

THE CASTLE: A BRIEF HISTORY

In Fall 1948, a creative writing class taught by Esther Haefner decided to create the college's first literary magazine. With Robert Gronlund '49 supervising as first editor-in-chief, students developed a 32-page magazine. Originally called *The Castle Tales*, when the first issue was released in February of 1949, all 500 copies sold out within hours. A second issue was produced in May of that same year, but the publication was eventually reduced to one issue per year. In 1957 the magazine's title was shortened to *The Castle*. In 1997, under editor Amy Silver, *The Castle* again became a semi-annual publication. This is the first issue of volume 71.

The Castle remains a student-run publication through Wartburg College under the guidance of our faculty advisor Dr. Amy Nolan. This edition was developed on Adobe InDesign and printed through the Wartburg College Digital Print Center.

Please direct any questions, comments, concerns, or donations to castle@wartburg.edu.

THE CASTLE

FALL 2016 | VOLUME 71 | ISSUE 1



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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Hello and thank you for picking up a copy of this issue of *The Castle*. I'm so thankful for my amazing editorial board, a wonderful advisor—Dr. Amy Nolan— and a great group of writers, photographers, and designers to work with to create the first issue of *The Castle* for this year. I'm also thankful for you, our dear reader, for supporting us, and I hope you enjoy reading Wartburg's literary and arts magazine.

—Hannah Creed

Editorial Board:

Gabrielle Fox
Katie Lee
Jesse Kielman
Alec Matthew
Amy Prestholt

ZACH MARPE is a senior Creative Writing major with a minor in Spanish, born and raised in the Lake Mills, Iowa, area. His passions include running (for Wartburg XC and Track), exploring the world, and embracing emotions through writing. Poetry is his favorite form of art, and all of his work is inspired by personal experience.

ALEC MATTHEW is a senior Environmental Science and Studies major from Ely, Iowa. He is involved in Wartburg Outdoors, Students for Peace and Justice, and Student Senate and works at CrawDaddy Outdoors.

JASMINE MOORE is an English major with a focus in creative writing from Chicago Illinois. She is a house manager and works with Newman Crew. She likes to write and loves to swim.

ABIGAIL PACA is a senior from Britt, Iowa majoring in communication arts with a minor in graphic design. Abby is also on the Wartburg Track team.

RACHEL PAPE is a Spanish and English major with a concentration in creative writing. She is from La Crescent, Minnesota. Rachel is involved in Ambassadors and Impower, and she works in the Writing/Reading/Speaking Lab.

AMY PRESTHOLT is a senior English and Secondary Education major from Manly, Iowa. She is currently involved in Psalm 149 and WASE. She also works on campus in the WRSL (Writing, Reading, Speaking Lab).

ASHLEY REYNOLDS is from Sumner, Iowa; and is currently a junior at Warburg College. She is pursuing a degree in business administration with concentrations in marketing and management. Her minor in graphic design and her involvement in Kantorei Choir and DVK, the hip hop dance team, has allowed her to continue her passion for the arts.

ALISHA UNGS is a second year journalism and religion double major from Storm Lake, Iowa. In her free time, Alisha is an avid reader and writer of poetry and short stories.

YVONNE WAMALA is a first year, pre-med student with a focus on biology. She is an international student from Swaziland and this is her first time in the States. She is involved in several activities on campus such as IClub and BSU.

ISRRAEL ALFONZO

ADRIANA GORDON

SHAHZEB JADOON

JOUIE JINNAH

AHYMAD LEE

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To the Lions

Gabrielle Calease Fox

silver lions guard the oak box
but I leave it yawning
an iron padlock on the side
but I don't have the key

nails and wires pose on their leather strip
unstrung
I'm scared to wear the strand

I'm always afraid to lose him
but I don't want the fright to end

nightmares lullaby dealings
like stars on the ceilings
but we won't fall –
Fears will never destroy Us all

a long separation calls them hither...
voices questions will we wither...
those constellations, they quiver...

I let his cross tumble between my fingers
glance at the leather necklace
and give him To the Lions.

CONTRIBUTORS

MEGAN BACKER is a senior Journalism & Communications major with an emphasis in Public Relations and a minor in Leadership. She enjoys spending time with her dog, Rylee and with her dad and uncle in the field, especially during harvest time. She currently owns her own business, Megan Lee Photography!

NATALIE BONTHIUS is from Iowa City and will graduate from Wartburg's Neuroscience program in December. Before starting medical school next fall, she plans to spend a semester at the University of Salzburg in Austria. Natalie will use that time to pursue her many interests, including writing, photography, piano, running, triathlons, and other adventure sports.

REBECCA BUCHANAN is a first year English major from Hampton, Iowa. She plays tenor saxophone in the Wartburg Wind Ensemble. Her interests include reading, writing, photography, and petting cats and dogs.

HANNAH CREED loves writing about her biggest inspiration, her family. She loves cats, poetry, and graphic design. Hannah is a senior Writing major with an emphasis in creative writing, from Center Point, Iowa.

CHARMAINE DENISON-GEORGE is a first year Business Administration major from Freetown, Sierra Leone. Some of her favourite pastimes are; engaging in conversations, Fashion Designing and styling her hair. Charmaine wishes to become an Entrepreneur and influential person in her country someday.

BRODY FOLKERTS is planning on attending the University of Iowa next year. He wishes to pursue an education in mathematics and physics. He also plays soccer and runs Cross Country.

GABRIELLE CALEASE FOX is a fourth year Secondary English Education major, Literature Minor from Waverly, Iowa. She is involved in Kappa Delta Pi: International Honors Society in Education, Phi Etta Sigma, Scholars (Honors) Program, *The Castle*, The Lance, Wartburg Handbell Choir, Duh-Versity Dance, and Hearthside. She enjoys reading, writing, Netflix, knitting, yoga, tea, and bunnies.

JESSE KIELMAN is a senior Communication Arts major from Waverly, Iowa. He is involved with Orange EXCEleration, the Castle, as well as various independent media endeavors.

BEN KLOOSTER is a third year music major (voice) and creative writing minor from West Des Moines, Iowa. He truly has a passion for singing, playing piano, composing, and writing creatively. His favorite genres to read and write include fiction and poetry. He is involved in Ritterchor, Castle Singers, and Student Center Council. He enjoys reading, listening to music, swimming, watching movies, and video and board games.

KATHRYN LEE is a sophomore English major with a concentration in Creative Writing and a graphic design minor. She's involved in *The Castle* and *The Odyssey*. Some hobbies she enjoys are writing, watching Netflix, reading, drinking coffee, swimming, listening to music, and playing her ukulele and guitar.

The Phoenix

Zach Marpe

Though I am enshrouded by the *phantoms* of my past;
though I am tormented and burned in the present;
though I am suffocated and drowned by future dreams silenced,
I will not become a *revenant*.

Though my *breath* has been stolen and my *legs* have grown weak;
though my *heart* is now rapt and malevolent;
though I can no longer stand and can barely speak,
I will not surrender a *degenerate*.

When my mind turns to *ash* and my *heart* beats its last;
for when I can no longer breathe;
from the moment your *touch* feels foreign and asked,
my *soul* will live on and have *peace*.

At the moment when the *world* is shadowed in gray
and what once was is no longer *home*;
at the moment when there's no reason left to *believe*,
my *pyre's splendor* has already shown.

When the *air* in the *night* has turned hazy and cold;
when I have lost *you*, my last loving friend,
I'll be forced to die—yes, once more, inside—
and I will rise again, *irreverent*.

Alone & In Progress

Zach Marpe

She was the rising and fading *rays* of *sun*;
she was the *stars* and the rustling *breeze*.

She was a beckoning call through the *pain* of it all,
but the *chill* not even she could appease.

She was the lush, covered *mountain*;
she was the home for which I hadn't dreamed.

She was the beat of a *heart* on an untraveled path,
but even her, an eternal winter did freeze.

She with he was a *story* far removed from the last;
the crisp *leaves* and good mood I could count in.

The season I loved I would soon come to refer to as *fall*,
but with them, my *poetry* turned it to *autumn*.

So, although she was not a cure from my *darkness*,
she and he were my *saviors*, my lasting *catharsis*.

Waiting for Marvin

Charmaine Denison-George

The situation was perfect, Debra had always thought. Her father would have no reason to object to their marriage because they were of the same tribe. The only trouble was that Marvin was still a mystery to her. He had always been. In all her years growing up at First Baptist Church, she'd learnt very little about him. And because some sort of knowledge about him was necessary for fuelling her imaginations of she and him, she'd let his mere sight inform her about him.

He was tall, very tall, athletically built, and a beautiful sight to behold. Debra would eagerly wait for the Communion service to commence just to see him walk up the aisle. Marv, as everyone so fondly called him, never walked ahead of his Mother and elder sister. He would wait until they'd left the pew before following them to the altar. A perfect gentleman. Even his gait was devoid of theatrics or macho unlike his counterparts whom Debra loathed. Her heart melted every time she caught a glimpse of him. She reckoned this was the case with other girls present. What else could explain Ramatou's theatrical toss of her curly hair extensions when in sight of him? Or Alba's exaggerated hip movements when walking past his pew? Skanks. Debra prayed that these girls had no hold on her future husband.

Marvin was even more beautiful to behold from the front. A girl just had to look into his dark, oval-shaped face and dreamy eyes to fall in love with him. His eyes told of hidden passions within him and a gentle spirit which made him seem even more attractive. An attractive young man, who despite being at least five years her senior, she was willing to wait for. Wait for him to finally recognize her.

Haiku Trinkets: A Journey Through a Thrift Shop

Gabrielle Calease Fox

Popcorn welcoming
Over the precious items in
Purgatory sweet

Heaps of china
Wait in lines on white shelving
Without pedigree

Perfumes lounge across
Motorcycles, flowers, ducks, rabbits
Smaller than my palm

Bears play violin strings
To ghosts of Danish cookies
On the purple jar circle

The leftover morsel
Lean Mean Fat Grilling Machine
Of a midlife crisis

The immortally
Green celery stick clings to the
Refrigerator

Light chimes from tin muses
Clash against raging 80s music
The ageless antique trapezes

Somehow, You Learned it Wrong

Rachel Pape

You are a young girl with a ridiculously fast metabolism. You are skinny and active. You can't sit still for even a minute. The way that you run through the house drives your mother crazy. Your hair is up in a ponytail every day so as not to distract you from things that are more important, such as running across the soccer field. Even though you're a girl, you have joined the baseball team this summer. Because you are strong and not afraid of anything. The boys tease and alienate you, not that you care. After all, you are young and don't know what it is like to be ashamed. On summer evenings, you and the neighborhood girls take laps around town on your bikes. Beads of sweat roll down your face, but you pedal hard because you want to be the fastest. That is all that matters.

Your mother works an eight-hour shift on her feet all day. She comes home tired every night. This evening, she throws a pizza in the oven because that's what is most convenient. You don't complain. It's cheesy and unhealthy and delicious, and you have a huge appetite from playing. Your mom takes an extra slice and says, I need this like a hole in the head. Then she eats it. After dinner, she looks in the mirror and sighs. She looks so miserable.

That weekend, your mom takes you shopping for back to school clothes. You share a dressing room because you value her opinion. You try on pairs of jeans and t-shirts with funny phrases on them. The fluorescent lighting in the room gives you both a strange glow. Your mom puts on a flowery sundress and sucks in her stomach. When she exhales, she says, I can't believe how fat I am. You had never thought of your mother like that. You see her as loving, bossy, brave, and hardworking, sure. But fat? Never.



You grow into a woman. Now, as you get ready to leave, you too stand in front of your mirror with a dissatisfied expression. It is just a trip to the grocery store, but for some reason, you care immensely about how people will see you. Your stomach protrudes slightly over the waistline of your jeans. Your cheeks have rounded out. You hate exercise because it is no fun at all. You can't run without worrying about your thighs jiggling. You hate the way that you feel. You hate the way that you look. Somehow, you learned that was all that mattered. Somehow, you learned it wrong.

Ode to Love

Jasmine Moore

I see you every day!
In people's smiles or actions.
I can feel you on my saddest days.
I can almost taste you during certain holidays.
You stand in the background but I can see you.
You only step out when needed.
You shine the brightest at weddings and funerals bring tears to everyone's eyes.
You give out hope. You help people get out of bed every day.
I see you in old couples faces after fifty years of marriage or in young faces exchanging vows.
I see you in friendships and sports groups.
I hear you in Christmas and chapel bells.
I see you in the light blue sky or at night in the stars.
I feel you in the wind never knowing where you come from or where you are going.
Because you are Love and are forever knowing.

Thank you for always coming and never going.

A Swashbuckler's Chant

Alec Matthew

Yo ho, yo ho, a pirate's life for me!
How joyous and thrilling that would be!
Seek many adventures,
and steal many treasures
and live upon the sea.

Yo ho, yo ho, a pirate's life for me!
How sad and lonesome that would be.
Love nothing but money,
no family, nor honey
with which to sail the sea.

Yo ho, yo ho, a pirate's life for me.
How short and treacherous that would be.
Here comes the Kraken,
tonight he'll be snackin'.
We'll rest upon the bottom o' the sea.

Writing is Hard

Hannah Creed

Why won't she stop crying? you ask yourself. The teardrops keep falling down her face and there's nothing you can do to stop it.

The tears are cold, she told you. Like hail hitting her face in the winter. You gain enough courage to write another sentence. *Why can't she just be happy?* you wonder, your heart aching.

She'll be okay, you keep telling yourself. But you'll never know for sure. You keep writing, hoping that someday she'll be better. That's all you can ask for. But for now, she will stay there. Locked up in your journal. You'll stay stuck on that page until she's happy. Until you're happy.

Snooze

Jesse Kielman

The sun, it brings with it the dawn,
A moment that I do abhor;
A day anew today hath spawned.
I spite it with a hateful yawn,
& slumber for five minutes more.

You nudge me with a loving blow,
what has become your daily chore;
I say your zest doth overflow.
As you push and prod me, beau,
I ask of you, five minutes more.

You look at me with gentle eyes,
You know now well our morn's rapport;
Dear, may I boast I've made you wise?
For you have learned I will not rise,
For at least five minutes more.

Now you badger me with zeal,
And hound me so I can't ignore;
"Wake! rise now!" you do implore.
"The time is nigh to go, therefore
you cannot have five minutes more."

"Love," I say to you with sweetness,
Abandoning my prev'ous meekness,
"You're right to say beyond this bed,
Today has joys and trials ahead!
You greet the day with vigor's spirit,
and sing to me your morning lyric,
I swear you could lead men to war!
By your trumpet I'll rise and conquer
this new day, I shall not squander
away today, so world, make way!

All these things to you I swore,
I'll truly do for you, Amor,
I only hope I will not snore,
As I rest five minutes more."

This is Fallween: An Ode to Fall

Katie Lee

Crisp, Crinkle
Sweaters in a bundle
Browns, Blacks
All sort of boots to match

Reds, Oranges
Colorful leaves of bundles
Dull, Beautiful
The trees show their true selves

Piping, Icing
Pumpkin Spice in a cup
Rounded, Sticky
Caramel Apples make a snap

Triangles, Candles
Jack-o-lanterns light the night
Tombstones, Fences
Houses made to be of the dead

Patches, Hay
Kids come out to play
Turns, Ends,
Find the way out of the maze

Ghosts, Princesses
All costumes in between
Tricky, Treaty
Let's get some candy

Untitled

Adriana Gordon

Walking into a safe zone, the smell of flowers and positive attitude fill the air. In the chair in front of me sits Krystal Madlock. Her clothes scream comfortable yet classy with a touch of the professional. She has perfectly done hair that fits her face, and jewelry that accents the details of her personality. Her smile is enough to help you make it through a long day of classes and adversity. When giving advice she has a subtle yet stern tone that says, you may think you cannot do it, but at the end of the day you will make it to the top and you will succeed. Her face lights up like a child on Christmas morning when she receives exciting news. Her love for elephants makes you fall in love with elephants. Though she may be the shortest when accompanied by a group of co-workers, she is the hardest to miss. She speaks with such passion when defending her honor and the honor of her students. She fights for respect, equality, and justice for herself and her students. She is a strong woman. She is Krystal Madlock.



Kiss | ABIGAIL PACA



Father | ASHLEY REYNOLDS



Desert Flower | HANNAH CREED



The Little Things in Life | MEGAN BACKER

Sandra

Yvonne Wamala

Sandra was feeling nervous. She kept pulling at a loose thread hanging from her sleeve. Her hair was carefully tied up in a bun, and she sat forward with her back straight. Her eyes darted around the room as if she was looking for something she had lost, but her body was completely still. Sandra looked well groomed. Her hands manicured and her make-up neatly done, she wore a knee-length skirt. She did not like her shoes. They hurt her feet. She had gone over nearly every scenario in her head, but she was already upset by a conversation she hadn't had. Not yet.

Sandra hoped they would like her. She hated this part. She thought of running away but her legs refused to unfold. She couldn't get herself to stand. In they walked, with beaming faces looking down at her. It was too late.

Studying

Alisha Unga

train of thought can fly
across the endless skyline
nothing comes of it

A Mother's Love

Jouie Jimmah

One unexpected night in the holy month of Ramadaan, after completing the Taraweeh prayers, mom went to the kitchen as my uncle screamed from outside, "Jesmin! Jesmin, Close the door!" Three gunmen ran towards our kitchen door which had been left open for my uncle. She dropped the glass and ran to close it. This was when her struggle with the three men began.

I always knew my mom was extremely hard working, a loving and caring woman. Her family was her small, perfect world. She made endless sacrifices to keep everyone happy. But from the night our home was attacked, I began to love her more than ever before. I witnessed another side of her, a quality even she did not realize she possessed: bravery no one in my culture would expect from a woman.

After failing on several attempts to open the door, the men began to shoot. One bullet went through the door, and another through the kitchen window. Despite this, my mom held onto the door, desperately trying to protect her family.

Hearing screams, neighbors called the police. Minutes later, the men ran and we all stood still terrified. She could have been shot, but she chose not to move from that door. She stood, and allowed God to take her but not her children. My brother and I were too young to help her that night. But our memories are still clear and unforgettable. Unconditional love gave her the strength to be brave and not give up. The kind of love like nothing in this world—a mother's love.

and, perhaps most importantly,
a place in which I have often pulled up a chair to simply allow all of the emotions that are collected throughout the day to seep slowly from my weary self, taking the time to look at them lying there on its surface and wonder what it is they were doing bottled up there in the first place; a table is a remarkable thing, the gathering together it does, and I assure you, the one in that quiet, burgundy kitchen is not the only one that is magical, in fact, I've found several others, places near and far where I have gathered with heart-friends, some old and revered, others young as the number of days I had been in the city I met them, yet filled full to the brim with the promises of new life: plucky pine, local pub; imitation wood, flat J; cordially calm cherry, the family of a Dutch friend; walnut standing on black metal legs, a gathering place for knights; covered in checkered cloth, the lake; so many other wonderful places, waiting – you may even know of one yourself that I don't know; there is something patient and intensely comforting about that old-oak dining room table, it has been waiting there for years, and I have every reason to believe that it will continue waiting for years to come; of course, it isn't waiting for nothing, something will happen soon, a game played or a story spun, I'll have to be there to find out what all the waiting is for, and so, I hope, will you; you must think before you answer, I'm sure it will keep waiting, regardless, but I'm a little less patient than a table, so...will you pull up a chair?

Serenity

Zach Marpe

A violent thunderstorm crashes;
a brutal sun scorches upon me.
A hailstorm becomes a barrage;
an icy cold creeps into my soul.

But *you* are my *solace*.

You are the light *breeze* and the ocean's *spray*;
you are the single *ray* of sun beaming down.
You are the soothing *din* of nature's *hymn*
among the unease in my mind that's a roar.

Now it's all quiet; all is *calm*.

A *weightlessness* enraptures me,
and, while I'm lost, now I'm *found*.

A *warmth* envelops my *heart*,
and ablaze and abound my soul is in me.

You are my *joyfully weary exhaustion*;
you are my *serenity*.

The Pumpkin Coffee Mug

Ben Klooster

With a core of glass and a look of orange
I can see its portrayed scare just facing me,
Giving me a chill down my spine
Through each rugged pumpkin line

With eyes of black and triangles of fear
I can see its laugh of evil creeping through my soul
Giving me goosebumps of cold and eek
Through every vein, both strong and weak

With a handle that's tight and a curve like an apple
I can feel its smooth grain flowing high to low
Giving me a petrified reaction, one not pleasant
Through each vertebrae, both straight and bent

With a night that's dark and an air filled with screams
I can see nothing but black with tears falling down my face
Giving me bunches of hopelessness and disgrace
When holding the pumpkin coffee mug to determine my fate.

It's A Big, Big Table

Amy Prestholt

Up and down on the swing I go,
legs pumping, heart beating,
sunset –
orange, purple, blood-red beauty that it is –
shining sneakily past the shadowy trees,
I hear the chaos of creation calling out from all directions,
compelling me to put one foot in front of the other,
buy that expensive plane ticket,
get in my car without a map and drive in the next direction,
see the city at night with all its imperfection,
climb a mountain on the back of a hooved beast,
their sweat slicking against the calves of my jeans as we climb higher
and higher to the view above,
or just sit in my room furiously writing a list of all the places I intend
to go
and planning how it is I will get myself there,
a plan that leads me to capture the grandeur of the world in cell-phone
photographs and more vivid memories, a plan that is never truly finished;
despite the repetitive, frustratingly insistent call that I hear again and
again
and the smooth leather harness it fastened comfortably tight to my
heart strings so that it might steer me 'round the world,
there is something patient and intensely comforting about that old-oak
dining room table with its lion paw legs and fractured finish
– solid, sturdy, smooth –
as it stands, frozen, full of solemnity,
in that quiet burgundy-walled, red checked window
waving dining room,
that invokes in me the securest and truest sense of something that took
the longest
time for me to understand,
that is,
what it means to be home:
a place to gather over the sights and smells of tradition,
a place to incessantly argue and laugh,
a place to enjoy a drink with friends,
a place to enjoy the simplicities of life,
a place to place the daisies I plucked from the grave in that pasture,
now many years undisturbed,

Lost sailor's lamentation

Alec Matthew

You don't know true fear
until you've come
face-to-face
with the
Kraken

Dark
Looming
Monster.
Just below the surface.

The Kraken wraps giant,
over-powered
tentacles around the ship,
crushing it.
And sending the crew into the sea.
Taking your crew,
your soul,
to Davy Jones' Locker.
But not you, you don't get to go.
Salt water attacks your wounds
and you just want to die,
but you can't.
You have to live to fight
the Kraken
another day.

Only its prey can feel its presence.
Sometimes days in advance.
Sometimes not until its too late.
The kraken stalks its victims until
the bitter end.

And only those threatened by the kraken
Ever know its there.
All others stand oblivious
Saying:
"It's just a myth."
"You won't drown."
"You can handle it."

Easier said than done.

Bend

Gabrielle Calease Fox

droplets
Poke.

[the cascading stream]
river
ocean sea
see aqua, green frames the
[two parts hydrogen one part oxygen]
current flows
algae reaches to be
Cut
By
Refracted
Light
[all pieced together at the next bend] covalent bonds

DRIP DRIP DRIP DRIP DRIP DRIP DRIP DRIP

[mind follows the steam's stream]
Moments coincide but – just –
miss
uneven
unattached
Refracted
[strung back together by one
word
entity
realization
]
until the next gale questions

DROP

she has a wave tattooed on the back of her neck.
"It's not because I want to be a mermaid. It's because I am one."

The Autopsy

Zach Marpe

'Twas orange and blust'ry; you see, 'twas autumn,
when my body they did dissect.
I didn't resist. No, couldn't have fought 'em,
for discov'ry and for respect.
With the mouth they did start. What words could be spoken
when certainty was not so clear?
But a song they did find, great lyrics not broken
by minds so locked up, so austere.
From my mouth they moved on to my heart or my mind;
the difference I still forget.
Tempted, they were, by how my heart was defined
but on my cerebrum they set.
A construct of beauty; body, heart, mind, and soul;
my darkness enveloped all these.
They questioned and doubted what made me unwhole
but not what had set me at ease.
But blackness was not all, a memory shone through.
It built me up; I called it glue.

Reality

Abyrnad Lee

You can run and run
Run all you want
Your salt skin will not lead you to freedom or closure
The fire and the rain
the hail and the fog
the sunshine
Will find you at your most vital organ
You can hide and evade
You can bargain and lie
Push away those who care about you most
isolate your self
you can't escape the pain of reality
and when reality confronts you
it is a mirror
it reveals only what is in sight
it doesn't lie
through reality
you see your rain
your fire and hail
your fog and sunshine
the elements reach your heart
The pain exposes you
For only you have been fooled
All this time you have only fooled yourself

you have no other choice.
it's either that,
or fade away in life's endless white noise
and although they're spasmodic,
few and far in between,

i'm glad to be here, to share in the joys

now go:
walk the earth
breathe air through your lungs
leave everything behind before you collapse
into the void

The Haunted Wreath

Ben Klooster

Branches of fear and ornaments of evil
The wreath hangs low, dangling side by side
Webs are formed when the wreath comes still
Spiders keep crawling when the old ones died.

Capes of the wind and spikes of the bush
The wreath goes haywire, holding on by a thread
To stop the scare not by pull, but push
Terror is real from what others have said.

Creatures tingle from the wreath up above
Making it haunted when the first old spider died
The only way is an exorcist not by hate, but by love
For a fighting chance the creatures have tried.

From my mind they traversed to my two-sided heart.

The struggle for power began.

Shadow and flame, a wraith and my soul stood apart,
and to the past, my life, they ran.

I choked and I stuttered as I gasped on my knees:

"It burns. Yes, it hurts. Kill me, please."

But my shade was pure hatred and spoke with a tease:

"Your soul is weak; your heart I will seize."

So my soul threw a blaze, and hate met true power:

My passion came forth for the fight.

With hope and a roar, one the other did devour,

and just one emerged from the plight.

So, my core they had reached, my tiger unleashed,

and unity they had created.

A driving animal, a dreamer who's called beast,

my memory concentrated.

Whether mouth or mind, despite a divided heart,

a feisty tiger, I am art.

Lipstick

Ben Klooster

Red, purple, and flamingo shades of pink
I can smell the scent like blossoms of cherry
Spring up and around watching two ends meet
Its taste like sugar on the lips I would marry

Soft and pure I feel when I kiss her
With butterflies settling in the pit of my stomach
The juice and water from her mouth I would lure
To salvage the love like a lollipop to lick

Do you love me? She would ask in my eyes
With ponder-like pride prancing around my head
I would say yes followed by relief and sighs
To care and dig into the words she had said

Through good and bad, I will look to her
Like a praising statue in the glimpse of an eye
The worst seems better and the best seems pure
To savor the moments until the day I die.

your checks from the bank of time

but know
if you have a passing thought
an uncontainable joy,
an unbearable misery,
a lingering memory,
anything at all
that defies the universe's blaring insistence
that your blaring existence in its eternal insignificance
is no more than a speck—

it matters.
it matters so much
for no other reason than
you
are
here. alive!
human, experiencing!

we are here together, and not one of us
has any inkling of an idea why
yet still we try to find
any inkling
of a ghost
of a past peace of mind

the search...indefinite

maybe once our sun supernovas
and our lovely earth either burns with it
or hurtles straight out of orbit
into deep space,
when that eight minutes of ignorance is up
and you find yourself shivering in the dark,
there will be one last echo in the resounding black:

'we were here. we were *here*, and we mattered.'

in conclusion, *you* matter.

matter

Rebecca Buchanan

earth orbits our sun
it floats through space
we live on earth
we don't know why

for all we know
there is no reason why
and all of this
is coincidence
collateral circumstance of cosmic collision
in a few years
(or a few billion)
the whole lot will be gone

it won't matter that when you were little
you had picnics with your mom and sister
under the big front-yard oak tree
around the child's plastic picnic table
you drank pink lemonade and ate
animal crackers, the kind with the frosting
you loved each other
can you believe now that that was enough to be happy?

it won't matter that your best friend
you loved more than anything in the whole world
broke. your. heart.
crushed it complete.
more than any lover could
it won't matter that whatever love the future
may or may not hold
will be a single cell among the infinite masses
in the veins of the universe
working to keep it alive one moment,
dead and forgotten the next
because the universe does not need you
and your love

you can let this knowledge of immutable irrelevancy
dictate how you live your life,
how you choose to write

Weight of the World

Hannah Creed

The weight of the world
Is resting on the 0.7 mm lead

The knowledge of the universe
Is waiting to be hurled
Through this fragile little girl's free verse.
Onto the blank page

What does she know?
Absolutely nothing
Her questions consume her
At night she lies awake
Staring at her pencil and paper.

Fragile like .5 mm lead.
Yet they both hold the universe
up
on its tippy toes.

Both have potential,
The lead and the girl
To give this world exactly what it needs.
Life.
Magic.
A story.

Autumn

Katie Lee

Autumn.

What is it all about?

Halloween. Pumpkin flavored everything-- pies, cookies, candles, coffee. Kids dressed as princesses, superheroes, clowns, genies, whatever their little hearts desire. Scrumptious candy that will cause cavities for years to come. The extra wind that breezes. Cozy sweaters and boots. Thanksgiving. Heart-warming turkey, mashed potatoes, corn, greens, rolls, apple pie. Family members hugging and gushing how much you've grown in the last couple months.

For me, it's all about the leaves. The colorful leaves. Bright yellows. Brick oranges. Semi-deep reds. Others mixed in between. Some have small, brown-edged holes from bugs eating them for food. They're beautiful.

I watch from my window, perched in a chair, as they float down as slow as they can. A few wavering from where they began and landing on the opposite side of the street. More and more go every day. Soon the trees will be bald and only pointy branches. I notice that yellow leaves stay on the longest. Why is that? I don't have the slightest clue.

I pray the yellow leaves hold on as long as they can. They're strong. But, I know today is the day.

As the last, large, old-yellow leaf falls, so do I.

This isn't a poem

Hannah Creed

Ahem

Okay

I'm totally not ready for this

When I have to think of words my brain's amiss

Maybe I should write about my first kiss...

No

I can't think of anything to write

These people think I'm crazy

I think they're right.

Do they understand how hard this is?

My poetry is either a miss or a hit.

My brain is a big pile of

Shit

What time is it

Man does time fly.

All I can do now is try to buy

Into this thing they call rhyme

And this thing called "reading aloud"

Maybe my poetry isn't meant to be read aloud.

It's just my ponderings

Wondering

Where to go next

in this rhyme scheme,

this time scheme

this mysterious scheme of life.

It's not finished yet.

She, who I cannot name.

Israel Alfonzo

She, who I cannot name, needs help. She, who I cannot name is imprisoned by loneliness. Still, she does not want any help with her suffering.

I met her long ago. She is small, but she does not care about that. Her size does not bother her because she has bigger problems. Wanting to be tough is very hard for someone with such a tender heart.

Her personality is a surprise box; I never know what I will find inside. Nevertheless, she has the most organized person I've ever met.

She has clever schedules for her dreams, which she desires with her whole heart. And she covers up herself with the most formal clothes and words for, after all, weakness may end her dreams. Like her clothes, formalities and rules are security measures for her mind.

I tried to help her. She rejected my aid. She argued that being lonely is the key to survival in her world. She argued that God is the only one who can help her. This makes me sad. Not because I cannot help her but because I can still see her in the road, suffering. She, who I cannot name.

Character Description

Brody Folkerts

She is almost stereotypical, dressing to fit in with friends, but her parents buy her everything. Compared to the average 17 year old, she is the definition of spoiled. Any article of clothing she desires, she gets. Any toy she wants, she gets. And when she doesn't get something she wants immediately, she pouts until she gets it. Constantly behaving like a toddler, even when she is with friends, she acts like a four year old. She doesn't want to admit it, but she does this for attention, and to make people laugh. Although appearing confident, she is extremely self-conscious.

Andrea does her makeup every morning. While some girls do this to look nice, Andrea does it because she doesn't like to show who she truly is. She covers up her real beauty, and consistently wears skinny jeans and boots. She's not very interested in the dating process. She likes to be single. In a wool sweater to stay warm, her hair looks like it's been dyed numerous times the past year. It's been damaged from the dye. All these qualities make Andrea seem like a normal human being, but deep down she knows she is not.

Cry For Justice (None Comes)

Alisha Ungs

I cry for justice-
none comes.
this world we live in
it is cruel and corrupt.
people only think about me. ME. ME!
You tell me,
"Money makes the world go 'round
it's just a fact of life."
But what happens to those who don't have it?
They are left in the dust.
How can you continue this life?
How can you not see?
I wish I could be blind like you,
if only to stop seeing
the pain.
the injustice.
the lies.
the cruelty.
I want to be blind to these things, like you.
I want to be ordinary, if it takes me away from here.
I cry for justice-
none comes.

Softball

Katie Lee

“Courtney, are you ready to go?” My father called.

“Yeah.” I replied, weakly. I didn’t exactly want to help my dad at his warehouse, but he was taking me to my town, Walford, league’s softball game. He didn’t have a choice though and neither did I.

I trudged down the stairs, meeting my dad at the bottom. His bald head was covered with the ‘Ford’ cap. The once dark blue was faded now and there was one large tear on the bill.

He ruffled my hair. “Let’s go, champ.”

I groaned, batting his hand away, resulting in me actually hitting him on the chin. I couldn’t help laughing and my father laughed a bit too.

Before we went outside, I stopped my dad. “Shouldn’t we get Caden to help?” He shook his head. “Your brother can’t. He has other work to do.” I shrugged.

When we opened the front door to go outside, our yellow lab, Annie, came running from wherever she had been lying to come with us.

The trip to the warehouse was less than five minutes, since it was in our same small town. The sky was covered with light grey, fluffy, clouds. I had heard it was supposed to rain and that made the butterflies in my stomach flutter more. I could barely keep still and, as I waited for my dad to give me further instructions of what we were doing, I clenched and unclenched my hands into fists.

“Alright.” My dad sighed heavily. “We’re burning that pile of fiber and stuff.” My dad was pointing to what used to be an open basketball court where the pile of rubble was.

I noted the large, wooden circle.

I pointed to it. “Including the reel?”

He nodded. “Yeah, but we’ll do it last.” “Okay...” I trailed.

•••••

The orange and yellow heat flicked at me as I tossed the last piece of

The Hands of Fate

Ben Klooster

Hand upon hand

Finger upon finger

Longing for something far away

Skin against skin

Bone against bone

Pressing together like fifty shades of grey

With its warm-drift touch and heart-soak feel

From a legendary book where love is real

Time will tell, not a moment before

Palm grasps the purity of sweetness in store

It is so close, but yet so far

Of happiness wrapped in bundles of tar

When the moment comes, to give not take

To believe, then receive, into your hands of fate

intestines aside and frantically dug around for her spleen and kidneys. 1:17...1:16. I found them, and they looked normal. 1:03...1:02...1:01.

The overhead light flickered, then went out completely. Total darkness. My heart thumped in my chest. *Stay calm, Molly. He's just testing you. He's just testing you.* I grabbed my phone out of my back pocket and ripped my gloves off to turn on the flashlight. I shined it up and down the cadaver's body, convinced that there must be something pathological and big that I had overlooked. 0:25...0:24...0:23. I shined the light on her head. Don't to it, Molly. 0:12...0:11...0:10. I reached for the cloth covering and yanked it back, revealing a mangled mess of flesh. My stomach dropped.

It was my own face. There were deep slashes across its cheeks, and the eyes were gauged out. My ears rang with terror and the sound of my screams. I spun around and lunged for the door handle, but the door swung open before I could grab it. Professor Lyle stood there smirking, clenching his clipboard in one hand and a long knife in the other. "Time's up."

Snow

Jasmine Moore

Snow, the color of white help me forget last night, shine the light in a place of darkness drift me away to a peaceful sleep.
Come freeze my soul so the pain will leave, let the wind rock me to sleep.

Let no man or horrors of the night wake me.
Let Satan himself pass over me and let me be hidden.
For he has many children and I ask to be pardoned from such a group,
God give me peace to sleep tonight, let my mind be free to drift in the wind.
Wake me to hear sounds of happiness and joy not of hate and anger.

Let me be free.

copper into it. Now the flames resembled the colors of blue and green where the heat was the most intense as it burned the old copper strip.

I was uneasy as I looked at the large, wooden, circle known as a reel. Well, it's one of the wheels part of a reel, which holds the long strips of copper my dad sells. It was so tall, it was a little taller than my dad and he's 5'9. I'm barely 5'2. And it had to weigh a ton. How were we going to pull this off?

"I want you to guide the reel with the stick as I push it with the lift." My dad instructed, showing me. I must've been thinking so much, I didn't see him prep the wheel on its thin side so it could roll.

"Please be on top of guiding. One little miss-up, it could tip, even with the lift holding it." My dad added.

Everything was going as smoothly as it could. I made sure to remove and replace the piece of wood quick enough it wouldn't get crushed between the wheel and moist grass. My dad came to a halt when we were about two or three feet from the fire.

"What're you doing?" I asked, confused. We could go even closer, I think.

He got down from the lift. "We're going to do it manually now. I don't want the lift getting any closer to the fire."

I nodded, getting ready to guide again as my dad balanced and rolled the wheel. As my dad was ready to put the wheel down into the fire, Annie got in the way. She had been following beside me and I thought she still was. I know my dad saw her and he was trying to keep the wheel balanced up, but it wanted to fall, didn't matter which way.

"Ann-Courtney! Move!"

I stumbled backwards onto the grass, the splintered edge scraping my left leg. It took only a second for me to realize what happened.

My heart pounded in my ears. It was like someone was deliberately gripping my airway closed. Tears ran down my cheeks and onto the oversized, white cotton tee I'd stolen from Cadan.

Time's Up

Natalie Bonthius

"Dad!... Daddy!" I screamed, my whole voice cracking. Frantically, I looked around for anyone. There was no one outside despite the small brown house and run down apartments next to my dad's warehouse.

This ringing started up in my ears, making the barks coming from Annie seem distant. I did the only thing I could think of and that was to lift the reel. The tears had dried on my face, but new ones threatened to break causing my vision to blur.

I just kept calling out for my dad, praying, as I tried to lift it. I felt like I was doing nothing though. I'm just a thirteen year old girl. I can't lose my dad. Not like this. Not right now.

My father's hand appeared and he began to drag himself out. I pushed every ounce of muscle I had left to lift the reel up more to help him. Once he was out, I dropped the deathening piece of wood.

My dad was trying to stand up and, instinctively, I helped him. "No more today." My dad puffed out. I couldn't bring myself to say anything because I knew if I did, I was going to cry more.

•••••

As I dressed into the blue and yellow softball uniform, I couldn't stop thinking of the accident. What if I hadn't been there? What if I hadn't been able to lift the reel? Would anyone have come? My entire body was still full of adrenaline. I was not sure I would be able to sleep tonight.

I cleaned up my left leg and applied band-aids to protect the scratch. I pulled my light blonde hair back into a ponytail then pulled the blue visor on. Before going downstairs, I grabbed my pink and black softball bag, which matched my glove and bat.

"Who's ready to kick Atkin's ass?" My dad asked, smiling as he came out of his bedroom wearing his version of my team's t-shirt. And he was wearing a running hat now instead of the 'Ford' one.

I figured we weren't going to talk about what happened.

"I am." I smiled, remembering what my nerves were actually for.

"You'll have ten minutes to find the cause of death." My jaw dropped as I snapped on my right-hand glove. "This one will be easy," Professor Lyle said, glancing up from his clipboard. In my fourteen months of medical examiner training so far, my fastest case had taken an hour to diagnose. *Ten minutes* would be impossible. "Coroners must work under pressure," Lyle said as he turned toward the cadaver room. I evened out the sleeves of my white coat, hoping that he would not notice my hands trembling as I followed him toward the metal door. He grabbed the handle of the heavy door and swung it open. "Good luck, Molly," he said through an unconvincing grin.

I squinted as my eyes adjusted to the intense overhead light in the tiny room. The door clicked behind me and I stepped toward the stainless steel table. The corpse laid face-up, naked except for two white cloths arranged in the usual fashion – one covering the head and the other, the groin. I glanced at the countdown clock on the wall opposite me. *9:55...9:54...9:53*. The skin of the cadaver's torso had already been removed and tacked to the side, revealing the organs from the neck to the midsection. The tag on the left toe stated *Female*, but the date and age at death were left blank – unusual omissions.

I took a deep breath, trying to ignore the overwhelming stench of formaldehyde that I could never quite adjust to. Glancing up and down the woman's body, I looked for an obvious cause of death. But she had no ruptured organs, crushed limbs, or noticeable signs of internal bleeding. *8:47...8:46...8:45*. I grabbed the scalpel out of my dissection kit and sliced her airway open, expecting to find a blockage that led to choking. But it was completely clear. I cut the heart away from her chest, untangling it from a sheath of tissue. Turning it over, I searched for discoloration that would indicate a heart attack. To my disappointment, it was a normal pinkish-brown color, with no signs of strain. *6:15...6:14...6:13*. My heart began to race as I grabbed the scalpel again and cut into her stomach. I peeled back the slippery brown covering, hoping to find some kind of ulcer, obstruction, or sign of poisoning. It was totally empty. *4:10...4:09*. Whatever Professor Lyle considered an obvious cause of death was *not* obvious to me.

With pools of sweat under my gloves, I lifted her intestines, unwinding the long, coiled tubes. I slid my quivering hands along them, searching unsuccessfully for a blockage or rupture. *2:45...2:44*. I set her

Bright Green Eyes

Shabzeb Jadoon

He had just come to the library. Walking to his usual spot, Mike opened his backpack and started laying out its contents on the table in an orderly manner. He reached in one last time and while pulling out what was inside, he hesitated. It was a gift from his best friend who had died in a car accident last year. Mike didn't remove it. He set his backpack down beside his chair and sat alone in the corner of the library. Mike chose silence over his companions, over all the distractions.

Mike was eighteen years old, yet he looked twenty-five. There were dark circles under his eyes and his posture showed that he was tired. With an innocent face, he stared at the screen of his laptop trying to figure out how he could conclude the essay which he had been working on for the past week. Like every day, Mike did not notice when his thoughts wandered off, and how he was back in his hometown, among his friends. His eyes stared blankly at the screen of his computer. Bright green eyes that lost their spark when he pondered how he had gotten himself into this situation. He missed home. He longed to belong to a place which did not exist. He had moved to this country because he thought he could change that. He moved to forget the accident. Still, it haunted him wherever he went. Tears gathered in his eyes. He wanted to cry out. He wanted to say sorry. Suddenly a pat on his shoulder brought him back to reality. He looked up and smiled. A smile which was forced. A smile that begged for attention. A smile that called to realize his inner demons.

Into October

Zach Marpe

We were an autumnal arbor,
beautiful and bright.

Your arms were my harbor,
and only in them did I feel all right.

But our auburn leaves turned brown,
and they fell; we became barren.

Forever more could I search the world,
but never one would I put life or care in.

The air a breeze, some days cold and now bitter,
shreds into wounded bark, and I merely shiver.

Your bay is gone now; it's been deconstructed,
and only a frigid sea lies beyond, where once our love did.

Now the past fades away, the fall signals one full year,
and the leaves which aren't ours make me wish that you were here.

Royalty

Gabrielle Calease Fox

Rocks stick out from the tall grass. Sore thumbs where they shouldn't be. It's not their fault, I suppose, we put them there.

We picked rock under the stark spring sun. They fought. My clay legs bent under their pressure. The straight field rows marred under their weight. Most rocks lawyered up for a personal tractor escort. They bargained for sooty chains and oil-caked hands as I wrapped the shackles around every observable crevice.

But we got them out. By tooth and nail and rumbling rubber tires. Now I could rest my shaken legs on the quivering rock sides. Conquered. And they knew it.

My sisters and I jump from rock to rock. They are our pathways through the grassy lava. Our kingdoms rising from their oppression. Our new source of safety.

The wind ripples the meadow and glazes the rock edges. It fans our tumbled hair behind our faces, making crowns of brunette and blonde.

Yes, we are queens of our dotted islands.

A Fishing Santa Claus

Ben Klooster

A Santa Claus of spirit looking for good girls and boys
Fishing for believers, givers, and toys
Spreading the joy through the hearts of the kids
Saving each spill with cups topped with lids.

A long white beard that's tugged at the mall
Fishing for the answer of who's greatest of them all
The kids are buoyant, eager, and sweet
When reaching to the hero of Christmas with greet.

A red fluffy hat that's two sizes too big
Fishing for warmth with bells that jig
Sliding down the chimney with gifts under the tree
Cookies and milk at the table to see

A pair of black, rubber boots that ride up the knee
Fishing for a fit that's tight as can be
Santa has a laugh, both hearty and whole
The good kids get toys and the bad ones get coal

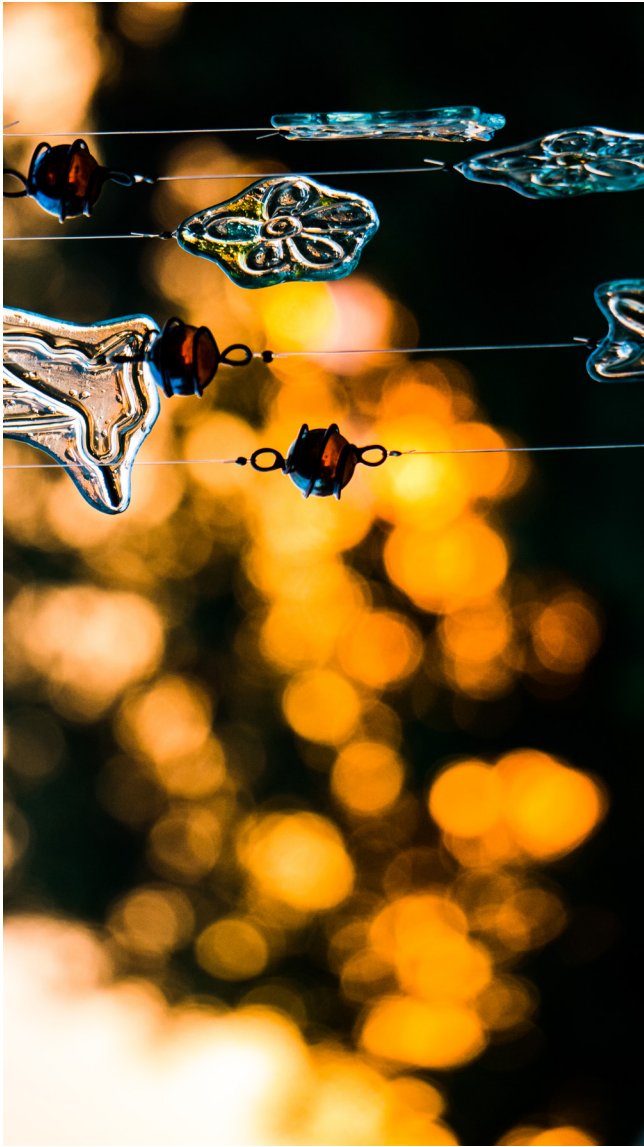
A stomach that rumbles at the end of the night
Fishing for a rest with all of his might
Christmas is over and the next one is near
Santa is watching always with his deer.



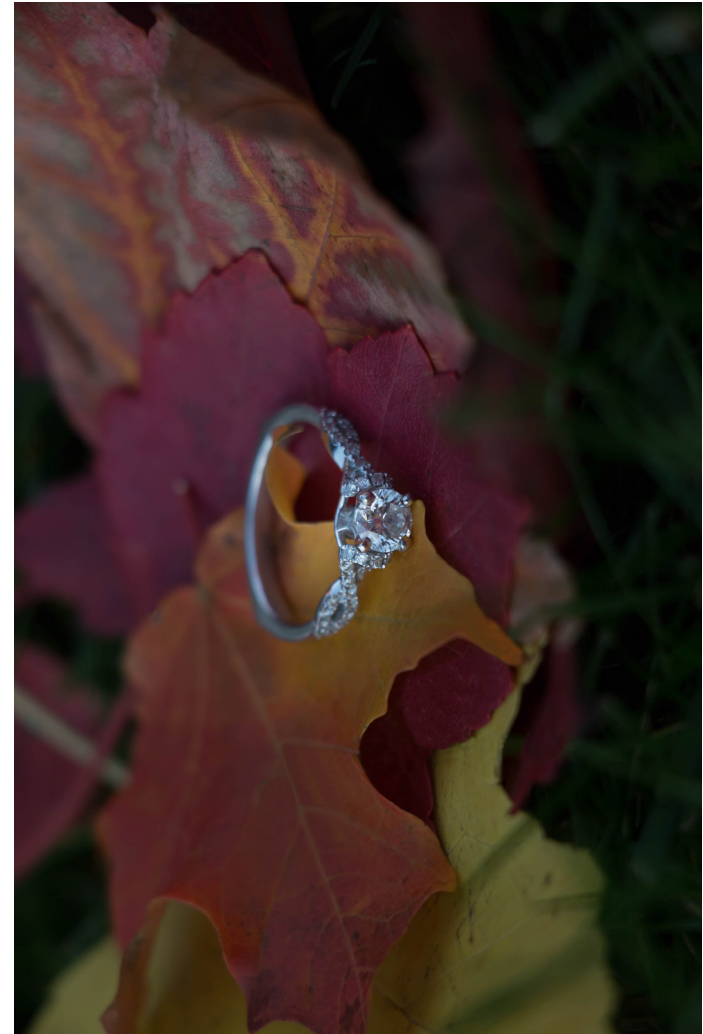
Delicate Arch | HANNAH CREED



Parked | JESSE KIELMAN



Summer Solace | JESSE KIELMAN



Falling In Love with You | MEGAN BACKER