

THE OHIO STATE  
UNIVERSITY AT LIMA

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VOLUME 5



*Asterism: An Undergraduate Literary Journal* is published annually by The Ohio State University at Lima.

All the poems and stories in the magazine are works of imagination.

Address all correspondence to:  
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4240 Campus Dr.  
Lima, OH 45804

Visit our website:  
[lima.osu.edu/asterism](http://lima.osu.edu/asterism)

Published Spring 2022

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# Revive Eden

## Carson Owens

*Stephen F. Austin  
State University*

As I drive these piney wood roads,  
Evergreens tracing the sunset with their jagged teeth,  
A crimson eye peering down as my car flies down the highway,  
I remember  
  those foggy, adolescent days.

The feeling of eyelids heavy with black, glossed  
Over the markers of sleepless nights.  
Ashtrays and heavy metal, putting on the skins of people  
That we weren't quite yet.

Car trips flooded with crocodile tears, the  
neighbors wondering what changed in the good girl next door.  
Angry words and angrier still,  
  when the fun ran out and we were  
left to  
face ourselves.

*Asterism*

This crimson sky has seen it all –  
And I have slipped into the skin of what I wanted to be.  
I'd give anything  
To do it all again.

# Solemn Statuary

Emily Hilligoss

*Palm Beach Atlantic  
University*

Marble could only replace  
skin for so long.

Chiseled lines resemble  
gently crafted cheekbones  
that creep into infamous  
smiles.

Lack of body heat  
makes her retreat back  
into folds of a nightgown.  
Marble could only replace  
skin for so long.

*Asterism*

# Memories Drown

Emily Hilligoss

*Palm Beach Atlantic  
University*

I wonder  
if weeping under willows  
makes devastation more  
romantic,  
if stars start to serenade  
and lighting comes with  
a heartbeat and wings,  
I'll know it's no longer  
a love story.  
Rain makes flowers  
but they wither in floods.  
My memories drown  
with them,  
tears reaching roots  
buried beneath years of  
forgiving but not forgetting.  
I am no longer interested in  
weeping under willows.  
I'd rather sit with devastation.

*Asterism*

# Family Vacation

Shelby Parks

*Palm Beach Atlantic  
University*

Jumping up and suddenly sitting on the balcony ledge of your eighth-floor hotel room is not the ideal start to a family vacation. Especially when you are ten and especially when you are struggling with your mental health for the first time. You may think it sounds like a good idea. Kinda exciting. Exhilarating. The most wild thing you could do in your ten short years on earth. But your dad will not think so. Your dad will spank you because he just watched his daughter's life flash before his eyes. Because he is scared. Your mom will not be happy with you either. But you will be spanked. Everyone will cry. You will realize the dark reality of what could have happened to you, and then you will all get changed to go to the beach.

*Asterism*



# Nursery Homes and Ice Cream Trips

*Rocky Mountain  
College*

**Nichole Davis**

Spoiled strawberry candy saturates the room  
mixing with sickly sweet urine and rose scented lotion  
for her weather worn sanded hands;  
to soothe them.

Her furry lips brought a slimy nude stained kiss to my velvetine cheek  
Leaving behind their lipstick print;  
heaving rotten breath.

Still,  
We always went for ice cream after our visits.

Father wept  
on the day  
of her death.

I wept  
For the loss  
of our  
after-visit-ice cream trips.

Now, strawberry ice cream smells like sickly sweet urine  
and rose scented lotion for her weather worn sanded hands;  
to soothe them.

*Asterism*

Nude lipstick  
looks like her furry lips  
which brought a slimy nude stained kiss  
to my velveteen cheeks leaving behind  
their lipstick prints and heaving rotten breaths.

# The Dance

## Mackenzie McAnear

Stephen F. Austin  
University

Inspired by Linda Ridgway's *The Dance*

The art of growing, thriving, fading  
Continuously.  
Exquisite like ebony  
I feel the tendrils taking hold,  
wrapping their darkness around me.  
Consuming me in its eternal eclipse.  
The rough branches scratching my legs  
tightening around my waist.  
Shriveled up leaves,  
breaking from their delicate withered stems  
to fall onto the frigid stone ground  
beneath my bare feet.  
This is Nature at its finest,  
taking over.

*Asterism*

# For George Floyd

## Shakira Posey

*Mississippi Valley State  
University*

Black bodies like piñatas  
their sugary ichor drew from vein  
the body the corpse  
turns footpath to grave

Black bodies like chewing gum  
scraped from East 38<sup>th</sup>  
spat on concrete in wads  
dried by Minneapolis sun

Black bodies like weeds  
sprouting out from cinder block  
sucking nutrient soil  
decomposing the earth

*Asterism*

# Midnight Light

Rachel Ouellette

*university of Maine*

Blinking, wishing, I'm still thinking,  
still thinking — civil hi in frigid night.  
Lightning, light igniting. Timid hiding,  
hiding — twilight's din is vivid, bright

In this insipid mist I will drift, sighing,  
sighing — thin wind-wisps sing, sink.  
Hiding, gliding. It's night, I'm writing,  
writing — I'm singing, still spilling ink

It isn't right. It's childish. Still, I might  
limn light, mining bright till midnight

*Asterism*

# The Mew of Flame

## Joseph Manny Heilman

*The Ohio State  
University*

The wick was whispering to him again. It was a late Tuesday night in which Mr. Right had been grading papers into the dying hours, and the candle wick had started to whisper to him. Mr. Right rubbed his tired eyes and prayed that the voice he was hearing was anything but the apple-scented candle. But it was. This was the fourth time the candle tried to whisper, yet this was the first time he had truly heard it. All the times before it must have been too quiet, little did Mr. Right know he would hear the whisper three more times. Yet, on this first time of hearing it, Mr. Right quickly stood up from his desk and extinguished the flame, blew it out like it was his last breath. This first time the candle had only whispered burn burn burn and then nothing but smoke. Feeling out of breath, Mr. Right shivered to his bones, grabbed his coat, and ran out his office door to head for home.

That night at home he lied to himself as he told his cat Purceton (which was named after the college Mr. Right so desperately wanted to teach at), “how he must have imagined the smoky voice filling every dark corner of his office”. He laughed sitting in his old leather recliner and ruffled Purceton’s ears saying “yes, my old friend I am simply too tired because candles cannot talk”. To this new lie, Purceton only flicked his tail and mewed his disbelief. Yet, Mr. Right had been convinced that he only had too little coffee that morning and made a note in his daily planner to drink an extra cup the next day.

*Asterism*

Days later at his office on the second time, Mr. Right heard the candle's voice; its plea made it farther. Starting with its triple burn and then as if it were using the breath that Mr. Right had given to it last time, it huffed out: *burn your life away*. This second time Mr. Right was convinced the candle was an envoy of Satan himself. Now to most people, this conclusion sounds outlandish. However, most people are not scholars of Literary Death like Mr. Right. In his thought, this solitary flame, like Poe's Raven, was a sign meant for Mr. Right to meet the Seraphim at the doors of death. For he knew the flame was a wicked one. Therefore, this time instead of giving his lifeblood of breath to the living flame, he rummaged through the drawer behind him until he found it! An old replica of candle extinguisher that Dickens would have used in his day. He gently stared at his favorite antique for a brief moment, forgetting the ever-present ever knowing flame whispering again its little mantra. Brought back to reality he quickly took the snuffer and brought it down upon the flame. He had never felt more satisfaction in his life, that is until he held his hand too long on the warring wick and found his hand burned due to his carelessness.

He threw the replica against the wall, grabbed the smoking candle, and ran out the door, this time forgetting his coat. He ran with the candle tucked under his arm all the way to his small one-person townhouse. He had struggled with his gate in the dark moonlight, taking quite a bit of time to finally get the small latch to unclasp. He ran up the broken sidewalk and set the candle on the porch. He then turned and went to his shed in the backyard. It was an old shed, which matched the small house quite well. Both had been painted white some years ago, but ever since Mr. Right's mother had passed away, he saw no point in keeping up appearances.

He quickly scanned the shed walls to find his old rusted shovel. Long ago it had been hanging in the back, so he moved a few disregarded cat trees that Purceton had not liked and of which Mr. Right had not made the time to take to the local goodwill. With the clear path, he reached the shovel and with his blistered hand grabbed the small, splintered handle. He didn't mind the pain. It reminded him that this moment was all real; the devil wanted his soul burned away.

He quickly got to digging. The pile grew as the moon sunk and before he knew it, Mr. Right had a nice deep tomb in his backyard. He climbed out of the pit and quickly went to the front porch, but he found the candle was no longer there.

“No, GOD, NO” he had screamed. He couldn't believe he had been so stupid. His mind flew through all the different scenarios: he could look for the candle, head back to the office, or head inside and hope to forget this all ever happened.

Slowly in defeat, he opened his front door. The keys felt hot in his hand as he unlocked the locks. Thankfully, Purceton was there to greet him (and remind Mr. Right that he had not yet been fed). Mr. Right gratefully bent down and scooped up his one companion in his lonely life. He carried him through the dusty hall and headed towards the out-of-date, rarely used kitchen. Yet, before they made it down the hall, Mr. Right noticed a shimmering of light falling out of his traditional dining room. Holding Purceton tight, he walked into the room that had not seen a person in seven years. Namely that last person had been his mother who seven years ago died of a heart attack while sitting in the head chair.



Mr. Right turned into the room and for the third time, he heard the triple *burn... burn... burn*, followed by a hearty *burn your life away, what are you living for anyway?* Mr. Right could not believe his eyes! The head chair was pulled out as if it was waiting for him. The candle, a blazing centerpiece with its flame dancing on the wick as if motioning him to sit his life away.

But this time Mr. Right was going to finally take care of the tempting flame. As Purceton jumped from his arms and ran towards the table, Mr. Right looked around his traditional dining room for a weapon, any weapon. His eyes fell on the old townhouse-style fireplace centered on the room's furthest wall. That was when he had the idea. So he grabbed the disregarded fire poker that was leaning lamely on the far brick wall. Wielding his weapon he took a deep breath, then steadied his hand, and just as the whispers of *Burn... Burn... Burn...* started to engulf the air, he swung.

The glass shattered. The wax poured like blood over the table's sides. Mr. Right felt weak. He noticed the glass sticking in his forearm. And then he heard it, the small mew, the mournful ending mew. Flicking on the light he then saw Purceton laying very still on the table, covered in blood...wax, and glass. Mr. Right collapsed; tears rolled down his stubbled chin. He picked his friend up and knew he was gone. He hugged Purceton like he had hugged his mother seven years before. He hugged till the tears went away.

He proceeded his way to the backyard to lay his friend down. He filled the tomb, and then the two things he had loved most were buried in the backyard and that is when a fire enlightened his eyes.

A flame that has no warmth, and with the poker in his hand as  
the sun rose he heard the whisper for the fourth time.

It was time to *burn... burn... burn his life away, what was he  
living for anyway?*

# Tom Ford Oud Wood

## Yesenia Luna

*California State  
University, Northridge*

The smell of cigarettes and musk,  
sends shivering flashbacks of you.  
Time was non existent when together,  
just two happy souls tangled into a honeymoon web.  
My heart instantly dropped as I stared at your ashtray.  
The blackness of the ashes matched the darkness of my  
room.

Cold, dark, lonely.

A black leather jacket still lays on my chair,  
*Tom Ford Oud Wood* scent lingering in the air.

How do you do it?

How do you move on so fast?

While you find your next soulmate,  
I'm left with our past.

# theosophy

Joshua Torrence

i  
see spirits  
in leaves of  
summer green / nothing so  
hyperbolic as valhalla / nothing so  
idyllic as heaven / the after, love,  
is in the now / the canyons &  
the tumbleweeds / the conch shards & the sand  
crab's claw / out from your corpse / last breaths will  
fetter your heart's pith / to a pretty prison where / trapped  
in unbody / you'll surely be free / in the mothwing there is  
grammie / in the gooseneck there is granddaddy / & in tigerlilies' mouths i  
do declare is where / you'll find my orange afterglow / once i quit the skin

# Dare

Shannon Ryan

The sound of a match shuffling  
across the striker. See how her stare stumbles  
over me, the spacy way she leans  
leaving me dizzy. Observe the blaze that ravages  
my ribcage at the thought of her fingers  
slotted through mine, her racecar under a sunburnt sky,  
our eyes meeting in the rearview, but  
objects in the mirror are farther than they appear.

The taste of firecrackers lingers  
on my lips as I hold  
the smell of burning in my mouth, swallow it  
whole. A flaming phantom  
permeates the room, fuses itself to the air  
and refuses to let go.

Lungs full of smoke I wait,  
the charred match clenched  
between my teeth. In rapid exhale her voice,  
crisp, crackles in the silence.

*It was only a dare, she laughs.*  
I continue to hold my breath.

# Wishbone

Shannon Ryan

I used to gather every wish, crack every bone, track  
every shooting star with fleeting, flickering eyelids,  
breathe every eyelash your way. I was never good enough  
at finding four leaf clovers, used to stare in awe

at the ones pressed against your mirror, all that green  
blending into your reflection each time you'd preen.  
I'm still there cradling the candle, knock on wood,  
the gentlest of raging licking the air,

feathered at the top, swaying just so.  
A halo glow around charring wick.  
A burn so soft and slow  
I almost imagine it to be loving.

I was the broken thing you wished upon. You split  
each of my bones uneven, watched my fiery descent  
from afar, plucked every eyelash and clover in sight and still  
you wanted more.

I blew out the flame, made a wish, watched  
the smoke swirl away, the tail end trailing  
like a spider web carried off in a breeze  
gentle and unwavering.

# Phasing

Shannon Ryan

They say the moon was born from the earth. Broken  
off, promptly displayed, made to gaze at from afar.  
A companion to admire, but never to touch  
with the gentle caress of an open palm.

Heart like the full moon I wait, bright and full  
of the weight of your gravity pulling me  
into a constant orbit, circling round and round, forever  
space between us. I'll linger in your periphery, gaining,

draining, dwindling down to a curved puncture in the sky,  
the edge of a teacup threatening to spill  
every shadow. A part of a whole  
that's now whole again without me.



# A Letter to Søren Kierkegaard

Nobel Chan

*Boston University*

I have dreamed

once, in a fitful slumber  
that you came crawling through the window  
that same thoughtful smile, and said—  
“Regine, love,  
Sail with me  
To the edge of the world  
Where the sea laps against a wall of stars,  
And underneath the hanging moon I will say  
I love you  
And I will mean it.”

On Sunday they sent that little letter  
and I sent Frederik to snip the flowers.  
There in bold is my name—  
I can still trace the loops of your loving lines,  
curl, caress, cream, cut  
the top open and spill the insides out.

*Asterism*

*“What I wish to give expression to is that to me an engagement was and is just as binding as a marriage, and that therefore my estate is her due, exactly as if I had been married to her.”*

As if.  
You, my as if husband  
As if Abraham  
did not sacrifice Isaac.

The last time I saw you  
before I sailed away, I held out  
my hand.

How different we would be  
if life was not either, or

but and.

# Hands Ghazal

Nobel Chan

I said, “don’t just stand there, give me your hand”  
You did. Both palms, you took sore hands

We dived in the ocean and saw a corpse  
Dead eyes, you took and shook pored hands

A red bruise turned green like leaves in the spring  
I looked, I held and I kissed a poor hand

Life is a spiral, a twisted thing  
A lie. You unravel the cloth with bored hands

You slip away in the death of night  
Trembles, where there were once sure hands

I want to hold your heart together  
But then I would need four hands

Who would you die for? Give an arm for?  
Nobel, I wish you had more hands

# FORGET-ME-NOT

Kieren Jeane

Maryland Institute  
College of Art

How do we disappear? he asked.  
Two heavy swings moonlit -  
we sat side by side barely swinging  
wondering  
how to disappear.

He pulled my swing closer to his  
covering my fingers with his.  
I felt like a woman -  
being dragged by a big mouth alligator  
pulling me down to the water  
to drown me in the deepness of oxygenless,  
almighty fear of endlessness,  
pressing against my chest  
his unfamiliar heartbeat, pounding  
metabolism of a cold, wet animal.

I was aroused -  
felt like I was nothing.  
Anything that used to mean something about me -  
cherry-scented hairspray, lukewarm puns -  
became a small bundle of casual  
playground hookup, a small chunk  
of baseless confidence that I could fall out  
of this love, as easily as in.

*Asterism*

We went at it until the grains  
of the shredded rubber on the surface  
of the playground were unbearable,  
until his brains were all over me.  
We zipped our own pants and sat back  
on the swings.

When he wiggled his feet teasing  
the breeze just to fly  
him home to his king-sized bed,  
I felt in my spine he wanted freedom.  
I chased him with the corner of my wisdom  
disappear through the predatory swamp  
that swallows  
every good thing  
worth remembering.

# To Protect Amy Tullos

I no longer care to be understood.  
Or to write in a way that others will thank me for.  
My words are not for your enjoyment.  
My openness(?): not an invitation to enter.  
Instead, take these letters as a Notice of Warning:  
All who may enter here  
will find no refuge in my pretty things,  
but instead a twistedness ~  
with every turn leading further  
  
to no end.

All are lost here.

# Uncertainty #5

*Texas Tech University*

**Amy Tullos**

Midnight summers.

Wet heat wrapped in my hair.

My hair wrapped around my face.

My face facing you,

facing a future that scares  
and excites me all at once.

I step

and I trip.

I skin my knees.

Blood drips down  
always down

and down further.

*Asterism*

# Why He Kissed Her

## Marah Hoffman

*Lebanon Valley College*

Dollish in her grace  
The blush of life still  
adorning her empty face.

I scoop her from  
the silk river of death  
to hold once more.

Watch the  
Angels crowd me  
and kiss the color  
from her complexion.

They, celestial seamstresses,  
clothe her in robes  
of stars.

*Asterism*



Soon porcelain skin beams  
with other-worldly light  
and I am drawn into her.

The angels warn  
paper arms waving frantic  
that I shall too be ignited.  
Drowned in the flickering  
folds of her yellow nightgown  
if I get too close.

But already,  
this line has been crossed.

# To My First Favorite Poem

**Marah Hoffman**

I took a knife to your vocal folds  
as you sang

of magic and stale dreams.

Their sharp splitting made the same

sound as God when he smelled apple juice  
on Eve's breath.

Then, I embraced you tightly

and thrust the pen which birthed you

into your spine

between the 15th and 16th vertebra

and twisted.

# Rain on Franklin Street

Alena Coleman

It's raining jellyfish.

You can see them in the puddle on the sidewalk,  
the thin veils of life congealing into constellations  
along the frothy border between water and concrete.

A temporary parting.

Tomorrow, they will slide together, a waltz of states,  
and make mud with the grass  
at the edge of the asphalt.

Life on the margins of things.

Jellyfish are a simple kind of arithmetic and biology,  
cells and static oozing with body magic--  
the kind that also ignites pistons in my brain  
and makes it slick and shiver in the open space  
behind my eyes, as it rolls  
to the six eight beat  
of the rain against the puddle  
and my body.

Me and the puddle.

Swirls of emptiness that rile with electricity  
dangerous and beautiful.

So I stick out my tongue  
and let the black beans of rain  
make mud in my mouth.

# **An Embarrassing Confession from a Solo Occupant**

**Emma Roder**

I sleep with the front door unlocked,  
deadbolt flipped left,  
loose chain swinging on a cedar frame,  
but no one has ever come in.  
Makes sense, it's a secret invitation—  
only available to people with one  
hand already on the knob—  
meant for no one in particular.  
Clementines are rotting in the fridge 'cause  
the grocery store's family-sized packaging  
was not made for a family of one;  
no one has realized I'm offering to share.

Maybe tonight I'll let the door  
hang wide on its hinges.

# Sickly

Emma Roder

*University of Illinois  
Urbana Champaign*

When a bird sings sweet enough  
for molasses to go rotten,  
my hair will stand on end  
and molten rock will  
seep through my pores  
and the air will get so hot  
the drapes will  
burst into flame.

Mark me, I'll burn  
the whole place to the ground  
before that song is done.

The woman in the moon  
will drag me through  
a hole in the ceiling,  
across an empty sky,  
up high enough  
that no sugar wings  
can ever reach me.

*Asterism*

# To My Brothas and Sistas On Our Gloomy Days

**Alayna Hester**

This is not the good morning we had hoped for.  
Puffy eyes, heavy hearts, and warm wishes  
lay the foundation for our days.  
Another Black Death.

We are stricken with crippling anxiety.  
Our bodies begin to tense up  
like they didn't trust us anymore  
like they thought we had traded it in  
for a chance at heaven.

I wish  
the words  
"I'm sorry for your loss"  
didn't seem like the catchphrase of our lives.

I wish  
us and death didn't know each other on a first name basis.  
Can we go back to being strangers?

And everyday,  
no matter how much  
this world berates our beauty,  
I am reminded  
that we are magical creatures.  
Crafted with the perfect pills and potions.  
But what happens to a people that are too scared  
to ever feel like magic?  
Do we get our happy ending?

So to all my brothas and sistas on our gloomy days,  
may I remind you  
when it seems like the world could give a damn  
and all the countless names go unsaid  
We will continue to scream.  
Loud enough that God himself will hear us.

# Meal Prep

Mason Gregg

Something absolutely wrong

must occur,

like,

when she is younger

her mother must stand

firm

that new jeans won't be bought

until sizes are lost.

Or,

when her father takes her

for a run outside

on the trail in town,



he'll admit,

“Hun,

no boy will date

a chubby girl,

so, this is what we do.”

Let her room reflect white

like a ballet studio,

dysphoric,

looking

down at her nose, and have Mom

promise

rhinoplasty as a milestone

future gift,

laser hair removal for that

pesky upper lip,

introduce to her

a calorie

too many,

have her hold

five pounds of fat

ask her to consider

how many of those

are holding her back?

Yes,

she needs all the ink

in the family printer

to trick herself,

to fold in.

*Asterism*

She rounds edges

close cuts

on pointe nails circling

cinched,

corseted, waists.

She orbits

pixie profiles with

pretty

plump

lips,

let her believe

she could

be,

maybe,

have the girl stretch

longer,

think thinner,

fill her up

with good old-fashioned

carbonation

a diet soda

for her, is all, thanks.

Coveting girl

equates

three hundred paces,

from reaching grey wall

to wall,

on tiptoes

to be a mile's worth.

Entice her to manipulate

*Asterism*

the measurements

from the scale

off by a few,

etch the calculations

to hang alongside

slanted reminders

she loathes herself.

Mother should applaud

her dedication to health,

as she said,

“That shirt

never looked good on you

Before,

So tight on the sides,”

What flavor

slim fast

should she sip tonight?

*Asterism*

# *A Note for Bertha Harris*

**Mason Gregg**

*University of Illinois  
urbana champaign*

After *Down and Dirty* (1994) by Louise Edith Fishman

“Take what you want and leave the dreck.” -L. Fishman 1977

(P.S)

I believe

angry women

are passionate women

so

I stapled up

our door frame

and spackled over

*Asterism*

the windows

with us inside.

I miss you bubbling

rage over ice,

your weighted mark

traced across pages

and pages.

I liked searching

for victory

in the sleight joy

of your implicated eyes,

and you loved

the devotion of my defeat-

like fire meeting filter-

in our little game of

rooftop roulette.



Practicing the condition  
of perfect love  
makes patience split  
like hardwood,  
passion welling  
possession, loud  
like black ink on  
white satin sheets.

There is only  
so long before we know  
it is done with.

Get your fix  
run with my love  
on the loose.

# Queen of Dirt.

Deja Jones

I sit on my throne of maggots,  
They squirm beneath.

I rule the flies,  
They linger around.

I keep my head up,  
They fly above.

Vultures.  
They peck bones.

The sun scorches.  
Burning my decaying eyes.

Don't look down,  
Don't look back,

My heart is rotting  
And I will fester.

# Dream Girl

Deja Jones

*Ohio State University-Lima*

I stopped eating.

I started sleeping in.

Dreamt of being the girl of your dreams – not mine

Receipt paper unraveled debt  
like tears rolling down my cheeks

Beauty is expensive – Love is priceless.

I gorged my eyes out

Implanted your eyes in the sockets

judged my grotesque image

I hated myself.

You hated all the colors I wore

So, I cloaked myself in black

black beauty

Dressed for my own funeral

The girl you've dreamt up

has died in your dreams.

*Asterism*

# Night Walker

Haley Mulcahy

*Ohio State University-Lima*

The moon drips nectar  
And washes her bare flushed skin  
In coal dusted fur  
And sharp, cherry claws.

Her cry shakes men to their bones.  
They bleed excitement in harsh winter's bite  
As they hunt her down.  
Her coat does not keep out the cold.

Down the street under warm lamplight,  
Her head is sprinkled with snowflakes  
Reflecting in dead eyes  
Which want this nightmare over.

Prey approaches.  
Starving.  
She strikes— it's her body  
Against his

Her groans of pleasure ring true  
Of scarlet flushed victory.  
She survives another day,  
Bathed in red.

*Asterism*

# Turbulent Lust

## Kyleigh Rodriguez

*Ohio State University-Lima*

At one point, he's what I desired

A lean, coy, nerdy figure

Stirred up envy because she was admired

Neglected him and left him disfigured

Envious of his observation

I lingered between the steel bins

Skip to a prolonged infatuation

My existence felt agonizing and I let him win

Repugnance of my entity

"You'll never be her"

Hence, I changed my identity

*Asterism*

Became somewhat of a poser

I'm aspiring for something deeper

Not a man who is deranged and erratic

Something like a keeper

A man whose love remains emphatic

# Mother Doesn't Know Best

**Kyleigh Rodriguez**

Reprimanded when my words were ill-timed  
Yet her words cut me deep, like the scissors that once slashed my arm  
Everything I did was wrong, no matter how I was primed  
Mother knows best, yet mothers don't cause their children harm

The one who held me accountable when I couldn't feel a flame  
Pertaining to her, inevitably I will hold a grudge  
Disconnection notices at ten years old, yet I was to blame  
When it comes to her, I won't budge

This anecdote should seem familiar to you  
I've never understood why you can't see  
Her era to accept accountability is long overdue  
You know what she did to you and me

This isn't meant to be endearing even if it rhymes  
I'm hoping one day, I'll receive a call  
I'm struggling to understand how you accept her crimes  
Do you think of your big sister at all?

# eve & isaac & iphigenia all have different eating disorders

Michelle Alstaetter

eve & isaac & iphigenia all have different eating disorders  
eve & isaac & iphigenia all have the same father  
the father is the first betrayal, after all. when you grow up thinking  
the tall man that lives in your house is god, eventual disappointment  
is inevitable.

the father is the first betrayal and once you know that the man who  
is supposed to protect you has no interest in protecting you, what  
really is the point in trying to protect yourself? if the man supposed  
to fill your plate has no interest in filling your plate,  
if agamemnon if abraham if god if Dad cannot will not won't do it,

well, you can't blame eve. all that, for an apple. you'd probably get a  
*thing* about food too.

when agamemnon and iphigenia sit in the doctor's office do you  
think agamemnon feels any sympathy for *why* she might be seeking  
comfort and distraction in food when the doctor says iphigenia has  
gained forty pounds in eight months or does he just think about  
how she was such a prettier, more beautifully *tragic* sacrifice nine



months ago when agamemnon and iphigenia sit in the doctor's office do you think the air between them is so thick when the doctor asks where iphigenia got a hand-shaped bruise that high up on her thigh that you could cut it with a knife  
thick like the air between us when i do my eleven o'clock confessions

a knife like the one abraham was going to drive into us  
a knife like the one agamemnon drove into us  
a knife like on account of your desert, even the son of god had to die

you'll notice satan offered us the apple  
not god

when abraham watches isaac work out for hours and track his macros, do you think he knows his son only started going to the gym after his dad tried to sacrifice him  
when abraham sits and thinks about that time he tried to sacrifice his only son, do you think he ever wonders if it was the voice of god or the voice of satan crooning in his ear  
when abraham tries to justify trying to behead his only son to himself, do you think he convinces himself it was okay because his Dad was telling him to

trick question. abraham doesn't try to justify trying to behead his only son to himself. abraham doesn't sit and think about it.  
abraham doesn't even notice isaac's obsession with control.

abraham doesn't care. the father never cares. or have any of your prayers ever not gone unanswered?

it's okay. it's nothing personal. he never answers eve's calls either, if it makes you feel better.

the father is the first betrayal because if the father is never wrong if  
the father is the strongest man in the world if the father's job is to  
look out for you if the father cannot be corrected  
if the father is never wrong and he doesn't love you then there  
must be something wrong with *you*

if the father is supposed to protect his children and the father  
almost takes your head off with an axe then you must not be his  
child. if the father is the strongest man in the world maybe working  
out for six hours daily will make you the strongest man in the  
world and you'll be able to sleep soundly at night without worrying  
where he's keeping that axe these days  
if the father thinks love is a dagger shoved into you maybe eating a  
whole chocolate cake will make you feel better  
if the father doesn't love you maybe you don't deserve 200 calories  
a day.

you'll notice satan offered us the apple  
not god

oh, right, eve. we've forgotten about eve. well, everyone does. how  
else would she be able to hide skipping dinner from adam and the  
kids?

don't feel too bad for eve. she deserved to get kicked out of the  
house anyway.

the father is the first betrayal because if you told someone for thirteen years that they'd always have an orange tree in the backyard and then you took an axe and cut down that tree in front of them into bloody wooden splinters they'd probably feel pretty let down

if you told someone for thirteen years they'd always have an orange tree in the backyard and then you sliced their throat to keep the greek army from starving to death,

you'll notice satan offered us the apple  
not god

he's always liked his kids waifish

look, Dad, i'm really sorry for quitting band but did you have to spill my blood on the altar of artemis?

of course it was hard for you to raise that axe over my head and prepare to bring it down, but i feel like we're overlooking the real victim here, Dad.

Dad, i'd really appreciate it if you read that article i sent you about gaslighting. yeah, yeah, cain and abel are doing okay in school. are you listening to me?

the father is the first betrayal because i'll eat an apple if i please, Dad.

(no i won't, Dad)

(i could never disobey you, Dad)

the most important part of anorexia recovery is to know the biblical expulsion and subsequent fall of man wasn't my fault  
ironically enough, the most important part of binge eating disorder recovery is to know that the fall of troy was my fault

oh, great, isaac just googled orthorexia. pure little lamb.  
i guess it's true what eve's known since that whole garden incident  
- shit can always get worse.

the father is the first betrayal because why don't you love me.  
the father is the first betrayal because maybe ill drive a knife into  
my gut and sacrifice my virgin blood to the goddess artemis  
myself.  
i wanna be just like you Dad!

you'll notice satan offered us the apple  
not god

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