

SPARK

A REVIEW OF NSCC STUDENT LITERARY & ARTISTIC EXPRESSION



SPARK 2010 **volume 2**

sparked by inspiration

Through poetry and stories, photographs and drawings, Spark showcases the talent and spirit of students at North Shore Community College. This second issue of Spark is dedicated to the persistence of vision, forward movement, and the knowledge that creativity is its own reward. **Enjoy.**



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My Deity

by Christina Siebertz

I wonder where I'm going
At every second of every day;
Walking around aimlessly
With an invisible blindfold,
Chasing a dream I think is real,
Trying to live up to
Expectations,
Either those of my own
Or someone else's,
I haven't figured it out yet.
Chasing people of my future
Or people I only hope
To be my future.
Like wishing stars they are,
So large and close at night;
Non-existent during the day.
Working, writing, thinking,
organizing
For a better tomorrow.
Consistently forgetting about
The todays and yesterdays.
Losing joy for the moment
Incessantly pushing forward
For my prize,
His eyes,
My dream,
Something that is what it seems.
Losing hope because I'm losing
hope
Needing perfect fulfillment
Not in human form.
A deity.
My deity.
Struggling for something
unearthly.

My Window

by Deb Scarfo

Days seen through muted windows
Deceiving the eye to see
My dream's enticing delusion
Through ambiguous transparency

Clouded from despairing breaths
Ambivalence scratching its surface
Of the perpetual devious mask
From my life's unconscious mess

Do I dare attempt to raise open
A window a crack at least
In hopes of glimpsing my desperate dream
And finally be released

Or do I scream wildly, pounding and punching
Until the glass shatters dangerously
Blinding my visions of escaping
The malevolent misery

Fighting to uncover the fearlessness
Forever kept remotely at bay
Permeating my every movement
Behind the muted windows of my days

Fictitious Walls

by Kayla Sweet

Your fictitious walls, they will
not break,
You've built them "unreal",
for your own sake,
The protection you've
created, all on your own,
Prevents you from ever, being
alone.

Disguising yourself, is all that
you know,
It's a desperate attempt, to
never let go,
Can't you see that you're
empty? Is it something you
can't face?

Don't you see that you're not
searching, in the right place?
You're reaching far out, for
something that's not there,
You are driven by anger, and
compelled by fear,
If you submit to faith, and let
yourself see,
Maybe you'll realize , what it
means to be free.

Painted On

by Kayla Sweet

A painted on smile,
An echoing laugh,
A trail of old secrets,
And a deceiving old path,
A welcoming garden,
Which hides wretched weeds,
If you're trying to grow,
Stop planting dead seeds,
Your mask will not cover,
But smother instead,
A lie is a lie,
No matter why it was said.

Not Like I Used To | *Martha Avril Duncan*



Husband

by Florence Urban

I don't remember a time when I didn't want you, you have always been the man that makes my heart leap out of my chest. I love everything about you, the way you look dressed and undressed, your calm stride and the wonderful way your mouth curves into a smile. I love the hunger in your touch and the flickers of red bursting inside the green in your eyes. You are my Irish knuckle head, you won't let them play games with you or question the power of your thoughts and I more than love you for that. I know it's hard for you to share the duty of being a

father with another man, but you do, and there are tears in my heart for you anytime you've been hurt because of that. The kids depend on you to add structure in their lives, and you do that. When they are hurt or hungry or happy you smile, cry and laugh with them and we love you for that too. Sometimes I watch you sleep, you are so peaceful and quiet your mind is at rest and I can't help myself, I kiss you all over your face until you growl and swat me away. I put my head on your chest and listen to your heartbeat, you don't know how much I love

you, and how proud I am to say I married my dream. I know I make you mad sometimes, when I spend money you meant to save or when my tongue whips you into submission. I need you to know you are the hero in this story and there is no place I'd rather be than watching you breathe. You are my husband and I intend on spending my life with you. When we get old and all the kids are gone and we can stroll around the house naked scaring the neighbors, know this my love, I'd do it all over again, every little bit just to be right here next to you.

Canyon

by Kayla Sweet

There is so much of you,
That I cannot reach.

The depth of you,
Leaves me without speech.

There's things inside,
That I'll never touch.

But it doesn't mean,
I can't love you as much.

There's a cave to you,
Is it dark and blinding,

There's a center of you,
I believe it's worth finding.

But in the end, I'm left to see,
That this exploration, is not up to me,

I cannot seek, what you don't want sought,
And I cannot think what you don't want thought.

Instead I'm left peering, too close to the edge,
Yet not close enough to climb down from this ledge.



Windswept | *Jenna Aiello*

Another Race

by **Christina Siebertz**

How I wish the sea
Would envelope me.
Freely floating
In no form
Feeling the true essence
Of nature and its intentions.
How I do love silence,
In its brisk way,
To subdue and nurture
Even the wildest of beasts,
Even myself,
As I struggle to
Defeat myself

And my demons
On a desert;
Under water as a mermaid;
In a tall tree
On a tropical night;

I wade
To and fro
Searching for meaning
In life
As a secondary race.

The Woman in the Distance

by Nelson Baker

I noticed her when I stood up after retying my left shoe. It was a surprise that I would never have envisioned in my mind. Standing there across the street, holding a newspaper over her head to block the rain from soaking her beautiful face, she stood apart from the rest of the world. This thing that she possessed, that which made her shimmer even under the grayish clouds, was what I adored about her most. I could barely move, as my memories of her began to find their way back to me. She struck me with something that was impossible to describe, pulling me in without her even knowing I was there with her.

It was apparent that this lady with her long, voluptuous, auburn colored hair was awaiting the arrival of a taxi. Raising her arm into the air to flag one down, she smiled as she was not yet successful. I sensed in her a hint of inadequacy as she lowered her arm back down. Just a hint. Just enough to impress onto her that soft, sweet amenity. Leaning into the passing vehicles, she looked further down the street in search of any oncoming taxis.

Finding myself frozen, unable to find the courage to go to her, I became lost in the memories of our once perfect life together.

There were times when I loved to love her, and other times, all I could do was cry. It is difficult to comprehend the idea that someone like her can be taken from you. Life has its ways and sometimes, they override love. To think that I would not be able to spend the rest of my life with her was my only weakness.

The night before we were married, I brought her to the ocean. After walking up and down the shoreline, hands clasped, we finally sat down in the sand. It was a cool night, and I saw that slight inadequacy in her that I will always love. With my arm around her, we looked beyond the shore, into the distance behind the water's edge. It was then that I reminded myself that I was the luckiest man in the world.

I told her I loved her that night. It wasn't the first time, but it felt different. I was in a land of my own creation. Somehow, my life with her was going just the way I had wanted. We were beginning a new life now, and I wanted with all my heart to make her happy. I wasn't perfect, but maybe our future could be. Perfect in our eyes.

On the eve of the day that would bring us into courtship, I made love to my fiancé by the

water. Just after midnight, with the sound of the waves splashing against the tide, life was born. It was meant to be. This most perfect night, with the hope of a long and wonderful life together, and I had nothing to regret.

What was stopping me from walking up to her? Soon, a taxi would pull alongside the curb, and take her away forever. I did not know where she lived. Nor did I have any inclination as to if I was even welcome in her life. My heart was pulsating as I was aware that this may be the last time I would ever see her, and then I would never forgive myself.

I felt as if I had only one shot at this. This was probably my reasoning for such hesitation. I was afraid of being rejected by her. I was afraid of what it would do to me. Even though I knew it would feel much worse if I did nothing at all, I remained still, except for my eyes, and my thoughts.

A few years after we were married, something happened that I will always remember. My wife and I had been walking on a trail deep in the woods. The sun was shining bright through the trees, and we veered off course to see it. As we came up to the edge of a rocky gorge, we saw a

view that was breathtaking. It was like we had traveled to a place not of this Earth. The sky shined its light beyond the cliffs, creating sunny trails that looked like they extended out into infinity. It was peaceful in a radiating way, and being here together brought even more depth to the love that we shared for each other.

Astounded by what she was seeing, my wife stumbled. Losing her balance, both of her feet slipped out from under her as she slid toward the edge. My heart sank as she cried out to me, and I knew that she would fall to her death if I did not save her in time.

With only a split second to react, I dropped flat on my stomach as close to her as possible, grabbing hold of her with both of my hands, underneath her arms. This halted her descent, while giving me a strong base in my positioning on the ground. In an instant reaction, she reached back for me, giving me the chance to take hold of her hands. Luckily, this did the job. If I had tried to grab her without dropping to the ground, I would have been off balance. And since we were so close to the edge, maybe both of us would have gone over.

I reacted in a way that I always hoped I would - without hesitation, using speed, accuracy,

and fortitude. If I had hesitated for even a second, she could have died.

There was no doubt that she was still alive. I was looking right at her. Though there were people everywhere, and an immense compilation of traffic, my focus was on this lady, with her magnetic abilities.

Waving to a taxi that was gradually approaching, she looked relieved as the driver replied with a wave of his own. He was not more than five or six vehicles from her, and even though the light had just turned red, I knew that time was running out for me.

The rain had changed into a mist, and peaks of the sun were straining to emerge from the clouds above. I felt as if something out there was providing for me a small sense of encouragement in lighting up the skies. Something was urging me to make my move. I looked up to the sky, watching as the clouds began to break apart. In my appreciation for such an unpredictable and beautiful world, I remembered the time in the park when I pointed my finger toward the sky, showing my son a passing airplane. He was only six then, and planes were more exciting to him than anything he had ever seen. The smile that came over his face, the happiness in his eyes,

“On the eve of the day that would bring us into courtship, I made love to my fiancé by the water.”

I will always look back on with my own indescribable elation. He always brought moments to my life that were joyous and memorable.

We were a family once. Parents to two young boys who we introduced to the world, and everything in it. She was a kind, gentle mother who had a natural way with children. They loved her more than candy, which for a child, is a compliment of the highest regard.

The light turned green, and traffic was again in motion. It was either now or never. After taking a deep breath and nodding my head, I started toward her, without

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“I wiped the tears from my face, and fighting the pain within my back, sat up to greet her face to face.”

continued from page 7

looking back. I could see the taxi driver through the passenger side window, as he pulled up beside her with a lustful smile on his face. I knew all I had to do was call out to her, and she would hear me. I was close enough to her now. I actually opened my mouth, but before I could speak, someone's horn abruptly beeped. I sighed, and as I was about to try for a second time, I noticed a pickup truck traveling at a speed that was much too fast. I was now on her side of the street, walking toward her, watching the oncoming truck. It had not yet slowed to a safe rate of speed.

The woman ran her hands through her damp, but still flowing hair, as the taxi driver opened the door for her. I began to run toward them, as I was concerned that danger was imminent. The driver saw me, and his smile changed to a look of confusion and fear. He then noticed the truck, and in seconds, had darted back around his cab and into the driver's seat. He didn't even shut the door he

had opened for her. As he hit the gas, he sped off, and the door shut on its own.

As the taxi departed, it left an opening, one large enough for another vehicle, such as a truck. She was still standing there, unaware as to why the driver left so quickly. All she did was insert a hair clip, as her arms were blocking her face for just a few seconds, and then he was gone. She put her hands on her hips, and that look of inadequacy spread over her face as she watched the taxi speed away. I wanted to touch her face just once in that moment, but I knew it wasn't going to happen.

“Watch out for the truck!” I yelled, running to her. But I was not in time. I was just a few feet away from her when the truck slammed into her.

“No!” I cried.

She was thrown several feet and finally hit the side of a building that was nearby. I could not believe what I was seeing. If I had only gone to her sooner, maybe she would not have been

hit. Maybe then I could have prevented this from happening. There was another crash, and I remember feeling excruciating pain in my back, but only for a second or two.

The next thing I knew, I was sitting on a rocking bench, on a large, slightly dusty porch, beside my beautiful wife. It was our home, the one we lived in for most of our life. We were rocking back and forth ever so gently, enjoying the view of a lake. We had aged gracefully, and I was still very much in love with her. This was our time of relaxation, early Sunday morning when the spring air was just right.

Sitting there, I looked back on a long and happy life. I thought of the greatest moments in my life. The ones that touched me the most. These moments are the ones that I hold in my heart forever. Some of them, I can see happening just a little different than they actually did, but there's nothing wrong with adding a few things to your memories that could give you that much more happiness. Remembering something with a little extra fondness than you once felt. It doesn't hurt anyone.

The way we see things in our life is what makes it a good one. Whether thinking of the past, present or future, having a hopeful mind and a loving heart

can lead your dreams into reality. And there is nothing wrong with that.

I opened my eyes, and I could tell immediately that I was in a hospital. I tried to remember how I got here, and then tears began to stream down my face. Why did I wait so long? I thought to myself. This all could have been avoided and I knew it. “Are you okay?” asked someone from the room.

I lifted my head and saw the only one I did not expect to see. She was sitting up in her bed, with a few bruises on her face, a bandage on her forearm, and a book in her hand. She put a bookmark on the page that she was reading and set the book down on the table beside her bed.

I wiped the tears from my face, and fighting the pain within my back, sat up to greet her face to face.

“My name is Wendy and I think I owe you a thank you, don’t I? What is your name?”

I smiled at her, and as I started to tell her my name, I began to think of the moments that meant so much to me over the years. ■

Unique Flowers | *Karen Spear*



Climbing the Ladder

by Jessica Toomey

My whole life I have let my fears get in the way of doing things I've always wanted to do. My fears are a "No Trespassing" sign blocking my way, and that I'm always afraid to cross. My first time going to Rye Harbor State Park was the day I walked past that "No Trespassing" sign and overcame my fear of heights.

Driving past Hampton Beach into Rye Beach, I felt like I was in another part of the world. A world that was kept secret from me for 19 years. Looking out the window, the picture seemed to be so unreal. To my right the water was a deep blue, but looked like white diamonds due to the sun shimmering so gently over the waves. Looking to my left all I saw was one house after another that resembled what ought to be a five star hotel. I felt uncomfortable looking at all these empty mansions, but I also felt at home with the blinding blue water making my eyes squint and the smell of the salt air.

As Nanu pointed to the wooden sign that read "Rye Harbor State Park," Nana Karen took a slight right into the park. While Nana found a space close to the water and parked her car, Eric kissed me on my cheek and smiled. He knew how much I loved his grandparents and that I was having fun.

Walking towards the water, I felt at ease, like I was home. That familiar breeze hit my face and was

getting colder and angrier by the minute. Like the beach at home, there were so many people at the park. Smiling faces in autumn, laughing, joking, spending time with friends and family, the scenery seemed to bring warmth to my face.

The park didn't seem any different from any other park. There were trees, pink flowers, benches, picnic tables, but there was one thing that made this park different from others I had visited before. There in the water were at least four different paths leading out to what seemed to be life guard posts. The paths were made out of the biggest rocks I had ever seen. From where we were standing the post seemed not far away.

"When we used to come here, years ago, Nick and I used to climb those rocks," Nana Karen said in her sweet tone that always made me feel comfortable. Looking up at Eric's playful eyes, he looked at me and asked "Do you want to climb them?" Doing what I do best I responded before I had time to think and blurted out "Yes."

Running in unison to the first big gray boulder of a rock, we leaped onto our starting line. As I took one step after the other, I realized we were already halfway between the path. I looked beside me thinking that Eric was there, and to my surprise he was at least 15 ft. ahead of me.

I started to panic. I felt as though

I was on a deserted island watching my rescue ship sailing away. With the angry wind pushing me around like a high school bully pushing a kid when he's down, I almost lost my balance. The air seemed to feel like knives hitting me all over. Looking back I couldn't see Nick or Karen or anyone for that matter. All I could envision in my terrified state of mind was falling to my death and my blood staining the rocks.

Eric was at the finish line coming in first and I was in second. Looking back upon our race to almost death, I slowly turned around and looked up in fear. My smile of completing what seemed to be a playful race wasn't over yet. I shivered as I looked up at the once so small post to now the terror of doom.

"We made it this far, let's go up on the ladder," Eric said as my heart fell through my chest. Not wanting to move, I inched towards the ladder. I decided to go first so that if I fell, Eric could carry me back to shore better than I could ever carry him. The ladder was roughly 10 ft. tall and was made of metal and was screwed to the ground.

I grabbed the sides of the ladder for dear life, still shaking and freezing, I didn't look down. Each step felt like a lifetime. My hands were freezing and turning a pale white. Placing both feet on the floor of the post, I stood there in silence for I was 15 feet off the ground and



clockwise

Eagle | *Warley Coelho*

Black & White Portrait | *Olesea Fiodorova*

Neon Neutral Geometry | *Mandi Marcotte*

in the middle of the water. Soon enough Eric was by my side. His eyes never looked so blue and scared at the same time. I touched his hand and he was shaking, but not from the cold.

“We should leave now, I’m pretty scared,” he said as he was heading down the ladder. “Wait, let me enjoy this,” I said to him with a smile. I looked all around me to make sure I wasn’t dreaming. I couldn’t believe I did that. I walked over sharp boulders in the middle of the ocean and up a ladder that was mounted to a rock. I was so surprised and shocked at doing what I did. We headed back to our starting point. I looked back and smiled. I smiled at the fact that I didn’t let myself down and conquered my fear of heights. ■







clockwise, page 12

Benjamin Brooks | *Martha Avril Duncan*

Brick and Steel | *Mandi Marcotte*

Brotherly Kiss | *Olesea Fiodorova*

clockwise, page 13

Stiles Pond | *Hillary Scott*

Berries | *Olesea Fiodorova*

Shoes | *Warley Coelho*



Warley Coelho ©

Two Wheeling Tinkerbell

by Tanya Green

Pedals flew like wings
Soaring on her own little rainbow
Nothing Tinkerbell about her
100% tomboy
On an endless rainbow flight
So she thought
Until that September day
Peter Pan up front
Tink closing in
Lost boys lagging behind
Speeding around curves
Tirelessly up Washington Mountain Rd.
Faster than ever down Sleepy Hollow Path

Approaching Whipper Willow Lane full
speed ahead
Pan!!!!!!!!!!
Crashing without a sound
Tink's feet desperately pounding pavement
Peter's body shaking uncontrollably
Blood spurting out from all directions
Tink's tears couldn't save him
Lost boys looked on in horror
Rainbow crushed
Wings shattered
Peter Pan dead

The Peddler's Daughter | *Hillary Scott*



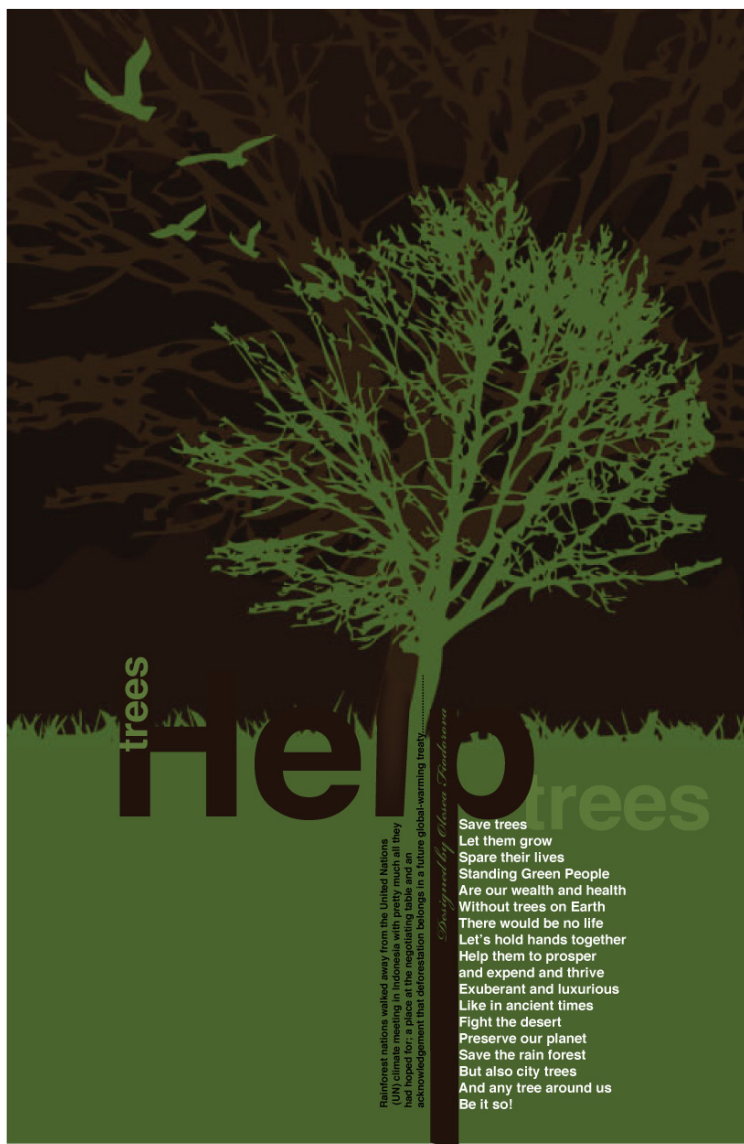
The Jump

by Shannon Horgan

A girl makes her way up an old worn path, weaving through trees and rocks. Making sure to avoid stray sticks and pieces of rock jutting out from the soil, she gets closer and closer to her destination. Sunlight streams in through gaps in the trees and dances through the woods. She struggles up a steep incline and is rewarded by reaching the top of the hill. The girl stops to catch her breath and takes in her surroundings. The woods are to her back and a clearing that ends in a cliff is straight ahead. A soft breeze ruffles some leaves and combs through her dark waves of hair. She looks up and the sun fully beams down on her now, warming her already sun-kissed face. She confidently walks over to the cliff's edge in long strides. Her warm brown eyes observe the waves crashing up against the rocks directly below. She takes a step back and reminds herself why she is there. The girl allows her mind to flash back through the memories and a few stand out in particular, as they should. The first time she fell in love, the first time her heart was broken, the friendships made and lost, and the spring when a new beginning blossomed from the concrete. A smile sneaks onto her face

before she even realizes it. She knows that the past is behind her but she is aware that it makes her who she is. For a while she was cautious, until a boy made her forget to be.

The girl stops reminiscing and takes a few steps back. She sheds her sandals, along with any regrets. She has one last second to reconsider but ignores it and makes a run for the cliff. An adrenaline rush follows as her jump slowly comes to an end and she is swallowed up by the waves. The time she spent in the air seemed like much longer than the actual seconds that went by before she hit the ocean. Her fall represented her reckless jump towards love and surviving. Just like the water broke her fall, so did a boy. She only felt more alive when they were together than when she hit the water. Love can look a lot like menacing waves but once you jump, love is the most intense feeling that is possible to feel in this world. The girl takes a deep breath after reaching the surface and starts the trek back to shore. Progressing up the sandy beach, she wore soaked clothes, a smile on her face, and for once her heart was as free as her toes.



clockwise, page 16

Help Trees | *Olesea Fiodorova*

Fruit | *Joanne Graham-Troy*

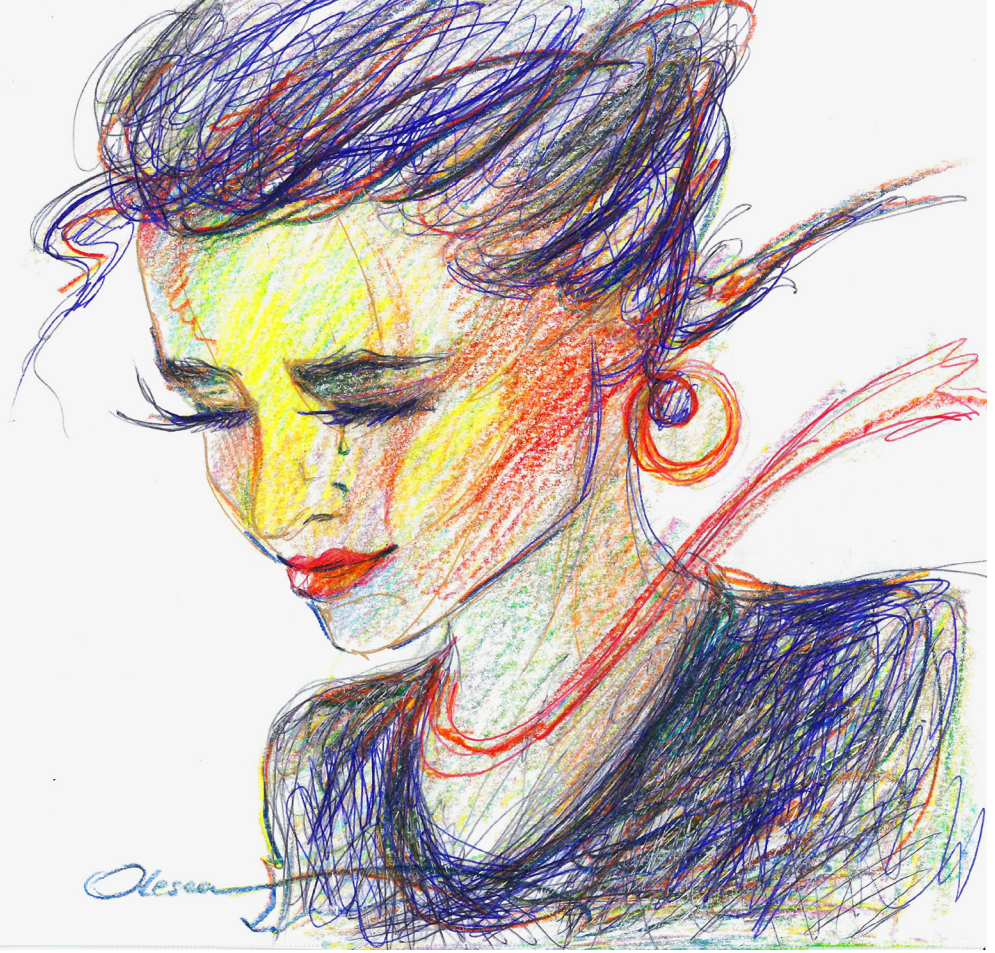
Paris Carousel | *Joanne Graham-Troy*

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Sad Portrait | *Olesea Fiodorova*

Thomas Edited | *Jake Bartolomeo*

A Marine's Arrival | *Victoria Nickerson*





clockwise

Callum | *Hillary Scott*

Crucifixion Fin | *Martha Avril Duncan*

Nostalgia on the Wind | *Olesea Fiodorova*

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Autoportrait | *Olesea Fiodorova*

In That Moment I found an Angel

by Amanda Frost

I remember running along the beach with you
It was mid-September
We were young and naive
And because of you, I was free
Like a butterfly in the sky
I had so many things to reach

When the sun started to set
You said it was getting dark out
And that we had to leave
I said I didn't want to sleep
You said "That's okay with me"
We drove through the entire deserted town
There was no one around
In that moment I realized
You were mine that night

And I don't know why
I don't know how
But we ended up here somehow
Just you and me
Chasing our dreams
Throughout the seasons
Hand in hand
You took me into your arms
In that moment I found
You were my safest place to hide

From every storm that's ever came
Every threat and every rain
Every tear shed by my fears
You've been here

God sent an angel
With wings to shelter me
A heart to love me
And a soul to guide me

Rain or shine
You'll be my guiding light
A guardian angel
To cherish me all my life



Finding Myself

by Deb Scarfo

“What do you want from me? I don’t have any money, if that’s what you’re after,” she furiously declared. Those were my birth mother’s first words to me. After all the years of gathering the courage to search, I was devastated to hear her thoughtless, hurtful remark. I had somehow always known of this inevitable moment, unconsciously aware I would find her one day.

I was two months old when I was adopted. I can’t recall the exact time or place when my parents first told me. It was something that was always a part of me, similar to knowing I had dark hair and hazel eyes. As a child I would often hear from my mother or father, “You were adopted Debbie, and that’s very special, because we were able to choose you.” But even as a little girl, I was never quite certain of that assumption, and by the time I was a teenager, I didn’t want to be considered “special” anymore. I longed to be like my friends who took for granted their siblings and parents resembling them, sharing the same expressions and mannerisms, an endless family history. I was desperate to belong in a “real” family. To be secure in knowing I inherited my mother’s blue eyes or my father’s long nose. My adopted mother and I were contrasts in every way and I endlessly craved a mother who could understand and accept me. Childishly, I repeatedly told myself, “If she was my real mother, she would truly love me for who I am.”

As the years passed, I became more obsessed with finding my birth mother, and at 26 years old, I went to court and obtained my adoption records that were legally sealed. As I walked out of the courtroom, my hands shook holding the file that contained my life’s beginning, and the end of not knowing who I was. I impatiently tore open the file, my birth father and mother’s name staring up at me from the pages. Her name was Dorothy Rau. She had been going through a divorce when she was pregnant with me,

while raising an 8-year-old son and 4-year-old daughter, my birth sister, Sue, who unbeknownst to me, I would meet in less than 48 hours!

My mind swirling with this newfound knowledge, I raced home, immediately picked up the phone for directory assistance, and in a few fleeting minutes I had my birth father’s phone number! When I excitedly called my husband and parents, the day’s events tumbling from my mouth, they swiftly tried to dash my enthusiasm, “Slow down, Deb! Why are you moving so fast? Don’t be so impulsive!” But how could they comprehend that I was on a moving walkway that was impossible to stop, any physical steps on my part no longer necessary.

Without hesitation I made the call and surprisingly ended up speaking with Claire, the kind, loving stepmother of my birth sister. Claire, I learned, was the wife of Chandler, Dorothy’s ex-husband, and he was not my birth father as the adoption papers stated. “You have a sister named Sue, who is dying to meet you!” Claire exclaimed.

The next morning, Sue and I spoke on the phone for hours, both of us overwhelmed with emotion at hearing the other’s voice for the first time. She confessed that she experienced an incredibly unhappy and unloving childhood being brought up by Dorothy, a cold manipulative narcissist, and her father, Chandler, an alcoholic and drug addict. Dorothy and Sue had been estranged off and on for most of her adult life. “Be grateful you were put up for adoption, Deb,” Sue told me with tears in her voice. We agreed to meet for lunch the next day, but never stepped foot inside the restaurant, instead sitting in the car talking non-stop for hours until dusk fell around us, surprising us back to reality. We were compelled to share every minute of our separated childhood and immediately bonded as if we grew up together and were not meeting for the first time as we were, adults 26 years later. I was incredibly for-

tunate to share a close and uniquely special relationship with my sister many years thereafter.

But, Dorothy didn't want to meet me. She was infuriated that I had found her and didn't agree to talk to me on the phone until weeks later. When she angrily questioned my reasons for searching for her, holding back my sobs, I replied, "I'm not looking for any money, I just want information." Resentfully, she refused to speak about the adoption or my birth father, and didn't even remember the date I was born! For weeks after I was paralyzed with depression, desolate and alone in my disappointment and pain of her rejection of me, for the second time in my life.

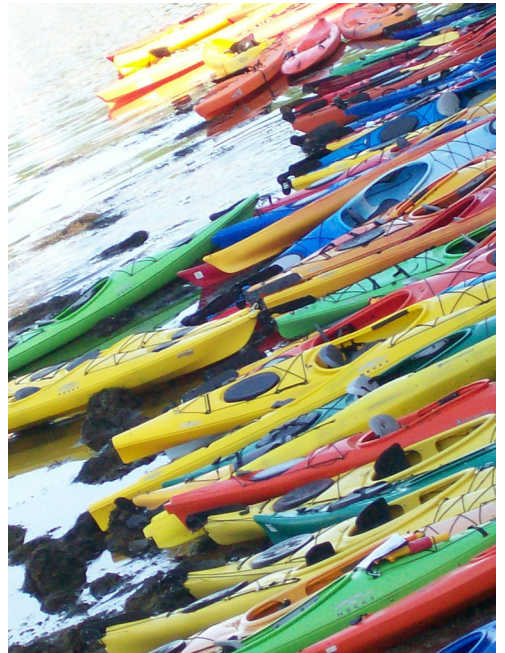
Months later, Dorothy decided she wanted to see me. On the morning of her visit, I wavered, tempted to cancel, terrified of this finalizing moment I had fantasized about all my life. She arrived at my doorstep with a small ordinary suitcase in one hand and yellow tulips in the other. She had a cultured air about her, was stylishly dressed and extremely attractive for her age of 68, with beautiful silver hair, her make-up perfectly applied. I was touched by the flowers, tulips being my favorite. "Oh, I always bring flowers when I visit someone," she announced indignantly, stealing my sense of hope in one moment. We sat side by side on my sofa; appetizers I had earlier agonized over went untouched. I was uncharacteristically quiet and shy, which worked out well as Dorothy was entirely content to talk only about herself, while I sat next to her, emotionally numb yet feeling a gradual anxiety stirring up all my lifelong insecurities. We looked alike physically, with the same eyes, cheekbones and mouth, which she commented on more than once. Yet that

is where our similarities ended. When she opened her suitcase, stacks of photos of all stages of her life spilled out between us. She proudly presented each one like a child showing off her most prized possessions, while I sat by quietly, riveted and drinking in the images that lay before me, intrigued as I was by our amazing likeness. Throughout, she elaborated on how awfully lonely her privileged childhood had been as an only child of a German tyrant father and a cold, distant, yet docile mother. She didn't question or seem interested in me at all, like a self-indulgent child taking center stage with the stories of her life, and I the understudy. It slowly dawned on me that I felt empty towards this intimidating woman who bore me 26 years ago, strangers we were and would always be. All the years I had pined over our meeting seemed like a distant frivolous journey. When I finally found the courage to ask about my birth father, she claimed she didn't know who he was, then contradicted herself and retorted, "He wasn't the most handsome man and did not have a decent job. Your father was a nobody!" The minutes slowly ticked by, until she rose to leave. I was grateful for her departure, this mother I had forever idealized in my daydreams of our meeting. She left that day, promising she would keep in touch, but I never heard from her again.

It's been over fifteen years since that fateful day when my birth mother and I first met, but the emptiness and pain of her abandonment still overcomes me at unexpected moments from time to time. Yet never once have I regretted my search, having no choice but gratefulness to her for my existence. ■

“She didn't question or seem interested in me at all, like a self-indulgent child taking center stage with the stories of her life, and I the understudy.”





clockwise

Patterns of the Night | *Olesea Fiodorova*

Hunter's Table | *Tracy Rubin*

Kayaks | *Samantha Gottlich*

Being Praised | *Olesea Fiodorova*

Essay

by Julie Mcdaid

I was born the third child of five to an Air Force military family. Moving was a constant. I can vividly remember the time my father gathered us into the living room and informed us we were moving to Turkey. Reactions varied and I can not say what my older sisters were thinking, but they were crying. With all the uninformed intelligence of a nine year old, I was excited. I went running to find a map, looking for a Turkey. I was crestfallen when it was not there. This was one of many youthful illusions shattered. It was there in Turkey I first became aware that my safety was not always a given.

It was customary for us to visit my Mom's family in New England before most major moves. This allowed us to re-connect with her large family of eleven siblings and countless cousins. The night before the flight to Turkey we wanted one last swim with the cousins. We hounded. We begged. We enlisted the help of cousins to plead our case. Against her best judgment, Mom caved and said yes to one last swim. We were already packed, so we wore the clothes for the flight and scrambled to borrow suits. When we had pushed Mom to the limit with "one more minutes," it was time to leave. "My socks! I can not find my socks." Everyone was tearing the yard and house apart searching, when someone spotted Uncle Fred's Great Dane with something clenched between his massive jaws. "My socks." I screamed. This sent the beast off with at least twenty of us cousins in hot pursuit. We chased him through yards, hedges and under picnic tables. Then he just sat down. He looked at us with those woeful brown eyes and in one gulp swallowed my socks! I flew to Turkey the next day. Shoes, no socks. STUPID DOG. It was a sign, I tell you. An omen of things to come.

The flight was long, too long with five of us to keep in line. When the plane was making its final descent I was glued to the window looking at the strange buildings and foreign sights and thinking

"Still no turkeys." We emerged from the plane right onto the tarmac. The heat was so intense I could see the waves of steam rise off the tar. Armed men with large guns, speaking a language I did not understand, were moving us toward a large open plane hangar. I was confused. Fierce-looking black shepherd dogs were strutting up and down. Our bags were brought forth and unceremoniously dumped right on the ground. Our belongings were out in the open for all to see as the large toothed beasts were sniffing and searching everything. At this point I was thinking two things; "Did anyone see my underwear?" and "If that dog does not find what he is looking for will he eat me?"

Dad told us we would be living "on the economy." That meant no armed guards checking the ID of everyone wanting to get into the barbed wire fenced area which we called home. That meant no feeling of security. It meant being submerged into the Turkish culture. It was here in Turkey that I came to realize I might not be safe. Bad things do happen, even to us.

We lived on the fifth floor of the Massey Ferguson Building. Massey Ferguson was a company that sold tractors and farm equipment. The whole first floor was a display of actual farm equipment. We usually would walk up the five flights of stairs because when the lift got stuck between floors, we never knew if it would be minutes or hours before help would arrive.

We often received shots to keep us from getting diseases. Our whole arm would go dead, like a heavy weight that could not be lifted. Trying with all our skill not to let on because, if others found out, it was great fun to punch your arm all day.

We functioned like other American families. We went to school and shopped. We did all the things people do, just embedded in the Turkish economy. My sister and I once took a Turkish bus to the downtown area. We crammed ourselves on foolishly thinking the bus was full. People kept piling on. The



stench of so many squished together in the heat of the day was overwhelming. We were packed so tight my feet did not hit the floor. It was like a cartoon. We learned there is no such thing as a full bus. By the time we made it to the door of the bus we had missed our stop by a mile. It was terrifying, being unsure of the terrain and the safety of where we were. We did eventually make it to the library. We never again took the bus.

Everyday was an adventure. American buildings were often closed for bomb threats. To be fair, I do not remember an actual bomb going off.

It was in Turkey I survived my first earthquake. The quake was a 7.0 on the Richter scale. There was a lot of damage and building closures, including the American school. The American school was a four-story building with a staircase up the middle. After the earthquake, half the building was condemned. We attended school half days so the other half of the school could use the building the rest of the day. During the chaos and confusion we were still just kids being kids and as soon as the building stopped shaking we (my siblings and I) ran to see if the seventh floor of our building was still there. Because earthquake code calls for no more than six floors, we thought maybe the seventh floor had just slid off.

We lived in Turkey during a very tumultuous time. In the region a war was waging. We called it the Cypress war. It was during this time we had forced blackouts. A blackout was when we were not allowed to use any light and had to draw

closed all curtains and shades. The reason for this was to keep the planes flying overhead from mistaking us for the target.

The drama was not constant and as kids I think we took it all in stride. One of us received a pogo stick as a present. We all ran down the stairs to try it out. We took turns joyfully hopping to our hearts content. We, of course, were safely hopping right in front of our building. The Massey Ferguson plate glass windows (to show off the shiny new tractors) were no match for my five-year-old brother flying through the air on his pogo stick and landing in the middle of that display. At the sound of that crash we bolted as fast as our legs would carry us. Never turning around. Never slowing down. Each of us trying to get home first. Trying so hard to get to the apartment before the police were called. We never slowed down one little bit, not even to make sure little Ed was okay. I just remember fleeing and my Mom bombing down the stairs to get Ed. I do not even remember if he was hurt or if we caused an international incident with our carefree hopping. I can not believe we left him. I can not really believe we thought we would get away, as if people did not know where the five loud American kids came from everyday.

Turkey was the first time we lived on the economy in a foreign place. The sights and sounds are vivid in my mind. The early seventies was a time of turmoil in the region. I became aware that the U.S. Military was not always thought to be the protector and safe haven I had been raised to believe. I learned bad things do happen, and I was not as safe as I always thought. I learned I can survive and family helps you through. That is unless you are five and pogo through a plate glass window. Then it is every man for himself. ■



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Cactus | *Olesea Fiodorova*

Tiger | *Danielle Tower*

Flowers Macs | *Olesea Fiodorova*

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Morning Arch | *Mandi Marcotte*





Something About the Way

by **Toni Allard**

Something about the way he looks at me,
as if he's watching the sunrise.

Something about the way he calls my name,
I simply smile by his amazement.

Something about the way he kisses my lips,
his passion unfolds as his skin touches mine.

Something about the way he holds me in his
arms,
ever so gently yet ever so tight.

Something about the way he speaks,
from the depth of his soul to the tip of his lips,
his words mean so very much.

Something about the way he smiles,
it brightens up the saddest of my days.

Something about just being with him,
there's no place I'd rather be.

Something about the way he knows me,
my strengths, my weaknesses, my hopes, and
my fears.

Something about the way he trusts me,
fragile yet open to all love's possibilities.

Something about the way he makes me feel,
it's Christmas in June and springtime in winter.

Something about the way he cares for me,
unconditionally and with a purpose.

Something about the way he loves me,
for I love him the way that he loves me.

Like the Tides

by **Nelson Baker**

She came and went like the tides
Fooled into believing the beauty of her would stay
with me

I watched her wash away
Suddenly my life is changed forever
I felt her enter my heart for the first time
When she lay beside mine
Sleeping as soundless as would a mime
I brushed my lips against her face
But somehow it left not even a trace
Because the love I once saw in her eyes
Has been tragically erased
The tides are high again
But she has not returned to shore
Leaving only remnants of our love
Those which could have grown into so much more

Street Market | *Joanne Graham-Troy*



The Darkest Night

by Tanya Green

Out into the void of night
An era has ended
Door locks behind me
Cold bites in spite of unseasonable warmth
My heart frozen
What will become of this place?
Will it be a legacy?
Will it disappear in the void of a December's night?
Taking my nightly walk for the last time
Thoughts spinning
Memories haunting
Taking on life
Approaching the rail bed
Moving slow
Stepping in
Savor each step, this is the last time
Feeling each rock and tie with scrutiny
As if making a sensory recording
Stopping
Never had before
To take it in
The empty station at night
Wrapped in silence
Still
Timeless
Could come back to do this
Never
Won't be the same
Purposeless, meaningless
Dead after tonight
Fading into history
Endless wake finally ends
Lights and a whistle!!
I've stopped too long
Platform feels as never before
Turn back see the approaching train
Rays of light cast upon glittering rails
Yet darkness prevails
Empty and cold
This is the darkest night

Guarding the Game

by Deb Scarfo

It's a frigid Friday evening, just after 5:00 pm and I race from the freezing, ice-cold wind that's whipping around the masses of people as they stream from the Danvers High School parking lot through the gym doors, thankful for the instantaneous warmth of the school. I pull open the heavy metal doors to the gym, hearing them bang loudly behind me, and quickly walk past the snack bar, my stomach grumbling as the enticing sweet smell of buttery popcorn hits my senses. Teenagers walk past with slices of thick, hot, cheesy pizza, the dripping grease marking their paper plates as it seeps through. As I enter the brightly lit gym, a heavy odor of sweat permeates the air like an invisible cloud. The stands are overflowing with numerous parents cheering and chatting, the noise initially deafening to my ears. Kids swarm the gym, intent on either watching the game that's in progress, or with each other, sitting close in tight groups. The freshman game is ending, and luckily I find a free space next to a few other Danvers parents that I know. I'm anxiously excited to watch my oldest son, Michael, play basketball against Marblehead High tonight, a team known for their numerous wins.

Michael casually jogs on the court with his teammates, ready to play in his white shorts and tank; a blue 22 blazes on his back. At 15, he's nearly a grown man, standing 6'1", and weighing a solid 170 pounds. His dark skin and hair contrasts with the bright white uniform he's wearing for the home game tonight. He immediately looks up into the bleachers, searching for my familiar, encouraging face. Spotting me wave and smile at him, he gives a slight nod, attempting to hide this gesture from his teammates. But the look in his eyes gives him away, instantaneously transporting to mine his appreciation that I am always there, eagerly cheering him on.

Michael was born to play basketball, and I've been passionately sharing in the intensity of his love

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continued from page 29

and sheer talent for the game from the long ago time of his toddler years, to his now thrilling high school career as a guard for Danvers High. “One, two, three.....twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two,” we both would gleefully chime in unison when he was a child, counting shot after shot he would get in a row in his Little Tikes net. His face alight with unpretentious pride and pure joy from playing this sport hasn’t changed much since then, except for the goatee that now decorates his chin, clearly marking the years’ passage.

Michael worked tremendously hard for this coveted place on the high school team, and it had been up and down emotionally throughout the tryouts

“Holy shit, Mom, I made JV!”

last November. “You’re a shoo-in for JV,” his previous travel coach had told him numerous times during last season. But a new high school coach came on board this year, announcing prior to tryouts, “No freshman will be playing JV.” Michael was crushed upon hearing this devastating news, coming home that evening from the gym refusing to eat, which is his favorite activity besides playing basketball and texting his friends. Then mid-tryouts, Michael was astonished to be personally invited by the JV coach, and over the next two stressful and excruciating days, he focused all his powerful energies into making the team. The last night of tryouts I anxiously awaited the news as if it were my own, and was amazed at the shocking text I received from Michael that evening summarizing his awe and disbelief.

“Holy shit, Mom, I made JV!”

As the freshman game ends, I’m aware of the dozens of Marblehead spectators swarming the bleachers; parents, family and friends supporting their town’s team. I eagerly search the court for number 22 and happily notice he is starting. “Before every game, I have to listen to rap on my iPod to psych myself up,” Michael had informed me earlier, while sitting next to me, plugs in his ears and lost in the music, the hood of his favorite American Eagle sweatshirt partially covering his eyes and face, making it difficult for me to gauge his true mood. Obviously this ritual of his works, as within 40 seconds he has the ball in his grasp, dribbling half court, weaving his way between the Marblehead defense. He raises the ball over his head and gracefully shoots the ball in the hoop for a smooth three pointer. “Nicely done, Scarf!” Coach Curley yells to my son by the nickname he’s earned from his teammates. Danvers jumps out for an early lead and the score is quickly 14 to 9.

Brian Curley is the Danvers’ JV coach. Thirty-years-old, fair skinned with a buzz cut, he is surprisingly short, his team towering over him. Yet watching him pace back and forth calling out plays from the sidelines, he appears overly strong and powerful by his confident stance and undying spirit for the game. “Sprint back on D! Sprint back on D!” is his favorite cry, laughs Michael. “And don’t let his size fool you,” my son had warned me earlier. “Our last loss against Saugus was nasty. After the game, Curley slammed his clipboard against the wall four times in the locker room, and didn’t say a word to any of us. We knew we were in trouble for practices that week!” he had muttered to me, rolling his eyes.

It’s now late in the first quarter, Danvers has possession, and the play is called. “Louisville!” the point guard yells to his teammates. Michael has the ball, dribbling it gracefully yet resolutely down the court, and passes the ball for a smooth assist to his teammate, who quickly runs a lay-up, knocking

the ball in. “Go White! Go Danvers!” the crowd cheers loudly and passionately! Before I know it, the half time buzzer sounds. Danvers is up, the score 29-20, and the team confidently jogs to the locker room, upbeat and anticipating a much needed win. Coach Curley fervently instructs them, “We’re doing a great job on offense fellas, just close out and watch for number 5. We still gotta play hard for another 16 minutes, so let’s end this nine game losing streak now!”

Back on court, Danvers sprints to the sidelines, huddles up and raises their right fists together chanting, “One, two, three.....Danvers!” Third quarter and Danvers is unstoppable. Teammate 11 passes the ball to Michael who quickly sprints up the court and easily tosses the ball in the net for another exciting three pointer. As Michael runs back to center court, he steals a quick glance up at me, not wanting to miss my face shining with enduring pride, my smile wide as I clap and cheer for him. Marblehead quickly falls behind and the score is now 45-32. Danvers is certain they can win this game. “Eight more minutes of hard work, and we’ve got this!” Curley cries to his team.

But as the fourth quarter rolls around, the tables turn and Marblehead quickly scores fifteen points. The score is now 52-47 with two minutes remaining, Danvers’ lead. Marblehead steals the ball, runs up for a lay-up, and the ball swishes in effortlessly. “Get the rebound!” screams Curley. Michael grabs the ball and sprints down the court, jumping high to shoot as a Marblehead player shoves him down. They both sprawl to the floor. The ref shrilly blows his whistle, “Foul. Red number 5!” he calls, motioning a pushing action with his hands. Michael stands at the foul line and bounces the ball twice, then twirls it in his hands, hesitates, then repeats this move again, another ritual of his. He crouches low, lifts the ball over his head and shoots. The ball glides in. “Come on Scarf! Go White!” shriek the high-pitched teenage girls from behind me. Michael makes both foul shots and the score is now 54-51. Marblehead grabs the rebound,

and with thirty seconds left in the game, they easily score, making it alarmingly close at 54-53. Marblehead suddenly calls a timeout with eight seconds left. Curley instructs his team at the sideline, “Close out on the shooters and don’t let them get a good look. Play your hearts out for eight more seconds! Okay, let’s go!” You could sense the team’s nervous apprehension to win this game. The players run back on the court. Marblehead has possession and quickly passes the ball back and forth between three players, desperately seeking an opening for a decent shot. Curley is running up and down the sidelines, arms flailing, “Get on D! Get on D!” he screams hoarsely. The bleachers vibrate from the teenagers sitting below loudly banging their feet against them. “Defense!” boom, boom, “Defense!” I steal a hasty glance at the clock, three seconds remaining! Marblehead gets open and shoots the ball. The gym is silent as the crowd nervously holds their breath. The ball arcs slowly towards the basket as if in slow motion as the hushed crowd intensely watches, awaiting the game’s outcome in this one shot.

“Swoosh!” The ball glides through the hoop for a three-pointer simultaneous with the buzzer sounding loudly. “Yeah, Marblehead!!!” “Whoo-hoo!!” The Marblehead crowd stands and uproariously cheers and claps, their team ecstatically patting each other on the back, slapping high fives. I sit stunned, too speechless to move. I watch the two teams lightly tap hands as they file past each other in the post game line. Michael looks up at me, this time unconcerned if his teammates notice, and angrily shakes his head in disgust, his face tight, his eyes clouded over with disappointment. I then sadly watch the Danvers players walk despondently back towards the locker room, their heads bowed and shoulders drooped, devastated by their vanished fleeting chance at ending their nine game losing streak.

Next Friday night they will be playing against Winthrop, a rival team they had beat earlier in the season, and I just know they will beat them again! ■

My Road to Life

by Alexander Ajede

I have been left on a lane
The cement ragged and dry
Alone to crawl, walk, then stagger with a cane
And watch others go by.
Pebbles and earth imbedding in my hands
Eliciting a sharp cry
Abrasions occur for every step that lands
Making me wish I would die
Overtime calluses will take place
Numbing the once so soft body
Leaving the past erased
Only as a distant memory
With the will strong I will pave my road
Checking for signs to ascertain
Resilient until the path unfolds
Until nothing of me remains
The smoothness comforting, the fog gone
and incipience of people coming into view
Makes me dazzle transiently under the sun
As I see life, clear and anew



Warley Coelho ©

Paint Me a Picture

by Samantha Mackenzie

I saw you cry once,
And I didn't even feel bad.
I thought about feeling bad, you standin' there
With these chunky tears strolling down your face
Like they owned the place.
Like rain on a window, painting a new picture
Of what was originally there.
I won't feel bad for you while you're busy
Feeling bad for yourself.
I always look the most feminine,
The most like a woman,
When I'm upset. I wonder if that's why he does it.
I picture those strong women with fire in their eyes,
Holding reign over the kingdom that is their home
By placing their hands directly on their hips.
I envy their power and fear what hides inside.
But when I stand there, dead-eyed with the one
I ought to trust, my hands on my hips with one
Cocked ever so slightly, but a firm stand no less...
I don't feel fierce or strong.
Remember when I said I didn't even feel bad?
I lied.
I feel as though my hands land on my hips
To keep everything from falling out,
And to keep myself from falling apart.
I wonder if that is the true female quality:
The ability to maintain appearances that
We are not weak in our time of weakness.
As one hand stays on my hip and the other to my chest
I shake my head, trying to grip the reins.
"Lordy, oh lord." I know it sounds like
This boy don't know what's a comin' to 'im.
Really, my hand is there to hide my heart.
I hand him a hanky to wipe those embarrassing things
Off his face, pretty little face.

left
Prom Lady in Red Dress | Warley Coelho



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