

Tenth Street Miscellany

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Tenth Street Miscellany

Mission Statement

Tenth Street Miscellany is a literary and arts journal produced by the students of Chadron State College. We seek to offer aspiring or unpublished writers and artists in the High Plains area an opportunity to express their individuality through various artful mediums.

Our editors work to provide a place for creators of the region to come together and put their works forward in a publication dedicated for them. In an area that can often feel overlooked, we think it's important to provide writers and artists with this opportunity to learn and share their skills with fellow writers.

Submitting works can be an intimidating experience and we hope to build a positive and encouraging experience for all aspiring creators.

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Music

A Collection by Yuta Tezuka

Sibyl



Purple Rabbit



Neo Schizophrenia



The Origin



Poetry

Dictionary

A Collection by Lydia Haselhorst

Howler

Mama warned me
not to sleep with bubble gum in my mouth,
I did it anyways.

It turned out just as she expected,
gobs of pink stickiness glued in my hair.

She spent the morning cutting chunks
of blonde entangled in tacky goop
from my head saying

*I knew this would happen,
You should have listened to me.*

Mama warned me about you,
but we know how well I listen to Mama.

Howler (N.) a painfully obvious mistake

Larvate

She lay cradled in my lap.
Her head turns into me and cries,
nails dig into my arm thinking I am her blanket.

She mistakes my fallen tear
on her cheek for his.

She asks him about it.
He doesn't say yes,
but he also does not deny.
So she follows him,
putting on her wardrobe of empty promises
to cover the wounds.

Single pieces have turned into a collection:

A hoodie	I love you
A bracelet	I'll never hurt you
A pair of shoes	I'll never lie to you
A ring	I'll always be here for you

My skin has been rubbed raw
from washing her tears away from my body.
She ignores her own wounds, but
do you think if I
stopped wearing long sleeves
covering mine,
she would leave him?

Larvate (adj.) covered or concealed by or as if by a mask

Selfish

The razor blade fell from her bloody hands.
Her body was lifeless
almost.

He found her before the last bit of herself had left.
He pleaded
Stay with me
wrapping the towel around her wrist

You have to stay with me
around and around
and around

I need you
he held the stained towel
tightly against her wrists

her dead eyes raised to his
she murmured
Convince me to stay for myself

With his mind empty,
his grip loosened.

Selfish (adj.) only concerned with one's desires rather than the best for others

17

Adeline Beason

I am an art museum.
I see the way he looks at me
When I stop being human,
And instead become something else:
Legs carved in marble
Oil painted lips
High blonde ponytail, sculpted from clay
I see the look in his eyes
When he's taking in that view,
Touring the facilities.

At my age, I've come to understand
I am an ancient thing:
A moss-covered monument
Masterpiece sealed in glass
Statue worn from years of fingerprints
All that I ask, as art museums do
Is that my patrons exercise caution
But I see the way he looks at me
And what do little boys do?
When the sign says "please keep your hands to yourself?"

I Always Win

Adeline Beason

perhaps it's cruel,
the cycle of meeting, loving, dying, recycling.
the aching loneliness, the vacuum of space that waits for Him

there's always a Him
That is, with a capital H.
Curly hair, a sharp smile
Some indescribable thing.
that draws me in when it's time to start again
He's indifferent at first, a little meaningless eye contact

i start turning him back into a stranger
when it catches
the little notification that tells me he's typing,
and that i've won.
as i have a thousand times
and a thousand times again

when the story reaches its climax
and we inevitably make that beast with two backs
He might be on top of me, pinning me down, squeezing my throat
shut,
but I see it there, in His eyes
He could kill me in that moment, and i've won.

by drawing Him in, giving him that power,
i make the end of the cycle and hurt Him again,
and for a moment make Him feel my loneliness, my vacuum.

it never gets easier
and i always win.

Making Stars Together

Azariah Knight

Created with care
From life my own I craft them
Their light is my own
Sent out into night
Feeling all that I cannot
Eyes that see the sun
 “Close your eyes and wish”
 I must peek through my fingers
 To watch something rare
 How could I not look
 Like arrows shot over us
 Falling from somewhere
Night sends me wishes
Wonderful, naïve, hopeful
Dust off and send home
It dies as I wake
Our only way to be one

Certified Summer Hater

Azariah Knight

I am melting on the concrete edge of the deep end
Summer is here.

Three mothers drag their plastic chairs across the pavement
The clattering echoes over the others laughing and gossiping
They lather each other's shoulders in tanning oil.

They're the blinding kind of pale, and their skin goes scarlet before
sienna

Their cheeks glow like coals before they settle.

The sun an unwelcome guest, only to me, it seems
It cackles at my upward glare.

Blue and green tiles under my legs,

Scrape uncomfortably on the descent into cool water.

Make it petrified grass and cartoonish snowflakes,

Dew should be crystal; tongues for catching snow

Not the sweat of your upper lip.

I inspect my adversary from under the water.

The worst I can do is present a middle finger

Come up for air

Wishing it

Autumn

Arithmetic Sequence

Bailey Schneider

My math teacher taught me to solve math problems.

$y = mx + b$ and SOHCAHTOA

How to cook a hotdog using a parabola

When subtracting a negative you add the opposite.

My math teacher taught me to solve problems.

The best play in basketball is done through misdirection

It's okay for friends to fight, just don't let it last

Blue shirts always look good with khaki pants.

My math teacher taught me that teachers have problems too.

Sometimes you give less homework after a fight with your wife

Smoking is something you hide from your students

Coaching more sports can distract you from being at home.

My math teacher didn't teach me how to help when a teacher has problems.

You never expect someone who knows how to swim to drown.

A teacher usually asks if you're doing okay, not the other way around

And you don't go tell an adult that another adult has issues.

My math teacher didn't solve his own problems,

At least, not in the way you'd hope.

If we would have known his problems were that bad,

We would have tried to help him solve them.

My math teacher had problems,

Not the kind that you can solve from the bold words in a textbook.

Ones he thought you could only solve by leaving forever

But that didn't solve the problems, it only left undiscoverable answers.

Quiet and Kind

Calyn Degnan

Quiet and kind girl
Why do you tilt your head down,
Is it rather in view of love
Or in fright?

You hold yourself so tight in that frame,
Why not let yourself free
Walk into my arms and heart,
let no man hurt you ever again.

For you are the one of my eyes
Devoted to only you.
Why hold fast to your beauty?
I shower you in notes of love
And petals of many colorful flowers.

I beg of you,
Please step into the light
Your beauty radiates above the rest.

Three's a crowd

Angelyse Perez

Three's a crowd they said, why not take that into consideration.
Are you too scared you'll end up alone and into pure devastation?
Or perhaps you think that joining in will be all dandy and fun!
But you will end up turning this friendship undone.

You probably think I am making this because I'm jealous,
Which is not true, in fact I am overzealous!
You know I was here first before you came along,
I think you just have this whole thing all wrong.

Now you are both looking at me like craziest here,
Stop doing that, it's making me feel very weird.
Look I may sound a bit too envious to your liking,
But what I am saying is true, I am not lying.

Three is a crowd, no more no less
Do I need to repeat myself about this mess?
If I am to count by twos its very proving,
If I count by threes, it is anything but moving.

And you're doing it again looking my way,
As if you're simply trying to say,
Are you okay, do you want to talk about it?
And I say no because I don't want to talk about it.
And you say, are you sure?
And I say yeah, I am sure.

And then we both stop and stare,
You try to lend a hand but am not there.
I really do want to explain it to you,
But in my mind, it's all too new.

I want to try to write something to help,
Instead of hiding my emotions and just going “whelp!”
Maybe I can start with song,
Or perhaps a poem that’s a bit too long.

So, let’s start it here with one last reason to rhyme,
Sometimes I get nervous because of the time.
I get scared and like push things aside
I don’t mean to just; I don’t like to confide.

But please do not look at me with very pitiful minds,
This is exactly why I don’t let you know what goes on behind.
Because if I let you into my hard exterior walls,
I don’t know how to protect myself again from the calls.

I will never truly feel safe with letting you know what really goes
on,
You are like this vast ocean, and I am just simply a pond.
And you are this ginormous crystal that everyone loves to be
around,
And I feel like I’m just this random rock a kid found.

So, is three a crowd? Let me put that into consideration.
I am the one too scared to end up alone and into pure devastation.
Joining in was not as dandy and fun
Instead, it made me feel like I was watching a friendship of three
become undone.

Might and Maybe

Angelyse Perez

I think I **might** have a problem—
But nothing too big nothing too small.
And it's obviously not that serious because—
I **might** have a problem
What are the chances I do have a problem
because I said "**might**".

Maybe I do have something but **might** not,
the word **maybe** is also indecisive
and **might** isn't confident—
So, it shouldn't matter.

Might and **maybe** are not that serious—
Right?

Might and **maybe** is just a theory, a thought, nothing set in stone.
Nothing labeled, nothing diagnosed, nothing prescribed—

Or **maybe**—
I'm just scared.

Okay, I **might** be terrified.
But if I repeat the **might** and **maybe**,
that **maybe** and **might** won't be true.
That this realization isn't really there—
That there **might** not even be a problem.

You know **maybe**—

I **might**—
I don't know.

Maybe my **might** is just my security,
and it **might** be that I **maybe** is my safety.
Safety from what you ask?

That—

"You **might** have ADHD, and **maybe** that's why you are experiencing anxiety?"

Not Born In The New Generation

Samuel LaRive

(I'm Macduff and I'm bummed about it)

The clean costume constantly handmade
Shakes so softly in the theater's backstage.
It's nowhere near the start of this act, so
Try not to focus on the things that lack

And all of this because
You just happened to be standing there when,
Some idiot wanted to quote Macbeth

All those long lines come out fine
But Sir Shakespeare started sleeping here
Cos' some idiot quotes Macbeth

Make a few jokes, oh so funny
But no one would let you forget
That idiot that quoted Macbeth

The cast got cursed, somewhere in the snow
It's oh so obvious during the show
Wrung hands clenched a page
Shouting that passion from a student's stable stage

Tips From The Poet's Muse

Samuel LaRive

Don't you dare

compare me

To a sunrise or

A sunset.

I'm not like the flowers in the garden,

In bloom or wasting away.

Don't say I'm like the snow

Or the rain.

I won't ever match any shade of blue. So please,

Don't dream of me crying or

Even wonder where I wander.

Just

Don't call me 'baby,'

Don't call me at all.

Life Snippets of Existence

Collection by Jarret Buchholz

PB&J's

Adulthood is
eating PB&Js in bed
but forgetting to enjoy them
for fear of spilling
on the mattress

A Spark

Smiles

They giggle

They laugh

Eyes meet

Spark

A flash unites two souls

An unforgettable moment passes

They part

Thoughts lingering

Only on each other

The Hypothetical Relationship with My Father

What if my dad never left, hypothetically speaking.
What if he and my mother got married?
Or even liked each other?

Would I have siblings?

Other than my half-sisters who were so young when we stopped speaking.

Would our hypothetical family have a family portrait hanging over our fireplace?

Who am I kidding?

Even with you we'd never be able to afford a home with a fireplace.

You lived like a frat boy until your mid-forties.

Only after your third kid did you decide to take charge.

But what if you took charge sooner?

Would you become the breadwinner?

Would you support every member of your hypothetical nuclear family?

Would you kiss my mother goodbye when you went to work?

Would we play catch in the yard?

Would you help my hypothetical sister with her homework?

Would we sit around our dinner table each night thankful for each other?

Thankful for you?

What if you came to my football games?

Would I have grown to like it, instead of playing out of survival?

Would you have supported my love for the arts?

Would you listen to my concerts?

Or come to my shows?

Or read my writing?

Or be there?

That's a lot to ask, I know,
But what if your son didn't have to feel
Such malice toward his father in order to survive?

What if he didn't cringe every time someone said,
"Your Parents"

What if he could celebrate Father's Day instead of dread it?

What if he didn't have to make jokes about you to ease the pain?

Why couldn't you just be there?
Even if you didn't get along with my mother.
Even if you still lived on the other side of the state.

You could've at least tried.

What if your son wasn't an
Afterthought?

What if your son still loved you?

Hypothetically speaking

*Creative
Nonfiction*

Not So Quick and Extra Dirty

Jace Demeranville

Rocks crunch underneath my tires. The Wildcat Hills loom in the distance. A cacophony of brake squeaks and rolling wheels from hundreds of riders in front and behind me proved deafening. Air flows through my helmet and hair. My outfit moves further from a fashion statement and closer to the fashion police watch list. Loose dirt grinds under my tires, and I lean into a turn at the bottom of a hill. My bike, with its own mind, decides straight is the most efficient direction of travel.

Straight into a bar-ditch, bitch.

In my freshman year of college, a professor threw around the idea of a cross-country bike trip. I, not having a bike suitable for the trip or money to afford gas home, decided the trip was a great idea. I attended a lecture on bike touring complete with photos, routes, gear, and a bike ready to tackle the world. I was hooked in an instant. I called my mom that night and told her my grand plan to cycle across the United States. She supported my dream and promised to help make it come true. My girlfriend disapproved. I ignored her.

A handful of months later, I scrounged up the money and purchased my first bike. Unnamed at the time of purchase, Cool Ranch is now one of three bikes. I loved her from the very beginning and dreamed big for her. She would travel the world with me. The Nebraska Panhandle became our training ground.

I found Gering the most boring place on earth. I worked, slept, and ate every day. Cool Ranch provided a sense of direction and enthusiasm to explore my local region at a slowed pace. We rode, watched cycling videos, or surfed online forums. Thanks to

my professor, Dr. Kinbacher, I fell face-first into the world of cycling. My wallet did not survive.

One night I stumbled upon a local cycling event and drunkenly signed up. The Roubidoux Quick and Dirty provided sixty-seven miles of dirt for races or casual rides. I was, and still am, young and dumb. But this race contributed to a bigger plan. It gifted me a chance to train for the Quick and Dirty and a thirty-five-hundred-mile bike trip. I studied all summer, and this race was the test.

I started my summer training strong. We rode one hundred miles a week. I purchased new tires that made her feel faster. I bought fingerless gloves and cycling shorts so I would feel cooler. Two weeks before race day, I started full-time flipping Blizzards™. I said goodbye to crisp morning cruises and hello to sweltering evening heat.

I attempted to ride Cool Ranch some. I played with some parts and busted her derailleur, which changes the gears, the week before the big day. Either the derailleur worked, or I walked. My local bike shop resuscitated her in time for the race.

Six a.m. marked the race start. Internet research suggested that a full meal two hours before the race allowed for minimal bonking early on. Bonking is that miserable moment when your body used the food you ate today and expelled all its energy. A four-a.m. wakeup seemed like a great idea. I could eat, hydrate, and warm up my legs.

The internet is full of liars. I woke up at five-thirty. This provided just enough time to get dressed and ride to the start line.

Whistles rang and crowds cheered. Hundreds of cyclists began their cruise toward the hills. A police escort led the charge out of town towards an almost fun day in the bike saddle. Positive vibes flooded the air. The atmosphere inspired me to ride, ride, and ride

some more. The peloton hit the dirt and the race was on. A thunderous roar of wheels sliced through the whooping and hollering of professionals and amateurs.

The first fifteen miles of rolling hills showcased my best riding to date, I could ride all day. My world was at peace. Until it wasn't.

Cool Ranch and I crawled out of the bar ditch. I smacked her handlebars back into alignment and spit the dirt, grass, and cow shit out of my mouth. The ride must go on, and on it went. The first real climb followed the collision. I was dirty, but otherwise great. I pedaled past dried grasses, towering dehydrated pines, and the first of three aid stations. Up, up, up I climbed, then I remembered the law of gravity. I am no physicist, but what goes up must go down.

I worked for that downhill. My phone displayed my speed. I got as close to Mach 1 as humanly possible: fifty-seven point four miles per hour. I stuck my ass out, threw my hands into the drops, and lowered my head toward Cool Ranch's frame. This position gifted maximum efficiency, maximum aerodynamics, and the perfect opportunity for the event organizers to catch a snapshot of my rear. I flew down that hill, or as close to flying as one can get wingless on two wheels.

I focused on the hills ahead of me. I savored the downhills and conserved my energy to crush the roads ahead. The rolling hills were conquered, but the next one would triumph over me. The tires on my bike were suitable for the asphalt road, but my body was not designed for the headwind and three-mile climb. My muscles ached as I climbed toward the second aid station.

My response was to shove my face full of Clif Bar and keep on grinding. I summited the hill and yellow-vested volunteers greeted me. Scratch Labs Rice Krispies, the true hero, accompanied

them. Marshmallows and crispy rice drizzled with dark chocolate crammed my cheeks.

The true icing on the Rice Krispy proved to be going downhill on Old Stagecoach Road. A short, but sweet descent long enough to digest my snack. I plummeted towards the final section of the terrain. I was prepared to crush the hills. I waved and the grass waved back. At mile forty, I was exhausted when the final climb came into view. Talk about a mood killer.

Carter Canyon Road provided a sick downhill on my previous rides. Hills that are fun descents tend to be insufferable climbs. My tires rolled over cracked pavement topped with crushed gravel. The combination created a slick surface ill-fit for climbing. Cool Ranch met her match, and I met mine. My legs weighed a ton and my arms struggled to hold my body upright.

My mind manifested snails that paced faster than us. Other riders demonstrated that walking was faster.

Less than halfway up, my legs that struggled to pedal now pushed my near-lifeless body and Cool Ranch up a hill. At this moment, the shade on the side of the road was the only thing that boosted my serotonin levels.

One step, two steps, rest. One step, two steps, rest. The cycle continued for a lifetime.

My perseverance paid off. At the top of the hill stood the final aid station armed with pickle juice shots. Ice cold pickle juice might not sound appetizing to anyone of right mind but to a half-dead cyclist, it was liquid gold. A rice treat followed two shots of juice.

The finish line was in sight, but the twenty miles seemed to stretch forever. While mostly downhill, I was riding through Jell-O. My legs certainly felt that way. I passed some farmhouses, fields,

and a few dogs. I challenged myself to catch the rider ahead of me. I lucked out when they started walking. Thoughts of quitting swarmed my mind, but my heart swatted back.

My family waited at the end. Six a.m. was too early for a send-off. They served as my reception party. After six hours, thirty-seven minutes and eleven seconds, I completed the race. A bump, bump signaled my timer stopping, and I crossed the line.

Clicks of a camera filled the air and my discombobulated brain spotted my family. I collapsed into them and met an ice-cold Gatorade. I hobbled over to the vehicles where someone threw my bike in the bed of our truck. I crawled into my sister's car and soaked in the air conditioning. For the first time all day, I inhaled something other than dirt.

I am beyond glad I completed the ride. In my early days of cycling, sixty-seven miles proved no easy task. I described it as type two fun. The type of fun when the moment is miserable, but it makes a great story. Type two is my favorite type of fun. I never gained anything from easy tasks. The race proved what Cool Ranch and I were capable of. That provided enough reward.

For 6:37:11, at a pace of ten point seven miles per hour, I pedaled and pushed my bike up and down hills. I did not accomplish every goal of mine. The one that I am determined to revisit, or even top, is to finish the sixty-seven-mile race before any of the hundred-mile racers. First place for both distances exceeded twenty miles per hour for the entirety of the race. I met the race's ten-mile-per-hour minimum by a whisker.

Professional racers and I are not built the same. I only have one thing to say. I'll be back, not so quick, and extra dirty.

Dear Blue Dog
Shayne Bayles

In 2006, at four years old, my parents took my brother and I to choose a puppy. We arrived at a family friend's ranch and were greeted with the licks and squeals of Blue Heeler puppies.

"What about this one?" I said. I picked up one of the squirming balls of fluff.

My dad shook his head and gazed around. The smallest of the puppies waltzed up to him as if to say hello. My dad knew that she would be our dog. Something about her set her apart from the others.

After we pulled into the driveway, my mom asked what we should name her.

"Candy!" I exclaimed.

As a four-year-old, thoughts of candy usually danced around my brain.

My brother, Kaleb, decided it would be spelled Kande, just to make it more interesting.

She quickly learned that when my dad whistled, it meant she needed to come back. I couldn't whistle, so instead, I mimicked my dad's whistle by going "woo-ah-whoop!" Kande would come to this sound as well. Eventually, I had the whole family doing "woo-ah-whoops" to call for her.

I used to make "wontons" for Kande. Wontons consisted of a dead walnut from our looming black walnut tree wrapped in a blade of grass. They were her favorite treat for some reason. Later in my life, I learned that dogs shouldn't eat black walnuts.

If you sat near Kandee, she nuzzled into the back of your arm, so you'd put it around her. She found comfort in this as much as I did. It warmed my heart to know that she wanted to be close to me.

A little kitten named Pretzel joined our family at one point. We'd been woken up late in the night by Kandee's barking and howling. Pretzel fell into our irrigation well. Kandee jumped over the fence to try to save him. If it weren't for her, we would've lost Pretzel that night.

She regularly jumped the fence during thunderstorms. Nothing scared Kandee except for thunder. During one particular thunderstorm, I was on the playground across the street from our house. Kandee bolted into the road from our front yard. I lifted the playground's fence with all my first grader might. Kandee squeezed under and played with me and my friends. It alarmed the teacher on recess duty to see an army of first graders running around with a dog.

"She's my dog," I told her proudly.

Ms. Peebles and I walked Kandee back to my house, and I chained her up. I never liked doing that, but it kept her contained.

Kandee hated being picked up just as much as she hated the thunder. Even as a puppy, she'd nip and yap at you if you tried to pick her up. She loved to sit in laps, despite being a bit too big for them

Kandee ran faster than any dog I knew. She loved to chase the ball, though she'd never bring it back. ATV rides excited her to no end. She preferred running alongside us and would even jump off the moving ATV if we tried to get her to sit with us. She once got road rash on her chin after she leaped off. I cried with worry for my dear dog, but she got right back up and resumed her sprint. She'd jump without hesitation at the sight of a marmot or chipmunk as

well. If I saw the small creatures before her, I'd hold onto her collar.

She'd spend hours digging if we let her. She yelped if the rodents fought back and nipped at her. Kandee greeted us after her marmot hunts with her black nose now brown with dirt.

Kandee joined in on our various camping trips. Cattle grazed the forests of western Colorado, and Kandee chased them out of our camping site with ease. She was a cattle dog at heart, after all.

Cattle weren't the only things she herded either. She often rounded Kaleb and I up when it got dark or when bedtime approached. Anytime we wandered to the dark side of the yard, distant from the porch light, Kandee made certain that we stayed visible to our parents. My mother told me a story of Kaleb and I leaving the light of the campfire one night only to be guided back to the flickering light by Kandee.

When Kandee was four, a sassy Jack Russel named Pip joined our family. We thought she resembled a Chihuahua in attitude. Pip loved my mom more than anyone else and slept between her legs each night. Like Kandee, Pip just so happened to be the runt of the litter. They grew close over the years. Pip actually knew to bring the ball back during a game of fetch. Kandee took this opportunity to play keep away from the smaller dog. She ran much faster anyway.

Pip dwindled by her eighth year. She no longer recognized my mom. It broke her heart to no end that her beloved dog was no longer the same Pip we once knew. To this day, we still have no idea what caused her to go downhill so quickly. We said goodbye to her on September 14, 2018.

My dear blue dog took Pip's death nearly as hard as my mom did. Kandee fell into a depression. Her usual chipper self disappeared. We never expected to lose Pip before Kandee. She reached

twelve years old at this point, and her health began to decline. She didn't run quite as fast as she did in her prime.

In February of the following year, Remi, a yellow lab, came along. It seemed to cheer Kandee up to have a new companion. A lot of our attention had to go to Remi to ensure she got the proper training.

Kandee fell down the stairs every once in a while. One night, while my dad was away for work, my mom and I woke up to Kandee crying out in pain. She had fallen down the stairs. Once my mom helped her up, she brushed the dust off. I cried. Kandee never deserved to feel any pain. An ache rose in my chest each time she fell down the stairs.

At the end of July 2021, we moved to Arizona. We feared Kandee wouldn't make the eight-hour trip. My aunt gave us some CBD treats to calm the dogs down in the car. My mom fed ninety-five-pound Remi and thirty-five-pound Kandee the same treat without giving it a second thought. A sheepish smile graced Kandee's face for the rest of the journey. Dogs don't technically smile, I know, but I swear to you she smiled.

Kandee declined rapidly after our move. Every day was a toss-up. Some days she chased Remi around the yard. Other days she threw up on the floor and struggled to get to her feet. My family questioned her quality of life, but it was easier to make light of the good days than to think of the bad days.

During Thanksgiving, my brother, his fiancé, and my cousin all came to visit. Our small rental didn't have the capacity for six people. My cousin and I set up an air mattress in the living room for the two of us. It sat low enough to the ground for Kandee to climb up and sleep with us. I missed the times of Kandee laying on my lap on the sofa. I regretted the times I'd asked her to get off of me.

On April 25, 2022, I stood in the kitchen of my new apartment, cooking oatmeal on the stove as if I were fifty years older. I received a Snapchat from my mom, a picture of Kandee with a caption that read “Kandee isn’t doing so well.” A couple of bites into my breakfast, she called me.

“We’re taking Kandee in today,” She said.

“Okay,” I said.

I expected this for a long time. Kandee just turned sixteen.

My mom cried through the phone. She told me that Kandee hadn’t been able to stand up on her own for the past few days. It wasn’t fair for my mom to have to make this decision. She had to make the same decision for Pip four years prior, and it still pained her. I cried with her.

I recalled the day before and how I boasted to my roommate about how my dear blue dog just refused to die. How we’d been expecting her to for years, but she kept on keeping on. We joked that she would break the record for the oldest dog, which is currently held by a different blue heeler.

I FaceTimed my mom a couple of hours later. I used my tomato plants as an excuse, asking her when I should transplant them. In reality, I wanted nothing more than to be with my family.

She showed me around their new house, taking me through the bedrooms and the dogs’ room. She showed my face to Kandee, repeating that she wasn’t doing well.

“Hi, Kandee,” I said.

Kandee lifted her head, with a bit of an excited bounce. Miraculously, she heard my voice and recognized it even. We’d believed her to be deaf for the past few years. Selective hearing might have been a better diagnosis.

I hoped that my voice brought her comfort during her last hours.

Later in the day, my mom sent me a simple text that read, “She’s gone now. I’m sorry.”

“It’s okay,” I responded.

I believed it at first. They say denial is the first stage of grief.

My head contained a layer of fog. I tried to distract myself with work.

Night fell and so did my tears. I scream-cried all the way home.

Who would nuzzle their head under my arm when I cried now?

It’s lonesome to cry alone for days on end. I yearned for my family. Being away from them made this loss much more difficult.

I regretted all the times I’d elected to play with Remi instead of Kandee. Or the times I’d taken Remi for a car ride because Kandee couldn’t hop into the car.

If only I’d spent more time with her.

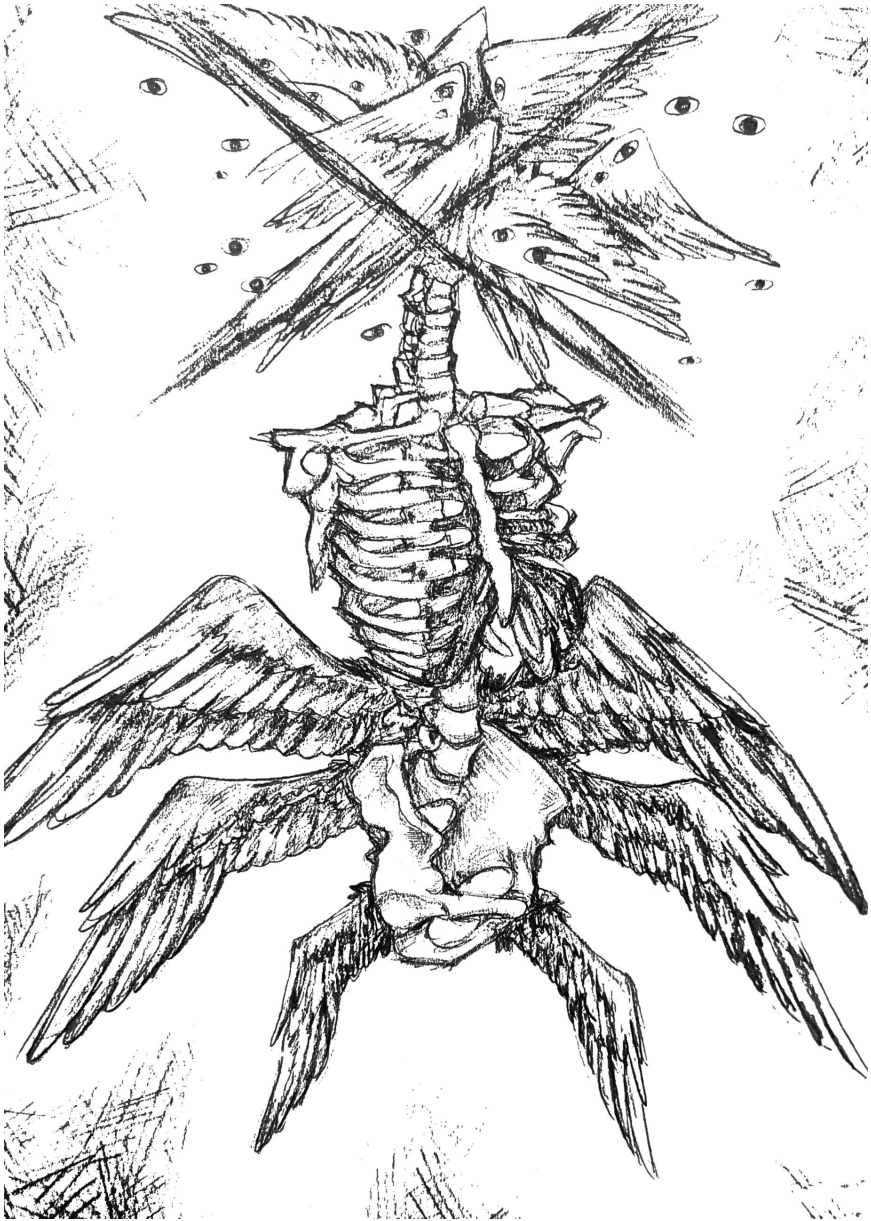
If only I’d cherished the simple moments more.

If only I’d gotten just one more day with her.

I kept telling myself she was in a better place; she wasn’t suffering anymore. People always throw these quotes around when it comes to death. I never realized that it isn’t all that reassuring until I lost Kandee.

How do you say goodbye to sixteen years of your life?

I haven’t figured it out yet.



Angel
Rowan Paul

Hot Drinks For a Cold Day
Collection by Mackenzie Dahlberg



Three Drinks *Mackenzie Dahlberg*



Espresso
Mackenzie Dahlberg



Latte Mixing
Mackenzie Dahlberg



Frosty Morning *Kamryn Kozisek*

Fiction

Somebody to Love

Jawny Freyja -Past Editor of Tenth Street Miscellany

You are quite sure the patterns on the ceiling shifted since you lay down that night. Maybe that bubble wiggled to the right a little bit. Did those streaks change direction? You can't tell. The red glow from your snake's night-lamp veils your room in "emergency" and illusions.

A symphony of joyous xylophones erupts in your right ear. Ringing high notes give way for deep gongs only to slide back up the scales. You heave a double-lung sigh and roll to your side. Fat white numbers dance across the screen. Time to get up already? Your fingernail clicks against the dismiss button. A closeup of your faces steals your motivation.

You started the night at the bars, but She said *let's go*. You throw a few bucks on the counter for your ice-waters and grab your bags. Booze sloshes in Her backpack, weed stinks in your's. *I heard there's a party*. You ask Her where, and cruise up Main Street. Sappy love songs drift from your speakers. Shadows of bodies slink along sidewalks. They converge toward one house on the corner. Your pickup sidles into a spot across the street. You clamber out of the truck and weave fingers. A regular Bonnie and Clyde. She pulls you up the porch steps. The real door sits wide open, only a sheet of glass with a gold handle keeping two worlds separate. She's blind from the few drinks at the bar. You open your mouth to say something, but the words are too slow.

BANG!

She stumbles away from the pane holding Her forehead. Dinner plate eyes study the door and shift to you. Her thoughts ring clear in your mind. The only answer you can provide Her telepathy is laughter. You bring Her hand to Her waist and stretch across Her with the other. The gold handle dips. You pull the door open for Her. Her jaw detaches like a snake's. For a moment She is silent, then tipsy laughter bubbles from Her chest. You smile, ushering Her inside.

The xylophones rip you back to reality. Another click brings silence. The pale beginnings of dawn tinge the red lights pink on your ceiling. You wonder if today is going to be any different. Another pair of checkered boxers and mismatched no-show socks are plucked from their respective bins. You doggy-scoot to the end of the mattress that still sits on the floor. Glow stick bones and Rice Crispy joints echo around the room. You cycle through an array of monochromatic t-shirts. Explicit words and drug use on a black background slide off a plastic hanger. The routine answers your question with no extra points for subtlety. Nike sweats unfold out of their drawer and you loop around the open-concept wardrobe.

Your landlord attempted to justify *not* building closets into the shop-house's bedroom during your walkthrough. Instead, the previous renters utilized a rather solid, steel pipe box on wheels and an IKEA open-closet. You overlooked the transgression as you would the teeth of a gifted horse. With the best view in town all to yourself for less than six hundred dollars a month, you would sooner have a heart-to-heart with dad. You signed those dotted lines and wrote the first check, lack of closets be damned. Besides, if anyone could figure out what to do with the scaffolding, it was Her.

The first time She came over you gave Her the grand tour. It's empty, but interesting, nonetheless. Most of your things are still

in your apartment, but She knows just what to do with everything you own and where to put it. Not surprisingly, most of Her suggestions are things you would do in the first place. Furniture layouts and decoration locations harmonize between your minds. It takes you a week and some change to get all your things moved over. You won't get everything unpacked before you go home for the summer, though. Suppose you can blame Her for that, too.

The door at the other end of the bedroom's U marks the end of the carpet and the start of cold, stick-on tile. The bathroom is big enough to play baseball in but lacks the king-sized tub for 10. You toss your clothes on a little table holding a not-quite body-length mirror. The glass warbles a dangerous tune. You don't look for a fall. The silver handle travels from 90° to 0° to 300° in a single twist. A hundred calcium-encrusted geysers sputter open onto the stained plastic floor. A polyester seat collects a little pool to rehydrate its petri-dish residents. Your organic haircare with "No" lists longer than a regular product's ingredient lists glisten in the spray. Your locks might still be a dying wicker-basket if not for Her intervention.

She spread Her arms wide at the aisle of shower stuffs. *You see alllll this? This shit is trash.* You nod with modest understanding, a student in the presence of the Master. You can only pray to have hair as incredible as Her's one day. She promises you that using the right products, albeit the expensive ones, will do wonders for even the unhealthiest of hairs. You pick out mostly coconut infused lathers and She dumps a handful of little foil pouches in your basket. *Hair masks. Use 'em.* You bite your lip. Anything for Her.

It's hard to complain. The soap is actually amazing. Your hair has never been silkier and you don't expect to find a better product for cheaper. You grit your teeth. A blob of provocative goop

squirts into your palm and you scrub it into your scalp. Exfoliating body wash suds over unwashable art and blank canvases. The streams of steam rinse off the bubbles and grime. You rub conditioner through and tie your mane up to soak in the grease. A sticky sugar scrub works over your skin like a young martial artist's fence-waxing technique. Sloughing off dead skin and deep grime is the most important step in shaving, though your sensitive skin suffers from just about any type of depilation. The occasional hair ingrows and there's always a span of time that your entire body burns with new hairs digging themselves out of closing pores. You shudder. Nothing will compare to the hell you put yourself through with the epilator.

Your hands scrub slimy sugar over pockmarked thighs. You've since disposed of the epilator and taken to micro-blades designed for eyebrows. Also one of Her suggestions, though for different reasons, the little pink and white shavers smooth your legs over far better than classic, multi-blade cartridge razors. Maybe you'll try a straight razor some day. Something about one blade agrees a little better with your baby-butt-soft skin. After a thorough flaying you rinse the coconut oils from your scalp. The water ceases. You shing the shower curtain open and reach for your amethyst microfiber hair towel.

She pulled off a towel turban better than anyone. The ocean-blue hair wrap accentuates Her ears and pulls giggles from your throat with each picture. You wear your own, though just a normal body towel holds your sopping hair up. She yells at you through the phone about your terrible practice. *The bigger towels wrap too tight around the hair and kill it.* You believe Her, a headache brewing where your skull attaches to your neck. She tells you to go to Walmart and buy yourself one like Her's this instant. You almost

forget to dress yourself before flying to follow Her commands.

With your hair wrapped up in lilac you tuck the corner of a brown and white striped towel under the tight spot by your armpit. A small leap brings you to the rug in front of the vanity. A set of puckered lips ward off steam on the mirror. A little ghost kiss. Your fingers pluck the toothpaste and brush from their bronze cup. The micro-bristle toothbrush pops up on your social media feed once in a while, but the internet is no contender for Her. Your knuckles whiten around the squishy rubber shaft. She can probably take responsibility for most of the things in your bathroom. Your fists slam on the counter, your head hanging over the sink bowl.

Her latest breakup challenged Her self-care routines. She lays in bed drinking and refusing to bathe. You spend nearly all your time with Her, making sure She doesn't drown and begging Her, at the very least, to brush Her hair. You're successful about once a week, sometimes resorting to goads and jeers to get Her in the shower. She doesn't actually stink. Not to you. You just do what's necessary when you have to.

Something drips off your nose into the sink. Water from your wet hair, maybe. You shake your head and brush your teeth with the pillow-soft toothbrush. The minty foam bubbles over your lips. It burns your tongue and the cracks where your teeth gouge your smile. You spit with spite and rinse your mouth under the tap. The mirror is too foggy to see yourself, but that's not a bad thing. You don't want to see yourself right now. You don't want to see anyone.

Except Her.

You shake your head again. The body towel falls away. The bliss of sweatpants on your fresh shave gives you an unfamiliar shot

of refreshing serotonin. You pull your semi-emo tee over your orchid turban. Thick hair requires an extra long wrap time, especially to produce beautiful beach waves like yours. You contemplate putting one of the various oils or spritzers in. Unwrapping your hair now seems like a lot of work.

The next door swings open over more of the same tiles. You float into the kitchen. Thick raindrops smatter against the window overlooking the chickens' pen. A weighted blanket of clouds stretches southeast, hydrating the crusty hills. You sidestep to the fridge and dig through frozen breakfasts and blocks of raw meat. Tattooed fingers decide on an icy egg and sausage sandwich. You wrap it with a paper towel and toss it in the microwave. Your stomach doesn't growl, but She would want you to eat *something*, even if it is processed garbage.

Discovering the toxicity of social media proved one of your biggest accomplishments. Your thumb flicks in a mindless haze. Pictures and videos and quippy quotes blur together. The world at your fingertips and you choose to spend a third of the day, everyday, fantasizing about other people's lives. About your life with Her. It isn't the wonderful or incredible that pulls you from your stupor, but the smaller messages. Little digital notes detail Her reactions to posts. A like here, a comment there. Maybe She is trying to tell you something with those likes. You dig into Her profiles. A search for context produces only disappointment. You consult your closest confidants, but only dread fills your empty DM's. Horoscopes and tarot draws tell you to look out for trios of numbers. *Butterflies and bees will signal an approaching soul mate*. She loves butterflies. An injection of hope. You love bees.

You re-download your favorite apps, but leave the notifica-

tions turned off. Detaching your life from the internet keeps your mind from sticking to Her existence. You're free to live a little, to think for yourself. It doesn't matter. She is tattooed on your brain. Every joyful moment, every tear shed in confidence, leaves a different etching in your grey matter. Maybe some music will help. A little weed, perhaps.

You tell your speaker to play something. Soft melodies grace your ears. Dirty water sloshes around in the bottom of an intricate water-pipe. You scrape a pile of dusty flower together on its tray and smooch it into the bowl. The steel wheel strikes the stick of flint throwing sparks into a stream of invisible gas. A tongue of orange flares over the green. Your gentle breath pulls the flame deeper into the herbs. Milky smoke bubbles from the scummy water, filling the bong. You pinch the bowl's glass spur and twist, unsticking the roughed male and female from each other. A deep inhale rips the blob of smoke through the glass and into your lungs. Drugs used to be fun.

You spewed a gout of vapor across Her hardwood floor. On the other couch She stretches Her arms and legs as long as She can. Her eyes doze over to you followed by a sleepish grin. *Good afternoon*. The breakfast burritos that morning paired with the all-nighter you pulled prior added up to an unexpected, though not unwelcome, coma-nap. You perform your own feline stretch and return the greeting. You find yourself spending as much time with Her as you can before Life pulls you apart. How many days was this in a row? It's hard to say, especially taking into account your severe lack of sleep. Fortnite blurs the nights together. Babysitting Her binge drinking fogs over the days. You just need to be around Her. Things can't end so anticlimactically. Not while you still having panic attacks walk-

ing out Her door.

What're we gonna do today?

You shrug your shoulders, but an itching spontaneousness grows in the back of your mind. You wonder aloud what drinking three or four micro doses would do. She cocks Her perfect eyebrow at you. *You have drugs?* Your earlobe tugs at the corner of your mouth. You tell Her about the tab and a half of LSD sitting next to the single hit of MDMA in your favorite stash-spot. Fire ignites behind the emeralds She possesses for eyes. Ideas for ingestion float back and forth until you decide to split both. *Let's go.*

You shake your head and take another hit from the bong. How stupid could you be? Mixing such strong emotions with such mind-altering drugs. You should be ashamed of yourself. Some guru you are.

The errands took you first to the store, then to your house. The giant orange kitty, George, greets you both at the door. He rolls over to show you his stripped tummy, meowing for someone to trace them with sharp nails. She hunches over and fulfills the request. You smile and step over the kitty, into your house. The bottom of a Barbasol can twists off and an orange pill bottle falls into your hand. *Bye, George. I love you.* You clamber back in Her car and speed down the straightaway connecting your homes. In through the back door, you give Her kitty, Poppy, the love you neglected to show George. She sets out two glasses and fills one with juice. You dump the drugs in the glass and mix them around with a straw. They diffuse as even as you're going to get and you take extra care in pouring half the juice in the other cup. You hand Her the drink that didn't get the little squares of LSD. With shaky smiles, you weave

arms and each shoot your shots of brain blaster.

Two hours later your energies blend together. The acid warps your Reality, the molly keeps you from spiraling into mental oblivion. A brief adventure to one of your besties' house down the street ends with your hands woven together on the walk back to Her place. You tug Her hand down next to you in the grass outside Her front door. The stars shine through wisps of clouds. The fluffs scrub away at your fingertips.

You tell Her you love Her.

I know.

Your fingers wiggle between Hers. You can't find the right words. Reality starts to make less sense. You wonder if the Earth can feel your heart thumping.

You treated Her to dinner at the Chinese restaurant the other night. The waitress brings the check and fortune cookies after the buffet. Your cookie births it's slip of enlightenment.

*If you wait too long for the perfect moment,
the perfect moment will pass you by.*

This was your moment. Right here, right now. Maybe you can shift the feelings in Her with something drastic. Something risky. You dig your nails into your palm. You open your mouth, then shut it. You turn your head. The world around Her melts and explodes, but drugs can't warp Her face. Your mind fails to imagine anything other than the reality of Her perfection. You bring your eyes skyward again. Your mouth opens and words fall out of it. She cocks an eyebrow at you. *You want a kiss?*

You slam your head into your desk. What in the fuck did you think would happen? Other than a hot iron searing the single smooch into your brain? The severe panic attack later that night looking across the living room at Her sleeping face surprised you a bit, though. Thinking about the last time you'd ever see Her still doubles you over. The struggle to move air through your lungs. Soaking your hoodie in sweat. Curling up on Her bathroom floor, too insecure to ask Her for help. You didn't see those things coming.

You don't know what to do. You wake up to a vision of Her. Reality bombards you with loneliness throughout the day, killing you until you lay down again on your regal bedspread. You plead with your sleepy mind to produce even the shortest of dreams about Her. You just need to see Her again. Maybe if you tell Her how you feel, again, things will end different. Or not end. A raspy voice sputters over the speaker. Something about driving Her way, through the middle of the rain.

You focus on the song, drink in its lyrics, its message.

The Universe is speaking. The cookie bounces into view.

Maybe this is your moment.

Rubber pickup wheels roll down the stretch of concrete.

You'll never know if you don't try.

Enemies and Champagne

Kayla Campos

Bored. The vast amount of boredom seeped out in buckets from Kalon's aura. He didn't give a rat's ass about the ocean of pests that dressed in suits and ballgowns too extravagant for their own good. They danced around in what Kalon called a seizure of insects crawling around the floor.

“How could they possibly call this dancing?” he said.

Disgust plastered itself across his face. His dark brows furrowed together, and his lips curled into a scowl. The ball tonight claimed itself to be special. The leaders of each kingdom traveled to meet in the kingdom of Solia and form a peace treaty between their species after years of war.

Solon happened to catch Kalon's eyes. The flirty werewolf couldn't help himself from pursuing a human woman that giggled in a high-pitched tune. Kalon needed to plug his ears.

“You mutt. Surly your ear drums shattered after hearing that shriek,” he said.

The cheeky king continued to woo the woman and to Kalon's detest, they embraced to form a passionate kiss. He shook his head and turned on his heels. Three minutes held enough time for him to know just how horrible the ball would continue to be. Yet, he couldn't leave without causing controversy for his kingdom. He was bound like a bat in a cage.

In the glamor of it all, Kalon wore an exquisite attire. He adorned a black suit with gold embellishments that showed off his chic charm and figure. The leather gloves on his hands held his signature statement. Kalon made the simplest of movements appear elegant to the eyes of his secret admirers. He didn't bat an eye to their piercing stares.

‘What am I, some zoo animal?’

A black mask laid across his face to conceal his identity. His raven hair cascaded down his back with a crimson ribbon that tied half his hair up. One main feature gave away his species. A thousand red moons found themselves in his eyes. Bloody and striking, his red eyes stood out from everything else. It caused a swarm of people to stay away from him. If he walked through the crowd, they parted like the sea. A smirk revealed his sharp fangs to which several faces paled at the sight.

Kalon loved the exhilaration he got from tormenting others. The way their eyes widened, and all color fell from their faces could make him sing with joy. He found himself in Utopia. Kalon figured that it was a good idea to make some of his time fly by faster by messing with some humans. After all, they were a herd of clueless cattle.

Kalon's eyes glowed with mischief. He couldn't wait to begin his hunt. Though, it appeared that Solon knew the plans the vampire decided on. The werewolf strolled over towards him. Kalon held the urge to roll his eyes. Solon draped his arm around Kalon's shoulders. The vampire's lips curled in disgust. Solon ignored the look on Kalon's face and continued to speak as if nothing was wrong.

“What do you want?” Kalon asked. He shrugged the unwelcomed arm off his shoulders.

“Am I not allowed to chat with an old friend?” Solon retaliated. His canines glistened in the light each time he smiled.

“No,” Kalon replied.

“Aw, come on, Kalon.”

Kalon rolled his eyes.

“Your existence in itself is a nuisance.”

Solon clutched the material around his heart. He pursed his lips.

“Ouch. My heart broke into millions of pieces.”

“Let it stay that way.”

Solon clicked his tongue and stuck like glue to Kalon.

Kalon sneered at the werewolf. He didn't sign up for a headache. The ball just kept getting worse and worse. The only reason Kalon bothered to attend was due to his promise with Illaria. Since she became the queen of the humans, Kalon promised her support and cooperation on his behalf. Their relationship held years of memories where the vampire watched her grow up. He considered Illaria his daughter and she considered him a father. He vowed to protect her as if she were his kin.

The vampire stared off into space. Solon kept touching Kalon and reminisced on their experiences of fighting each other in battles. Kalon felt the eyes of his fellow vampires staring at their interaction. They shared glances between one another as if to clarify

that their king was being touched by a furry beast. Kalon didn't have the energy to deal with the werewolf's hyperactive mood swings.

'Annoying,' he thought.

Much to Kalon's detest, a conversation nearby sparked his interest. Not in a positive way.

"Why did our queen allow these monsters to enter our kingdom?" someone spoke.

"They shouldn't be allowed in here," another said.

"They've slaughtered our people for hundreds of years. Suddenly they want peace?" a man said.

"This is ridiculous. We can't have peace with monsters," a woman replied.

"We know they are savages. You never know when they'll attack us," The man said.

Solon and Kalon tuned into this conversation occurring a few meters away. A group of men and women gathered in a circle. They spoke in rather hushed voices. As if they didn't realize the others had superhuman abilities.

Kalon didn't bother to hide his annoyance. He knew that humans liked to voice their opinions. It didn't matter what they thought of him. He never asked to be within their presence either. Rather he hated it.

"I beg your pardon," Kalon said. He turned to face the group of men and women. His piercing eyes stared each of them down. They turned to share glances between one another. Beads of sweat began to glisten on their foreheads.

“I don’t give a bastard’s shit about hearing those things you call words coming from your mouth,” he said.

A woman coughed at his words. The men grumbled in response to his statement. Their faces flushed a deep shade of red despite the masks concealing a majority of their faces. Solon snickered under his breath. He patted Kalon on the back as a form of approval. Kalon allowed his eyes to linger on the humans for a few more seconds. He tore them away after they turned on their heels. He figured that would be the end of it. Wrong. It wasn’t long until another daring voice spoke out.

“Vampires are only good for killing those around them,” a man said.

Swish. Kalon snapped his neck to stare at the human who said those words.

“What did you say?” Kalon asked. His pupils dilated and his eyes glowed a bright ruby shade. The man showed his blatant hatred towards the vampire. He made direct eye contact with Kalon. His mouth opened to release a series of words that left the vampire lunging for the man’s throat.

“Kalon, no!” Solon yelled. Solon wrapped his arms around Kalon’s figure to catch him in time.

A chorus of collective gasps echoed throughout the ballroom. Then it fell silent. Not a single sound could be heard. No one dared to breathe. Everyone knew that the vampire’s life story remained a mystery, but speculations and theories arose throughout the years. Many rumors believed that he slaughtered his own family. A great number knew that humans killed his family. Kalon’s actions

never confirmed his true past.

“They don’t care if they kill their wives and daughters,” the man said.

Hiss. Kalon saw red. His fangs extracted from behind his lips. The veins on his neck protruded a deep blue shade. He thrashed against Solon’s iron grip. The werewolf dug his heels into the floor to provide some resistance. Kalon could only think about slashing the man’s throat. Solon whispered into Kalon’s ears to talk some sense into him. He knew that blood would decorate the ballroom floor if he didn’t.

“Don’t cause a scene. We are here to sign a peace treaty for fucks sake. This is what he wants,” he said.

Kalon stopped thrashing against Solon. He turned to face the werewolf and gripped their chin in his palm. His eyes narrowed into sharp slits. Daggers pierced Solon’s eyes. A chill ran down the male’s spine. Every strand of hair on the back of his neck stood up. Solon felt Kalon’s stare penetrate his soul.

“Be a good dog and stay quiet. Your constant yapping is an ear sore,” Kalon said.

Solon’s jaw dropped. His arms fell to his sides out of shock and obedience. He knew Kalon long enough to know when things were out of his control. Solon also didn’t want to be on Kalon’s bad side at that moment. He could feel every ounce of rage emitting from the vampire. He experienced first-hand, on several occasions, Kalon’s unfiltered wrath. On the battle grounds, he was a ruthless monster with nothing to lose.

Kalon released Solon's chin with a small pat on the cheek. He turned to meet the eyes of the bold human. The man didn't show any signs of backing down from Kalon's intense stare. A visible gulp proved enough for Kalon to know there resided some fear in them.

"I'm giving you one second to shut your mouth before I rip your tongue out," Kalon replied.

"Or what, leech?" he defied.

A psychotic chuckle escaped Kalon's lips.

Freeze. The man froze in his spot. His crossed arms fell to his sides. The glass of champagne in his hand remained full. His eyes held glints of rebellion despite the faint trembling of his hand. He wasn't going to back down without a fight. Kalon ensured that the man would get the fight he was looking for. But the image of Illaria crossed his mind and made him stop in his tracks. Kalon's anger dissipated. Solon was right. He didn't need to put on an act of violence at an event meant for peace. Kalon decided to remain composed. At least until it all came crashing down.

"You killed your family," the man said.

Kalon's patience snapped in half. The man's words sliced through the thin thread of composure he had. Kalon's eyes returned to their glowing shade. His gaze bled into the soul of the man. The urge to resist bloodshed in that moment deemed itself impossible. Solon remained planted in his spot. The werewolf awaited the vampire's next move.

Kalon's stare shifted to glance past the provocative man to meet the eyes of Illaria. The young woman stood at the top of the staircase. She stared at the vampire. A nod. That single nod gave

Kalon the green light. Illaria granted him permission to attack. She overheard the conversation at hand and understood how sensitive it was for Kalon. Illaria would not tolerate disrespect of another royal in her kingdom, much less on someone she saw as her father. Kalon bowed his head to thank Illaria for granting him permission. A sinister smirk stretched across his lips once he raised his head.

The man's egotistic grin wiped itself off his face once a smirk plastered across Kalon's lips. His face paled yet he kept up his act of "bravery" for the onlooking crowd.

Step. Step. Step. Kalon's shoes echoed across the ballroom floor. Time froze. Everything froze.

In a matter of seconds, Kalon stood before the man. The vampire's tall statue loomed over him. The man appeared like a little boy in front of Kalon. The stark difference in their heights stood out like a sore thumb. Kalon parted his lips and spoke for the first time in ages.

"Has anyone ever told you that you're annoying?" he asked.

Solon's laughter broke the eerie silence. Kalon couldn't understand what it was about his words that seemed so hilarious to make the werewolf double over in laughter. Again, Kalon couldn't care less. He focused on the prey before him.

"I-I," the man said.

He began to stumble over his words. Kalon's eyes squinted at him.

"Don't tell me you're stuttering now." Kalon said.

The man began to take steps backwards.

“You killed them all.”

Solon and Illaria shared a quick glance between each other. In that shared glance, Kalon grabbed ahold of the glass of champagne from the man’s hand. No one moved. The vampire brought the glass to his lips and drank the champagne.

“Thank you for the refreshment,” Kalon spoke.

The man stood frozen. He couldn’t bring himself to run away. Before he knew it, the vampire decided to attack. A single blink was all it took for Kalon to catch the man in his clutches.

The vampire smashed the delicate glass against the man’s head. It was like cracking an egg. The glass shards scattered on the floor. Kalon whistled. He released the man from his grip to inspect the shards of glass and picked out the perfect one to use.

“I’ll bestow to you a gift,” Kalon said.

The man shook his head from side to side.

“No. No-”

Kalon’s thumb snaked its way past the man’s lips. He jerked the man’s jaw open and proceeded to hold them in place. The man thrashed against the unbudging vampire.

‘Useless.’

The shard of glass that Kalon picked out glinted in the bright lights. The man’s eyes widened, and he began to release strangled screams. Kalon hummed at their attempts to get away. A series of men muttering to each other and women gasping filled the room. No one could tear their eyes away. They were all hypnotized.

“What happened to the way you were speaking so carelessly a few seconds ago?” Kalon continued. He stepped forward.

The vampire leaned down to bring his face closer to the male. The man’s hand began to tremble. Kalon’s fangs were on clear display in such proximity. Shifting his eyes, Kalon glanced down to see the glass of champagne quivering.

“Oh, please,” Kalon said.

The man shook his head.

“Don’t stop now.”

A gulp.

“Continue what you started,” he said. Kalon placed his gloved hand on the man’s cheek to cup it between his palm. His thumb stroked their cheek.

“I’m sorry. Please don’t kill me,” the man said.

Kalon used his thumb to tap against their cheek. He feigned concern and sympathy. His head shook from side to side. He loved the way the man’s body trembled.

“It’s our fault. You didn’t kill them, we did,” the man said.

Kalon’s little act stopped. At that moment, his eyes darkened, and his pupils dilated. Kalon dug his thumb into the man’s cheek. His voice dropped a lower octave and his eyes stared into the man’s green ones.

“You’re right.” Kalon stated.

The man nodded his head up and down repeatedly.

“You killed them all.”

Solon and Illaria shared a quick glance between each other. In that shared glance, Kalon grabbed ahold of the glass of champagne from the man’s hand. No one moved. The vampire brought the glass to his lips and drank the champagne.

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Kalon slid the shard between his fingers and pressed down on the man's tongue. The muscles struggled to tear apart. The sound of veins bursting open, and flesh being torn apart echoed in the ballroom. The man's screams of agony turned into choking symphonies. Kalon's leather gloves glistened with crimson blood. Drip, drip, drip. The blood splattered onto the floor.

"Don't fret," Kalon said. His hands clutched the man's tongue in his palm. He turned to face the crowd of onlookers and brought his bloody hand to lick the back of his palm. People gagged in the background. A Chesiree smile spread across his lips.

"It's just a little blood."

Divorced Sisterhood

Sadie Vander Wey

Castel perched on the peak of the Empire State Building. The wind ruffled her feathers against their natural grain. She pulled out her communication device and powered it on. A minute lapsed, and it established a connection.

“This is the Guardian reporting in. All is calm, Lord Hermes.”

“Proceed as normal then, Cas.” Hermes sounded rushed. Usually, he talked her leg off for hours, but he ended the transmission after his reply.

She shut the sturdy device. A sharp click disappeared in the wind. Castel leaned forward and fell. Her cloak caught the wind moments before her wings. She glided through the air, watching the ground.

This pattern grew monotonous. Patrol dragged on like normal.

Nothing to report and nothing to do.

The screaming wind throughout the day had died down to a whisper. It lacked the strength to glide on. Castel flapped her wings harder in a burst of energy. She breached the thick wall of clouds above her. Color exploded around her. Red and orange wove a tapestry in the sky. The sun dipped below the clouds, shining golden beams of radiant light through the sky. The hilt of Σωτήρας, or Savior in the Common Tongue, refracted the sunlight through its sapphire

hilt. Four hundred years passed since she became a Guardian. In all that time, the sunsets never changed.

Castel tucked in her wings and fell. Beadlets of water gathered on her armor and skin. A small smile crept onto her face. She plummeted through the sky, growing closer to the ground. Her smile grew.

A flash of blue light consumed Castel's body. She shifted. Mortals could not handle seeing what their minds did not understand. To protect the fragile sanity of mortals, Castel morphed into her human form. Her hair darkened from its unnatural shade of white, and her wings disappeared. She glided to the ground on her remaining power and landed in a dark alley. Castel liked to blend in with the humans. Often, she stopped minor crimes or helped those in need. It passed time and kept her busy.

The streets of Manhattan bustled. People jostled one another on their journey to their jobs, shopping, or homes. Castel fit among them like a puzzle piece. The crowd pulled her deeper into the city, and she lost herself in the torrent of people.

Her excursion did not last long. Shockwaves rippled through the city. A blast of blue fire and screams followed. Castel ran for the nearest alley and shifted. A few powerful flaps of her wings carried her high into the sky. Smoke erupted in a billowing tower to the east. Castel frowned and flew to the site of destruction. Explosions of this size only spelled trouble.

Faster.

She needed to be faster.

Her beating wings matched the tempo of her racing heart.

The acrid scent of burning flesh and hair touched her senses. Castel landed. She stumbled.

The screams disappeared. Carnage stretched beyond her sight. Blood coated the square along with the smell of fresh corpses. Limbs stuck out from demolished buildings. A crushed skull rested at her feet. An eye sat a few inches from its mangled home.

Castel's stomach flipped. No normal human explosion caused this scale of destruction. A god, her race, committed this wrath and destroyed the beings Guardians were created to protect.

A sapphire flame caught her stinging eyes. She stumbled to it and kneeled. The blue blaze lived and moved of its own accord. Castel's hand pulsed in a similar glow, rippling with power. She brushed her magic-coated fingers along the edge of the fire. The flames licked at her fingers, yet the living fire stayed in place.

“Fuck,” Castel whispered.

A ripple of stark cold wind snaked through the air. Castel snapped to attention. Power resided within that wind, and it reeked of godly essence. She knew that scent.

The Guardian took to the sky. Gods of Wind were sometimes challenging to follow. They laid traps and threw off the tracker by placing false paths. However, Castel controlled North Wind too. She could not be fooled.

Castel did not register she'd been hit until the pain consumed her. Blue flames raced up along her side. She beat at the flames with her hands. The living fire jumped to her hands. The fire spread and consumed most of her body. She released her power and extinguished the flames in a powerful blast. Castel let out a pant of

air and took a swig from her flask of nectar. The burns on her body cleared the moment she sipped the healing liquid.

“That took you longer than expected.” A woman’s voice cut through the silence.

“You did not need to kill innocents to get my attention, Khione,” Castel said.

“Ah, but it’s much more fun to watch them burn!” The pale goddess cackled. She appeared from thin air like a wraith materializing from the shadows, and she hovered in the sky. Khione, the Goddess of Snow, Ice, and Hail. Pale skin laced with veins of glittering blue comprised her form, existing between a god and a mortal. Her skin glowed and moved of its own accord. It held an ethereal beauty.

“What do you want?” Castel kept her tone blunt. Khione never appeared for pleasantries.

“Well, I was thinking-”

“A dangerous activity to do, I’m sure.”

“Oh fuck you too, Castel. You know why I’m here.” Khione’s voice could kill with how much venom she packed in the word.

“Do I?” Castel unsheathed Savior and flipped the hilt of her sword in her palm.

Khione glared. “I am the eldest, and you know it.”

“Eldest, yes. Strongest and smartest, that’s where you lack, Khione.”

“You weaseled your way into the Olympians’ good graces and took the Guardian title from me.” Khione’s hands balled into fists. Her form shimmered in an unstable manner.

“I did no weaseling. You were not meant to be a Guardian. You never were, and you just proved it.” Castel gestured to the destruction behind them. “You think that you have some sort of claim to this title just because of birth. This title is not given by heritage, Khione. It is earned.”

“I have earned it!” Khione’s voice carried two tones as if two people spoke. Her canines bared in a snarl. Her skin glowed white, and she visibly shook.

“How? You just killed the mortals you would have sworn to protect.” Castel flared her wings.

“I have waited centuries to claim this Guardianship. I am *done* waiting.”

The next blast of flames Castel blocked with ease. Khione never listened. The goddess allowed herself to be consumed by jealousy and bitterness. Castel sent a wall of ice in return. She hated that killing Khione would be the only outcome. However, Castel’s job called.

Khione’s eyes glowed, and she deflected the oncoming blast. She gritted her teeth.

Power flowed through the sisters’ skin in a lapis hue. Their magic collided. Power surged and raced for the outer edges of the city. Screams from below never reached the goddesses’ ears. Their focus remained on each other. This fight contained more than just a battle for power. It held the weight of war near its end. Castel and

Khione had clashed many times in the past.

After today, their paths would cross no more.

The fight ensued, and the two sisters didn't hold back. With the immense power of two goddesses came great destruction. Castel realized that later while pinning Khione. The latter coughed and splattered golden ichor on Castel's face. She punched the goddess in the face, and Khione's face snapped right. Then left. Back right.

Ichor splattered on the ground, and Castel did not stop. She spat a glob of golden blood on Khione's battered face. More ichor dripped off Castel's pale fist.

The Guardian smiled. She had longed for this fight for centuries, and now, here Khione lay. She always was the weaker sister. She brought this upon herself. The limp goddess lay in a pool of her own ichor. Bone stuck out from her lower leg, dripping more gore from its pointy edge.

Pitiful.

Castel wiped ichor off her chin and flicked it to the ground. She readjusted her grip on Savior. She took a deep breath and exhaled. Time to end the carnage. She stepped forward.

Khione stirred. The goddess snatched Castel's cloak and dragged her down. The Guardian dropped to the ground. An arm hooked around her throat and stretched her backward.

"Did you think I would be that easy to kill?" Khione hissed the words in her ear.

Castel's nail's dug into Khione's pale skin. She clawed and kicked out with her feet.

“I am the eldest.”

Castel thrashed.

“I will not be beaten by you.”

Castel reached down to her hip.

“I said I would be the next Guardian, and I meant it!” Khione’s grip tightened.

Castel’s vision blurred. She fumbled at her side, her fingers catching the edge of it. She couldn’t breathe.

There.

Her fingers closed around her communicator, and Castel slammed it back into Khione’s face. The goddess screamed in pain and let go. Castel gasped for air and scrambled away.

She jumped to her feet and flicked her hand. Savior came to life and flew hilt-first into her hand. She took a few breaths to steady herself. Her lips drew back in a snarl. “Fuck you, Khione.” The words came out in a rasp. Her throat burned.

Khione clutched her broken nose, ichor gushing between her fingers. “How dare you.” She choked through the words.

“How dare I?” A snarl followed Castel’s words. “Look around you, Khione. You want to be a Guardian?”

“Yes, you title-stealing bitch.”

“Then look and look hard. These mortals? You killed them, Khione.”

The city lay in ruins at their feet. Slabs of concrete toppled over, crushing mortals into a red pulp underneath. Mangled arms and legs stuck out at awkward angles.

Castel didn't look too close. "This is the cost of being a Guardian, Khione, and you are not fit to wield this power." Castel tightened her grip on Savior.

"You wouldn't dare kill your own sister." Khione hissed the words from where she lay on the ground.

Castel knocked her flat against the ground with a swift punch. "I divorced that name for you centuries ago," Castel said.

She drove the sword into Khione's stomach and twisted. A gurgle escaped Khione's lips, ichor gushing around the sword in her. Castel yanked the blade out and a flood of ichor followed.

Khione's eyes glazed over.

Castel sat back on her heels with a heavy sigh. Savior clattered at her side. Her jaw ached, but the ache in her chest hurt more. Destruction reigned in the city. Their fight destroyed buildings. Rubble and dead mortals were strewn everywhere. A bloodied and unattached arm stuck out from the pile beside her.

Bile built in the back of Castel's throat, and she retched. This was going to be a mess to clean up. Things could be worse. Things could be much worse. The Olympians wouldn't be pleased, but she could worry about that tomorrow.

Castel let out a heavy sigh and stood up. A wave of pain engulfed her, and her legs buckled. Her gasp sounded through the destroyed area. A gasp of the same pitch and volume echoed back,

except it sounded different. Castel raised her head. Struggling to her feet, Castel surveyed the area. She found the source of the noise in a matter of seconds. A human male lay underneath a pile of rubble and coughed up blood. Castel felt her chest constrict with each cough.

With a grimace, she limped toward the male. She summoned the last few dredges of her magic. Blue tendrils wrapped around the debris on the man's chest, and the rubble moved off of him. She knelt and checked his pulse. It was there, but it felt similar to her pulse. Her head tilted to the side, akin to a curious dog. This could not be right. Khione didn't...

Castel reached her hand out. Savior flipped through the air and landed hilt-first in her hand. She turned the blade and sliced open her left palm. A groan of pain sounded from the man. Her bloodied palm grabbed his left hand. Red leaked down his wrist.

"Fuck," Castel cursed. "Fuckfuckfucking fuck. Damn you, Khione, damn you!" She pressed the hilt of her sword against her forehead, leaving an indent. Her hands trembled.

This man's Fate now lay entwined with her own. The tremble spread to her arms. Any injury she sustained in a fight would be brought upon him. Every cut and blemish on his skin would be her fault.

Her shoulders shook. A hot tear cut through the dirt and grime on her face. She broke her oath. Castel could not protect this man to the best of her ability when their Fates were combined. She doomed him.

Castel remained motionless for a few long minutes, pressing her forehead into her sword hilt. She broke her stationary position

and reached for her flask. She stared down at it. A tear rolled off her chin and dropped into the amber liquid.

She was Castel Eclair, daughter of Athena, goddess of wisdom, and Boreas, God of the North Wind. She would not break.

The Guardian swallowed her guilty thoughts along with a long draught of nectar. Like before, her wounds closed and healed. She snapped her jaw back into place along with her broken wing. While she stifled a scream, the man on the ground let out a pained moan. The male's wounds closed up.

She stared down at him. This was an ancient magic.

Castel snatched the dented communicator from beside Khione's corpse and onlined it. "Lord Hermes, Khione, Goddess of Snow, is dead and winter is coming. Please prepare for an Ierotelestia."

"You're shitting me, kid. What happened?" Hermes sounded stressed.

"She blew up an entire block of Manhattan, one of the busiest squares to top it off. I warned Zeus she was after the Guardian title." Castel allowed her voice to drop into a snarl. "Now I have a mortal tied to me from some fuckery Khione pulled."

"What? What are you talking about?"

"Before I killed her, Khione used some kind of magic. I found this mortal male, and whatever wounds I have, transmit to him. He healed once I healed. I...I don't know what to do, Hermes." Castel's bottom lip quivered. She had felt more emotion today than she had felt in centuries.

“Shit, I dunno, Cas,” he paused. Silence emitted from the communicator for a few long seconds. “Well, Zeus is gonna want to see this. Bring him to Mount Olympus. Maybe one of us Olympians can break the curse or something.”

Castel did not respond right away. The mortal stirred. She did not have much time left.

“I will be there soon, Lord Hermes.” Castel knelt beside the male.

His eyes opened, glazed over in remaining pain and shock.

“Do not worry little mortal,” Castel said. She slid her arms underneath him and picked the human up with ease. “I will protect you.”

A Good Day's Work

Ashy Blacksheep- Past Editor of Tenth Street Miscellany

Buckley thumbed through the week's take from his paper route.

"Two, four, six, eight, and one hundred," he said of his twenties.

Twelve dollars of smaller bills remained—tips from his customers who appreciated the alarm clock consistency with which he thumped papers against their doors. He crumpled the tips along with his slim paycheck and let it drop into his top dresser drawer where he knew his mother would find it.

At least there was only one parent to watch out for. Buckley knew he had a father in the clinical sense, in the sense he existed. However, "father" was more of a regular noun than a proper one to him. His biological father smudged his little kid memory with the roughness of a windproof Carhartt thick enough to insulate against the warmth of hugs. To be sure, Buckley had no "dad" amongst the men his mother cycled through to fix her car or the kitchen sink. That was a term Buckley felt needed to be earned meritoriously as his Scout Troop might have put it. As the one kid of a mostly single mother, Buckley thus qualified as the "man" of the house. As such, he took it upon himself to provide for the children, as it were.

Buckley read in one of the business magazines he delivered that children indoctrinated early in financial aspects of the home made more of themselves, according to a fifteen-year study. By financial aspects, they meant putting stamps on the utility bills or earning allowances. And by made more, they meant money. But Becca didn't pay utilities in their section eight house and Buckley

knew she felt clever for taking the money he allowed her to.

When he first started the paper route, he earned fat checks. His mother, and cosigner on his Youth Savings Account, was kind enough to take them to the bank for him while he was at school. Except rather than deposit them, she cashed them. Or so he assumed when he didn't see a dime of any of it and she came home one night in new clothes. After that, he rode slower on his routes and throttled his legendary paper throwing accuracy just enough to not lose all the hours free of his house that the job afforded him.

The next payday had been a Sunday morning. Buckley met his route supervisor, Kramer, at the usual corner.

“There’s your dough, Buck,” Kramer chuckled.

Refusing to acknowledge any play on his name, Buckley frowned at the check. Kramer noticed even in the 4:00 a.m. street-light.

“What’s the matter? Not as much as you expected?” Kramer asked.

Buckley folded the check in half and put it in his pocket.

“Well,” Kramer said, “it’s not so bad, that’s about what the other kids make.”

Buckley knew full well he could make at least twice as much as the other paperboys on account of the extra routes he was willing to take. Not to mention the tips he could pull.

“Nah, it’s not that,” Buckley said. “I actually wish it were less.”

Kramer gauged Buckley. “I thought as much,” he said.

“What’s that?” Buckley asked.

“That you were slackin’ on purpose. I can’t guess why. A little hustler like yourself.”

Buckley took a turn a gauging Kramer. He saw a grown man

who still made his living delivering papers. Coffee cups and Corn Nut wrappers wafted syrupy and salty from the footwells of his station wagon. This was a man he knew his mother would never have any use for. She didn't read newspapers and she hadn't asked to meet him yet. Buckley decided to describe to Kramer how his first and subsequent paychecks were spent.

"Hmm," Kramer rubbed his chin. "Lemme get that check back, see what we can do about all that. Meet me back here when you're done with your route."

When Buckley returned, Kramer handed him a check for a quarter of the original amount.

"By law, I have to cut you a check, see." Kramer doled the remainder out in cash. "But there's that at least, huh?"

Kramer extended his hand. Buckley shook it.

It was Sunday mid-morning again: another route in the books, another check hidden like an Easter egg in his drawer, and another Sunday service to attend at the compulsion of his mother. The topic of today's sermon regarded judgement and restraining oneself from casting stones; one of Buckley's favorites. Even then, he could always count on the congregation to ruin even a decent sermon for him. They didn't seem to get any of it. From the pews, Buckley's eyes wandered up at crucified Jesus whose eyes rolled back in his head looking as bored as Buckley felt.

"No manners, these kids," he heard the pious ladies behind him say. They didn't bother to whisper.

"You're right, Laverne. All they've got to do is pay attention for one hour a week and they can't even do that much."

"God help them," Laverne said.

"I'd hate to be his schoolteacher."

"Amen."

Buckley looked to Jesus for confirmation, finding it in his rolled eyes which said, *Forgive them, Father. They know not what dicks they are.*

Towards the end of the sermon, the collection plate made its way around. Buckley's mother made a little show of sifting through a handful of ones, putting two of the four she had on the plate. Buckley palmed one of her dollars when it was his turn to pass it off. Buckley felt half-ass piety should be reflected in one's donation. He, at least, wouldn't be guilty of taking donations made in the good lord's name in vain. He'd be sure to visit the convenience store in the early hours of the next morning, maybe make Swedish fish of her alms for laughs, but probably not.

He preferred the Icees at the Circle K where none of the graveyard shift clerks minded him smoking the occasional cigarette. He left his bike behind the building. The door *bing-bonged* when he opened it. Tonight's clerk, a middle-aged guy with a beard growing in no particular direction, met Buckley's eye. With recognition, he resumed reading an unpurchased copy of Maxim. Buckley made his way to the drink station selecting a complimentary water cup from the soda fountain and filling it with blue Icee. At the coffee part of the drink station stood the only other customer at the moment, a construction worker by the looks of the reflective vest hanging from his back pocket.

Bing-bong. Behind them a high schooler entered the store. Buckley recognized him from Scouts; a kid named Chris who was as remarkable as his name was rare. Buckley planted a spoon-ended straw in his Icee. Winding through the candy aisle on his way to the counter, he added a pack of Sour Patch Kids to his Icee hand and slipped some Reese's Pieces up his sweater sleeve. The construction worker paid the clerk and left the store with his packet of sunflower

seeds and cup of black coffee. Chris walked up next in line. Buckley got in line too, hanging back and sipping some of his Icee.

Though Chris was a handful of years older than Buckley, he was no smarter for it. In Scouts, Chris' merit sash stayed sparse despite being in longer than most kids. Buckley wasn't sure why Chris kept on as long as he did without becoming an eagle scout but figured the troop didn't mind him sticking around. An active scout is a scout who pays his dues, after all. These days though, Chris just wore badges of puberty; itchy pocks on his neck and face that seemed ready to blow at the first scratch. Chris put a thirty-five-cent pack of gum and a dollar on the counter stuffing his hands in the kangaroo pocket of his hoodie drawing it tighter around him. Buckley noticed the tell-tale crinkle of plastic emanating from the back of Chris' hoodie. By the size of the lump, Buckley guessed jerky and thought, *Amateur*. He saw his guess confirmed when the packet of jerky sunk from under the worn waistband of the hoodie. He didn't flinch when it slapped like a dead fish to the floor either, not like Chris did.

"Were you paying for that, kid? Or were you just putting it back and getting the fuck outta my store?" The clerk asked.

Even Chris' pimples paled.

"I, uh—" Chris stammered.

"Here, man. You dropped this too," Buckley said.

He picked up the jerky and flipped it into Chris' hand with one of his own twenties on top. Chris murmured a quick, "thanks," and paid for the snacks.

The clerk's glare ushered Chris out until the *bing-bong* popped off.

Buckley stepped up to the counter and offered his most

charming smile, the same one that sold hundreds of poinsettias to all his grandpa's lady friends each season.

"Kids, right?" Buckley said. He put his tiny Isee and Sour Patch Kids on the counter.

"Fuckin' kids," the clerk grumbled.

He rang the Isee up as a small fountain soda. Buckley pocketed his change and the Reese's Pieces. The clerk had his Maxim cracked open again before Buckley *bing-bonged* his way out of the store.

Outside the Circle K, the fluorescents hissed like the cicadas who'd long since fallen asleep. The flight patterns of moths strobed against the flat black of early morning. Buckley downed the rest of his Isee, passed the ice chest, the smoke pole, and stopped. Lying in the parking lot were a few limp dollars and some silver change that shined like little moons. Chris' change. Buckley scanned the lot. No Chris in sight. Buckley left the change on the ground and mounted his bike. He rode one handed eating Reese's Pieces into another morning so dark, sunrise didn't feel promised.

Personally, Buckley didn't care about money. He just knew that everyone else, especially adults, did. When he told his mother he wanted to join scouts, her first question was, "And just how much is that going to cost me?" He explained that he could get a job delivering newspapers to pay her back for the dues to start, he mostly just needed her to sign the liability waiver. Her enthusiasm grew as she read it over.

"They'll take you for whole weekends?" She asked.

"For camping trips here and there, yeah," Buckley said.

"Sounds like I get custody-free weekends even without your good-for-nothing father," Becca chirped.

After getting into the troop, he started scoping out which

merit badges he wanted to earn. The Entrepreneurship badge seemed as good a place to start as any seeing as he already had a job. By the time he'd earned it, he added it to a half dozen other badges for camping, first aid, astronomy, chess, cooking, and cycling. Buckley coveted his time scouting. Earning merit badges offered the perfect justification for stacking up skills in his areas of interest, namely self-sufficiency. He wanted to never *need* anyone for anything. At one point, he got nominated to be the troop chaplain after he corrected the troop leader on bible passages he tried to quote. But he managed to successfully decline by telling the troop leader in a respectful whisper that he didn't actually believe in God. The troop leader nodded and explained to the rest of the scouts that such appointments should bolster new skills for a scout rather than leaning on skills they already had. Thus, another scout really ought to be chaplain. And it was so.

Buckley loved camping the best. On those occasions when the troop did go for a weekend excursion, he felt happy. Not bored like he was at school, or just content like when his mother was at work and he had the house to himself, but happy. Other kids asked him how to do stuff and the troop leaders didn't pester him except to inquire on what he was working on next. The state parks they camped in were noisy in a way that never irritated him. Birds called to attract one another or ward off other birds, but no bird or creature ever called for him to leave their woods. Maybe to back off if he made them nervous, but never to get out. They seemed to accept him as part of their world, making it sort of his world too.

For all the money he managed to make and keep from his mother, he put most of it towards camping gear of his own beyond what the troop supplied. He hoped to complete his pack before the next time his mother kicked him out of the house. Knowing her

there was no telling how soon that might be. He just wanted to be ready and not have a repeat of that first time.

One night, Becca had come home late from an evening shift. She foraged through the kitchen cupboards while Buckley tried to focus on the TV.

“Ugh, there’s nothing to eat in this house,” Becca bitched. Though, Buckley couldn’t imagine to whom.

“There’s a box of KD in there,” he offered.

“That’s kid food,” she said.

An image flashed in Buckley’s mind of him as a dog, Becca coming home late making kissy noises, and pouring dry elbow noodles into a bowl for him.

“Barely,” Buckley said.

“What was that?” Becca stepped into the living room.

“I said, barely.”

“What, so the groceries I get aren’t good enough for you?”

“It’s not like you eat it.”

“Because I got it for *you*.”

“Okay.”

“So, why don’t you eat it?”

“I’m not hungry.”

“You’ll eat it for dinner.”

“I said I’m not hungry.”

“Well, that’s too bad, you’re eating it.”

Becca went to the kitchen and slammed some of the dishes around in the sink in search for a pot. Buckley turned up the TV trying to listen to scientists talk about black holes over his mother’s clamoring. By the time the program finished, Becca shouted to him from the kitchen, “Come eat.”

On the table were two bowls of macaroni in a thin cheese

soup. In the pale noodles, Buckley recognized the downward spiral the evening was taking. The event horizon, he understood, long since passed and nothing would escape Becca's misery well.

"Sit. Eat," Becca said.

Buckley thought again of dogs.

"What did you do to it?" Buckley asked.

"I cooked you dinner goddamnit, now eat!"

Buckley sat. With his fork he fished out some of the noodles like a pool boy scoops leaves. The over-boiled noodles were nearly translucent. For the sake of science, he took a bite. He could tell she used no butter and compensated for that with way more milk than the three-step instructions called for. It was a lukewarm, baby-soft, box dinner disaster. He looked up from the bowl at Becca who stared back at him as if daring him to say something about it. Buckley held the stare.

"Well?" She prodded.

Buckley looked at her fork which lay untouched beside her bowl.

Becca's eyes and nostrils flared.

"May I be excused?" Buckley asked.

"Are you kidding me?"

"What? I told you. I'm not hungry."

"Buckley, eat your food."

"It's so gross you won't even eat it."

"I fucking knew it," Becca said with triumph.

"That you can't cook?" Buckley asked.

Becca stood. Reaching over the small table, she raised her palm and held it there, poised to pop him in the mouth. Buckley stared steadily into his mother's face with what he hoped looked like disappointed boredom, as if to ask, *That's what you came up*

with? Becca lowered her hand. In a huff she gathered the bowls and dumped them into the sink. She grabbed her purse off the counter and rummaged through it.

“Here, you little shit.” She held out five dollars. “Get your own dinner.”

“But I’m not—”

“Just get out!”

“Whatever,” Buckley said.

He took the five. He picked his jacket up from the couch and went out front. On the porch, his bike lay on its side. The metallic paint of the frame glinted in the last shreds of daylight. Buckley lifted the bike upright grateful to be out of the house. He straddled the bike and pulled the jacket on. Once he’d done up the last button, he heard the dead bolt of the front door click and the chain slide into place. A note fell through the mail slot, but the message was clear enough to Buckley without reading it. He wasn’t welcome in the house, a kind of backwards grounding. The note may have said for how long, but he didn’t care. TV light flickered from the window. The volume went up leaving some sitcom simultaneously loud and indecipherable save for the laugh tracks.

He sure as shit wasn’t going to give her the satisfaction of begging to be let back in. So, he stayed out all night in the park and went to school in the same clothes from the day before. He spaced out in class to the point where one of his teachers found him insubordinate and assigned him after-school detention. *All the better*, he thought. He napped through detention and went to the Circle K to finally spend Becca’s five dollars on a green chili freezer burrito when the cops rolled up. They approached him as his burrito cooked in the convenience store microwave.

“I was gonna pay for it,” he asserted.

“We’re taking you home, kid.”

“What for?” Buckley demanded.

“For running away. Your mom is worried sick.”

“She kicked me out!”

“Yeah, sure, kid. What a punk blaming your own mother like that.”

Compelled to abandon his burrito and propelled by the cops into their cruiser, Buckley remained silent during the ride to his house. Becca answered the pummeled door with makeup running down her face.

“Oh, thank you officers, thank you,” she said.

“Of course, ma’am. Give us a call if you have any more trouble.” The officer tipped his hat.

Becca batted her lashes some and said to him, “I will, thank you again.”

Becca held Buckley’s shoulders in the doorway as the officers left. On the edge of the porch caught in a bit of bush, Buckley noticed the note she’d dropped the night before. He figured it must have blown there in the night. Once the officers were out of sight, Becca’s voice went back to normal and she let go of him.

“Un-fucking-believable that you’d run off like that,” she said.

Run off? He thought but said nothing. He picked the note from the bush.

“And where do you think you’re going?”

“Just shutting the door,” he said. He pocketed the note and went inside, pulling the door shut behind him.

“Go to your room. I don’t want to even look at you,” Becca commanded.

In his room, he took out the note which read, *If all you are is*

ungrateful, then have someone else take care of you and don't come back. Buckley crumpled the note. He tossed it onto the dresser and fell back on his bed. Staring through the popcorn ceiling, he imagined having the note when the cops had picked him up. He imagined them accusing him of forging it. He imagined proving in a court of law that the penmanship was clearly not his. He imagined the day he really would leave this place and Becca behind. Until that day came, he wouldn't bother imagining whatever was next.

Academic Works

The Rise and Fall of Rubber Reliance, 1839-1976

Jace Demeranville

Vulcanized natural rubber rapidly became a global product due to imperialism and industrialization. It transformed the modern world between 1837 and 1976. The decades before and after 1900 marked a “complex industrial societies dependent on goods that they couldn’t mine or grow at home.”¹ Only a sliver of the earth was suitable for growing rubber. The resource became most essential in the decade surrounding World War II, and “FDR begged citizens to turn over to the government ‘every bit of rubber you can possibly spare’: old tires, raincoats, garden hoses, hoes, bathing caps, gloves.”² Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the President from March 1933 until April 1945, called on American citizens to contribute the necessary resource. Rubber was an essential resource to the war-time world, yet war would be its demise.

“Natural rubber is a renewable polymer endowed with remarkable properties including its high elasticity and high film, forming capacity, properties that enable its use in a wide range of applications.”³ Rubber is only produced five to ten degrees from the equator meaning there was a very limited zone of growth.⁴ Natural rubber is a tree sap like that of a maple tree. While maple tree sap produces a sweet, sticky substance, the sap of a rubber tree should stay away from the mouths of consumers. It is a sticky, gelatinous substance

1 Daniel Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States* (New York, NY: Picador, 2019) 264.

2 Ibid, 266.

3 Janet L. Hamilton, *Natural Rubber: Properties, Behavior and Applications* (Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers, Inc. 2016) 1.

4 Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire*, 265.

like that of a glue. For millennia it was used for medicine, sandal soles and gluing balls together for ancient sport, things that have been entrenched in ancient societies, such as those in Mesoamerica.⁵

The Americas had a rubber tree, *Hevea Brasiliensis*, but the successful production came from plantations of *Hevea Brasiliensis* in the East Indies where the conditions for producing rubber are suitable.⁶

Vulcanized rubber is the product that FDR was calling on Americans to contribute. The invention of vulcanization in 1839 by Charles Goodyear “developed a compound of rubber, white lead, sulfur and a heat treatment (or curing) process, Goodyear created a product-at first called fireproof gum, afterword vulcanized rubber- that exhibited impressive durability.”⁷ This process created the rubber that ended up in tires, gloves, and use in machinery. Rubber became a mark of globalization, “a process (or set of processes) that embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions, generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and power.”⁸ This type of rubber hit its peak during World War II but shortly met its downfall. The rise of the synthetic era meant that natural rubber was not necessary for every product. The rise and fall of this truly globalized product will be examined largely through the lenses of imperialism

5 Michael J. Tarkanian, Dorothy Hosler, “America’s First Polymer Scientists: Rubber Processing, Use and Transport in Mesoamerica,” *Latin American Antiquity* 22, No. 4 (December 2011): 469.

6 Jewell Venter, “Possibilities of Rubber Production in Caribbean America,” *Economic Geography* 4, no. 22 (October 1928): 381.

7 Gent, A.N. “rubber,” *Encyclopedia Britannica* (June 4, 2020). <https://www.britannica.com/science/rubber-chemical-compound>.

8 David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt, Jonathan Peraton, “Globalization,” *Global Governance* Vol. 5, No. 4 (October-December 1999), 483.

and industrialization.

Before World War II: The Demand Grows

The 1830s marked an age of experimentation with rubber, at least for one man. Charles Goodyear spent the decade, and the time following, finding ways to improve his vulcanization process. “Goodyear’s story, traditionally told, is one of a man obsessed with India rubber who discovered a series of mildly successful ways to cure rubber, to keep it from losing its shape when hot or cracking when cold.”⁹ Goodyear’s process evolved as time passed to improve the quality of the rubber. As a product, rubber became part of everyday items; “Tires, tubes, hoses, insulation for electrical wires, raincoats, life rafts, gas masks, and a thousand little parts and bits were made from it. Between 1860 and 1920, world rubber consumption grew nearly two-hundred-fold.”¹⁰ In the short time following Goodyear’s invention of the vulcanization process the rubber economy boomed. While rubber was not the only tropical resource making its way around the globe, it was unmistakably necessary in the global market.

It was no question that rubber demand was growing. “Growth of industrial demand for rubber, allied to bottlenecks in the production and/or trade in wild rubber in the tropical Americas, resulted in the rise of the rubber plantation during the first decade of the twentieth century.”¹¹ The 1920s marked an important time in the rubber industry but not because rubber was the final product. An automotive industry was making its mark and rubber was an essential

9 Cai Guise-Richardson, “Redefining Vulcanization: Charles Goodyear, Patents, and Industrial Control, 1834-1865,” *Technology and Culture* Vol. 51, No. 2 (April 2010): 357.

10 Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire*, 265.

11 J. Forbes Munro, “British Rubber Companies in East Africa before the First World War,” *Journal of African History* 24, No. 3 (1983): 369.

material. “From having just a handful of companies before World War I, by the mid 1920’s Chicago grew to include more than 600 firms that were producing a wide assortment of automotive-related products.”¹² The automotive industry was reliant on other industries to manufacture parts and materials. Akron, Ohio, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, became local industrial zones regarding tires and steel.¹³ As cars became ever more affordable, and consumer demand increased. Travel trends began taking passengers to the air and the demand for rubber grew.¹⁴

The rise to popularity brought a few problems to the rubber industry. Most notably, prices began to rise. Rubber plantations in the tropics could not keep up with demand. London prices soared, encouraging substantial British investment in plantation companies.¹⁵ Production had to expand to keep up with the demand.

Imperial Expansion

The British settled on East Africa to grow their rubber industry. This venture proved unprofitable for the British, compared to the tropical regions already producing rubber.¹⁶ The United States was in a similar situation to the British. “Concentration of some 97% of

12 Robert Lewis, “Local Production Practices and Chicago’s Automotive Industry, 1900-1930,” *Business History Review*, 77, No. 4 (Winter, 2004): 611.

13 Lewis, “Local Production Practices,” 612; Michael Conzen, “The Progress of American Urbanism, 1860-1930,” *North America: The Historical Geography of a Changing Continent*, eds. Robert Mitchell and Paul Groves (Totowa, N.J., 1987), 347-70; David Meyer, “The National Integration of Regional Economies, 1860—1920,” *North America: The Historical Geography of a Changing Continent*: 321-46; Philip Scranton, *Endless Novelty: Specialty Production an American Industrialization, 1865-1925* (Princeton, N.J.; Princeton University Press, 1997).

14 Richard Evans Schultes, “The Domestication of the Rubber Tree: Economic and Sociological Implications,” *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 52, no. 4 (October 1993): 483.

15 Munro, “British Rubber Companies,” 369.

16 *Ibid*, 377.

the world's rubber production within a limited area in the Orient has always had serious implication for the United States which is the rubber producer's main market."¹⁷ The United States's industry was also in need of expansion. American ventures first began in Brazil when Henry Ford establishing a plantation in 1928. In 1935, Good-year Tire and Rubber Company expanded to Panama and Costa Rica. These plantations failed, much like the British ventures. Due to infection, the trees were not able to thrive.¹⁸ One area of the world grew the rubber needed for tires and other goods and the world powers discovered that it was not possible to replicate elsewhere. The demand for rubber was growing, but it was not until World-War II that it would hit its peak.

Rubber in World War II

Until United States' involvement in the war, the Allied powers and their supply lines relied on the U.S. to manufacture wartime goods. During World War II, factories in Eastern Europe were under control of the German Reich. The Nazi forces were sandwiched between Western European forces and Russia forming the Allied powers. War has always been good for business and in the case of World War II, that business was in the United States. "By the eve of the Second World War, the country consumed some 70 percent of the world's supply, bought mostly from Europe's Asian colonies. If war came, the United States would need still more."¹⁹ The United States used a lot of rubber and was ever needing more. Involvement in the war did come and the demand skyrocketed.

The rubber supply to the United States, however, was soon

17 W. Gordon Whaley," Rubber: The Primary Sources for American Production," *Economic Botany* 2, No. 2. (April-June, 1948): 206.

18 Whaley," Rubber," 206-207.

19 Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire*, 265.

cutoff. This had detrimental impacts on the country. Europe was just one of two theaters of war during World War II. Japan was on a mission to seize control in China and Southeast Asia. On December 7 and 8, 1941, Japan needed access to rubber and moved into Southeast Asia taking Vietnam from the French. The United States was cut off from the European colonies that supplied 97 percent of its rubber.²⁰ A rubber shortage was no longer a “what-if” scenario, it was reality. The resource that the world became so reliant on was now gone.

Government Programs and Experimentation

There were a few options for the United States including goldenrod and synthetic rubbers, however neither was producing the quality or quantity needed for a global market. Cars needed tires, both civilian and military vehicles were in dire need of rubber. Wooden and steel wheels were explored with no success. Rubber was an irreplaceable resource.²¹ There was a gap that desperately needed to be filled. “FDR begged citizens to turn over to the government ‘every bit of rubber you can possibly spare’: old tires, raincoats, garden hoses, shoes, bathing caps, gloves. The president’s Scottish Terrier, Fala, donated his rubber bones. Eventually nearly seven pounds of scrap rubber were collected for every man, woman, and child in the country.”²² The gap was still there.

Government programs, like the rubber collection, were put into place to help fill the global need for rubber. For starters, use of rubber in civilian manufacturing was nearly prohibited. The national speed limit was reduced to thirty-five miles per hour. It was imposed to reduce wear on tires. Scientists were recruited to try other plants,

20 Ibid, 265.

21 Ibid, 256.

22 Ibid, 256.

like goldenrod. Synthetic rubber was being explored with no prevail. “As the director the War Production Board’s Civilian Supply Division told the Senate, producing the requisite six hundred tons by 1944 would ‘require a miracle.’”²³

To fill the demand, the United States tried utilizing other plants for rubber, with minimal success. Two plants native to the United States, the guayule, a evergreen shrub from the American Southwest, and goldenrod, became the focus of native rubber production.²⁴ Rubber was produced from goldenrod, but the process was not sufficient for commercial scale. The quality of rubber from goldenrod were not up to par with that from southeast Asia, and technical advancements would be needed to make it usable.²⁵

Guayule was a different story than goldenrod. The Emergency Rubber Project during World War II started a small guayule nursery. In Mexico the shrub was exploited and improved to produce a rubber of the same quality of *Hevea Brasiliensis*. The nursery grew to 32,000 acres and was “sufficiently successful that congress authorized the plantation’s expansion to 500,000 acres.” The program was canceled to develop synthetic rubber.²⁶ The world was dependent on the United States who was dependent on rubber. To keep the market alive, the U.S. needed to be creative. The United States needed synthetics.

23 Ibid, 256-257

24 “Guayule is an evergreen shrub that originated in the arid zone from the southwestern part of the USA to northern Mexico and therefore can be grown in environments totally different from those suited for para rubber trees (*Hevea brasiliensis*). Also, the rubber constituent contained therein is very similar to that of a para rubber trees. Bridgestone, *Guayule*, https://www.bridgestone.com/technology_innovation/natural_rubber/guayule/

25 “Rubber,” *Scientific American* Vol. 152 No. 2(February 1935) 79.

26 W.G. McGinnies, Arthur M. Bueche, “Natural Rubber Production,” *Science New Series* 192, no 4239 (May 7, 1976): 506.

The Rise of Synthetics

War is, undoubtedly, good for the economy. Warfare stimulates an economy requiring industries to produce goods for war-time use. War also sparks innovation. Vaccines, radar, and the atomic bomb are three well-known technological advancements that came during World War II. At the same time, synthetic rubber was being developed. Germany was in as desperate need of rubber. The Reich instituted the Four-Year Plan in 1936 which involved plowing a substantial amount of the economy in IG Farben, a German chemical manufacturer. Hitler ordered German tires to be made entirely of synthetic rubber by 1939 and shortly before invading Poland declared that “Germany had definitely solved the rubber problem!” German stockpiles lasted only two months of fighting proving that Hitler did not solve the rubber problem.²⁷

Germany could not manufacture enough rubber to supply their forces. The United States’s rubber program worked differently and ultimately proved successful. First, the director of the rubber program was instructed to “be a son-of-a bitch.” Instead of sending thousands of laborers to their deaths, he would stand up to oil executives. There also was no big discovery that made synthetic rubber possible. “It was the result of a thousand little discoveries made by a small army of well-funded industrial chemists.”²⁸ World War II instilled a sense of pride in American Chemists. They were given a problem, one of impending doom, and rapidly developed a material that could do the job of rubber. Rubber was on its way out.

The Fall of Rubber

Synthetic rubber could be processed nearly everywhere, un-

27 Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire*, 267-68.

28 Ibid, 269.

like natural rubber that is restricted to within five and ten degrees from the equator. The United States needed 600,000 tons of rubber by 1944; an amount unable to be fulfilled with limited access to the resource. After the invention of synthetic rubber, the United States met its goal by mid-1944. Germany, in the least, competed three unsuccessful synthetic rubber plants compared to fifty-one in the U.S. that were built by the end of the war. By 1945, the American rubber plants overshot the goal producing 800,000 tons of synthetic rubber without even manufacturing at capacity.²⁹ The rubber crisis was essentially solved. The United States had the rubber it needed to supply the war raging in Europe and the Pacific. What was called a miracle years earlier became reality for the United States.

Synthetic rubber saved the United States from crisis and helped the Allies achieve victory. Without synthetic rubber, it is uncertain which side would have won. Jeeps and tanks were rolling on synthetic tires and treads, U.S. synthetic rubber lasted longer and proved more durable than the German concoction. By the end of the war, nine out of ten pounds of U.S. rubber were factory-made, mostly from oil.³⁰ Synthetic rubber gave the United States and its allies an advantage in the harsh conditions of war; an advantage that could not have come at a better time.

The Post-War Years

After the war, the United States resumed buying rubber from the plantations in Southeast Asia. “Rubber-once the cause of war, colonization, and mass death-became a commodity that Washington could be cavalier about.” The new industrial rubber plans simply meant that the States were no longer reliant on plantations in South-

29 Ibid, 267-269.

30 Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire*, 269.

east Asia. Natural rubber made up roughly 30 percent of the market but was no longer a necessity.³¹ The United States now had access to an almost immeasurable amount of an essential resource.

This newfound rubber was bound to create some problems with the natural rubber producers. “During 1959 domestic consumption of synthetic rubber reached 64.5 percent of the new rubber market.”³² This created competition between synthetic and natural rubber. The United States purposefully stimulated the natural rubber producers. The Korean war marked the next time when the synthetic rubber industry needed to fill the supply chain. Natural rubber was limited to only being purchased by the United States government and was being inspected. Roughly 40 percent of the contracted natural rubber was of lesser quality than paid for.³³ While natural rubber quality varied, synthetic rubber was all made to specifications; quality was of no worry. Improvements were made to the transportation and production of rubber to ensure uniform quality.

Natural Rubber Expands

After World War II, companies looked to expand natural rubber production out of Southeast Asia. *Hevea Brasiliensis* is native to Brazil but was never successfully produced on an industrial scale in the region until after the war. As technology advanced, companies were able to expand operations out of Southeast Asia into tropical regions of South/Central America and Africa with marginal success. The Goodyear Company owned a large Brazilian plantation but found it necessary to spray to improve resilience. The Firestone Company developed a program in Peru that produces high quality

31 Ibid, 271-269.

32 Charles F. Phillips, Jr., “The Competitive Potential of Synthetic Rubber,” *Land Economics* 36, no. 4 (November 1960): 322.

33 Charles, “The competitive Potential of Synthetic Rubber,” 328.

rubber with improved resistance and cloned seedlings for placement in Guatemala and Liberia. Firestone also has a highly resistant plantation in Brazil. In 1954, B. F. Goodrich started its first rubber producing plantation in Liberia.³⁴

Conclusion

Synthetic rubber built a supplemental industry around natural rubber production that did not create the fall of a resource. Instead, synthetic rubber established the decline of reliance of natural rubber. Natural rubber production has never ceased due to the creation of synthetic rubber. Natural rubber has since been enhanced to expand to new regions of the globe previously unfit to produce large quantities of the resource. By 1976 the United States had not achieved independence from rubber, importing 800,000 tons annually. This is despite guayule plantations within its own borders that seemed promising.³⁵

Hevea Brasiliensis, natural rubber, became a globalized resource and marked a global world. The transportation industry relies heavily on the singular resource. Electrical wires in houses, parts to computers and phones, and trans-oceanic cables would not be as efficient today without rubber. Rubber is an embodiment of the definition of globalization: “a process (or set of processes) that embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions, generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and power.”³⁶ Industries based in the United States relied on interactions and transactions

34 Ernest P. Imle, “Hevea Rubber: Past and Future,” *Economic Botany* 32, no 3 (July-September 1978): 274.

35 McGinnies, “Natural Rubber Production,” 506.

36 David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt, Jonathan Perraton, “Globalization,” *Global Governance* Vol. 5, No. 4 (October-December 1999), 483.

with rubber producing regions. European countries then relied on the products of the United States. Without a doubt, rubber became a global product that has transplanted itself into societies worldwide. Vulcanized natural rubber rapidly became a global product due to imperialism and industrialization. It transformed the modern world between 1837 and 1976.

While confirmed nor denied, rubber became a crucial factor in the Allied victory in World War II. Rubber sparked a sense of nationalism amongst scientists and scholars to propel a victory. It was not until Japan controlled the rubber-producing colonies that the United States buckled down and truly created a rubber boom with indefinitely lasting effects. Rubber is a product that globalized rapidly but was never truly phased out. There was no fall of rubber, just the fall of reliance on the resource. Synthetic rubber did not destroy the natural rubber industry, instead it allowed for comfortable growth and development of the resource while supplementing the industry.

The Dual Nature of Siduri, Tavernkeeper at the Edge of the sea *Abigail Swanson- Past Editor of Tenth Street Miscellany*

She lives at the edge of the sea, she runs a tavern complete with gold brewing vat, and she doesn't take any crap from Gilgamesh. Siduri the tavernkeeper is a unique and even unexpected character in *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, but is she just a character or is Siduri meant to represent something beyond the mortal realm and beyond the scope of the story?

Siduri comes across as a displaced character, a character imposed on the narrative seemingly out of the blue. She is described as "The tavern keeper, who dwells at the edge of the sea," (*Epic of Gilgamesh*, 74). Her residence at the edge of the earth is almost outside the world. Once Gilgamesh passes her tavern, he is no longer in the land of the living but passes into the land of immortal beings and creatures of myth. Siduri bridges the gap between the mortal and immortal and gives Gilgamesh the wisdom he needs to cross over to the immortal realms. This could be a sign of Siduri's character reaching beyond the scope of the story and representing something more, just as a storyteller bridges the world of the story and the listener's life.

Siduri has a history and place entirely outside the context of the story. She is said to have a "brewing vat of gold," and "for her was wrought the cup wrack," (*Epic of Gilgamesh*, 74). These items are not mentioned elsewhere in the story yet seem to give extra weight and importance to Siduri's character, like items taken from another story or myth with a history all their own. Just as a storyteller may draw images or figures of speech into the story from the

sea and has a gold brewing vat, listen to the gal). However, Siduri is more than just a hearer. Although Gilgamesh ignores her advice, she still guides him on his way. Through the journey Gilgamesh comes to understand Siduri's advice. Similarly, a good storyteller doesn't just yell a message at an audience. They communicate the message through the long journey of the story and let listeners take time to understand through the story.

Siduri has a great deal of respect for the gods and tells Gilgamesh "The eternal life [he is] seeking [he] shall not find," since the gods, "established death for mankind and withheld eternal life for themselves," (*Epic of Gilgamesh*, 76). However, it is unclear if Siduri herself is subject to a mortal life, or if she is an immortal trying to console Gilgamesh. She is not concerned with Gilgamesh's threat to strike down her door, so she may be concealing a power we know nothing about. Her location on the edge between the mortal and immortal realm also points to the idea of her not being entirely mortal and not entirely bound to the world of the story.

The next topic she covers is her statement of the work of mankind, reminiscent of the preacher in Ecclesiastes. She essentially says Gilgamesh should eat, drink, and be merry while he still lives. An interesting imperative since her supposed livelihood centers around people drinking. Day and night she says Gilgamesh should be happy and make every day a delight (*Epic of Gilgamesh*, 76). Gilgamesh should also raise children and love his mate well. She mentions he should clean his clothes, wash his head, and bathe in in water. (This triple reference to cleanliness could be a nod to the unkempt state of Gilgamesh when she sees him coming after his time spent in mourning.) However, she seems to miss that it is his inability to enjoy his life that spurs Gilgamesh on his quest. He

listener's world to help the audience better understand a character or situation, Siduri's personal effects allude to a broader world beyond *The Epic of Gilgamesh*.

Her name "Siduri" means maiden in Hurrian- a language entirely separate from Sumerian, the language the Epic was written in (*Epic of Gilgamesh*, 74). So, Siduri's very name comes from outside the context of the Epic. This points to her nature as a character reaching beyond the scope of the story and into the world of the listener. Similarly, a storyteller interacts with and becomes part of the story in telling it but exists and lives in a world beyond the story.

Siduri enters *The Epic of Gilgamesh* at a pivotal point – Enkidu died, and Gilgamesh realizes he too will die. "Woe has entered [his] vitals" and he has "grown afraid of death," so he searches for Utanapishtim, a man who became immortal (*Epic of Gilgamesh*, 72). She sees Gilgamesh from afar, bars her door against him, and speaks to him from the top of her roof. She is willing to get involved in Gilgamesh's story, but only from a distance, unlike other female characters in the story like Gilgamesh's mother, the princess Ishtar, and even Shamhat the harlot. A narrator's place in the story is similar – they relate the necessary information to the audience and ensure listeners hear the story, but they do not get directly involved in the action.

As he does with other females in the story, Gilgamesh spills his guts to Siduri and explains his state of mind and body. Like other female characters in the story, Siduri offers Gilgamesh advice and guidance, although he refuses to listen, and gives him information to help on the next leg of his journey. She fills a role similar to that of any listener or reader. She hears his whole story, yells the solution at him, but he ignores her obvious wisdom (seriously, she lives by the

sea and has a gold brewing vat, listen to the gal). However, Siduri is more than just a hearer. Although Gilgamesh ignores her advice, she still guides him on his way. Through the journey Gilgamesh comes to understand Siduri's advice. Similarly, a good storyteller doesn't just yell a message at an audience. They communicate the message through the long journey of the story and let listeners take time to understand through the story.

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cannot relax and be happy because he is filled with a fear of death. This could be a sign of her status as an immortal being – she doesn't worry about death so she cannot understand the mortal fear of death.

In this moment, Siduri says what every storyteller and reader of the epic wishes they could say to Gilgamesh – and what he ultimately discovers – there is no secret to life, he must simply live while he can. She serves as a teaching voice in the story, summarizing what Gilgamesh learns on his quest. This is what the story of Gilgamesh teaches – we see Gilgamesh striving after the wind time after time and end up with what he had all along – his rule and kingship in Uruk. He is left a mortal man who must make the most of each day as it comes knowing it could be his last. Siduri sees beyond Gilgamesh's circumstances when he comes to her tavern and understand the true moral of his story.

However, despite the wisdom in her own words, Siduri seems not to follow her own advice. She lives on the edge of the sea with no hint of who her clientele might be. No mate or children are mentioned, and she seems utterly alone when Gilgamesh comes knocking. She is not an example to Gilgamesh of what it looks like to live out “the work of mankind,” she is just a voice calling him to enjoy his life while he can. Siduri sees the answer and tries to communicate it to Gilgamesh but ultimately the response is up to him. Storytellers can speak to their audience and try their best to clearly communicate what the message of the story is, but ultimately it falls to the hearer to listen or ignore the story.

We see Siduri has backstory complete with name, special objects and a setting alien to the rest of the story. She treats Gilgamesh differently than any other character, helps him understand his current state of mind, and gives him the knowledge he needs to

continue. Her advice is sage, but seemingly unexecuted in her own life. Siduri helps Gilgamesh tell his story and reminds him of the true message of the story without tying herself to the world of the story. She is only in about a hundred lines of the story and yet can communicate her message perfectly. Siduri doesn't take over the narrative but listens and assists Gilgamesh on his quest. She guides Gilgamesh and helps him reach the ultimate destination of his journey as a narrator guiding readers to the conclusion of a book.

Siduri's character is unique in the epic and her advice transcends the story of a spoiled king trying to escape death. However, there is no way to know if the originators of the story intended Siduri's wisdom and wit to represent their own or anything beyond just another voice in the story. But perhaps mental images of early Sumerian storytellers should have a little sidurian flare- unexpected characters with entirely unknown backstories, caretakers of storied objects, and imparters of erudite insight. And perhaps modern storytellers or tavernkeepers should be respected a bit more, since they may be trying to tell the message of the story early, before the harrowing conclusion.

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Meet The Editors

Erin Hayhurst- Editor in Chief

“No matter what anybody tells you, words and ideas can change the world.”

- *Dead Poets Society*, 1989

Erin is in her third year at Chadron State College as an Advanced English Studies major with a focus in creative writing and hopes to pursue an MFA in creative writing after she graduates in 2024. She was born and raised in Scottsbluff, Nebraska where her love for writing and reading began at a young age. Erin joined Tenth Street Miscellany last year as a fiction editor and has loved every minute since. In her writing, Erin focuses mostly on speculative fiction and screenplay, predominantly in the fantasy genre, but has had both fiction and creative nonfiction pieces accepted into Sigma Tau Delta conventions.

Erin joined the journal as an opportunity to hone her editing skills and to meet new people. Since then, it has become a way to bring voices of the Great Plains forward, giving her fellow writers a chance to be published and seen. One of her goals is to create a place where creative people of the area can come together and put their works into the world.

During her time at CSC, Erin has participated in musical theatre, Sigma Tau Delta, and writing occasionally for the Eagle Newspaper. Outside of writing, her interests include reading, film and television, music, hiking, spending time with her friends and family, and painting.

Erin would like to thank everyone who made this publication possible, including but not limited to, Professor Markus Jones, The Mari Sandoz Society, Abigail Swanson, and her amazing editing team. Thank you to everyone who submitted their works to this journal. It is your voice we strive to amplify. Finally, she would like to thank the readers of this publication for taking the time to support the writers and artists of the Great Plains region.

Rebeka Scheiderer- Non-Fiction

Rebeka (Bek) Scheiderer is from the western slope of Colorado, and she is in her third year at Chadron State College. She is working toward a bachelor's degree in literature and creative writing and is set to graduate in 2024. After graduation, she plans on getting a master's in library science.

In addition to being a Tenth Street Miscellany editor, she is a member of Sigma Tau Delta. She joined Tenth Street Miscellany in the Fall of 2022 as a nonfiction editor. It has been a rewarding experience to be part of the Tenth Street team, and she is excited to make more memories with her fellow editors in the next year.

Bek loves her cat, her friends, and of course, writing. She enjoys writing all genres, but especially short form nonfiction. She typically writes about her friends, family, and herself, but she is also experimenting with other subjects. She is currently working on a collection of poetry that focuses on the ups and downs of life, like work, school, depression, and other challenges that adults face.

Bek attended the Storycatcher Workshop in the summer, where she learned all kinds of skills like writing humorous poetry and killer scenes, plotting a tragic fantasy story, and playing hack-eyesack. She plans on exploring different genres and learning even more as she continues her education.

Bek is grateful for the other writers and instructors in her program, as they have given her endless support and helped her grow as a writer. She hopes to encourage her peers as much as they have encouraged her. She sends her thanks to fellow editors, submitters, and sponsors for making this publication possible.

Ashley Burrows- Fiction

Ashley Burrows is a Junior at Chadron State College. She is a double major in Legal Studies and English Creative Writing. She is involved in various clubs and activities on campus as she is the Vice President of CSC Sigma Tau Delta club, a member of the Student Senate, involved in Chi Alpha, the Green Team, and the Homecoming Committee.

Ashley loves writing fantasy, historical fiction, and poetry, although she does not consider herself a poet. She adores reading all genres of books, particularly historical fiction and fantasy. She hopes to publish her book one day and work with other writers across the globe.

When she is not writing, she is playing video games or acoustic guitar and hanging out with her cat. Ashley adored her time working with the other wonderful editors of Tenth St. Miscellany and seeing the amazing talent and creativity of the Chadron area.

Ashley joined the Tenth St. Team because of her love of writing and connecting with fellow writers. She loved collaborating with the other editors and working together to create this publication. She looks forward to future projects and participation in Tenth St. and other clubs at Chadron State College.

Isabel Manchego-Pena- Fiction and Academic

Isabel is a junior at Chadron State College majoring in English Studies with an emphasis in Literature. She is from Loveland, CO, and plans to return to Colorado after receiving her bachelor's at CSC and pursue certification/education in counseling and secondary education. At CSC, Isabel is involved in Zeta Alpha Kappa, United, Sigma Tau Delta, Familia, Chadron Criminal Justice Club, Social Work, Campus Improvement Committee, and Esports on campus.

Isabel enjoys a variety of different hobbies such as reading, singing, playing board/video games, and martial arts. Isabel has practiced Krav Maga for over a decade and received a certification to instruct Krav Maga to kids ages 3-15. This was Isabel's first job and one she would consider picking up again after graduating. She also enjoys Muay Thai, Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, and Judo, but has less experience in these martial arts.

Being a part of Tenth Street Miscellany has been an inspiring, educational, and enjoyable experience for her. Isabel has learned more about several areas of writing as well as expanded her interests in reading. Tenth Street Miscellany has encouraged her to expand her writing capabilities and explore new areas of interest. Isabel is thankful for being given the opportunity to make this 2023 writing journal possible and getting to work alongside such talented writers and editors. Thank you to the readers, writers, and collaborators for making this all possible.

Kayliegh Sughroue- Poetry and Academic

Kayliegh Sughroue is in her third year at Chadron State College. She majors in English literature and minors in creative writing. When she graduates in May she hopes to go on to grad school and get her masters in English. She joined Tenth Street to help improve her editing skills in the hopes it would help with her future career.

She was born and raised in McCook Nebraska. She grew up with two older brothers. It was thanks to these two brothers that she grew up to be a bit of a tomboy. The three of them spent a lot of time running around outside together. They would make up games in order to occupy their time. Kayliegh spent most of this time just trying to keep up with her brothers which turned her into a very stubborn and sassy person.

She always had a love of the arts and dabbled in many different forms of art, but books held her heart. You could always find her with a book in her hands as she made her way through school. She enjoys reading all genres, but she especially enjoys fantasy and historical fiction. Her favorite book series as of right now is Percy Jackson and the Olympians.

She does have a special place in her heart for the classics as well. If asked she will say that Shakespeare and Jane Austin are two of her favorite authors of all time. While some may find this weird for a twenty-three-year-old she claims that they have helped shaped literature today so it's hard not to like them. This love of old English writers can be tied back to her mother who introduced her to *Pride and Prejudice* when she was a child.

She really enjoys spending time outside with her friends and family. She really enjoys playing video games when she isn't working on schoolwork which is what she spends most of her time doing during the school year. However, if she does find the time then she loves to spend days curled up on the couch with a hot chocolate and saving the kingdom of Hyrule.

Hannah Pfeifly- Poetry

Hannah Pfeifly is an English literature student with minors in creative writing and history at Chadron State College. She is currently a senior who is involved with many clubs on campus. Hannah is involved with Sigma Tau Delta, Zeta Alpha Kappa, and Student Senate.

Though she did start as a history major, Hannah quickly realized her true passion laid in the creative realm. She enjoys writing all three genres but is drawn to poetry. Hannah also enjoys her old lady hobbies such as embroidery and crochet. One can commonly find her at home with a cup of Earl Gray and her cat Penelope curled up in her lap.

This is Hannah's first time editing for Tenth Street Miscellany. She has treasured her time not only learning valuable skills in the field of editing, but the time she has spent with her fellow editors and advisors. For the 2022 copy of Tenth Street Hannah edited the Poetry section and ran the social media pages.

Thank you to each writer of Tenth Street. Thank you for your wonderful stories and experiences which have shaped this publication. And of course, thank you to the readers without whom Tenth Street would have no reason to exist.

“I dwell in possibility...”

—Emily Dickinson

The staff of Tenth Street Miscellany gives special thanks to

Mari Sandoz
HERITAGE SOCIETY


for sponsoring this publication. You have made edition of Tenth Street Miscellany possible. Thank you so much for providing a place for High Plains Voices to be heard. Thank you!

The vision of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society is to perpetuate and foster an understanding of the literary and historical works of Mari Sandoz; and to honor the land and the people about which she wrote: Native Americans, ranchers, farmers and the people who settled the High Plains country.

<https://www.marisandoz.org>

Story Catcher

Summer Writing Workshop & Festival



Presented By:
The Mari Sandoz
Heritage Society
and
Chadron State College

The Story Catcher Writing Workshop and Festival takes its inspiration from one of Nebraska's most famous writers, Mari Sandoz (1896-1966), who grew up in the region on the homesteads her family settled at the turn of the 20th century. In addition to building an impressive career as an author, Sandoz went to great lengths to encourage other writers by conducting summer writing workshops on college campuses, reviewing manuscripts sent to her by aspiring authors from all over the nation, and teaching creative writing through programming produced by Nebraska Public Television. Writing—and fostering the talents of aspiring authors—was her passion. It is fitting, therefore, that this committed teacher of writing who captured so many stories from this region should be the inspiration for our diverse workshop offerings these ten years.

It is our goal to channel this spirit of Sandoz and The Story Catcher—to guide and encourage writers in capturing their own creative ideas, to help transform those ideas into written works that can then be shared, discussed and revised, and to celebrate the best qualities of writing from this workshop—and this region—in a festival that may inspire the story catcher in all of us.

The 2023 Story Catchers Workshop

The 2023 Retreat Will Be in the Black Hills of South Dakota!

June 6-9, Creekside Resort at the State Game Lodge.

Registration is open until May 10th, 2023. Scholarships are available and applications are due April 10th, 2023.

We encourage everyone with a story to tell and words to share to take advantage of this amazing opportunity!

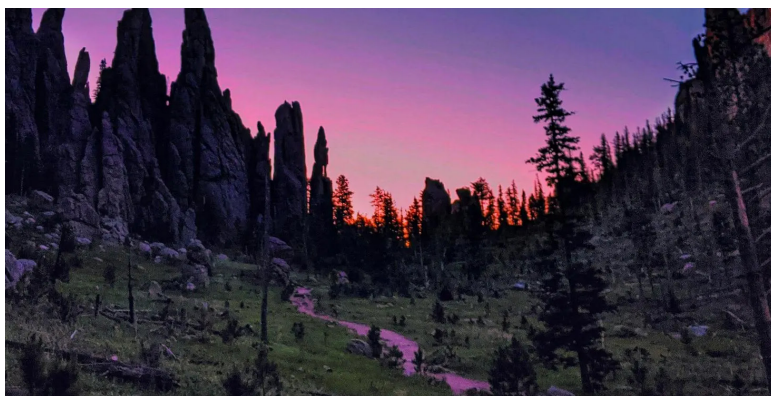
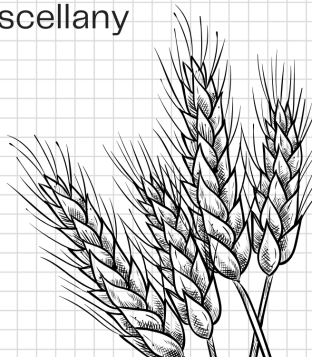
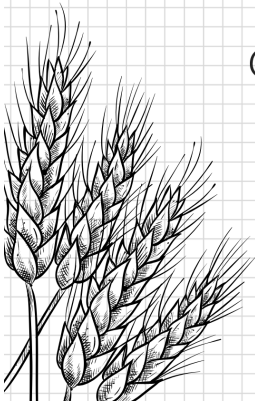


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We hope you've enjoyed this journal, and we have decided to leave you, dear reader, with a prompt and the white space necessary to explore your own stories.

Write a poem with an abstraction, a verb, and a place.

Describe the journey you went on to acquire this book. Use strong verbs. And consider using the second person.

Look out your window and describe what you see as if you had just experienced a great loss. Now, look out your window one more time and describe what you see as if you had just experienced great joy.