

# ODYSSEY

COLLEGE BASED **ART & LITERARY**

COMPETITION: ALL  
LAKE-SUMTER STUDENTS  
CAN ENTER FOR

**CASH PRIZES!**

CHECK OUT THIS YEARS  
WINNERS INSIDE!

TWO BOOKS IN ONE!  
FLIP TO BACK  
FOR MORE  
FUN

*Edgar Allan Poe*



# ODYSSEY

VOLUME 32-2015



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LAKE-SUMTER STATE COLLEGE  
ART AND LITERARY MAGAZINE  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR  
TARALYN PIERCE  
ADVISOR

**"...Thrilled me filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before"**

**The Raven**

**-Edgar Allan Poe**



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LAKE-SUMTER STATE COLLEGE  
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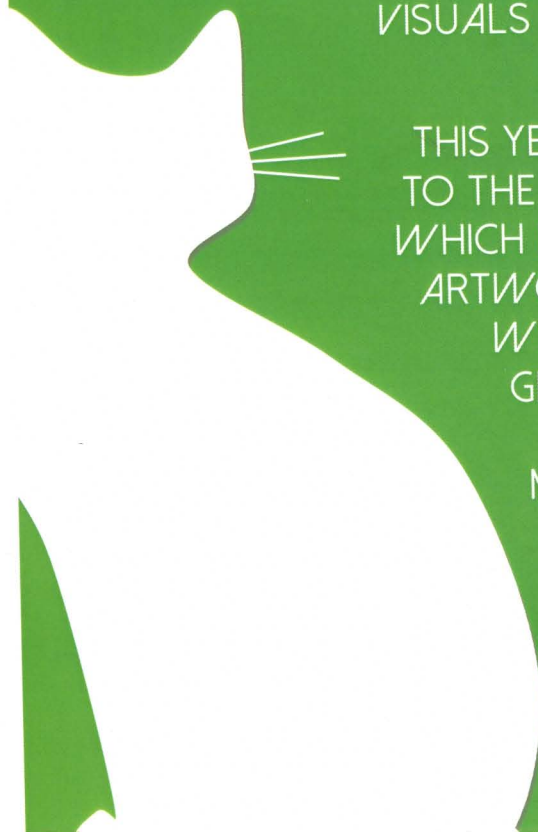
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# EDITORS NOTE

## ODYSSEY STAFF

THIS YEAR WE HAD MANY GREAT ENTRIES, AND SINCE WE DID NOT HAVE AS MANY AS PREVIOUS YEARS, WE TRIED TO FIT ALL OF THE ENTRIES IN THIS MAGAZINE. WE ALSO DECIDED TO GO WITH A MORE MAGAZINE LIKE APPROACH AS WELL AND DECIDED NOT TO USE ANY WEBSITE IMAGES. FOR EXAMPLE, THE COVER WAS CREATED COMPLETELY IN MICROSOFT WORD. THIS ALSO MEANS ANY PICTURE THAT WAS NOT AN ENTRY WAS TAKEN BY ONE OF US TO IMPROVE THE MAGAZINE, AND ADD TO THE AMAZING WRITING WE HAD THIS YEAR. THIS YEAR WE HAD A RECORD BREAKING AMOUNT OF POETRY. THEREFORE, WE CHOSE AN EDGAR ALLAN POE THEME. ELIZABETH, OUR GRAPHIC DESIGNER, DESIGNED THE COVERS COMPLETELY ON HER OWN. TWO OF POE'S MOST RECOGNIZABLE WORKS ARE THE RAVEN (1845) AND THE BLACK CAT (1845), OF WHICH WE USED VISUALS INSPIRED BY THESE WORKS OF LITERARY ART.



THIS YEAR WE DID GET THE OPPORTUNITY TO TALK TO THE ARTISTS THAT CAME TO THE AWARD SHOW, WHICH IS ALWAYS ENJOYABLE TO PUT A FACE TO THE ARTWORK. WE WANT TO SAY CONGRATS TO OUR WINNERS AND ALSO TO THOSE WHO HAVE GRADUATED. WE WILL MISS TALKING TO YOU AND HAVING YOUR AMAZING WORK IN OUR MAGAZINE. WE HOPE ONLY THE BEST TO YOU IN YOUR FUTURE CAREERS AND NEVER STOP BEING ARTISTS!

- Kaylee Temple

# AWARDS

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MY NEVERLAND  
2ND: DAVID RENNA  
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OF NONE  
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Were I called on to define, very briefly, the term Art, I should call it 'the reproduction of what the Senses perceive in Nature through the veil of the soul.'

-Edgar Allan Poe



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OF NONE  
DAVID RENNA



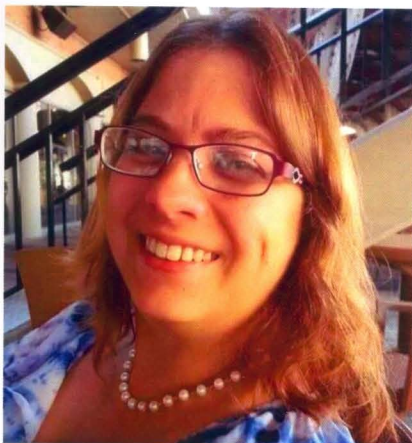
HOLDING BACK  
KATY MCKAY



YOU ARE MILA  
WITHOUT IT  
SADE MONET  
VALDERRANA



# STAFF PAGE



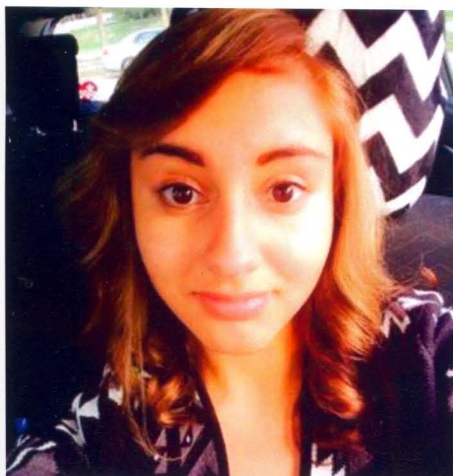
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ODYSSEY GRAPHIC DESIGNER

## ABOUT OUR WEBSITE



### OUR WEBSITE INCLUDES:

- ◆ PHOTOS FROM THE AWARD SHOW
- ◆ CALENDAR FOR EVENTS ONCE DATES ARE CONFIRMED
- ◆ SOME INFORMATION ABOUT THE ODYSSEY AND ITS STAFF
- ◆ PAST ISSUES OF THE ODYSSEY DATING BACK TO THE 1980S
- ◆ GALLERIES OF THE ARTWORK INCLUDING THE WRITINGS
- ◆ CONTACT FORM THAT ALLOWS YOU TO EMAIL THE ODYSSEY STAFF
- ◆ FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

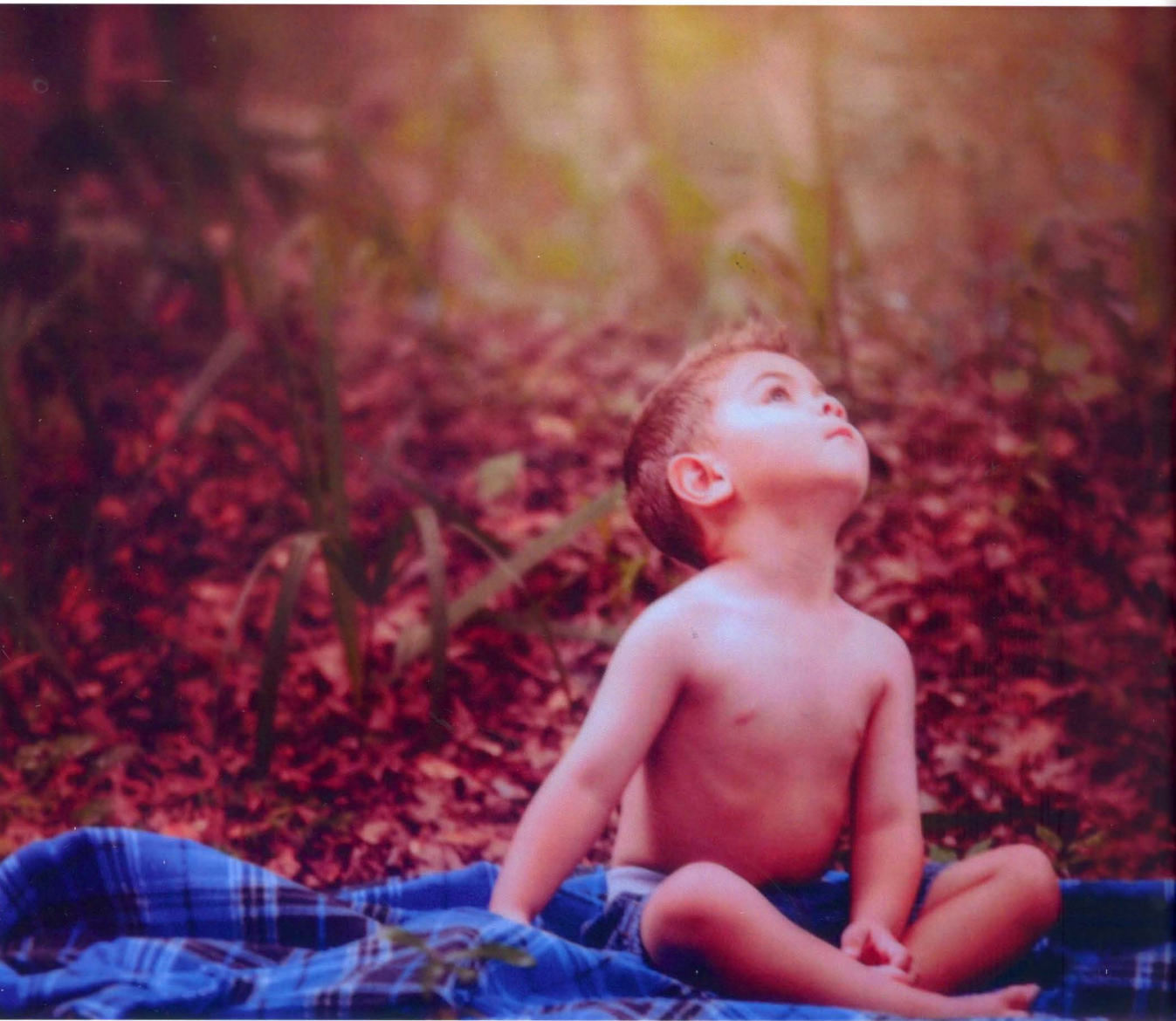
### THE WEBSITE URL IS:

<http://lscstudent.wix.com/odyssey>

O'er the strange woods--  
o'er the sea--  
Over spirits on the wing--  
Over every drowsy thing--  
And buries them up quite  
In a labyrinth of light--

-Fairyland

Edgar Allan Poe



THE GIVING TREE CRISTINA LOPEZ



# SOMETIMES

ALEXIS PAYNTER

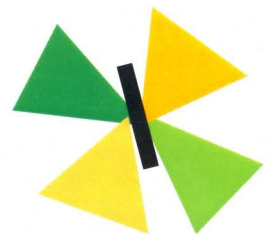
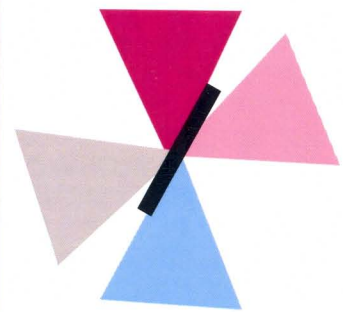


OFTENTIMES I THINK OF YOU. LEFT WITH **WHISPERS** OF SUCH TIMES. WHEN YOUR HEART HELD ONTO MINE. THOUGHTS ARE ALL I OWN OF YOU.. YOU HAD CALMED MY RAGING STORM. WITHOUT YOU I'M LOST AT SEA. WITHOUT YOU I CANNOT BREATHE. THE **WAVES** STAY ABOVE MY HEAD. I TOUCH THE SPACE NEAR MY RIBS. WHERE YOU STAYED AND MADE A HOME.. SPIDER WEBS AND BROKEN **BONES**. LIVE THERE NOW. BUT I'M ALONE. SOMETIMES I DO FORGET YOU. WHEN MOTHER PULLS ME TO HER. HER **WARM** SUN RAYS ARE MY CURE.. HER BODY **WRAPS** ME UP **TIGHT**. I LIE THERE WITH MY EYES CLOSED; **DAISIES GROW** FROM MY SOFT SKIN. AND BERRIES BLOOM FROM MY CHIN. **BUMBLE BEES** COME BUZZING BY. I AM ONE WITH HER **BEAUTY**. THE SAME SWEET RIVERS COURSE THROUGH MY OWN

VEINS AND FLOWING OUT TILL I AM FINALLY FREE. EVEN AT NIGHT HER **LIGHT** SHINES IN THE SKY AS IF ALIVE. EVEN WITHOUT YOU I RISE AND I SWEAR- I WILL SURVIVE.



BEYOND THE MUSHROOM KAYLA CHIDESTER



# A CONSTITUENCY OF NONE

**I**T WAS NOVEMBER 6TH AND EVERYONE WAS ABOUT TO NOT VOTE FOR THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. EVERYONE WAS RATHER APATHETIC ABOUT THE PROCEEDINGS AND NOBODY IN THE NEWS WAS COVERING THE EVENT, BUT EVERYONE DID AGREE THAT IT WAS A TIME-HONORED AMERICAN TRADITION THAT SHOULD BE RESPECTED AND OBSERVED IN THE PRIVACY OF EVERYONE'S HOMES. SEAN MCALLISTER, THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE, WAITED FOR THE PROCEEDINGS IN HIS OFFICE. AS HE WAITED FOR THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTION, HE THOUGHT ABOUT THE FUTURE AS WELL AS THE PAST.

THE TRADITION OF NOT VOTING BEGAN DURING THE MID-TERM ELECTIONS OF 2018. PEOPLE WERE RATHER BUMMED OUT ABOUT THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS OF 2016, ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING THE CANDIDATE WHO WON THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE DID NOT WIN THE POPULAR VOTE (AGAIN). AND SO WHEN MID-TERMS CAME ALONG IN 2018, MOST PEOPLE THOUGHT, "OH, THAT'S OKAY. I KNOW MY VOTE WON'T MAKE A DIFFERENCE. BESIDES, I KNOW MY DISTRICT USUALLY SWINGS ONE WAY. I'LL JUST LET THEM DO THE WORK THIS TIME." THE ONLY PROBLEM IS THAT EVERYONE HAD THAT SAME IDEA. AND SO, IN THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY, NO ONE VOTED ON ELECTION DAY.


THE RESULTS WEREN'T PARTICULARLY CATASTROPHIC. EACH STATE HAD GUIDELINES ON WHAT TO DO ON SUCH OCCASIONS. IN SOME TOWNS WHERE MAYORS WERE RUNNING, THE CANDIDATES JUST DREW LOTS UNTIL ONE WAS CHOSEN. THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, REALIZING THAT THE GOVERNMENT COULD SEEMINGLY FUNCTION WITHOUT THE INPUT TO VOTE, DECIDED, "HEY, WHY NOT MAKE A TRADITION OUT OF THIS?"

OF COURSE, POLITICIANS THOUGHT OTHERWISE. HOWEVER, INSTEAD OF ENCOURAGING THEIR CONSTITUENTS TO VOTE, THEY DECIDED TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PASS NEW LEGISLATION. SOME STATES BEGAN TO INCORPORATE NEW ELECTION TIE-BREAKER RULES. THINGS LIKE CRAPS AND ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS WERE ADDED TO THE WAYS IN WHICH A TIE COULD BE BROKEN. THIS LED TO A FAMOUS SENATORIAL ELECTION IN MISSOURI WHERE ONE CANDIDATE TRIED TO PLAY WITH LOADED DICE.

ANYWAY, SINCE EVERYTHING SEEMED TO WORK OUT DURING THOSE MID-TERMS, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE THOUGHT, "HEY, LET'S TRY THAT AGAIN FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS!" AND SO IN 2020 NO ONE VOTED IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. THIS TIME, THE NEWS DID REPORT ON WHAT WAS HAPPENING NOT BECAUSE IT WAS IMPORTANT, BUT BECAUSE IT WAS EXCITING. NOBODY KNEW EXACTLY WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF NO ONE VOTED.

WELL, THE ELECTORS DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO AT FIRST. BUT THEN THEY ALL HAD THIS GREAT IDEA. THEY FIGURED THEY WOULD VOTE IN A WAY THAT WOULD REFLECT THE POPULAR ELECTION RESULT. AND SO THE ELECTORS THEMSELVES CHOSE TO NOT VOTE. NOW THINGS GOT PRETTY DARN INTERESTING, BECAUSE THIS WAS SEEN AS A TIE IN THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE. THAT'S WHEN ONE OF THOSE AMENDMENTS IN THE CONSTITUTION COMES INTO PLAY (SEAN MCALLISTER COULDN'T REMEMBER WHICH ONE IT WAS AT THE MOMENT WAS IT THE 14TH? THE 19TH? MAYBE THE 26TH?), BECAUSE THEN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IS SUPPOSED TO VOTE FOR A PRESIDENT AND THE SENATE IS SUPPOSED TO VOTE FOR A VICE PRESIDENT.

WELL, AS YOU CAN PROBABLY GUESS, THEY ALL DECIDED TO REFLECT THE WISHES OF THEIR CONSTITUENTS AS WELL, AND SO THEY ALL ABSTAINED FROM VOTING. BUT THERE'S EVEN A RULE ABOUT THAT TOO IN THAT VERY SAME AMENDMENT, BE-



CAUSE THAT TOO WAS TREATED AS A TIE, AND WHEN THAT HAPPENS, THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE BECOMES PRESIDENT! AND EVERYONE IN AMERICA WAS HAPPY IT WAS THE BEST SHOW ON CABLE TELEVISION ANYONE HAD EVER SEEN AND THE RATINGS SOARED THROUGH THE ROOF. "NOBODY COULD'VE PREDICTED THAT TWIST ENDING!" EVERYONE MOSTLY SAID.

BUT ELECTIONS WERE LESS EXCITING AFTER THAT. YOU SEE, PEOPLE STOPPED RUNNING FOR OFFICE ALTOGETHER. THEY FIGURED, "HEY, THE SYSTEM WORKS WITHOUT PARTICIPATING IN IT WHY WASTE MY TIME VOTING WHEN THERE ARE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO?" AND SO THE NEXT MID-TERM CAME AND WENT MOSTLY IT WENT, CONSIDERING NO SEATS WERE CONTESTED, SO THE INCUMBENTS REMAINED THE INCUMBENTS. EVERYONE THOUGHT IT WAS REFRESHING, REALLY. THEY DIDN'T HAVE TO ENDURE THOSE REALLY ANNOYING CAMPAIGN ADS RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THEIR FAVORITE SHOWS. TWO YEARS AFTER THAT, NO ONE CHALLENGED THE SITTING PRESIDENT, SO FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY THE PRESIDENT REMAINED THE PRESIDENT WITHOUT OPPOSITION.

OF COURSE, THERE WERE SOME CONCERNS. PEOPLE DON'T LIVE FOREVER AND SEAN MCALLISTER KNEW THIS BEST, WHAT WITH BEING 101-YEARS-OLD AND ALL. AND SO MAYORS AND CIRCUIT JUDGES STARTED TO KICK THE BUCKET. THAT'S WHEN MOST STATES STARTED TO MAKE AMENDMENTS TO THEIR OWN CONSTITUTIONS TO GIVE POWERS TO THE GOVERNOR TO APPOINT PEOPLE IN VACANCIES (SOME STATES ALREADY HAD RULES LIKE THAT, SO NOBODY THOUGHT IT WAS A BIG FUSS ANYWAY). BUT THEY DIDN'T BOTHER TO DO THAT WITH REPRESENTATIVES. THEY FIGURED THERE WERE SO MANY THAT THEY HAD PLENTY OF TIME TO TABLE THAT MATTER TO A LATER DATE. WHEN GOVERNORS STARTED TO KEEL OVER, CONGRESS PASSED AN AMENDMENT ALLOWING THEM TO APPOINT PEOPLE IN VACANCIES. EVEN WHEN SUPREME COURT JUSTICES ANSWERED THEIR FINAL SUMMONS, THE PRESIDENT NEVER BOTHERED TO APPOINT NOMINEES (EVERYONE AGREED THAT THE SUPREME COURT REALLY DIDN'T DO MUCH BUT MAKE THINGS MORE COMPLICATED ANYWAY). AND EVERYTHING WAS FINE.

SO EVERY EIGHT YEARS, THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE BECAME THE NEXT PRESIDENT. AND THAT TRADITION HAS CONTINUED TO THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS OF 2084. THIS TIME, HOWEVER, EVERYONE STARTED TO CARE ABOUT THE ELECTIONS AGAIN. YOU SEE, WHILE SEAN MCALLISTER IS THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE AND, OBVIOUSLY, THE NEXT PRESIDENT, HE ALSO HAPPENS TO BE THE LAST EXISTING MEMBER OF CONGRESS. HE WAS ONCE THE YOUNGEST MEMBER OF CONGRESS, BUT NOW HE'S THE OLDEST ONE EVER, HAVING SERVED

IN CONGRESS FOR 72 YEARS.

IN JUST UNDER AN HOUR, THE POLLS WOULD CLOSE AND NOBODY WILL HAVE CAST THEIR BALLOTS. HOWEVER, NOTHING IN THE CONSTITUTION SAID WHAT TO DO WITHOUT A LEGISLATIVE BRANCH. I MEAN, THE COUNTRY HAD BEEN GETTING ALONG FINE WITH THERE BEING ONLY ONE MEMBER OF CONGRESS FOR THE LAST EIGHT YEARS SURELY THEY COULD GET BY IF THERE WAS NO ONE THERE, RIGHT? NEWS STATIONS DEBATED THE ISSUE FIERCELY, SUGGESTING THAT THE PRESIDENT COULD SIMPLY ISSUE EXECUTIVE ORDERS. SINCE THERE WOULDN'T BE A CONGRESS TO STRIKE THEM DOWN, THEY COULD GET BY FOR ANOTHER EIGHT YEARS (WELL, IF SEAN MCALLISTER SURVIVES HIS EIGHT YEARS IN OFFICE) BEFORE ANYONE REALLY HAD TO THINK ABOUT DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

AND SO HERE SEAN MCALLISTER SAT, THINKING THAT MAYBE IT WAS TIME TO DO SOMETHING. SO WHEN THE POLLS CLOSED AND THE RESULTS IMMEDIATELY CAME IN AND THE ELECTORS ALL ABSTAINED AND SEAN MCALLISTER HIMSELF ABSTAINED TO VOTE FOR HIMSELF, HE AUTOMATICALLY BECAME THE PRESIDENT. AND FROM THAT DAY UNTIL INAUGURATION DAY, SEAN MCALLISTER THOUGHT AND THOUGHT SOME MORE ABOUT WHAT TO DO. AND SO, AFTER SWEARING ON A COMPUTER TABLET OPENED UP TO THE DIGITAL VERSION OF THE BIBLE, PRESIDENT MCALLISTER IMMEDIATELY GOT TO WORK ON HIS IDEAS.

ON THE FOLLOWING DAY, PRESIDENT MCALLISTER ISSUED A WORDY EXECUTIVE ORDER THAT WAS LATER SUMMED UP IN BULLET POINTS ON THE NEWS THAT BASICALLY SAID THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT WAS NO LONGER AN ELECTED OFFICE BUT AN APPOINTED ONE SERVED FOR LIFE (OR UNTIL THEY ARE REPLACED), AS WERE ALL OTHER OFFICES OF REPRESENTATIVES ON BOTH A FEDERAL AND STATE LEVEL. WITH NO SITTING MEMBERS OF CONGRESS OR THE SUPREME COURT, THE EXECUTIVE ORDER WAS MADE INTO LAW IN THE SAME DAY.

AND THEN SOMETHING AMAZING HAPPENED. PEOPLE WERE HAPPY FOR ONCE. THEY NO LONGER HAD TO DEAL WITH THE PESKY ISSUE OF HAVING TO CAST A VOTE (THAT DIDN'T REALLY MATTER ANYWAY) FOR SOME GUY WHO WAS JUST GOING TO SCREW THEM OVER. INSTEAD, THAT RESPONSIBILITY WOULD BE LEFT TO THE PRESIDENT. HE WOULD APPOINT GOVERNORS AND SENATORS AND CONGRESSPEOPLE AND JUDGES. IT'S WHAT EVERYONE WANTED ANYWAY, SINCE EVERYONE STOPPED VOTING LONG AGO. AND SO EVERYTHING TURNED OUT OKAY.

WRITTEN BY: DAVID RENNA



JUPITER 2-9-14



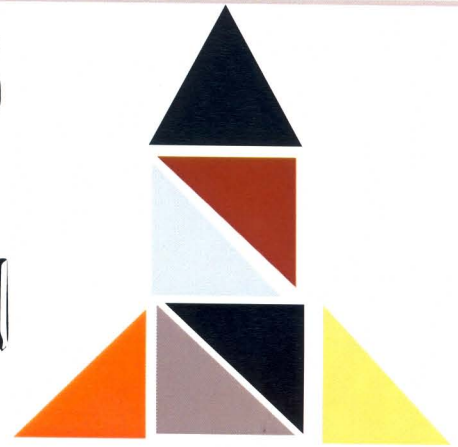
KRISTEN BINNING

From a wild weird clime that lieth, sublime,  
Out of SPACE—Out of TIME.

-Dream-land  
Edgar Allan Poe



# EMBRACING THE DREAM



"TEN, NINE, EIGHT,  
SEVEN, SIX, IGNITION  
SEQUENCE ON, FIVE,  
FOUR, THREE, TWO, ONE.  
WE HAVE LIFTOFF." The  
control room erupts into gleeful  
cheer. The vibrations of this brief  
moment in time echo throughout  
the world as mankind is glued to  
their media. The year is 1969  
and the Apollo 11 astronauts cling  
to their seats as the forces of  
physics send their blood into a  
panic. An unforgettable feeling  
that will be talked about for  
decades. But no feeling can  
compare to wiping moon dust off  
space boots after a long day of  
astrobiological exploration on the  
surface of Luna.

I have a vision that  
stretches beyond the edge of the  
world. **IT BREAKS THROUGH  
THE STRATOSPHERE AND  
MEETS IN BETWEEN THE  
HEAVENS AND THE  
VASTNESS OF STARS.** It  
travels at light speed into the  
depths of exploration, and  
embraces history and the future  
of mankind. It creates wonder

and awe. And with this vision, is  
inspiration, and from that  
inspiration - **IT BECOMES A  
DREAM.**

A dream can be defined  
as an aspiration, or a goal,  
alongside this is also a definition  
of a wild or vain fantasy. Some  
thought that stepping foot on the  
moon couldn't be done. But the  
crewman of the Apollo 11 mission  
turned this dream, which once  
was a fantasy, into a reality.  
Fast forward forty-five years  
later:

**MAN HAS TURNED  
THAT SMALL STEP ON THE  
MOON INTO A GIANT LEAP  
CHASING A COMET  
THROUGH THE COSMOS,  
AND CATCHING IT, ONCE  
AGAIN MAKING HISTORY.**

Now let's talk scientific  
philosophy. Murphy's Law  
states: anything that can go  
wrong, will go wrong. It is  
understood by the scientific  
community that the risks  
involved with some of the most  
ambitious projects are almost  
not worth it. The space agencies

have seen their share of tragedy.  
Disasters such as the Space  
Shuttle Columbia of 2003, or  
the government budget cuts that  
almost ended hope for space  
exploration altogether. Lives  
were lost, and dreams were  
broken, but it didn't stop us.

**WHEN I LOOK UP AT  
THE STARS AT NIGHT, I SEE  
OPPORTUNITY.** Opportunity  
that was put there from the hun-  
ger of mankind. The hunger to  
explore, the hunger for  
knowledge, and the hunger to  
advance. The audacity to take  
the punches of the risks involved  
brought us to this point. We  
have those who are not afraid to  
be bold to thank for it. The first  
astronauts on the moon, the  
computer technicians in mission  
control, the math professors at  
your local community col-  
lege, and the leaders who in-  
spire each of us to go beyond  
where we ever thought imagina-  
ble. **SPACE, THE FINAL  
FRONTIER.**

**BY KRISTEN  
BINNING**



SHERRI ROSE

LITTLE CAR BIG CAR



# WHEN IT RAINS

THE AC IN THE CAR WASN'T DOING ANYTHING AGAIN. I WAS SWEATING, AS ALWAYS, IN MY BEAT-UP CAR. THE FRONT VENTS HAD NEVER REALLY WORKED. YOU WOULD THINK THAT WOULD'VE BEEN SOMETHING TO REALLY LOOK OUT FOR WHEN YOU BUY A CAR IN SOUTH FLORIDA, WHERE THE WEATHER IS EITHER SUMMER OR SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION FROM THE SURFACE OF THE SUN. BUT, AT THE TIME, I WAS MORE FOCUSED ON TRYING TO GET A MODE OF TRANSPORTATION AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, BECAUSE TAKING TWO DIFFERENT CITY BUSES JUST TO GET TO HIGH SCHOOL WAS ALREADY PUTTING ME AT THE EDGE OF DROPPING OUT. BUT THAT'S AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT STORY. IN THIS ONE, I WAS MELTING IN MY SEAT.

I MEAN, IT WASN'T EXACTLY A PARTICULARLY HOT DAY—NOT BY SOUTH FLORIDA STANDARDS IN JULY. IT WAS A LITTLE BIT AFTER NOON AND MY CAR HAD BEEN SITTING IN THE SUN FOR A FEW HOURS, ALLOWING JUST ENOUGH TIME FOR THE INTERIOR TO FESTER AND BEGIN TO SMELL OF BURNING PLASTIC. YOU EVER GET IN YOUR CAR AND FIND THAT THE AIR WAS SOMEHOW THICKER AND HOTTER THAN IT WAS OUTSIDE? I REMEMBER GETTING INTO THAT CAR AND THE AIR BURNING MY EYES. EVERY

BREATH I TOOK IN WAS LIKE SIPPING A BOTTLE OF TABASCO. SO YOU DO THE ONLY THING YOU CAN: YOU CRANK UP THE AC TO THE POINT WHERE IT'S BLAZING IN SO LOUD YOU CAN'T HEAR THE STEREO. BUT THEN THAT'S A TWO-FOLD PROBLEM, BECAUSE THE FRONT VENTS ARE JUST BLOWING THE COLD AIR ON MY CD PLAYER, CAUSING THE DISC TO SKIP, AND THE ONLY THING THAT'S REALLY COOLING DOWN ARE MY KNUCKLES ON THE STEERING WHEEL BECAUSE MY MEAT CLAWS ARE SO BIG THAT THEY BLOCK THE VENT FROM ACTUALLY HITTING MY FACE.

THOSE WERE THE DAYS WHEN MY BIGGEST WORRY WAS HOW I WAS GOING TO COOL OFF COMING HOME FROM A JOB. WELL, IF YOU COULD CALL IT A JOB. I WAS "SELF-EMPLOYED" AT THE TIME, WHICH IS TO SAY I DID ODD-JOBS BECAUSE I COULDN'T FIND GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT (OR WHATEVER THEY CALL THE PROCESS BY WHICH YOU FULLY TAKE A SHIT JOB THAT NOBODY REALLY WANTS BECAUSE THOSE ARE THE ONLY OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO YOU). I MEAN, I WASN'T PICKY. IT'S JUST EVERY JOB AGENCY YOU WENT TO AT THE TIME THERE WAS SOME 40-YEAR-OLD GUY DRESSED IN SUIT AND TIE LOOKING LIKE HE WAS TEETERING ON THE EDGE OF EATING A BULLET BECAUSE HIS MBA

WASN'T SAVING HIM FROM THIS "ECONOMIC DOWNTURN." IT PROBABLY DIDN'T HELP THAT ALL THE OLD FOGEYS WHO REFUSE TO RETIRE ARE WORKING AS BAG BOYS AT PUBLIX, COMFORTABLY ENJOYING THE BENEFITS OF MEDICAL AND DENTAL PLANS.

BUT YOU DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO, AND SO I DROVE AROUND ON A WORD-OF-MOUTH BUSINESS ON OFFERING COMPUTER LESSONS OR TRYING TO FIX PEOPLE'S COMPUTERS. DON'T GET ME WRONG IT'S A PRETTY SWEET GIG IF YOU HAVE THE PATIENCE FOR IT. YOU HEAR THE HORROR STORIES FROM TECH SUPPORT ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO DON'T KNOW HOW TO TURN THEIR MONITOR ON OR THEIR COMPUTER AND THINK THAT'S PURE FABRICATION, BUT IT REALLY ISN'T. MOST OF THE STUFF I CAME OUT FOR WAS BECAUSE MR. SCRUFFLES KNOCKED A CORD LOOSE AND NOBODY THOUGHT TO LOOK IF THE THING WAS PLUGGED IN OR NOT.

BUSINESS, AS YOU CAN IMAGINE, WASN'T GREAT. WORD-OF-MOUTH IS A NICE WAY OF SAYING, "PLEASE, FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, TELL YOUR FRIENDS, FAMILY, AND YOUR CHRISTMAS CARD MAILING LIST ABOUT ME BECAUSE I WORK ON-CALL AND I'M NOT EARNING DIDDLY-SQUAT." MOST OF MY BUSINESS CAME FROM A FAMILY A WEALTHY FAMILY WHO WAS MORE THAN WILLING TO ENTERTAIN THE DOWN-ON-HIS-LUCK KID. IT STARTED OUT WITH AN ELDERLY GENTLEMEN WHO WANTED TO LEARN HOW TO USE HIS COMPUTER HIS GRANDSON HAD BOUGHT FOR HIM. HE WAS A REALLY GREAT GUY. HE DID WHAT MOST PEOPLE OF THAT AGE DO WHEN THEY RECOGNIZE AN ALRIGHT INDIVIDUAL THEY BUILD YOU UP, TALK ABOUT HOW YOU'RE AN "UPSTANDING MAN" AND BELIEVE THAT, EVENTUALLY, YOU'LL GET THAT BIG BREAK BECAUSE "YOU'RE BRIGHT AND INTELLIGENT." AS AN ASIDE, IF I HAD A NICKEL EVERY TIME SOMEONE SAID THAT ABOUT ME, I PROBABLY COULD'VE RETIRED AT 20, SO I'M NOT SURE WHAT EFFECT REPEATING IT HAS OTHER THAN TO POLITELY REMIND ME THAT INTELLIGENT YOUNG MEN SHOULDN'T BE FAILURE-TO-LAUNCH TYPES.

ANYWAY, HE WAS KIND ENOUGH TO PHONE UP HIS SON WHO LIVED OUT IN COOPER CITY. HE WAS A JEWELER WHO WAS A LITTLE MORE THAN ECCENTRIC, IF NOT A LITTLE BRAZEN. HE ALWAYS HAD WORK FOR ME EVERY OTHER WEEK, WHICH WASN'T TOO MUCH OF A PROBLEM. EVENTUALLY, THOUGH, HE STARTED TO GET A LITTLE TOO COMFORTABLE. OR I MUST HAVE SENT HIM THE WRONG SIGNALS, BECAUSE SUDDENLY HE'S TALKING ABOUT THE RAUNCHY "GUY STUFF" OF BAD CONVERSATION, LIKE DESCRIBING THE INTIMATE DETAILS OF HAVING SEX WITH HIS WIFE OR TURNING ON A PORNO BECAUSE HE THINKS ONE PARTICULAR SCENE IS HILARIOUS. I DO MY BEST FACE-PALMING-IN-THE-

INSIDE, NERVOUS-LAUGHING-ON-THE-OUTSIDE BIT AND HE DOESN'T SEEM NONE THE WISER. EITHER WAY, HE'S GIVING ME WORK TO DO, SO I DO MY BEST TO NOT SAY MUCH IN THE WAYS OF PROTEST.

SO WHEN I GET DONE WITH HIM, I'M MORE THAN A LITTLE RELIEVED. HONESTLY, I WAS NEVER REALLY SURE WHAT HE'D SHOW ME OR TELL ME THE NEXT TIME I WOULD COME OVER. THIS TIME IT WAS A MIDGET GANG BANG BONANZA THAT HE WANTED TO SHOW OFF BECAUSE HE THOUGHT THE MIDGET LOOKED LIKE HIS WIFE, BUT I THANKFULLY DECLINED AND INSISTED I HAD TOO MUCH WORK TO BE DONE (HONESTLY, EVERY OTHER WEEK WAS A MATTER OF CLEANING OFF THE SPYWARE AND ADWARE ON HIS COMPUTER THAT HE WOULD OBVIOUSLY GARNER IN HIS "EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES"). I REMEMBER GETTING IN MY CAR AND AFTER BEING ASSAULTED BY THE HEAT, I BREATHED A SIGH OF RELIEF, LIKE AN AWKWARD PORNOGRAPHIC WEIGHT HAD JUST BEEN LIFTED OFF MY SHOULDERS.

I WAS TAKING SHERIDAN HOME, AS USUAL. SHERIDAN, LIKE MOST EAST-WEST STATE ROADS IN BROWARD COUNTY, IS A TWO-FACE STREET, WHERE ANYTHING WEST OF 441 IS SHANGRI-LA AND ANYTHING EAST IS BROKEN GLASS AND BROKEN HOMES, AND WHERE THE TWO MEET IS POT-HOLE CENTRAL BECAUSE THAT PARTICULAR STRETCH OF 441 WAS ALSO JUST AWFUL. BUT IT WAS THE QUICKEST WAY HOME, AND IT'S NOT LIKE HOLLYWOOD IS ANY QUICKER, WHAT WITH THERE BEING A TRAFFIC LIGHT EVERY TEN FEET OR SO.

I SHOULD'VE KNOWN BETTER AT THE TIME, REALLY. IT'S JULY, IT'S THE MIDDLE OF THE AFTERNOON IN SOUTH FLORIDA THESE ARE ALL THE TELL-TALE SIGNS OF A STRICT TIME TABLE OF SUMMER SHOWERS. NORMALLY I DON'T MIND THE RAIN, WHEN IT RAINS, EVERYTHING QUIETS DOWN. ALL THE SOUNDS ARE DROWNED OUT IN THE CITY THE TRAFFIC, THE HONKING, THE CONSTANT SOUND OF SIRENS. IT'S LIKE HAVING A NICE SIESTA IN THE MIDDLE OF A BUSY DAY. THE DARK CLOUDS ACT AS THE DIMMING OF THE SHADES AND THE PELTING OF HEAVY RAIN JUST DROWNS OUT ALL THE BULLSHIT IN THE WORLD. WHEN IT RAINS, IT'S QUIET. I LIKE THE QUIET.

WHEN IT RAINS WHILE YOU'RE DRIVING, HOWEVER, IS AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT STORY. SOUTH FLORIDA IS BELOW SEA LEVEL, SO WHEN IT POURS, THE STREETS FLOOD, GUARANTEED. HONESTLY, HURRICANES AREN'T THE REAL DANGER IN SOUTH FLORIDA. HELL, HURRICANES ARE FUN. YOU DON'T GO TO SCHOOL OR WORK AND YOU HAVE HURRICANE PARTIES WHERE YOU TAKE BETS FOR HOW LONG IT TAKES FOR THE POWER TO GO OUT AND THEN START A POOL LATER ON HOW LONG IT TAKES THE INCOMPETENCE OF FPL TO GET THE POWER TURNED

BACK ON (AND YOU GET POINTS FOR BETTING ON THE POOR NEIGHBORHOODS, OTHERWISE IT WOULD JUST BE A WASTE OF MONEY). NO, SUMMER SHOWERS ARE THE WORST. I MEAN, THE KIND OF SUMMER SHOWER WHERE YOU SWEAR YOU'D THINK GOD HIMSELF HAD CUPPED A HANDFUL OF THE ATLANTIC OCEAN AND JUST DUMPED IT OVER US.

THAT'S THE KIND OF RAINSTORM THAT WAS ON THE HORIZON. IT WAS LOOKING BIBLICAL TO THE EAST AND THAT'S WHERE I WAS HEADING. THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN REALLY DO IN THIS SORT OF SITUATION. IT'S LIKE ONE OF THOSE THINGS WHERE YOU CAN ALREADY SEE YOURSELF GETTING IN AN ACCIDENT. YOU KNOW HOW IT'S GOING TO HAPPEN AND WHEN IT'S GOING TO HAPPEN BUT YOU JUST DON'T KNOW HOW BAD IT'S GOING TO BE. SO YOU JUST SOLDIER ON. IT'S ONE OF THOSE THINGS YOU FILE LATER IN A DRAWER AND WONDER HOW THE HELL THE HUMAN RACE HAS MANAGED TO SURVIVE FOR SO LONG. "WHY YES, I THINK I WILL BUILD A LOVELY LITTLE TOWN BELOW SEA LEVEL IN THE SWAMP-LANDS WHERE THE AVERAGE PRECIPITATION IS 10 INCHES OF RAIN IN JUNE."

AND SO, AT THE SOUND OF A GREAT TRUMPET BLAST, IT WAS SO ANNOUNCED THAT WE WOULD HAVE THAT GREAT STORM, AND DOWN IT CAME. YOU KNOW IT'S BAD WHEN THE HIGHEST SPEED SETTING ON YOUR WINDSHIELD WIPERS CAN'T KEEP UP (THEN AGAIN, I'VE GOT A CRAPPY CLUNKER, SO MY WINDSHIELD WIPER SPEED PROBABLY ISN'T THE BEST MEASURE TO USE). IMMEDIATELY EVERYONE FORGETS HOW TO DRIVE AND THINK TURNING ON THEIR EMERGENCY BLINKERS IS THE EQUIVALENT OF SAYING, "SHIT'S BAD; SLOW DOWN, ASSHOLES." SUDDENLY THE BLAZING OF THE AC WASN'T NECESSARY NOR WAS THE BLARING OF MY SKIPPING MUSIC. I'M WHITE-KNUCKLED AND FOCUSED ON TRYING NOT TO DIE AT THE MOMENT. THAT SWEET HENDRIX RIFF ISN'T GOING TO GET ME THROUGH THIS.

EVENTUALLY IT SUBSIDED SOMEWHAT, BUT THE RAIN JUST WOULDN'T LET UP. I CAME CLOSER THE SHERIDAN AND 441 INTERSECTION THE HALF-WAY POINT HOME. TRAFFIC WAS BUMPER-TO-BUMPER THOUGH, WHICH, HONESTLY, WAS TO BE EXPECTED. A GIANT PICKUP WAS IN FRONT OF ME, SO I COULDN'T REALLY SEE WHAT WAS AHEAD OF ME. HE WAS PROBABLY ONE OF THE GOOD OL' BOYS, WITH HIS RAISED TRUCK AND MUD FLAPS TO BOOT A FISH OUT OF WATER IN A THOROUGHLY LIBERAL COUNTY. HE WAS PROBABLY SOMEONE'S KID IN BOCA WHO PICKED UP

THE SOUTHERN STYLE DRESSING OF GREEN FATIGUES AND A TRUCKER HAT TO HIDE THE FACT THAT THEY ARE EMBARRASSINGLY WEALTHY. IT WAS EITHER THAT OR A POPPED COLLAR POLO WITH WHITE GOLF SHORTS, SO I COULDN'T REALLY FAULT HIM.

THAT'S PROBABLY WHAT GOT ME IN THIS SITUATION. ANYWAY JUST CONTEMPLATING WHETHER THE GUY IN FRONT OF ME WAS A LEGIT GATOR WRESTLER FROM THE EVERGLADES OR SOME SPOILED RICH KID TRYING HIS BEST TO FIT IN WITH WHAT THE YOUNG REPUBLICAN DEMOGRAPHIC IS SUPPOSED TO LOOK LIKE IN THE SOUTH. I WASN'T FOCUSED ON DRIVING. I DIDN'T NOTICE ALL THE CARS IN FRONT OF ME DESPERATELY TRYING TO TURN RIGHT OR LEFT AT THE INTERSECTION. I WAS IN THE MIDDLE LANE AND BEHIND A HUGE TRUCK AND THE LIGHT WAS GREEN AND HE WAS FLOORING IT. A MOMENT LATER I REALIZED WHY.

THAT TRUCK TURNED INTO A FISH AND SWAM RIGHT THROUGH SHERIDAN STREET, WHICH HAD TURNED INTO SHERIDAN CANAL. HE FLOORED IT RIGHT THROUGH AND PARTED THE GRAY SEA FOR A MOMENT. I HAD NO WAY OF TELLING HOW DEEP THE WATER WAS THOUGH. MY BRAIN WASN'T PAYING ATTENTION TO HOW HIGH OFF THE GROUND THAT LIFTED TRUCK WAS. BESIDES, I WAS ALREADY IN THE MIDDLE OF INTERSECTION, HAVING GONE TOO FAR TO NOW TURN LEFT OR RIGHT (UNLESS IT WAS INTO ONCOMING TRAFFIC), AND THE LIGHT WAS CHANGING. AND SO I MADE WHAT ANY PANICKED PERSON MIGHT DO IN A STRESSFUL SITUATION I CARRIED ON, EVEN THOUGH I INSTINCTIVELY KNEW IT WAS THE WRONG THING TO DO.

RIGHT OFF THE BAT I KNEW IT WAS A BAD DECISION. JUST A REAL BONE-HEADED, BAD DECISION. BUT IF YOU MAKE A DECISION, YOU HAVE TO FOLLOW IT THROUGH, RIGHT? WELL, NOT IF IT'S A TERRIBLE DECISION, BUT MY BRAIN WASN'T FUNCTIONING AT THE FREQUENCY AT THAT MOMENT. IT WAS SAYING, "YOU'VE DONE IT NOW YOU'RE A REAL DOLT." I DON'T THINK I WAS GOING TO HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT BEING CALLED AN INTELLIGENT YOUNG MAN AFTER THIS ORDEAL.

ULTIMATELY I DECIDED I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO MAKE IT THROUGH, SO WOULD I WOULD DO INSTEAD IS PULL UP INTO THE GAS STATION OFF TO THE RIGHT AND HOPEFULLY NOT FIND MY CAR TURNING INTO A SUBMARINE. I WAS ALREADY PUSHING IT THE WATER WAS RISING UP QUITE STEADILY. I COULDN'T TELL AT THE TIME BECAUSE IT WAS STILL POURING, BUT THE STREET



WAS EASILY FLOODED THREE FEET DEEP. BUT I CONVINCED MYSELF THAT WAS A NONISSUE THAT GOING FORWARD WAS THE ONLY OPTION. OKAY, YEAH, I WOULD NEED TO

GO THROUGH DEEPER BE OKAY, RIGHT? I

WATER, BUT I SHOULD QUICKLY DID THE MENTAL CHECKLIST IN MY MIND FOR WHAT HAPPENS IF WATER GETS IN YOUR ENGINE. SHOULD I FLOOR IT AND THEN CUT THE ENGINE? YEAH, I THINK THAT WILL DO IT. FLOOR IT, COAST UP THE INCLINE INTO THE GAS STATION, AND THEN START THE CAR AGAIN AND DRIVE HOME AND PRETEND THIS NEVER HAPPENED.

WELL, THERE WAS A DIP BEFORE THE ENTRYWAY INTO THE GAS STATION, SO FOR A MOMENT THE ENTIRE HOOD OF MY CAR WENT UNDER WATER AND THE ENGINE CUT A SECOND LATER. I WAS DEAD IN THE WATER. SUDDENLY MY FEET BECAME RATHER COLD AND I REALIZED THAT THE WATER WAS FLOODING THROUGH. A SURGE OF ADRENALINE SHOT THROUGH ME AS I CONTEMPLATED ON WHETHER I SHOULD SHOUT AND CURSE QUITE LOUDLY AT HOW STUPENDOUSLY STUPID I WAS OR JUST CALMLY COLLECT MYSELF AND DO WHAT HAD TO BE DONE. SO I CHOSE THE LATTER.

I OPENED THE CAR DOOR AND WHAT LITTLE BIT OF ME THAT WASN'T ALREADY WET WAS IMMEDIATELY SOAKED IN STREET WATER. WHAT'S MORE IS THAT THERE WAS A CURRENT, AND SO MY CAR WAS SLOWLY BEGINNING TO FLOAT FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD. I QUICKLY HOPPED OUT AND BRACED, KEEPING THE CAR IN PLACE SO I COULD WORK MY WAY ON TRYING TO PUSH IT UP THIS RATHER SMALL INCLINE THAT WOULD SOON BECOME A MOUNTAIN. OVER BY THE GAS STATION PUMPS, A COUPLE OF GUYS HAD TAKEN SHELTER FROM THE STORM AND WERE WATCHING ME, LAUGHING.

IT TOOK A GOOD COUPLE MINUTES OF PUSHING BEFORE THE TIRES CONTACTED WITH THE ROAD AGAIN. THEN CAME THE MOST GRUELING FIVE MINUTES OF THE EXPERIENCE AS I PUSHED THE CAR UP THE INCLINE TO THE GAS STATION ITSELF. NOBODY KNEW IT, BUT I WAS SOAKED IN SWEAT OVER THE SOAKING RAINFALL. IT'S A TERRIBLE EXPERIENCE BEING BOTH EXHAUSTED AND DRENCHED IN

WATER. I DON'T KNOW HOW THOSE OLYMPIC SWIMMERS DO IT, BUT GOOD ON THEM ANYWAY.

I FINALLY ROLLED IT TO A STOP AND PUT THE CAR IN PARK AND THREW UP THE EMERGENCY BREAK FOR

GOOD MEASURE. MIRACULOUSLY, MY CELL PHONE SURVIVED. IT WAS ONE OF THOSE NOKIA BRICK PHONES THOUGH. IN THE EVENT OF A NUCLEAR BLAST, TWO THINGS WILL SURVIVE: COCKROACHES AND THOSE PHONES. I SMOOTHED OUT MY WET AAA MEMBERSHIP CARD AND PLACED A PHONE CALL FOR A TOW TRUCK.

"YEAH, UH, IT'LL BE AN HOUR OR SO BEFORE WE CAN GET TO YOUR LOCATION. WE'RE SWAMPED WITH THE STORM."

YOU EVER HAVE THAT SUDDEN REVELATION WHERE YOU JUST COMPLETELY GIVE UP ON THE SITUATION YOU HAVE FOUND YOURSELF IN? THAT WAS ME BY THE END OF THAT PHONE CALL. NOT BECAUSE I WAS DREADING WAITING FOR AN HOUR OH NO. I WAS DREADING THE DAY AFTER, WHERE I KNEW IT WOULD COST A SMALL FORTUNE TO GET MY CAR FIXED. A CAR I NEEDED FOR WHAT LITTLE WORK I HAD. AS I SAT ON THE HOOD OF MY CAR AND CONTEMPLATED MY WRETCHED LIFE, I OVERHEARD THE TWO GUYS WHO HAD LAUGHED AT MY MISFORTUNE FROM EARLIER.

"OH HELL, WOULD YOU LOOK AT THAT ANOTHER ONE!"

I TURNED AROUND AND LOOKED AT THE STREET I PRACTICALLY HAD TO SWIM THROUGH AND SAW SOMEONE IN A CRAPPY LITTLE SEDAN LIKE MINE IN THE EXACT SAME SITUATION I WAS IN NOT BUT TEN MINUTES AGO. UNLIKE ME, HOWEVER, HE WAS FAR BRAVER AND THOUGHT HE COULD FLOOR IT RIGHT THROUGH THE STREET AND MAKE IT PAST THE FLOODED SECTION. HE THOUGHT WRONG. HE WAS STALLED. HE GOT OUT OF THE CAR. HE HAD TO BE ABOUT MY AGE, AND HE WAS NOT HAPPY. THE MEN BEHIND ME SPOKE UP AGAIN.

"I WONDER WHAT HE'S GONNA DO?" I WAS WONDERING THAT MYSELF. AND THAT'S WHEN IT DAWNED ON ME. I WAS ALREADY SOAKING WET AND I WASN'T GOING ANYWHERE ANY TIME SOON, SO WHY NOT HELP HIM

OUT? I MEAN, SURE, IT WAS STILL POURING, AND, SURE, IT WAS LIGHTING AND THUNDERING, BUT AT THIS POINT, WHAT WAS LEFT TO LOSE? IF I WAS GOING TO CATCH PNEUMONIA, IT WAS PROBABLY GOING TO HAPPEN REGARDLESS IF I SAT ON THE HOOD OF MY CAR IN WET CLOTHES OR IF I WADED THROUGH THE THIGH-HIGH FETID STREET WATER ONCE MORE. AND SO THAT'S WHAT I DID.

"YOU ALRIGHT?" I HAD TO SHOUT A LITTLE OVER THE RAIN.

"YEAH, MAN," HE SAID, AND HE ANGRILY RAN HIS HAND OVER HIS SHAVED HEAD. "FUCK!"

"YEAH," I AGREED. I WADED OVER TO HIS DRIVER-SIDE DOOR. "LISTEN, YOU WANT SOME HELP PUSHING THIS UP TO THE GAS STATION?"

"YEAH, MAN, YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO DO THAT."

"WELL, I WAS ALREADY WET, SO I FIGURED, 'WHY NOT?'"

HE STOOD BY THE DRIVER-SIDE DOOR AND STEERED WHILE I PUSHED FROM THE BACK. IN NO TIME HIS CAR WAS PUSHED UP NEXT TO MINE. HE WRINGED OUT HIS SHIRT, AS IF THAT WOULD SOMEHOW IMPROVE HIS SITUATION OF BEING COMPLETELY DRENCHED.

"FUCK, MAN, I DUNNO WHAT I WAS THINKIN'."

I SIMPLY NODDED IN AGREEMENT WITH HIM. HE LOOKED BACK AT MY CAR AND THEN GRINNED.

"YOU DO THE SAME THING, HUH?"

I NODDED ONCE MORE. WE STOOD TOGETHER QUIETLY FOR A MOMENT AND LOOKED OVER THE INTERSECTION.

"HOLLYWOOD REALLY OUGHT A DO SOMETHING 'BOUT THE DRAINAGE ON THIS STREET," HE SAID.

"YEAH," I SAID. I WASN'T MUCH OF A CONVERSATIONALIST, SO I SAID THE DUMBEST THING I POSSIBLY COULD. "WHEN IT RAINS, IT POURS."

HE GOT A GOOD CHUCKLE OUT OF THAT AND THEN DUCKED INSIDE THE CONVENIENCE STORE TO PLACE A PHONE CALL FOR A FRIEND TO PICK HIM UP. MEANWHILE, I STOOD LOOKING OUT ONTO THE INTERSECTION, DOING MY BEST IMPRESSION OF THE THOUSAND-YARD STARE LIKE AS IF THE ORDEAL I HAD BEEN THROUGH WAS IN SOME WAY TRAUMATIZING. I WAS FOOLING MYSELF, REALLY. I WAS DOING MY BEST TO COVER UP THE FACT THAT THIS WAS, IN A WAY, EXCITING. IF I HAD LEFT EARLIER AND MISSED THE RAIN, I'D BE HOME RIGHT NOW DOING

ABSOLUTELY NOTHING, CONTEMPLATING WHETHER THERE WAS MUCH OF A REASON TO GET OUT OF BED BEFORE NOON THE NEXT DAY BECAUSE I HAD NOTHING GOING ON. AND HERE I WAS DOING MY BEST TO STOP MYSELF FROM GRINNING THAT WAS NOW ACTUALLY ENJOYING THIS PREDICAMENT. SO I KICKED UP THE IMAGINARY DUST, SUCKED IN MY TEETH, AND SHARED IN THE PLIGHT OF THE GUY I HAD JUST HELPED OUT.

"WELL-L-L-L, I CAN'T BELIEVE IT ANOTHER ONE!"

I WAS BROUGHT BACK TO REALITY AS THE BLEATING OF THE TWO MEN FOCUSED MY ATTENTION TO YET ANOTHER SEDAN BECOMING TRAPPED ON THE ROAD. IT WAS DIFFICULT TO TELL THROUGH THE RAIN, BUT I COULD SEE THAT THIS TIME IT WAS AN ELDERLY LADY IN THE CAR AND SHE WASN'T GETTING OUT. JUST THEN, THE GUY FROM EARLIER CAME OUT AND STOOD BY MY SIDE AGAIN. I LOOKED AT THE CAR AND THEN TO HIM.

"LISTEN, SINCE WE'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE, DO YOU JUST WANT TO FISH THESE PEOPLE OUT?"

HE CONTEMPLATED MY PROPOSITION FOR A MOMENT AND THEN SIGHED AND NODDED HIS HEAD.

"SURE, WHY THE HELL NOT?"

AND SO WE SET OFF BACK INTO THE WATER AND FELT THE COLD RAIN UPON OUR BACKS ONCE MORE. WE WALKED UP TO THE DRIVER-SIDE OF THE DOOR AND SHOUTED OVER THE RAIN. THE WOMAN WAS THOROUGHLY UPSET, BUT EVENTUALLY WE CONVINCED HER THAT SHE HAD TO GET OUT OF THE CAR AND OUT OF THE WATER. THUNDER SOUNDED OFF IN THE DISTANCE AS IF TO REINFORCE OUR WARNING AND SO SHE DID. THE GUY ESCORTED HER THROUGH THE WATER AS I WORKED ON PUSHING HER CAR THROUGH THE WATER AND TOWARD THE GAS STATION. A FEW MOMENTS LATER, HE RETURNED TO HELP AND OUT THE CAR CAME FROM THE FLOOD AND ONTO HIGHER GROUND.

"THANK YOU SO MUCH!" THE WOMAN WAS UNDERSTANDABLY SHAKEN, BUT THE THANKS IN HER VOICE SEEMED TO PUT HER INTO GOOD SPIRITS. "I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WAS GOING TO DO!"

WE EXCHANGED PLEASANTRIES BUT A MOMENT LATER I REALIZED THAT ANOTHER DRIVER HAD REPEATED THE SAME ERROR WE HAD MADE. SO WE SAID OUR GOODBYES TO THE WOMAN AND WALKED BACK DOWN INTO THE WATER. LIGHTNING FLASHED NEARBY AND THE STREETLIGHTS WENT OUT AS THUNDER CRACKED

"HO-O-O-O-LY SHIT!" THE GUY CLUTCHED AT HIS CHEST. "WE GONNA DIE OUT HERE!" HE BEGAN TO LAUGH THEN. I COULDN'T HELP BUT LAUGH AS WELL. WE WERE PUTTING OURSELVES AT RISK EVERY TIME WE WENT BACK INTO THE WATER, BUT WE JUST DIDN'T CARE. THERE WAS SOMETHING ENJOYABLE ABOUT THIS EXPERIENCE NOW PROACTIVELY WORKING TO HELP PEOPLE OUT IN DIRE NEED. THIS IS HOW IT MUST HAVE BEEN FOR THE VIKINGS IN THEIR LONGSHIPS ON ROUGH SEAS. HEARTILY LAUGHING IN THE FACE OF DANGER BECAUSE IT WAS BOTH EXCITING AND SCARY AT THE SAME TIME. YOU BARGAIN DURING SUCH TIMES. "WELL, GOD, IF YOU WANT TO TAKE ME, THEN I GUESS I'M OKAY WITH THAT."

WE FOLLOWED THE SAME ROUTINE AS BEFORE. BY THIS TIME, WE HAD A ROUTINE DOWN AS TO HOW WE WOULD CONVINCE PEOPLE TO EXIT THEIR VEHICLE AND LEAVE IT IN THE HANDS OF TWO YOUTHS TO FISH IT OUT OF THE FLOODED STREETS ONLY ON THE HONOR OF THEIR WORD. IT WAS YET ANOTHER ELDERLY WOMAN, AND SHE WAS DOUBLY THANKFUL.

"YOU ARE TWO SWEET, YOUNG MEN," SHE SAID, SMILING SHEEPISHLY. "YOU DESERVE A REWARD FOR SUCH A GOOD DEED." SHE WAS ALREADY PULLING OUT A COUPLE OF HUNDRED-DOLLAR BILLS FROM HER PURSE BEFORE I SPOKE UP, WAVING MY HAND AND SHAKING MY HEAD.

"THANK YOU, MA'AM, BUT THAT'S NOT NECESSARY."

THE GUY LOOKED AT ME THEN, AND I COULD TELL THAT HE WASN'T AGREEING.

"OH, ARE YOU SURE? YOU DESERVE IT!"

THIS TIME I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING AND LOOKED AT THE GUY. HE CHANGED HIS MIND FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER. MAYBE HE THOUGHT HE WOULD FEEL GUILTY IF I HAD ALREADY DECLINED AND YET HE SAID OTHERWISE, OR MAYBE HE RECOGNIZED THAT HELPING HER HAD AN INTRINSIC VALUE WITHIN ITSELF.

"YEAH, IT'S ALRIGHT. IT'S THE CHRISTIAN THING TO DO."

I SMILED AT HIS CHOICE WORDS. BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE COULD BE SAID, HOWEVER, YET ANOTHER CAR HAD STALLED IN THE FLOODED STREET. THIS CONTINUED ON FOR FOUR HOURS UNTIL IT STOPPED RAINING AND WE WERE JUST COLD AND OUR HANDS WRINKLED FROM BEING IN THE WATER FOR SO LONG. AFTER FOUR HOURS, WE HAD FISHED OUT FOURTEEN CARS. WITH THE RAIN HAVING

STOPPED, THE STREET FINALLY BEGAN TO DRAIN AND TRAFFIC WAS ABLE TO BEGIN TO SLOWLY TRAVEL DOWN THE ROAD ONCE MORE.

"SHIT, I'M TIRED," THE GUY SAID TO ME. WE WERE LEANING AGAINST OUR CARS, TAKING A MUCH-NEEDED REST. MY LEGS WERE SMOKED AND MY ARMS WERE LIKE WET NOODLES.

"ME TOO," I SAID, AND I MEANT IT. BUT I DIDN'T BEGRUDGE THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING TIRED. ABOVE ALL ELSE, I WAS HAPPY. I WASN'T SURE WHY AT THE TIME MOSTLY BECAUSE I HAD NEVER BEEN HAPPY BEFORE IN MY LIFE BUT I JUST KNEW THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING BENEATH THE SURFACE THAT SPOKE TO A PLACE THAT I HAD NOT VISITED IN SUCH A LONG TIME. I HAD FORGOTTEN THE TOW TRUCK WAS THREE HOURS LATE AND THAT MY CAR'S ENGINE WAS STILL RUINED. IT WAS NO LONGER IMPORTANT.

"WELL, I'M TIRED OF WAITING FOR MY FRIEND," HE SAID TO ME. "I'M JUST GONNA WALK ON HOME." WE SHOOK HANDS THEN.

"STAY SAFE," I SAID TO HIM AS HE BEGAN TO WALK AWAY.

"YEAH, YOU TOO!" HE SAID, CALLING BACK TO ME. AND SO HE WALKED ON DOWN THE ROAD UNTIL HE DISAPPEARED FROM MY SIGHT.

A FEW MINUTES LATER, THE TOW TRUCK SHOWED UP. THE DRIVER HOPPED OUT AND VERIFIED MY DETAILS AND THEN BEGAN TO HITCH MY CAR TO HIS TRUCK. HE LOOKED OVER TO THE PARKING LOT NEARBY OF THE LITTLE OUTLET STORES WHERE WE HAD PUSHED THE CARS IN.

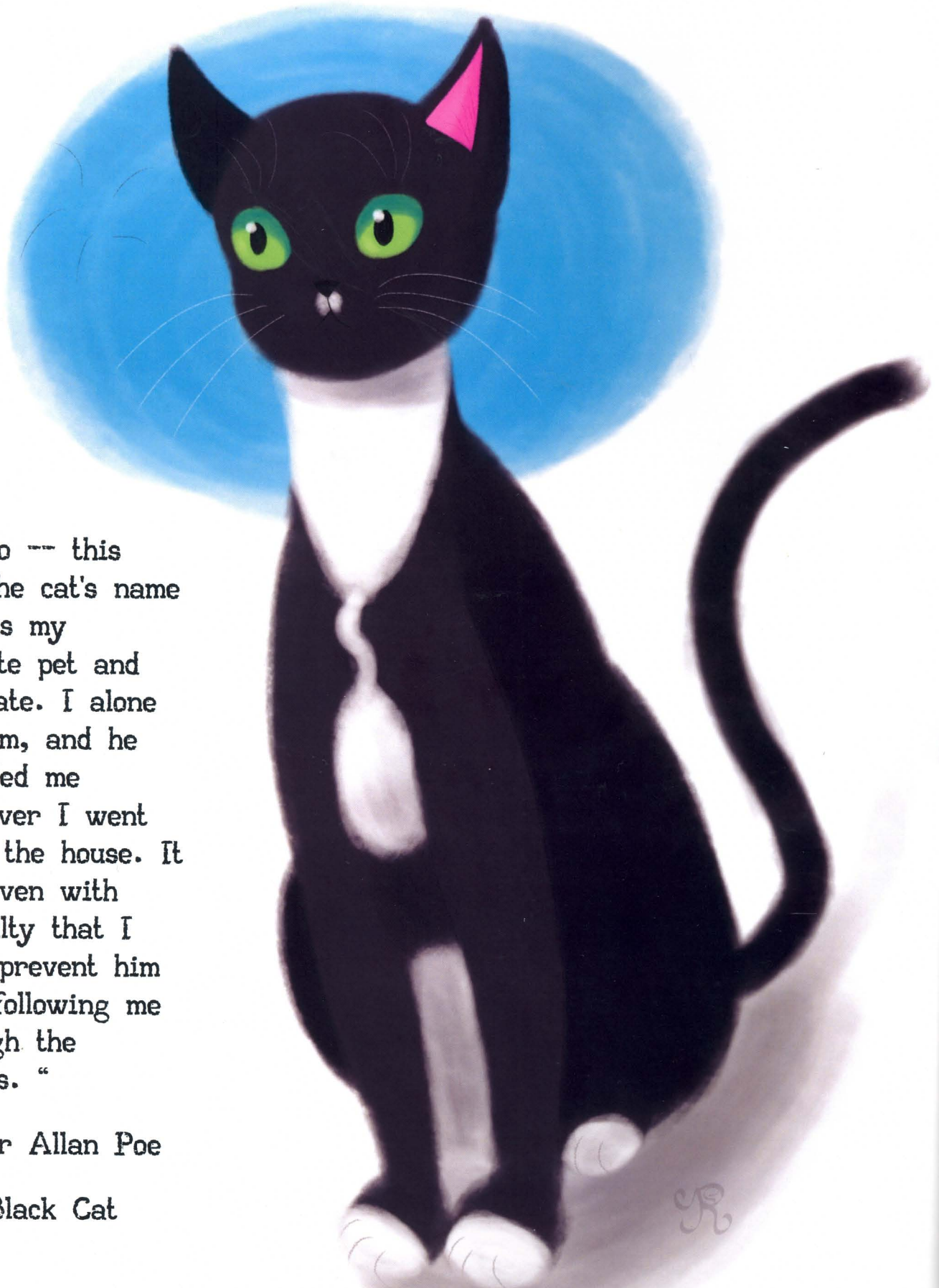
"MAN, LOT OF PEOPLE GOT THEIR CARS FLOODED, HUH?"

"YEAH," I SAID TO HIM. I ABSENTLY LOOKED DOWN AT MY WRINKLED HANDS.

"WELL, YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY," HE SAID, CLIMBING INTO THE CABIN OF HIS TRUCK.

"WHAT'S THAT?" I SAID, FOLLOWING HIM. "WHEN IT RAINS, IT POURS!"

THE IDIOM HAD LOST MEANING TO ME BY NOW. SOMETHING DEEP INSIDE OF ME STIRRED TO MARK THIS DAY AS SOMETHING ELSE. SOMETHING ENTIRELY NEW AND WHOLLY GOOD. I LOOKED PAST ALL MY WORRIES AND TROUBLES THAT I KNEW I WOULD HAVE TO FACE TOMORROW AND THE DAY AFTER THAT. I SMILED AT MY PREDICAMENT AND SOMETHING SPOKE TO ME FROM WITHIN. "TODAY WAS A GOOD DAY," IT SAID, AND I CORRECTED IT, SAYING, "NO, TODAY WAS THE BEST DAY."



"Pluto --- this  
was the cat's name  
--- was my  
favorite pet and  
playmate. I alone  
fed him, and he  
attended me  
wherever I went  
about the house. It  
was even with  
difficulty that I  
could prevent him  
from following me  
through the  
streets. "

-Edgar Allan Poe

The Black Cat



SEA MONSTER

SHERRI ROSE

HOLDING BACK-KATIE MCKAY

THEY SAY "YOU'RE WEAK AS WATER  
AS FRAGILE AS A SHEET OF ICE  
YOU EVER BREAK, BEND, FALTER  
NO, YOU JUST DON'T SUFFICE."

---

I RETORT "FINE I'LL BE AN OCEAN!  
HOLD BACK THESE MIGHTY DEPTHS  
AS DEADLY AS A DEEP BLUE POTION  
I'LL BE ICE TOO MONSTROUS FOR YOUR  
DAINTY STEPS!"

---

THEY SAY "YOU'RE WEAK AS A FLAME  
AS FLICKERING AS A TINY SPARK  
YOU ARE SNUFFLED BY A BREEZE'S GAME  
WHERE IS YOUR MIGHT? YOUR HEART?"

SO SAY I "WATCH ME BURN!  
I'LL LIGHT THE FOREST  
I'LL GET SO HOT, FROM NO WIND I'LL TURN  
AND NO WATER WILL BE CONTEST!"

---

BUT IN THE END WHO ARE "THEY"?  
THEY ARE ONLY I TALKING TO MYSELF  
ALL ALONE WITH NO THOUGHT AND TOO  
MUCH TO SAY  
IMAGINING THESE DARES ARE SOMEONE,  
SOMEONE ELSE

---

ALL I AM LEFT IS TO HOLD BACK  
TO KEEP THE OCEAN, KEEP THE FIRE  
LOCKED AWAY TO HIDE ALL FACT  
LEAVING ME A WEAK, THIN LITTLE WIRE



# A NEVERLAND, MY NEVERLAND

THE SWORD SWUNG RIGHT ABOVE MY HEAD. SO CLOSE I COULD HEAR THE BLOOD STAINED BLADE SWISH AND SLICE THE SALTY AIR, BUT NOT CLOSE ENOUGH.

"YOU OLD COD FISH!" I JEERED. "YOU'RE LOSING YOUR TOUCH."

ALL AROUND ME MY BOYS CHEERED AND STOMPED THEIR FEET ON THE WOODEN DECK OF THE PIRATE SHIP, CHEERING ME ON. NEXT TO MY EAR FLITTED A LITTLE GOLDEN HAired FAIRY WITH THE VOICE OF CHIMING SILVER BELLS, WARNING ME AND FRETting OVER ME. BUT I AM FEARLESS AND BRAVE WITH MY DAGGER AND MAGIC GIFT OF FLIGHT.

THIS IS MY ISLAND AND NO SILLY PIRATE CAPTAIN CAN DEFEAT M-  
*SMACK!*

THE SUDDEN SOUND OF WOOD ON WOOD JOLTED ME OUT OF MY LAND. ALL AROUND ME MY PEERS STARED, WIDE-EYED AND FEARFUL AT THE MAN WHO TOWERED ABOVE ME, BRANDISHING A RULER LIKE A SWORD.

"MR. PANCHESTER," THE MAN, OUR TEACHER, MR. HAWKINS, GROWLED. "I WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF YOU ATTENDED TO YOUR LESSONS INSTEAD OF GOING OFF TO YOUR OWN LITTLE WORLD."

I STARED AT HIM, FEELING A FIRE BURNING IN MY EYES. MR. HAWKINS

STARED BACK WITH AN EQUAL AMOUNT OF STUBBORNNESS. HIS STYLIZED MUSTACHE TWITCHING WITH EXPECTATION. I KNEW WHAT HE WAS WAITING FOR. BUT I WAS GOING TO MAKE HIM ASK FOR IT.

"DO YOU UNDERSTAND?" HE SCOWLED.

I SMIRKED INWARDLY, KNOWING I HAD WON. BUT INSTEAD OF SAYING, "YES, MR. HAWKINS," LIKE I KNEW HE WANTED, I SIMPLY NODDED CURTLY.

MR. HAWKINS GLARED DOWN OVER HIS EAGLE BEAK NOSE AT ME. "THAT'S STRIKE TWO, MR. PANCHESTER. NOW, I'M NOT GOING TO ASK AGAIN. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?"

"YES," I SAID, MATTER-OF-FACTLY, GIVING THE MINIMUM ANSWER.

"YES, WHAT, MR. PANCHESTER?" MR. HAWKINS SMIRKED TRIUMPHANTLY AT ME. ALL AROUND US THE OTHER BOYS SAT, RIGID WITH ANTICIPATION, BREATH HELD TIGHT IN THEIR CHESTS. EVERYONE WAS WAITING FOR THE ANSWER THAT WOULD MAKE OR BREAK ME, THE ANSWER THAT COULD WIN OR LOSE THIS BATTLE FOR ME.

"YES," I SAID, PAUSING FOR EFFECT. "YOU OLD COD FISH."

THE BOYS GASPED, EYES AGLOW WITH SHOCK AND ADMIRATION. I GRINNED WICKEDLY, KNOWING THAT I

HAD WON THIS BATTLE. I WAS FEARFUL AND BRAVE! NO BOY WOULD DARE SAY SOMETHING LIKE THAT TO AN ADULT. NO PIRATE CAPTAIN, OR TEACHER, WOULD EVER BE ABLE TO DEFEAT ME. OR AT LEAST I THOUGHT.

MR. HAWKINS SWOOPED DOWN ON ME AND CLUTCHED MY UPPER ARM WITH A HOOK-LIKE HAND.

"IF YOU DON'T WANT TO LEAVE THIS WORLD, THEN I'LL TAKE YOU OUT OF IT," HE BELLOWED, DRAGGING ME OUT OF THE CLASSROOM.

AS WE PASSED BY EACH DESK, THE BOYS WHISPERED WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT.

"BE BRAVE PETER."  
"YOU'RE OUR HERO PETER."  
"DON'T LET THE OLD COD FISH WIN PETER."

THE BOYS DIDN'T SPEAK THEIR STATEMENTS OUT LOUD, BUT I COULD READ THE WHISPERS IN THEIR EYES.

"MR. PANCHESTER," MR. HAWKINS GROWLED, HIS VOICE LOW AND DANGEROUS, SIGNALING THAT HE WAS ABOUT TO GIVE A LECTURE AND I HAD BETTER LISTEN FOR MY OWN GOOD. "HERE AT ST. JOHN'S BOYS' ORPHANAGE, WE STRIVE TO REHABILITATE THE STREET URCHINS OF LONDON. WE REQUIRE YOU TO BE MATURE. SO WHEN YOU ARE FINALLY RELEASED FROM OUR

SYSTEM YOU ARE A FUNCTIONING ADULT."

I MADE A FACE. ADULT. I VOWED LONG AGO THAT I WOULD NEVER BECOME ONE OF THEM WHICH IS WHY I WOULD NEVER JOIN A PIRATE CREW LIKE HOOK'S.

I SHIFTED AGAINST THE BONDS THAT HELD ME IN A VICE-LIKE GRIP. CAPTAIN HOOK THOUGHT HE HAD ME TRAPPED. WHAT A SILLY OLD COD FISH! LITTLE DID HE KNOW THAT I WAS ONE STEP AHEAD OF HIM, THAT I KNEW WHERE HE WAS TAKING ME AND WHY.

ALL AROUND US THE JUNGLE GREW DARKER AND DIMMER. HE WAS LEADING ME RIGHT TO DEAD MAN'S CAVE WHERE, UNBEKNOWNST TO HIM, THE TREASURE THAT HE WAS SEARCHING FOR WAS HIDDEN. I COULD HAVE LAUGHED OUT LOUD! HE WAS GOING TO TRY TO LOCK ME AWAY WITH THE ONE THING HE COVETED MORE THAN ANYTHING IN THE WORLD!

"HOW DO YOU EXPECT TO BE A PROPER ADULT," MR. HAWKINS SAID, GRIPPING MY ARM TIGHTER AS HE SENSED MY ATTENTION DRIFTING. "WHEN ALL YOU DO IS SHIRK YOUR WORK AND NEGLECT YOUR STUDIES? IT'S TIME YOU STOPPED ACTING LIKE A CHILD AND BEGAN TO GROW UP!"

GROW UP. THE WORDS PUT A BAD TASTE IN MY MOUTH. THAT WAS SOMETHING I WOULD NEVER DO. WHO WOULD WANT TO GROW UP AND BE AN OLD COD FISH LIKE MR. HAWKINS OR HOOK?

THE CORRIDORS SEEMED TO BE GROWING LONGER AND DARKER WITH FEWER WINDOWS TO LET IN THE SUN. WATER DRIPPED DOWN THE STONE WALLS, AND THERE WAS A MUSTY SMELL IN THE AIR. WE WERE CLOSER TO THE CAVE NOW.

I TOOK A SECOND TO GLANCE OUT OF ONE OF THE WINDOWS AS WE PASSED AND SPIED THE SPRITE-LIKE GIRL WITH GOLDEN HAIR WHO LIVED ACROSS THE STREET. I ALWAYS IMAGINED HER HAVING LAUGHTER LIKE SILVER BELLS.

I BET SHE WOULD AGREE WITH ME! SHE WOULD AGREE THAT ADULTS ARE BORING AND GROWING UP IS A HORRID THING. SHE WOULD THINK ME BRAVE AND FANTASTIC AND WOULD FOLLOW ME THOUGH ALL MY ADVENTURES, CHEERING ME ON.

I WONDER WHAT IT WOULD REALLY BE LIKE TO HAVE A GIRL AS A FRIEND. THE ONLY GIRL I KNOW IS MISS WENDY WHO MENDS OUR CLOTHES AND COOKS FOR US. I'VE NEVER HAD A MOTHER BEFORE BUT I ALWAYS IMAGINE

MOTHERS TO BE LIKE HER. EXCEPT WITH MORE TIME TO TELL STORIES AND SING TO ME AND TO BE A BETTER COOK IF I HAD A MOTHER LIKE MISS WENDY, AND A FRIEND LIKE THAT LITTLE BLONDE GIRL, AND OF COURSE MY CLASSMATES TO FOLLOW ME, THEN I WOULD MAKE SURE TO PROTECT THEM FROM THE EVIL ADULTS LIKE CAPTAIN HOOK AND HIS DASTARDLY PIRATE CREW.

WE WOULD LIVE ON MY ISLAND WITH MERMAIDS AND PIRATE TREASURE! I WOULD FLY FROM ONE END OF THE ISLAND TO THE OTHER AND BE IN CHARGE OF EVERYTHING! WELL, EVERYTHING EXCEPT FOR THE INDIAN TRIBE. YOU CAN'T RULE OVER INDIANS, THEY TAKE CARE AND RULE OVER THEMSELVES. BUT I WOULD BE BEST FRIENDS WITH THEM, MAYBE EVEN BLOOD BROTHERS, AS IN THE PICTURE BOOK OF ADVENTURES I STOLE FROM THE CAPTAIN'S LIBRARY!

ON MY ISLAND I WOULD FIGHT PIRATES, SWIM WITH MERMAIDS, CLIMB TREES, AND EXPLORE THE JUNGLE AND SECRET CAVES ALL DAY LONG. I WOULD WIELD MY DAGGER AND BE THE GREATEST BOY HERO THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN!

AT NIGHT I WOULD SLEEP IN MY VERY OWN TREE HOUSE AFTER THE WENDY GIRL, OUR DESIGNATED MOTHER, TOLD ME AND MY BOYS A STORY. I MIGHT EVEN LET HER BORROW MY SPECIAL ADVENTURE BOOK IF SHE PROMISES TO WRITE MY ADVENTURES IN THEM.

AND BEST OF ALL, WE WOULD NEVER, EVER GROW UP. EVER!

"MR. PANCHESTER!" MR. HAWKINS BARKED. "HOW CAN YOU POSSIBLY BE EXPECTED TO BECOME A RESPECTABLE ADULT IF YOU REFUSE TO GROW UP?!"

I GLARED AT HIM. "I WILL NEVER GROW UP!"

MR. HAWKINS UNLOCKED THE OLD CLOSET DOOR USED FOR TIME OUTS. THE DOOR OPENED SLOWLY, IT WAS THE ENTRANCE TO DEAD MAN'S CAVE AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE ENTRANCE TO MY PERSONAL ESCAPE FROM THIS GROWN-UP WORLD.

"WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT, MR. PANCHESTER," THE EVIL CAPTAIN GROWLED. "YOU NEED TO GROW UP. YOU WILL GROW UP! THIS LAND YOU'RE LIVING IN WILL NEVER BE!"

WITH THAT CAPTAIN HOOK FORCED ME IN THE CAVE-CLOSET AND SLAMMED THE STONE COLD DOOR IN MY FACE. THE CLICK OF THE LOCK ROAMED AROUND THE HOLLOW CAVE, CAUSING THE DUST AND COBWEBS THAT

CLUNG TO THE ROCKS TO FALL ON TOP OF MY HEAD, COATING MY REDDISH HAIR WITH SILVER.

THE DARKNESS ENGULFED ME AND TRIED TO SWALLOW ME WHOLE, BUT I JUST SAT BACK AND SMIRKED. CAPTAIN HOOK DID NOT UNDERSTAND, HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND. HE WAS AN ADULT, A GROWN-UP, AND WHAT DID THEY KNOW ABOUT MY WORLD? IT WAS ALMOST SADDENING TO THINK THAT THE OLD COD FISH WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO GET HIS HANDS ON THE TREASURE HE SO DEARLY LONGED FOR, THE TREASURE THAT I HAD IN MY GRASP AND COULD HOLD WHENEVER I SHUT MY EYES.

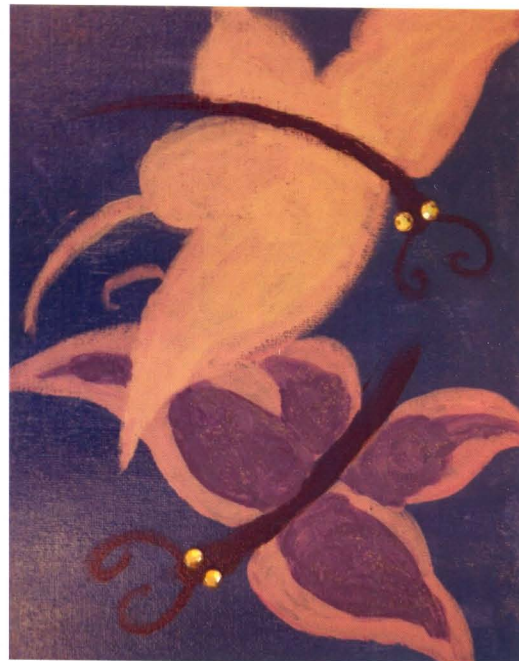
"THIS LAND YOU'RE LIVING IN WILL NEVER BE!" HIS WORDS ECHOED IN MY HEAD FOR A WHILE, CAUSING ME TO FROWN SLIGHTLY.

"A LAND THAT WOULD NEVER BE A LAND OF NEVER THINGS" I MUTTERED TO MYSELF.

A TINKLING CHIME SOUNDED IN MY EAR, PULLING ME OUT OF MY THOUGHTS.

"I KNOW TINK," I SMIRKED. "THE COD FISH DOESN'T UNDERSTAND. THIS IS A NEVER LAND, MY NEVERLAND."

**AMANDA FRENCH**



**SHERRI ROSE DANCING BUTTERFLIES**

# LET'S GO



# SOMEWHERE

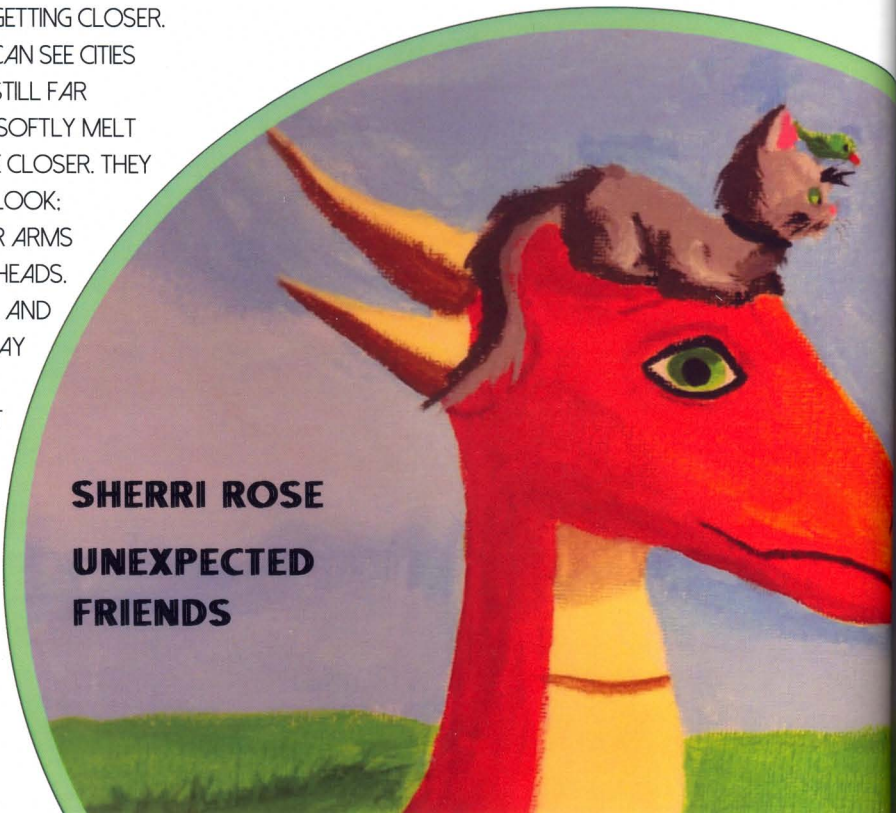
LET'S WALK. LET'S GO SOMEWHERE. WHERE? I DON'T KNOW. JUST WALK WITH ME. GRASS. WE'RE WALKING BAREFOOT, AND IT FEELS AS SOFT AS CARPET. IT'S THE WILD KIND. THERE'S BIRD-SONG DRIFTING IN THAT WARM BREEZE: A BEAUTIFUL TRILL STRAIGHT FROM THE FLUTE OF GOD. LET'S FOLLOW IT, SHALL WE? AH, THERE ARE TREES OVER THERE. ANCIENT ONES, WITH BRANCHES BIG ENOUGH TO LIVE IN. WE LOOK CLOSER, AND SEE FLASHES OF COLOR. FEATHERS DRIFT DOWN LIKE LEAVES IN FALL. YOU CATCH ONE, A RAINBOW-COLORED ONE, AND HAND IT TO ME. I CATCH AN Iridescent RED ONE, AND HAND IT TO YOU. THEY'RE BEAUTIFUL. LONG PINIONS. PRIMARIES. WE CAN STILL FEEL THE FLIGHT IN THEM; IT'S WARM AND PULSING: ALIVE. FLY WITH ME? YOU FEEL STRANGE, AND YOUR BARE FEET LIFT AN INCH OFF THE GROUND. I RISE A BIT, AND PUT MY FEATHER IN MY HAIR. WE FEEL THE BREEZE FLOW BENEATH US; SO STRANGE. COME WITH ME. I HAVE THINGS TO SHOW YOU. RISE, RISE. WE GO UP. THE OLD TREES FLASH BY, AND THEN RUN OUT OF SKY. WE ARE NOT LIMITED BY ROOTS. COME WITH ME; I'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE. RISE. THE CLOUDS ARE GETTING CLOSER. LOOK DOWN; YOU WON'T FEEL AFRAID. WE CAN SEE CITIES FROM UP HERE. SPIRES RAISE IN THE DISTANCE. STILL FAR BELOW US. MOUNTAINS, COVERED IN SNOW, SOFTLY MELT INTO THE CLOUDS. LOOK UP. THE CLOUDS ARE CLOSER. THEY FORM AN IMPERFECT CEILING, FULL OF HOLES. LOOK; THERE'S ONE. FOLLOW ME. SPREAD OUT YOUR ARMS AND DREAM; THERE YOU GO. UP, UP. THUNDERHEADS, THESE ARE FAR LARGER THAN THE MOUNTAINS, AND FAR LESS PERMANENT. UP. NOW WE'RE MIDWAY UP THEIR HEIGHT. ARMS OUT AGAIN; LET'S FLY AWAY. THAT SUN KISSED WIND IS GLORIOUS. IT RUNS THROUGH OUR HAIR, MAKING MINE STREAM OUT BEHIND ME LIKE BANNERS. LOOK DOWN THROUGH THAT BREAK IN THE CLOUDS. A SMALL TOWN SITS QUIETLY BELOW; THEY CAN'T SEE US UP HERE. FASTER. LET'S GO FASTER NOW. SMALL CLOUDS BREAK AND FLASH OVER OUR ARMS. YOU TAKE A DEEP BREATH AS YOU RUN THROUGH ONE; IT FEELS GOOD ON YOUR DRY LUNGS.

THAT. WHAT IS THAT? THERE ARE BUILDINGS UP AHEAD, ALL WITH CLOUDS FOR FOUNDATIONS. WANT TO VISIT THEM? I AGREE. WE GO FASTER. WE SEE PEOPLE NOW; THEY'RE WAVING AT US. CLOSER, CLOSER, AND NOW WE SLOW DOWN. ARMS OUT, FEET DOWN, WE DESCEND. OUR FEET NEVER REALLY TOUCH DOWN; WE FLOAT A FEW INCHES FROM THE PEARLESCENT TILES. THE NATIVES ARE AMAZED. CAN YOU BELIEVE IT? THEY'VE NEVER FLOWN! ONLY THEIR CITY FLOATS. REST, THEY SAY. STAY WITH US. THAT SOUNDS GOOD TO ME. WHAT ABOUT YOU? WE WILL. WE FOLLOW THEM, FEET UP BEHIND US. YOU TWIRL, STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT. THAT'S OKAY. YOU DON'T NEED TO BELIEVE IT. THEY LEAD US TO A ROOM FILLED WITH FUR COVERED DRAGONS. ONE OPENS ITS WING AND ROLLS ONTO ITS SIDE. YOU LIE DOWN NEXT TO ITS CHEST, RESTING YOUR HEAD ON ITS ARMS. A SOFT WING

:KATY MCKAY



**SHERRI ROSE**  
**UNEXPECTED**  
**FRIENDS**





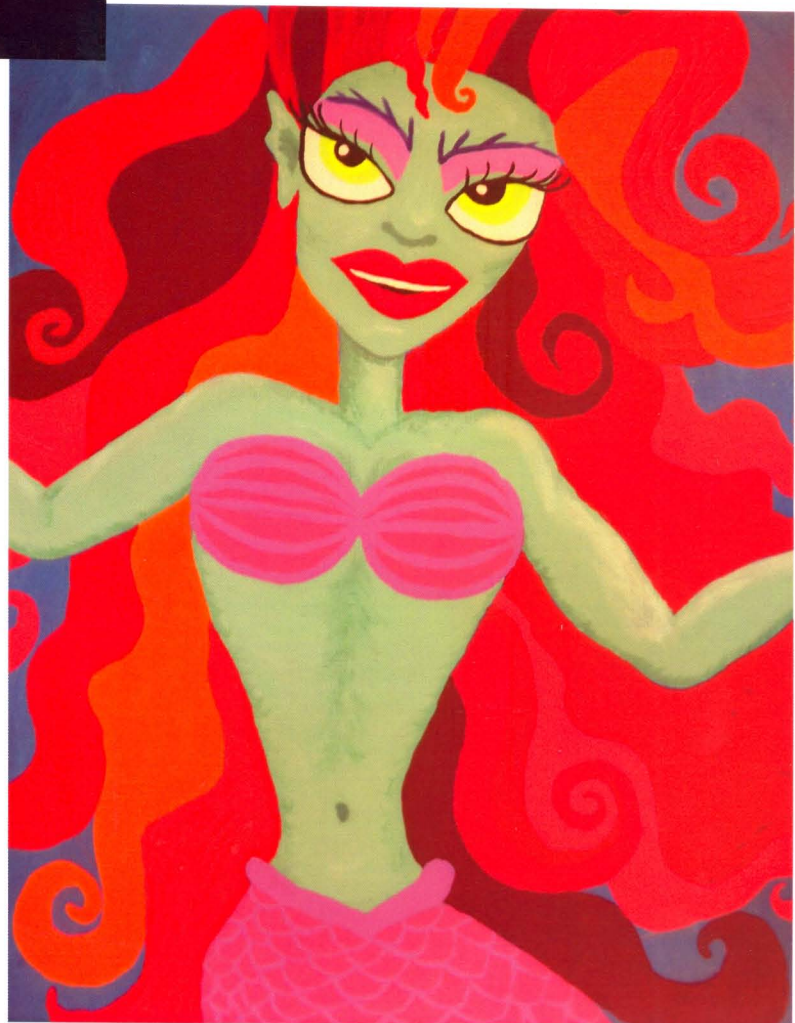
# LAGOONA

NIKI SNYDER

Tempt the waters from their bed;  
For no ripples curl, alas!  
Along that wilderness of glass --  
No swellings tell that winds may be  
Upon some far-off happier sea --

- The City in the Sea

Edgar Allan Poe



MERMAID

NIKI SNYDER

# SECRET BOXES

## PREFACE

ERICA LAWSON, A SUCCESSFUL FRANCHISE OWNER OF A TRAVEL AND TOUR AGENCY BY THE NAME OF *ULTIMATE JOURNEY TRAVEL AND TOUR, INC.* WALKS INTO HER OFFICE THIS BRIGHT AND SUNNY MONDAY MORNING ANTICIPATING A BUSY AND PRODUCTIVE DAY. ERICA IS AN ATTRACTIVE WOMAN IN THE EARLY FORTIES, WITH SHORT REDDISH BROWN WAVY HAIR, BIG GLOWING BROWN EYES, AND A PERSONALITY THAT MADE EVERYONE SHE MET WANT TO BE HER BEST FRIEND.

SHE PLACES DOWN HER CUP OF DUNCAN DONUT'S COFFEE AND BRIEF CASE, TURNS ON HER LAPTOP, AND BRIEFLY GLANCES AT HER MESSAGES. SHE NOTICES THE MESSAGE FROM THE CORPORATE OFFICE REMINDING HER ABOUT COMPLETING THE CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY. OPENING HER EMAIL SHE FINDS THE SURVEY, PRINTS IT OUT, AND PROCEEDS TO LOOK IT OVER. THIS WAS THE FIRST YEAR THE CORPORATE OFFICE INITIATED A CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY AND IT WAS LAUNCHED TO ENSURE THAT ALL THEIR FRANCHISES WERE PROVIDING THE UPMOST SERVICE IN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION. THERE IS A SERIES OF QUESTIONS THAT NEED TO BE ANSWERED AND AS ERICA REVIEWS THE SURVEY ONE QUESTION IN PARTICULAR CATCHES HER EYE. SHE SITS IN CONTEMPLATION FOR A FEW MINUTES WHILE FOCUSING ON THE QUESTION WHICH READS,

"WHAT WAS YOUR MOST MEMORABLE ASSIGNMENT?"

A SMILE COMES TO HER FACE AS A WARM TINGLING FEELING BEGINS TO RESONATE THROUGHOUT HER BODY. THIS YEAR WAS THE CULMINATION OF A SERIES OF VERY SPECIAL AND MEMORABLE EVENTS THAT HAS LASTED A SPAN OF FIFTEEN YEARS FOR A VERY SPECIAL RECIPIENT OF ERICA'S BIGGEST CLIENT. SHE WAS SO THRILLED AND HONORED TO HAVE BEEN THE NAVIGATOR IN THIS UNBELIEVABLE JOURNEY. STILL FOCUSING ON THE SURVEY QUESTION, ERICA TURNS AROUND AND PICKS UP A PICTURE OF THIS VERY CLIENT WHICH BROUGHT PLEASANT MEMORIES TO HER MIND. THE PICTURE WAS OF EMILY VAN HORN, WHO WAS NOT ONLY HER BIGGEST CLIENT BUT ALSO

HER MOTHER'S BEST FRIEND, A VERY SPECIAL LITTLE GIRL NAMED LACI KIM REYNOLDS, AND HER PARENTS ELIZABETH AND DALE REYNOLDS.

TAKING ANOTHER SIP OF HER COFFEE, ERICA OPENS UP A WORD DOCUMENT ON HER LAPTOP AND BEGINS TO TYPE.

MY MOST MEMORABLE ASSIGNMENT WAS ..

IT ALL STARTED THE DAY SIXTY-NINE YEAR OLD EMILY VAN HORN MEETS ELEVEN YEAR OLD LACI KIM REYNOLDS INITIATING A RELATIONSHIP THAT WOULD ENDURE ALL OF LIFE'S CURVES, EVEN DEATH. ONE MIGHT BE WONDERING HOW A SIXTY-NINE YEAR OLD WOMAN BECAME BEST FRIENDS WITH AN ELEVEN YEAR OLD GIRL. WELL, IT ALL STARTED ON SPRING MORNING IN 1999 ON CAREER DAY AT WILSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. THE PRINCIPAL HAD INVITED SEVERAL RESPECTED AND PROMINENT BUSINESS OWNERS, COMMUNITY RESIDENTS AND PARENTS TO COME TO SCHOOL AND TALK TO THE CHILDREN ABOUT THEIR CAREERS, LIFE EXPERIENCES AND/OR TRAVELS. EMILY WAS ALSO INVITED TO SPEAK AND SHE GRACIOUSLY ACCEPTED BECAUSE SHE ESPECIALLY LOVED TALKING TO AND INTERACTING WITH THE CHILDREN. ERICA REMEMBERS EMILY ALWAYS SAYING,

"CHILDREN'S INNOCENCE ALLOWS THEM TO LISTEN AND DREAM ABOUT THINGS THEY COULD ACCOMPLISH JUST BY BELIEVING IN THEMSELVES."

EMILY'S CHILDHOOD WAS A MIXTURE OF MYSTERY, SUSPENSE, TURBULENCE, AND EXCITEMENT. STARTING FROM CHILDHOOD, EMILY HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO TRAVEL ALL OVER THE WORLD; AND THEREFORE, HAD MANY STORIES TO TELL THE CHILDREN ABOUT HER LIFE AND TRAVELS.

THAT SPECIAL CAREER DAY AT SCHOOL WAS THE BEGINNING OF A RELATIONSHIP THAT WOULD BECOME A DEEP AND BEAUTIFUL FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN A YOUNG CHILD AND A PROMINENT WORLDLY WOMAN. MANY ADULTS CAME BY TO SPEAK TO THE CHILDREN. THERE WERE PARENTS, LOCAL POLICEMEN AND FIREMEN, BUSINESS OWNERS, AND EVEN THE MAYOR SHOWED UP TO TALK TO THE CHILD-

DREN.

IT WAS NOW EMILY'S TIME TO TALK AND AFTER INTRODUCING HERSELF IN HER VERY DISTINCTIVE DUTCH ACCENT SHE ASKED THE CHILDREN A QUESTION.

"I WANT EACH OF YOU TO TELL ME WHAT YOUR FAVORITE THING TO DO IS?"

EMILY GLANCES AROUND THE ROOM LOOKING AT EACH CHILD IN WONDERMENT. SHE GOT ALL KINDS OF ANSWERS.

"I LIKE BASEBALL."

"I LIKE TO SING."

"I LIKE TO SWIM."

"I LIKE TO LEARN HOW TO FLY A PLANE LIKE MY FATHER," RESPONDED THE BLONDE HAired BOY SITTING IN THE BACK ROW.

EMILY LISTENED CAREFULLY TO ALL THE CHILDREN'S ANSWERS AND THEN HER ATTENTION WAS DRAWN TO THE PRETTY AUBURN HEAD-ED GIRL SITTING IN THE

RIGHT-HAND SIDE MIDDLE AISLE THAT SEEMED TO BE OFF SOMEWHERE DAYDREAMING. EMILY CONTINUES TO FOCUS HER ATTENTION A FEW SECONDS MORE ON THIS INTRIGUING YOUNG GIRL BEFORE ASKING HER,

"AND WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE THING TO DO YOUNG LADY?"

POKED BY THE CLASSMATE SITTING BEHIND HER TO GET HER ATTENTION, LACI LOOKS UP AT EMILY CONFUSED AND RESPONDED,

"I'M SORRY I DID NOT HEAR YOUR QUESTION."

SMILING BACK AT LACI, EMILY AGAIN ASKS,

"WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE THING TO DO?"

THINKING ABOUT EMILY'S QUESTION FOR A FEW SECONDS LACI PROCEEDS TO ANSWER,

"I HAVE MANY THINGS I LOVE TO DO."

"I LOVE TO TALK TO THE BIRDS AND LISTEN TO THEM SING."

"I LOVE RAINBOWS."

"I LOVE PUZZLES."

"I LOVE MUSIC."

"I LOVE TO PAINT."

"I LOVE TO WRITE."

"I LOVE LOOKING AT PICTURES."

STOPPING FOR A SECOND OR TWO, LACI QUICKLY AND EXCITINGLY ADDS,

"OH, I ALSO LOVE PYRAMIDS."

LACI'S LAST COMMENT REALLY PEAKED EMILY'S CURIOSITY WHICH PROMPTS HER TO ASK ANOTHER QUESTION.

"WHAT IS IT ABOUT PYRAMIDS THAT YOU LOVE?"

ENTHUSIASTICALLY LACI ANSWERS,

"I LOVE THE WAY THEY MAKE ME FEEL, AND I LOVE THE WAY THEY POINT UP TO SKY. NO WAIT, I LOVE THAT WAY THEY POINT FURTHER UP INTO THE UNIVERSE, AND I THINK THAT THEY PROBABLY REACH STRAIGHT UP TO HEAVEN."

EMILY GLANCES AT LACI FOR A FEW MOMENTS NODDING HER HEAD IN AGREEMENT AS SHE SENDS LACI A CONFIRMING SMILE. LACI ACKNOWLEDGES EMILY'S SMILE AND FEELS AN IMMEDIATE CONNECTION WITH HER. IT

WAS THAT VERY MOMENT THAT EMILY

KNEW THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING DIFFERENT AND VERY SPECIAL ABOUT LACI. LACI HAD JUST LISTED ALL THE THINGS EMILY LOVED TO DO AND HER MANNERISMS REMINDED EMILY OF HER WHEN SHE WAS LACI'S AGE. IT WAS AS IF EMILY WAS HAVING A FLASHBACK WATCHING HERSELF WHEN SHE WAS TEN YEARS OLD. A BOND CONNECTION WAS FORMED THAT DAY BETWEEN EMILY AND LACI AND UNKNOWN TO EITHER OF THEM AT THAT TIME KINDRED SPIRITS WERE BEING BROUGHT TOGETHER FOR A VERY SPECIAL AND IMPORTANT PURPOSE.

BY: ANNA PARRA

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# YOU ARE MILA

# WITHOUT IT

## Chapter 1:

\*THUMP\*

MILA-HELLO?

CHAE-.....UH.

MILA-I'M SORRY, I THOUGHT....

CHAE-I UM..

MILA-YEAH, OKAY. I'M SORRY....

CHAE-NO! WAIT, UM...ER....HI.

MILA-OH. HI. I'M SORRY BUT IT'S REALLY DARK IN THIS CLOSET. WHERE ARE YOU?

CHAE-I'M RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU. HERE.

\*REACHES OUT TO HER\*

MILA-OH. HEHE THERE YOU ARE. WHY DIDN'T YOU ANSWER?

CHAE-WELL TO BE HONEST, I WAS NERVOUS.

MILA-WHY?

CHAE-I DUNNO....I JUST....

MILA-HEY, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

CHAE-NO, I MEAN....I SAW YOU EARLIER AND I THOUGHT YOU WERE INTER-ESTING.

MILA-THANKS.... I'M MILA.

CHAE- MILA, THAT'S REALLY PRETTY. HOW DO YOU SPELL IT?

MILA-M. I. L. A.

CHAE-WOW.

MILA-HAHA THANKS. HOW DO YOU SPELL YOUR NAME?

CHAE-C. H. A. E. L.

MILA-CH....CH...CHE...CHEL?

CHAE-NICE TRY, BUT NO. MY NAME IS SPELLED C H A E L, BUT IT IS PRO-NOUNCED LIKE KYLE.

MILA-OH REALLY? THAT IS INTERESTING.

CHAE-THANKS SO MUCH.

MILA-YOU'RE VERY WELCOME. SO HOW DID YOU GET IN HERE?

CHAE-ACTUALLY SOME OF THE GUYS TOLD ME IF I WAITED IN HERE, THEY'D SEND A "SURPRISE" IN FOR ME. I

DIDN'T THINK THEY MEANT A GIRL.

MILA-WELL, SURPRISE! HAHA.

CHAE-HAHA YEAH I GUESS. HOW DID YOU GET IN HERE?

MILA-OH, WELL....ACTUALLY A FEW OF MY GIRLFRIENDS DARED ME TO STAND IN HERE FOR 20 MINUTES FOR A

SECRET SURPRISE TOO.

CHAE-OH...DO YOU THINK OUR FRIENDS PLANNED THIS?

MILA-I'M NOT REALLY SURE CHAE.

CHAE-HUH. I GUESS WE WAIT 20 MINUTES THEN.

MILA-YEAH I GUESS BUT HOW DID YOU KNOW IT WAS ME?

CHAE-WHAT? I DIDN'T.

MILA-YES YOU DID.....HOW DID YOU?

CHAE-OKAY OKAY. I RECOGNIZED THE SOUND OF YOUR VOICE.

MILA-MY VOICE? HOW?

CHAE-WHEN I SAW YOU EARLIER, I HEARD YOU SPEAKING

MILA-OH. OKAY. WHY DID YOU THINK I WAS INTERESTING?

CHAE- WHY DO YOU ASK SO MANY QUESTIONS?

MILA-OH! HAHA! I'M SORRY, I DIDN'T MEAN TO INTERROGATE YOU.

CHAE-HA, ITS FINE.

MILA-SERIOUSLY, WHY DID YOU?

CHAE-BECAUSE YOU ARE THE ONLY GIRL THAT HAS A PONYTAIL TONIGHT.

MILA-HAHA! WHAT? I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

CHAE-WELL YOU ARE.

MILA-HEEHEE, WELL YOU ARE VERY OBSERVANT.

CHAE-PERSONALLY, I THINK PONYTAILS ARE BEAUTIFUL. THEY DON'T HIDE YOUR FACE.

MILA-OH.....THANK YOU. CHAE.

CHAE-NO PROBLEM AT ALL.

## Chapter 2:

THE DOOR HANDLE JIGGLED AND A LIGHT SEEPED IN THROUGH THE CLOSET. "HEY YOU TWO! THERE YOU ARE!" EXCLAIMED TESS. MILA AND CHAE SLOWLY TRUDGED OUT OF THE CLOSET AS THEY ADJUSTED THEIR EYESIGHT. MILA TURNED AROUND TO SEE CHAE. CHAE WAS YOUR BASIC TALL, DARK AND HANDSOME SENIOR WITH A CROOKED SMILE. MILA BEGAN TO SMILE AS SHE REALIZED WHO SHE'D BEEN IN A CLOSET WITH AND AS TO WHY SHE DIDN'T NOTICE HIM BEFORE. "SO, I GUESS I WILL SEE YOU? LATER?" HINTED CHAE. BEWILDERED BY HIS CHARM, MILA SIMPLY SIGHED "YEAH..." INSTANTLY TESS ANCHORED HER ARM AND BEGAN TO STROLL HER AWAY BACK TO THE PARTY. MILA WONDERED WHY TESS WAS TALKING TO HER. SHE NEVER BOTHERED TO APPROACH HER IN SCHOOL. WHY NOW? "O M G! MIKA! I'M SO JEALOUS OF YOUR HAIR. IT'S SO LONG AND THICK. YOU ARE LIKE A KARDASHIAN OR SOME-THING." SAID TESS. MILA GLANCED AT HER HAIR AND UNDERSTOOD HER JEALOUSY. TESS HAD RED-ORANGE HAIR THAT WAS FRIED FROM NUMEROUS HAIR-DYING, ALTHOUGH SHE CLAIMED SHE WAS A NATURAL RED-HEAD. MILA'S HAIR RESEMBLED PRINCESS JASMINE'S LONG, JET BLACK PONYTAIL WITH A LENGTH THAT ENDED AT THE SMALL OF HER BACK JUST ABOVE THE BUTT. SHE HAD THE SNOW WHITE PALE COMPLEXION TO MATCH. HOWEVER, MILA'S FAVORITE TRAIT WAS HER FATHER'S LIGHT GREEN EYES. "ACTUALLY IT'S MILA, BUT THANK YOU." SHE SAID SWEETLY. "OH. RIGHT." TESS SCOFFED AS SHE ROLLED HER EYES. "WELL I SHOULD GET BACK TO MY FRIENDS." MILA SAID ANXIOUSLY. "WHAT'S THE RUSH? COME HANG WITH US FOR A WHILE." TESS OFFERED GESTURING AT THE GROUP OF GIRLS BEHIND THEM. EACH OF TESS' FRIENDS HAD A SLY LOOK. MILA TOOK A STEP BACK.

SHE DIDN'T WANT TO BE RUDE. AFTER ALL, THIS WAS TESS' ORDERED WHILE WINKING AT HER FRIEND. TIA LEFT THE ROOM AND RETURNED WITH A NAVY BLINDFOLD AND A PAIR OF SHINY SCISSORS HELD BEHIND HER BACK. "WHAT KIND OF GAME IS THIS?" ASKED MILA. "BASICALLY YOU WILL BE BLIND-FOLDED AND YOU'LL HAVE TO GUESS THE SONG BEING PLAYED ON THE STE-REO." EXPLAINED TESS. "GUESS THE SONG?" ASKED MILA. TIA STOOD BE-HIND HER AND TIED THE BLINDFOLD OVER HER EYES. "YEP, I KNOW IT SOUNDS STUPID BUT IT'S REALLY FUN." ASSURED TESS. "ALL RIGHT, BUT WHY AM I BEING BLINDFOLDED?" ASKED MILA. "THAT'S JUST THE GAME MIKA." TESS SNAPPED WHILE PLUGGING IN HER IPOD. "OKAY, AND GUESS!" SAID TESS. MILA BEGAN TO LISTEN. GWEN STEFANI MAYBE? "UM....SWEET ESCAPE?" ASKED MILA. "YEP! NEXT SONG." SAID TESS. TIA BEGAN TO SLOWLY SNIP THE TOP OF MILA'S PONYTAIL. MILA PANICKED. "WHAT'S HAPPENING?" ASKED MILA WOR-RYINGLY. "WHAT DO YOU MEAN? WHAT'S THE SONG?!" YELLED TESS. TIA WAS HALFWAY DONE BY HER NEXT GUESS. "ORDINARY PEOPLE BY JOHN LEG-END?" GUESSED MILA. TESS DENIED EVEN THOUGH SHE WAS CORRECT. FI-NALLY, TIA CUT THE LAST STRAND AND HELD THE THICK PONYTAIL WITHIN HER GRIP. MILA THOUGHT HER HEAD FELT LIGHTER AND SHE FELT THE BREEZE OF THE A/C VENT BRUSH THE BACK OF HER NECK. MILA JUMPED UP FROM THE STOOL AND YANKED THE BLIND-FOLD OFF. "SERIOUSLY! WHAT'S GOING ON?!" SHE CRIED. AS SHE SCANNED THE ROOM TESS AND HER FRIENDS WERE SNICKER-ING AND GRINNING. TIA TOSSED THE HAIR AT HER CHEST. MILA CAUGHT IT AND GASPED. SHE SLOWLY RAISED HER HAND TO HER HEAD AND RAN HER FINGERS THROUGH HER HAIR. HER EYES GREW BIG AND SHE INHALED LOUDLY. SHE FELT HER STOMACH TURN. MILA LOOKED DOWN AT THE LOCKS WITHIN HER PALMS. "THIS IS MINE?"



CONTINUE  
ON OUR  
WEBSITE!

[HTTP://LSSCSTUDENT.WIX.COM/  
ODYSSEY](http://lsscstudent.wix.com/odyssey)

# THANK YOU!!

THE ODYSSEY STAFF WOULD LIKE TO GIVE RECOGNITION TO THE LAKE-SUMTER STAFF, FROM THE JUDGES, TO THE PEOPLE WHO HELPED PREPARE OUR EVENTS FROM THE GALLERY TO THE AWARD SHOW. WITHOUT THEIR HELP THE ODYSSEY WOULD NOT HAVE COME TOGETHER LIKE IT DID THIS YEAR AND RUN AS SMOOTHLY WITH OUR SMALL STAFF, WE ARE GRATEFUL.

WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK THE PUBLISHING TEAM, FROM FORD PRESS IN LEESBURG, FOR PRINTING OUR MAGAZINE AND TURNING THESE AMAZING COLLECTIONS OF ART FROM OUR STUDENTS INTO AN ART MUSEUM EXPERIENCE AT OUR STUDENT'S FINGERTIPS. KUDOS.

LASTLY, WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR STUDENTS FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS YEARS LAKE-SUMTER ART & LITERARY COMPETITION. THE ODYSSEY WOULD NOT EXIST WITHOUT OUR STUDENTS. SO PLEASE CONTINUE TO SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT THIS MAGAZINE SO WE CAN GO FURTHER WITH SPREADING THE WORD ABOUT THE ODYSSEY MAGAZINE AND THE COMPETITION.

32 YEARS STRONG & MORE TO COME!

- Elizabeth Petre

FLIP THIS BOOK

OVER FOR

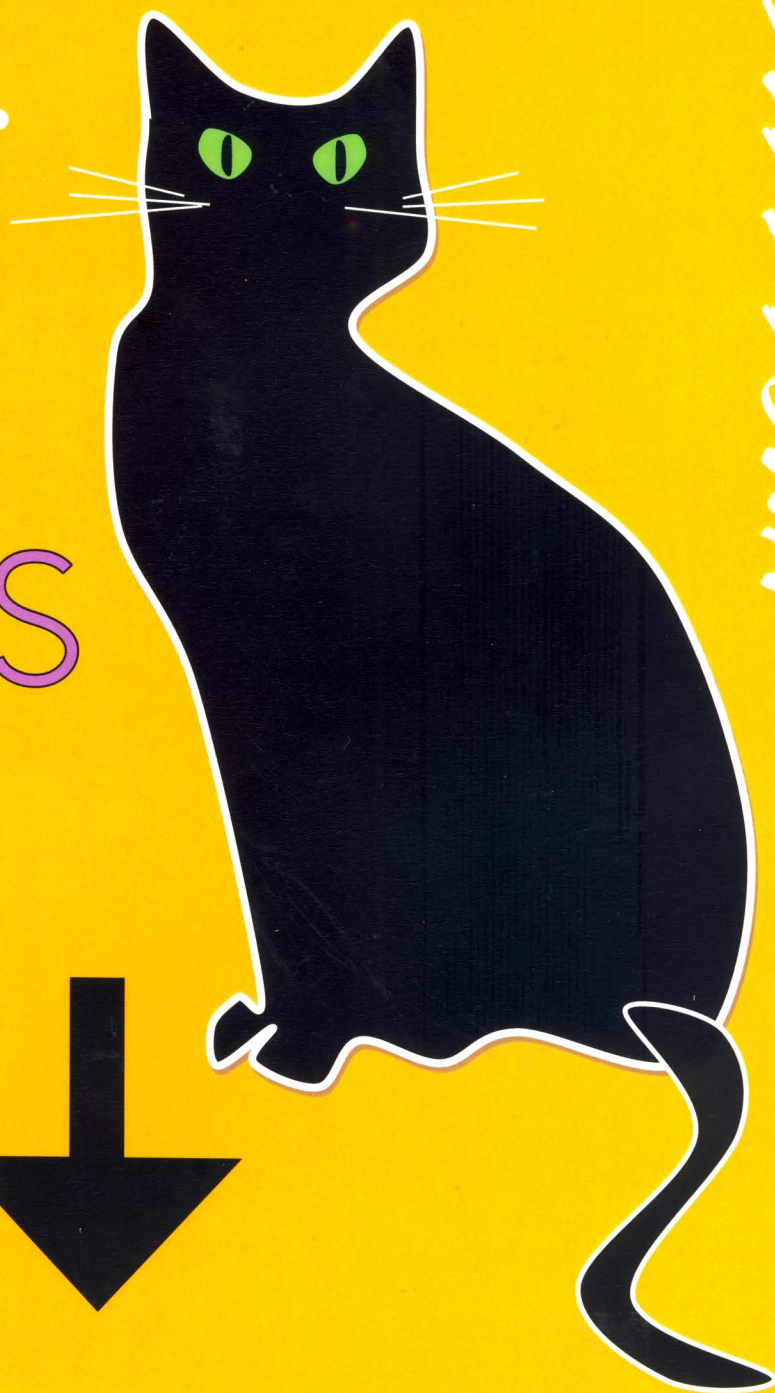


MORE...

ART

PHOTOS

POEMS



*UPSIDE DOWN*

*FUN!*

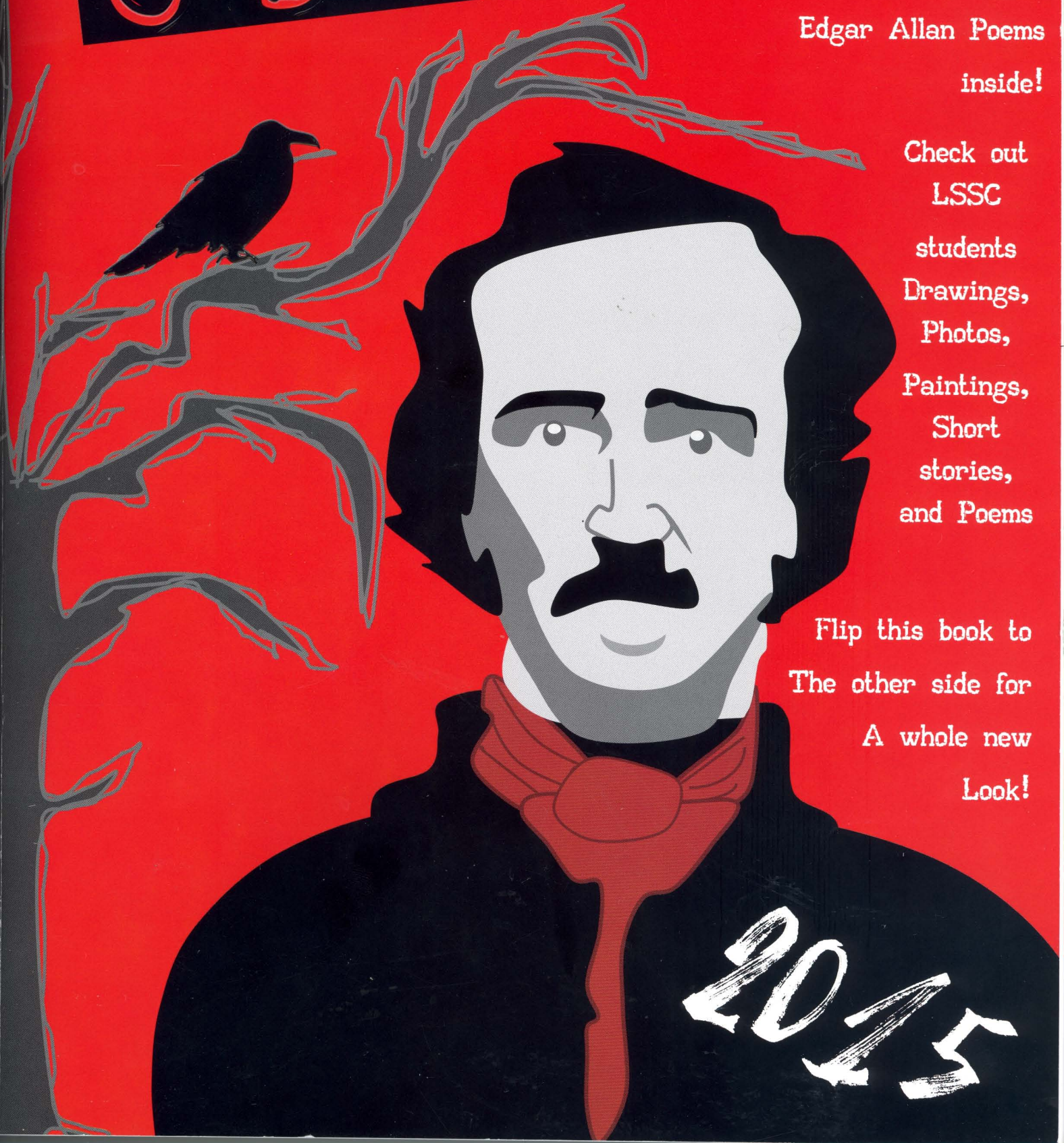


# ODYSSEY

Edgar Allan Poems  
inside!

Check out  
LSSC  
students  
Drawings,  
Photos,  
Paintings,  
Short  
stories,  
and Poems

Flip this book to  
The other side for  
A whole new  
Look!



2015



# SPIN BY KATIE MCKAY

WITH A BURST OF COLOR AND LIGHT, HE PULLS HIS BUILDING MATERIAL INTO THE SCENE. TIME, GRAVITY, AND SPACE ALL DREAMED UP IN AN INSTANT FOR A SMALL BUBBLE OF TANGIBILITY. HE HOLDS ALL THE SPARKLING STUFF IN HIS HANDS, THE VAST NOTHINGNESS STRETCHING OUT BENEATH HIM LIKE A SEA. SPREADING HIS ARMS, HE LETS THE SMALL UNIVERSE EXPAND AND FLOW OPEN.

WHAT'S GOING ON? A FEW IMMORTAL ONLOOKERS ASK. WHAT'S HE DOING? THEY DON'T KNOW YET. THEY ONLY KNOW THAT HE IS INTENT.

HE RUSHES IN TO DWELL IN THE MIDST OF THE BUBBLE OF TIME AND SPACE, AND HIS TRAVEL SETS THE DUST CLOUDS SPINNING INTO GALAXIES. THERE IS ONE PARTICULAR CLOUD THAT HE HAS HIS HEART SET ON; HE FRAMES IT GENTLY WITH HIS PALMS, AND SPINS IT JUST SLIGHTLY. IT IMMEDIATELY BEGINS TWINKLING WITH STARS. THE FIRST POINTS OF LIGHT ARE ALREADY POPPING OUT OF EXISTENCE, THROWING THEIR BORROWED DUST BACK INTO SPACE. THERE IS ONE STAR THAT HASN'T FORMED YET, THOUGH. HE KNOWS ABOUT IT, AND FEELS IT IN HIS MIND. THIS ONE IS SPECIAL.

HE LOOKS DEEPER, AND JUMPS TO A SMALLER FRAME. THERE'S ANOTHER NEBULA BETWEEN HIS HANDS NOW; THIS ONE MAGNIFICENTLY SMALLER. IT WANTS TO COLLAPSE, TO PULL INTO ITSELF AND BE ALONE, BUT THAT IS NOT HIS PLAN. HE SPINS IT.

IT TWIRLS LIKE A DANCER MADE OF DUST, HOLDING OUT ITS ARMS, ITS LEGS, ITS ENTIRE BEING AS IT SPINS.

WHEN IT PULLS IN THOSE CELESTIAL ARMS, IT SPINS FASTER, HEATS UP, STARTS TO GLOW. THE DUST SURROUNDING IT, WHICH STARTED AS A CLOUD, NOW STARTS TO FORM DELICATE RINGS. THE LITTLE LIGHT IN THE CENTER STARTS TO BREATHE ON ITS OWN. THIS ONE IS SPECIAL INDEED.

HE PULLS ONE OF THE RINGS WIDER, AS A POTTER GENTLY SHAPES THE MOUTH OF A POT. ANOTHER HE SHRINKS BETWEEN HIS PALMS. WHEN ALL OF THEM ARE PERFECT, HE GATHERS THEM UP SO THAT THEY STILL SPIN, BUT NO LONGER AS DUST. OF ALL OF THESE, HE CHOOSES ONE MORE SPECIAL THAN THE REST. THE GRAVITY THAT HE PUT THERE AT THE START HAS MADE IT ROUND AND MADE IT HOT, GLOWING WITH ITS BRETHERN.

HE LOOKS DEEPER STILL. THIS ONE, SPECIAL SPHERE IS BEFORE HIM NOW, SWIRLING VIOLENTLY WITH HEAT. HE BREATHEES ON IT, AND IT CALMS TO JUST A GENTLE RADIANCE FROM ITS HEART. THIS IS THE ONE.

HE PULLS WATER TO THE SURFACE, BREATHEES CLOUDS ONTO IT, AND ADJUSTS THE MOON FOR TIDES. HE MOLDS LAND BENEATH HIS FINGERTIPS, AND THEN TAPS IT TO SET IT BREAKING AND DRIFTING. HOW QUICKLY IT ALL GOES BY TO HIM, WHO EXISTS OUTSIDE OF TIME. JUST A COUPLE DAYS. WHO CAN TELL HIM OTHERWISE? WHEN HE WANTS SOMETHING FASTER, HE POURS IN MORE TIME. WHEN HE WANTS IT SLOWER, HE SKIMS SOME OFF THE TOP. WHO CAN TELL HIM WHAT A DAY IS?

BEFORE HIM IS A THING OF BEAUTY NOW, JUST PERFECT. AROUND IT TO THE EDGE OF THE UNIVERSE, COUNTLESS OTHERS FORM, BUT NONE SO EXACT AS THIS. AND NONE OF THEM WILL HAVE WHAT HE IS ABOUT TO DO TO THIS ONE

CLOSER NOW, HE STANDS ON THE WARM EARTH WHERE HE CAN STILL FEEL LIFE PULSING BENEATH. THIS NEXT PART TAKES MORE EXACTNESS THAN ANYTHING ELSE IN THE UNIVERSE. IT WILL BE TINY, BUT INCREDIBLE, UNLIKE ANYTHING ELSE IN THE BRILLIANT SKIES. HE TAKES A STEP, AND IN HIS FOOTPRINT GRASS SHOOTS UP. THE NEXT STEP BECOMES FLOWERS. THE NEXT, TREES THAT ARE ANCIENT BEFORE HE SETS HIS FOOT BACK DOWN.

HE WALKS UNTIL HE STANDS WITH HIS FEET IN THE DEEP. REACHING DOWN, HE PULLS HIS FINGERS THROUGH THE WATER, AND THE EDDIES SPRING TO LIFE. THEY WRIGGLE AND LEAP, SPREADING OUT LIKE INK INTO THE FAR REACHES OF THE OCEAN. HE LIFTS HIS HAND FULL OF WATER, AND AS SOME DRIPS OFF, THE DROPS BREAK APART INTO COUNTLESS SETS OF WINGS AND TAKE TO THE SKY AS A DISPERSING CLOUD. THE WATER HE STILL HAS, HE THROWS, AND WHEN IT HITS THE EARTH IT SPLASHES INTO LIFE.

HE COMES EVEN CLOSER, STEPPING THROUGH FIELDS AND LETTING HIS FINGERS SOFTLY BRUSH THE TOPS OF REDWOODS. HERE IN A GARDEN, HE KNEELS. DUST LEAPS INTO HIS HANDS, STILL REMEMBERING THE LIFE HE GAVE IT. TO HIM, IT WAS JUST A DAY OR SO AGO. HE STARTS TO CARVE, TO MOLD THE DUST INTO A SHAPE HE'S BEEN THINKING ABOUT SINCE A FEW DIMENSIONS BACK.

WHEN HIS SCULPTURE IS DONE, HE INHALES, DRAWING IN HIS VERY OWN ETERNAL SOUL, AND PAUSES. THIS IS MORE THAN HE GAVE THAT FIRST HANDFUL OF SPACE AND TIME FAR MORE THAN HE GAVE THAT SPECIAL CLOUD, OR THAT ONE STAR. THIS IS MORE THAN HE GAVE THAT SINGULAR MOLTEN WORLD. THIS IS FAR MORE THAN HE GAVE THE TREES, THE BIRDS, THE FISH, THE BEASTS. THIS IS SPECIAL. HE DRAWS THE THING OF DUST TO HIS LIPS, AND EXHALES.



AHSOKATANO BY YOLANDA ROSADO  
ODSANO BY YOLANDA ROSADO

WHEN WE SMELLED FOOD, WE DESCENDED SLOWLY TO FIND IT, RELISHING EACH MOMENT OF WIND UNDER OUR WINGS. ONCE WE FOUND WHATEVER MISERABLE CREATURE HAD BECOME OUR DINNER, WE ATE QUICKLY. WE LEAPT BACK INTO THE SKY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

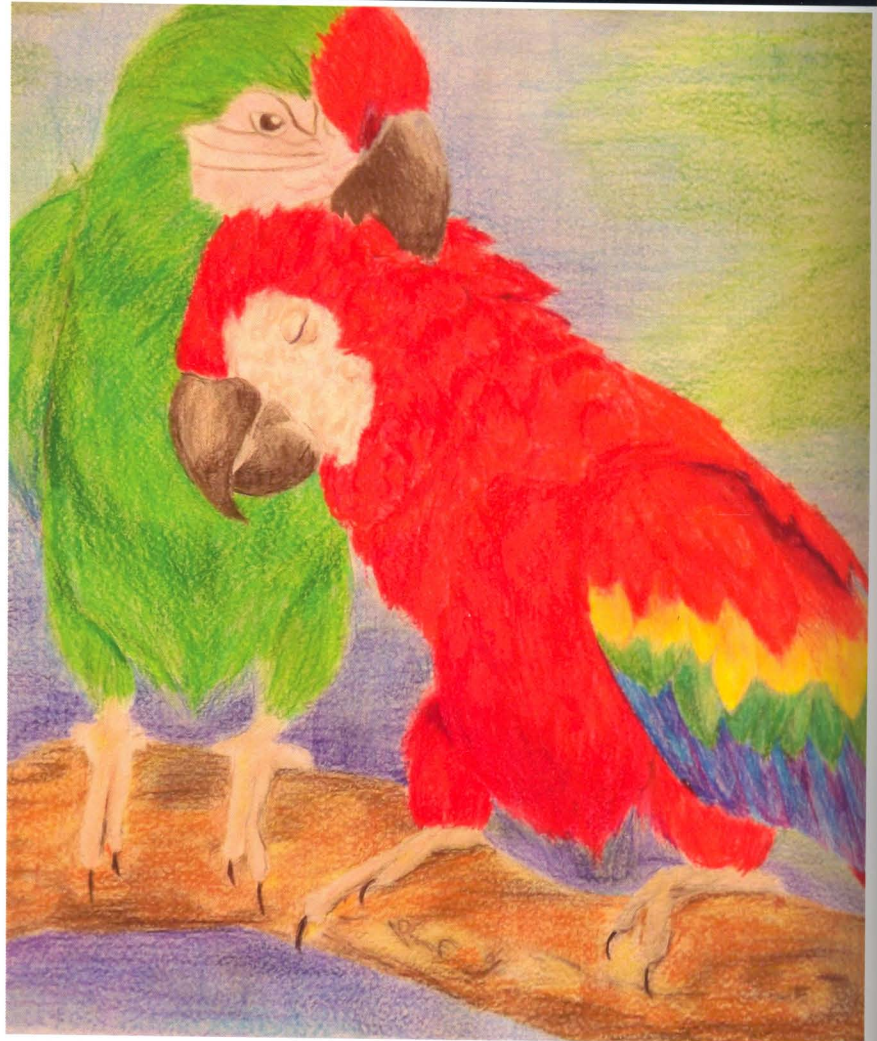
WE LOST EVERYTHING. WE NOW EAT ROTTEN FLESH, RATHER THAN THE SWEET, AMBROSIAL NECTAR THAT WE STARTED WITH. OUR FEATHERS ARE THE COLOR OF SOOT, RATHER THAN THE RAINBOW THAT THEY COULD HAVE BEEN. WE CROAK SOMETIMES, OR HISS, BUT NEVER SING ANYMORE. THE OTHERS DON'T UNDERSTAND US.

BUT THEN AGAIN, THEY'VE NEVER SPENT HOURS ON THE BACK OF A CLOUD. THEY'VE NEVER SEEN THE WORLD FROM 10,000 FEET UP. THEY'VE NEVER COME SO CLOSE TO HEAVEN AS WE.

THE EAGLES WERE RELUCTANT WHEN WE ASKED THEM TO PLUCK THE FEATHERS FROM OUR HEADS. THEY LOVED THEIR SMOOTH, PREENED FEATHER LIKE NOTHING ELSE, AND COULDN'T FATHOM WHY WE WOULD GIVE OURS UP JUST SO WE COULD EAT THE KIND OF FOOD THAT THEY ONLY ATE WHEN DESPERATE. BUT THEY DID IT. WHEN THEY WERE DONE, THEY STARED AT OUR BALD, WRINKLED FACES WITH QUIET HORROR. WE THANKED THEM AND SPREAD OUR WINGS.

WE FLEW UP AND UP AND UP AND UP AND UP. WE FLEW UNTIL WE COULDN'T SEE THEM ANYMORE. WE FLEW UNTIL WE COULD SEE FOR MILES IN EVERY DIRECTION, AND THEN WE FLEW INTO THE CLOUDS. WE GRACEFULLY

DIPPED IN AND OUT OF THE MOIST, WHITE FLUFF. WE TWIRLED AND DANCED WHERE NO ONE COULD SEE US ANYMORE. WE LET THE SUN WARM OUR BLOOD. WE WERE QUIET; NO UGLY SCREECHES FILLED THAT PEACEFUL EXPANSE.



**KAYLA CHIDESTER BIRDS OF A FEATHER**

100 YARDS OF GATOR GLORY  
ERIN NORTH



TREE 3D-WENDY MERRILL

VULTURE-KATIE MCKAY

BEADY EYES FROM BALDING HEAD LOOK  
DOWN

HELD ALOFT BY TATTERED WINGS.

VOICELESS, RANCID, SEEKING DEATH

AND FEASTING ON THE WORST OF THINGS.

YET SOMEHOW HE'S CONTENT  
ALOFT.

GLIDING UGLY UP HIGH.

PERHAPS IT WAS A GOOD  
EXCHANGE:

LEAVING BEAUTY, CHOOSING SKY



SQUIRREL ON A TREE BY PATRICIA VELEZ

# FALL IN LOVE WITH YOURSELF

FALL FOR YOUR LITTLE QUIRKS:

HOW YOU RUN YOUR FINGERS THROUGH YOUR HAIR

HOW YOU BITE YOUR LIP IN CONCENTRATION

FALL IN LOVE WITH YOURSELF

WATCH YOURSELF GET READY IN THE MORNING

LOOK AT YOURSELF AS IF YOU WERE GAZING AT A LOVER

MESMERIZE YOURSELF

WITH THE WAY

YOU ROLL OUT OF BED OR

BRUSH YOUR TEETH IN TINY CIRCLES

FALL IN LOVE WITH YOURSELF

STARE AT YOURSELF NAKED

WITH EYES VOID OF

JUDGMENT

DISGUST

OR APPREHENSION

FALL IN LOVE WITH YOURSELF

LOOK AT YOURSELF WITH WONDER

LOOK AT YOURSELF AS SOMEONE WOULD LOOK AT A PIECE OF

ART

LOOK AT YOURSELF THE WAY A MOTHER LOOKS AT HER

NEWBORN CHILD

LOOK AT YOURSELF THE WAY A FATHER LOOKS AT HIS DAUGHTER AS SHE WALKS DOWN THE AISLE

FALL IN LOVE WITH YOURSELF

DON'T BE A STRANGER TO YOUR BODY

GET TO KNOW EVERY INCH OF YOUR SKIN

COUNT EVERY HAIR

BECOME FRIENDS WITH EVERY

MOLE

SCAR,

AND STRETCH MARK

FALL IN LOVE WITH YOURSELF

ROMANCE YOURSELF

DRESS UP FOR YOURSELF

CALL YOURSELF CUTE

LAUGH AT THE SILLY JOKES YOU MAKE  
CUDDLE UP AND WATCH MOVIES WITH YOURSELF

FALL IN LOVE WITH YOURSELF

THE ONLY REASON YOU DOUBT YOUR BEAUTY IS BECAUSE YOU DON'T SEE YOURSELF AS OTHERS DO- AS I DO.

FALL IN LOVE WITH YOURSELF

FOR THEN

YOU'LL UNDERSTAND WHY

I HAVE FALLEN FOR YOU

BY: ALEXIS PAYNTER



LACES OF LOVE ERIN NORTH





# FLY BOYS

## BY KATIE MCKAY



THE OTHER BIRDS CONSIDER US BUZZARDS TO BE A SORRY BUNCH UGLY, **VOICELESS** SCAVENGERS. BUT THEY FORGET. **THEY FORGET** THAT WE CHOSE THIS, THAT WE GAVE UP OUR BEAUTY AND VOICES AND FINE FOODS FOR SOMETHING BETTER. THEY FORGET THAT WE WERE ONCE LIKE THEM. HUMMINGBIRDS, PIGEONS, THEY FORGET THINGS QUICKLY. THE HAWKS AND EAGLES MIGHT REMEMBER, BUT THEY ARE TOO PROUD TO CONSIDER THEIR PASTS. WE **BUZZARDS** ARE NOT SO ARROGANT. WE REMEMBER.

**LONG AGO**, ALL OF US BIRDS **WERE** BEAUTIFUL. WE WERE SMALL AND **SPRIGHTLY**, AND WE SANG, SWEET TRILLS AND WARBLER TO EACH OTHER FOR LOVE. WE FEASTED ON SUCCULENT NECTAR AND BUILT **DELICATE** NESTS TO RAISE OUR YOUNG. MOST OF THE BIRDS WERE SATISFIED. SURE, SOME TRADED THEIR NECTAR FOR BERRIES OR SEEDS. SOME CAUGHT BEES. SOME MADE SAVORY TREATS OF THE INSECTS THAT SWARMED AROUND US, BUT IT WAS JUST A MATTER OF TASTE; THEY WERE ALL **BEAUTIFUL**. AND THEY ALL FLITTED FROM BRANCH TO BRANCH CONTENTEDLY.

WELL, MOST OF THEM DID. A SMALL NUMBER OF THOSE BEAUTIFUL **BIRDS WERE** NOT SATISFIED. THEY WANTED SOMETHING GRANDER; THEY WANTED TO GO HIGHER AND FASTER, TO BE STRONGER. THE BEAUTIFUL BIRDS HAD TO SPEND ALL DAY EATING TINY BERRIES JUST TO SURVIVE AND KEEP FLITTING AROUND. THE **UNSATISFIED** BIRDS WANTED MORE. THEY **WANTED** TO SPEND TIME SOARING HIGH AND SEARCHING, RATHER THAN EATING. THEY WOULD FLY UP AS HIGH AS THEY COULD, AND THEN DIVE BACK DOWN WHEN THEY COULDN'T STAND THE HUNGER. THEY STARTED TO CHASE THE OTHER BIRDS. THEY PRACTICED CATCHING AND CARRYING THINGS IN THEIR TINY, DAINY FEET. SOON, THEY GREW STRONG. THEIR CLAWS BECAME TALONS AND THEIR CHESTS DEEPENED WITH NEW MUSCLE. THEY LOST SOME OF THEIR COLORS SO THEY COULD BLEND INTO THE TREES OR SKY. THEY BENT THEIR BEAKS AGAINST ROCKS SO THAT THEY COULD PRY MEAT FROM BONES. THEY LEARNED **TO SWOOP**, TO ATTACK FROM ABOVE. WITH THE ABILITY **TO KILL** CAME THE FREEDOM TO FLY FAR FROM FOOD, AND THEY LEARNED **TO SOAR**. THEY SPEND HOURS FLYING, KNOWING THAT ALL THEY HAD TO DO WAS DIVE, AND THEY WOULD BE SATISFIED FOR A LONG TIME AFTER.

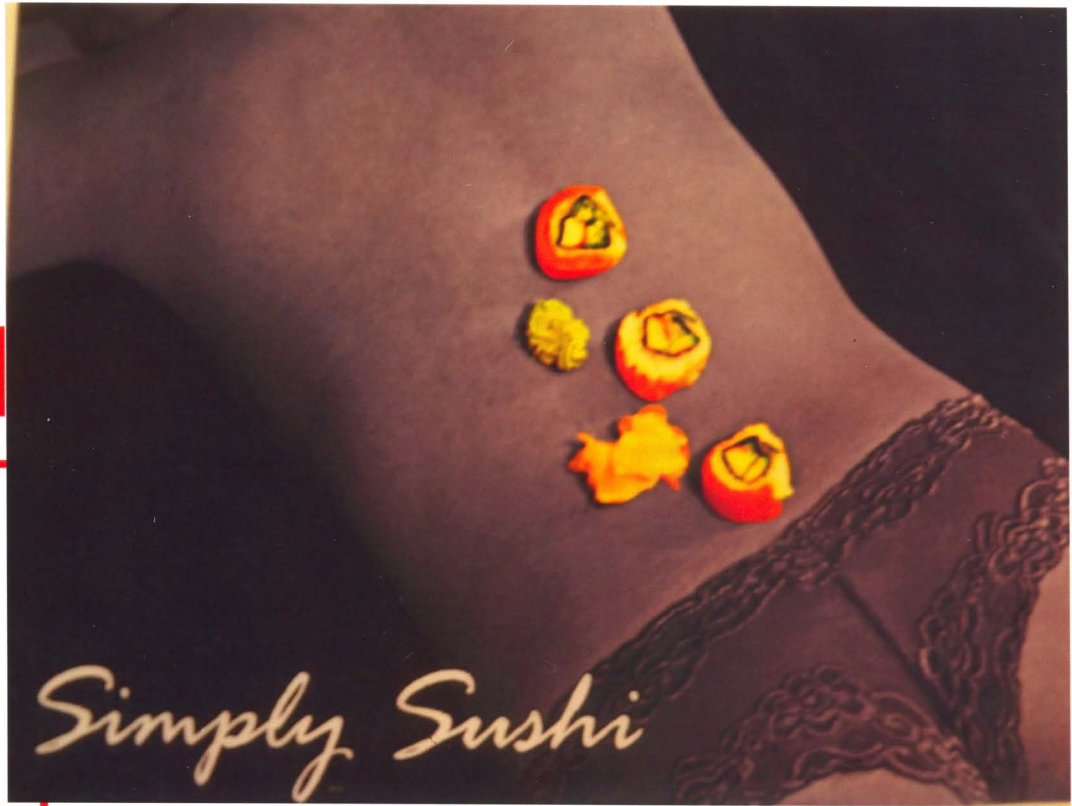
SOME OF THE HAWKS AND EAGLES STILL WEREN'T SATISFIED. NOT ALL OF US WANTED THE ADRENALINE RUSH; SOME OF US DIDN'T CARE ABOUT THAT. SOME TOOK OFF TO THE SEA AND LEARNED **TO FISH**. SOME STRETCHED OUT THEIR WINGS AND DECIDED **TO FLY AROUND THE WORLD**, USING THE SEA FOR FOOD.

**WE**, ON THE OTHER HAND, **WERE THE ODDBALLS** THE STRANGE OF THE STRANGE. WE DIDN'T CARE ABOUT THE THRILL OF KILLING. WE DIDN'T NEED TO TRAVEL BARREN OCEANS. WE DIDN'T NEED BEAUTY OR GRACE. WE DIDN'T EVEN NEED A CALL OF OUR OWN.

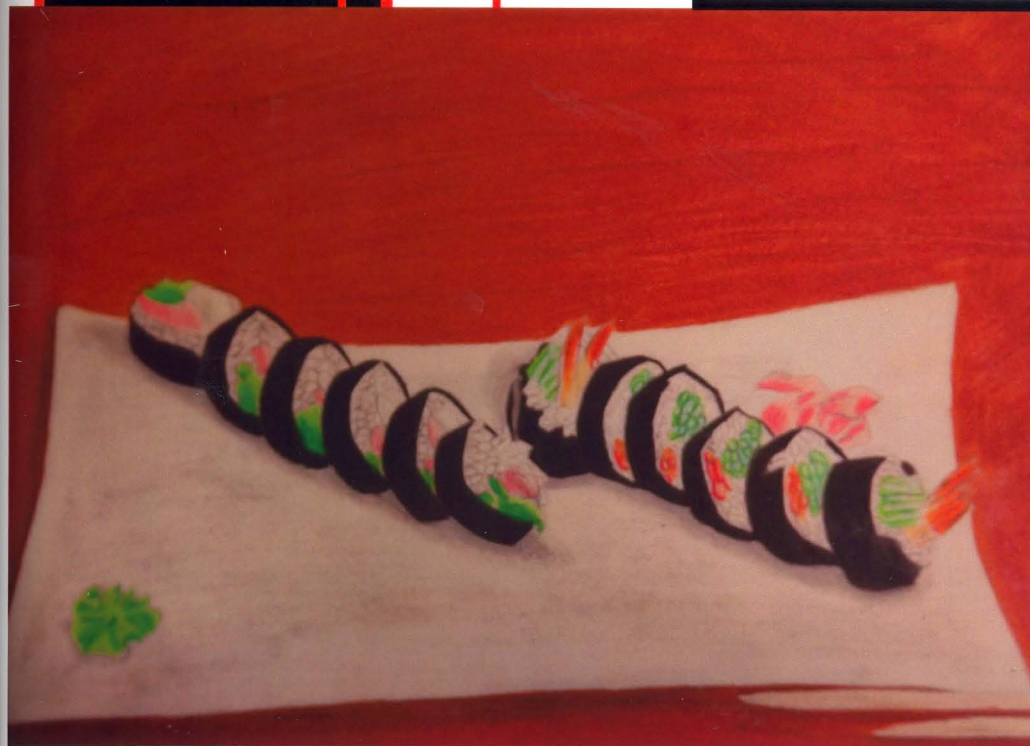
**WE JUST WANTED TO FLY**. WE WANTED TO FLOAT RIGHT INTO THE CLOUDS AND CIRCLE THUNDERHEADS. WE WANTED TO SOAR SO HIGH THAT EVEN THE EAGLES WERE JUST SPECKS BELOW US. WE WANTED TO RUB SHOULDERS WITH THE SUN, AND WE DIDN'T WANT ANYTHING TO INTERRUPT THAT. HUNTING TAKES TOO MUCH EFFORT; IT DISTRACTS US FROM OUR ONE DESIRE AND JOY, EVEN IF FRESH MEAT DOES TASTE BETTER. BEAUTY? WHO ARE WE TRYING TO IMPRESS?

SIMPLY SUSHI

ERIN NORTH



*Simply Sushi*



SUSHI

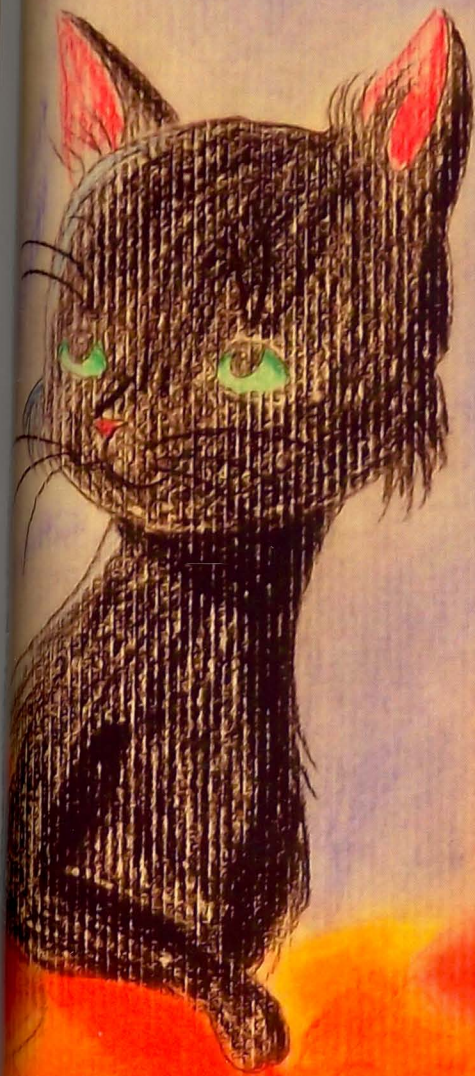
SHERRI ROSE





HALLOWEEN CAT

SHERRI ROSE



ECHOES OF A DREAM-AGATHA PLASARE

AS I TRAVELLED THROUGH THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS;  
THE ROADS UNTRARRED, DUST MINGLED WITH SWEAT;  
AS I STOPPED BY THE RIVER AND SHARED A DRINK,  
WITH FALLEN LEAVES, HERDS OF CATTLE AND DEAD ANIMALS;  
I LOOKED UP AT THE ROARING PLANE ABOVE ME  
AND SAID TO MYSELF,

THAT BIRD IS GOING TO MY DREAM LAND



AS I SAT WITH MY FOLKS UNDER THE BAOBAB TREE;  
FEEDING OUR EYES ON THE FASHION OF THE WHITE MAN'S WORLD;  
FROM ONLY T.V. SET OF THE VILLAGE.  
AS I WITNESSED THE FREEDOM, THE LEISURE AND PLEASURES;  
OF ALL THE SHAMELESS ECSTASIES;  
I SAID TO MYSELF,

THAT IS MY DREAMLAND.



AS I BID FAREWELL TO MY FOLKS;  
DRESSED IN WHITE, LIKE VICTORS FROM WAR;  
SHARING HUGS AND TEARS OF JOY AND OF PRIDE;  
FOR THEIR ONLY BEACON AND HOPE.  
AS I WAS LIFTED INTO THE SKY WITH  
THE SHAKING OF HEAVY METALS  
AND FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN;

I TOUCHED THE  
CLOSET METAL TO MY SEAT AND SAID;  
BIG BIRD, TAKE ME TO MY DREAMLAND



AS I SIT IN MY ROOM

WEAK AND FRAIL,  
THE LAST LEAF OF



MY ROOM, DARK, AND QUIET; LIKE MY WORLD.  
I WISH I COULD TELL THE CLOCK TO STOP TICKING  
QUIET!

I NEED  
LENCE, TO TALK TO MY SOUL;



AND INQUIRE OF MY DESTINY

SLOWLY, I MOVED TOWARD THE  
MIRROR.

I TURNED ON THE LIGHT;

THE ONLY ONE I NEED, TO FACE MY SOUL.

I WANT TO SEE HER FACE.

I LIFTED MY HEAD WITH A HEAVY HEART AND ASKED;  
THIS IS MY DREAMLAND.

BUT WHERE IS MY DREAM?

WHERE IS MY DREAM?



Those who  
dream by day  
are cognizant of  
many things that  
escape those who  
dream only at  
night.

- Edgar Allan Poe



I AM STILL WITH YOU CRISTINA LOPEZ



# THE THINGS WE DO NOT SEE PASS US EACH DAY,

AS THEY ALWAYS HAVE AND ALWAYS SHALL DO,

FOR THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO ANYWAY,

OTHER THAN CARRY ON UNDER LIFE BLUE.

IT'S A SAD SONG SUNG BY SOMBER BUFFOONS,

WIFE WITH THE CRIES THAT SIGNAL SOMETHING OUT

HEARD BY ALL ON THE PLANETS AND THE MOONS,

YET FALLS ON DEAF EARS IN A COSMIC DROUGHT.

[REDACTED]

IT TAKES BUT ONE LOOK TO SEE THE SORROW

AND OFFER HELPING HANDS TO THOSE IN

[REDACTED]

NEED:

[REDACTED]

TO MAKE AN EVEN BETTER TOMORROW,

ONE NEED BUT DO A GOOD AND COMELY

[REDACTED]

DEED.

[REDACTED]

LIFE IS NOT LIVED AWAY FROM THY NEIGHBOR:

IT'S LIVED IN SERVICE OF THANKLESS LABOR.

[REDACTED]

**DAVID RENNA**

"Evil is a consequence of Good, so, in fact, out of Joy is sorrow born."

Berenice

Edgar Allan Poe



KISS OF RED

## WHEN CUTTERS CRY

I ONCE READ THAT CUTTER'S DON'T CRY  
IF YOU ASK ME, I'D HAVE TO ARGUE THEY'RE WRONG  
WE CRY, BUT OUR TEARS ARE NOT SALTY OR CLEAR  
NOR DO THEY COME FROM OUR EYES

OUR TEARS ARE JUST AS WARM AS YOURS,  
BUT COME FROM DEEPER WITHIN.  
OUR TEARS ARE BRIGHT RED.  
WITH EVERY CUT, WE CRY.





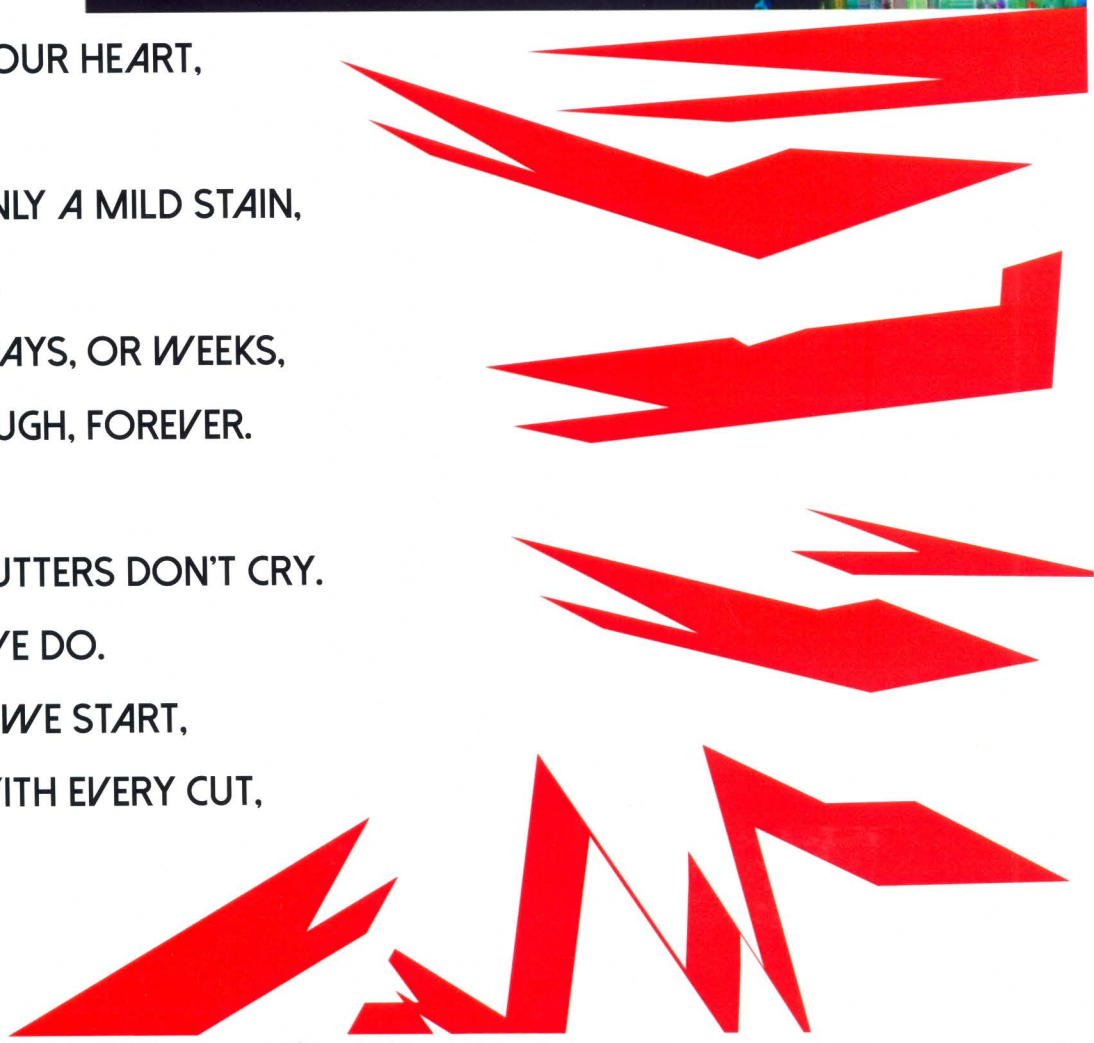
KRISTEN BINNING

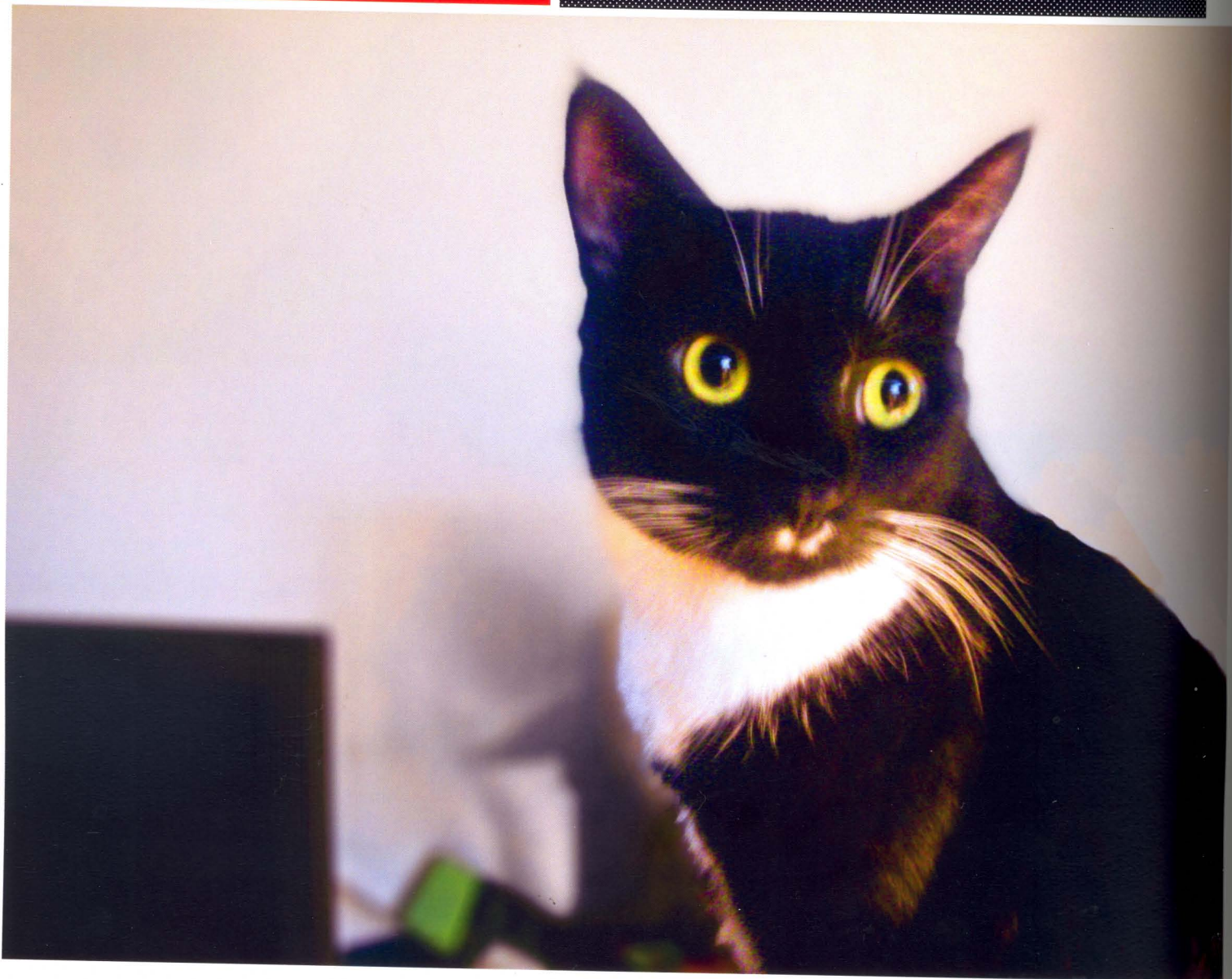
WITH EVERY BEAT OF OUR HEART,  
MORE TEARS COME  
YOUR TEARS LEAVE ONLY A MILD STAIN,  
EASILY WASHED AWAY.

OURS TEND TO LAST DAYS, OR WEEKS,  
AND WHEN DEEP ENOUGH, FOREVER.

SO NO, I CAN'T SAY CUTTERS DON'T CRY.  
I KNOW FULL WELL WE DO.  
I DON'T KNOW HOW WE START,  
I JUST KNOW THAT WITH EVERY CUT,  
SOMEHOW WE DO.

**ELIZABETH FIEBKE**





"For months I could not rid myself of the phantasm of the cat; and, during this period, there came back into my spirit a half-sentiment that seemed, but was not, remorse. I went so far as to regret the loss of the animal, and to look about me, among the vile haunts which I now habitually frequented, for another pet of the same species, and of somewhat similar appearance, with which to supply its place."

-Edgar Allan Poe,  
"The Black Cat"

[REDACTED]

SADNESS

BY AMANDA FRENCH

TIS BUT A SUBTLE SHARPNESS,  
THAT CUTS TO THE CORE.  
GENTLY GRAZING THE SURFACE,  
BUT THERE FOREVER MORE.

[REDACTED]

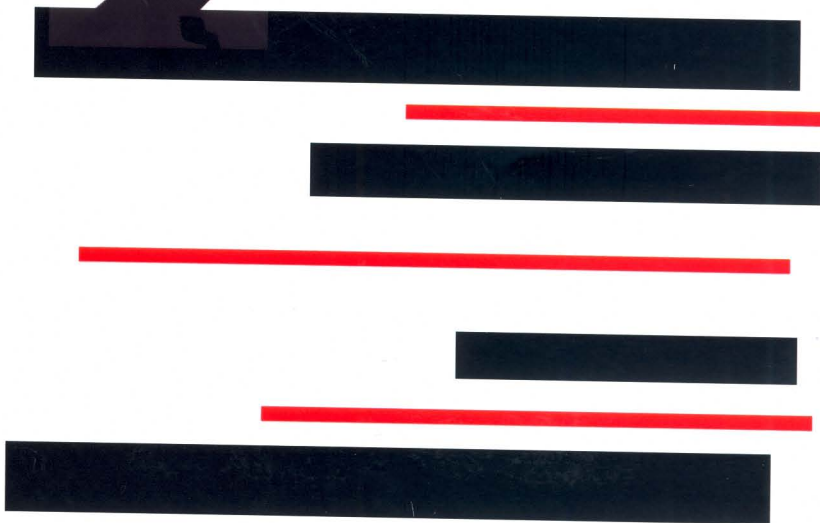


NIGHT FLYER

KAYLA CHIDESTER

**FREEDOM- KATIE MCKAY**

SPREADING WINGS AND SPRINTING FEET  
A REASON FOUND TO LIVE  
BREAKING CHAINS AND SINGING BIRDS  
A CAPTAIN OUT TO SEA  
DANCING LEGS AND SHOUTING VOICE  
A CREATURE BOUND SET LOOSE  
DREAMING SLEEP AND DRIFTING BREEZE  
A WRITER WITH A PEN.





# Oh Darling

My sweet child,

your heart may

never completely heal.

It will be full of cracks,

and covered in bruises.

But trust me when I tell you.

You will find people

that make flowers grow in those cracks.

They will fill every empty space.

And you will find yourself overflowing;

you will drown so beautifully.

Happiness will seep out of your whole being.

And people cannot help but feel it too.

Yes, your heart may be full of holes

But oh darling,

you will be a garden.

Alexis Paynter



*My Boy - Cristina Lopez*



## BLACK

THERE IS THIS PAIN THAT I CAN'T ESCAPE  
IT FOLLOWS ME EVERYWHERE  
I CAN'T BREATHE UNDER ITS HOVERING  
ITS MASS BRINGS DARKNESS  
I'VE HEARD IT MAKES YOU FEEL ALIVE  
BUT I ONLY WANT TO BE DEAD  
I'M ALREADY DEAD INSIDE WHAT DOES IT WANT  
FROM ME  
IT TELLS ME MY HEART STILL BEATS  
IT'S ATTRACTED TO THE YOUTH  
I WONDER IF IT'S TURNING BLACK  
I'M TOO WEAK TO FIGHT IT OFF  
I'M SICK IN THE MIND  
NO TREATMENT TO SUFFICE  
DARKNESS STILL CREEPS  
CALLING ITS PREY  
THIS PAIN HAS PLAGUED ME

KRISTEN BINNING

## ETERNAL VESSEL

BLAKE SELBY

ABDUCTED FROM HIS HOME,  
ONTO ANOTHER STELLAR DOME,  
ABRUPTLY ASCENDING,  
INTERNALLY DEMANDING

SKY FATHERS REST THE WEARY HEAD,  
YOUR EVER PRESENT DOMINION  
FOREVER SAID

CONSTANT EXPLORATION OF THE  
VAST UNKNOWN,  
THE SECRETS SHALL NOW BE TOLD

PRY MY SOUL FROM THIS  
WORTHLESS SHELL,  
AND SHOW ME THE STARS AS YOU  
WOULD TELL

# CALL OF THE DEAD

HEARD THE SONG OF THE

ARTS.

CALLING MY SOUL.

BREATH TURNING COLDER.

THEIR CHORUS ROSE.

WANTED TO LEAP FROM MY BED.

TO FLEE THE DEAD.

WHICH I COULD NOT BUDGE.

HEART OF LEAD.

THE ANGELS THEY CAME.

TO TAKE MY HEART AWAY.

BUT STILL I STAYED.

LED WITH MY SHAME.

AND THERE I STAYED

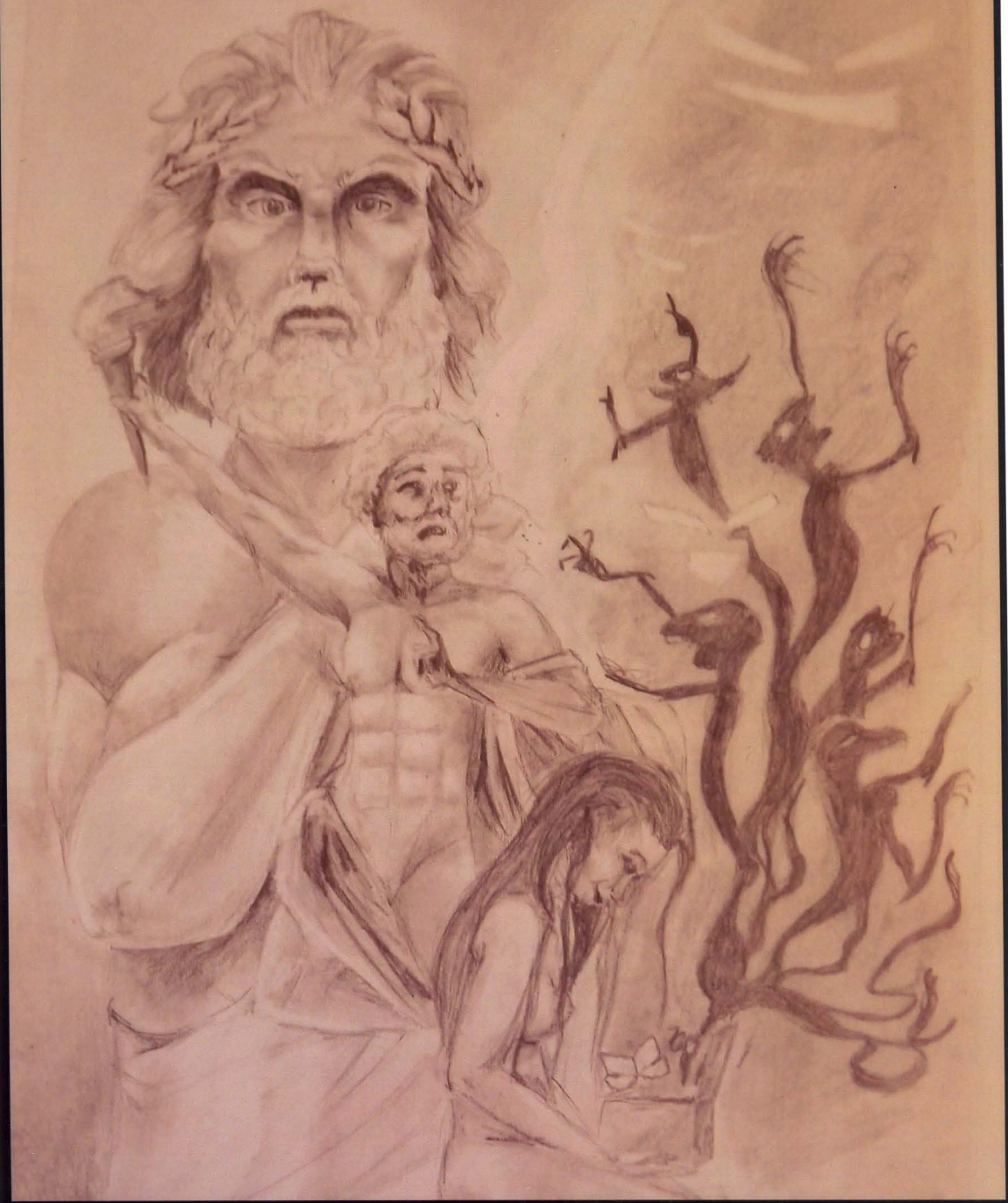
FOREVER MORE.

ANOTHER LOST SOUL.

A VICTIM TO WORLD'S

FASTY LURE.

GREEK CREATION KAYLA CHIDESTER



AMANDA FRENCH

...From the lightning in the sky  
As it pass'd me flying by --  
From the thunder, and the storm --  
And the cloud that took the form  
(When the rest of Heaven was blue)  
Of a demon in my view -- Alone by Edgar Allan Poe



This gaze of beauty it is timeless to me,  
Like an endless summer spent eternally

A transfer of souls through pools so piercing,  
An exquisite feeling that begets this eternal blessing

A peace is felt each time seeing your face,  
Like a warm blanket wrapping,  
Giving embrace

Like a flower in its zenith never to wilt with time,  
To ignore this precious gem would be a crime

For beauty can't be measured by the outside,  
But by the happiness you invoke when by my side

A companion,  
An understanding of the internal,  
Forever to be,  
Over obstacles I will hurdle

For the real gift isn't to obtain or have any gain,  
But to stare into the eyes of beauty once again

By: Blake Selby

# *Eyes of a Beauty*

# THAT ONE NIGHT

AS YOU SIT NOT KNOWING

WHAT TO SAY.

YOU'RE SO COOL

*KRISTEN BANNING*

YOU TURN TO ME AND THE LOOK IN

SO SMOOTH

YOUR EYES SAYS IT ALL WITHOUT

THE WAY THAT YOU MOVE

NEEDING TO SPEAK.

I FEEL LIKE I

YOU TOUCH ME IM BREATHLESS

DON'T

I CRUMBLE AS

BELONG

IM RESTLESS

NEXT TO

YOUR LIPS

YOU.

MEET MINE AND

THE JAZZ

I FLY AWAY

IT ADDS TO

TO AN

YOUR

UNKNOWN

SWAG

PLACE, A

YOUR

FARAWAY

SMOKE

PARADOX.

RINGS

WHY ME.

FLOAT TO

WHAT IS IT

THE CEILING.

YOU SEE

I CAN SEE YOU AS A

I DON'T CARE TAKE ME

ROMANTIC

ANYWAY.

SWEEPING GIRLS OFF THEIR FEET

YOU PICKED ME UP IN A SOFT

ONE BY ONE THEY FAINT IN DEFEAT

EMBRACE

AT THE THOUGHT OF YOUR LONGING NEED.

I PUT MY HANDS AROUND YOUR FACE

I WATCH AND GAZE

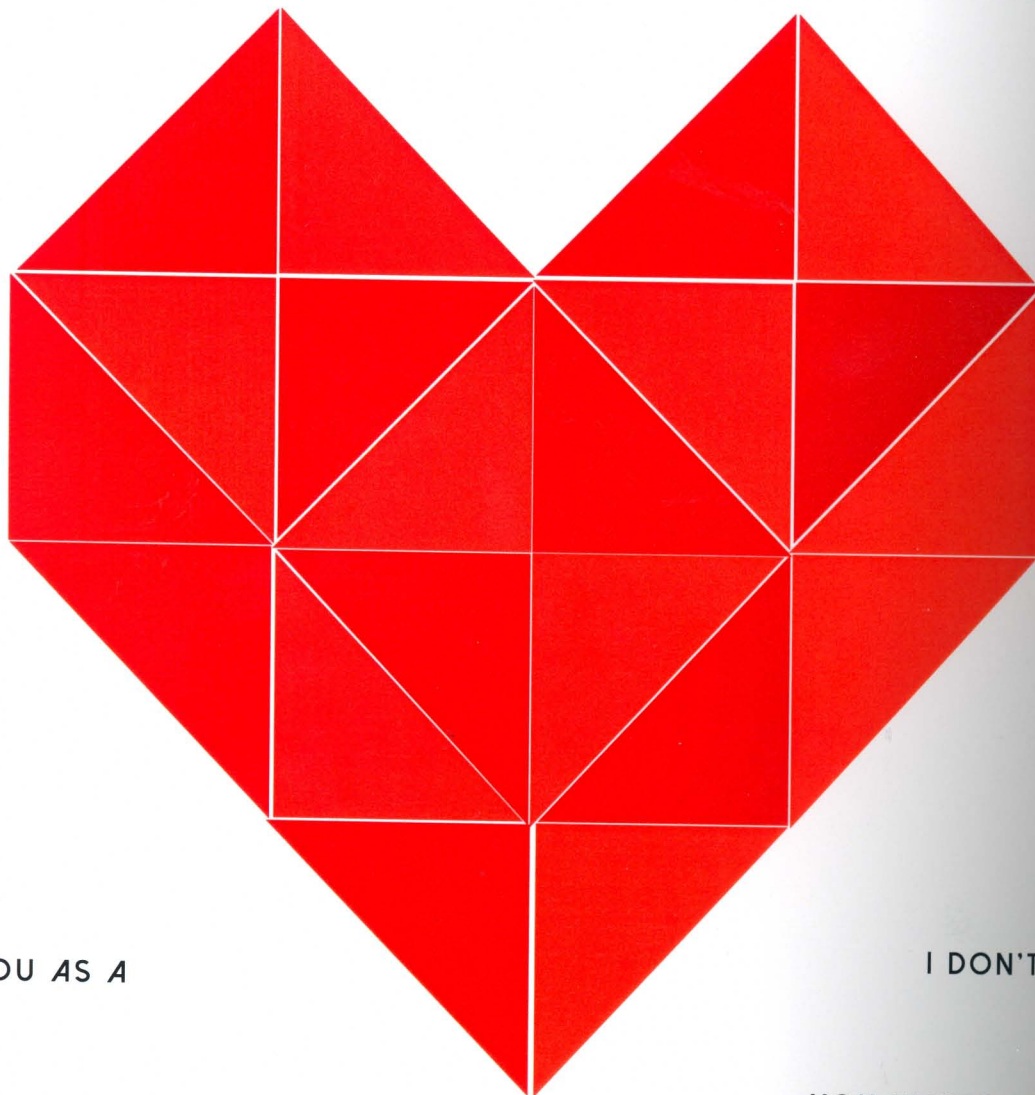
I DIED JUST A LITTLE AS YOU BROUGHT

AT THE GAMES THAT YOU PLAY

ME TO YOUR BED

MY NERVES ANTICIPATED THE FUTURE

AND HERE I GO AGAIN.



TIME TRAVEL 1969  
BY KRISTEN BINNING

We loved with a love that was  
more than love--

Annabel Lee

-Edgar Allan Poe







# FOOTPRINT

OVER THE BARK YOU TRAVERSE AND  
UNRAVEL,  
PUSH FORWARD WITH THE GOAL OF LIGHT  
YOU TRAVEL,  
ERECTING, LUSTING, A GALLOP TOWARD  
THE NEARING  
EVACUATED FROM THE EAR YOU FIND  
YOUR CLEARING

BUT HERE COMES THE FOOTPRINT,  
AN ELUSIVE BARBAROUS FORCE,  
BENDING NATURE WILL AND ENACTING  
DISCOURSE  
THE ONCE GREEN FOREST NOW RENDERED  
TO ASH,  
NO EXPLANATION, BUT THIS SURELY CAN'T  
LAST?

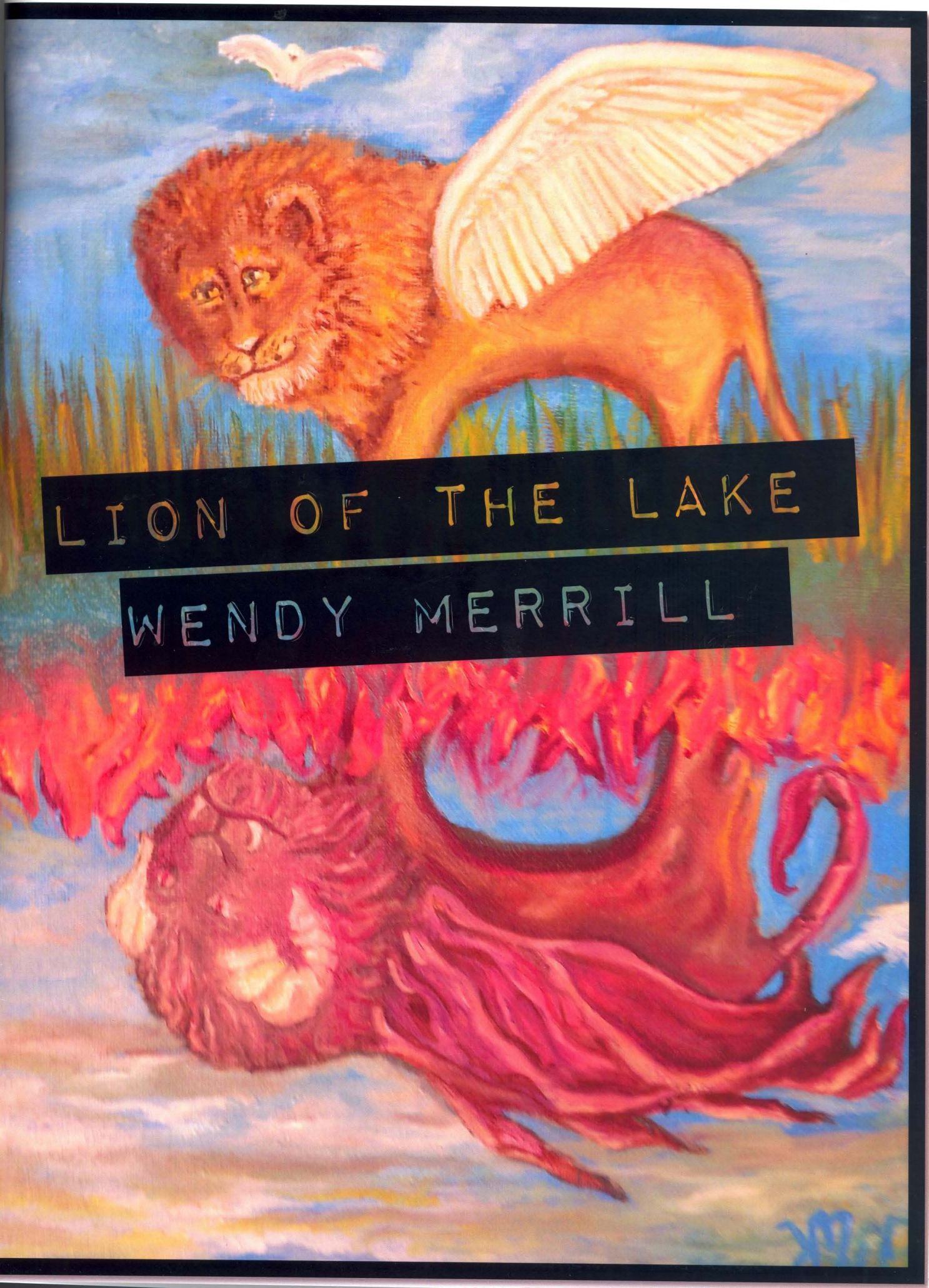
BRING FOURTH MACHINES TO CULTIVATE  
POWER,  
REAPING THE BENEFITS,  
OH WHAT DEVASTATION CAN BE DONE IN  
AN HOUR

THE ONGOING PUSH FOR PROGRESS,  
BORING WRINKLES IN OUR MOTHER'S  
BEAUTIFUL FACE,  
BUT ITS ALL FOR THEM,  
OR IS IT A DISGRACE?

NOW ASCEND FLORA OF THE FOREST,  
LEAP FORTH AND SHOW THEM YOUR  
WILL,  
AN UNWAVERING ASSERTION TO NEVER  
STAY STILL

CONTRARY TO OUR INTEREST,  
YOU KEEP TO YOUR PLAN,  
BUT HERE IS THE FOOTPRINT FOREVER TO  
STAND

# BLAKE SELBY

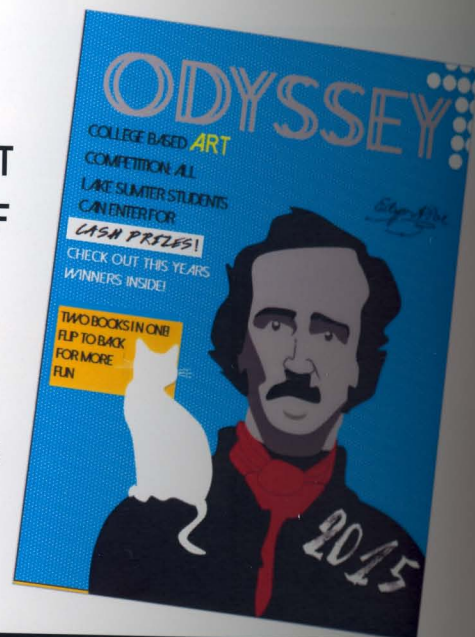


LION OF THE LAKE

WENDY MERRILL

# THEME 1

THIS SIDE OF THE BOOK HAS A COLORFUL VIBE TO IT INSPIRED BY THE MORE MODERN POP LIKE LOOK OF MAGAZINES IN TODAY'S CULTURE, AS WELL AS EDGAR ALLAN POE'S MORE UPLIFTING WORK. THE USE OF MORE COLOR WAS ALSO CHOSEN IN RECOGNITION OF THE COLORFUL ART SUBMISSIONS WE GRATEFULLY RECEIVED THIS YEAR.



# ABOUT OUR THEME

THIS YEAR WE HAD A RECORD BREAKING AMOUNT OF POETRY, SO WHO KNOWS MORE ABOUT POETRY THEN EDGAR ALLEN POE? WE HAD SO MANY IDEAS TO CHOOSE FROM THAT WE COULDN'T LIMIT TO ONE THEME SO WE DECIDED TO DO TWO BOOKS IN ONE. WE WERE INSPIRED BY POE'S POEM THE RAVEN AND HIS STORY, THE BLACK CAT. THEREFORE RAVENS AND CATS CAN BE SEEN THROUGH OUT BOTH BOOKS. WE ALSO WANTED THIS YEARS PUBLICATION TO BE MORE LIKE A MAGAZINE WHICH WORKED PERFECTLY, SINCE WE RECEIVED A LOT OF WRITING THIS YEAR. LOOK AT BOTH BOOKS THEN TELL US WHICH ONE IS YOUR FAVORITE!

P.S. THE EDGAR ALLEN POE ON EACH COVER WAS CREATED BY OUR OWN ELIZABETH DETRES!

# THEME 2

THIS SIDE OF THE BOOK FOCUSES ON MOSTLY RED AND BLACK SHADES AND HAS A DARKER TONE. THIS HALF ALSO INCLUDES MORE OF THE DARKER STORIES OF THIS YEARS WRITING. JUST LIKE THE FIRST HALF, WE DECIDED TO USE GEOMETRIC SHAPES TO DECORATE THE PAGES.

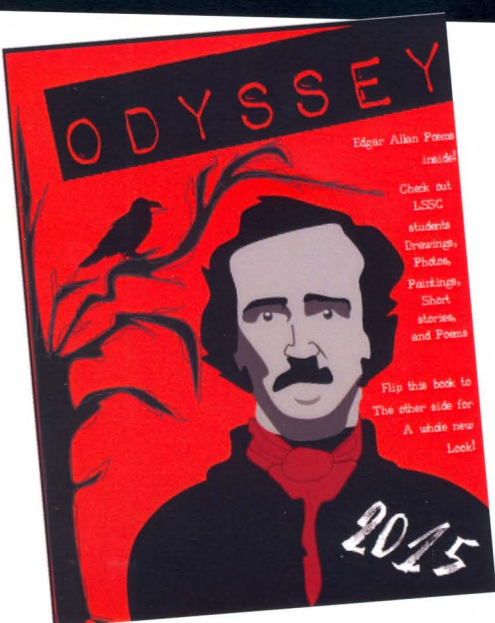


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BEAUTY

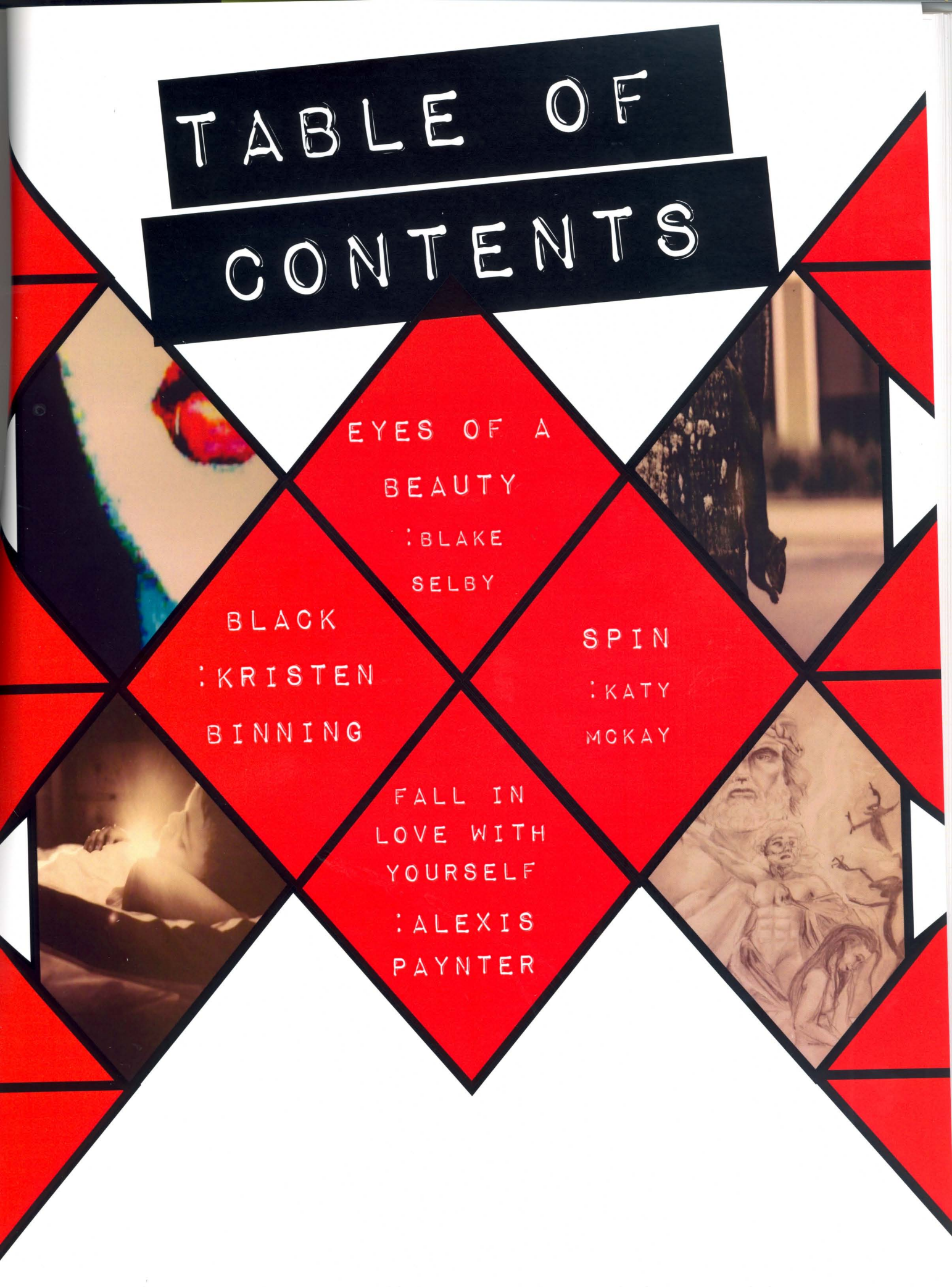
:BLAKE  
SELBY

BLACK  
:KRISTEN  
BINNING

SPIN  
:KATY  
MCKAY

FALL IN  
LOVE WITH  
YOURSELF

:ALEXIS  
PAYNTER




TURN THIS BOOK  
AROUND FOR

MORE


*FUN...*

FOLLY...

& MELANCHOLY



And so being young  
and dipped in folly,  
I fell in love  
with melancholy.



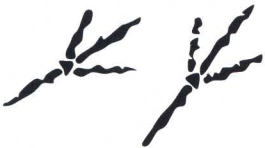
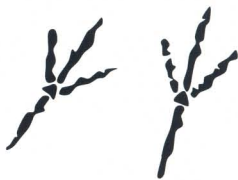
- Romance  
Edgar Allan Poe



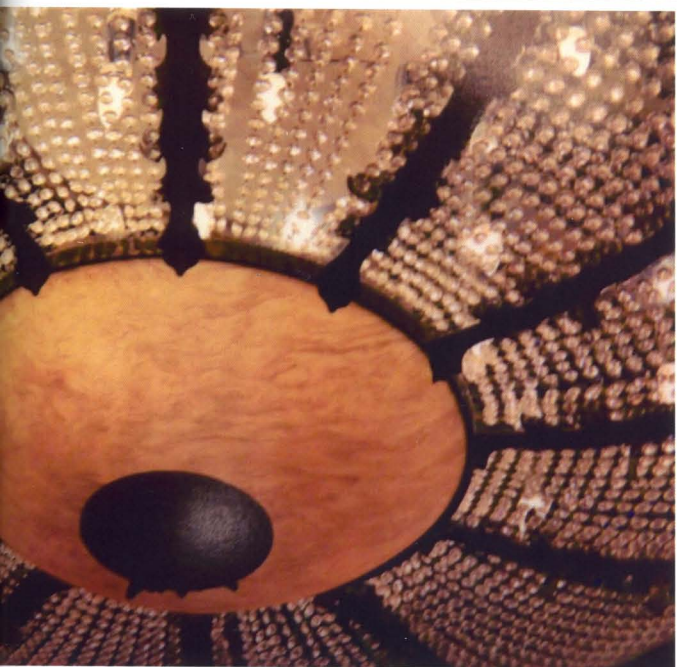


ILLUMINATION

SHERRI ROSE



NIGHT MEETS ENDING DAY  
KRISTEN BINNING



PATRICIA VELEZ

CHANDELIER

