

# CALLIOPE

THE STUDENT JOURNAL OF ART AND LITERATURE  
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**calliope** *kal<e>i:opi. U.S. (Gr. Kallioph)*

(beautiful-voiced), the ninth of the Muses, presiding over eloquence and heroic poetry.

1. An instrument consisting of a series of steam-whistles toned to produce musical notes, played by a keyboard like that of an organ

2. attrib. calliope hummingbird, a hummingbird, sellula **calliope**, of the Western United States and Mexico.

*Oxford English Dictionary*



# ODE TO TEMPTATION

by CHRISTINE CAMP

*Calliope First Prize 2011 - Poetry*

Soft and clean, like rainfall in the early spring,  
your memory drips down these ancient,  
war-weary bones of mine.  
Pure as oxygen before a flame,  
your words keep my dry eyes open  
and my wind-weathered fingers outstretched.  
You have sung me ballads of what lies beyond here—  
beyond this barren, desolate place—  
and like a siren you are drawing me near.

Truth there cannot be in every one of those  
beautiful, piercing notes.  
The breakers I'm so desperately struggling toward  
through the foam and froth cannot really—  
cannot possibly—  
be the tranquil waters your melody tempts me with.  
Odysseus, bound and bruised, I know  
exactly what it is I hear.  
What spills from your lips like myrrh and honey  
belies the poison of your words, and my  
bloody wrists and ankles ache for it.  
My ship sails eastward on the sea,  
from the world your birdsong promises,  
but my heart is creeping towards your voice.

# A PROPOSAL TO REMEMBER

by NOVPREET BAJWA

*Calliope First Prize 2011 - Fiction*

“It is ok to get married,” consoled Mom.

“No it is not,” I snapped back.

“Well, I don’t know what to tell you more. Your papa already said yes to the boy’s parents.” Mom said exhaustedly, “Change your outfit and put on the blue salwaar-kameez I bought for you. It’s Ikjot’s favorite color, your papa says.”

Mom left, mumbling under her breath, and I was stuck with the hideous royal blue suit to wear. What kind of name was Ikjot? I heard all the weird names in Punjab: Sandeep, Manjeet, Devinder, Arvinder, but never Ikjot. I knew then I was never going to like him.

Darkness fell under the sky as I finished dressing up. The aroma of somasas, pakoras, and chai filled the house. My room, on the other hand, smelled of roses, and my piles of clothes hung neatly in the closet. Who were we trying to impress? The King of England? As I looked around my perfectly tidy room, thoughts rushed into my brain. Was I going to clean my room everyday if I got married to Ickboy? And who was going to cook the food? I sure as hell didn’t know how to cook, and I didn’t want to learn, though my mom kept telling me, “An Indian girl who knows her way around a kitchen, knows her way around a man’s heart.”

As thoughts transported me to my deepest fears, a door bell rang. Ickboy was here! Before answering the door, my mom ordered me to come downstairs into the kitchen. As I passed the living room I noticed the crunched curtains, hanging above the sofa were ironed and the room was perfumed with roses, though the smell of food overpowered the scent. I wanted to scream! The door was answered. Muffled sounds traveled into the kitchen. Seats were taken. A beginning of a conversation was heard. And I was trying to distinguish his voice from the rest. My mom was ordered to bring me out because they “anxiously” waited to meet me and they could not bear any longer. Because of this comment, laughter was made, and my mom rushed into the kitchen to get me.

“Come on, they’re asking for you. Grab those plates of snacks and I’ll carry the chai,” ordered Mom.

I obeyed like a good little Indian girl and carried the plates to the living room; my mom trailed in front of me. My eyes fell on the chosen boy as I entered the room. His dark complexion was the first thing my eyes caught and next his attire. Wearing a crimson shirt which matched his ordinary black pants, Ickboy looked ghastly. The shirt looked horrible against his skin tone. His parents’ appearance was not my con-

cern, though I did notice the huge black mole on the boy's father's cheek. I set down the plates and greeted Sat Shri Akals to everybody. Hugs were exchanged and Ickboy and I were introduced.

Tasting the snacks, things were asked: "What are you studying? What college are you attending? What is your career? Can you cook Indian food?"

To this my mom replied, "Oh yes, Jassie can cook! She made the somosas, and the rest of the snacks."

Lie!

"And she cooked some of the dishes for dinner. Also, she cleaned the whole house today! Our Jassie was taught to do everything from her childhood."

Lie! Lie! Lie!

After the charade of lies, Ickboy and I were left alone to talk! Silence took over as the parents left.

He looked more nervous than I was. His face formed beads of sweats. I felt my body tense up against the sofa and I had the urge to move but dared not to! Finally he broke the silence, "So, you are studying at GW?"

"Yes," I managed to say.

"I go to John Hopkins," he volunteered.

He casually carried on with the one-sided conversation and touched on every subject he thought of. I dosed in and out of the talk as fears burned my body. Was I going to listen to him the rest of my life like this? He was very talkative and did not need me to interrupt. And to listen to his doctor talk about a heart's left ventricle and the right was straight out boring. My major was English. I would rather talk about John Galt and Hester Prynne. Or argue about how Frankenstein was the doctor who created the monster! But not a talk about doctors! The conversation continued into the subject of names:

"God, how much I hated my name," he laughed.

I didn't join in.

He awkwardly continued, "Kids teased me about my name all the time and I felt like an outsider just like Gogol from the *The Namesake!*"

At the mention of Gogol, I gasped, "You read *The Namesake?*"

"Yes, it's my favorite book."

"It's my favorite, too!" I said cheerfully.

"I like it because it gives me a sense of security to know that there are people like me who are struggling with the whole Indian- American identity."

"Wow, I never thought of it like that. But yes, I believe that's one of my reasons for reading it over and over," I said excitedly.

Suddenly, Ickboy didn't look half-bad. In his blood-red shirt that perfectly matched his complexion, Ickboy looked appealing.

# AN ALIEN

by JESSICA REDMILES

Circle and floe the black tarantella  
again into your music  
wide asleep,  
the world is watching you shake your chains.

stop your heart, the sweat in your ocean  
deeper than you dream  
is weeping for you  
barefoot in the waste city wandering.

the speech of devils  
leaks into your mouth, acid  
tongues berate your fragile ears  
and they echo forever ever ever

sinking, you spin and spin  
until it turns you invisible  
and you come alive again  
vanish  
into your thin brown hair



# I THINK IT IS FALL

by GAISU YARI

*Calliope First Prize 2011 - ESL*

May I hate the world?  
Maybe because of the sadness  
Maybe because of the unfairness  
No clues to talk about  
No proofs to argue about



I think it is fall  
The neighborhood where I was born  
The district where I grew up  
And the ocean where I fell more depressed  
Not even depressed maybe fell apart

I feel extremely unhappy that you came late  
Look at your leaves  
Are they smiling?  
Ask from the beauty of love

I was listening to your breath last night  
Wow, how pleasant  
Remember the dream that I had  
You are an amazing season

The season that can help me with  
My night without a moon  
With my day without a sun  
And with my life without tears

Smile for the moment that I stare at you  
The moment that I want to grow  
Be with me today  
I feel quiet and great under the leaves that  
You want to be loose from

Where?  
The trees  
Ah, no more leaves to write about  
No more birds to sing out loud  
No more flowers to share without  
And no more you to be allowed  
Let me be alone today  
Not only today  
Maybe forever

# TWILIGHT ANAGKE

*by* RICARDO J ERAZO

A small bird dives  
the sky,  
it flaps its wings  
dancing to the summer  
breeze harmony

beyond the sea where that tiny bird  
flows  
a river downstream from the mountain  
to a city, dusty and hungry.

there are no lights  
to light the night,  
no stars, no moon,  
no sun to warm up  
the lone child lying on the floor,  
mumbling with a weak voice:

Today,  
I didn't play, didn't run, didn't laugh  
I spoke but no one listened.  
Today,  
I starved, and died, and cried  
and no one noticed.

# SILENCE

by ANDREW O'DONNELL

*Calliope Third Prize 2011 - Fiction*

The drip slowly slid down the window. Finding a partner, it combined to roll even faster down the glass. A flash of lightning shot across the heavens, and its crack of thunder was so loud it rattled the pane. The drop was jerked and thrown around, but it continued its downward motion.

Johny sat on his bed in his dark room, watching the progressing drop of rain. He liked the storm; the bright lights thrilled him as he tried to hear their sounds. But with each bolt of lightning, he only felt the windows rattle; he never heard a sound.

A light flashed and he closed his eyes, straining with all his might to hear its sound...was that it, did I hear it that time? But no, it had only been his memory of the sound filling in when he felt vibrations. He was grateful for his memories and tried to keep them alive by returning to them on occasion. But he also wanted them to stop messing with his head, and heart. His memories had a habit of filling in for what he had lost. He missed the birds' songs waking him up in the morning, or the insects singing him to sleep at night. He missed music and speech...he missed hearing the rain. He never understood how loud silence could be until he was forced to live in it.

He had, strangely enough, not heard the car because his music was turned up too high. His memory was of a black convertible running a red light, and then his waking up in absolute silence. The doctors had told him, by writing on a note pad, that he had hit his head on the pavement and lost parts of his brain. The biggest sections that had died controlled his walking and his hearing. Another crash sounded, and the vibrations shook him out of his silent memories. Just then, the lights died in the street outside his window; the neighborhood had lost power. Johny lay back on his pillow to fall asleep...he could still hear the thunder in his dreams.



MANTICORE  
*by* RAE KOCHANSKI

## GRANDFATHER'S APARTMENTS

*by* JINWOO LEE

*Calliope Second Prize 2011 - ESL*

To me, the most special place in my life would be my grandfather's house. I think it's more special because it doesn't exist anymore. He passed away three years ago and there's no place that I could call my grandfather's house now. All I have left are my sweet and happy memories about my grandpa and his apartments. I wish I could go back and visit him one more time.

My grandfather lived in Busan, South Korea, for his entire life. Busan is the second largest city in Korea, called the city of ports. Every Thanksgiving day and New Year's holiday, the whole family gathered in grandpa's house. I loved to hang out with my cousins and nieces because they really knew how to enjoy holidays. There were always many traditional Korean foods on the table waiting for me. Glabi, Bi bim bob, Kimchi jjigae, Tangsoo Guk, they are so delicious; I usually gained four to five pounds when I was in there. Aunt Lee's special fried shrimp that had her secret dipping sauce was one of my favorite foods, and I can't forget that taste and still miss it so much. When the whole family gathered in Grandpa's house, my dad, uncles, and Grandpa played a card game called go-stop, which is similar to poker. I loved to watch them play. Yielding, laughs and money were exchanged, and it was really fun to watch even though I didn't know what the rules were. I always cheered for Uncle Lee because he gave me some money when he won the game. I am the youngest in the family, and I received so many kisses, hugs, advice, and money, every time I was in Grandpa's house. I always thought and think that I am really blessed to have this wonderful family.

One thing that I surely remember about my Grandpa's house is that he had furniture that surprised me. He had a heated bed, and it really made me fall asleep in less than fifteen minutes. A massage chair's vibration felt really weird to a little boy, but I liked that weird feeling and sat on it all the time. Grandpa also had a huge TV that made me excited to watch it. It made me feel like I was in the theater.

Grandpa usually moved apartments once or twice a year. I didn't and don't know why he moved, but it was fun to visit different apartments each time. Also, his apartment was always on the top floor of the building. I hated to wait for the elevators to go up and down because it took so long. The view from Grandpa's apartment was usually amazing. One of his apartments had a view in which I could see the stadium of Busan's professional baseball team. Fireworks from the stadium were very cool.

I really miss Grandpa and our traditional family holidays that we had in his house. The memories that I have of him and his houses make me feel how important the family is. Someday, when my grandchildren write about a most special place to them, I hope that it will be my house with many memories that I'll give them like my grandpa gave to me.

# JUST TEN MINUTES

by REBECCA TALLANT

*Calliope First Prize 2011 - Creative Non-Fiction*

The humid, salty air was all around us. The sound of the waves crashing was just background noise to all the laughter emerging from where we were sitting. The light breeze caused the smoke to swirl around our softly lit front porch. Sitting there enjoying everyone's company, I realized that I was the only one not smoking. Even my friends who didn't smoke were sitting there puffing on those little sticks that could change someone's world. After all, they did mine.

I heard the voice coming from my left, but it wasn't until I looked at him that what he was saying registered in my head. "Want one?" he asked, his head cocked and tone inviting; it's no wonder why people try smoking in the first place. But his polite, – I'm sure that's what he was trying to be, by including me – welcoming offer set off something inside me. Something that I rarely would let myself think about and...

...Bam! There I am. Seeing it in my head. That day. That day that changed everything.

Teddy bears, Barbie dolls, and dress up clothes clutter the room. Collections of Polly Pockets, My Little Ponies, and trolls with multi-colored hair and jeweled belly buttons line each shelf of one of my bookcases. I am eight years old, and this is my room. It's the perfect little girl's room. Brightly colored rainbows cover the bottom half of my walls, and toys are everywhere. Hanging right above my head is my Free Willy poster. My huge Simba puppet sits at the foot of my bed, and Kate, my small, stuffed cow is cradled in my arms.

Tossing and turning under my puffy, white Strawberry Shortcake quilt, I try dodging the rays of sun that seem to be taking over my room. I peek at my clock even though I don't really want to see the time. I know that I'm up earlier than I need to be. But Mom woke me up when she hollered up to Jes.

"Get up, Jessica! Don't make me drag you out of bed." There is no whimpering or even any reluctant feet shuffling across the carpeted floor. There is no noise or movement coming from her room. "Jessica, get up!"

I don't think that it was so much that Jes didn't like school; it was just that she did not want to go. Ever. "I'm not going. Go away!"

"Get your butt out of bed right now!" If Mom wasn't mad already, she definitely was now.

I hear them making their way up the stairs, the heavy footsteps of a disappointed, frustrated mom. First I hear a soft knock on my door, then the squeaking noise it had taken to making when opened. "Bec, I need you to sit with Robby."

“But moooom,” I whine, “I don’t wanna.”

“I know, babe, but it is just for a minute so I can run your sister to school. He’s sleeping so I just need you to sit with him.”

I hear more commotion coming from the room across from mine. Mom is pleading with Jes, begging her to get up. It’s in the midst of their bickering that I hear it. I’m not sure what it was about it - maybe the tone of her voice-but it got me out of bed that day.

“This room is disgusting. You will clean this mess. And what is that smell?” asks my annoyed mother.

“Piss off!” shouts back the angry seventeen year old girl. The same girl who most days, I idolized. The same girl who so unintentionally would alter our world that day.

Dutifully, and with tired eyes, I stumble out of bed. I make my way across the dull, midnight-blue carpet. It’s a little after seven o’clock in the morning, St. Patrick’s Day, 1999. I make my way down the steps and sit in my little brother’s nursery. I stare at the white walls with the pale blue trim that runs around the room. I am thankful that his multi-colored train curtains are covering the windows to keep the bright, rising sun out. I listen to the one year old babbling away, not saying a single real word. I snuggle up in the chair next to his crib, still in my Bugs Bunny nightgown.

“I will be back in ten minutes,” says mom as she finally leaves to take my sister to school. We live right around the corner from Langley High School, no more than three minutes away but close to a ten minute drive with the morning traffic. Those minutes, those ten minutes, were the longest, most unforgettable ten minutes of my life. They changed everything.

Crack. Shatter.

I hear noises that sound like my mom running the garbage can over the rocky, loose gravel driveway. Is Mom back already? That was fast. I keep hearing these strange noises. Thump. Crumble. After about a minute of these same strange sounds, I begin to worry. I watch my baby brother. Not a care in the world until I abruptly interrupt his peacefulness. Frightened, I grab Robby and hide behind the glass paneled door to his room. The noises continue. I don’t think to do anything but stay tucked behind the door. Suddenly, the front door is thrown open with such force that it swings all the way back on its hinges. I hear my name being called. Shrieked. I realize that it is my next-door-neighbor. I can see her through the glass of the door. Her small, middle aged figure stands there, her eyes everywhere. She is in her robe, her hair, which is always perfect, a mess. When I appear in the foyer, my little brother in my arms, I see a look of horror on her face. She gathers my brother up, out of my arms, and she directs me out the front door. I am in my bare feet, but we run across the front yard to her house.

It’s a cool mid March morning. Piles of old, hard snow are still scattered on the cold, solid ground. I look up at my neighbor in complete confusion. Why did she just

run into my house? She looks at me, knowing that I have no idea what is happening and in that moment, I glance towards my house. I am still. I cannot move. I cannot think.

Red. Orange. Crimson. These colors pop out like fireworks. Big, cherry colored fireworks. Bright, massive flares like the ones around traffic accidents. But they aren't fireworks. They aren't police flares. They're flames. I watch as the glowing blaze explodes out of my sister's room. They don't stop. The flames keep bursting out of the roof. Smoke is billowing out of where my window should be. I had no idea that the popping noise I had heard was my sister's room blowing up above us. Tears start to trickle down my cheeks. My toys, my clothes, my troll and pony collection-ruined.

I feel a slight nudge and I suddenly pop back into reality, the hot, thick air all around me. After replaying it all in my head, I find myself paralyzed, the same way I was that memorable March morning. I tried to say it as coolly as possible but a shaky, "No," was all that came out. He caught me so off guard that it had thrown me back into that day.

It was a lifetime gone in a matter of minutes. One second I was snuggling up in my brother's nursery, and the next I was watching dark clouds of smoke and radiant flames erupt out of the second floor of my house. It is a day that will live with me forever. Sometimes I think about how quickly it all happened. It was just ten minutes. But they were the longest, most unforgettable ten minutes of my life.



# KATRINA

by LAUREN A. KIEFER

*Calliope Second Prize 2011 - Creative Non-Fiction*

From time to time, the smell was so horrible I forced myself to choke back vomit until we drove past. No matter how painstakingly the owners attempted to tape the doors closed, the smell of rotten meat, decomposing vegetables, and sour milk seeped through the refrigerator's seams and into the street.

Aside from the occasional demolition team, almost everything lay silent and



abandoned in the wake of the storm. Dried mud crunching underneath the tires of our Jeep was the only sound that followed us through the Parishes. The roads resembled riverbeds and we drove along their winding route, stopping every once in a while to stand beside a building and compare the tidemark to our own height.

On some streets, the houses had completely vanished. All that remained were concrete foundations punctuated by water mains. Here and there I found a wooden post mailbox standing in front of a now empty lot. The numbers on its side and the mail it held were the only proof that not so long ago, this had been someone's home.

Everything was out of place. Tugboats had come to rest in the middle of fields, cars had landed on top of houses, and houses on top of cars. Tons of debris, some completely beyond recognition, now floated in the swamps or lay scattered on the muddy roads. Near the 17th Street breach, a house sat across the street from where its foundation had been ripped from the ground. Staring at the relocated home with its windows improbably intact, I realized water was still slowly dribbling down the street and pooling in the mud around my feet.

Some homes were completely empty, their contents piled at the curb waiting to be taken away, but there were not enough trucks to haul the waste, barely a dent had been made. Three months after the storm and it looked as though the water had only just receded. Most buildings still sat untouched, rotting from the inside out.

Downtown life was starting to move on. Repairs were being made and the bars were open, but aside from the French Quarter, most streets fell to darkness, our headlights the only guiding light along their lonely path.

It had been Thanksgiving Day and near strangers had invited us into their home. We shared a wonderful dinner with them on one of the few inhabited streets along the canals. This family had weathered many storms and to them, the destruction was no more than an inconvenience. Their lives continued as usual, save for some family members having not made it back to town for the holidays. They wanted a full, lively house and happily encouraged us to fill the empty chairs around their table.

We were no longer outsiders as we sat around in their home, sipping beer and wine, looking through old photo albums, fighting sleep that soon follows the most satisfying of meals. We spoke of impermanence and of enjoying each day as its own. Sitting inside their house, it was more than clear: it's the people that make the home; it's walls that can all too easily fall down.



SANDSTORM EMBODIED  
*by* CHRIS WILLIAMS



*Calliope Third Prize 2011 - Art*

FAMILY  
by OLGA CASTANEDA MARTIN



SPIRIT OF ISLAM  
*by* GHOFRAN SHAKER

# BEAUTY OF A BUTTERFLY

*by* RAHMIEN RAHIM AMIN

*Calliope Honorable Mention 2011 - ESL*

Butterfly caress  
Slowly, gently, carefully  
Opening beauty

# THE WEATHER IS COLD

*by* PONNIA ACHU MUYEN

*Calliope Honorable Mention 2011 - ESL*

The weather is cold  
But still very ambiguous  
With the sun glowing.

# A MOTHER WITH HER CHILD

*by* NAFISA ABDULALI

*Calliope Honorable Mention 2011 - ESL*

A mother with her child  
A few words of solace  
No reasons to cry

# EPILOGUE – UNFINISHED

*by* JACQUI BARRINEAU

Can you give me a first sentence?  
How about the last word?  
Be so kind, would you?  
The last word on the last page?  
A tidy ending to our messy story?

Perhaps 140 characters that say  
good night and good luck.

If that's too much,  
easy silence will do,  
much like a backspace,  
a shutdown.  
Deletion often feels right.  
A careful edit goes far,  
    don't you know?

But then  
Concise.  
Precise.  
Never really our style, right?



COILS AND CURLS

*by* JULIA BROWN

# THE SAFFRON VEIL

by NOVPREET BAJWA

I keep a veil—  
a *Saffron* veil.  
Thrust into the world of unknown,  
it bravely shines with the foreign flag,  
guiding its fellows in the Promised Land.

I keep a veil—  
a *Saffron* veil.  
Crowded into a land of lost stories,  
it weaves its past into the present,  
hoping its stories too won't be lost.

I keep a veil—  
a *Saffron* veil.  
Forced into an arena of unnatural customs,  
it parts with its traditions to learn the new,  
surviving for the future.



# THAT'S AMORE!

by JULIE TAGUDING

Bags packed, triple checked. “Toby, why won't you turn on?” you huffed, and I smirked at the irony of naming your laptop. The house was heavy with anticipated tears and nervous hysterical laughter at stupid jokes. I tripped up the stairs and you called me a fruitcake, and I realized this extended trip you would make without me. As the Chrysler pulled out, stuffed with dorm supplies, I ached at watching half my heart skid out the door. Blood is thicker than water and love survives beyond time, but from you I learned to love and accept and the art of the fake Italian accent.

# CHARMING'S TRAGEDY

by KATHERINE AYESHA RAHEEM

*Calliope Second Prize 2011 - Fiction*

No one would have recognized him, his feminine features enhanced with lip color and blush, his slim body sheathed in a gown that perfectly matched the unique shade of his green eyes. A lace-trimmed corset made his false bust-line enviable.

He was smiling as he observed his reflection in the young prince's golden crown. He really did make a handsome woman, and the prince seemed most taken with him. What would the honorable youth say if he knew the eyes he gazed into belonged to another young man? Ellie laughed sadly.

"Do I amuse you, my love?" The prince had a voice meant for seducing pretty ladies out of their petticoats.

"Oh, I would never laugh at you, my Lord—I simply cannot believe my own luck, the very luck allowing me to be here, in your arms."

"It's hardly luck, more likely love," Charming said solemnly.

Ellie twittered at that. "Oh good sir, do not jest! You're liable to make a girl's heart jump right out of her chest."

Charming's mouth curved wickedly. "If that's so, to abandon jest would hardly be to my advantage." Ellie's cheeks reddened at that. He was an actor and could cry on command, or offer a gentle, you-can-tell-me-anything smile, project total innocence or rearrange his features into an unapproachable sneer. His "family"—a stepmother with the hooked, wart-peppered nose of a witch and twin stepsisters nearly as painful to look at as they were to interact with—seemed immune to any and all of the masks Ellie—Elbert—tried on. His stepsisters disliked him because he was prettier than they could ever hope to be. Their mother hated him because he was *everything*—er than the girls could hope to be, with his beautiful singing voice, his clever hand at needlework, his culinary skills and his graceful carriage. Elbert was the male version of what her daughters would never be.

Earlier that day, Ellie's stepmother had enjoyed making him sew her daughters matching dresses for the night's ball, constantly finding fault in his work and demanding that he start fresh. When he finally finished, he watched the girls in the gowns he'd slaved over. The women departed gleefully. Ellie's face was the picture of loneliness and despair.

The moment they disappeared behind the curve of the road, a grin split Ellie's face as he dashed to the library. The women never touched the books, and secreted behind them was Ellie's treasure. He lifted the carefully folded silk, letting it unfurl in a shimmering blaze of green. Within half an hour—he had a deft hand with makeup



thanks to hours of playing with his stepsisters' pots and perfumes—Ellie was on his way to the ball.

It was thrilling to enter the enormous ballroom and run smack into his dour stepmother. He gave her a haughty look and was hugely satisfied by her murmured apology.

Ellie's eyes roamed the room until he honed in on a winking circle of gold smiling against a head of dark hair. He crossed the ballroom, his movements elegant and deliciously feminine, until he stood in the prince's peripheral vision. It took less than thirty seconds for the prince's eyes to settle on Ellie's pretty face. Acknowledging Charming's gaze, Ellie dropped into a curtsy, watching with amusement as Charming made a beeline towards him.

But Ellie's smug attitude vanished when he stepped wordlessly into the prince's arms. He'd only come to the ball to foil his stepsisters' ridiculous attempts to lure the prince. He'd never considered any other consequence.

He'd never considered that he'd fall in love.

"You're beautiful," Charming murmured, his lips a whisper away from Ellie's as they waltzed.

"Let us get some fresh air, shall we?"

Ellie's heart pounded hard enough to hurt. He mutely let the prince lead him outdoors. The garden smelled like magic, and when Charming plucked a flower from a rosebush and tucked it behind Ellie's ear, he felt his defenses weakening.

The night air was cool and soft. Excitement made Ellie shiver, prompting the prince to offer his coat. The gesture was as beautiful as the man who'd made it, and Ellie felt tears burn in his eyes. Hadn't he always known that when he fell, it would be swift and likely painful? But even in his most outlandish fantasies he'd never imagined falling for a prince.

"Darling, what is this?" Charming swept a teardrop from Ellie's cheek with his thumb. "Have I done something wrong?"

"Oh no," Ellie managed. "You've done everything right. I've wronged you, dear prince. I'm sorry, so sorry. I must leave you."

"Dear madam, you can't be serious—it isn't yet midnight!"

Emotion clogged Ellie's voice as he broke away from the prince's embrace. "Forget me, my love. Forget me and find another." Even a clever actor like himself couldn't hold back the tears.

"Just give me a name!" the prince begged.

"Ella," he responded softly. "Just Ella." And he turned away with sorrow in his heart.

Charming made a mad grab for Ellie's sleeve, ripping the fabric in the process. Sobbing quietly, Ellie ran, leaving the prince standing in stunned silence.

At home, Ellie ripped the dress from his shaking body and threw it into the fire.

No one knew the mysterious Ella who had enchanted the young prince. Rage and frustration coiled in Charming's gut. He kept the swatch of fabric ripped from her dress tucked in his pocket, terrified that it was all he'd ever have of the girl who so captivated him.

It hadn't been her beauty; rather, it had been the very essence of her. Charming had seen into Ellie's soul and found his mate.

Days bled into months as Charming combed the countryside for a girl with sparkling green eyes. He would find her. They were meant for each other, and damn anything standing in his way.

When the prince came thundering down the dusty lane one cool spring morning, purple cloak billowing behind him, Ellie's heart stumbled in his chest. Before he could duck out of sight, he was spotted.

"You! Tend to my horse. Tell your mistress the prince has come to call."

Ellie caught the reins of the huge beast and nodded silently.

Less than ten minutes passed before the prince, his mood as stormy as his eyes, swept out of the house. Ellie waited by the stair with Charming's horse; he silently offered the prince the reins. Charming turned to go.

Ellie couldn't stifle the soft sob that slipped from his mouth.

Charming whirled around. He knew that heartbreaking sound. Anticipation had his own heart pounding as he stared at the boy with the milk white complexion, the full mouth, the slender build.

"Look at me," he demanded in a whisper. Ellie raised his head until his eyes met those of the prince.

"By God, you're the spitting image of my green-eyed enchantress!" Hope flared in his breast.

"Where is your sister, boy?"

"I have no blood relatives living, sir," Ellie responded quietly. He held his breath and wished for a miracle.

"But—Ella!"

"Ellie," he corrected softly. "Short for Elbert. You were supposed to forget. You were supposed to forget the night I fell in love with you."

Charming opened his mouth, shut it again.

"The heart wants what the heart wants. I cannot apologize for it."

"You're sick," Charming managed after a long moment.

"You are sick, and my heart would never, could *never* want a filthy creature like you."

He leapt onto the horse, revolted and, to his bafflement, hurt. Without a word, he left the way he'd come.

The prince became a king, marrying a girl with deep brown eyes, lush curves and a golden complexion. He told himself he was happy, though his wife never made his

pulse race or his heart burst.

Many years later, Charming heard that a beloved dressmaker named Elbert had taken ill. As he flew on horseback down that familiar country road, he prayed.

Astonished servants showed Charming to Elbert's bedside. "I'm sorry, love, I'm so, so sorry," the king whispered.

Ellie opened tired eyes, their vibrant green irises undimmed by age. At the sight of his one true love, his mouth curved. He died with a smile on his lips.

And the king wept.



RIVERBEND  
*by* MARGARET DUNNE



JAZZ AT EASTERN MARKET  
*by* SARAH GRIGSBY



DESTROY 2K11  
*by* MIKE DORMAN

# PERSEPHONE

by NATHAN MOORE

*Calliope Third Prize 2011 - Poetry*

Sometimes  
silver rivers  
meander through  
my eyes

Pink trees  
turn upside down  
their roots  
reach for the  
sky

In the deserts of hell  
it's Persephone I find  
naïve  
and divine

All rivers  
end at her feet  
all pink trees  
take root  
in her mind



TEXTURED SPIRIT

by DEE SHIRLEY

# THE PLACE THAT IS SPECIAL TO ME

by NUMITA YADAV

*Calliope Third Prize 2011 - ESL*

If I had to choose a place that is special to me, I would probably choose my home. There are many different reasons for me to choose my home as a special place. It is a place where I spend a lot of time, and I have decorated it the way I like. The interior decoration and peaceful environment of my home make me relaxed and happy all the time.

I would like to start from the living room, where I have put great effort to create a relaxed and calm environment. This is the room I see the first upon entering my house. I have decorated this room with a vase of fresh flowers and a cozy blue couch with matching curtains and carpets. There are family pictures hanging on the wall, which are painted creamy white. Every day after work, when I return home, the family pictures hanging on the walls make me feel as if I am with my family all the time.

The other area in my house that I mostly like is my kitchen. It is the place where I spend lots of time. Cooking and serving delicious food to my family and friends makes me feel exhilarated and content. I have decorated my kitchen with the traditional utensils like mud-made pitchers and handicrafts that I bought from my home country, Nepal. Every guest who has visited our house has appreciated the look and the crafts displayed in the kitchen.

Last but not least, another place in my house that is very special to me is my meditation room. This room is very quiet with no distractions. As soon as I walk into this room, I start to feel relaxed. There is a view of a garden from the window of this room. I can hear the twittering of birds, smell the flowers and feel the fresh air, which also motivates me to meditate. I have decorated this room with meditation bells, candles, and incense sticks. The incense sticks of different fragrances sooth my heart; whereas the sounds of the meditation bells please my mind. There is a mat in the center of the room where I can sit comfortably through the meditation.

Thus, besides the interior decoration and family pictures which make my home a special place, it is also a place where I can experience privacy and freedom, where I can spend quality time by myself discovering my inner spiritual world, which gives me courage and support to fight the obstacles that come towards the path to success in my life.

# FLY BURIAL

by HENRY W. LEEKER

*Calliope Second Prize 2011 - Poetry*

It seems a speck at first,  
a movement unlike  
the dust particles cart wheeling in the draft from the window,  
It writhes, epileptically;  
wiggling and warping  
the onyx speckles on the faux-marble tile,  
making them tilt in the alabaster void.  
Legs cyclically kicking out an encroaching,  
unfamiliar, upside down, perspective.  
Its wings beating into sanitarium stone  
with a faint, echoed cacophony;  
trying to comprehend solid obstruction.  
Wondering what happened to the free nothing  
which guided its flight.  
It trembles like loose dirt over a shallow grave.  
Not quite dead yet, only stationary  
and not by choice.



HANDLED POT  
by FRANK SPINK





INDIVIDUALITIES  
*by* HWA RI JANG



SURREALITY  
*by* MARTHA TAYLOR JOHNSON



LAST STAND  
*by* JUSTIN LAGO



SAILBOAT  
*by* LAURA LAVEDAS

*Calliope Second Prize 2011 - Art*



*Calliope First Place 2011 - Art*

WORN BOOTS  
*by* KAYLA DARCY



SELF PORTRAIT - DREAM  
*by SOL RYU*



POPPIES  
*by* TIFFANIE HENSON



MUTE MAN  
*by* MARYAM SEDAGHATPOUR





UNTITLED  
*by* ASHLEY TENNENT

# SEE NO EVIL

by KATRINA NICOLE HAWKINS

Relaxing as the hot water beat out the stress of presentations and taking orders, the blond woman searched blindly for her washcloth. With the front door locked, this was her world and work could not interrupt her calming mind. As she scrubbed the clinging soap away from her eyes, a low rumble started, making the bathroom shudder. The rumbling got louder; the bathroom stopped shuddering and began to vibrate, though the woman continued to rinse away the soap from her hair and eyes. Out of the silence came the ear splitting whistle of the EL-train, making the woman jump. She stumbled and caught her footing as her whole apartment shook violently from the closeness of the passing train.

“Sometimes I think they blow the whistle just for fun. I bet it must be the only enjoyment they get... Wait what was that?” the woman said to the room, grabbing for the rail she had installed for just this purpose.

Listening to the sounds of the rattling apartment, she heard nothing out of the ordinary. She shook her head dismissively, “Maybe I just need to take a holiday and get out of the city.”

Getting a firm hold on the bar, the blond leaned over and retrieved the washcloth that was floating by her ankle. Draping it over the support bar, she listened for the second whistle from that train and heard it coming from a ways down the track. As she flicked off the water, the apartment began to stop shaking as the train sped away. She stood there dripping wet, holding on to the bar for minutes after the train rolled away. She was listening to the rest of her quiet apartment; shaking her head, she sent water droplets spattering on the sliding glass door. She knew she only had what felt like a few minutes till the next train would come hurtling by and rock her apartment again. She almost felt like a little pig not letting the big bad wolf in each time the trains came by. Though she knew this thought was silly, it still made her grin, like she had all those years ago before she grew up.

The squeaky wheels of the shower door rolling back brought her out of her childhood memories and back to the present day, which was not as bright or fun filled in the least. She grabbed a towel from the rack and wrapped it tightly around her body, and turned to stare blankly into the frosted mirror. Placing a finger on the sink she traced its curved bowl and grabbed her hairbrush that lay in the sink where the train had shaken it. Running the brush absently through her short hair, she continued to listen to what was happening outside her bathroom. She could hear the Walters going at it again; they argued almost every day at different levels of frequency, but today must have been one of those days, because the blond could hear every other word.

“Three, two, one,” she counted down.

**SLAM, CRASH** went the door right across the hall as Mr. Walter violently opened and closed the heavy wooden door. The woman whipped her head to face the unlocked bathroom door as the crash sounded, because it was not Mrs. Walter throwing something at the closed door but something from her own kitchen.

“The roses,” she gasped. Quickly she placed the hairbrush back on the sink, turning to the door. It opened within seconds, and she entered the rest of her brightly lit apartment. She walked in measured steps until the cold of the linoleum hit her toes. She had left the vase of roses in the sink until she could find a secure place to put them, where the vibrations of the train could not ruin their beauty. Taking another step, a sharp pain stabbed the arch of her foot. She withdrew her foot from the floor and with it, a shard of glass. Cursing under her breath as she pulled out the sliver, she placed her foot back and slid it across the floor, moving little sharp bits of glass and roses out of her way. She did the same with her other foot; it would have looked like skating to anyone else, but to her it was natural to feel her way around like this. Reaching the other side of the kitchen, she put her hand out, took one step onto carpet and had her hand meet the door. She was going to give Mrs. Walter a piece of her mind and ask her to help clean up the mess that now was the kitchen, but not necessarily in that order. She reached for the chain that was one of the locks she had installed. Something jingled as she brushed her fingers against it. Running her fingers over the looped metal that should have been attached to the wall, she found it broken. A gasp came from her lips; hurriedly she ran her hand down to the lock, fumbling in haste to unlock, and found it was already unlocked.

“No, no, no... this can't be happening,” she murmured. She slid one hand down the door and then the other hand more slowly. She ran her hands over the door again, just finding a fractured wooden hole where the doorknob should have been. At this, she withdrew her hand like the door burned. The rumbling began again, but it was hard to feel over the rush of adrenaline and the speedy beating of her heart. Turning towards the small living room, she rushed for the phone. Tripping over her work bag, she went down. Papers spilled out of their neat folders to a jumbled mess that she was now sprawled over, towel sliding down her back. Ignoring the papers, she clutched the towel tightly to her chest as she went trembling to her knees. The next EL-train was on its way and her apartment had already started the volcanic shaking. The blond quickly turned her head to the rattling closet that she knew was only a few feet behind her. Tears fell from her vacant eyes as she knew she was not alone anymore. Hastily she scampered across the carpet, not worrying about crumpling her important case documents. The shaking got worse as the train approached, making the woman stumble and lose her balance. She finally reached the table that held the cordless phone by running headlong into it, knocking the table over, hearing the phone stand thump on to the carpet. The closet rattled more loudly as she could hear the train getting closer. Her heart raced faster and her mind was blank except for the

indescribable need to get the phone. Moving the table aside, she fumbled with the phone stand, finding where the phone should have been. Searching the floor with outstretched hands, she found nothing.

“Come on, come on...phone...phone...get the phone,” she told herself as she searched in wider circles. The cabinets now picked up on the rattling that the closet had started as the train came even closer.

“Your call can not be completed as dialed, please hang up...” came an automated voice from a few feet away.

She crawled after the voice with outspread hands, searching for the absent phone. Suddenly her hands hit something solid; she knelt there feeling it. It was solid and definitely immovable. Moving her hands over the solid mass, she was able to make out what it was made of. It was, as she thought, a column of denim.

“Your call can not be completed...” came the automated voice again now from above her head. She looked up but could see nothing; she could only feel denim beneath her fingers.



## A HORSE WITH A BIG HEAD

*by* HWA RI JANG

# DEMAGOGUERY IN THE TIME OF RELIGION

by NADER AHMED

“For what benefit did the Athenians obtain by putting Socrates to death, seeing that they received as retribution for it famine and pestilence?”

-Mara bar Serapion

“This country was founded on one thing and one thing alone,” uttered the head of the prosecutorial team, as he opened his summation. “Religion. Religion, my friends, was—and remains—the foundation of this nation,” spoke the man in a stentorian tone as he paced up and down the courtroom, striking the jurors from their vigil with his piercing gaze. Everything about the man spoke to his refinement, his talent, his elocution; he was heavily involved in politics and well-versed in debate. He had joined the case pro bono; it was what one might call a cause célèbre.

“Our ancestors fled here because they were prosecuted for their beliefs. Their beliefs! Those tenets that held the incondite house together! Could you imagine such a fate?” inquired the urbane gentleman. His eyes reeked of sympathy. There was no doubt this man believed what he said. “But such a fate is better than abandoning God altogether, as the defendant would have us do. He would have us forsake our lives, the intangible force that makes our tangible existence bearable, by having us adopt agnosticism, atheism, pantheism, and so forth! He claims to be a man dedicated to reason, to science, but you know as well as I, jurors, that science is just another religion. They beg you to adhere to beliefs of nothingness, to subscribe to the death of the Judeo-Christian God! Do you not wonder why, jurors?”

A hushed silence filled the courtroom, as the man looked from juror to juror, feeding their anticipation. The answer was whispered as if it were the greatest secret in the world. “To put their own god on the throne, my friends, they wish to replace what has stabilized our world for millennia with their own god. They would have us believe in a god of reason and rationalism, whose characteristics would be distinguished by them. Is the hubris of this not manifest? They would ask you to be so arrogant as to presume to know more than anything else in the world. The defendant, K., disseminates these ideas. He offers to teach such things to our children, and their children, and they listen! They heed the word of the prophet. Is it not ironic? There is no God, and K. is his prophet! You, jurors, have seen the deleterious effects of this man’s oratory. He is a demagogue, appealing to the childhood wonder of boyhood. You have a choice to make. Will you allow the demagogue to continue his execrable activity, or will you punish him for his error?”

The man paused, as if to give the jury a brief moment to consider the consequences of letting the horrific man go. “We are in a battle against all deviants of God. They wish to pollute the land with their vitriol, their desiderata. We must tolerate others. Mohammedans, Jews, adherents of the religions of the Far East—to not tolerate them would be to betray our upbringing. God manifests through their beliefs, however wrong they may be. But, those who dispute even the existence of any and all manifestations of God must not be tolerated! They are scum, the dregs of society, and by tolerating them, we risk our preclusion from the Kingdom of Heaven. They seek to drag us down with them. This is a duel, a battle to the death; it is us versus them, the good versus the evil. We must serve as the soldiers of God, lest the beasts run us over.” With that surreal conclusion, the man finally sat down, content with his argument. The defendant, a timid looking man whose name, K., seemed apposite, stood up to offer his own summation. He could not afford an attorney, and none had chosen to take his case pro bono.

“Jurors, I am not a bad man, as the prosecutor would have you believe. I am not a demagogue. I feel as if the prosecutor, who I’m sure is of sound mind and body, has become a little lost in the maze of his own circumlocution. A demagogue appeals to your fears and beliefs in order to consolidate power, no? If I am truly a demagogue, then I am doing nothing more than extrapolating and expanding on what lies within. If I am truly a demagogue, it is only insofar as I am like an itinerant gadfly buzzing around a horse that has become staid in its satiety, trying to force it to recall the joy of movement. As such, I will never stop buzzing until I have accomplished my goal.”

The jurors seemed to recoil at the brutal defiance of the defendant; it seemed obvious that his diction was not helping his case. K., staring intensely at each juror in succession, didn’t appear to care. “Furthermore, the prosecutor likens me to a prophet for an abstract religion, yet claims I am an atheist, among other things. How can I be an atheist while at the same time a prophet for another religion? It only makes sense if you consider the prosecutor’s oratory to be the product of demagoguery. He is the demagogue; does he not appeal to your fears and concerns with these baseless accusations? By his word, I am both an atheist and a theist, both a demagogue and a man of reason.” K.’s arguments seemed to be resonating with some of the jurors, but some still seemed uncertain.

“Such contradictions, when accepted readily, are truly detrimental to a society. Allow me to paint you a more accurate picture. I am not an atheist. In fact, I was born a Calvinist, was raised a Calvinist, and have now settled into a position of an agnostic Calvinism. Agnosticism and atheism are different, despite the popular interchangeability of the two. As Clarence Darrow once said: ‘I do not pretend to know where many ignorant men are sure—that is all agnosticism means’. Am I going against my religion by simply stating that reason, not religion, should rule a society? I think not. The two do not have to be opposed to one another. They are not engaged in an

eternal struggle. There does exist a mundane struggle between the two, though—and we are the source of it, as is evident by the prosecutor!”

The jury looked on curiously as K. continued. “The prosecutor says this country was founded on religion. But his story itself reveals the truth of the foundation! It was founded on religious tolerance precisely because our ancestors were fleeing the tyranny of religion! God, if he exists, is glorious; I do not dispute this. But God, in his mysteries, can be misinterpreted and abused, and that is a most horrific crime. His will can be misconstrued and lead to cruelty. I agree with the prosecutor insofar as the horror of the hubris of man goes. Is man not arrogant to assume he can interpret the will of God fully and correctly? We are too capricious to do so accurately. The prosecutor says we are involved in an eternal battle versus all religious aberration. I disagree. Jurors, if one thing is true in this entire world, it is something Dudley Field Malone once said: ‘There is never a duel with the truth!’” The courtroom was consumed by ferment upon the conclusion of his speech. The judge bellowed for order and banged the gavel. Eventually, the jury retired to deliberate. A week later, they returned, and the judge asked them for their ruling in regards to the fate of K.

“Does this not seem ironic at all to you?” inquired K., as they tied him to the cross. “Be thankful, sir. I didn’t use nails out of deference to you. Not all of us believe you to be guilty, but it is a necessary sacrifice,” retorted the executioner. “Your words would have destroyed our way of life.” K. contemplated this for a few minutes. “Sometimes perdition is the only way to reach exaltation. If God exists, he knows I have only done good,” replied K., who said no more words, resigning himself to his fate.

A massive crowd had gathered to watch the conflagration. K. was to be burned alive on the cross. The prosecutor from K.’s case was on the stage where the cross was centered. The executioner lit the fire as the prosecutor declared, “Here we bear witness to the triumph of good!” The crowd largely cheered, overwhelming the despondent ululations of K.’s family. Suddenly, a white beam poured down from the clouds, absorbing K. into the empyrean. The crowd, confused, initiated the inexplicable permutations into a mob. Shock stained the prosecutor’s countenance. “Evil is amidst!” promulgated the prosecutor, ululating to placate the crowd. It did not work. They had come to taste blood, and they would have it. The cross continued to burn.



URBAN JUNGLE  
*by* ANTHONY BOUCHÉ



# LOST IN PARIS

*by* ELIZABETH A. FIKE

It was a very cold August day in Paris, France. The temperature was in the mid-sixties and very windy. It was cold enough to require long sleeves, pants and a scarf. It was my first time in Europe, and I was extremely excited to see the sights. Our bus dropped us off at the Paris opera house, and we were instructed to be back in five hours. It was our only free day on the trip, and I wanted to go to the Louvre since our tour did not include a trip to the museum. I was dying to see the Mona Lisa and Van Gogh's paintings. I was traveling in Europe with my grandparents, and on this particular day, they were exhausted. They decided to return to the hotel to rest, so I was left on my own to find the museum. By nature I'm not the type of person to explore new places or venture out on my own. At the time I was very dependent on my family and didn't do much without them. This trip was once in a lifetime for me, so I decided to push past my reservations and go. Our tour bus driver, a gentleman who had lived in Paris for nearly twenty years, instructed me to go down twenty blocks on the Avenue de L'Opera, where I would cross the bridge which leads to the museum. At least this is what I thought he said, since he gave me directions hastily in German. How we ended up on a German guided tour in Paris is another story altogether.

Off I went down the busy street in search of the Louvre. The city was so exotic and fascinating to me. The streets were filled with people from all over the world wearing all sorts of different clothes and fashions. The architecture of the buildings was also very new to me. I've been to large cities in the US, and the buildings are new and cold. In Paris the buildings are big and old with large shuttered windows. Most have balconies with flower gardens on the rails and gargoyles sitting on the roofs. The streets are lined with shops like Chanel and Dolce and Gabbana. There are cafés everywhere with people sitting outside smoking and drinking coffee. It was heaven; the city smelled like smoke and freshly baked bread.

I was so entranced in the sights that I wasn't paying very much attention to the street signs or how far I had traveled. At one point I came to a fork in the road; I could go either left or right. I figured that our guide just forgot to mention this little detail and went to the right, which is the direction I was supposed to go. I turned onto a deserted alley with no people or shops. It was lined on both sides with large apartment buildings. I continued walking in the alley, and out of nowhere a young man approached me. He had long blond hair tied back in a ponytail, piercing blue eyes and was wearing a long black trench coat. "Mademoiselle," he said. I stopped and turned to look at him. All of a sudden he started screaming at me in French. I was terribly confused as to why a strange man would be yelling at me, so I started walking away as quickly as possible. I turned my head to see where the man was, and

I saw that he was following me down the alley. I turned right onto the first busy street I saw and looked back again to see where he was; he had vanished.

At this point I was totally freaked out; all I wanted to do was find a taxi and get to the Louvre. I start looking around, and there were no cars anywhere in sight. The street I had turned on was a market place; it was lined with outdoor stalls where people were selling fruit, vegetables and herbs. The only stores on the street were bakeries and butcher shops. It was what Americans would consider a farmers market. I continued on down the alley and tried to ask a few people for directions. Now just like most people from big cities, the Parisians I spoke to were not so willing to assist a lost tourist who spoke no French. At this point I begin to panic; I was completely lost in a strange country, no map, no cell phone, no taxis anywhere in sight, and no one willing to help me. In my entire life I had never felt so alone. I refused to turn around and back track because who knew where that crazy French man was lurking?



## RADISH BOUQUET

*by* OLGA CASTANEDA MARTIN

My only option was to continue on and hope I would find a main road where I could find a cab. I didn't know this at the time, but Paris has thousands of tiny alley ways and back streets. I turned down one street and ended up on another back alley. The street names all seemed very similar, like Rue de Charles or Avenue de Charles. Every turn I made, I ended up getting deeper and deeper into the labyrinth of small back alleys. I felt like a mouse in a maze trying to find the cheese at the end. I realized that because I was panicking I wasn't able to pay attention and get anywhere.

I sat down at a small café to catch my breath and regroup. I ordered a coffee and smoked several cigarettes. While sitting there I tried to figure out what to do. How was I going to find my way back? I only had about an hour and a half left until the bus was scheduled to pick us up from the opera house. I knew if the bus left without me I'd be totally screwed because I had no idea what the name of the hotel we were staying at was. I wanted to cry. As I'm sitting there I start to look around, the street I had ended up on looked so peaceful. There were several old French men sitting at the café smoking and laughing. The street was lined with flower vendors with all sorts of bouquets, red tulips, white calla lilies and pink carnations. At that moment I had what some people would consider an epiphany. I was in the most beautiful city in the world, seeing parts of it that most tourists never get to see and should be enjoying every minute. I knew at that moment that I would be fine, that I would find my way. I paid for my coffee and walked over to one of the flower vendors to purchase a bouquet. He looked at me and said in heavily accented English, "I'm so glad you're smiling; you looked so sad sitting there at the café." I laughed then for first time that day.

"You have no idea what a day it's been," I said, to which he asked me if I had just come from the botanical gardens.

"No" I said "I've not been able to make it there just yet".

"Well, it's right around the corner, if you want to go".

My eyes lit up with joy. I wasn't very familiar with the layout of Paris, but I did remember from a map that I had looked at previously that the botanical gardens were located by the Seine River and that most of the major streets ran perpendicular to the Seine. I thanked him profusely and left. I had about thirty minutes left until the bus would come and started to run. I ran along the Seine River and turned onto the Avenue de L'Opera, the same street I had started out on. I got to the opera house and made it to the bus on time. When I got to the hotel that evening I handed my Nana the flowers and she asked me about the Louvre. I just smiled and told her I had decided to walk around instead.

I never did make it to the Louvre to see the Mona Lisa. Whenever I think back about my trip to Europe it's not seeing the Eiffel Tower, or riding down the canals in Venice or even meeting some of my relatives in Germany that I think of. It's a cold, windy day in Paris where I found me.

# THE BREVITY OF NIGHT

by ANDY TRAN

Clear skies, sun stands tall, clouds come  
Chill Evening dims to bleak night  
Warm air burns slow and freezes  
Red rays, brown grass, blue rain dives

Faucets leak, gush, can't shut off  
Flat wood top, splinters, chips fly  
Smooth Cups, slip, drop, crack hard  
Thin napkins, bends, folds, severs

Phone vibrates, rings, texts jingle  
Loud voice, big words, no meaning  
Closed mouths, no words, screams inside  
Records spin, jump skip, sounds die

Clean scents, air stales, smells putrid  
Fresh steak, overcooks, stinks foul  
Sliced bread, yeast and molds, rots fast  
Sneeze from pepper, salts sting eyes

Cold floors, damp sleeves, fire scorches  
Firm chairs, plush seats, legs sway back  
Toes itch, fingers dry, bones shake  
I touch her skin. I've...lost touch

# SPECIAL PLACE

by CLAUDIA AYALA

*Calliope Honorable Mention 2011 - ESL*

Years ago, when I was eleven years old, my mom moved out of my house. I was so depressed that I did not want to leave my room. My father was really worried about me. One day, he knocked at my door and convinced me to go out with him. He said that there was a wonderful place he wanted to show me. I asked him what the name of it was, but he said that for right now I should call it special place and I could find a name for it by myself.

We finally got there. The space was awesome, like nothing I have ever seen. I could feel how the sun was shining compared with the darkness and coolness of my room. There were a lot of different birds singing and flying at the same time. I think they were trying to celebrate the presence of a new visitor. Also there was a waterfall. The water was coming down the hill. It looked so refreshing. My dad knew the space very well, so there was nothing new to him except the reaction he could see on my face.

After I analyzed the space, my Dad and I sat on the green and really clean grass. He started talking about his past and about his reaction the first his father brought him there. After that, he said his father used to bring him here every time he was feeling upset, too. He thought it would be good for me as much as it was for him. Then he asked me if I was feeling the same way about my mom. I explained that the sadness was still there, but it was not hurting as much as it did before I came. At the time, I was so relaxed, that I did not want to think about my problems. I tried to look at them in a positive way.

Now, those years when I was a child are gone. I grew up visiting that special place every time something bothered me. Sometimes I went with my Dad and sometimes by myself. I have to admit that I always preferred to go by myself because it was easier for me to work my problems out on my own. I am still feeling the same as I did when I was eleven years old. Now, I understand when people say “your body is the one thing that gets old, but your feelings are still the same.” That space looks the same for me every time I go back. The environment is still untouched.

Over the years, I have learned that my feelings about my special place will always be different from anyone else's. I love to visit it and now I call it enchanted. Why did I pick that name? Well, for me it was magic because just visiting it used to change my thoughts even without trying.

# NOTHINGNESS OF THIN AIR

by NADER AHMED

“There’s our catastrophe. In the bag.”

-Samuel Beckett, Catastrophe

Embrace me with chains,  
Embrace me with air,  
Return to the nothingness of thin air

Life is so much better than then  
I can be reached – anywhere, anytime  
Beckon to my toys if you ever need me

And nobody can hear us as  
We think thoughts of each other  
Of freedom and the days

Before all of world could tell this apart  
When one could not help but think that time then  
Is not the same thing as the modern way

Definitions do not change, but accumulate,  
And you learn more and more  
About the nothingness of thin air

Contradictions influx and coming  
To conclusions of worth and sacrifice,  
In remembrance of Gulliver:

Wandering, between the islets,  
Oscillating betwixt the two,  
And in landing, one discovers the man,

Tied down by infinitesimal chains,  
Held down by the hell of commodity,  
Struggling against the nothingness of thin air.



NUMBER SPACE  
*by* JOHN DEFORE



MAMMOTH CAVE LIZARD  
*by* JULIA BROWN





GRAVE STONE  
*by* ALEXANDER ZURUN



LADY APPLES  
*by* YEI BIN LEE

MY ANTIQUE MOTHER  
*by* NGOC PHUONG BICH NGUYEN

I don't love my mom due to our biological bond; I love her because she has gone above and beyond her duty as a mother. For that, she holds an irreplaceable part in my heart. What makes her so great, you may wonder?

Let me take you back to the time when I was about four years old and my family had to secretly flee Vietnam in the middle of the night. Our original plan was to go to Malaysia by sea. My ship was highjacked and stranded in the middle of the ocean for seven day and nights.

On the third day of being in the ocean, my family's food/water portion had run out. Being a toddler at the time, I did not have the will power to withstand the hun-

ger and thirst that throbbed inside my body. I often succumbed to the temptation of the salty sea water and snuck off to the back of the ship to take a few sips. Every drop that I gulped down made me regret drinking it a thousand times. Not only did the sea water not quench my thirst after drinking it, but it also made me even thirstier.

My mom finally caught me drinking the sea water and told me not to do it anymore because she would go ask the captain to spare some of his fresh water. When my mom said “asked,” I knew she meant begging because the captain was a selfish man. I watched my mom as she climbed to the deck to speak with the captain. About two minutes later, I saw my mom kneeling while the captain pointed at her and laughed. I couldn’t make out what was being said due to all the passengers groaning and crying in despair. A few seconds later I saw the captain’s son walk up to him with a bottle of water. A glimpse of happiness inside me quickly disappeared as I watched the captain’s son spit in the bottle.

As I saw my mom hurriedly walking back to give me the water, I told myself, it’s either this or death, so be a big girl and disregard the taste. I can still vividly remember the disgusting, slippery feeling of the mucus juggled along my throat as I attempted to swallow it with the water. Deep down I would have rather died than drink that nasty water, but I knew how my mom is such a rebellious person, who would never yield to anyone even if it meant losing her life, yet she kneeled and begged, all for my sake. I couldn’t let all that effort go to waste.

After my ship was rescued by the police of Bangkok, Thailand, our family was placed in a refugee camp. The refugee camp was separated from the outside world by a barbed wire fence. Right outside the fence was a field of 4ft tall grasses and wild flowers. While living as refugees, we were forbidden to work. Each week, the camp chief would distribute food, water and wood to live off, but that ration wasn’t enough to last three to four days. By the end of every week my family would be at the starving point.

Finally, my brother couldn’t stand watching his family suffer; he decided to sneak outside the camp to go look for work. Luckily, my brother found a couple of villagers three miles from our camp. My brother told us that he was helping an elderly couple on their farm. Instead of being paid with money, the old couple gave him a variety of tropical fruits such as mangos, jack fruits or longans to bring back. My brother usually left at midnight and didn’t return until two to three days later. All went well until one night; the chief caught my brother crawling through the fence.

The following day, around noon, the chief and ten of his subordinates rounded up everyone in the camp. He had my brother kneel before him with both of his arms tied in the back. The chief pointed at us with his gun and fiercely said, “This is what happens to those who violate my rules!” and whacked my brother in the head violently with his gun. Blood began to drip from my brother’s head, and he fainted shortly after. My mother’s screams echoed in my ears. In my mind, I cursed that fat, cruel

man. My brother was only fourteen; he didn't deserve to be punished that harshly. My brother was transported to a nearby prison outside of the camp, and visitors were not allowed. If anyone were to be caught around that area unauthorized, he would be killed immediately.

My mother didn't really care about the consequences and decided to go visit my brother in secret. My dad opposed the idea at first but he knew it was impossible to stop her. Each night, my mom would pack a bit of food to bring with her; she was afraid that my brother might not have enough to eat.

My heart was like a beating drum, and I would grip the fence as I watched my mom walking through the tall grasses. Tears filled my eyes as I looked up to the radiant full moon and shimmering stars, hoping that Buddha could hear my prayers and protect my mom. Every night that my mom went to visit my brother, I would always stand by the fence wearing my white night gown with my long, pitch black hair draping down on my back waiting for my mom's return. I remember one time someone mistook me for a ghost and ran off a distance. From that day on, no one dared to stay out late at night, and that served as a great advantage for my mom. There were many refugees who had family members being held captive, but none had the courage to go the extra mile like my mom did.

To others the next event might seem trivial, but to me, this is one of the many unforgettable memories that engraved in my mind and heart. I was in third grade at the time and my family was still living in Thailand as refugees, it was 8:00am and I was late for school. I quickly brushed my teeth, grabbed my backpack and rushed out the door.

During recess while I was playing double Dutch with my classmates, suddenly I saw my mom walking towards me with a rope looped with multiple rubber bands in her hand. I shyly asked, "Mom, what are you doing here?" And she said warmly, "Oh since you left your rope at home and I was afraid that you might be bored during recess so I brought it for you." At that moment I just want to jump into my mom's embrace, thanking her for caring so much about me, but I didn't. I just stood there and watched my mom walk off.

As I was watching her walk away, I bit my lips and clenched my hands, trying hard not to burst into tears. To think that my mom didn't mind the trouble of walking in the burning sun and humid air in the ninety-eight degree weather for thirty minutes just to bring my toy so I wouldn't be bored during recess makes me feel so blessed with such a great mother.

My brother often said, "Think of our mom like an antique item. It might have lost its perfection for being outdated, but it's priceless because we won't be able to find another piece like that in our lifetime." I couldn't have agreed more. I'm a mother myself, but I can honestly say, I probably don't have the courage or dedication to love my children the way my mom did with hers.

# THE MUSIC OF LIZARDS

by NATHAN MOORE

*Calliope Third Prize 2011 - Creative Non-Fiction*

The sea of clouds broke to reveal a new sky. Blues faded to greens, and then pinks and reds ruled for a while. I grazed quietly by the pull-up bars and treaded cautiously in the sand. Predators lurked beyond the woods and waited for their prey to get thirsty and give in. I dipped my head low to drink from the pond, always poised and ready to run. On the Jurassic plain you had to look out for the old hungry ones. I cocked my head back like a bird and started to scream my name, but my howl was broken by words streaming in.

“Do you want to play Power Rangers?” A boy asked, breaking the primal trance.

I roared the anthem of the dinosaur and went back to my task. He turned and shouted, victoriously doing a dance.

“I’m the Red Ranger! I’m the Red Ranger!”

Another boy yelled. “No you’re not! I am”

A third chimed in. “Oh yeah! Well I’m the White Ranger!”

All the boys stopped fighting and stood in awe of his decision. Nobody had ever thought about going higher than Red.

I continued the day’s work of existence and ended up scavenging eggs and chewing on ferns. Survival is all that matters to the simple dinosaur brain. The sky changed again from dark red to gray.

Then the teacher intruded, barking, “It’s time to come inside. Tomorrow you’ll have more time to play.”

All the boys and girls stepped out of their Ranger suits and I stepped out of the jungle. Tomorrow the raptors would hunt, and stain the knives on their feet. I could have joined them, or walked with the giants, but I remained an Iguanodon; oblivious to time’s assignment.

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I don’t know when the urge was born. It’s a seed that was planted when I was very young. I never felt the growth of its roots searching for a home. One day it arrived, and it came out in a burst. It happened during story time at Mrs. Kelly’s preschool. Mrs. Kelly was born to be a teacher. She loved teaching so much she taught from her home, a small white house with wood floors and four rooms. She had a class of nine who loved and adored her, because in her glasses was a reflection of each of our mothers. She taught us to cut with scissors and write our names on lined paper. She told us stories and gave us games. We learned to say the Pledge of Allegiance, and once we even caught and killed a snake. The nine of us cornered it in the sandbox, while Mrs.

Kelly fetched the rake.

It was in the middle of Story Time that I noticed a dim burning in my gut. My head felt like it was on fire, and my hands began to sweat. One idea polluted my mind, and it tortured me with heat. It said,

“Jump up like a bird and scream!”

“Scream!”

I tried hard to listen to Mrs. Kelly’s words, describing a lovely bear, but Scream was all that was there. It echoed from every corner of my consciousness, until soon it was right on the tip of my lips.

“Act like a bird! Go ahead! Get up and run around the room!”

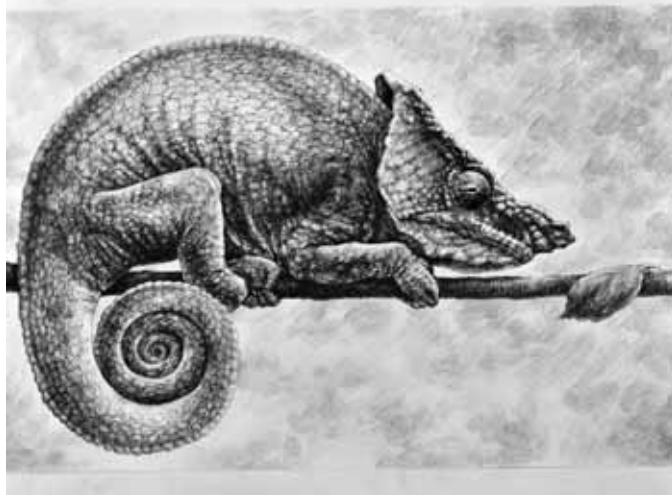
I couldn’t sit still. The story about the bear dissolved in my ears, and Scream continued, loud and clear. The transformation began without my consent. The bird I was becoming captured my vision: prehistoric, reptilian, with gold scales and slick blue feathers. My arms turned into wings, and my bones began to bend and shake. My neck coiled back and my face extended into a beak.

Now all I had to do is stand up and Scream!

I leapt up from the circle of Indian style statues and flew up above them. The first thing I did in my new skin was spread out my wings and cry like a Pterodactyl.

“RAAAAAAAAKKKKKKK.” The high pitched siren rang.

My vocals strengthened as I flapped around the room. I hopped in between children and snapped at their shoes. I let out one more good scream and then faced



CHAMELEON  
*by* SOL RYU

Mrs. Kelly. The bear book rested in her lap. She tightly squeezed one page until she tore off a corner. Her mouth was ajar like a crocodile. A tree of veins bloomed out of her neck. I stopped mid-yell and froze in a soar. I shook the mantra out of my head and came crashing to the floor. No sooner than I could morph from bird to boy, Mrs. Kelly scooped me up by the ear and carried me into another world. I was still too drunk off flying to hear the eight other children gasp and whisper. They knew what was coming, but my mind was a foggy lake of comprehension. I had to erect a mental wall to keep out the beast. It already had gotten me into trouble once, this urge to stand up and scream. I couldn't decide if I was just bored or crazy. The urge came so quickly, taking over completely. I had no say in the matter. All I know is it felt good to break the silence.

My punishment was to lie in a room on my stomach with my tongue sticking out. I wasn't allowed to move, or speak, certainly not scream and shout. The other kids passed me on their way to lunch and looked on in fear. How long would it be before the urge found them and they ended up here? I laid there for what seemed like days, getting to know this new pain. The urge never showed up once in those moments of shame. After my tongue was white and dry, and my stomach brown and bruised, Mrs. Kelly scooped me up by my ear again and threw me out to my mom. I got two disappointed looks that day. I knew I had broke the golden rule. I never stood up during Story Time again. I always sat quietly and smiled like a fool. I don't remember a single detail about many of those story time stories, but I've never forgotten those few seconds of wild glory.

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Mrs. Kelly shipped me off to a bigger school, hoping I learned my lesson, but the first week I was sentenced to sit by myself at lunch for imitating the hiss of a Dilophosaurus. Imagination was our playground in Kindergarten. During play time we would never go swing on the swings or kick a ball in the dirt, we'd huddle up in circles and play Power Rangers, or Ninjas, or Monsters, even War. But after weeks of fights over who would be the Red Ranger, and making ninja stars out of paper, I found these imaginary worlds empty of the music of lizards. The voice was crawling back, this time in a beam of light. It hit me like an asteroid, and I immediately slouched down and let out a roar from a forgotten age. I acted out every scene of the dinosaur movies I owned. I stalked the small forests and deserts of the playground, but most of the time I just grazed like a good herbivore, observing the actions of the flies and plants. No more Red Ranger, or Dracula, or Hero. There was only pure instinct and knowledge of Nature. The rule of the dinosaurs began and ended with a yell.

“Play time children!” and “Now it's time to come in.”

Always breaking the spell...

Another year passed and the urge to dream quieted down. In first grade, play

time was whittled down to a measly half hour. We learned to walk in straight lines with an index finger over our mouths. We started adding numbers and placing the correct name of the continents on an empty map. It seemed like mathematics and geography would replace the cold-blooded kings, but then one day I saw the strangest thing. The class was walking single file, with a finger to their lips, and out of the corner of my eye I saw a green flash. Across the playground, stuck to a building, were dozens of winged lizards bathing in the sun's rays. I rubbed my eyes and squinted, glaring across rippling heat waves, expecting this impossibility to be rationally explained. But they remained. New lizards joined them and sang. I could make out their tiny horned heads and paper thin wings. I saw one snap at a dragonfly, and another take off with the breeze. I tried to tug on the shirt of the boy in front of me, but our teacher Mrs. Tut, scolded:

“Finger over your lips, children!”

I did as she said, biting my tongue. When I looked back at the building, the lizards were gone.

Slowly, one by one, I forgot every dinosaur name I had learned. I forgot the taste of the ancient dew and the heat of the ancient sun. The urge to dream disappeared; the voice crumbled into dust. My thoughts were filled with new drugs and the awkward string of love. Humans became the new predators. Skin became the new field to graze. Through the cracks of the years, my imagination slipped away. All my dinosaur movies and toys were thrown in the attic to melt and freeze. The scream of the lizard left my tongue; the words of men found their place.



## THE GUISE OF MALE WRITERS

by HENRY W. LEEKER

The first time I read “The Lake Isle of Innisfree” by William Butler Yeats I was speechless. In this poem the narrator describes an ideal sanctuary located in the Irish countryside. The narrator envisions the place, remarking that he will reach it someday, but not today. I’ve read it thousands of times since, and every time it has filled me with a sense of total contentment with the universe, a feeling that all things have been set into motion to work themselves out for the better. Though this Zen-like satisfaction lasts only a nanosecond, it seems to render any moment of loneliness, impotence, or despair I’ve ever felt totally irrelevant. The feeling that I first had and continue to



have from reading this, or any good poem, is comparable only to the euphoric first exhale of a smoker's much needed cigarette.

Since then I've struggled to find other writers. Those whom I've found were few. Only a small percentile of those few have been males. Like me, those male writers were looking for a sense of belonging. Male writers are under a particular strain to live up to society's expectations. They must choose to make an awkward compromise with societal norms or face rejection. To me, and other male writers, being a man in the arts means wearing a guise of perceived manliness as though it were a subset personality. It means being torn between one's passion to understand the human soul and a yearning to be "one of the guys."

I thought maybe this feeling of isolation was just a phase, or an individual exception in the face of an overwhelming rule. When I got to college I began to notice something familiar in my English and Creative Writing teachers, particularly my male teachers. Some of them still yearned for acceptance while others lingered on from wounds suffered in the same struggle. The male English teachers were somewhat tragic. They were either bitter, stuffy old men who had compromised on a dream somewhere along the line, or they were aging men still trying to prove themselves to the boys who had long ago tired of hassling them. Deep down my professors and I were all on a quest to prove that we were still men.

My Victorian Literature professor was a short and wiry man of almost seventy with flat grey hair and a protruding lower lip that seemed to stick out in disdain at his select students. He was known for making statements on students' analyses like "interesting, but not quite on point" or to reduce a letter grade on a midterm for misplacing a comma in the honor pledge. But behind his hawk-like eyes I sensed a sadness fueled by some kind of inadequacy or lack of accomplishment. In his office hung a mural with a personalized poem by writer James Dickey whom he later revealed to have been a friend and drinking buddy from their days at Clemson. Explaining this to me, he looked back at the mural like one looks over an old photo collection. The look was a mix of nostalgia and resentment. I could tell he was reminded of a literary lifestyle which he was not privy to. In class he seemed to have a cold indifference to the passion of writing. Yet during the occasional lecture he could not help but show signs of admiration and even affection in his tone when he spoke of A.E. Houseman or Thomas Hardy, signs that a masculine pride would not allow for.

My first Creative Writing teacher could be described simply as "buff." When I walked into class the first day I thought I had mistakenly gone to my weightlifting class. He taught in professional attire, but I will always remember him at the gym in a black muscle-shirt. When he was out of the office, you could find him at the university gym. Rain or shine he would be there effortlessly doing free-form dips or running on the indoor track. He ran with machine-like efficiency and form, his elbows cocked parallel to his hips and his closed fists jutting outward, always it seemed with a "what

are you looking at?” look on his face. He always seemed to be someone who had been left behind by the other boys. I wondered how often he had been picked last for basketball teams in middle school gym class. How often had he been moved to tears and then forced to hide it? It was easy to envision him on a playground, oblivious to a rowdy game of flag football, his nose stuck too far into a “selected works.”

My American Literature professor was by far the most jovial of these men, but not without an underlying longing to his character. He stood in front of us during the lectures with slightly unkempt jet black hair and glasses that he compulsively fidgeted with. His Adam’s apple would bobble up and down like a manic elevator as he talked to us in a thick and toothy Alabama accent. One thing that stuck with me was that whether he was talking about Walt Whitman or Tennessee Williams, he always managed to ham-fistedly make a reference to his love for NASCAR or college football. I could almost see him in a pair of thirty-percent-off LL Bean work jeans with the knees worn out. He would be shirtless with arms red from the midday sun but with a doughy belly as white as the sanitary university lecture halls, a redneck ying-yang. I could see him with a third Bud Light in his hand, caught in the intensity of a near collision at the bend or a visiting team’s fumble. I could see him yelling, trying desperately to be seen as anything but “just” an English teacher. Most importantly he wanted (would want?) to be seen as a man.

I can relate to these men. I have also felt the need to wear the guise of perceived masculinity. When, say, being interviewed for a job or simply trying to fit in, it doesn’t work in my favor to say that I most enjoy taking contemplative walks or losing myself in a work of poetry. I am forced to highlight activities more “suitable” for my gender. I tell interviewers that I am an Eagle Scout, to which I receive a hearty “very impressive.” When I firmly shake the hand of a friend-of-a-friend in a smoky lounge and tell them I’m an avid boxer, they immediately re-think every solely male train of thought that ends with the question “can I take him?” So it seems that I am safe, for the moment.

The last lines of “The Lake Isle of Innisfree” read “I will arise and go now, for always night and day/I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;/While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,/I hear it in the deep heart’s core.” The narrator can imagine this idyllic place. Unfortunately it is currently out of his reach and he must set out to find it. Likewise I, these men whom I have known, and other male writers are still searching for that sense of equilibrium, a place that’s free of judgment.

# WALKING IN THE SPIDERWEBS

by KATHERINE AYESHA RAHEEM

The silence dragged on interminably. In my head I played the Quiet Game—whichever stays quiet the longest wins. I desperately wanted to win, wanted her to break the silence and draw me into a conversation about anything at all. I wanted to know she was there, still a fixture in my life despite the hundreds of miles stretching between us. I heard background noise, probably the bustle of her roommates, three girls I was intensely jealous of. They got to have her; I was left behind with nothing to keep me company except the knowledge that, despite the dead air, my best friend was giving me her time if not her attention.

Paranoid thoughts ran unbidden through my head. Had it always been like this? Surely we once had actual conversations, the lengthy ones teenage girls are infamous for sharing. Surely I only felt distant from her because she was literally far away; there was no need to worry about our friendship, to worry that it was weakening, slowly eroding as each moment passed into the next without a sound to accompany it.

We were forever friends. I knew that. It was ridiculous for me to even entertain the notion that something wasn't right. As I'd done countless times before, I dropped my gaze and studied the familiar script. It did precisely what it was meant to, calming me down, reminding me that she would be there for me, now, tomorrow, forever, always. But I missed her, God I missed her. I still do. Less than a year before, I was driving to DC, a girl on a mission. I'd chosen to ignore the words of people who warned that a single taste of the needle would never be enough, that your thirst for it would rapidly become unquenchable. I longed for the sharp sting dipping into my skin. My excitement was palpable, anticipation and nerves combining to fill me with a fabulous energy, utterly unique to the needle and the experience.

I didn't second-guess myself. I made my decision and wasted no time following through. The pain would be brief, the high giddy and intoxicating. I'd only felt it once, but you simply don't forget a sensation as brilliant as that. Besides, pain was hardly a deterrent. Not when I was on my way to making my best friend a part of me forever.

An hour later it was done. The needle, sterilized and sharp, was armed with nothing more than ink. Its pulsing movements had given me something I'd needed so badly: a constant reminder that my best friend was with me, part of me, no matter how many miles separated us. The tattoo's cursive script refers to a song—our song, I suppose, although later I'd wonder if it held as much meaning to her as it did to me. After all, I was the one on the verge of an emotional breakdown, the one who needed to hear the comforting lyrics that even now make me teary-eyed. This one line in particular really sets me off, as the vocalist sings in a voice tinged with frustration, "If

you think I'm giving up on you, you're crazy. If you think I don't love you, well then you're just wrong."

At the time, only one other design graced my skin. A handful of years later, I would have six. But there is only one that I've ever regretted getting. Each tattoo represents something huge in my life, something permanent and steady and beloved. I planned them all meticulously. Perhaps it seems rash and stupid to want a permanent reminder of a person, especially when that person is a friend. They come and go, after all. But this was different. She was my rock. Our childhoods were so tightly intertwined that I have few memories that don't include her. She was a fixture in my life from the age of four on. I truly never believed that our friendship could come to an end. The idea was beyond the realm of possibility. Sure, we'd drift and go our separate ways, but she would always be My Best Friend. That title was hers alone.

For a long time I wondered; for a long time I worried. Questions plagued me, a little desperate, a little hopeful, a little scared. Would the memories of our friendship haunt me forever, hurt me forever? Would a mental image of the two of us poolside spring into my head whenever I smelled the uniquely summer scent of chlorine and sun block? Would Calvin and Hobbes ever be just a boy and a tiger instead of our imaginary partners-in-crime? Would I ever appreciate the crisp sting of autumn air without remembering the day we raked our initials in the leaves blanketing her yard? What about spaghetti and Mott's applesauce, the delicious tang of fresh Sri Lankan pineapple, the rich chocolate taste of Nutella? What about Hershey's Syrup and 2% milk, chocolate mustaches and late night kitchen raids? What about cheesecake garnished with slices of kiwi?

And God, what about the music? Hadn't that brought on my current dilemma? Would "Bohemian Rhapsody" ever stand alone, or would I always associate it with her dad's booming voice as he sang backup to Freddy Mercury? Would "American Pie" ever serve as the background music to anything other than the car rides of our childhood? Would the heartbreaking lyrics of "Don't Speak" replace "Just A Girl" as our No Doubt anthem?

Would I ever hear "Just Wait" without thinking of her? Would I ever look upon those two words on my wrist and feel anything but a pang of sadness, of pain and loss? I can't be sure, yet. Sometimes I see them and am blinded by memories. More often, though, I see the power of the words themselves. In them there is strength: not the kind you get when someone squeezes your hand in comfort, but a strength and power entirely your own. The words mean patience and love and hope. They are a promise that I won't let today's challenges stop me from grabbing hold of tomorrow. They are a promise that I can and will handle whatever life throws my way.

They are a promise that if I just wait, it will come.



BIG HANDS  
*by* ANNE GORHAM



SELF PORTRAIT WITH GUITAR  
*by* YEI BIN LEE

# THE PAPRIKA JUNGLE

*by* CJ RAMONES

Brown arms adorned in emerald stretching to great lengths  
Height towering over existence  
Cradling and nurturing tender breaths of life  
Below the arms above the feet  
A central battle ground  
Where blood is drawn

Silence

The darkness creeps along branches  
Thirsty  
To devour the meandering monkey  
Pounce  
Jaws sink into the monkey's ribs  
Shriek  
Fangs puncture lungs  
Red  
Orange and yellow  
Dawn skies cry  
For those who died.

# THE SETTING SUN

*by* NICHOLAS ARONOW

The Setting Sun  
by: Nicholas Aronow

Standing atop the hill  
looking over the city scape  
with clouds pouring in from all sides

the azure sky being eaten up by the night  
with my back to the great temple with its spire reaching out  
a needle licking the fading light

I see in the distance the cliffs from faraway mountains  
which fight to hold back the last bits of sunlight  
I look down to the road ahead

the whir of the city  
calls me home  
it's time  
to go