



ENJAMBED

Spring 2015

Spring 2015

enjambment

The continuation of a sentence without a pause beyond the end of a line, couplet, or stanza.

enjambéd

A magazine that continues beyond the confines of the written line.

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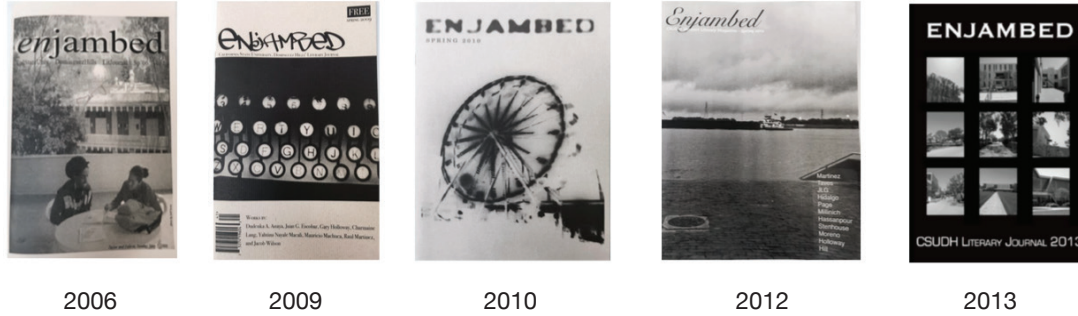
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Letters From the Editor(s) *past and present*

Enjambéd: A metamorphosis
(2006-2015)

Student run. Randy Cauthen advised. Enjambéd continues to evolve and stand the test of time.



Amanda:
Inspired by the editions before me, I set out as the 2014 chief editor to accomplish three goals. 1) expand the submission participants to include any college student 2) expand the content to all forms of rhetoric including visual, audio, and digital, like art, photography, graphic design, digital shorts, and screenplays. 3) I wanted the magazine to be accessible in both hard copy and digital formats.



My re-vision was to transform the Literary Magazine, Enjambéd, into a MultiLiteracy Magazine and by doing so inspire future editors just as I was inspired.

An email from Melissa Williams arrived:

May 8, 2014 11:52 AM

Hello-
I thought last night was a great success! I have some ideas for the next issue (more funding, color!!, more campus-wide involvement), and I'd like to have more of a leadership role next year, if no one objects to that. I am cutting back on either classes or work next year, partially so I have more time for stuff like EGA and Enjambéd. :-)

Best,
Melissa

Melissa:
I was inspired. I set four goals for the 2015 edition: 1. Print at least double the previous year's amount. 2. Form a partnership with the Art and Design Department for help with design and to garner more visual submissions. 3. Print in color to better feature the visual submissions. 4. Book an established local poet to read at our launch party.

I started fundraising in the fall, shaking my cup all over campus, and by early April I had exceeded my fundraising goal. Dr. Bury from the Art and Design department jumped in to our project head first early in the spring, assigning an independent study student to design the book, and helping spread the word about our call for submissions. Thanks to the talented Art and Design students, this is definitely the most beautiful edition of Enjambéd yet, and thanks to our generous supporters, this edition will have the widest on-campus circulation ever. Finally, local poet Elynn Maybe has agreed to come to the launch party to share her work and help celebrate our amazing student writers and artists.

This edition of Enjambéd reflects and celebrates the amazing diversity and talent of our Toros. I am thrilled to share it with the Dominguez Hills family. Enjoy!

Amanda Reyes, Enjambéd Chief Editor 2014
Melissa Williams, Enjambéd Chief Editor 2015

Abstract Nudes

Annette Lewis



Epithalamion

Andy Lara

When I saw your wedding pictures, delayed thoughts
surged forward: your white dress brought forth
the black days and long nights of our high school years, and I focused
on us, and other things we lost,
when we were in charge of time, the borders of our bodies
falling
down, fragile, leaky vessels voyaging through the violent,
teenage tempest. 10 years later, you've arrived, and
I am not surprised, for I
always
knew you'd find the light, you'd make a bride—

always knew you'd influence
springs of salt water to stamp channels
down
our
cheeks.

I remember when we sang at the top of
our lungs to keep our eyes awake, losing our voices, our hearts their formlessness,
as our tongues sang the sorrow
on the radio, two phantoms echoing static on the freeway of night.
I remember jamming with the world, the future unfurling,
long patches of black
interstate
beckoning us, summoning our teen heat, miles and miles of
raccoon-entrail-dazzled road,
and your brother's blue truck reflecting the summer moon's 'ruined mein.'

We were free seventeens, with our wide eyes, and our inertia-styled hair, how we cried along to the fuzzy
strings
and the canon drums
on the stereo, your company killing the solitude inside my chest, and the
sleep demons enchanting us into the steel divider, like a drain craves
the excess tears and rain,
off the highway
off the ramp,
into an alien blackness.

And then there was me:
too tied up;
burrowing my youth;
flooding the void; my reeling, jigsaw mind unfound.

Beautiful bride, I should be happy for you, your white dress could have been a sally
against the grey cloud's thick forest suspended in relief, yet
I am undone,
still
a mute little punctured drum, forever strapped inside the same crooked skin

Sugar Skull

Julie Mendoza



Librada and the Tree

Maria Argentina de los Milagros Rodriguez Mendoza

Librada del Aguila, a wild child that ran the hills that wended up behind her home. The stories are that she ran with the goats up towards the cerros, and she became an orphan by the following circumstances: los Cristeros came again into the town, the women and children fled into the hills and into the faraway caves, one to two hours walking time.

The Cristeros were these men who came on horseback and raided towns at gunpoint. They stole the young girls and took anything they wanted. One day, her mother, Estefania Lopez was in the center of the town, selling hand made tortillas and wild song bird nests that she peddled to gather centavos to buy the things she couldn't make for herself and her two daughters. When the gunfire started, she was full of un susto, y de ahi, ya no se recupero. She was sick until she died, not long after. Librada was just a girl, and her sister was three or four years older.

But before that fateful day of los Cristeros, on her daily journey to el cerro con mis chivas, Libradita, could not be still, she was — —she was climbing a tree, again picking at a bird nest, this time she fell and her eye was caught in a branch, her life was spared but not her eye. The wound was deep and the eyelid pulled and ripped. The orb healed over with grayish goo. The fall further branded her with a four inch gash on her left temple on a peñazo that broke her fall. Maybe the cloudy, unseeing eye saved her from other unspeakable horrors.

After they buried their mother, they were both shuttled from family to family to whomever would take them. Whomever's pity extended beyond a feeling in their chest into an actual acto de caridad. During one of those stays, an uncle raped the older sister and she engendered my Tia Gloria, her first daughter. But no one speaks about it, I've heard it mentioned once, by my Tia Gloria herself, as she mourned and regretted her own existence. Librada grew up knowing that life was hard, but for her it would be harder. The cursed gray eye obscured her thin tall solid frame. People stared at it, and it did not return the stare. They did not see Librada del Aguila. So she learned to work. My mother says that whenever she entered a home, any home, she would go directly to the sink and begin washing dishes, after washing a mountain of dishes she was always fed. Everyone loved her, everyone always needed something, some housework done and she worked.

At some point, Librada left her little town, de San Pedro Piedra Gorda, Guanajuato to the haze and obscurity of la ciudad de Mexico, Estado de Mexico where she could live imperceivable to gawking eyes. She was a liveinmaid, when she had my mother, at the late age of forty. For an inheritance, Librada used to say to my mother Refugio, "Cuquilla, no tengo nada pa' dejarte, mas quell trabajo. Si quieres estudiar, estudia. Yo ya estoy vieja, ya vivi mi vida. Tu vida, es tuya. Hay tu sabras. No tengo nada pa' dejarte mas que'l trabajo. I have nothing to leave you but work, if you want to study and make something of yourself, that's your choice. I have lived my life. I leave you nothing but work." The legacy of these words were bequeath to me, and from the age of ten, I remember their rehearsal in my mother's litany of exhortations. Even though I failed ten classes in tenth grade, I continued to study. And even though I failed classes at El Camino College, I continued to study. And even when I found it difficult to pass some of my classes at Dominguez Hills as an undergraduate, I continued to study. I studied, instead of washing dishes.

Flight

David Ringo



The Chase

Jon Sebastian

Sam Eliot was a beat cop. In tired old blues, brass badge and holes in his boots, he was running after a man he saw snatch a purse from an old woman throwing seeds in Central Park. He thought he saw this man snatch a purse from an old woman in Central Park.

Sam Eliot was running very fast for about fifteen minutes, and very fast for his age for a man he saw lift a purse from an old woman in Central Park. They made their chase up and down the large grassy knolls and back again through trees. Faster through trees they galloped. The man was about half Sam Eliot's age, but, miraculously only slightly ahead. The chase continued over the west bridge and toward the dredges of the darker part of the city.

The spectrum of green blue yellow faded into swirls of brown red black.

The man fearing capture cut across an alley into a familiar part of town. He turned on a dime, jumped over a bum sleeping in the gutter, and sprinted down a gully of shadows.

Sam Eliot knocked off his oversized cap because it was obstructing his view. As it hit the ground he hollered after the man "Stop or I'll shoot!" This scare tactic was hopeless. The man sped up and down the alley. He slung the purse—which was now shedding large black feathers round his shoulder and debated jumping to a lowered fire escape.

He jumped.

Sam Eliot was only a few paces behind. Sam Eliot brushed his brow with the exhausted cuff of his faded uniform, swung his arms back like a windmill and leapt into the air. Grabbing ahold of the rusted and rickety ladder, he scrunched his sweaty brows in bewilderment and thought to his self "My God is that purse molting?" He shrugged off this absurd thought and pursued the thief up to the roof of the apartment complex.

Fifteen flights up like cat and mouse; The Chase kept a systematically escalating pace.

Sam Eliot climbed faster.

Ascending higher in the sky, the view of the darkest part of the city had a regal glow of gold silver purple. Peeling back the veneer of this metropolosphere on the last floor before the

rooftop, Sam Eliot roared "You have nowhere to go, punk!" with almost every last breath.

"You'll never take me alive, copper! This is my ticket outta' here," the thief slobbered.

"Just give up now, son, and I'll make sure the judge goes easy on ya." Sam Eliot's words had little influence scaffolding a fifteen-story building in the darkest part of the city.

"Ta' hell with you ya' old flatfoot!" the thief drooled.

The thief vaulted over the final railing, scattering leathery obsidian plumes. Sam Eliot clenched his fists and inhaled deeply his last fumes of energy as he hurdled after the thief. Sam Eliot could no longer ignore the fringes floating around his head now.

The thief waltzed with the edge of the building and savored the second-to-last sight he would ever see in this world with fearful tearing green eyes: the downtown sun setting.

He turned around and saw Sam Eliot panting with his six-shooter drawn. Slowly backing to the brim of the pavement he ordered Sam Eliot "You go to hell, you sunuva bitch! You God-dammed, good for nothing pig!"

"Calm down, son. It's over. Nowhere to run." Sam Eliot's words fell from his mouth like that apple that fell far from the tree.

Sam Eliot's eyes were twinkling in the twilight with vindication. This collar might finally get him that long overdue promotion to Detective. He could feel it.

As the thief stood at the last inch of cement he spread his arms in the Jesus Christ Pose and screamed "YOU GO TO HELL!" **ZZRPTFROOMDT!** Just then: an eight-foot wing imploded from underneath the thief's shoulder. The force from the blast knocked him backward off the ledge. Squawking and screeching, a large jagged canary yellow beak came snapping out, attached to an angular head with beady-red eyes. The long black feathers were cascading around the ledge like Fourth-of-July. This parade celebrated the thief's demise as the dark swallowed him whole. Sam Eliot shot three futile bullets into the designer-winged monster to no avail. This avian beast's second wing floated

into form as it plopped to the cement. It hobbled to its talons like plows, lurched forward, and in one lightning-fast swoop plucked out both of Sam Eliot's eyes. Sam Eliot thrashed around emptying his chamber erratically. He fell backward to the concrete writhing around the roof while clutching his hollowed ocular cavities and gurgling blood.

No authority in ornithology could explicate this creature. It exalted its godly wingspan and let out a terrifying roar then soared into the darkness.

A young boy staring out of his window instead of studying for his exam on the history of mankind, two miles away, never knew the only shooting star he ever saw was not a star at all, but a brass badge that crashed into a large grassy knoll littered with seeds.

The End

City Hall

Felicia Martinez



I am the Picture Perfect Example of Yin and Yang

Tony Jones

I am the picture perfect example of Yin and Yang

A Gemini

Born between the heavens and hell

A black man sentenced to jail with no bail

From birth

But like a Gemini

I am white

But most people just look at the darkness

Always afraid to look at the light

Watching the way they walk because they feel

That if they trip they will fall

But I embrace my stumbling steps

A Gemini

Born to the edges of both sides

My dreams are nightmares

And I, well I

Can turn insomnia into sweet rest

Violent I can caress

Turn pain into peace

Turn insanity into a conscious mentality

And yet

You only look for the dark

Never turning on your flashlight because

You're scared of the image you might find

You hide behind stereotypes, clichés, judgment

And your perception

Masking your fear like spraying perfume on a casket

Tranquilizing the truth as I struggle to grasp it

And I don't need big words, or make similes curve so you can understand

That being Yin and Yang you've forgotten I'm a man

And regardless of my race my words will still permeate

To forge a new nation

I will recycle all this hate and animosity

Because I am a Gemini

Both light and darkness with a surge of inspiration

I hope one day we will turn on the light

And vanquish all the fears that were hidden in the night

Fish Tacos

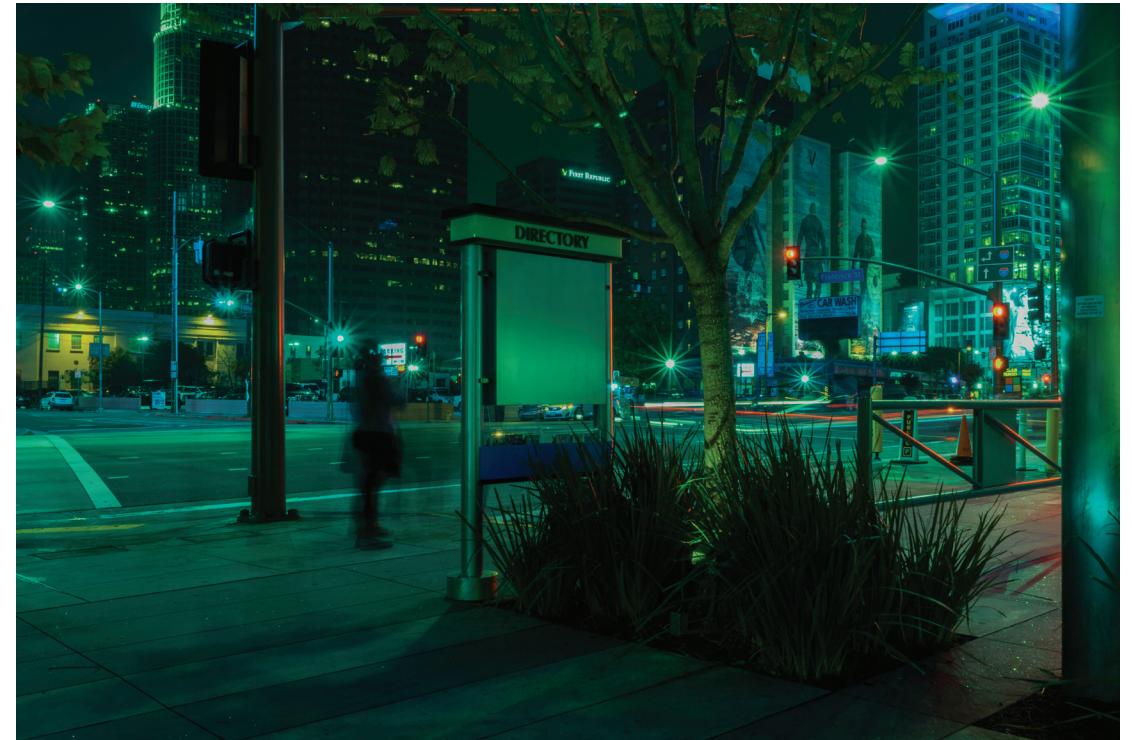
Jose Gonzalez

On paper,
I fit in with the rest of the fellas.
Primo's my color, and Jesús has my
grandpa's complexion. There are many shades
of brown. We gather for a day of labor.
Monday through Friday,
we pull parts for minimum wage.
At lunch, the fellas invite me to eat
w/them.
Jésus laughs when I burn my tongue
w/the
homemade chili his wife made. What a hoot!
Trip how the mexicanish guy burns
his tongue w/the pods of his people. I
give them a whiff of my authenticity:
"Mi abuelo's from Michoacán," I say.
"A place named Tangancicuaro."
"O," they say, somewhat impressed.
It's not
enough to elevate my status, but the fact
earns me a seat next to the fellas in
the lunch trailer or a spot beside one
of the homeboys when the workers gather
outside.
Not everyone's invited. The dude from
Honduras is never asked to chill; he
drives home for lunch.
The dude from the D.F.
is called a chilango. I never figured out
what that meant, but I know it's a diss,
and the fellas called him that to his face.
It's the second time I've
heard someone from Mexico City called that.
I wasn't shunned like they were, but I
shared a spot alongside the Honduran and
the dude from the D.F. All of us are Raza,
but some of us are more Raza than others——
There are many shades of brown, but some
shades are rejected. The reasons are legion.
I've given you two. I'll give you one more.
It happened on a Friday.
That's the day a lot of
Raza don't eat meat. Better make it to
confession should you transgress.
That's a venial sin.
But what if you ain't Catholic?
Jésus said hallelujahs don't recognize
the pope's authority.

A Mexican protestant doesn't follow
the true faith.
"But my grandpa went to mass
every Sunday," I said.
"What happened to you?" Jesús said.
We were posted by the roach coach. I had
ordered a burger and fries. Everyone else
asked for fish tacos. Primo said out loud
that he wanted a burger too.
Jésus eyed Primo. He shook his head. "Don't do it."
Primo said, "If José can do it, why can't I?"
Jésus said, "What's he know?"
Primo thought about what was said, and then
he crossed himself and ordered an hamburguesa——
In
the name of the cross & civilization,
conquistadors and priests imposed their views on
posterity.
The first Mexican, born of Malinche and Cortez,
wasn't Catholic or Protestant. Rules came later,
rules that dictate intake. What did Jesus eat every
Friday for thirtythree years?

Trails

David Ringo



Smacks

(Talking About how to Talk About African American Vernacular English)

Evan Ruiz

I'm sitting on my plastic folder, on a wet bench on campus, waiting for an African American person to walk by. One that is under thirty or over fifty, my homework directions say. A person of that designation walks by but I am too shy to ask him the interview questions. A second. Maybe intimidated is a better word. A third. I could have chosen a friend to ask. But I didn't. I hadn't expected to feel intimidated. A fourth. I just don't know how a stranger will react to a (racially) white (ethnically Mexican) girl asking these questions. I hail the fifth person through her headphones and she smiles politely at me.

"Okay, thank you. The first question is: do you prefer the term African American or black? And why?"

"That's hard," she says squinting, "African American because it's more like an ethnicity but black is a race." She is probably in her mid-twenties like me; has loose, red, braided ringlets; a bright, neatprint floral shirt; and is carrying a paperstuffed binder.

"That's true," I say, "Not enough people make that distinction. Okay, question two. There's been some scholarly debate over the years about what to call Black English. Here's a list: Black English, Black English Vernacular, Afro American English, African American English, and African American Vernacular English. Which do you think is best and why?"

"I like African American Vernacular English because 'vernacular' says that it's a slang, our slang, but that it's appropriate."

"Okay, kinda legitimizes it. Cool, what about Afro American English?"

"No," she says, "that's uneasy. Too pro-black."

"Like the 60s, backtoAfrica feel makes it uneasy? That's interesting. Okay, that's it. Thank you, I learned something," I say.

"Well, that was fun," she says without snark, we smile, and she walks away.

Alone, I regret that we won't hang out again. I admired her intelligence, friendliness, and willingness to talk. Oh well, I think, some nice, simple moments can just stay nice, simple moments. I feel surprised and pleased that the conversation had been so amiable, that she had been so well spoken. I realize that it is not preferable of me to have as-

sumed that a random person on campus would not know the language of racial politics.

I think about the other assumptions present in this interaction and assignment. I notice with some surprise that we didn't need to clarify between ourselves what Black English is. I had imagined having to explain what it meant to someone. Why, how stupid. I realize that thought smacks of colonialthink. Let me teach you about your culture. That's not flattering. It shouldn't be surprising that people outside the Linguistics department know how to talk about their own experience as African American people.

I think about her use of 'slang' to describe Black English. There she's wrong. Black English is more than a slang. It's a full-fledged English dialect, unique and meaningful in its own way. It may not be equal to the Standard English dialect in social prestige, but it is equal to Standard English in communicability and cultural legitimacy. Easy mistake. She just really hadn't used the right label, the right term.

I'm walking through the library, peering into faces. Gotta find a black person. Gotta find an African American person. The over fifty thing is going to be hard. How often do I talk to an overfifty, African American person? Oh, she might be able to help me. It feels unsettling to think about race so explicitly. Yet here I am, in a lounge chair, thirty feet from the library help desk, trying not to stare as I wait for the librarian to get off the phone so I can use her for my homework assignment. Maybe the specimen aspect of using a specific type of person for information is what is uncomfortable. Does all social research have that dynamic? She sets the phone down and I approach the counter.

She has thick, greying hair pulled back into a short ponytail. She sits straightbacked in a navy blazer, and she has her hands clasped together in front of her on the desktop. When I say I want to ask her about nonlibrary related issues, she seems guarded. "As long as it won't take too long. I am the only on duty librarian here to answer the phone."

"Okay, it's short," I say, "two questions. Thank you." I don't know why this is already tense. Maybe because I cornered her at work. My voice seems unlike my own, unusually soft

and highpitched. "Do you prefer black or African American as terms?"

"African American," she says without hesitation.

"Okay, why?"

"Because it denotes a heritage. It says where we are from. It is historical. There are different Africas but there have been black people all over the world. African American touches on both parts of the identity, being African and being American." She is stiff and authoritative in how she tell me this. I interpret her tone as severe, resentful even. Later, I will look back on this and see how I might have been the one that made her feel onedged.

"It's more about ethnicity than race," I say, parroting the friendly woman from earlier.

The librarian nods. I attempt a smile. It feels malformed.

"Okay, next last question." I hold the list of terms for Black English over the counter so that she can see the items on it. "There's some debate about what to call Black English. What would you choose? Here are some options: Black English, Black English Vernacular, Afro American English, African American English, and African American Vernacular English."

She leans forward and points. "I would not choose any of those," she says, "I do not think it should be labeled."

My linguistic training never allowed for that option. Everything has a label. Oftentimes, more than one. "Why?" I ask.

"Because there are regional differences, differences in expression, cultural differences of English expression. No average, we should not make a difference."

"So, you don't think we should use labels even like North Eastern dialect?"

"Maybe if you are studying them. But there are always differences in how people just talk. I would not use any of them." She leaned back again in her chair and clasped her hands in her lap.

"Okay, great, thank you for your help and have a nice day." I say and, not meaning to, hastily turn away. I hear her wish me the same as I depart. Walking toward the exit, I feel pink-cheeked, ashamed. Why? She seemed to hold the concept of African American Vernacular English in disdain when scholars used it as a way to legitimize or respect the dialect. She seemed disdainful of any label for the dialect. Why? How does one categorize them then? Maybe she doesn't want to categorize. Maybe it doesn't need to be legitimized.

Outside the library, it is an eyesearing, orangelightened day. As I cross the walk from the

library entrance, I think about how she had said there was no need to distinguish how people "just talk". To her the "Vernacular" is just how people talk. It is not anything distinct on its own. It is only once we, others, academics present distinct definitions to study that the language becomes something begging to be assigned a term. Is that because we define by comparison define something by what it is not?

I enter the dim, cool Humanities building. The walls made spongy with decades of layered paint. I remembered how the librarian had moved her hand away from my list of titles as if to say, "those are your labels, you can keep them."

Dry

Gabriela Espinoza



Excruciating Climax

Ashley Smith

An eerie silence
stretched beyond the
classroom as I felt the
thick
fog of anxiety closing into me.
I gasped and tried again as I
couldn't make out what kept me from
breathing.
The wooden desk vaguely began to feel
damp
as I brushed my hands together; the sweat
heightened
my nerves.
a soft tune in the back of my
cluttered
mind began to play and my feet
soothingly
mirrored it.
questions
flew before me as I began to
doubt
the strength of my capabilities
"Was it going to be alright?"
I inhaled deeply.
"Will I be alright?"
craving the very innate
desire
to be cradled, I began to gently rock
in my seat as these thoughts
caressed
the very essence of my nerves.
a strong monotonous tone broke the
silence,
it spoke; "You may begin"
I breathed as I held, nearly
gripping,
the pen and I started.

Untitled
Annette Lewis



Pillow Talk (At The Circus)

Jon Sebastian

She said “Act your age not your weight.”
And, I said
“Let’s take off our thoughts and
Reinvent the wheel.”

We’re not much for pillow talk--

When I held you like a first edition
And told you
“This is forever”
I meant every word.

But how long
Can We
Hang on--
How long can We hang on
To a word?

Love is like a merry-go-round;

Roun’ N Roun’ We go;
Pretty colours, lights and music
As sweet as it is quick.

Up and down We know,
Now, Love is like a merry-go-round.

But there are plenty rides
At the circus.

Phone

Paul Wooten



The Ooh is Silent

Natalie Velazquez

“The ‘ooh’ is silent, Adam.”

Caty sat on the edge of his futon fidgeting with her fingers trying to delicately choose her words. They had been together eight months now and it hadn’t been the experience she yearned for. They grew “comfortable” is how she put it, but the reality of it all was that he was not putting forth a true effort. Not that a relationship should be toilsome, but a certain degree of involvement, consideration, and passion should be present.

The “ooh” of a relationship that she knows should exist; that subdued satisfaction, accrued the moment a woman is utterly wooed. The dignifying elation and natural realization. An essential connection; the driving force behind their relationship.

It just wasn’t there.

“I think we aren’t enough for each other... we both want more; different... I’m supposed to be falling in love...” as these words left her mouth a sharp sting struck her heart. Tears swelled in her eyes at this admission.

The “ooh” hadn’t happened.

Despite all of the intention. Despite all of the affection, it just hadn’t.

She liked him and made a point of expressing her appreciation of him. Yet, no matter how nice, how doting, how loving, funny, and vulnerable she made herself he found reason to scoff, complain, and make comments offensive enough to murder her libido.

“The ‘ooh’ is silent, Adam... do you know what I mean?”

He looked perplexed and hurt all at once. He wasn’t one for poetic style. He didn’t enjoy having to dig deep for meaning.

“The ‘ooh?’”, he asked.

“Yeah, the ‘ooh’, that magical moment. The essence of a relationship. The sustenance. The ‘ooh’. Our similarities are great, but our differences are greater. I want to feel that ‘ooh’.”

He sat still, sadness crept onto his face as he looked at her. He wanted to say he’d be everything she needed, that he’d work on being more affectionate, but all he was able to say to her was “oh...”

Friends of Bill

(an unfinished work in progress) Chapter One (of twelve): “Rotten Rod”

Anonymous

He hit hard alright. Harder than ever.

They’d paved the landing in front of the porch at the Anaheim Alano Club since the last time he was thrown out from underneath the “We Care” sign. Ironically, he’d carved it himself in his sponsor’s woodshop upon first coming to AA. Now it hung crookedly from a pair of rusty chains above the porch in front of the meeting room’s main entrance, a veritable revolving door he’d entered and exited for nigh on a decade now, sometimes by foot. Most times by flight.

He was a hard case. After all, for a decennium he’d been doing the three-step waltz: dancing step one, and step two, and step three, he’d dry-up for a day, for a week, for a month, before finally drinking again. And like any good alky, he always drank again.

Always.

As they say in AA, it’s always the first drink that gets you drunk: “It ain’t the caboose that kills you...,” he’d declare with the impulsive enthusiasm of a drunken fool and the gnomish wisdom of sober sage, “... It’s the engine.” And who would know better than he? Before landing in Anaheim in the winter of ’59, he’d been – like so many displaced veterans after the War – a hobo, traveling the tracks like a lonesome locomotive whose engine burned with an unquenchable fire fueled by an insatiable thirst for more, with nowhere in the world to go, yet all the time in the world to get there.

“NOT AS THE WORLD GIVETH, GIVE I UNTO YOU.”

Ah, the Word and the world...in but not of it...the world and the Word. I was a toe-headed little boy red-light, green-light with pretty blue eyes he looks just like his mother donning a tartan kilt alba gu bràth! and a clip-on tie father knows best when I first encountered these words musical chairs inside the little wooden white church outside the Garden of Eden built long before Abraham was my father I am (or my father’s father) ever thought of taking his first drink. Think...Think...Think...

Carved into the sturdy, stained oak of the jube’s rood beam that bridged the altar pil-

lars and framed the chancel screen’s tracery, the Word’s words somehow sang to me, a Mattins hymn whose music only I could hear, a hauntingly mellifluous melody, harmonizing... with the church’s creeky floors..., with the bleeding light of its multi-colored stain-glass windows..., and with the soft, slender, textured pillows embroidered with iconography and images depicting various saints, each one sitting in front of the altar’s kneeling rail, one long communal prie-dieu, where congregants would gather for the Eucharist, and where I had my first spiritual experience-- not by eating the Lord’s body, but by drinking His blood.

You see, in the Anglican tradition I was raised in (or at least the church I went to), if you were baptized (infant baptism is the norm), you could take communion, even though you weren’t technically eligible until first confirmed. So at seven years old, I knelt down and took my first drink. Only a sip, it was enough to confirm in me a glorious feeling of euphoric bliss, rivaled, perhaps, only by the feeling we no doubt experience in the womb when we’re hit with that rush of endorphins occasionally released by mothers, especially when they feel an over-whelming sense of love for their preborn children. This glorious feeling did indeed deliver me from myself, making me weightless to the world, and giving birth to such a glowing sense of satisfaction that I finally felt like I belonged. Pursuing this feeling would bring me to my knees again and again and again, how many more times I cannot say.

“I’ll drink again!” he’d holler, risking heresy: “Sure as shit!” He wasn’t shitting. “They’re gonna havta hit me in the face first with a shovel fulla dirt!” Sure as shit, forty years sober, he died in a convalescent hospital for Veterans, a “We Care” sign the floor-mat outside the front-door of the main entrance. Forty days later (his children squabbled selfishly over what little he left, including his mortal remains), they finally hit him in the face with a shovel full of dirt.

A pugnacious flyweight and former pugilist, Rotten Rod fought in two wars, falsifying his birth certificate and serving as a sixteen-year

old submariner in the Pacific theater during World War II, where he fought in the famous battle of the Java Sea, and was captured when his Tambor-class submarine, *Moby Dick*, ran aground on an atoll, not far from the Japanese POW camp at Ōfuna, where he was imprisoned for the remainder of the war. Unaccustomed to civilian life, or perhaps to life itself, he re-enlisted, sobering-up long enough to serve in the Marines during the Korean War. He always said war was Hell, but strange as this may seem, some birds find freedom only when caught in a cage.

He was a strange bird alright. Married and divorced ten times: five to the same woman. Loretta broke his heart more times than he quit drinking, and he quit drinking so many times he quit counting. Truth is, he loved his liquor more than his leman, and he loved her more than life itself. She loved him, too. Too much, maybe. Maybe not enough. She finally quit quitting him after he left her one too many times, this time when taking a shower, sneaking out the bathroom window while she watched TV: I'll take "Denial" for \$1,000.00, Alex, disappearing on a ten-day, black-out bender that emptied his wallet and filled him with the desperation only a drunk like he could affirm or deny. His prized sponsee, a Jack Mormon named, of all things, Jack, rescued Rod after tracking him down and finding him in a deserted barn determined to die. As soon as they returned, Loretta ran-off with Jack while, powerless, Rod lay recovering in bed, but Jack couldn't keep his pecker in his pants any more than Rod could keep the plug in the jug: "An alcoholic will kill a love that could not die": Rotten Rod would say this with a sadness all his own, as if sadness were a song only he sung himself.

He dressed like a cowboy, talked like a sailor, and walked with the hurried, yet measured, steps of a restless itinerant preacher, just as anxious to get to the next town as he is to leave it, preferring funerals over weddings because corpses always keep their promises. He wore a 10 gallon hat twice as big as his pint-sized, pickle jar head: "Once a pickle, always a pickle. You ain't ever goin' to be a cucumber ever agin." A bolo tie hung from his scrawny, rooster neck, draping the front of his neatly pressed, white wool shirt. The tie, comprised of twin, foot-long strands of braided leather, each tipped with gold-plated aglets, was secured by a beautiful, manjū-netsuke clasp made of ivory—

hand-carved, depicting a dragon, the Japanese Sea God, Ryūjin, who had power over the ocean and could transform into a human being at will; this, he stole from a prison guard at Ōfuna. His skinny leather belt, the same one his father wooped him with when he couldn't find a proper switch, was secured by a beaded-belt buckle given to him by one of his last sponsees, a Lakota Souix named Martin, whose indigenous name, Otaktay, means "kills many."

Rotten Rod met Martin on an H&I panel three days after Rod's sponsor, dry as a tumble-weed, committed suicide, baptizing himself in White Spirit (along with everything else, including his rare, first edition, first printing "Big Book" with Circus Jacket), then hand-cuffing his left arm to a brand-new, cast-iron table saw before striking a match which set ablaze an inferno that burned brighter than even the best of his days, now darkened forever— a conflagration seen for miles around, from as far away as St. Luke's, the Episcopal church where he used to go to AA meetings religiously, to St. John's, the Catholic hospital where he was born, congenitally restless, irritable, and discontented. Martin was on parole, living in a half-way house for Native Americans in Harbor City or Wilmington or San Pedro. Hopped-up on peyote and bug juice while driving his Grandfather's '58 Chevy Apache with one headlight, its broken doors swinging open-and-shut like the flapping wings of a wounded bird, he committed manslaughter, running-over a mother (pregnant with triplets) and her grandmother, who, like he, were on their way home from a Sun Dance in a remote Indian village somewhere in Shannon County on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, where his grandmother's grandmother— half-sister of Wovoka, prophet and progenitor of the great Ghost Dance— was trampled by a stampede of U.S. cavalry in the infamous Wounded Knee Massacre on December 29, 1890.

Untitled

Paul Wooten



A Burden

Intisar Alshammari

My father always tells me
That I am a wolf
A wolf as a Bedouin
Is a symbol of strength and power.
Sometimes it is reassuring
To know that my father sees a wolf in me.
But most of the time I don't see it
I wonder how my father sees strength
When I don't see it myself.
The weight of the word becomes unbearable
The weight of the word makes me cry
I feel burdened by it.
Every now and then
I call my father
And I try to let him know
That I've failed him
I call him when I'm crumbling under the pressure
Of life
I give him the chance
To have second thoughts
I wait for a sentence
That may set me free
I wait for a doubt
But instead all I hear is:
Why are you crying?
You are a wolf
You don't cry because life is hard

You are stronger than that
His response shocks me
It puzzles me
Where do you see that strength, father?
He calms me down
He makes me believe
That I can overcome all the difficulties
Of my life
I believe him
I hang up the phone
Only to be reminded
That sometimes
I do see what my father sees in me
Sometimes for a few seconds
I see that wolf
In the sparkle of my eyes
When I'm doing something
I'm passionate about
When I talk about a topic
That I am excited about
My father must have seen this sparkle
Even before I saw it.
It must be one of the privileges
Of being a parent.
You see things in your child first.
And never forget.

The Cross and the Crucifix

B. T. S. Agnomen

“Momma don’t go! Daddy come home!” ~John Lennon

From a distance (nine times the space that measures day and night to mortal men, he mused), he couldn’t be seen, but by the eyes of the Immortal Man Himself, Who sees everyone and everything. This, by faith, he could see, and yet this mustard seed of sight couldn’t see him past his comminating conscience, making him a coward, cursing and accusing him such that he feared he was sin itself. Thus, there are at least as many sins as there are sinners, and there are many, for all fall— all fall short of the glory of God. But, he thought, he’d fallen farther and faster than any, rivaling even the rebel angels themselves, who, like he, were tormented by thoughts of lost happiness and everlasting pain.

It was cold and dark that night, balanced, as he was, in the bell tower, the wind whistling a mournful dirge, whispering in his ears in soft lament. From there, he perched himself precariously atop the church in which, earlier, he had delivered his first, and last, sermon, standing in the pulpit high above the congregation. Higher still, the steeple crowned the campanile. Above this the spire, like the forefinger of the first Adam in that famous fresco, pointed frustratingly to the firmament.

He felt like Tanner in that tell tale told, “Judgement Day,” his body a great, heavy bell whose clapper swung from sideto side but made no noise. There would be noise enough when the bells in his belfry began to ring..

ring...

ring...

So he started to

sing...

sing...

sing...

“I’m looking at the river, but I’m thinking of the sea...”

In singing, he was clinging to the notion that his obedience to the song’s prosody might somehow overcome his disobedience, evinced as this was by the mad crescendo of the bells themselves. He clung to this notion with all the desperation of a drowning man, the cacophony of carillons a rising tide threatening to capsiz his sanity, sinking him right then and there.

Seeking some escape, he took hold of a flimsy reed of thought which floated by along the current of his consciousness; this, that the spire, despite the Heavenly heights to which it did aspire, like the extended digitus secundus manus from the aforementioned fresco, didn’t quite touch the sky’s skin, reminding him that, aside from his penis, his fingertips possessed the highest concentration of touch receptors and thermo-receptors among all areas of his skin, which, he further mused, was the largest organ of his body, despite the size of that errant member.

But the bells’ knells interrupted this short-lived reverie. So he sang even louder, shouting, then yelling:
“...I’m looking at the river, but I’m thinking of the sea!”

Yet with each and every clang, the lyrics and the melody became increasingly dissonant. And the harder he tried to harmonize the two, the more disparate the distance between them, so much so that he felt as if he were straddling an ever-expanding crevice far below which roared Gehenna’s diluvial dalles, a fiery deluge threatening him with the fate of an ever-burning sulpher unconsumed.

So he screamed, so loud he could almost hear himself above the damning din of the ringing bells of his fevered brain, driving him insane:

“...Thinking of the sea!! THINKING OF THE SEA!!!”

Then, clutching a crucifix in his left hand and a cross in his right, he suddenly slammed his fists against his head, boxing his ears till they bled, silencing sound itself, at which point he sunk in a slump and, mercifully, passed out.

...

Some time passed, during which he soundly slept, perchance to dream of nightingales warbling lullabies while virgins sang, antiphonally, pastoral psalms to little lambs bleating Holy vespers, praising God and His mercy, which endures forever. Perchance to dream of sleep itself. Perchance the sleep of death, that never-ending night, only to be rudely resurrected by the nightmare of his parents bickering bitterly as they loomed-over his open casket, their towering, tenebrific silhouettes burned-out by the sun’s dawn:

“You,” his father cursed, “loved him to death!”

“And you,” his mother cursed right back, “loved John Barleycorn to death!”

As they argued, their surreal shadows crossed each other and spilled over him like the inky black blood of some two-headed monster fished from the hadal depths of a deep sea trench in an oceanic ossuary now become the burial vault of his grave, a No Man’s Land between his father’s fear and his mother’s pride.

...

Gone. Gone. This bird had flown, and taken with his sleep her song. “I, too, must go,” he soliloquied in iambic dimeter: “The bells invite me.”

He stood up and looked down. First at his palms, stained by blood— the stigmata of his guilt, the one hand; his shame, the other. During the passion of his nocturnal ecstasies, his hands were pierced— one, by the cross; the other, by the crucifix: the former, from his father, an erstwhile Episcopalian and only son of a Hampshire Grenadier, who, like his father, and his father’s father, caught his death drinking cold small beer; the latter, from his mother, a raging Roman Catholic, who, haunted by hagiography, hung herself while holding onto a portrait of St. Dymphna, patroness of incest and the mentally ill.

Both were gifts. Posthumously given to him upon graduating from seminary, seemingly so long ago.

He looked down, past his palms to the ground below. Then toward the Heavens above.

At long last, he bent his knees, leaned forward, and performed a dramatic caesura before diving into his swan song with all the gusto of Cavaradossi singing “O Dolci Mani” in his final performance of Puccini’s Tosca.

...

The following morning, the sexton found him: face down, arms outstretched as if crucified to the concrete, his cranium cracked. Clean. Just like the Liberty Bell.

Vista del Duomo da Via Dello Studio

Gabriela Espinoza



Second Genesis

Jade Harvey

He said “let us make man in our image and likeness let us give him dominion over all the earth. He blessed them. Man and woman he blessed them saying let you then be fruitful and multiply. He saw all he had made and, behold, it was very good.

Evening passed and morning followed

On The seventh day he rested, and while he rested another schemed evening passed in morning Followed. Another creation schemed; a plan to set man against all of this. To make evil, of the favored ones.

These past and fear would follow. The first day.

It took in the man and the woman and gave them the invitation. An Apple at the center of a forest of plenty. It became the harboring of all things to come. He made man and woman to understand and this invited greed.

Bliss passed and science would follow. The second day.

It's set the fangs of the serpent against the man and it puts superiority between man and the creatures in his dominion, and again between man and his beloved, and again between man and his fellow man.

Dominion passed and masterhood would follow. The third day.

It divided the people. With language and prayer it divided them. Setting confusion on the people, and religion on the world. Laying misunderstanding in the heart, and hate in the world. It set them on one another.

Understanding past and slavery would follow. The fourth day.

It fanned the confusion of the people and set it ablaze. Sowing mistrust and anger it brought violence and on the heels of this violence bring dominion, and lordship and assimilation. It saw the degradation of entire worlds.

Calm passed and War would follow. The Fifth day.

It set on the world for good man with good intentions. In his hand were placed the medium of destruction. A darkened genie that must never be released.

It did nothing.

Man saw how dangerous it was. In their refusal to heed reason they tried to tame it.

Creation passed and destruction followed. The sixth day.

On The Last Day

it watches as they suffer, it gloats

they die in their millions they die

the fearful rich and suffering poor

all given the same glowing grave

Polychromatic Visions

Michelle Weiss

Moments was the theme
And they came in phases
Isolated moments of transcendence
Followed by isolated moments of renitence

The changing shapes of the overlaid kaleidoscope
Of the overlaid rainbow kaleidoscope that
Was projected on the walls
Projected on the floors
Projected throughout the rooms and floating in the air
It brought animals... *frogs!*
It brought demons... *swastikas?*
It brought incarnate faces of voices from the past
That were etched into the wood of the bookshelves

The zebra print rug was a metallic river
A metallic river that flowed back and forth
That flowed back and forth on the lines of
The wooly brown and white zebra print rug
Why can't I stop crying?
The metallic river spilled onto the beach wood floors
And connected the house through one static current
Why am I still crying?
That same metallic river existed in the bathroom
As I sat and watched my toes touch the river
Of the beach wood floors

The house then expanded
Did the house just get bigger?
The pillars were still in place and all was in order
But the house had expanded
Look, the house just got bigger!
And then the hallway warped into a vortex
Pulling me towards it through my face
Pulling me towards it by the back of my head
But I fought to stay in my place
Afraid of what would be left of my mentality
If I let my physicality go with it

The paintings became technicolored holograms
They popped out of their frames
They're following me
The three dimensional paintings shifted back and forth
Shifted back and forth as I walked by them
Every pore, every fiber
That made up the atoms
Of her skin were visible
“Whatever you do, do not look in the mirror”
OH BUT YOU SHOULD LOOK IN THE MIRROR!
Every freckle, every blemish
On my skin was extenuated

The leaves shivered in the cold
The branches bent and erected and bent again
I knew the tree would come to life
I just knew it!
The pink petals on the flowers shrank into white bulbs
Then grew in real time into fully bloomed fluorescent pink flowers
And the life cycle occurred over and over again

A seemingly endless amount of visual stimulation
Of visual transformations
But what happened to my transformation?
What happened to the revelations? The epiphanies?
Why did I come out of this the same as I was before?
And then the moments began to fade
With a flickering fire that highlighted the walls
A flickering fire that slowly dwindled
Slowly dwindled as the moments eventually dissolved

Micro-Connection

Gabriela Espinoza



Elf-Touched

Livia Bongiovanni

It happened long ago, in my grandmother's time, that a young man and woman of her village were married with great celebration. The young man was a sailor by trade and, as his profession demanded, was often away from home. But somehow, despite the young man's call to the sea, the couple managed to conceive a lovely baby girl. The midwife of the village attended to the birth in the manner taught to her by her mother and her mother before her. She hung bundles of broom from every window and door, placed a pinch of salt on the infant's tongue, and laid an ancient, weathered horseshoe beneath the blankets of the child's cradle. The young woman watched the midwife with the self-important gaze of a new and inexperienced parent but made no move to interrupt her in her workings.

"Good Mother," she asked the midwife, "what is it you do?"

"I am making your home safe for the babe, Child, as my mother has taught me and her mother before her."

"My home is safe enough, Good Mother," the young woman protested. "What need have I for a bit of broom, a pinch of salt, and an old horseshoe?"

The midwife smiled, ignoring the young woman's rudeness. "The good men of our village protect us from ordinary dangers, but there is precious little they can do against the whims of the Fair Folk. That is why I and my mother and her mother before her have always marked the homes of newborn babes with broom, for it offends their dainty faerie noses. We then give the child a taste of salt so the faeries cannot bear to leave their magic kisses. Most importantly, we place a bit of iron in the babe's bed an amount the size of a horseshoe will do for the Fair Folk for all their immortality have never been able to stand the presence of cold iron and live." The young woman looked doubtful, but said nothing to the midwife. The older woman wished her well and assured her that the child would sleep peacefully that night, and so she did, even with the shape of the horseshoe under her pillow.

The years passed and the child blossomed under the midwife's watchful eye. The young woman reluctantly tended to the bundles of broom every week to make sure they were fresh and gave her child a taste of salt each morning, but she sometimes forgot to replace the iron horseshoe when she washed the bedding. For this the young woman was often scolded and overtime she grew so tired and irritated with the midwife's reprimands that she became more and more lax in following the wise woman's advice. It was not long afterwards that she stopped bothering to refresh the bundles of broom or give her daughter a taste of salt each morning. When it came time to launder the bedding that month, the young woman gathered up the blankets and brought them to the river to wash. The horseshoe, which had become lost in the sheets, tumbled out and fell to the bottom of the river, forgotten.

The midwife stopped visiting, for the young woman had made it clear that she no longer desired the wise woman's help. The midwife, who had done all she could, resumed her duties in the village and found work enough to keep her occupied. The child did not lack for love despite the midwife's absence and continued to grow as happy and healthy as any child could be. Weeks passed without incident until one morning the young woman noticed a change in her daughter's eyes. Last night they had been sparkling and vibrant with youthful curiosity but this morning they seemed overly large and soulful. There was an ageless maturity in their depths completely unnatural for a child of her age, and they glinted with a spark of mischievous cunning that made the young woman very nervous indeed.

The child looked about the house as though she had never really seen it before. She examined all the rooms, peeked under all the beds, and peered into every cabinet she could reach. Finally, she turned to her mother and said, "Mother or Mam or Ma or whatever I call you, what may I have for breakfast?"

The young woman looked down at her daughter worriedly. "You may have porridge

and milk with a bit of bread as you always do, Child.” But the girl would have none of that. She stamped her foot and demanded fruit with honey, trays of sweetmeats, and a barrel of spiced cider to drink. The young woman stared at her once well-behaved child in disbelief but remained firm. “You may have porridge and milk with a bit of bread to eat and that is all,” she repeated. The little child remained unwavering and again demanded that her mother bring her delicacies of which she herself had never seen let alone tasted. The young woman refused her daughter a second time and wrestled her to the table where she placed before her porridge and milk and a bit of bread as she always did. The child shrieked and flew into a rage. She tossed the bread to the ground, tipped over the milk and threw the bowl of porridge across the room with a strength no girl-child could possibly possess. The young woman was horrified and did not know what to do, for her daughter absolutely refused to behave. If she tried to spin thread, her daughter would howl and kick and tear at the basket of wool until every bit of it was knotted and tangled. If she wanted to churn butter, the child would shout and scream and pull her hair so the young woman would be forced to churn with one hand and hold the other to her head to stay the pain. When it was time to wash the dishes, the child cried at the top of her lungs and banged on a copper pot with a wooden spoon. This went on for three days without interruption until the young woman began to suspect that the child living under her roof was no longer hers. Finally, she swallowed her pride and went to the midwife to ask her advice.

The midwife, who had never held a grudge in her life, invited the bedraggled young woman inside and listened patiently. She waited until the young woman was through and said, “The child in your house is no child at all, but a faerie in the form of a changeling. Had you kept the bundles of broom fresh, the horseshoe beneath her blanket, and given her a taste of salt every day as I told you, no faerie would have been able come near your child. They have stolen her away,” she explained, “for faeries have no children of their own.”

“Please,” the young woman sobbed, “I know that I have been unkind to you and have been an ungrateful fool, but I must know how I can retrieve my daughter.”

“Ah,” said the wise woman, “If you

wish to see your child again, you must beat the changeling at its own game and trick it into admitting its true age. Listen closely and I will tell you how to outsmart one of the Fair Folk.” The young woman dried her tears on the hem of her apron and listened carefully to the midwife’s instructions.

When the young woman returned home she did not say a word to the changeling, who insisted on knowing where she had been all day. She walked into the kitchen and, ignoring the changeling’s persistent questions, began to set the table. She took out two plates, two napkins, two spoons, and two cups and placed them on the table with a pot of freshly brewed tea. The young woman filled both cups to the brim and then sat and delicately sipped her tea. All the while, the changeling watched her with a puzzled look. The faerie stared as the young woman lowered her cup and began to talk to the empty chair. The changeling was now very curious and asked what she was doing.

“Can’t you see, Love?” said the young woman, speaking to the changeling for the first time, “I’m having tea with the queen of the faeries.”

The changeling looked from the young woman to the empty chair and scowled. “I see nothing,” it declared.

“Why what a silly child you are!” the young woman replied, “Queen Elise is sitting right across from me. She is a most lovely lady, though some may think her too tall. She has a mole just on the side of her nose, but I don’t think it makes her ugly at all. She looks quite regal in her dress of fish scales don’t you agree?”

The changeling frowned again and crossed its arms. “Madam, Queen Maeve is more beautiful than any mortal woman. Her face shines like the sun and is as clear as the sky on a cloudless day. She wears only the finest gowns made of spider silk and rose petals and I should know.”

“Oh really?” said the young woman, “And why is that?”

“I should know because I have served in Her Majesty’s train for two thousand years.”

The young woman smiled as the changeling cursed, realizing what it had done. Not a moment later the faerie was gone and the

young woman’s true daughter stood before her in a dress of leaves and flowers fit for a princess. The child ran to her mother and embraced her with all her might, but soon pulled away in confusion.

“Mother,” she asked, “Where have all my friends gone? There was a lady with the most lovely pointed ears and a crown made of moonflowers. She was the one who held me when I cried for you. Oh, Mother it was so beautiful in the place where the little elves live. I wish I could show you.”

The young woman held her daughter to her urgently. “No, Child! You were stolen from me by the Fair Folk and held captive in the world of dreams. You are safe at home now, and will never return to Elfland again.”

A week passed and the young woman did her best to carry on as though nothing had happened. She replaced the withered broom all around the house and even hung a brand new horseshoe over the door. But the child would only sit and gaze longingly out the window. She grew quieter by the day and by the end of the week, she stopped speaking altogether. The child began to waste away, despite her mother’s care and this time the young woman did not hesitate to ask the midwife’s advice.

The midwife returned to the cottage and was astonished at what she saw. The child had grown pale and wan, her bright eyes had dulled with grief, and her angelic face was sunken and hollow. The midwife sat down beside her and placed a comforting hand on the child’s knee. “I’ve heard you’ve been to Elfland. I would very much like to hear about it,” she prompted.

At this the child brightened ever so slightly. She spoke haltingly, for she had become very ill with longing, and began to tell the midwife all about the wonders of Elfland. She talked of towering trees that never once shed their leaves. She spoke of the fair lady with the crown of moonflowers. She described miniature castles and babbling brooks down to the most minute detail and by the time she was finished there was no doubt in the midwife’s mind as to what was wrong.

“Your child,” she informed the young woman “is pining away for Elfland. Mortals can be sometimes be brought back from the realm of

the Fair Folk but there are a few, the elf-touched, who never truly return. Sometimes they can be taught to forget their time in Elfland, but often they will pine away until they die of a broken heart. If you wish to save your child, you must let her return to Elfland, and I cannot promise that you will ever see her again.”

The young woman cried and buried her head in her hands. She grew angry with the midwife, refusing to believe that her daughter was now more like one of the Fair Folk than a human girl.

The midwife sighed and rested her hands in her lap. “Believe what you like, my dear child. But remember what happened the last time you grew angry and refused to heed my advice.”

The young woman looked to her daughter and felt a terrible ache in her heart. Desperate though she was to keep her daughter by her side, she could not bear the thought of one she loved so dearly suffering so slow and painful a death. So, the young woman and the midwife took down the bundles of broom from the house and removed the iron horseshoe from the door and set them aside in the garden. They took their time putting the child to bed and when the young woman found she could cry no more, she fell into an exhausted sleep. When they awoke the next morning, the child was gone. The only sign of her departure was a single moonflower in full bloom resting on her pillow.

The young woman’s husband returned from sea that spring only to be greeted by a now desolate wife and the solemn-faced wise woman. The women told him that his little daughter had died of a fever while he was away. The young man embraced his wife and they returned home where their tears could fall freely. And weep they did, until it seemed they had no more tears to shed. It has been ten years since I returned to Elfland and I hear that the couple is now raising their second child, a son. The young man has slowly recovered, for he knows that death is a journey which all mortals must make. But my mother, alas, has never been the same.

Serene

Bianka Miranda





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