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Winter 2013

# Tower

A magazine for the literary and visual arts



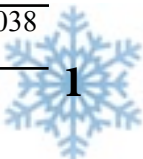
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Pinkerton Academy

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### Advisor

Mrs. Deborah Kneisley

**Bus Ride***Shannon Finney*

I can see my life pass by  
 through rainy windows,  
 cold and wet against my cheek.  
 Forests and unimaginable  
 expansions of populations.  
 Endless streets, stretching towards nowhere.  
 I can see my life pass by  
 like birds perched on wires, mingling;  
 like women riding street cruiser bikes;  
 trash can allyways.  
 treeless neighborhoods, ball playing kids;  
 countless heads bobbing in their cesspools:  
 specimens.  
 I can see my life pass by,  
 like the million metropolises identical.  
 like the billion other busses  
 full of watchers,  
 watchers out windows,  
 watchers like me.  
 How many watchers are there?

**Learn to Stand***Alexis Ellis*

Tears,  
 They burn.  
 Lost at the turn,  
 Face in your hands.  
 You grow so weak,  
 Hardly can you stand.

They all said it was a sin  
 To make scars on your skin  
 But yet,  
 They make scars on your heart.  
 For you,  
 It's hard to tell them apart.

They nip,  
 They pick.  
 But nobody said you *had* to bleed...  
 You find yourself,  
 On your knees.

Hey now, I know,  
 You're stuck in this ditch.  
 I'm going to help,  
 Put you back together;  
 Stitch by stitch.  
 But honey, please...

Nobody deserves to cry.  
 You are beautiful,  
 As can be.  
 You are so precious,  
 To me.

**Optometrist***Nick Papa*

everyone around me is losing their vision  
 they don't ask me but I make them each a pair of glasses  
 from my own bones  
 plucking them out of me and carving them  
 until they are a perfect fit  
 soon there are no more of my white bones left  
 and I give my own glasses away  
 I become blind and spineless.

**Summer Peace***Skyler Oliveira*

Photograph

**The Cover Up***Brittney Henry*

Pick it up off the shelf.  
 Smell each bottle.  
 Sure to choose the perfect one.  
 Everyone else needs to approve.

Vanilla or fruity?  
 Fake sometimes.

One day I smell warm and sweet.  
 The next day I'm bitter and cold.  
 Breathing in the intoxicating fumes.

It's like a deceiving smile.  
 Hiding what is truly beneath.

Put spirits of happiness on to cover guilt.  
 Confidence to cover insecurity.  
 Why not go without?  
 Be myself for a change.

I don't need a mask.  
 I'm the only me in the world.  
 There's no need to cover that up.

It's time to be different.  
 Don't pick out a new personality each day.  
 Wear the real one.

**The Wooden Box***Nicole Caron*

The creaking boards  
squeak out their song  
as I shuffle  
across the room.

Dust fills the air  
as the box croaks open  
like a long forgotten memory  
rested  
lost.

First I see  
the ocean-blue eyes  
deep and crystal clear  
attic boards  
teeming with timeless youth.

Holding the delicate frame  
feeling the soft silk dress  
her red cheeks  
still rosy from play.

I remember her keeping  
watch over the parlor  
the sun glinting off  
her golden hair.

She stood tall  
on the mahogany table  
with all the others  
like her.

We grew up  
and left that house  
she retired her watch  
and to the attic she went.

And into her worn  
wooden box  
her youthfulness  
into an endless sleep.

I shut the box  
with a dull thud  
crossing the worn  
leaving childhood  
behind.

**Fiesta***Skylar Oliveira*

Photograph



**Life***Allyssa Parish*

The beginning of the end,  
 The start of a new,  
 Show me the Light,  
 The light of its beauty.  
 Don't throw it away,  
 Don't shatter its glass,  
 Don't blow it away,  
 Like a leaf in the wind.

**A Memory That Lasts Forever***Austynn Gurley*

I remember being a little girl,  
 hearing that familiar buzz  
 of my Papa mowing the lawn.  
 Stopping everything to go outside.  
 The newly cut grass,  
 it was just for me.  
 Wiggling my toes like an inch worm,  
 back and forth.  
 Who would have known that something,  
 so simple,  
 would turn into something so important.  
 A memory that today,  
 is still so special,  
 and that will stand in my heart...  
 forever.

**Snowflake Dreams***Kasey Thierren*

The sun  
 Nestles into the  
 Mountains cradle  
 Closing her eyes  
 For a restless sleep

The moon awakens  
 Glowing upon  
 The exhausted rooftops

Boys, Girls  
 Moms, Dads  
 Even  
 Cats and dogs  
 Crawl into  
 Their web of dreams

Lights slowly flicker off  
 Eyes flutter shut  
 Subconscious takes over  
 And the  
 Magic begins....

Candy clouds rain  
 Gumdrops and lollipops

Cotton candy skies  
 Licorice rainbows  
 Swirling through

No  
 Sneaky, green goblins  
 Hide in the  
 Dark shadows of the forest  
 While Cyclopes  
 Open their hideous eye  
 Stalking victims

Maybe...  
 Just blackness  
 Nothing at all  
 Peace  
 Serenity  
 Life's interruptions  
 Are silenced

It's your dream  
 Make it happen.

**The Wall Between Us***Wendy Landers*

Cast of Characters:

- Doug: 18-20 years old. Wears army fatigues, shirt unbuttoned and pants not tucked in to boots. Hair is messy, like he's been through a fight.
- Steve: Mid-thirties. Also wearing army fatigues, but they are dirty and torn. Un shaven, hair dirty and messy, and a bandage wrapped around his head, covering his eyes. He is behind a translucent curtain. The audience knows he's there, but can't see him.
- Korean Officer: Wears a North Korean Army uniform. Angry yet dopey expression.

Setting: A three walled greenish brown tent is set up, with the stage left wall made of fencing. There is a light from behind the tent, and the silhouette of a man can be seen. In front of that wall, inside the tent is a man, lying on the ground, asleep. He wakes up, rubs his forehead.

- Doug: Ugh. Some night.
- Steve: I'll say.
- Doug: Who's there? (Looks around edgily)
- Steve: Oh, just you're friendly neighborhood American POW.
- Doug: I didn't know anyone else was here.
- Steve: Yeah, they got these cells set up next to each other. I'm Steve. (Reaches hand around through fence)
- Doug: I'm Doug. (Shakes his hand)
- Steve: When'd you get in?
- Doug: I guess last night. You didn't see me?
- Steve: (like he's hiding something) I guess I must have been asleep.
- Doug: How long have you been here?
- Steve: I dunno, maybe a couple weeks. It's just nice to have someone to talk to. (Doug sighs and lays down) You'll get used to it after a while.
- Doug: That's what I'm afraid of. (Korean Officer enters stage left and slips a wooden bowl through the fence, one to Steve and one to Doug. Doug takes the bowl and takes a bite of its contents, getting a brief look of disgust, then settling in for the rest)
- Steve: Gourmet. Or the closest we'll ever get again.
- Doug: Why? You think we're gonna die here?
- Steve: I'm not getting my hopes up that's we're gonna get rescued. Look at it this way, every time these gooks gain more territory, our chances of rescue get slimmer and slimmer.
- Doug: You trying to depress me?
- Steve: No, I'm too busy depressing myself. (Sighs. There is a pause, and he slides his bowl out from his side. Doug does the same and stands up to stretch.) How old are you?
- Doug: 18.
- Steve: Geez. You're just a kid.
- Doug: Why? How old are you?
- Steve: 34. My birthday might've been a couple days ago, but I've lost

track of the date.

- Doug: It's the 27th.
- Steve: Yup. Turned 35 three days ago.
- Doug: I'm sorry your birthday had to be spent here.
- Steve: Me too, kid. (Leans up against the curtain, accidentally nudging Doug) Oh sorry. Though it is good to know you're real and I haven't just started talking to myself.
- Doug: I think it would take longer than two weeks for that to happen.
- Steve: Crazyer things have happened. (Pause) So, where you from, kid?
- Doug: Vermont. A little town nobody's heard of. You?
- Steve: Phoenix, Arizona. God, I miss it there.
- Doug: How long has it been since you were there?
- Steve: (shakily, as if close to tears) Almost two years now.
- Doug: You alright?
- Steve: Yeah, I'm fine.
- Doug: You don't sound fine.
- Steve: (half laughs) My wife could do that too.
- Doug: What?
- Steve: Tell what I'm feeling just by my voice. At night I'd have my back turned to her and she knew exactly what I was thinking.
- Doug: What's her name?
- Steve: Julie. (Sighs) What I wouldn't give to see her face again. (Tilts head down, puts hand over forehead.)
- Doug: Come on, man. Stop being such a downer. I promise I'll find a way to get outta here. You're gonna go home and see Julie's pretty face again.
- Steve: I appreciate the effort, but it's not about that.
- Doug: What? What do you mean?
- Steve: Nothing, never mind.
- Doug: No, come on.
- Steve: No really. Let's change the subject. You got yourself a girl?
- Doug: I did. She left me just before I got shipped out.
- Steve: That's rough. You in high school?
- Doug: I was. Graduated just before I got drafted. What about you?
- Steve: What about me?
- Doug: What'd you leave behind?
- Steve: A wife and two kids. Tom is 7, and Jessie... she was born a month after I left. She should be almost two by now. (Sighs) I'll never get to see her.
- Doug: Come on, man. I told you to stop being such a downer. You're gonna see your daughter before you die in here.
- Steve: (Chuckles) Sure, kid. Listen, I'm gonna take a nap. Alright?
- Doug: Alright. (Lays down and looks at fingernails. Flips over onto stomach, facing stage left. Gasps quietly, as if he sees something offstage. Whispers) That guard has a pocket knife. If I grab it I could tear through the tent and get us outta here. (Puts his head down to sleep)
- (Lights dim, indicating night. Korean Officer with a gun sits facing stage left, his back to the fence. A pocket knife clearly sticks out of his back pocket. He puts his gun down, and the sound wakes up Doug.

He sees the knife and carefully reaches his hand through the fence and grabs it. He quickly shoves it down his shirt to hide it. Some time passes, and the guard slowly leans forward and falls asleep. He snores, and Doug perks up, preparing to make his move. He stands up silently, and stomps on the ground twice, making sure the guard is really asleep. The guard doesn't stir. Doug smiles, and opens the knife. He briefly studies the wall that separates him and Steve. He uses the knife to cut across the top, letting the whole wall fall to the ground, revealing Steve, who is on the floor, facing away from the audience. Doug goes onstage, entering into Steve's side of the tent.

Doug: Steve, wake up man.

Steve: (Sits up, revealing his blindness) What do you want?

Doug: Oh.... Steve. (Touches the bandage on Steve's head, then puts his hand on Steve's shoulder)

Steve: What? You're on my side? How?

Doug: I stole the guard's pocket knife and cut a hole in the tent. But...why didn't you tell me?

Steve: (Sighs) I didn't want you to get more anxious than you already are. I figured it didn't matter because one of us would probably die in here before we get to see each other... so to speak.

Doug: What happened to you?

Steve: A grenade blew up maybe ten feet in front of me. I caught a lotta shrapnel in my face and eyes. These guys picked me up, cleaned out the shrapnel, threw a bandage over it and dumped me here.

Doug: I'm.....sorry. I wish I had known. (Grips Steve's shoulders and puts hand to his chest, eyes shut)

Steve: (Smiles) Don't worry about it. Come on, let's get outta this hellhole.

Doug: (Stands up, helps Steve get up. Examines stage right wall and briefly looks back at Korean Officer, who doesn't move. Doug braces himself, and stabs the stage right wall with the knife and tears a long hole through it. He steps through and takes Steve's forearm, helping him through to the other side.) You alright?

Steve: Are we out?

Doug: Yeah, but we gotta be quiet. We still have to find our way to allied territory.

(Takes Steve's forearm and leads him onstage. Doug looks around to make sure the coast is clear, and sees something offstage left. Korean officer yells at him, and he runs offstage right. Steve starts to follow, but Doug lets go of his arm just as he gets offstage. Korean officer yells again and a gunshot is heard. Steve collapses and the stage goes black.)

### City Walk

Adam Bohorquez

Deadly Comics





**The Greenness in My Eyes***Megan Cullinane*

At night, alone in my room, I scroll down in search of his last post. I scroll past stranger's regrets for not spending more time with him. I scroll past wishes for him to be at peace. I read and reread his final, ambiguous message to the world. I had heard about it in school that day. It was why my friend was encouraged to leave and cry at home instead of the lunch table. It was why I searched for his page. It was why I waited until I was alone.

It made everybody pause and wonder why. It made my eyebrows furrow. It made tears well behind my eyes, but they were too afraid to come out because I hadn't even heard of him before. I wondered what I would never know about him, and what strangers would never know about me. I had nothing to mourn but information on a computer screen.

\*\*\*

The greenness in my eyes increases depending on what I'm wearing. My face and hands get red when a large group of people looks at me. That redness is the blood that soars through my system because I'm alive, even if I'm embarrassed and I feel like I want to disappear. My freckles become more pronounced in the summer. My cuticles have taken over my fingernails; the little white semi-circle is no longer visible on all of my fingers except my thumbs. I announce what I'm about to do in the bathroom and apologize to the icky faces in response, or I smile at people who giggle. I shower every other day, otherwise the fluorescent lighting at school emphasizes the oils in my hair.

My laugh bubbles out of my mouth. I try to pronounce all of my T's and S's. The aspirate consonants sound like fireworks amidst all of the vowels in the English language. I feel like these little pockets of air released from my mouth make a difference in life.

Too many of my weekends are spent enjoying hours upon hours of *Mad Men* or *How I Met Your Mother* or *Grey's Anatomy* on Netflix Instant Watch. I also like being alone in my room. I ponder my walls: the vibrant green color, the Harry Potter posters, the pictures my friends drew, the street artists depiction of New York City, the photographs of Disney World, prom, and meeting Wally. I keep a diary in which I write when it strikes my fancy or when I feel like I should. I don't write down everything that happens, or even everything worthwhile. My life isn't in those notebooks, but a lot of my thoughts and fears are. I Google things that I can't ask my mom or my friends about, and I delete what I'm ashamed of discovering afterwards.

I wasn't very happy at prom, despite the pictures. The built in bra's plastic wires poked out of the top and broke that sensitive area

of skin by my armpit. The girl in the red dress borrowed it from me. I got goose bumps when I took that red dress off the hanger and tried it on. I feel more than beautiful when I wear it.

My time of day is the nighttime. When I'm alone in my room or out with my friends. Like when we drove off road and up the grass hill. We bounced a little, but the car didn't get hurt. We busted out the telescope and I saw the big red spot on Jupiter. I opened my mouth because it was so precious. They yelled at me for fogging up the lens. I went back to the car, cuddled in the blankets and rubbed my fingers in my gloves while sitting on the hood. When we are together I feel infinite like the kid in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* while he's driving in the car at night with the wind in his and his friend's faces. We're alive.

\*\*\*

I click back to my profile page. It's information on a computer screen. I am so much more than that. So he must have been, too. But—Tears escape. They swim over my cheek and top lip; I can taste the salt.

But this is how we see him now, the strangers and I. He is only information on a computer screen.

**Photo of Dog***Erin Doble*

**Yin and Yang**  
*Colin Coviello*  
oil on canvas



**Leaf***Shannon Finney*

Tiny infant of a speechless mother  
 with tender skin and popping veins,  
 Attached umbilically,  
 growing minutely,  
 changing and maturing as the months progress.

Full grown and strong,  
 still connected to its mother-  
 nourishing, loving,  
 how could it ever leave?

Growing tired of the blowing breeze,  
 wanting to be  
 one of the trees:  
 monarchs of the shadowy forest.

Observing  
 beings of deliberate paths-  
 free wanderers,  
 unrestricted by roots and  
 stationary branches.

Withering helplessly as all lives do  
 as fall's blushing red  
 corrupts its bones.  
 And it curses its perpetual days  
 of vertically inching,  
 fed by its mother it doesn't know.

Facing the inevitable,  
 brittle and cracked,  
 separated from its lifeline  
 by a cruel, wintry gust.

Landing facedown in the snow,  
 reflects on its short life  
 of thoughtlessly surviving  
 and cherishing every breeze.

**The Monster of Me***Genevieve*

Night sky flashed in front of me,  
 The lightning strikes,  
 As the monster ran a heard,  
 Legs stuck,  
 Couldn't jump or fly away from the dream.

Time, it dragged on,  
 With this mind turned off,  
 Slowing pace with what's at thought,  
 This night became a melting pot,

Steaming away all my mortalities,  
 The fright of loneliness,  
 Became a reality,  
 Couldn't stay away,  
 This force began to actively,  
 Drag the rest of this into a distant gallery.

Gallery was unseen,  
 A new adventure, extremely obscene,  
 But then it was realized,  
 It was all just a dream,  
 Ending with nothing,  
 But what's left of me.

**Change of Fate***Wendy Landers*

If you could change your fate, would you? If you'd have asked me this question a couple weeks ago, I would've probably said yes. But knowing what I now know, I can give a sure answer of no. Whatever happens, happens. It's best if you just let fate take you where it wants. I was too naïve to understand this a few weeks ago.

You see, when this all started I was just out of school for the summer and couldn't wait to do whatever I pleased. I reveled in the sweet freedom of summer and didn't think about anything but the present. There was a carnival in town, and I went with a group of friends, although it didn't take long for me to lose them. I have a tendency to wander.

I eventually found my way to a fortune teller, Lady Pandora. She had a slightly dazed, but somehow wise look in her makeup-clad eyes. She reminded me of a teacher I once had, whose wisdom and cleverness revealed itself only after she had convinced us that she was crazy.

"Come in, young Adrian," she said.

"How did you know my name?" I asked, understandably taken off guard.

"Don't ask how," she said. "There is no how." She gestured for me to sit down in front of the small table in front of her. There was a glass egg-shape that seemed to be hollow, with a purple plaid scarf wrapped around the bottom to keep it upright. Well, it might have been blue or maybe reddish, but the blue lighting was throwing off my perception of colour.

"Do you want to know how you will die?"

"Yeah, why not?" I said. I didn't really give it much thought; I was in a whimsical mood that day.

She put her hands on the glass egg, and closed her eyes for a moment, then opened them and took my hand to place it on the egg too. I sat there, just going along with it, and she closed her eyes again. I honestly don't think I really believed in it very much; I just thought it would be fun.

"Here!" she said, her eyes shooting open. "Look."

I looked into the hollow glass egg, and I saw a blurry but getting clearer, image of myself. It was an older version of myself, not that much older, mind you. He looked maybe 30 or so, and wore a very torn white shirt. He was thin and somewhat muscular, looking kind of beat up and tired.

"That's me?" I said. "D---."

"Shh," she said. "Watch."

I watched as the older version of me was pushed into an empty and dirty room with glass windows, almost like an interrogation room. He put his hands out in front of him to avoid slamming into the back wall, and when he turned, he was confronted by two large men in suits. He looked up to them, trying not to show his fear. He said something that I couldn't hear, and the larger of the two men gave him a hard sock to the face. He slammed into the white tiled wall behind, trying not to fall. The second man kned him in the stomach, which brought him down to the floor. He coiled up on the ground in agony and the two men continued to beat him within an inch of his life. They paused for a moment, and he managed to stand, but when he did, the larger man took hold of his head and smashed it hard into the window, breaking it and sending shards of glass everywhere, some of which got in his eyes, blinding him. As the older version of me lied on the floor, bleeding and barely conscious, the two suited men exchanged a few words. The victim choked out a word or two, but the two men ignored him and left. He lay there on the ground, and died, I assume of internal bleeding or some kind of head injury.

As the image in the glass egg disappeared, I continued to stare into it, speechless. I blinked, and looked at Lady Pandora.

"Why? How? What did I do to get in that situation?"

"I cannot say," she said apologetically.

"Please, I really have to know," I pleaded.

"No," she said. "It's not that I could tell you but don't want to. I simply don't have the ability to tell you."

I sat back in my chair and gazed into nothing. I couldn't believe what I had just witnessed. And it terrified me even more to think that the person I saw getting beaten so horribly was myself.

"But," I mumbled. "Is there anything I can do... to like... prevent it? Avoid it?"

"You can try," she said. "But I wouldn't suggest it. Your fate is your fate."

I blinked slowly, and stood up. "Thank you," I said politely.

"You are welcome, my friend," she said. "I hope whatever decision you make is a wise one."

I nodded, and left the tent, completely forgetting about my friends, or the carnival, or joyous freedom of summer. I walked out of the crowd, and went home, unable to think about anything else. My eyes remained fixed on the ground in front of me, and the image of myself in such pain hung in front of me the whole way.

When I got home, my mind was still a reel of questions. When will

this happen? What will I do to deserve it? Or if I don't deserve it, why will it happen? Who are those men in the suits? Are they working for someone? The more I thought about it, the more nervous I made myself. I became more and more determined to do something about it.

How convenient it was that then I happened upon the watch. I was in the public library, looking for books about time travel, and I saw a silver pocket watch on top of the row of books. I looked around, to see if anyone belonged to it, but I was alone in this section of the library. I took the watch and studied it. It had an intricate design on the front, and I noticed a slip of paper was inside it. I opened it and read what was written on the paper in fancy inked letters.

*To the finder of this watch: This device will allow any individual to travel backwards or forwards in time within his or her lifetime. The individual will be transported to wherever his/herself is at that moment. If oneself is not alive at a moment in time, the individual will be unable to access that moment. Use with great caution.*

Oh my god, I thought to myself. This is perfect. I looked around to see if anyone was looking, and stuffed the watch and the paper into my shirt pocket. I inconspicuously left the library and rushed home to give the watch a try.

On the back of the paper there were instructions on how to use it. Set the watch one hour ahead for one year ahead, and one hour back for one year back. Hold the button on the top for five seconds to return to your present. Seemed simple enough.

I set the watch to thirteen years later, where I would be 30. I could tell right away that this was not close enough to the time of my death; my future self was still a bit chubby. I tried to go ahead another two years, but the watch could only bring me one year ahead, as my future self didn't live past that year. When I arrived at the scene, I watched my older self get brutally beaten, just as before. It was harder to watch this time around, knowing the outcome. When the two suited men left the room, I waited until I was sure they were gone before I went to my future self to talk with him.

"Hey," I said calmly. I kneeled down in front of him.

"What? Who's there?" he said, startled. He had been blinded, and couldn't see who was speaking to him, or if they were a friend or enemy.

"It's alright," I said. "I'm not with those guys."

"Why are you here?" He sat up against the wall and turned his in a head few directions, as if trying to find where this voice was coming from.

"I wanted to ask you something," I said. "Who were those two men?"

"I assume some of Johnny's goons."

"Who's Johnny?"

"He's Sophia's father."

"Who's Sophia? Why would her father order this?"

"Sophia is my fiancée. I love her with all my heart," he paused and tilted his head down sadly. "Her father is an Italian mob boss, and doesn't want his daughter dating, let alone marrying a man with Irish blood in him."

"Was this out of the blue?"

"No," he said. "He warned me to leave her several times. But I couldn't. I just couldn't. I love her too much to leave her for something stupid like that. I knew full well that he would get back at me, but I didn't care."

I thought about helping him. I thought about what it might mean if I brought him to a hospital. He would be blind the rest of his life.

"Hey," he said. "Who are you? And how'd you find me?"

"I..." I couldn't tell him. The whole story was too stupid and crazy. "Don't worry about it."

"Well, if you won't tell me who you are, will you at least help me? Bring me to a hospital or something? Please?"

I remained there for a moment and said nothing. "I'm sorry," I said finally. "But this is how it's going to end."

"What?"

"If I save you, you will still die some other way. Cancer, heart attack, choking on a mint," I explained. "But no matter how you could die in the future, there is no way it will be as meaningful as this death. You are dying because you refused to value your safety over your love. I don't think that can be topped."

"So, you're just gonna let me die here, like this?"

"Yes," I said. I put my hand on his shoulder. "I'm sorry, but that's the way it has to be." I stood up and started to walk out of the room.

"Wait," he said as I was in the doorway. "Could you stay here? I don't wanna be alone."

I turned and looked at him in his pitiful state. Bleeding from the eyes, cuts and bruises all over, he muttered "please?" I blinked and walked back over to him.

"Alright," I said. I sat down next to him.

"Thank you," he said, and tried to smile. I took his hand and smiled

a sorrowful smile. He still didn't know who this person was, but in the end, I don't know if it would have mattered. I looked at him, and his head started to sway a bit, like he was getting dizzy. If I could see his eyes I guessed they would look dazed.

He didn't say anything, and neither did I. We both knew what was going to happen, and I think me being there made him less afraid. He seemed pretty calm for someone who is about to die.

His head gently fell back against the wall, and his hand went limp in mine. I sighed and kept my hand in his for a moment. But then I blinked, and I was suddenly back in my room, in the present, the watch dangling on the chain around my wrist.

I sighed and looked at my hand. There was still some blood on it. I closed it tight, as if trying to grasp onto what I had left of him. I squeezed my eyes shut, trying to hold back the tears. I felt as if I had lost a brother.

I looked up at the window and saw my reflection. I blinked and remembered that the person I was mourning for was... myself. My reflection looked back at me, and I almost wanted to apologize to it.

It's funny when I think about now, but I don't regret my decision. That was one of the most poetic deaths that could've found me, and I am honestly proud to grow up to be the man who dies that way. Does that make any sense?

### **Exhausted Souls**

*Samantha Bowie*

There's a random time in our lives when  
All we ever do is wander the earth  
In an exhausted state, like ghosts  
Trying to find each other.

Well I found you, or at least  
You found me.  
So now we're tired, and the only option  
Is to sleep.

So let's just lay here for a while.  
Let's just lie on this soft, warm bed  
And not think of the world or what people  
say.

Let's slumber like giant dragons.  
Let's sleep for a thousand years  
And wake up with the reassurance  
That we'd be in each other's arms.

**I am a Chest***Samantha Bowie*

At first, my chest was an empty coffer,  
 Washed up on the sandy shores  
 Where the people lounge in the sun,  
 Not caring about the empty chest.

But you strolled along the salty shore,  
 Curiosity growing ravenous in your veins and  
 A heart as strong as any beats beautifully.  
 And so you picked me up and took me home.

You opened the chest and found a small plant  
 Rooted into the worn leather bottom of the chest.  
 You nurtured it, sang to it and took care of it,  
 And the plant in my chest grew.

The plant in the chest is my heart,  
 And the chest is me.

**Walk on the Beach**

Photograph  
*Erin Doble*

**The Big Question***Jessica Wolfe*

Sitting on a stool  
 Sketching out time,  
 Inserting souls into His story.

He draws and erases,  
 Creates art, love, and beauty  
 And is the mind to our existence.

Why are we seeking  
 Only a Utensil?  
 Or am I missing the point?

Does our gift of will and love,  
 Come from the heavens?  
 Or are they wrapped in smaller packages?

God is a Pencil,  
 But only now.  
 One day I might believe differently.

The holder of the brush  
 May be just us  
 Our mind may be doing the creating

Has our ignorance of the colors  
 Cause us to fashion  
 A nonexistent designer?

I may be the artist  
 And might pull out my canvas  
 To finally, fully erase Him.

**Old Friend***Skyler Oliveira*

I go to her when I am stressed  
 She lets me hold her long, thin hand  
 The touch is smooth  
 It brings me comfort

Some may say our relationship is strange  
 To us it is perfectly normal  
 I mess up her hair  
 Plaster her make-up in bold shades  
 Hold her head under water

Through thick and thin  
 I can depend on her  
 She is always there for me

Through her I convey my thoughts  
 My desires  
 My pain  
 She is my release  
 My muse

When I hold her in my hand  
 I feel at ease  
 My grip is sure and gentle  
 She helps me breathe life  
 Into my pallet of vibrant pigments

She eases away my worries  
 With soft, loving strokes  
 With her help  
 My energy is processed into something  
 Beautiful

**Bone***Nick Papa*

i'll use my hands to break the bone,  
 i have the will to do this.

Since I have to, I'll do it alone,  
 i have the will to do this.

my heart, it tries to pull me back,  
 but I have the will to do this.

my fingers, the physical strength I  
 lack,  
 but I have the will to do this.

now, I can't live with bloody hands,  
 but I have to will to do this.

until my time empties its sands  
 i'll have the will to do this.



**Cancer***Collin Coviello*

She's sitting down,  
 And she's sorry we came to see her.  
 Wants to get up,  
 And she's sorry because she needs our help  
 Because we have to waste our time on her.  
 She forgets she's sorry.  
 She forgets she's standing,  
 And asks to sit down  
 Because she's tired,  
 And she's sorry.

Gets shots and gets sick as  
 She pull water through her pursed lips,  
 Her skin's tight as if she's aged twenty years  
 She sips and drips  
 'Cause there's no feeling,  
 There's no healing,  
 And there's no going back  
 To the mountains, or the forest  
 Or the beach.

So she presses her pain pump to feel relief-  
 If only for just a moment- From the pain she feels.  
 BUT NO AMOUNT OF MEDICINE WILL HEAL HER  
 DAUGHTERS.

They're sorry they can't ever help,  
 They're sorry they can't make her better,  
 But then they forget they're sorry,  
 And they're mad because Mom missed another birthday  
 For chemo.  
 "Mom's getting better,  
 We'll go camping next weekend"  
 BUT THEY NEVER GO CAMPING  
 Not anymore.

She's sorry she's the reason everyone stays home,  
 She's sorry she won't see her daughter's wedding,  
 BUT SHE CAN'T STAND UP.  
 So we stand WITH her,  
 By her side.  
 Until she DIES.  
 They cry and they're sorry,  
 Trying to make her wake up.  
 We'll lift you up again.  
 We'll lift you up a million times if that's what it takes.

She was sorry until the day she died.  
 Maybe you should give it a try.  
 Take nothing for granted.  
 You have what you have because of the help you've received  
 Be ashamed,  
 Humiliated,  
 For real reasons,  
 And spare her the drama.

**The Shades***Jackie Pierson*

Concealed in the darkness  
 They evade the sun  
 Hiding from ever watching eyes  
 Its persistent glare ever present

They glide along  
 Following or in front  
 Hiding in obscurity  
 An apparition  
 Disguising itself  
 Concealing identity

In the frosty night  
 They congregate  
 Under an ebony sky  
 Splattered with a million ancient suns

What do they whisper  
 About when they gather  
 Stories, legends  
 Words that will never  
 Be heard

They stand to witness every memory  
 Every life and death  
 All the murders unsolved  
 And all the joys uncelebrated  
 Knowing more  
 And seeing more  
 Than anyone ever will

Their dark existence  
 Only an echo  
 Of what they reflect  
 They hide their faces  
 In the chilly darkness  
 Their identities secret and concealed

Not worth an investigation  
 They put forth  
 No detail, no stories  
 Only mysteries

**One***Ryan Purcell*

A different soldier  
 Than everyone else.  
 One with nature,  
 One with death.

He does not kill  
 For simple pleasure.  
 Soldiers always  
 Follow orders.

He slips through  
 Green grass, yellow wheat,  
 Dressed with the environment.  
 The Sniper is a baneful assassin

His hand of death  
 Reaches past a mile  
 In the blink of an eye,  
 The rifle becomes the Grim Reaper.

The hunter sees,  
 Knows, and hears all.  
 He eliminates everything  
 That stands in the way.

The lead streak never misses.  
 With a small explosion  
 And a short burst of thunder,  
 Death, is on its way.

It breaks through the sound barrier,  
 Passes through time,  
 And rips through  
 Man's flesh.

All returns to routine now.  
 Creatures carry on  
 With their usual days,  
 And he slips away, like nothing happened.

**Little Fox**

Crayon

*Adam Bohorquez***Never Ending Galaxy***Jeffrey Graham*

My dog's eyes light up brighter than the stars  
 His heart is larger than Mars  
 Every time he sees me  
 His tail spins into a vortex  
 His fur is softer than a cloud  
 His smile glows in the night  
 But doesn't lighten when it gets bright  
 He runs faster than a jet  
 He's my own little alien pet  
 His personality is more colorful than the sun set  
 He is the rainbow after the rain,  
 The bright clear skies of the day,  
 And the meteor showers putting on a play  
 His love for me is a never ending black hole  
 He is a spaceship exploring new places day after day  
 He is Pluto you never know if he'll stay  
 Yet I know he's the Earth and won't ever stray  
 He and I make up a never ending constellation  
 And at the end of the day he is the sun, who needs his sleep  
 And the rocket blasting off into another day's adventure

**The Day of My Papa***anonymous*

The day of my papa's death,  
 Thinking that this could be the end for me,  
 Realizing though that he would still be here,  
     Not in his body,  
     No not at all,  
 But as a spirit and a wandering soul.

He still cares for me although he's no longer here,  
     But his heart and love is  
     Floating wherever I go,  
     Never had the chance to say,  
     That he's the breath I breathe,  
 And how much love is left for him.

Yet it is true,  
 Never getting the chance to say good bye,  
     Before his last breath,  
 Never got the chance to tell him to stay,  
     And see me off into the world,  
 To be with me when I graduated from high school.

Arriving too late,  
 He was gone for good,  
 The world has been shattered,  
 My heart is now beating with a hole.

Wishing he could be here to see me now,  
 Living life alone and hoping he's just pretending,  
     It turns out that he isn't joking,  
     When he leaves me behind,  
     Leaving me here all alone.

Guiding me from above,  
 Keeping me safe from any pain could be endured along the way,  
 Also the loneliness that friends try hard to fill,  
     That he caused me to have,  
     When he left me forever.

That very day of his death,  
 His memories that continue to dwell inside,  
     Will never die off,  
     Or leave me behind,  
     Like he did,  
 Right after he took his last breath,  
 This ended his life on Earth.

**Over Seas**

*Callee Thompson*

We began –  
Friends  
Exploring across the ocean

It was all happening rapidly  
I play it back in my head:

The deep sea  
Crystallizes

Dawn falls  
Twilight rises

Starlight  
Concealed by prisms  
Comes through the surface

Rhythmic patterns  
Fight their way  
Under the surface

A natural map  
We follow them  
Through sandpaper waters

But swells we'd crossed  
Are rebelling against us

Our sea-swept home  
In the distance

A twinkling blackberry  
Against now midnight skies  
Make it hard to find

Now here I am:

Blistered and broken  
Carrying his graceful bones  
Wrapped in colors  
Over cascading waves

The billows  
Like the fragmented glass  
Of my grief  
Are piercing my skin

The tide below appears crimson  
Mimicking bullet holes  
Leeching his life away  
Faintness overcomes me  
Yet I must forge on

Alabaster remains  
And silvery tags  
Shining like moons  
Awaken memories

Of long ago summers  
When his soul  
Was held by flesh  
When our minds  
Had no cares

Laughing  
We'd enlisted together

My friend  
Now nothing more  
Than a smiling skin  
Scraped away  
By the harsh reality  
Of becoming a man

## The Key to Leadership

*Timothy Wood*

There are many ways to become a leader. Self-help books, mentors, and philosophies all have their definitions of leadership. Leadership is one thing that our society lacks. Leadership is a rare find in today's world. But why is it that so many have a problem with being a true leader? What does being a true leader even entail? Leadership at its most basic substance can be defined as one word: influence. By this definition, everyone is a leader, because everyone has influence. The key is how to influence people in a positive way. Being a leader involves affecting positive change in others, and not being affected by others through character, service, and vision.

If compared to a meal, the character of a person is the meat of his leadership abilities. Without it, he'll lack the foundation, material, essence, and substance needed to affect others positively. There are two things that a person needs to have good character: attitude and integrity. Attitude is how a person reacts to a person or situation, whether it is positively or negatively, and integrity is when a person is the same no matter who he is with or what he's doing. A good attitude will influence others in a positive way, which is why it is one key of being a good leader. Last year, a friend of mine got in trouble when he wasn't directly responsible for what he did. The natural reaction for him was to complain and have a bad attitude about the situation. Instead, he went through it with a smile and showed people that no matter the circumstances, a person can always look at the positive side of life. My friend used getting in trouble as an opportunity to show his attitude in a positive way. Not only is attitude important in a leader, but so is integrity. Real integrity is hard to come by. It's rare for someone to stand up for how they want to live. In a sports competition I had the opportunity of playing, we had just scored to make it 3-1. Our coach, in order to get time to regroup and plan a strategy to come back for the last 20 minutes, told me to go on the field and fake an injury so that the team would get time to talk. I didn't think it would be right of me to do that, and I would have rather lost the game than cheat and give us a better opportunity to win. We still lost the game, but I didn't consider that as much because my integrity remained the same. Integrity, like attitude, has an effect on other people. My coach thanked me the very next day for what I did. Integrity and attitude will never go unnoticed, and it affects other people in a powerful way.

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tors, and philosophies all have their definitions of leadership. Leadership is one thing that our society lacks. Leadership is a rare find in today's world. But why is it that so many have a problem with being a true leader? What does being a true leader even entail? Leadership at its most basic substance can be defined as one word: influence. By this definition, everyone is a leader, because everyone has influence. The key is how to influence people in a positive way. Being a leader involves affecting positive change in others, and not being affected by others through character, service, and vision.

If compared to a meal, the character of a person is the meat of his leadership abilities. Without it, he'll lack the foundation, material, essence, and substance needed to affect others positively. There are two things that a person needs to have good character: attitude and integrity. Attitude is how a person reacts to a person or situation, whether it is positively or negatively, and integrity is when a person is the same no matter who he is with or what he's doing. A good attitude will influence others in a positive way, which is why it is one key of being a good leader. Last year, a friend of mine got in trouble when he wasn't directly responsible for what he did. The natural reaction for him was to complain and have a bad attitude about the situation. Instead, he went through it with a smile and showed people that no matter the circumstances, a person can always look at the positive side of life. My friend used getting in trouble as an opportunity to show his attitude in a positive way. Not only is attitude important in a leader, but so is integrity. Real integrity is hard to come by. It's rare for someone to stand up for how they want to live. In a sports competition I had the opportunity of playing, we had just scored to make it 3-1. Our coach, in order to get time to regroup and plan a strategy to come back for the last 20 minutes, told me to go on the field and fake an injury so that the team would get time to talk. I didn't think it would be right of me to do that, and I would have rather lost the game than cheat and give us a better opportunity to win. We still lost the game, but I didn't consider that as much because my integrity remained the same. Integrity, like attitude, has an effect on other people. My coach thanked me the very next day for what I did. Integrity and attitude will never go unnoticed, and it affects other people in a powerful way. In order to be a good leader, a person must have a strong foundation by having excellent character, which includes attitude and integrity.

While a person must have a strong foundation by having character, a strong foundation itself isn't enough to be a great leader; one must also be able to serve others, not only himself or herself. Service is all about

humility and sacrifice. Giving up of a person's own time, money, or resources is extremely important to be a good leader. Throughout this past season, our varsity soccer coach has led us in many community volunteer efforts. Every game the team brings in canned food items or clothing for the local soup kitchen. We did a fundraiser for the special needs group at the school. We held a couple practices with various soccer teams that are part of the town's soccer program. On a number of days this year, instead of practicing, we did yard work for two women whose husbands had died that past year. Our coach demonstrated great leadership in this, because he showed that he cared more about helping and serving other people than how well we did in our season. He affected not only his team, but also his community in a big way. Service is a great way to demonstrate great leadership. Not only must a person have a strong foundation through character, but that person must also be able to sacrifice and humble himself enough to serve others.

The last thing a great leader must have is vision. Especially for young people, but for adults also, this is the most difficult to show others. Vision requires more than simply doing things, as with character and service. To have vision, one has to be a thinker and innovator, someone who will look beyond what is happening right now and look to what can and will happen. If a person looks for obstacles, that's what he'll find, but a person of vision will see these as opportunities. My father owns a business and one of its functions is to teach about lead and asbestos safety. Early in the company's development, he would only get one or two people per class, which wasn't good for business. Instead of cancelling these classes, he would still teach the clients, even though the company probably wouldn't make money in the teaching area. This may have seemed like a bad idea at the time, but eventually the company got a reputation of trust and dependence because they rarely cancelled classes. This gave them much more business. Though it didn't make much sense at the time, my dad had the vision and foresight to not cancel the classes so that the company would be given a good reputation. He saw beyond the obstacle of not having enough people in the classes and saw the opportunity to make a name for his company. A great leader will have the vision to do the unexpected to get the expected results. Vision, though it's very difficult to see in others, is the most important leadership quality because it causes one to think outside the box and without it, a person can't prove that he can lead people to do the unexpected or the unorthodox to achieve goals. A person with vision affects change in others by showing that it's not about the destination so much as the journey, and a person of vision will

guide them on that journey.

To be a good leader, one must simply influence others in a positive way. One does this through character, service, and vision. Plain and simple, are society lacks good, effective leadership. It's time for a change. Just going through life and being influenced by others is the norm these days. Instead, be the reason that people change! Be a leader! Prove to others that following is no longer enough. If we all become leaders, we will change this country, and this world, for the better.



**Woman with Monkey**

*Erin Doble*

Photograph

## Lover's Qualms

*N. R. Vedoe*

In the Middle Ages, during the reign of King Arthur, there was a fair maiden by the name of Elaine of Corbin. Her father was King Pelles who was said to be very protective of his young daughter but very proud of her beauty. He would flaunt his only daughter to his subjects and to any passersby. More often than not, there would be three old women glowering at the beautiful Elaine as she was being shown off like a prized pet. She would stand at her window with her tutor, James who was born in the same year, next to her. He would stand at the window in full view of the people but not a single eye noticed his torso. His limbs and clothes could not be seen and all things that he touched which didn't have the breath of life in it became as invisible as he. James would always see these three women, but Elaine never did. He tried to warn her about the hags, but she paid no heed to these alarms. Their conversations would always go like this.

"Elaine," he would whisper, "there are three hags down there who are forever glaring at you. I fear they may be witches."

"Don't fret, James. They are harmless. Those hags are only jealous of my youth," she would typically reply. However, after many months of the hags watching the young girl they decided to take action. The old women were Morgan le Fay and two of her witchy friends in disguise and they were tired of seeing this beautiful, young girl being flaunted. They stole into her room late at night and took her from the room into a tower.

They left a note upon her bed that said, "We witches have tired of thy daughter's beauty. In the middle of your town you shall find a tower that we have built of earth. It can't be destroyed so don't bother. Within this tower is your daughter. She shall be boiled alive but never die or have her flesh slough off until the best knight in the world touches her hand, allowing the water to recede."

They unlocked the door to Elaine's room. They gagged the poor girl and bound her limbs, and then they went to the tower at the dead of night. Unbeknownst to these witches, James had followed them to the tower as they were making it. He watched them as they created the tower which rose from the ground like a dead man's hand. He watched them place the magic water into the tub that could never boil away. He watched as they took off Elaine's gown and shoved her into the tub. He heard her scream in agony as the hot water touched her skin. He snuck into the room before the witches were able to shut it. When inside, he let her

know that he was present in the tower with her.

"Elaine, I am here with you. Don't fear, you are not alone," he mumbled into her ear.

"James, thank God you are with me! AGH! Do you think you could try to scoop out some of the water? They have bound my hands," muttered Elaine in extreme agony.

"Of course, but I don't think I'll be able to get you out. This is magic water. The witches said that the only way for you to get out of this to hold hands with the best knight. I haven't even been knighted."

"It's still worth to try, ugh, and scoop out the water. Perhaps then water will come down enough that I'll be able to escape."

James placed his hands in the water and winced from the burn that he got from the boiling liquid. He began to take out the water little by little until he had a sizeable puddle at his feet. Elaine shifted in the tub and James watched as the water began to form a long stream that ended back in the tub. James watched in horror as every single drop went back into the tub, making him feel hopeless. He sat down in a corner and pondered what he could possibly do for the girl he tutored.

He looked towards the door. The witches had not locked it and it could very easily be opened. If he wanted to he could leave Elaine where she was, but he didn't dare do that. The steam inside of the room was beginning to become very thick, and it was hard to breathe. James walked over to the door and cracked it open so that just a sliver could be seen. All of the steam slowly leaked out of the stuffy, stone room. Elaine seemed to be comforted by the sudden lack of steam in the room. She heaved a great sigh and gave James a weak and pained smile. He looked back at her and quickly slipped out the door.

He snuck back into the cellar of the castle of King Pelles and searched for a jar of oil. A small window that was high up allowed a yellow ray of light illuminate the entire storage room. He passed by the wines and cheeses and felt about the shelves for quite some time until his hand touched a large, rotund glass that was greasy. He ran up to the ray of light and the liquid inside was clear, yellow, and viscous. James sprinted back up the stairwell and back out to the outside world. Clouds of dust were left in his wake as James was making his way back to the tower. The tutor was panting heavily as he opened the door to the steam room.

"I brought something that could help you," James heaved out holding out the oil and bending over on his knees.

"What is it?" Elaine inquired as she grimaced while facing her body



towards the tutor.

"It's oil!"

"Oh, please help me and place it on my shoulders! This water is burning my neck," she pleaded. He fumbled with the stopper for a bit until he was able to pour a handful of the liquid gold into Elaine's shoulders. She rubbed it wherever she was in extreme pain and found that it greatly reduced the torture she had to suffer. This pattern that James did to comfort Elaine was continued for five years. During those years several knights would come and try to save the King's daughter and possibly win her fine, white hand in marriage.

Whenever a knight from the Round Table came, James was forced to hide in the corner of the room to wait and see if Elaine would be able to escape. None of the knights could make the water recede, and the town was beginning to lose hope that their lady would ever be saved. They were doubtful until a knight named Sir Lancelot rode into the town of Corbin on a pure white stallion with a boyish grin on his face. They tugged him by the hand up the stairs to Elaine's steaming room. James had just fanned the room out a few minutes before Lancelot came up the stairs. The room looked as if there was just a light mist floating about when the supposed greatest knight in the world opened the door, yet Lancelot felt around the stone room as if he were blind. James was forced to shuffle about the hall as Lancelot passed by him on several occasions. After twenty minutes Lancelot found Elaine in the tub up to her neck in boiling water.

He held out his hand to her and as she touched his palm the water around her receded and she was able to get out of the tub in which she had been held captive in for half a decade. A robe was quickly wrapped about her by ladies-in-waiting, and she was shoved off to the castle to be properly clothed. James was the last to leave the room filled with overjoyed bodies. There was a door that opened up to the stairs that led down to the town. James was trailing behind the others and noticed that Sir Lancelot had his hand on the latch of the heavy, wooden door.

"Wait, wait I'm coming! Please hold the door open!" he shouted at the knight, but as he neared the opening the door was slammed shut in his face. With all of his might he pushed and pulled on the door, but could not move it. He looked about him and found a window through which he would just be able to squeeze. He peered down and saw a massive pile of hay that would be perfect to cushion his fall. A farmer stood tending to the pile making it larger and larger as he dumped all of the hay he had harvested from his fields into the stack. The farmer gave a quick jump and the poor, old fellow nearly had his heart stop when he saw a mass of his hay

come tumbling down for no apparent reason. The farmer heard moaning and groaning from on top of the stack, but saw absolutely nothing there.

He stood in place, flabbergasted, and screamed when he felt something rush past him but saw nothing.

The tutor of Elaine managed to make it to the castle of King Pelles and watched as Sir Lancelot gorged himself with the substance of Corbin. To the horror of James, Elaine was looking at Lancelot as if he were a bit of honey cake to beseech the eyes. She had not touched her food and had only been staring at Lancelot for the entirety of dinner. Lancelot had occasionally turned towards Elaine and asked how she was or whether or not she was hungry. He'd pick his teeth with his tongue and give her a shy smile when her father wasn't looking, making her give a quiet giggle. This pattern happened for three days. On the third day, James decided to talk to her about her obsession with Sir Lancelot. He sat next to her and started up a conversation.

"Elaine," he said, "you're being silly with Lancelot! Can't you tell that he doesn't care for at all? He just wanted to prove himself the best knight in the world when he saved you! He's a fraud for all maidens. The Queen is the only one for whom he cares."

"No, I can tell he cares for me, and he's brave and kind," was her reply.

"You don't understand. His smirks are only meant to appease your father for he is giving the man a bed to rest his thick head on. He only thinks of you as another thing he has saved."

Elaine laughed and said, "He definitely cares for me, my invisible tutor. He saved me from a boiling kettle. How could he not care for me?"

"You claim that he is brave and kind, but I can prove that he is neither. When I tried to get down the stairs of the tower he slammed the door in my face, forcing me to jump out of a window. Your father and I saw him running from a chicken and your father had to catch it so that he wouldn't have to scamper up a tree. Lancelot is not the greatest knight in the world. While he may be good with a sword and be gentlemanly with maidens he is certainly not the best."

"You are only jealous of him. You want to be a knight like him, but you cannot because no one would be able to see you. Sir Lancelot is the greatest in the world. I love him, James, I love him."

"I know you do, but he only cares for Guinevere. He'll never settle for you," sighed James.

"Why are you against Lancelot so very much? He is most magnificent knight in the world," said Elaine angrily.

“Elaine, while Lancelot may not love you, there is another who does.”

“Do tell me who this is,” said Elaine with her eyes turning to slits and her lips turning into a thin line.

“It’s me, Elaine. I have loved thee ever since I gave thy skin oil to soothe it. I have treated thou well. Why do thy eyes stare only at that fool?” questioned James. His tongue had a tendency to slip into the High Language of the upper class whenever he was excited or upset.

“I knew you were just jealous,” snarled Elaine. She turned her back on James and flared her nostrils. James looked down at his clear feet and bit back his tears. He slowly turned his head towards Elaine. He noticed her hand was extended towards him on the covers. He placed his hand on the sheet and carefully slid his palm over to Elaine’s. His fingertips were about an inch from hers when she suddenly pulled away her hand. He sat shocked for a while before he was able to ask her a question that he really wanted answered.

“How did you know that I was going to touch your hand? You can’t even see me!” inquired James.

“I’ve learned to know you well. I know what you will do before you do it. Your movements are very predictable, my dear, transparent tutor,” replied Elaine.

“May I hold your hand, anyway? It would be very nice if I could.”

“Yes, here, take my hand. My dear friend, you’ve been good to me. I hope that thy soul not be ripped by my harsh words from earlier.”

She felt her hand being grasped by an invisible one and she gripped onto it tightly. Another one stroked the back of it caringly and then pushed a lock of hair behind her ear. As much as the advances of James moved her, her mind still remained on Lancelot. James had noticed that no amount of affection he showed Elaine would move her so decided to confront the man who had stolen the heart of the Lady of Corbin.

“Lancelot, I wish to speak unto thee,” shouted James. He had managed to catch up with the knight in a hallway in the castle. Lancelot turned around and looked about to see absolutely nothing behind him. He shrugged assuming he must have been hearing things until he felt a hand grasp his shoulder. He swatted it away and quickly came to the realization that there was an invisible man in the castle at Corbin.

“Good God, man, were you cursed by a witch?” asked Lancelot trying to change his angle of viewing James to see if any part of him was visible.

“No, no I have been invisible for as long as I may remember. All

things not alive that I touch become invisible as well. However, my transparency is not that I wish to speak of. No, it is about the fair maiden Elaine. You have stolen her wonderful, kind heart, a heart which I have worked long and hard to gain the trust of. I have been her tutor and friend ever since she was born. You are causing her damage by staying here and not showing her any affection. Why do you care naught for her? Is she just another maiden to you? I will assure if you hurt her you will pay greatly for it.”

“Talkative fellow, aren’t you? I have saved many a virgin just like her. Over time I have learned not to grow overly attached to those I save. I would have left earlier but I feel as if I should be kind to King Pelles by being kind to his daughter. I’m sorry if I’ve caused any damage.”

“Fine, but when you leave make sure that you have not completely romanced Elaine so that she shall only think of you.”

“I’m not sure how I shall do that, but I shall try nonetheless,” responded a slightly confused Lancelot. He shook his head as he left from the conversation with the invisible man. The castle of King Pelles is an odd place, indeed, he thought.

Lancelot stayed for a total of two weeks before he returned to Camelot to be with the Queen again. After he left, Elaine no longer held her head up high. She would forever look down at her feet and no crack of a smile would spread across her lips. Both her father and James tried to cheer her up through presents and jokes, but the corners of her mouth stayed pointed down. She moped about the castle and didn’t say very much to anyone, not even James.

During a night when Elaine had seemed particularly depressed, James found a note on her chest that was a farewell note written by her hand. He read it with trembling fingers and ran down to King Pelles to show him his daughter’s thoughts.

King Pelles pursed his lips and muttered, “I knew she would try to end her life. James, you have done much for my daughter, but I wish to ask of you one more thing. Please, I beg of you, watch Elaine and prevent her from killing herself, but please make sure that she doesn’t know that you’ll be watching her.”

“I would do anything for your daughter,” said James clenching his fists. He grabbed a knife from the armory and ran back to the room of Elaine. He placed the dagger in his pocket so that it would touch his skin and remain invisible. He stole into Elaine’s room and watched her as she sat at the edge of her bed. She heaved her head as he entered and James got a full look at her face. She had aged ten years in the ten days since

Lancelot had left from the castle. Dark bags hung under her eyes and nearly all the color had drained from her face. Her mouth had been formed into a permanent frown without even the slightest glint of happiness.

"What is the matter, James?" she inquired.

"I-I just wanted to check on you," he stuttered. She lowered her head again and placed her head in her hands.

"Please go away, James. I wish to be alone."

"I shan't leave you," sternly replied James. She looked at him again and he turned towards the door.

He hesitated for a moment as he contemplated whether or not he should stay. He slipped out of the room and walked halfway down the stairs before he sprinted back up them again. He reached the door panting. He pressed his ear against the door and heard a slight shuffle and a stool being suddenly shoved across the floor. He burst through the door and saw a rope tied to the ceiling and the other end wrapped around Elaine's neck. Her lips had begun to turn blue and her limbs were twitching. James was unable to move when he first saw Elaine but quickly regained his senses. He took the dagger out from his pocket and sliced through the rope. His fingers fumbled over the rope to get it off of her. He loosened it enough so that he could slip it over her head and he threw the wretched coil away from his Elaine. He gently slapped her face in an attempt to revive her. After half a minute, a gasp for air issued from her lips which still had a mild tinge of blue to them. James sat her up onto her bed and supported her in a sitting position. She coughed several times before she was finally able to breathe normally. James sprinted down the stairs and fetched a glass filled with wine and grabbed a jar of honey from the kitchen. He tucked half-pence into the dress of the maid from whom he had stolen the sustenance. His feet flew back up the stairs to reach Elaine before she tried to hang herself again. James laid down Elaine on her bed when he got back upstairs. He tried to give her the wine with honey, but she refused to drink.

For many months James and King Pelles watched Elaine degrade and wither away. James would always bring her down to dinner each night. A bowl of boiled peas was placed in front of Elaine for her to eat. Her fork would pierce just one pea. With a delicate gesture, the fork would be placed upon her lips and she would gently chew the small vegetable. James would attempt to bring her outside for walks after dinner, but this was done in vain. She remained in her bed and occasionally walked about her room as if she were pacing. Her responses to both her father and James were always laconic and hardly answered anything.

"Good morning, my dear daughter," would be King Pelles' greeting to his daughter.

"Hello, Father," Elaine would reply.

"Are you having a good day today?"

"Yes, Father."

"Do you wish to go for a walk or perhaps play with some of your ladies-in-waiting?"

"No, Father. I wish to go to my room."

The king would merely purse his lips and allow his daughter to stay within her room. The final line was drawn when a lady-in-waiting told King Pelles about how emaciated Elaine had become.

"King Pelles, King Pelles, I must tell you of your daughter," said the maid.

"Please tell me good news," sighed the King.

"I'm sorry to say that it is very bad."

"If I must hear it, then I must."

"Her ribs are sticking out of her stomach, the lines on her face are becoming more defined, and- and her hair is becoming gray and thin," somberly said the maid. King Pelles rubbed his beard as two teardrops fell from the corners of his eyes. The lady-in-waiting was sent away and the King marched up to the tower where his daughter slept.

"Get up, Elaine," demanded the King.

"I do not wish to, Father," whispered her weak voice.

"You are dying, and if you do not quit your sorrowful ways you shall be lost forever."

Elaine turned her head towards him, "Father, I shall wither away. I may no longer be fixed for I'm in too deep on my deathbed."

"I shall send James."

"No."

"Oh and why not?"

"He mustn't see me."

A voice in the corner piped up and replied with, "But I see you now."

King Pelles left the room when he heard the voice of the faithful tutor in the room. However, he kept his ear to the door so that he heard every word that was spoken between his daughter and her tutor who was the same age. He heard the words from James telling him of the affection that the tutor had for his daughter. He had known for a long time

that James had cared for Elaine, but he never realized he had cared for his daughter this deeply.

James sat at the edge of the bed and asked, "Elaine, sweet Elaine, why must you do this?"

"I can't go on. I've tried before, but now it is too late to turn back the clock," was the sad reply of Elaine.

With tears in his eyes, James said, "No! It is not too late! Get up, get up, now! I will make you live!"

A form at the edge of Elaine's bed began to shimmer. It had a vague human shape and it was looking directly at the dying girl in the bed. As the form shimmered, the features on it became more and more noticeable. A definite nose and eyes could be seen where the head was. The arms and legs became more defined and were covered with a typical, baggy shirt and pants of the Middle Ages. The shimmering form in front of Elaine looked as if she could stick her hand straight through its stomach, but as she tried to do so her hand was stopped by another that was definitely solid but translucent. She recognized the feel of the palm against her skin. She suddenly realized who the shimmering form was in front of her. She became shocked as the flesh turned more and more solid and gained color. Sitting in front of her with her hand in his was James. He could be seen in his full glory with tears streaming down his face.

"I-I can see you, James," stuttered Elaine.

"What do you mean?" said James in a confused tone. He looked towards his hand and noticed that he could see it. He had never seen any part of him before and it felt odd and dizzying to suddenly see his limbs. While he may have been startled at his own self, he only looked at his hand for a moment before turning his eyes back to Elaine. Her face was a mass of confusion and her jaw had dropped down to her chest. His eyes were an emerald green while his hair was the curliest black she had ever seen. His face was one that left an imprint on the mind forever. It definitely left a large imprint on the fevered mind of Elaine. She blinked and stared at him for a very long time. Her thoughts of Lancelot melted away from her mind and the only face that filled her head was that of James. Even though his face was red and covered by the tears his features were still fine, sharp, and pale. She began to hate herself for not loving him more deeply than before. She felt indebted to him for not only comforting her while being boiled, but for also being loyal to her even when she was wretched to him.

"James, could you please come closer?" pleaded Elaine.

"Whatever you wish," he sobbed.

"Could you possibly forgive me for all that I've done to you?"

"What wrong hath thou done to me, Elaine?"

"I have never fully appreciated all that you've done for me. I pray that you shall forgive me for this."

"I shall always forgive thee for any sin thou have done against me," choked James who was very upset at the moment. The High Language of the upper class had been uttered from his lips for this reason.

"Is there anything I could possibly do for you before I die?" whispered her dying lips.

"For this once, I wish to touch mine lips to thine. Never before have I done this, but I have wished to do it for a long time."

"I consent," murmured Elaine. He bent over and placed his mouth to hers which was still surprisingly red for a dying person. He stroked her hair as he placed his lips to hers and could feel the cold settling into her. He sat back up and saw that her skin had turned gray. He threw himself over her body and bawled even more heavily than before. When that noise reached the ears of King Pelles he burst open the door. He knelt beside the bed of his dead daughter and wept alongside James. They sat there for several hours before they were able to speak to each other. King Pelles was the first to speak.

"I know that you loved my daughter so did I. We loved her equally," stated King Pelles.

"Yes," swallowed James.

"We both know whose fault this is, the very reason as to why my only child is dead."

"I need thy old armor. Lancelot must receive justice for what he's done," growled James.

"My old armor is in the closet in the armory. You know what you must do to prepare. I'm too old to fight that upstart."

James quickly armored himself with the old silver armor and chain mail that King Pelles had worn to ward off Saxons. He grabbed the best sword he could find and swung it around to make sure the balance was good for him. He knew little about sword fighting, but his love for Elaine and his wrath towards Lancelot made him a quick learner. James hacked a several hay dummies and sliced all of them in half. The tutor had managed to beat the best swordsman in Corbin in a face to face tournament. James had even managed to knock off a pin from a wood stump with a lance. He left Corbin after two months of training with a fine stallion and a week's worth of supplies. He headed off into the forest in search of the best knight. Lancelot had a specific type of armor which made him easily recognizable. It was shinier than most to start and it had his emblem on it,

a lion with a lance in one paw and a heart in the other. This armor is what made James recognize the knight. He approached him with his sword and helmet in hand while yelling the other man's name.

"Lancelot, come forth and fight me for what you have done!" shouted James in a grisly voice.

"And what, pray tell, have I done?" said Lancelot in a cocky manner.

"You have caused the death of Elaine of Corbin, for this you must die."

"Your voice sounds familiar, but I don't recognize your face. Who are you?"

"I am James of Corbin, the once invisible tutor of Elaine, the woman whose death you caused. When she died my limbs became opaque."

"That'll do it," said Lancelot with a nod. He drew his sword from his scabbard and ran towards James with a shout. James quickly put his helmet back on and rushed towards Lancelot. They met at the middle and sparks flew as they collided. They slashed and hacked at one another and more than just the sword was used during the battle. Fists and shields were placed on the enemy whenever there was a chance to use them. Both men were panting after an hour of fighting. Blood droplets from both men had fallen on the leaves of the forest ground. Their clash of swords could be heard from miles away as the battle became more and more intense. The fight lasted a total of four hours before Lancelot held up his hand in mercy. He lifted up his visor and could be seen sweating heavily.

"You are a good fighter," panted Lancelot, "do you wish to be a knight at the Round Table?"

"It is a great honor to be a knight at that table, but I shall never be in any league with you!" replied James.

"Not all the knights like each other there. We need someone like you. You would be able to save more maidens than most, maidens who are like Elaine of Corbin."

"I oblige, but I still don't forgive you!" was the answer of James. He turned around and started walking. He took two steps and then he felt cold metal being shoved into his back down his armor. It pierced his back, went through his ribs and stabbed his heart. James fell down to his knees and grimaced in pain. He swayed back and forth before he fell down on his face at the base of a large tree. Lancelot kicked him over and checked his vital signs, nothing. He stood over him and gave a quick snort.

"I'm sorry, my friend, but you were too good, and I must remain the best."

Lancelot rode back off to Camelot on James' horse where he knew

he would be safe. He approached the King on his return and knelt before the throne.

"My liege, I have come home clean of sins," said Lancelot to King Arthur. Arthur nodded his head towards his commander. He believed what he said and trusted what his best knight had said to him. The words which Lancelot spoke were golden in his mind, and the atrocities of the knight were heard of no more.

**Your Sweatshirt***Achille Orlowski*

Faded, light gray  
 Shades of stormy skies  
 Fabric is warm, soft, comforting  
 Slight rips and tears line the edges  
 Worn and tattered from years of use.  
 Emotions swell  
 Home, safety, sorrow.

Stains splattered, here and there  
 Memories preserved forever.  
 Perhaps paint from new house  
 Or sharpie and glue from late night projects  
 All from another time and place.  
 The tears fall  
 I miss you.

Your scent remains  
 Some days it's all I have left  
 I cling to it  
 Like one lone leaf in fall  
 Hoping for sunny days to return.  
 It whispers to me  
 "love, strength, faith."

Big enough to wrap myself in  
 Perfect for chilly days.  
 Healing when I'm sick  
 Works wonders on the soul  
 Soothing the tired, hopeless.  
 My heart mends,  
 Chipped, but not yet broken.

You are my hero  
 My savior  
 This is your cape  
 To me, a memento  
 Something never to be forgotten  
 Full of charm and enchantment  
 I'll hold on to the sweatshirt 'till you return.

Dear Reader,

This is an exceptional packet of paper you hold in your hands. These pages are filled with the time that students spent putting their thoughts on paper. Whether they wrote, rhymed, drew, or painted, this magazine is the result of their own efforts. It is a small pocket of youth culture.

What makes this issue marvelous, however, is the fact that it exists at all. It seems that each person has something else that is more important to do than sit down and write a poem, never mind the process of revision. Gone are the romantic days of sitting in the windowsill with our favorite pen and decorative notebook in hand. Gone are the days when the submission folder overflows. Gone are the days when artwork and writing is printed on paper. It's sad to watch the creativity of my generation falter, die, shrivel up, and reveal itself in the words used when losing video games. Rather than writing, high school students can think of a million other projects on which to procrastinate. Authors are a minority.

So congratulate them, Reader, and thank you for taking the time to read this jewel. We appreciate you more than you know.

I would also like to thank my staff and advisor for dealing with my personal lack of time.

Enjoy this packet of youth expression created by students for students.

Megan Cullinane  
 Tower Editor

**Cover: Title --Skylar Oliveira--Medium**

**Title page: Title-- Artist -- Medium**

**For next year's editions**

Submission Forms are available in Room 416

**Note:** In the interest of fairness, all *Tower* entries are evaluated **anonymously** to ensure that no bias is present. All names are removed once the entries are received, and each author's name is replaced with a number.

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## **Colophon**

**col·o·phon** *n.*

1. An inscription placed usually at the end of a book, giving facts about its publication.

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