



Old Traditions
Mohammad Al Khiami



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Arts & Literary Journal
Spring 2016 Edition, Volume 10



AUKuwait *Review*

The AUKuwait Review: Arts & Literary Journal
Spring 2016 Edition: Volume 10



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Reader,

Welcome! After a long year of hard work, sleepless nights, and unrelenting dedication, we are pleased to finally present the 10th issue of the AUKuwait Review! Like its predecessors, the 2015-2016 Spring Edition of the Review reflects the collective creativity and talent of the AUK community.

As many of you may already know, last year we introduced the Halloween section to the Review, dedicated to the winners of the “Halloween Short Story” contest we hold every October. If you love spooky stories or crave the adrenalin rush from scaring yourself silly, then we urge you to turn to this year’s Halloween section and enjoy the creative pieces we have to offer. If you don’t like scary stories, we urge you to turn to the Halloween section anyways. Who knows? You might even come to like it.

It has been a privilege working with this year’s team of dedicated, hardworking, and talented individuals and I am so very proud to have been a part of it! On behalf of the Editorial board, I would to thank all the writers, photographer, artists, editors, designers, and supervisors who worked on this year’s issue of the Review. It would not have been possible without your contribution! Enjoy it, share it, and hopefully next year, you can be a part of it too!

Sincerely,

Nusrat Jamil

Editor-in-chief of the AUKuwait Review

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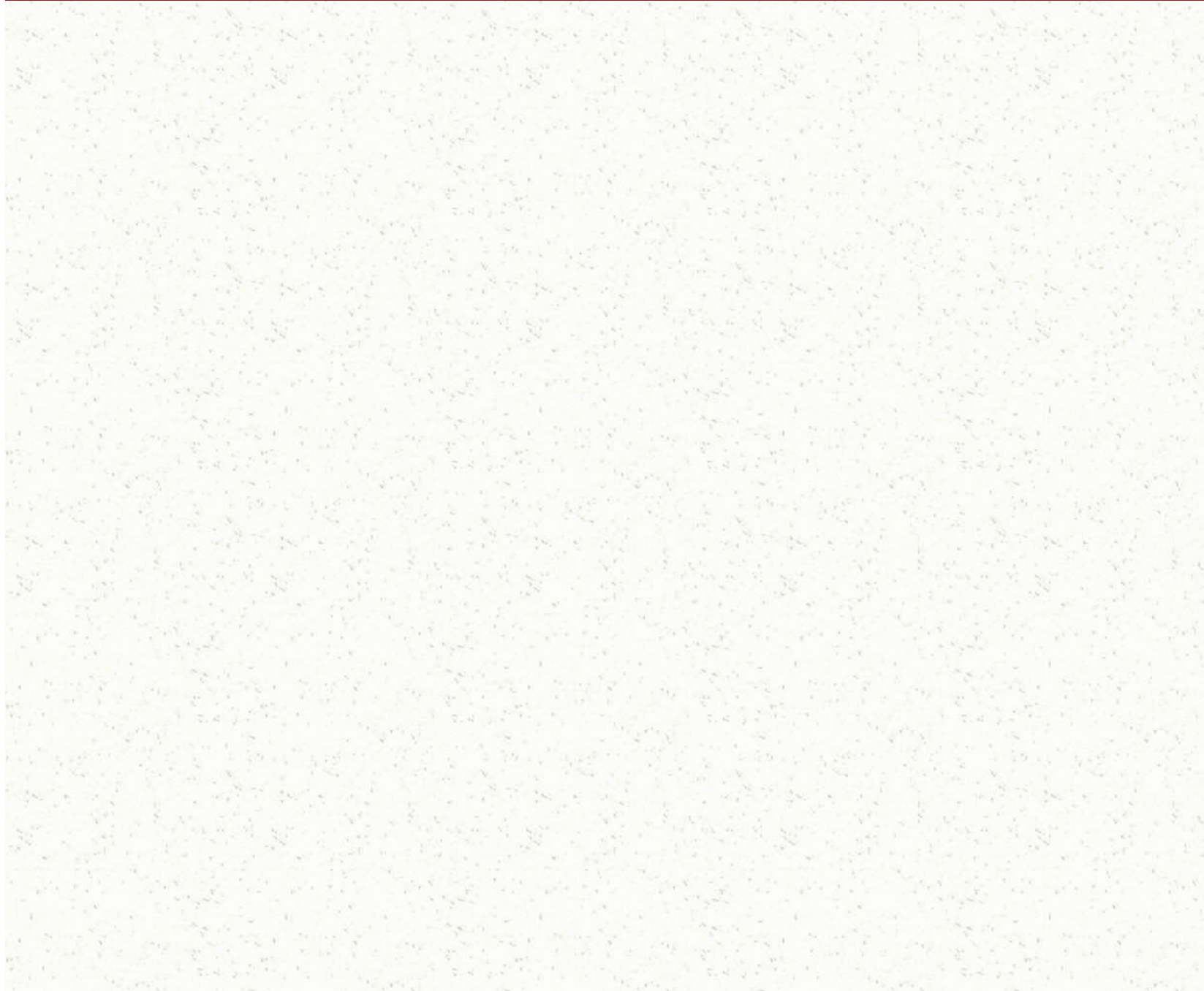
*Peace to the World from
Kuwait*

By: Prof. William Andersen

POETRY & PROSE

z y
x z
l s h
u l d
v y
M i J
A k N e W
g r x f b w n j
q B m E H T
G c J L n p u X
D O t P Q S
R s a U V
K e





A BLANK PAGE

Shahad Al-Failakawi

Give me a place to start from
An initial.
A blank page.
Something as white & sparkling as diamonds.
Give me an access to the brain.
Let me delve through its secrets.
Envelop me within its creases.
Show me the unpaved roads to reach ultimate knowledge.
Enlighten my blindness.
Be the enchanting melodies to my deafness.
Shine as the hope I wish for.
Smile upon my face;
Show me the good in life.
Let me see the imperfection of life through your wrinkles.
Through the echoes of your flexible decibels.
And all the smoothness it withholds.
Clarify my silent existence by giving me noise.
Set me to rest.
Show me serenity in a haphazard world.
Show me how to love in the midst of hate.
Conquer all my walls with your strength.
And help me cry my sorrows away.
But let me laugh after weeping.
Make my heart beat after it aches.

A BLANK PAGE

Help me spread my wings in the misty sky
And, most importantly,
Revive the true essence of being inside my veins.

A LIGHTHOUSE

Palwasha Waheed Shaikh

White and bright,
Eyes flutter but we hold on tight.
Tumbling, clashing and mixing,
Foam is blasting and we are gasping.
Met with the twinkling dust but lost again.
We drowned into the blue-white mist to combust.
To the grave and weary eyes,
The glimmer was a source of delight.
Guided and fueled by its grasp,
We pulled through the dark draft.
Alas, by the shore,
The ever-forgiving white spark turned around,
Leaving the now-saved travellers with its flare,
Which would forever serve as a souvenir.
Like a lighthouse education guides us through rough storms.

A LITTLE ADVENTURE

Amal Behbehani

“WE! Are on the hunt! For unicorns!” She announces, standing outside his porch step, looking up at him with a serious expression. He’d just come home and barely got any sleep when she rang his door.

“Do such things exist?” He rubs his eyes tiredly, eyeing the little bundle of energy hopping on her toes at his door.

“Of course they exist! How do people write about them then? Are we all imagining the same thing? No. So it must exist!” She says in a rush, stomping her stick against the floor.

He takes in her getup. Fishnet stockings, a safari hat, a bulletproof vest and the stick in her hand – which, on a closer look, is a butterfly net.

“You seem prepared.” He yawns and looks over her shoulder. There wasn’t anyone with her, waiting at the street side.

“WE never know what we might face.” She admonishes him, giving him a look he’s used to receiving but on a larger scale from someone else.

“Okay, let me just get prepped up too.” He ushers her in and heads to his room. She takes a seat at the chair he got her, an egg shaped one that she really wanted at the store and made up ten reasons as to why he should buy it. Reason number one: because it was shaped like an egg. He still bought it anyway and kept it here.

He gets his cell phone and jacket, wallet as well. Who knew how much it costs to spot a unicorn.

“Your little munchkin is off to find a unicorn.” He sends out a text, and instantly gets a reply.

“If this is your way to get me talking to you again, it’s lame.”

“Suit yourself. My phone is with me if you need her.”

No reply back. He sighs and returns back to the living room. She’s still in her seat but sitting upright and at attention, looking ready for their outing.

“Okay. Let’s head out.” He waits for her to jump up and lead them on their quest. She doesn’t move.

“Um. I don’t know where to go first.”

“Huh?”

“Where do unicorns usually hang out?”

“I—.” He runs a hand through his hair, holding back the laugh that tries to escape.

“They usually are found around people who are good and innocent.”

“Huh?”

“They usually go to the nice people. They won’t come out until there is someone like them in human form. The best girl in the world.” He explains to her. At least that’s what he remembers. Something about hunters as well. He should get the Last Unicorn film for her to watch.

She lights up. “I know where we can find one. Let’s go!” She grabs his hand, and he just startles at the gesture; it has been awhile since she was this excited and willing to let him join in her games.

“Woah okay. First coffee, then we’ll head out.” He imagines it goes well, despite the sparkling glint of an obsession in the girl’s eye.

A LITTLE ADVENTURE

And then, he imagines being behind bars before she's twelve is not something that should happen. Even after twelve. He hopes not. The police officer has her sitting next to his desk, offering her a juice box as he goes over their transgressions. He just listens along; his eyes keep going to the clock above them. He had hope.

The stomping of boots and he wipes the knowing smile from his face. He stays still in his jail cell and doesn't look up till she's in his eye view. She's wearing her usual work suit, handcuffs on side, as she eyes the vest the girl is wearing.

"Mommy!" She runs into her arm, squealing as she hugs her and lets her mother worry over her. Seeing there are no scratch marks on the kid, the woman ushers her outside and strides back over to him. She doesn't look pleased at all. He's happy at least the jail cell is keeping her from reaching for him.

"So. Sorry to call you while you're on your shift."

"You took her to a show set. To stalk an actress."

"I see getting into jail is the only way to get you to talk to me."

"You crashed a set. While they're filming."

"The actress was pretty cool about it until they brought security around."

She scrunches the bridge of her nose. He always found that cute about her.

"Why?"

“Well.” He gets off the jailbed and drapes himself against the cell, arms leaning outside.

“Your daughter thought Lana Parrilla would get her closer to unicorns. It was worth a shot.”

“Oh so now she is my daughter when she gets you into trouble?!”

“Yeah, just like her mother.” He grins.

“Don’t.” She says a hint of a smile in her voice.

“Do I get to leave now?”

“I came for her. You can stay the night.” She tells him and turns around, walking over to the kid. “Enjoy the comfy bed.” She calls out to him.

“Thanks, sheriff.” His eyes trail after her, till he senses the other police officer staring at him.

“Shush it.”

“Mhmm. Night David.” The officer smiles amusedly as he sips his coffee, getting up to leave as well.

“Night Frank. Don’t forget to bring bagels tomorrow.” He calls out as he plops down on the bed, the creaking already giving away at how the night will be. He mercifully doesn’t dream of unicorns. When all is said and done, three days after, the kid sneaked back to his house. He let her sit on the porch with him and drink hot cocoa with marshmallows. Two only for him, and plenty more of them floating in her drink.

A LITTLE ADVENTURE

“Dad.”

“Hmm.”

“When are you coming home?”

“Not yet, sweetie.”

“I miss you.”

“I miss you too. You can always come and see me, even for another unicorn hunt.”

“Okay. But mom said no more unicorn hunts or she’ll send you to Alaska.”

“Will you visit me in Alaska?”

“Mom says it’s really far.”

“Hm. We should stick to normal stuff to do here then.”

AN ACKNOWLEDGED LEGISLATOR BARROWS A SONNET

Prof. James

My poem is not a moment's monument,
Nor did I look in my black heart and write,
Not spontaneous overflow, but sentiment.
The best words in the best order? Not quite.

People say my poems are bad, but not
Because those people are bad, but because
My poems are bad.
They (both people and poems) imitate immaturely.

I hate poetry but buy books of poetry
I mostly choose between vulgarity and banality
I use numerous adjectives and superfluity;
I am the high priest of visibility.
In a couplet, trying to sum up my concept,
I fear the abstract and also the natural object.

Footnotes and fyi (not to be included in the published poem, I hope)
Title: Percy Byshe Shelley
Line 1: Christina Rosetti

AN ACKNOWLEDGED
LEGISLATOR BARROWS
A SONNET

Line 2: Sir Philip Sidney
Line 3: William Wordsworth
Line 4: Samuel Taylor Coleridge
Lines 5-7: Randall Jarrell
Line 8: T.S. Eliot
Line 9: Kenneth Rexroth
Line 10: Robert Graves
Line 11: Ezra Pound
Line 12: Wallace Stevens
Line 13: Me
Line 14: Ezra Pound

AQUAPHOBIA

Palwasha Shaikh

Standing high above a familiar piece of land, my eyes could not help but wander. They attempted to find meaning in the white clouds that embellished the limitless expanse of blue. Soon the clouds parted to welcome its supreme lord, the sun, and my eyes bowed out of respect for its powerful glare. I was now forced to stare at the assortment of rocks that lay beneath my bare feet. Tightly clutching the crumbling assortment of rocks, I realized my feet were unwilling to let go of the known.

But it was time for me to leave my nest of security and comfort, and take my first flight to venture into the deep unknown. “Come on, live your life. Have fun! Do something interesting for once!” were words of encouragement disguised as a taunt that had angered me. Like a broken CD player the words kept on replaying in my mind, as I struggled to find the correct button to hit pause. Even a rush of cold breeze that occasionally greeted my body did not have enough strength to extinguish my raging anger.

Instead with every gust of wind that hit my glowering face, I became more resolute. I had taken off my shoes. With bated breath, I now counted twenty steps backwards. I then took off. My face turned red in anger while the pebbles violently rubbed against the base of my naked feet. Soon there was no ground left to run on, and for a second I was levitating in air.

Gravity began taking its effect, and I was on my way down. My red face, which had been filled with anger, now showed only fear.

AQUAPHOBIA

As I began to plummet down, the beating of my heart grew louder and louder in my ears. Duh-dun, duh-dun...why did I decide to jump in the first place? Duh-dun, duh-dun...Really, I decided to do something reckless for the first time and...wait a minute! I don't know how to swim...

Splash!

I hit the surface of the water, and I was sinking uncontrollably into the deep unknown. In silence, thoughts began floating in my mind. So this is how I die. I was completely happy and safe at home with my harmless books. My books that opened a portal to multiple adventures at no cost. Why did I jump off a cliff that was 350 ft. high? Why? Oh! If I survive this I am not going to leave my friends...

Water rushing through my nose, I choked and gagged on nothing but the sparkling lake water. I became that little helpless child once more. My past had collided like the water currents with my present, and I was left distraught. Like her I had no idea where to go. Which way was death and which way was life, I did not know. All I could hear was the rumbling of the clear liquid that continued to engulf me. I tried to scream to escape its clutches, but only rows of bubbles were produced by my efforts. The little child was not amused by the bubbles then, and I was not amused by them today. She had for a reason not pursued to learn swimming.

I panicked. In a state of complete terror, I began batting my hands like a flappy bird everywhere and anywhere, creating huge

splashes. Desperately fighting to see the light, I expected to be rescued again like I was years ago. But my grandparents were nowhere near, and I was not in a swimming pool. My throat was in agony with the rising pressure of trapped air, and the remedy was air.

A rough and experienced hand pulled me up. It exposed me to the air that was heavy and humid. It felt thick, as I had hoped, coating the inside of my throat and relieving my thirst. I could feel the moisture clinging to my drenched clothes, as I struggled to hold on to the hand.

The sun that shone against the water blinded me. As soon as the contact lenses readjusted, I squinted my eyes open in search of the shore. I was simply irritated and wanted to quickly get out of the cold and freezing water, before I drowned again.

Accompanied by awkward silence, I was guided by the lifeguard who had rescued me. In the quiet, I could loudly and clearly hear the thoughts that were gliding in his bald and shiny head. He had the same question that I was asking myself, why did I jump in the first place when I did not know how to swim?

Maybe I was tired of being labeled as boring and foolish and wanted to try something adventurous. Maybe I for once wanted to be irresponsible and reckless. Maybe I wanted to be the interesting one among my friends, and not a boring old bookworm. No matter what the reason was, in the end I was able to stop the unstoppable chain of taunts that replayed continuously in my head. But none of these were the reasons I really jumped...

AQUAPHOBIA

I smiled at the lifeguard to express my gratitude. He looked at me and said, “ You are a brave one.” He left.

He knew.

I had triumphed over my fear.

CONGESTED TRAFFIC

Prof. Craig Loomis

The next day's newspaper--page two, column three--will have a lengthy description about what happened: how traffic was moving just fine for a November's Thursday afternoon when suddenly the red wink of brake lights was everywhere, followed by horns honking, traffic slowing, slower, stopped, backing up as far as the Mishref turnoff, and now bigger and longer honking; and how an armada of police cars--flashing redandblue lights, loud speakers blaring--insisted drivers get out of the way, slow down, get ready to stop, etc. And some of those drivers heard and obeyed, while others, thinking the gravelly unused emergency lane is there for a reason, veered to the left, and in a spray of windshield-shattering pebbles hurried on. But never mind, because by now some have even pulled over to get a better looksee. One red SUV--family of one boy and one girl parked neatly, picnic-like on the shoulder--the little girl, one hand firmly attached to her mother, the other straining to touch the sparkly white clothing at her feet, at everybody's feet. The mother, knowing all there is to know about such clothing, let's her daughter grab. Meanwhile, the father with son are content to watch, thinking, perhaps, that this sort of browsing is best left to the women. In fact, the boy--ten or eleven years old, who's to say with boys these days--thinks this is funny and turning red-faced towards his father says something that starts out being serious but--he can't help it--ends up being full of laughter.

The road is littered with the stuff--from here to there; a large wooden crate has fallen from a truck, splintering, its fresh, white wood

CONGESTED TRAFFIC

filling the road with a colorful collection of bras and panties, a roadway of white other clothing that has not stopped twisting and turning in the traffic wind, swirling desert heat.

Meanwhile, again, the police have arrived to, finally, make the problem go away, this sort reckless display of lingerie, along with friendly scavenging. But of course it is too late, and tomorrow's newspaper will read: how this unfortunate spillage resulted in a long line of congested traffic as lingerie clogged the roadway. And so, police officers step out of their cruisers to consult with one another. Blueandred lights forever flashing as they finger their holsters because their police training tells them you never know. Eye-balling the situation, they radio for advice: need they retrieve the clothing if it is already off the road? In the end, police headquarters tells them that yes, officers are to leave their cruisers and to collect the clothing, to pick it up and push the broken crate to the side of the road. All done fingering their holsters, for the time being, they advance on the lingerie.

As the police do their duty, car windows are being rolled down with heads peeking to get a better look. Meanwhile, the desert winds care nothing for things like this--a pink bra (cup size 34A, if truth be told) is seen cartwheeling over the highway, closely followed by two, no three purpleandwhite panties (sizes unknown). The police walk faster to capture these pieces. Haram.

A big white car jerks to a halt, and the driver--Indian maybe Sri Lankan--bounds out to gather a handful of brightly colored clothing,

and just when he thinks he has done his duty, he turns to the car as if being spoken to, listening, nodding— windows tinted, talker unknown— and now backs up to claim what looks to be a candy-caned bundle of softness; he has it and looks back again, and yes, that's right, now back to the car and his real job as driver.

But never mind, because by now the police have sealed off that part of the road and all is well, and as they slowly begin to collect the lacy field of lingerie, using their dusty boots to push all to the side of the road, and traffic begins to restart, crawl forward, as people, one last time, lean to take photos, before accelerating into the hot Thursday afternoon, giving one final honk for good measure.

DENYING THE GREY

Batul K Sadliwala

In and out,
Belonging and not,
Forever splintering
Along borders and law.
Here, an outsider within,
There, an insider without:
Spy and traitor.
Between white and black
The grey exists
But cannot.

“Choose!”

ENDLESS STRUGGLE

Sara M Shinnar

They always said to follow your dreams.
Having a dream was the way to reach.
But, reality is the road they seek.
And dreams were for those who are weak.
They say in the real world you kill or die.
No guilt attained to win the fight, but never surrender for your right.
They say aim and shoot before you lose and before you die.
I aimed to shoot but failed the fight, failed my strength to win my right.
A voice inside me said push again and bend the rules for you could win
and never lose.
It said dream big and aim high, because second chances never die.
It said wound the rest but never kill, because every human deserves
to live.
And every dream deserves to fly.
I undoubtedly got up again and aimed for the bullseye,
For the dream I will fulfill and keep alive.
I pushed and pulled, I dodged and turned,
For my dream that will return.
I wonder if my strength will survive,
For me to reach the finish line.
I saw my dream shoot across the sky, as it had reached the finish line.
It reached the world the second try.
Never believe people's lies as dreams will always come alive.
It was a dream. A dream of mine, that will change the world before I die.

HAPPINESS

Nourah Al-Ibrahim

It tastes like eating a delicious food.

It looks like a white room.

It feels like having another chance to live.

It sounds like listening to good news.

It smells like a perfume.

HUES

Shahad Al-Failakawi

Along the mountainside
 She stands.
 With a dream in her hands.
 With a wish of survival;
 The vision of accomplishing the impossible.
 She looks into the misty horizon;
 All is there is the hues of blue and orange.
 Mystifying her senses with its glamour.
 Twinkling is the sun, before it leaves.
 Emptying the place, for a brighter moon.
 To share the duty of lightening our lives.
 Acting as a major part of it.
 Sun rays are made to hit the windowpanes;
 Fill us with happiness of optimism.
 The yellowness of it coaxing us into fraudulent felicity.
 And for some reason, we smile.
 While the moon debunks our dreams;
 Perpetuates our sad reality.
 Where solivagant souls roam the vortex of minds.
 Petulant to surrender to the shallowness of night.
 How ironic are those two?
 Gainsaying each other so freely,
 Leaving her so frantic.
 With a hand filled with the dreams she once wished for;

HUES

Her life is at peak.
And the phlegmatic sensation is beginning to fade;
For her life is crumbling,
With the rising of the moon.
Oh will the muse return with the sun?

LIVING IN A WORLD WITH UNKNOWNNS

Jasim Masters

Mismatched clothes;
Burgundy fringed skirt,
And turquoise peplum blouse.
Ragged-up face;
Intense aura;
And messed-up thoughts.
Too engrossed in overcoming to live;
Too hooked to care.
Of prose and lavender, I speak;
Of the loss of friends;
Of crystals and mist;
Of unknowns that await to be lived.
Of objectifying poor souls;
Of a wicked society;
Of eyelids that scream judgements.
Of eloquence in lying;
Of hostility-filled wrinkles;
Of unacceptability.
Of rules suffocating one's being.
Of misanthropy;
Of a vague future screaming to be relished.
Of souls awakening by coercion.

LIVING IN A WORLD WITH UNKNOWNNS

Of a sunlight that might shine.
Of tears gone to waste;
Of the purgatory of thoughts.
Of heads refusing to be shut;
Of a hope resurfacing.
Of a life filled up with contradictories.
A sigh releases itself;
Followed by slews of tears.
Showing that withholding oneself is never the answer;
And that this, too, shall pass.

MARRIAGE

Sara Abdullah Alhasawi

Marriage is a dream to build. A life to share
One day we will sit side by side we will think
Back over the years. Taking your hands, your heart, and
Your everything will be my forever.
Marriage is a dream to build. A life to share
No matter what happened, no matter what's thrown our way
We will be together at every moment in our life, breathe together
Our hearts beat together. Every day won't be a dream but we are
In this together because our spirit is one.
Marriage is a dream to build. A life to share
Is a ring. As you place this wedding ring onto my finger
You become my lover, my soul mate, my companion
My love for you is like this wedding ring has a start
Has middle, but definitely has no end. As it tells the
World that I choose you.

NEVER ENTER THE MANSION

Weam AlKharif

There was a blackout. The room was dark with a sudden scream being the cause of it. The same scream her friends had informed her of, the screaming that stopped her friends from going anywhere near the abandoned mansion or even consider going inside. It was like a sign of danger. The wooden floor of the abandoned mansion was creaking as the timid footsteps continued onward. Anna's entire being was trembling, but not from the obvious reason of being in an abandoned mansion that might have ghosts inhabiting it. No, she wasn't one to blindly believe in stupid made-up stories or rumors to frighten teenagers.

Ghosts weren't real, and she was going to prove it. In order to do that, Anna had entered the mansion after the man she suspected to be behind the special effects of this place. And now she stood in a room, and found spirit charms were thrown in random directions. As she looked around, another scream came. She jumped, then straightened as she looked towards the mirror; she was certain she saw someone run past in the reflection of the mirror's glass. "A-Alfred...I know you're doing this..." Her quivering voice was then hushed by another scream. This time, the scream caused the glass to break into small sharp pieces, randomly scattering about the room. Anna held up her arms reflexively to protect herself from the merciless sharp edges of the broken pieces of glass. "Who's screaming? This isn't funny!" she still refused to believe ghosts existed. There was just no way.

“The widower that lives here. Well, used to live here anyway. She doesn’t take kindly to us, she probably wants us out of her home.” Alfred, the man she suspected to be behind this, told her as if the answer were obvious. Anna quickly turned hearing his voice, she wasn’t expecting him to show himself so soon. “I told you not to come,” he said, and he was expecting an answer. Anna nodded, he had told her not to come, but she hadn’t taken him seriously. She heard the scream get more high pitched but then stop as the room got colder at the same time. She would blame the cold on the recently cracked windows. There was no way the scream had anything to do with the room getting colder. It wasn’t possible. “Ghosts aren’t real and I am going to prove to everyone that you’re dishonest-” she stopped talking when she felt something slide on her arm, it felt like a damp hand. Her fear got to her and she was actually considering the rumors behind the mansion and so she asked, “H-How did the w-widower d-die again?”

“They say she drowned, a forced drowning to be exact.” Her eyes widened and she had flinched at the feeling of water that was leaking down her arm. She had to calm down and she tried to remind herself of her beliefs. Ghosts aren’t real. Anna was hearing whispers around her, words she couldn’t really know what to make of. The feeling of another damp hand came to her, she felt it on her back this time. She just stood there, she wasn’t going to let her increasingly growing fear get the best of her. She refused to and she had to control herself. “They never

NEVER ENTER THE MANSION

caught the killer, the old widower often said she felt someone watching her every move.” As he spoke, she wanted to cover her ears from the next scream that came, but Anna was too afraid to even move at that moment.

Eyes suddenly widened, Anna felt a hand from behind her connect around her neck, and her fear grew worse. She suddenly felt like she was being forcefully drowned. She felt like she was slowly losing consciousness in the process, it was all over. The next second, Anna could barely hear chanting, and that was when she felt the pressure around her neck disappear and her knees hit the cold floor. She stayed there, trying to recover the air she was denied from the assault. She looked up and scanned the room for anything that might make sense of the situation, maybe it was what used to be in the room that caused this. There just had to be a sensible reason for what happened! Standing with some help from Alfred, she brought her shaking hand to her throat and felt droplets of water on the skin of her neck. And she couldn’t deny it anymore. That wasn’t her sweating, she knew it. There might have actually been a ghost here. “I told you not to come.” As Alfred’s voice travelled to her ears, she could only hope whatever it was didn’t come back.

OUT OF ORDER

Sara M Shinnar

Scattered around the floor,
Are the pieces I handed over to you,
They are the pieces of a broken heart
My broken heart
The pieces you left behind,
And contend with total demand and abuse.
At first I didn't mind and said you are worn out.
I trusted you with myself. The only thing I owned,
But you threw me away
And pieces of my heart were scattered around the floor
As they lay there in disarray they remind me of the sweet and bitter.
And I start to wonder why I stayed
But my answer was simple.
It was justified and it seemed adequate at that time.
I might have a broken heart
But you have my love
I need my distance now and I might never come back
Yet I still love you.
Now and forever,
Even with my shattered heart.

PLIGHT

Feba E Sunny

There he was looking out of the window,
Depressed, distressed, completely lost
He was the rich, handsome only son of a widow
Yet in his bed he turned and tossed

His heart went out to the needy,
The oppressed and the starving
He was angry at the world – so cruel so needy
The increasing number of deprived was alarming

Was there nobody to help them?
Why couldn't anybody solve this dilemma?
Is the obstacle too big for money to overcome?
Can't we save the less privileged from more trauma?

The afternoon was no better
He asked the butler to bring in some tea,
While he visited all his pending letters
The butler left the room quietly

Within minutes his tea was brought
And kept at his side by the maid
Alas! She forgot what she was taught
Unlike her orders the teabag in the pot stayed

In a fit of anger he threw at her the pot
Yelled for the butler, and had her fired
No more explanation was sought
Within a day a new person could be hired

The maid wept and begged ere leaving
Behind her the huge mansion gates closed
Her fate had always been so deceiving
It didn't startle her anymore she supposed

The butler took a last glance at her
Then closed the heavy curtains and sighed
Her three children missed tonight's supper
Due to a teabag not set aside.

SALEM SHAVES OFF HIS MUSTACHE

Prof. Craig Loomis

One of the first things he did was shave off his moustache of some 38 years, and one of the first things she did was say, “What’s the matter with you?”

When he answered, “Nothing,” he really meant to say everting.

At 59, one Wednesday morning, with the sun dusty and reeyed over the city, Salem stepped to the bathroom mirror, and giving the steamyglass a good wipe, took a hard look at his face and decided he had one last chance at love. Running his hand over the mirror yet again, and yes, at 59 years old he had one last chance. Of course he had a wife and they had been married for 30, no 31 years but that was different, ask anybody, that is different.

Thanks to an uncle, along with a friend who knew a friend, it took only two years, two months for Salem to become an assistant manager at one of the important insurance companies on Soor Street. His children, two girls, were grown, one married, the other not because she had other ideas. But nevermind that, because one day in the office, not too long after he’d taken that extra-long look in the mirror and shaved off his moustache, as he headed for the elevator, his superviing all done for the day, two doors down and to the right as he was on his way home, he, for no special reason, glanced right and saw Reedah at

the copy machine. She didn't see him because making copies was more important than looking up to see who was standing in the hallway. Reedah had always been that way. Right then, Salem stopped, and running his fingers over his once-moustache thought about saying something to her, but then changed his mind and continued on. But he didn't forget about Reedah, and the next day he spoke to her once, then twice, and then he went out of his way to say Hello and when she Helloed him back, she said it in such a way that he was certain she meant something more. Later, when the others only smirked at his wasta jokes, she giggled, her cheeks opening to dimples; and he was convinced she really meant something bigger and better.

Salem remembered love, and that was the problem –the remembering. At 59 and an assistant manager, remembering the sweet ache of love. It followed him about like a shadow. That, and now he saw it everywhere: arm in arm, the swish of a skirt, a red lipsticked smile, the gentle slope of a neckline. It was everywhere but just beyond his fingertips.

He started singing the love songs of his youth and when he couldn't remember the words, he hummed. He sang and hummed for weeks and when nothing happened he laughed at himself. Actually, it wasn't really laughter but he made it sound like it was. He went to the bookshop and bought the poetry of his college days. He wore

SALEM SHAVES OFF HIS MUSTACHE

shirts that had once been in fashion, but no longer. In the mornings she watched him wearing shirts of thirty years ago and said nothing. He dreamed of long ago lovers who in his in dreams refused to age, who owned the same smooth skin, the same blonde hair, only he had changed, had aged. Salem had moved on without them.

As the days became weeks then months, and nothing happened, Salem began to worry in earnest. But she hadn't been married to him for 30, no 31 years for nothing, saying, "What's wrong with you?" He shrugged, answering a question with a question: "What?" In the past the waiting had been enough, things happened—the telephone rang, someone knocked at the door-- people changed their minds. But now, waiting brought nothing but more waiting, and even more disturbing, a big emptiness. Secretly Salem knew that desperation was not the answer either; in fact it would only make it worse, scaring love away. He'd seen it, heard stories, watched enough movies. Perhaps he wasn't trying hard enough. He decided to hum his love songs longer, harder, re-reading those college poems, watching more TV.

Of course this was something one did not mention at the diwaniya. If he did, they would laugh, smirk, blow shisha in his face, or, worse, say nothing. No, Salem was alone in this.

After two months, one week, four days, Reedah's boyfriend of two years proposed, and she accepted. He was happy for her. That's what he said, "I'm so happy for you." Of course he wasn't, he didn't even know he had a boyfriend. He couldn't believe she would leave him like that, after all they had been through. That night Salem couldn't sleep. However, his wife, like always, could; and once the sheets and pillows were correctly arranged, she would not move until morning, all the while snoring manly. In the end, with the gray of early morning at the window, Salem found a residue of sleep, but only a slowly spinning sleep—from side to back to side to stomach, to side to back, to ... And in awoke for work exhausted.

By payday, Reedah said her good-byes, shook hands, the occasional hug, a hint of tears, until finally, cradling a bouquet of white roses, she left the office to marry, to live in Salwa with his parents. It wasn't long after that that Salem decided to grow his moustache back, and he did, but it wasn't the same. His going back to his moustache caused her to tilt her head, beetle her eyebrows and ask, "What's wrong with you?"

SPEAKING GRIEF

Batul K. Sadliwala

Memories, embellished in tokens,
Tears, unwept and flooded,
Assurances from strangers,
Came solace from none.
Souls there may be;
Unreachable still.
For you are in decay
Under marble and rose petals,
Where kept promises have no worth.
The silence of those ahead
The noise of us left behind
Oppress the same.
“Au revoir!” I bade
But missed your “Adieu,”
Leaving disjoint words--
These--
To grieve your whole.

TETA

Jude Alsaleh

“You look so sweet, who are you?” she whispered with a distant voice. The wrinkles on her face defined her agitation, her constant struggle of remembrance. “You’re Teta, I’m your daughter’s daughter and you’re my mother’s mother, remember?” I said with a hopeful smile. She looked at me with familiarity, with warmth, like she always did. She can’t remember, but she knows me. The disease has taken over her memories like an unexpected plague. As her eyes closed, the continuous battle of remembering began. The threads of her memories came closer and twirled around her seductively. She extended her arm to reach for the thread glowing with nostalgia, but it turned into a snake and slithered away. A tear found its way around her wrinkles, filled with evading memories. She opened her eyes and whispered, “You look so sweet, who are you?”

THE WEEKEND DECISION

Prof. Craig Loomis

In the beginning, the new country, after consulting neighboring countries, speaking to assorted advisors and astrologers, having political meetings and lengthy diwanis--not to mention the occasional fistfight--decided, in that a Thursday/Friday weekend was best, and so decreed by the Amir. Smiles and handshakes all around, followed by fireworks and a three-day holiday for all.

That was seven years ago, and now things have changed, and although a Thursday/ Friday weekend still seems like a good idea to many—almost any two back-to-back days will do, thinks advisor number two--the banks are not happy, and, as a rule, nobody likes unhappy money. That's when the Amir called a special Monday afternoon meeting of his advisors, announcing, "I am thinking of making a change. This Thursday/Friday weekend business is becoming a problem, you know, and I am thinking of change." His advisors, wide-eyed because this is the first they'd heard of such weekend change talk, said yes, change is often not a bad thing, if done correctly—they are not advisors for nothing—but what did he have in mind? And so he told them the bankers wanted a new and different weekend, that this Thursday/Friday weekend cannot go on, that it has to do with the rest of the world and economics, and such. But never mind, in essence the bankers are keen on moving everything to the left one day. "How about that, one day to the left: a Friday/Saturday weekend, sah?"

“To the left, your Highness?” The advisors, who have always been open to suggestions from the Amir, said it yet again. “To the left one day? The banks, you say, your Highness? The banks?”

“Yes, yes, it has to do with stock markets and currency exchanges, to keep our bookkeeping in balance with the rest of the world— that sort of thing. That’s what I have been told. Never mind the details, you get the idea.”

Except for the distant call to prayer, there is a royal silence in the chamber as advisors with Amir sit to consider, until finally—the royal silence all used up--advisor number eight, who is brand new with a double college degree in finance and accounting clears his throat and raises his hand like he is back in the classroom, and the Amir, who still thinks raising hands is not a bad idea, motions towards him, “Yes, number eight.”

“Yes, well, your Highness, if we are all in agreement, I would like to make a motion that the weekend be moved to the left one day, and henceforth, our weekends will be Friday and Saturday.”

The others stop to stare at advisor eight, this two-degreed colege graduate. “Motion, number eight?”

“Yes,” as he fingers through the yellow sheets of notes in front of him. Such notes had been extremely important to him in college, and he has a double-degree to prove it. “I would like to make a motion.”

THE WEEKEND DECISION

Advisor number two, who has been there since the beginning, who is two chairs to the right of the Amir, who, on second thought, thinks moving weekends one day left or right will be more trouble than it is worth, and by the way, who are these banks and shopkeepers to tell us what to do, and what's this talk of emotion, says, "Nothing like an emotion is necessary. The Amir decrees, and that's that." Snapping his fingers to show all what a decree sounds like.

"Yes, yes, of course," mumbles number eight, "My mistake. I just thought..."

The Amir smiles at youth and college degrees as well as advisor number two, who, if truth be told, is his first cousin. But never mind because now it is time for tea.

After tea, advisor number eight has not moved, frowning down into the yellow pages of his notes, while number two has turned his chair to advisor number one, to laugh at number one's jokes that, as a rule, are never funny. Meanwhile, the Amir has finished his tea, his two telephone calls to New York, not to mention his visit to the royal bathroom, calls the meeting to order.

By now, advisor five, who almost never speaks because he is shy and has something like a lisp, stands and says it is not a bad idea, your Highness, this weekend change, and "as one of your most trusted advisors I whole-heartedly endorse it, thank you." Sitting back down.

The other advisors have nothing against number five, nobody does and yet this does not stop them from staring at him. Did he say

whole-heartedly? Is that the word? Number five can feel their stares but pretends like it is nothing, looking down intently at his fingernails. Secretly, advisor two wonders what it all means when quiet, shy, lispful number five speaks like that. Standing to speak like that.

There is more talk, consulting, and the Amir being the Amir listens, nodding every now and again, until finally, looking down at his gold wristwatch, he stands and when he does all eighteen advisors stand too. He declares that after much thought and investigation and advice—thank you all very much--the new Friday/Saturday weekend will take effect next month, so moved. “I mean decreed.” There is mild applause, and an afternoon of new country decision-making is complete. Shishah for all.

WHAT'S THE VALUE OF THING CALLED "LOVE"?

Hassan Shah

What's the value of the thing called "Love"?
That silly feeling touched when triggered,
The passion that swiftly fades when the fire grows weary,
The nostalgia that pulls you back on the hook,
When the next fox catches your eyes.

What's the value of the thing called "Love"?
That fantasy first encountered in fiction,
The fabric adopted for your daydreams,
The scam that left you hoodwinked,
And snapped you out of the haze.

What's the value of the thing called "Love"?
That morning, noon, and night hankering,
For the great showers milked out of your pockets,
Till you're left to dry,
And suddenly you're no darn good.

What's the value of the thing called "Love"?
That cradle of the green-eyed beast,
The shadow of a doubt rolling you off the rocker,
When your flame lights on the coming torch,

Leaving you green for aye (1) .

What's the value of the thing called "Love"?
That masked charade,
Donned to walk the red carpet,
Last-ditch to win a thumbs up from the upper crust,
Before the show becomes yesterday.

What's the value of the thing called "Love"?
That missing tender link,
The forgotten sense,
On why had the goddess Aphrodite given her blessings,
For your bond.

(1) For aye: Archaic or Scottish for "Always" or "Still."

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO MY PRIDE?

Hassan Shah

Miser is the man writing my checks,
Ominous streak behind his superficial charade,
Nuttier I have grown due to his hold over me,
Embarrassment I have hid well in a brown paper bag,
Yabbered to myself, “Whatever happened to my pride?”

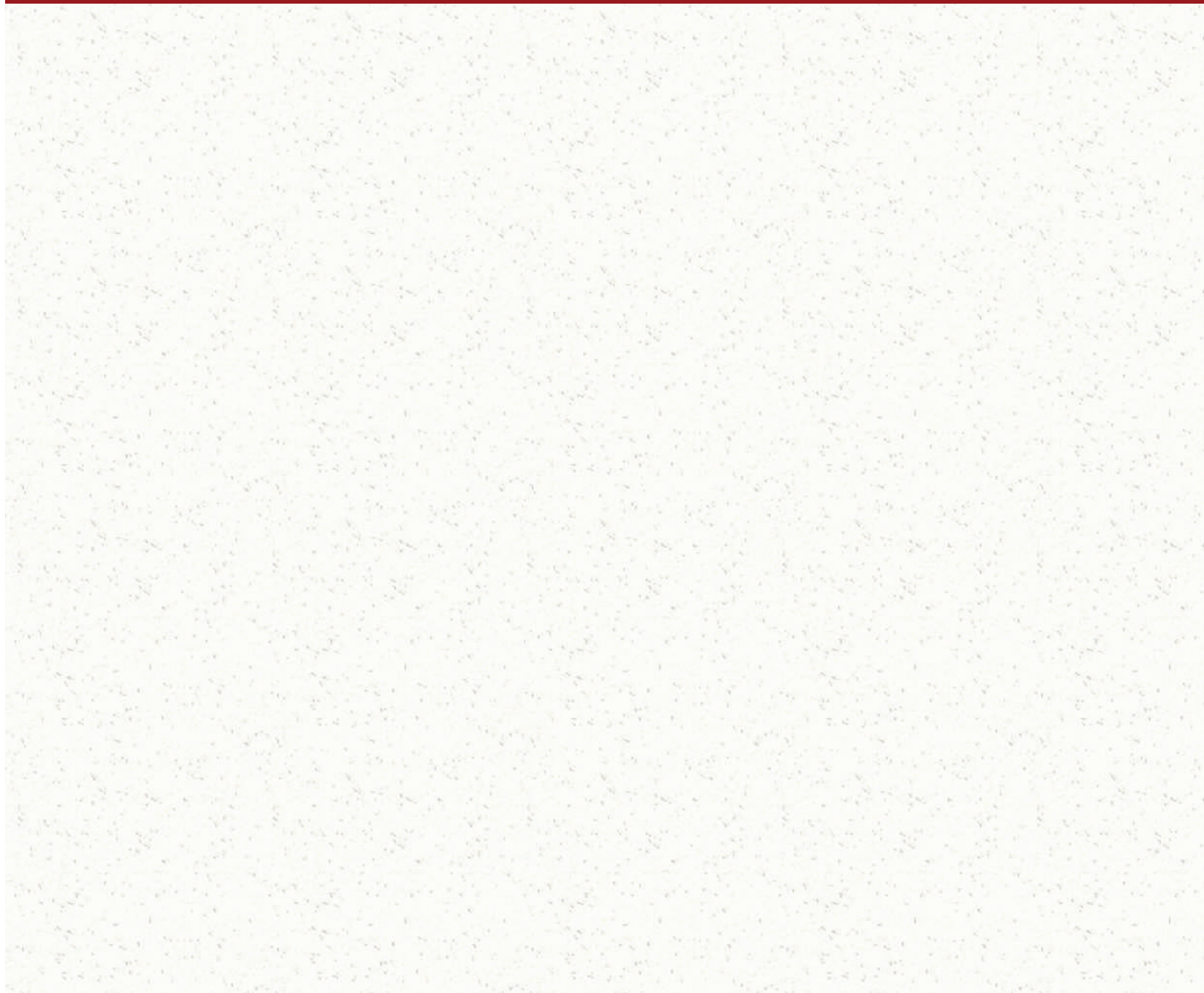
WHERE I STAND TODAY

Shahad Al-Failakawi

I stand today
 Bashful and embarrassed.
 Ashamed of what I've become,
 Of how I've turned out to be.
 Vulnerable with no backbone;
 Broken into shreds.
 Allowing words to take their toll on me;
 Fracturing me into a million little pieces.
 I give in to the desire of snatching my hair from its roots;
 And declare the uncontrollable feeling of self-doubt to be a constant
 factor in my life.
 I choose the wrong road;
 I let the malicious demons haunt me down.
 Making my hands shake while I draw;
 Faltering my voice when I speak.
 And moistening my eyes once my heart breaks.
 Demeaning is the silence in my head;
 Shattering my facade;
 & ruining everything I've ever worked so hard for.
 Words are knives stabbed into my heart;
 Rupturing my veins;
 And destroying my very being.
 I let the chants get to me,
 Melodiously singing words of doubt inside my head.

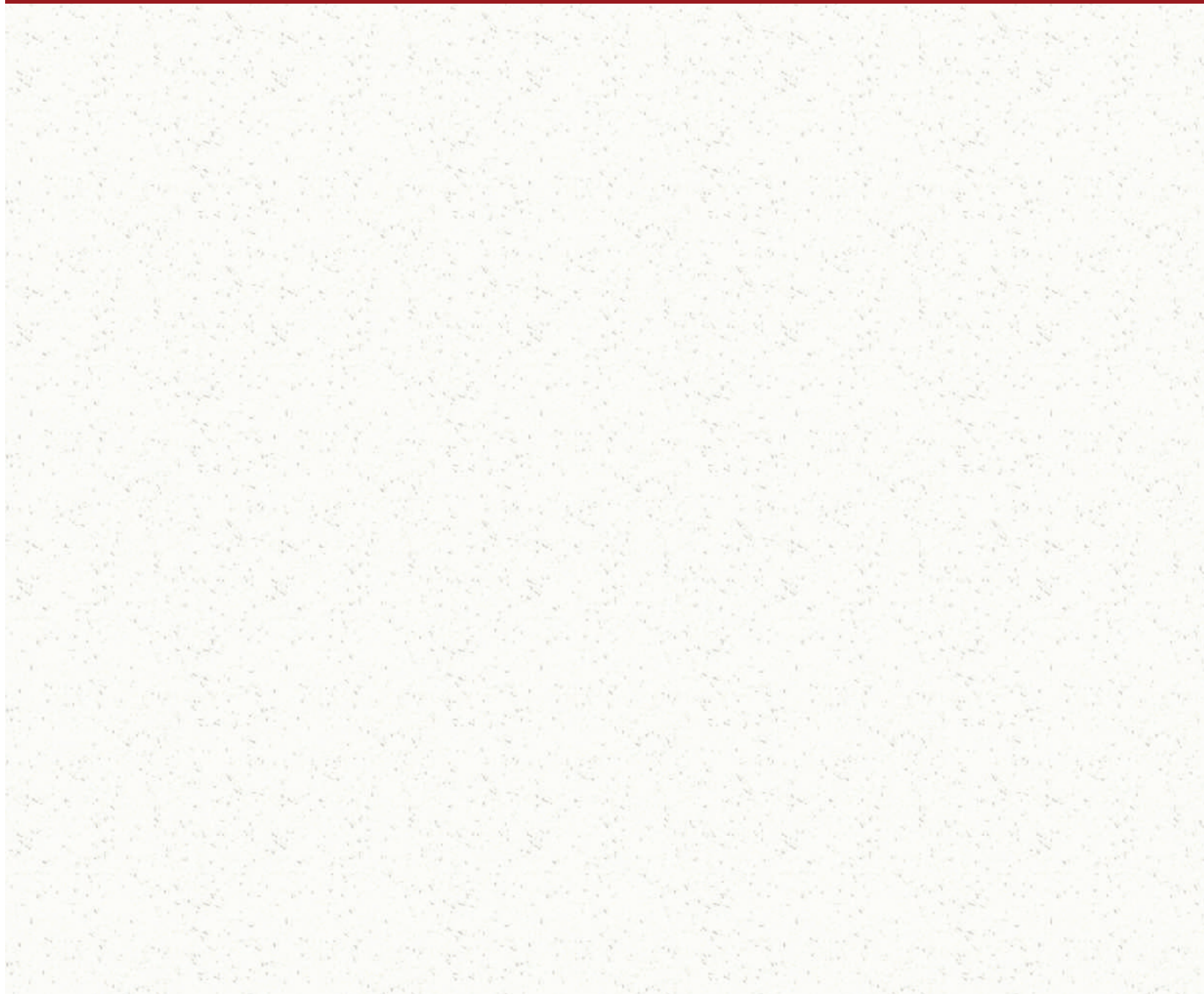
WHERE I STAND TODAY

Ruining my already fragile self-esteem;
And exacerbating my misery.
I take a few minutes to think,
And let realization dawn on me,
As I fall into piles of hysterics.





2nd ANNUAL
HALLOWEEN
SHORT STORY COMPETITION



CZ0-6

Joseph Collier (First place)

Imagine a world where you wake up in a hospital bed barely breathing. Your whole body numb and motionless. The warm glow of the sun just scraping through a hairline crack in your eyelids. Not hours earlier you were driving home from the mall. You remember don't you? You tasted death that day, remember what it felt like? It all happened so fast, yet you still remember your head smashing clear through the windshield and the sound of your ribs snapping one by one. Gasping for air as the flashing ambulance lights and wailing sirens lulled you to sleep. You can still hear the Surgeons shouting in vein watching you suffer, twitch and bleed. Your chest burning as tears rolled down your cheeks whilst each of your ribs as knives dug into your lungs spilling blood into them. You cringed and prayed. But it wasn't enough.

The bitter empty feeling of loneliness kept haunting you, for a while it was all you had left. But what is this warm silky light dancing through the hairline crack in your eyelid? You feel nothing of your body, yet as you peel your eyes open you can see your right hand hanging off the gurney twitching. Had you been paralyzed in the accident? You struggle mentally to order you fist closed. Delayed at first, your fingers one by one take the familiar shape of a fist. You nervously order your head to turn from its left hanging position on your pillow to align with the ceiling. You can just barley feel the cringing and cracking of your neck with ever inch your head turns. As the final crack sets in, you feel the itchy polyester lined sheets, then the chill of the air conditioning

CZ0-6

fanning over you and the slight flickering of a TV in the corner of your vision. Just hints of the world around you trying the break through. You struggle to place your hands onto the sides of the gurney and pray that your torso is still intact enough to sit up. Sure enough you stagger and sit upright facing the half open door.

Amazingly, there was little to no pain in your joints or muscles having pulled yourself up. Attentively, you turn and face your right where the flat screen TV lie on a low table. The remote resting on a bedside table just within arm's reach. The TV is flashing with images of the National Guard firing upon sloth like civilians whimpering away. Their skin; though blurry and pixelated; is pale and white. You reach for the remote and turn up the volume on the silent massacre. Halfblooded screams filled the room, drowned out by guardsmen firing and yelling orders. Your jaw drops in terror as you read the news strip: "government formally apologizes for accidental release of bio-weapon CZ0-6, said to be the cause of presumably deceased penitents now re-animating and spreading the toxin. The CDC states: CZ0-6 has an indented 'kill switch' triggered by accumulated genetic mutation which will cause all infected living citizens to decease and re-animate..." You desperately scramble to the bathroom and stare at your haunting reflection in the mirror.

Your skin pale as a sheet, your eyes dead and colorless. You lift your hospital gown to inspect what should be stitches or incisions from the operation, you see no scars and all of your ribs intact. You count all the way up your breast bone, all twenty four. The door creaks open behind you causing you to nearly stumble. A young girl barely six years old stood hugging the side of the door, peaking around the side. She politely asks if she could come in. You nod slowly. As she entered you notice she was bald with dead colorless eyes. She stands in the bathroom doorway, tilts her head to one side and smiles. She exclaims that you look funny and quietly giggles to herself. She extends a hand towards you and gestures for you to shake it. You comply and gently grasp the hand of the child. She smiles and introduces herself, "I'm Delilah and you-"

Delilah whimpers at the sound of a door bursting open across the hall. A muffled man shouts: "She's in here!" You hear four heavy pairs of footsteps marching towards the room. Delilah runs behind your legs hugging them. She screams: "Don't let them take me!" the men dressed in full yellow hazmat storm into your room and attempt to grab Delilah. You frantically shove one of them out of the way unintentionally sending him flying out of the bathroom and indenting him into the wall. Another lunges forward and kicks you to the floor. You hit your head on the sink then the floor and begin blacking out. You struggle to see two of the men dragging the wailing, kicking girl

CZ0-6

away whilst the last speaks into his intercom: “We have patient zero, radio HQ for Evac. We have a man down, possible contaminant.” He reaches for his belt grabbing a small butterfly knife and begin drives it towards your temple.

To what seems like instinct you jerk your hand in the way of his knife sending the blade searing through your left hand. You cry out in in horror as burgundy blood pours down the knife onto your face. Overcome by pain you jerk you left hand back disarming the CDC agent and scramble to your knees. The shocked agent backs away in horror and reaches for his sidearm but as he cocks his M9 you lunge at him from a crouch and dive for his waist. With your right hand you rip away his pistol and being clawing at his mask. You sit directly on his chest pinning him to the floor desperately trying to tear away at his mask. The agent screams and flails in horror as a red fury pours over you as if someone had destroyed everything you loved.

Both his suit and skin are ripped away with every fury-driven swipe, but all you could see is a man that had to die but by the time you are really aware of what is was you were actually doing you can see the bone of his skull and several minutes have passed. Your half-torn fingernails reek with the stench of his blood with a rich pool of it having already been poured across the floor of your room. You are covered in what is undistinguishably your blood or his. The tear he left

in your hand with his butterfly knife is gaping and stating to swell but it does nothing more than tickle you. You once again scramble to your feet and stare at the two circular red holes in the agent's face. Before you feel any remorse set in the faint scream of Delilah re-ignites you and you hurl yourself into the main hallway and sprint towards her screams left of your room. As you leave your room you cut through a wall of stench festering from the bodies of executed patients still rotting in their beds. Half-faded fluorescent bulbs filcher ever other second revealing what's left of their features.

A young headless woman barley in her twenties lying flat with her limbs hanging off her gurney, her head almost hacked off half-hanging on her shoulders with her spine peeking through her flesh with a line of old dark blood dripping from her jugular down to her waist. An old man curled up in the fetal position with a freshly rotting hole in the right side of his head housing a stained scalpel. An older woman pressing a small boy against her chest both of whom have finite steams of blood running from precise bullet holes through their temples. None of the bodies were half as pale as yours, the life in their eyes gently slipping away. Your heart furiously palpitating open and shut in your chest struggling to make use of the disgusting air being forced into your lungs. Once you pass a dozen rooms you catch a glimpse of a CDC agent driving a knife through a corpse. His intercom buzzes to life: "All units be advised patient zero has escaped custody. Repeat, be

CZ0-6

advised...” you slide past the agent masked by the sound of the remaining intercom message whilst he is still carving the skull of the deceased patient. You cautiously move past several more doors along the hall whilst your head throbs furiously synchronized with your heart from the dire chance of pace.

The atmosphere however, becomes much more tolerable as you approach the end of the corridor. Once you move past all the rooms in your hall you carefully peak your head around the corner and take into view an exit to the hospital that looked much cleaner then you thought possible given the circumstances. Only a few fluorescent bulbs towards your current end of the hall were flickering. As you scan the considerably shorter hallway of only four waiting rooms along the left side of the wall you come across items that strike you. All of the doors were neatly left fully open as if by routine. The floors hadn't the slightest streaks of blood or stains apart from a puddle of what looked like water around a toppled tray left outside a waiting room. The air even had hints of aerosol spray in it. I mean who would use aerosol in a hospital were numerous allergies and illnesses could react dangerously to- “No let go of me! Let go of me!” Your awkward tangent is silenced as your head jerks towards the exit and you bolt towards the double doors ignoring all other questions floating in your mind. You cross your arms at the middle of your forearm and burst through the doors.

At the other side of the door you are met with two blinding flares. The first of which being the sun burning the back of your eyes and the second a piercing red light zipping around your cornea causing your eyes to water and itch. Whilst nearly disoriented, a deep booming voice shouts into a megaphone “Infected, Freeze! On the ground now!” Between the megaphone, the blinding sunlight and the tactical lasers beaming into your watering eyes you barely manage to make out the blurry shadow of a small girl being lifted into the back of what appears to be a larger truck with plating escorted by two men wearing forest camouflage. The shadow jerks its head towards you and shrieks: “Help!” Although disoriented you somehow instinctively crouch down causing the weapons pointed towards you to open fire. Whilst avoiding the initial shots you lunge towards the truck clawing the ground with panther like reflexes. You pick Delilah up and turn around to run. The back end of a marines M16a4 greets you right between your eyes. You squirm to keep Delilah in your arms as you hit the ground. She squeezes your hospital gown and clings to you. As the Atmosphere barely clears up being in the shadow of the van you see the back end of a stock slam between your eyes again. Your head quakes back and slams into the ground as trickles of blood pour from your nose and cut lips. The slamming persisted and after the third blow your arms gave way and unfolded leaving Delilah to be tugged away kicking and screaming. The sides of your head ached and burned. Everything started sounding like you were underwater. Until splat. You tasted death that day, remember now?

I FALL TO PIECES...

Latifa Al-Hajeri (Second Place)

What they said, all of it was right. And all of it was wrong. The conspiracy theorists had a point and hopefully their victory was a solace to them (“There will be a zombie apocalypse! We have to be prepared!”) in light of so many being turned into zombies. Ah, yes, did you realize that within your lifetime, and it was within your lifetime, that zombieism became a reality? Its origins were as dark and as poignant as oil, and all the wars fought over it, releasing the zombie virus as the by-product of a biological warfare agent on both sides, so it doesn’t really matter who did it first. What’s done is done.

All initial indicators were far less insidious than one might have believed, but that is not to say it isn’t a struggle. There was no funeral, no burial, no thinking someone was resting peacefully until for some unknown reason their eyes flashed open again, only this time with no pupil. There was no scratching, clawing, stubby, bleeding hands reaching up through the dirt, grasping at the fogged air of a moonlit night. No piles of grass and sod discarded to one side as a body lurched back up in an unending sea of moans and groans. There was, however, the quiet subtle inhale. The release of the agent inside the human body. The spread of the infection and the disease until finally, at last, the heart stopped. But the mind continued. And as the mind continued, so, too, did the body.

You don’t wander around hoping for brains. The brains of others. Eating slurpy, burpy brains with reckless abandon. Poking through skulls? Going in through the nose or the eyes of the victim in

an effort to find the mushy pink or grey matter? The mechanics of such an exercise always seemed so improbable and unlikely to succeed, but that is what Hollywood is for, I supposed, to make up silly shameful excuses. “Of course!” Hollywood yelled. “Of course people would come back from the dead! They would be driven back to the world of the living on the quest for....why! Brains! Why not, brains?” Why not indeed:

I liked my food cooked.

I don’t think I would like such spongy food.

Really! How would you get the brains out and how hungry would you be to just pry and pry and claw while they screamed and screamed, “No! Not me! Not my brains!”

It would take so long to actually find a way to get the brains, the way Hollywood would have you believe, that someone could just as soon find a shovel and hack off the zombie’s head. There. That would solve that problem.

You don’t rot right away. You may never rot. One day, I will likely rot. It’s a vicious cycle though, one I don’t plan on giving up any time soon but who knows when I will break. You have to keep your mind occupied. You have to keep feeding it. You have to stay busy and work and think and rethink and redo and repeat because the second you slow down, the second you take a break, the second you don’t keep things moving, moving, always moving---

I FALL TO PIECES...

Then, and only then, does the rot start. The prickling on the skin that is looser now. The loosening of teeth, the clumped hair falling from the crown. Then, and only then, must one succumb to the smell, the smell of rotting flesh whose owner forgot to stay alert and vigilant and fresh. Some give up right away, hands and ears falling as they will like lepers in the Old Testament. I chose to fight it to stay busy and occupied and fast and always moving.

But what happens when it gets too exhausting? What happens when I take just a second to close my eyes and allow my brain the opportunity to Just. Be. Empty. Then, I imagine, the real horror begins because that is when you lose. There are no brains to save you. Oh, if only something could save you. But there's nothing. That is when you fall.

To pieces.
Literally

I HAVE NEVER BEEN THE RELIGIOUS SORT

Aisha M. Al-Mishwit (Third Place)

“I have never been the religious sort..
Before nature turned its back on itself and became ugly I felt
hypocritical for wearing the cross around my neck; impugning the idea
of God above.
.. Hope.

I now hope all my words were nothing more than mere calumniating
sentences; for now I pray He hears my pleas of redemption.

God made us pure. Simple.

Mortals side by side that were meant to move together effortlessly in
beautiful harmony, but we have failed His flawless design. We have
failed ourselves.

Our minds gone gnarled.

Our bodies turned sullied by poisons we willingly drew within
ourselves - made filth.

Armageddon was once this fictitious joke, but the day is before us and
we are not the ones who will stand to see it. We have sullied His name
and our fate is to fall by our monstrous brethren. Their simplistic urge

I HAVE NEVER BEEN THE RELIGIOUS SORT

to purge darkness from the world is proof of His first plan desperately enacting to try and redeem itself.”

~*The Night Prior*~

Thundering feet beat against the street; heavy breathing fell from the mouths of the four remaining survivors of apartment complex B.

There had been twenty seven of them.
Twenty three. Laid to waste.

A motherless child, a man of faith and two siblings - a brother and a sister - were all of whom remained from apartment complex B.

The man of faith clutched his cross as he ran, murmuring prayers to his almighty God, scooping up the female child who cried and did nothing; too young to understand what religion truly was and therefore did not call upon the ambiguous idea that is God.

Of the siblings, the brother stumbled and fell. Their assailants emitted an ear piercing shriek of gleeful greed, the smell of rotting flesh coming ever so closer as the twisted, peeling and leaking creatures moved all the quicker to their prey.

The sister whom was ahead, turned back and watched in horror as her

brother was torn apart by hollow eyed monstrosities she once dared to call her friends, her co-workers and even her family.

The man of faith looked back, trying to call her attention to him, away from the madness that was set before her -- her brother; screaming and gurgling as his jugular was ripped open by forever hungry teeth.

She called his name, howled it in agony, when not too far along in the past she spit upon him and promised to never speak with him again. Foolish girl. Little did she know then that she would regret so strongly the words of misdirected hate towards him. Her baby brother. Michael.

The religious man hissed his concern and set down the girl, nudging her forward.

“Run.” He said. “Run and don’t stop; I swear we’ll be okay. Just run.”

The child wept all the stronger, but turned on heel and kept moving forward regardless of the man who turned back. Her legs were swift and the wind whistled in her ears; she had once been a beautiful image of innocence beneath her mud caked clothing and the overwhelming fear that made her little heart beat faster than it ever had before.

But God did not accept the falsehood of her imagery. A bloodied beast that was once quite a jovial man ran out towards her in a food lusting

I HAVE NEVER BEEN THE RELIGIOUS SORT

frenzy, brought to the ground her eyes were the first to be taken from her. Alicia was always told how beautiful they were.

The man of faith looked back at the nightmare rendering sound of blood curdling screams, but did not stop himself from running back to the older woman. He took hold of her arms and threw her towards the direction of a building with an open door.

Jeremy was always quite selfless, he was a good man. A bit too selfless. God apparently thought so. For after he moved her from danger, one of the monsters that had been feasting on her brother became interested in him.. And sunk her teeth into his leg.

The woman looked back and cried out his name, foolish girl, it was always going to be her downfall that she was too outwardly expressive. She called attention to all the creatures on herself.

She quickly slammed shut the door, but it only bounced back open from the force as she ran to the second floor. Shrieking and groaning escaped the undead servants of God as they raced after her; another door slammed shut though and this one remained. She balled herself into a corner and wept loudly holding her cross pendant and there she remained.

~*Present*~

“My name is Diana. Forgive me God.. For I have sinned.” With her final words and the rising sun as she clutched her pendant, the creatures finally broke through..

Z-40892

Dr. David Hadbawnik (First place)

At night we run. Moving slowly, our limbs stiff from the heat of the day. Day is for resting, and we cling to the shadows, bunching into the corners of abandoned, crumbling buildings, where people once lived and worked. Where we once lived and worked.

We are zombies. Some resist this label – after all, it comes from them; from their fear and hatred – but I embrace it. My spine is deformed, my joints fused, my vocal cords corroded, so that only a pathetic groan escapes my cracked lips. But under all that – under the gore in my hair, the missing bit of scalp and the mangled nose and the one gouged eye that hangs from its empty socket – my brain works perfectly. My memory is spotty. I miss music; I may have been a musician, or only a person who enjoyed listening to music.

There is a cold, fiery force that brings us together and keeps us going. Nor are we without direction. A pleasant tingling works up from the base of the cerebral cortex when enough of us move together, as if drawing a spark from the slow shuffle of our feet over the earth. We head east, gathering numbers and spreading out slowly. Images and sensations waft through us – hands washing dishes, kneading dough, tying shoelaces – tactile, repetitive motions buried somewhere inside us, dim corridors of human moments from whence we came.

A cluster of cats sniff around a pile of garbage as we approach, our feet shuffling on the dust-blown road. Two of the larger cats freeze, their ears perking up; one of them steps tentatively forward, hissing. We keep moving and the cats scatter into the night with a chorus of forlorn cries.

One memory: A little boy sitting at a table across from a man (his father?). A plate of food on the table between them. The boy's face set in a stubborn frown, hard as only the face of a little boy or an old man can be hard. By a gesture from the man it's clear he wants the boy to eat the food, but the boy refuses. They sit there. Time drips from the clock that hangs on the wall above them, the minutes falling slowly away. Still the boy sits, the man sits, and the food sits between them, long gone cold.

Why won't the boy eat the food? What does this memory mean? Why does it turn and turn in my brain?

The sky turns a slate gray and the heat begins to tick up as night fades. Dawns are always spectacular, and we slow down and go quiet as some primal force demands our silent awe. There is an indescribable pink, a moist color out of a dream, and quickly the day breaks – that verb is so apt – as light flows into the sky, accompanied by the stirring of birds in the branches that line the road.

Z-40892

Then all is chaos. A scream, followed by explosions, the noises mingling together and ringing in our ears. Bodies go down beside me – limbs torn from torsos, flesh spewing gore, meat spilling out, groans, more screams, explosions – with everything flashing & spinning I see a figure turn, open its mouth; the next instant the face simply disintegrates and teeth, skin and blood shoot over me in a wet cascade.

Suddenly, in our midst, the human is there. He (is it a he?) opens his mouth, but all that comes out is more noise. He keeps pulling the trigger on his weapon but the explosions have stopped and we hear an empty clicking sound instead. As we close in he raises the weapon, swings, beats down one of us, another, the soft crunching sound of metal striking brain – but then we are on him.

In a little while, the frenzy complete, we move on, searching now for shade as the day grows hot. Behind us something twitches, rises up from the dirt, and follows along, groaning softly.

Somewhere there is a little boy sitting at a table across from his father – it must be his father – refusing to eat the food on his plate. Was I the boy? Was I the father? (Am I? Will I be.?) This memory is mine, is me; at times I believe this. Other times, I believe it is a fragment blown into me from someone else, or something I saw once or read or dreamed, something that never happened. Something that never happened at all.

JUSTIN ON WORRIES

Dr. Abid Vali (Second Place)

“I have,” said Justin, “a friend who worries. Well I really mean acquaintance because how well does one human being really know another—”

“Another what?” I asked because I knew the only way to really put him off his stride was to change the subject; no one ever actually managed to get Justin to shut-up. But he wasn’t biting this time. Ironical, that, as it later turned out.

“Worries, as I was saying before I was so rudely interrupted, and I really don’t know why. She is a social success – surrounded by hordes of people all the time; she has no domestic tragedies worth speaking of, except for this horrible Elvis bust that a beloved aunt gave her and that she now carts around with her everywhere. So she’ll latch onto anything that strays past – including me.”

“Why on Earth would anyone ‘latch on’ to you?” I scoffed reaching for the crackers again; it was going to be one of those nights.

“I suppose I’m just scrumptious to women. What do you think I should do?”

I was shocked to say the least: Justin asking for advice was not an everyday occurrence. It must be *el niño* making him come all over weak or something.

“Why not just get her stuck into someone else?”

“That might work but you never know with these mothering types; you’d think they’d been bitten on the hand or various other portions of their anatomies so many times by their testosterone

JUSTIN ON WORRIES

fueled reclamation projects that they'd be leery of my sort who resist all betterment; instead they flap around cheerfully like chickens with their heads cut off. It's downright eerie! Her worries are just a way of sublimating her worries if you follow me."

"Not really now that you mention it."

"Well it's all very diabolical. You worry about other people and so you don't have time to worry about yourself you see. And so you just let yourself go a bit – like you."

"You're just bitter because they wouldn't accept your screenplay at seven studios large and small and I sold that pilot to HBO last Tuesday."

"Well yes, but – and here's the thing – you don't see me worrying about it do you? The trouble seems to be that too many people have too much money to throw around and no real idea of where to throw it. There's the educational system for you; the only industrialized country where it costs more the higher up the graduate ladder you climb. So why worry about the elementary stuff? It's compulsory, it's paid for, isn't that good enough? Education concern is absurdly overrated. Much better to laze about in mobs as so many are doing now. Befits their actual mental capabilities.

There was this time when, as a poor benighted Resident Assistant paying my way to an education, I had a shocking experience. 'Twas the night before spring break and all through the house... alright, stop snoring! I'll quit the verse and give it to you straight.

Basically I was the resident watchdog (for the collegiately challenged that's the guy – or gal – on your floor who keeps the rules, and you, in bounds, does rounds of the building on duty nights, holds programs and reports problems, and is a general dogsbody for the floor, but to return to our narrative), on duty for the night. To cut a long story short the whole college was dead drunk and, at about three in the am I headed for the john to take a lea... ahem, perform a certain function of nature and I heard the shower running – not strange you ask? Not at all I answer, 'cause people are always bathing at weird times in college (like once a year) but this running shower was somewhat weird because it wasn't changing. Y'know, people move in the shower the sound of the water changes right? In this puppy, zip. Now you ask, was my life that boring that I contemplated the acoustics of showers in such great detail? I say nay. But it was 3 in the morning fer godssake, I had to do something to stay awake right? So I go up to the shower and try and peer under the curtain, no dice. I see something long but who knows if it's human, it certainly wasn't animate. The problem was really quite serious if you stop laughing hysterically for a moment and think about it, it could be someone dead drunk and passed out in which case I'd have to call an ambulance. That's a real worry for you."

"So what did you do already?"

"I said in a cloud clear voice the words which cause college graduates across this fine nation of ours to scurry in fear – 'This is the R.A.!' No answer. I repeated myself, nada. Then I said 'If you're in

JUSTIN ON WORRIES

there answer now or I'm comin' in!' Bupkus. So I go in and discover that for 5 minutes I've been agonizing over a – (drumroll please), 6-foot tall, fern leafed, potted tree. Turns out the floor joker had won it as a bar door prize, and upon returning with it (pickled to the gills in cheap vodka) had decided it needed 'watering'.

Why worry about education at all? The reason our elders know so comparatively little is because they have to unlearn so much that they acquired by way of education before we were born."

"So what exactly are you going to do about your friend, the worrier?"

"I should probably introduce her to you; the meeting would cure you of all worries about your fellow man forever. She's a zombie you know."

THE MONSTER

Dr. David Hoffman (Third Place)

I was just sitting on my couch watching some trashy talk show when the door was kicked open violently. It smashed against the adjoining closet door and threw splinters through the air as I jumped up in mad shock from the couch, my popcorn flying with the splinters. Adrenaline flushed my heart, constricted my throat, electrified my skin. It only took one glance to see the ghoulish figure was after me, and I was set on a frantic scramble down the hallway. There was no other exit from the house but the front door – now smashed – and the not-so-big back window, so I lunged for escape down the hallway. No questions formed. No thoughts had time. I was all action.

The beast followed in a rage, not quite yelling, not quite howling, stumbling but steadily pursuing. I saw a deadness in its eyes – a hunger, really – when I finally glanced behind me, trying to discern my attacker and the reason for my flight. I found none but self-preservation, but – of course – that was enough.

Reaching the back room, I quickly navigated the mess of sheets and boxes, scampering over some, throwing some behind me as more obstacles for the monster. Noises of a terror so unimaginable, so unutterable reached me from behind and gripped me with blinding thoughts of pain and demise, blood and bile. My fingers tore at the window latch, ripping it apart and – in so doing – jamming it in place. Without a thought, I smashed my arm through the double-paned

THE MONSTER

window to the elbow, gouging deep scores in my flesh. As soon as I had, the howls from the creature, now in the room with me, grew even more horrifying. It was bloodlust, hunger, and rage all in one. It madly attacked the room after me, but I was soon headlong in the bushes two stories below and back on my feet, pulling branches from my shirt.

I ran for miles, days, who knows really. I ran and my heart pounded. I ran and my feet trod the earth. There was no thought of time, of consequence, of cause and effect. There was only the running, and the earth, and my heart, and my lungs, and that god-awful monster behind me and its brutal sounds. All the while, I dared not look back for fear that doing so would lose me that fatal step and bring me under the claws and howls and fangs of the beast. All the while, that sound persisted and spurred me on accompanied only by the beat of the vile creature's feet behind me, ever gaining but never achieving.

I have no idea how I've come to this place of safety and white. You are my only audience, my only confidante. How can I explain it? What else can I say? Once you have seen this thing, this monster, this alien beast of blood, you can never be the same. You can never go back. I live in constant fear of the day it comes through that door, too. That's why I watch it so suspiciously. You don't believe me? Wait. It will come. And if it doesn't, I will count myself lucky for every second that I can sit on this floor without running in that terror.

...

“I don’t understand, doctor. You say you can find nothing wrong with him, but look at him in there. He’s clearly distressed.”

“Oh, that is clear - absolutely. But the problem is we can’t seem to find anything else wrong with him. He knows who he is, where he is. He remembers everything else. He’s cogent to an extreme degree. None of our scans have turned up anything suspicious. The only odd thing about him is that he is absolutely convinced that you are some sort of vile monster that wants to feed on him.”

“But that’s insane! I was just coming home from the store like always, and the moment I came in, he acted like he was possessed. He screamed this awful, awful sound ... I can’t describe it. Oh, god, it was so awful! Unhuman, really. And for you to say that there’s nothing wrong with him – “

“Now, I didn’t say that. Clearly, there is. We just can’t seem to figure it out. And that’s precisely why I called you in today.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, I wonder if you could help us fill out the picture a bit. I want to say this delicately ... Is there any reason for you to think that he wants

THE MONSTER

to be in here? Is there any tension in the house that would make him want to create this reality?”

“Are you implying that I’m really a monster?”

“Well, no ... Only to him.”

A MIDNIGHT MEAL

Jasim Masters

Night has always bothered me for some reason. Maybe it's because of all the zombie movies and games I grew up with. I always expect to see a zombie suddenly appear around the corner or sneak up right behind me. I have to keep reminding myself that there's no such thing as zombies.

Tonight is no different. Our class is invited to our professor's house for dinner. The invitation calls it a midnight meal. I don't want to be the only student that doesn't show up. Most of the students have been to the professor's house before, but I have always have given him an excuse why I couldn't come. Not tonight. I've run out of excuses. As I walk through the empty streets, my eyes move back and forth scanning the darkness around me. "Remember", I tell myself. "There's nothing to be afraid of. Nothing at all."

I arrive at the address on the invitation card. It's a normal enough neighborhood - rows of nice houses and perfect lawns. I walk up to the door and push the button. A middle-aged woman answers the door and I introduce myself. A big smile appears on her face as she says, "Yes, we've been expecting you. Right this way." I follow her inside to the living room where I find all my classmates talking and laughing with each other. When they notice me, all the conversation stops. Their heads turn toward me and they give me a very strange look as if I was some kind of celebrity or something making me feel a bit uncomfortable. Suddenly, my professor comes in from another room and breaks the silence. "Jasim's here, everybody. Now we can get this

A MIDNIGHT MEAL

party started,” he announces. He puts his arm on my shoulder and escorts me into the room.

By this time, it’s about eleven o’clock and about an hour from our midnight mealtime, but I’m starving because I’m not used to waiting so long to eat my dinner. Students come up to me and it seems like everybody is being extra friendly. It seems like everybody I talk to feels they have to touch my arm or shoulder. They smile at me, but I can see in their eyes that they’re thinking about something else. “Is there some rumor going around about me?” I ask myself. “Did someone tell them that one of my family died?” Maybe it’s the time of night. Maybe they’re as hungry as I seem to be and they’re thinking about their midnight dinner.

Even the conversations in the room seem to revolve around food in some way. Two people in the corner discussing how much meat a lion can eat at one time. Another group on the sofa are talking about the rising cost of fresh meats. Over on the other side of the room a bunch of students are listening to the professor talk about a tribe of cannibals that he visited on his last trip to Africa. “Yes, definitely,” I tell myself. “These people are hungry.”

As it gets closer to midnight, little by little, the room slowly empties. It seems that people are disappearing. Where is everybody going? Is the party moving to another room? Are people getting tired of waiting for dinner and they all decided to pick up something on their way home? I am too hungry to even consider leaving. What would be

open at this time of night anyway? There are still a few people left in the room. There are enough so that staying isn't going to be that awkward. Besides, it just means that they'll be plenty of food for the rest of us to eat.

Suddenly the grandfather clock in the professor's living room starts chiming, "Bong, bong, bong." When it finishes, the middle-aged woman who answered the door appears and lets us know that dinner is ready. I take a second to check my phone before I switch it off and follow the others out of the room. In front of me is a door leading down into a dark basement. Here comes that feeling again. As I look down the stairs, all I can see is pairs of glowing eyes. "Remember", I tell myself. "There's nothing to be afraid of. Nothing at all."

CURFEW

Shahad Al-Failakawi

It was 9:42 pm and curfew was at 10, I was almost late and foreshadowed trouble.

After a night spent at the “Iguana Café”, only the most popular café in Eastern Creytown, ordering the usual- Medium sized hot chocolate with extra cream, a dash of cinnamon and absolutely NO marshmallows.

I left the café and headed back.

The gust of wind swept through the trees, while I frantically paced back to my dorm room.

Leaves scattered all around me, and I tried my best to maneuver around them; the crunch would draw them in, and that was the worst that could happen.

Following the few deaths, everyone was sure to be home before the sun went down.

I, on the other hand, was enjoying the last of my rebellious teen years.

The trees bustled next to me and the rain tapped against my glasses; I swiped my fingers across the lenses to get a better view of my path.

Something cracked in the distance and I started sprinting, before I knew it my foot banged on something and I found myself toppling on the pavement, my tumbling ended with a thud and a loud cry of pain from my mouth. I gasped and remembered they were lurking around.

There have been about 7 reported deaths just around campus.

Toreston Krawl died in the boy’s locker room right after football practice. I heard his body was as pale as Edward Cullen from “The

Vampire Diaries” and his eyes were bulging out.
Penelope Miller’s remains were found under the bleachers.
The street was dead silent and there was no one in sight.
Panicking, I dove under the bench and held my knees close to me,
assessing my injuries; nothing too serious. I was gasping for air when I
saw it trudging my way.
I held my breath; I could feel the veins crinkle around my forehead and
my face getting really hot, despite the fact that it was almost 25 degrees
outside.
I clutched my knees closer and started to mumble a quick prayer.
It can smell you, sense you, hear you; how would I save myself now?
The thing limped my way and I froze, it was above me, blood slithering
down its body like molasses, onto my shoes, “not my new Nike Air” I
thought to myself, my thoughts were interrupted by the dreadful whiff,
it smelled rotten. “Was it the half-cut tuna sandwich I saved from
dinner in my left pocket?” Oh the smell, I dry-heaved trying to control
myself; but it was too late; it heard me.
I heard loud grunts and heavy panting slowly approaching me.
I rapidly looked through the pouch of my hoody for anything I could
use; the only things I could find were a box of Mike and Ike’s, an
inkless pen, and a post-it note from class earlier.
With a groan Its boney fingers wrapped around my foot and I was
yanked, I held onto the bench but I was jerked and tussled, my glasses
smashed against my nose and shattered to pieces, My teeth clenched

CURFEW

down on my tongue and I could taste blood running down my throat, my elbows and knees continuously scraped on the ground until my fingers unraveled from their grasp on the bench. I was dragged and dropped on the ground with a thud. It hovered for a second above me, Its groan ringing in my ear, wrapping around me, with just one grip, my shoulder bones started crunching like the leaves I stepped on earlier, then in a flash it knelt and delved into me, feeding on me, biting flesh, devouring me.

The only thing I could hear while I was slowly being eaten was my black army watch alarming me that I missed curfew.

Well, I guess this would be a reasonable excuse.

It was the day I died.

DETACHED

Shahad Al-Failakawi

Disconnection. Maybe you can describe it as utter detachment from the outer world. It's being casted, shunned and unwanted from everything surrounding you. It's like walking on a path of unknown, escaping from things that keep on haunting you down. Except that it's not only pre-existing in the back your head's chambers, where neurons are barking orders to manufacture thoughts of hallucinations, it's the certainty of your life. Or more like, it's the hassle that I've unconsciously found myself digging into.

So here's my story:

A second of silence is okay, but what about an eternity full of it? Living by the torn facials of haphazardness, and trying to decode it. Think of the irony of having little metallic peanut-sized piece, providing you, a human being with a nourishing soul, the paths to pave & the choices to make. Without it, you'd be lost in every sense of a meaning, having no map to direct you nonetheless, but pure instinct to guide you through life.

Life, with all its hardships you have to endure, that some would choose death as an easy way out. Letting my disability turn into an obstruction from my survival wasn't a choice on my list. So once upon a time, I clutched to 17 year-old life with all my fingers, reluctant to let go of the things that I've come to reach so far.

DETACHED

It's times like these when gratefulness surged through me for being born as whom I am. In an alley, where buildings were burning down in silence, and soot filling every pavement. The smell of smoke overcoming everything else, hazing one's vision. People were screaming at the top of their lungs, or supposedly what you'd think when you see the looks on their faces. I crept behind a burgundy concrete building, carrying nothing but a notepad with me. Aside from everything, a green tiffany garbage bin sat beside a young man my age.

His face was enhanced by the lit street lights. He looked exhausted and morose by life's baggage, but as he raised his head, the deepest set of blue gibbous eyes screamed at me. He started to mouth something that looked like 'what's your name?' I clenched my wrist, and held my pinky up, clenching it in an upwards position. Spelling out my name.

Not catching up with the fact that he couldn't understand ASL. I thought to myself, Who in this neighborhood of Brisbane even speaks ASL anymore? But the puzzled look on his face awakened me to the fact that he isn't one of my friends who have grown to adapt to with my case. I fiddled with my pocket, touching the leftover notes of money I had, my little lip balm box, till I reached for my pen. I scribbled my name.

“Sia, what a cute name”

I grinned politely tucking my highlighted hair behind my ear, then pointed at him, hoping that he would get the hang of it a bit by bit.

“I am Pierson.”

I offered my hand as a sign of politeness, and he shook them with a tremble. I wondered if he was cold, and what was he doing in this deserted place. I shrugged off the insensible thoughts I had gotten about a complete stranger that I just met.

Abruptly, I saw movement; he was reaching out for a bagel that was in his pocket. He then started to ask me if I wanted some while brushing his hand through his hair nervously, so I smiled at ease and nodded. He gave me a piece that I chewed on it. As crusty as the exterior, it tasted stale and outdated, but I wouldn't embarrass him after all the effort he'd exerted into asking me.

A few minutes later, a revolting smell started roaming around; it hit the back of my throat. My olfactory system was slowly starting to fill up with unwanted odors, spoilt eggs, rotten pickles, stale metal, it was dreadful.

DETACHED

I turned to Pierson as I watched his freckled face slowly crunch up with disgust.

The garbage shook.

Something was thrown into the garbage, but I couldn't dare look.

We crept to the corner to see what was going on.

Two figures droopy, with rags of bloody skin hanging from their arms, their jaws looked dislocated and the color of their eyes looked as if decayed yellow milk had been poured in them. They were slouching towards with pale tilted faces sagging with blood.

Pierson was terrified, and so was I.

One of the zombies came closer to us, we were out of breath and our mouths were as dry as the bagel I had earlier. As their waxy eyes met ours, I felt paralyzed. I knew it was over.

Maybe it was time to give up.

EDUCATION MATTERS

Kathy Nixon

The girls looked both thoughtful and worried as they sat on the sofa in front of the fourth-floor elevators in the Liberal Arts Building. Dalal sighed and then said, “we should help her. Beverly deserves to live her life and earn a university degree.”

But Sara turned to Dalal. “We could get into a lot of trouble for doing this. It breaks the Student Code of Conduct.”

“Only parts of it,” Noora replied before Dalal could answer. “I think we are upholding more of the code than we are breaking. The professors tell us to think critically and act with compassion for others.”

Dalal read from the non-discrimination policy. It says that AUK “affirms its commitment to ensure that each student shall be permitted to study and otherwise participate in the AUK community in an environment free from any form of discrimination, including race, color, religion, age, disability, gender, national origin, or marital status. The University considers a diverse campus community and the many points of view represented within as a means to enhance the quality of one’s overall educational experience.”

Sara shook her head. “It does not argue for equal rights for the dead,” she said.

“Well, duh,” Dalal replied. “Do you think that Dean Rawda even knows there are dead girls wanting to attend AUK?”

Dalal and Noora voted to help while Sara declined. However, majority ruled so all had to participate in the plan they concocted after reading Beverly's note.

Beverly's note explained that she dreamed of attending university. During the summer before her fall matriculation into Oxford, she had surprised her cousins in Kuwait with a visit. They were happy to see her but also a bit distant. They told her not to hug them and to always lock her bedroom door. The oddest thing of all was they never joined her for meals.

Beverly did not realize they were zombies. Their precautions would have kept her safe, but one day Beverly insisted on driving the girls to the mall. Unfortunately, there was huge traffic jam on the way and Beverly was such a healthy human whom her cousins loved. They had only intended to take a nibble from Beverly as she drove. But one bite led to another, and then another, and then another, and the next thing Beverly knew, she woke up dead.

Her Aunt Ayat broke the shocking news to Beverly. Not only was she dead, but her body parts would rot away and she would start to smell. Aunt Ayat encouraged Beverly to look on the bright side - Kuwait had many advantages for a zombie including sumptuous perfumes. Beverly told her family that she would live in Kuwait. She then vowed to embrace her new existence as a walking corpse. Her cousins gave her a big bottle of Oudh to celebrate.

Beverly's cousins - Hiba, Dina, and Farrah, were happy to roam aimlessly around the malls feeding by taking small bites out of 50 to 100 of the people that shopped each day. They had discovered that if they only took one tiny bite from a person as they "accidentally" bumped into him or her, that person did not realize a zombie had taken a nibble. More importantly, that tasty morsel of an individual neither died nor turned into a zombie. Marina Mall, The Avenues, 360 Mall, Souk Sharq, Al Kout, - the numerous Kuwaiti malls were zombies havens.

Beverly did not enjoy shopping for her meals with the gusto of her cousins. She still wanted a degree. After she had been a zombie for two months, she heard some girls discussing AUK and decided to give them a note asking for help. It was a bit tricky since Beverly was starting to lose the ability to articulate words clearly and body parts were starting to wobble. But they made a plan. The girls would cover for her lapses.

The first week went well but then Beverly started to deteriorate faster than expected. By week three of class, Beverly could only mumble, grunt, and say yanni. Luckily, there were many careless human students who answered the professors similarly. Dalal then perfected her ventriloquist skills and answered for Beverly.

One day after midterms, Beverly raised her hand to answer a question and her arm dropped off. Noorah quickly raised a dummy arm while Dalal dropped her book-bag on Beverly's fallen limb. Five weeks after that near-disaster, Dr. Craig patted Beverly on her shoulder

EDUCATION MATTERS

praising her essay. The motion caused her scalp to fall off. He looked shocked. But Dalal called him and when he looked away, Sara tossed a wig on Beverly's head as Noora hid the scalp. Still looking a bit queasy, Dr. Craig asked the four girls to see him during office hours.

HAITIAN ZOMBIES

Prof. Ben Crace

Zombies seem to be everywhere these days. From *The Walking Dead* to *World War Z* to zombie fun runs, the meme has taken over the popular imaginary, particularly in Westernized societies where zombification by bureaucracy or a technocracy has potent, real purchase. However, despite all the zombie talk, I've only known one person who has actually met the living dead.

When I was a kid, my grandfather traveled a lot all over the world for business and charitable reasons. One of these trips was to Haiti where he helped weld bunk beds for an orphanage. On one particular trip, he was invited to a coffee plantation for lunch.

"We had the day off from working at the orphanage and this nearby coffee plantation owner invited me, because I was the token American I guess, to his home for lunch. I remember it as if it were yesterday. It was such contrast to go from the shacks and concrete block buildings of the neighborhood around the orphanage to this plantation.

The owner had sent a driver to pick me up and as we drove up to main house, a white clapboard thing that looked like it had been imported from Savannah, I could see workers moving slowly in the coffee fields beneath the early afternoon sun. They were moving methodically, rhythmically, with purpose but without, you know? Anyway, leaving clouds of dust behind us, we finally arrived at the house where we were

HAITIAN ZOMBIES

cordially greeted by the owner himself. He was several inches shorter than me, so 5'6" or so. He was wearing this gleaming white suit and had a wary smile with eyes shaded by his broad panama hat. He extended his hand, greeted me in Creole and then as if it was a bit of an effort, translated his own words, 'Welcome, welcome to my home.'

Lunch was a one of those three course affairs in a screened in room with fans. Apparently he had the money to run the air conditioning, but the fuel hadn't arrived to run the generator and electricity, well, is iffy in Haiti anyway. He apologized profusely but not as much as I was sweating. It was just us in this room with a table spread with all the local delicacies. Let me back up; there were four servants in each corner of the room, dressed smartly in waiter white with the towel over the arm and all. I sat down to the right of the head of the table chair, obviously my host's, with my back to the guy standing sentinel-like against the wall closest to the doorway. I was already feeling a bit off with the whole situation, wondering why I was there, and so on, but, you know how you can feel the presence of someone behind you? I don't know if it's a sixth sense or what, but you kind of just know when someone is around you; they have a presence. Well, this waiter-servant guy had no presence. No presence at all and my appetite was starting to be replaced with an ache. Every time I sipped the lemon water, he was there. Every time I ate a few leaves of lettuce, he was there,

gloved hand reaching around from behind, refilling my plate, my coffee cup, my glass. And each time, he startled me because he wasn't really there.

Towards the end of the meal, I finally let my curiosity or maybe it was my fear, get the best of me, and I commented to the host how top notch his servers were. He smiled and replied, 'Yes, yes, of course. They're my zombies. The one behind you, I sometimes take on trips with me. He only breathes once every twenty minutes, so I just check him as luggage in my trunk. They don't eat either and do whatever I ask. I have several working for me around the plantation and in the house. They are very helpful to have around and much cheaper than hired hands.' I didn't know whether to laugh or run. The proof of his story was standing behind me, staring through empty eyes waiting to refill my glass.

I HATE PARTIES

Anwar Al Saleh

I hate parties. I always hated parties. My roommate Jane always begged me to go to them but I always say no. There was a party at our college literary every week. On Halloween day there was no classes even though it was a Tuesday. In honor of Halloween I decided to read a Stephen King book. That is the only participating I am willing to do. My nightly routine was always to curl up with a good book and read until I feel sleepy.

“How do I look?”

Jane was going as a black cat

“Very original” I said sarcastically

“Hey it’s not my fault I’m not creative, but how do I look” she repeated

“You look so cute”

“I don’t want to look cute, I want to look sexy”

“Fine, you look sexy”

“Oh, you’re just saying that”

“You’re right, I am”

As soon as she was out the door I picked up my book, got comfortable, and started reading. A few hours later I began to feel sleepy, I placed my bookmark on the last page I read and turned off my lights. I fell asleep fast. I woke up with a start, someone was screaming. Am I dreaming? I looked around, I was in my dorm room lying on my bed on the same position I fell asleep in. I looked at my

clock, it was 1 am. I heard another scream. Was someone in trouble? I sat up and realized there was not just one scream but a lot of screaming, and it was coming from outside. These screams were screams of terror. What was going on? I got out of bed and looked out the small window, it was dark but I could still see many silhouettes of kids running and screaming. They were running like they were running for their lives, but I couldn't see anything else. What were they running from, should I be worried? I turned around and started to walk towards the door when I heard a loud bang that made me jump.

“Jane, is that you?” No answer

“Who's there?” I asked again

My voice was shaky, I could not control it. I wanted to look though the peep hole but I did not want to get close to the door. It could be a drunk girl who got her rooms mixed up. I heard a loud groan and then the door burst open. A slumped figure was in the doorway, it looked like a young man but I could see his face.

“What do you want?” I demanded

The figure started moving; it was limping as though its leg was broken. It moved closer and I saw it clearly. It had grey skin, eyes had no irises, and beneath its eyes were dark purple shadows. Holy crap, it's a zombie. Is this some kind of joke? It couldn't be real; it was Halloween many kids were dressed as zombies. I took a few steps back until my back was pressed against the wall. Joke or not, I had to get

I HATE PARTIES

away. I ducked under his outstretched arm and arm and run out my still open door. I was expecting to hear laughing but I heard nothing from the room as I run down the hall. There was still screaming, but now there was also gunshots. The police, thank goodness. What were they shooting at? I was beginning to doubt that this was a prank. I ran down the stairs barefoot in my pajamas but I didn't care. I had to find out what was going on. I ran outside my dorm building, I tried to stop one of the running kids but nobody would stop. Everybody seemed terrified. Maybe I should run with them?

"Don't stop keep running" a police officer who appeared out of nowhere said to me

"What's going on" I had to ask

"Zombies" he said

"Are you sure they're real"

"We saw them eat a couple kids so yeah we're sure"

"Oh my God"

"Just go!"

I turned around to run but something grabbed me from behind. The officer reached for his gun but something grabbed him too. There was no one around, all the running kids were far away now. I screamed and twisted but whoever grabbed me was so strong. The officer screamed but not for long as the zombie who grabbed him split his head open and took a big bite at his brains. I am going to be sick. Not for long, I was next.

KEEP WALKING

Fatemah Al-Dewaili

Entry#57:

“Old people and kids are more likely to contract the Levin Flu.” Ian told us over coffee, reading his newspaper. He pointed at a small frame in the corner of the paper, where three figures were drawn. “And fat people too, I guess.”

“Ian,” I said, chewing on my muffin. “That’s a pregnant woman.”

“Oh,” the blond frowned before he stared at my middle seriously.

“You’re not pregnant are you?”

I blew him a raspberry.

Rajan cleared his throat, a fond smile on his face. “Are you two done flirting?”

I laughed merrily at what he said. “He wishes! I’d rather flirt with an octopus!”

Ian, upon hearing that, blew a raspberry back.

Comfortable silence filled our living room.

“The borders are still closed.” Rajan suddenly said, and I sighed dejectedly at being reminded, feeling as though all the happiness had been drained.

My twin sister is missing; Eileen was on a mission overseas for the Agency of Scientific Studies when the bans on travel were put in place.

I wish she’d pick up her phone for once!

“Well it’s better than allowing infected people in.” Ian replied, beginning to work on the crosswords.

Ring!

KEEP WALKING

A video-call alert appeared on my phone, the name: “Eileen” pulsing in the middle. I eagerly pushed the “Accept” button as I called out: “It’s Eileen!”

As I connected my phone to the TV, my sister’s face appeared on the screen. I excitedly called out: “Eileen!”

“Where are you — ?”

“What’s happening outside — ?”

“Thank God you’re alive.” Eileen breathed, tears in her eyes. Wiping her eyes, she said: “Everyone listen, this is important.”

I cocked my head to the side. What?

“Althea, you two – The Levin Flu – the Agency created it. They were hoping for immortality, but all they found is death.”

Ignoring our confusion, Eileen continued: “The Virus was made by Dr. Levin. Once it infects the host it destroys immunity – when the host dies, it somehow hijacks the dead brain and takes control of the corpses’ body.”

I blabbered, unable to comprehend what she was saying. Rajan seemed as shell-shocked as I am but Ian, a scientist, said: “That sounds like a parasite. What does the virus do after it takes over?”

She blinked at Ian, as if he was asking her a stupid question. “What do you think? The virus uses the corpse to infect others.”

BANG!

Althea’s breathing grew heavy. She looked pained, but she didn’t seem to mind the noise behind her.

“Eileen?” I weakly said, my voice tight and watery. “What’s that?” Althea faced me, a sad smile on her face. For the first time, I noticed that she was bleeding from a bite mark on her neck.

How could I miss that?

“Althea, I’ve been inside a facility for the infected. I am the last one who hasn’t turned but that’ll change.”

‘Self-destruct will begin in three minutes.’ A recorded voice declared and I knew why she looked so sad.

“Eileen.” I pleaded, tears flowing freely down my face.

“Althea.” She calmly replied. “The world’s going to change horribly. Please promise me you’ll keep walking, surviving, no matter what happens.”

Our identical eyes met and I shakily agreed. Giving me a last smile, my sister mouthed a goodbye as the screen turned black.

“NO!” I screamed, despaired. Unable to keep standing, I fell to the ground, sobbing heavily.

My twin’s gone.

*

Entry#100:

Eileen’s predictions were scarily accurate. Once the “Infected” began to appear, people became horrible. The government tried to help in the beginning but nowadays there is only radio silence.

Lynching, raiding and kidnapping – the world has become a scary place.

KEEP WALKING

“Althea?” Rajan stepped into my room, although you couldn’t tell it was him with the grey gasmask on his face. He was carrying a backpack. “We have to go now.”

I put my sister’s photo inside the backpack and slung it on my shoulder. “I know.”

As I put my gasmask on, Rajan spoke: “We’re going to be fine – you know that right, Althea?”

“Yeah.” I confirmed, falling into step next to him. We didn’t bother locking our apartment; we’ve already emptied it. Everything was packed inside Ian’s Jeep. “Are we sure Ian’s grandmother’s farm is safe?”

I felt a fist smack my head. “Ouch!”

Looking back, I saw a smirking Ian. “‘Course it’s safe! Besides I’d like to see those zombies climbing a mountain! Honestly, do you think I’d let Rajan go there if it wasn’t?”

“Hey what about me?”

“A barbarian like you doesn’t need to be protected.”

As Ian and I argued, with Rajan refereeing again, I felt calm. If I’m with those two, I don’t think anything can stop us.

I thought back on my promise.

You see, Eileen? I’m walking, and I won’t stop until the very end.

STRONGER TOGETHER

Shefera Alhooti

My heart is beating fast, my brain is freaking out and my legs want me to stop. Who knew my Christmas break would turn out to be a horror movie?

I believe that in just a couple of minutes, I'm going to get bitten and my brains will get eaten and then I will turn to become one of those things that people call them 'The Dead' or simply 'Zombies'. Maybe once upon a time, zombies were fictional monsters created for a good horror movie, but now they are real and they're after any human being who's still alive.

The snowy weather on Christmas day used to be magical and now it's a curse because you can't run as fast as you could when your feet is under 2 ft. of snow. I looked behind me and saw one of those creatures looking at me with hunger trying to eat me. His pale, bloody skin and his weird sharp teeth make me shiver more in this weather. I look forward and notice a fire in the distance. Maybe there's someone who could help me. I scream out for help, hoping that someone would save me. I try to run faster but couldn't and ended up falling on my face making it easier for the zombie to catch me. I wanted to get up and continue running but then a question came through my mind, what's the point of living if you don't have any family left? I flip myself and stare at the stars while knowing the zombie is getting closer. I smile and close my eyes as I make a snow angel, at least it will look magical for a second before blood covers it. I could feel the presence of the zombie above me, "It's time" I whisper to myself as I wait to feel the

STRONGER TOGETHER

pain of the bite, but I hear a gun shot instead. I immediately open my eyes, “What are you doing? GET UP!” I heard a boy’s voice. The gunshot attracted other zombies and made them faster. I got up and looked at a 12-year-old boy with a Remington 870 hunting gun (It certainly looked bigger than him). I stood up realizing the kid saved me and now we both need to run. “Come on!” He yells as he charges to the woods where we might be able to lose the dozens of zombies behind us.

We kept running through the woods, both of us focusing only on surviving. We could still hear the zombies running faster than expected. “When I tell you duck, you duck, got it?” The boy says between breaths making me confused but I reply, “Got it.” I waited for his signal. Shortly after we get closer to the fire, and I notice a group of people holding bottles that like bombs. These people were ready for something. I couldn’t help but what is, that’s when the boy yelled, “DUCK” and I did. The bottles are now flying above us hitting the zombies and an immediate explosion filled the forest, killing all the zombies behind us. I looked at the boy impressed and he had a smirk playing on his lips. “What was that?” I said getting up. “That’s my family being awesome.” He says. “You okay Jay?” An older woman runs to him. “Yes” He says while she squeezes him in her arms. A man walks up to me a minute later with a serious face and asks, “Did you get bitten?” I shook my head sideways. “Good.” He smiles and then introduces himself, “My name is Chuck and this has been my family

since this mess happened.” “I’m Charlotte. Thanks for saving me out there.” I smile looking at all them. They looked like a family that I want to be apart of, but they can’t replace my family. I sigh and look at Chuck. “I won’t be staying, but thanks.” I gave them all genuine smiles and walked away “Charlotte! Wait!” Jay yells making me stop. He looks at me with sympathy in his eyes, “You can’t just leave. You don’t have anyone out there. I saw how you gave up right there and I know we will never replace the people you’ve lost. But we all lost our families too and but we’re together to pick each other’s pieces and try to survive through this nightmare together. Please Charlotte, we’re stronger together.” I look at him then back at his family. All of them were waiting for my response. He’s right; I can’t survive on my own. “Okay.” I whisper and he smiles. “Welcome to the family of zombie killers.”

We don’t know when this nightmare will end. We don’t know what’s next. All we know is we’ll find away to survive.

THE BUB THERAPY

Hassan Shah

Michael Graves concluded from the happy celebration among the doctors, nurses, and orderlies that he finally passed the Bub Therapy. They surprised him the moment he walked in the cafeteria, accompanied by Dr. Hans Vornoff, at first he couldn't see a thing in the dark but when the lights came to life he was startled by the sight of the balloons, the large sign that reads Farewell, Michael!, and the staff shouting, "SURPRISE!" as they sounded their paper horns, popped open their champagne bottles, and sang For He's a Jolly Good Fellow. For a moment Michael felt like they were celebrating Fourth of July, although he accepted the bash with a happy moan as he joined in.

He wasn't allowed to drink alcohol since he's underage. Instead they served him his favorite course, fresh lamb brains dipped in blood. In a fit of delight, he took a chomp at his meal with his bare hands like a starving infant and never bothered with table manners despite taking weeks to master a utensil and a napkin. Half the staff were repulsed by his eating habit, the others thought it was rather adorable watching Michael smearing himself after sinking his teeth on the brain.

Four years Michael has spend at Seabrook's Institute. Seabrook is a worldwide foundation for the recently deceased, founded in the 1930s by William Seabrook after the world witnessed its first plague of reanimated corpses hungry for flesh. At the beginning it was a war of the worlds. Nobody knew the source of the Armageddon; some said it was caused by the wrath of God, while others questioned if it was a virus from an unknown substance. Mankind managed to standup the

first two years after a fierce battle with the undead but it wasn't enough for the dead kept coming back. Hence, Seabrook made his establishment and began collecting all the corpses he could lay his hands on, and studied them. The next couple of years, he made experiments to cure victims infected with the zombie virus to no avail. In 1986, Seabrook's Institute welcomed Dr. Thomas Savini, and he proposed to help zombies retain their human memories. They labeled the treatment as "The Bub Therapy", named after a character in a George Romero movie. The zombies were trained to act civilized like the living and its close to teach a child how to spell and use a tool, and correct behavior. Once a zombie proves himself refined, he'll be welcomed back to society and walk peacefully with the living. Today the living and the dead were at a long period of peace, and nothing proved to be any worse than Judgment Day.

Michael couldn't recall exactly how he ended up at Seabrook. For all he knew is that he came to the world the moment he opened his eyes the first time as a soulless corpse. The first memory he made was waking up in a room crowded with people like him, lost and confused, out of shape, and held in chains. The strangest part Michael ever thought of is why did big sized heads tempt him. When he encountered Dr. Hans Vornoff the first time, all he ever wanted was to crack his skull open and satisfy his lust for Vornoff's brain. However, he did manage to avoid thinking of his doctor as a happy meal once he was trained under his wing, and thought of Dr. Vornoff as nothing more

THE BUB THERAPY

than his only friend and would surely miss him once he walks out of Seabrook.

The family waiting outside the institute appeared to be Michael's family. He had no recollection of them whatsoever but he was certain to remember once he takes his time to interact with his old environment.

'Hi, Mike!' his mother sounded enthusiastic as she put her arms around him for a hug.

'Hi, son,' said his father though he didn't sound so thrilled, and seemed to have forced himself to fake a smile.

Michael's brother, Isaac, on the other hand didn't say a word just waved his hand in a quick greeting and then covered the bottom half of his face since he couldn't stand the funky odor of a dead person. Michael understood the gesture of his family and showed them that he's been nothing but happy to have them back in his life, though deep down he had a bad feeling of what's yet to come.

When Michael was welcomed back home, he wasn't literally allowed to sleep in the house but outside in the backyard shed. He felt like a lawn dog, and questioned how swell his life will be by tomorrow. Will anyone really accept him as a common individual or just another sideshow freak of nature?

THE INFECTED

Farah Aldaihani

The place is filled with clicking noises, scratching sounds, and screaming voices. I shiver with fear. How did they get me here, and what do they want from me? I do not remember anything; I can't see anything, and most of all I do not understand anything that is happening right now. Ever since the disease started spreading, everyone in my town started acting weird and pushy, it is like the end of the world. Our town has been acting weird for over a month now, screaming at each other and killing one another. I cough trying to get the plastic bag off of my face but I fail miserably. I am scared, scarred and confused. I wish my mom were here, I miss her warm-shoulders.

The clicking noises get near as I am trying to break free from the chains I am chained with. I can hear some voices but I can't recognize them. Is it possible that somebody else is here? A guy let out a fearful whisper, "We have got to get out of here," trying to get me out of my chains. "Who are you?" I say swiftly. He breaks me free grabbing my left arm, "Now, you have to run as fast as you can," He stutters horrifyingly. "Ok," I say. The numbness of my thighs leaves me with a terrifying thought that we will not survive. I look around as I am running besides this blue-eyed pale-skinned guy I just met. I find myself discovering that the clicking noises I heard earlier are from sick humans, those are the ones who caught the disease and turned into the human monster that is ready to attack people. "Are these people infected?" I ask. "Yeah, we call them clickers around here because they make annoying clicking sounds." He utters. I remember this phrase

THE INFECTED

from a video game I used to play before all of this chaos, it is called The Last of Us, and it reminds me of what is happening in my isolated town.

The paleness of his skin is attractive yet suspicious, I remember about a week ago when my father got infected, he turned pale then he became one of these filthy things. I still cry myself to sleep remembering his last words to me “Tessa, you have to protect yourself, you are your own person now, and look after your mom.” My dad is my hero, he endured all of the horrifying things we have gone through just to stay alive. If it weren’t for my dad, my mom and I would be dead by now. “Has your skin always been this pale?” I ask fearfully. “What do you mean?” He utters nervously. “My dad got bit by a zombie about a week ago and before he died, his skin turned pale,” I say as I am walking away. “Yes, I got bit too but I have an alibi,” He mumbles. “Are you out of your mind, if you got bit then you will turn to one of those disgraceful things” I say furiously. “I have a...” a clicker interrupts the conversation with his clicking noises. “We should continue running or else we will be dead,” the pale-skinned guy says. “I know how to kill a zombie, trust me,” I utter proudly. As the clicker gets close, I prepare my weapon of destruction, a sharp stick my dad gave me to stab these creatures in the heart. “You can’t kill a clicker with a sharp stick, are you insane?” He shrieks. “I did it before, do not worry about me,” I say. “You can’t kill a clicker unless you

shoot them in the head,” the blue-eyed guy replies. He grabs my left hand while throwing my stick away, “let’s go.”

The sunlight is strangely warm, how did I get trapped in that old school? I find myself thinking about the school and the sunlight. “What’s your name?” the blue-eyed guy utters. “I am Tessa, what about you?” I say. “I am john,” he replies. “How did you end up in that school?” I ask. John looks at me strangely and says, “I was assigned to find you.” “Me? Why?” I utter. “Your mother told me that she left you in that school because the governor was trying to kill humans to feed his zombie son,” he explains. “But I do not remember going there with her,” I say. “It is because she drugged you thinking it is for the best,” he utters. John walks towards me, “You are mine now” I look at him fearfully, “Yours?” He lets out a deep sigh, “I am the governor’s son.”

THE MYSTERY GIRL

Palwasha Waheed Shaikh

I have been running. Running for what seemed like an eternity. My legs were numb. I could still feel the adrenaline rush through me. It had complete control over me for so long that I was serving to its commands like a loyal dog. This murderous creature had inspired such terror in me that to avoid it I was willing to jump through hoops of uncertainty. Every scream and cry that echoed through the rooms of this gloomy place sent a shrill down my spine.

I crawled into the web-infested corner of the corridor, and found refuge in the moonlight entering through the rectangular window. The moon glowed in harmony with the glittering stars against the backdrop of lightning and thunder. The sky like me began to weep uncontrollably. I was now against the wall with my knees up to my chest, rocking back and forth.

How could it be? It is impossible. Zombies are just a figment of filmmakers and writers' imagination. Purely developed for entertainment and money. Zombies are just one of many characters that my neighbors dressed up as for Halloween. Wait a minute! Maybe this is all a prank. It is all in my mind. Yes... Yes! Yes! The fear is all in my mind. None of this is true.

"I am not scared. Listen to me. I am not scared!" I screamed at the top of my lungs. My voice echoed back. Striking against the obscure walls, into my ears and back into my mind. I stood up and shook off my fear.

I consoled myself, “Frank, all those zombies were just humans in disguise. You are not a coward.”

“So, you are not scared. You nosy reporter,” said a familiar tone all of a sudden.

Stunned, I turned behind to look. There stood the zombie, staring right into my eyes. I started to shake and took a step back with caution.

“Where are you going? You are not scared of anything.” The dreadful creature groaned with a drooling smile. “Are you going to leave without meeting the host?”

“You...you invited me to the party,” I murmured taking a step back. The zombie’s disfigured limbs rubbed against the wooden floor. Leaving behind scraps of dead skin, as it advanced towards me.

“Yesssss!” the creature hissed. “Don’t you recognize me?”

I took a closer look in disbelief. It was the same girl that I had met in this mansion before disaster struck. I remember.

“Who are you? Do I know you?” she had spoken sweetly, while her gleaming eyes stared at me for response.

“Oh! I am Frank, the reporter. I am actually looking for the host of the party...” she had interrupted me.

“No one knows about the host, Frank. No one cares! Look around you. All these people come here impersonating someone they are not. They devour the food and have a time of their life.” She continued, “You reporters and your pesky little habit of putting your

THE MYSTERY GIRL

noses where they do not belong.” Even though she had mocked me, I did not feel insulted.

She left in a hurry, before I could even ask her name. The lights went off. Suddenly I could hear people screaming in terror, in chorus with the violent lightning that began to strike every minute.

In the flashes of light, I saw human faces being drained out of life. Flash. I saw blood flowing down someone’s face. Flash. I was being chased by a swarm of lifeless creatures. I began to run for my life and ended up in the corner.

This realization left me staggered. “No! It ...could not be. Are you?”

“Yessss!” interjected the zombie that I had adored earlier tonight.

“You are not like them,” she chanted with every step she took forward.

I was tied with chains of fear. I could now see the old man behind her. Sharp gaze and with a hunched back, he had warned me when I had entered into the mansion.

“You don’t belong here, boy. Leave! Before you become one of me. This house is not what it seems. It’s all an elaborate illusion...” I wished I had listened to him.

The lightning began to strike violently. With every flash and thunder, my heartbeat echoed louder and louder in my ears like a ticking bomb.

Is this really happening to me? Is it?

Her body was like wax that had been melting for days and left to rot. My master was now drawing close to me. The beating in my ears grew louder and louder...duh-dun, duh- dun, duh-dun.

Suddenly, the beating stopped. I changed. I became the old man.

I am now hungry for a human brain. Standing next to the girl whose name I do not know, but I am ready to obey her like a loyal pet.

THE PROMISE

Fatemah Al-Mayzad

In everyday life we hear many stories and legends about scary beings that lurk in the dark waiting to scare and kill us. This is one of the stories.

In 1918, in Western Ireland, there was a rich nobleman called Hector. He was very cruel towards the people who worked for him and would laugh at their misfortune because they were born poor and not rich like him. If his employees didn't listen to him he would whip them and not let them eat for three days until they begged on their knees for his forgiveness. He was a ruthless man with no heart. One day while Hector was riding his horse and checking his land he saw one of his workers dozing off; this made him very mad so he grabbed his whip and started whipping the man. He whipped the man many times, even though the man screamed for help and begged him to stop. By the time Hector stopped whipping the man's back was full of scars and blood and the man couldn't move.

Man: Why did you do this to me? What did I ever do to you?

Hector: You committed the worst sin.

Man: What is my sin?

Hector (laughing): Your sin was that you didn't work and just slept. The man looked at Hector in disbelief. He began coughing up blood and his vision became somewhat blurry; he knew it was the end. Suddenly, he smiled.

Hector: Why are you smiling?

Man: I'm smiling because I'm thinking of what I'll be doing to you.

Hector: What do you mean by that?

Man: Listen to me Hector. One day I will have my revenge upon you and your bloodline. Mark my words, revenge will be mine and I will laugh at the end. HA HA HA!

Then the man died and Hector didn't care about what he had been told and lived everyday the same. Until one day while he was sleeping he dreamt of the man looking at him with an axe and killing him while laughing. Hector woke up shouting. From that day Hector would always wake up shouting that the man will come and kill him. People started calling him crazy Hector. Hector couldn't take the dreams anymore or the people mocking him, so he hung himself.

One hundred years later, two of Hectors descendants came to Ireland to visit their grandparents. They were identical twin boys called Shadow and Light. Both of them were in their early teens.

Shadow: Light, don't you feel like we are being watched?

Light: Shadow I think you have finally lost it.

Shadow: I'm serious about what I'm saying.

Outside their grandparent's house there was a figure lurking and watching them while laughing. When night approached and both boys were sleeping, a figure slowly approached Shadow's bed, and the figure covered Shadow's mouth with its hand. Shadow immediately woke up and tried to scream but without use. He looked at the figures eyes and was shocked to see that the figure wasn't a human but a zombie. The zombie took Shadow to an abounded house and tied him up. Then he

THE PROMISE

came back to take Light the same way.

Both twins were terrified and crying. They tried to speak with the zombie but they couldn't because he had covered their mouths with a cloth. They both looked at what the zombie was doing. The zombie was holding an axe and making its edge very sharp while laughing manically. After that the Zombie approached Shadow and killed him with the axe. While the zombie was doing that he was laughing. Light couldn't believe what happened. He started to scream but to no avail. Five minutes later Shadow was dead and Light was sobbing. He thought it was all just a dream so he closed his eyes, but when he opened them it was reality. The worst thing of all was that Shadow became a zombie. Shadow then went to Light and held his neck and snatched his head...and Light was extinguished.

And so Hector's descendants were dead. The man, or zombie, had fulfilled his promise, and the last laugh was his.

THE ORACLE OF THE CURE

Esra'a Al-kandari

He slammed his water glass down on the table so hard her plate rattled. Still, she refused to look at her brother, glaring instead at her napkin, which she was ripping into shreds with her fingernails. “I thought I already told you not to talk about it again!” said Kyle furiously. With a clenched jaw, Kyle got up from his chair sending it back to hit the wall, and left the apartment.

Once that first tear broke free, the rest followed in an unbroken stream. Kristen bent forward where she sat on her chair and pressed her palms to her face trying to force herself to stop crying. Her thoughts shattering around, from the memory of that hideous day in which the infection was spread. It was just months before Kyle was born, when an awful infection turned her beloved to the living dead. But what left a heavy scar in her chest was that she somehow felt responsible for her parents’ death, since she could not do anything to prevent it. Her ability to see a grey ring around people’s neck was what she blamed most. She could see what no human ever did. She was born with the ability of seeing a grey ring around people’s neck and when the grey ring turns black she knows that the person is about to die. But on that curtain day, the day where the world turned dark, humans started to feed on each other, and the living became more like the dead, something changed. Her parents came back home and she immediately noticed that their neck ring has turned black. She was devastated by the thought that her parents will leave her and her brother behind, alone in this changed world. But as days passed by, she realized that they did not die. The

THE ORACLE OF THE CURE

parents will leave her and her brother behind, alone in this changed world. But as days passed by, she realized that they did not die. The infection turned them into what people called “zombies”. And before the infection completely controlled them, her parents committed suicide right in front of her eyes.

The infection altered the meaning of death. It turned the neck rings that only Kristen was able to see from grey to black, but they kept on living. While remembering those horrible memories. Kristen was now asleep on the couch. She opened her eyes, it was dark, half asleep she got up to check on Kyle when she realized that it is almost midnight and she needs to leave immediately to catch the bus heading to the city. Quickly, she put on her jacket and then rushed downstairs out of the apartment. Luckily, the bus taking the volunteers has just arrived. She got on the bus and sat at the nearest empty seat. A voice she recognized from the back seat asked her, “Kristen, I can’t believe we have met again in this way. But why are you here?” Although Kristen heard the soft voice clearly she did not want to answer that question, instead, Kristen leaned back her head, closed her eyes and pretended to sleep.

Kristen volunteered to help the scientists in finding a cure, because she believed that her ability to know when a person in this case is going to turn into a zombie had to do with finding the cure. She wants to end this infection and guarantee not only Kyle’s safety but other’s as well. She felt obliged to use her ability to save them all.

The bus came to a stop, they finally reached their destination. But for some reason Kristen's heart started pacing rapidly, her breathing began to speed and fill her ears with noise. When the bus doors slid open, a man in a long white coat with files and papers in his hands got in. His eyes dancing to every occupied seat in the bus as though he is counting the number of people volunteered in his mind. He identified himself as one of the scientists they will be working with. Then, He started to spread the papers to them and asked them to fill them in, and give them back as they are leaving the bus. Kristen could not bear a minute more in this bus. She couldn't understand why she felt like something bad was about to happen, everything around her was in fast- forward while she was motionless in the middle of it all.



Antonia Stamos



William Andersen



Abdula



Abdulaziz Alshammari



Abdulaziz Alshammari

ARTWORK

Abdulaziz Alshammari



Abdulaziz Alshammari



*Antonia
Stamos*

The Morning Sunrise
Prof. Marcella Janush-Kulchitsky



350 on Töpferstraße
Abdulaziz Alshammari



The River, the Bridge, and the Castle

Abdulaziz Alshammari



**The Ruins of the Thousand Temples of Sewu,
Yogyakarta, Java, Indonesia**

Prof. William Andersen



The Forbidden City, The Imperial Palace of China

Prof. William Andersen



Night Time Dresden

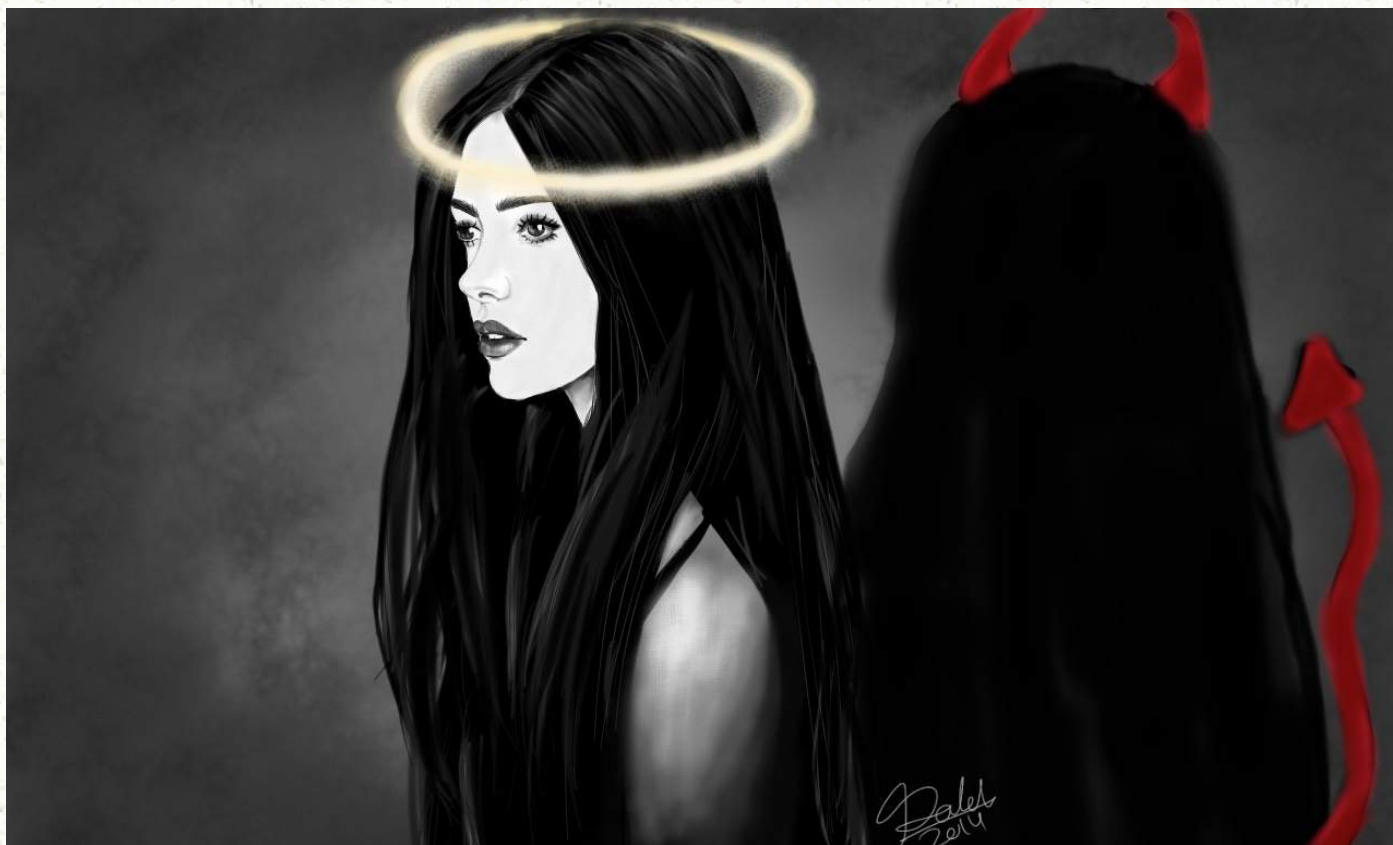
Abdulaziz Alshammari



Waiting For The Unknown

Zahraa Asad



Binary*Dalal K Al-Sane*

lizard

Athoob Al-Roumi



Decency
Sara Babazadeh



Orient Flavour*Dalal K Al-Sane*

Strike of Creativity

Nada M Al-Kharashi



The Coconuts

Prof. Marcella Janush-Kulchitsky



Shoton Festival

Prof. Maryam Hosseinnia



Kuwaiti

Dalal Al-Abdulrazzaq



Flamingo Independent

Nada M Al-Kharashi



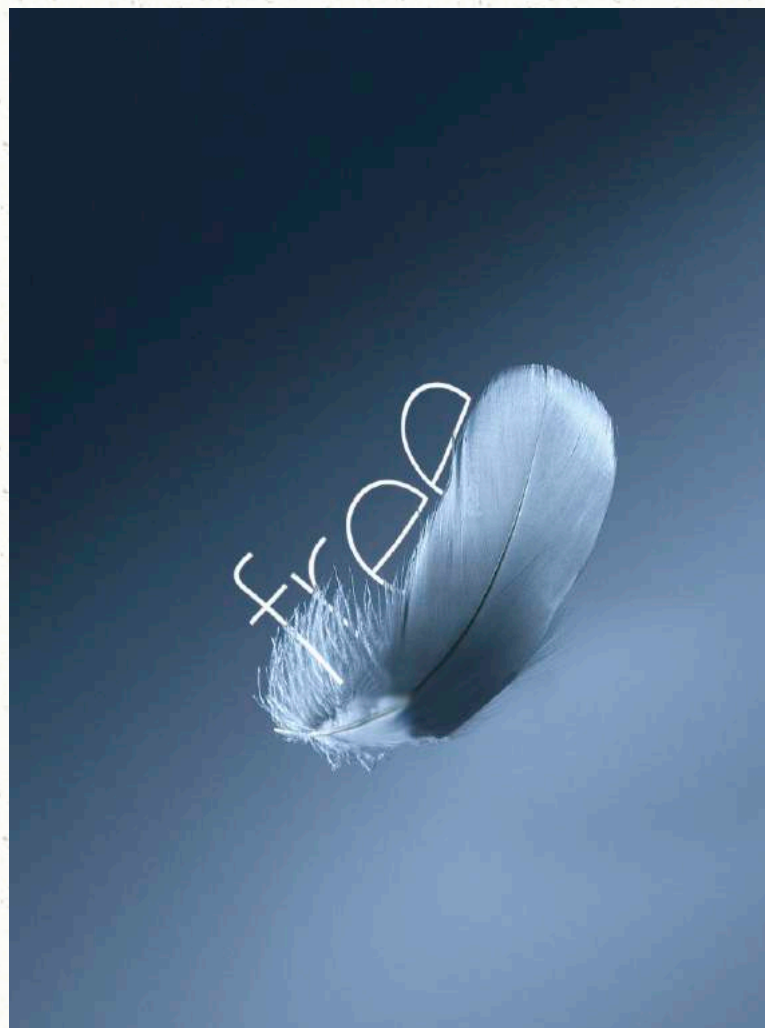
Emin Minaret

Prof. William Andersen



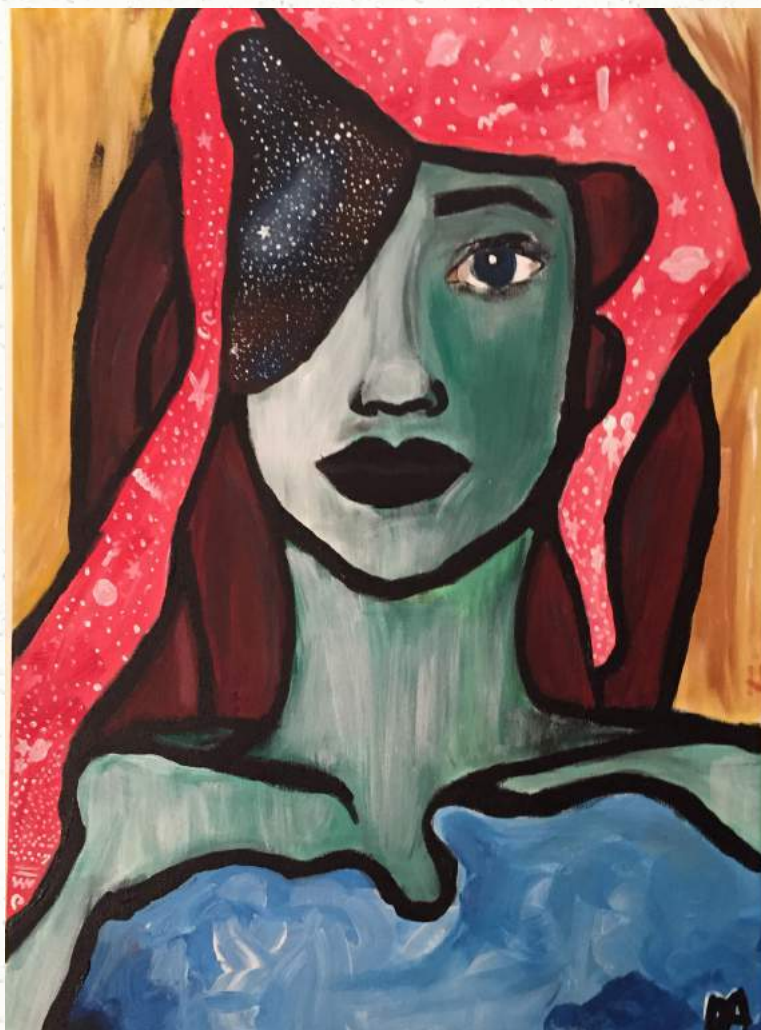
Gentleman Cat
Athoob Al-Roumi



Free as a Feather*Nada M Al-Kharashi*

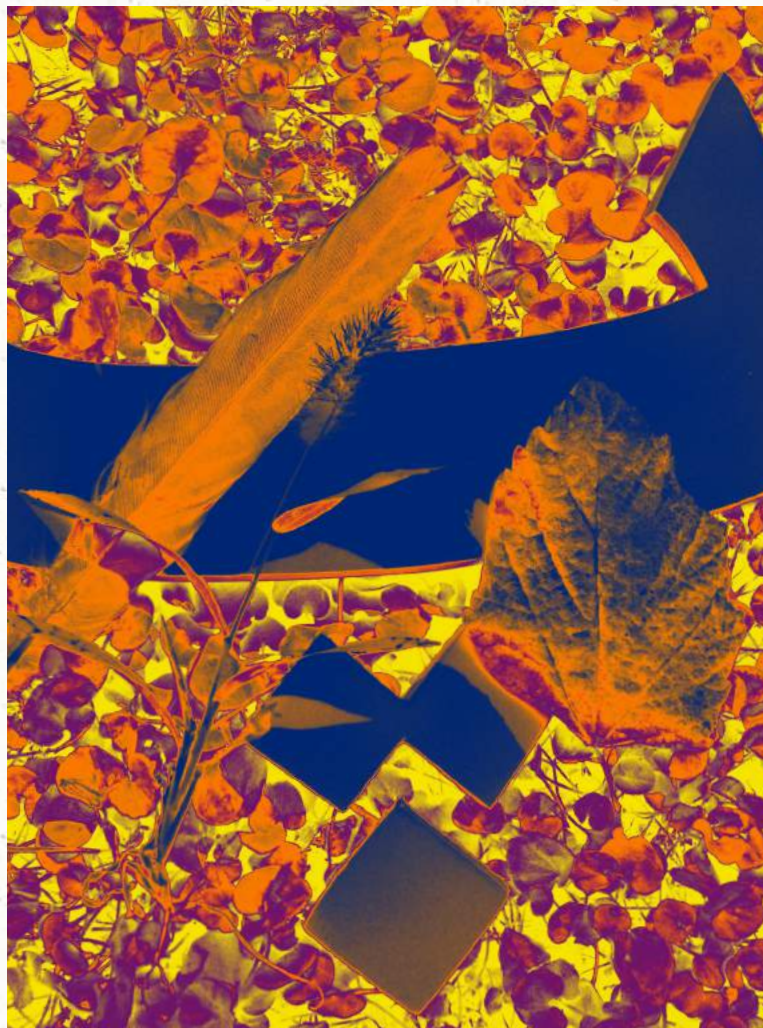
Universe in her Eyes

Dalal Ali



Paez

Prof. Maryam Hosseinnia



Pretense Laughter

Sara R Babazadeh



Littleplanet Dresden
Abdulaziz Alshammari



The Last Breath of Life
Zahraa Asadallah



Woman in Power*Sara R Babazadeh*

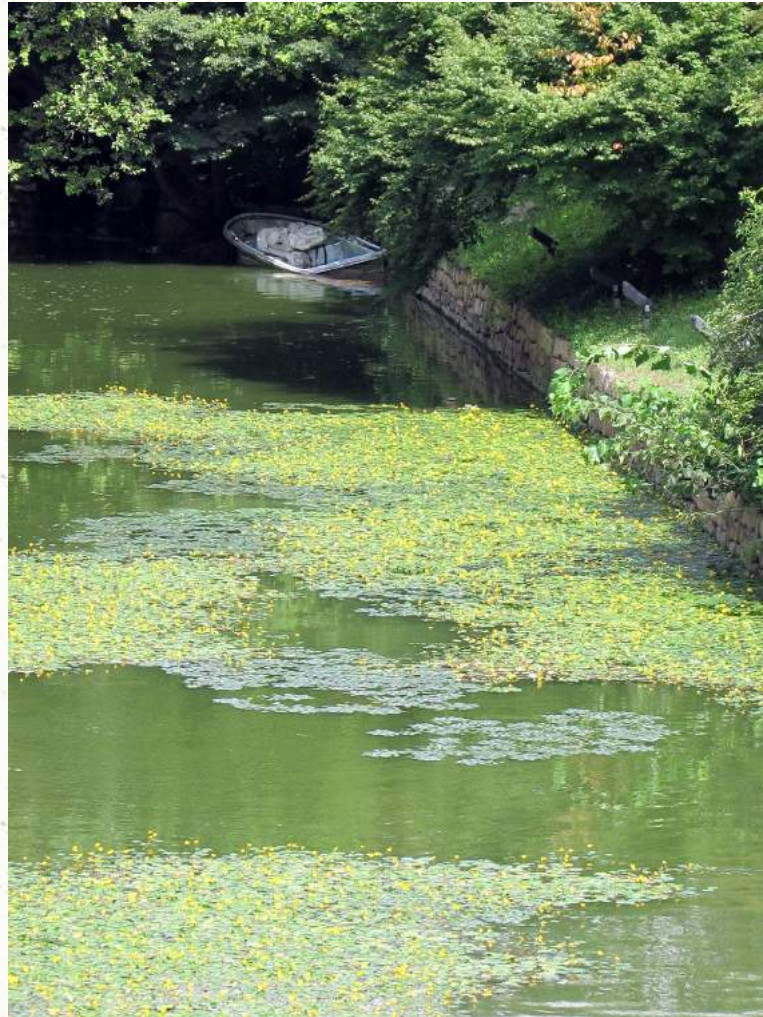
Vayeeh

Prof. Maryam Hosseinnia



Water Lilies at Donggung Palace and Wolji Pond, Gyeongju, Korea

Prof. Antonia Stamos



Nalati Grassland

Prof. William Andersen



Timeless Tranquility
Prof. Antonia Stamos



Kuwait City at Night
Sara R Babazadeh



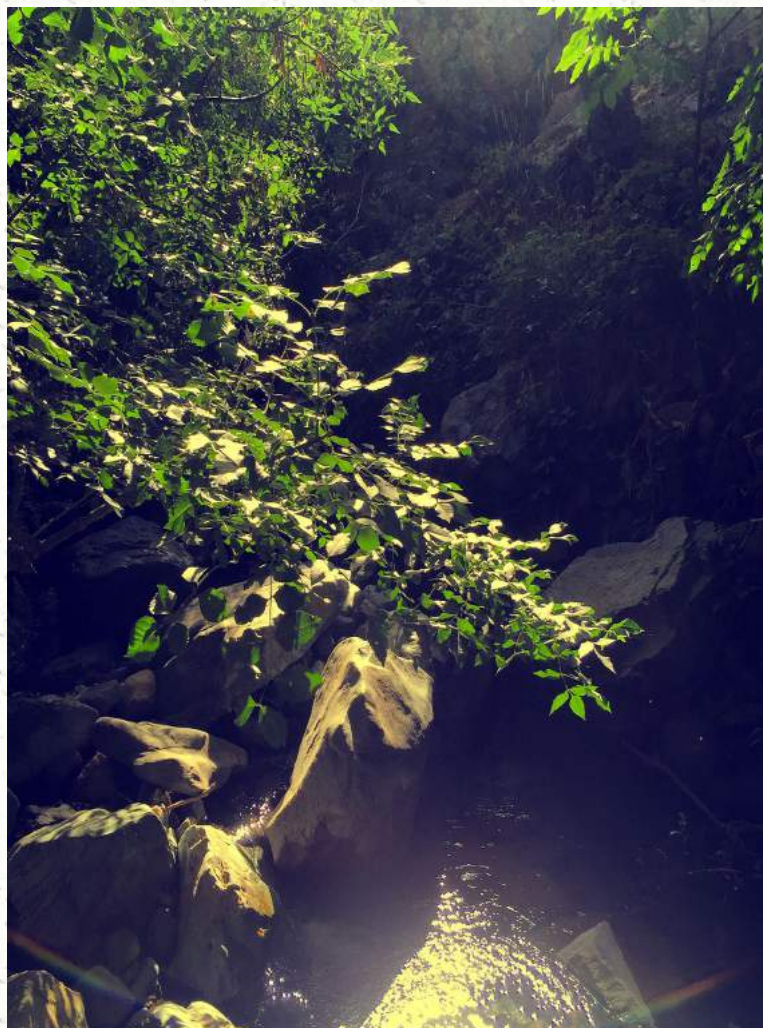
Tea Time Anytime

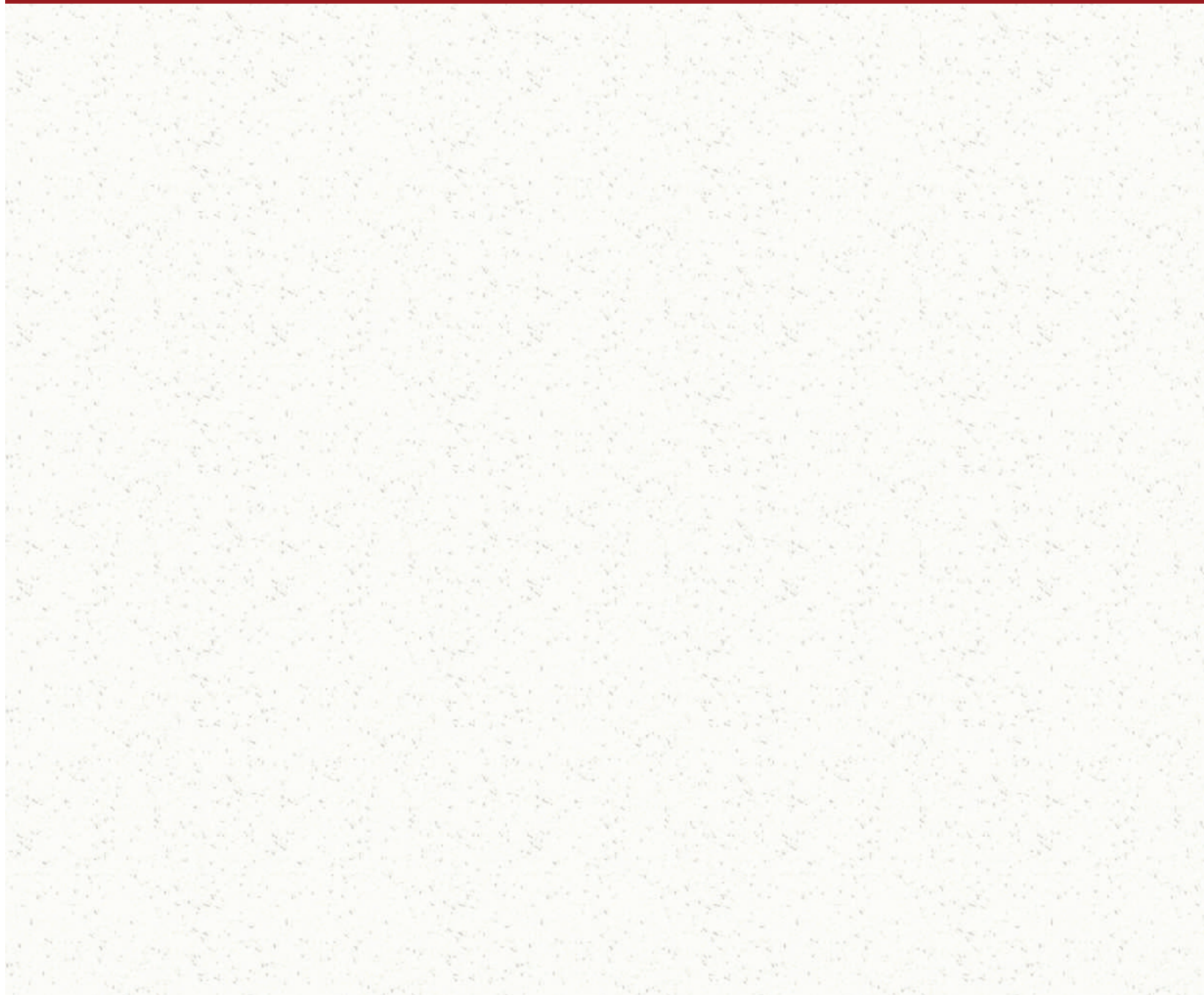
Sara R Babazadeh



Iran-tehran

Marjan Ziaei





Peace to the World from Kuwait

Prof. William Andersen

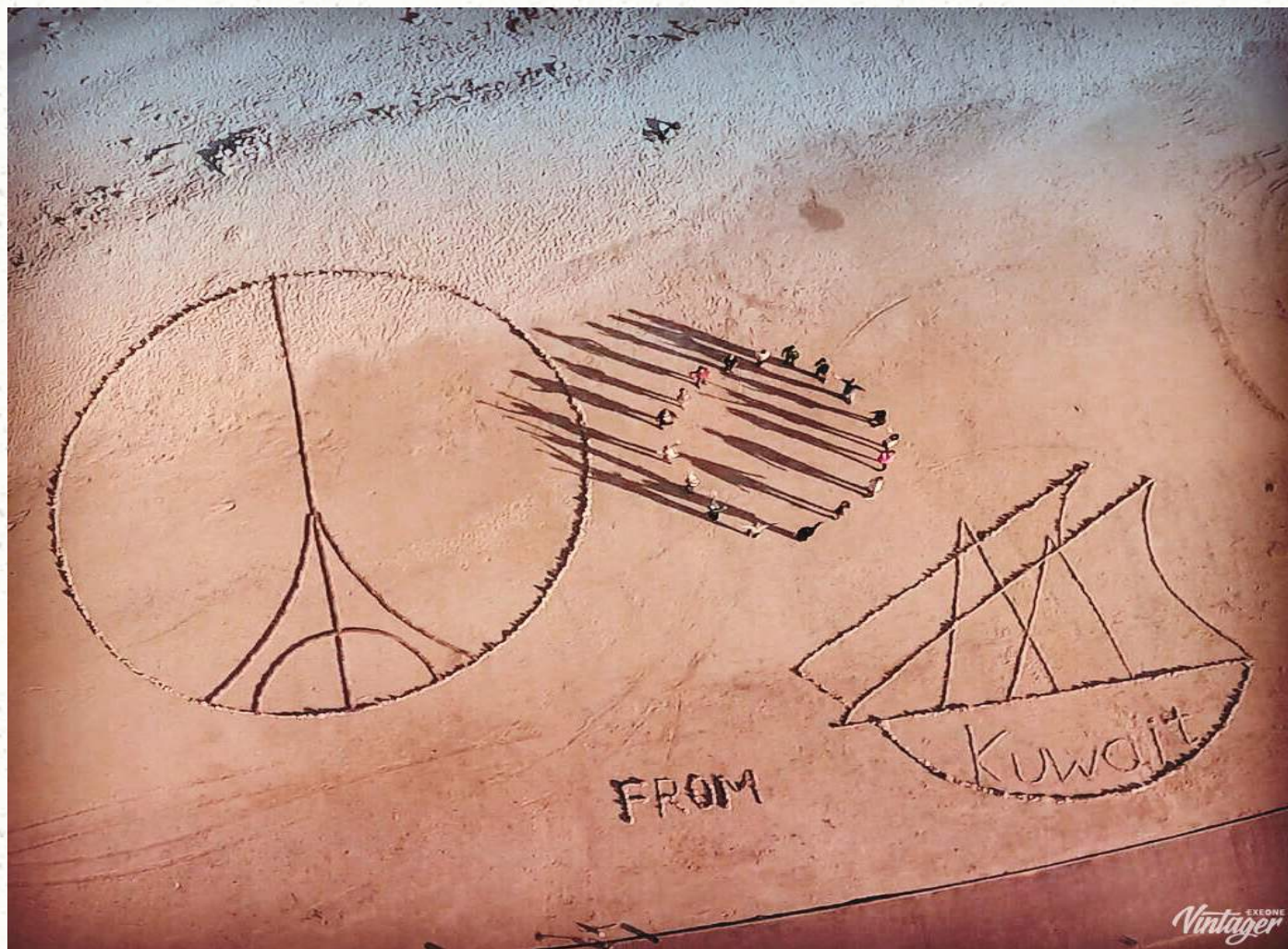
NOTE FROM DR. WILLIAM ON THIS PROJECT:

On Saturday, November 14, our students and I were taking part in an environmental installation workshop led by the renowned Earth artist Roy Staab who was a visiting artist to AUK over the last week. While we had planned to use only found materials on the Salmiya Beach to create large scale abstract designs, we all woke up that morning to the tragic events in Paris that had taken place the night before.

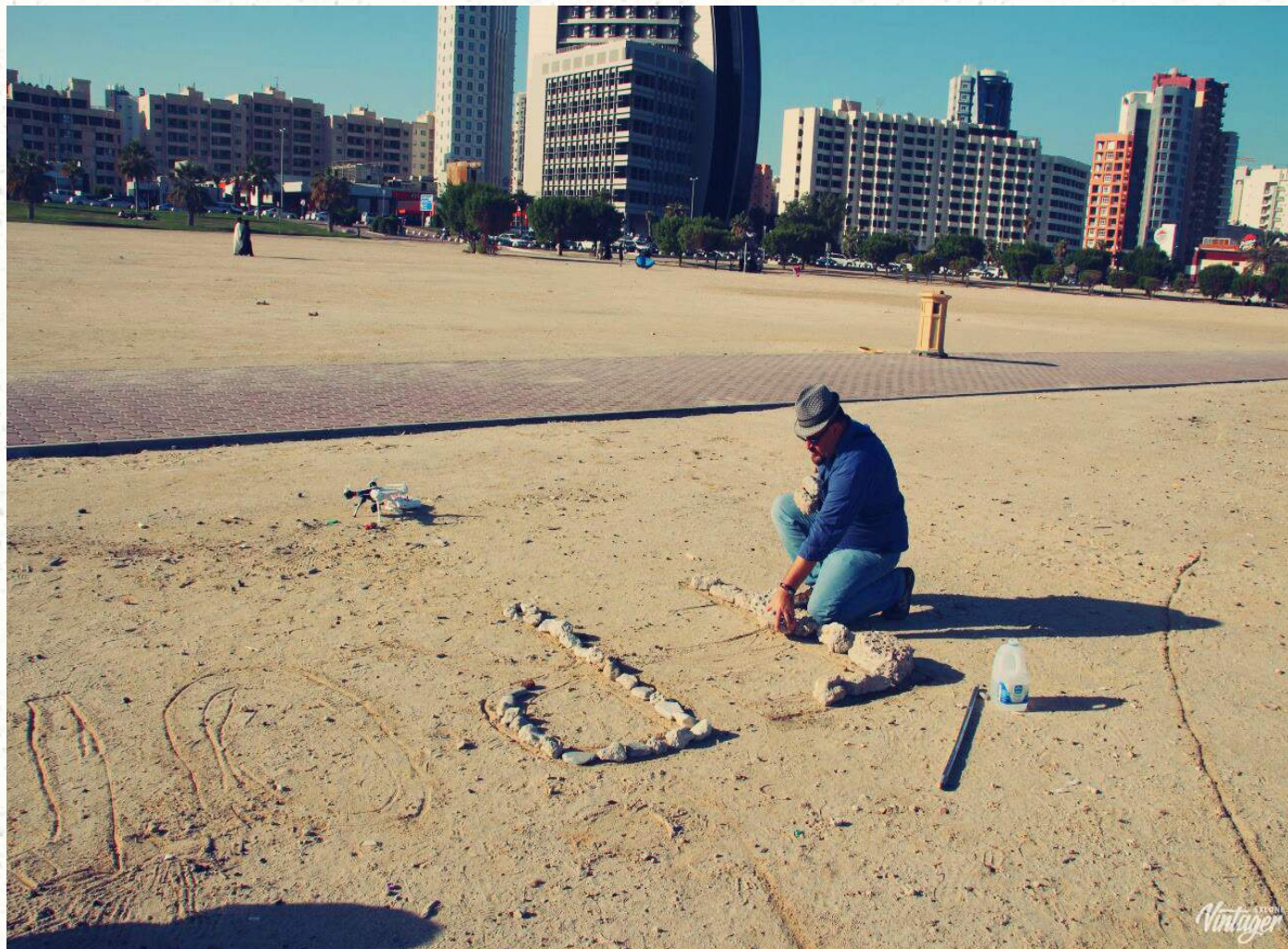
Immediately a number of us thought that we could use our workshop to send a positive message of peace and solidarity to the people of Paris and the world. Based on a design by one of our students, we collectively used rocks, shells and reused materials to create a large scale peace symbol conflated with an image of the Eiffel Tower, a Kuwaiti dhow, and the words “From Kuwait.” We then used a drone to take photos and video from above. The students, the visiting artist and I were exhausted after completing our creation but all felt that we had managed to make a positive message to send out to the world from Kuwait.









*Vintage*





الأعمال الفنية

Zahraa Asad



Abdulaziz Alshammari





*Zahraa
Asad*

Mona A Singer



Mohammad Al Khiami



Dalal Ali

الاحساس والنوبة

عبد الله الحموض

بأول سطر امسي عليكم بالخير
ربيع عمري مر وانا انتظره من حياتي
مالوم النفس ب مشتري الرخص والتبذير
الوم انسان ما قدر مبتغى حبي وذاتي
هذي ماهي رسالة عتاب حزن وتبرير
هذي نبذة قصيرة من صفاتي
الناس اجناس منهم يستاهل التعيير
ومنهم لو بوصفه؟ بياخذ حسناتي
شاعر واستخرج حروفي من اعماق بير
اكتبها ويسبق القدح في شعري كتاباتي
طبيب ، مهندس، ضابط ، كل طير فوقه طير
خلك طموح وبكرة تقول شوفوا انجازاتي
الشقى نوبة تستدرج صغير وكبير
والابتسامه احساس من ضمن انفعالاتي
هذا انا ابتسم ب بوقت قصير
ونوبة حزني ترد ملهوفه تشقي حياتي

استهتار ورعونه

خل العين للعين تاخذ مسار منظرها
 في ليلة سرقت عيني الزين إنسية مزيونه
 ضاعت علومي من شفت ياناس مظهرها
 هزة كياني والعين فيها صارت مجنونة
 لا أو من ب عشق العين من اول نظرها
 لكن ب هالزين عيني من بدايتها مفتونه
 ذاب عذب الشعر من حطت هذي سطرها
 بقلبي وعقلي وقصيدي كتبت «لا ياخذونه»
 هذي هدية جميلة و الجمال بذرة ثمرها
 ترسم البسمة في قلبي وتهيج شجونه
 الحي يحييك واشهد انه احياني حياها
 حيه ومعها الوضع المشلول له مرونة
 حكاية نفس إنسية ما عاشرت دهرها
 لكن من شفتها خالفوني استهتار ورعونه

وسلامتكم

#بقلمي

آمال مُسافرة

ليلى عبدال

أحتاج أن تربت على كتفي فراشة
تسمع شكواي،
وتهديني غبار الأمل..!

أحتاج أن أمكث أيامي القليلة المتبقية
بقرب صديقة عمري،
قبل أن أعانق ذلك المنفى
وأنسى!

أحتاج أن أزور البحر،
حتى أهديه آخر قصائدي..
قصائد البياض والحرية،
قبل أن أعانق قدرتي الأسمى
وأنسى!

أحتاج أن أكون ورقة زيتون
كي تُقطفني برفق
ثم تطلقني في مهب الريح
كأي حب عابر..
وأنسى!

ارحل عني..
لا أحتاج إلا الشيء
ففي منفاي كل حاجاتي مستجابة،
حيث الحب الأسمى!

اشـتياق

لـيلى عـبدال

ألفُ الألم..

شبنُ الشَّوق..

تاءُ التَّرقب..

ياءُ اليأس..

ألفُ الأنين..

قافُ القُبُل..

جميعها تؤول إليك

روح هشة

ليلى عبدال

صغيرتك جوفاء

كناي سُدَّتْ ثقبه بغيار الحنين

يُبيكِها أنين أوتار الكمنجات

وشجن مقام النهاوند

وبكاء طفل رضيع

وفقد الأب الحاضر

احضنها..

خلف النص

ليلى عبدال

في عقلي حروفٌ تُكْتَبُ..

في عيني مشهدٌ يُرصد..

في أذني صوت سنونوة تتعذب..

في قلبي أوجاعٌ تُضَمَّدُ..

لكن؛

في يدي عجزٌ.. لا يُكْتَبُ!

كُن جميلاً

ليلى عبدال

استشعر ذرات الهواء التي تهبط على وجهك..
استشققها،
عائق النقي منها،
وحارب تلك المطعمة بالبارود!

راقب حركة جفّيك..
برودة أطرافك،
تعب يداهمك..
تبحث عن أطراف أخرى تعانقك..
تحنو عليك،
كي تطفئ إشتياقك!

تأمل رقّة قلبك..
انقباض شريانك،
انبساط وريدك،
رجفة يديك،
وحنان وجدانك..

حرّر صراخك..
 شجون حروفك،
 صمت صياحك،
 وابحث عن خلاصك..

اعلن الحب على لوحتك..
 لَطِّخْها بحروف سنديانك،
 اسقها من أحبار مزمارك،
 واصنع منها أسطورة ابداعك..

كُن شاعراً

لـيلى عبدال

تفتح كزهرة أوركيد
تحول ساقها لقصبه فاحرة
تدسها بمحبرة الشعر كلما جفت قلوبنا
فتكتب شعراً فواحاً مليئاً بالصور النادرة
اكتب،
كلما انتهى الشعر أن يتحرر من المحبرة
حتى يملئ عالم الخوف بترانيم آمنة
حتى ينعش أزهار القلب الذابلة
وتبقى كما انت
أوركيدة خالدة

رجل يموت

يوسف ماجد نايف

*** ١ ***

ماذا يرى رجلٌ

يموتُ؟

يرى القَرْنَفلَ تحت شُبَّاكِ

يراك تلوكُ ذاتك، تلتوي، تَزرقُ

من تفكيرك المحروق من أطرافه

*** ٢ ***

ماذا يرى؟

وهو المُسجَعُ والمُقَفَّى

والهوامشُ

وهو أطرافُ القُماشِ

وحظُّ قِطٍ حين يسفُطُ

وهو لقطَةُ شاردٍ

ماذا يرى بينَ الشقوقِ سوى الشروقِ

وسطلٍ ماءٍ باردٍ لم تقوَ جاريةٌ عليه

يرى الكثيرَ ولا يقولُ

ولو تحدّثَ لا يُطيلُ...لأنَّه رجلٌ يموتُ.

*** ٣ ***

لأنه رجلٌ وحيدٌ

كلُّ ما يجري سيجري
وهو ينتظرُ الصُّعودَ بكاملِ الذكرى
و يُنشِدُ وحدَه في رُكنِهِ أنشودَه للموتِ
ألَّفَهَا على مضضٍ..
ولم يَأْبَهُ لِقَافِيَةٍ ولا سجعَ رقيقٍ
[كان يكره ما يُعكِّرُ صفوه]

*** ع ***

ماذا يرى رجلٌ يموتُ؟

لعلُّه يحيا بفكره موتِه المحتوم..
ينطفئُ المساءُ ولا يموتُ
وتسقطُ الأوراقُ منه فلا يموتُ
كأنَّه يزدادُ دفناً وإتكالاً كلَّ ثانيةٍ

*** ه ***

يراك حديقَةً سوداءَ
لم تُحرقْ حشائشُها

يراك قذيفه هتكت ستائر صمته
ويراك - حين تكون منه - مبتسماً
كأنك لا تراه ولا يراك

*** ٦ ***

يرى الندى
يختار الصدى

ويحار..
كيف سيضحك السنجاب منه؟
يحار
كيف يفوز في الشطرنج
كيف يُقابل الباب الحديدي الذي في باله
ويحار أكثر
من تراجع أمام الصمت تقديساً

يراك.. ولا يموت القهر فيه
إذا رأى ما لا يسرُّ

وكلاً أرهقته بشبابك انكسر الضباب

أمامه
في صدره
بين الصخور

وبين قطرات الندى.

*** ٧ ***

ماذا يرى رجل يموت؟
يراك قنديلاً كأجمل ما يكونُ
يراك نايًا

لا يراك

*** ٨ ***

لأنه فقد الشعور
تراه يبحثُ فيك عن أملٍ
يراك رهينة

لا يستشيطُ إذا ارتكبت خطيئة

أولا
 تُهْدِيهِ الْكِتَابَةَ
 عَنْكَ،
 عَنْ يَدِهِ الْيَسَارِ،
 عَنْ التَّحْدِي،
 أَنْتَ مَعْتَوَهُ...نعم..
 بَلْ أَنْتَ تُشْبِهُهُ

يُحَرِّكُكَ النِّيسْمُ كَقَشَّةٍ
 وَتَهْزُ قَلْبَكَ رُؤْيَا الْأَطْفَالِ
 أَوْ بَعْضِ الْجَمَالِ

وَرُبَّمَا [أَوْ رُبَّمَا لَا] تَنْتَهِي زِحْلَامُكَ
 الْكُبْرَى

*** ٩ ***

يِرَاكَ
 وَأَنْتَ فِي بَحْرِ نَتِ الْأَفْكَارِ
 تَخْشَى أَنْ تُفَكِّرَ مِثْلَهُ
 تَخْشَاهُ....

لا تنتظرُ إلى عينيهِ
 أو قدميه أو شفّتيهِ
 فهو كُفْرَةٌ
 هوَ فيلسوفُ زمانهِ
 ها أنتَ تخشى أن تُحرّكَ معصميكَ
 أمامهُ

وتخافُ من نضراتِهِ الحُبلى بدمعِ كاذبٍ

*** ١٠ ***

استفاقَ ظهيرةً
 ليراكَ تلعبُ بالهواءِ
 تُقلبُ الصُّورَ الصغيرةَ
 [لا هيأً عن هذه الدنيا..]

فيكُنْ عَنكَ سطرًا واحدًا
 وبنامِ ثانيّةٍ

فتتطرُ نحوه كالفقْطِ

*** ١١ ***

تَنْظُرُ نَحْوَهُ
وَتَرَاهُ أَجْمَلَ كُلِّ يَوْمٍ
مِثْلَ فَنَانٍ أَصِيلٍ
لَا يَطُورُ ذَاتَهُ مِنْ أَجْلِ مَالٍ
أَوْ رِيَاءٍ
لَا تَرَاهُ كَمَا يَرَاكَ
لَأَنَّهُ رَجُلٌ يَمُوتُ

*** ١٢ ***

يَظُنُّ أَنَّكَ أَبْلَهُ
وَيَظُنُّ ظَنَّ السَّوِّءِ فِي أَفْعَالِكَ

ارْتَبَطَ الْمَسَاءُ بِهِ
وَأَنْتَ هُنَاكَ تَرْسُمُ قُلُوبَ حُبٍ
بَلْ تُخْرِيشُهُ بِالْأَلْوَنِ
يَسِيلُ الْحُزْنَ مِنْهَا

*** ١٣ ***

لا أراك
 لحائط بيني وبينك
 لارتباكك وارتباكك
 من سماع شهيقه وزفيره
 [يتنافسان ويُفسدان صداقةً دامت سنيناً
 يهدمان مودةً وتفاهماً..]
 لكنّ حدسي لا يُخيبني...

*** ١٤ ***

أغيبُ [وزنتما في البال]
 واكتمل الغيابُ إذ انكسرتُ
 وصرتُ العنقُ ما تعلّق بالحداء
 من الدماء
 ولست أعرف مَنْ أمامي
 أو ورائي
 كُلُّنا نمضي إلى حتفٍ
 [سوادٍ مُبهرٍ مُثلاًئٍ]
 لكنّنا عُمي . . وأنعسُ منهمُ

*** ١٥ ***

سأغيبُ أ طولَ
فانتظِرْني
رَبِّما ستُعِدُّ خُطواتي الأماكُنْ
رَبِّما التاريخُ كرَّرَني كثيراً
ربما..
أو أَنَّنِي رَقْمٌ قصيٌّ سارِدٌ
[سأموْتُ وحدي مثلهُ]

*** ١٦ ***

هي رحلة قد تستمر إلى نهايةِ عمرنا...
وهو الغيابُ بما يجودُ بهِ
من الحكمِ الوجيزةِ
والمُنَى
نحتاجه جدّاً
كما نحتاجُ غرَبَتنا
لنعْرِفَ من نكونُ
إذا اقْتَرَبْنَا من نهايتنا
وأحسَسْنَا بها تدنو
كُدُبِ هائجٍ

*** ١٧ ***

أ دنو من الباب المُزخرف
 [بابُ غُرفتيها و حيثُ تموتُ
 أحلامُ السُّكاري والمُغَنِّييْن]
 المحبَّة: قطعة أو قطعتان من القماشِ
 تُغطِّيَانِك... أو تكادان
 - المحبَّة: أن أراك - أيا حبيبة صاحبي
 في غرفة النومِ الصغيرة
 تشربين الشاي ثم تُحاولين النومَ
 - أجلسُ في الممرِ كقطعة سوداء - أنظرُ لا ألاحظُ مطلقاً
 حركاتِ جسمك..
 نمت..
 نامي جيداً يا حُلوتي....

*** ١٨ ***

في حوزتي من دبلُ جدتك
 الذي أرتبه عنها بُعيدَ مماتها
 لكنني في حيرة من أمري الآن
 الليالي لا تمرُّ بنا سريعاً
 والسعادة في بطون الناس

*** ١٩ ***

قيل عن الجنون وصدقهِ
ما قيل...
لكن من أصدق؟ من يُصدّقني إذا قلت الحقيقة؟
من سيضنّب منطقي؟

*** ٢٠ ***

سأعود يوماً يا صديقي لاتخف،
سأعود مرتجفاً من البرد، انتظرنى...!
أشعل القنديل واهداً...
قلّب الصُور الأخيرة، وابك منك هنيئَةً
فلعلّ دمعك -يا صديقي - أصدق الأشياء
واسكر - إن أرذت - بماء غُربتي الطويلة

*** ٢١ ***

كنت زعمى

*** ٢٢ ***

منت أعمى...
لا أرى إلا يديّ

و لا أدقُّ في تفاصيل الحياة أو المحبة
ربما متعجرفاً أو بارداً مثل الثَّمائيلِ / الزُّجاج
فلستُ أذكرُ وجه أُمي أو أبي
مثلُ الوباء أنا..

*** ٢٣ ***

إذا اتَّسَمْتُ على وجهي ملامحُ قِطعةٍ
(فاحذَر، تَجَنَّبني قليلاً) (أو كثيراً)
عندها.. أنا لستُ صاحبك القديم
تجنَّب التدقيق في شفتي أو خدي
واحذَر أن يحِرَّضَكَ الفضولُ
فقد ترى ما لا يسُرُّكَ فيهما

*** ٢٤ ***

قد كنتُ أعمى قبل صوتك
- يا حبيبة صاحبي -
ولعلَّ إخلاصي اختفى أيضاً
(لأسبابٍ نُورِدُ وجنتي)
فلن أقول..

*** ٢٥ ***

وإذ يُعربِدُ قلبي الصافي
 يُلوّثُهُ الهواءُ الساخنُ / المرئِي
 يدخلُ في ثيابي أولاً
 ويرى فؤادي أبيضاً
 فيشُ حرباً لا أراها مطلقاً
 إذ يقرصُ الأطرافَ ، يقتلُ
 ما تعلّق بالفؤاد من الجمالِ
 ومنذُ كنتُ براءة الأطفالِ والأشياءِ،
 ينخرُ عظمَ أحلامي ،
 ويمضُغني،
 ويبصُفُني مراراً في القمامةِ

*** ٢٦ ***

عندها
 الشيطانُ يدخلُ في دمي
 وتهاجرُ الروحُ حيثُ غمامةٌ فوقِي تمرُّ
 تغيّرُ الوضعَ ...

*** ٢٧ ***

استجبتُ إلى نداء الشرِّ
 (كان الجوُّ يهدأ مثلَ أعصابي تماماً)
 كنتُ أشعرُ بالسعادة والهواءُ يهبُّ
 في وجهِ حياديّ الملامح
 [قلتُ في نفسي: سأرجعُ...]

*** ٢٨ ***

خمرُ ريقِ حبيبتِي هوجنَّهُ الفدروسُ،
 كنتُ حمامةً / طفلاً وديعاً حالماً،
 والآنُ أنهشُ لحمَ أعدائي وأصحابي
 / بلا هدفٍ ، وألهو عارياً في كلِّ روحٍ
 كلَّ وادٍ أسودٍ أو أبيضٍ، ألهو وأهتِكُ
 سترَ كلِّ حبيبةٍ أو مومسٍ ، لا شيءَ
 يوقِّفني ويردِّعني.. ضميري في مكان ما،
 وخمرُ الحبِّ إدماني
 و لكنْ،
 ليسَ أولى أولوياتي

*** ٢٩ ***

ورغم الشرّ .. يلسعني صقيعُ
 حينَ أمضي نحوَ بيتِ صديقي المَعْتَوهِ أنظرُ
 لا أرى
 بل لا يشُدُّ (كما مضى) الحبُّ انتباهي
 أينَ أذهبُ؟ هل أتابعُ.. كيف؟

*** ٣٠ ***

أسمعُ صوتَ طفلٍ من بعيدٍ
 فيرزوايا حانةٍ، وله دويٌّ مُهلِكٌ،
 تتكرّرُ الأفكارُ - أردعها - تعودُ بَقْوَة ، لنقولَ أني طيب
 لنقولَ أني صادق في عُمقِ أعماقي
 [فهل أصغي إليها..؟]

*** ٣١ ***

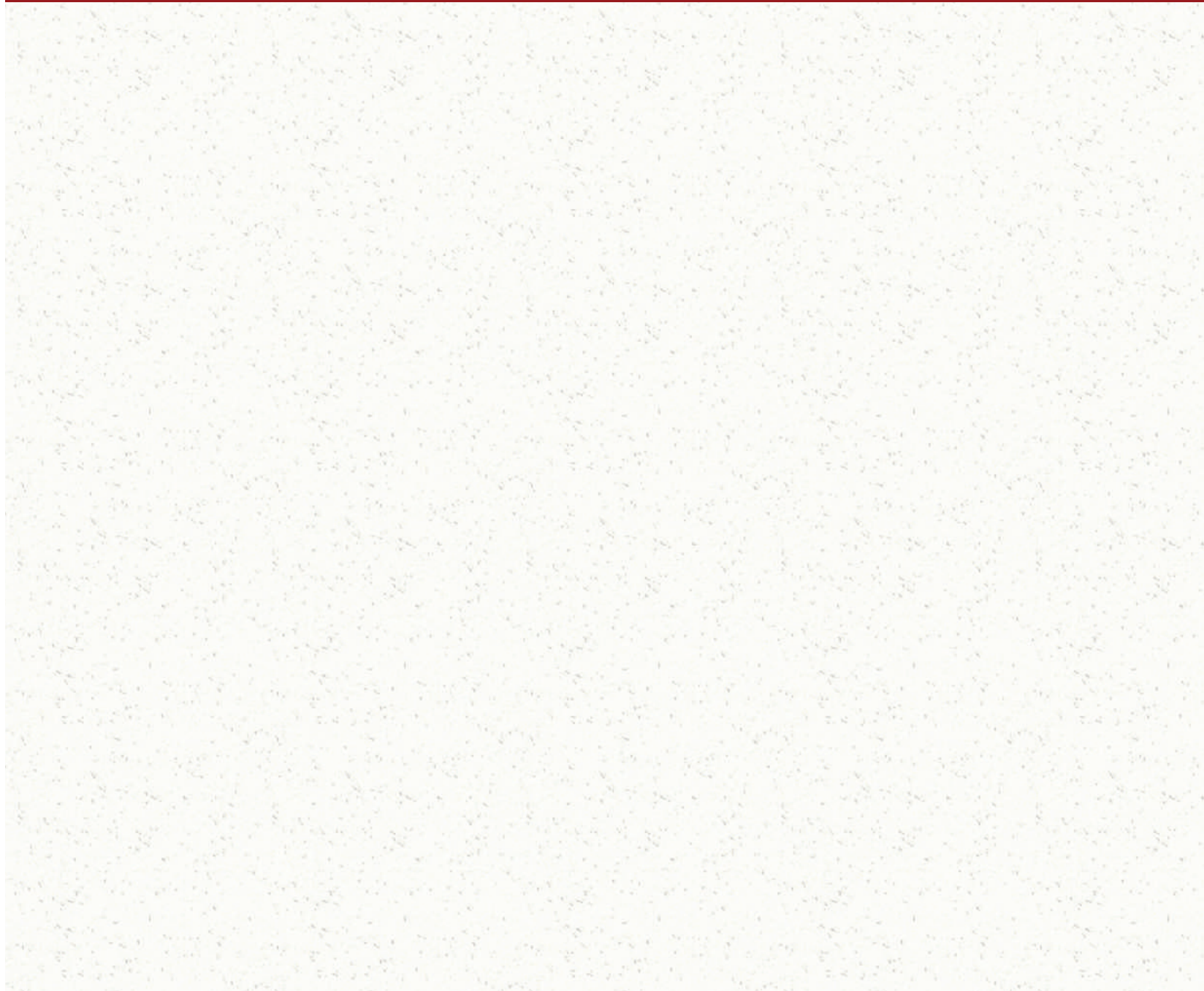
يا حبيبةَ صاحبي...
 سأحبُ شكلَ الموجِ عن بُعدٍ
 وأصحابِ السوايقِ
 وارتجافَ يمامةٍ
 سأحبُّ نفسي إن تسئلي لي . . كأنك مُرهق ؟
 كلاً.

ولكني سأعرفُ قُدر نفسي
عاجلاً أو آجلاً

*** ٣٢ ***

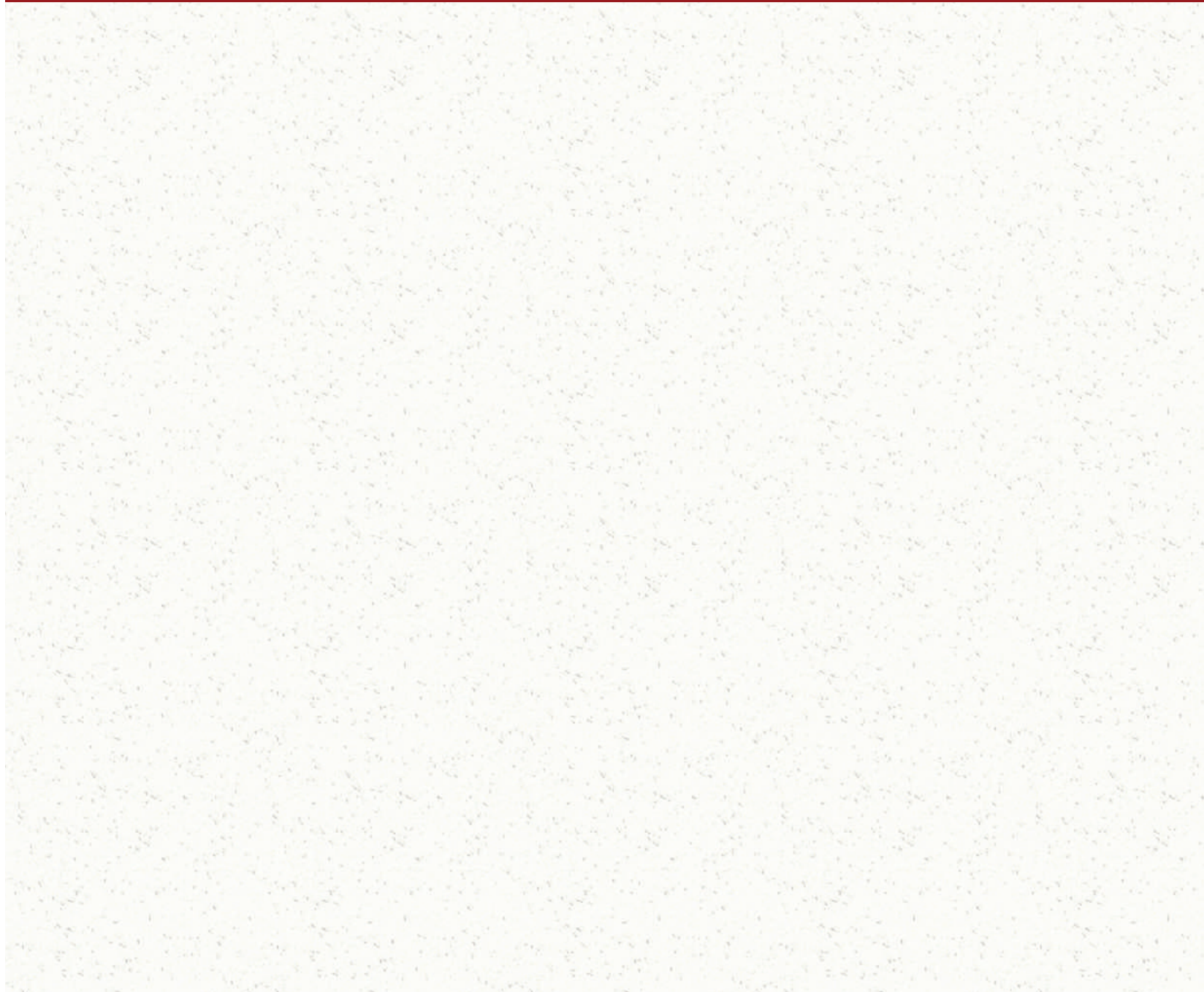
يُحييكُ حُمُوكُ أيها القلبُ التعيسُ
تجيءُ -أيضاً- بعضُ أمواجِ الحقيقةِ
كي تنغصَّ عيشةً ملأى بأحزانٍ
(وأفراح كذلك)

ها أنا، رجلٌ يبولُ أمامَ منزلٍ صاحبي
وأبيه. أدخلُ. لا أرى إلا سواداً. أينَ هُم؟
لا لستُ أخشى ما أراه ولا أراه
ولستُ طفلاً هارباً. مع أنني رَجُلٌ، أراني
بائساً جداً لأول مرةٍ
أنا بعضُ نافذتي ومَرَاتِي
فبعضي صادقٌ جداً
وبعضي كاذبٌ جداً
أرى وجهاً كوجهي
فيهما...
وأموثُ حيراناً.



والشعر النثر





المحتويات

الشعر والنثر العربى

١٧٨ الاحساس والنوبة

عبد الله الحموض

١٨٠ أمال مُسافرة

ليلى عبدال

١٨١ اشتياق

ليلى عبدال

١٨٢ روح هشة

ليلى عبدال

١٨٣ خلف النص

ليلى عبدال

١٨٤ كُن جميلاً

ليلى عبدال

١٨٦ كُن شاعراً

ليلى عبدال

١٨٧ رجل يموت

يوسف ماجد نايف



AUKuwait ريڤيو

الجامعة الامريكية في الكويت: مجلة الفنون والآداب
نسخة ربيع ٢٠١٦، مجلد ١٠



Nightlife
Abdulaziz Alshammari



AUKuwait

ثقيلو

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نسخة ربيع ٢٠١٦، مجلد ١٠

