

ELOQUENTIA

OXFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT STUDENT MAGAZINE



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LITERARY AND ART MAGAZINE



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Fall 2017



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FALL 2017

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

By Michelle Green
Photo by Love Tsai

- HARVEST POEMS COLLECTION -

The overall theme of the poem collection entitled "Harvest Poems" centers around the beauty and life of trees during fall. The first poem opens this discussion by painting a general view of what occurs in the autumn. The second poem delves into how underneath all of this beauty, the one killer-- the oncoming frost-- kills the tree from below, chilling the roots and the earth. The last poem explores this "death" from above, depicting the changes in leaves, branches, and color composition that occur when fall draws to a close.

Crisp

Deep nights, solemn winds, quiet minds
Dreams of life with realities of pain.
Cold nights, deathly winds, lost minds
Death in the air with poison in the roots.
Lush beauties, green leaves, strong origin
Turned by death with dreams of pain.
Loved by most, betrayed by all, gone to little.

Underneath

Underneath
Shielded by most, killed by one, shriveled to dust
Origin of life and granter of eternal beauty.
Signals sent, lives lost, twisted to grain
Above grounded beauty and admirer of green.
Killed by one, one be cold, master of death
Sharing love and wanting love back, forgotten to all.

Above

Green with vast lush among brown so strong.
Yellow to orange no lush no more.
Red with glory growing less more.
Brown among brown living less.
None upon brown stronger as ever but bare as bone.
Once green with vast lush among oh so strong.
Once changed, change never let go.



**By: Steve T.
Oxford Virtual Academy**

Top Photo
Hope Tsai

Bottom Photo
Love Tsai

THE HEART

ARTIST KYALIE K.
OXFORD VIRTUAL ACADEMY



"THIS ART PIECE THAT I HAVE MADE IS THE HUMAN HEART. IN MY LIFE, I HAVE BEEN THROUGH A LOT...BUT, THIS ARTWORK SHOWS THAT EVEN THOUGH I HAVE BEEN THROUGH SO MUCH, MY HEART IS STILL BEATING AND STRONG."

YOU LIKE GHOST STORIES?

Griffin Grabowski
Oxford Virtual Academy

Lucas' legs shook as he hopped off his bike and stared at the twisted gates of the legendary graveyard. The holes in his grey jeans did nothing to protect his frail legs from the blustering wind of Autumn. He was hoping he wouldn't be alone tonight. They promised they would be there at eleven.

But the boys who had planned on a night of beer and drunken fun could not be found. He was alone with the spirits, and not the kind he had expected.

He must have been the first one to arrive. His glasses transfixed themselves on the rusted gates grinning at him.

Do it. Come inside. We dare you.

Lucas' slim body stiffened while his trembling fists tightened in the pockets of his dark blue hoodie. Should he walk through the peering gates, or hop back on his bike and leave?

You don't want to leave. Not now. Your friends are almost here.

With a sudden surge of confidence, he pushed through the gates. He flipped his hood over his head and walked at a cautious pace. The sun gripped tight onto the horizon as fuchsia and purple started to evolve into the black of night. As he walked on his lonely path, the gravestones began to fade, each one older than the one before. Finally, he reached the center of the grounds. The meeting spot.

By then, the sun had plummeted off the edge of the Earth and darkness was there to watch it fall. The screen of Lucas' phone singed his eyes as he checked the time.

Eleven o'clock.

"They were supposed to be here." Lucas' frustration came out. They were going to search for the ghost stories that they had been told when they were younger. The sources of most of Lucas' fears. But this, this was Lucas' true fear. He was alone.

He yawned and sat on the grass. It was long, as if it hadn't been seen to in weeks. But no less, it supplied a cushion to his bony frame. His back leaned up against an unmarked stone. He stared at the time on his phone. It was his only source of light.

"Flashlights ruin the atmosphere," he remembered them saying with odd grins, "don't bring those." Their faces played in his mind like a black and white horror film.

He prayed the boys were just running late. But it was clear.

They're not coming.

A cold sweat broke out underneath his hood. His chest heaved and his heart pounded.

They tricked you they tricked you they tricked you.

He ran.

His glasses shook with every bumpy step he made. The light from his phone danced devilishly.

continued on next page...

It created an epileptic effect on the trees. Shadows turned into demons and branches lunged for his flailing arms. His presence turned nothing into something. Somethings. Somethings that were hungry.

"Damn it," he cursed through his dry throat, "I should be back by now." You're going the wrong way little Lucas. In a second, Lucas found himself on the ground, his body aching. He looked down at his feet. A red backpack was flopped over in the dirt. He had tripped. "What the hell?" he heard someone scream. A light shined in Lucas' face, blinding him. He heard the voice again, "Who are you and why are you here?" "What?" The fall had taken a toll on Lucas' head.

The light came down to the ground. A girl stood there in a short-cut black dress. Lucas' glasses were now cracked, but he could still make out the skeletal ribcage on the black fabric.

The bones, along with her hair glowed silver in the faded moonlight. She repeated through deep purple colored lips.

"Who are you?"

"The name's Lucas," he said as he examined his bruised limbs.

"And why are you here?" Her eyes pierced.

"I... well... I was just leaving."

Lucas, still wobbly attempted to sit up. She watched him with a curiosity. A smirk melted onto her face.

"Oh. Well Lucas who was 'just leaving,' you wanna see something wicked awesome?"

Lucas tried to process this.

Strange girl.

Graveyard.

Middle of the night.

"Wicked awesome."

He wasn't sure what to do. His mind told him to just go home, fix his glasses, and wallow in his weekend.

But his mouth had other plans.

"That depends," he said, "What do you consider 'wicked awesome?'"

She finally moved. The girl extended her hand.

"You like ghost stories?" she asked him.

He grabbed her hand. "Yea."

She pulled him up, strongly. "Well, we're going to be a part of one."

continued from last page; Griffin Grabowski

YOU LIKE GHOST STORIES?



ACT I SCENE III

LOVE TSAI

It was a dreary fall day in the graveyard of the city. A drafty breeze rushed through the trees, and a brown squirrel came out of its home in the thicket to grab a small tree nut. Its whiskers tensed in anticipation as its paws tried in vain to grab the food. As the unnamed squirrel desperately attempted to pick up the acorn, footsteps encroached on all sides, sending the squirrel into a great display of panic. It looked at the tree nut one last time, and then darted up the side of the nearest tree, just in time before the intruders could see him.

"Where hast thou been, sister?" asked one cloaked figure. The figure dropped the hood of the cloak and revealed a beautiful face otherwise riddled with scars and imperfections.

"Killing swine," the second figure replied, cleaning a knife on a fold of her own cloak. The blood seeped into the black fabric as she pointed the knife to a third sister, before dropping her hand and putting the knife away once more.

This third sister ignored the second's actions and addressed the first. "Sister, where thou?" she asked, her hands fingering an amulet tied around her neck.

"A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap," the first answered with a devious smile. "And munched, and munched, and munched: 'Give me, ' quoth I.'" The figure's face turned sour as she recounted the next event. She kicked some leaves that rested on the ground in fury. "Aroint thee, witch! the rump-fed ronyon cries. Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o'th Tiger: But in a sieve I'll thither sail, And," she faced her companions and raised her eyebrows in defiance, "like a rat without a tail, I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do."

The two others cackled in agreement.

"I'll give thee a wind," one said.

"Th'art kind," the first replied, with a bowing of the head.

"And I another," the other earnestly added.

The witch heaved in a deep breath and exhaled. "I myself have all the other," she said. "And the very ports they blow, all the quarters that they know I'll shipman's card. I will drain him dry as hay: Sleep shall neither night nor day hang upon his pent-house lid; he shall live a man forbid; weary sehights nine times nine, shall he dwindle peak, and pine." She took her companions by the arm and drew them in.

"Though his bark cannot be lost, yet it shall be tempest-tost. Look what I have," she said.

"Show me, show me."

"Here I have a pilot's thumb, wrecked as homeward he did come."

The witch replied, a sinister smile gracing her lips. The sisters stood still for a moment, reveling in their evil plan.

Suddenly, a drum sounded from the heavens. The third sister tugged her companions in close once more and said, "A drum, a drum!

Macbeth doth come."

As if prompted by a silent sponsor or inherent nature, the three sisters joined hands and circled around the garden, chanting a spell.

"The Weird Sisters, hand in hand, Posters of the sea and land, Thus do go, about, about, thrice to thine, thrice to mine, and thrice again, to make up nine. Peace!" the sisters shouted. The squirrel shook in fright and darted away to another tree.

"The charms wound up."

Barely did the sisters have time to let go of each others' hands until two men walked into the clearing, heads deep in discussion.

"So foul and fair a day I have not seen," said a stately gentleman. With tired but soft eyes, he walked ever so slightly ahead of his friend, who looked even kinder still.

"How far ist called to Forres?" the friend asked with a slight smile. The walk through the graveyard had been long and weary, but Forres was still up ahead. The friend stopped short when he came upon the three witches, who leered at the two from beneath their strong brows. The three sisters stayed silent.

"What are these?" he asked when the witches wouldn't greet them. "So withered, and so wild in their attire, that look not like th inhabitants o'th earth, and yet are ont? Live you? Or are you aught that man may question?"

The three sisters listened to his questions and nodded silently.

"You seem to understand me," he said, "by each at once her choppy finger laying upon her skinny lips: you should be women, and yet your beards forbid me to interpret that you are so."

Macbeth gestured to the women. "Speak, if you can: what are you?"

The women smiled even wider at Macbeth, teeth showing in an ominous grin.

"All hail, Macbeth! Hail to you, thane of Glamis!" said the first.

"All hail, Macbeth!" echoed the second. "Hail to you, thane of Cawdor!"

"All hail, Macbeth!" chimed in the third. Her words shook him to her core: "In the future, you shall be king!"

Macbeth startled and stumbled back a few steps. To declare someone else king, rather than the mighty Malcolm, was treason. Worse yet, the witches have targeted something he had always tried desperately to keep out of sight-- the ambition for power.

ACT I SCENE III

LOVE TSAI

“Good sir, why do you start, and seem to fear things that do sound so fair?” Banquo asked. “Ith name of truth, are ye fantastical, or that indeed which outwardly ye show? My noble partner you greet with present grace and great prediction of noble having and of royal hope, that he seems rapt withall: to me you speak not. If you can look into the seeds of time, and say which grain will grow and which will not, speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear your favours nor your hate.”

“Hail!” cried the first.

“Hail!” cried the second.

“Hail!” cried the third.

The three witches began enclosing the two men.

“Lesser than Macbeth,” said the first, “and greater.”

“Not so happy,” admitted the second, “yet much happier.”

“Thou shalt get kings,” declared the third, “though thou be none. So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!”

“Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!” said the first witch, while Banquo looked at Macbeth incredulously. Was all this to be true? Macbeth ignored Banquo’s questioning gaze and turned back towards the apparitions.

“Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more: by Sinel’s death I know I amthane of Glamis; but how of Cawdor? The thane of Cawdor lives a prosperous gentleman; and to be king stands not within the prospect of belief, no more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence you owe this strange intelligence, or why upon this blasted heath you stop our way with such prophetic greeting?” He took a deep breath and commanded them, “Speak, I charge you.”

The three witches pressed a final finger to their lips and stepped back, disappearing into thin air. The two men looked around themselves wildly, trying to see where they could have gone.

“The earth hath bubbles, as the water has, and these are of them: whither are they vanished?” he asked in disbelief.

“Into the air,” Macbeth answered gravely. “And what seemed corporal, melted, as birth into the wind. Would they had stayed!”

Banquo was not satisfied. “Were such things here as we do speak about?” he looked at Macbeth with wide eyes. “Or have we eaten on the insane root that takes the reason prisoner?” Banquo could not believe that such physical beings could have vanished into thin air. Macbeth simply waved his hand and ignored his questions.

“Your children shall be kings,” he said instead.

Banquo shrugged. “You shall be king,” he reminded Macbeth.

Macbeth nodded. “And thane of Cawdor too: went it not so?”

“To th’selfsame tune and words,” affirmed Banquo. The two men startled once more when the leaves around them shook with footsteps. “Who’s here?” Banquo asked.

Two other men, familiar faces with happy smiles, entered into the clearing.

“The king hath happily received, Macbeth, the news of thy success,” one man began. “Thy personal venture in the rebels’ fight, his wonders and his praises do contend which should be thine or his: silenced with that, in viewing o’er the rest oth’selfsame day, he finds thee in the stout Norweyan ranks, nothing afraid of what thyself didst make strange images of death. As thick as hail came post with post, and every one did bear thy praises in his kingdom’s great defence, and poured them down before him.”

The second one spoke up, bestowing a piece of paper upon the grateful Macbeth. “We are sent to give thee from our royal master thanks, only to hearld thee into his sight, not pay thee.”

“And for an earnest of a greater honour,” added the first. “He bade me, from him, call thee thane of Cawdor: in which addition, hail, most worthy thane, for it is thine.”

Banquo stared at Macbeth in surprise. What, can the devil speak true?

“The thane of Cawdor lives,” reminded Macbeth. “Why do you dress me in borrowed robes?”

The second man grimaced. “Who was the thane lives yet,” he began, “but under heavy judgment bears that life which he deserves to lose. Whether he was combined with those of Norway, or did line the rebel with hidden help and vantage, or that with both he laboured in his country’s wreck, I know not; but treasons capital, confessed, and proved, have overthrown him.” Macbeth was in shock. Glamis, and thane of Cawdor: The greatest is behind. Thanks for your pains.

He turned towards his friend. “Do you not hope your children shall be kings, when those that gave the thane of Cawdor to me promised no less to them?”

Banquo hesitated at his friend’s prompting. “That, trusted home, might yet enkindle you unto the crown, besides the thane of Cawdor. But tis’ strange: and oftentimes, to win us to our harm, the instruments of darkness tell us truths, win us with honest trifles, to betray’s in deepest consequence. Cousins, a word, I pray you,” he said to the two men.

Macbeth stared at the three men. Two truths are told, as happy prologues to the swelling act of the imperial theme. I thank you, gentlemen. This supernatural soliciting cannot be ill; cannot be good. If ill, why hath it given me earnest of success, commencing in a truth? I am thane of Cawdor. If good, why do I yield to that suggestion whose horrid image doth unfix my hair, and make my seated heart knock at my ribs, against the use of nature? Present fears are less than horrible imaginings: my thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical, shakes so my single state of man that function is smothered in surmise, and nothing is but what is not.

Macbeth: novel excerpt continuation

ACT I SCENE III

LOVE TSAI

“Look how our partner’s rapt,” Banquo commented.

Macbeth ignored him. If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me, without my stir.

“New honors come upon him, like our strange garments, cleave not to their mould but with the aid of use.”

Come what may, time and the hour runs through the roughest day.

“Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure,” reminded Banquo gently.

Macbeth awoke from his stupor. “Give me your favor,” he apologized. “My dull brain was wrought with things forgotten. Kind gentlemen,” he said to the two men. “Your pains are registered where every day I turn the leaf to read them... Let us toward the king. Think upon what hath chanced: and at more time, the interim having weighed it, let us speak our free hearts each to other.”

Banquo nodded in agreement. “Very gladly.”

“Till then, enough,” Macbeth finished. “Come, friends.”

This piece takes from Shakespeares’ Macbeth, a play, and transforms a scene into a novel, adding pacing, narration, and contextualization within a different literary form.



A LETTER TO MY FELLOW STUDENTS

hope tsai

Well, hello there!

Thanks so much for stopping by Eloquentia Literary Magazine.

Now, stop for a moment. Stay there. Don't move. Don't navigate to some other website, and don't look at your planner that's just bursting with to-do lists and due dates. Let your mind drift away from the pressing deadlines and the looming exams. Just stop for a moment, and breathe.

Now, think. When was the last time you drank some water? Walked around? Brought your heart rate up from that resting low? Indulged yourself in some hobby that didn't make you feel guilty about it afterwards? When was the last time that you had some fun just for the sake of it, and didn't worry about the lost time later on? Yes, getting your homework done and doing it well is incredibly important, but so is enjoying the life you have. So, what should you do to make the best of every day?



Drink water. Yes, what a cliché piece of advice now, isn't it? But it's true. There are tons of scientific studies out there about how drinking water can rejuvenate you and replenish your energy; you are, after all, about 60% water—it's only natural that you're going to start feeling sluggish if you haven't had any water in a long time. (And no, pop does not really count.)

Get up and move every hour or so. It doesn't even have to be longer than five minutes; just stand up, take your eyes off the textbook or the computer screen, and take a short walk, do some jumping jacks, jam out to a song! Your strained eyes need to relax for a bit, and so does your brain; after you're done reenergizing, then you can get back to work with a renewed mind.

Stop going to social media websites, and stay focused on your work. For one, you're wasting time by switching back and forth between the two tasks. You know you're not getting your work done as fast as you possibly could, and yet there's a sense of unease or guilt when you keep on scrolling down or click on another video. You're not really enjoying the time you have with either activity. Wouldn't it be much more relaxing to finish all of your work and then spend some undivided time on your entertainment?

A LETTER TO MY FELLOW STUDENTS (CONT.)

hope tsai



Go to bed early, and wake up early. Yes, I know, another cliché tip! But seriously. Going to sleep at a reasonable hour is not such a bad thing, and when you get a good night's rest, then you won't even have to force yourself to wake up early—you'll already be awake by the time your alarm clock rings. In addition, a well-rested brain will do much better on homework and tests, and if you finish your homework earlier, then you have the rest of the evening to relax!

Do something enjoyable every day. This might sound a bit morbid, but if you were to die today, would you be okay with the day you had? Of course, some days are chock full of things you don't like; after all, we don't control the universe. However, if every single day turns out to be miserable, then it's time to switch things up. Sing every day, dance around the street, read a book, or watch an episode of a TV show. Cut out some time to do a hobby, and here's a hint: it's ultimately much more satisfying to, say, watch an episode of *Stranger Things* when your homework is already done. So, instead of sneaking in bits of entertainment throughout the day, just stay focused on your work until it's time to relax!

To all of my fellow students: I know that it's easy to fall back down and succumb to old habits, but you can try! You don't even have to wait for a new year or a new semester; you can start over every single minute.



OXFORD VIRTUAL
ACADEMY

Maria

By Maria Sobrino

Photo by Erica Yang

A news article discusses current or recent news of either general interest (i.e. daily newspapers) or of a specific topic (i.e. political or trade news magazines, club newsletters, or technology news websites).

A news article can include accounts of eyewitnesses to the happening event. It can contain photographs, accounts, statistics, graphs, recollections, interviews, polls, debates on the topic, etc. Headlines can be used to focus the reader's attention on a particular (or main) part of the article. The writer can also give facts and detailed information following answers to general questions like who, what, when, where, why and how.



My Stressful Situation and Relief Techniques

BY CAITLYN GEDA

It was September 3rd, 2012. I had been living in Germany for a little under a year when I first became a student at Montessori Schule Clara Grunwald. This school was completely German speaking, a language that I had very little prior knowledge of. My German capabilities were limited to a few numbers, and colors. Being immersed in a new school is a stressful event, let alone being immersed in one that is foreign, and non-English speaking. As a 10 year old, the transition was one that I had welcomed; however, I did not realize the extent of the stress that I would be under.

Stress is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as, “A state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances.” In my case, I was mentally drained due to the demanding, and completely new environment that I found myself in. Imagine being plucked from comfort, and from normality, and then being thrown into foreign experiences, and a new life, in complete ignorance. I did not know the language, or the culture of the German people, but the real struggle, and stress started the moment I entered the school. There were people my age who I could not communicate with, and who did not understand what I was feeling. I did willingly, and quite eagerly, want to learn German, but it just couldn’t come fast enough. This waiting, and high anticipation for something that would take time, caused me to become nervous, and to lose faith in myself. I had an unrealistic expectation of how long it would take me to become fluent in the language, and comfortable at the school, thus creating stress.

Most would agree that everyone encounters some form of stress daily. The question is, how can it be dealt with? The American Institute of Stress found in a study that mental health is in fact improved through participation in physical activity, such as sports, or exercise (Rosch). In Germany, I was a member of a swim team, which allowed me to relieve the stress of the day after school. I was unaware at the time how much the activity helped me to get through stress, but looking back, I am not what would have happened if it had not been for my daily swim.

Another stress relieving technique is finding a quiet place, and cooling down by taking multiple deep breaths. This technique is one of the oldest in the book, but it was recommended especially for young people by Michael Eisen, founder of Youth Wellness Network (Stress Relief). He describes this technique as an “in-the-moment” stress reliever. During my first month at the German school, my fifth grade class was studying the 16 states of Germany. As there were 16 students in the class, each of us was assigned a state, and required to present a poster. I remember being frightened at the prospect of presenting in German to the whole class, but I prepared, and studied heavily. When it came time for me to present, I looked out at everyone in the class, lifted my notes, and began, as best I could, my presentation on the state of Saxon (Sachsen). I had tried to keep it simple by sticking to short sentences, but by mid presentation, a wave of stress hit me, and I began sobbing. Multiple students jumped up, and murmured what I assume were soothing words, but because I could not understand them, it just added to my stress. I left the room crying, and when I entered the empty hall,



My Stressful Situation and Relief Techniques

BY CAITLYN GEDA

I realized that it was a perfect space to just breathe. I took multiple deep breaths, and was able to calm myself down enough to reenter the classroom, and finish my presentation, as best I could.

The presentation break-down resulted from an in-the-moment type stress. However, I have also noticed that there is a constant stress, a stress that sticks around, and that builds up over time if not relieved. The daily stress of trying to communicate with my peers in Germany was a constant stress. Every now and then, it would build up enough that I would seek someone out, just to cry and vent. Although venting may not seem like a great stress reliever, for me it truly helped. I was able to put the situation into perspective, and realize that my stress would be relieved, if only for time. That epiphany was a comfort to me, as were the words of the people I vented to. As psychologist Ethan Schafer, PhD, simply states in a magazine titled, *Stress Relief*, “Reach out to others for support.” I did reach out for support, and my stress was tremendously reduced as a result of that. The constant stress of my situation weighed me down, but through venting, and reaching out, I was able to overcome my struggles.

Stress is an overwhelming, and uncomfortable feeling that everyone experiences. It is something that cannot be cast aside, because it will build up and continue to weigh you down. Numerous stress relieving techniques exist, but in the end, it comes down to what works best for you. I found that physical activity, deep breaths, and support from others helps me to relieve my stress. These techniques got me through a stressful patch in my first couple of months at a German school.

By the fourth month, I experienced little to no stress, and was able to communicate, as well as understand, German. By the first year, I was considered fluent in the German language, and by the end of the second year, my pronunciation was indistinguishable from that of the native German kids. I would not have accomplished this if not for my persistence, and for my stress relieving techniques that allowed me to be so persistent, and ambitious. Stress is tough, but stress relieving techniques not only exist, but are effective, as my personal experience demonstrates.

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create
by Serena Bianchi



I'll Tell the Moon
by Serena Bianchi



INNER OUTER SPACE

by Serena Bianchi, a watercolor artist who regularly draws inspiration from Twenty-one Pilots and their main drummer, Josh Dun. Bianchi is also the artist behind the preceding two drawings, "Create" and "I'll Tell the Moon."

I'll Tell the Moon
Serena Bianchi



YOURS TRULY,

AN EPISTOLARY POEM BY LAUREN
KHULA

For the last hour, I've been ripping out
pages and pages of letters directed to you.
I am not sure what I'm supposed to say.
You're the one that broke me.
Here I am.
Every moment spent thinking of what we used to be.
Now, now we are nothing.
Memories stay embedded, eternal,
stuck on a never ending loop
of your smile,
your laugh,
your heart.
You were the only person that made me feel
beautiful.
Meeting you for the first time was like listening to a song
that would never get old,
one that you would love forever.
You were my song.
I loved you and I never wanted to lose you,
I didn't want to wake up in the morning and have you gone.

Reality hit though, and we became nothing.
I gave up on you and you gave up on me.
Our memories still stand.
Jackson, you were the one that made me
happy,
in the darkest time of my life,
and now you are gone.
The truth is... You were my everything,
but in the end you broke me.
You broke my heart and I hate you
because I still love you,
and I hate myself even more for it.
Worst of all, I cared too much and then you
left me stray.
The fear of not being good enough,
being left alone with a broken heart
and the thought of why I let my heart fall
so quickly.
I can't do much now, but I hope that you
remember us
every kiss,
every hug,

every smile.
I will forever miss your blonde hair and
blue eyes.

I will miss you, my love.

Yours truly..

by Lauren Khula
photos by Love Tsai





THE TALE OF TWO KINGS

BY RAINA YARBROUGH

Damian and Roy, although they are brothers, have two very different personalities. Damian had a very kind and giving personality and was always happy to put others first, helping anyone in need. Roy on the other hand, was often prideful and thought he was above everyone. Damian knows his brother is this way and wishes he could help him. That following Sunday, when Damian and Roy went to church, Damian decided to talk to their youth pastor, Pastor John, about Roy. He told Pastor John how prideful and rude Roy tends to be and asked if he could talk to Roy about putting others first. The next week after Wednesday night Bible study, Pastor John asked Roy to stay behind so he could talk to him. Roy rolled his eyes and sat down. Pastor John asked him if he knew the story of King Saul and King David. Roy shook his head. Pastor John began to explain that because King David was faithful to God and obeyed him,

the Lord was with him. But King Saul disobeyed God and was prideful so the spirit of the Lord left him and an evil spirit from the Lord haunted him. Roy gave a concerned look. Pastor John continued to explain that King David was not perfect but when he sinned he asked God for forgiveness. Also, when you put yourself before God and do not do his will, the Lord will not reward you. At this point Roy knew this was about him. Pastor John asked him, who have you been representing, King David or King Saul? Do you honor the Lord in your actions or do you just care about making everyone like you? Can the Lord reward what you've done in the past week? Roy looked down at his shoes and let out a sigh. Pastor John and Roy prayed that he would have a better attitude and would put others first. The next morning Roy woke up before everyone else and made his whole family breakfast.

Damian went up to his brother and gave him a hug and all Roy could say was thank you. Thank you for loving me enough to find get me some help and always staying kind. Damian smiled, and they sat down and ate their breakfast.

the bully on the bus

My grandfather is a great storyteller. His stories are about the times and experiences of his youth, in the good old days of the 1960s. The world was different then it is today. Kids found ways to amuse themselves without the use of internet, game boy or cell phones. One thing, however didn't change with passing time: bullies. This story is about my grandfather's experience with a bully. Here is how he tells his story.

It was a summer morning on the farm; the cows were mooing and the rooster's crowing was signaling me that it was time for my chores before I hurried off to school. I finished my chores and grabbed my books and ran to the bus stop, with my faithful dog Buster at my side. Every morning my dog Buster tags along to the bus stop and then faithfully comes back at 3:00 and waits for the bus's return, bringing me back home.

I have to say I hate the bus, not for any reason other than a kid named Wally Wood. Wally Wood is older and bigger than me, and his goal in life, as it seemed to me, was on the bus, was to torment me and all the kids who were smaller than him. On my way to the bus stop I would imagine him walking to the bus stop, planning who he was going to hit on the back of the head with his gigantic hands, with his gigantic class ring that he used as a weapon. I was totally afraid of Wally Wood, and worried every day if it would be my turn again to connect with his ring on the back of my head.

Today was not my day, but rather another kid's, who, like me, looked really scared sitting on the edge of his seat, just waiting for Wally Wood's attack. I watched his routine from 4 seats away. I watched Wally Wood prepare his weapon by turning his ring to the palm side of his hand, then with sneering parting lips in self-pride he started his wind up and connected to the back of the kid's head. THUD. "Gotcha, you little pipsqueak", Wally Wood sounded off in triumph of connecting to his target. According to Wally Wood's etiquette if you cried and alerted the bus driver, you got another hit, so every kid just held in the pain and sat quietly, grateful that it was over.


This went on for almost a year, until one day I had decided that I had enough of Wally Wood the bully. I took my seat on the bus and arranged my school books for optimum help in clobbering him back. Wally Wood took his seat behind me, I could feel his hot breath on the back of my neck, and I could hear the rustle of his clothes as he prepared the gigantic class ring to connect with the back of my head. I heard the wind swish as he came in for the wind-up. That is when I turned in my seat, and with all the strength I had, I took my schoolbooks and clobbered him right in the face before he got a chance to hit me. Then to my surprise, I heard my voice say, "That is the last time, Wally Wood, that you are going to bully me or anyone else on this bus". It was quite a moment-all the kids on the bus started clapping in exhilaration and support. I looked back at Wally Wood, who now looked smaller than the smallest kid on the bus; the sneering was gone from his face and he sunk back into his seat, defeated at last. That ended the Wally Wood bully bus ride and from that day on, I never let anyone bully me again, drawing on the strength from that one glorious moment in time. This story has always been one of my favorites told to me by my Grandfather. I love his courage to stand up to the bully on the bus. Although the story reflects a different time uncomplicated by the internet and cell phones, it rings true of a continued social problem we still face today.





P R O L O G U E

THE KNIGHTS OF PEACE



Every year in Wartide, all the five-year-old children were rounded up and taken to the palace, and lined up according to rank (the higher ranking being in front). This story is about Igoté, the princess of Wartide and sister to Queen Aeronwen. When she was five, she was the first in line (being the highest ranking five-year-old), which she still did not understand.

Igoté was walking down the hall. It was the eve of her fifth birthday, and she thought it was excellent. She now had more rights than when she was four, such as walking along corridors alone, without a nurse constantly watching over her. Her brother, Cadfael, had asked her to come to his room that day, so she obliged. She liked her brother very much, admired and loved him. Her sister, on the other hand, had never shown her any sort of love. She thought it was because Aeronwen thought herself too tough and regal. As she walked, she ignored all the war tapestries of gory victories on the wall. She really tried to ignore the Terrors Mountain range to the north. She finally got to Cadfael's room.

She did not even bother knocking; it was a custom she and Cadfael had long since ignored. If he did not want anyone in his room, he simply locked the door. So she walked straight in. Cadfael looked up from the book he was reading and saw Igoté standing in front of him, closing the door behind her. Instead of his usual smile, he gave her a grim expression. She was confused— he usually greeted her warmly with a kind smile.

"Brother? You okay?" She inquired simply. He stood up, bent down and picked her up. She thought this was a bit more normal, but the colors in his room seemed darker than last time, or perhaps more foreboding. He sat down in a chair.

Without answering her question, he sighed and spoke.

"You're now five years old. Do you have a clue what that means?" He sat her on one of his knees. Igoté shook her head.

"Nope, is it good?"

Cadfael sighed heavily. "It's really not. Do you remember Agni, from last year? Your friend? She had her fifth birthday just before you had your fourth?" Igoté nodded.

"Yeah, where did she go?"

"She was banished. That means that she can never come back. There is a test, you see. I took it eleven years ago. You choose between a wooden sword and a stone branch. If you choose the branch, they banish you. If you choose the sword, you can stay." He explained. Igoté, being only five, did not understand about Agni, but she understood that she wanted to stay because of Cadfael. She did not want a sword; she thought they were crude and angry, like any weapon.

"Igoté, I need you to choose the sword, so you can stay here and see me. Plus, I don't know how you would survive if there was no one with you."

Igoté nodded. "Ok, I can choose the sword."

But already, a clever plan was forming in her head.

On the last day of the year, Igoté had still not forgotten her promise to Cadfael, but she had also not forgotten her plan. She stepped up to the table where two objects were placed in front of her. She reached out with both hands and looked around at the crowd of adults all watching her. Cadfael gave her an encouraging look and attempted to direct her attention toward the sword. Aeronwen looked solidly at the sword as if she already knew that Igoté was going to choose the sword.



PROLOGUE

THE KNIGHTS OF PEACE (CONT.)



It seemed everyone's eyes were directed at the sword. Igoté placed her hand on the branch and at the same time seized the sword. A gasp ran through the crowd and a cry issued simultaneously from both Aeronwen's and Cadfael's mouths.

"Igoté! No! Why did you...?" Cadfael's voice was hoarse and rough, grating and heart wrenching.

Aeronwen staggered back, regained her composure, and walked with regal disdain out of the room.

Igoté did not understand Cadfael's surprise. She had chosen the sword, after all, she just really wanted the branch too. She was taken to her room by her nurse. The room where the test was administered was vibrating with excitement and speculations ricocheted off walls. Igoté sat in her giant chair and looked at a picture book, but the pictures were disturbing battle scenes unfit for a five-year-old. But the children and adults of Wartide all had the same books and read them all. In Wartide there was no such thing as "age appropriate" or not. She set the book down, disturbed by the graphic pictures, and stared at the door. A knock resounded. She was not in the mood to talk to anyone, and she thought her sister probably wanted her to go to the throne room.

"Permission to enter, not granted." She added a tone that sounded very much like her sister, hoping that perhaps they would think she was Aeronwen. The door opened anyway and Cadfael walked in. Great, she thought. Now he was going to lecture Igoté for also choosing the branch. Instead, though, he told her to follow him.

"Aeronwen wants to see both of us," he stated, sounding like a leech had sucked all his emotion dry.

Igoté took his hand in hers and followed him willingly down the hall. If she had to go to the throne room, she was glad she had to do it with Cadfael, and not alone. Cadfael was her brother and he was strong. He was strong and tall, the prince of Wartide, but he had confided to her that he hated war as much as she did. He had found out about the test just before he took it and did not want to leave, and most certainly not die. So he had just chosen the sword. The marble walls seemed oppressively close to her. They arrived at the throne room and beheld the queen of Wartide in all her cruel, malicious majesty. She was their sister. She was the personification of cunning and hate themselves. Igoté stood tall and looked her sister defiantly in the eye. Cadfael looked down and kneeled.

"Igoté, dear," Aeronwen had a patronizing tone in her voice, "I cannot speak to you if you look me in the eye. You are too lowly to look at me in that manner."

Igoté obeyed, wanting to please her sister so she could stay with Cadfael.

"As you all know, a great injustice has been done. Igoté chose both the branch and the sword. If she had chosen the sword, all would have been fine, but she also chose the branch. Therefore, because she chose the sword, she cannot leave. But because she chose the branch, it shows she is defiant of war. We all know she hates battle training. As punishment, she must train to become a warrior. We also know that she hates the Terrors Mountain Range. As further punishment, she will spend an hour every single day staring at the Terrors Mountain Range during sunset, contemplating how warlike they are," Aeronwen's words fell on almost deaf ears, that barely understood what she had said. "Leave my presence." She waved her hand in the air, dismissing them.

As Cadfael brought her to her room, she felt like she was being dragged because her feet did not keep up with her brother's long strides. So he picked her up and carried her to her room. He left her sitting on her giant chair that looked as if it was swallowing her up. She sank into the chair's soft downy fabric as the news of what was going to happen to her sank in. She was going to stay! But she had to fight. She could see Cadfael! But she had to stare at the cold, cruel, evil-looking mountain range for an hour.

Aeronwen had seen to it that she had no time to herself other than the time reserved for sleeping. Igoté thought that there should probably be more to being queen than just controlling people. But what did she know about being queen? After all, she was only five.

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