

Ink

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Ocean Glow

Friday night starts with PJ's truck. We call it The Red Dread. It's practically ten feet off the ground and the tires are enormous. It's covered in mud as usual and it only sits three people, scratch that, it only seats me, PJ and Linus. The tail gate has a small dent in it from that one time PJ let me drive. I may have backed into a fence but I still maintain my innocence. That fence hit me.

Anyway, PJ picks me up around 10:30 p.m.

"Hey." He grins.

"Hey back." I say

"Linus is really excited about tonight. He can't stop talking about it. Well, you know Linus; he never stops talking about anything."

I laugh. Linus is something else. He knows everything about everything. We sit in silence until he pulls up to Linus's house. PJ honks his horn and a split second later Linus emerges.

"Hey Linus!" I yell from my seat.

"Bastille! He yells back. "I got the towels! This is gonna be epic!" He flashes us a thumbs up sign and runs to the truck.

"It's about time!" PJ says as Linus opens the passenger door.

I slide over to the middle. My arm grazes PJ's and the butterflies in my stomach start to flutter. He cracks a smile.

PJ drives straight for the next thirty minutes and Linus continues to talk about everything and nothing. He stops once we reach Redwood Grove.

"Wow." Linus whispers, "It's incredible."

The trees look like giants and they leave me speechless.

"It's even better than I imagined." I say.

"Wait till we get to the cliff," PJ says. "It gets even better."

“Better than going mermaid watching with your best friends?” I ask.

“Almost.” PJ says with a smile.

We walk straight into the trees and I try not to trip over any fallen branches. I hear a small rumble and I ask PJ what it is.

“Close your eyes.” He says to me. I do. He puts one hand on my waist and the other on my back and guides me toward the rumble. “Open.”

The ocean is breath taking at night. The moon shines down on the waves and makes them glitter like the diamond necklace my sister wore to her wedding.

“This is amazing.” Linus takes the words right from my mouth. “Did you know that the moon is the single most important factor of tide creation?”

“Hey Linus,” PJ says.

“Yeah?”

“Shut up.”

I laugh and so does Linus.

“Alright,” PJ starts, “I got us a little something to lure the mermaids in.” He pulls a small bottle from his pocket and hands each of us a small white pill.

“Is that what I think it is?” Linus asks.

“This, my friends, is Annabel Lee.”

I put the pill on the tip of my index finger. “For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams of the beautiful Annabel Lee,” I say.

“And the stars never rise but I feel the bright eyes of the beautiful Annabel Lee,” PJ finishes.

“Hey that’s great guys,” Linus interjects. “Why don’t we pour ourselves some cognac and tell creepy stories.”

PJ laughs and tells us to take the pill. We do and I instantly feel lighter.

“Feel that?” PJ asks. “That is the beautiful Annabel Lee surging through you.”

“Actually, that’s your body reacting to the chemical that’s just been released into your blood stream. Once we hit the water, our bodies will give off a faint glow which will attract the mermaids.” Linus says.

“You’re such a brain Linus. Don’t ever change that.” I say.

“It might be best if we do this with a running start. I don’t think Bastille wants to look over the cliff before she jumps.” PJ tells us.

I nod my head. “Let’s do this.”

“Wait, fully clothed?” Linus asks

“You know, I didn’t think about that.” PJ says.

“Well Linus, it looks like you’re actually going to see what a real girl looks like.” I say as I take my tank top off and fling it at him.

Linus’s eyes get big and his mouth drops open as he gets a look at my bra.

“Nice, Bastille.” PJ laughs and he takes off his shirt and Linus follows suit. No cover of darkness can hide his red flushed cheeks.

“Remember to wait until you’re just about to hit the water to take a deep breath. We’ll be fine once we jump in as long as we stay close to each other being that we glow and all,” PJ instructs.

“Yeah,” Linus agrees. “Try to grab a starfish from the bottom. Mermaids love them and they’ll be more inclined to come if they see that we have an offering.”

“Oh, you mean two dudes and a girl who faintly glow aren’t enough?” I ask sarcastically.

“Well actually,” Linus starts.

“Not now Linus. Ready Bastille?”

I nod my head and grab PJ’s and Linus’s hands. “On three,” I say.

“THREE!” PJ yells.

No one moves.

“Guys, if we want to do this, we’re going to have to actually jump.”

“Sorry PJ. But it’s a little bit daunting knowing that I have to jump off a cliff in the dark.”

“It’s okay Bastille. We’re practically invincible.” He responds.

“Actually, we’re on drugs.” Linus says.

“Let’s try this again. Ready? THREE!” PJ yells.

We run straight for the edge of the cliff and then we jump. For a minute I'm flying and then I see the water getting closer. I take a deep breath just before I hit.

The coldness of the ocean pricks me like a thousand little pins. I'm still holding onto PJ's hand. Somewhere along the way Linus's must have slipped out of mine and this makes me panic until I see a faint golden glimmer a few feet below me. The glimmer gets closer and then I see that it's Linus with his arms full of starfish. PJ grabs two big purple ones and hands them to me and then grabs one for him. He points upward and we swim to the surface.

"Bastille, you look like a golden goddess!" Linus says as soon as my head pops out from under the water. I look at my hands. They're glowing and so are PJ and Linus.

"This is incredible."

"It's about to get even better." PJ says. "Let's get to the rocks."

We swim over and PJ helps me climb up. I grab Linus's hand and pull him toward me. PJ takes his place to my left and we leave our feet dangling in the dark water. The faint glow sways underneath the surface.

"You know, this is probably a little bit dangerous. Cliff diving in the dark and all," I say

"I never even thought about that," Linus answers.

PJ and I look at him and laugh. "Of all the things you never thought to think about," PJ mutters.

"Where'd you get the Annabel Lee?" I ask PJ. "I've never even heard of it before."

PJ adjusts himself on the rock. "You know that August kid?"

"Yeah, he's my lab partner."

"That guy's weird. He's in my French class. Never says a word to anyone." Linus adds.

"Really?" I ask incredulously. "He's always so sweet to me and he talks to me all the time." I say.

"That's because he likes you." PJ says.

We're quiet for a minute until Linus breaks the silence with some random fact about who knows what and then I see it. The ripples in the water are getting bigger.

"Look! Something's coming!"

PJ and Linus lean out to get a better look.

"Oh my god!" I say as I see the top of a head rise from the water in front of me.

"Give her a starfish." PJ tells us and Linus holds out a big purple one.

The mermaid takes it from Linus. Her skin glistens like fish scales. I take note of her finger nails. They are long and sharp. She bites into the starfish and a smile spreads through her lips. They're blood red against her pale skin. She looks behind her shoulder to signal others and three more mermaids are birthed from the water. They all have the same pale glimmering skin and blood red lips. I notice that the first mermaid is wearing a crown of seaweed decorated with various sea shells. The others are wearing smaller less ornate crowns. We take turns handing them our starfish and I can't help but admire the mermaids and their long hair fanning out into the water. They say nothing the entire time and the only sound I hear is the water lapping against the rocks and the bare backs of the mermaids. The one closest to me reaches for my starfish and I hand it to her gingerly. Her fingers touch my mine as I hand over her prize. They're cool against my own. Linus gives them the last of our starfish and once they realize we have nothing left to offer, the three behind their leader dip below the surface and disappear.

Their leader stares at PJ and Linus intently. Her gaze is warm, almost motherly, but I feel a warning behind it.

She slowly bobs up and down in the water, the small waves bring her shimmering body closer to us and PJ and Linus seem to be more and more enamored with every inch she comes closer. The mermaid reaches toward PJ and Linus and cups their cheeks with each of her hands and Linus starts to slide toward her.

"Linus!" I yell. He doesn't hear me so I turn to PJ. "PJ! PJ!" He doesn't even know I'm here. I start to panic so I slap him across the face. Hard.

“Ow! What’d you do that for?” He asks while rubbing his cheek but he doesn’t have to wait for an answer because he sees what I see. He sees Linus slide into the water with the mermaid. She leans in to kiss him and then she pulls him down below the water with her.

My heart stops beating for what seems like a minute and PJ jumps into the water.

“I’m going after him!” he yells.

PJ disappears under the surface and I see the faint glow getting dimmer and dimmer as he gets further down. It is pitch black and the only thing I can hear is the water splashing against the rocks so I do the only rational thing I can think of. I dive in after my friends.

I get about thirty feet down before my lungs start to burn but I’m not about to give up. I open my eyes as wide as I can to search for my friends and I ignore the stinging ocean water attacking my eyeballs. When I can’t hold my breath any longer, I kick to the surface and I gasp for air as soon as I pop up.

“PJ! Linus!” I yell. “Somebody! Help!”

“Bastille! Get to the rocks!” I see the faint outline of PJ and I swim toward the sound of his voice.

“Bastille! Get over here! Hurry!”

I get to the rocks and PJ pulls me up. Linus’s lips are blue and PJ starts giving him mouth to mouth and then pounds on his chest.

Finally, after what seems like forever, Linus spits out a mouthful of water and PJ helps him sit up.

“That was incredible.” Linus murmurs.

I breathe a sigh of relief.

“I think she likes me!” Linus squeals.

“Well you might want to wait until she finds a way to put her insides back where they belong before you ask her out.” PJ says and I notice he’s covered in sticky black substance.

“Is that what I think it is?” I ask.

PJ grins and hands me something. It’s the seaweed crown. I take it and I smile.

“It’s beautiful.” I say

We sit on the rocks for a little while longer. PJ puts his arm around my shoulder and sets his chin on the top of my head and we stare into the brightness of the moon while I fiddle with my new crown. The night was perfect.

Andrew Wax

Black Art

Veins control pressure where the art of you grows.
Or brain, I cannot command. Your intuition; voodoo.

Smell lurking. Anxiety tails me, and you won't show.
Mirage of me close; your chest. Anchovies and voodoo.

Bass proves subliminal. The EQ breaks.
You shot Sinatra. Free verse voodoo.

Lips to skin triggers no savor, and this tongue black.
Tonics illogical. Throw back majority. Vodka and voodoo.

No lens of perception, as I've forfeited you.
Passing your shadow, I see voodoo.

Jacob Zentner

Heads Up

Now the sky is falling,
Dropped from Heaven's depths upon Man
It plummets upon existence,
So run while you can

Now the sky is falling,
Grinding summits as if they were gravel
Like the footstep of God,
It converts everything to powder

Now the sky is falling,
Breaking forests beneath its weight
The cobalt haze above our world,
Becomes our ever grimmer fate

Now the sky is falling,
Pressing the seas down into ice
With an ever tighter grip,
It holds the globe like a vice

Now the sky is falling,
So lift your head and raise your fist,
As the very air you breathe
Is turned into a mist

Melissa Withnell

A Boy in the Pines

It wasn't very long ago
That I forgot about my fearless heart.
I drifted through the pines
I ran to the place where nobody goes
Unsure of what I knew, but trusting what I know.
I had tried without trying to escape the sounds of the time
The time that *ticked* and *tock'd* within my mind.

It was early in the evening,
Still lingering, like morning dew,
I never meant to stumble upon another,
I never meant to crash into you.
You were escaping the tick and the tock, too.
And as we crashed—the mud—it *flew*,
Sticking to our skin, staining what we knew.

For a moment we stood in the thick of the mud
And we were the same, me and you.
We were so different, me and you.
And I could leave and you could go,
But we both craved the mud between our toes
And we would stay and let it all go.

It was only us and the birds above--
They wouldn't dare to chirp or sing the word, *love*,
But something in our bones let us fly higher than a dove.
With a freedom higher than what we knew,
Higher—in one single moment's shove,
Than any hundred year pine, ever growing, ever grew.

But you knew that it was over—over from the crashing start.

You held a secret—you hated that secret,
A secret doomed to make us part,
And I never told you about the mud and the clover
 The mud that you left on my heart.

I would have refused you,
I would have washed you away from the start.
But who *could* have known—who *would* have known
That a boy in the pines
 Could leave *mud*
 On my heart.

Jelly Doughnut

You overslept. Late nights putting in extra hours for the new job doesn't score extra points at the office when you're running late. Maybe the boss won't notice? Then you see her in the window watching you slide into your tight, designated parking slot. She looks mouth-wateringly ripe as you meet her cool stare with one of your own. Despite being late, you smile and confidently walk into the advertising building.

Three attractive coworkers from the HR department enslave you as soon as you step through the revolving glass door. Even though you know better than to fall for the booby trap at work, you can't help being hypnotized by their gentle bounce as they lead the way to your office. They quietly whisper reassurance in your ear that the eight o'clock meeting is now pushed back to nine o'clock. Their breath is warm against your skin. You look down when you feel the pressure of something lightly pressed into your strong palm. Your attention is diverted to a delicate little pink box. You finger the slit on one side of the box just enough to expose its contents. As soon as you see it, you know you want it.

The delectable jelly doughnut is far superior to any other doughnut in the pink box your coworkers bring to the office Friday mornings. It not only quenches your hunger, but satisfies your craving for something devilishly sweet. Knowing that rich raspberry jelly doughnut is waiting for you sets your senses aflame in anticipation. You tell your coworkers you need to get ready for the meeting. They quickly scamper away in a flurry of giggles.

At last, you and your jelly doughnut are alone. You appear to be eager, yet try to restrain yourself. Your mouth waters in expectation. Knowing it must taste as good as it looks, you slowly lift the doughnut to your lips. Every moist layer taunts and teases your senses. The flaky sugary coating sticks to your lips as your

teeth sink through the soft dough to the juicy raspberry center. The pleasure of the first bite ripples from the sensitive taste buds in your mouth to the end of your toes. Your sanity explodes for just a moment. Licking the sugary glaze from your lips after the sensational experience, you revel in the afterglow of the exhilarating coupling with this sensation sent from heaven. You cannot wait, so you devour the rest with a hunger that can only be fulfilled as only a succulent jelly doughnut can fulfill you.

You throw the hot pink box on the desk in satisfaction then look at the clock. Five minutes to nine. You grab your notebook before heading to the boardroom. You're almost at the meeting when you realize you forgot your presentation outline. You head back to your office but hesitate as you hear a low moan as if someone is in agony. Cautiously, you peer inside your office door. Your boss is standing in front of your desk holding the pink box within the palm of their left hand, while a drop of your sweet jelly glistens on their right index finger. Angrily, you grab your boss's guilty hand. You slowly slide your skillful tongue along the artificially sweetened fingertip, taking the last of the moist jelly off of the perpetrating appendage. Their eyes glaze over. With a wicked grin, you leave the exposed culprit holding the box.

Still yearning to nibble at your pastries, your boss picks up the phone and dials the receptionist. "Ann? Stop whatever you're doing! I want you to go downtown and buy every jelly doughnut they have. Yes, right now!! "

Sundays Like These

It's Sundays like these
That I wish
Would never end.
Staying in bed
Past eleven a.m.
And all the while
It feels like time is running by.
Time's an Olympic runner
In the 100 meter dash.
5.2 seconds and then a flash.
But all I can see is you and me.
And even if the world came tumbling down,
With gigantic booms and deafening sounds.
And if the Pentagon was to go up in flames
And the stars to explode,
I could care less
Because all I see is you in my bed.
So let the freeways collapse and the major cities too.
Let the panic spread and the wildlife burn.
Let the oceans boil over and power lines be uprooted.
But even if this all did happen, I'd never even notice.
Because it's Sundays like these
Where all I see
Is you and me.

Karen Birtwistle

Audacious

Strong, daring, and bold
Indestructible like a wild flower
Tackles life's obstacles like bodacious
Like a herd of cattle,
That needs to be roped and brought down
Beams with confidence from head to toe,
Standing tall and proud
Under her hat and rhinestones
Walks with her pointed shovels ready and armed
Has a heart like a destruction derby
Has no problem roping life's disasters,
Dusting away sorrow and pain
Barrel racing, to achieve life's pleasures,
Peace, fame, gain trust from
the world
Rides love like the wind, but loves every ride
The wind blows in
A filly that needs to be tamed
She's audacious

Martin Valenica

Moon Sanctuary

How will I get there? Through the rabbit hole? Wardrobe? The cupboard under the stairs? You think of him and you're already there. Your mind flies you through green fields of brush and grass. You sail the flooded cities and the underwater libraries to explore. You open your eyes and find yourself in a fantasy world that you have carefully crafted, the world that works in your favor. And somehow, that chain of events lead you here: your sanctuary. Your moon haven with that lovely tree. You wonder how you even made it up there, why everything you see is beautiful, but something is wrong. Your sanctuary and this earth-- so close to clashing. And that state of dreaming and your reality will become one. Is it your fate to walk into this foreign land? Or did you die a long time ago, searching those woods for him?

Vyver

Loose cigarettes lay scattered on a book to the right of his hand, as if limbs themselves, though maimed and skeletal. He looked to grasp the glossary of grammar on the cherry wood of his desk. Dylan reached for a cigarette. The button of his breast pocket was still undone and he flipped up the tab with his right index, and pulled out a lighter. He raised the speckled end to his lips, adjusted the fire starter accordingly, and inhaled.

Choo! Choo! The sound of a train's whistle from his primped desk; a message on the iPhone this early could only be her. Madison Brent was towering of height, currently blonde and vacillating. His thumb touched "Read" and his cheeks worked another pull.

The message from his executive editor spelled out, "And what will you be treating the office to this morning?"

Exhale.

His mind was overloaded with unsettled thoughts concerning his work this morning, though he still couldn't help but wonder what might be taking Jean so long to wash up. Jean, so simple in the way she handled him and his burdens. It was hard for him to not question. He didn't. They were perfect complements of each other. She supported them both to an extent. Their bond fused easily, not in a way that was effortless, but they were a force, a peaceful collaboration of lives.

He typed, "Coffee, bullshit, and a big smile?"

"Take the day off. -Madison"

This was predictable. He thought back to the previous day's events at the offices of *Seaside*.

Dylan grabbed the top note card from his pile of scratch paper on the door sized desk. The cigarette hung from his lips as he creased the card and turned both corners inward to make an airplane. Her editors were mangling his commas! Completing the airplane he held the sharp white object to the grain, while snatching a sharpie from the rectangular pen holder. He wrote a message, "Fuck You, Fuck You, and Fuck You. Dylan Vyver."

"Hi."

He had not heard her coming on and consequently the 'r' he proudly signed carried on like a sine graph. His body jolted, and the cigarette fell to the desk.

"Holy FUCK! Ha-ha!" He bent as he laughed, picking up the cigarette, and beckoned her over, "Can I have a hug?" He noticed that the ashtray had been emptied.

Jean's dark brown hair nuzzled under his chin as they embraced. This was the best, though he was distracted and slightly readjusted to see the plane's message once more. Jean did the same.

"I heard your phone from the bathroom, was that her?" Their grip didn't loosen at this point. "What IS that?"

He returned a cheesy smile, "Well, I have the day off! Will you call in, please? You never do."

"Fine," he said as he realized she would not. The haze of smoke, with the moisture of the shower and warmth of the new day created a muggy climate in the dampened grey cement loft. Dylan pulled Jean as she walked away from him, and then he lifted the window open. Smoke passed through the window, and the breeze of the port refreshed their senses. The leaves of the oak tree outside moved as if they were epileptic; he had not given up the good fight, and he gave the plane a good toss. Changing every which direction the plane hovered on the winds and dropped out of sight down into the square.

"Just let the commas go." She sounded unsure of herself.

"How about I let you go?!"

Jean looked him in the eyes, her eyebrows raised. He did not let her go. He noticed her blatant freckles, a flash of grey cloth, and her morning blue eyes. His eyes closed and he felt her tongue and lips to his. He embrace her and noticed her

undergarments were missing. Her ribs still seemed so fragile to him. He palmed her breasts as intrigued as if he hadn't done this for the past nine years.

Choo! Choo!

Choo! Choo!

Dylan Vyver's dark grey oxford pants were still on.

Sara Wachter

At the Lake House

At the lake house my kin reunite.
Sunbathing in the bright sunlight,
boys tease girls lying on the shore.
Pillow fights ensue to settle scores,
leaving them laughing in delight.

Wishing on stars filling the night,
Waiting for fireworks to ignite,
Everyone wants gooey s'mores
At the lake house.

On a good day the fish will bite,
On windy days we fly a kite.
Poison Ivy children can't ignore.
Scary stories; giggling for more.
Summertime always feels just right,
At the lake house.

Billy Mitchell

Why Did I?

Why did I do it?

Because I could.

Should I have done it?

Not at all!

Then why did I do it again?

Power Tools

Running jars down a night's back road, black lace, fire, honest holes in jeans, and bare feet and long wet hair and gramophones. The way that dusk changes a field and the silhouette of a tree; the smell of lavender; the way a rushing wind makes my hand feel sticky from the window above a seat of a rusted Chevy. Leaving the door unlocked at home; the trigger on an M1 Garand and making planters out of red wine barrels--Oh, the smell of rich soil and Merlot; the feel of dirt under my finger nails in early spring and the taste of a really good California avocado. Cold beer after a hot day of pounding a hammer and the ring of sweat that it leaves on the backyard table--gin on Sundays anyway and the feeling of indifference because you're just too tired to give a damn. Running your fingers along your last dry coat of polyurethane and resting your head on the back of a cathedral pew while everybody whispers—they're talking about you. Swinging on gates, flying on shopping carts, the fog rolling off of the Pacific at dawn, booze on my Daddy's breath, short night gowns on a Wednesday night and the roaring through the hardwood and halls of a 3 AM Bessie Smith song. Jesus and Virgin Mary candles and crows; the gentle way that a man's hands feel upon your skin when he touches you for the first, and sometimes, the last time--the curious smell of a newborn that you'll never know. Mrs. Tovar's tacos. Finding what you lost with a shovel and discovering what you had known all along with a pen; a tear on a dead author's page, and taking naps on Grandmother's grave. Sweet cornbread with soft honey butter...and power tools.

Fucking power tools.

Andrew Wax

Impish Pattern

Hell covets heaven.
Checker: ubiquitous lie
Oil stars, no riddle?



Photography by Suzanna Howard



Photography by Suzanna Howard



Drawings by Gerardo Gonzalez



"Diversity"
by Kyle Pinch



Photography by Jacob Zentner



Photography by Jacob Zentner

Fathers and Sons

In the fall of 1988 I got the pleasure of traveling with my Dad to Tel Aviv, Israel because my dad had to meet with a professor from the college there. We were walking down a quiet street, taking in the sights and sounds of the city, my dad explaining to me Israeli history and culture when suddenly there was an ear shattering noise. The sound was deafening, my ears stopped working and time seemed to slow down. My body would not move even though my mind was saying "Run, RUN!!!!"

But I just stared straight ahead. I stayed frozen for several seconds not sure what had happened, trying to process what I had just witnessed. A storefront less than a block away was on fire. Every window within twenty feet of the store had shattered and a car in front of the store lay in ruins. I could not take my eyes away from the destruction. Flames jutted out of the car like it was a bonfire, the doors ripped off by the bomb. With shattered glass all over the street and several bystanders fleeing the scene I grabbed my dad's arm and he said, "Ian, are you OK???" I didn't answer. I just stared at the what was left the car. Again, "Ian, are you OK?"

I just held on to his arm and looked up at him. My dad said "Are you hurt?"

I told him I was fine and we quickly fled the scene. I had to really try hard to keep up with my dad, who was moving very fast. Once we were several blocks away my dad stopped and turned to me and started staring at my body. He started with my face, then my arms, and then legs. He then ran his hands up and down my extremities like a police officer patting down a suspect.

"Oh, thank god! You're not hurt" He said with a sigh of relief.

He gave me a hug and I saw tears in his eyes. I had only seen my dad cry once before, when his father had died two years prior.

We quickly continued to our vehicle and headed out of Tel Aviv. We didn't speak in the car as we drove back to where we were staying. It was over an hour drive but my dad was as silent as I was. I just stared out the window, watching the daylight slowly disappear. I kept flashing back to what had just happened. Smoke and fire, coughing, my hands and legs stiff, grabbing my dad's dry arm and feeling like if I let go of it I would be sucked into this explosion. It felt like we were there to observe an event, it was over, so now we leave.

When we returned to where we were staying, I went straight to my room and lay down on the bed. My dad followed me in and sat down on the bed beside me. He turned and hugged me and didn't let me go for several minutes. When he did he finally did speak, he said "I love you."

"I love you too dad" I said reflexively.

"Do you want to talk about it?" he said quietly.

I nodded, not knowing what to say.

"It's okay to be scared. I was scared too" he said quietly, "scared that you were hurt, I thought that I could have lost you. You are the single most important thing in my life and I can't picture it without you," he said, tears coming from his eyes for the second time that day.

Being young and somewhat naïve I did not grasp what he was trying to say until years later.

My dad went on to explain to me what happened and why. He told me about Palestinians and the West Bank and how there has been fighting over the land for thousands of years. We talked for about an hour before I told him I was tired, and that I wanted to go to sleep. It was as though I had not slept in days, I just wanted to close my eyes and rest. My dad lay down next to me and I fell asleep in his arms.

The last few days in Israel were uneventful. Probably because we didn't leave the little town in the desert that we were staying at. That was fine with me. The trip home was long but I was glad to be headed back to a place that I felt safe. All I thought about was the car explosion the entire flight back.

Eight years later my dad told me that he had to go to Israel again and asked me if I would want to go. I knew what he

meant by “if I would WANT to go.” We talked about it for a couple of weeks and finally I said yes. It wasn’t that my dad was pressuring me to go; I could have said no and he would have been fine with it. I think he wanted me to be absolutely sure before I gave him an answer.

We stayed at the same place we did last time, a professor’s house in the Negev desert. This time we would only be there for a few days. On the second to the last day we were there we had to go into Tel Aviv. As we were leaving I told my dad I wanted to go to where the bomb went off. We drove up and down the city streets for about an hour trying to remember where it was. We never found it. The next day we flew home to Sacramento. I asked myself years later “Did my dad really know where it was but didn’t say anything? Was that his way of shielding me from reliving the events that took place eight years earlier?” I have never asked him, and I probably never will.

Parents and their kids have bonds for many different reasons, and my dad and I share one that is unique. The look that I saw in my dad’s eyes that day told me everything that I wanted to know. That my dad loves me with all his heart and cares for me more than I think I will ever truly know.

Martin Valencia

Trophy

The zombie took the vicious bite of fate on my flesh. I was not human, but immortal. A taste—a craving I never knew I had. Is this a blessing? I am a monster amid her hope. She grabbed her chainsaw and chopped off my head, and stole me away from my zombie life. Now I'm just a trophy that she wears.

Carlos Mendoza

The Poets Are Dead

The poets are dead
The poets are dead
Instead of kick out the jams
They stick out their hands
Like a fish out of sand
The Poets are dead

The poets are dead
The poets are dead
Like the thin shreds of flesh
Connecting what little is left
Of their neck and their head
The poets are dead

The poets are dead
The poets are dead
Passing themselves off
As actually well thought
Well fed and well taught
The poets are dead

Thank god almighty
For all of his smiting
The poets are dead
Now we shan't suffer
Their awful writing

Karen Birtwistle

Sealed Lips

Red Rose

Resembles desire

Scents ignites hot passion

While thorns release the bleeding heart

True love

Melissa Withnell

Brass Locket

So what if we smash our guts for habit
And the hole was never ours for the fall
Wise advise you to never trust a rabbit
Crazy, they say, and you are, after all.

So what if it's not real, not I, nor you
But I still knew the way my chest pounded.
Artificial love in the daring of two,
But I still heard the way that we sounded.

Give me the fools of folly who trespass,
Let me stand on the edge of their moment.
Trap them to last in my locket of brass,
Keep-sake'd in reality's atonement.

But, what if it is real, both you and I?
And what if you leave and what if I cry?

Same Time Tomorrow

"August, tell me what happened." The Doctor asked.

"You know what happened." The boy responded.

"Yes, but I want you to tell me why it happened." The Doctor shifted in his seat. August exhaled and pursed his lips.

"I know what they'll do if I tell you. What's in it for me?"

"You get to clear your conscience, August. You can do the right thing. Now, go on, tell me what happened."

August looked at his feet and grinned. "I watched her. For months, but you know that. It's in my file. May I see it?"

"No," the Doctor answered, "go on."

"I waited for her. She looked extra beautiful. Her hair was in a pony tale but some of it was falling loose from the sides. She was wearing those big sunglasses, like the ones that Audrey Hepburn wore in Breakfast at Tiffany's. "

"Mmhmmm," said the Doctor as he scribbled on his notepad.

"She was wearing that perfume I like. I could smell it on her." August stopped and watched the Doctor take his notes.

"Go on, August, tell me what happened next."

"You already know."

"Yes, but I need you to tell me. We talked about this, remember?" The Doctor was getting impatient and August could sense this.

"What's in that cabinet behind your desk?"

"Things. Now come on, lets hear the rest."

"What kinds of things?"

"August, please," the Doctor said sternly.

"I don't feel like talking anymore today. Same time tomorrow?"

"That's not how this works August. Now, tell me what happened next."

"What happened next...what happened..." August repeated to himself. "I watched her get out of her car. She was almost to the front door when she dropped her keys. That's when I decided to make my move. So I walked over to her. Said hi. Ya know." August stared at the Doctor.

"And then?"

"And then," August said dreamily, she spoke to me. "Her voice was the most beautiful thing I'd ever heard. I can still hear it now, ya know. It's still in my head, just like I can still smell her perfume."

"Tell me about her disappearance August. Tell me about that."

"Actually Doctor, we really are out of time." August got out of the leather chair and made his way to the door when he stopped and picked up a small mahogany frame. "Who is this woman, Doctor? She's beautiful."

"That's enough for today August," the Doctor said.

"I'll bet she smells nice," August whispered to himself.

Catherine Wilson

Poke

It was their ultimate weakness. The ultimate torture. Am I a sadist? No. Do I like to see them squirm? Yes. I tend to pin them down. They like it. They just don't admit it. Then...the real fun begins. Their squirming. Their labored breathing. Their stomachs sinking in from the dreaded weapon approaching their mid-section. I always tell them the same thing: If they're good, I'd go easy on them. But of course they're never good.

As my weapon slowly approaches their body, high-pitched noises emit from their mouths. It's actually quite comforting to hear. It means it was working. They writhed under me and my torture continued. And to think.....it all started from one little poke.

Remember Your Notes

It's eleven at night and I'm cramming my brain
Mass, energy fields and tectonic plate
That chemist we studied, what was her name?
Now I've had a mental breakdown. Oh great!

Three hours later and I'm off to bed
I tuck myself in and shut my eyes tight
Visions of equations dance in my head
I fear a good grade is nowhere in sight

My clock goes off late. Now there's much to do
I gather my things and leave without delay
My lack of sleep from study I will soon rue
A test, as you know, is scheduled for today

I burst out my door and jump in my car
It's just my luck I'd have to stop for gas
Even though the drive is not very far
I got stuck in traffic and could not move fast

Oh man! Now I've got a flat tire
But I guess it could be a lot worse
My car could randomly catch on fire
It's like this day has been cursed

I finally manage to fix the flat
Now I'm back on my merry way
Sorry, but I've got no time to chat
Or believe me, there'll be hell to pay

I search the parking lot, end to end
But cannot locate any good spots

Failure for sure, if I cannot attend
So I leave my car parked on the white dots

I run to class and enter with a kick
And discover I had only minutes to spare
I sit at my desk at watch the clock tick
Dude! This anxiety I cannot bare

Before long the sweat sets in
On my palms and behind my ears
One minute left until we begin
But it feels like a hundred years

The clock strikes nine and test time begins
Before I can start I feel I have failed
This will be the day I pay for my sins
Then I read the board, "Today's test is cancelled."

Andrew Wax

If Time Wallowed

Lost in your parallels
I will not deceive
From the sprout of life
Daily I've received.

Less work, plus good reads
With people we repeat
Letting sun flow
Fasting, but life is our meat.
"Distracted from distraction by distractions"
Shall I read or retreat?

Friends won't be defined
My ideas won't follow
It's now and I'm here
Call it a vision, I'm hollowed.

By the fact you won't, can't
Will never finish with me.
Paths cross not double
Maybe stay in and read.

Some days you're all gone
Ink, plus connections

Torn between book and adventure.
Wise, no, fulfilling to know
I balance life's sights
 With my friends in a prose.

Breakdown

The jerky second hand made monotonous laps around the clock's face, stopping on each bold number for a perfect one sixtieth of a minute before making its way over to the next one. Todd watched this physical representation of time do circles intently. He knew the very minute his mother would arrive. She may have had a reputation for being an impatient woman, but she was prompt if nothing else. It always, always, took her precisely twelve minutes to reach the elementary school after leaving work at 3 pm. It was 3:09 now.

Todd shifted in the padded steel frame seat. He'd been sitting in it for close to an hour and a half now and his bottom wasn't shy to remind him of this uncomfortable fact. In the matching seat directly across the hallway sat Peter, with his blue eyes and shaggy blonde hair. Neither of them had said a word since they'd been placed there. Peter's split lip had finally stopped bleeding about forty five minutes ago, yet he still clutched the reddened tissue paper in his resting fist like a trophy. The only evidence that Todd had been in the fight was a smudge of dirt on his jacket's right shoulder. After he had bounced back up from the push there had only been one punch thrown, and then the recess lady had descended on them from nowhere. Todd had come quietly. He knew this would result in a suspension. There was no sense in resisting.

The principal's door opened and Peter's dad stepped out, a stern faced man with a balding head. His eyes settled on Todd just long enough for him to give the elementary nemesis of his son a firm glare. Then he turned and said, "Come on, Peter." Todd's opponent stood up from his seat and followed his father down the hallway, his chin hung low, not a glance in Todd's direction.

Now he was alone. 3:11, although this next minute felt like it went by slower than the last ninety. The clock continued to tick its tedious tock. Todd listened to the steady sound until it

seemed to originate from inside his own head. His brain dropped into overdrive as his thoughts burned rubber. Even if he tried, he couldn't single out one of them from the rest. When she got here, she might want an explanation. He wouldn't want to give her one, because she'd probably just rebuff anything he said, just like she always did.

The click of high heels pulled his unfocused gaze off the tessellated floor. His mother was briskly making her way down the hall at approximately twenty-five seconds after 3:12. She stopped outside of the principal's office, adjusted her business coat, fixed her red hair, and opened the door. Before she entered she gave Todd a cool, hard look. He knew that look. It was disappointment, but he didn't care. None of this was his fault, really. The door slowly closed behind her with a gentle click. For the next five minutes Todd heard voices from within, spoken in all seriousness. He imagined the principal droning on and on to his mother about how her son had become agitated lately and unfocused in class. Perhaps he'd ask her if there were any problems at home, but Todd knew she was unlikely to answer such a question honestly. She would say things were fine, even though she knew they weren't.

The door opened again and she stepped out. She looked down at her son and patted the dust off his shoulder. "Todd," she began, "There will be consequences for this."

"It wasn't my fault," he said, unable to hold back the predictable line of defense. "Peter just came up to me and—"

"That's not the point, Todd. You were in a fight with another student. I don't care what he said to you. You're too old to be brawling with other kids now." He looked down at his feet, sulking, words jamming in his throat. "Let's go," she said.

From the walk through the school, through the parking lot, and to the car, they were silent. Todd sat in the back seat, his hand-me-down backpack by his side as he watched the rush hour traffic, his forehead against the glass. His mother had left the radio off, and for that he was miserable. Anything would be better than the wretched silence that filled the already empty space he could feel between them.

They drove, in unbearable silence, until finally she pulled off the road and into the parking lot of a hardware store. She shut off the engine and turned around in her seat. "What happened today, Todd?"

He sighed. This was something he really didn't want to talk about right now. "Mom, it doesn't matter, okay. He was just...being an asshole."

She pointed her skinny finger. "Don't swear."

"Well it's true."

She was quiet for a moment, staring at his frowning face, and then she asked again, "What happened?"

Todd clenched his jaw, swallowed, and decided there was no point in avoiding it. "He...Mom, he said I wasn't gonna have a family anymore. He laughed and said..." Todd stopped to wipe his eyes on his sleeve. "So I told him to shut up and he pushed me. So I got up and hit him."

She took a long breath, her eyes closed. "You'll be in middle school next year, Todd. You can't be getting into fights like this."

"I didn't start it!" he protested again.

"That doesn't matter. What matters is—"

"It's not my fault you guys are getting a divorce."

Her face went rigid. Todd knew instantly that he'd said something he shouldn't have. She turned back in her seat and stared blankly out the windshield, not a word to say for some time. Finally, with a broken voice, she said, "I know it's not your fault, Todd. It's mine." Then she started to cry.

As she sat there in the front seat, shaking and sobbing, Todd could only watch. He was afraid to speak, afraid to move, afraid to breathe. Here was his mother, a strong, determined woman of reputable quality. And she was losing it. Coupled with the impending divorce, his whole reality suddenly felt a lot more fragile in that moment. With no other action coming to mind, he scooted forward to rest his hand on her shoulder. "I'm...Mom, I'm sorry." He couldn't stop his own voice from breaking now. "Please don't cry."

She did stop, and after a few long breaths she calmly said, "No, I'm the one who's sorry. I tried so long to hang on, but

your father and I just disagree on everything now. I try and try, but I'm not getting anything back from him anymore." She paused for a moment. "I didn't want to put you through this. I knew it wouldn't be fair. But I just couldn't...pretend anymore." She turned back around to look at him. "Maybe one day you'll forgive me for giving up."

Todd unbuckled his seat belt and leaned between the seats to give his mother an awkward hug from over her shoulder. "I do forgive you, Mom," he mumbled into her hair.

"I know," she whispered back. "I know." They stayed like that for a long time, nothing else to say, and then he finally pulled away. She smiled and asked, "How about we get some ice cream before we go home, huh? We haven't gone out for ice cream for a long time."

Then Todd found the courage to smile back. "Okay."

As they left the parking lot, she turned back to him and, in a playful tone, she said, "Well, at least you won."

Unschooling

"It's a miracle that curiosity survives formal education."
Albert Einstein.

If I asked you what unschooling was, would you know? What comes to mind? Lazy parents and a couch potato kid? Perhaps the confusion comes about in the title given to this practice. Un is, after all, a prefix used to mean "not". When you tack it on to the front of schooling, it gives the impression that you aren't schooling. Therein lies the deception. Unschooling is obviously not done by sitting at a desk for six hours a day and memorizing facts, nor is it done by lazing about being a couch potato. It is done in every waking moment of the day and in such a natural way that the child isn't even aware it's happening. I looked for a definitive definition of Unschooling to share with you, and I couldn't find one. The term is used in homeschooling circles, but it means different things to different people, and therefore people have many ways of doing it.

Spend the day with me and my son and you'll see what I believe Unschooling to be. We wake-up, and pancakes are on the menu for breakfast. As I bustle about getting the ingredients, they are being read to me by my child. Unfortunately some of the dishes are dirty, so we only have a few measuring cups at our disposal. He converts all of the measurements so that instead of using the 1 and 1/2 cup to measure we can get by with the 1/4 cup. We're having scrambled eggs too. He must figure out how many eggs to use if each person wants two eggs, and there are three of us. After they're cooked, he'll need to divide them evenly. He'll then have to figure out how many pieces of bacon each person gets as we sit down to eat.

We've decided to go for a walk after breakfast. It's starting to look like fall as the leaves are falling from the trees. We

collect different leaves, noticing the different shapes, sizes, and colors that come from the different trees. We pick up some acorns too. Some are still intact, and the others are broken. This gives us the perfect opportunity to see inside and examine what they look like. We can also hypothesize about why we think some of them are opened. Our most probable hypothesis is proven when we hear a crow caw before he tosses down an acorn into the street. A few moments later a car passes by cracking the acorn open and exposing the nut inside for the hungry bird. We walk a bit further and notice a spider web. There are still some dew drops on it, and they are swirling with all the colors of the rainbow. We discuss the spider but focus mainly on the dew drops. Why does water reflect these colors? We talk about how the sun is a white star and that white is a composition of all the colors. When it shines on water drops, it bends, and if you're able to look at it at the right angle, you can see that the water breaks up the light revealing a rainbow. We continue our walk while stepping over various insects out for their morning crawl. On our way back home, we notice a strange looking bug. We have no clue what it is but would like to know more about it. So, we go to the library.

Once we're at the library, we find several books about insects and look through the pictures to see if we can find our bug. Success! We found it. It's a boxelder bug. We get the book and also one on prisms. These are the interests of the day. On the way home, we go to the grocery store. The child writes down a list of must haves for dinner. His writing has to be legible otherwise I'll end up getting the wrong things. If he's uncertain of the spelling, he asks. Once we're home, the book about bugs is read instantly followed by lots of excited "Mom did you know this?" and "Mom did you know that?" After lunch, we decide to look at the prism book. It has a fun experiment in it, so we do that. This leads to another experiment and another. In one we are filling a zip bag with water (liquid) and putting it in the microwave, sealed, until the bag has expanded and the water has disappeared (gas). Now we put the bag in the freezer. We talk about the different states of matter, and check on the bag throughout the rest of the

day. We start the rolls for our dinner, so the dough can rise. We talk about yeast and rising, and we measure sugar and water.

We go outside to play, explore, and discover before starting dinner. We've had quite a fun time making a muddy lake and watching the various sized worms come out of the soil to swim around in it. Some of the worms are taken out for a closer look. It's amazing what you can see with the naked eye when you take the time to look. You can see that blood is pulsating through the worm in a systematic way. And, each spurt of blood starts out near the center of the worm. We conclude that the worm's heart must be located there, and that with each beat, we can see the blood circulate through the little worm body. The worms are happy when they are put back in the muddy water. We notice that the sun is starting to go down. We make a mark on the ground where the fence shadow starts. Three minutes later we do another mark and another. We continue this for a period of 18 minutes. We then measure the distance between each mark and make a graph of our results. We found that the closer the sun got to the horizon, the faster it appeared to go down.

We get washed up for dinner and check on our bag in the freezer. Along the sides are tiny pieces of ice. We have succeeded in turning a liquid into a gas and a solid. We are happy; we decide to make a list of things that can be more than one physical state.

For dinner we are having chicken soup and rolls. We punched our rolls down before we made our sunset graph. Then we pinched them from the dough and placed them on the pan to rise again. They are almost ready to go in the oven now, but not quite. While we wait on them, we snap the green beans and chop the carrots. We discover that the green beans have tiny little things inside and begin discussing different ideas about the green beans: Could you plant the little seed from inside to grow one? Why are they called green beans if they aren't beans? If beans are legumes, why aren't peanuts called beans? The list goes on, and it takes many twists and turns with many possible answers to each question. We continue talking while we finish getting things ready

for dinner. We wonder how many rolls there are. Since we were so excited about making our graph earlier, we forgot to count them. Not to worry; we count the number down, the number across, and then multiply them to find our answer. We also have to bake them for 1,200 seconds before we can eat, so the timer is set for 20 minutes.

After dinner, we play a game of mad libs. We come up with some silly adjectives, and the house is filled with lots of laughter. We then decide to read a story before bed, but none sound just right, so we make up our own. We decide on a setting and characters. The plot is made up as we go along. The child drifts off to sleep with a smile on his face.

Today we have not spent six hours in a classroom learning reading, writing, and arithmetic. We did not have facts recited to us that we must memorize. We were not told what to learn, and how we should learn it. Instead, we spent the entire day in our classroom. We learned by involving ourselves in our lessons. We did our math through measuring and cooking. We learned about living organisms, seasons, and states of matter. We made graphs, hypothesized, and wrote stories. Instead of being told what to think, we were given lessons on how to think. We let our curiosity guide us and discovered so much more than we could have ever gotten out of just sitting at a desk listening to a teacher go on and on about abstract thoughts. I'm unsure what we'll learn tomorrow. Maybe we'll do an art project with our leaves. Whatever it is, we'll let our curiosity guide us in it. This is Unschooling.

Contributors

Karen Birtwistle

Age nine was when I realized my true passion in life: literature and horticulture. I loved expressing myself through my thoughts as well as through the beauty in plants. It was a year ago that I decided to unite these two together for the perfect dream and perfect major. We are never too old to find passion in our dreams; I did.

Ian Demment

I returned to college at 33 years old. I am a father of two wonderful kids who I spend all my free time with. I have had the privilege to travel all over the world and experience many different cultures and I have come to enjoy writing about it in my free time.

Gerardo Gonzalez

I first started drawing as a kid and many people told me I had a talent but, I myself never took it seriously until now. My senior year in high school I had an architecture class and my teacher personally told me I had talent once he saw a drawing I did of a realistic eye. From there I started doing portraits and I finally found something I'm good at but especially enjoy.

Suzanna Howard

Upon being born, I took a quick fancy to the written word. As soon as one of those magical writing sticks was placed in my hand, I began to transplant my thoughts onto paper. I hold the utmost respect for our planet, and try to capture glimpses of earth's beauty in my photographs. My awesome offspring, sharing his magical view of the world with me, has educated me in ways I never knew existed. You'll find us frequently partaking in a dose of laughter (the most wondrous of medicines), and attempting to save even the smallest of creatures (harming any life form would be unacceptable).

Imaginating 101

Imaginating 101 is the coolest thing to hit WCC since, well, since WCC itself (and that's saying a lot). I-101 is the fresh new club for students who are searching for a group with which to explore their creative potential in the field of writing. Its goals are to provide these imaginers with a place to come together, collaborate ideas, expand their horizons, and make damned fools of themselves, all in the name of imagination. Within, they will create work that will resonate as they learn to imagine, so just write!

Carlos Mendoza

Emerging from the once hollow depths of Woodland Memorial Hospital, Woodland, CA, comes writer/ actor/ director/ musician/ late 80's baby and run-on sentence advocate, Carlos Mendoza. Learning to read at around the age of four, and constantly being spoken about as "He loves to read", when honestly, I didn't - I just read because I had nothing better to do, Carlos Mendoza soon began writing, on paper, on cardboard, even on an old suitcase-typewriter that would sit inside of my family's hallway closet. It honestly doesn't mean much, so fast forward fifteen to twenty years or something and you have a hodge-podge of cultural apathy that lends itself (I guess) quite handily to the literary stylings of a cultural mutt like Mr. Mendoza.

Billy Mitchell

Billy Mitchell is a student at WCC

Kyle Pinch

I am 20 years old and I am studying to become a psychologist. I also am studying ministry at a Bible college and seeking to spread the word of God. I love to sing, do art, and write. I use all my passions to bring glory to God.

Liz Urias

Liz has been writing since the first grade and hasn't stopped. When everyone else was writing about lunch, she was writing about being a lion tamer and life as a bacon sandwich. She loves elephants, Anderson Cooper, live music, index cards, and misses Borders terribly. She currently resides in Woodland with her husband, a man so wonderful that you would think he was a dream.

Martin Valenica

Martin is a first year college student with goals to someday teach at the elementary level. He enjoys reading books and collecting old records in his spare time.

John Vu

Hello, readers of INK! My name is Johnny Vu. I'm currently a student at Woodland Community College studying to get my Associate's Degree in Business. However, I have had a great passion for drawing for over 10 years now. My current long-term goal is to draw professionally full-time, whether it be making original comics and graphic novels, working in animation, doing freelance illustration, or whatever other opportunities come my way. I'm able to pursue this goal thanks to my amazing parents who continue to support me every day. I'd like to thank both of them for all of their support, and the editors at INK for accepting and appreciating my work as well!

Sara Wachter

Sara is a local girl with a passion for adventure and writing who dreams about becoming a novelist.

Andrew Wax

bank notes overcast these days.
but I love that look; as skin blemish red
allow me to rephrase.
maybe if we had a corner... YEAH! just the 1 and an owl
ridiculous in size.
border, top and right, flawed, blue and red fibers

i'd hang that on my bedroom wall
for you to enjoy, on me.
i always think best in the hot sprinkler.
i wrote this in the shower.
i wrote this standing up.

Catherine Wilson

I have been writing for eight years, mainly writing fiction stories with my friends. I like writing for a site called FanFiction.net, where I can write stories on how an anime or book should have ended. I like to edit my friends' work and edit anonymously.

Melissa Withnell

Melissa is a student at WCC, where she discovered her passion for writing. With the long term goal of a career in academia, Melissa hopes to teach English at a Junior College. Many of Melissa's poems can be found online at MelissaWritesFree.com.

Jacob Zentner

JZ is an Imaginator Extraordinaire, purveyor of procrastination, fictioner of function, makeshift philanthropist, pretend outdoorsman, (non)serious cyclist, aspiring home cook, American taxpayer, right handed, left footed, everyday guy with a knack for the wild (and mild) side of living. He can also entertain you with a story or two after sleeping in late on a Saturday and enjoying a cold, dark beer (batteries are included)

Ink Staff



Martin Valencia, Liz Urias, and Melissa Withnell

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