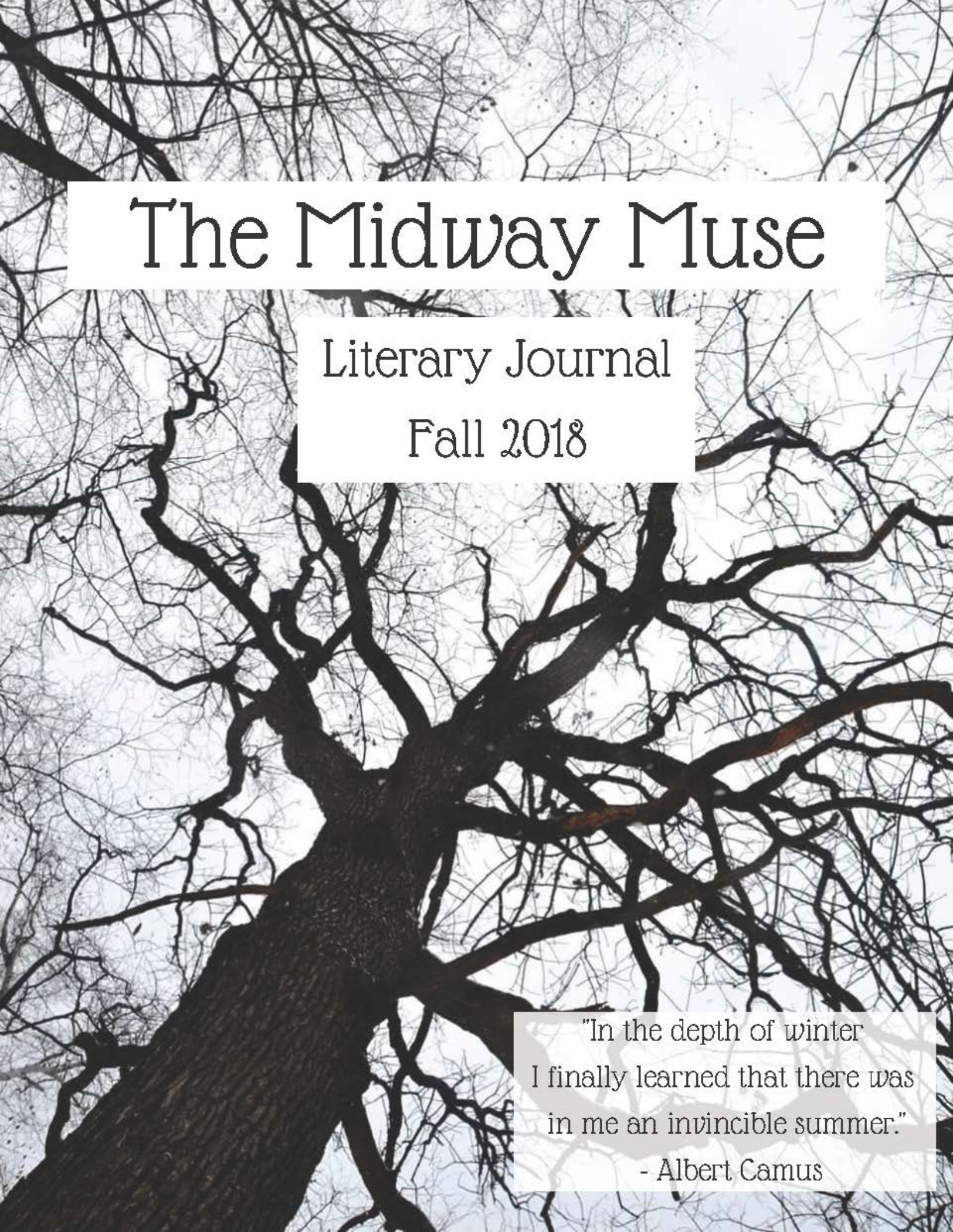

The Midway Muse

Literary Journal

Fall 2018

"In the depth of winter
I finally learned that there was
in me an invincible summer."
- Albert Camus

The Midway Muse

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Faculty Editor: Dr. Rebecca L. Briley

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Editor's Note

The vibrant leaves come drifting down, coating the cold ground. A bright leafy blanket of red and orange, soon to be replaced in sparkling white.

Lush trees become jagged and dark. Warm breath blown out into plumes. The world turns cold, a life of desaturation.

Each day instead seeming more like night. Spring seems distant and unreachable, a life of unending winter.

But through melting snow grows new buds. Young life springs forth, potential unbounding. Brightness and hope reign in spring.

--Diana Burkee

Autumn in Midway



-Jill Giles

Autumnal Villanelle

Now is the thing anticipated long
Set in like blood, the sacrificial stain,
Its youth exchanged for one last echoed song.

The Frost-y lump, the sense of something wrong
Its fabric, finger-frayed in nervous strain,
Now is the thing anticipated long

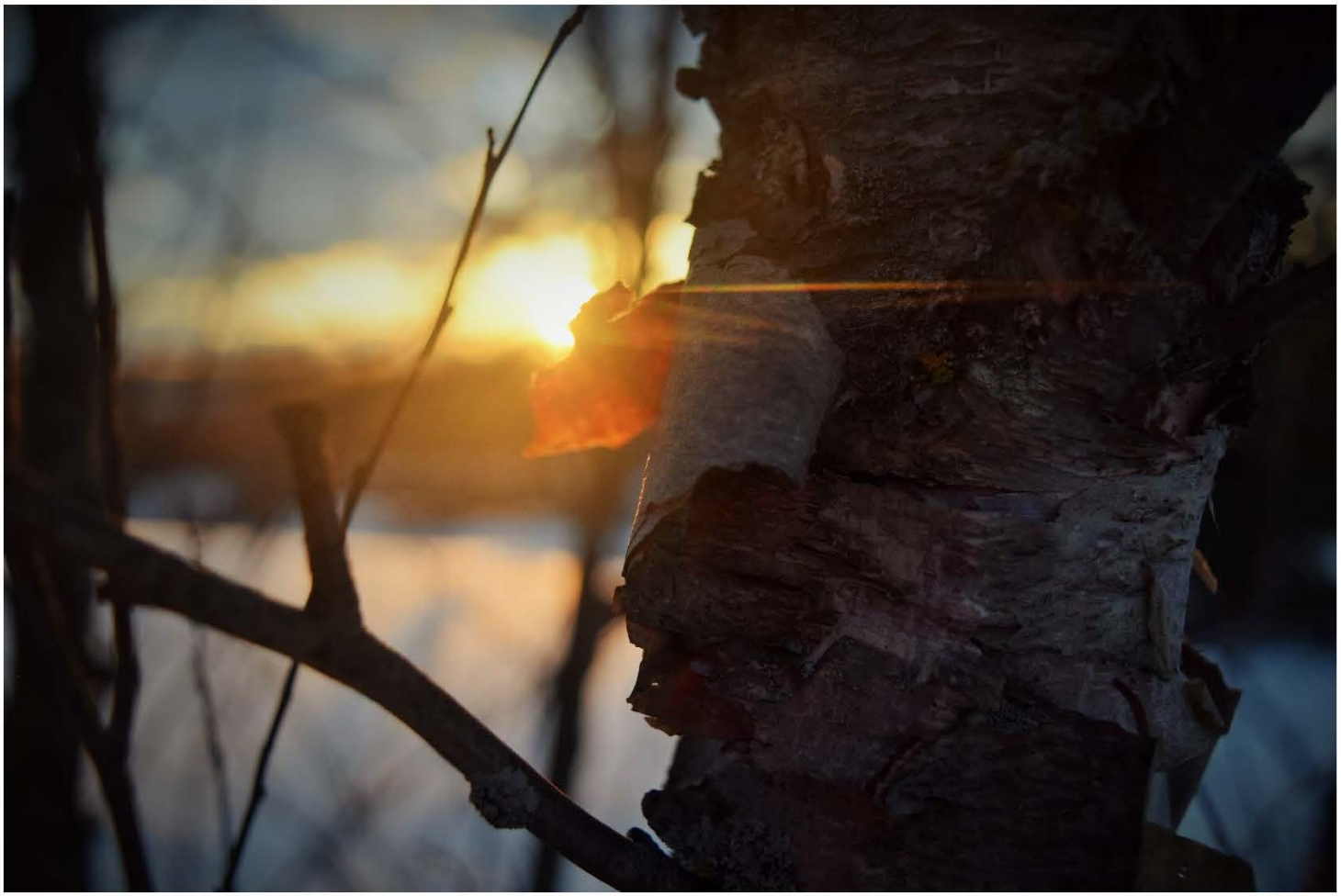
Announced by migratory evening throng.
So much to lose, so little left to gain.
Its youth sold, bargained for a breathless song.

The funerary home where all belong:
So little left to lose, so much to gain.
Now is the thing anticipated long.

What lies ahead requires a spirit strong
To rise up, wraithlike, mid the river rain,
Its life lost, care-less, in the dying song.

To etch one's exit brief in briefer bone,
To leave behind the sum of worldly bane:
Now is the thing anticipated long,
Its essence sacrificed for endless song.

-- *Rebecca Luttrell Briley*



-Hannah Waroway

Eulogy for Icarus

He longs to fly but cannot lift a wing:
The wax gone thin, the feathers long unfurled.
He labors just to raise his head and bring
His eyes to focus on his fallen world.

That he once knew the heat of melting sun
Is just a myth he dreamt of ecstasy.
Eternity his sentence, long begun
When green-eyed mermaids lured him to the sea.

His drying eyes take measure of his cage
Where still his wings are pinned for lack of trust.
In dying light is residue of rage
Enough to rip them free in rains of rust?

The clock ticks loud unmitigated truth
As heart competes for fading finish line.
The road he travelled in unfettered youth:
A labyrinth he thought he'd left behind.

He sighs, his acquiescence smells of rot,
As through some window cracked the wind still sings
A siren's song his heart has not forgot.
He strains—dare he again to test his wings?

--Rebecca Luttrell Briley



-Salah Shakir



-Hannah Waroway

Empty Sky

A pain swells within me, growing and strengthening, as though I were pregnant with it. This horrible unborn suffering which is dependent upon me, such that I cannot escape.

A cry erupts from within me. A futile attempt to expel this ache which consumes me. I am alone, no ears to hear for miles around. My sobs echo among the trees.

I open my stinging eyes, red and sore from the tears. I watch the dark clouds which loom above me.

This time, I bellow. My voice ringing at a volume it has never known before, still falling upon deaf ears.

Perhaps this is my lot, my life lesson in perseverance. Though I can't help but wonder... am I screaming to an empty sky?

--*Anonymous*

Belief



-Michael Levin

Where I'm From
(Inspired by George Ella Lyon)

I am from rough, uneven paved back roads that unwind into the dark silent nights;
where owls are heard hooting in the night while stalking within the mist covering the trees.

I am from land that is shared among farmers producing golden ears of corn and soybeans,
the smell of tobacco being smoked from dark-colored barns from five in the morning to ten in the evening.

I am from where cattle are the selected friends to spend your weekend with,
hearing their moos and hooves stomping around in the rolling open fields of grass.

I am from the traditional backyard or open field bonfires in October,

From roasting marshmallows, loud music
blaring from vehicles with their windows down,
to bow fishing at the "Bottoms" in the late spring
in a small boat shared with four people.

I am from the forgotten Waterfowl Capital in America,
in which caused very little visitors to pass
through and stay for a while and admire our
small town.

I'm from somewhere so tiny that it would be impossible to do anything,
without the rumor mill hearing it first,
and forced to stay up late once snuck home with
a one-on-one talk with your parents.

I'm an alumnus from a school that bleeds Kelly green,
and known for holding significant tributes to
those that have fallen.

I'm from a place that their mascot is known to soar and fly high in the sky and made of metal, but if you were to actually see them near –
you may need to duck and cover,
as an atomic explosion were to shortly follow them.

Somewhere hidden on the shelves in my dark lit closet is a collection,
a collection of all my yearbooks throughout the years,
collecting dust, filled with notes from my classmates, teacher signatures, and no longer in-service phone numbers.

I am from the memories that drove me far away from the country roads and to never look back, as good memories can never happen a second time.

-- *Carra Pearson*



-Hannah Waroway

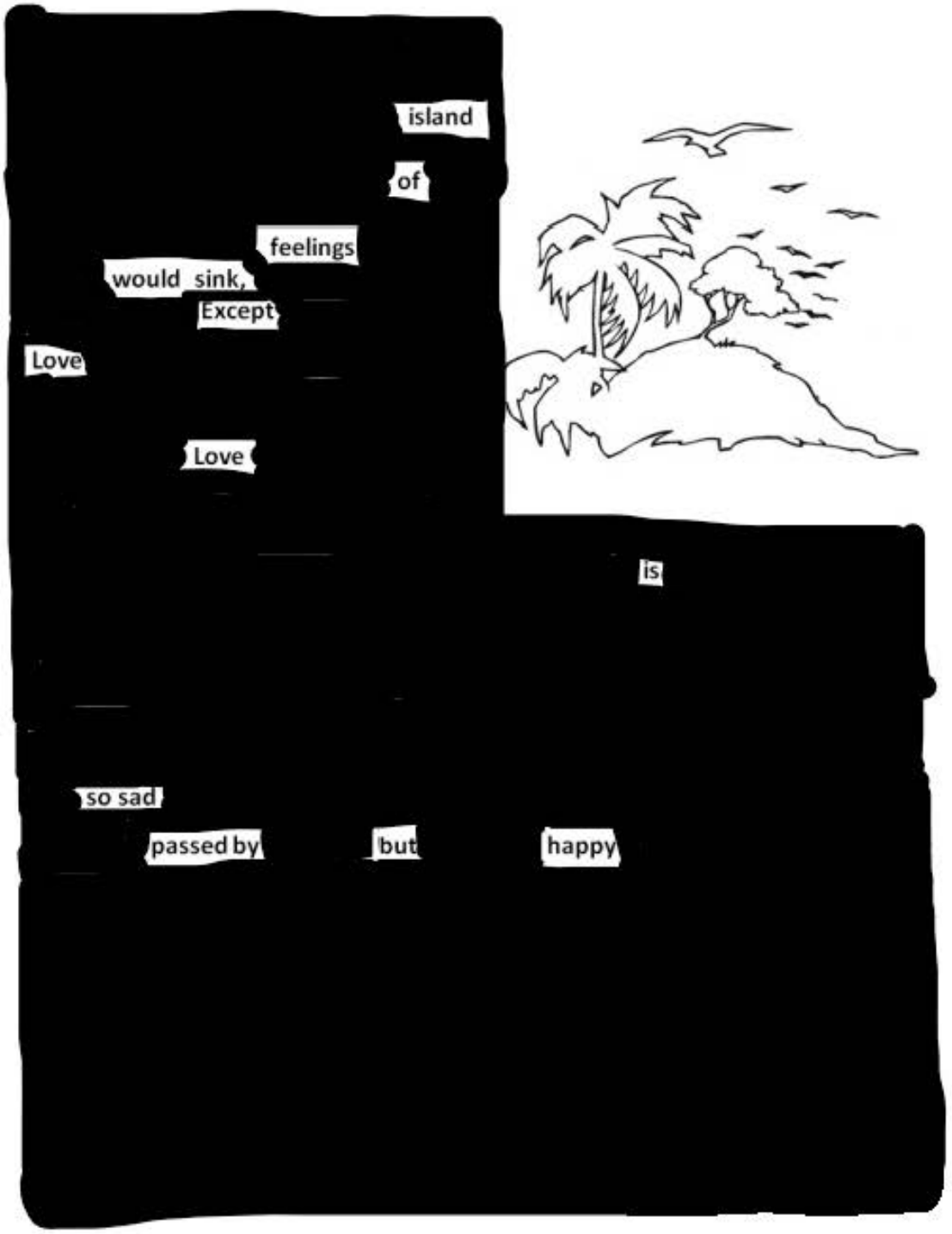
Before the Wolves

Softly she recalls a time before
Time, before the clock-work formed
A fist and, bloody, clenched within her
Chest and, pounding, gushed, "There's
Only this"—before the hands closed
Palms and pulled, before the Winter,
Before the wolves. Take her back to
Milkbreath and Wonder, to before the
Patter, so soft, became thunder and
Thunder heightened into growls and
Shadows, prowling, hoisted heads,
Snapping milk-teeth at her breast.
Take her and keep here where nothing
Was dirt and all was just Earth; and nothing
Was Sacred, all was just Earth; and the only

Pang that hurt was Pain. Take her back to
Golden mist, before the, "Nothing—only
This," before she knew to be afraid and
Bade the Brightness keep her lit. There
She belongs, in soil, in clouds, far from the
Blood that woke the wolves, far from the
Hounds that have started to howl. She
Belongs in the Timeless, the peaceful Light
That, dripping warmly, brightly pooled—
Before the Wasteland, before the wolves.

-- *Cait A. Smith*

Love – A Blackout Poem



-Taylor Stephenson



-Lilly Pendley

The Donut Lesson

An Allegory

The professor decided this semester she would teach her students a lesson. Not the usual lesson of correct sentence structure or proper English grammar; not the instruction in citing outside sources in accurate APA or MLA format. Not even names and dates and events and ideas and arguments and plots and characters and all the content that goes into teaching writing and literature and research, which is what she tried to teach each semester. Operative word, tried.

Oh, sure she still hoped to impart knowledge and wisdom in all those areas, as per usual. But this semester she decided she would try, at least make an effort to impart something her students seemed less and less capable of grasping but more and more in need of such absorption.

You see, over the many years of the professor's long career, students had become progressively more self-absorbed and equally less scholarly. Not only were

they lacking in academic acumen, they were becoming increasingly lacking in basic politeness and human decency. Tardiness, late homework, no textbooks, no notebooks, unexplained absences and so on. Add to that the incessant cell-phone captivation and total lack of lecture attentiveness, and the professor was beginning to wonder why she and the students even bothered to come together at the scheduled time: 50 minutes M, W, F or 75 T, TH—those who bothered, that is.

So at the beginning of this particular semester, she decided to try something different. To teach a different lesson, one that seemed more urgent and more necessary even than passive voice or iambic pentameter.

It had been the professor's habit to bring donuts to class on special occasions: first day of class, last day of class, and every exam in between—just to sweeten the experience, she'd laugh. One semester, when forced to teach an 8:00 class, she'd brought donuts every morning—to make the ordeal bearable, she'd explained. Most students gobbled down the sugary

stickiness, their rare but automatic "thank yous" chewed up and swallowed with the crumbs. Some, of course, didn't even do that: they were vegan and couldn't eat anything made with milk or egg, they were on a strict low-carb diet for wrestling season or cheerleading tryouts, they didn't eat generic pastries that didn't at least come from Starbucks.

She herself rarely if ever imbibed in her own treat, bought admittedly at the local grocery store. She had read somewhere, on Facebook, probably, that the worst thing one could put in one's body was the fat and sugar of the ubiquitous donut. For that reason she never bought them for herself, and if there were leftovers from her class, they made it to the administrative assistant's office for others to partake.

This semester, however, she would bring in donuts as usual, but not so much for the indifferent students as for herself. The object for her object lesson. She wanted a visual to make an impact, to render the abstract concrete, as she was fond of saying. She'd also read that the average American adult read, if he read at all, on the 6th grade level, which coincided

ironically with the age at which young people were just beginning to grasp the concept of abstractions, the concept of concepts, so to speak. Although the teens who enrolled in her classes were considerably older than the average sixth-grader, she doubted their thinking skills any more developed. Visual learners, concrete thinkers required show and tell. So that is what she would give them.

The rules were simple: for every "infraction," for every inconsideration...tardies, absents, little white "dog ate my homework, my grandmother died" lie, every minute on cell phones or social media, every eye roll and every rude response...she would eat something. Not a lot, but something she didn't need or want. Something harmful to her body. Donuts. She wouldn't say a word to call attention to her behavior or explain why she had suddenly taken to gorging herself on the provided refreshment. In fact, she didn't even expect the students to pay much attention to her indulgence. She did hope they would begin to notice when bite by bite led to pound by pound and maybe, just maybe a spark of curiosity

would ignite into a question which might lead to an explanation and then even a discussion.

She wanted the visual to make an impact: little "harmless" things adding up to big hurtful things: pounds and pounds of fat. Obesity. Heart disease. Diabetes. Yes, she was willing to put herself in harm's way in hopes of teaching her students one real lesson. A life lesson she felt they couldn't live without, one she was willing to die for if necessary. Of course she hoped it wouldn't have to come to that, but then again, she generally entered each semester with aspirations that were not actualized. After all, what was a martyr to a cause if that martyr wasn't willing to see the sacrifice through to the very end.

So the semester began and as luck would have it, so did the first class at 8 a.m. Donuts every morning. The professor showed up promptly at 7:50, armed with the tools of her trade: textbook, notes, dry-erase pen, class roster, and donuts. The first student arrived in pajamas and uncombed hair; the professor nibbled a sugar-glazed. The next student who grunted a response to the roll call, another bite of

pastry. Another student didn't bother to answer at all—couldn't hear his own name through the noise of his earbuds—another taste of chocolate frosted. And so on. For every mannerism lacking in good manners, the professor ate its weight in Krispy Kreme.

When the first day of classes was over, the professor was feeling nauseated. She didn't feel up to eating anything nutritious, either, after a full-course menu of sweet. Still, she had yet to make a dent even in the complacent consciousness of the student body: no one had noticed her behavior or said a word to her about it at all. She must persevere. So she did.

Every day. Donuts and Dante. Donuts and dangling participles. Donuts and donuts and donuts. Because every day there was a plethora of tardies and excuses and absences, less and less of everything required and more and more of everything unwanted. Cell phones replaced textbooks, cameras reduced note-taking to a flash of the whiteboard, social media replaced social interaction and scholarship and sensitivity. And bites

and bites of donuts replaced the professor's reproofs and admonitions.

Day after day, month after month, the 16-week semester rolled on. And the pounds from the daily diet of donuts rolled on, too. Around the professor's middle. Under her chin. Her hands and feet swelled. She had to change to bigger shoes, wear her rings on smaller fingers. Her clothes began to strain to hold it all, until they couldn't. On her meager salary, she bought more clothes—consignment shops for full-figured women, sloppy sweaters and elastic waists.

And still no one noticed. No one said a word. And because the professor was determined not to voice her scheme to the class, their indifferent behavior burgeoned like her waistline. Soon no one even attempted to hide the fact he or she was texting on their phone or sharing jokes on Facebook with the friends around them. Fewer and fewer assignments were turned in under the expectation late papers would be accepted with no penalty points taken off. The teacher accepted their carelessness without a word.

Finally, the last week of classes arrived. The 8:00 final was scheduled and students strolled in at 8:05, 8:10, even 8:20. Some clutched weeks of late assignments in their hands; some hadn't even bothered. The campus scuttlebutt, in spite of syllabi alerts to the contrary, was all one had to do to pass the class—any class—was to pass the final exam.

But where was the professor? The chair she usually occupied at the beginning of each class was empty. No neatly stapled printed tests and no neatly stacked boxes of fresh donuts occupied the middle of the desk. For the first time the students noticed. Nothing. They noticed she was not there.

So what was the protocol when the professor didn't show up for the final exam? Could students leave immediately? Must they wait the usual 30 minutes? No sign on the door, no message scrawled on the white board explained the anomaly. Some nervous students began to check their campus email for clarification. One turned to another to ask if the date had changed or if they were in the wrong place.

Just as the awkward atmosphere was becoming palpable, the professor rolled in. Literally. Her obese body was wedged between the arms of the wheelchair she now over-filled. Her face was barely recognizable, her eyes peering out like the Pillsbury Doughboy's raisins in her chubby cheeks. IVs swung from a pole attached to the back of the chair, their tubes snaking down to sink their teeth in her bloated arms.

Who was this woman? What was she doing in their class? And would they have to take the final after all?

For the first time, the professor spoke. Of course, she had spoken all semester long, but not on this subject. Not on the matter of what was the matter with her, how she had changed, and why. Now, in a dispassionate low voice, she explained the experiment she had conducted on their class. Without reproach or reprimand, she laid out the rubric by which they could follow her objective. How she had eaten their indifferent insolence all semester, literally. An unholy communion: their sins on her body.

An uncomfortable silence settled on the class. Then, "Gross," one said. "That's disgusting," said another. "Do we still have to take the final?" asked another. The professor didn't say another word. One by one the students gathered up their phones, their backpacks and shuffled out the door. One girl—a cheerleader or some other kind of athlete judging by her fit and trim appearance—said to her counterpart, just loudly enough for the professor to hear, "I'd never let myself go like that," before leaving the professor alone in the empty classroom.

The lesson was over. Everyone had failed.

--*Anonymous*

Shopping Shelter



-Michael Levin

The Dramatic Monologue: a piece written for the theatre for one actor who speaks directly to the audience.

Sweetiepie

A Monologue

[A young woman age 20 dressed in casual clothes. She carries an old female cat in her arms.]

Daisy: Hey, this is my cat, Sweetiepie. Don't judge her name, I've had her since I was 8 years old. Which makes her almost 12 years old. We've gone through so much together and share so many memories.

I've never considered getting my cat registered as an emotional support animal, or ESA, before because I never thought I had experienced anything to deserve one. I always felt that if I did get her registered it would be me taking advantage of the system. Now, I'm not so sure that's the case. It was suggested to me to try to get her registered, so she can live with me on

campus and I figured I had too much to gain to not try.

I'm a little nervous about going to explain why I feel I deserve my cat with me, so if you're not opposed, I'm going to practice what I intend to say.

I figured I'd focus on my home life. If I had to pinpoint where the majority of my stress comes from, I would say it's from home and the troubles that come with it.

Talking about family life is hard, but not in the way one would think. I'm not struggling to muster up the courage to share the vast secrets that make up my life, but instead I struggle with deciding what to share. Every family has their secrets, but what makes some deserving of leaving the shadows and others not?

I'm sure each of you have your own family secrets- do you not? Things you wouldn't possibly share with anyone outside your home.

But you're not hiding them out of fear, you hide them out of loyalty.

When do you decide to break loyalty with your family and expose all the dirty secrets that were hidden away in the house? I don't believe I know the answer to that question any more than you do, but here I am about to share things that's been hidden away for years.

Why now? Why did I wait until I was 20 to realize that things weren't okay? Surely, I must have known things were odd before now. I didn't though.

Somehow, I managed to rationalize away the things amiss in my family for years until my world came crashing down. I was 18 before I managed to see through the lies and pieced together how truly horrifying my reality was. In many ways this crashing reality broke me. I fell a part, unsure how to fix myself enough to face the world.

Growing up, I was unable to see how dangerous my older brother was. I rationalized his aggression and anger as common because I was never told differently. My parents used to tell me I antagonized him and after being told that repeatedly, I believed them. He caused many cuts and bruises on me that my parents would write away as common play between siblings and I truly feel they believed that. They didn't want to see their son as a monster. He was their first born, their pride and joy. I, however, was the second child who only instigated problems.

As my brother and I aged, and his anger and aggression increased, I believe my parents began to realize he was dangerous because around age 10 my parents told me to stop playing with him because he was sick. Of course, I didn't realize that by sick they meant he was a monster. I should have known he was since he was so violent, both to me and animals. I remember when we were very young, and he tried to burn my cat's tail. Fortunately, he was unsuccessful,

and she was able to run away from him. [*Talks to the audience]* But what 12-year-old tries to burn a cat's tail? Do you know any child that age who does that?

Anyway, I don't believe my parents ever thought my older brother would go after my younger siblings. I guess they thought where my brother and I were closer in age he would only mess with me, but as my younger siblings grew older, he would try more and more to cause fights.

Most of the fights he instigated were focused around video games. He would steal their games and lose them or break them. Being young, my siblings didn't understand why he was mean to them and I was unable to explain it well enough for them to understand. I would simply tell them he was sick, but that didn't begin to explain what was wrong with him. [*To the Audience*] But how could I tell them that he was a real monster? Children are supposed to fear the monsters on TV that are colorful and not real. They aren't

supposed to know that the real monsters live with them disguised as a brother, or any other relative.

Recently, the fights have started to be instigated by anything that displeases my older brother. A month or so ago, while I was home, he tried to take food away from my sister because she "ate too much." Being an idiot, I ran into the kitchen and put myself between him and her and took the bread away saying the young ones eat first. He threated to hit me, raised his fist and shoved it in my face, but he didn't strike me. I didn't flinch, I knew better than to let him know I feared him. At the end of the day, I felt it was better for me get hurt than my little sister or brother. They are too young to be dealing with his aggression.

I wish I could say this was a one-time occurrence, but it wasn't. I can't begin to recount all the times he's threatened to hit, kick, stab, or shoot me. Most encounters are idle

threats and doesn't faze me the slightest bit but, isn't that strange? Wouldn't you be scared if someone threatened to stab you? Or to shoot you? Yet, I'm not scared of his threats.

Well, I do fear him, but not for myself.

I don't fear the monsters on TV. I'm not sure if I ever did. After living with a real one my entire life I guess you grow used to the terror and you learn to cope the best you can. If you can even say you've coped because you really don't. You don't learn about how writing can help you express yourself, or that finding a hobby can help release the stress of living with a monster. Instead, you end up hurting yourself emotionally by pretending everything is fine when it's clearly not, or worse you physically hurt yourself because you don't know what else to do.

I feel like I'm one of the lucky ones. I've never tried to kill myself, sure I've thought about it. But surprisingly a lot of people have. Fortunately, I haven't wandered that close to the

edge. However, I can't say that I've learned to cope with my life. I've been putting it off and hiding it from view because I'm not sure if I'm ready to dive into that abyss.

I'm sure you're wondering why I still go home since I know he's there. Since he's so mean you would think that I would stay away. That's the smart decision, I know. But I have nowhere else to go. I do not have a job, no license, no car, nothing. I have nothing and if I quit going home, I can't explain to you how much more stress would be added to my life if I had nowhere to go.

Over Christmas break last year I experienced that overwhelming strain. My brother wrapped his arm around my neck and tried to squeeze the life out of me without a reason. I had gotten up to throw a piece of trash away and when I passed him in the doorway, he attacked me. My dad tore him off me, but they blamed me. Told me I instigated the fight and I was the one made to

leave because they wouldn't kick him out. I had been in the house less than a day and they made me leave. I ended up with a friend, his mother was really sweet, and she took me in. She gave me a place to stay and food for 6 days until my parents threatened to cut me off if I didn't return home. Looking back, it seems comical that they threatened that. They already chose him over me. They didn't really care if I came home, but my grandmother found out I left the house and they decided I was bringing shame to the family. I'm not sure how I was the one bringing shame, but that's what they told me. So, like the good girl I was raised to be, I obeyed my parents and went home. Two days later my parents drove me back to school. We haven't had much of a relationship since. I can't forgive myself for not being good enough. They chose him over me, and I can't help but blame myself for that.

I feel maybe that's why my cat needs to be my ESA. She could come with me to college and I could grow and begin the path of delving into

the past and figuring out who I am. I wouldn't have to fill her in on all the secrets of my life and I wouldn't feel worried about leaving something out. She's been with me through all of it. She knows all the secrets hidden within the walls. Us being together would grant us both a chance at a happy and free life. I wouldn't be alone, I would have someone. Being given the responsibility of taking care of her would help me more than I could ever explain. She's my source of happiness. I'd do anything to keep her safe and that place isn't at my house. She belongs with me, on campus.

[*Returns attention to the audience*] So what did you guys think? Do you think that's enough? I'm not sure if I'd want to add more, but if you have any suggestions, I'd appreciate it. I'm willing to add anything if it means I can have my cat.

[*Lights down as she sits, stroking the cat.]*

--Anonymous



-Diana Burkee

A Picture Paints A Thousand Words

A Monologue

[*A young artist dressed in comfortable clothing comes onto the stage carrying a bag of art supplies. When she gets to center stage, she sets down her bag onto a table and pulls out a sketchbook. She can't find a pencil even after rummaging through the bag thoroughly. She turns to the audience for help.*]

Hey, does anybody have a pencil? Preferably I'd take a mechanical one, but I won't complain if it's just regular. [*An audience member gives her a "planted" pencil.*] I just need to borrow it for a little bit, and then I'll give it right back. I would've brought my own, but I seem to have misplaced my pencil bag. I'm lucky I remembered to carry my sketchbook with me. [*She sits down and begins to sketch.]*

I like doing practice sketches in my free time. Usually I try and do a couple every day since you know, practice makes perfect and I want to try and improve every day. Though if I can't

improve, practice sketching can at least help with making sure I don't decrease in my performance. After all, the less you practice, the more you start to appear rusty and can't remember some of the things you used to know.

I know someone out there can relate. Tell me, who here has gone through a phase and then years later tried to pick it back up where they left? [*She looks at the audience, acknowledging any raised hands.]* It's hard at first, y'know. Who here has maybe looked back at some old school work that they did in a previous grade and sit and think.... How in the hell do I interpret this? It's like a foreign language or something.

Anyways, I always find it's good to challenge yourself. Y'know, many people can become afraid to draw something because they've never attempted that thing before; they find it scary, so they avoid it all completely. However, with that logic in mind, you'll always hesitate to try and draw that thing. Thus, it will remain difficult for them to draw. It's only when you start to draw something that you understand its structure and

anatomy thus becoming easier for you to understand. For example, I know many people are afraid to put more motion into their poses or are skeptical to draw different poses in general. They might hide behind the excuse that they're just a beginner artist, or they just like to doodle. [*She looks up at the audience from their sketchbook*.] I know when I see potential, and believe me, a lot of people have it; it's just up to them to see it. [*She goes back to sketching*.] When people make some of these excuses, it just drowns my hopes. It's not like back in the day where you had to go to art school to get good at art or go to the library and strictly rely on the pictures given; believe it or not, a lot of people still think this way and it's not entirely wrong, but it's not right either. [*Long pause while she sits and sketches for moment, thinking about the next thing to say*.]

I can understand when someone is stressed, and they show little improvement, but it's the ones who aren't in that type of situation and choose not to improve, that just disappoint me. But

then I self-reflect and wonder why I feel this way. Is it because I'm disappointed that someone's passion doesn't match or exceed my own? Or is it that I see so much more in that person that they appear to be blind to?

I remember when I had a string of painful years in my life and remember the want to move forward with my art because it was something during that time that kept me sane. I felt like there was no one I could talk to without having some kind of repercussion. Regardless, I wanted to be like my peers, but my self-doubt and stress kept my wings tied so that I couldn't excel and move forward. But when the time came, and things got better, I took my chance and within a couple of years I got to a point where I'm semi-satisfied.

I think that I know the power that the creative arts can hold and how it can help those who need an outlet. I see people give up art entirely and it makes me think about how that can affect them. If they don't have a hobby or something that helps them cope, then what type of outlet

are they going to find? Either they don't have an outlet and tip over the edge because they aren't expressing themselves in some way, or they could turn to more unhealthy outlets, which can lead to substance abuse...The thought concerns me.

I know I'm coming off a bit preachy, but I speak from my own experience. Your outlet can be your crutch when you're on your last limb, and it can be the one thing that saves you. It doesn't have to be through the arts, it can be anything that you love doing, just make sure it's good for you.

[*She turns and reveals the finished pencil sketch*.]

--Lilly Pendley



-Diana Burkee

Mamma's Girl

A Monologue

[*Young girl sitting on the ground center stage, in a fancy dress. She is barefoot but has a pair of knee socks, and Mary Jane shoes sitting beside her. She has a bow in her hair. As she talks, she plays with her clothes, eventually taking off the bow, putting on the knee socks and the shoes, and finally removes the dress to reveal a t-shirt and shorts.]*

I've known for a long time now that my Mamma doesn't like me very much. My Mamma smiles at pretty little girls. You know, the ones with bows in their hair that wear dresses and fancy shoes. *[she pulls the bow out of her hair and throws it down in disgust.]* I don't like dresses or fancy shoes! They hurt my feet and give me blisters. One day my Mamma told me to listen carefully. She said, "Now you're gonna wear these shoes today whether you like it or not." I told my Mamma, "I will not wear these shoes

because they hurt my feet and I get sand in my shoes when I'm on the playground." She said I was gonna get a spanking if I didn't wear these shoes. So you know what I did? [*she pulls out some knee socks and puts them on.]* I found some big socks and I pulled those socks up to my knees and then put those shoes on. [*puts on the shoes and kicks her feet delightedly]* Mamma did not approve. She told me to take those socks off. I said, "I won't!" Now I did get a spanking, but I did not take those socks off! I'd say it was worth the spanking because I had fun on the playground and could hardly feel it when my shoes were full of sand. This is how I know my Mamma doesn't like me.

She doesn't like me climbing trees, either, but she can't stop me. I remember one day my older brother Charlie and his friend Jack climbed the great big magnolia tree in our yard. It was a good climbing tree cuz the big low branches made it easy to jump up and catch ahold of. I came out into the yard and saw them halfway up

that tree, and I yelled, "Wait for me! I'm comin'!" I grabbed ahold of that first big low branch and started climbing as fast as I could to catch up with them. I got about halfway up that tree and I had to stop because it felt like I was being rained on! I looked up and you know what those boys were doin'? Those boys were peeing on me from the top of that tree! I wasn't being rained on! I was being peed on! I yelled at them to stop peeing on me but they just kept laughing. I threatened to tell Mamma on them but they knew I would get in trouble for even being in that tree.

They were right. I didn't tell but I did make a promise to myself that day that I was gonna get them back. [*Pulls the dress off over her head to reveal her t-shirt and shorts.]* Now I just have to think of something terrible enough to get back at them. Something that Mamma won't find out about and get me in trouble. [*Speaks to the audience*] Do you know of anything that would be more terrible than getting peed on? Do you?

I just have to come up with something worse than what they did to me, even if it *does* get me in trouble! It'll be worth it, if I can just get them back. Mamma doesn't like me anyway.

[*She scans the audience for an answer, then sits in thought for a second. Then her face lights up as she thinks of something.*] I've got it! No, I can't tell you yet! That would spoil it. Wait here! I'll be back in a minute! [*She jumps up and runs off stage right for a few seconds. The stage is empty but the lights are still on. In a few seconds she comes back on slowly, rubbing her backside and wiping her nose. Her face slowly breaks into a grin as she sees the audience.*] Yeah....it was worth it! [*Lights out.*]

--Martha Muller



-Hannah Waroway

A Sonnet for Hope

Perhaps these things will change someday
Or maybe they will stay this way
Potential bursting at the seams
But change is good, so come what may.

The future heaping with new dreams
Its full of hope, and light that beams
Things come and go, and ebb and flow
The universe reveals its schemes.

So when we feel the need to fight
Or run 'til we are out of sight
Just wait and see what time will bring
For everything may turn out right.

--Diana Burkee



-Jennifer Luttrell

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