



The Lockdown Issue

Staff 2022

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FSZ

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Introduction

"If there's a book that you want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it."

Toni Morrison

Here in the Fachsprachenzentrum (Language Centre) at Universität Bielefeld, we've long wanted to introduce a course in creative writing. It's our belief that language learning should be spirited and creative. Techniques such as singing in classrooms and creating theatrical pieces help simulate the creative centres of the brain and allow for more productive language immersion.

With the mass lockdowns of 2020, the need for creative outlets became all the more pressing. Isolation and inertia took their toll on everyone's mental health. Coincidentally, the summer semester 2020 was the semester we had decided to add creative writing to our schedule. We hoped for enough interest to fill a class: what we got, however, was a landslide of registrations. Nearly 150! That first semester, we held two sections of the course.

It was immediately apparent that these courses were sorely needed. The talent shown by our student writers was, and continues to be, overwhelming. It was clear that this creative outlet was helpful for students for not only practicing their English writing but as an emotional outlet as well: the topics that we have dealt with run the gamut, from dark to light, happy to sad, exciting to terrifying.

As the teacher of this course, I felt quite privileged that my students would share this sometimes intensely personal work with me, and I wanted to find a way to share this wonderful work with the university community as a whole. And this is where the idea for a journal came up.

All of the work you see here was written for the first two semesters of this course (Summer 2020 and Winter 2022/21). Participation was voluntary: students were asked to submit 1-2 pieces they were most proud of for inclusion in the journal. For most, this was their first hint of publishing their work. A team of student volunteers took the reigns, working with authors and putting together the issue you're now reading.

On May 31, 2022, we hosted a small reading in the FSZ lounge to highlight some of these pieces, read by the authors themselves.

I hope you enjoy reading the works of these massively talented writers as much as I have. The fact that they are writing in their second (or sometimes third, fourth, or fifth!) language makes their achievements all the more impressive. I have no doubt that you will be hearing from these young voices a lot in the future.

Georgina Willms
June 2022

Words to Worlds

Kay Dockhorn

With my quill as your guide and the ink your imagination,
let these words find a home in your mind.

Bleeding letters running down a page to paint the pictures they describe.

The first ink dries and fades in swirling shapes of igneous rock; a vast plain of monochromatic greys.

The fresh fluid continues its journey, warm roots slowly twining with shadowed crevices to grow and sprout an orchard of sunny greens. A dense carpet of foliage and fruit the perfect cover, for the earth that slowly darkens and heats the further south you get.

As steam starts to rise, trees fall away, and all other flora shrinks from avid green to aching brown and ends as ash in the winds above the sudden plateau.

Convoluting creeks start as cracks in the volcanic earth, spidering and merging to become rivers that run further south still. A myriad of waterways carve their paths through this part of the land. Those that start as rivers eventually evaporate, and the others have a warm glow about them that belies their decidedly DANGEROUS nature.

After a while, the coal-like plateau that was crisscrossed and cut by flowing bodies of liquid is suddenly broken by a cliff that spans the entirety of the southern mainland.

The ink swells and spills, before suddenly falling faster than feathers find they can float; waterfalls roaring down the face of a cliff. A deafening din that's only amplified by the sudden change in altitude.

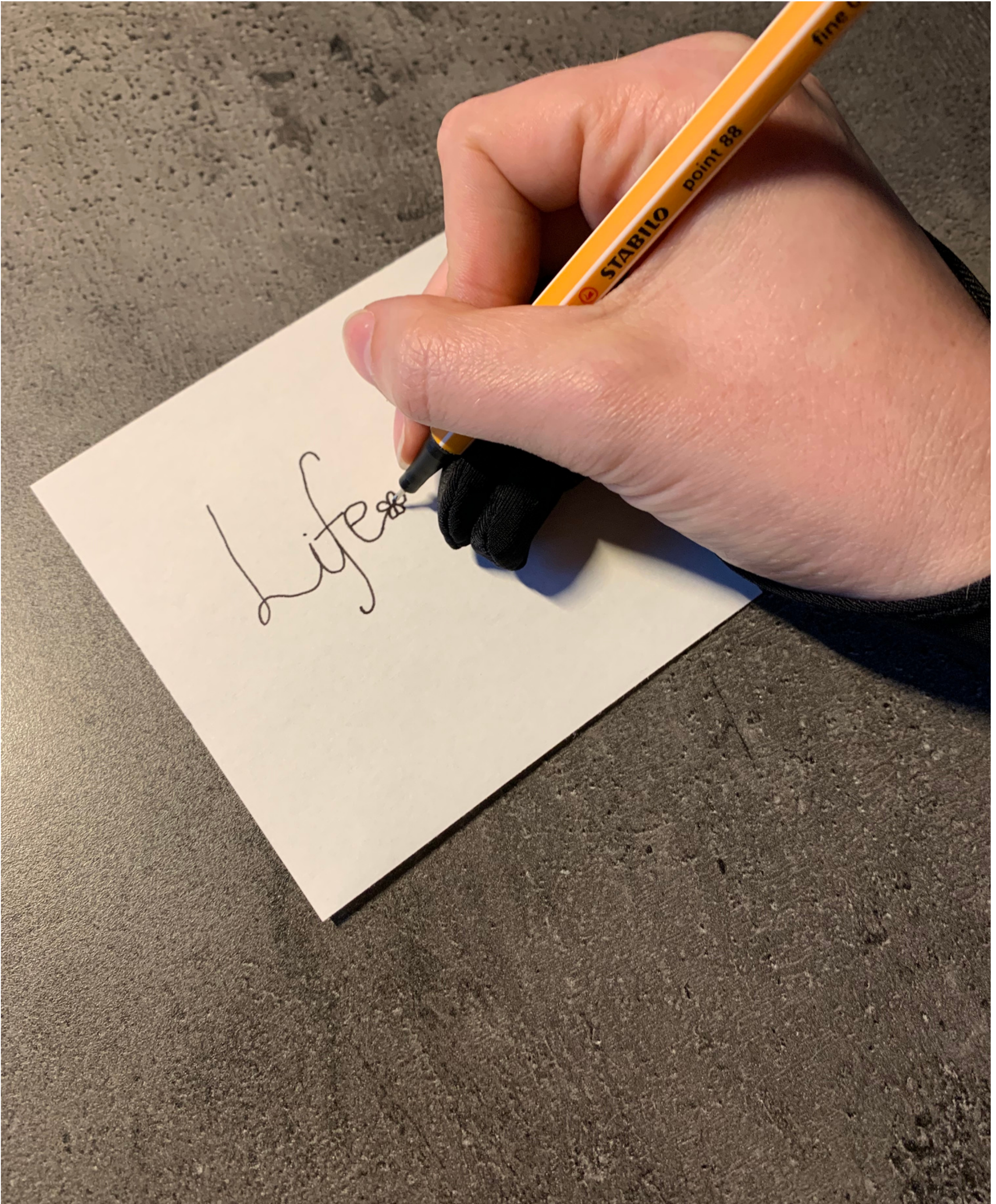
Everywhere the water doesn't run, the cliff face is smoothie smooth. Any edges and crevices eradicated by the sun and wind.

A central part of the page is almost totally spared from the sudden swelling of the black fluid. Fairly regular sections of a strip of parchment lined with fingernail creases that act as little trenches to tow tiny lines of ink into their midst; A softly swerving staircase leading to the capital of this world of words.

The paper begins to welt and crease as the ink continues its southern trek. Hot and humid air emanating from a spot of red that once splashed upon its surface.

The fresh ink encircles the old, further heightening the contrast of the surrounding white and encroaching black; A lava lake that illuminates the bases of volcanoes that rest at the southern-most tip of the country, blanketing the lower regions in legions of snow-similar ash.

The heart of the world as warm and pulsing as the magma fibres that are traced from the first to the last touch of my quill.



Kay Dockhorn

What Lies, What Waits

Paula Kaiser

I wonder
What lies beyond the sky
I wonder
What lies beyond the sea
I wonder
What waits out there for me

Clouds are forming
Rain is dripping
Wind is howling
All around
While I am watching
Slowly breathing
Wondering
When I'll get out

The sky is clearing
Sun is peaking
Birds are chirping
All around
Everywhere
The pollen's floating
Carrying a silent sound
On days like these
I wonder

I wonder
What lies beyond the sky
I wonder
What lies beyond the sea
I wonder
What waits out there for me

The sun is burning
Water's splashing
People laughing
All around
While I am watching
Slowly breathing
Wondering
When I'll get out

The warmth is soothing
Life is thriving
Bees are flying
All around
And finally
The frogs are croaking
When the light is going out
On days like these
I wonder

I wonder
What lies beyond the sky
I wonder
What lies beyond the sea
I wonder
What waits out there for me

The air is colder
The breeze is sharper
Colours changing
All around
While I am watching
Slowly breathing
Wondering
When I'll get out

The days get shorter
The geese stray further
The light is fading
All around
And when I see
Their lanterns swinging
The kids are singing loud and proud
On days like these
I wonder

I wonder
What lies beyond the sky
I wonder
What lies beyond the sea
I wonder
What waits out there for me

The snow lies thicker
The wood burns better
In every oven
All around
While I am watching
Slowly breathing
Wondering
When I'll get out

The nights are longer
The cocoa's sweeter
The smell of cinnamon
All around
And strolling across
The Christmas market
I feel welcome and at home
On days like these
I wonder



Michelle Piwek

Coming out

Pia Tomkel

"Gender and sexuality are so fluid. It's OK to change your mind a million times and figure out what works for you. It's OK to take your time." - Amandla Stenberg

Gender and sexuality can also be quite confusing and sometimes even difficult to deal with. But at the same time it can be exciting and fun to discover. Personally, I experienced all of these feelings in the last couple of years as I came out as genderfluid and bisexual.

But first I want to explain some terms. A genderfluid person changes the gender they identify as throughout the gender spectrum. Their gender identity at any given time can be a binary or a non-binary gender. Bisexuality is the attraction to two or more genders. Not always with the same degree, not always with the same intensity but valid all the same. Coming out is the process of accepting their gender or sexuality and no longer want to hide or conceal it. The term "coming out" is mostly used by queer people as their gender or sexual identities are not seen as the norm by most of society.

First off I want to share my personal story of coming out as genderfluid, then discovering my bisexuality and how it has helped me to accept myself the way I am so hopefully I am able to help you too.

During the early stage of my teenage years I started to realise that I wasn't really feminine. Or didn't have - what most people assume - feminine traits or interests. I mostly didn't dress feminine, act feminine and in general my look wouldn't come to mind if someone asked what a girl looks like. But during these years I had fun playing with clothes, expressing myself and discovering "me". Then I got introduced to the LGBTQ+ Community by my best friend who came out as a lesbian at that time. So I learned about different labels and gender identities. Then I discovered the term "Genderfluid" and thought: "Hmm... this feels familiar". It wasn't just the dressing differently that made me question my gender but it was also that my gender changed from time to time. Some days I felt really masculine and also dressed that way, but some days I felt really feminine and also dressed that way when I felt like it. I remember myself wearing baggy hoodies with a binder beneath it to cover my chest. But on the other side I loved playing with my femininity, put on make-up and wore dresses. The term "Genderfluid" fit like a glove and soon I wanted to tell people about my gender identity. My mum already knew what was going on as I made her order a binder (to cover my chest with) online and with that had to explain to her that I thought I was genderfluid which she accepted. Next, I told my two best friends who were also very accepting and supporting. But I wanted to go one step further: I decided to come out to my class.

In that moment I was nervous. I was never more nervous about something before (at that point in my life). After explaining to my classmates what genderfluid meant and that I, in fact, am genderfluid they all congratulated me on coming out! From then on I didn't have to make up excuses on why I wore baggy/"manly" clothes. But I was very lucky that my environment was and still is so supportive!

About two years later I then realised that the term "genderfluid" no longer fit. Since then I identify myself as female and also use the she/her pronouns. To conclude, my coming out as genderfluid was an important challenge for me as I learned a lot of things along the way. That being myself the way I am is totally fine, that my two best friends will never leave my side and that it's okay to be different. During that time I also learned to be more accepting of others and to not judge a person by their appearance.

Next, I started my a-levels and never really thought about my sexuality or gender identity during that time. But from time to time I did think about it. And I always kind of knew that I wasn't straight. I always found women quite attractive because well, have you looked at women? And I always kind of knew I was bisexual though there was never "that moment" which made me realise that. Furthermore, I don't really feel the need to come out as I think having a different sexuality other than heterosexual should be normalized and in my opinion one doesn't have to come out (unless they want to of course!) due to that reason. I am proud to be bisexual and so should be anyone who is queer.

My advice is to be who you are. You don't have to hide a part of you, instead you should embrace it! Life is so much easier when you don't have to worry about hiding something completely normal. Being queer is awesome and you should celebrate who you are. If you want to come out then go for it! If you don't then don't. There is no right or wrong way, there is just your way. But please make sure you are in a safe environment when coming out. Sadly, there are still people who don't accept queer people and a lot of them are parents who sometimes are even willing to kick their children out if they come out to them. So please don't put yourself at risk and please get help if you are in danger!

As it is pride month, I wanted to share my story. It's nothing special but I am happy to be bisexual. And even though I am no longer genderfluid it made me realise that discovering your sexuality and gender is very personal and different for everyone. And it takes time. And it's okay to change your mind. It's all about you and do what makes you feel comfortable. And if you don't want to label yourself that's fine too. Sexuality and gender is a spectrum and you don't have to squeeze into a box in which you don't belong.

It's okay to be different.

It's okay to take your time.

You are valid and you are loved.

Happy pride month!



Georgina Willms

A Memory

Katharina Mainka

A tiny pond behind glass
Leaves tumbling in the water
A beautiful creature, hiding
Spreading his ostentatious fins
Mefishto

The Unicorn Sight

Lara Korkmaz

One day later:

Yeah, that happened to me...

The day before:

I was watching some Netflix while eating some cereal (Lucky Charms and of course, I tried to get as many unicorns as possible while doing so) when it happened. Something in horse like shape with a long ringed horn. I rubbed my eyes in disbelief. For sure it was just my wild imagination because I ate too many unicorn marshmallows. So I switched my focus to my Netflix show again. Then, from the direction the horse like shape with a horn ran to, I saw a rainbow sparkly something shoot along my window. It was at that moment, when I was certain that the horse like shape, I just saw was a unicorn. I actually saw a unicorn. The only sensible thing to do was to shout "Unicorn!" and not only in my bedroom...

I spilled my cereal bowl as I tried to untangle myself from my blanket, threw my remote onto my bed and reached for my walkie talkie: "Code rainbow. Can you hear me? Code rainbow over." My friend Nellie, who lives next door, answered: "No way! A code rainbow? I always knew that unicorns exist but I..." She stopped talking, and the next thing I knew my doorbell rang. I sprinted down the stairs and skipped three of them with a big jump. The minute I opened the door Nellie asked: "Where?" "I think it is in our garden." We ran to the back of our house, full of excitement, just to see my dad practice his act for the carnival this Saturday. He was hidden under his horse costume and put a horn onto the head of it. Oh, and the rainbow sparkly something shot I saw...Yeah, that was just the paint my dad threw in the air (also part of his act) and the reflection from the sun and the remaining window cleaner on my window.

Miraculous Ladybug Fanfiction - "The suspicion"

Malin Tan

Developed by Jeremy Zag, Zagtoon, Method Animation, Toei Animation
Written and created by Thomas Astruc

Marinette/Ladybug: 16 years old, student at Collège Francois Dupont, part-time superheroine, half-Chinese and half-French

Adrien/ Chat Noir: 16 years old, student at Collège Francois Dupont, part-time hero, French

Plagg: Chat Noir's kwami; small, magical creature which gives the holder the power of destruction, can fly through walls and has magic powers, needs cheese to charge his power

Tikki: Ladybug's kwami; small, magical creature which gives the holder the power of creation, can fly through walls and has magic powers,

Master Fu: guardian of the miraculouses, knows everything about the power of the miraculouses, Chinese

Wayzz: Master Fu's kwami, with his shield he can protect his holder from being attacked

Hawk Moth: villain, current holder of the butterfly miraculous, his goal is to steal the Ladybug's and Chat Noir's miraculous because these two are the most powerful ones, identity still unknown

Scene takes place after the episode "The Collector" (3.1.) (Paris, September 2016)

Marinette: Mr. Agreste can't be Hawk Moth, he was akumatized. (visibly relieved)

Master Fu (thoughtful): Hmm, probably not. But we still need to be careful. After all, he still could be Hawk Moth who might want to lead us up the garden path.

Marinette: Hm. You could be right. I have to check this out with Chat Noir.

Master Fu: Yes, but please be careful. If he is really Hawk Moth, you could be in danger...

Marinette: I will. Bye, Master Fu (jumps on her feet)! Come on, Tikki.

Tikki: Bye, Master Fu. (flies back to Marinette)

Marinette leaves with Tikki.

Master Fu: Bye (sighs thoughtfully). Hm maybe, we can also check him out, Wayzz?

Wayzz: MASTER! You know you have to take care of yourself because you are not as strong as before.

Master Fu: (reluctantly) I know, Wayzz.

After school: Ladybug and Chat Noir meet on the rooftop of a building in Paris.

Ladybug: I have talked to Master Fu, and he is still uncertain about the fact that Mr. Agreste is not Hawk Moth. There is the possibility that he could have akumatized himself on purpose so we would not suspect him...

Chat Noir: Well... then we have to get to the bottom of it (serious facial expression).

Ladybug: Are you ok? (worried)

Chat Noir: Yes! (determined)

Ladybug: But we have to be careful. We should investigate in our civilian form first, so he won't suspect us.

Chat Noir: Well, I'll see what I can do about it.

Ladybug: Me, too. Let's meet here in three days again or earlier if we find something new. Same time. Bye!

Chat Noir: Okay, bye!

Chat Noir and Ladybug part ways. Chat Noir jumps back to his house and detransforms. Plagg, his kwami appears.

Adrien: I can't believe Ladybug still suspects my father. But I promised to get to the bottom of this, so I will.

Plagg: Maybe we should check your father's vault again where we might find something useful?

Adrien: (sighs) You know, this can be dangerous and might turn into a disaster like last time. My father or Nathalie might catch us again. Did you already forget the surveillance camera?

Plagg: No, but I could help and manipulate it so he won't see you in the records. (chews on a stinky piece of cheese)

Adrien: Okay, but we still need to be careful. I don't wanna get in trouble again.

Plagg: You can count on me, Adrien. (finished his meal)

Adrien: Then, let's do it!

Adrien sneaks out of his room with Plagg hidden in his pocket. They head to his father's vault in his office. Carefully, Adrien tries to open the door.

Adrien: The coast is clear. Work your magic, mate! (whispering to Plagg)

The kwami flies to the surveillance camera which is in the right upper corner of the room and disappears in it. After a few seconds, he comes out.

Plagg: Done! Now go!

Without hesitating, Adrien types the code into his father's vault. Indeed, it is still the same code as the last time, it is his mother's birthday. Without a noise, the vault opens. Attentively, Adrien glances at the items on the board.

Beside the thick book, which he stole the last time, he discovers a pendant which is fixed with nine cyan peacock feathers.

Plagg (surprised): Wow, this reminds me of the peacock miraculous. (thoughtful) It seems like a double.

Adrien: Why should my father keep the peacock miraculous in here? (Pause) Well, should I take it or not? My father will notice if it is gone! (panics)

Plagg: Then take a picture of it.

Adrien: Good idea!

He moves the pendant out of the vault and takes pictures of every angle of it with his phone.

Adrien: This should do. Hopefully, Ladybug can get something out of it (puts the pendant back in its place and closes the vault).

Plagg: Let's go back.

Adrien and Plagg leave Mr. Agrestes' office. Back in his room, Adrien uploads the pictures to his cloud, transforms into Chat Noir, opens the window and jumps on the roof. He opens his phone for superhero matters and begins to make a voicemail after he couldn't reach his partner.

Chat Noir: Hey M'Lady, I found something in Mr. Agreste's vault that you might find interesting. Meet me on the top of the Eiffel Tower at midnight. Chat.

He sends her the pictures which he has uploaded in his cloud, flips his phone shut and goes back to his room.



Kay Dockhorn

A New Beginning

Paula Kaiser

The show was going great. The performers were outstanding and the crowd was cheering. Kalix was pulling all the strings backstage. He was the organiser of the circus and managed his job well. Although he loved being an artist himself, he didn't enjoy being the centre of attention. Kalix was an attraction outside the circus as it is, since his appearance was rather unusual. People don't often see other people with an unusual skin colour and horns, so Kalix liked to stay in the shadows of the stage, in his own little comfort zone.

Finally, the last act was over and all the stars came on stage one last time to thank their audience. After a while, the crowd lightened and everyone began clearing the stage. The circus needed to move on to the next town tomorrow, so everything had to be packed tonight.

As Kalix was just killing the lights, he heard the sound of clapping behind him. He turned around and a person appeared from the shadows. Curiously, everyone looked in their direction. The figure was wearing a dark cloak with a hood pulled over their face. They lifted it and revealed their head of golden hair underneath. "Bravo!", the guy exclaimed. "What a performance! I was thoroughly entertained!" Kalix could feel his friends were pleased with this compliment, they were always glad to receive positive feedback. "Thank you, Sir, we really appreciate it", Kalix said. The guy had his hands put on his hips smiling up at the stage, then he turned back to him. "You must be the manager, right?", he asked and casually pointed at Kalix. "Yeah, something like that", he answered. "Is there something I can help you with, Sir?"

"Actually, yes, you can!", the guy came up to him and reached out his hand. "The name's Carter by the way, Carter Clyum, nice to meet you!" Kalix took his hand and introduced himself. "So", Carter started "Do you guys, by any chance, have some space for another singer?", he asked. As Kalix was about to answer, his friend Mariel jumped from the stage and landed right next to him. She was a skilled acrobat and was otherwise of a very curious nature. "Oh, so you're a singer?", she asked, as she put her arm on Kalix' shoulder, dragging him down a bit. "I would definitely call myself a musician!", said Carter proudly. "Interesting, interesting! Care to give us a performance?", she dared him in a friendly manner. The bard smiled: "Ask and you shall receive!", he pulled out a lyre from underneath his coat, making his way upstage. He seemed to be very confident, maybe even a bit cocky. The remaining folks of the circus gathered in front of the stage to examine the newcomer. Having an audience seemed to be giving this guy some ecstasy. He positioned himself and with a swift hand movement, he opened the clasp of his coat, which dropped on the stage, and started his performance.

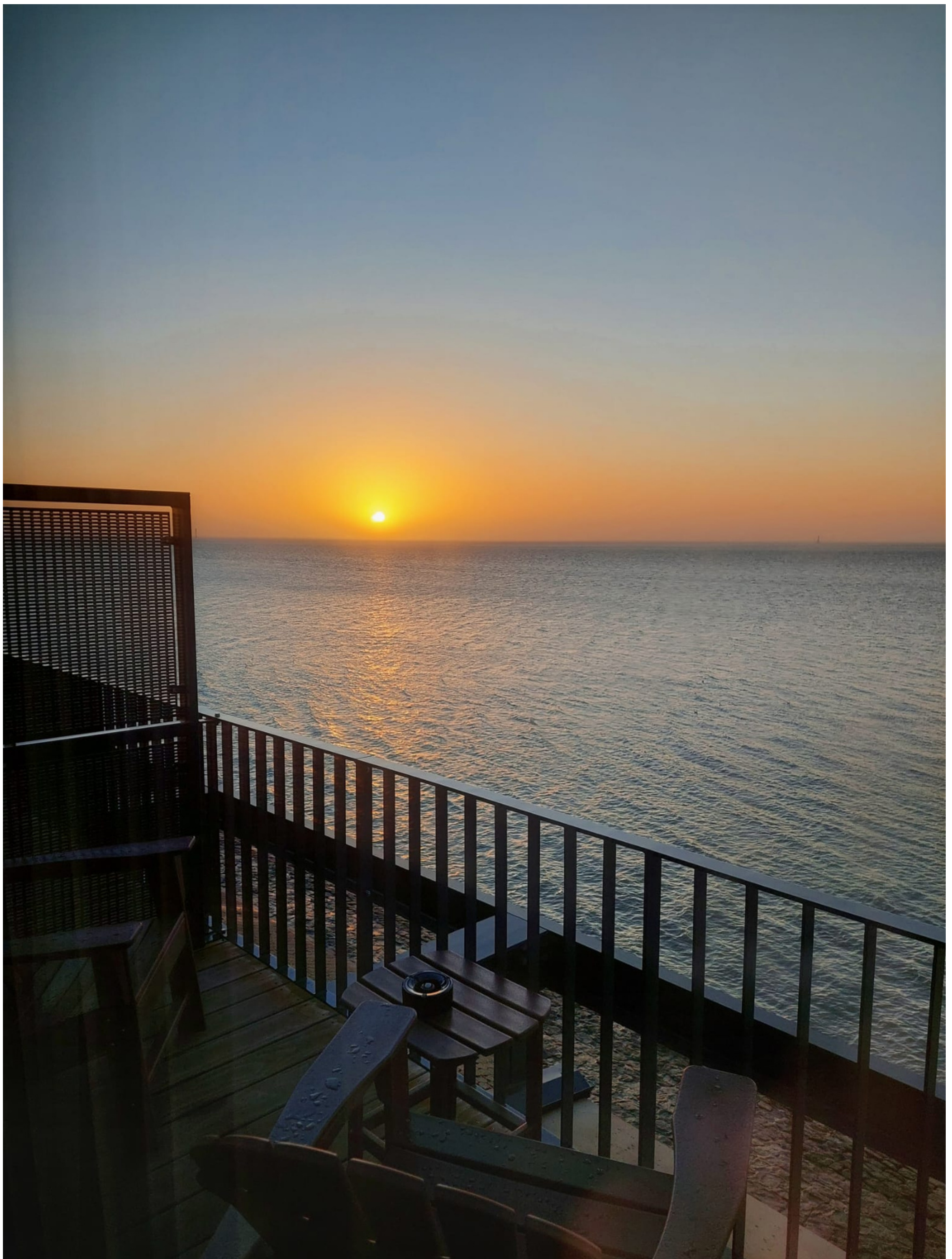
He was actually really good and Kalix was impressed. He was so good, in fact, that some people even came lurking out of some street corners and people opened their windows to see and hear him. Carter had a beautiful voice that seemed to lure people in. Kalix wondered if he might be descended from sirens or something similar. Carter ended his song on a soft note giving the audience a longing look. He was completely engulfed in another world. When the note faded away, Carter snapped back into the real world, coming back to his confident demeanour. Nobody said a word, but Kalix could tell from the look on Carters face that the majority of the crowd was standing there with their jaws on the floor.

Kalix stood there, speechless for another moment before he started clapping. Everyone else came back to their senses as well and began applauding. "Thank you, thank you!", Carter was bowing down on the stage. Shortly after, the applause died down and Carter left the stage with a last wave into the night. He was walking right up to Kalix and Mariel, with his coat casually resting on his shoulder. "So, what did you think? Am I cut out for the job?". He asked, smiling. "I mean –", Kalix started but was interrupted by his companion: "Are you kidding? 'Cut out for the job', doesn't even describe it, you're a pro!", she called out."

What would someone like you even need a wandering circus for?" Carter was obviously flattered, as he smilingly put his hand to his neck and avoided Mariel's look. "Maybe his confidence wasn't actually as real as, Kalix thought. "Oh wow, thank you", he was slightly blushing. "Well, truth is, I'm sort of on the run from someone, therefore travelling in a group is a lot safer, but I also enjoy the company of some like-minded people", Carter admitted. Mariel and Kalix went quiet for a moment but when they looked at each other, they knew it didn't matter. "Listen", Kalix looked at him with his eyebrows raised a little. "When you start harming our business more than supporting it, you're out." Carter's eyes went big, as if he weren't expecting this response. "But until then, you're welcome to stay", he finished his sentence.

Carter started grinning from one ear to another: "Thank you so much, I promise I will do my best to assure this circus will flourish!" He grabbed Kalix' hand and shook it with glee. Then he turned and thanked Mariel as well. "If you don't have a place to stay, you can ask the tavern owner across the place if they still have a room, unfortunately the inn is completely booked", Mariel told him, but Carter assured her that he had something for himself. "So Carter, we'll be moving tomorrow morning, so you better be here at first light, so you won't be left behind", Kalix explained. "Got it", Carter nodded. "But for now, let's go talk to Wilbur, the real circus director, and get a drink. He'll be glad to meet you", Kalix offered. "Won't say no to that!", Carter agreed.

While the rest of the people finished deconstructing and packing the stage, the three of them went off to fill out the formalities. When Kalix first met Carter, he wasn't so sure of him, but he proved himself and left a good impression on him. Although Kalix didn't know it yet, this was the start of a glorious friendship.



Michelle Piwek

YOU

Lara Korkmaz

CW: *body shaming*

Look in the mirror
Try to cover up everything that is wrong with you
You can't go out like that!
I don't see the difference when you put makeup on
Time to go to school
Smile
Don't forget your glasses
To cover your face
Don't forget the baggy clothes that hide your body
That's what happens every day so try again
Wake up
Forget everything that tries to hide YOU
Who you are
Be like the glass frog
He's no fraud
Stop to wonder
Because at some point we all lay 6 feet under.

She

Pia Tomkel

The grass is green
the sky is blue
My eyes have fallen onto you

Pretty, pretty, pretty –
woman
Your smile ; warm
Like the summer wind.

The voice is soft
Green eyes are clear
I'm glad you're sitting with me – hier.

Here –
on this field
through which mild winds blow.
where we are all alone

And you sing your favourite song
Which I've dreamt of for so long
These are the summer days.

Red wine trunks (song)

Malin Tan

We were kids going to the same school
you were smart and I a nerdy girl
played in the crowd
when you first noticed me
you stared at me

I glanced back into your sky-blue eyes
my heart skipped a beat
'cause they were shining bright
I turned away still being mesmerized
Mesmerized

Made a courtesy when we met again
always been that kind of gentleman
girls in the club,
they had a crush on you
but you had no clue

I've crossed your way 1000 times
but I didn't say a word
I was too shy to go to you
and say hello
'cause you might reject me
you might reject me

I was insecure
'cause you were one of the greatest,
friendliest guys
with an infectious smile
to fall for

Red wine trunks
A beautiful body, genuine soul
We were young
my stomach made 1000 jumps
I didn't dare to say hello
'cause I was shy and insecure

You were quiet
but polite
Introvert and smart
cooler than I thought

Self-confident
brave and bold
And always fight
for all you want

Resting in yourself
in your thoughts
couldn't help
but to admire you
for your strength
to be yourself
to be yourself

Yeah, I guessed I was
struck by cupid's arrow
Baby



Kay Dockhorn

American Sweethearts

L.P. Bachus

She continued swiping through Bumble as she looked across the room towards him. She couldn't remember opening the app. It's funny, she thought to herself, how we can have the one right in front of us and still behave like insatiable toddlers, looking for more, looking for fast. All, because we are so used to getting what we desire, right here, right now.

But she had already found him. Is this how soulmates are supposed to work?, she wondered. Looking at someone and immediately thinking: I recognize you. And then having to wait, not knowing whether the other person felt and thought the same.

The first time she had seen him had been in this exact study room in their college's library. It had been the first week of the fall semester, classes had just begun, leaves were falling outside, painting the courts every shade of red and orange imaginable. She had been looking for a quiet place to do her readings. And there he had been: Bent over a physics' textbook, taking notes with an intensity that she wouldn't have thought available to a guy his age. He had worn headphones, and she had wondered what he was listening to. Wondered, whether she would someday know the playlists on his phone. Whether they would go to concerts together, him putting his arms around her when their song was being played. The faint light originating from the library lamp had painted shadows on his face while his hair was practically glowing against the sun piercing through the window. She imagined that touching it would feel warm and smooth, almost silk-like. When he had looked up and stared into the room, lost in thought, she had noticed the long dark lashes framing his eyes. She hadn't been able to tell their color then, she had stood too far away. They were green but turned bluish when the sun came out. She knew that now.

And on exactly this day last October, she hadn't been able to suppress her smile and with every fiber of her being she had thought: I know you.

Oh, him getting up to walk over to her, her smiling coyly at him, then accepting his invitation to have coffee together at the café downstairs - picture-perfect. Becoming very close very quickly, bonding over their love for indie rock and their mutual hate for Professor Irvine's Intro to Algebra class. Realizing that they laugh at the same videos on YouTube, and both liking salty popcorn when going to the movies. Beginning to spend almost every waking minute in each other's presence, her missing his soft voice and curious demeanor whenever he spends the weekend at his parents' or goes to football games with his guy friends. Him being a physics major and planning on going to grad school to become an engineer. Being family oriented and wanting to be a good provider for his future children. Her loving that about him. Later making pancakes on Sunday mornings, standing in their spacious kitchen, sipping coffee while he kisses her good morning on the cheek and their children play on the living room floor. Them growing old together, watching their children grow up, falling in and out of love, graduating and heading off to colleges just like the one they had met at.

So, there she was, standing at the exact same place on the library floor, looking at the exact same person exactly a year later. Still having the exact same feeling of a deep, inexplicable connection.

A student walked by and brushed her with his bag, pulling her out of her thoughts.

“Sorry.”

She looked up, startled.

“Never mind”, she murmured under her breath, glancing back towards his desk. And he looked up from his laptop and their eyes met. She smiled. He stood up, closing his MacBook and putting it into the backpack next to him. Her eyes closely followed his movements around the room while he made his way towards the entrance where she was standing. He passed her with a quick nod. She turned around to watch him leave the library. He stopped on his way out, glancing over his shoulder, pivoting on his feet. A wrinkle appeared in between his beautiful eyebrows, giving her a questioning look.

“Do I know you?”

In my mind (Forget you, my dear)

Kiara Kuhrs

C-Dur, D7, A-Moll, F-Dur, G-Dur

Verse

I wanna write you a song
But every time I start
The melody seems wrong
Form phrases in my mind
Every time I try,
Feels like I've gone blind.

I wanna call your phone
But every time I try
My mouth is turning dry
Words tumbling in my mind
And they're telling me
I'll stay left behind

Pre-Chorus

But I don't want to keep still
I want to raise my voice
Guess I don't have a choice

Chorus

Cause in my mind I already moved on
Didn't even take me long
To forget you, you're long gone.

In my mind I didn't shed a tear
Never wished to have you near
Never even lived in fear

I could forget you, my dear

Verse

And then I always need to
tell myself I mustn't move
in such a speed but you
Seem to tighten your grip
And I try to escape
Always careful, not to trip.

Pre-Chorus

But I don't want to keep still
I want to raise my voice
Guess I don't have a choice

Chorus

Well, in my mind I already moved on
Didn't even take me long
To forget you, you're long gone.

In my mind I didn't shed a tear
Never wished to have you near
Never even lived in fear

Yeah, in my mind I already moved on
Didn't even take me long
To forget you, you're long gone.

In my mind I didn't shed a tear
Never wished to have you near
Never even lived in fear

I could forget you, my dear

Bridge

Moving slow in pace
Steadily forgetting your face
Forgetting the way
You made me feel
Know we weren't ideal
Must admit, sometimes believed
The words you spoke were real
So, tell me, how does this make you feel?

Chorus

Guess, in my mind you already moved on
Didn't even take you long
To forget me, I'm long gone.

In my mind you didn't shed a tear
Never wished to have me near
Never even lived in fear

You could forget me, oh dear



Georgina Willms

Good Times, Bad Times

B. Befeldt

Time:

1960-70s in Britain

Characters:

Mick, 27 – young college student who loves to get in love but not getting caught too deep into real feelings.

Angie, 25 – sees in Mick her big love and is deeply aroused and attracted to him and his personality.

Keith, 29 – the best friend of Mick.

Scene:

Its midnight. Mick and Angie are sitting at a table of their favourite restaurant “Highwire” arguing with passion.

Mick: It's all over now.

Angie: That cannot be...

Mick: But Angie, when will those clouds all disappear?

Angie: Why are you speaking in riddles? Be clear for once.

Mick: We had Good Times, Bad Times and often you gave me shelter.

Angie: But Mick... you know I would fight for our love like a Street Fighting Man...

Mick: There is no Satisfaction left and I feel like a Tumbling Dice in this very moment.

Angie: When We Were Falling in Love, we were just Sweet Little Sixteen, now we are for two months in a relationship. I Love You Too Much.

Mick: Get Off of My Cloud. I would be a Fool to Cry.

[Angie starts crying outrageously.]

[Keith comes in with two girls and walks over to the table of Mick and Angie.]

Keith: Mick what did you do? Angie seems not to be Happy at all.

Mick: Could you do the Emotional Rescue? I need some Brown Sugar in my Coffee.

[Mick nervously grabs his cup of coffee and walks to the bar]

Keith: Don't Look Back and Feel On Baby!

[Angie whimpers with a scratchy voice]

Angie: It's so Sad Sad Sad...

Keith: It is All About You. You must see the Connection right now!

Angie: I have Mixed Emotions and feel like a Honky Tonk Woman... The Pain in My Heart feels like Poison Ivy.

Keith: I would like to be your Thief in the Night. I Wanna Hold You!

[Mick makes his way back to their table after a short conversation with one of the girls Keith brought with him. It is shortly after midnight]

Mick: It is Ruby Tuesday. Keith, I'll tell you She's so cold. I am Going Home – Till the Next Goodbye.

[Mick takes his jacket, one of the girls from the other table walks up to him. Both leave. Angie falls into disbelief]

Keith: Time Waits for No One – Let's Spend the Night Together.

Angie: Damn Keith, I feel Like a Rolling Stone! Will You Be My Lover Tonight?

Keith: Uptight (Everything's Alright).

[Keith sweeps up the tears of Angie's cheeks, holding her jacket while taking his own and both rapidly leaving the restaurant]

[Keith and Angie on stage – they are in front of Angie's flat]

Angie: I feel the Pain in My Heart, I need Rough Justice. Will you Save Me?

Keith: I will be your Knight in shining Armor!

Angie: Then let me be your Sister Morphine, doing the Dirty Work.

[She really seems to be a Dangerous Beauty' Keith thinks out loud]

Keith: I'm blue and lonesome as a man can be...

[Angie grabs Keith's hand and pulls him right into her flat – the Parachute Woman landed tonight]

Because my group did not recognise it in the first place: The whole Drama Scene is written with Song Names and Lyrics from 'The Rolling Stones'.

It was a bit like a class trip

Ann-Kathrin Tebbe

CW: death

It was a bit like a class trip. At first, I had been skeptical when my best friend Hanna had suggested that we go on vacation with a few friends from school. Although I got along well with all of them, I couldn't imagine going on vacation with them at first. But now it was fun. And it was a bit like a class trip. Unhealthy food, and every now and then there was drama because someone spread rumors about a person from the group. The only difference was that now we didn't have to hide the alcohol from teachers. The alcohol flowed like water again this evening. You'd think that at 23, we'd be able to judge how much we can take and when it's better to call it a night but the slurred conversations about existence and the meaning of life suggested otherwise.

"Where are Seb and Liz anyway?" asked Tom, after we had just finished another round of Never Have I Ever. "I don't know, I haven't seen them in a while. They wanted to go for a walk" replied Sara who was still the most sober of us all. "Nice. A walk" Lucas said, putting extra emphasis on the word walk. Julia began to giggle, "Let those two take their walk in peace." I, too, had to laugh. I knew Liz had been in love with Seb for quite a while, and I secretly hoped that the two of them weren't just taking a walk. "I'm going to text Seb anyway," Harry said. His voice was calm and clear. But I was sure he wasn't entirely sober. "Dude, relax. They just need a little time to themselves," Tom said, laughing. The others joined in.

Harry forced a smile as well, but I could see the skepticism in his eyes. "Let's play another round of Truth or Dare," Julia suggested. "I'm out," I said, taking a seat in the big armchair in the corner. "Me too. I'm going to bed." replied Harry and disappeared into one of the rooms. "Spoilsport!" shouted Julia and gathered with the rest of the players around the big dining table in the middle of the room. For a while, I continued to listen as the others exchanged secrets they probably wouldn't have shared with anyone in a sober state but gradually my eyes started to fall shut.

"Shit". A soft clang from the kitchen woke me up. I was still sitting in the armchair which made my back hurt quite a bit now. "Sorry, I didn't mean to wake you," Harry said, now coming out of the kitchen. "No problem, it might be better if I change into my bed sometime anyway. What time is it?", "Almost half past four," Harry replied after glancing at his cell phone, "and Seb still hasn't texted me." "Aren't they back yet?", I was starting to get worried. Liz had been in love with Seb for a long time, but she still wouldn't just stay away with him for hours without a short message. "No, I just looked and called Seb and Liz, but they're not answering. I think I'll go find them now," Harry said seriously. "I'll come with you. Maybe they fell asleep on the beach." The beach was only a few minutes from our vacation home and it wasn't particularly cold. So, it was quite conceivable that the two of them were having a romantic evening on the beach. We slipped on our shoes and into our jackets.

Harry wrote a note so if the others woke up, they wouldn't worry. Quietly, we left the apartment and a cold wind caught us. Perhaps it was a little too cold to spend the night on the beach after all. On the way to the beach, we kept meeting people who had probably just come out of one of the clubs. But Seb and Liz were not among them. I was starting to get really worried. As if Harry had read my thoughts, he reached for my hand. "Thank you," I said softly, "Not entirely unselfish. I'm scared too," Harry replied with a slight smile. "But I'm sure it's all good," he added, sounding unconvinced. Silently, we walked on, to the beach. I didn't feel like talking, and besides, I didn't know what we should talk about. At school, we had been good friends and had done a lot together.

After school, contact gradually broke off and we had met mainly at parties and occasionally, at the supermarket. "It's unusual to see Lara Kingston so silent," Harry interrupted the silence, "I remember DVD evenings where you talked for hours, so that I missed the whole movie." I had to smirk. "But that's only because you always chose stupid movies. My stories were much more exciting". "Matter of opinion," Harry countered. "I'm just really worried about Liz. She'd never go that long without calling me or talking to me. At first, I didn't want to say anything, because she is also in lo..", I hesitated. I had promised Liz not to tell anyone. "Because she's in love with Seb." Harry finished my sentence. "She told me drunk at a party a few weeks ago," he adds, noticing my questioning look. "She probably doesn't even know anymore". Finally, we reached the beach. It was dark and empty and had something mysterious about it. Nothing reminded us of the families and vacationers that had lined up just a few hours ago. We walked down to the water, hoping to get a better view of the beach. "Let's walk a bit. Maybe we can find them," Harry suggested, my hand still gripped tightly.

The water was calm. Only a gentle breeze broke the silence. In the distance, I could see something white on the ground. "There's something there," I said, releasing my hand from Harry's grip to start walking. The white thing was a shoe. A woman's shoe. With pink appliqués. Liz' shoe. "What's that?" asked Harry who now came up beside me. "Liz' shoe," I felt terribly nauseous. And hot. And cold at the same time. Why would Liz take off a shoe? The sand was clearly too cold to walk barefoot. "Why are you so sure about that? Every other person has those shoes." "Because Liz and I bought it together. I have the same pair. We wrote our initials in it so we wouldn't mix them up. It says LS. Liz Steinfeld.". "Shit! Shit, shit, shit." A tear left my eye. A few minutes ago, I had slight hopes that maybe the two of them had just gotten stuck in a bar, now I was pretty sure something had happened. "Hey, hey. I'm sure there's a logical explanation for this," Harry said, putting his arms around me. "Maybe we should call them again." Carefully, he pulled his cell phone out of his pocket and dialed Seb's number. After a few seconds, a mechanical voice began, "This is Sebastian Brown's voicemail. I am not available at the moment. Messages after the beep." It was the same with Liz; after a few seconds, her voicemail jumped up as well. "Okay", Harry took a deep breath and clasped his hands at the back of his neck, "Let's go back to the apartment. We're not getting anywhere here. It's too cold and too dark. We need to wake the others and come up with a plan. Maybe we should call the police." I admired Harry for being able to think so many clear thoughts and for not going crazy.

We walked quickly back to the apartment. The sun slowly rose on the horizon. I had lost all sense of time. Back at the apartment, we woke the others, they moaned and groaned that we were kicking them out of bed so early. When everyone had gathered in the living room, Harry told them what happened. If they didn't all look pretty beat up anyway due to the short night, all color was gone from their faces by now at the latest. "We have to go find them", Sara said, already wanting to go and get her shoes. "

Stop", Harry held her back, "Lara and I already went and searched the beach. We need to make a plan. Split up. Some should stay here, in case they come back. Maybe someone should call their parents." "I'll do that", Julia exclaimed. I was grateful I didn't have to call the Steinfelds. I didn't feel able to talk to them. But Julia seemed surprisingly composed. "This reminds me of summer 2006. Something similar happened on my sister's class trip," said Tom. "Dude, don't say that," Lucas countered. "Why? What happened on your sister's class trip?" Those were the first words to come out of my mouth since arriving at the vacation home. "Nothing, don't listen to him," Harry said quickly. "What happend on your sister's class trip?", I almost screamed, and the others looked at me with wide eyes.

"Well. They were on a school trip a few years ago. One night, two students, Mary and James, snuck out of the hostel to go to the beach. When they didn't return the next morning, the teachers alerted the police. The two were found dead a few weeks later by fishermen out at sea," Tom swallowed. A quiet sob escaped from Sara's throat. I couldn't say anything. Think anything. Feel anything. "But it won't be like that this time!" Loud and convincing, Harry interrupted the silence as his cell phone rang. He picked it up. "Mister Smith. This is the Brighton Police Department. You are listed as the emergency contact for Sebastian Edward Brown. I'm sorry to inform you that...", I didn't hear the rest. My head was a loud roar. My hunch had been right once again: It was a bit like a class trip.



Kay Dockhorn

HMS Belfast

Nils Apelmeier

CW: violence, war, death, Nazis

“And here to our left, we can see the heart of this ship.” While saying that, I pointed to the two-steel plated multi-barreled gun turrets right in front of the student group. Pointing to it was futile anyway, since the eyes of all the young boys from thirteen to fourteen were already trained on the massive guns planted on the front deck of the HMS Belfast. Most likely, they already knew everything that I was going to say. The teachers on the island were giving their students enough preparation for these kinds of trips. It still was my job as a tour guide, so I continued. “Shortly after the Second World War, this cruiser was towed up the Thames River and now functions as a museum ship and a reminder of the past war. It also has a wonderful view on the Tower Bridge, the London Tower and the riverside.”

Pointing out the mentioned locations, I let my view gaze as well. On most buildings, there were flags, for today's anniversary of the end of the war. This was also the reason why there were so many school classes and other guests here that got tours from old members of the Royal Navy like me. I looked back to the students in their strict school uniforms. Every single one was impeccably dressed, and not one looked like he was inattentive or distracted. I looked down at my own new uniform, sighed, and continued. “These 15-centimeter guns have a range of 20 kilometers and under a good crew, they can be fired up to 6 times per minute per gun.”

I stopped for a moment. I hated the next part, but I couldn't do anything about it, so I looked directly to the students and asked. “Who of you can tell me how far this would be?” Immediately, every arm in the class shot in the air. I pointed to the big blond-haired student in the first row. He lowered his arm and answered in a disciplined tone. “Here, from the center of London, these guns are able to hit the entire city including its suburbs, Sir!” I performed a benevolent nod and answered. “Very good.” Then I suddenly stopped. On the dock, near the bridge, I had spotted a black car with the sign of the military police. Looking a bit further on the walkway to the ship, I could see the driver. A man in a dark uniform and with a briefcase in hand. He walked onto the ship's deck and then moved with purpose to the ship's bridge.

It could just be a routine check, but I got a very bad feeling about this and maybe... The looks of the students snapped me out of my thoughts. I had to continue the tour, so I added. “20 kilometers is not very much in naval combat. Still, this cruiser dueled with gigantic battleships like the German Scharnhorst.” The students were all silent and followed my information dump with interest. While some even made notes. So, I added a few more details about the service time of the ship and closed with my usual ending. “After the end of the war in Europe, it also saw service in the Pacific and was heavily damaged. Due to resource shortages, the repairs were only finished after the whole conflict was over. Then, high command decided to move this vessel up the Thames River and use it, as you can see, as a museum.”

Looking back at the student group, for the first time, their attention was not focused on me. They were all looking at something or someone behind me. Before I could turn around, a voice, dripping with wrong friendliness, was raised. "And what this fine sailor was also going to tell you is the second role of the HMS Belfast." The voice made a small pause and then added the rhetorical question. "Right?" I did not dare to turn around, so I just nodded slowly and listened to the heavy leather boots of the man coming closer. It must be the soldier in dark uniform who arrived earlier. Everyone else with military boots on the ship, I would have recognized by voice. Not really paying attention to me, the voice just continued with a strong German accent. "Well, it may also be in vain. As good students of the Reich, you should already know this second purpose."

Finally, he moved into my view and positioned himself beside me, which gave me the possibility to muster him from the corner of my eye. His black SS uniform was kept very neatly, and he wore the red swastika bandage on his left arm with pride. His head was adorned by the typical black cap, with a skull symbol, and attached to his uniform were multiple military honors. One of them, I could recognize as an Iron Cross. All the students and me as well, saluted him in the way that we do with every official after the war and in near military unity everyone said: "Heil Hitler!" My stomach turned around and I had the strong urge to take a shower. Until this day I was not able to understand how we lost the Second World War, but this is our reality now.

I got a hold of myself and looked at him: "Yes, Oberstgruppenführer, thanks for the addition, Sir." Not reacting in any way to my answer, he continued looking forward to the class. The boys all nodded silently. Everyone knew how dangerous it was to offend such a high ranking official. The SS-officer pointed at the tall blond boy in the first row that I had already asked a question before. He looked like the personification of German race ideals. Even his eyes were blue. If not born on the British Isles, he would have already been taken into a special program for future soldiers. Still, the boy looked eager to prove himself and he just waited for the Oberstgruppenführer to start his sentence, which he, after a short and dramatic pause, did. "You, boy, tell me. What is the purpose of this ship?"

The answer came immediately and you could hear that the boy tried to copy the accent of the SS-member. "This ship is here to secure the loyalty of the city of London and its inhabitants to our beloved Führer Adolf Hitler and the German Reich." While the boy talked, the officer looked at me for the first time and mustered me until I lowered my view submissively. Happy with the answer and my subordination, he added another question. "Good, and now tell me, how is a single ship able to subdue an entire city?" Again, the student only hesitated for a second and answered. "Every time, when a German citizen is killed or wounded by terrorist activities inside the city, a shot from this ship will be fired to the district where it happened. When the crime is targeted at a high ranking official, there will be multiple shots." The SS-officer nodded and clapped silently with his hands. "

"Very nice, young man. One day, you will become a formidable recruit for the SS. Even, if you were not born a German." The boy looked proud and happy about the compliment. It seemed that the new generation was even more loyal to the regime than my own. Most of us have integrated through necessity, the young ones did it out of loyalty. But who was I to judge? With the war's end, I joined the regime myself. The officer now addressed the entire class and gave me a file at the same time that verified my fears. "Since you young students are here to learn, this is your lucky day. Today, you will witness a punitive bombardment like this. The first one this year to be precise." Addressing me casually, he asked. "Are the guns loaded?" Despite being slightly distracted by the documents, I answered as calm as I could. "Yes, Sir. As soon as the guns are adjusted to the coordinates, they can be fired."

Reading the documents, I could gather that three German soldiers had been mugged in Whitechapel. No one was badly injured and they hadn't worn their uniforms when it happened. Still, the rules are the rules. Once such an order was given by local high command, there was no way of revoking it. With hesitation, I went into the gun turret and adjusted it to the coordinates in the document. While I was working the old machinery, the officer explained to the student what had happened and how all Germans had been evacuated secretly. He also explained how these atrocities were necessary to keep the peace in the German Reich.

After finishing my task, I sat in the gunner's chair for a few seconds. Years ago, I would have tried to adjust the shot to hit something else. Nowadays, I just avert looking at the target altogether and only put in the coordinates that came from the Wehrmacht office. Maybe it is because one of my colleagues was shot three years ago for exactly that, when he changed the target to a German barrack, but to be entirely honest, I had just given up. I calmed myself in ignorance by not knowing what my work would be hitting and who it may be killing.

After taking in a heavy breath, I got up, joined the group outside the turret, and gave the officer a short nod to signal him that the gun was loaded. A smile curled upon his face and he finished his monologue with: "Since the attacks happened in Whitechapel the target will be something in this district." Looking once again over the students, his gaze came to a stop on the blond boy that had already answered his questions. During the explanation, all students became a bit more serious, and they seemed to understand what was going to happen soon, but the change in the blond boy was even harsher. His face had gone pale and his eyes showed a fear that had not been there before.

The Oberstgruppenführer noticing this, addressed him once again directly: "Good young man. You have given me very good answers today. Do you want to have the honor of firing the weapon?" The youth's face turned into a porcelain mask. Knowing that this was an offer he could not refuse, he nodded. The officer naturally noticed his hesitation and asked with his slimy voice. "What's wrong, young recruit? I give you the honor to be a part of the Reich's justice and you seem to falter. Why is that?" He got even more pale than before and without any of the courage from before, the boy answered. "I am sorry, Oberstgruppenführer... I mean Sir... I... I..." His voice broke for a second. Then he tried again. "I am aware of the high honor that you bestow upon me, Sir. It is just... My grandmother lives in the Whitechapel retirement home." The last part was nearly a whisper and while saying it, he never looked the officer in the face.

The man looked at him with a feigned look of sympathy and replied. "Look me in the eyes, young man." The boy did like he was told, but I could see the fear in his eyes and his arms started shaking. The officer did not go into it and just continued. "You don't have to be concerned. The quarter is big and even if, by chance, the retirement home gets hit, your grandmother dies as a heroine. She would be sacrificing herself for the justice of the Reich. So come now and join me to perform your duty as a rightful citizen." With that, the officer walked into the gun turret. After a second, the boy followed him and after this, the entire class gathered in front of the door. The inside was already cramped with the gun, ammunition and other mechanical devices.

The Oberstgruppenführer maneuvered the boy into the gunner's chair and placed himself next to him. Then, he started explaining for, him and his entire class. "After the loading and adjusting of the gun, which your fine tour guide already finished, it is rather easy to fire the weapon. "You just have to push this button and the gun is shot." While saying this, he pointed to a small grey button on the side and then continued. "Your classmate will press it when I give the command. You should remember and honor him for this moment. He put his personal loyalties behind the ones to the Reich and his Führer."

I could not see his face anymore, but I would have sworn that these propaganda phrases really built the boy up and he looked dedicated to pressing the button. The officer began counting down with his hands and added, "Make sure to cover your ears unless you want to end up deaf." I nearly forgot to do so and quickly raised my hands to my ears. While doing so, I let the documents, detailing the punitive action, fall and scatter on the ground. By mistake I looked at them and as I saw the target, my blood froze. "FIRE!" The officer shouted and the boy fired the gun. A deafening explosion happened right next to us and the shell started rising into the air. The Oberstgruppenführer already began reloading the gun while I still looked at the target and read it again and again: Whitechapel retirement home.



Michelle Piwek

The lost dredger

B. Befeldt

Oh, sweet rays of spring sunshine where have you been?
Warming and full of joy you welcome the little boy,
who eagerly works with sand and his beloved toy,
in his mind the castle is already built for his queen.
Nothing is manufactured without the right tool!

April calls forth the power of wind and rain without hesitation
and mother and son quickly leaving in need of evasion.
Buggy's destiny is sealed in the wet sand, waiting for orders of his master,
whereas the stormy apparition is travelling purposefully faster.
Where is he, who gave me my name and took me everywhere he'd go?

The little one is searching for his best friend, feeling the pain of loss.
Mommy's loving and caring lies in displeasure.
The numb cry of disbelief from the toy dredger
isn't even heard in the late hours of the day, by gloomy dancing moths.
People passing by, talking about a fairy-tale gone bad.

Our big Roadtrip (where nothing bad ever happens)

Tamara Hagspihl

CW: swearing, death, selfharm, substance abuse, violence,
lyrics from ACDC's „Highway to Hell“, just everything really

The moon turned red an hour ago. Tracy is still explaining how this is some sort of almost impossible occurrence and blah blah blah, nobody listens anyway! Darren just turned the radio up. Didn't stop her. The red light makes the canyons left and right of the street look pretty cool though. Almost like everything is covered in blood or part of a red light district. Pretty metal! "So, are we just not gonna talk about this?" Urgh, of course Josh is the one to break our perfect shield of pretending. I open the window on my side and let the dry wind blow between the space of my fingers. Haven't been so far out in a couple of months.

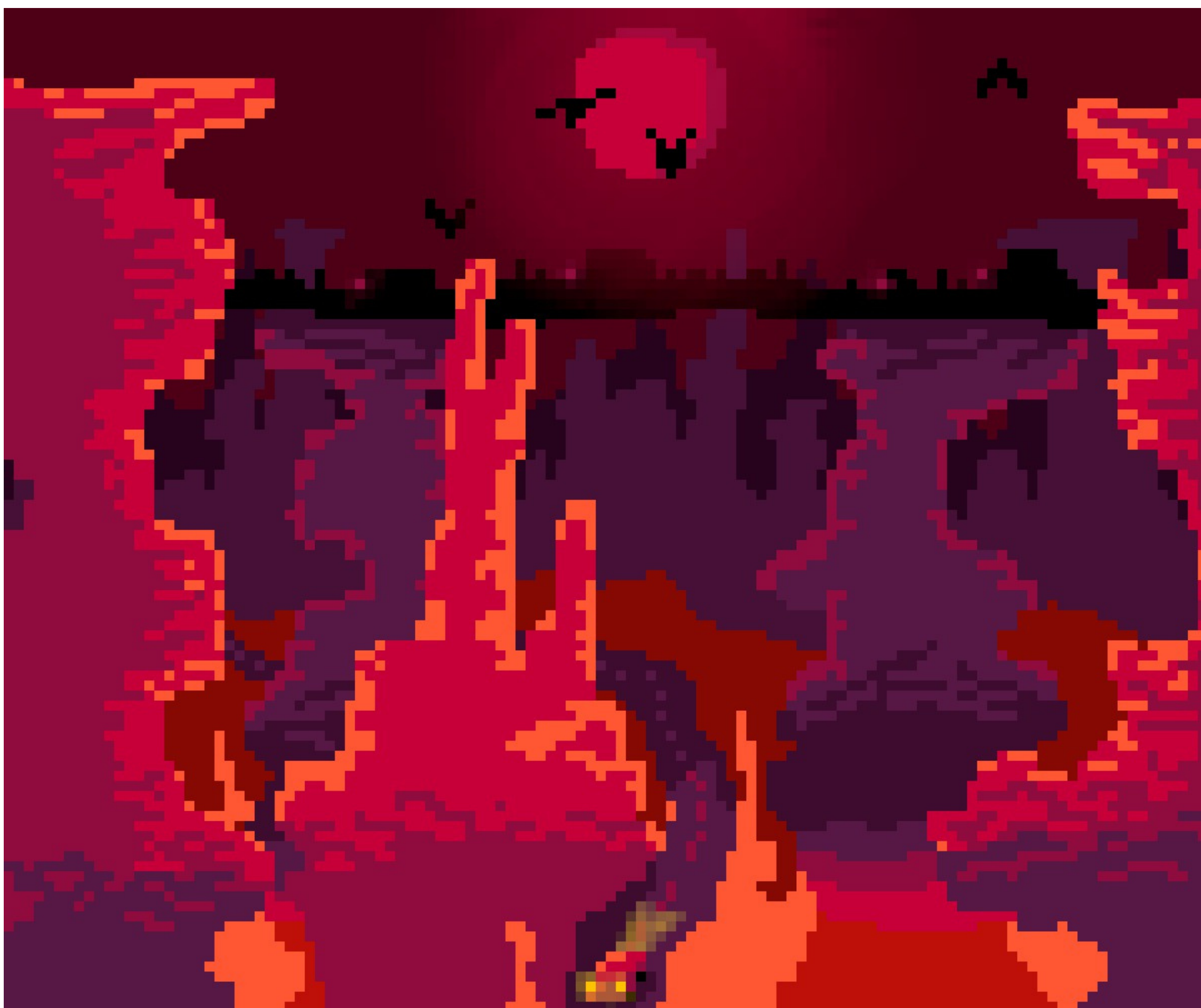
"Why... why are we even out here?" He keeps talking. "Because Darren couldn't just let this fucking idea go and we, as his fucking friends, support his fucking ideas, even if they are bullshit!" Nobody has anything to say against my perfect summary of this situation. None of us really wanted to be here. But Darren... well, it's hard to say no to him. Darren Puppy-Eye Collins. I gave him that name when we first met. My brother from another mother. Runaway, street criminal and general asshole. So we had a lot in common. Don't recall how we met Josh, but he was running his parents' store at the time, always kept to himself.

First time I saw him, I thought he was kind of a pushover, I remember that vividly. And Tracy, she was a student at some university, we met her in town. Never told us how she ended up in this place. "Got the beer?" First time Darren opens his mouth on our little trip to the big highway. "Sure do." Because of the fucking box I can't stretch out my feet. "I haven't missed the taste of beer one bit." No one asked you, Tracy. I didn't actually say that. I'm trying to be nicer to Tracy, she is a good girl. Maybe I dislike her sometimes, because she seems to have her shit together so much. Smart and well mannered. No doubt that she is deep down just as lost as the rest of us. We all are...

"I still think this is a bad idea!" Josh pushes his face between the seats. The red moonlight flickers over his always slightly twitching eyes and the scars on his wrists. Usually he wears gloves. Since we set out in a hurry, he probably forgot. Wonder if this is what got him here. I still carry my ticket all the time, the last syringe I wanted to take before getting clean. Next one was always going to be the last one, who was I kidding? When I think about it this way, Darren still wears the old leather jacket with the bullet holes. He never wanted to show me, if under his clothes, the gun wounds were still there. Such a prude sometimes. But I guess we all hold on to the past in one way or another. I look out the window, just over the horizon, the big highway appears. It is soaked in the blood light as well. And there goes the road sign that says: "Styx-Freeway ahead, please turn around!" But we won't turn around tonight. Fuck signs!

Fuck the authorities! What a bullshit name for a street anyway. Just call it "Highway to Hell" or something. Hah, that would be funny. Still. "So...you really wanna do this, Collins?" Darren nods. Urgh, it's no fun when he stops talking like this. "What exactly is it that you are missing? The impending doom of global warming? The injustice of a corrupt government, or maybe just shitty parents that kick you out if you no longer fit into their perfect views of society?" He just shoots a grim look at me from the side. I know this look all too well. "I'm just saying that life is a fucking shitshow, man. We can be happy that we are done with it."

Tracy begins biting her nails. She gets easily nervous when people fight, oh, and she is also not too fond of cars. "But, hey, if you want to visit the old mortal coil, that's cool. Just don't get your hopes up. Like a very wise woman once said: Nobody dies a virgin, life fucks us all." In the backseat, Josh starts to nervously laugh. He was never really good at reading the room...or the car in this case. "I am pretty sure that this is not a common saying... but Charlotte has a point, life... is nothing but sorrow." Hate when she calls me that, it's Charlie, never Charlotte. Well, Darren doesn't seem too happy with Tracy's words as well. His grip around the wheel tightens and his knuckles turn brighter. "You just don't get it. Look around!"



Tamara Hagsphil

We do. Big Canyons and behind us, just a peak of the big desert area. Nothing much there as well. Just "Some City". Kinda stupid name, but I think it's funny. People here call this place all kinds of names: Purgatory, Limbo, Yomi, Patala, Sijjin or whatever weird shit they used to believe. My personal favorite is Some Place. It just fits with Some City. Hey, Charlie, where do you live? Oh, just over at Some City in Some Place. And they would say: Some Place, in that shithole? No reason to get all bitchy, it isn't the nicest place I've been to either, everything here looks so... dead. Ha, good one! "I for one don't want to end like this, stuck here for the rest of my..." "Life?" Good one as well, Tracy. Who knew the stuck up rich girl could tell jokes?! "Listen, you don't need to come with me, but this is important to me." Something in his voice tips me off. "Wait, this is not about Minato, is it?" His jaw tenses up. Fucking hell, it is! Minato was Darren's boyfriend... well, is. They never really got the chance to break up after all. But why now, after almost two years? "Forget it! We are almost there..." He isn't wrong.

The red moon disappears behind Styx and we pass the place where most of us in Some Place got off. Made the jump from the road to heaven, hell or whatever eternity awaits at the end of the road. That makes us Lost Souls. Nobody ever makes it back up, some fucking crackheads have tried once or twice. Those who made the climb got picked up by the angels. Ugly-ass, fucking angels. At least we call those grey little monstrosities that. Josh tried calling them Shinigamis, but he is a nerd so it didn't stick. Just flying around over the Styx, maybe keeping guard.

Like most of the time, the road is busy with all sorts of transportations. I swear, once I saw one dude pass by on a unicycle. A lot walk as well, those that were too poor in life to own a car and can't even afford the fucking bus or whatever they have up there. The world is so broken that even in death you get screwed for not having money. And that's where Darren wants to go back. "What the..." Language, Josh! But yeah, what the fuck?! Before us lies some sort of ramp, carved into the stone of one of the pillar cannons. "Did you do that?" Finally, Darren Puppy-Eye loses the grim look and smirks at us. "Had some explosive help! Took only the better part of three months, but it will be worth it!" So his plan is actually to drive all the way back up?

Damn, I know he is a big dum dum but this... this is the work of a genius! "Ladies, Gents... Charlie, please put on your seatbelts and keep your hands inside the vehicle at all times." And we do. "This is going to be a bumpy ride!" And he turned the music even louder. Hell yeah! Behind me Tracy is muttering: "This is so stupid." The car jerks and up we go. I will never admit it, but I'm holding my breath. Wait, do I even want this to work? Yes! But not for me, I want Darren to have this, I really do.

Hit it, Collins!" I can hear the sounds of the passing souls now, but also the flapping of the winged creatures above. If we would get picked up and dropped by them... would we die? Would that make us double dead? Funny what your brain comes up with when you are driving towards certain doom. "I can see the cars!" Josh presses his face against the window, he's still clinging to his seat.

The moon reappears and for a moment, all we see is red. And then, with a bump, we are on the street. We are on the fucking freeway! Left and right are cars and people, all covered in red light. They all are moving in one direction. "Hold on!" Darren shouts over the music and we do. He jerks the wheel around and we crash into some walker. They are fine...Probably. A new song starts. Living easy, loving free. Season ticket on a one way ride. Fucking perfect. And we ride. Hey, does this make us to fucking Ghostriders? Through all those people that just died, away from the big light or gate or whatever shit they are aiming for. Don't need a reason, don't need a right. There is nothing I would rather do."

A loud screech drowns out the lines. "Shit, shit, shit. One is diving down!" cries Josh, his eye is twitching even harder now, and I can tell he is about as close to one of his breakdowns as we are to the world of the living.

Crash! Something hit the car. Claws scratch off the old, red paint on the ceiling. Going down, party time. My friends are gonna be there too. "THIS WAS SUCH A DUMB IDEA!" I don't think. I just grab one of the beers out of the box, crank down the window and throw it through. Just like the old times. Crash again. And another screech. "FASTER!" squeals Tracy. In her panic, she grabs my hand. Girl, I need that to fight the monster... but, I won't be the one who is going to let go. "I AM FASTER!" Oh, yeah, deadly situation. "It is flying again, but it is still behind us!" Josh is scratching his arms now, that is like a 8.5 on the Josh-panic-scale. No stop signs, speed limit. Nobody's gonna slow us down! We knock over another group of walkers. Faster."

In the back mirror, I see the angel. It slowly disappears in the mist. Wait, what mist? My fingers are numb. Tracy has one hell of a grip. "I think we made it..." Darren is panting. There is white all around us, I can't even see the street in front anymore. Suddenly I feel this pressure in my ears and head. It's like diving. And then there are the stars. Ain't no stars in Some Place. The car stops and above us are stars in the sky. And a white moon. Everything tingles. Is this what it feels to be alive? The world is so blurry and still so... Much.

Don't know why, but we all get out of the car. Fuck, why are my hands shaking? I look around. Josh is curled up on the floor. Clutching his head. What is that red stuff on his arms? Did he spill ketchup? What a clumsy idiot. Tracy is still holding my hand somehow. She is as white as the moon and blue and purple and red and she is crying. And her hair is all messed up. Maybe I should ask her on a date. Or maybe I shouldn't, since she is so smart and I am such a piece of shit. I shouldn't. I don't even know if she likes people like me who don't even know if they want to be a girl or a boy. Darren is still there too. He is limping a few steps away from us. Why? "Hey, Collins." I can barely get the words out. I feel sick. But he turns around. His shirt is all red as well, wasn't it white a moment ago? I think I need to lie down. But I am already on the floor. This sucks. I can't feel my legs anymore. Life really is a fucking shitshow.

night crawler

L.P. Bachus

standing on a porch I'll never own
frostbite
I am still covered in your spit

the chosen one
for it is you who has seen me naked
other eyes have never counted
in determining what I am worth

your love for me feels like a visible stain
I fear you have contaminated me
and left me out to rot
with the forgotten fruits of last night's supper

my scream still buried at the back of my throat
and I wonder
would mother even come if she heard me?

Losing Her

Kay Dockhorn



Kay Dockhorn

CW: blood, death, emotional turmoil, injury

Everything's been caught in a time freeze.

Turning every which way, my brow furrows as I come to terms with this unnatural setting. It's not the first time that this has happened, but that doesn't make the experience any less odd.

I see my little sister standing not five meters to my right and jerk away in shock, only to realise that she's been caught in this time pause along with most everything else.

Hands raised to cover her mouth, her tears trail down her cheeks, a few drops even suspended mid-air. Like miniature diamonds held up to the light so that you can see them sparkle in the moon's eye.

They aren't the only things caught in the moonlight though.

The ice dome that had been surrounding the mountain tip upon which I stand almost looks like it's exploded, millions upon millions of ice shards pointing outward, as though the cause had come from in here, gleaming like daggers in the moon's white light.

It's an eerie setting.

Everything preserved as it had been during the time when...

'No.

No, no, no, no, no, no, no.

Please, no.'

I'm panting, my breath quickening with every passing second as though I'm running through the thicket of my own emotions, each and every vine and trunk trying to block my view of the one thing I don't want to see, but my gaze seems to find her form of its own accord.

In an instant, I fly to her side.

My eyes burning with a horrible mix of disbelief, denial, pain, and rage.

Her blood is sluggishly sliding out of that fatal wound now, a sword cut from her collarbone, across her stomach, to her hip, pooling around her to form a slim frame of silvery blue upon which she lays. Her clothes and wings are soaked in her liquid life, the fabric creased and crusted, and her feathers rumpled and sticky looking.

My hands curl into fists as my body trembles.

My uncle did this.

He stood off to the side now. His attack on a pure angel, and one who had been unarmed and defenceless at that, sealing his fate as an unmeltable ice sculpture for the rest of eternity.

Not that it mattered. He'd dealt the damage he'd intended.

And as much as I tried to deny it, I was running out of arguments... and excuses.

'Three.'

My ears are filled with the roaring sound of a waterfall.

'Two.'

I can't tear my gaze from her still body, my eyes prickling with unshed tears.

She told me she loved me, and I couldn't give her an answer; I couldn't speak at all.

'One.'

'I can't deal with this!'

An unearthly sound, a cross between a scream and a howl, rips itself free from my burning throat as hot tears find their freedom and run down my face, to drip off of my chin and onto the thawing wasteland below them.

As the sound emanating from my throat fades away, my aura darkens to a murky black and chills skitter over my skin. I spread my wings and rocket into the sky, to the only point in the air where no shards float, in the space of that one missing panel that had let light and air circulate this wretched place.

I feel a storm brewing.

Clouds gather above me, extending over the entire city, close to the mountain where we currently are. Their colour changing from white to grey to black.

Thunder growls and lightning snarls as the clouds continue to spread until they engulf the entire kingdom.

One wavering shaft of moonlight breaks through my cloud cover, its faint light illuminating Rose's still figure.

I watch, painfully transfixed, unable to look away, as her hair is bleached to no more than a faint fox red. The stinging memory of her shining green eyes stabs me like a knife as I remember those same eyes looking so pale and lost. Usually dancing and sparkling, filled with hope and emotion. Their swirling shades of green an impossible mystery for me to solve, faded and glazed to a sickly, washed-out colour that looked more like a dying grassland than the flourishing forests they once were.

Rain begins to fall over the land.

At first nothing more than a light drizzle, then getting larger, and stronger and louder, until the raindrops are even bigger than golf balls. Falling from the sky to shatter upon the earth, one followed by another, and another and another.

The rain holds steady, feeling more like a maelstrom of miniature liquid nitrogen bombs than the icy water it really is.

Once the rain manages to wash away the rest of my tears, I cease the brewing storm, watching the clouds become sparse and white once more. The revealed moon casting everything into an eerie glow.

But the moon isn't the only thing glowing tonight.

I whip around the instant I notice the faint golden glow.

Rose's entire body is enveloped in a soft, warm light, and all around her flowers are beginning to bloom, growing out of the pooling blue blood surrounding her still body.

Her bloody clothes replaced with a simple, pure white dress and every one of her feathers tipped blue and silver.

Fresh tears prick my eyes as the glow begins to fade... Taking Rose with it.

But the haunted memory remains as the time freeze thaws, and the icy shrapnel is dispelled into a million spinning shards, with a deafening screech of ice sliding over ice.

Though the beauty of the night sky is thus revealed, it is lost on me.

That brilliantly beautifully setting a stark contrast to my broken heart and its new home in a numb and empty oblivion.

"Cyrus?"

A hand on my arm makes me flinch as I turn toward my sister's voice.

I can't bring myself to force a smile though, even for her sake.

"Let's go home."

She offers, clasping my hand as we start our descent down the mountain on foot, my wings hanging limply down my back and dragging uselessly behind me.

Looks like an angel really does lose their ability to fly when they lose their soulmate.

All That Stays

Michelle Piwek

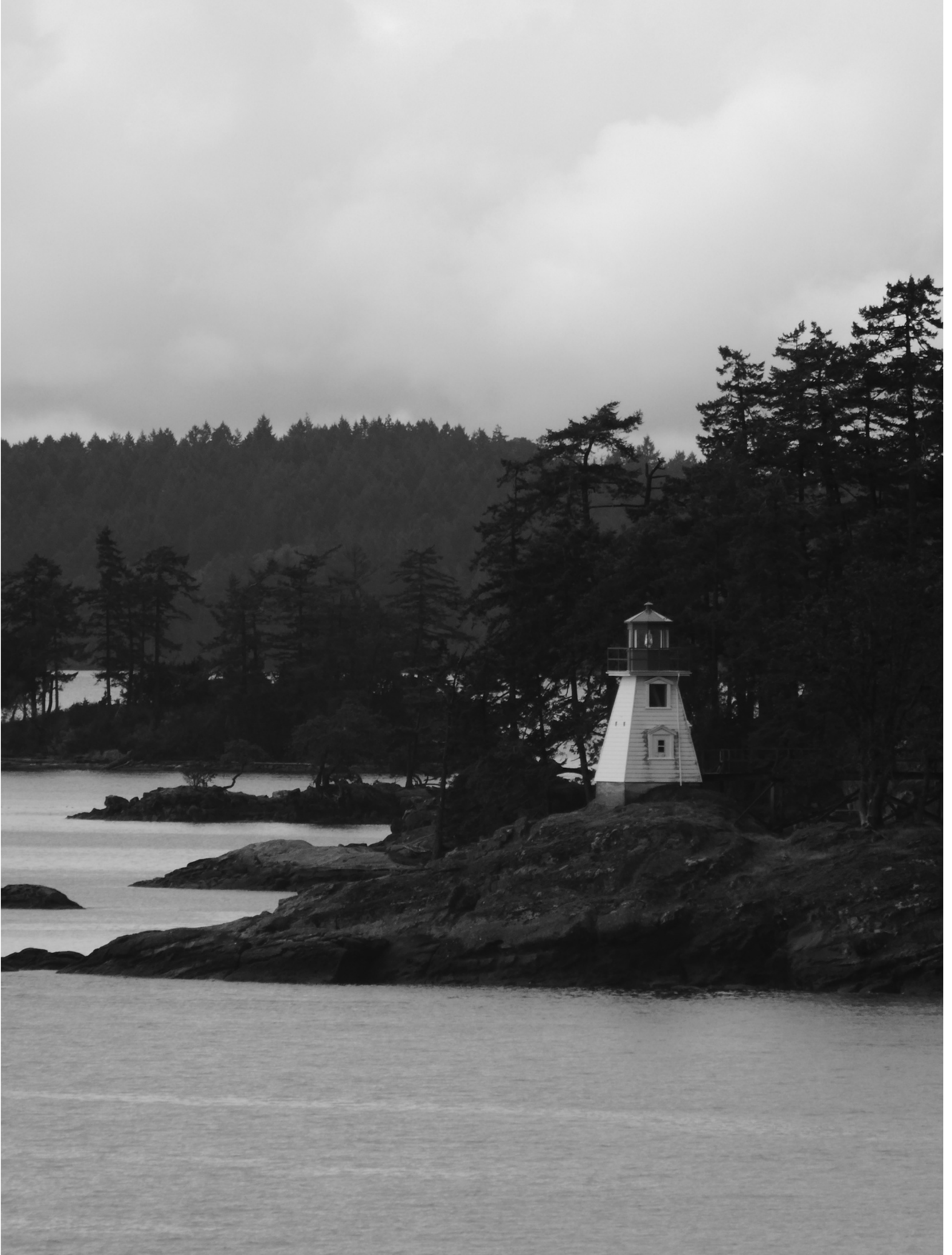
CW: death, funeral, grief

For Mama and Sarah

As the urn is lowered into the ground
I hear silence spread around
No one knows what to say
No one knows a way
To express their pain

As everyone starts to leave
I stay behind with my grief
Staring down at the grave
I can feel the coming wave
Of tears like drops of rain

As the tears eventually run dry
I turn away with a heavy sigh
I can't help but feel betrayed
And I know that will never fade
But stay forever in my brain



Michelle Piwek

This Is The End

Michelle Piwek

I'm sitting on the edge of the cliff, my feet dangling above the abyss. I'm afraid of heights, but as long as I don't look straight down, I'll be alright. And the horizon is prettier to look at than the sharp rocks below anyway.

The horizon. I've always had a fascination with the horizon, with the border where the sky meets the sea. Or rather where the sea melts into the sky. When the weather is good, you can barely see the transition, both blues mingle and mix until there is no contrast anymore. As if you could steer a sailboat straight into heaven. But today, the horizon is a sharp line, no merging, no blending. Bad weather. Not really a surprise, considering today will be the end of the world.

I glance around, but I'm alone. Nobody else wants to sit on the cliffs by themselves, rethinking life and wondering about missed opportunities. Everybody's too busy panicking, praying, and ultimately, hoping that maybe things will still go differently. But I know that they won't. The scientists have never been wrong before. Why should they be wrong now?

I look up. Clouds have piled up above the ocean. Not the white, fluffy kind of clouds you see on a sunny day. These are massive and gray, like a heavy blanket covering Earth. With enough creativity and fantasy, you may even be able to see a few animals in there. But I'm not in the mood to be creative. So, I just see them as what they are: an omen of destruction.

It's funny. The really bad stuff hasn't even started yet, and the people are already freaking out. Even this far away, I can still hear the faint noises from the city, carried to me by the wind; the screams, the sirens, the loudspeaker announcements from the military convoys trying to control the masses.

I'm relieved that I've escaped the city so soon. I knew what was going to happen, once people realized that we're all going to die. The chaos, the fighting, the senseless looting. I didn't want to be a part of that. So, I drove to the only place I knew could comfort me in difficult times: the cliffs.

And now here I am, with a front row seat for the apocalypse. And I'm surprisingly calm. No panic, no fear, just curiosity for what's to come. It's not like I don't care that I'm going to die. I mean, yeah, it sucks! There are so many things in this world I haven't experienced yet: foods I haven't eaten before, places I haven't visited, friends I haven't made.

But some things are inevitable. Some things simply cannot be avoided. And I guess I have accepted that. A teacher once told me to see every problem as a challenge from the universe. Which is funny, considering that we're all going to die because an asteroid from outer space, the literal universe, is going to crash into our planet. Well, that's a challenge...

The wind turns, and the city noises fade away. Over the sea, I can see the first flashes of lightning, but they are still too far away to hear the thunder. The scientists predicted it would start this way, with a giant storm, caused by atmospheric changes as the asteroid gets closer. I don't care. I love storms and at least, I get to experience one more now before it all ends.

I lay down and close my eyes. All I hear is the wind. I imagine that it's talking to me. Maybe a warning that I should run before it's too late. Maybe it's asking me who I am. Or maybe it's a just soothing lullaby. I like that one the best.

I'm pulled out of my imagination by loud thunder crashing. The storm has moved closer to the coast now. I can also feel the wind gain power, pulling on my hair and my clothes. Maybe, if I keep completely still, it will pick me up and carry me away. But I know that it's a hopeless wish.

Then I feel the first rain drops on my face. I twitch a little but keep my eyes shut. Just like the wind, it doesn't take long for the rain to get stronger. Heavy drops hit my body, one after the other, quicker and quicker, and soon, I'm soaking wet. I can hear a voice whispering in my mind: If you don't get up and get changed, you're going to get a cold. I can't help but giggle. I'm definitely going to die and yet, my mind is still worried about me getting sick. I mean, seriously?

I take one last deep breath and then sit back up again. Immediately, I feel the wind tear on my body, and for a slight moment, I think it might push me over the edge. I dig my fingers into the wet grass beneath me. Not that it would really help, but still it's reassuring. I am still here, still alive. At least for now.

The storm has gotten worse, it has reached apocalyptic dimensions. The clouds have turned an even darker shade of gray, almost black, and there is no single trace of the sky. I look over the water. Its color has also changed: it's no longer clear blue, but a mix of grays and dark greens. It looks dangerous, toxic, like a monster come to life. And the sea really does look alive with waves building up as high as skyscrapers that crash into the cliffs underneath my feet. I can feel the vibration from every impact, getting more aggressive each time. Even the ocean tries to escape.

There! Far, far away, close to the horizon, a glimmering light coming from the sky. I blink and squint my eyes. The pouring rain makes it hard to see anything, but I'm sure the light is there. And I'm right. The light grows stronger, more intense. On a normal day, I would have said it was the sun coming through after a storm. But today, it's not the sun.

Suddenly, the blanket of clouds breaks open and makes way for a gigantic fiery ball. This is it. This is the message from the universe. I'm in awe and can't turn away. Then the sound hits my ears. It's like a thunderclap echoing in a cave and me standing in the middle, unable to escape. It surrounds me and makes it hard to even follow my own thoughts. Although it's almost unbearably loud, it's also somehow soothing. A steady rhythm, dark and deep, and I feel my heartbeat synchronize with it.

The asteroid hits the water and is quickly out of sight. The water around piles up, forming a monstrous wave that slowly makes its way to the shore. It's a fascinating process. Destructive, yes, but also oddly beautiful. The clouds, the wave, a few rays of light from the burning asteroid. It looks like a painting, and I wish I would have brought my camera. I know the picture wouldn't survive this but still, just capturing this view would have been enough.

I close my eyes. It can't take long now. I wonder what's going to hit me first, the pressure wave or the water. Had I paid more attention in physics, I would probably know now. Or maybe not. Do the standard formulas still apply when an asteroid hits our planet? Doesn't matter now anyway. This is the end. And I am ready.



Michelle Piwek

Author Bios

Nils Apelmeier

Nils is a history student at Universität Bielefeld. When not thinking about historical or imaginary settings, he plays Pen and Paper or improvisational theatre. Despite all this, he still has a fair grip on reality... At least he hopes so.

L. P. Bachus is an aspiring writer from Bielefeld. Her interests lie mainly in the simple yet complicated everyday interactions and relations between ordinary people. She is currently studying philosophy and psychology at Bielefeld University. When she is not writing, she loves to read, drink copious amounts of coffee and discuss exciting ideas with friends. This is her first work to get published.

B. Befeldt is an amateur writer studying Anglistics and History at Bielefeld University to become a secondary school teacher. His focus in these texts were mostly influenced by spontaneously interpreted daily life situations. He is very interested in Music and old fashioned Video Games. These are his first works that are published.

Kay Dockhorn was born in Germany in 1998. She grew up in Australia though, moving there when she was 2 and living there for about 16 years before coming back to Germany to study. She's loved to read since the 2nd grade, and she wrote her first short story in the 5th grade. Kay self-published her first fantasy book in 2015 and did the same with the sequel 11 months later. She loves creative writing and is looking forward to all the works she'll be writing, and reading, in the future.

Tamara Hagspihl is a student of Bielefeld University. She lost her father when she was still a child, which is a contributing factor to the naturally emotive writing she can create with themes of loss. Tamara puts her whole heart into her writing, and I'm sure every reader will find themselves empathising with the tales she tells with her words.

Paula Kaiser is a student at Bielefeld University, whose studying English and loves creative writing. Storytelling is one of her greatest passions and happily shares her stories with others. She's been doing creative writing since she was in elementary school and her love for writing still remains today. Paula mostly writes short stories, but has recently found that writing poetry is actually quite nice. In her future, she plans on writing longer stories and keep improving herself and her writing.

Lara Korkmaz is a student at Bielefeld University.

Kiara Kuhrs

Hi everyone! My name is Kiara, and I study sports science and English at Bielefeld University. Besides doing rhythmic and artistic gymnastics, I found my passion for music through dance, and since I was a child, I have loved to sing as well. I always have Karaoke sessions in my car, and during the lockdown in 2021, I started writing my own songs. This is the second completed song I wrote, and I hope you like it.

Katharina Mainka is a student at Bielefeld University.

Michelle Piwek is studying English at Bielefeld University. After experiencing losses and struggling with mental health for several years, she recently rediscovered her love for creative writing, both through seminars as well as the LiLiGoesMental blog. She now uses writing as an outlet to express herself and deal with difficult things.

Malin Tan

My name is Malin Tan. I am 24 years old and currently studying Public Health in the last master semester. My hobbies are writing, singing, playing the piano and the guitar and doing sport

Ann-Kathrin Tebbe is a student at Bielefeld University.

Pia Tomkel is a student at Bielefeld University.