

Assumption College's
Literary Magazine

MUSE

Loyal Inquisitive Ambitious Appreciative

Volume IV
2017-2018

MUSE

Assumption College's Literary Magazine

We are **loyal** to each other

We are **inquisitive** about the writing world

We are **ambitious**, creative writers

We are **appreciative** each other's imaginative works

**A collection of Drawing,
Fiction, Painting,
Photography, Poetry,
Non-Fiction & Short Stories
created by members of the
Assumption College community**

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

It has been an exciting year for *Muse*! After hours of deliberating, the Staff Editors have compiled the poetry, prose, and artwork you see here.

Muse would like to thank the Writing Workshop professors, John Hodgen and David Thoreen, both of whom have honed their students' work and encouraged them to submit. We would also like to thank Professor James Lang for his guidance. In addition, *Muse* would like to thank its Staff Editors and all who have submitted. We would not be able to produce such a vibrant magazine without all your hard work!

OUR SELECTION PROCESS

Muse is completely and utterly a work of undergraduate student achievement. The Editors-in-Chief compile all submissions as anonymous works to be assessed by the Staff Editors. The Editors then meet to discuss the literary merits of each submission and battle it out to select the most distinguished prose, poetry, and art pieces for publication. The magazine is then composed by the Editors-in-Chief.

Want to be a part of *Muse* Volume V? You can never be too early! Send literary submissions as attached word documents and photography/artwork as .jpeg or .tiff files to muse@assumption.edu.

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Art & Photography

Erynne Arvisais
Steven Foertsch
Eva Hogan
Julia Minichello
Kateylynn Rosa
Gianna Rousseau
Rheannon Swire



What am I? (..... 24601)

I'm not complex
I don't intricately carve subtle nuances
Like Michelangelo in Florence
I'm overt and obnoxious
An on-fire caveman screaming in your face
A flaming homo erectus.
I'm not methodical or consistent:
Just some of those habits I never picked up in
middle school
Like studying
Blowing gum bubbles
Or having high self esteem

I'll go through a year long drought
Before jumping into a river
Forgetting that I don't really know how to swim
But I don't really know how to drown either
So I just kind of chill there.
Oh wait that's hypothermia.

I sift through the word-vomit that I spew out
Looking for a lump of fool's gold
And after the words that would have had resonance
In the hands of someone better are spent
The tide of sickening motivation passes.
I am abruptly nauseated to my core
At the sight of what is before me,
And that's just my face reflected in the computer
screen.

I want to move to the moon

I want to move to the moon.

The moon doesn't have hair to be held back above
a toilet on a Saturday night.

The moon doesn't have mascara stained shoulders or
beds and friends that were supposed to be left alone.

The moon doesn't have clothes to be invaded and sheets to
be stained with experience and innocence and being too
drunk to remember.

The moon doesn't have tears on a Sunday morning after a
shaky voiced phone call from a childhood friend telling you
that she woke up in the wrong bed.

The moon doesn't have gravity to hold down the words that
earth would keep pushed down inside our mouths and
trapped below our throats
and imprisoned by our ribcages holding the breath inside
our lungs
or society blocking its ears refusing to hear and accept
that maybe what she wore that night didn't mean a damn
thing and that
the boy who took what was hers was not just doing what
boys do but instead
was the result of what happens when boys notice girls being
sent home from school for
revealing their shoulders one inch too many and the prod-
uct of fifty year old men
calling thirteen year old girls sluts for wearing their shorts
too short.

what type of place are we living where the word rape
makes the skin crawl of
1 of 4

I am 1 of 4 children.

I should probably take them to the moon with me.



Your Failure

I am your walking failure
I am a constant reminder of your failure

You saw me as broken
You thought I needed fixing
You objectified me
You saw me as a broken used toy
You took it upon yourself to be the one to 'fix me'
You thought you could fix me

I admit that at the time we met
I had some emotional problems
I was handling them
I didn't need help
I was down but
I sure as hell wasn't broken

You had a life mission though
You thought that your purpose was to 'fix' people
You thought I was your next project
You thought I was just some broken toy you could glue back together
You were so wrong
You are still wrong

I had been down before
I could pick myself back up
I had done it before
I sure as hell could do it again
I didn't need any
I sure as hell didn't need help from You

You see yourself as the angel
You see yourself as a savior
You see yourself as a bless to 'the broken'

You are none of these things
You never will
You are a curse

I always saw myself as strong
I always saw myself as independent
I always saw myself as resilient
I never thought I could be shattered
I never thought I could break
I never thought you would be my undoing

You may have thought you were my saviour
You may have thought you were going to be the one to fix all my problems
You were the complete opposite
You were my undoing
You were the one to break me
You were the one to shatter me

I didn't know what to do
I had never been broken down into nothing
I never had to completely rebuild myself
I did it though
I have come back
I am stronger than ever

You will never admit to what you did to me
You don't see what you did to me as bad
You may see this as 'fixing me' in the end
You are still wrong
You broke me
You had no part in my recovery from you

I was my recovery
I put myself back together
I glued the pieces back together
I cut myself doing it

I am far better than I was before you
I am a far stronger person than you ever will be

You were shattered from this
You realized you can't 'fix' people
You didn't see your own problem
You aren't 'fixed' your damn self
You are weak
You are the broken one

I have become the bigger person
I have become the better person
I have made myself into the person I am today
I give no credit to anyone else for who I am
I built myself
I am no failure

You may see me as your biggest failure but
You are your own biggest failure



Two Truths and a Lie to the Boy Who Stole My Heart

1.) I threw the red joyeux noel shirt
in the spare bedroom since you
wrapped your arms around me
when I was wearing it
and it's still reeling from your warmth
a fire that I dare to run my fingers
through whenever I pick it up
even though your love was as fake
as the daisies on my nightstand.

2.) I put the aqua blue prom dress
in my closet since you
asked me to dance with you
when I was wearing it
and it's still as ice cold as your eyes
an ocean that I let myself drown in
whenever I look at it
even though your love is as dead
as the old lady who hemmed it.

3.) I shoved the blue checkered pajamas
in my drawer since you
talked to me on the phone all night
when I was wearing them
and it's still whispering your words
a book that I could lose myself in
whenever I move them
even though your love is as silent
as the night that surrounds them.

Ending Up in the Sky

I peered into the old telescope and gazed at the constellation Cassiopeia, a bedazzled M in the sky. I remembered the mythology of the constellation from an astronomy class that I took. It's about this Queen Cassiopeia who is vain, and brags that her daughter, Andromeda, was more beautiful than anyone else, including all of the nymph-daughters and Nereids of the sea God Nereus. So therefore the land of Ethiopia is plagued by an attack from Poseidon, the King of the sea. Cassiopeia and Cepheus, Andromeda's parents, were much concerned about this so they went to seek the advice of an oracle, who told them that all they could do was to sacrifice Andromeda to the sea gods. Andromeda was therefore trapped to rocks with chains and there was nothing she could do to fight against Cepheus, a sea monster. However, then Perseus comes and saves the day, killing Cepheus and saving Andromeda. Cassiopeia is put in the sky as a punishment from Poseidon, and she's trapped in a throne so that when she moves across the sky she's sometimes upside down. Being trapped in a chair for all eternity seems like a way to torture someone. Whenever I look at the constellation I can never decide whether she's trapped in a chair or if she's peering into a mirror.

For as long as I can remember, I've always enjoyed looking at myself in the mirror, and gazing at the reflection of a tall young lady with blonde hair and hazel eyes. I've never considered myself vain though, not like my twin sister, Cassie. My mom and Cassie enjoy acting. During high school, Cassie would often get the lead roles, not because she had a strong singing voice, but because she was attractive. She always had this aura of confidence about her, like she was so certain of being loved. Even though we had the same hair, her hair always seemed to fall in the right way. Even though we had the same eyes and facial features, she seemed to know how to apply mascara, foundation and lipstick effortlessly. My clothes never hung on me like hers did, accentuating her curves and hips. "You look like a model," I told her one time when we were getting ready for a musical once. She smiled and thanked me, asking me if I thought her eye makeup was even on each side. Then we took a picture together, as though she was a celebrity and I was admiring paparazzi.

My family and I are pretty wealthy. My dad is an astronomer, and he has done work with NASA that has given us a pretty great income. Although I wouldn't say Cassie was popular, she certainly had more friends than I did. We would often have parties at our house for our birthdays and Halloween. Even though they were supposed to be our parties, most of the kids that were invited were her friends. Don't get me wrong, I had my own group of friends, but they were all studious like me. Although they enjoyed parties, they would have just been happy hanging out with me. The Halloween parties were costume only, and if you didn't show up in costume, you couldn't come. While I usually preferred costumes like being a Renaissance princess, Cassie would often dress up as a fairy princess that reminded me of Glinda. Although I detest horror movies, we would often watch one in the basement downstairs, one of those ones where they tell you in the beginning that everything that happened in this movie actually did happen. All I could think was yeah, everything in the film actually happened, since you actually filmed it. More often than not, it was an excuse for Cassie to get close to whoever her boyfriend was at the time, which was more often than not Pearson, our next door neighbor.

“Andrea?” someone asked.

Startled, I jumped back from the telescope and saw it was Pearson.

“Oh hi, Pearson, how are you?” I asked.

“Good, what are you doing?” he asked.

“Looking at the constellation Cassiopeia,” I replied, heat rising into my cheeks. When I was a kid, my dad would take me and Pearson outside with a telescope and show us the stars. Cassie would never be there since she would be too busy working on collages of stars from magazines. Even though we were best friends when we were kids, he was always with Cassie in high school. However, when I was a senior in high school I was sitting in a corner of the library with a book when he came over before I could even read any of it. He listened to me so well. I thought for sure that he would ask me to go to prom with him, but one night my parents and I went out to dinner with some family friends while Cassie was out shopping with some friends. Pearson was there with some friends, and I went over there to hang out with them.

He asked me if I wanted some of his dessert, so I shared it with him. Then he asked me if I had a date for prom, and when I told him no, he told me that he had asked Cassie. Sure enough, when I got home that night Cassie told me about how he wrote on a scrap of paper Will you go to prom with me? Check yes or no on it, and all I could do was drown my sorrow in jamming out to Taylor Swift.

“May I?” he asked, nearing the telescope.

“Go ahead,” I said.

“Don’t be vain, Andrea, like that queen,” he said.

“Or what?” I challenged, as he knew how much I liked gazing at my reflection.

“You’ll end up in the sky,” he said.

Gianna Rousseau



To the Girl Who Sits Next to Me in Class

I peered into your olive green eyes, a murky sunlit lake
and I wanted to ask what color were her eyes
since I almost forgot. I wanted to say that
on the night before it broke apart like a shattered vase
I dreamed of you in need. As though without her
you would cease to be. I told them of my dream.
“That happens all the time,” they said.
But I didn’t believe them. Not this time.

Her eyes flashed like emeralds, too, globes of the world
and I wanted to ask why her drawings were green
but she never knew. I wanted to say that
on the night before she listened to me as quietly as a book
I recited her a poem. As though without her
there would only be half-eaten deserts. I told them she was gone.
“You have to let her go,” they said.
But I didn’t say anything. Just like last time.



Bags of Adenoids

I don't remember the hospital,

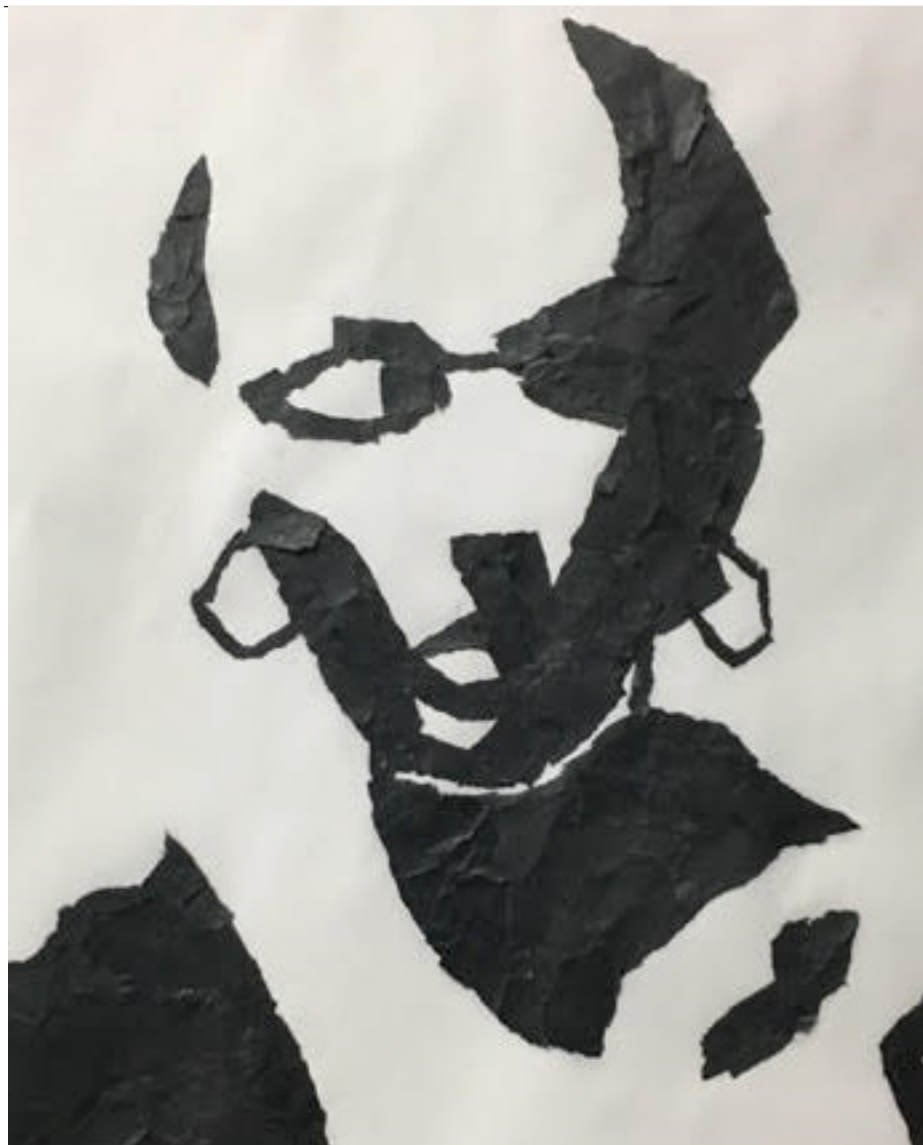
The simple procedure to remove the tonsils and adenoids, those pink fleshy masses between the throat and nose, whether they vacuumed them or scraped them out of my skull, the pain that shot through my arm moments before my vision faded to black and the sounds of the hospital died away. You told me how I woke up screaming and thrashing, raging like a tiger. Eyes aflame with both fear and hate, how I cried and howled "THEY'RE KILLING ME" before the sedatives kicked in as the doctors held me down on the operating table. How the next time I came up I tore the IV drop from my arms in my struggles before passing out in Dad's arms covering him with blood, tears, and snot. You spoke about the dread and fear that came next, as I wasted away, refusing to eat anything, withering skin and bones stuck in a bed, with dead fish eyes, before finally accepting my favorite treat, a purple Grape popsicle, on the day that decided life and death.

I don't remember those days, but I have lived with the after affects every day since.



Heavier Things

I came prepared with pencils and gluesticks and notebooks my mom had bought me when they were on sale over the summer, and the lunch box that was magically packed and set on the kitchen counter this morning clanked in my backpack that was larger than my torso, and it was the first day of school, so you were taking pictures with the other kindergartners, and you stooped down next to them so the parents could click their kodaks, and I'll never forget the whirring sound of a moment slapping onto negative film, especially when you smiled and crouched next to me and my mom's eyes were extra bright that day they were glistening, and then the bell rang, and I had to turn and wave goodbye to her and bravely walk up the brick steps and march into a classroom of clean chalk board, carpets with the alphabet on them, wooden cubbies, shining desks, and it was sometime after I had eaten my magic sandwich that I asked without raising my hand, "Mom, could I use the bathroom?" and my olive cheeks quickly burned rosy when I heard the boys giggle at me, so I tried not to walk too quickly to the bathroom, and as I sat on the toilet, I wondered about your mom and if your dad was nice to her, or if he was gone some days too, if your mom took pictures of you with your teachers, and if your mom ever got quiet and straight-lipped whenever you brought home bad grades and you suddenly shrunk on the couch as she yelled at you something about not growing up to be successful and rich and finding a good man who'd take care of you, but when I finally walked back into the classroom, I took a good hard look at your face and your long eyelashes and pretty smile, and I couldn't tell. I really think you were happy.



**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS FOR EVERY POEM I EVER WRITE
ABOUT SUICIDE OR SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

I. The writer has tried to kill herself before.

No shit, Sherlock, you think I'd be that crass to make that crap up?

II. However, the writer also knows that she's always felt she has made it up. I have trouble believing I didn't conjure up my self-hatred for the hell of it. God knows I'm probably pathetic enough to do so. And what better thing to write about than suicide? You can't even picture the metaphors –

III. That last one was mostly bullshit. The writer acknowledges that she was a weak piece of shit for letting herself get there, but once she was there, it was real.

IV. She knows you're tired of hearing about this (in general, or because she's always talking about it).

She knows you want her to shut up and talk about a cute boy.

She knows that she's sick of it too.

She does not expect or want you to give her a break.

V. The writer acknowledges that if you are the type of person who wants her to shut up, then the poem isn't for you and you can find your cheap thrills elsewhere.

A. And if you are the type of person who wouldn't roll their eyes without good reason, the author has acknowledged you before any of these poems were written (god I hope they are written, because this would be so embarrassing).

VI. The writer is not suicidal at the time of writing, nor does she plan to be (this is for her professors and any school official who'd be worried – seriously, I'm fine).

VII. And if she was, she has won before, and she can win – whatever that means – again. (Got that, Mom?)

VIII. The. The writer acknowledges the simple majesty of the word “the”, among many other such majesties. So they exist, and they're behind every single word of these poems.

21.

So it seems here I meet
Amongst the clouds of tobacco smoke
And in the chimney of adulteration and adolescence
Let alone addiction and solemnity-

The insecurities of those around-
Paranoia of the perishable
That finds its way into every incarnation-
Lipstick, egregious clothing, short skirts, and whiskey sours,
All combining to form the herald of our hearkening
To the whispering shouts of our mortuaries.

It is a shame to believe,
That we will never shake that soliloquy,
Screamed out in unison verse-
And grow past our fearful prides
To live as human beings,
Before our clock strikes 12.

Paper Anchor

Ebony ink
Riding flotsam upon water

Paper clings to a puddle's depths
Just as tightly as she to yours

But eventually the mess separates
And the writing on the wall will float-

Your surface tension, trial by water
Will not pressure her descent

And she will come up.
She will plead fault.

Then, all that you've clung to
Will only be what she allowed-

To sink to your level.

Dear Love

Dear _____ ,

I thought I knew you.
I thought I knew everything.
My life was safe, and organized,
and safe.

What I didn't know was that you were never here at all.
What I thought was you was actually jealousy, insecurity, and fear
all dancing their way into my heart,
wearing masks that looked like you.

They were the villains,
the monsters,
the demons, that broke into my heart and tore me to shreds from the
inside out.

So I don't know you,
I've never met you.
Never shook your hand and knew you would forever be in my life from
that moment on.

But I have seen you.
Seen you dance all around me like mosquitos,
biting just to remind me that you still exist.

I've seen you in the sunrise over my favorite scene at 5:17 a.m.
the promise of a new day.
In every dog that has ever run up and jumped on me,
nothing but you in his eyes.
I've seen you in the 19 shimmering smiles who, every day,
teach me more than I could ever teach them.
In hippos and in giraffes, the only pets that I ever wanted.

I've seen you in my brother's arms as he held the remains of my shattered spirit.

And in my grandparents as they danced around their kitchen to the sound of Elvis,
and the sound of you.

So, no I don't know you
and I sure as hell don't know everything.
but I know that you're out there
somewhere.

You're not safe and you're not organized,
But you are everything,
and I cannot wait for the day that I do finally know you.

I hope to meet you soon,

Shards

I can't remember
too clearly
how it happened,
because the moment
the words
flew from his lips,
the room
began
to spin

in a pool of tears and cries as I watched all of the people that I love most in this world collapse to the cold wooden floor around me.

My knees
could no longer
support
the weight of my heavy heart
and mind of questions,
so my body sank,
as if in slow motion,
into the pain of the room.

I didn't notice him grab me in his arms as I fell or the mug slip through my fingertips just to shatter like the rest of us or the blood pour from my hand as it clutched for some semblance of hope and yet got nothing but the shards of reality.

I am shaking in his arms and wishing
only that they are yours, because
cause the only clear thing about this moment,
is that you aren't here.

Horizons

I'll meet you where the oceans touch the sky.
I'll meet you where the shades of blue collide.
Hover above the boundless seascape ahead,
Await me there, heavens and stars overspread.
For us, my love, the sun will surely pause,
And time itself will abandon it's cause.
I'll find you there at last, that unseen place,
And finally, my eyes will rest upon your face.
Where clouds dissolve into a brilliant shine.
And our two worlds connect to form a line.
We will have forever, love, forever with no divide,
Where our impossible is truth and our shades of blue collide.

Brick Children and Bruised Peaches

There were those bruised, split peaches for sale,
All hanging in the corner,
Bathing in the neon, chipped paints
Of whatever sleeping bodega they chose for their shot up skinnies
To lean against for the night.

These spicks were swagging some pants
From a ghetto disco era
A few sizes too large for their shady figures,
Faces hidden in the caves around their heads,
Brown skins, black skins
Mostly brown skins where I was at—
Walking, mouths pissing on territory.
They want to own everything
With their profanities.

They came—the pink skins.
Raised their guns to the fifty stars,
Blood white and true,
Fireworks sang freedom to these streets.

The brick children looked outside of their tiny windows—if they had windows—the windows where those boxed up air conditioners stuck out of,
Looking like the bellies of their drunk papis who have no work,
Passed out dead on the couch
While mami cooks him a dinner
That he no longer tastes.

I was under a blanket
On some couch
In some living room.

A Chihuahua was with me,

Near the window of these scenes,
Tried to close my eyes to dream
But then I heard sounds coming from my wall.
My new neighbors.
Two men. Swearing.
Beating each other.

The children fell out of their windows,
Each and every screamed,
“The country I left behind
Is all around me.”

How to Pimp a Butterfly

Remember Wesley's Theory. Remember they haven't taught you everything.

And no one actually gives anything For Free. Don't take it and expect to give nothing back.

They will beat it out of you. Spit back King Kunta even though you'll feel nothing like royalty.

Google Institutionalized. The first example reads, The danger of discrimination becoming

Institutionalized.

Maybe they didn't want to flat out say racism?

And instead pretend like u won't try to climb over These Walls.

You in Trumps America now boy, everything ain't just gonna be Alright.

You might wake up tomorrow, sign chained to your ankles, "For Sale".

Momma never warned you. At least you don't remember, you haven't talked lately.

You never understood Hood Politics, found yourself on the wrong block
Too much change in your pocket tryna to figure out How Much a Dollar
Cost

But the Complexion of your currency ain't quite correct cuz

That's when you realize The Blacker the Berry, the less like you.

You Ain't Gotta Lie, you like where you are now.

Starting to think i belong and shit.

But remember, even though you know how to Pimp a Butterfly, you're just a Mortal Man.

Chamomile

On the eighth day she coined the word "Poetry"
And I savored the syllables, dipped them in silence,
Just so I could remember a time before her.
A time where I didn't know, and she didn't tell me.

I threw away an empty box of tea,
The blue label read, "Chamomile"
The mug sat on the counter, never a chance
to plead half empty
 or half full.

She sang without opening her mouth –
A foreign language. And I savored the syllables
but don't remember what they tasted like.
Something calming perhaps.

Maybe one day I'd be able to speak her tongue.
Then she wouldn't need to tell me.
I'd find a new box of chamomile,
And savor the syllables.



Relic

There is something within me
that holds with utter insistence
that to be unblemished is to be loved.

No one ever told me that
but they didn't have to because
twenty-one years is long enough to learn
that it is easier to admire the immaculate
than understand the imperfect.

Imagine my surprise then
when in my pursuit of perfection
I fell and scraped my pristine hands
and with horror found that
there were scars on my feet
left over from years of walking on eggshells
carrying things too heavy to balance
on paper thin spheres.

And with joyous dismay I found
that *in my deepest wound*
I saw your glory
and it astounded me.



Shrek in a Haiku Compilation

Are we there yet? No.
Are we there yet? No Donkey!
Shrek in a haiku.

Onions have layers.
Ogres have layers. Again,
Shrek in a haiku.

Do you think he is,
Compensating for something?
Shrek in a haiku.

Blue flower red thorns,
Blue flower red thorns. Again,
Shrek in a haiku.

Would be easier
If I wasn't color blind.
Shrek in a haiku.

I bet you've never
Seen a donkey fly. Again,
Shrek in a haiku.

You are ugly, but
Only at night. Shrek's ugly
Twenty-four seven.





My Valentine's Day Nightmare

Among other things, I can say I loved my husband. He was my high school sweetheart and there was almost nothing that could get me to stop loving him. Almost. It was Valentine's Day when it happened. He had planned the whole day for us. We would have breakfast in bed before work and then have a nice dinner and well you know. We were just married for about 5 years now and I really wanted to have kids with him. I was 33 years old and I felt ready.

So, after our lovely dinner at the fanciest restaurant in town, we came home. I drank a fair amount of Sassiciaia, a fancy Tuscan wine, at dinner, so I was feeling frisky. I went into the bathroom freshen up, while my husband prepared the room. I put on the fanciest makeup I owned and put on my newest lingerie, a nice, lacy black bra with matching panties. As I was getting ready, I started to hear strange noises coming from the bedroom, almost like a screaming goat.

"Is everything alright, honey?" I called out.

"Everything is fine. Just wait until I'm ready."

I shrugged it off because I knew my husband well. You see, he's a history professor at Stanford University. He likes to engage in a lot of historical activities outside the classroom. His course of study was ancient Rome. One time he made us try gladiatorial fighting. Not a roleplay I'm willing to try again. Anyway, as I finished preparing, I called to my husband. He came up behind me and covered my eyes with a blindfold.

"Now, follow me, and don't remove the blindfold until I tell you," he said, hearing the smirk in his voice.

As he pushed me towards the door, I got the strange whiff of blood. At first I was going to ignore it, but as he guided me further into the room, the smell became stronger. He turned me around, facing away from him.

"Wait right here," he said, excitedly.

As I stood there, I could hear my husband dragging something behind him. Whatever he was dragging, it sounded heavy and the closer he got, the stronger the smell of blood became.

I heard him grunt as he lifted the heavy object and fear began to bubble inside me. He made one final grunt before my vision went black and I slammed into the floor.

I slowly removed the blindfold as black dots danced across my vision and my ears rang like sinister wind chimes. I could hear my husband rambling on as I tried to sit up. I put my hand to my head and felt something wet and sticky. I looked at my hand to see a thick, dark red liquid. Blood. I couldn't believe my husband had hit me. As my vision was returning to normal, I saw that the blood was splattered everywhere, in puddles on the floor and streaked across the wall.

Could that be my blood?

I was about to scream when my husband covered his bloody hands over my mouth. He started whispering excitedly in my ear, but all I could think about was the blood oozing into my mouth from his hands. In his animated garble, all I caught was, 'ancient Roman fertility ritual'. I turned around to see blood across the floor, followed by a dead carcass of a goat. Then, I started to make the connection. My husband has beaten me in the head with a dead goat to make it more likely for us to have children. At the time, I was terrified, but part of me now thinks it's almost sweet.

After being beaten with a goat, I ran. I was covered in blood and ran to the nearest neighbor's house. I never saw him after the divorce. Two years later, I started dating a new guy. He was a psychologist who studied serial killers. I guess you can say I know how to pick them.

13 Things I Wish I Could Have Said to You in Your Final Moments

I never thought January 2017 would be the last time I would see you. If I had known, I would have prepared to have said my goodbyes before this, but fate did not work out in our favor. So, here are the things I wish I could have said to you in your final moments.

1. I love you so much.
2. I miss you already. I miss the way your soft fur felt when I ran it through my hands. I miss the way my hand rose and fell as you breathed, in and out. I miss feeling of your tiny heartbeat, listening to it as it synchronized with mine.
3. You were always a pain in my ass. You whined all the time, begging for someone's attention. You would always get stuck outside on the same tuft of grass or on the corner of the deck and I always came out to rescue you. You would cry and give me the eyes, and let's be honest, I can't stay mad at that face forever. You would always distinctly pee on my sister's side of the room and not mine (thank you), but would pee on both of our laundry when you were jealous. But, again, I could never stay mad at you.
4. You became a routine that will be hard to ignore. Every day after school or work, I would let you out of the cage and put you outside to go to the bathroom. I would feed you at the same time every night, let you out again right after, and always give you your nightly treat at 8:30 PM. This will be a hard routine to break.
5. You farted. A lot. And they stunk.
6. One thing that always made me smile was that there was someone at home waiting for me. Whether I was at school or work, I knew that when I walked through that door, you would be there to greet me with a howl and a bunch of nose kisses. Now, coming home is a struggle because you won't be there to greet me anymore. No more howls. No more nose kisses.
7. You were always there for me when I needed someone to talk to. Although you had no idea what I was saying, you would listen to me. I would cry and you would put your head in my hands, look me in the eyes, and

it was almost as though you were saying, “Everything will be okay.” That alone made me feel even the slightest better than I had before. You would sniff my face and ears, almost like you were whispering sweet-nothings to me, as a way to make me feel better. I wish I could have you here as I write this, your head nudging my knee for comfort.

8. Playing with you was always a blast. You would get so excited over the smallest movement or even the simplest word. Gator, your most precious toy, will be lost without you.

9. There is an empty feeling in the house, like this amazing family is missing something so precious. There will always be that empty presence sitting under the fireplace.

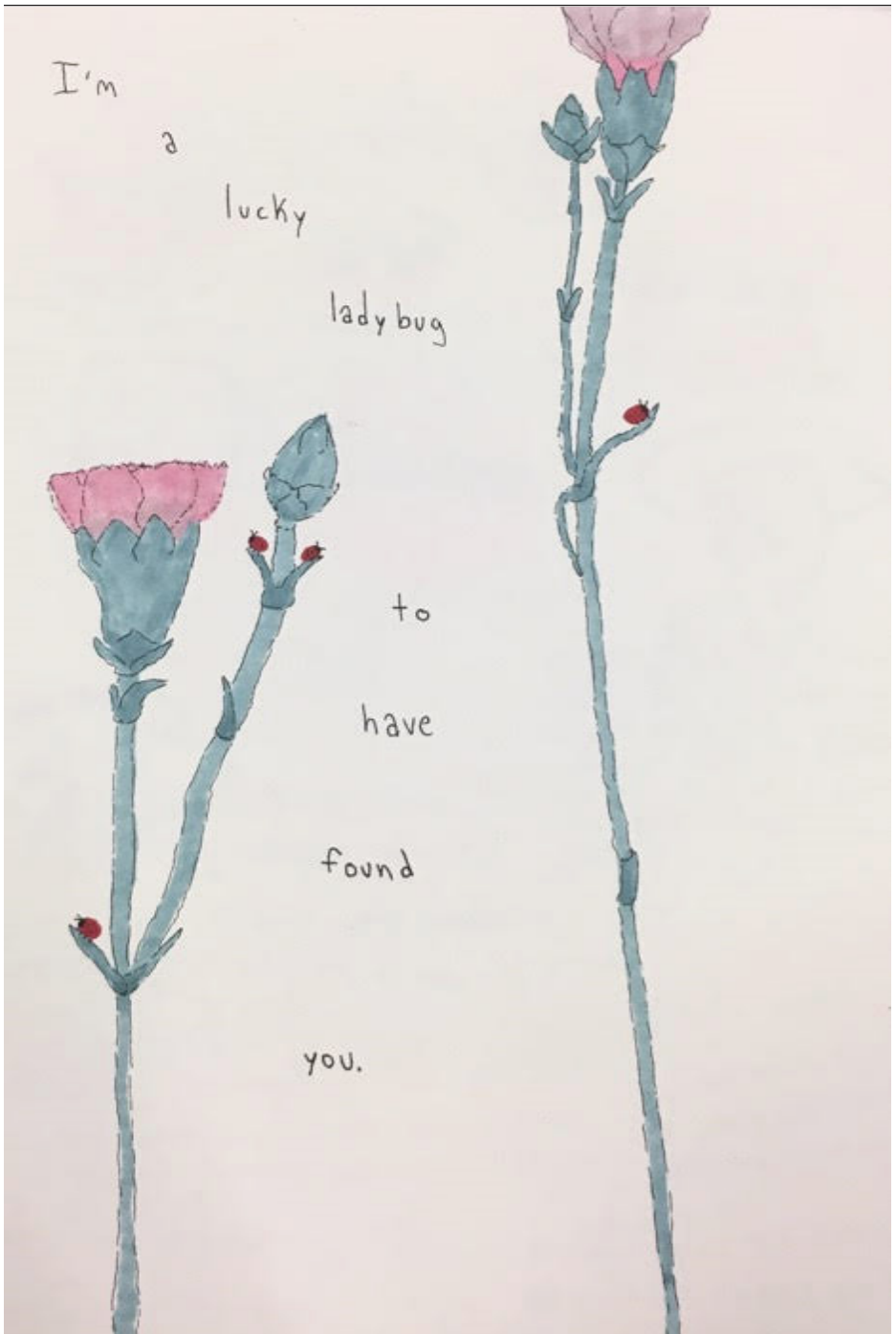
10. I regret ever saying that I didn’t want you when we first met, because I don’t know who I would be without you.

11. 12 years of our lives have included you in the memories and that is something no one can take away from us or you. We tried to make life better for you after what you had been through as a pup. We didn’t want you to feel abandoned ever again. You had a wonderful family to take care of you and love you. And I want you to know that you have filled our lives with such joy and happiness. And I hope that we did the same for you.

12. Augustine once wrote that if you love someone too much, losing them will basically kill you. Among other things, there is one thing that I will never regret and that’s loving you too much. Why hold back all the love I can give to someone who needs it? I will always love you, but losing you is the hardest thing for me. I loved you as though you could never die. I just hope that when God was given his new angel that you remember me when I die. So, please wait for me.

13. I wish I could have pet you one last time and told you how much I love you. In the end, putting you down was the only option because you were in so much pain. Now, I know that you are safe. We have placed you in a beautiful urn on our mantle with a picture of you imprinted in wood next to it. So, it will be almost like a small part of that empty space has been filled.





I'm
a
lucky
ladybug
to
have
found
you.

Bobby Pins

You filled me up
with promises
and infected me
with utterly contagious laughter.
And now I'm being held together by
 71 bobby pins.
And that really terrifies me.

i sit alone in the valley

the air smells wet and pure,
and there is nothing i can see for certain.
all white fog around me,
dampening my peach fuzz
perhaps just looking for a way to change.
with each deep breath,
i feel purer and bigger
and bigger, and i keep growing
upwards through the fog
within my reach is the otherside,
and i can feel the warmth in my fingertips
reaching towards that uncertain place
where maybe i will be able to see.
when finally i burst through,
mist clinging to my hair like a cobweb veil,
the sun is beaming, a divine grin,
blowing kisses at the hilltops.
the fog laps at the slopes like waves,
swirling whirlpools in greyscale,
breaking with frothy gold sunshine.
swollen with admiration,
my tongue weighed down with too many words,
there's nothing for me to do
but open my eyes wide
and watch

Postcard to a Night Owl

Somewhere along the column of my chest directly under my throat
Is a poem for you
Something that will talk to you after I've fallen asleep
Eagerly hanging on the words you say
And responding the way I would at 3am had 3 am not woken up into
Tuesday
And perhaps you'll feel the words in your chest
As they confess that I've missed you
Came to hold you the way I can't
Because the distance is a formality
An excuse to slip your address between these words
So all the poetry like this never fail to find you
Come to hold you when I can't
I hope you let them in
Because they've been asking about you
Ever since nostalgia graced their pages
And you still have stories to tell

You Are Not a Sonnet

I am no William Shakespeare with a marionette pen
 silent chaos behind closed curtains, a sensibility
 manipulating cold agile arthritic hands, when
 the audience is a blind personified soliloquy.
And you are not 16th century transcending verses
eloquence strung up like ends of calligraphic letters
 Or stationary metaphors that time cannot reverse
To appear before blind men who are to judge things better.
We don't belong here among the one hundred fifty four
where confessions become a template for other couples
 and we become diluted infatuated folklore
witnessing tender refrain hollow your name to rubble.
Here you stand, spotlit and alone, etching soft eclipses
across this worldly stage, for you, me, and they who've listened

An Open Letter to the Butterflies in my Stomach

I'm sorry I trapped you in my stomach
In curiosity I wanted to feel like a kaleidoscope
A twisted disarray of colors contorting into carelessly beautiful perspectives
And you were unpredictable, perfect in your ability to make things, like the
wind, look alive

Dear butterflies,
The way words careen against each other as they tumble from my mouth is
proof that I will
always have space for you in me
I will create for you multiverses so that you will want to stay out of your own
volition
I will invite you into my daydreams, let you visit my secrets
Until I can romance you into loving me as "home"

Dear butterflies,
Do you look like his?
I ask because I imagine that when he and I converged you emerged as com-
plementary to
whatever his were

Dear butterflies,
Will you always multiply when I see him? Always lay witness to his pres-
ence?

Dear butterflies,
It seems as though the more colorful you get, the more poisoned I become
I am sweet toxicity and you are bitter nonsense sometimes
But I still love the way your chaos deteriorates me

Dear butterflies,
Unlike guns and fists and words, there is no fight I can bring you to
And I'm sorry because your wings already have graffiti war paint
Which I will admit looks epic but they are not meant to chase storms

And although he is not a storm, his bad nights catch him in the middle of a
tumbling ocean and
you cannot carry him to shore.

Dear butterflies,
you cannot carry him to shore.
But you can sit with him
Paint smeared and crystalline as you are
Bring him all the words that have settled in the pit of his subconscious that
will remind him that
metamorphosis is a growing pain
But also a beautiful one

Dear butterflies,
Please teach me how to grow stronger in darkness

And so our story continues...