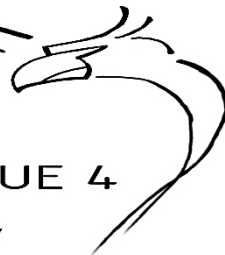


PHOENIX *NOW* ISSUE 4

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CAUTION: FUTURE

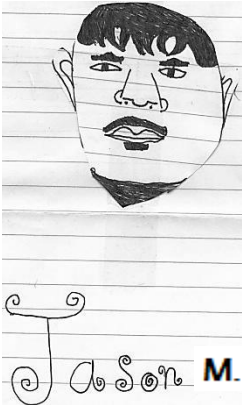
Phoenix Now: Issue 4 is...

...an issue wherein we deal with this theme: **potential dangers of the future**. Inside, we hope to capture different interpretations which explore the repercussions of acting or not acting in the present and how an action or inaction might impact the future. For example, does anyone remember “Y2K”? The year was 1999 and a fear was introduced to the world– was there a fatal flaw in technology which would cause the downfall of the Internet and the loss of incalculable information worldwide at the dawn of year 2000? Were we to experience another loss of knowledge like the world had when the great library of Alexandria was destroyed by fire over 2000 years ago? Thankfully the “Y2K” danger did not come to pass and now you are free to “Google” Alexandria because of it! Yet, what if it had? Are we over-reliant on technology? What other concerns should we have moving into the future?

Our idea was to share creations with you which engage this concept. Should we make a change, stay the course...what if we do, what if we do not?

Thank you for reading our creations and supporting our efforts. Without your support, who knows what might happen to literature and the arts in the future...

Cheers,



M. Kolodzyk Editor and Faculty Adviser for Phoenix Publications

*Contributor of the Above Drawing: **Nolan K. Burgner**, Age 9, a Friend of The Phoenix and MATC

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Remember, each **Phoenix Now** issue may deal with anything from the darker aspects of humanity, to topics and ideas which explore the human condition and humanity’s struggle. Our goal is to shed light on subjects and ideas that sometimes go “unnoticed” by mainstream society.

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Bleak, by Natasha Hollerup

Time Quickens

by Jeanie Dean

Time quickens
compresses the space
We feel the pace hasten us
Squeezed deep more in less
till we wander
are we running
hah hah hah hah
out of time
running to what
where there is no
tomorrow
only from which we came
ahead

Time quickens
compresses the space
We struggle to face
the limits of knowing
it's the end of the road
Will there be enough time
to completely return
Certainty
catapults us through
the narrow chasm
between the last world
the lost one now
and the one unknown
ahead



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Time quickens
compresses the space
How will I remember
your shining face
Oh my dear one
it is the child
who creates the parent
We shoot through
born amidst
memory pressed
in the divine spin
coiled in your
forgotten embrace

Time quickens
compresses the space
till there is none
We can't fathom this place
the feel of the air is lost
the sound of the sky is foreign
Movement carries
a new name
not a child
many children
renew a race
pushing light
to the still knowing
ahead

Meet the Contributor, Natasha Hollerup:



I have been writing since a very young age, although those were mostly Christmas lists and the stuff that was not Christmas lists raised concerns with my mother. Now, I am currently a student who plans to save the world and live in a hotel. When I'm not trying to save the world or looking for a hotel to live in, I write YA fiction that has a twist of the paranormal in it or I'm writing love letters for those who need it the most. Other times, I'm just glued to Twitter, because I do that as well. The strange attracts me, and my favorite superhero is Buffy. Together, in some odd combination, these things motivate me to write (although none of my stories are strange or about Buffy).

CAUTION: FUTURE

Regarding Caution of the Future, by Jeanie Dean

The topic *Caution: Future* is highly significant for we have been living in a time of prophecies and disasters. From the Mayan Prophecies of a new age to angst over the end of the millennial, people are concerned about cosmic changes for the human race. Fears of the future permeate our daily reality. We seem to be sweltering in anxiety about global warming, hurricanes, earthquakes, falling asteroids and economic collapse. In addition to an increase in natural disasters the world witnessed also a shake-up in two great religions with the retirement of their leaders. Pope Benedict retired in March 2013 and is the first pope to retire in 600 years and the Dalai Lama in 2012 disassociated his position as spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism from his former political role as the head of the state of Tibet. Not only that but rock and roll has fallen and hip-hop is rising to take its place. Radical change and thoughts of change move us to both fear and inspiration.

This poem *Time Quickens* engages our collective anxiety about past and future by picturing an accelerating present.



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Alien Flight, by Sterling Peoria

THE CHILD LEFT BEHIND, by Janella Jones-Steward

My soul is torn apart. My dreams are on hold wondering if you will ever come through the door. Choices separate us with thick walls of regret. Time goes by, seasons change as I hold on to hope. As I wait on a letter or phone call, my eyes fill with tears thinking about what we've lost and the cost through the years.

No kisses in the morning, no hugs at night. Not even a walk through the park, why oh why? As I grow up without you, life seems unfair. You ask about my grades or how I'm doing in school, but you never ask how I feel not having you there. You feel like a stranger to me in so many ways. How can you call me your child or say you love me, yet cause me so much pain?

You left me behind for selfish reason, never stopping to consider my feelings. Now you're doing time when you could have been free. But it's your time not mine so just let me be. Yes I forgive you but I have to live for me.

You have made me so much stronger because now I see. I can live my life without you and still succeed. I can fly to the moon or jump from a plane. I can be whatever I want to be as long as I stay free.

Dedicated to my daughter: Adrianna Simpson

1.

dawn

robin
orange feathers
askew, illuminated
in red glow
below
sitting, waiting on a wire
for a current
for the moment
its head tick technological

the light fades, translates
robbing darkness
from a wing surrounded
by a green glow

it does not know
that it is time to go

2.

Audrey

where did you go
rome
congo,
somewhere exquisite?
you are now urged
in this moment:
feel missed

you should have
taught elegance
the sensuality
of a kiss
life stripped
you from us
you left us
gaping.

everything
in your day hidden
imaginations enough
not today
not the tomorrow
you would have wished
did you leave this
world knowing
you'd be missed?

sincerity, care, integrity
what's behind those brown eyes,
that we have missed?

keep them closed now,
your back to the world
the sight is not for
your eyes to view,
things have shifted.

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3.

bullets

punctures
an arrow's shaft
the target flaps
in the wind, breathing
whistling, wanting
to advertise—
president wanted:
dead or alive

calls, demonstrations,
movies, articles, and more
for rebirth
you want it
under thirty
I cannot hear your voices
so quiet
so full of promised
whispers without actions

the foundation
is real,
the promise
is actual
and action
is on break—
another four years
to wait, to see,
is there a difference?

Kimberly opens up the mailbox to see another bill from the doctor. She got the explanation of benefits (EOB) from the insurance company last week. She will have to sit down with both and do a comparison to be sure they match up before she presents them to Jerry, her husband. This is just another in a long series of talks they've had regarding Tyler's medical bills. In the past three years, Tyler has racked up an impressive \$25,000 in medical bills. He is 16. He lives with his mother, Jerry's ex-wife. Tyler doesn't have a rare medical condition. He doesn't suffer from a chronic disease. He is inflicted with a mother who takes him to the doctor and demands medications for him as soon as he begins to sniffle with the early onset of a cold. She also demands x-rays and tests when he has an ache or a pain. She is setting him up for medical dependency.

Holly has a genetic degenerative condition in her spine. She is at the doctor's office at least once per week out of concern when anything irregular might signal a decline in her condition. She is on no less than six prescription medications at any given time, including the highly addictive Vicodin. This summer she developed severe stomach issues which the doctors are having trouble diagnosing and treating. She blames it on the Coca Cola slushy she enjoys each day. A quick perusal of my Food and Medication Interaction text would clearly suggest the stomach issues are related to a deterioration of her stomach lining from long term use of pain pills.

No one can deny Holly has a condition which requires attention and pain management. Nor can one deny the occasional doctor visit of a growing Tyler. Yet, these stories suggest an over-reliance on the medical community and the pharmaceutical companies.

Society gives credence to the media and the media deluges us with conditions and treatments. If you take this pill, your pain will go away. If you take this other one, your condition will be mitigated. See your doctor. Talk to your pharmacist. You don't need to suffer. We, and only we, the medical community, can help you feel better. And when medication doesn't do the trick, they will prescribe another. When the medication causes a long term complication, there is always a prescription treatment for that as well. It is a vicious circle and Tyler is at the beginning of a road Holly knows all too well.

There is no argument of an absolute medical necessity or medication necessity. The argument lies in where does necessity end and where does a manipulation of the public's reliance begin. Who, ultimately, has the back of the public's health?

Do the insurance companies? Historically, they were set up to act as mediators between the doctor and the patient and protect the patient's pocketbook in a world of rising health care costs. Somewhere along the line, though, this mission changed. Insurance companies stopped putting patients first and began looking at their bottom dollar. The challenge of sorting through EOB's and benefit payments became the job of the patients.

Is it the responsibility of the pharmaceutical companies? An evening watching television might present a picture of public health interest. However, a quick look at the annual income statement of Abbott or Pfieser will show profits in the billions.

Is it the doctor's responsibility? In an average day, a doctor will see an average of four patients per hour. A nurse will handle the intake, blood pressure and temperature. The doctor will review the nurse's information; listen to the patient's complaint and heart rate. He will then make a speedy diagnosis, write a quick prescription to fit the presented illness, and move along to the next patient to maintain the busy clinic schedule. Very possibly, in an urgent care situation, the patient will not see a doctor with whom he has a relationship.

It is up to the patient, or the patient's guardian, to take responsibility for his or her own health. They must take steps to understand the common viruses and aches and pains and understand when to use an over-the-counter medication, or when to let time heal the wound. They need to understand that not all ails deserve the attention of a medical professional or a prescription to cure.

This is the true public health interest.

In Holly's case, it may be too late. But it's not too late for Tyler.

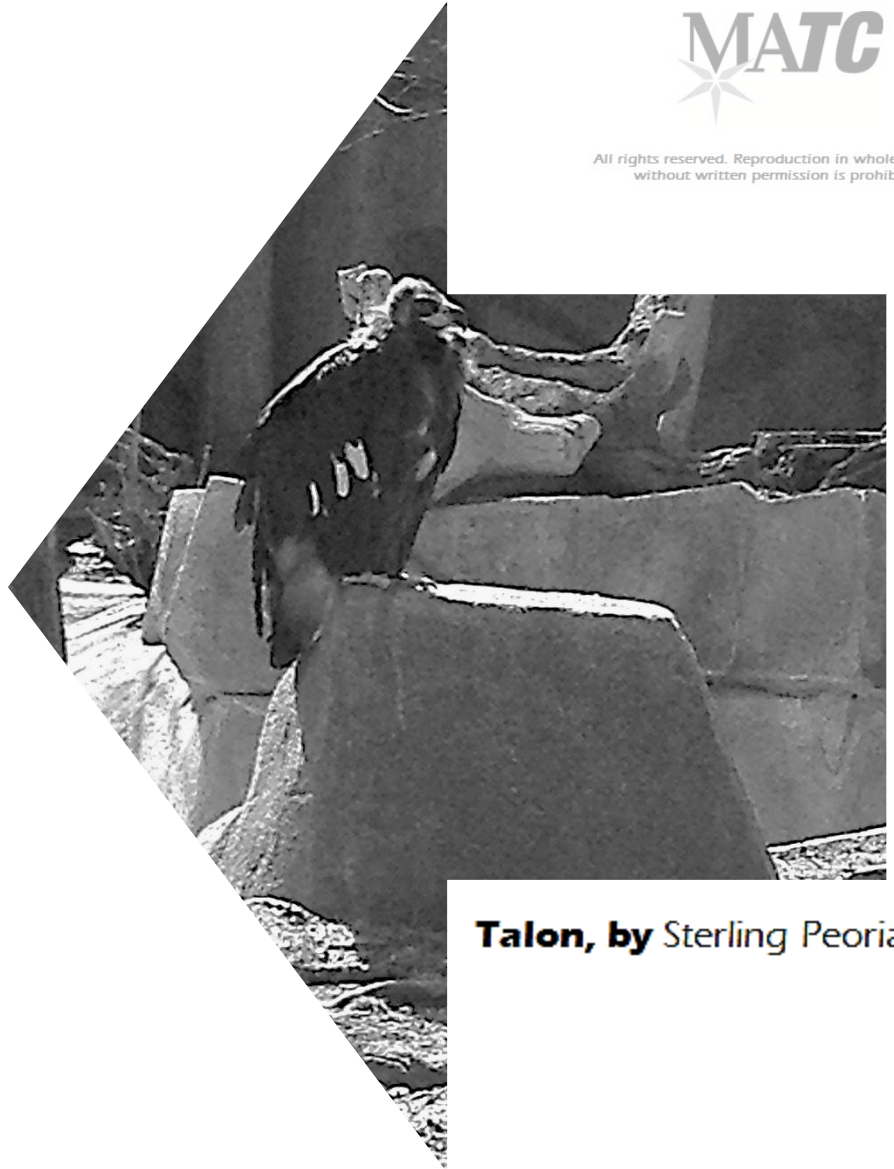
The Beauty of AIDS, by Shenekia Sabrina Pinkston

She invites you in.
No questions No answers.
Her protection is the hairs between
hers and your legs.
Tasting the cruelty of youth.
pledging to the unknown, but
you've got it.
She is lying next to him,
but he is lying in a bed of Aids.
The fluid of love you thought
she was giving to you.
No a fluid of welcome to
the wonderful world of AIDS.
There is no turning back
you gambled with death
here lies her beauty of the
part he once wanted
not tamed by his name,
but by that which had erased
pasted and predicted his present and future...
AIDS

Wrap it up!



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Talon, by Sterling Peoria



April 23, 2775; 11:00 am; Anastasia...

"Wake up!"

The quiet, repetitive tick of his watch filled Nick Lockheart's ears while his two-toned eyes opened and the dark transformed to the view of his hand, which clutched at his weighted burnished gold pocket watch. Suddenly, the ticking of the watch faded into the cacophony of murmuring students. *Oh, shit*, he thought as he raised his head and his stomach dropped as the other students turned to face him, just like his instructor was.

"Nice of you to return from dreamland, Mr. Lockheart," the round-faced, overtly thin and ridiculously tan instructor said as his voice resonated through the barely filled lecture hall, "Now, I would like to finish teaching the class, if you're quite done with your sleepy time babbling."

The majority of the students snickered but Nick wanted to know what had been said, nervous that he had made a fool out of himself during a possible wet dream. He tried not to feel nonchalant about it, but the feeling didn't come. Instead, a spreading chill moved through his blood. If he could remember what he had been dreaming about, he knew he would've been fine, but his dreams lately...

The dismissal bell rang through the academy and everyone started to pack their books away, with the exception of Nick, who was mentally preparing himself for a confrontation with his instructor. Once they filed out of the classroom, Nick quickly checked to see if he'd actually had a wet dream – again, in this class – and then slowly inched down the stairs from the top row. It felt like cement had encased his feet, but he continued. While he was full on his quota of lectures from his teachers, he didn't expect to see an end to them anytime soon.

A prickle on the back of his neck, something so minute, made Nick turn his head towards the door and he caught a glimpse of a girl in what he thought was a white wedding dress as she walked by. *That's strange*, he frowned. He then felt the firm poke on his shoulder and flinched once he turned back around and his eyes met with the instructor's round face.

"So, Nicholas, you think that sleeping in this class will help you?"

Here it is, Nick thought to himself, "Mr. Jones –"

"Professor."

"Professor Jones, it was an accident, one that will never happen again."

That's right, be as contrite as you possibly can. Maybe he'll buy it.

Nick's head started to throb, pressure building against his brain as a thought that didn't belong to him passed through his mind.

"I wish that I could believe you, Nicholas, but this is the thirteenth time this semester – *thirteenth* – I've caught you sleeping. Then, you start babbling about gardenias and your classmates become more interested in that instead of what I'm trying to teach them. Do you expect me to believe you and let you pass?"

Nick shook his head and let his shoulders slump. *Gardenia? I'm getting in trouble for a stupid flower?* He let his sigh expel from his mouth and put his backpack on his back, folding his arms against his chest. "Professor Jones, I can't guarantee that I'm going to stay awake in every class, but I am passing. So, that has to mean something."

The instructor pursed his dry, chapped lips and tapped an open space on his head where hair used to be. "I'm going to have to take your behavior into consideration but perhaps this will give you time to figure out how to stay awake in my class. Maybe, you should train less and go to sleep earlier."

"Yes, sir," Nick mumbled. His feet no longer felt heavy so he practically sprinted up the stairs to get out of the stifling, sour classroom before he punched his instructor in his smug mouth. Once he was finally outside of the classroom, he took a deep breath and looked around the bustling hallway for any sign of the girl in the wedding dress. He didn't and instead of waiting around, he headed in the direction of the Combat Simulation Center, where he had a standing appointment.

Twenty minutes later, Anastasia Palace Academy's campus buzzed with over five hundred primary school students and over a thousand secondary school students, crossing the huge courtyard to get from one place to another. The students in the primary school all looked identical in their uniforms that proudly displayed the Academy's blue, white and green. The students in the secondary school were free to wear anything they wanted. Their clothes were normally bought by their parents or bought with the generous allowances that they received through work-study at the academy.

Nick pushed his way past his fellow students to get to the elevator once he entered the academy's Eagle Fighter Base, which housed about two hundred and fifty students. He had lived at the base for ten years and was going to have to stay another five. Living on the base secured him a spot as an Eagle Fighter candidate, but he didn't know when that was going to happen.

When he walked into the Combat Center, Nick entered the first training room and found his best friend, Kieran Waterford, lounging on a bench next to his elaborate sword with his arm shielding his eyes from the beaming sunshine that radiated through the skylight. After he looked at the time, Nick rolled his eyes. Kieran had shown up earlier than planned and had been waiting. Kieran had always been known to be prompt, as it was part of the dynamic that he and Nick had established when their friendship had passed five years.

Kieran was a neurotic, competitive and perpetually cocky perfectionist whereas Nick was a careless, accident prone underachiever. However, they were both extremely gifted with natural talents. They also balanced each other out very well, even though a lot of people couldn't agree with or understand the logic to their long lasting friendship.

Two minutes passed before Nick dramatically cleared his throat to get his friend's attention. Kieran then turned around and stood up, picking up his sword. "It took you long enough. I've been waiting for, like, twenty minutes. What happened? Did an old lady crawl up your butt or something?"

"I had to stay after class. I fell asleep again and you know how the rest goes," Nick shrugged, with the conversation still on his mind. "That's not the point anyway, because I showed up on time. You were here twenty minutes *early*."

As Kieran handed Nick a sword, there was a blank look on his face, as if Nick had spoken in an entirely different language. Nick then decided to turn his concentration to his weapon instead of trying to convince his friend that he was right. It was nowhere near as extravagant as Kieran's sword, but it was substantial. Nick also didn't have to worry about the blood damaging any gold inlays the sword didn't have. He was happy with the sword and it still had yet to fail him.

They took their positions and bowed to one another, for honor and luck in their battle. Kieran then stood upright and kissed the blade of his sword. "We're going to get an assignment soon. I feel it in my bones. I applied for a team captain position back in February, so I might be your commanding officer when we get our first mission."



You've got to be kidding me, Nick thought as he frowned in disapproval. "I just hope to get an assignment and you're trying to go for captain? Are you competing with Wilder again?"

"Nick, assuming will only make an ass out of you and me. You're an underachiever, a *chronic* one at that. The only reason why you're doing well in school is because you have to, so you could never understand why I make so many brilliant decisions."

Normally, Nick could let a comment like that go but his earlier confrontation propelled him to give Kieran a one finger salute. Kieran responded by swinging his sword at Nick's head.

Nick managed to duck before he lost his head, but he knew how close he'd come to dying if he was only a few seconds slower. When he looked at his best friend, Kieran shrugged casually, as if that was an appropriate apology, and swung his sword at Nick's head again. This time, Nick blocked the attack with his own sword. "Don't be surprised when you get kicked out for trying to kill me, douche."

"Spare me. It'll be your word against mine and you're the academy's problem child. I may get a warning from the Dean, but that's about it."

"Well," Nick replied, "If I live through this training session, I might take Annika to the Palace Gala. She's been asking and I think that I might say yes."

Kieran put his sword down. "Wait a minute. You're taking my *favorite* ex-girlfriend to the Palace Gala?"

"Spare me. You've dated the majority of the girls in our grade and up. Excuse me for not having much of a choice."

"What can I say? Girls love an ambitious guy and ambitious, you are not."

Oh, I can be ambitious. You just won't like what would happen if I was.

Nick shook his head as the pressure began to mount again. "Maybe you should ask Sage to go with you. As far as I know, she's never been one of your girlfriends. You should ask her after the match."

Kieran grabbed his water bottle and splashed some water into his mouth, shaking his head. "Ugh, don't remind me about that stupid match. Sage doesn't count in my tally of women."

"Why doesn't she count? She's hot, smart and has a great body. Plus, she's our age. I think she hates you, though."

Kieran rolled his eyes and he and Nick returned to practicing their swordplay among the bright green foliage, sunshine and moss of the simulation set up in the training room. Kieran increased his speed but as Nick was preparing to increase his speed, the room and Kieran slowed to a stop. The pressure in his head returned and Nick closed his eyes to keep the sun from making the pain in his head worse as he thought, *Oh, no. Not again.*

All of a sudden, he wasn't in the Combat Simulation Center nor was he in Anastasia Palace. He was in a white bedroom with huge bay windows and an absolutely breathtaking view of the ocean, though the doors leading to the balcony appeared to be blocked off. He looked out at the water but a whisper over his shoulder told him to turn around. When he did, he found a girl around his age staring out the window as well. Finally, their eyes locked and he walked over to her with an urge to touch her that was unnerving. He took her face in between his hands when he reached her and she mouthed his name in question, as if she couldn't believe that he was there. He nodded with a smile and everything, for once in his short life, felt complete. Then, she looked down towards the middle of dress. His eyes followed suit and he found that blood was spreading through the white lace of her dress. He had to help –

“Oh, my God...”

The strong, abrupt stinging pain in Nick's abdomen jolted him back to the Combat Center, to Anastasia Palace, to Kieran and to reality. The girl faded from his mind and in front of him stood his frozen best friend with a mix of shock and fear on his face. Nick didn't understand what had happened but then he involuntarily lurched forward as Kieran's sword left his body and he saw the blood on the blade. When he looked down at his shoes, he found blood falling down his shirt and pooling under his feet in the green grass. *This is too much blood*, he thought to himself and he knew that he had to get some medical help and soon.

He took a stumble back as the room began to waver and his legs started to feel like lead. Kieran dropped his sword and ran to Nick to keep him up. Then, he walked Nick out of the training room while trying to keep pressure on Nick's stomach. They managed to make it halfway to the Medical Clinic before Nick insisted on going the rest of the way by himself. The clinic was not much further, he told his best friend, and Nick shuffled away and continued his search for a doctor. Sheer determination managed to keep him upright, but he was worried that bloody footprints he was leaving behind had to be cleaned up right away before a younger student saw them.

It felt like forever for Nick to arrive at the door of the medical center. It also felt like he had been drained of almost all of his blood. His vision began to darken and he blinked to see if he was in the right place, but everything started to go black. He tried to reach for the door of the Clinic and his bloody hand slipped off of the handle as the dark finally drowned him and he collapsed. His breathing became shallow and blood pooled underneath him. As he lay on the tiled floor, starting to go unconscious, he could see bright colorful flashes of light in the darkness. The lights looked just like fireworks.

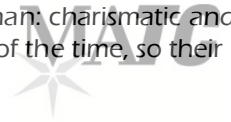
12:01 p.m.; Marivia...

A strong, abrupt pain shooting through her stomach caused Elisabeth Wintier to awaken with a jolt. At first, she thought she was in a dark, dank room with someone calling her name and she started to tremble but then, she realized that she was in her quiet, empty room. Her hands were pressed against her stomach but she reluctantly moved them to the plush mattress beneath her and tried to stop the trembling from the chill she felt, although her large bay windows were always locked. She thought that if wrapped her blanket around her, her nerves would calm but after looking at the clock on her bedside table, she pushed the blanket away and got out of bed. It took her about thirty seconds to reach the edge.

She had been home for only three weeks and she still had yet to get completely comfortable. Some doctor would come in at random times to check on her and make sure that she had been getting on fine, but the doctors were never the same and their questions always led back to the one question she didn't want to answer, and the one question she wished she could answer but couldn't.

Elisabeth began to finally relax when she was in the middle of packing for her trip with her father. It would have been nice if she could've stayed

home, but her appearance was important to her father's political win in September. Her father was nothing if not a businessman: charismatic and consumed with making his country better for his people. However, he and Elisabeth disagreed on where she was needed all of the time, so their relationship was fraught with tension.



She had always been a very calm girl, but her calm as of late almost came off as cold and she didn't correct herself. She didn't really feel as if she needed to make any more friends than she had, especially since she had a habit of losing them when they realized that she was out of school a great deal of the time for some reason or another.

Once she was done packing her bag, Elisabeth walked to her vanity and pulled her hair out of its braid. She rarely looked in the mirror, except in passing. She thought that she looked too plain, if not younger than most girls her age. A lot of people thought that she was cute, but she hated that. Infants were cute. She was almost 15. She didn't want to be cute.

With a huff, she turned back to the mirror and gasped softly as she saw a moving image of herself walking through a room towards a young man around her age, who was strapped to a strange metal apparatus. He was unconscious and hurt. He felt familiar but she couldn't see his face.

She became fixated with the scene playing in front of her and didn't even realize that she was touching the glass of the mirror. Unfortunately the image blinked out and all that was left was her fascinated, scared reflection. Then, a knock on the door shook her out of her trance and from the outside of her door, a man's voice said, "Come down to brunch, Elisabeth. We have to go in a couple of hours."

Elisabeth turned away from the mirror and after a moment she replied with a lilting accent, "I'll be right down. I just need a minute to change."

Her gaze reluctantly returned to the mirror and she thought about what she had just seen. Then she noticed a hint of blood on her dresser. She looked down at her floor and found bloody shoe prints on her carpet. She rose and followed the prints until it led to the door. Bloody fingerprints marred her doorknob and she touched it. The blood was fresh. A second later, she felt a sharp pain in her abdomen and looked down. The entire abdominal area of her nightgown was drenched in blood.

Elisabeth gasped. She pressed her hand against her stomach, trying to keep the blood in but the bleeding wouldn't stop and blood was pooling around her bare feet. Her gasp became panting and before she could hold it back, she let out a piercing scream. Then, she collapsed to the floor and darkness swallowed her whole.

Spacediver, by Brandon Haut

One hundred thousand feet
Resting at the edge of Space
Feeling very much alone

Like an astronaut
Gazing at the Firmament
And the Nothingness below

There are Icy Stars around
Creaking as they shine
So explosive in the Snow

There's a hazy Planet Blue
Looming under my balloon
And I think of What I know

Twenty-four mile dive
All my life I've lived for This
With my Courage never shown

I'm so far from Heaven's gate
Yet enormously infinitesimal
The Uni-Verse says Hello

Patriotic far from land
Gravity is calling me home
I resolutely let go

Plunging through a shining sphere
My fears are icy cold
For it is useless to fear now

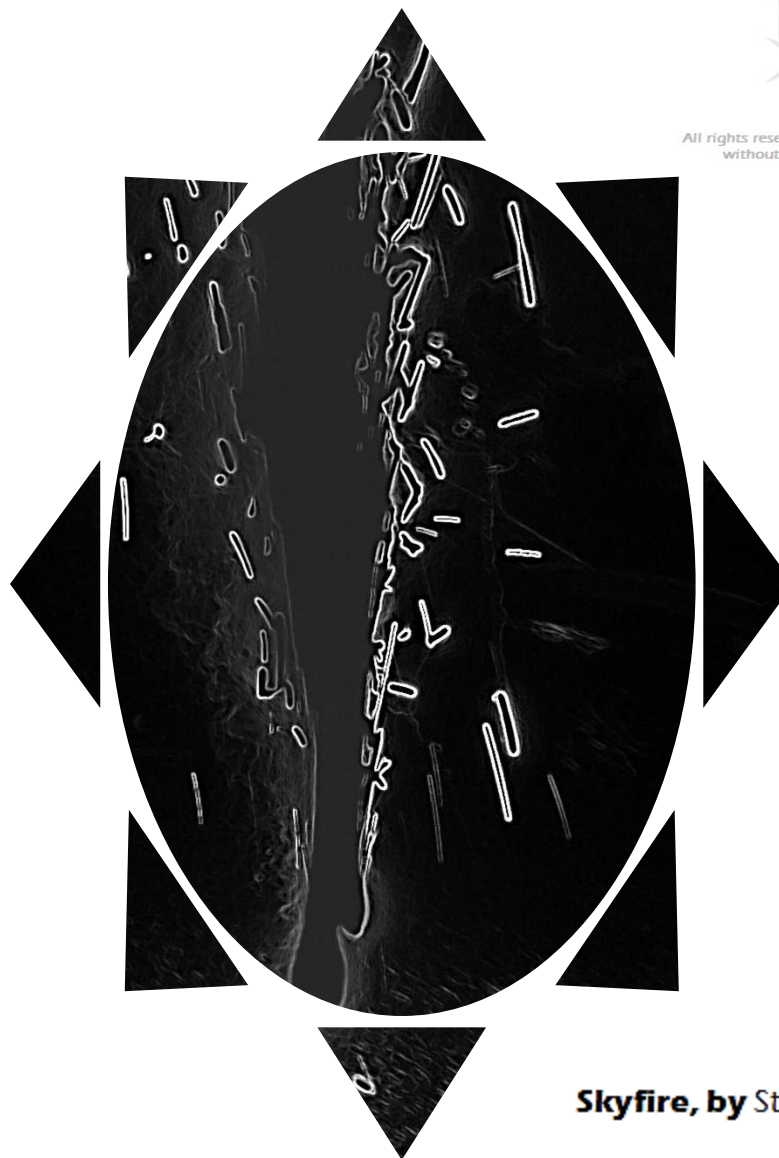
The planets watch me fall
To where my Family awaits
Watching me plummet down

My life spins in His Hands
As I crash into a cloud
Thanking Him I didn't drown

Diving into Gravity
Tumbling through Adversity
Swimming into History



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Skyfire, by Sterling Peoria

She the cute on the eyes type
she the on first site appears to be strong type
like to be held when she's alone type
attention getting just to depend on sitting alone
on the phone waiting on his last text when he get home type
she the stressed type
the one who post facebook updates about how he broke her heart again
TYPE
the afraid of a new start type
the afraid of the light too scared to get revealed in the dark type
the insecurities of her past leave her hurting in the heart type
you afraid of the edge but hangin in like a scapegoat
in need of protection from being emotionally disturbed like a raincoat
don't update ya status just to repeat past mistakes
because tragic happens in the snap of a trap ready to catch prey
he only wants the tangible idea of ya cupcake
so high off ya emotions so when u fell u had a heart break
he got you wound up on his finger like adhesive
cause the drop of this emotional rollercoaster so high you gotta be still
it's a shame u can't make ya own mistakes u gotta be his
instead u should stop being afraid of the life ya gotta relive
you addicted to his lies every word makes ya knees weak
waiting on that next high from a lie he's like bird seed
u peckin at his every move waiting for him to drop that line

that's gone derail ya train of thought into an abyss of countless time
and now ya problems got u in over ya head knees deep
confused about emotions this love proof vest makin ya chest bleed
guess u ain't hurting cause u goin back like a crack addict
pushing rehabilitation to the side just to get back at it
a shadow can only follow u until you decide to rebirth
we all done been a puppet to those games love hurts
his lies were a figment of your imagination a conspiracy
countless albums can be read on love history but here's my theory



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CAUTION: FUTURE

Pain, by Joshua David Wright

Pain shows itself in so many different ways;
You've got your pain from being hurt,
The pain from those heartaches,
The pain you get when you exert yourself too much,
The pain from an accident,
The pain from everyday life as the fate which was provided to you.

Sometimes we sit and wonder why me,
Why must I be going through this,
Why can't I just live a long pain-free life,
Why can't this pain just go away.

Sometimes we react differently to each kind of pain;
Some people drown themselves with alcohol to cover the pain,
Which only covers the pain till the next day, when you start drinking again.
Some people go to get high to ease their minds,
As their brain cells are eaten up by their very own drug.
Some take the pain in and hold onto it as it never gets released nor expressed,
As it bursts into anger, uncontrollable.
Some just try to hide it, make it un-seeable, never to be told;
As the pain just grows stronger and stronger, they hide themselves within their own self
Without even knowing what hit them.

Pain can be turned into a horrible nightmare for many people.
Whatever pain you may have held deep inside,
Whether it's from something happened to you,
Or someone else had caused you pain in any way shape or form,
Don't go holding it all in,
As it will finally get to you,
In one way,
Or in many different ways.

CAUTION: FUTURE



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The End and the Beginning, by Jerry Viet

Where everything is a means to an end, but the meaning is scrambled and the beginning is concealed, yet somehow minutely visible.

Where love, hate and fear is the same feeling.

Where if one is prepared to fight someone's war; they have to be prepared to fight their own.

On a path I passed a black dog, a grey wolf, a snake and a hawk.

In a time where gift giving stops the asking of questions.

I saw a girl become a woman. This woman was the enemy. I hated her and then feared her when her temper was directed at me.

My battle lost, my life forfeited. I accepted my situation and laid my weapons in front of her. At that moment I looked at her with love.

In this world I am found because I am lost.

Euphoria and misery is always one step away.

Here I walk alone in the dark only to realize I am the darkness that surrounds me.

Am I the hero, the villain or the victim? Maybe I'm all three. Maybe I am just ordinary longing to be extraordinary.

My fear has brought me into this world. My lack of faith has kept me here.

I have the will, but not the strength, the courage, but not the knowledge, the destination but not the road. I am not whole.

My heart is empty. My mind is too busy. My soul is exiled.

My life seems like a dream. My dreams feel lifelike.

I am not here. I am where I want to be, but only part of me.

In this limbo no one has come for me.

I am the hunter and the hunted, however, I am somewhat empowered by my own fear.

The fear of never knowing.

The end from the beginning.



Miles to Go, by Natasha Hollerup



The Road to Hell, by Natasha Hollerup

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Not all fairy tales have a great ending. Sometimes, the princess forfeits her “happily ever after.”

For all intents and purposes, this story is beginning at the end; my 18th birthday and the moment after my fairy tale became a very real, very insane nightmare.

Yes, I will begin the story here.

This was not how the story should have ended. It was never something I imagined until I was buried neck deep and couldn't find a way back out. By the time I had a chance, the story no longer belonged to me and I had become a willing pawn in a sequence of events that took a horrific turn. I never wanted any of this to happen, but I guess none of that matters anymore. The punishment had fit the crime and I deserved to be punished.

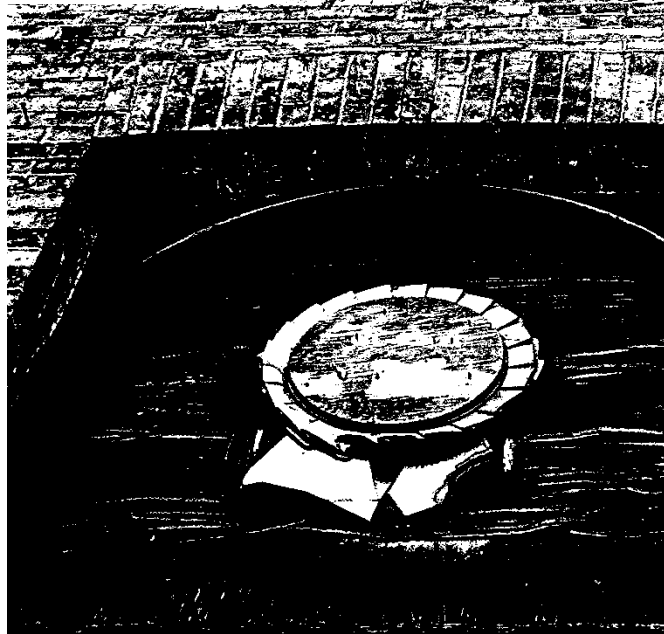
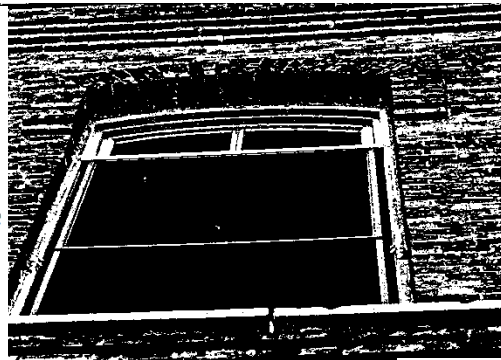
What was my crime? Well...I'm not ready to say just yet.

So, I begin this story at the end of this whole mess: on my 18th birthday, in the kitchen of a palatial mansion where I lay with six – or is it seven? – stab wounds and a blood soaked shirt. A cell phone is next to my head and the gun I used to shoot my stepbrother in the head is lying next to me. My stepbrother is lying near the kitchen's entrance and his blood has sprinkled on the egg white walls. I can only imagine how the police, or my mom and stepfather, will react if they come and find us.

I can't take any of this back, even though I wished that I could more than anything. Even so, there is never a real do-over in fairy tales,

I'll Be Ahead, by Brandon Haut

All the things we said we didn't do were never done,
And now the summer's over and I'm under the impression that I'll rarely see the sun
But clouds are only optical, I still can feel the rays
And once the rainy drizzle dies it will leave a warm and pinkish haze
I don't need anyone who was everyone to me at any time
Since eventually there will arrive new faces to replace the ones who left me in the rime
There is a gilded door ahead that's open just a crack
To see the sights that lie ahead and remind me never dare glance back
Other than to smile and know my happy ones are safe
In a mental pocket zipped apart from rotten ones to give me some relief
Goodbye for now, I'll wave and watch you drive this dusty road
I won't choke on the gravel when my head is in the clouds and my mind on airplane
mode
My widescreen eyes are focused on the steeple up ahead
As I follow swollen contrails just to know I'm being led
I'll take my leave and rewrite history in my stylized penmanship
I'll take my cue and flip the page to write again with stylized penmanship



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Inside Us All, by Kassie Drews

Day after day these walls trap me.
I am a prisoner of fear.
People staring and whispering will always haunt me.
Paranoid anxiety secludes me.

I am a prisoner of fear.
Always making pitiful excuses.
Paranoid anxiety secludes me.
'I can't' 'I'm scared' 'They will hate me'.

Always making pitiful excuses.
But some days it's so lonely being alone.
'I can't' 'I'm scared' 'They hate me.'
Why must I be so weak?

Some days it gets so lonely being alone.
At least no one, this way, can hurt me.
Why must I be so weak?
Will I ever gain confidence?

At least this way no one can hurt me.
No one will ever get to know me.
Will I ever gain confidence?
I guess it takes inner strength to be loved.

No one can ever get to know me.
That is, unless I let them.
It takes inner strength to be loved.
This is a start: my epiphany.



Disconnecting..., by Sterling Peoria

Desperate for Survival, by Julie Zielke

I've become a different person since the Z virus wiped out most of my city. I used to spend my Friday nights drinking and watching bad horror movies at home with my closest friends. Now my life resembles a bad horror movie, with a bunch of walking dead ghouls trying to eat me alive. All of my friends are gone now. They have either become the walking dead or have died by the hands of them. These days I spend my Friday nights boxed up inside my home, trying to somehow keep my sanity. Coming up with new ways to entertain yourself is no easy task, let me tell you. Friends were so much more fun than trying to figure out how to solve this damn Rubix Cube. I don't even want to play with it most of the time, but it just sits there on the end table in my living room, staring at me. I feel like it's somehow asking me, begging me to play with it. It looks as lonely as I am, and I feel sorry for it.

I still drink on Friday nights, although somewhere along the way Friday nights turned into most nights. I have a decent amount of liquor stocked up inside of my kitchen cabinets. Once I started to see how real this virus was, I loaded up on food and alcohol, mainly whiskey. I'm not really fussy when it comes to eating though. I can survive off of cereal, peanut butter, and bread alone. My Friday night drinking is the one consistency in my life that reminds me of when everything was still normal. I remember about six months ago, I didn't have to walk down the street holding onto a shotgun or keep a hunting knife in my right jacket pocket. Those were the days. I enjoy drinking much more than I used to because it numbs me from the nightmare that my life has turned into. Now instead of sipping on a glass of ice cold red wine I drink whiskey, mostly Jack Daniels, straight from the bottle. I don't even care if it's room temperature. I can barely taste anything anymore. As long as the whiskey that's running through my veins relaxes me enough to fall asleep and forget about the life that I'm living, I could be drinking sewer water for all I care. Now that I'm no longer working as a nurse, I don't have to worry about waking up to the deafening buzz of my radio alarm clock, or waking up with a hangover. I'm definitely not a morning person, so I guess this outbreak has had some benefits after all. Although I have to admit that I miss being able to help people. It was quite the rewarding experience helping save lives back in the transplant ward. I have ventured out a few times in search of other normal, non-infected people like me. So far I haven't been successful, but I refuse to accept that I'm the only survivor left here in San Diego. I don't care what I find: a dog, a cat, a man or woman, I have to find someone or something to talk to. I don't know what to do with myself now that no one is around to listen to my bad jokes and help me make fun of B rated horror movies.

I'm still trying to get used to the darkness that constantly surrounds me in my own home. All of my windows are heavily boarded up. I miss the sunlight and the cool ocean breeze, but I have to do what's necessary for my survival. I have my back door boarded up as well, and I keep five locks on my front door: three that turn and two chains. This doesn't even feel like my house anymore, I feel like I'm trapped inside of a prison. It's funny, aside from the palm trees and the Pacific Ocean lining the coast, you would never guess that this is San Diego California. Stepping outside is like stepping into a completely different world from six months ago. There are rows of abandoned cars that stretch on for miles, and most buildings are destroyed. There are piles of garbage lining the streets and broken windows everywhere. Besides the hoards of the hollow eyed undead with flesh between their teeth, it is desolate here. It's the middle of October now, and it has been raining almost every day for the past two weeks. Even when it's not raining, the sky is mostly overcast. I miss the sun, a lot. The sun does peak out a few times a week when it wants to, mostly in the evenings. Which means that when I do venture out of my home in the early morning, the sky is mainly a drab shade of gray. I can't decide what's worse, the constant gloomy weather or the stench of stale rotting flesh filling the air outside.

It's been about two weeks now since I've left my home. It's difficult to see how this city has fallen apart because it just makes everything more real. Sometimes I close my eyes and try to pretend that this is only a dream, and I'll wake up eventually. Out of everything that I've lost, I miss Vincent most of all. With his smooth deep voice and his warm body embracing mine, somehow Vincent could make all of my worries just melt away. His favorite old black sweatshirt never leaves my couch. It's the one item from him that I have left in my possession. He forgot the sweatshirt at my house about eight months ago.



That night we were sitting on my couch laughing about the new virus that was going around the United States, before it really got out of control. The Z virus they called it, where the Z stood for zombie. The virus supposedly came from ingesting a new form of aspirin that recently came out. At first everyone claimed that it had no side effects, but after a few months the government announced that there were reports of people turning into crazed lunatics, eating other people, with no signs of intelligence. They said that the aspirin caused the zombies to become severely violent, and that if you were bitten by an infected you became one of them. Of course, no one really believed it at first. That night, Vincent was coming down with what I thought was the flu. He showed normal flu related symptoms: a fever, pale, very low energy,

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"I hope I don't wake up tomorrow craving brains instead of soup," he said to me, and we both laughed.

"People turning into mindless freaks, what a bunch of shit." I said. "There has to be a more logical explanation than people turning into a bunch of zombies."

He left that night to sleep in his own bed, fearing that he was contagious. We didn't live together yet, but he was planning on moving in soon. I started to get worried when I didn't hear from him for three days since we talked almost every day on the phone, sick or not. On the fourth day I went to his apartment, but there was no answer. I must have stood there for fifteen minutes before I finally left. I figured he would contact me eventually when he was feeling better, but there was no sign of him for three weeks. I started to think that maybe he was cheating on me and had left town. He was extremely handsome with a good sense of humor after all, and I'm sure other women had their eyes on him. Or what if he had been in an accident? I just couldn't stop thinking about him. Then one day, I was out picking up groceries when I saw what looked like Vincent from behind. He was wearing the exact same clothes I had last seen him in—a light blue collared shirt and khakis. He had the same short sandy blonde hair and he looked about the same height. He was kneeling down on the sidewalk not too far away from his apartment building. Afraid that he was hurt, I jumped out of my red Acura and ran up to him.

"Vincent? Are you okay?" I yelled as I sprinted towards him. "Where the hell have you be...?"

Before I could finish my question, he turned around and looked at me with chunks of fresh brain hanging out of his mouth from his poor victim laying on the sidewalk. He grunted and lunged for me with an empty look in his gray, hollow eyes. It was then that I realized how severe this virus really was. I ran back to my car and drove faster than I ever have before in my life. I haven't been out of my house much since then.

I broke my gaze from the old sweatshirt laying on my couch. I had to get out of my house, away from it. I mean, there had to be other survivors in this big of a city, right? I was pretty desperate for someone to talk to at this point. It was 8:07 am, and not many zombies were out at this time of day. They mostly came out after dark to feed. It was one of the rare days that I woke up before eleven o'clock, and I hadn't drank much the night before. It was nice to not wake up with a pounding headache for once. I threw on my tan jacket that Vincent had bought me for our one year anniversary, placed my hunting knife in my right pocket, and strapped a freshly loaded M-16 rifle around myself. I had a couple of rifles and shotguns sitting on my couch that I had looted from Walmart, ammo and all. I even found a book there on how to use guns, which came in very handy since I had no previous experience with them. Gotta love Walmart. It took me about a week to read *Guns 101*, but hey, it's not like I didn't have the free time to study.

Armed and ready, I cautiously poked my head out of my front door. Good, no zombies in sight. Plus, the sun was peeking out from behind the clouds. The air was cool, but not cold. It felt like a good day to be outside. Walking down the street, my optimism slowly began to fade as I barely recognized my own neighborhood anymore. Empty cars lined most of the streets, and I found decomposing corpses every few blocks or so. It was quite a depressing sight. I must have walked a couple miles before I finally saw a zombie. He was stumbling around and grunting with his back turned to me, which was nice. That always makes it easier for me to shoot them. I get nervous looking at them face on because they are definitely not the most pleasant things to look at. He never even heard me coming, and I splattered his head open with

my rifle. That was the most satisfying thing I had done in a long time. You could kill the zombies only through the most vital organs: the brain or the heart. But the head was much easier for me to aim for. Shooting a gun took some practice over the months, but now I was practically a pro at this. I looked at the great job I did for a moment before spitting on him and then moving on. I didn't expect to find another person outside, but I must admit that I wished I would've ran into someone else who was non-infected. I started to panic then. What if I really was the only survivor left here? How could I possibly go on alone?



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After walking a few more miles, I came to a Walmart and decided to stop in. I didn't need anything here this time, but it seemed like a decent shelter for would be survivors. After all, Walmart sells just about everything that one would want for a zombie apocalypse: food, flashlights, knives, baseball bats, and bedding. The inside of the store was pretty clean for the most part. Sure I noticed that a few items, mainly food, were gone. But aside from a few random items on the floor, not much seemed out of place. It definitely didn't look lived in. As I walked down the canned goods aisle, I noticed that no one had touched the canned peas. I hate peas, and I had a lot of built up frustration inside. Frustration from losing everyone that I cared about, and being alone for so long boiled up inside of me. So I took every single can of peas off of the shelf and I threw them as hard as I possibly could on the floor.

"Stupid peas! I hate you!" I yelled at them as if they could hear me.

I kicked a few more of them on the floor, and I smiled at the mess that I had made.

After searching the Walmart twice and eating a whole row of Oreo cookies, I decided to give up and leave. Although I tried my hardest not to get my hopes up, I was still incredibly disappointed with the no signs of human life here. It was overcast when I stepped back outside, fantastic. I must have been in there for a least a few hours. I wasn't used to the constant silence outside. Somehow being outside made me feel even emptier than being boxed up inside my home. I guess I just had a hard time accepting how real this outbreak was. Seeing how it had wiped out the entire city was too much for me to handle. Thoughts of Vincent, my family and friends clouded my mind. Suddenly, a cool breeze blew my long bangs into my eyes, and I shivered. I shook my head, snapping out of my daze. As I pushed my auburn bangs away from my face, I walked around to the back of the Walmart. I had never really noticed the apartment buildings that were back there, across the street. Even though I was emotionally drained, I decided to head over there before giving up for the day and heading home.

The street was empty except for a couple of parked cars. It was unusual to see a street not packed with abandoned cars, although there were a few corpses scattered over the lawns and the street. The apartment buildings looked unkempt, not that the rest of the city didn't. There was an over grown hedge in front of all five buildings and dark pinkish purple flower beds that had been trampled over quite a few times on the lawns. The building went up about ten floors, and most of the windows were broken from the fifth floor down. I wondered if any of the poor fools that had lived there attempted to jump out of their windows to dodge the zombies. I slowly walked past the first few buildings, inspecting them more closely. I stopped at the second to last building. I could smell a faint aroma of cigarette smoke in the air. *That's strange, I thought, zombies don't smoke.* I walked closer towards the smell. Upon further inspection of the building I noticed that one window on the ninth floor was open. *Open*, not broken. I thought I could see the screen from down below. This place definitely called out to me for a further inspection inside, so I knocked out the remaining glass inside one of the windows with my right elbow. The glass shattered loudly on the linoleum floor inside, and I peeked my head in. The hallway was dimly lit, but there was just enough light coming in from outside that I could still see pretty well. I slowly climbed inside and stood still for a moment, listening. *Silence.* I slowly made my way up each flight of creaking stairs, my heart pounding like a jackhammer inside my chest. *Could there really be another survivor up there,* I wondered.

At last I reached the ninth floor. The cigarette smoke was much stronger here, and I could hear the faint

sound of music playing. It was coming from somewhere down the hall, but my heart still began to sink.

Maybe someone had just left their radio on before being eaten alive. But then again, why was the cigarette aroma so strong? Perhaps a chain smoker had lived here? Whatever the explanation, I had to investigate since I was already inside. Four doors down I stopped and pressed my left ear closely against the door. Apartment 905, yep the music was definitely coming from inside of this door. I could hear Jim Morrison singing "break on through to the other side." What a great song, although somewhat downbeat for my current situation. My heart was racing so fast now that I thought it was going to jump right out of my chest. I knocked twice, with as much force as I could muster. The music stopped suddenly, and I heard movement inside. Oh my God, was someone really in there?



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"Hello?" I said as loudly as I could, but my voice was still shaking.

"Are you infected?" Said a deep male voice from the opposite end of the door.

"No."

"Okay, I guess I'll trust you... but I warn you, I'm armed."

"So am I."

There were a few clicks as he unlocked the door. I was immediately amazed at his good looks as he stepped into the hall. He was tall, about six feet, with almost shoulder length dark brown hair and light almond colored eyes. He held a shotgun in his right hand and a lit cigarette was hanging out of his mouth.

"The smoke seems to keep them away." He said with a half-smile. He threw the cigarette down and stepped on it until it went out.

"Uh, hi," was all that I managed to say. I couldn't believe that there was actually a real live person standing in front of me!

"Hey, Man, I was starting to think that I was the only non-infected person left in this whole goddamn city. But I'm happy to have been proved wrong."

"I love The Doors." I said, blushing. At that moment I couldn't seem to come up with anything more intelligent to say.

"Ha, you have good taste in music I see. It's too bad I'm almost out of double A batteries, otherwise I'd listen to this CD all day." He smiled again, and I could feel my legs trembling.

There was an awkward silence then as we stared at each other. I think the problem was that neither of us knew what to say next. It had been so long since either of us had seen a normal person face to face. A thousand thoughts were racing through my mind at once. Suddenly, a noise behind me interrupted my thoughts. There was a loud *thump, thump, thump, thump*. A long moan followed the thumping noise. Uh oh, that didn't sound very promising.

"Duck!" The man from the apartment yelled, drawing his shotgun.

I quickly did as he commanded. I closed my eyes tight as a couple of shotgun blasts went off.

"It's okay." He said gently. "I got it, you can get up now." He extended his left hand to me.

I pulled myself up with his help and turned around, shaking. The blonde haired female zombie had been shot right through her heart, twice. Her tongue was hanging out of her mouth, and I could smell the stench of rotting flesh on her breath. Gross.

"Thanks." I said.

It felt nice to have someone looking out for me for once, instead of having to constantly take care of myself. His gentle voice and warm smile comforted me. I was also quite impressed with his aim. I could never make the heart shots. This guy would definitely make a great shooting partner.

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"Get your ass in here before more of them come." He commanded as he interrupted my thoughts by grabbing my coat and yanking me inside. "You want a drink?" He asked as he headed towards the kitchen.

"Whiskey, please."

"I have whiskey, but I don't have anything to mix it with. Sorry, let me see what else I have."

"That's fine. I'll just take the whiskey straight."

He looked surprised, and then he smiled.

"You got it."

His apartment was small, but clean. It smelled a bit smoky, but there were no dirty clothes or dishes anywhere. It was a simple set up; the walls were white and the furniture black. I took my jacket and M-16 off and set them next to me on the black leather couch.

"I'm David by the way." He said as he walked into the living room and handed me a short glass of whiskey.

"Do you have a larger glass?"

"Ha ha. Finish that first champ. There's plenty more where that come from."

I nodded and took a sip. Jack Daniels, my favorite kind of whiskey. I was starting to really like this guy.

"You never told me your name," he said as he sat down across from me on a leather arm chair.

"I'm Lauren." I finally smiled back at him. I was still in shock of finding another survivor.

"You know Lauren, I've never met a woman who enjoys drinking whiskey straight."

"Yeah, I'm pretty awesome."

We both laughed at that.

"Damn, it's been so long since I've had something to laugh about." I said.

"I understand. There's not much to laugh about these days." He took a long sip of his whiskey. "I mean, at first I thought this Z virus was a joke. I never thought that it would be this severe."

"Same here." We sipped our whiskey in silence for a bit. "You know," I said eventually. He looked up at me as if I startled him. "It probably isn't the best idea for you to be living here by yourself, especially up on the



ninth floor. You don't really have the best escape route."

He thought for a moment before he spoke.

"You're right. After everything that's happened, I was, I guess I still am in shock. I lost everyone close to me, and I didn't know where to go. So I just stayed here. Not the smartest choice I guess." He shrugged.

"Do you think that anywhere in the United States is zombie free?"

"I don't know. That would be nice though."

"Well you know, I have my own house just a few miles away, and it's practically zombie proof."

He nodded thoughtfully.

I continued. "You could come stay with me since it's safer, and um..." He raised his left eyebrow. "Maybe we could pack up some supplies and weapons and hit the road tomorrow. We could try the south. If the south doesn't work out, we could always try the Midwest or the east...anywhere away from here."

"That's not a bad idea. I haven't left San Diego since this whole outbreak started. I'd love to get out of this city and start over somewhere. Just try to forget some of this crazy shit, you know?"

"Yeah, I feel the exact same way. There's nothing here for me anymore." I had to bite my lower lip to keep the tears in my eyes from falling.

David stood up and smiled at me, his eyes sparkling. "I'm going to pack some clothes and extra guns real quick. We should get out of here and head back to your place while it's still early afternoon. I'm so tired of looking at this shitty apartment."

"Sounds good to me."

I sipped my whiskey some more, and I could feel it warming my bones. It was hard to hold my excitement in. My whole body was shaking, and I was hoping that the whiskey would eventually calm my nerves. I couldn't believe that I had finally found another survivor! Regardless of the hordes of the undead that roamed the city, I still felt a deep happiness sweeping over me. My life was definitely starting to look up. Finally, I could leave all of my bad memories behind. I was ready to start my new life with my new found, non-infected friend. I was overjoyed that I wasn't alone anymore. I was lost in my thoughts when David returned about ten minutes later with a packed duffel bag and backpack hanging off of his right shoulder.

"Okay," he grinned, "ready to go?"

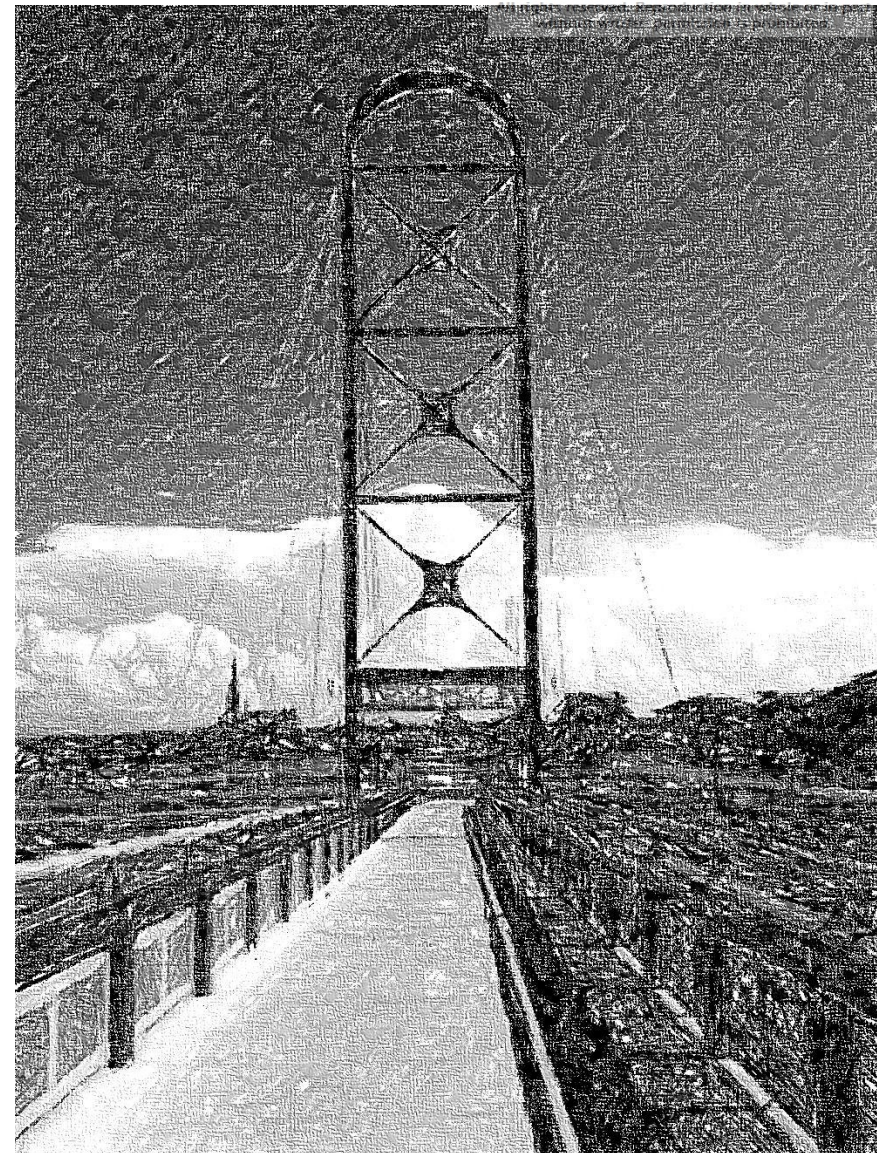
"Ready."

Walking out of the apartment with David by my side made me realize that for the first time in a long time, I was actually excited for tomorrow.



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The loss for a word is disturbed by a verb
that only loses what it's worth when a curve ball is turned
too much or not enough to get the message across
while those who remain found tend to be the same ones being lost
the word that means its spoken is a little bizarre
when it comes down to memorizing why we stare at the stars
space bars can't compete with this word it's a dilemma
spoken word in greek means rhema
it's the passion of the untolds that slip off your lips
when in just one instance it's just that easy to forget
that words have power had power and always will
and yet no one in this room has ever tried to stand still
go on ahead be silent while I go in for the kill
so i can remind you that time is of the essence be real
we never had it in the first place don't take over this earth
just so people like me can disturb minds with spoken words
i don't need to speak what's already been spoken
cause behind those eyes your eyes have never really awoken
to this social reality that lies beneath a breath
of fresh air and calm humility put your mind to the test





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Kassie Drews: Hello, included here are a few poems I have written for my Creative Writing course that my teacher suggested I submit to this magazine. I hope you enjoy them!

Brandon Haut: I am former VP of the Phoenix Literature and Arts Society student organization. I have work published in *The Phoenix* and the Phoenix Now Issues 1 and 2, as well as the Phoenix Website. I love to write poetry, prose poems, creative nonfiction, flash fiction, and anything else of an experimental nature. I write about nature, emotions, lack of emotions, daydreams, hopes, anxieties, and general nonsense. In addition to writing, I also love to draw cartoons and participate in theatre.

About my work included here: *I'll Be Ahead* (poetry) is a poetic monologue about the resolution to move forward in life with no regrets. *Spacediver* (poetry) tells a story of an astronaut freefalling to earth from space, yet portrays a deeper significance.

Michelle Arndt-Quirk: I am currently a full time student at MATC, in my third semester of the Dietetic Technician program. I am also the single mother of three children. At this time, my creativity is solely directed to my homework assignments and juggling my busy life, but the past has seen me writing, doing crafts, decorating, making jewelry and mastering the kitchen. I look forward to pursuing these hobbies again this coming summer, after I have graduated.

My name is **Janella Jones-Steward**. I am 36 years old, returning to school after 18 years. I have two daughters and one of them attends this college as well. I have been writing poems and poetry since I was 14 years old and I want to put my work out there for other women in order to inspire them and let them know that you can survive. I am the living proof. I am currently in the Criminal Justice program because I've always been interested in policing and helping others. However, writing is my creative outlet and way to express myself. My life story is told through my poems.

My poem entitled "Child Left Behind" is about children who go through their lives without their fathers, because their fathers are in prison.

Meet the Contributors



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Jerry Viet: As a leisure writer and photographer, I have written over 120 poems and 7 screenplays. I have also self-published my works both for Kindle and book form now available on Amazon.

Joshua David Wright: I am currently studying Renal Dialysis as it's one of my father's requests as I was great at it and something I liked doing. My passions are to help others aiding in their lives any way I can.

Julie Zielke: I'm a twenty-four year old nursing student, and this will be my fifth semester at MATC. I currently work part time as a sales associate at a card store. I've loved writing for as long as I can remember. As well as writing short stories, I also enjoy writing poetry. I still have poems saved that I've written from ten years ago. I also keep a journal, and I've kept a journal since I was about eleven years old. I write about everything: my goals, story ideas, thoughts and feelings. This story included here I wrote for my creative writing class. Fantasy stories have always interested me, so I thought it would be fun to write a zombie story. So I wrote a story about a young woman's personal journey after a zombie outbreak wipes her city clean. Although I'm happy with my ending, one day I hope to expand on my story.

ATTENTION: Writers, Artists, Photographers and Creators:

GET PUBLISHED IN: The Phoenix!

The Phoenix is MATC's award-winning literary magazine. We now publish a compilation of the best artistry from MATC students, alumni, faculty and staff online and in two print magazines.



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We are now accepting submissions in the following categories:

Art: Digital, Electronic, Pencil and Ink, Acrylics, Pastels, Watercolors, and more.

Writing: Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry, Essays, Plays, and other forms considered.

Photographs: Digital Prints, Black and White Prints, Color Prints, Electronic, and Transparencies.

Special Categories: Songs/Lyrics, Short Comic Strips, Short Graphic Novels, Sculptures, Jewelry, Furniture, Welding and anything else you consider a creative work!

***Please Note:** For non-digital creations, please take a digital photograph of your work in the highest quality possible and then submit your work through our website.

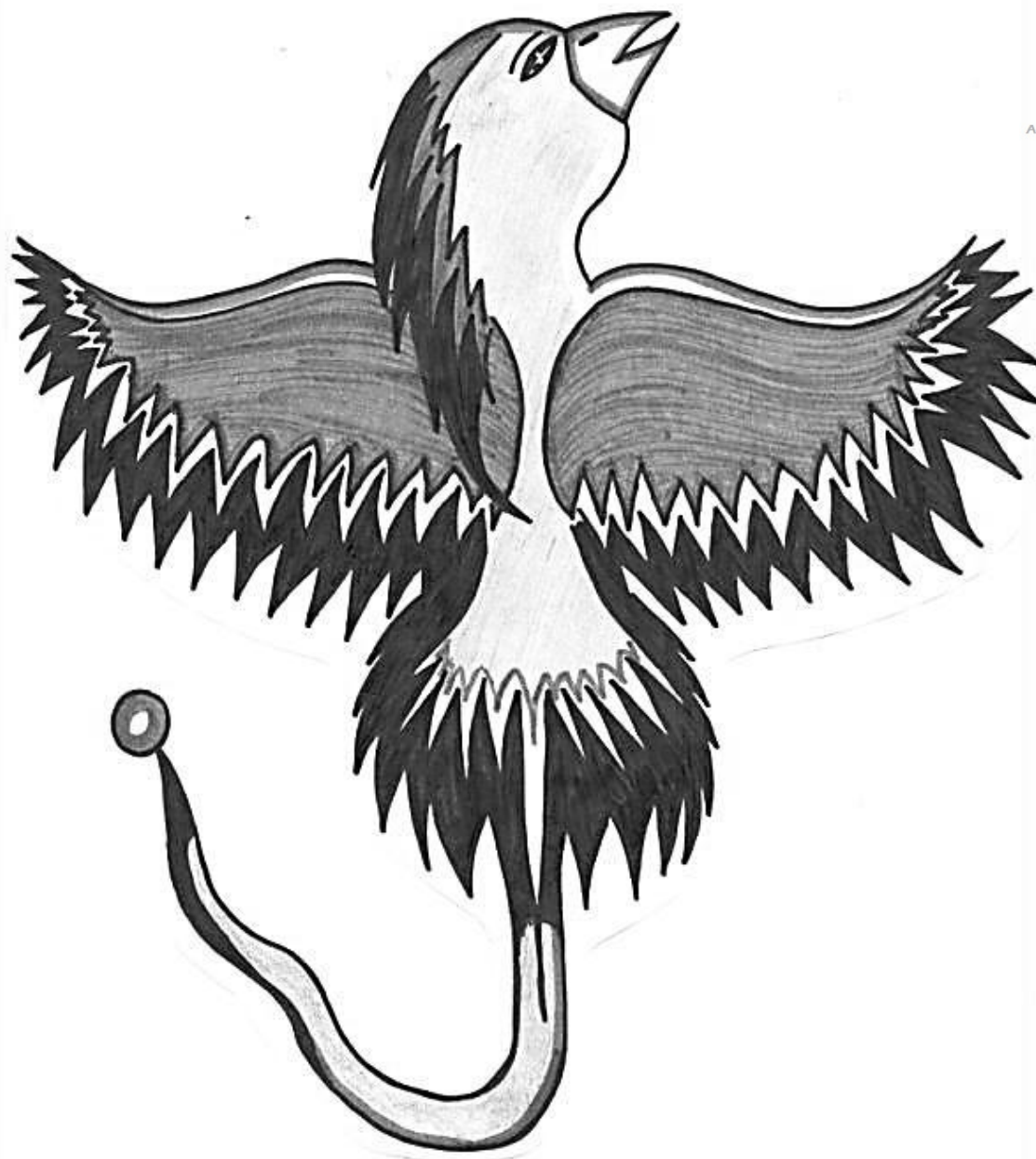
For questions, please contact Jason Kolodzyk at: kolodzyj@matc.edu

To Submit Your Work: go to <http://matcphoenix.com/submit/>

Finally, Please Consider Joining the Free Creative Writing Student Group!

Are you passionate creative writing or writing about art, literature, or photography? Would you want to go see a play, go to an open mic, or meet up and talk about being creative? If so, you are in luck! We can do these fun things together!

The Phoenix Student Organization is currently recruiting members and leaders! Please contact Jason Kolodzyk at the above email address for details on how to join.



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