

MONTAGE

Fall 2012



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Cover Art: **Candyland** by Teresa Marcotte

Art has been rotated for the cover. Correct orientation available on page 34.

Welcome to the 2011-2012 edition of Montage!

For the second year in a row, I have had the honor of editing this magazine. And, once again, I have been blessed with excellent support from many people along the way. I want to thank Dr. Seufert for his wonderful guidance and ever-present smile. I am grateful for the devoted Montage staff, who were always willing to voice ideas and provide positive, constructive feedback on whatever I threw their way. And where would we be without the student poets, artists, writers, and photographers who so graciously submitted their masterpieces? Thank you to all of them. Special thanks go out to Steven Varble, whose work on laying out the magazine is invaluable to a tech-illiterate person like me. Finally, huge thanks to Julie Woodward of Main Street Printing, who brought to life the beautiful finished product you're holding now.

I have thoroughly enjoyed working on Montage again this year. The staff and I hope that you love the magazine as much as we do. Happy reading!

Amy Goodman

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Kemah Boardwalk

Teresa Marcotte



His Getaway

Teresa Marcotte



Nature's Cabbie

Teresa Marcotte

Through a Child's Eyes

K. Jerome Schmidt

To see the world through a child's eyes,
The splendor it would unfold.
Speaking only true thoughts,
Questioning things unsure.
Great wonders you will find,
Locked within the mind,
Clinging to a parent,
When the world shows things unkind.
Maybe you will play today,
Or perhaps you'll read a book,
Could that rainbow have a pot of gold?
I will take a closer look.
Will you swing on a tire swing?
Will you swim in a creek?
Capture a toad, a mouse, a snake
Which will leave your mother, unable to speak.
What can you offer the world in life?
Is not yet on your mind,
The adventure's you long for will unfold
Through a child's eyes.



Police Car

Teresa Marcotte



Early Morning Rain

Teresa Marcotte



Through His Eyes

Teresa Marcotte

As I Lay Here Thinking

K. Jerome Schmidt

As I lay here thinking

I wonder how life would have been

For those around me

To see such sorrow

As the lights shine down

From up above

Arms stretched far and wide

For life would have carried on

For others to see

Even though

The pain is never forgotten

What might have been

One could only imagine

Happens only in make believe

Letter For Zero

Kylie Funk

February 6th

Dear Zero,

Your name in my mouth is a bitter taste. All it does is just simply bringing me pain. All I can feel is loneliness, emptiness, hopelessness, helplessness. I miss you. I miss your touch, your voice, the feeling of your breath so close to me. I miss it terribly. I wish so much anymore that we had never become what we did. Maybe I'd be spared the heartache that I feel. Maybe I'd be spared of the emptiness that your name brings, the tears that well up in my eyes, the constant having to tell everyone that I'm fine and that you are too. I can't take this. I don't know what I did to deserve this. I wish you'd just tell me. I wish you'd just talk for once. Let me in, Zero. Please.

You bring me nightmares. You make me lose sleep. I thrash in my sleep and have the battle scars to prove it. I've punched myself; I've bitten myself, all in your name. All because of what you do to me. And this is all because of your silence. This is all from my heartache, my desperation, my pain at your silence. You made me believe that someone out there honestly cared for me, that someone could love me. I never felt guarded with you. You were honestly the one person I've never lied to. You're the one person I had 100% trust and faith in. I gave you my heart, even though I never told you. You still have it. You're crushing it and you're not even aware.

The thought of you makes me sick at my stomach. It gives me this ache that I cannot describe. The thoughts of our future together are fleeting, but they're still vivid, like they are real and that they really happened. I can see me standing with you, hand in hand, looking into your eyes. I can see us with our perfect child, as we talked of. I can see us shortly beforehand playfully arguing over the name, how you absolutely hate the name Hope McKenzie, whereas I absolutely love it. I can even feel your kiss on my cheek, my neck, and my lips right now as I write this, and it hurts me. My stomach aches terribly with these thoughts. My heart pounds deeply in my hollow chest. My breath sticks in my throat.

I still remember how you told me that you'd always be here when I needed you, how you'd always have a shoulder ready for me. I remember telling you of my crisis, of how I didn't know what to do and how I couldn't deal and that I had no one to turn to and talk to. I remember how you told me that I didn't have to go through that alone and how I could've talked to you then. Though I didn't want to see you then, it still makes me happy that you cared. I still hope you care.

I can feel your love, I know it's there. I just wish you'd show it. I just wish you wouldn't ignore me. I wish you wouldn't pretend that I'm not here, that I'm not talking. I don't know what I did to deserve this treatment, but I'm sorry, Zero. I'm truly sorry for whatever I did wrong. I can't take this silence. Not from you. I don't recognize myself in the mirror anymore. You've changed me. You've shaped me in a way that I wasn't aware I could be nor did I intentionally want. But this is me now, and as long as I can have you back, I'll gladly take it. I don't know what it is about you, but I can't take not having you around. I can't take not being able to hear your voice, not being able to see your face, not being able to feel your touch.

I think of you now and just cry. I feel that hollow emptiness in my chest, the kind that can only come from true sorrow. I feel lost without you, Zero. I feel like I wander through the days in a fog, like nothing else seems to matter. Every thought I have, no matter what I'm doing, is about you. You're all I have on my mind. I constantly worry about you. I wish you didn't worry me so much. I bet you didn't even know that I feel linked to you in a way I've never been linked to anyone before.

I can feel your pain. I can feel when you're sad and when you're angry. It affects me directly. My mood goes from happy or content one second to angry or sad the next, and I can't even explain it. I came to find later on that at every occurrence of this odd change, you had a similar mood just about the same time. You may be angry with someone at school; I punch my pillow in my sleep. You may feel overwhelmed with everyone putting you down and you sulk at home; I lay about with a feeling of hopelessness I cannot describe. I want you to know that I don't mind this at all; it makes me feel like I'm close to you, knowing how you feel at the moment. I wish I were right there with you, to comfort you and hold you. To whisper in your ear that I'm here and that I love you and that everything will be okay. If only I could tell myself this.

Even as I write this, I lie here, feeling the February cold set into my body, feeling myself shiver and wish that I had you here next to me, to hold me, keep me safe, and make me warm. I wish you were here to calm the terrors that I have in my sleep. I wish you were here to make me feel safe. I wish I could feel your arms around me as I sleep. I love you so much, Zero. I wish you could realize this. I wish you could realize that your deafening silence is absolutely killing me. I love you. I guess all I can do now is stay here awaiting your answer.

With all the love in my heart,
Yuki.

Stones in the Sand

Lauren Beauchamp

We only went to see his father once. I know it was hard for him. Hard for him to face that stone in the sand. We went the day after he gave me the ring. We'd been crazy happy the day before, Saturday, driving all around to show the ring to his family and mine. Then on Sunday, we drove out to the cemetery. He didn't speak during the drive. His jaw was set. His eyes were moist. And his lips didn't move. He just drove.

We walked through the wrought iron gates, under the sign that read "Rivertown Cemetery" in old-fashioned lettering. We walked to the southwest corner, where the family plot was. My heels sunk in the sand. The patchy grass crunched under his boot soles. He avoided the newest stone. First, he showed me the graves of his great-grandparents, his grandparents, the aunts, uncles, and cousins of the generations gone by, the tiny headstone that had no name, and marked the spot where his great-grandmother had buried her first child, who only lived for two days. Finally, there were no stones left, except the one he brought me to see. He stood silent facing the gray double stone.

"Greg and I picked it out," he said to me, referencing his older brother. "Mom only told us to get a double one, so there would be a place for her beside him. Greg and I were glad for that, I guess. It meant we'd never have to go through that again. They misspelled Mom's middle name, though. We'll have to get that fixed. One day."

He pulled his red ball cap off and wiped his eyes, grasping my left hand with his free hand. He held up my hand, turning it so that the ring faced the stone. "You'd like her, Dad," he said with tears in his voice. "You'd like her a lot. You'd say that she reminds you of Mom. I'm going to marry her, Dad. I'm going to marry her before I go. You'd tell me that I made you proud. Wouldn't you, Dad? Wouldn't you say I've finally made you proud?"

I stared at the stone. It was easier than watching him cry. I saw the name. Samuel Gregory Jackson. The brief words inscribed below. Beloved Husband and Father. Then the dates. "The cruelest part of tombstones," I murmured under my breath. "Only the beginning and the end of a life. And a dash, a straight line carved into a rock. That's all I can know of this man." 1916-1959.

"I can't believe it's been five years," he was saying to his father, letting go of my hand. I reached up and squeezed his shoulder. "You missed a lot of my life you know. I was fourteen when you died. Fourteen. Greg was eighteen. Why? You made it through the war. How could you let an accident kill you? How could you? Before Greg even got to graduate? Before I did? How could you leave us?"

I listened, hearing the hurt beneath the anger. "He didn't mean to," I said. "You know he didn't mean to die."

But he couldn't hear me. He was still talking to his father. "It's my turn to go, Dad," he said. "Like you did. Like granddad did. I didn't choose this, though, Dad."

Pain pierced my soul.

"Are you ashamed of me? Are you ashamed that I waited for the draft? Greg didn't. You were always so proud of Greg. I was always second in your eyes, wasn't I? Well Dad, Greg's missing. Did Mom tell you that? I don't want to go, Dad. But I will. I'll make you proud. But I wanted you to meet her. She's going to be my wife, Dad. Her name is Sarah. Sarah Donnelly. Her family moved here a year after you left. You'd like her. But I already told you that, didn't I."

His tears were gone now. Defiance glinted his eyes.

"Andy," I said. "You didn't tell me." I wanted to reproach him, to be angry with him for not telling me right away, not calling me the very hour he got that letter. But I couldn't. He looked so broken, he was hurting so bad, I couldn't do anything to hurt him. And I couldn't change his mind. Other guys might be going to Canada and burning their draft cards, but I knew Andy wouldn't. He hadn't been raised that way. His granddad had fought the war to end all wars, his dad had been on the beach for D-Day, and his older brother was a soldier in Vietnam. No matter that this wasn't what he wanted, he would go. Even though it meant leaving me. "You didn't tell me you were going. You didn't tell me about Greg."

"I wanted to tell Dad first," he said, "I knew you'd understand, but I didn't know if he would." He sighed. "I still don't know."

"He understands, Andy," I said, not knowing where the confidence came from but feeling it in every word. "And so do I. But don't keep any more secrets from me. Tell me everything. Promise me there will be no secrets between us."

"No secrets," he said, "Ever." And he drew me into an embrace.

“And promise you’ll come back,” I whispered, so quietly that I knew he couldn’t hear. I didn’t want him to hear. Because I knew how honest he was. He would never promise something that he couldn’t guarantee.

That was 1964.

Twenty-One Years Later

“Two years later,” I said, “I was sitting in our little apartment, trying to get the baby, you, Andrew, down for his nap, when a sharp knock sounded on the door. I knew what it was. In my soul, I knew. I put you on my hip and walked woodenly toward the door. I opened the door to a soldier. ‘I’m sorry, ma’am,’ he said. That was the worst day of my life, Andrew. We buried Andy, your father, in this sand, beside his father and the marker for his brother, and all the generations that had loved this land before him. I couldn’t stay, Andrew . . . I took you and that folded up flag and I ran away.” I willed my son to understand.

“I understand, Mom,” he said, clearing his throat. “But I needed to be here.”

I stared at him, my boy, now a man. He looked like his father. My son is nineteen. The same age his father was that day in ‘64. I only took him to meet his father this once. It was hard for me. Hard to face that stone in the sand. But I brought him today. The cemetery hasn’t changed much. The iron gate squeaked when we swung it open. But the sign still reads the same, in the same old-fashioned letters. My heels still sunk in the sand, and boot soles still made the patchy grass crunch.

I avoided the stone we’d come to see, pointing out the others in the unofficial family plot. My son’s great-great-grandparents, great-grandparents, his grandparents. His grandmother was there, too, now. She’d passed on in ‘78. I wrote to make sure her name was spelled properly on the stone. Andy and Greg would have wanted it. I pointed out the aunts and uncles and cousins of generations gone by, and the tiny stone with no name. I showed him the flat marker, provided by the US Army for his Uncle Greg. “Gregory Samuel Jackson. 1941-1964. He served his country with honor.” The body had never been recovered.

“We should go to the park,” I said. “I want you to see the memorial. It’s nothing fancy. Just a case with names listed under wars. Those who served and those who died. You father’s name is there. And your uncle’s. And your granddad. And your great-granddad. I should have brought you sooner. I’m sorry.”

He turned away from me, facing the stone in the sand. He took off his red ball cap and twisted it between his hands.

My boy read his father's stone aloud. "Andrew Matthew Jackson. Beloved Husband and Father. Beloved Son. 1945-1966." He turned to me, then. "That's all it says?"

I fumbled with the flowers in my hands. "I know . . . I know it's not enough. I never could put the right words together. It's too plain, too simple. But . . . Those were the things that mattered most in the world to your father."

"Father," he said, tasting the word on his tongue. "Dad."

He stared at the stone in the sand.

"He was so much like you. I wish you could have known him."

"So do I," said our son. "So do I, Dad. I like to think that I'm making you proud. I'm not you, and I'm not granddad. I can't be. But I'm going to make something of myself, Dad. I'm going to school, Dad. I'm going get a job. And I'm not going to leave the way you did. I swear I won't leave the way you did."

That was 1985.

Twenty-One Years Later

This is the first time the boy has been here. The cemetery has changed little. The wrought iron gate is rusty now, but it still squeals on its hinges. The sign is still in the same old-fashioned letters, but "Rivertown Cemetery" is missing the ,v the y, and two e's. The patchy grass crunches under his boot soles, and the sand sifts for his footprints. He is nineteen, and he removes a red ball cap as he approaches. He looks like his father. He looks like his grandfather. Tall, tan, strong, slim. I can hardly bear to watch him.

He avoids the stone he has come to see, studying the others instead. His great-great-great-grandparents, his great-great-grandparents, his great-grandparents. His grandfather. His great-uncle. The aunts, uncles, and cousins of generations gone by. A tiny worn stone that has fallen forward into the sand. He reads many of the names and dates under his breath. He stops before the stone beside his grandfather's. "Sarah Donnelly Jackson," he reads. "Mother. 1946-2006."

He moves past my stone, to the stone that he came to see. It is the newest stone here, on the edge of an unofficial family plot that is now nearly full. "Well, Dad, " the boy says. "Well. It wasn't supposed to happen to me. You

weren't supposed to leave me, like granddad left you, and his dad left him. At least you hung on until I graduated. I guess I should be glad for that. At least I knew you."

The boy puts on his hat and turns to go.

"Danny," I call, my voice a whisper on the wind.

He turns, shaking his head as if to dispel the sound from his ear. But he looks at his father's stone and he reads it aloud. For me. "Andrew Daniel Jackson. Beloved Father. 1966-2007." My son.

The boy, Danny leaves then. He walks away, the patchy grass crunching and the sand sifting to mark his footsteps. The red ball cap is on his head and he doesn't look back.

I remain behind, with the stones and the sand and the creaking of the gate.

A Witch's Song

September Bush

I sit here, drowning in my thoughts. I am surrounded by darkness and shadows that watch my skin swallow a sliver blade.

I am trapped with my past that engulfs my future as my own Banquo sits chained to my desk.

Black bird pearls stare at me as thoughts turn into sick mutations upon my wrist.

He moans begging me to continue.

I push more into my flesh and I feel his heart pound against his scattered ribs, broken by his own dreams.

I cry out as I slip, sliding the blade next to muscle that is purer than cane.

My forehead begs for something cold.

My head swells with pressure and blood, the mixture moves into my eyes.

Banquo smashes his head on my desk, spreading his wings wide open and reaping to the sounds I emit to myself.

Warm dark blood rivers down my pale cold arm.

Slowly he inhales my breath, puffing his chest out suddenly.

I exhale slowly as my chest collapses and I fall onto the hard cobble stone floor, dropping into a dark world of unconsciousness.

Even a knife will betray me in the end.

The Choice

K. Jerome Schmidt

What lurks in the darkness to scare?

You could take a look

But no courage to dare

Tis I said a man in a hoarse crisp voice

I have come here tonight to give you a choice

You may choose one option of two

Whichever it is, all falls on you

The first is a gift, yet has a flaw

Life everlasting while others they fall

The second is love only you will know

Yet no one will love you

And it truly will show

The young slave looked up and paused only a second

One will give me the love I have only pretended

And though this love it will it will to me bring bliss

And sadness also with no love to kiss

The other is life never fearing of death

Yet without a loved one in which to hold to my breast

How will I decide a choice such as this?

Just pick one and try to be quick

I have others to see on a night such as this

Hold on the slave said

True the second brings love

And the first great pain

I choose the first

It has more to gain

How can this be it'll bring only sorrow

Time with the loved ones

Is only time borrowed

Yes but a day knowing love is a day worth living

As the man turned to walk away

He said to the slave you have made the right choice

Love is the only gift

Life, just a choice.

The Epic

K. Jerome Schmidt

If the portholes of time were opened
And stones 'stead of thrown were laid
We would not look to the "chosen"
And the world would calm and be gay
The answer I cannot bring
Within the words of this rhyme
The outcome will be viewed
By the straining sands of time
There is not one to guide us
The rich nor the meek
The profits of misfortune
The heretics, they speak
For who is to say what is better
For another man
I choose to do my best though
Lending a helping hand
I will provide the shelter
For you to weather this storm
And together we shall sail
Towards the farthest shore.
I have my thoughts a many
However clear they may not be
Try not to understand me
Sometimes it's best to follow my lead.

Alexa Elson

Lauren Beauchamp

Alexa Elson willed her eyes not to look into the rearview mirror as she drove away. You only look back on a place you will never see again. And she would come back. Someday. But now was the time to be strong. Now she stuck out her chin and bit her lip. She would not cry. Not here. Not now. Not with Dad sitting resolute in the driver's seat beside her. This was what she wanted, wasn't it? It was she had planned, and what she knew that she must do. Wanting didn't enter into it. She squared her shoulders and leaned back slowly. It was a six hour drive. She needed to let her muscles relax and her mind, as well. She closed her eyes when they reached the interstate, willing the rhythm of the road to lull her to sleep.

She hadn't slept much last night, anyway. She needed the sleep. But mostly, she just wanted the oblivion that sleep would bring. What had she done? What was she thinking? She had never wanted to go to college so far from home. Until last year, she'd never wanted to go to college at all. But she had to leave. Dad didn't understand. Her little brothers, Jared and Caleb, didn't understand. Kelly might be the only person who understood, but Alexa didn't want her father's new wife to understand her. Alexa liked Kelly. She knew Kelly was good for Dad. Good for the boys, too. If they'd accept her. And that's why Alexa had to leave. Because Alexa knew that as long as she was at home, the boys would never accept Kelly as their new mother. They would never accept Kelly's son, Seth, either.

The boys finally had the chance at having a mother, and Alexa wouldn't do a thing to ruin it. She was just too old now to make it work for herself. She'd been seventeen already when Dad remarried. Mom had died five years before. Jared was four and Caleb was two when Mom died. They barely remembered their own mother. Caleb only knew what Alexa had told him.

So for five years, Alexa had kept the house running. She'd done laundry, cooked meals, and cleaned the house. Dad had worked the night shift back then. He didn't know that for the first few years, she'd slept on the floor of the boys' room at night while he was gone. He did know that she kept the big black Lab, Quincy, in the house with her. She kept a cordless phone beside her pillow, too, just in case. Nothing had ever happened, but how Alexa had worried. She wanted to protect the boys.

She couldn't protect them from the pain of Mom's death. Mom had died in a freak car accident the winter that Caleb was two. The three kids had

been home with Dad. Mom had gone into town to do a little Christmas shopping. It was getting dark, and she hit a spot of black ice on the old county road. The car crashed into a telephone pole. The doctor told Daddy that Mama was killed pretty much instantly. She didn't feel any pain. Daddy told Alexa the same thing. Alexa always wondered how that was supposed to comfort anybody. Whether Mom had felt pain or not, she was dead. And that hurt plenty.

Alexa just couldn't deal with having Kelly in the house and knowing that Kelly was Dad's wife now. She couldn't stand seeing Kelly take Mom's place in their lives. But the boys needed a mother, not just a sister. So Alexa tried to make things as pleasant for Kelly as she could. But it was so painful. As Alexa's senior year drew to a close, she knew she had to get away, make a break. But not just for herself. It was for the boys, too. Because as long as Alexa was there, the boys would treat her as they always had. Like she was their mother. And Kelly deserved better than that.

She'd always been there for the boys, and now she was leaving them. She'd told them goodbye last night. This morning, they left before the boys even woke up. She was there and then gone. Leaving them. Like Mom had. They'd have to hate her for doing that to them. After all her promises to never leave them, she'd gone and done it. But it was for their own good. Without Alexa, they'd depend on Kelly. Without Alexa, they'd have Kelly and Dad. Two parents.

It didn't matter that Alexa would be miserable. The boys would be happier in the end. So Alexa decided to go to the school her mother had graduated from. Like her mother, Alexa would become a nurse. It would be a major that she could lose herself in. She needed that. To focus on others, not herself. Alexa flexed her jaw. She could do this. Whether she could or not, she would.

As they drove south, Alexa finally began to relax. The school was in Tennessee. A small liberal arts college with a good nursing program. They stopped for lunch at McDonalds. They were almost there. Alexa stared at her Big Mac and fought the stupid urge to cry. Dad's voice seemed rough. His eyes were red.

"Are you sure this is what you want, Alexa? You know you don't have to do this."

She stiffened. "I'm sure. This is what I have to..." she stopped and corrected, "this is what I want to do, Dad. It'll be fine. I'll come home some weekends."

“So like Lily. So like your mother.”

Dad barely ever mentioned Mom. Alexa supposed he tried to block the painful memories. She might have wanted to do the same, but once again, wanting couldn't enter into her decision. Alexa wanted the boys to know as much about their mother as they possibly could, and if Dad couldn't speak of it, than Alexa would. The memories were always there anyway.

She didn't want to push Dad too much. It was already a hard day for him. Still, she asked, “How, Dad? How am I like Mom?”

He blinked. “She . . . She could be stubborn, like that. Staying the course she set for herself. Never backing down. You're a lot like your mother, Alexa. Have I never told you that?”

She smiled tiredly and shook her head. “Not for a long time. Not since...” There was no need for her to finish her sentence. He already knew.

“I'm sorry, honey. So sorry.”

Blinking back tears of her own, she told him, “It's okay, Daddy. That's just the way it was. Not your fault. Just life.”

“Alexa, I know you had to grow up too fast. God, you were only twelve. I'm sorry you had to deal with all that. If I could have kept you a child through it all, you know I would have. I'm sorry you had to deal with all that.”

“Just the way it was, Dad. Don't beat yourself up over it. So I grew up a little faster than some kids my age. It made me stronger, too. Tougher. More prepared to deal with life's hard knocks. I know what's important, now; and what's worth hanging on to.”

“That's what I mean, Alexa. You're always so serious. You always try to see the good in the bad. I wish ... Just have some fun, Alexa. Don't study too hard, okay?”

She laughed. She had to lighten the mood. “I'll try not to, Dad. I don't think that's the usual advice, though. Is it?”

He laughed. “Guess not.” He glanced at his wristwatch. “Better be hitting the road, I guess.”

Wake Me From This Nightmare

K. Jerome Schmidt

When the light you thought was here to stay

Is covered by shadows of yesterday

Kept within so others can't see

You run from the darkness

For a chance to be free.

Time plagues your mind

It stops just briefly

Or so it seems

Then catches up

With the child within.

The light you have held

For the one true savior

Is diminished by adolescent behavior

So you keep the faith

Not to look the fool

Afraid to stand for what is not cool

Individualism.

Meantime your friends

Go along with the scheme

Kneeling to what?

Surely this too a dream.

You have been blinded by a shroud

No more than a face in a crowd

Of others that share your own lack of reason

Saintly enough just for the season

It's all like a book

A nursery rhyme

Passed along for quite some time

And no one cared to ask

Who was the author

The quicker to follow

The quicker to slaughter.

Nothing But the Wind

K. Jerome Schmidt

She whispered my name softly
I stayed still and wondered,
Is this a dream?
Not another sound was made
Not a crinkle of the paper left on the floor
Not a creak of the bedroom door
Now where has my love gone off to?
I stayed awake to see what would transpire.
It seemed too quiet
The air was thick
My body felt cold and alone
I opened my eyes to take a look
Then it came to me; I was not home
I was somewhere else
No light yet not dark
Was I suspended in my own mind
Or have I lost myself once again
Within the realm of time?
I could hear her voice replay in my head
Fading as it called
I shifted abruptly to the side
Though out of bed I did not fall.

Was it at last?
Did I finally take
The one eternal sleep
Did my love awaken to find me there
Leaving her in my sleep
I try to remember the last thing I had seen
Replaying it in my mind
And there it was
A shadowed figure
Staring at the knife in my side
I reach for it yet have no arms
Struggling in my hell
Shake myself though no movement
Within this curse I dwell
Damned in here
My own quiet space
To remember times before
If only I had better hearing
To catch the stranger at the door.

Lament

K. Jerome Schmidt

The old lady turned her nose upwards. "Had this become the youth of today?" She took the change clumsily given to her by the clerk and exited the convenience store. The woman had lived in the city since it had first been a small single-street town some seven plus decades before. No longer able to drive by her vision leaving her many years before, she hobbled to the bus stop bench. Three teenagers were occupying the spaces and none of which stood to allow her to take a seat. In fact none even noticed her existence. The city bus pulled up and she, along with the others climbed aboard. The driver called her "Darlin" as he told her to hurry up and put the change into the slot. Then he hastily sped off, throwing her to the floor of the bus. She had fallen a year before and quietly hoped that this time she would not need to go to the hospital for another hip. She pulled up into the first seat and wept to herself. After around fifteen minutes she sounded the bell indicating she needed dropped off at the next stop. Then slowly struggled to her feet, and stepped down off the bus. She stopped and took a seat at the bench. She lifted her grey-pleated dress to reveal an already green and purple bruise from her fall. After another ten minutes of gathering her strength, she started for the comfort and safety of her house.

When she unlocked the door and placed her key on the hook, she felt the pain worsening in her legs. She placed the milk in the fridge, eggs on the shelf, and made a sandwich for dinner.

After dinner the elderly woman walked the long corridor to her lonely bedroom. Past the hall of photographs of loved-ones long since gone, beyond the marriage license hanging in the same spot since the nineteen-fifties, into her wood paneled room. She put on her dressing gown, said a prayer for her grandchildren that no longer visit her to stay safe and prosper in life, then the old woman laid down in her bed and died.

Petals

(A Jeromean Couplet)

K. Jerome Schmidt

Where did the blooms first fall?
They flutter and fly to the winds call
Much like the times of old,
The tale of lovers whose lives unfold
On the pages of books, with leaves they shine
Desires, thoughts, promiscuous in rhyme
The blooms swept up unknown
Much like the life of one's love is shown.

Tales from Fishhook

K. Jerome Schmidt

It was a long night.

The fog had rolled in early,

and now hung thick blocking all sight within a few feet.

I sat on the couch wasting time as usual.

Until sleep could rear its head.

The dog had been barking steady,

so I decided to look out to see what the issue was.

Duke was facing the street on the opposite side of the house.

I figured it was a stray cat,

I put on my shoes and went outside.

I rounded the back of the house and seen nothing.

Curious I strolled out to the dog and squatted next to him.

He looked past me and continued to bark.

Then he lunged forward to the end of his chain.

His bark changed to a ravenous growl at this point.

I looked at him and asked what he seen.

Then I noticed his hair was standing on end.

Something was over in the fog,

placed beyond my view.

I am not easily frightened, so

I stood and walked towards the object of Duke's interest.

The lights were off in the house,

aside from one in the living room

where I had been sitting just prior

to my journey outdoors.

It illuminated the yard in front of the house

about ten feet from the house.

That is where I seen what my faithful dog

had been trying desperately to acquire.

A man stood in the street moving away from the house.

I called to the figure.
No reply.
So I gave chase.
The figure seemed to float in the fog,
staying just feet away from my grasp.
I remembered the pistol,
I carry with me at night
though no more than a child's toy,
and drew it mid run
and fired it into the back of the figure's head.
It let out a horrible yell,
then turned towards me.
I dove into the man,
though nothing was there.
Grass was all I had in my grip.
I looked up from the ground
and it stood before me
eyes shimmering pale in the foggy moonlight.
I quickly stood
and let another round fly
into the figures hood.
The man went down into the grass,
this time making no sound.
I grabbed onto the beings chest,
looked into its eyes
and seen myself staring back.
In the distance,
I heard something moving fast
coming directly towards me
I fixed my gaze on exactly what it was
as Duke lunged for my throat.
What a good dog.

Path Chosen

Martez Turner

Sometimes we don't always find what we want to seek

With so many obstacles in our path none of them gentle, tame, or meek

We do our best to walk the dotted line, and try to avoid the change,

But change comes every day, forcing our goals to be at a distance, a range,

People come into our lives and at that moment they are unknown,

But they can have wonderful advice

That you soon learn to make your own,

We are all meant to be here on this land called earth,

If we were not , there wouldn't have been our moment of birth,

Only thing to remember is live life to the fullest, but use your mind

Because if you make a wrong decision, everyone else leaves you behind.....



Butterfly

Teresa Marcotte



Thoughts

Kylie Funk



Candyland
Teresa Marcotte



A Little Piece of Heaven

September Bush

The Writer

K. Jerome Schmidt

To be a writer, a scribe of thoughts
My mind becomes the paper, pen my heart;
Jotting down elusive remarks, for you.
This is but a challenge, a will of sorts
A map in a book, dreams giving reports.
The reader is the critic, the jury,
The subject the defendant, the case read.
What will the verdict decide for my fate?
Another year older, another cage?
One more way, to bring my thoughts to the light.



My Christmas Wish

Teresa Marcotte



Our awesome advisor, Dr. Robert Seufert, is as famous around campus for his collection of fun, eye-catching neckties as he is beloved for his cheerful, eccentric personality. While we wish him all the happiness in the world as he retires from his role as a full-time professor, we will certainly miss running into him—and his crazy ties—as we travel the halls and grounds of MacMurray. Congratulations, Seufi! We love you!!



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