

ALLEGANY COLLEGE OF MARYLAND  
**EXPRESSIONS** 2015



A L L E G A N Y C O L L E G E O F M A R Y L A N D  
**EXPERIENCE ONLINE** 2015

# EXPRESSIONS

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## ALLEGANY COLLEGE OF MARYLAND

12401 Willowbrook Road, SE  
Cumberland, Maryland 21502-2596  
www.allegany.edu

### CONTRIBUTORS

Johnnie Bailey	Jamie Pendry
Angelina Blume	Deborah Phillips
Richard Brode	Jeremy Ross
Antania Cannady	Angel Steinkirchner
Jarrold Clapper	Danielle Stonestreet
Justin Davis	Briana Swisher
Julie Hoffman	Sarah Thomas
Theodore H. Honeycutt	Dustin Tippen
Brittany Howell	Marsha Tressler
Lynette Marie Huff	Matt Winters
Donna Kroll	C. W. Yowell
Charolette Masoncup	

### FACULTY EDITOR

Dr. Ronald Jenkins

### STUDENT EDITOR

Karly Taylor

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Arts and Humanities Faculty

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### ARTWORK ON COVER

*"Untitled"* by Sarah Thomas

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# Student Editor's Reflections

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To have been chosen as student editor for such a project is an honor no words can fully express, but along with the honor comes the thought of what should or could be said. Romantic writers of the 19th century provide much insight about such situations of writer's block, and this is no exception. Matthew Arnold says, in his poem "Self-Dependence," "Resolve to be thyself; and know that he, who finds himself, loses his misery." In the poem, the speaker is trying to find himself, which is a path of discovery that everyone comes to at some point in life, a path that defines who we are, what we want, and what we're willing and able to do. The poem's speaker finds consolation and inspiration through nature, just as people every day find and express themselves through art. And it is because of these creations that we can begin to understand and appreciate not only all the doom and gloom but the beauty of the human experience, for art is an extension of ourselves and our realities—experiences and wisdom gleaned from innumerable circumstances unique to every single person. Just as there's no limit to the imagination, so it is with art, provided we, like the speaker, look beyond the narrowness of social duties and expectations into the sublime, where subsequent art will provide a compass for people to find their true selves.

*-Karly T.*



## TRACKS AND FLAGS

*Lynette Marie Huff*

# AMONG THE TREES

*C.W. Yowell*

Fred and I went walking among the trees this afternoon. We just wanted to be in their midst, feel their energy, their passion, their communication with each other. As usual, the mountain and the trees were singing their song, composed of the babbling of a stream, breeze whishing through the leaves, settling of the earth and the groaning and rubbing together of the trees themselves. All together, it made a mighty operetta, soothing and yet energizing and invigorating at the same time.

Today was different. We felt it as soon as we reached the thickest part of the trees along the road. The song was there, birds trilling and sending their joy across the forest, but it was different, even Fred felt it and responded. Instead of taking off willy-nilly through the trees, he paused at the edge of the forest, cocked his head, and listened. It seemed...sad. The forest was singing but it was a low, slow, quiet kind of song. The trees knew we were among them, we could feel that they knew. It wasn't threatening, this knowing, more like...thank you for coming. The energy was a low throbbing instead of the usual tsunami of sounds ...all sounds were in tune with each other.

Not often do the birds, trees, insects, wind, earth and stream sing together, in perfect harmony; today they did. As we walked among the trees, a path seemed to open and invite us in. The trees beckoned, lured, invited us among them and we followed.

There wasn't the usual rushing around of small creatures, or rat-a-tat-tat of a woodpecker; all held a solemn, respectful quiet. It was as if a dirge was being played, a wake being held. We followed deeper, into areas we had never been, and the trees beckoned us on, their limbs and branches seemingly waving us forward, to a sudden clearing in the forest.

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This was not a clearing that had evolved over time; this was sudden. The underbrush had been shattered and trees pushed over, leaning against each other, dirt and rocks and roots becoming visible where they had been exposed to unaccustomed daylight. In this wreckage was the tree.

THE tree. The Mother Tree. An ancient Red Oak, massive at its base, fallen, its length unseen where the top lay in the undergrowth as if it were being pillowed, protected, and comforted. The other trees around gave the impression of leaning over this tree, caressing her with their leaves, this massive creator of a majority of them. Her offspring were spread throughout this forest, sown in the form of acorns by the wind and stream and the small, scampering animals. This was the Mother. This was the reason for the respectful quiet of the mountain's song today. The trees were grieving the fall of one of their respected elders, the mother of many.

Fred and I stood at the edge of the new clearing in the thick forest and felt the waves of emotion sweeping from tree to tree and bush to shrub and carried on the wind and the rills of her stream. The entire mountain forest was mourning the loss of a great old one.

Her roots stood naked and exposed to the sunlight for the first time in over two hundred years or more, and her offspring began weaving her tale. She was old, more than the two hundred years I had first surmised, much more. She had withstood storm, fire, the shaking and resettling of the earth around her when she was still a stripling, able to flex in the chaos and remain rooted. She had stood quietly in a small corner of the forest, shielded from the best of the sunlight and rain and nutrients. This had served her well. Mother tree didn't grow as fast or as sturdy as the trees around her, and she stayed somewhat slender and a bit twisted from the shaking of the earth. This made her unacceptable to the loggers when they came through harvesting the larger trees, the better trees, the best trees for lumber to be sent to England whence the loggers came.

She was here before the loggers arrived and remained long after their bodies had recycled back into the dirt they had come from, fertilizing it as they decomposed. She had survived many such forays of the lumbermen because she was not straight and tall

like the best trees in the small edge of forest where she grew.

Her small corner of the forest regrew the underbrush thicker than before due to the increased sunlight, becoming thick and thorny, presenting an impassable barrier to the next wave of humans. These, in search of the wood to burn, took the leftovers, those unsuitable for lumber. She was spared yet again.

The brambles gathered about her to hide and shield her as if they knew she was destined to resurrect the forest. She survived yet again and continued growing. There was indeed a clearing and then a small field, plowed and smoothed, rocks turned up and removed, shrubbery, trees and bushes unceremoniously swept away by the men who now claimed the land and began farming it. But except for this far corner, it just didn't seem worth the trouble of removing the incredible number of rocks and boulders that had accumulated. The tree was spared again.

Years of farming passed and the surrounding area changed with time. What had once been a spring of fresh, clear, icy cold water had been diverted long ago to irrigate crops. Walls of rocks had formed near where they had been wrenched from their earthen bed; vines, thorns and underbrush grew around and among the piles creating a refuge and home for many of the forest creatures. Mother tree began growing faster.

Man's clearing of the area had allowed more sunlight to reach her and more nutrients to be washed down the slope to her from the heavy spring rains. She grew. The farms fell to man's depression, were foreclosed on, were abandoned and left to grow wild. Grow wild they did, brambles and jack pine and raspberries and crabapple trees giving way to the hardy fast-growing tulip trees that secured the earth with their wide spreading shallow roots. The forest replenished itself, and the tree became The Mother. The one that rose before Fred and me now, these decades later. The one that the surrounding trees grieved over, their sap dripping like mourners' tears. They sang their sad song of goodbye to Mother tree and the birds and stream and wind and small scurrying animals joined the trees in their song of farewell to a great old one. Even in death and decay, she cared for her young and the other trees around her.

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The day I discovered her, I saw that her upper limbs and branches would deteriorate and be carried away as nest material. Her bark would become a refuge for numerous beetles, grubs, and other insects and arachnids for years to come. Where she fell, her trunk would create a depression that would serve as shelter for many of the forest dwellers through the long, snowy Western Maryland winters to come. Eventually she would be completely reabsorbed into the earth that had birthed her, sheltered, fed and watered her for all those many years until she stood on her own, until she became the Mother of many more trees, until she began her next stage, feeding and fertilizing and protecting her forest with her own decaying trunk.

That was the song of the forest and mountain this day. Fred and I were permitted to join and pay our respects because we were frequent visitors, always tending what we could of the forest.

We both stood silent and respectful as the song slowly faded into the noise of man's engines and machines ripping the guts from the neighboring forest and mountains. I wondered...how long until they take all of the forest, all of the mountain, all of the streams and clear, cold springs? How long do we have together, this tree, this forest, and Fred...and I?



# LONE

*Danielle Stonestreet*

## EXISTENCE

*Charolette Masoncup*

I have often wondered  
How it would be to cease to exist  
Will it be dark? I ask myself  
I wonder if it brings a certain bliss  
Not that I'll ever feel my own lack of existence  
I have often wondered  
About forcing nonexistence  
As I stare at ceilings or clear blue skies  
And as warm salt water  
Makes crooked trails out of clear blue eyes  
Knowing that I am much too cowardly  
Much too cowardly to try for nonexistence  
I have often wondered  
How it would be to cease to exist.  
Will I have peace? I ask myself.  
Not that I'd know a thing about it.



# HOMELESS HERO

*Donna Kroll*

( 13 )

## FIREFLIES

C.W. Yowell

A warm, pleasant evening falling upon the lawn. An uprising of luminous fairies, each flashing its message to the world, and hopefully to others of its kind of the opposite gender. They slowly drift upwards and across the lawns with the breeze as the evening light fades into night's darkness. The children run after the floating lights to capture them, temporarily, in their glass jars in order to watch the little flashing creatures climb about on the blades of grass inserted into the jars and blink their little message, "Here I am, pick me," to the others like them. The free flyers, floating among the night-lights from stars and porch lights alike, flash back "Here I am, come find me."

The children, of all ages from one to one hundred, gaze in wonder at the floating, rising, flashing lights of the fireflies as the messages are blinked back and forth like insect Morse Code. Very few of the children enjoying this nocturnal summer play wonder about the "how" of the creation of these tiny flickers of cold iridescence; that is left to scientists.

A Russian chemist and researcher, Natalia Nikolaevna Ugarova, states in the journal *Nature Photonics* that the "chemical reaction that produces the enchanting light that these insects are famous for — is useful not only for biological research but also in photonics, where it serves as an ideal model of a photo-emitter system. In fact, it is one of the most intensively-studied bioluminescence systems and is now widely applied in biotechnology for gene-expression reporting, adenosine triphosphate (ATP) sensing, and DNA sequencing" (8).

As if that explains the magic of the lights, lifting from among the blades of lawn and rising towards the sky like angels heading home after a long day of being guardians. Ugarova further explains: "Luciferase is a common bioluminescent enzyme found in the firefly *Photinus pyralis*. It catalyzes the oxidation of firefly Luciferin in the presence of magnesium ions and adenosine-5'-triphosphate. The product of this

reaction, Oxyluciferin, is in a singlet electronically excited state and has been proved to be the bioluminescent emitter of visible light" (8). I wonder if that is what attracts the amazed attention of the children around the world to these *Photinus pyralis* as they emit their oxidized Luciferin in a bioluminescent blaze of natural light. Perhaps it is the result of all of those chemical reactions that are the attention grabbers: insect lightning.

I suppose that Ugarova's description would explain the "Why and How" of the bug lights, but it does not explain the fascination these fairy lights impart to us children as well as the words from the poem "Ode to a Lightning Bug" by Susan Prospere: "the lightning bugs open their topcoats/to fly, and their hearts/enamored with the night,/ light small temptations/in the minds of the children" (401). The colors of the night flying insect's lights are a result of the sequence of the amino acid in Luciferase, the chemical reaction of which is identical in all species of luminescent flies and beetles, and appears not to influence the coloration of the illumination of the fairy-like insects (Ugarova 8.)

What child so fortunate as to view the flight of these enchanting lights has not exclaimed to her friends "Why, look! Those insects are emitting a bioluminescent glow caused by the reaction of the enzyme luciferase catalyzing the oxidation of Luciferin in the presence of Magnesium ions and adenosine-5-triphosphate which when combined creates Oxyluciferin which has been proven to be the cause of the emission of the bioluminescent light!"

I prefer to think—as does Prospere in the poem "Ode to a Lightning Bug"—that the fascination of holding a burning ember of insect in their hands without harming either hands or insect was the actual attractant for the children, me included.

Why, though, the different coloration of lights from the same kind of insects? Ugarova explains that by analyzing the bioluminescent spectra (the light) using "gaussian curve fitting...the whole spectra can be decomposed into three components. These parts 'peak' at one of three wavelengths." The first two "coincide with the well-known values of green-yellow and red bioluminescence maxima, whereas the weak peak, at 670 nm, was observed for the first time" and is, as yet, unexplained (Ugarova 8). Meanwhile, the children "who, in turn, move erratically/over lawns,/"

clasping captured lightning bugs/in their cupped hands” (Prosperre 401) do not really care why the colors are different, only that they are so. The fact that the light of the lightning bugs is caused by chemical reaction and enzymatic action and is therefore important to science and researchers—who were, after all, children at one time as well—is evident in the many years, dollars and people involved in the research.

I wonder if children would prefer analyzing the bioluminescent spectra using gaussian curve fitting, and determining that the spectra is composed of three components” (Ugarova 8), to “clasping captured lightning bugs/in their cupped hands,/until the night is filled/with the lit cathedrals/of [their] hands.” Imagine these children performing such an experiment while one child, named Amy, “luminous/ in her own light...wonders aloud/if all plans are haphazard.../ because all of us/ imagine connections in our heads,/joining together these pinpoint of light,/dot by dot,/as we name constellations” (Prosperre 401). I, for one, prefer counting stars and lightning bugs.

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# GOLDEN

*Antania Cannady*

Nights surrounded by silence.

A silence all too foreign.

They say silence is golden, but this silence has been poisoned

by a taint like no other, a taint unwanted

tainted without purpose, except to mock —

to mock every thought I've had, every feeling,

laugh at every emotion that used to be positive, but now feels doesn't

belong—no

comfort in my mind,

my thoughts of yearning, missing pieces, thoughts never to be un-thought,

because they are too dominant.

In the silence that is presumed golden, but reveals itself by haunting,

tears fall but don't make a sound, because I am not to cry.

I was given no pity, so pity is never expected, nor is it accepted.

No help arrived or maybe I pushed it away.

Silently, I wish it would come back to me.

I'm ready, I think, but then I'm hushed.

Because if only the tears didn't fall past my cheeks, past my shocked

mouth and onto my throat and close it, I'd probably be okay.

But my throat, it closes, thus nothing comes out.

No words, no screams, no pleas, nothing.

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So I lie there, in my self-pity...

pity is what I hate, because it hates me.

In that minute, every negation,

every feeling I had that day, that week, that month, that year: they come back and remind me: I am to work on myself before I try to help others.

But until then – until tears loosen their grip on my throat, until the thoughts go, until the mocking stops and the tainting clears, I'll lie in silence.

That everlasting gold silence.



## KIDS IN COSTUME

*Johnnie Bailey*

## WOMEN OF GOTHIC LITERATURE

*Angel Steinkirchner*

### Abstract:

In "Women of Gothic Literature," Angel Steinkirchner uses three popular Gothic tales to illustrate the role of women characters in Gothic literature – particularly, how the hair of these women contributes to their roles, identities, and oftentimes, their downfalls. With the use of three such tales - "A Whisper in the Dark," "Porphyria's Lover," and "Ligeia" - Steinkirchner discusses the symbolism entwined in the locks of these leading ladies.

Beginning in the mid 1700's and spanning the 1800's, a wave of darkness spread throughout the world of literature that took hold of readers and writers alike: the Gothic novel. Melding together the themes of "reason and madness, eerie atmosphere and everyday reality" ("Horror Story"), the Gothic movement preyed on the fears of its audience, haunting their psyches with twisted tales of the supernatural, the mysterious, and the psychological turmoils of secret madmen – while simultaneously spawning a wealth of literary greats like Bram Stoker, Mary Shelley, and Edgar Allan Poe. Named for the architecture commonly used throughout its stories, the Gothic genre often called to the forefront "barbaric" settings of large castles with secret passageways and lavishly decorated, but cold and airy rooms, to create unnerving settings for unsettling stories – an "atmosphere of mystery and terror" ("Gothic Novel"). But the settings weren't the only disconcerting element of these tales – the events of the stories themselves were filled with mysteries and grisly scenes enough to keep the readers fearfully hanging on the edges of their seats. Many tales revolved around madness, and most often around chilling deaths. While the stories surely didn't discriminate by way of gender – men and women characters alike were candidates for these haunts – women characters in the Gothic genre often got the short end of the stick. Many met

dismal and usually unfair fates, likely because the death or desecration of a young innocent – as woman are often portrayed – is a far worse tragedy than other manlier or older casualties. As Poe himself once said, the most melancholy of all subjects is death – the most poetic form of which is “when it most closely allies itself to Beauty: the death, then, of a beautiful woman” (qtd. in Frank 38). Not surprisingly, the leading lady characters of the genre tend to have something in common: their hair. Not just that they have hair – though that in itself can be argued an important feature to create the beautiful female character – but that the hair serves a greater purpose of the story and the characters themselves. Hair symbolizes femininity, beauty, identity, and love. The physical color of the hair itself can also lend a particular air to the character as well: darker colors seem to portray intelligence or mystery, while fairer blondes tend to show innocence or perhaps feminine guile. In Gothic literature particularly, the hair of these females also lend the authors the opportunity to invoke strong feelings and reactions in the readers through the use of foreshadowing, suspicion, or outright terror. The use of such tactics can be seen in works from three big players of the genre: Louisa May Alcott, Robert Browning, and Edgar Allan Poe.

Louisa May Alcott, while widely known for her book *Little Women*, had a darker side to her writing that is evident in stories like “A Whisper in the Dark.” The story follows Sybil, a young orphan girl who – through her father’s will – is betrothed to her cousin Guy, to be married at eighteen. When she is seventeen, her uncle comes and brings her to live with him and Guy, and for a while Sybil is happy with Guy and her new home. However, there is an underlying plot to which she is not aware. The fortune that rightly belongs to her becomes her uncle’s through Guy when she marries him, by right of the will. And should she go insane as her mother did, all is automatically turned over to him. Sybil, being forthright and independent, strong-willed and sharp-witted, accidentally gives her uncle the impression that she is not in love with Guy, but fancies him (the uncle) instead. The uncle, desperate for the fortune and willing to do whatever necessary, asks for her hand in marriage, at which point Guy walks in and sees the spectacle. Angered and betrayed, he storms from the house, leaving Sybil angry at her uncle, yelling and throwing the ring he offered. Just then his doctor

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walks in – a man whom Sybil never liked – and quips that she is mad. This reminds the uncle of the clause in the will and sets into motion the downfall of his niece. Sybil unknowingly supports the uncle’s claim of insanity when she leaves the house in pursuit of Guy in the middle of a rainstorm on horseback, running through the mud with her hair undone and bonnetless. Because she is so independent and outspoken, she repeatedly “proves” her uncles’ claims of insanity and is sent to a madhouse, where she confusedly awakens with her once long hair cut short. Sybil spends a great amount of time in the madhouse, struggling to stay sane while all her statements of sanity only support her appearance of the contrary. Day in and day out, Sybil struggles to keep her mind intact by trying to solve the mystery of the pacing footsteps she constantly hears from upstairs. She eventually receives a message from the pacer – who turns out to be Sybil’s mother – imploring her to leave the place while she still can. Sybil’s chance soon arises when a fire breaks out and the place is in chaos: she takes off running as fast and as far as she can, only to be found by none other than Guy, who tells her all about her uncle’s plot. Sybil and Guy make amends and even get married as they were supposed to, but even though her nightmare is over and the doctor and uncle are dead, Sybil can’t escape the lingering memories of the place that nearly stole her sanity.

The importance of hair can be seen in a few instances throughout “A Whisper in the Dark.” At first, upon arriving at her uncle’s home, Sybil is nervous and excited to meet her cousin Guy whom she is to marry. When she gets dressed and dolls up for him she studies her appearance in the mirror, remarking – among other things - that “[my] blonde hair, wavy and golden, was gathered into an antique knot of curls” (266). After gazing at herself, she says out loud: “I’m glad I’m pretty!” (266). Later in the story, Guy gives to her a flower as they are riding in the early-morning fields – a flower which she wears in her hair later that night to dinner. These details are important evidence of what Sybil’s hair means to her – a thing of beauty. In her eyes, her hair gives her a certain radiance, and she uses it to look pretty for Guy, to impress Guy, and in this sense it lends to her her beauty. In the instance of wearing Guy’s flower, it is also a symbol of love: not only do the flowers attribute to her lovely

hair, but the fact that they are there means something – namely that Guy’s gift meant something to her, and that she wants to show it off. This all adds to the tragedy that occurs later in the tale – her horror at waking in the strange setting of the madhouse, scared, confused, and all her beautiful golden hair cut short to the shoulders. Sybil is horrified upon learning of the loss of her hair: her beauty is gone, all the importance of that hair is cast aside, and the short shearing brands her as a madwoman. Not only does Alcott use hair as a symbol, it is also an important clue and a tool of foreshadowing. In Sybil’s frantic leaving of the house to chase after Guy, she is running outside with her hair undone, without a bonnet, in the middle of a rainstorm. At the time, this would have been a shocking thing to do, and the vision of Sybil with wet, soiled, “crazy” hair alludes to her going mad – or at least her being labeled as such, with proof to follow. In this manner, Alcott is able to tie in hair as a symbol of love and of beauty while creating a huge red flag for readers of Sybil’s coming fate. Plus, when Sybil finally receives the message from the mysterious upstairs pacer, it is in the form of a tiny letter, tied around the dog’s collar with a lock of long blonde hair. So in a way, though hair massively contributed to Sybil’s downfall and induction into the madhouse, that same golden-hued hair was a ray of hope and an agent of her escape. But Alcott wasn’t the only writer of the day to use hair as such a strong image and plot device: Robert Browning took it a step further.

Browning’s poem, “Porphyria’s Lover,” also tells a haunting tale revolving around hair and the symbolism entwined within it – perhaps to an even more dramatic end. The poem, which is told from the point of the narrator, opens with a typical dismal setting: the rain is pouring down outside, the wind “[tearing] the elm-tops down for spite” (line 3). Enter Porphyria, who “glides” into the cottage, removing her soiled gloves and shawl, and warms the place with a blazing fire. Afterwards she sits down next to the narrator, and upon receiving no reply from him puts his arm around her, lays his head on her shoulder, and spreads her yellow hair over him. She professes her love for him then, but the narrator tells us she is too weak to “give herself to [him] forever” (line 25). Looking up into her eyes, he realizes that she worships him, and he sits thinking what to do in this moment where he has her all to himself – where for this

moment she is his and his alone. He finally comes to a conclusion, and wrapping her hair around her throat three times he strangles her to death, assuring us – or himself – that she felt no pain. Opening her blue eyes with his fingertips, he lays her head on his shoulder and sits with her for the rest of the night, remarking that still “God has not said a word.”

While there are certainly many interpretations of the poem and its meanings, one thing is certain, and that is the dramatic use of Porphyria’s hair. The use of her hair as the murder weapon is provocative: why her hair? Perhaps because it was right there, on hand. But perhaps there is a deeper meaning. Porphyria is portrayed as a lovely lady who brightens the room – she *glides* into the room to warm the place up. And though one can assume that she was at a party of some sort, she is at the house now with the narrator, in the middle of a stormy night, so one can also assume she loves him enough to venture there. These ideas of femininity and love seem to manifest themselves in her hair, when she literally engulfs the narrator in it by spreading her hair over him, and he realizes she worships him. Porphyria uses her hair to envelop the narrator in her love, in her essence, giving herself to him in that moment and becoming his ideal for love and femininity. In the end, it’s almost poetic that her hair should be used to end her life, for if her blonde locks represent love the narrator is then literally killing her with love. In his mind, it is justified. There is no doubt that he adores her, and in this moment she reciprocates that sentiment. Her love, her innocence, her vitality, is all wrapped up in that yellow hair that he then wraps around her throat, and perhaps that is why he believes she had felt no pain: it was all in – and for – love. But Porphyria is not the only Gothic lady character whose love and adoration was personified through her hair.

Edgar Allan Poe’s “Ligeia” lays out yet another chilling tale about a beautiful, airy woman named Ligeia, with long dark locks. “Ligeia” is also told from the view of the narrator, who dearly loved Ligeia above all else. He describes her at length: she was strangely beautiful, her hair and eyes dark and mysterious, her footfall light and graceful – all lending her a very ethereal feel. However, the narrator’s unflinching love cannot save his beloved from the sickness that befalls her and kills her. Distraught, he

moves to England, where he meets and marries Lady Rowena Trevanion – the polar opposite of his dear Ligeia. Where Ligeia’s hair was black and eyes dark, Rowena’s locks are fair and eyes icy blue. Where Ligeia was graceful and mysterious, Lady Rowena is cold and logical. And it isn’t long before the narrator comes to realize that Lady Rowena does not truly love him, even coming to “loathe her with a hatred belonging more to demon than to man” (78). He suffers then, plagued with longing for his true beloved who has been taken from him much too soon. However, not long after this realization, Lady Rowena also takes ill, and it is during her decline that the narrator thinks he sees curtains moving by themselves and a faint apparition in the room. He writes this off, however, until Rowena succumbs to her sickness. Sitting next to her deathbed, the narrator is again engulfed with the memories of Ligeia and is half asleep when he hears the corpse sigh. Startled, he stares at the body, whose face momentarily regains color only to fall dead again. The strange happening continues all throughout the night until he is awakened by the startling image of the corpse standing upright in the middle of the room. Baffled by the vision, he struggles to understand the figure of what should logically be the body of Rowena, but that does not feel like her – until the figure lets her hair fall, and the narrator knows without doubt who she is. The hair, “blacker than the raven wings of midnight” (88), instantly identifies the visage as the narrator’s lost Ligeia.

While at first it may not seem that hair plays too big a part in Poe’s “Ligeia,” upon closer inspection it can be said that the hair is the defining feature that set the two ladies apart. While both Ligeia and Rowena were undoubtedly different in demeanor, they were also vastly different in their looks: most notably, in their eyes and hair. In this sense, their hair became their identities, which is further proven when at the end the narrator recognizes the figure as his lost love because of the black hair. Not only does the hair lend a distinguishable identity to these ladies, though; it also gives each a certain *feel*. Ligeia is mysterious, of a Germanic background big on the supernatural, and very intelligent. Her knowledge is conveyed through her dark eyes, while her raven-black hair lends to her cryptic, mystical air. Likewise, Rowena’s description lends to her very different attitude – her icy blue eyes seem to be a physical trait of

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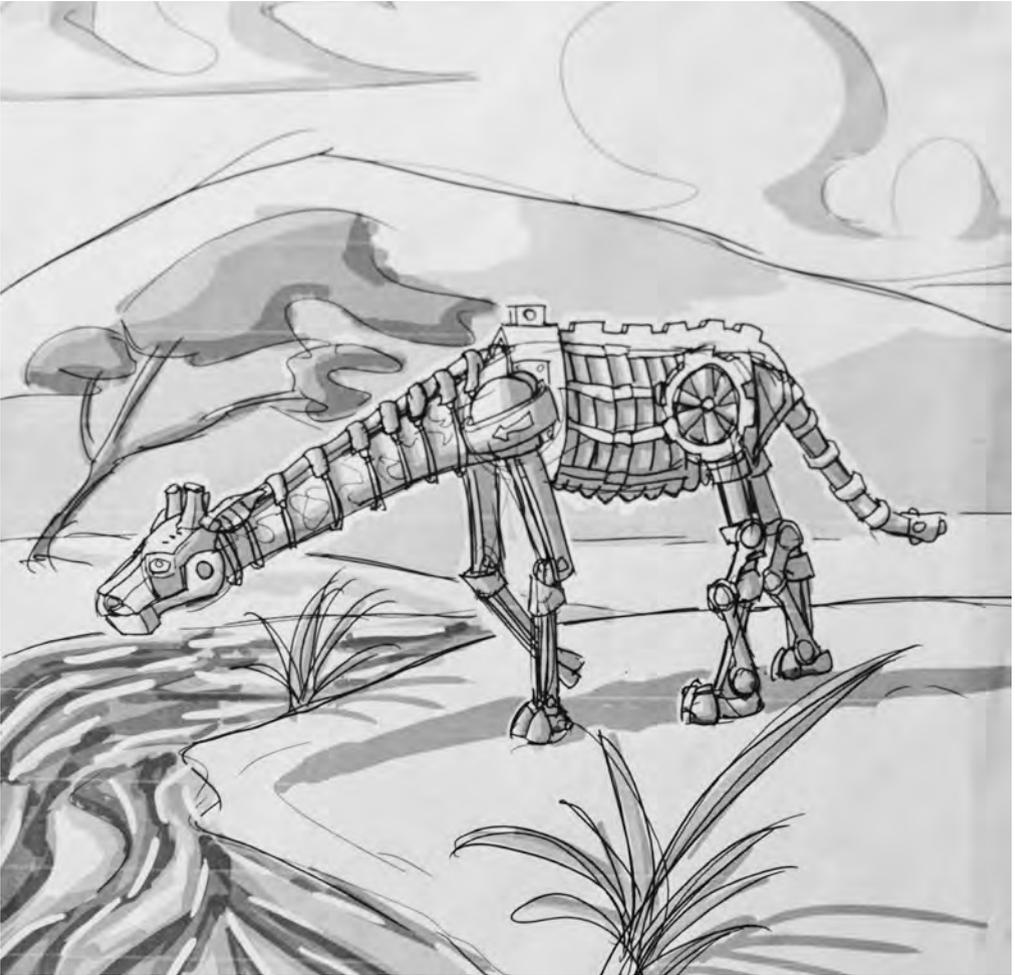
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her coldness towards the narrator, of her not truly loving him. Her fair hair does all the more in giving her that cold aloofness and straight-laced logicity. By giving the women completely opposite features, Poe not only sets them apart as being opposites in every way – creating a clear dichotomy between the two – he also uses the hair to give them identities, and a certain vibe or feel of the characters.

While the point of Gothic literature is to evoke strong emotions in readers – mostly fear, horror, surprise, and so on – the plot lines of the stories themselves aren't the only things used to bring forth these reactions. In many tales hair plays an important part in gaining these responses, while simultaneously creating symbolism. And in the case of the many female characters the genre employs, hair is a symbol of beauty, love, femininity, and identity. However, the use of hair does not end there: beyond the symbolism reached with the use of these ladies' tresses, the locks themselves often play a bigger role as that of a plot device. In Alcott's case, Sybil's hair alludes to her downfall in the use of foreshadowing; in Browning's, hair becomes a lethal murder weapon. Poe uses hair to create a clear dichotomy between two very different women. In all these tales there is a common thread, and that is of hair serving a larger purpose in the bigger picture. They make hair into something more than meets the eye – these authors show us that such a simple thing as one's own hair can have a dramatic effect on the events of a story, and even alter the course of one's own fate.

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## WATERSIDE

*Theodore H. Honeycutt*

# MEMORIES OF OLD NORTH END

*Deborah Phillips*

I grew up in the North End of Cumberland, Maryland. From 1954 to 1969 it was my world, all I knew and all I wanted. It broke my heart in 1969 when my parents moved to Bel Air and I was taken out of my world, and ripped from my friends. North End was a safe and quiet place. At that time, the rules were such that you came inside when the street lights came on. After the street lights came on, all my friends would gather on our big front porch, drink hot chocolate, and play an innocent version of "Truth or Dare."

We would also play Hide and Go Seek in couples, just as the sun started to set. My mother used to force us to take my bratty little brother along, possibly as a chaperone! HA! He was always "it" and he never found us! Our house butted against Braddock Junior High School's tennis courts which gave us many choices of where to hide. It's important for me to make clear that we were in seventh to ninth grade and we were all clumsy early teens. All we did was fumble around, have an awkward first kiss, and maybe our first touch (or get to first base, as it was called then).

One of my favorite memories is of sled-riding down County Field. County Field lay on a hill next to Braddock Junior High. It was steep and seemed to go on forever. Walking to the field and pulling our sleds, hearing the crunch of the iced-over snow, seeing the clear sky with a million stars and our breath as we laughed, are such simple memories. Years later I can still see and hear the laughter and friendship. I can also smell the bonfire we would light and see the embers flying around our heads. Now, sadly it is grown over and forgotten. For my generation of friends it was "our winter wonderland." When it started to snow, we would all gather with our sleds, a car hood, cardboard boxes and whatever else would send us flying down that hill. The greatest thing about the field was that at the bottom was a ditch. If you were on the car hood and hit that ditch you were airborne and flying down a residential street. Looking

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back now I know we were lucky that no one got hurt. We definitely had no fear or apprehensions that we might not be safe. The worse that happened was that I stood too close to the fire and caught my new boots on fire. Afterwards, the wrath of my mother was worse than any accident I could have had on that field!

When we weren't sled riding we were at Louie's Store. It closed many years ago but the building still stands at the corner of Pear Street and Columbia Avenue. Louie and his dad Joe had a counter where we would sit and drink fountain sodas and buy a bag of "penny candy" that actually cost a penny! We would hang out on and by the steps into the store's front door. Louie recently died and I was able to see him and thank him for the wonderful memories he allowed my friends and me to make on that corner. He never chased us away, or called our parents when we stepped out of line. He handled the problem himself.

One of my funniest memories was when my (again) bratty little brother would follow us to the store. He was six years younger than I, and a pain! In front of Louie's there was a white metal garbage can and a mailbox. Whenever the little pest would come around, the older boys would pick him up and put him on the mailbox, and sometimes in the big metal garbage can. Of course I never told Mom, but someone else would run and tell her and she would have to come down to the store and pull Bill out. My mom was a meek and quiet woman who used language that burned my ears whenever she would have to come to Bill's rescue.

My favorite place was on the corner of Pear Street and Columbia Avenue. Now, there are three steps going up to what used to be an entrance to the Louie's. Every time I pass these steps my mind takes me back to my childhood and sometimes I get misty eyed. I spent many hours on those steps. That was where some of us got our first kiss, where others heard their first "I love you," and where most of us strengthened many friendships. On those steps, we also said good-bye to a couple friends who went to Vietnam and thankfully came back alive. Sometimes I want to park and sit on those steps and have a talk with the friends I haven't seen or who have now died.

When the time came, my parents were able to buy a very nice house in Bel Air. I hated it. I had just finished my freshman year at Allegany High School and moving

would not only rip me from my neighborhood and friends but it would move me into Fort Hill territory. I would teach them: I would die and it would be their fault! How dare they torture me this way!

The first day of my sophomore years arrived and I was lost. Strange school, strange people—I just knew I would get cooties for being a traitor and stepping into the enemy school. As it turned out, I was received and accepted as one of the “popular” kids. My new friends taught me new activities: ice skating, roller skating, football games and dances. I was finally allowed to car date. I missed my old way of life but found myself happier than I thought I could be.

Here I am, sixty years old and so thankful for the childhood I had and the many friends I have, throughout Cumberland and the world. When it snows I see in the paper where the neighborhood kids are sledding down the hills at Braddock. I remember how much fun that was, skidding downhill on some old car hood, going airborne at the end of it all. But then I look up at Braddock Junior High. There’s County Field, which has not been tended in years. Its radical slopes are no longer sledable. That makes me a little sad because I know these kids have no idea what sledding really is.

## BEAUTIFUL

*Antania Cannady*

There he stands upon his pedestal,  
awkward, uncomfortable, unaware of his golden heart,  
trapped in deep, detailed, unorthodox thoughts.  
He doesn't know his power in the hearts of many – the minds of far from few.  
Heart on his sleeve, and often under-spoken, he has  
So much to offer, yet so much to learn  
of himself, of his grace, his tongue, his touch.  
And oh, how he warms and awakens a heart that's been sleeping too long,  
a heart that has grown silent from deprivation.  
See, I don't think this boy knows much confidence.  
Or he must be humble.  
It's obvious to outsiders why he stands upon his pedestal;  
they say ignorance is bliss?

But there's a girl.  
She sees him.  
No, she reads him  
because she is quite the same.  
She can hear the greatness of others  
but she cannot sense herself.  
She's never both feet in.  
It's either one foot in or one foot out.  
Afraid to say something wrong to make it worse,  
afraid of not being good enough,  
afraid to let others into the gray sea of her thoughts,

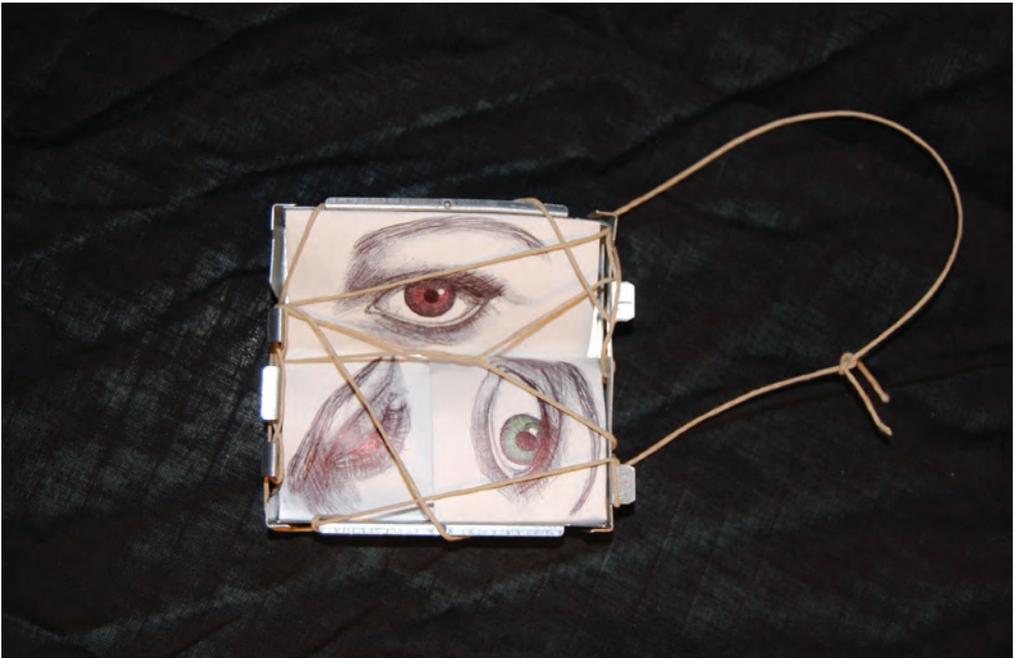
she thinks of breaking the dam on her thoughts.  
She fears the lurking demons that will swim out –

But in some way, he leads them.  
And what's odd is that he embraces what she is ashamed of.  
His acceptance makes him more blind and ignorant than he was before.



## PEOPLE ON GRATES

*Johnnie Bailey*



# UNTITLED

*Angelina Blume*



## WATERFALL

*Briana Swisher*



# NATION'S CAPITOL

*Johnnie Bailey*

# EXPRESSIONS

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**SARA**

*Donna Kroll*



# UNTITLED

*Jarrod Clapper*



## POSTED

*Lynette Marie Huff*

# HEATHEN

*Dustin Tippen*

Empty.

The ignorance of hope.

Reliance on that which we do not know,

And to know is to be without.

Alone.

The price of knowledge.

To be wrong in seeking only what is right.

To be judged for having doubt.

Scared.

The fear of being right.

A world without hope, without meaning.

Wishing that I might be wrong.

Cruel.

The pursuit of our own end.

Without questions there can be no  
answers.

The promise of answers keeps us strong.

But...

The eternal prelude to "Why?"

The matron of our unending journey.

Knowledge incarnate.

Because...

Each a single step. Forward unto  
ambitions great.

The answers for which we "But" and  
"why?"

Our source of power. Their source of  
hate.

## BOUNDLESS

*Sarah Thomas*

My dream is not to be rich or famous, popular or noticed, well-liked or even well-rounded. My dream is to be so wise and passionate about life and love and people and the world and the sky that the wind blowing through my hair isn't an ordinary wind, but a wind that belongs to the ones who dedicate their worlds to the beauty of everyone else's world. I want to stand in the moonlight and run with the stars. I want the world in my hand, but even more so the galaxy in our hands together. I want to feel the buzz in my head and the pressure in my chest of discovering and unveiling a new part of the world – or at least my world.

What if you could change someone's life by speaking just one sentence? To have the power to write something so marvelous and brilliant and devastatingly beautiful that it sends someone's heart soaring to their own undiscovered world is the thing I dream of. I want people to know not my name, but my heart. I want to make them feel the things I feel when looking at the pink and orange sunset, or when sitting in the black darkness save for one little candle light, or when standing outside in the snow at night and being captivated by how the snow reflects the moon and makes the world bright and magical.

I love those unordinary nights more than anything. But on ordinary nights, midnight is the darkest time, and also the time when you sleep the heaviest; it is also the time when your thoughts become as heavy as your sleep. It is the time when it is easiest to let your thoughts flow and to be able to feel their weight lifting off you as they exit your mind. And as you drift off to sleep, your thoughts become dreams, and your dreams become the desires that give you the soul to exist. Dreams are like a lantern; they direct your path in the dark and show you parts of the world that you didn't know existed. I crave being able to take your hand and to look into your eyes and show you the passion you can have for the world. To soar the sky with you and to

paint your soul with the brightest of colors and to share my every thought and concern and whim and hope with you: that is my most wonderful dream.



## GLASSES AND GRAPES

*Lynette Marie Huff*

# I HEAR FAMOUS PEOPLE: A Quest for Inner Peace

*Julie Hoffman*

As Dorothy stated in *The Wizard of Oz*, "Toto, I've a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore" (AFI). You are right, Dorothy: we definitely are not. Kansas is not where an almost forty-year-old woman is a freshman in college. Kansas is not where she closes her business, takes a part time job, and throws caution to the wind. Without a doubt, I have left Kansas and returned to the realm I once thought unnecessary. Some might consider this hindsight, others a mid-life crisis. I prefer to view it as evolution. I am leaving the safety of my comfortable life and leaping into the world of "OMG" and "LOL." It is a place where carefree teenagers are the majority. Where the important topics of the day can range from *do you think he likes me* to *she is such a diva*. I am evolving.

Heck, whom am I kidding? I am bored! I am bored with life, bored with me, bored with everything. I need a change. I began realizing all of my regrets in life. Everything I could have, would have, and should have done came flooding back to me. As I sat there, deep in thought, Jack Nicholson chimed in with his "You can't handle the truth" (AFI) spiel from *A Few Good Men*.

"Oh yeah, Jack. Well bite me," I grumbled. Still ticked at Jack and his arrogance in regards to my unsatisfactory life, I decided it was time for me to put on my big girl panties and face the facts. As I considered my options, I figured college was better than becoming the old woman with fifty cats. I hate cats! I need an education. I need to return to college and earn a degree. Am I insane? Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. Yep, I am crazy! I had flirted with higher education, not once, but twice before. Why would this time be different? I am way too old to be thinking like this. My self-critiquing has led me to Brad Pitt, with those amazing dimples, wandering into my mind via *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*:

For what it's worth: it's never too late or, in my case, too early

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to be whoever you want to be. There's no time limit, stop whenever you want. You can change or stay the same, there are no rules to this thing. We can make the best or the worst of it. I hope you make the best of it. And I hope you see things that startle you. I hope you feel things you never felt before. I hope you meet people with a different point of view. I hope you live a life you're proud of. If you find that you're not, I hope you have the courage to start all over again (Curious).

This is why I relish Brad Pitt movie marathons. Inspired by his comforting words, I picked up my phone and called the admissions office at ACM.

Three placement tests, forty forms, eight phone calls and one student loan later, and I am officially registered. Pride of accomplishment is quickly replaced with dread. I am an almost forty-year-old freshman. That is like the forty-year-old virgin, *minus* one. Ugh, minus, and I am in the math class with the blue haired kids. Yet, I am still the dumbass of the class. Calgon take me away. Back to Brad, let's consider him in his big kahuna shirt from *Fight Club*, entering stage left, calmly stating, "Shoving feathers up your butt does not make you a chicken" (Quotes).

This is why my Brad Pitt marathons are only twice a year. "Get out of here, I am trying to enjoy my Calgon," I shout. With that statement, the eye candy that has been standing before me turns into a smart mouthed Julia Roberts in *Pretty Woman*, proclaiming, "I can do anything I want to, baby, I ain't lost" (Pretty). Julia is right. I have a five-year plan. The girl with blue hair is nice and my mid-term in Math is ninety-eight percent. For the first time in a long time, I feel challenged. I feel confident. I feel young! I find myself looking forward to snow-days and school delays. I worry about homework, quizzes, and tests. Ah, life is good.

As I mature, so do the voices in my head. "It's the magic of risking everything for a dream that nobody sees but you" (Million), Mr. Morgan Freeman so elegantly states from the *Million Dollar Baby* platform. "I could not have said it better myself, Morgan" I reply with dignity. I have always had big dreams, yet they've remained in the World of Disney. "What is that, Julia?" I inquire. "I want the fairytale" (Pretty), she repeats, once again in her *Pretty Woman* getup. I do want the fairytale. Not the typical *girl*

*meets boy, boy is wonderful, and girl lives happily ever after fairy tale. I want the girl is competent; girl can stand on her own two feet and is eternally happy ever after fairytale.*

This dream is not lifestyle-related but of a personal nature. For too long, I have felt stifled by my lack of accomplishments in regard to my capabilities. I now am accomplishing my dream in accordance with my capabilities. I am stepping outside of my comfort zone and embracing a world full of fear. I am stepping out into a world of freedom! I am thinking outside of the box, and relishing my newfound mental stimuli. This is not a fix-all solution with my fairy godmother waving her magic wand. It is a baby steps, a one-foot-in-front-of-the-other process. And boy are my boots made for walking. I think that is a famous quote too, but there is no apparition or mental celebrity accompanying it, so I am using it as my own. That is the problem with my celebrital insight - it can be so confusing!

With my first semester reaching its halfway mark, I am encouraged in regard to my results. My mid-term grades are straight A's. I am older than most of the students, but not the oldest! Although I had to sport my big girl panties, they are not yet granny panties. I could be doing this at sixty! In light of that, I am actually ahead twenty years versus behind twenty-two. Wow, that is one way to put a spin on things.

Such is life. You do what you have to. You tell yourself things that make perfect sense to you, yet others find strange. But for the first time in life, I can join Rhett Butler in saying, "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn" (AFI). As I sit here smiling in agreement with Rhett, Patrick Swayze barges in. Wearing his rugged, rebellious leather jacket, he matter-of-factly states, "Nobody puts baby in the corner" (AFI). I grin and say, "Patrick, you can call me baby anytime."

### **Acknowledgment Statement:**

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# A PAIR OF BOOTS, AN M16, AND A KEVLAR

*Jamie Pendry*

Here I am with my fellow soldiers standing at attention. Honestly, it's the most uncomfortable position to stand in. You have to keep your legs straight without locking your knees, heels touching with toes pointed out at a forty-five degree angle, back straight, and arms down at your side with fingers curled in so that your thumbs are touching the outer seam of the uniform. There is no speaking or movement when at this position; you just face forward. Normally I complain, mentally, when standing like this. But not today.

Today is different from most other days. Today I have realized I should never complain about something as petty as the position of attention. For today, the coolest, windiest day so far this winter, I stand facing forward gazing upon a pair of boots, an M16, and a Kevlar. These three items on their own don't mean much to most people. However, when set up with boots on the ground, M16 in the upright position between them, with Kevlar resting on top, they bring a flood of emotions and thoughts. They represent someone's father, mother, sister, brother, husband, wife, aunt, uncle or friend who paid the ultimate sacrifice for their country. They mean that brave, dedicated soldiers laid down their lives for another: America.

Different speakers are talking, speaking great, wondrous things of the soldier who gave his life for his brothers and sisters in arms. I can't hear a thing they are saying, though: I am solely focused on the dirty tan boots, the old yet clean M16, and the dusty worn-out Kevlar. The longer I stand in this open field, facing toward this symbol of dedication, I begin to have an overwhelming sense of disgust followed by an even more powerful emotion: anger. I am not upset with the soldier; that would be ridiculous. I am maddened by the terrorists who killed him. My fellow soldiers and I have been deprived of a great comrade. Al Qaeda has taken another of our heroes. The only thing at this moment that made me feel a little better was to assume we had

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killed the man who ended the life of one of our own.

As I continue to look forward, I notice out of the corner of my eye a small child, a girl. My thoughts immediately shift. The little girl is clinging tightly to, I would assume, her mother. She is in a simple black dress, her blonde hair curled and secured back with a yellow ribbon. How appropriate it was for her to wear a yellow ribbon. She reminds me of the U.S. Army Cadence, "around her hair she wore a yellow ribbon, for a soldier who was far, far away." Her father is far away, never coming home. My heart starts to break. I have completely lost focus on the boots, M16, and Kevlar. My focus is solely on her. How do you tell a child that her father is never coming home? How did her mother tell her? The longer I stare at this little girl, the more I feel my emotions getting the best of me. I am overtaken by heartrending sadness. I try to fight it back, but I am no match for my emotion; tears form in my eye. I have told myself, before this all started, that I wouldn't cry. However, there it was, cold and running down my cheek. Briefly I think about how crazy I must look right now. I know how I normally look when I cry; pale, eyes blood shot, nose running; a complete mess. I am worried that's how I'm looking now. I want to wipe the tear away so my fellow soldiers don't see it, but darn it, I'm still at the position of attention.

Just then, I hear First Sergeant calling out roll call. "Sergeant Hammer." "Here." "Sergeant Francis." "Here." "Sergeant Slaybaugh." Without even thinking, "here" comes out of my mouth. I am so used to saying it when I hear my name being called. It's second nature.

"Sergeant Lowery." Silence fills the field. Why is no one answering? "Sergeant First Class Lowery." Silence again; he can't answer because he is our fallen soldier. The realization, of never hearing this name again without thinking of the ultimate sacrifice involved, is clear. "Sergeant First Class Jonathan A. Lowery."

Instead of the silence one might expect at this point, we are all startled by the sound of gun shots behind the formation. The unit has begun the 21 gun salute. It is a sound like no other. The sound of the seven M16s going off three times is so distinct, that soldiers at a good distance away come to a dead halt, and go to the position of attention. Every soldier knows that when you hear that earth-quaking sound, someone

is paying respects to a fallen brother or sister, and you do the same. Even though it is actually rather quick, this 21 gun salute feels like it lasts forever. I can picture the eight soldiers standing behind the formation all decked out in their green dress uniforms, white gloves on their hands, seven of them holding M16 assault rifles. The eighth person is there to call out the orders; he is usually the highest ranking person in the group. They have been practicing the proper way to do this ever since the unit deployed two months ago. I wonder if they ever thought they would have to do this "for real" one day. Are they back there worried they will mess up, and not honor Sergeant Lowery the way a true hero deserves to be honored?

Salute is over and we are waiting for that beautiful trumpet to play the song of our fallen. To me, TAPS is the most important call in the military. We hear it every night, on post, around 2230. It signals the closing of the day, and honors those that perished that day and before, on the battlefield. Every time I hear it, I shed a tear. This time is different. As the trumpet begins to play, I feel a thousand tears running down my face. Is it because I now know someone personally who gave his life in the name of freedom? Maybe it's because I know the world is without an excellent soldier.

As TAPS comes to an end, we prepare to take turns walking up to the boots, M16 and Kevlar. It is time to pay our respects to SFC Lowery. I am one of the first to go up. "Hold yourself together," I say to myself. I've never been through a memorial service. However, I am in charge of some lower enlisted soldiers, so I need to set a good example for them. It is one of those times where "I didn't know" isn't going to be a very good excuse for messing up. Plus, to make things even more nerve-wracking and emotional, SFC Lowery's wife and daughter are watching. "Here we go," I think to myself. Then it dawns on me that I have been crying, and my face is probably a mess. Nothing I can do about it now, so I just take two deep breaths and make my way up to the front.

The closer and closer I get, the sicker I begin to feel. Could it be my nerves getting the best of me? What is going on? My legs are beginning to shake. "Please don't fall," I keep repeating to myself. Just then, someone touches my shoulder; it is First Sergeant. He continues to walk up with me. Once we get to about five steps away from the

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memorial, we stop and go to the position of attention. Then we begin our salute; raising our right hands to our brows, counting in our heads to three, making sure not to touch our brows until we get to three. By the time my hand gets to my brow, I am back in tears. "Godspeed, Lowery," I whisper. For a brief second I focus again on the boots, M16, and Kevlar. Then I quickly pray, "Lord, never make me say goodbye to another friend again." First Sergeant and I count to three again, this time lowering our salute. As soon as our hands are back at our sides, we do a quick right face, and march away from the memorial; we pass SFC Lowery's family on the way and I give a quick glance of appreciation for their sacrifice, and continue on. Once we get to where we need to be, I stand and wait for all the soldiers to pay their respects. Two by two they each go up. As each one passes, I can't help but wonder if they truly know what this all means.

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I have been through many more memorial services since this one, and I can never look at the boots, M16, and Kevlar without thinking of SFC Lowery. As TAPS plays at the end of each service, I quietly ask SFC Lowery to take care of these new soldiers in heaven, just like he took care of us all while he was on this earth. Now that I am out of the service, every time I even see a picture of the boots, M16 and Kevlar, I can't help but think back to the time I first saw them set up for real. I now know what sacrifice looks like, and I will never be the same.



# NOIR

*Briana Swisher*

## A WOOD-LOVER'S REFLECTION INFORMED BY A NATURALIST

*Brittany Howell*

It's odd how you can distinguish one person's whistle from another. I can still hear my mom's distinct whistle if I focus hard enough. When my mom would whistle it was my signal that it was time to come inside, and believe me she sure did whistle a lot. I was always outside and I mean always. There was so much to see and explore. I love nature, its sounds, smells, textures, and its mystery. I grew up in the small town of Barton. Our town consists of two bars and three churches; the rest is creek, woods, and coal mines. There wasn't a lot to do when I was growing up besides get lost in the adventure of the wilderness in my backyard.

The woods are where my best friend and I built our first tree house, where I learned to fish, where I had my first kiss, where I learned to climb, where I got my first scar, and where I went to be alone. So many memories wash over me every time I surround myself in the woods' beauty. I am comfortable there. I know the terrain and the sounds. The woods are where I am at my most confident. I grew up in their presence and I know their temperament. They are like a friend I have come to be close with, a friend with whom I can share anything without judgment or opinion. Like John Muir, here in the woods I find "everything is hospitable and kind, as if planned for [my] pleasure, ministering to every want of body and soul."

When I was younger I seemed to have endless energy when I was in the woods. Without even thinking twice, I would hike the tallest hill just to see what was on the other side. Curiosity seemed to be my only train of thought, the unknown pushing me forward, the anticipation keeping me focused on the mission at hand. I didn't have to find money or a gold mine. For my hike to be worthwhile, something as simple as a neatly shaped rock was a treasure in my eyes. I still find a kind of energy when I am in the woods, maybe not as endless as when I was a child, but still a burst of energy. I feel like a kid again and for a little while I can forget about all my worries and just see where my curiosity takes me.

The way that rocks and roots feel under my shoes is almost like a massage. I love the beauty of every tree with its own singularity. The air is so crisp and fresh like the best fruit you have tasted that you just want to keep taking more of it in. It's not just the scenery and the smell of the air that I love about the woods, it is also the sounds. The birds fill the woods with music in the spring. The hummingbirds and bees bring their own unique beats, buzzing from flower to flower in the summer. The creaking of old trees and the rustling of leaves are the harmony of fall. The snap and clash of icicles falling from treetops carry the tone of winter. In the woods with my two feet on the ground, lungs full of fresh mountain air, throat full of the melody of the woods, I feel at peace.

I love the time I spend in the woods for so many reasons; the landscape, the sounds of nature, the confidence I feel, and the ability to be me. To this day I can't help but pick up rocks that catch my eye. I write a date or a memory on them and store them in my closet. Every now and again when I have a bad day I will sort through them and can't help but smile. I still consider them little treasures. The woods will always hold a place in my heart. They are my childhood, my youthful energy, my adventure, my place of peace, and so much more. There is so much mystery in the woods' creation. As the great naturalist John Muir describes it,

to learn how they [trees] live and behave in pure wilderness, to see them in their varying aspects through the seasons and weather, rejoicing in the great storms, in the spiritual mountain light, putting forth their new leaves and flowers when all the streams are in flood and the birds are singing, and sending away their seeds in the thoughtful Indian summer when all the landscape is glowing in deep calm enthusiasm—for this you must love them and live with them, as free as from schemes and cares and time as the trees themselves.

Muir's passage makes me think of the beauty of my own woods where I have so many wonderful memories and hope to create so many more.

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# EXPRESSIONS

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## UNTITLED

*Richard Brode*

# MY HOME

*Matt Winters*

I was only two years old when my parents moved into our first home, and not long after we moved in, my brother was born. Growing up at our home was the best time of my life, a time I wish every child could experience. Our home was always filled with love, laughter, and joy.

Our home had a large yard surrounded by a beautiful landscape of mountainous woods and a great field. There was also a small creek in the woods that my brother and I would play in for many years to come. Whether it was summer or winter, every change in season would bring a different aspect that we always looked forward to at our home.

Holidays are probably one of the things I miss most about our home. When family would visit, Mom and Dad would always decorate the house and make everyone who entered feel welcome and loved. My brother waking me up on Christmas morning is something I will miss so much that I tear up just thinking about. To this day I can remember the smell of the Christmas tree or the wonderful food Mom would prepare on Thanksgiving.

Playing with my brother and Dad in the yard is another part of home I miss dearly. Even the neighborhood children would join us. Whether it was simply catch with a baseball or football, we always had fun. Our Dad always worked very hard during the week but he made time to play with us and come watch our ballgames. I can still remember all the great times we had playing sports in the yard or building forts in the woods with neighborhood kids. I can still hear my Mom yelling at us, "come home, dinner's ready."

We owned many pets over the years and I still remember each one. We had mostly dogs and cats and they were very much part of our family. I miss having them greet my brother and me when we would walk up the road after school each day or

# EXPRESSIONS

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play with us on a snow day when school was closed. Sadly, the pets passed over the years but we would bury them at the top of our yard where the sun would hit in the evenings. We always felt they were still watching over us as we grew up.

As the years passed at home we all grew older and things began to change. The love between my parents was not the same. This was hard to watch for my brother and me. After so many happy years together, we never in a million years thought our parents would split up. My senior year in high school was probably my hardest because my parents had divorced and nothing was the same again. My brother was the strong one during the divorce and for a short time it was just him and me at home. We helped each other through this hard time and became even closer with our Dad. We still stayed very close with Mom, but our home was never the same.

Years passed and time began to heal our wounds. I joined the service and moved away for the first time in my life. My parents and brother kept in touch with me, but I was homesick. I missed everything about my room, the fireplace in the living room, Dad cooking dinner, my brother pitching to me in the back yard. I missed my Mom. I put pictures up in my wall locker of our house and our yard after a big snowfall that winter.

A year into my service time and I had moved to Japan, even farther away from home. I had a calendar with a countdown set up of when I would be able to return home and see my family. Then one morning I woke to the worst news I could have imagined. My brother had passed away at home. My brother had died at twenty years old after taking his own life. Everything after that for the next few years was a blur.

I remember my Dad had put our house up for sale around six months after my brother passed away. Our house sat empty for almost a year before I was able to return for the first time since I had left the service. It was very, very hard. I fell down and cried when I walked inside. I remember walking through our house one last time, visiting each room, saying goodbye. I remember cutting the grass and trimming the yard one last time for the realtor to show the house the next day. Riding around the yard on the lawnmower was tough, reminiscing about all the good times we had

shared together. I mentally saw a lot of ghosts that day and still feel haunted to this day by having to say goodbye to our home. I remember my neighbor coming to give me a hug after I got finished mowing the lawn. I could feel so much love and energy from that hug, I'll never forget it.

There's not a day goes by I don't think about my home or all the wonderful memories we made there. I still find myself driving by every now and then to check things out, maybe hoping deep down inside my family is there waiting.

## WAKING FROM BED

*Lynette Marie Huff*

I wish to lie dormant  
Like a blade of grass in winter's grip.  
The vacant warehouse of my mind  
Ample with empty pallets.  
No thoughts or plans to fill containers.  
I call out  
And only echoes of my voice  
Reverberate soullessly from the shadows.  
Ah, it is perfection! For you see, I have grown weary of agendas  
And forced obligations. How loathsome  
And dull they are to me!  
I recoil from calendars and bucket lists;  
They only serve to run time down.  
No, it is not to be realized!  
If I stir, it is of my own accord and not for  
The boredom of routine, for I scoff at such  
Normalcy.  
It is a counterfeit skin; translucent to me,  
Ideal to all others.  
By day's end, the wan and dusty hide  
Peels off like black bark from an ailing tree.  
Leave me to my festival of nothingness!  
It is the suit I shall wear against the awful  
Celebration of the mundane.



# STILL LIFE OF SHOES

*Justin Davis*

## CEDAR JEWELRY BOX

*Marsha Tressler*

Cedar attracts my senses and attention every time I am in contact with the wood. It makes a strong aroma that opens up my mind and brings back memories of my late grandmother. She loved the scent too. I remember going into her bedroom and opening this beautiful jewelry box, with an exquisite outdoor scene of deer and forest on the top, just to smell cedar. When she passed, the family, knowing I loved it, bestowed it upon me. Since then, I have opened it numerous times to breathe in the sweet and calming scent of memory.

As I said, the outdoors scene on the top of the jewelry box was something that immediately attracted me. It was a beautifully painted fantasized world in the woods complete with deer, trees, flowers, and a gorgeous sky in the background. I often thought, as a child, how wonderful it would be to walk into the woods and have this vision. Or, I would imagine, this is a picture of Heaven, where my grandmother had gone.

I don't have many other memories of my grandmother (as she passed when I was just seven years old), so the cedar jewelry box is something I am glad I acquired from her passing. I hope to give it to my grandchildren. Cedar, its reddish brown tint and its scent, will always bring memories of my late grandmother and the marvelous jewelry box I will hold dear forever.

# THE NEW AMERICAN DREAM: An Examination of *The Hunger Games* and its Popularity

Jeremy Ross

## Abstract

A speculative research essay, "The New American Dream: An Examination of *The Hunger Games* and its Popularity," examines the causes of the success of *The Hunger Games*. Jeremy Ross provides proof through primary and secondary sources. Mr. Ross shows how increasing social angst among adolescents and an increasing sense of nationalism have led to the success of *The Hunger Games*.

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The American Dream, at least the one our forefathers longed for, is dead. Long gone are the days of the pioneer spirit that drove the settling of America and our pursuit west and a feeling that paradise was over the next mountain top. Long gone is the belief that hard work and God would lead us to this dream. These ideals have given way to a New American Dream. This dream is constructed on the values and ideals of a dystopian society that fears and tries to escape the government's totalitarianism and the dreadful environmental conditions of our time. This dystopian dream is evident in the popularity of the *The Hunger Games*, a film series adapted from the novel *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins. The film is set in the futuristic dystopic land of Panem. As tribute to the Capitol, segregated adolescents are forced to compete as gladiators for the entertainment of the authoritarian government. If these adolescents win (survive) they are given the prize of a lifetime in the Capitol. The Capitol is the only district free from the games.

The series is allegorical, thus speaking to and reflecting the growing social angst and increasing sense of nationalism in adolescents. A New American Dream has been created by the kind of dystopic view of (or lack of hope in) the future evidenced in the

film. In his article "Baby's Gone A-Hunting: *The Hunger Games*, Bully, and Struggling to Grow Up," Bernard Beck examines *The Hunger Games* and why it is popular among adolescents. Beck also examines why this new view of America has developed. According to Beck, "The role of movies [is to] present a dystopic view of the future in our actual attempts to deal with contemporary adolescence" (27).

From the very beginning of the series, *The Hunger Games* has enjoyed enormous popularity. In their article "Hunger Strikes," Keith Staskiewicz and Carrie Bell provide us with insight to the film's popularity. On the opening weekend of the first film, *The Hunger Games* earned \$152.5 million (Staskiewicz and Bell). Staskiewicz and Bell explain that this is one of the highest opening weekends of any film. They expect *The Hunger Games* to become the most successful film series of all time. Because the series possesses more than just a cult following, it is important that we understand why. In order to begin this process, we will go to the film's writer, Suzanne Collins.

In an interview with Hillel Italie, Collins explains why she believes *The Hunger Games* has been so successful. Collins says that her creativeness for the novels came from several different sources. However, she points to one cause in particular. Collins explains that it was her late night viewing of the Iraq war that gave her inspiration. Collins illustrates her inability to distinguish between the war coverage and reality television. She believes that we are experiencing too much information to really engage any of it appropriately, that we are becoming desensitized to violence and suffering. She states that it is her job to properly help her children understand the war. "I think right now there's a real uneasiness in the country that the kids feel," she says. Collins explains that it is hard for her children to even digest what is really happening in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

It is this desensitization where the New American Dream has had its beginning. A dystopian, segregated future is more appealing than the future we have passed on for the kids of America. From the opening scene of *The Hunger Games* we get this sense of dystopia. A totalitarian government has enslaved and segregated the population into districts. From these districts, adolescents must compete on a televised survival game. At the helm of this dystopia is a president who embraces these games. It is here

where see what Collins refers to as needed and unneeded wars. A war in which a government enslaves and segregates its people is unneeded. For citizens of this world, a rebellion—or needed war—is necessary. In *The Hunger Games*, the rebellion of the adolescents is successful in the eventual unity of the country.

Beck goes on to examine why adolescents may hope for this dystopic view. Beck explains that adults and adolescents have very different views of the future. Adults must deal with a future they created, while adolescents must deal with a future given to them. He states that today's adolescents must accept the future for what it is: a dystopic society in which adolescents have no hope and war is the only possible outcome. Beck also explains that in today's culture, it is not enough to wait for adulthood. Adolescents want status (political power) now. Beck explains that in their version of the future, there are no adults, and that in the future we will have left behind such things as civil war, foreign war, hunger, political and social strife, and poor economic conditions.

Beck goes on to explain that the future belongs to today's adolescents. These adolescents are left to deal with whatever future that has been created for them. According to Beck, adolescents "nowadays must accept a certain peculiar social status for the time being . . . . They are not as worried about the transmission of culture from the older generation as they are excited about their invention of a culture to replace the old one" (28).

Reality television has played a role in this view for adolescents. In her article "Beyond the Blood: What *The Hunger Games* Can Teach Tweens," Eliana Dockterman examines what *The Hunger Games* is teaching adolescents. With the wars in both Afghanistan and Iraq at a near end, it is important to examine how adolescents are viewing these events (their future). According to Dockterman, this generation of adolescents has grown up watching reality television. These shows provide unattainable goals for the future. She states that it is reality television that has led to adolescents not totally understanding the consequences of events such the Afghan and Iraq Wars, which further feeds their disdain of the past generation. For example, adolescents may get caught up in watching *Keeping Up With The Kardashians*. Watching Kim plan a wedding can lead to an absentmindedness about the

consequences of war.

Dockterman further explains that *The Hunger Games* and its dystopic view provide adolescents with some real world ideologies, among these being socioeconomic disparity and loss of civil liberties (Dockterman). She explains that it is these conditions that draw formerly separated people together. It is these forces that create the need for rebellion for the adolescents in the film.

After examining Beck and Dockterman, we can begin to understand how adolescents are attaining this dystopic view. Whether it is an attempt to cope with the future left for them, or a desire to attain adulthood, adolescents are leaving behind the American Dream. Additionally, today's adolescents are left to deal with social strife that we have failed, in so many ways, to prepare them for. We have allowed them to get lost in reality television. It is no wonder the dream is dead. We can further investigate this when examining the wars by themselves.

Inside *The Hunger Games*, there is an emerging sense of a return to nationalism, a sense that what divides us makes us stronger. In his article, "The Case for American Nationalism," Michael Lind examines how America has lost her sense of self. Lind explains how America has lost the memory of what once made it great. He explains how America was once the world's standard for nationalism and the right of self-determination. According to Lind, "During the two world wars America championed the rights of small nations against empires—including its imperial allies like Britain—and during the Cold War Americans sympathized with the 'captive nations' of the Soviet bloc" (9). It is this sense of nationalism that Lind refers to that is now gone from today's America.

Lind goes on to examine how this ideal of nationalism, that served us so well for two hundred years, has now vanished. Lind asks, "If enlightened liberal nationalism served the country so well for two centuries how is that nationalism now frequently identified as evil?" (12). *The Hunger Games* shows us that this sense of nationalism (a sense of patriotism and humanitarianism) is re-emerging. It shows today's adolescents an "us against them" mentality. (The "them" being us, the ones who ruined their future.)

This sense of nationalism is also important to examine in that it is not an accepted

view of psychologists. In his book, *The Psychology of Nationalism*, psychologist Joshua Searle-White examines the phenomenon. According to Searle-White, "There is no psychological theory of nationalism" (459). He goes on to state that the best way of exploring the issue is by grouping individuals and examining the results.

After examining all sources related to this topic, we can now understand how the American Dream has changed. There is both a sense of settling for dystopia and an increase in nationalism. The old American Dream is no more. These are the ideas that have led to the popularity of the film series *The Hunger Games*.

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## Inspirations



### JOHNNIE BAILEY

#### *"Kids in Costume"*

During this cold breezy day as the inauguration starts to begin, I came across a brother and sister wrapped up in a small blanket as they tried to stay warm.

#### *"People on Grates"*

In Downtown Gallery Place I came across a row of homeless people laid over top of a drainage grate and bundled up to stay warm. It was so harsh to see people having to live this way.

#### *"Nation's Capitol"*

This was something that caught my eye when walking in downtown Washington, DC I came across a row of flowers that led into a great historic place called Union Stagnation as our US flag sits in the center.

### ANTANIA CANNADY

I don't have too much to say about my writing, except that it's an outlet for me, and that I never wanted to be published, and I hope that "Golden" lets people know that they're not alone.

### LYNETTE MARIE HUFF

#### *"Waking From Bed"*

The first line of this poem came to me as I lay comfortably in bed. The weight of the day and those to come felt large, especially because I was ill with a bad head and chest cold. Responsibilities, somehow, feel all the more substantial when one is in poor health. To put it plainly, I just didn't want to get up out of my warm bed.

# Inspirations



## *"Tracks and Flags"*

I went for a walk downtown with camera in hand, looking for things of interest. I decided to venture to the small train station which, in spite of the fact that I've lived in Cumberland since 2002, I've never seen up close. The more I looked at the train on the tracks, the more the scene spoke to me. I noticed the direction of the tracks versus the direction of the interstate; coupled with the set of American flags sitting as idle as the train, I found the scene picturesque. It was an average moment in an average town, yet somehow it was just a little more that day.



## *"Posted"*

Worn down, abandoned, dilapidated homes and neighborhoods have recently piqued my interest with my desire to capture them flourishing. This structure is from a building that was partially burned in a residential fire. I photographed the section that didn't appear affected by the blaze from the outside.



## *"Glasses and Grapes"*

Walking into Art Appreciation class during my final semester was always a feast for my eyes. Everywhere I looked there was something of interest. The glasses and vinyl grapes sat each day by the window as natural light flooded behind them. I thought of how lovely they looked – spots and stains included, which only added to their uniqueness.

## **JAMIE PENDRY**

Name change to protect family in "A Pair of Boots, and M16, and a Kevlar."



# BLUE MOON

*Briana Swisher*

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