But attempts to tame the boy failed, for he was swift and wile and had a fine aim with his sling.

And some, few and far between, stopped and asked why, exactly he was there. Of course these people were rare, for most only care of what effects them or their morals. Never did they get close, for the subject of their curiosity would sit aloof in verdant needles. The boy delighted in these rare folks of the curious sort, and would tell them of strange, wonderful things.

“My pa would bring me up here,” he would crow, leaning against a wry trunk, “and sit me on the tallest o’ branches. As I got older I’d end up splintering their tops, and the men in orange would chop them down ‘til only the smaller trees were left standin’. So my pa left, too, to find taller trees for us. Only then will she be able to see us, and we to see her.”

Any further telling would be withheld, for the boy also delighted in the faces of those swindled out of a good tale. As of yet he had found none willing to search any farther than a few demands and briberies, none willing to offer their time to find the end to this story. None but one.

For there was also a girl. A girl, curved in her forms, generous in her smiles and silent in her search for answers. She saw how the adults treated the peculiar lad, and she envied the brilliance of his tall tale. And only she, with her quiet presence, knew more of the arboreal child.

Night after night he would crawl up the trees, greeting each like a beloved relative, gentle as he found his perch. She was much too clumsy to follow, but the boy knew this and, on the evenings where she approached in the golden lamplight, he would scamper up younger pines. His hearing was keen; he could sense her approach long before she herself knew she wanted to follow him. Her dresses would snag and rip and tear, but still she followed to the best of her abilities.

Only if the night was lively, only if the breeze whispered gently, only if Orion watched from above would he speak. Gone was the shrill trill of the brink of adolescence. The voice that would drift through the air was one of a storyteller, weaving something of the unbelievable sort. A melody giving life to a symphony that was altogether quite the enchantment, or so the girl might say.

It was the eye that drew him here, he would purr. A great iris of churning silver, choppy as a sea of mercury yet with features as fine as a platinum statue. His father always spoke of it with wonder, this eye; vast and beautiful, yet sightless as a newborn pup. This eye was blind, born to the sky without a pupil to allow it to see the world which it governed. Blinking slowly, over the slow span of a month, it would squint and peer through the rippling of the dark, looking for whom it loved. But it could not truly look, its vision only that of faint shadows and feeble light, and thus it cried shimmering tears.

By day the other eye would open, but this eye saw only brilliance; it projected the beauty it imagined upon the world and warmed it, creating something untrue to the nature of things. Blinded in a different way, blinded by its own glare, this eye was just as unsuccessful as its twin, and together they watched without ever sighting what they so desired.

One such night the girl brought a lantern with her, the flickering flame swaying near the heavy branches the tree bore. And in this ruddy light she finally beheld his face, and he offered her a wry grin.

“My pa will find a way for her to see us,” he rasped, eyes staring past her, past the sky. “If he don’t, then I’ll do it for him. I think I’m ready to meet her now, don’t ya think?”

His eyes ate up the gleam of the lamp, one milky and white and the other pale and iridescent. She gave him the lamp when he asked for it and watched him scuttle away into the dark with his prize. Then, she left, the sky wreathed in indigo shadow.

It was late in September on a cold evening when a spark caught in the park, conifers of all sorts crackling and hissing as flames lapped at the smoke in the air. Fire grew stronger and brighter, eating away at vast swaths of forest and blooming brighter than a city upon the land. None saw the boy, nor did they know what happened to him; he did not concern them, after all.

Only the girl noticed, as her family fled far, far away, that despite this violent contrast, dark plumes of smoke blotted out this catastrophe from the seething gaze that was the sun and moon. The fire would go unnoticed by the celestial bodies, just as the boy had always been unnoticed by his mother.

Mother

Leena AZ Shearзад

I don't want to go to paradise if my mother is not in there.

Mother, your beautiful name is the most powerful word in any language.

I want to take your warm hand, to flow deeply in your beautiful eyes, to always say these words:

I love you, mom.

Mother, you give me all your happiness, and accept every kind of pain that I have made.

Until my last breath I'll never forget you.

My glorious God, give me that ability to always be with her, may her kind heart never be broken by me.

Being a mother means having the hardest responsibility in the world, means there is no break, but unconditionally giving love

Mother, in praise of your tender world, I will sing the melody of devotion.

I find the glory of love in your motherhood murmuring to us.

I see through the motive of Creator in your tender heart.

Your sight is the proof? of love to my heart.

My faith is the result of your prayer; I recognize God thanks to your tongue.

Seven heaven is underfoot of mother.

Pure love is the love a mother gives her child.

Her Self-sacrifice, anxiety, and limpid tears all called pure love.

Mothers love eyes are always anxious because of us like God blue eyes in the sky.

In my lifetime, I kneel down two times.

First in the presence of God.

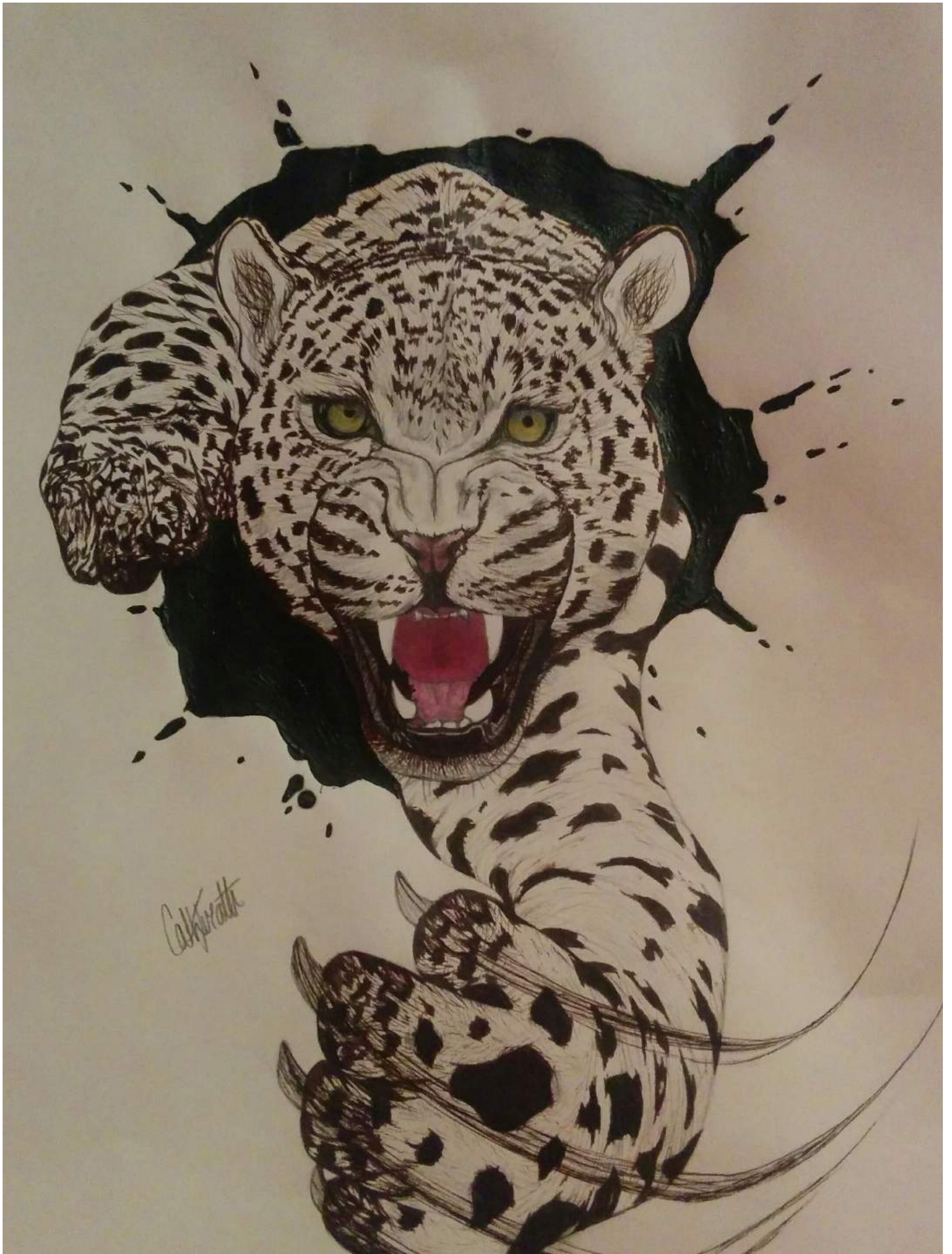
Second in the presence of my beloved mom.



Thanks for the Memories
Maggie Rose Johnston



Leopard (Right)
Fox (Left)



L'amour dès le premier regard

Ahmad Nazari

Sherbrooke, c'est la fin du mai. En ce merveilleux après-midi, je me promène avec mes écouteurs à l'oreille. Habillé d'un beau chandail et d'une paire d'espadrilles, j'ai décidé de prendre de l'air pour me reposer. Le ciel est tellement bleu et beau que j'ai l'impression d'être à l'été. Tout à coup, je vois quelques hommes qui intimident et agressent la belle jeune femme en la traitant de tous les noms. Je la reconnais tout de suite : c'est Julie, une de mes collègues. Elle crie de panique et les hommes ferment leurs oreilles à toute parole de la demoiselle. J'interviens en insultant et en jetant mon gant pour sauver Julie qui est vraiment splendide à mes yeux. Dès j'ai posé mon regard violent sur eux, ces criminels ont eu la chair de poule et ils ont laissé tranquille la jeune fille. Dès que j'ai vu son visage, j'ai eu le sourire jusqu'aux oreilles. Ses yeux et son sourire m'ont séduit dès le départ. Elle me regarde avec beaucoup d'amour et de séduction.

-Merci, Ahmad ! Tu es mon héros. dit-elle avec une voix amoureuse.

-De rien. Cela me fait plaisir. répond-je en la regardant droit dans les yeux.

Elle m'embrasse sur ma joue et je marche jusqu'à chez moi.

Ensuite, en ouvrant ma boîte postale, je découvre une enveloppe qui contient une feuille blanche écrite à l'encre invisible. En faisant un peu de chimie avec cette feuille, je découvre qu'elle est écrite avec une calligraphie apparentant à une belle femme. Voilà ce que j'apprends : « J'ai une surprise pour toi. Alors, pour la découvrir, sors dehors et tu verras la suite. Je suis certaine que tu es heureux. Signé : Anonyme. » À ce moment-là, je me questionne sur la lettre, car, selon moi, cette lettre constitue d'une blague pour me distraire. Tout ce que je sais, c'est que la lettre a été écrite par une femme. Malgré l'hésitation, j'ai décidé de suivre les instructions. En plus, il fait beau dehors et je dois prendre de l'air après tout. Aussitôt que je sors de ma maison, je vois un beau bouquet de roses avec une note. Je la lis : « Tu as trouvé mon cadeau. Maintenant, rends-toi dans un IGA et achète-moi quelque chose. Ensuite, rends-toi au parc Jacques-Cartier pour découvrir la suite » Alors, je décide d'acheter du chocolat en forme d'un cœur, car je sais que les femmes aiment du chocolat. Après avoir acheté du chocolat, je ressens du pessimisme dans mon cœur, car je pense qu'elle me joue un tour et que tous mes efforts ne valent rien. Par la suite, je me rends au parc et je découvre une feuille dans un buisson. Selon moi, c'est un autre indice pour avancer à ma quête. En effet, c'est une autre lettre qui me donne un autre indice : « Je te félicite beaucoup ! Tu as presque terminé la quête. Ta dernière étape est de te rendre jusqu'à chez moi. En rendant chez moi, tu auras ma surprise que je t'ai promise. » À la fin de la cette lettre, elle a laissé des flèches en spécifiant le numéro de rues que je dois traverser. m'orienter. rends à un rendez-vous avec une belle fille. Alors, je continue de me promener avec un sac d'IGA, rempli des cadeaux, et la feuille qui aide à m'orienter. Des passants me regardent de manière passionnante et ils se demandent si je me rends à un rendez-vous avec une belle fille. Au fil de ma promenade, la journée se dirige vers la fin et je vois un magnifique coucher du soleil. Je marche avec un visage questionné, mais je demeure curieux quant

à la fin de ma quête. Je veux terminer une bonne fois pour toutes et je veux voir le bout du tunnel. Alors, après suivi des flèches, je trouve la maison et je cogne à la porte. C'est un silence total. Alors, j'ai tourné la poignée de porte et j'entre à la maison. À ce moment, j'ai de la sueur partout et, dans un état de stress, j'avale ma salive. Mon cœur bat à un rythme incroyable. Tout à coup, dans un état perdu, j'ouvre accidentellement l'interrupteur. Coup de théâtre : Tout le monde sort de leur coin en criant :

-SURPRISE !

J'ai tellement peur que je suis le point d'évanouir. Dès que je vois Julie, mon visage rougit et mon cœur frappe plus fort que prévu. Elle a tellement une belle robe que j'ai l'impression d'être dans un mariage. À ce moment-là, je devine que c'est elle qui écrit toutes les lettres pour organiser une fête.

-Voici ton cadeau. dit-je en sortant du chocolat de mon sac.

En voyant cela, elle sourit avec beaucoup d'amour.

-Merci beaucoup ! réplique-elle.

Ensuite, la belle musique commence à vibrer l'ambiance de la maison. C'est une véritable fiesta qui commence et tout le monde danse. Pour finir, on s'embrasse comme dans les bons films d'amour. Le baiser m'offre l'impression d'être au paradis avec elle. Avec mon romantisme, je commence à devenir Brad Pitt qui séduit pleins de femmes dans ses films.

Life

Leena AZ Shear zad

Sometimes when you have expectation those who help you,
in defeated times they will give you the biggest defeat.

Sometimes you can be nervous, but you can't make anybody upset, troubled with lots of hardest events.
Today is a bad day, don't forget good things are on the way and tomorrow is a better day.

People may forget what they hear but, they will never forget how they feel.
Life means passing from vicissitudes Those who pass shall win.
Life means understanding each other in any kind of circumstance and creating love.
In the way of prosperity, we should stay strong like mountains.

Our duty in life is not to live without problems, but to live with goals and motives.

I just know life is the colour of God.
God is neither blue nor red.
But is the colour of reality and love.
just know only with love you can find God.
Love is the endless river in the name of love The broken mirror in the name of heart.

The pearl spilt by the name of tear.
The endless path by the name of hope.

The Mantle

Nathan Guerrette

Alas! The sweet alluring breath of the wind came through the ancient oak wood and swept past them without a trace of sorrow. Amid this, a soft pitter-patter of hooves escaped such corruption, yet had isolated the only thing that remained of him...

For even as she slept, the girl had brought the night a most pleasing aroma of oak and the pine that had spread all around the newly acquired home of Ana and her daughter, Inga. The house was old and ancient, with ivy grown 'round the edges of the thing, suffocating the forgotten, now decrepit wood. It was by some miracle that the damn place hadn't have fallen to the Earth from which it was erected upon 250 years ago. Alas, 'twas the only home left standing that Ana could live in, due to the spiritual retreat that had been called such as to prevent the mind from worrying of eviction. They would never find her and her daughter here, at last.

There had been a man named Constance who lived to be the grandfather of Ana and the great grandfather of her daughter. The man had a long scar on his left eye that dashed from his forehead to his cheekbone. His monocle had covered the most of his face but the scar was visible nonetheless.

'Twas him! He alone was the owner of the very home that Ana had ran to. There had been no paintings, nor photographs of the man and so it became a rather interesting debate in the family as to describe him, whilst feasting on Christmas dinner. It would often become, afterwards, a tradition to exaggerate and hyperbolize the man to the children, of whom would fall over their seats and giggle uncontrollably.

Inga would remember a time where her Aunt Llewellyn and her mother would describe the man as "so repulsive that they couldn't paint him as the paint would fall off the canvas in retaliation".

~

'Twas a quarter 'till midnight when the girl, all dressed for bed had sat upright with her back against the post, picked forth a book of which she was quite fond of. The novel was indeed Tolstoy's own, *Anna Karenina*, and it was all the most often when Inga would pretend to be Kitty Shcherbatsky, with her elegant and girlish features, she would read the book until Kitty became sick, she decided to play Anna, as to allow herself to be with Count Vronsky.

She began the second part of the novel when she heard a very odd noise from, what she thought, was coming from below her. So, she got up out of bed, and leaned over to see what was calling her from 'neath the bed frame. 'Twas nothing. Nothing at all.

She had scrunched her face and listened more intently as to hear what the noise may have been saying. Perhaps it was her mother? No, her mother was asleep, that could not be it. That could not be it.

Alas, she climbed back into bed and continued the book until she heard the noise again, but at this point she had heard it much more clearly, though not loud enough to make out its intent. She had thought she heard an "N" in the word somewhere. She waited a bit more.

The noise continued, ghostlike once more. And soon, Inga had sworn she had heard her name.

And so, she had jumped from her bed, and climbed down onto the wooden floor, barefoot. She opened her door, and soon crept slowly and soundlessly from her bedroom to the stairs down into the common area. To which the ghostlike voice had whispered more and more, each intonation becoming more present and clearer, until it was certain it was saying her name. She approached the commons, and the voice had stopped, but soon, she crept into a corridor to the left.

Then she had felt hairs prickle on her neck, as her name was shouted, then screamed as if the name was torture. She walked straight into the corridor, in a trance, and in front of her figure stood a large and ornate oak door.

This door was not like any of the others in the house, and she could not think of a time when the door was even there. Although the screams seemed as if they were howling from the door, it became a reaction as she approached it to unhinge the latch and to open it, though she did not. The oak door was indeed ornate with the most exotic of ebony fixings all around the edges of the door. The markings resembled a long elaborate story that personified the metamorphoses of boy to man. As beautiful as the edges of the door was, 'twas the center fixture that presented the most illustrious elk antlers that hung a third of the way to the floor on the door. The handle of the thing matched the ebony texture of the edges and yet, the clasp of the door was a rich solid gold that looked authentic and new, as if it needn't have been polished. There she had placed her hand to turn the clasp and to release the latch. She opened the door, and instantly, an aroma of agallochum and of various fragrances came lofting into her nose as she pressed forwards into the chasm.

There were stairs that immediately started as she closed the oak door into the darkness. As she did that, she could have sworn that the elk that was in replace of the knocker had illuminated its eyes with a fire that shook the very being of the home.

The stairs were wood, and although they resembled as if they were polished, they hadn't of been. Lo, the stairs that led to the unknown did not creak, nor show any sign of wear or relief as Inga walked up them. And as she trekked forwards, there had been an illumination that formed from the top of them. As she got closer, she could see a long tapestry of crimson rugs emblazoned with an unknown language. She had reached the top of the stairs, soon thereafter, to see a very large and very high ceilinged room. The room had shelves for walls and each book looked compact as they showed no signs of wiggle room between them. There was no dust on anything. Not on any of the books, not the polished wooden floor, not on the solitary window that sat directly in front of her, projecting the outside storm. Although she could see the lightning crack, she could not hear the slightest rumble of thunder pass through the valley, nor could she hear the rain that pitter pattered across the window. It was if the place was secluded from everything.

She walked. Gazing at the shelves and the large portrait that hung neatly over an enormous hearth. She hid her eyes as she approached it, but after a second she looked at the flame. Not at the edge, but directly into it, and saw a note that lied in the center of it. She knelt over the bear pelt that lied in front of the flame, and got closer to the hearth.

As she did just that, a soft creak was heard as she faced the flame. A voice soon was heard over the flame.

"You have no place here." it whispered.

Inga did not turn around, but rather, froze in position. She did not speak, as she did not know what to say. Her voice had escaped her as she stared into the flame. Footsteps softly walked towards her, though they did not sound like footsteps by a man but rather not unlike horse hooves as they walked upon the polished wood.

"You are here to celebrate the death of man, perhaps?" it asked.

At this, Inga shook her head.

"Do not fear a mere faun, for I will not harm a girl." he said soothingly.

Inga slowly rose to her feet, and turned around. As soon as she caught sight of the faun she looked back at the hearth.

"You are strange, for if you had discovered this place, you would have surely seen faun folk before? As we gather the parcels for our masters, the Centaur? Do not fear us, child, for fear is the recurrence of true hatred and misunderstanding."

Inga paused and looked back at the faun, of whom smiled. His hair was curled on his head but brown and straight on his chest. He wore a large red fur coat and his eyes were staring directly at Inga's.

"You are Inga? Forgive my sudden rudeness, for I hadn't seen you precious face since the old age. Have you come back from the dreaded war? The tea is still warm and the biscuits quite cool. Stay if you must, for I have indeed called for your return with the strength of my feeble yet yearning heart."

"How? How do you know-?"

"For I have indeed saw you in your mother's arms as youngling. The woman has cared for you more than I can say, yet you left me. Left this home and left your ancestors to rot in the cold forgotten fire."

"This has been odd. For this home has provided me with its solace for only but a night! Unless I am mistaken, this home has never seen me in any age, old or new!"

The faun had chuckled at this.

"You may call me Aktaion."

"Hello" Inga said coldly. "Where is my mother?"

Aktaion frowned. He looked over to the window.

"Do you think it'll rain all night?"

"I do not believe so." she answered. "Please tell me where mother is?"

The faun paced over to the bookshelves. He grabbed a book from the wall whilst muttering to himself absent mindedly. He flipped to a random page, and spoke.

"How many times does the word 'death' occur in Anna Karenina?"

"95 times if I am not mistaken. But please, Mr. Aktaion, my mother!" she exclaimed.

At this, the faun sighed. He absentmindedly rubbed a scar on his eye.

"You know my name." He asked.

"Yes. You have told me your name is Aktaion, but- " "Yet you have no foreseeable idea on why I am here?"

"No, as I have not known you long, except-"

"I am the Torchbearer for the centaurs." He said softly. "I burn the deceased. Your mother, Ana, has since died. 'Tis my duty to put her remains in urns above the flame"

As Aktaion had said, Inga had noticed a large collection of urns above where she stood next to the fire. Each varying in size and texture, however, she noticed the largest were on the left and they were the darkest shade of ebony and on the right they were small and round, with a marble like texture to them. Inscribed onto them were names. The largest was a man named Tuomas Teloni (the first of her family) all the way to Junas Aquila (the most disgraced cousin of Tuomas). All of them were there, in line.

He pointed to a spot in the middle. An empty spot with Inga's mother's name imprinted in a luscious golden color, indicating that was the spot where Ana was to be cremated.

"You are showing love for her. One that I cannot fathom. These woods breathe a musk much too bleak for me. For they had told me! The elder wood had shrieked and flailed in agony! The limbs of the mother bearing fruit as they writhed in painful ecstasy! For they are coming! I can hear their whispers, and I can taste their distress! Sweet child, you must hide me in the shade! Only then will night descend upon another hideous soul!"

As she turned 'round the ornate door had vanished, leaving only an empty hole in the howling void. A bitter and fragile wind came in and swept past her shoulders and died feebly in the flickering flame beside her. For it had gotten colder, and the full moon hung just above her. The snow fell harder as she stumbled away from the fawn, yet with each step came another inch...until she became the snow, and the coldness of the enchanted hallways of nature became her burial ground...each step... each pressing force towards survival...fading, and fading as each snowflake fell slower and slower until she could hear a soft chime of bells in the mess of ivory rain. With each step, she could hear the chant of pagans, softly singing, mourning in the wind. Warmth became her desire, and yet... the coldness faded. Slowly, the urn was filling and soon, it was not unlike the rest. The pagans ceased, and the bells stopped their resonations, the sound was lifted by the sole howl of the wolves of the throne room, beckoning the return of their master.

Yet the smell of agallochum and the kiss of sweet flame was all around her. The coldness, as it could have, evaporated from around the wood. The flames were rising and, with them, a man approached her. He held an elongated torch in one hand and in the other, a long stick that prodded into Inga's chest. Inga, who continued onwards

with each step, was pressed back two.

All
Became
Still

...and so very quiet.

In the far distance, an oak door had appeared, although, in the midst of flames, there was no mark of wear upon it. Each fixture was intact; the ebony corridor was not tarnished with the marks of fire. As the girl approached it, she looked at the clasp, the golden clasp of which still had marks on it from her own hands...hands that opened the oak door into the study.

She could hear laughter...distant voices. She could smell the same familiar aroma, yet she could also waft the scent of elk as it lay on the table.

The table had many people surrounding it. On the far left a very large and dark haired man. To the far right, a woman with fair skin and blonde hair. In the middle of the table was a large ornate chair and a chalice with red wine sitting next to a golden plate with no food upon it. Next to the throne was a woman, of whom Inga had recognized as her mother.

Her mother had beckoned her, as did the rest of the crowd. She had only known her mother, yet, as she approached her, the rest of them became more and more familiar, as if there had been a connection somehow, in this hallway of enchanted ebony. Somewhere, where the ghosts of midwinter fires smolder, a hunter fends off the rest of the wolves with only a knife. As the wolves devour his flesh, the last thing he had seen is an elk, with its antlers pointed at God. As with this case, the elk had been on the mantle place facing the table, of which, the girl had eaten her fill, as her mother recited an old poem to her:

It was in this haunted place under a moonless
cloak of ebony
I was drawn to the glow of a young spirit weeping
in the woods
The blackest ravens and ice-veiled boughs,
Yearn for your embrace, spirit of the melancholia
Show me, again, your sweet face
Enchant me with your rich, cinder burnt ether
Lure me into your arms and bless unto me eternal
death

Of all the while that the girl had been in the midst
of the elk hanging so neatly on the mantle, the
urns had all since then shattered. The ash had
been spread all across the floor of the pelt that
lay in front of the fire. Every now and then there
would be a stray speck of ash that would touch the
flame, and it would instantly make the flame turn
a brilliantly hue of crimson. At this, Ana had been
watching her daughter and had then asked her.

“You are quite unhappy in the family’s rendez-
vous.” She said. “Come, let us sit ‘neath the pan-
theon of oak.”

At this, they did just that. They, her mother and the
elder Teloni, had, walked to the edge of study to
the pantheon.

“I felt the gentle kiss of flame caressing my neck
as it swallowed me in its undying grasp” said
Inga, near tears as she sat on the stone nearest the
catafalque.

“I had died, and you the same, but not for any rea-
son other than to bring closure to the family name,
for the house was calling for our exile the moment
it heard us.” Whispered Ana.

The man named Teloni nodded.

“These walls” he spoke with barely a whisper as
he caressed the floor. “The wood is breathing. You
feel it. I feel it. Your mother feels it. The faun, the
damned faun, feels it.”

“The faun! Oh what was it now?” Inga gasped.

“Aktaion, my dearest, the hunter! For he, the
Torchbearer! Look above the Mantle, sweet child!
The faun had soon become the hunted!”

At this, the girl ran over to the hearth and stopped
at the spot where she was first found, watching a
dying spark feebly smolder. Although, now it is
her who tended a large, expanding flame! One that
was` rising to the heat of the painting of Con-
stance, as he gazed down at her, with the monocle
and scar. Now it was certain, now it was clear,
the head of Aktaion was left on display above the
mantle for all to see!

There had been silence in the room of enchanted
oak and ebony. A deathlike silence that gave way
to every sound. The sleet was hitting the window
with a sharp, but faint rattle as the flame roared
louder and louder. The girl stumbled over to the
table, knife in hand, and she began a series of mu-
tilations to her body. First her arms, then her legs
then her stomach and neck.

Yet there was no blood that poured forth from the
wounds. Each time she cut her body, it instantly
healed and no pain, nor blood or mark was felt or
seen again.

“You are ill my dear! Teloni, we must!” her moth-
er screamed, emphatically.

“Ana, there is another choice, yet-”

“We mustn’t do anything! This is a matter for the
family! For the child is indeed a marionette hung
feebly on string by the will of her master, Ak-
taion!”

At this, Teloni muttered something, and soon, he rose from his seat to see the child. He had taken, from the table, a hammer and a dozen nails, and from this, he picked the child up, propped her against the head of the faun and from there he crucified her to the fixture above the hearth. The family soon then grasped each other's hands as they stared up at the girl from the flame, as it rose up to lick the feet of which bled a dark crimson wine onto the pelt below her.

Yet from there, in some distant wood, a voice was heard howling in the void, crying and yearning for the day to come, but rather, it lay in cold waste as it shouted endlessly over and over again in desperate attempts to sway the god of fate to swing in her favor. But alas, the mantle had its fill and from there, the oak door, with all of its ebony edges and the one single golden clasp that opened forth a study of misery and neglect had since then toppled onto itself onto the earth it was erected upon 250 years ago.

Leviathan

Maggie- Rose Johnston



Symphony of Screams

Maggie Rose Johnston

I'm terrified of myself; what have I done? What sort of craze took over me, to make me inflict such a horror? Maybe it was that utter, total, terrible agony. Hearing that my father had died, struck dead where he stood by some delusioned youth -what sort of a father did that child have, for it to run around with a shotgun on a Thursday evening?- might have been the trigger. Perhaps, perchance; the sound of my mother's broken wail was enough to get my nose out of my books and my thoughts away from my studies.

Or maybe it was simply how her scream sounded in my suddenly shattered mind.

Of course I was given time to grieve; we all split apart, those remaining in this family, each holed up in separate rooms to scream of this hole in our lives. Of course those at school tiptoed around me, as if the slightest breeze should tear me apart. Of course I smiled, tearfully, each sneer pulling painfully at my cheeks as I attempted to regain a semblance of normalcy.

But a strange state of mind found me, as opposed to a blessed relief from all these pitying stares. What usually gave me pleasure left me feeling quite hollow, wondering why such trivial things would ever make me giggle or laugh or chuckle. Instead I felt a prickling, just at the back of my nape, where I could feel them watching me. Like the tentative steps of small spiders this odd sensation spread, down through my torso, trailing through my spine down into the very tips of my fingers and toes where it would wiggle like a swarm of parasites. The giggles, the laughs and the chuckles of the creatures around me sounded more... intriguing. Drawing me near, though I had no heart to join into the chorus.

Sound, I soon discovered, had a new meaning to me. It spoke to me, it fed me, in the way silence and appearances and the meaning behind the noise no longer could. The giddy music leaping from delicate jaws no longer held my attention. I was becoming addicted – entranced – to what one's vocal cords could create. Soon my focus would remain only at the indignant squeals, then the hushed, harsh words. Then the growled, sharp retorts, then the bellowing rages that I so scarcely was able to enjoy. Then the piercing howl as a lass broke her arm as she took a harsh fall down the stairs, the ultimate perfection of melodious noise.

It was during this time that I recalled that I had been frequenting someone, before my life began to revolve only around what was heard.

He was a lovely boy; finely sculpted yet not so as for one to suspect some meddling surgeon's involvement. A kind, thoughtful demeanor resided within him; he was always so eager to please, always so gentle, always so affectionate. The kind of young man who would halt in his tracks to give a stray pup's ears a loving stroke. A sort of purity, so rarely found in our modern world.

Away in Europe he had been, off in the remote country to see long-awaiting relatives, where the Internet's twitching grasp was resisted. Only when he returned did he learn of my father's fate, of how I had changed, and he rushed to my side, ever diligent, and did his very best to console me. The young man was more than willing to fend off the insects crawling at my walls, ever understanding. He even assured me that the phantom of my father which appeared to me was but a trick of the light, ever so comforting was he. His words where all that embodied his essence, all that he used to sooth my encroaching madness.

And in those soothing words I found what I so craved.

The perfect tone; the delightful pitch; the exquisite timber; a smooth soprano that all but made my toes curl even when he only said the gentlest things.

I began to wonder what sort of symphony could exit his rough lips if he were to be in pain.

Our intimate activities soon became more intense. Cuffs, biting, scratching; anything I could do to get the music I so desired from him. The pleasure I felt from his touch was as fleeting as a quiet breeze; I wanted his sounds, his groans, his cries, noises so primal none could summon them at will.

It became my mission to do just that.

Excuses for time alone became excuses to make him scream. My abuse of his body increased, my need unstable, yet he did not run, nor seek aide, nor so much as skip a beat when others would point out how weary he had become. Perhaps he saw me as a damsel in distress, the maiden of his mission in need of saving. Perhaps he thought he could cure my internal ailment, if only he gave me what I wanted. Perhaps, perchance.

One day I could not bear it any longer; the temptation of the most grandiose of howls had been eluding me, kept shut tight between gritted teeth that forced out a tender, pained upturn of the lips. The thought of how the screams of someone dying in utter, complete agony kept me awake at night, my musical instrument unconscious beside me, fresh marks adorning his skin.

My mother and siblings were away; off meeting with friends of my father's unable to attend his funeral, weeks ago. We had the household to ourselves, to use as we pleased. I had found a sharp, sleek knife, one my deceased parent used when skinning his kills after a hunt. I kept it hidden, under my plush pillow as my lover lay me down onto the bed, before finding himself restrained to it. As I brought him to ecstasy, a simple art compared to that I had mastered to elicit the resonances I so desired, the knife found his finger, a mere accident.

The panicked howl that pierced the air triggered something akin to a feeding frenzy; I could hold back no longer, blood flowing freely as he shrieked in growing terror, pulling at his restraints in vain.

Things became shrouded to me afterwards; I vaguely recall hearing his regrets, irritating gasps between cries, how he had trusted and loved me with all his being. Pained sobbing as my knife sliced through his skin, leaving raw, red meat to the air. Returning, euphoric at his calls for help as a bolder tool began to carve into the bones of his fingers, then into his brow. I found that his eyes and lips brought him particular pain when cut ever so delicately, and that pain brought me to unknown heights of bliss.

And then I recall silence. No more of his blessed voice, only his blood coating me in sticky sheets. If I listened closely I could hear it dribbling down through the linens, take in how harsh this quiet was compared to the last wail I had prompted from my companion. A work of art, the greatest I would ever hear. But then a brilliant thought struck me.

I am writing this so those who would wish to know understand the power of the voice and its many tones. How it scares me that such a beautiful thing sits, never appreciated or adequately admired, and how it can change one's mind with one note. Bile is stinging my throat, and trembling has taken hold of my limbs. What power, the unknown desires have, to have driven me to such madness within less than a month's time. What power, the sounds of the world have, to drive me to still want more, even after this.

I can hear the sirens approaching, yet the only thing I now wish to hear is my own heart halting its beating. One final stutter before an all-encompassing stillness... Maybe then I will have found the most euphoric of sounds.



Sunset on the Lake
Wesley Smith

Humans of Champlain



“I grew up in Tajikistan, a Persian country. I am in love with literature and poetry for as long as I’ve known myself, and I write too.

My valuable message today is this: With trust, bravery, and confidence in ourselves, we can comprehend the affairs of Life. If you want to have a meaningful and unparalleled life, you should understand the meaning of Love. Always try to create; it’s the only way you will be in tranquility.

I love my language. I write in my language, and I am trying to translate in English too. Every person is unique and unobtainable, so let’s make an effort to find the real place for us on Earth.”

(“What’s your advice to new students?”)
“Eat the fruit in the lobby on Fridays. It’s free!”



("What's your advice to new students?")
"Stay on top of your sh**! Wait ... can I say
sh**?"
("We'll put stars on it.")



"What's a pizza's favourite type of joke? A
cheesy one!"



“When I was eight I thought snowflakes were alive because a reporter said that they were all different -- like humans.”



“My friend said I’d look good in it.
It took some convincing.”

“I’ve been doing make up for five years. Ever
since, I’ve bettered my technique. This was
fast, only an hour and a half, all alone.”



“When I was in kindergarten, my friend and I had to clean tables . . . You know those plastic eyes? Googly eyes? We wanted to keep one but we didn’t have pockets. So, I put it in my ear and it got stuck. I had to go to the hospital.”



“I like Champlain because the teachers and students are very close. My favourite spot is the entrance where students meet. . . . It’s the heart of the campus.”

